North Country Blues

C.B. Smith

Come gather 'round, friends
And I'll tell you a tale
Of when the red iron ore 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
But I was raised up 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 was a-humming
Till 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 buckets 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 my work, it was cut
And the firing air, it felt frozen
Till a man come to speak
And he said in one week
That number eleven was closin'They complained in the East
That they are paying too high
They say that your ore ain't worth digging
That it's much cheaper down
In South American town
Where the miners work almost for nothingSo the mining gates locked
And the red iron rotted
And the room smelled heavy from drinking
Where 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 stars, one by one, they're a-foldin'
My children will go
As soon as they grow
Oh, there ain't nothing here now to hold them

Lyrics provided by
https://damnlyrics.com/