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## Community of Thoughts

by Katy Wise

It creeps up on me, slithering through the usually quiet and calm community of my thoughts.

I don't see it coming until it has pooled in every nook and cranny of my mind. Gathering in the furthest corners out of my reach.

And suddenly I cannot look at myself in the mirror without frowning, I put clothes on and pull them off again. I shut the curtains and ignore my phone. The little food I force into myself I quickly force out again.

My brain swims in circles, recapping every choice, every decision every conscious movement I have made, and questions it all.

And then even more dangerously it expands; to decisions yet to be made, paths yet to follow and people still to meet. I am frozen, all faith in myself lost and consumed by fear.

My stomach is sick, my eyes see nothing but darkness and my mind is falling through a black hole; every step, every stretch of a muscle suddenly seems infinitely difficult.

I am down the rabbit hole and lost in Wonderland, where everything seems anything but wondrous. I revert to a child in the womb, looking for safety, for security, I give in and climb under a blanket.

The world is too big and I am too small. So I stop.

And then a familiar body at my side, a silky coat and a wagging tail, warm breath and a definite smile.

A walk she suggests, a reason to get up she represents and a purpose to go on.

Movement suddenly seems possible again, and a dazzling light is peeking through the blinds.

And so I follow the wiggling body of elation to the door, picking up a lead as I go, and slowly the darkness ebbs away like a receding tide. And the monster in my mind is back in its cage.