

# *This Present Darkness*

*Daylight Saving for Those Feeling Lost*

*Volume 1*  
*By Sarah Carter*





Dear Reader,

Yes, friends, Daylight Saving has come like a thief in the night. The great darkness has descended upon us again. Where does all that stolen daylight go? And why does it feel like it's been sucked from your soul?

What once felt like heresy, frank conversation about abolishing DST, is more common than ever. Still, a change of such magnitude goes unrealized. Hasten the day! While we wait, take heart! You are not alone! By implementing these disciplines, you too can face this dim season with courage. More, you can encourage others as you carry your internal flame from socially distant hearth to socially distant hearth.

This little volume contains hard-won helps for navigating the DST transition. For many years of my life, I tried to white-knuckle it, bullying myself for having a harder time with the darkness than others seemed to. I suffered alone. I tried exercise, journaling, prayer, meditation, and therapy. Each helped me a little. Slowly, as I shared my struggle, I found I was not alone. Many people struggle with nocturnal existence.

Dear friends, this is what I know so far. Some of it is a joke, but most of it is real (esp. space station). If you have questions about which is which, please email me.

And yes, "many a true word is spoken in jest," but this volume is not meant to replace professional counseling, so please reach out to a pro if you're in real deep.

Your fellow traveler on this road,

*Sarah Carter*

Sarah Carter

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## *Part 1*

# *Resisting the Darkness: Daylight Extending Tactics*





## SWIMMING POOLS

I started to swim the year I first realized I was in darkness' inky grip, and I eked out at least another hour of "daylight" that season. Our gym pool had a giant clear dome over it (like in Bio-dome only I was allowed to leave). It was dark outside the dome, breezy out of the water, and straight up bright as hell beneath the surface. I still can't do turns and often kicked folks that asked to share my lane, but I was up front about this.

Yes, likely you will be cold as you change from your street clothes to your suit. Yes, you might pinch your hair putting on your swim cap. But as long as you're submerged, you beat the system.

Swimming reminds you that summer exists, and keeps you focused on packing and unpacking. Rolling your wet towel the same way each day (or different ways) is comforting. You might even make a swim friend.

We already know that  
**EXERCISE** is **FREE DRUGS**,  
but in these troubling times,  
**SPORTS** also offer **FREE**  
**ARTIFICIAL DAYLIGHT**.

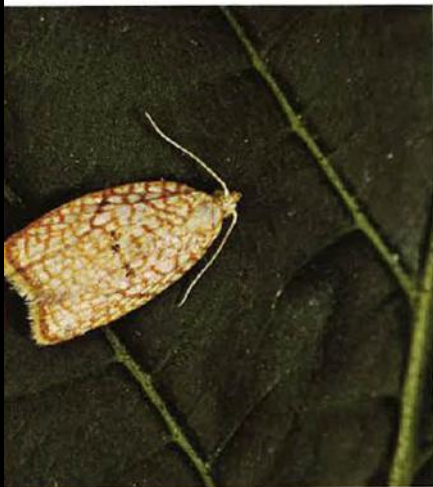


## TENNIS

Growing up, we played a game called "Is it a police spotlight or a tennis court?" Okay, we didn't because one of these things moves and one is stationary, but you get the point. Where else is it always **HIGH NOON** after sundown? Where else are people defying nocturnal existence?

Also, traditionally in tennis, you have to move your body, therefore, **FREE DRUGS**. I guess it's possible to just lie on the tennis court, but there's the complication of people wanting to play. Also, sometimes tennis courts have that kind of button that you have to push every 15 minutes.

The point is: **TENNIS COURTS ARE BRIGHT**. If you hate tennis & can find a lesser used court, maybe you can bring a boom box and have a dance party with your friends. You're paying for all that shiny light with your tax dollars so you might as well la-la-live it up.





