

A FIREMAN'S STORY OF THE BRAVE VOLUNTEER, RECITATION

Performed by: John Joe English

A passenger was getting on the train and the engineer's face was all battered up, y'know?
But 'twas all healed up. And he said to the fireman:

'A frightful face!' Yes, he said, You're correct,
That man on the engine there,
Don't pack the handsomest countenance,
Every inch of him sporting a scar.

But I tell you, friend,
There ain't money enough piled in the National Bank,
To buy that face, no, nor a single scar.
'Have a drink?' No, I never indulges, thanks.

Now, Jim was an old-time engineer,
And a better one never was known,
Been running here since the first machine,
Was put on the Quincy Road.

And there isn't a man who pulls a plug,
From Maine to the Jumping-Off-Place,
That knows more about that big iron horse,
Than that man with the battered up face.

'Get hurt in a mash up?'
No, 'twas done legitimate sorta way:
He got it tryin' to save a girl
Up on the road last May.

Now, I haven't much time to spin you the yarn,
Because we pull out at 2:25,
But hold on there, Miss, till I toss in some coal,
Just to keep the Old 90 alive.

Now, Jim was pulling a Burlington passenger car,
Left Quincy a half an hour late,
And been running at a pretty good rate of speed,
So's not to overtake number 29 freight.

The Old 90 was more than hopping along,
Quivering at every nerve,
And all at once Jim shouted: 'Oh merciful God,'
As she shoved her sharp nose round a curve.

I jumped to his side of the cab,
And about two hundred paces or so,
Stood a girl on the track and her hands raised aloft,
Her face just as white as the snow.

She seemed to be so paralysed with fright,
She couldn't move forward or back.
But when Jim pulled his whistle she fainted and fell,
Right down in a heap on the track.

Now I'll never forget till the day of my death,
The look that came over Jim's face;
He pulled the old lever right back like a shot,
So's to slacken the 90's wild pace.

He put on the air brakes as quick as a flash,
Out through the window he fled,
And he skimmed along the running board just like a cat,
And laid down on the pilot ahead.

As soon as we reached where that poor creature lay,
He seized tight a hold of her arm,
He raised her aloft to throw to one side,
Out of all danger and harm.

Somehow he slipped,
Fell in with his head on the rail as he threw the young lass,
The engine right over him passed,
And the pilot head striking him ground up his face in a frightful and horrible mass.

Now as soon as I stopped, they backed up the train,
To that spot where the poor fellow lay,
And there sat that girl with his head in her lap,
And she wiping the warm blood away.

The tears rolled down in torrents on her cheek,
She sighed as if her heart was all broke.
I tell you, friend, such a sight as that there,
Would move the tough heart of an oak.

Now we put Jim on board, brought him back to town,
For week after week the boy lay,
And hovering right in the shadow of death,
Was that girl by his side every day.

Now doctoring and nursing brought him around,
A kind of snatched him right out of the grave.
His face ain't so handsome as it was,
But his heart remains just as noble and brave.

Now you know there's a sequel, the storybook says,
He fell there in love there did Jim,
But he didn't have the courage to ask her to have,
Such a battered up rooster as him.

She knew how he felt:
Last New Year's Day was the first of the leap year you know
She then cornered Jim and proposed on the spot,
And you bet he didn't say no.

Now he's building a house up there on the hill,
He's laid up a snug pile of cash,
And the wedding is to be on the first day of May,
Just a year from the day of the smash.

She said he rescued their life to save hers,
So they just turned the tables about,
And gave back to him the life that he saved—
There's the bell, good day sir, we're just going to pull out!