

## Ian Tyson "Claude Dallas"

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In a land the Spanish once had called the Northern  
Mystery,  
Where rivers run and disappear the mustang still is  
free.  
By the Devil's wash and coyote hole in the wild Owyhee  
Range  
Somewhere in the sage tonight the wind calls out his  
name.  
Aye, aye, aye.

Come gather 'round me buckaroos and a story I will tell  
Of the fugitive Claude Dallas who just broke out of jail.  
You might think this tale is history from before the West  
was won,  
But the events that I'll describe took place in nineteen  
eighty-one.

He was born out in Virginia, left home when school was  
through;  
In the deserts of Nevada he became a buckaroo,  
And he learned the ways of cattle, and he learned to sit  
a horse,  
And he always packed a pistol, and he practiced deadly  
force.

Then Claude he became a trapper, and he dreamed of  
the bygone days,  
And he studied bobcat logic and their wild and silent  
ways  
In the bloody runs near Paradise, in monitors down  
south  
Trapping cats and coyotes, living hand to mouth.  
Aye, aye, aye.

Then Claude took to livin' all alone out many miles from  
town,  
A friend--Jim Stevens--brought supplies and he stayed  
to hang around.  
That day two wardens--Pogue and Elms--rode into  
check Claude out,  
They were seeking violations and to see what Claude's  
about.

Now Claude had hung some venison, he had a bobcat  
pelt or two;  
Pogue claimed they were out of season, he said  
"Dallas, you're all thru."  
But Dallas would not leave his camp. He refused to go  
to town.  
As the wind howled through the bull-camp they stared  
each other down.

It's hard to say what happened next, perhaps we'll never  
know,  
They were gonna take Claude in to jail, and he vowed  
he'd never go.  
Jim Stevens heard the gunfire, and when he turned  
around  
Bill Pogue was falling backwards, Conley Elms he fell  
face down.  
Aye, aye, aye.

Jim Stevens walked on over; there was a gun near Bill  
Pogue's hand.  
It was hard to say who drawn his first, but Claude had  
made his stand.  
Claude said "I am justified Jim, they were gonna cut me  
down,  
And a man's got a right to hang some meat  
When he's livin' this far from town."

It took eighteen men and fifteen months to finally run  
Claude down.  
In the sage outside of Paradise they drove him to the  
ground.  
Convicted up in Idaho--manslaughter by decree--  
Thirty years at maximum, but soon Claude would break  
free.

There's two sides to this story, there may be no right  
or wrong,  
The lawman and the renegade have graced a  
thousand songs.  
The story is an old one. Conclusion's hard to draw,  
But Claude's out in the sage tonight he may be the last  
outlaw.  
Aye, aye, aye.

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Mystery,  
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By the Devil's wash and the coyote hole in the wild

Owyhee Range

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