

Elegy to a Hobo



With vagrancy his railroad past
And this gospel mission his very last,
He rides a coach men ride but once
On an old coal-burner no hobo wants.

But men; this train which we all must hop
Is no coal-burner with its whistlestops,
It's first class freight, has no bulls to flee.
It's a hotshot train, and it's truly free.

Look. The doors are shut on this car he rides;
No whistles or light can enter inside.
No one can roll him in the mud on the ground,
He can sleep now in peace, there are tramps around.

And when this morning ends amid tearless eyes
And a flatbed rolls as a milk run plies,
This bo will ride in his sleeper car
On a journey to a siding in our railroad yard.

There. Uncoupled from the engines he knows,
Yardmen will come, and light must go,
As a gentle shove and a sunken grade
Puts his coach in a tunnel that no train can invade.

So men. Don't fret this one last freight,
For the rails we ride when sleep is sound,
As this bo now knows, are vineyard bound;
Where Torpedo Red and Golden Glow
Are spirits to warm a hobo's soul.