



Prism Behavior

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The prism started to behave only after I lived with it for a while. It threw spectrum spots and arcs all over my living space, and found obscure reflective surfaces off which to bounce rainbows. It beamed vectors of light, coloring through the motes of dust to illuminate the spatial relationships in my rooms. The dynamics of the change of the sun's position during the year influenced the angles of those vectors of rainbow. After an appropriate period of cohabitation I could sit in the living room with the prism, and feel as if the changing sky was in my lap.

Since I separated from my family two years ago and moved out of my house the prism was shifted from the position in the corner between two sunlit windows, where it could put on its best display, to a position in a corner towards the center of the room, where it only got an occasional winter ray. This reduction of the prism to its most opaque state seemed to me unfortunate, though characteristic of the way my relationship with my family had changed. The prism often seemed to "highlight" important changes in my personal life.

On a recent visit I helped my wife move her big roll-top desk into the living room with the prism. This caused a rearrangement of all the furniture in the room, including the prism. Early the next morning, as I stepped into the dining room, I was hit in the eye by a flash of violet light, reflected off something resting on the window frame, a cube of Plexiglas, one of my boys' objects. Embedded in the Plexiglas was a small globe of the whole earth. There was also a band of spectrum on the door through the outside wall, perpendicular to the window. This elegant new door had been built and installed by my wife's friend, and seemed to have been designed to the measure of his small build. I've felt some ambivalence about this improvement on my house. The spectrum lay like a rainbow arched across it. From the neutral realm of light, a lesson for the heart.

I put on some music and sat down in a chair that had been moved to a new position. From there I could see through the prism out the window the shadow of the drainpipe on the overlapped siding of the porch. The shadow forms a staggered shape like a lightning bolt down the porch wall. On the upper ledges of the shadow rich layers of the orange fade upwards into yellow, and on the underledges dark blue brightens to cerulean.