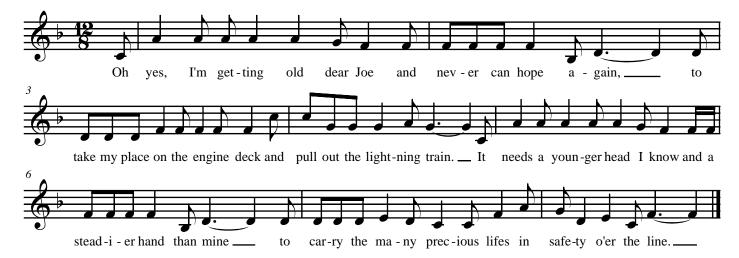
Engineer

As sung by Lester Coffee 08-20-1946 Harvard, IL



Verse 1.

Oh yes I'm getting old dear Joe
And never can hope again,
To take my place on the engine deck
And pull out the lightning train.
It needs a stronger head I know
And a steadier hand than mine
To carry the many precious lives
In saftey o'er the line

Verse 2.

More than thirty years of my life dear Joe Has been spent on the iron rail, I've had my share of the danger too Yet was never known to quail. I sometimes felt my time had come Though I seldom felt "afeared" For you know they used to "recon" me A first class engineer

Verse 3.

I never forget that awful night
While running the Thunder Joe,
That Christmas eve near the Elden Branch
Oh didn't it blow and snow.
I could not see the winding track
Nor either the drivers turn,
The night was pitchy dark Joe
And our headlight wouldn't burn.

Verse 4.

I felt a strange and sudden fear
As we ran across the hill,
My heart beat wild as we neared the bridge
Just beyond the gravel hill.
When suddenly the stearling light
Gleamed down a long the track,
And I shouted jump for your life Joe
And I pulled the lever back.

Verse 5.

I'll never forget that awful shock
And it makes my blood run cold,
As I hear again the wintry air
The bells both engines tolled.
They tolled for the dying engineer
Underneth the sterling deck,
The tolled for the many precious lives
That went out in that awful wreck

Verse 6.

The are tolling now in this heart of mine For my darling, my only child, Oh God when I saw her fearful fate: No wonder that I was wild. When I saw her lying cold and dead With a smile upon her brow, A smile I often see dear Joe When I think of my darling now

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Verse 7.

I never forget just what she said The last time I took her hand: "Goodbye Papa, 'til we meet somewhere" I didn't just understand. But it has always seemed to me dear Joe As I lost my little lamb,

Verse 8.

But now I am forever laid aside
Will open the valves no more,
But I'll watch and wait for the sound of the bell
From the train on the other shore.
Though old and crippled they'll put me on board
And the run will be quick dear Joe,
And I'll meet my long lost child again
The darling that loved me so.

Critical Commentary

HST notes:

In the Professional Papers series:

Lester A. Coffee, age 75, Harvard, Illinois. Learned song 53 years ago - old then.

K.G.