

SEND IN THE ~~CLOWNS~~ BLACK SWANS

DON'T BOTHER, THEY'RE HERE

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Armed Freedom

Are you happy with your 401(k)? If it's following the Stock Market, you've lost about 10% since its high of 26,616 on January 12, 2018.

Whether you turn a wrench, bake bread, drive a semi, teach high school or college, design software, or engineer the construction of moon rockets – no matter what your job – only 90% is left. The money you've been saving and counting on for your retirement, your daughter's wedding, or a great vacation isn't going to go as far as would have just three months ago.

Late last year, "Market Analysts" predicted that in 2018, while there would be "a correction" at some point, the outlook for a good year of growth was good.



They said this would happen barring the "Oopsy!" of "a black swan event." That's their jargon for something

very much out of the blue: like North Korea launching a preemptive strike on the United States, half of California falling into the Pacific from a humongous earthquake; or, equally improbable but less damaging, Trump Tweeting truthfully.

Rumor has it that these forecasting techniques have improved since the Greeks sought to know their future by consulting the Oracle of Delphi; or when some Roman high priest examined the entrails of a sacrificial ox, as in Peter Paul Ruben's "Decius Mus Consulting the Soothsayers" (*below left*). This painting is at the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska. Ironically, that's the hometown of Warren Buffet - the billionaire Wizard of Wallstreet, *aka*, The Oracle of Omaha. Hmmmmm.

For all their statistical modeling, however, the analysts seem not to have taken into their calculations the current occupant of the White House. Analysts like to say that "the underlying economy is strong," and that may be so. Except, when someone with their tiny hands on the very long levers of the economy keeps acting out the impulses he is psychologically unable to contain within himself.

Behold, then, *Cygnus trumpestus* (*above right*), the most dangerous of

all the black swans. Remarkably taken by its own bizarrely-plumed self-importance, this black swan has been observed gazing at its own reflection for long periods of time. Since its call is frequent, far-reaching, and bugle-like, one rather wishes it were related to the fabled mute swans. Frequently sensing danger, it carries its wings raised high in an aggressive display; and then, quite vigorously, attacks with its red bill.



As Wikipedia notes, they "usually mate for life, though 'divorce' does sometimes occur, particularly following nesting failure, and if a mate dies, the remaining swan will take up with another." But *this* male black swan (the "cob") divorces when the female (the "pen") ceases to *continuously* gaze adoringly at him. More frequently, he simply ends their pair-bonding when he tires of looking at *the same old pen*. She may then seek revenge, whooping to any who'll listen that he's simply a lout - thus proving what should be the old adage that "the pen is mightier than the cob."

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In addition, it is not unusual for *Cygnus trumpeustus* to “take up” with other, younger pens, particularly if his mate is nesting. A lout indeed.



To the casual observer, *Cygnus trumpeustus* appears to be a faithful protector of his brood (*above*). But careful observers note that his oft-demonstrated grandiose self-conceit usually cancels out such instinctual mandates. The pen will summarily drown a cygnet if the youngster strays *even a bit* from the path of his considerable wake. For him, it's *always* “my way or the flyway.”

This may help explain why, despite the alarmed pleading of economists, the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, and major businesses, the President has gone ahead and imposed tariffs on Chinese imports. Denying that a trade war will surely result, he pulled an Admiral Farragut at the Battle of Mobile Bay: “Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!” Farragut won that battle, but a Chinese trade “torpedo” has blown a bit of a hole in the hull of the economic ship of state. It's taking on water.

Of course, those “Market Analysts” *did* forecast a “correction” as the over-heated market returned to more normal stock valuations.

So, is this the “correction” they forecast? Sorry, I'm fresh out of sacrificial ox entrails. Beyond making

sure your investments are appropriate for you and well-diversified, you might as well try to get some sleep and *focus on something you can do*.

Trump *is* the Black Swan event. The “correction” that's needed is to remove him from the White House.

A dimension of this black swan's grandiosity is that he is incapable of seeing himself as a mixed bag of triumphs *and* failures like the rest of us. On the outside, he is Hindenburgian: a ginormous gas bag! But the spark that always threatens to ignite the fatal explosion that would tear apart the thin skin of his ego would be for him to entertain the notion that he's flawed - neither black nor white, but gray. Never! He must be without blemish. Perfect.



And that is why Donald J. Trump is our Projectionist-in-Chief. Unable to manage anything inside of *him* that would stain his self-image, those things must be projected out onto the screen of other people. Then, it's just the far easier task of managing *them*. *He* has no faults. *Others* do. Truly, he's like a movie projector throwing images onto a screen far away.

Read his Tweets and listen to his words. Most of the time, the negative criticisms he projects onto others is but a description of himself.

His September 2015 appearance on *The Tonight Show With Jimmy Fallon* was instructive. Fallon asked him if he ever made apologies. Trump replied: “I think apologizing's a great thing, but you have to be wrong. I will absolutely apologize, sometime in the hopefully distant future, if I'm ever wrong.”

“If I'm ever wrong.” That was a hilariously rich moment when he was a candidate. But now he's our President - with a soul-destroying need to deny his own faults; blaming others for the faults, failings, flaws, and behaviors he dares not own. He is a man deeply divided within himself. To put it differently: he is only half-a-man, the “good” half. The rest of him is unknown to him. It has

been projected out onto us.

The United States already had its divisions before Trump ascended to his throne. But his internal need to split himself off from the dark side

of his own life contributes a great deal to the growing darkness that continues to divide us and threatens the remaining “bonds of affection” we still have for each another.

He will continue to inflame our divisions because he *must* in order to stay psychologically afloat. That is the source of this Black Swan's “buoyancy.” He must be restrained at the voting booth this November - and removed from office in 2020 - before he drowns us all.

~ Armed Freedom