

## Rio Lindo

Fifty years ago, in Western Colorado,  
An oil well came in big named Raven One.  
An oil field grew from nothing, & workers came  
running  
For a lot of work and a little post-War fun.

They mostly came from Texas, Oklahoma and the  
Ozarks,  
From the bayous and the big refinery towns,  
They came in Fords and Chevvy's, piled high and  
loaded heavy,  
Toward high-pay work out where stars are bright.

### **Chorus**

*Oh the brightest stars shine on Colorado,  
And Rio Blanco got the biggest share,  
But the brightest star one night was a trailer  
burning bright.*

**Ins: chromatic walkdown I-IV) Rio Lindo (yodel?)**

Boomtown came to Rangely, little cow town by  
the river,  
With dirt streets, two bars and a one-lane bridge.  
Families lived in tents while the companies built  
the big camps,  
Out in the field by Raven Ridge.

Some folks found another place, farther down the  
river  
A long drive to work but the rent was free,  
You could drag your trailer down to the White  
River bottom  
Where stars were all the streetlights you could see.

There were six or seven trailers blocked up there  
in the willows,  
There was air to breathe and lots of room to think  
There were deer and skunks and magpies, more  
ducks than you could talk to,  
And all the river you could drink.

**Chorus:** *Oh the brightest stars . . .*

Kerosene for lights, they had kerosene to cook  
with,  
And kerosene to keep the trailers warm.  
The lantern light from windows played yellow on  
the river.  
The cottonwood trunks and the pale canyon walls.

22 below, in the last week of December,  
After Christmas, the kids were all in bed,  
No phones, no radios, just starlight on the air,  
Folks would sing or talk or play some cards or  
read.

Three kids were sleeping in one trailer by the  
river,  
The one-year-old and the older kids, the twins,  
Their folks kissed them good night, and walked  
two trailers down  
For a hand of canasta with their friends.

They saw the canyon lighten through the trailer's  
iced-up window  
The yellow firelight came flaring through.  
A guy raced to Bonanza and he raced back with  
the pumper,  
But there was nothing anyone could do.

**Chorus:** *Oh the brightest stars . . .*

Ignacio they call it, where the county road goes  
over  
The Rio Blanco south to Baxter Pass,  
There is nothing heading south till you hit the  
Colorado,  
But dirt roads and towns that didn't last.

Fifty years have passed and the river runs  
regardless,  
By a quiet canyon bottom gone to wild,  
The beauty of the place can seem like violation  
When you think about the kids who died that  
night.

### **Bridge:**

But the river runs blameless as a river,  
Songbirds come in March from Mexico  
Better put the pedal down, roll across the Rio  
Blanco  
Till the stars and the dirt roads find you home

**Chorus:** *Oh the brightest stars . . .*