

THE BALLAD OF EARTHQUAKE MCGOON

From Hong Kong and Shanghai to far-off Tibet
This legend is growing with time
Of the behemoth creature who flies in the sky
Who knows neither reason or rhyme
His three hundred pounds shake the earth when he walks
Yet he sears with the grass of a loon
The legend makes claim that this beast from the east
Is known as Earthquake McGoon.

While still a mere lad in his tenderest years
He sensed a precocious young boy
Who knew naught of vices like women and beer
To his parson a true pride and joy
But tales of "The East" and the streetcars that ran
In an easterly-westerly way
Sowed dreams of wild oats in our young hero's head
He vowed that he'd go there to stay.

So J. B. McGovern cast off all his chains
Took the name of Earthquake McGoon.
He yearned to carouse on a far eastern claim
Where he would have plenty of room.
No then learned to fly like a bird in the sky
With Wee Willie, the Doc and the rest.
He staked out a claim in that far-flung domain
And lived with a Mandarin's nest.

The timbered task floors in the bars that he entered
Would groan with deep pain at his weight,
He'd heist at his paunch and in thunderous tones
Say, "Fill her up, Matey. It's late.
This hollowed-out leg that's supporting me now
Will hold half a keg of your best,
This stomach of mine which protrudes to your bar
I am certain will hold all the rest."

But it looked like the doom of Earthquake McGoon
And we swore he would never come back
When he deadsticked his plane onto Linshow one day
His future looked truly quite black
They threw him in jail and granted no bail
They took both the shoes off his feet
Yet he stomped on the floor and beat on the door
For whiskey and something to eat.

In fear of their lives or because of the din
From the behemoth creatures within
His captives panicked and gave him a bottle
Of rice wine diluted with gin
But they still couldn't feed this pendulous hell
Whose temper grew worse by the day
And quaking with fear they finally released him
After six months and a day.

His pendulous stomach a hundred pounds shy
And sporting a wonderful beard
He came back to Ciy once again like a bird
And belted "I never was skewered
I've eaten them out of their prisoners fare
Drank all of their rice wine and gin
By eating and drinking have turned back the tide
Those (scurved) just had to give in."

So believe what I say, friend, and lend me an ear
To prove to yourself if you want
That the legend of Earthquake, the woman and beard
Is true as a Venusian wart
Go down into Kowloon, in Gunglun back room
And there staring you in the face
Is this behemoth creature, his hand on his prop
With a smile on his lecherous face.

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This legend is growing with time
Of the behemoth creature who flies in the sky
Who knows neither reason or rhyme
His three hundred pounds shakes the earth when he walks
Yet he roars with the roar of a lion
The legend takes claim that this beast from the east
Is known as Earthquake's Mother.

This was given to
me by Mr. Smith
a few months after
Mr. Graham's death at
Dunsmuir Park

LI Kwei