

# For A 2013 Better World



POEMS BY DRAWINGS ON  
PEACE BY JUSTICE BY  
Greater Cincinnati Artists

**“For a Better World”  
2013**

Poems and Drawings  
on  
Peace and Justice

by  
Greater Cincinnati Artists

Editor:  
Saad Ghosn

“When it shall be said in any country in the world, ‘My poor are happy; neither ignorance nor distress is to be found among them; my jails are empty of prisoners, my streets empty of beggars; the aged are not in want, the taxes are not oppressive’-when these things can be said, then may that country boast of its constitution and government.”

**Thomas Paine**

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.”

**Archbishop Desmond Tutu**

# Foreword

“Poetry is not a luxury,” states Audre Lorde, a Caribbean-American writer, poet and civil rights activist. “It is a vital necessity of our existence. Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. ... We can train ourselves to respect our feelings and to transpose them into a language so they can be shared. And where that language does not yet exist, it is our poetry which helps to fashion it. Poetry is not only dream and vision; it is the skeleton architecture of our lives. It lays the foundations for a future of change, a bridge across our fears of what has never been before.” Combining powerful language, a perceptive and genuine questioning, and a visionary dream, poetry thus becomes a strong communicative and transformational tool.

Forty nine poets use it here in this 10th 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 visual artists who through their responsive drawings add to the message. Of all ages and backgrounds, these literary and visual artists use their art and talent to state their concerns and affirm their beliefs; by doing so, they also 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 Bucky Ignatius, Gwyneth Stewart, 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 2013

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***POEMS:***

**ELLEN AUSTIN-LI**

A native of Upstate, New York, Ellen Austin-Li has lived in Cincinnati for the past 16 years; she currently lives in Clifton with her husband and two sons. This past year, she has discovered her writing voice, particularly as it applies to poetry. A Registered Nurse, she now focuses solely on writing. Ellen is also a community gardener in Avondale, which has become a major source for her inspiration.

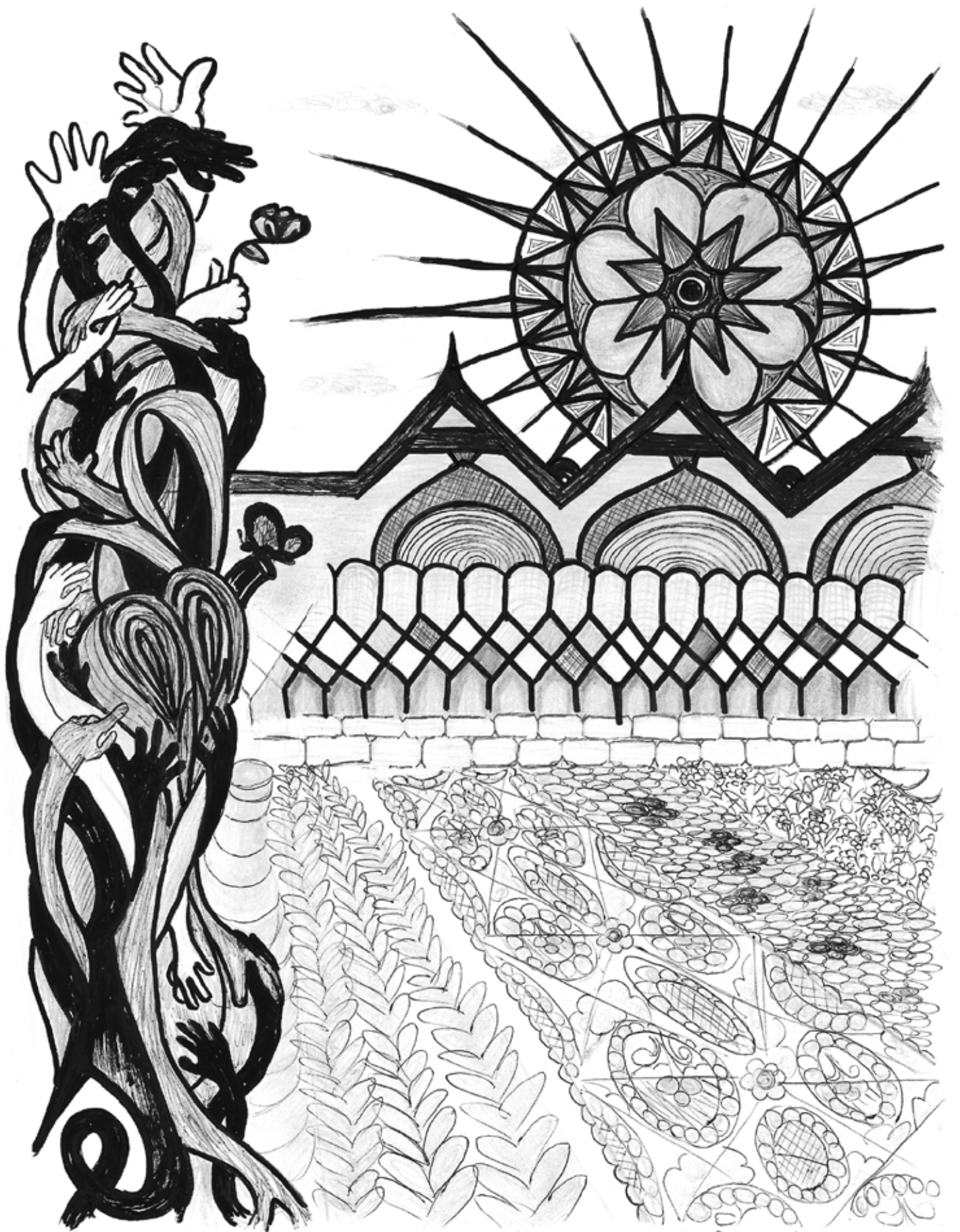
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***DRAWING:***

