



Ghosts  
of old  
Judeau

by CRYSTAL  
SNOW  
JENNE



*To those unsung men and women whose high courage  
and bold daring builded the bridge over which the world  
later passed to the "Trail of '98" . . . .*

*To Our Early Pioneers!*



# Ghosts of Old Juneau

by

CRYSTAL SNOW JENNE

I would sing a song of Juneau in a day now long gone by.  
In the upward march of progress, shall we let these  
mem'ries die?

You, proud new Hotel Baranof, subject of our latest boasts,  
Can you lift your lofty penthouse, and not really feel  
the ghosts?

You've usurped a place historic, once the mecca of the town;  
For upon your streamlined corner, derelict, and falling  
down,

Stood a board shack which encompassed the meat market,  
where was sold  
Beef, when slaughtered on the beach where our big mine  
now turns out gold.

And I'm sure Chief Johnson's spirit must flit sighing through  
the mine,

As he seeks his mighty totem, record of a clan so fine,  
Which stood beacon for the tourists who were wont to climb  
the hill

When we hailed a boat's arrival every six weeks with a  
thrill.

I believe, reincarnated in the form of Patsy Ann,

Is a ghost of early Juneau that was once a steamship man,  
Who is looking for the shaky walk which was our only pier  
When "Slim Jim" would call out "Steamboat!" and the  
town turned out to cheer.



Over yonder, where clean pavement leads to civic buildings fine,  
Mired in mud a spirit clamors for revenge, and seems to

pine

For the days when squaws in blankets, some with faces painted  
black,

In a long line squatting, offered treasures from a flour  
sack:

Here were moccasins and baskets, bracelets fine of hand-carved  
gold.

Totems rare by finest craftsmen young and sly, or bent  
and old;

Salmon-berries rich and luscious, cans of ripe blue-berries too

You might buy; or if you pleased them, they would give  
them all to you.

Up the hill where lies a city, gnomes and elves were wont to  
roam.

I have seen them flit in shadows when I ran away from  
home

To lie dreaming in a moss-bed 'neath a canopy of leaves

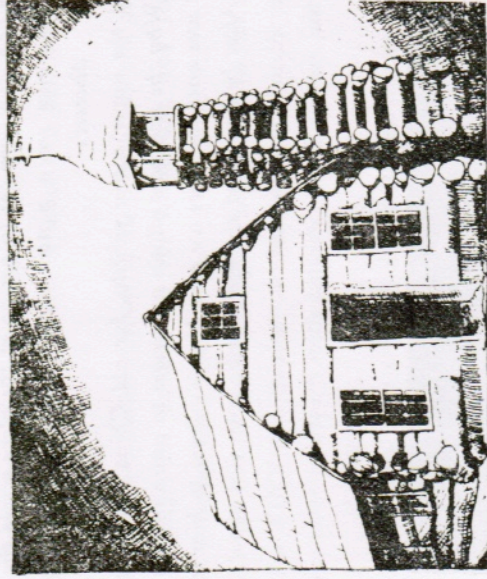
That were singing to the sunbeams, which bound up like  
golden sheaves,

Filled all spots where birds might twitter, kissed the buttercups  
to gold,

Lit the blue arch, fleeced and downey, warmed the brook  
when it was cold.

But the elves turned into goblins, on the Nob Hill of today,

In the city cemetery, where we never used to play.



Ghosts are in the Hotel Juneau, all about the place they perch.

They resent an elevator in the old Log Cabin Church.

They are seeking for the builders, those who prayed and those  
who sang,

For the little group of children gone, whose happy voices  
rang

Through the tiny room at Christmas, as old Santa Claus  
appeared,

And gumbooted men and women joined the bedlam as  
they cheered.

Here a bride from far-off England knelt in sweet humility;

From that union Juneau boasts perhaps her finest family  
tree.



When you stop your car to gas up at the place across the street,  
You may see a pigtail vanish (if your glance is most  
discreet)

Round the upper corner swiftly, for old China Joe must learn  
Why the city now allows a stranger to usurp in turn  
What was once the place we gave him to belong to him for aye,  
After he had saved the miners who were just about to die.



China Joe, here's looking at you! You were once a prince  
of men.  
May ancestors guard and keep you till the day we meet  
again.

At St. Ann's the nuns are kneeling as they hear the Angelus—  
And a few of them remember what that bell once meant  
to us,

In the days when Father Althoff in his priestly cap and gown,  
Through his sextant, on the house-top, read the sun  
before the town,

And we hastened to our duties by the time which he had set;  
For KINY was missing—it had not been thought of yet!  
And we went to church with lanterns, 'neath a cross just made  
of wood,

But the spirit of the parish I'll admit was just as good.

