

Big Dome

by Marta Randall

First Things First

First thing first, in Big Dome it is all times with danger. There are light boxes up high on top like in Safe Place but in Big Dome it makes light sometimes and sometimes not, you can't tell. In Big Dome it is raining at all times but the most of danger in Big Dome is the growing stuff that eats, it is called Weed I hate it because it kills. Also are moving-by-themselves things, they are creatures they eat growing stuff and sometimes they try to eat me but I am crafty-fast and sometimes I eat them. I do not hate them but I hate Weed because it tries to kill me more.

My name is Runner I run it is what I do. There are two Safe Places with Big Dome between and I run from Near Safe Place to Far Safe Place; I bring stories, I bring the magics of Far Safe Place that heal or the magics of Near Safe Place that taste good, this is called Trade. My brother was Runner and my father and my grandmother I did not know her. Weed ate my brother as Weed ate my grandmother but my father had a sickness and Near Safe Place people would not help him and he died so only I am Runner now.

Safe Places people hate me because I run through Big Dome for they think Big Dome is evil and they will not go there for themselves, but for Trade they make me run through Big Dome and for this they hate me and think that I am evil also. They are foolish, for if I do not run they will have no healing magic in Near Safe Place and no good-tasting spice in Far Safe Place and this they know. When one time I was sick I needed Far Safe Place healing magic, they talked much talking but they gave it to me anyway. They have to for only I am Runner and my Girl is too tiny to run Big Dome.

This story is of one run that I ran, I will tell it to you it because it is my story and because it is true.

Big Dome bottom is flat and round on the bottom and all around there is Wall, coming up and over and down again, like a bowl inside. Halfway up Wall at Near Safe Place there is a flatness like a lip in Big Dome Wall

this is Inbetween where I stay; behind Inbetween there is another wall and behind that is Near Safe Place like a bubble on Wall poking out, but it is not out of Big Dome and it is not in Big Dome, it a Safe Place by itself alone. Inbetween is all made-stuff, nothing growing, nothing with colors I do not love it but it is mine I live there with my Girl. My Girl has a mother and a father but I do not know them for people gave her to me as they gave me to my father, gave my brother to my father, gave my father to my grandmother . My Girl has pretty hair long like wind she has long legs they are strong and skinny she will be a good Runner when she is grown.

One day at Inbetween we are eating fruits; Safe Places people have fear of everything in Big Dome and will not eat the fruits so only Runners eat them they are good. We like the round ones that crunch and sometimes there are yellow ones that are soft and sweet inside, we find them at Wall below Inbetween.

Sometimes too I catch Big Dome creatures, tiny ones, they are good to eat but Safe Places people will not eat them either because Safe Places people are foolish. They make white stuff they eat it, it is heinous I hate it.

Two people come to us a bigger one a smaller one and the bigger one says, My name is Kinner. This is Mian. We want you to run. It is an important Run. You must do it.

I say, It is not time for me to run yet I cannot make a Run, I have been on a Run, I have gone in I have come back, it is not time yet again.

They sit all shifting; a Runner does not all times fidget so, we are still until we have to move, then we all times move until we stop, then we are still again. Safe Places people, their still is all move, their talk is all broken, it is a waste. Kinner bigger one says, We are sorry. We know it is not time. But this cannot wait. It is important.

I say, I will not run again without a because. Sometimes I have to talk broken with them or they do not understand they do not even try. I have another fruit and they look at it fast then away fast, it makes me smile.

Mian smaller one says, Do not argue with him. Do not waste time. Make him do it. It is what he is for.

I say to them, You cannot ask a Run without a because so tell me your because then maybe I will do it if that is what I think.

Mian little one opens his mouth and Kinner bigger one touches him hard so that he yelps and shuts up and I bite a fruit it is not good to smile. My Girl gives me a yellow fruit and I eat it and Kinner pulls her mouth down at it.

Kinner says to me, There is a long story. It is of times many times far ago. It is not short.

I say, That is okay to me I can listen to a long story .Mian puts his face together like a sour taste and my Girl laughs at him.

