

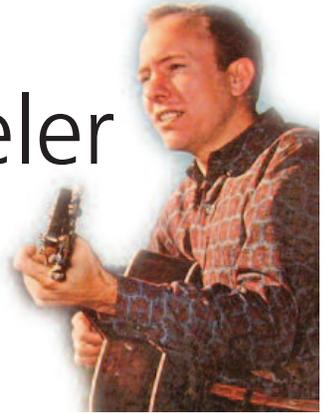
**WEST VIRGINIA
MUSIC
HALL OF FAME**



**Song
Lyrics**

This song is mentioned in Billy Edd's story, "The company owned everything," about life in a coal camp. A coal tattoo is a blue mark left on a miner's skin when a piece of coal hits him.

Billy Edd Wheeler



Coal Tattoo

by Billy Edd Wheeler

Travelin' down that coal town road. Listen to my rubber tires whine.
Goodbye to buckeye and white sycamore. I'm leaving you behind.
I've been a coal man all of my life, laying down track in the hole.
Got a back like an iron wood, bent by the wind.
Blood veins blue as the coal. Blood veins blue as the coal.

Somebody said, "That's a strange tattoo you have on the side of your head."

I said, "That's a blueprint left by the number nine coal. A little more and I'd have been dead.

Oh, but I love the rumble and I love the dark. I love the cool of the slate,
But it's on down a new road, looking for a job. Traveling and looking, I hate.

I stood for the union and walked in the line. I fought against the company.
I stood for the U. M. W. of A. Now, who's gonna stand for me?
'Cause I got no house and I got no pay. Just got a worrying soul
And a blue tattoo on the side of my head
Left by the number nine coal. Left by the number nine coal.

Someday when I die and go to heaven, the land of my dreams.
I won't have to worry about losing my job to bad times or big machines.
And I ain't gonna pay my money away or lose my hospital plans.
I'm gonna dig that coal while the blue heavens roll.
Singing with the angel band. Singing with the angel band.