



SURVIVOR

It's knowing you shouldn't and doing it anyway, it's getting away with it until the day you don't, and then it's living the rest of your conscious thought with the regret and the self-recrimination of it because you didn't. It was the false reassurance of repetition which made it seem safe when it wasn't, and it made sense at the time to walk where you did because it wasn't supposed to happen and it was your right not to have it happen, but just because you had that right didn't mean it couldn't happen just because it shouldn't happen and you should have known that and actually you did know that but you walked where you did anyway and now you'll have to live with that. They tell you it wasn't your fault and you know it wasn't your fault but you're aware you could have avoided it if only you hadn't been so confident it wouldn't happen to you. And what for? Convenience, for the sake of a few minutes you'd save and which you did save for so long, but all the minutes you saved - and there were many of them - don't make up for the few hideous minutes you'll never be able to lose which you should have considered but didn't because, well, one doesn't.

The path which is as dark now as it has always been and which you will never be able to see in the same light again, nor any other path when it's dark, nor all the other paths that are perfectly well-lit but have been cast into darkness by association, is a path you'll never choose again and choosing any path is impossible without fear. It's trying to see the light you always saw even when it wasn't there but everything's affected because you know you should have known better but you didn't because knowledge presupposes experience and while you thought you had experience in abundance - all those minutes you saved! - you realise you never had anything other than the almost deliberate blindness you were born with, and you watch others now who haven't lost their innocence and their trust and their soul and you want to warn them so the same doesn't happen to them, but on the other hand it's not wanting to be alone where you are and not wanting to be the only one who made the mistake that wasn't your fault but which will forever tether you to that hideous moment when you learned that knowing you shouldn't and getting away with it until the day you didn't was meaningless. It's feeling selfish and guilty because you'd never wish it on anyone else, and you really don't and you wouldn't even think that way if you didn't feel so alone and so responsible and so out of place in a body that no longer feels as



if it belongs to you entirely because even while it was being taken you knew there was something you'd never get back and yet it's being grateful that something, at least, was left.

Every morning, it's dragging your soul back into the body with that part of it missing and living with that missing part and choosing a path which may be the wrong one and knowing you will never again know.

And it's waking up and continuing to want to wake up and continuing to want to inhabit your almost-body and continuing to make decisions about which dark or well-lit path to take. It's having the courage to breathe and to carry on breathing and it's accepting that you are someone and will remain someone and will continue to be alive.