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Coal Tattoo

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(Billy Ed Wheeler)

Travelin' down that coaltown road,
Listen to those rubber tires whine;
Goodbye to Buckeye and White Sycamore,
I'm leavin' you behind.

I've been a coal man all my life
Layin' down track in the hole,
Got a back like an ironwood bent by the wind
Blood veins blue as the coal.

Somebody said "That's a strange tattoo
You have on the side of your head."
I said "That's a blue print, left by the coal
Just a little more and I'd be dead"

And I love the rumble and I love the dark
I love the cool of the slate.
But it's on down the new road lookin' for a job
It's the travelin' and lookin' I hate.

I've stood for the union, walkin' the line,
Fought against the company;
Stood for the U. M. W. of A.
Now who's gonna stand for me?

I got no house and I got no pay,
Just got a worried soul;
And this blue tattoo on the side of my head
Left by the number nine coal.

Someday when I'm dead and gone
To Heaven, the land of my dreams,
I won't have to worry on losin' my job
To bad times 'n big machines.

I ain't gonna pay my money away
For pensions and hospital plans.
I'm gonna pick coal where the blue heavens roll
And sing with the angel bands.

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