

Words and music by Gordon Lightfoot

There was a time in this fair land when the railroad did not run
When the wild majestic mountains
Stood alone against the sun
Long before the white man and long before the wheel
When the green dark forest was too silent to be real

But time has no beginnings and history has no bounds
As to this verdant country they came from all around
They sailed upon her waterways and they walked the forests tall
And they built the mines, the mills and the factories for the good of us all

And when the young man's fancy was turning to the spring
The railroad men grew restless for to hear the hammers ring
Their minds were overflowing with the visions of their day
And many a fortune lost and won and many a debt to pay

For they looked in the future and what did they see
They saw an iron road running from the sea to the sea
Bringing the goods to a young growing land
All up from the seaports and into their hands
"Look away," said they, "across this mighty land,
"From the eastern shore to the western strand."

Bring in the workers and bring up the rails
We gotta lay down the tracks and tear up the trails
Open her heart let the life blood flow
Gotta get on our way 'cause we're moving too slow. (2)

Behind the blue Rockies the sun is declining
The stars they come stealing at the close of the day
Across the wide prairie our loved ones lie sleeping
Beyond the dark ocean in a place far away

We are the navvies who work upon the railway
Swinging our hammers in the bright blazing sun
Living on stew and drinking bad whiskey
Bending our backs til the long days are done

Canadian Railroad Trilogy

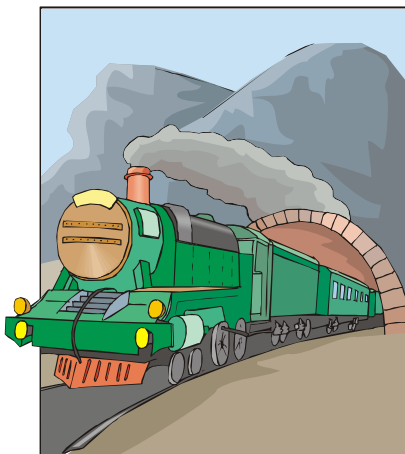
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We are the navvies who work upon the railway
Swinging our hammers in the bright blazing sun
Laying down track and building the bridges
Bending our backs til the railroad is done

So over the mountains and over the plains
Into the muskeg and into the rain
Up the St. Lawrence all the way to Gaspé
Swinging our hammers and drawing our pay
Driving them in and tying them down
Away to the bunkhouse and into the town
A dollar a day and a place for my head
A drink to the living, a toast to the dead

Oh the song of the future has been sung
All the battles have been won
On the mountain tops we stand
All the world at our command
We have opened up the soil
With our teardrops and our toil

For there was a time in this fair land when the railroad did not run
When the wild majestic mountains stood alone against the sun
Long before the white man and long before the wheel
When the green dark forest was too silent to be real
When the green dark forest was too silent to be real
And many are the dead men too silent to be real



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