

Women Who Fell to Earth:

An Artist's Story

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Subject: Writing to the music of Mark Leonard's "Sheer Horizon", the Emerald Inventor tries his hand at story telling to establish the background tale for his role playing game. Good games have stories to tell, and his is about four aliens from the Flower Planet.

Statistics: 2580 Words. 11490 Characters. 7 Pages. os000607 Women Who Fell to Earth. ©2000 Bill Ritchie.

The Visitation

One day, 30,000 years ago, a woman fell to earth. Not in the way this may sound-- not a fast, life threatening fall, but slowly and silently she fell, brought here in a huge craft from the Flower planet. Her craft came down slowly and settled on the water of the sea we know today as *The Mediterranean*.

She swam out of the craft as it sank from her sight. She could see land in the distance, but it was far away. She would have sunk, too, had it not been for a dolphin that had come to see what made the disturbance in the water. The dolphin saw the woman and knew she was in danger.

To the amazement of both the sea creature and the woman, they could speak to each other. His name was Sean. When he asked her where she had come from, she said, "We call our home the Flower Planet." And the dolphin said, "Then you are Little Flower, here on this Earth."

He saved the alien woman that day, and carried her to the beach where she walked through the shallow water to a place among the boulders, high above the water's edge and near the grasses. She felt strange, and lay herself down between two large white boulders and fell into a deep sleep.

The Ocean in Winter

For days and weeks she lay there in a kind suspended state between life and death. When the dolphin had brought her to shore, it was autumn. She awoke in the winter. The nights were long. Day followed night and night followed day as she adjusted to the time on this strange planet, this planet Earth.

Still as stone, she scanned the horizon in the day, hoping to see the crafts of her sisters and brothers. But there was nothing to see except the passing clouds. Once in awhile she thought she heard a familiar sound, voices in the distance, but she could not see what made the sounds. She was as still as a stone.

At night, high above her, she saw lights. Every twenty-eight nights, lights twinkled above. They were not stars. They appeared one at a time, and moved to and fro, as if to trace the top of the high cliff. But every morning, there was nothing.

As winter changed into spring, she lay, still on the beach. Her time was different than that of the ones who lived on Earth. She could move through time the way we might move from one room to another. So, she lay on the beach a hundred days—from the autumn, when she fell to Earth, and all through the winter.

Descending Water

One day she rose and walked toward the cliff. As she got closer, she discovered that a long white line that seemed to rise from the sea was actually a stream of water falling down to the sea at the foot of the cliff. The water fell hundreds of feet from somewhere at the sheer wall's edge, high above.

She walked closer and closer. She wound her way through, around and over the boulders that covered the beach until she could hear the falling water over the sound of the waves from the sea, breaking against the shore.

When she got close to the falls, she marveled at the beauty of the white stream hurtling into the deep, dark green water. Where the waters met, the spray and foam and waves were creating a kind of dance. Little Flowers found herself moving with it in a kind of slow rhythm, too. Then she recalled a vivid image of their Prince—at home on the Flower Planet—how they danced on a beach like this, so long ago.

Little Flowers

A shout came from the sea—“Little Flowers! Little Flowers!” It was the dolphin, Sean. He had come back! She felt a surge of joy in her chest and his chirping trills and singing filled the distance between them and echoed from the rocky cliff. The sound of falling water was like a continuous refrain, and then the dolphin seemed to hear it, too.

She danced to his singing, faster and faster. He cavorted around the water, jumping high, diving, and dancing on his tail! She jumped and clapped her hands with joy, so glad she was to see him. She sang back to him, “Sean! You’ve come again! I am so happy!”

“I have something to show you,” he trilled, “Little Flowers, come with me!” Without a pause, and as if this were part of her dance, in to the blue sea she dove. She sliced into the water, unafraid. Their dance continued awhile, as she treaded water and laughed at his clowning dance and his flipping tail.

Then underwater, and his voice called out to her again and again, “Little Flower, Little Flower!”

Sean’s Song

“I have something to show you,” he repeated, but his sound was more serious, as though something important was bothering him. He gently swam under her and she mounted his back, holding his strong dorsal fin. He spoke slowly this time. “Little Flowers, there are more like you . . .”

