

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Hallelujah I'm a Bum

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Oh, why don't I work like other men do?
How the hell can I work when the skies are so blue?

cho: Hallelujah! I'm a bum, Hallelujah bum again,
Hallelujah! give us a handout and revive us again.

Oh, I love my boss and my boss loves me,
And that is the reason I'm so hungry.

Well, springtime has come and I'm just out of jail,
Without any money, without any bail

Oh why don't you save all the money you earn?
Well if I didn't eat, I'd have money to burn.

Oh, I like my boss, he's a good friend of mine,
And that's why I'm standing out in the breadline.

I can't buy a job 'cause I ain't got the dough
So I ride in a boxcar 'cause I'm a hobo.

I went to a house and I knocked on the door,
The lady said, "Scram, bum, you've been here before!"

I went to a bar and I asked for a drink,
They gave me a glass and they showed me the sink.

Oh why don't you work like other folks do?
How can I get a job when you're holding down two?

Whenever I get all the money I earn,
The boss will be broke and to work he must turn.

I went to a house and I knocked on the door;
A lady came out, says, "You been here before."

I went to a house, and I asked for some bread;
A lady came out, says, "The baker is dead."

When springtime does come, oh won't we have fun,

We'll throw up our jobs and we'll go on the bum.

George Milburn, in his "Hobo's Hornbook," says that a version of this famous hobo song "was found scribbled on the wall of a Kansas City jail where an old hobo known as One-Finger Ellis had spend the night, recovering from a overdose of rotgut whisky. Al Jolson, of all people, made a big pop hit out of this: in England, though, "bum" means something else, so over there he had to sing: Hallelujah, I'm a Tramp. RG

DC, JB