

*I wrote this piece (Short story? Collection of musings?) on a train at night at the end of summer 2011. Any fear of a blank page was overcome by a strong feeling that I could only write the piece on that train, at that time. It may be allegorical; but I'm not sure it's my place to decide.*

# Night Train

© Harry Cutts 2012

---

So here we are, then, in our railway carriage, our fortress of light, as it speeds through the endless dark. The sound of engines becomes its own kind of silence as it propels us through the darkness. Or do we move at all? Or does the outside world simply pass us by in our sanctuary of metal and mercurial energy?

Yes, there is a world out there, through the glass. Some of us do not look, contenting themselves with the endless reflections, as if denying the darkness. Others glance out occasionally and ponder the moving specks of light that fly past through our reflections. What sort of strange life gathers around such isolated sparks? They wonder for a moment, before they are distracted by something else.

Only a few, who press their faces against the panes and cast the light from their minds to better perceive the darkness, are rewarded. They see colours, dark shades of blue or red, barely perceptible yet valuable clues to the world beyond the glass. Sometimes they see rectangles of white light, the windows of other carriages that cosset people not unlike ourselves, yet who move in other directions.

But other than these outward-lookers, few wish to step outside our safe haven. The light that we have stops us from seeing through the darkness, some point out. Why would stepping outside change that? Only a few ask another question: unless we understand the darkness, how can we truly appreciate the light?