

Woody Guthrie, John Henry

John Henry when he was a baby
settin' on his mammy's knee
picked up an hammer in his little right hand
Said "Hammer be the death of me me me,
hammer be the death of me!"

Some say he's born in Texas
Some say he's born up in Maine
I just say he was a Louisiana man
Leader of a steel-driving chain gang
leader on a steel-driving gang

"Well", the captain said to John Henry
"I'm gonna bring my steam drill around
gonna whup that steel on down down down
whup that steel on down!"

John Henry said to the captain (what he say?)
"You can bring your steam drill around
gonna bring my steam drill out on the job
I'll beat your steam drill down down down
beat your steam drill down!"

John Henry said to his Shaker
"Shaker you had better pray
If you miss your six feet of steel
It'll be your buryin' day day day
It'll be your buryin' day!"

Now the Shaker said to John Henry
"Man ain't nothing but a man
but before I'd let that steam drill beat me down
I'd die with an hammer in my hand hand hand
I'd die with an hammer in my hand!"

John Henry had a little woman
Her name was Polly Anne
John Henry took sick and was laid up in bed
While Polly handled steel like a man man man
Polly handled steel like a man.

They took John Henry to the graveyard
laid him down in the sand
Every locomotive comin' a-rolling by by by
hollered "there lies a steel-drivin' man man man
there lies a steel-drivin' man!"