

10th October 2020

Sunshine

**“Her angel’s face
As the great eye of heaven shined bright,
And made a sunshine in the shady place;
Did ever mortal eye behold such heavenly grace?”**

Edmund Spenser, The Faerie Queen

A few weeks ago, when I offered some thoughts about rain during a wet few days in the western highlands of Scotland, a friend challenged me to reflect on sunshine. Since then, a number of other issues have taken priority, but now that I’ve got round to it, I’ve discovered that sharing thoughts about sunshine isn’t that hard – even in October!

We all like the sunshine – when clouds part and the sun breaks through, on a holiday beach, filling our garden with warmth, attracting people to parks, lifting the spirits. Some people suffer from SAD, “Season Affective Disorder”, which is, simply put, a reaction to a *lack* of sunshine, a mood disorder in which people whose mental health is quite normal through most of the year exhibit depressive symptoms around wintertime. When SAD was first spoken of, many were sceptical. But the condition is now recognised to have a “season pattern”. SAD is, for example, measurably present in the Arctic region – where the hours of daylight are very limited in the winter months – with the rate in Finland being around 10%. And the treatment? Bright light, and, best of all, sunshine!

It’s not too big a jump to use this metaphor and go to Spenser’s *Faerie Queen* quote above. An angel’s face shines and makes “a sunshine in the shady place”, showing the heavenly grace we all need to behold. Might we be such angels of sunshine for those around us?

Shakespeare suggests, in *Venus and Adonis*,

Love comforteth like sunshine after rain.

There are those around us now who need comfort after, or during, the rains of their sadness, a light that can be their “sunshine in the shady place”. Such heavenly grace is ours to offer. Why would we hide it away?

A prayer for today

*Where there is the sadness of dark days,
may we shed be the light of hope and love. Amen*

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