

Classic Poetry Series

Edward Harrington

- poems -

Publication Date:

2004

Publisher:

PoemHunter.Com - The World's Poetry Archive

Morgan

When Morgan crossed the Murray to Peechelba and doom
A sombre silent shadow rode with him through the gloom.
The wild things of the forest slunk from the outlaw's track,
The boobook croaked a warning, "Go back, go back, go back!"
It woke no answering echo in Morgan's blackened soul,
As onward through the darkness he rode towards his goal.

An evil man was Morgan, a price was on his head;
The simple bush-folk whispered his very name with dread;
Before the fierce Dan Morgan the bravest man might quake-
A cold and callous killer, he killed for killing's sake. .
Past swamp and creek and gully, and settler's lone abode,
Towards the station homestead the grim Dan Morgan rode.

And still that hooded horseman that Morgan could not see,
Watched by the wild bush-creatures, rode close beside his knee.
Before them in a clearing a drover's campfire burned:
The phantom rode with Morgan, and turned when Morgan turned.
And loud the boobook's warning came on the cold night air,
"Go back, go back, Dan Morgan. Beware, beware, beware!"

He reached the station homestead, into the hall he strode,
And on his evil features, the flickering lamplight glowed.
"Into one room!" he thundered. Bring me a glass of grog!
If any disobey me I'll shoot him like a dog!"
With pistols cocked and ready, dark-eyed and beetle-browed-
Before the famous outlaw the bravest hearts were cowed.

All night with loaded pistols he dozed and muttered there,
All night the evil shadow stood close behind his chair.
The brave Scotch girl McDonald, a lass who knew no fear,
Slipped out unseen by Morgan to warn the homesteads near.
And in the hours of darkness, before the break of dawn,
Around the fierce Dan Morgan the fatal net was drawn.

Day broke upon the Murray, the morning mists were gone,
The magpies sang their matins, the river murmured on.
When Morgan left the homestead and neared the stockyard gate
He heard the boobooks warning, and turned but turned to late -
For Quinlan pressed the trigger as Morgan swung around,
And sent the grim bushranger blaspheming to the ground.

So fell the dread Dan Morgan in Eighteen sixty-five,
In death as much unpitied as hated when alive.
He lived by blood and plunder, an outlaw to the end;
In life he showed no mercy, in death he left no friend.
And all who seek to follow in Morgan's evil track
Should heed the boobook's warning: "Go back, go back, go back!"

Edward Harrington

The Bush Rangers

Four horseman rode out from the heart of the range,
Four horseman with aspects forbidding and strange.
They were booted and spurred, they were armed to the teeth,
And they frowned as they looked at the valley beneath,
As forward they rode through the rocks and the fern -
Ned Kelly, Dan Kelly, Steve Hart and Joe Byrne.

Ned Kelly drew rein and he shaded his eyes -
'The town's at our mercy! See yonder it lies!
To hell with the troopers!' - he shook his clenched fist -
'We will shoot them like dogs if they dare to resist!'
And all of them nodded, grim-visaged and stern -
Ned Kelly, Dan Kelly, Steve Hart and Joe Byrne.

Through the gullies and creeks they rode silently down;
They stuck-up the station and raided the town;
They opened the safe and they looted the bank;
They laughed and were merry, they ate and they drank.
Then off to the ranges they went with their gold -
Oh! never were bandits more reckless and bold.

But time brings its punishment, time travels fast -
And the outlaws were trapped in Glenrowan at last,
Where three of them died in the smoke and the flame,
And Ned Kelly came back - to the last he was game.
But the Law shot him down (he was fated to hang),
And that was the end of the bushranging gang.

Whatever their faults and whatever their crimes,
Their deeds lend romance to those faraway times.
They have gone from the gullies they haunted of old,
And nobody knows where they buried their gold.
To the ranges they loved they will never return -
Ned Kelly, Dan Kelly, Steve Hart and Joe Byrne.

But at times when I pass through that sleepy old town
Where the far-distant peaks of Strathbogie look down
I think of the days when those grim ranges rang
To the galloping hooves of the bushranging gang.
Though the years bring oblivion, time brings a change,
The ghosts of the Kellys still ride from the range.

Edward Harrington

There's Only The Two Of Us Here

I camped one night in an empty hut on the side of a lonely hill.
I didn't go much on empty huts, but the night was awful chill.
So I boiled me billy and had me tea and seen that the door was shut.
Then I went to bed in an empty bunk by the side of the old slab shed.

It must have been about twelve o'clock – I was feeling cosy and warm –
When at the foot of me bunk I sees a horrible ghostly form
It seemed in shape to be half an ape with a head like a chimpanzee
But wot the hell was it doin there, and wot did it want with me?

You may say if you please that I had DTs or call me a crimson liar,
But I wish you had seen it as plain as me, with it's eyes like coals of fire.
Then it gave a moan and a horrible groan that curdled me blood with fear,
And 'There's only the two of us here,' it ses. 'There's only the two of us here!'

I kept one eye on the old hut door and one on the awful brute;
I only wanted to dress meself and get to the door and scoot.
But I couldn't find where I'd left me boots so I hadn't a chance to clear
And, 'There's only the two of us here,' it moans. 'There's only the two of us here!'

I hadn't a thing to defend meself, not even a stick or stone,
And 'There's only the two of here!' It ses again with a horrible groan.
I thought I'd better make some reply, though I reckoned me end was near,
'By the Holy Smoke, when I find me boots, there'll be only one of us here.'

I get me hands on me number tens and out through the door I scoots,
And I lit the whole of the ridges up with the sparks from me blucher boots.
So I've never slept in a hut since then, and I tremble and shake with fear
When I think of the horrible form wot moaned, 'There's only the two of us here!'

Edward Harrington