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## In the Stands

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*In the Stands*

*For Paul Zarzyski*

July dust hovers  
then covers the horse  
going down. Cowgirls  
dressed in red and rhinestones  
tremble like beads  
of sweat in summer sun. Then  
bronc and rider break from spin  
to-spin-out in one clear Hail Mary  
straight-away for the stands.  
The calm pulse of no return  
quickens to a melee of yells,  
of men and women straining  
for a better view—as the bowlegged roan,  
yoked in chaps and spurs,  
runs, lunges and dives.

The crowd rises,  
beer cans and children in hand.  
Every summer in a moment  
we forget what we owe  
and risk it all on a clown  
taunting a bull, or cowboy in the air.  
We bank on luck not our own,  
brush the dust from our clothes,  
and pray our bodies  
grit the same way out. All year,  
the rider's record hanging on,  
the whiplashing body, the black hat  
clinging to the motion,  
reminds us whether up or down,  
win or lose—we know *luck* and keep on.

*David Louter*