

Jeff Hardin

Blues Man of Horse Creek

Around the fire our faces flickered as  
he plucked the strings to find another song  
inside a banged-up, much-of-nothing guitar  
he should have propped up on the fiery coals.

Up all night, a little blues thrown in,  
a rustling about of smoky clothes and tease  
of rain for three days on its way but lost.  
He was a brilliant secret History kept

the world from finding out about. Instead,  
he'd look us in the eye and grin—C sharp—  
then throw his head back at the universe

to sing for all he was, wild-eyed, drunk on  
homemade hundred proof, a soul flung up to take  
its place amid the mansions of the stars.