

1 The Book of the Dead

THE ROAD

These are roads to take when you think of your country
and interested bring down the maps again,
phoning the statistician, asking the dear friend,

reading the papers with morning inquiry.
Or when you sit at the wheel and your small light
chooses gas gauge and clock; and the headlights

indicate future of road, your wish pursuing
past the junction, the fork, the suburban station,
well-travelled six-lane highway planned for safety.

Past your tall central city's influence,
outside its body: traffic, penumbral crowds,
are centers removed and strong, fighting for good reason.

These roads will take you into your own country.
Select the mountains, follow rivers back,
travel the passes. Touch West Virginia where

the Midland Trail leaves the Virginia furnace,
iron Clifton Forge, Covington iron, goes down
into the wealthy valley, resorts, the chalk hotel.

Pillars and fairway; spa; White Sulphur Springs.
Airport. Gay blank rich faces wishing to add
history to ballrooms, tradition to the first tee.

The simple mountains, sheer, dark-graded with pine
in the sudden weather, wet outbreak of spring,

crosscut by snow, wind at the hill's shoulder.

The land is fierce here, steep, braced against snow,
rivers and spring. KING COAL HOTEL, Lookout,
and swinging the vicious bend, New River Gorge.

Now the photographer unpacks camera and case,
surveying the deep country, follows discovery
viewing on groundglass an inverted image.

John Marshall named the rock (steep pines, a drop
he reckoned in 1812, called) Marshall's Pillar,
but later, Hawk's Nest. Here is your road, tying

you to its meanings: gorge, boulder, precipice.
Telescoped down, the hard and stone-green river
cutting fast and direct into the town.

WEST VIRGINIA

They saw rivers flow west and hoped again.
Virginia speeding to another sea!
1671—Thomes Batts, Robert Fallam,
Thomas Wood, the Indian Perecute,
and an unnamed indentured English servant
followed the forest past blazed trees, pillars of God,
were the first whites emergent from the east.
They left a record to our heritage,
breaking of records. Hoped now for the sea,
*For all mountaines have their descents about them,
waters, descending naturally, doe alwaies resort
unto the seas invironing those lands...
Yea, at home amongst the mountaines in England.*

Coming where this road comes,
flat stones spilled water which the still pools fed.
Kanawha Falls, the rapids of the mind,
fast waters spilling west.

Found Indian fields, standing low cornstalks left,
learned three Mohetons planted them; found-land
farmland, the planted home, discovered!

War-born:

The battle at Point Pleasant, Cornstalk's tribes,
last stand, Fort Henry, a revolution won;
the granite SITE OF THE precursor EXECUTION
sabres, apostles OF JOHN BROWN LEADER OF THE
War's brilliant cloudy RAID AT HARPERS FERRY.
Floods, heavy wind this spring, the beaten land
blown high by wind, fought wars, forming a state,
a surf, frontier defines two fighting halves,
two hundred battles in the four years: troops

here in Gauley Bridge, Union headquarters, lines
bring in the military telegraph.
Wires over the gash of gorge and height of pine.

But it was always the water
the power flying deep
green rivers cut the rock
rapids boiled down,
a scene of power.

Done by the dead.
Discovery learned it.
And the living?

Live country filling west,
knotted the glassy rivers;
like valleys, opening mines,
coming to life.

STATEMENT: PHILIPPA ALLEN

—You like the State of West Virginia very much, do you not?

—I do very much, in the summertime.

—How much time have you spent in West Virginia?

—During the summer of 1934, when I was doing social work down there, I first heard of what we were pleased to call the Gauley tunnel tragedy, which involved about 2,000 men.

—What was their salary?

—It started at 40¢ and dropped to 25¢ an hour.

—You have met these people personally?

—I have talked to people; yes.

According to estimates of contractors

2,000 men were

employed there

period, about 2 years

drilling, 3.75 miles of tunnel.

To divert water (from New River)

to a hydroelectric plant (at Gauley Junction).

The rock through which they were boring was of a high silica content.

In tunnel No. 1 it ran 97–99% pure silica.

The contractors

knowing pure silica

30 years' experience

must have known danger for every man

neglected to provide the workmen with any safety device....

—As a matter of fact, they originally intended to dig that tunnel a certain size?

—Yes.

—And then enlarged the size of the tunnel, due to the fact that they discovered silica and wanted to get it out?

—That is true for tunnel No. 1.

The tunnel is part of a huge water-power project

begun, latter part of 1929

direction: New Kanawha Power Co.

subsidary of Union Carbide & Carbon Co.

That company—licensed:

to develop power for public sale.

Ostensibly it was to do that; but

(in reality) it was formed to sell all the power to

the Electro-Metallurgical Co.

subsidary of Union Carbide & Carbon Co.

which by an act of the State legislature

was allowed to buy up

New Kanawha Power Co. in 1933.

—They were developing the power. What I am trying to get at, Miss Allen, is, did they use this silica from the tunnel; did they afterward sell it and use it in commerce?

—They used it in the electro-processing of steel.

SiO₂ SiO₂

The richest deposit.

Shipped on the C & O down to Alloy.

It was so pure that

SiO₂

they used it without refining.

—Where did you stay?

—I stayed at Cedar Grove. Some days I would have to hitch into Charleston, other days to Gauley Bridge.

—You found the people of West Virginia very happy to pick you up on the highway, did you not?

—Yes; they are delightfully obliging.

(All were bewildered. Again at Vanetta they are asking, “What can be done about this?”)

I feel that this investigation may help in some manner.

I do hope it may.

I am now making a very general statement as a beginning.

There are many points that I should like to develop later, but I shall try to give you a general history of this

condition first...

GAULEY BRIDGE

Camera at the crossing sees the city
a street of wooden walls and empty windows,
the doors shut handleless in the empty street,
and the deserted Negro standing on the corner.

The little boy runs with his dog
up the street to the bridge over the river where
nine men are mending road for the government.
He blurs the camera-glass fixed on the street.

Railway tracks here and many panes of glass
tin under light, the grey shine of towns and forests:
in the commercial hotel (Switzerland of America)
the owner is keeping his books behind the public glass.

