

Mean As Hell

Johnny Cash

The Devil in Hell we're told was chained
A thousand years he there remained
He neither complain nor did he groan
But was determined to start a Hell of his own
Where he could torment the souls of men
Without being chained in a prison pen
So he asked the Lord if he had on hand
Anything left when he made this land
The Lord said yes there's a plenty on hand
But I left it down by the Rio Grande
The fact is ol' boy the stuff is so poor
I don't think you could use it as the Hell anymore
But the Devil went down to look at the truck
And said if he took it as a gift he was stuck
For after lookin' that over carefully and well
He said this place is too dry for Hell
But in order to get it off his hand
The Lord promised the Devil to water the land
So trade was closed and deed was given
And the Lord went back to his home in Heaven
And the Devil said now I got all what's needed
To make it good Hell and he succeeded
He began by putting thorns all over the trees
He mixed up the sand with millions of fleas
He scattered tarantulas along the road
Put thorns on cactus and horns on toad
Lengthened the horns of the Texas steer
Put an addition to the rabbits ear
Put a little Devil in the bronco steed
And poisoned the feet of the centipede
The rattlesnake bites you the scorpion stings
The mosquito delights you with his buzzing wings
The sunburst are there and so the ants
And if you sit down you'll need have soles on your pants
The wild boar roams on a black chaparral
It's a Hell of a place that he has for a Hell
The heat in the summers are hundred and ten
Too hot for the Devil, too hot for men
The red pepper grows upon the banks of the brook
The Mexican use it in all that he cook
Just dine it with one of 'em and you're bound to shout
I've Hell on the inside as well as the out
My hands are calloused July to July
I use a big dipper to navigate by
Fight off the wolves to drink from my well
So I have to be, mean as Hell
A sheep herder came and put up a fence
I saw him one day but I ain't seen him since
But if you need any mutton we got mutton to sell
We're cowpunchers and we're mean as Hell
Neither me nor my pony's got a pedigree
But he takes me where I'm wantin' to be

I'll ride him to death and when he is fell
I'll get me another one, mean as Hell
I shot me a calf and I cut off her head
'Cause the boys in the bunkhouse are wantin' to be fed
They rise in chime with the five thirty bell
And the best one of any of 'em, is mean as Hell

Songwriters
CASH, JOHNNY R. Published by
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