

GET ON BOARD!

**TRAIN SONGS, RHYMES,
AND
STORIES FOR CHILDREN**

Buy the Book!

Buy the E-Book!

DR. RENE BOYER

Includes the children's story,
"The Little Engine That Could"

Supplemental Materials
Available Online



Beatin' Path Publications, LLC BPP-RBGoB

Trains are fascinating! Playing with toy trains and watching real ones roll by on a track have enthralled generations of children and adults, alike. The enchanting sights and sounds of locomotives chugging along their tracks have always drawn attention. In fact, the possibilities for creativity and imagination that come with playing and watching trains are endless.

Railroads existed as early as 1550 in Germany. The tracks made of wooden rails called “**wagonways**,” marked the beginning of the modern rail transport era because they made horse-drawn wagons or carts easier to move along dirt roads.

By the late 1700’s, iron replaced wooden rails and wheels. For a long time, horses provided the “**horsepower**” needed to pull cargo until the invention of steam-powered locomotives in the United Kingdom in the early 1800’s. This invention changed things. Though these steam-powered locomotives, originally designed to pull wagons of coal, were soon re-imagined to accommodate passengers.

Many early locomotives in America were imported from the United Kingdom in the 1820’s. Soon after, the United States formed its own locomotive manufacturing industry. By the 1830’s, the American locomotive industry was in full swing.

During the 19th and early part of the 20th century, rail was the “coolest” way to travel. Because cars and airplanes hadn’t been invented yet, trains were an important mode of transportation.

This “Golden Age” of railroads, which it came to be called, lasted from the 1880’s until the 1920’s.



Contents

Contents	5	A Childhood Memory	34
What Happened to Trains?	6	The Train	36
From a Railway Carriage	6	Big Rock Candy Mountain	38
Introduction	7	The Underground Railroad	39
About This Book	7	This Train	41
Children's Train Songs	8	I'm Goin' Home on the Mornin' Train	41
Down by the Station	8	Git on Board, Little Children	42
Train is a'Comin'	9	Life's Railway to Heaven	43
Engine, Engine Number 9	10	Immigrants and the Railroad	44
Engine, Engine Number 9	11	A Gust of Fall Wind	44
A Peanut Sat on a Railroad Track	12	The Radish Song	45
Ride the Train	12	Feng Yang Song	46
Little Red Caboose	13	Paddy Works on the Railway	47
Train, Train, Choo, Choo Train	14	Drill Ye Terriers Drill	48
New River Train	14	Echo Canyon	49
Captain, Go Sidetrack Your Train	15	Trains And Blues	50
To Stop the Train	16	The Midnight Special	51
The Rock Island Line	16	The Orange Blossom Special	52
She'll Be Comin' 'Round the Mountain	17	Homesick Blues	53
Freight Train	18	Train Whistle Blues	54
I've Been Working on the Railroad	19	Trains And Storytime	56
Nine Hundred Miles	20	The Little Engine That Could	56
Railroad Bill	22	The Little Engine -	56
Cluck Old Hen	23	Theme 1	56
Polly Wolly Doodle	24	The Little Engine	58
Folk Ballads	25	Theme 2	58
John Henry	27	The Little Engine	59
'Dis ol' Hammer	28	Theme 3	59
Take 'dis Hammer	28	The Little Engine	61
Casey Jones	30	Theme 4	61
The Wreck of the Old '97	32		
The Wabash Cannonball	33		

Children's Train Songs

Just think about it! During the early childhood years, toddlers and primary-aged school children form a train by placing a hand on the shoulder of the child in front of them, keeping children together while on field trips or other outings.

Outside of school, many children enjoy getting down on the floor and playing with toy trains, even creating their own train by connecting cardboard boxes. Over the years, children have clearly given the term, boxcar, a whole new meaning.

Songs about trains are great fun for children. They learn just from the simple words and rhythms. The lyrics to *Down by the Station* describe how trains move and make different sounds. The song tells about the role of the engine driver. When the signal is given, the train moves slowly from the station and travels to a designated location.



Down by the Station

American Popular Song
Paul Mills and Slim Gaillard - 1947

F C7 F F C7 F
 Down at the sta-tion, ear-ly in the morn-ing, See the lit-tle puf-fer-bil-lies lined up in a row.
 5 F C7 F F C7 F
 See the en-gine driv-er pull the lit-tle lev-er. Toot! Toot! Whoo! Whoo! Off we go.

Did you know?

A **pufferbilly** is an Australian steam locomotive used in coal mines.

Once a train is underway, the conductor walks through the train, collecting tickets from passengers. Today, many passengers use apps on cell phones and other electronic devices to show their tickets and seat assignments to the conductor.

