

For Those Who Grieve for Our Country - 22 October 2019



By Anna Von Reitz

I am often on the receiving end of angry people who are just now waking up. Instead of thinking about the facts and taking action, these angry people just want to attack something, or someone -- usually, me -- and go back to sleep. I have grown used to this response and consign such people to my "Hibernating Bear Bin" --- those who resist waking up.

Harder for me to deal with, by far, are those who grieve for our country, who meet the Bad News head on, but with tears and horrible sadness. Today, I had to meet with a young Russian immigrant who had such high hopes based on coming to America. He didn't realize that he would struggle here, too, with a police state mentality and a corrupt government. Like many immigrants, he came looking for America and found "the US" instead.

His disappointment was heart-wrenching. He wept without sound. He wept for himself, but also for me and for you and everyone else, and I recognized the moment: it's that hopeless moment between when you realize that you've cut yourself, and the bandage being applied. Nobody can say much at such a time. I am a Great-grandmother, so I know about such things, and yet, knowing doesn't always help. All I could offer was a hand on his shoulder.

Then, quite by accident, in my "Poem-a-Day" subscription file (Poem-a-Day is an internet program from the Academy of American Poets that publishes a new poem every day) I found this and I quote:

"My Invisible Horse and the Speed of Human Decency" by Matthew Olzmann:

"People always tell me, "Don't put the cart
before the horse," which is curious
because I don't have a horse.
Is this some new advancement in public shaming--
repeatedly drawing one's attention
to that which is currently not, and never
has been, in possession of?
If ever, I happen to obtain a Clydesdale,
then I'll align, absolutely, to its proper position
in relation to the cart, but I can't
do that because all I have is the cart.
One solitary cart --- a little grief wagon that goes
precisely nowhere---along with, apparently, one
invisible horse, which does not pull,
does not haul, does not in any fashion
budge, impel or tow my disaster buggy,

up the hill or down the road.
I'm not asking for much. A more tender world
with less hatred strutting the streets.
Perhaps a down-tick in state-sanctioned violence
against civilians. Wind through the trees.
Water under the bridge. Kindness.
LOL, says the world. These things take time, says
the Office of Disappointment. Change cannot
be rushed, says the roundtable of my smartest friends.
Then, together, they say, The cart!
They say, The horse!
They say, Haven't we told you already!
So my invisible horse remains
standing where it previously stood:
between hot dog stands and hallelujahs,
between the Nasdaq and the moon's adumbral visage,
between the status quo and The Great Filter
and I can see that it's not his fault ---
being invisible and not existing--
how he is the product of both my imagination
and society's failure of imagination.
Watch how I press my hand against his translucent flank.
How I hold two sugar cubes to his hypothetical mouth.
How I say I want to believe in him,
speaking softly into his missing ear. "

I quote it for you, because this-- in essence-- what I hear everyday from people young and old, all over this country, and all over this world. They want to believe in a better world and a way to get there, but in their grief, they don't see how. They don't yet really know that the answer lies inside themselves, that they are the "missing" horse and the "missing" government.

In my own reply, I gently say--- wake up from the bad dream, my children.

It's only an old man behind the curtain. And he can't give you what you want. Freedom, kindness, a better world--- these are all things that you can give yourself, and give to others, too.

The lack of society's imagination, you can supply that. The impotent, seemingly non-existent government, well, that belongs to you, too. I smile. I rest a hand on a shoulder.

We'll answer the call. We may be slow. We may make a lot of mistakes. But we will get where we truly want to go. Five more States of the Union assembled themselves last week, took up the reins of self-governance, and put flesh back on the invisible horse again.

No need to worry about the cart. It's there, carrying a bin full of grumpy hibernating bears.

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