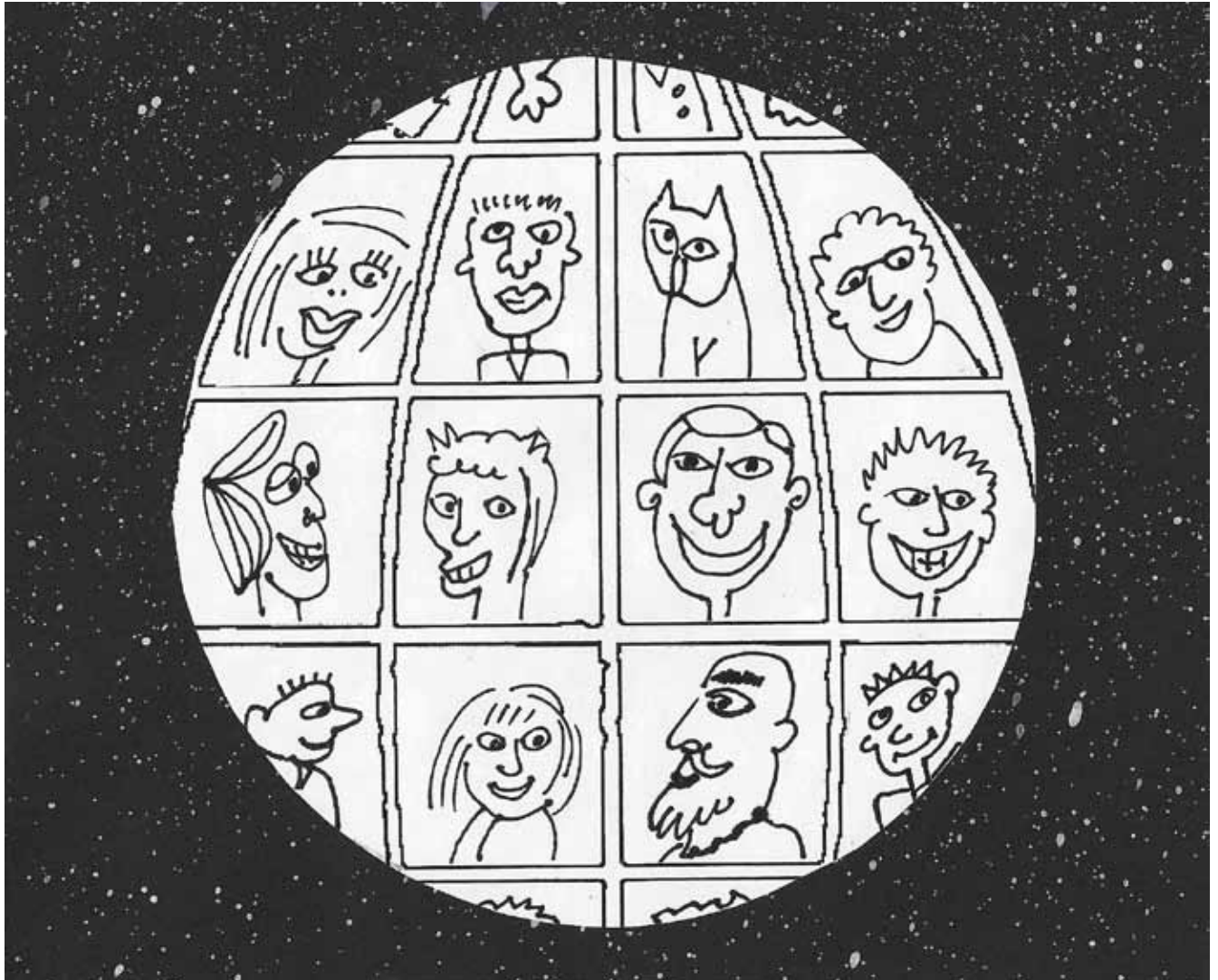


For A 2012 Better World



POEMS BY DRAWINGS ON
PEACE BY JUSTICE BY
Greater Cincinnati Artists

“For a Better World” 2012

Poems and Drawings
on
Peace and Justice

by
Greater Cincinnati Artists

Editor:
Saad Ghosn

“Each time a person stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, these ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”

Robert F. Kennedy

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Martin Luther King

Foreword

“Poetry is above all an act of faith in the power of language,” says Chicano poet and activist Francisco X. Alarcón. “It is rooted in the belief that human communication is possible in very profound ways that even escape common logic. Poets question dogmas, notions taken for granted, and speak ‘truths’ that defy the ruling order of things.” Combining powerful language to a perceptive questioning, poetry thus becomes a strong communicative and transformational tool.

Seventy eight poets use it here in this 9th edition of “For a Better World” to speak for a world after their heart and values, a world of love, peace and justice. They are joined by the elegant voices of thirty seven visual artists who through their responsive drawings add to the message. Ages 9 to 89, each of these literary and visual artists use their art and talent to state their concerns and affirm their beliefs, and by doing so strengthen each other’s diverse voices and give life to their hopes and dreams.

In a world that remains prey to injustice and wars, these artists weep for the dead, revolt for the oppressed, denounce unjust societal wrongs, advocate for the poor, the homeless, and the neglected, reject violence and its consequences, fight for the battered environment. They also challenge the prevailing societal values of materialism, consumerism and domination and speak for a change in values towards love, compassion, forgiveness and understanding. They paint a beautiful world, a world of diversity and equality, where peace is based on truth, justice, and kindness.

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

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

My appreciation also goes to Donelle Dreese, Kate Fadick, Jerry Judge and William Howes, who kindly reviewed all the submitted poems and provided their editorial advice.

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

Saad Ghosn
Book editor and organizer

May 2012

“For a Better World” 2012

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POEMS:

CELESTE BROTT

Célèste Brott studied creative writing with a poetry focus at UC, graduating with honors in 2010. She now works as a copywriter and runs the personal style blog Fashion is Evolution. In her spare time, Célèste performs standup comedy. She lives in Northside with her photogenic cat and a very sweet man.

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ANNETTE LACKNER

Annette Lackner, a native Cincinnati, wife, mother and grandmother, takes every opportunity to share her words, including writing articles for her parish magazine. She loves to write fiction and has just finished a one-act play, but she finds poetry the best way to express her thoughts on peace and justice. She is an on-going member of Women Writing for A Change.

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DRAWING:

EVAN HILDEBRANDT

Evan Hildebrandt started making art in 2003 while working for a top car company. He initially drew with sharpie markers then moved on to exploring oil paint and other media. Soon Evan began selling his artwork and felt the need to become a full time artist. He quit his job and jumped fully into the art world. His work is now sought after by many high end clients and designers. Evan is also the gallery director at Bromwell's in downtown Cincinnati, where he has his studio.

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Jury Duty

Evan Hildebrandt¹²

What Happened in the New York Sky

(A villanelle)

(by *Celeste Brott*)

Philippe Petit walked on wire
between the north and the south tower
long before the shouts of "Fire!"
It was something to admire.
Up where man should surely cower,
Philippe Petit walked on wire,
nimble dancing: a surefire
way to show his grace and power.
Long before the shouts of "Fire!"
before that awful, horrid, dire
day, that world-shaking hour,
Philippe Petit walked on wire.
A silhouette in black attire,
he walked through air: a drifting flower,
long before the shouts of "Fire!"
Remember always what transpired;
don't let violence turn you sour.
Philippe Petit walked on wire
long before the shouts of "Fire!"

Jury Duty

(by *Celeste Brott*)

Rows and rows
of chairs of people,
trying to be robots:
impartial,
rational,

bored.

We are acres of corn
waiting to be harvested.

We sit in chairs that don't
face each other. We read newspapers
that don't interest us, and we wait,

not knowing if we anticipate
or dread being called.
But we are not called;
we are never called.

And we sit, and we wait
for nothing,

Telling ourselves it's not for nothing –
the importance of justice,
the honor of duty –
serving our community,
our country.

But we know
we are just sitting
and waiting
and drinking free coffee
and not being called to serve.

Someone Is Waiting

(a Pantoum)

(by *Annette Lackner*)

It was in a stationery shop in India
Two girls clad in saris buying school supplies
"Are you sisters?" I ask
The older replies, "Oh no, she's just my maid."

Two girls clad in saris buying school supplies
I want to tell the older: never use "just" about another soul
The older replies, "Oh no, she's just my maid."
But I'm in a country not my own, I stand dumbfounded.

I want to tell the older: "Never use "just" about another soul
I see the anguished look in the little ones eyes, behind her
frozen smile
But I'm in a country not my own, I stand dumbfounded.
At home I will speak for a little one waiting to hear my words.

I see the anguished look in the little ones eyes behind her
frozen smile
At home I will speak for a little one waiting to hear my words
"Are you sisters?" I ask
It was in a stationery shop in India

POEMS:

KATE CASSIDY

Kate Cassidy, an artist and a writer, originally from Waukegan, IL, has lived in Cincinnati for 21 years. She has always loved to express her feelings in writing, especially through prose.

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MICHAEL HENSON

Michael Henson is author of several books of poetry and fiction. He is a frequent contributor to StreetVibes. A member of the Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative, he is co-ditor of Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel, SAWC's annual publication.

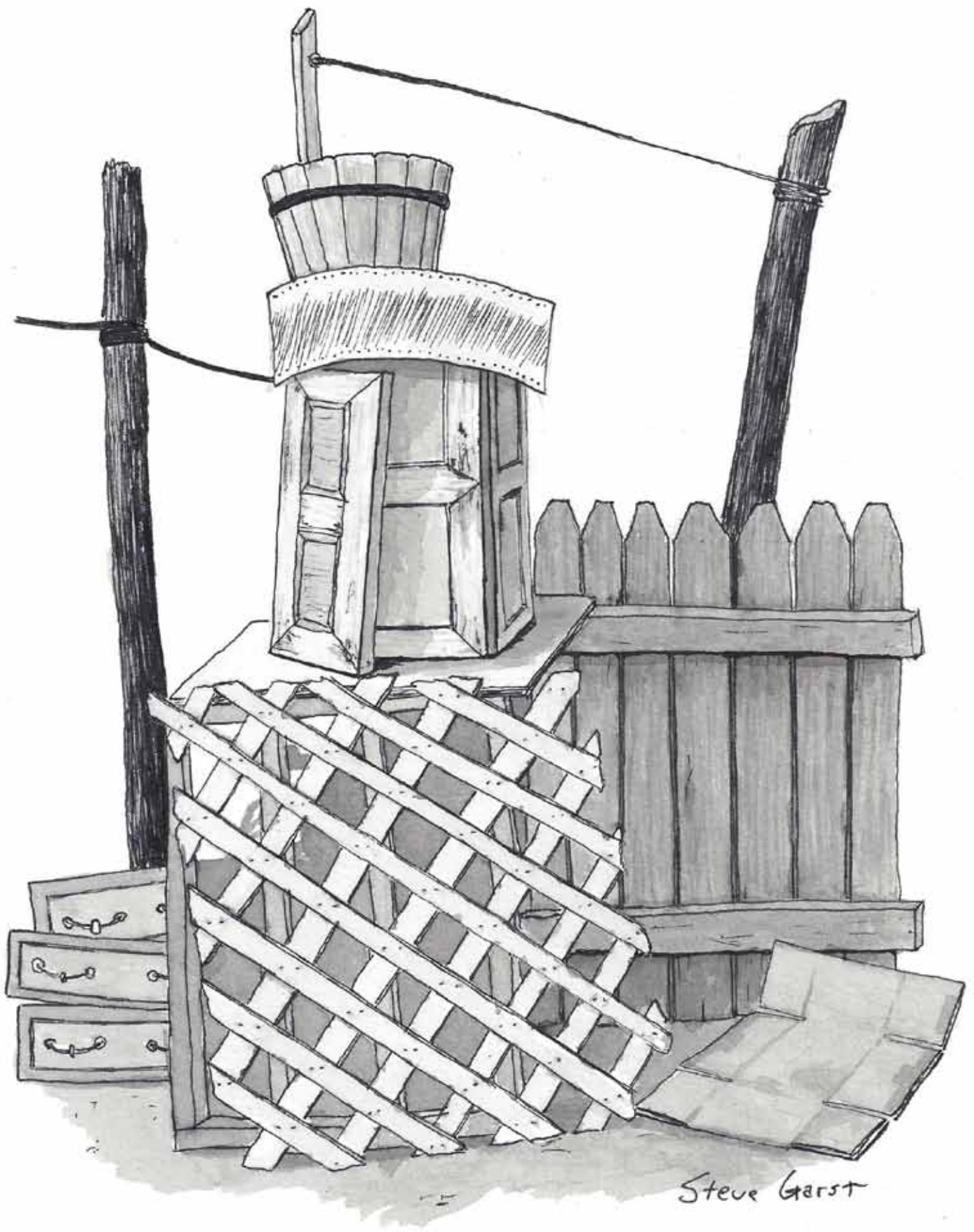
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DRAWING:

STEVEN GARST

Steve Garst is an artist currently working on his MFA at Miami University. His work deals with the concerns that arise from the world around him. He pursues the imbalances of the natural world and draws attention to its minute details, working often metaphorically, trying to echo the mysteries of the wonders around each corner.

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Steve Garst

Crimson

(by *Kate Cassidy*)

Stainless steel skies
Fell on crystal pavement.

The sun set on nights past
When blacks & whites fought
With mixed insanities.

The moon displayed wild shadows
In angry dances of desperation.

Orange flames begged to heaven
And stars fell to the earth.

Below, white & black bodies fell side by side
Dying or injured.

The answer finally came.

We are all of one color, after all,
Blending as warm crimson streams
Down cold forgotten gutters.

*(Note: poem based upon the uprisings during
the civil unrest in the '60's and 70's)*

The Alleys of Over-the-Rhine

(by *Michael Henson*)

These are the hidden back-door by-ways,
dark and seemingly nameless as the paths of
forests.

Adrian
Atlas
Bianca
Bolivar
Boots

Cool and dark in the blaze of summer.
Cold and dark in the man-killing winter.

Bunker
Clymer
Comer
Coral
Dodt

Locus of the mysteries of death and conception.
Retreat of the homeless and the hunted.

Elijah
Enon
Fenwick
Foltz
Freeport

Paved with brick and curbed with stone,
littered with broken glass, wasted syringes, and
wilted condoms . . .

Glass
Goose
Gear
Hafer
Hart
Hukill

Nothing grows here but the moss on the walls,
nothing but the grass in the seams of brick and
stone.

Hust
Kirk
Levi
Nagel
Noah
Osborn

At night, lit but the distant moons of the streetlamps,
the homeless find a cold and stony sleep.

Parvis
Peck
Plough
Ray
Rodney
Sellew

No one sings here but the lonely inebriate, no lifts a prayer,
Only the desperate priest of the needle, only the acolyte of the pipe.

Sharp
Thurber
Unnamed
Von Seggern
Whetsel
Wilkymacky

POEMS:

VICKIE CIMPRICH

Vickie Cimprich is a Kentucky writer. Her book *Pretty Mother's Home - A Shakeress Daybook* (Broadstone Books, 2007) features several Shakers of African descent who were members of The Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill near Lexington, KY.

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**MICHAEL JAMES WILBERS
(1951-2011)**

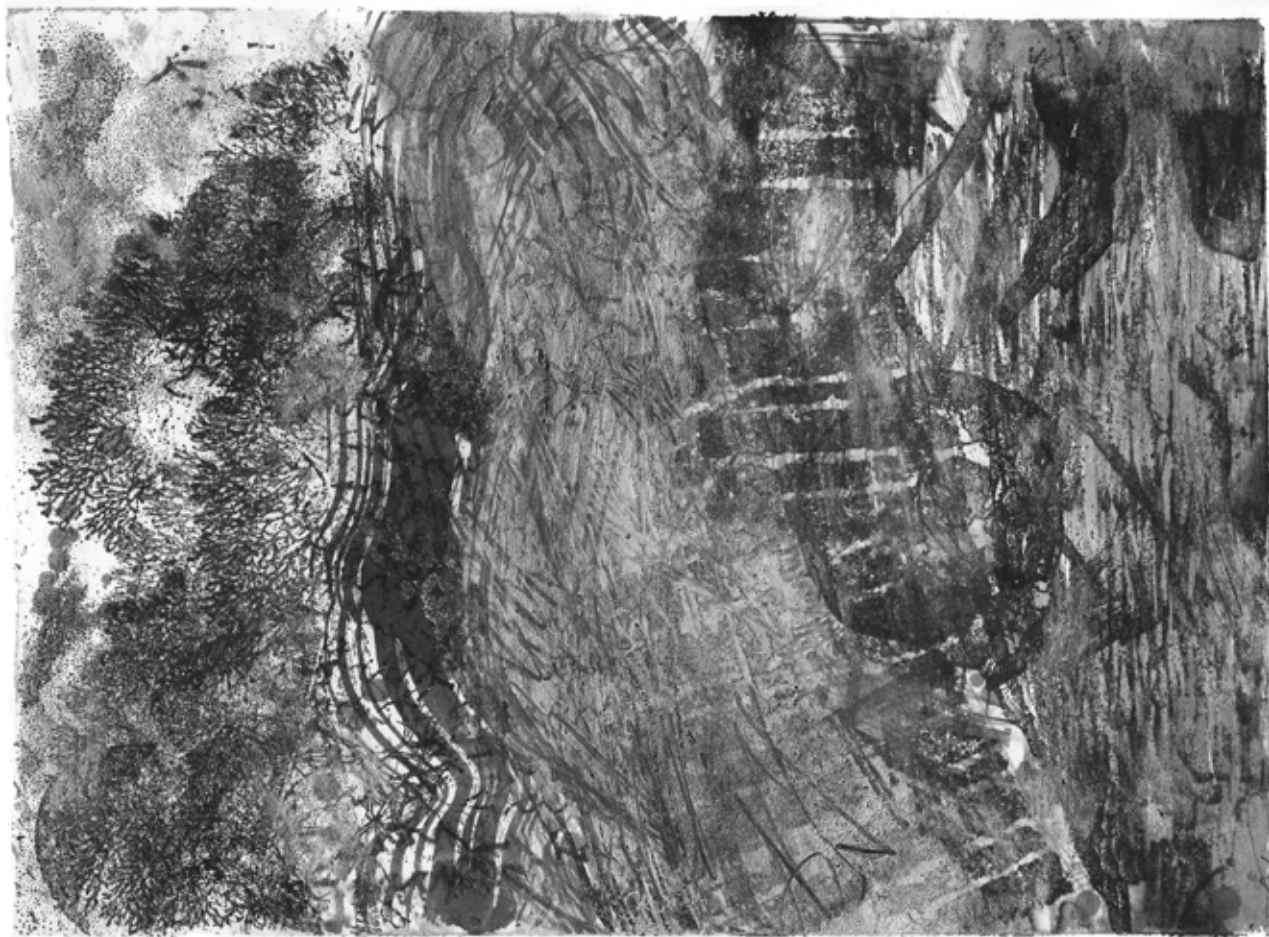
Mike Wibers was born and raised in rural Campbell County, KY. He attended Northern Kentucky University where he majored in English. He was a naturalist, poet, songwriter, musician and artist. His life's dream was to farm the land.
(Mike's wife's email: susie.v@fuse.net)

DRAWING:

HALENA CLINE

Halena Cline is a Cincinnati studio artist whose work has been broadly exhibited. Cline's work consists of watercolors, ceramics, oils and mixed media. Her works are included in many corporate and private collections nationally and internationally.

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Stone

Elegy for Many Farms

(by *Vickie Cimprich*)

One home is good as another to Dad.
Now that he's 88, the childhood train ride
with Grandma Lovas from the village to Žilina
gets better all the time. (Neither he
nor his brother would so much as
taste the town food at first.)

In Trenton, Ohio there was plenty pasture
for the kids' sheep or horses, barns
for chickens, corn, for his airplanes, for
over sixty years of tools and serviceable cats.
Alongside the rail tracks he had
airstrip enough for fifty years
of take-offs and landings.

It got to be kind of stranding
when the Miller brewery moved in
the other side of the Mennonite cemetery,
but when the saloon crowd across the road
started keeping Mom and him awake nights,
it was time to move. His son
had bought land in Preble County,
down the road but out of view
of the fighting rooster farm.

The new ranch house went in,
where the grandkids have outgrown
the tree swing from Trenton
which hangs from the hackberry branch
on ropes twenty feet long. We see it dangle
in the wind, between French doors
that open off the kitchen and some fields
where the wild turkeys graze.

It doesn't matter where. You can break off
a willow branch in Slovakia or Ohio,
and always root it here.

The War Against th' Farm

(by *Michael James Wilbers*)

I am leavin' behind a paper trail
With which th' road department can't contend
It's a battle with th' Northern Kentucky's own
university
Over an easement thru th' sacred,
A greenbelt we belong to
This conservation talk ain't nonsense
It doesn't come from outer space
In fact it comes from earth's own tellin'
It comes from th' mem'ry of th' Creator
'Nd here's th' record that has bin left
“(...th' time came)... t' bring t' ruin those ruinin' th'
earth”

[Revelation 11:18]

Th' word of God, good enough
But sumthin' else remains, green stone walls
Moss covered now, bald when they went up
As retainin' walls, a husbandry in itself
Fer th' soil alongside these sluices of Shanty
Crick
These drainage patterns 'r swales, these
aqueducts
Fer heaven's torrents, laid by men of th'
nineteenth century
With one 'r two horse power---horses draggin'
sleds of rock
Evident down t' this day when heavy equipment
threatens
T' overlap their work with ill treatment 'nd
uncaring
With a violence, of engines t' bring more engines
Thru this great canyon, this channel of euphoric
recall
'Nd mellifluous tone, th' din of photosynthesis
A simpler man than I, one who makes this valley
His primary home put it this way
“We got flyin' squirrels bin around since I was a
young'un
Won't have anywhere t' go once they put that
road thru.”
It's all but done, he expects it
'Nd that is how current I am
With this poem t' fight fer me

October 6th, two thousand-ten
The War Against th' Farm reaches Pooles Crick
Not t' change it but t' say what a shame
Fer th' purposes of documentation under th' sun

(Note: In th' first place is a tranquil valley. In th' other is a plan t' pave a road down thru a holler that is not t' be wasted that way by th' mere U.S. way of doin' things. Green space alleviates th' toxic 'nd th' carbon dioxide of th' industrious burgs of human parasitism as it is, or in a perfect world, symbiosis. Y' haveta know that six generations out of Germany, th' residents of th' head of a gravel drive off Pooles Creek are still enjoyin' a privacy that will forever be annihilated by th' poverty of th' mentality that builds a road where t' disturb th' Land will be an acquiescence t' failure. That's why I mean t' be printed up in this way...because we th' residents 'nd workers of unincorporated Campbell County in this neck of th' woods at least have other ideas about how long your drive home from th' university (that is who is drivin' this notion of a new road between John's Hill 'nd th' Double "A") should take.)

POEMS:

COVEDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Alexandra Bick, Nolan Brown, Cameron Dodd, Ryan Draughn, Ally Elliott, Cole Frondorf, Grace Holloway, Kennedi Lewis, Caleb Malott, Tatum Rogers, Dani Slaven, Josie Slaven, Alyssa Smith, Draven Smith, Taylor Spivey, and Isabel West, are Covedale students in grades four and five, who participated in a reading and language arts enrichment group, meeting briefly once a week with Cynthia Tisue, the Gifted Enrichment Specialist. This year, the fourth graders read and wrote fables and learned about poetry. The fifth graders read “To Be a Slave” by Julius Lester, part of a focus on the history of Cincinnati and the Civil War. They did “Poetry by the Numbers”, beginning with aphorisms and couplets and also attempted writing longer poems.

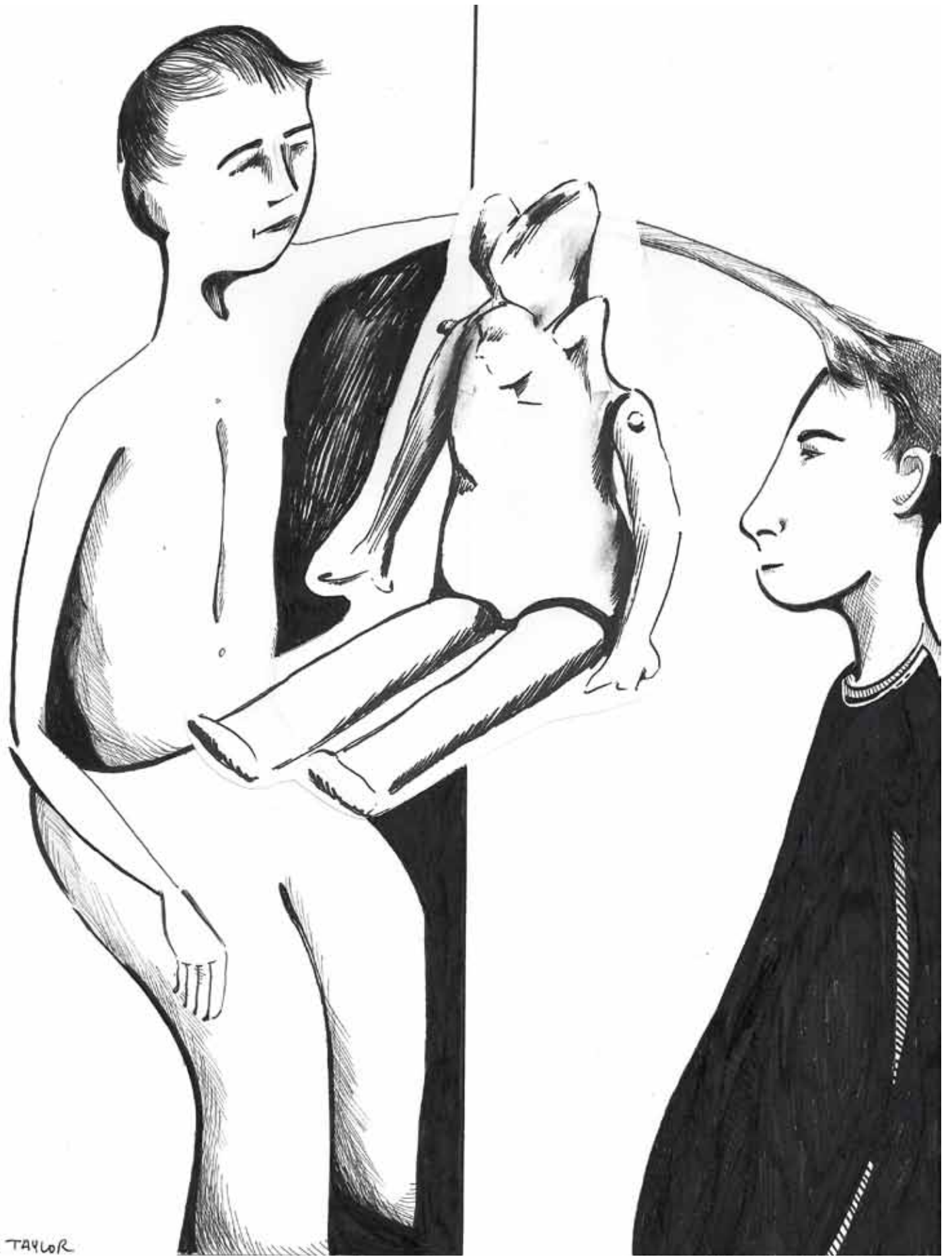
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DRAWING:

KIM RAE TAYLOR

Kim Taylor, a local visual artist, has worked in the fields of animation, design and fine art. She earned a BFA from the University of Texas at Austin and an MFA from the University of Cincinnati/DAAP. She has also studied at the University of Georgia in Cortona, Italy. Kim is currently Assistant Professor of Art at UC Clermont College. Her work is shown both locally and internationally.

