

The Ballad Of Casey Jones

Words & Music:

T. Lawrence Seibert, Wallace Saunders & Eddie Newton.

Info from Wikipedia: Wallace Saunders was an engine wiper & friend of the recently-deceased Casey, who made up the words to the tune of the then-popular song "Jimmie Jones". His version was never copyrighted and, thus, the original words are lost. The second version was by vaudeville performers Frank & Bert Leighton, who learned it from their brother William, who was an Illinois Central Engineer. They also neglected to copyright it. Vaudeville performers T. Lawrence Seibert & Eddie Newton were smart enough to copyright and publish the song in 1909 as "Casey Jones, The Brave Engineer" and the song passed into American lore. Those of us of a certain age also know this tune from the "Choo Choo Charlie" Good & Plenty commercial.

Well-Known Seibert-Newton Version:

F C F
Come all you rounders if you want to hear the story about a brave engineer.
F C F
Casey Jones was the roller's name. On six feet of wheels across he won his fame.

The caller called about Casey about a half past four.
He kissed his wife at the station door.
Climbed in the cabin with his orders in his hand.
Said "This is my trip to the promised land."

CHORUS:

F C F G7
Casey Jones climbed in the cabin. Casey Jones, orders in his hands.
F C F C F
Casey Jones, leanin' out the window. Takin' the trip to the promised land.

Cruising at the Memphis yards on a fly. Rain been a-falling and the water was high.
Everybody knew by the engine moan that the man at the throttle was Casey Jones.

Jones said, "Fireman, now, don't you fret. Sam, well, Sam I ain't giving up yet.
Eight hours late with the southbound mail,
We'll be on time or we'll leaving the rail."

CHORUS:

Dead on the rails was a passenger train. Blood was filling up Casey's brain.
Casey said, "Hey, now, look ahead! Jump, Sam, jump or we'll all be dead!"

With a hand on the whistle and a hand on the brake,
North Mississippi was wide awake.
"I see," a railroad official said, "He's a good engineer to be a-laying dead."

CHORUS:

Headaches and heartaches and all kind of pain; all a part of a railroad train.
The sweat and the toil the good and the ground, part of a life of a railroad man.

CHORUS:

TraditionalMusic.co.uk version:

"...Many songs have been sung about Casey Jones and the famous train wreck of 1909. At the time of the tragedy, according to one legend, Casey, throttle puller of the Illinois Central's crack Cannonball, was driving No. 638, making a run for a friend who was ill. The train was wrecked at Vaughn, Mississippi, and Casey died at the throttle. Wallace Saunders, his Negro engine wiper, set down the story of his death and it was sung to the then popular tune of "Jimmy Jones."..."

Come all you rounders that want to hear
The story of a brave engineer.
Casey Jones was the rounder's name,
On a six eight wheeler, boys, he won his fame.

Casey Jones mounted to his cabin,
Casey Jones with his orders in his hand
Casey Jones mounted to his cabin,
And he took his farewell trip to that promised land.

The caller call Casey at half past four,
He kissed his wife at the station door,
He mounted to the cabin with the orders in his hand,
And he took his farewell trip to that promised land.

When he pulled up that Reno hill,
He whistled for the crossing with an awful shrill;
The switchman knew by the engine's moan
That the man at the throttle was Casey Jones.

He looked at his water and his water was low;
He looked at his watch and his watch was slow;
He turned to his fireman and this is what he said,
"Boy, we're going to reach Frisco, but we'll all be dead."

"So turn on your water and shovel in your coal,
Stick you head out the window, watch those drivers roll;
I'll drive her till she leaves the rail,
For I'm eight hours late by that Western Mail.

When he was within six miles of the place,
There number four stared him straight in the face.
He turned to his fireman, said "Jim you'd better jump,
For there're two locomotives that are going to bump.

Casey said just before he died,
"There're two more roads I would like to ride."
The fireman said, "Which ones can they be?"
"Oh the Northern Paceyfic and the Santa Fe."

Mrs. Jones sat at her bed a-sighing
Just to hear the news that her Casey was dying.
"Hush up children, and quit your crying',
For you've got another poppa on the Salt Lake Line."

Janie Jones Official Lyrics Version:

Per trainweb.org: "This version was considered by Janie Jones, Casey's wife, to be the most accurate representation of Wallace's original version. Mrs. Jones spent much of her life refuting some of the vulgar references other versions made about her husband."

Come all you rounders if you want to hear
A story 'bout a brave engineer,
Casey Jones was the rounder's name
'Twas on the Illinois Central that he won his fame.

Casey Jones, he loved a locomotive.
Casey Jones, a mighty man was he.
Casey Jones run his final locomotive
With the Cannonball Special on the old I.C.

Casey pulled into Memphis on Number Four,
The engine foreman met him at the roundhouse door;
Said, "Joe Lewis won't be able to make his run.
So, you'll have to double out on Number One."

"If I can have Sim Webb, my fireman, my engine 382,
Although I'm tired and weary, I'll take her through.
Put on my whistle that come in today
'Cause I mean to keep her wailing as we ride and pray."

Casey Jones, mounted the cabin,
Casey Jones, with the orders in his hand.
Casey Jones, he mounted the cabin,
Started on his farewell Journey to the promised land.

They pulled out of Memphis nearly two hours late,
Soon they were speeding at a terrible rate.
And the people knew by the whistle's moan.
That the man at the throttle was Casey Jones.

"Need more coal there, fireman Sim,
Open that door and heave it in.
Give that shovel all you got.
And we'll reach Canton on the dot."

On April 30, 1900, that rainy morn,
Down in Mississippi near the town of Vaughan,
Sped the Cannonball Special only two minutes late
Traveling 70 miles an hour when they saw a freight.

The caboose number 83 was on the main line,
Casey's last words were "Jump, Sim, while you have the time."
At 3:52 that morning came the fareful end,
Casey took his farewell trip to the promised land.

Casey Jones, he died at the throttle,
With the whistle in his hand.
Casey Jones, he died at the throttle,
But we'll all see Casey in the promised land.

His wife and three children were left to mourn
The tragic death of Casey on that April morn.
May God through His goodness keep them by His grace
'Til they all meet together in that heavenly place.

Casey's body lies buried in Jackson, Tennessee,
Close beside the tracks of the old I.C.
May his spirit live forever throughout the land
As the greatest of all heroes of a railroad man.

Casey Jones, he died at the throttle,
Casey Jones, with the whistle in his hand.
Casey Jones, he died at the throttle,
But we'll all see Casey in the promised land.