

## Miner

That Friday in July the midwife quick-parcelled me  
bloody in a blanket. Five days  
until they'd show me to my mother.  
Tuesday, father cradled me in. *Show me*  
she wailed. He revealed my splendid night pelt  
extra thumb, star nose. She  
kissed them, weeping. First week of October  
they filled my wheelbarrow with earth, dimmed lights  
delighting at my squeals in the tender dark, my first dig.

By my third birthday I was abroad in neighbours' gardens  
breathing my own expired air, making little craters.  
Around midnight father would wave, dancing  
with a torch for me to find him, his smell all smoke-weed  
his clogs drumming me home. Mother's sweet scent  
with me always, deeper than I could tunnel.  
The vibrations of her steps were nursery rhymes. Then  
I was gouged out for school.

That first week I learned to make myself invisible.  
Cats owls and buzzards ruled the air.  
I masked my skilful hands and savage bite  
learned the language but kept quiet.  
Served twelve years of din and glare  
snout flaking, whiskers twitching  
sore eyes all itch and seep  
seeing nothing, understanding nothing  
missing mulch and earth and calm and clay.

## Nicolette Golding

### 1st Place in the Open Poetry Category

2021 International Competitions - Wells Festival of Literature