I grew up on a farm
But it did me no harm
  We just plowed and we planted and hoed.
We hauled bundles of hay
Throughout the long day.
  I kept hoping to haul the last load.
I learned lots from my mother,
Bonded strong with my brother,
  Took pride in our “humble abode.”
And I’m still here alive
 ‘Cause I learned how to drive
  With my dad as we hauled one more load.
As we hauled for the herd
I heard very few words
  From my dad as we drove down the road.
He was calm and collected,
And seldom dejected,
  Never anxious to haul the last load.
I learned by observing
His method of serving
  In silence and calm as we rode.
And while feeding the cattle...
No jabber... no prattle!
  Just thinking, “Is this the last load?”
It was not that I shirked
Or avoided my work.
  I had learned not to stay in that mode.
So I stayed quite alert
And I worked till it hurt,
  But I wanted to haul the last load.
I often was teased
But never displeased
  When my quest for relief was bestowed.
And he laughed at my plot
To bypass the feedlot
  And proceed to haul the last load.
“Right soon” or “We’ll see”
Was his answer to me
  When I asked if we’d quit and unload.
No straight answer I got
As I pled and I thought
  That, just maybe, this IS the last load.
“To the house and some rest”
Was my earnest request
  Since a sizeable load had been stowed.

But it still wasn’t dark
It was not time to park.
  There was still time to haul one more load.
With the sky turning gray
At the end of the day,
  We’d worked all day long, and it showed!
So as darkness approached
My question was broached:
  Is it now time to haul the last load?
There was likely some charm
To work hard on the farm...
  A “blessing” so humbly bestowed.
Quitting work was absurd
As we hauled for the herd.
  Not one thought that we’d haul the last load.
But the years went on by
Seldom thinking that I had a debt to my dad that I owed.
He taught me the rules
Apart from the schools
  One thing learned: Not to haul the last load.
He was perky and spry
With a glint in his eye
  And he taught me by things that he showed.
He taught me to stay
Til the end of the day,
  Always waiting to haul the last load.
Now he lived a long life
On the farm with his wife
  Who was happy to share the workload.
You would not see him frown
Though the years wore him down.
  He kept hauling and hauling that load.
When we fought off the gloom
In his hospital room,
  (He was nearing the end of his road.)
He just eyed me and said
As I stood by his bed
  “It’s time... to haul the last load.”
What a sobering thought,
To be careless and caught
  Without tending your “row to be hoed.”
So I challenge you, friend,
To be true to the end,
  ’Til it’s your time to haul the last load.