

## Ian Tyson

### "Night Riders Lament"

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While I was out a-ridin'  
the graveyard shift, midnight 'til dawn  
The moon was as bright as a reading light  
For a letter from an old friend back home.

And he asked me, "Why do you ride for your money?  
Tell me, why do you rope for short pay?  
You ain't gettin' nowhere, and you're losin' your share,  
Boy, you must have gone crazy out there."

He tells me, "Last night, I run into Jenny,  
She's married, and she has a good life.  
Boy, you shore missed the track  
when you never came back -  
She's the perfect professional's wife.

And she asked me, 'Why does he ride for his money?  
Tell me, why does he rope for short pay?  
He ain't a-gettin' nowhere, and he's losin' his share,  
Well, he must have gone crazy out there.'"

But they ain't never seen the Northern Lights,  
They ain't never seen a hawk on the wing,  
They ain't never seen spring hit the Great Divide,  
Well, they never heard old camp cookie sing.

Well I read up the last of my letter  
Tore the stamp for old Black Jim,  
When Billy rode up to relieve me  
He just looked at my letter and grinned.

And then he said, "'Why do they ride for their money?  
And why do they rope for short pay?  
They ain't gettin' nowhere, and they're losin' their  
share'  
Son, they all must be crazy out there.

'Cuz they ain't never seen the Northern Lights,  
They ain't never seen a hawk on the wing,  
They never seen spring hit the Great Divide,  
They never heard old camp cookie sing."

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