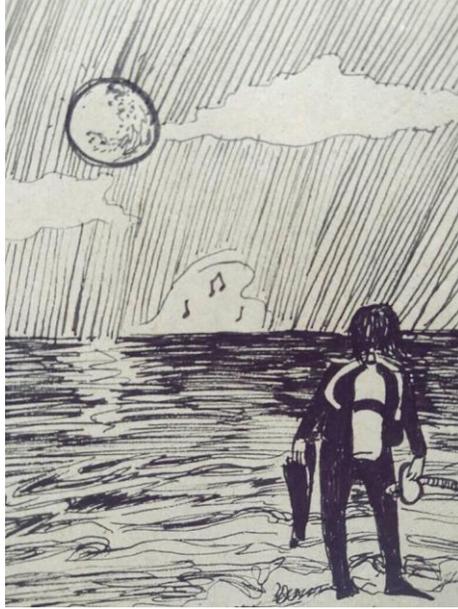


Ocean's song of light

By Retno Windradini



- Indonesia, 5 May 2017 -

I had been like this since elementary school, a strong, "caring", and perfect class leader, hiding a heart as fragile as glass inside. I'm not weak! I'm only trying to survive. my friends look up to me, my teachers loved me. I love it.

I love it?

They said, "there will always be darkness behind every light"

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The silent black night was still enveloping the beach as i slowly count my step outside. Rhythmic melody of ocean's wave slightly smashing the sand filled beach. Piercing cold wind entered my dive suit. Entering the beach, i feel the coldness of the night on the grain of sands. Full moon illuminated this pitch black sky, making the stars unseen. I stand, closing my tired eyes, taking my first deep breath.

"I will join the sea tonight" ...

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"Baruna, you are still a mere child, you can't do anything, your mother is also to be blame....", a loud clash between objects echoed.

"WHY DID I EVEN GAVE BIRTH TO YOU!", mother cried, "an-answer me...!!"

"Baruna, you have to achieve good grades! you have to! you are not my child if you achieve bad grades! understand?"

"Baruna, i envy you. you have a wealthy family, good looks, Summa cum laude... "

"Baruna, i really love you, you are a kind and intelligent person"

"Baruna, can you listen to my story? i'm really sad..."

"Baruna, you still haven't paid your debts"

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ENOUGH!

That little darkness inside my heart, i used to look down on it. "It will soon go away", i thought to myself. This little darkness has accumulated into a huge monster inside my heart. Behind my smile, is a struggle to tame this huge monster inside.

My only friend is the sea, because no human has ever listened to me intently.

I can feel the warmth of the ocean's waves on my legs as i walk closer to the sea. This nostalgic warmth seeps away my darkness, i love it.

I slowly put on all my scuba diving gears, then i walked closer to the sea.

My mind has never been clearer than this. The last thing i want before i die is to say hello to my sea friends. I entered the sea, engulfing my whole body. Although warm, i can feel cold and strong wave sweeping me further from the shore.

" The bridge has been burned"

I allowed myself to be carried by the waves. It was pitch black, so i turned the underwater flashlight on.

The sea and her inhabitants were fast asleep tonight, no fishes on the corals far below or any marine mammals swimming around. I can only hear the sound of my underwater breaths.

"kkkkrrrrr.....hhhhhhhuu....."

Suddenly came an eerie low moan sounded nothing like i have ever heard all my life, followed by a continuous strong waves big enough to bring me further. As the voice disappears, several enormous black-winged object appeared and moved gracefully around me. I pointed my flashlight to this black object. was it what they call "Manta ray"?

As i shift my gaze downward i remembered my true purpose here, my last exploration. I decided to swim down approaching the corals. It was majestic, millions of snow-like minuscule objects floated above this huge coral beds. I tried enjoying this spectacle while it lasts.

"KKKRkkkrrrrrr.....HHHHuuuuuuuuuu.....iiii....."

The second low moan came in again, this time louder and longer. the sea vibrated along with the song.

"What was that?" i grew scared.

It was scary yet beautiful, a sound i have never heard my entire 23 years living.

To a sudden realization, i saw my oxygen bar is reaching zero and i am in 25 meters deep, exceeding my maximum diving depth. I have to ascend slowly to avoid decompression sickness. I took a deep breath to conserve what i have left, i'm not planning to go back anyway.

"Krrrrr.....hhhuuu....."

The mysterious sound approached me again and an enormous creature approached me.

All i can see from that creature is a warm and understanding eye gazing at me.

I smiled weakly, weirdly, it smiled back.

I want to shout, her song accompanied by words came into my mind.

"are..... you.....okay...?"

Time seems to slow down.

Is it talking to me? can it communicate with me?

Everything around me except the creature is blurred, only us and a continuous flow of the song. We exchanged our mind, it seems she is trying to listen to me.

"tell your story....."

The next thing is all blurred, i can only feel warmth enveloping my whole body.

Did i die? Somehow i feel all better now, almost like all my burdens disappeared.

suddenly all is black.

- Indonesia, 9 May 2017 -

"wake up....."

"Baruna, wake up!" said a heavy voice.

"Was that a dream?..." I opened my eyes slowly

"Baruna, you are extremely stupid!" shouted a man beside me "I told you to dive with me"

"where's my phone?"

"We found you stranded on the beach wearing full diving equipment, and zero oxygen!"
The man explained, "You slept for 4 days after decompression chamber"

"My phone, please? "

"NO, and i have bad news" He said, "we found a huge monster stranded on this shore
just yesterday"

"A huge monster?!" my heart suddenly raced

"People said it was a Giant Squid from He-- HEY WAIT!!!"

I raced outside my room, hoping to see this 'monster'.

The shore was crowded and i couldn't care less, i push through the crowds just to see
this 'monster'.

"is it alive?" i grew scared

Then i found what i was searching. That all familiar gaze, this time lifeless.

I cried.

- Scotland, 5 May 2020 -

"That was the reason i took interest in researching marine mammal, sir"

"I see...."

"A bit sentimental, yes. But i need your guidance"

"Okay, shall we begin our research then?"

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