

You'll Never Leave Harlan Alive

Patty Loveless

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

Oh my grandfather's dad crossed the Cumberland Mountains
Where he took a pretty girl to be his bride
Said "Won't you walk with me out the mouth of this holler
Or we'll never leave Harlan alive"

Where the sun comes up about ten in the mornin'
And the sun goes down about three in the day
And you'll fill your cup with whatever bitter brew you're drink
in'
And you spend your life just thinkin' of how to get away

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

Grandma sold out cheap and they moved out west of Pikeville
To a farm where Big Richaldn River winds
And I bet they danced them a jig
And they laughted and sang a new song
"Who said we'd never leave Harlan alive"

But the times got hard and tobacco wasn't selling
And old grandad 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

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