

Doing Time

Doing Time

It's a bitter day of sorrow
When you drink the cup of shame
You're branded with a number
And forced to give your name
You put on them dirty garments
As the outcome of your crime
'Tis a bitter day of sorrow boy
When you're doing time

At night you are surrounded
By four great white-washed walls
You will hear the hours chiming
As the warder makes his calls
Or maybe you are dreaming
Of the one you love so well
When suddenly you're wakened
By the ringing of the bell

You roll your nap in silence
As you listen to the chime
'Tis a bitter day of sorrow boy
When you're doing time
This hill of life's a steep one
A long and dreary climb
But it's twice as long and steep my boy
When you're doing time

In his Big Book of Australian Folk Song Ron Edwards writes
"I had collected it on 21 January 1965 at Cairns from 'Tiger' O'Shane. He
had learned it from a friend who in turn had picked it up while doing time
in Stuart Creek gaol in northern Queensland.

In 1967 Clem Parkinson collected a version of Doing Time at the other
end of Australia, from the Morwell River Prison Centre, and it can be seen
from this fact that the ballad is widely spread. It is Clem Parkinson's tune
that I have used here".

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