

# North Country Blues

Bob Dylan

Come gather 'round friends and I'll tell you a tale  
Of when the red iron pits ran a-plenty  
But the cardboard-filled windows and old men on the benches  
Tell you now that the whole town is empty  
In the north end of town my own children are grown  
But I was raised on the other  
In the wee hours of youth my mother took sick  
And I was brought up by my brother  
The iron ore poured as the years passed the door  
The drag lines an' the shovels they was a-humming  
'Till one day my brother failed to come home  
The same as my father before him  
Well, 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 miner  
Oh, the years passed again, and the giving 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 reason  
Then the shaft was soon shut, and more work was cut  
And the fire in the air, it felt frozen  
'Till a man come to speak, and he said in one week  
That number eleven was closing  
They complained in 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 nothing  
So 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 sinking  
I lived by the window as he talked to himself  
This silence of tongues it was building  
'Till one morning's wake, the bed it was bare  
And I was left alone with three children  
The summer is gone, the ground's turning cold  
The stores one by one they're all folding  
My children will go as soon as they grow  
Well, there ain't nothing here now to hold them

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