

MIDNIGHT ON POKER CREEK



A paradox
How the soul captures insignificance
And omnipotence conjointly
Through the simple act of engaging the constellations' density
As the moon rises from behind the murky rimrock
How reflection and philosophy
Hold no meaning in the blunt, twin aspects of pure sensation
And palpable experience
That serve to silence arrogance
How the senses struggle to contain/absorb/consume
The vastness of the Great Alone
And fail
Leaving only worshipful wonder
How rules and boundaries are both compromised and expanded
Through the soft, low call of a bay to its companions
And the rustle of the yard-wide creek
Through its rust-red banks
How the absence of sound
Contributes to a symphony of sight;
Sight that allows the essence of a billion perpetual stars
To enter the blood and race through mortal veins

RIDIN' WITH RED



Hey, hey, get along, get along
We'll ride with the wind, we will sing our own song
The stars are a ceiling, the prairie's our bed
We're ridin' the Red Wall, ridin' with Red

Sun comes up early, camp comes alive
Coffee and bacon if you're rising by five
Red's telling stories 'bout Garvin's third wife
Leans on an old split rail fence
Yeah, Red, he's a good friend of mine

A gypsy, a cowboy, a tracker of sign
A sometimes professor, a poet full time
A nip from a hip flask, a shit eating grin
He remembers some girl from Duboise
Yeah, Red's had some spots he's been in

Hey, hey, get along, get along
We'll ride with the wind, we will sing our own song
The stars are a ceiling, the prairie's our bed
We're ridin' the Red Wall, ridin' with Red

Coat made of buckskin, battered old hat
Mexican silver, fringed rawhide chaps
That Red Wall's above us, an outlaw's old dream
The sun makes the rim seem to burn
Oh, Red knows some sights you can see

Riders and Red Men, men working the mines
Railroaders and rangers, Red's one of their kind
Red knows their stories, he writes of their lives
Makes you think you might have been there
Yeah, Red's got a good story line

Hey, hey, get along, get along
We'll ride with the wind, we will sing our own song
The stars are a ceiling, the prairie's our bed
We're ridin' the Red Wall, ridin' with Red
We're ridin' that rough trail, ridin' with Red
Yeah, we're on down the road with our old buddy Red
Our old buddy Red

THROUGH THE GAP



Through the gap, down the arroyo
Cool water and long, sweet grass
Fresh horses, a place to go
Red Wall shines, hot as a fever
Warm as your mother's love on the day that you leave her

Lonely rider in the morning mist
Hell bent for the rim to the West
A bowler hat and a saddlebag full of cash
And a pistol he'd rarely used
Except the times when he'd had to choose
Between the Hole in the Wall
And a hole six feet in the ground

Through the gap, down the arroyo
Cool water and long, sweet grass
Fresh horses, a place to go
Red Wall shines, hot as a fever
Warm as your mother's love on the day that you leave her

Through the Hole there is a hideaway
Keeps the wolves at bay
'til the next payroll comes rollin' down the railroad line

Thirty faces ring the campfires light
Tall tales on a moonlit night
A guitar and a bottle of Old Yellowstone
A place where ghosts run free
The Wild Bunch and the Shoshone
The feeling that you should have been here a hundred years ago

Through the gap, down the arroyo
Cool water and long, sweet grass
Fresh horses, a place to go
Red Wall shines, hot as a fever
Warm as your mother's love on the day that you leave her

(Repeat Chorus *acappella*)

(Repeat Chorus)

Riding the Red Wall has to do with urgency - urgency born of the need to experience something extraordinary. The attraction of the place is intoxicating. It is burning. It is undeniable. It's the spirit of the time we capture. It is historical emulation, juxtaposing traditional sensibilities with contemporary realities... and sometimes, when Garvin's stories about the Wild Bunch and the Johnson County War hit home, when Jackson's buffalo roast is succulent, when the long ago chants of Cheyenne and Shoshone are nearly audible, and when the Big Dipper and Orion come in a little closer to hear what's being sung around the campfire, we get it right.

HOOFBEATS ON STONE

The smell of the ocean, the New England sky
A Chance encounter that altered my life
The first time my hands traveled horsehair and man
I knew this sleek racer and I were the same

A mystic connection, a meeting of minds
A pure understanding older than time
I slid in the saddle and took up the reins
Se off on a road I still follow today

The ground shook, the earth churned
The wind blew back tears, my spirit burned
I rode for the thrill, I rode from the need
I rode with passion, I rode with speed

I still love the true strength of muscle and bone
I fill up my soul at the sight of a roan
I will keep these memories that only I own
I thrill to the music of hoofbeats on stone

Mountains and plains, blue western skies
I feel I'm seeing this land through God's eyes
As I lead this fine horse 'cross the rocky terrain
And share a connection too deep to explain

But part of me lingers on the Atlantic shore
Where a fast pony shook me to my ver core
Where I first discovered the soul of a horse
With leather and rigging, I set my life's course

The ground shook, the earth churned
The wind blew back tears, my spirit burned
I rode for the thrill, I rode from the need
I rode with passion, I rode with speed

