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Richard Garrity

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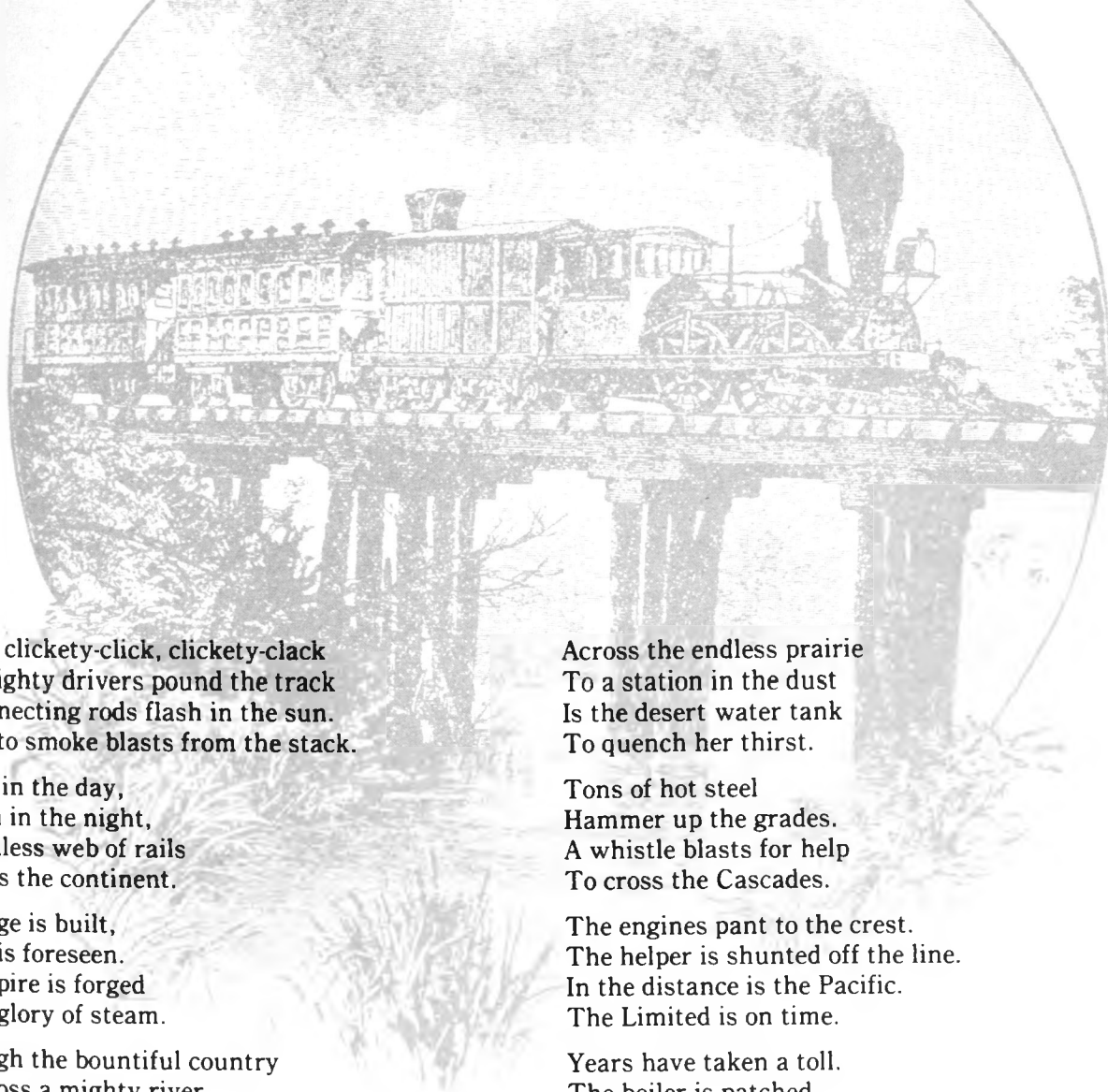
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The Glory Of Steam

By Richard Garrity



With a clickety-click, clickety-clack
The mighty drivers pound the track
As connecting rods flash in the sun.
Staccato smoke blasts from the stack.

Bright in the day,
Hidden in the night,
An endless web of rails
Crosses the continent.

A village is built,
A city is foreseen.
An empire is forged
In the glory of steam.

Through the bountiful country
Or across a mighty river
Speeds the iron horse,
A taker and a giver.

The harvest of the land is moved;
Passengers cross the nation.
It has a schedule to keep
At a distant destination.

Against the driven snow,
Into the pelting rain,
Or heat, cold, and fog,
Hurtles the Number Nine.

The journals are hot;
The water is low.
Stoke that fire
To make her go!

Across the endless prairie
To a station in the dust
Is the desert water tank
To quench her thirst.

Tons of hot steel
Hammer up the grades.
A whistle blasts for help
To cross the Cascades.

The engines pant to the crest.
The helper is shunted off the line.
In the distance is the Pacific.
The Limited is on time.

Years have taken a toll.
The boiler is patched
And the fiery breath is feeble.
Faceless diesels carry the manifest.

The relic shudders to a halt
With a final exhaust of steam.
This is the end of the line:
This is the requiem.

RICHARD GARRITY, of Oklahoma City, is a free-lance writer and photographer who continues to share his expertise with WESTVIEW.