Blinded by Sight

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"The weather was unseasonably cold for March, but that didn't keep Marilyn from rolling her pant legs above her ankles and remaining motionless in the sand. Beautiful sea shells washed ashore by the hundreds. But Marilyn's focus was concentrated on the overcast reflection in the waves. Dark gray clouds loomed heavily over the north Atlantic this day. The near freezing sea water, send in by the tide, flowed quickly across her feet, washing the sand from between her toes. Marilyn didn't even flinch when the salty ocean water hit her skin."

Cover Page Footnote
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She has not been the same since her husband, Robert, passed away six months ago. A successful fisherman and boat maker, Robert died in a fishing accident off the coast of Nova Scotia. Marilyn's daily routine now included countless hours spent staring aimlessly into the north Maine horizon. Each and every day, she would go a little further into the ocean, quietly whispering, "Swallowed by the Sea."

She was completely removed from her former life, and stood as a mere shell of a once vibrant and exciting woman. When she lost Robert, she lost the catalyst that sparked her life's energy. It hurt people to see her in the condition she was in. An amazing thing then happened to Marilyn, she met the last person in the world you would think could help her gain what she missing, a man with no sight.

Atop a cliff, approximately a quarter of a mile from the spot where Marilyn stood, a small car pulled up to the edge. Inside the car were three shapes. The first looked to be a man in the passenger seat, as was the driver, but the back seat had what looked like a dog in it. Exiting the passenger side was a man looking to be in his late 60's wearing dark sunglasses, and a large golden retriever. Attached to the dog was a harness that the man held onto. As the two exited the car, the passenger door slammed behind them and the car pulled away. Making his way slowly to shore, the man stopped every so often to pet his companion. He seemed to know his way around very well, given the fact that the dog seemed to be guiding him. Within a few moments of his walk down the beach, he reached Marilyn. At first he didn't even recognize that she was there, but as soon as his dog barked in her direction, he was aware of her presence. Squinting heavily, the man was able to make out a human figure, and addressed it accordingly.

"Good afternoon," the man said. There was no response from
Marilyn. "I said, good afternoon," repeated the man. Still no response from Marilyn. "Well, we mustn't bother this person any longer, let us go," the man said to his dog.

Just as the two visitors were about to leave, she turned her head slightly, and with an embarrassed look on her face said, "I'm sorry, what is it that you just said?" said Marilyn.

"I simply said good afternoon. My apologies if we interrupted something," the man replied. Marilyn stared at the man and his pet for a few more moments before speaking again.

"That's a very nice looking dog," said Marilyn, as she turned her head back toward the water.

"Well, I thank you for the compliment, and by the sound of it so does Robert," said the man, accompanied by a bark.

"Who's Robert?" asked Marilyn.

"Robert, of course, is my trusty companion here," replied the man.

"Robert means a lot to you, doesn't he?" asked Marilyn.

"Oh yes, I would be lost without him. My sight isn't exactly what it used to be. I would never have even spotted you there had it not been for Robert," said the man.

"Do you have a name, old man?" asked Marilyn.

"Oh yes, of course, how rude of me. Rambling on without so much as my name. The name is Ethan, Ethan Drake. World traveler, scholar, and just recently proud canine owner. And your name Miss, or Mrs."

"Marilyn, and it's Mrs. An unfortunate accident though has left me a widow." Marilyn's voice trailed off after those last few words.

"My sincere condolences, Marilyn. I imagine though that your husband is watching over you, yes." Just as Ethan finished his sentence, Robert barked loudly in Marilyn's direction.

"Easy boy! We mustn't frighten this nice woman," said Ethan toward his guide.

"Ma'am, I don't mean to pry, but isn't that water a trifle bit cold to stand in barefoot?" asked Ethan.

"You know it's funny that you say that. Up until recently I probably wouldn't have been able to go in the water like this. Now though, I don't think much about the cold," replied Marilyn.

"Then what do you think about, if you don't mind me asking?" "I think of the past and what could have been, or for that matter, what should have been." Marilyn turned away for a moment, and then took another step deeper into the chilling ocean tide.

Looking on curiously, Ethan wondered what her intentions were. "Marilyn, the tide is quite rough this day, would you mind stepping back a bit," said Ethan.

"How can you tell how far I'm in the water, you can't see old man," Marilyn said sarcastically.

"You know, you're right. I can't see that, but do you know who can? Robert." Marilyn turned her head sharply and looked down at the golden retriever standing five feet away from her. "He probably has better vision than either one of us, to be honest with you. Robert is pretty impressive. He can see that you're a woman who has lost that which shaped her existence. He sees a woman who rather than cope with her loss, would just as soon end her life. That's right, Robert can certainly see many, many things. You know I've been all over the world, Italy, Australia, Russia, but I'll tell you one thing. I've never met anyone quite like Robert, and from the likes of it, neither have you." Ethan adjusted his dark sunglasses, and re-gripped the harness surrounding Ethan's neck.

"Who are you, old man? How do you know so much about me?" asked Marilyn.

"I listen, and so should you." With that Ethan and Robert were on their way.

After hearing this, Marilyn stepped back from the water and turned in the direction of Ethan. Unfortunately, a fog had rolled in and she could not see more than a few feet in front of her. Remembering what Ethan had said, to listen, that is exactly what she did. Marilyn rolled her pant legs down to her feet and walked across the beach to her house. It was night now, and her eyes weren't the best sense to use. However, her ears could pick up a faint bark in the distance. She turned around, only this time to Robert looking back at her and then to the ocean. She glanced off toward the horizon, and at that point realized what she needed to do. Live on. Robert will always be there, just like before. The only difference is that rather than see him, she would have to listen, listen to the rippling waves of the ocean.

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