

The Silent Wheels

This is a story like no other like no other
about father against son, brother against brother
it is about the 1984 miners strike
a dispute never again will we see the like
it was not about money, it was not about greed
it was about saving our jobs, as previously agreed
it is about a group of miners and friends
who fought the fight right up to the end
the Tories planned it, with precision and hate
bringing in a hatchet man from the states
he took on the steelworkers, cut them down to size
but the miners they were really the prize
with the Tories telling lie upon lie
but when they went back, their heads still were high
the leader was a man with political ambition
but all that he did was cause a division
denied them a vote, denied them a say
he just caused a break away
they called themselves the U.D.M.
nobody had ever heard of them
when the union was split we had no chance
the Tories led us a merry dance
the public support was starting to slack
and the T.U.C. said "it's time to go back"
men who still stood as strong as an oak
their pockets empty, but their spirit unbroke
they worked down the mines, that dark dirty place
you can see them now the blue scars on their face
the dust filling their lungs, makes it difficult to walk
but you can hear the pride in their voices, whenever they talk
i imagine that you knew men like these in the story
they wanted fair play, not power, not glory
the backbone of our country, working deep down beneath
but when they wanted some help they were kicked in the teeth
when coal it was king, they were the men of the hour
now all the politicians want is nuclear power
in the valleys the mines they were abundant
now they are closed, the miners redundant
they said that the mines were uneconomic
so they imported the coal, how ironic
they spent millions of pounds importing the coal
while the miners they were put on the dole

when the challenge was put down they accepted the fight
for their pride,their jobs,their children's birthright
all they wanted was to save our industries
but they closed the mines,the steelworks and factories
all the Tories wanted from the men down beneath
was revenge for what they did to Ted Heath
the shafts they are gone,the wheels are silent
the Tories closed them for spite,for enjoyment
the labour party said "the Tories don't care"
but let's be honest,they closed their share
and when these hard proud men had no more to give
left broken and breathless,struggling to live
and when the dust in their lungs took away their lives
there was no compensation for their wives
the coal board sent letters,but they had no shame
all the letters were the same, saying "not enough to claim"
their shortage of breath was not down to us
it was asthma,emphysema or bronchitis
but when they closed the mines was it our saving grace
who wants to go down that dark dirty place
your colliery is safe,that's all they will say
but the newscaster said it is closing today
they told us it was one of the safest in the land
so when we heard the news we didn't understand
it is uneconomic,exhausted,no future they say
so they import the coal from the U.S.A
but wasn't it a man from that faraway land
who closed our mines, for a hundred thousand grand
they didn't even use the personal touch
they didn't think they owed us that much
they offered redundancy or a chance to move on
but where would we go,the mines are all gone
we were told in the morning,told not to worry
tell us by five,take you time,don't hurry
and when we had our redundancy pay
thirteen weeks wages were taken away
now the mines are no more,the valleys are bare
the once thriving communities are no longer there
but at least we can look at the sun when it shines
and be glad no sons of ours will ever go down that mine
their future in us they have put their trust
we must protect them from that dust

so many have left the valley's so green
can you blame them after what they have seen
what is left for them in the valleys today
there's no future for them,it's all been taken away
so the thirtieth anniversary we will soon celebrate
so think back over the years,and stories relate
and think how many good men have gone to their graves
after years in the dark,where the dust made them slaves
the politicians don't care to them it's a game
they will never take any blame
they go to their beds,blissfully slumber
to them you're just a name and a number
where the mines once were is neatly landscaped
looking back are we glad that we escaped
no more proud men will they injure or maim
no more letters sent out saying "sorry no claim"
no more men with blue scars on their face
and the valley's are a much cleaner place
the slag heaps too are being taken away
and the landscape is changing day after day
never again will the dust put good men in a shroud
goodbye to the mines we should all shout out loud
they've taken away too many good friends
so can we now let this be the end
and so to our absent friends,think how would they feel
as we raise a glass to the silent wheels.

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