

# 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