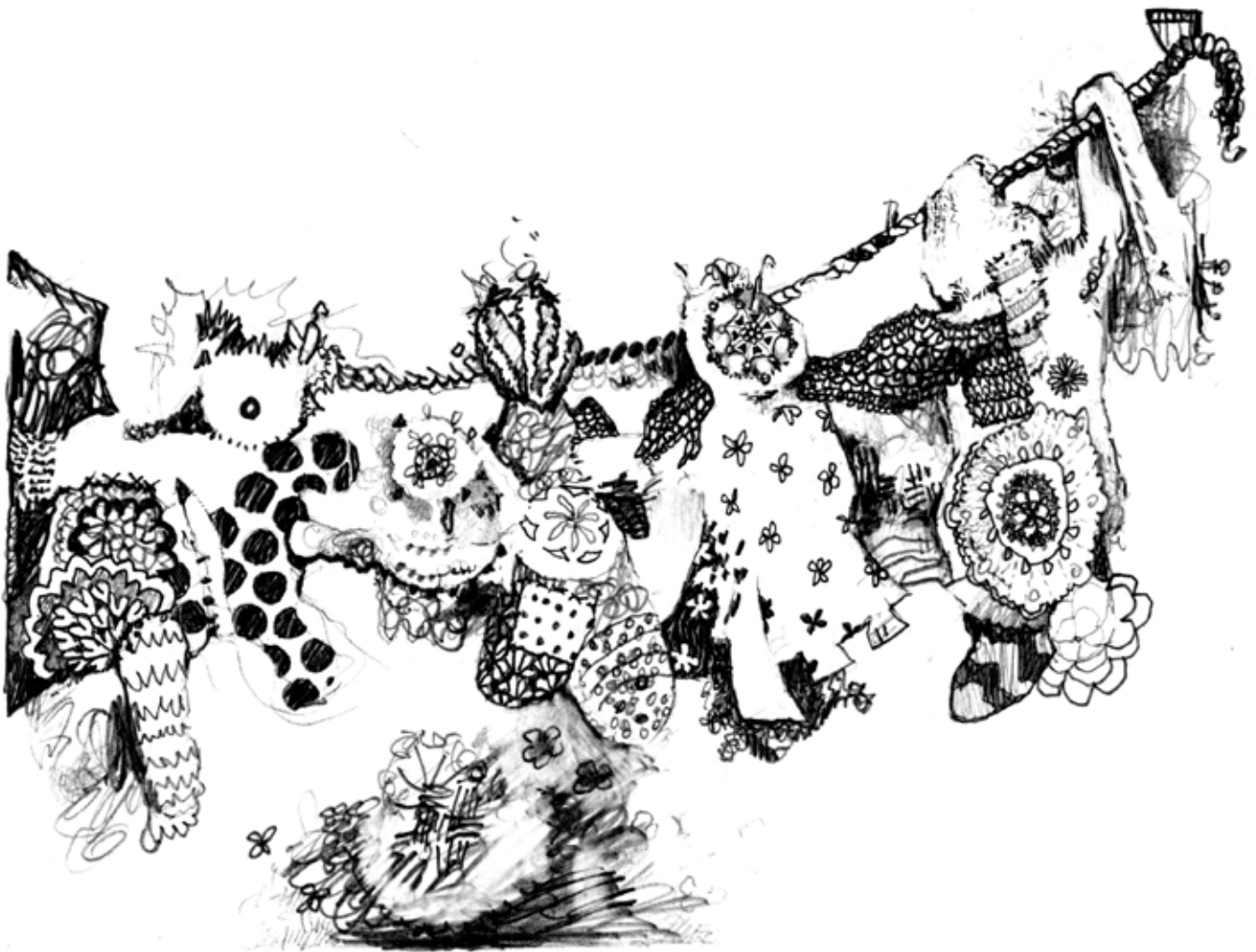


For A 2008 Better World



POEMS AND DRAWINGS ON
PEACE JUSTICE BY
Greater Cincinnati Artists

“For a Better World” 2008

Poems and Drawings
on
Peace and Justice

by
Greater Cincinnati Artists

Editor:
Saad Ghosn

*“I prefer to be
a dreamer among the humblest,
with visions to be realized,
than lord among those
without dreams and desires.”*

*“Yesterday is but today’s memory,
and tomorrow is today’s dream.”*

*“Tenderness and kindness are not
signs of weakness and despair,
but manifestations
of strength and resolutions.”*

Kahlil Gibran (1883 - 1931)

Foreword

According to Irish poet Edna Langley, if one cannot imagine poetry, one cannot imagine peace. Poetry, pacifist at its root, keeps, however, a large place for a just and vivifying anger. Poets and artists, witnesses and reflectors of their times, are moved by injustice, abuse, violence, wars; using their potent and powerful voices, they speak of these evils, of their mischief, and by this doing help trigger a change for a better world, a world of peace and justice after their hearts, their dreams, their beliefs. Poets and artists often make the invisible clear and the desired possible and real.

In this fifth year's book of poems and drawings on peace and justice, poets and visual artists from Greater Cincinnati, ages 10 to 85 years, combined their voices and their visions for a better world. Fifty one poets and 36 visual artists, with eloquence and acuity, strengthened each other's hopes and dreams. They rejected a grim status quo, denounced unjust societal wrongs, renounced violence and its consequences, and welcome a change in values towards compassion, forgiveness and understanding.

In a world torn apart by wars and injustice, these artists questioned the reasons for violence, wept for the dead, worried for the vulnerable mother and child, revolted for the oppressed poor, homeless and weak, rejected inequality, expressed concern for the battered environment. They challenged the prevailing societal values of materialism, consumerism and domination, and painted a beautiful world, one of diversity and equality, where peace is based on truth, justice, equal opportunity and kindness.

With their lucid song, these artists also confronted the evil in this world and promised to stand up for the fight. Their song is an appeal to each of us to join in and make a change; it seeks to eliminate our isolation and loneliness and invites us to hold hands and share in the same well of strength and energy for a better world.

To every participating poet and artist, and to everyone who directly or indirectly joined in the making of this book and in the spread of its message, my heartfelt thanks and gratitude.

My appreciation also goes to Arturo Gutierrez-Plaza, Michael Henson, William Howes and Jerry Judge, who kindly reviewed all the submitted poems and provided their editorial advice; and to Andrew Au and Michael Link who graciously volunteered their time and technical skills in putting this book together.

For a better world, always, a world of love, peace and justice.

Saad Ghosn
Book editor and organizer

April 2008

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POEMS:

A. A. AARON

A. A. Aaron, born in Antarctica, is and 'archy'ologist and a 'Drake'oholic.
His poetry can be read at <http://aachelabelaaron.blogspot.com>

JEFFREY HILLARD

Jeffrey Hillard is the author of four books of poems, a chapbook of short stories, and is publisher and editor of the new online magazine, *RED! Webzine* (www.redwebzine.org). Journalism-based and eclectic, RED! is devoted to sharing stories of positive transformation in the lives of prisoners and formerly incarcerated individuals internationally, as well as stories of innovations and innovative people in the world of criminal justice. Jeffrey is associate professor of English at the College of Mount St. Joseph.

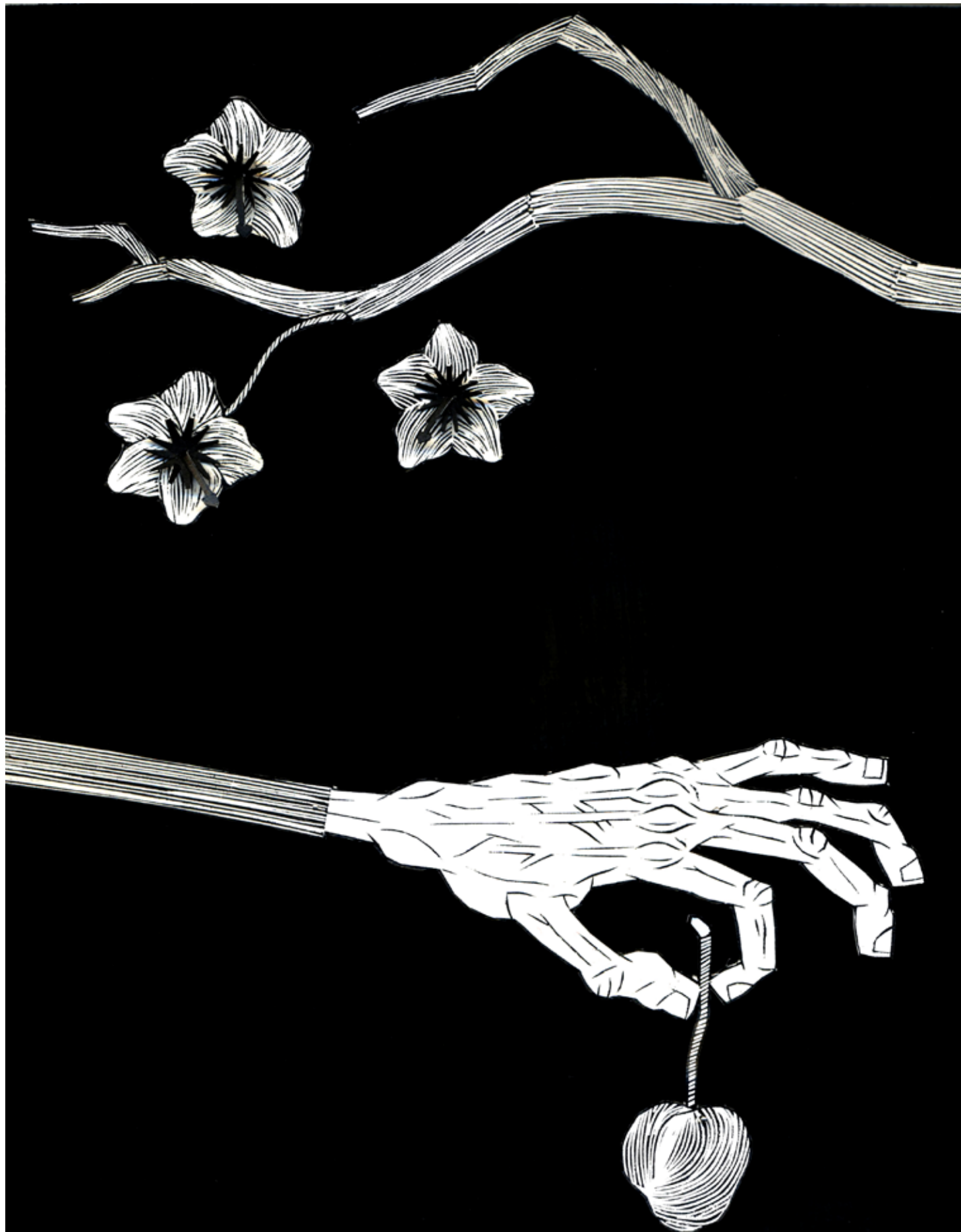
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DRAWING:

CHRISTIAN SCHMIT

Christian Schmit lives in lovely Covington, KY. He spends most of his time teaching art to short people. Sometimes he even makes art of his own.

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A Cherry-Picking Minute

(by **A. A. Aaron**)

The cherries hang ripe from the branch
& are no less desired for not being blossoms

& the birds & the squirrels & the deer & the fox
will pluck it clean if it isn't picked

now is the time of cherry-picking – the time
of long cupola ladders – the time the people
hired themselves out to climb those trees

they moved from town to town for spare change
& the carnivals & the hucksters followed right
behind
to spirit it away from them again

can you hear the sound? cherries thundering
into tin buckets – transmuting into silver?
can you hear Ole Pappy John & his brother King
calling the dances & sawing the fiddle
with a bucket of nickels before them
when the last of the cherries rolled in?
pure alchemy of fingers & rhyme

and sweat & hopelessness & misery

they themselves the cherry blossoms – bourne
away in the March wind
but they were game – children – they never let
it show

Elegy for 'Priceless Friend'

(by **Jeffrey Hillard**)

a villanelle

in memory of Anthony Beard, Jr. 1992-2007

We know he lives in our searching minds,
and although he has left us, his beauty reaches
us. As the earth shifts, another season climbs

through our window. We can live in cold times,
only, this year we'll sweep these leaves clearing
a path, believing he lives in our minds.

He's lived to swim, scout, lose the woods in
hikes.
Look. A branch he'd know. And more. Tree after
tree,
as if they shift the earth and seasons, and for
him, a climb.

In his shadow, his sister and brothers will, in
time,
cling to what he was – is still – his boyhood they
keep.
They'll feel him living in their minds.

Sometimes the sun fades and so does the
earth's fever.
He always knew this. Yet his life so slipped by
because the earth shifts, climbs toward a new
season.

Winter clouds one day will hold and not rain ice,
and hold his voice – never buried with him – for
keeps.

We trust our minds knowing he lives inside.
When earth shifts seasons, we'll live for that
other time.

POEMS:

KAREN ARNETT

Karen Arnett lives and tends her gardens in Mt. Healthy. She considers the natural world to be her first and wisest teacher, especially regarding peace, cooperation, and interdependence.

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DRAWING:

CHRISTOPHER DANIEL

Christopher Daniel received a BFA from the University of West Virginia (1994) and an MFA in sculpture from DAAP, University of Cincinnati (1997).

He continues to work with Thin Air Studio, creating large environmental installations in Cincinnati and abroad. This past Summer Christopher started Blue Hell Studio, a metal fabricating business in which he designs and creates functional sculpture, railings and furniture.

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Room Enough

Where are the churches that would open their
chimneys
wide to colonies of swifts that pour down
each evening like a liquid column
from the darkening air, and sing
all are welcome here?

Where are the neighbors who rejoice at visitations
of groundhog by day, skunk by night,
the mole who tunnels her soft colonnade of
soil,
the deer who steals away on small feet,
stuffed with tender okra pods,
the fattening squirrel who buries and forgets?

Are they bats? asks the childish voice. She
calls
her sister from play and they sit beside me
on the still-warm asphalt of the parking lot,
their wonder glowing in the dusk
at the tucked wings descending,
not yet knowing the feel of nuisance
as it slides from the tongue
nor the blocky edges of
lock the door.

Green Zone

I fiddle while the world burns.
This shovel makes sweet music
tuned to the perfumes of compost and
humus.
In here the centipede labors across
mountains,
over clods exploded
from my garden fork.
This province of peace, this tiny world
my green zone.
Inside this perimeter only tender feet
shall tread, and mostly
I am on my knees, making
a slow prayer to the living soil,
for the safety of small things
that carry on under strawy mulch.
And I bow my face to the newest
leaves opening like a pair of palms placed
together.
As my nose touches leaf, black ink specks
expand to giant flea beetles,
each replete with the wish to thrive.
I cannot find a difference in the size
of our respective rights to our lives.
And I garden while the world turns
desperately holding this small line
against destruction - none
inside these grassy boundaries,
but for the noted carnage of a luckless
earthworm,
victim of my inattention.
I mourn each tragic loss.

POEMS:

FRANCHOT BALLINGER

Franchot Ballinger's poems have appeared widely over the years. His book *"Living Sideways: Tricksters in American Indian Oral Traditions"* is available from the University of Oklahoma Press. He plays Native American flute as a spiritual care volunteer with Hospice of Cincinnati and has recorded a CD on NA flute.

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DIANE GERMAINE

Diane Germaine, a writer and a choreographer, born in NYC, spent a fair chunk of her adult life there and now resides in Cincinnati. Diane's writing and dance works often reflect experiences and associations from the city. She has work published in NYS's *Chronogram Magazine*, received funding from the OAC and the City of Cincinnati for *"Didi, a Life"* - a 2003 3-act spoken word/dance play - and is currently selecting the poems for her first chapbook.

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DRAWING:

KURT STORCH

Artist Kurt Storch lives and works in the Cincinnati area. He is the Associate Director of the Dicere Gallery in Camp Washington and is currently involved with The Mental Health and Arts Collaborative, a group of local Mental Wellness professionals and Artists whose goal is to break down the stigma, both personal and social, of mental illness.

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1

DATE 04/26/04

KURT STORCH
333 KILBUCK RD. CINCINNATI, OH 45238

TAKE 3 CAPSULES BY MOUTH EVERY MORNING

EFPEXOR XR 37.5MG CAPSULES
QTY: 90 MFG WYETH-AYERST
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USE BEFORE 04/26/05
SLP/MAD

May Cause Drowsiness Or Dizziness

This Drug May Impair The Ability To Drive Or Operate Machinery Until You Become Familiar With Its Effects

STANDARD GRAVITY PINK CAPSULE
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2



Fine Crosshair

Duplex Crosshair

German Reticle

Precious Seed

(by **Franchot Ballinger**)

Framed in the open window of the rusting red door,
she's pretty as a picture, the seed of light
shines so in her brown face.

Too young to pick, old enough to be burden,
she waits in a migrant's pickup at field's edge,
waits for another August dusk.

In the hot and hazy Ohio air, her mother and father
are bent in the field's mid-distance, vague question
marks.

She watches, murmurs a child's tuneless song,
not knowing yet the songless days before her,
not knowing how she will be about her father's
business.

The sun lays its dusty smolder across the field,
and a darkening veil falls over the eastern sky
under which her parents now return, faces drawn,
bearing the heavy sheaves of their days.
Her voice flutters about them in the parched light.
Was she ever a song carried in their hearts?
I imagine her mother at some past day's hot and brittle
end waiting
while her man—harrowed and harvested himself—
hovers
over her, sparrow frail, embracing her with dusty wings.
No annunciation here, his finishing grunt the only
Magnificat
for more fruit to be bruised at our tables.

The Old Girl

(by **Diane Germaine**)

The old girl
kept her mouth shut...
not able to make a change,
not able to move forward.

Remaining in such
an atmosphere,
meant surrendering
to adversity,
meant burying identity.

It took years for her
to find the energy
to stand up,
to find the words for
“enough.”

My One Girl

(by **Diane Germaine**)

She's too pretty
for that,
too fragile for that;
She's –
too my daughter
for that –
My One Girl.

And no joy
can dispel my frenzy
of the killing machines:

She's too pretty for
the debris of bodies
of car wrecks or dry overdoses,
the patterns of veins in thin arms;

she's too fragile for
falls from windows
50 feet up or
the sniper's bullet;

she's too my daughter
for blood on tiles and
dismembered parts in fields.

She's my joy -
My One Girl;

and there's no use
to frenzy
about unnamed hate
I cannot dispel,
or plastic explosives
so lovingly strapped
with the intimacy only
a lover can know.

POEMS:

TIMOTHY CANNON

Tim Cannon, Native Cincinnati, married, three grown children, retired hair designer, actively involved in poetry, photography and art. Tim's poems have been published in previous "For a Better World" anthologies (2004 and 5), and other publications. One of his photos was chosen for Cincinnati's "Capture Cincinnati". Tim enjoys Cincinnati, his birthplace, yet, his heart tells me it still could to be a greener, peace-full place...

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TONYA D. MAIDEN

Tonya Maiden resides in Wyoming, OH. She is the proud mother of a normal, (i.e. crazy!) 15 yr old daughter, Arris Ja'Bri. A graduate of Howard University in Washington, DC, Tonya is a Microbiologist with the heart and soul of a writer.

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DRAWING:

KATHERINE BAKER

Katie Baker is a student at Northern Kentucky University, earning her degree in the Fine Arts and English Writing. She is the Art Editor for NKU's literary publication, *The Licking River Review*.

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Katherine Baker

Fingers

(by **Timothy Cannon**)

A part of me
That connects
That touches another
Sensitive as my soul;
Reaching out
Movements so delicate
Began so tender and weak
Grew very strong
One day they will be frail;
They have possibilities
To change for better
A life
This planet
To grasp onto a dream;
These fingers are very powerful
They can hurt
Pointing at another
Blaming fault
Given as a sign
One finger means hate
Two fingers can create peace;
Today I will use them
To create
To write a poem
Inspiring a change;
I will allow Creator to work through them
His fingers, my fingers
Touching
Giving
Receiving
Creating love.

Trees

(by **Tonya D. Maiden**)

No Tree ever
Wrapped its branches
Around the throat of
a Boy. a Man. a Woman.
a Girl.

No Tree ever
Cut into the skin of
a Man. a Woman. a Child.
Nor broke a neck
For malice or mere sport.

No Tree ever
Chose with no remorse.
To take the life of
a Mother. a Father.
a Daughter. a Son.

No Tree ever
Bent down and spat, with hatred-
“-your skin is Black,
you are Worthless
you don’t deserve to Live
you must now Die.”

Why, then?
Why were Trees
Used for evil?
Such vile, barbarous acts.

Trees are God’s Blessings.
Majesty and Purpose.
Shade. Shelter. Nourish.
Beauty. Vista.
Play. Joy.

Windblown leaves dance.
Strong trunks stand tall.
Roots anchor.
Bark protects.
Branches reach out.

Not meant to hang
Strange Fruit,
But apples and oranges.
Birdfeeders and nests.
Tires for swings
And tree house ladders.

Trees.
Created not for dangling death.
But, for celebrating life.

POEMS:

NICHOLAS CAUDILL

Nicholas Caudill is a student at the College of Mount St. Joseph; he studies math and music and also serves as poetry editor for the school's online literary magazine, Lions-on-Line.

Nicholas is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Writer's League.

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DRAWING:

CAROLE WATKINS

Carol Watkins is a junior studying fine arts at the University of Cincinnati. She works mainly with the human figure in ceramics.

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CAROL WATKINS '08

Asleep on a Metro Bus

Did I ever tell you
the story of how we first met?
You don't remember because you were

asleep on a metro bus, your head
beginning to tilt forward and
nearly knocking over what you were
holding.

I was lost in the city
trying to find my way home and
you looked to be going anywhere
but a home.

I climbed the stairs
and gave the driver my coins
leaving one pocket empty.
The bus was crowded with strangers
but there was an empty seat
next to a stranger named you,

asleep on a metro bus, your head
beginning to tilt forward and
nearly knocking over the clay pot
you were holding.

I was looking at the city
trying to find any sign of hope and
you, with closed eyes, were trying
to find hope in your city of dreams.

Your eyes were closed, but if open
I imagined they'd be the exact shade
of brown that grass turns when going
dormant, eventually to return to green
in early March or April. My eyes
were strangely drawn
to a stranger named you,

asleep on a metro bus, your head
beginning to tilt forward and
nearly knocking over the clay pot
you were holding that contained
a single red geranium.

I wondered
how any flower could survive in the city
and you wonder how you would survive
without getting out of the city.

Several years later I know
I have found my way home
as I awake from a warm bed
on a January morning.
I descend the stairs and
pull a key from a full pocket.

Looking at the faded brown grass
I see a small red flower sprouting
and hope you found the home
you always wanted. A home
where you will be

asleep on a familiar bed, your head
beginning to tilt forward and
nearly knocking over the clay pot
you were holding that contained
a single red geranium.

Starting from Within

There is peace in the barrel of a gun
moments before the bullet accelerates.

In my thoughts gunshots all fail to fulfill their target,
all fall to the floor in innocence, like rain drops.

When I watch the clouds move my life decelerates.
All the outside voices return to their respective owners

like bullets running in reverse back into guns. I find
there is peace in the silence of my thoughts.

Moments before the world accelerates back into chaos
I hope my thoughts can rise into the clouds so that

when others feel the rain they may decelerate into
peace.

