

Chicken-In-The-Pot

CHARLES HARPER WEBB

One dollar buys a chance to catapult
a rubber bird onto a spinning table that seems

full of pots, but is full of empty space
where my boy's chicken's sure to fall.

Years ago at a carnival, I played this game
for a silver throwing knife that would

have made me legendary on my block.
The most my boy can win is a stuffed

snake with a sombrero and a two-
tequilas-past-commode-huggin' grin.

"Please, please," I cried until my dad
hacked up a dime, and then another

so that I, who with my bb-gun, blasted
dirt-daubers out of the sky, could hoist
a gun that spat corks—one! two! three!—
into the dust, and gave me a hard kick

along the road to the cynic my son sees
as I sigh, and offer up a crumpled buck.

“Why not burn it?” I want to say,
but force myself to croak, “Good luck.”