

“Anglosphere,” and western Europe together have enough wealth and a wide enough geographic distribution of strength to be a pivotal power in the long-term clash of civilizations, even in a world in which economic activity and demographic growth are centered in the east and south.

This West would be more like the British Empire of the nineteenth century than the American empire at the end of the twentieth, operating in terms of “splendid isolation” within its own vast sphere and regarding with jealousy the rise of other great powers.

Such jealousy need not lead to war: imperial Britain long played the role of offshore balancer in Europe, and the united West can be the balancer of civilizations, working with others as needed to check and constrain the rise of a civilizational hegemon. This is the closest the world might ever come to an equilibrium of civilizations and states—a larger application of the old Augsburg formula of *cuius regio, eius religio*. That would not be the end of the clash of civilizations, but it would provide a basis for greater security and respect. 🏰

## Halloween

---

Amit Majmudar

We aren't monsters, we're just masks  
With bite-sized kids inside.  
The licorice-black new moon tonight  
Has got something to hide.

The lights are off in all the houses  
Up and down this street.  
The gumdrop has a needle gouge  
And isn't safe to eat.

The monster wears a judge's robe,  
The monster wears a badge,  
The monster wears a suit and gathers  
Kids into his bag.

We stumble singly up the steps,  
We rap on the darkened door  
And drop like candy from a hand  
Into the opened floor.

---

Amit Majmudar's latest book is *Godsong: A Verse Translation of the Bhagavad-Gita, with Commentary* (Knopf, 2018). His forthcoming books are *Soar: A Novel* (Penguin India, 2019) and *Kill List: Poems* (Knopf, 2020).