

Come on down here you brave miners I've a tale to tell to you
Of a lifetime in the shadow of the Sunshine Number Two
What it feels like when the fire of Hell consumes a hundred men
How it feels to hear the rumble when the shaft comes closing in
Down past the foot of Ewing Spur a miners' graveyard lies
Where a man can take his rest beside the river when he dies
Forgetting every blunder or misstep he ever made
And but for forty tons of rock that's where I should be laid

Like coals to coals, and wood to fire, the careless man to strife
But two men die from black damp for each one killed by the knife
Though one man may leave his mother while another leaves his wife
As for me I left a daughter but that's just the way of life
For a few it was loose timbers holding up a smutty vein
For another just a dead strike shaft and unexpected rain
And for some it was some pencil-pushing bugger with no name
Who'll be swagging beer in Pittsburgh when they're handing out the blame

There's a night that lasts forever, there's a vein that's long gone dry
There's a place where broken miners long to see the starry sky
Where a man's so close to Hell his blackened soul can never die
And where no one walks away unmarked no matter how they try.

The lorry runs along a track you're not supposed to cross
But there ain't no work for women so she just ignores the boss
'Cause this morning on the window there were icy tongues of frost
So she's out there in her apron picking up the rock that they've lost
When she goes to Mass on Sunday there's no hope of being blessed
'Cause she knows who pays the priest so she's got nothing to confess
But the boy down at the comp'ny store keeps staring at her dress
And she's met a dozen men who swear they'll buy her happiness

When I walked among the living every day at half past four
I would take her to the temple and we'd stand outside the door
And the temple man would come to mark the chalkboard with the score
And we'd take home what was left after they paid the comp'ny store
Now at night she dreams of better times before her life turned gray
And of living in the comp'ny house on forty hours' pay
The dances at the union hall, and the music they would play
Do you wonder that she loves the dark and hates the light of day?

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Now she's two months shy of seventeen and soon she'll have her own
But there won't be any preacher, no white candles to be thrown
She will live or die by happenstance and labor all alone
So it might as well be her down here beneath this load of stone
Just up the hill from Sunshine there's a graveyard full of men
The lucky ones who walked or crawled or were carried out again
And if they don't find heaven they might find rest for the soul
But she and I will live and die in a Hell made out of coal