

Bob Dylan, North Country Blues

Come gather 'round friends
And I'll tell you a tale
Of when the red iron pits ran empty
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
'Til 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 givin' 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
'Til a man come to speak
And he said in one week
That number eleven was closin'.

They complained in the East
They are playing 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 smelted 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
Then one morning's wake
The bed it was bare
And I's left alone with three children.

The summer is gone
The ground's turning cold

The stores one by one they're a-foldin'
My children will go
As soon they grow
Well there ain't nothing here now to hold them.