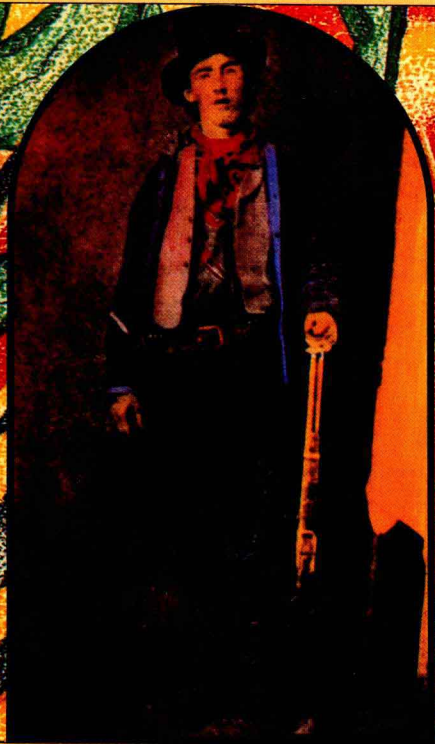


"WONDERFUL...ONDAATJE'S LANGUAGE IS CLEAN AND ENERGETIC,
WITH THE POP OF BULLETS. THIS IS LITERATURE, ART."

—ANNIE DILLARD, AUTHOR OF *PILGRIM AT TINKER CREEK*

MICHAEL ONDAATJE



THE COLLECTED
— WORKS OF —
BILLY THE KID

MICHAEL ONDAATJE

**THE
COLLECTED WORKS
OF
BILLY THE KID**



PENGUIN BOOKS

PENGUIN BOOKS

Published by the Penguin Group

Viking Penguin Inc., 40 West 23rd Street, New York, New York 10010, U.S.A.

Penguin Books Ltd, 27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ, England

Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Ringwood, Victoria, Australia

Penguin Books Canada Ltd, 2801 John Street,

Markham, Ontario, Canada L3R 1B4

Penguin Books (N.Z.) Ltd, 182-190 Wairau Road,

Auckland 10, New Zealand

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices:

Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England

First published in the United States of America by

W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1974

First published in Canada by

House of Anansi Press Limited 1970

Published in Penguin Books 1984

3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Copyright © Michael Ondaatje, 1970

All rights reserved

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING IN PUBLICATION DATA

Ondaatje, Michael, 1943—

The collected works of Billy the Kid.

Reprint. Originally published: Toronto: Anansi, c1970.

1. Billy, the Kid—Fiction. 2. Billy, the Kid—

Poetry. I. Title.

[PR9199.3.O5C6 1984] 818'.5407 84-3095

ISBN 0 14 00.7280 2

Printed in the United States of America

Set in Garamond

Credits

The death of Tunstall and the reminiscences of Paulita Maxwell and Sallie Chisum on Billy are essentially made up of statements made to Walter Noble Burns in his book *The Saga of Billy the Kid*, published in 1926. The comment about taking photographs around 1870-1880 is by the great Western photographer L. A. Huffman and appears in his book *Huffman, Frontier Photographer*. (Some of the photographs in this book are his.) The last piece of dialogue between Garrett and Poe is taken from an account written by Deputy John W. Poe in 1919, when he was the president of the National Bank of Roswell, New Mexico. The comic book legend is real. With these basic sources I have edited, rephrased, and slightly reworked the originals. But the emotions belong to their authors.

Acknowledgments

Some sections of this book have appeared in magazines, so I would like to thank the following magazines and their editors: *Bleu Ointment*, *It*, *20 Cents Magazine*, and *Quarry*. And the following books: *The Cosmic Chef* and *The Story So Far*.

Pages 99-102 appear through the courtesy of Charlton Press, Inc., copyright © Charlton Press, Inc., 1969, pages 1-10 of *Billy the Kid*, Vol. 1, No. 72, May 1969.

Except in the United States of America,
this book is sold subject to the condition
that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise,
be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated
without the publisher's prior consent in any form of
binding or cover other than that in which it is
published and without a similar condition
including this condition being imposed
on the subsequent purchaser

PENGUIN BOOKS

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF BILLY THE KID

Michael Ondaatje was born in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in 1943. In 1962 he moved to Canada, where he now lives, teaching at Glendon College, York University, in Toronto. His other books include several widely praised volumes of poetry as well as the novel *Coming Through Slaughter* and the memoir *Running in the Family*, both of which are also published by Penguin Books. He has twice been given the Governor-General's Award for Literature.

