The Gol-Darned Wheel

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I can take the wildest bronco in the tough old woolly West;
I can ride him, I can break him, let him do his level best.

I can handle any cattle ever wore a coat of hair,
And I've had a lively tussle with a tarnal grizzly bear.

I can rope and throw the longhorn of the wildest Texas brand
And in Indian disagreements I can play a leading hand,

But at last I got my master and he surely made me squeal
When the boys got me astraddle of that gol-darned wheel.

It was at the Eagle Ranch, on the Brazos, when I fust
Found that darned contrivance that upset me in the dust.

A tenderfoot had brought it, he was wheeling all the way
From the sunrise end of freedom out to San Francisco Bay.

He tied up at the ranch for to get outside a meal,
Never thinkin' we would monkey with his gol-darned wheel

Arizona Jim begun it when he said to Jack McGill
There was fellows forced to limit bragging on their riding skill

And he'd venture the admission the same fellow that he meant
Was a very handy cutter far as riding broncos went;

But he would find that he was bucking 'gainst a different kind of deal
If he threw his leather leggins 'gainst a gol-darned wheel.

Such a slam against my talent made me hotter than a mink
And I vowed that I would ride it for amusement or for chink.

And it was nothing but a plaything for the kids and such about,
And they'd have their ideas shattered if they'd lead the critter out.

They held it while I mounted and gave the word to go;
The shove they gave to start me warn't unreasonably slow.

But I never spilled a cuss word and I never spilled a squeal-

I was building reputation on that gol-darned wheel.

Holy Moses and the Prophets, how we split the Texas air,
And the wind it made whip-crackers of my same old canthy hair,

And I sorta comprehended as down the hill we went
There was bound to be a smash-up that I couldn't well prevent.

Oh, how them punchers bawled, "Stay with her, Uncle Bill!
Stick your spurs in her, you sucker! Turn her muzzle up the
hills!"

But I never made an answer, I just let the cusses squeal,
I was finding reputation on that gol-darned wheel.

The grade was mighty sloping from the ranch down to the creek,
And I went a-galliflutin' like a crazy lightning streak-

Went whizzing and a-darting first this way and then that,
The darned contrivance sort o' wabbling like the flying of a bat.

I pulled upon the handles, but I couldn't check it up;
And I yanked and sawed and hollered but the darned thing wouldn't
stop

Then a sort of a meachin' in my brain began to steal
That the devil held a mortgage on that gol-darned wheel.

I've a sort of dim and hazy remembrance of the stop,
With the world a-goin' 'round and the stars all tangled up;

Then there came an intermission that lasted till I found
I was lying at the ranch with the boys all gathered round,

And the doctor was a-sewing on the skin where it was ripped,
And old Arizona whispered, "Well, old boy, I guess you're
whipped."

And I told him I was busted from sombrero down to heel,
And he grinned and said, "You ought to see that gol-darned wheel"

From Cowboy songs, Lomax

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