Train is a'Comin'

Traditional American Gospel Song

D G D
 Train is a - com - in', Oh yes! Train is a - com - in', Oh yes!
 5 Bm G D Bm G D
 Train is a - com - in', Train is a - com - in', Train is a - com - in', Oh yes!

Verses: 2. Gotta get my ticket... 3. Hear the whistle blowin',... 4. Goin' to the Glory,...

Did you know?

Two major types of trains are: **Freight Trains** and **Passenger Trains**. Freight trains carry supplies and other goods. Passenger trains carry people. Many kinds of cars make up a freight train. They often include:

Box Cars



Flat Cars



Coal Car



Oil Tanker Cars



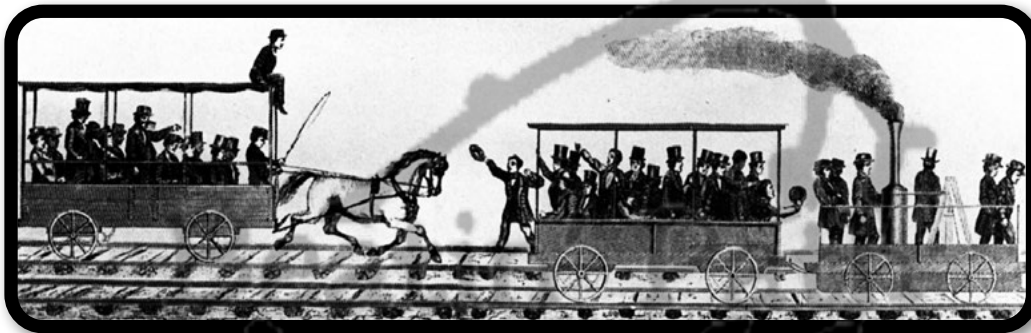
Folk Ballads

Trains inspired many legends, and with those legends came folk songs that remain as part of who we are as a country today.

Many of these folk tunes were written as **ballads**, stories or narratives set to music. The story told is usually traumatic. Two of the most famous ballads about trains are *John Henry* and *Casey Jones*, both with tragic endings.

Did you know?

In 1830 the first public railway in the United States, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&O), opened. The steam engine used to pull the train was called **Tom Thumb**. It is very interesting to think about and discuss how trains and the big steam drills used to lay railroad tracks, changed things.



Peter Cooper's Tom Thumb Races a Horse. U.S. Dept. of Transportation

The transition from horsepower to coal and then to Steam Engines gave America one of its most memorable folksongs - **John Henry**.



John Henry: A West Virginia Legend

John Henry was a mighty man. He was born a slave in the 1840's but was freed after the war. He went to work as a steel-driver for the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. John Henry was the strongest, and most powerful man working the rails. He spent his days drilling holes by hitting thick steel spikes into rocks. There was no one who could match him, though many tried.

The construction of a new railroad was to be built, thanks to the mighty John Henry. But looming right smack in its path was a mighty enemy, **the Big Bend Mountain**. The bosses at the C&O Railroad decided that they couldn't go around the mile and a quarter thick mountain, so they decided to drill through it.

In February of 1870, John Henry and several hundred other workers, many of whom happened to be African American, began drilling the Great Bend Tunnel where the Greenbrier River makes a seven-mile meander around Big Bend Mountain. They worked tirelessly to cut a 6,450 foot-long tunnel through the mountain.

The workers cut through layers of red shale, which tended to disintegrate when exposed to air, making the tunnel a dangerous place to work. Coupled with the dust and unexpected rock-slides within the tunnel, over a thousand men died. But John Henry worked tirelessly, drilling with a 14-pound hammer, and digging 10 to 12 feet of dirt and stone in one workday. No one else could match him.

One day a salesman came to the camp. He had a steam-powered drill and claimed it could out-drill any man. After convincing the foreman to let him give it a try, a contest was set up between John Henry and that drill.

The foreman set up the steam-drill. John Henry pulled out two 20-pound hammers, one in each hand. They began. The steam drill noisily drilled and drilled. John Henry hammered and hammered. Thick coats of dust were everywhere. Spectators were howling and cheering. After 35 minutes, John Henry had drilled two seven-foot holes, a total of fourteen feet, while the steam drill had only drilled one nine-foot hole.

John Henry held up his hammers in triumph! The men shouted and cheered. The noise was so loud, it took a moment for the men to realize that John Henry was tottering. Exhausted, the mighty man crashed to the ground, the hammer's rolling from his grasp. The crowd went silent as the foreman rushed to his side. But it was too late. John Henry, the greatest driller in the C&O Railroad, was dead.

