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Forever? Or Ursula K. Le Guin Makes America Great Again By Repositioning Trump as the Dispossessed

By Marleen S. Barr

For fantasy is true, of course. It isn't factual, but it is true.—Ursula K. Le Guin, "Why Are Americans Afraid of Dragons?"

The Native Americans she [Le Guin] knew in her youth, who revered nature and did not embrace Western technology, could have inspired the 'churten principle,' or 'transilience'—spaceflight facilitated by storytelling—in . . . 'The Shobies' Story.'—Marleen S. Barr, "Ursula Le Guin: An Anthropologist of Other Worlds Marleen S. Barr Remembers A Titan of Science Fiction," *Nature*, February 23, 2018

I was allured by the notion of transilience, the transfer of a physical body from one point in space-time to another without interval. The Cetian word for it is churten. . . . In 'The Shobies' Story,' transilience acts as a metaphor for narration, and

narration as the chancy and unreliable but most
effective means of constructing a shared reality.

--Ursula K. Le Guin, "Introduction." *Hainish Novels
& Stories, Volume Two*, Library of America

I am a feminist science fiction scholar who cannot abide Trump.

His presidency is analogous to a rapacious malignant lump.

Day in and day out his actions enrage.

The limit came when he decreed that immigrant children belong in a cage.

As an American, I must stand up and beseech

That the time has come to impeach.

Why is it necessary to implore

To remove a president who brags about grabbing pussy galore?

I am becoming increasingly afraid

That Trump will successfully ensconce a right wing Justice who will overturn Roe vs. Wade.

It is absurd that feminists are currently engaging in mental contortions

About how to protect the right to abortions.

Who could have the illocutionary force power

To step forward and save American women in their eleventh hour?

The person who would be best

Is a revered science fiction writer from the West.

I didn't know that for us she would still be there.

Until I stared directly at her signature short hair.

To my great chagrin,

I was looking directly at Ursula K. Le Guin.

'But Ms. Le Guin you are no longer here.'

'Don't sweat the details Marleen my dear.

Trumpism is a political emergency

Which must be met with supernatural urgency.

I have come back from the dead

To tell a feminist science fiction scholar that the solution lies in what she has read.'

'Just when women were battling zero,

You have returned to act as our hero.'

'To win the day for feminist resilience

Women must turn to my 'churten transilience'.'

And then I realized that the way to maintain feminist glory

Was to embrace Le Guin's depiction of the power of story.

"The Shobies' Story" describes how churten transilience enables spaceships to travel.

It explains that unified narrative voice can have more thrust than a conservative Justice's gavel.

Le Guin made it clear that the way to protect the rights of the female sex

Is through a literal reading of her text.

The fact of Le Guin's real resurrection

Attracted unprecedented media attention.

Feminists knew that they had nothing to fear
Because our beloved Ursula was once again here.

Liberals were no longer forlorn
When Le Guin led a rally in front of the White House lawn.

She asked everyone at once to recite the same tale
About how Trump's presidency would ultimately come to no avail.

When the crowd simultaneously described getting rid of the presidential buffoon
He floated above the White House in the form of a big fat orange balloon.

As the gathering vehemently intoned that Trump must permanently go
He was seen ascending somewhere over the rainbow.

Because a group recited one story to show that they were distressed
Trump was permanently dispossessed.

In other words, due to adherence to churten power conviction
From the White House Trump faced eviction.

Soon after Trump went up up and permanently away it was foretold
That he spent the rest of his days painting the Emerald City gold.

Now that Trump was miraculously dispatched
It was time to focus on the writer to whom we are all so attached.

'Ursula, please, forever can you stay?'

'Your question will be answered on another day.'

'One of my book reviews states that I wished that you would never die.¹

Making my wish come true is something that I had to try

Even though after I wrote your obituary

I expected the wish to become unnecessary.'

'For the moment, I explained how to use my text to repel Trump's misogynistic attack.

For the moment, I am back!'

For poetry, of course, is true.

We will always have the work authored by the Le Guin we knew.

© Marleen S. Barr

Note:

1Please see Barr, Marleen S., "10! Or, Forever!" *Review of 80! Memories& Reflections on Ursula K. Le Guin*. Eds. Karen Joy fowler and Debbie Notkin. Aqueduct Press, 2010.

Links:

[How a 1990s Science Fiction Television Series Predicted the Age of Trump](#)

[Ursula K. Le Guin: An Anthropologist of Other Worlds](#)

Bio:

Marleen S. Barr is known for her pioneering work in feminist science fiction and teaches English at the City University of New York. She has won the Science Fiction Research Association Pilgrim Award for lifetime achievement in science fiction criticism. Barr is the author of *Alien to Femininity: Speculative Fiction and Feminist Theory*, *Lost in Space: Probing Feminist Science Fiction and Beyond*, *Feminist Fabulation: Space/Postmodern Fiction*, and *Genre Fission: A New Discourse Practice for Cultural Studies*. Barr has edited many anthologies and co-edited the science fiction issue of PMLA. She has published the novels *Oy Pioneer!* and *Oy Feminist Planets: A Fake Memoir*. Her *When Trump Changed: The Feminist Science Fiction Justice League Quashes the Orange Outrage Pussy Grabber* is the first single-authored Trump short story collection.