

Denizens of the o'dark hours

I wish there were a term like "gloaming" for the early morning. Gloaming is twilight or dusk. I want a word for early in the morning, just as the east is starting to get a little bit light but before it's really clearly day.

I run early in the morning. If I'm not out the door by 5, I'm running very late. Throughout my running years, that's the time of day I like best for running. It starts out the day nicely and I don't have to think all day about when I'm going to fit it in or whether I'll still have the energy for it by the end of the day.

I like it because it's early. It's my time. Nobody else in my family is up by then (well, on good days, anyway) and I don't have to worry about anyone else. It's just me and my running. The other reason I like it, though, is because of the people who are also out at that hour.

I haven't met anyone first thing in the morning who is clearly unhappy. I say good morning and they say it back. Some of them also carry on brief conversations with me, always (so far!) positive. During the day, in the bright sun, I've said hello to people and gotten sworn at, but in that delicate time between full dark and sunrise, it almost feels like everyone has put the bad part of the day on hold for a little while. The sun isn't anything more than a suggestion in the sky yet and the day, for those of us out walking, running, or biking, is full of promise and possibility.

My mornings are better for running. I am happier for these brief interactions with people who are simply out and moving, maybe going to work, maybe getting some exercise. I can often hear the smile in someone's voice as they respond to my greeting. I hope they can hear the smile in my voice, too.

The denizens of the time before dawn are, by and large, good

people. I like that.