Kinner says, First thing first there were people here. They did not come from here. They came from someplace else far away. It was a different planet.

Then I know this story and I know that Kinner tells me because she thinks I am stupid and I do not know it but Runners know all the stories, Near Safe Place stories and Far Safe Place stories, and also Runner stories that Safe Places people do not know. I think to stop Kinner but I have not told this story to my Girl yet so I let Kinner talk. She tells it in Safe Place talk that is bunched in pieces, it is not pretty.

Kinner says, It was a different planet. It was called Earth. There were people. Macus brought them to this place. It is called Venus. The people built Big Dome. They built Near Safe Place. They built Far Safe Place. Macus put growing stuff in Big Dome. We do not know why. The people lived in Big Dome. The growing stuff stayed where Macus put it. Macus stayed in Big Dome. He was happy. The people came to Venus and went to Earth. They came and went many times.

I say to my Girl, Macus was First Father he made Big Dome and Near Safe Place and Far Safe Place, that is what they say in Near Safe Place.

Mian little one says, That is what is true. Macus did those things. Also he did many other things. Don't you believe that?

I say to him, I am Runner I believe what I have to believe it is what I do. Mian wants to argue but Kinner yelps him and he makes his hands go up and his mouth go closed.

Kinner says, Many times they came and went. Then it was told to them, you must all leave. You cannot live in Big Dome any more. You must go to Skyhome. Macus was not happy. He said, we are happy in Big Dome. We will not leave Big Dome. Skyhome people did not like this. They tried to make people leave Big Dome. Macus took his people that believed in him. They hid in Big Dome They hid in secret places that Macus made for them. Soon Skyhome people went away. They left Big Dome. Then Macus brought his people out. They put together things that Skyhome people took apart. Macus was happy again.

Kinner says, After then was Domer. He lived in Big Dome. He was all times angry .He said to the people that Macus lied. He said Macus made

for them to stay in Big Dome. Domer said for that there was no reason. Domer said Macus was the evil.

Kinner and Mian make the sign over shoulder but I just eat fruit and my Girl just eats fruit and Mian makes his face all together in bunches.

Kinner says, Then people did not come to Domer at all. Domer's hate was many times bigger. He came to live alone in middle Big Dome. He came to live in the growing stuff. He said, I will change the growing stuff. I will make it to hate people. I will make it to eat people. Then they will have to leave Big Dome. They will do what I want. He changed the growing stuff. He put his hate inside it. Then the growing stuff became Weed. The people fought with it but they could not stop it. Macus said, It is Domer his making. Macus alone went to middle Big Dome. He came to Domer. Macus had great magic but Domer his anger also was great. Weed did not stop. People had to go to Near Safe Place and Far Safe Place. They did not see Macus ever again. But Macus's magic was strong to keep Weed from Near Safe Place and Far Safe Place. So it was then. So we are now.

Kinner and Mian again make the sign over shoulder and they look at me and look at my Girl, my Girl says, Father is this true ?

I say, It is what they say is true you can believe it if you want; in Far Safe Place they tell a different story, it is like this story sometimes, sometimes not.

Mian says, It is not a true story then. This is the true story. It is the only truth.

I shrug and I say to Kinner, This story is not a because, it cannot make me run.

Kinner says, The saying of this story is not ended. This is only the first thing first part. I have not said the second thing next part. For that part you must come with me to inside Near Safe Place. It is important for you to come.

Now I am surprised for they do not like it when I go to Near Safe Place and sometimes they try to hurt me there, so when I must I go only to Near Safe Place Market that is near the Wall and I go no further. I do not like it there but I am curious so I take my stick that is my Runner stick but I leave my Girl, she has fear of Near Safe Place because they throw things at her sometimes as they did to me, the children throw things and also the adults. Kinner says, You can come with me. You will be safe. Mian will come too for second thing next part.

I say, That is okay to me I can stand him. Kinner goes first, then me,

and Mian comes behind he does not like it I hear him all times mutter mutter.

This ends first thing first part.

