

The Ghost Town at Tinton

Black angus low to the dark hills
where men once slogged home from the mine
grimed with dirt and gold, loaded
with stories from twelve hours
in the hole. It is cooler now,
the sun a burnished orange over the berm.
Their bellows shiver down spearfish canyon.
Dark as shadows they wend
dirt paths between arthritic homes
kneeling in the grass, past
the old Ford rusting on a rise
flecked with mica, past
the post office and dance hall ruins
at main street's end, straddling
two states. Though the gold is gone,
the ground gives up tantalite ore
for missiles and consumer electronics,
metal that resists corrosion. Nights
like this, when all is still, sounds can carry
for miles. Voices from a radio left on
on the top of a ridge can travel
through trees, too indistinct for love
or loss, and sift like ghostly fingers
through rotting walls where newspapers
fifty years old were once stuffed
to keep out the chill.