**ERICA WINE**

Erica Wine is a fine artist working in Cincinnati, OH. Originally from Dayton, OH, she studied fine arts at the University of Cincinnati, DAAP. Her art deals with natural and artificial subject matter.

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Edca Wime

## The Community of Beauty

At the edge of where white meets black,  
An Eden exists.  
A garden of promises,  
and a garden of beauty.

Peace dwells behind the towering Russian sage  
And the sweeping ornamental grasses.  
Red roses lend their grace  
To the entrance of  
the home of the butterflies.

Butterflies circle and alight  
Upon vibrant orange yarrow,  
And pastel purple balloon flowers,  
While cars zoom past,  
Oblivious to the treasures within.

Benches extend their invitation  
To enter in repose,  
While street kids walk past,  
Casting quizzical glances  
At the contrast of beauty's abundance beside them,  
With the stark ugliness of poverty in their lives.

Women with alabaster skin  
Pull weeds and plant flowers,  
While children with coffee-colored skin  
Delight in scurrying lizards.  
Dark-skinned men visit,  
Offering blessings, and  
Offering gratitude  
To the other gardeners within.

Garden beds offer sustenance  
to those who till the soil,  
Dirt beneath nail beds  
Of black and white gardeners alike.  
The color of skin unimportant  
Beneath the changing skies,  
Before the grace of their harvest.

Peace lives on the climbing vines,  
Intertwining lives,  
Of have and have-not,  
Filling the spaces between  
With splashes of color and fragrant bonds,

Bonds of community,  
Bonds of humanity.  
The garden of beauty  
Becoming common ground  
beneath their feet.

## Over and Under

Money flows, and streets change,  
crumbling buildings gentrify,  
Yet some people stay the same.  
The old neighborhood rapidly evolves,  
But the best is out of reach,  
For the survivors of slavery,  
And for the people without means.

The beauty of this rebirth  
Is balanced by the change,  
To those that lived under  
Poverty, in old buildings  
From days gone by.  
These guardians must not be forgotten,  
The people who have stayed,  
The souls who have been left behind  
In Over The Rhine.

In older days, the wealthy  
did not remain,  
Fleeing to greener lands.  
Those same, over poverty,  
were free again to choose  
To return to Old Germania,  
And with their wealth  
this neighborhood infuse.  
This rebirth promises true things,  
If the poor can have a place,  
a home to call their own,  
In Over The Rhine.

Green space filled with newness  
Music fills the air,  
Water spouts vertically,  
Reaching for the sky.  
This new heart beats certainly  
For all around to share,  
A space with commonality,  
A space to remain the same,  
A symbol of hope,  
over to under, in Over The Rhine.



***POEMS:***

**PHEBE BEISER**

Phebe (Karen) Beiser, a retired librarian from the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, is currently a teacher at Women Writing for (a) Change. Poetry, nature, and Eastern spirituality are her passions. Phebe's blog on "nature, meditation & much more" can be found at <http://phebek108.wordpress.com>.

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**TERRY PETERSEN**

Terry Petersen is the grandmother of three, a poet and a singer/songwriter who plays guitar for the elderly at a local nursing home. Her life focus is positive thinking, reflected in her blog: <http://terrypetersen.wordpress.com>

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***DRAWING:***

**CURTIS GOLDSTEIN**

Curtis Goldstein, a native Ohioan, makes paintings, collages, sculptures, and installations that reflect his personal views of society, politics, and humankind's stewardship of the environment.

