

The Great Nashville Railroad Disaster

David Allan Coe

one sultry summer morning in the year of 1918
three hundred men with ebony skin
pulled out of union station
heading out of nashville for western tennessee
homeward bound cause uncle sam closed down
the munitions factory.

at that very moment on the cheatham county line
old number one train from memphis
was running way behind
back in the smokey club car a memphis gambling man
said gentleman, I'm folding these cards
cause I drew a dead mans hand!

a young man in a milk truck out near dutchman's grade
said oh my god two trains one track
then he closed his eyes and he prayed
a sister from the orphans home made a cross upon her chest
cause a one iron beast was coming from the east
and another one was coming from the west

the bird flew from the tree tops as the impact shook the ground
the screaming wheels and the grinding steel
could be heard for miles around

now every july 9th a few miles west of town
to this day some folks say
you can hear that mournful sound