

The Tramp

By: Joe Hill

Music by George Frederick Root; additional verses by Hugo T. Hansen

If you all will shut your trap,
I will tell you 'bout a chap,
Who was broke and up against it, too, for fair;
He was not the kind to shirk;
He was looking hard for work;
But he heard the same old story everywhere:

"Tramp, tramp, tramp, keep on a-tramping;
There's nothing doing here for you;
If I catch you 'round again,
You will wear the ball and chain;
So, just keep on tramping:
The best thing you can do."

He walked up and down the street
'Til the shoes fell off his feet;
In a house, he spied a lady making stew;
And he said, "How do you do?
Can I chop some wood for you?"
What the lady told him made him feel quite blue.

She said, "Tramp, tramp, tramp, keep on a-tramping;
Nothing doing here for you;
And if I see you 'round again,
You will wear the ball and chain;
So just keep on tramping:
That's the best thing you can do."

'Cross the street, a sign he read;
"Work for Jesus," so it said;
And he thought, "Here is my chance! I'll surely try."
And he knelt upon the floor
'Til his knees got mighty sore;
But at eating time, he heard the preacher sigh:

"Tramp, tramp, tramp, keep on a-tramping;
Nothing doing here for you;
Well, if I catch you 'round again,
You will wear the ball and chain;
So just keep on tramping:
The best thing you can do."

Down the street, he met a cop;
And the copper made him stop;
And he asked him, "When did you blow into town?
Come with me up to the judge!"
But the judge, he said, "Oh, fudge!
Bums that have no money needn't come around."

So, it's, "Tramp, tramp, tramp, keep on a-tramping;
There's nothing doing here for you;
And, if I catch you 'round again,
You will wear the ball and chain;
So just keep on tramping:
The best thing you can do."

Finally, came that happy day
When his life did pass away;
He was sure to go to Heaven when he died;
When he reached that Pearly Gate,
Saint Peter, mean old skate,
Slammed the gate right in his face and loudly cried:

"Tramp, tramp, tramp, keep on a-tramping;
The Pearly Gate is closed to you;
There is nothing I can do
For a tramping 'bo like you;
So just keep on tramping:
The best thing you can do."

Denied heavenly glory,
He sought for purgatory
For the reason he'd no other place to go;
And he said, "I'm full of sin,
So, for Christ's sake, let me in!"
But the pilgrims said, "Oh, beat it! You're a 'bo!"

"Tramp, tramp, tramp, keep on a-tramping;
Nothing doing here for you;
There is nothing we can do
For a tramping 'bo like you;
So just keep on tramping:
The best thing you can do."

Down the Golden Stairs, he went,
Bent for Hell for lack of rent,
And was greeted by the Devil with a smile;
"Come right in beside my fire;
Sit a while before you hire;
We have plenty help and never need to tire."

"Stick, stick, stick around for supper;
No one need go hungry here;
If you'd own a company,
This is just the place to be:
Tramping never did have much appeal to me."