

On the Sensei and William Saroyan
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Trump's lost and I'm sitting here on this leather couch letting my mind go where it will and, to my surprise, aikido classes I took years ago (the martial art of aikido) pops into my head. In particular, the teacher of the classes, he was called a sensei as I remember. He really impressed me back then. Lean and fit, stood upright and proud. Moved flowingly, gracefully. Self-contained, rooted in his place on the earth, comfortable in his being. Poised, had a quiet calm about him. Dignified. Honorable. Respectful of all living beings. Sought to create order and peace, and to protect and cultivate the growth and development of all people and the natural world. And fierce as hell; mess with him and you've got a problem, which he would deal with post haste in elegant fashion without mussing a hair on his head.

The point here, they weren't like Donald Trump and his look-at-me, boorish, put-down tweets, reality show, which I admit, has really grated on me these past four years. Or well, one way they are alike, mess with Trump and you've got a problem, he hits back hard, but it's in the manner of a schoolyard tough, nothing elegant about Trump's attacks. Anderson Cooper apologized for saying it, but Trump *does* look like an obese turtle, an out-of-sorts orange snapping turtle. Perhaps Trump's defeat for a second term—not the norm--will prompt Republicans to look for classier human beings as leaders and candidates in the future. Hope so

Something else that came up during this time of free-associating was somebody from the distant past, William Saroyan. Saroyan (1908-1981) was an American novelist, playwright, and short story writer. He was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for Drama and an Academy Award for Best Story. His novels, among them *The Human Comedy*, were taken seriously, some critics going so far as to put him in a league with Hemingway, Steinbeck, and Faulkner.

What came to mind in particular about Saroyan was something I read about him. As it went, he decided that World War II wasn't any of his business and gave it no energy, went on with his life as if it weren't happening. I remember that really striking me when I read it. World War II? That just *had* to be everybody's business. You *had* to attend to that, absolutely. What's Roosevelt doing now? How's the war going? World War II and the U.S., World War II and each and every one of our individual lives—one and the same. Nope, not to William Saroyan. The way he looked at it, he hadn't had anything to do with starting that war, nobody had asked him what he thought about it; if they had, he would have told them that he considered it a very bad idea, all that anonymous killing and mass destruction. So the hell with it. Mind and body, Saroyan opted out.

One thing the political class—Trump in particular, but all of them, Joe and Nancy, all of them—abetted by Fox News and MSNBC and the rest of the talkers, has gotten across to me is that I have follow their drama like it was an afternoon soap. I didn't plan to do it, but I've noticed that since the election, I've been' moving distinctly in the direction of "Saroyaning" that show. Trump, and Tucker Carlson too--I've hit the clicker. None of my business. I'm giving them as much time and energy as they give me. I'm not advocating that you or anybody else do this, I'm just reporting. I'm guessing that Donald and Tucker and the rest of them aren't in mourning that I'm going away. So they aren't worse off, and I'm feeling better living my life--streaming my movies, whatever—rather than attending to their theirs from way, way, way far away as I have been doing for too long.