

In Search of Eternal Light

by Anna Thorne

I approached the bedroom, lingering at the light switch, apprehensive to turn it off. Darkness enveloped me. It is hard to resist that looming fear of the unknown. It must be long past midnight by now. I looked for the moon but even she was hidden. I took solemn steps across each chilling tile towards the bedside. The blanket acts as my protective cocoon, my hand reaches for the nightlight to illuminate a warm glow. Taking a deep breath in, I hold it for a moment before letting go. My eyes found the silhouette of the dreamcatcher, she is the keeper of every incantation I whisper each night.

I wasn't always fearful of the dark, once I was blissfully naïve, trusting that everyone sought to live in the loving inner light of their hearts. Everything was easier when I believed this sentiment. My mind wanders back to the years that passed between us, from the magical adventures through clear springs and deep forests to the endless deserts of the west. I had never loved someone like that before, with all of my heart handed over. I had no understanding of darkness then, there was no need for it.

Before falling into the enchantment of such rosy-eyed memories, I was reminded of his selfishness, annihilating my soul like a black hole until I was left with nothing. The memory of his violent glare still remains clear as if no time has passed. He turned my fears into strings, I was his marionette. Facing the darkness he left me in was a mounting task I tried to forget.

My red hair was long back then, always putting it into a bun during the hot summer days. My body was pale and thin, increasingly weakening. The light from my eyes was vanishing, but I didn't know that then. I run my fingers over my freshly buzzed hair, revitalized by the strength I had to disobey his command to let it grow. I'm still learning to accept myself for who I am.

I wanted to stop thinking of those times, but some part of me knew it was necessary. One day I won't need to be reminded of the past, but the war in my mind wasn't over yet. I have suppressed my painful past for too long, it's time to confront those memories so I can put them to eternal rest from my soul. I refuse to let a piece of myself be ruled by fear any longer.

With a final breath, I closed my eyes, ready to face the battle sure to ensue in my dreams.

Towering trees danced in a circle around me while the wind howled its command. I was still lying down, but on something rigid and cold, like a metal examination table. I was alone, what a peaceful feeling to not be on constant edge with him around.

Ocean waves softly crashed in the distance. I remember how I would always swim out beyond the break, escaping the constant hum of chatter back on the shoreline. Out there, away from everyone, I felt free to be myself. The water was always comforting. I would float in its lulling melody.

The swaying trees came back into view. A familiar figure walked towards me. He sat down, cross-legged as if preparing to meditate. I wanted him to leave but something kept me from speaking. In fact, I could not move at all, despite my best efforts. I tried to speak, to scream, but nothing came out. The desire for him to leave reluctantly disappeared. Something stranger took hold of my mind, something invasive. I tried to fight this perpetrator, but it soon settled in and I forgot who I was.

“Who am I?” I asked.

Darkness whispered, “you don't need to worry about that, it is no longer your concern.”

The darkness began spreading through me like a virus. I was filled with increasing discomfort. I wasn't strong enough to fight it. I had no choice. The darkness topped off my brain with doubt like a fresh tank of gasoline. All the while the cross-legged man kept still.

I've been a weak spirit, broken and useless. This is all that I am. Who was I to think I could accomplish anything in this world on my own?

Light softly whispered, "Let go of your doubt. Don't resist the darkness within you, your fear will only strengthen its hold. You will be protected."

Clouds obscured the moon's luminance, and my hope went with her.

But I remembered what the light said. I trusted the moon would reappear. Releasing my resistance, despite my terror, I sank into the darkness within. Through the trees, a pink neon sign hovered over a tavern, flashing the word LOVE in beautiful glowing letters. The tavern glided towards me, violently crushing the trees in its way. I stood up, noticing the dilapidated facade. I walked through the tattered doors. It was littered with half living souls. They were all hunched over themselves, clinging to their glasses of golden elixir. I saw a familiar figure at the far end of the bar. The sole bartender was pouring her another glass. I could feel her numbing isolation, her thoughts intoxicated with fatal thoughts. She was trapped but she lost the will to care. I walked towards her in hopes to wake her. I wanted to be strong for her, but as I got closer, her feelings consumed me as if they were my own. The bartender gave me what she was having. I soon lost grip of where I started, and she ended.

