

John Denver, Daddy, What

This song was first released on the All Aboard! album. It is the only album it has been released on.

Daddy, what's a train? Is it something I can ride?
Does it carry lots of grown-up folks and little kids inside?
Is it bigger than our house? Well how can I explain
When my little boy and girl ask me Daddy, what's a train?'

When I was just a boy and living by the track
Us kids would gather up the coal in big 'ole gunnysacks
Then we heard the warning sound as the train pulled into view
The engineer would smile and wave as she went rolling through

She blew so loud and clear, we had to cover up our ears
And we counted cars just as high as we could go
I can almost hear the steam those big old drivers scream
A sound my little kids will never know

Daddy, what's a train? Is it something I can ride?
Does it carry lots of grown-up folks and little kids inside?
Is it bigger than our house? Well how can I explain
When my little boy and girl ask me Daddy, what's a train?'

I guess the times have changed, kids are different now
Cause some don't even seem to know that milk comes from a cow
My little boy can tell the names of all the baseball stars
I remember how we memorized the names on railroad cars

The Wabash and the TP, Lackawanna, the IC
The Nichel-Plate and the good old Santa Fe
Just names out of the past, I guess they're fading fast
Every time I hear my little boy say

Daddy, what's a train? Is it something I can ride?
Does it carry lots of grown-up folks and little kids inside?
Is it bigger than our house? Well how can I explain
When my little boy and girl ask me Daddy, what's a train?'

We climbed into the car, drove down into town
Right up to the depot house, but no one was around
We searched the yard together for something I could show
But I knew there hadn't been a train for a dozen years or so

All the things I did when I was just a kid
How far away those memories appear
I guess it's plain to see they still mean a lot to me
'Cause my ambition was to be an engineer

Daddy, what's a train? Is it something I can ride?
Does it carry lots of grown-up folks and little kids inside?
Is it bigger than our house? Well how can I explain
When my little boy and girl ask me Daddy, what's a train?'

Words and Music by Bruce U. Utah Phillips