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## **Rhymes of a Roughneck**

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# Rhymes of a Roughneck

## THE BIRTH OF THE LAND

For a thousand years the Devil crouched  
On the white hot flags of hell:  
For a thousand years the Devil cursed  
The imps that had chained him well;  
For a thousand years the Devil sulked  
And planned with his hell-trained brain  
Of the things he'd do, when his term was thru,  
And freed from the blistering chain.

He'd even the score with the men of earth,  
And give them back pain for pain,  
For all of the days he had felt the blaze  
And the sear of the galling chain.  
And it came to pass when his time was up  
And hell's gates were opened wide  
That all hell rang, and the clinkered imps sang  
When the Devil passed Outside.

"I have served my time," the Devil said  
As he halted by heaven's gate;  
I have sweated in hell for a thousand years  
And each year was a year of hate.  
I have framed my plans for a thousand years,  
I have worked out the details well  
Now I'd have a place near the human race  
As a sort of a prep school for hell.

The sons of men, on the earth below  
Have scarcely a chance to sin,  
Churched, belled and gowned, they mope around  
By precept, all sealed in;  
There is never a sin for lust of flesh  
Nor sin for a man struck blow,  
And the red blood crime of the olden time  
Has passed with the long ago.

Hell's motley crew is scarce worth coal  
When they come to the thing called death;  
They squat on the coals with the real damned souls  
And listen with bated breath,  
To the tales of the earth, when the world was new,  
When a man had to fight for his own,  
When he took his wife at the risk of his life

And killed for a half-baked bone.

Now I'd build a place where a man might sin  
For the sake of his own desires;  
Make his the cause, and his the laws,  
And the penalty, mine own fires;  
Hast a place on earth to breed such men  
Each for his own deeds blamed?  
If you'll give me a place, I'll breed a race  
That hell may not be shamed.

The God King sighed as he searched the plat  
And the map of the earth below;  
I have given a place for every race  
In the belt from snow to snow.  
I have given a home to each bird and beast  
For even the fox has its hole,  
I have given all land to the sons of man  
And I've builded a home for his soul.

In the seven days that I toiled below  
When I builded the seas and lands,  
There was much to do, and I didn't get thru  
And one place unfinished stands.  
It's the part of my work that I really regret,  
For I know it's the worst of the lot,  
It's known down below as The Land of the Snow,  
Or, The Country that God forgot.

It stands apart by the Northern Pole,  
Unfinished, forgotten, alone,  
And no man's hand has won this land,  
And no man calls it his own.  
The country is made up of odds and ends,  
Unfinished mountain, and swamp and lake,  
Stuff that couldn't be used when the earth was fused;  
If you want it, it's yours to take.

"I'll take this plot," the Devil quoth,  
"For I like your description well,  
Yes, I'll take this place and I'll mould a race  
That will be a credit to hell."  
Then he whistled an imp from the uttermost part  
And they dropped as the comets whirled  
Past the white baked stars, past Venus and Mars  
To the unfinished part of the world.

He landed at last on Denali's crest  
And he gazed on his acres wide---  
Barren and bleak, from each mountain peak  
And swamp to the Arctic's tide.  
The Devil grinned as he stood and gazed  
Said he, "This is just what I need,  
It's the place of my plan, for the downfall of man  
Where I'll change his ambition to greed."

Then he summoned the legions of hell to his side  
Named an arch imp to straw boss each crew.  
Tho they gibbered and cursed, each one did the worst  
With the jobs Satan gave them to do.  
They tumbled the mountains high up, and on end,  
Piled glaciers where streams ought to be,  
And swamp land was placed in the desolate waste  
That stretched from the hills to the sea.

They shook down all hell for a climate to fit,  
But they couldn't get suited in hell,  
So they took the worst parts and with devilish arts  
They built one that suited them well.  
They laid out muck swamps where the water lies dead  
Bred mosquitoes and moose flies and gnats  
Put the brown bear that kills on the barren brown hills  
And with quill pigs infested the flats.

They shut off the sun for full half of the year,  
Made each glacier a blizzard blown trap,  
They strung out volcanoes half way to Japan  
Each one with a hair trigger cap.  
They planned for the coast line a system of storms  
Each equipped with a ninety mile breath  
And then spread o'er it all the fog that men call  
The North Coast mantle of death.

Then knowing full well that man would not go  
To a Land so forlorn to behold,  
He salted the hillsides and some of the streams  
With nuggets and traces of gold.  
He tinted the hills with a green copper ledge  
And covered the valleys with game,  
All this for a lure, then the Devil felt sure  
That the white man would fall for the same.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE LAND

The lure of the little known places  
Still calls, as it called to your sires;  
The longing for wide open spaces,  
The perfume of evening camp fires;  
The hunting for treasure unfound yet  
The knocking at fortune's own gate;  
The doing of deeds for the joy that it breeds  
Were all used by the Devil as bait.

The summers besprinkled with sunshine,  
The hillsides a riot of bloom  
With meadows a color shot grandeur  
And valleys as still as a tomb.  
With mountains of cloud-encased beauty  
Or with stars shining down on it all  
It's the trails we don't know that call us to go  
And no wonder man heeded the call.

The winters, the trails all unbroken,  
The far fields that beckon and call;  
The song of the frost on the runners  
And the Northern Lights high over all;  
The trees in the bend of the river,  
The streams that nobody has spanned;  
The whisper of gold, the story half told,  
All this by the Devil was planned.

