

Joe Hill

Phil Ochs

Joe Hill come over from Sweden shores
Looking for some work to do
And the Statue of Liberty waved him by
As Joe come a sailing through, Joe Hill
As Joe come a sailing through

Oh his clothes were coarse and his hopes were high
As he headed for the promised land
And it took a few weeks on the out-of-work streets
Before he began to understand
Before he began to understand

And Joe got hired by a Bowery bar
Sweeping up the saloon
As his rag would sail over the barroom rail
Sounded like he whistled on a tune
You could almost hear him whistling on a tune

And Joe rolled on from job to job
From the docks to the railroad line
And no matter how hungry the hand that wrote
In his letters he was always doing fine
In his letters he was always doing fine

Oh, the years went by like the sun goin' down
Slowly turn the page and when Joe
Looked back at the sweat upon his tracks
He had nothing to show but his age
He had nothing to show but his age

So he headed out for the California shore
There things were just as bad
So he joined the industrial workers of the world
'Cause the union was the only friend he had
'Cause the union was the only friend he had

Now, the strikes were bloody and the strikes
Were black as hard as they were long
In the dark of night Joe would stay awake and write
In the morning he would raise them with a song
In the morning he would raise them with a song

And he wrote his words to the tunes of the day
To be passed along the union vine
And the strikes were led and the songs were spread
And Joe Hill was always on the line
Yes, Joe Hill was always on the line

Now, in Salt Lake City a murder was made
There was hardly a clue to find
Oh, the proof was poor but the sheriff was sure
Joe was the killer of the crime
That Joe was the killer of the crime

Joe raised his hands but they shot him down
He had nothing but guilt to give
It's a doctor I need and they left him to bleed

He made it 'cause he had the will to live
Yes, he made it 'cause he had the will to live

Then the trial was held in a building of wood
And there the killer would be named
And the days weighed more than the cold copper ore
'Cause he feared that he was being framed
'Cause he found out that he was being framed

Oh, strange are the ways of western law
Strange are the ways of fate
For the government crawled to the mine owner's call
That the judge was appointed by the state
Yes, the judge was appointed by the state

Oh, Utah justice can be had but not for a union man
And Joe was warned by summer early morn
That there'd be one less singer in the land
There'd be one less singer in the land

Now, William Spry was Governor Spry
And a life was his to hold
On the last appeal, fell a governor's tear
"May the Lord have mercy on your soul
May the Lord have mercy on your soul"

Even President Wilson held up the day
But even he would fail
For nobody heard the soul searching words
Of the soul in the Salt Lake City jail
Of the soul in the Salt Lake City jail

For 36 years he lived out his days
And he more than played his part
For his songs that he made, he was carefully paid
With a rifle bullet buried in his heart
With a rifle bullet buried in his heart

Yes, they lined Joe Hill up against the wall
Blindfold over his eyes
It's the life of a rebel that he chose to live
It's the death of a rebel that he died
It's the death of a rebel that he died

Now, some say Joe was guilty as charged
And some say he wasn't even there
And I guess nobody will ever know
'Cause the court records all disappeared
'Cause the court records all disappeared

Say wherever you go in this fair land in every union hall
In the dusty dark these words are marked
In between all the cracks upon the wall
In between all the cracks upon the wall

It's the very last line that Joe Will wrote
When he knew that his days were through
"Boys, this is my last and final will
Good luck to all of you, good luck to all of you"