The Death of a Miner
By Paula Cizmar

Mary Alice

It’s what I really want to do, Jack. I can’t just sit and watch. All my life…I watched. I watched. I watched my daddy until he finally couldn’t take it any more and-

[JACK: I don’t know. I don’t know. MARY ALICE: Jack, wait! No. Listen.] Listen, I gotta do this. I gotta…Let me tell you. You see, one day my brother and about ten of the boys from his class went out explorin’ in the caverns and one day, ‘bout a mile from where we were livin’. Jack. Listen. They were in there a few hours—guess they wanted to go way back into the cave to see where it would take them. There was a flash thunderstorm and it started to flood. Well, they got divers down there…and TV cameras came from the city…and it kept rainin’ off and on. My mama dragged my daddy out to the cave…and all the rest of us. We all sat there, with the other families, sat there, lined up on the hillside, lookin’ down into the flooded pit, the TV cameras takin’ our pictures…we sat there…watchin’…waitin’…watchin’…the divers tryin to work their way through the water and up into the cavern…watchin’…and everytime they came back with’…My mama just sat there. Sat there. And then she started…couldn’t help herself, I know, but she started with that look…accusin’ my daddy with her eyes. If we didn’t have to live in this place, none of this woulda happened…that’s what that look said…this is your fault…I wish it was you in that cave and not—look at you…can’t do nothin’…can’t even get my boy outa that cave……it was just flashin’ outa her eyes. Finally, my daddy couldn’t take it anymore.

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