

## Tom T. Hall "More About John Henry"

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{The Storytellers and I were doin' a show down in  
Meridian, Mississippi  
And these friends of mine came up  
And brought me this real old book about John Henry  
And they told me if they let me read this old book  
I'd probably write a song about it  
And they did and I did and I called it 'More about John  
Henry'}

First of all John Henry was a black man  
He was born where the sun don't ever shine  
He was six feet tall he didn't know his own strength  
But he did not swing the hammer all the time  
Of course he didn't, John Henry had some women on  
his mind

There was a woman cross the street named Poor Selma  
Loved John Henry like a natural man  
John Henry quit Poor Selma just like he was quittin' work  
He loved that stinger-ree of Julie Anne  
And what is it a stinger-ree is somethin' else you  
understand

There was a man named Stacker Lee in Argenta  
A little man with a big 44  
You know he shot his woman down and took a shot at  
Poor Selma  
But old Stacker won't be shootin' anymore  
He had to quit it, John Henry laid him dead on the floor

John Henry threw Stacker Lee in the river  
Then he said, "I've got a say so to say"  
He broke out in a song that was wrote by Blind Leonard  
He said, "Julie Anne, I'm singing my say"  
He said, "I love you but I do not like your lowdown  
ways"

Well John Henry went to a conjurin' woman  
Said, "This misery ain't no way to live"  
Somebody's back door creeping on my pretty Julie  
Anne  
Conjure woman had a say so to give

She said, "John Henry", she said, "That's just the way things is"

Well John Henry went to a Hell bustin' man  
Said, "I'm tormented deep in my soul"  
Well that Hell buster prayed John Henry's sins away  
And they tell me that the thunder did roll  
Sweet Jesus what a frightenin' sight to behold

From that day on John Henry was a changed man  
All he did was just work all the time  
Well he worked till the muscles in his body gave out  
Then he kept right on a workin' in his mind  
Don't do it 'cause a man ain't supposed to work all the time

Julie Anne said, "John Henry I love you"  
Poor Selma said, "John Henry you're my man"  
Ruby said, "I'm gonna cook ye up some greens and some lean meat  
With corn bread in a four foot pan with lotsa cracklins  
But John Henry was a different kinda man

Well they allow that hard work killed John Henry  
I'm gonna leave that allowin' up to you  
Well was he killed by hard work or was he killed by bad women  
Be sure that this ain't happenin' to you  
Quit working when your day's work work is through

'Cause a man ain't supposed to work all the time  
And you know that ain't just the way the things is  
A stinger-ree is somethin' else you understand  
Quit working when your your day's work is through  
God bless you

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