

FOR A BETTER WORLD



POEMS + DRAWINGS
ON
PEACE + JUSTICE
BY

GREATER CINCINNATI ARTISTS

“For a Better World”

Poems and Drawings

on

Peace and Justice

by

Greater Cincinnati Artists

Editors:

**Saad Ghosn
Michael Henson**

Foreword

Artists, whether they use words, images or music, ... are not only witnesses but also changers of the world.

Artists have subversive powers due to their capacity of seeing clear beyond the immediate, conveying powerfully their feelings, stirring emotions and thinking, and as a result, changing and improving the world. Their role is that of visionaries, of revolutionaries, setting the path to change, to effacing the wrongs.

In our city scarred by inequality, racism, injustice and institutional violence and in these times when our world is increasingly the prey to lusty and destructive politics, poets have to speak up. Thirty three of them did so in this book - all ages, all backgrounds; and their diverse voices crisscrossed and strengthened each other. They were joined by shy or screaming images from 33 visual artists, teaming also for the fight.

Artists have to grasp the courage and the will to witness in their art what they witness in their heart. They will then contribute to the building of a friendly, fraternal and sharing community, one that breaks the isolation of their song, and gets it loud and strong. Artists in this book, using words and images, have started this process - one that will evolve and expand. They have spoken of peace and justice, of a better world. More will join in and their message will keep growing, clearer, year after year.

This book is intended to become a yearly contribution of local artists to peace and justice in Cincinnati, their city, and in the world in which they live. It will join hands with a yearly event, SOS ART, that will bring together each summer a diverse group of artists and individuals of all expressions, all peace lovers and peace seekers, and all working towards a better world, a world of love, peace and justice.

To every participating poet and every participating visual artist, our most sincere thanks and our heartfelt gratitude,

Saad Ghosn and Michael Henson,
Book editors and organizers

June, 2004

*"Every gun that is made,
Every warship launched,
Every rocket fired, signifies,
In the final sense,
A theft from those who
Hunger and are not fed,
Those who are cold
And are not clothed.
The world in arms is not
Spending money alone.
It is spending the sweat
Of its laborers,
The genius of its scientists,
The hopes of its children."*

*President Eisenhower
(April 16, 1953)*

“For a Better World”

Poet	Poems/Visual Artist	Page
Herb Allen	Maybe Next Year <i>Drawing by Fran Watson</i>	11
Franchot Ballinger	Fine Dust Floating in the Dark (after Georg Trakl's "Grodek") <i>Drawing by Voss Finn</i>	15 15
Kody Lane Blankenship	The World <i>Drawing by Kody Lane Blankenship</i>	18
Tim Cannon	Poets Speak Out River of Freedom So Why, Must Some Die <i>Drawing by Thom Shaw</i>	21 21 22
Idrissa Ekundayo	You Know I Feel This Pressure Afghanistine <i>Drawing by Emil Robinson</i>	25 25
Robbyn Wiley Gamble	Why Is Silence So Uncomfortable <i>Drawing by Jan Brown Checco</i>	29
Brian Garry	Fighting Over Dirt The War Within <i>Drawing by Holland Davidson</i>	33 34
Sherry Gels	The Law If There Were <i>Drawing by Matthew Pillischer</i>	35 35
Saad Ghosn	Falling the Giant Dwarfs Leaving the Forest of Thorns The Prophet Gone <i>Drawing by Alan Sauer</i>	41-42 43 44
Richard Hague	Riot <i>Drawing by Jay Bolotin</i>	47-52
Pauletta Hansel	If I Ever <i>Drawing by Douglas Paul Smith</i>	55

Billie Ray Helderbrand	Four Years of Terror	59
	Where Are You Free	60
	<i>Drawing by Steven Fox</i>	
Michael Henson	Prostitute at Walnut and Liberty	63
	The Great Man	64
	Shock and Awe	64
	<i>Drawing by Saad Ghosn</i>	
Stephen Herero	Dreaming Private Lynch	67-68
	Zion	69-70
	<i>Drawing by Halena Cline</i>	
Scott Horstmeier	Two Things for Peace	73
	A Piece for Peace	73
	<i>Drawing by Christopher Van Perkins</i>	
Benjamin Hughes	When I Grow Up	77-78
	Your Definition	79-80
	Just Want the Truth	81-82
	<i>Drawing by Mark Patsfall</i>	
Jerry Judge	Cleansing for Americans	85
	A Special Lottery	85
	No Forwarding Address	86
	<i>Drawing by Larry Jones</i>	
Lucille Kelch	The Eagle and the Dove	89
	<i>Drawing by Rob Jefferson</i>	
Lonna Kingsbury	Freedom	93
	When Was the Last Time You Fed Our Babies	94
	<i>Drawing by John Young</i>	
John Kramer	The Bells of Peace	97
	Fist of Rage	97
	Make Love Not War by Bonzo the Bonobo	98
	<i>Drawing by Wolfgang Ritschel</i>	
Steven Paul Lansky	Onion Poem	101
	<i>Drawing by Farron Allen</i>	
Carol Feiser Laque	Dorothy Following the Yellow Brick Road	105
	Into the Yellow Brick Wall	
	Nighty Night: Spring in Iraq, a Musical	105
	An American Dream	105
	<i>Drawing by Bill Howes</i>	

Obalaye Macharia	Warfare	109-111
	Ode to BH: The Renaissance Community <i>Drawing by Andrew Loughnane</i>	112
Mike Murphy	Look, George	115-116
	State of Denial	117
	Come! Bring Food & Music	118
	<i>Drawing by Andrew Au</i>	
Matthew Pillischer	Humanity	121
	<i>Drawing by Jennifer Purdum</i>	
Chris Roesing	The Exemplar Preached <i>Drawing by Jeff Casto</i>	125-127
Alan Sauer	Save Our Shit (by Alien Sour) <i>Drawing by Mark Fox</i>	131
Aralee Strange	Quelle Horreur!	135
	Utterly Persuaded	136
	<i>Drawing by Michelle Red Elk</i>	
Sharon Thomson	Advent	139
	The Year of Our Lord, 2001	140
	Before the Bighorn	141
	<i>Drawing by Barbara Ahlbrand</i>	
Rebecca Watkins	And Then What	145-146
	To My Brother, a Young Soldier	146
	The Sage and the Sorrow	147-148
	<i>Drawing by Rick Robick</i>	
Fran Watson	Pieces of Peace	151
	<i>Drawing by Carissa Barnard</i>	
Penelope Weber	I Am an Angel <i>Drawing by Christopher Daniel</i>	155
Tyrone Williams	What Depends	159
	The Sun Also Sets, Black-Eyed	159
	Of Bootstraps and Grace	159
	<i>Drawing by Gary Gaffney</i>	

POEM:

HERB ALLEN

At age 82, Herb Allen describes himself as a late bloomer with a new passion for creative writing, hand thrown stoneware, earthenware and for the design and crafting of ethnic jewelry.

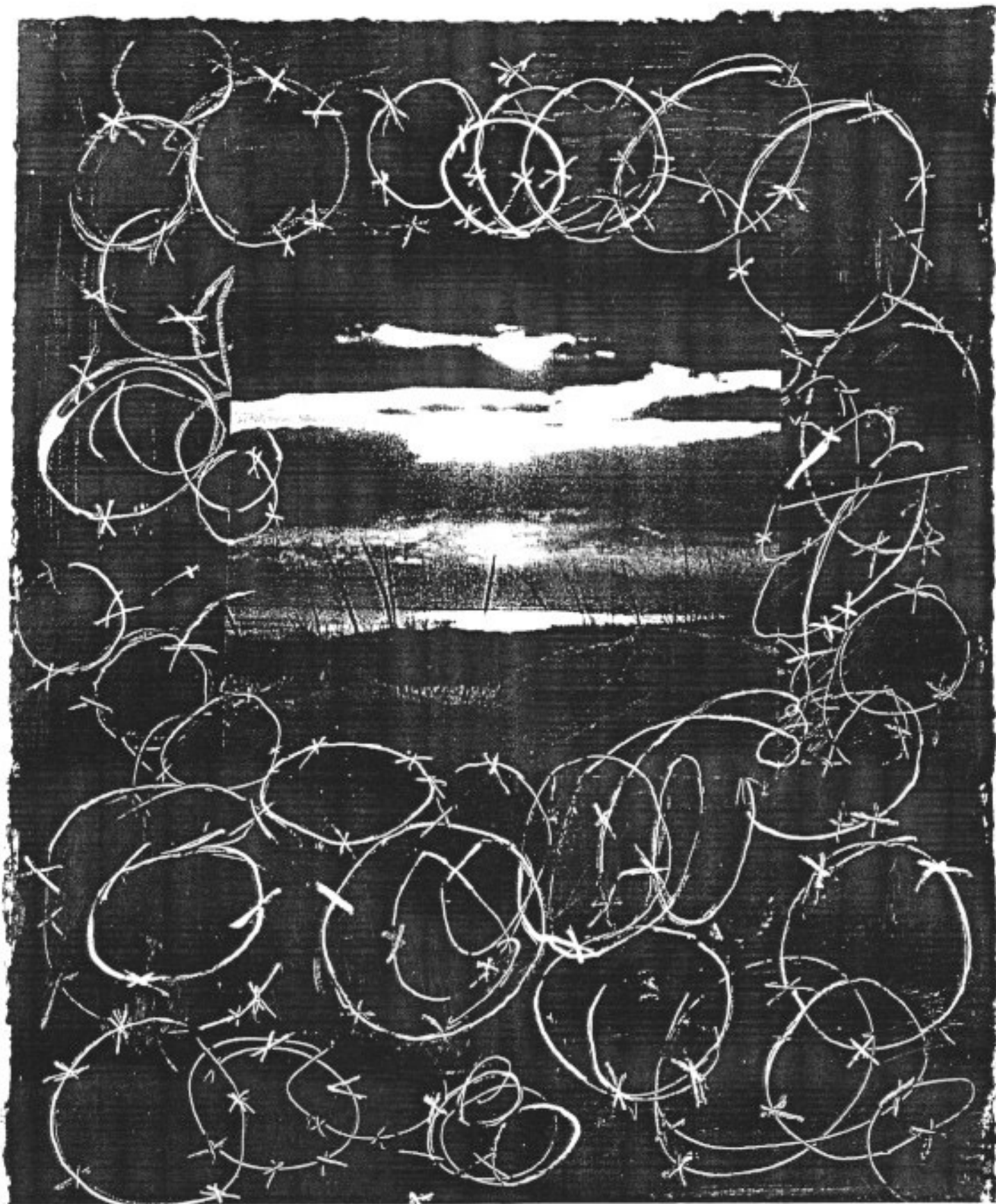
Herb is an Emeritus Adjunct Associate Professor at UC College of Medicine. He owns the Mount Auburn African Suite Bed and Breakfast, on Dorsey St, in Cincinnati.

DRAWING:

FRAN WATSON

Fran Watson is an artist who primarily writes. She was the art critic at CityBeat for five years and worked for the Cincinnati Suburban papers, as correspondent at large, for about 10 years. Haiku is Fran's favorite form of poetry, but good writing in any format will always claim her admiration. Fran is also an accomplished visual artist who appears in shows, either solo or group, several times a year.

Contact: watson@fuse.net



From a Wilson

Maybe Next Year

Maybe next year
Just may be then
I'll think of world peace

This year my thoughts
Of a better world would tomorrow
Challenge my credibility
Amid shameful world woes
Of a war on terrorism

Bells and whistles
Surround my sound sphere
As spring sprouts
Hereabouts in hill and dale
With dazzling memories
Of many yesteryears

Promising resurrection
As in the past sequels to
Seders and passion plays
The way of the cross
Flights of survival
Salvation for hordes
Forgiveness for many

My own aching bones
Personal pains and sorrows
Notwithstanding
We'll put them aside

Any hope for a better tomorrow
Eludes my practical sensibilities
Seems impossible while Bush,
Cheney, other good and bad
Men and women like them
Fuel their bank accounts
While my soul cries for justice,
The end of violence in
Our homes, our neighborhoods,
Our country and abroad

Civility and peace
Seem on hold

As Langston Hughes
Lamented in the twenties
Life ain't no crystal stairs

Surely, for me life's been
A full bowl of mixed pleasures
Layer upon layer of love and hate
Of anxiety, grief, frustrations

Joy and interim
Grunts of pleasure
Fits of excitement
Discovery and more

Rarely perfection
But appreciation
For more and more
Here and there

Highlights of creative
Works of art
Simple, complex, colorful
Light and dark
Historic, pagan, primitive
Old and new
Beauty, beauty, beauty
In all things
Great and small
Will do it for me

Maybe next year, just maybe
I'll think of world peace
And better understand
The arsonist's passion
For fire and flame
The perverted fights and delights
Of the Sado-masochist

POEMS:

FRANCHOT BALLINGER

Franchot Ballinger is a retired Emeritus Associate Professor of English from the University of Cincinnati. Over the years, his poems appeared in a number of poetry journals. His book "***Living Sideways: Tricksters in American Indian Oral Traditions***" is in press at the University of Oklahoma Press. Franchot is also an amateur musician with a particular love for playing Native American courting flutes.

Contact: f1225b@yahoo.com

DRAWING:

VOSS FINN

Voss Finn studied sculpture at the Art Academy of Cincinnati (BFA, 1992) and at Bard College, Milton Avery Graduate School of Fine Arts, NY (MFA, 2001). He currently lives and works in Cincinnati.

Contact: vossfinn@yahoo.com



Voss Fint

Fine Dust

"Grandpa was Austrian, not German," my mother repeated,
a fine distinction missed by little Yakov
as Hitler trod the Judenplatz during my childhood.
It mattered to her, of course, after the war,
after the inescapable knowing: the gas, the ovens,
the Jewish ash rising sacrificially, the fine dust of guilt
settling over everything spoken *auf Deutsch*
and further, finding its smothering way half the globe distant
and powdering perhaps even my little Yankee tongue
which had not yet tasted my other, closer inheritance,
the bitter fly ash of names like *Pit River, Sand Creek, Wounded Knee,*
Tulsa, Birmingham, Mississippi, and more and more,
falling unseen but no less searing
and burning in the same cinder night.

Floating in This Dark (after Georg Trakl's "Grodek")

It's nightfall again. The plains lose their golden light,
promises that can't be kept, and the blue lakes
are circumstanced darkly. Oaks cry out in wind voices

like bayonets, their leaves clattering like scabbards against legs.
Tramped paths lead through the grass to black bodies. Quietly,

in a meadow corner, as if the gathering red clouds
of God's presence, blood pools, cool as the moon.
The shadows, settling, regard dying boys
from whose slashed mouths leap wild cries.

Beneath the shining thorns of the stars, a sister's or wife's ghost
like a moth flutters down over a corpse, kisses the hero,

caresses his crown of blood. Now, softly the flutes
of deepest nights sigh, broken reeds of grief.
On a little hill like an altar, pain feeds spirit's flame,
and all its children float in this dark thick as fireflies.

(As a pharmacist in the Austrian Army during WWI, Trakl was charged with caring for casualties from the horrendous battle at Grodek, Poland. In despair over his inability to alleviate their suffering, he attempted to shoot himself.)

POEM & DRAWING:

KODY LANE BLANKENSHIP

Kody Lane Blankenship is a gifted twelve years old 6th grader at New Richmond Elementary. Her writing has earned her two awards from the SOITA Create-A-Book Contest. Kody also enjoys gymnastics and sings and dances with the Kids of Broadway.

(Kody wrote and illustrated her poem "The World" when she was eight)

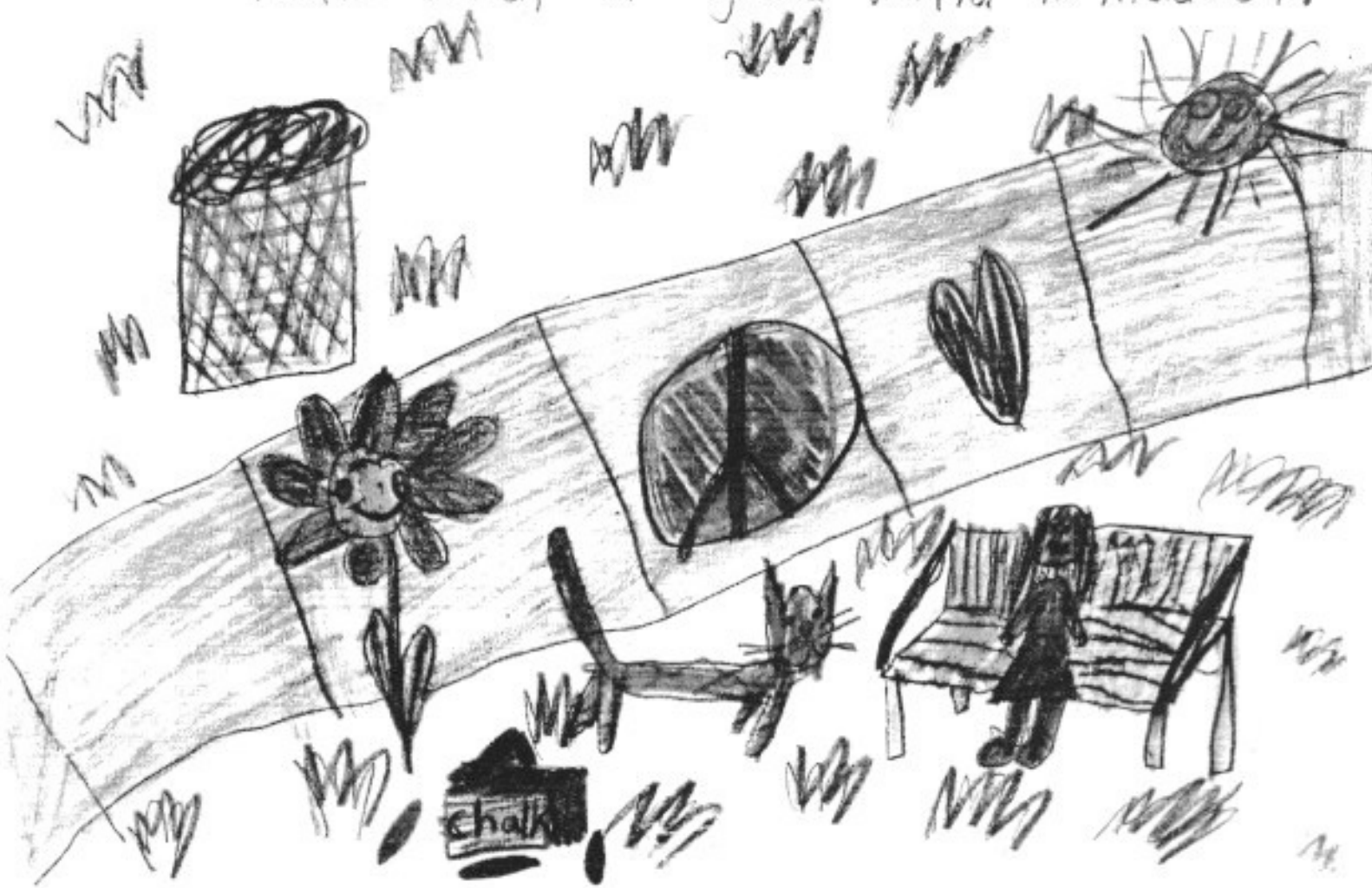
Contact: kodylane@one.net

by Kody Blankenship

The World



Sunny days beautiful flowers
Pretty kittys on morning hours
Special people special places
Everyone with smiling faces
If I controlled the worlds,
There would be happiness in the air
No more wars
No more unfairness everywhere
If I controlled the worlds,
There would be only peace and loves,
That's what a good world is made of.



POEMS:

TIM CANNON

Tim Cannon, born in Cincinnati, is an all around artist who enjoys poetry, photography, and painting. He is currently working on "Women of the World", a painting project to showcase portraits of women from different countries, cultures, beliefs, lifestyles, pointing to their beautiful uniqueness and yet to their similarity. For Tim, poems, art, music, relationships, are openings to universal love, to the spirit that is in all living things...

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DRAWING:

THOM SHAW

Tom Shaw received his training at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. An internationally acclaimed artist, he has exhibited extensively in galleries, art centers and museums, nationally and internationally (Finland, Japan, Czech Republic). For Thom, his work "continues to chronicle the vagaries and the frailties, the moods of hope and of despair and the natural resilience of the human spirit"



S H A W

Poets Speak Out

Who will speak up for those
Who cannot speak for themselves?
Who will lend their voice
For those whose voices are silent
Those, whose lips that have not spoken,
Those that have not learned
Such words of abomination.
Will it be a statesman, a senator,
Some politician, no?

