Welcome Mother Jones

Welcome Mother Jones
(Jenkin D. Reese, coal miner-bard of Mahaska, Iowa)
first sung, by himself, at a UMW meeting October 13, 1902

All hail, Mother Jones, to Mahaska,
The Garden of Eden in soil;
That has been the gem of all Iowa
In production of coal and toil.
The smiling of faces that greet you,
Our heroine of labor and right,
God bless your dear soul, is our feeling
For visiting 'Aska to-night.

The themes of your speeches are grander,
And richer than silver and gold;
The life of the mansions eternal,
Where wisdom and love will unfold.
Steer forward! March on with your mission;
Through strife and injunction be brave,
And follow the steps of the leader,
The starving and toilers to save!

The world of to-day is advancing,
But Nero is yet on the throne;
And Croesus with iron rod ruling,
The devil will soon take his own.
The light of millennium is dawning,
The ages unborn will be blest;
Mother Jones will be ever remembered
When her soul joins the heavenly rest.

This song, perhaps, better shows the reverence felt by miners for a living legend and "culture hero" then it does the bardic genius of the miners.

Mary Harris Jones, born in Cork in 1830; Grew up in Toronto; became an organizer for railroad workers in 1873; served labor and unions as a part of every great labor struggle until 1919. Especially active in the coal mines where the worst conditions in America were. Died 1930.

AJS