

HARRY HOUDINI

A cause célèbre places my hand
on the lever, delivers the lemon bead,
wrung from wet-nap
to my tongue overlaid with thirst.
I throw a knife at the sleeper astride the balloon,
blue lids with the mystic stretch gone out.

Not a minute too late.
Run down a narrow gauge to see the rail slip.

Urgency, I say, shaker off the shelf,
and I balk it midfield,
choking on a pepper of dead
distant relation you can't mistake.

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They tell me to set the bat down,
which I do, like a hair on the lens.

And here, I emerge,
combed from my father's clear water
(only I know why) trickling mist
up to ashy high-rise, along the city talon,
another cottonmouth vaquero,
license to rodeo and nothing to ride
but an auditorium filling with snare,

in total stitches over what
has already occurred to me
is my best dressed thought.