

REINCARNATION

“What does reincarnation mean?”
A cowpoke ast his friend.
His pal replied, “It happens when
Yer life has reached its end.
They comb yer hair, and warsh yer neck,
And clean yer fingernails,
And lay you in a padded box
Away from life’s travails.”

“The box and you goes in a hole,
That’s been dug into the ground.
Reincarnation starts in when
Yore planted ‘neath a mound.
Them clods melt down, just like yer box,
And you who is inside.
And then yore just beginnin’ on
Yer transformation ride.”

In a while, the grass’ll grow
Upon yer rendered mound.
Till some day on yer moldered grave
A lonely flower is found.
And say a hoss should wander by,
And graze upon this flower,
That once wuz you, but now’s become
Yer vegetative bower.”

“The posy that the hoss done ate
Up, with his other feed,
Makes bone, and fat, and muscle
Essential to the steed.
But some is left that he can’t use,
And so it passes through,
And finally lays upon the ground.
This thing, that once wuz you.”

“Then say, by chance, I wanders by,

And sees this on the ground.
And I ponders, and I wonders at,
This object that I found.
I thinks of reincarnation,
Of life, and death, and such.
I come away concludin' ... 'Slim,
You ain't changed, all that much.'"

Wallace McRae
Cowboy Poetry
Gibbs M. Smith, Inc.
Peregrine Smith Books
Salt Lake City, Utah
p. 185

THE COWBOY AND THE SEAGULL

Now the Judge he wasn't happy
 When they brought the cowboy in.
The charge wuz "Seagull Poachin'."
 It was time for discipline.

It was time to teach that feller
 That we all should coexist,
Or else the seagulls might end up
 On the "Endangered Species" list.

And so the judge demanded
 Jake explain the reason why
The environment got trampled,
 And the seagull had to die.

Jake said, "I's lost out on the prairie,
 Sees this bird up in a tree.
I hadn't et fer days.
 It wus either him er me."

The old Judge felt compassion.
The cowboy seemed sincere.
Said he'd join the "Save a Seagull Club"
And be a volunteer.

And so the Judge dismissed the case.
To pursue it seemed a waste.
And then he said, "Jake, by the way,
Just how does seagull taste?"

Jake answered, "Oh, it's similar
To any other fowl.
It's a little like Bald Eagle,
But it's more like Spotted Owl."

Phil Kennington

VERA

In a lonely Outback homestead
Quite remote from City life
Lay the station-owner¹ dying---
By his side, his loving wife.

And he tried to speak a little
So she bent her head to hear---
"Remember when I met you, Vera?"
"Yes, I remember, dear."

*"I didn't have a penny, but
You loved me just the same,
And one fateful winter's evening
You agreed to take my name."*

"Yes, dear! I remember that!"

¹ station-owner: in the Outback of Australia, a "station" is a stock ranch.

His loving wife agreed.
“Then you came out here, and worked so hard
To fill my every need..

Depression brought us hard times---
But you stood here by my side
Through the drought of nineteen-thirty-two
When all out cattle died.

But Vera, you were always there!”
She quietly said, “That’s right.”
“And even when I went to war---
You didn’t want to fight

But you joined the nursing service
And were always near at hand
To lend support!” She quietly spoke,
“I’m glad you understand!”

“Then back here on the property
We reared our only child,
But we lost him, Vera---Lost him!”
“Yes, I know,” she sadly smiled.

“Now the bank is taking over
And there’s one thing that I grieve---
I’ve worked so hard so many years
But I’ve nothing much to leave!”

“Don’t worry now, my darling!
Some dreams do come unstuck!”
“You know what, Vera?” “Yes, Darling?”
“I think you’re bloody bad luck!”

Carmel Randle
COWBOY POETRY, The Reunion
Gibbs Smith Publisher, Salt Lake City, Utah
p. 60
--Excerpted from Gone Bush!, self-published, 1996.

THE WOMEN

I've never met a rancher's wife
Whose toiletries aren't filled with strife
'cause when they want to take a bath
They have to move the newborn calf.

Whose washing machine has quit again
And the clothes are hanging in the rain
I guess the machine just ain't able
To digest the fencing staple.

She must be able to drive a truck
And winch it out when it gets stuck;
Grease the tractor and auger the grain
And in the morning do it all again.

It's nice if she can charm the banker
Ride out the colt who's a little ranker
And fix a meal for the harvest crew
Who comes in when it's fallen do.

Raise the kids and raise the chickens
And not be too hard on the little dickens
Not have a fit when the mortgage is due
Just count you blessings she's in love with you.

