

Then with a click, the shutters flew open. I stumbled: awe-struck. Through the glass of my window, I saw what could be our new home; I was lost for words.

We were not far. At least, that's what my friend on board told me. The planet shone in the darkness, like a beacon of hope. Sapphire waters and emerald forests pieced together to form a perfectly matched globe – as if it were an angel's creation. The land below us was cloaked with shadows, but light frayed the black edges, like it was curing a sickly body.

Clouds swirled, they were white ribbons, finishing a blue and green gift for us, waiting to be discovered. A glimpse of hope I had from the start sparked into a steady flame, burning away my worries. I think I recognized a similar land structure to my home. The silver-lit horizon was the last thing I saw, before the shutters snapped shut again, leaving me to – out of wonder – stare into space.

How can I describe the thing I saw?

Its blossoming, luminescent white flowers were even brighter than the sun. For a moment, I saw the stem curve, like green, twisting fingers, winding to protect the treasure growing on its tips. A tangle of roots were sprawled across the ground.

Light burst toward me. I closed my eyes, ready for it to hit me, setting free a strangled cry. Suddenly, everything dimmed. I was frozen. I was stunned. I was awe-struck. A fragrance poured out of the flowers, like a reborn creature, taking another form. Thin threads of gold laced together to form a risen sun, piercing every shred of darkness.

I thought about how petty its seed was, and wondered how it had become such a beautiful being.

"It's a seed," said Cavor. And then I heard him whisper, very softly. "Life."

Life' and it immediately dawned upon us that our vast journey was not in vain, that we had come to no arid wasteland of minerals, but to a world that lived and breathed! We watched intently. I remember I kept rubbing that glass with my sleeve, warding off and slight hint of mist.

The picture was clear, but only vivid with colour in the centre of the field. Through the curvature of the glass, dead fibres and seeds lay sprawled on the ground. But we could see enough! All down the sunlit slope, one after another, these forms of life cracked apart, like husks of fruit; like they were gasping for breath; opened eager mouths that drank in the warmth and light of the newly risen sun.

Every second, more seeds erupted, and as they did so, their brothers and sisters looked down on them. Then, with a steady assurance, those seeds thrust a rootlet downwards, and a strange, bundle-like bud in the air, until the whole slope was cloaked with plantlets, standing at the attention in the command of the sun.

They did not stand still for long. The bundle-like buds swelled and struggled and, with a flourish, burst open, suddenly bearing a crown of crimson, adorned with blood red rubies, followed by a whorl of seemingly-dead leaves spiralled upward, breezing their flowering crowns. They lengthened

rapidly, lengthened visibly even as we watched. The movement was slower than any animal's, yet swifter than any plant's I had ever seen before.

How may I suggest it to you – the way that growth went on? The leaf tips grew so that they seemed to shift, even while we stared at them. The brown seed-cases shrivelled and was absorbed with equal rapidity. Have you ever, on a cold day, seen the thin thread of mercury in a thermometer creeping up? These lunar-plants grew like that. In a few minutes, it seemed, the buds unwrapped itself, creating a sea of red, waves slowly forming, sending a single ripple across the surface of the newly-made planet.

Joy Shun Lau, aged 10