Billy Vanero 2

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Billy Vanero heard them say
In an Arizona cow town one day,
That a band of 'pache Indians were on the trail of death.

Heard them tell of murder done
Three men killed at rocky run,
They're in danger at the cow ranch said Vanero under breath.

Cow Ranch 40 miles away
Was a little place that lay,
In a deep and shadowed valley of the mighty wilderness.

Half a score of homes were there
And in one a maiden fair,
Held the heart of Billy Vanero, Vanero's little Bess.

So no wonder he grew pale
When he heard the cowboys tale,
Of the men that he'd seen murdered day before at Rocky Run.

Sure as there's a God above
I will save the girl I love,
By my love for little Betsy I will see that something's done.

Not a moment he delayed
When his brave resolve was made,
Why man? His comrades told him when they heard his daring plan.

You are riding straight to death
He answered save your breath,
I may never reach the cow ranch, but Betsy Lee will know I tried.

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Rounding a bend
Riding out and he got shot
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From a limb a twig he broke
And he dipped his pen of oak,
In the warm blood that was spurting
From a wound above his heart.

"Rouse!" he wrote before too late
Apache warriors lie in wait,
Goodbye Beth, God bless you darling
And he felt the cold tears start.

Then the message he made fast
Love's first message and its last,
To the saddle horn he tied it
And his lips were white with pain.

Take this message if not me
Straight to little Betsy Lee,
Then he tied himself to the saddle
And he gave his horse the rein.

Just at dusk a horse of brown
Wet with sweat came panting down,
The little lane at the cow ranch
And stopped in front of Betsy's door.

But the cowboy was asleep
And his slumbers were so deep,
Little Bets could never wake him
Though she tried forever more.

You have heard the story told
By the young and by the old,
Way down yonder at the cow ranch
The night the 'paches came.

Of that sharp and bloody fight
How the Chief fell and the flight,
Of the panic stricken warriors
Then they spoke Vanero's name.

In an old and reverent way
As men utter, let us pray,
As the speak the names of Heroes
Thinking how they lived and died.

Though his memory is kept green
While his face and heaven between,
Grow the flowers Betsy planted
Ere they laid her by his side.

From singing of Deborah L Hickman's mother
a more complete version than BILLVAN
DLH

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