Streets of Laredo (Cowboy's Lament)

(alternate:)

Streets of Laredo (Cowboy's Lament)

As I walked out on the streets of Laredo,
As I walked out in Laredo one day,
I spied a young cowboy all wrapped in white linen
Wrapped in white linen as cold as the clay.

"Oh, beat the drum slowly and play the fife lowly,
Play the Dead March as you carry me along,
Take me to the green valley and lay the sod o'er me
For I'm a young cowboy and I know I've done wrong."

"I see by your outfit that you are a cowboy"
These words he did say as I boldly stepped by,
"Come sit down beside me and hear my sad story,
I was shot in the breast and I know I must die."

"Let sixteen gamblers come handle my coffin,
Let sixteen cowboys come sing me a song,
Take me to the graveyard and lay the sod o'er me
For I'm a poor cowboy and I know I've done wrong."

"My friends and relations, they live in the Nation,
They know not where their boy has gone,
He first came to Texas and hired to a ranchman
Oh, I'm a young cowboy and I know I've done wrong."

"Go write a letter to my gray-haired mother,
And carry the same to my sister so dear,
But not a word of this shall you mention
When a crowd gathers round you my story to hear."

"Then beat your drum slowly and play your fife lowly,
Beat the Dead March as you carry me along,
We all love our cowboys so young and so handsome,
We all love our cowboys although they've done wrong."

"There is another more dear than a sister
She'll bitterly weep when she hears I am gone,
There is another who will win her affections,
For I'm a young cowboy and they say I've done wrong."

"Go gather around you a crowd of young cowboys,
And tell them the story of this, my sad fate;
Tell one and the other before they go further
To stop their wild roving before 'tis too late."

"Oh muffle your drums, then play your fifes merrily
Play the Dead March as you go along
And fire your guns right over my coffin,
There goes an unfortunate boy to his home."

"It was once in the saddle I used to go dashing
Once in the saddle I used to go gay,
First down to the dram-house and then to the card house
Got shot in the breast, I am dying today."

"Get six jolly cowboys to carry my coffin,
Get six pretty maidens to carry my pall,
Put bunches of roses all over my coffin,
Put roses to deaden the clods as they fall."

"Then swing your rope slowly, and rattle your spurs lowly,
And give a wild whoop as you carry me along,
And in the grave throw me and roll the sod o'er me
For I'm a young cowboy and I know I've done wrong."

"Go bring me a cup, a cup of cold water
To cool my parched lips," the cowboy said;
Before I turned, the spirit had left him
And gone to its Giver --- the cowboy was dead.

We beat the drum slowly and played the fife lowly,
And bitterly wept as we bore him along,
For we all loved our comrade, so brave, young and handsome,
We all loved our comrade although he'd done wrong.

DT #350
Laws B1
Note: This the the fullest version I've been able to dig up:
from Cowboy Songs (Macmillan) RG
whole record of versions of this song Unfortunate Rake

Visit www.traditionalmusic.co.uk for more songs.