IN ILLINOIS

My father's father's father owned the Enterprise mine the Enterprise Coal & Coke Company 1871
he was a shareholder, being a coal digger, kept a log of entries, shafts & air shafts, rooms by number & number of feet died 1881

My father's father went down to a river town to work came back to the mining town where his father—went down in the Paradise Mine a miner & later a mine examiner tested the air the face & the roof Sundays & holidays too walked three miles out & back when there was no train

My father whose mother kept him out of the mines kept his father's oil lamp kept his father's carbine & safety lamps kept a box of wicks—picks—globes kept his father's 50-year union pin his first aid pin his flashlight safe for use kept manuals papers This lamp was given all labeled This pin was given kept it all it was his legacy labeled dated 1965 & signed & kept for me
DO YOU WANT TO BE A MINE EXAMINER?

Test with flame safety lamp
   for methane & other gas
   for oxygen deficiency

Test air current, amount of air
   Examine seals & doors
   Test roof, face & ribs

Always be sure of a safe line of retreat

blackdamp (carbon dioxide) suffocation
whitedamp (carbon monoxide) poisoning
stinkdamp (hydrogen sulfide) poisoning
firedamp (methane + air) explosion
afterdamp (after explosion) explosion + poisoning
flooding  roof collapse
First European sightings of coal


“Best organized labor state in America”

*Mother Jones, in a 1923 letter citing southern Illinois coal miners. Jones was a seamstress for Chicago barons on Lake Shore Drive before turning, in 1890, to labor organizing. In the 1890s, southern Illinois coal miners marched from town to town calling on fellow miners to strike. United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) ranks swelled from 400 to over 30,000 in the region, where strikes were successfully led by miners rather than labor leaders.*

Largest private-sector coal company in the world

*Francis Peabody was the founder of the Peabody Coal Company. In 1883, he shipped coal from southern Illinois to Chicago, where he lived on Lake Shore Drive. In 1895, he began buying southern Illinois coal mines; in 1913 he signed his first coal supply agreement with an electric utility. When he died in 1922, he owned 46 mines in Illinois and nearby states. Peabody later expanded into Southwestern and Western states, and to Australia. The company emerged from a year of bankruptcy in April 2017, and at the end of that year owned 5.2 billion tons of coal reserves.*
When I was ten they took me into a coal mine
I gave a report to our class that had seen
*How Green Was My Valley* a movie set in Wales

The miners had lamps like my grandfather’s
lamps & I never forgot the whistle explosion
the father trapped & killed but I had forgotten
the wage cuts the strike the lost jobs
the emigration to countries like our own