The Wreck Of The Old 97

[G] They gave him his orders at [C] Monroe Virginia
Saying [G] Steve, you're way behind [D7] time
This is [G] not 38 but it's [C] Old 97
Put her [G] into [D7] Spencer on [G] time

Then he looked around and said to his [C] black greasy fireman
Just [G] shovel on a little more [D7] coal
And when we [G] cross on over that [C] White Oak Mountain
You can [G] watch Old [D7] 97 [G] roll

Well, it's a mighty rough road from [C] Lynchburg to Danville
On a [G] line that's a three mile [D7] grade
It is [G] on this grade that he [C] lost his airbrakes
You can [G] see what a [D7] jump he [G] made

He was going down the grade making [C] 90 miles an hour
When his [G] whistle broke into a [D7] scream
He was [G] found in the wreck with his [C] hand on the throttle
And was [G] scalded to [D7] death by the [G] steam

When the telegram came from [C] Washington Station
Oh, [G] this is how it [D7] read
"Oh that [G] brave engineer that run [C] Old 97
Is lying [G] in [D7] Danville [G] dead"

Now ladies you must [C] take a warning
From [G] this time on and [D7] learn
Never [G] speak harsh words to your [C] true loving husband
He may [G] leave you and [D7] never [G] return.

This railroad ballad is based on a true story.
Old 97 was a Southern Railway train officially known as the Fast Mail. It ran from Washington DC to Atlanta, Georgia. On September 27, 1903 while en route from Monroe, Virginia, to Spencer, North Carolina, the train derailed at Stillhouse Trestle near Danville, Virginia, killing 11 people including the engineer Steve Brody.