

A Poem Found in Tennessee

I found a poem
buried
in Tennessee

inside
were scraps of words,
ripe old phrases
about

our southern mountaineers,
voices from the hills,
hillbilly women

white trash:
the 400-year
untold history
of class
in America

my own country
Hillbillyland:
what the movies did
to the mountains
what the mountains did
to the movies

the United States of Appalachia:
how southern mountaineers
brought independence, culture,
& enlightenment to America

Appalachian reckoning!

Appalachian spring

selected readings
from southern Appalachia

reading Appalachia
from left to right

they'll take away your project:
a chronicle

feud
Hatfields, McCoys
social change
in Appalachia

the Kentucky cycle

night comes to the Cumberlands:
a depressed area

death & dying
in Central Appalachia:
changing attitudes
& practices

yesterday's people:
life
in contemporary Appalachia

hillbilly elegy:
a family
& culture
in crisis

oh, mercy,
oh, mercy

what you are getting wrong
about Appalachia

what you have wrung
(the last drop)
from Appalachia

you have wrung
Appalachia
inside out

you have wronged
Appalachia

you rang,
Appalachia?

power
& powerlessness:
quiescence & rebellion
in an Appalachian valley

Forgive me,
HarperCollins.
Forgive me,
Imagine Entertainment.

Forgive me,
Jeff Bezos.
Forgive me,
Amazon—
smile, okay?

Forgive me,
a sin-eater.

Forgive me.
I ate the words
that were in the jar
and which
you were probably
saving
for the bank
in order
to grow interest,
whet consumer
appetite
for more, more . . .
please, sir,
can we have more
of Appalachia?

Forgive me.
I scarfed the scraps
of words
like tiny bits
of potato,
carrot, corn.

Some bits tasty, satisfying.
Others worm-ridden, rancid.

A meal from scraps.
Fighting back in Appalachia:
traditions of resistance
& change.

My final word.
Revenge is delicious
so sweet,
so cold.

– Rachel Jennings

