

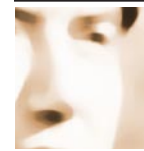
# 4 poems

Franci Louann

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portrait of a cowboy



on meeting tom jackson



eye over strathcona



prairie fantasies



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[ click mouse to begin ]

## portrait of a cowboy

© Franci Louann

who is this cowboy  
getting on a plane in Edmonton?  
wide brown brim  
long oilskin coat of chocolate

is he an Aussie?  
an outbacker?  
a “mate”?  
(she wonders)

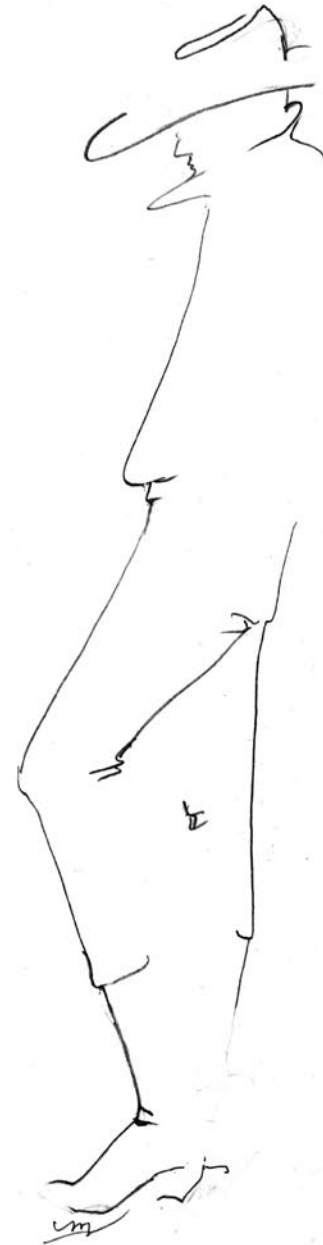
(she says)  
I could use some of your gear  
for Saturday night  
our Western Night in Saskatoon

is he a rodeo dude?  
a bronc buster?  
a bull rider?  
(she wonders)

(she says)  
cowboy boots  
I need black cowboy boots  
is black OK in June in Saskatoon?

is he an entertainer?  
a country singer?  
a heart-acher?  
(she wonders)

(he says)  
try Broncho’s – try Claypool’s  
how much do you want spend?  
take your VISA!



(he says)  
nine weeks on, three weeks off  
I’m just back from “the territories”  
the DEW line!

(she thinks)  
Distant Early Warning  
just learned that last night  
it’s obsolete – “landscape garbage”

(she asks)  
doesn’t that have a new name?

(he says)  
North Warning System

(she asks)  
when was it all started?

(he says)  
in the mid-fifties

(she wonders)  
was that the McCarthy era?

(she SEES)  
his eyes are  
bedroom blue  
his fingers  
nicotine brown



Marion said  
YOU MET TOM JACKSON?!  
and said if she had met Tom Jackson  
POEMS would be dripping from her  
fingertips

## on meeting Tom Jackson

© Franci Louann

sure I regret not taking him  
and maybe his wife too  
around the corner  
not introducing him  
to a dozen dental hygienists  
at our conference  
at the Westin Hotel  
in Calgary  
in nineteen ninety-six  
I'd just been on the phone  
turned around  
and they were there  
coming from a darkened dining-room  
Tom was tall, very tall  
very broad-shouldered  
very "tall, dark, and handsome"  
in black jeans  
and a bright red golf shirt  
Alison acquiesced  
let me seize the moment  
I wish I had acknowledged her  
I know he spoke with me  
I'm sure we shook hands  
I probably said why I was there  
maybe they were both amused  
with my obvious  
star-struck behaviour  
as I stood shyly, short in my cowboy boots  
my pant suit with the ruffled jacket  
chosen for Calgary

in my dreams I have more courage  
I take them both to the lounge  
introduce them to my friends  
explain how Tom is the star of "North of 60"  
I say: he's a great actor  
I watch every week  
he can sing too!  
"That Side of the Window"  
is my favourite  
Tom is a philanthropist  
I tell them about The Huron Carole  
the annual cross-Canada concert tour  
Alison "wanted to make a million"  
Tom suggested charity  
their work is for the Food Banks  
Tom is a great Canadian  
together they are the best that they can be  
they inspire me  
I don't collect autographs  
maybe someone would have taken our photograph!  
Tom Jackson, thanks for the memory!

after all  
Marion said  
if she had met Tom Jackson  
poems would be dripping  
from her  
fingertips



I remember  
the small neat pile of papers  
on the chair beside your kitchen table  
no desk  
no drawers necessary  
I voiced envy of such simple living

Yet you despaired  
feared the pile might grow  
and fall

On the bathroom counter  
your things were hidden  
in a wicker case  
your neatness a habit  
not just an effort  
for my four-day visit

## eye over strathcona

© Franci Louann

Now  
two months later  
I watch the news from Edmonton

See how a twister  
has spun through lovely old Strathcona  
where you walk to work  
the unedited tape is a collage  
a crisscross of red, blue and yellow  
an abstract mosaic, ironic beauty

Shreds of homes, of lives  
are piled like pick-up sticks  
poked and pulled at by stunned survivors

Twenty-five dead  
hundreds injured  
don't try to phone they say  
helpless I focus  
my mind's eye  
on your small pile of papers.



## prairie fantasies

© Franci Louann

teepee? wigwam?  
darkness

on furs and skins  
stretched over branches

smoke stinging nostrils  
hearing voices outside

I welcome you  
my lover

later  
on a travois

furs and skins again  
stretched between poles

behind a horse  
a rough road

we meet again  
my lover



# Franci Louann

**Franci Louann** has been writing poetry since age twelve. Nee Fran Workman, she'd like to prove a connection with Dr. Joseph. Some of her early poems, included in Dorothy Livesay's last anthology, are now in the permanent collection of the Vancouver Public Library.

Franci edits a poetry column for the Canadian Unitarian, and she hosts spontaneous poetry events "downstairs" at the Javanet in Vancouver. Franci has a pink python (polyurethane) cowgirl hat, drives a Pony, and says she could live in Calgary. Her partner, José, is a gaucho from Portugal, Argentina and Calgary.

About one-half of Franci's poems are very short. She is fashioning these into a manuscript entitled: **WHATEVER HAPPENED TO FRAN WORKMAN –Ten Lines or Less**, a mini-auto-bio by Franci Louann.



# About North Wind Press

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NUGGETs is an online member service of North Wind Press,  
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