



## Looking Outward

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Columnist

### Recovering from the election

*When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.*

*I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light.  
For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.*  
—Wendell Berry

I feel like I am sharing a national, mental depression with over 60 million Clinton supporters, a majority, in fact, of all those who voted.

I found some solace in the above poem and maybe you will, too. It's time to take a deep breath, relax and take a close, reflective look. Because among all the pundits, prognosticators,

statisticians and talking heads there was a great deal of surprise and in some cases horror going around in recent weeks.

I remember over a year ago watching Donald Trump come down the escalator in his tower and announce his candidacy. I was with friends at the time and I suggested that this con artist would win the nomination and election. I was hit with a wave of guffaws, and for a year I have been hearing about mathematical impossibilities from friends and family. I said he would win and Hillary's emails would be her undoing right after the issue arose.

Never have I wanted to be wrong so badly. The whole thing was unsettling for me for a long, long time. Government at the national level has not functioned for quite awhile and frustration was building and finally erupted on November 8. People voted with their guts and not their heads.

For those who voted for Trump: I don't think you are all bigots and "low-information voters." To regard you as such would be a gross simplification of what happened. I am a facts-and-evidence person, so I am having trouble getting around the idea that facts and evidence had little to do with your candidate. In my view, what did happen was born of anger and frustration — and lots of both. People wanted change and, it seems, change regardless of the cost. I don't think the Democrats listened to those whose lives were not changing for the better, those who were displaced, underemployed, left behind and unable to cope with the world as it is in so many parts of this country. Trump

supporters looked at the food fight we call Congress and were justifiably pissed off.

I worked in Russia between 2004-08 and I recall a Russian expression and pardon my paraphrase. They say Russians are slow to load the cart but quick to drive it. In other words, they take oppression for a long time and then erupt, and things get wildly and irrationally changed all at once. That explains their revolutions in 1905, 1917 and 1989. Sadly, the outcomes did not work out as hoped for them. I hope this one works out better for us.

OK, Republicans, you wanted some shaking up and were willing to ignore the fact that your candidate played one race against the other. You wanted to embrace some reality-spinner's myth about when America was great and you were OK with displacing immigrants and building walls. You all have mothers, many of you are married and have girls, and you were willing to ignore the fact your candidate denigrates women. You wanted a businessman but got a fraud and con man. Will the planet survive a Trump presidency? Sure it will, but we may not be on it.

It seems you already have to look the other way. Obamacare will not be dropped but tweaked. The wall will be a fence. The guy who railed against special interests and lobbyists filled his transition team with lobbyists, bankers and hedge fund CEOs to drain

the swamp in Washington as you put it. Did he say he will deport 11 million illegals? He meant 3 million. The man who wanted to bring us together hired Steve Bannon as his chief strategist. He's a guy who really knows how to whip up the extreme wing of the Republican Party into a frenzy. If you didn't care that you were lied to before the election, you probably don't care now.

Don't be smug, Democrats. You dropped the ball on this one. You were cocky and self-assured. Rather than reach out to all you only focused on those places you thought you could win. Your pencils were not sharp enough and your message was limp. You talk of inclusiveness but you missed the boat for a large part of this country. You thought the anger was a hill, but it was a volcano.

Well, what now? After a short mourning period get up off the couch, hold your head up and move on. Democracy is a very messy business. It's not neat or organized or tidy. To start with we have to recognize most of us, regardless of our political stripe, do love this country. We need to give Trump some breathing room and an opportunity to truly make a meaningful transition

to outline his agenda.

We need to organize. In the parts of this country where life is not so good we need to work to make it better in our communities. We need to involve ourselves in local government and take an interest in what is going on. Change happens from the bottom up.

We cannot tolerate those who hate, so we need to act swiftly and harshly with those that commit hate crimes. We need to educate children and adults on human rights and inclusivity. We need to make people aware diversity is our strength. We need to protect the environment at every juncture where greed motivates action.

We are now the loyal opposition, so let's get a backbone and act like it and never let a minute go by when we aren't making the powers that be aware of how we feel. If we see injustice we need to fight it in every forum in every corner from peaceful protests to court action. Make noise and lots of it. Take nothing for granted. We are not going away and we are a force to be reckoned with. Model democratic ideals for our kids and get involved. Hey, I have an idea: Let's make America great again.

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