



Exeter  
ALL PHOTOS BY RAY KLIMEK

MOUNTAINS OF BLACK COAL waste formed the landscape for many Wilkes alumni growing up in northeastern Pennsylvania. Such was the case for Ray Klimek '78, an English major who grew up in Exeter.

“There was a fairly large culm bank right behind my house which was the site of various activities from my childhood and adolescence — a combination of playground and classroom where history and fantasy intersected,” he recalls. That intersection became the subject of an artistic adventure that spanned the Atlantic Ocean. His photo collection “Black Deserts/Welsh Tips” explores the coal fields of both northeast Pennsylvania and South Wales.

## BLACK DESERTS

PHOTOGRAPHER COMBINES LITERARY AND VISUAL ARTS IN EXPLORING COALFIELDS



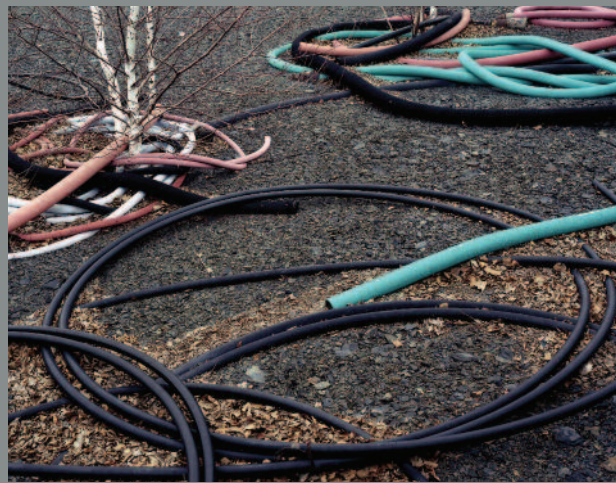
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## WELSH TIPS

Klimek merged his scholarly interest in literature and the visual arts by studying poet William Carlos Williams and then photography. “As a champion of the local, Williams had insisted that the stuff of poetry could be found in our own backyards,” says Klimek, now an assistant professor at Ohio University. “So I took that as a kind of inspiration and challenge.”

The project began in 2002 and culminated in two trips to Wales in 2005. Klimek credits poet Judson Evans '77, director of liberal arts at The Boston Conservatory, with telling him about the historical and geological connections between Pennsylvania and South Wales.



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Swoyersville