



Penned by Lantern Light

This column will spotlight members of the Western Wordsmiths Chapter of the 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.

A Few Lines For Oregon From A Grateful Native Son

by Tom Swearingen

*I've roamed all corners of this state
At lope, or trot, or walking gait.
From vantage point of horse's back
On vast wide range and single track.*

*Smelled the air of sage scent mesas.
Followed ruts and ancient traces
Of nomads, beasts, and those who came
To stake their claim and bring my name.*

*Watched desert devils spin and dance,
Their dust trails haze the far expanse.
Then fade and lift to leave behind
My outlook clear with inspired mind.*

*Cut the tracks of wild Mustang bands.
Packed deep in cool of timber stands.
Spent 'nuff time around city walls
To know I prefer coyote's calls.*

*Circled herds on high graze grasses.
Trailed them down steep switchback passes.
Spent lots of nights with stars my lamp,
Bedded down in a remote camp.*

*Picked way cross rivers snaking down
From mountain range and hilltop crown.
Seen life they bring to valley floor,
Then fresh the salt at ocean shore.*

*I've come to love this diverse land,
Where creative fires can be fanned.
Six decades here have made it clear
I'm glad my roots were planted here.*

*Oregon is a sacred ground
Where coiled up thoughts can be unwound,
Then strung in lines to then be sung
With passionate voice and angel's tongue.*

*So now my plan's for me to stay
Until my final earthly day.
If that works out, then I'll be blessed
To ride my days out in the West.*

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TOM SWEARINGEN

Tom Swearingen is an Oregon horseman whose original cowboy poetry is often inspired by his own experiences and observations from the saddle. Tom brings his stories to life with rhythm and rhyme and a style that makes him a popular performer not only at cowboy gatherings and horse camps, but wherever else you find folks who appreciate the heritage of the West. Two-time winner of the National Finals Rodeo Cowboy Poetry Contest and 2015 and 2016 finalist for Western Music Association Male Poet of the Year, Tom's poems have been published by the Center for Western and Cowboy Poetry, featured in *Cowboys & Indians Magazine*, and recognized by such organizations as the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame.

Tom's *Horses and Happiness* CD was a two-time finalist for WMA Cowboy Poetry CD of the Year. His newest CD *Rhyme 'Em Cowboy!* was a 2016 finalist for WMA Cowboy Poetry CD of the Year. For more on Tom visit oregoncowboypoet.com.