

# Johnny Cash - The Legend Of John Henry's Hammer

Tom: G

Johnny Henry's pappy woke him up one midnight,  
 he said, "Before the sheriff comes, I wanna tell you,  
 "Said "Listen boy,  
 learn to hoist a jack and learn to lay a track  
 learn to pick and shovel, too, and take that hammer,  
 it'll do anything you tell it to."

John Henry's mammy had about a dozen babies,  
 John Henry's pappy broke jail a dozen times,  
 the babies all got sick and when the doctor wanted money,  
 he said, "I'll pay you a quarter at a time, startin'  
 tomorrow,  
 that's the pay for a steel driver on this line."

Then the section foreman said, "Hey! Hammer-swinger !  
 I see you brought your own hammer, boy, but,  
 what else can all them muscles do?" And he said,  
 "I can hoist a jack, and I can lay a track, I can pick and  
 shovel, too."  
 He said, "Can you swing a hammer?"  
 And he said, ? Do anything you hire me to."  
 "Now ain't you somethin' ! You so high and mighty  
 with all that muscle! Go ahead, boy, pick up that hammer,  
 and show me what you can do!"

He said, ?Get a rusted spike and swing that hammer down  
 three times,  
 I'll pay you a nickel a day for every inch you sink it to.  
 Go on and do what you say you can do !?  
 With a steep-nosed hammer on a four foot switch handle,  
 John Henry raised it back til' it touched his heels, then  
 the spike went through the cross-tie and it split it half  
 in two.  
 Thirty-five cents a day for drivin' steel.  
 "Sweat ! Sweat, boy ! Sweat ! Only two more swings !"  
 Said, "I was born drivin' steel."  
 Well, now, John Henry hammered in the mountain,  
 he'd give a grunt, and he'd give a groan with every swing,  
 the women-folks from miles around heard him and come down

they'd watch make the cold-steel ring "Lord ! What a  
 swinger !  
 Watch him make the cold-steel ring."  
 Then the bad boys came up laughin' at John Henry,  
 they said," You're full of vinegar now, but you bout'  
 through!  
 We gonna get a steamdrill to do your share of drivin' ,  
 then what's all them muscles gonna do? Huh? John Henry?  
 Gonna take a little bit of vinegar out of you."  
 John Henry said, "I feed four little brothers,  
 and my baby sister's walkin' on her knees.  
 Now, did the Lord say that machines ought to take the  
 place of livin'?  
 And what's a substitute for bread and beans ? I ain't seen  
 it !  
 Do engines get rewarded for their steam?  
 Then John Henry said to his captain,  
 said, "A man ain't nothin' but a man,  
 but you can bring that steamdrill 'round I'll beat it fair  
 and honest.  
 I'll die with that hammer in my hand, but I'll be  
 laughin',  
 'cause you can't replace a steel-drivin' man.  
 There was a big crowd of people at the mountain,  
 John Henry said to the steam-drill, "How is you?  
 Said, ?Pardon me, Mister Steamdrill,  
 I suppose you didn't hear me, I said : How are you!  
 Can you hoist a jack? Can you lay a track?  
 Can you pick and shovel too?  
 Listen, this hammer-swinger's talkin' to you.  
 Two thousand people hollered, "Go John Henry !"  
 then somebody hollered," The mountain's cavin' in !"  
 John Henry told his captin,"Tell the kind folks, don?t  
 worry,  
 it ain't nothin' but my hammer suckin' wind, it keeps me  
 breathin',  
 this steel-driver's muscle, it ain't thin.

<sup>E</sup>  
 "Captain, tell the people to move back farther,  
<sup>B7</sup> I'm at the finish line and there ain't no drill  
<sup>E</sup> It's so far behind that it don't got the brains to quit it <sup>D</sup>  
 when she blows up she'll scatter cross the hills Lord,  
 Lord,  
<sup>E</sup> <sup>G</sup> <sup>E</sup> <sup>B7</sup>  
 when she blows up she'll scatter cross the hills."  
<sup>D</sup> Well, John Henry had a little woman,  
 I believe the lady's name was Paulie Ann.

Yeah that was his good woman.  
 John Henry threw his hammer over his shoulder and he went on home.  
 Early next mornin' he said, "Come here, Paulie-Ann, come here, sugar?  
 Said, "You know, I've been laying here watching that sun come up,  
 and I believe this is the first time I've seen the sun come up that I couldn't come up with it.  
 " He said, "Take that hammer, Paulie-Ann, go to that railroad,  
 and when you swing it at the lead men,

you tell him that ain't all I can do, tell 'em.?  
<sup>G</sup> <sup>C</sup> <sup>G</sup>  
 I could hoist a jack and I could lay a track, I could pick and shovel, too,  
<sup>G</sup>  
 ain't no machine can, that's been proved to you!  
<sup>G</sup>  
 There was a big crowd of mourners at the church house,  
<sup>D</sup>  
 the section hands laid him in the sand,  
<sup>G</sup>  
 trains go by on the rails John Henry laid.  
 They slow down and take off the hats, when they come to where he's layin', restin' his back. They say, "Mornin', Steel-driver, you sure was a hammer-swinger." Then they go on by pickin' up a little bit of speed. Clickity clack.?  
<sup>G</sup>

Yeah, yonder lies a steel-drivin' man, Lord, Lord,  
<sup>D</sup> <sup>G</sup> <sup>A</sup>  
 yonder lies a steel-drivin' man.  
<sup>A</sup>  
 Yeah, yonder lies a steel-drivin' man, Lord, Lord,  
<sup>E</sup> <sup>A</sup>  
 yonder lies a steel-drivin' man.

## Acordes

