

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.