At this she nearly fainted. Her sisters! Sean sensed her emotions rising but he went on to say, “Not like you—they are of a different hue, a different shade of you. Their skin is like yours, thin and smooth. Their hair is long and dark, but their skin is pale, like the color of shells, like the color of my belly.”

Little Flowers’ sisters were dark-skinned, like her.

Sean offered, “Let me take you to see.”

“Yes,” she said.

Night Creation

“Take a deep breath, Little Flowers, for we have far, far down to go!” She did as he told her, filled her lungs and then he arched his back, her leaning forward and her cheek pressed hard against his smooth gray skin. Hard, hard she held him with both hands and, with her heels, she gripped his sides.

“We are going down,” Sean said, “Deep down where the others, like you, are now dancing to their spirits.” She could understand, but said nothing. How far down he went! Now it was a dark as night, no longer could she see the light from above. She began to fear the depth and darkness, the pressure building on her ears.

As dark as the darkest night in space but there were no stars, only nothingness, and she felt increasing pressure on her from all sides. She felt something brush her side, then her back. Her lungs ached, screaming for air. She felt Sean’s back arch slightly and suddenly she was in air. Yet they were not above the sea, it was still black.

“Catch a breath, Little Flowers,” the dolphin said. She took several.

“Where are we?” she asked the dolphin.

“I am taking you to see those who are like you,” he said. “Deep breath now, deep breath, Little Flowers. We haven’t far to go.” But it did seem like a long, long way as again, they were underwater.

She kept her eyes closed, unconsciously, the darkness so black that to open her eyes was useless. Again, she felt something slip past her shoulders and she realized it was sea plants. Though her lungs still wanted air, she felt more relaxed, her trust in Sean growing; but soon she was becoming desperate as her lungs ached.

Theme from KLMA

“Now jump off my back, jump, jump Little Flowers,” Sean urged her. She did, kicking off Sean’s back in a shower of water like a geyser, and she came down again, her feet touched solid stone. She looked around, gasping for air.

What she saw was horrible. Torches, firelight, smoke filled the acrid air. Then there were screams, and fists beating at her, and there, almost within an arms length, a woman, blood flowing from a gash in her shoulder, in glistening red streams down her arm and onto the wet stones where she lay next to the pool where Little Flowers had burst on the scene.

And women, pale-skinned and wildly wailing and pointing at her, making unintelligible sounds that were a chaotic mixture of screams, threats and words she could not grasp.

They rushed at her, slapping at her, motioning as if to demand, “Go Away!” then, regrouping and frightened, they rushed back to the dying woman, turn to look at Little Flowers and again ran at her.

Out of the confusion Little Flowers saw something and she understood, because a few feet away from the woman there lay a huge animal, black as the night she had just escaped. Still and dead, the dead creature’s deep-set eyes stared blankly at Little Flowers. Felled by the women, blood was running from a horrid, crushed patch in its skull and from its nose, seeping into fissures in the stones where lay.

Little Flowers half crawled, half dragged herself toward the woman, despite their rising protests. The noise subsided.

Moku

Little Flowers knew the woman would die unless she could stop the bleeding from her arm. Without hesitating,, she touched the place. The other women gasped and moved closer, unsure whether to stop her or let her go on with her action. Now Little Flowers pressed the wound, pulled a piece of the old one’s thong from around her waist and wrapped it expertly around the wounded’s arm.

Now understanding, one of the other women handed her a rough fabric, and Little Flowers pressed it hard against the wound. Slowly, calm seem to be returning. The old one was breathing regularly now but weakly, and her eyes were closed.

A Tale of Three Tall Trees

High above, above the ground and this cliff that hid the underground cave, three tall trees swayed in the wind, unaware of the drama of life and death that was taking place below. There had been a cave bear earlier that day, feeding on berries that grew on bushes under those trees. The bear wandered to the opening in the rocks, sniffing at the scent of the people—the women—who used it as a passageway to their secret chamber below.

Cave bears, too, used these caves.

Little Flowers knew, from her many days of watching them from the beach below, these tall trees were like sentinels. She knew she was now somewhere deep inside the stone cliff, in an underground grotto, accessible through the underwater tunnel that Sean, the dolphin, knew about.

