

## Big Bill Broonzy

### "John Henry"

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When John Henry was a little baby boy, sitting on his  
papa's knee  
Well, he picked up his hammer and a little piece of  
steel, said  
"Hammers gonna be the death of me, Lord, Lord"  
(repeat 4 times)

The captain said to John Henry, "I'm gonna bring that  
steam drill around  
I'm gonna bring that steam drill out on the job  
I'm gonna whip that steel on down, Lord, Lord" (repeat  
4 times)

John Henry told his captain, "Lord, a man ain't nothing  
but a man  
But before I'd let your steam drill beat me down,  
I'd die with a hammer in my hand, Lord, Lord" (repeat  
4 times)

John Henry said to his shaker, "Shaker, why don't you  
sing?  
Because I'm swinging thirty pounds from my hips on  
down,  
just to listen to that cold steel ring, Lord, Lord" (repeat  
4 times)

Now the captain said to John Henry, "I believe that  
mountain's caving in"  
John Henry said right back to the captain,  
"Ain't nothing but my hammer sucking wind, Lord,  
Lord" (repeat 4 times)

Now the man that invented the steam drill, he thought  
he was mighty fine  
But John Henry drove fifteen feet,  
the steam drill only made nine, Lord, Lord (repeat 4  
times)

John Henry hammered in the mountains, his hammer  
was striking fire  
But he worked so hard, it broke his poor, poor heart,

and he laid down his hammer and he died, Lord, Lord  
(repeat 4 times)

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