

The Choice

by Emily Puckett

The darkness loomed before me,
Beckoning, seductive.
I had been there before
And never wanted to return.
But there it stood;
Oddly, comforting.
I turned to get away
But it followed
Like a shimmering shroud.
Following me, calling me.
I used all my resources
To escape, to banish it.
This time no thing worked
And I was engulfed.

At first I welcomed it
For it was predictable,
comforting, familiar and
I hated myself for doing it.
Soon I spun out of control.
Lost all bearings, felt nothing
But fear.
Deeper and deeper into the darkness.
Fear and Guilt
Were all I knew,
Bereft of love, joy, God.

It seemed as if there
Was no place for one of no faith.
I longingly peered out
Of the darkness.
Looking, searching.
Returning my gaze were
Eyes of concern, eyes of confusion.
Only one was willing to
Enter the darkness with me
Yet I continued to fear.
The voices of darkness
Quietly whispered their secret:
Do not trust a heart of
Compassion and love
For it will fail you.
It can not withstand the
Confusion of your fear.
You are too frightening
And it will fail you.

And I listened, Goddamit.
 I listened to the voices
 And I believed.
 I believed to the depth of my soul.
 Darkness, despair, hopelessness.
 My constant companions.
 I cursed them daily
 Yet held them tightly.
 I prayed to God for freedom
 But held them tightly.
 I believed the darkness.
 Goddamit it, I believed.

A phone call, a voice,
 An off-hand comment.
 A story shared, a nudge given.
 God had spoken and I heard.
 I picked up the word and
 Locked it away for fear
 The darkness would find it.
 In moments of safety
 I brought the word out.
 I held it, touched it,
 Yearned for it.
 Each time, I held it longer.
 It soon began to glow
 And with it came warmth.
 I continued to hide it away.
 The voices of darkness still
 Sang their song.
 Not yet would I trust
 The Word.

Flickering, sputtering, fragile.
 It grew inside me.
 The Word gained strength
 and its glow deepened,
 Calling me with its intensity.
 Calling me out of the darkness
 As Lazarus was called.
 I stepped fully into the light
 And quickly shrank back,
 Shaking, shivering, shuddering.
 Did I dare believe it?
 This light, this Word.
 The voices were quieted,
 Waiting patiently their turn.
 They trust me to return.
 They knew I could not risk.
 They knew the strength of fear.

It was here:
 The Light, the Word,
 The Dark, the Fear.
 Which would I choose?