

A Break in the Cloud

by Colin White

Each had jostled and laboured for his or her place upon the blunt outcrop, in the cold persistent darkness, where the outcrop was merely something that had fallen and not quite been washed away. Some had fought doubly hard, single-claw, clutching the delicate pockets of their embryonic spawn. At last, after what may have very well been an eternity, the fuss had finally died down, as all in attendance stood quietly and waited.

A thick indifferent wind thrashed the outcrop, rich with salt and sulphur; the foul breath of tears from thirty-thousand years, delivering a washed-out facsimile of old whispers and dead laughter.

“What are we waiting for?” asked a young one, after a pause.

There was a collective murmur. Muted consideration. And then:

“For a break in the cloud,” came his reply.

With the uncertainty surmounted, everyone was glad to return their attention to more frivolous matters, such as clinging to the outcrop, and licking their dry mouths, and listening to the wind. Everyone that is accept for the young one, who clung to his elder's back and sat frowning at the sky.

“But the clouds go on forever,” he protested. “They will surely never break.”

“The wind has told us that they will, young one,” the benevolent elder said. “A break in the cloud is coming. Be still now. Just wait.”

“But how does the wind know such things?” begged the young one. “And why must we stand and wait?”

Available online at [«http://fictionaut.com/stories/colin-white/a-break-in-the-cloud»](http://fictionaut.com/stories/colin-white/a-break-in-the-cloud)

Copyright © 2010 Colin White. All rights reserved.

“In time you will come to know its secrets. You will start to see the signs. This is very special day indeed. Such days are few and far between.”

Suddenly something broke through from above. Something gold and vast and unimaginable. It illuminated the landscape, which was a scattered constellation of similar outcrops, each one carpeted by a close-knit gathering of creatures, each one jutting from an endless black sea.

And then the sun disappeared again behind the cloud, erasing the horizon and plunging the world back into darkness.

All those in attendance stood there quivering, the soft places inside their shells warmed and nourished by the brief glimpse of daylight. The young one was absolutely speechless, his bulbous eyes blinded. Now he understood why they had come, and why they had fought so hard.

