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# Digging

John Kinsella

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## DIGGING

Ground baked so hard you can only scrape  
and pick at it, occasionally shattering  
into sheets and chips around a rocky protrusion.  
It is dirt around stone. Prize and quarry.

The trees around the blank space you aim  
to plant, say something about Rousseau  
as you turn over states of nature,  
the inherent goodness of anti-social  
behaviors absurd in the heat. Filling gaps.

Digging in dryness with roots of a transplant  
seedling singed like hair, though living hairs  
and not the dead white hairs of your own head,  
sweat-slicked under the hat, a failure to acclimatize,  
catch the little moisture that comes with evening.

Digging against the grain of the hill, feet  
slipping as you struggle to grip—mountaineer—  
to reach finally deeper into the earth  
than the length of the seedling's root system.

To breach a tunnel, a vein through which white ants  
migrate to their next meal, next tree with a gray  
dead heart, to take community lock stock and barrel,  
damaged by air and light which you quickly  
cover them against, though curious

to know if the queen might move through  
that small aperture, or if she transmigrates.  
Filling the digging in around the roots, tilted  
away from the white ants' conduit, who might

just taste to see if the cellular intrusion  
so nearby is living or dead, how the cellulose  
might digest, pass through their body  
back into the rocky soil. The dirt stays under  
my fingernails. There's not enough water  
to clean it away.