

Heaven, Hell or Purgatory: Julie Howard

I stand barefoot, before a door named HELL. I step through and yelp as my foot hits a path of small, sharp, stones. The door locks behind me. No choice then.

Ahead atop a hill is a small hut. A tattered sign pinned to its door reads - SCREAM AND YELL. I do until my lungs ache.

YOU ARE NOW LEAVING HELL

Yay! What next?

WALK DOWN TO THE VALLEY. PICK UP SMALL STONES. THESE ARE YOUR REGRETS AND GRIEVANCES. My hands fill quickly.

NOW HURL YOUR REGRETS

I hurl them one by one. Further and further. My heart lightens with each throw. Maybe there is heaven after all.

She wraps a soft towel around me. I'm placed in a hot wooden box. Immediately the heat is turned up. Almost fainting, I'm desperate for cool water. Seconds later a bucket of iced water is tipped over my head.

The heat pounds. I stumble out of the box and I'm plunged into a deep bath of icy cold water.

One more round of this hell before I'm settled onto a massage bed. Warm oil, a gentle massage with hot round stones. Oh the Purgatory Spa is not the travel experience I expected it to be.