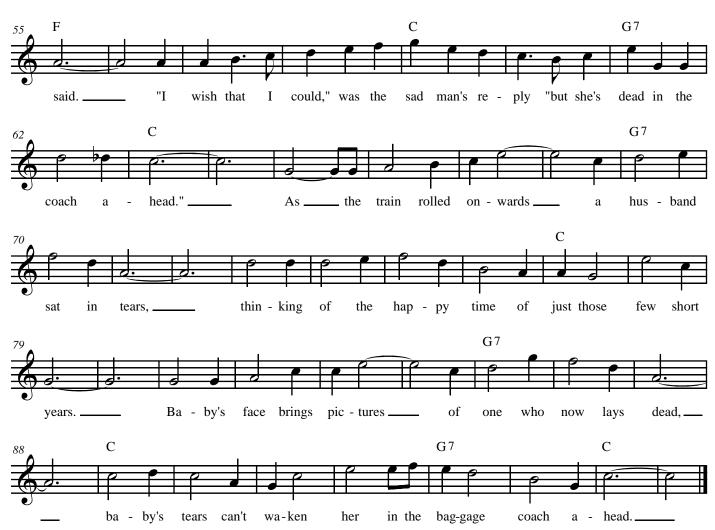
# **Baggage Coach Ahead**





Lyrics

'Twas a long dreary night And the train rattled on All the passengers had gone to bed. Except a poor man With a babe in his arms And he fondled it close to his breast.

The innocent one began crying in vain As though its poor heart would break. "Throw him out," said a man, "Don't let him stay here, He's keeping us all awake."

"Put him out," said another, "Don't keep it in here, We've paid for our berths and want rest." But never a word Said the man with the child As he fondled it close to his breast. "Oh where is its mother Go take it to her," A kind woman softly said. "I wish that I could," Was the sad man' s reply "But she's dead in the coach ahead."

As the train rolled onward A husband sat in tears, Thinking of the happy time Of just those few short years.

Baby's face brings pictures Of one who now lays dead, Baby's tears can't waken her In the baggage coach ahead.

## **Critical Commentary**

Transcriptions by MB and HST.

### HST notes:

In the Professional Papers series: In response to general demand Chorus printed - copyright 1896 by Handy [?], Harland [?], and Coassigned 1924 to Edw. B. Marts[?] Music Co. Used by permission.

In Bag. Coach ahead was one of the songs sung in vaudeville circuits to the acc of colored pictures thrown [?] on the screen.

Mrs. Bessie Gordon, age circa 40, Schofield. Learned the song from her mother - Mrs. Gordon runs a crossroads tavern about 8 feet square. She sings for her patrons and accompanies herself on a reed organ which she has cut down to fit under the bar.

#### **Editor's notes:**

Randolph writes that this song is said to have been written by Gussie L. Davis, "a Negro resident of Kansas City," about a true event: Dr. James B. Watson, whose wife died in 1869, and whose 2-year-old daughter Nellie cried on the trip to take her body from Kansas City to Pennsylvania (Randolph 163). Another source (Lucile Morris, Springfield Mo. *News and Leader*, Sept. 30, 1934) wrote that it was "written about 1894 by a Pullman porter, and is believed to have been drawn from his experience" (Randolph 164). These are not necessarily conflicting accounts, as Davis may have been a Pullman porter.

#### Sources:

Kennedy, Charles O'Brien. American Ballads - Naughty, Ribald, and Classic. New York: Fawcett Publications, 1952. Text only.

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Songs of the Pioneers. Camdenton, Mo: Albert E. Brumley, 1970.

Spaeth, Sigmund Gottfried. *Read 'Em and Weep: The Songs You Forgot to Remember*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page, and Co., 1927.

K.G.