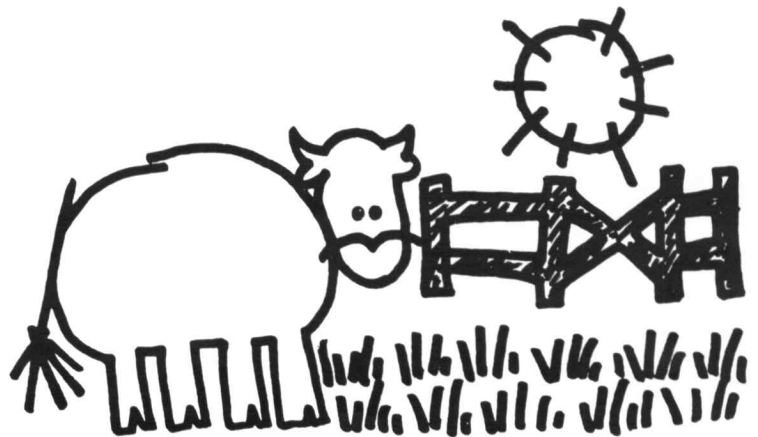


# "The Swagman at the Golden Gate"

Ted Simpson

Saint Peter put his quart pot down and rubbed his saintly eyes  
 As through the clouds came a figure bowed pursued by swarms of flies  
 Came tramping up to heaven's gate and stood there in a maze.  
 Then he dropped his swag and tucker bag and said, "Well spare me days!  
 I've humped this old matilda since the age of seventeen.  
 There's not a track in the great outback that us two haven't seen;  
 So when I rolled me final swag I thought I'd cleared the slate,  
 But stone the crows before me nose I see another gate.  
 In fifty years of trampin' and covering all the while  
 Twelve miles a day at least, to say, eight gates to the mile,  
 Now I'm not much good at figures but the way I calculate  
 In my career I've opened near on twenty million gates.  
 There was gates that fairly haunt me, there was gates of every sort—  
 Saggin' gates and draggin' gates, high, low, long and short,  
 Gates that seem to challenge yuh and gates that seem to grin,  
 Lazy gates and crazy gates that hung on half a hinge,  
 Gates tied up with fencin' wire and gates with fancy scrolls,  
 With patent catch and homemade latch, and gates made out of poles,  
 Wide gates and narrow gates, big barriers and small,  
 Rusted gates and busted gates, I've wrestled with them all.  
 And I've opened 'em and shut 'em till the sight of all I hate  
 And I'd sooner miss your heavenly bliss than open that there gate.

What's that you say, you'll open up for me—  
 Well that's what I call nice—  
 And close it too when I get through? This must be paradise!"



Reprint from: *Range Management Newsletter*, official newsletter of the Australian Rangeland Society, edited by Barney Foran at Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia, November, 1981. The poem was collected by Bill Scott, an Australian Folklore Collector, in 1981.

Reprinting was recommended by Hank Mayland, Soil Scientist, Kimberly, Idaho, to give readers a little Australian humor and a chuckle or two.