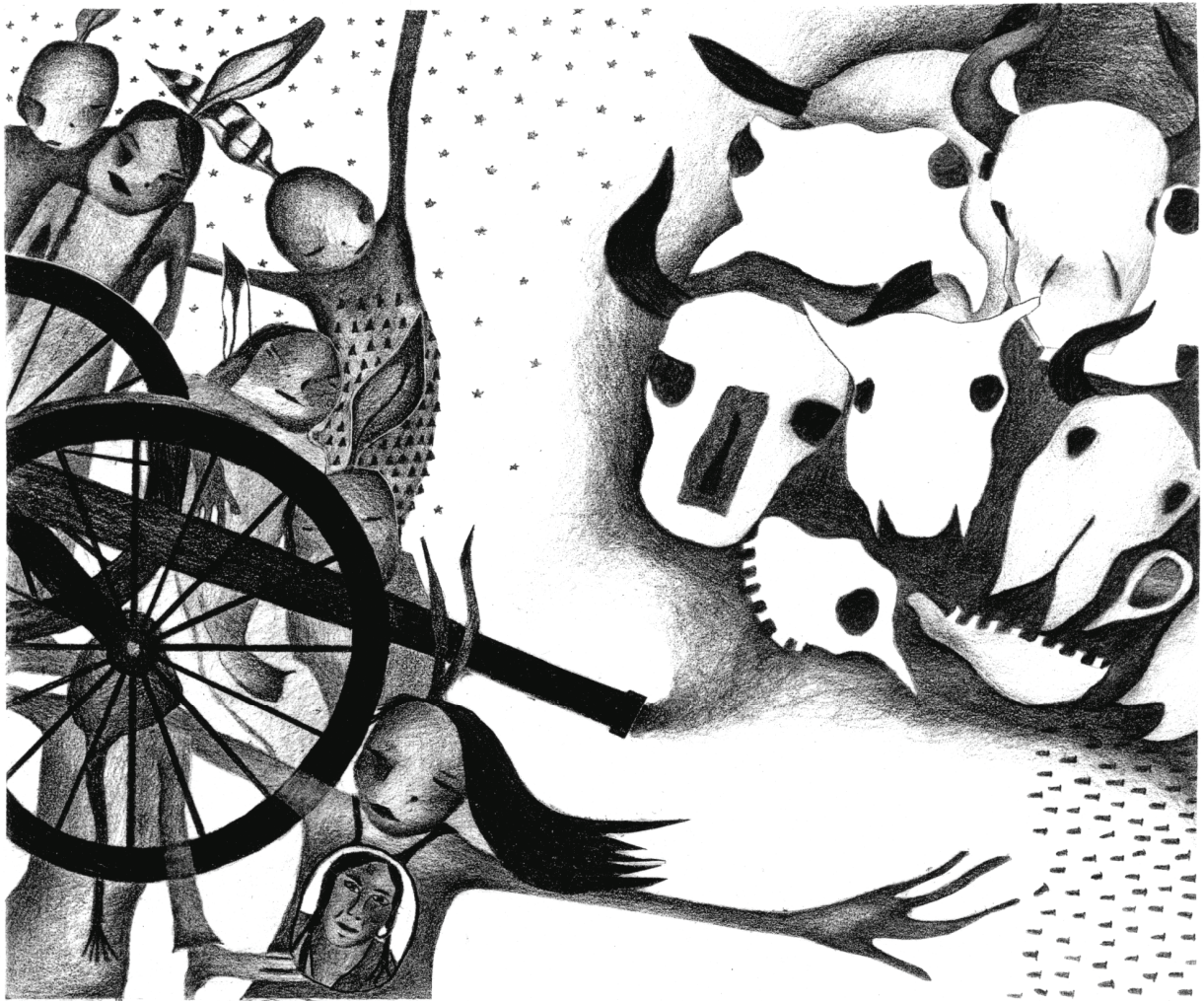


For A 2006 Better World



POEMS **BY** DRAWINGS ON
PEACE **BY** JUSTICE **BY**
Greater Cincinnati Artists

**“For a Better World”
2006**

Poems and Drawings
on
Peace and Justice

by
Greater Cincinnati Artists

Editor:
Saad Ghosn

“The tiny, cumulative efforts to build a more just society are comparable to the sources for a great river. The Mississippi River starts with a few raindrops in northern Minnesota. These raindrops merge into rivulets and then into brooks and then into streams and rivers that all swell into America’s priceless and mighty river. Similarly, our efforts—small and large, daily and cumulative—spread the more noble sentiments of our humanity toward one another.”

Ralph Nader

Foreword

For the third consecutive year, poets and visual artists came together as witnesses to peace and social justice issues facing their city, their country, their world. In this book, 44 poets, including 6 children, and 39 visual artists combined their voices for a better society and a better world.

Diverse and different, their various testimonies joined in harmony and provided strength to their ideals and hopes and to each other. They pointed to the complexity of our current world, but also to a possibly beautiful one, a world where love, compassion, sharing and unselfish giving prevail.

Using their powerful voices, these poets and artists questioned the reasons for violence; for war; for the derailing of our religions; for the failed democracy of our institutions; for the prevalingly ignored human rights... and they wanted peace and justice reinstated. They asked for the respect and protection of the poor; of the weak; of the abused child; of the abandoned victim of natural or man-made disasters. They asked for an end to violence and for a reversal of society-condoned injustice.

These poets and artists' pleading songs and messages are strident and resonant. They interpellate each of us and invite us to be active participants and significant contributors to the peaceful and just reshaping and humanizing of our society and of our 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 Michael Henson, Jeffrey Hillard and Jerry Judge who kindly reviewed all the submitted poems and provided their editorial advice; and to Jen Brenner and Steve Welker who graciously volunteered their precious 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 2006

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Children POEMS:

SARAH ERICKSON

9 years old, 4th grade (Teacher: Ms Cynthia Tisue), Covedale Elementary School,
Cincinnati, OH

XYONA FLOYD

10 years old, 5th grade (Teacher: Ms Cynthia Tisue), Covedale Elementary
School, Cincinnati, OH

SAVANNAH JACKSON

10 years old, 5th grade (Teacher: Ms Cynthia Tisue), Covedale Elementary
School, Cincinnati, OH

ADAM LINDLEY

10 years old, 5th grade (Teacher: Ms Cynthia Tisue), Covedale Elementary
School, Cincinnati, OH

BARBARA NAGEL

6 years old, 1st grade (Teacher: Ms Lisa Bowman), Johnson Elementary School,
Ft. Thomas, KY

JAMES WALLER

11 years old, 5th grade (Teacher: Ms Cynthia Tisue), Covedale Elementary
School, Cincinnati, OH

DRAWING:

CAROL MACCONNELL

Carol MacConnell is an expressionistic landscape professional painter who works in oil. She has won many national and local awards and her work is in numerous businesses and private collections.

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Carol MacConnell

Prisoner

(by **Sarah Erickson**, 9 years old)

Why am I here, in this lonesome place; I did not do a thing.
To never see the light of day or hear the church bells ring.
All the jury was in favor of putting me in jail,
My brother was a witness; he would've forced their plan to fail
But he looked me in the eye and said not a word.
Finally, he spoke. "I'm sorry, Daphne, your trial has been heard."
I tried, oh, I tried to protest,
But the chief of police called, "Lock her up with the rest."
I've been here a year, how much longer can it be
Until my dearest brother will someday come for me?
Now I am thought of as a convict, there will be no way
I shall get out, for now I am here to stay.

Peace

(by **Xyona Floyd**, 10 years old)

Peace is what we need.
There's no peace when we have guns.
I wonder if we will ever have peace.

Peace

(by **Savannah Jackson**, 10 years old)

Peace is so nice
It's what we don't have
We need more.

Guns Destroyed

(by **Adam Lindley**, 10 years old)

Guns should now be destroyed
Except for ones used by peace protectors
If not we may go to war with ourselves

Peace

(by **Barbara Nagel**, 6 years old)

I believe peace is God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.
Peace is being nice to people and peace makes everyone good.
People get happy because peace MAKES them happy.

Money

(by **James Waller**, 11 years old)

Money causes greed
And is not what humans need

POEM:

LENOX ALLEYNE

Lenox Alleyne was born in 1951 in the twin island Caribbean Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. He enjoys writing poetry as a hobby and a form of relaxation and in 1970 won first award for his poems from a local newspaper. Lenox migrated to the US in 1995 and lived in New York City until 1998; he then relocated to Cincinnati where he currently resides.

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DRAWING:

SANDRA SHARP

Sandra Sharp received her BFA in painting from the College of Mount St. Joseph. She has taught at The Art Academy of Cincinnati and currently teaches figure drawing and painting at The Dayton Art Institute.

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Sandra Sharp

For Peace

Somewhere the warmongers are singing,
Their song makes a rancid refrain.
The seams on their purse are swollen to
burst,
The battlefields littered with pain.
The songs on their lips got no lyrics,
It's a strange disjointed melody,
And it defies all the laws of logic
And it's so antiquated to me.
But I know in time their singing,
Would somehow one day cease.
Wars fought in the name of religion
Cannot be the solution for Peace.
Innocent lives are slaughtered,
Hearts torn apart by grief,
Nerves once steel now shattered,
When will we find relief?
Religious fanatics spread terror,
Like marmalade on rye,
Their jihad a soul endeavor,
A cause for which they'd die.
So called threatened democracies
Takes its wars to foreign lands,
While diplomats between cocktails
Strive to concoct resolutions.
How long will we let these war lords,
Play at their evil game?
So they could fill their pockets
With their ill-gotten gain.
We need to come together,
We need to take a stand.
We need to form a common bond,
A brotherhood of man.
If the reins of vigilance we relinquish
What legacy will now remain?
And freedom's candle be extinguished,
Our forefathers would have died in vain.
So stand firm my brothers,
And dear sisters too,
Rejoice in the creator,
There's something we all can do.
Say a prayer for peace,
Raise a flag for peace,
Strike up the band, show a hand,

Sing a song for peace.
Let voices ring throughout the land,
All in the name of peace.
Let freedom's flag fly victorious,
Let praises never cease,
Let voices ring throughout joyous,
All in the name of Peace.

POEM:

AMMA

Susan Hergert (Amma) is the founder and manager of Snakes Rising, a music and dance community specializing in mideast fusion and belly dance. She lives in Cincinnati with the lead drummer of the troupe, her husband of 26 years. Her poetry arises from her real life experiences as a woman, mother, dancer, singer and activist.

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DRAWING:

CAROL WINTERS

Carole Winters is a publisher and artist living in Northern Kentucky.

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Why We Dance

When I awaken, shaking
Within the wee hours
While a bomb is dropped half way around the world
I dance this dance.

I put on Hossam Ramzey
Interpret the Masmoudi
In shimmies with women on the other side of the globe
It must be THIS dance!

As blood flows
Awaken, again
And dance a grandmother's secret from Baghdad
The pain is less.

In Labor's beginning
I am called from sleep. Hips...
Invoke half moons, lessons from ancient Persia
A babe is born!

As war rages
Americans awaken
And feel a connection to the rhythms of the mid-east
Those who dance are one!

The dance unites
There are no enemies on
This our blue-green planet, only other wisdoms and
Other lessons learned.

(Note: It was shortly before the "War on Terror" began that I took to studying the middle-east dance forms as an expression of embodied spirituality. When the horrors began, I was relieved to know that I had this connection with the women of Baghdad. I was dancing their dance!)

POEMS:

BARBARA BONNEY

Barbara Bonney is a librarian living in Newport, KY. She is an active participant in the Cincinnati Writers Project's Poetry Critique group. Previous publications include anthologies, children non-fiction books, author/artist interviews and articles. Barbara looks forward to publishing more poetry.

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DRAWING:

JOAN EFFERTZ

Joan Effertz has an MA in art education (UC), an MFA in printmaking (Pratt Institute) and an English certification (UC). She has taught at the Art Academy as an adjunct professor and was director of Tiger Lily Press for seven years. Joan also was a Paideia coach and taught in Cincinnati Public Schools for 19 years. She is currently working on a body of work, *People of the Book*, and trying to publish children's manuscripts she has written.

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Joan Effertz

Finding Baseball

I have not thought much about baseball
since she died.
The Tigers rise and fall without my notice;
stadiums are debated, built and worshipped
in
while I buy groceries.

She never knew she loved sports
until my brother asked her to catch final
scores
for him on the radio on school nights.
So she listened while ironing in the dining
room—
Ernie Harwell's voice floating over Dad's
white shirts,
Al Kaline and Norm Cash just names she
heard over and over
until they stirred hope.

On Michigan nights in July, they listened
together,
the iron and her face steaming over sheets
and more white shirts,
my brother sprawled on the floor sharing
the box fan.
When Ernie's voice gained momentum,
climbed higher and higher,
the iron paused...

hits, runs, steals and nabbed catches
all brought whoops from my timid mother
but grand slams elicited a near-dance from
this woman
who was never allowed to dance.
The church and her marriage kept her
ironing;
her son gave her dance.

Freeway Sins

I passed Jesus on the freeway doing 70;
he was 62 vertical feet of white fiberglass
and Styrofoam.
Ohio ground mired him to the waist;
his arms stretched up like a referee on a
touchdown.
He tilted his face heavenward.

Behind him stood the "Solid Rock Church"
who chose his icon over a gymnasium,
a BMW for the pastor and feeding the poor.
They probably didn't intend for travelers to
laugh
or run off the road gawking. I'm sure they
meant
for motorists to think holier thoughts
and to sense Jesus lifting their burdens.
I get the metaphor.

But I don't get the pain on his otherwise
cherubic face
and his being stuck in an island of a pond.
Every time I whiz by him I feel guilty, but not
for the usual sins.
I hear him pleading through his clenched
teeth,
"Get me out of here. Take my hands and
PULL".

But I can't stop, Jesus.

Christmas Letter

You and I don't bother to keep in touch;
so it's my right to bore you once a year with this letter:

I was promoted to manager at our new mall store;
William made partner in May. He barely made it
to see Sarah crowned Homecoming Queen
or Josh score the winning goal.

We seldom saw each other with our new jobs.
We drifted apart, had affairs.
Homecoming was Sarah's peak--
then came drugs, men, prostitution.

Josh broke his leg on the slopes last January
but the depression afterwards
was what hospitalized him for months.
He's allowed to come home on weekends now.

It turns out I'm not manager material
but I've not been demoted or fired.
William hates contract law
but there's the mortgage, the bail, hospital bills...

May the peace of this season be with you.

POEM:

JEFF CASTO

Jeff Casto is an amateur poet and professional visual artist who has lived in Cincinnati, OH, for the past 24 years. Jeff has shown his mixed-media artworks regionally and in New York. His rhyming poems enjoy riffing on the oppressive RAFF.

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DRAWING:

JULIE BAKER

Julie Baker has an MFA in drawing from the University of Cincinnati (1986). She currently teaches art at NKU and Cincinnati State College.

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Julie Baker

An American 'To Do' List: a Sarcastic History for the Chronologically Challenged

Must shoot the Savage Heathen
And enslave the Blacks
Burn anyone deemed a Witch
And break Foreign backs

Must start deadly battles
And take land from Others
Hurt thousands of innocent people
Slay the kin of Native fathers and mothers

Must mop the Mick
And shun the Chiney-Man
Shoot Mexicans and whomever else
Who doesn't resemble what I am

Must disable the Abolitionists
And jeer at the Jew
Suffocate the Suffragettes
And wallop the Wops, too

Must discriminate against those who are
brown
And put limits on liberty and choice
For the majority has decided
Only the pale need a voice

Must be intolerant
And shove my beliefs down the Unwilling's
throat
'Tis the Rape of Religion
Have the Almighty's Blessings and YES I
shall gloat

Must hunt down the U.S. Hun
And jail the American born Jap
Interrogate Intellectuals
And give Commie Pinkos the rap

Must libel the Liberals
And stop the Feminist cause
Hinder civil-rights
Hey this Uh-Merica, not Oz

Must cut down the tree huggers
Harass the Lezzies and Queers
Must manufacture what works
Hate, Lies and Fears

An agenda must be made from a tragedy
milked
Loathe those who may wear a turban
They don't drive an SUV
And they're not white or suburban

Must profit from a myriad of wars
And the delicious spoils it brings
Absolutely must lower taxes (only for the
rich)
The bell has always been cracked - but let
freedom ring

POEMS:

VICKIE CIMPRICH

Vickie Cimprich is a Northern KY writer whose work appeared most recently in *The Journal of Kentucky Studies* and in *Poetry As Prayer: Appalachian Women Speak* (editor Denise McKinney, Wind Publications). Two grants from The KY Foundation for Women enabled her to complete a manuscript of dramatic monologues, *Pretty Mother's Home*, in the persona of a Pleasant Hill Shaker Village woman.

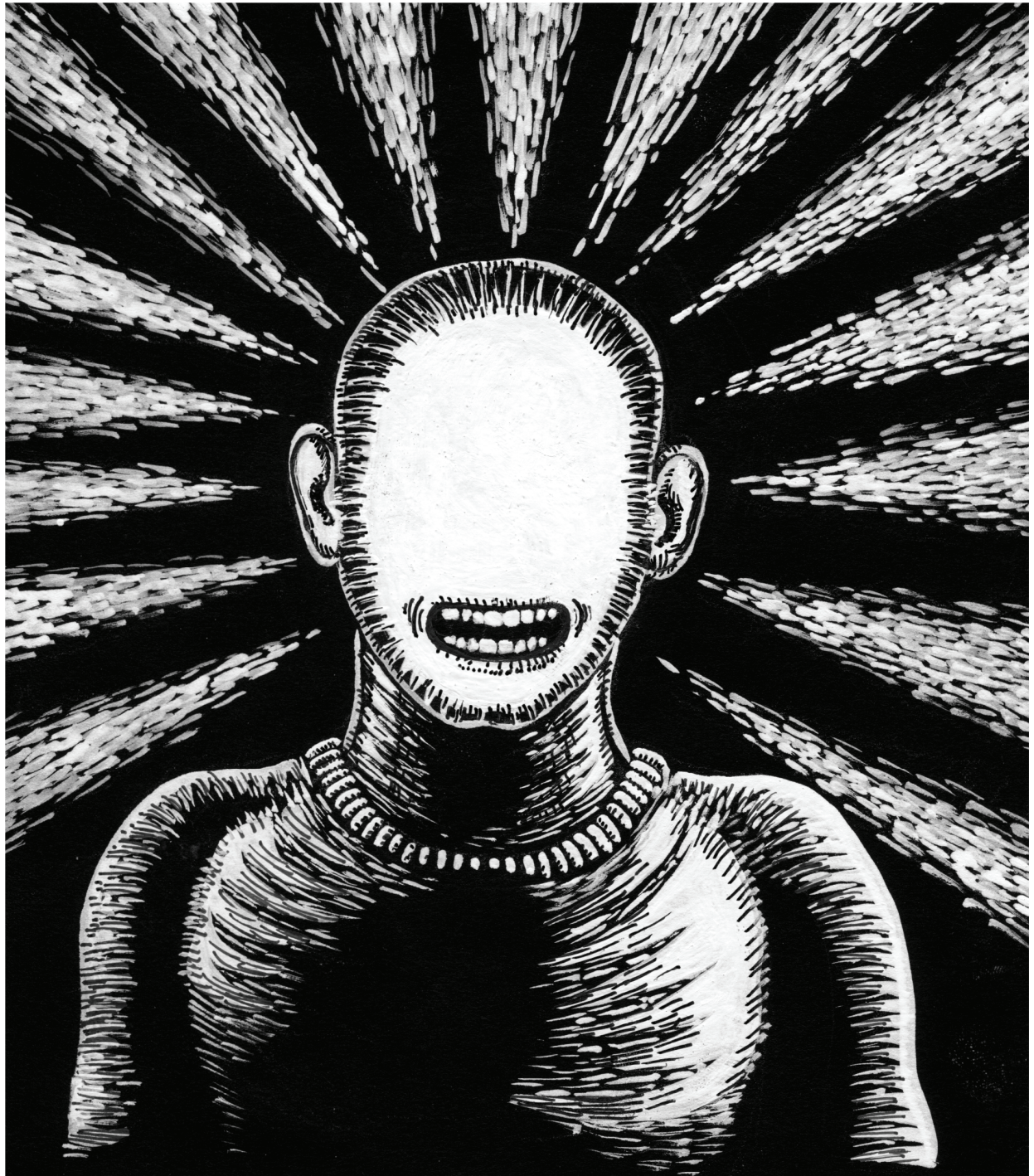
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DRAWING:

SCOTT DONALDSON

Scott Donaldson graduated with an MFA in Theater Arts from the University of Minnesota (1982). He worked professionally as a set designer, a scene painter and an exhibit designer (Field Museum of Natural History; Ohio Historical Society, Columbus; National Underground Railroad and Freedom Center; Tech Museum of Innovation, San Jose, CA). In 2003 Scott began to pursue a career as an artist and continues as an independent exhibits designer. His art has been shown locally. He is the recipient of an Individual Artist Grant from the city of Cincinnati (2005).

