

COLLABORATIVE STORYTELLING

HER WORK HAS JUST BEGUN



This is a determined young woman. She is sitting on the beach at daybreak. She hails from New England. She doesn't seem like the person you'd see here every day. She's looking out to sea... at a horizon. We think she's the first of her family ever to see this horizon.

Her outside environment is chaotic. She needed to be by herself – be with herself and get away. To think. To clear her mind. Maybe she doesn't even want to spend her time here on the beach thinking. As she looks at the horizon, she has mixed feelings of hope and of what she has lost in the past.

Maybe she is managing tough days in her life - trying to catch her breath, sitting with her thoughts and reliving the day's events or maybe

even her whole life – making sense of all that has happened. She’s deep in thought... going over her plans and weighing options. She is thinking about what she has to do. There is a streak of fear looking back over her life.

She just wants to be blanking her mind out and be mindful of where she is right now - breath in and out gently and relax. Let it go...

Let it go...

Let it go...

Her mother called her, “Flor de la Manana” (“Flower of the Future”). She accepts her name. It’s o.k. but at 40, living in the 1950’s, she feels more tough than beautiful. She feels like she has to be an iron flower in order to survive... an iron flower that floats and survives against all odds.

Flor is alone. She may or may not feel lonely. She seems determined and strong, confident...like the famous war poster of the woman wearing a work shirt and a head wrap tied in the front.

She’s married and taken care of – she’s dealing with the “women don’t work” thing. She doesn’t like it and she’s a bit restless. Not being satisfied with the world of her childhood; Flor is searching beyond the

limits and structure of the world she was raised in. She's angry but is using her anger as opposed to letting it destroy her. She understands that she really needs to break the shackles that have been imposed upon her and she's thinking of what the consequences of those actions will be.

She might be the wife of a marine, a confident mom, with two or more children, whom she's managed to raise all alone; not knowing when her husband will return from war. Flor's been successful at mitigating the impact of a father's long absence on their children.

Maybe it's after the war has ended and Flor's just lost her job. Maybe something happened last night - an argument or fight last night. It could be that she was fired. She might have been thrown out of the factory, like so many women were after the war ended. She regrets some of the things she said in the fight. She feels the other person had a perspective she didn't consider.

Flor is determined to make a decision and a change.

After the moment in this image, Flor rises and returns home to inform her husband she **WANTS** to work. She returns to her workplace and asks to see the manager. The manager doesn't want to come out and face her because he, too, knows he had a decision to make – a tough decision. He's not ready to face her.

Several years ago, a friend sent Flor a postcard of a far-off place. As she packs her luggage she considers a boat docked at sea. Flor takes that boat and begins rowing. Against all odds, Flor is out of there! She's rowing to the place shown in that postcard. She doesn't know the place or the way but that's where she's going! Maybe Argentina... it feels to Flor like as good a time as any to go there.

A terrible storm arises. The boat rocks back and forth and finally capsizes forcing Flor to swim. Flor doesn't know where land is. She could have been drowned which finishes her story – it ends there as do the stories of many women.

Many women drown in their boredom.

OR...

Flor is thrown up upon an island.

OR...

Flor was swimming towards the island and a boat noticed her! Flor waves to it and calls to it, and the deckhands hear her cries and save her!

Flor is similar to other women who must struggle after war's storm is over.

Flor is striving to lead a satisfying life.

Flor realizes her work has just begun!

Flor is going to have an

Adventure!

THE STORY ABOVE WAS COMPOSED BY:

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PARTICIPATING VIA E-MAIL: KAMINI RAVISHANKAR, S SRIDEVI, AND ARIVAZHAGAN O.



I offer a special thank you to Eric Miller and the Chennai Storytelling Association for inviting me to facilitate a collaborative storytelling experience for their World Storytelling Day 2016 videoconference, on 20 March 2016. Please feel free to contact me at: Kathy.redman@7VWP.com or (USA) 315-238-5700.

A recording of the videoconference is at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDPiA9PCDhw> .
 The story-composing process begins at 37:20.

Note: After the story-composing process ended, Eric told that this photo (which is posted at www.storytellinginstitute.org/photo.jpg) was of his mother, Lydia Joel Miller (1915-1992). The photo was taken in the early 1950s, before Eric was born. Lydia was a dancer and choreographer -- a pioneer of Modern Dance, along with Martha Graham and others. She led her own dance company for a number of years. She became editor-in-chief of *Dance Magazine* (1957-1969), and then Head of the Dance Dept of the High School of Performing Arts (1972-1984), both in New York City.