A world of an unrelenting darkness and shapeless demons, a terrain of infinite chasms and hidden crevasses: the lightless landscape that was my home. Alone. This was what my high schooling years were like, and much of my childhood years. Growing up with an alcoholic father who was emotional and occasionally abusive and a mother who attempted suicided in my primary school years was not an easy stroll. Being 'put in the system' at such a young age, seeking help was not a concern for me, rather, traversing my lightless landscape proved treacherous.

Depression, that was what others named this landscape, Home is what I called it. Even though it was home, the darkness was comforting as much as it was overpowering. When I got lost it in the terrain, I drowned: I was either feeling too much or feeling nothing at all. I don't know how, but I discovered that the way to bring light to the drowning darkness was pain. Year 10 was the height of my self-harming behaviours. It got to the extreme that my mother could not stand the marks and made me wear things to cover them up only to draw more attention. A few teachers asked about it directly, but my teachers all knew that I was seeing the school counsellor, and I appreciated it this understandable "ignorance". Other kids in my class used to joke about it all the time: "look at   he cuts himself". I felt embarrassed, ashamed, and alone in spite of the ample support around me; I knew I had support, I knew I was loved, yet I still felt alone and I felt horrible about it. I felt like a bad friend, an unappreciative swine who did not know how to accept support or help or love when I had no reason not to, especially because I had no worth, nothing to offer anyone. No one understood me, I didn't understand me, it was all too much. I didn't want to talk about it, I just wanted an escape, I just wanted to see some light.

My mother did not understand and took the "it's not good for you, stop cutting yourself cause it's hurting me" attitude, which only increased my chances of drowning and continue in the endless cycle that was my Home: induce pain to find the light only to find the light to be drowned once more. I needed pain. I found solace in the pain, and the scars reminded me of this solace, even if momentary, it worked. The stigma around self-harm compounded the endless cycle: I couldn't understand why people that who loved me couldn't realise that what I was doing worked. There was, no, there *is* nothing wrong with self-harm.

Self-harm was just another compass to guide me through the lightless landscape. It wasn't my only one, but it was one that worked when nothing else did.

I spent years traversing the lightless geography, mapping out the landscape, becoming familiar with it, all the while getting lost in it. Today, this landscape, this lightless landscape is less dark. The dark spots will never go away, it is my Home, but it's not my only Home. I can engineer and mould this landscape to whatever best suits me at any given time; self-harm no longer is a compass to pave a path for light. How? It was simple really: somehow—with help of course—I learned to accept my circumstances without judgement and just "go with it". Darkness is darkness, light is light. There is no bad, there is no good, there simply just is.

Simple, yes. Easy, no.