Second Thing Next

Behind Inbetween is Wall then there is Gate then there is Near Safe Place as I told you. Gate is three parts you go in first one first to wait, go in second one second to wait, go in third one last then you are in Near Safe Place Market. It is a Runner story that once there were great made-stuff birds in Near Safe Place, before the people came from Big Dome to live in Near Safe Place, but Near Safe Place people say that Macus made Near Safe Place to keep them safe from Weed. I will not tell them a different story, they are too foolish to listen and will say only that it is a lie.

We go through Gate into Near Safe Place where nothing grows here it is all made-stuff places that are mostly round and black and grey with stairs; it is a Runner story that Near Safe Place people live in the dead made-stuff birds, but this too I will not tell them. Also here there is a heavy thicker smell like air that is too old and I think my Inbetween is ugly but Near Safe Place is uglier. There are many Safe Place people when they see me they make ugly faces with ugly eyes but they do not come near me I want to make a face back to them but I don't.

We go through Near Safe Place until we come to a far place by the Wall there is a square-builded place and Kinner stops there. Kinner says, This begins the second thing next part. It is inside this building. I will show you.

Inside we go down many stairs then again down and again and I don't like it, it is too close. When we stop we are in a big empty place with carts and tools and there is nobody there is just us and the tools are dropped on the floor like everyone went fast away from everything, I do not like it either.

Kinner says, This is where the food comes from. They change it here. They make it into food we can eat. They do it in tanks. First it is in Big Dome. It is growing stuff. It grows near the bottom gate. It can't get through. The magic keeps it out. The food makers cut it. They bring it in with long scoops. They kill it. When it is dead they clean it. They put it in

tanks. It grows and is food. It is what we eat.

I just look at her so she goes to a big door and opens it and she says, Come look. Behind the big door is another room with holes in the bottom and some have white growing stuff in them. It is what Safe Place people eat but some holes have only black stuff that looks dead and rotting and some holes have white and black stuff together it smells worse bad than heinous.

Kinner says, That is the second thing next part. Macus's magic is stopping. The magic that makes the growing-by-itself stuff become food. It is not working anymore.

Kinner and Mian make the sign and go away fast and I go also and Kinner closes the door .

Mian says, Domer is winning. Macus is losing. We have to help him or we will die.

Kinner says, In the place where Macus fights Domer there is a magic. It is a magic of Macus to make food. In the first time part the people came to Near Safe Place and Far Safe Place. They had the magic from Macus. It fed them. Now the magic is gone. We must go to Macus. We must help him to fight Domer. If we help him he will give us the magic.

Mian says, We need you to run to middle Big Dome. To where Macus fights Domer. You must take a power to Macus to help him. Macus will give you the magic. And you will bring it back. And we will eat.

Kinner says, If you do not do this Near Safe Place will be dead and so will you. It is important.

I shake my head, I say, I can live at Inbetween where there is food for me and water and I can hunt in Big Dome so why should I do this for you?

Mian says to Kinner, I told you so. I told you not to trust Runner. He won't do it. He hates us.

I say, I hate you for you hate me your hate came first and I think if you are hungry you can eat evilfruit and you can hunt, you can live Inbetween as I do you, you can run.

Kinner says, We cannot hunt. We cannot run. We cannot go to Far Safe Place. There is Big Dome between. It would kill us.

I say to her, Now I must think for a while it is important that I do this.

Then I think that all I know of Big Dome is near the Wall where I run between Safe Places and that I do not know Big Dome middle at all or

what is there or how much danger it has. Also I think about Inbetween where Runners must stay and I think about how my Girl cannot come to Near Safe Place for they throw things at her and I think about how my brother died running and how they would not give my father the healing magic when he was sick and also I think about how Safe Place people need us to run but they hate us because they make us run. I think of all these things and I do not like them then I look at Kinner and Mian that are Safe Place people, foolish like all Safe Places people and I am angry.

I say to them, No, you made me what I am and then you hate me for it and for this I will not make this run for you. You can learn to hunt in Big Dome you learn to run as Runners must do for we must hunt or we will starve and because of this because of all of this I will not help you now.

