

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Number Two Top Seam

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(Watson)

As I was out a-walking one evening in spring
I overheard a collier so mournfully did sing
I stopped to listen for a while to what he had to say
And I never shall forget his words until me dying day

"Now I was born here in this town, I lived here all me life
I had three fine young children, likewise a loving wife
And me father he was a collier and so I followed him down
And I worked the number two top seam, right underneath the town

Oh all the houses in our street they had cracks in every wall
And people always used to say someday they all would fall
And sometimes in the dead of night disturbing every dream
You could hear the blast from every shot in the number two top seam

Now it was as the shift was changing at half past four one day
That the roof collapsed behind us as a timber prop gave way
But it wasn't till we reached the top that the dreadful news we heard
That half the street fell fifteen feet and plunged into the ground

Now there were children playing in that street, there were women in their homes
When the ground collapsed beneath their feet, an hail of bricks and stones
There was nothing left but ruins where our houses once had been
And twenty women and children lay in the number two top seam

They say they'll give us all new homes at what they call great cost
But that is little recompense to the loved ones we had lost
You colliers who've a mind to wed consider ere you do
That the pits not only claim the men, but the women and children too."

recorded by June Tabor on "A Cut Above" (1979)

A bit different from the standard mining disaster songs. MJ
MJ