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I SEE NOTHING BUT WHAT I EAT

Scott Donaldson '06

Package from Home

Cheetos!
Star Kist Tuna Lunch to Go.
Canned Fruit Cocktail in Heavy Syrup
and a righteous foot long pepperoni stick.

U.S. troops cut through the packing tape
to a feast of stateside home, and the love

most cannot taste in the sesame bread rings
once baked in a blasted Basra bakery,
in olives or figs grown on
any country hillside, nor
any lamb roasted whole with its flock
in a field of flaming oil.

Dog, on Garfield Place

Last Tuesday our old friend Dog lurched off
alone, obedient to the atherosclerotic clot
that leashed the right half sphere of
what's behind his rose of a face.
His mind's teeth clamped a telephone
and shook it so a social worker at UC
Hospital
would protect his pending SS status and
he could flop at last on an indoor bed.

Oh farewell Piatt Park, where Dog
lent his salt to bench and bush!
Cronies, salute with grin or rabbit punch
this brown bag mead mate of our many
seasons.
Goodbye, Cookie Lady (he's charmed dry
socks
and Planter's cracker packs off me for the
last time).
Dog rounded the corner
and the sirens caged him.

POEMS:

TYRONE COLLIER

Tyrone Collier is a fourth-year philosophy student at the University of Cincinnati. He is the founding member and president of the Association for Future Black Law Students and of the University Chapter of Phi Sigma Tau International Honor Society in Philosophy. He is also the newly appointed Director of Ethnic and Cultural Affairs for Student Government.

Tyrone plans on attending graduate school for philosophy.

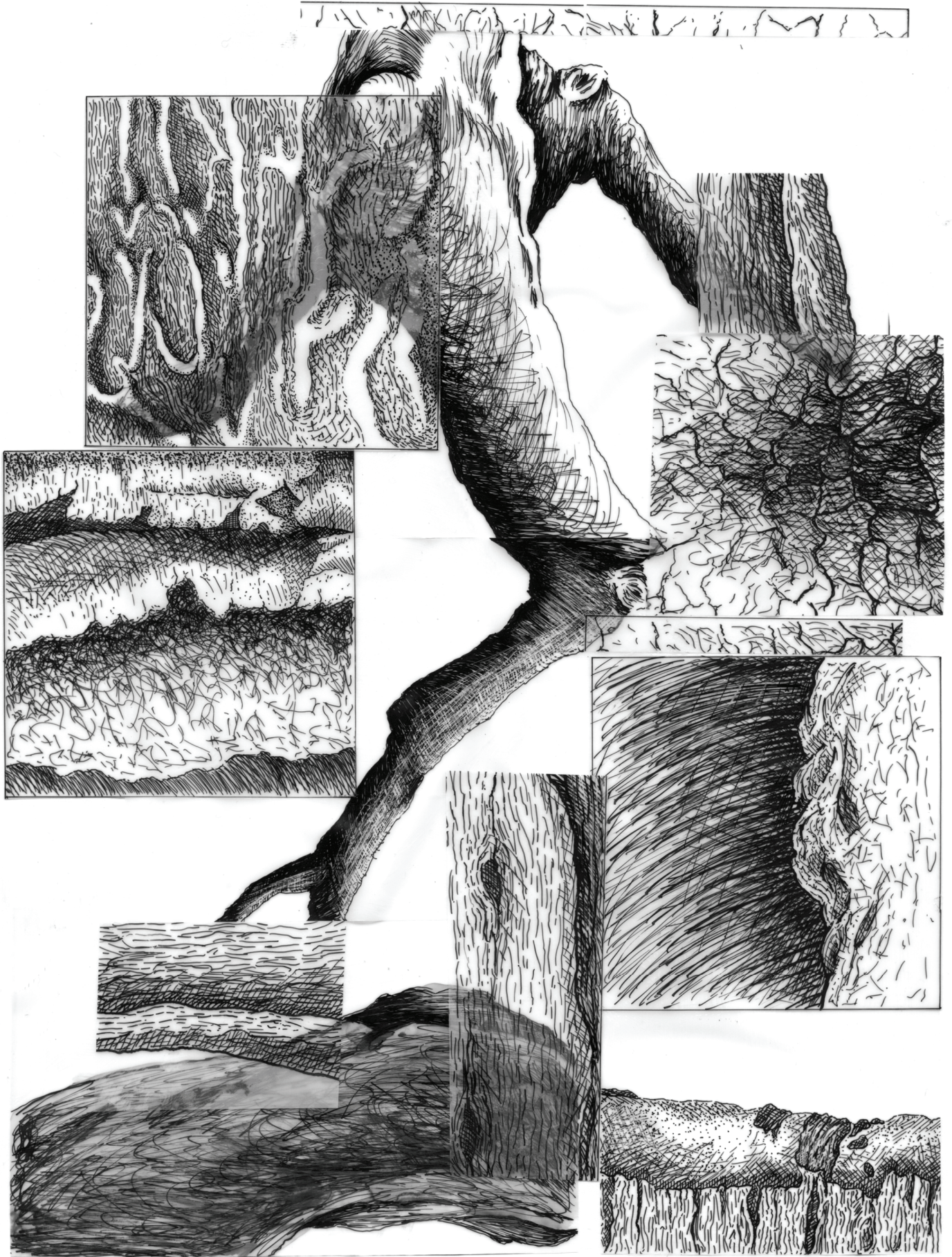
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DRAWING:

KIM RAE TAYLOR

Kim Rae Taylor will obtain her MFA in painting from the University of Cincinnati in June 2006. She received her BFA from the University of Texas, Austin and participated in the University of Georgia's Italian Studies Program in Cortona, Italy.

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Kim Rae Taylor

Societal Arachnophobia

a spider
bone-colored, busy
as the hands of Thoth¹
no heal-all, no moth

in a crevice of a chair's back
she stretches like Clotho²
the sticky, off-white,
narrow threads,
broad, taut,
'tween the gray walls

stretching her abdomen
in her labor
to trap
and twines fine lines
into a tight lattice,
a gossamer film

when done, the architect draws
into the deepest corner
'neath her snare
agile to her purpose
and cunning
waiting
feigning innocence
of cruel design

(Notes:

¹ *In Egyptian religion, god of wisdom and magic. A patron of learning and of the arts, he was credited with many inventions, including writing, geometry, and astronomy.*

² *Fates, in Greek religion and mythology, three goddesses who controlled human lives. They were: Clotho, who spun the web of life; Lachesis, who measured its length; and Atropos, who cut it.)*

The Storm

Strewn about their murky beds
the glassy eyes and bloated chests
of black and supine dead!
None alive 'cept those who floated best...
or none, for none could bear the red
and raging waves whose crests
made wet the belly of the pallid sky:
nor winds whose white and violent breath
surged about a calm cyclopic 'eye'.

A fierce cyclonic harvester of death!

And Death himself: the haughty puppeteer
whose bone-white fingers strike the iv'ry
keys,
upwelling sullen notes for Heaven's ear
and thereby twisting air and swelling seas.
The crash of symbols and the crash of
waves;
the wines of violins and wines of souls;
where bodies occupy the filthy graves
black as a thousand holes!

Those who manage to survive
seek refuge in a lousy spot
like *herded black beasts*,
among their own, alive
and dead alike, allowed to starve and rot,
the stink of waste and death made hot!
In states that faith alone cannot revive.

Saturated bodies, black and poor
forsaken like a ruined ship;
leg and arm as mast and oar
and nothing for the lips...

and nothing for the lips!

POEMS:

ROGER CROTTY

Roger Crotty, a writer, lives in Cincinnati with his wife, Martha, an artist. To pay the rent, they have a home-based writing/design business, 'Crotty & Crotty'. Roger has been writing for a long time. . . almost as long as he has been indulging his two other passions: reading and rooting for the White Sox.

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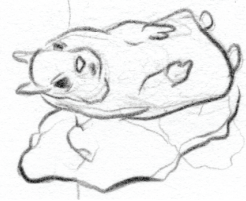
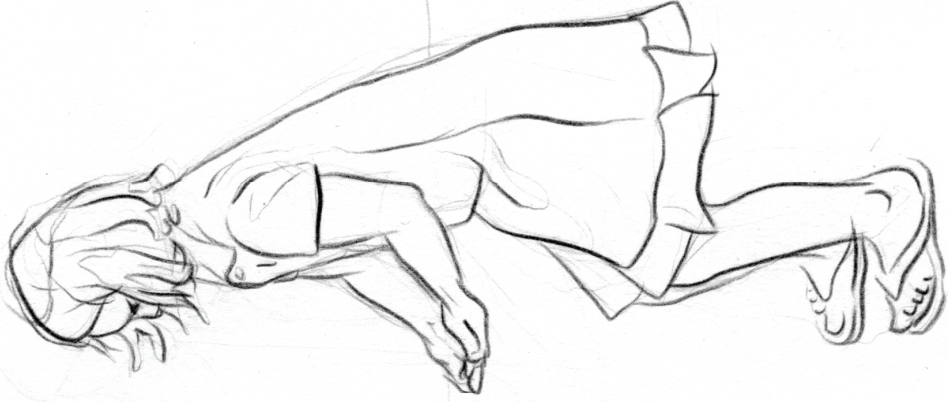
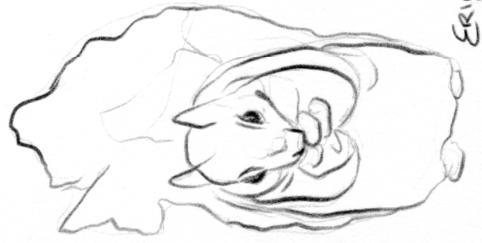
DRAWING:

ERIC RUSCHMAN

Eric Ruschman, a student attending the Art Academy of Cincinnati, recently rediscovered what it is like to be a child. He tries his best to love people and creates art that hopefully triggers the same. Eric cries about once a day for any number of good or bad reasons. He thinks physical affection is pretty great.

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ERIC RUSCHMAN



Squirrel Watching

Squirrels
are marvelous creatures
one minute, tightrope walkers
using their tails
for balance
like the fellow
on that thin wire
way up at the top of the circus tent
carrying his long balancing rod
the next minute
like practiced jewel thieves
crawling up the columns
and across the support beams
on the front porch to snatch
the bird seed, hung high in feeders
then
off to leap from branch to branch
scaling the tallest trees
all by themselves without
sherpas to guide them, show
them the best route to the top
outside
all day long, in any weather,
when a storm approaches
their innate doppler
tells them to pause, seek shelter.
Scientists tell us that
we are the utmost on the
evolutionary chart
the other side says
we are the result of
the peak creative work of some
ultra-brilliant designer.
Watching squirrels
at their everyday lives
tells me
that they're both wrong.

Non-CEOs

Two guys come to the door,
one white and one black,
here to pick up our couch
that we are donating to
the charity that employs them.
One grabs each end
of the couch, they move
smoothly out the front door
down the iffy, crumbling
front steps of the apartment,
come back for the cushions,
and then leave. After
they have gone it occurs
to me that this whole experience
has been pleasant, polite,
jovial, competent, some of
the adjectives that apply
to these two non-CEOs.
If only the economic ladder
could be inverted, the unselfish
and competent would be in the
right place.

Strange Citizen

On the back porch of our apartment
on the first floor of an aging brownstone
in a neighborhood at the center
of the 25th largest metro area
of this one nation under god,
high up behind a ceiling board
lives an unusual citizen. . . a bat.
His full name, as dubbed by us,
is Louisville Slugger, Louie for short.
He sleeps all day and preys all night,
and the evidence seen each and every day
on the floor of the porch indicates that
his nightly forays and his digestive tract
are successful and function at peak
capacity.
So far, we have not made a report to any
authority or government agency, even
though
both his appearance and name are quite
out of the ordinary.

POEM:

MADELEINE CROUSE

Madeleine Crouse, a member of the Greater Cincinnati Writers League and the Cincinnati Writers Project, has a background in dance and in paralegal work. Her writings have been published in *The Comstock Review* and in the recent Cincinnati Writers Project Anthology, *Someone Has to Die*.

Contact: crousjmcrs@aol.com

DRAWING:

JAMIE OBERSCHLAKE

For several years Jamie Oberschlake worked as an illustrator for mostly horror fiction publications, including the World Fantasy Award winning title, *The Throne of Bones* by the late Brian McNaughton. Jamie now prefers to use more personal subject matters in larger, more ambitious paintings and sculptures. He is currently working on an MFA at the University of Cincinnati.

Contact: www.oberschlake.com



Janip Oberschöke
-06-

Colonel Roberts a k a W.W. to the Residents of the Bishop Gadsen Retirement Home

I've heard that years ago he was partial to gin
and would go days ingesting juniper
berry, clear-colored drinks. It's been told

one night while thoroughly tanked he returned
from the store with a hundred jars
of pickles (all dill). At times,

while still in the punch he would punch
the air, roll on the floor, fight lions
or remember his war. Now, he lives

amid sober white walls, and is told
to hush while his roommate rests.
At ninety, the Colonel does chin-

ups, eighteen at a crack, from a bar
on a doorway. His mind, not as strong,
resists reality. Crouching to the floor,

he yells to my uncle whose room
is next door: "keep your head down
George - hunker into the trench -

the bastards have hit." Blood pours
from his buddies' ragged shell holes;
he sees red pools gathering.

The ground girds its loins afraid
to accept them - and souls fly
from their human nests.

POEM:

BRET CHRISTOPHER DUNCAN

Bret Christopher Duncan is a poet, performance, and visual artist. Although largely self-taught, Bret attended the Antioch Writers Workshop (Yellow Springs, OH) in 2003 and briefly studied the Adler Acting Technique under a private instructor. He has performed at venues such as The Southgate House, Contemporary Dance Theater, York St. Cafe, and Penny Lane (Boulder, CO). He is currently involved in projects aimed at the revival of storytelling in a contemporary style.

Contact: boogaluu@aol.com

DRAWING:

YBETTE INOJOSA

Ybette A. Inojosa is a freelance graphic and art glass designer who also does mixed media work and designs, including painting, drawing, sculpture, and photography. She is currently studying Radio and Television at Northern Kentucky University.

Ybette has been involved and/or worked in art related fields almost all of her life.

Contact: yinojosa@fuse.net



YBETTE INOJOSA

The Bibles Many Pious Authors

The pious skip merrily
As church bells stoically toll
Their shared vision is seriously
Unhealthy to the soul

As church bells stoically toll
They intolerantly proselytize
This is unhealthy to the soul
Thinking one way to the exclusion of all others is unwise

They intolerantly proselytize
From subsequent generations oblivious
Thinking one way to the exclusion of all others is unwise
And engenders wars most heinous

From subsequent generations oblivious
An inherited teaching is adulterated
And wars are engendered, wars most heinous
Religion then is rendered a drug and its followers sedated

An inherited teaching is adulterated
As it was transcribed by the spiritually blind
Religion they rendered a drug and its followers were sedated
Repeating earthbound illusions blunts the mind

As it was transcribed by the spiritually blind
The bible can be used as a tool for good or ill
Repeating earthbound illusions blunts the mind
And thus religions trusted ministers asserted their will

The bible can be used as a tool for good or ill
And so the pious can skip merrily
Religions trusted ministers have asserted their will
And their shared vision destroys lives, seriously

POEMS:

MARK FLANIGAN

Writer/performer Mark Flanigan, a Cincinnati native, has been publishing for more than a decade. His column “*Exiled on Main Street*” appeared first in X-Ray and later online for over three years; his new column “*Exiled from Main Street*,” now appears monthly at semantikon.com. Mark’s collection, *Not Necessarily God Stories*, is available at oneleggedcowpress.org.

Mark is also well known for his live performances in places as varied as the Northside Tavern and CAC. He is in the process of recording his first album with musician Steven Proctor.

Contact: talkmule@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

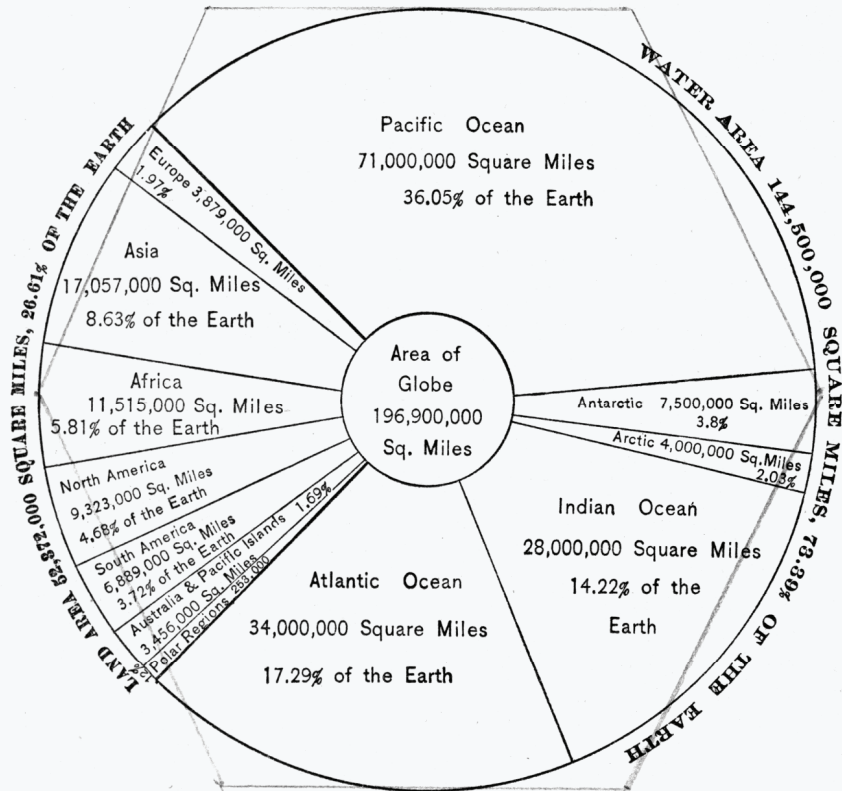
TIM MCMICHAEL

Tim McMichael received a BFA in printmaking from the Art Academy of Cincinnati (1994). A cofounder of VOLK/ c.s.p.i., a hyper-active performance and exhibition space (Cincinnati, 2000), he has shown locally and regionally, and most recently in a solo exhibition “Linked” at the Weston Art Gallery (11/2005).

