

November 9, 2016

Dear Ones, this is the first in a series of responses to the election on November 8. It begins with a quote from Adam Zagajewski, a Polish poet who lived under Soviet occupation :

Above all though, I detect the exceptionally patient and persistent work of goodness, which could not be completely extinguished, even in this rather cruel century. Goodness does exist, not just evil, stupidity, Satan. Evil has more energy and can act with the speed of lightning like a blitzkrieg, whereas goodness likes to dawdle in a most peculiar fashion. This fatal disproportion leads to irreparable losses in many cases. ... But goodness returns, calm, unhurried, like those phlegmatic, elegantly dressed, pipe smoking gentlemen detectives in old fashioned mysteries, who appear upon the scene of the crime the day after it has been committed. It comes back slowly as if it alone had no access to modern modes of transportation, no train, car, plane, rocket, or even bicycle at its disposal. It returns though, deliberately as a pilgrim, inevitably as the dawn. Unfortunately it comes back too slowly, as if it doesn't want to recall that we are tragically caught up in time, we have so little time. Goodness treats us as though we were immortal. It is itself immortal. In a certain light, dry way, and it apparently ascribes the same quality to us, dismissing time and the body, our aging, our extinction. Goodness is better than we are.

While we wait for goodness to wend its way back towards us, we cannot ignore time and the body, our aging, our extinction – or the effects this election might have on the bodies and extinctions of our fellow humans, animals, plants, air, and oceans. But since many of us are feeling stunned and ripped apart right now, and since we've been presented with something of a black box – no one really knows what's about to occur – it's important to pause a moment. We've just seen what happens when passions take over, and the antidote is probably not going to be more of the same, even if we think our passions are different.

So for right now : A man will become president who thrives on chaos and so creates it all around him. He also craves attention so that, moment by moment, he can find out who he is. My advice to myself : Don't give him the attention. Don't get sucked into the chaos. Take a little time to get unstunned, to grieve, to start to stitch up the rips. Mr. Obama is president for two more months. Take

the time to sink roots, deeply, into what sustains : love, the natural world, art — whatever it is for you. Let us begin to protect everything that's been put in harm's way by healing back to each other. Let us refuse to bring chaos into our homes and our hearts. Let us turn our gaze, these days and nights, to what we care for, not what we dread.

If we do that, as the lineaments of our catastrophe become clearer we'll be ready to lay the groundwork for the return of goodness, deliberate as a pilgrim.

With my love,

*Stausutholaud* 