

Arlo Guthrie, 1913 Massacre

by Woody Guthrie

Take a trip with me in nineteen thirteen
To Calumet, Michigan in the copper country
I'll take you to a place called Italian Hall
And the miners are having their big Christmas ball

I'll take you in a door and up a high stairs
Singing and dancing is heard ev'rywhere
I'll let you shake hands with the people you see
And watch the kids dance 'round the big Christmas tree.

There's talking and laughing and songs in the air
And the spirit of Christmas is there ev'rywhere
Before you know it you're friends with us all
And you're dancing around and around in the hall

You ask about work and you ask about pay
They'll tell you they make less than a dollar a day
Working their copper claims, risking their lives
So it's fun to spend Christmas with children and wives.

A little girl sits down by the Christmas tree lights
To play the piano so you gotta keep quiet
To hear all this fun; you would not realize
That the copper boss thug men are milling outside

The copper boss thugs stuck their heads in the door
One of them yelled and he screamed, "There's a fire"
A lady she hollered, "There's no such a thing;
Keep on with your party, there's no such a thing."

A few people rushed and there's only a few
"It's just the thugs and the scabs fooling you."
A man grabbed his daughter and he carried her down
But the thugs held the door and he could not get out.

And then others followed, about a hundred or more
But most everybody remained on the floor
The gun thugs, they laughed at their murderous joke
And the children were smothered on the stairs by the door.

Such a terrible sight I never did see
We carried our children back up to their tree
The scabs outside still laughed at their spree
And the children that died there was seventy-three

The piano played a slow funeral tune,
And the town was lit up by a cold Christmas moon
The parents, they cried and the men, they moaned,
"See what your greed for money has done?"