

Hipshot & Tom

by [Steven Peterson](#) in the [November 2022](#) issue

Sunday morning, 1965.
I'm ten, Tom's eight.
Comics are in color
in the Sunday *Chicago Tribune*.
Church is starting soon
but Tom says he won't go.
But he will go
because our parents will say so.

Until then, Tom reads
his favorite comic strip: *Rick O'Shay*,
about a sheriff in a Wild West town.
Rick's pal is Hipshot Percussion,
a hard-drinking gunslinger.
Tom's favorite one is when
Rick and his wife are going to church
but Hipshot says he won't go.
Next, we see why.
Hipshot rides alone
up into beautiful mountains
to tell God this: *Much obliged*.

Fifty years later, in Denver,
Tom will die,
alcoholic and living alone.
Next, when I fly there
to collect his few things,
I'll look out my brother's windows
and see mountains,
those beautiful mountains.