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curtisgoldstein

## tiny Taliban

(by *Phebe Beiser*)

16 victims  
murdered  
in the middle of the night  
minding their own business  
sleeping in their homes.

1 U.S. soldier  
returned to base  
in the middle of the night  
Afghan shawl wrapped around  
his guilty gun.

Thousands of villagers  
Southern Afghanistan  
will never be the same  
1 family lost 11  
impossible to count their loss.

Blood money  
from the land of the free  
(money makes everything better)  
alcohol or mental illness  
among the reasons given.

Grieving mother  
holding dead baby in her arms.  
Was this child a danger?  
“Was this child  
the Taliban?”

## To the Little Girl Standing Posed for the Camera with a Rifle and a Dead Fox

(by *Phebe Beiser*)

I couldn't be more than five.  
My grandfather had just shot a fox.  
He was so proud. Someone thought  
it would be fun to have me pose,

gripping the rifle with the fox  
suspended from the clothes line  
so it would look like I had been the huntress.

Grandma Katie stands behind me.  
She is smiling. I'd do anything  
to please my grandma.  
I was her favorite.

I have an odd grin,  
as if I'm not quite sure what is going on.  
I wonder if the rifle  
is still warm to my touch.  
I wonder what I am thinking,  
or did I turn numb  
and go outside myself?

I have always loved animals.  
My grandma's farm  
had Laddie and Boy-Dog.  
Sometimes there were chickens.  
Sometimes pasture was rented for cows.  
Did I identify with that unlucky fox?  
I can't believe I wasn't upset—  
me who hated to step on ants!

I wouldn't doubt  
that this was the beginning  
of my becoming a pacifist.

## Final Wish

(by *Terry Petersen*)

Along a back window  
at a huge family gathering  
in a rented hall  
the oldest man sat in his wheelchair  
huddled with the youngest child.

In the center  
long tables covered with  
gold, red, and black painted signs  
claimed truth, whole,  
perfect, beyond criticism.



The families divided the space  
into zones, while their words  
stung the air—

*How can you say?  
I can't forgive you for . . .  
You are a fool.*

While the family members argued,  
the elderly gentleman and the small girl  
met with approving eyes,  
a twining of fingers, a gesture, a smile.  
He celebrated the exquisite fit of  
her name to her personality,  
despite both the hardened hearts  
that fed her and his inabilities to  
respond beyond a crooked grin  
and speech delayed by  
multiple strokes and advanced age.

She giggled, tugging gently  
at the sagging folds in his face.  
Then, when the child grew tired  
and slept in his arms,  
the figure of the man's wife,  
gone twenty years, appeared,  
clothed in soft light.  
She called to him.

Before he allowed his spirit  
to separate from his body,  
he whispered his final wish  
into the girl's small ear.

The buffet opened as  
the child's mother noticed  
her waking in the lap  
of the dead man.

Unwilling to touch cold flesh,  
several family members  
abandoned their divisions,  
at least for that moment,  
and called to the girl,  
*Please, Hope, come to us.*

They didn't know they were  
echoing the gentle man's  
deepest desire.

***POEMS:***

**MATT BIRKENHAUER**

Matt Birkenhauer teaches English at Northern Kentucky University's Grant County Center, with emphasis on Composition and Rhetoric; he also often teaches literature classes. Matt lives in Ludlow, KY, with his wife and two sons, Matthew and Benjamin.

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**JEAN SYED**

Jean Syed is in the Cincinnati Writer's Project and has been published in several of their anthologies. She has also been published by Dos Madres Press, in the "Lyric," and this year will have a poem in the Ohio Poetry Association's anthology. Jean contributes to Streetvibes and has been broadcast on WVXU.

