

Journey of a Wounded Healer

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4. *Know ye not that ye are gods?*

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I am always reminded, whenever I'm inclined to feel sorry for myself, how the situation might easily be worse. For me, from the perspective of several decades on the planet, it has become a true consolation. I might have died in the woods or failed to make it back to the house to the telephone. My stroke could have been more debilitating than it was. I am grateful that none of these worse cases has come to pass. And I am reminded daily by the doctors, nurses, nursing assistants and other staff, floor polishers and trash collectors, who left unsafe conditions in their home countries, how fortunate I am to have been born an American.

The staff of the hospital in Albany is a United Nations of people from Russia, Ukraine, Jamaica, Nigeria, Albania, and other places who came here to make better lives for themselves, often starting over again at the bottom. They want to be here. And their dedication to their jobs, from low to high, is an inspiring example to me. Most of them go way beyond the mere requirements of their vocations. I believe they genuinely want to help people. They are givers. They are healers.

It is easy for most Americans to take their freedoms and security and even their health for granted. These emigres were not born into these blessings but had to struggle, often learning a new language and adjusting to a new culture, to obtain the privileges and graces so many born-Americans do not value or even consider. In all that has happened to me and around me, I have been blessed beyond measure and I am grateful not to have forgotten this.

As I look out the window of my room and see the rippling of the flag in the wind, I think of the sacrifice of blood and limbs and lives offered for our common safety and welfare. I am reminded of the rule of law that protects us from tyranny and abuse, that orders our lives in mutually beneficial ways, and enables us to look forward to better lives for ourselves and our children.

So, when I might feel my complaining would be justified, I am happy to gain a truer perspective that reminds me of how much worse circumstances are for the greater part of my fellow human beings. We live like kings and complain like paupers. *Know ye not that ye are gods?*