'Cause poems are written and songs are sung
About the men and the West they won
But none of them would be worth a damn
Without the women who give them a hand.

Terri Mason
Bpx #5232. Airdrie, Alberta
Canada T4B 2B3
Living on Cowboy wages
p.45

HER HANDS

She lay there in her soft white robes,
Her face was like a queen;
“I will not weep for her,” I thought,
“In death she is serene.”

But when my eyes had traveled down
To where her dear hands lay,
The hands that told of sacrifice,
That I could ne'er repay.

Emotion sped her quiver full,
My strong will to revoke;
I looked down at her toil-worn hands
So still---and my heart broke.

Zina Woolf Hickman
Utah Sings: An Anthology of Contemporary Verse
UTAH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, ARTS AND LETTERS
Provo, Utah
1934

Zina Woolf Hickman was the daughter of John Anthony & Mary Hyde Woolf. She was educated in Cardston, Alberta; the University of Utah; University of California at Berkeley and Stanford. She has written a great deal---stories, poems, and special department material on a daily newspaper. In addition to the necessary duties of being a housewife and holding down a newspaper position, she has written poems for the love of writing.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR FRIENDS

Friend is a word that I don't throw around
Though it's used and abused, I still like the sound
I save it for people who've done right by me
And I know I can count on if ever need be.

Some of my friends drive big limousines
Own ranches and banks and visit with queens.
And some of my friends are up to their neck
In overdue notes and can't write a check.

They're singers or ropers or writers of prose
And others, God bless 'em, can't blow their own nose!
I guess bein' friends don't have nothin' to do
With talent or money or knowin' who's who.

It's a comf'terbul feelin' when you don't have to care
'Bout choosin' your words or bein' quite fair
'Cause friends'll just listen and let go on by
Those words you don't mean and not bat an eye.

It makes a friend happy to see your success.
They're proud of yer good side and forgive all the rest
And that ain't so easy, all of the time,
Sometimes I get crazy and seem to go blind!

Yer friend just might have to take you on home
Or remind you sometime that you're not alone.
Or ever so gently pull you back to the ground
When you think you can fly with no one around.

A hug or a shake, whichever seems right
Is the highpoint of givin', I'll tellya tonight,
All wordly riches and tributes of men
Can't hold a candle to the worth of a friend.

Baxter Black

AMERICA FOR ME

“Tis fine to see the Old World, and travel up and down
Among the famous palaces and cities of renown,
To admire the crumbly castles and the statues of the kings,---
But now I think I’ve had enough of antiquated things.

*So it’s home again, and home again, America for me!
My heart is turning home again, and there I long to be,
In the land of youth and freedom beyond the ocean bars,
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.*

Oh, London is a man’s town, there’s power in the air;
And Paris is a woman’s town, with flowers in her hair;
And it’s sweet to dream in Venice, and it’s great to study Rome,
But when it comes to living there is no place like home.

I like the German fir-woods, in green battalions drilled;
I like the gardens of Versailles with flashing fountains filled;
But, oh, to take your hand, my dear, and ramble for a day
In the friendly western woodland where Nature has her way!

I know that Europe’s wonderful, yet something seems to lack:
The Past is too much with her, and the people looking back.
But the glory of the present is to make the Future free,---
We love our land for what she is and what she is to be.

*Oh, it’s home again, and home again, America for me!
I want a ship that’s westward bound to plough the rolling sea,
To the blessed Land of Room Enough beyond the ocean bars,
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.*

Henry Van Dyke
(1852 - 1933)

Judge David S. Young

Judge David Young (retired) has been a member of the Utah State Bar Association for forty-six (46) years. He spent sixteen (16) years as a Trial Court Judge in the Third District Court. Earlier he was a member of the Utah State Board of Pardons and the Utah State Board of Corrections.

His love of poetry comes from recognition of the importance of brevity, clarity, and pithy word selection in writing. (“Unlike many legal pleadings!”)

Judge Young’s Mother was raised on a farm/ranch operation five (5) miles east of Cardston, Alberta, Canada. It was there he spent the summers of his youth riding horses and “helping” as only a child may do. He learned to gather the cows for milking and thereafter milking them; he learned to collect the chicken’s eggs; and “pull Canadian thistles with two leather gloves on each hand.” His Grandfather, always considering safety, made him ride without a saddle until he was twelve (12) years of age to avoid a fall and catch in the stirrup.

His poetry interests are eclectic. He loves Emily Dickinson, Robert Service, Edgar Guest, Wallace McRae, Baxter Black, Waddie Mitchell, Don & Phil Kennington, Bill Hirschi and many more. His selections are from their writings.