When the trap of the Devil was ready  
Widespread went the whisper of gold,  
And the white men stampeded like cattle,  
There never was tie that could hold.  
The first mad rush to the Northland  
When the scum from the four ends of earth  
Came in with a rush, a scramble, a crush  
Like scrap in a fusing pot hurled.

They came all untaught and not ready,  
Spurred on in the mad rush for gold;  
They died here unsung and uncared for  
Of famine, and scurvy and cold.  
They had the same laws as the wolf pack,  
Stay up, for you die if you fail,  
And the paths to the Northern placers  
Are marked by their graves on the trail.

The towns that they started were plague spots  
With brothels and dance halls aglare,  
With cribs, faro banks and roulette wheels

And phonographs adding their blare.  
All traps for the young and unwary,  
All builded to help with his fall,  
Never dealer was fair, never game on the square  
For the Devil presided o'er all.

Nick fiendishly grinned when he saw his work  
And he chuckled with devilish glee---  
"When it comes to making an up-to-date hell  
They've sure got to hand it to me.  
For every ten souls that come in to this land  
There's nine of them headed for hell  
With never a fight, the percentage is right,  
And my prep school is doing quite well."

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus for a time he ruled this land  
Where few might venture forth,  
For never a man-made law held good  
From Dixon's Entrance north.  
He held this land in his claw tipped grip,  
And he took his pay in souls,  
Theirs was the blame, for they played his game,  
And they paid for it on hell's coals.

But the Devil lost when the law came in,  
Or the men who made the laws,  
The gambling hall and the dance hall went  
And the Devil was forced to pause.  
For the life in the land develops men,  
Men of an alien breed,  
A new made lot, that couldn't be bought,  
And strangers to graft or greed.

They loosed the land from the Devil's grip,  
They pierced the hills with their trails,  
They flagged the rocks at the harbor's mouth,  
They paved the way for the rails.  
They builded a school where the dance hall stood  
And they brought in their children and wives;  
They gave their all to the new land's call  
And some of them gave their lives.

Now the pimp and the brothel have passed away  
And the gambling hall is a dream;  
A railroad train now follows the trail  
Where we followed a nine-dog team.

A thousand stamps now sing their song  
Where we panned on the gold shot ledge,  
And a picture show now marks the line  
That once was the frontier's edge.

The milch cows graze where the brown bear roamed  
And a saw mill sings its lay  
On a bar in the Yukon River  
Where we panned one summer day.  
They are raising wheat where the bull moose grazed  
In the summers of long ago,  
It seems kind of strange when we note the change,  
But we'd rather have it so.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yet, sometimes we dream as we camp at night  
In the bend of the river's flow  
Of the land that was, of the land we knew  
In the days of the long ago.  
The wild free land that bred the men  
Who fought with might and main  
And took this land from the Devil's hand,  
And we'd like to see it again,

#### A WOMAN, A DOG, AND A WALNUT TREE

This Land is the orphan kiddie  
Of the group with their stars in the Flag,  
And it's looked on Outside as an alien,  
Where its treatment makes honest men gag.  
It's treated the same as the harlot  
Who barter her body for pelf  
And carries it home to her master  
And is told to look after herself.

Of course we're an orphan, adopted  
When cast off by the great Russian Bear  
And our lot's been the lot of an orphan  
And we've had a "stage orphan's" care.  
Our coal land was grabbed by our Uncle,  
Our copper and fur by the Jews,  
While another gang took all our salmon  
And corrupted our natives with booze.

Sam gave us an Army Commission  
And told it to build us a Trail,  
But all that Sam gave was permission---

He didn't come thru with the kale.  
Now a trail in Alaska costs money  
And when Dick tries to get a bill thru  
Some jackass from Maine reads the figures  
And "moves the amount cut in two."

Our Uncle Sam owns all the cables,  
And the prices he gets are a sin,  
It costs more for a word to Seattle  
Than it does from Salt Lake to Berlin.  
Our coast line is rugged and broken,  
A menace to each ship that sails,  
But Sam has no money for coast lights,  
They get the same treatment as trails.

And Alaska is some husky orphan,  
We can reach from the Gulf to B.C.,  
We could stand with one foot in Kansas  
While the other was washed by the sea.  
We're allowed only one voice in Congress,  
And that one bereft of a vote,  
And has to get some one's permission  
Ere he loose a protest from his throat.

Sam gave us a group legislative,  
But barred them the making of laws,  
They could only memorialize Congress  
And give it the reasons and cause.  
The cry of the world is for Home Rule  
Yet imported fools crowd our bench,  
And some of their mining decisions  
Send up to high Heaven their stench.

Sam made us quit gambling, that's all right,  
But one thing that nobody knows  
Is why he allowed a bone head from Georgia  
Hang the crepe on our own picture shows.  
We're all hedged about with restrictions  
And, Sam, won't you in us confide  
Why some of your damphool ideas  
Are not tried out on some one outside?

This Land's not the land of the weakling  
And the men up here know what we need,  
And we're sick of your bunch from the Outside  
Who's only incentive is greed.  
We've stood for Pinchot's conservation  
And we've stood for your carpet-bag horde

Who have grabbed off the jobs in Alaska  
As a sort of political reward.

But, Sam, take a tip from a Roughneck,  
Go slow now and don't crowd your hand  
Or some day you may find that the orphan  
Has quit creeping and learned how to stand.  
Don't make us the goat for the theories  
Advanced by some government cog,  
And don't use this land as a station  
For trying things out on the dog.