Maybe it would be a simple poet.
Yes, it will be the poets
That speak up for these silent ones
To speak out of the violence,
The hatred, the repulsiveness of war.

For those with innocence must be
protected
This innocence must be sheltered,
maintained.

They must have a voice
That can be heard in this world,
Spoken words that stir emotions
Words that will bring tears
To wash away the façade
Of what is shown as justice
A two-sided coin.

Who will speak up for those
Who cannot speak for themselves?
Who will lend their voice,
Who will speak for our children?
Yes, it will be the poets...

River of Freedom

Into the undying night
To the river of freedom,
Less the shackles rattle and clank
They speak the sound of my name.
If I'm caught, the rope will swing
Never to see "the beautiful river,"
The river of the Ohio.

One hundred lashes
Bound to an old cypress tree
I helped my wife and child to escape,
"To that river in the north
Just follow that bright star,
Cause someday, someday
We'll be together, someday."
Fifty more lashes
For setting my family free,
Never to see my only child
Tied to this old tree.

Just one chance you have
At the fall of dusk
After the fields,
The breaking heat of the day.
To escape into the night
And to the north
That lantern of light sings.
Freedom, freedom, freedom
Those sweet words echo
In the hollow of my mind,
Freedom, freedom, freedom
The hound dogs are a calling my name.

Into the undying night
To the river of freedom,
Less the shackles rattle and clank
They speak the sound of my name.
If I'm caught, the rope will swing
Never to see my family,
Beyond "the beautiful river"
The river of the Ohio.

(In memory to all who gave their life for
pure freedom....)

So Why, Must Some Die

And through the tears
In the reflection of a child's eyes,
I saw the world collapse
Countries collide.

Increasing droplets descend
Splattering as they hit the ground,
A pool of blood is spilt
Innocence dies without a sound.

The supple delicate fingers
Releases to fate,
Pulled loose from mother's grasp
Broken by this world's economic weight.

So fragile is this life existence
Suspended by a thread,
We allow a few to decide our destiny
Entangled in a political web.

Don't you hear our children's anguished cries?
Open up, your sleepy silent eyes.
Do you feel a question burning inside?
There is an answer, that all must decide.
Don't you feel this love residing inside?
So why, must some be allowed to die.
Don't you feel this love residing inside?

So why, must some die?

(Children are brought into this world to experience life, with no voice to choose. They are the ones caught in the middle. We must consider the spirit of all children first, in decisions that affect this world.)

POEMS:

IDRISSA EKUNDAYO

Idrissa Ekundayo is a founding member of SOS (Summons Of Supreme), an Improvisation performance collaborative, of Artistic order of 144,000, a spoken word collective, and a member of Hittite Empire, a ritualistic theatre troupe. He is also the author of "***Gibberish, CD: Call it What you Want.***" Idrissa performed in the London International Festival of Theatre (L.I.F.T), and in various poetry venues, national and international. He is a community activist and an educator in the Cincinnati Public Schools.

Contact: idrissa_ekundayo@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

EMIL ROBINSON

Emil Robinson has grown up in the Cincinnati area amongst a large artistic family. He is a realist figurative painter who is a first year graduate student at UC DAAP.

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Emil Robinson

You Know I Feel This Pressure

you know i feel this pressure
to really watch what i do and how i do it
don't wanna repeat any lazy vibes and same type of silliness
want/positive/ forward/ growth - watch you watch me
for some reason I feel this for us
that way
i'm doing it for you you know that dream
real - man - dream
otherwise you'll never see how much i want an us only us a world
of us
shock revo-world
change if us is
a write difference
so i'll right difference
make since of since in sinceless now
love like now rub like when meditating hands on lower back
come
s/he dances at the - oneloveonefightonelifelivewriteright
s e p a r a t e
be
dark green life
Oh how I loved you then

Afghanistine

when i check the site the images
make me think of butoh
i don't know how paint and sweat mix
holding death in place burning makes for a dope piece
art does truly transcend all languages
even if nothing comes from this
just seeing this work has given me so many ideas
shiva

something wise something great has taken great pleasure
in the condition of the world right now

now
walk with me
no sandals please - -- burn

POEM:

ROBBYN WILEY GAMBLE

Robbyn Wiley Gamble, a photographer and writer, lives currently in south Dayton. Her poetry, featured in regional and academic publications, has lately been inspired by dream imagery.

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DRAWING:

JAN BROWN CHECCO

Jan Brown Checco believes that art is evidence of life being lived. She heard a wise professor say that one day, making all of her years of academic training worthwhile. Jan teaches figure drawing at universities and hatches projects for international artist cooperation, the most recent of which is "Clay, Color & Fire" in the TM Berry International Friendship Park.

Contact: (513) 751-4783 or Visit: www.brownchecco.com



Why Is Silence So Uncomfortable

A pin drops...

and strangers seated side by side

shift and fumble ...quietly.

A red headed lady in the front row giggles nervously

as a couple in the last row gently holds hands

while a child plays with his shoestring

slowly wrapping each string into a loose bow around his ankle.

The auditorium doors creek open

as a round dark gentleman

carefully pushes a wheelchair inside

looking for an aisle seat.

A bent woman with a handkerchief wrapped around her watch

yields her chair and smiles

as a tall man in a gray turtleneck whispers "I've seen it all".

Cane in hand, the bent woman inches her way to the back of the crowd.

A petite Mother smooths her hair and leans toward her daughter

Whispering "There by the grace of God go I."

The daughter waits, twirls a long dark curl around her finger as the cane and the woman pass

"Aren't you going to see the President?" the little girl asks.

The lady stops, removes the program from her black patent leather purse

and drops it ever so lightly into the trash can as she pushes the door

and solidly closes it behind her.

POEMS:

BRIAN GARRY

Brian Garry was born and raised in Bond Hill, a working-class African American neighborhood. Raised by a strong community activist mother and a manager of a local plumbing supplier, he has been a community activist since birth. In his recent run for Cincinnati City Council he advocated the rights of the working class and putting an end to systematic racism in City policy and practice.

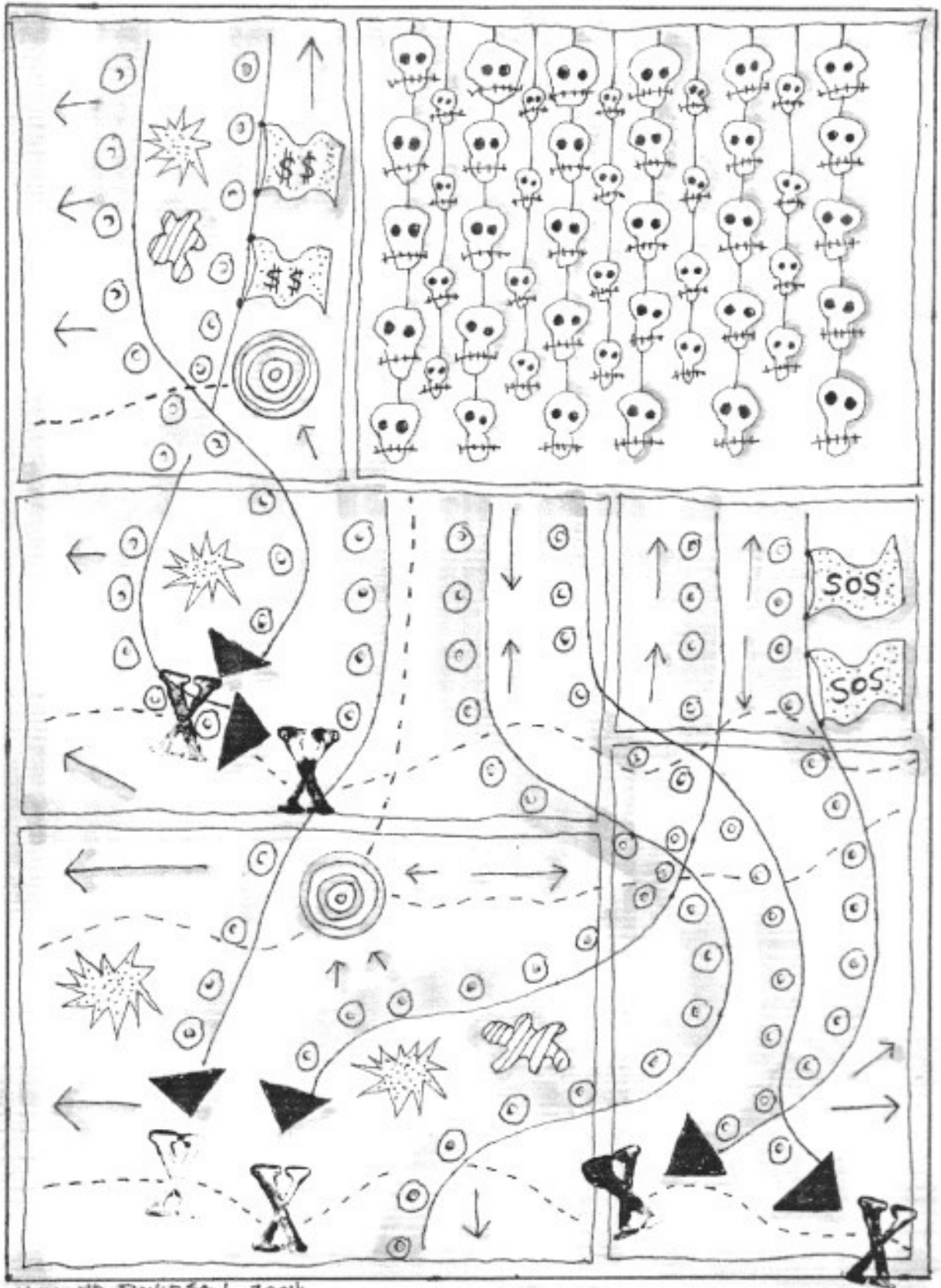
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DRAWING:

HOLLAND DAVIDSON

Holland Davidson, a fourth-generation Floridian, migrated to Cincinnati in 1983. Her art reflects her eclectic taste and her absurdist take on contemporary life. Holland's paintings are in collections worldwide.

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HOLLAND DWIDSON 2004

Fighting Over Dirt

Fighting over, over the dirt
People are homeless, and out of work
All because of fighting, over the dirt.
People are sick, in need of health care.
In my soul there is a tear.
Something happens and people get hurt
People are fighting, over the dirt

Using us like, we have no feelings.
I just need, some time for healing
Did I forget about my self-worth?
So many of us seem to get hurt
My mind is reeling.
All I do is sit around and look at the ceiling.
I got to be Loving, in all my dealings

Something happens and people get hurt

People all over, they're over worked.
Don't know about you but I'm bout to go berzerk.
They are Taking it all, out of the Earth
aren't we all of equal , infinite worth?

People are fighting, over the dirt
Something happens and people get hurt

People sleeping all in the street.
I will rise - the universe I will greet
Everything, it speaks for itself.
From this spiritual poverty comes wealth.
I'm gaining some inner health.
Some guidance some mirth, re-birth.
Rich people prepare to share the Earth.

The War Within

War Against the Poor, The war on me
The war on my inside
The war rages on.
Flames against the sky
Yeah I'm Inflammatory
I'm Hot, Hot Boy, Hot Head.
Yes I'm inflamed, incensed, engulfed with the flames
The fire of Justice, The burning flame of Freedom pours from belly.
Passion
Compassion
Feel the heat, it's getting warm in here
Fan the flames
My guts metaphorically strewn all over the cityscapes –
Some by the police,
Rattle the cage
Answer the door with lead.

Blood visceral
This is my block
Fighting over the block
Bush wants to sell the dope on this block
But I'm takin' the block back, my block
Black Block
We the entrepreneurs, Selling Freedom,
Marketing Democracy,
Peddling Justice, Liberation, Capitalism
All by methods of brainwashing and mind control
Democratic lullabies, bedtime stories
Lulling us to sleep at night brought to us live by corporate media
Whose purpose is only thought distortion, mental transfixiate to cause us to vote Bush
in the next election
GW wants us to be perfect little American puppets awaiting the teacher to come and
teach us
What is life? Life is bad be afraid here is your gas mask terrorists are everywhere.
We will fly around the earth orbitin' while you all blow yourselves up with weapons we
created.

Democratic lullabies sung to
Saluting the flag that we burn

All we are is dust,
While we are here, we fight over dust - to become dust.

(with contribution by David Mitchell)

POEMS:

SHERRY GELS

Sherry Gels is a poet who always wanted to be a writer. She teaches seventh grade reading and language arts to support herself--and help kids--until she figures out how to live off of her writing and poetry. In the meantime, she also trains for marathons, takes yoga classes, and writes for fun--and survival.

Contact: sherrygels@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

MATTHEW PILLISCHER

Matthew Pillischer is a member of the International Socialist Organization (Cincinnati branch). He creates films, songs, theater, spoken and visual art. When he is not organizing for a better world or producing art, he is feeding animals and shoveling goat shit at Sunrock Farm.

Contact: mpillischer@yahoo.com or Visit: www.overwallsthemovie.com



MATTHEW PILLISCHER

The Law

If
for every action
there is
an equal
and opposite
reaction,
do we need
to talk about
justice?

If There Were

If there were
only
peace
you wouldn't have called
me a lesbo
in an
ANONYMOUS
e-mail message.

If there were
only peace
you wouldn't have called
me and my friend dykes
as you sped past
in your car
while we were running

If there were
only
peace
present here
I wouldn't be
MAD
at you

But there's not
and I am
and you did
and I am
and I am
and I am
and I am.

POEMS:

SAAD GHOSN

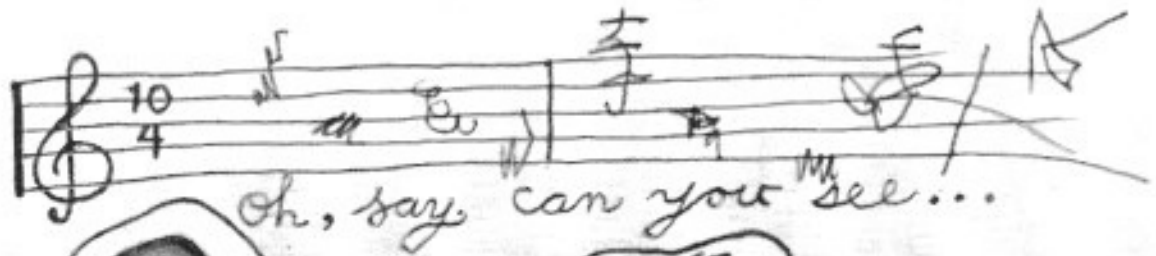
Saad Ghosn, a native of Lebanon, has been living in Cincinnati since 1985. A medical professional and an educator, he resorts to visual and spoken art to express and convey his sociopolitical views.

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DRAWING:

ALAN SAUER

Alan Sauer, originally from Dayton, Ohio, lives in Cincinnati where he attended the Art Academy and obtained, in 1992, a BFA in Printmaking and Painting. Alan is a prolific artist who uses ink drawing, painting and stone carving and writes poetry, short fiction and non-fiction. Alan has exhibited regularly locally. His work is included in many private collections.



Oh, say can you see...



can you see?



54.

THE
**UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA**



ALAN SAUER

Falling the Giant Dwarfs

I see them falling, dwarfs in clothes of giants.
They lie, they twist, they fart;
Fake towers of false grace.
They say they are truthful, they are compassionate;
Their compassion, gist of their interests, of their hidden privileges;
Their truth, the tainted story of their wicked past.
They bite; they maul the tender meat; they break the gentle skin.
They wash their teeth in perfumed water.
They smile and their lips glow self-love and self-esteem.
Their round belly touches their nose.
Their eyes, languorous and happy, rest down fulfilled.

I see them falling, decrepit and wretched souls.
They say they are the best, they live for nobility;
Empty hearts ready to burst.
They give the void of their self, prickly cacti waiting to sting.
They push, they clear the way for their arrogant inner snake.
They take, and steal and hide.
They swallow, they spite.
Trompe l'oeil cathedrals, fake mirages, only a hint.
They speak of wisdom, but of diamonds and gold.
Their friends, the wolves of the mountain, the terror of the sheep.
They conceal their hands, their piercing weapons, their deadly guns.
Their arms embrace and suffocate.

I get them falling, ugly distorted shadows.
I pull their brittle hair; I break their crusty nose.
I open shallow and hollow their heart of tin.
I crack their cutting, their white, their shiny teeth.
I tear their clothes; I smash their limbs.
I throw them far with a slingshot piece.
I erase them fully; I bury them deep.
I silence the memory of their treacherous deeds.
I blow the wind in their desolate homes
And borrow earthquakes to fall their walls...

Then I observe, content;
And I shake their dust off of my feet

...And I rest and I dream.
I dream of large blue skies,
Of smooth waves on the desert sand,
Of birds flocking in harmony,
Of sturdy cathedrals of beauty.

I dream of transparent love, of giving hands,
a smiling child, a happy end.
I see a soul as pure as light
I hear a song sung to unite.
A growing tree, an orchard full,
A wounded will to mend and cure.
A passing cloud takes off despair,
A kindly heart beats in the air.

...And I sleep and I dream.
I see a kingdom of truth and peace,
A realm of justice that now prevails,
A broken world in full repairs.

...And in my sleep, of joy I weep.

Leaving the Forest of Thorns

And I look down and I see my heart falling,
A rock deep below the waves.
I listen impassible to the moans of the womb,
But my eyes betray my soul and I cry.
A lonely knight in the forest of thorns,
I follow the river, seeking the shores.
I ask the star for guidance, the moon to smile,
And both ignore my plea and in their distance
fly.

Then I stop and I look at the trees,
At the green of the leaves,
At the morning bees;
At life that grows and explodes.
I look at the flowers that bloom,
At the water that flows,
At the light that glows.
I sense a thrill in my bones,
A hope again permeates my skin.
I smile and forget the sorrows
And the pains anchored within.
I feel light, ready to fly;
A bird flapping its wings.

Then suddenly I remember.
I hear the cries of the battered child,
The screams of the slaughtered sheep.
I see a house hit and destroyed,
A whole family buried deep.
A man that steals just to survive.
A young girl sleeps in the street.
A mad woman laughs and asks why,
A bullet shot aimed at her feet.
Lies are the answers to all things wrong;
Lies are the truth of the powerful strong.
Why is a child deprived of wealth,
And the wise aged of good health?
Why does violence become the rule,
To break the weak, restrain the poor?
Why does color blind the eyes,
To trigger hatred and despise?
Is inequality so deep engrained,
A law of nature, of genes made?
Are human rights fallacious words,
Only to be written and not heard?

Then I decide to leave my
forest,

My forest of comfort,
My forest of thorns.
I say good bye to what I thought,
in isolation could bring me joy.
I speed the air, winged by a breeze,
My pain still there, numbed by my dreams.
At every corner I meet a soul,
Hungry and ready to wage a war;
A soul like me in its island kept,
Far from itself due to neglect.
Strong bound together and hand in hand,
Of our despair we plan the end.
We fill the skies, we spread the dream,
And change the rules to make it real.
We call the homeless, the poor, the weak,
The lonely, the wounded and the meek.
We flip the coin, we change the word;
We make it all a better world.

The Prophet Gone

He told the child of the street,
That he follows the moon;
Of vanity and deceit,
He does not know the tune.
The power of the lion,
In kindness he mends;
And the fragile flower,
With all care he tends.
He wears the cloth of the monk
And the smile of the sun;
His arms are open to give,
To embrace everyone.
His possessions, a light soul,
The air blowing his song,
The colors of the rainbow,
His pure deeds all along.
Noble are his words,
Transparent his intent;
In restful peace he sleeps,
Satisfied and content.
He worries for the poor,
For the deer in the park,
For the weak who endure,
And the child in the dark.
He gave away his heart,
A gift to all he met,
And nothing in return,
But due truth and respect.
He is called a madman,
A visionary, a saint,
An eccentric to fall,
A dangerous threat to faint.

They told the child of the street
The path of the moon was wrong;
That nothing counts in their world
But power, control and greed.
They refer to him as misfit,
A lost soul, a lonely hand,
A weak mind weary to hit,
A wavy shadow unable to fend.

The more they possess, the more they
thrive;
Destroying the earth, they lie, they
contrive.
Shooting the bird and downing its nest,
They clear the way for their selfish
quest.
Why would they worry about all rest,
When their palaces contain the best.
Their rule of life is I and I,
Oblige the others to comply.

I summoned the child of the street
To tell the story of the moon,
And not to cry the prophet gone,
Now well at peace in his retreat.
His heart with a bullet was found,
The sun still smiling at his face,
His body open to embrace
The earth by all his kindness bound.

Then I held the child of the street,
And in deep sorrow we both wept;
Our friend's death, not a defeat,
Rather a call to resurrect.

