
KEVIN CLARK

Death Comes for
The Old Cowboy

Night breathes in the window
like a steel guitar.
He asks her
could he have this dance
and the Red Road Ranch Band
leans coolly into *Yellow Rose*
just the way his mother
would sing it to the wet moon
of the San Angelo sky
long after he'd been put to bed
and she was drinking her coffee
alone on the porch, her voice
taking him to the stars.
Blankly she says yes,
and they walk untouching
to the middle of the crowded
floor. He puts his arm
to the small of her back,
swipes his free hand
at his jeans, and carefully
takes her soft palm.
In the thick smoke
of the August night, he nods,
spins slowly left,
and *Lord!* how she follows
like a dream, circling
on the endless curve
of that sweet pedal steel.