We gaze o'er the line of the Yukon  
As we're watching our neighbors at play  
And we wonder why Our Uncle Sammy  
Don't treat his Alaskans that way.  
We look at their broad graded highways  
And then at our own half blazed trails  
And, Sam, it comes damned nigh to envy  
When we think of their thrice a week mails.

They don't know the word conservation,  
Their resources, all theirs to use,  
And when they ask their Uncle to help them  
Their Uncle don't often refuse.  
Their Uncle has helped them develop,  
Furnished work there for men who were broke,  
And, Sam, when it comes to Coast Lights  
They make ours look like a joke.

But in spite of it all, Sam, we love you,  
We love every thread in the Flag,  
We love every stream in Alaska,  
We love every cliff, every crag.  
We're not like the Woman or Dog, Sam,  
And we're not like the Walnut Tree  
Cause we want to be loved in return, Sam,  
And, Sam, you are blind, or you'd see.

*Old English Proverb:*

"A Woman, a Dog, and a Walnut Tree  
The more you beat them the better they'll be."

WHEN THE WATER STARTS TO RUN

Along in early spring time, as the sun starts swinging North  
To linger with the land it loves, and violets peep forth,

When the water starts to running thru the riffle blocks at noon  
And you figure that you'll clean up, about the first of June.  
You've been thru a long hard winter, but you see the end in sight,  
You don't worry 'bout the cleanup, cause you know the pay is right;  
But you're feeling sort of restless, as your blood warms with the sun  
And your heart will start to itching, when the water starts to run.

You may leave your Camp at evening and mush away to Town  
To dally with the hootch a bit, but the feeling will not down.  
You may mix up in a poker game, or try the dance hall's lure  
But you're fighting off a feeling, that the old cures cannot cure.  
You've got that longing feeling that there's nothing satisfies,  
And your pard can't interest you, no matter how he tries,  
You're lonesome, moody, restless, out at Camp, or in the Town  
Your mind will not rest easy, and your troubles will not drown.

Then memory pulls her picket pins, your thoughts go back thru years  
To Outside, Home, and Sweetheart, and this last thought sort of cheers;  
You recollect the days you spent beneath a Southern sky  
And with regret you now remember they all ended with good-by.  
It's the same old world-wide feeling that comes to man each year,  
But it seems to hit us harder, when we're getting in the "clear";  
It seems that it grows stronger, each year added to our life---  
It's the hankering of the white man for a Pal, a Home, a Wife.

Man was not meant to live alone, why quarrel with Nature's laws,  
God gave you strength to build a home, wherefor then do you pause?  
Go forward like your father did, go forth and seek your mate,  
For till you know a wife and home, you know not Heaven's Gate.  
It's the deep inherent longing for a baby on your knee,  
For the sound of children's voices, beneath your own fig tree.  
The male instinct to have a mate, to love, to guard, to hold,  
The one instinct that's left to us, that triumphs over gold.

With strength enough to build a home when once you get a wife  
Bear gently with her follies, but guard her with your life;  
Crowd full her heart with loving, yet hold a guarded rein,  
Lest ye two now that rate as one, again be counted twain.  
And if she come from Outside Camp, remember all is new  
And give her time to find herself, teach her to lean on you.  
And should homesickness grip her, and you find your wife in tears  
Forget the jest and love her, remember your first years.

Then gone that restless feeling, gone all desire to roam,  
Life's interest all is centered, deep in your Northern home.  
Life waits in peace the cleanup, you pass up Outside joys,  
And the tempter's voice is silenced by the music of her voice.  
Then you're a true Alaskan, with a home won from the North,

God grant you children's voices when the violets peep forth,  
And in the summer evening, beneath the midnight sun,  
May your heart grow closer to her, when the water starts to run.

#### THE THROWBACK

He was born far east of the Rockies  
Of a pet in society's van;  
A wine-soaked daughter of pleasure  
Bred back and threw a man;  
A man-child who grew up a stranger,  
Who never could learn the way  
Of a people who gauge their pleasure  
On a line with the price they pay.

Just a shred of an education---  
A few years of college life,  
A course in the card and wine room,  
A year with a chorus-girl wife,  
Then disgust with a life unnatural  
Spurred on with the curse of the go,  
He quitted that life forever  
For the land of the gold and snow.

The Lure of the Land had gripped him,  
The Land where you die if you fail;  
The Land of the fabled fortunes,  
The Land of the endless trail.  
The Land of the lonely silence,  
The Land of the cruel cold,  
The Land of the lost ambitions  
Alaska, the Land of gold.

There winters of long hungry hardships,  
Summers of pest-ridden heat;  
Dicing with death for a grub stake,  
Risking his life for meat.  
Tossing away his young manhood,  
Giving the best of his youth  
To the holes that he bedrocked on wildcats,  
Where gold was scarcer than truth.

Ten years spent in Alaska  
Gray haired, with cheeks all atan,  
Beaten, but still unconquered.  
Flat broke, but still a man,  
Digging and sinking and drifting,  
Trying to locate the "pay,"

With each hole a fresh disappointment---  
Yet hoping to strike it next day.

Scorning the letters recalling,  
Forgetting the friends he had known,  
Turning his back on the Outside,  
Facing the future alone.  
A Cabin, a Squaw, and a Fishwheel,  
A bend in the river's flow,  
A band of half-naked breed kids---  
He stayed there, a sourdough.

