

DARREN C. DEMAREE

**UNFINISHED MURDER BALLAD:
THE ONLY DEDICATED COWBOY IN
COLUMBUS, OHIO, OBJECTS TO THE
PRICE OF HIS BLACK COFFEE**

Slenderness worn from where muscle once wanted to grow, then grew only to fit the active frame and casting of a man who had no room in his world for the modernity of the city he lived in, he knew that if he was going to have the energy to make it through his day as a chew-spitting communications technician at AT&T, he would need a lunch time coffee. Up at dawn, he had tended to his crop on the fire escape, he had fed all the animals before he fed himself, and all three of his cats appreciated that sort of man. Now, though, the slack before him was demanding two dollars for a black coffee, and that wore on him the way a bad hand would have worn on the Duke. His father had been a tax attorney, and bequeathed him no rifle. He would need to go to the pawn shop again.