

THE STEEL RIVER

-A Great Depression Era Poem-

A river flows that's made of steel,
It reaches shore to shore,
It goes right on from town to town,
And carries rich and poor,

The rich man rides the smoker car,
The poor man rides the rods,
The rich man is content to leave,
The poor man to the gods,

The brakeman keeps his eyes alert,
For riders such as me,
They want some cash to ride their train,
They say it's not for free,

But some of us don't have a buck,
And still we need to go,
If we can hide inside a car,
They never need to know,

I used to be a mining man,
They threw me out the door,
I'd work down at the smelter, but,
There isn't any ore,

I thought I'd ride the Steel to find,
A suitable new job,
That's why I'm in the jungle here,
On sidetrack, Rocky Knob,

Now let me weed your garden plot,
Or let me cut your wood,
Then, if you feel the urgin' true,
Some grub would taste right good,

My daddy was a steamboat man,
His daddy drove a raft,
I'd rather ride the railroad now,
And both think I am daft,

So let's get on this boxcar here,
And ride the Steel on down,
We'll leave this sad condition for,
To find a brand-new town,

I know it's there, around the bend,
I heard a hobo say,
The folks are nice, with jobs galore,
And pretty darn good pay,

Someday I'll find a fine new job,
This trouble cannot last,
I'll settle down and build a house,
And then forget the past,

I'll live a life of joy and ease,
With wife and kids my own,
A yard, a dog, a garden plot,
And house made out of stone,

And when my days come to an end,
I'll hear the trumpets sound,
To leave this life with no regret,
With family gathered round,

In heaven there'll be a jungle hut,
Like none you've ever seen,
The bunks will all be feather beds,
The folks will not be mean,

We'll sit around the campfire ring,
With stories all night long,
Of Steel in all her glory days,
In times when life went wrong.

By John D. Boenke
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