

Walk Under the Full Moon

There's regular night. There's regular day. But then there's the few special nights every month when the full moon shines.

These nights are special, but you might not know it if you live in a city - too much light pollution, too many street lights, and who thinks about the moon in a city anyway?

Come out to the country and you'll understand.

On full moon nights, this world opens up to humans. Night takes on a more friendly aspect. The moon shines down with such power that you can walk or drive without the aid of external lights. The shadows and fearful things of the dark recede a bit. It's like nature is having a monthly "open house."

A whole world of life lives and moves at nighttime which most of the time we miss. When the sun goes down even the most outdoorsy of us tend to consider it time to go inside and get ready for bed. Meanwhile lots of animals are just beginning their day, or gearing up for feeding or frolicking.

Go out and you'll hear them - cicadas and frogs - or see the the eyes of a raccoon or a herd of deer. But they aren't spectres. And in the night, you are a guest in their world (in the day, they are usually just shy intruders in yours), coming as a minority.

It's like you and they are walking around in just a muted, calm form of daytime. Everything is visible, but not in the glaring hot light of day - just the cool, gentle light of night. The characterization of the moon as a goddess makes sense: mystery and femininity map well to the experience.

The natural monthly cycle of things brings a huge variation in the experience of what a single night can be, and it's a shame that it's so easy for us to forget this third kind of "day" in which we can experience the resting world so clearly. A walk after midnight (H/T to Patsy Cline) on a full moon night is a simple experience that shouldn't be so rare.

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