

God Damn the CPR!

when I come to the plains, why I come on the train and the
train was the C P R I learned how wood-en slats feel and I
ate rot-ten meals cour-tes-y the C P R. Now it
took us three weeks to get to Was-ka-na Creek and that was
fast for the C P R and I got off in the Jaw and went
in-to a bar. it was owned by the C P R and they
wa-tered the beer so all a- round me I hear god damn the C P
R! damn the C P, damn the C P, god damn the C P R!

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When I come to the plains why I come on the train
And the train was the CPR
I learned how wooden slats feel and I ate rotten meals
Courtesy of the CPR
Now it took us three weeks to get to Waskana Creek
And that was fast for the CPR
And I got off in the Jaw and went into a bar
It was owned by the CPR
And they watered the beer so all around me I hear
God damn the CPR!

Now this man comes to me and he says, "I can see
That you've got a hunger for land.
Well, I got a small place and she ain't no disgrace
(in fact, she'll do your kind just grand).
Now she's easy to find, just take a trip down the line
Until you come to some nice black loam
And then go beyond and when you come to a pond
You're fifty miles south of home.
Put your name on this line and now that you've signed
You're in debt to the CPR (you fool!)
Debt to the CP, debt to the CP, in debt to the CPR!"

Well I plowed up my ground just a-walkin' around
Behind an old plow and a horse
And I planted my grain and I looked out for rain
But the heat kept a-gettin' worse
Oh, when she finally come out, why I let out a shout
And all the hoppers come a-hoppin' around
And whatever they left was destroyed like the rest
When the hail came a-poundin' down
So now there's only one thing that I wanta sing
God damn the CPR! I mean it!
Damn the CP, damn the CP, god damn the CPR!

Oh, I married a wife and we begun a hard life
In a one-room, sod-roof shack
And we had us some kids and just gettin' them fed
Was like enough to break our backs.
And then this CPR man comes rollin' by in his train
And he promised her a gayer time
Now my wife went away without a word to say
She even left my socks on the line
So now there's only one thing that I wanta sing
God damn the CPR
Yes, damn the CP, damn the CP, god damn the CPR!

Well, I bin here fifty years and I'm in debt to my ears
And the kids left ages ago
I got rhumatiz and I fergit where things is
And I can't stand the sight of snow
And the neighbours are gone and I'm usually alone
And the furnace keeps goin' on the bum
But though I'm gettin' old and I'm often mighty cold
I know where my troubles come from!

Oh, yes I do, so I'm a-tellin' you
 God damn the CPR
 Damn the CP, damn the CP, god damn the CPR!
 The freight-rates!
 Damn the CP, damn the CP, god damn the CPR!
 The rail-line shutdowns!
 Damn the CP, damn the CP, god damn the CPR!
 And the profits!
 Damn the CP, damn the CP, god damn the CPR!

Geoffrey Ursell, originally from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, makes songs that reflect the hardships and injustices he sees around him. His language is that of the people he sings for—farmers, workers, anyone who is getting short-changed—and his themes reflect their struggles, with the weather, with the finance companies and with the CPR. Besides songs, he also writes poetry, novels, short stories, plays and some journalism. Geoffrey presently lives in Regina, and his record "Prairie

Grass Prairie Sky: Music from Saskatchewan" is available from: Caragana Records, c/o 2226 McTavish St., Regina, Sask. S4T 3X2. Some of his work, including "God Damn the CPR!" has been published in an excellent anthology of Canadian songs, *Singin' About Us*, edited by Bob Davis and compiled by Bruce Burron (James Lorimer & Company, 35 Britain St., Toronto, Ont. M5A 3V8: 144 pp. \$5.95).

Rika Ruebsaat



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