Everything on the outside must start from within.

POEM:

VICKIE CIMPRICH

Vickie Cimprich of Northern KY is grateful to join the “For a Better World” poets and illustrators in 2006 and 2008. Her book *‘Pretty Mother’s Home - A Shakeress Daybook’* (Broadstone Books, 2007) is a collection of poems about life in the (pacifist) Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, KY. during the end-of-slavery and Civil War years.

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DRAWING:

SUZANNE CHOUTEAU

Suzanne Chouteau, born in Davenport, Iowa, received her BA in Art from Saint Ambrose University (1983) and her MA (1985) and MFA (1988) in Printmaking from the University of Iowa. In 1988, she joined Xavier University Department of Art as a Professor teaching courses in printmaking, drawing and art history. Suzanne’s artworks have been shown in over 80 solo, invitational, and juried exhibitions in the US. She is a member of the Southern Graphics Council, Mid-America Print Council, and the Los Angeles Printmaking Society. Suzanne is married to Chris Bedel; they have a son, Elijah Bird Bedel.

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A Channel of Peace

Suzanne Michele Cloutier 2008

Seven Little Portions

(for St. Francis of Assisi)

Nobility, 1204

Below Monteluco, Francesco,
the dream that grabbed you,
by your crested shield,
is stellar with the pieces
that are missing.

The leper, 1205

Francesco, dare un bacio a Elena.
Francesco, give a kiss to Elena.
Give. Give.
Il gusto di Elena gradisce il sale.
She tastes like the beginning of the sea.

Chiara, 1212, 1234

Low on Mount Subasio lives Clare
with her own at San Damiano,
ever the center of your hold on light.
In her own hands she lofts high the bread
over the valley of any threat.

The Creche, 1223

At Greccio your beasts
have invented for all winters
the glint of light of the world
off the brown globes of their eyes.

Hunger

Not all the fear that kept things small
as the children or chickens of Gubbio
locked inside during months of wolf siege
assuaged any politics.

It was the wild noises and smells exuding
from this colloquy between the grizzled
that bought the settlement.

Stigmata, 1224

In every direction the cross
blasts seraph wings into birds,
till you are blind
to any wanted Assisi.

Any day your dream
has always bled under the skin.
Leo felt it every day.
Now, though, helping you
off Alverno,
it soaks his own tunic.

Relics - 1226

Your bones move from grave to grave.
Cimabue's colors vault over them,
until the earthquake of 1997
spreads fresco dust like a tsunami
down the basilica's aisles.

Buried intacta
not many miles away
at Dunarobba's foresta fossile
are trees that know songs
sparrows sang in the Pliocene.

POEMS:

REBECCA COLVIN

Rebecca Colvin is a Masters Student, majoring in secondary education, at the College of Mount St. Joseph. She has two beautiful boys, ten and seven, and a wonderful husband. She enjoys singing, theater, and filmmaking.

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KATHY HOLWADEL

Kathy Holwadel rides her bike 5 days a week instead of using a car. She hangs her laundry on a line in the back yard. Currently trying to learn how to write a good novel, she plans to plant vegetables in her spare time this summer.

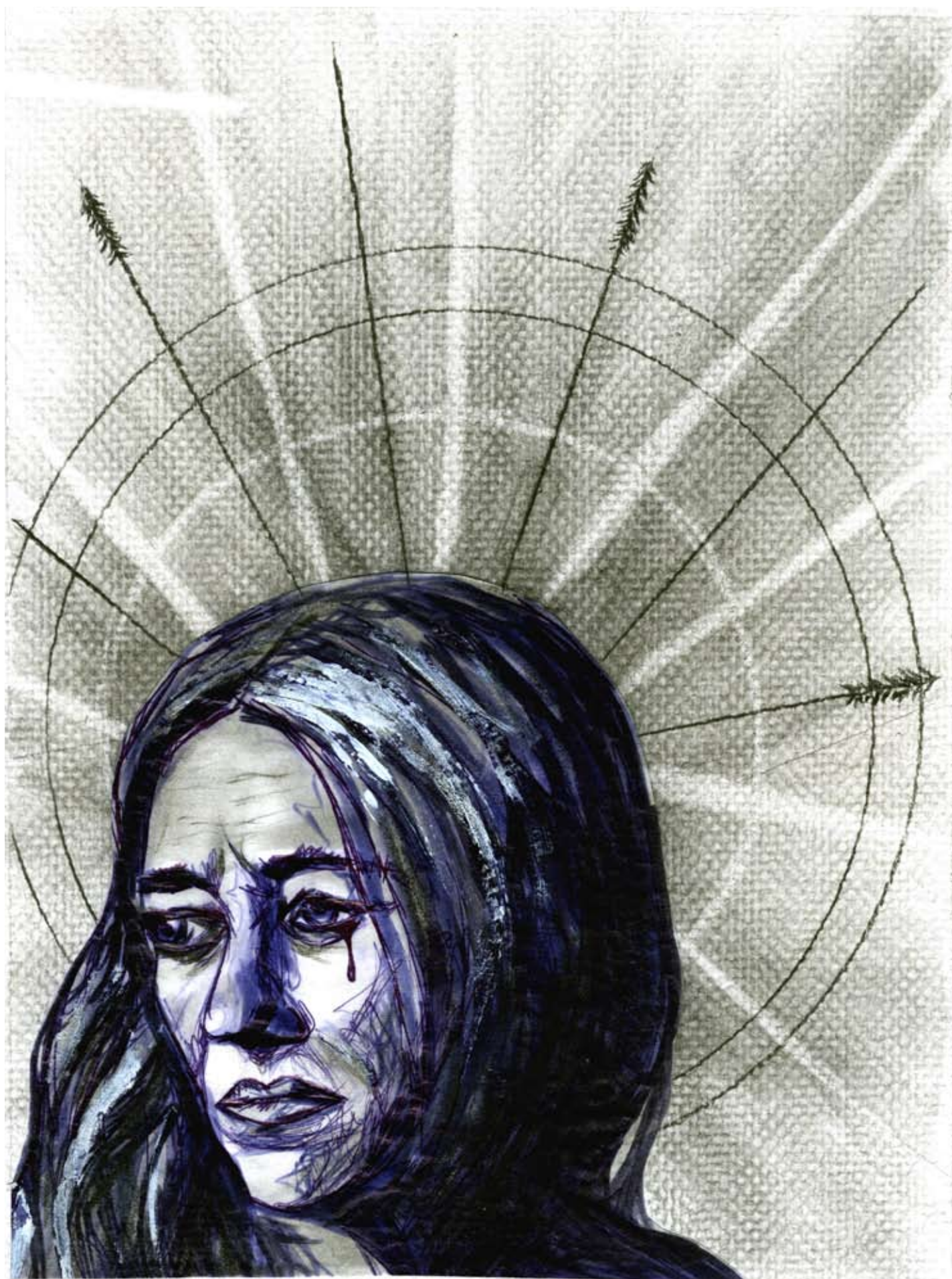
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DRAWING:

JILL HAWKINS

Jill Hawkins is a Sculpture major at the University of Cincinnati. Works predominately with plaster and ceramics. Truly loves her Clifton Neighborhood.

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Jill Hawkins

Women's Work

(by *Rebecca Colvin*)

I don't know if I'll ever find my self. My mascara tube is dry, old,
and unwanted. My mascara and I have a lot in common.

I only have eight minutes left to get them to school before they
get another tardy and I'll get another reminder

of how un-together I really am. There never seems to be enough
money or enough me to make enough money. The house

is never settled. The sound of my tires under my car is like an
old friend. If I could listen just a little while maybe

I'll finally hear myself. The frozen hamburger meat spins around
and around to the hum of the microwave. I wonder

what it feels like to be frozen. I think I would like to be frozen.
Maybe in the cold, cold quiet, I will re-surface.

My tires are talking again. They speak of non-sense in some sense
of a rhythm. I think I really want my car to be my best friend.

I desperately want an un-needy best-friend. He kisses the back of
my neck. The water falls like shattering glass in the kitchen sink.

I notice how worn out the kitchen faucet is looking. I can empathize
with my kitchen faucet. He pushes himself closer to me and

the counter digs in under my ribs. I wish this felt warm and I wish
I felt sexy. I look down at the rubber yellow gloves covering

my hands. I say nothing because I know he needs to relax. But,
when will I relax like that? Probably never!

I lay there in the dark, silence is creeping in. I feel his body jerk
into the deeper realms of sleep. The quiet of the room

is simply overwhelming. I pray for peace.
Pray for sleep.

What We Need

(by **Kathy holwadel**)

(for M.A. on our 6th Anniversary)

My husband has holes in the heels of his socks.
But he doesn't need socks.
He only has two feet, he says.
"Who's going to see?" he says,
Happy in his ventilated comfort,
As though this, the assumed and natural evolution of gentlemen's footwear.

Married more than six years now,
I toss them in the trash with the dryer lint when he isn't looking.
And later we'll shop the outlets for a deal.
4 pairs.
I'll press for 8.
But he only has two feet, he'll remind me again.
How many socks does a man need?

The next week
Or the week after that,
He'll try them on,
Gradually work them into the circuit of his wardrobe.
He'll be happy,
No more, no less than before.

But I will sleep better
Next to a man without holes in his heels,
Regardless of how many feet he has.
My husband may not need socks
But everyone needs someone to care if theirs have holes.

POEM:

FRANK DAVIS

Frank A. Davis grew up in a rural area near the Ohio River where Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky converge. He has worked as a farmhand, coal miner, deckhand, and carpenter, and taught English at the junior high, high school, and college levels.

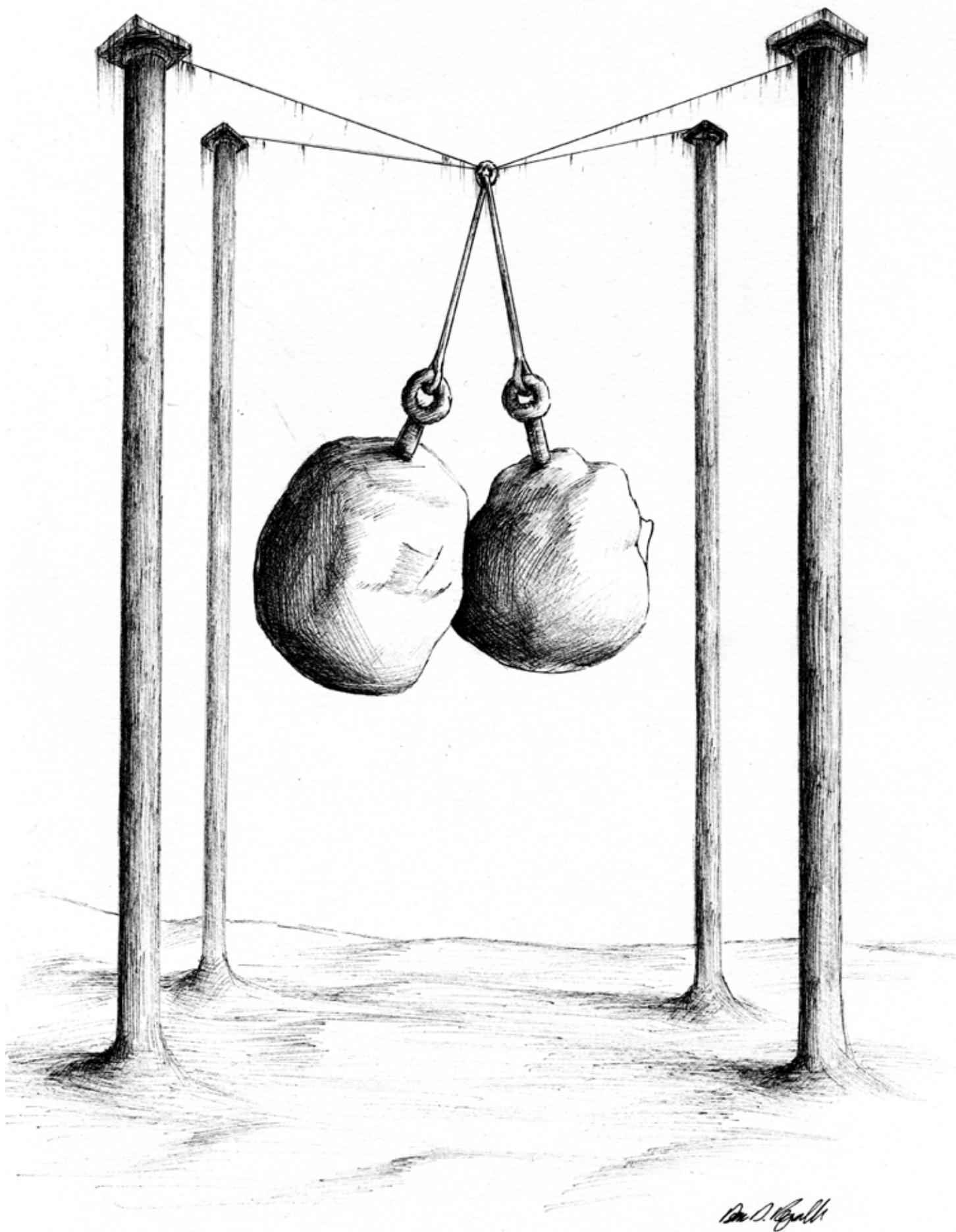
Contact: fadavis2001@yahoo.com

DRAWING:

DEAN REYNOLDS

Dean D. Reynolds, originally from Los Angeles, CA, is currently studying painting at Northern Kentucky University. Now turning 37 he has been picking up from when he was 18.

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Cleaving

Anticipation

O Motherland who is my Mother, O Fatherland who is my Father,
From the womb, I am brought into you, my great collective home,
My home, my homeland--my America!

A homeland built upon four great, living pillars, the pillars of work and school, of family and faith;

These are the four great and living pillars of my America, nourishing pillars that siphon, ever siphon,

From the vast, inchoate sea of citizens young or old, male or female, weak or strong--

Pillars that siphon, constantly siphon, my fellows and me up through human xylem and human phloem,

Nourishing us with knowledge, experience, and example to serve and delight self and society

On the upper terrace, the upper terrace teeming with collective life, the upper terrace we call society.

«Oh, yes!» I shout, «I want to serve, to both serve and delight self and society,

This teeming collective of life we call society!»

«Oh, yes! You, too!» Mother and Father both exclaim,

«Let the living pillars of your America draw you up and in!

«Let each living pillar nourish with human xylem and human phloem,

«May they nourish you to enrich this sweet land we call home.

«In the pillar of work, you will learn to earn; in the pillar of school, you will learn to learn,

«In the pillar of home, you will learn to obey; in the pillar of faith, you will learn to pray.

Home

«Son! Think of the living pillar that is your home—your room, your music, your clothes, your car;

«Think of the day we call Thanksgiving! A table overflowing with turkey, ham, beef barbecue, and mutton, too;

«Think of the Fourth of July! Of our nation's birth, our military might, the dazzling fireworks at night;

«Son! Think of Christmas! More turkey, ham, beef, and mutton, too, and of course, presents, presents galore;

«All this is home—this and much more! At home, you're safe from poverty's constant knocking at the door;

«From home every morning, your mother and I leave, to earn more mammon, more, more--more of what we need;

«To home every evening, your mother and I return, to eat, sleep, and dream of what to buy with the money we earn;

«Son! Think of the living pillar that is your home! Think of your room, your music, your clothes, your car!»

«O Mother! O Father! I think of my music, my clothes, my car; I think of my room, but—do you know who you are?
 «The day we call Thanksgiving began in October for harvest to celebrate,
 «Not in November for Christmas commerce to propagate;
 «Was not Jefferson's July parchment a minority declaration, fraught with doubts of war against the mother nation?
 «Christmas is the birthday of Jesus, who did say of home, 'The fox has its den, but I—I have no place to call my own.'
 «These celebrations --or holidays--so called--seem nothing to me but false festivals all--
 «Home is not a place, not a house nor a town; not in anything tangible can home be found;
 «The essence of home resides in a singular sense, a sense of quiet continuity, of love un-earned for all perpetuity;
 «Like Henry Thoreau, no matter where I go, no matter how far I roam, I want to be, I will be, everywhere at home;
 «To bow, to curtsy, to scurry, to run, from boss to boss, with scarce a thought about dignity lost;
 «Like a waterbug ever mindful of surface tension, skimming only the shallows of life with no real comprehension;
 «Like hamsters that scurry home to a bunkered burrow, pantry full and flowing with artificial food,
 «Burrowed in the media room, replete with music, TV, and movies to mold my mood,
 «To prime me for a siege mentality, to feed me one more platitude,
 «To take the virtual for the real, to be from the real world one more remove.

«O Mother, O Father, to you what do I say, what can I say of this living pillar that you call home?
 «I do think of my music, my room, my car--but I wonder, I grimace, and I wonder--do you know what you are?»

«Oh, son! Oh son! You're quite undone with imagined fret, soon you'll see Americanism is the best life yet;
 «As the hand of Yahweh calmed the water the very first time;
 «Let the hand, the invisible hand of the marketplace, calm your troubled mind;
 «Think of your home this hand has given us, a home envied by all the world;
 «Indeed, so envied by all the world, it has to be guarded by our flag unfurled;
 «Jesus warned that others would revile us and hate us, but His spirit time and again continues to aid us;
 «They envy our homes--t'is proof of God's love, proof of his smile from heaven above;
 «The envious are led by Satan himself; they are indeed the children of sin, but sooner or later, we'll reign them all in;
 «In every home, in every church, we raise our voices to sing and sing: «Let freedom ring! Let freedom ring!»
 «From home to home, from hearth to hearth, Yahweh our voices always praise;
 «Goodness and mercy are sure to follow us all our days;
 «From home to home, from hearth to hearth, Yahweh our tongues shall never fail.
 «Through Americanism, justice and truth over all the Earth are bound to prevail.»

«Now I do hear you--O Mother, O Father--I hear you well, but why were your tongues quiet and your lips quelled
«When the Sioux died and the Cherokee cried, when Africans in chains became a race enslaved?
«Now I do hear you--O Mother, O Father--but why were your mouths mute and your eyes averted
«When Mexicans were murdered and Mexico raped, when babies in Baghdad were starved and slain?
«What of their homes from whence they came? Where is the truth, the justice, that your Americanism can claim?»»

Choice

«Oh, yes!» as a child I had shouted. «I want to serve self and society!
«This teeming collective of life we call society!»
«Oh, yes! You, too!» Mother and Father had exclaimed. «Let the living pillars draw you up and in!
«Let each living pillar nourish you with human xylem and phloem to enrich this sweet land we call home.
«In the pillar of work, you will learn to earn; in the pillar of school, you will learn to learn;
«In the pillar of home, you will learn to obey; in the pillar of faith, you will learn to pray.»

O Mother! O Father! O Motherland! O Fatherland!
In the pillar of work, you both did say, in the pillar of work I would learn to earn;
Yes, I learned to earn, as you did say, to earn insecurity at the cost of my dignity;
To earn tangible wealth at the cost of intangible life, of carnal existence in a land of surfeit.

In the pillar of school, you both did say, in the pillar of school I would learn to learn;
Yes, I learned--I learned the opposite of love is not hate, but control of another's economic fate;
I learned a system exploiting sisters and brothers, at the cost of increasing insecurity for me and all the others.

In the pillar of home, you both had said, in the pillar of home, I would learn to obey;
Yes, I learned to obey, as you both did say, to obey Adam's invisible hand that guides the entire land;
To obey Consumerism as much as I can; to obey the merciless law of supply and demand.

In the pillar of faith, you both did say, in the pillar of faith, I would learn to pray;
In the pillar of faith, I did learn to pray--to mighty Yahweh-- great God of war, god that all true Americans adore!
Yahweh! Supreme mover throughout eternity: the high god of hypocrisy, the alpha and omega of pseudo-security.

* * *

O Motherland, O Fatherland, for you I have a question or two---

These living pillars you put me through, the living pillars of faith and home, of work and school,
Is there a single pillar which you put me through that operates by democratic rule?

Are these not the four pillars from which Americanism grew? Don't you claim democracy and
Jesus through and through?

Does not Jesus teach «like begets like» to me and to you? Does he not regard hypocrites with
wrath and righteous rue?

Americanism! With your vast and all-consuming hypocrisy, you give a bad name to Jesus and
democracy!

Americanism! You flaunt your misbegotten wealth and might, thinking this alone makes for
right!

Americanism! Worst of all---

You sense no halting shame in your evil deeds, but unending pride both open and perverse!

'Tis true--to be born, a child does not choose;
Nor by choice does it draw first breath,
Though a child soon learns that life without choice
Is life bleak and grey---life not worth living.

'Tis true--its mother and father a child does not choose,
But how it cleaves to mother's breast, to father's hand;
Only with long and great and convulsive pain
Can child its mother and father cleave and unclaim.
What long and great and convulsive pain---what folly?
Can move child both mother and father to cleave and unclaim?
What long and great and convulsive pain---what folly?

Americanism. Americanism. A-me-ri-ca-ni-sm.

POEMS:

PAUL DAVIS

Paul Davis is a clinical social worker and former Marine. He currently works with veterans with Post Traumatic Stress, instructing them on mindfulness meditation. Paul is also an aspirant for the Order of Interbeing, a lay order started in 1966 by Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh.

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DENISE MOSLEY

Denise Mosley was born in Atlanta, Ga and moved to Cincinnati in 1995. Her writings include short stories, poetry and songs. Denise has a novel in progress that she hopes will emerge finished this year.

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DRAWING:

GREG CLEM

Greg Clem is an Ohio native originally from a small town in west central Ohio. He is currently completing his graduate degree in fine arts at the University of Cincinnati.

Contact: guitarslinger26@yahoo.com



Question

(by **Paul Davis**)

Marine, why are you in my country?
You tell me you are here to save me.
I don't believe you.
Marine, you are not listening to me.
I don't hate you and your eyes tell me
you don't hate me.
Marine, why are you in my country?
Open your eyes. What keeps my words
from reaching your heart?
Why did you kill me?
Why did I kill you?
I died before you knew me.
You died before you understood.
Come to me – open your heart.
I will hold you and you will know me
and understand

(Poem inspired by a question a Vietnamese girl asked the poet in 1966, a GI Vet then in Vietnam)

Conundrum

(by **Denise Mosley**)

When the planes sounded in the distance
her house was still-
their breathing was peaceful before the kill.
She tore through the rubble of the darkened
aftermath
finding only bits and pieces of what her hopes had
cast.
Her son was nine, her daughter eleven
lost in the flames, their ashes blown to heaven.

Years later a woman walked into a crowd
and claimed her loss with explosions humbling the
proud
Americans-at-the-gate.
“One nine, one eleven” were her pleas to God to
understand.

Year after year recycled this moment in the past,
each building falling one by one- each one a
stormy blast,
each building held the love of someone's heart,
each cradled someone's past.

Each loss ignites at first the greatest grief and then
the greatest rage,
Each nation leads an iron fist giving page for page,
vengeance guised in security.
One nine-one eleven
One 9/11.
One thought to kill, or be killed.

A peaceful mother seeking justice,
a righteous nation seeking peace,
Peace equals justice?
Justice equals peace?
One nine, one eleven equals 9/11.
Each prayer winds its way to God among the ash
filled air,
our futures hanging in the balance of an act that
equals fair.