## Early Risers Club

I know, I know, some of you night owls just stopped reading. Parents are like, "Is there any other way?" All I'm saying is, get it while the getting's good. If you feel better when it's brighter, can you shift your schedule temporarily and see how you do? Then, if you fall asleep earlier, your awake time after dark will be that much shorter.

Enlist the help of your annoyingly awake friend for a morning walk. Ask your boss if you can start 1 hr early so you have some daylight after work. IMO, bargaining for screen time with the sun is well worth the scheduling interruption. It may just be the jolt you need.

## Light Therapy

I have never had a SAD lamp, but I know a bunch of people who have and they DIG IT. I just googled SAD lamps and there are a bunch of hip versions that are affordable and also well-designed, and well, it's worth a shot. If you don't care for it, you can always trade it for an air fryer on Facebook Marketplace. Who's it gonna hurt? Honestly, I wish tanning beds had the same effect.

## Vitamin D

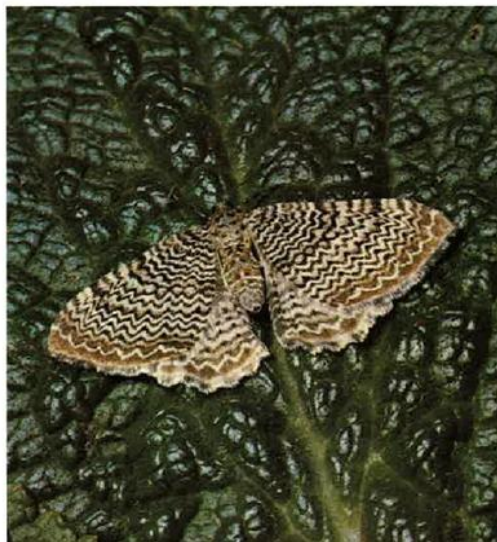
What if I told you there is a way to pressure wash your insides with golden sunlight? VITAMIN D rules. I take mine in a capsule that includes Magnesium & Zinc. Many vegans choose to stick to vitamin D2 which typically comes from shrooms/yeast while D3 can come from fish oil or sheep's wool. YUM!



*Part 2*

*I Love You  
But I've Chosen Darkness:  
Leaning In*





## SPACE STATION

One of the most effective strategies I've used on my brain during the infernal darkness is called SPACE STATION. The basic premise? Whenever you reach a boiling point of anger or despair, just remind yourself out loud that, "Well, we all live on this space station now so we're going to have to get used to it."

It was incredibly kind of you to sacrifice the lush green lawns of Earth to develop a new frontier for humankind (and maybe all the cool aliens we will have joined forces with by this point in this scenario that you are creating right now).

It's a well played joke on yourself that spends socially, too. People who overhear you saying it laugh because they think you're just joking . . . and you are. Kind of.

Play spacey music (see playlist link on the back of this zine). Read space books to glean material for your dialogues. You are a citizen of outer space now. Make yourself at home (until March).

### RECOMMENDED SPACE OR SPACE-ADJACENT READING

*Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card

*The Sirens of Titan* by Kurt Vonnegut

*Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula K. Le Guin

*Dawn* by Octavia E. Butler

*Just anything* by Ray Bradbury

*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams

*Dune* by Frank Herbert

*Packing for Mars* by Mary Roach

*The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery



## HYGGE

TBH it annoyed the hell out of me when this word was used by American retailers to sell socks at Christmas a couple years ago. Since then, I've learned the following about this actually cool practice/lifestyle/thing called hygge (pronounced hoo-ugh).

1. hygge is special "seeds of happiness" planted by the Danes to break up the grey, cold months
2. umbrella term for cozy, comforting, favorite people-involving activities and things (like childhood foods, warm fires, perfect dinner conversation, and having tea in china cups.



**THE 10,000 POUND PHONE**  
Reaching out to a friend who creates conversational space for you can sometimes feel impossible. But it 1. invites you into the buoyancy of someone else's energy 2. shows them you are thinking of them 3. gives you a break from you.