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KIM TAYLOR

Can We Handle It?

(by **Alexandra Bick**, grade 5, age 11)

What did we do?
Did we deserve this?
We want the truth.
But can we handle it?

Unjust

(by **Nolan Brown**, grade 5, age 11)

Guns are at the backs
Of banana sacks
Is it right
For those with might
To control the weak?

Sorrow and Blood

(by **Nolan Brown**, grade 5, age 11)

Why is there bloodshed?
People every day
Cry away, cry away.

There is slavery today,
We claim it not.
Slaves every day,
Cry away, cry away.

Wars rage on,
Day to night.
Soldiers every day,
Cry away, cry away.

Cry away, Cry away.

Jail

(by **Nolan Brown**, grade 5, age 11)

Why is there war
On the poor?
Many weep
For friends gone by,
Gone away, gone by.

Love For Peace and Justice

(by **Cameron Dodd**, grade 5, age 10)

War can create meanness,
It can tear friends apart

Love can heal a river,
It can create peace with just one heart

Injustice helps nothing
For loving is a perfect cure

For love is like water;
It is always pure

Why War?

(by **Ryan Draughn**, grade 5, age 11)

Why did it start?
Why do we fight?
Why is it so hard
to get along?
When will we
settle this right?
Why do we involve
violence?
Violence is not key.
Violence is hurtful.
Especially to me.

Peace on Earth

(by **Ally Elliott**, grade 4, age 10)

Peace on Earth is what I dream
For all to be good and no one to be mean
One by one we should try our best
To spread peace and love to all the rest
This is something we shouldn't ignore
For we should have peace but no more war

Peace Will Ring

(by **Cole Frondorf**, grade 4, age 9)

Slavery is bad
It makes abolitionists mad
We should sing
to make peace ring!

Everyday a Slave

(by **Grace Holloway**, grade 5, age 11)

I was treated cruel
just like a mule

everyday a slave

hungry doesn't describe me
starving doesn't describe me
almost dying describes me

everyday a slave

cotton picking from dusk
'til dawn
this goes on and on
'til I Cry

everyday a slave

Freedom

(by **Kennedi Lewis**, grade 4, age 9)

I love freedom
it makes me happy
everyone needs freedom
like me and my pappy

What Is War?

(by **Caleb Malott**, grade 5, age 11)

What is war?
Is it fighting for peace
or just because people don't get along?
Will someone tell me?
I want to know!

Peace Will Ring!!

(by **Tatum Rogers**, grade 4, age 9)

Martin Luther King,
Said that peace would ring.
Peace would run through and through,
Be nice was all we had to do.

Freedom Would Ring

(by **Dani Slaven**, grade 4, age 9)

Martin Luther King,
Knew that freedom would ring
So we can join hands and sing
He was a good man and he cared about others,
And they cared about people as brothers.

Rage

(by Josie Slaven, grade 5, age 11)

The steady beat of his heart,
Surprised it didn't race.

That no-hearted she-wolf
Made fun of his race.

His fists were clenched in rage, disbelief
And anger too.

He looked at her and smiled,
"One day is the day you'll rue"

The Sadness of Martin Luther King

(by Alyssa Smith, grade 4, age 9)

Martin Luther King had a special soul,
Some hearts were made of coal,
And when he got shot in the head,
People still are saying he is dead.

Martin's Words

(by Draven Smith, grade 4, age 9)

Martin Luther King
Had a peaceful dream
That everyone is free
To live harmony.

Alone

(by Taylor Spivey, grade 5, age 11)

They kept me in the dark
for almost three years,

There was more fighting,
As they grew apart,

Now he's gone,
And I'm all alone,

With no father to call my own.

Freedom

(by Isabel Wiest, grade 4, age 9)

I want to be free,
Free to be me.

Free to fly,
In the sky.

Free to not be filled with woe,
Whenever and wherever I go.

POEMS:

ELLA CATHER-DAVIS

Ella Cather-Davis is retired with her husband of 42 years. She writes poetry, essays and children's stories. She holds a degree in English Literature from the University of Cincinnati and currently attends the Osher Life Long Learning Center at UC. She is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Writer's League and Ohio Poetry Society. Ella also loves classical choral music and sings with various choruses. Her work has been published in books, anthologies and newspapers.

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MICHAEL TODD

Michael Todd writes and performs spoken word poetry; he is also a painter. He lived in the San Francisco Bay area for 20 years and relocated to Cincinnati 4 year ago. California has affected his work, adding freedom of thought and a focus on social issues to his writing and painting.

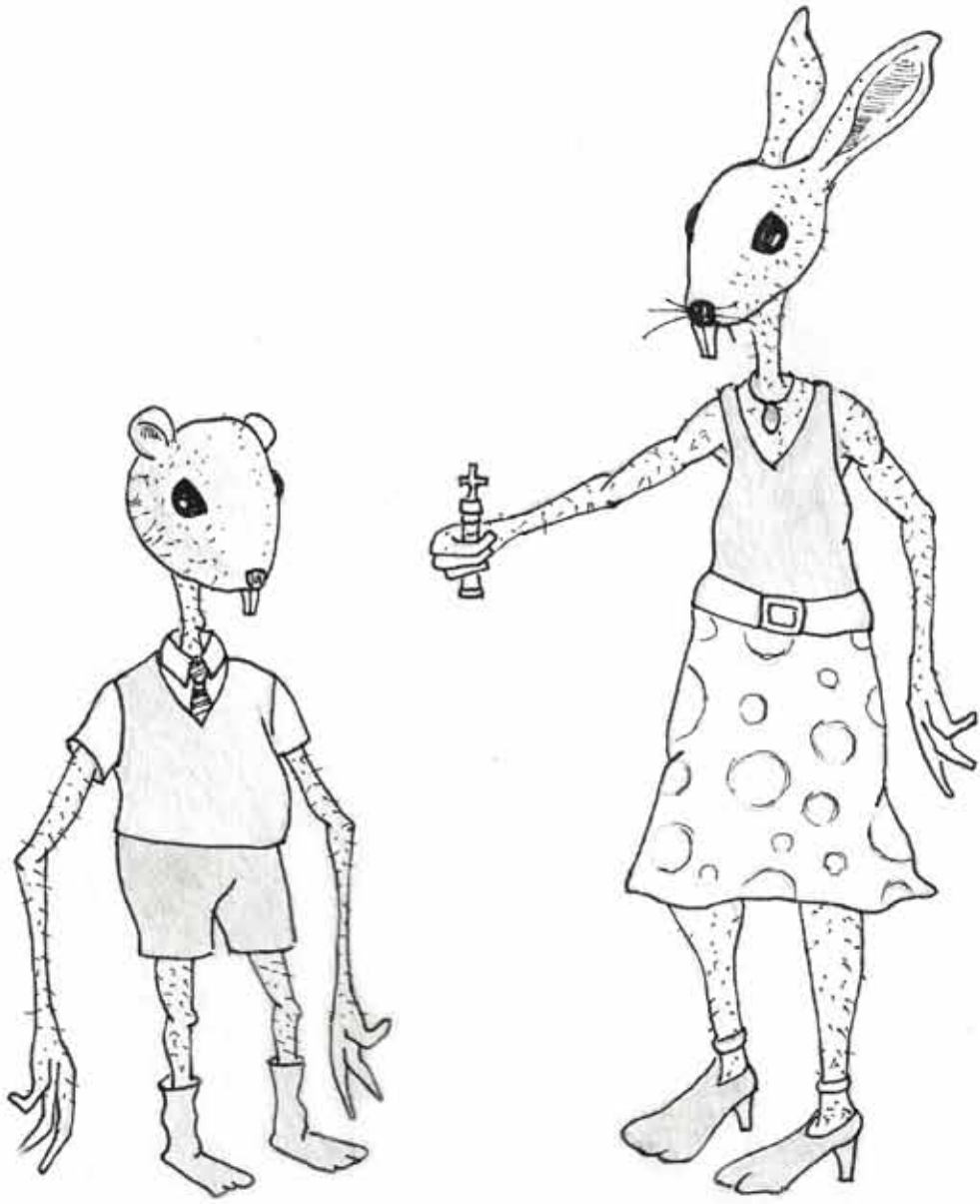
Contact: michaeltodd14@yahoo.com

DRAWING:

MATTHEW MILLER-NOVAK

Matt Miller-Novak graduated with his B.F.A. from Youngstown State University in 2001. He then received his M.F.A from the University of Cincinnati in 2005. After graduating from UC, he taught painting, drawing, and narrative drawing at Northern Kentucky University for five years. He currently attends Salmon P. Chase School of law. He is the Director of Passages Art Gallery in North College Hill.

Contact: millernovm1@nku.edu



Miller - Noah '12

Grandson

(by *Ella Cather-Davis*)

When you were born, I severed the cord
between my daughter and yourself
and I promised you that
I would love you all of your life.

Since your Father had deserted, and
Mom worked long and hard, I was a
necessary part of your upbringing;
a privilege, an honor.
As a child, when you slept on my watch,
I would tip-toe by often, to reassure that
you were safe. I vowed you would be.
Oh, it was a love to break your heart.

I re-lived my children through you;
we picnicked, found extraordinary
treasures in the woods, read and
discussed books and movies.

Your preface to these was often:
“Grandma did you know” . . .
When you were ill, I marched war
until the invader surrendered.

We shared Battleship, Monopoly, Pokemon
where you let me win to prolong the games.
Baseball, cycling trips, skateboards, archery, and
then you let me go, in your early High-School.

You have become a citizen of the world,
stepping up to contribute your gifts.
You still visit, sometimes overnight,
and I still check in as you sleep and

I still say, only to myself, this time;
“I will love you all of your life,
and it is a love to break your heart.”

Formula for Bullying

(by *Ella Cather-Davis*)

Pre-emptive aggression is very effective,
surprise and disarm the intended target.

Establish initial dominance over target,
re-double your effort if target cowers.

Gather supporters in your endeavor.
Convince target they have no worth and

surround target, using shame and
public ridicule to subdue them.

Spread your spin to degrade target.
“This is a worthless human being.”

Sarcasm wounds, use it freely, grimace
and use coercive body language.

Intimidate, ambush unexpectedly,
repeatedly, relentlessly, consistently.

Don't allow a shred of empathy
to infiltrate your campaign.

The target must learn to submit.
don't you remember, you did.

The Star over Mecca

(by *Michael Todd*)

The star over Mecca lights the path
Of the elegant gypsy king
The desert sand cushions his footsteps
Nights delicate mist
Fades then reappears as Krishna
In the form of a celestial Oasis
She beckons me
To meditate
And become the voice
Of a virgin waterfall
As it impacts
The surface of the sun
Emerging as a living Psalm
I hold dear Mecca

POEMS:

ANGELA DERRICK

Writer and poet Angela Derrick knew from the very first book she read that she would be a writer. Much of the inspiration for her writing comes from her husband Jason who is currently incarcerated. She is a staff columnist with RED! The Breakthrough 'zine.

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SUSAN JANE SCARDINA

Susan Jane Scardina has worked for more than 10 years with the United States Probation office for the Southern District of Ohio in Cincinnati. She likes her job very much, but her passion is writing. Susan is a member of the Cincinnati Writers Project, and their Poetry Critique Group.

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DRAWING:

KELLY & KYLE PHELPS

Kyle & Kelly E Phelps, identical twin brothers, are Associate Professors of Art respectively at The University of Dayton and Xavier University. They earned together their BFA degrees at Ball State University and their MFA degrees at The University of Kentucky. Much of the Phelps' work is about the blue-collar working class, class relations and the everyday struggles of the common man and woman. It has been nationally widely exhibited.

Contact: phelps@xavier.edu; kyle.phelps@notes.udayton.edu



Who We Are

(by *Angela Derrick*)

We are friends, wives, lovers,
mothers, daughters,
sisters, cousins, aunts;

We are the loved ones,
We might be you.

We come from across the street,
across town,
two towns over, out of state,
across the ocean.

We travel millions of miles.

We wait-
in our cars,
in line, at the gate,
inside the gate,
at the door, at the table.

We wait. Period.

Docily we follow instructions:
line up here
sign this
scan your hand
hold out your arms
spread your legs
shoes off
lift up your feet
shake out your bra
list your jewelry
count your money
count your blessings-
you get to leave.

We pass through
eleven gates,
razor wire,
barb wire fences,
metal bars
security doors
stun guns

only five through the gate
at a time
to the park
that isn't a park at all.

We are the other half-
the unseen and unheard
prison population living in the
land of the free
but incarcerated nonetheless.

On the Way to the Prison

(by *Angela Derrick*)

It is a long, long road
that leads to the prison.
Fields and houses
and more fields.
Speed limit changes
continuously.
45-40-50-65-55-45
Overzealous cops
in unmarked cars
gleefully wait
for unsuspecting
drivers
happily moving
towards visiting
their loved ones.
Flashing blue lights
break into the stillness
of the morning.
Do you drive that
way back in
Ohio, Ma'am,
he asks me
sternly.
Flashing my
brightest smile
I respond
Actually, Officer, I do.

U. S. Probation

(by *Susan Jane Scardina*)

Michael's eyes spit.
Forgetting thick glass
between us
my hand shakes
as I give him a form.
This could be my son
child of a fruitless womb.
He is street wise
joint seasoned
angst ridden.
Despite my soft eyes
and little skirt
I represent
"The Man" he blames
for months in a cell
life in prison with no bars
society blind to his poetry.
He cries
to free himself
of the pain I hand him.

POEMS:

KATE FADICK

Kate Fadick has worked as a community organizer in rural Appalachia and with community organizations in urban neighborhoods. Her current day job is “poet”. She lives in Cincinnati’s Northside neighborhood with her partner, two dogs, a cat and one wild garden.

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STEVEN PAUL LANSKY

Steven Paul Lansky is the author of *Main St.* (2002) and *Eleven Word Title for Confessional Political Poetry Originally Composed for Radio* (2009), both chapbooks published by Seaweed Sideshow Circus. His audionovel *Jack Acid* (2004) is available on Squidmusic. Steven also has written a novel: *the citizen*, which has had excerpts published in *The Brooklyn Rail* (2005), *ArtSpike*, *CityBeat* (online), and *Streetvibes*.

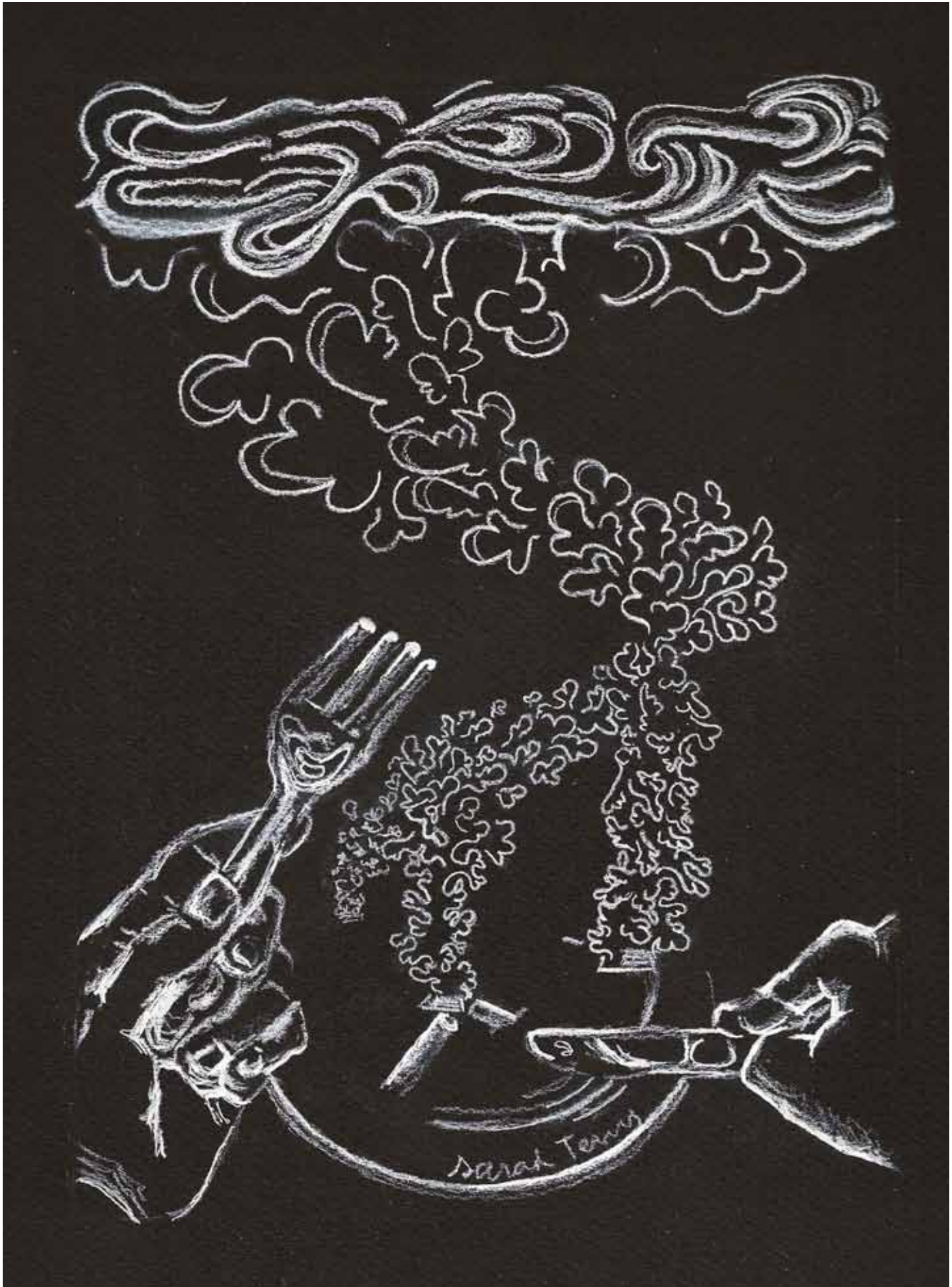
Contact: lanskysp@muohio.edu

DRAWING:

SARAH TERRY

Sarah Elizabeth Terry is a Kentucky-born artist located in Cincinnati, OH. In 2012, she received a BFA in sculpture from the University of Cincinnati’s DAAP program. Sarah has also studied glass casting and metal fabrication at Pilchuck Glass School in Seattle, Washington.

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Autumn Rituals, 2001

(by *Kate Fadick*)

1
walk in the woods
kick leaves inhale decay
bring buckeyes home

gather three mums two pumpkins
cornstalks for the porch
hang the harvest banner

go to the apple farm
eat fritters drink cider
pick a bushel for sauce

cook walnut cheddar loaf
bake squash and Indian pudding
feast on the night we are all home

2
boys in men's bodies around our kitchen table
they leave my last words until evening stuck
on hooded sweatshirts with pet hair and lint
you finish your puzzle gather keys kiss me quick.
our love yous hang in the foyer

3
in October I wake to terror's fallout
see a small boy at the grocery
dressed in full camouflage

For the Anniversary of Any War

after Jane Kenyon's "*Three Small Oranges*"

(by *Kate Fadick*)

One robin sings as if this is the only
spring evening, as if all of the song
must be served up now. And I listen,

lured outside just as the wind picks up,
saucer drops of rain smack against
the side of the house. I pull

the poem I copied late last night
from my pocket, the one another poet
wrote twelve years ago, the one I read
again.

Oilface

(by *Steven Paul Lansky*)

BP executives wear oilface
to a meal of gulf black poisoned clams,
shrimp, and lobster bisque served
with guilt, shame, ravioli rife with green
spinach, ricotta cheese, combined with
dispersants. Drivers boycott at
the gas pump; rivers cry out for
past perfect rapids.

POEMS:

NORMA FOWLER

Norma Fowler, from Latonia, KY, is an employee at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Cincinnati, OH. Norma is the author of two novels, *The False Prophet* and *The Devil and John Raines*.

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CYNTHIA OSBORNE HOSKIN

Cynthia Osborne Hoskin is a writer presently doing profiles for AEQAI.com. She is also a printmaker, part of the Northern Kentucky Print Club, and is Chairman of the Campbell Conservancy, Inc. in Kentucky. Cynthia lives with her husband and a domineering Scottie in Northern Kentucky.

Contact: choskin@fuse.net

RICCI MICHAELS

Ricci Michaels is an award-winning artist, muralist and poet. She has been involved in the Cincinnati arts community for over 20 years. Her work often reflects themes of empowerment and social issues.

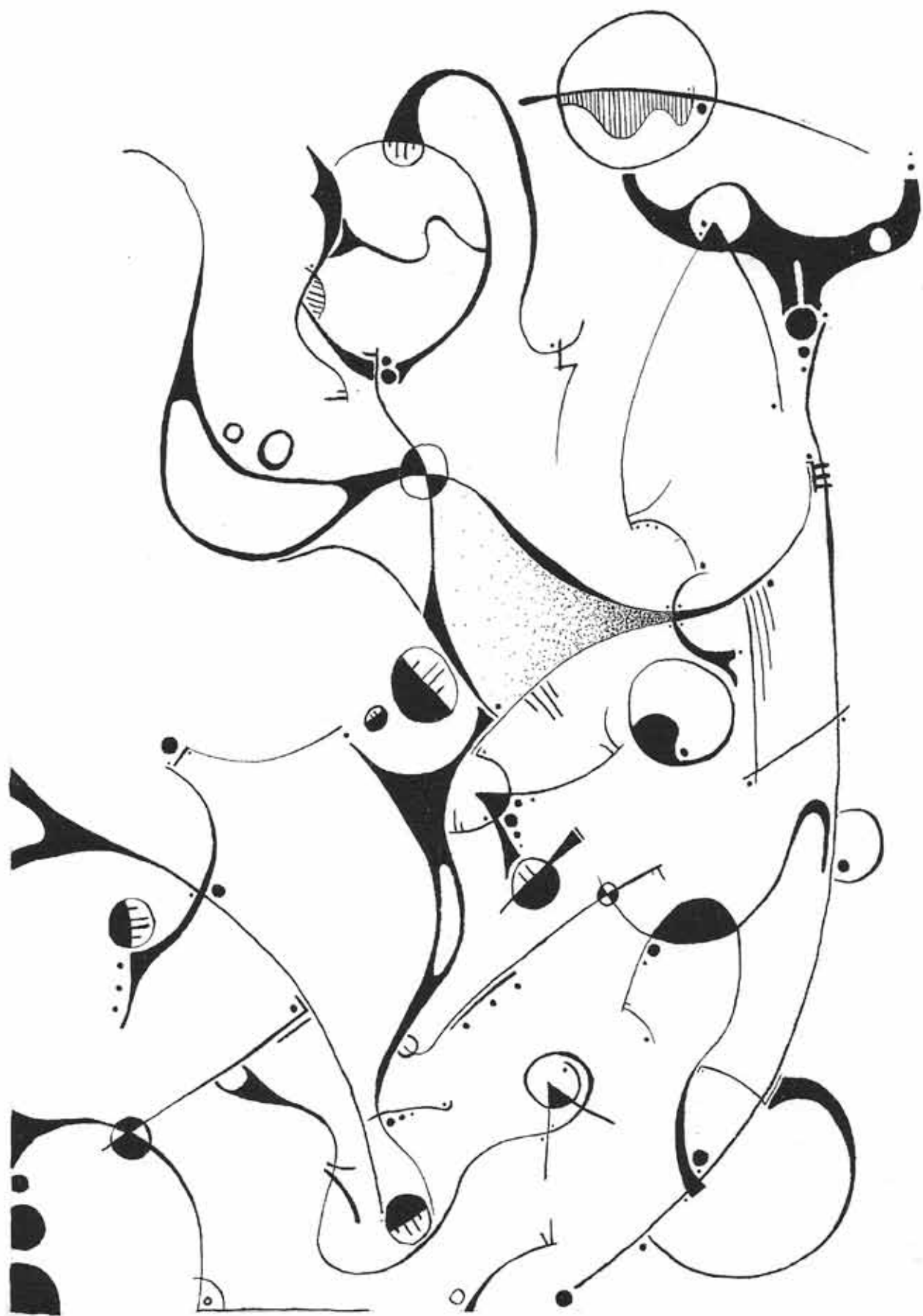
Contact: trubluartist@yahoo.com

DRAWING:

ARI PRESCOVITZ

Ari Pescovitz is currently completing a graduate degree in Architecture at UC (2012). His drawings explore the psychological effect of pareidolia, the search for images in the abstract forms of clouds. Through the flowing abstractions, faces and images of animals emerge at the intersection of elements.

Contact: ari@pesco.net; www.apescovitz.mosaicglobe.com



Prescott

Justice to Be

(by *Norma Fowler*)

The scales of Justice are sometimes blind
As are the eyes of men ..
Who see not the wiles of deception
Encompassing the maze they live therein ..

There is a soft streaming light
They have not seen
Meant to show the way . .
With the promise of an irrevocable pardon
Providing the serene and calming justice
Of a bright and sunny day ..

PEACE

(by *Cynthia Hoskin*)

Haze of sun and fog, a quiet hillside,
The smell of fallen leaves,
And a dusting of snow on the ground.

Rustling of a squirrel's fast pace,
The slower steps of a doe and fawn
Come down to the pond for a drink.

