

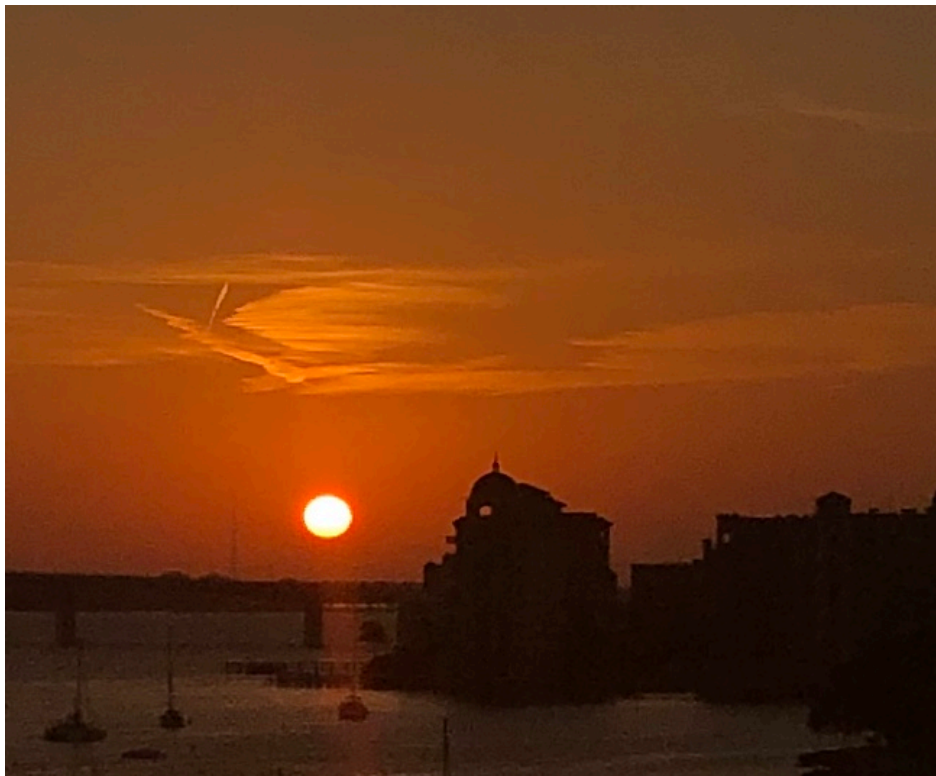
Our Local Star

Our local star is a chemical factory, producing elements up to iron (#26) by nuclear fusion, a nearly perfect sphere, as are all massive objects in the universe, constrained by gravity (the curvature of spacetime caused by mass). The iron in our blood and the calcium in our bones were produced by previous generations of stars at least five billion years ago. Heavier elements (gold, copper, silver) were produced by explosions of much larger stars (supernovae).

Our local star is one of 200 billion stars in our galaxy, which is one of two trillion galaxies in our observable universe, which is one of an infinite(?) number of universes in the multiverse. Ah, the cosmic pleasure of a boggled mind, an utterly insignificant sentient speck, yet supremely significant to myself. Ponder the irony.

Our local star is a typical "main sequence" star, which will exhaust its hydrogen fuel for nuclear fusion in about five billion years and expand to envelope the orbit of the earth as a "red giant" star. Oceans will boil off, life here will cease.

Enjoy the awe. Enjoy this day.



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