

Travelling by Steam

Fairport Convention

With a steady hand on the lever
And the signal ready to pass
Keep the light burning, fireman
And the water, well up in the glass

With a shoulder to the rail
There's no better place to be
Than the right side of the footplate
When you're travelling by steam

Stand in the bight, look for the green light
Voices that echo and ring down the line
One load to shed, then homeward we tread
Till morning and the coal-boy come singing

Me granddaddy worked in the railway
A bigwig, so I've heard talk
Me father, he was a driver
Travelling pit to port

And there's no better life for a young man
With them you must agree
When you're right side of the footplate
And you're travelling by steam

Stand in the bight, look for the green light
Voices that echo and ring down the line
One load to shed, then homeward we tread
Till morning and the coal-boy come singing

Tomorrow it's off up to Banbury
A lodging turn for me
Where I can lay me head on a pillow
In a room where I can sleep

And it's up and away in the morning
And wipe the clock-face clean
And you're right side of the footplate
And you're travelling by steam

Stand in the bight, look for the green light
Voices that echo and ring down the line
One load to shed, then homeward we tread
Till morning and the coal-boy come singing

So pick up yer traps and yer Tommy-box
We're reaching the end of the line
Keep yer eye on your watch, lad
We'll bring her in on time

And it could have been life on the dole queue
Or mining for coal at the seam
But you're right side of the footplate
And you're travelling by steam

Stand in the bight, look for the green light
Voices that echo and ring down the line

One load to shed, then homeward we tread
Till morning and the coal-boy come singing