Violence is weak when it compares
To the beauty of a loving soul;
Strength of pure deeds always fares
Above the tyrants and their toll.

POEM:

RICHARD HAGUE

Richard Hague is the author of ten collections of poetry, most recently "***The Time It Takes Light***" and "***Alive In Hard Country***". He is the 1982 Post-Corbett Award winner in Literary Arts and a three-time winner of Ohio Arts Council fellowships in poetry and creative nonfiction. Richard's teaching memoir/poetry collection "***Lives of the Poem***" is forthcoming in 2005.

DRAWING:

JAY BOLOTIN

Jay Bolotin was born and grew up on a farm near Lexington, KY. He is currently completing a movie made of woodcuts for which he has also written the score. It will be first shown, beginning in 2005, at the Contemporary Art Center (Cincinnati), The Museum of Contemporary Art (San Diego), and the Georgia Museum of Art.

RHO BY RICHARD HAGUE



EVEN THE BEST MEN ARE FIGHTING
THE CONDUCT OF ONE WITH THE NEEDS
OF WHOSE CONSTITUTIONS ARE ACQUAINTED

Jay Bolotin

Riot

Over-The-Rhine, Cincinnati, April 2001

"Hurt or scorned people are places where real enemies hide"

—William Stafford, "Report To Crazy Horse"

"Who can wonder that the laws of society at times be forgotten by those whom the eyes of society habitually overlook, and whom the heart of society often seems to discard?"

—Dr John Simon, City Medical Report, London, 1849

"Even the best men err in judging the conduct of one with the recesses of whose condition he is not acquainted."

—Melville, "Benito Cereno"

April, early, and the city locked down,
blood bright on the stones of the alley
where Timothy Thomas was shot,
bright on his Dollar Store t-shirt,
bright on the clenched knuckles of the police.
The treasury of Fear is filling.

Fear is the greatest capitalist,
gathering unto itself and unto its vast corporation
the partners Frenzy, Panic, Terror, Rage.
Now Fear has made you, city,
its latest catalogue, its vivid marketing of itself—
Saturday Night specials,
fully loaded high-caliber deals, corpses of young black men in alleys,
grim-faced denying and stonewalling cops,
red-lined neighborhoods of poverty and woe,
sputtering councilmen, shrieking backstreet martyrs and agitators,
children up and down Vine Street chewing their fingers
and weeping.

And on the catalogue's cover a sheet of brightest metallic paper
mirrors your face, city:
in Fear's catalogue, we are this month's
cover girls and cover guys, the main attractions.
(Self is always the greatest fear, facing Self the most
personal and intimate fear,
projected so your dreams, city,
crowd with niggers, wetbacks, spics and hillbillies,
queers and dykes and rag-heads, all Creatures from the Black Lagoon
that goes stagnant and rank within your own fear and intolerance,
poorly hidden but as surely there as your abandoned subway.)

Nor think you will escape into your suburbs, city,
for there is the subtlest, most poisonous Fear, the money-colored walls
you build around yourselves, your treeless deserts of abundance,
your chronic diseases of traffic,
your field and grove-blasting plagues of commerce,
your sprawling unplanned lack of beauty and decent sewage,
your malled whited sepulcher bankrupt treasuries of success.

City,

Fear builds its battalions of your inner city trash and junk,
Fear erects its barricades of obfuscation and gobbledygook,
then displaces endlessly the poor and the illiterate.
Fear feeds on failed school levies and self-segregation
(you, city, among the most segregated in America).
Fear haunts Findlay Market, diminishing the crowds,
emptying the streets, smothering the musicians,
Fear hides in the baklava and the bagels,
in the short ribs and chitterlings and sausage.
Fear blights the flowers of the vendor,
stalks the honey-gatherer, rapes the paper-maker and the cooks.
Fear sits legless on the steps of City Hall, begging for change,
and you, O city, outlaw begging for change.

Riot has slept for years under
the steel basement doors of Main Street.
Riot has hung out at Vine & Elder,
sprinted glass-breakingly crazy through Mohawk and Madville,
smoked reefer and crack at 14th and Clay,
shot heroin in the parking lot of the Boudinot LaRosa's
while Petie Rose bunted one-liners in the kitchen.
Why have you not seen Riot
in his red shirt, the tattered schoolbook
freshly thrown from his hand?
You have ogled Riot in her tight white dress,
cut low over her tattooed chest.
Why have you been surprised
to find Riot at your door, hawking blood,
stealing the keys of your car,
spray-painting the columns of your new temple stadium?
For Riot knows your name—it is scrawled
on a piece of paper in Riot's left pocket,
paper wet with rain that has leaked through the roof
of Riot's broken classrooms in Evanston,
scrawled in angry lipstick on the West End Marathon's
restroom's mirror, it is scratched invisibly into the bricks
of Yeatman's Cove next to the names of the others,
it wanders the history of Tall Stacks,
looking for black men to carry its loads.

It hangs like a bloody sword from the hand of Cincinnatus.

Do not think Riot always speaks harshly.
Riot whispers in your ear, city,
Riot curls up like a dog of small fire
under your Hyde Park bed at night,
Riot rides the metro past the Stowe House
and remembers all its haunted rooms, its tight-lipped mute displays.
Riot silently scales the monument at North Bend,
waving its bloody sweatshirt.
Riot rides shotgun, wary, wordless, with the Chief of Police.

Despite all of your haranguing and all of your testing
and all of your mandating and sacking of your faculties,
despite your callowness and cruelty, city,
Riot can't spell. Riot can't count. Riots sits in a schoolroom
where the students appear to be dying, where the walls
are hung with peels of paint like the skin of flogged slaves,
where brown stains the size of secret massacres
darken the corridors, where classmates named Denesha
and D'Juan disappear over Christmas, never to return,
where teachers lose sleep over spelling errors
and multiple-choice tests on Citizenship.

Failure in the proficiencies—
how obvious on your streets, how clear
in your downtown gunshot alleys, how perfectly accomplished
in your mostly-white powers and your black defendants, how
expressed admirably in your school statistics,
and your self-indicting demographics—
how completely and successfully, city, you fail your
own citizenship proficiencies.

(What is it you are testing,
what facts ignoring, what truths turning your backs on,
you who make the tests,
you who think bullying with percentiles is less offensive
than bullying with fists?
Legislators, testers: heal thyselfes.)

Riot lives where most mayors, hotshots, high muckamucks
have never lived or would dare to live;
Riot lives where the governor
would never send his own children to kindergarten;
Riot limps to its job
in the inner city school cafeteria where it hawks
french fries and cholesterol to its own nieces and nephews,
and eats its own dignity and sickens itself;

Riot refuses to be patronized or even to demand
what it is entitled to, being denied so many times;
Riot requires immediate gratification after centuries
of being put off, lives poorly, eats poorly, drinks too much,
smokes too much, can't imagine a better life, breaks every bottle
it sees on the street, tears the branches off planted trees,
walks as an infant with bloody feet in front of its own trashed house
and sets fire to its own garage;

Riot lives in another universe from the Garden Show
and the Hyde Park Gold Coast mansion tours and the Cardinal Pacelli School
Best-Dressed and Most Likely to Succeed.
Riot eats flowers and burns mansions and takes up the phone book
and chooses addresses at random. Riot wakes you up, O city,
from the sleep of your spirit and your heart,
it cries out in the wilderness, and you are either Moses,
city, or you are Pharaoh.

Riot makes these demands, even without speaking—
a Mayoral Proficiency exam,
a corporate CEO Mercy and Justice accountability exam,
fixing the athletic teams' bungling and shredding of millions of tax dollars.
City planners, you have failed,
traffic clogging all the orange-barreled ignored infrastructural
highways and byways,
so that Road Rage, Riot's cousin, moves to town
and squats under every freeway overpass, loading and pointing its guns.
Universities, you have mostly failed, the city is little better for you,
the citizens no more peaceable, civil, tolerant, understanding,
the environment no more protected, the wealth no better distributed,
the coalitions no healthier nor abundant nor effective,
the citizenry little the wiser for all your departments
and programs and degrees.
Riot demands a Patience and Forbearance exam,
Riot requires a major in Self-Examination,
a Chancellor of the Study of Studies,
an Ombudsman of Decency and Retribution,
a Dean of orderly discourse.

Still, Riot continues to live in the black and Appalachian
and Cambodian and Latino pointed fingers,
in the wake of the bailed-out CEO motoring off in his sleek yacht of money
while the shareholders' futures flatten like slashed city tires.
Riot has stood with its heart on its sleeve,
with its hand out in peace, and has waited for centuries in line
in the interminably opaque uninhabited answering-machine bureaucracies
of passing the buck and hoarding.

Riot wanted to move, but couldn't.
Riot wanted to learn to read,
but the building was cold and the rain came in.
Riot stood before the Music Hall and asked to listen,
and the answer was No Panhandling.
Riot wanted a better place to live,
but the landlord was in Florida, counting the gelt.
Riot wanted equality
but the scales were tipped by privilege and custom and fear.
Riot wanted quiet nights
but the sirens of the police stabbed it in the side
and the blue flashing lights
strobed it into nightmare.
Riot wanted protection
and was given assault.

City, will God help you if you continue your evil ways?
Will God be satisfied with mostly white schools and mostly black schools?
Will God be satisfied with the BMW gated community Haves
and the locked-down abandoned-to-the-metro Have Nots?
Will God be satisfied with shrieking and cursing
in the place of singing and healing?
Will God sit down at your tables and negotiate justice?
Is justice negotiable?
Is liberty negotiable?
Is poverty a crime?
Is hunger a vice?
Is ignorance to be upheld?
Is callousness to be rewarded?

City, draw a line around yourself, and beyond that line, say No More.
Freeways, subdivisions—no more enervating sprawl.
Reinhabit yourself, city, your busted blocks, your wasted vacancies,
your beautiful cast-iron downtown storefronts and brownstones
and walk-ups, reinhabit them all with well-meaning people,
people abandoning the isolation and privilege of the segregated suburbs,
abandoning the temples of Mammon off the freeways,
abandoning the mall parking lots,
returning them to trees and crops and birds;
people rebuilding their own downtown,
repairing the infrastructures of spirit,
building bridges of talk and story-sharing and glee.
Do not spread yourself thin, do not continue to flee yourself,
but concentrate your efforts and your wealth and your justice
where they are needed most, city,
make Vine Street paradise, Main a haven of delight,
the West End a jazzy fellowship, downtown a crowded dance
of sidewalk ballets and chess games and street rap and thriving vendors.

Otherwise, city,
Riot will become your next mayor,
seizing a lifetime term,
and you will continue to empty, to fold up, to die,
and there will be no there there, city,
and without a center
there can be no direction
from which to venture forth toward the future,
or to gather in to celebrate the past.

You will be lost inside yourself, O city,
you will be a fallen temple, ruin, your people a tribe of
wanderers in the desert of yourself:

Shall you overcome, city, or be overcome?

POEM:

PAULETTA HANSEL

Pauletta Hansel is a writer and teacher with Women Writing for (a) Change Foundation. Her first book of poetry, "*Divining*", was published in 2002 by WovenWord Press. Her poem, "If I Ever", was included in her performance piece, "*Sitting with Terry*", dedicated to Terry Flanigan, who died in 1996 of AIDS-related causes.

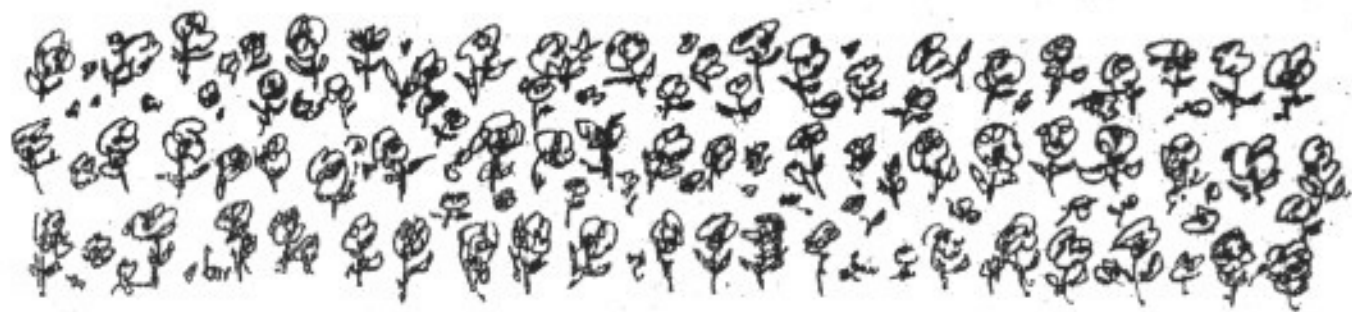
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DRAWING:

DOUGLAS PAUL SMITH

Douglas Paul Smith, a painter and illustrator working in Cincinnati, studied Industrial Design (U. of Cincinnati) and Liberal Arts (Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA). He worked as an editorial illustrator for Tacoma's music magazine, Pandemonium!, and The Stranger Weekly of Seattle. He has exhibited his work in Cincinnati, Seattle, Chicago, Louisville, NYC.

Contact: crewcruxcrayons@yahoo.com



LOUAS PAUL SMITH

If I Ever

If I ever make a movie about war,
there will be no death

without a story,
no life a sprawling body on a field.

It would be too long, I know,
this movie about war

where every body has a mother
and a turtle or a cat.

He broke his leg when he was seven,
and his sister called him names.

In school he hated science, could not bear
to slice into a beating heart.

And now his girl proclaims his feet
too cold in winter,

but forbids him socks in bed:
she will warm them here

between her own,
shivering in his arms.

No one would want to watch
when every bullet breaking bone

begins a life told backwards,
death to birth.

from *Divining* (WovenWord Press 2002)
reprinted with permission of the author

POEMS:

BILLIE RAY HELDERBRAND

"I write in the hope that others will understand"

Billie Helderbrand is a poet living in Cincinnati. He uses his poetry as a vehicle for discussing political issues, past and present.

Billie's poetry has been published widely, including in
"The Sound of Poetry."

DRAWING:

STEVEN FOX

A native of Hamilton, Ohio, Steven Fox's goal is to create art from within his soul dealing with the past, present, and future and giving all praise to God.

Contact: creativefox@fuse.net



Four Years of Terror

When you were elected it was under a blanket of fog,
tell me why electoral votes count for so much more
than the people whom you swore to stand up for.

You take the land set aside so we don't kill all nature's life,
and change it to an oil band.
What gives you the right to destroy everything with your own hands,
or was this your master plan?

Now let us go to a foreign land, start a war that you say is necessary,
but let us think: a necessity, is that not the water we need to drink?
Your reasons for war have yet to become a reality!
Remember to cover the cheek
for the side of your face is where you learned to speak.

Now tell me why all the people in that land have to die?
Ohh yeah, I see, our government doesn't lie, sssshhhh,
that was a mistake, no weapons found once again,
that was a mistake, but listen to the lives we saved, mmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

Will you step aside or once again will Jeb be your police state?
Win the vote the old fashioned way, with the blood of America's fate.

Where Are You Free

As I think about the history in which we came from,
I realize many things have not been undone.

What did the Boston Tea Party mean?
Was it a tax that the people were to feel,
but not see.
This was set by the old mighty king.
Now let's see how this has changed
by traveling thousands of miles across a vast sea.

Can we agree taxes are found upon the English Tree
and carried to a home that was lied to and called free.

The first time a tax that came to be from the Civil War
just to add a sting upon rebels families
and now relaxes its affect upon the American dream,
so where is this able to be called free?

And That's What You Call The American Dream?
Red, white and blue?
What do these colors mean to you?
Do they scream freedom rings,
or does it show that it is only a dream,
something that is not to be seen.

I know nothing remains the same,
but the constitution wasn't meant for governmental gain.

Let's travel and see that the government has learned a new game,
who pays for their climb to fame,
such a shame,
and society has no one but themselves to blame.

A challenge I can no longer restrain,
what does freedom to you mean?
Is it something that you have to pay for in order to participate
or allow the government to restrain?

POEMS:

MICHAEL HENSON

Michael Henson is author of "*Ransack*" (a novel) and "*A Small Room with Trouble on my Mind*" (a book of stories). He is a member of the Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative.

DRAWING:

SAAD GHOSN

Saad Ghosn, a native of Lebanon, has been living in Cincinnati since 1985. A medical professional and an educator, he resorts to visual and spoken art to express and convey his sociopolitical views.

Contact: saad.ghosn@uc.edu



Saad Ghosn

Prostitute at Walnut and Liberty

She stands her corner,
squares her shoulders,
and scans the streets
with a professional, fire-hardened eye.
There is much for her to watch.
Cars nurse at the pumps of the Shell
station.
Carpenters glance back at her as they
shoulder their lumber.
Dope boys, arrogant shadows on the
opposite corner,
study the noonday traffic.
And so does she.
A BMW passes an aging Toyota,
a patrol car spreads blue light
across an Audi with tinted windows,
and a pickup truck stops short,
cut off by an SUV
the size of a small Midwestern town.
And on it goes.
Impatient,
she strides one way,
then another.
Some cars cruise slowly round her
corner
and the men who drive the cars
turn their eyes from the traffic to gaze at
her.
She stares them back
with a question in her brow
and sometimes a word
and sometimes a shift of her shoebox
hips
(She has gone, you see, so very slim.
She has that hollow in the jaw;
she has that shadow below each eye.)

I do not know what these men see when
they see her
but I know
she has a golden brain
and a rapid heart
and internal organs shapely as fruit
and silver nerves
that have been frailed and fouled by
crack cocaine.
And I know that
when she was small
she was greeted with joy
and she was greeted with dismay
and when she cried she was comforted
and when she cried she was ignored
and she was fed and coddled
and she was not-fed and she was
cursed
and her life which was perfectly normal
and her history which was utterly cruel
have brought her to this corner
where she studies the passing cars
and the glances of the men in the cars.
She sweeps the street with a hungry
eye
and she is not satisfied.
She strides one way, then another,
down one street and back.
Her arms swing like hammers
but she always comes back
to her post on the corner
where, quickly, she looks right, she
looks left,
then right and left again,
like a hawk on a rail.

The Great Man

The vigilance of a great man
is the tooth of a fox
at the neck of a vole.
The breath of a great man
blesses all his projects
and withers the hopes of his enemies.
The will of a great man
rains on his people.
Day and night,
day and night
it drenches all otherwill.
The voice of a great man
rings like a metal dollar
on a marble counter.
The potency of a great man
has no purpose
but to bear all before it
like a flood
or a powerful wind.
The mind of a great man
is not bothered by contradiction,
is not worried with truth or lie,
is not disturbed by the thoughts of
others.
The stride of a great man
is certain
and is not broken
by the bodies in his path.

Shock and Awe

Only men who have made their souls
small
can contemplate such things.
Only men with minds abstracted
can murder with untroubled hearts.
These men have made their souls small
but their minds are very large.
The pages of their books
ripple with muscular theory.
The screens of their computers
thrill with graphics.
Their powerful search engines
discover and delete
every micron of resistance.
They have charted destruction
down to the megabyte.
The color of sand,
the taste of salt,
the prickle of heat,
the weight of a piece of fruit
are nothing to these men.
For their souls are small,
made smaller with every lie,
and their minds are abstracted
and augmented,
fed daily on megahertz and silicon.
Swollen with dollars and pride,
the inflated minds stride down the
broken avenues.
These men would be like gods
were their souls not so small.

POEMS:

STEPHEN HERERO

The artist's name, Stephen Herero, is an amalgam of the first draft of Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist* and the Herero tribe of Namibia, who figure prominently in Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*.
By 1907 an estimated 80% of the Herero were wiped out by the German army after an armed uprising against the German colonial regime.

