

# Engineer

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

Oh yes, I'm get-ting old dear Joe and nev-er can hope a - gain, \_\_\_\_\_ to  
3  
take my place on the engine deck and pull out the light-ning train. — It needs a youn-ger head I know and a  
6  
stead-i - er hand than mine \_\_\_\_\_ to car-ry the ma - ny prec-ious lifes in safe-ty o'er the line. —

## 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 safety 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 "afear'd"  
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

## 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.