

John Henry

Burl Ives

John Henry he could hammer,
He could whistle, he could sing
He went to the mountain early in the mornin'
Just to hear his hammer ring, Lord, Lord
Just to hear his hammer ring.
Just to hear his hammer ring, Lord, Lord
Just to hear his hammer ring.

When John Henry was a little baby,
Sittin' on his daddy's knee
He picked up a hammer, a little piece of steel,
Said hammer be the death of me, Lord, Lord
Said hammer be the death of me
Said hammer be the death of me, Lord, Lord
Said hammer be the death of me

When John Henry's fam'ly needed money,
Said he didn't have but a dime
If you wait 'til the red sun goes down
I'll get it from the man in the mine, Lord, Lord
I'll get it from the man in the mine
I'll get it from the man in the mine, Lord, Lord
I'll get it from the man in the mine

Well John Henry went to the Captain
Said the captain, what can you do
I can hoist a jack, I can lay a track
I can pick and shovel too, Lord, Lord
I can pick and shovel too
I can pick and shovel too, Lord, Lord
I can pick and shovel too

Well the captain said to John Henry,
Gonna bring me a steam drill 'round
Gonna bring me a steam drill out on the job
Gonna whup that steel on down, Lord, Lord
Whup that steel on down

Well John Henry said to the captain,
Oh a man ain't nothin' but a man
'Fore I'd let your steam drill beat me down,
I'd die with my hammer in my hand, Lord, Lord
Die with my hammer in my hand

Well John Henry said to the captain,
Looka yonder what I see,
Hole done choke, drill done broke,
And you can't drive steel like me, Lord, Lord
Can't drive steel like me
Oh no, you can't drive steel like me, no no
Can't drive steel like me

Well John Henry drove into the mountain,
His hammer was strikin' fire
He drove so hard he broke his poor heart
And he laid down his hammer and he died, Lord, Lord
Laid down his hammer and he died

He laid down his hammer and he died, Great God
Laid down his hammer and he died

Oh they took John Henry to the White House
And they buried him in the sand
Every locomotive come roarin' by
Says there lies a steel drivin' man, Lord, Lord
There lies a steel drivin' man
Says there lies a steel drivin' man, Lord, Lord
There lies a steel drivin' man

Shaker why don't you sing,
I'm throwin' twelve pounds from my hips on down,
Just listen to the cold steel ring,
Just listen to the cold steel ring

Well the Captain says to John Henry
I believe this mountains cavin' in
John Henry said to the Captain,
'Tain't nothin' but my hammer suckin' wind,
'Tain't nothin' but my hammer suckin' wind

The man that invented the steamdrill,
Thought he was mighty fine,
John Henry made his fifteen feet,
The steamdrill only made nine,
The steamdrill only made nine

Well John Henry had a little woman,
And her name was Polly Ann