



# *The Wooden Indian and the Shaghorn Buffalo*

Carl Sandburg  
North American

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*Intermediate*  
*2 min read*

One night a milk white moon was shining down on Main Street. The sidewalks and the stones, the walls and the windows all stood out milk white. And there was a thin blue mist drifted and shifted like a woman's veil up and down Main Street, up to the moon and back again. Yes, all Main Street was a mist blue and a milk white, mixed up and soft all over and all through.

It was past midnight. The Wooden Indian in front of the cigar store stepped down off his stand. The Shaghorn Buffalo in front of the haberdasher shop lifted his head and shook his whiskers, raised his hoofs out of his hoof-tracks.

Then—this is what happened. They moved straight toward each other. In the middle of Main Street they met. The Wooden Indian jumped straddle of the Shaghorn Buffalo. And the Shaghorn Buffalo put his head down and ran like a prairie wind straight west on Main Street.

At the high hill over the big bend of the Clear Green River they stopped. They stood looking. Drifting and shifting like a woman's blue veil, the blue mist filled the valley and the milk white moon filled the valley. And

the mist and the moon touched with a lingering, wistful kiss the clear green water of the Clear Green River.

So they stood looking, the Wooden Indian with his copper face and wooden feathers, and the Shaghorn Buffalo with his big head and heavy shoulders slumping down close to the ground.

And after they had looked a long while, and each of them got an eyeful of the high hill, the big bend and the moon mist on the river all blue and white and soft, after they had looked a long while, they turned around and the Shaghorn Buffalo put his head down and ran like a prairie wind down Main Street till he was exactly in front of the cigar store and the haberdasher shop. Then whisk! both of them were right back like they were before, standing still, taking whatever comes.

This is the story as it came from the night policeman of the Village of Cream Puffs. He told the people the next day, "I was sitting on the steps of the cigar store last night watching for burglars. And when I saw the Wooden Indian step down and the Shaghorn Buffalo step out, and the two of them go down Main Street like the wind, I says to myself, marvelish, 'tis marvelish, 'tis marvelish."

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