

Song of the Shifter

The following was written by Del Jones' grandfather, Charles F. Thomas, Jr., who owned a coal mine in Colorado and supervised tunnel work on the Aqueduct And Hoover and Coulee dams.

Hustle the mucking! Come on with those cars!
Bar down! Lay the track! Get up the crownbars!
Bring in the jumbo! Set timbers and lag!
Airhose and water! Don't let the job drag!

Machines on the crossbars! Tighten the clamps!
Get started drilling or we will be tramps!
Pull in that machine! Don't break out too far!
Hurry up, Johnny! Who's first off the bar?

Get hold of that blowpipe! Look out for the muck!
Move those lights back! Load dull steel on the truck!
Bring in the powder and tamp sticks and load!
Tie on the bus wires! Get out of the road!

Roll out with the jumbo! Lower the wings!
Not much to do-just a million odd things!
Plug in the cable and turn on the juice!
Hold tight a second until she cuts loose!

How goes the hour? Just a quarter past ten?
Get going, boys! Do it over again!
Back to the heading through smoke and the muck;
The best crew of men to drill and tend chuck!

I'll push you and cuss, but you know the game!
Hurry and hustle! Each shift it's the same!
We'll show those Hoosiers and dumb scissor bills
How to drive tunnels 'neath mountains and hills!

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