

I have no faith in our government. The mass deportation of people makes no sense at all. And, I have almost as little faith in the common sense of people whose ancestors came to this country generations ago with little or nothing, finding a land full of racial prejudice and cultural and country-of-origin discrimination, but yet a place where they could have better lives for themselves and their children. We thought we had begun to progress beyond those outdated and discriminatory beliefs. But, as long as people make their choices and form their views according to something they have seen on television or found on the internet, I have little expectation that our treatment of each other and of our planet will improve.

We will continue to support views that apparently have become minority beliefs in this country. We ARE all immigrants, unless our ancestors migrated across the Bering Strait region thousands of years ago. Those folks, Native Americans and First Nations people, have legitimate claims on citizenship based on origins. The rest of us are here either because someone brought us here in chains or because we came of our own free will seeking a better life. Trump's deportees are no different. And, we have seemingly accepted this outrageously bigoted, discriminatory behavior, believing the falsehoods about immigrant crime rates and dangers to people whose ancestors have been here a little longer.

I am putting all my faith in Mother Earth. Even at this late date, when she has been exploited and damaged by centuries of human activity, I believe that there is a way back to sanity and a worthwhile existence on this planet.

My Bible will be Robin Wall Kimmerer's new book, *The Serviceberry*, "Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World." In this small but powerful volume, the author explains the "gift economy," a way of living in which reciprocity plays a central role. The role of the serviceberry, which some of us know by other names—Saskatoon, Juneberry, Shadbush, and Sarvis—embodies this way of living. The tree distributes its wealth of fruit to benefit the natural community of which it is a part. And this distribution, much of which is done by birds, ensures its own survival. But, in our present human society, those individuals that have accumulated great wealth are intent on increasing their own riches, not in the good of the community as a whole. And now, we have those oligarchs in the forefront of our country's political system. We can no longer depend on a fragile, but formerly enduring

democratic system, imperfect as it was. Reciprocity has no role in the oligarchs' market economy. More, more, more for me is the only goal.

There was a particular Serviceberry Tree I remember when we were young. We knew these shrubby trees as "sarvis," one of the names that Kimmerer mentions in her book. At a certain time in the summer, we made a trip to the "choppings," the area now part of the national forest, to see if there were going to be good blueberries to pick later on. And, at a place I recall as if it were yesterday, my dad would stop, because he knew that the sarvis would be ripe. We would stand by that tree and eat the reddish/purplish berries by the handful.

Now, when I see those first fragile white blossoms in early spring, I know the season has turned. And when the sarvis are ripe, I try to get a taste, but the cedar waxwings and other seed eaters are stiff competition. But, I know if they have been there, they have taken their share with them. Their digestive systems would deposit those seeds elsewhere, a gift to Nature.

Mother Earth works this way if we would only let her and even help her when we have a chance. But, it requires us to exchange the present market economy for a gift economy, a scenario where we are "all in this together" . The oligarchs may not be richer in this system, but adopting an Earth based gift economy may mean the survival of humanity on this fragile planet.