

Dan Murphy's Brindle Cow Author Thomas Bracken

She'd grown up with the family as quiet as a mouse  
It was only with a crow bar you could keep her out the house  
When she'd finished with your garden she would raise her head with pride  
And gallop home to Murphy's taking fences in her stride

A fence could never stop her, if you put the top rail higher  
she'd lie down sideways on the grass and get under the bottom wire.  
Dan Murphy sold her once a month but the following afternoon  
she'd be back in Danny's corn patch looking like a war balloon

But it can't go on forever tho I hold its business sound  
To sell a cow for three pounds ten and buy her back for a pound  
If you do it once a month it is the sort of game  
That makes you wish for 50 cows with which to do the same

But it can't go on forever as Pat Hennessy declared  
It was through his influence in the yard that Murphy's life was spared.  
Well, there's nothing left said Murphy as in gloomy thought he sat  
but to try her o'er the hurdles or to race her on the flat.

So they threw the saddle on her, she might bellow she might roar  
But the Murphys gathered round her and they numbered twenty-four  
And another Murphy backed her as she gave the last a fall  
She might pig root off a dozen but she couldn't sling em all

In the early summer mornings with the sweat upon his brow  
You could see the form of Murphy doing time upon his cow.  
She was on the track at daybreak, she was tried against the watch  
And she did a record gallop with a clinker called *Hopscotch*

So they tried her oer the hurdles and proved that she could race  
So they made her hot as ginger for the Fleetown steeplechase.  
If you've never heard of Fleetown you should go up there and see  
How the district's represented at its annual racing spree.

Where they gather from the township and a hundred miles around,  
The man who's got a thousand and the man who's got a pound.  
And they ride to stop each other as I've often heard em boast  
That it very often happened not a horse gets past the post.

On the morning of the meeting there was massed a giddy throng  
as Matilda and her trainer and her jockey came along  
There was *Corkscrew* and *Vindictive* who had won the cup before  
And Chapman with *Redemption* and Jim Hales with *Singapore*

And the gelding from Mt Pleasant who had done a record spin  
And the chestnut mare *Protectress* and the black colt *Paladin*  
And *Confusion* and *Glengarry* trained as fit as fit could be  
But the brindle cow Matilda was the horse they came to see.

The favourite was *Confusion* and his price was four to one  
But *Vindictive* came in closely for the work that he had done.  
It was ten to one *Redemption* and *Glengarry* and *The Chow*  
And any price you mention on Dan Murphy's brindle cow.

She bellowed round and sidled when people came too near  
She lashed out like a racehorse when they buckled on the gear  
But they got the saddle on her though she tried to charge the band  
And the cheers went up like thunder as she cantered past the stand

Now they've left the saddling paddock, now they're walking down the straight  
Oh get the stable money on Matilda ere too late.

While the crowd were idly talking of the favourite and his looks  
There were three and twenty Murphy's doing business with the books.

They're off they're off, they're off at last, a flashing line of silk  
And fast behind a row of tails came Murphy with the milk.  
The timber past the turning shook and quivered with a smash  
as with both their jockeys fighting, *Bess and Piolet* came a crash.

Two flights of hurdles and a stretch of post and rails once more  
*Projectile* crossed the *Barber* raking *Hales* off *Singapore*  
*Confusion* balked the water jumps and at the ditch and mound  
*Vindictive* fouled the *Corkscrew* and *Glengarry* went to ground.

She rose her head and waved her tail and didn't swerve a jot  
As Murphy whispered in her ear she cleared the bloody lot.  
He nursed her at the double and he coaxed her at the plough  
It was worth a fiver just to watch Dan Murphy ride his cow.

She was going like a motor down the back stretch by the shed  
Near the hurdles by the paddock she was fighting for her head.  
The second double downed *The Chow* and the field was down to three  
And still Matilda in the rear was jumping like a flea.

Above the beating of his heart Dan Murphy heard the mob  
The leading three are baulking and the cow is on the job  
They wheeled to face the water jump neck or nothing for it now  
When right beside the favourite shot the horns of Murphy's cow.

She rose her head and rushed the jump it was in mid air they tell  
How she whistled past *Protectress* like a fifteen pounder shell.  
Jim Wiffell on *Confusion* swore and settled down to ride  
Matilda simply winked her eye and held him stride for stride

They flew the hurdles level with *Protectress* on the right  
*Blue Peter* just behind them starting in to make a fight  
All around the bend and up the straight you should have heard the roar  
The brindle cow Matilda wins—the cow, the cow, the cow.

Now she's shaken off *Confusion* now she's coming with a run  
*Blue Peter's* beat-the-brindle-cow has only just begun.  
There were sounds of many Murphy's and the bookies all turned pale,  
The faster that Matilda went the higher rose her tail.

It kept on rising, rising till she passed the judges chair  
and Murphy scooped the Flectown cup with eleven lengths to spare.