

SULLY'S PAIL

(Tom Paxton)

I've a thing or two ta tell ya that I think you ought to know,
About that rusty bucket Sully carries down below.
You're not the first one stranger, that has laughed at Sully's Pail;
You're the over one that's laughing now, the rest has heard this tale.

Sure, when we was young and handsome, had some ten years in the game,
Old Sull, he had a partner and Jim Rielly was his name.
They had knocked about together, Bingham, Butte, and Cor-du-Iain;
And they brawled in every bar-room from Eligh to Fort McLean.

Now me and old Ted Johnson, sure you'll not remember him,
We was working at the Rarris had a stope with Sull and Jim.
The four of us together, we was working side-by-side,
That's how I chanced to be there on the night Jim Reilly died.

Well, the blastin' had been easy, it was coming out like sand,
And we was muckin' out the ore, those days we mucked by hand.
And we was nearly finished, and I hadn't heard a sound,
But something must have happened, for Jim Reilly yelled "Bad ground!"

When we headed for the timb'ring, Sully must've took a spill,
For when we looked back in there, he was pinned beneath his drill.
The ceiling; it was groaning now, all set to drop the lid,
And Sully, pinned beneath his drill, was sobbing like a kid.

Well, there's some can watch their partners die, not throw their lives away,
But Reilly wasn't one of them, he wasn't built that way.
As soon's he seed what happened, "Hey, hold on there, Sull!" he cried,
And before he had the words out, he had thrown the drill aside.

They come around the ore car, Reilly wearing a big grin.
Guess he never knew what happened when the hanging wall caved in.
Sully reached the timb'ring, his face as white as chalk,
And Reilly, two yards back of him, caught fifteen tons of rock.

That day Sully's pail was buried, he ate from Reilly's pail in tears,
And he's carried that same bucket now for more than twenty years;
So, you can laugh at Sull because he's mean and drinks a lot,
But don't laugh at Sully's bucket, that's the only friend he's got.