2. It was the old '97, the fastest mail train,  
That runs on the Southern Line  
And when she pulled into Monroe, Virginia,  
She was forty-seven minutes behind.

3. They gave him his orders in Monroe, Virginia,  
Saying, ‘Steve, you’re way behind time.  
It’s not ’38 it’s old ’97,  
You must put her in Danville on time.’

4. ‘Just one more trip,’ said the sleepy conductor,  
As he kissed his loving wife,  
I’ve stole enough money from the railroad comp’ny  
To last us all through life.

5. ‘Goodbye sweet wife,’ said the drunken brakeman,  
As he waved his cap in delight,  
‘If the wheels will roll and the engineer stays sober,  
We’ll all reach home tonight.

6. Steve turned to his black and greasy fireman,  
Said, ‘Shovel in a little more coal,  
And when we cross the White Oak Mountain,  
You can watch old ’97 roll.

7. He was going down the grade, makin’ ninety miles an hour,  
When his whistle broke into a scream,  
He was found in the wreck with his hand on the throttle,  
And scalded to death with the steam.

8. O, a sad farewell, when we heard the signal,  
And the brakeman dropped the pin,  
And for hours and hours the switchman waited  
For the train that will never pull in.

9. Young ladies, you must take warning  
From this time now and on,  
Never speak harsh words to your true-lovin’ husband,  
He will leave you and never return.

10. Did she ever return? No, she never returned,  
Though the train was due at one,  
For hours and hours the watchman stood waitin’  
For the train that never returned.