

*The Miner* by Natsume Sōseki

- *The Miner* has been described as a precursor to the work of James Joyce and Samuel Beckett. In what way might this be true?
- Can *The Miner* be described as a work of social realism?
- How did the introduction and afterword add to your experience of reading the book?
- 'Far from being an experimental oddity — all of Sōseki's novels are experimental — *The Miner* is actually a work central to Sōseki's evolving analysis of what "hell" in a modern context means.' Do you agree with this assessment by author Damian Flanagan in the *Japan Times*?
- Haruki Murakami says *The Miner* is one of his favourite Sōseki novels, and two of his characters discuss the novel in *Kafka on the Shore*. Do you see any similarities in style or themes between the two authors?
- 'There is no such thing as character.' To what extent is this statement borne out in the novel?
- The last line of the book reads: 'And every bit of it is true, which you can tell from the fact that this book never did turn into a novel.' Is *The Miner* a novel?