

The second thing that happened that day was a rant out of nowhere by my science teacher. I have no idea what led up to it, because I wasn't listening, but I started paying attention when he said,

"There is an invisible world all around us." He waved his arms up and down. "A world, or worlds, if you will, filled with beings, structures, light and energy that we can't see, hear, taste or touch."

Although this was awesome and all, I still wondered, not for the first time, what Mr. Croft was smoking or possibly snorting because not only was he a wild man like the mad scientist in *Back to the Future*, (except that he was young and had hair so red it looked like his head was perpetually on fire) but because this was yet another random topic that leaped without warning from his fevered brain.

Last week, for instance, he devoted the entire period to the *Zombie Apocalypse* and insisted that it was already here, in the form of the Ebola virus. I started calling him our Science Fiction teacher.

"Of our five primitive little senses..." He paused. "Just out of curiosity, who can name our five senses?"

"Seeing, hearing, tasting and touching," some wiseass said, just repeating what Mr. Croft had already said. At least he'd been listening.

"Okay. And?"

A beat or two, but nothing.

"We have five senses," Mr. Croft said, "That was only four." He looked disgusted. We were used to our teachers looking that way.

Still, we wrinkled our brows and tried. Five! What was the fifth? What? What?

"The sense of smell," I said, quietly. I mean, come on, people. That's like a major sense.

Mr. Croft said, "Yes! Thank you, Lejeune! So, we've got hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and seeing. Let's focus on seeing. No pun intended."

(That pun remark of course flew over everybody's head but mine.)

"Consider this," Mr. Croft went on, "we are surrounded by things we can't see because they are too far or too near, too big or too small, too fast or too slow, too dark or too bright to perceive with our naked eyes. Can you see a plant grow? No, too slow. A bullet fired from a gun? Too fast. Can you stare at the sun? It would blind you. Can you see in absolute dark? Not even your hand in front of your face.

"And speaking of faces, let me ask you this: last time you looked in the mirror, did you notice all the ugly eight legged mites crawling up and down your eyelashes?"

"Eeeww, no!" screamed all the girls, including myself. I wondered if mascara could kill them. If so, I was definitely clear.

Mr. Croft smiled, somewhat sadistically, I thought, and intoned "Google it" as he watched one of his female students (not me) take out a pocket mirror and peer in horror at her eyelashes.

I looked at the clock. 30 seconds to take off. Then he said something truly terrifying.

"Scientists say that the eye and the brain work together to form electrical impulses," Mr. Croft said. "Impulses that allow humans to see only those images they need to see."

He raised his voice, probably because of the scraping and shuffling and chatter that always preceded the end of class.

"In other words, we are permitted to see only what we need to see in order to survive. But

consider this: if our brain and our eyes are censuring our view of our world, what are we missing? What is standing right in front of our faces?"

Yikes. Mercifully, the bell rang. We all jumped out of our seats instantaneously and raced for the door.

Sorry, Mr. Croft. Food for thought, though.

Yet as I made my daily rounds through one stupefying class after another, I could not get that whole "invisible world" thing out of my head. Mr. Croft's point apparently was: we are surrounded by things our eyes and brain won't let us sense. Why? Because we would go crazy, or never be able to sleep again? So what are these terrible (or beautiful?) other things that are too big or small or slow or fast; too light-absorbing or light-reflecting for us to see? We all live in the same universe but we all have radically different perceptions of it.

I did google it and he was right: there are these hideous microscopic monsters crawling on our eyelashes! Humans know about mites but mites don't know about humans. So I guess we're one up on the mites. But who don't we know knows about us? Who is watching, listening, smelling, tasting and touching us?