

Call of the West

Stan Ridgway

He got the high sign so he jumped a bus
Along the roads that wind on through
The hot mojave and the jericho
He'd start his whole life anew
And what he left behind he hadn't valued
Half as much as some things
He never knew Right around sundown...
He got dropped off on a street in town
Where a grey old man looked him up and down and said
"son, this ain't no western movie matinee
You're a long way off from yippie-yi-yay
'cause I can tell at a glance you're not from 'round these parts
You've got a green look about'chacchthat's a gringo for starts
Sometimes the only thing a western savage understands
Are whiskey and rifles and an unarmed man
Like you""so you gotta keep on the move!
Don't let that fancy paint job fool you!"
Then the old timer pulled him close and said You've got a long way, I know
You've got a longer drive ahead
Through the bones of the buffalo
Through the claims of the western dead, andcc
Just like the spokes of a wheel
You'll spin 'round with the rest
You'll hear the drums and the brush of steel
You'll hear the call of the west, call of the west
You'll hear the call of the west, call of the west Spoken
Harshly awakened by the sound of six rounds of light-caliber rifle fire
Followed minutes later by the booming of nine rounds from a heavier rifle
But you can't close off the wilderness
He heard the snick of a rifle bolt
And found himself peering down the muzzle
Of a weapon held by a drunken liquor store owner
"there's a conflict," he said, "there's a conflict
Between land and people
The people have to go
They've come all the way out here to make mining claims
To do automobile body work
To gamble
Take pictures

To not have to do laundry
To own a mini-bike
Have their own cb radios and air conditioning
Good plumbing for sure
And to sell time/life books and to work in a deli
To have a little chili every morning
And maybe... maybe to own their own gas stations again
And take drugs
Have some crazy sex
But above all, above all, to have a fair shake
To get a piece of the rock and a slice of the pie
And spit out of the window of your car and not have the wind blow it back in your face "Now, from the high timberline to the deserts dry
Who'll risk dangling on some hangman's tree
To stake their claims on these prarie plains
While they say this lunch is not had for free?
Just like the spokes of a wheel
Who'll spin 'round with the rest
They'll hear the drums and the brush of steel
And I'll hear the call of the west, call of the west
(yippie-yi-yo, yippie-yi-yo-ki-yay, yippie-yi-yo-ohh-ohh)
I'll hear the call of the west, call of the west
(yippie-yi-yo, yippie-yi-yo-ki-yay, yippie-yi-yo-ohh-ohh)
I'll hear the call of the west, call of the west
(yippie-yi-yo, yippie-yi-yo-ki-yay, yippie-yi-yo-ohh-ohh)
I'll hear the call of the west, call of the west
(yippie-yi-yo, yippie-yi-yo-ki-yay, yippie-yi-yo-ohh-ohh)Spoken/shouted:
I used to be somebody!
I used to be somebody, do you hear me?
Do you hear me? I've been there!
I used to be somebody, God damn you!
I've been there before!
Don't walk away!
Well, youccyou wanted unleaded?
Unleadedccthat's next pump over, so keep on movin', okay?
No, it's out of order.

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