

Morning View Kentucky
3 December 1957

Hello Mr. McCarthy,

The latest outburst of celestial phenomena, viewed all over the world since the advent of Sputnik #1, has left me feeling terrifically frustrated. I have spent thousands of hours chugging back and forth across the sky. I am outdoors more than most people, and watching the heavens is an automatic gesture; yet I have seen only airplanes, birds, weather balloons, comets, eclipses, and other ordinary things.

The disappointment was the more crushing this time, as I thought I saw something too, and was happy as a sunflower about it for several days. I saw that nice, mysterious, luminous red mist of the evening of November 6th.

It was such an unusually lovely evening for November, that I was out wandering about enjoying it. Little clouds were silver grey in the moonlight, and off to the North, pale fingers of searchlights patterned the night sky, occasionally touching a cloud to fleeting whiteness.

As I stood looking absently into a stretch of open sky, it was suddenly pierced by a dot of pinkish light. It was a tiny flash, but almost painfully brilliant, and I have a persistent feeling that it was a double flicker of light -- two almost instantaneous flashes -- though I do not consciously remember it as such.

While I wondered whether it might be the faulty wing tip light of a distant airliner, and watched for its repetition, I became aware that the bit of sky at which I was staring was assuming a glowing rosy hue. Distrusting my eyes, I looked away, then back again. The luminous redness was definitely brighter and had spread over a larger area.

It moved slowly but perceptibly westward, continuing to intensify in color and brightness, though not so rapidly as at first. Pale clouds, like a school or silvery fish, drifted across the glow and it appeared to shine more vividly through the interstices.

I watched in the utmost contentment until there was again nothing to see but moon and stars high above the wandering searchlights. By the time it had vanished, I was comfortably certain of the identity of the gleaming red haze. The whole world was waiting for