



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.

From “Jeremiah Johnson” 1997 movie with Robert Redford

Del Gue: “Maybe you’d best go down to a city, Jeremiah.”

Jeremiah Johnson: “I’ve been to a city, Del...”

Siren Song of the City

by Duane Nelson 2018

*I live in time with the rhyme of the range
The canyons and mountains and plains,
With horses and cattle, and men of the saddle,
The wind and the snow and the rains.*

*No city has ever yet drawn me to live,
Where people exist side by side
Where all around fusses, the cars, trucks and busses;
Mechanical monsters they ride.*

*There’s good folks that live in the city of course,
But I’m guessing they really don’t know
How life can be bettered, by living unfettered,
Out here where most people don’t go.*

*Oh they all live in time, with the tick of the clock
The smog and the air that’s all gritty.
Yes, they’re good people all, but they’re caught in the thrall,
Of the siren song of the city.*

*The city itself is all concrete and steel,
has absolutely no soul
There’s no good solution, for noise and pollution,
But onward and onward they roll.*

*Yes, they all live in time with the tick of the clock,
Not the sun or the moon or the stars.
In condos and high-rise, apartments of small size,
In the clubs and the theaters and bars.*

*They’re all on a schedule, in their concrete world,
And leisure is something that’s rare.
Folks hurry and scurry, and all the time worry,
they’re not gonna get their fair share.*

*They’re all of a kind, but they’re not all that bad.
And I’m sure they don’t want my pity.
Yes, they’re good people all, but they’re caught in the thrall,
Of the siren song of the city.*



Duane Lee Nelson was born and raised in North Dakota, then moved to Oregon as a teen-ager where he now lives on a ranch near The Dalles, Oregon. He has been in agriculture related businesses all his life. He began writing and reciting Cowboy Poetry around 2000, and has opened for such performers as Dave Stamey, Juni Fisher, and Waddie Mitchell. He won the Rising Star Division at the 2014 Kamloops Cowboy Festival, and was one of the five finalists for the IWMA Male Poet of the Year in 2016 and 2017. Duane’s CD Cowboy Lonesome was nominated for the IWMA Cowboy Poetry CD of the Year in 2016. Duane recites at Gatherings across the country, entertaining all with his dynamic presentation. Now retired, Duane lives on a ranch near The Dalles, Oregon with his wife Lori and takes care of a small cow-calf herd while cowboying for as many local ranches as possible. Duane and Lori have six children and six grandchildren.