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Belle Starr

Richard Dixon

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Belle Starr

by Richard Dixon

As mean, lowdown and cutthroat as they come,
she gave as good as she got. Just ask
husband Sam, who for thirty years bore
the scars of her slashing knife.

Hidden back in the hard reaches of Robber's Cave,
she harbored outlaws from three territories.
The caught ones got hung by Judge Parker over
to Fort Smith. Homely, harsh face a liability,
it didn't stop Cole Younger. She once killed a man
who joked about putting an American flag over
her head and give her a poke for patriotism.

When the time came and the laws had infested
her once-safe haven, she packed up, moved north
50 miles to Whitefield. In February of '89 she turned
up murdered, her killer never identified. In April
that same year the government opened up
the Oklahoma Territory for settlement, the beginning
of another end.



Photo (detail) by Joel Kendall

