

# Dangerous Dan McGrew

Hank Snow

A bunch of the boys were whooping it up in the Malamute saloon  
The kid that handles the music-box was hitting a jag-time tune  
Back at the bar in a solo game sat Dangerous Dan McGrew  
And watching his luck was his light of love the lady that's known as Lou

When out of the night which was fifty below and into the din and the glare  
There stumbled a miner fresh from the creeks dog dirty and loaded for bear  
He looked like a man with a foot in the grave and scarcely the strength of a louse  
Yet he tilted a poke of dust on the bar and he called for drinks on the house

There was none could place the stranger's face though we searched ourselves for a clue  
But we drank his health and the last to drink was Dangerous Dan McGrew  
There's men that somehow just grip your eyes and hold them hard like a spell  
And such was he and he looked to me like a man who had lived in hell

With a face most hair and the dreary stare of a dog whose day is done  
As he watered the green stuff in his glass and the drops fell one by one  
Then I got to figgering who he was and wondering what he'd do  
And I turned my head and there watching him was the lady that's known as Lou

His eyes went rubbering round the room and he seemed in a kind of daze  
Till at last that old piano fell in the way of his wondering gaze  
The rag-time kid was having a drink there was no one else on the stool  
So the stranger stumbles across the room and flops down there like a fool

In a buckskin shirt that was glazed with dirt he sat and I saw him sway  
Then he clutched the keys with his talon hands my God but that man could play  
Were you ever out in the great alone when the moon was awful clear  
And the icy mountains hemmed you in with a silence you most could hear

With only the howl of a timber wolf and you camped there in the cold  
A half-dead thing in the stark dead world clean mad for the muck called gold  
While high overhead green yellow and red the North Lights swept in bars  
Then you've got a hunch what the music meant hunger and night and the stars

And hunger not of the belly kind that's banished with bacon and beans  
But the gnawing hunger of lonely men for a home and all that it means  
For a fireside far from the cares that are four walls and a roof above  
But oh! so cramful of cosy joy and crowned with a woman's love

A woman dearer than all the world and true as Heaven is true  
God how ghastly she looks through her rouge the lady that's known as Lou  
Then all of a sudden the music changed so soft that you scarce could hear  
But you felt that your life had been looted clean of all that it once held dear

That someone had stolen the woman you loved that her love was a devil's lie  
That your guts were gone and the best of you was to crawl away and die  
Twas the crowning cry of a heart's despair and it thrilled you through and through  
I guess I'll make it a spread misere said Dangerous Dan McGrew

The music almost died away then it burst like a pent-up flood

And it seemed to say repay repay and my eyes were blind with blood  
The thought came back of an ancient wrong and it stung like a frozen lash  
And the lust awoke to kill to kill then the music stopped with a crash

And the stranger turned and his eyes they burned in a most peculiar way  
In a buckskin shirt that was glazed with dirt he sat and I saw him sway  
Then his lips went in in a kind of a grin and he spoke and his voice was calm  
And boys says he you don't know me and none of you care a damn

But I want to state and my words are straight and I'll bet my poke they're true  
That one of you is a hound of hell and that one is Dan McGrew  
Then I ducked my head and the lights went out and two guns blazed in the dark  
And a woman screamed and the lights went up and two men lay stiff and stark  
Pitched on his head and pumped full of lead was Dangerous Dan McGrew  
While the man from the creeks lay clutched to the breast of the Lady that's known as Lou

These are the simple facts of the case and I guess I ought to know  
They say that the stranger was crazed with hooch and I'm not denying it's so  
I'm not so wise as the lawyer guys but strictly between us two  
The woman that kissed him and pinched his poke was the lady that's known as Lou