Post office window, a hive of private boxes,
the hand of the man who withdraws, the woman who reaches
her hand
and the tall coughing man stamping an envelope.

The bus station and the great pale buses stopping for food;
April-glass-tinted, the yellow-aproned waitress;
coast-to-coast schedule on the plateglass window.

The man on the street and the camera eye:
he leaves the doctor's office, slammed door, doom,
any town looks like this one-street town.

Glass, wood, and naked eye : the movie-house
closed for the afternoon frames posters streaked with rain,
advertise "Racing Luck" and "Hitch-Hike Lady."

Whistling, the train comes from a long way away,

slow, and the Negro watches it grow in the grey air,
the hotel man makes a note behind his potted palm.

Eyes of the tourist house, red-and-white filling station,
the eyes of the Negro, looking down the track,
hotel-man and hotel, cafeteria, camera.

And in the beerplace on the other sidewalk
always one's harsh night eyes over the beerglass
follow the waitress and the yellow apron.

The road flows over the bridge,
Gamoca pointer at the underpass,
opposite, Alloy, after a block of town.

What do you want—a cliff over a city?
A foreland, sloped to sea and overgrown with roses?
These people live here.

THE FACE OF THE DAM: VIVIAN JONES

On the hour he shuts the door and walks out of town;
he knows the place up the gorge where he can see
his locomotive rusted on the siding,
he sits and sees the river at his knee.

There, where the men crawl, landscaping the grounds
at the power-plant, he saw the blasts explode
the mouth of the tunnel that opened wider
when precious in the rock the white glass showed.

The old plantation-house (burned to the mud)
is a hill-acre of ground. The Negro woman throws
gay arches of water out from the front door.
It runs down, wild as grass, falls and flows.

On the quarter he remembers how they enlarged
the tunnel and the crews, finding the silica,
how the men came riding freights, got jobs here
and went into the tunnel-mouth to stay.

Never to be used, he thinks, never to spread its power,
jinx on the rock, curse on the power-plant,
hundreds breathed value, filled their lungs full of glass
(O the gay wind the clouds the many men).

On the half-hour he's at Hawk's Nest over the dam,
snow springs up as he reaches the great wall-face,
immense and pouring power, the mist of snow,
the fallen mist, the slope of water, glass.

O the gay snow the white dropped water, down,
all day the water rushes down its river,
unused, has done its death-work in the country,

proud gorge and festive water.

On the last quarter he pulls his heavy collar up,
feels in his pocket the picture of his girl,
touches for luck—he used to as he drove
after he left his engine; stamps in the deep snow.

And the snow clears and the dam stands in the gay weather,
O proud O white O water rolling down,
he turns and stamps this off his mind again
and on the hour walks again through town.

PRAISE OF THE COMMITTEE

These are the lines on which a committee is formed.

Almost as soon as work was begun in the tunnel
men began to die among dry drills. No masks.

Most of them were not from this valley.

The freights brought many every day from States
all up and down the Atlantic seaboard
and as far inland as Kentucky, Ohio.

After the work the camps were closed or burned.

The ambulance was going day and night,
White's undertaking business thriving and
his mother's cornfield put to a new use.

“Many of the shareholders at this meeting
were nervous about the division of the profits;
How much has the Company spent on lawsuits?

The man said \$150,000. Special counsel:

I am familiar with the case. Not : one : cent.

‘Terms of the contract. Master liable.’

No reply. Great corporation disowning men who made....”

After the lawsuits had been instituted....

The Committee is a true reflection of the will of the people.

Every man is ill. The women are not affected,
This is not a contagious disease. A medical commission,
Dr. Hughes, Dr. Hayhurst examined the chest
of Raymond Johnson, and Dr. Harless, a former
company doctor. But he saw too many die,
he has written his letter to Washington.

The Committee meets regularly, wherever it can.

Here are Mrs. Jones, three lost sons, husband sick,
Mrs. Leek, cook for the bus cafeteria,
the men : George Robinson, leader and voice,
four other Negroes (three drills, one camp-boy)
Blankenship, the thin friendly man, Peyton the engineer,

Juanita absent, the one outsider member.

Here in the noise, loud belts of the shoe-repair shop,
meeting around the stove beneath the one bulb hanging.

They come late in the day. Many come with them
who pack the hall, wait in the thorough dark.

This is a defense committee. Unfinished business:

Two rounds of lawsuits, 200 cases

Now as to the crooked lawyers

If the men had worn masks, their use would have involved
time every hour to wash the sponge at mouth.

Tunnel, 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ miles long. Much larger than
the Holland Tunnel or Pittsburgh's Liberty Tubes.

Total cost, say, \$16,000,000.

This is the procedure of such a committee:

To consider the bill before the Senate.

To discuss relief.

Active members may be cut off relief,

16-mile walk to Fayetteville for cheque—

WEST VIRGINIA RELIEF ADMINISTRATION, #22991,

TO JOE HENIGAN, GAULEY BRIDGE, ONE AND 50/100,

WINONA NATIONAL BANK. PAID FROM STATE FUNDS.

Unless the Defense Committee acts;
the *People's Press*, supporting this fight,
signed editorials, sent in funds.

Clothing for tunnel-workers.

Rumored, that in the post office

parcels are intercepted.

Suspected : Conley. Sheriff, hotelman,

head of the town ring—

Company whispers. Spies,

The Racket.

Resolved, resolved.

George Robinson holds all their strength together:

To fight the companies to make somehow a future.

“At any rate, it is inadvisable to keep a community of dying

persons intact.”

“Senator Holt. Yes. This is the most barbarous example of industrial construction that ever happened in the world.”

Please proceed.

“In a very general way Hippocrates' *Epidemics* speaks of the metal digger who breathes with difficulty, having a pain and wan complexion.

Pliny, the elder....”

“Present work of the Bureau of Mines....”

The dam's pure crystal slants upon the river.

A dark and noisy room, frozen two feet from stove.

The cough of habit. The sound of men in the hall waiting for word.