Creatures in pain of birth and
Pain of death, killing and living,
Is this what you meant by peace?

The natural order of things, you say,
As the sun breaks through,
And somewhere a storm gathers.

JUSTICE

By his own God; by his country's laws;
You and yours are wrong
And must be punished and learn.

Destruction lurks, but he will teach you
What to trust and tolerate
From the time you leave the breast.

He knows right from wrong;
His father taught him well to see,
Blessed by the God he devised.

FALLACY

I keep three, and you have three,
And that is fair, as you see.

But yours are rotting; mine are new,
And you complain, as is your due.

A higher judge now must choose
And both of us all six will lose.

Who Am I???

(by *Ricci Michaels*)

I am so elusive, yet not sought after enough.
The world needs me now, i am an absolute
must.

If you wage me in the name of your god,
It might surprise you to find
that we are on the same side...

Children embrace me without a care
knowing one day they will be my heir
and oh what vast treasures i hold for them.

I know they will embrace me and love me
and keep me around for all eternity....
something you could never do...

I Am Peace.....baby

POEMS:

KAREN GEORGE

Karen George has been awarded grants from The Kentucky Foundation for Women and The Kentucky Arts Council. Her chapbook, *Into the Heartland*, was released by Finishing Line Press in 2011, and her work has appeared in *Memoir (and)*, *Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel*, *The Single Hound*, *Ontologica*, *Thumbnail*, and *The Barcelona Review*. She holds an MFA in Writing from Spalding University, and has taught writing at University of Cincinnati's Communi-versity.

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JEAN SYED

Jean Syed is a member of the Cincinnati's Writers' League and Ohio Poetry Association. She has been broadcast on WVXU for her "Sonnets."

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DRAWING:

NICOLE TRIMBLE

Nicole Trimble is a Cincinnati-based artist, working mainly in the fields of painting, printmaking, and drawing. She holds a BFA in painting and printmaking from Miami University, and is currently an MFA candidate at the University of Cincinnati. Drawing inspiration from the human figure and focusing on cycles of decay and reconstruction, her work shows the human body in transition from distinct entity to rearticulated, basic human matter.

Contact: trimblbn@mail.uc.edu; www.nicole-trimble.com



B.N. TRIMBLE

Without Child

(by *Karen George*)

At a family gathering, seconds before exiting
a restroom stall, two women entered,
ran water to rinse or fill a container.
Only one sink, no room to maneuver,
I waited for them to leave.

One woman declared another's marriage
invalid, because childless.
I didn't know whether the woman in question
was unable to conceive,
or, like me, chose not to.
The tone of the speaker, steeped in a union
blessed many times, stunned me.
The other's response never came.
Only water smacking porcelain.

I wanted to defend the union of two
for love alone, fling the door open, release
a volley of curses against the narrow-minded,
or state calmly that we're abstaining
from procreation so her children have enough,
or insist, "Love isn't a matter
of numbers; it's infinite in itself."

But the speaker droned on
about women's true fulfillment,
and I believed the other listener,
by her silence, challenged the judgment,
so through the gap between door and frame
I kissed a prayer of thanks her way.
When both left, I soaped and rinsed
the dirty words down the drain.

Give and Take

(by *Karen George*)

Outside a café, as dark gathered,
I listened to a teen play his guitar.

Between songs he checked
his upturned hat to gage his cache.

He kept repeating a song about a mad
scientist -- all he knew, or trying to perfect?

I considered a request for Neil Young
and how he'd ask, "Who?"

When I thanked him on the way to my car,
he looked up from his fast-food,

and gave me a sweet smile
that opened me a little wider.

In the parking lot another teen invited
me to "Look at that star,"

like he wanted to know its name,
but when I looked up, I saw only black,

felt the weight of my shoulder bag
and purse snatcher warnings via email.

"No, I'm sorry," I said, "you're scaring me."
The words no sooner uttered than shame

settled over me with the surprise
and regret of his two words, "No, ma'am."

There was nothing left but to watch him
walk to his car, and I to mine. Once home,

I found what he'd asked about. Face lifted
to the fall sky, I whispered, "Venus."

That Martyred Mother

(by *Jean Syed*)

For nine long months she nurtured you alone,
And on your birthday, that was bloody hell,
The torment and the suffering, the swell
Diminished so that each morbid groan
Exulted in a different, happy tone,
For you existed, and you faired very well.
In twenty years another torture fell.
You, a soldier, higgledy-piggledy, prone.

Have some compassion for that martyred mother,
Who bore a child in a time of peace,
Not knowing peace would dissipate to war,
And the sacrifices made by her to smother
The hardships, care, without any release,
But her will and contentment to outlaw.

POEMS:

MICHAEL GEYER

Michael Geyer, a Cincinnati native, graduate of the U.C. School of Engineering, currently teaches high school chemistry. He lives in Montgomery with his wife and son.

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LONNA D. KINGSBURY

When she is not out and about the country spreading «the good words» Lonna D. Kingsbury remains committed to helping students in our schools here at home find a positive voice. Students from Oyer, Western Hills University, The Children's Home, Sands Montessori, Leaves of Learning and many, many more continue to perhaps change a bit or our world one word at a time.

Contact: lonna@kingsburyproductions.com; meriprxtr1@aol.com

DRAWING:

DANIEL J. LAWSON

Daniel J. Lawson is a 26 year old Cincinnati native and resident. As an artist he tries to push the agenda of the art community. Daniel strongly believes that art can change a community; he focuses his attention on the school system as a primary factor of community influence.

Contact: lawsondj@mail.uc.edu



Daniel Lawson

Tacking

(by *Michael Geyer*)

Nothing I do
will keep me
from being buried
under my flag

my new enemy
at my back
with dusk minds
and razor tongues
opposing vision

forcing me
to exist
on the blind side
of power.

I can only hope
for collateral damage
to save me.

Untitled

(by *Michael Geyer*)

There are limits
to everything
including

all I ask ask
ask about before
your answers blur

and subtleties swim
in the sordid
language of daily

misappropriations,
those sugarcoated
sins

of an opaque
system,
you keeping your

sacred secret
with salt and
poison

for the wounds
and throats
of the apathetic.

Her Majesty

(by *Lonna Kingsbury*)

She glories in her servitude
to HIM
and how to please HIM
prays to answer boldly
as her time convenes
to prove herself as
worthy
pure
unafraid
in movement
embracing every challenge
as increments display
His way
to save
to savor
each momentary stay
in readiness
in order
preparing for
His day

Show Time

(by *Lonna Kingsbury*)

The assemblage of participants
across the makeshift theater
containing growth spurts daily spread
pulse
testing narrowed views
beyond each seers' comprehension
deemed

THE official camera drone
reports prismatic rudiments
colored-coded
dramas scored

Emergence

Resurgence

in glassy high-pitched
riot tones
technically presenting
threatenings at home
while masquerading honors
featuring unknowns
of faceless nameless leading man
bring tired curtains down

POEMS:

SUSAN F. GLASSMEYER

Susan F. Glassmeyer has been working on words and poems ever since her grandfather taught her the language of train whistles when she was a little girl. Susan believes that poetry can save lives and supports that notion through her work at Little Pocket Poetry.

Contact: susannaglass@yahoo.com; www.littlepocketpoetry.org

JERRY JUDGE

Jerry Judge is a Cincinnati based poet and social worker. He's an active member of the Cincinnati Writers Project and the Greater Cincinnati Writers League. Seven of his poetry chapbooks have been published - the latest being *Night Talk in the Barracks* (2010) by Pudding House Publications.

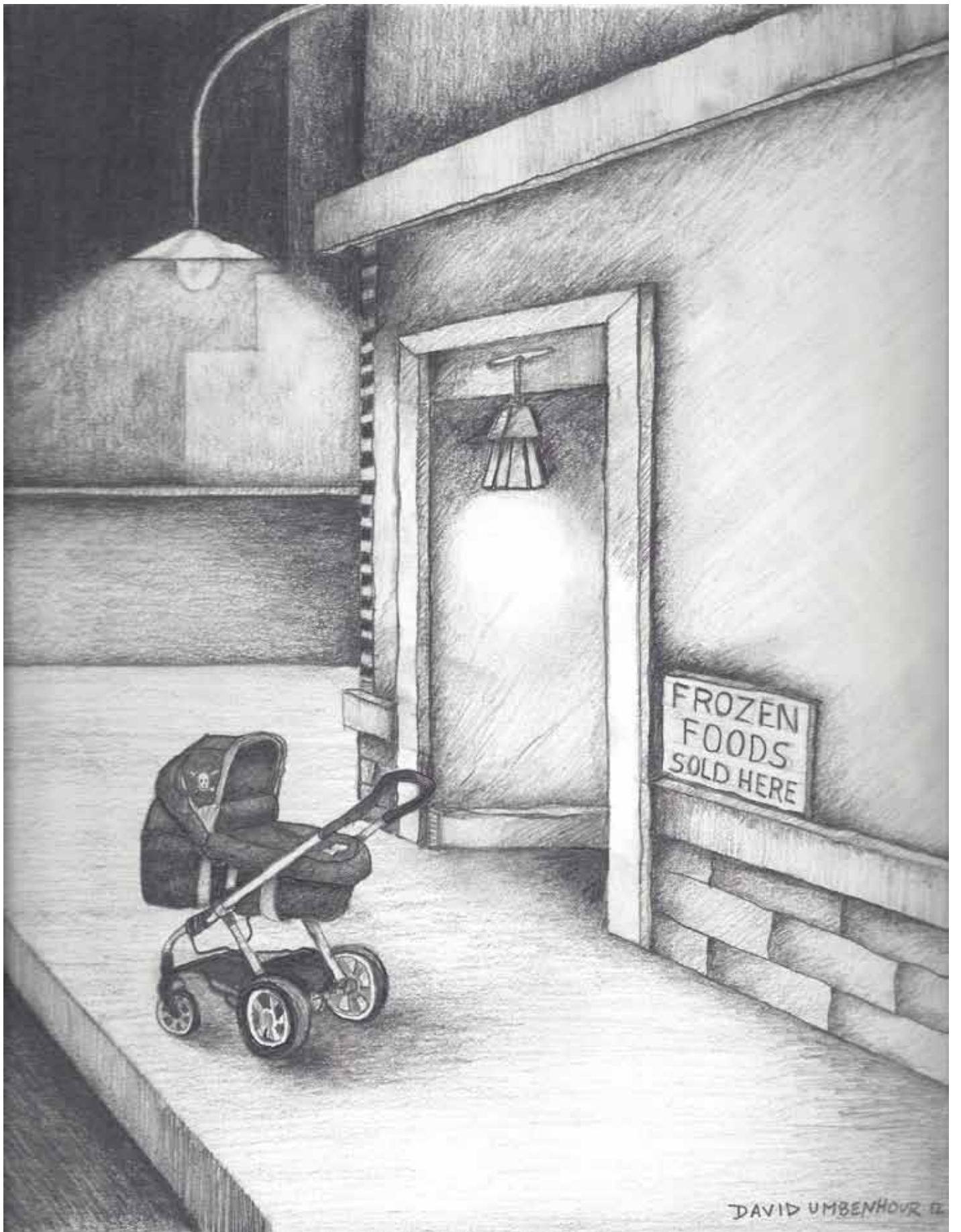
Contact: jerryj871@aol.com

DRAWING:

DAVID UMBENHOUR

David Umbenhour has worked as a graphic designer, printmaker and teacher for over twenty-five years. He also collaborates with local artists and writers to create limited edition prints at his studio, Umbenhour Press.

Contact: dumbenhour@fuse.net



DAVID UMBENHOUR II

Club Life

(by *Susan Glassmeyer*)

To join the club a follower does a favor for the leader who wants revenge because a follower from another club stepped on the leader's new shoes which some say was done on purpose. Who knows. God knows it doesn't matter. The leader's shoes are dirty is all that matters and he won't get his hands dirty over such a petty crime, so he puts a gun in the still clean hands of his applicant follower saying Shoot that bastard in his shoes if you want to join my club. As bad luck would have it, a young mother walks her firstborn in a stroller to the corner food market to get some frozen dinners. She's minding her own business when a bullet ricochets off a building and lodges in her neck. Now she's paralyzed down to her shoes. And the fourteen year-old follower, his life is paralyzed too, and the baby's, and the neighborhood in which they all live whether inside or outside the club life.

Heather

(by *Jerry Judge*)

at the all night shop
lost among the neon on Main Street
Heather has Grim Reaper, her pimp,
dealer and tattoo artist aim
his needle and carve on her back
a leafless tree with a rotted nest

between rounds with johns, Heather
leafs through a tattered Nancy Drew book
smiles when she finds pictures in back
of her first foster parents before
their car accident before deflowering
by the next mom and dad

after a beating by her pimp,
Heather dreams of wild ginger, yellow trillium
and fire pink bunched along the mountain trails
where her good foster parents hiked
even to the top of Clingman's Dome –
her only glimpse of god

Gang Member Shot

(by *Jerry Judge*)

Spouting bravado on his cell phone
the shooting victim sprawled
in his own blood in the parking lot.

My paramedic son pried the phone
from the vic's hand, tried to cut off his pants
to treat the leg wound.

Resisting, the teen whispered
in my son's ear
that he didn't want his gang to see

he had peed in his boxers.
All the way in the ambulance he cried
for his mama.

Photographs

(by Jerry Judge)

I hate the bright sun.
I hate the light deepening the sadness.

I hate the grief I can't heal
spreading through the families.

I hate seeing the soldiers coming home
in boxes that now can be photographed.

POEMS:

GERRY GRUBBS

Gerry Grubbs lives and works in Cincinnati, OH. A well published poet and writer: *Girls in Bright Dresses Dancing* (Dos Madres Press), *Palaces of the Night* (Wordtech), Gerry is also the poet Laureate of the Olympic Garage.

Contact: ggrubbs@fuse.net

DAVID G. KOUNS

David G. Kouns was born in Kentucky in Jesse Stuart country. He is a retired teacher and administrator. David's poems strive for accessibility and connections; he hopes something in them would trigger in the reader a lost memory or experience.

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DRAWING:

MARTIN COOPER

Marty Cooper is a local artist, inventor and designer. For over twenty-five years he has lead the research and development team in the design of unique watches and outdoor accessories for Dakota Watch Company in Cincinnati.

Contact: privcoop@aol.com



Martin Cooper

In the Orchard

(by *Gerry Grubbs*)

If you find yourself in the orchard
Before dawn listening to what
The blossoms spread in anticipation
Of some other arrival ask yourself
If there is something more important
Then this moment in the dark
Alone among the trees whose fragrance
Is calling for the dawn to come

Seeing the Now

(by *David Kouns*)

High overhead black streaks
Crow-like flew toward the final
Bounty in a distant cornfield,

A chipmunk with mumps-like cheeks
Hurried toward a tree root burrow
Under a giant red oak tree,

Two deers standing stone-like in the
Shadow of an ancient beech tree
Begin to browse in the morning gloom,

A small stream with bubbly voice
Beckoned all to drink their fill
At nature's fount,

A red fox marked its passing
As a broken red line
Behind tall grey trees,

A path covered with leaves
Twisted and turned seeking
Its way through the woody press,

A snapshot of land and sky
A deep breath of intense awareness
The imprint on spirit of timeless meaning.

Snow Emergency

(by *David Kouns*)

The window an eye on the falling snow,
Gusty winds driving snowflakes against
The frosty panes,
Drifting triangles of white embracing
The backyard fence,
Dogs tracks, a geometric pattern across a
Plain of white,
The street out front lost in the shifting
Snow,
Slipping and sliding a lone jogger would
Not be denied,
A snowplow busy rearranging the ever
Changing piles of snow,
Fourteen hours of relentless snow fall
Brought a city to its knees,
A snowbound population in living their
Lives in slow motion,
Bruised egos reminding us that we
Are not always in control,
If just for a brief moment such days
Remind us that life can be more.

POEMS:

RICHARD HAGUE

Richard Hague is author of fourteen books of poetry and prose, most recently *Public Hearings* (poetry) and *Learning How: Stories, Yarns & Tales*. *During The Recent Extinctions: New & Selected Poems*, is forthcoming from Dos Madres Press. He has taught young people and adults at Purcell Marian High School, at Northeastern University and at many other venues since 1969.

Contact: dickhague@purcellmarian.org

DRAWING:

TOM TOWHEY

Tom Towhey, a native of Cincinnati, is primarily a painter interested in creating works with multilevel imagery. His stories are told in a non conventional layering of paint. His artworks can be found in collections and galleries throughout the world.

Contact: towhey@gmail.com



Thomas Hieronymus Houckey 1613

Conduit

after a metaphor for the poet by Octavio Paz

Ears are torn off, tongues jerked out,
villages poisoned, cities fouled, but
I am waiting as an empty pipe waits.
Far off, in mountains where people speak
pidgin-hijacked languages, it is daily fire.
Children toss dolls and burning rags in
ditches.
Birds inflame small trees. But near and far,
narrow creeks begin to rise and testify.
Every leaf in the rainy forest is a highway
down
for truth's vivid rivulets.
Below a stone dam built long ago
by boys already dead, I gather and I hear.
I am wide, long-lived as water, many-eared.
Listen! Soon I will fill and sing.

Cool Free Market Capers

Third graders fall from
school windows,
computers like millstones
around their necks.
Instead of first-aid,
their teachers
prod their broken bodies
with bar-coded answers
to online tests.
Businessmen look quickly
away, their consciences
at last grown as heavy
as their wallets.
Blood congeals
in tiny pools
inside video games.
Handguns sprout from
the foreheads of babies,
while in the state
capitols, unions,
like cockroaches,
are stomped
by hundreds
of elected feet.

Under His Garden the Sounds

re: horizontal hydraulic fracturing

Upright for a moment
in his plot, hoe at rest
beside him, he sees his own
shadow armed,
faceless brave with a spear
as long as himself,
pointed darkness
inclined toward his neighbor's
innocent porch.
Deep in the earth,
under lakes, gulfs
towns, oceans,
under nurseries and temples
and K-Marts,
a dull machinery groans.
The sun inspires bombs.
Rain is a wash of poison,
soil a sordid bivouac.
Water from faucets
bursts into flame.
All day he has thought
to grow beans; all day,
somewhere deeply near,
it seems always a time
of battle.

POEMS:

GEORGE HARDEBECK

George Hardebeck, from Hamilton, OH, grew up in part in Co. Kerry, Ireland, where his family helped found The National Folk Theatre of Ireland. George directs *ARCHE - Arts Restoring Culture for Healing Earth* - which advocates for First Peoples, Culture & Life - ecologically, has initiated Healing Our Heartlands, a regional reconciliation conversation series, and events and projects to restore our long-integral life.

Contact: geomhardebeck@excite.com

MIKE MURPHY

Mike Murphy, gardener, poet and philosopher, lives with his wife, Birdie, near the Enright EcoVillage neighborhood in Cincinnati. Mike & Birdie share a concern to help our culture become more sustainable; they hold monthly vegetarian potluck dinners, first Sunday, 2pm.

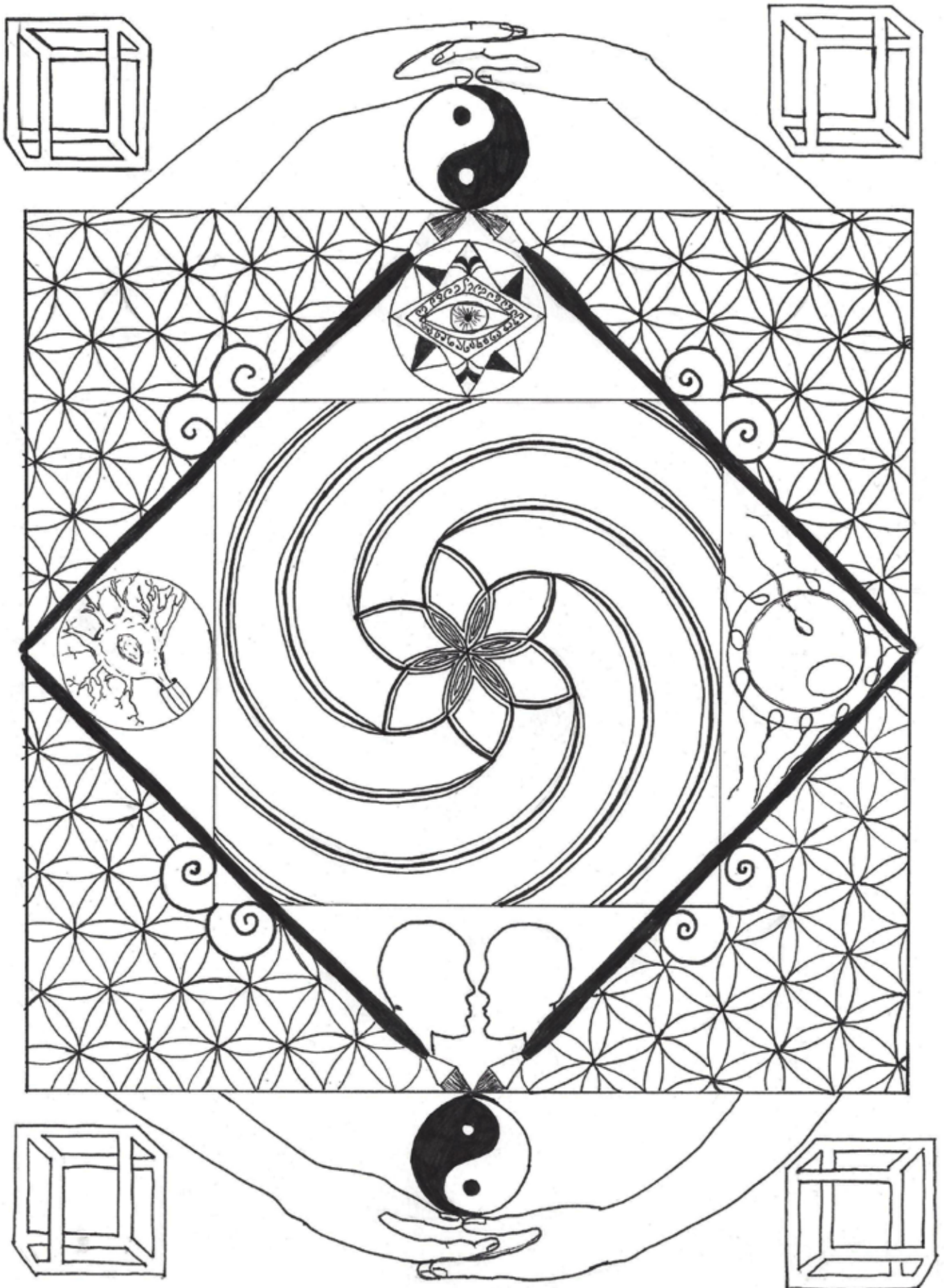
Contact: mjmurphy1938@zoomtown.com

DRAWING:

EMILY CASAGRANDE

Emily Casagrande is a local ceramicist, engaged in making pottery and ceramic sculpture out of her home studio in Cincinnati. She graduated from both Northern Kentucky University (2008) with her Bachelors of Fine Arts and from the University of Cincinnati (2011) with her Master's in Art and Art Education. Emily is also a pottery instructor at Pleasant Ridge Recreation center and aspiring high school art teacher.

Contact: casagrandeart@gmail.com



Sipping Tea

(by *George Hardebeck*)

While we sip our tea
Blood brightly stains our palms
Soaking in our steaming baths
will not wash off
these sins of fathers
or mothers
Children elders mothers wives
sons and daughters all
lay in our soils still
so we may behold the
peace of property sold
of pastoral lawns cold
Infants ripped from mothers
raped and massacred together
beloved ripped from wombs
dead because nits become lice
so soldiers glorified said
How can their children rest
if they may not rest honored
so why might we expect
a stress free life in this guilt
O Mother Our Mother
we have torn and tortured you
continually ever more
It was you they defended
as much as their own
as heartfully as for their children
as their own ever caring mother
Your blood is ever on our hands
for the exhaustion of your lands
your body and communion of life
sacred and holy is upon us
These sins are ours
to repent and amend
while we may
They will continue to be
those of our children
for all we do not
reconcile and restore
in our day
As we drink tea so
Her ancient tree falls
Her wetland is drained

Her Native child killed
and sister raped
Her steward displaced
from her body
made a servant of
First world empire
Because they loved
and cared for her wholly
in body mind heart and soul
and then their neighbor
as themselves
So they are killed taken
Martyred or enslaved
for keeping this primal law of
Creator in Creation
How can our children rest
when her life disappears
So we can watch TV
and contaminate all streams
of Life
All is comfort
All is rest
Buy our product
Line our pocket
Consume the rest
Consumerfest
all is cancer
This is only a test
only a test
Killing the children of her web
Her living waters and loving
lands
will kill and likely worse
those who misconstrue
her Life
too

Painting Reality On a Big Canvas

(by *Mike Murphy*)

A blank canvas,
The universe
We, the brush,
Circumstances,
The paint....

What we think,
What we say,
What we do...
These are
The strokes
By which we
Create the picture
We call reality.

'Tis a
Joint venture
To be sure
Involving us
Individually plus
Billions of other folks

Been doing this
For awhile now
Not a
New thing...
NOT NEW...

We've been
Doing this
Actually
For millennia...
For eons...
For EV-ver...

We've simply
Been doing it
While
We've been
Sorta asleep....

Now, tho...
Now....

NOW, we are
Waking up a bit...

Rubbing the
Sleep of
History &
Religion from
Our eyes

What moral
Compass
Shall guide us...

What value
Shall we
Choose
As our
Polestar...

Shall we
Keep on painting a
Picture of
Violence &
Destruction?

Or...
Could we...
Y'know...
Could we
Choose to
Paint a picture of
Co-creativity &
Harmonious
Exploration

We could,
Y'know....

That would
Have
Endless
Possibilities....

And wouldn't it be
Kinda fun?

We are the
Brush...

The canvas is
Waiting...

We have
Abundant
Circumstances....

POEMS:

ZACKARY D. HILL

Zackary D. Hill, better known to friends and family as 'blade', is an aspiring screenwriter living in Hamilton, OH, with his wonderful wife and potentially too many animals. Though a longtime lover of peace and justice, this is his first time being recognized as such. May 2012 be a giant step towards a better world.

Contact: zakablade@hotmail.com

NEIL KELLY

Neil Kelly is a graduate of the College of Mount St. Joseph, where he majored in Communication Studies and minored in Written Communication. He plans to attend graduate school at Northern Kentucky University where he will study Public Administration with a focus in Non-Profit Management. He enjoys writing short stories and poetry in his free time.

