

Sully's Pail

Tom Paxton

I've a thing or two ta tell ya that I think you ought to know
About that rusty bucket Sully carries down below
You're not the first one stranger, that has laughed at Sully's
Pail
You're the only one that's laughing now, the rest has heard thi
s tale
Sure, when we was young and had some, had ten years in the game
Old Sull, he had a partner and Jim Reilly was his name
They had knocked about together, Bingham, Butte, and Coeur D'Al
ene
And they brawled in every bar-room from Ely to Fort McLean
Now me and old Ted Johnson, sure you'll not remember him
We was working at the Rarus had a stope with Sull and Jim
The four of us together, we was working side-by-side
That's how I chanced to be there on the night Jim Reilly died
Well, the blastin' had been easy, it was coming out like sand
And we was muckin' out the ore, those days we mucked by hand
And we was nearly finished, and I hadn't heard a sound
But something must have happened, for Jim Reilly yelled - bad g
round
When we headed for the timb'ring, Sully must've took a spill
For when we looked back in there, he was pinned beneath his dri
ll
The ceiling, it was groaning now, all set to drop the lid
And Sully, pinned beneath his drill, was sobbing like a kid
Well, there's men can watch their partners die, not throw their
lives away
But Reilly wasn't one of them, he wasn't built thatway
As soon's he seed what happened, "Hey, hold on there, Sull!" he
cried
And before he had the words out, he had thrown the drill aside
They come around the ore car, Reilly wearing a big grin
Guess he never knew what happened when the hanging wall caved i
n
Sully reached the timb'ring, his face as white as chalk
And Reilly, two yards back of him, caught fifteen tons of rock
That day Sully's pail was buried, he ate from Reilly's pail in
tears
And he's carried that same bucket now for more than twenty year
s
So, you can laugh at Sull because he's mean and drinks a lot
But don't laugh at Sully's bucket, that's the only friend he's
got