Some folks say that John Henry's likeness is carved right into the rock inside the **Big Bend Tunnel**. And if you walk up to the edge of the tunnel, sometimes you can hear John Henry with his two 20-pound hammers swinging his way to victory.

Immigrants and the Railroad

Did you know . . . The Pacific Railway Act was signed by **President Abraham Lincoln** on July 1, 1862. This act launched the building of America's **Transcontinental Railroad**.

The building of the railroad needed workers, and it didn't matter from whence they came. The railroad leaders were forced to recruit workers from a variety of backgrounds.

In the West, it was Chinese and Irish immigrants and Mormons. In the Midwest, it was the Civil War Veterans, including African Americans. The Pawnee Tribe provided protection. Collectively, their toil and tenacity connected our nation. Though many died in the process, the routes, and rails that these brave Americans and Immigrants built, still transport goods American families depend on today.

The Railroad and Chinese Immigrants

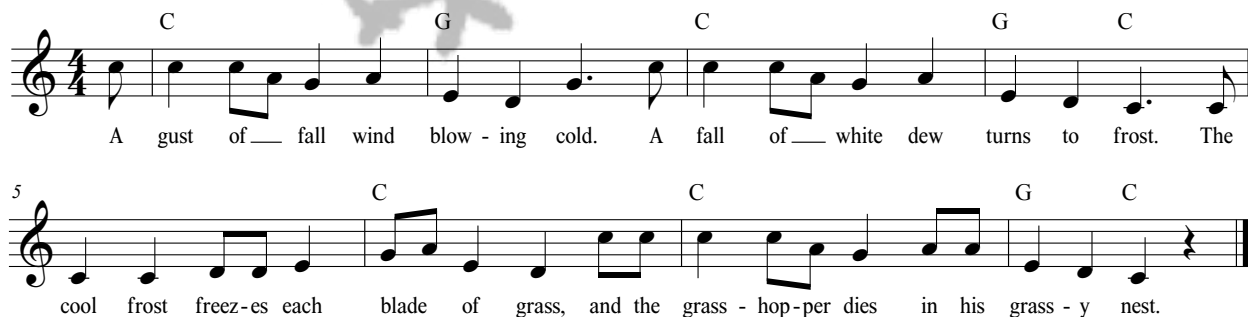
During the 19th century, more than 2.5 million Chinese citizens left their country and were hired to work on the railroads. They weren't paid much money, nor did they have decent living accommodations, but this did not stop them from making an everlasting stamp on the development of the railroad in America.

The work was tedious, as the railroad was built entirely by manual laborers who used to shovel 20 pounds of granite rock over 400 times a day. They had to face dangerous work conditions – accidental explosions, and rock avalanches, which killed hundreds of workers, not to mention the snow and frigid weather.

Thousands of Chinese laborers, mostly young men from the southern Guangdong region of China, bore through solid granite to construct miles of railroad tunnels on Donner Summit. These Chinese men completed an astonishing engineering feat and a crucial link in the Transcontinental Railroad.

As did African American workers, Chinese workers sang as they worked on the railroad. The following are examples of songs they sang from their country.

A Gust of Fall Wind



A gust of fall wind blow - ing cold. A fall of white dew turns to frost. The cool frost freez-es each blade of grass, and the grass - hop-per dies in his grass - y nest.

Trains And Blues

Because of a lack of education and skills, many of the enslaved who now were free during the second half of the 19th century, unfortunately found themselves in prisons, having been incarcerated. Many others went to work on the railroads.

Ironically, both the railroad and the prison helped provide the inspiration needed to shape the musical future of America.

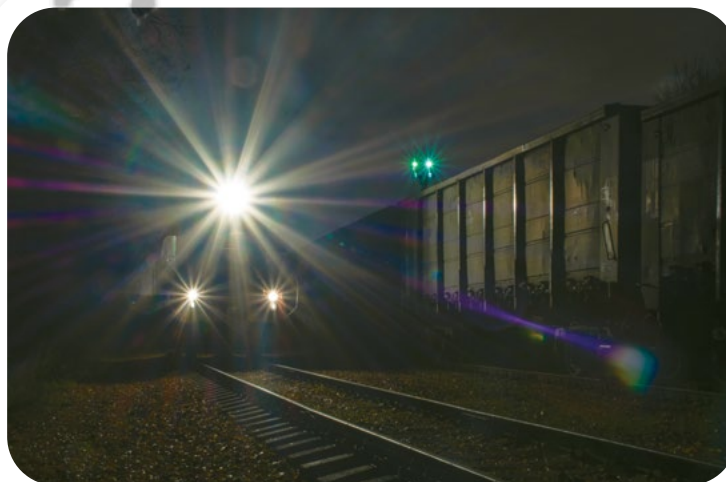
This section of ***Get On Board: Train Songs, Rhymes and Stories for Children***, will highlight a few examples of how the railroad became a major focal theme of many blues singers and folk musicians.

