

North by West

Words by Harry 'Breaker' Morant, tune by Graham Jenkin. "Shoot straight you bastards!" were his last words to the firing squad before they executed him for the murder of Boer prisoners in a climate of appeasement just before reaching a peace treaty.

We've drunk our wine, we've kissed our girls, the funds are sink - ing low,
The hors - es must be think - ing it's a fair thing now to go;
So sling the swags on Con - da - mine and strap the bil - lies fast,
We'll stuff a bot - tle in the bags and let's be off at last.

What matter if the creeks are up – the cash, alas, runs down!
A very sure and certain sign we're long enough in town.
Old Bobby rides the boko, and you'd better take the bay,
Quart Pot will do to carry me the stage we go today.

No grass this side the Border fence! and all the mulga's dead!
The horses for a day or two will have to spiel ahead;
Man never yet from Queensland brought a bullock or a hack
But lost condition on that God–abandoned Border track!

When once we're through the rabbit–proof it's certain since the rain
There's whips o' grass and water, so it's North by West again!
There's feed on Tyson's country–we can spell the mokes a week
Where last year Billy Stevens trapped his brumbies on Bough Creek.

The Paroo may be quickly crossed–the Eulo Common's bare;
And, anyhow, it isn't wise, old man, to dally there!
Alack–a–day, far wiser men than you or I succumb
To woman's wiles, and potency of Queensland wayside rum.

Then over sand and spinifex and o'er the ridge and plain!
The nags are fresh–besides, they know we're North by West again.
The brand upon old Darkie's thigh is that upon the hide
Of bullocks we must muster on the Diamantina side.

We'll light our camp–fires where we may, and yarn beside the blaze;
The jingling hobble–chains shall make a music through the days.
And while the tucker–bags are right, and we've a stick of weed,
A swagman shall be welcome to a pipe–full and a feed.

So fill your pipe, and, ere we mount, we'll drink another nip
Here's how that North by West again may prove a lucky trip;
Then back again–I trust you'll find your best girl's merry face
Or, if she jilts you, may you find a better in her place!