

BALLAD OF BILL THE BONE

A freedom born of the lonely trysts,—
A trust that keeps its mark.

A mark that's found with the lowing herds,
All bedding down to their rest,—
Those untamed herds that heed the voice,
Of the cowman's tongue the best,—
A reeking melody of speech,
Framed in the Border West.

He rode to his task in the morning light,
So sinewy and unshriven,—
And blood once shed in a streak of red
Raves that more blood be given;
You may rack to escape from the Pole to the
Cape,
And then you have not striven.

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A bronco squealed, a bronco skewed
And writhed each inch of the way;
But Pete the bold one scratched his moant,
In the gleaming light of the day,
And mocked him through dry lips that cracked,
With a laugh and a whoop, so they say.