

Speech

Subject: Keene Draft "Paper Moon"

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When we watch children in a school play, with their cardboard trees and paper moons, and our own round faces glowing with delight, our hearts know that their tender lives stretch out before them in such deeper dimensions than their sweet imaginations can yet grasp. In time, their worlds and their stages will be real and substantial, and the happy endings of their stories will not be written except by their own perseverance, tears and blood.

We know this, and yet we sometimes bitterly resent that our own stories, our own dramas, are not more happily presented and quickly provided with happy endings.

And what is it to our hearts when the play goes on too long, and too many people die, and injustice and cruelty have too big a part in too many scenes, and still we cannot step to the front of the stage and make our curtsy, all of it happily resolved in love and a flurry of applause?

What is it to our souls when we have to just keep slugging through dark places, with lies and villainy around us like mosquitoes and snakes that will not let us be, will not let us find a safe camp?

This group, you good friends, came together because an immoral and unnecessary war--now there is a redundancy--rose up like a mental illness in the national mind. You wrote letters and marched and held signs to represent sanity, mental health, human values-- your own kind hearts in the world. And the war came anyway, just as though you had taken an aspirin against a cancer.

Buy why were you not swept away? Why, after all that has happened in America, from stolen elections to the destruction of our necessary institutions of mutual help, are you still at it? Why, after you have seen our country become the international symbol of irresponsible conduct, of torture, of political imprisonment for life, of destruction to the global ecosystem, are your spirits not smeared across the plaza under the treads of these tanks?

Are you slow learners, or are your hearts stronger and your souls deeper than you ever imagined? How is it that you have become heroes in this hard and dramatic turn of world history?

It is what you came here for. And so you must take energy from ever dark cloud and steal some resolve from every treachery meant to disempower you. You must siphon gas from the tanks sent to crush you and fashion your own cocktails. This is your life and your own great part in the real play of a great nation's fate.

There is no greater gift than to be given a life of meaning. There is no greater heroism than to bravely represent love in a dark time of fear.

>From the wreckage of the storms and other attacks that precipitate now from the fearscape of this troubled planet, we grasp the hands of our fellow creatures and are resolved to help each other survive. To represent love in the world will mean now that we must put our bodies in the places where we are needed by our fellow creatures. Politics no longer works with emails and petitions. It no longer works with protest parades and letters to editors. It works now in the shelters of our gathering storms, in the ghettos of poverty, in the isolations of our elders and our children. Political organizing must give way to social organizing, where we serve each other's needs. The politics will follow, the elections will be our report cards.

Until the progressives and the Democrats understand this fact, not much progress can be made. We will slug it out and we will keep at it. But I hand you this map and flashlight: the way forward is in directly serving the people who need us now, and each other, with love and enlightenment, so that more may consciously grasp their freedom and the private genius that is each person's share of divinity. From that world of love we can build the society we have always longed for in our great national dream.

So look to the impossibility of things and know that the happy ending is not to be found under a paper moon. We are not children and this is no play nor rehearsal. Accept and celebrate the fact that we are deeply engaged in a drama of global meaning. We understand that nobody survives this world and our souls are therefore without fear. We welcome the fight, and, by George, we are up to it.

Thank you.