BOOKS BY MICHAEL ONDAATJE

There's a Trick with a Knife
I'm Learning to Do: Poems 1962–1978

The Dainty Monsters

The Man with 7 Toes

The Collected Works of Billy the Kid

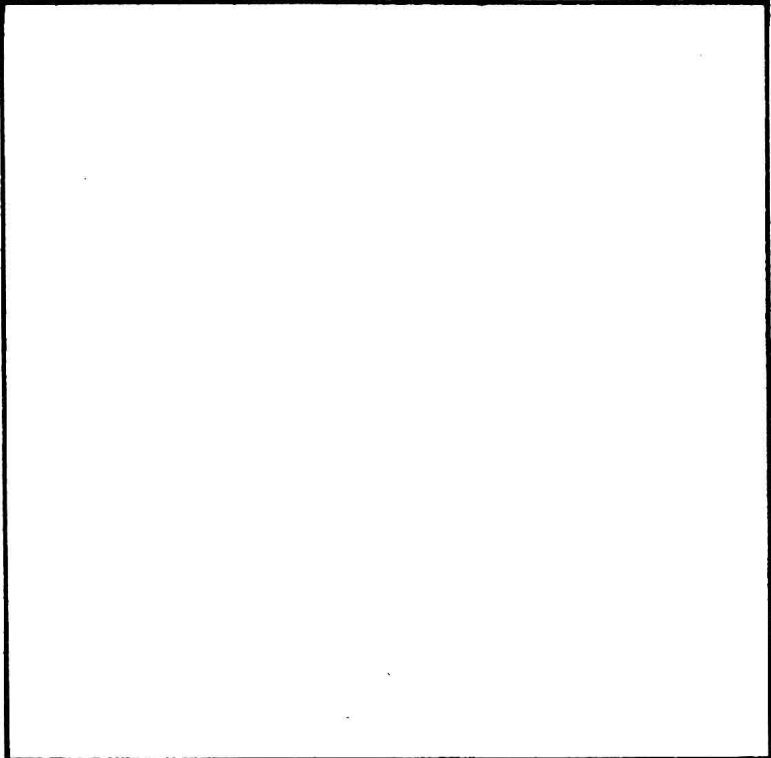
Rat Jell

Coming To
✱ghter
Elimination Dance

Running in the Family

This book is for many but especially for Kim, Stuart and Sally Mackinnon, Ken Livingstone, Victor Coleman and Barrie Nichol.

**THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
BILLY THE KID**



I send you a picture of Billy made with the Perry shutter as quick as it can be worked — Pyro and soda developer. I am making daily experiments now and find I am able to take passing horses at a lively trot square across the line of fire — bits of snow in the air — spokes well defined — some blur on top of wheel but sharp in the main — men walking are no trick — I will send you proofs sometime. I shall show you what can be done from the saddle without ground glass or tripod — please notice when you get the specimens that they were made with the lens wide open and many of the best exposed when my horse was in motion.

These are the killed.

(By me) —

Morton, Baker, early friends of mine.

Joe Bernstein, 3 Indians.

A blacksmith when I was twelve, with a knife.

5 Indians in self defence (behind a very safe rock).

One man who bit me during a robbery.

Brady, Hindman, Beckwith, Joe Clark,

Deputy Jim Carlyle, Deputy Sheriff J. W. Bell.

And Bob Ollinger. A rabid cat

birds during practice,

These are the killed.

(By them) —

Charlie, Tom O'Folliard

Angela D's split arm,

and Pat Garrett

sliced off my head.

Blood a necklace on me all my life.

Christmas at Fort Sumner, 1880. There were five of us together then. Wilson, Dave Rudabaugh, Charlie Bowdre, Tom O'Folliard, and me. In November we celebrated my 21st birthday, mixing red dirt and alcohol — a public breathing throughout the night. The next day we were told that Pat Garrett had been made sheriff and had accepted it. We were bad for progress in New Mexico and cattle politicians like Chisum wanted the bad name out. They made Garrett sheriff and he sent me a letter saying move out or I will get you Billy. The government sent a Mr. Azariah F. Wild to help him out. Between November and December I killed Jim Carlyle over some mixup, he being a friend.

