North Country Blues

Bob Dylan

Come gather 'round friends and I'll tell you a tale
Of when the red iron pits ran plenty
But the cardboard filled windows and old men on the benches
Tell you now that the whole town is emptyIn the north end of town, my own children are grown
Well, I was raised on the other
In the wee hours of youth my mother took sick
And I was brought up by my brotherThe iron ore poured as the years passed the door
The drag lines an' the shovels they was a-humming
'Til one day my brother failed to come home
The same as my father before himWell, a long winter's wait from the window I watched
My friends, they couldn't have been kinder
And my schooling was cut as I quit in the spring
To marry John Thomas, a minerOh, the years passed again and the givin' was good
With the lunch bucket filled every season
What with three babies born, the work was cut down
To a half a day's shift with no reasonThen the shaft was soon shut and more work was cut
And the fire in the air, it felt frozen
'Til a man come to speak and he said in one week
That number eleven was closin'They say the east, they are paying too high
They say that your ore ain't worth digging
That it's much cheaper down in the South American towns
Where the miners work almost for nothingSo the mining gates locked and the red iron rotted
And the room smelled heavy from drinking
When the sad, silent song made the hour twice as long
As I waited for the sun to go sinkingI lived by the window as he talked to himself
This silence of tongues it was building
Then one morning's wake, the bed it was bare
And I's left alone with three childrenThe summer is gone, the ground's turning cold
The stores one by one they're a-foldin'
My children will go as soon as they grow
Well, there ain't nothing here now to hold them

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