

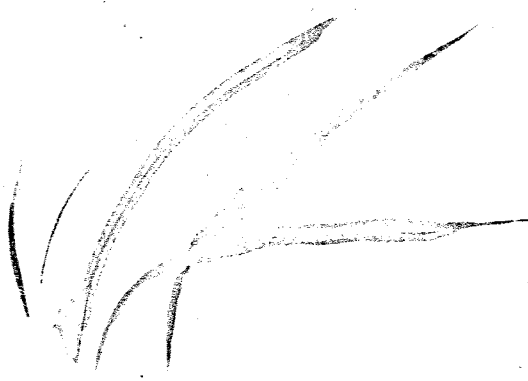
## A Dark Winter

It was dark and cold. It had been dark and cold for many months. Often he didn't even notice how cold it was. He would swim slowly through the current, which flowed beneath the frozen ice. Sometimes, when he became too tired, he would stop swimming and just drift.

He swam alone, now. But once long ago, before the darkness came, he did have friends. He remembered how they used to swim and dance and chase each other through the bright, clear water. He missed his friends very much.


When it first became dark, he and his friends <sup>were separated.</sup> ~~had become~~ separated, He searched very hard for them. He swam through the icy water, calling their names. Day after day he looked for them. But as the winter months continued, he became more and more tired, and was unable to search for long periods of time. What's more, he didn't even know where to look anymore. Everywhere he went looked the same: cold and black.

One morning he heard a cracking noise. At first he thought it was the sound of a shrimp egg breaking open. He



was very hungry, for it was hard to find food during the winter. <sup>So</sup> He began to smell carefully. ~~and to~~ <sup>He</sup> swim down to the bottom, where he knew eggs were planted among seaweed and other growing plants.

He smelled for a long time, but couldn't find anything. The water was even colder in the lower depths. He became tired quickly, and had to rest often. He was worried. He wondered how he could survive the rest of the long, dark winter, especially without food and without friends. He sat down on a rock to think. He felt sad and alone.

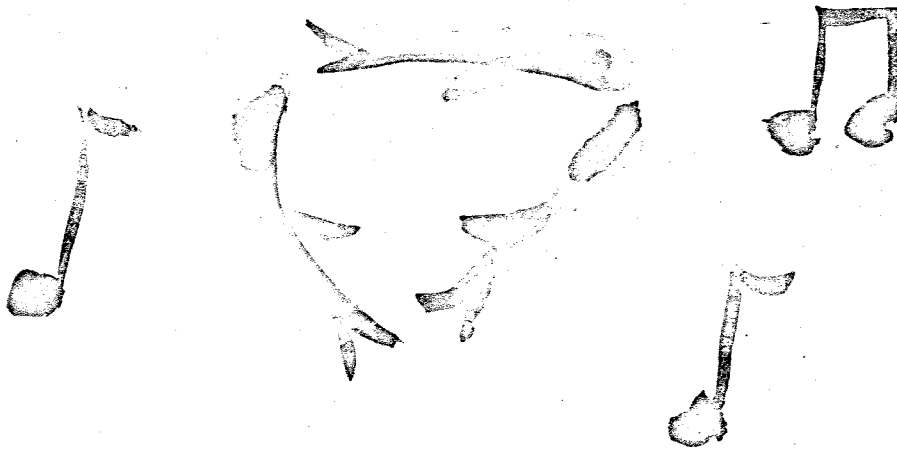


Again, he heard the cracking sound. This time he swam upward.

As he got closer to the surface, the cracking sound grew louder.

He saw a glow. It seemed golden to him, like a bright ray of sunlight filtering through <sup>crystals.</sup> the ice. All of a sudden, the water felt warmer.

He began to dance with joy, for now he knew that spring was near. He danced and danced, swimming in circles and loops, making himself dizzy. Soon he heard laughter, and, swimming towards him, he saw his old friends. They all began to dance together joyfully.



Questions:

1. Describe how the fish must have felt during the dark of winter. How do you think you would feel during a time without sunlight?

2. How does the fish get food to eat during times of darkness.

How do we get food? Have you ever felt hungry like the fish? What did that feel like?

3. How do you think the fish is feeling at the end of the story? Explain why you gave the answer you did?

4. When have you felt the kinds of feelings that the fish felt?

(Suggestions: e.g., #1: discuss Norway--land of midnight sun, etc; could discuss "dark times" in children's life

#2: method of obtaining food; use of senses by fish; cmp. man's sense of smell; going to supermarket--- What would it be like to have to get your own food from nature?

#4 Could have students share their feelings with each other--teacher could point out similarities in experience, etc.