I take my stick and go up then Kinner and Mian come behind me they do not talk, but I do not trust them for they have made themselves helpless then they come to me to make it better; they are not so good as they think they are. I do not like that they follow me but they will not stop and together we go through Near Safe Place and I do not talk to them, they do not talk to me, it is silence.

I come to Inbetween with Kinner and Mian behind me and I call my Girl but she doesn't answer; I call all over Inbetween even by the edge to Big Dome but she doesn't answer and I turn to Kinner and I am scared-angry I say, Where is my Girl, where have you put her?

Mian smiles he says, We have her where she is safe. Until you return from middle Big Dome. Then you can have her again. If you do not go, we will keep her. If you do not come back, she will die.

Then I know them how they lie and I hate them as I hate Weed and for this I grab Mian by his neck I want to kill him but Kinner she cries, Runner do not do this. If you do your Girl will die.

So I do not kill him but I hold him tight until his face is red I shake him and throw him down and I put my stick to him and I say, You are making me to run and so I must, but I will not forget this. If there is something not right when I come back I will kill you if there is something not happy with my Girl I will kill you do you understand ?

I press my stick to him until he nods, he says, I understand. She will be safe. His voice is rough.

There is hate in him as there is hate in me; he stands to hold his throat and I turn away I will not look at him. He says in a voice all jagged, All runners are part Domer. It is what they are. They can go through Weed, that is the proof.

Kinner takes a sack from her clothes she gives it to me, she says, This sack has power in it. Do not open it. When you are in middle Big Dome give it to Macus. If you open it the power will not work.

I want to hit her too but I do not I do not talk I take the sack it is not heavy.

Kinner says, In middle Big Dome there is battle always. Macus and Domer have fires to their hands. They throw them. There is much noise and heat and light. You must take the magic power sack. You must hold it over your head when you are there. Then you will be safe.

I think, I will be safe when I am back and my Girl is not hurt, then I think again and I say to them, Mian says that all runners are part Domer and this is true beyond true so if my Girl is not safe when I come back, if she is hurt if you have changed her, I will bring Domer magic I will bring it to Near Safe Place then there will be Weed in Near Safe Place and Near Safe Place will die, and this also is true.

Kinner her face is tight and Mian too their eyes are big they make the sign over shoulder, they are foolish and they will believe anything, but if they hurt my Girl I will kill them and this is all times true. I take my stick and my sack and her sack, I put them over my shoulder and I go down ropes into Big Dome and I go.

This ends second thing next part.

Third Thing Third

I go down the ropes into Big Dome to where there is a little space with no growing stuff and it is most times safe. After then comes growing stuff some tall called Tree some small called Bush; these are Runner words Safe Place people do not know them. Safe Place people think all growing stuff is Weed and all is evil, they are foolish for they stay all times in one place they cannot learn. So there is a Tree and Bush place then more and more places where there is Weed. Weed is fast, it hides then comes of a sudden to grab with arms and eat I have seen it do this to creatures and they all times die. It is important to go fast faster so Weed cannot grab and this is how I run. Sometimes there is a place that is okay, sometimes there is a place that was okay but now is with Weed and there I have to jump and climb and be crafty and when I am come to my Runner rest I sit until my breathing comes easier again. Runner rest is a made-stuff place as high as Trees, there is no Weed there and it is safe when my Girl is bigger I will

bring her here so she can have a safe rest when she runs. I think of this and I think of my Girl that she is with the Near Safe Place people and I hurt for her inside me and anger fills me that they should take her and fear fills me that they should hurt her and I must sit quiet quieter until inside me it is calm again and I am not weeping, for a Runner must run with a heart of cool water or a Runner will die and if I die then my Girl will be alone forever for she cannot yet Run. And so I wait and I count my breathings until my heart is cool and I can make myself ready to be ready again.

There is a Runner old thing called Map it says where things are; my grandmother had it then my father then my brother now it is mine and when I am dead it will be my Girl's. Runners mark on it where they are and how they got there but Safe Places people do not have Maps, they do not care where they are they do not go it is always here to them. I sit on my Runner rest to look at Map there is a Tree here with fruit growing so I eat some fruit while I look.

