

GO STARE AT THE OCEAN

If you follow me on Bluesky (which has really taken off, thanks to the fascists, so consider signing up if you haven't already), you'll know that I have been at the ocean in County Clare.

I am staring at the ocean.



If there's one thing I recommend to you right now, is to take some time, however long you can, to go stare at the ocean. Or the sky. Or a meadow or mountain or river. Or even a swarming city street.

Go stare at something and just stare.

Oh, and also, breathe. If you need to, do something that will help you breathe: yoga, walking, swimming, singing, playing the tuba.

And after you've stared for a while, sit down and think about how you're going to pick yourself back up again. I'm not asking you to pick yourself back up again.

Yet.

Just asking you to make a plan about how you'll do so.

As Nicholas Grossman explained, authoritarians want you to quit. Figure out how you'll defy

them.

My plan, for example, includes something several other people's plans do, too: A change in my media diet. I was always planning to change the way I used Xitter after the election; I was deliberately swimming in the toxicity of the site. I may explain why one of these days. But everything – Musk's juncture with the government, the change in Terms of Service that go into effect tomorrow, the insanity – demand clearer limits on its use, at least for me. I'm also imposing (attempting to self-impose) a budget on my social media time, just like mothers give their children screen time limits. So far, out here by the ocean, I've mostly succeeded, though the post-Matt Gaetz insomnia made it tough.

I've got a stack of reading that will fill the time – a stack of reading that will help me think about what we can do to fight this. So far, this week, I've finished *How to Win an Information War*, and started *Opus*, along with a reading list on Viktor Orbán. I've been wondering if folks would like to do a periodical book discussion around here?

Trump succeeds when he hijacks attention and rationality. I *know* that and yet have also succumbed, even while I was trying to persuade others not to be distracted. Figure out what parts of your media diet make you easy to distract. And purge them, to the extent you're able.

And while you're changing your media diet, make sure you invest in the outlets that are providing important content, because they're likely to face new obstacles and even new opportunities. Such as *The Onion*, buying *InfoWars*!

I'm also going to try to change the emotions with which I approach this fight. I'm not sure I'm ready to explain that yet – let me go stare at the ocean some more before I try.



But I need to – I think we all need to – target our outrage. There's plenty to be angry at top Democrats, at each other, for. With some exceptions (like Gaza), most of those things are less important than the reasons to be angry at the fascists.



Make sure you limit your rage and focus it where it belongs. Or better yet, channel that energy.

Something else to consider: first, make a list of those personal habits or new hobbies you've been meaning to adopt and lay out some steps to get there. Make sure you have something else to sustain you, for when you can't stare at the ocean. Do something so often – this week, for me, it is yoga – that makes you feel noticeably stronger. Replace some of the time you've been fighting with self care.

And sustain or build your networks. Not just your political networks, the folks with whom you've worked to try to elect Kamala Harris or restore reproductive rights. But your other networks, too. Sometimes, after fascists break political networks, it's the choirs or the knitting clubs where civic discourse can regrow.

The very first thing authoritarians try to break are the networks of civil society, because isolated people are easier to terrify. So make sure yours are as strong as they can be before the wrecking crew comes.



Go stare at the ocean.

Go take the time. Prepare to pick yourself back up again.