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**Wreck of the 97**

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Steve Brady kissed his lovin' wife  
By the rising of the sun  
And he said to his children, 'May God bless you  
For your dad must now go on his run'

'Twas the twenty-second day of that November  
And the clouds were hanging low  
He took old 97 out of Washington station  
Like an arrow shot from a bow

I was standing on the mountain that cold and frosty morning  
And I watched curling smoke below  
It was smoke from old 97's smokestack  
Way down on that southern road

97 was the fastest mail train  
Ever run the southern line  
But when she reached into Richmond, Virginia  
She was twenty-seven minutes behind

He received his orders at the Richmond station  
Saying, Steve you're far behind  
Now this isn't 38 but it's old 97  
You must put her into Spencer on time

When he read his orders, he said to his fireman  
Do not obey the whistle or the bell  
And we'll put old 97 into Spencer on time  
Or we'll sink her in the bottom pits of hell

He saw the brakeman signal and threw back his throttle  
Although his air was bad  
And his signalman said when he passed Franklin Junction  
'You could not see the man in the cab'

Steve looked at his watch and said to his fireman,  
'Just throw in a little more coal  
And when we reach those Cumberland Mountains  
You can watch old 97 roll

He went over the grade, making 90 miles an hour

And his whistle broke into a scream  
He was found when dead with his hand on the throttle  
And was scalded to death by steam

When the news went in oe'r the telegraph wires  
This is what the Western said,  
'That brave, brave man that was drivin' 97  
Is laying in North Danville dead

The people waited at the depot  
Till the setting of the sun  
It was hours and hours the dispatch was waiting  
For the fastest train ever run

Source: The Arizona Wranglers 'The Wreck of the 97'. Recorded in 1929 in Hollywood, California. Reissued on Various Artists 'Train 45: Railroad Songs of the Early 1900s' Rounder CD 1143.

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