

the german for it, the french

out west, he was known as the beautiful fuck who was just passing through. out west, he had no italian name — no designer suits, no silken neckties, no shoulder holster. out west, his gun was tied low and strapped to his thigh. what did you expect? he was sometimes called by a name in spanish. it ended in an o.

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howdy, ma'am.

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the stink from his horse did not stink. he knew how to comport himself; when to say, if you please, and, thank you kindly. he knew how to say, i don't care.

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he could hum them just like they do out west, humming them around the bar-b-q grill on those western patio evenings when the coyotes moan so low and far away and the feral dogs run in packs through the streets, tearing apart the odd trapped cat. he could howl when the time was right; could sing if you want and if you didn't mind, parts of most songs, with a la-la-la and a yodle-yay-hee-hoo, pluck a few notes on the banjo or the fiddle or — he didn't play the hurdy-gurdy. he was out west, with his long moniker. he knew four nights drunk by heart. he could track. he knew what to eat.

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he was the perfect houseguest. you wouldn't even hardly know he was there. the bathroom wouldn't be a god-awful mess, and he would be ready when you are, a quick-draw artist, experienced in the ways you have in mind. a man of the world, you might say.

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he would go out back to break, stand in the yard away from the house. you could see him out there, smoking his unfiltered cigarettes, watching the sparrows on the telephone line, listening to the doves cooing in the trees. at night, you could see him looking up at the stars. you wouldn't know from looking that he still wished on the first one, star light, star bright. he might tell you about it, if he thought you might think it was sweet.

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in the morning, you might take such a man to the airport, tell him lovely and pleasure and glad, press your share of an aeroplane ticket into his western hand. he would remain the perfect gentleman, make no fuss, feign no protest. he would give you a fond yet discreet kiss, and would add the special touch of turning one last time before the gate to gift you with a smile and small wave.

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in the afternoon, you could try a matinee with a girlfriend. if you should happen to bring up the subject, she is certain to ask all about such a flown-away man. you could tell her as much as you like, or even more. use any name you choose.