



Image credit: NASA

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# An Astronaut's Tribute to the Milky Way

"You're old, dusty, gassy and warped. But beautiful."

Scott Kelly's words say a lot. He snapped this evocative image of our galactic hometown through the space station's cupola window in September of 2015. Framed here by the humble forgings of mankind and the elegant arch of earth's atmosphere, the sheer abundance of solar systems with which we share the neighborhood is breathtakingly apparent.

The fairly long exposure time required for this image – five seconds – accounts for the elongation of the stars, which would otherwise appear as sharp pinpoints of light. Temperature differences produce the wide range of colors seen here, from cooler red stars to hotter blue stars. Our yellowish sun is in the low to mid-range of this scale.