## **REST LIKE A FARMER**

A couple winters ago, I asked a farmer friend what she had been up to, and she said, "Resting." I was flabbergasted. Of course, she was doing off-season things outside sometimes, but mostly, she said she was just going to bed when she wanted to and reading a lot. A person doing this in real life had literally not even seemed possible.

Winter is not everyone's off-season, but maybe there are ways you can plan to rest like this. This dang pandemic has been horrible, but it has also helped me realize what I actually like to do when FOMO isn't running my brain. Even working extra hard to give myself a whole Saturday off, or taking a technology sabbath for 24 hours goes a long way.



## INSIDE PROJECTS

HERE IS A LIST OF INSIDE PROJECTS I LIKE DO EITHER BECAUSE THEY ARE FUN OR USEFUL. YOU WILL HAVE YOUR OWN LIST, NO DOUBT: organize my Tupperware drawer / clean out closets & donate what you don't need or use / write down quotes or poems you find beautiful on cards and stash them around your house to memorize / revive snail mail correspondence / call 1 person every day/ polish your plant leaves / write a new song / digitize old photos / get whatever you need to play old CDs & tapes and listen / stretch / sew on old punk rock patches or give them to your cute little punk cousin / repair fav out-of-commission items / learn to draw / paint rocks/ read about your favorite social causes and brainstorm how to be involved / take presents to your elderly neighbor / make a zine about soups/ volunteer for your religious or political community / learn to specialize in a specific type of international cuisine / learn a new instrument or language / apply for new jobs if you hate yours / meditate /make up dances / pump iron / nap / herbal infusions

## GOTH OUT

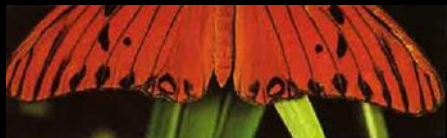
So night thinks it can OUT GOTH your SPOOKY A\$\$? I THINK NOT! Lily Munster. Morticia Adams. Elvira. You know the drill. Pull out your darkest kit and join right in. I never invested in a comprehensive gothy outfit because I was more of a punk but this year I bought a black Russian princess-style hat so you get the picture.

Honestly, though, sometimes it's fun to scare yourself (ever heard of Halloween?!). My farm job is to close the door of the chicken coop which requires a quick 5 minute walk in the darkness. At first, I used a flashlight like a wiener. Then, one night, I just went for it and only turned my ankle slightly because I was wearing platform Crocs. I made it just fine and the fear helped me feel more alive. Now, I always stroll down in the dark like a vampire queen.

\*Caution- do not do this in a not safe place, duh. Also, one night, I didn't realize that they had moved the cows; I heard the hot exhalation of a giant beast close at hand, shrouded in darkness. I almost lost my you-know-what.

But just a few deep breaths later, and I was OK. ;)





## PILLZ

Each person has a different opinion about this, so I will be brief. I white-knuckled through seasons of depression for 20 years. I was hesitant to try anything for many reasons ranging from stigma to fear of prescription chemicals. In my mind, pillz = failure (wild, huh?). Then, last fall, I couldn't get out of a very low place. I tried an anti-depressant. It helped. I asked to come off it as soon as I felt better (in the doldrums of January). My doctor managed not to laugh and politely asked me to wait til spring. I did, and I came off right before the global pandemic. BAHABA. But I have been fine. This may or may not help you, but I wanted to share. <3



*Days Get Longer After  
December 21*



*"If Winter comes, can  
Spring be far behind?" -  
Shelley*



**This Present Darkness (2020) is by Sarah Carter.**

**You can send a copy to your friend at [www.dailyfieldwork.com/photo-books](http://www.dailyfieldwork.com/photo-books) and peruse the other fine titles available from Daily Fieldwork.**

**This zine was written during DST 2020. This year's This Present Darkness will be an audio essay that can be accessed at [www.dailyfieldwork.com/fieldwork](http://www.dailyfieldwork.com/fieldwork).**