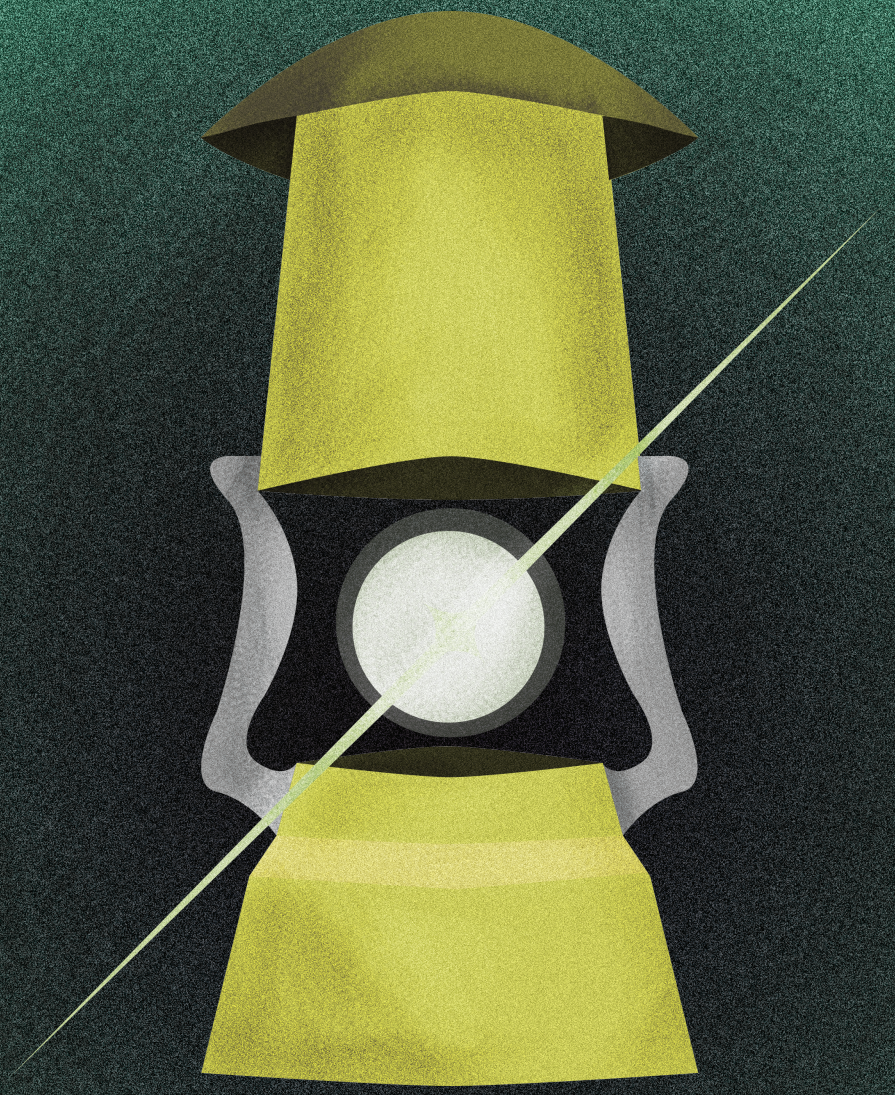
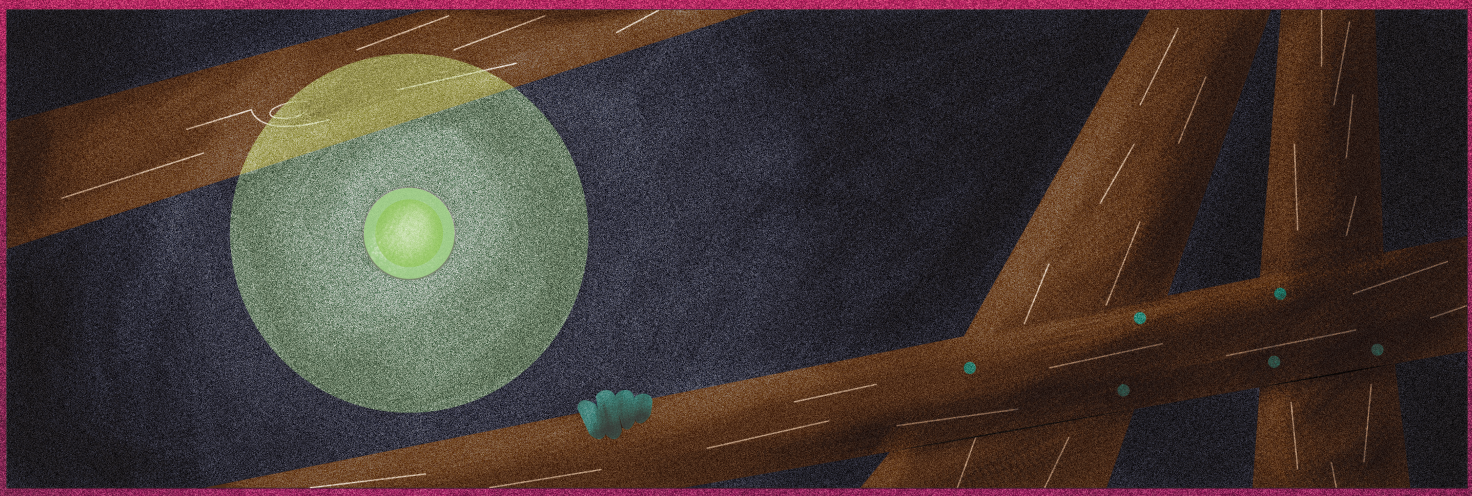


