

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Reuben Train

Reuben Train
(traditional)

Oh, Reuben's coming down the track,
And he's got his throttle back,
And the rails are a-carrying him from home.

If the boiler don't bust
'Cause it's eat up with rust,
I'll soon be a long ways from home.

If you don't believe I'm gone,
Look at the train I'm on;
You can hear the whistle blow a thousand miles.

I'm a-going down the track;
I ain't never coming back,
And I'll never get no letter from my home.

Well, the train run so fast
Till I knowed it couldn't last,
For the wheels was a-burning up the rail.

Old Reuben had a wreck
And it broke old Reuben's neck,
And it never hurt a hair on my head.

Now I'm walking up the track,
Hoping I'll get back;
I'm a thousand miles away from home.

If I ever get back to you,
You can beat me black and blue,
For I'll never leave my shanty home.

Collected by Sandy Paton from Frank Proffitt, Reese, North Carolina, 1961.
Lomax printed a collated version of eight stanzas "picked up through the years
along the song-hunting trail" (The Folksongs of North America, New York, 1960).
The Frank C. Brown Collection (North Carolina Folklore, Durham, NC, 1952)
includes two versions, one of which contains seven stanzas. The song, in more
fragmentary form, seems to be quite widely known. Its relationship to the
well-known "900 Miles" is obvious, I think.

