

Duquesne University

## Duquesne Scholarship Collection

---

Hallowed Secularism

The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian  
Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly  
Excellence and Professor of Law

---

9-6-2020

### September 6, 2020: "art is not enough, but art is all we have"

Bruce Ledewitz

*Duquesne University*, ledewitz@duq.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism>



Part of the [Constitutional Law Commons](#), and the [Law and Philosophy Commons](#)

---

#### Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2020). September 6, 2020: "art is not enough, but art is all we have". Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/1333>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly Excellence and Professor of Law at Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hallowed Secularism by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection. For more information, please contact [beharyr@duq.edu](mailto:beharyr@duq.edu).

Title: "art is not enough, but art is all we have"

Date: 2020-09-06T10:26:00.001-04:00

9/6/2020--One of the saddest book review/essays I have ever read is by the writer Rumaan Alam, reviewing *Collected Stories* by Lorrie Moore in the *New York Review* August 20, 2020 issue. (here). It's a really good review. Alam admires Moore's work and has great insights into it. But he detects and shares a decline in optimism over the years: "In the decade that elapsed between *Birds of America* [1998] and *A Gate at the Stairs* [2009], that premillennial optimism—we thought Al Gore would be president!—hardens. ...The writer sees the world differently now, and maybe with the wisdom of age, it's more difficult to sustain optimism." But it's not really a matter of optimism or pessimism. It's worse than that. In the end, art does not console us. But nothing else does either. That conclusion is the source of Alam's last line--"This story reminds us that art is not enough, but it is all we have." But is it all we have? In terms of my new book, Alam answers no to Bernard Lonergan's question, is the universe on our side? You can build a civilization out of the no, but it is not easy to do so. Nor is it necessary. There is also a potential yes, even for those who do not believe in God. That is the secret of renewal.