

“Academy Awards of Expendable”

by Susan Truxell Sauter

From the anthology, *Fracture: Essays, Poems, and Stories on Fracking in America*, Ice Cube Press (2016)

*We took too much.
We licked the bowl,
licked the spoon,
ate the bowl,
the counter, the silverware
the drawer, the floor.*

*And now a Lifetime
Achievement Award,
featuring West Virginia in Her Starring Role.*

*Soundtrack: The Beverly Hill
billies or Deliverance.
Pick one. Pick two. Pick
up your banjo, hill gypsy,
on tiptoe in your own land
clutching your humble
pie wrapped in a miner's kerchief
for the dark days underground.*

*Profiled in Style: Carhartt
overalls-by-Blankenship,
Gucci miner's lamp bag,
make-up by Massey,
(coal-creased skin)*

*Special Effects: Three million
pounds of explosives per day.*

*Our time is limited.
Thanks must be abbreviated.*

*A trailer: Oily
nails scrape the layered shale pro-
file--defiled. (We failed
you failed me.) Baby drills
down, turns drill, releases
slick water, explode.*

Applause now.

*Raise your bedecked arms
bedazzled with Patek Phillipe
diamond time baubles, watch
over the collapsed ground,
throw back black
water toasts, etch the effluvia
onto your creamy, downy skin,
drip into your fluffed crevasses,
your Ralph-Laurened satined gowns.
Finish your Marcellus martinis.*

*I want to thank the titans of industry,
my producers, the consumers, the
stunning script, my stunned surface,
the neighbors who sold out,
the directors of apocalypse. I share
this award with all, including the vigilant
E. Gordon Gee-bow-tied, tongue-
tied board members who sat at the table
of the largest mining disaster
in recent history. And, for you,
the audience so adorned,
let me thank: fur-bearing animals
for dying, the canaries, too,
as our oxygen thins worldwide.*