

## Hank Snow

# "Ballad Of Hard Luck Henry"

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Now wouldn't you expect to find a man an awful crank  
That's staked out nigh three hundred claims and every  
one a blank  
That's followed every fool stampede and seen the rise  
and fall  
Of camps where men got gold in chunks and he got  
none at all  
That's prospected a bit of ground and sold it for a song  
To see it yield a fortune to some fool that came along  
That's sunk a dozen bed-rock holes and not a speck in  
sight  
Yet sees them take a million from the claims to left and  
right  
Now aren't things like that enough to drive a man to  
booze  
But Hard-Luck Smith was hoodoo-proof he knew the  
way to lose

Twas in the fall of nineteen four leap-year I've heard  
them say  
When Hard-Luck came to Hunker Creek and took a  
hillside lay  
And lo! as if to make amends for all the futile past  
Late in the year he struck it rich the real pay-streak at  
last  
The riffles of his sluicing-box were choked with  
speckled earth  
And night and day he worked that lay for all that he  
was worth  
And when in chill December's gloom his lucky lease  
expired  
He found that he had made a stake as big as he  
desired

One day while meditating on the waywardness of fate  
He felt the ache of lonely man to find a fitting mate  
A petticoated pard to cheer his solitary life  
A woman with soft soothing ways a confidant a wife  
And while he cooked his supper on his little Yukon  
stove  
He wished that he had staked a claim in Love's rich  
treasure-trove

When suddenly he paused and held aloft a Yukon egg  
For there in pencilled letters was the magic name of  
Peg

You know these Yukon eggs of ours some pink some  
green some blue  
A dollar per assorted tints assorted flavors too  
The supercilious cheechako might designate them high  
But one acquires a taste for them and likes them by  
and by  
Well Hard-Luck Henry took this egg and held it to the  
light  
And there was more faint pencilling that sorely taxed  
his sight  
At last he made it out and then the legend ran like this  
Will Klondike miner write to Peg Plumhollow Squashville  
Wis

That night he got to thinking of this far-off unknown fair  
It seemed so sort of opportune an answer to his prayer  
She flitted sweetly through his dreams she haunted  
him by day  
She smiled through clouds of nicotine she cheered his  
weary way  
At last he yielded to the spell his course of love he set  
Wisconsin his objective point his object Margaret

With every mile of sea and land his longing grew and  
grew  
He practised all his pretty words and these I fear were  
few  
At last one frosty evening with a cold chill down his  
spine  
He found himself before her house the threshold of the  
shrine  
His courage flickered to a spark then glowed with  
sudden flame  
He knocked he heard a welcome word she came his  
goddess came  
Oh she was fair as any flower and huskily he spoke  
I'm all the way from Klondike with a mighty heavy poke  
I'm looking for a lassie one whose Christian name is  
Peg  
Who sought a Klondike miner and who wrote it on an  
egg

The lassie gazed at him a space her cheeks grew rosy  
red  
She gazed at him with tear-bright eyes then tenderly  
she said  
Yes lonely Klondike miner it is true my name is Peg

It's also true I longed for you and wrote it on an egg  
My heart went out to someone in that land of night and  
cold  
But oh I fear that Yukon egg must have been mighty  
old  
I waited long I hoped and feared you should have  
come before  
I've been a wedded woman now for eighteen months or  
more  
I'm sorry since you've come so far you ain't the one  
that wins  
But won't you take a step inside I'll let you see the twins

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