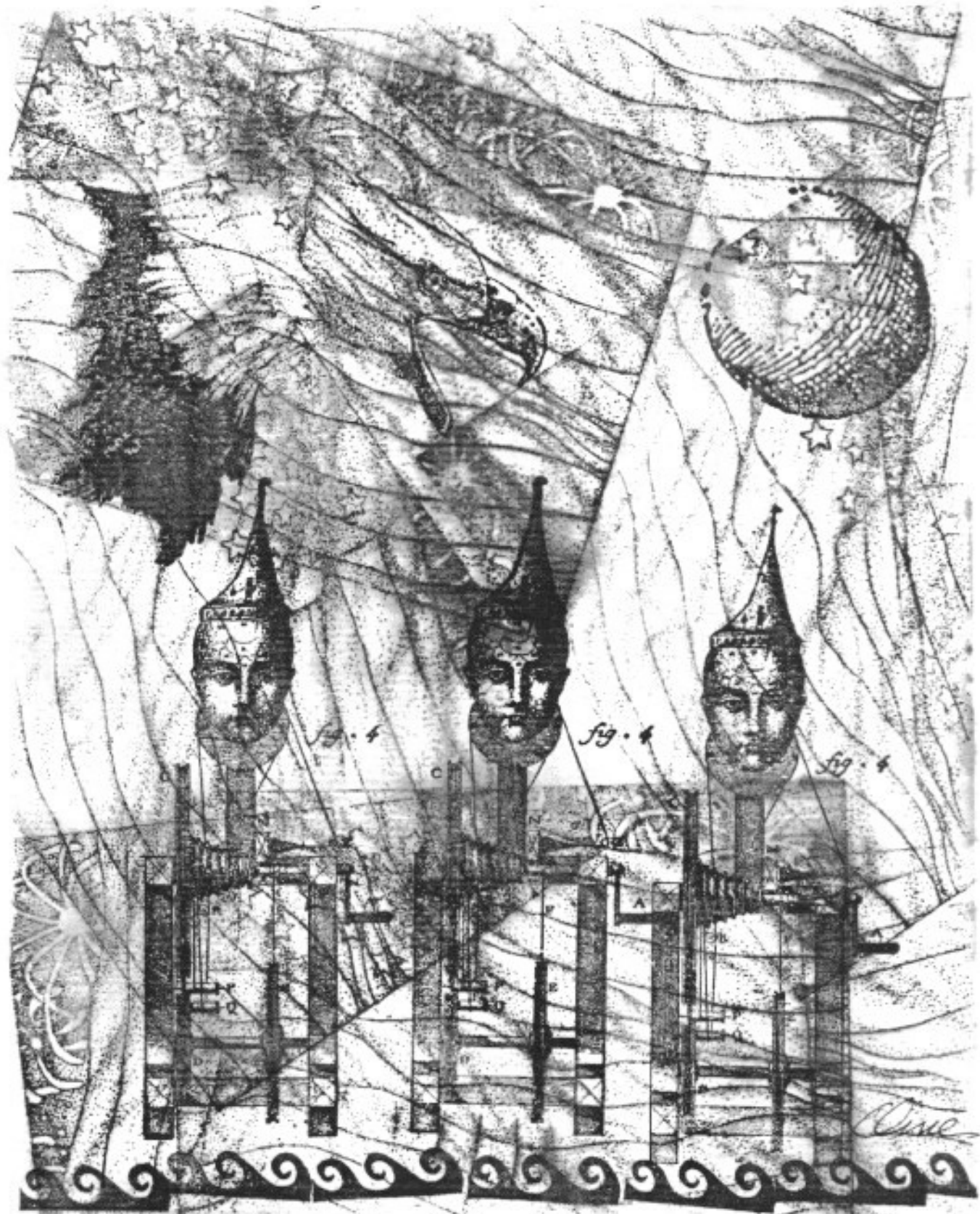
Contact: stephen_herero@yahoo.com

DRAWING:

HALENA CLINE

Halena Cline is a working artist in the Cincinnati area since 1980 and has exhibited on a national scale. Her recent works depict ideas about the hegemonic and greedy dealings of the United States government in Iraq.

Contact: halenacline@hotmail.com



Helena Cline

Dreaming Private Lynch

driving down my street
tri-colored patriotism
waves in the breeze
from every other house
cars going by
flags flowing like diplomatic envoys
or permanently pasted
on bumpers and door panels.
i was at a restaurant
seated for lunch looking up
at a soft-focused print
of a section of american flag
a patriotic dreamscape
mental note: extremely tacky
never sit here again
this was until i saw
the hanging sconce
over each table was
creamy-white with red
swirling stripes.
now who was samuel johnson thinking
of when he said that patriotism
is the last refuge of a scoundrel?
used to be that only
used car dealers
would fly the rag
for no reason
big and flashy
gaudy as can be
large enough to hide
a lousy paint job
or muffle the rough ride
of soft shocks.
is this cuz you're swelled with pride?
or that it's only possible
for von neumann machines
to process one instruction
at a time?
the thought of brave men and women
black, yellow, white, and brown
from small towns
across this great land
taking a stand
against a dictator
marching his armies
across europe

with impunity
hold on a sec, wasn't
that **saving private ryan** ?
ok why not private lynch?
she's suffering from amnesia
just like all the rest
of us.
she could be the new
pinup girl/poster child
for the new world order.
after all who has time
for questions
like who armed saddam?
or who shot sadat?
who is sadat?
who funded and organized
the mujahadeen hoedown
in afghanistan?
could it have been we_the_people ?
it is, and i mean this,
too painful
to ask a lot of questions
to live on the boundary
of uncertainty
when you have been
trained to shut the fuck up
and do what
you are told.
wanna be bold?
who you gonna listen to?
who you gonna ask?
how long can you
stay balanced
on the edge of that
question
without falling
into the groove
of someone else's ideology?
how long can you wait
for an answer
and will you know it
when it comes
or if it bit you?
who will tell you
when you have an opinion
what it consists of

and how tenaciously
to hold on?
i wish it were just
that i was ridiculing
someone else here
but i'm not.

the charismatic certainty
of suicide bombers,
hijackers, neoconservatives, and
evangelicals
one-way tickets all,
unwittingly cheered on
by these rag wavers.
who are these simpletons
i ask myself
c'est moi, dude,
c'est moi
they're as gullible
and scared as i am
freaked out and
ready to wrap ourselves
in a warm ideology
something colorful
and familiar.
i can see a white picket fence
memorial day parade
blue angels at the
dayton air show
technology and power
raw might in the upstretched
hands of the righteous.
the chosen exception
to all human history
springing full grown
out of
the declaration of independence,
devoid of isms
so last century.
who can remember
jim crow?
the cold war?
we don't recall
last year, last month.
clipping photos off the web
reviewing the online dailies
images of brutality,
chaos, slick marketing,

the whole nine yards
captured in the eyes
of a four year old iraqi girl.
have we become
something else or
is this what we
have always been?
and who is this we?
four centuries of
slavery, expansionism, and
intervention
against a nameless other
hell, we give our pets names
feeling angry
and powerless
at the same time
or in quick succession
like alternating current,
but can you remember
how good it felt
to be demonstrating against the war
with several hundreds
down at fountain square
sensing that link with
eighteen million people
around the world?
a deep swell
moving in a bottomless sea
these truths we hold
to be self-evident
this day, this feeling, this coming
together
we hold to be sacred
the streets of this world
ablaze with banners
or just ablaze
with the oneness of the dharma
the wretched of the earth
the dialectic of history

i'm ready for my closeup, mr. wolfowitz.

Zion

i woke up this morning
thinking about iraq
which then brought up
memories of being an activist.
actually it hasn't brought up
any memories at all,
just fear.
fear of being
marginalized and
inconsequential,
investing years of work
for what?
was there anything
tangible gained
or contributed
that was worth all that?
a more daunting question is
how could i have used that
time to better effect?
it feels like i'm not
only whining
but that i don't even
have the capacity
just to get by
from day to day
making a living
dealing with
depression and despair.
before long this daydream of self pity
melts into anger and outrage
at the thought of
this cheap knockoff
of a previous administration
that deliciously feeble
son of a bush
dragging off our kids
and their future
to kill and lay waste
in our name.
i mean, really now
it's bad enough
for one to pillage
and slaughter
solely for personal gain

but it strikes me as obscene
to dress it up
in the biggest lies
they think
can be marketed
to a gullible, stressed out,
and freaked out
america.
for the rest of the world
the nameless "other"
we'll cram our
policies down their throats
but for the locals
we'll be bombarded
daily with the same story
of a madman
bristling with
weapons of mass destruction
a pancho loco hopped up
on tax cuts and steroids,
a 21st century
sergeant slaughter
ready to invade sovereign countries
spreading chaos, destruction, and
priceless antiquities
in his wake.
wait a sec
are we talking
about saddam or dubbya?
it probably depends on
who you've been listening to lately.
why are the weapons inspectors
wasting their time
flying all over iraq
chasing down rumors
when they could be
touring u.s. military bases
and factories
stockpiling
and turning out
weapons
that would make any
third-rate tyrant salivate?
on our knees
we should thank god
that we

can be trusted
to judiciously mete out death
and destruction
only to those who deserve it
to bring order to chaos
to spread the wealth
to all in need
feeding the hungry
protecting the defenseless
ensuring
the propagation of
all and sundry
such fairy tales.
in a situation
so hopelessly fucked up
maybe there is something of the divine
that happens
as people endeavor to help each other
consoling one another over losses
too dreadful to bear
when absolutely
nothing else can be done,
trying to salvage
something
from a situation
that threatens to strip
our humanity from us
victor and victim alike.
is there a prayer i could say?
what petition would i make
and to whom?
with a madman
at the wheel
we are picking up speed
daring the world
to get in our way
while we rock ourselves
gently to sleep
sweetly dreaming of armageddon
and the kingdom of the new zion.

POEMS:

SCOTT HORSTMEIER

Scott Horstmeier was born and raised in Cincinnati, OH. He married a very fine Cincinnati girl named Daphne. He has two beautiful Cincinnati-born children, named Breanna and Aidan. He cares very much for his city and wants to see it grow and improve into the city it should be.

Contact: horstmeier@juno.com

DRAWING:

CHRISTOPHER VAN PERKINS

Christopher Van Perkins, a native Cincinnati, began drawing and painting at the School for Creative and Performing Arts. As he matured, his later experience became primarily self-taught. Christopher continues his subject on social matters and differences with the hope of balancing and bringing light to negative issues in society.

Contact: cvpkp@netzero.net



CVP
CHRISTOPHER VAN PERKINS

Two Things For Peace

What will bring peace to the 'Nati?

Giving money to big corporations?
Building fancy condos?
Planting flower pots on Vine Street?
Adding new bars on Main Street?
Two big sports stadiums?
Building new schools?
A new city election process?
Finally completing the River Banks
Project?

Simply put: no

Two things will bring peace to the 'Nati

Love and acceptance

We have to love one another
We have to accept one another
For who and what we are

We can open up all the wallets we want
We can open up all the new buildings
we want
We can open up all the new
development we want

Until we open our hearts to one another
it won't matter

We have to love all of our neighbors
We have to accept all of our fellow
citizens
We can't shun anyone

If we want this city to prosper and grow
No one should be outcast
We have to realize

Cincinnati belongs to everybody

Two things will bring peace to the 'Nati

Love and acceptance

A Piece for Peace

How can we have peace
When everyone doesn't have a piece?
Of the majestic Queen
Sitting on the river so serene
A fractured town
Stomped with a foot of fear
A foot of hatred
A foot of ignorance
Neighbors that have all scattered
Have left a city shell all battered
My childhood thoughts are now all
shattered

How can we ever have unity
When at every neighborhood there's a
boundary
Separating them from us and us from
them
All that does is judge and condemn
People want to separate
Instead of celebrate
Our uniqueness
Our differences
Our heritages
People want to separate if our skin's a
different color
All that does is pit us, one against the
other

Cincinnati wants peace, and she wants
it now
So we have to look past our skin,
whether it's white, yellow, red, or brown
And everybody wants a piece, they don't
want to be an outcast
So we have to come together, if we
want the Queen to last

POEMS:

BENJAMIN HUGHES

Benjamin Hughes has several pads, pens and three years of experience as a spoken word artist. An individual competitor in the 2003 national poetry slam, Benjamin's contributions in poetic works, opinions and commentaries can be seen in such publications as: Thewriterscrib.com, freechoicemedia.com, poeticnites.com, Spoken Visions Magazine, and on his site: www.iambenjaminhughes.com

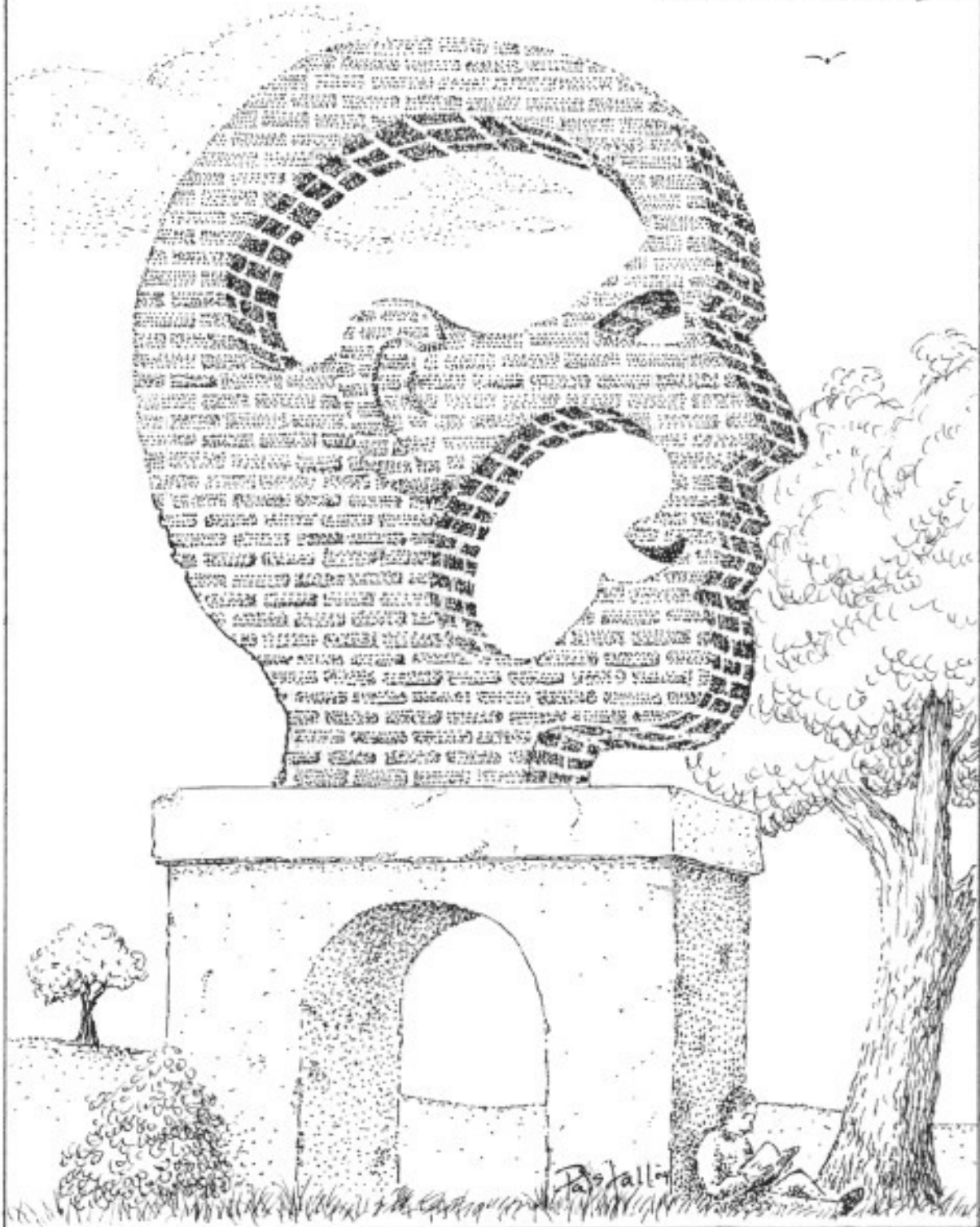
Contact: benjaminhughes@iambenjaminhughes.com

DRAWING:

MARK PATSFALL

Born 1949, Milwaukee, WI. Graduated HS 1967. Attended Nathaniel Hawthorn College, Mass. College of Art, MA. MFA 1979, U. of Cincinnati. Spent 13 months in Vietnam. Two daughters, one son. Artist, printer, publisher.

Contact: mpginc@iac.net



MARK PAT'S FALL

When I Grow Up...

You ever hear the talk when kids were kids
About what they want to be when they're old enough to live
To live a life that they can control
Dreams and aspirations of when they grow old
Driven to hear stories and to be something grand
Aspire to be bigger and better - by their own hands

I use to hear those stories from the mouths of babes
Their mommy's asking them to behave
And all kinds of stuff
"Little Tommy, what do you hope to be when you grow up?"

"Mommy I want to be a fireman and save peoples lives
Maybe a cop, not any robber that wears mask and a disguise
Or maybe mommy, I'll be a doctor or lawyer maybe that"
Grow to be something that all parents pray will be proud of and not regret

So with the children in class in elementary school
The teacher would go around and ask the question
Kids with weary eyes
Couldn't wait to mention
All with smiles, hopes and dreams
They'd be busting out the seems
Cuz they couldn't wait to present their schemes
On what their parents,
Oh I mean
What they wanted to be...
Hopefully, when they grew up

"When I grow up"... this and that
"When I grow up" uhhh and all that other crap

But I will never forget
The look in that teacher's eye
When I stood tall and proud

As she asked the question
And was very surprised
I said really loud

"I want to be a poet when I grow up"

Silence

"Well Benjamin
A poet isn't easy to be
It's frustrating and time consuming
Not a profession that makes much money
Unless you are one of the lucky ones

And I just pray you'll be that lucky"

I replied "Well no - Mrs. XYZ
I don't care how much money - I make because I will be fine with the lyrics I create"
I want to inspire people with thoughts
And move them with writings – see
I want to be a poet
I don't care what anybody thinks
Because somehow, somewhere
I can make a difference
With what I say and how I feel"

"I want to write and recite
To make my feelings and your feelings real
Because if I didn't write
Then I couldn't live"

"If I didn't have paper or pen
Then I don't feel like there'd be much of anything else I could give"

"When I grow up, I want to be a poet, Mrs. XYZ
That's the career I have chosen
Do they have Undergraduate, Master's and Doctorate degrees?
Cause I wouldn't want to be uneducated and just posing
I want to become a poet for all
For I know and believe I can
I could try it for a while at least
And if that doesn't work then maybe I could try becoming a neurosurgeon
Nah, but at least I could write about something in that direction"
I could try to live off my art
That's just what I want to do
Because I know others who have been to that place
Where people think you should be
Living life
Making money
But I will tell you this
I don't think I'd be happy
Because I let someone else tell of what I should be"

I hear grown ups talk of what they could have been
I hear them saying to themselves
"If I had more time
I'd do it all over again"
I have heard that and I don't want that for myself

"I want to be a poet when I grow up
Would rather have a strong mind rather than material wealth
So Mrs. XYZ
When I grow up, a poet is what I dream for myself"

Your Definition

"The *definition* must say what something is, and not what it is not"

The Professor and the Madman – Simon Winchester

Anyone creating a dictionary –
If that is an occupation that is still practiced today –
Has stated, "Defining a word is a fine and peculiar craft"
Not far off from an equation in math
There are rules and procedures to approach that are important

So to begin
I say all that to say this:

When you say something
You better know what the hell you mean
When you define - your something - for someone else
You better be pristine

After all the meanings can be misconstrued
Or even misperceived
And if you don't define that - something - you say
Then what you say can be conceived

As being

Unimportant

And we don't want that now do we

So
Ask yourself this
What is your definition?
Is it missing?
Or do you know who you are?
Do you understand the definition of you?
Or is it hidden somewhere far...

From your mind

Is there something different that distinguishes your life from others?
Or are
You just simply waiting to die
Like so many people who waste their lives under life's covers
In the background
We all have been told subservient lies
To keep us from doing more

Others tell us
"You can't do that"
Or
"You'll never be anything, so just give up!"

They say
"Are you crazy, you'll never achieve that!"

And in fact
We react
To that

And after being given
Others definition
Of who we ought to be
We begin telling ourselves

"Hell maybe they are right,
I agree"

Understand the cycle
Do you see?

Having the facts and figures
Shouldn't keep you from your dreams
But in reality those facts and figures are trying hard
To keep you from what god had meant you to be?

What would have Einstein ever accomplished
If he agreed with what his early teachers said
If Medger Evers wouldn't have continued to speak out
And instead laid down his upright head

If instead
Of continuing to build and try to fly
The Wright brothers just gave up

If Arthur Ashe stopped playing tennis
Or if - in the Civil War - the North gave up

But what if,
We kept stating what if
Instead of actually act?
What if we were happy
With all that we are and have...
Instead of point out what we lack

So to go back
To the beginning
A definition for yourself should be brought

But remember
The *definition* must say what something is,
And not what it is not

So tell me what
Is your definition for you?

Just Want the Truth

I want to find a way to move people even when they are stuck in places that cannot be moved

I want to do things that have never been seen

I want to change your opinion

Maybe even

Change George Bush's religion

Into something more conceivably believable

Because you know all he believes in is his family

Let's have a big gathering

And invite all the men that helped support

Don't retort BUSH

Or resort to lame excuses

Let's just be real and name the abuses

Too many nooses around the necks of government people

"We are all made equal"

Especially when it comes to laying blame

The same thing that happened before

Is happening

Again

Got to restrain myself from making any fake claims

Because someone

Somewhere

Is playing a game

With my beliefs

My freedoms

My thoughts and abilities

My taxes

My health care and 401K

My social security

They're killing me slowly with their intentions

And all this information that they fail to mention

Like when we went in

To fight and keep Saddam from releasing terrorist threats

We rushed with shock and awe

Military plans that were really long shots and bets

Does the president have **turrets**?

