

Elizabeth "Libba" Cotten (1893-1987)

Freight Train

From Elizabeth Cotten, Folkways FG 3526.

When Elizabeth Cotten and her brothers played music together, they each would have songs that they called their own and this was one that she sang as hers. It was one of the few that she ever composed herself and was largely inspired by the train running near her home and by her friendship with the railroad men. She sang the song for a gather-

ing at the Seeger's house in Washington, D. C., in 1952 and both Peggy and Mike learned it. Nancy Whiskey learned it from Peggy in England and it was subsequently copyrighted by two English "song-writers" and popularized in this country by Rusty Draper and more lately by the country singer, Mac Wiseman.

Key of C. Guitar.

Freight train, freight train, run so fast; freight train, freight train,
run so fast. Please don't tell what train I'm on, they won't
know what route I'm going.

Freight train, freight train, run so fast,
Freight train, freight train, run so fast,
Please don't tell what train I'm on,
They won't know what route I'm going.

When I am dead and in my grave,
No more good times here I crave,
Place the stones at my head and feet,
And tell them all that I'm gone to sleep.

When I die, Lord, bury me deep,
Way down on old Chestnut Street,
So I can hear old Number Nine,
As she comes rolling by.

When I die, Lord, bury me deep,
Way down on old Chestnut Street,
Place the stones at my head and feet,
And tell them all that I'm gone to sleep.

Published in *The New Lost City Ramblers Song Book*.
Seeger, Mike, and John Cohen, eds. 1964. New York: Oak Books.