

Excerpt from “The Welkin of Summer”

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The welkin is so close, some days.

Every once in a while, she can feel herself being lifted. At first, a simple levitation - the sparks of electricity detaching between her toes and the ground - then, a flutter - touching the air beneath her feet, weaving her arms through a tuft of antigravity. Slowly, the surface of the Earth shrinks further and further away. Cars become pebbles, houses become dirt mounds, trees become ants. And it's only once she's breached the troposphere and gliding her hands through the clouds and touching sheer sunlight that she realizes what's happened, where she's gone.

Then it vanishes. She watches the sun disappear behind a thatched roof of great, billowing thunderclouds. The sky melds into a dispirited grey. Wind up there gets strong and husky, painting goosebumps along her skin, leaving her floating between snowcapped mountains and the underside of purgatory.

Floating, at first, isn't so bad, if ignoring the strong winds and dark skies. It's actually a peaceful pastime, sitting at the top of the Earth, watching the elements of life at work below.

Then she becomes curious.

Then forlorn.

She attempts to return to Earth, but her body is stuck in place, held up in the thin air by an unseeable twine of steel. She can't go back home, she can't speak to those she loves, she cannot even see her town from up there. Floating, gradually, becomes a despondent nightmare, and all she has are a chilled sky and even colder emotions.

She shrinks inside of herself, a vulnerable ball of flesh exposed to a vast and hollow void.

I want to go home.