

Before dawn

By Holly Lisle

I love this time of the morning. I'm sitting here, already having knocked out a few words. The house is quiet except for the whirr of the little fan at my feet and the purr of the cat sitting on my shoulder. Two little stained-glass lamps cast enough light on my desk to make it not quite dark in here – the monitor does that, too, but light from a monitor is never quite as ... friendly.

At this time of the day the house is still cool. It is quiet. And it is mine.

This is a hopeful time – nothing yet has happened to put an edge on anything. No bad news, no unhappiness, no failure; at this hour of the day, the world and everything in it is a fresh slate, and I can face my words and my work, serene and unscathed.

It helps. It's been a few years now since I routinely rolled out of bed before the sun. I think it's telling that it only took me three days to adapt – that today I was awake before the alarm went off, even though I hadn't yet rolled over and checked the time. This really is my time ... and I've missed it. And so has my writing.

It's good to be back.

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