

A TOUGH SEASON

BEFORE & AFTER
THE ELECTION

2 0 1 6

L I T O T E J A D A F L O R E S

USE THE
RIGHT & LEFT
ARROW KEYS
TO TURN THE PAGES

November

Between two seasons: Where did autumn go?
Where is winter hiding? Cold, but not cold enough.
Those high-desert painted plants now all half asleep,
Chamisa just a tired tan bush, only ragweed still going strong,

Snakeweed & purple aster mere memories, yucca spears,
Dried-out seed pods above a sea of brush, tumbleweed
No longer tumbling, but stranded on dusty dirt roads.
The Valley holds its breath while peaks dream of snow . . .

It won't be long. We'll forget about elections, polls, politics & panic,
Back to the real. Snow is real enough, pure enough, pure white,
The color of all colors, no color, any color, of starting over . . .

We're ready for change, it won't be what we want, it never is.
But it will be welcome, first flakes, cold against your skin,
Life almost perfect, anyway damn good, between two seasons.

Surprise

The future is almost here, and it doesn't look good
The future got here faster than we ever thought it could,
Took us by surprise. Problems on hold till 2050
Are no longer on hold . . . 2020 is now too late.

Another hottest year on record, more refugees than ever,
More from Africa than the Middle East, way too many,
And this is just the beginning, it won't end, it can't.
We can't end it either, even if we wanted to. Do we?

What's missing? Not enough compassion? passion?
Or purpose? We take our time & time is running out.
Gotta do something—but what? Where to start?

Thinking it won't work, no answer, nothing to do.
Can that be true? No! It can be but isn't. Don't believe it.
Try to make a difference, try to save this crazy world . . .

Election Evening 2016

Countdown to tomorrow, endless anxious hours,
Where are we going? Tonight's way too long.
We'll wake up torn in two directions: dawn's colors
Cheering us on, fears of fascism waiting in ambush.

Tomorrow won't be pretty, a dark deceitful future
Waiting to snag us, the election now out of reach,
How long before it's over? Really over? Ever? Never?
We still dream of a better world but can't quite believe in it.

How can we sleep tonight? So much to worry about:
Global warming to the extinction crisis, all our neighbors,
Human and non-human, all we've learned, all we can lose.

We'll wake up with hugs and kisses. That should help.
We'll promise to keep going, although we're not sure how,
Almost 50/50, good and evil, almost impossible odds, almost . . .

“Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy”

An unholy alliance—the simple, the innocent, uneducated but sincere,
And the smart, the cunning, ruthless and rootless, with no allegiance
Except to themselves and a few friends, just as selfish and self-centered,
Just as indifferent to the lives of others, the fate of others, of the planet.

An unholy alliance—this is where we are, today, tomorrow, for how long?
Hard to see an exit. Hard to know what to do, harder yet how to change.
Everything changes, *todo cambia*, but not always for the better, no!
Nothing is given, and it's all too easy to give up, stop fighting back . . .

Time to get serious. No time to waste. We need a new majority,
Lots already lost, we'll never get them back, but what about their kids?
A long shot. What could help? \$15 an hour and better schools...

Can't count on it, gotta win this fight one vote, one voter at a time.
Look deeper, there it is: Capitalism: the law of supply, demand & greed,
Can we fight it, rule by rule, tax by tax, day by day? We'll find out . . .

Aftermath

A blank slate, wiped clean, no past, no interest in the past,
Someday soon this will be all that's left, or left over,
Someday soon we'll look back and ask: What else?
What else could we have done? Last week? Last summer?

No future in that past. The real question: What can we do now?
Step one: don't despair. Step two? There's the rub, we just don't know . . .
Start the day, every day, with the same question: What now? What next?
Lots. Start moving, write letters, make plans, talk to friends, go...

Artists gotta make art, writers write, organizers organize, let's talk!
And how about average folks, not artists, not writers, not organizers,
But still ready to make a difference, if they only knew how? . . .

Forget just showing up, use Facebook if you can, spread the word.
As simple as possible: They promised you X, all you got was Y.
Crony capitalism, the biggest con. Both start with C, same old story.

In Here, Out There

White walls, a white paper lamp, pretty simple, pretty perfect.
One-way windows, black mirrors, hiding a super moon
Out there somewhere, floating upward above invisible peaks,
A raku jar, bone-white between two bone-white antlers . . .

The quiet zone—so far from chaos but we feel it anyway,
The future is fraying, we really don't want to go there . . .
Who would? Out there, behind those black windows
Our world is coming apart at the seams, don't recognize it.

Out there, people are afraid, fat cats and greed-heads gloating,
Doors closing, hopes dimming, while stock prices keep climbing,
Winners and losers, too few and too many. What's different?

Out there lies turn into truth, it's worse than we can imagine.
But we can't stay here, inside these walls, this beautiful safe space,
Our hearts are out there, soon enough we will be too.

Post Truth

The daily disaster—dystopia now!
When truth is inconvenient, just deny it.
It won't matter—and it doesn't . . .
Listening to bad news every morning,

As a kind of protest, accepting reality,
Or trying to. Even when it hurts.
Listening to truth you don't like,
A pyrrhic protest, but what the heck!

Looking for other realities, still real:
Snow on the peaks this morning,
Earth still turning, changeless change.

You'd think nature would be hard to deny.
You'd be wrong. They're trying, non-stop.
Nature isn't paying attention—are we?

Almost Thanksgiving

Running out of words, things to say, ideas,
Reasons not to feel bad, or feel worse,
Clever new ways to look at the same sad story,
Talk ourselves out of a terrible funk, this black cloud.

Time to look elsewhere. Where else? And when?
Time to get real. Tomorrow's Thanksgiving—only it ain't.
Time to say: No thank you! No way! No more!
Say no, yes, not from spite but hope. No's our yes, for now.

Thanksgiving on hold until we earn it back, and share it.
We'll wake to a world gone mad, and wait for the sun
To pour over eastern peaks, something to count on:

Ice on all the ponds, creeks fringed with white,
Dry, cold, and windy, colorless high country grasses,
Waiting nervously for winter. We won't wait long.

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