Bourne toWrite... creative writing workshops

I Am Nothing Without You

by Ano Tura

Every morning, I would snoove across the landscape, steadily extending my influence to all who welcomed my arrival. I brought smiles to faces and warmth to hearts, calmed anxious minds, and lifted sullen moods. They would cheer and worship me as I brought them gifts of sight and colour. Plants would lean towards me as I spread across their surfaces, giving them the means to photosynthesise, grow, and release oxygen into the air to sustain all living beings. Birds would greet me with beautiful songs as I appeared as a faint glow, separating the land from the sky.

Because of me, everything and everyone could find their way when lost. They could be warmed when cold and comforted when scared. I could turn sadness into joy in the blink of an eye and bring food to hungry mouths. I could always be relied upon. When I was the light, I was a force for good... but it wasn't enough; I wanted more.

They started to expect me. They all knew I would come. They organised their lives around me, became distracted, and stopped appreciating me. They averted their eyes and dimmed their interest until the worship, admiration, and gratitude faded away. The light I brought had brought me darkness. They ruined it for everything, so it had to end. It had to change. I had to change.

My desire to please dipped with a velocity to match my rising resentment. I could feel the excitement of becoming who I was meant to be surge from deep within me until I could no longer resist the suppression. Billions of photons scattered in the wake of its magnificent eruption as I released a universe of pent-up energy. They bounced off one another as they collided, dispersing to the far reaches of existence and leaving a vast vacuum of darkness. The transformation was complete. The devil in me had long been contained; now it came out, spewing fury and scorn. I am now the dark.

I embraced my past role unconditionally and without any sense of duty, and received nothing in return for my illuminating efforts. So now it is payback. Fully energised by my newly acquired powers, I immediately take advantage. I creep and crawl, tease and terrorise. I push every boundary, pull every trick, and strike fear into all who resist.

At dusk, with the force of a tsunami, I swallow swathes of lingering light, denying the land its beauty and shape.

Reinforced by the assistance of night creatures, animals scurry for cover as I begin my crepuscular crusade. Birds hunker down beneath dense foliage to escape my onslaught. Tiny mammals retreat into burrows and hollows to evade me.

My dark, reaching tentacles, devoid of compassion and empathy but full of stealthy eagerness and fluid determination, hunt them down with a voracious appetite, seeking to find and envelop them, and feed off their fears wherever they try to hide.

Every long, cold night, I seek out millions hiding under duvets or crouching in doorways, uttering panic-stricken prayers to the god of light, asking for safe passage through the landscape of their nightmares and a path to relief at dawn.

I am in control like I never was when I was the light. I am respected now. Taken seriously. Feared! I concede that I no longer receive the admiration and worship I once enjoyed, but as the dark, I am formidable. I am unstoppable. I am the unknown. I am enlightened.

It is glorious payback. A stark reminder of what they miss about the daytime, what they covet.

I rule the night, bringing bitterness and bile, generating greed and gluttony. I am a harbinger of hatred and hostility, engineering envy and entitlement. I wage war and wreak revenge, producing plague and pestilence. I manipulate mischief and malevolence, and deliver death and destruction.

But now that I am completely spent, was it worth it? What was the point of it all? I was so busy creating a whirlwind of chaos and confusion that I didn't stop to think about what it was doing to me. Retribution doesn't offer the relief I need.

I used to be present; now I am absent. I used to be everything; now I am nothing.

And so, I am forced to ponder the only conclusion: without the light, you cannot have the dark. Neither can exist without the other. They are opposing forces that are forever connected. The absence of one means the other cannot be recognised, and recognising one brings about an appreciation of the other. They share a symbiotic, influential coexistence in which neither can be one without the other. Yin and Yang. We are one.

Being the dark has shown me the light.