

## **BLACK LUNG**

We crawl under ground  
On our hands and knees  
We shovel coal fast  
As we cough and wheeze

The sweat and dust  
Get in our eyes  
We dream of jobs  
Under bright, blue skies

We shovel that coal  
Then shovel some more  
On our hands and knees  
With a back that's sore

The coal operators  
And non-miners say  
"Those mining men  
Sure get good pay."

If they should go  
And load one ton  
They'd know what gives  
A man Black Lung.

Each day we go  
Down in a grave,  
In dust-filled air,  
We work and slave.

Weekends we feel  
We're on a reprieve,  
Like soldier boys  
Home on a leave.

We live it up  
And have some fun  
Breathing pure air,  
Forgetting Black Lung.

If an accident doesn't [happen]  
We know dang well,  
Black Lung will get us  
In spite of it all.

Don't judge a man  
By his class or his style  
Till you have walked  
In his shoes one mile.

When we greet St. Peter  
In heaven's pure air,  
He'll say, "You're home now,  
You've paid your fare.

"You worked in the mines,  
In old West Vir-gin,  
Your dues have been paid,  
So fellows, come in."

Unknown