

Country Poetry Corner

The Ghost of Miners Past by Lindsay Waddell

His ghostly image plods the route
Trodden by many a miner's foot
Over the top and down the hill
Into the mine – more tubs to fill
The clean cold air will soon be lost
And in the end his life it'll cost
The grey dark ore it is his living
But those damned mines they're not forgiving
Some of his friends already gone
Some by when they were twenty one
He's made ten more, but just how long
Can his broken body keep going on?
The falls, the water and then the gas
Survived them all and time does pass,
The bits and pieces on the farm
Not enough to keep winter warm
When times are hard he has to borrow
From the company: they have no sorrow
He's in the bag when he's in debt
Must hew the lead with back real bent
And when his week is once more done
Back o'er the top into the sun
He sucks the cold air, as he must
Through lungs half full of killer's dust
He hopes his wife has sold the beast
At least some money but not a feast,
To pay his debt so he's not owing
Then he can make a healthy living
To live and work back on the land
To cut and turn the hay by hand
To not go back down that old level
To hew that lead for the devil
And with some luck he'll make two score
Not many miners make many more
And he can watch as others take
That trudging walk to Lady's Rake
O'er the top in the morning sun
And end of the week when work is done



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