One of the most timeless, as well as poignant examples of a song that was created that addressed trains is *Midnight Special*. It was recorded by Huddie Leadbetter, better known in the Blues and Folk music world as Leadbelly, in 1934.



Huddie Ledbetter

Running past Sugar Land Prison, where Leadbelly was serving time, the glaring light of the *Midnight Special* became a symbol of salvation and freedom for the inmates.



Trains And Storytime

The Little Engine That Could

by Watty Piper (1930), Adapted by Rene Boyer (2026)

Add: Rhythm ostinato to Verse 1

Rene Boyer

Triangle

Sandblock

Sandblock

Agogo

1. Chug, chug, chug.
Huff, huff, huff.
Ding-dong, ding-dong.
Puff, puff, puff.

Add Theme 1 to (Verses 2-5) NO VOICE

The Little Engine - Theme 1

Rene Boyer

AG

AX

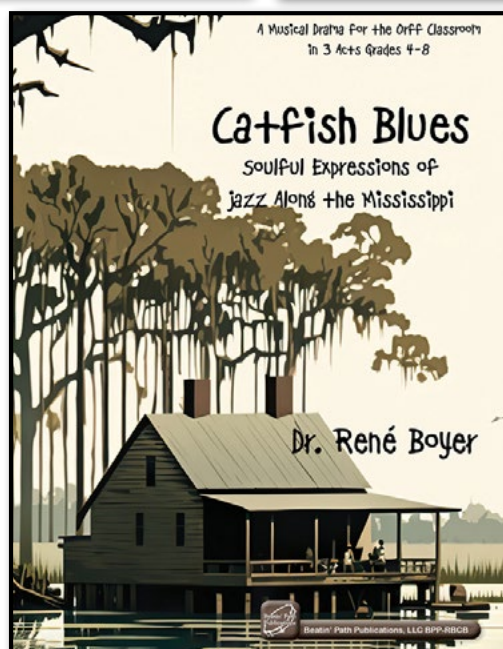
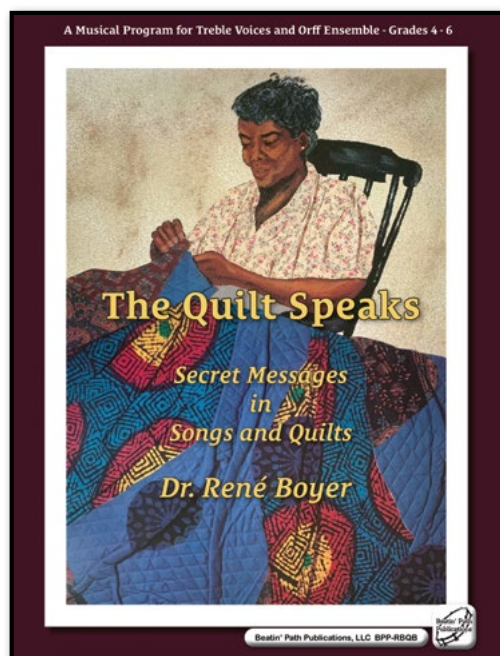
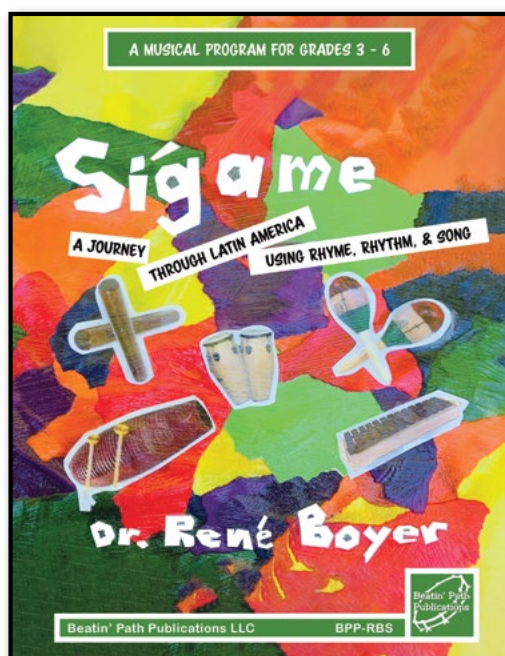
BX