#### THE MALAMUTE

When the stars from the skies have fallen  
And the smoke of the world's cleared away;  
When Saint Peter marks "30" in Life's Book  
And we meet there on Judgment Day;  
When our trials and troubles are ended  
And we're wise to the best and the worst;  
When the time has arrived that the wise ones  
Have told us the last shall be first;

When the men who've made good are rewarded  
And the losers are turned loose in Hell;  
That's the time that a lot will be learning  
The true reason and cause that they fell.  
And I wonder when Peter gets busy  
As he works out the tenement plan,  
And when Heaven's thrown free for location  
Will he confine the locations to man?

If he does, my claim's open for jumping  
For I can't figure Heaven complete,  
If the dim distant trails of the sky land  
Are not pattered by malamutes' feet.  
Cause I know it would never seem home-like  
No matter how golden the strand,  
If I lose out that pal-loving feeling  
Of a malamute's nose in my hand.

And it's that way with lots of Alaskans  
These men of our own last frontier,  
Who tear into nature unaided  
And who scarce know the meaning of fear.  
Who live on lone creeks all alone here  
Where the living and dying are hard,  
And where oft times their only companion

Is a malamute pup for a pard.

He's a real chum with things coming easy,  
He's a pal with things breaking tough,  
He's a hell-roaring fighting companion  
When somebody starts something rough.  
He's a true friend in sorrow and sickness  
And he doesn't mind hunger or cold,  
And he's really the only one pardner  
You can trust when you uncover gold.

He's a guard you can trust at the sluice box,  
And he'll watch by your cache thru the night,  
And if some cheechako tries to molest it  
That cheechako's in for a fight.  
As a pardner he's silent, but cheerful  
With never a kick 'bout the trails  
And if it wasn't for him in the winter  
There never would be any mails.

He pulls on our sleds in the winter  
He's first in the rushing stampede  
He goes where a horse couldn't travel  
And besides that he rustles his feed.  
He takes a pack saddle in summer  
And follows us off thru the hills  
And when we go short on the grub pile  
He shares up whatever he kills.

'Twas a malamute first scaled the Chilkoot  
At the time of the great Klondike charge;  
'Twas a malamute first saw Lake Bennett  
And left his footprints at La Barge;  
They hauled the first mail into Dawson,  
That Land of the Old Timer's dream,  
And when Wada first drove in from Fairbanks  
He was driving a malamute team.

They broke the first trail into Bettles  
With no guide save the lone Northern Star;  
They freighted next year to Kantishna  
And from there to the famed Chandelar.  
They know the long trail to Innoko,  
Tacotna and Iditarod too,  
For there's never a Camp in the Northland  
But what these same malamutes knew.

They brought the first sport to the Nome Beach  
Where they showed up in action and deed  
That the North dog is game as they make them  
And besides that has plenty of speed.  
He came home with the bacon from Candle  
Like a bat out of Hell, thru the snow,  
And the plunger that cashed in his "out tab"  
Was his pardner, the Old Sourdough.

So it seems to me kind of unfair now  
As we drift toward that permanent Camp  
Where the angels are running a dance hall  
And a millionaire grades with a tramp;  
Where the trails are located on pay dirt  
And a grub stake can never expire---  
Well, if they shut out my dog, they can keep it  
And I'll "siwash" it, down by Hell's Fire.

They herald the growth of the Northland  
And progress is marked by their trail;  
A railroad now goes where they brought out  
The Seward-Iditarod mail.  
He's first in the growth of Alaska  
And without him this land would be lost,  
For there's never a stream in this country  
That the malamutes' trail has not crossed.

But you can't tell me God would have Heaven  
So a man couldn't mix with his friends;  
That we're doomed to meet disappointment  
When we come to the place the trail ends.  
That would be a low-grade sort of Heaven  
And I'd never regret a damned sin  
If I mush up to the gates, white and pearly,  
And they don't let my malamute in.

#### UNSATISFIED

Some sigh for the breath of the desert  
Where the stifling heat waves blow;  
Some pant for the trackless tundra  
And the sting of the cold and snow;  
Some long for the wash of a sultry sea  
As it breaks on a tropic shore;  
Some pine for the breeze of the northern seas  
And the sound of the Arctic's roar.

The things that men love be countless  
But they're seldom the same with two,  
For the things I care for most of all  
Might never appeal to you.  
Some men run to wine and woman,  
Some long for a wife and a home,  
And he drifts with the tide, unsatisfied,  
Who leaves these things to roam.

For he hates the sands of the desert  
And the slimy tropic south,  
Or his dreams of a northern fortune  
Are as ashes in his mouth.  
He loses the best life holds for man  
His existence means discontent  
Still he goes his way, until comes the day  
When he quits it---a life misspent.

YET

Some sigh for the breath of the desert  
Where the stifling heat waves blow;  
Some pant for the trackless tundra  
And the sting of the cold and snow;  
Some long for the wash of a sultry sea  
As it breaks on a tropic shore;  
Some pine for the breeze of the northern seas  
And the sound of the Arctic's roar.

#### THE PROSPECTOR

Where the ragged, snow-capped saw tooth  
Cuts the azure of the sky  
And watches o'er the lonely land  
As ages wander by;  
Where the sentinel pines in grandeur  
Murmur to the glacier stream  
As it, ice-gorged, gluts the canyon,  
Never brightened by the gleam  
Of sun at brightest noon day,  
Nor moon of Arctic night,  
And whose only link with Heaven  
Is the fitful Northern Light.  
Where the Whistler shrills in triumph  
And the Big Horn dreams in peace,  
Where the Brown Bear skulks to cover  
Up where silence holds the lease;  
Where the land is as God left it

Nor has known the tread of man,  
There's a treasure ledge a-waiting---  
Go and find it if you can.