I still love the true strength of muscle and bone
I fill up my soul at the sight of a roan
I will keep these memories that only I own
I thrill to the music of hoofbeats on stone



THE SAINT OF EMPTY SADDLES

(Requiem for a Space Cowboy)



A tumbleweed is rollin' down the (C) center of the (G) road
A lonely closing credit in a (Em) final epi (D) sode
(G) It blows on in from Iowa, bouncing (C) for downtown (Bm) L.A.
Where it (C) veers off toward the (G) canyons, before the (D) wind takes it a (Em) way (C)

Landscape's always changing, rough country takes its toll
It's headstrong, tough and stubborn, Lord, it (Em) tries your very soul
But you're better for the battle, you're stronger if you fail
You learn how to hone your story, how to tell a truer tale

Make a movie 'bout my life/make a movie 'bout my times
Make a movie 'bout the things I've done and things I left behind
Write a story 'bout the future/write a story 'bout today
Write a story 'bout things long ago and how things should have stayed

If the choice/were mine I'd jump offa that Hollywood sign
Into the wilds of Wyoming with those hard luck friends of mine
If my dreams/were real I'd wrangle some Hollywood deal
And ride off into the sunset on ol' Paint/the Empty Saddle's patron saint

A legend of the frontier scrawled on a bison horn
In this land of myth and legend where the Wild West was born
It pulls like an addiction, a tale that must be told
Of a lonely, silent rider from an old B-Movie Roll

Make a movie 'bout my life/make a movie 'make it true
Make a movie 'bout the things I've done and things I'll never do
Write a story 'bout the future/write a story 'bout today
Write a story 'bout things long ago and how things should have stayed

If the choice/were mine I'd jump offa that Hollywood sign
Into the wilds of Wyoming with those good old friends of mine
Now they're closing fast, looking like some Hollywood cast
So I'll ride off into the sunset on ol' Paint/the Empty Saddle's patron saint

OUT WEST OF LARAMIE



Heaven help you when you close your eyes
And let your mind drift in dreams
You just might see her face big as life
Those haunting eyes, sparkling green
You'll remember things she whispered low
For you to know, only you
And you'll see yourself in her embrace
Face to face, fresh as dew
Then you'll wake up all alone
In your heart's place she's left a stone

Out west of Laramie
The Wind helps me forget
Thought she stopped wanting me
Her memory hasn't yet

There's a storm up near the timberline
Lightning strikes, thunder peals
There's a storm that rages in my heart
Just as dark, just as real
O, the burning pain I know
Will melt this deep Wyoming snow

Out west of Laramie
The Wind helps me forget
Thought she stopped wanting me
Her memory hasn't yet

(Repeat chorus)

(Oohs)

Our West of Laramie, her memory's not through yet



OH, SHENANDOAH!

*Away
I'm bound away
'Cross the wide Missouri*

Instrumental



HAVE WE LOST THE LAST TRUE COWBOY?

I'm a man of 45, just tryin' to stay alive
Caught between the present and my past, I work every penny just to make it last
I've never known riches or fame, and when my father gave me his name
That was good enough for me

He raised a proud and hungry brood, worked his hands to the bone just for food
Watched him mend fences, save a calf, saw him bury his better half
So this morning when I got the call, I sat staring at his picture on the wall
But that wasn't good enough for me

Have we lost the last true cowboy?
Has he finally crossed the range?
Has he seen the last red sunset?
God, he must be feeling strange
His eyes steady and blue, he sat his saddle tall
I just can't believe this great man could fall

He loved my wife and my family
Taught them about life's lessons round' our cottonwood trees
Held my babies in his calloused hands, showed them how to love this land
Passed on what his granddad had known, and tended to these seeds he had sown
And that was plenty good enough for me

Some folks leave you money, some leave a mess
My father left his mark, and I'm in his debt...yet
I'm five again holding his saddle horn
His arms around me, his favorite shirt all worn
I think we'll never see his kind again (they're leavin' us too fast)
Their age is coming to an end
That's just not good enough for me

Repeat Chorus

SMOKEY



The riders appeared in the distance
All a-gallop and whippin' their reins
'til they stopped right in front of the wrangler
Who had watched as they loped 'cross the plains

He recognized each of the horsemen
Compadres from so long ago
They whooped and they hollered,
Raised hats in the air
Put on one heck of a buckaroo show

There were Foster and Lund, Shook and Tug, too
Wayne rode a frisky young roan
And Pres gave a nod that the wrangler returned
While he wondered what coop he'd just flown

One rider reached down with a buckskin-gloved hand
The wrangler just smiled as they shook
"It's sure good to see you again, my old friend"
Chuck said with a jovial look

"You, too," the wrangler replied with a sigh
"You sure stirred up my notion to roam"
Bob spat a plug, said, "Then it's roamin' we'll do"
And Bud said, "You finally come home"

"Home?" said the wrangler with the shake of his head
Steffen grinned, then he said, "Yep, that's so
These mountains and prairies
 have always been home
For cowboys like you, me and Pernot"

