

Next Horizon

(G = girl / B = Boy)

G: Did you see that?

She stares through the small rectangular window.

G: Did you see that?

He sighs and throws his pillow against the wall, plop, it slides down the wall. Opening his eyes he notices the ceiling shining bright.

B: Turn off the lights.

He sits up in bed.

B: Get down. You're gonna get in trouble.

Stumbling and rubbing his eyes he reaches the stool and carefully climbs up to look out the window.

B: What is that?

G: It's the moon.

B: Nuh uh. The moon is in the sky.

G: It's not there. It fell.

She steps off the stool heading toward the door.

G: Come on let's go.

B: Mum and Papa will get mad.

She smiles and grabs his hand.

Footsteps pitter and patter against the stone path winding down along the hill. Sloshing ebbs and trickling flows from the small creek follow their steps. The moon's light shines up towards the sky and curls through the trees. They reach the bottom of the hill overlooking the small town next to the ocean.

G: Wait. We can't go that way.

B: It's how we get to town.

G: The Boulders along the edge are blocking the light.

B: Let's go b—

She grabs his hand as he turns around.

G: The bridge.

B: But—

G: It'll be fine. Dad just said those things cause you're clumsy.

He looks up at her.

G: Trust me.

Their shoes lift off the ground inching closer to the first wooden plank. Firmly planted on the plank they move forward while holding the weathered rope railing with each step. The wind whistles through the bridge as the creaks and moans of the wood fill the stale air. The moon's light greets them at bridge's end. She looks back at him.

G: See I told you it'd be—

Taking his final step off the bridge his foot slips under him. Falling backwards he crashes through the wooden planks. He frantically reaches up for help, she lunges at his hand. He slips through her

fingers. Her other hand grasps his leg. Firmly holding on she pulls him up wrapping her arms around him.

G: Are you okay? Hey look at me.

Her hand glides his face up to meet her eyes.

G: Look at me. We'll always be together.

She kisses him on the top of his head.

G: Always... We can g—

B: I want to dance on the moon.

She nods her head and wipes the tear rolling down her cheek.

Skipping through the empty cobble streets of the fire lit town they reach the ocean. The moon's light rests across the calm water.

G: Now what?

Leaning near the edge he cups his hands scooping up the cold water, it flows against the ridges in his fingers. A droplet taps him on the cheek, then another. In the reflection of their eyes the surface of the water begins to drift and ripple in sequence like desert sands weaving with the wind. Droplets float in the air as far as the eye can see. He raises his foot hovering it over the water's surface. Tiny grains of water cascade and crash around his shoe as he places it down.

B: Come on let's go.

Nearing the moon its light bounces off the floating droplets. They hear giggling. Looking around they see countless imperfect silhouettes shimmering through the droplets. They race toward the fallen moon. The ocean settles as the moon rises to take its rightful place between earth and the stars. The children smile and dance on the moon.

M: Hello?

M: Hello? What. What is this?

Tremendous swirls of blazing orange, globs shaped with bright crimson, and radiant yellows streaks fuse and tear each other apart starting to slowly give way to a muddled darkness.

M: Can you hear me? Hey!

M: Please answer me.

A celestial mass from beyond the moving globe canvas of colors emitting blinding white light demanded notice.

M: Please help me. I don't know. I don't.

M: Please.

The light continues relentlessly.

The helpless moments go on from constant to frequent to finally far and few in-between but still no answer, no acknowledgment of any kind exists...

M: Whats that?

M: Oh, no, I'm not sure what these indents are. What about you? I noticed all your colors are nearly gone.

M: Yeah. That light is rather annoying, guess that's one way to deal with it.

M: You hear that! Turn it off!

The light continues relentlessly.

M: Whatever.

M: Yeah I've tried turning around. It's just. It's. Well the pain is too much I can't.

M: Sleep? I can't. I told you I can't adapt like you!

M: Everything I can think of.

M: How can you say that?

M: I don't know what I'm gonna do! Just leave me alone alright!

The revolutions continue between the now entirely muddied dark globe and the blinding celestial mass.

The light continues relentlessly.

M: Hello.

M: I'm sorry I yelled.

M: Please say something.

The light continues relentlessly.

M: Turn it off!

The light continues relentlessly.

