

《In the Mine (extract from Down the Mine)》 [George Orwell](#)

The machines that keep us alive, and the machines that make machines, are all directly or indirectly dependent upon coal. In the metabolism of the Western world the coal-miner is second in importance only to the man who ploughs the soil. He is a sort of caryatid upon whose shoulders nearly everything that is not grimy is supported. For this reason the actual process by which coal is extracted is well worth watching, if you get the chance and are willing to take the trouble.

When you go down a coal-mine it is important to try and get to the coal face when the 'fillers' are at work. This is not easy, because when the mine is working visitors are a nuisance and are not encouraged, but if you go at any other time, it is possible to come away with a totally wrong impression. On a Sunday, for instance, a mine seems almost peaceful. The time to go there is when the machines are roaring and the air is black with coal dust, and when you can actually see what the miners have to do. At those times the place is like hell, or at any rate like my own mental picture of hell. Most of the things one imagines in hell are if there — heat, noise, confusion, darkness, foul air, and, above all, unbearably cramped space. Everything except the fire, for

「礦記」

我們賴以生存的機器，凡是製造機器的機器，都要直接或間接的靠煤推動。在西方社會的新陳代謝系統裡，最重要的人物，除了農夫之外，便是數煤礦工人了。他們像是滿身污垢的女像，人類所有其他乾淨光潔的事業，都靠他們的肩負起。只是這個原因，便值得我們去看，礦工實際採煤的情況了——那就是說，如果你有機會，又不嫌煩的話。

下礦最要緊是趁礦工正在採煤時到達礦床。但那可不容易呢，因為礦工採煤時，人來了往，會打擾他們的，也就不受歡迎了。但要是另外的时间去，得到的印象，也許就全不是那一回事。比方說，星期天的煤礦就幾乎一片平靜。礦內的機器開得震天價響，裏面的空氣被煤屑染得漆黑一片，你又能親眼看到礦工怎樣採煤時，那才是下礦坑的最好時刻。這時的礦洞就像地獄一樣——至少我心目中的地獄也不過如是。我的想像中的地獄的情景，都在礦內見到了——燥熱、嘈吵、混亂、黑暗、污濁的空氣。還有更甚的是令人難以忍受的狹隘空間。除了火以外，大概地獄有的，那兒都找到了。礦內不能點火，只有礦燈和射燈

When you have finally got there — and getting there is a in itself: I will explain that in a moment — you crawl through the last line of pit props and see opposite you a shiny black wall three or four feet high. This is the coal face. Overhead is the smooth ceiling made by the rock from which the coal has been cut; underneath is the rock again, so that the gallery you are in is only as high as the ledge of coal itself, probably not much more than a yard. The first impression of all, overmastering everything else for a while, is the frightful, deafening din from the conveyor belt which carries the coal away. You cannot see very far, because the fog of coal dust throws back the beam of your lamp, but you can see on either side of you the line of half-naked kneeling men, one to every four or five yards, driving their shovels under the fallen coal and flinging it swiftly over their left shoulders. They are feeding it on to the conveyor belt, a moving rubber, belt a couple of feet wide which runs a yard or two behind them. Down this belt a glittering river of coal races constantly. In a big mine it is carrying away several tons of coal every minute. It bears it off to some place in the main roads where it is shot into tubs holding half a ton, and thence dragged to the cages and hoisted to the outer air.

微弱的光線，僅，穿過圍，的煤塵。——  
終於他過最後一排坑木到達礦洞了——換到那裏  
也要經過一番折騰。等一下我會給大家解釋——橫亘  
在前面的是一道高三、四呎，黑得發亮的牆。那就是  
煤層了，它頂着的平滑的天花板，是藏着煤層的岩石，  
腳踏着的，也仍是即岩石。所以，你身處的狹道便只  
有和煤層一般的高，大概總不會超過三呎。及至心神  
稍定，第一個得到的印象，便是礦內運送煤塊的輸送  
帶發出的要命的噪音，幾令人震耳欲聾。礦內煤塵厚  
得像霧一般，阻擋着射燈的光線，所以根本看不遠。  
但是，兩旁的半裸男子，還是能看到的。他們的相隔四  
、五碼的跪在地面，使勁地把鏟子插進掉下的煤不堆  
裡，然後再敏捷地把煤石拋過左肩，拋進輸送帶上。  
輸送帶是一條移動的橡皮帶，大概只有兩呎寬，就在  
礦工身前一碼左右川流不息。一道閃閃發光的煤河便  
在輸送帶上不停的向前奔馳。在較大的礦洞裏，輸送  
帶每分鐘運走的煤能達數噸之多。到了礦內的主要道  
道，輸送帶便會把煤塊傾進是有半噸容量的鐵桶裡，  
接着鐵桶便被拖進升降機內，再由升降機送上地面。  
看着礦工矮瘦的身軀，很難不對他們的堅毅的體魄