POEMS:

DONELLE DREESE

Donelle Dreese is a poet and an Assistant Professor at Northern Kentucky University where she teaches Multicultural and Environmental literatures. Her interests include the relationship between people and the places they inhabit, environmental racism and other social justice movements.

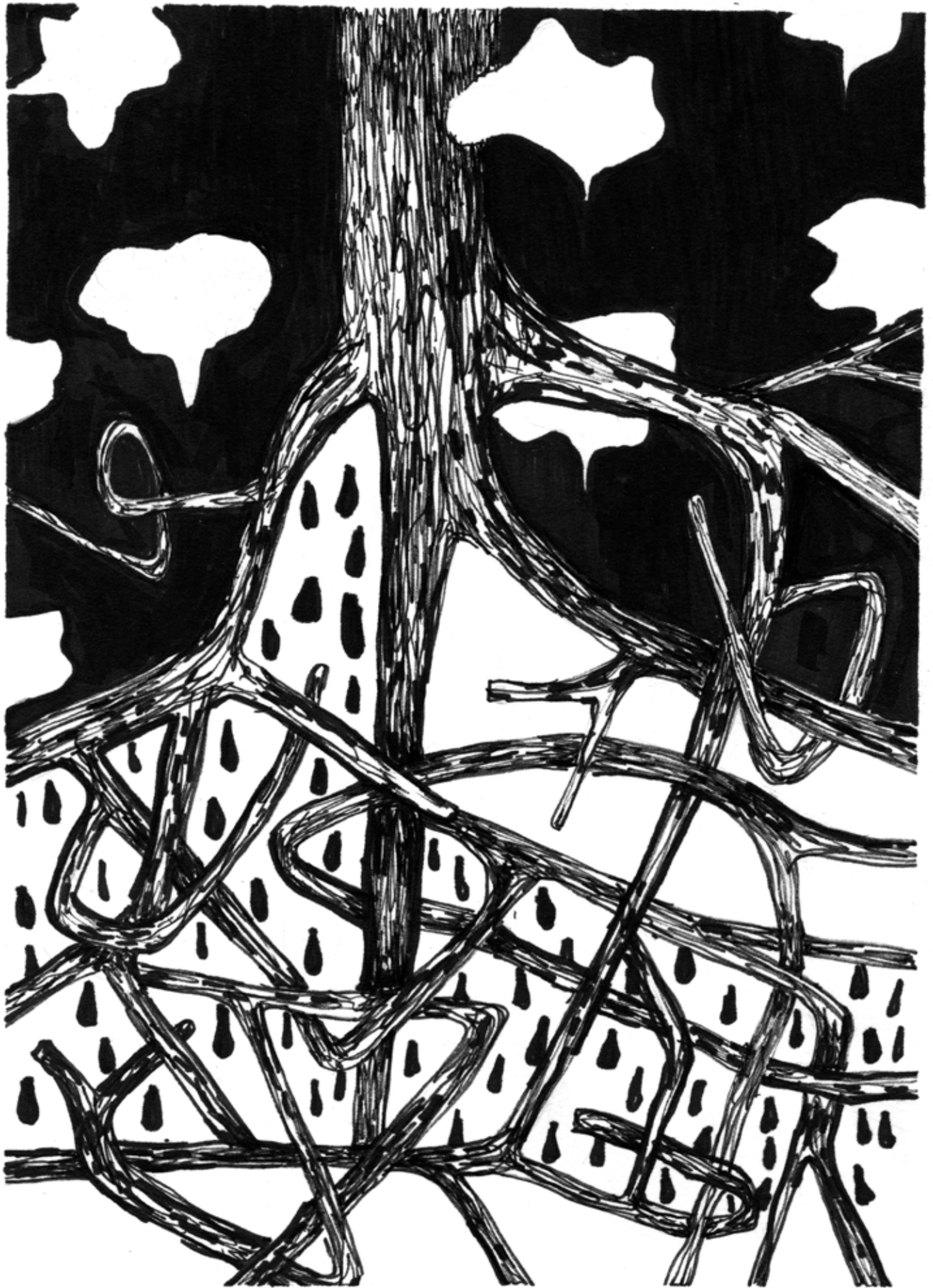
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DRAWING:

TRACY FEATHERSTONE

Tracy Featherstone is an Assistant Professor of Art at Miami University; her recent body of work has been inspired by a trip to Ghana, West Africa. Tracy's work has been exhibited Nationally and Internationally and most recently at the Weston Gallery of Art, Cincinnati, The Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH, the U of Southern Mississippi Museum of Art, and The Fringe Festival, Edinburgh, Scotland. In 2006 Tracy was granted an award for Individual Creativity by the Ohio Arts Council.

Contact: feathete@muohio.edu



Juan Gutierrez

Close to Midnight

This is the season of the runaway moon and bear tracks
where lizards huddle on roof tops to reunite their collective silver
as electric wires split and dangle over a frozen mud
puddle waiting for the sun.

I have been looking for you the way a young girl
looks for an old mitten stuffed with folded love notes.

By midnight, there will be nothing left but urgency.

The last time I saw you the gravity of a storm
broke from me like accouterments of war suddenly outgrown
and the flutter of my uncoiled wings was unspeakable.

Don't you see?

This is the world gone mad with smallness
and intolerance where paper bills are
used for kindling and sent to push
the buttons of broken bones.

We can no longer live like this rupture doesn't matter.

I'm wearing boots that remind me of thick brush
at the base of a mountain.

I am ready to run.

What the Buddha Might Say

Life's lesson are bog orchids
hard won
gingerly drawn
willow-fringed
if we're lucky
poised with moments
of acrobatic glee
and cantankerous laughter.
They are braided with duck down
dipped in silver-gilded seawater
softened with glacial flour
and refined into
a few words of wisdom
whose edges have been
polished smooth.

The Torchbearers

Leaving Camp Lejeune,
we were called soldiers.

We returned as roped spirits, ash trays,
middle class crates of shrapnel.

The highway splitting Hatteras
bordered peach sand, ragged bushes,
a path through the dunes
where the fisherman left footprints,
drippings from their tackle boxes.

We watched the tips of their rods
march away from the surf
mimicking tall grasses, property stakes,
images from sniper school, supply depots.

We wanted to be the torchbearers
with growing crowns of fire
crying "freedom!"
but instead we are broken children crying
for the green chambers of summer.

Sand is a bed of bullets
where fear waits
to poke a wing
through its gritty cocoon
and fly out to sea.

POEMS:

BARBARA FLICK

Barbara Flick is a local free-lance writer and poet. She has been a featured guest columnist for Streetvibes and has been involved for many years with the Women Writing for (a) Change Foundation. She currently works at a Cincinnati-based full-service marketing agency in advertising and public relations.

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RONA SMITH

Rona Smith is a senior medical student at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine graduating on May 26, 2008. Rona graduated cum laude from Prairie View A&M University where she received her Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Biology and a minor in chemistry.

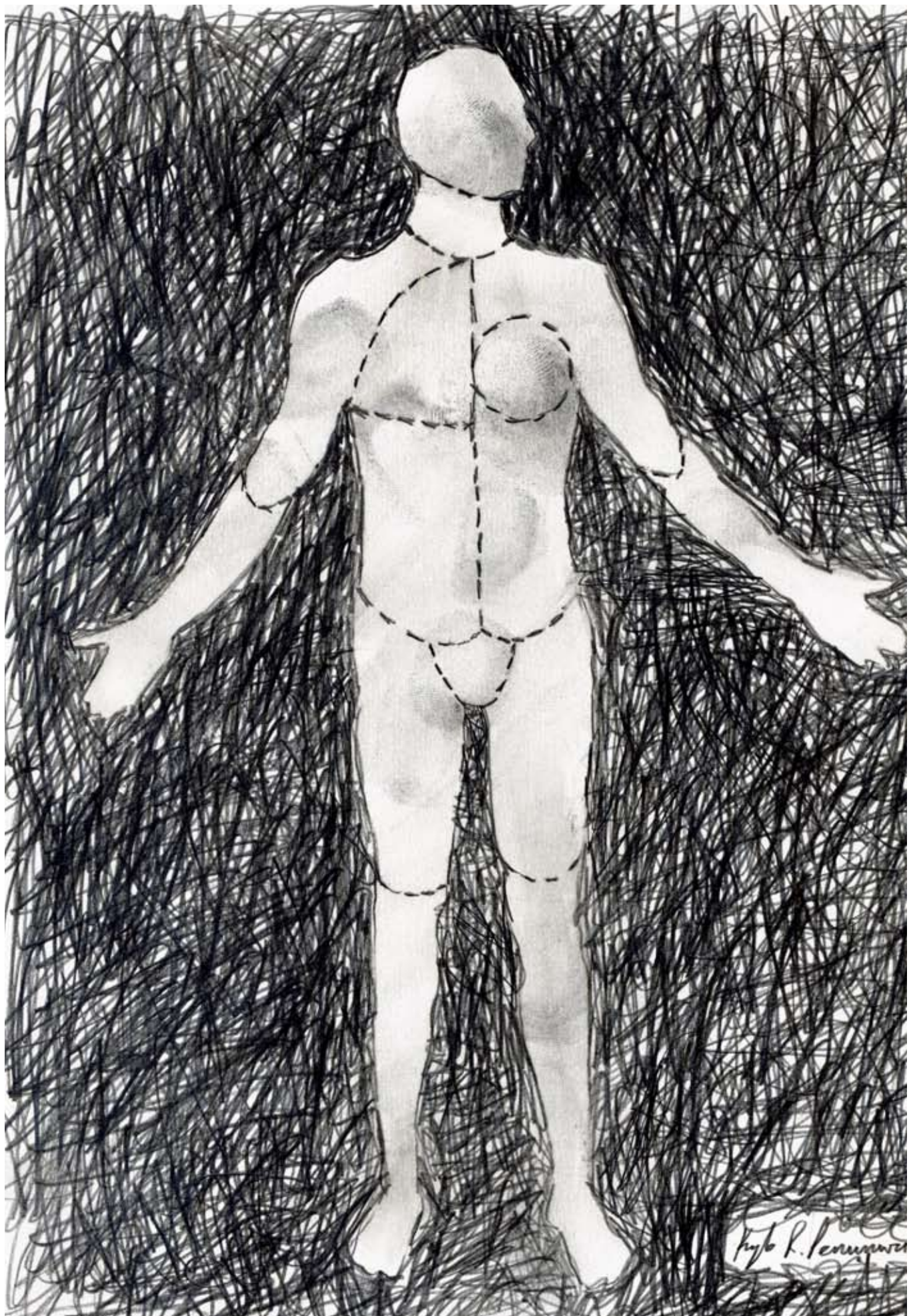
Contact: smir3@email.uc.edu

DRAWING:

KYLE PENUNURI

Kyle Penunuri came to Cincinnati six years ago, via Colorado, California, Louisiana, Alabama, and several stops in-between. The Art Academy of Cincinnati was the draw and the cost of living kept him. Kyle is currently a graduate student at the University of Cincinnati, concentrating in Sculpture.

Contact: kylepenunuri@yahoo.com



Tinting the Black and White with Burst of Orange

(by **Barbara Flick**)

On that day, there was a promise of change
Whisking away that extra baggage, the frustration, the pain
All the unusual circumstances that left causes to derange

Constricted hearts were let free, out of their range
Trying to restore the pleasant, the peaceful, the sane
On that day, there was a promise of change

Minds were freed to welcome the obscure, the strange
All those cast aside, whose memories had been slain
Tinting the black and white with a burst of orange

Valleys of new grains grew beside the grange
Daisies and sunflowers replaced the weeds once again
On that day, there was a promise of change

Ideas and thoughts liberated to exchange
Unlocking the key to the hidden, imaginative brain
Tinting the black and white with burst of orange

Hope went from the shadow to the long-range
Rain fell down, adding final rust to the vicious chain
On that day, there was a promise of change
Tinting the black and white with burst of orange

Liberty

(by **Rona Smith**)

My liberty can not be represented by the colors: red, white, and blue,
Its meaning is carefully defined by various shades of a different hue,
Like the mahogany trees from which slaves hung,
The crimson blood of Native Americans forced to run,
The putrid green of money that exchanged hands,
Crystal blue tears of people ripped from a foreign land.

Purple pride reminds me of what it means to have liberty
It's a freedom that surpasses our current reality
An ability to open one's mind
To look out into the world and respect the color line
We are all different, and that's what makes our freedom significant
Not hiding behind this "melting pot" ignorance

If we could all “just get along” there would be no war
Nothing to believe in, nothing to stand against, nothing to live for
It is only when we accept that our differences give us common ground
That this idea of freedom and liberty will become more profound.

Maybe then ruby red could represent the passion from our hearts
An ability to look beyond our mistakes in hopes of a fresh start
Royal blue could represent the devotion we give to embarking on this new path
Cradled in the courage of our ancestors, we will never forget our past
The great white hope that inspires us to strive past persecution
To come together as one and find resolution

My history is yours and yours is mine
Through our stories, our lives intertwine
Liberty is about more than being free
It’s the chance to celebrate the colors that represent you and me

The orange hue of our tenacity
The bright yellow of our hope
The royal purple of our majesty
The blue courage that allows us to cope

Our Liberty is lined by the lavender hills of Luxembourg
Indigo valleys of Enola
Burgundy brooks of Savannah
Evergreen trees of Bull Run
Rustic terrain of Texas
The teal river of Tangier
And the yellow sky covering mountains once known as the great frontier

No my liberty can not be represented by just three colors: red, white and blue
It takes a great pallet of colors to weave this story from my point of view
A tapestry woven with strands of history
Our reverence for the past is what gives us Liberty

POEM:

GARY GAFFNEY

Gary G. Gaffney was born in New Orleans, LA. He is a visual artist, a Professor for some 30 years at the Art Academy of Cincinnati and a sometime poet.

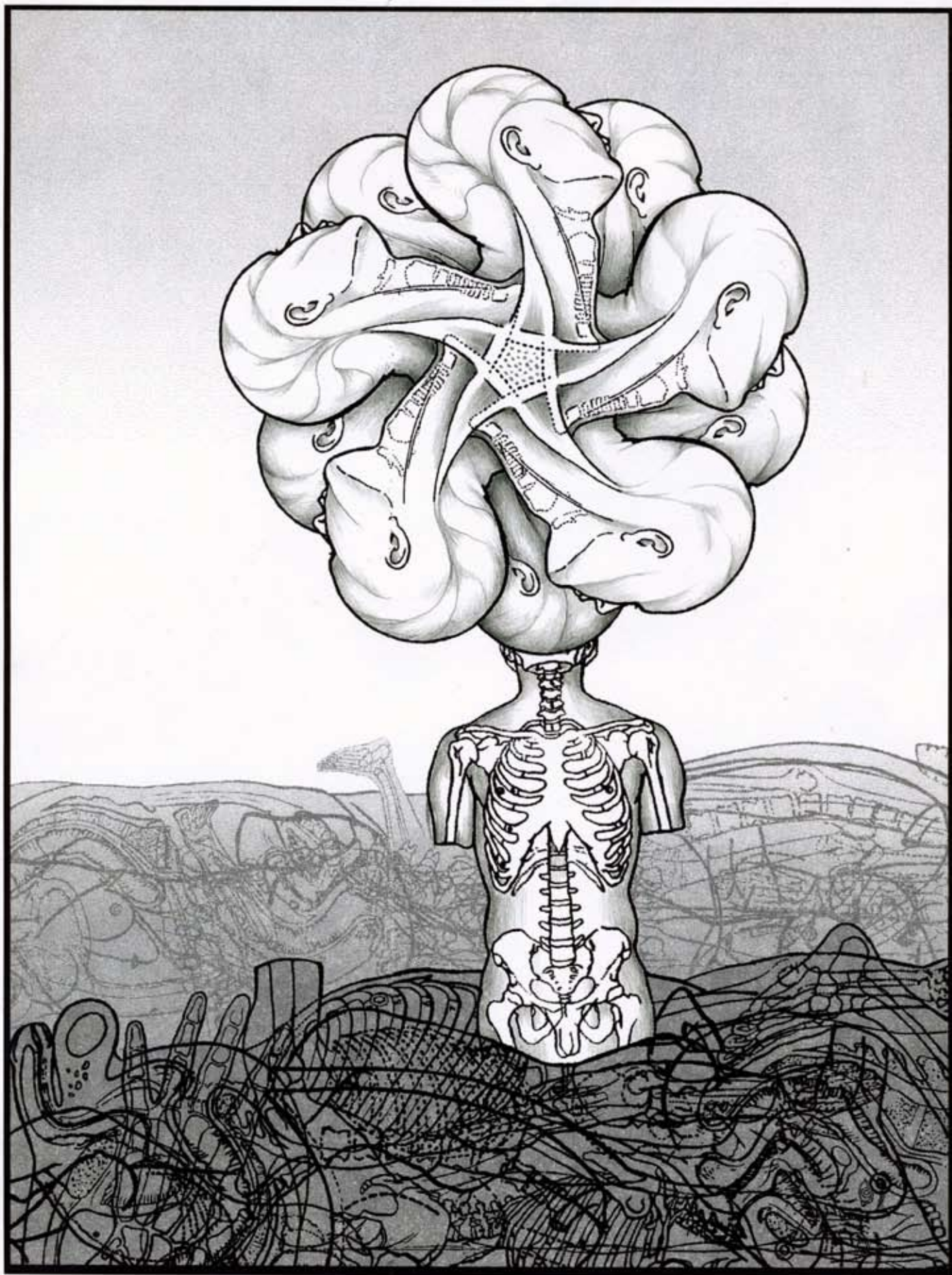
Contact: ggaffney@artacademy.edu

DRAWING:

MARK PATSFALL

Mark Patsfall, born April 17, 1949, Milwaukee, WI; two daughters, one son; artist, printmaker and publisher. A Vietnam veteran, he earned his MFA at UC (1979) and founded Clay Street Press, Inc. (1981) located on Clay St in Over the Rhine. Mark has worked with many local, national and international artists in the creation of fine art original prints and multiples. From 1983-2000 he worked with artist Nam June Paik as designer of sculptures, exhibitions and public projects. In 2004 Mark opened The Clay Street Press gallery.

Contact: mpginc@iac.net



MARK PATSFALL

Dead

Hell, they're just black savages.
3,000,000 / Belgian Congo

The virile Mao took an annual swim
in his river of blood.
56,000,000 / China

Would the rotting corpses, end-to-end, reach
the moon?
And their stench reach the nose of the Em-
peror?
1,750,000 / Japan

A carpet of dead bodies
so a few could wipe their feet.
20,000,000 / World War I

How many disemboweled bodies, hearts
exploded,
brains splattered, souls lost in frozen mud?
25,000,000 / Soviet Russia

Men, women and children became meat.
Spirit became meat. Victory must be fed.
55,000,000 / World War II

.
Killing neighbors, friends, brothers, children,
really meant killing themselves.
600,000 / Spain

Severed limbs and hacked bodies. Blood-
screams
of hate and powerlessness. Whispers of non-
violence
1,000,000 / India-Pakistan

Whomever you kill, bathe in their blood, lie in
the grave with
them. Explain the madness.
4,000,000 / Korea

Some died in vain. Some innocent. Some
scared. Some in battle.
Some believing. Some by their own hand.
Some heroes.
Some still remain the living dead.
3,000,000 / Vietnam

Their mourners, flies and maggots. Their
shrouds, parched earth.
Their coffins, the arms of their mothers.
8,000,000 / Nigeria

Night after night...TV. Piles of empty eyes
at the moment just before...
2,500,000 / Ethiopia

Rouge. Red. Blood. Stains. Spurts. Warm.
Spill. Soak.
Hack. Slash. Wash. Eat. Drink. Piss. Fuck.
Die.
1,700,000 / Khmer Rouge

Each bullet propelled by a good cause. Each
body torn open
for the very best reason. Each child dead for
the political good.
1,700,000 / Afghanistan

God permitted us to shoot them down, to cut
them down,
to rape them down, to stand tall on mountains
of their dead flesh.
1,000,000 / Iran-Iraq

Dead.

POEMS:

ARTURO GUTIERREZ-PLAZA

Arturo Gutierrez-Plaza, born in Caracas-Venezuela, 1962, poet and critic, has published several books among which: *'Al margen de las hojas'* (1991), *'Principios de contabilidad'* (2000) and *'Pasado en limpio'* (2006).

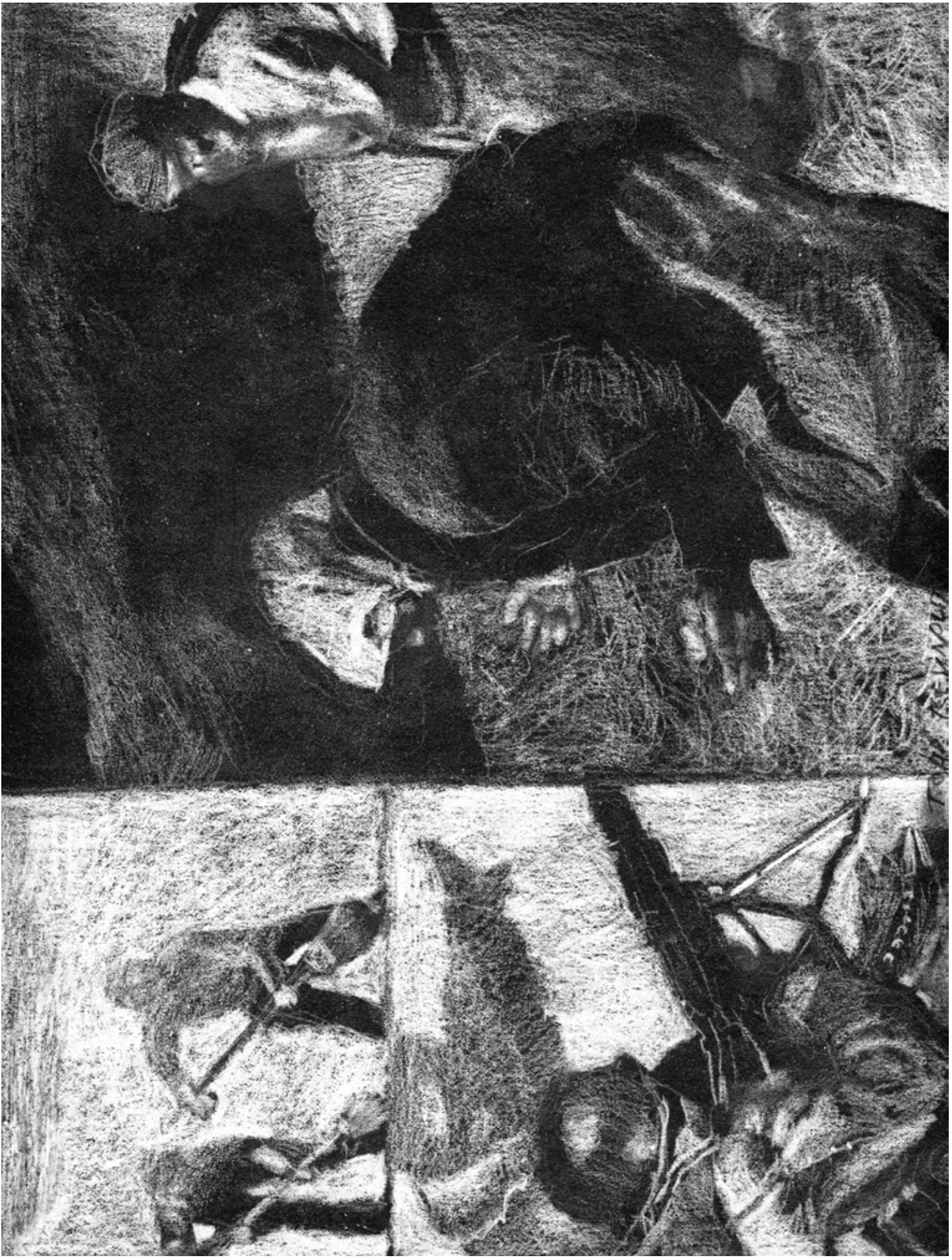
Contact: arturogutierrezplaza@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

TODD REYNOLDS

Todd Reynolds is an adjunct professor of art at Shawnee State University in Portsmouth, OH, where he also manages the art gallery. Todd earned a BFA and an MFA in painting from Ohio University, Athens. His work has been featured extensively in many commercial and nonprofit venues, including several museums; it is represented in the permanent collections of the Southern Ohio Museum, Portsmouth and the Zanesville Art Museum, Zanesville, and in numerous private collections. Todd received an Ohio Arts Commission Individual Excellence Award in 1992.

