

# Whose Memories? Our Memories!

1) I drive through coal country,  
Pennsylvania; hillsides stripped  
to a rocky gray-black rubble,  
with signs that read:

“Danger, Open-Pit Mine”

or

“It’s Everybody’s Goal,  
Mine More Coal.”

I spend a few moments  
contemplating the meaning  
of the word “everybody.”

There are some living still  
who remember these hills  
before the strip mines.  
Yet a child born here today  
grows up imagining  
that this is what the earth  
really looks like.

2) I walk along Broadway  
just south of Wall Street;  
land covered with pavement,  
steel structures encased  
in concrete or glass  
rise toward the sky.

There is, I tell myself,  
nobody alive today  
who remembers the forest  
which once grew here,  
the streams, the meadows.  
Every human being who  
inhabits this city, or even just  
comes to visit, imagines  
that this is what Manhattan  
Island actually looks like.

I spend a few moments  
contemplating the meaning  
of the word “nobody.”

Steve Bloom  
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