

Ramblin' Jack Elliot "1913 Massacre"

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Take a trip with me in nineteen thirteen
To Calumet, Michigan, in the copper country.
I'll take you to a place called Italian Hall
Where the miners are having their big Christmas ball.

I'll take you through a door, and up a high stairs.
Singing and dancing is heard everywhere,
I will let you shake hands with the people you see
And watch the kids dance round that big Christmas tree.

You ask about work and you ask about pay;
They'll tell you that they make less than a dollar a day,
Working the copper claims, risking their lives,
So it's fun to spend Christmas with children and wives.

There's talking and laughing and songs in the air,
And the spirit of Christmas is there everywhere,
Before you know it, you're friends with us all
And you're dancing around and around in the hall.

Well, a little girl sits down by the Christmas tree lights
To play the piano, so you gotta keep quiet.
To hear all this fun you would not realize
That the copper-boss thug-men are milling outside.

The copper-boss thugs stuck their heads in the door
One of them yelled and he screamed, "There's a fire!"
A lady, she hollered, "There's no such a thing!"
Keep on with your party, there's no such a thing."

A few people rushed, and it was only a few
"It's only the thugs and the scabs fooling you."
A man grabbed his daughter and carried her down
But the thugs held the door and he could not get out.

And then others followed, a hundred or more
But most everybody remained on the floor.
The gun-thugs they laughed at their murderous joke,
While the children were smothered on the stair by the door.

Such a terrible sight I never did see
We carried our children back up to their tree.
The scabs outside still laughed at their spree
And the children that died there were seventy-three.

The piano played a slow funeral tune
And the town was lit up by a cold Christmas moon,
The parents they cried and the miners they moaned,
"See what your greed for money has done."

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