Contact: treynolds@shawnee.edu



The Tip of a Pencil

It is easy to consolidate the view
to the tip of a pencil,
to assume the world resides in it.

The look unfolds, pursues
The steps of an alien destiny.

The man sweeps the dust
Accumulated over the months.

It is not yet winter, but it does not matter,
-there are lives whose steps always leave
footprints in the snow-.

Sweep the remains of the days
-of what has been your body-.
Push aside into the corners the bad thoughts.

Turn on the TV:

“For sure, we do not know each other.
I have seen you little, only from a sidelong
glance in the mirrors.
I know not what to tell you.

I have done many things. Eat, drink, sleep.
Unavoidably I slept.
May be the only thing I did.”

Sweep unskillfully, but sweep,
Gather lint, memories, hair.

The man, without knowing it, moves on,
Enters enemy territory,
Walks on a mined field,
On the remains of his own body.

All is so uncertain. You see yourself, you
touch yourself, you smell yourself:
For a moment you think you live in it.

Don't be a fool; don't be a fool, -they insist.

What is intelligence for?

La Punta de un Lápiz

Es fácil consolidar la vista
en la punta de un lápiz,
pretender el mundo en ella.

La mirada se despliega, persigue
los pasos de un destino ajeno.

El hombre barre el polvo
que se ha ido acumulando durante meses.

No es invierno aún, pero no importa,
-hay vidas donde siempre las pisadas dejan
huellas en la nieve-.

Barre los despojos de los días
-de lo que ha sido su cuerpo-.
Arrincona en las esquinas los malos pensam-
ientos.

Enciende la televisión:

“Es cierto, no nos conocemos.
Te he visto poco, tan solo de reojo en los
espejos.
No sé que decirte.

He hecho muchas cosas. Comer, beber,
dormir.
Inevitablemente he dormido.
Quizás es lo único que he hecho.”

Barre sin pericia, pero barre,
junta pelusas, recuerdos, cabellos.

El hombre, sin saberlo, avanza,
incursiona en territorio enemigo.
Camina sobre un campo minado,
sobre los restos de su propio cuerpo.

Todo es tan incierto. Te ves, te tocas, te
huelas:
por un momento piensas que vives en él.

No seas tonto, no seas tonto -te insisten.

¿Para qué la inteligencia?

One street is enough, a view limited by two corners.

I live on an odd-numbered floor,
I look out from the window
But do not even encounter
The little girl of the chocolates.

We are a thing that walks and thinks
And says to itself
And contradicts itself
And says to you
And says to us,
That speaks and falls silent.
That repeats itself and lies.
A stuttering thing.

Bad cholesterol, genes, aura, lunatic moods.
Foolishness may be, inconclusive, finally.
A silent, definitive doubt.

I turn on the radio.

They say war is good,
People die and leave no debts.
They die for the country, for the honor that
never fails.

In my country they also die,
Every thirty minutes they die upright or on
their side.
It does not matter. A bullet always pierces
them.
If you try to stop it, you also die.
for death is impatient when it faces the future.
Nevertheless, the man progresses, advances,
at times he marches in shiny boots
in order to reflect the gaze
of some pride or of some commander.
A straight, decided, controlled look
between mutilated bodies and fallen lives.

I turn off the radio.

"I know, however, that all is not a dream,
And had I known you before, I probably
would not be here.

Una calle me basta, un paisaje acotado por
dos esquinas

Vivo en un piso impar,
me asomo por la ventana
pero no encuentro
ni siquiera a la niña de los chokolatines.

Somos una cosa que anda y piensa
y se dice
y desdice
y te dice
y nos dice.
Que habla y enmudece.
Que se repite y miente.
Una cosa tartamuda.

Colesterol malo, genoma, aura, venáticos
humores.
Una tontería quizás, sin suma, en fin.
Una duda silenciosa, definitiva.

Enciendo la radio.

Dicen que la guerra es buena,
la gente muere sin dejar deudas.
Muere por la patria, por la honra que jamás
claudica.

En mi país mueren también,
cada treinta minutos mueren de pie o de
costado.
No importa. Siempre una bala los atraviesa.
Si intentas detenerla, también mueres,
pues la muerte se impacienta ante el porvenir.
Sin embargo, el hombre progresa, avanza,
a veces marcha con botas lustrosas
para reflejar la mirada
de algún orgullo o algún caudillo.
Mirada erguida, decidida, ordenada
entre cuerpos mutilados y vidas en baja.

Apago la radio.

Sé, sin embargo, que no todo es sueño,
de haberte conocido antes quizás no estaría
aquí.

Last night I thought I was going to die
But I thought above all
That before you would know it
The squirrels would have found out.

I moved the table to the window,
From there the shadow of the trees
Resembles that of my pencil
There is a common shadow to wood.
Now I can begin
To write about shadows in full day.

If my neighbor were to learn all this
She would stop greeting me.

Are never trustworthy those who take refuge
In obscurity when there is full sun.

It is known that dust accumulates due to negligence:
The carelessness of an inert existence.
Without adequate sanitary rules
Every civilization is endangered, turns into
dust, disappears...

But everything does not have to be so rational.
If the newspapers salesman
were to ask me: "how can one be optimistic
these days?"
I would tell him the truth: "There are no good
reasons to be",
"Do as you wish with your faith".

I open my e mails.
A long list of news items speak of the climate
in other countries,
of the melting glaciers and the tepid dead bodies
that lied in them,
of global warming, but most of all of the war,
of African famine and Hollywood adoptions,
of a baby deer lost in the suburbs of Pennsylvania,
of the sports fanatic who caught a homerun in
the stadium,
of the thousands of dead during the last tsunami,
of the return in my country to the 19th century.

Anoche pensé que iba a morir,
pero pensé sobre todo
que antes de que lo supieras
se enterarían las ardillas.

He mudado la mesa hasta la ventana,
desde allí la sombra de los árboles
se emparenta con la de mi lápiz.
Hay una sombra común a la madera.
Ahora puedo emprender
la tarea de escribir de día sobre las sombras.

Si la vecina supiera todo esto
dejaría de saludarme.

Nunca es confiable la gente que se refugia
en la oscuridad a pleno sol.

Es sabido que el polvo se acumula por la desidia:
la dejadés de una inerte existencia.
Sin adecuados regímenes sanitarios
toda civilización peligra, se hace polvo, desaparece..

Pero no todo ha de ser tan racional.
Si el vendedor de periódicos
me preguntara: "¿cómo se puede ser hoy
optimista?",
le diría la verdad: "No hay razones para ello",
"allá usted con sus asuntos de fe".

Abro la bandeja de mi correo electrónico.
Un sin fin de noticias me hablan del clima en
otros países,
de los glaciares descongelados y la tibieza
de los cadáveres que yacían en ellos,
del recalentamiento mundial, pero sobre todo
del de la guerra,
de la hambruna africana y las adopciones
hollywoodenses,
de un venadito perdido en los suburbios de
Pennsylvania,
del fanático que atrapó un homerun en el
estadio,
de los miles de muertos del último tsunami,
de la vuelta al siglo XIX en mi país.

When sweeping, windows have to remain closed,
to avoid the aggressive effects of intrusive winds.
As it does not import to separate
the various kinds of remains,
these can be accumulated in one single pile,
hair, fallen eyelashes and drops of sweat
added to the vestiges of other bodies
that also make their life in this neighborhood.

Thus, and as a matter of fact,
such a small collected pile
appears much like a small neighborhood
meeting
or at least, like a clandestine cell
where, in order to share complaints, gather
the daily victims of our community.

Writing is not a distinct case,
it also suffers from the wear down,
the tip of the pencil pulverizes,
it turns into lines on the page,
the ephemeral testimony of a displaced intimacy.

Converted into a precarious footprint
it follows the steps of a man
on the relentless snow
that will cover in January
Extended and anonymous cemeteries.

(translated by Saad Ghosn)

Al barrer, las ventanas deben permanecer cerradas,
se debe evitar la agresión de vientos intrusos.
Como no se trata de separar
distintos géneros de despojos,
se pueden acumular en un solo montón
pelos, pestañas caídas y gotas de sudor
junto a los vestigios de otros cuerpos
que también hacen su vida en este vecindario.

De este modo, si a ver vamos,
un montoncito reunido así
se parece mucho a una pequeña junta de condominio
o al menos, a una célula clandestina
donde se agrupan para compartir reclamos
las cotidianas víctimas de nuestra comunidad.

La escritura no es caso aparte,
ella conlleva el desgaste,
la punta del lápiz se pulveriza,
se convierte en trazo sobre la página
en el efímero testimonio de una desplazada intimidad.

Convertida en huella precaria
sigue los pasos de un hombre
sobre la irredenta nieve
que en enero cubrirá
extensos y anónimos cementerios.

Song for Phillip, My Spanish Student

Phillip attends classes
daily
in his green uniform.

Phillip is almost a child
who confuses
Mexico with Madrid.

Phillip likes
to be recounted
stories of overseas.

To be told the victories
of Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus
and his legacy in Gettysburg

Phillip knows only three things:

Faith in his country,
money
and God

In this prison he has always lived:
with no evil

Phillip soon
will go to war
like Johnny.

Which forgotten language
will he bring back from Babel?

In which tense will he learn
to conjugate
'to kill'?

Who will occupy his desk
and follow his lessons
when he will cease to be?

(translated by Saad Ghosn)

Canción para Phillip, mi Estudiante de Español

Phillip asiste a clases
diariamente
con su verde uniforme.

Phillip es casi un niño
que confunde
México con Madrid.

A Phillip le gusta
que le cuenten
historias de ultramar.

Que le hablen de las victorias
de Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus,
y su legado en Gettysburg

Phillip conoce sólo tres cosas:

La fe en la patria,
el dinero
y Dios.

En esa cárcel ha vivido siempre:
sin maldad.

Phillip pronto
se irá a la guerra
como Mambrún,

¿Qué lengua olvidada
traerá de Babel?

¿En qué tiempo aprenderá
a conjuguar
matar?

¿Quién ocupará su pupitre
y seguirá sus lecciones
cuando no esté?

POEMS:

RICHARD HAGUE

Richard Hague is the author of twelve books, most recently *'Lives of the Poem: Community and Connection in a Writing Life'* (Wind Publications). His collection of political and satirical poems, *'Public Hearings'*, is forthcoming in 2009 from Word Press. Richard is a member of the Board of Directors of InkTank.

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MICHAEL TODD

Michael Todd writes and performs spoken word poetry; he is also a painter. Michael lived in the San Francisco Bay area for the last 20 years and relocated to Cincinnati a year ago. California has affected his work, adding freedom of thought and a focus on social issues to his writing and painting. His work can be viewed on YouTube.com under Michael Todd and The Art Of Living Black.

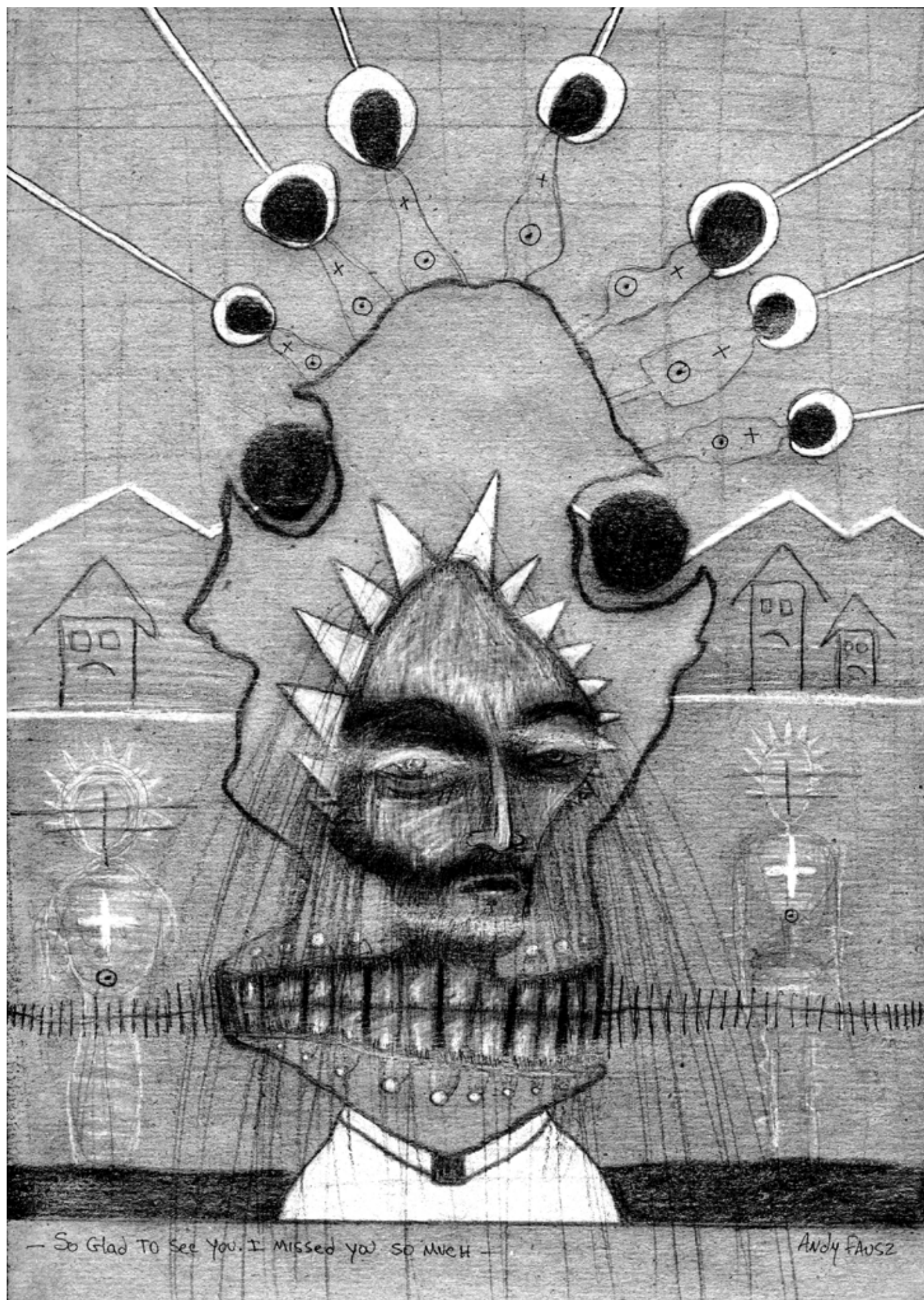
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DRAWING:

ALBERT “ANDY” FAUSZ

Albert Fausz Jr. (Andy), a 31 year old visual artist from Bellevue, KY, is a full time BFA student at Northern Kentucky University expected to graduate in 2009. Andy has been a volunteer teacher with Covington Schools and The Frank Duveneck Arts and Cultural Center, and also a participant in street scapes 2007. He is interested in art that is emotional, expressive, and narrative. He currently lives in Newport, KY, where he is an active member of the art community.

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- So Glad To See you. I missed you so much -

Andy FAUSZ

Irrecoverable, or, “The Long War”

(by *Richard Hague*)

Saigon to Baghdad

Penny, Muttry, Clyde the Dog,
all the other unchristened
heathens of pen and bowl and cage:
in times of other wars
I tried to make a home
for you where there was no home,
wanted somehow to buddy you,
mates, householders, comrades.

Now you might as well be gouts of flesh and hair
exploded through lost backyards,
stubble bomb-strewn in a far field,
a few teeth rattling in a cheap plastic bowl
misplaced on a workbench in some basement.
And I am not about
to take up a shovel or resurrection.

Still, you have become the little undersaints of my
devotions, unofficial blesseds of my boyhood,
rising up in memory now as the prophets of my
grief
in these new long days of invasion, despair, displacement.

Unphotographed Boxes

(by *Michael Todd*)

The blind empire's saber
Rattles notes in violent tones
Slowly painting the town red
As the human condition
Continues to beg for mercy

Yet you ignore
Love and respect
As the solution
And proceed to arm
Both friend and foe
Producing a very strange fruit
That withers and dies
On the vine

Meanwhile ghost face priest
Wear tattered uniforms of
A thousand grief stricken mothers
As minimum wage mercenaries
Begin to arrive home
In unphotographed boxes

Quite the surreal sacrifice
To comfort the egos and apathy
Of a few rich men
Men that bathe in the windfall
Of grade “A” Texas tea.

POEMS:

(CAROL) JOY HAUPT

(Carol) Joy Haupt grew up in New York City and has lived in Cincinnati since 1960. A frequent European traveler, she is a graduate of Antioch College and OSU's School of Social Work, and has, since her retirement, been actively engaged in community work and creative writing. Joy is currently writing a fictionalized memoir about the life of her maternal grandmother, a 1905 Jewish immigrant from what is now Eastern Poland.

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JEAN SYED

Jean Syed has lived in Loveland for twenty eight years and is an American citizen now. Poetry is her hobby and she prefers formal verse over free verse.

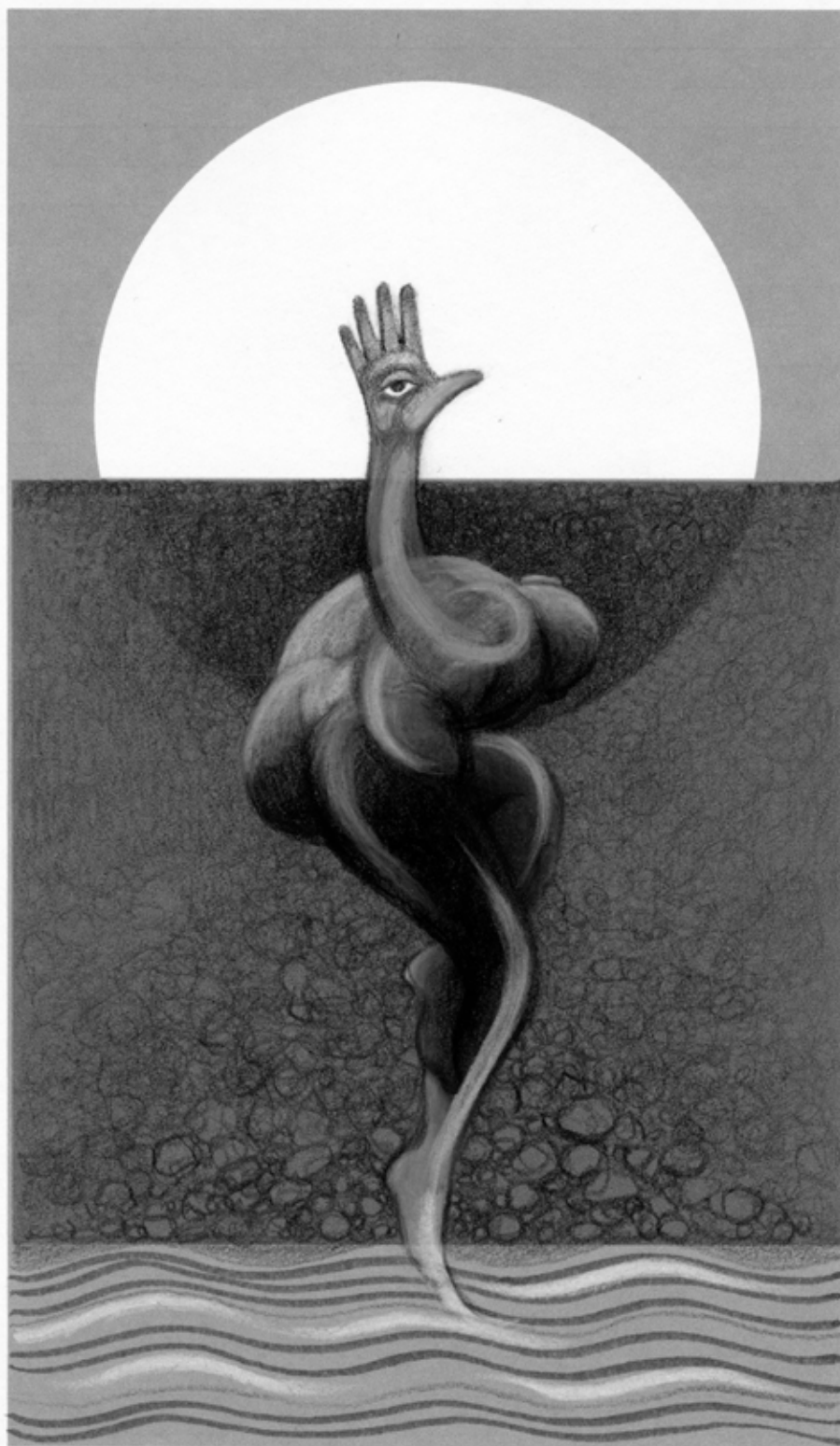
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DRAWING:

JAN BROWN CHECCO

Jan Brown Checco works in a variety of mediums and scales, from ceramic to painting to installation, and from the intimacy of the printed page to the broadcast forum of public walls. She works with communities in cooperative creation of expressive murals and mosaic art, and is devoted to fostering international dialogue through artist exchange projects.

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Jan Brownlee - 2016

Boy Soldier

(by **Carol Joy Haupt**)

Adrift, age 12,
his entire family killed
in the massacre, he was

discovered by soldiers,
sheltered, clothed, fed
a steady supply of meth and coke,

handed an AK-47
with simple instructions
and a comradely pat on the back.

Sleek and nimble, he cut through small spaces,
hid behind foliage. The first encounter
was a nightmare.

After that, killing came easy.
Later, the troops would celebrate,
drinking, snorting, exchanging high fives.

Was there anyone
who cared about you
the interviewer asked?

Oh yes, my lieutenant. I was attached to him.
He carried a volume of Shakespeare.
I loved Shakespeare when I was in school.

Everybody needs to belong.

*(poem inspired by the interview author
Ishmael Beah gave Terry Gross (NPR, Fresh
Air) on February 21, 2007.)*

Down the Paris Metro

(by **Jean Syed**)

Yearning, ardent, the music rippled on such
An instrument I'd never heard before.
She plucked the plangent strings on her bandore
Down the Paris Metro. I knew how much
Homesickness she endured, those hands her
crutch,
Lone in that long and breezy corridor.
I wanted my arms to embrace her, soar
Straightway to her Ukraine, but paused to clutch

A CD, on which wishful coins were laid,
Thinking about stark refugees world wide
Who had drawn faces and were much afraid,
As they floundered within a man-made tide,
For then they lay upon a shifting sand
Hoping that we will give a helping hand.