Runners mark only where Runners go, so when I see middle Big Dome on map I know Kinner was not all times lying, so I take fruit and I put my knife in my belt and I go.

Far Safe Place people name this Mother Jungle and they say that in middle Big Dome it is not Mother Jungle it is something else they do not say what but they never come here so they cannot know. In Mother Jungle there is Weed but also there is Tree and Bush with colors stuff called flowers, also there is fruit some good some not. The most of danger is light, you run in light then light is gone you can't tell when or why and you can't see; sometimes dark is short sometimes long you cannot trust it.

It is a Runner story that long time back there was light in Big Dome that was not box light, that first on top of Big Dome outside it was empty just Sky and light fell from Sky for many days then there was dark many days and box lights they were for that dark time. But First Part people put growing stuff called algae in clouds that are in Sky outside of Big Dome, it was a magic to make air for breathing but the story does not say how green-stuff algae can make air. The algae made dust to fall from Sky and it fell and fell and now it is over Big Dome so there is no light from outside, just box light that is sometimes light and sometimes not and that makes it all times dangerous. I believe this because it is a Runner story and Runners tell truth to Runners when they know it or they don't tell at all but I do not know how falling dust can make Venus change except to make it very dirty. Safe Places people are foolish often but First Part people were very strange.

The path to Far Safe Place goes through the growing stuff until it comes to the made-stuff bridge that fell and under the bridge is a deep place that has a big water noise in it, it is called Ditch. Here the path goes away toward the Wall to Far Safe Place and here I must leave the path and the part of Big Dome that I know. I go over a big growing-stuff wall that is not Weed then I am where it is new to me. I go on a made-stuff flat place Map says it is called Road Broken and I am with caution of this new place so I am careful-curious and I look around and when I have walked for a while I see creatures of colors moving in air, they are called birds they dance through rain and sing like water, I have not seen them so many or so near before. Some colors dancing birds are in Trees also in Trees are flowers they have many colors. I look careful then I stop, for here I see only big Trees and colors dancing birds and flowers and I hear a quiet of noises of deep Ditch water and rain falling and water on Trees and of singing of birds – also a manyness of color, of green Tree, brown Tree, colors dancing birds, flowers of many colors in gray rain like a magic come down slowly dancing. I stand on Road Broken in the little rain and my fear goes from me for I did not think it would be so beautiful with singing colors, that it would be so fine.

I am made stupid from beautiful for I do not see the arm of Weed cross Road Broken and wrap on my leg it throws me down it pulls and I see more arms of Weed come fast from Ditch so I grab for my knife but it is tangled then the Weed cuts my leg. This it does all times before it puts in poison and I am greatly terrorized but I fight it with my Runner stick until I can get my knife and I cut the arm of Weed until it breaks then I am free but other arms are coming and I run for Tree and go up fast-faster-fastest, the colors dancing birds scream and fly and I hold to Tree until my breathing comes. Weed is two parts, one part is arms that hold and poison to make creatures still but not to kill or eat; that is for the second part where the arms start. Second part of Weed is all white with mouth and teeth, it eats creatures that is how it kills them it is horrible.

Weed arms move on Road Broken waiting for me and I am angry mostly to myself for it is my fault for being stupid with beautiful. When my breathing comes easier I open my sack and I take a strip of cloth and put it on my cut but it is not bad and it has no poison in it.

Weed will wait long time, so I go up again until Tree touches Tree and there I go across with breath tight. Old Tree groans and bends then I am in next Tree then next Tree then next until Weed lies behind on Road Broken where I cannot see it. Weed cannot come up Tree so I rest and mark upon Map of Ditch with Weed, then I eat fruit and stretch and lie to

sleep. Before I sleep I think again of my Girl and I think of where Near Safe Places would put her in their made-stuff home and I think they would put my Girl where they have a hole in Wall which is where they put Near Safe Places people when they piss off other Near Safe Places people, and the Near Safe Places people are scared frightened terrified of the hole in Wall and sometimes they are so terrified they die. But my Girl would not be terrified for it would look like Inbetween to her where we would sit and look at Mother Jungle but she would be alone alone and I must move my mind away from her so that my heart is cool and when I have done that I sleep.

