

Back Story

For Stanley Fefferman

You like that every single word, image, and idea in my poetry has meaning and is put there for a reason, so when you ask about the plant in my poem and need to know more about it, its background, where it came from, whether it was a gift, I tell you that many years ago it was a seed in a meteorite that had travelled to Earth from another planet, an exo-planet that we now know as *Dimidium*, 50 light years away in the constellation of Pegasus, and it germinated, came into full bloom, and was lovingly cared for by a man who was regularly abducted by aliens, and during one of these abductions the plant was kidnapped by Somali pirates and then was knocked overboard in a howling storm. It washed ashore and was rescued by a Jesuit missionary and his wife. Years later the Jesuit died of toxic fumes while painting his semi-detached bungalow, and the wife, whose name was Constance, a Civil Engineer who could speak three languages, not wishing to be reminded of him, by which the plant, through no fault of its own, did, left it at the front door of a local home and garden centre, which, unbeknownst to her, was run by cruel botanists (who happened to be shape-shifting identical twins) who were ready to call it quits, because their business was ready to go into receivership due to incompetent management practices, the fickle markets, and a monsoon in the Philippines. When my girlfriend saw the shape the plant was in, her heart went out to it, figuratively, and she bought it and brought it back to health by playing Antonio Lotti's *Crucifixus for 8 voices*, performed by The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, which was co-founded in 1894 to celebrate the opening of Massey Hall, and when we moved in together she gave the plant to me, a gift, a token of lasting friendship, a reminder that love endures, that love heals, that love can span solar systems, and love can bring two people together, despite everything. And how fortunate for me that I painted these walls blue two decades ago, capturing so delicately the mood I am in now. And what of the shape-shifting botanists, what made them so cruel? You may want to sit down for this.

By: David Clink

For poetry award consideration – Aurora Award and Rhysling Award.

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Will appear in my next poetry collection, *The Black Ship* (forthcoming from CZP).

Text found at: <http://strangehorizons.com/poetry/back-story/>

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