

## The Reflection of Light After Staring into the Darkness Too Long

To this point, the 21st century has been less than I had hoped. I mean, it's not all bad. It has definitely had its high points. That renaissance of television has been fun. The Sopranos, Breaking Bad, the first part of Game of Thrones. The Mando-verse! (I mean there has been more Star Wars content than a nerd like me could shake a stick at.) The Cubs won the World Series in 2016, and that was pretty great. The first black president, and the gift that was Michelle Obama - also wonderful. Podcasts are also very cool.

Overall though, I'm calling the 21st century a disappointment.

For the most part, I'm disappointed in humanity, as a group. If my grandparents were the greatest generation, and they managed to rebuild the world with integrity after the Western World was ravaged by war, then the standard was set, right? We knew what it took to be good and do right. Didn't we? Maybe they didn't rebuild the world with integrity. Maybe systemic racism, rejection of the metric system, and global capitalism set us up for failure. Shit. We're fucked.

Maybe we only knew how to tell what was good because humanity has over the last 10,000 years been something of a plague. As far as our cumulative contributions to Earth's history go, we might be a scourge. Wars and genocides. Pollution. Kardashians. Maybe we only know what is good when it's held up to what isn't.

I have, or maybe had until recently, resigned myself to the belief that darkness is the norm. Using the universe as a cosmic example, let's think about what's out there. Darkness. Deep and vast, lifeless darkness. Cold, sterile, emptiness. A void. And maybe that cosmic symmetry exists within us all. Like the nebula that looks like a cat's eye, or how a vast river and its tributaries look like the tiny capillaries in our bodies -the natural patterns echo throughout. The human soul could be, like the vast theoretically never ending universe, predominantly composed of vast, empty, darkness. Maybe the only good is tiny pinpricks in the distance. Maybe we're mostly dark, and light is rare.

But, wait.

Are we not drawn to the light? When we look up at the night sky, we don't stare into the abyss. Our attentions scatter from point of light to point of light. How many can we see? How far away are they? Oooh, I think I see the Milky Way swirling out, away from us. We *are* drawn to the light. The light gives us life and power and warmth. The light is so much more powerful than the dark. Each morning when the sun rises, the temperature goes up, the frost melts, the dew evaporates. The light creates where the dark destroys.

Light might be more rare, but it is so much more powerful. Light will always beat dark, no matter how much darkness there is. And don't forget, my friends, "it's always darkest before the dawn."

Wait. Is it? Hold on...

Okay. I checked. Turns out nope. It's not darkest before the dawn, it's darkest, scientifically at midnight. The "it's always darkest before the dawn" quote is just something lovely that 17th century English scholar Thomas Fuller said. Still though. Light comes after darkness, and the light has power to heal and grow and do good stuff, so let's be pro-light.

Yeah. That.