When I awake I come through tops of Trees to Road Broken again but here there is no Ditch and no Weed and I am pleased. I eat some fruit from the Tree then I come down and I see that Road Broken is wider here with tiny growing things like leaves called Grass. I walk until Trees stop then there is a place of falling down made-stuff buildings but not like Safe Place places that are dead made-stuff birds for these have flat sides going up far and where some are broken the pieces lie around them like skirts. They are on Map but Map doesn't tell of all the colors for they are red and blue and green and yellow, not like Near Safe Place that is gray and black for here it is bright with flowers brightness it is okay to me.

I go through this place on Road Broken where it is covered in Grass. The wind is like tiny breathings there are clouds with tiny rain falling it is quiet but not like Mother Jungle quiet for here there is nothing moving it is strange. Through this I go for a long time then I stop to eat and drink then I go for a long time again all day and sometimes I see creatures, they are with caution to me as I to them but there is no Weed and for this I feel a little better but not too much. Then I see where the buildings end and that beyond is more Grass then Bushes then Trees like a second Mother Jungle. It is not on Map but I am too tired for more strangeness this day I will wait to sleep for rest.

There is a building near it is empty inside with small lights in boxes some bright some dark, also there are stairs so I go up them to a place where there is a window broken and stuff in bunches underneath it like leaves that are dry it is safe. I go to second Mother Jungle for dead Tree stuff and I make a fire inside by window broken for creatures and Weed fear fire and they stay gone. After I eat I sit by the fire and I think of my Girl that they should not hurt her, of Near Safe Place that they lie to me, of the Runner stories that do not tell of all the singing or dancing or colors that are in Big Dome where it is away from the Wall. Also I think of the Macus magic that Kinner said I do not know to believe or not it is a

puzzle.

In Far Safe Place they say before Macus was Seeder he came and builded Big Dome to find things out then he made for it to change slow-slowly outside where Big Dome is not and this was for there should be air to breathe outside Big Dome so the people could go there to live. Also Seeder builded Skyhome up beyond Big Dome and he said for people to go to Skyhome for it was time but Macus argued with Seeder for Macus was a worker he worked in Big Dome and he loved it. So Macus his people hid they stayed in Big Dome and Seeder his people went to Skyhome and that is where they are. Far Safe Place people say Seeder will come back and he will bring Big Rain to wash Big Dome and wash all outside that is Venus so people can go there and be safe. They want this but still they will not go into Big Dome and this also is a puzzle.

Far Safe Place people say also that there were many people like Domer that wanted to leave Big Dome and that Macus's people fought with Domer's people and there was much death and that Domer made Weed to win this fight but Weed ate Domer's people and Macus's people both it was not particular. Near Safe Place people say Macus was First Father but Far Safe Place people say Seeder was First Father. But Safe Places people do not know Big Dome for they never come here and I think maybe they do not know Seeder or Macus or Domer and that it is all just a Safe Place story and it is not true, is what I think, maybe, I don't know. Then I think I will know when I get to middle Big Dome, I will know if the stories are true if Macus and Domer are there with fire throwing and I am with fear a little so I put Kinner's magic power sack under my head for luck.

My fire goes low and I sleep but in the middle of sleep the building wakes up it speaks and makes shakings and hissings and I am already jumping away when I wake and I yell and grab my two sacks my stick and run fast to outside of there, I run to Trees fast like birds I go up a Tree fast-faster and there I sit shaking all over and I look back.

The building does not follow but it is with groans and hissing and then a cloud comes from the building its top and I look up and I see all the lights in boxes every place in Big Dome are shining and all the smaller lights in boxes in the builded places are shining and the light along Road Broken are shining and I think that maybe they shine because the building hisses and makes clouds but that is foolish it is a mystery and I don't like it. After a long time I take my Map and mark of this and then I come down and move quick until I am away from there.