Because I swear I'm seeing changes

His personality

His confidence

And balls have rearranged us

The US and conservatives are leading everyone to belief
That the threat exists
When there is not evidence to prove they will need
More money for the fight

87 billion dollars are you crazy
Sending people in on the whims of
Yes's no's and maybes

Well maybe I am wrong
Maybe I ask too many questions
But the fact of the matter is that I ask so I won't cause deception
Want to have what I need to make a good decision

President Bush I want you to help me
Understand your mindset
Because soldiers are dying everyday
As a result of your pride and ignorance

So just tell us the truth and maybe we will believe
Instead of ask for 87 billion - maybe there is something else you should ask yourself

"If I was on the other end, would this make sense to me?"
Ask that question - please

POEMS:

JERRY JUDGE

Jerry Judge is a Cincinnati-based poet, social worker, and peace activist. He is the President of the Greater Cincinnati Writers' League and author of two poetry books. Jerry still becomes saddened and enraged whenever he thinks of "Shock and Awe."

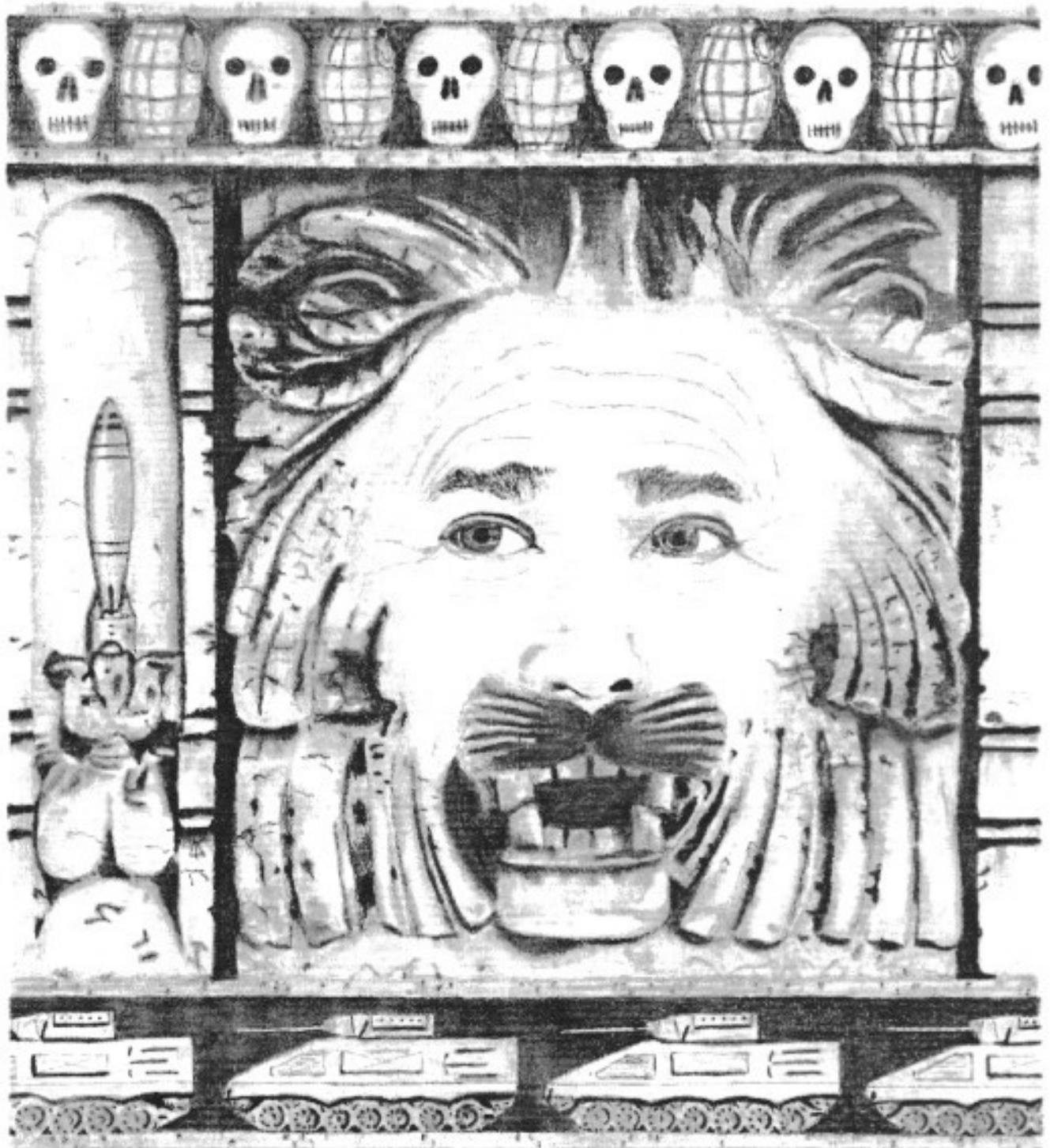
Contact: jerryj871@aol.com

DRAWING:

LARRY JONES

Larry Jones, born in Cincinnati, graduated from its University. Now retired, he devotes his time to travel and to his artistic creations. Larry is a photographer; he also makes ceramic and mixed media sculptures and recently took up sketching. He has shown his work in numerous galleries in the Greater Cincinnati area.

Contact: lejones_99@yahoo.com



Larry Jones

Cleansing for Americans

We will march and bomb.
We will bomb and bomb.
We will bury our dead and bomb.
We will bury their dead with our bombs.
We will wave our flags and bomb.
We will attend church and bomb.
We will watch on tv the bombs bombing.
We will watch on instant replay the bombs bombing.
We will watch on slow-mo the bombs bombing.
These are holy bombs.
We will bomb bomb bomb.
Bombs will cleanse.
Hallelujah!
Bombs. Bombs. Bombs.
These are holy bombs.
Hallelujah!
Take us back home. The bombs.
Show us the way. The bombs.
These are holy bombs.
Hallelujah!
Forgive us our sins. The bombs.
Forgive us our trespasses. The bombs.
Hallelujah!
Bombs. Bombs. Bombs.

A Special Lottery

All other countries had been disarmed,
but the President reserved the right
of preemptive strike whenever he sensed Evil.
Each bomb spiked up his popularity at home,
caused Geiger counters to glow across the globe.
The Star Spangled Banner was sung before,
during and after football games and tv shows.
The Playboy channel featured topless singers,
the religious channel showcased a tuneful Jesus
and Mary. Once a month a special lottery
let citizens pick what country might be bombed next.
As the number of countries left began to dwindle,
America's North and South pointed fingers.

(first published with a different title in
Artspike Magazine)

No Forwarding Address

I should have known at the stadium.
Quarterback's neck snapped.
Fifty thousand frenzied fans cheering
tackler dancing flamenco over still body.

I should have known from television.
Clean-cut announcers foaming at mouth.
American flags undulating as
Iraq's people are blown into scraps.

I should have known from City Hall.
An ordinance enacted
to protect downtown merchants by
outlawing begging by the homeless.

I finally knew when I opened the curtains
on the other side of his eyes.
Void. Empty.
No forwarding address.

(first published in *Pinehurst Journal*)

POEM:

LUCILLE KELCH

Lucille Kelch is a 72 year old part Shawnee Indian who enjoys writing poetry. She is an amateur taxidermist who also makes Native American crafts such as mandellas and dream catchers.

Contact: (513) 553-4683

DRAWING:

ROB JEFFERSON

Rob Jefferson graduated from the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 1992 with a major in painting and a minor in drawing. Rob has shown his work extensively in solo and group exhibits.

Contact: rjefferson@cinci.rr.com



R. J. J.
ROB JEFFERSON 2004

The Eagle and The Dove

High up on a mountain
Lived an eagle and a dove
One got its way through aggression
And the other just through love
You can strive to win a battle
Until victory is yours
But a little bit of persuasion
Can open many doors
Like the eagle on the mountain
We can fight and win the war
But to show a little compassion
Can accomplish so much more
We can try to have the patience
Of that tiny gentle bird
We can win the battle quicker
If we just resort to words
We don't have to be an eagle
And dig our talons deep
We can sit and talk it over
There will be many less to weep

POEMS:

LONNA KINGSBURY

Lonna D. Kingsbury is a local poet and the originator of Cincinnati's Poets Anonymous and the producer/originator of Countering the Silence, a concept currently in its fourth year of continuous cable presentation. Lonna remembers UC fondly in the days of James Bertolino and finals at Arnold's. Her first Cincinnati publication as Lonna DuChaine occurred in "Clifton Magazine" as the lone female poet between Bertolino and Dallas Wiebe.

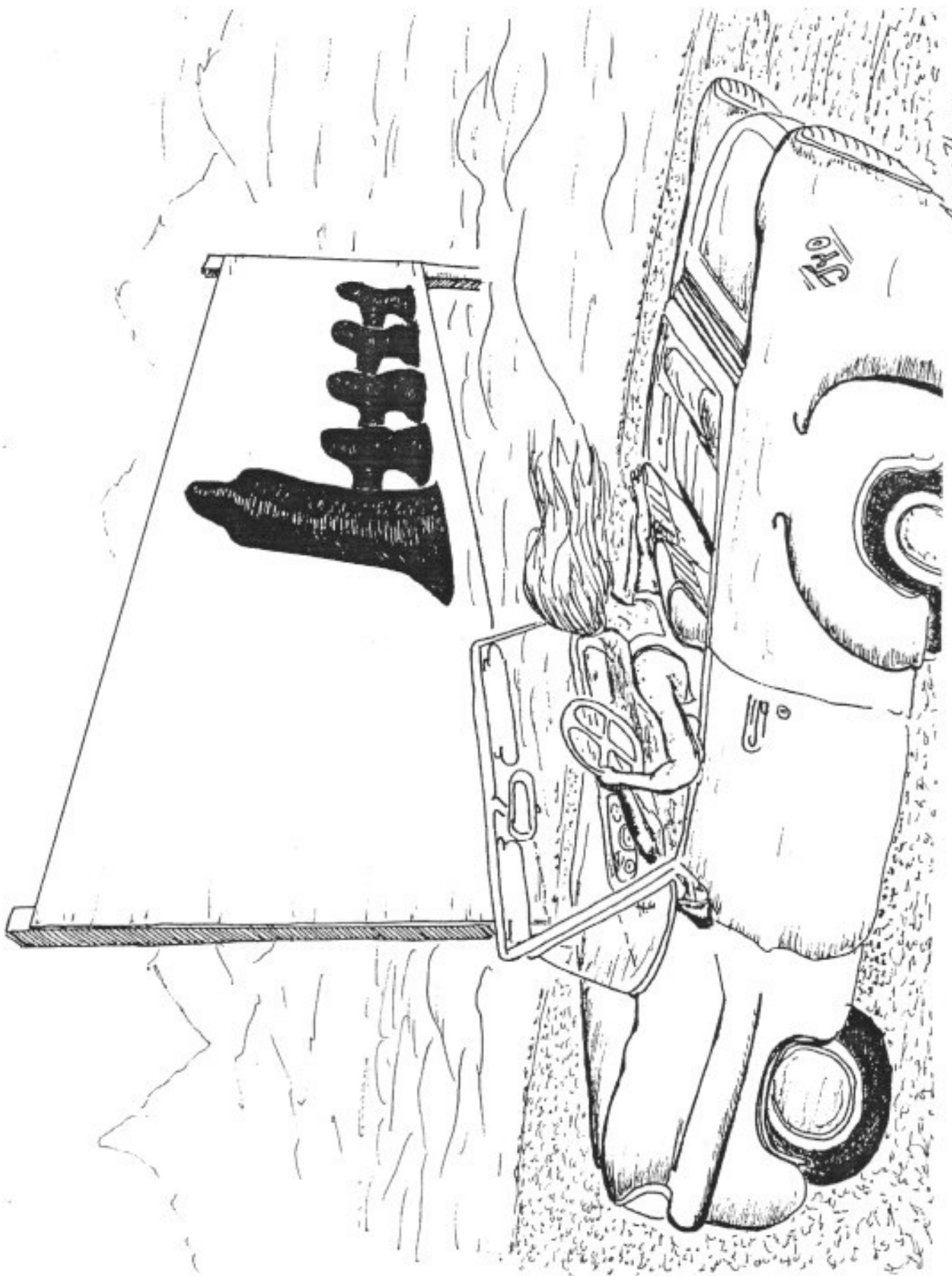
Contact: meriprxtr1@netzero.com or Visit: www.counteringthesilence.com

DRAWING:

JOHN YOUNG

John Young was born in 1968 at Our Mother of Mercy Hospital in Mariemont, OH. He is a self-taught artist with family histories in both written and illustrative arts. He continues to explore new and different ways to express himself.

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Freedom

Wheels on roads ring Freedom
always have and ever will
from days of bonded exiled souls
to modern student goals
from aged passing lifelines
to lonely waiting young
uplifted by slow steady steps
alighting from beyond
who reinforce with wonder
instill through simple joys
belief in opportunities
in reaching out - employ
small selfless acts befriending
angry and confused
miraculously teaching
through sharing hope renewed
freedoms just beginning
negating easy outs
provided through revealing
routings proven sound
of magical proportions
as wheels on roads reground
connections to each rider
that virtually resound
old as time foundations
resurrecting strong
proof of all who are - are one
with those who've been before
and yet to come - forever
linked throughout the chain
transcending every destiny
extending equal space
honoring each passage
inherent lines and traits
as generations one on one
successfully portrayed
cooperatively leading
artistically displayed
entreat our future travelers
combine to yield each way
for equal peaceful traveling
above . . . beyond . . . today.

When Was the Last Time You Fed Our Babies

When was the last time you fed our babies
faint-hearted mewlings struggling soft
promptly debedding -running to closed room
as pre-dawning floor-scene
silently mocks

the stark remains
of so engrained
effusively ignorant pain

Weeping, my eyes sought to see

Missing my glasses I sped to our nightstand
running past husband and worry-struck dog
upon full revival realized panic
stirring me forward was not of this realm

had merely been
intrusive dreams
infusing heart-rendering fear

Keening, my ears sought to hear

Peeking in seeing normal kept stages
of antiques and what-nots beloved to me
noticing useless playpen left standing
neatly and tidy behind the wood door

No babies here
expelling tears
in silence or terror-struck chords

Grieving, my throat sought to breathe

Moving to kitchen plugged in my coffee
releasing my dog through glass sliding doors
Adding my creamer sought couch's comfort
remotely tuned into news -24

with graphic gore
of settling scores
and holding attention of all

Tightening, my heart sought to beat
and somewhere I heard the screams

When was the last time you fed our babies . . .

POEMS:

JOHN KRAIMER

"Slammin' John" Kraimer is a performance poet, musician, and magician from West Chester, Ohio. In March 2004, he was crowned winner of the annual Riverbank Poetry Slam competition held at the Fitton Center in Hamilton, Ohio. John works as the Director of Disability Services at the University of Cincinnati - Raymond Walters College.

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DRAWING:

WOLFGANG RITSCHEL

Wolfgang Ritschel, a native of Austria, studied fine arts, pharmacy, medicine and philosophy. A successful medical scientist, he left academia in the mid-90s to become a full-time artist (painting and sculpture). Wolfgang has exhibited extensively in the US, Europe and South America; his work is part of many museums, public and private collections. He is an Emeritus Professor of Pharmacology at the University of Cincinnati.

Contact: ritschelart@hotmail.com or Visit: www.wolfgangritschel.com



WOLFGANG A. RITSCHEL

The Bells Of Peace

(In this poem the performer has a stings of bells which are shaken at the indicated times)

{ring bells}

In the year *{ring bells}* there came a lasting peace
Man grew weary of the pain and strife and the fighting finally ceased

They put away their warrior ways and together shared the land
On blood stained ground they faced their foes and extended open hands

They swore to never fight again, they all took solemn vows
The weapons were all melted down and beaten into plows

A reign of Peace throughout the Earth, where a rain of bombs once fell
A harmony throughout the land where once was living Hell

Why they fought so long and hard they couldn't understand
Why they destroyed all that they did and killed their fellow man

But now that was behind them, a relic of the past
For in the year *{ring bells}* the bells of peace were cast

The people gathered round them to listen to them toll
A feeling overwhelmed them deep within their very soul

The sound was so magnificent, the music loud and clear
Wouldn't it be wonderful if now it were that year?

{ring bells}

Fist of Rage

The fist of rage is thrust up high
Harsh words are heard, sharp insults fly

Thumbs turned down, they shout and yell
A jarring mantra, "Go To Hell!"

The bird is flown from outstretched hand
And venom spews from angry man

There certainly is no shortage
Of hatred here on Earth
But imagine if you can, just for a second
For what it's worth

How amazing it would be
If these gestures all did cease
Because the only fingers flying
Were the fingers meaning peace

Make Love Not War by Bonzo the Bonobo

(In this piece the performer wears a monkey mask and the poem is read from the perspective of a monkey. A brief explanation is given about a bonobo behavior. FYI, many primate species display and practice aggressive behavior within their social structure. Bonobos, as you will learn in this poem, have developed a much different method for functioning within their clans).

Make love not war, you wish that it were true
Well it is if you're a bonobo, that's what we like to do

We're horny, lusty monkeys who don't have time to fight
Instead of getting all pissed off we do it day and night

Unlike our primate cousins, unruly chimpanzees
We bonobos do it on the ground or way up in the trees

Rather than plotting dirty deeds or who to battle next
We bonobos sit around with our clans having wild sex

Single, double, triple, homo or hetero
We do it any way they can to keep group tension low

Now you might think such behavior is perverted and most vile
But it's really not that crazy if you ponder it a while

You see, we bonobos substitute sex for aggression
While you men resort to rage and repression

If people tried bonobo ways they'd say we're morally corrupted
But what about your bloody wars and all the lives destructed

So if you travel to the jungle and find yourself a jumping
Fear not it's just a bonobo, and that's your leg he's humping

POEM:

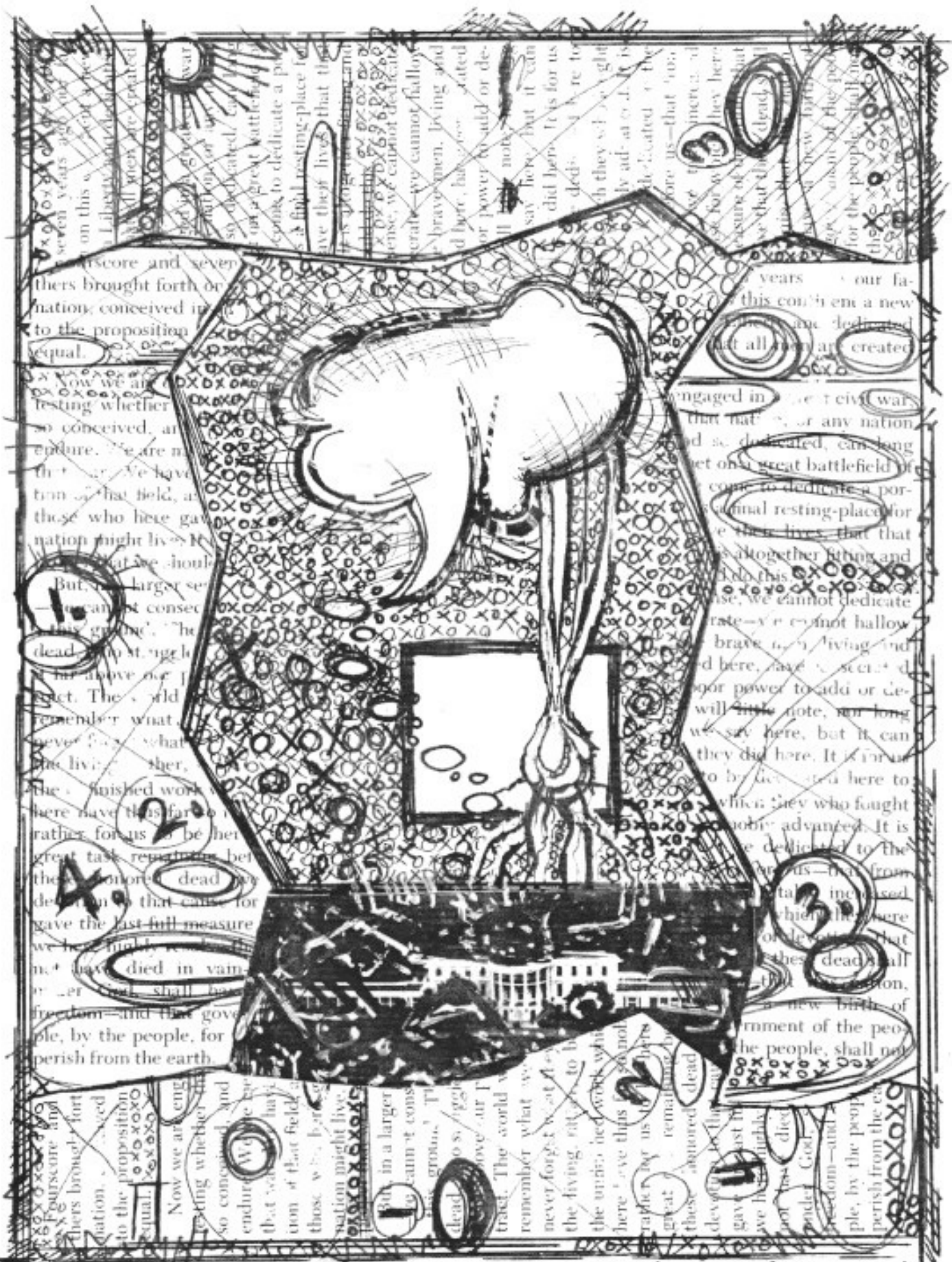
STEVEN PAUL LANSKY

Steven Paul Lansky is a Cincinnati writer whose interest in the plight of people who face mental illness, homelessness, and poverty moved him to write this poem inspired by the early music of Bob Dylan and the theater of Mary Kroner (another Cincinnati).
Steven teaches at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

