

# Canadian Railroad Trilogy

Gordon Lightfoot

There was a time in this fair land when the railroad did not run  
when the wild majestic mountains stood alone against the sun  
Long before the white man and long before the wheel  
when the green dark forest was too silent to be real  
But time has no beginnings and hist'ry has no bounds  
as to this verdant country they came from all around  
They sailed upon her waterways and they walked the forests tall  
built the mines, mills and the factories for the good of us all

And when the young man's fancy was turnin' to the spring  
the railroad men grew restless for to hear the hammers ring  
Their minds were overflowing with the visions of their day  
and many a fortune won and lost and many a debt to pay

For they looked in the future and what did they see  
They saw an iron road runnin' from the sea to the sea  
Bringin' the goods to a young growin' land  
all up through the seaports and into their hands

Look away said they across this mighty land  
from the eastern shore to the western strand  
Bring in the workers and bring up the rails  
we gotta lay down the tracks and tear up the trails  
Open 'er heart let the life blood flow  
gotta get on our way 'cause we're movin' too slow

Bring in the workers and bring up the rails  
we're gonna lay down the tracks and tear up the trails  
Open 'er heart let the life blood flow  
gotta get on our way 'cause we're movin' too slow  
get on our way 'cause we're movin' too slow

Behind the blue Rockies the sun is declinin'  
The stars, they come stealin' at the close of the day  
Across the wide prairie our loved ones lie sleeping  
beyond the dark oceans in a place far away

We are the navvies who work upon the railway  
swingin' our hammers in the bright blazin' sun  
Livin' on stew and drinkin' bad whiskey  
bendin' our backs 'til the long days are done

We are the navvies who work upon the railway  
swingin' our hammers in the bright blazin' sun  
Layin' down track and buildin' the bridges  
bendin' our backs 'til the railroad is done

So over the mountains and over the plains  
into the muskeg and into the rain  
up the St. Lawrence all the way to Gaspé  
swingin' our hammers and drawin' our pay  
Layin' 'em in and tyin' 'em down  
away to the bunkhouse and into the town  
a dollar a day and a place for my head  
a drink to the livin' a toast to the dead

Oh the song of the future has been sung

all the battles have been won  
On the mountain tops we stand  
all the world at our command  
We have opened up the soil  
with our teardrops and our toil

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when the green dark forest was too silent to be real  
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And many are the dead men too silent... to be real