



So many things
a train
may contain!

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You may have seen one thousand trains,
Trains in the sun, trains in the rain,
Up in the mountains, down on the plain.

The locomotives look very fine,
As they pull containers all in a line.

The engines roar, the boxcars fly,
Watch the trains as they go by!

But have you ever stopped to wonder,
Do you ever sit and ponder,
What's in those boxes pulled behind?
Does it ever itch at your mind?

Does it ever pique your brain,
That so many cars make up a train—
What on earth can the train contain?

What gets moved from there to here?
Turn the page, you'll see, my dear,
On the rails from here to there—
Things and stuff from everywhere.



All kinds of things,
All sorts of stuff,
From stuff of steel
To things of fluff.

Cars in parts and whole cars, too,
Food for plants and food for you.

Baby seats and Christmas treats,
Hockey sticks and baseball mitts,
Beans and peas, split or green,
More raincoats than you've ever seen.



Bags
 And boots
 And pouches
 And sleeves,
 Shirts of cotton and synthetic weaves.

Aprons,
 Coveralls,
 Labcoats,
 Pants,
 Soft-soled shoes for those who dance.

Burlap sacks that are rubberized,
 Screwdriver kits that are multi-sized.
 Rice and rye and sphagnum moss,
 Games to play and balls to toss.



Knives for a butcher,
Flour for a baker,
There might even be
Tools for a candlestick maker.

Books for scrapbookers,
Fish hooks for fish-hookers,
Hammers for builders,
And slops for distillers.



Telephones
 And toilet paper
 And TV sets as well.

Toluene
 And toilet seats
 And potpourri that smells.

Underwear
 And Christmas socks,
 Shoes and pantyhose,
 Baseball caps, rocket jetpacks—



No, we're all still waiting for those.
So many cars make up a train—
What on earth can the train contain?
On the rails from here to there—
Things and stuff from everywhere.
All kinds of things,
All sorts of stuff,
From stuff of steel
To things of fluff.



Garden tools to turn your soil,
Kitchen tools in which to boil.

Pruners, saws, and shears and loppers,
Pots and pans and popcorn poppers.

Bones of rawhide for your dog
A scratching post made of a log—
That will make a happy cat,
And so will a new napping mat.



Things that whir
And spin
And work.

Things that dig
And things with torque.

Things that are pieces, stuff that's tools.
Things that heat and stuff that cools.

Mailing machines and minibikes,
Snowmobiles and railway spikes.

Bicycles and ATVs,
Power tools and blank house keys.

Things to help you with your jobs,
From mobile phones to cotton swabs.

All the things the train contains
Could run circles right around your brains.



Pulverized phosphate rock
 And ground volcanic ash.
 Bandages for boo-boos
 And unguents for rash.

Barrels,
 Baskets,
 Barley malt.
 Marshmallows
 And table salt.

Solar panels,
 Sofa beds,
 Suitcases and swings,
 Mayonnaise and macaroni
 And other tasty things.



What do you like to eat, I wonder,
If your name is Tom?

As the train rolls past out yonder,
Does it carry something yum?

What's a treat for you, Margot,
Something like a pear?

And for a boy who's named Ivo,
Do candies ride in there?

Fresh produce from the farmer's fields
In refrigerated cars.

Packaged snacks and luncheon meat
And sweet granola bars.

Waffles and French toast, you say?
I bet there's pancakes, too.
Maple syrup, pizza pie
And berries red and blue.



There's spices like cloves
And fridges and stoves
And tins to make pies out of mud.

Tortillas and tortes
And wood shims for your forts
And for vampires there's sometimes dried blood.



Oats and groats and lawn grass seed,
Peanuts, raw and shelled.
Disc brakes for a jeep or coupe,
And other cars as well.

Shirts and shock absorbers,
Ammonia nitrate and chlorine.
Fishing rods and tackle boxes,
Carrots, fresh or green.

Logs and lumber, living trees,
Houseplants, shrubs and vines.

Sheets for your bed or sheets made of steel,
Elastics, ropes and twines.



The train may carry many things,
As you can surely see,
As it rolls along the rails,
Through such pretty scenery.

In the mountains, through the towns,
Over forest, stream and dale,
The train will bring you what you need,
From where it's made to point-of-sale.

From underwear to vacuum cleaners,
From rags to mops to brooms,
From the sewer pipes under city streets
To a nightlight for your room.

Things we need and things we want,
They're brought to us by train.
Umbrellas and their holders,
And pills for shoulder pain.

From paper plates to picnic tables,
From dolls to action figures,
From saplings that will soon be huge,
To bonsai trees that get no bigger.



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A book-length exploration of but a fraction of the voluminous and varied goods and materials transported from one corner of the continent to another, daily, by CN.

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This book was conceived and created for the CN100 – A Moving Celebration tour.