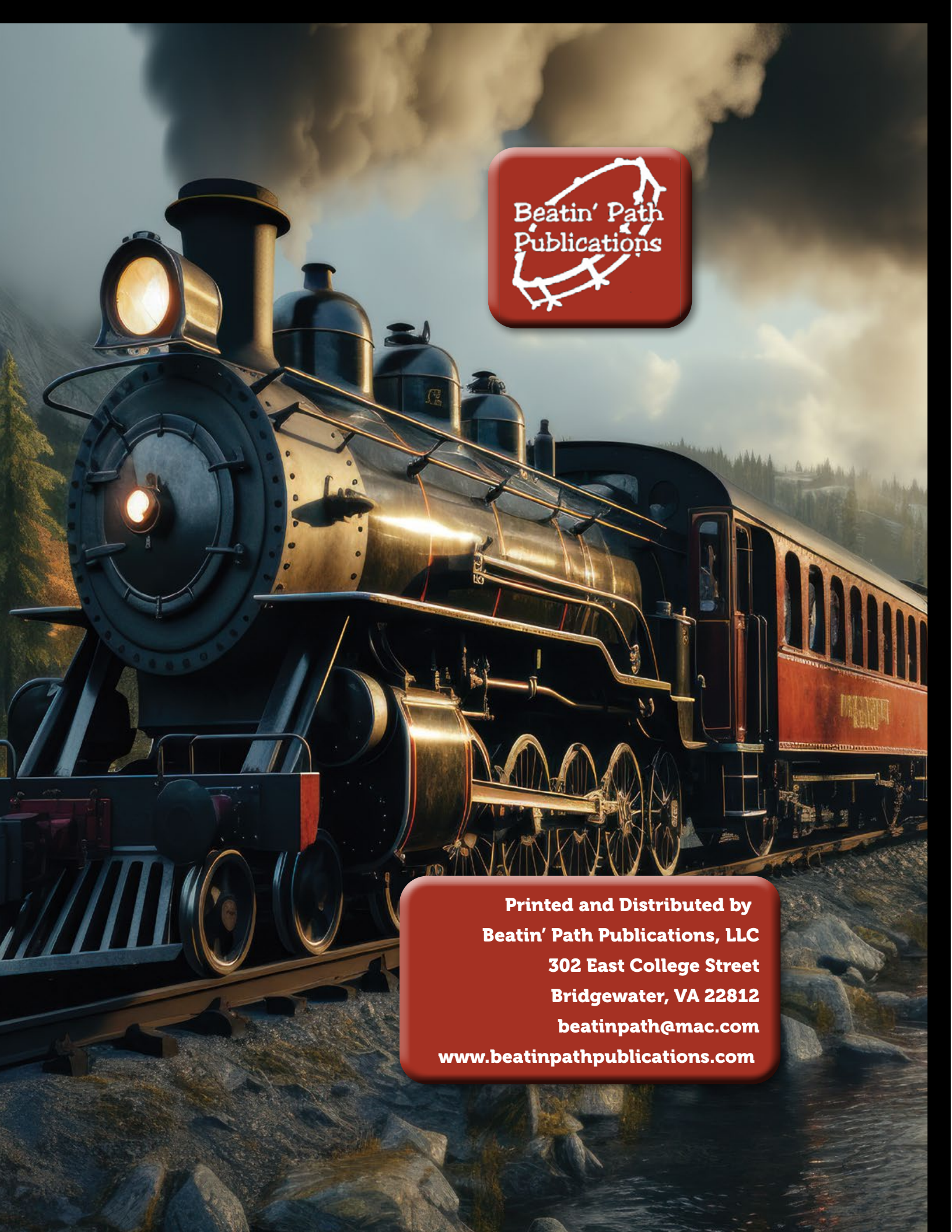
The lit-tle train is on the track, it's car-rying ma-ny things; So boys and girls can cel-e brate the

com-ing of the Spring. There're toys and games and balls and bats and vi-deo games ga-lore, But

More from Dr. René Boyer at Beatin' Path Publications.

https://bppub.net/Dr_Rene_Boyer



A detailed steam locomotive, painted in black and gold, is pulling a red passenger car through a scenic mountain landscape. The locomotive's large headlight is illuminated, and thick white steam billows from its smokestack. The passenger car has several windows and a red body with gold trim. The train is on a track that runs along a rocky riverbank. In the background, there are steep, forested mountains under a cloudy sky.

Beatin' Path
Publications

Printed and Distributed by
Beatin' Path Publications, LLC
302 East College Street
Bridgewater, VA 22812
beatinpath@mac.com
www.beatinpathpublications.com