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At the Neoliberal Funeral: "I'm Sorry for Your Loss"



Photo by [The Good Funeral Guide](#)

So, yeah, I'm standing here at the funeral looking at the corpse. It's got a liberal application of makeup covering the reality of death, but you can still see it steaming under there. It's that hidden decay that moves forward despite the chemical concoctions. Microscopic changes until they aren't. This is one of those funerals that you go to out of obligation. You really could not stand the guy. You know about this dead relative and their history of misdeeds. They did so many things to bring this death upon themselves, yet you understand the wailing in the front aisle. Even when someone this hideous passes away, those who were accustomed to the abuse feel lost without it. The void is frightening.

And not to mention the potential is being filled with a stepdad who kinda looks with lust at the family kids. Mom is already planning to remarry and the new guy is beyond worrisome. No wonder the kids are so messed up. I don't even smoke, but this feels like a time to slip away from this funeral to the alley to hang out with those who do, take an all-knowing drag, just this once, and not go back in.

The loss that the true left signaled might happen actually did. Who knew playing chicken with reproductive rights over the years as a funding ploy might turn out this way? The thing is, I don't know that any of this is materially going to change the lives of those with ample money. They will always find ways to take care of themselves and their family, be it trips to "Europe"—please put your fingers around Europe when you read this (sorry for the overuse of air quotes, of course I mean Ob-Gyns who do abortions) or any other number of life changing alterations for the little people that translate over to only inconveniences for the wealthy.

And beyond this concern and the very real anxiety that anyone not male, white, straight, etc is feeling, I can't help but feel baffled by the behavior of the liberal "brunch crowd" (sorry, by that I mean assholes who put their own material convenience above the very real struggles and plights of others). You know who I mean, the ones going into the DNC with their hands literally covering their ears so they wouldn't have to hear protesters complain about a genocide that seems to be selecting age group 5-9 as the best demographic to drop American-funded bombs on top of. Now, I am in no way launching criticism at those who viewed a Harris vote as some kind of harm reduction, and had serious ethical issues with giving a vote to a genocidal administration. I do understand that sometimes one has to take into account if a behavior might give you personally enough time to regroup and try again to defeat some existential type threat. But I really don't think many fall into this category. For those that do, this is not about you.

I'm speaking to the people who love poems like German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller's "First They Came". Of course you know what I'm saying—we were all brought up with that type of feel good ethics, a sense that we would never, ever do something like that. We would stand up for the rights of others, even before we were personally oppressed. Because we are GOOD™. But, yeah—so I think we can see how that's turning out. The meaning of that poem, being that if you, of course, deflect and deny the humanity of others and allow them to be brutalized, you will be next.

Those of us on the left have been screaming about the genocide, but we were treated as if it were simply one of many issues, and not a particularly important one by most of the

liberals in our midst—not as if it is the culminating and defining characteristic of our nation in 2024. Yes, genocides have happened in the past; the nation exists because of one, but to say it is the way of things everywhere and in this present time is to deny the ethical pariah status the US has so richly earned with pretty much every other nation around the world. The partner in all of this, the other nation that votes alongside the US, is that food isn't a right. So, yeah, pretty much the Empire in the Star Wars world—that's us.

So we have, in real time, seen that poem start to play out. I fear very much for the looming Christian Nationalism coming, but to place blame on those of us who did not give full-throated support to a genocidal campaign is to miss the point entirely. You own this shit-show, not us.

This is the path that neoliberalism put us on. Every single time a faux-left candidate screwed over everyone for political expediency, or perhaps an even more sinister round-up, the left to a corral Bernie Sanders maneuver. This is the logical destination, and here we are, screaming into the station.

The Democratic Party offers basically nothing but a dangling set of offers that they don't pay out on, and this has been the way since probably after the New Deal. I don't think that the average upper-income Democratic voter realizes that maybe those checks that came out during the Trump administration's COVID era really did save someone's ass. It seems like a small thing, but I have definitely heard that referenced as in, "They all suck, but at least we got a few checks out of Trump"—that is the way of right-wing populism. They give a tiny sip and take massive credit. It's not like it's a new thing. Argue about issues like this and whether he should get credit, but lose sight of the forest: the Democrats are not offering anything substantial to materially improve the lives of their citizens. And there are always people willing to trade ethics for comfort. I think the best thing I saw post-election was this from @megindurti: "If you are someone who was able to overlook the genocide and cast a vote for Kamala Harris, then you already understand how a conservative was able to overlook Trump's extremism to vote for him."

Of course, voting in Trump, who will likely implement further cuts (or completely eliminate) things like Medicaid or Social Security, will do demonstrable harm to the working class. I'd say though, that you have to know that perhaps for the upper-level backers of the Democrats, losing is preferable to offering meaningful relief to the vast majority of citizens. The citizens will be given some glommed-up reason why things are terrible when these changes are enacted—probably along the lines of culture war distraction and application of textbook scapegoats.

Why did Harris back down so quickly and concede almost immediately, even in the face of some sketchy-sounding voting issues? I'd guess because the real power brokers are kinda fine with a Trump win, and she is nothing but a low-level soldier in this corporatocracy. She was probably told to throw in the towel. The goal is ever-tightening control of a populace in the face of resource depletion and an ongoing effort to continue concentrating wealth into the hands of the few. It's not truly about Democrats or Republicans at this point, despite what it feels like from our vantage point. In our daily life, it will likely get much harder and there will be less freedom. From this we all need to think about what we can do locally to assist those who will likely be harmed from the social issues lurch to the right. I'm not going to spell it out but I'm sure some people can come up with ideas of mutual assistance in the face of ever tightening lack of freedom.

But again, the rhetoric of the Harris campaign—basically that a Trump administration would be the end of democracy—wouldn't you fight a little bit when places with mail in votes like Washington state did not see the huge drop in presidential Democratic voters seen elsewhere? Now I'm not climbing a fence and storming the capital for Harris, I wouldn't bother to say bless you if she sneezed, but there is something odd about all of this. The fact that Cop Cities, snipers on rooftops during protests for Palestine—this happened while Biden/Harris were in office. If you were truly worried about the fascists that might take over, wouldn't you tone down the ones in your own administration? Of course you would, that's why I'm saying this not just as simple as the fascists won this time around. They've been winning every election. This one just is on steroids (but only for aging men like Joe Rogan, not for the trans men!).

Self reflection is necessary, the individual self and our collective self as US citizens. This is obviously not working for anyone but about 5% of the population and it is like a disease infecting others with hatred for their neighbors. We can't keep going on this way; we literally can't. I hope we find a way out of this and I know one thing, walking in circles without turning on our flashlights won't get us anywhere. And we need to take a strong look at how not caring about others, even those far, far away will come back to haunt us. The remedy will be humility, empathy and true pragmatism. Yeah, all the things Americans are pretty much hideous at.

Because again, the gnashing of teeth that is the loudest in regard to this election loss seems to be coming from those who were among the quietest about genocide. Maybe they should read that poem again and have the assignment to write out a report on what it really means and how to stop terrible things from happening.

Kathleen Wallace writes out of the US Midwest. Her writing is collected on her [Substack page](#).

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