

# Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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## The Streets of Loredo

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As I walked out in the streets of Loredo,  
As I walked in to old Loredo Town,  
I spied a poor cowboy all wrapped in white linen,  
All wrapped in white linen for they had gunned him down.

"Oh, I see by your outfit you are a cowpuncher,"  
This poor boy said from his lips of flame red,  
"They done gunned me down, boys, and run off and left me  
Here in the back street just like I was dead.

"Well, I see by your outfit you are a cowpuncher,"  
This poor boy says as I boldly step by,  
"Come sit down beside me, my story I'll tell you,  
Cause I'm a poor cowboy and I'm going to die.

"Well, I was born in Southeast Texas,  
Where the jimson weed and the lilac does bloom;  
I went to go live there for to go far a-ranging,  
And I've trailed from Canady down to old Mexico.

"Twas once in the saddle I used to go dashing,  
Twas once in the saddle I used to go gay;  
Twas first down to the dram house and then down to Maisy's,  
I'se shot in the breast and I'm dying today.

"Well, go write a letter to my grey-haired mother,  
Go pen me a note to my sister so dear,  
But there is another more dear than a mother,  
Who'll bitterly weep when she knows that I'm hurt.

"Get sixteen cowboys to carry my coffin,  
Get sixteen pretty ladies to bear up my pall,  
Put roses all over the top of my coffin  
To deaden the smell as they bear me along.

"Oh, swing the rope slowly and ring your spurs lowly,  
And play the dead march as you bear me along;  
Take me to the green valley, there lay the sod o'er me  
'Cause I'm a poor cowboy and I know I've done wrong.

(Sung by Harry Jackson)

This Wyoming variant of The Cowboy's Lament paints a callous picture of the cowboy's shooting, but is equally vague as to the specific reason for the murder. Nor does the ballad give us any hints as to whether a connection can be drawn between his visits to the saloon and 'Maisy's' (probably a bawdy house) and his being 'gunned' down.

The funeral procession and death march are more specifically worded in cowboy lingo than in the previous variant; the drums and fife, more readily-identifiable with a military funeral, are here replaced by a rope and spurs, tools of the cowboy's trade.

Harry Jackson learned this variant in Wyoming in the summer of 1938. This recording may also be heard as part of an album of The Cowboy: His Songs, Ballads and Brag Talk (Folkways FH 5723).

DT #350  
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