Kentucky Coal Miner's Prayer

Aaron Watson

Deep in the mountain of Harlan County
Employed by the Cumberland coal company
The pay is short, the days are long
But our labor union laws are coming on strong
So I drink this whiskey for my throatWear my hard hat and weathered coat
Early every morning I stand in line
Waiting to work these Kentucky coal minesWe enter the shaft around five thirty
With two dozen hands, cold, callused and dirty
We'll dig through a million tons of rock and clay
And we'll still be digging at the end of the day
Down on our knees we confess our sins
And pray that the roof above don't cave inSo bless our hearts and save or souls
And the air we breathe down in the devil's hole
Just last week when the the ceiling fell
The explosion trapped us in the depths of hellThe weight of the earth took poor Tucker's life
Leaving behind a hungry baby and wife
We dug out with our shovels and picks
But soon enough the black lung disease will make us sickSo bless our hearts and save or souls
And the air we breathe down in the devil's hole
I work deep in the mountains of eastern KentuckyI know if I leave Harlan alive I'll be more than lucky
Wish I could go to Texas and plant some cottonseed
But moving takes money and I've got three mouths to feed
So I drink this whiskey for my throat
Wear my hard hat and weathered coat
Early every morning I stand in line
Waiting to work another Kentucky coal mine

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