Split Screens on CNN

(by **Jean Syed**)

On the left: California burning,
orange skies, dense smoke in the ravine.
On the right: rockets also burning
in blue skies on my television screen.

Oh yes! We have to get away from here,
our sacred earth as long as there's the time.
We have to go to some other bright sphere
to repeat wars, mismanagement and crime.

We shook off, before, the Old World's dust,
my great-grandchild will go to Venus, Mars.
Yet I hope it would be for pioneer lust
that he wants to explore the sparkling stars,
and not because our earth is wind or fire,
and our self slaughtering to be its pyre.

POEMS:

C. L. HENSLEY

C.L. Hensley is a senior sociology major at Northern Kentucky University. She believes that artists, no matter their art, have the responsibility to be socially conscious and not self-serving. C.L. does not adhere to an assigned ideology, and does not consider herself a poet; she is just pissed off, hungry and tired of running the rat race.

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HEATHER MATHEWS

Heather Mathews, a retired Law Office Manager and Small Business owner, has five children and eight grand-children. She is Ohio Certified Master Gardener and a survivalist with skills at tracking and story telling.

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DRAWING:

SHEILA

Sheila graduated from Northern Kentucky University with a BFA in ceramic sculpture (2007). She resides in Fort Thomas, KY, and currently works at Funke Fired Arts in Hyde Park. Sheila is interested in investigating ceramic forms to inspire the viewer for a change for the greater good of humanity.

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SHEILA

State of the Union Address

(by **C. L. Hensley**)

Changing the condition
Of the situation we live in
Will take constant contributions
From conscientious citizens
With a monumental mission
Of mobilizing the masses
To intimidate injustice
And infiltrate intellectual instigation

America is a boil festering and filthy
On the back of despicability
Filled with frailty and subservience
No longer able to speak our minds
No longer able to socialize
Individuality controls our lives

It forces us to sit quietly
Has blindfolded our mental capacity
To the point where we can't see
The devastation and destruction
That's been implanted
By our plantation masters
That we appointed into power

A passing of the torch so to speak
From masturbator to dictator

I mourn the loss of American dignity
We weren't always this vile
A catalytic decay upon our moral reality
Created by the television
And the loss of superstition

Compulsory citizen subservience
Habitually and perpetually
Projected upon an uninformed infantry
That carries out the will
Of biblical barbarity
Discriminately butchering
Beautiful and innocently born babies

I implore you America!
To stop and think
Reflect upon our history
Of genocide and slavery

Do you believe we
Should be punished for murder
Because we are an accessory
Stop the devastation and annihilation
Of multiple nations
Under the disguise of globalization
Reclaim this once great nation
From the destructive hands of the Bush Administration

Native Man

(by **Heather Mathews**)

*(For all Men Who Have Given Themselves up
for Peace)*

Mighty thunder,	Roaring clouds
Hooves pounding	And strength proud
Warrior, child,	Provider win
Royal lineage,	Sinew kin
Wind blown,	Faded heart
Honor crush	And noble part
One and nature	Wisp of mind
Crumbled word	Cultural duel
Solitary crowded,	Portrait knight
Alive but dead	Found yet lost
Wind congealed	Martyred pride
Shawnee prince,	Sightless eyes

Restless free and shackled pain
Noble caged and spirit tamed

POEMS:

MICHAEL HENSON

Michael Henson is author of three books, most recently, *Crow Call*, poems in response to the murder ten years ago of the homeless activist Buddy Gray. He is a frequent contributor to StreetVibes, the newspaper of the Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless.

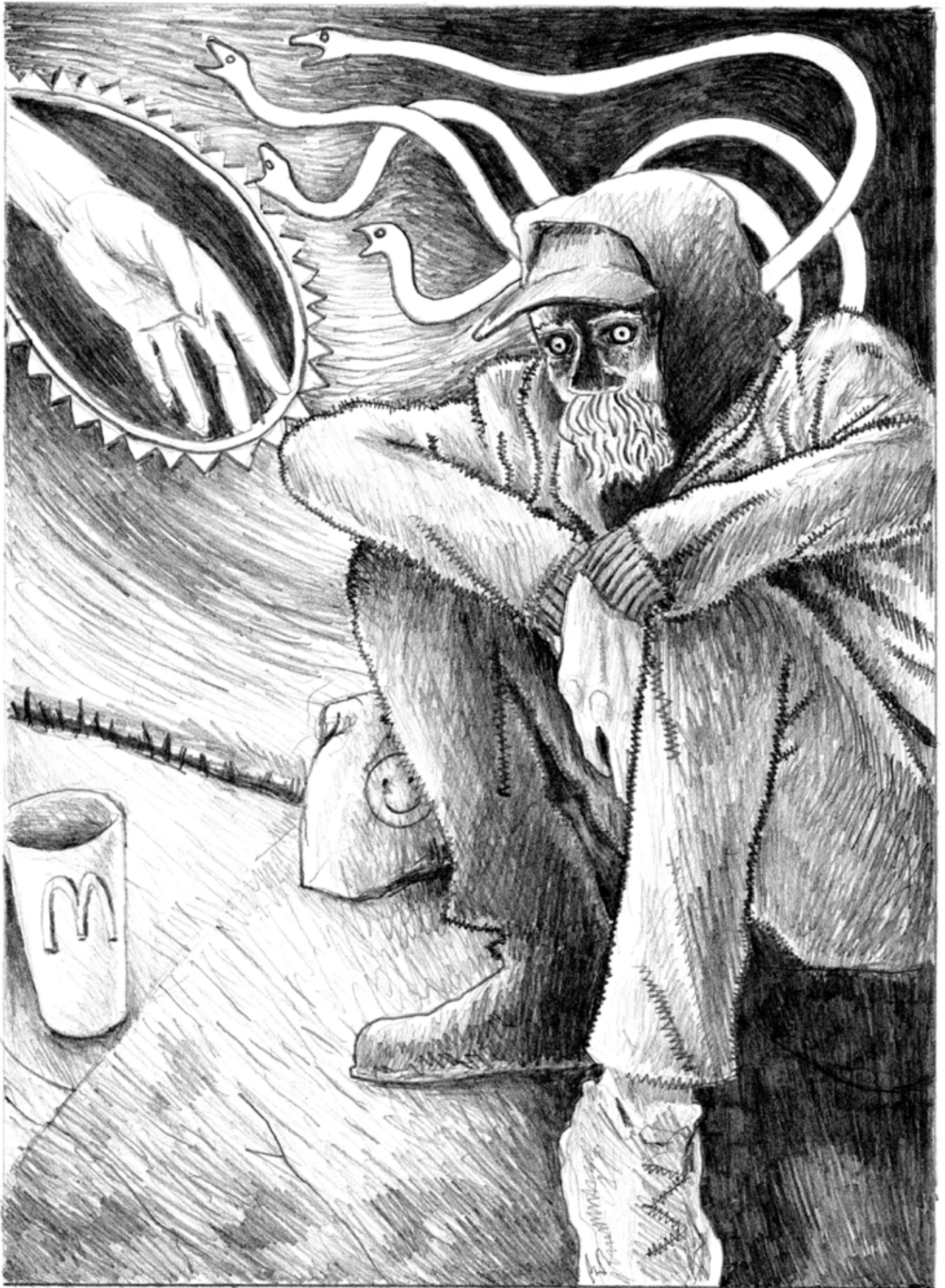
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DRAWING:

ROBERT JEFFERSON

Rob Jefferson, born in Memphis, 1970, graduated from the Art Academy of Cincinnati with a BFA in painting (1992). Rob's work explores cultural parallels and connectedness.

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R. JEFFERSON

Memorial for the Homeless Dead

The winter wind they call the Hawk
rounds the corner of the season
and skitters the last leaves to the fencelines.
We stand in a park with a paper in our hands
and down the paper runs a list of names
None of the names will answer if we call them
but we read them to remember that they had names.
these people of the underbridge,
the condominiums of the shelters,
the apartments of park benches,
the cardboard havens and bedrooms of the poor.
What can we know about these names but that they died
---some in the usual way
and some in ways it hurts to think on.
They died of violence, accident, and neglect.
They died of untreated disease,
of over-dose and under-attention.
They were cold, they were hungry,
they were sick, and they died.
And now they are nothing but a list of names running off into the wind.
The Hawk sweeps the corner of the shivering season
and the cold grass is stiff around our shoes.
We stand in a park with our pockets full of wind
and nothing in our hands but these pages full of names
and the names are fading from our sight.
They were cold, they were hungry, they were sick.
They were over-dosed and under-funded,
displaced from the neighborhood of the living
and now their names trickle into the cold, stiff grass.
The Hawk tests the currents of the turning season
and strips the warmth from the downtown towers.
We stand in a park with our hats full of dust and we ask,
who decided which doors would open and
who decided which doors would close
and who decided these names would be on the list that we read this day.
They were cold, they were tired,
they were gentrified and they died
and now their names fade into the light.
The Hawk calls once in the sweep of the changing season
and wickers away the last of the leaves.
We stand in a park with our hands full of light
and in the light a list of eternal names.
They were cold, they were sick, they were hungry.
They were over-dosed and under-guided and they died.
If we call these names now and it seems they do not answer,
we can learn to listen in the grass, in the wind,

in the shower of sunlight that falls around us.
We can listen in the cold cry of the Hawk.
Listen close:
They are a whisper now on the tongue of God.
We call their names to remember they had names,
these people of the underbridge,
the condominiums of the shelters,
the apartments of park benches,
the cardboard havens and bedrooms of the poor.

Thirty Years Ago

A winter storm moves in and settles on the city streets.
The frozen gargoyles of City Hall leer from their parapets.
Frost grips the park benches with cold white fingers.
Snow dusts the eaves of the tenements
along Race Street, Vine Street, 14th
and the sad nameless alleys that run off Republic.
Snow caps the parking meters
and blinds the windows of the parked cars.
It is a deep, perfect, silencing snow
that muffles the sounds of the sirens,
the cars on Central Parkway,
the snatches of music that thump from the jukeboxes of Main Street,
and the softened clatter of a truck being loaded.
Into the snow steps a group of ragged shadows.
Three or four at first, then more,
then tens and twelves.
They shiver, blink back the snow,
pull their second-hand coats tighter,
and stagger, step, or shuffle as they are able,
southward down Main Street.
Some talk, some grumble,
and some are silent as the snow,
but they walk in something like order, something like a march.
They walk as if, at the end of their march,
there might be something like hope.
Perhaps they are crippled by alcohol,
for they do not seem to understand
it is the job of the poor
to die silent and in some other place.
Down Main, they stumble south to 12th Street.
Those at the head of the line stop for a moment.
They puzzle, where are we supposed to go?
But someone tells them,
so they turn west and continue their march.
They do not seem to understand

it is the mission of the misguided
to lose themselves quietly,
and in some other place.
Down 12th to Walnut,
they limp and shuffle in their battered manner
and pass under the cold eye of Germania,
that great verdigris goddess, perfect in limb and posture.
But they ignore her; they do not look up.
They do not seem to understand
it is the job of the broken to keep on breaking,
quiet, and in some other place.
Past Walnut, they cross Jackson where a prostitute eyes them.
She seems to see herself in them
and she stamps her foot for warmth and turns away.
The women among the shadows mutter something
and the men look down
and they all keep marching.
They do not seem to understand
it is the task of the scorned
to bury their pain down the road
in some quiet, distant place.
The shadows cross into the glare of Vine Street
and the light is not kind
for it glitters on their snowy rags
and lights the broken places on their cheeks
and marks the red rims that circle their eyes,
But they march on. They do not seem to understand
it is the duty of the damaged
to hide their broken bodies
quietly and in some distant place.
They march their shivering march past Glossinger's
and as they march, some gaze like lovers
into the darkened windows
for they have already begun to ache and shiver
for the wine that waits there.
But they march and tremble
and they do not seem to understand
it is the responsibility of the fallen
to whisper their sins to a cold, clay confessional
in some distant place.
They march past Race Street
and the park with its great black trees
and some look sidelong to watch the park fill up with snow.
They keep on, one after another,
for they do not seem to understand
it is in the interest of all
that the abandoned take their loss
to a quiet empty field in some distant place.

Down they march to Elm
where they glance toward the floodlights facing Music Hall
and they do not seem to understand
it is the obligation of the undertaught
to spare the senses of the cultured
and to die. Quiet. In some other place, Not here.
But the ragged shadows march on,
just a few more stumbling steps
and through these doors against all law,
all rule, all duty for the poor
that they might find warmth,
and a little food
and a chance at life.
Through these doors,
these lawless doors.
Right here,
and not in some distant place.

Thirty years have passed.
I cannot tell you
if these shadows lived or dutifully died.
But I know the doggish cold
still follows at the heels of the poor.
The hawkish wind still whistles down the alleys.
The gargoyles of City hall
test their wings and wait their orders.
But the arrogant poor still march.
They walk their ragged, crooked mile
ignorant of law or duty
in search of a little warmth, a little food,
a little more of life than others would allow them.
We have marched through the snows and suns of thirty years.
Many have come and gone through these doors.
And we honor each of them.
For here, in this place,
we renounce the law that says the poor must die
for the comfort of the uncomfortable.
We abrogate the rule that says
a woman must freeze
for the warmth of the well-housed
or that a child must starve
to feed the well-fed.
Here today, we declare,
there is no law but the law of love.
There is no rule but the rule of justice.
There is no duty but the duty of hope.

POEMS:

CYNTHIA OSBORNE HOSKIN

Cynthia Osborne Hoskin, originally from the East Coast, is a 70-year old child with a history of writing, painting, and print making. She has been a Real Estate Broker, Editor, Features Writer, Public Relations Consultant, and a community activist. Cynthia lives in Kentucky with her present husband of 23 years and a Scottie named Abigail.

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STEVE PENTICUFF

Steve Penticuff teaches Upper School English at The Summit Country Day School. In his spare time, he reads Ferlinghetti and prepares poems for his first chapbook. At night, Steve dreams of his native California, where the coastal redwoods have never stopped calling his name.

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DRAWING:

GENE SOWLES

Gene H. Sowles lives in Cincinnati, OH. He has a BFA in sculpture from the University of Cincinnati. Gene has shown extensively in many galleries both locally and nationally. His work can be seen at Dicere Gallery in Cincinnati.

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Lesson in Diversity

(by *Cynthia Hoskin*)

"We're good," she said, her tail held high,
White wings laid flat upon her thigh,
And strutting so, she led her brood.
"We're good, we're good," she proudly
mused.

The goslings tripped, a ragged row,
Their orange feet dug into snow.
"We're good, we're good," they lightly cried,
'til all at once a crow they spied.

"A friend, a friend," the great goose heard,
As goslings rushed to meet the bird.
"Oh ugly sight," the mother spat
"Oh, children dears just look at that!"

"We must not notice, hear or speak
To such a one, not one small peep!"
The goslings drooped and slunk away
When all they wanted was to play.

The crow looked up from hunting food
To see the strange retreating brood.
"Must be a frightening thing they saw,"
And so the crow let out a caw.

Around the Kettle

(by *Steve Penticuff*)

I hear the story as a child:
Buddhist monks avoiding the grass
lest they step on a worm.
But a worm is just a worm, I think,
and laugh, then trample the lawn
with friends in search of anything
that crawls or hops.

We shove cricket bodies
through fish hooks, make insects
smolder under magnifying glasses,
aim (and shoot) to kill the birds
and squirrels with home-made
bows and arrows.

Eventually some of us grow up.
We watch a fresh generation
of children at play, ripping wings
and heads off live cicadas, pouring
gasoline over ants, chopping worms
to pieces just for fun.

And light shines
from wells of deep compassion
in our eyes, a flood of hope
for the world even as our hearts sink:
deep down we know
superiority to everything we harm
is an illusion,
and the kids know not what they do
when they dip their soft
hot and wiggly summer toes
and ease their bodies
into warm waters of violence
that only seem cool
(because of course it takes awhile
to reach a boil).

If we're lucky, our own children
catch us now and then
trapping flies and spiders
in jars and carrying them gently
to the porch, where we let them go,
and our fruit ripens right there
on the vine as innocence returns
and shines in the eyes
of those we rescued
drying off outside the kettle.

POEMS:

SUE NEUFARTH HOWARD

Sue Neufarth Howard, Cincinnati native, published poet, visual artist, retired. 1983 Poet Laureate for Clifton Heights/Fairview – Cincinnati Recreation Commission Neighborhood Poetry Contest. Graduate of Miami University (Oxford) and UC Evening College. Member of Greater Cincinnati Writer's League. Several poems have won Prizes in Ohio Poetry Day Contests since 1998. Poems published in *The Old Mill Pond Anthology*, *Nomad's Choir*, *Poetic Hours*, *Mid America Poetry Review*, *Creative Voices: The ILR Anthology*, and other publications.

Contact: snhpoet@netzero.com

DRAWING:

ALAN SAUER

Alan Sauer, originally of Dayton, OH, lives in Cincinnati where he attended the Art Academy and obtained, in 1992, a BFA in printmaking and painting. Alan is a prolific artist who uses ink drawing, painting and stone carving. He has exhibited regularly locally and his work is included in many private collections.

Contact: onenationunderskin@yahoo.com



Negative Space

what you don't notice
between tree leaves
between birds in flight formation

the space around
the artist's painted image
around newlyweds out for a stroll

what the eye picks up that you
don't see – until
the negative space looms large

limbless dead tree against the sky
tiny downed bird
the couple a table apart

man alone on a high roof ledge

A Mystery

In the dark and cold
identified only by two words
on a white tag
Unknown (River)

Five feet four inches tall
one hundred twenty-four pounds
pulled from the Ohio River
November – a week after Thanksgiving
muddy riverbank, North Bend

She has a name – maybe a family
maybe children

Now June – in a black plastic bag
in a freezer – coroner's office
fan blows cold air constantly above her
"the lady from the river"

The body will talk to you.
Blond or gray hair
curled toes – sign of Arthritis
likely 60 or early 70's

Found in white Easy Spirit gym shoes
black skirt, black blouse
around her neck – string of black and white beads
maybe a waitress

Suffered trauma – possible high fall from a bridge
only a few days spent in the water – identifiable
if only someone could look at a picture and say
"That's her"

There is still hope her story will end differently
fliers bearing her picture are handed out
neighborhoods canvassed near
where she was found

The riverbank will be searched again
maybe something missed
something with a name
she has a name
maybe they can find her family, too

Maybe someone will be grateful to know
what happened to their missing
sister, Mother, daughter

Maybe they will come for her
give her a proper burial
have a chance to say
Goodbye

(Found poem, based on an article in the Cincinnati Enquirer).

POEMS:

W. B. “BUCKY” IGNATIUS

W.B. “Bucky” Ignatius is one of the older hippies still around, eagerly awaiting the 13th U.S. President of his lifetime with no fear of worse luck. Besides poetry, Bucky loves choral singing, photography and gardening. Two bright daughters and the two cutest grandsons ever keep him from being a full-time curmudgeon.

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JAKE LUDWIG

Jake Ludwig is a fifth grade student at St. Ignatius School. He enjoys his friends, many sports, and playing his electric guitar. Jake’s favorite subjects are science and history. He likes playing with his puppy, Merfy, a miniature daschund with a big attitude.

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DRAWING:

AARON KENT

Aaron Kent (“AK-47”) was born in Springfield, OH, 1972. He studied commercial art in high school and studied fine art and sculpture at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. Aaron worked at Casting Arts and Technology in Cincinnati, where he studied bronze casting and metal fabrication.

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Dumb, But Not Blind

(by **Becky Ignatius**)

Politically,
i never hesitate,
but plunge headlong
into the breach.
righteous and sort of sure,
sure always of my ability to compete
mind and mind.
leftist, rightist, Dylan told me to be an upist.
my biggest gripe with capitalism
is the capital i
with little you
and little we.
having heard many times
the tragedy of america,
i came, a while ago, to the conclusion
that love/socialism/democracy/brotherhood/
and enough money to start
were all we needed.
love was all we needed
socialism was all we needed
democracy was all we needed
brotherhood was all we needed
and enough

FLASH

enough what??
i need a reading list, though not
necessarily to read,
a growing circle of friends,
grass and bananas to keep me warm,
smiling, singing, bouncing when she
walks lover,
and music.
that's what i need.
where there are forces trying to keep
me from these things,
i oppose them.
be them "them" or "us."

Politically,
i don't theorize much at all.
i live, and living, learn.
and love, and loving, learn.
and america has gotten in the way
for lots of us
here, there, and everywhere.
and in that sense,
timeless, nationless sense,
she is my enemy.
if you ask me but what about Stalin
and no freedom
and Hungary
and Czechoslovakia
i'll tell you,
i don't know.
how to spell them even.
but better dead than red?
NO! i say--better alive than afraid
and better a love than a country.

War and Peace

(by **Jake Ludwig**, 10 year old)

When we're at war
we're not at peace
the good times begin to cease
it seems like the whole world stops
from day and night
to around the clock.

As the whole wide world
holds its breath
to something that may lead
to tragic death
peace is what we want to achieve
but to do that we have to believe.

If we can achieve all our goals
we can patch up all the holes
that cover our earth's surface.

POEMS:

CAROL IGOE

Professionally, Carol Igoe is a behavioral psychologist, a long time activist and a writer for disability rights and for the environment. Besides writing information briefs for the public in these fields, Carol writes poetry as a way of experiencing and describing how we all fit together in the world.

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DRAWING:

TAMMY MALONEY

Tammy Maloney, born in Manchester, CT, studied at Alfred University in Western NY and at American University in Washington, DC. Tammy now resides in Cincinnati, OH.

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Tammy Moody

February 21, 2008: What the Moon Saw

The moon eclipsed last night,
Hung like an ancient Persian coin,
dulled rust,
then slowly grew back into silver light.

Hung over my quiet snow-filled street,
not even a dog barked, the peace was so deep.
Hung over all the mountains, rivers, farmlands
of my country
where there is no war,
no tanks, no hidden bombs or ambushes,
no helmeted soldiers, kicking down our doors,
no ditches full of dead and tortured men.

Hung over sleeping Europe,
the gods of war restrained and buried deep.
Finally slipping into dawn
at the farthest edge of war,
past civilization's oldest haunt.

Hung in earth's dark red shade,
broke free,
then glowed again, full of hope,
clear shining mistress of our night.

The Year Turns

Solstice

Menorah like
bare trees
thrust up
their winter prayer:
Forgive us our sins,
Teach us compassion,
Once again, send
green life out of cold death.

Resurrection

Spring wind pushed back my hair,
Cupped my ear,
Whispered
Birdsong has reclaimed the air.

Cardinal, robin, mourning dove
Stake out their trees.
Waking branches pull in sun and rain,
Leaf the sky, proclaim sweet life again.

Against all odds, snakes, frogs, fishes push
upstream,
Though deserts creep
And polar ice caps slowly melt.

Resurrection!

Once more earth spins our way among the
stars.
So may it be today,
and for years to come.

