

The check felt extra heavy in his pocket as he started the car and let it warm up. He slowly turned his smile up into a chuckle, wishing he could see Megger's face when he started to skin that mink. When the fleshing knife came down the right side, hit that scar and slashed a three or four inch hole in the pelt.

"Nope! Fifteen-fifty for a three-dollar mink ain't bad!"

He jammed the shift down into low, made a wide circle running across a corner of Meggers' yard, pulled through the gate and headed the sputtering Plymouth for home.

## Monuments

*by Paul Kratoska*

*English, Sr.*

The mines died forty years ago.  
The soft, brown coal was gutted from the earth  
And the cinder offal laid on the land—  
Red mountains of rust and cinder  
In the midst of fertile fields.  
Valleys have eroded the mountainsides,  
Baring twisted ribs of slag  
And bleeding into the soil.

The coal has long ago been swept  
Ashen from hearths.  
The miners are old and cough up coal dust,  
Carrying the dust of the mine  
To the dust of the grave.  
The cinder mountains remain,  
Barren cairns in the living fields,  
Monuments of their life and labor  
Standing to the wind and stars.