

The Three-Footed Deer: An American Metaphor

My neighborhood near Front Royal, Virginia is home to several deer, nearly all of them does. It's a pleasure to watch them graze or glide across the lawns of this community, pausing as they nibble the grass to stare at me or disappearing soundlessly into the woods surrounding the houses and yards.

And then there's the three-footed deer.

I noticed her over two years ago. At first, I thought she was limping because she'd hurt her right front foot, but then I realized she was missing about eight inches of her leg. No idea how that happened—some sort of trap, perhaps—but I pitied her as she clumsily jerked herself across the yard and thought, "Well, darling, you're not long for this world."

Happily, I was wrong. I see that deer every couple of weeks, jerking and hobbling across the neighborhood lawns, and I always shake my head with amazement that she's still among the living. Sometimes if she's close enough, I say hello to her. (Hey, I do the same thing with the rabbits. Sue me.)

Earlier this fall, when the doe made an appearance, I suddenly realized she is, in a way, a metaphor for America. She's crippled—are we allowed to use that word these days?—just as our country is crippled. Every day we open our screens or turn on our televisions, and various bloggers, commentators, and media folks tell us our country is going down the tubes.

These people have a point. Rocketing inflation, clogged and broken transportation chains, insane policies at our southern border, anger over the vaccine mandates, bickering and battling over the control of American education, an American military that seems increasingly incompetent. Take your pick of these or any of a dozen other issues.

But the good news is that, like the three-footed deer, Americans are still moving along. We're still on our feet.

Not that it's easy these days. Our government officials and bureaucrats have enacted laws that have hobbled our economy, bringing misery to millions of us. We've spent nearly two years in the bog of the Wuhan virus, plagued by measures that have proven laughably ineffective at combatting what amounts to a bad flu. To our embarrassment and shame, we got trounced in Afghanistan, leaving behind a terrorist government in possession of vast amounts of our military equipment. We quarrel over Critical Race Theory and transgenderism while the Chinese Communist Party acts with planning and deliberation to cast its influence throughout the world.

Yet here we are, still on our feet.

And now, unlike that poor deer, there is some hope that the tide is changing, that the core values of America—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—still mean something and have a chance of restoration. Here in Virginia, for example, the recent elections revealed the unhappiness of our voters with the status quo. We've elected a new governor and lieutenant governor as well as a new legislature.

In New Jersey, a truck driver, a man of modest means, [may have defeated](#) one of the state's most powerful Democrats in his bid for a seat in the State Senate. At the time of writing, [new bundles of election ballots](#) were being discovered in that state, so maybe the fix is in for the old guard, but whatever happens, it's an astounding turnaround.

Across the country parents are demanding accountability from school boards and seeking a stronger voice in their children's education.

Americans are waking up and reminding those in charge—the so-called “elites”—that they are not our masters but our servants.

I'm not one of those people who get all misty-eyed over bunny rabbits or squirrels, or for that matter, deer. I enjoy watching them, but there my affection ends.

In the case of that three-footed deer, however, I've decided to make an exception. I think I'll give her a name.

I'll call her America the next time I see her.

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