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## On The Way To The Cherokee Strip

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# ON THE WAY TO THE CHEROKEE STRIP

*by Elmer Suderman*

On his way to the Cherokee Strip  
to homestead a quarter section of land  
father in his lumber wagon  
followed hard-packed Chisholm Trail  
where millions of longhorn cattle  
had once raised clouds of dust  
from the Rio Grande to Abilene.

All day in September's silent,  
creeping hours the wagon,  
slow as the long day,  
creaked slowly beyond church bells  
and smell of home baked bread,  
beyond windmills and osage orange hedges,  
across enormous blue-sky,  
wind-and-sun prairie,  
through Newton, Wichita, Wellington,  
Caldwell, Medford, Enid, Hitchcock.

In vast, enormous land,  
horizon as far away at end  
as at beginning of day,  
he saw neither beginning nor end,  
the only change shadows,  
rearranged by shape-shifting thunder heads.

It was a long and lonely trip.