Ghost Mine



The mouth that gaped into the mine at last vomited un-life back out from itself. Her womb had carried them ceaselessly since the collapse of '37, and now they returned, half reformed, carrying their wounds upon their faces and their tools upon their hands.

The miners left through the boarded double-door at the front of the shaft entrance - they did not need to remove the planks from their spots. Clad in overalls, gloves, helmets and coal-dust, they walked away from the mine's disuse by light of a sickly green lantern held at the front of the formation.

At 2 they crossed over the yawning creek bridge, though she had collapsed in the flood years ago. Deer did not so much as look at the spectral pilgrims.

Men did, though. While the band had passed through the old town unnoticed, Mr. Burowski's early-morning smoke was interrupted by the cast of the lantern across the silent road. At first, he had thought the broken streetlamp had righted itself, until he saw a pickaxe carried on a bony shoulder under shrouded eye-sockets. Mrs. Ridlety bore witness to steel-toed boots traveling un-impeded through her sedan. No-one had screamed though. They simply followed – at least the brave ones.

Mothers and fathers covered children's eyes on porches in confusion, like they did when the Pinkerton's fired upon their grandfathers. Yet some still walked behind the miners while they went on their way toward the new coal offices built in the newest section of the town.

The miners shifted past the mural decorating the side of the office, depicting the events of that afternoon long ago, with ivy growing across their faces.

They broke the lock on the door using a pickaxe, and the one in front had left a coal-dusted handprint on the knob. Fewer living followed inside than had followed them to the gate outside. The spectral band seemed to wait for the living to bear witness to yet more, and as soon as several had collected into the lobby, they proceeded down the halls, led by the sickly green lantern.

