

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.

