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The Coal-Strike at Consumers, Utah: 1933

Don Snow

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THE COAL-STRIKE AT CONSUMERS, UTAH: 1933

Parmly shoves the ramrod down the dirty barrel
of his .06, like a steel train entering the mine.
Outside the Slavs jabber in tongues as strange to him
as Ute, and the Finns with their narrow eyes and round
faces red as the bricks of their saunas
could be Navajo, they die the same.

He enters the heat of a day too drowsy to stir,
finds Gordon Creek dry for the first time in his life
and blames the thirst of the Serbs.

Meanwhile, Mayor West sends Troopers armed with whiskey
and swords up the pinon hills to Consumers.
As they throw their heads back to drink, hats fall,
desperados, all the lost Utes they admired as kids
down their throats.

They arrive like Pancho and Cisco, trucks
kicking up bursts of dust like horses, to find the barricades
down, the mattresses back on their beds, Aino Louma's
ancient Studebaker grinning at home like a sow,

and poor Parmly, walking naked down the dusty creek,
a band of Slav-squaws, bare-breasted,
prodding him with his own gun. They've pissed on him
and he's crying, and the women seeing him cry like their children
squat down, offer him and his Troopers suck
"to make them human."