

"Words' Worth" Poetry Readings

Poets at the Culture, Arts, and Parks Committee of the Seattle City Council.

The Miner by Allison Durazzi

I fell in love with your grandma
the first time I kissed her.
It was class night at San Souci Park,
June, nineteen forty-two.
I asked her to marry me in a letter
I sent before I shipped out to the War.
We had the wedding on my first leave
from the army, and "Sentimental
Journey" was our song
for the next fifty-two years, until she died.

Well, I came home from the War,
jobs were hard finding,
so eventually me and your Uncle Joe
went down to the mines. We were young
enough as it was, but some of those boys
shoul'da been in school instead a dying
like they was. Sometimes your Grandma's hear
when one of them tunnels fell in,
and she'd worry till I come walking
through the gate at Lloyds Lane.
The girls, your mother and your aunt,
they'd run up to me,
asking for my lunch box, I always
kepta little something in there for them.
I never wanted to go back,
but I was a daddy, had a family to feed,
so there I was again, me and my partner
on the carts, back and forth,
we had to fill them things eight times
before we got paid.

One day your grandma heard three whistles.
She stood on the porch
not sure if I was coming home.
She took one look at the girls running
to me, my face dirty from coal and
I was caughing for all the gas sthey'd pumped
into my veins.
She was a little too proud to cry,
but she looked at me and said
through her teeth, "if you go to work
tomorrow, don't come home."

Next day, some of them boys hit lime,
maybe never knew what hit them.
I can only pray to God they died
before they knew they were in their grave

No one was there to get them outta the fire
and by morning they had to close the shaft.
I'm here to tell you because
me and your grandma heard that whistle
real loud at the house on Lloyds Lane
It's been more 'an forty years, but I remember.

When I'm at the bottom of Bear Creek Hill,
where that shaft closed,
more 'an forty years and the smoke still rises
ou the ground
like it caught fire yesterday,
the smoke still rising, reminding me
I am alive.

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