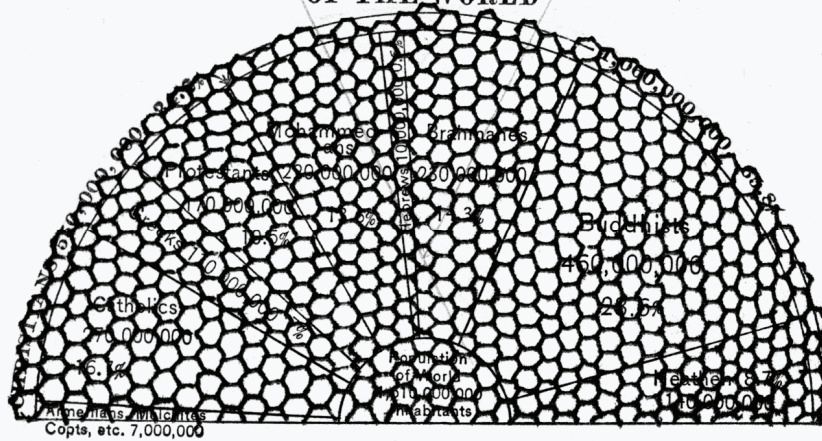
Tim currently lives and works in Cincinnati.

Contact: thirteen@fuse.net

AREAS OF THE EARTH



PRINCIPAL RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD



Janitors of the World Unite!

*(for Pastor Rev. Bill Barron,
candidate for Cincinnati city council)*

my publisher asked
for something
that had

to do with
something
other than myself.

at first,
I had a hard time with this.

then, the few things
I had earned
but never collected on
kicked in,
the couple of bags
I filled
but never picked up
surrounded me.

all of a sudden
I got tired
for whatever reason:

America,
we shot out
the lights,

and even God
won't turn them back on.

Trading Down

How did this happen? Who
gave birth to whom?

Whose wallet am I holding?
Who's I.D.?

Has anyone figured
anything out yet? Why

the sky's blue, for instance,

or where time truly goes?

To think we share
so little space,

are faced with, outside,
so green a grass! Goodbye

to glasses, or look away,
we have served notice to meaning—

having jumped to safety
from over 100 flights up—

we will fall, like all civilizations have fallen,
with stubbornness instead of grace,

and last the day
because of it.

It will eat itself

it'll eat itself even
turn on its side
come 'round
find a way
dig in
bring it down
alongside itself,
a dirty death waltz
the film fading
to gray,
a kamikaze chorus
ushering us
to sleep
tucking us in beds
ready made
and with walls
that rise
in time

just ahead
of our hand

is this not
where you're wont
to turn away?

POEM:

GARY GAFFNEY

Gary Gaffney is a Professor at the Art Academy of Cincinnati, where he has taught for more than 25 years. He is a visual artist who works in various 2-D, 3-D and 4-D media, and who also has a love of words.

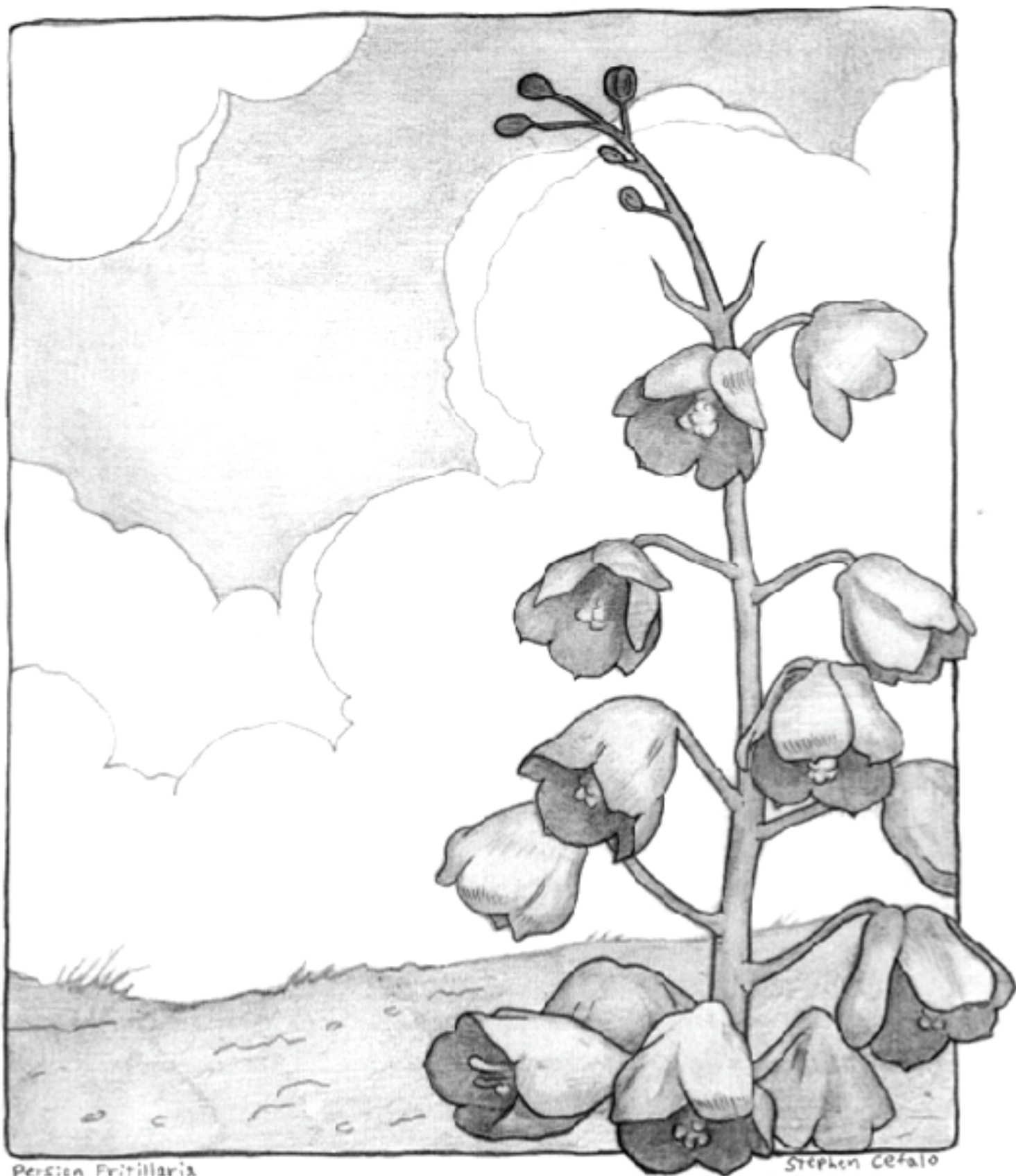
Contact: ggaffney@artacademy.edu

DRAWING:

STEPHEN CEFALO

Stephen Cefalo received his BFA at the School of Visual Arts (1999) and his MFA at Indiana University (2004). He teaches at the Art Academy of Cincinnati, and lives in Erlanger, KY, with his wife, Amy, and his five children. In April 2006, Stephen will have a solo exhibition of his paintings at The Carnegie Art Center, in Covington, KY.

Contact: StephenCefalo@insightbb.com; www.StephenCefalo.com



Persian Fritillaria

Stephen Cefalo

My War

1. Remembering

Soul, soaked in scream,
I never sang.
I unknew loving.

I killed a yellow man,
(pounding him with the first, the second,
the thousandth bullet of our rage).
Part me was in his shroud of dying flesh.

Memory (now)
is not the calendar of the evening news.
It is the every breathing act.

2. Healing

My child knows me only as seed.
And what can I share in stories
soaked in blood and scattered flesh?
And all the things I came to do at the edge of my fear?

Who hurts with me?
Holding tight against the rage
from every fragment of cell and self.

Look at me!
Wearing shame and rage
and all the other medals
of the rituals of that code.

So I give out my pain to the another,
not dilution, not sacrament.
Reconciliation to the always-will-be-ness of it.
Accepting in a solitary, daylight act,
I end-begin.

POEMS:

JANELLE JOHNSON GROVE

Janelle Johnson Grove is a new resident to Cincinnati where she lives with her husband, Stephen, and 2 year-old daughter, Savannah. Her background is in education and she loves helping others flourish in their literacy skills.

Janelle's most recent activities include coordinating a tutoring program in the Norwood area and living in an intentional community, in Georgia, working with refugees.

Contact: jjohnsongrove@yahoo.com

DRAWING:

JUDY DIMUZIO

Judy DiMuzio, a Cincinnati artist, has a BFA in printmaking from the Art Academy of Cincinnati. She is an active member of Tiger Lily Press and of the Colerain Artists. Judy's work is figurative, each with its own story. She works in different printmaking media, but enjoys particularly the spontaneity of monotypes.

Contact: judydimuzio@yahoo.com



Judy DiMuzio

Chameleon

My pride settled herself onto bended knee
and asked for your help.
All you could hear was my brokenness and
irresponsibility
rippling and multiplying
into a great neediness.
My need expanded to you,
involved you,
and angered you.

You spoke of your lack
and I saw the truth in your eyes.
Words tried to hide
the hard blade of judgment,
raised at me in your swift glance.

Eyes downcast,
I turned from your resistant gaze
while murmuring the soft refrain of
apologies.

Then I remembered –
*Soothe, soothe the inflictor.
He wields the power.
You must speak to the pride nestled
into the fibers of his flesh.*

Crumpling my pride,
I put my hands in my pockets and dammed
up my eyes.
I told you what you wanted to hear –
promises of change,
ownership of wrongdoings,
taking responsibility of
all that is wrong.
I involved only myself this time.

Yes, yes, yes you nodded.

Finally, your hand opened and you reached
into your pocket.

Heart Asunder

Dear heart,
Can you please tell me your logic?
Why it is that at times you
break by all the pain of this world,
your river bursts with sorrow's currents,
your velocity roars by the knowledge of all
that there is – and isn't.
Your flowing waters move me to act,
change,
make a difference.
And so, I go and face what is so frightening,
so unfamiliar,
so unlovable.
I rise out of my hiding to see another's life,
to listen,
and wrestle with the questions of fairness.
But, really,
is justice me going to another?
A privileged to an underprivileged?
Is she really passively waiting for me to
come to her –
as if I was God descending upon the lowly?

And dear heart,
Why is it that at another time you might see
the wounds and hear
the fading notes of another's youthful
dreams –
and you just stand stiff and barren?
I hear you stubbornly shouting,
"Dammit! I don't care."
"It's all too much!"
And in the end, you ask
what difference can I really make?
After all, who needs me in their revolution?
And what is the revolution about anyway?

What can I trust to steer
my pursuits of justice and peace
if I cannot trust
your stability –
you wavering companion.

You are my loyal guide.
Yet, your unpredictability mystifies me,
and I falter.

Inversion

You speak to me of that day when all will be fair.
You pull me into your dream of a world at rest –
pure streams pooling on the mountainside,
happy neighbors with lives flourishing on common land,
everywhere there is more than enough,
the rich and poor, young and old, the rainbowed peoples
all magnificently threaded together
in a harmonious existence –
in that day when all will be well.
“Come, follow,” you say, “live the vision.”

But, I say to you
what about the cadence in my heart?
And your heart?
And all the hearts?
What about the complex rhythms of judgments?
What about
the fears of scarcity thundering inwardly;
with his mighty tongue rolling out its dooming song upon us?

Who will settle these throbbing nocturnal voices?
Who will still our raging rivers whose energies are so powerful
that all the scaffoldings of brotherhood are dismembered?
Who will come inside, and within, the deep, fleshy folds of our
hearts
and heal the tears?

I speak to you of that day when our hearts will be mended.
I sing to you about a person at peace within the dwelling of her own being –
the broken person who has gathered her shattered self,
melted the fragments,
and breathed into the hot drips
a miraculously refining fire –
in that day her gleaming wellness will mesmerize us.
“Please, come,” I say, “pursue this hope.”

*Turn this in your head.
Spin it in your heart.
Consider who is born of whom?
Which reality reflects the other?*

And, does it matter?

POEM:

RICHARD HAGUE

Richard Hague is a 2006 winner of an Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award in Poetry. His latest book is *Lives of the Poem: Community and Connection in a Writing Life* (Wind Publications, 2005). He is a member of the Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative.

Contact: haguekort@fuse.net

DRAWING:

DENISE BURGE

Denise Burge: born 1963, native of North Carolina;
painter, quiltmaker, and filmmaker;
currently a professor in the art department at the University of Cincinnati;
recent recipient of a Joan Mitchell Foundation award.

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D. BURG '06

Galway Kinnels Reads James Wright, Martins Ferry Ohio, April 13, 1991

1: *He Reads, And Is Interrupted*

Galway's voice, rich and plain
as his linen shirt after he sheds his jacket
(we wait for the workman next
to roll his sleeves, forearms
over the lectern
as over the fenders
of a car, wrenches and hammers
rattling in the pocket of his tweed)
—his voice moves out among us, slow,
tentative,
tough supple garfish probing the banks.
Bly presides to his right, *ex cathedra*,
the wild scud of his hair
a squall, his eyes closed
so that the words may enter his skin
as wrens might hallow red air.

Then three quick blasts
from the emergency airhorn three
more *hahn hahn hahn* three
more:
sound stunning as falling I-beams,
torpedoed propane tanks,
colliding reefers or coalcars.

Galway smiles, blinks, gapes about,
unsettled.
The audience, outlanders mostly, scholars,
poets, a few working stiffs from somewhere
else
in the world, all shift and mumble
till the silence focuses again.
Gurgle of a coffeemaker somewhere,
library murmur: Galway reads on.

Meanwhile, slipping outside,
I see the life squads, four or five
ambulances, pulling into the millgate by the
river.

Outside Dutch Henry's bar, three men
stand smoking on the curb:
of course they have lived the lives of tough
angels,
Wright would have had it no other way,
would have had them step out of a joint
as out of the river's darkest channel,
wiping their hands on their pants and
cursing,
as they do right here.
Nor would they have faces other than
these:
Coleridge, Goethe, the old Leonardo,
that dusty-browed mechanic.
Nor is there around them any nimbus
but graylight and the stink of slag.
There's blood, maybe, in the mill down
there,
freshly broken bone, flesh snagged, flayed,
scorched—
the thousand wounds this place inflicts—
and where the railroad bends along the
river,
old snow like drifts of broken fathers
slumps ashore.

2: *Life Here*

No fault of Robert's or Galway's
that they do not understand
the three blasts on the horn.
There are birds that live here
whose names remain, even to the natives,
completely unknown,
birds that walk the depths of river
among chains and broken towboats,
nesting in the silted skulls of virgins.

There are animals in these parts
that eat fire, chlorine, slag,
and that have eighteen stomachs to
digest them into willow leaves and flies.
Poetry means nothing.

There are teachers walking the streets here
wearing brass knuckles, married to
iron bridges and drowned Buicks.

There are restaurants just upriver,
along the railroad tracks,
where a thousand last meals
have been eaten, and bars where
no one drinks.

Churches that scream.

Hillsides bleeding children.

Catfish that will not be opened,
even by fishermen's knives.

3: Wright, Speaking From Heaven

*I ran away from this place
forty years ago, and was smart to do it:
why do you come back, friends of mine,
strangers with pens in your pockets,
talking a load of pious crap among those I avoided
and those who often hated me?
Listen: places hardly ever want their poets.*

*Ah, Christ, you know I love you.
Come clean. Nothing has changed.
The rich still devour the poor.*

*Tell them what America has done,
what America has failed to do—
tell them why you keep coming back,
putting my words in your mouths.*

POEM:

MICHAEL HENSON

Michael Henson is a member of the Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative. *The Tao of Longing*, his chapbook of poems, was published by Dos Madres Press in 2005. *Crow Call*, a book of poems on the death of Buddy Gray, is due out in the fall of 2006 from West End Press.

