

It is not only in our social life, however, that we dread silence. We love noise more than we know, even no other human being is present. When we go from town to live in the country we deceive ourselves if we think we are doing so in order to exchange noise for quietness. We go into the country, not in order to escape from noise, but in search of a different kind of noise. Noise is companionship and I remember that I, as a child liked even the ticking of a clock in the bedroom... There are sounds that are terrifying at night, but they are chiefly so because of the stillness that is broken by them. The breathing of a cow behind a hedge, as you pass along a silent road at midnight, may startle you; but it is not the cow, it is the silence, that has startled you. If nature indeed could contrive to maintain all her busy sounds through the night, darkness would lose more than half its terrors.

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