

jerry macmullen

PHB-3a

WHEN WE WERE OLD AND GREY

When we were a little boy, we saved up our pennies so that, once a month, we could buy a 10-cent pulp called The Railroad Man's Magazine. It was a good pulp, full of history and fiction of the High Iron, and one year it ran a 12-month series called Around the Union By Rail. In it the author, whose name we recall was Gilson Willetts, took his readers all over the United States by Pullman and day-coach. In us it instilled a burning desire to, some day, cross the country by rail and come back through the Canadian Rockies, on Canadian Pacific. And so, one day, we caught the 4:30 San Diegan and, at Los Angeles some three hours later, boarded what used to be the Super Chief for Chicago and then the one and only change of trains, to Boston. Santa Fe, we heard, would not let Amtrak call if Super Chief which we now can understand -- so now it's the Southwest Limited.

And there the Great Adventure began. Come bed-time, we found that all of the plumbing in our car had conked out. There was no hot water, no cold water, and the john wouldn't work. Somewhere over around Needles they