

The Ocean

by Kyle Eggleston

Life is like an ocean. The water tells the tale of a person's existence.

Everyone begins on the shoreline. This is where their journey starts. They stand on the shore watching as their parents are out wading in the water. When the time comes, the individual is led into the water little by little a small piece at a time.

Eventually a young man or young woman emerges. They leave the beach and begin to swim in the ocean. At first a person stays close to the shoreline. Some find the deep end quickly while others take a more cautious approach.

Some learn to swim from the experience of others while the rest learn from gaining experience by trial and error.

Sharks swim the ocean looking for bait. Something to sink their teeth into. They would rather steal from a person instead of learning for themselves.

My life has been an interesting trip on the sea of life. There have been times when the waves have tossed me to and fro without concern for anything. Some waves have been easy to navigate while others have been a little more difficult.

Through it all there has been buoys in the water leading me through traitorous water to safety. I have not always followed the buoy markers and have swam among the sharks. Oh they took a nibble here and a nibble there allowing me to heal before continuing on. By the time I stopped ignoring the warnings it was almost too late. Luckily the sharks lost interest in me and went on to hunt for something a bit less boring. I was grateful when the sharks left yet saddened at the same time.

You see they fascinated me. Here were creatures swimming in deadly waters. Some had scars or wounds they got from experience. The buoy was so far away and the sharks were so close. They made me feel ashamed for wanting to stay among the safer water where the water was mapped and known.

Before I realized it I was deep in with the sharks. I didn't know where to turn. Instead of tearing me apart, they left me to drown. I suppose it was a way of getting back at the weak.

So I started to swim towards the safety of the buoy. By that time it was almost out of sight. I swam and swam fighting the waves as they came upon me. The waves were trying to push me back to the water I had become accustomed to with the sharks.

There were times, I must admit, when it seemed easier to just let go of the drive and determination. It felt easier to allow the waves carry me to certain destruction. Each time my head went under the water I fought to see the goal. The buoy beckoned me to keep fighting against the current.

When the waves died down that's when I swam the hardest. I swam great distances on those days further than when the waves were crashing down on me. At that moment when I began to think I could do it all by myself and started looking for other places to swim besides the buoy, the storms would come. Great powerful storms causing the waves to start up again. I found myself deep in prayer to an unseen power to help guide me to the buoy. I kept swimming.

There were times when I felt I could no longer swim to keep my goal. No matter how hard I tried, I just was sitting still. Treading water trying to stay afloat and keeping my head above water. I hung on looking day by day for calmer water. It was difficult on days when my mind kept telling me to simply give up.

I admit it would have been easier to do that. I had the means, all I had to do was stop trying. The water's current would eventually take me under, down to a watery grave. It would have been easier but it wouldn't have been worth it. Deep down I'm a fighter. Have been since the day I was born. One has to have a strong will to battle the waves of day to day life.

So instead of giving up and going to that watery grave I kept pressing on. It was a

while before I made it to the buoy. Felt like years to be honest. But I made it.

My journey was far from over. Yes I made it to the buoy. I could have found a nearby island and stayed there. Perhaps I would have been content for a while. But having been in the ocean for this long I came to an interesting realization.

You see, the ocean is vast. There are many places to explore and discover. So I looked for the next buoy and the next one after that. I keep looking for my buoys to swim to. Each buoy adds to my experience. Each buoy adds to my life's existence. With each buoy I grow and learn. Somedays there are no buoys to swim to so I make my own. I forge my own path through the great ocean that is my life.

I am my own ship in a vast array of ships. Each one going its own direction and speed. Sure it would be easy to stay in port or on the beach where it's safe.

That's not what I'm here for. No. I'm here to live a life that's full. A life that is made to explore and experience the sea.

My life is my ocean.

No one can take that away from me.