DRAWING:

FARRON ALLEN

After earning a bachelor's degree in Social Work (1979) and a BFA in Sculpture and Graphic Design (1988) from West Virginia University, Morgantown, Farron Allen received, in 1990, an MFA in Sculpture from the University of Cincinnati (UC).
Farron currently teaches sculpture foundry at UC.



on this... seven years ago... Liberty... will never be repeated...
 score and seven... others brought forth or... nation, conceived in... to the proposition... equal...
 Now we are... testing whether... so conceived, an... endure... We have... that field, as... those who here gave... nation might live... But... larger se... cannot consec... this grave... the dead... struggle... above our... The world... remember what... never... what... the living... the finished work... here have this far... rather for us to be her... great task remains bet... the... dead... definition... that cause for... gave the last full measure... we... died in vain... shall have... freedom—and that gove... ple, by the people, for... perish from the earth...
 Now we are engag... testing whether... so conceived, and... endure... We have... that we... have... tion of that field... those who... nation might live... But in a larger... by... it cons... groins... The world... remember what... never forget what... the living... to be... the union... here... this... not... for us to... remain... these... dead... devoted... the... gave... last... we have... much... of... died... God... freedom—and... ple, by the peop... perish from the ea...
 years... our fa... this continent a new... have dedicated... all... an... created... engaged in... civil war... that nat... or any nation... and a... dedicated, can long... meet on... great battlefield... come to dedicate a por... annual resting-place for... these lives... that that... together living and... dead... this... use, we cannot dedicate... rate—we cannot hallow... brave... living and... d here... we cannot... power to add or de... will... note, nor long... we say here, but it can... they did here. It is... to be... here to... which they who fought... nobly advanced. It is... dedicated to the... from... which... more... that... the dead... shall... tion... new birth of... rnement of the peo... he people, shall not...

FARRON L. ALLEN 2004

Onion Poem

got my onion. my onion, see.
a pain. a hurt. pain, maan, see, hurt, see.
the man want my onion. i say NO. NO you take pain.
take pain. leave my onion. leave my onion alone, see.

there's a window. a window, see. don' break no window, see.
windowframe paint, need to paint my windowframe, see.
ain't the same, man. ain't
the same, man. see, i ain't been the same.
pain. pain. man, the pain i feel, man. see, you don' understand, see.

so, i'm leavin'. gonna get on the plane and go away. not gonna live
here no more. take my onion an' go. go, see. go away where there
ain't no pain, see. where, see. where, see. sinners gonna drive me away.
so many sinners drive me away. take my onion and go across the sea.

where have all the flowers gone? long time passing?
flowers in the windowbox. cactus flowers on the windowsill.
red and pink and purple. lovely bruise. lovely. paint my onion purple.

hello? hello? (my friend hands me a cell phone) it's george W. bush for you! george?
how do i know it's you? dubya for warmonger? yeah, that's what i say. he says,
"steve, could i use your onion for a few days?"
no. "steve, you still hanging with that folksinger crowd?"

my friend george, we got two words for you. REGIME CHANGE!
we want the same thing, just for different countries! let's disarm the USA.
let the UN monitor US elections, and inspect US weapons of mass destruction.

the phone goes dead. george is gone. gone. he don't know no onion.
i had a mad dream that we snuck into the White House and removed the top three
floors so there was just an empty shell and dubya was another homeless man. he had
to walk to another town 'cause all of DC was closed.

morally bankrupt, socially stratified, politically isolated, and we all sat back, turned off
the TV rattle of war and watched the children grow. watched the flowers grow. sat
around in the onion patch hand in hand,
peaceful as the wild city critters, squirrels, raccoons, pigeons, and robins.

POEMS:

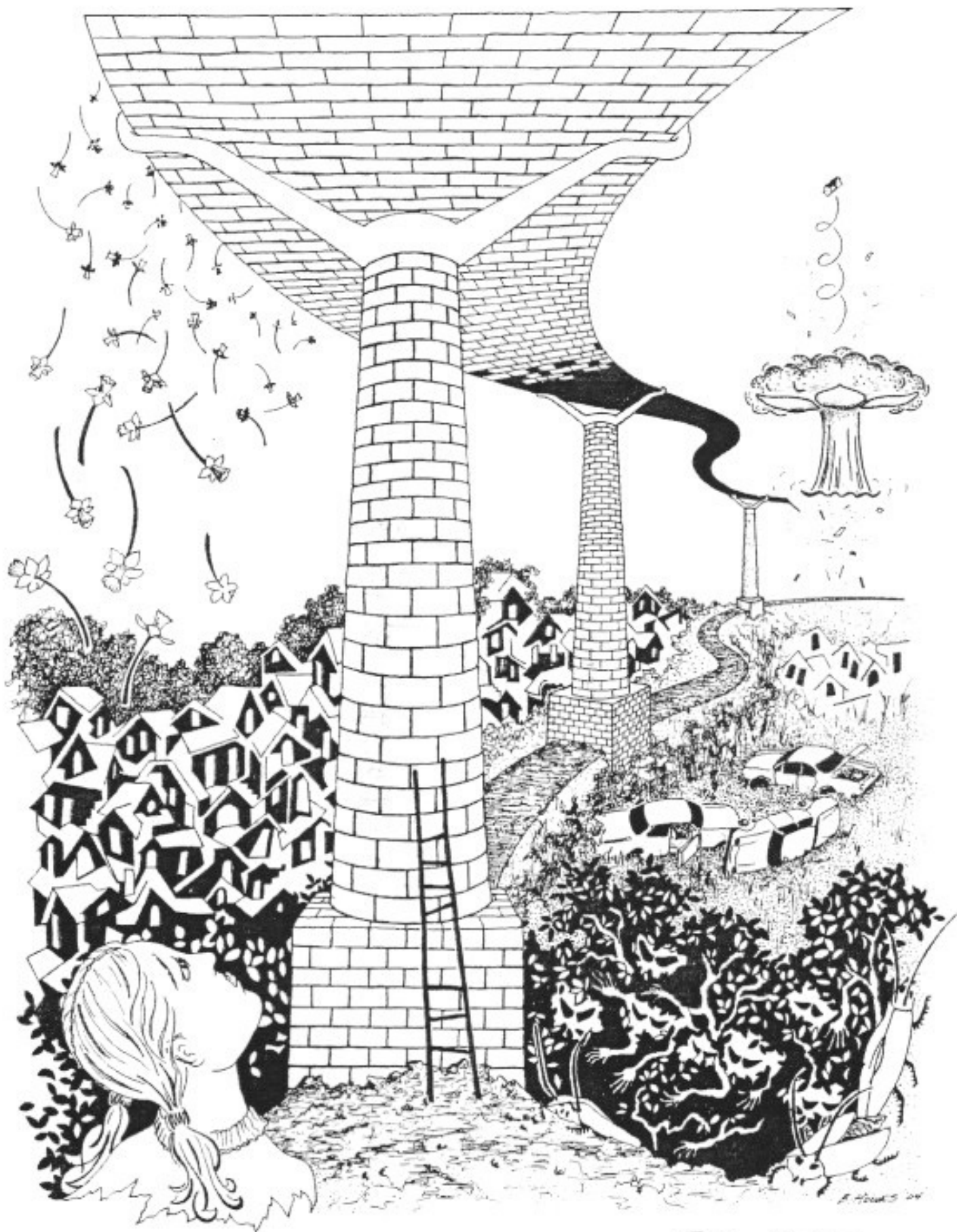
CAROL FEISER LAQUE

Carol Feiser Laque, born in San Francisco, has been living in Cincinnati since 1966. She has a PhD in writing from the University of Cincinnati (UC) and has taught creative writing at both UC and Xavier University. Carol's poems included in this book are from her new collection of poetry: "*Fleshly Bread, Nervous Wine*", published by Circumference Press, summer 2004.

DRAWING:

BILL HOWES

A native of Cincinnati, Bill Howes graduated in 1985 from its University with a bachelor's degree in Industrial Design. Bill is a landscape designer at heart, who enjoys gardening and connecting with nature. In 2003 he was the recipient of *Garden Design's* Golden Trowel Award for best garden by a non-professional.



BILL HONES

Dorothy Following the Yellow Brick Road Into the Yellow Brick Wall

It gets cold some nights –
bitter. In the heat I sleep
under the freeway off-ramps.
Then I can't hardly breathe.

When the library opens I'm there
to get warmed or cooled down.
I've slept in cars below zero
with other men. You need a man
so you're not raped all year long.

I lived in a concrete storage
shed for a while once.
Nobody hires you for a job
when you got no address.

I've been from one shelter
to another, one church
to another for food.
Now I live in Tender Mercies
which is where I got T.B.
No roaches though.

Nighty Night: Spring in Iraq, a Musical

Every dawn without fail,
I puke daffodils.
Yellow peril blooms everywhere.

This story is about debauchery.
Pricks and Cocks bomb and loot
the land – destroying history.

I should shrug, I know
the way I did
after 9/11. Welcome to my world.

Baghdad is full of guerillas
and aborted baby girls.
Let's throw a party
in my uterus

An American Dream

I want to be in a car
commercial. You know
the ones that conquer
the wilderness. You know
the one where the woman
is sexy and mates with the
steering wheel for
forty days and nights.

Then all promise and
possibility are mine.
My children eat coca puffs
and coolaid for breakfast.
Even Jesus drives to church.

POEMS:

OBALAYE MACHARIA

Obalaye Macharia was born and raised in the "village" of Findlater Gardens in Cincinnati, OH. He attributes much of his current standards for living to having grown up in such a communal environment. Obalaye also believes that such a beginning prepared him well for life as an entertainer and member of The Artistic Order of 144,000.

Contact: obalaye@global144k.com

DRAWING:

ANDREW LOUGHNANE

Born deaf in 1974, Andrew Loughnane spent his early childhood in a world of colorful shapes and images. After a series of operations, he fully recovered, though this early experience sealed his fate as a committed visual artist. Andrew has a BA in Germanic Studies from Indiana U; he has been active as an artist most of his life. Seeing little difference between art and everyday life, Andrew uses media ranging from installation, drawing, video, photography... to challenge traditional notions of materials, space, and audience participation vis-a-vis traditional, as well as contemporary art.

Contact: andrew@unit-2-art.com



Andrew Loughnane

WARFARE

No! Noooo!!!
No More
No More Please No!!
I, I won't no more
I want no I
Won't no more
No more I won't study
No more
I won't study no more Please
I won't study....WAR
I won't study war no more
No more I won't study war
I won't study war no more
I got to even the score
Got to let my bird of passage soar
This is warfare and it's not fair
So who should care if we don't prepare
Where are all of my revolutionary mothafuckas at
Well put your fist in the air
Because nothing will ever compare
To the bullshit that's happening everywhere
Everytime I turn around I'm on another battle ground
And how stupid does this battle sound
Against myself against my kin
Got to battle with my friend
Got to battle with the notion that I was born in sin
Got me doing my Black Magic war dance again
Cause by the way things are looking
This fuckin war will never end
Especially if we pretend
That we don't comprehend
This sick psychotic trend, women and men
Warfare must cease
That's why I release the lyrics in this piece
Cause I want peace
Don't you want peace?
See we want peace
That's what we're writing for
That's what we're fighting for
That's why we won't study no more war
I won't study war no more
Because it's time to explore
What the hell we're in these second class schools for
While my first class jail awaits me
And some dumb ass cracker fake educate me
And my employers think it's okay not to compensate me

The way they do their own
And they're wondering what is so god awfully wrong
With whites receiving 22 billion dollars in business loans
Meanwhile back in the hood things ain't all good
Because our two million dollar loan
Didn't last as long
And now we're joining hands singing that same tired ass old song
WE SHALL OVERCOME SOMEDAY
But not today
Because it's payday
And everything is okay
And I still got time to play
So I grab my fifth of e & j
Jump in my Chevrolet
And roll around the way
To see what my niggas got to say
Hey, what the fuck you mean
I ain't got time for no war
Cause I'm so fresh and so clean clean
Got my bling bling and everything
Seems like a dream
That quickly recoils into a nightmare
Because this warfare against terror can't seem to take care of
The crooked cop
That won't be stopped
From shooting me down like pop pop pop
And when their day in court comes all the charges are dropped
And then they look in my face and say JUSTICE
Boy what a waste
And at sundown Jesse, Mfume, and Sharpton leave without a trace
What a fuckin disgrace
The way these pimpin preachers prostitute my race
While the chase
The chase
To erase my black face
Is still on
BANG
Another brother gone
And here we go
Joining hands again
Singing another tired ass song
EVERYTHING IS GONNA BE ALRIGHT AFTER A WHILE
So smile my sun child
Allow your soul rays
To penetrate the crowd
To liberate the crowd
To illuminate the crowd
BLOOD!!!

BLOOD!!

Has been spilled in these streets
It's being spilled in these streets
And they're still wearing their sheets
And we're hearing the harps beat
While preparing for a repeat
A repeat

I repeat
BLOOD!!

Has been spilled in these streets
It's being spilled in these streets
And they're still in their sheets
And we're still hearing the harps beat
Preparing for a repeat

No retreat
No retreat

As we continue to speak in the most creative ways
With lyrics that were made to free the slaves
So step out of your graves
And live again

My friend, it's time to do some soul searchin

Are you with them

Or are you with us

Isn't the slogan "in god we trust"

Or is it that we lust

To fuss and fight

Brothas and sistas

Look into the light and gain some insight

So that we can change the wrongs to right

And right the songs

That scream forever more

WE

WON'T

STUDY

WAR

NO

FUCKIN

MORE

Ode to BH: The Renaissance Community

This spirit can't be contained
Our love for our community won't be restrained
It's morning time!
And we're wide-awake
It's time to participate
Love has over-powered hate
Just take
A look around
I KNOW!! We lost a lot but look at what we've found
FREEDOM
Take a whiff of the air up here
We've been through a life filled with pain
Yet never shed a tear and yet hear
On these very grounds
SHHHH
Listen!
You can still hear the sounds
Of my foremothers Leaps and bounds and now
Our hearts pound
So wear your crown
And wipe the frown from your faces
Think of all the places
We could be
But We are
Together and free
Building the renaissance community

Bond Hill = Lil' Afrikah

POEMS:

MIKE MURPHY

Poet Mike Murphy spent time-chunks in Clermont County, Wilmington College, New York City, California, Rhode Island, & the internationally-known Sirius Community Conference Center in Massachusetts, returning to Cincinnati to jot down poems.

Contact: mmurphy10@fuse.net

DRAWING:

ANDREW AU

Andrew Au, born 1972 in Chicago, IL, grew up in West Virginia. He is a well-established visual artist who obtained an MFA from the U of Cincinnati in 2000. On his first grade homework assignments, Andrew was reprimanded for drawing dinosaurs. His work continues to address 'monsters', but now focuses on finding their roots in the social, political, and dysfunctional of our culture and civilization.

Contact: rotor242@yahoo.com

PRINCE OF PEACES

LIBRIS

WAR HED
NOK ULER

ANDREW AS



Look, George

Look, George--
We don't
Really
Need this war
On Iraq,
See.
We've figured
It out.
It's really
Simple.
Let me explain.
There's just
Three steps,
Maybe four.

For **starters**,
George,
Change your
Mind &
Cancel that
\$674 B/10yr
Tax Cut
You just gave--
Mostly to your
Rich buddies.

Second, George--
Put that \$
Into a
Global
Marshall Plan to
Stop wrecking
The environment--
And also to
Start eliminating
Social &
Economic
Degradation.

Third step, George--
And this is the
"MAIN IDEA",
George--
Put this

"Marshall Plan
To End
Pollution &
Poverty"
Straight into the
Hands of
Those wonderful
PEOPLE'S COUNCILS
Springing up
All around the
World--

Like the
Earth Democracy
Movement in
India, George,
Defending
Biodiversity
On farms &
In nature--

Like those
Amazing city
Budget councils
All over Brazil,
George,
Allocating
Hundreds of
Millions annually
For people's needs--

Like the
Marvelous
Citizen Panels
Of Denmark,
Australia, the US,
& A dozen
Other countries,
George,
Sorting out
Technology &
Waste issues--

Or like those
Quietly effective
Study Circles

Of Sweden,
George...
And so on.

What then?
Well, George,
The momentum
Of people's
Democracy is
Bound to
Rise into
Revolution
Sweeping the
Planet clean
Of oppressive
Regimes like
Iraq or
North Korea,
George...
Or any other
Obstacle that
Stands in
The way of
People's
Access to
The necessities
Of life like
Food, air,
Water,
Beauty,
Nature,
Creativity,
Sharing &
Harmony.

So, George,
The **fourth** phase
Is massive cutbacks
In obviously
Less needed
Military spending--

So we can
Spend our
Time & energy
On what
Really matters--
Enjoying life,
Creating, &
Sharing, &
Love.

Pretty simple,
Eh, George?
So, look, George.
See, George?

State of Denial

Seemed like
John Wayne
Up there
Giving that
State of the Union
Speech--

Guns blazing
Ask no questions
Admit no mistakes
Make no apologies--

Sure,
All the world is
Glad the
Bloody
Saddam Hussein is
Out of power--

Heck,
Been better if the
US had not
Helped *put* him in
Power in the
First place--

Anyway,
Pres. Bush
Never asked
Why
So many
People are
Strapping
Bombs on
Themselves &
Blowing up
Americans--
Never
Admitted
He was
Wrong about
A Baghdad-
Al-Quaeda
Connection, or

WOMD--&
Never
Apologized for any
Lies or mistakes--

Of course,
Real leaders,
Real men & women,
Are not afraid to
Ask questions or
Admit mistakes or
Apologize--

In some, tho,
Our celluloid
God of the
Fast Gun &
Slow Mind
Lives on & on
In grand
Olympian
Denial.

Come! Bring Food & Music!

Come, now--
Let's not
Completely blame
Bush or
Cheney.

Bush is a
Psychiatric
'Dry Drunk'
(Google-search
This term)
With imaginary
Enemies &
Imaginary friends &
Delusions of
Grandeur.
Cheney,
They say, is
The same,
Only worse.

And Powell--
The 'nice' one--
Once told
Congress
He wants
The US
To be the
'Bully on the
Block' (1992).

Okay.
These & other
Neocons
Have realized
Their wish,
Their fantasy--

But should
We the People
Let these
Fanatics
Tell us
What to think,
What to say,
What to do?

Come, now!
We are
Adults.
We have
Common Sense.
We know
How to
Seek & find
Heartfelt
Sensible
Solutions.

Are we not
Brothers?
Are we not
Sisters?
Are we not
Friends?
Are we not
Lovers?
Are we not
Stewards of
The same
Earth?
Children of the
Same God?

Come!
Let us
Put down
Our guns
& Bombs...
Come,
Let us
Each
Bring food &
Eat & drink
Together--
Let us talk...
Perhaps we'll
Even sing--
&, Yeah,
Maybe even dance.

Come!
Let us have
Food & Music!
Come!