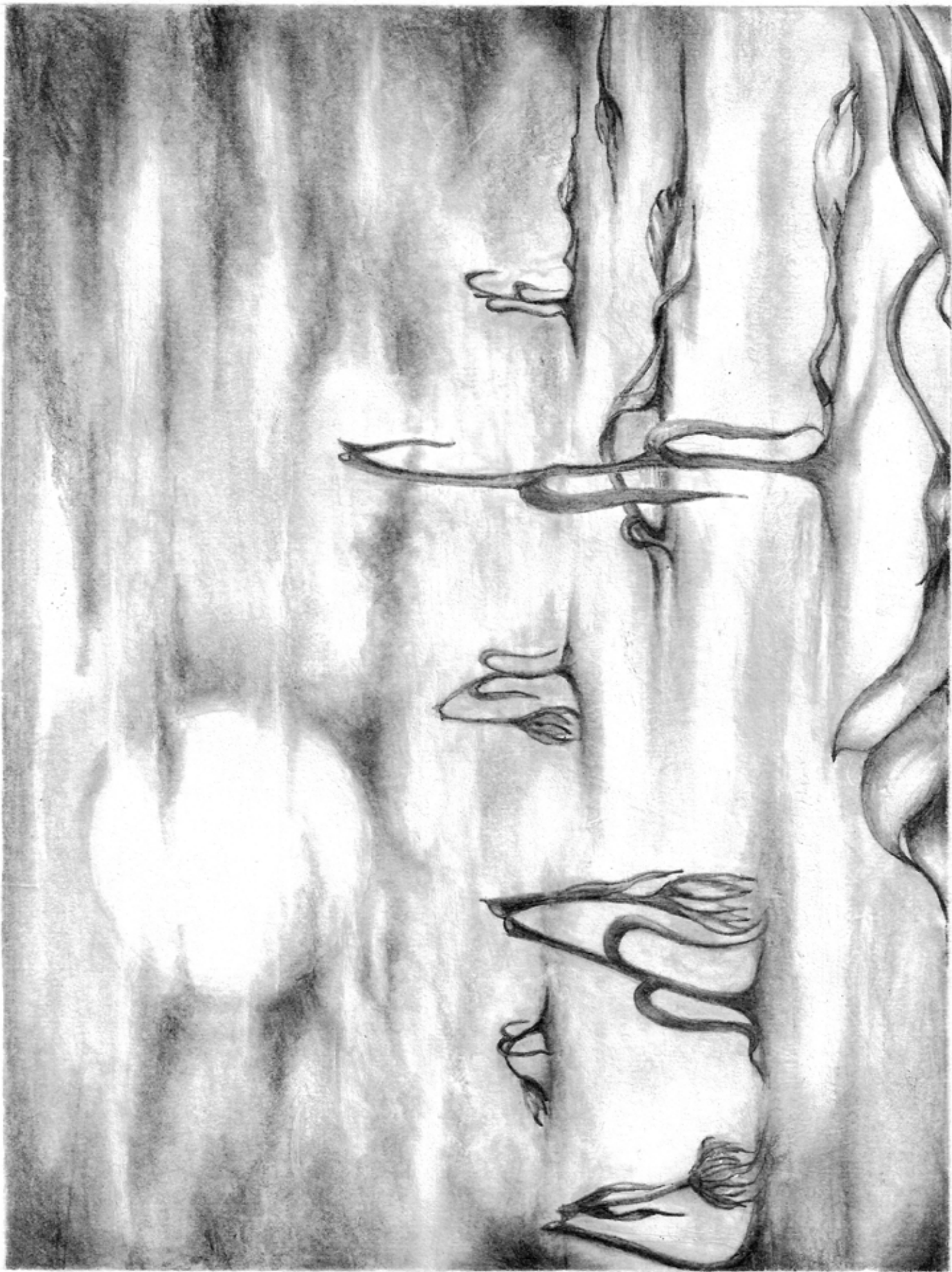
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***DRAWING:***

**BRUNO ZABAGLIO**

Bruno Zabaglio, from Naples, Italy, has lived in the US since 1973, in Cincinnati since 1991. He began drawing and painting in his early years under the guidance of his two artist uncles, Gennaro and Armando Olivieri. Bruno received a BFA and a Curatorial Practice Graduate Certificate from UC/DAAP. He maintains a professional studio at the Essex Studios. He is also an art curator and a guest lecturer at UC Clermont College.

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ZAB 2013

## **“In Guns We Trust,”**

*after Aurora, July 20, 2012*

(by **Matt Birkenhauer**)

“In Guns We Trust” I think should be  
Impressed on all our currency.  
A salutary message sent  
To all gun foes of our intent.

To clean up crime and arm our tots  
We’ll hand out handguns by the lot.  
We’ll even give kids golden chips  
When they get A’s to buy their clips!

And next when Johnny empties rounds  
Into a classroom in some town  
We’ll say (and this is nothing new)  
“Guns don’t kill people. Kids do.”

