

Wreck Of The Old 97

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Charles Noell & Henry Whitter

 G C
On one cloudless morning I stood on the mountain
 G D
Just watching the smoke from below.
 G C
It was coming from a tall, slim smokestack
 G D G
'Way down on the southern railroad

It was 97, the fastest train
Ever ran the southern line.
All the freight trains and pass'gers take the side for 97,
For she's bound to be at stations on time.

They gave him his orders at Monroe, Virginia,
Saying, "Stevie, you're way behind time.
This is not 38, but it's Old 97
You must put her into Spencer on time."

He looked 'round and said to his black greasy fireman,
"Just shovel in a little more coal.
And when I cross that old White Oak Mountain
You can just watch Old 97 roll."

It's a mighty rough road from Lynchburg to Danville
And the lie was a three-mile grade.
It was on that grade that he lost his air brakes
And you see what a jump that she made.
He was going down the grade making 90 miles an hour,
When his whistle began to scream.
He was found in that wreck with his hand on the throttle;
He was scalded to death by the steam.

Did she ever pull in? No, she never pulled in.
And at 1:45 he was due.
For hours and hours has the switchman been waiting
For that fast mail that never pulled through.

97, she was the fastest train
That the south had ever seen.
But she run so fast on that Sunday morning
That the death score was numbered 14.

Now, ladies, you must take warning
From this time now and on.
Never speak harsh words to your true loving husband
He may leave you and never return.