

Rejuvenate

They call me crazy, a lunatic, even psychotic. Like there's something wrong with me.
They look at me like I'm a virus, like I'll infect them if they get too close.
They whisper my name in hushed murmurs of disdain, as if I can't hear.
They make me hold my head low when they stare, waiting for me to make a mistake.
They assume things about me just because of a tiny part of who I am.

But they don't understand who I really am.
They don't know why I try so hard to conceal that part of me.
They don't get that what I want more than anything is to stop hiding in the shadows.
They don't realize that the reason I can't be myself is because of them.

Or is it?

My world is gray. Colorless. Lifeless. In my world, the words *lively* and *vibrant* do not exist.

My world is a vortex, ready to suck me in if I try to escape, always swirling in the back of my mind.

My world is meaningless. Dull, like me. Spiritless, like me. Empty, like me.

At a time, my path was clear, my life all figured out.
I tried to push away the snark, the spitefulness, the cruelty, and continue along my path.
But there were too many distractions, too many detours.
Too much for an isolated soul like me to handle.

It started with just a cold, creeping feeling of unease.
But now, every look I get is frigid and hateful.
Every word I receive sounds stiff and hollow.
Anything I do feels impossible.
And everything is pushing me over the edge.

Until, a ray of warmth managed to find its way through the dense fog and shadows of my world.

At first, I couldn't feel it on my frostbitten skin, numb from all the criticism.
But slowly, I could feel it's warmth on myself, making every part of me tingle.
The feeling was almost familiar. What was it?
And then, it was gone, and all the waves of sadness and loneliness rolled back, making me question if that split second had even been real.

Yet, soon enough, it was back.

There was a strength to the warmth this time, but it kept its gentle, steady feel.
I felt no pressure on myself, no force to come closer to it.
But there was a choice. Not a choice between good or evil. Or even between light and dark.
It was a choice to accept or push away.

Change is a strange thing.

People are either good or bad with it.
I never cared. Days went on repeat for me.
If something different ever happened, it would be worse than anything before.
And yet, something drove me to accept the choice.

And then, I saw what the warmth was. What that vaguely familiar tingling sensation arose from.

I didn't understand. Why did the simple action cause me to feel... happy?
And then I realized.
It was a smile.
Someone had smiled at me.
And I smiled back.

Again, it disappeared, but this time I held onto the warmth and didn't let go.
I had lived for so long in that foggy and shadowed prison. The place I called my world.
But I wasn't going back. It was time to make a new world.

My world is full of color now. Lively and vibrant. In my world, words like *colorless* and *lifeless* do not exist anymore.
My world has been born anew, and is filled with love and joy and hope and passion.
My world is full of meaning. Happy, like me. Enchanting, like me. Worthwhile, like me.

So what if they think I'm crazy?
So what if they think I'm contagious?
So what if they spread rumors about me?
So what if they stare?
So what if they believe that I can't do something I want to do or be someone I want to be?

I can see the world through rose-colored glass, and I know it isn't perfect.
But I do know that if I start now, I can change it.