POEMS:

JERRY JUDGE

Jerry Judge is a Cincinnati-based poet and social worker. He is a member of the Cincinnati Writers' Project and the Greater Cincinnati Writers' League. Jerry has published in many journals and has published four poetry chapbooks.

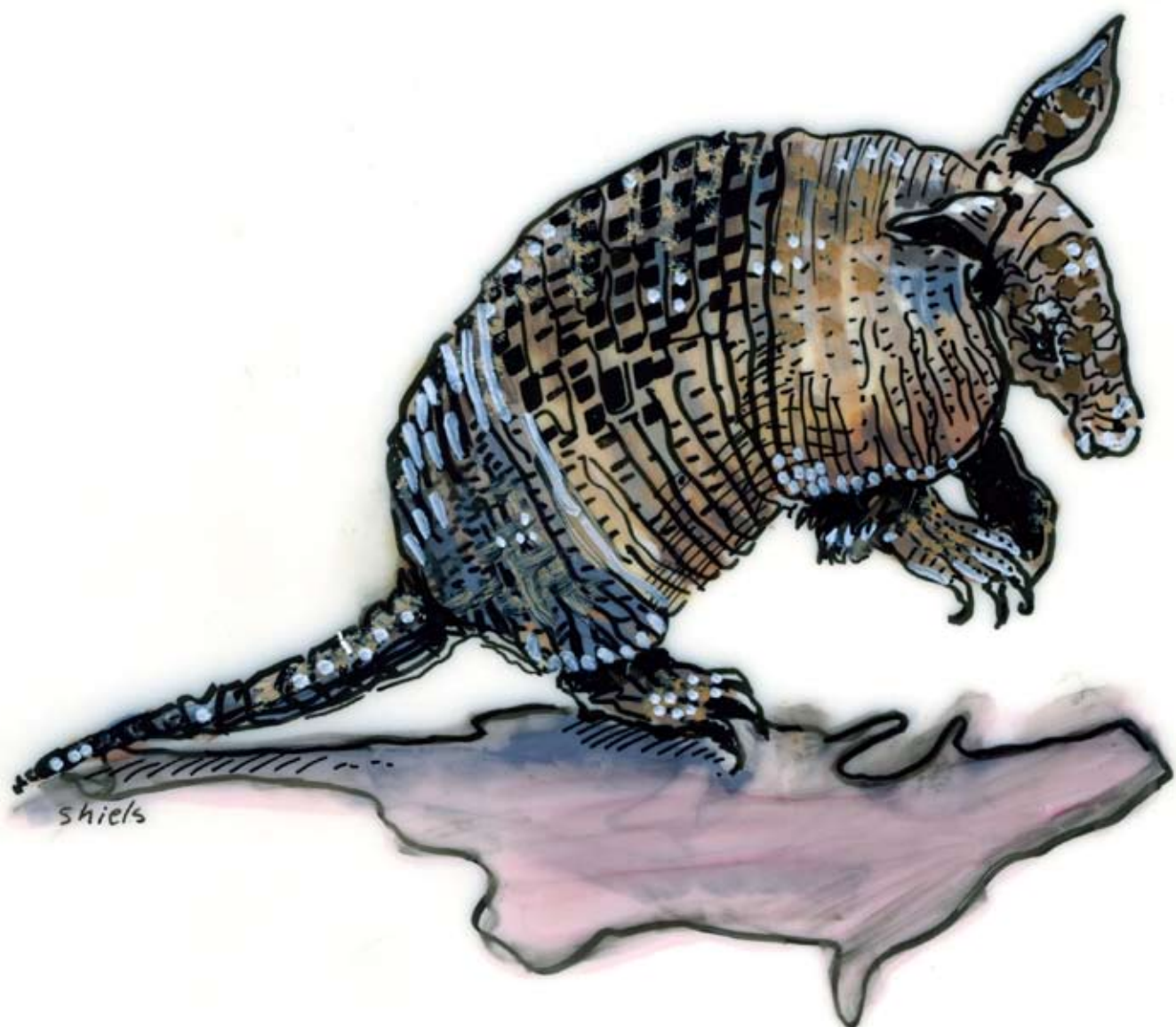
Contact: jerryj871@aol.com

DRAWING:

LESLIE SHIELS

Leslie Shiels is a painter in Cincinnati, OH. She graduated from DAAP, University of Cincinnati, in 1974.

Contact: lgshiels@fuse.net; www.leslieshiels.com



If I Met George W. Bush

I'm a pacifist (usually) and besides
there would be scores of Secret Service men
measuring my every move – especially my
hands.

No. It wouldn't be physical, but I would yearn
to say something that would pierce him
for almost forever like depleted uranium.

Yet, what could I say or show
that would impact a mind and soul
wrapped in denial's impregnable armor?

Like an armadillo bumping around
feeling nothing, the President
meanders on at our peril.

Duty

*"I sleep clearly every night."
Paul Tibbets, pilot of the Enola Gay*

How wonderful it must have been
to follow and have such faith
in your superiors and their good will
that you could do anything
without doubt, without guilt,
and sleep like your mother, Enola Gay,
still rocked you and sang lullabies
while "Little Boy" just floated in the sky.

*("Little Boy" was the code name of the atomic
bomb dropped on Hiroshima.)*

Modern Garden

When he awoke,
he saw his
innocence exposed.

The landmine left him
the only survivor
from the Humvee patrol.

Like an obsessive lover,
guilt has tracked him
back to Ohio. He shows

his incision, snaking
from Adam's apple
to navel. He says

the army wants him
back. He says he will
return. There's no choice.

POEMS:

LONNA KINGSBURY

Lonna Kingsbury teaches poetry and creative writing at variant levels throughout the city. A native of Chicago, she makes at least one yearly sojourn to continue to be a part of The Chicago Poetry Fest and North Beach Poets. Currently active with Miami River Writers, Lonna helps facilitate Juanita Mays' newly reformed Milford group and remains founder of Cincinnati's Poets Anonymous as well as Miami Township Poet Laureate.

Contact: lonna@kingsburyproductions.com

DRAWING:

EMIL ROBINSON

Emil Robinson grew up in Cincinnati. In 2006 he completed his MFA degree from the University of Cincinnati department of fine art. Emil's work is exhibited nationally and internationally. He is dedicated to his art and his family. He currently lives in Walnut Hills, Cincinnati, OH.

Contact: androcles23@hotmail.com



Emil Robinson

News Brief

Breath held fast --aghast
past any chance foretelling
One on one
somewhere
alone
cautiously awaiting
fearfully negating
the single course of Who
and Why
or When
we meet
replete
with How
or What the given time
 --will finally reveal.

Will it come as justice
claiming first-fired fare
from masquerading distance
advancing to the vanquishment
changing both our lives
or will it come by happenstance
quickly from the shadows
protecting misspent shadowed peace
Where one of us must die?

Both Sides Now

Both were brave
Both were young
Both were justifiable
Both were worried
wearied by
constant inconsistencies
Both were caring
Both had shared
peaceful lamentations
minus rents or sundry woes
but now feared only how
single-minded factionings
undermined each soul
face to face
eye to eye
juxtaposing goals.

Epiphany

Two days --all night
we're running scared
breathing hard
with sun too bright,
colliding shins with every rock
hidden within sight
Blinded by the sweatings
with one more ridge and maybe then
I'll get my bearings, sit a 'sec
breathe and find our company
 --if anyone is left

A little peace
 that's all I need
a moment to reflect,
find out where I'm posted
not really lost, not yet
as coordinates all neatly mapped
directionally decree
me somewhere past insanity
and fear of echoed primal screams

My dream?

Just let me make it home.
Please --map my way back home.

Alone
 below
I'm counting days
indebted as the rest
keeping pace
protecting
unwilling to regret
working through each nameless wrong
steadying each course
negating acts deceptive
bettering the worst

And then a break
too sweet, right there
the peak!
A breeze?
Ah, coolness --good.

A quick glance up and
Thank You, God . . .
From climbed position
gain my foot---

Oh, my God,
now facing
the one who made it here before
shouldering his weapon
frozen to the core
waits for just that moment
named before as one of truth
hesitating slightly
before the sub sequential burst
exploiting time
gone idle
impugning prayers of benefit
for each deceitful warp of faith
for killing
and for death
as slowly flows the bleeding
commingling
--at rest

POEMS:

LINDA KLEINSCHMIDT

Linda Kleinschmidt, a long-time college composition instructor, is a full-time freelance editor working with authors in the US and abroad. Linda has been in love with writing since childhood; she writes poetry, short stories, juvenile material, and articles on the crafts of writing and editing. Her poetry has been published and won a few awards. She has published two picture books and won a Writer's Digest Honorable Mention for Juvenile Writing. Linda divides her time between Cincinnati, OH, and Hanover, NH, where she is completing her graduate degree in liberal studies at Dartmouth College.

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GERALDINE WITTEKIND

Gerri Wittekind is a 63 year old retired R.N. who has a passion for gardening, writing and Monhegan Island, Maine.

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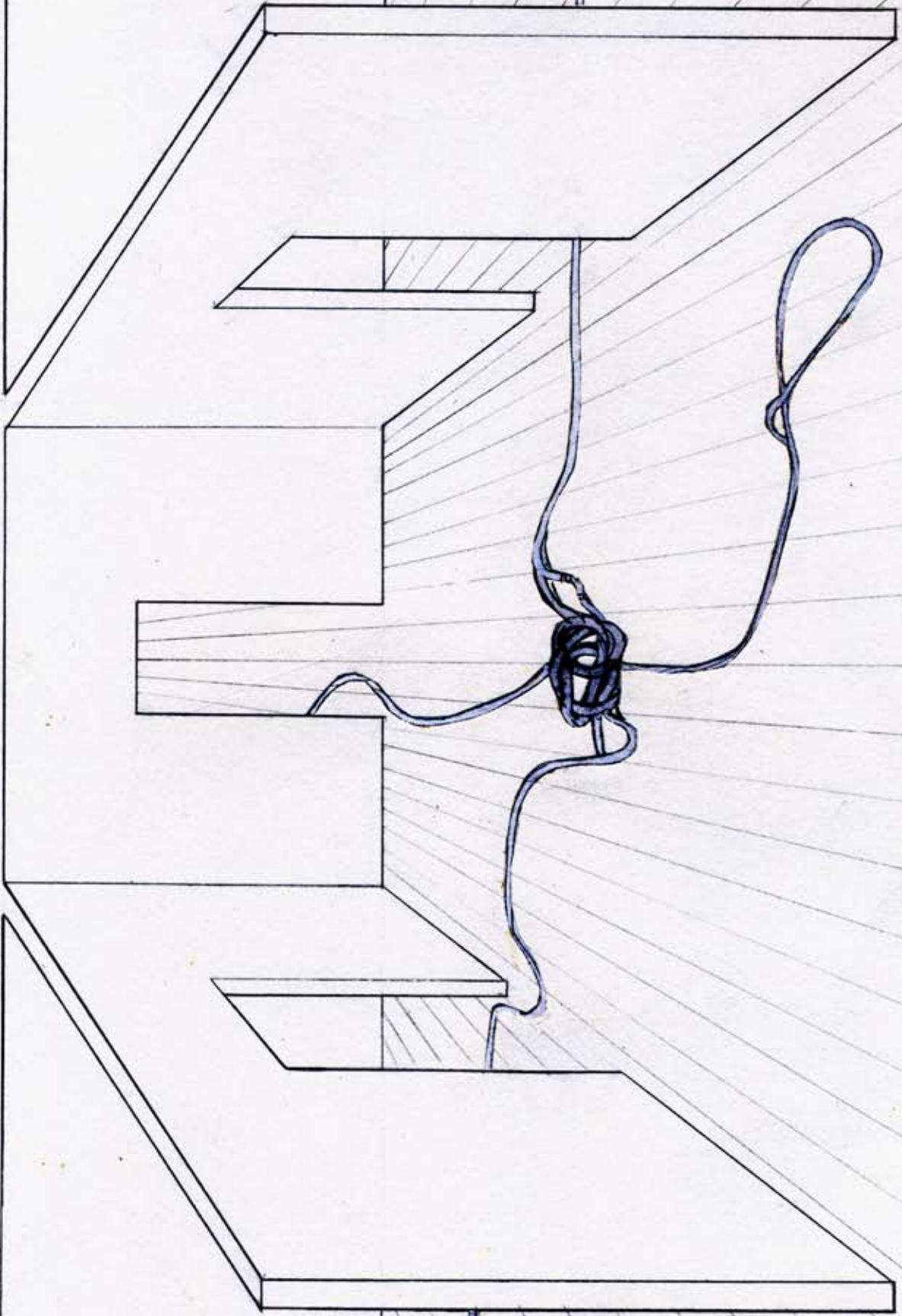
DRAWING:

CATHERINE RICHARDS

Catherine Richards is a graduate architecture student at the University of Cincinnati. She is also an artist interested in all types of collaborative art making. Catherine recently worked in London, England, designing an exhibit for the Victoria and Albert Museum.

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Catherine Richards



Pallbearers

(by **Linda Kleinschmidt**)

Woman, you are life's pallbearer,
You eulogize and take the grief
From the bearers of it.
Husband, father, son, or friend,
Woman, you hear the sounds, touch the wounds.
Consume the sadness.

Are you strung of steel perhaps,
Or is your soul task a calling
Reaching back to Adam ?
You are a lioness. You unfurl and enfold,
Earth helpmate, an essence, you remain the
Loyal carrier of ongoing.

The Season

(by **Geraldine Wittekind**)

Hypocrisy.

Atrocities.

Christians, Muslims, Jews.
Exalted leaders
quote our holy books
to excuse the things we do.

Millions die
with bloated bellies,
bulging eyes.

Orphans, widows,
refugees
cry
into the echoes
of eons.

And fat, old men
smoke cigars.
Toast each other
with flutes of crude.

Speak with ease
of war
and weapons.

Land mines, blackhawks,
guns, grenades.
Young men.
Boys with toys
and hard ons.
Martyrs or murderers,
depending on
which side
they fall.

*I have heard it said
the world is starved
for great men.*

To everything
there is a season.

It is the winter
of our planet.

Mothers, sisters.
Great women.
It is not enough
to bitch and breed.
It is not enough
to pray and grieve.

Great women.
hear the plea from
desert sands,
canyons, caves.

Listen to the desperate cry
in the roiling waves.

Get off your knees.

It is our season,
our turn,
our time
to lead.

POEMS:

ANNETTE LACKNER

A native Cincinnati, Annette (Toni) Lackner grew up on the East Side, attended Nativity Grade School and Regina High School. She does not have a degree, but took several creative writing courses at UC. She traveled extensively and spent time in Ecuador, The Phillipines, Thailand, India, and many States in the US.

Her poetry comes from the connection she made with various cultures.

Annette is a strong advocate for peace and has written short stories as well as articles for her Church Periodical.

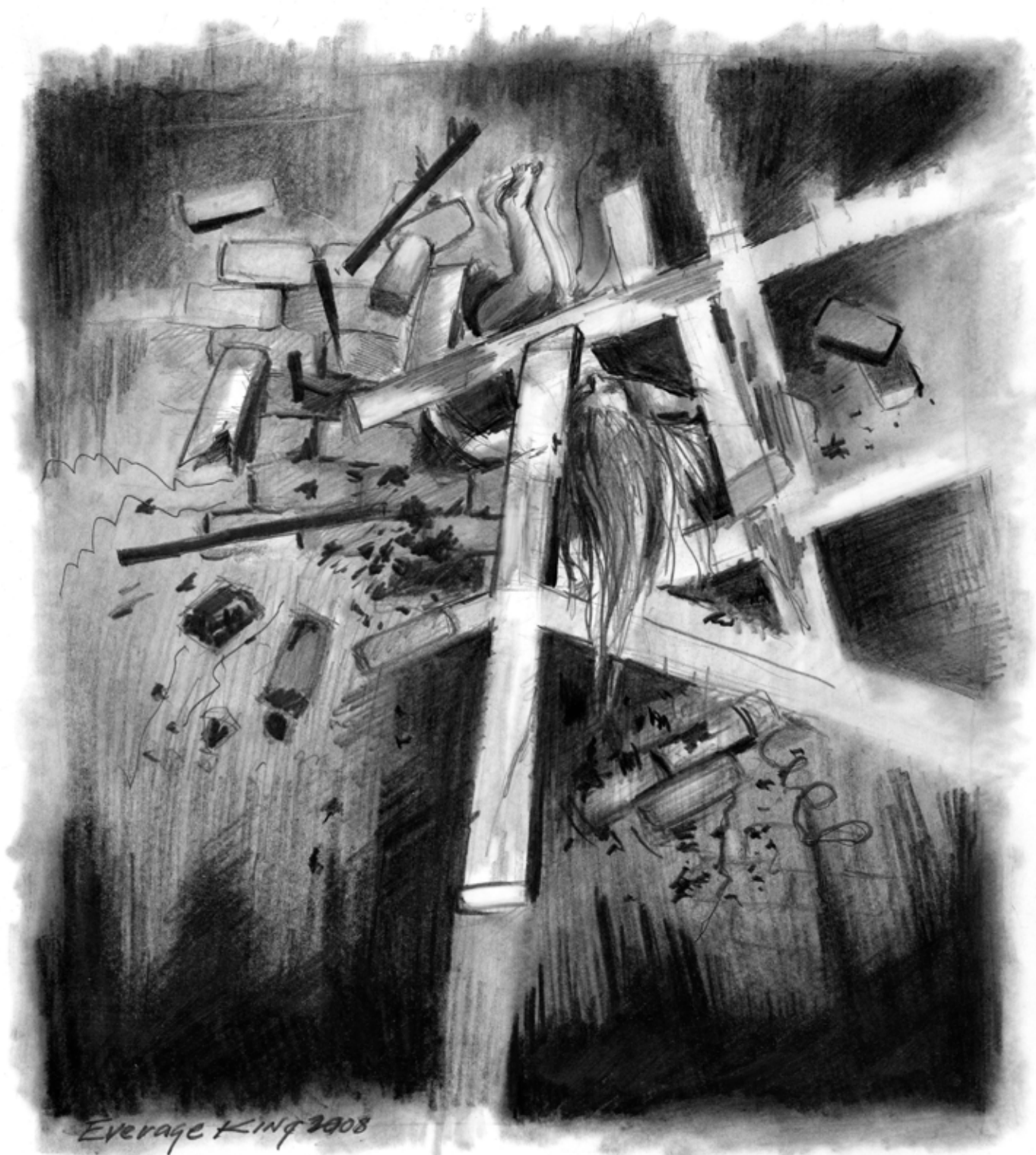
Contact: tonibell@fuse.net

DRAWING:

EVERAGE KING

Everage King, Atlanta, GA, born artist. Raised and educated in Cincinnati, OH. Attended UC with degrees in Liberal Arts, Fine arts and Education. Taught art in public schools in Columbus and Dayton, OH, and Baltimore, MD. Paints most often in watercolor and acrylic mediums in an impressionistic manner.

Contact: emossking@yahoo.com



A Traveler's Prayer

I saw you at the village well
Along the dusty road to Jaipur
Soap and towel in hand
In a queue for a morning bath.
Were Iraqis like you at the well
When we "shock and awed"?
I pray for them

I met you in the Philippines
Your dead parents beside you
Mummified in your tribal tradition
Was someone mourning at a grave
In Lebanon when unholy bombs exploded
I pray for them

Welcomed into your Andes home,
You wove a colorful blanket for me
Your children proudly watching.
Were families and blankets and homes
Destroyed when the horrors of war
Descended upon the hills of Afghanistan?
I pray for them.

I saw your family on a train
Crossing the River Kwai.
Laughing, lunching, playing games.
Was a family traveling the rails,
Eating lunch, playing games
When rockets showered down on Israel?
I pray for them

Lost countrymen of September 11th
Our military and their families.
The bloodied minds and bodies
At Walter Reed,
I pray for them.

I pray
I pray
I pray
Mostly, for a better way.

Misguided Prayers

A child is dead.
No more kisses on her curls
No more patting of chubby legs
Bright innocent eyes will
No longer look in wonder
At the simplest wonders
Of the universe.

Pulled from the rubble
Burnt and maimed.
On one side of a line
Collateral Damage.
On the other
Murdered by terrorists.
Country of origin doesn't matter
It's the same everywhere.

Screams in the streets
If she had been aborted.
Guardians raked over the coals
If a freak accident had taken her
A faulty product, a congressional hearing
Whichever, there would be OUTRAGE.
But for this little one, NONE.

World leaders say they're sorry
Prayers go up to their God of choice.
I am sickened.
Lebanese, Iraqi, Israeli, Iranian
She is the child of us all.
Perhaps we should pray for our own
Sorry souls.

POEMS:

CAROL FEISER LAQUE

Carol Feiser Laque has just published her new collection of poetry titled *Queen Anne's Lace*. Carol's favorite class is recess.

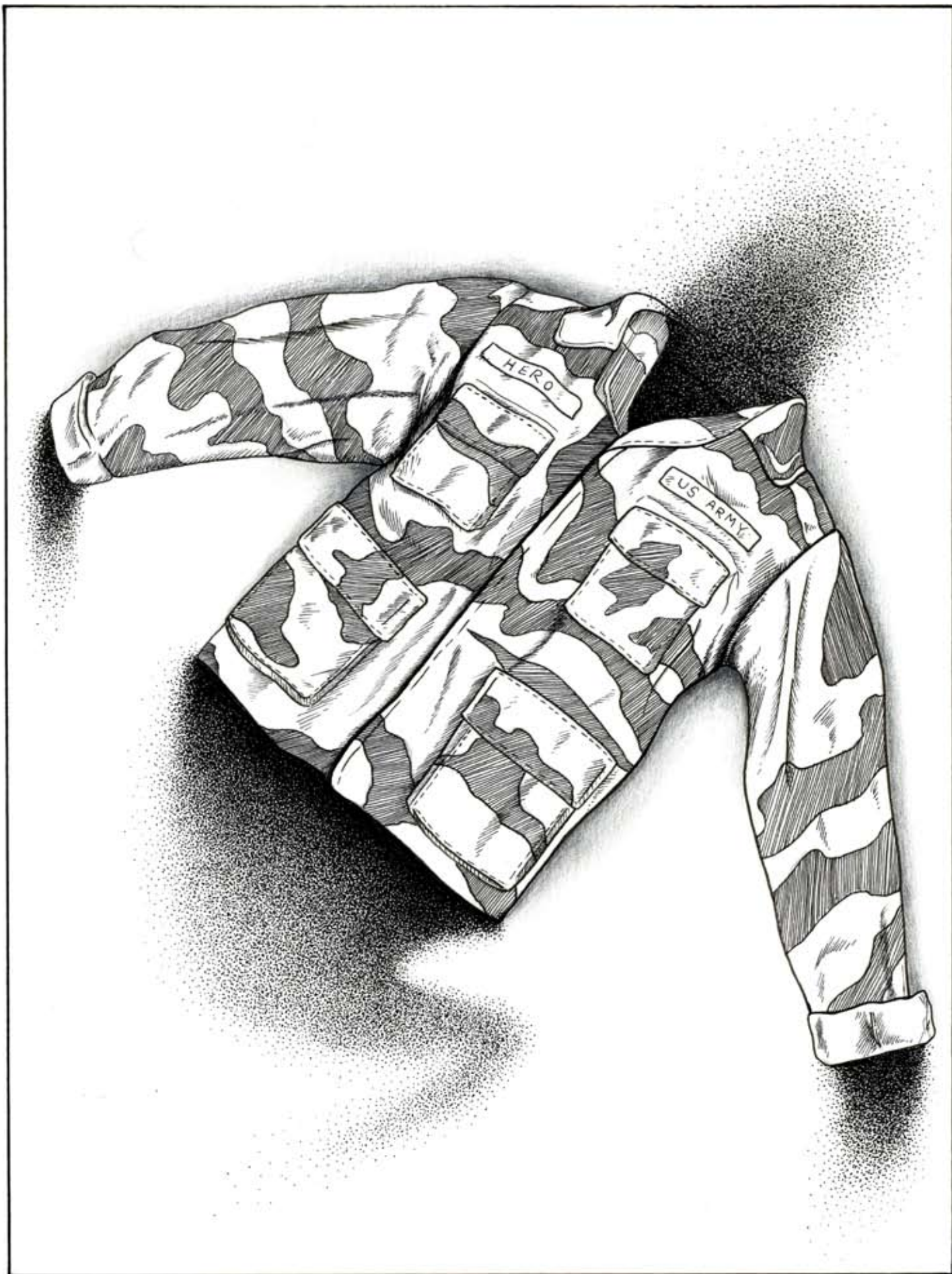
Contact: claque@fuse.net

DRAWING:

MATTHEW REED

Matt Reed is an artist, educator, and radical leftist currently living in Cincinnati, OH. His work has appeared in galleries locally, nationally, and internationally; and his illustrations have been used for magazines, comic books, t-shirts, and music album covers.