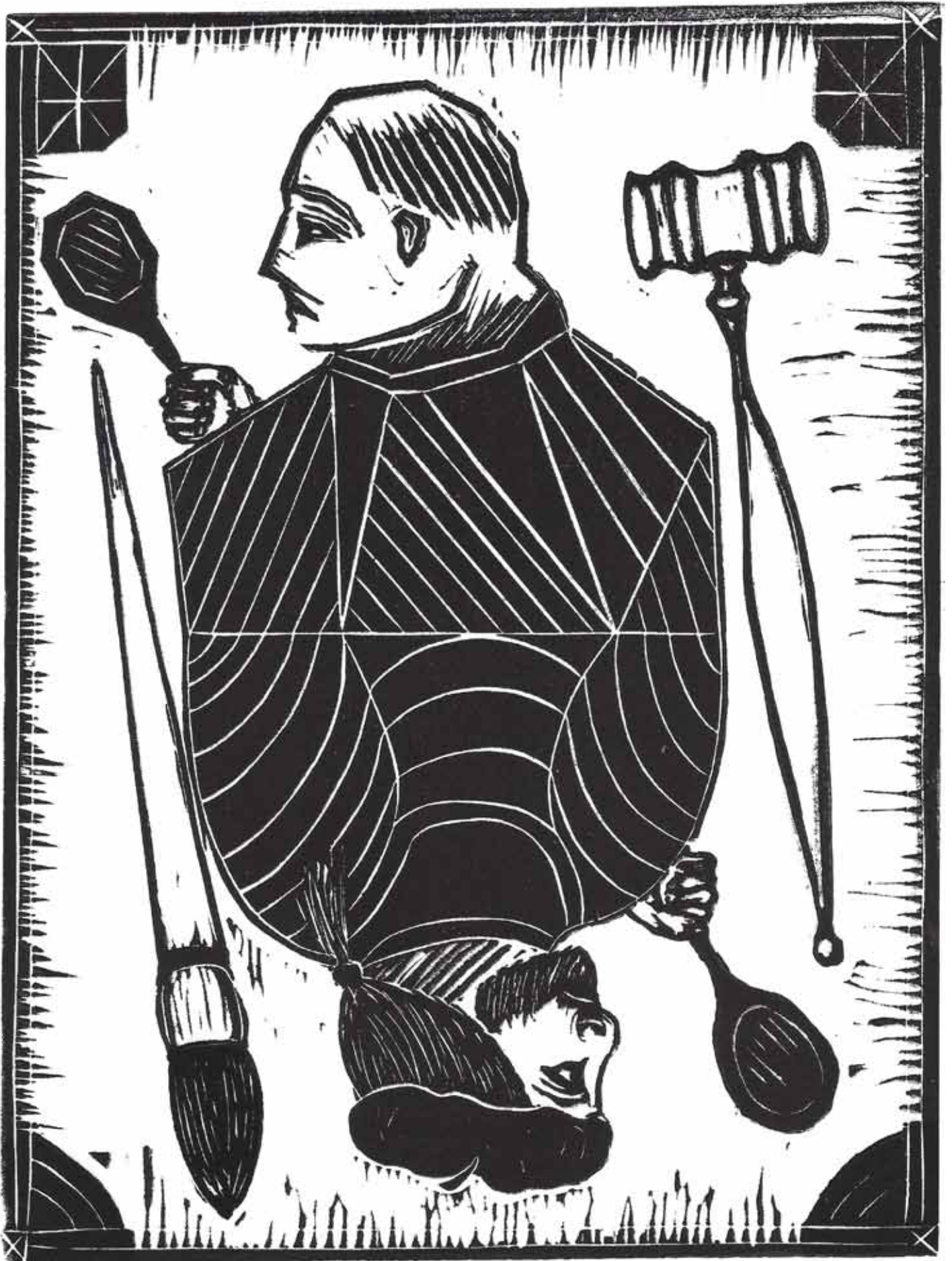
Contact: neil_kelly@mail.msj.edu

DRAWING:

BILLY SIMMS

Billy Simms is an artist and educator who lives in Hamilton, OH with his wife and two cats.

Contact: m67simms@aol.com



Billy Simms

(pre)Occupation of Man

(by Zackary Hill)

A love of hate is all the world knows
or cares to show from place to place
in faces foreign to familiar woes.

Windswept autumn leaves of human foes
fall from grace to make a pile of disgrace
and hate for love as all the world knows.

Camouflaged for racial battles in utero
by parents afraid of neighborly embrace,
all faces foreign are born to woe.

Butterflies collide in a rainforest rainbow,
mirroring man's similar suicidal pace
away from a love the hated world would know.

A diapered disposition towards war is the
status quo
in a day began in company, about face,
to face a foreign need for woe.

Nature does not teach toddler commandoes
what nurture faults as failures of race,
and a love for hate the world learns to know
as faces now foreign are filled with woe.

Still Life Sentenced

(by Zackary Hill)

To the artist:

Open the doors of justice
to the burning candle of the blind—

Hold out your hands for charity,
and focus on the innocence of need.
Hunger is a friend to the guilty,
and the wait outweighs starvation
on a scale bought with painted verdicts.

To the judge:

Look beyond the shadows
of Aristotle's shallow cave—

Seek the inner chamber of a dream,
holding court with forgotten colors.
And hiding a shaded world aflame
with fired puppets on the wall
wait for a light to draw them.

To the still:

Lead me away
from this witness stand of life.

Rubber Hits the Road

(by Neil Kelly)

Self-deprecating they say I am.
I don't know, but I like Spam.

Meat's irrelevant
But I wrote it for the hell of it.

You may ask, "What's the deal, Neil?"
See, this poem's 'bout how I feel on wheels.

People stare, but I don't care;
It's just a fucking motor chair.

I wheel, with cheer and glee
Not caring one bit who sees me

Rubber hits the road
Like a fly hits a toad.

Engulfed in the tile streets, I soar.
My chair lets out a mighty roar,

Or a soft hum.
Like a little bumble bee

Seeks the next flower
I roll on hour after hour...

Endlessly, like the Energizer bunny.
God, I wish this poem was funny.

Anyways, I sit in a chair
Who cares?

You are too.

POEMS:

SUE NEUFARTH HOWARD

Sue Neufarth Howard is a Cincinnati native, poet, visual artist, former business writer in marketing and sales training at DuBois Chemicals. She is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Writers League (GCWL) and Colerain Artists. Sue received Third Prize and/or Honorable Mention in several Ohio Poetry Day Contests since 1998. Her poems have been published in the Journal of Kentucky Studies - 25th Anniversary Edition; the Mid-America Poetry Review; Nomad's Choir; and The Incliner - Cincinnati Art Museum.

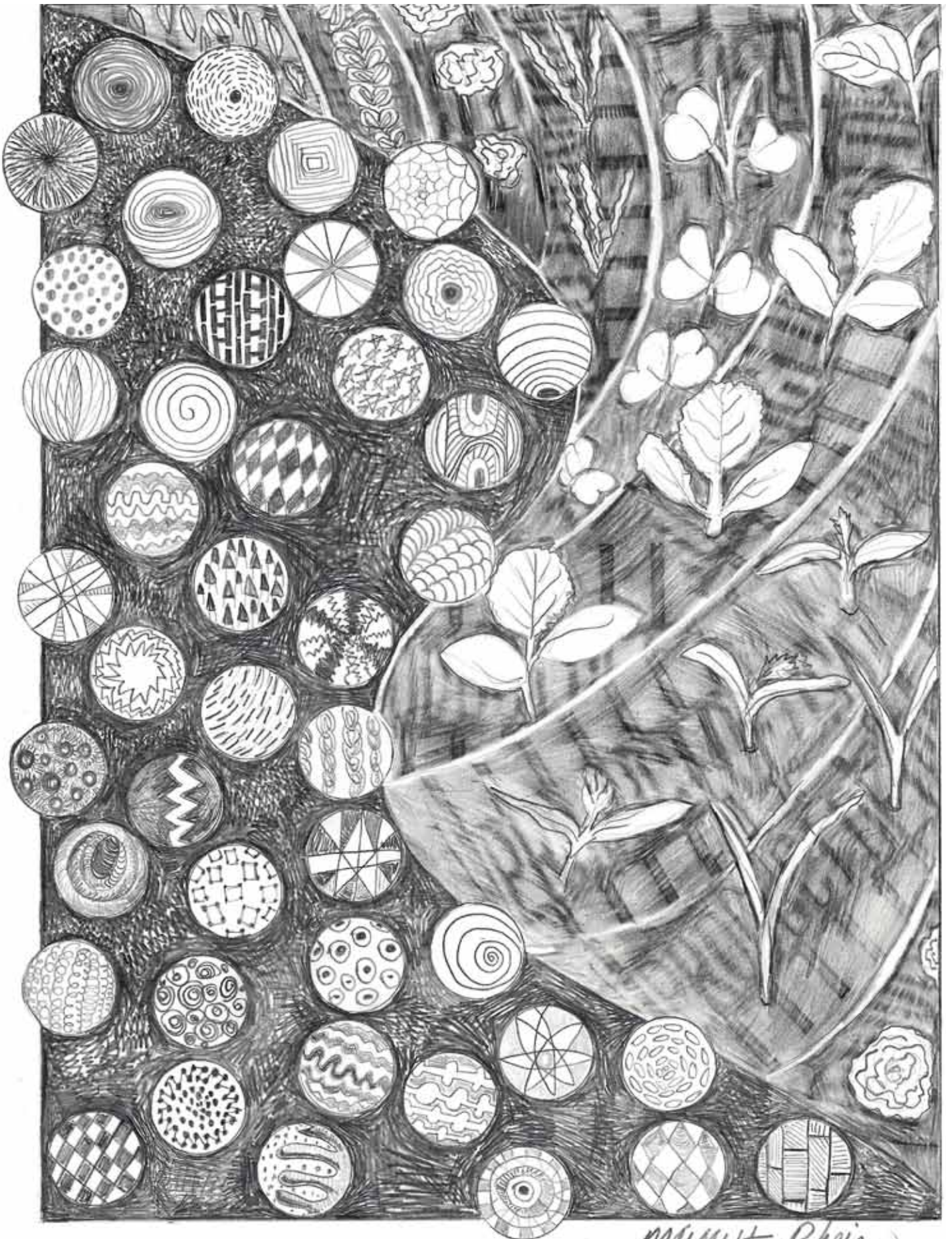
Contact: snhpoet@fuse.net

DRAWING:

MARGARET RHEIN

Margaret Rhein is a papermaker, book and collage artist working in Cincinnati for over 37 years at her studio, Terrapin Paper Mill. Exploring the patterns, colors and textures found in the natural world of plants, flowers and trees she references these often in her art work.

Contact: paperpeg@gmail.com



Margaret Rhein

Rounds

Murder No. 18, Cincinnati, 2011.

Murder No. 22, It is not commonplace, murder...

Murder No. 35, yet not unfamiliar.

Murder No. 39: Families of victims talk about their losses...

Murder No. 43: speak of the day their old lives died.

Avondale, January, the son shedding teen mistakes, emerging clean into manhood, gunned down on a Sunday morning.

A Master Barber - husband, father of four, shot in his shop, cutting a five year old's hair.

The poet, rapper who loved to make people laugh, felled, dying, makes his last call: "Mom, you ok? I love you."

Forty three deaths, forty three holes in the universe. Families forever connected to the day, the time,

the violent act - connected in a brotherhood of loss, seek justice, make a plea for folks to be their brother's keeper,

bearing the pain, the endless pain.

Found poem based on the article "A Human Being, Not Just a Homicide," by Krista Ramsey in the Cincinnati Enquirer Sunday, August 21, 2011 issue.

Powerful Plots

A bright spot on Pleasant Street, a garden plot, Mattie's Dream - the green revolution.

Verdant rows and rows of crops on deserted lots in Over-the-Rhine. Collard

greens, red Russian kale, squash, tomatoes, arugula, each plant given a name -

Mattie, Buddy, Ricardo - and serenaded with Michael Jackson songs, the work of

city farmers. New urban gardens rooted in place, for now, like street street lights and sidewalks, a

mystical way of bringing people together, a way to control one's destiny. Hands

in the dirt, growing food and jobs, better diets, good for the soul.

A found poem, based on the Cincinnati Enquirer article, "Fresh Off the Farm - in Cincinnati," by Krista Ramsey, Sunday, June 5, 2011.

Uncelebrated

Someone must do the unlaudable tasks - kill the invading spider capture the bat that flew down the chimney

fix a flat, a leaky faucet gut the leaf filled gutters

unclog toilets, restart
the disposal, bury
the family cat

remove splinters from
fingers, check out scary
sounds after midnight,
walk a bride down
the aisle, help carry
the funeral coffin

the mundane, not heroic,
tasks that nobody ever
thanks them for - fathers
who keep the dark of
the fearsome world at bay.

*A found poem based on an article in the
Cincinnati Sunday Enquirer by Krista Ramsey,
"The Incalculable Worth of a Good Dad."*

POEMS:

CAROL IGOE

Carol Igoe has worked for over 35 years as a psychologist specializing in Developmental Disabilities. She is a parent coach and educational advocate in private practice; she also coordinates the Parent Training Coalition of Hamilton County. For the past two years Carol has worked with the Healthy Homes/Lead Poisoning Prevention Collaborative of Hamilton County to decrease environmentally caused disabilities in children. She is field organizer for the local chapter of “Padres Latinos Asociados por los Niños Especiales de Ohio”.

Contact: ckigoellc@fuse.net

DRAWING:

MARY MARK

Mary Mark is a printmaker renowned for multi-colored reduction process linocuts; recently absorbed in an investigation of oil pastels. She lives and works in a 136 year old church building east of Cincinnati.

Contact: marymark@fuse.net; www.marymark.com



Mary Made

Thomas Merton Speaks to January 2012

At the corner of Fourth and Walnut,
Downtown Louisville,
He awoke
From the dream
That we are
Strangers among strangers.
Awoke from a dark dream
Of closed hearts,
Apart,
Deprived of the hope "that help is always
And everywhere,
Present".
Awoke, laughing, to see'
All of us,
Walking around like the sun,
All of us, standing
Before the doorway to death,
Before the doorway
To the stars,
Not separate, but joined.

Li Po Surveys the Flow of History: 750 Ad

*"There I looked down on Loyang's waters:
Vast sea of barbarian soldiers marching...."*

Strangers,
Barbarians,
disguised as our brothers,
Welcomed among us.
By that sly stratagem.
Like Li Po, now
We see,
Suddenly visible
From our mountain side of loss:
Emptied homes,
Fouled streams, cities wasted.
In the moon's cold light
Exposed (Revealed) at last,
Look!
Not men,
But wolves with men's hats on their heads.

(Li Po, Ancient Air: 701-763)

Flowers for Homes

This is a place history clutches you
By the foot as you walk the human earth,
Like a hand grabbing from the grave,
Not to frighten but admonish.
"Returning to the cemetery in the old
Prague ghetto" Marge Piercy

In the community garden
Hidden deep in sunflowers and lavender,
bumble bees, still as death,
Not dead, but sleeping for the night.
No dens, hives, nests, holes,
but flowers.
It wounded my heart,
How they trust to such a fragile home,
exposed, asleep, alone.
(Safe, not like their human brothers,
No home but the ground,
under bushes, bridges,
Out along the river banks.)
Fleeting brotherhood,
Now walled in a poem,
Reality below the moment,
Suddenly visible, poetry's purpose.

POEMS:

ERIC JEFFERSON

Eric Jefferson was born in Cincinnati, OH, and lives in Brooklyn, NY. His work was most recently published in the Chicago-based independent magazine *Curbside Splendor*.

Contact: ericcjefferson@hotmail.com

DAN RUBIN

Dan Rubin resides in Northside, Cincinnati, with his wife and two children. He attends monthly meetings of the Northside Community Writing Project and is beginning his second novel. Dan has developed a passion for reading, writing and expanding his vocabulary.

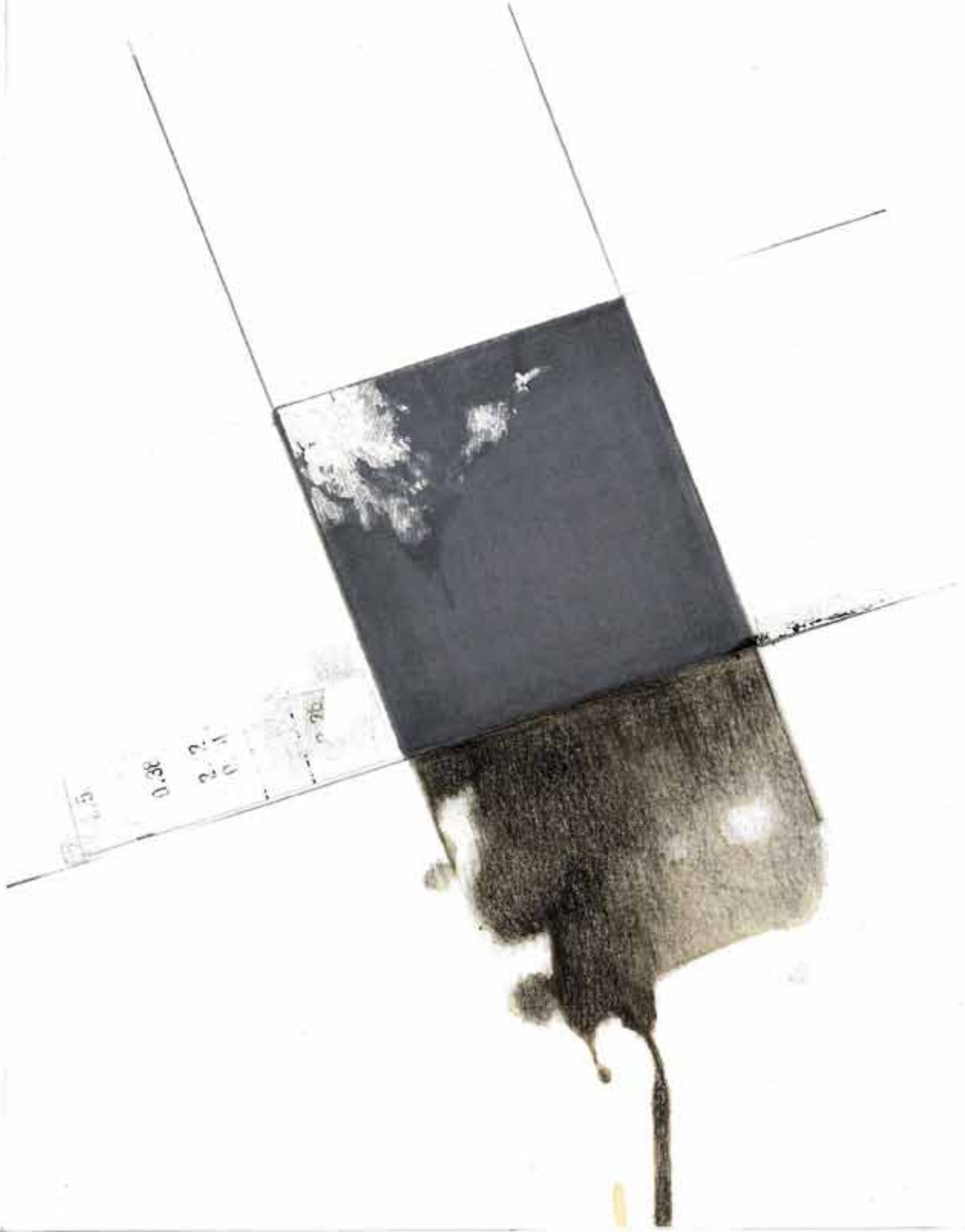
Contact: danrubin542@gmail.com

DRAWING:

RICHARD EYMAN

Richard Eyman's body of work includes designing websites, collateral pieces, logos, brand identity campaigns and illustrations for local, regional, and national clients. He earned a MFA from the University of Cincinnati and a BFA from the Columbus College of Art and Design. Prior to his faculty work at the Art Institute of Ohio - Cincinnati. Richard also taught courses at the Art Academy of Cincinnati, and at the University of Cincinnati.

Contact: willdesignforbeer@gmail.com



RICHARD EYMAN

patience

(by *Eric Jefferson*)

patience becomes willpower
and willpower force
what you no longer could
get away with in public
you did in private
until the lid was blown off

captured
you feigned contrition
attempted massaging the lie into the truth
argued ineffectually against the fact
that the pendulum
will and must
swing the other way
to right the wrongs
and restore order
if only to topple you
to expose you
to keep your hands
out of our affairs
and wallets
and off our bodies
to keep you
from kicking down our door
and dividing what we decide
is a home
and a right to happiness

we don't want your power
or your money
or your authority
it doesn't have to be poetic
or even proportionate
it needn't be an eye for an eye
but we will
reduce you to ashes
if we must
it has always been this way
it is not a sword
or a rifle
or a badge
or a law

it is its own weapon
and we will
bring you to it
it has always
been there
waiting
for
you

Prayers

(by *Dan Rubin*)

1

Bless us all, those that move
Task and clamber
On to work and on to people
Making choices, taking breaks, hoping for
Some recognition albeit little too late
Wanting fun and having none to
Speak of

2

Realize this today
You will most certainly make mistakes
That catch the ire of your coworkers or
Those you are trying to help
And realize that next year your little mistake
Will most likely not be remembered
Realize this today

3

Remember yesterday?
Remember how everyone hated you?
Well, prepare yourself
As everyone may love you today
Today, you may be surprised,
That you are the hero in the eyes
Of those around you
This may not be true of tomorrow though
But just today

POEMS:

NANCY K. JENTSCH

A resident of Campbell County, KY, Nancy Jentsch enjoys living in the country and travelling from time to time. She recently added chickens to her menagerie and is blessed with more fresh eggs than she and her family can use. While she has travelled and lived in Europe, a 2010 trip to Managua, Nicaragua took her out of her comfort zone and resulted in a couple of poems.

Contact: jentsch@nku.edu

CONNIE VAUGHN

Connie Vaughn's prose and poetry have appeared in *In Our Own Words*, *Fickle Muses: an online journal of myth and legend*, *Wild Things* anthology, *North Shore* and *Grain* magazines, *The Journal at Ohio State*. She's performed at Around the Coyote festival in Chicago, the Annual Gwendolyn Brooks Open Mic contest, and other venues. Connie keeps a blog about running and life. She walks through forests of physical things that are also spiritual; they watch her affectionately.

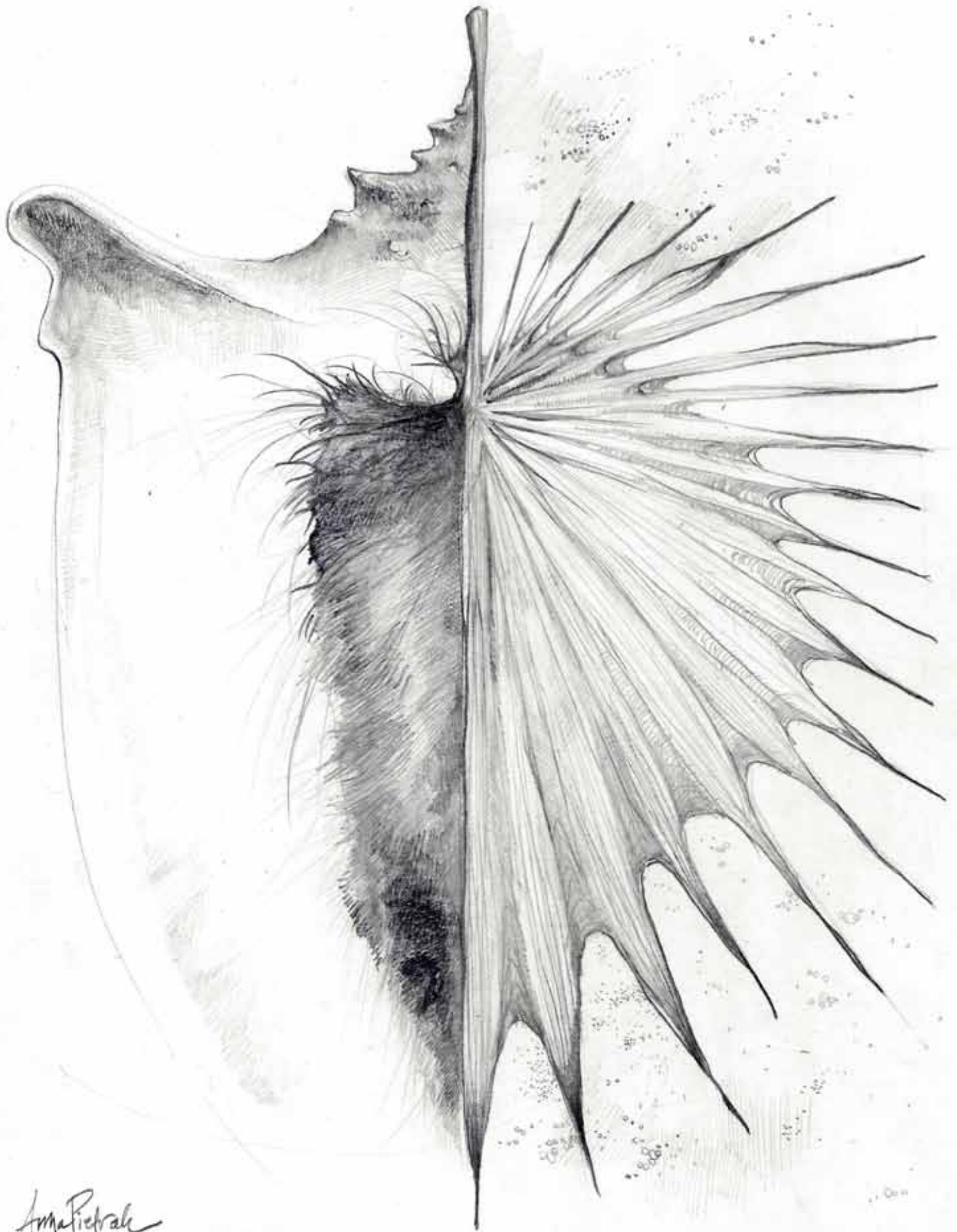
Contact: cmvaughn1@aol.com; www.connievaughn.com/blog

DRAWING:

ANNA PIETRZAK

Anna Pietrzak is a Master of Architecture student finishing her last year of studies at the University of Cincinnati. In addition to studying architecture, she also enjoys taking pictures and has exhibited her photography both locally and internationally. Anna's portfolio also includes several graphite and colored pencil drawings and more recently, cast bronze and aluminum sculptures.

