

## LIGHT IN A DARK SEASON



The consensus I'm hearing is that the Dark of the Year is far from being wholly in our rearview mirror. So my intent in what follows is not to make this already challenging season easier, but rather to shed some light into the Luminous

Abyss in question. It might be fitting in this conTeXt to mention that less than a week ago I eXperienced my own 'Dark Night of the Soul' in the form of a 'White Night' during which I was unable to sleep so much as a wink due to eXtreme pain precisely where my YggdraSilly Backbone meets my Skullbone.

By way of a clue as to the severity of this ordeal, had it continued another couple of days, I very likely would be in the Bardo by now. Mercifully, while I'm not fully out of the woods, I'd characterize my condition as roughly 90% improved. It's a variation on a theme I've eXperienced -- & contrived to have survived -- once before, my 'takeaway' being that occasional tests of our pain threshold would appear to be central to this ongoing initiatory plot. What say we allow Sweet Baby James Taylor to weigh in :: "When you're down & troubled / And you need some lovin' care, / And nothin' is goin' right, / Close your eyes & think of me, / And soon I'll be tHere / To brighten up even your darkest night." (from 'You've Got a Friend').

Someone else who knew a thing or two about darkness was Jorge Luis Borges, who late in his life had arrived to this remarkable InSight :: "Blindness is a limitation, but it is also a liberation, a solitude propitious to invention." (from Borges's Preface to 'The Unending Rose,' which can be found in his truly eXtraordinary "The Book of Sand," Penguin, 1979). Or, in other words, as George Meredith -- who Borges cites -- puts it :: "Not 'til the fire is dying in the grate / Look we for any kinship with the stars."

And once the sheer vastitude of this entanglement(seeing stars, in me own case : ) has been apprehended, one is suddenly in a position to grok theoretical physicist Stefan Klein's observation that "We live in a shadow world. No matter where we look, there is twenty times more than appears to us. More of what? We have no idea. But without dark energy, without dark matter, we wouldn't eXist." (from Klein's "How to Love the UniVerse," as trans. from the German by Mike Mitchell; The eXperiment, NYC, 2018). Let there be Light. For, as we know to our not-infrequent chaGrin, 'El Palacio no es infinito.'