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## Eugene Manlove Rhodes, 1869-1934

**B**EHIND the grave of Eugene Manlove Rhodes there is a perfectly formed piñon tree, and beside it two shapely junipers. They were the tapers that burned at Gene Rhode's burial. The sun was high priest, the mountain earth he loved, the altar. And the attendants with him at these hours of communion were those who were his neighbors in Tularosa, Hot Springs, Hillsboro, Lake Valley: Hiram Yost, who has appeared in many of Rhodes' tales, Bob Martin, another character made more real in Rhodes' print, and about forty others who knew Gene Rhodes from the time when everyone thought he was a little "queer," till the time of his wide fame as a Western writer.

Rhodes' body was carried upon a truck from Tularosa to the pass in the San Andres Mountains. The road skirted the north edge of the White Sands and then climbed into the range over rocky arroyo beds, through vegas trimmed in coral cactus, mesquite, and greasewood clumps. The long finger-like cactus was brilliant with green hued prongy stems and coral blossoms—coral spread roses upon desert rods. Yuccas, too, were in bloom, holding stately white candelabra in the bright light of mid-afternoon.

The men must have been for hours preparing the pit. It was dug in white gypsum. They had to pulverize the rock. The mound heaped above the earth was powder white. Two simple boards were the markers. Gene Rhodes will remain for a while as simply identified as any cowboy who rested on the plains of the Old West.

The ranch is the Threadgill ranch; Rhodes' own place was sold years ago. Ex-Governor Curry said that plans would be made later to fence an acre and place a memorial stone. For this the artists and writers of New Mexico, with Rhodes' friends, will be responsible. Those who seek the place in future years will greatly out-number that comradely few who were mortician, pall-bearers, grave-diggers, and mourners, all in all.

T. M. PEARCE.