

# LA BOVINA

(A TRAGIC OPERA)

## SCENE I

A courtyard in the Stockyards.

*(Enter a guide with a crowd of society men and women in sightseeing tour)*

*Chorus of Society People:*

O odor enduring!  
O perfume divine!  
Was e'er so alluring  
A fragrance as thine?

*Guide (pointing):*—There is the place where we butcher the hogs, and there is the place where we massacre dogs; while this pretty building behind you, of course, is the place we receive and matriculate horses.

*Chorus of Society People:*

O odor enduring!  
O perfume divine!  
Was e'er so alluring  
A fragrance as thine?

*(Exit a band of fatted calves. They dance).*

*Chorus of Society Ladies:*

Well, this is some show! They don't do things by halves.

*Chorus of Society Men:*

Oh, look at the ballet, oh, look at the calves.

*(At conclusion of ballet, the calves, society people and guide go out. Fred enters alone).*

*Fred:* ..

Fair Bossy, how I miss thee!  
How yearn once more to kiss thee!  
But thou art in the Lone Star State  
While I await my hideous fate!  
Imprisoned in a slaughter house,  
Soon to become a porter house.

*(Bossy enters on hoof from behind.)*

*Bossy:* My Fred!

*Fred:* How camest thou to Chi? Who let cher?

*Bossy:* I came on a C. R. I. Cow-catcher.

*Fred:* But why camest thou to Chi?

*Bossy:* That I with thee might die.

*Fred:* O most courageous Holstein! But hist! Here's Mr. Goldstein!

*(Goldstein, an inspector, enters. Bossy hastily disguises herself with heavy veil.)*

*Goldstein:* How now! You steers are loose again! Back cattle, back into your pen!

*(Fred, Bossy and Goldstein go out. Flock of sheep enters; play games and sing.)*

*Chorus of Sheep:*

Button, button, who's got the button?  
Soon we'll all be legs of mutton.  
Run, sheep, run, stop, sheep, stop—  
Soon we'll all be a mutton chop.

*(Goldstein enters.)*

*Goldstein:* How now, you sheep are loose again? Back, sheep, back into your pen.

*(Goldstein and sheep go out.)*

*(Gus, the bum steer, enters alone.)*

*Gus:*

My life is saved! O tidings sweet.  
They say I am not fit to eat.  
To Texas I'll return in haste.  
And having slipped the wife a taste  
Of chloroform or cyanide  
I'll claim proud Bossy as my bride.

## SCENE II

Scene—Death Chamber at Stockyards.

*Chorus of Killers:*

O, sweet is our job when we hit 'em just right,  
When the steers go to sleep without saying  
good night.

But when we don't bean 'em right square in the  
forehead

The way that they holler about it is horrid!

*(Forty or fifty steers heavily veiled enter the death chamber. Among them are Fred and Bossy. Gus, the exempt, disguised as a loungeur, looks on. The killers raise their tack hammers and go about their work. First Fred falls, then Bossy. As she strikes the floor, her veil falls off and Gus recognizes her.)*

*Gus (anguished):* Bossy! La Bovina! Oh, Sugar, you killed a milch cow!

End of Opera.

*(Written after three years of music at Home Ec and classes at the Livestock Pavilion; dedicated to husbandry, and also to J. W. Mlinar, unofficial chap-eron to forlorn bulls bound for the stockyards.)*