

ROB HOLLIS MILLER

SHIVAREE

my decision
to escape my own sure shivaree
came to me
as we herded two of my
cousins
down main street
carrying their brides in
full regalia on their shoulders

my uncle, I knew years ago
had simply run out of the marriage hall
and jumped the first freight out of town
spending his wedding night
in a box car and leaving
his astonished bride
high and dry
not yet having a grip on family custom

with him my hero
I planned my escape
and first night desertion
only to find a cousin waiting at the door
not with my car

my bride washed diapers
in a tin tub and
I hung them on a line
on the flatbed truck

the store windows were black dead eyes
and the street lights showed
my bride to be purple
in that light my relatives'
laughing faces took on the aspect
of animals, friends of years
were foreign to me
my glowing
bride I knew not at all
nor ever would

the diapers by morning were dry and I
was gone from there, unlike my
uncle, looking for a new
childhood