These men breathe hard
but the committee has a voice of steel.
One climbs the hill on canes.
They have broken the hills and cracked the riches wide.

In this man's face
family leans out from two worlds of graves—
here is a room of eyes,
a single force looks out, reading our life.

Who stands over the river?
Whose feet go running in these rigid hills?
Who comes, warning the night,
shouting and young to waken our eyes?

Who runs through electric wires?
Who speaks down every road?
Their hands touched mastery; now they
demand an answer.

MEARL BLANKENSHIP

He stood against the stove
facing the fire—
Little warmth, no words,
loud machines.

Voted relief,
wished money mailed,
quietly under the crashing:

“I wake up choking, and my wife
rolls me over on my left side;
then I'm asleep in the dream I always see:
the tunnel choked
the dark wall coughing dust.

I have written a letter.
Send it to the city,
maybe to a paper
if it's all right.”

Dear Sir, my name is Mearl Blankenship.
I have Worked for the rhinehart & Dennis Co
Many days & many nights
& it was so dusty you couldn't hardly see the lights.
I helped nip steel for the drills
& helped lay the track in the tunnel
& done lots of drilling near the mouth of the tunnell
& when the shots went off the boss said
If you are going to work Venture back
& the boss was Mr. Andrews
& now he is dead and gone
But I am still here
a lingering along

He stood against the rock
facing the river
grey river grey face
the rock mottled behind him
like X-ray plate enlarged
diffuse and stony
his face against the stone.

J C Dunbar said that I was the very picture of health
when I went to Work at that tunnel.
I have lost eighteen lbs on that Rheinhart ground
and expecting to loose my life
& no settlement yet & I have sued the Co. twice
But when the lawyers got a settlement
they didn't want to talk to me
But I didn't know whether they were sleepy or not.
I am a Married Man and have a family. God
knows if they can do anything for me
it will be appreciated
if you can do anything for me
let me know soon

ABSALOM

I first discovered what was killing these men.
I had three sons who worked with their father in the tunnel:
Cecil, aged 23, Owen, aged 21, Shirley, aged 17.
They used to work in a coal mine, not steady work
for the mines were not going much of the time.
A power Co. foreman learned that we made home brew,
he formed a habit of dropping in evenings to drink,
persuading the boys and my husband—
give up their jobs and take this other work.
It would pay them better.
Shirley was my youngest son; the boy.
He went into the tunnel.

*My heart my mother my heart my mother
My heart my coming into being.*

My husband is not able to work.
He has it, according to the doctor.
We have been having a very hard time making a living since
this trouble came to us.
I saw the dust in the bottom of the tub.
The boy worked there about eighteen months,
came home one evening with a shortness of breath.
He said, "Mother, I cannot get my breath."
Shirley was sick about three months.
I would carry him from his bed to the table,
from his bed to the porch, in my arms.

*My heart is mine in the place of hearts,
They gave me back my heart, it lies in me.*

When they took sick, right at the start, I saw a doctor.
I tried to get Dr. Harless to X-ray the boys.

He was the only man I had any confidence in,
the company doctor in the Kopper's mine,
but he would not see Shirley.
He did not know where his money was coming from.
I promised him half if he'd work to get compensation,
but even then he would not do anything.
I went on the road and begged the X-ray money,
the Charleston hospital made the lung pictures,
he took the case after the pictures were made.
And two or three doctors said the same thing.
The youngest boy did not get to go down there with me,
he lay and said, "Mother, when I die,
I want you to have them open me up and
see if that dust killed me.
Try to get compensation,
you will not have any way of making your living
when we are gone,
and the rest are going too."

*I have gained mastery over my heart
I have gained mastery over my two hands
I have gained mastery over the waters
I have gained mastery over the river.*

The case of my son was the first of the line of lawsuits.
They sent the lawyers down and the doctors down;
they closed the electric sockets in the camps.
There was Shirley, and Cecil, Jeffrey and Oren,
Raymond Johnson, Clev and Oscar Anders,
Frank Lynch, Henry Palf, Mr. Pitch, a foreman;
a slim fellow who carried steel with my boys,
his name was Darnell, I believe. There were many others,
the towns of Glen Ferris, Alloy, where the white rock lies,
six miles away; Vanetta, Gauley Bridge,
Gamoca, Lockwood, the gullies,
the whole valley is witness.

I hitchhike eighteen miles, they make checks out.
They asked me how I keep the cow on \$2.
I said one week, feed for the cow, one week, the children's
flour.

The oldest son was twenty-three.

The next son was twenty-one.

The youngest son was eighteen.

They called it pneumonia at first.

They would pronounce it fever.

Shirley asked that we try to find out.

That's how they learned what the trouble was.

*I open out a way, they have covered my sky with crystal
I come forth by day, I am born a second time,
I force a way through, and I know the gate
I shall journey over the earth among the living.*

He shall not be diminished, never;
I shall give a mouth to my son.

THE DISEASE

This is a lung disease. Silicate dust makes it.
The dust causing the growth of

This is the X-ray picture taken last April.
I would point out to you : these are the ribs;
this is the region of the breastbone;
this is the heart (a wide white shadow filled with blood).
In here of course is the swallowing tube, esophagus.
The windpipe. Spaces between the lungs.

Between the ribs?

Between the ribs. These are the collar bones.
Now, this lung's mottled, beginning, in these areas.
You'd say a snowstorm had struck the fellow's lungs.
About alike, that side and this side, top and bottom.
The first stage in this period in this case.

Let us have the second.

Come to the window again. Here is the heart.
More numerous nodules, thicker, see, in the upper lobes.
You will notice the increase : here, streaked fibrous tissue—

Indicating?

That indicates the progress in ten months' time.
And now, this year—short breathing, solid scars
even over the ribs, thick on both sides.
Blood vessels shut. Model conglomeration.

What stage?

Third stage. Each time I place my pencil point:

There and there and there, there, there.

“It is growing worse every day. At night I get up to catch my breath. If I remained flat on my back I believe I would die.”

