

Natchez Was No Longer to her Taste

by John Cantey Knight

Hard eyes, a stone's throw away, watched
 her descent. From carriage to ground,
 the shoe slipped from black velvet
 to linger an ankle in moments of allurements,
 then balance the unfolded legs
 that graced their way to the graveside.
 A funeral veil barely hid her smile. The clods
 that fell in the aftermath of the eulogy
 buried the body of a hand too slow, eyes
 not practiced enough, the loving heart
 exposed a moment too long. A matched set
 of dueling pistols crossed his chest.
 A lock of chestnut hair and a daguerreotype
 of full lips and a coquettish pout mocked
 from a pocket watch protected from touch
 by cold glass. She was so deadly desirable,
 a young gentleman almost in envy
 thought, *I'd die for her*. But the man
 in the coffin had been misled. No lady's
 honor required defense. It was contemptible
 of her Yankee adulterer to wait just beyond
 the burial site of the man who had been
 her champion. Not a soul offered condolences.
 Every eye watched in wonder, perhaps fear,
 some with a lust strong enough to disgust.
 Each one knew the carriage's destination.
 As fresh as a blushing virgin, the harlot waved.
 Damned, tomorrow the pair would depart
 live oaks and Spanish moss, the dueling ground.