

## One People

Ellie Malkin is an old friend of mine from Congregation Ohev Sholom in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. When I was President of that Congregation, over many years, Ellie was a supporter. She was not just a personal supporter of mine, but she was a supporter of Judaism, the Williamsport, Pennsylvania, community, and all things good and decent in life.

My recollection is that Ellie was a one-time school teacher. Her husband was a doctor. I do not even know how accurate I am in that respect, but it does not matter.

Ellie's hobby, among others, is to write poetry. Every once in a while, she would send me a poem, never seeking publicity and rarely, if ever sending it to the newspapers.

Ellie and Herb Malkin are simple people. The use of the term "simple" of course does not mean unsophisticated, unintelligent or valueless. Quite to the contrary. The term "simple people" is meant to extol their straightforward, honest and highly intelligent approach to life. They respect and love other people of decency, and typically they receive the same in return from others.

The poem follows:

*We are one people of this earth.  
This virus proves the curse.  
The world turns as we reflect,  
On what will happen next.  
We hibernate in one place,  
No matter what your creed, religion or race.  
We speak the same language,  
No matter where we live.  
I was raised to hope and pray;  
To survive another day.  
Do take care!  
In all this strife,  
We will always have the love of life.*

Somewhere, sometime I will have to put together a book of Ellie's poems. Over the years, she has sent me others and I know that I have them around in the house, in cardboard boxes. That is not the place for them. The place for Ellie Malkin's talent is in the hearts of others to appreciate her goodness.

I never was much fond of poetry. Two people changed my view on that. One of them was Michael Gross, my long-time friend and primary care physician. The other was Sascha Feinstein, who I did not know very well but, on several occasions, I heard the Lycoming College Professor read his poetry. I learned from both Gross and Feinstein that the reading of poetry is a talent in and of itself. Poetry well read, can be more appreciated by the listener, than simply the raw words on paper.

When I was in school, I had a passing romance with E. E. Cummings. I have no idea why I enjoyed his poetry, but perhaps it spoke to the existential alienated generation to which I belong. Something about his tone, color and cadence was appealing. I do not remember any of the words.

Ellie Malkin's poetry is different. It is straightforward, understandable and speaks from heart to heart.

I fear that poetry in general is a lost art. It is probably the fault of people like me, who only came to appreciate the artform later in life.

I think of poetry a lot like opera. My father was an opera aficionado. My Aunt Ethel sang in the New York Metropolitan Opera. I was raised with opera. My father bought the Librettos so that he could sing along. He talked about seeing Richard Tucker, the famous tenor, in the Synagogue. We went to Tanglewood to watch Aunt Ethyl since with the New York Metropolitan Opera company. My sister got to be an extra and dress up as one of the cast. I, with my big tortoise shell glasses, simply sat in the hot tent with my father and watched.

Very few people appreciated opera. For me to love and to swoon over opera, was a lot like the devotion some of my friends had towards poetry. Just the other night I was listening to some arias broadcast by Pandora through my iPhone and eventually to a Bose Bluetooth speaker. There I was in the kitchen utilizing the most modern appliance of technology to listen to one of the most archaic and misunderstood genres of theatre. Pavarotti's voice has not faded for me as he belted out one of the great arias from La Boheme. Today we are all Bohemians of sorts. We hide from the virus, we cling to the few friends that we can have anything to do with and we push onward in the hope that better days will be ahead.

I once chided my partner and good friend, Jeff Dohrmann, by telling him that life is a play. He, a Shakespearean aficionado, and a man well versed in the drama of life, could not have agreed more with my observations.

All of these artforms that our kids know so little about; poetry, opera, the great plays have all been more or less backburnered. Hopefully, the day will return when education means something other than the latest political fad.

Only recently I have been working on a screenplay of the life of Alexandra Salome. Does anybody reading this know who she was, why she is famous, and what great proverb was written about her? Perhaps a few scholars do, but not enough of our kids would have the slightest idea of who she is.

Thank you very much Ellie. Please accept my public endorsement, praise and love. You are indeed a woman of accomplishment, a fiery life. Keep up the good work and please keep sending me your poetry. You have contributed greatly to my life and the lives of all who know you.

*Clifford A. Rieders, Esquire  
Rieders, Travis, Humphrey,  
Waters & Dohrmann  
161 West Third Street  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
(570) 323-8711 (telephone)  
(570) 323-4192 (facsimile)*

*Cliff Rieders is a Board-Certified Trial Advocate in Williamsport, is Past President of the Pennsylvania Trial Lawyers Association and a past member of the Pennsylvania Patient Safety Authority. None of the opinions expressed necessarily represent the views of these organizations.*

**CAR/srb**