

You'll Never Leave Harlan Alive

Kathy Mattea

In the deep dark hills of Eastern Kentucky
That's the place where I trace my bloodline
And it's there I read on a hillside gravestone

"You'll never leave Harlan alive" Oh, my granddads dad crossed the Cumberland Mountains
Where he took a pretty girl to be his bride

Said, "Won't you walk with me out of the mouth of this holler
Or we'll never leave Harlan alive?" Where the sun comes up about ten in the mornin'
The sun goes down about three in the day

And you'll fill your cup with whatever bitter brew you're drinkin'

And you spend your life just thinkin' of how to get away No one ever knew there was coal in them mountains
Till a man from the northeast arrived

He was waving hundred dollar bills, said, "I'll pay you for your minerals"

But he never left Harlan alive Grandma sold out cheap and they moved out west of Pikeville
To a farm where big Richland river winds

Oh, I bet they danced them a jig and they laughed and sang a new song
Who said we'd never leave Harlan alive But the times got hard and tobacco wasn't selling
And old granddad knew what he'd do to survive

So he went and dug for Harlan coal, sent the money back to granny
But he never left Harlan alive Where the sun comes up about ten in the mornin'
The sun goes down about three in the day

You fill your cup with whatever bitter brew you're drinkin'

And you spend your life just thinkin' of how to get away The sun comes up about ten in the mornin'
And the sun goes down about three in the day
And you fill your cup with whatever bitter brew you're drinkin'
And you spend your life diggin coal from the bottom of your grave

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