If your heart be steeled to triumph  
Nor beats less at your defeat;  
Can you watch your whole world melt away  
And still smiling, fortune greet?  
Will your heart and brain and sinew  
Crowd you on, when hunger's pain  
Gnaws your belly and you're beaten,  
Can you lose, and fight again?  
Can you raise the cup of fortune  
To your lips and bravely quaff  
The draught she has prepared for you  
And win or lose and laugh?  
Can you see the fruits of hardships  
Centered on one desperate throw  
And know Fate's dice are loaded  
Nor curse to see them go?  
Then take your burden up again  
And stagger up the trail,  
You're bound to make a winning  
Cause you don't know how to fail.

I, who've spent my youth in following  
The lure of hidden gold  
Must pass the buck to Nature  
And admit I'm growing old.  
And yet each spring I hear it calling  
And it's music to my ears,  
The call of lonely places  
That I've listened to for years.  
It's cost me all most men hold dear  
Some forty years of life,  
And all the joys that others get  
In babies, home, and wife.  
My life's been all to-morrows  
And my family only dreams  
And to the average plodder  
I've missed it all it seems.  
Still, I've never taken orders  
And I've always liked the game,  
And if life could be lived over,  
Why,---I'd live it just the same.

IF

*(A Steal from Kipling)*

If you can hit the trail in zero weather  
And laugh at frozen hand, or foot or face;  
If you can eat your dogs, and still keep moving  
And beat the rest, and hold the stampede's pace;  
If you can stake and dig alone, unaided  
And hold your ground, if needs be with a gun  
And find the gold and have some lawyer steal it,  
And lose, and start again, and call it fun.

If you can go a year on mouldy bacon  
And fight the scurvy off with bayo beans;  
If you can jump your socks and do your washing  
And smile the while you patch your threadbare jeans;  
If you can laugh when sordid hunger mocks you  
And smile while passing strangers eat your grub;  
If you can boost when everybody knocks you  
And know him wrong who holds you but a dub.

If you can still the pain when Outside calls you  
And choke back thoughts of friends you still hold dear;  
If you can still the dreams when night befalls you  
And wake and strike while eyes and brain are clear;  
If you can wait and stick it out a-smiling  
When longing letters come to you from home,  
And then don't find the taste of "hootch" beguiling  
You'll like this Land, from Seward up to Nome.

If you can bear the deadly strain of waiting  
Till your turn comes, and fortune smiles on you;  
If you can fight and lose and keep on fighting  
And to your early promises stay true;  
If you can go thru Hell to spend the summer  
And cuss, and freeze, and starve the winter thru  
And start in broke again another New Year  
You don't need this Land to make a man of you.

If you can beat the Row, the Game, the Dance-hall  
And all men's pleasures, that you know are sin;  
If you can live alone, and not get lonesome  
Nor heed the "lady" when she says "come in":  
If you can pick a winner from the "wild cats"  
And hold and hope when everything looks blue;  
If you can give up everything you've ever cared for  
Then *Alaska is the only place for you.*

US FOR SAM

While all Europe is a shambles  
And the whole world is at war,  
And half the land the sun shines on  
Is drenched in human gore;  
When every Nation counts the men  
It knows are tried and true  
We send this message to you, Sam,  
"Alaska stands with you."  
You never treated us quite right---  
You grabbed away our coal,  
You reserved all our fire wood  
And what we've used, we've stole.  
You soaked us on our cable tolls  
But we don't give a damn  
Even at twenty-eight cents per word  
*we're with you, uncle Sam.*

You've squandered untold millions  
On the filthy Philippines,  
But you always made Alaskans  
Go and rustle for their beans.  
And your black and tan possessions  
Tho they've cost you quite a few  
Can never be depended on,  
While we'd go thru Hell for you.  
We're quite unused to luxuries  
And we've always played alone,  
When we asked for help to build our trails  
You handed us a stone.  
You've four-flushed on the railroads  
But we don't care a damn,  
If they monkey with the Eagle  
*we're with you, uncle Sam.*

You gave us lief to make some laws  
Then tied our hands behind;  
That gift to us was just the same  
As pictures to the blind.  
Your laws all have a "joker,"  
Made to catch some Sourdough,  
And it's hard to beat the game, Sam,  
The way it's framed up down below.  
We've always been the dumping ground  
For your political misfits,  
But Sam, if you're in trouble  
We're willing to call it "quits."  
We've never had an even break,  
But we don't care a damn;

If the Lion growls, remember this,  
*we're with you, uncle Sam.*

We're used to meeting troubles  
And if you put us to the test  
You'll find Alaska loves you, Sam,  
Far better than the rest.  
But Sam, when this is over,  
As morning follows night,  
Pray give us your attention  
And set some matters right.  
We need some decent cable rates,  
We need some decent mails,  
We need some decent coast lights  
And we need some decent trails.  
You've given these to all the rest  
But we don't care a damn;  
If it's full grown men you're needing  
*we're with you, uncle Sam.*

#### HOW LONG?

As long as lure o' placer gold  
Brings North the best ye breed,  
As long as tales of camps and trails  
Are planted with your seed,  
As long as red blood courses thru  
And warms adventure's sons,  
They'll sally forth, bound for the North,  
Misfortune's chosen ones.