It gradually chokes off the air cells in the lungs?
I am trying to say it the best I can.
That is what happens, isn't it?
A choking-off in the air cells?

Yes.

There is difficulty in breathing.

Yes.

And a painful cough?

Yes.

Does silicosis cause death?

Yes, sir.

GEORGE ROBINSON: BLUES

Gauley Bridge is a good town for Negroes, they let us stand
around, they let us stand
around on the sidewalks if we're black or brown.
Vanetta's over the trestle, and that's our town.

The hill makes breathing slow, slow breathing after you
row the river,
and the graveyard's on the hill, cold in the springtime blow,
the graveyard's up on high, and the town is down below.

Did you ever bury thirty-five men in a place in back of your
house,
thirty-five tunnel workers the doctors didn't attend,
died in the tunnel camps, under rocks, everywhere, world
without end.

When a man said I feel poorly, for any reason, any weakness
or such,
letting up when he couldn't keep going barely,
the Cap and company come and run him off the job surely.

I've put them
DOWN from the tunnel camps
to the graveyard on the hill,
tin-cans all about—it fixed them!—

TUNNELITIS

hold themselves up
at the side of a tree,
I can go right now
to that cemetery.

When the blast went off the boss would call out, Come, let's
go back,
when that heavy loaded blast went white, Come, let's go back,
telling us hurry, hurry, into the falling rocks and muck.

The water they would bring had dust in it, our drinking
water,
the camps and their groves were colored with the dust,
we cleaned our clothes in the groves, but we always had
the dust.

Looked like somebody sprinkled flour all over the parks
and groves,
it stayed and the rain couldn't wash it away and it twinkled
that white dust really looked pretty down around our ankles.

As dark as I am, when I came out at morning after the
tunnel at night,
with a white man, nobody could have told which man was
white.
The dust had covered us both, and the dust was white.

JUANITA TINSLEY

Even after the letters, there is work,
sweaters, the food, the shoes
and afternoon's quick dark

draws on the windowpane
my face, the shadowed hair,
the scattered papers fade.

Slow letters! I shall be
always—the stranger said
“To live stronger and free.”

I know in America there are songs,
forgetful ballads to be sung,
but at home I see this wrong.

When I see my family house,
the gay gorge, the picture-books,
they raise the face of General Wise

aged by enemies, like faces
the stranger showed me in the town.
I saw that plain, and saw my place.

The scene of hope's ahead; look, April,
and next month with a softer wind,
maybe they'll rest upon their land,
and then maybe the happy song, and love,
a tall boy who was never in a tunnel.

THE DOCTORS

- Tell the jury your name.
- Emory R. Hayhurst.
- State your education, Doctor, if you will.
Don't be modest about it; just tell about it.

High school Chicago 1899
Univ. of Illinois 1903
M.A. 1905, thesis on respiration
P & S Chicago 1908
2 years' hospital training;
at Rush on occupational disease
director of clinic 2½ years.
Ph.D. Chicago 1916
Ohio Dept. of Health, 20 years as
consultant in occupational diseases.
Hygienist, U.S. Public Health Service
and Bureau of Mines
and Bureau of Standards

Danger begins at 25%
here was pure danger
Dept. of Mines
came in, was kept away.

Miner's phthisis, fibroid phthisis,
grinder's rot, potter's rot,
whatever it used to be called,
these men did not need to die.

- Is silicosis an occupational disease?
- It is.
- Did anyone show you the lungs of Cecil Jones?
- Yes, sir.

—Who was that?

—It was Dr. Harless.

“We talked to Dr. L. R. Harless, who had handled many of the cases, more than any other doctor there. At first Dr. Harless did not like to talk about the matter. He said he had been subjected to so much publicity. It appeared that the doctor thought he had been involved in too many of the court cases; but finally he opened up and told us about the matter.”

—Did he impress you as one who thought this was a very serious thing in that section of the country?

“Yes, he did. I would say that Dr. Harless has probably become very self-conscious about this matter. I cannot say that he has retracted what he told me, but possibly he had been thrust into the limelight so much that he is more conservative now than when the matter was simply something of local interest.”

Dear Sir: Due to illness of my wife and urgent professional duties, I am unable to appear as per your telegram.

Situation exaggerated. Here are facts:

We examined. 13 dead. 139 had some lung damage.

2 have died since, making 15 deaths.

Press says 476 dead, 2,000 affected and doomed.

I am at a loss to know where those figures were obtained.

At this time, only a few cases here,
and these only moderately affected.

Last death occurred November, 1934.

It has been said that none of the men knew of the hazard connected with the work. This is not correct. Shortly after the work began many of these workers came to me complaining of chest conditions and I warned many of them of the dust hazard and advised them that continued work under these conditions would result in serious lung disease. Disregarding this warning many of the men continued at this work and later brought suit against their employer for damages.

While I am sure that many of these suits were based on meritorious grounds, I am also convinced that many others took advantage of this situation and made out of it nothing less than a racket.

In this letter I have endeavored to give you the facts which came under my observation....

If I can supply further information....

Mr. Marcantonio. A man may be examined a year after he has worked in a tunnel and not show a sign of silicosis, and yet the silicosis may develop later; is not that true?

—Yes, it may develop as many as ten years after.

Mr. Marcantonio. Even basing the statement on the figures, the doctor's claim that this is a racket is not justified?

—No; it would not seem to be justified.

Mr. Marcantonio. I should like to point out that Dr. Harless contradicts his “exaggeration” when he volunteers the following: “I warned many....”
(Mr. Peyton. I do not know. Nobody knew the danger around there.)

Dr. Goldwater. First are the factors involving the individual.

Under the heading B, external causes.

Some of the factors which I have in mind—
those are the facts upon the blackboard,
the influencing and controlling factors.

Mr. Marcantonio. Those factors would bring about acute silicosis?

Dr. Goldwater. I hope you are not provoked when I say “might.”

Medicine has no hundred percent.

We speak of possibilities, have opinions.

Mr. Griswold. Doctors testify answering “yes” and “no.”

Don't they?

Dr. Goldwater. Not by the choice of the doctor.

