

# Hidden

*by Adam Sifre*

She is alone in the ocean.  
Close to the shore, where the happy people are.

But still, so far.

Instead, she is touched by cruelty.  
It hugs the outside of her shell.  
She withdraws, becomes smaller inside,  
Believing her shell will protect her.

She is wrong.  
Cruelty finds the small cracks, the smallest open seams,  
And slips past her shell, searching for flesh.

It finds her, and takes.  
And takes, and takes.  
So she withdraws, and sometimes, when she feels it has taken  
everything,  
There is only darkness.  
She is lost. Gone. Resigned.

There always something left,  
Something Cruelty never touches.  
The one thing Cruelty desires above all else.

It rushes to this tiny thing,  
this last remnant of she.  
She races to meet the cruelty and the pain,  
the suffering and loss.

And there in the darkness, she embraces it,  
Surrounds it.  
Irritates it.

It doesn't cease, never completely.  
Cruelty and pain have tattooed her life,  
gifted her scars that may fade, but never leave.  
Somehow, she takes it.  
Surrenders.

She gives it the only thing she has.  
The only thing worth having.  
It surrounds the pain.  
All her love, all her sweetness.  
Everything pure that is her.

Contracts.

Contracts around the Cruelty.  
Until the pressure of her,  
the rightness of her,  
hardens around the pains  
again, again, again,  
layers it with love.  
So much love.

And now there is another shell.  
A shell within her shell.  
A pearl.  
A beautiful perfect pearl,  
All love.  
Except for one tiny grain of Cruelty,  
trapped and surrounded by love.

Who will see?

Who will get past the shell,  
And see the pearl?

Who will discover the treasure that has always been her?  
Who will find her in the dark?  
Who will see her?  
Who will be patient, and resist the urge to take?  
Who will wait to receive her treasure, freely given?

Someone. Please, let there be someone.

