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# Vallejo in the Mines of Quivilca

Naomi Wallace

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a few paces as the sea pushes their boots.  
Some drop to their knees, beat the water with their fists.

From this point each of them will go on, though going on  
from here can only mean going back—to a city,  
perhaps Salamanca, the square burnt dry,  
the windows high up flagged with laundry.  
Or to a house in a field—the old stumps are still  
in the yard, the fruit pits on the door step, the scraps  
of wool under the bed. But after so many years  
the quiet ones waiting inside are strange.

### VALLEJO IN THE MINES OF QUIVILCA

The *Cholo* breaks out of the mountain rock, a man,  
a hunk of stone, blasted, burned, a vein of metal,  
a vein of blood pumping across his forehead like a fuse.  
His right hand numb, though he still uses it on his wife.  
The Company has gone too far, he says, turned us  
into dogs and dogs won't dig ore the way a man should.  
At home his wife presses the plates onto the table,  
slowly, like printing a sign. There's a meeting tonight.  
With a shovel she digs up the nail box under the porch.  
It's my Uncle's gun, she says, as her husband runs the barrel  
over his lips like a salve. This time his wife won't stay home.

As the men walk, their black and soggy lungs swing  
like pendulums in their chests. And from way high up,  
looking down, the Yankee God of the Tungsten mines  
charts the miners' puny trails towards the campfires.

And the God sweats.