

Je Me Souviens

Honorable Mention, [The Year's Best Science Fiction: Twentieth Annual Collection](#), edited by Gardner Dozois

"Je Me Souviens" appeared in the Summer 2002 issue of [Artemis Magazine](#).

Reviewers have been kind:

"This quiet story was laced with melancholy and full of dignity." — Greg Beatty, [Tangent Online](#)

"...the most overtly spiritual of the issue's septet of stories and also the most lyrically written...a commendable tale, quite effective in showing both the subjectivity of progress and the sad, ultimate ethereality of tradition."
— Daniel E. Blackston, Firebrand Fiction Reviews, [SFreader.com](#)

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The hopcar soared over the crater wall and settled to the rock-strewn floor just a few meters away. Its bright-green metalwork, only slightly dulled by the dust its landing had raised, gleamed in the Earthshine.

Years of trudging across the crater floor from my habidome to the shrine had turned my own moonsuit the color of old bones. Recently, my skin had begun to take on that same skeletal gray, as though, like the legendary chameleon of old Earth, I was beginning to blend in with my surroundings. Nevertheless, with both gloved hands I brushed away the fresh layer of dust the hopcar's arrival had deposited, wanting to look my best for my visitor.

After all, it had been most of a decade since the last one.

The dust settled, and the hopcar's airlock slid open, revealing my visitor, her own moonsuit so spotlessly white that it glowed almost as bright as the smooth pearl-white globe of the Earth, hanging above us.

"Welcome, Ms. Chai," I said into my helmet microphone. "I am Brother Damon."

"Then you really do exist," a woman's voice came back in my ears. "I admit I half-expected I'd get out here and find the whole thing was an elaborate joke by my friends."

I didn't know how to respond to that; I didn't know what she meant, then. Instead I said, "If you'll follow me, Ms. Chai, I'll show you to the shrine."

"Lead on, Brother Damon. And call me Tia, please."

"Very well, Tia." I waited until she joined me, then led her across the crater floor toward the shadowed wall where the shrine is buried.

"I don't see anything," Tia said.

"Wait until we step into shadow," I said, which we did a moment later. "Now turn off your lamp and wait for your eyes to adjust."

Her lamp went out; I had never turned mine on. We waited in silence for one minute, two; then, "Oh!" she said.

From the darkness ahead of us emerged the ghostly image of a door, a simple,