"That's mighty invitin'" the wrangler replied
"But my family and friends need to know
Where they can catch up and just how long I'll be
No, I can't just pick up and go"

Garvin said, "Son, they'll be comin' along
When the time is just right, that's for sure
But for right now we got you a fine buckskin mare
With a silver bit, bridle and spurs"

Then the riders all parted to let one man through
He led the mare in from off to the side
Red smiled that big smile
Gave the wrangler the reins
And said, "c'mon now, Smokey, let's ride"

C'mon now, Smokey, let's ride
Let's ride for the border
Let's ride side by side
Let's ride through the day
Let's ride through the night
Let's ride on forever
Ah, Smokey, let's ride

RIDE THE RED WALL

Instrumental



WYOMING WIND



And when I die
When they put me away
Won't you please let 'em say
That I was a cowboy

Red dust tracked on the hardwood
Leads to the boots stuffed under the chair
Each grain tells its own story
Of ages and wind, good luck and despair
Black, sweat-stained Stetson with a Montana crown
Brings visions of stampedes and strays
The clothes of a cowboy are scattered about
His life's in the same disarray

He's at ease in the saddle
He can be anyone he might choose
He once thought he could win any battle
He still won't admit there are times he must lose

He's soothed by the Wyoming wind
Others may curse it, it's heaven to him
It blows through his soul like a favorite old hymn
It soothes him, this Wyoming wind

Tin-type rests in an album
A serious stare from an old pioneer
The same eyes reflect from the mirror
Hundred year gap but the feeling's still clear

He kisses Melinda, then picks up the twins
His rough fingers comb through their curls
He knows that his children won't take up this life
In a p.c. compatible world

He's at odds with the future
He's spotted the signs of the times
There are those who can change with the weather
Others are caught in the hurricane's eye

Oh, he loves the Wyoming Wind
Others may curse it, it's heaven to him
It blows through his soul with the strength of a hymn
It knows him, this Wyoming wind
It knows him, the Wyoming wind

BUG GUTS ON THE WINDSHIELD



Shirley smiled sweetly
When I pulled in off the road
Six days on old I-80
Hauling heavy loads
She brought me a martini
Dressed in her skimpy negligee
Sat on my lap and whispered
Someone else's name

I quickly said, "Excuse me
But I'm not called Ramon
And by the way, who bit your neck?
And ain't that new cologne?
She swore she'd never left the house
She was shocked at my suggestion
But when I saw our Cadillac
I succumbed to indigestion

She said that she'd been faithful
That she'd never been to town
But them bug guts on the windshield
Them bug guts let her down

There was roadkill on the fender/Bottles in the trunk
Cactus in the whitewalls/the whole car smelled like a skunk

She went rollin' cross the prairie'
In that El Dorado coupe
Drinkin' champagne from the bottle
With Ramon in my best suit

The last I heard, she dumped Ramon
Ran off with two ranch hands
The fat guy from the circus
And a mariachi band

She said that she'd been faithful
That she'd never been to town
But them bug guts on the windshield
Them bug guts let her down
The ol' bug guts on the windshield
Them bug guts let her down, down , down

MORNING STAR MOON



Morning Star Moon/Wyoming sky/bittersweet tales/from time gone by
Legends in life/lessons in death/buckskin and sage/winter's cold breath

Medicine pipe/lost in the snow/embers grown cold/no power flows
Ghost-smoke ascends/to the four winds/the old time is gone/a new time begins

Morning Star Moon...

The Cheyenne's home
It fills my soul
With echoes of tunes
Played under Morning Star Moon

There's wildness in this place...
It's coyote cries/It's yucca spines
It's red dust in the teeth, in the hair, in the eyes
It's trout in the creek/It's eagle's wings
It's petroglyphs, carvings and tipi rings

There's serenity in this place...
It's whispering water/it's musical breeze
It's the wind through the willows and cottonwood trees
It's the call of a bay/it's the song of the brook
It's a time-honored tale/from a forgotten book

Morning Star Moon...

Big Horns are quiet/Red Fork is low/brilliant blue sky/riders below
Echoes of time/from the Red Wall/hoofbeats convey/the spirits' call

Morning Star Moon...

The Cheyenne's home
It fills my soul
With echoes of tunes
Played under Morning Star Moon

THE SEARCH



I stood on the continent's cusp
The rhythms of a million lives below quieted
By the land's benign (and benevolent) power
And slipped beyond questions
Into a state of pure knowledge and assurance
Of my place

I felt the prairie exert its seductive gravity
Its secrets pulling me back to a forgotten grave
On a rolling bluff overlooking the Republican River
Where I sat for hours watching hawks circle
For no other reason, it seemed, than to accept my cognizance
Of their place

I bowed to the force of the great Spanish Peaks
Uttering their true name, *Huajatolla*, in reverence
And bade my sons listen to well-traveled windborne ancestors' spirits
That surrounded and recognized us
Offering absolute faith and awareness
Of our place

I rode a gelding in the shadow of the Red Wall
Vexed and amazed by the power of both animal and stone
Frantically searching for order and symmetry
That proclaimed me either master or slave
To the overwhelming presence
Of that place