

Alien Women: Understanding Poetry

Answer the questions about the poem. The answers should help you understand the poetry.

In '21, my mother still herself at seventeen marched for **Alexander Howat** to bust the **scabs** who worked the mines in place of the fathers and husbands of the thousand women who marched with her carrying their men's **pit buckets filled with red pepper** to throw in the eyes of the poor scabs who cursed back in English to **their Slovene, German, French and Italian** over the State Militia's rife fire.

It's all **dim in her mind** now. She remembers only that she was hungry and frightened. She does not remember Judge Curran, who said, "it is a fact that there are **bolsheviki, communists, and anarchists** among the alien women of this community. It was the lawlessness of these women which made necessary **the stationing of the State Militia** in our county for two months to preserve law and order." She does not remember they were called an **Army of Amazons**.

1. Who was Alexander Howat?
2. What is a "scab"?
3. What were "pit buckets filled with red pepper" used for?
4. Where were the women from originally?
5. Why is it now "dim in her mind"?
6. What are bolshevikis, communists and anarchists?
7. Why is the State Militia stationed in the county?
8. Why do you think they were called the "Army of Amazons"?