

## COBIS Poetry Competition 2019

### Category C: 15-19 Years Runner-Up

#### Death Chute

The miners left and the earth sleeps,  
But in the shadows, someone creeps –  
A heavily clad silhouette.  
Flamelight gleams and pirouettes,  
Then darkness falls again.

A damp blanket thrown over him,  
A wick in hand, his features grim,  
The man tiptoes on silent feet  
And stops where two dark tunnels meet.  
He looks and walks straight on.

Black chutes and shafts appear and pass;  
He searches for explosive gas.  
Rocks slide and fall and water drips;  
A prayer moves the withered lips.  
Eyes twinkle in the gloom.

The wick flares up. What to do now?  
Escape! Escape! Escape! But how?  
Yet luckily the pocket's small.  
It doesn't harm the man at all,  
So on again he goes.

Sweat trickles down his hidden face;  
It criss-crosses and twines like lace.  
The wick grows shorter, shorter still,  
But there is yet some time to kill.  
The hidden killer lurks.

The lit end of the wick dies down,  
Then relights, a dazzling crown  
Of bright red and blazing yellow –  
A monster, a mighty bellow.  
It buries and engulfs.

Last sand falls through the hourglass,  
Each little grain a second past,  
And if life could be read from books,  
A type that saddens, gladdens, hooks,  
The final page's been turned.

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