

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 . . .*