## **Little Lambs**

*With Apologies to William Blake, but none  
to Wayne LaPierre and the death-dealers  
for the NRA*

(by **Matt Birkenhauer**)

Little Lamb, who shot thee?  
Dost thou know who shot thee?  
Mowed thee down, and bid thee bleed,  
In the hall and o’er the mead;  
Gave thee clothing for entombment,  
Softest clothing, to be mourned in;  
Took away your tender voice,  
Which made all your friends rejoice?  
Little Lamb, who shot thee?  
Dost thou know who shot thee?

Little lamb, I’ll tell thee,  
Little Lamb, I’ll tell thee.  
He lobbies for the NRA,  
(Though he calls himself a man).  
He is craven and he’s vile;  
He is anything but mild.  
He’s bought off by the NRA  
Which in Congress rules the day.  
Little Lamb, we mourn thee!  
Little Lamb, we mourn thee!

## **Peace Offering 2012**

(by **Jean Syed**)

Weep, America, for the fire-fighters in Webster, New  
York,  
Weep for the school children and educators in  
Newtown, Connecticut,  
Weep for the Sikhs of the temple in Oak Creek,  
Wisconsin,  
Weep for the cinema-goers in Aurora, Colorado,  
Weep for the shoppers in the Clackamas Mall, Oregon  
Who got in front of the second amendment.

Shame, shame, shame on  
Our households who say it is  
Our impregnable right that  
Our gun-owning selfishness  
Should not be infringed.  
Our mind-set is to blame.

Shame, shame, shame on  
Us who say that  
We are deserving  
To be protected from violence.  
We are the violence  
Of the second amendment.

We should hold bonfires  
Flaming in every city square  
Of all household guns,  
Especially the ones which are most cherished,  
Going heavenwards like incense as a peace offering  
To victims and to God.

Let the second amendment be a continuance  
Of the quest for domestic tranquility.  
May we dwell on the pursuit of happiness  
We should have in this land, that none of  
Our households will be to blame for  
Murder and massacres.



***POEMS:***

**J. BUTLER**

J. Butler is parent, spouse, artist, poet, performer, Buddhist, queer, student, teacher, eco-psychologist, and wanderer. One can find all these identities navigating at [www.nowallthetime.com](http://www.nowallthetime.com).

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**NANCY JENTSCH**

Nancy Jentsch is a resident of Campbell County, KY, where she lives with her family and numerous animals. She enjoys reading, knitting, puzzles and traveling. In 2010 she led a group of NKU students on a study program to Nicaragua, and this year's poem is a result from that experience.

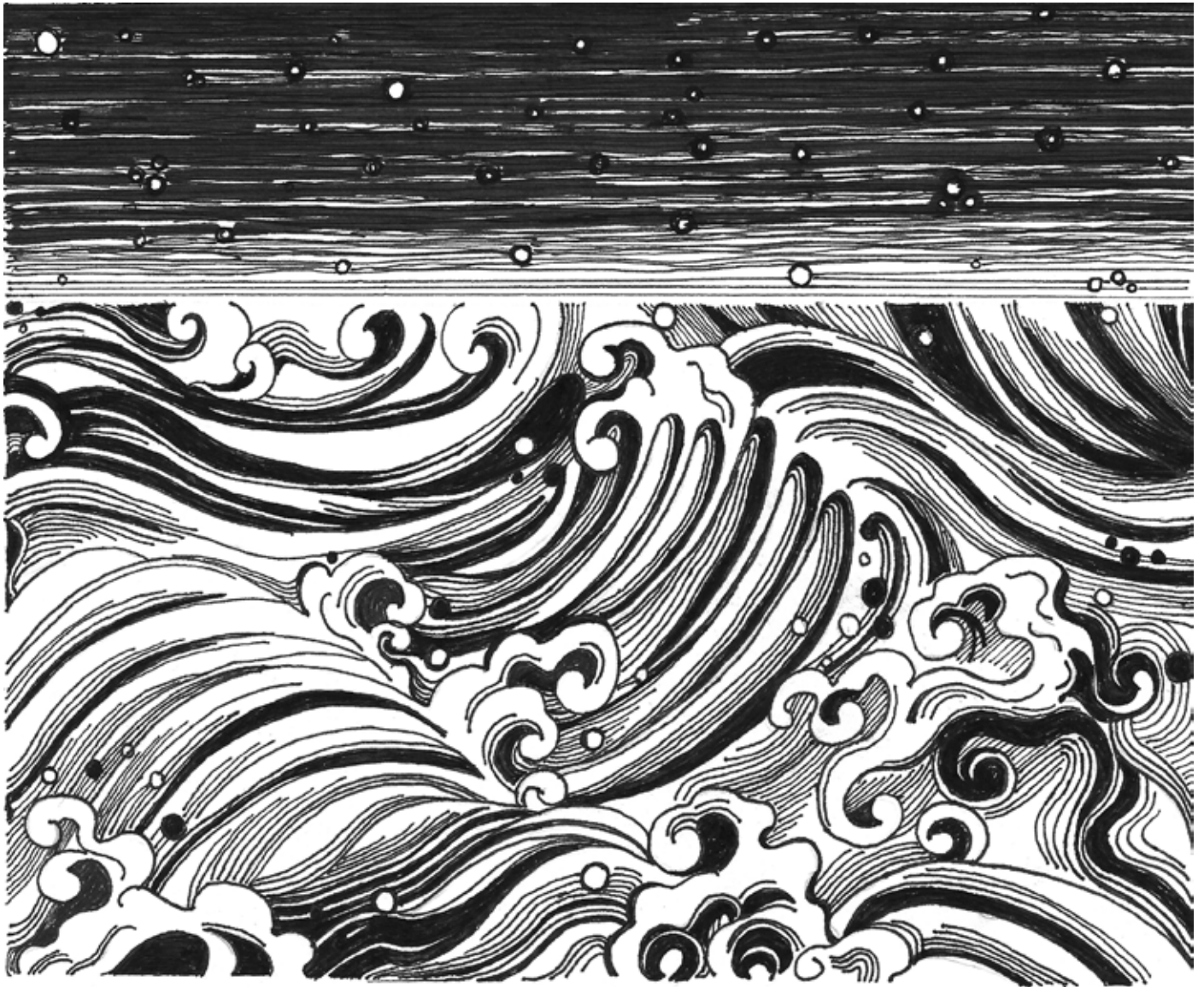
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***DRAWING:***