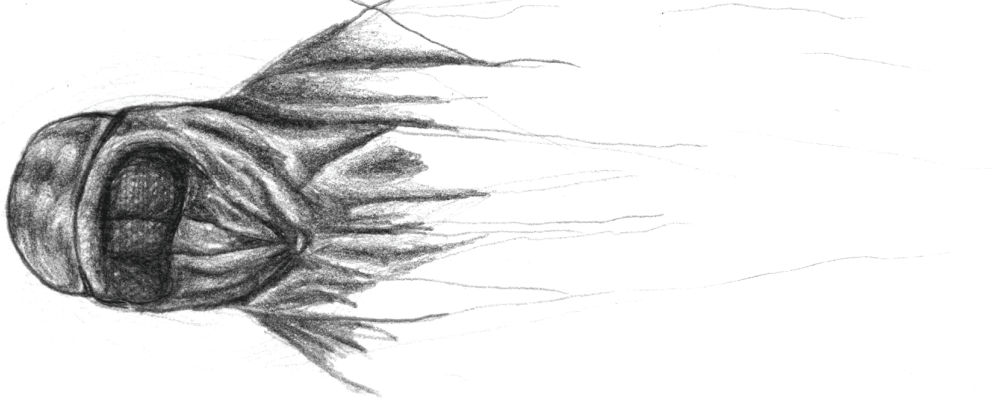
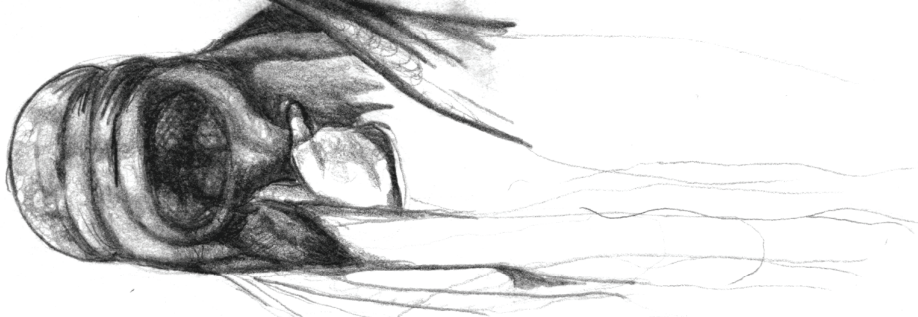
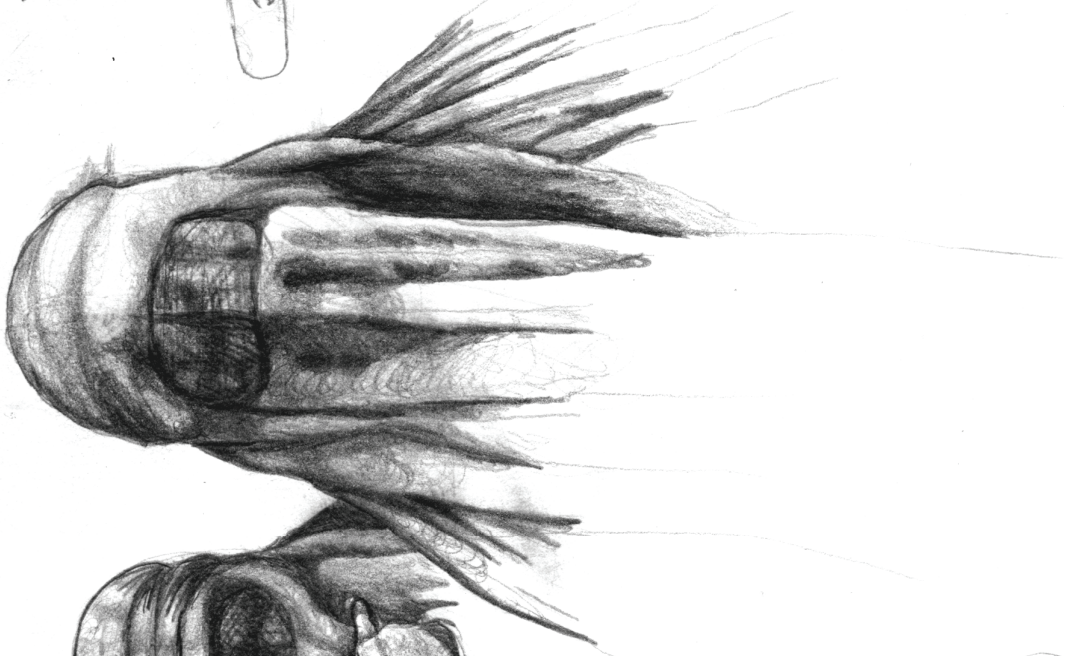
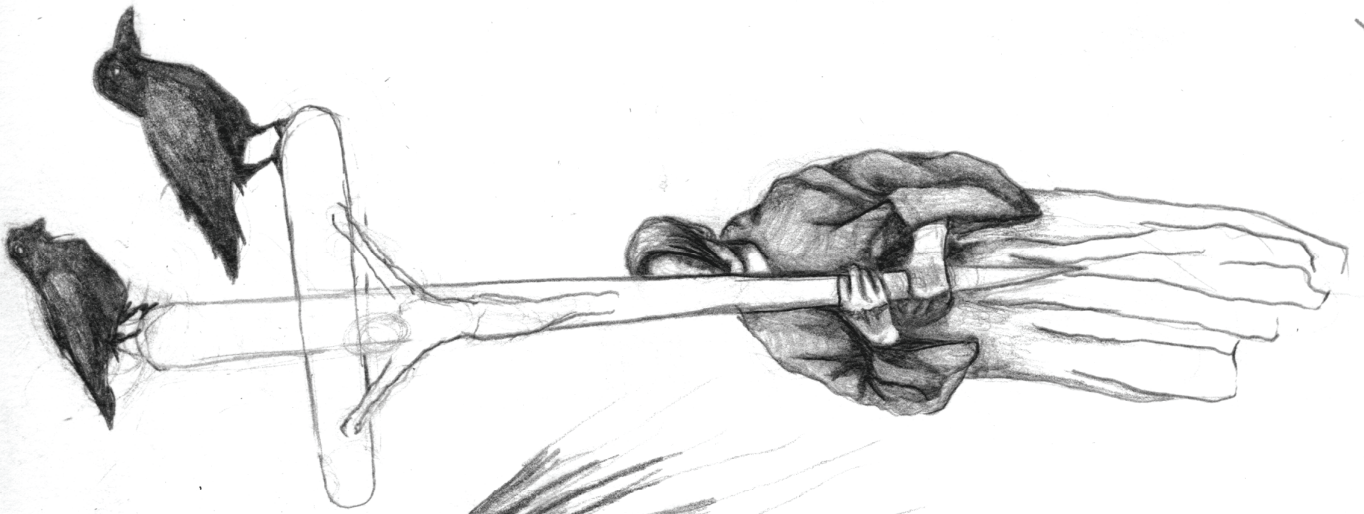
Contact: jamiehp@earthlink.net

DRAWING:

GREGORY DAVIS

Gregory Davis is 23 years old and a Senior in the fine arts department at DAAP, University of Cincinnati.

Contact: gregdavis16@yahoo.com



Art Dini

The Day Is Coming

The day is coming.
Strap on your shoes.
The blastula earth swells;
It crackles with nerve.
A light flickers through the east.
Strange molecules rattle in the air like
gravel.
The goat sniffs once
and trots to the edge of the meadow.
Some new thing is birthing.
The day is coming.
What are you doing?
Put on your nativity.

The day is coming.
Put on your hat.
A child walks into the desert
with his death in his arms.
Smoke drifts across the valley floor.
A woman flings dust by the handful into the
barren air.
The raven watches from his post.
He calls, three times, five times, seven.
Some new thing suffers.
The day is coming.
What are you dreaming?
Put on your poverty.

The day is coming.
Put on your gloves.
We walk toward the distant mountains.
Monks chant away the dark hours.
A woman builds a song, stone by stone.
Even the mole has found a voice.
(Put your ear to the mouth of his tunnel;
hear him grumble.)
Some new story tells itself.
The day is coming.
What are you speaking?
Put on your wisdom.

The day is coming.
Button up your red shirt.
The spears of night rattle in the alley.
Listen, a sound of grinding steel.
Listen, a sound of dying leaves.
A man takes his place against a wall.
A woman takes her place
in a field of refugees.
Some new cross takes its nails.
The day is coming.
What are you dying?
Put on your resurrection.

POEMS:

JEFFREY HILLARD

Jeffrey Hillard is the author of four books of poems. He has received two Ohio Arts Council Individual Artist grants, and in 2000 an OAC fellowship as Resident Writer at The Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, MA. In 1993, Jeffrey received the Post-Corbett Award for Literary Artist, and in 1998 the Sister Adele Clifford Award for Excellence in Teaching at the College of Mount St. Joseph where he is currently an associate professor of English.

Contact: jeff_hillard@mail.msj.edu

DRAWING:

CARRIE NIXON

Carrie M. Nixon focuses on figurative drawings and paintings; she has been exploring issues of identity and alter egos in an ongoing series of figures in costumes. Other recent series include the "Captive" series of zoo animals, and the "Cannon Fodder" series depicting her students at the University of Cincinnati. Carrie is a native of Detroit, MI, and has exhibited frequently in the Midwest and Northeast, including at Chicago's Peace Museum and New York's Allan Stone Gallery.

Contact: carpe.diem@fuse.net



Magnificat

How the chin of this baby Jesus got grace
with the thick lip of mud is mysterious.
Its Christmas pose still planted in mid-
summer, the baby is bewildered
in the manger under the build of rain.
Dirt from flower pots can't be stopped.
Overflow dances on shepherds and straw.
Even the dogs usually chained
to a porch are inside, the chains
swaying on the mailbox.
That manger is the center of nothing
and the center of everything.
If anything is known in a hard rain,
it's that this one person passing
will stare, drenched, and walk away
as if it's old furniture in the yard.
That baby smile, fixed, is the ingredient
of longing, or an extended moment
coming from ocean not a mile away,
or coming from the parking lot
where tourists circle lighted concrete
islands, sidestepping puddles.
Rain slowing, each window looks down
at the manger. Each passing of salt air
gathers more of the smell of fish scraps.
With all these people walking in the lot,
the end of the theatre show must have
happened. Passersby. Wet ceramic
angels
in a stray headlight. The baby ignored.
It's the ever-changing cool-to-warm
wind
that brushes the angel and manger. Grass
leads both away from and toward
the manger and plastic sheep, with no end
in sight to the mud dripping on the baby.

Los Tuberos

(Havana, 1997)

Night grips this latest body rocking on the
sea.
He kneels with others, thrusting the
makeshift boat
into the Gulf Stream, legs wobbly, arms
cranking oars.
He snatches crackers stacked in a can. He
rows and eats,

feels crumbs on his tongue before he feels
his throat bleed his eyes of any real
comfort.
Night washes waves across his blanket,
bringing sea
to the kneeling others who stroke the boat

which slips into sheets of waves, and he
believes only
in water black as the innertubes on which
he floats.
He'll split his hands' skin until he can't
stroke
anymore. Then he'll crawl against another's
feet,
this man gripping a blanket while he rocks
at sea.

*(Note: Tuberos are crude rafts of driftwood
and tires made by Cubans trying to leave
Cuba via the Gulf stream and drift to
Florida.)*

Ghazal

*(Herring Cove, Provincetown
after Agha Shahid Ali)*

I am more than design: breakwater cleanses my fear upon water:
When the sun dries my skin, I'll never again be revealed upon water.

It's either evening or late afternoon when empty bottles float by.
The kiss I don't receive is stranded, like a mirror upon water.

Absence composes the gray shore where I always walk.
A wind once dropped shell fragments like tears upon water.

When she touched my arm, what faded was the need to remember.
I can be lead to shade and be taught nothing is bleak upon water.

Where are they going? Why does a family wrap towels around sand castles?
Where wet cold rocks roll is a shadow smeared upon water.

She left first; now I'm enthralled by land lapping the sea.
And although I do, there's nothing I should find clear upon water.

I can almost tell when stars cut deep into our thoughtless hearts.
I'm never pleased with endings, knowing I could leave upon water.

What broke through the trees did not call out my name.
I want to know when a star burns, is relieved upon water.

I dream that I've failed to remember how to watch birds.
The sailboat dips – and slashes – all but retreating upon water.

I've received all the light I need given to me by the tired sky.
Out of such light flows a lost dream upon water.

POEMS:

SUE NEUFARTH HOWARD

Sue Neufarth Howard: city native, published poet, visual artist. 1983 Poet Laureate - Cincinnati Recreation Commission Neighborhood Poetry Contest. Graduate - Miami University (Oxford) and U.C. Evening College. Current President - Greater Cincinnati Writers League (GCWL). Several poems have won Third Prize, Second Prize, and Honorable Mention in Ohio Poetry Day Contests since 1998. Poems published in *Creative Voices: The ILR Anthology* and other local publications.

Contact: snhpoet@netzero.com

DRAWING:

JACKIE BRADEN

Jackie Braden, a native Cincinnati, resides in Northern Kentucky. A contemporary artist, she currently works primarily with various Water Media to produce abstract works that incorporate bright colors, texturing, patterning, and sometimes collages. Jackie's studio is in the Pendleton Art Center.

Contact: bradenjc@ucmail.uc.edu; www.jackiebraden.com



"The Bushy Wind"

Jackie Brader.

Final Flight

pewter sky
pushy wind

blizzard of
golden leaves
silky soft
as glove leather

settle
as cushiony
golden garnish

cast off comrades
languish
in proximity

accept last rites
searing sun
rotting rain
contemplate
rebirth

whisper
a husky grace
beneath
footfalls

Boss Rant

we need to talk

that tsunami business
its outta my hands

you gotta understand
I was just the builder

built this planet
put you in it

just set things in motion
no easy task

that 7 day rap
way off base; don't work that fast

so its out of my control, forces collide
shit happens, cause and effect ya know

love you all, but forces unleashed
will have their way with you

after my so called Sunday rest, took up
recycling; can't keep up with the work

what with tsunami, hurricanes,
mudslides, crashes

floods, fires, cancer
and what not, been working overtime

spirits stacked sky high
understaffed – get my drift?

you disaster survivors, stop saying
I yanked you out of harms way

I don't have time, don't have reason
to pick and choose, you dig?

my job now, get those spirits back in action,
repackage for a second shot, newborn

and by the way, I sent
those commandments for a reason

check out the no kill clause
what I really said – don't murder

and if you just can't control yourself
you suicide bombers, Al Quaida guys

don't say it's on my account
don't expect any sympathy from me

child-murderers, hopped up freaks
when your time comes, you're goin' straight
down

Listen up – don't ask for special favors
either
I got enough problems up here

there's that computer I put in your head
and I gave each of you a piece of me

so get with it, get on the stick
you've got the tools

do me a favor, give me 110% effort down
there
I'll hack out this disaster backlog up here

POEM:

BRIAN HUEHLS

Brian Huehls has worked in residential architecture and land planning in the Cincinnati area since the early 70's. He has used his poetry as a tool to better understand people and the places they feel trigger peace and harmony in their life. Brian's design and place making have been both strongly influenced by the writings of Wendell Berry, particularly his essay *Standing By Words*.

Contact: lbhuehls@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

EILEEN MCCONKEY

Eileen McConkey has a BFA from Kent State and many years of painting, sculpting, Prop/set design, illustration and teaching. Eileen thinks that interpretations and commentary through art are an important responsibility within the art world.

Contact: eileenmconkey1@adelphia.net; www.eileenmconkey.com



Gilbert M'Conkey

If You Would Have Peace

If you would have peace in your day
 Look beyond yourself.
Build your character so you bend
 Without breaking
Like a tree living in the wind
 Ever moving.
The things outside your own control,
 Just let it be
Like the fallen branch of the tree
 Which is replaced
By the new growth of each season,
 Each in its time.

If you would have peace in speaking
 From your thoughts,
Be open to new ideas.
 Much can be done
 Within a well kept fertile mind
 And through others.
Build on the compost of mistakes
 Wasting nothing;
Like the fertile field well nourished
 By fire and time.

If you would make peace with others
 Meet their minds.
Be open to each new debate
 Looking beyond
The misconceptions of the word
 To find meaning
Of the unspoken thought within;
 Deep in each soul
Many words written and spoken
 Are as simple
As a single drop of water
 In a still pond.
Find simplicity in a heart...
 Peace lives there.

POEM:

ERIKA HUTCHINS

Erika Hutchins, a Junior at the Art Academy of Cincinnati, is 21 years old. She lives with her older sister and two of her cantankerous ferrets in Corryville, Cincinnati, OH.

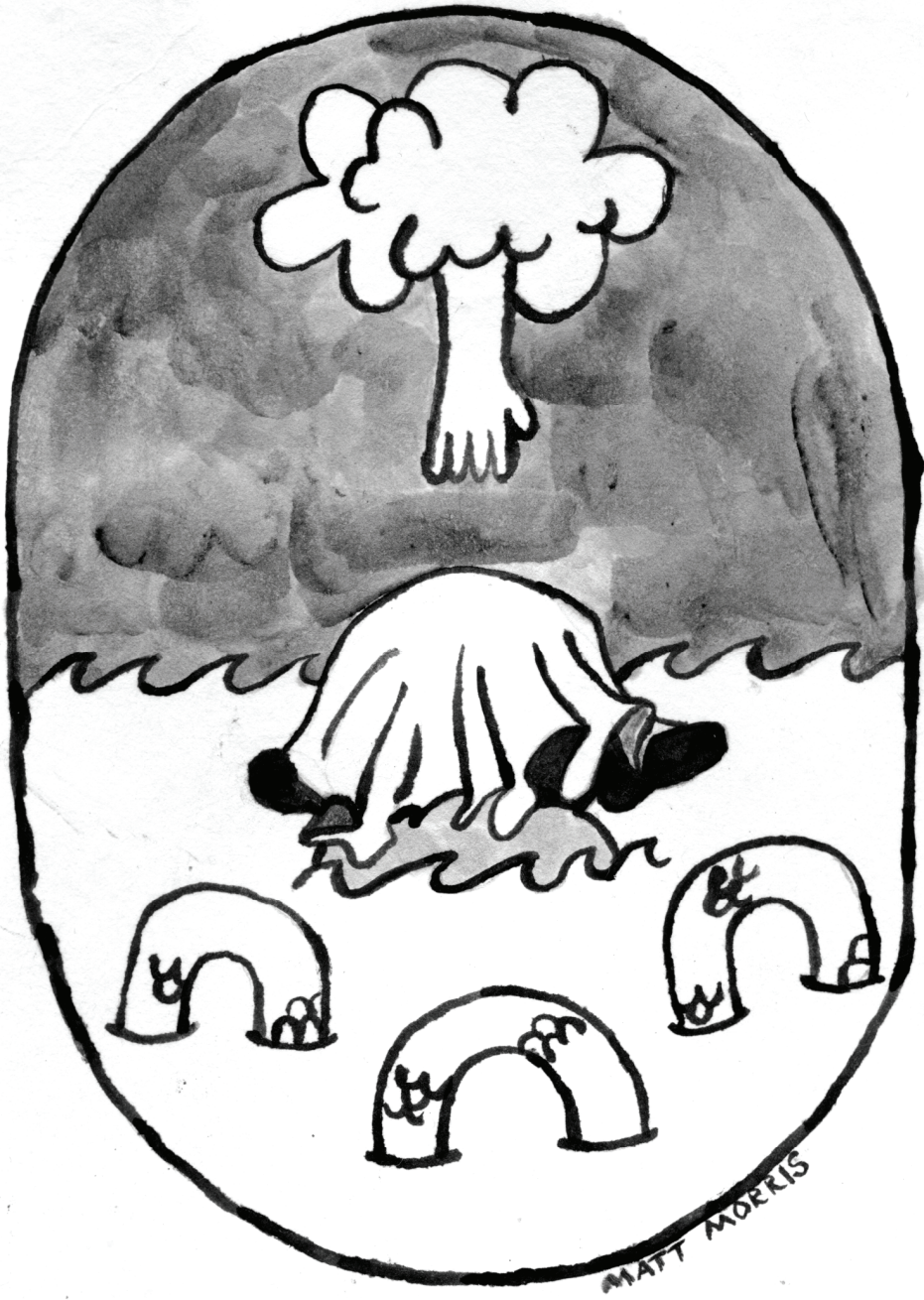
Contact: burntweenysandwich@gmail.com

DRAWING:

MATTHEW MORRIS

Originally from Louisiana where he spent time exploring historical cemeteries and working with art collaborative communities, Matthew Morris now lives in Cincinnati, studying at its Art Academy. He paints and organizes information and shows off and, mostly, he loves. The most recent addition to his loving world is his newly adopted black cat named Saint Kitten.

Contact: rococoputto@hotmail.com



MATT MORRIS

And on My Primitive Float

And on my primitive float, I am afraid
that the lungs will last and the ships will sink.

I run
the role
of playing.

of crying.

And so do you, run the risk of some devious leviathan in your desperate night
Rolling the fears off your tongue like so many joys.

No crisp sighs of love, no vesper wishes of eternal wrong

A crowded aggregate of lonely men, you are
raging the tropics, as a goldfish dying.

And I the ice-pick, not the thorn, in your side. Made me
throw the anchor.

Who sleeps in the fog,
and cat calls the rogue lashing of Fate?

POEMS:

W.B. IGNATIUS

W.B. "Bucky" Ignatius is a long-time Cincinnati artist who sends love letters to the world through poetry, photography and songs, in church and festival choirs and with the beer-celebratory group "Aqapelyx Anonymous."

