

Hello,

I felt compelled to add my voice to this project as I believe in the seemingly minute contributions we can make to society, through the art of language and visual appeals, not only to reflect on what has happened but to also build hope for the future. In the last year I have lost a lot of respect for this nation and its willfully ignorant people, but I have also noticed the resiliency of those who would stand against hate to protect others and pursue justice in the face of systemic oppression. I no longer care for sides in any debate, I look for humanity and humility. The bi-partisan system never worked for the people and I believe we are approaching a consciousness as a society that has realized this truth and will actualize it soon enough. If it weren't for the emotional support of my closest friends and loved ones, I would not have overcome the hardships of this year.

The people who refuse this new reality stir up a lot of turmoil in public that reflects their personal frustrations, without regard to the emotional repercussions that effect those around them. This is stressing to me because it shows me that there is a disconnectedness between these individuals and the state of the people in their own nation. I only hope that they find peace with their new lives and stop dragging others down to their own retched levels. I am tired and I am weary of what life for me and my friends will look like post-pandemic, the lack of power and self-agency we've been made aware of in this time of self-reflection has all but robbed us of our hope for a better future. We will try, non-the-less, to achieve great things, but we can't do so alone. This is something we must all work for together and I want every person who feels alone right now to know that we are in this ocean storm together, no matter what our boats may look like, and we must weather it together if we are to succeed.

I wish that people could leave their biases with end of last year, to move forward with only compassion for their fellow neighbors. I've seen too much hate for my short lifetime, and I believe that I am not alone in this fed-up feeling, so I want to warn those who wish to perpetuate fear and hatred that they will no longer have a platform of power in the new world. I want to warn them that so long as there is fear in their heart, they will never feel the love of the community, only the support of the wrathful. And they should reflect on which light they wish to bask in and what kind of life they wish to lead hereafter.

Sincerely,

**Shelby Jean Purves**

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