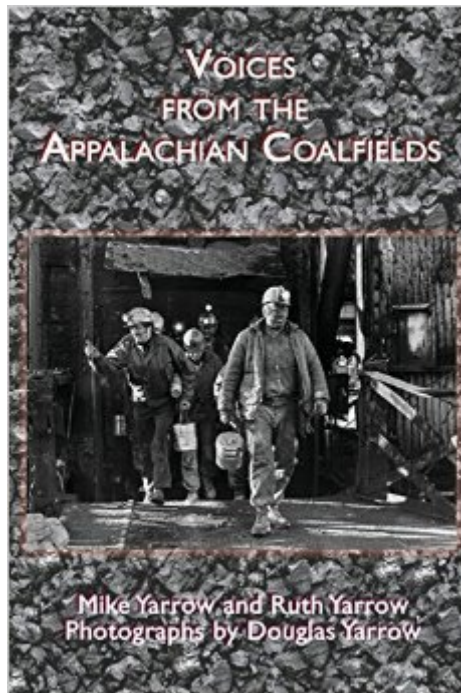


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# Voices From The Appalachian Coalfields (Appalachian Writing: Working Lives)



## Synopsis

Interview Poems by Mike and Ruth Yarrow, Photographs by Douglas Yarrow/.../Voices from the Appalachian Coalfields is a powerful, compelling collection. The â œfoundâ • poems of the miners and their spouses along with the photographs of mines and miners combine to bring its readers into the mining community, to feel the challenges of the work, mentally and physically, on the miners and their personal lives. The Yarrows have done a great service by compiling and editing these interviews into poems. These voices have a lot to say about mining life specifically, but also about work and love, and how we all try to balance those things in our daily lives. Their clarity and authenticity, their authority and earned wisdom, and above all, their passion, demand our attention.

~Jim Daniels, author of Eight Mile High: Stories and Apology to the Moon: Poems

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The voices of the miners and their families become truly audible in this amazing and moving compilation of their recorded conversations with the authors Mike and Ruth Yarrow. The format brings to life the many work problems and safety problems miners face on a daily basis. It becomes an important portrayal of actual corporate coal mining mismanagement. Additionally it is a poignant picture of the miners' everyday interactions of strong camaraderie, sexism, racism, poverty, and incredible strength of character under adversity. It is a wonderful, enlightening and important book.

Mike Yarrow, & more recently Ruth Yarrow, found poetry in these stories from the mines of West

Virginia. As a non-miner, I learned a bit about life underground in a coal mine...& about the human spirit. There are approx. 22 pp. of b&w photos. The following is an excerpt:Everybody knows it's dangerous....One of my jobs is to check the fire suppression system,...You got a little test button. You push it and it rings a bell, stops the belt, and water is supposed to come out of the sprays. Sometimes it works; sometimes it don't....The hoses get leaks in them and people come and turn them off....It's a hassle getting somebody to fix them things. And it will stay fixed for a week....I enjoy the work, a lot of the people there; we have a good time. There's a challenge to it. You are working where no man has been before. You can see evolution right there in front of you, this big fossil record of the earth. It's fascinating. ("Ken," p. 11-13)

It's a wonderful book, but there are a lot of disturbing things to read about. The dangers the miners face, the fears their spouses and other family members must deal with, the feast-or-famine economies, the deaths and injuries and long-term diseases associated with being a miner, the dreadful claustrophobia producing work conditions, the hazing and testing by co-workers especially to the female miners, the violence within families, so many difficulties. There are also highlights, fast friendships, trust and help by coworkers, strong family bonds, union gains, lots of words of wisdom. It's quite a kaleidoscope of experiences and opinions. The photographs by Doug Yarrow (Mike's brother) also add a dimension of understanding. Thanks to Ruth and Mike for giving us the opportunity to hear the miners' voices.

Wonderfully candid stories and photos describe what it was like to be a miner in the 80's. Politicians and big business versus social conditions: Has anything changed?

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