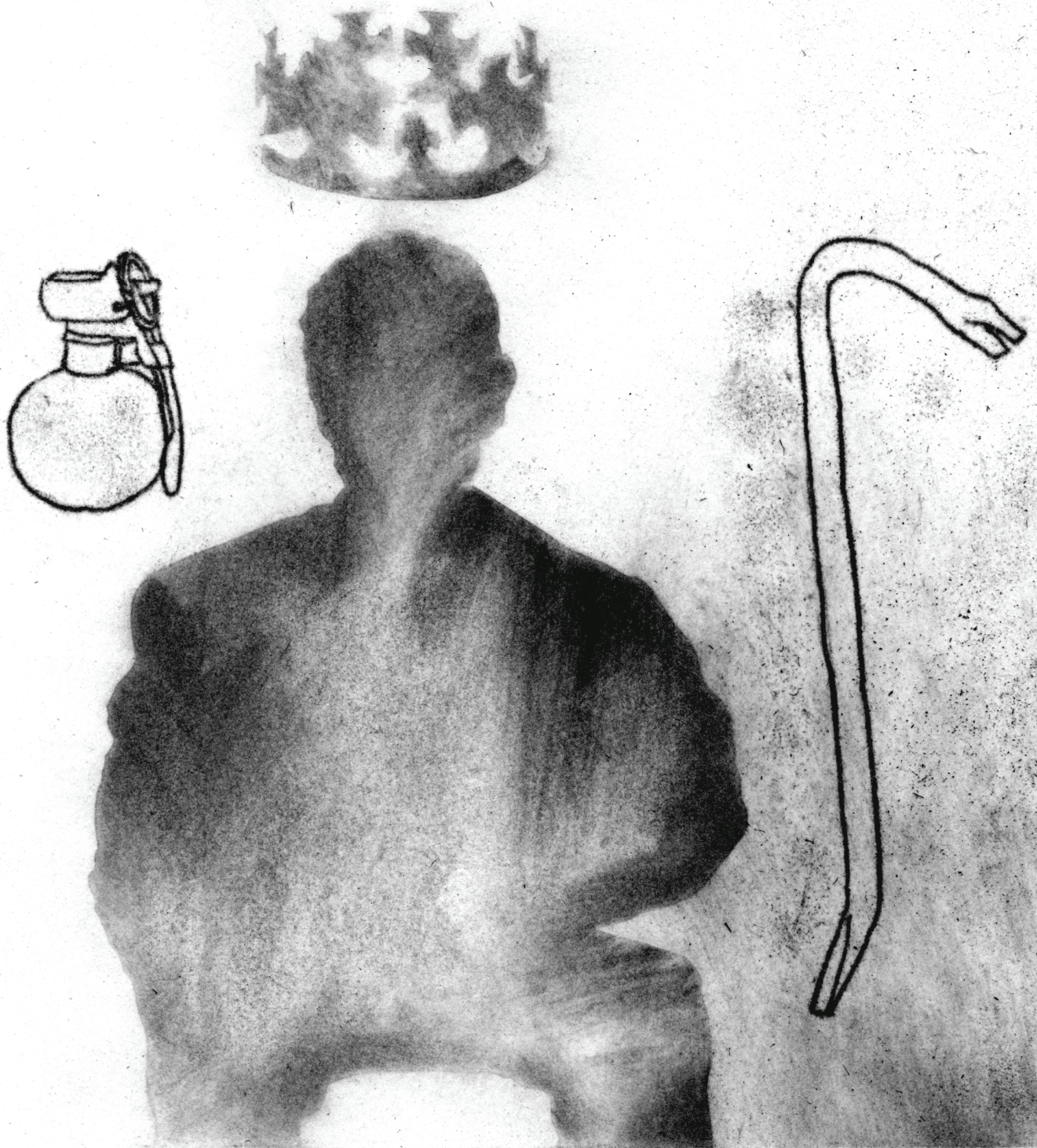
Contact: ignatius@fuse.net

DRAWING:

KEVIN BARBRO

Kevin Barbro, from Cincinnati, will obtain a BFA from UC, June, 2006. Kevin is deeply concerned with fighting injustice and oppression and in his art challenges the ideas of capitalism, government, control, and hierarchy. He has shown his artwork locally and outside Cincinnati. Along creating art, Kevin has also performed in an anarcho punk band for several years.

Contact: barbrokw@netscape.net



KEVIN BARBRO

Beatitude Adjustment

Mercy those who rush to render
what is worldly, due to Caesar,
to themselves, in Jesus' name.

With Jesus' name a useful tool,
a lure, a crutch,
smokescreen, crowbar,
whatever's needed for the goal—
Caesar illusion of control
and lust for power—
this base profanity lies safe
inside the fortress
of denial.

Mercy those who public pose
as Christian, while in heart and speech
discard the poor, scorn the meek,
spend righteousness for victory,
trade pure-in-heart for legal.

Beatitude adjustments
to enhance the poll positions
of those blessed with ambition
and good circumstance.

If you must play the power game,
please, not in sweet Jesus' name.

Inventory

There are no words, no if, no why—
there is god's glory in our eye

There is no where, no when, no how—
there is god's loving here and now

And no, no end, no me, no you—
there is god's grace, there is god's glue

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 three poetry chapbooks.

Contact: jerryj871@aol.com

DRAWING:

KEN HENSON

Ken Henson lives in Cincinnati, where he makes things and teaches at The Art Academy of Cincinnati. When he isn't making things, Ken enjoys reading, learning , and spending time with loved ones.

Contact: khenson@artacademy.edu



Ken Henson '06

Happy Hour

Iraq battle scenes
no longer captivate
this crowd as a brunette

in a tailored blue suit
orders barkeep to switch channels
or turn off the carnage before

it ruins the chicken dinner
she'll soon be picking up
on her way home to the condo.

The bartender hops to the TV
on his one good leg
and turns the sound up.

(previously published in Out of Line)

Honest Americans

Of all people, it started with the President.
At a press conference, he said I'm going
to be truthful and then he was.
He admitted everything that he did
that he shouldn't have and everything bad
he wanted to do but was thwarted.

Of course, one political party was stunned
while the other frothed at the mouth.
Unfortunately, there was no serum
for what ailed the President and honesty
spread viciously and without remorse.
Marriages exploded and businesses
imploded.

There are now only four of us Americans
left.
To be honest, I plan to take out the other
three
before they can plot to get to me.

Return from the Great War

*(response to 'The Return of the 147th'
(1919), Dixie Seldon – Cincinnati Art
Museum)*

I
Earth shudders
from marching men and wild applause,
the roaring from a quarter million
spectators.
Flags undulate from buildings, columns and
the sky itself.
Colors swirl as five thousand singers greet
red-cheeked soldiers
passing through the grand arch on Fountain
Square.
The heavens and all gods smile on
Cincinnati this day.
Sunlight glints off Col. Galbraith's medals.

II
Beneath the paint:
blank expressions of wives,
mothers, fathers, lovers,
sons, and daughters
telegrams yellowing in drawers
unplowed fields
silence
unborn children

POEMS:

LONNA KINGSBURY

Lonna Kingsbury, Poet Laureate of Miami Township, is honored to be included once again and for the 3rd consecutive year in *For a Better World*. Her latest reading at Chicago's famed *Poetry Fest* brought much attention to the publication.

Contact: meriprxtr1@fuse.net; www.counteringthesilence.com

DRAWING:

CODY GOODIN

Cody Goodin has been a professional artist for over 22 years. He works in a variety of media but loves painting and digital media the best. His art tends to reflect his spiritual path and often his odd sense of humor.

Cody currently has a studio at the Essex Studios in Walnut Hills, Cincinnati.

Contact: codyart@fuse.net; www.codygoodin.com



Sheepless in Seattle

Disposable –
diapers, dogs, identity
who
what
which
that may betray
the problem's bland mendacity
trite, without the blissful kiss
of death to norms' redundancy
allowing writhing rehashed finds
dispersed through down home mediums
who set each tone
creating zones
unabashedly designed
for salving questing firebrands
hushing radical opines
serving swaddling softening
keeping peace
eroding space
trashed
anew each viewing
smothering each smoldering cry.

Searching

You know . . .

eclipsing formal introductions
overriding mingle games
exhausting every empty myth
in smiling surges past

What if . . .

even as you falter
not unknown to avarice
treading stark, dark downward slopes
embracing sloth at will
through pestilence and heartache
despairing at false hubris
retreating
purging
seeking
truth that what it is . . .

-It is

Numberolgy

Forgive me father
for I have sinned
in overriding darkness
grasping strength from cloven hoof
disregarding name
encouraging each little death
countering, replacing
lonely, sole necessity for
grandiose repast
incredulously upper crust
with murmured warm assurance
delaying parting timing
for focusing on dawn
though knowing hope betrays at will
controlling grip while clucking
pantomimed sweet parting words
perverse
deserved
rehearsed
from treasured movies classical
immediately absurd
endured
entrusting self to triple lock
bravely 'till the driving's
far beyond bare luminescence
negating all returns
aligning noises
setting streams
visual and whitened
couching backing fetal-prone
repositioning home
numbering digits one to ten
through mock eternal order
twenty, thirty, forty-five
numbing latent fears
digitizing
hypnotized
until miscounting alters
sequence pausing dormant state
awake, afraid
she prays

POEMS:

JOHN KRAIMER

John Kraimer, aka Slammin' John, is a performance poet, keyboard and synthesizer musician, and magician. He is currently serving his second year as the poet laureate for the Riverbank Poetry Project – a program of the Fitton Center for Creative Arts in Hamilton.

John especially enjoys performing in schools.

Contact: john.kraimer@uc.edu; www.riverbankpoetry.com

DRAWING:

JENNIFER ACUS-SMITH

Jennifer Acus-Smith is an artist and teaches art at Edgewood Middle School. She has received a BS in art education with a concentration in painting and an MA in art education from Miami University, Oxford, OH. Jennifer's work references the fashion world and related gender issues with acrylic, textile materials and various printmaking techniques.

Contact: a4chncooky@yahoo.com



J. Acus-Smith

We Don't Need Another Hero

We don't need another hero
in some God forsaken war
We don't need another hero
we've been down that road before
We don't need another hero
in some distant tattered land
We don't need another hero
in bloody combat hand to hand
We don't need another hero
to honor all they gave
We don't need another hero
who's now laying in a grave

We don't need a politician
who can't tell wrong from right
We don't need a politician
who's too quick to start a fight
We don't need a politician
who thinks he's God's selection
We don't need a politician
whose main concern is reelection
We don't need a politician
who doesn't plan ahead
We don't need a politician
who brings our boys home dead

We don't need another hero
to honor all they gave
We don't need another hero
who's now laying in a grave
We don't need another hero

The Language of War

The weapons there they specialize
The targets there they neutralize
The combat zone they sanitize
It's the language of war

The people there they terrorize
The women scream, the children cry
The bombs explode, the people die
It's the outcome of war

They immobilized the target in Bravo
Quadrant 4
A dismembered bloody torso lays there
strewn across the floor
Precision guided smart bombs sail in with a
mighty roar
Eviscerated bowels and brains are
splattered on a door

For the people at home we try to disguise
The image of war as seen through their
eyes
Words carefully picked, full of whitewash
and lies
Meanwhile, dead bodies lay covered with
flies

If we truly knew what was done in our name
We might lower our heads from the weight
of the shame
For the innocent die in this God awful game
Is there some way to stop? Is there
someone to blame?
It's the curse of this thing we call war

POEMS:

CAROL FEISER LAQUE

Carol Feiser Laque facilitates a poetry workshop for the Cincinnati Writers' Project. Her latest collection of poetry, *Dressed in the Flames*, is due out Spring 2006.

Contact: claque@fuse.net

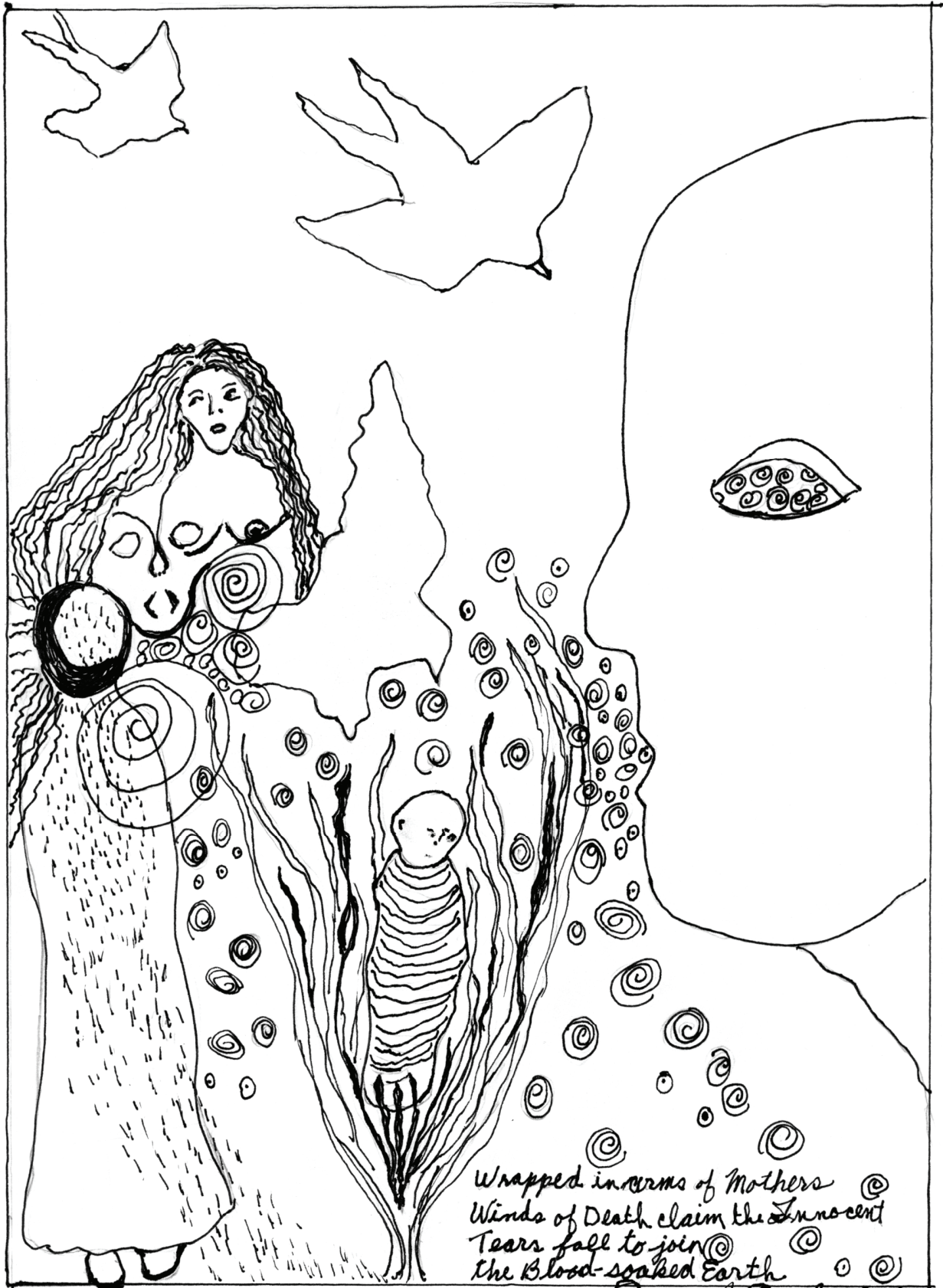
DRAWING:

JANE A. CASH

Jane A. Cash has lived and worked in Cincinnati for the past 30 years. She is a 3D-2D artist who has produced large bodies of work in a variety of mediums. Her sculptures and paintings have been exhibited both locally and regionally.

Jane recalls a quote by Martin Luther King Jr. that rings true today: "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter". Jane believes that art making is a powerful way to break the silence.

Contact: jacc@fuse.net



Wrapped in arms of Mothers ©
Winds of Death claim the Innocent ©
Tears fall to join ©
the Blood-soaked Earth ©

Jane Walsh 2006

Winter 2006

A sad light - seven AM
while bitter winds
bend the hemlocks.

We are restless –
the newspaper is
written in blood.

How long will
bleeding fingers
pen the wars.

Each soldier lost
is a lifetime
running a river

of blood and guns –
they are as always
play toys to Death.

Civil and uncivil wars
leave my stomach –
my eyes tied in knots.

I hold my baby close
singing lullabies
for a motherless land.

Girl babies kept
as mothers to men:
a psychotic mob

who eats madness
for dinner while
the Weapon of Mass

Destruction: Saddam
cannot be tried
in court; chaos rules.

Each tear I shed –
another day without
peace without justice.
Where will my baby sleep?

Breakfast Litany

Somewhere, somehow
children become soldiers
or a reeking mob.

I stir my coffee
with a deliberate
circle saying to myself

what goes around
comes around.
Maybe war will be

destroyed by AIDS
or bird flu. Even
nature is rebelling.

Soon we will war –
fight oceans, forests,
clouds, all that is left.

Then Gods everywhere
will weep

A Palestinian Woman's Lament

Today I lost my children
to a fiery nightmare -
of the war outside my body.

My flame of justice
hangs on the wick
into midnight noon.

I try to stay awake
shattered by armies
where stars are invisible.

I am a mother's smoke
rising to a suicidal sun.

POEMS:

RICHARD LUFTIG

Richard Luftig is a professor of educational psychology and special education at Miami University, OH. He is a recipient of the Cincinnati Post-Corbett Foundation Award for Literature and a semi finalist for the Emily Dickinson Society Award. Richard has been awarded prizes in a variety of poetry contests and his poems have appeared in numerous magazines and journals in the US and internationally in Japan, Canada, Australia, Finland, and England.

Contact: luftigrl@muohio.edu

DRAWING:

BILL ROSS

Bill Ross is a Cincinnati artist and a social worker for individuals with disabilities. His work has been displayed in galleries in Indianapolis, Chicago, Columbus, OH, and of course Cincinnati. Bill is the Co-Founder of *Visionaries and Voices*, a community-minded studio for artists with disabilities.

Contact: bill.ross@hamilton-co.org



Bill 2006

Pocket Park

broken benches, crumbling brick
all but abandoned save for flowering
graffiti. a radio wafts,
settling like cinders on the street below.

from some open window hip-hop,
maybe Mozart, only rooftop
pigeons know for sure.

a stunted bush, exhausted
flowers, the defeated swatch
of threadbare grass.

in the corner, a poor excuse
for a tree, waxed, wan
as if carried out from the basement
and exposed to sun
for the very first time.

and against the bricks an old man tries
to soak up what's left of the shade;
clothes, skin, the color of earth,
communing alone
with his brown paper bag.

In the Free Clinic

They have learned to sit and wait
on queue, their weighted eyes turned
down, dark and doubtful.

It is a hard earned skill to wear time
like rocks being rubbed away
by water until you become invisible,

learning to wait and not expect anything
to change, keeping your face a blank
slate, to-be- written on, erased,

written on again in a longhand
of hurt. Out of chances and choice,
they sit, worn and dog-eared

as the two-year old magazines
lying unread on the splintering
end tables. Tired of wilting

wall paper flowers, they watch
without seeing the tiny girl
sprawled across the floor, coloring

with broken crayons, going off the page,
giving testimony to the hardwood
that she has indeed been here.

