

Anthracite

by Richard Hague

A bag I had from a friend
sat in a corner of the trailer
till I remembered it, brought it
to the fire.

Now its
old scent rises, and I am swept back
to Steubenville, boyhood,
coal furnaces, grit and milltown stink
and beautiful strange girls, olive-
skinned, dark-eyed, or
fair Irish, or swart Romanians,
black-haired Greeks,
and all the food,
baklava, stuffed grape leaves,
kielbasa, colcannon,
and all the old women trailing
those beautiful girls,
wary,
women in wide black dresses,
bituminous babushkas, even faint,
dusky mustaches they did not grow
but rubbed from their husbands' faces
in their come-home kisses from the mines.