

## East Texas Red

Tom Russell

Down in the scrub oak country  
To the southeast Texas Gulf  
There used to ride a brakeman,  
A brakeman double tough.  
He worked the town of Kilgore,  
And Long view twelve miles down,  
And the travelers all said  
Little East Texas Red  
He was the meanest bull around.

If you rode by night or the broad daylight  
In the wintery wind or the sun,  
You would always see little East Texas Red  
Just a sportin' his smooth-runnin' gun.  
And the tale got switched down the stems and mains,  
And everybody said  
That the meanest bull  
On them shiney irons  
Was that little East Texas Red.

It was on a cold and a windy morn'  
It was along towards nine or ten,  
A couple of boys on the hunt of a job  
They stood that blizzardy wind.  
Hungry and cold they knocked on the doors  
Of the workin' people around  
For a piece of meat  
And a carrot or spud just a boil of stew around.

East Texas Red come down the line  
And he swung off that old number two.  
He kicked their bucket over a bush  
And he dumped out all of their stew.  
The travelers said, "Little East Texas Red,  
You better get your business straight  
Cause you're gonna ride  
Your little black train just one year from today."

Well Red he laughed and he climbed the bank  
And he swung on the side of a wheeler,  
The boys caught a tanker to Seminole  
Then west to Amarillo.  
They caught them a job of oil-field work  
And followed a pipeline down.  
It took them lots of places  
Before that year  
Had rolled around.

Then on a cold and windy day  
They caught them a Gulf-bound train.  
They shivered and shook with the dough in their clothes  
To the scrub oak flats again,  
With their warm suits of clothes and overcoats  
They walked into a store.  
They paid that man  
For some meat and stuff  
Just a boil of stew once more.

The ties they tracked down that cinder dump  
And they come to the same old spot  
Where East Texas Red just a year ago  
Had dumped their last stew pot.  
Well, the smoke of their fire went higher and higher  
And Red come down the line.  
With his head tucked low in the wintery wind  
He waved old number nine.  
He walked on down through the jungle yard  
And he came to the same old spot  
And there was the same two men again  
Around that same stew pot.

Red went to his knee's and he hollered  
"Please, don't pull your trigger on me.  
I did not get my business straight."  
But he did not get his say.  
A gun wheeled out of an overcoat  
And it played that old one two,  
And Red was dead when the other two men  
Sat down to eat their stew.