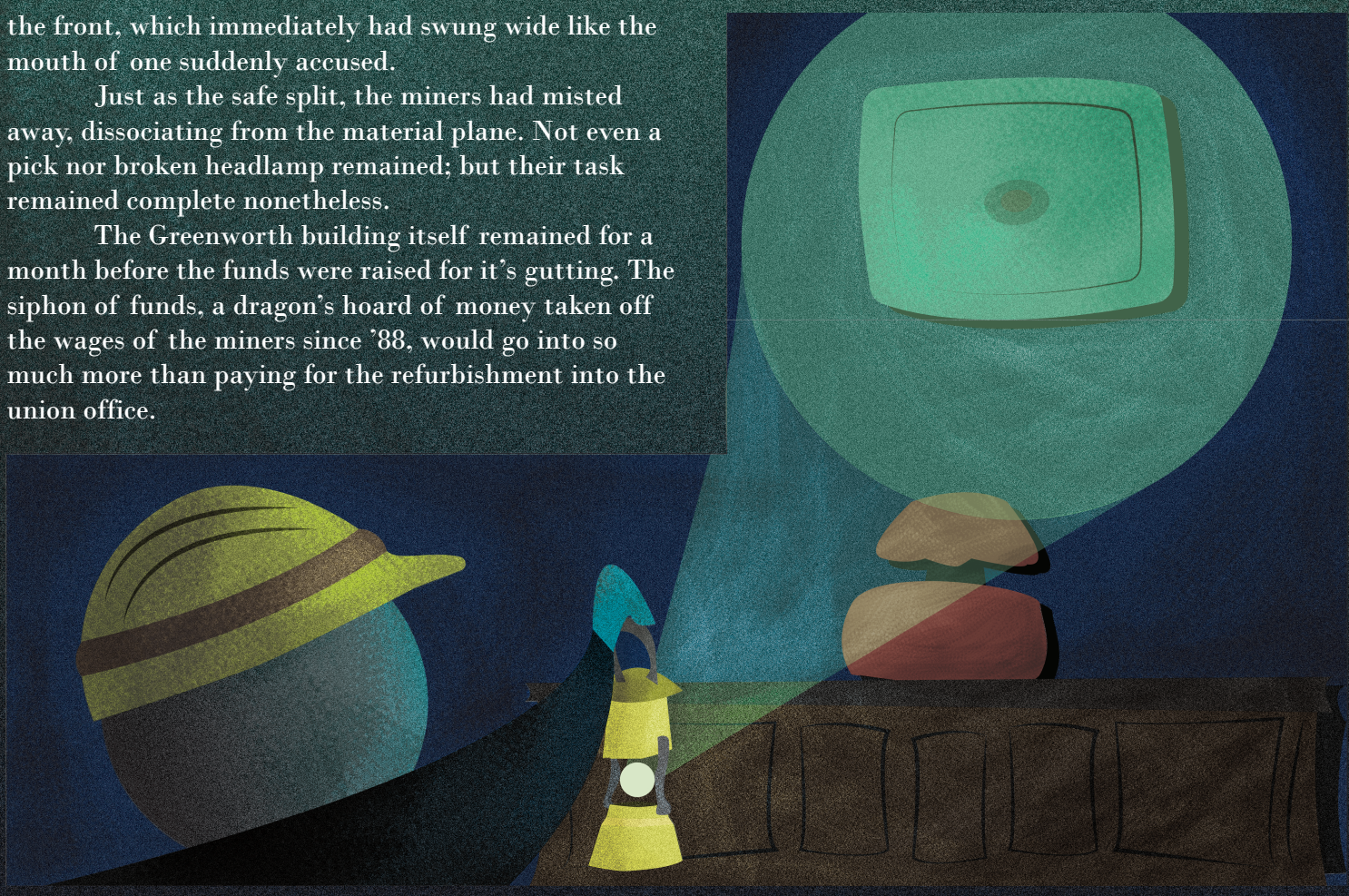
At last, the Greenworth's room – no one had

called it the Executives office even when it was located closer to the mine. It had always been Greenworth's room since '88, even if it was a different Greenworth. The safe planted deep into the back of the rear wall certainly had been from the old office as well.

At once, the one at the lead carrying the lantern raised it and spotlighted the metal door with the radial knob in the center. The surliest specter among them proceeded forward, with boots thudding across the office, the only sound coming from the miners in 2 decades.

The pick lifted high into the air, and the safe split itself as if in fear of the strike that awaited. A crack divided all but the solid door on

the front, which immediately had swung wide like the mouth of one suddenly accused.

Just as the safe split, the miners had misted away, dissociating from the material plane. Not even a pick nor broken headlamp remained; but their task remained complete nonetheless.

The Greenworth building itself remained for a month before the funds were raised for it's gutting. The siphon of funds, a dragon's hoard of money taken off the wages of the miners since '88, would go into so much more than paying for the refurbishment into the union office.