

The Arch

By Moira Baird

Many years ago the good earth spawned a monumental rock by the shore. Day and night the tide moved and washed around it's base, one day bashing it, caressing it the next, pounding it another. Tiny fragments of rock crumbled exposing a weakness, a keyhole, through which a dot of light projected onto it's shadow.

The turquoise sea found the key to the lock and pushed and poked one drop, two drops, more drops rubbing and twisting its way through the rock, opening to the size of a door. The tides continued to push the door wider each day, returning particles to the earth with each swing. Sand scoured around the space, munching into the fragile rock.

And then the rock by the shore was no longer. It became an arch. A narrow mass hunched over the sea. Rough yet polished, the arch textured into a natural beauty.

Man came, in a fraction of time, to clamber over, seeking thrills. At first gentle, chalked hands grasped and fingered. Tight boots toed pencil lines and rock ripples.

Later metal claws were rammed into small cracks to be tugged, twisted and pulled. Wet ropes snagged the surface, whipped and lashed beneath the arch.

At its feet oil covered bags and plastic bottles hooked and strangled. Orange peel and condoms swilled the rising turquoise waters into a murky grey slime.

Man wanted more.

Metal bits shook and penetrated the ancient walls. Shiny metal chiselled, dull bolts hammered into the underbelly above the swirling rubbish.

And still the swelling tide hungrily took it's share.

The arch fought back, discarding dead flesh and throwing chunks at the men. The sea grew higher and the sun burned hotter.

And man never returned.

But the feast continued, the surf gnawed through the arch until it crumbled to it's knees, breaking its spine before returning to the settling sea.