A Train Robbery

Levon Helm

The foreman touched the cold steel lines
The rail bed was frozen with ice
In the distance an engine was keeping good time
The steam whistle moaned just twice
Down in the cut past the old Tressel bridge
Twelve fine horses stood
Masked men shivered in the cold on the ridge
Not far from the Glendale woods
The brass lamp shone from the swaying train
When the driver saw the red light
Her iron brakes sparked like silver rain
And the metals screamed through the night
The baggage man peered out to look for the fault
When fear froze up his heart
He was staring down the barrel of an army colt
That threatened to tear him apart
We will burn your train to cinders
So throw the money on down
Open up your damned express car
And jump down to the ground
But we won't touch that old woman
[Incomprehensible] and they claimed
They ain't offered no reward
For Frank and Jesse James
Frank and Jesse James
In long soldier's coats frayed with the years
Quickly they scrambled aboard
Men were the sweatin' and the women shed tears
And a preacher prayed to the Lord
When they opened the safe there was nothing for them

So they strode down through the train
What a miserable sight these desperate men
Robbin' old folks for their gold, watch, chains
We will burn your train to cinders
So throw the money on down
Open up your damned express car
And jump down to the ground
But we won't touch that old woman

[Incomprehensible] and they claimed
They ain't offered no reward
For Frank and Jesse James
Frank and Jesse James
Now some say the devil had taken his soul
Some say his spirit survived
But we all know he was nothin' but a Missouri farm boy
Just fighting to stay alive
High above that railroad bed
On a ridge where the pines grow tall
If you listen to the wind, there's a ghost of a chance
You can still hear old Jesse call
We will burn your train to cinders
So throw the money on down
Open up your damned express car
And jump down to the ground
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[Incomprehensible] and they claimed
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