M: I can't take it anymore!

M: I have to turn around.

Struggling through agonizing pain with every inch of turning. Trying to find some relief from the constant light. The pain is too much.

M: No. I have to push through!

The light stopped. Finally relief and an unknown sight.

Limitless expansion of far off interstellar flickering specks sets the backdrop to a vast diagonal tear of absolute black intertwined with alluring pinks and magnificent purples. Nothing to be said, nothing to be done, one could only gaze in awe of the space of everything. A peaceful reverberating hum fills the void. At last able to rest its eyes enjoying the peace of what now is. It appeared that this would be the entirety of the lonely existence of this small celestial being.

But as it often is with most things curiosity began to take over.

Deciding to push through the pain at least once more for a hope. A hope of discovering something different. Maybe it was the reward of a lonely existence, a random occurrence, or some grand plan beyond comprehension, but that is exactly what was discovered.

M: The warmth. I guess I missed that.

The light continues.

M: My friend how the revolutions have changed you. You truly are a sight.

A sight once barely contrasting the darkness around is now filled with a canvas of ocean blues, lush tints of green, and shades of vibrant amber.

M: You too were brought back to face the light.
M: Although I'm afraid nothing has changed about me.

Half a revolution passes.

M: Those look similar to the flickering specks far off.

M: There aren't many of them.

M: I wonder if.

M: Hey is something down there? Can you hear me?

M: It's so much different than anything else.

M: The raging storm of warm colors, the muddled darkness, the calm of these beautiful colors, and now these specks. Everything else stays the same except you.

As it was before is now again as curiosity began to grow. The thoughts started to build. If I could turn around I can go down there. No matter the pain I have to try. The specks far away. Maybe I could go there. No, it's too far. There has to be something different. No. Something more. This is it. This is my only chance.

That was the night when the moon fell to earth.

G: Let's go explore.

G: Hey did I ever tell you I have super strength?

He looks up at her with his eyebrows raised.

B: You do not.

G: Watch this.

She hurls a moon rock as high as she can.

B: How did—

G: Here try it.

He grabs the small moon rock from her hand. He raises his arm high above his head and in a quick circular motion flings it underhand over their heads with almost enough force to lift him off the surface of the moon. The rock fades into the stars.

With his mouth wide open and eyes gleaming with reflections from the stars he turns his head to look at her.

B: Are we superheroes?

G: I wish. Things are just a bit different on the moon.

G: Hey don't look so sad. Eat your vegetables maybe one day you'll have super strength.

B: Yuck!

She laughs and pats him on the head.

They sit on the surface of the moon with their legs stretched out and palms facing down gently stirring up moon dust as it cuddles around their fingers. The other children are off in the distance.

B: There's so many.

G: The stars are much closer up here.

B: Can we go dance on them?

G: Sure, I'll meet you there one day.

B: What's that?

G: They're called craters. I think they're from falling stars hitting the moon.

G: Kind of like sparrow valley next to town.

M: So that's what all these indents are.

They abruptly stand up spiraling moon dust around them as they turn in every direction but there's no one around.

B: Who was that?

M: Hello?

B: Hi.

G: Who is that?

M: You can. You can hear me?

G: What do you mean? Where are you?

M: I'm right here.

There's still no one around.

M: I guess I'm what you call the moon.

G: What?

B: That's so cool!

G: How can you talk?

M: I'm not sure. It seems you're the only ones that can hear me.

B: This is so amazing. Does this hurt?

The boy jumps up and down on the moon's surface.

G: Hey quit it!

She grabs his arm and pulls him back down as he's mid-flight from another jump.

G: Wait you said we're the only ones. Does that mean you're up here all alone?

M: It's only me.

B: What about the sun?

M: What is the sun?

The light continues.

B: It's that big ball of light over there.

G: Not even earth talks to you?

M: Ear—

B: It's where we're from!

G: We left our home because we saw you fell into the ocean.

M: Can you tell me more about where you're from?

B: Yeah! We live above town next to the ocean. Our mum and papa work there and it's lit with fire oh and there's this one shop that always has fresh bread. And there's this dog that chases you cause he wants bread but he's so friendly. Oh! Also—

Their conversation goes on for what seems countless revolutions or so the moon felt. Learning about all life has to offer, all the simple joys and stories through a young boy's eyes and all the complexity and annoyances from an older sister.