She could not have known about the cave bears, nor could she have known that the lights she had seen were torches carried by the women from the camp as they celebrated their monthly rituals. Here, in this cave, were the lights’ sources.

They’re Gone

The trees were high above and far away. Little Flowers’ sisters and brothers were far flung, unaware of what was happening. They were somewhere else, scattered on this planet. thought of them,

Looking at the women surrounding her and also the old one, Little Flowers wondered if her family was having anything like this happening to them. The group was quieter now. *I need water*, Little Flowers was thinking. *I need water to save this one.*

If she dies, I will die, too. All the while, Sean had been waiting, silent, barely moving and unnoticed in the pool.

The Nightmare

She watched the old woman's face. Then the old one opened her eyes, and looked directly into Little Flowers' eyes and her face wincing with her pain. She closed her eyes again, muttering, chanting in a language which, to Little Flowers' surprise, she and Sean understood. Again and again old one said it, her eyes clinched tight with pain and terror. Her words meant *nightmare*.

The dolphin said to her in their common language, "No, not a nightmare, not a nightmare, old one. It is Little Flowers, come from afar."

"Water!" said, Little Flowers, "ask for clean water." And Sean understood.

The Sheer Horizon

The dolphin told the old one, who understood, "Water, get them to bring water," and the old one, opening her eyes again, spoke those words. Three of the women turned quickly and returned with a huge brown gourd. It was heavy, filled with fresh water. Little Flowers took some water in her hand and dabbed at the wound.

The old one would live. The wound was deep, and it would take a long time to heal. The old one, although weak and pained, told the women to get her bag. When they brought it, and opened it for her, Little Flowers was surprised to see that it contained many kinds of dried leaves and packs of roots, knotted together. Surprised also that she knew them. These were medicine.

The Gift

Days passed. The women came and went by way of the secret route to their camp. The old one stayed, made comfortable on a dry bed of plant leaves and thick furs. She grew strong rapidly, and spoke to Little Flowers in the same language as Sean, the dolphin. But as the days went by, the old one was pleased to find that Little Flowers could learn her human language extremely rapidly.

Within a few days Little Flowers could speak with the other women. They told her how this cavern was their secret place, where they came to sing, dance, and paint. Above, their men kept their distance because they were afraid to interfere.

It was very late one night and the old one and Little Flowers were alone. Though tired, the old one had something important on her mind. Speaking softly she asked Little Flowers to come close. As the dark alien drew near, the old one took from around her neck a knotted leather strand holding a small bag, its opening wound tightly by a thong.

"It is tied so that only a wise old woman like me can open it," she said. "You do not appear to be old, but I believe you are one of the ancient ones. I have known such an ancient one," she said after awhile. "Open it," she said to Little Flowers, "This is a gift for you. I believe these . . ." and she handed the bag to her. She spoke now with strength and conviction, "I *know* that these belong to you."

Little Flowers untied the thong with ease as the old one watched, her small head nodding slowly and following the dexterous movement of Little Flowers' fingers as she pulled the bag open. The leather resisted, as if glued together. It was stiff. It had not been opened for a long time. Whatever was in it was heavy, and rattled together like beach stones.

She turned the bag, and four stones fell out. They were the Prince's stones! As the old one watched, Little Flowers cried, holding the Sisters' stones in the bowl of her hands. She was unable to stop crying, her deep, gasps and tears streamed from her clinched eyes and she buried her face in her hands against the precious stones from the beaches of Fleura, the Flower Planet.

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About the Author: Bill H. Ritchie, Jr. is an Itinerate Professor of Art in Seattle. He taught 19 years at the UW as a professor of art, traditional printmaking and media arts. Resigning at 43 to start his own learning, research and production company, he began work on *Emeralda: Games for the Gifts of Life* in 1992, a game featuring an imaginary place accessible by his computer. He's immersed himself in an artist's virtual Promised Land for the age of digital reproduction.

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION 0006071652

The above STORY, titled THE VISITATION, DRAFT 01 was started in the year 2000, 6th month, 7th day at 1459PDT, _____ GMT by Bill H. Ritchie, Jr and this draft completed and printed at 1652PDT by Bill H. Ritchie, Jr., with a rough draft sent to MARK LEONARD, composer of the audiotape SHEER HORIZON that the writer used for inspiration to write the text.