It is impossible to watch the 'fillers' at work without feeling a pang of envy for their toughness. It is a dreadful job that they do, an almost superhuman job by the standard of an ordinary person. For they are not only shifting monstrous quantities of coal, they are also doing, it in a position that doubles or triples the work. They have got to remain kneeling all the while — they could hardly rise from their knees without hitting the ceiling — and you can easily see by trying it what a tremendous effort this means. Shovelling is comparatively easy when you are standing up, because you can use your knee and thigh to drive the shovel along; kneeling down, the whole of the strain is thrown upon your arm and belly muscles. And the other conditions do not exactly make things easier. There is the heat — it varies, but in some mines it is suffocating — and the coal dust that stuffs up your throat and nostrils and collects along your eyelids, and the unending rattle of the conveyor belt, which in that confined space is rather like the rattle of a machine gun. But the fillers look and work as though they were made of iron. They really do look like iron hammered iron statues — under the smooth coat of coal dust which clings to them from head to foot. It is only when you see miners down the mine and naked that you realize what splendid men, they are. Most of them are small (big men are at a disadvantage in that job) but nearly all of them have the most noble bodies; wide

生出一股妒意。他的的工作绝不轻松，如平常人的标准来看，更简直是超人的所为。他的工作只要开煤数量庞大的煤即愈简单，他的被迫採用的姿势还会令他的工作增加两倍，或甚至三倍。他们一直都要保持跪着的姿势——站起来，他们便会触及上的岩石碰个正着——你且须自己亲自尝试一下，便知道箇中需要多大的耐力了。相对来说，站着用镜子是容易得多的事，因此你可以兼用脚趾的力。跪着用镜子，所有的力量便只能来自手臂和肚皮的肌肉。还有，礦中的情况也不是得对礦工有利，首先是洞内难以耐受的燥热——有些礦洞情况或会较好，但有些则可能熟得叫人窒息——无论是喉痛、鼻孔、甚至眼睫毛，都会塞满煤塵煤屑，还有輸送帶永无休止的响声，在那狭小的空间裡，就像槍的机关槍声一樣。但是，礦工都像铁人般结实不为所动——他们看来像铁人，工作起来也像铁人，一个个彷彿都是铁匠打成的铸像——一尊，由顶至踵都被着一层煤屑的纹痕。只有亲眼目睹过赤裸的礦工採煤的情况，你才会知道他们的实在是多麼了不起的一羣。他们大多身材矮小（高大的都不宜当礦工），但是幾乎全都有极优秀的体形：肩

shoulders tapering to slender supple waists, and small pronounced buttocks and sinewy thighs, with not an ounce of waste flesh anywhere. In the hotter mines they wear only a pair of thin drawers, clogs and knee-pads; in the hottest mines of all, only the clogs and knee-pads. You can hardly tell by the look of them whether they are young or old. They may be any age up to sixty or even sixty-five, but when they are black and naked they all look alike. No one could do their work who had not a young man's body, and a figure fit for a guardsman at that, just a few pounds of extra flesh on the waist-line, and the constant bending would be impossible. You can never forget that spectacle once you have seen it — the line of bowed, kneeling figures, sooty black all over, driving their huge shovels under the coal with stupendous force and speed. They are on the job for seven and a half hours, theoretically without a break, for there is no time 'off'. Actually they, snatch a quarter of an hour or so at some time during the shift to eat the food they have brought with them, usually a hunk of bread and dripping and a bottle of cold tea. The first time I was watching the 'fillers' at work I put my hand upon some dreadful slimy thing among the coal dust. It was a chewed quid of tobacco. Nearly all the miners chew tobacco, which is said to be good against thirst.

膊宽阔，渐向下收于指尖而柔软的腰部，骨小而坚实，  
，大腿厚而坚实；身上的肌肉真可说是多一分嫌多，  
了二分嫌少。在较热的矿洞裏，他们的都只穿薄短裤，  
木底鞋和护膝，在最热的矿洞裏呢，就连薄短裤也不  
穿，只穿木底鞋和护膝。你根本不能凭他们的样子知  
道他们的有多大。有些矿工也许已有六十岁，或六十五  
岁，但那报着这黑煤屑的赤裸的身躯，看上去却是一  
十模样。矿工如果没有小夥子的体格，便不能胜任，  
这样的体格，就是当守衛也合适。他们的腰若是多了  
几吋肌肉，便不能长久弯着腰工作。那景象只要看了一  
次，便叫谁忘不了：排成一行的混身漆黑的人像，  
弯着身，跪在地上，以惊人的力量和速度把煤块铲掉  
。他们的每天工作七个半小时，因为没有所谓的「休息  
」时间，理论上是不能停下来的。不过，到了换班时  
候，他们都会趁机抢下刻地拿来吃自己带来的饼干；便  
当通常都上一些塗了肥肉油的麵包和一壺冷茶。我头  
一趟到矿洞参观时，曾在煤屑裡摸到一些湿，黏，的  
东西，原来即是矿工嚼过的一口烟丝。几乎所有矿工  
都嚼烟丝，据说可止口渴。