

## The Light House Keeper

I was minding my own business, building strength from another long battle, when I read that an old friend has died. Not from cancer. He was just riding his bicycle when he was hit by a drunk driver. Insanity. We are 44 years old and I have locked eyes with the vessel that will take me out. And I still don't even know what I want to be when I grow up. And it pains me to think that I will be this. Because I don't even know what THIS is. But I still want to do this the best that I can do. And so I begin the adaptation process. I breathe, and lay down, listen to the Earth, until I am almost maddened by my own stillness, my breath filling areas even outside my lungs. When I am full, I go for a walk in the woods and replace the air in my lungs with sunshine into my heart. I twirl, almost slowly, to feel the rhythm of time cycling around me. It is then that I can shed the negative protective bark. I play a game making sense out of a scenario that, under any other circumstances, would be ludicrous. And I find peace.

I think I am the light house keeper. I have learned to stand wicked tall looking out over the swirling sea. I am the visual representation of all the dangers that come with life; misfortune, loss, ailments, and tragedy. These are the real rocks upon which sailors are lost. But somehow, my light is more than the sum of those hardships; I am a beacon of hope to the weary. There is always a passage to whichever harbor you seek. I have counseled at seminars, received phone calls, answered texts, cried over Facebook inbox messages. Friends, loved ones, strangers all hoping that my light will guide them safely.

Who qualified me for this job? I know nothing of nautical principles. Navigation should come from a Garmin, because the magnificent stars were created for nothing more powerful than wishes. And I have so many. Please God, heal the sick, embrace the frightened, feed the hungry, and above all that, keep my four children safe while I'm busy. I certainly did not choose this employment. It is so more than full time, replacing bulbs, polishing glass, going for scans, agreeing to treatment, answering email, and worrying about people I have never even met. But I won't dare quit.

For the rocks will still be there. For the fear of the unknown is so much greater than the phrase "recurrence." For all of my grandchildren who should remember to jump from a rope swing after they are told that they are terminally ill. For Friday nights that are still about complaining of husbands. For God, whispering kindnesses through my lips. For each sailor who is so much more tired than me. For all of the friends I have not yet met – that they should hear love in my voice when I advise them to wish upon that star.

For Rafe, and all others before him, who made a difference in the world before he left. I'm going to attempt to follow his lead. I will figure out a way to build my own ocean in the middle of the desert. Help me keep this candle burning, so others can find their way with us. Light and Love- forever.