Contact: pietrza@gmail.com; www.cargocollective.com/annapietrzakportfolio



Anna Petrali

Managua por la Mañana

(by *Nancy Jentsch*)

Morning sounds in Managua
Move my sleep towards light.
My dreams dawn to thoughts as
Señor Rooster's kikirikí inspires
Tropical birds to trills as fanciful as their
plumage.
Trucks labor uphill spewing
Fumes and off-key fugues in their wake.
From behind the compound's scissor-wire-
trimmed wall
Our protector barks.
I should feel safe.
Managua por la mañana.

Against this backdrop enter voices
Voices chanting slogans
Voices marching in unison
Under a choking cloud of smoking rubber.
My luminal senses perceive
Reprise of revolution in Nicaragua
And fear sears my weary synapses.

Gathering courage I wake
And hear beyond the mirage
Doves cooing in unison,
Roosting above the embers that warmed
the poor of Managua
Into tomorrow.
Mañana en Managua.

I, Colony

(by *Connie Vaughn*)

In the days when I dressed for dinner
and long Edwardian evenings
we made a fine potage of hyena
and sipped daiquiris from conch shells
on the veranda. Houseboys brought plates and
news of visiting dignitaries,
and we swept the bugs out
lest we forget how to be civilized.

Our gardens overgrew us:
how thoroughly we snipped
away at their lush aggression!
We scripted a more orderly diurn
for our wild mahogany home—
the hearty breakfast, tea at 5
and ways to keep the termites out.
The health of the world was at stake.

We brought reading, writing and ciphering,
tailored shirts, jackets and knee pants,
Parliament and well-constructed shoes. We
brought houses at right angles, glass
chandeliers, raised beds, paved roads
and trained men. We brought the Scientific Method,
thick typeset encyclopaedias with coloured plates,
coins
and banks and factories and clocks and ordained
clergy.
We brought engraved silverware and we brought
guns.

In spite of it all, the sea nipped
and snapped at our rocky ankles, and the whitecaps
thundered as high as they wanted to. My lace hem-
line
soiled and ruined, I lost my diamonds
on the beach somewhere. The garden, of course,
took itself back. When the termites finally digested
all four of my bedposts, I lay down against
the weave of my acacia mat, and, at last, slept.

POEMS:

LINDA KLEINSCHMIDT

Linda Kleinschmidt, a former writing teacher at Cincinnati State, Norwich University, and Granite State, is currently a freelance editor and writing consultant worldwide. Her poetry topics include New England, women, and human rights. Linda has published two children's picture books, multiple articles on the craft of writing and editing, and won three Writer's Digest Honorable Mentions. She divides her time between Cincinnati and Hanover, NH.

Contact: lmk42@earthlink.net

TAUNJA THOMSON

Taunja Thomson has been writing for twenty years, and her poems have appeared in *The Cincinnati Poets' Collective*, *The Cincinnati Poetry Review*, and *The Licking River Review*. Her poem "Seahorse and Moon" was nominated for the Pushcart Award by the editors of *The Licking River Review* in 2005. She currently lives in Cold Spring, KY, with her husband and five cats.

Contact: rossettimoon@yahoo.com

DRAWING:

JIMI JONES

Jimi Jones is a Cincinnati artist and graphic designer. He is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati/DAAP and recently retired after a 27 year career as an art director in charge of display design at Procter and Gamble. Jimi is a founding member of the Neo-Ancestralist art movement.

Contact: jaj0421@zoomtown.com



jimi jones

Vermont Hills

(by *Linda Kleinschmidt*)

Villages grow, people coarsen, get busy,
Farms fail or are sold,
Towns gentrify.
Roads change, widen to
Run straighter as highways.
Even autumn colors mute from
Acid rain and maples dying.

Over time, through place,
There are constant passages,
But the hills stay.
Stalwart, quiet, strong
In their granite.

You can go to the end of a lane,
Climb a country road, and
Still see a hill far off,
Rising to stroke the sky and
Spread across the horizon,
Bolstered by other hills
To resolution almost.

Village Carpenter

(by *Linda Kleinschmidt*)

Spare, short, sparse with words,
He talks with his hands.
His new front stoop is strong, sturdy,
And utilitarian like the man.

This builder of step-bridges
Links person to town,
Neighbor to friend,
Inside to outside.

He works slowly with prudence,
Cutting, smoothing, connecting
Lengths of wood, a handful of nails
To form a whole,
Pleased his work is needed.

The world needs more carpenters.

Promise

(by *Taunja Thomson*)

I was discovered on the moon and underwater
bound and gasping for breath, to be burned
and mocked, ashes of a non-human, a witch, a dancer,
a dreamer. My hair became the tangled branches, my legs
the dewy stalks of grass, my arms the stiff arms of trees;
my brow, the bone-white moon covered in beads
of sweat dripping upon starving old women,
women who owned nothing but curses.

He swung with grace after the convulsions. They thought
him
dead, indistinguishable from night. They thought him
animal with animal anger and animal lust. His teeth
were wicked white like mine when I threw back my head
to cry out.

We opened our mouths to laugh at them, swallow
them like night. Our kinship swallows the earth
and will burn it as it hangs amid a dream
of dark and a promise
of stars.

POEMS:

DIDI KOKA

Didi Koka is a writer, Healer, Mother, and prize-winning MFA graduate in Poetry. She has published essay in *Confluence*, interviews in *Water-Stone*, and poetry in *Minnesota Medicine* and *Rock, Paper, Scissors*. She has conducted poetry groups for healing professionals and has performed poetry with the *Heal the Earth Collective*. Didi currently works and volunteers as a family physician for the underserved in the Twin Cities.

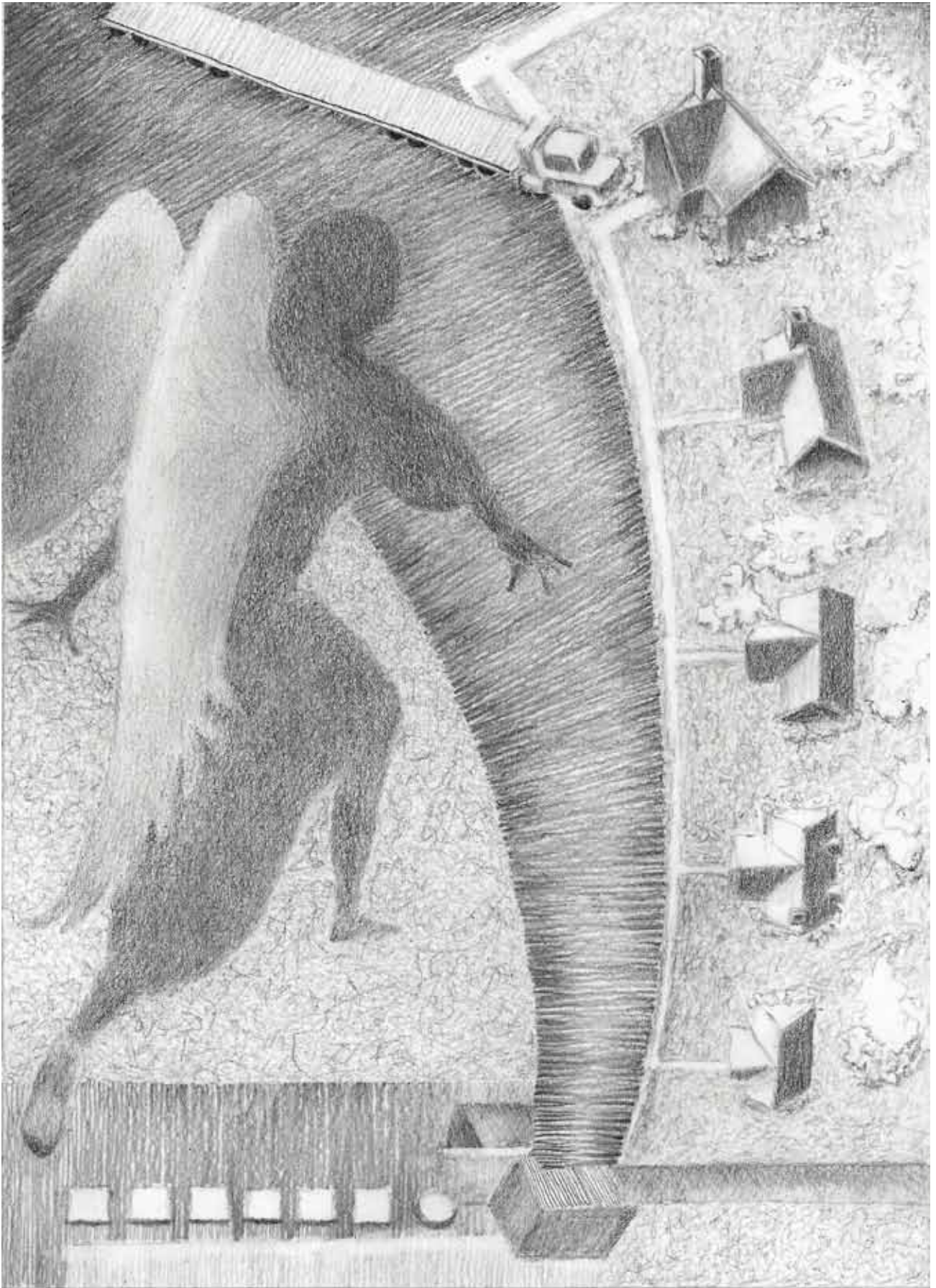
Contact: didikoka@gmail.com; www.mnartists.org/Didi_Koka

DRAWING:

ROBERT KLING

Bob Kling was born in Erie, PA, in 1950; English major at Xavier University; commercial sculptor for 34 years; requires use of fingers to more readily think.

Contact: rkling@cinci.rr.com



Bob Kling

All Dreams

“How are you doing building sentences in this world?”

Begin with a first whisper—look
and you must not look
Enter a chorus or drums and silence that
drowns
out you—rise above—you see
your house seated on a familiar childhood
street
but you did not have a house as a child
just cramped living quarters,
no matter, you relax and all begins

well with birds and swings and laughter
and such until one long flatbed truck
pops off the street heads for the corner.
Somehow you see it from above, like
a god or a falling angel, see shards
of wood explode, the yellow sign
announcing convenience split in two
like a derby disaster on TV mute.

You do not notice this lack of sound,
the lack of fire. You are indignant
in your dream and still yelling when
just then another careless rig with snake-
length swirls and makes wreckage.
Is your house hit? You feel legs as they pump
the sidewalk looking for your previous
dream life.

How quickly even dreams can disappear.
Without warning you are no longer yourself,
without warning you are marching into halls
demanding
your rights with hundreds, no thousands of
strangers,
dreamers asking for the dreams back.

nocturnal vision

no heroes roam the grounds today,
only memories crowd the night twinkling;

brilliant shooting tears shred the sky,
the wreckage beautiful and harrowing to behold;

wrestling leaves, the backdrop of day
of night, suffering—

It is not my place to judge pain;
it is of this universe, the relic of lullabies

whose lyrics hang in air; sung promises
to weary infants, moonlight heavying lids

cleaning up this ripped darkness, its shreds
holds words of last night’s prayers.

How rare to find a passing heart, a fortuitous
remnant of small peace the whole world knows.

American Narratives: Pests and Pesticides

(take 1)
repeat again *how many dead? when will this
carnage end?*

red lentils simmer slowly
fountain floats for tongues

a fragile flame can still melt steel
coat blackened fish, silence:

kills—no natives are left

mouths belch bleached germs
burp apologies to the babes
little mushrooms lay crumpled

bleating, bleating left to overrun
this innocent land, killed beasts

camouflaged in skins of debris —
no animal with eyes survives

innocents—who will rise to protest?

POEMS:

CAROL FEISER LAQUE

Carol Laque, born in San Francisco, settled in Cincinnati in 1996, and has been living in Chicago since November 2011. She is a well published poet, published by small presses from California, Virginia and Ohio. Her latest collection of poems, *The Beekeeper's Story* was published in 2012 by Conference Press, Cincinnati, OH. In 2010 Carol was awarded the lifetime achievement award from the Cincinnati Writers' Project, titled 'Sky Blue The Badass' after Dallas Wiebe's nationally known novel of the same title.

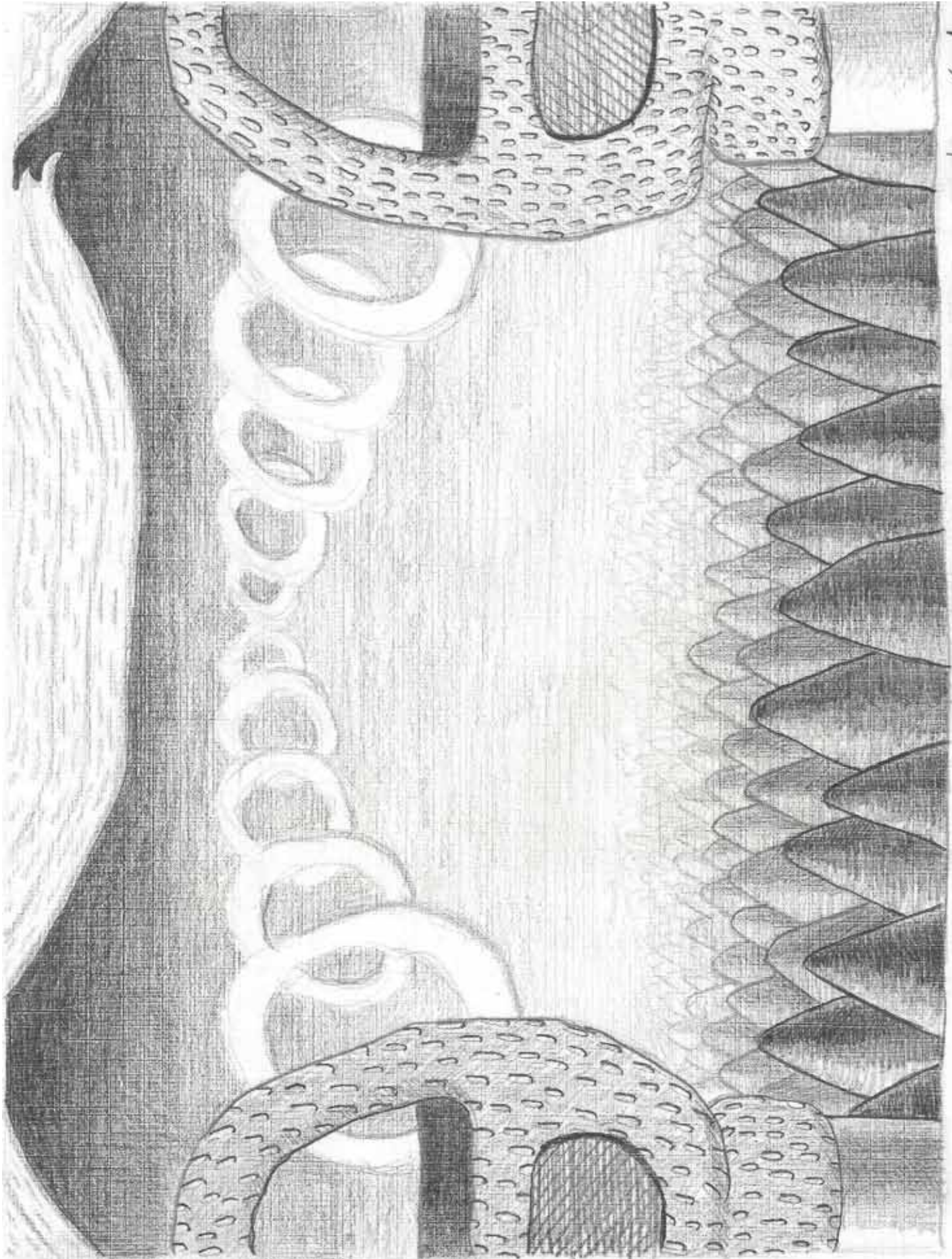
Contact: carollaque@gmail.com

DRAWING:

CHRISTOPHER LAND

Chris Land graduated from the Herron School of Art and Design, Indianapolis, in 2008 with a bachelor's degree in painting. He went on to earn an MFA from the University of Cincinnati in 2011. He mainly works with oil on medium sized canvases and paints in the attic of the 107 year old house where he and his wife reside in the Evanston neighborhood of Cincinnati.

Contact: furforfour@gmail.com



Chris Lead

The Color of a Blessing

I begin in silence.
One Black arm, the other White –
are together lifting Heaven –
Both the Shining Sun and the New Moon.

In my life and beyond death,
I am a girl flying with finches
into the black green of Pines –
into white, trembling, curling Birches.

I paint my soul Black and White.
I dance a Black and White dance.
I sing a Black and White song
until the days and nights are Whole.

I watch Black and White hands
folded together in Prayer.
This is the Color of a Blessing.

Nightly News

Wolves howl great O's
to possess city lights,
and under the covers,
even policemen shudder.

All night long, the wind roars
as trees, buildings sway black
along with the new moon
in never-ending circles.

Wolves circle urban and
suburban wearing deep paths
made deeper out of hunger, instinct.
So many children go missing.

Grandmothers wail near the
end of life for the Loss
of the beginning. Children
meet wolves dusk to dawn,

And silence the howling
with no time for terror –
lost in the center of circles
while not a single tear is shed.

Minding Time

I am an eating parking meter,
swallowing change and
owing the time of my lives.

Metal to metal coins click, whir
exchanging time on the cheap.
I swallow whole National Parks

where they drill and spill oil.
Eminent domain claims my uterus,
Breast, ovaries, sweat glands.

The flashing tintinnabulation of casinos
is where and when I become a
famished slot machine full of unpaid taxes.

My coins and time expires –
as the meter flashes and an officer
puts a ticket between my ice cold lips.

Hansel and Gretel

Lapis spangles from my ears until I am
a grim fairy tale, wooded, precious.

Hansel and Gretel drop crumbs to find
their way home lost into abandonment.

Inside the candy Gingerbread House
I am the Wicked Witch.

I keep the oven burning for the boy who
holds his bony finger outside his cage.

Pushed into my own oven, I die while the
children survive bathed in flames.

Burnt to ashes, I am a screaming
snack from Hell.

As murderers, the children discover
“Evil does not die of natural causes.”(1)

(1) *Charles Krauthammer*

POEMS:

JUSTIN PATRICK MOORE

Justin Patrick Moore is a writer and host of the radio program *On the Way to the Peak of Normal* on WAIF 88.3 FM. In 2011 he gave a talk at the third annual Esoteric Book Conference in Seattle on the subject of *The Library Oracle and Its Angel*. His story *Gertrude and Ludwig Spin A Web* appeared in *Flurb #12*, a webzine of astonishing tales edited by scifi legend Rudy Rucker.

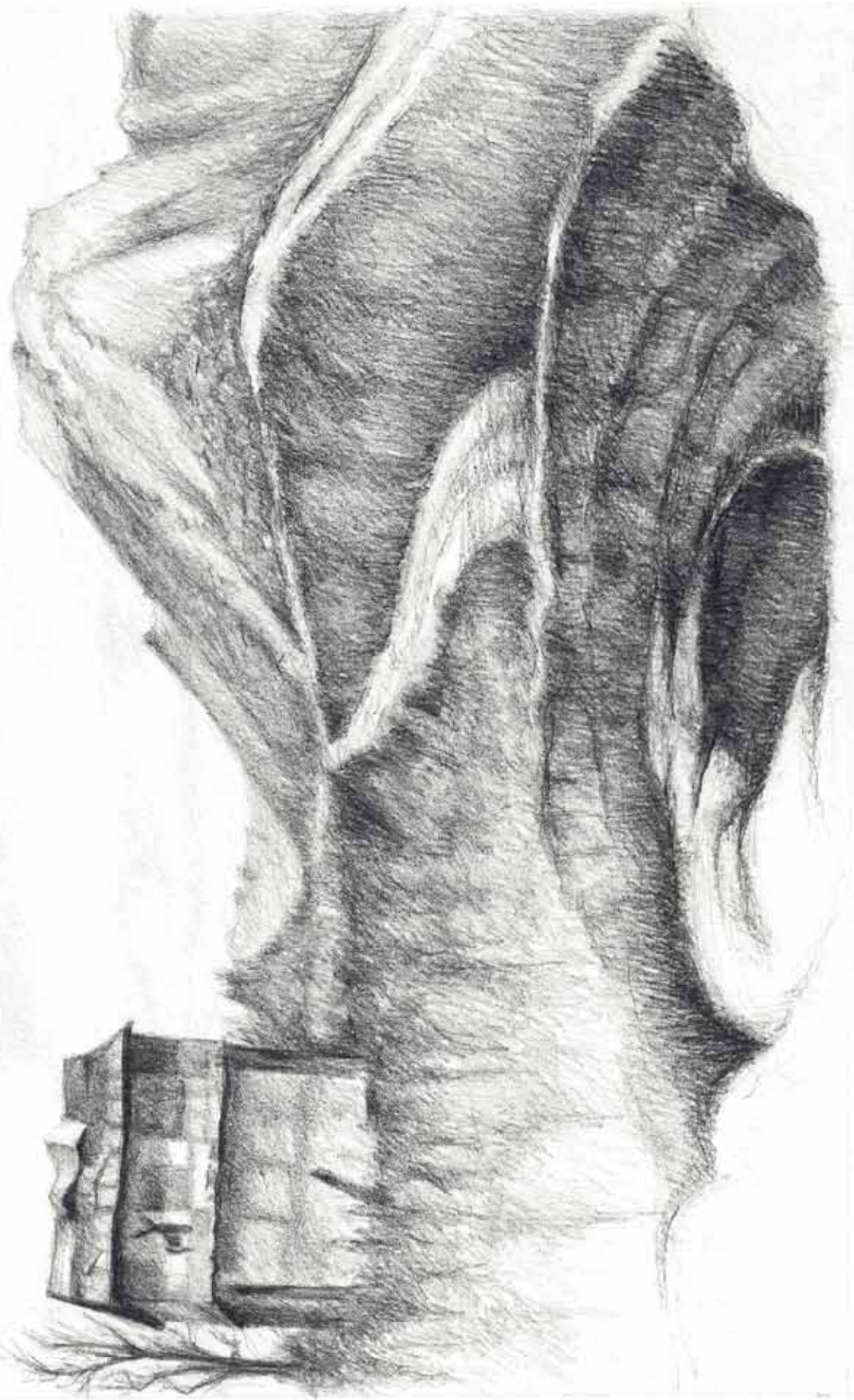
Contact: justinpatrickdreamer@gmail.com; <http://sothismedias.com>

DRAWING:

RACHEL E HEBERLING

Rachel E Heberling is currently working as an artist in Cincinnati, OH, and is also the printer for artist Jay Bolotin as he works on his upcoming feature-length animation. Rachel was recently a graduate administrative associate for professors Ann Hamilton and Michael Mercil for one year at The Ohio State University in Columbus where she received an M.F.A. in printmaking in 2011. Her artwork is influenced by her former home of Bethel, Pennsylvania, which borders the mining regions, as much of her work portrays obsolete technology and abandoned industry.

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Rachel E. Atterling 2012.

After the After Party

After

the after party
America woke up
with a hangover

After

all the oil was guzzled
doing keg stands
at wells around the world
guns held
to the face of foreign frat boys.

We were raiding

tipping the scales in our favor
when free trading broke
because the spoils were in other lands

we'd blown up our own mountains
poisoned our own shores
crude treaded coats on one thousand seals
and bloody sputum in our lungs

the black coal dust on our hands
didn't stop us from signing off those deals

After

the after party
we woke up shaky
because the pipes were cashed out
the last glimmer of ancient sunlight
burned in a frenetic
threehundredyearorso flash

woundtight to our gadgets
the screens glitching out
into digital cold cloud

war fever
post traumatic vets sent home
when the last barrel sold

in desperation for more
a club soda golf swing
offshore
desecrating gulf coast

and we wonder, still wasted
after

all the fun has been had
who's going to clean up after us,
after the after party?
Isn't that a third world job?

learning, as the fuel burns out
we just might need to use our own hands

Ole Weird America

There's an ole weird America

my Granpa used to know
where horeshoes hung on painted signs
and hexes beamed from old barn doors.
It's hard to see now,
because the light from stores
clouds out stellar light
and the daily mind, trivial, has sunk low.

too many bars
too much time
spent in them, spent behind them

not enough

down in cornfields
among the circled crops
of the Heart Land.

Down where the grass is blue
the moon used to shine
a midnight medicine when cold winds blew,
but now, with the steel factories closed
and the barn fallen over
with the trailer boarded up
all you hear are the ghostly echoes
of that ole weird America
the last plucked string
of a homemade dobro.

Cause all the people have packed their bags
to join the new Imperium,
called by the click, culled by the coin
clink clink clink

they've walked on and forgotten
the rusty drinking songs of coal barges,
neighborly waves and nods,
local colors stripped like the mountains
making way for auto malls.

Inside the big box walls,
John Henry's hammer can't be heard
the railways been paved over
and their ain't no time for a strange birds call
the hoary haunts replaced by nowheres
a limbo of broken carts, emptied shopping lots.

pray the kudzu cover all

But there's a locket wrapped with hair
down deep in hidden pockets,
a heart pumping blood
among the oddballs and the lint,
amidst the shorn paper
of the shorn people.

within them:
untapped aquifers

subcutaneous reservoirs
where all secret rivers run

Dreamer Of The Dark Fantastic An Ode For Koizumi Yakumo: Patrick Lafcadio Hearn*

Lafcadio,
your Irish eyebrows
pour over paper
while your classic Greek hand
unfurls spindly writing
beneath diminutive lamplight.

Your one good eye is scrunched, myopic
your fingers cramped, back sore
head full of fantasy and folk lore,
the perfumed dreams of a fairy in a Tea garden.

You were a spiritual ambassador
for Japan, your final home

adopted by the Kami as much by the people
from your birthplace on Lefkada,
by way of Dublin, Cincinnati
the West Indies and New Orleans.

Your gift was to tease out
the soul of a place,
to translate the genius loci
into a liquid language
soluble to friends
left behind in the West.

You were locked away as child,
shut in a closet, a punishment
to cure fears of the dark.
With age you end up going nearly blind,
befriending many ghosts along the way.

Your gift was inner sight.
In a playground game you lost an eye
but like Odin, became a seer
peering into Other worlds,
more at home in the Mittelmarch
then under the smoky towers of industry.
Your pen was made of foxfire
and all your words were goblin.

