

America, the Earth Is Too Small to Be Far From You

To the Editor:

Since I left the Joint Committee on Taxation to take care of my parents in Australia, people have sent me messages to say how lucky I am to be here in Sydney. It is true I am missing working on market to market and that I am glad it hasn't come into law because then there will be something to do when I come back.

But I didn't want to write to you about that.

I wanted to talk to you about America, now that I am far away. My great grandmother Mali was born in New York in the 1880s and she was gassed and incinerated at Auschwitz in 1944.

I came to New York as a child in the 1980s and fell in love with the city so much that I had to come back to live there in 1990, and it was even better than my dreams. Then I came to Washington in 2000 and found it a drama and a fairy tale altogether.

When people say to me, oh I wish I could come with you to Australia and get away from all this, I tell them that there is no getting away from America. There is not a segment of Earth that is not touched by America. Although Americans see themselves as diverse and riven, we who are far from you, like the astronauts seeing our planet from space, see a single light: the light of liberty.

When the Great Britannia ended up in the trenches of western Europe, America was there waiting, and it has led the world for one hundred years. When people talk about the passing of America to the next world power, I tell them: There is nowhere else to go. Where America goes, all the world follows, not because America is flawless, but because the alternative is tyranny. The values we call human, of autonomy, of freedom, a place where discarded persons are welcomed and can flourish — that is America.

I decline to accept the end of America because even when I live far away, I have nowhere else to go. None of us does.

When it is reported in the news that the United States is to shut down in a budget skirmish, my parents in Sydney worry as my forefathers trembled in Nazi-occupied Europe when Roosevelt died. We hang on to every one of your moves. We are counting on you.

And so I have a favor to ask you. Take care of America for me. You, who are its guardians. The discarded of the Earth have founded and led America's greatest empires, but none of that could exist without a government of singular individuals who hold fast to the principles that the founders held to be inviolable. I trust you, the government, and people of America to watch over America for us, for yourselves, and for all the Earth.

Viva Hammer
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