Walking the Brooklyn Bridge

No takers today-
just old ladies in
sensible shoes and tourists
naïve as immigrants,
breathing in and out
the scent of the city.

Far above us steel cable
fractures into diamonds
of light that slant the sky
while below cars rush
rubber to road making
concrete and girders hum.

Out on the water, tugs
steam in complement,
wedded like salt and pepper,
snouts buried hard into barges
that cut open wounds
of water. Below the surface

is where the edifice is cursed,
where twenty-seven men,
immigrants mostly, died scratching
out tons of mud and stone
from a river so absent of color
that even black began to look

interesting. Where the architect
died surveying the site and his son
taking over, felt the tug
of the river so strong
in his blood that he got the bends
and his wife had to finish the job.

Where twelve more died just watching
the dedication, trampled
over rumors that the span was about
to collapse like a mast in a gale.
Now all that is just forgotten
history evaporated into a rusting plaque

riveted onto the highest arch.
It recites a bridge but holds
no song of familial grief,
the loss the color
and taste of undertow. We stop;
in ones or twos- facing out

to Ellis Island, huddled against
the remembering wind and quickly
scan the story with half
the plot missing, this full
length play, with the cast
of characters still incomplete.

POEM:

FRANK D. MOORE

Frank D. Moore received an MA in English from the University of Cincinnati in the 60s and taught for many years at the Community College of Philadelphia. He is the author of *The Traveller's Rest Poems* (1995). He died in Santa Fe in the summer of 2005.

DRAWING:

EVAN HILDEBRANT

Evan Hildebrant started doing sharpie marker drawings at work about three years ago. After filling two books of drawings, he decided to start painting and has never stopped since. Evan has not had an academic training in art; he takes as much advice from anyone as he can.

Contact: evhildy@hotmail.com



"Personality Injection"

Evan Hildebrandt

COWBOY PREZ

COWBOY PREZ

winks at his toadies
as he strides forth
remembering his practice
in front of the 3-
way mirror of
holding his arms way
out from his sides
remembering to carry
imaginary bricks
end to end
between arms and ribs
so that a foot or more
of space is seen
between
so that he *is*
a Texas cowboy
biceps the size of "mush-
melons," thinking John
Wayne & Prez Reagan
stalwart and twinkling
now calling out
to the sycophants
milling near his aura
Spike, Old Buddy, Hey,
Mule, Tractor Man
wink wind slap slap
no one man enough
to call him aside
sugget that his "style"
is more simian than
studly (apologies
to apes and monkeys)
and that "built like a brick
shithouse" is not necessarily
a compliment

POEM:

JUSTIN PATRICK MOORE

Justin Patrick Moore is a writer, musician, and consciousness explorer living in the Northside community of Cincinnati with his girlfriend, Audrey, her daughter Iliia, two dogs, two cats and a turtle. He is also a radio programmer for the WAIF 88.3 FM show *On the Way to the Peak of Normal* and publisher of a 'Zine, the Dyslexicon

Contact: satyroz@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

DAVID MICHAEL RICE

David Michael Rice is a multi media artist who specializes in large scale interactive sculpture and experimental electronics.

Contact: exelx@fuse.net



David Michael Rice

A Sketch of the Hellscape

In the trenches I have dreams
 of bell-drops falling from a neutron sky.
Wicked planes of deceit are hovering
above broken cities of ash,
where children lay strayed out.

Across the horizon, fading into a grim dusk
 white flashes race away distantly
searing the air with nuclear visions.

I hear the myriad screams
 blistered memories
burnt with boiling holy water onto my brain.
They succumb unto relentless sickness.
Shadows etched onto concrete graves.

From the trenches I feel the sweat drops sting
 shrapnel of war all around me flies
buzzing on festering carcasses, tainting the water
feverous hellscapes swarm malaria skies.

POEMS:

MIKE MURPHY

Mike Murphy grew up in Clermont County, OH, farmland. He is a 'ustabe' and 'wannabe' farmer, a sometime poet, and a full-time visionary who thinks that our only just and peaceful post-carbon future will be networked islands of organic farm-based communities.

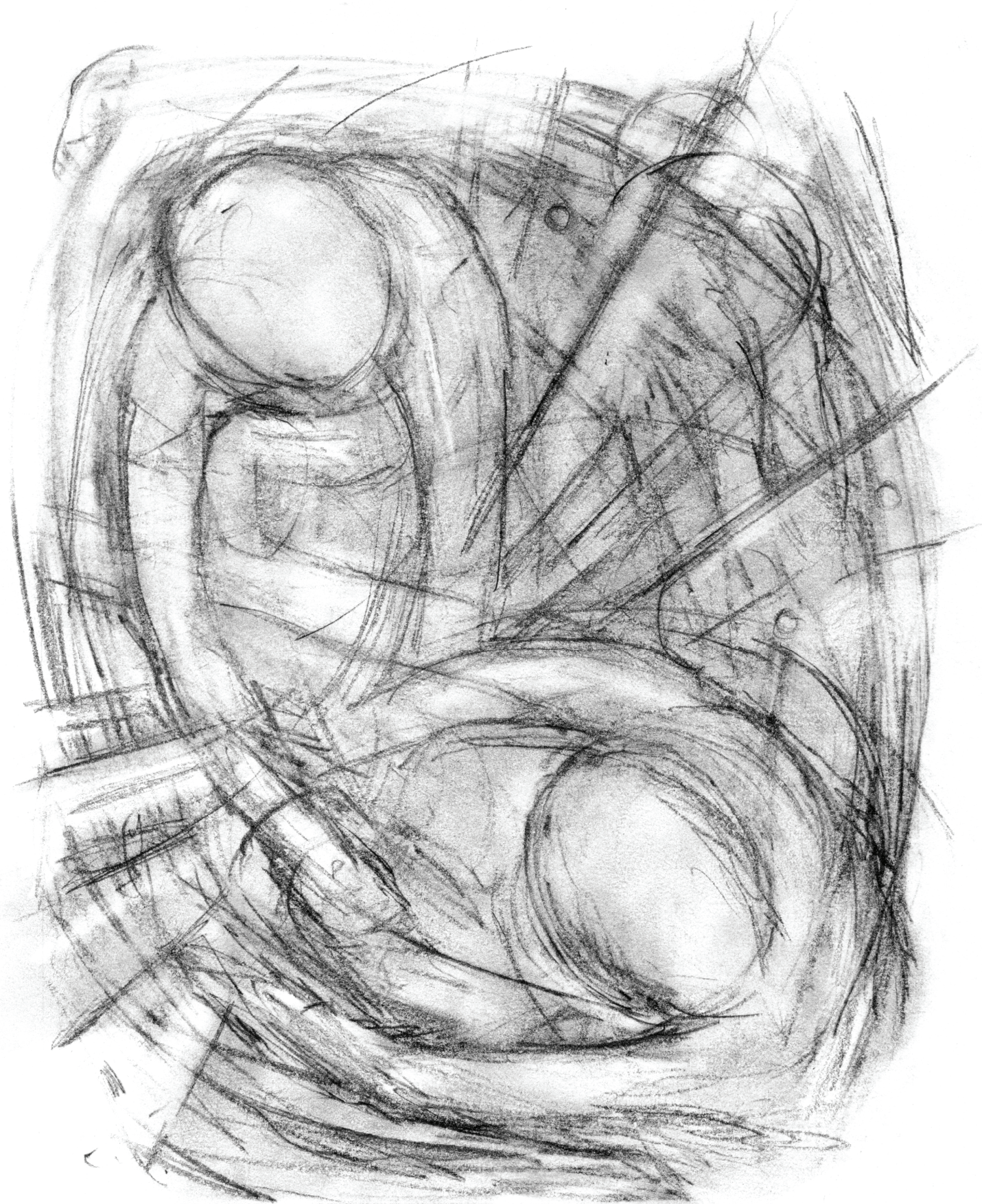
Contact: mmurphy10@fuse.net

DRAWING:

MARK ULLRICH

Mark Ullrich is an artist living and working in Cincinnati. He is a graduate of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Mark's non-objective paintings can be found in several private and public collections in Ohio and in the Eastern United States.

Contact: gtmullrich@msn.com



Mark Ullrich

O, Batakas! O, Dodgems!

O, Bataka!
You flimsy
Padded
Thing, you!
You cleanser
Of chakras!
You pounder,
You beater,
You swatter &
Driver out of
Hang-ups!
You renewer of
Body & soul!
You bringer of
Tearful,
Weak-kneed
Laughter!
You foam padding
Around plastic tube!
You Bataka!

O, Dodgem!
You rolling
Whirling
Car!
You glider
Between overhead
Electric screen
& Underwheel
Steel floor!
You smashing
Log-jammer!
You crashing
Hammer!
You joyful
Assault!
You Dodgem!

You Batakas!
You Dodgems!
You bringers of
Parental patience!
You releasers of
childhood's
Homicidal glee!

O, Batakas!
O, Dodgems!
Your harmless
Pleasures
Await
All would-be
Warriors
World around!
Your magic
Transforms
Us into
Peaceful Warriors!
O, Batakas!
O, Dodgems!

May your gifts
Be discovered by
Us all!

We Talk Politics

In my house
We talk politics
We ask why
This tax must
Be spent on
This war
We ask why
We must send
Our sons & daughters
To this war

We ask
What good
Will come
Or what harm
Befall
If we fail
To spend
To send
To rend & fend
We talk politics
In this house...

Yeah. 'N' sex
'N' religion, too
'N' philosophy
'N' art, e.t.'s,
UFOs, nature spirits,
'N' whether or not
We are
Gods & goddesses
Awakening-----
Or....or....
Just a gleam
In our own eye,
A whimper on some
Forgotten planet.

POEM:

AARON OSTERBROCK

Aaron Osterbrock is finishing this year his degree at UC in Information Systems/Digital Business. He has been seriously committed to writing poetry for the past five years and hopes one day to publish his own book of poems.

Contact: aaronosterbrock@yahoo.com

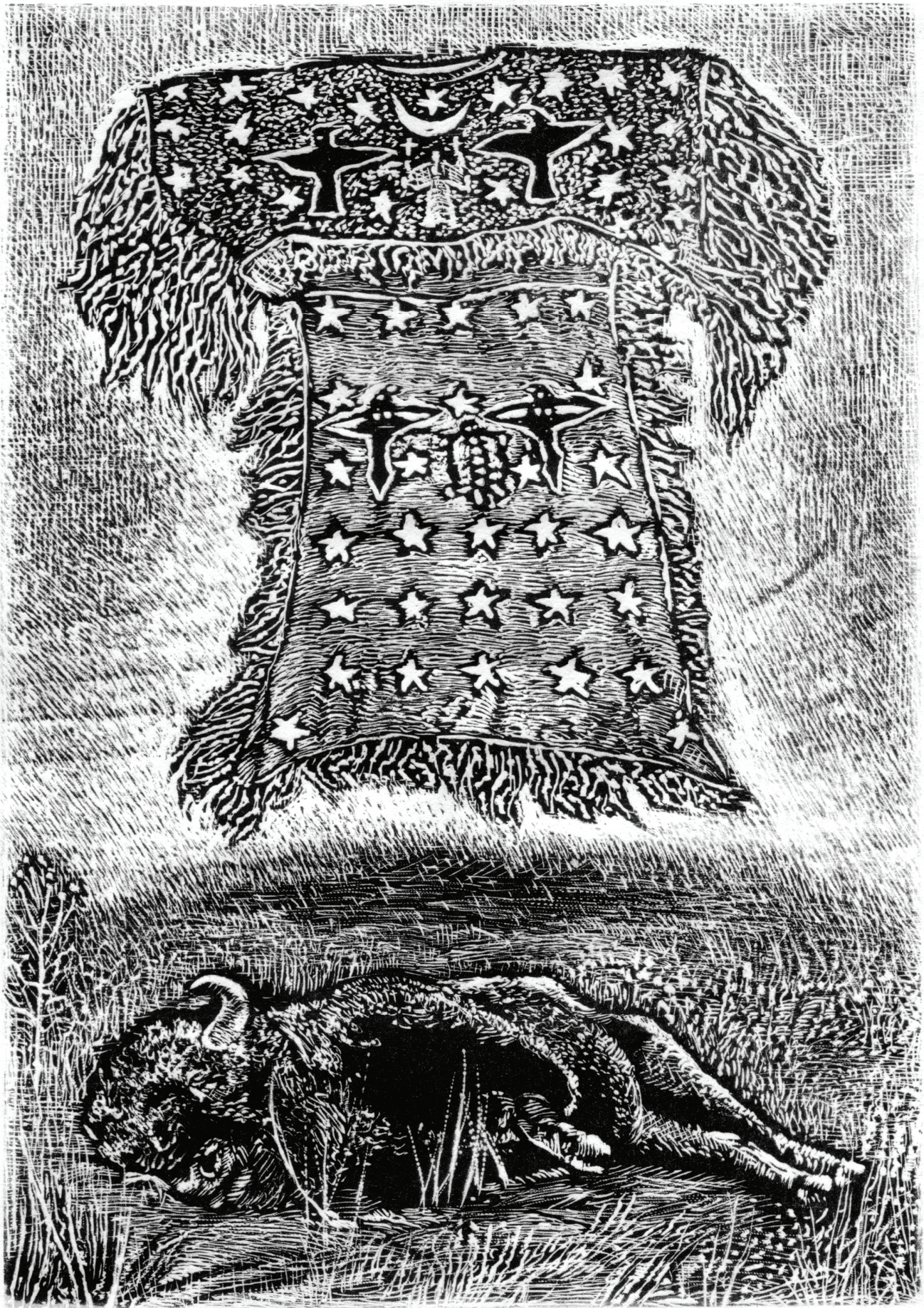
DRAWING:

SUZANNE CHOUTEAU

Suzanne Michele Chouteau is Professor of Art at Xavier University, teaching courses in printmaking, art history and design. Her work has been exhibited in over 75 juried regional, national and international exhibitions including in 2006 the *Parkside National*, *Sixty Square Inches*, *Paper in Particular* and in 2005 the *Los Angeles Printmaking Society's 18th National Print Exhibition*, the *Texas National* and the *Mid-America Print Council's Members' Exhibition* among others.

Suzanne lives with her husband, Chris, and son, Eli, on a nature preserve in Adams County.

Contact: chouteau@xavier.edu



Genocide of the Conscience: Wounded Knee 1890; Yellowstone 2006

Simonne & Nicole Choufear 2006

notjustus

Peace is our profession
But if the workers go unpaid
What will become of the task?

The currency that flows
From one mouth to the next
Can hardly satisfy
The throngs of poverty
Can hardly outlast the cries
Of empty stomachs

Candy for the taste
Makes everyone feel nice
Until the sugar-coating
Exposes the lies
Actions to change
Are mere words set to fill
Hungry masses
Growing hungrier still

A call to act resounds
A bell wrung and cracked
If only those that heard it
Would have taken the chance to act
Before Pass and Stow realized the split

Recasting another to conceal the rift
Few see the gap
Even fewer fight for its fix
For the hatred that resides in the ignorance
Of not appreciating difference
Like-minded people, like-minded tastes
Bland, boring, and "safe"
History will expose our true face
Whether it is one of acceptance or one of
hate

Outside the workers maintain a patriotic
hoist...

Eyes bloodshot (the red)
from exhaustion
Complexions pale (the white)
from malnutrition
Dreams frostbitten (the blue)
from neglect

Hoping for substance
Unsatisfied, they default
To pledging their allegiance
Knowing liberty must come
Before justice for all

POEMS:

BRIAN RICHARDS

Brian Richards lives on a ridge in Scioto County. He has been writing for more than forty years, but, to his relief, nobody has noticed.

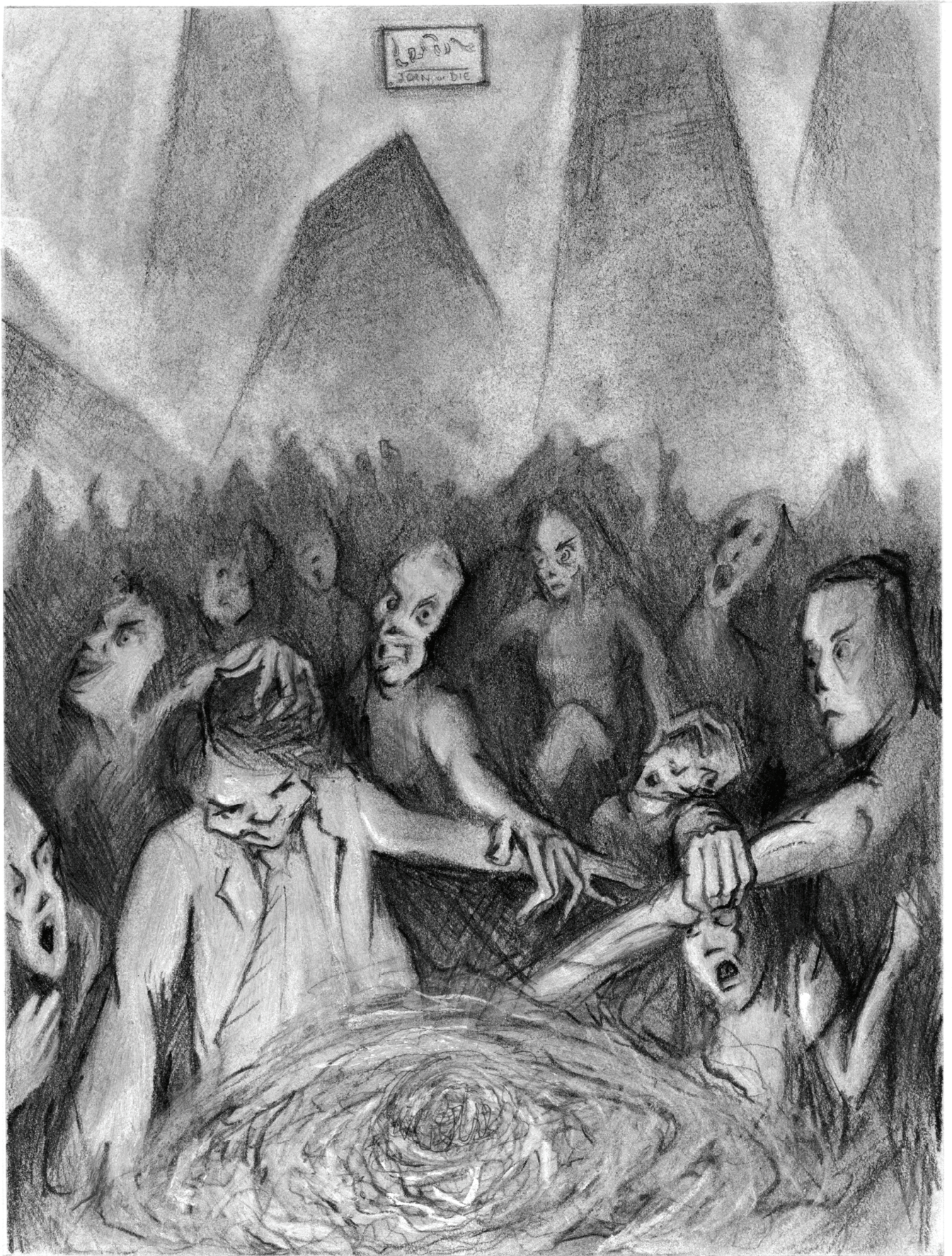
Contact: brichards@shawnee.edu

DRAWING:

STEPHEN SMITH

Stephen Smith is a 2003 graduate from Miami University with a BA and MA in Art Education and a BFA in Painting. He is currently a teacher at Winton Woods high school. Stephen is a painter that has shown at various galleries in Cincinnati including Base Gallery and Enjoy the Arts.

