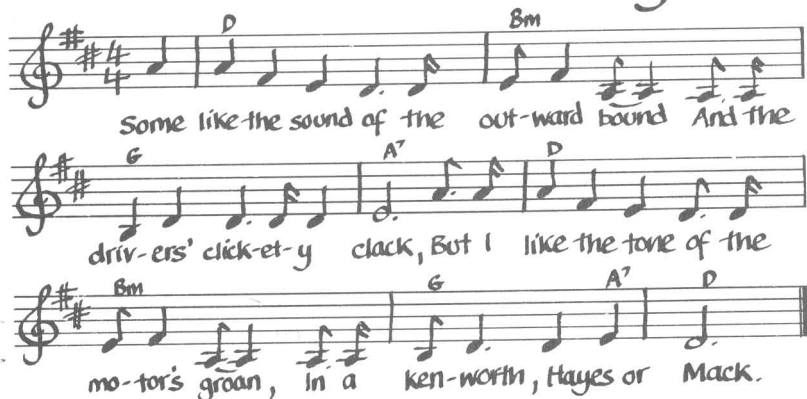


The Truckdriver's Song



Words & tune © 1974 K.M. Papov Arrangement © 1974 P.J. Thomas
(transcription by S.A. Cox)

Some like the sound of the outward bound,
And the driver's clickety-clack;
But I like the tone of the motor's groan,
In a Kenworth, Hayes, or Mack.

My windshield shows me where I go,
And my mirrors where I've been.
My tandems roll and take their toll
Of the highways that I've seen.

Well, I learned to feel through the steering wheel
The road I cannot see,
And I hit the air 'cause I really care
For the rig that's under me.

The rain beats down on the way so black,
And the night is blacker still.
I'll pull this load to the open road
On the far side of the hill.

Now she's made of steel and nuts and bolts,
But you've got to treat her right
Or the dizzy bitch will hit the ditch
And leave you cold and white.

Now there's nothing left for me to say
That's not been said before.
So I'll just say as I go my way
That I like the diesel's roar.



B.C. Forest Service

“The Truck Driver’s Song” reveals how one man thinks and feels about truck driving. His personal view is so concretely and directly stated that we not only share his experience but feel that it presents a general truth about driving the great haulage trucks. The song tells what it’s like behind the wheel.

Kerry Papov of Nakusp, B.C., on Upper Arrow Lake, who made the song a few years ago, has driven trucks in the Nakusp region for some twenty-five years. For many years he hauled logs to the mills from gyppo logging operations. After the CPR cut off steamship service on the Arrow Lakes, he hauled waybill freight two hundred miles from Vernon over the rough roads of the Monashee Mountains. In recent years he has been carrying gravel for road-building. Another job has been taking oil and heavy equipment to logging camps and mines. He has put most of the mileage on his two White trucks on the one-hundred-fifty miles of the region’s single-lane gravel-topped back roads. The song brings the common element of all these jobs, the act of driving, to us with great immediacy.

Just as the whistle and rail sounds of trains stir the feelings of some people, Kerry tells us in his song that he is stirred by the sounds of the great haulage trucks. In the northwest four makes are prominent: Kenworth, Hayes, Mack and White, each of which carries with it an aura of engineered power, rugged

strength, and reliability. These vehicles have two wheels in front and four pairs in a tandem assembly in the rear, making ten in all; a trailer adds another tandem with eight for a total of eighteen wheels. Loaded weights range from 23 to 27 tons (21,000 to 24,500 Kg.). The song puts you right in the cab of the rig, feeling “through the steering wheel the road you cannot see,” hitting the air brakes, facing the treacherous blackness of mountain roads on a rainy night—and if you make an error, “she” will make it fatal.



P.J. Thomas Collection

Kerry M. Papov at the wheel of his White

What is meant by “the open road” is not specific—the term is relative. But “the highways that I’ve seen” suggests hauling on long runs over major paved roads. The song thus takes us beyond the back roads of the Nakusp area, but is rooted in Kerry Papov’s immediate experience.

Kerry has played guitar since his teens. He plays flat-pick with a Chet Atkins feel on a beautiful big Gibson, sings around home, and has more songs made and in the making.

P.J. Thomas

“The Truckdriver’s Song” will appear in the forthcoming book “Where the Fraser River Flows” and Other Songs of the Pacific Northwest; P.J. Thomas, ed. (Hancock House).



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