Mr. Griswold. But that is usual, isn't it?

Dr. Goldwater. They do not like to do that.

A man with a scientific point of view—
unfortunately there are doctors without that—
I do not mean to say all doctors are angels—
but most doctors avoid dogmatic statements.
avoid assiduously “always,” “never.”

Mr. Griswold. Best doctor I ever knew said “no” and “yes.”

Dr. Goldwater. There are different opinions on that, too.

We were talking about acute silicosis.

The man in the white coat is the man on the hill,
the man with the clean hands is the man with the drill,
the man who answers “yes” lies still.

—Did you make an examination of those sets of lungs?

—I did.

—I wish you would tell the jury whether or not those lungs
were silicotic.

—We object.

—Objection overruled.

—They were.

THE CORNFIELD

Error, disease, snow, sudden weather.
For those given to contemplation : this house,
wading in snow, its cracks are sealed with clay,
walls papered with print, newsprint repeating,
in-focus grey across the room, and squared
ads for a book : HEAVEN'S MY DESTINATION,
HEAVEN'S MY...HEAVEN.... THORNTON WILDER.
The long-faced man rises long-handed jams the door
tight against snow, long-boned, he shivers.
Contemplate.

Swear by the corn,
the found-land corn, those who like ritual. *He*
rides in a good car. They say blind corpses rode
with him in front, knees broken into angles,
head clamped ahead. Overalls. Affidavits.
He signs all papers. His office : where he sits.
feet on the stove, loaded trestles through door,
satin-lined, silk-lined, unlined, cheap,
The papers in the drawer. On the desk, photograph
H. C. White, Funeral Services (new car and eldest son);
tells about Negroes who got wet at work,
shot craps, drank and took cold, pneumonia, died.
Shows the sworn papers. Swear by the corn.
Pneumonia, pneumonia, pleurisy, t.b.

For those given to voyages : these roads
discover gullies, invade, Where does it go now?
Now turn upstream twenty-five yards. Now road again.
Ask the man on the road. Saying, That cornfield?
Over the second hill, through the gate,
watch for the dogs. Buried, five at a time,

pine boxes, Rinehart & Dennis paid him \$55
a head for burying these men in plain pine boxes.
His mother is suing him : misuse of land.
George Robinson : I knew a man
who died at four in the morning at the camp.
At seven his wife took clothes to dress her dead
husband, and at the undertaker's
they told her the husband was already buried.
—Tell me this, the men with whom you are acquainted,
the men who have this disease
have been told that sooner or later they are going to die?
—Yes, sir.
—How does that seem to affect the majority of the people?
—It don't work on anything but their wind.
—Do they seem to be living in fear
or do they wish to die?
—They are getting to breathe a little faster.

For those given to keeping their own garden:
Here is the cornfield, white and wired by thorns,
old cornstalks, snow, the planted home.
Stands bare against a line of farther field,
unmarked except for wood stakes, charred at tip,
few scratched and named (pencil or nail).
Washed-off. Under the mounds,
all the anonymous.
Abel America, calling from under the corn,
Earth, uncover my blood!

Did the undertaker know the man was married?
Uncover.
Do they seem to fear death?
Contemplate.
Does Mellon's ghost walk, povertied at last,
walking in furrows of corn, still sowing,
do apparitions come?

Voyage.

Think of your gardens. But here is corn to keep.
Marked pointed sticks to name the crop beneath.
Sowing is over, harvest is coming ripe.

—No, sir; they want to go on.

They want to live as long as they can.

ARTHUR PEYTON

Consumed. Eaten away. And love across the street.
I had a letter in the mail this morning
Dear Sir,...pleasure...enclosing herewith our check...
payable to you, for \$21.59

being one-half of the residue which
we were able to collect in your behalf
in regard to the above case.

In winding up the various suits,
after collecting all we could,
we find this balance due you.

With regards, we are
Very truly,

After collecting

the dust the failure the engineering corps
O love consumed eaten away the foreman laughed
they wet the drills when the inspectors came
the moon blows glassy over our native river.

O love tell the committee that I know:
never repeat you mean to marry me.
In mines, the fans are large (2,000 men unmasked)
before his verdict the doctor asked me How long

I said, Dr. Harless, tell me how long?
—Only never again tell me you'll marry me.
I watch how at the tables you all day
follow a line of clouds the dance of drills,

and, love, the sky birds who crown the trees
the white white hills standing upon Alloy
—I charge negligence, all companies concerned—
two years O love two years he said he gave.

The swirl of river at the tidy house
the marble bank-face of the liquor store
I saw the Negroes driven with pick handles
on these other jobs I was not in tunnel work.

Between us, love

the buses at the door
the long glass street two years, my death to yours
my death upon your lips
my face becoming glass
strong challenged time making me win immortal
the love a mirror of our valley
our street our river a deadly glass to hold.
Now they are feeding me into a steel mill furnace
O love the stream of glass a stream of living fire.

ALLOY

This is the most audacious landscape. The gangster's stance with his gun smoking and out is not so vicious as this commercial field, its hill of glass.

Sloping as gracefully as thighs, the foothills narrow to this, clouds over every town finally indicate the stored destruction.

Crystalline hill: a blinded field of white murdering snow, seamed by convergent tracks; the travelling cranes reach for the silica.

And down the track, the overhead conveyor slides on its cable to the feet of chimneys. Smoke rises, not white enough, not so barbaric.

Here the severe flame speaks from the brick throat, electric furnaces produce this precious, this clean, annealing the crystals, fusing at last alloys.

Hottest for silicon, blast furnaces raise flames, spill fire, spill steel, quench the new shape to freeze, tempering it to perfected metal.

Forced through this crucible, a million men. Above this pasture, the highway passes those who curse the air, breathing their fear again.

The roaring flowers of the chimney-stacks less poison, at their lips in fire, than this dust that is blown from off the field of glass;

blows and will blow, rising over the mills,

crystallized and beyond the fierce corrosion
disintegrated angel on these hills.

