

SHARON THESEN / The Last Rescuer

(Chilean mine disaster rescue, October 2010)

From a distance, shaky and dark, he picks up a rock from the cave floor—
a cave floor clean as a stage, the rock an ornament of cave-life
—the walls scrubbed-looking, like Styrofoam edifices
on a Star Trek episode's dreary temporary planet—
he chooses the rock the way a diamond thief would choose
a last fat gem from a padded tray as loud sirens
bleet—
his desire to leave a shit, beyond joy that such a huge
haul had already been taken—the last
rescuer turns out the lights with theatrical echoing snaps
and admits himself to the darling pink capsule
and closes the door and stands in it
with his stolen rock as the capsule begins to sway and rise
and knock against the sides of its shaft
and lift him up, onto the long-disputed
clapping and cheering ancestral lands.