

The Sun in Your Eyes

By Caitlin Adams

The tunnel has collapsed.

My arm felt strange. A sensation weakening my bicep. Panic and confusion are weaving through my sleep drenched head. I gasp. She hears nothing. She. Rada? Sleeping on my arm. I look across my pillow at her. She is so peaceful. Panic. *Panic*. My arm. I try to slide my arm gently from under her head, but I am too clumsy. She stirs.

“Everything okay?” she whispers, eyes half open.

“Fine.” I mumble a little too harshly and slide out from under her.

The panic recedes as I get out of bed and head to the cramped washroom. I sit on the toilet in relief and exhaustion. I’m so tired. Why am I awake? It’s not just my arm. A memory pushes through the thought. All I can think of is how they would be breaking through. Maybe even right now. The tunnel will be complete.

For months I’ve worked on the newest Dust Bowl project. The storm whose origins are lost to unlearned people like me. A storm that has raged for decades now and it seems like it will never end. A Dust Titan someone once said. Fitting, I think, remembering some theory that some brain somewhere made; if we reach the Eye, they can solve the problem and kill the Titan. The project rolls through my mind again. No one has ever cleared the storm on the surface. We need to go under it. It’s safe. I’ve dug most of the tunnel myself.

I finish and shuffle back to the bedroom and look at the body in my bed, what is her name? Is it Rada? Raina? Rash? No Rada. Rada has rolled to her side. I imagine her back pressing against me.

A flash from the side table catches my eye. A synchronized blue flash. The Foreman's pattern. Blip. Blip. Blip. I sit on the edge of bed and pick up my Keep, the small computer fitting snugly into my hand. My thumb brushes raised bumps and I feel the message travel through my hand, up my arm and into my mind.

The tunnel has collapsed.

I brush the Keep again.

The tunnel has collapsed.

I turn to Rada, her Keep is also flashing. I reach out to shake her awake, but stop. Instead, I brush my fingers down her back. My cold fingers. She shivers and pulls the blanket closer to her body. I hold my index finger down on my Keep and focus on the Foreman. The location comes to me.

Eastern garage.

I feel dread in my stomach like I know something. I don't know anything, though. I dress. I know now that the first message woke me and my arm kept me awake. I wear my reflective stripped labourer's overalls. I toss my gloves into my helmet and tuck that under my arm. I leave Rada sleeping in my bed.