As long as snow slides claim their toll  
And glaciers split and rend,  
And sweepers turn the flimsy craft  
And trails come to an end;  
As long as flashing Northern Lights  
Flame in the Arctic sky,  
Your boldest ones, your bravest sons  
Come North to win or die.

As long as lust of wealth obtains  
And gold will buy all things,  
And bank accounts but mark the line  
'Twixt shovel stiffs and kings;  
As long as fancy rides free reined  
And distant fields seem fair,  
They'll seek the ship and make the trip  
To the land of Do and Dare.

As long as birds mate in the spring  
And moose run in the fall,  
And widows win the college youth  
And hold his heart in thrall;  
As long as chance for fortune's smile  
Can be centered in one throw,  
This is the truth, the Nation's youth  
Will hear the call and go.

As long as water runs down hill  
And smoke goes up from fire;  
As long as pleasure precedes pain  
And women love for hire;  
As long as Klondike widows  
Trail thru Outside Cafes  
Some one must stick on the lonesome creek  
For there's ever the "him" that pays.

As long as "huskies" curse the moon  
And creeks remain unnamed;  
As long as quicksands mask the bar  
And there's placer ground unclaimed;  
As long as "pay" is found and staked  
By some deep-sea-going Swede,  
That gypsy trace that marks our race  
Will out, then we stampede.

#### THAT 30 U.S. ON THE WALL

A man that's spent years knocking round "out in front"  
Has most usually had lots of pals---  
He's mixed up with pardners at various times  
And he's had his affairs with the gals.  
Now, a pardner's peculiar in lots of his ways  
And he'll ditch you for various reasons,  
And a gal never knows straight up from twice  
And her mind seems to change with the seasons.

I've been in on good ground with pardners I've staked  
And I thought they were square, till I found  
They were trying to cross me, the miserable pups,  
And whipsaw me out of my ground.  
I've had a few pards that would stand the hard grind  
And they'd stick through hard luck night and day;  
They were all you could ask while you rustled for grub,  
But they blew up when you uncovered the "pay."

Way back in the "eighties" when I'm just a kid,  
I crossed up with a breed gal I'd met  
One winter at Circle; she cleaned me that year  
And skipped out with all she could get.  
I've fallen for females in half of the camps  
That's spread over this country up here,  
But "square guys" or "pretzels" I couldn't get by  
And none of them stuck for a year.

I got kind of discouraged and quit the she sex  
And figgered I'd just herd with males,  
But it don't make no difference, I guess that I'm wrong,  
'Cause there's always the parting of trails.  
I've had lots of dogs, but a dog always dies,  
Or else the poor devil gets killed.  
When you like 'em and lose 'em, their loss leaves a hole  
That seems for a time can't be filled.

So pardners and females and dogs is taboo  
And I know, 'cause I've fussed with 'em all.  
There's only one pal that I know is true blue  
And it's that Thirty U.S. on the wall.  
She's stood by my shoulder and stopped a brown bear  
And she keeps the cache full in the Fall;  
She's got the one talk that a claim jumper knows  
And she craves no attention at all.

I'm getting old now, and some sot in my ways,  
And I don't loosen up like I did.  
I'm slower to make friends and slower to trust  
Than I used to be when I'm a kid.  
So it's good-by to females and good-by to dogs,  
And good-by to pardners and all,  
For the only one pal that I find I can trust  
Is that Thirty U.S. on the wall.

#### FLOTSAM

The China Coast's a dumping ground  
And the South Sea gets its share  
Of the kind of men that don't make good  
The kind of man that never could  
The men that never care.

A worthless, careless drinking lot  
Combed out from between the Poles.  
It's gin, and cards, a woman's breath,  
Laughter and love and sudden death

And the Devil gets their souls.

It's a throwback to a weaker strain  
That's washed by the Tropic tide.  
And a mixture of Dago and Japanese  
Latin and Jew and Portugese  
Crops out thru a sun-tanned hide.

But the Northland gets a sterner breed  
To fuse in its harder mould.  
It's the breed of men that don't know fail;  
That's the breed of men that hit the trail  
For the fabled land of gold.

They're a sturdy, fearless, fighting lot  
And they play the game to win.  
They fall for women, wine, the game  
And win or lose, they smile the same  
And to quit is their only sin.

Here the Norsman bunks with the canny Scot  
And the lad from the Emerald Isle  
Works side by side with Russ and Dane,  
North-bred men of brawn and brain,  
Men that are worth your while.

So me for the land of the Midnight Sun  
With the north lights in the sky,  
Me for the land that mothers this race  
Where you have to fight to hold your place,  
Where you can't quit till you die.

#### TRYING

The dream of the white man ever goes out  
To the fight that can never be won,  
And ever he plans to do the things  
That they say can never be done.  
It's seldom he values the things that are  
What he craves he may never gain,  
Yet ever he tries, till the day he dies  
And then feels he has lived in vain.

He climbs to the top of the highest hills  
To search out the vales afar;  
He bedrocks a hole on the deepest creeks  
He hitches his cart to a star.  
He's ever the first in the far stampede

As he chases the rainbow's blend,  
But it's not the need, and it's not the greed,  
It's the wanting to win in the end.

And whether he strives in the lofty range  
Or tries in the crowded mart,  
The longing to do what has never been done  
Is uppermost in his heart.  
He tries to build where none other has built,  
Win the maid that none other has won,  
To find the gold that he never can hold,  
To finish what cannot be done.