POWER

The quick sun brings, exciting mountains warm,
gay on the landscapers and green designs,
miracle, yielding the sex up under all the skin,
until the entire body watches the scene with love,
sees perfect cliffs ranging until the river
cuts sheer, mapped far below in delicate track,
surprise of grace, the water running in the sun,
magnificent flower on the mouth, surprise
as lovers who look too long on the desired face
startle to find the remote flesh so warm.

A day of heat shed on the gorge, a brilliant
day when love sees the sun behind its man
and the disguised marvel under familiar skin.

Steel-bright, light-pointed, the narrow-waisted towers
lift their protective network, the straight, the accurate
flex of distinction, economy of gift,
gymnast, they poise their freight; god's generosity! give
their voltage low enough for towns to handle.

The power-house stands skin-white at the transmitters' side
over the rapids the brilliance the blind foam.

This is the midway between water and flame,
this is the road to take when you think of your country,
between the dam and the furnace, terminal.

The clean park, fan of wires, landscapers,
the stone approach. And seen beyond the door,
the man with the flashlight in his metal hall.

Here, the effective green, grey-toned and shining,
tall immense chamber of cylinders. Green,
the rich paint catches light from three-story windows,
arches of light vibrate erratic panels on
sides of curved steel. Man pockets flashlight,

useless, the brilliant floor casts tiled reflection up,
bland walls return it, circles pass it round.
Wheels, control panels, dials, the vassal instruments.
This is the engineer Jones, the blueprint man,
loving the place he designed, visiting it alone.
Another blood, no cousin to the town;
rings his heels on stone, pride follows his eyes,
“This is the place.”

Four generators, smooth green, and squares of black,
floored-over space for a fifth.

The stairs. Descend.

“They said I built the floor like the tiles of a bank,
I wanted the men who work here to be happy.”
Light laughing on steel, the gay, the tall sun
given away; mottled; snow comes in clouds;
the iron steps go down as roads go down.

This is the second circle, world of inner shade,
hidden bulk of generators, governor shaft,
round gap of turbine pit. Flashlight, tool-panels,
heels beating on iron, cold of underground,
stairs, wire flooring, the voice's hollow cry.
This is the scroll, the volute case of night,
quick shadow and the empty galleries.

Go down; here are the outlets, butterfly valves
open from here, the tail-race, vault of steel,
the spiral staircase ending, last light in shaft.

“Gone,” says the thin straight man.

“Hail, holy light, offspring of Heav'n first-born,
‘Or of th’ Eternal Coeternal beam
‘May I express thee unblamed?’”

And still go down.

Now ladder-mouth; and the precipitous fear,

uncertain rungs down into after-night.

“This is the place. Away from this my life
I am indeed Adam unparadiz'd.
Some fools call this the Black Hole of Calcutta,
I don't know how they ever get to Congress.”

Gulfs, spirals, that the drunken ladder swings,
its rungs give, pliant, beneath the leaping heart.
Leaps twice at midnight. But a naked bulb
makes glare, turns paler, burns to dark again.
Brilliance begins, stutters. And comes upon
after the tall abstract, the ill, the unmasked men,
the independent figure of the welder
masked for his work; acts with unbearable flame.
His face is a cage of steel, the hands are covered,
points dazzle hot, fly from his writing torch,
brighten the face and hands marrying steel.
Says little, works : only : A little down,
five men were killed in the widening of the tunnel.”

Shell of bent metal; walking along an arc
the tube rounds up about your shoulders, black
circle, great circle, down infinite mountains rides,
echoes words, footsteps, testimonies.

“One said the air was thin, Fifth-Avenue clean.”

The iron pillars mark a valve division,
four tunnels merging. Iron on iron resounds,
echoes along created gorges. “Sing,
test echoes, sing : Pilgrim,” he cries,
singing *Once More, Dear Home*,
as all the light burns out.

Down the reverberate channels of the hills
the suns declare midnight, go down, cannot ascend,
no ladder back; see this, your eyes can ride through steel,
this is the river Death, diversion of power,
the root of the tower and the tunnel's core,

this is the end.

THE DAM

All power is saved, having no end. Rises
in the green season, in the sudden season
the white the budded

and the lost.

Water celebrates, yielding continually
sheeted and fast in its overfall
slips down the rock, evades the pillars
building its colonnades, repairs
in stream and standing wave
retains its seaward green
broken by obstacle rock; falling, the water sheet
spouts, and the mind dances, excess of white.
White brilliant function of the land's disease.

Many-spanned, lighted, the crest leans under
concrete arches and the channelled hills,
turns in the gorge toward its release;
kinetic and controlled, the sluice
urging the hollow, the thunder,
the major climax

energy

total and open watercourse
praising the spillway, fiery glaze,
crackle of light, cleanest velocity
flooding, the moulded force.

*I open out a way over the water
I form a path between the Combatants:
Grant that I sail down like a living bird,
power over the fields and Pool of Fire.
Phoenix, I sail over the phoenix world.*

Diverted water, the fern and fuming white

ascend in mist of continuous diffusion.
Rivers are turning inside their mountains,
streams line the stone, rest at the overflow
lake and in lanes of pliant color lie.
Blessing of this innumerable silver,
printed in silver, images of stone
walk on a screen of falling water
in film-silver in continual change
recurring colored, plunging with the wave.

Constellations of light, abundance of many rivers.
The sheeted island-cities, the white surf filling west,
the hope, fast water spilled where still pools fed.
Great power flying deep: between the rock and the sunset,
the caretaker's house and the steep abutment,
hypnotic water fallen and the tunnels under
the moist and fragile galleries of stone,
mile-long, under the wave. Whether snow fall,
the quick light fall, years of white cities fall,
flood that this valley built falls slipping down
the green turn in the river's green.
Steep gorge, the wedge of crystal in the sky.

How many feet of whirlpools?
What is a year in terms of falling water?
Cylinders; kilowatts; capacities.
Continuity: $\Sigma Q = 0$
Equations for falling water. The streaming motion.
The balance-sheet of energy that flows
passing along its infinite barrier.

It breaks the hills, cracking the riches wide,
runs through electric wires;
it comes, warning the night,
running among these rigid hills,
a single force to waken our eyes.

