

was platinum blonde, as were her eyebrows and lashes. Her skin was flawless and porcelain, and mildly translucent. Her eyes were a pale, eggshell blue. Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien were startled when she came out – no one in either of their families had such fair coloring. Dr. Harrison insisted she would grow out of it.

“Oftentimes babies come out on the pale side - like biscuits that haven't been in the oven quite long enough. Give her enough time and she'll soon be a toasty golden brown, ready to spread with raspberry preserves.”

Dr. Harrison was a round man and delivering babies always made him hungry. After every successful birth his wife would broil a succulent roast and mash up mounds of extra-buttery potatoes. Auralee's delivery left him particularly famished. He congratulated Mr. and Mrs. O'Brien and quickly rushed home for dinner.

But Auralee didn't change. Her skin remained translucent and her hair kept the same wispy color and texture of her infancy. If Mr. O'Brien hadn't spent every night of the past August entangled in his wife's arms, he might have questioned Auralee's parentage, but as he had, he had no other choice than to accept this tiny, cloud-like baby as his daughter.

Between her birth and her death, Auralee's life was demarcated by five Anomalies of Science-Based Fact. The first one transpired when she was only a year old.

In January of 1945, Mr. O'Brien started taking trips to the southern part of the state. He claimed it was for a project at work and, due to the confidentiality clause in his contract, he could not tell his family any more than that. As the trips became more