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Top Hand

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TOP HAND

by Pam Daughtery Smith

Up at dawn and gone all day—
 Cutting, baling, or hauling hay.
 Trouble knocking down the feed?
 Just crawl on in if that's what it needs.
 Heifers a kicking and thrashing in the strain.
 Grab that calf and help ease the pain.
 Breaking ice, and though you get no thanks,
 Your cattle are grateful for a drink from the tank.
 Branding and doctoring and worming and such...
 Has working cattle always taken so much?
 And the boss, Lord knows he has his days.
 When nothing you do ever goes his way.
 you set the bale in the wrong place or just plain set it wrong.
 The gate's off the hinge, the horses are in the wrong pen, and your hair's too long.
 But you put up with his guff
 'cause you know he ain't so tough.
 A time or two you've witnessed this little fact
 When you saw his missus straightening up his act.
 So you're on permanent hire—
 No way you can be fired.
 Truth is you wouldn't trade this joy for the world.
 After all, you're not only top hand—
 You're also Daddy's little girl.■