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Youth Writing Camp I — Journal Stampede Week, Calgary©

by Faye Reineberg Holt

I want to tell them the stories
Journey into yesterday
Tell them of the wild west wild
That first stampede
Not the illusion or would-be-truth
Not the myth of Guy Weadick
Not the great Guy, posed
For pictures in his Stetson
Not the guy who drank too much
Bragged too much, took credit not due
Lied by omission, and twenty years later
Got what he deserved — Fired
Not the Big Four who should have been
Big Five, men with money
Who donated dough that crowds might see
Real myth and make-believe competition
I want to tell them stories
Of women who entertained
Shocked, awed, alarmed
LaDue lassoing a cowboy
With three quick flicks of her wrist
Roping him tight, hand and foot
With world champion talent

Lucille, steer wrestler
Her steer roped, thrown, tied
Faster than a speeding bullet
Blanche, world champ
Of cowgirls and bucking broncs
In a world where little girls sat quiet
Hand-stitched and embroidered
Hankies, pillow cases, samplers
I want to tell them of talented Tilly
Roman and trick rider, acrobat
In gymnastic bloomers
Trained as a hairdresser
At a time when women's skirts
Still brushed the floors
When no girl or woman dared
To wear shorts and a tank top
But they have morning sleep in their eyes
Dreams of dates on their minds
Too tired for shocking stories
About great great grandmothers