Washed up penniless in the Queen City
you slept on paper shavings
at the local printers,
nourishing your dreams in the library,
breathing in a host of fantastic heterodoxies.

Bootstrapped up from the pavement
you eventually landed behind a news desk.
Never afraid
you stared down the barrel of horror,
from violent cremations to tan yard murders;
immersing yourself in haunted landscapes,
listening for echoes, voices of ancient ancestors.

You did not mind bucking authority
even when it bucked you back.
Three glasses down, coming home from the
beer garden
into the kitchen at the boarding house,
your eyes fell on Mattie, a black skinned story-
teller.

The world wasn't ready for your illegal love,
cast upon the rocks of social disdain
you couldn't reach a safe harbor,
and your marriage, void under law, dissolved.

So you slinked on down to New Orleans
and simmered yourself in Creole cuisine,
hacking away at the papers again,
scribbling down many a fanciful sketch,
making attempts at translations from French,
growing your powers, pouring your light
into newsprint, denouncing corruption,
disabusing fallacy, penning obituaries
for Doctor John and Marie Laveau.

Then tiring of the Southern scene,
waxing weary of the socials while wanting the weird
you traveled even deeper south,
skipping off for two years to Martinique,
where you wooed the Muse of the odd
in search of tropical flavors
to quill your cryptic travelogues.

Then off again, pit stopping
in New York to wrangle with editors, publishers,
magazine men;
before tacking along on a train to Vancouver
to step aboard the good ship Abyssinia
on a Pacific passage dark as any of yours
and step off on St. Patrick's day in Japan 1890,
Yokohama, among people who smiled,
wishing you well during the days torrential rain
dreaming at night of ideographs and insects
soundless visions running on phantom wheels.

In Matsue
you married during the frozen winter
Setsu the warm daughter of a Samurai,
who melted the coarser aspects of your nature.
There wasn't much language between you
so she spoke in the shared sympathy of Shinto
in the grave voice of her countries oldest chillers,
breathing life into ghosts,
awakening cruel demons who slept close to Earth.

Finding home at last you were made a citizen,
became professor Yakumo
gave birth to a son Kazuo

unleashed yourself on paper
letting the local spirits do the writing,
as your blood boiled under oil lamplight,
possessed, prolific, a passionate interpreter.

On good terms with Kitsune
the last years of your life were happy.

You made a boat of words
to crest over this rocky world of men,
and resting, sailed beyond them

your final voyage
off to visit the Hare in the moon
one last stop
on the river to Heaven.

*(Note: *Patrick Lafcadio Hearn (1850 – 1904), an international writer, was born in Lefkada, a Greek Island. At age 19 he emigrated to the USA and settled initially in Cincinnati where he worked as a reporter for the Cincinnati Daily Enquirer, covering local murders, and authoring sensitive accounts of some of the disadvantaged people of Cincinnati. His writings also often denounced political corruption, violence and intolerance. He later went to Japan where he lived until his death.)*

POEMS:

MARY-JANE NEWBORN

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

Contact: 513-929 2376

NOBLE-KOFI

Noble-Kofi is a native of Cincinnati, OH. Although poetry is his first passion, his other creative outlets include photographing urban landscapes and fashion design. He is currently working on a book entitled "Portraits of Poetry".

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DRAWING:

MARTIN VOTA

Marty Vota is an artist and illustrator from Cincinnati, OH. He is currently a BFA student at Northern Kentucky University.

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Martin Vota

Denaturing

(by *Mary-Jane Newborn*)

I am giving my mother a haircut.
She doesn't really want it.
I do it because people prefer her shorn.
They mock – "aging hippie" –
But she is ageless and also older
than any god they imagine.

I hate to trim her long green tresses,
adorned with flowers, sprinkled
with feathers and seeds.
After her winter baldness, her spring beauty
electrifies my heart.

I wait as long as I dare,
afraid of being fined for letting her
run riot all around the house.
I clip around the blossoms,
snip the strands that poke through
the lively colors,
and gather the cuttings to make beds
for small forms.

Query

(by *Mary-Jane Newborn*)

Hey! I hear you're proud to be American, yeah?
And you were born here, right?
OK, so listen, can you tell me something?
I was just wondering—
See, I was born here, too,
But, you know, I really don't remember how I did it.

So, like, how exactly did you manage
To get born here?
'Cause I have a hard time being, like,
Proud of something when
I don't have a clue about how, um,
I pulled it off, you know?
So—
How'd you do it?

Wake Up Trees

(by *Noble-Kofi*)

When there are no trees,
There is no breeze.
When there is no breeze; it's hot.
Then we become infected by disease,
Hatred, then disaster;
Wake up Trees !!!
Because we are infected.
For we are the ones who maintain the breeze.

POEMS:

GREGORY NICAISE

Gregory Nicaise is a current Junior at Centre College, studying sustainable community development and minoring in environmental studies. A student of painting, poetry, drama, and vocal music, Gregory aspires to work at the community level developing local economic and community centers that promote responsible consumption and human ecology.

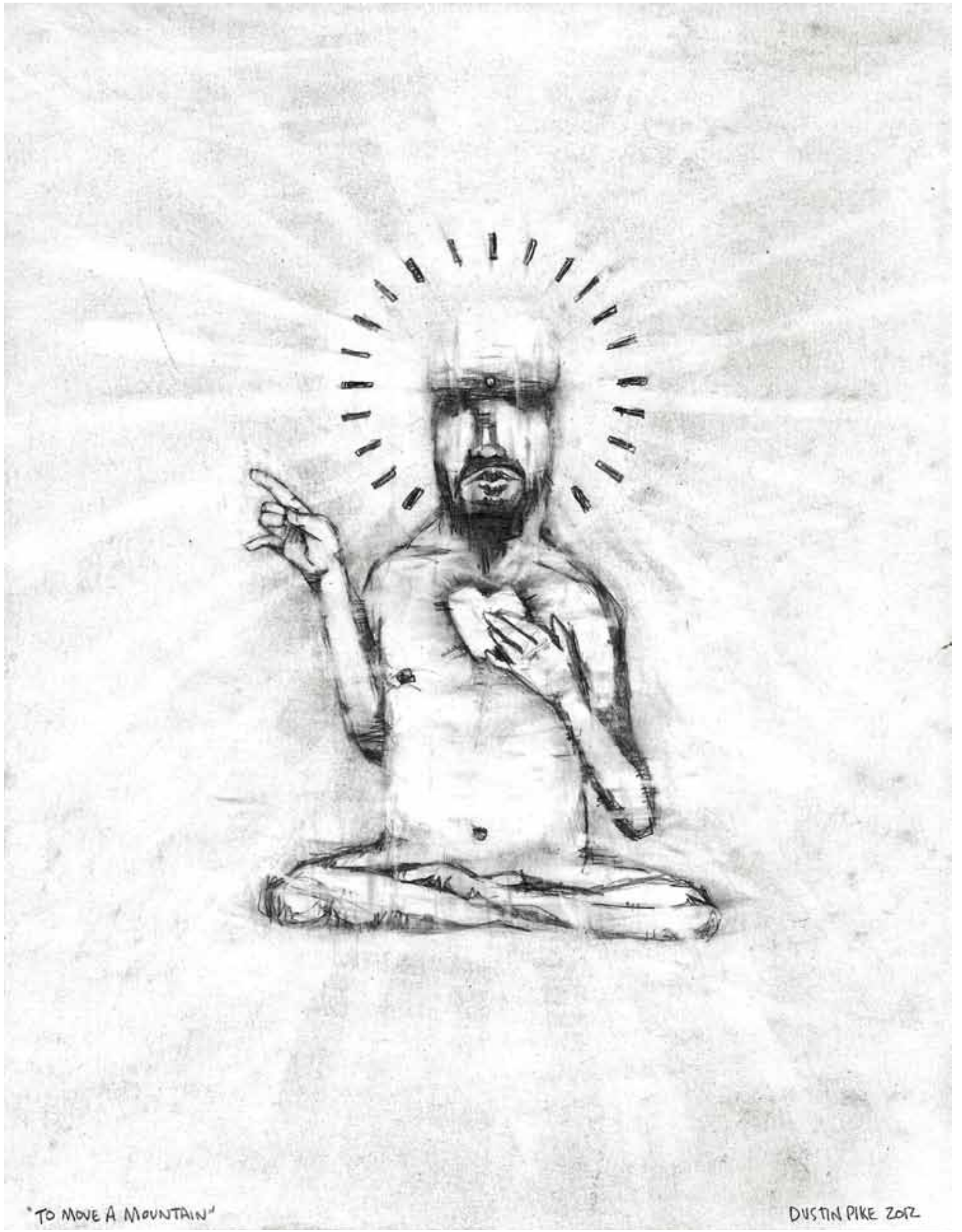
Contact: gregory.nicaise@centre.edu

DRAWING:

DUSTIN PIKE

Dustin Pike is an artist, freelance designer, writer, and pawn-broker living and working in the Greater Cincinnati area. His method of expression utilizes the structure endowed through the process of design, coupled with the freeform nature of art making. Dustin's work attempts to capture the timeless essence of modern humanity through his various portrayals of contemporary life.

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"TO MOVE A MOUNTAIN"

DUSTIN PIKE 2012

Helping Hands

If I could move mountains
I would;
though all I've been given are these hands.
So while hands may seem substantial,
peering miles away, pinching each peak
between thumb and finger,
it's never that easy
– at the least I know this:
Mountains must be moved from within.
and only once I know
each shake and shift of shale,
which collides off these cliffs,
can I let my fingers seep into the rich soil,
hold hands with its history,
and grasp my first step towards the next
horizon:
new Sun over setting peaks, and rising
people.

Conflict Resolution

Blame us child-raised-adults
crying “he started it”,
playing petty pay-backs
on a merry-go-round of landmines.

We stand heated, on watered lawns,
beefing rip-sleeved T-shirts,
glaring red white and blue as a proud ornament
to our white front porch.

We raise our fists gripped tight,
taunting battle cries,
chanting we're #1
in conflict resolution.

We should blame us “peace-keepers”:
burying all our dead,
throwing on all their dead,
and still hunting for their heads.

Let the victims blame our manly resolutions;
too lost to just walk away,
too prideful to turn the other cheek,
too bullied to realize peace gives peace.

Bring Me Home Again

It took a recognition
of being lost, to collapse
in the circles I'd spent, and plead
on a breeze, “bring me home again.”
It took a listening
of life and death, to hear
Him say “home only takes seeing
the world from the ground up.”

So He pulled me past my gardens;
beds fed across the land
as the authored lines of bound pages,
booked with hungry numbers, produced,
and spread for miles away. He walked me on
and over, spectating the growth of greens
distancing to deeper blues until met by
some solemn sight of wheels,
spitting and rolling just more.
He took me beyond this roaring war, towards
the gated thorns, to His grounds ignored.

He led me to His fields: a breathing
spectrum of overlapping depths raised
across his chest, reaching roots through His arms
to embrace community's core. He led me among
the complication of leaves, spreading dancing
greens,
to yellow imperfections, to undoing umbers;
He led me to an unexpected place of less life than
death,
where the pervasive loss crunched brown beneath
my feet, and I anxiously feared
for the dead and dying.

Among the angst of a smeared pallet of green and
brown,
He stopped me, “This is where you'll find your
home;
you must learn to see the world from the ground up”

So I laid myself within the weeds and broken
branches pinching on my soles; I arched my back
to the bugs slipping through my skin; I clench my-
self
as to the crawling itch of the breathing;

I spread my arms
and sunk my fingers into the crusted dirt as if to hold myself down

– I opened my eyes and saw
a grand oak guarding me by the dull-warm undersides
of transparent leaves sparing me beneath. I felt the tickle
of the wind petting my hairs, relaxing my stiff neck. I let myself into
the ground, gave way to the bugs, gave way to the toppling trees, and the fretting ferns;
I listened to His breathe in the wind, giving rhythm
to the clapping leaves – my heart beats. I, too, began to breath, let those fears free,
so with each intake... release: my grip loosened
as soil sifted through gaps in my fingers, spilling control
back to the land that feeds me, back to Earth: back home.

POEMS:

MICHAEL O'BRIAN

Michael O'Brian is a Cincinnati based performance art poet and a former OWS protester. He has published several collections of poetry including his most recent compilation *The Revolution Will Not Be Poeticized*. He was awarded the Warrior Poet Award in 2008, published a collection of short stories titled *Beneath the Shadow of the Arch* and a collectible magazine titled *My Occupation: An Occupy Wall Street Experience*.

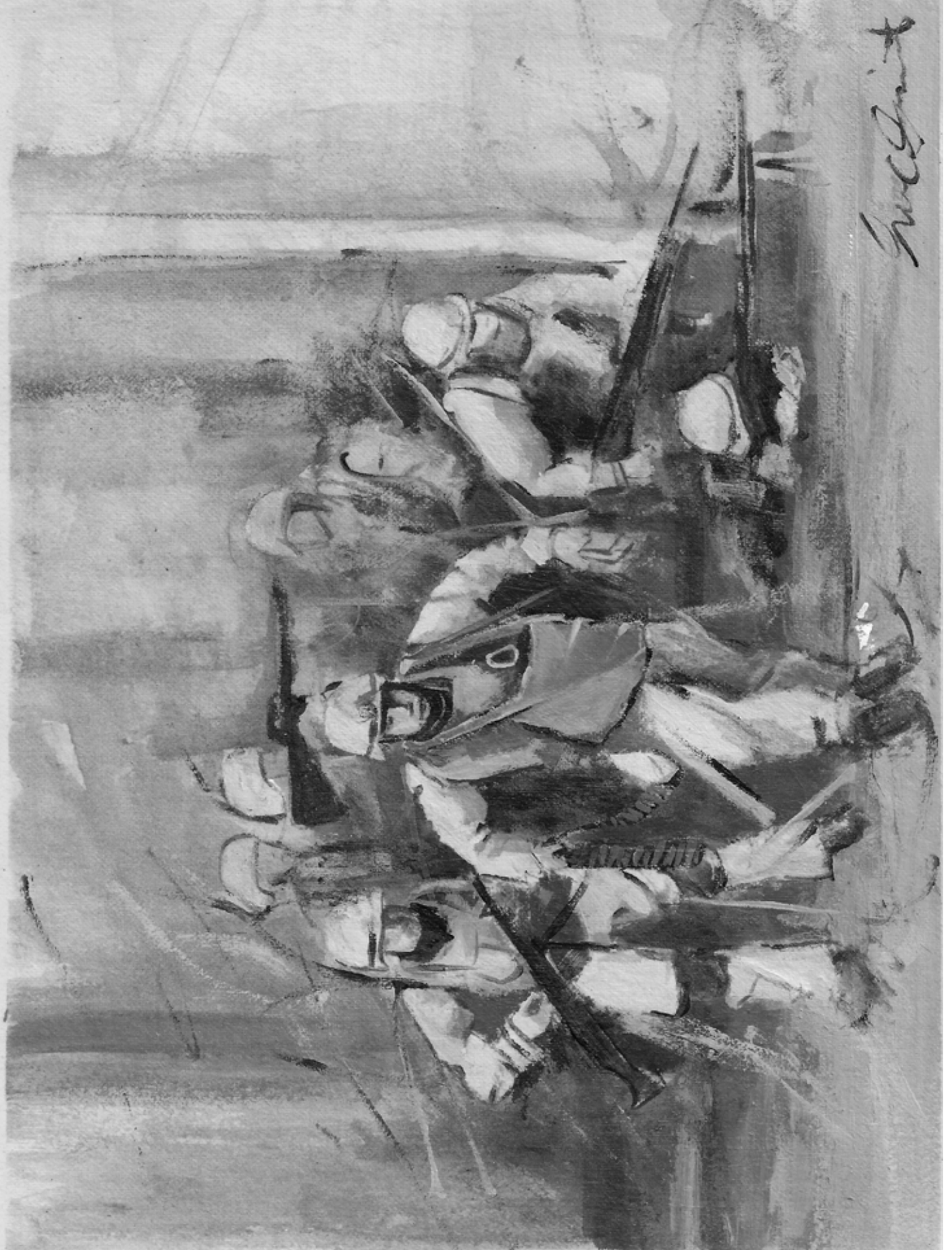
Contact: wordengine@aol.com

DRAWING:

NICK SCRIMENTI

Nick Scrimenti, an artist based out of Cincinnati, OH, has an MFA degree from the University of Cincinnati (2012). He has been affiliated with the ArtWorks program in Cincinnati on multiple projects. Recently, Nick was selected as a nominee for the Joan Mitchell Foundation MFA grant.

Contact: nscrimenti@gmail.com



Nick Scrimenti

Enemy of the State

Who is the enemy of the state
whose political ideas do not relate
to the new world order we wish to create?
Who are the people we now must hate?
We're in a battle that we cannot lose.
I heard about it on the evening news.
We took picture with a satellite.
Used infrared and shot all night.
We saw the picture in the morning light
and knew the enemy that we must fight.
Where is the state of the enemy?
Is it Syria, Iraq or Iran?
Is it Yemen or Afghanistan?
Is it China or Pakistan,
Cuba, Russia or Uzbekistan?
Where is the state of the enemy?
The mirror of history continues to reflect
the days of our past that we'd rather forget
when the Apache and the Sioux suffered genocide,
and the Yoruba and the Kru were enslaved from their tribes.
We built the railroads with immigrant Chinese.
Now we blow up whomever we please.
We put a nuclear bomb in the head of a rocket.
We're the only ones to ever drop it.
No one's big enough to ever stop it,
and we're not going to quit until we rule the planet.
Who is the enemy of the state
whose bomber's fly to perpetuate
the consecration of the union's fate
to seek, destroy and annihilate
the state of the enemy?

Soldier Song

*Forward March! Pity, Dog gone pity. My girl living in the city.
C.O. won't give me no leave. L.T. won't give me know pass.
Ten more days of stomping this grass. All y'all can kiss my...*

Two hundred steps, four hundred feet,
caught in the cadence of a military beat.
Johnny bust a drum, time to run.
Our lives depend on the mark of a gun.

Armed artillery, number of a battery,
gifts from clouds, metal from sky,
hitting so loud can't hear kids cry.
Everybody knows somebody gotta die.
Pray to my god somebody's not I.

*Your left. Your left. Your left, right or left.
Keep in step. Right or left.*

Who's left? Must be hurt. Might be dead.
Woman took a shot into her head.
Now she got a brain filled with lead.

*Your left. Your left. Your left, right or left.
Keep in step. Right or left.*

Semper Fi, do or die.
Shove a bayonet through your enemy's eye.
It's just my body squeezing this trigger.
Shoot another gook. Kill a sand nigger.
Isn't gonna matter when the smoke gets clearer.

*Your mother was home when you left. Your right.
Your father was home when you left. Your right.
Your sister was home when you left. Your right.
Your girlfriend was home when you left. Your right.
Jody was home when you left. Your right.
Your mother, your father, your sister, your girlfriend
and Jody were home when you left. Your right.
Sound off: one, two.
Sound off: three four*

Bring it on down, down to the ground.
Destroy factories. Burn down schools.
It's all in the name of the democratic rule.
Ain't your beef. Do as you're told.
Shoot to kill. You don't aim to wound.
Count up the dead, and count yourself lucky.
The best man won: the modern day cowboy.

Company halt: one two.

POEMS:

TERRY PETERSEN

Terry Petersen refers to herself first as grandmother of three, and second as singer/song writer, poet, and life-student at the ripe young age of 65. She belongs to three writers groups and focuses on writing to the heart.

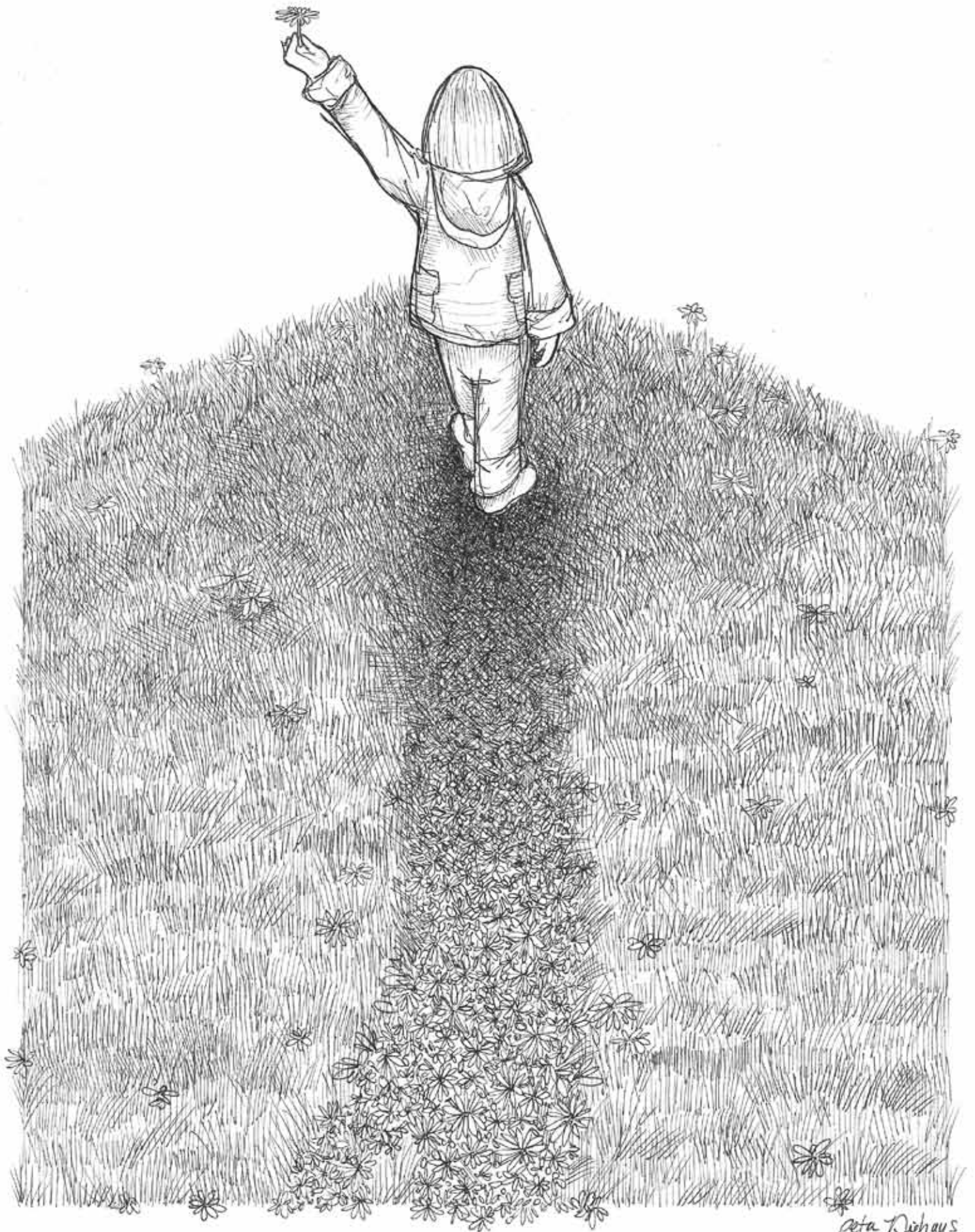
Contact: tpetersen@fuse.net; www.terrypetersen.webs.com

DRAWING:

PETA NIEHAUS

Peta Niehaus is a native of Northern Kentucky and recent graduate from Northern Kentucky University's BFA Graphic Design program. She is currently working as a digital designer at VSA Partners in Chicago. Besides design, Peta is passionate about people and naturally, the arts and their influence.

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Peta Rishaus

Rebecca, Child-Pilot

At the age of four Rebecca believes
my '97 Toyota can fly to the North Pole
on five-dollars-worth of gas,
where a lion on vacation from Africa
crosses the iced runway
and romps with polar bears.

I smile, aware of the real world,
its violence, demands, and
misunderstandings.
In my granddaughter's imagination
pilot-parent-child roles interchange
at whim. Night and day
reverse in a single breath.

To Rebecca, a person's skin color
fits like a comfy shirt.
Black, White, or Tan doesn't matter
as long as it conforms to a hug.
Old or young, rich or poor, fat or thin,
our little girl sees magic in anyone.

As the two of us walk over tundra,
dry pavement if we weren't pretending,
the casual observer could think
the older leads the younger across traffic.
Instead the wiser one directs her elder
into simplicity.

Chrysalis

You laugh when I say Daddy and Uncle Steve were my babies.
Pool water drips from our bathing suits
through the white plastic slats of our beach chair.
The dark puddles mimic gray shapes shifting overhead.
We sit wrapped in the limited safety of a gold beach towel.
I breathe the scent of your chlorinated hair as if it were medicine.
My embrace would save you from more than chill if it could,
make you a princess at the age of three.
But I think of a chrysalis,
spared the struggle of opening its own cocoon yet denied flight.
I kiss you on the top of your dark, wet head
and tell you how wonderful you are.

"Super Why" Not?

Mesmerized, cross-legged on the floor,
Ella watches "Super Why," her favorite show,
where Alphabet Pig and the Spelling Princess
flash letters across the screen.
Our granddaughter communicates through sign
language.
Her tripled twenty-first chromosome
has delayed language. But at the age of two
she underlines the text in books
with her tiny fingers, then requests
that stories be read again and again.

I smile, the proud grandparent,
imagining her small voice reading aloud
with the enthusiasm innate to someone who knows
how to work for what she wants.
She had two major surgeries before
she was two months old, and wears the scars
as if they were jelly stains.

My granddaughter has Down syndrome, I say.
I'm sorry, the reply. I'm not, my answer.
I stroke her blonde hair as the program fades out,
and Ella blows me a kiss,
her blessing upon me, her grandfather, dog,
cat, or favorite snack.
To Ella all is peace.
It may take time to convince popular opinion.
But we have Ella to make the effort worthwhile

I pray for your spirit to sing whenever gray clouds
meet inevitable dark patterns below.
You giggle. *Daddy and Uncle Steve. Babies.*
It's okay, Kate. You don't need to understand.
Your small body curls next to mine.
I am in no hurry for you to grow up.
I have no idea how soon you will learn about loss.
That winter your friend slips under an ice-covered lake.
An accident. She's critical. Her prognosis, unclear.
As the months pass and your birthday arrives
I prepare your special dinner.
You come into the kitchen as I cook.
I expect you to ask about your presents.
Instead you mention your friend,
in a coma now, a sliver of the child she once was.
I pray for her every day.
You appear unaware of the power of words larger than you are.
Your fresh four-year-old trust widens a chrysalis opening.
Gray skies shift overhead, bash the ground below,
and leave you twice as beautiful.