They poured the concrete and the columns stood,
 laid bare the bedrock, set the cells of steel,
 a dam for monument was what they hammered home.
 Blasted, and stocks went up;
 insured the base,
 and limousines
 wrote their own graphs upon
 roadbed and lifeline.

Their hands touched mastery:
 wait for defense, solid across the world.

Mr. Griswold. "A corporation is a body without a soul."

Mr. Dunn. When they were caught at it they resorted to the
 methods employed by gunmen, ordinary machine-gun
 racketeers. They cowardly tried to buy out the people who had
 the information on them.

Mr. Marcantonio. I agree that a racket has been practised, but the
 most damnable racketeering that I have ever known is the
 paying of a fee to the very attorney who represented these
 victims. That is the most outrageous racket that has ever come
 within my knowledge.

Miss Allen. Mr. Jesse J. Ricks, the president of the Union Carbide
 & Carbon Corporation, suggested that the stock-holder had better
 take this question up in a private conference.

The dam is safe. A scene of power.

The dam is the father of the tunnel.

This is the valley's work, the white, the shining.

High	Low	Stock and Dividend in Dollars	Open	High	Low	Last	Net Chge.	Closing		
								Bid	Ask	Sales
111	61 ¹ / ₄	Union Carbide (3.20)	67 ¹ / ₄	69 ¹ / ₂	67 ¹ / ₄	69 ¹ / ₂	+3	69 ¹ / ₄	69 ¹ / ₂	3,400

The dam is used when the tunnel is used.

The men and the water are never idle,
 have definitions.

This is a perfect fluid, having no age nor hours,
surviving scarless, unaltered, loving rest,
willing to run forever to find its peace
in equal seas in currents of still glass.
Effects of friction : to fight and pass again,
learning its power, conquering boundaries,
able to rise blind in revolts of tide,
broken and sacrificed to flow resumed.
Collecting eternally power. Spender of power,
torn, never can be killed, speeded in filaments,
million, its power can rest and rise forever,
wait and be flexible. Be born again.
Nothing is lost, even among the wars,
imperfect flow, confusion of force.
It will rise. These are the phases of its face.
It knows its seasons, the waiting, the sudden.
It changes. It does not die.

THE DISEASE: AFTER-EFFECTS

This is the life of a Congressman.

Now he is standing on the floor of the House,
the galleries full; raises his voice; presents the bill.
Legislative, the fanfare, greeting its heroes with
ringing of telephone bells preceding entrances,
snapshots (Grenz rays, recording structure) newsreels.
This is silent, and he proposes:

embargo on munitions

to Germany and Italy
as states at war with Spain.

He proposes

Congress memorialize

the governor of California : free Tom Mooney.

A bill for a TVA at Fort Peck Dam.

A bill to prevent industrial silicosis.

This is the gentleman from Montana.

—I'm a child, I'm leaning from a bedroom window,
clipping the rose that climbs upon the wall,
the tea roses, and the red roses,
one for a wound, another for disease,
remembrance for strikers. I was five, going on six,
my father on strike at the Anaconda mine;
they broke the Socialist mayor we had in Butte,
the sheriff (friendly), found their judge. Strike-broke.
Shot father. He died : wounds and his disease.
My father had silicosis.

Copper contains it, we find it in limestone,
sand quarries, sandstone, potteries, foundries,
granite, abrasives, blasting; many kinds of grinding,
plate, mining, and glass.

Widespread in trade, widespread in space!
Butte, Montana; Joplin, Missouri; the New York tunnels,
the Catskill Aqueduct. In over thirty States.
A disease worse than consumption.

Only eleven States have laws.
There are today one million potential victims.
500,000 Americans have silicosis now.
These are the proportions of a war.

Pictures rise, foreign parades, the living faces,
Asturian miners with my father's face,
wounded and fighting, the men at Gauley Bridge,
my father's face enlarged; since now our house

and all our meaning lies in this
signature: power on a hill
centered in its committee and its armies
sources of anger, the mine of emphasis.

No plane can ever lift us high enough
to see forgetful countries underneath,
but always now the map and X-ray seem
resemblent pictures of one living breath
one country marked by error
and one air.

It sets up a gradual scar formation;
this increases, blocking all drainage from the lung,
eventually scars, blocking the blood supply,
and then they block the air passageways.

Shortness of breath,
pains around the chest,
he notices lack of vigor.

Bill blocked; investigation blocked.

These galleries produce their generations.
The Congressmen are restless, stare at the triple tier,
the flags, the ranks, the walnut foliage wall;
a row of empty seats, mask over a dead voice.
But over the country, a million look from work,
five hundred thousand stand.

THE BILL

The subcommittee submits:

Your committee held hearings, heard many witnesses; finds:

THAT the Hawk's Nest tunnel was constructed
Dennis and Rinehart, Charlottesville, Va., for
New Kanawha Power Co., subsidiary of
Union Carbide & Carbon Co.

THAT a tunnel was drilled
app. dist. 3.75 mis.
to divert water (from New River)
to hydroelectric plant (Gauley Junction).

THAT in most of the tunnel, drilled rock contained
90—even 99 percent pure silica.

This is a fact that was known.

THAT silica is dangerous to lungs of human beings.
When submitted to contact. Silicosis.

THAT the effects are well known.
Disease incurable.
Physical incapacity, cases fatal.

THAT the Bureau of Mines has warned for twenty years.

THAT prevention is: wet drilling, ventilation,
respirators, vacuum drills.
Disregard : utter. Dust : collected. Visibility : low.
Workmen left work, white with dust.
Air system : inadequate.
It was quite cloudy in there.

When the drills were going, in all the smoke and dust,
it seemed like a gang of airplanes going through
that tunnel.

Respirators, not furnished.

I have seen men with masks, but simply on their breasts.

I have seen two wear them.

Drills : dry drilling, for speed, for saving.

A fellow could drill three holes dry for one hole wet.

They went so fast they didn't square at the top.

Locomotives : gasoline. Suffering from monoxide gas.

