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Which Side Are You On? The Story of a Song

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WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

The story of a song

BY GEORGE ELLA LYON
ARTWORK BY CHRISTOPHER CARDINALE
IN MEMORY OF
FLORENCE REECE
(1900–1986)
&
HAZEL DICKENS
(1935–2011)

For the people of Harlan County
and for all who sing out for justice,
especially Jean Ritchie,
the Reel World String Band,
Jessie Lynne, Jason, Silas, Anne, & Kate
— G.E.L.

For the workers, organizers, their families, and friends
who have taken a stand to protect our right
to labor and live with dignity

For my son, Macéo,
who will inherit the fruits of this struggle
— C.C.
My Pa is a miner.

Earnings our dinner deep in the mountain blasting and loading coal.
Sometimes when he’s worked a low seam, my little sister has to walk on his back to straighten it out.
We live in a coal company house on coal company land,
and Pa gets paid in scrip that's only good at the company store.

He says the company owns us sure as sunrise.
That's why we've got to have a union.