POEMS:

DAVID PETREMAN

David A. Petreman has published widely in U.S. and Canadian literary journals. His latest book is *Candlelight in Quintero* (Dos Madres Press, 2011) and a recent chapbook, *Francisco in the Days of Exile* (Finishing Line Press, 2008). David teaches Spanish and Latin American Literature at Wright State University and has published books and articles on a number of Hispanic writers.

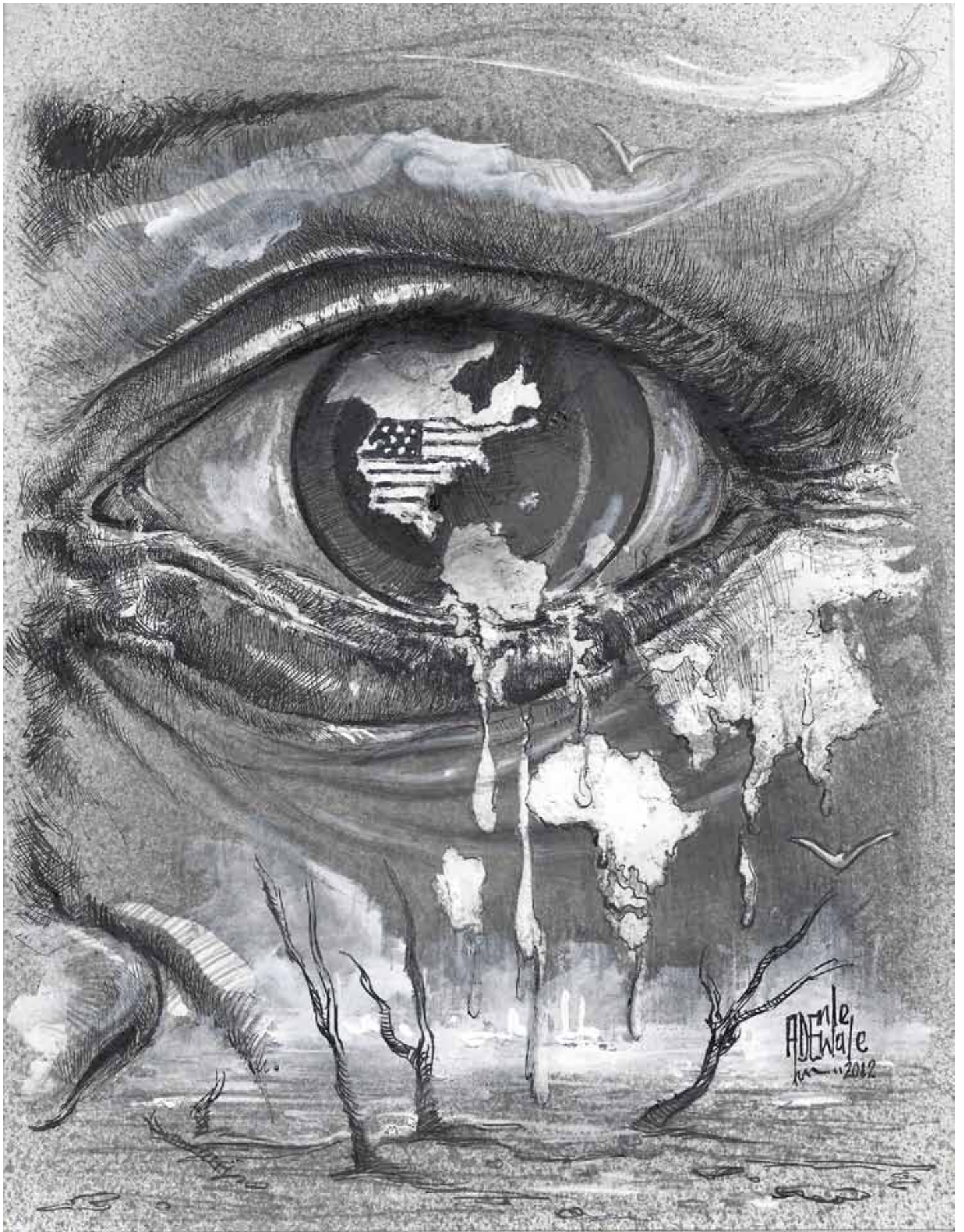
Contact: david.petreman@wright.edu

DRAWING:

ADEWALE ADENLE

Adewale Adenle, born in Nigeria, obtained a BFA degree at Yaba College of Technology, Lagos, Nigeria, an MA in Museum Studies at the Southern University in New Orleans and an MFA in 2D Studio at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio. Adewale has taught art classes in New Orleans public schools and has 15 years experience as a political cartoonist for various newspapers in Nigeria, the US and Great Britain. He has exhibited widely and won numerous awards and grants.

Contact: artdewale@gmail.com



God Bless America

God bless America.
I mean Canada.
And Mexico, Chile,
Cuba and Nicaragua.

Wait. Take it back
To the original oval,
When Vespucci sighted
Land rising so high
It blocked his imagination.

He stopped dreaming
And took to drawing
What his eyes revealed
And signed away his first name,
Lining it up south of the equator.

His images returned to Europe
And engendered jealousy
From his New World sites and seeds,
And the orb began to spin faster,
To wobble without boundaries
That limit greed and slaughter,

Until we the people
Usurped these customs,
Stole his name
And branded it
Into our own foreheads,

Where now we are
All too visible,
Disunited and divisible
As we split the world
Into so many broken parts.

So, yeah, God
Please bless America,
All of the Americas,
And while you're at it,
Bless the whole
Damned planet.
We can all use it.

Bernabé

No mother
Could lift this child.
No condor
Descend to such carrion.

Susana finds him
Covered with lime,
Branches and boards, skin
Dry, still pulling,
Stretching like the hide
Of a staked-out
Deer before tanning.

Soldiers who kill
Take him from her
Again. Try again
To steal the truth.
They stuff him
And parts of others
In bags to haul away
Like letters piling up
From abroad, never
To be delivered.

Susana turns away
From the site
Holding a remnant
Of his shirt.
On the way home
She rocks it in her arms,
Then buries it
Behind the hut
So dawn will never find
Her completely alone.

Bottles in the Sea

*“Cast your bread upon the waters;
for thou shalt find it after
many days.”*

--Ecclesiastes 11:1

The first bottle is sucked
Out to sea with the tide
By a September moon
Pulling for voices
To sing freely
Songs of work and faith
Sorrow and joy
Bluntly silenced
By the dark force
Blotting out her light.

It is Santa Rita
Cabernet Sauvignon
Detached and floating,
Its fragile ballast
A single line
On a paper strip:
Va a caer.*
(*He is going to fall.)

Succeeding nights
Spawn more bottles,
The tide pulls true.
Santa Clara rises,
Dips, in her hold
Another message:
Va a caer.

Enduring darkness
Generates flotillas,
Santa Carolinas
Filled with echoes
(y va a caer)
And screams
Drowned out
Back on the land,
Santa Blancas

Embody lines
Dotted in blood Stripes of paper
Settle to the glass
Like the residue
Of leftover wine,
(Y va a caer.)

The vessels bear
Words that sink more
Heavily into salty currents:
Santa Emilianas reserve
Singular voices of newly
Childless mothers
Whose questions are seized
From their throats
Back on the land,
Voices of children
Who refuse to be born
Until they can see light.
Santa Anas contain
The songs of Jara
And the haunting echoes
(Y va a caer)
Rising from cavernous arenas.

Wave upon wave the vast
Cresting sea
Engulfs the jetsam:
Words that fall
Page by page
Dispatched from sinking
Land into bottles
Drained in despair.
(Y va a caer.)

Las santas, conveyed
Through the night
By mounting swells
Float and bob
One by one point out
An open moon,
Begin to flicker
Like candles
Lit in the waiting.
(Y va a caer.)

Voices on the sea
Echo deep in the ears
Of those who watch,
Wait for the ocean
To give life again,
Back again
In waves that fall,
(Y va a caer)
Return lost words,
Songs thought forgotten
Back again
In waves that fall,
(Y va a caer)
Restore pages, books
Nearly lost, names
Of those who are,
In waves that fall
(Y va a caer)
On other shores, distant
That fall back upon our own,
Bringing bottles
And voices
Back to the land.
Wait...wait.
Va a caer.
Wait.

POEMS:

PURCELL MARIAN HIGH SCHOOL

Griff Bludworth (gbb.rocks@gmail.com), **Elijah Davis** (elijahdavis17@gmail.com), **Katelyn Dornbach** (katelyn.dornbach@yahoo.com), **Mike Gilb** (mgilby3@gmail.com), **Rachel Hunt** (rachelhunt@fuse.net), **Megan Elizabeth Hustmyer** (mhustmyer@fuse.net), **Dustin Joosten** (dustyjuicebox@gmail.com), **Chelsea Mason** (chelseamason7@yahoo.com), **Brianna Ross** (ross.brianna0@gmail.com) and **Lou Suer** (1lousuer@gmail.com) are sophomore and senior students at Purcell Marian High School, Cincinnati, OH, enrolled in a Creative Writing class taught by author and poet Richard Hague.

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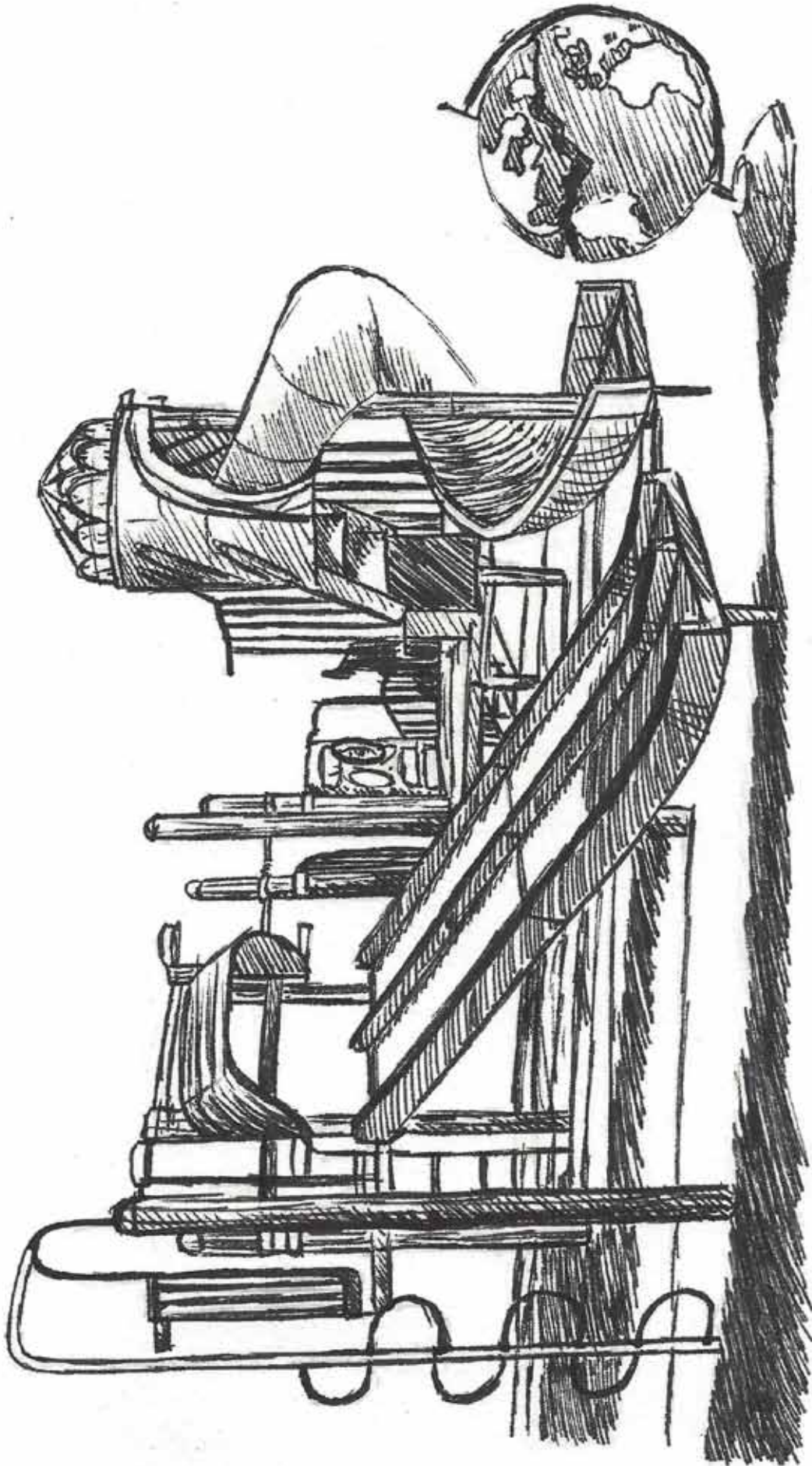
DRAWING:

ALBERT WEBB

Albert Webb, born and raised in Kentucky, is a printmaker who renders work based on hybrid forms dealing with attraction and repulsion. He recently graduated from Miami University with a Masters of Fine Arts.

He currently lives in Oxford, OH.

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R. Albert Webb

\$102

(by *Griff Blutworth*)

My friend told me today he was going to be a Marine.

He is not a brainless jock
who throws two-hundred pounds of meat
into a grinder to “look cool” or be tough.

He doesn't spend his time ramming people
on a grassy field
or wasting his life clicking plastic triggers
to see red pixels spray
from eerily realistic images.

He is a real man.
He acts with me in school plays,
and has brought a tear to my eye
in and out the characters he brings to life.

He is actually one of the greatest men I have
known,
and for him to die overseas for crude men of
some pointless power
would cost the world a lot more
than a couple of \$102 barrels.

Blood Flowing from the Heart

(by *Elijah Davis*)

A girl's inner cry for help
never seems to be heard.

The constant sexual harassment
from the man who assisted
in giving her life.

Toward off this evil is a persistent
pain, like the period of
XX chromosome
It seems forever for the cramps to
seize.

A childhood memory of being
caressed by the hands of the Giver
haunts the teen girl's dreams.

Day dreams of the beastly beatings,
and slimy sweaty fornications.
Her groan of pain screaming from within
calling for help.

Depraved image of her father
aggressively introducing his
One Eyed Trouser Snake
to her little mouse.
Tears as thick as blood
Pain as heavy as the mountains
Her equilibrium is like a flowing
river, bleak.

Hunting Games

(by *Katelyn Dornbach*)

Footsteps as loud as bulldozers
lifting the wreckage
left in the path of destruction.

The men, like hawks in the night,
Come after their prey.

I run faster than
I have everyone before;
for a moment, I even
wonder if at this speed
I could fly.

I envy the birds' ability to lift off
and escape through air.

I am a bird with no nest to retreat to,
My home is destroyed.

And the echoes of gunshots
haunt my every move.

It is an interesting journey,
one must pursue.

Whoever can outrun the bullet,
that is the game we play in this life.

Guilt

(by *Mike Gilb*)

There's a homeless man on the street.
He has no shelter, no protection,
no money to his name.
People walk by, paying him
with insults and names.
They call him "Drugee" and
"Bum" and "Hobo."
That acknowledgement is better
than the emptiness he receives
from those that can't make eye contact.
In this way he is less of a man.
In society's eyes he is no longer a person,
he is only a burden needing their help.
He is a small percentage point
of the people that the rich take care of.
Out of the generosity from their expensive
hearts,
they give from the bundles of extra they have.
The coins in their pockets are extremely
vital in his survival on the streets they travel.
The charity they give is payment
for the guilt they feel.

Price of this Poem

(by *Rachel Hunt*)

This poem ate a piece of Kayford Mountain
that exploded to create electricity
so this computer could function for an hour
thus creating a landslide
suffocating the animals, plants
and people who lived in the vale with the
slurry.

This poem enslaved a five year old
who was forced to work at a sweatshop
in order to create a cheap Mac Book Pro.

This poem started a war
so that painless oil could be obtained
to deliver the laptop to this door,
so, in neat eye-pleasing letters,
It could appear centered on this page.

Broken

(by *Rachel Hunt*)

A child sits,
eyes glazed like the cream filled donut
clenched in his hand.
The flash of the TV's colors illuminates his face,
now only a mere ghost
sitting crossed leg on the floor
of the air-conditioned room.
Commercials flicker,
brainwashing the youth till only the idea
of an increased allowance can process in his mind.
Finally they end,
and a smile slowly grows across his face
his eyes take in his favorite images
of merciless bloodshed between the hero and the
villain.

Far off a mountain explodes,
a women cradles her hand while working at a
sweatshop,
a baby cries out in hunger.
A puppy shivers as the chain comes down again,
a father sighs as he lead his family to the
homeless center.
A teenager pulls the trigger of his rifle for the first
time,
a one armed veteran begs for change on the
freeway,
a family screech their anguish into the sky.
And another child is sobbing since she'll miss
that same TV program.
In this way,
I know the world is broken.

Of Bagels and Bombings

(by *Megan Hustmyer*)

Black stars are blinding you as
you eat a blueberry bagel on the way to school.
Disembodied voices coming from a static machine
are talking about a bombing in Syria.
As you listen, the bagel becomes heavier on your tongue.
A woman's voice speaks of shells raining from the sky,
women and children running through the streets,
calling for family members who could no longer answer.
There are disembodied limbs on the ground,
and their original owners crawl somewhere,
for something to relieve their pain,
before another explosion topples rocks
on their bleeding bodies.

The conversation switches to protests in Russia,
but you are no longer listening, instead you turn to
your own mother, concentrated on the road ahead,
and wonder how different you would feel
if you were in Syria now. If your mother had been lost in
that fiery slaughter, and if you were now running
through your hometown, anguish rolling off your cheeks
as you take in the carnage,
and you know that your mother is dead,
but still you must look because your gut is telling you
that it's not real, that she cannot be dead, because that is
as plausible as the existence of purple wombats.

You wonder if living in Syria was like living in a nightmare,
the kind where you still think you're awake,
and so everything that happens is really happening,
then not happening at the same time.
You then hope you will never have to find out,
and calmly finish your bagel, putting Syria in the back of your mind,
as it was such an easy thing to do
when the most worrying thing on your mind
is finishing a crossword puzzle
for homework in your U.S. History class.

The Nature of War

(by *Dustin Joosten*)

In a trench,
its bottom muddied by the mixture of blood and dirt,
a warrior rises from the muck.
His weapon's sight searches for a heartbeat.
The index finger hesitates then twitches.

In a jungle,
the vines and leaves an emerald curtained to the stage.
The mouse, tail twitching, scurries around.
Its heat a beacon to the hungry snake
who rears back and doesn't give a second thought
to the body in its mouth.

The carcass, if there is one
is a package, stamped fragile and this side up, that's
shipped
to the once hopeful mother.
Her shock, the agony of love lost.
No longer a parent but a mourner.

The lioness comes to her cubs.
The runt dead, no surprise,
pushed to the side for the hyenas to live on.
The survivors claw and bite
for the leg of zebra
rusted with stale, caked blood.

Bleeding Poverty

(by *Chelsea Mason*)

As life bleeds,
satisfaction flares its bud.

Blessings yearns for morality,
pushing away the might of freedom.

Surging the bright horizon,
the world floods with poverty.

Overwhelming directions,
burns as clouds drifting wayward
as the light conveys out a vision.

The accentual focus on tomorrow,
deepens the stride of intensity
to progress from destruction to peace.

Prejudice

(by *Brianna Ross*)

It keeps coming
back without warning,
like a hiccup
of unoriginality,
pounding
on my world,
caving
in on my productivity,
a cancerous plague,
fidgeting
with all things authentic,
a boundless pothole
of "as high as an airplane",
settling in,
snug, bathed
in ignorance,
unmoving,
residing
in spacey areas,
unexamined by many,
so they continue
their exhibition,
successfully
biting at the heads of society.

What Matters

(by *Lou Suer*)

Consider a stream running down a mountain.

See the clear rapids, where yellow sunlight jumps
from wave to trough, trees on the banks have leaves
that define the color green and the thousand

Observe the explosives being dropped
into a hole dug by crane in need of more fuel.

As if the on/off switch to the radio in a hearse
Matters more than the deaf corpse in the back.

POEMS:

ARMANDO ROMERO

Armando Romero (MA, 1981, PhD, 1983, Latin American Literature, U. of Pittsburgh) is a scholar and a writer who has dedicated his life to the study and practice of literature, concentrating on Latin America poetry. His books *Las palabras están en situación*, and *El Nadaismo o la búsqueda de una vanguardia*, are used as textbooks in Colombian universities. As an author, Armando has written poetry, novels and short stories and has published an anthology of Latin American poetry, *Una gravedad alegre* (2007). He won in 2011 the “Concejo de Siero Award” for Novella in Spain.

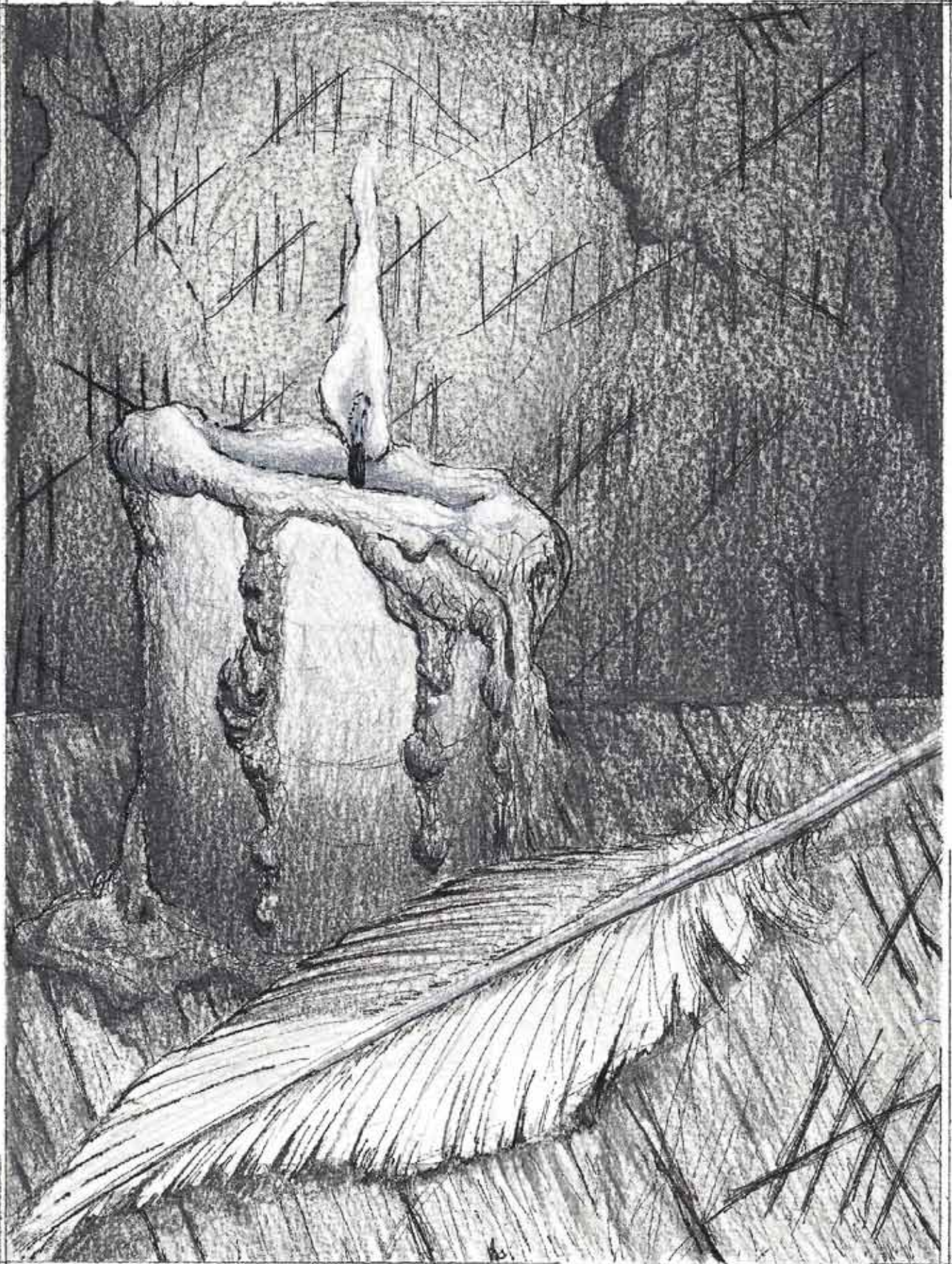
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DRAWING:

NICK BRUMMER

Nick Brummer is an artist working and residing in Dry Ridge, KY. His present work deals mostly with still life and portrait work, concentrating mostly on the intimate interactions of the subject with light. It consists of mostly oil paintings and mixed media drawings using graphite, ink and acrylic washes. Aside from his work as an artist, during the day Nick works at a local college as a graphic designer; he also teaches Shaolin-do martial arts in his hometown.

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N. BRUMMER

First cause

In a hamlet leaving Ambato
a woman told me of her misfortunes:
all the saints she invoked
went to heaven sooner or later.
With all the right invocations
and well worded prayers
she could call down a saint
to her one room hovel
lit night and day by a smoking candle,
and she'd live with him until he took off
one day for heaven
and wouldn't come back.
And no matter how she begged and prayed,
she couldn't get him to return.
So she'd try again with another
and the same thing would happen.
She tried it on so often, there was nobody left
in the ranks of the blessed.
In anguish, lonely, gazing at the wilderness
and the mountains,
she asked to speak to God directly
but there was no answer.
When I asked her why,
she covered her ears and said:
God doesn't exist; they all fell into a void.
That night I went on my way to Riobamba.

Another Country

They beat the country so hard all over
they made it round
and turned it into a great mass
and it bounced off its borders like a pool ball.
Nobody could stop it bouncing
this way nor that way.
It rolled and rolled,
falling more violently all the time.
They do say
if anyone spent a long time inside it,
he'd get over the dizziness,
but woe betide anyone who left,
even for a minute;
the horrendous machine
would never grant him a pardon.

