

## 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.