

Tangled up in the West

by
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When grandpa cleared the sage a hundred years ago,
He said it was harder to train cows back then.
So he used 4-point wire on all the fences,
To keep the cows out and to keep 'em in.

Then the winds blew and the sand moved in.
Buried the fences and almost their dreams.
Through the Depression what keep them going,
Was the grass along a perennial stream.

The deep wells were dug during the War,
When farm prices were finally good.
And when the best ground was planted to hay.
We uncovered the wire where the fences once stood.

Now I know barbed wire helped win the West.
But now days we are just trying to get untangled from the mess.

Once I took a short-cut across a back pasture.
Then I found out a little too late.
I had also taken ten feet of wire with me,
For a ride, out on the interstate.

When those 4-points finally grabbed ahold,
Chunks starting coming out of my rear tire.
With pieces flying and the tread a flappin.
"My God, I must be on fire!"

When the rear end spun around to greet me,
I thought, this might be the end?
But then the skidding stopped and the dust settled.
The sand and sagebrush had saved me again.

It's true barbed wire helped win the West.
But now days we just want to stay untangled from the mess.

Now I know my bales are usually heavier than most.
Good farmin keeps the alfalfa weed-free.
And my cows are gainin, but moving awfully slow.
I called the vet, "What could the problem be?"

He drove out to the ranch to take a look.
"This trip better be worth my gasoline!"
Then he told me, "You've got hardware disease!
Its the worse case I have ever seen!"

"These cows got anvils floating in their eyes,
And they are looking pretty obscene.
And if you sell them for slaughter now,
they'll have to cut them up with acetylene."

Yep, the "Devil's Rope" did help us tame the West.
But now days folks are wondering how to get untangled from the mess.

Now when I break open a piece of new ground,
I have nightmares the night before.
Grandpa's wire is waiting there for me.
I feel like I am marching off to war.

The disc digs it up and cuts it into pieces,
Spreading shrapnel across the new hay field.
To jam the drill and dull the swather,
I feel like I am working in a battlefield.

The shards have taken out the swather's teeth.
I'm headed back to the tractor dealer again.
"Your ranch has got the hardware disease."
The parts man says with a sarcastic grin.

I know barbed wire helped win the West.
But God help me please get untangled from this mess.

YOU CAN'T FARM WITH AN AEROSTAR

Well, I bought this piece of ground ten years ago,
To build some city boy dreams.
I cleared the sage and planted the seeds.
This farming, it can't be as hard as it seems.
And I got the name of a local farmer,
Someone I might try to befriend.
To answer all my crazy questions,
And the things I couldn't comprehend.

Now he always acts surprised,
Every time that I drive up.
Because everybody he knows,
Drives a pickup truck.
So he hides out in his shop,
Hoping I will just drive away.
Until he realizes it's me,
And not some tourist from the highway.

When he finally offered me some neighborly advice,
He didn't mean me any harm.
"David, buy the pickup first!
Then start the farm".

Well, I prayed for the snow and the spring rain.
I learned that water is precious indeed.
And I learned that a farmer has to experiment,
If he is ever going to succeed.
But after four years of worry and sweat,
I am going to have to concede.
The only crop I can seem to grow,
Is a new kind of jackrabbit feed.

So I asked him, "What am I doin wrong?
Is there something I cannot see?"
He stared at the ground, took a deep breath,
And then he told me.
"IT'S THE CAR!
YOU CAN'T FARM WITH AN AEROSTAR!"

“Now you better stay off the highways,
When those cold winds start to blow.
Because that’s a California car.
It doesn’t like the snow.
Or always carry your tire chains,
Flashlight and poncho.
Unless you like driving sideways,
Where ever you try to go.”

“And I know that sliding door opens wide,
And those seats, they do come out.
And you can just fit a pair of calves inside,
From the tail to the snout.
But if you desecrate the family car,
Your wife is going to shout.
And you better not drive in the carpool,
Until all that poop dries out.”

“And when you take those rear seats out,
There is plenty of room in back.
For your tools, pesticide cans,
And your handyman jack.
But, you better pray the Lord is with you,
If you ever get in a wreck.
Because that load you have been a carryin,
You will be wearing around your neck!”

“So you had better hire a good lawyer.
And write a brand new will.
Because if your tools don’t getcha,
That 2,4-D will!”

“Ah tell ya, IT’S THE CAR!
YOU CAN’T FARM WITH AN AEROSTAR!”