



His fierce face thrust at the stranger,
 he spat, "You made me hit my brother."
 Barely the last word spoken,
 then the first fist thrown.
 He beat bloody the man
 until from behind, an arm locked
 'round his neck, and Jim said, "Stop,
 Stop now, Chet."
 "Stop,"

"Temper, temper," his father cautioned.
 He took his anger to the ring,
 became the Golden Gloves champ
 with the *basso profundo* voice.
 Still, the wrong tone, wrong look...
 Now, blind as a raged bull, he swung
 before he saw Jim taking the blow.
 Two fists formed in temper's forge.

Violence Becomes You

The crowd cheers.
 Illegal groin kick.
 Like a tall pine,
 the fighter is felled,
 cold on the canvas.
 Above him waivers the opponent.
 Gloves raised, eyes swollen,
 he walks to the wrong corner.
 Somewhere a bell sounds
 the end of round twelve.

Clenched jaw slackens
 against right-hand jab.
 Feigning left, glove drives
 into the gut.
 Angle the camera
 to show blood drip
 onto full-front tattoo,
 glistening iconic detail
 in color—
 blood red, vein blue,
 long black hair
 matted under thorns,
 ribs shadowed
 above navel.

Victory

A Real Bout



Nancy E. Brown

"Tomato Can:"
 The slang term used to describe an inferior
 boxer that an up and coming fighter takes on
 to burnish his reputation & record.
 Also, a boxer who 'takes a dive' or
 loses a fight on purpose.

Tomato Can Blues

No bets on the plodding bruiser
 who is not Ali's Wepner,
 The Bayonne Bleeder from Jersey.
 Not Tyson's Douglas in Tokyo.

He's a bad boxer picked to make
 this champ look good,
 a real *tomato can* kind of guy—
 until his southpaw found the champ's jaw
 and the wrong 'can' hit the mat.

Please recycle to a friend!

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