

# 10 Books Featuring the Night

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/oct/23/top-10-books-about-the-night-nightwalking>

## 1. An Astronomer's Tale: A Bricklayer's Guide to the Galaxy by Gary Fildes

Earlier this year, I visited Kielder Observatory in Northumberland and picked up this book written by the man who founded it. Not only is it a beautiful nature memoir about understanding the night sky, it's also a wonderful reminder of how anyone, no matter where life has taken them, can follow their dreams and aspirations. Fildes left school at 16 and entered the building trade, but after years of harbouring a secret love for astronomy, he finally followed his passion and helped to bring thousands of other people closer to the stars.

## 2. The Midnight Folk by John Masefield

A childhood classic filled with everything the young imagination might conjure up from the shadows: witches, wizards, talking animals, seafaring adventures and rides on flying broomsticks. Young Kay Harker sets out on a midnight quest to recover a long-lost treasure stolen from his great-grandfather, but soon finds himself up against dark and terrible forces and must rely on his friends, the "midnight folk", to help him. Often frightening but always enchanting, this was always a favourite story of mine to read by lamplight.

## 3. Acquainted with the Night: Excursions Through the World After Dark by Christopher Dewdney

The Canadian author takes his reader on a beautifully woven journey through our relationship with the night, from science and art to storytelling and anthropology, examining our love for sunsets, fireworks, astronomy, nightclubs, sleep and bedtime stories. His writing is engaging and poetic, speckled with comedic anecdotes and rich in detail. Part fact, part philosophy, this is the perfect read for sleepless nights.

## 4. Tristessa by Jack Kerouac

This noisy and humid novella-memoir takes place on the Mexican streets, as the protagonist travels through the night to visit the morphine-racked sex worker he believes he has fallen in love with. An uncomfortable tale, ebbing and flowing between the pain of its impoverished characters and the cyclical numbing of their addictions.

## 5. The Night is Darkening Round Me by Emily Brontë

A poem to share with friends on a dark and stormy night, this is one of the most evocative and menacing verses from my favourite Brontë sister. Its descriptions of the wild, untameable weather and the unexplained tension captured in the

repeated phrase “I will not, cannot go” pull the reader right back into the shadowy corners of Wuthering Heights.

#### **6. The Taxidermist’s Daughter by Kate Mosse**

Mosse is the master of eerie historical thrillers and this 2014 novel, based around a remote stretch of the Sussex coast, does not disappoint. Opening as residents gather in a misty churchyard to celebrate St Mark’s Eve – a night when the ghosts of those fated to die in the coming year are said to appear –it plunges into a shadowy world of murder, secrets and amnesia. Delightfully disturbing, impossible to put down.

#### **7. Nightwalk by Chris Yates**

For those drawn to nature writing, Nightwalk is a magical journey into the author’s intimate relationship with the outdoors. His love of walking and angling have given him a gift for deep observation, noticing every slight shift in his surroundings, every bird call and blossoming flower. Yates watches the countryside landscape change as night falls, inviting readers to slow down and take notice of the world.

#### **8. A Midsummer Night’s Dream by William Shakespeare**

“Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.” The original midnight adventure, Shakespeare’s most enchanting comedy follows four Athenian lovers as they are manipulated by a herd of forest fairies intent on causing mischief. While Samuel Pepys called it “the most insipid, ridiculous play” he ever saw, it remains one of Shakespeare’s best-known and most adored comedies.

#### **9. At Night: A Journey Round Britain from Dusk Till Dawn by Dixe Wills**

A travel guide with a difference, Wills approaches nightwalking from a more practical angle, exploring how familiar landscapes change during darkness. He meanders gently between geography and history, and offers his readers useful tips on walking safely in the dark, enjoying what our nocturnal landscapes have to offer.

#### **10. The End of Night: Searching for Natural Darkness in an Age of Artificial Light by Paul Bogard**

Light pollution may not get as much attention as the climate crisis and air pollution, but it is a growing environmental problem, researched meticulously by Bogard. He asks why dark skies are so important to people and wildlife, exploring both nature conservation and our ancestral connection with the night sky.

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