



Penned by Lantern Light

*“My thoughts of life and land and plight
Are penned by lantern light this night.”*

~ Sam DeLeeuw

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.

The Gift

by Sam DeLeeuw



Today the saddle has no scars.
It's new, unused and tends to creak.
It's stiff and doesn't want to bend.
Its core, the tree, is far from weak.

Through years of use and sweaty work
Will come signs of wear, scuffs and stains.
The oiled surface will lose its youth,
But constant, the tree's strength remains.

The leather wears away in time.
Repaired, patched swells will show its use.
The latigo will be replaced
From circling more than one Cayuse.

Rains will soak it, sun will heat it,
Dirt and mud will dry its leather.
Astride this kack he'll proudly sit
As he rides through grueling weather.

The boy who rides this kack today,
Will be a man by journey's end.
Growing older with passing years
As their land and their cows they'll tend.

The gift the father gives his son,
Of saddle made with him in mind,
Is not just rawhide, stitched and shaped
Over a tree with thick wool lined.

With this gift will come the wisdom
Learned riding at his father's side.
He'll witness first hand God's beauty.
Why to this way of life they're tied.

All this knowledge will come with time,
When he saddles up and rides each day.
Through coming years, boy and saddle
Will be tested along the way.

Their stories will be deeply etched
On his face and on the saddle,
Told by the scrapes, scratches and scars
From years working with their cattle.

Years have come and years have passed.
The man and saddle passed the test.
Lessons of life along the way
Were welcomed with little protest.

Once the old saddle had no scars.
It was new and tended to creak.
No longer stiff, now flexible.
The tree proved strong and never weak.

The gift the father gave this son,
Of the saddle made years ago,
Was not just rawhide, stitched and oiled,
But was the means by which he'd grow.

Sam DeLeeuw is the current president of the Western Wordsmiths Chapter of the Western Music Association. She is a multi-award winning poet and humorist. Sam knows “whereof she writes.” With more than twenty years as a rancher's wife, she has herded horses, cows, sheep, and daughters. Sam's background gives her all the ideas for her often humorous but sometimes tear-evoking stories. Much of her original poetry is taken from her own family's genealogy, happenings from day to day life, from people she's met and the places she's been. Raised in eastern (Black Foot) Idaho, Sam now makes her home just outside of Ogden (Roy), Utah.

