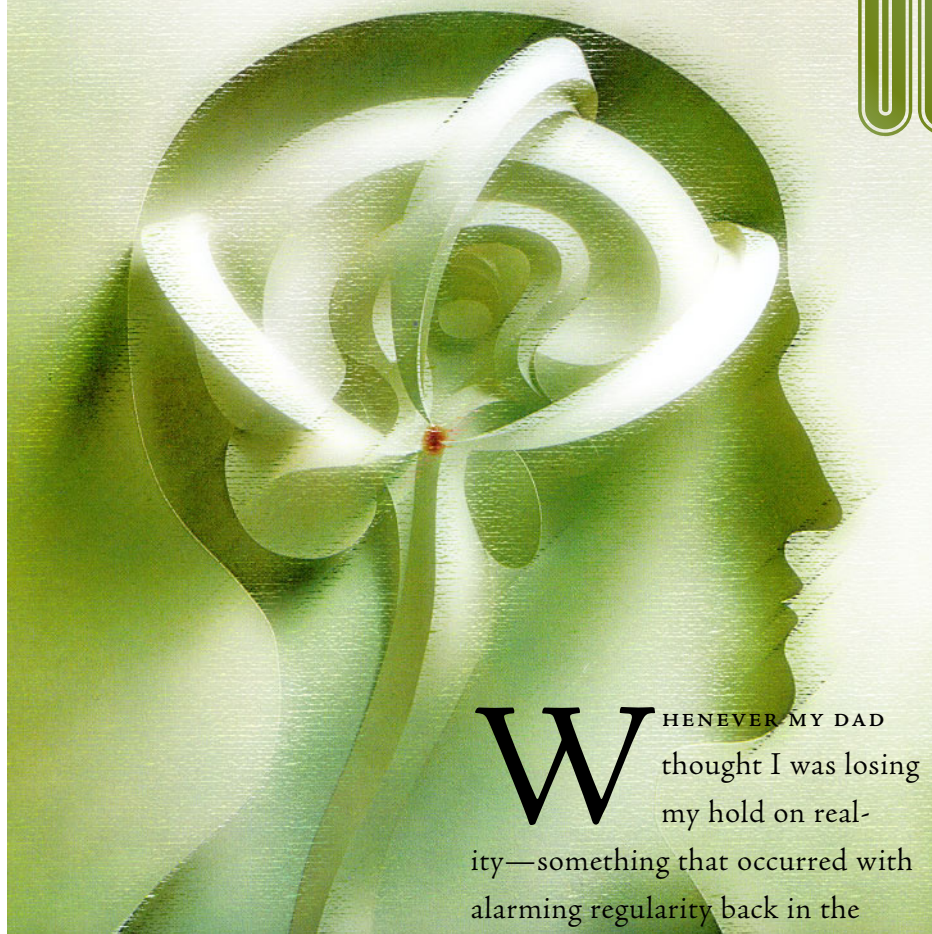


Even though princes sit and talk against me,
Your servant meditates on Your statutes.
Your testimonies also are my delight;
They are my counselors.

Psalms 119:23-24

holding onto our sanity



WHENEVER MY DAD thought I was losing my hold on reality—something that occurred with alarming regularity back in the

'50s and '60s—he would grab me by the shoulders and say, “get your head screwed on straight.” And no translation was required for that colloquialism.

It is the inherent manner of youth to go a little “wacko” from time to time, to try out new and potentially dangerous thoughts and activities, to rebel just for the sake of rebelling. Thus it is necessary for them to be told from time

to time to “get their head out of the clouds” (yet another colloquialism) and return to the real world.

As an adult I am reminded of my dad's sage reprimand on an almost daily basis. Every morning when I read the news, when I acquaint myself with what is going on in the world outside our 11.68 acres of land, my response is to tell myself to “get my head screwed on straight.”



For I was envious of the arrogant
As I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

For there are no pains in their death,
And their body is fat.

They are not in trouble as *other* men,

Nor are they plagued like mankind.
Therefore pride is their necklace;
The garment of violence covers them.

Their eye bulges from fatness;
The imaginations of *their* heart run riot.

They mock and wickedly speak of

Reflections
by the Pond

No. 458

August 2, 2010

oppression;
They speak from on high.
They have set their mouth against
the heavens,
And their tongue parades through
the earth.

Psalms 73:3-9

Perhaps throughout the world,
but especially here in the United
States, these are strange and trou-
bling times. For the first time in
our history we have elected a black
man as president—in the abstract,
at least, a laudable and mature
milestone. Yet we have also for the
first time elected to this, the high-
est office in the land, someone who
doesn't much like who we are as a
nation—someone who takes issue
not just with our character and
habits, but with the very root and
substance that undergirds us: our
Constitution.

Moving sideways from the presi-
dency, we have the very same sena-
tors and congressional members
who purposely and purposefully
orchestrated our current abysmal
fiscal situation, now reprimand-
ing the rest of us for our profligate
ways. Adding insult to injury, these
authors of our demise have the
temerity to deem themselves the
wise and august adjudicators who
will now rescue us from this unfor-
tunate happenstance.

Meanwhile, there are those who
think it is perfectly all right—even
appropriate—that a \$100 mil-
lion, 13-story Islamic community

center and mosque be included in
the rebuilding on and immediately
around the site of the September
11th attack in New York City.

This building would be used to
teach hatred for and incite violence
against this country, and would
be situated in the shadow of the
Twin Towers—would be, that is, if
those towers (and more than 2,500
lives) had not been destroyed on
September 11, 2001 by radical
Islamists.



Behold, these are the wicked;
And always at ease, they have
increased *in* wealth.
Surely in vain I have kept my
heart pure
And washed my hands in innocence;
For I have been stricken all day long
And chastened every morning.

Psalms 73:12-14

We live in an insane world in an
insane time—a time in which good
is reviled and evil is celebrated.
And sometimes when we read and
hear about what is going on out
there, it feels as if our brain-box
is getting twisted around like the
little girl's in *The Exorcist*.

What we need is to get our head
screwed on straight.

How do we do that? How do we
reorient ourselves from the deluge
of misinformation, deceit, hypoc-
risy and evil unremittingly spewed
forth every day? How do we hold
onto our sanity in an insane world?

When I pondered to understand
this,
It was troublesome in my sight
Until I came into the sanctuary of
God;
Then I perceived their end.

Psalms 73:16-17

Those who have set their feet on
The Rock may get buffeted from
time to time, but they will not fall.
Those who rely on the intimate,
indwelling Spirit may occasionally
get dispirited, but they will not
despair. And those who find their
joy and meaning in God's sanctu-
ary—wherever that may be for
them—know that evil will not tri-
umph, and our peace will be found
in the nearness of the Lord.

Whom have I in heaven *but* You?
And besides You, I desire nothing
on earth.

My flesh and my heart may fail,
But God is the strength of my
heart and my portion forever.
For, behold, those who are far
from You will perish;
You have destroyed all those who
are unfaithful to You.
But as for me, the nearness of
God is my good;
I have made the Lord God my
refuge,
That I may tell of all Your works.

Psalms 73:25-28

