

Tom T. Hall

"Turn It On, Turn It On, Turn It On"

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Johnny got up one morning
He went down to the company store
Got him a big box of bullets
To fit into his .44

The store man said, "Son, are you gonna work?
You know you owe me too much to stop"
John said, "I got a little workin' to do
But I ain't goin' by your clock"

People said John was a slacker
'Cause he wouldn't fight in their war
A man wasn't much
If he wouldn't fight back in nineteen forty and four

The doctor said, "John was just too sick to go"
But the people said that he was a coward
And one of the men makin' fun of him
Was a fellow named Milton Howard

Milton was down at the cold spring
A drinkin' from a mason jar
He said, "John, you better get yourself to work
Or you're gonna fool around 'til you get fired"

John blew the dust from his old .44
Put two holes in Milton's head
When Johnny walked off to get some more shootin'
done
That ol' cold spring was a runnin' red

Next guy he met was a Stigall boy
And the boy had a hammer in his hand
John said, "Son, you should've built yourself a box
'Cause you're a headed for the Promised Land"

Stigall fell down to his knees to pray
And he cried, "Lord, Johnny please don't shoot"
Before he got halfway to saying, "Amen"
Well, old Johnny shot him out of his boots

Word went out through the county

That old John had lost his head
The people were runnin' and screamin'
There were seven of 'em lyin' there dead

Johnny hid out in a farmhouse
He had satisfaction in his eyes
He said, "I know they're coming to get me, boys
But they ain't a gonna take me alive"

People gathered 'round that old farmhouse
Was the relatives of all them dead
Now John said, "If the sheriff comes through that door
I'm gonna fill him, plumb full of lead"

The sheriff kicked down that old farmhouse door
But old John's gun would not shoot
Johnny just smiled at the sheriff and said
"The Lord must think a lot of you"

They took old John to the jail house
He entered in a guilty plea
The judge said, "Death in the electric chair
'Cause it's murder in the first degree"

John's last meal was a lot of fried chicken
Cold beans and the baby squash
He ate every bite that they brought him
Then he smiled and said, "I thank you all a lot"

They put old John in the electric chair
They shaved his ankles and his head
The preacher said, "Son, have you got something to
say
In a minute you're a gonna be dead"

John said, "I ain't no coward
And the people know that I won't run"
Then Johnny smiled up at the warden
And said, "Turn it on, turn it on, turn it on"

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