**BROOKE BRANDEWIE**

Brooke Brandewie is an artist whose aesthetic is inspired by the Vienna Secession artists' movement and by Japanese prints. She is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati/DAAP in Fashion Design. She currently teaches trend forecasting and branding in the Fashion Design Program at DAAP. Brooke has worked as a designer for the Live Well Collaborative for the past 5 years.

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## joanna macy said

(by *J. Butler*)

you must speak your truths  
say them out loud  
act them out in subway stations  
unsolicited and wild  
whisper them softly  
in the arms of your lovers  
reckless and vulnerable in front of  
your peers

bare yourself  
like an autumn tree  
show the angles you made  
to catch the sun  
beneath or between  
your neighbors

you must hear your truths  
listen  
whole bodied  
there are inner landscapes  
turned battlefields  
from truths withheld  
from truths unheard

every truth  
every single truth  
matters

know deeply  
the telling  
and the listening  
are the same thing

when you speak your truth  
your experiences of this world  
become  
unstuck in time

like Billy Pilgrim  
the whole systems have always lived  
discontinuously

and so should we

## Snapshot

(by *Nancy Jentsch*)

My lens catches an oxcart  
(fortuitously framed by a thatched roof,  
in the background a white beach,  
crested waves of the Pacific)  
burdened with driftwood -  
smoky heat for the chill of the night  
(a sure first prize in the international category).

The prize pocketed,  
a thought as scorching as the sun over Nicaragua  
causes me to hide the picture,  
ashamed I'd found the scene quaint  
when its actors' roles were daunting,  
heaving wood on the treadmill of survival  
with fuel for a night's fire the sole reward.  
I'd prized only the tableau,  
pixels framed by thatch  
before the drumbeat of the ocean's waves.





***POEMS:***

**STACEY CALKINS**

Stacey Hubbs Calkins is a native of Richmond, KY. She has a BA in Political Science from Berea College and a MA in Public Administration from Ohio State University. Stacey is a member of Women Writing For (a) Change. She currently resides in Cincinnati with her husband and daughter.

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**DONELLE DREESE**

Donelle Dreese is the author of two poetry collections: *A Wild Turn* (Finishing Line Press), and *Looking for a Sunday Afternoon* (Pudding House Publications). Her poetry and fiction have appeared in many publications including Quiddity International, Hospital Drive, Roanoke Review, Appalachian Heritage... She is an Associate Professor of English at Northern Kentucky University.

