

THE OFFICE WHOLESALER

The sidewalks were deserted, the lobby was the same;
The place looked dark and dreary, except one window pane.
Behind it sat a weary man, his head held in his hand;
His face was steeped in anguish as he peered across the land.
He saw the blue Willamette that glimmered from afar,
But his mind was sorely burdened by an unsold transit car.

He snapped it up in early May when things were looking right,
And got the mill to ship it, but not without a fight.
It was a steal at seventy-two, his hopes were raised on high;
But lo when first he offered it, the dealers passed it by.
He shrugged and bade the railroad boys to slow her down a twist,
Then doubled up his efforts to get it off his list.

In early June he dropped a hint that he'd take two bucks less;
The trade was deathly quiet, he sensed a frightful mess.
He broke out Crow's big Buyer's Guide and swamped the U.S. mails,
Two weeks went by and still that car was drifting on the rails.
One day he tapped a new cigar and in between the puffs,
The agent called and said the thing has just reached Council Bluffs.

Then, as he sat in constant fear a-pondering his fate,
The I.C.C. got in the act and upped the demurrage rate.
He fumed and stormed and fretted, then plotted out his course;
He'd fix those rascals soon enough, he called up Senator Morse.
And while he listened there unto; his mind a whirling fog,
The fickle green Fir market slipped another cog.

By now his heart beat faster, his face turned ashen gray,
His friends were sympathetic, he had been warm and gay.
His family crept on tiptoe, they thought he'd never rally;
At night he'd bolt upright in bed and henceforth shout the tally.
Each morning saw him mutter as he fumbled with his cuffs,
"God help me move that transit car on hand at Council Bluffs".

Before the day was over, he'd make three dozen calls;
New England, Pittsburgh, Newark, too, and Cuyahoga Falls.
He kidded, joshed and pleaded, the cards laid on the line;
Some joker finally countered with a measly fifty-nine.
"By God," he roared, "I'll eat it first," and then banged down the phone,
(He later wished he'd answered with a little softer tone).

No further offer came his way, though prices took a hike;
Until the B.C. Union boys decided not to strike.
And then the bottom sifted out, the worst had just begun;
The mail came in dribbles, the phone in silence hung.
Today he sits a broken shell, the wind has quit his sails;
The car in question never moved, it's rusted on the rails.