



Darkness at Night: A Riddle of the Universe

By Edward Harrison

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Darkness at Night: A Riddle of the Universe By Edward Harrison

Why is the sky dark at night?

The answer to this ancient and celebrated riddle, says Edward Harrison, seems relatively simple: the sun has set and is now shining on the other side of the earth. But suppose we were space travelers and far from any star. Out in the depths of space the heavens would be dark, even darker than the sky seen from the earth on cloudless and moonless nights. For more than four centuries, astronomers and other investigators have pondered the enigma of a dark sky and proposed many provocative but incorrect answers. *Darkness at Night* eloquently describes the misleading trails of inquiry and strange ideas that have abounded in the quest for a solution.

In tracing this story of discovery—one of the most intriguing in the history of science—astronomer and physicist Harrison explores the concept of infinite space, the structure and age of the universe, the nature of light, and other subjects that once were so perplexing. He introduces a range of stellar intellects, from Democritus in the ancient world to Digges in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, followed by Kepler, Newton, Halley, Chéseaux, Olbers, Poe, Kelvin, and Bondi.

Harrison's style is engaging, incisive yet poetic, and his strong grasp of history—from the Greeks to the twentieth century—adds perspective, depth, and scope to the narrative. Richly illustrated and annotated, this book will delight and enlighten both the casual reader and the serious inquirer.

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Editorial Review

Review

Beguiling... A veritable Cook's tour through the history of astronomy. (Owen Gingerich *Nature*)

The night sky is dark. The question is why... Mr. Harrison has an answer, but to state it here seems as unfair as giving away the final chapter of a mystery story. Better to read his book. (Timothy Ferris *New York Times Book Review*)

Harrison...does a rare thing here: he manages to combine history and real science... A remarkable book. (*New Yorker*)

Darkness at Night is a very elegantly written history... I think Harrison has written a beautiful book, the best available on Olber's paradox... Be sure not to miss this one. (Frank Tipler *Times Higher Education Supplement*)

From his years of contemplation of the riddle of the dark sky, Harrison has now distilled a truly wonderful book. *Darkness at Night* is superbly written [and] excellently illustrated. (Michael Rowan-Robinson *New Scientist*)

About the Author

Edward Harrison was Distinguished Professor of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Steven Huckins:

In this 21st century, people become competitive in every single way. By being competitive at this point, people have to do something to make all of them survive, being in the middle of the actual crowded place and notice simply by surrounding. One thing that oftentimes many people have underestimated the item for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a publication your ability to survive rises then having a chance to stand up than others is high. For you personally who want to start reading any book, we give you this specific *Darkness at Night: A Riddle of the Universe* book as a beginning and daily reading e-book. Why, because this book is usually more than just a book.

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