



## Stories of Stuff



**Going, Going, Gone**  
**by Liz Berg**  
**From a tale told by Margaret**

She never liked the Staffordshire King Charles spaniel flatbacks, standing like sentinels on the mantelpiece. Something in their white stare unnerved her. So when her parents sold their house in Minions, she was surprised to find herself asking, “Where are the dogs?”

“We thought you hated them so we took them up in the barrow to a mineshaft and tipped them in.”

She couldn’t help herself. She ran up the lane to the moor. Her feet sank into dank peat, forcing her to her knees.

“I’m sorry, dogs, I wanted you. Truly I did,” she wept.

The wind whipped around the moor. Grasses shivered. Cows huddled, protecting each other—ponies whinnied as they dashed away. Far beneath, in the damp heat of the earth, something stirred.

Whispers filled the cavern. Soon disused galleries were filled with knocking, tapping, and chiming. Joy of being needed once more suffused the detritus. Broken ladders, copper bedpans, and burnt saucepans shimmied out of the way as every tiny speck gathered.

Water dripped down the cragged walls, heating as the china reconstituted. Steam roiled in the cavern creating a thermal cloud.

She was lying on the ground when it began to shake. The shaking intensified; a shaft of steam shot out into the atmosphere.

# THE WRITERS' BLOCK

To her astonishment, she saw the Staffordshire dogs, cushioned by the steam, coming to land beside her. She picked them up and inspected them carefully. They were her parents' dogs, undamaged. She clutched them and thanked whichever gods had returned them to her.

Underground, the cavern settled. Proper job.

She wrapped them in tissue paper, laying them carefully on the back seat of her car. They would fetch a pretty penny at auction.

*Story told by Margaret at the Crafty Toasty Club at The Liskerret Centre*