

The Unionville Chronicles

Twentieth Canto

To the south of Winnemucca, there was one town
That stood all alone for miles around.
One dusty lane met the one railroad line
A single saloon was open at that time
Inside, one bar, built from railroad ties,
Stood before one wall, swarming with flies
Where the customary clients drank, swatted and told lies.

And in that sole saloon stood a half dozen strangers,
The posse, discussing some plans and their dangers,
“How long do you reckon we ought to keep searching?”
A deputy asked the High Sheriff while lurching.
“The law never rests till we’ve hanged every thief,”
The Sheriff responded, to everyone’s grief.
“So one more bottle,” he ordered to the deputies’ relief.

Sometime, the next morning, the Sheriff strode outside
To consider his bladder and the next ride.
To the East, over yonder, above Unionville,
The circling crow gave the Sheriff a thrill.
He remembered the rider he’d caught in his sight,
Shot through, but maybe not done with his flight.
Wherever he lay, his co-thieves would come in the night.

Rushing back in to the bar, after a pause,
The Sheriff reminded the posse of their cause,
And offered his drunken deputies the freedom

Of straddling their nags or waiting til he kneed them.
So one more time justice through the desert came rumbling
Like dust in the breeze or tumbleweeds tumbling.
The Sheriff rode fiercely, his drunk posse rode grumbling.

Not far away, near a mine lost long ago,
A black-haired, bad woman had noticed the crow.
Quick-minded and tempered, her plans crystallized
And she kicked sand on the fire and into the brothers' eyes.
In determined silence she saddled her horse,
And loaded her shotgun and pistols, of course,
Three outlaws set a course parallel to the contrary force.