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Excavation

John Sterling Harris

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Excavation

The little boy kneels
At the sun dried mound of soil
Left from the digging of a trench.
He excavates roads to the summit
For his toy trucks,
Digging with a small shovel
Whittled from a shingle.
But frustrated by the dryness of the dirt—
Too powdery to pack into walls
Or hold the bank of a dugway
Or make a proper tunnel—
Like the good damp dirt down deep—
He scrapes away the surface
Repeating the desert child's litany:
Dry dirt you go away. Wet dirt you come here.
Dry dirt you go away. Wet dirt you come here.

—John Sterling Harris