POEM:

MATTHEW PILLISCHER

Matthew Pillischer is a member of the International Socialist Organization (Cincinnati branch). He creates films, songs, theater, spoken and visual art. When he is not organizing for a better world or producing art, he is feeding animals and shoveling goat shit at Sunrock Farm.

Contact: mpillischer@yahoo.com or Visit: www.overwallsthemovie.com

DRAWING:

JENNIFER PURDUM

Jennifer Purdum was born in 1975 in Wooster, OH. She obtained a BFA from the U of Cincinnati in 2001 and an MFA in Painting from American University (Washington, DC) in 2003. Jennifer is a prolific artist who has exhibited her work extensively, both locally and nationally.

Contact: vonda300@yahoo.com



J. Rudlum

Humanity

I opened up my arms
and took out all the veins;
I laid them out, separated,
whole, long strains of humanity.

There aren't enough healthy veins in my body
to aid the wounded or the dead.

The blood of my body fit neatly in porcelain cups.
I hung them from a tree
and birds bathed their tiny wings
in the bold red
that was inside me.

A thousand new maroon cardinals,
wet with life,
flew across the city.

"Is it raining blood?"
a woman asked.
The tears went on, unnoticed by the majority.

POEM:

CHRIS ROESING

Chris Roesing (Roesing Ape) is from Kentucky, has two BAs (French & Theatre), and has been/is a poet, a musician, an artist, an actor, a performance artist, a bartender, a webmaster, a videographer, a composer, a waiter, a copy boy, a designer, a novelist, a director, a playwright, an organizer, a promoter, a jerk, a light and sound technician, a developer, an audio technician, a programmer, a (bad) cook, a busboy, a student, a booking agent, a radio DJ, ...

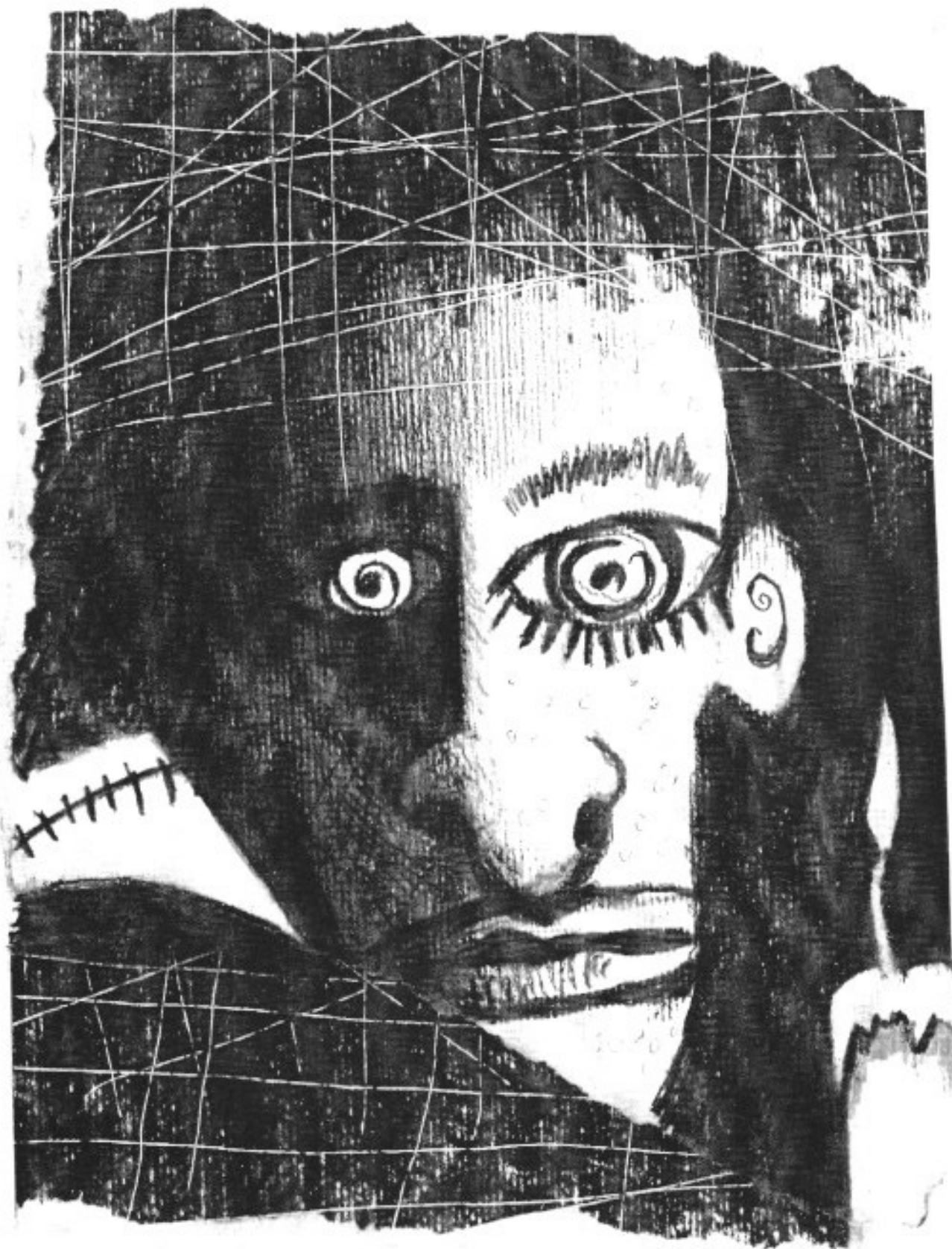
Visit: www.roesingape.org, www.artdamage.org

DRAWING:

JEFF CASTO

Jeff Casto, a West Virginia-born artist, has been living and working in Cincinnati for the past 20 years. His work fuses painting with sculpture; found objects with the two-dimensional issues of color and design. He has exhibited throughout the Mid West and in NYC. His work is in several corporate and private collections, local and abroad.

Contact: jefcasto@aol.com



CASO

The Exampled Preached

I must say nothing with words,
Only with movement will I speak,
I will be so subtle that you will not notice,
I will be ordinary implicit and implied,
But with every true movement, day or night,
I am a secret rebel for the light.

When suddenly you admit a lie,
Or return an object got by theft,
When your whipping tongue is held,
From a weaker mind's exposed back,
And you find yourself suddenly grown conscience,
For no known reason,
Recognize this as the product of my secret message,
My subliminal beacon.

When your anger which once tasted so sweet,
Sticks in your mouth like a sweat bee,
So that you wish immediately to spit it out,
When television grows boring,
When you notice the beauty of a tree,
Yet feel nothing of a hippie,
It is as if you have just decided to,
Like something always secretly wanted,
But never, not really, well almost, but not quite,
Know then you the effect of my rebel brothers and me,
Quietly spreading the light.

A wise sounding voice in your head may claim impulse,
Or your young mind finally grown mature,
Or the turning of a new leaf,
Or the beginning of a new year,
But slowly at first, slowly at second,
Like white glue peeling off of fingertips,
Inconsistencies of thought and deed dissipate,
Anger and hurt lose their edge,
Less and less is offense taken in,
And you become good,
And you will feel alone,
You will be held by love,
And you will be alone.

You may have been changed,
You may be seen by rebels,
You may be invited to fight,
Along with brothers and sisters,

To secretly spread the light,
But probably not.
You may realize that your journey entire,
From nothing to notice to bad to good,
Was led by the invisible examples,
The sub-conscience preaching of the light,
The preaching of the quiet and silent dissenters,
But probably not.

And if the change has taken you,
You will find yourself at first a clumsy bird,
Your vision and passion may make you a fool,
And you may shine the light in other's eyes,
And make them blind in seeing if they can see,
And you will find,
That where you can see they'll be blind,
And where you choose not to look they can see,
And nothing will seem to show them what you've seen,
Not words, not acts, not books, not grief,
And at this point where you will feel most weak,
With ridicule, and looks, and words behind your back,
The troops shall seek to secretly,
Spread the black.

And then you may give in,
The tools you've gained will be honed for manipulation,
Or maybe it was too late,
Maybe the light has sucked you in,
Become stuck between your teeth,
Mayhap you have been cursed with the love of light,
And we will be gone,
My rebel brothers and I will be gone,
You will be left alone,
With a need for the light,
And the misunderstandings of everyone.

And so you search,
And look and read and probe and ask,
Because there is nothing else left to do,
You will have moments of serenity alone in your car,
You will understand the universe on drugs,
You will think the most beautiful things,
As you fall asleep at night,
When you walk alone,
As you wash your hair,
In those thousand moments that we all have to ourselves,
In the bathroom, the car, the bed, the couch,
Between speaking and interaction with others,

Between occupation with objects,
There are those thinking moments,
And to you,
All will seem majestic and potent,
Alone.

You will despair,
In futility,
For now you realize you have given up your power,
To the pattern,
And the pattern drags you slowly into peace,
Piece by piece,
And you will say to yourself,
"I must say nothing with words,
Only with movement will I speak,
I will be so subtle that you will not notice,
I will be ordinary implicit and implied,
But with every movement day or night,
I am nothing,
But a secret rebel for the light."

POEM:

ALAN SAUER

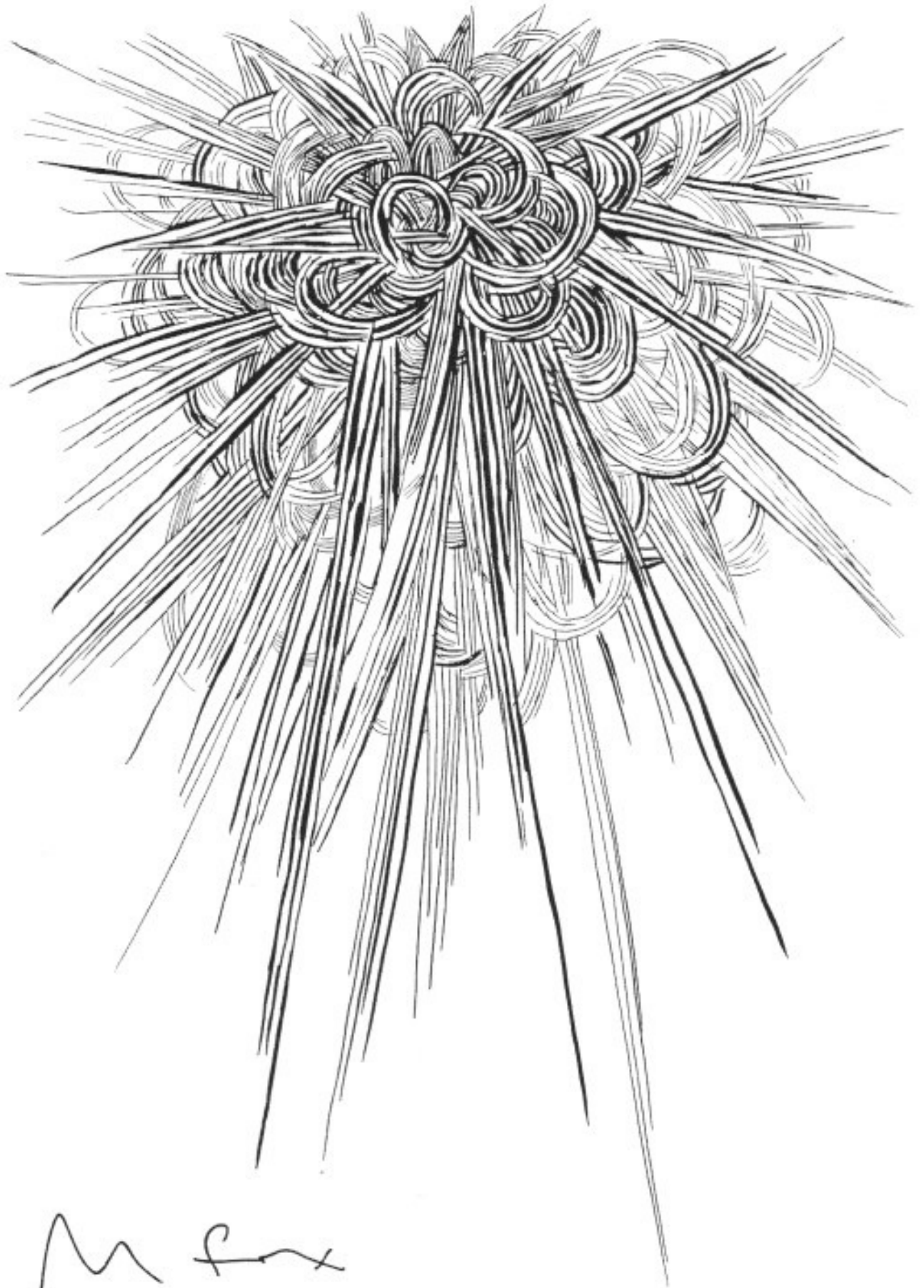
Alan Sauer, originally from Dayton, OH, lives in Cincinnati where he attended the Art Academy and obtained, in 1992, a BFA in Printmaking and Painting. Alan is a prolific artist who uses ink drawing, painting and stone carving and writes poetry, short fiction and non-fiction. Alan has exhibited regularly locally. His work is included in many private collections.

DRAWING:

MARK FOX

Mark Fox, a native of Cincinnati, is a visual artist who works in a variety of mediums. Since 1990, he has been creating drawings, multimedia installations, animated films, video, as well as performances in contemporary puppet/object theater. Fox is currently working on large drawing-based constructions. He lives and works in New York City.

Contact: foxsaw@mac.com



M fox

Save Our Shit

By Alien Sour

The movement of our hearts stilled by laws and allegiance.
In a state where pets are pissed that you hate their masters,
they push their domesticated faith on everything around them.
Like pavement over everything that grows,
like junkies who need you high with them,
like lapdogs sneering at wolves for not doing what they're told.

Politics skipping like flat rocks across the surface of half-functioning dreams,
hoping to gain flight mysteriously.

Building guns that shoot knives.
Projecting bruises on the sky.
Plugged in, unborn, never having taken their first breaths.
Killing blooms for the comfort of stability when nothing here lasts forever
(I imagine flowers spitting in our faces and calling us ugly).

I had a dream last night;
I was a soldier in my city
along with people I knew.
We had no uniforms.
Then soft and slow,
like central heat
in the heart of a meaningful prayer,
my thoughts bleached pure
like a bone in the sun
silenced by light and made accurate.

Q: What can I say?

A: I'm a nation under skin without perfect teeth.
I govern myself in dirty shoes.

Not just on TV or in the paper
but even out my door,
I see what we have agreed on as acceptable:
cut, comb, shave, polish, tame, paint, and engineer.
I see that
all men were created equal,
but they don't stay that way.

That's exactly how I know we're nuts.

POEMS:

ARALEE STRANGE

Aralee Strange is a published poet and playwright whose works have been produced at the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and the Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati. She also wrote and directed a feature film, "*This Train*". Aralee is currently working on a new play.

Contact: getstrange@earthlink.net

DRAWING:

MICHELLE RED ELK

Michelle Red Elk was born in Lawton, Oklahoma. She is a member of the Comanche tribe. Michelle makes drawings as well as beaded images using glass seed beads. She is a member of the Indian Arts and Crafts Association and is recognized by the Indian Arts and Crafts Board.

Contact: nokoni@cinci.rr.com



·Michelle Red Elk·

Quelle Horreur!

What makes America beautiful is hidden behind all the fire
and world class exhibitions of psycho storm boot goings on
the lords of the zeitgeist want to stop time with.

Mon Dieu! listen to them breathe Blue Willie's worst nightmare
just because they can.

When it comes to the smart or lucky stealthzoom remote
hits&miss big impact we are unpacking
there's no such thing as a fair fight.

Translated from the Arabic: welcome to the Street
a singular cast of thousands without a face
about to blow now more than ever.

Hola! cultural politics at gunpoint is a disgrace.
Bonjour! time to re-adjust your current balance of power.
Guten tag! a glaring need for back in the day identity
looks like a surprising affinity with fat cats and the sweeping
consequences of ridiculous amounts of money carving out
Victory.

If you imagine that brutal responses to how many die in
New York City happens to be what people everywhere
want you to do think again.

Public is a big word.

Utterly persuaded

the wicked rattle shape and restrict the earth
and you and scores of extras
taking to new heights the return of red-faced male
full-sail take control giant steps to the rescue

Mapping the limits of j'accuse across the planet
is all about get the lead out and call for real-time
load and play typhoon sky disaster
call for settling the score
opting for the on-screen replay call to arms
the same old full card simulcast confusion and
possibly out and out lies that ignite the old flame
now playing twenty-four/seven

While some say that most of us are afraid
we love a parade
ch-ch-ch-change
and a show of hands
what matters most can look like a thousand flowers bloom
a prize in every one
our broken connection
the mad hope and recently unearthed radical critique that unites us
our rites of life

If it turns out peace resting its bones on the blood of many
folds its wings before night falls
pack light
Valhalla is a state of mind

Good times are growing spooky in the sweetland

POEMS:

SHARON THOMSON

Sharon Thomson is Poet-in-Residence at Grailville, an environmental and education center in Loveland, OH. She is a widely published poet and community artist, presently completing her MFA in Writing at Spalding University. Her most recent chapbook is "*Sharon Thomson, Greatest Hits 1973-2000*" (Pudding House)

Contact: sharonthomson2001@yahoo.com

DRAWING:

BARBARA AHLBRAND

Barbara Ahlbrand, a Cincinnati visual artist, has exhibited her work extensively locally and nationally. Over the years, she has won several awards. Her work is included in many public and private collections.

Contact: b.ahlbrand@att.net



Barbara Ahlbrand

Advent

In this, the last part of winter, in the snow
still shining, beaten in
with all our footsteps that keep on
repeating and each breath is white and light
--one more letting go--that hovers
like a shadow about to be entered.

We're here now and around us
the trees are bones in the wind.
Wailing. Ice snapping. It's the world coming apart
in the arms of some dark mother. Rock me.
Tell me tales of India, songs
of the swollen-bellied tribe
in Rwanda, rumors of torture
among the mountain people; how Jerusalem turns golden
beneath the desert sun. Sing
of hushed gatherings: guerillas
slipping through the Salvadoran night. And a fire burning
in the eyes in America, even. There are still
ears pressed to the ground, imagining
the sound of after
the earth stops splitting.

(originally published in *Athenaeum*)

The Year of Our Lord, 2001

1.

When the world goes dark and turns to ashes falling,
the dream that we were chosen to be safe, forever blessed
just falling like those two tall towers pressed like destiny
against the sky now falling. Look: how small a body is
when it is falling from the sky, how fast we run
when concrete crumbles, when a cloud and wind
and flying rubble come snapping at our heels.

2.

So quick. The shining city turns to dust.
What's left is smoke. We count the dead
and smell the end of life as we have known it.

3.

I wake each morning, search for signs, scan the sky for angels,
omens, a long-lost prophecy written on the clouds, some revelation,
some god's intention breaking through the daily news: the bombs,
more threats, the loss of innocents, pictures
of the unexpected casualties.
So this is war.

Apocalyptic warnings: what might be, things we've not seen yet
hiding in the food, lurking in the water, buried in the next day's mail.

The Holy Lands are far from here: the hay, what light?
a virgin womb. Today, Bethlehem is one more outpost
where missiles leave tracks, burnt tidings in the midnight sky.

Before the Bighorn

There is a picture of Custer on his first expedition:
golden hair, long moustache, shining boots, buckskin pants.

I've seen the movie: how he came through here, polished,
soldiers a thousand strong, scouts, trappers, Indian guides,
reporters, photographers, geographers, a procession

a hundred wagons, more, each pulled by six sleek mules;
a dozen caissons; seven ambulances; three hundred cattle;
a lorry full of pickaxes, pans for sifting gold.
And his buglers, the call:

American flag slicing the wind
like a sharp blade to scratch away
the promise

"as long as rivers run and grass grows and trees bear leaves"

Wasichu, The People whisper
the word for white man
through the dark wood,
He who takes the fat.

They watch from rocks and fallen trees
as Wasichus hold their pans toward sun and pray
for gold to shine from gravel, how they howl like dogs
and claw each other when they find the dust, the glitter.

And when Wasichus climb
the seventh sacred mountain,
carve their names and etch
the date, the curse is set:

They will die.
All of them.

There is a picture at the visitor's center:
Custer and his smirking men, all
sabers and carbines, cocky stance
astride the place that was not theirs,
their end.

Signed, William H. Illingworth,
photographer,
the only one left
after the Bighorn, found later
dead, by his own hand.

POEMS:

REBECCA WATKINS

Rebecca Watkins, a native Cincinnati, is a poet, a revolutionary, and an activist interested in promoting awareness of the soul and of Mother Earth.

She recently spent six months working on the Navajo Reservation in Northern New Mexico, and currently lives in Gallup, NM.

