

**Ode to the American Railroad**  
**By Cain Pence**

The Mighty engine called the iron horse  
Shaped a nation at its core

Brought gold from West and money from East  
Powered by engines greater than a hundred beasts

It hauled the northern Minnesota rock  
Upon its turning wheel  
Shaping iron ore into Pittsburgh steel

Carried the grain from Montana farmers yield  
Drove the oil from a Texas field

The fruit of the California farmer enriched many a banker  
Barren North Dakota land gave America countless tankers

It helped turn wheat from Kansas into flour  
And transformed coal from Virginia into power

Connected a nation from sea to sea  
Let a continent burst open and free

Shaped the horizon of a million immigrants dream  
Laid their hopes on a wooden railroad beam

It united the Nation after a bloody Civil War  
Provided the produce for your local grocery store

Inspired the young boy and the music band  
Carried the soldier who defended its land

When the story of the great American Nation is told  
Recall the Ode to the American Railroad

*Cain Pence is a writer based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He grew up along the railroad tracks and vowed as a boy he would see where they led. After graduating from Georgetown University Mr. Pence travelled throughout all 435 congressional districts in the United States. He fulfilled his boyhood promise to see where the tracks led. He can be reached at [caino@cainpence.com](mailto:caino@cainpence.com).*