Contact: mrmatthewjreed@hotmail.com



MATT REED

The Hero

I have lost both arms.
I have lost both legs.
My body is full of shrapnel.
My head is full of bullets.
My lips and eyes are gone.

I say nothing. Burnt -
my remains are shipped home.

Ashes and bone fragments
are boxed tightly for
my parents who receive
medals for my bravery.

In the photograph my
parents hold, my head
is shaved, and I am
19 years old for ever.

Rocking Chair

A rock in my chair
empty handed. I have
lost time's children
to carside bombings.

I have no parents, or
grandparents, or children
to notify from my
empty handed rocking chair.

Only the wartime horror
leaves me with empty
cradles. The children
orphaned are too old to rock.

Children besides strapped with bombs,
they are headed to their
own heroics – leaving
shattered bones and blood.

First Communion

Stalking corridors of light,
Priests steal innocent children,
and close their eyes
to Heaven and Hell.

Purgatory punctuates the children's silence –
saturates the entire Vatican.
Drunk with stolen chants,
the clergy saves freedom's

Jam and peanut butter
for sandwiches to
lure hungry children.
The innocent bare -

a refined and sanitized
sin where Holy Robes
hide hopes of Paradise –
hide communion's poison.

Speaking as God,
the clergy consumes
the body and blood
of small children.

These children cannot speak
or walk corridors candlelit...
after Priests prey them
into rancid little graves.

Revelation

In a forest of saplings
the forest sways, shattered -
As people cut the trees down.

Their leaves, branches massacred -
The forest is cut into deserts,
Blowing sands, windy, cut

Eyes with grinding tears on
famine's faces. No east or west -
No north or south – only war in

The Middle East burns bloody
tears on sands, mobs, orphans.
This is a desert of madmen.

The Revelation cuts sharper
than the sword. Bombs
splinter glances, entire civilizations.

I wander through the desecration -
Wishing I were God.

POEMS:

MIKE MURPHY

Mike Murphy helps grow vegetables, as well as fruit and nut trees, on Sharing Circle Community Farm outside Maysville, KY. He reads a bit, listens to BBC, shares a farm-life with his partner Birdie Fetterhoff, and writes thoughtful poems.

Contact: mjmurphy1938@windstream.net

SAMANTHA SCHALK

Sami Schalk is a recent Miami University graduate with majors in Creative Writing and Women's Studies. A native of Southgate, KY, Sami considers herself a feminist-activist-poet and is a Young Women's program faculty at Women Writing for (a) Change in Cincinnati. She intends to earn a Master of Fine Arts degree in Poetry and then return to the Cincinnati area to teach, write and perform.

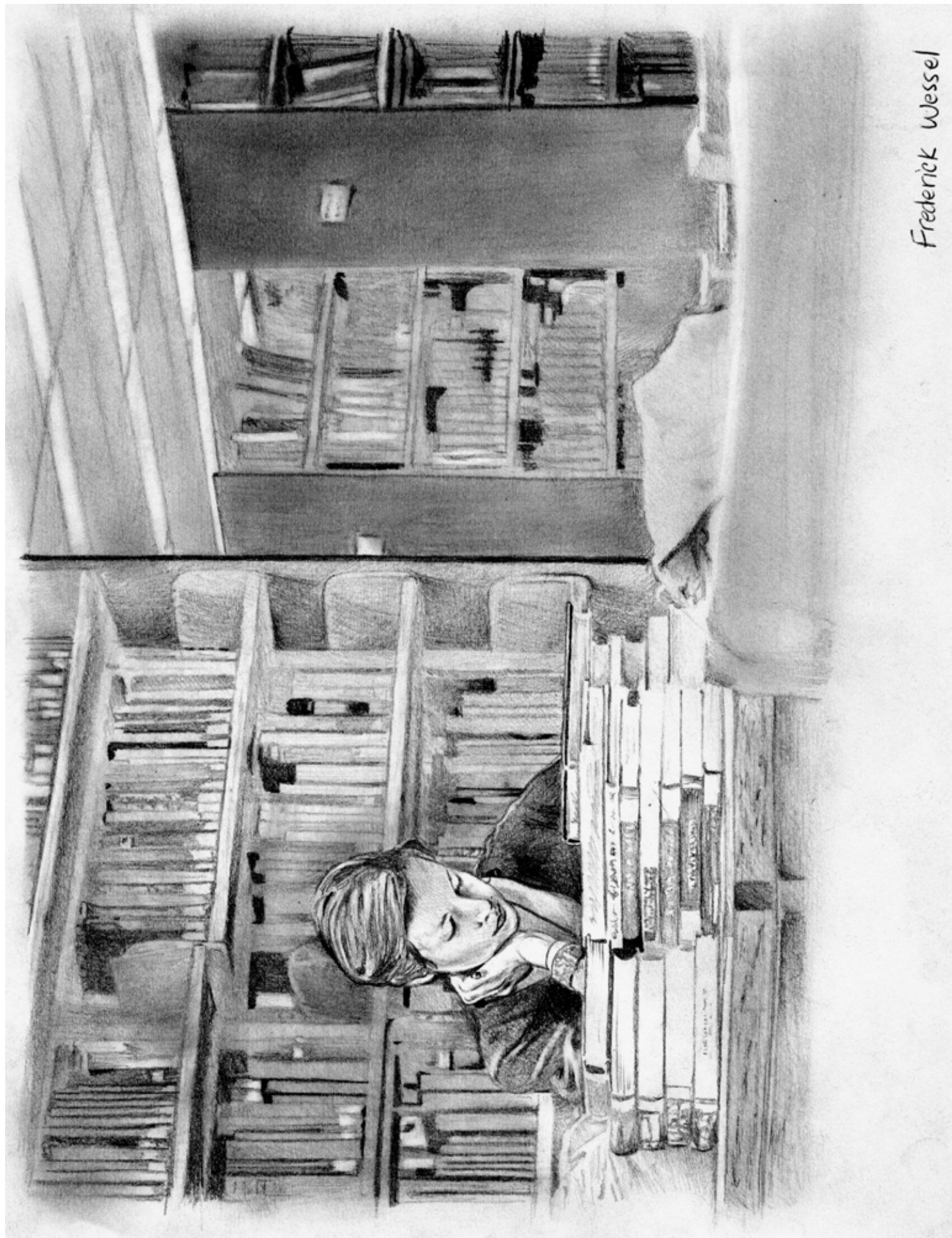
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DRAWING:

FREDERICK WESSEL

Sculpture and painting are Frederick Wessel's passion. Frederick has a job to stay alive and buy supplies. He attends school to learn how to better create art.

Contact: flwessel@yahoo.com



Frederick Wessel

‘DRUTHERS

(by **Mike Murphy**)

We have our ‘druthers, y’know.
We don’t hafta be
The ‘Bully on the Block’.
We don’t hafta be
An arms dealer
In a hot tub.

We don’t hafta send
Our brothers & sisters
& surrogate others
To kill people we don’t know
In endless empire wars.

Some of us’d ‘druther
Change our country’s habits
Of overthrowin’ other people’s
Gummints (usually because
they are too democratic)
And propping up
U.S. corporacracy puppets w/ the
U.S. military.

We’d ‘druther not have a
Warfare economy
Protecting a resource-grabbing empire
Behind a smokescreen of
Fighting terrorism.

We’d ‘druther stop defending
Fear-based ways.

We’d ‘druther create
People-friendly, earth-friendly ways
An economy run on-the-job democratically
By local people everywhere.
We’d ‘druther
Make new friends & neighbors
Of people we don’t yet know,
Growing into a network of sustainable
communities,
Exploring friendship-based possibilities.

These are our ‘druthers.

Why I Chose a Liberal Arts School

(by **Samantha Schalk**)

I am learning here to open minds,
to see the world with perceptive eyes,
to think from views not my own,
to step outside my comfort zone,
to empathize and analyze,
to fight and question the social lies,
to share my education with those who don’t
know
how new experiences can help them grow.

I’m learning here to speak my mind,
so I’m sorry if you find,
my words a harsh, discomforting tone,
my opinions clashing with your own,
but I’m giving voice to those without,
politics by word of mouth.
Change through action, change through truth,
change starting in these collegiate roots.

I’m learning here to tell you no,
this is not the way life must go,
I will not lie here underfoot,
everything I have I will put
into calling you on your bluff
and changing things just enough
to make a damn difference.

POEMS:

MARY-JANE NEWBORN

Born and raised in Cincinnati in 1969, Mary-Jane Newborn married her British pen pal at a rock concert in Eden Park, moved to England for 12 years, became vegetarian and started a 26 year career as an art model. Afterwards, Mary-Jane lived in Miami, FL, for 7 years and returned to her homestead in 1988. In 1989, she became vegan. Mary-Jane now lives in Winton Place, volunteers with Earth Save Cincinnati, and continues activism for the liberation of all beings.

Contact: 513-929 2376

DRAWING:

HALENA CLINE

Halena Cline, a working artist in the Cincinnati area since 1980, has exhibited on a national scale. Her recent works address the chaotic situation of, not just world politics, but also the present issues facing the United States' 2008 election.

Contact: ulx110@one.net



Afrodizzy

The other morning on the radio
I heard about an elephant and a rhino,
in South Africa, who are in love -
now don't you wonder what they're thinking of?

In the very land of apartheid
here are two creatures of a different hide
who nonetheless have become close friends;
so this is the way the dark age ends.

Species to species and face to face
beings come together from every race,
human and rhinocerine and elephantine,
to share the fruits of the gift divine.

When the ivory touches the magic horn,
long memory embraces the unicorn;
if a tusk can caress a rhinoceros,
how much easier might it be for us?

Free Love

Please don't give me flowers;
let them live and grow.

Please don't give me potted plants;
let them wriggle their toes in the ground.

Don't give me leather;
I don't receive stolen goods.

Don't give me fur;
I won't support armed robbers.

Don't give me feathers;
let the birds fly unfettered.

Don't give me pearls;
let the oysters bounce unbound.

Don't try to feed me steak;
I don't eat corpses.

Don't take me to the zoo;
let wildlife be wild.

Don't give me ivory;
let elephants live with tusks.

Don't give me silk;
let the moths hatch out.

Don't give me caviar;
let the sturgeon's belly be.

But what am I to do? You ask;

What can I give you?

The truth is... nothing.
I want nothing from you.

Give yourself a lot of love;
Accept your self without condition.

Cherish the life in you
and you will cherish all of life.

Uncage, unchain, unleash yourself;
allow no exploitation.

If you love me,
let life live free.

POEMS:

ARMANDO ROMERO

Armando Romero was active in the Colombian avant-garde movement El Nadaismo during the 1960's. He has traveled extensively throughout Latin America, Europe and Asia. He lives in Cincinnati, where he is a Charles Phelps Taft Professor in Latin American literature at the University of Cincinnati.

Contact: armando_romero@msn.com

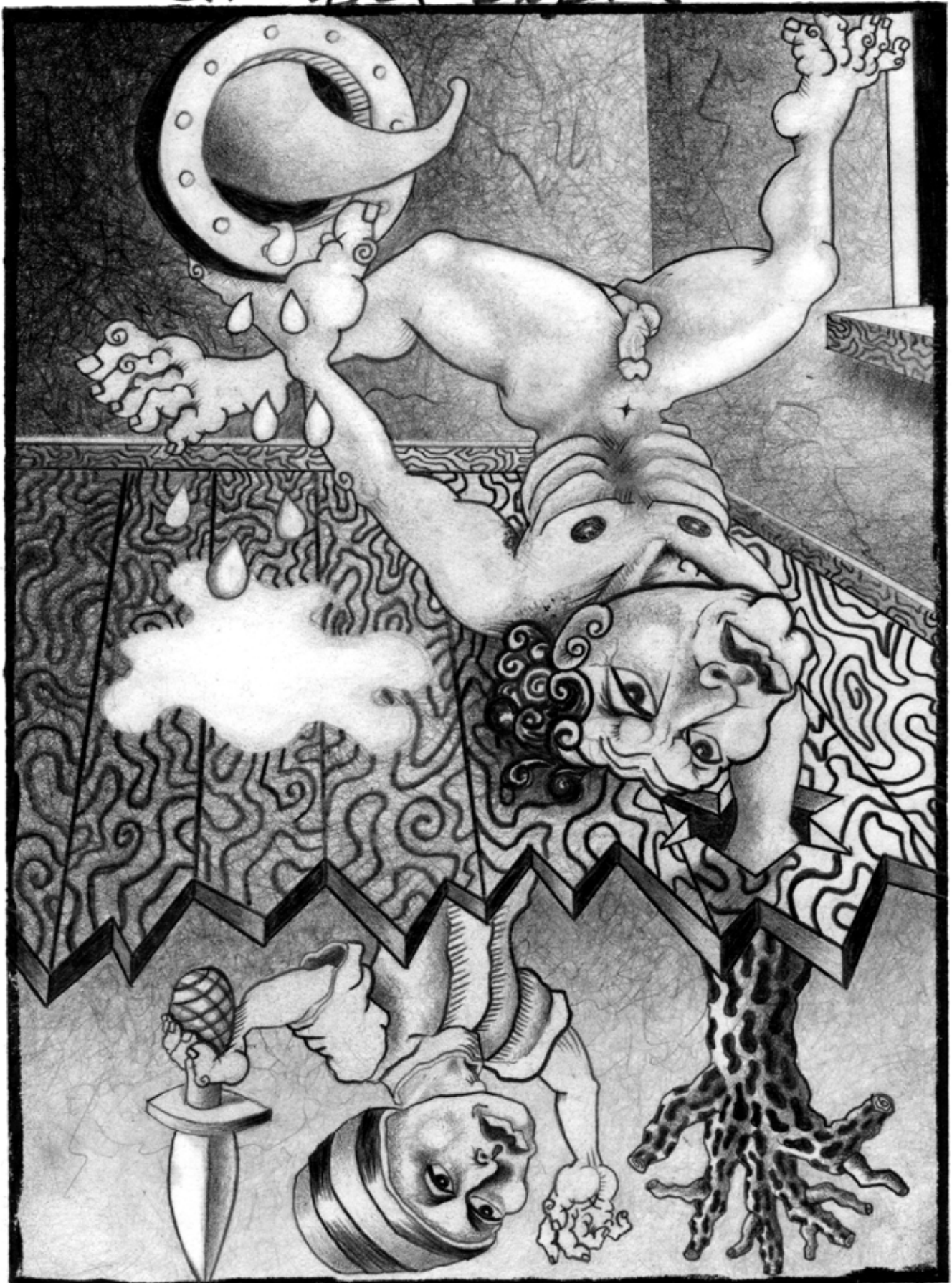
DRAWING:

JAY BOLOTIN

Jay Bolotin was born and grew up on a farm near Lexington, KY. He has recently had solo exhibitions at Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, The Joslyn Museum (Omaha), The Georgia Museum of Art, Vanderbilt University, and Bucknell University. His work will be shown, with that of the artist, William Kentridge, at the John Hansard Museum (Southampton, England) in the Fall of 2008.

Contact: jaybeeink@hotmail.com

El Árbol Digital



The Digital Tree / a poem by Armando Romero
July 2008

The Digital Tree

This was a man whose right hand had been buried
who would spend his days in an empty room
resting his feet against the upper corner of the window
while holding a ship's porthole in his left hand;
rhinoceroses would pierce it with their horns
and allow their metallic hides to shine through

He had taken up the notion of being a poet
and spent so much of his time talking about the war
that he had neglected his right hand.
It had grown slowly and furiously
and, without his being aware of it,
had crossed through the very center of the earth
and surfaced at the other end.

When the children of northern Sumatra
suddenly saw a tree without leaves and without fruit,
they rushed off to summon their parents,
When they came, they brought heavy swords
and felled the tree at its roots.
A white liquid seeped from its ravaged bark.

From that moment on,
this man as a poet, feels a sharp, cutting pain,
but he cannot tell exactly where in his body
it is contained.

(translated by Alita Kelley and Janet Foley)

El Arbol Digital

Era un hombre al que le habían enterrado su mano derecha
Pasaba sus días metido en una pieza vacía
Donde se sentaba
Los pies contra el ángulo superior de la ventana
Y su mano izquierda sosteniendo un ojo de buey
Por el cual los rinocerontes
Ensartaban su cuerno
Y hacían brillar su corteza metálica

Le había dado por ser poeta
Y se pasaba todo el tiempo hablando de la guerra
De tal manera
Que había descuidado su mano derecha
Esta creció lenta y furiosamente
Y sin que él se diera cuenta
Atravesó el mundo de lado a lado

Cuando los niños de la parte norte de Sumatra
Vieron aparecer un árbol sin hojas y sin frutos
Corrieron espantados a llamar a sus padres
Estos vinieron con sus gruesas espadas
Y cortaron el árbol de raíz
Un líquido blanco lechoso salió de la corteza
tronchada

Desde ese entonces
El hombre como un poeta
Siente un dolor terrible
Agudo
En un sitio del cuerpo que no puede determinar

Blossoms of Uranium

The three of them arrived at the same spot
They ordered foaming drinks
They greeted the courteous multitude

All three went up to the same table
They drank smoking potions
They knew nobody
They were not uncomfortable

And lo and behold,
When all three jumped together
Over the cornice
Over the window
Over the hole
The woman at the bar said there was no reason to be afraid
Since they were a new flower brought from the East

But when they came down again and killed the whole multitude
She said before dying that there was nothing to fear
That she had come upon the wrong garden
That she was mistaken about the flower
And that instead of blossoms from Buddha
She had brought blossoms of Uranium

(translated by Alita Kelley and Janet Foley)

Flores de Uranio

Llegaron los tres al mismo sitio
Pidieron espumeantes bebidas
Saludaron a la amable concurrencia

Llegaron los tres a la misma mesa
Tomaron humeantes pociones
No conocían a nadie
No estaban incómodos

Y he aquí
Que cuando los tres se encaramaron
Sobre la cornisa
Sobre la ventana
Sobre el agujero
La mujer de la cantina dijo no se asusten
que ellos eran una nueva flor traída de Oriente

Pero cuando descendieron y mataron a toda la concurrencia
Ella dijo antes de morir que no había nada que temer
Que se había equivocado de jardín
Que se había equivocado de flor
Y que en vez de traer flores de Buda
Había traído flores de Uranio

POEMS:

SHERRY COOK STANFORTH

Sherry Cook Stanforth is an associate professor of English at Thomas More College. She teaches courses in creative writing, Native, African American and Appalachian literature, environmental studies, and folklore. Sherry's writings have appeared in the *Indiana Review*, *The MacGuffin*, *MELUS*, *Language and Lore* and *NCTE* book publications. She performs in Appalachian folk bands, seeks knowledge about natural plants and raises many children.

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KATHRYN TRAUTH

Kathryn Trauth graduated from Thomas More College with a degree in English. In addition to her love of literature, she has played an active role in Cincinnati's theatre scene, both in performance and production. This fall, Kathryn will begin graduate work in Literature, focusing on ethnic American studies and folklore.

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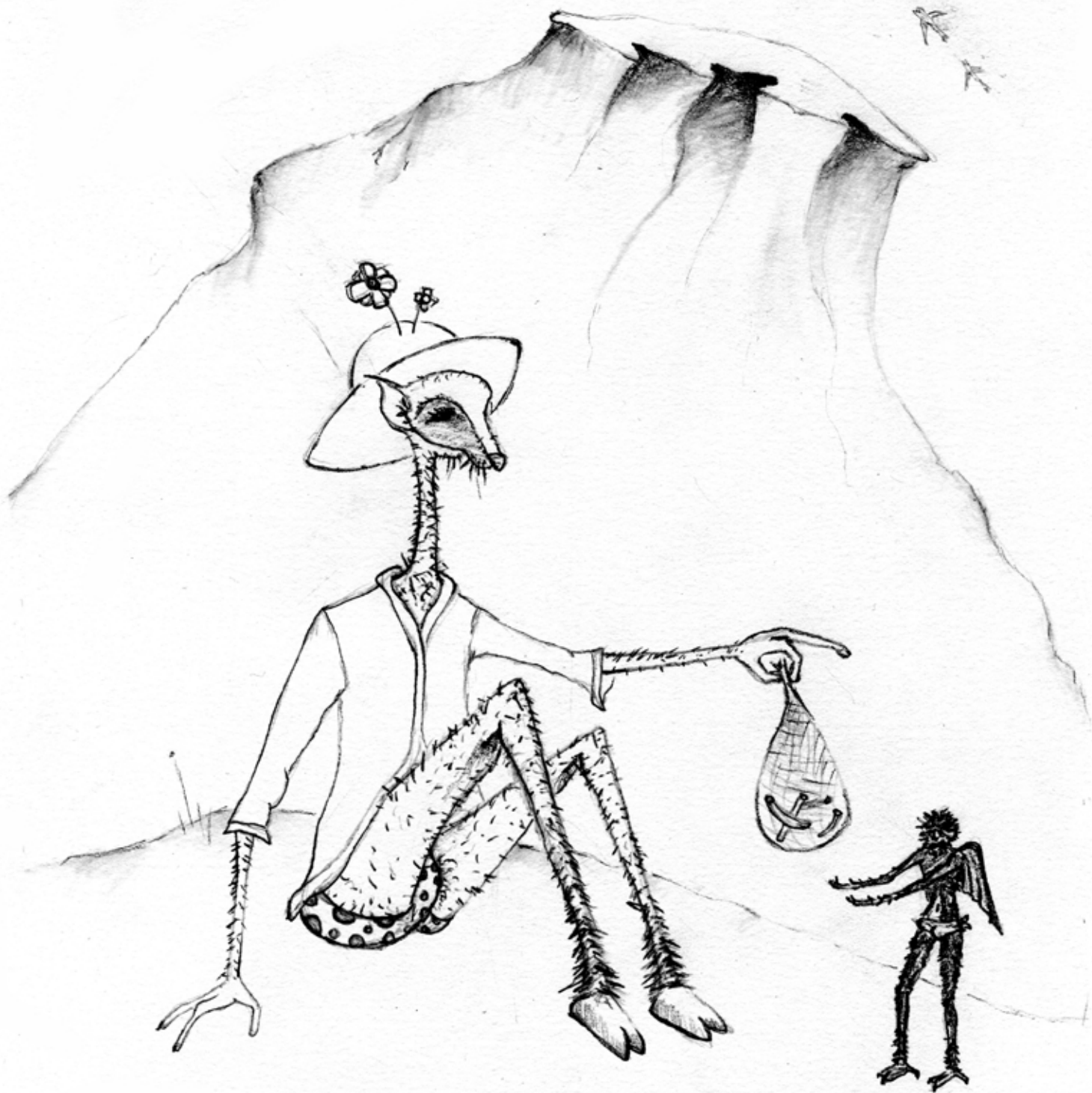
DRAWING:

MATTHEW MILLER-NOVAK

Matthew Miller-Novak received his BFA of Painting at Youngstown State University and went on to receive his MFA of Painting at the University of Cincinnati. After graduate school, Matthew remained in Cincinnati and is currently working on a body of work titled *The Life and Times of Lucifer von Satan*.

