

# The best human gift is perspective

Andrei Codrescu

it's also the worst  
when used in circumstances calling for a closeup  
or in circumstances that call for detachment  
it is only a gift when it employs the appropriate distance  
that minimizes pain  
between the observer and the observed

.  
we have a school for teaching appropriate distance  
it's called a slum a favella

.  
how long  
do I have to stay away?

.  
a circumstance is a circus and a stance

.  
without the circus I fold like a limp rag  
when the circus comes I take a stance

.  
i am an observer at the circus, rarely get paid

Andrei Codrescu is a Romanian-born American poet, novelist, essayist, screenwriter, and commentator for National Public Radio. This poem is from the author's forthcoming book of poetry, *Too Late for Nightmares* (Alba Press). He writes, "Fifty books later I still think that words are not outrageous enough."

He lives and works in Brooklyn.

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