

One Citizen's Reaction to the Election Mess

David L. Smith

David L. Smith is a professional artist living in Dayton, OH.

Ever since election night I have felt like my emotions were being put through a wringer. This election uncertainty has caused anxiety and sleeplessness, not only for my wife and me but for many of our friends. Our emotions have run the gamut from jubilation to anger to gut-wrenching depression.

This post-election turmoil has not only hurt my performance of daily tasks but has taken some of the joy out of Christmas shopping.

To my mind the president is like the captain of a ship. I don't ask that he be superman, only that he stand at the helm, keep a hand on the tiller, and steer a steady course. Some of our greatest leaders have been ordinary men. I think of Ronald Reagan and Harry Truman.

George W. Bush has steered the good Ship *Texas* through many a storm. Al Gore throughout his life has constantly shifted course: first he is pro-life, then he's pro-choice; first he joins Tipper in criticizing Hollywood values, then he decides to embrace them in return for cash.

I have always considered myself an American patriot, but lately it has been difficult to remain patriotic. The other night as I half-dozed off in my recliner while watching TV, I imagined that I was at a large gate that seemed to represent the entrance to America's future. It was slightly ajar and through it I could glimpse a shining city on a hill. I felt that if I could just push it open this nation could enter a golden age of culture, peace, and tranquility. But some political forces were trying to push it shut.

Much later after I had gone to bed I dreamt that I was standing in a check-out line at Krogers with a cart full of groceries. The man ahead of me seemed to have a problem. He was showing his bill to the cashier and yelling, "Let me show you what's wrong with this!" Then with a stubby pencil he was proceeding to re-add the items on the bill in front of the girl's eyes.

"Excuse me, I'll have to get the manager," she said. Those behind me were beginning to lose patience. I only caught a glimpse of the man's face, but it looked to me like Al Gore. Ω