

Senior Division, Poetry
Sheri Coombs, St. John's
Money & Dust

When they find the bulging ancient steamer trunk, Ethel and Marina think
it's just going to be more of the same:
archaic clothes, stiffened handkerchiefs, flattened hats.
They are going through their father's possessions.

Releasing the bursting lid, Ethel sees a seeming solid
slab of green paper.
It glimmers with a black metallic silt
and glitter erupts suddenly into the sunned air of the room.
Marina gasps,
thrusts her arms deep into the trunk, her face and breath

exclaiming.

Their mother is in the kitchen.
Face and eyes still as a cat watching a hideaway. She is absently stroking a
well worn wallet.
Her fingers sparkle darkly
as she works the soft folds of leather.
The wallet is empty.

Ethel and Marina enter the kitchen warily. They see their
mother, the gleaming wallet, her distracted black shimmered fingers.

She addresses the splendid sun shafts:
The dust got everywhere.

It sheathed himself and
everything he ever brought back from that sooty pit.
It got into the bedclothes, the teacups, the kettle!

Iron ore dust everywhere.
This scintillated house!

Marina lifts her filled fisted hands towards her mother,
skin blackly bejeweled to the elbows.
At last their mother turns to them and
looks at the wads of burnished money.

He's gone now.
His work will shine forever.

I couldn't spend it.
I wanted the dust
more
than I wanted the money.