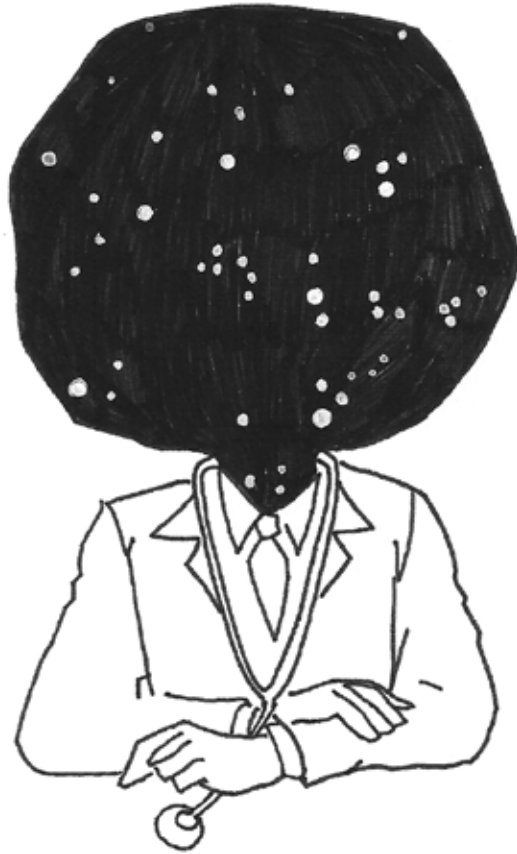
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***DRAWING:***

**JAMIE MUENZER**

Jamie Muenzer is an artist living and working in Cincinnati, OH. Since graduating from DAAP (2011), she completed a one year ceramic artist residency at Core Clay, worked as the Education Coordinator at local arts organization Visionaries + Voices and has recently been showing and selling her mixed media paintings.

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JAMIE MVENZER

## Too Many Bullies

(by *Stacey Calkins*)

The pain of the unprotected  
vibrates in the air.

The essence of betrayal and despair  
leaves a lasting impression  
in the hallways.

Like the invisible trains  
of humans herded  
toward torture and death.

It doesn't happen here.  
We have a zero tolerance policy.

The principal comes from a  
family of principals  
schooled in the art of manipulation.  
A man with many voices.

His need for success  
greater than his need to  
do the right thing.

Administrators and teachers,  
hired by those  
seeking similar attributes,  
stand behind him,  
smiling like sharks  
on top of the bodies of  
the ones who dare to care.

Certain people were  
designed to suffer.

Angels watching from far above,  
rarely deign to intervene.  
It's just too much work.

## White Coat Syndrome

(by *Donelle Dreese*)

What you are hiding  
beneath the white coat  
is a rash surfacing  
cold coffee stains  
an asymmetrical signpost  
brown birthmark.

You, prescription writer  
who always spells my name wrong.

Your previous patient lingers  
beneath the jagged edges  
of your fingernails.

A machine spits out paper.  
The automated nurse smiles  
at no one.

We, the herd of cattle  
bottleneck at the door.



***POEMS:***

**ELLA CATHER-DAVIS**

Ella Cather-Davis is retired with her husband of 44 years. She began writing at age 40, writing poetry, essays and children's stories. She holds a degree in English Literature from UC 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. Her written work has been published widely. Ella also loves classical choral music; she sings with the historical May Festival Chorus.

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**KATHY LONGSHORE**

Growing up in Cincinnati, Kathy Longshore started writing poetry in first grade. Being a teen baby boomer in the 70's greatly influenced her passion for love and peace. Grandmother of seven, Kathy is inspired in her writing by nature and life events.

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***DRAWING:***

**ANH TRAN**

Anh Tran is part of hark + hark projects and is program coordinator for Modern Makers. She collects pens for drawing and writing 6 word stories.

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Anh Tran

## Penultimate

(by *Ella Cather-Davis*)

to the moment preceding the dawn,  
when deer are creeping across the field  
softly, like gray phantoms, and the birds  
are not yet awake to fuss and sing.

When the fog glides gently over  
silver grass like a lover's caress, we know  
that in this hushed moment we are safe - -  
safe from all the impending woes and wars.

Sure in this sacred silence,  
we summon our courage to judge - -  
How we have mattered in time - - -  
knowing we could be better.

## Broken Things

(by *Ella Cather-Davis*)

Hello, I think you are broken.  
You, sitting there talking rather fast  
about everything all at once, trying  
to convince me that you are fine  
just fine.

But you are encased in steel,  
parts moving in synchronization;  
gears, cogs, wheels all churning  
beneath that fine porcelain skin.  
You pause.

"Do you remember he would slap me  
first with one hand then the other  
for a very long time, so long . . .  
just like you would swat an insect?  
"I remember." I answer . . .

"Say, doesn't your daughter  
graduate college this Spring?"  
But you are not in the now  
as the machine keeps grinding,  
crippled along.

