

*Kestrel*

Tim Armentrout

## **Level Ground**

In the land I stand on  
    dead faces

whisper facts hidden

                            only by topsoil

of company after company

                            bleeding treasuries

from earth's oldest hills

Union Carbide

Coal and Coke Railroad

Coal and Iron Railroad

Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad

Baltimore and Ohio Railroad

Buffalo Creek and Gauley Railroad

Porter's Creek and Gauley Railroad

In the land I stand on

what is left

in the wake of a business

that takes its names from what it destroys

Yellow Poplar Lumber Company

Clinchfield Coal Company

Elk River Coal and Lumber Company

Brook Trout Coal Company

Greenbrier River Lumber Company

Patience Incorporated

Hollow Mountain Resources Incorporated

## *Kestrel*

In the land I stand on  
the throats of breathless workers  
and with every step the wind  
carries their wheezing echo  
so that new ears hear the words

Black Lung

Silicosis

Afterdamp

Blackdamp

Deforestation

Acid mine drainage

Scrip

Yellow dog

Strike

In the land I stand on  
desecrated homelands  
and unmarked graves  
so I breathe and sing for

Buffalo Creek

Matewan

Bloody Mingo

Paint Creek

Cabin Creek

Kayford Mountain

Martinsburg

Hawk's Nest

Kanawha

Holly Grove

Blair Mountain

Sago

Alma

Upper Big Branch

*mountainis simper liberi*



Matt Pasca

**In a Name**

After years of their bedroom closed  
for show, a comet swept through: final  
flare of DNA. Before I was

an I, they named me Matthew,  
as in “Gift from God” and Blake,  
as in English poet buck naked

in the yard, drunk on angels.  
A heritage of miracles rushed  
through me like a train I had to catch.

God and Blake are very popular; I know.

We like God for pinning a name  
to the wordless, Blake for ashen  
fists, the garden green, warbled innocence.

But magic and vision can mute  
with no Merlin or Dumbledore to hide  
one away in a cobbler’s extra bed.

As a boy, my chest an aperture  
of light, divine lens of oxide  
and nasturtium; yet unversed

in luggage tags and takeout orders,  
hydrant of throat rusted  
shut, the station of common

sense waiting for my train  
to chug in. The dumb  
luck of my third name must

be what’s saved me: Pasca—Spanish for Easter—  
rolls back the stone of distance,  
resurrects me every time these

words wander out to  
land on your listening  
face.

