

## SIXTEEN TONS

(Merle Travis)

Additional verse by Lew Toulmin, 2001

Some people say a man is made outa mud  
A poor man's made outa muscle 'n blood...  
Muscle an' blood an' skin an' bone  
A mind that's weak and a back that's strong

*chorus: You load sixteen tons an' whaddya get?  
Another day older an' deeper in debt  
Saint Peter doncha call me 'cause I can't go  
I owe my soul to the company sto'*

If ya hear me a-comin' ya better step aside  
A lotta men din't an' a lotta men died  
With one fist of iron an' the other of steel  
If the right one don' getcha then the left one will.

I was born one mornin' when the sun didn't shine  
Picked up my shovel and I went to the mine  
Loaded sixteen tons of number nine coal  
And the strawboss said, "Well, Bless my soul!"

I was born one morning in the drizzlin' rain  
Fightin' and trouble are my middle name  
I was raised in the canebreak by an' ol' mama hound  
Ain't no high-tone woman gonna push me around.

Well, I ran off to sea, I escaped that store,  
I swore to God I'd dig coal no more.  
But after two weeks on the Black Ball Line,  
I wished to hell I was, back down that mine!