

The Union Steward

Who are these of lowly pay
With haggard look and hair of grey?
They get no rest by day or night.
They're always wrong. They're never right.
They do not have a law degree,
But go to bat for you and me.
Though seldom have they been to college,
They must possess the widest knowledge,
Of labor grades and when to grieve,
Vacation pay and sickness leave,
Of overtime and who's to do it,
Of coffeetime and who's to brew it,
The how and which and why and when,
And all the problems of women and men.
If, with forepersons they agree,
Then they're rats who've got weak knees.
If to the workers they try to cater,
They're branded as agitators.
Those who have to take this slop
Are called the STEWARDS of your shop.

--Anonymous (from The Legal Rights of Union Stewards by Robert M. Schwartz, revised edition 1994)

A shop steward knocked at the heavenly gate
His face was scared and old
He stood before the weigher of his fate
For admission to the fold.
What have you done, Saint Peter said,
To gain admission here?
I've been a shop steward, Sir he said
For many and many a year.
The pearly gate swung open wide,
St. Peter touched the bell
Come in and choose your harp, he said
You've had your share of hell.

--Author Unknown