

# The Band That Didn't Memorize Christmas Songs

*by* Carl Santoro

The jingle bells seemed to scream  
as they were torn off the  
swinging saloon doors.  
In their place now entered the sound  
of many boot spurs jingling roughly  
as they walked the wooden floors.

Every head turned to see  
who committed this  
startling wrong.  
It was none other than the  
six musicians known as  
"The Band That Didn't Memorize Christmas Songs."

As they bellied up to the bar,  
Old Joe, the Barkeep put aside his towel.  
He looked under the counter  
to make sure his gun  
was where it was.  
He stared at them hard as an owl.

On stage was young Clementine  
singing the lovely  
"O, Holy Night"-  
God, she looked so beautiful  
under that soft blue stage light.

The Band That Didn't Memorize Christmas Songs  
swallowed many whiskies each  
before they realized the darling  
was up there looking  
fresh as a new peach.

"Keep it down!" they heard a man shout  
who had his feet up on a table.  
He bellowed this out with a angry grunt  
as loud as he was able.

It was Sheriff Gotschalk bothered  
with a tear rolling down his face.  
The peach-faced Clementine blushed  
it became quiet throughout  
the entire smoky place.

The Band That Didn't Memorize Christmas Songs  
felt for their holsters  
looking around for the louse.  
(nobody was stirring - not even a mouse)  
Their leader, Chestnut Jack,  
took out his long bow,  
and pointed it at Gotschalk  
deliberate and slow.

"We don't want no trouble"  
the Sheriff he did say.  
"Now when she's a finished,  
why not you'all go on up there and play?"

The band snarled then laughed,  
and spit in the floor tin.  
Those in the room now wondered  
just who it was gonna win.

Outside could be heard  
the hard patter of rain  
A man stared out a window,  
only to see a passing train.  
A pocketwatch was opened,  
the bells of the church rang  
The Band That Didn't Memorize Christmas Songs  
opened their wet saddlebags  
obeying orders given  
to the whole gang.

Old Joe popped a cork  
off a cherished cold champagne.  
As Jack and his crew began to move  
and wipe off all the sad rain.

They brought out a brass horn,  
violins and a guitar,  
Jack said, "Everyone drink!  
Come up to the bar!"

The Band That Didn't Memorize Christmas Songs  
entertained them all this midnight.  
It was the song they knew  
Auld Lang Syne they played,  
another year it got them through.