He lives his life in a trying way  
And he scorns the things that are tame,  
If all seems lost, he still fights on,  
For ever he plays the game.  
And the efforts he makes as he strives to win  
Are a credit to him and his breed,  
And the gods will count and give full amount  
And accept the act for the deed.

#### FOR

The dream of the white man ever goes out  
To the fight that can never be won,  
And ever he plans to do the things  
That they say can never be done.

It's seldom he values the things that are,  
What he craves he never may gain,  
But ever he tries, till the day he dies  
And then feels he has lived in vain.

#### THE NEW MASTER

As one who lays aside a task, where one has ruled alone,  
I lay aside the crown of hell, and give to you my throne;  
As one who feels his race is run, whose day is of the past,  
I recognize your genius, and abdicate at last.  
I go and leave you master, and I feel it's just as well,  
For Hades lacks its master, until you rule in hell.  
The world wags on and changes, old methods now seem weak,  
And the changes of a thousand years, of these I fain would speak.

I've raised and sponsored many names, that darken history's page,  
I've made them rulers of the world in many a by-gone age.  
They all have shown a human turn, from Nero down to you,

But now my life-long dream of a super fiend at last seems coming true.  
I've watched you since the faintest spark blazed in your mother's womb,  
I've watched your hypocritic grief, beside your father's tomb;  
I know the tainted blood that flows thru your each and every vein  
That shows up in your withered arm, and feeds your fevered brain.

I saw it in your grandsire, where first it cropped out plain  
When German gold was squandered to slay the honest Dane.  
I fed you dreams of empire, and dreams of lust and greed  
And the age old lust of conquest that taints all of your breed.  
The strain that showed in Nero, cropped out alike in you,  
You killed your gentle mother, but not as Nero slew.  
I gave you hate of Albion, for all the world will tell  
That could I kill that Anglo strain, I'd use the earth for hell.

I loathe the Anglo-Saxon race, I hate their English speech,  
For where the Union Jack waves high, the Cross will ever reach.  
Their ignorant millions till the soil, for they protect their own,  
I hate it for I've never had this ensign for mine own.  
I taught you how to use God's church, I built the path you trod,  
I filled your mouth until you claimed, a partnership with God.  
I told you tales to tell to men, I coached you every hour  
Until an egomaniac ran wild, mad with a lust for power.

I made an army for you then, the peer of all war lords,  
I smiled the night you went away to visit Norway fiords.  
I knew your Bagdad railway schemes, I knew the Austrian claims,  
I knew that German gold would guide the mad assassin's aims.  
I knew the schemes that you had planned, the one that nothing curbs,  
I envied your diplomacy that blamed it on the Serbs.  
My brain ne'er hatched a finer scheme, your armies marking time  
And then the rape of Belgium, your premier man-sized crime.

And if one deals in hellish schemes, that one must stamp your worth,  
You made a shambles of that land, you moved hell up on earth.  
The cries of mangled maidens, the mutilated child,  
The tears of butchered mothers, would drive an earth man wild,  
And thru it all proclaiming, you were the tool of God---  
O pardner in this orgy, no one suspected fraud.  
You butchered, maimed and pillaged, hell never saw such sights  
As the Prussian Guard remembers, on those first Belgian nights.

O shades of maddened Nero and his early Christian fires,  
Could he have been in Belgium and have seen your funeral pyres!  
Could he have seen your orgies he would have wept for shame  
But had he your fiendish cunning, he might have done the same.  
But the hated Saxon balked you and the desperate fighting Frank  
Hurled back our super devils and took us on the flank.

Your inbred tainted offspring lost his chances at Verdun  
Where curtained steel just saved the world from the grip of brutal Hun.

But Wilhelm, you are crafty, you are mine own I ween  
Your fertile brain had brought to life the hell-born submarine,  
You killed the unarmed merchantmen, you murdered in the dark,  
You sent the child and mother to feed your friend the shark.  
The world grew sick with wonder, no voice was raised to laud  
And still you did it in your name, the name of you and God.  
Where you have trod the world is dead, no sign of life or mirth,  
You beat me, Bill, you beat my hell, with this of yours on earth.

You won hell's admiration and of all of mine own folk  
When you paired off with the ghastly Turk, that was a master stroke.  
And all the things you did before, just now seem weak and tame  
Since you launched that Dardanelles campaign of pillage, lust and shame.  
To fuss thus with my chosen race, my ally since time dates  
Proclaimed that Kultur and the Turk are well matched running mates.  
And tho I've watched hell's orgies, and stood by in fiendish glee,  
I quit you, Bill, these Turkish stunts are far too much for me.

When officers from Kultur's class stand by and watch a Turk  
Just disembowel a mother, why, Bill, it makes me shirk.  
It makes me shudder and I've watched the master fiends of hell,  
But none of them have brains like you, none do their work so well.  
When Turk and German flood with oil, then set a school ablaze  
And bayonet the babies, as they stumble thru the haze,  
I yield the crown to you, Dear Bill, my pupil passes me  
You take the role of Master and your pupil I will be.

I've worked for hell's best interests, my master now appears  
For when your name is mentioned, the imps break into cheers.  
The gavel of the poor damned souls, that long has rung their knell,  
Is passed to you, I abdicate and now you rule in hell.  
For years I've done the best I could, now I realize I'm thru,  
And in the future I'm content to live and learn from you.  
Your earthly work is finished, soon in hell you'll carve your name  
And I shudder when I realize that hell won't be the same.

