

# Smoking Giants

*by* Shawn Misener

There's smoke coming out of the cave. People gawk and flutter by me on the pier, safe from harm. Agitated voices agitating me. Raising up the ghosts of frightened chickens.

"Can you see into it?" a man asks behind me.

"Too dark." I begin, turning, but he's not there anymore. I wonder if he was ever there at all.

It started out thin and directed, as if maybe a giant crouched with his giant-sized cigarette. Now it's more. A crowd of giants, smoking the place out.

The cackling is gone from the pier. I watch them, an amoeba of humans, moving away from the cave. They leave a languorous trail on the beach. I think they've always been together, talking amongst themselves about whatever is happening around them. A part of me wishes they'd walk into the cave and disturb whatever is burning it from the inside out.

I find a cigarette in the breast pocket of my shirt. I haven't smoked in months, or years even. Maybe if I hold it up to mouth of the cave it'll light. It's only perception that the pier where I stand is hundreds of yards from the fire. The fire I can't see. The fire I can't see getting bigger, creating more and more smoke.

I slip the butt end in my mouth and line up the tip to the cave. Inhale. I can't hear the people anymore. For now it's just the cave and the pier. And me, smoking again.

