

You'll Never Leave Harlan Alive

Darrell Scott

In the deep, dark hills of eastern Kentucky
That's the place where I trace my bloodline
And it's there I read on a hillside gravestone
"You'll never leave Harlan alive"

Well my grandfather's dad crossed the Cumberland Mountains
And he took a pretty girl to be his bride
He said, "Won't you walk with me out of the mouth of this hollow
or we'll never leave Harlan alive"

Where the sun comes up about ten in the morning
And the sun goes down about three in the day
And you fill your cup with whatever bitter brew your drinking
And you spend your life just thinking how to get away

No one ever knew there was coal in them mountains
'Til a man from the northeast arrived
Waving hundred dollar bills, he said "I'll pay you for your minerals"
But he never left Harlan alive

Well Grandma sold out cheap and they moved out west to Pineville
To a farm where Big Richland River winds
And I'll bet they danced them a jig, and they laughed and sang
a new song
"Who said we'd never leave Harlan alive?"

But the times, they got hard and tobacco wasn't selling
And old Granddad knew what he'd do to survive
He went and dug for Harlan coal and sent the money back to Grandma
But he never left Harlan alive

Where the sun comes up about ten in the morning
And the sun goes down about three in the day
And you fill your cup with whatever bitter brew your drinking
And you spend your life digging coal from the bottom of your grave