

Wilderness House Literary Review 17/3

Douglas Hawley

Freedom Or Freedumb

There isn't a simple answer to what freedom means to me. There are things that it is and there are things that it isn't.

I have freedom of movement, but that doesn't mean that I get to drive a Cadillac or take a cruise around the world if I can't afford it.

I can believe or not what I want. That doesn't give me the right to force people to believe as I do, or do as I want them to do.

I can own a firearm with limitations according to whatever local law and the Supreme Court is saying on a given day. I'm not in a regulated militia and don't want to kill, so I avoid gun ownership. As I am writing this, fourteen people were killed with a gun or guns in a school in Texas. Revision – nineteen people.

I can support or vote for the candidate of my choice, but for several years I've had a choice between different losers, so it doesn't do much for me.

I get an education, but it is up to me to evaluate it and use it. Many ignored or forgot most of what they learned in school and now depend on conspiracy nuts, talk shows, and celebrities for their information. The loudest, craziest, and most partisan are responsible for most of the noise.

I get health care, but if I weren't on Medicare, it might not be good. While many in the USA get inadequate health care, some get too many tests and waste doctors time.

I can live where I want if I can afford it, but it might not be a pleasant place and I might not be wanted. Depending on my race, religion, and looks many places that are technically open to me are not practically available.

I have freedom from want, but it isn't guaranteed, it depends on my bank account.

None of us have freedom from fear because of hateful people who might want to kill us because of our race or religion, or some other reason.

I can live and love with the person of my choice if that person agrees to it. Unfortunate people end up with abusers or alone.

I have freedom of expression within legal limits (plagiarism, libel, perjury), but no one has to offer me a venue or listen to me.

I have the right to pursue happiness, but I'm not guaranteed of attaining it.

I have the freedom to try for the occupation of my choice, but nobody would pay me to play basketball or sing.

I can't speak of other countries, but in the USA freedom is frequently unused, misused, and abused.

To appear in Written Tales