

## ADVICE TO MYSELF: RESISTANCE

Resist the thought that you may need a **savior**<sup>1</sup>,  
or another special being to walk beside you.

Resist the thought that you are alone.

Resist turning your back on the knife  
of the world's **sorrow**<sup>2</sup>,

resist turning that knife upon yourself.

Resist your disappearance  
into sentimental **monikers**<sup>3</sup>,  
into the violent pattern of **corporate logos**<sup>4</sup>,  
into the mouth of the unholy flower of **consumerism**<sup>5</sup>.

Resist being consumed.

Resist your disappearance  
into anything except  
the face you had before you walked up to the **podium**<sup>6</sup>.

Resist all funding sources but accept all money.  
Cut the strings and **dismantle**<sup>7</sup> the web  
that needing money throws over you.

Resist the distractions of **excess**<sup>8</sup>.  
Wear old clothes and avoid chain restaurants.

Resist your genius and your own significance  
as declared by others.

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<sup>1</sup> Savior: a person who saves, rescues, or delivers

<sup>2</sup> Sorrow: a feeling of deep distress caused by loss, disappointment, or other misfortune suffered by oneself or others

<sup>3</sup> Monikers: a nickname

<sup>4</sup> Corporate logos: a symbol or image that represents a company

<sup>5</sup> Consumerism: the act of buying products in an effort to attain happiness

<sup>6</sup> Podium: a small platform on which a person may stand to be seen by an audience

<sup>7</sup> Dismantle: to take apart

<sup>8</sup> Excess: more than necessary

Resist all hint of glory but accept the **accolade**<sup>9</sup>  
as **tributes**<sup>10</sup> to your double.  
Walk away in your unpurchased skin.

Resist the millionth purchase and go backward.  
Get rid of everything.  
If you exist, then you are loved  
by existence. What do you need?  
A spoon, a blanket, a bowl, a book—  
maybe the book you give away.

Resist the need to worry, robbing everything  
of **immediacy**<sup>11</sup> and peace.

Resist traveling except where you want to go.

Resist seeing yourself in others or them in you.  
Nothing, everything, is personal.

Resist all pressure to have children  
unless you crave the **torment**<sup>12</sup> of joy.  
If you give in to **irrationality**<sup>13</sup>, then  
resist cleaning up the messes your children make.  
You are robbing them of small **despairs**<sup>14</sup> they can fix.

Resist outrageous charts spelling doom.  
However you can, rely on sun and wind.

Resist loss of the **miraculous**<sup>15</sup>  
by lowering your standards  
for what constitutes a miracle.  
It is all a fucking miracle.

Resist your own gift's power  
to tear you away from the simplicity of tears.

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<sup>9</sup> **Accolade**: an award, honor, or instance of positive acknowledgment or praise

<sup>10</sup> **Tributes**: an act, statement, or gift that is intended to show gratitude, respect, or admiration

<sup>11</sup> **Immediacy**: the quickness of action or occurrence

<sup>12</sup> **Torment**: severe physical or mental suffering

<sup>13</sup> **Irrationality**: the quality of being illogical or unreasonable

<sup>14</sup> **Despairs**: feelings of being without hope or of not being able to improve a situation

<sup>15</sup> **Miraculous**: having the nature of a miracle; supernatural

Your gift will begin to watch you having your emotions,  
so that it can use them in an interesting paragraph,  
or to get a laugh.

Resist the blue chair of dreams, the red chair of science, the black chair of the  
**humanities**<sup>16</sup>, and just be human.

Resist all chairs.

Be the one sitting on the ground  
or perching on the beam overhead  
or sleeping beneath the podium.

Resist disappearing from the stage,  
unless you can walk straight into the bathroom and resume the face,  
the **desolate**<sup>17</sup> face, the **radiant**<sup>18</sup> face, the **weary**<sup>19</sup> face, the face  
that has become your own, though all your life  
you have resisted it.

—Louise Erdrich

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<sup>16</sup> **Humanities**: the study of all languages and literatures, the arts, history, and philosophy

<sup>17</sup> **Desolate**: (of a person) extremely sad and feeling alone:

<sup>18</sup> **Radiant**: sending out light; shining or glowing brightly

<sup>19</sup> **Weary**: feeling or showing tiredness