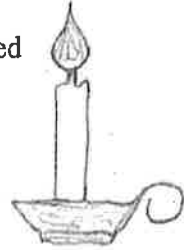




A single raven soared in groundlessness high above Michigan Territory,
with mighty wings drawn on the incorporated territory of an early 1800's
United States of America.



Circulating far below, it trained its eyes on an assembly of fabric, blue faded
miners, each propped with a pick ax, each with face of dirt and grit.



A hard day's work, far below in caverns, candle lit, cold, dark and damp,
extracting Wisconsin's first metal of mining, lead ore.

A shaft, cascading down, deep into the carved out earth,
100 feet or more



a seemingly intimate atmosphere, though deceptively industrious,

13 million pounds of lead per year, extracted,

mining in these glorious hillsides of southwestern Wisconsin.



The raven cawed,

tall contraptions built as armatures to the sky, one heaping lead ore cart,

rolling rickety, one cart after another, running on its line,

deposits made in shiny metallic substance,

steam locomotive, black and heavy.

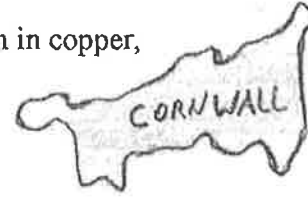


Raven,

soaring on a breeze,

“from where do these skilled men travel, oh wise winds of ancestry?”

England, land of Cornwall, where land meets rolling sea, rich in copper,
lead, and tin.



Centuries of mining born into blood.

look to new place names, Hardscrabble, New Diggings, Mineral Point,
Black Jack and Lead Mine.

Call to the spirit of mineral miners

bring your muscle, your toil, your knowledge, your kin.

Settle in these new lands where prosperity lurks

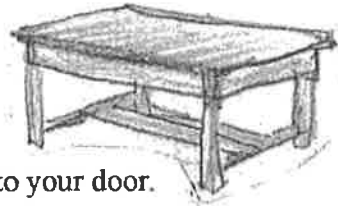
hole up in the hills and shelter into badger holes,

settle into your homely log cabin, sit dreamily in your rocking chair,

shelves and hardwood table,

a hard day's work

the white waves of shake rags, leading you to your door.



Smell the faint aroma

dough, potato and beef.

Venison of the whitetail deer,

soup simmered in stock,

celery and chicory root.



Raven peers in now

glimpsing the desire of dessert,

suet of mincemeat pie, nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves



confection of bakewell tart, shortcrust of jam, frangipane, and flaked almond.

In steps a maiden rather bold,

weighted in apron, and ritual of daily chores,

still tall and slender, her hair like gold,

extended arm, the giving nature,

carrying with her,

her story



the child who will sleep soundly after an active day.

This new found land has the tone of hope,

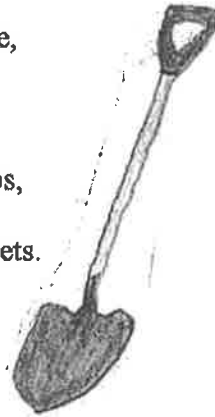
here lies the possibility of wealth,

hardworking men with shovels and lamps,

dig for lead to produce its pipes and bullets.

If you work hard through sweat and toil,

your selfless act may be rewarded.

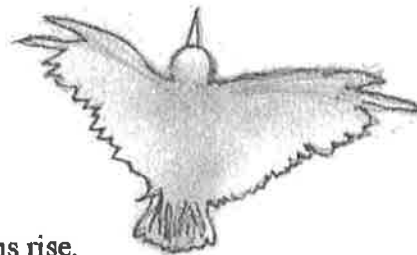


Your children sweet and innocent may live a life through different means.

Raven flies

High,

but down below the toxins rise,



for where these men have cleared the trees

lead is melted in the refineries.

Native

Sauk, Fox, Ho-Chunk, Ottawa.

Indigenous land,

here to come 300 years of oppression.

They long have tried to regain through war,

but they were no match for the white man and his gun.

To their pleas you are unaware.

You work the mine.

You work the mine.

Now your day is done,

your battle to survive today is won!

mattress stuffed of straw and leaves

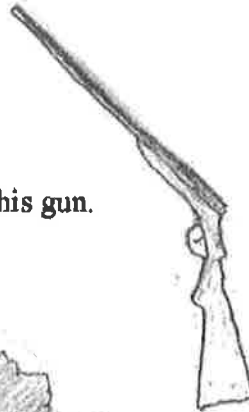
bedded down, with a sound night's sleep.

But don't rest long for time goes quickly

soon you must repeat your day.

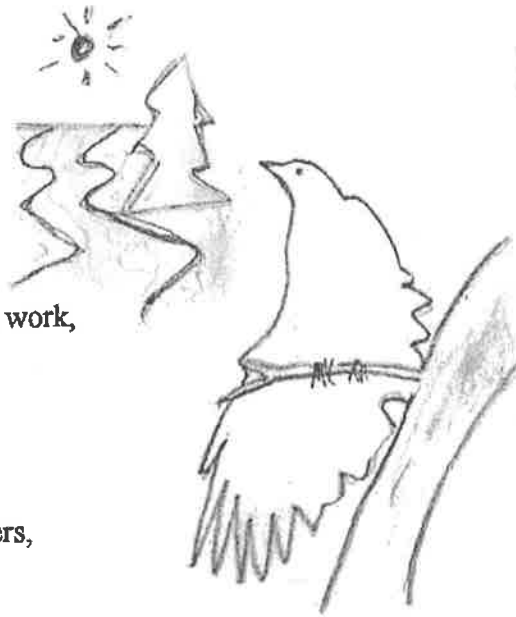
The raven wakes,

the rooster crows



fresh brew of coffee, sweet cottage loaf,
yeast bread, quick bread, barley scone.

As all of the miners greet on their way to work,
the raven watches black and wise,
savanna oak, open prairie, river bed,
carved deep below stratus of earthen layers,
the miners descend into an abyss.



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