Stumbling upon a brick chimney shaft

Jake Goetz

what can a butter
of sunlight smeared on a leaf
tell us about morality
or family? that the underside
is a night one can't
differentiate from morning?

or if i filled a bag
with pebbles from the Yangtze
and told you to take them
to the end of the sky
would you find walking
bottomless?
or collapse
from exhaustion?

could you watch the way
words float through years
only to get stuck some-
where on an escarpment
in a mess of lantana and flax
drawing meaning out
from the senses   unmeaning
in their essence   to locate
the self in some planetary
syntax of symbols

in search   one might say
to let letters loose
of logic

or to a logic

let loose of letters
                                 opting instead
                 for simple transfers
                           tensing muscles in blood
               like ferns in soil
                    the oomph and ahh
              straining legs
            farting and sweating
              to ground a branch
           to stumble upon

                 a

        l   g   g

   o   i   r

     n   a   e
       e   n   y
            t
            i   b   rooted beside
            r   a   a brick chimney
            o   r   shaft   which
            n   k   channelled   air
                                           down   to the
                                           Kemira   Colliery
                                         where coal   was
                                           cut   from
                                           Mt.   Kiera
                                           loaded   onto
                                         wagons   and driven
                          down to   Wollongong port
               along a track   you now walk
            tracing a   coal path
   through   Country

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in 1982 BHP sought to sack
hundreds of Kemira's workers
but in protest 31 miners
stayed underground for 16 days
while mass demonstrations
filled Wollongong's streets
and a train took thousands
of workers to Canberra
where they protested against
the Fraser government's apathy
toward the retrenchment

when the workers arrived at Parliament
ALP leaders Hayden and Hawke
were waiting to address them from a stage
while a flimsy barricade and a few police
stood defending Parliament House
but the workers swept past the stage
broke through the barricade   stormed up
the steps of Parliament
and smashed their way through the doors
chanting 'we want jobs'

'we want jobs'

'we want jobs'   *'we want jobs'*

'we want jobs'

'we want jobs'   *'we want jobs'*   *'we want jobs'*

'we want jobs'

'we want jobs'   *'we want jobs'*

'we want jobs'   *'we want jobs'*

'we want jobs'   *'we want jobs'*

'we want jobs'   *'we want jobs'*

* * * * *

Kemira Colliery coal works fatalities

1871 – John Cole, miner (fall of stone, leaving a wife and three children)

1871 – John Coombes, miner (killed by stone block whilst working with father-in-law, Thomas Allum)

1879 May 14th – Joseph Seal, miner (roof fall)

1880 Sep 24th – Thomas Allum, labourer (run over by wagon on incline)

1884 Sep 6th – Andrew Bell, miner (fall of coal)

1885 Nov 14th – Thomas Dumphy, miner (fall of coal)

1887 Jan 30th – Thomas Danby, wheeler (fall of coal)

1888 Oct 4th – Robert Kenning, points boy (run over by set)

1896 Aug 28th – James Goldrick, horse driver (wagon on incline)

1897 Sep 13th – Charles Benjamin Drew, shunter (crushed between wagon buffers)

1900 Oct 15th – Patrick Hayes (natural causes)

1906 Jul 10th – John Dobing, 71, brakeman (runaway skip)

1906 Sep 20th – John Dumphy, 35, miner (roof fall)

1908 Aug 31st – William McDonald, 56, Deputy (trip and fall)

1910 Mar 4th – Thomas Francis O'Brien, miner (heart failure)

1910 Mar 17th – Frederick Peterson, 30, miner (roof fall)

1912 Jan 19th – John Charles Wilson, 36, shiftman (fall of stone)

1915 Jun 17th – Joseph Hay, 53, miner (roof fall)

1930 Apr 15th – Frederick Walker, miner (fall of stone)

1939 Sept 18th – Antonio Carollo, shiftman (died from injuries)

1948 Nov 8th – Harold Whitehead, welder's labourer (electrocution)

1949 May 25th – Keith Arnett, lamp man (crushed between battery loco and surface tipping ramp)

1950 Mar 28th – Eric James, coal cutter operator (crushed upon slipping under the coal cutter)

1951 Nov 15th – Walter Hurt, battery loco driver (fatal injuries when colliding with a derailed 6 ton capacity mine car