I do not want to sleep again and also it is good to move while there is light for the light may go away and so I walk through Second Mother

Jungle. Here the Trees are mostly in rows with some fruit some not and also little Bushes short and not too many and no place for Weed to hide. Second Mother Jungle is smaller than Mother Jungle for soon I am out of it again and there are more made-stuff places and they are not hissing but still I have no trust for the hissing place was quiet too before it woke up, maybe to eat me.

Before I come to the new builded places I walk slow then slower until I am stopped and I know that I am belly-scared for fear of buildings that might hiss but behind me is the building that does hiss and so instead I sit at the edge of Second Mother Jungle and I think many thoughts. I am almost to middle Big Dome for Big Dome top here is highest then it goes down again; I think about Macus and Domer throwing fire but also that if I go back Near Safe Place people will know I did not go to Macus and they will hurt my Girl. I do not see light or hear noise from fire throwing but there is much I do not know here and if buildings wake up to eat people maybe Macus and Domer do fight in middle Big Dome and maybe it is not just a Safe Places story and maybe they will throw fire at me and I will die and if I die then I cannot return to Near Safe Place and they may kill my Girl and then what is the use? Then I am double belly-scared and I feel a blackness like a dark time when there is much danger but it is too black to be safe and there is nothing I can do.

I think then, I am Runner I have run farther than my brother or my father or my grandmother maybe farther than any Runner. I have seen colors dancing birds and flowers and the hissing clouding building and I have seen the danger of middle Big Dome that it is stranger than strange and greatly beautiful. And I am still with fear and I am tired but I am alive I am not hurt and I am not like Safe Places people that think all strange is deadly and all beautiful is bad. And I think, this strange run is my story my Runner story that only I can tell but I cannot tell a coming-back-not-finishing story, a story with no end, and fear is still with me but the blackness is not so bad in me now. So for that and for my Girl that I love her I take my stick and sacks and I touch my knife in my belt and I stand and for luck I make the sign over shoulder. Then I go in to the new builded place.

This ends third thing third part.

Fourth Thing Last

Here in middle Big Dome the made-stuff buildings are bigger below then smaller then smaller like steps going up and all glowing white with flowers down the sides bright as colors dancing birds with a sweet smell. These places have windows some broken some not and some with words but many are mostly gone and others I cannot read them. I am scared-careful for Weed perhaps but also other things and I make myself to walk like tiny rain. Here is a silence of little noises of water falling some from sky and some from builded places and some from Trees and tiny wind breathings and quiet then less quiet and then I hear a bigger breathing, beat to beat to beat, like a heart. I stop to hear it and it makes my skin go cold so I put Kinner's magic power sack upon my head and I hold my stick that it makes my hands hurt with tightness.

I walk slow slower slowest to the middle to where the buildings stop and I do too and I hide at a corner of the last builded place for the beat to beat is stronger here and I hold my breathing before slow-slowly I look.

There is Grass then there is dirt then there is water like in a cup but a muchness of it, gray-blue water that is just water moving by itself beat to beat to beat against the dirt and far away across the water there are more builded places like dots like specks so far-away tiny and that is all. That is all. I creep around the last builded place and I look with my eyes small and with my eyes big but in middle Big Dome is just only Grass and water moving gray under clouds and small rain falling. No Macus no Domer no Seeder no fire-throwing fights; middle Big Dome is empty, they are all gone, there is only me.

I whisper I say Macus? and water goes beat to beat to beat that is all so I say louder Domer? and only water speaks. I take a stone that is beside me and I throw it in to make a splash and I jump back away from the water but there is only beat to beat to beat and when I put my head out there is nothing for water has swallowed stone and there is just water and cloud and nothing except me, and I think, is it for this that I have come for a muchness of water and for rain falling and for nothing else? I throw a bigger rock for water to swallow and a bigger one and a piece of fallen made-stuff that is huge and I throw it and water rises and falls and makes rings on water and that is all, that is all, I yell for Macus for Domer for Seeder for anyone and the water goes beat to beat and nothing happens there is no one in middle Big Dome but me there is no magic here there is no help.