There have been men that fell in the tunnel. They had
to be carried out.

The driving of the tunnel.

It was begun, continued, completed, with gravest disregard.

And the employees? Their health, lives, future?

Results and infection.

Many died. Many are not yet dead.

Of negligence. Wilful or inexcusable.

Further findings:

Prevalence : many States, mine, tunnel operations.

A greatest menace.

We suggest hearings be read.

This is the dark. Lights strung up all the way.

Depression; and, driven deeper in,

by hunger, pistols, and despair,

they took the tunnel.

Of the contracting firm

P. H. Faulconer, Pres.

E. J. Perkins, Vice-Pres.

have declined to appear.

They have no knowledge of deaths from silicosis.

However, their firm paid claims.

I want to point out that under the statute \$500 or

\$1000, but no more, may be recovered.

We recommend.

Bring them. Their books and records.

Investigate. Require.

Can do no more.

These citizens from many States
paying the price for electric power,
To Be Vindicated.

“If by their suffering and death they will have made a future life safer for work beneath the earth, if they will have been able to establish a new and greater regard for human life in industry, their suffering may not have been in vain.”

Respectfully,
Glenn Griswold
Chairman, Subcommittee
Vito Marcantonio
W. P. Lambertson
Matthew A. Dunn

The subcommittee subcommits.

Words on a monument.

Capitoline thunder. It cannot be enough.

The origin of storms is not in clouds,
our lightning strikes when the earth rises,
spillways free authentic power:

dead John Brown's body walking from a tunnel
to break the armored and concluded mind.

THE BOOK OF THE DEAD

These roads will take you into your own country.
Seasons and maps coming where this road comes
into a landscape mirrored in these men.

Past all your influences, your home river,
constellations of cities, mottoes of childhood,
parents and easy cures, war, all evasion's wishes.

What one word must never be said?
Dead, and these men fight off our dying,
cough in the theatres of the war.

What two things shall never be seen?
They : what we did. Enemy : what we mean.
This is a nation's scene and halfway house.

What three things can never be done?
Forget. Keep silent. Stand alone.
The hills of glass, the fatal brilliant plain.

The facts of war forced into actual grace.
Seasons and modern glory. Told in the histories,
how first ships came

seeing on the Atlantic thirteen clouds
lining the west horizon with their white
shining halations;

they conquered, throwing off impossible Europe—
could not be used to transform; created coast—
breathed-in America.

See how they took the land, made after-life

fresh out of exile, planted the pioneer
base and blockade,

pushed forests down in an implacable walk
west where new clouds lay at the desirable
body of sunset;

taking the seaboard. Replaced the isolation,
dropped cities where they stood, drew a tidewater
frontier of Europe,

a moment, and another frontier held,
this land was planted home-land that we know.
Ridge of discovery,

until we walk to windows, seeing America
lie in a photograph of power, widened
before our forehead,

and still behind us falls another glory,
London unshaken, the long French road to Spain,
the old Mediterranean

flashing new signals from the hero hills
near Barcelona, monuments and powers,
parent defenses.

Before our face the broad and concrete west,
green ripened field, frontier pushed back like river
controlled and dammed;

the flashing wheatfields, cities, lunar plains
grey in Nevada, the sane fantastic country
sharp in the south,

liveoak, the hanging moss, a world of desert,
the dead, the lava, and the extreme arisen

fountains of life,

the flourished land, peopled with watercourses
to California and the colored sea;
sums of frontiers

and unmade boundaries of acts and poems,
the brilliant scene between the seas, and standing,
this fact and this disease.



Half-memories absorb us, and our ritual world
carries its history in familiar eyes,
planted in flesh it signifies its music

in minds which turn to sleep and memory,
in music knowing all the shimmering names,
the spear, the castle, and the rose.

But planted in our flesh these valleys stand,
everywhere we begin to know the illness,
are forced up, and our times confirm us all.

In the museum life, centuries of ambition
yielded at last a fertilizing image:
the Carthaginian stone meaning a tall woman

carries in her two hands the book and cradled dove,
on her two thighs, wings folded from the waist
cross to her feet, a pointed human crown.

This valley is given to us like a glory.
To friends in the old world, and their lifting hands
that call for intercession. Blow falling full in face.

All those whose childhood made learn skill to meet,
and art to see after the change of heart;

all the belligerents who know the world.

You standing over gorges, surveyors and planners,
you workers and hope of countries, first among powers;
you who give peace and bodily repose,

opening landscapes by grace, giving the marvel lowlands
physical peace, flooding old battlefields
with general brilliance, who best love your lives;

and you young, you who finishing the poem
wish new perfection and begin to make;
you men of fact, measure our times again.



These are our strength, who strike against history.
These whose corrupt cells owe their new styles of weakness
to our diseases;

these carrying light for safety on their foreheads
descended deeper for richer faults of ore,
drilling their death.

These touching radium and the luminous poison,
carried their death on their lips and with their warning
glow in their graves.

These weave and their eyes water and rust away,
these stand at wheels until their brains corrode,
these farm and starve,

all these men cry their doom across the world,
meeting avoidable death, fight against madness,
find every war.

Are known as strikers, soldiers, pioneers,
fight on all new frontiers, are set in solid

lines of defense.

Defense is sight; widen the lens and see
standing over the land myths of identity,
new signals, processes:

Alloys begin : certain dominant metals.
Deliberate combines add new qualities,
sums of new uses.

Over the country, from islands of Maine fading,
Cape Sable fading south into the orange
detail of sunset,

new processes, new signals, new possession.
A name for all the conquests, prediction of victory
deep in these powers.

Carry abroad the urgent need, the scene,
to photograph and to extend the voice,
to speak this meaning.

Voices to speak to us directly. As we move.
As we enrich, growing in larger motion,
this word, this power.

Down coasts of taken countries, mastery,
discovery at one hand, and at the other
frontiers and forests,

fanatic cruel legend at our back and
speeding ahead the red and open west,
and this our region,

desire, field, beginning. Name and road,
communication to these many men,
as epilogue, seeds of unending love.