

Brighton Belle

Ralph McTell

My Granddad drove a steam train
My father drove a truck
Right across North Africa
Taken prison at Tobruk
And when the war was over and he'd returned from hell
My Granddad got promoted to the pretty Brighton Belle

Her colour scheme was brown and cream
Some called it sand and sable
There were curtains at the windows
And a lamp on every table
Her job to drive all cares away, in luxury propel
Us from the tears the war torn years on the pretty Brighton Belle

The train stopped at the platform
Let out a cloud of steam
My father walked me through it
Like entering a dream
And he gave me to my Granddad and no one saw to tell
How I rode on the footplate of the pretty Brighton Belle

My mother pushed her bicycle
My father drove away
The railway went electric
Granddad went to work each day
In a clean shirt every morning and he came home clean as well
The best he said was when he quit the pretty Brighton Belle

In the middle of the platform
On East Croydon station
Standing in a glass case
Was an ancient stuffed Alsatian
Collecting for the orphans of the railway men who fell
In the war that came before the pretty Brighton Belle