

## Before Your Bandanna Slips Over Your Good Eye

Oh Little Cowboy before you go,  
 Before your bandanna slips over your good eye,  
 Go back to the burned down bunkhouse for one last look  
 In the gray ashes and charred nails.  
 Stand on the smooth foot stones worn to the hue of pecan meat,  
 Polished by the boot soles of troops of mounted men.  
 Stand still by the stub of a gate post listening, forever listening,  
 For Rowdy's last take and Salty's last draw.  
 ("These three of a kind beats them two pair")

Oh little Cowboy before you go,  
 Before your bandanna slips over your good eye,  
 Saddle to ride full face into the North wind under a gray winter sky.  
 Drop and find a leather glove in the frozen grass,  
 Stuff your shirt tail inside until the collar tightens against your throat,  
 Trim your chap wings to turn the raging gales,  
 And once again rejoice in the luxury of turning South to the house.

Oh Little Cowboy before you go,  
 Before your bandanna slips over your good eye,  
 Toward evening after the winds still, go back to the red clay bluffs  
 On Dutch Woman Draw.  
 Set the mind's eye to the ear's tone to pick up once again fifty, maybe sixty  
 Head of bulls bawling to a rising moon, or whatever celestial forces cause  
 The monsters of the cattle ranges to bellow before nightfall.

Oh Little Cowboy before you go,  
 Before your bandanna slips over your good eye,  
 Arise before daybreak, strike out the door,  
 Ride east to the edge of Bentley Hill,  
 Dismount to set fire to the upwind side of the biggest sacahuista on the rim,  
 Await for enough light to bring a ghost band of horses to the house on the  
 run.

So go forth Little Cowboy,  
 Take up the smooth stones to place back on the rim of Bentley hill,  
 Scrape the bunkhouse ashes into Dutch Woman Draw,  
 Tighten up your bandanna. Forgive the times that took it all away.