Contact: sscrue@yahoo.com



STEPHEN A. SMITH

A Song of the Fur

The Janjawiid grow strong just north
of catastrophe on the south side of
ridges they grow

tall and potent.

They live

to restore the right of the cavalier to
every virgin.

We will uproot them.

We will cut them down their pendant sacs
unspent.

We will save intact the flowers of grace
their depredations.

We will immolate them

ourselves.

May God bless us that worship
in the fatwa of our astonishment.

Of Plata o Plomo

Join or die. The people clearly opt
for competitive hedonism exhibited in
an otherwise aimless internally
combusted orgy of stimulation through
simulation.

It was Plato first declared
the absolute that is immeasurable
gorge between the good and the necessary
but
never has mother been a more unexamined
preference than in the devotions intoned by
the young
ethicists waving about their academic
credentials, models
of the materially buffed corporate pimp.

POEMS:

KATHLEEN RIEMENSCHNEIDER

Kathleen Riemenschneider writes poetry in her spare time when she is not exposing children to the arts through the Cincinnati Arts Association's education program.

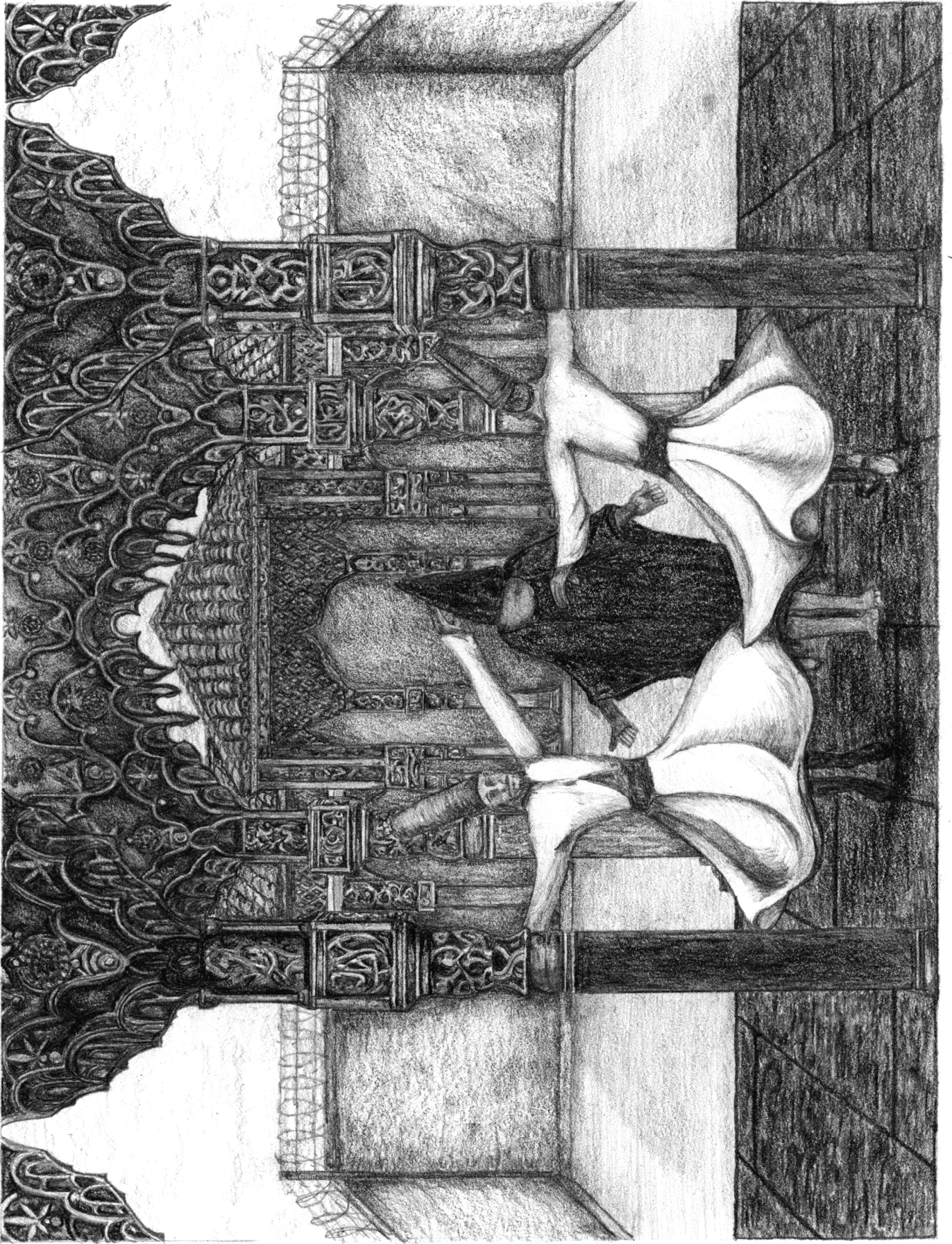
Contact: katriem@earthlink.net

DRAWING:

JEREMY KIEFER

Jeremy Kiefer, a native and resident of Cincinnati, has always had an affinity for the arts, but has not studied or pursued them in a serious manner. In the past he focused on drawing and painting, and recently on design and building, especially furniture and interiors. Jeremy works as a carpenter and enjoys the small pleasures in life, such as cooking and yard work.

Contact: kieferjk@fuse.net



Jeremy Kiefer

ABU GHRAIB One-Step

I want him to dance
the one so often displayed
in the Virginia Reel of Pentagon photos
his black sack costume
with the black pointed hood
like an initiation outfit for the Klan

simply at first—an arabesque
then build slowly—the movement
until it's an expressive modern dance
revealing—what his face must show
under the hood
finale—his body collapsed by fear

his arms spread out
as if experiencing a revelation
at least he should swirl endlessly
like a dervish

No.
Neither is allowed.
Only the promenade of military intelligence
he—the one in the black sack costume—
is cast as a statue—motionless
no movement—no shockwave
flicker of a hand—a trigger
one step off the box. . .

Genocide: It Happens Everyday

We construct otherness so that I
can exist with clear definition

I carve my world with the razor-sharp
knife that severs, dissects your wrong parts

The one percent difference in our
genetic code, the most important

We are made in God's image and you
certainly fail to resemble him

Through your nostrils you breathe the
wrong air
Inhale the sting of toxic gases

Your speech is filled with inadequate
expressions, no tongue should utter them

I will never be all that you are not
Genocide: it happens everyday

POEMS:

BRIAN ROSS

"When it became obvious what a dumb and cruel and spiritually and financially and militarily ruinous mistake our war in Vietnam was, every artist worth a damn in this country, every serious writer, painter, stand-up comedian, musician, actor and actress, you name it, came out against the thing." Kurt Vonnegut
Brian Ross was born in New York City and raised in Reading, OH. He is currently a student at the University of Cincinnati.

Contact: bigbriballs@yahoo.com

DRAWING:

HOLLIS HAMMONDS

Hollis Hammonds received an MFA in painting and drawing from the University of Cincinnati, and a BFA in drawing from Northern Kentucky University. She is a part-time professor of drawing and painting at NKU, and teaches in the School of Design at DAAP. In addition, Hollis is the Exhibition Coordinator at the Art Academy of Cincinnati.

Contact: hhammonds@artacademy.edu



Nollis Hammond's

Smoke

Where there's smoke,
there's firebombs hunting for terrorists
in mountain towns on the Afghani-Pakistani
border,
ridiculous as Monty Python's mosquito
hunting.

Where there's smoke,
there's another 70 billion dollar budget
request before Congress,
to continue the Middle East wars,
wars whose mission has been
accomplished.

Where there's smoke,
there's more tax cuts for the rich,
while there's trillions in a national debt that
keeps rising and rising,
burning a hole in our economic ozone layer.

Where there's smoke,
there's entitlement cuts for the poor, welfare
and Medicare,
the fulfillment of Republican mandate – the
poor stay poor,
the rich stay rich, and the rich hold all the
power.

Yeah, 'cause where there's smoke,
there's lobbyists, middlemen, fronts for big
business
funneling millions of dollars to political war
chests
to ensure progress, to maintain the status
quo.

And the status quo is the smoke I see rising
from factories along I-75, the shitty smell in
every city,
the drilling and pumping and razing and
dumping
that lets the sun flash-burn our planet a little
more each day.

Where there's smoke,
there's American opposition to
environmental reform,
a 95-0 rejection of the Kyoto Accord in the
Senate,
a nepotistic president who "will not accept a
plan that will harm our economy."

Where there's smoke,
there's a line of SUV's stalled in traffic,
big pickup trucks with NRA and W '04
bumper stickers,
the tacit approval of all this obfuscation.

Where there's smoke,
there's silence, opposition voices
marginalized,
'harumph, harumph', bombast and bullshit,
even Hunter S. Thompson couldn't take it
any more.

There's smoke everywhere,
smokescreens and pollution, politics and
corruption,
war and hate and intolerance and fear,
and dirty old men lining their coffins with the
cashblood of the world.

I've Got a Great Life Here

I've got a gum that keeps me from choking on smoke.

But what can keep me from seeing
little yellow flags on a dry Angolan plain
that mark where land mines were buried,
like Easter eggs for curious, rebellious children?

I've got a girl that keeps me company at night.

But who can keep me from feeling
the hopelessness of Rio urchins forced to beg and rob,
and whore with fat businessmen,
and cut tourists in fetid alleyways?

I've got a job that keeps me from going hungry.

But money can't keep me from knowing
that a billion people don't have enough food or clean water,
that two billion people shit in buckets
and live in filth and die of diarrhea?

I've got a country that keeps me safe from all that unpleasantness.

But nothing can keep me from hating
this American ignorance, filthy rich and getting richer,
the know-it-all right, illiterate leaders who start wars for more profit,
who won't stop till they start World War 3 just to prove the liberal media wrong.

I've got a great life here, near the end of the world.

POEM:

ARALEE STRANGE

Aralee Strange's body of theatrical work includes *ETTA STONE: A film for Radio, dr. pain on main, The Chronicles of Plague, and An Evening at the Sad Café.*

She also wrote and directed *THIS TRAIN*, a feature film. Aralee's poetry has appeared in: *semantikon's In the Stomach; Forklift, Ohio; For a Better World, 2004-5; WORC'S; Pavement Saw; Jawbone: SplitCity; X Ray; Soaptown, Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel; evil dog; and others.*

Aralee is currently working on a new play and a book of poetry.

Contact: getstrange@earthlink.net

DRAWING:

JASON FRANZ

Jason Franz, born in Cincinnati, OH, attended its Art Academy (BFA, 1988) and its University (MFA, 1998). Since 1997 he has taught and developed new courses in both art and design at the Art Academy, UC, and most recently Xavier University. As an artist and professor, Jason is the recipient of numerous grants and awards (Ohio Arts Council Fellowship, Xavier University Faculty Development Grant, two Summerfair Foundation Individual Artist Grants). He has actively exhibited his work regionally and nationally since 1986. He is Executive Director/Founder of Manifest Creative Research Gallery and Drawing Center.

Contact: jason@jasonfranz.com; www.jasonfranz.com

This Just In - Keep It Simple - Keep It Real - the days ahead will confuse your eyes



FRANZ 2006

this just in

keep it simple
keep it real
disappear for a while when you can but
don't hurt anybody's feelings about it
your mind is your own
you've come the long way home
and a hard rain is falling

hurricane's on the wind
hot southern blues blowing up
off the beaten path along the coast

mother nature's on a tear down there
she's got 'em on the run
she's a seething angry thing

nobody knows the trouble
she's seen
nobody knows but jesus

up here big storms brewing
tornado watch and warnings
all our looming catastrophes
crawling across the screen

read 'em and weep

this just in

*wind keep blowing waters on the rise
people on the roof and it's hot as fire
who gon' fish us out
who gon' lend a hand
playing own it all monopoly with poor
people land*

nobody knows the trouble
they're in
nobody cares but jesus

no rhyme or reason
which way the wind blows

*mama gone dada on us
wash us all away*

*who we gon' pray to
what we gon' say
mama don't listen when
she having her way
say*

ain't it a shame
say

lift up your face to the rain
which you can't stop
and couldn't call down
if your life depended on it

so who we gon' pray to

what can you possibly say?

*lamebrain firebrands running things
know it all bleeding hearts wringing
they hands
who we gon' blame for this
when we going home
who dropped the ball in The bleeping
End zone
never had possession
never had a clue
this is a test
we cannot pass*

ain't that a gas

*now get off your bleeping ass
and get us some help down here
ain't you heard?
mama done pulled the plug
be hearing angels wings and
blind men singing jesus saves*

and some will walk and some will float
some will fly and some will die trying

*she done turn our wine to water
she done wash us all away*

nobody knows the misery
they've seen
nobody minds but jesus

*talking about survival
who the fittest*

look at the screen
there are pictures a thousand words
don't begin to describe

adjust your eyes

can you see in the dark?
can you learn what you forgot
and forget what you know is false?
can you sleep on the floor in a car
in a swing in a pinch
on the roof of a house?
can you gnaw raw bones
if you have to?

*don't tell us hang on a few mo' days
don't tell us help is on the way
we been to the promise land
and it's all lies*

*we know how you cats got so fat
we see that all y'all's smiles is fake
no mystery our ass got washed away*

this just in

the days ahead will confuse your eyes
your mind your heart which breaks
at all we could not rise to

wind's picking up
steady rain's pocking the pond
where the bullfrog hunkers
under his own teeming spawn
and the brim hang deep
beneath the rotting dock
waiting it out

nobody knows the trouble
we're in
nobody can oh jesus

POEM:

STEVE SUNDERLAND

Steve Sunderland, director of the Peace Village and professor of educational foundations and peace studies at UC, uses poetry as a powerful affirmation of peace. Steve is the recipient of the Gandhi, King and Ikeda Peace Prize, a prize from the Council of American Islamic Relations (CAIR), an award from the Cincinnati Public Schools, and a recognition from UC's Just Community.

Contact: sundersc@email.uc.edu

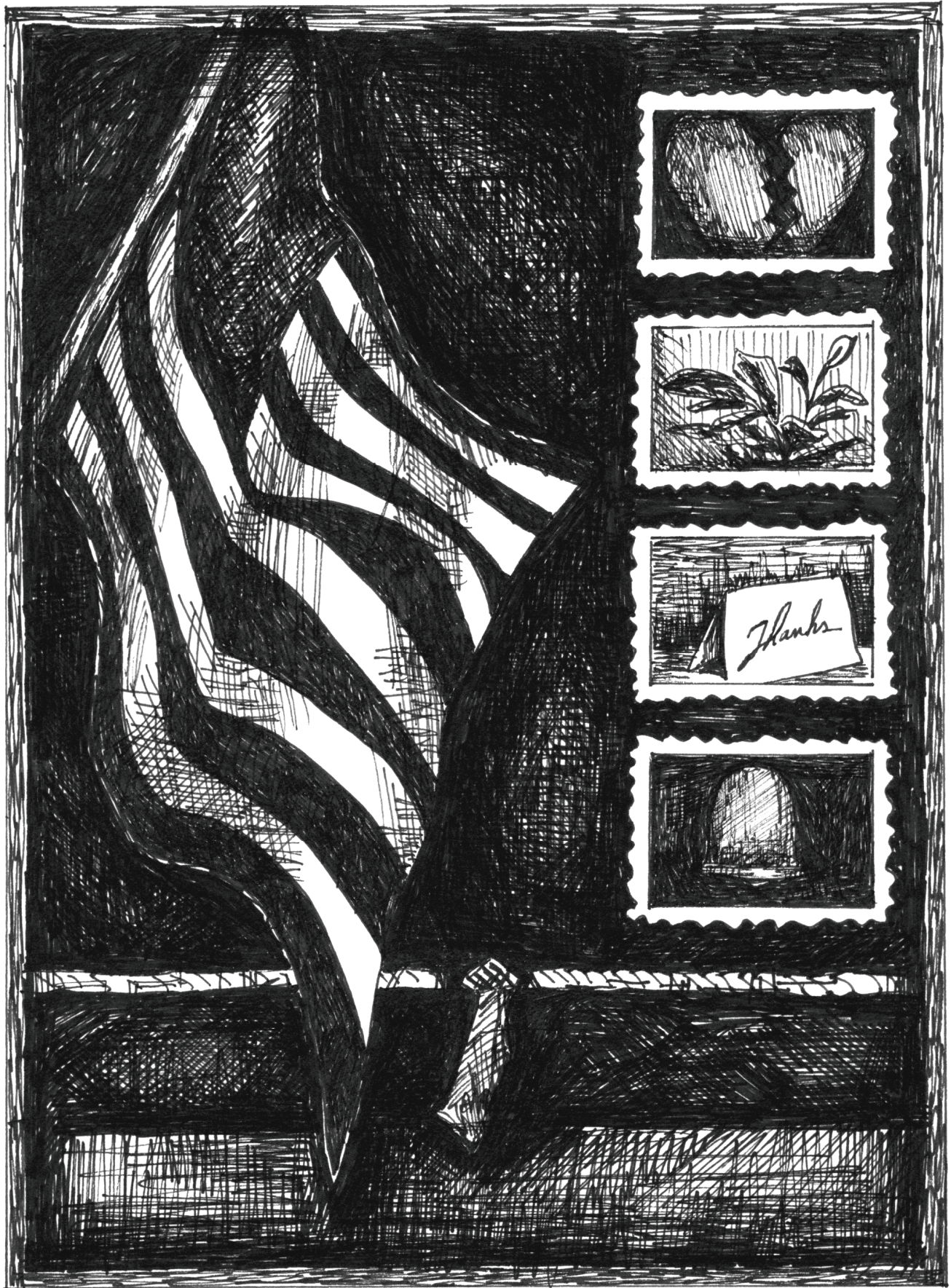
DRAWING:

WENDY EILERS

Wendy Eilers, a new artist to Cincinnati, grew up in Southern Illinois, just outside St. Louis, and studied graphic design at Eastern Illinois University. She now works in the newspaper industry as a graphic design software trainer and paints miniatures in watercolor among other two-dimensional media.

Wendy's artwork is currently for sale at Closson's Fine Art Gallery.

Contact: wendy.eilers@yahoo.com



Wendy Gilman

Vet's Sangha: 2005

1. Where is my voice?

Where is my voice for peace?

I, too am lost in the bloom of anger.

I do not want to speak about the pretty
pictures of Viet-Nam and They's return.

Will someone go "back" to Baghdad in 20 years?

Will there be an Iraq so full of
graveyards that the "prettiness" is obscured?

2. Where is my voice of compassion?

I, too, am so glad to listen to the vet's stories--
their victories with PTSD on lips that quiver.

Yet, my heart stays too cold, too closed,
too violent. I want to stay in the
mob, throwing rocks of protest.

3. Where is my voice of forgiveness?

I, too, did not go when my number was called.

Someone went for me--increasing their fear
as I reduced mine?

