

2014-03 Black – Silence

SILENCE

By Joan Black

Slowly, slowly, my wits returned - had I been asleep or unconscious? It was dark and I struggled to open my eyes but after several painful seconds realized that they WERE open and I was surrounded by darkness - deep, black darkness. Tentatively I flexed my extremities and was able to wiggle finger and toes but only barely and the rest of my body did not respond to the messages from my brain. My brain, my mind, my head, my BEING, were fuzzy. It was difficult, all but impossible to hold onto a thought, to follow through, to make any sense. What had happened? Where was I?

It was all too much effort and I drifted off. For how long? No way of knowing. Again, struggling up from a gray haze I became aware of my surroundings but this time around my head was somewhat clearer and more focused on the fact that there was not one spec of light. My body hurt and I could not move. Was I dead I wondered? Surely if I were dead I would not have feeling and I could feel pain, so no, I was alive, but barely.

My thoughts took on an urgency - it was imperative to figure out where, why, how, what - but nothing made sense. I had been....just WHAT had I been? I had no recollection of anything before waking up in this cold, dark, cramped space. I took a breath and captured a faint odor - something familiar, something tantalizing, a memory of something past but just what it was eluded me. Desperately my thoughts flitted unable to hold on to anything specific. My Name! What was my name? No, no. That was wrong. Not what WAS my name but rather what IS my name? I am me. I am here - but where was here? Circling back to the same old conglomeration of questions without answers. My heart beat wildly and I gasped short, shallow gulps of air. Air filled with dust.

"Don't panic. DO NOT PANIC!" That mantra kept running through my mind, but despite the admonition I could feel myself going over the edge. Helpless despair clutched at my heart. My heart that was beating rapidly – thumpa-thumpa-thumpa – and that was the ONLY sound I could hear in all that vast.... black..... terrifying.....silence.