

## Strip Mine

A terrible, lunar beauty,  
pale and sere  
like leaves past withering  
when we run along the edges,  
slag bits broke loose and  
rolled down the wash  
to the bottom,  
pebbles round  
as dark marbles,  
two halves of ancient bivalve clam  
facing each other  
in frozen contemplation,  
the animating spark  
between them  
buried in sediment eon ago.

At the edge  
wild chicory contributes its blue  
to the green and white tangle  
of Bindweed and Queen Anne's Lace,  
then, the shallow mine pit,  
wide, rusty gash,  
obscene nakedness  
of rock scoured of soil by the rains  
since the miners packed up their rig  
and left.

Ledges with crumbling faces  
of limestone, gneiss, and shale,  
whole trays of layers which separate  
to reveal the mystery  
of delicate calligraphy on slate,  
ancient fern or fish,  
or link to man.