

Text by Alina Woods after Do Ho Suh's "Fallen Star"

The Wish Within Fallen Star

*Blue, luminous skin. Pale, weightless hair. Eyes of crystals. Formless and formidable.
Living but inhuman. Beautiful but unseen.*

*The clouds are their homes. Lives of uncertainty as storms come and go. Buoyant beings
meant to form and reform. They live an eternal life of watching. The world below them rises and
falls.*

*They laugh and lilt, dance and prance, jump and swirl. They are stormriders and sun
baskers and star gazers. They are the watchers and peacekeepers between here and there.*

*One watcher watches for too long and begins to long. She sees the stability of Earth and
its people, their structures, their green vegetation, and she wonders. She wonders what it's like to
be stuck in a singular form. She wonders what it's like to live in their little structures. She wants
to become a part of all the things she has only ever been able to watch. She wishes to be seen so
she does what watchers do not do. She leaves the sky and begins to fall...*

Ava walks out of Geisel Library and eagerly leaves the tension and stress of midterm week behind her. The cool October air and early darkness of the changing season greet her as she approaches the Snake Path. The Snake Path is a long winding sculpture of a snake that functions as a path down the side of a hill and connects the library to the Warren Mall. Ava soaks in the greenery and pauses in the middle of the path. She gazes up at the night sky with its twinkling stars and nearly full moon.

The stars actually seem brighter than usual - well one star in particular. Ava tries blinking a few times and accepts that the star may just be Venus. With that being decided, Ava starts to look away from the bright star but the glow of it intensifies. She blinks quickly but it shines brighter still. Ava rubs her eyes, shakes her head a little, and squints to refocus. It dawns on Ava that the star isn't just getting brighter but it's getting closer.

Ava wants to call it a shooting star but realizes it isn't even shooting across the sky. It's coming right at her. This realization makes her heart start pounding and her eyes widen to saucers as she remains frozen in shock. She wishes she paid more attention in her astronomy class because she is only two seconds away from running around and screaming, "The sky is falling!" From her memory of her astronomy education, she's only 85% sure that this phenomenon is an impossible occurrence. All of her senses and instincts have aligned on the bright and fiery projectile that is, in fact, falling out of the sky directly above her.

The heat of the star warming her skin makes the world snap back into focus for her, and she realizes she is still standing on the rounded, tiled Snake Path. The surface is just slick enough that when she turns to run, her feet slip out from under her. Down, down, down she slides until she hits the dirt patch at the bottom of the curve beside the tail of the snake sculpture. She shrieks as her feet leave the ground but her abrupt landing knocks the wind out of her and silences the scream. Now lying flat on her back, she raises her arms to cover her face as the growing heat suddenly becomes painfully hot.

There's a loud crash, a groan, a creak, and then... nothing.

Ava lowers her arms to find a large cloud of smoke and dust above the Jacobs School of Engineering building. She stands and dusts herself off with a bewildered huff. She looks around to find no signs of damage. No craters and no fires. She almost thought she had hallucinated the

whole thing but then as the smoke begins to clear, she notices an odd shape atop the engineering building.

A question overwhelms her: if that thing fell from the sky, shouldn't it have burned up in the atmosphere or obliterated the building and maybe the entire school?

She really should've paid more attention in her astronomy class.

The oddly shaped silhouette seems to be perched on the corner of the building and with the dissipation of the smoke she can see clearly that the shape is incontestably a house. A rectangular box with a triangle on top; a house fell from the sky. She was starting to think that this is not a situation at all answerable by astronomy.

Her gut tells her that some things may be better left unknown but curiosity, and perhaps the adrenaline of nearly being burnt to a crisp, leaves her unable to resist the need to get a closer look. With steadier feet than pre-house-landing, she takes off across Warren Mall and enters the engineering building. By the time she reaches the roof, the smoke is gone, the nearly full moon shines brilliantly, and the unfallen stars twinkle. At the sight before her, she gasps and wonders if magic is real. The rooftop is covered in greenery of various plants: patches of succulents, bushes with and without flowers of purple or yellow, and thick, luscious grass. A brick path curves through the leafy garden. The path is lined with mini grassy fields as it approaches the white door of a little blue house. The house is simple with white trim, a charcoal black roof, and a brick chimney. There's a window on either side of the door and a miniscule window above it. Only a few feet of the house rests on the roof and the remainder juts out and into the open air.

Ava walks up the path and when she is almost within arms length, the front door opens and a light illuminates the inside of the house.

A voice that is childlike and breathy reverberates in the space around her, “*come, come, come in.*” She couldn’t tell which direction the voice came from. It felt as if she was in a room with speakers lining every wall.

In her haste to get away and confusion as to which way is away, Ava falls ungracefully to the ground for the second time that night. She moves her head wildly to scan the rooftop. She finally says, “Who’s there?”

“Who? Who? You. You there, come here. Come see. Come see.”

Ava stands up again, albeit much slower this time. “Am I dead?”

The voice laughs, “*Dead? Not dead. Here! So see! Come, come, come in.*”

She takes a deep breath and assesses the peculiar situation. Her best guess is that she fell asleep before she ever left Geisel and her lack of sleep, high intake of caffeine, and poor nourishment has culminated in the weirdest dream imaginable. She would tell her roommates all about it in the morning and lay off the caffeine going forward. So, she could find no harm in appeasing the funny sounding voice.

Ava shrugs and steps into the tiny blue house.

The watcher of the sky fell. Down, down, down she went and with a crash, groan, and creak she settled. She made the top of a tall structure her home. The form she took was one of the many little versions of the structure that occupied Earth’s surface. She made sure part of herself hung over the edge of the structure so that she could still feel the air surrounding her. It brought her pleasure to be a part of Earth and still feel the similar airiness of her old home.

The watcher extended herself further into little bits of greenery and brick, imitating other Earthen homes she had seen. She couldn't wait to be the one who is seen. Her little structure remained empty because she could only ever watch from above. Interiors were unknown. She waited until an Earth being saw her. She befriended the Earth being and once it was inside of her little structure, she laughed at the feeling of it and searched for the words to convince the being to help her form the proper interior. It taught her many new words and objects. Through trial and error, she formed a fireplace, a sofa, several kinds of chairs, a rug, tables, bookcases, and desks. She even formed lamps so Earth beings could see her better at night. The watcher formed a home to be shown.

Blue exterior and pale interior. Dark roof and crystal clear windows. Brick path through purple, yellow, and green. No longer meant to watch and only meant to be seen.