

Answered Prayer

By Bill Jones

*Jake, the rancher, went one day to fix a distant fence.
The wind was cold and gusty and the clouds rolled gray and dense.
As he pounded the last staple and gathered tools to go,
The temperature had fallen and the snow began to blow.
When he finally reached his pickup, he felt a heaviness of heart,
From the sound that the ignition made he knew it wouldn't start.*

*So Jake did what most of us would do if we'd have been there
He humbly bowed his balding head and sent aloft a prayer.
As he turned the key for the last time he softly cursed his luck,
They found him three days later, froze, in the cab of that old truck.
Jake had been around in his younger days and done his share of roamin'
But when he seen Heaven, he was shocked—Hell, it look just like Wyoming!*

*Oh, they was some differences of course, but just some minor things,
One place had simply disappeared—the town they called Rock Springs.
The BLM had been shut down, and there weren't no grazin' fees,
And the wind in Rawlins and Cheyenne was now a gentle breeze.
All them Park and Forest Service folks—they didn't fare so well,
They'd all been sent to fight some fire, in a wilderness in Hell.*

*Though Heaven was a real nice place, Jake had no peace of mind,
So he saddled up and lit a shuck, not knowin' what he'd find.
Then one day up in Cody, one October afternoon,
He seen St. Peter at the bar of the Old Proud Cut Saloon.
Of all the saints Jake knew in Heaven, his favorite was Peter.
(This line ain't really necessary but it makes good rhyme and meter.)*

*So they shared a frosty mug or two, or maybe it was three,
Nobody there was keepin' score—in Heaven beer is free.
"I've always heard," Jake said to Pete, "that God will answer prayer,
But the one time that I asked for help, well, He jest plain wasn't there.
Does God answer prayers of some and ignore the prayers of others?
That don't seem exactly square, I know all men are brothers.*

*"Or does He reply randomly, without good rhyme or reason?
Maybe it's the time of day, the weather or the season?
I ain't tryin' to act smart, it's just the way I feel,
And I was wonderin', could you tell, Pete, what the heck's the deal?"
Pete listened very patiently and when ol' Jake was done,
There was a smile of recognition and he said, "Oh, you're the one.*

*"That day your truck it wouldn't start, and you sent your prayer adrift,
You caught us at a real bad time—the end of the day shift.
And 10,000 Angels rushed to check the status of your file,
But you know, Jake, we hadn't heard from you in more than jest awhile.
And though all prayers are answered—God ain't got no quota—
He didn't recognize your voice, and cranked some guy's truck in North Dakota!"*

© Bill Jones, from his book, "There Ain't Much Romance in the Life of us Cows."
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