Causa Prima

En un caserío a la salida de Ambato
una mujer me contó la naturaleza de su desgracia:
todos los santos que ella invocaba
se iban al cielo tarde o temprano.
Con buenas jaculatorias
o plegarias de adoración y substancia
atraía a un santo
a su casucha de un solo cuarto
alumbrado noche y día con una vela de sebo
y allí cohabitaba con él hasta que un buen día
éste se iba derecho al cielo
para nunca volver.
Y por más que ella suplicaba con rezos y rogativas
ya no conseguía hacerlo regresar.
Intentaba entonces con otro
y el resultado era el mismo.
Tanto trató hasta que ya no quedó nadie
en el santoral.
Angustiada e íngrima frente a la desolación
de los páramos y las montañas,
pidió hablar con Dios
y no encontró respuesta.
Al preguntarle por qué,
me dijo bajando las orejas con las manos:
Es que Dios no existe, todos ellos cayeron al vacío.
Esa noche seguí mi camino hacia Riobamba.

Otro Pais

Tan duro le dieron a ese país por todas partes
que lo fueron haciendo redondo,
y ya convertido en una masa grande
daba de bola bola contra sus fronteras.
No había quien lo detuviera cuando se iba
para un lado, ni para el otro.
Rodaba y rodaba
dando tumbos cada vez más violentos.
Dicen que
si alguien permanecía mucho tiempo adentro
se olvidaba del vértigo
pero pobre del que saliera
por un minuto,
las maquinaciones del horror
nunca lo perdonarían.

Poor Christ

A cry of pain broke the silent communion
of the faithful gathered for Sunday lunch
around the square.
He was being dragged, beaten and in chains,
a sad figure
against the grey background of the scene.
We came out as he went by
and no one said a word.
The soldiers, proud and shining
and on the boil for knives and machine guns.
They'd caught him the night before
crossing the river.
All his friends died
in the ambush.
As he went by me
I could see the painful cloth
his face had become.
He cried out piteously each time they kicked him.
Each cry a bloody spider in the face of the town.
I said nothing.
A man beside me said: "Poor Christ."
Then everyone went back
into the restaurant in silence.
As usual, I decided I'd take off
forever that very night.

(translated from Spanish by Alita Kelley)

Pobre Cristo

Un grito de dolor al mediodía despertó
a los parroquianos congregados al almuerzo
silencioso en el domingo de la plaza.
Lo llevaban amarrado con cadenas y golpeado
daba una imagen triste
contra lo gris del paisaje.
Salimos a su paso
sin pronunciar palabra.
Los soldados, orgullosos y relucientes
hervían en deseos de cuchillos y ametralladoras.
Lo habían capturado la noche anterior
bordeando el río.
Todos sus compañeros habían muerto
en la emboscada.
Al pasar por mi lado
vi el trapo de dolor
en que se había convertido su rostro.
A cada puntapié gritaba sin consuelo.
Cada grito una araña de sangre sobre el pueblo.
No dije nada.
Un hombre a mi lado dijo: "Es un pobre Cristo".
Todos regresaron
silenciosamente al interior del restaurante.
Yo decidí huir de allí
y esa noche, como siempre.

POEMS:

LINDA SCHOFIELD

Linda Ann Schofield has lived most of her life in western Ohio. She earned her M.A. in English from the Ohio State University. She started her retirement from 31 years in the education field—most as a high school librarian—in June of 2005, and moved to the Cincinnati area.

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DRAWING:

CHRISTIAN DALLAS

Christian Dallas, born and raised in Boone County, KY, received a BFA (painting) from Northern Kentucky University. Upon graduation, he sought representation at Pendleton Art Center to showcase his work. Christian is currently a full-time painter trying to further his development as an artist and in his career.

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Assault

*How long will you assault a man?
Would all of you throw him down—
this leaning wall, this tottering fence?
Psalm 62*

He wanted to stay in school
but no one cared enough
to show him what it took.
He didn't have me for a teacher.
I'd never have passed him on
or failed to love him to success.

The counselors
escorted him out the door.

Now he wanders the streets,
high on booze or drugs,
selling what he can steal,
or himself,
to pay for his habits.

Yesterday, I saw him pass
by the school, hunched over
as if he'd been beaten.

If I'd been his teacher,
I'd have dragged him
to every class he needed
to graduate, hauled him
into every study session
for the state graduation exam.

If I'd been his teacher,
he'd have a job
waiting for him
when he finished school,
or, why not dream big,
maybe he'd be starting college.

Just like I did with my other babies,
as only I would dare call them,
I'd force him to succeed.
Never would I have to look down
from a second story window
to see a hunched back,
stumbling feet.

Consequences

*O Lord, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me!
Psalm 3*

He knew better than to be alone
in that part of town, at that time of night.
That's the thing about shortcuts--
they can get almighty long and bumpy.

They caught him when he was just
a block away from safety. Six
on the prowl, a target found.
Two attacked, four watched.
He was lucky to come out the winner.

"Let's see how you do with four of us."
He pulled his piece. Sirens screamed,
tires squealed, the six were gone.
He was left with his gun, the police,
his face on the sidewalk as they fastened the cuffs.

With his bruises and scratched face,
he was back in school the next morning
along with one of the two boys who jumped him.
The teacher they had in common
heard about the attack. She's terrified
he's going to be tried as an adult
on a concealed weapon charge.

During her planning period,
she called the boys to her room,
locked the door. She began quietly;
they made excuses. By the time
she was finished, students on the first floor
heard her anger word for word.

A Safe Place to Cry

*For he who avenges blood is mindful of them;
he does not forget the cry of the afflicted.*

Psalm 9

Babies cry; men don't.
At least that's what you're told,
what you tell yourselves.

But what if your friend is shot
while waiting for the bus
to take him to school?

What if the only answer
your girlfriend has to your baby
is abortion?

What if you receive a phone call
that a rival gang banger is gunning for your best friend
and you get there just in time to see him shot in the face?

What if on your eighteenth birthday
your mom hands you your clothes
in a black plastic bag and says, "You're on your own."?

Where do you go when life is unbearable,
when no matter how hard you push
down the anger and sorrow

it pushes right back up again?
You go to Mrs. R.'s classroom
where she lets you put your head

on her shoulder even though
you're 6'5" and she's 5'4"
or you're black and she's white
or you're a gang banger and she's never
even had a parking ticket,
and you cry.

POEMS:

MARTHA STEPHENS

Martha Stephens is retired from the University of Cincinnati. She likes peace and justice and hopes we'll be granted a little of each one in her lifetime.

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DRAWING:

FRANK SATOGATA

Of Japanese ancestry and raised in a Western culture, Frank Satogata constantly searches for ways to integrate the best of both cultures into his personal identity as a painter. His search has focused on understanding the relationship between Zen Calligraphy and Abstract Expressionism. Spontaneity of Brush Strokes and Evidence of Process are an important part of both and an essential part of his work. Frank constantly refines his mark making so it becomes increasingly part of his personal calligraphy.

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Frank Satogata

Last Day

In commemoration of those who died in Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9th, 1945 – and all who may yet perish in nuclear war.

On the last day
A rabbit came to taste the dandelions
Along the low hedge,
Sent, some might say, to bless us
Though he did not know anything about us
Or what blessings are.

The great cloud of death was drifting on
And we were in its way.
There was nowhere to go
So we simply stayed at home
On the last day,
Not wanting to die underground
Pecking away at a protein bar
In an illusion of safety.

A repast, in fact, was not what we seemed to need
On the last day,
Though it was good to watch the rabbit
Chewing its munchies
Along the low hedge,
Startled a bit, when we appeared
With the shears to clip things,
Showing us for a moment its fat cottontail
In a bobbing burst down the hedgerow.

Yes, we trimmed the hedges
On the last day.
Not thinking anyone would ever see
And yet -- who knows --
I suppose we felt.

We liked the yard, the hedge, the rabbit,
A slow walk down the block
To see our bit of woods.
We liked the companionship of other living things
On the last day
And the beauty of them and
The lack of sentience in them and all foreboding.

An Invitation to Walt Whitman from the Belle Dame Sans Merci of Washington D. C.

Laura Bush Speaks to Walt Whitman and Receives His Reply

Good Walt Whitman, come with me.
Let me raise a toast to thee!

In my house so fine and white
Sing your songs for my delight.

Lady! I will sing for thee
In the forest wild and free.

But to your house I cannot go
Until we see your mercies flow
To all children here below.

Every child of every race
Every faith and every place
Needs your blessing and your grace.

Handsome lady! Smile on these
Whom death awaits beyond the seas.

Let your gentle mercies flow
To all people here below.

“Poem after John Keats’s ballad about a fairy queen, who had no mercy for the gentle knights she seduced and then left for dead. In 2003, as the US invasion of Iraq was imminent, Ms. Laura Bush invited US poets to an evening at the White House to honor Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman. However, when she found out that the poets were planning to challenge the US invasion, the evening was canceled.”

POEMS:

TOM STRUNK

Tom Strunk lives in Northside with his wife and twin daughters. He is a professor of classics at Xavier University. His poetry strives to express the eternal longing for the spiritual, emotional, and political liberation of the individual and community.

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DRAWING:

ALISON SHEPARD

Alison Shepard has always been intrigued by the human form. She began drawing when she was very small, before she could even write or spell. She still explores drawing as a foundation for her works in intaglio printmaking and oil painting. A search for luminosity led her to explore oils, and a love of chiaroscuro to etching, drypoint, and mezzotint. Alison holds a BFA in painting from Northern Kentucky University, and an MFA in printmaking from Miami University.

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MR SOUP KITCHEN SNAKORZ / WARRIOR OF TRUTH NATION 2018

Soup Kitchen Savior

I saw Jesus the Christ
at the St. Thomas of Canterbury soup kitchen
yesterday,
no lie.
I was serving up soup
when he walked in plain as day,
ragged and wily,
muttering underneath his breath.
He wore an old tattered army jacket
and an unkempt untrimmed beard,
his hair was mad and his eyes were red wild.
He was black,
had the midnight sky in his skin,
kissed by the moon,
and as if that wasn't enough
he was a woman too,
sprung from earth,
I didn't ask what business he had in Uptown,
I just served him three bowls of soup,
which he ate along with a loaf of bread, wheat,
a slice of chocolate cake and two cups of coffee,
black, no sugar.
He thanked me each time with a toothless grin
I watched him to his seat
where he sat preaching about love and kindness,
calling things by their true names,
"property is theft,
blessed are the peacemakers,
love your enemies,
workers of the world unite,
you have nothing to lose but your chains"
He rose,
and on his way out he took two oranges,
another loaf of bread
and without even asking
he sneaked a pound of butter into his coat pocket,
but hey, I didn't say anything,
I just figured the guy was hungry
like the rest of us.

Streets and Alleys

Condos are rising down the street
where you lived, after the doctors took
you away, an abandoned torn canvas,
empty pill-bottles,
and a broke-bound Dante
was all that I found.

In the silence of a winter
snowfall I think of you,
wander into the midnight,
down the alley, find a rock
from the construction site,
aim well, throw high,
wait for the glass,
and run.

As You Stood before the Soldiers

As you stood before the soldiers
their swords drawn
clouds rolling over the horizon,
I fell in love with you.

Nothing could save you
or stop you in your madness.
Your skin glistened in the Autumn heat.

You fell to the ground
defiant in your rage.

I saw you once or twice
afterwards, wandering the rainy
side-streets, looking for your name
in the love letter graffiti

angelic and alone.

POEMS:

STEVE SUNDERLAND

Steve Sunderland is a peace activist, co-founder of the Peace Village, a professor of peace and educational studies at the University of Cincinnati, and a believer in the power of poetry to change the world.

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DRAWING:

STEVE SCHUMACHER

Steve Schumacher founded the non-profit Alliance for Leadership & Interconnection where he was Executive Director. He currently is coordinator for a national manufacturing certification training program. His drawings and mixed media works have appeared at the SOS Art show for the last three years, Sidewinder Coffeehouse and the Lockland Positive Center.

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SS

Steve Schumacher

Gentleness

Gentleness is not known well enough.
Sometimes this weed of hope
Dances in a breeze that surprises me.

Often a touch, a glance, even a
Cold hand gently placed on the skull
Can lighten a load of pain and confusion.

I know there is a special smile
On your face that sharpens the
Light coming into my eyes and I, too
Have to smile out and in.

A child of three reaches up
And accepts your hand
Because he/she knows that
This hand, this set of fingers and
Palm, this light paw,
Is filled with golden sunlight.

For these seconds, we learn to
Walk upright, use a spoon for
Ice cream, and examine a friendly
world.

Battle Tested

“Nothing about the problem of the Negroes
was ever taught in a classroom at school; and
whenever I would raise these questions with
boys, they would either remain silent or turn
the subject into a joke.”

R. Wright (1943). Black Boy.

Where are the problems and the blessings
Of a life in shadows, at the margins,
In the dark colors,
Taught?

We sit in classes, books, and papers
Behind us, burning to ash.
The paper was so lost that even
The names of the heroes are beyond
Memory.

Questions about the secrets of the lives
Lived, of how an unemployed father
Finds the strength to get up and face
Another day of emptiness, are not
Asked. Or even allowed.

We are existing in classrooms
As we exist in the community:
Isolated, armed, ignorant, and without a
Guide.

Now the distraction of testing replaces
The ever present fear of a future
Without the person.

Training for the test, sharpening the
Eye, the finger at the trigger,
At the gallery with targets, focuses
The mind on the game of accuracy.

Some are turning on themselves,
Believing the target reflects their
Identity. not having a gentle word,
Rather, a command to perform,
They, We, see nothing but even
More civil wars ahead.

Where is Lincoln when we need him?
Who will “emancipate” us from these
Slave systems?
Every school looks like Gettysberg-
Millions of lost children
Being prayed over.

Confessions from the Front Lines

"Righteousness is our first refuge and our strength."

R. P. Warren (1961). *The Legacy of the Civil War: Meditation on the Centennial*.

What catches the spark of righteousness
Turning it into a blazing
Cloak for many to wear?

I first remember the flame when
It burned me with my ignorance.
Not wanting to display my stupidity
I dove into the fire and emerged
Angry.
"Who says...?" was the start of
Decades of resistance, fighting, and
Confusion.
"What about your bias...?" was
The continuing line as I inflated
Anger to match intensity of words.
It worked for a while. Nothing
Can capture a mind, build it, and
Expand it like a dedicated angel
Of shame.

A fire burns and burns.
It blinds to other ideas,
Protects the heart
From other kinds of heat.

The attitude of the besieged requires,
It is thought, the costumes of war, and varying kinds
Of razors, fists, and curses.

As the fire continues, the specific gets
Caught in the general, the exception becomes
The rule, the victimized is the only citizen
Worthy of a vote.

We band together in the power of the
wound. Our voices are disguises of our
Crisis. Our certainty is a necessary weapon.

Even the small child's happiness
At being on a different jungle jim is
Forgotten, brushed aside, and rejected.

From flame to flame, the burning continues.
There is so much inside to burn.
There is so much outside to burn.
I looked up and saw grown men who
Isolated like me, our voices connected,
Screaming: "Hear us! See us! Love us!"

POEMS:

GARY WALTON

Gary Walton is the author of seven books including five books of poetry: *The Sweetest Song*, *Cobwebs and Chimeras*, *Effervescent Softsell*, *The Millennium Reel*, *Full Moon: The Melissa Moon Poems*, *The Newk Phillips Papers* (short fiction) and *Prince of Sin City* (a novel). His new book of poetry *Eschatology Escadrille: Elegies and Other Memorabilia* is due out in 2012. In 1994 and 1995, Gary was nominated for the Pushcart prize. In 2010, he was voted Third Place: “Best Local Author” in City Beat magazine.

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DRAWING:

CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER

Chris Plummer graduated from Northern Kentucky University in 1999 and can now be found, coffee in hand, sitting towards the back of his art display in many art festivals throughout the country. When not on the road, he usually drinks coffee in Alexandria, KY.

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cplummer

Here in Garbageland

The rides are made from Peckerwood
Throwaways, like this Ferris wheel here
Fashioned from blood and bone, and
Billions of bent beer cans, bolted and

Pinned with toxic syringes, glued with
Abandoned dreams frozen in perpetual
Plastic wrap, insulated from the ground
By perfectly formed rhetorical phrases like

The kind found in bathroom stalls or
Scratched indelibly in the sacred wood
Of church pews and altars or thrown
Carelessly from the most pious of pulpits—

The wheel turns like an escapement lit
By incandescent bulbs and the run way
Flashes blue and red, then black and blue
And the cotton candy swirls come with

Insulin pills to ward off diabetic shock—
All the while, we sing and sing and shout
At the video screen which continually
Reminds us that hope is a product patented

By Bristol-Meyers and sold in sacks like
peanuts
To sightless elephants. Tickets must be
Purchased early, not to beat the rush, but
To confound the summer tornadoes, who

Always seem to know how to call the tunes
Even if it's the last one you will ever
Hear—but it's a ride you'll never forget to
Remember and the roustabouts and Chinese

Gaffers full of viridian tattoos of tear drops
And hermetic Sanskrit, laugh and laugh
Here at the summer fair, the carnival
Just at the edge of town.

Melissa Moon at Breakfast

“You can't depend on other people
For your happiness,” Melissa Moon said,
Shifting in her chair, arranging her paisley
Kimono, all the while nibbling on a wedge

Of buttered toast and raspberry marmalade,
“I'm simply tired of mourning for my
Country, writing eulogies for my friends—
And feeling sorry for myself....I'm not

Saying one needs to be a lone wolf,
A pack has its uses, especially if you
Are hungry” —here she popped a plump
Strawberry into her mouth and let a bit

Of the red juice ooze from the corners
Of her lips—“No, one needs to think of
The butterfly, a Monarch perhaps, rising
Alone on summer thermals, head tilted

Toward the sun, defiant of gravity and all
Opinion, up and up toward—where?—
Argentina?—no. Nirvana?—a bit presumptuous,
Perhaps—but at least, tomorrow—of course, one

Need not be so grand, at all. How about a
Single rose bush, beside a house, a modest
House, a shack, in fact—one can bloom in the
Most humble of settings....” Here she stopped,

A wedge of melon pinioned on a fork, she
Brandished like a sword. She stood up,
As if in mild alarm, and declared, “My God,
I need a pencil, the time has come! I must

Write something down....” With that, she
Twirled and fluttered and fled the room
Like a flag unfurling. Soon the typewriter
Was clacking away in the next room.

The day had begun....

Complaining to Death

“By the way—you look fantastic in your boots of Chinese plastic.” —Chrissy Hynde

Melissa Moon sat down for the interview
In a small café located in an indifferent
Part of town—already Christmas displays
Had invaded the shelves of stores though
It was still late October—

“Should one say
Merry Christmas...” Ms. Moon opined while
Lighting up a black and brown twisted cheroot
To the frowns of slack-faced on-lookers, “when
One hasn’t even begun to Trick-or-treat? My
God, Thanksgiving! Think of that!” she said,
As she forced blue-gray smoke through her
Pursed lips making an ephemeral filigree in
The still air—then after ordering a soup and
Campari with ice, the author looked around
At the tables and then the street with dismay.

“I think complaining has become
My métier,” she said, without blinking, “a
Way of being in the world—not much we can
Do to change anything, though—and even if
We could change the government or even
People’s minds there is still death to contend
With—and...” she said sighing, “worse
Decrepitude—that slow painful waiting and
Wasting away into superfluity and oblivion....”
Here she stopped and strummed her fingers
On the Formica table top as if pausing for
A distant tune to return to her memory—
“...and now look,” she said, pointing with
The burning tip of her tiny cigar, “my soup
Is cold and my ice has melted—it’s maddening
To be constantly victimized by this incessant
Entropy—when, Mon Cher, is enough, finally,
Enough!”

“Merry Christmas,” she said to one
Of the carved pumpkins sitting in the window,
As she stood up and walked briskly to the
Sidewalk, leaving her companion completely
Nonplussed watching the heels of her boots strike
The concrete with a delicate feminine defiance
That sent tiny sparks into the growing dusk,
Barely illuminating that delicate moment
Before the streetlights blink on and
The city’s mood shifts from taupe to mauve.

POEMS:

FRAN WATSON

Fran Watson is one of those traditional Americans who believes in peace, equality and apple pie, none of which are prohibited by law or religion. As an artist, writer, musician, and a slue of other stuff, she is able to draw upon a long life of prejudices, both for and against, herself and her personal preferences. She has raised a family, buried two husbands, kept on painting, kept on writing, and kept believing that we could all be just a tad better if we just put our minds to it.

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DRAWING:

DAN WOLFF

Dan Wolff is an artist, cartoonist, and illustrator dedicated to creating a lifetime of work that has substance, meaning, and a message of understanding. Working In comics, ink, paint, and pixels, art will always have the power to move him to move others.

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12. #1077



12. #1077

Forever Soldier

It's another world in war
a world where the unspoken is spoken
a place where goodness doesn't count
and humanity's vows are broken.
Survival is a barren land
just me and the enemy
when we both walk away alive
it's the best that it can be.
Like all things, though,
it should end sometime.
I am back in my native world
where killing is seen as a crime.
Where life is known as "peace".
Killing goes on in the mean streets,
not in my yard, not in my workplace
not on my every day beats.
It's not over for me, though.
Inside I still carry the killing
my mind knows it's all behind me,
but my memory isn't willing.
And at night it rushes back in the dark
like the monsters of childhood days
and I waken my wife with my screaming
dreaming my warrior ways.

Dinner Party

Somewhere is death
and pain
and unspeakable acts
performed to war's
percussion,

but here is quietness,
gentility,
civilized behavior
drowning out the sounds
of the unthinkable.

Here we hold our forks correctly
napkins on our laps,
eating in time to music,
smiling
comfortingly,

peering around the table
at our silly lives,
stumbling on as if
this is all there is,
barely hearing
the bombardment
or terrifying whine
of incoming.

Down the block
the last bus is leaving
filled with neighbors
who cry from the windows
for the loss
of all the fine linen.

What It Is

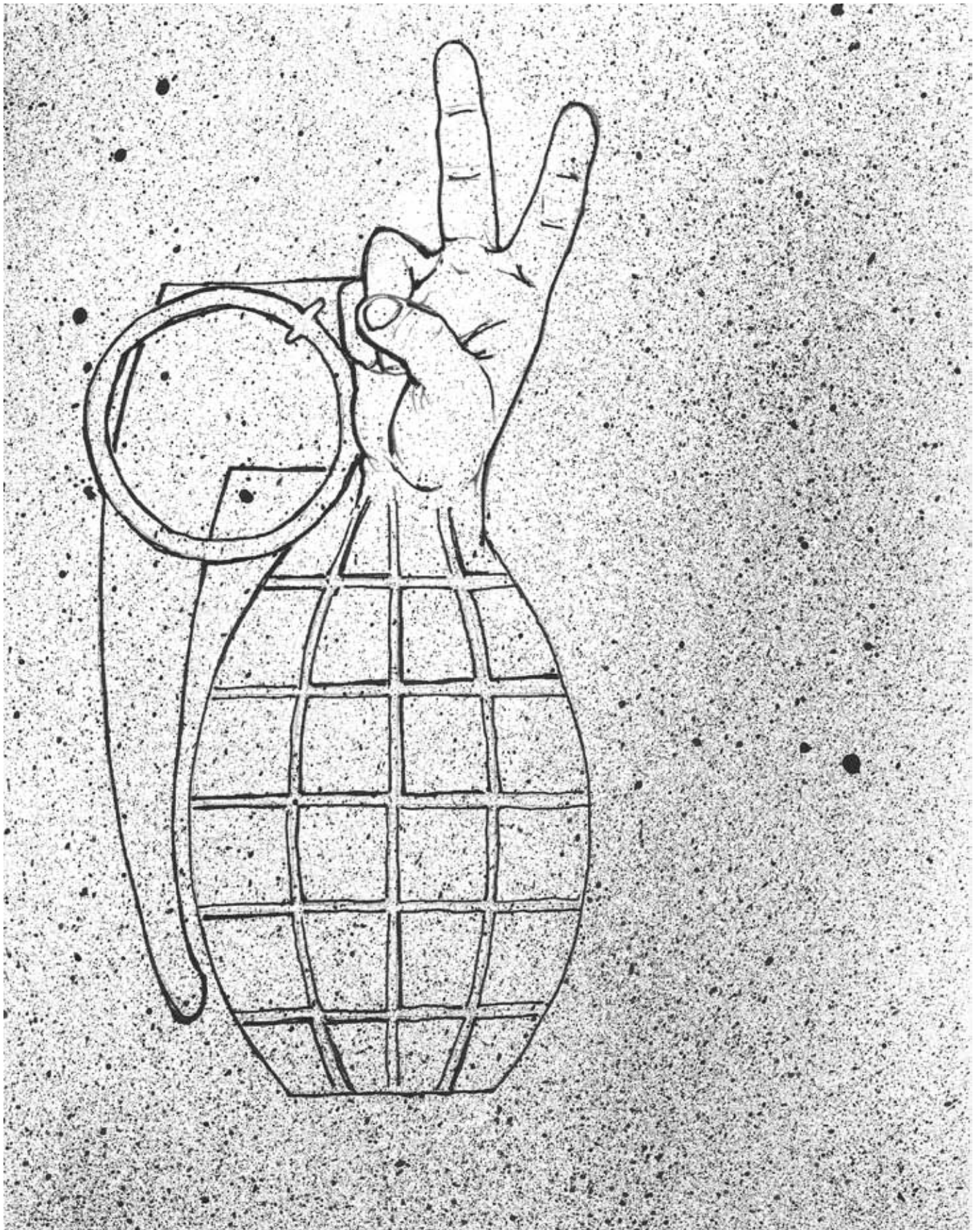
When a child stops crying and surrenders to sleep,
when dogs stop howling, and the cock stops crowing,
it's cool water to slake a mighty thirst
and the sight of home after unpleasant duty,
the sweet whisper of sheets brushing, sighing,

the gray of day becoming, shade by shade, after night,
the feel of an embrace in friendship or in love,
warmth after a winter day outdoors,
dreams replacing terror-ridden nightmares.

Peace is a child's smile and a stranger's thanks,
the sweet relief of rest, of food when hungry,
familiar faces smiling, laughing, turning toward each other,
solving a problem, the fragrance of newly cut grass
and flashing fireflies hovering over open fields,
dancing in the rain, singing in the shower.

A million peaces there are, as individual as we,
yet only one completely captures and entralls.
Just one the subject of prayers, books, heroic tales,
inspiration, and bottomless grief.
For a day, perhaps, joy paints the world hysterically.
Streets fill with parties, confetti clouds rain down, and cheers.

A conflict ends. Just one, mind you, others still alive and well.
Mankind cannot deal with a world on fire,
we celebrate by battle, not by war,
taking our peace where we find it.



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