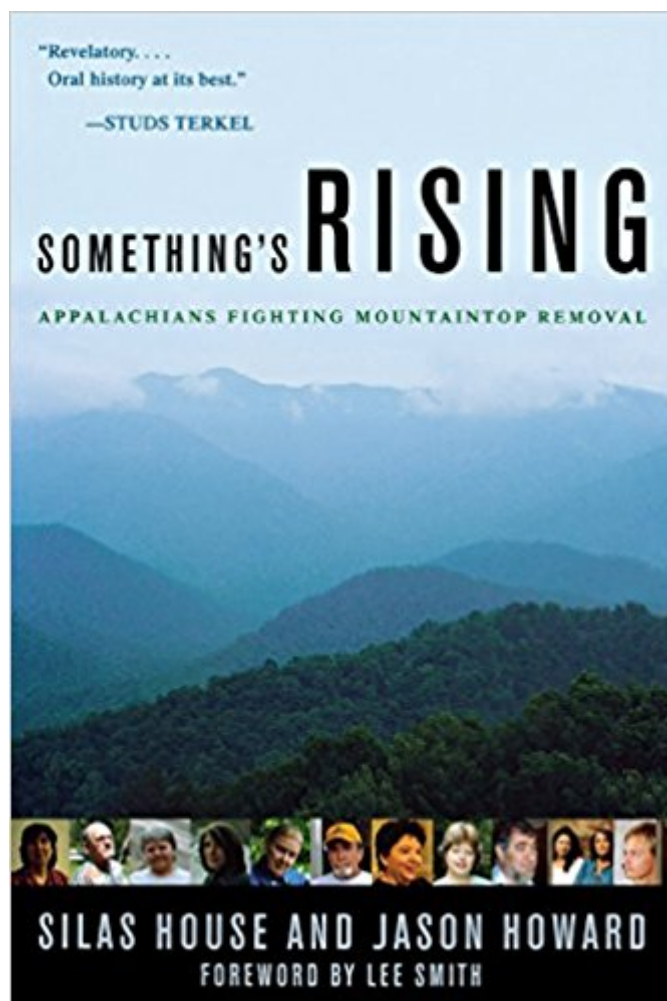


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# Something's Rising: Appalachians Fighting Mountaintop Removal



## Synopsis

Like an old-fashioned hymn sung in rounds, *Something's Rising* gives a stirring voice to the lives, culture, and determination of the people fighting the destructive practice of mountaintop removal in the coalfields of central Appalachia. Each person's story, unique and unfiltered, articulates the hardship of living in these majestic mountains amid the daily desecration of the land by the coal industry because of America's insistence on cheap energy. Developed as an alternative to strip mining, mountaintop removal mining consists of blasting away the tops of mountains, dumping waste into the valleys, and retrieving the exposed coal. This process buries streams, pollutes wells and waterways, and alters fragile ecologies in the region. The people who live, work, and raise families in central Appalachia face not only the physical destruction of their land but also the loss of their culture and health in a society dominated by the consequences of mountaintop removal. Included here are oral histories from Jean Ritchie, "the mother of folk," who doesn't let her eighty-six years slow down her fighting spirit; Judy Bonds, a tough-talking coal-miner's daughter; Kathy Mattea, the beloved country singer who believes cooperation is the key to winning the battle; Jack Spadaro, the heroic whistle-blower who has risked everything to share his insider knowledge of federal mining agencies; Larry Bush, who doesn't back down even when speeding coal trucks are used to intimidate him; Denise Giardina, a celebrated writer who ran for governor to bring attention to the issue; and many more. The book features both well-known activists and people rarely in the media. Each oral history is prefaced with a biographical essay that vividly establishes the interview settings and the subjects' connections to their region. Written and edited by native sons of the mountains, this compelling book captures a fever-pitch moment in the movement against mountaintop removal. Silas House and Jason Howard are experts on the history of resistance in Appalachia, the legacy of exploitation of the region's natural resources, and area's unique culture and landscape. This lyrical and informative text provides a critical perspective on a powerful industry. The cumulative effect of these stories is stunning and powerful. *Something's Rising* will long stand as a testament to the social and ecological consequences of energy at any cost and will be especially welcomed by readers of Appalachian studies, environmental science, and by all who value the mountain's majesty—our national heritage.

## Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: University Press of Kentucky; Reprint edition (January 5, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0813133831

ISBN-13: 978-0813133836

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #362,572 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #73 in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Engineering > Energy Production & Extraction > Mining #198 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology > Rural #1054 in Books > Science & Math > Environment > Environmentalism

## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Novelist House (Clay's Quilt) and Kentucky journalist Howard, both "children of Appalachia," decided to pick up where the national media have left off in their environmental obsession, illuminating the long-growing mining crisis in Central Appalachia. Twelve Appalachians-among them a college student, former union organizers, community activists and the octogenarian "mother of folk," Jean Ritchey-provide first-hand accounts of a disappearing way of life, a vital ecology in rapid decline, an industry that refuses to take responsibility for the devastation it causes (blowing the tops off mountains is only the latest, most destructive technique), and a nation too hooked on cheap energy to help. If nothing else, these oral histories will give readers a sense of what's at stake on a personal level. Student Nathan Hall calls mining the best job he ever had: "I met the most interesting characters of my life... the most hilarious, most good hearted." Says Judy Bond, lifelong resident of the leading coal-producing county in W.V., "The more coal we mine, the poorer we get." This important collection illuminates the ongoing betrayal of the American mining town. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

\*Starred Review\* Of all the destructive practices our energy-hungry society has invented, mountaintop-removal coal mining is the worst. After an entire mountain is blown up for a relatively thin seam of coal, topsoil, rocks, and trees are shoved into valleys, burying streams, killing plants and animals, and endangering people. Appalachians have tolerated this because they have always looked to King Coal for employment, but mountaintop removal actually eliminates jobs, and now the voices of the people of coal country are rising in protest. House and Howard vividly profile 12 remarkable Appalachians, many with generations of coal miners in their family tree,

who are bravely speaking out in defense of Appalachia's threatened landscape, wildlife, and human communities. In memory-laced, sometimes funny, sometimes harrowing oral histories, each activist shares tales of environmental awakenings and risky activism, among them folksinger Jean Ritchie; writer Denise Giardina; Carl Shoupe, a former deep miner; and whistle-blower Jack Spadaro. All 12 eco-heroes are mesmerizing, informative, and motivating as they articulate their moral and spiritual convictions, love for the land, and pride in Appalachian culture, while calling for responsible mining and respect and protection for all of life. --Donna Seaman --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

This book, a book about grass roots struggle against big coal and the devastation of the Appalachian mountains, is an important book. It is a book of beautifully written stories, full of imagery. I can see eighty-six-year-old Jean Ritchie's eyes in the rich descriptions and almost hear her sing. These descriptions make me want to sit at her feet, hear her voice and her wisdom. All the people in the book are portrayed as real people I'd like to meet, their stories so compelling, their voices sincere. But most of all, though, this book makes me heartsick for a way of life that has been, not lost, but stolen or sold, it inspires me to join this fight against the ravages of coal. Coal has done little for the people of Appalachia but make us poor, use our land and our people badly, and destroy the mountains with which we identify. Something's Rising is a cry for justice, for a way of life, a warning for the people of Appalachia and America to wake up before it is too late, before our mountains are gone, our streams polluted beyond reclamation. It should be required reading, not in every history, geography and science class in high school and college, but for every legislator in this country, every man or woman who was elected on claims he or she represents "the people."

This is a great work of oral history and environmental literature not from academics or outside observers but rather from the people on the receiving end of a raw deal. Coal is big money for capital but a curse for labor. Appalachia contains some of the poorest zip codes in the United States, and yet billions of dollars in natural resources have been harvested from these very counties. This short book attempts to explain some of the reasons why this is so. And this is nothing new. Ballad singer Addie Graham saw it first hand decades ago: "You don't know the wealth that went out of that country. It'd kill you to know of it. When the big companies came in they bought all the timber in that country, all through it . . . All that walnut timber, millions of dollars worth, went out of there. The wealth that was in that country, they never got nothing much for it; it went too cheap" What happened with timber and other natural resources happened with coal, and it continues

to this day. Wealth goes out and the people stay poor and despised, the butt of jokes in the 'liberal' media. The thirteen activists and artists portrayed here and the editors of this book attempt to redress this imbalance.

This book is very powerful and a true work from people like you and I who support preserving the environment and local culture. Very eye opening and inspirational to people all over who have experienced loss at the hands of greedy corporations.

I never read the entire book. I purchased it as a gift for my brother in Newfoundland but since you don't deliver to Canada I was forced to have it delivered to my home and then re-mail it to Canada.

This book changed my life forever. After reading it, I became an activist against the horrible practice of mountain top removal coal mining.

Excellent book with personal insights into a very polarized issue in Appalachia. It is good to hear the people speak relating personal stories often overlooked in the conflict between resource extraction from outside corporations and the health issues it causes.

Bought for Appalachian Studies class. I was not disappointed.

Something's Rising is one of the best books I have read about the genocide going on in Appalachia. This area has been used, abused and ignored by America and with the help of this book and others out there like it, America can face the awful truth and help right the wrong done to Appalachians.

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