I want to say to my twin--"thank you,"

And, "I am sorry"--and to the dark brother who went for me
And never returned,

I want to say, rather, to scream,
"IT SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN!"

4. Where is my voice of hope?

Sometime in the 1940's and 1950's I was "drafted"
Into the peace army.

I bow to my parents, brother and sister
For their complicity.

I bow to Jackie Robinson
For his inspiring example.

And to all of my Teachers.

Yet, my voice of hope is weak.

I am late to the chorus of daily singing,
Only Now awakening to the perpetual need of loving care.

I am recognizing my voice for me.

5. Where is my voice?

It is here, in this veteran's sangha, reflecting the deep thunder
Of memories one half recovered;

it is here in the body's roots,

And you and I can hear the sweet bell of love.

POEMS:

JEAN SYED

Jean Syed is a member of the Cincinnati Writers Project and of The Greater Cincinnati Writers League. Jean is English, married to a Pakistani, and has one son. Some of her poems have already been published.

Contact: alasinc77@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

POLLY HART

Polly Hart is an artist who lives in Cincinnati with her husband and three children. She has a studio at the Essex in Walnut Hills. In 1988 she graduated from the University of Cincinnati DAAP program with a degree in Graphic Design. Polly's work has been shown throughout the region.

Contact: pollyhart@cinci.rr.com



POLLY HART

Starvelings

(Or, the Woods and the Wide, Wide World)

The sun's a color control knob gone kaput,
Turning on only a monochrome day.
The far woods are eroding into lime,
The nearer barely stir. Stark, black limbs cut
No capers,
as starvelings too worn out to play
Endure in last rags till a bitterer time,
And millions gasp, in sound bites, at the plight
Of junior stoics too numb to despair,
At apathetic children hosting flies

As trees host birds. The same quick appetite
Probing cracks in bark, nuthatches share

With flies that salivate round nostrils, eyes.

Dear God! Please bear with us till tomorrow's
Normal service brings its norm of sorrows.

My Joy

What can I fulfill in this world?
I am Africa and poor,
I will give my tears to you
As I can only endure.

I am one of the numberless sick,
Or child soldier or child whore,
My joy has gone to satanic states
I can't give any more.

My talents they are ground in dirt
They are my funeral pyre
Of all my hopes and happiness
Burning in hellfire.

POEMS:

OSCAR TREADWELL

Oscar Treadwell likes to read, write and talk about poetry and jazz. He can be heard each Sunday evening on WVXY 91.7 FM and streaming on WVXU.ORG

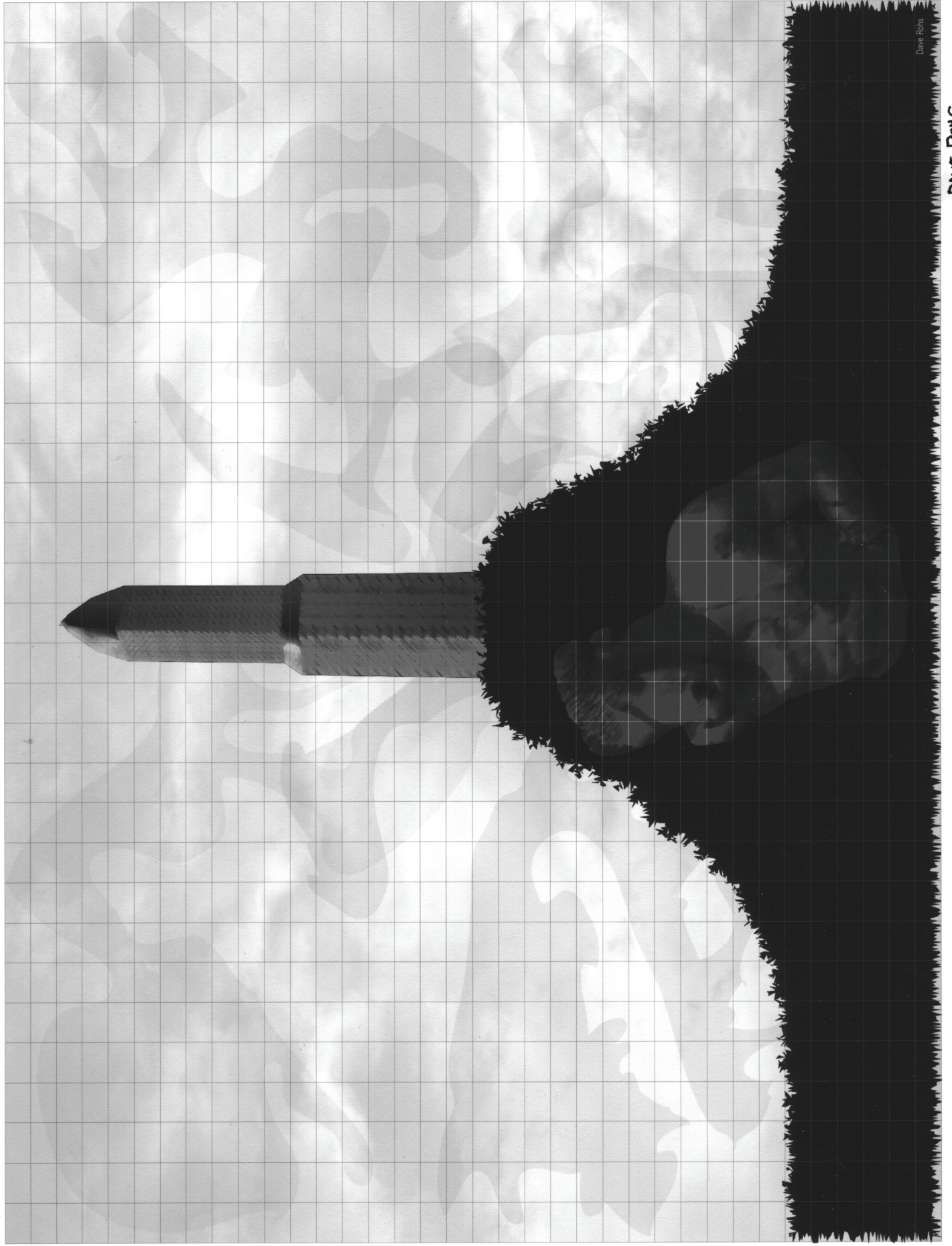
(Note: Few weeks after submitting this information, Oscar Treadwell unexpectedly passed away, April 1, 2006)

DRAWING:

DAVE ROHS

Dave Rohs is an artist and musician residing in the sweet solemn decay of Cincinnati, OH. Dave graduated from Northern Kentucky University in 1989 with a BFA in Painting and from Ohio University in 1993 with an MFA in sculpture. Since then Dave has regularly exhibited his work both locally and regionally; he has also released three CDs as part of the band Chalk.

Contact: info@obscurator.com; www.obscurator.com



Dave Roberts

DAVE ROBERTS

The Vanity of Absolute

Oh, vast shrine of emptiness,
Oh, pillar of deceit
in bold relief,
scantily disguised in dumb glitter,
Still the silent vanity.

Still, the silent vanity
would succor and distill
the raven's bleak deceit,
and singularly putrid rancor
would attend the lie's defeat

would caress the charred bones
of antiquities refuse,
and cherish cacophonous
moans of righteousness and ordained ruse.

Still the silent vanity
and sow the wild and free of truth,

Still the silent vanity
and know no more the age corrupts its
youth.

Ignore the vain self-God lure,
demand the simple sanity
and stand erect forevermore to
Still the silent vanity.

Eminent Domain

Marauder's code
to rend and plunder,
ask, and then
to tear asunder,

set the rules
of confiscation,
set the rules
of compensation,

take it, leave it,
power's mode
to show
you have no latent say,

to show your rights
are temporary
when compared
with money's sway.

A power grab
for business use,
to fill the covetous
taxer's coffers,

find yourself
another place,
take the hand-out
that he offers.

Register your opposition,
go to court,
for homestead
plead,

but in the end
dominion loses,
your dominion,
lost to greed.

POEMS:

FRAN WATSON

Fran Watson is a visual artist whose work is in a number of fine collections. A docent for 23 years for the Taft Museum of Art, she developed a good fine art history background. Fran wrote for a number of Cincinnati-based newspapers and was the art editor for City Beat for five years.

Poetry is her secret indulgence, lately expanding into short stories. Fran is a life-long resident of Northern Kentucky; she has traveled extensively in Europe exploring its museums.

Contact: Watson@fuse.net

DRAWING:

BLAIR GIBEAU

Blair Gibeau has a BFA from the Art Academy of Cincinnati. He is a journeyman stage technician and scenic artist.

Contact: blair.gibeau@fuse.net



On the Rocky Edge

On the rocky edge of the creek,
sun was a stranger.
Only in winter, when trees stretched,
shivering and bare,
did yellow light splash
on patches of icy water,
warming the flat rocks
exposed by some ancient
catastrophe, so that I may have
a place to sit in peace.

Was there
some pre-ordained reason
for the creation of this one clear spot?
Perhaps it was always the plan
that I should need to be here
on this day, searching for space,
praying for quiet, hearing nothing
but the low roar of a far-off world,
and the flurried wings of peace.

Let Me Count the Ways

Free as a bird
Buy one, get one free
Born free
Freedom from want, from fear
Free estimates
The best things in life are free
Free love
Free oil change
Free samples
Carefree
Free as the air we breathe
Free store
Free at last
Free checking
Freeform
Admission free
The land of the free
Freeways
Hands free
Free speech
Freedom march
Free trial
Free on bail

Are we free or what?

POEMS:

LINDE GRACE WHITE

Linde Grace White is the author of *Dollbaby: Triumph Over Childhood Sexual Abuse*, editorials in local media, and a variety of poetry. She taught severely emotionally disturbed youngsters for 21 years in a local school program and is now retired to the computer!

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DRAWING:

CRAIG LLOYD

Craig Lloyd received a BFA in painting from Wright State University, Dayton, OH, and an MFA in painting from the University of Cincinnati. He is currently an assistant professor at the College of Mount Saint Joseph where he teaches drawing, design, painting and printmaking. His work has been shown regionally and nationally in over 90 group and solo exhibitions.

Contact: craig_lloyd@mail.msj.edu



Craig Lloyd '06

Addiction

You'll do anything to get it--
Yes--you'll sell everything you own,
You'll sell your body,
Your heart, your mind, your soul.

You'll have at least 10 good reasons
why you need it--
It's a physical thing--you can't make it
through the day,
You can't do your job or even keep a job
without it.

You'll live anywhere, under any
circumstances,
with people you don't even know
and you'll only think about it, where it's
coming from,
how soon you can get some,
what it's going to cost, whether you get it or
groceries.

Prices rise at the pump, and you rue the
day you learned to drive.

I'm Tired

I'm really tired of yelling how wrong you are!
I'm attacking your right to be here
And I'm attacking you!
You have your nerve, you evil scumbag!
What's the matter with you?
Why aren't you
 white
 Christian (the right kind, of course)
 American (with only Northern
European ancestors)
 rich
 over 50
 and willing to do everything to benefit
 me?
What makes you think you are human, too?

I Want

I'm an older woman now.
Hair is graying,
More pounds than I want settling on the
frame,
Strength not quite what it used to be,
Retirement stretching out in front of me,
Taking stock of life...
And there are some things **I want!**

Can you give me justice for all?
Can you give me peace in my
neighborhood and in the world?
Can you give me space to practice my
religion without imposing yours?
Can you share your "stuff" with those who
have no "stuff"?
Can you stop grabbing, hogging, feeling
you need still more?

When you are my age, unfortunately, you
will see
What human beings are and should be...
You will want to live and let live...
You will know that all you really want is
peace.

POEMS:

DALLAS WIEBE

Dallas Wiebe, born in Newton, Kansas, in 1930, grew up there and graduated from Bethel College. He received his MA (1954) and PhD (1960) from the University of Michigan. He taught at the University of Wisconsin for three years and then the University of Cincinnati for 32 years, mostly in the creative writing department.

Dallas retired in 1995 and is now Emeritus Professor of English at UC.

Contact: wiebe@fuse.net

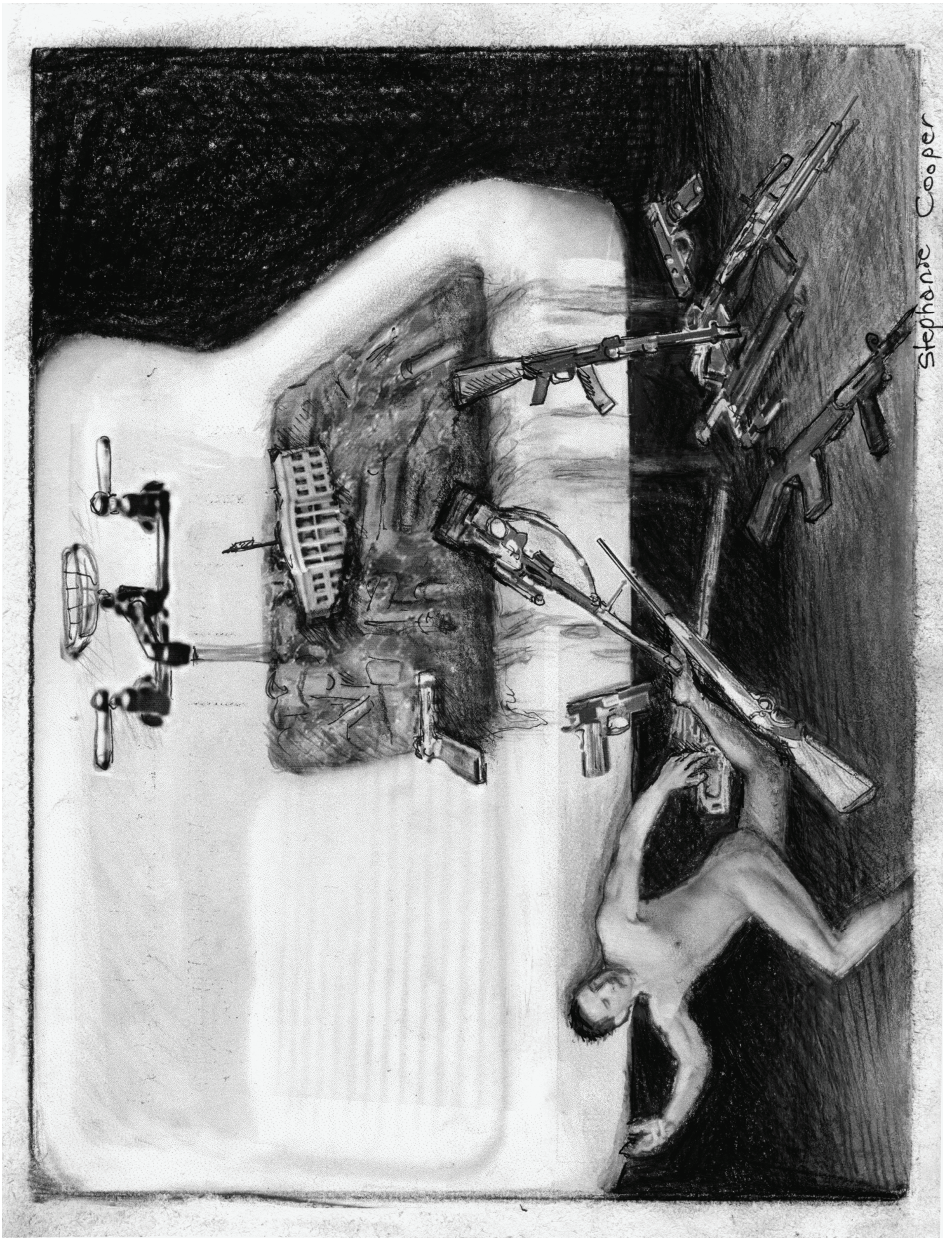
DRAWING:

STEPHANIE COOPER

Stephanie Cooper has an MFA in sculpture from the University of Cincinnati (1980). She has taught art at the college level at the Art Academy of Cincinnati, UC and NKU.

Stephanie has received several grants from the Ohio Art Council and the City of Cincinnati and is a Post-Corbett awardee (1987). She has exhibited widely, locally and nationally, and her work is in many private, public and museum collections.

Contact: rabartsc@zoomtown.com



Stephanie Cooper

The Mother of Bad News Poems: #24

The Mother of Bad News elects a president.

The Mother of Bad News likes to pretend
that in the U.S. Black people are equal to
White people.

She loves the game of "Let's Pretend"
that we want racial equality.

She tells the Republicans, White
supremacy
and you got the South.

She tells the Republicans, ignore civil rights
and you'll become president.

She tells the Republicans, execute enough
Black men
and you're fit to lead the nation.

The Mother of Bad News is a member of
the NRA

and just loves to conceal her weapons
while she waits her opportunity
to shoot a Black thief in the back.

The Mother of Bad News has a hair-trigger
temper

and lets it tell her what to do.

She smiles and drivels out words
like "compassion," "tolerance" and
"justice."

She says, put on mascara and throw out
the Black votes

And we'll all go to Washington, DC,
in a hand basket.

She can't wait to arm more soldiers
and gun up the drug dealers.

It's all so great,
and then there's that all White building
to house her little Texas boy
as he destroys unions
and makes war on the workers.

The Mother of Bad News knows
how to get elected.

You just have to enlarge the hole in the
ozone,
execute hundreds, murder minorities,
suck up to the White racists
and you're in.

The Mother of Bad News Poems: #30

The Mother of Bad News voted for George
W. Bush.

Now she weeps for his election
because she lives
on Medicare and Social Security.

She survives on the worst news of all.
She now knows that bad news comes to
everyone,
even to her.

When bad news is elected to the
presidency

she knows that she is irrelevant
and her days are numbered.

The bad news now is from the White House
and she is unemployed.

She thinks her life is over
because the purveyors of bad news
now rule the land.

If there is no good news—and there isn't—
then all news is bad
and she's right.

She thinks she should leave the country
and see if Canadians recognize bad news
and will not elect it to leadership.

She thinks that perhaps in Canada
the Canadians will still know
what bad news is
and she will have a job.

She hopes they will know the difference
between good news and bad news

So they can become
the most powerful nation
in the world.

The Mother of Bad News Poems: #29

The Mother of Bad News loves Christmas,
even though it comes but once a year,
which she hates.
She loves Christmas because that's when
she can distribute her best gifts:
suicides on Christmas Eve,
drunken drivers obliterated on expressways,
children choking on candy canes.
She loves it because it's the time of family hate,
husbands beating wives,
children torturing pets that they got for Christmas
and which they don't want.
It's the time of filling landfills
with wrapping paper and non-biodegradable ribbons.
It's the time of church services
where the boring Christmas carols are sung
for the thousandth time.
It's the time when the music of Bach is irritating
and the music of Handel causes diarrhea.
It's the time when the Gospels become slapstick
and Christ is born to make the world safe for adultery.
It's the time when angels rap to shepherds
and wise men carrying M-16s
bring gifts of Anthrax, AIDS and Ebola.
It's the time when the whole world
waits in silence for genocide.
It's the time when a star foretells
the end of man.
It's the time when prayers ascend
through holes in the ozone.
It's the time when cemeteries and golf courses
are the only green wreaths left on earth.
When the Mother of Bad News says "Merry Christmas,"
she stands under the mistletoe
and awaits your lips.

