


# A Moment Like This

*Alayna Een*



I remember dreaming of a moment like this.

I am curled up comfortably on the couch, leisurely turning the pages of a novel. Friends and roommates meander about, making cheerful conversation. Christmas music floats through the warm, bright air which mixes with the steady but gentle steam rising from the mug in front of me. I lean forward to take a sip. As my always-cold fingers touch the warm ceramic, I remember.

I remember dreaming of a moment like this.

It is a very different night. I am walking down the cold Spanish street. My steady exhalation adds temporary warmth to the air in front of me, thawing my frozen nose for a moment—but just a moment. I breathe in—the air so cold and clear that I almost choke—and expel another smoky cloud of warmth. The humid air chills me to the bones and worsens with every new weak gust of wind. My cold toes have lost feeling long ago and I walk, numbly kicking against the groves of cobblestone.

The two of us are the only figures to be seen in this silent, empty street. We walk quickly, but in no certain direction. A heavy darkness fills the night, broken only by the intermittent streetlamps' sickly yellow pools of light and the fleeting warm rectangles of opened doors. Occasionally, other figures will dart by: they do not want to talk, they are not often kind. I try not to count the minutes until we can go inside; I try not to get discouraged. As I look up, past the brilliant stars to the familiar, luminescent moon, the desperate longing of a single, simple human need fills me—I want to be warm. And somewhere behind my conscious thought, a warm dream forms. It is revisited many times in the most intense moments of the winter nights that follow.

And now that warm dream is my reality. I look back on those nights I thought would never end and I see only distant memories. Was it really a year or more ago? In a weird conundrum, my heart bursts with gratitude at the memory of those moments, awful and eternal as they seemed at the time. I marvel at how quickly they vanished and life rolled on. My reflections in this unexpected flashback have given me a precious, unexpected gift: perspective. Though that hard time is gone from me in all but memory, others will rise—and indeed, have risen—to take its place. But I am armed with confidence in a simple truth learned from my reflections on a moment in the cold Spanish street, and I *know*: “this too shall pass.”