Matthew exhibits his work locally, regionally, and nationally.

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Matthias Miller - Novak '08

That Mountain

(by **Sherry Stanforth**)

That mountain cradled me
in a twilight bed of vetch
its shadow bent to kiss me
with fairy bells snow blossoms
promising fat ripe fruit
rounding a Cooper's hawk
hunted the helium skies high
scree bouncing on the rocks
when the bird dove down

That mountain tasted musk-damp
loamy with maiden hair cotyledons
unfurling painted trillium hiding
behind old log-rot some bloodroot
gripping darkened furrows there
I sat in the arms of a hemlock
dreaming of life see me scaling
barefaced lines of rock rising
from the stream bed I spy prism
minnows zipping glinting
in a pool tucked away

That mountain wrapped itself
in bridal veil lace smelling sharp
cold and sure streams soft-bending
hugging the land as a forever lover
a God-line of trees sunning spelled
out sassafras ash and shagbark bent
sparking each season branches touching
wild with longing then morning time
fog wove all the shapes together

What mountain crow cawing out
a grief song hear now how
the laurel hell falls twisted bent
beneath shale mounds ridgelines breaking
as bones of some ancestor plowed
from ash to dust with no end
stumplines standing raw flat faces
circling up the sun memorials to trees
they say the rains a-coming to wash
the valley ammonium nitrate baptism
fulfilling a spirit-driven thirst
for the pinnacle past
in a present progressive
move to unmask heaven

Property Line

(by **Kathryn Trauth**)

Mesophytic heaven just being
by its own knowledge

the Frisbee mom brought
to the park instead

my favorite sassafrass
on that mountain

from the park swing until
I am that sassafrass,

run from mom's
'Wind it up's by make-believing

tonight we'll eat green beans dad
brought home from Yulip Mountain

brother's cloudy eyes on
"Take Your Child to Work" day

dad's lunch pale riding shotgun
to Black Mountain

TIMBER-ing onto humus,
watch it crash into the hollow's cradle

dizzy sick with log rolling as we
uproot chickweed and poison ivy

we can't hear that engine roaring
through our heaven

where tomorrow,
he'll mine.

POEMS:

DORI J. VAN LUIT

Dori Van Luit, born and raised in Cincinnati, OH, went to UC to study Business, Journalism and Music. She is a member of the Cincinnati Writers Project Poetry Critique Group and her poetry won awards with southwestern Ohio A.O.P.H.A. Dori has self-published two poetry books, and has had poems accepted in other collections. She is retired, has nine grandchildren and does volunteer work.

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DRAWING:

LEW BARBER

Lew Barber is a Senior in the Fine Arts Program at the College of DAAP, University of Cincinnati. He has been making art, focusing on sculpture, for over 10 years. In his 2D work Lew pulls his influences from comic artistry and focuses on minimal line, texture and shadow to complete a figure.

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One Day in the Mall

we heard carolers singing “peace on earth, good will to men.”

Santa’s bells could not cover the gunshots;
Red ribbons on boxes could not cover the bloodshed;
Pine scent from trees could not cover the stench of death;
Toys from family could not cover the broken heart of the motherless child;
Diamond earrings could nor cover the grief of the widow;
Police could not cover the fear of those hiding under counters.

Nothing could change the heart of the tortured soul who shot them;
He did not know the Prince of Peace.

Memories of Another War

6:20 pm – late March, chilly night
Tom Brokaw reports on the war in Iraq –
War – a toddler’s thoughts drift back in time.

Little hand on the 7, big hand on the 6
“Come get ready; it’s time for bed.”
“Daddy’s not here to kiss me goodnight.”
“He’s working late because of the war –
when the hall light goes off, he’ll be home.”

Little hand on the 2, big hand on the 12
I held mother’s hand in the grocery store
She gave ration stamps, then came home with
not much meat to make vegetable soup,
navy beans or potatoes with onions.

Little hand on the 3, big hand on the 12
I stood on the chair in the kitchen
Wooden bowl in front of me, large wooden spoon,
A big white block and a small orange packet
“Stir”, said mother, “till it’s all mixed.”
I wouldn’t eat margarine for 35 years.

Little hand on the 8, big hand on the 12
Saturday night – I stayed up late
We sat in chairs near the radio
Heard FDR with his Fireside Chats –
Then Glen Miller’s band, the Grand Ol’ Opry.
But when the sirens blew, we pulled down the blinds
and turned out the lights and waited in quiet.

Little hand on the 10, big hand on the 9
Waiting to get a seat in church –
Chairs down the aisle – everyone there.
On the way mother ran her last pair of nylons
“I’ll wear old black cotton stockings like
Grandma used to – we must sacrifice for war.”
Helped pick lettuce, tomatoes, beans from a
Victory garden.

Dad saved newspapers with large black headlines:
Iwo Jima, Bataan, Corregidor
Three homes on our street –
gold stars in their windows
One was black or purple – I just can’t remember.
We bought war bonds with dimes and pennies,
wore old shoes; our dads drove old cars.

When it was all over – that long, hard war –
Passing through Cincy, thumbing cross country
My tall handsome cousin in navy blues
Walked me to school that day – how kids envied me.

A child’s first memories came into a war
You can’t know the feeling if you hadn’t been there.

POEMS:

VICTOR M. VELEZ

Victor M. Vélez, a native of Puerta de Tierra, Puerto Rico, grew-up in New York City and relocated to Cincinnati in 1994. His poetry includes: *6 Silver Poets & The Bullets Proof Chapbook*, 1999. Victor published his first poetry book, *A Quest for Answers: A Personal Journey*, Xlibris, in 2003 and will release *Conga Blues* in April, 2008.

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DRAWING:

TERENCE HAMMONDS

Terence Hammonds was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the late seventies. He attended the School of the Creative and Performing Arts and received a BFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston/ Tufts University. Terence has been printing at the Clay Street Press ever since.

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Terence
Hammonds

Rapunzel in Brooklyn

My head was small and round,
shaped like a “Goya.”
Not “Goya” the artist
with his elongated figures,
but a Goya bean.

The later 60’s,
an era full of
freedom like confetti:
freedom of voice,
sex,
freedom of race,
protest,
freedom of faith,
colors,
freedom of expression,
lyrics,
freedom of hair,

that’s where I came in.
Like an ethnic “Rapunzel”
my hair grew.

Days of clean cut parted split
straight line overnight stretched
nylons and VO5 were over.

Replaced by an uncontrollable,
unshaped afro, parallel to
the different views lurking
the decade.

At the mirror, I racked it
reflecting Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde
trying to take out the knots of
a society with many split ends.

It grew,
I fertilized it with “Afro Sheen,”
saw it advertised on “Soul Train.”
Racked it with my red, black and green
afro pick as a sign of my 25% African influence.

In the distance, I could hear
John Travolta approaching,
dancing “Saturday Night Fever.”

The time had come,
times were changing,
it was time for my
afro pick to retire.

It took a part-time job
as a backscratcher,
satisfying the itches,
resounding the new rhythms
of a new era.

The New York City Blackout of 1977

(New York City- July 13, 1977 – 8:37pm)

Eleven years and nine months later
it happened again,
like Jason coming back.

Darkness covered New York City
like the ashes of Mt. Vesuvius
covered Pompeii.

In the realm of darkness
equal opportunity reign,
the elements of poverty
were invisible,
rulers could not measure
the poor nor the rich,
prisms could not reflect
the colors of the rainbow.
Republican, nor Democrats
could be distinguished.
Protestants and Catholics
had no denomination.
Darkness had no depth of field,
no shadows, nor shade, no perspective,
only darkness pressed against the eyes.

When morning came, and sun
shed light on the city, all was revealed,
everything was back to normal.

Poverty was back on the spotlight,
the rich glittered off the lights.
Colors depicted nationalities.
Republicans rode their elephants,
while Democrats owned the White House.
Protestants proceeded door-to-door,
while Catholics fist their chest,

and

“The Declaration of Independence”
was legible once again, where
“All men are created equal.”

POEMS:

FRANK X. WALKER

Kentucky native, Frank X. Walker is the author of four collections of poetry and the editor of *PLUCK! The Journal of Affrilachian Arts & Culture*. He is a founding member of the Affrilachian Poets and currently serves as the Writer-in-Residence at Northern Kentucky University.

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TIMOTHY WHALEN

Tim Whalen is Cincinnati-born and found. He paints, sculpts and writes. These art forms help him express himself, have communion with the public, and leave evidence of a Better World.

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DRAWING:

JIMI JONES

Jimi Jones has a BS in graphic design from UC. He is member of a small art movement of African American artists whose art is based on the search for ancestral truth, both modern and ancient.

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By Jimi Jones

Urban Architecture

(by **Frank Walker**)

Main street in Over-the-Rhine
between 12th and 14th

is landscaped with lean black hustlers
in long white tees

and young mothers who drag children
down the street like leg irons,

has learned to ignore statistics and the ammonia
scent
of summer concrete soaked in piss,

stacks its poor twelve deep at bus stops, and
wraps
its homeless in empty store fronts and cardboard

blankets, at night. Around the corner
from another new condo and secure off-street
parking

something the size and color of hope
dies every 30 seconds

so junior pall bearers crowd street corners
practice pouring libations

dark suits in their pockets
their neighborhood's last rites already waived.

Must Be

(by **Timothy Whalen**)

(*Remembering 9/11*)

There must be a song
with each voice in accord

There must be a ship
to reach every shore

There must be a home
every man can afford

There must be a key
to unlock every door

There must be a truce
to end every war

And there must be a way
to keep peace secure.

Out of the Grave

(by **Timothy Whalen**)

(*A Soldier's Prayer*)

We fight for love and happiness
We pray for strength and might
We hope for grace from thunder
as we roar on through the night
If the daybreak brings us glory
and the price for peace is paid
We'll break the chains of calamity
and raise the children from the grave.

The Warning

(by **Timothy Whalen**)

The winter cold will pass
and spring will come at last
but though the flowers bloom
the earth is filled with gloom
We strain to see the sun
through missile smoke and gun
The heat of war and pain
consumes the summer rain
As all of nature shows
a ravaged field won't grow
And if life falls like autumn leaves
we perish beneath an endless freeze.

POEMS:

GARY WALTON

Gary Walton is the author of five books of poetry: *The Sweetest Song* (1988), *Cobwebs and Chimeras* (1995), *Effervescent Softsell* (1997), *The Millennium Reel* (2003), *Full Moon: the Melissa Moon Poems* (2007) and one book of short fiction and humor: *The Newk Phillips Papers* (1995). His current work-in-progress, is a comic novel about Newport, KY in its heyday as a gambling Mecca called *Sin City*. Gary received a Ph.D. from George Washington University. He is currently an assistant professor in the department of Literature and Language at NKU and Editor of the *Journal of Kentucky Studies*.

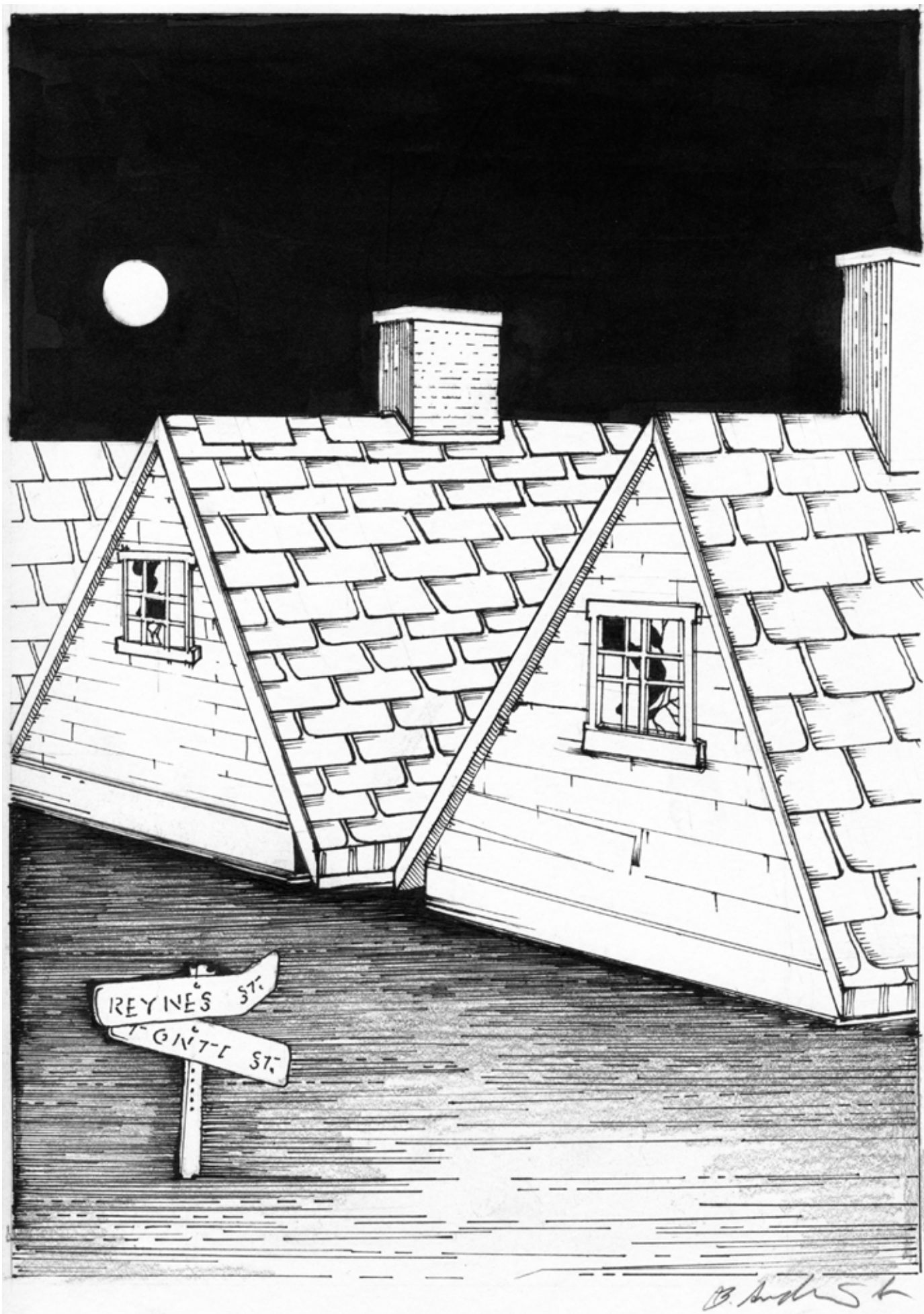
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DRAWING:

ANDREW AU

Andrew Au is an artist who has been working with socio-political themes for several years. He is an Assistant Professor of Art at Miami University, Middletown, OH. He recently returned to the Cincinnati area after having experienced Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005.

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Katrina 2005

We sit on the roof
Waiting—the bodies float by—
Where are the Chinooks?

They won't let us die—
No, not in America—
If we was white folks.

Where was the concrete
To keep the levees intact?
Must be in Iraq.

Who knew a cat five
Would flood the whole goddam' town?
Pret'near everyone.

If I just had one
Hour of electricity,
I'd drown on tv.

Class in the US?
Who got wet and who didn't?
Think, who dead? Who ain't?

It don't take no voodoo
When the helicopters come
To see the devil.

After the storm go,
Check up into the attics—
Find the new graveyards.

This Poem Is

Afraid
Of the Milgram Experiment
And
The blind obedience
To
The man in the lab coat
Demanding
You flick one more switch—

The howls of
Pain

Echo in your
Brain even as you
Follow
His imperious orders—

Somewhere in your
Skull
The lizard brain enjoys
Suffering,
Like your tongue
Slathering
Over a rare grilled
Sirloin
Or a chunk of
Chicken
Broiled golden and dripping—

We are not
Far
From the cave
Squatting
Behind scented straw grass
Naked
On a Savannah,
Gnawing
On some straggler,
Boon
Of our latest raid, an
Attack
On a tribe behind the far hill.

Dignity can wait until
Bellies
Are full and
Conscience
Is just a word
Deferred
For after dinner
Chit-chat,
As the call of
Duty
Is just a means to
Focus
The hunger and hate while
Scraping
The spears before the
Hunt.

Eschatology Escadrille¹

"Do not weep maiden, for war is kind"
--Stephen Crane

*"That's a fellow now that'd sell his country
for a fourpence—eye!—and go down on his
bended knees and thank the Almighty Christ
he had a country to sell." --James Joyce, "Ivy
Day in the Committee Room"*

i
When the Fourth Estate
Has become a Fifth Column—
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

Should we sing about the end times
Or just remain solemn?
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

ii
Is it rapture or rupture?
I never can remember—
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

And mass dissimulation
Has become the legal tender—
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

iii
Should we moan "*Kyrie Eleison*"?
Mes amis, s'il vous plait—
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

No, let's recite a Kaddish
Or better still, a Rondolet?
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

iv
'Cause I'm gonna drive my Hummer™
and my big black SUV—
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

'Til the polar ice cap melts
And kills both you and me—
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

*(1To be recited with the verve of the huckster
Professor Harold Hill of 'The Music Man')*

v
The "*ding en sich*"
Is such a quaint notion—
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

As we drop democratic bombs
In the sand across the ocean—
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

vi
Squint into the space
Between what's done and said—
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

And you can see the truth oozing
From the wounded and the dead—
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

vii
It's not what we know;
It's what you will believe—
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

Remember, the ace in the hole
Is always hiding up our sleeve—
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

viii
So, sit back, relax
Don't ask the reasons why—
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

There'll be no time for questions
No time to say goodbye!
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

xi
Ye shall surely reap
Such seeds as ye did sow—
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

And when we come to get you— (*and we will*)
—Don't say I didn't tell you so!
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™
Fox News®, Clear Channel©: Armageddon™

POEMS:

FRAN WATSON

Fran Watson: Artist, musician - flute and classical guitar, - published writer, blessed by the muses. Her art may be seen on the 5th floor walls at Pendleton Art Center, where she has a studio. Travel is one of her many hobbies, as is learning. Taft museum of art docent for 25 years.
Mother of four amazing people.

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DRAWING:

GARY GAFFNEY

Gary G. Gaffney, born in New Orleans, LA, is a visual artist, a Professor for some 30 years at the Art Academy of Cincinnati and a sometime poet.

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The Wind Last Night

moaning hungrily, the wind last night
tore at the hilltop across the road,
nearly bending trees to the ground.
dead branches crashed, and last year's nests
were shredded, discarded in the dark.
one mighty blast followed another,
relentless in the attack, reveling in power,
possessed of endless energy.

alone and alert, I listened.
surely the woods were destroyed,
the hilltop bare, the landscape furrowed,
forever altered by the charge

today, a weak winter sun, half gray, half
cream,
revealed the trees, reaching familiarly sky-
ward,
as if this same prosaic sky had not raged
hours before, predicting total ruin.

the wind will return, and the trees will bend,
not break. the strong will become stronger,
the hawks will rebuild, swooping down the hill
and soaring above in effortless arabesques.
Once more I will hear seductive summer's
breeze
whispering tenderly through green, leafy
crowns
as if the chaos had not been,

and will be again.

Virtual Freedom

freedom, the elusive chalice,
subject of ad campaigns,
byword of shiny men in suits, themes of endless
movies
involving bloody battles, horrendous tasks
and sacrifices, ... some place else.

Nomad tribes are free, now, to be counted
and beg on city streets.
the homeless are free to be sheltered,
in designated places.
everyone may buy starter castles,
but may not hang out sheets to dry.
children and dogs have parks for play
carefully encased by wire fences and gates.

and.....

a nameless devastated village
sprinkled with squatting survivors, staring in
shock
while some heroic voice pronounces them free,
in a language they cannot understand.
purchased from their aimless content
by the foolish bravery of strangers.
hopelessly, they search for their children,
sifting for memories in the debris of lost homes,
too hungry and lost to care about "freedom".

POEMS:

KEN WILLIAMSON

Ken Williamson, a native of Cincinnati, is a graduate of Norwood High School and Ohio University. He was a US Army Photographer and Journalist in Vietnam in 1969 and owned his own film and video production company for 28 years. He has served on the boards of *Life Success Seminars*, *The Joseph House for Homeless Veterans* and *Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 649*. Ken is currently CEO of *On Location Multimedia* and is an active writer and photographer. His photographs may be seen at www.photogalleryonthenet.com, also with a link to his poetry.

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DRAWING:

KEVIN HARRIS

Kevin Harris lives in Franklin, OH. He teaches drawing and printmaking as an Associate Professor at Sinclair Community College in Dayton. Kevin received a BA from Hampton Institute (1983) and an MFA from the University of Cincinnati (1988). Growing up in Cincinnati, he attended North Avondale Elementary School and Walnut Hills High School.

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Kevin Harris

The Rain, My Mother and Common Sense

"You don't have enough common sense
to get in out of the rain...
you're going to get wet",
my Mother would announce.

I was only seven.
exploring a child's adventure.
Playing in the rain
with my friends.

Small, shallow areas
in the pavement
would fill
with water.

Our feet made huge splashes
as we purposely
took aim
in the puddles.

Our mission
splashing
ourselves
and each other.

The rain ran down my face,
dripped off my nose,
filled my ears,
and cooled my body.

When the summer shower was over,
and the puddles were gone,
I put on dry clothes
and enjoyed the sweet smell of the air.
Today,
49 years later,
I sometimes work in my garden
in the rain.

The water runs down my face
drips off my nose
and fills my ears
transporting my mind
to Vietnam
and a different adventure.

The smells return
mildew
and the uniform that never dried.
Fear and loneliness.

The sarge never said:
"Son, git out of the rain,
you're gonna git wet".
And where was the
common sense
in that?

Peace at Last

I returned to Vietnam in search of treasures lost.
I looked into the eyes of the enemy
and found a friendly spirit.
Had I discovered myself again?

I returned to the battleground in search of youth
gone by.
The smells, the sounds, the feelings.
All I found were echoes of days gone by
and spirits screaming through the silence.

I returned to Vietnam
to find something I left behind.
And found that
The treasure of peace had not been lost.

