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A Cultural Revelation — Willie Nelson and His Gay Cowboy Song

Thursday, February 16, 2006

The fact that singer Willie Nelson has recorded his own “gay cowboy song” is not so revealing. After all, the Hollywood elites have gone agog over *Brokeback Mountain*. In one sense, Willie is just joining the bandwagon. He also has a song on the movie’s soundtrack.

What makes this story so revealing is the fact that the song, “Cowboys Are Secretly, Frequently Fond of each Other,” was written twenty years ago. “The song’s been in the closet for 20 years. The timing’s right for it to come out,” said Nelson, according to BBC News. “I’m just opening the door,” he says.

Nelson’s openly-gay manager, David Anderson, said, “This song obviously has special meaning to me in more ways than one,” said Mr Anderson. “I want people to know more than anything - gay, straight, whatever - just how cool Willie is and ... his way of thinking, his tolerance, everything about him,” he added.

So this is the way to show how cool you are, how tolerant. This says a great deal about our cultural moment.

Just consider the lyrics to the song:

There’s many a strange impulse out on the plains of West Texas; There’s many a young boy who feels things he don’t comprehend. Well small town don’t like it when somebody falls between sexes, No, small town don’t like it when a cowboy has feelings for men.

Well I believe in my soul that inside every man there’s a feminine, And inside every lady there’s a deep manly voice loud and clear: Well, a cowboy may brag about things that he does with his women, But the ones who brag loudest are the ones that are most likely queer. Cowboys are frequently secretly fond of each other; What did you think those saddles and boots was about?

There’s many a cowboy who don’t understand the way that he feels towards his brother; Inside every cowboy there’s a lady who’d love to slip out. Ten men for each woman was the rule way back when on the prairie, And somehow those cowboys must have kept themselves warm late at night. Cowboys are famous for getting riled up about fairies, But I’ll tell you the reason a big strong man gets so uptight:

Cowboys are frequently secretly fond of each other; That’s why they wear leather; and Levi’s and belts buckled tight. There’s many a cowboy who don’t understand the way that he feels towards his brother; There’s many a cowboy who’s more like a lady at night.

Well there’s always somebody who says what the others just whisper; And mostly that someone’s the first one to get shot down dead: When you talk to a cowboy don’t treat him like he was a sister Don’t mess with the lady that’s sleepin’ in each cowboy’s head.

Cowboys are frequently secretly fond of each other; Even though they take speed and drive pickups and shoot their big guns; There’s many a cowboy who don’t understand the way that he feels towards his brother; There’s many a cowboy

who keeps quiet about things he's done.

What will cowboys make of that? Ponder the distance between Texas and Hollywood.

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