

Nitty Gritty Dirt Band

"Dark as a Dungeon"

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It's as dark as a dungeon way down in the mine...

SPOKEN: I never will forget one time when I was on a little visit down home in Ebenezer, Kentucky. I was a-talkin' to an old man that had known me ever since the day I was born, and an old friend of the family. He says, "Son, you don't know how lucky you are to have a nice job like you've got and don't have to dig out a livin' from under these old hills and hollers like me and your pappy used to." When I asked him why he never had left and tried some other kind of work, he says, "Nawsir, you just won't do that. If ever you get this old coal dust in your blood, you're just gonna be a plain old coal miner as long as you live." He went on to say, "It's a habit (CHUCKLE) sorta like chewin' tobaccer."

Come and listen you fellows, so young and so fine,
And seek not your fortune in the dark, dreary mines.
It will form as a habit and seep in your soul,
'Till the stream of your blood is as black as the coal.

CHORUS: It's dark as a dungeon and damp as the dew,
Where danger is double and pleasures are few,
Where the rain never falls and the sun never shines
It's dark as a dungeon way down in the mine.

It's a-many a man I have seen in my day,
Who lived just to labor his whole life away.
Like a fiend with his dope and a drunkard his wine,
A man will have lust for the lure of the mines.
I hope when I'm gone and the ages shall roll,
My body will blacken and turn into coal.
Then I'll look from the door of my heavenly home,
And pity the miner a-diggin' my bones.

ADDITIONAL STANZA RARELY PERFORMED BY MERLE TRAVIS:

The midnight, the morning, or the middle of day,
Is the same to the miner who labors away.
Where the demons of death often come by surprise,
One fall of the slate and you're buried alive.

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