

“Mindlessly Digging”

By Ayla McPherron

A mother of three young children wails in pain as she holds the cold, boney body of her second born child. She cannot see his face, but she feels an overwhelming motherly instinct wash over her as she clenches his thin arms and rocks back and forth. Normally, as humans, tears would be running down our faces. If she could, she would be crying a waterfall, but her tears dry up and sizzle the moment they leave her tear ducts. Sand rests over Montana like a duvet cover. The heat has become too much for us to bear, so we began to dig many years ago. Eventually we forgot what we were looking for. Perhaps the desperation to adapt to the quickly changing environment is what made us pitiful mole-like creatures. Our eyes are small and beedie, but our hands are useful for scooping out rocks and dirt effectively. But honestly, I believe that keeping mankind together has taken so much effort, we began to loosen our grip on humanity. So here we are, several feet underground, mindlessly digging holes until our nails have eroded away into bloody nubs. It takes too much effort to formulate a thought. Free will seems more difficult than reversing the damage we have already caused many years ago. This mother, a woman with glassy eyes and a prominent spine sticking out from her back, cannot understand her own grief. Her children gather around her. They try making calming noises in an attempt to console their devastated mother. However, she doesn't budge. Instead she just looks down at her lifeless child's body. They have been digging, digging, and digging for a very long time. Everyone down here has lost their concept of time. We eat what we can when we feel hunger and we rest on the cool rocks when we feel exhausted. People die all the time. One day someone is there, another day they are not. But, we have lost that connection we had with others. We have lost that feeling of grief. This feeling was new to her. A mother who has been mindlessly digging with her bare fingers for all of her life cannot understand why she feels this way. A feeling of loss that has never been taught and never been learned is now plainly in front of her. Even though eyesight has been lost for all of her life, she feels it and accepts it.