THE VANISHING SMUDGE

What to do
Cover one eye and stare at the smudge on the left. After a few seconds, the smudge will mysteriously disappear. Now do the same thing with the smudge on the right. For some reason, not well understood, the circle prevents the smudge from vanishing.

Why does it work?
Staring at something long enough causes the light-sensing cells of the eyes to become exhausted and “shut off” temporarily. Moving the eye even slightly will refresh those cells. When the smudge is surrounded by a circle, your stare wavers slightly between the smudge and the circle surrounding it so that your eyes are refreshed. This keeps the smudge from vanishing.