Roy Bean

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Cowboys, come and hear the story of Roy Bean in all his glory,
"The law west of Pecos," read his sign.
We must let our ponies take us to a town on lower Pecos
Where the high bridge spans the eanyon thin and fine.

He was born one day in Toyah where he learned to be a lawyer
A teacher and a barber and the mayor.
He was cook and old-shoe mender, sometimes preacher and bartender
And it cost two bits to have him cut your hair.

He was right smart of a hustler and eonsiderable a rustler,
And at mixing up an eggnog he was grand;
He was clever, he was merry, he could drink a Tom and Jerry.
On occasion at a round-up took a hand.

Though the story isn't funny, there was once Roy had no money
Which for him was not so very strange or rare;
So he went to help Pop Wyndid, but he got so absent-minded
That he put his RB brand on old Pap's steer.

Old Pap got right smart angry, Roy Bean went down to Langtry
Where he opened up an office and a store.
Where he'd sell you drinks or buttons or anothcr rancher's muttons,
Though the latter made the other feller sore.

Once there came from Austin City a young dude reported witty
And out of Bean he sorta guessed he'd take a rise;
So he got unusual frisky as he up and called for whisky
Sayin', "Bean, now hurry up, gol durn your eyes."

Then down he threw ten dollars, which the same Roy quickly collars
And the same Roy holds to nine and hands back one;
Then the dude he gave a holler, when he saw that single dollar
And right then began the merriment and fun.

The dude, he slammed the table just as hard as he was able,
The price of whisky was too high, he swore.
Said Roy Bean, "For all your fussin' and your most outrageous cussin'
You are fined the other dollar by the law."

"On this place I own a lease. I'm the Justice of the Peace,
And the law west of the Pecos all is here,

And you've acted very badly." Then the dude he went off sadly
While down his lily cheek there rolled a tear.

One fine day they found a dead man who in life had been a red man
Though it's doubtless he was nothing else than bad.
They called Bean to view the body. First he took a drink of toddy,
Then he listed all the things the dead man had.

For a red man he was tony, for he had a pretty pony
And a dandy bit and saddle and a rope;
He'd a very fine Navajo rug and a quart within his jug
And a pony that was dandy an the lope.

So the find it was quite rare-o, for he'd been a cocinero
And his pay day hadn't been so far away.
He'd a brand-new fine white Stetson and a silver Smith and Wesson
While a purse af forty dollars jingled gay.

Said Roy Bean, "You'll learn a lesson, for you have a Smith and Wesson
And to carry implements of war is wrong.
Forty dollars I will fine you, for we couldn't well confine you
As already you've been layin' around too long."

Now, you boys have heard the story of Roy Bean in all his glory
He's the man who was the justice and the law,
He was handy with his hooks, and he was ornery in his looks,
And just now I ain't gonna tell you any more.

From American Ballads and Folk Songs, Lomax
sings to versae of Tramp, Tramp, Tramp. (also Humoresque, for that matter)
RG

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