While you gaze upon the treasures shown in Juneau's Nugget  
Shop,

You may hear a stealthy footstep, treading soft, abruptly  
stop.

But this is no modern robber, could your eyes but see his boot,  
Nor is he a cringing fellow looking for some modern loot.  
Moccasins make soft his footsteps, tall he stands, sunburned  
and bold,

Round him is his tribal blanket, on his arm a bracelet gold.  
He but seeks to gaze in sorrow at the child he stole away  
But relinquished to her brother who refused his pledge  
to "pay".



When you see the lights a'flitting in the B. M. Behrends Bank,  
You should know 'tis but an oil lamp colored by a  
druggist's rank

Which was shown through huge glass urns of purple, yellow,  
green or gold,

When a shack there housed the drugstore and aquarium  
of old.

But these haunts are friendly spirits who return to praise the  
one

Who has done more for our little town than others all  
have done.

May his name live on forever, spirit of our proudest boast,

When the building that he left us has become another  
ghost.

In our Juneau City Clinic, wearing uniforms of white,

Fair-haired nurses treading softly, are a very pretty sight.  
Theirs the task to meet the public, keep the patient satisfied,

Make a chart and shine the X-ray, see the bills are paid  
all right.

Oh that science could but give them eyes to see the shades  
that pass—

Old Doc Simpson, tall and cranky, mixing something  
in a glass—

He's amused to find that doctors have a need for sleep or food.

He was help when help was needed, answering: "That's  
good, that's good!"

Blast of drums and blare of trumpets from our schoolhouse  
on the hill

Beckon ghosts from out the darkness to appear at  
window-sill,

And to mourn for days departed when the little two-room  
school

Housed the town one night each month for singing lessons  
taught by rule.

Gone the movable partition 'twixt the Indians and the whites,  
Which we shoved up to the ceiling to make room on  
program nights

When our literary meeting brought us out in Sunday best

To debate, sing, or make speeches, or discuss the town's  
last jest.

When officials find their autos moved from out the parking  
space

Where they left them as they entered their accustomed  
working place,

Let me whisper that the spirits from the dormitory old

Have been playing pranks on Uncle Sam who left them  
in the cold,

As he tore down the old buildings which had housed the  
mission there

When Joe Juneau and Dick Harris were the highly  
honored pair

Who had given us a village that had thrilled a world remote;

And we got our mail from Washington upon a  
side-wheel boat.

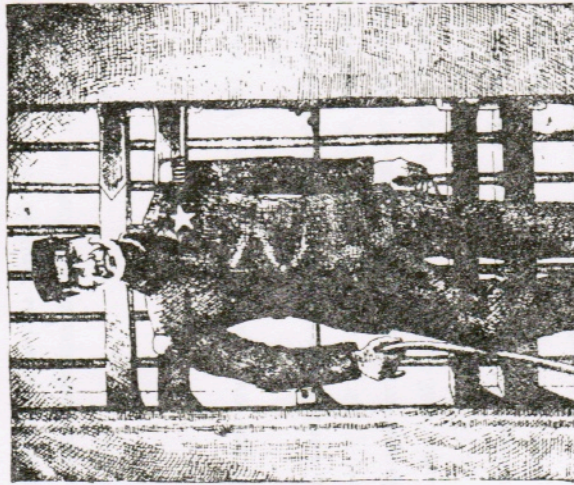


Passing through locked doors and windows in the jail on  
courthouse hill  
Chief Kowawee's pale shade keeps flitting, for he's  
independent still.

Patiently he waits fulfillment of the prophecy he made  
When he saw our first fine courthouse and, unsmiling,  
briefly said:

"Skookum big house. Kowawee like 'em. Lots of room,  
as white men wish.

Some day Kowawee's people have it for a place to dry  
their fish!"



His policeman's star keeps shining, gift from Uncle Sam of  
yore,  
Sometimes you can see it twinkling, in the moonlight at  
the door.

Ghosts are passing in battalions as our city steps along.  
Surely you must feel them marching, you must hear  
their warning song:

"Shout and revel if you must,  
But remember man is dust—  
Some day you will be the ghosts  
While a generation toasts  
Progress on its mighty trek.  
You've no time to fear us ghosts,  
Make the forge clang while you may,  
You are only here today,  
And tomorrow they will boast  
Your fine deeds—when you're a ghost!"

So I sing my song of Juneau in a day now long gone by,  
Turn the tender page of mem'ry and then leave it with  
a sigh.

You may boast, O mighty Progress; you may smile at days  
of yore,  
But you owe your very being to the men who went  
before.

Travel onward, travel upward; hitch your wagon to a star,  
Keep the oldtime spirit living — ghosts are watching  
from afar.



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