

When I read about the death
of the Buddha's mother
seven days after his birth,
I share his feeling of loss.

Chogyam Trungpa (1938-1987)

A FLOWER BLOOMS HERE. A CHILD DIES IN BOISE.

The middle of July. Such an ideal time to be writing to you about all the little miracles occurring on the land, such as the beautiful white daisy that opened overnight in the butterfly garden.

We think of harvesting, as nature is concerned about preparing for the autumn. There will be Meyer lemons, guavas, tons of wild blackberries, and of course, my favorite, the pumpkins which will be ready for the children of the increasing number of families using our food pantry to pick in October.



I could also tell you about the people who come to help us, or the families who come to pick the blackberries or pumpkins. The joy fills my old heart in seeing the innocence and exuberance of these people on the land we consider sacred. Their being here helps bless the land.

That's what I want to write about, but we are in one of the troubling periods of history where there are other things that occupy our attention. Like the fact that there are thousands of children and their families in Yemen who are starving to death, because humanitarian aid is being blocked by the Saudi monarchy. With the assistance of our own country, the Saudis are using starvation as a tactic for conquering the Yemeni. I have seen children dying from starvation when we were involved with the AIDS pandemic in Romania. It is not a pretty sight nor one you can forget.



Unfortunately, we don't have to look abroad to find situations of increased brutality and cruelty. It's here amongst us. The flames of hatred, bigotry, racism, gender brutality — and just plain mean-spiritedness, viciousness, and revenge are on the rise right here at home. As a number of you have recently pointed out to me, those evil flames are being fanned by people we should be able to trust. It seems as if more and more people think that if they are upset by anything it is allowable to grab a knife or gun and take revenge.

I have to be frank with you. Some of my colleagues here have very legitimate concerns about what I write below. Their attitude is that there are many bad and dark things



going on that the healthy thing for me to do is to try and balance that with things that inspire and give strength in these troubling times.

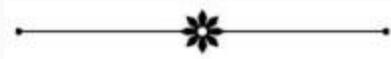
But I have decided to go ahead, because I feel that what happened in Boise is very important but has been buried under what is constantly flowing out from Washington D.C. and other places. Maybe it's just something about my psychological makeup or personal experiences. I saw some really bad things ignored in the 20th century.

A young colleague asked me “What do you want people to feel reading this?” That was a good question. I thought about it and realized that I was very angry and I wanted other people to be angry. Am I just holding in the anger I didn't express during the AIDS pandemic and the aftermath of the Holocaust? Maybe so.

And when the same colleague said that piling bad things on top of bad things is not

healthy and that sometimes expressing the specific details of a situation or even anger itself can be counterproductive, I couldn't argue with her. All I know is, this is where I am at this moment.

So if this is not a good time for you to add to the cares that you are already handling, then just stop here. I would certainly understand that. And I will do everything I can to focus on the beauty that surrounds me and to share that in the future as I hope I have in the past.



For some time we at Starcross have been very concerned about the plight of the Middle East. Many thousands of people have been killed and injured. Children have been traumatized, left without parents, starved, and brutalized all because they are pawns in an incredible political game. We here are on a list to receive and care for individuals or family where our geographical location would be appropriate. Unfortunately, the spiteful attitude of the man in the White House and his supporters severely limits the number of refugees entering this country, even though the United States was founded by refugees.

The city of Boise, Idaho has been particularly receptive to caring for refugees, especially from the Middle East. Several apartment complexes have been set aside for refugees. One of those is the Wylie Street Complex. A short time ago the people at Wylie Street were focused on providing a wonderful birthday party for three-year-old Ruya who escaped from a frightening situation in Ethiopia with her family. The place was decorated with happy birthday banners and Ruya was dressed as a Disney Princess. Most of the children in the complex were eagerly participating in the celebration. Unbeknownst to all of them another drama was taking place.

A couple of days before someone in an adjoining apartment had allowed a man, an American named Timmy Kinner, to stay overnight. But, she became nervous about him and asked him to leave the next day. He began planning his revenge. A child he met in the hall asked if he was going to come to the birthday party



the next day. Kinner said, “You will see what will happen later.”

Ruya was a very happy child. She enjoyed preschool, swimming playing with the other children. Her mother said she was the sparkling light of her family.

The birthday party was in full swing when Kinner arrived with a knife. A child who ran to safety said that Kinner would pick up each child and look at them face-to-face, stab them multiple times, put the child on the floor and pick up another. Among the victims were Ruya, two 4-year-olds, a 6-year-old, an 8-year-old and a 12-year-old. Three adults were also stabbed when they came to the assistance of the children.



The police arrived very quickly and were stepping over bodies as they tried to assess the situation and capture Kinner. The police chief later tearfully said, “This was pure evil.”

Ruya, her mother, and a translator were flown to a Salt Lake City medical facility with the help of shocked and compassionate people in Boise. But sadly, Ruya died. Most of the other victims are still hospitalized with life-threatening conditions. The injuries are serious. One adult was stabbed in the neck and is partially paralyzed. The six-year-old girl has been

operated on twice to try to repair damage caused by stab wounds to her liver and pancreas. The story will unfold as the days go on.

Kinner, the American, is in jail, but he has shown that if he can't stay at Wylie Street neither can those Syrians, Iraqis, and Ethiopians.

These people all fled extreme violence in their countries of origin. They were relishing the peace and safety offered in Boise. There are many bad things happening in our world and in our country specifically. But there's something about the dreams and death of Ruya and the sufferings of her friends and their families that I just can't get out of my mind. Perhaps for me, and maybe for you, it is some kind of a “last straw.”



In some way I feel we are all partially responsible for that horrible situation

that happened in Boise. It saddens me that I have not heard many, or indeed any, cries of outrage or stings of compassion from our country's supposed leadership, outside of the state of Idaho. Are we becoming immune to things of this nature?

I don't quote the Bible often but there is a section from the book of Leviticus (19:33) that jumped out at me and has been in my thoughts as I mourn the death and dreams of this little girl.



If a stranger lives with you in your land, you shall do him [or her] no wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your own people, and you shall love him [or her] as yourself, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt. I am Yahweh who speaks.

It is wise to remember those words. As international travel and mobility increases, what does the future hold for each one of us? What kind of a planet are we building?

Brother Toby