

The Light

Edward Tortorelli

For as long as they could remember, they had a light. Not a very bright light. In fact, one might argue it was fairly dim, but it was a light, and it was theirs. That light followed them, kept them company. Maybe it wouldn't illuminate every corner, but they could see themselves and that was good enough for them. Then one day their light changed. It glowed so brightly they had to look away, the shine nearly blinding. They couldn't understand it and the intensity didn't falter. For a while they couldn't see a thing, the light too glaring and their senses overwhelmed, but slowly they adjusted to see again. They hesitated at first, not trusting this new vibrancy, why would they when nothing had been this bright before. Something new and unfamiliar and overwhelming and strangely becoming pleasant. While they could see just fine before they now noticed things previously shadowed, a vibrancy they never knew was masked by shades of grey, and a warmth that made them realize things were cold in the first place. They learned to like this new light. What started as too much became comforting and just right. It was a new normal, one they hadn't realized they were missing until now, but now knew that this was the thing they had hoped for deep down in the dim.

Then the light went out.

Almost just as quickly as it appeared the light was now gone, and they could no longer see. It was hard to tell if the light was back to what it was or out entirely, after being in brightness for so long they couldn't tell the difference anymore. Everything was shadow and the cold felt like an ache and the light didn't return. They thought it may have been an accident, something temporary that would fix itself because how could they learn to go back to dim and darkness after being given something so brilliant? Why show them the light at all if it was just to be taken away again? What unfair test is this? The light didn't return. The longer they spent wishing and hoping the more resigned they became, and the light didn't return. They stayed still for quite a while, staring off into the darkness and wondering why the light didn't return. Maybe it was something they said or did, a mistake they didn't fix or a problem they didn't face. A fault in character, a misstep, or maybe even a curse they couldn't shake. These thoughts lingered, spiraling into a web that never seemed to hold any answers. A pain settled, one that felt bigger than just a little darkness, something that made them long for the past, for when they had what was theirs and didn't long for more. A pain that made them realize that the hope brought to light was now encased in darkness that felt far colder than it had before it was unearthed. They sat, they paced, they cried, they yelled, they laid around for days.

And the light still didn't return.

Slowly, ever so slowly, they began to reach out, feeling into the darkness and started to move again. They found they remembered the room even without sight and moving by touch, while unknown, was not nearly as hard as sitting still. They fumbled, sure, it was only inevitable, and sometimes that fumbling seemed to bring in a darker darkness, but they kept going and they fumbled less and less. As time went by, they began to notice shapes, outlines of things they had seen before, a soft glow forming within the light. This wasn't the light from before, no, but it was a light.

And it was theirs.

Edward Anthony Tortorelli is a current student studying sociology as well as too many STEM subjects. He loves a good book, traveling, and spending time with his pets Moose, Mochi, and Tofu.