

Dick Shepherd Memorial Poem- Original

(For the D. Shepherd Memorial Cowboy Poetry Gathering Nara Visa, NM September 1993)

I was just a boy when I met Dick Shepherd,
Therefore, my memories are few.
I wasn't even old enough to think
Much less remember too.

The stories I'll be rhymin'
I wasn't there to see.
Even if I look the poet,
Clyde's the storyteller, not me.

A chuck wagon cook on the cow work trail-
He's really the boss- No doubt!
He's got your dry bedroll, toilet paper, beans-
Stuff you can't get along without.

When he calls you into grub, don't hesitate.
You don't need another word.
"Eat fast, Hurry up 'cuz others will remember
When it's your turn to watch the herd.

Dick Shepherd was the chuck wagon cook-
The thinker at the Matador.
He also provided regular entertainment.
His pranks would make 'em roar.

Like the time when a new hand, Dick Hysel,
Called for a horse to mount.
Dick figured this kid wasn't as tough as he seemed
So R.C. (Dick) just pointed out.

The thunderheads gathered over in the western sky
Lightning was brighter than the dawning sun.
That grinnin' Hoss stopped lickin' his lips, teeth clenched.
Everyone's fixin' to have some fun.

As Hysel tightened the cinch, the monster's eyes got red.
Bared teeth, pinned ears showed his notion.
The boys gathered 'round, the storm clouds grew
A mile away you could hear the commotion.

As Hysel wallered on, cheers went up,
Dick threw his booger in under.
The hands laughed, Dick smiled as the kid got piled
Hit the ground- sounded like thunder.

Strugglin' to get up and knock off the dust,
Tryin' real hard to breathe
Hysel said "The only kid that rode that hoss
First name had to be Billy (Billy the Kid, that is)

Another day the tale got turned
With no one else.
Bonnie Simmons told of the day
When Dick's horse, with no rider, lit a shuck for town.

Bonnie found the horse still saddled,
Standing by the fence
When the broken grass rope still tied to the horn
Started to make sense.

Bonnie recognized Dick's horse and saddle.

Misfortunate could have been his own.

After the wreck, that hoss sailed out.

That traitor was tryin' to go home.

Bonnie captured his hoss, tryin' to find Dick,

He led him over the hill.

What Bonnie found was such a funny sight

Folks are laughing still.

After she'd calved, the cow needed a milkin',

She had spoiled from tit to brain.

Dick roped her to bed her down, but didn't get it done,

So he thought he'd better try again.

This time, when he turned her head around,

Her horn stuck in the ground, the rope broke.

She began to hook his horse, the hoss began to pitch.

Dick didn't make the ride, he slipped his hold.

When Dick hit the ground, he still had the lead.

Knew he'd better run if he had the power.

He outran the cow, but it took 4 or 5 laps

to get far enough ahead to climb the windmill tower.

When Bonnie showed up he got shed of the cow.

Poor Dick's face was ashen.

Dick now limped from the force of the fall.

Helpless and angry, he'd taken a thrashin'.

There's more to Dick's story Clyde wanted told
Prob'ly the most important part.

Dick was convinced, after the life he lived,
He needed a change of heart.

R.C. had gone to drinkin'
Seein' pink elephants everywhere
His life went to flashin' before his eyes
It gave him quite a scare.

Thinkin' about the Judge up above
Keepin' track of his every move.
He'd heard about forgiveness
Better make a move toward God's love.

Rememberin' what his Mom had taught,
Those simple Bible lessons
He looked up a cowboy preacher
by the name of Tommy mullins.

Not knowing one Church type from another
They seemed to "work for the same outfit"
The blood of Jesus Would make the difference
A baptism would make a hit.

Dick didn't want "used water"
After committing his life to Christ.
Only crystal clear, clean and running
Would show how his life's made right.

He didn't want a common baptismal tank
Where other men's sins had been buried.
He wanted a fresh stream from Seidel Springs
To take the load of sins he'd carried.

When Dick came up out of that water
He felt new, like starting over again.
His new faith made public, confident of heaven,
He strutted like a brand-new man.

Dick Shepherd was the kind of a man
Many want to meet, but really known by only a few.
Remember and talked good about long after he's gone,
I want to be like that, don't you?

by "Cactus" Jack McCarty Jr. 09/24/1993

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