

Handout 2

El corrido de Kansas

Cuando salimos para Kansas
Con aquella novillada,
¡ay, que trabajos pasamos
por aquella llanada!

Como las nubes eran tan prietas
y sin alcanzar el corral,
los truenos eran tan recios
que nos hacían llorar.

Cinco mil eran los novillos
los que íbamos a llevar.
Entre quince mexicanos
no los pudimos dominar.

Bajamos al Río Grande,
no había barco en que pasar.
El caporal nos decía
—Muchachos, se van a ahogar—

Los vaqueros le responden
todos en general,
—Si somos del Río Grande,
de los buenos para nadar—

La madre de un vaquero
le pregunta al caporal,
—¿Qué razón me das de mi hijo?
que no lo he visto llegar—

Señora, yo le dijera
pero ha de querer llorar,
su hijo lo mató un novillo
en las trancas de un corral.

Si seguimos como vamos
y como vamos seguimos,
aquí se acabó cantando
los versitos de un vaquero.

The Ballad of Kansas

When we went to Kansas,
With that herd of cattle,
Oh, what work we had
On that plain!

The clouds were so dark
We couldn't reach the corral,
the thunderclaps were so loud
They made us cry.

Five thousand were the cattle
That we had to drive.
Between fifteen Mexicans
We could not control them.

We went down to the Rio Grande.
There was no boat in which to cross.
The foreman said to us,
"Boys, you are going to drown."

The cowboys responded
All together,
"We are of the Rio Grande,
Of the good swimmers."

The mother of a cowboy
Asked the foreman,
"What can you tell me about my son,
Whom I have not seen?"

"Lady, I will tell you,
But it will make you cry.
Your son was killed by a steer
Against the bars of a corral."

If we keep on as we go,
And go as we keep on,
Here ends the singing
Of a cowboy's verses.

The Ballad of Kansas

an adaptation in rhyme

When we drove our cattle to Kansas,
We worked through a driving rain.
Oh, our work it was never ending
Upon that endless plain!

The corral disappeared before us,
So black was the midday sky.
And you never have heard such thunder,
So loud it would make a man cry.

The cattle to lead were five thousand.
We drove five thousand head.
Just fifteen Mexicanos were we.
We were less leading than led.

When at last we had reached the big river,
No boat on the bank could be found.
The foreman cried, "On the other side,
I'll find every one of you drowned!"

The cowboys responded together,
"But this is our native land!"
They shouted to him, "We know how to swim!
We come from the Rio Grande!"

The mother of one of the cowboys
Saw the men riding home minus one.
She walked right up to the foreman.
"What word have you, sir, of my son?"

"Dear lady, I'm going to tell you,
Though it's going to make you cry.
'Gainst the rails of a pen, a steer did him in.
That's where your dear son did die."

Oh, we're riding on and the work goes on.
We work as we ride along.
And here is ended the singing
Of a simple cowboy's song.