



# Penned by Lantern Light

This column will spotlight members of the Western Wordsmiths Chapter of the International Western Music Association. It will highlight an invited poet guest with possible short biographical information of his/her works. If a member of the Western Wordsmiths Chapter and if interested in submitting one piece of original work for publication, please contact the Western Wordsmiths chapter president.

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## Quiet Conversation

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*Just a quiet conversation  
Between friends as they both sat,  
Saddled, looking down upon  
The cattle on the flat.*

*'Cause the trail for one was ending  
In just weeks or maybe days.  
His "til then" getting closer  
Put both men in a haze.*

*A promise to rarely dwell on  
Lean and low times of the past,  
But rather, focus forward  
To pastures green and grassed.*

*'Bout things that don't get talked about  
Near as often as they should  
'Mongst men who've rode together  
For years through scarce and good.*

*Making words come not so easy.  
Hard to know just what to say.  
But still some things need saying,  
And this would be the day.*

*The words that were shared that morning  
Were heartfelt and came with tears,  
Conveying things not spoken  
For way too many years.*

*Sure, they'd done a lot of talking  
About subjects then at hand.  
About the herds or markets,  
Or issues with the land.*

*It started with, "I'll not forget  
All the kindness that you've shown.  
You've been quite the friend to me,  
I'd say the best I've known."*

*Lord, it's hard to bid your farewell  
To a pard who'll soon be gone,  
Stepping beyond the daylight  
To no more ride the dawn.*

*They'd talked about the need for rain.  
Spent hours in idle chatter.  
They'd solved the world's big problems,  
And some that don't much matter.*

*With the solemn silence broken  
These two cowboys' talk turned deep,  
To truths they'd always treasure,  
And promises to keep.*

*There was quiet contemplation  
Between friends as they both sat,  
The last time looking out on  
The cattle on the flat.*

*But this day some words were spoken  
That they'd never before shared,  
At least to one another,  
For now their hearts were bared.*

*A promise to keep forever  
His memory close at hand,  
And finish things he'd started,  
And live the dreams he'd planned.*



**Tom Swearingen** of Tualatin, Oregon is a horseman who tells of the people and land of the American West with cowboy poetry, often inspired by his own experiences and observations from the saddle. He brings his stories to life with rhythm and rhyme and a storytelling style that makes him a popular performer not only at cowboy gatherings and horse camps, but at libraries, historical centers, and wherever folks who appreciate the cultural heritage of the West are found. Tom is two-time winner of the National Finals Rodeo Cowboy Poetry Week Contest, and has been nominated as Male Cowboy Poet of the Year by both the International Western Music Association and the Academy of Western Artists. He has been recognized as a finalist for IWMA 2018, 2017 and 2016 Cowboy Poetry CD of the Year.