

# The Testimony Of Patience Kershaw

## The Unthanks

It's good of you to ask me sir  
to tell you how I spend my day  
Well in the coal black tunnel sir  
I hurry coves to earn my pay  
The coves are full of coal kind sir  
I push them with my hands and head  
It isn't ladylike but sir  
you've got to earn you daily bread

I push them with my hands and head  
and so my hair gets worn away  
you see this baldy patch I've got  
it shames me like I just can't say  
A lady's hands are lily white  
but mine are full of cuts and segs(?)  
and since I'm pushing all the time  
I've great big muscles on my legs

I try to be respectable  
But sir, the shame, god save my soul  
I work with naked sweating men  
who curse and swear and chew the coal  
The sight, the smell, the sound kind sir  
not even god and sense me shame  
I say my prayers but what's the use  
tomorrow will be just the same

Now sometimes sir I don't feel well  
my stomach's sick, my head it aches  
I've got to hurry best I can  
my knees feel weak, my back near breaks  
and then I'm slow and then I'm scared  
these naked men will batter me  
they can't be blamed, for if I'm slow  
their families will starve you see

All the lads they laugh at me  
and so the mirror tells me why  
pale and dirty, can't look nice  
it doesn't matter how I try  
Great big muscles on my legs  
Baldy patch upon my head  
Lady, sir, oh no not me  
I should've been a boy instead

I praise you good intentions sir  
I love you kind and gentle heart  
but now it's 1842  
and you and me we're miles apart  
100 years or more will pass  
before we're walking side by side  
but please accept my grateful thanks  
god bless you sir, at least you tried