

By Jessica Ortner

NIGH UNTO

Make no mistake--Ask no adds  
Adam's ale tis bottled courage  
Now firewater's best man,  
Hits the flat. Though not beauty  
could fill the broken

Lost above one's bend  
Time is tempered  
A'most fuddled don't do it justice  
I am not here to make a mash  
Offish I come  
Old Scratch, I'm here to listen

Six beans in the wheel  
Difficulted  
Choose life above snakes or  
Bite the ground

Like axle grease on toast  
Fine as cream gravy  
But I ain't disremember  
The Owl Hoot Trails

The rusty falls  
Given up-- now nailed to the counter  
Whitewash not hidden  
Make hay while the sun shines or  
Find peace within The Marble Orchard.

*Using historical slang and phrases of the old American West, NIGH UNTO tells a story about a cowboy who struggles with alcoholism and is contemplating suicide. Your first impression may be that this poem is made up of random words that are meaningless, but when you begin to understand the meaning of the lingo, your opinion will surely change. For added benefit, I have provided the poem with the modern translation.*

#### NIGH UNTO (ALMOST)

Make no mistake--Do not offer help

Water tis bottled whiskey

Now alcohol's best man,

Suddenly heads into the prairie. Though not beauty

could fill the broken

Lost all control and powerless

Time is tempered

Almost tipsy don't do it justice

I am not here to make an impression

Reserved I come

Devil, I'm here to listen

Six bullets in the revolver

Perplexed

Choose to stay alive or

be dead

Like butter on toast

Fine as cream gravy

But I don't forget

Outlaw way of living

The rusty falls

Given up-- Proven to be a lie

Secrets not hidden

Make the best of what you have or

Find peace within the graveyard