

THE BALLAD OF OLD TOM LAMB

Oh I've travelled the world from Brazil to Siam
But I never met the equal of Moose Lake's Tom Lamb.
He was raised like a Cree, as spry as a sparrow
And he once shot ten fleas with but one bow and arrow.
When he bagged his first bear and downed his first moose
He shot from Pa's shoulder -- a precocious papoose!
At age four and a quarter he shod his first horse,
And then roped a wild staleon -- as a matter of course!
On the day he was five, in Nineteen ought three,
He scalped a horned owl, which proved him a Cree.
And on his sixth birthday he hauled in a trout
That fed all his family till August was out.
Young Tom was a wizard at trapping the beaver,
On the trail of a girl he never would leave her --
In fact he tracked one from The Pas to God's Lake
And she left all her curls in her desperate wake.
But still Tom pursued her -- he was then not quite eight --
And the end of this tale I'd rather not state.
When Tom was just ten, as you might well expect
His career was so startling that it couldn't be wrecked.
He hauled fish with ten horses hitched shoulder to shoulder
At sixty below, and sometimes much colder --
At eighty below he slept on the ground
When coyotes and wolves froze stiff all around.
He could keep a fire burning when no one else could,
And he pulled off such tricks as no beardless boy should --
He dodged all the schools but, incurably noseey,
Took advanced courses in women from The Pas' Cut-throat Rosie.

Endowed with such knowledge as few youths achieve
Tom soon blossomed out as the North's menace to Eve.
But here I'm obliged to draw a thick curtain
For Tom was a lad to keep pants and shirt on.
At twelve he evinced a marked interest in flying,
And he kited so high that folks swore he was lying,
But in fact Tom had copied the art of the hawk --
He took off in hot air and flew on a squawk!
Since then he's been flying on sheer nerve, without gas,
And no one can match him -- he lands on his ass!
Tom explains that this science is easy to master --
Just callous your rear -- and you can't meet disaster.
This brings our Tom's saga to the age of fifteen,
By which time the North with stark envy was green --
For nobody knew how to tame this young squirt.
But he met his come-uppance, enclosed in a skirt,
Untamed as a wolf and as sly as a lynx
He went shopping in Eaton's and there met a minx --
So shy and so soulful -- so wide-eyed and quiet --
She stirred up in Tom a storm like a riot.
When he shot at a moose he missed it by miles --
When he ate ham and eggs he wound up with piles!
When he took Granny's cure he could sit down with ease --
But as soon as he saw Jennie he collapsed with a sneeze.
At last he took potions -- a lock from her hair --
The fat of a moose and the claw of a bear
And he mixed in the juice of a cat caught in heat --
And with that Jenny Armstrong was doomed to defeat.

For how could a girl resist such a suitor?
And where could a man find a girl that was cuter?
So they pledged to each other, for worse or for better,
And Tom said, "It's worth it! So long as I get her!"
Now the years have sped by and Tom, turning sixty,
Has a glint in his eye like a ten-year-old pixie.
With six lusty sons and a trio of daughters
Old Tom walks Moose Lake like the Lord on the waters.
He swims like an Otter, and flies like a goose --
He works like a beaver, and roars like a moose --
He talks like a Cree, and he flies like a bird,--
He uses such language as few people have heard --
But he's still got some magic --
A bang and a slam --
And the North has one name for it -- just simply TOM LAMB.

by Leland Stowe

Reader's Digest

Moose Lake - Tom Lamb's 60th Birthday party - June 29, 1958.

Written in ten minutes while the girls were setting the dinner table.