

I will bid farewell with sun's first light.
Oh, my dear one please don't cry.
If you think of me at this time each night,
Then the days will surely fly.
I must ride again where the Curlew's wailing
Can reach as far as the bright stars trailing
The soft, silver moon that is slowly sailing
On a dark blue velvet sky.

For I ride once more on a lonely plain
Through the heat and blinding glare,
Which may bring back pain of thirst again
That no man should have to bear.
While a mirage waves with a flaunting, taunting
As a hot wind whines which is strangely haunting,
And they play their games which are weirdly daunting
To the men who ride out there.

In a veil of haze that is ever there
From the tread of cloven hooves,
We must ride all day through the grit and glare
While the cruel sun hardly moves.
As skulls of dead cattle lie grinning, bleaching
On land as it saps and is slyly leeching,
We hold to the hope we will soon be reaching
The town with its glinting rooves

Oh, the bullocks know as we push them on
From their runs out in the west.
They can sense or smell that those days are gone,
So, they jib or try to test,
With their stubborn ways and a willful moaning,
Or they start to ring with a numbing droning,
Then just plod along with a grateful groaning
From land where the Curlews nest.

Oh, the devil wind drains a weary mind
As it sears and saps men dry,
'til the man you were has been left behind
Out there where the dead men lie.
In the distance, squalls of red dust are stirring,
Then the wind assaults with a whining, whirring,
And cattle are spooked by its blinding blurring.
We know how a man can die.

Now I yearn for a home as I sit and stare
At the ember glow at night,
Or lie in my swag on a landscape bare,
While bathed by the soft starlight.
So, The Cross rolls by as I should be sleeping
And the first night watch rides cautiously keeping
A vigilant guard for some wild dogs creeping,
Not far from our camp tonight.

Now the railhead yards have come into sight,
So, this trip is almost done.
We penned all the bullocks in the fading light,
Then counted off one by one.
The months on the road will seem far away,
When we meet at the pub to collect our pay,
Then we'll drink and we'll vow we will meet some day
On another droving run.

I will miss good times with the mates I've made,
Who are stockmen, bold and true.
They will stick with you through the light or shade.
Better men I never knew.
I will miss the fire of a sunset glowing;
The wagonette drafts with their thick manes flowing;
A steady night horse in a wild wind blowing,
And the scent of dusty dew.

So, the night rolls on as we forego sleep
To relive times we have spent.
Push back tomorrow so this night will keep,
Then wonder where the time went.
The yearn in my heart is for one who's waiting,
And love for a land, so hostile, berating;
Now I find myself torn and hesitating,
As I ponder my lament.

We will bid farewell in the morning light.
As friends, we will try to jest,
With a true handshake and a grip so tight,
Then ride away from the west.
There's a place in my heart that will sometimes ache
For this desolate place that can only take.
But though I shall leave I would never forsake
The land where the Curlews nest.