I am nothing on my own. I am worthless without him, without someone to define me. I am incapable of transcendence. Who would ever want me? I am flawed and broken.

The man from the forest walked in. He was handsome, full of artificial confidence and power. I was nothing in comparison to him. He took my hand and led me back to our forest.

I heard the faint sound of light, she spoke from the clouds and whispered “the darkness cannot destroy your light, it can only mask your luminance. Use what you have seen to realize what you once were in order to become what you must be.”

I woke up to shards of sand piercing my skin. Squinting, my eyes found no end to this desert. I wasn't alone though; I could make out a group of people in the distance. I saw him walking towards the party and loyally followed him. A lulling melody of lethargic gloom became louder as I approached. Familiar faces were toasting in dazzling black attire. Despite my best efforts, they looked right through me. Never had I felt more alone.

I looked down to notice I was wearing a long white gown with a suffocatingly high collar. Pulling to loosen the collar, it only tightened more. Was I in the midst of my funeral or wedding? What is being put to death within me? What is coming to life? I hoped for the death of darkness and the birth of light.

Suddenly I remembered him. I went over to him, instinctively grabbing hold of his hand like a frightened child. From this touch, as chilling as it was, I had finally felt acknowledged for the first time. His hand became warmer as he gripped my hand tighter. I became weaker each draining moment, feeling the light within me flicker.

He looked on past me, coldly surveying the party. Just as I began to question him, I was compelled to follow his steps again. We walked, I behind him in exhaustion, away from the party.

My mind fought each step, and I suddenly felt déjà vu. Has this happened before? I couldn't fully comprehend this feeling of resistance within me, but for the first time I trusted my intuition. I

gathered what little strength I had left to look back, only to see all their faces distorted like the movement of a lava lamp. They melted away, back into the engulfing darkness.

I had not heard from the light in quite some time. I hurried my steps to catch up to my captor.


Looking back, I can see that he knew my desperation from the beginning. I was his prey. My eyes became his vision and my thoughts his creation. He remained his own while what little of me existed was rapidly disappearing.

I was trapped in a revolving world of inner darkness. I had felt this was my deserving fate, so I accepted without much refusal. With time this world would become a home. The chilling silence of this desolate land would become my tranquility. In time I grew unafraid of this misty world of enveloping darkness.

Uncertain of the difference between my eyes being closed or open, I grew tired from attempting to discern the difference. I eventually noticed he was gone. He was no longer in need of me. He absorbed all the light I had. Upon this realization, I had finally come to accept fate.

Just as I exhaled my last breath, the near imperceptible light revealed itself. This light was not simply shining through the darkness but transforming every piece of this dark world into light. The landscape became pure white. A nourishing breeze filled my lungs, the light has brought me back to life.

The light no longer whispered but declared itself without hesitation. It was a light not seen by the eyes but felt with the heart. This made it clear to me, that the true light does not exist outside of me but within my very soul. I now understood not to fear darkness. Through sinking to the deepest depths of my darkness, I rose into a mystic liberation.

A person wearing a patterned, sleeveless dress is sitting on a wooden deck. The image is heavily overlaid with a teal color, making the details somewhat muted. The person's hands are resting on their lap. The background shows the wooden planks of the deck and some foliage.

I could feel my left hand tingling, palm down across something soft and familiar. My eyes shuttered like the wings of a butterfly. The sun dances through the trees, cascading golden rays through my window.

I could hardly remember a single dream. Images, like an old out-of-focus film, flashed across the black theater of my eyelids. These faint glimmers of feelings slowly revealed themselves until my mind came to the brim of understanding. I am thankful for the darkness that casted its veil over my soul for so long, for it was through this veil that I have uncovered an unparalleled clarity. By darkness, my revelation of light has emerged.

Rising slowly, I wandered to the window and watched a butterfly emerge from its cocoon. I watched her dance through the air until she was no longer in view.