#### PROSPECTING

Looking for placer pangar,  
Loafing about in the hills,  
Getting your grub with a rifle,  
Taking your drink from rills.  
Getting your bed from the spruce tree,  
Taking your course by your dreams,  
Just camping alone in the mountains,

Siwashing along the streams.

Locating the hind sight on Nature,  
Traveling alone and far,  
Thinking with no one to guide you,  
Digesting the things that are.  
Back trailing the life that's past you,  
Peeping at what's in store,  
Pondering over life's mistakes,  
Wondering, how many more.

Dreaming alone of childhood days,  
Regretting some things that are past,  
Recalling lost opportunities,  
And chances too good to last.  
Living your whole life over,  
Recalling the daily grind,  
Thanking your God that it's over,  
Glad that you've left it behind.

But still regretting your errors,  
Sad for some things you have done,  
Wishing that you had coppered some plays  
As you count them one by one.  
Now living a life, clean, decent,  
For man never sins alone,  
Getting a grip on your ego,  
Coming at last to your own.

You dream and you hunt all summer  
Till you notice a chill in the air,  
Then you think of your warm snug cabin  
And you feel that you'd rather be there.  
Then you head over unblazed passes  
Till at last you herd with your own,  
And though you located no pangar  
You are better for being alone.

#### THE WOMAN THAT YOU PASS BY

My trade was old when the world was new,  
Ere the pyramids rose by the Nile  
Men quitted their wives, and gave me their goods  
For the warmth of my kiss, and my smile.  
For never was wife who could hold her man  
By the honeymoon's afterglow  
Did I veil mine eyes and beckon to him,  
God's truth, and 'tis you who know.

My trade was old when the world was new,  
Long ere Caesar ruled in Rome,  
To spend their gold in a harlot's cell  
Patricians quitted home.  
And high born dames since the world began  
Have learned to sit and to sigh  
And to patiently wait for their lords to leave  
The woman that you pass by.

I'm only a pawn in the game called life,  
Yet I take what you never could hold;  
I garner the kisses you'd barter life for  
And with them, I gather your gold.  
I garner the best of your manhood's prime  
Then quit them when shattered in health;  
I bring to heel the ones that you love  
And smiling I shear them of wealth.

To garner the wealth that you hold in store  
I must keep me surpassing fair,  
For the life that I lead is an open book  
And the game that I deal is square.  
Stop---think of the maids and wives you know  
As you drift thru life's subtle game---  
How many are dealing as straight as I?  
How many can say the same?

You give your all, and you slave your life  
In a struggle to hold one man;  
You think you're paid if he call you wife  
And be true to you for a span.  
You keep his house and you bear his child  
And you walk with your head held high  
But most of his love, and his kisses go  
To the woman that you pass by.

The favors you give, I sell for gold,  
And men prize what costs them high;  
You never will learn that love goes out  
With the tear in a woman's eye;  
That the patient drudge who sits at home  
And learns to save and to mend  
Can never hold the light of love  
But is doomed to lose in the end.

So I follow the old dishonored trade,  
Bedecked in garments fine,  
And the cream of the earth is saved for me

In raiment and food and wine.  
And life to me is a merry game  
Tho, sometimes, I weep and sigh,  
For deep down in your heart, do you envy me  
The woman that you pass by?

#### WHY

Why is it Alaskans all come back  
When they've quit this land for good?  
Why is it that no man stays away  
When he's sworn to his friends he would?  
Where lies the grip this country hath  
All tangled around the heart  
That takes a grip that can never slip  
And can never be torn apart?

Is it the lure of the summer sunshine  
That goes to the head like wine?  
Is it the lure of the far flung meadows  
Of the shadowy scented pine?  
Is it the lure of going where none have gone  
Of just being alone in the wild?  
Is it the lure of the ancient glaciers  
That were old when Christ was a child?

They come here wild, athirst for gold  
They would win and run away,  
They lose the stake they brought along  
And then they have to stay.  
Here each one follows his own bent,  
The mines, the hills, the mart,  
Work's but a name, the end's the same,  
The country steals your heart.

There's a lure to the land of the poppy,  
There's a lure to the land of your birth,  
You swear you abhor it, and yet you'll long for it  
As no other land on this earth.  
There's the lure of the snow mantled vastness,  
There's the lure of each valley and hill,  
Of friends that you've met, that you'll never forget  
And you'll want to come back, and you will.

#### AND STILL I LIKE ALASKA

I've tramped across her endless miles of tundra,  
I've rafted all her rapid flowing streams,

She's kept me on the hummer,  
I've fought mosquits in summer  
And "siwashed" neath Aurora's wintry beams,  
And still, I like Alaska.

I went a winter once on pay streak bacon,  
I've gone a year on nothing much but beans,  
I've squandered all my time checks,  
The kind they give us roughnecks,  
And haven't got a dollar in my jeans,  
And still, I like Alaska.

I got a stake one time and wandered Outside,  
And I'm telling you I surely put on "dog,"  
But they got in between me and my poke  
They sure did clean me  
And I hit for Dixon's Entrance, on the "hog,"  
And still, I like Alaska.

I don't suppose a man will live to beat it,  
Some day we'll quit this land of ice and snow,  
And when the Devil gits us,  
And finds a place that fits us,  
And we're working on the sulphur beds below,  
I know I'll like Alaska.

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