The Testament of Patience Kershaw

It's kind of you to ask me sir,_____ to tell you how I spend the__
day._____ It's in a coal - black tun - nel sir,_____ I
hur - ry corves to earn my pay._____ The corves are full of coal, kind
sir._____ I push them with my hands and head._____ It
isn't__ la - dy - like, but sir,_____ you've got to earn your dail - ly bread.__

1. It's kind of you to ask me, sir, to tell you how I spend the day.
   It's in a coal-black tunnel, sir, I hurry corves to earn my pay.
   The corves are full of coal, kind sir. I push them with my hands and head.
   It isn't ladylike, but, sir, you've got to earn your daily bread.

2. I push them with my hands and head, and so my hair gets worn away.
   You see this balding patch I've got? It shames me, sir, I just can't say.
   A lady's hands are lily-white, but mine are full of cuts and segs,
   And since I'm pushing all the time, I've great big muscles on my legs.

3. I try to be respectable, but, sir, - the shame! God save my soul!
   I work with naked, sweating men who curse and swear and hew the coal.
   The sights, the smells, the sounds, kind sir, not even God could sense my shame.
   I say my prayers, but what's the use? Tomorrow will be just the same.

4. And sometimes, sir, when I'm not well, my stomach's sick, my head it aches.
   I have to hurry best I can; my knees feel weak, my back near breaks.
   It's when I'm slow that's then I'm scared, these naked men will batter me.
   They can't be blamed for, if I'm slow, their families will starve, you see.

5. And all the boys they laugh at me and, sir, the mirror tells me why;
   Pale and dirty can't look nice - it doesn't matter how I try!
   Great big muscles on my legs - a balding patch upon my head,
   A lady, sir? Oh, no, not me! I should have been a boy instead.

6. I like your kind intentions, sir. I love your kind and gentle heart,
   But this is 1842 and you and me, we're miles apart!
   A hundred years or more will pass before we're walking side by side,
   But please accept my grateful thanks! God bless you, sir, at least you've tried.