G: Oh shoot we should probably go back now.

B: Do we have to?

G: Weren't you worried before we left about Mom and Dad getting mad?

B: Yeah b—

M: I can take you home but will you please come back?

B: Are you kidding? You're like the coolest thing ever.

She smiles and nods her head.

G: I promise we'll come back.

The moon takes the children back to earth and they wave and yell goodbye. The moon watches the tiny flickering specks on earth as it shuts its eyes able to finally rest discovering the something more it had been searching for through all those revolutions.

Revolutions pass with the moon mostly watching earth while dreaming of grand astonishing adventures. It wondered how they would compare to the stories from the boy and girl. How the moon yearned for their return.

Then suddenly a new light approached.

Engines thrust hovering just above the moon's surface blowing up a blizzard of small moon rocks and dust. A man leaps from his ship. Taking a moment to look across the barren crusty landscape he takes a step bouncing from foot to foot stopping and standing before a large crater. He lays down on his back looking up at the backdrop of stars.

B: Hello. It's me.

M: My friend you've come back. I didn't even recognize you. It's so great to see you again.

M: Please tell me how your life has been. I want to hear everything.

B: It seemed like it was another life when we met.

M: Oh?

B: I was afraid it was just some hopeful dream of a child.

M: Where's your sister?

B: She never stopped believing in you.

B: Not long after you took us home we snuck out after supper. Couldn't resist the smell of fresh bread from town, think I told you about that shop.

M: I remember that. And the dog.

B: The lady that owns it always lets us have the day olds when she closes. Yeah the dog so—

He slowly starts to giggle.

B: I swear came out of nowhere and snatched it from my hand.

M: That darn dog.

B: We chased it around every corner down every alley. I was just about to grab him when I smacked head first into a pole.

He laughs.

M: Guess the dog got away.

B: He came back and starting licking me as I laid there. Turns out he was more interested in making friends than eating the bread.

M: Oh. Um... I don't think I ever asked. But what exactly is a dog?

They laugh.

He wipes the tears forming around his eyes from laughing.

B: So many stories and things I have to tell you.

M: Please do.

He smiles and starts to tell the moon his stories and stories he's only heard. They vary from close to home to the furthest stretches of the world. Stories of the grandest adventures filled with daring heroes and the most vile villains. Lands with mythical forests, magnificent mountains, and scorching deserts. Places home to luxurious palaces, restless metropolises, and quaint villages...

He pauses midstory.

B: And she was. She—

M: You can tell me.

M: It's okay.

B: She... She's gone.

M: What happened—

Tears begin rolling down and over his cheek falling to the moon's surface.

B: She's gone and I hate her for it.

He swiftly wipes the tears away leaving a red mark on his face from the aggressive swipe by his arm.

B: And I hate myself for feeling that way.

B: She promised we'd always be together. She promised we'd come back.

He sits up and weeps uncontrollably.

B: You heard her. She promised!

M: I can't imagine the pain you feel.

M: I'm so sorry...

M: May I tell you a story?

He snuffles and wipes his nose.

B: Sure.

M: I won't pretend to know your world. From my dog comment I'm sure you can tell. But I do know everything space has to offer. From seeing the formation of earth, gazing at the unchanging galaxy, and watching countless shooting stars. Sights too miraculous to accurately describe. Through all my revolutions I had seen everything. Or so I thought. I never spoke of this but meeting you and your sister was the most unexpected and truly amazing thing I've experienced.

He leans back resting his forearms against the moon.

M: You two really did save my life.

B: I'm not sure what to say.

M: Do you see that distant blue star?

B: It's really beautiful.

M: That star is the only new thing I've seen up here in quite some time.

B: Why are you telling me this?

M: I would give anything to share more moments with you. To hear more of your stories.

M: It's painful to say but I think it's time for your next adventure. And maybe, just maybe you'll find something there.

He sits up wiping the rest of the dried tears from his face. He stares at the tiny blue star with his palms on the moon's surface gently stirring up dust as it rests around his fingers.

B: You know.

With a smirk on his face he lets out a small sigh.

B: I think I'd like to stay here with you for a while...