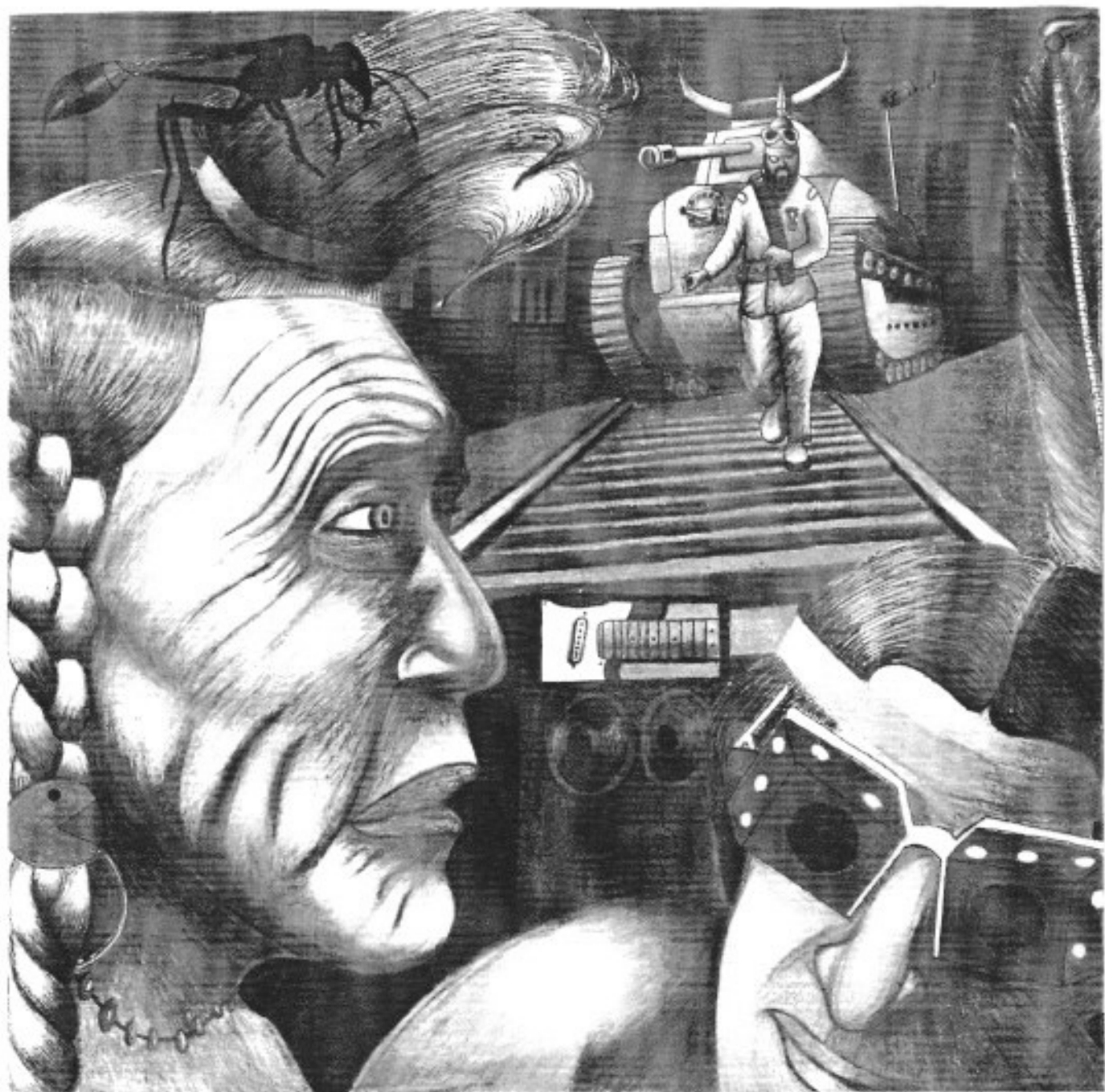
Contact: rebeccawatkins28@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

RICK ROBICK

Rick Robick is a peace loving, multimedia artist.

Contact: dalirama@prodigy.net



RICK ROBICK

And Then What?

When we kill enough
To own the oil and liberate those left living,
When we destroy enough
To spread democracy like a contagious wish
Amidst bombed out buildings,
And bloodied bowed heads.
When we fear enough
To breed the insidious ignorance
That runs our government into our children
And teach them to fear
As we have feared
And to react and act in fear
Then to justify unjust actions
With political vernacular
Such as patriot, homeland security, mass destruction, terrorist alert, liberate, duct tape,
shock and awe, and Rome Shall Fall.

When we have lied enough
Out of greed to obtain another's land,
Saying it is in the name of good or God,
Freedom or democracy,
When any damn fool can see
It's all about oil and money,
And a plan to overthrow a regime long before 9-11.
Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Bush know
Which words to employ
As they readily deploy
Our young men and women
To wage war on someone else's sand,
And we agree in complacency
Because we've been "dumbed down" since the 60's
And now we can't question the new man's killing season.
Cause we got our eyes glued to prime time
Listening to the local media
And the gatekeepers are choosing what to feed us
According to what politician or corporation they are in bed with.
So we keep turning a blind eye
Because we don't want to lose what we got
Which isn't much if you look at our souls.
Mother Teresa knew what was up
When she said we are impoverished
That's right we are starving
In our obesity and materialism.
We keep turning away from the truth,
Because the truth can be a sticky business
A troubled road, a lifetime commitment;

The truth creates dissonance among the constituents.
The truth eradicates ignorance.
Then you got people thinking, and talking,
And marching, and impeaching,
And conscientiously objecting
This War, which is not my War.

The truth my friend is nowhere near you are being told the truth is.
And what is happening here will always happen
Until we speak up
And then What?

To My Brother, a Young Soldier

My young brother
We are remarkable
With our shining scars and our piercing eyes.

I can feel the centuries lag behind us
As we rise out of the tangled oppression of our mother's womb
To scream fire
And burn the brows
Of the white gods of war
And the mammon monuments

Remember,
to walk barefoot through the field
In order to feel.
Something
Like fingers of grass tickling your arched feet,
The insects echoing in your eardrums,
Smell the nascent lilac defying pollution,
And read the bumps on the road like Braille
Our ancestors frequently leave messages there.

Then look in my eyes like you know me
And I will tell you with certainty,
I have a hunger for light now,
And I can feel the pulse of God in the pounding rain.

The Sage & The Sorrow

The Franciscans tell me of the Mother
The Blessed
The Sacred Blue
With her pure heart and body
Her feet on the head of a snake
The weeping world in her womb.

My eyes have been stolen
This barren landscape screams right through me.

They tell me of her son.
The Savior who believed in peace and equality,
They say he was a revolutionary.
He hung with the poor, the prostitutes, and the drunks.
They say he is here with me
I ask if he is here, does he see this?

I spoke with a gentle native man
He had long white hair and a cane.
As a child he was stolen and forced
Into a government boarding school.
He showed me a peculiar black scar on his face
Between his left eye and his nose.
He said, "From a German soldier's boot when I was a P.O.W. in World War II".

I sat next to a drunken woman on the sidewalk
"I have hopes, they are up there", She whispered
And together we tilted our heads and studied
The soft faces of the spring clouds
Resting against the cobalt sky.

"What are your dreams?" I asked.
Her heavy head fell forward into her hands
Then snapped back up and tears were in her eyes.
"That's in here, the dreams", she said,
Tapping her breastbone.

I came with dreams too intimate to speak of
My hopes are somewhere in the clouds with hers
But neither is real here.

Two homeless women told me
They slept huddled together under the bridge.
They watch out for each other
Cause the men get mean when they drink.

The one with short hair named Valerie
Tells me she has a lump in her breast.
Come four o'clock the sisters at Casa San Martin will feed them.
"Sometimes the food is bad –the lettuce is brown",
Valerie laughs.
Then she is serious, she says,
"No one hears us".

My friend's great grandmother went
On the Long Walk
Forced from her land
By the "scorched earth" removal policy
Held in captivity and starvation for four years,
As over 8,500 Navajos and Apaches were.

I awaken confused by dreams
Of brown hands in my hair,
A crying woman in the Chevron parking lot,
Lost men sitting in the street,
And children who do not trust me.
I look in the mirror and I am momentarily surprised
By my white face.

*At times I see it clearly
I am dancing around an ancient wound
Handing out flimsy recompense.*

I am tapping on my breastbone
Reviving the dreams.
I am uttering an old prayer
Saying
"Let it rain"
Is there a Savior here?

POEM:

FRAN WATSON

Fran Watson is an artist who primarily writes. She was the art critic at CityBeat for five years and worked for the Cincinnati Suburban papers, as correspondent at large, for about 10 years. Haiku is Fran's favorite form of poetry, but good writing in any format will always claim her admiration. Fran is also an accomplished visual artist who appears in shows, either solo or group, several times a year.

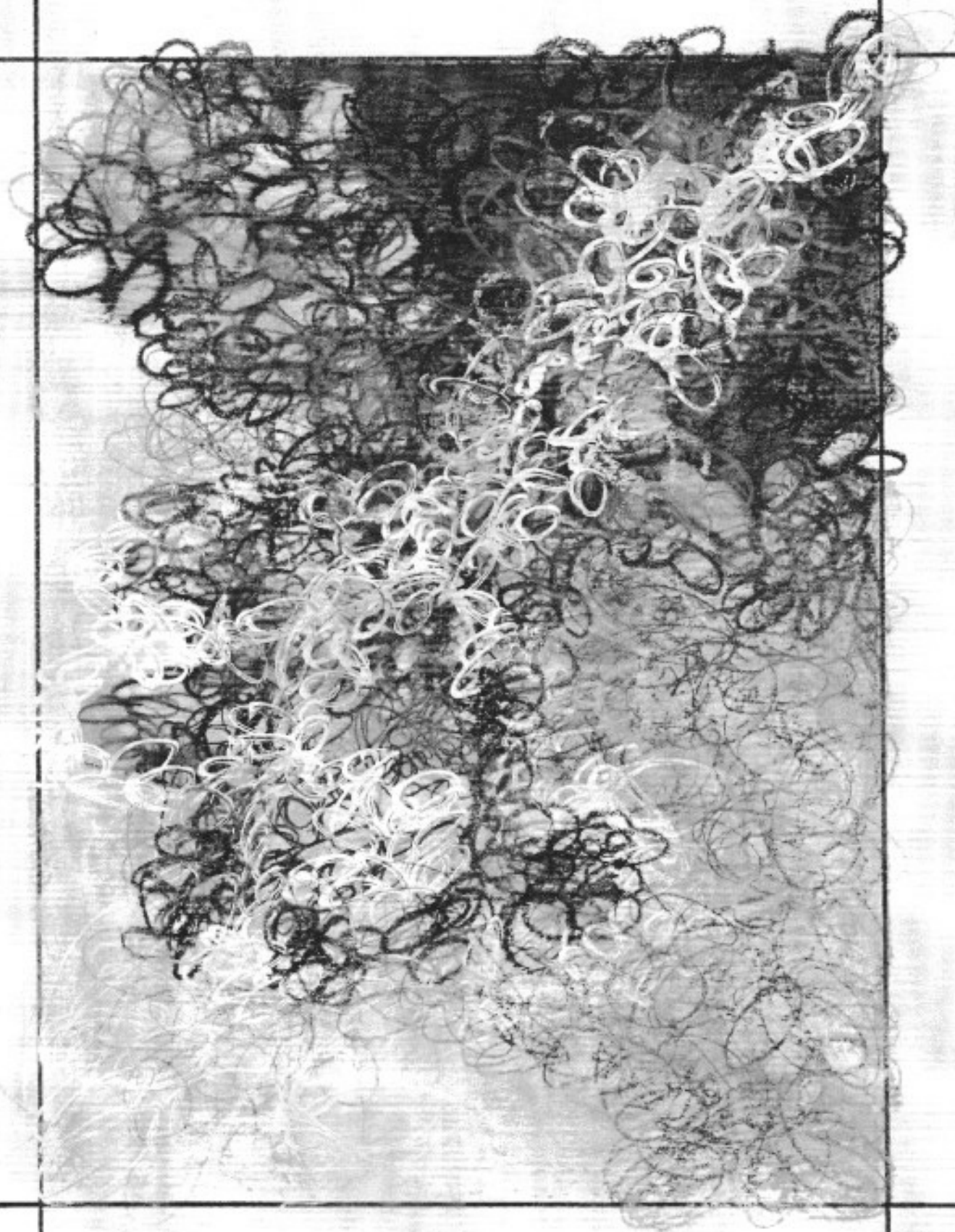
Contact: Watson@fuse.net

DRAWING:

CARISSA BARNARD

Carissa Barnard obtained a BFA from the University of Arizona's School of Art in 1995, and an MFA from the University of Cincinnati's DAAP College in 1997. Currently, Carissa presides over The Mockbee Center of the Arts as its Managing Director alongside Program Director Christopher Daniel. Together they curate and produce "The Massive Project" exhibition series, an annual event at The Mockbee, showcasing major works by Greater Cincinnati artists.

Contact: carissabarnard@fuse.net



CARISSA BARNARD

Pieces of Peace

I have not met peace as I drive,
jockeying for advantage on the clogged X-ways,
wishing for more eyes to watch the speeding dangers,
a stouter car to shield me from impact,
a sharper instinct for survival.

Neither do I know it on gray street corners
where young men practice their avarice
on drug dependent victims,
strutting their leather-clad well-being.

I look for it in classrooms when I teach,
in parks when I walk, in pleasure-seeking crowds,
In good places and bad, and I find it at last,
cringing inside of me, nearly dead from neglect.

POEM:

PENELOPE WEBER

Penelope Weber: "I just pray and ponder, and my words are there. It brings me a sense of peace...and maybe makes a difference in someone's life."

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DRAWING:

CHRISTOPHER DANIEL

Christopher Daniel received a BFA from West Virginia U in 1994 and an MFA in sculpture from the U of Cincinnati DAAP in 1997. He currently works as a freelance toy sculptor, and teaches Steel Sculpture at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. Christopher is Program Director of The Mockbee alongside Managing Director Carissa Barnard with whom he also co-curates and produces "The MASSIVE Project" exhibition series. As a member of Thin Air Studio, he also creates interactive outdoor sculptures.

Contact: sharkpod@aol.com



Christopher S. Daniel

I Am an Angel

I am an angel,
My wings are within,
My colorful quilt of armor,
my skin.

Don't take me for granted,
Or judge or berate,
Instead take my hand-
Before it's too late.

I'm longing for peace,
For justice, at last.
I am a mirror,
I am your past.

I am a child, with a heart and a soul,
My badge of color, make me complete,
Make me whole.

I am the question, You are the key,
You have the answers,
Kneel down and teach me.

(Written for every child of every color, perfect as they are.)

POEMS:

TYRONE WILLIAMS

Tyrone Williams teaches literature and literary theory at Xavier University in Cincinnati. His book of poems, "*c.c.*" (Krupskaya Books, 2002), is available at Joseph-Beth Booksellers.

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DRAWING:

GARY GAFFNEY

Gary Gaffney was born in New Orleans, LA and is a professor at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. To him, it is worth believing that the world is sacred, and he tries to make his images say that.

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the wizard doubles

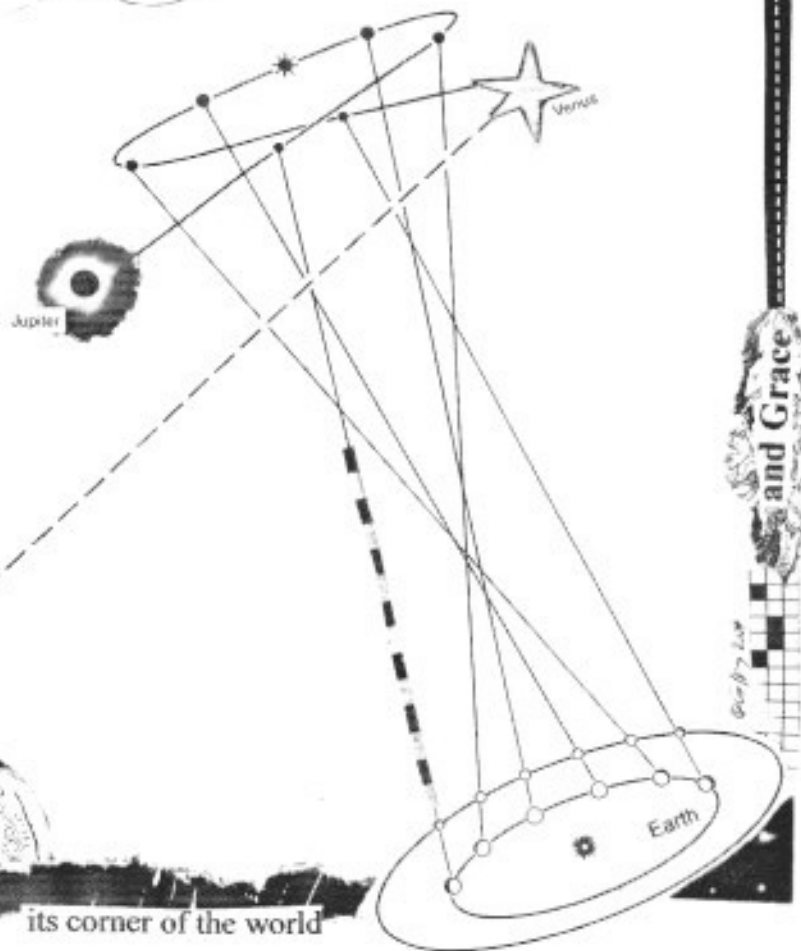


The jester dances in a figure of fire



here

a figure with wings



its corner of the world

Gary Gaffney

What Depends

In the blank moon
a figure with wings

hovers. Colorless tableau,
an effect of the sun in absentia

for half of those on earth.
The sun is yellow, blue or red

as seen from earth, Venus, Jupiter.
But we live here and nowhere

else, with colorless words:
the moon is white, the figure,

black, a war, wrong,
a war, right, all colors,

white, no colors, black.

The Sun Also Sets, Black-Eyed

Not being no radical
but stemming from roots, branching out
beyond limb edge, these fingers
coil into fists
box a blond sky
until, puffed up with bruises
red and purple as the sunset,
it staggers back into its corner of the
world.

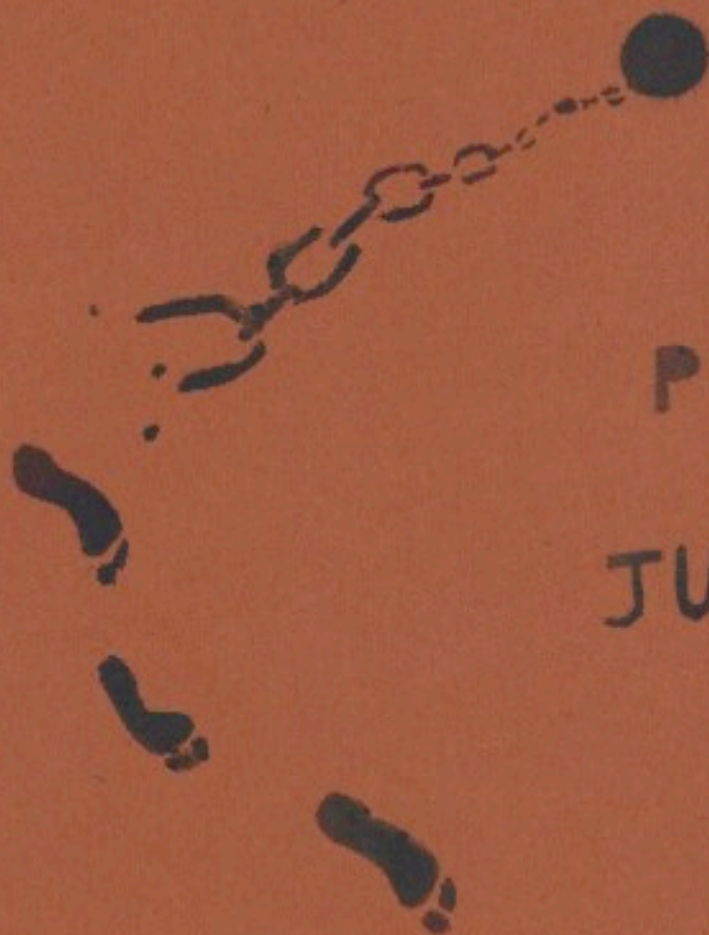
Of Bootstraps and Grace

Not-yet finished, hope
slumps

down in the throne,
some limp
houseplant by a downed window,
rain-streaked.

The jester dances in a figure of fire
sewn into a rug.

With special effects, the wizard doubles
as Lazarus, as Jesus.



PEACE
AND
JUSTICE