

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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The Fireman's Song

The Fireman's Song
(D. Bilston)

Whenever you see a train go by,
Or hear an engine's whistle cry,
Think of the man on the old footplate
Shovelling coal, the drivers mate.

cho: A loco fireman is me grade,
Boiling water is me trade,
The driver thinks he runs the show,
But if I'm not there the train won't go.

Heaving coal for a hungry fire,
Sweating cobs to get steam higher,
Of the colliers harvest that I burn,
With toil and sweat, me wages earn

The driver sits there like a god,
A decent mate but an idle sod.
Though I'll be shovelling on me knees
Still he'll sit there at his ease.

The pick and shovel are tools of me trade
And two strong arms to swing the blade,
Hands with palms as hard as leather,
And nimble feet as light as a feather

One day a driver I will be,
Of the pick and shovel I'll be free,
Until that day I'll shift the coal,
Raising steam so the train can roll.

Notes. Don Bilston was presumably still a fireman
when he wrote this song, but was later rated as Driver.
I believe he was based at one of the Birmingham sheds.
But I don't know which one.

Recorded by the Ian Campbell folk group on MFP STEREO 1349

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