

Day Zero: Comet Strike

Written by Alex Baer

Wednesday, 09 November 2016 15:18 - Last Updated Wednesday, 09 November 2016 17:13

If our clock wasn't cleaned, it was certainly reset. That makes twice in one week. I wasn't over Falling Back yet -- now, in mid-primal scream, I am Falling Forward, imagining many of us, holding our heads as we drop, by the battalions, parachuting in, chutes failing to open, each of us Edvard Munch, spying the ground racing up.

Somewhere around 3:00 a.m., as Eastern Shock Zone is calculated, I think it was, when it was certain -- when the curtain was pulled around the unsettling corpse of the election.

3:00 a.m. -- the time, you might remember from past messaging, when it was comforting to think someone alert, aware, and with lights-on-in-the-head, might take an emergency call for the nation, get up, get the lights on, and start working.

(Soon, of course, at 3:00 a.m., we can count on someone groggy, foggy, and with fused circuit breakers in the head, to take an emergency call for the nation, sit up, and start tweeting insults and partial-sentence rants.)

Like many, I was bleary-eyed, and maybe teary, too, and with the strong need for sleep at hand -- alas, another formerly safe refuge made impossible, another port denied.

So, I went back to old tricks, the equivalent of counting sheep: letting my mind wander, while sleep-typing, helping words do easy circus tricks on cheap wooden chairs, for no applause or treat -- just because the words were restless, flipping and flopping around on the seismically shattered floor of my skull, a gaggle of squishy, half-deflated, somewhat wounded concepts limping and lurching to and fro...

Later on, there would be time to attend to First Aid, for others. For now, the words would have to do their best, and try to swim on their own to the surface for air.

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I now have a much better idea how it feels to recover from a stroke, and to try to learn how to speak again.

I now have a much deeper appreciation than before for the stunning brilliance of Al Pacino's closing scene in the *Godfather* trilogy -- **SPOILER ALERT!** -- when he is braced against the opera house's stone steps, after his daughter has been shot dead on those steps, her body crumpled on those same steps, nearby, his head craned backward and up toward the skies, eyes wide, mouth open -- and the gravity-suspending eternity of worlds upon worlds of time before any grieving sound can be strangled up, out of his tortured inner depths.

When air returns to our chests and lungs, we can talk more about First Aid, about The Steps of Grieving, about What to Do Next.

For now, in our far-flung and imaginary group therapy session with and for one another, we can only start with our startlement, with our stunned disbelief, with our wide-eyed pain and open mouths on the cold, stone steps of this Neo-Democracy.

- For this half of our whole: Wherever we thought we lived, we now know we were wrong -- dead wrong.
- No, a **SPOILER ALERT!** would *not* have helped for this election -- trust me.

So, for now: Take a chair. Tell your story. But, always realize, you will need to decide for yourself whether or not you will kiss the back of the hand that beat you, whether or not you will kiss the golden ring...

... and, if so, how, exactly, you will approach it. And what you will do next.

But, that will all be later. When we can breathe again. When the normal human reactions drain from our souls.

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Now, it is time for us to take a chair, and share a beginning. Here and now -- this is the best I can do:

* * *

COMET STRIKE

(Or: Sampling the New History's Core at a Quarter to Four)

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The Earth is now become flat. Can't think of another thing except, my gawd -- *that's that* ('scuse me while I rub this stark sting).

Let the weeping disbelief begin! Let my long, sleeping relief begin!
The king, as we know, has no clothes -- and my own? They no longer feel close.
The future has been snapped, upended and the present, scuttled and ended.
(What now, the fate for our cool brains and facts, our old decency and diplomacy? How to now face their hot feelings and fears, this new degradation of democracy?)

* * * Life persists, even beyond comet strikes, even beyond dinosaurs, until a new
form of virulent life takes root,
settles in, and proclaims all that it sees and likes

as something to be claimed and seized -- and settled by strife.

Older life can suddenly become the opening feast for the Newer. (This isn't the first time
that some lives *objected*
to being the fodder.)

And so: The circle completes. The spiral moves forward. The pinwheel goes round
and round.

* * *

To think we were worried about global climate change, when we had a perfectly good Extinction Level Event like

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this

in our immediate future...

Sorry. It's the surprise coming out. Reflexes, you know. Easy mistake to make in Day Zero of Group...

It will be some time before I can make myself think about The Munsters - in - The White House,

and controlling all three branches of government,

in between gilding the Lincoln Bedroom

for lease,

twenny million a night.

* * * We share more than ninety-nine percent of our genes with primates.

(This neatly explains the very messy, 600-plus day season just past, along with all the threat-growls, the chest-beating, the play-humping, and the shit-flinging.)

As I heal, I try to remember the mixed blessing of rising above, and the benefits of humor as bandages, and tell myself:

With these genes, you expected something else?