The comes my black anger and I take the magic power sack, I pull it with my hands I bite it I rip it open, inside there is a piece of broken window tied with ribbon and some paper with writing and some powder

that is blue and red and yellow but wind takes it from my hand to the water and that is all and it is gone and it is stupid and that is what Safe Place people think is magic, for they are foolish foolish foolish they are stupid they live in lies. I throw Kinner's big stupid magic into the water and I throw the sack also and water swallows the magic but takes the sack far away and far away until it is gone and the water moves beat to beat to beat and nothing changes. All the things that I have seen and all the things that I have learned are a waste; Safe Places people will die and I will die and there will be an end to Runners and to all stories, for there is no magic in middle Big Dome and I think there never was. I do many foolish things then beside the water until I cannot move and cannot think and a darkness comes from above me and from within also.

When after long time the darkness goes my anger goes also. I know that I must go back to Near Safe Place and I must tell them there is no magic and there is a great sadness in me for I think that they are stupid they will not believe me and they will kill my Girl and then I will try to kill them but they are many and they will kill me instead and then I will die and they too will die from their bad food and it is all a waste, it is all a waste but it is all there is to do. I take my Runner stick and my own sack that is only my magic that is my life and I walk not looking away from water to the builded place and I think of my Girl that I love her and want to hold her and I put my face with tears up to the rain and then I see the Sign.

I know this Sign, in Near Safe Place they name it Macus Sign in Far Safe Place they name it Seeder Sign but it is the same sign. The Safe Places Signs are dull and do not move but this sign moves in the wind and it has colors dancing it changes and glows it is like a magic by itself, I see it on a made-stuff piece that sticks from a building it looks like this :

I stop to stare for it is beautiful and strange and I do not understand why a Safe Places Sign is in middle Big Dome. I am so much away from me from anger and weary and sad that I have no fear I touch it, it is smooth and cool and first I think that maybe it is a Sign from Macus for help to us but it is only real like Tree or Grass or made-stuff or Water so I know that is not so, but still the Sign dances with colors and I cannot move from it, there is something here that I need to know.

I sit and I think hardest of all times hard. I think of all the stories and they come to me together to make a new story, a story that when First Part people went to SkyHome some people stayed in Big Dome for because they loved it that it was home and they would not leave, but they fought

each to the other and they made Weed and Weed ate them and chased them and they ran from it from Big Dome middle for wanting to be safe and in Safe Places there is no Weed but also there is no life. So now Safe Places people fear all of Big Dome and will not live here and that is their punishment for fighting and for making Weed and for being evil as they are for that they hate Runners and they hurt them and they may hurt my Girl and they will kill her and me when I tell them what is the truth.

They do not earn the truth is what I think second part next, for they are evil as they have made themselves so. So I will go back to them and I will tell them what they want to hear, I will bring magic for them from middle Big Dome and I will take my Girl and we will leave, we will come to middle Big Dome where there is danger but in all things there is danger; there is much that is strange but in strangeness there may be good. And for last thing maybe I think that if they will not give me my Girl I will take her from the hole in Wall for it does not make fear for me and does not make fear for her and we can scramble down Wall even if they see us they will not catch us for they are cowards and so we will be free.

Then I take the Sign it comes easy into my hands it makes colors between my fingers it is more real than real. I will take the Sign to Near Safe Place and I will tell the people that the Sign is Macus magic and Seeder magic that they gave to me and I will tell them that they must give me my Girl and if they will not give her I will take her and when I have her I will give them the Sign and we will leave the Safe Places we will leave Inbetween we will come to live in middle Big Dome with the hissing buildings and the colors dancing birds and the great water that moves to itself beat to beat to beat, and here we will be happy. If the Safe Places people can live to come to us we will not make them go, but I will not bring them here for they have not earned the truth they must learn it alone themselves.

I put the Sign in my sack, I take my Runner stick but before I go I take the Map and mark upon it, Here is the Sign place where it said, There is a home.

Then I go.

It is Done

This ends the fourth part last of my story that is told now, for I am Runner and I tell it and it is true.