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Section 4

Best Photo: The Pale Blue Dot

Because of the urgings of an astronomically interested friend, I came across this meager, simple, and seemingly empty photograph known as The Pale Blue Dot in a Wikipedia article online. A photograph of Earth taken by the *Voyager 1* space probe from six billion kilometers away, this snapshot shows the insignificance of the planet Earth and human life through the planet's juxtaposition with the black, dark, and infinitely expanding space surrounding it. For humans at least, Earth resides as the center of the universe and the location of all of the activity, events, and interactions in the entirety of existence. Nevertheless, this mind-blowing photograph works poetically to transform completely the perspective of the viewer, forcing him to remember and become better aware of his negligible and miniscule place within the cosmos. Carl Sagan, an American astronomer and astrophysicist, could not have been more clear in his speech about The Pale Blue Dot when he said, "Our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the universe, are challenged by this point of pale light." In a poetic manner, this quote by Sagan and this photograph compel the viewer to become more aware and conscious of human pursuits and endeavors and to understand the folly of human narcissism and their egocentric concentrations. Moreover, the pale blue dot apparently resides as the only planet abundant and plentiful with life in the entire universe, as depicted by this photo, poetically emphasizing the responsibility of humans to be kind and compassionate in their dealings with one another in order to protect and appreciate Earth, the only home mankind has ever known.