Tom O'Folliard decided to go east then, said he would meet up with us in Sumner for Christmas. Goodbye goodbye. A few days before Christmas we were told that Garrett was in Sumner waiting for us all. Christmas night. Garrett, Mason, Wild, with four or five others. Tom O'Folliard rides into town, leaning his rifle between the horse's ears. He would shoot from the waist now which, with a rifle, was pretty good, and he was always accurate.

Garrett had been waiting for us, playing poker with the others, guns on the floor beside them. Told that Tom was riding in alone, he went straight to the window and shot O'Folliard's horse dead. Tom collapsed with the horse still holding the gun and blew out Garrett's window. Garrett already halfway downstairs. Mr. Wild shot at Tom from the other side of the street, rather unnecessarily shooting the horse again. If Tom had used stirrups and didnt swing his legs so much he would probably have been locked under the animal. O'Folliard moved soon. When Garrett had got to ground level, only the horse was there in the open street, good and dead. He couldnt shout to ask Wild where O'Folliard was or he would've got busted. Wild started to yell to tell Garrett though and Tom killed him at once. Garrett fired at O'Folliard's flash and took his shoulder off. Tom O'Folliard screaming out onto the quiet Fort Sumner street, Christmas night, walking over to Garrett, no shoulder left, his jaws tilting up and down like mad bladders going. Too mad to even aim at Garrett. Son of a bitch son of a bitch, as Garrett took clear aim and blew him out.

Garrett picked him up, the head broken in two, took him back upstairs into the hotel room. Mason stretched out a blanket neat in the corner. Garrett placed Tom O'Folliard down, broke open Tom's rifle, took the remaining shells and placed them by him. They had to wait till morning now. They continued their poker game till six a.m. Then remembered they hadn't done anything about Wild. So the four of them went out, brought Wild into the room. At eight in the morning Garrett buried Tom O'Folliard. He had known him quite well. Then he went to the train station, put Azariah F. Wild on ice and sent him back to Washington.

In Boot Hill there are over 400 graves. It takes the space of 7 acres. There is an elaborate gate but the path keeps to no main route for it tangles like branches of a tree among the gravestones.

300 of the dead in Boot Hill died violently
200 by guns, over 50 by knives
some were pushed under trains — a popular
and overlooked form of murder in the west.
Some from brain haemorrhages resulting from bar fights
at least 10 killed in barbed wire.

In Boot Hill there are only two graves that belong to women
and they are the only known suicides in that graveyard

The others, I know, did not see the wounds appearing in the sky, in the air. Sometimes a normal forehead in front of me leaked brain gasses. Once a nose clogged right before me, a lock of skin formed over the nostrils, and the shocked face had to start breathing through mouth, but then the mustache bound itself in the lower teeth and he began to gasp loud the hah! hah! going strong — churned onto the floor, collapsed out, seeming in the end to be breathing out of his eye — tiny needle jets of air reaching into the throat. I told no one. If Angela D. had been with me then, not even her; not Sallie, John, Charlie, or Pat. In the end the only thing that never changed, never became deformed, were animals.

MMMMMMMM mm thinking
moving across the world on horses
body split at the edge of their necks
neck sweat eating at my jeans
moving across the world on horses
so if I had a newsman's brain I'd say
well some morals are physical
must be clear and open
like diagram of watch or star
one must eliminate much
that is one turns when the bullet leaves you
walk off see none of the thrashing
the very eyes welling up like bad drains
believing then the moral of newspapers or gun
where bodies are mindless as paper flowers you dont feed
or give to drink
that is why I can watch the stomach of clocks
shift their wheels and pins into each other
and emerge living, for hours

When I caught Charlie Bowdre dying
rossed 3 feet by bang bullets giggling
at me face tossed in a gaggle
he pissing into his trouser legs in pain
face changing like fast sunshine o my god
o my god billy I'm pissing watch
your hands
while the eyes grew all over his body

Jesus I never knew that did you
the nerves shot out
the liver running around there
like a headless hen jerking
brown all over the yard
seen that too at my aunt's
never eaten hen since then