

Hank Snow

"The Hobo's Last Ride"

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In the Dodge City yards of the Santa Fe
Stood a freight made up for the east
And the engineer with his oil and waste
Was grooming the great iron beast.

While ten cars back in the murky dust
A boxcar door swung wide
And a hobo lifted his pal aboard
To start on his last long ride.

A lantern swung and the freight pulled out
The engine it gathered speed
The engineer pulled the throttle wide
And clucked to his fiery steed.

Ten cars back in the empty box
The hobo rolled a pill
The flare of the match showed his partner's face
Stark white and deathly still.

As the train wheels clicked on the coupling joints
A song for the rambler's ear
The hobo talked to the still white form
His pal for many a year.

For a mighty long time we've rambled Jack
With the luck of men that roam
With the backdoor steps for a dining room
And a boxcar for a home.

We dodged the bulls on the Eastern route
And the cops on the Chesapeake
We traveled the Leadville narrow gauge
In the days of Cripple Creek.

We drifted down through sunny Cal
On the rails of the old SP
And of all you had through good and bad
A half always belonged to me.

You made me promise to you Jack
If I lived and you cashed in

To take you back to the old churchyard
And bury you there with your kin.

You seemed to know I would keep my word
For you said that I was right
Well, I'm keepin' my promise to you pal
'Cause I'm takin' you home tonight.

I hadn't the money to send you there
So I'm takin' you back on the fly
It's the decent way for a 'bo to go home
To the by and by.

I knew that that fever got you Jack
And the doctor he just wouldn't come
He was too busy treatin' wealthy folks
To doctor a worn out bum.

As the train rolled over it's ribbons of steel
Straight to the east it sped
The engineer in his highcab seat
Kept his eyes on the rails ahead.

While ten cars back in the empty box
A lonely hobo sighed
For the days of old and his pal so cold
Who was taking his last long ride...

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