Oh little girl with no front teeth  
with which to smile so long ago.  
Now you smile mechanically.  
I could not help you, I could not.  
So now at last,

Here we are, nearly through our lives,  
long past that springing monster  
who was so very broken.  
And I am reluctantly convinced that  
indeed, we are broken.

## An Ambiguous Eulogy

(by *Kathy Longshore*)

As a teen I listened to my father  
Interpret the world through prejudiced words.  
He knew every derogatory term  
And used them on a daily basis.  
With strong conviction I'd go against him  
And made sure I became friends with the few  
blacks  
And the Jewish girl with her traditions  
And spent some time in a Catholic church.

No secret that Dad and I weren't close.

As an adult I watched as my father  
Fall victim to a stroke and diabetes  
And the short-tempered man with no patience  
Had to learn to wait in the nursing home  
For assistance on a daily basis.  
Once a week and on special occasions  
I would visit. In his captivity  
He became a much better listener  
Though often superficial and self-serving.

I'd apologize for his demeanor.

One time my father became so upset  
When a double amputee resident  
Wore shorts. Who wants to look at that, he'd ask.  
Though it didn't bother the resident.



Dad's closest friend there, lived to 96,  
Was a tolerant angel from heaven,  
A devout Catholic all of her life.  
She treated everyone like family.

I was inspired by her tolerance.

Over the years I watched in amazement  
As my father became more dependent  
Upon others for his personal needs.  
For six and one-half years he often complained,  
Mostly about food or having to wait  
Or a change in staff or entertainment.  
But never about the caregiver's race.

I hoped his stereotypes were fading.

In his final months I watched my father  
Lose both legs. He said he'd just wear his shorts.  
And in his last lucid moments he said  
He was glad that we had finally made peace.  
Such a strange way his life affected mine:  
Making me want to be kind to others.

I wondered if he learned what I had learned.

**POEMS:**

**BETH DOTSON BROWN**

Beth Dotson Brown, a freelancer writer and editor, enjoys writing articles and short stories, both of which have won awards. She is the author of, *Yes! I Am Catholic*, (2007), of a collection of one-act plays, *Mothers, Daughters and the Spaced in Between*, and contributed to *A Cup of Comfort for Breast Cancer Survivors*. Beth lives in a quiet Kentucky town where she gardens, cooks, teaches and works to make peaceful and positive contributions to the world.

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**SUE HOWARD**

Sue Neufarth Howard, a Cincinnati native, is a published poet, a visual artist, and a member of the Greater Cincinnati Writers League (GCWL) and Colerain Artists. She has received many awards for her poetry and her poems have been published in several journals. Her published chapbooks include *TreeScapes*, *EarthWords*, *In and Out of the Blue Zoo*

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**DRAWING:**

**J. BUTLER**

J. Butler is parent, spouse, artist, poet, performer, Buddhist, queer, student, teacher, eco-psychologist, and wanderer. One can find these identities navigating at [www.nowallthetime.com](http://www.nowallthetime.com)

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j. butler '13

## Padded, Pink Bra

(by *Beth Dotson Brown*)

Padded, pink bra  
rests  
in crook of tree's arm,  
forgotten  
after early morning pay.  
Clear vodka bottle  
announces  
current choice of poison,  
empty  
from tilting in the dark.  
Cigarette butt  
stained  
from Santa-red lips  
blows  
in winter breeze,  
abandoned  
only because of child care rules.  
Shiny convertible  
drives  
eyes steadily ahead  
avoiding  
bra, bottle,  
not seeing  
the local discardees.  
Neighborhood walker  
wonders  
why the city is  
bleeding,  
one block  
dying,  
slowly and alone.

## Still Life

(by *Sue Howard*)

Copper vase, Black-Eyed Susans,  
apple, orange, purple grapes  
a blue-checked cloth.

With brush-stroked colors on the  
painter's canvas, a still life.

Beyond the artist's view...

Psycho madness, innocents  
taken out, assault rifle fury.

Earthquakes swallow  
the unprotected, unsuspecting.

Hurricanes, floods, tornados  
pummel, extinguish at random.

Tyrants slaughter all  
who threaten their power.

Lives stilled...no beauty  
in evil, black anguish, destruction.

Still...life goes on

and the painter with brush  
and color brings to life  
stillness, beauty, respite.



***POEMS:***

**HOLLY END**

Holly End is a writer of poetry, essays and short stories, and an active member of Women Writing (for) a Change. She is also the director of development for Cooperative for Education, an international nonprofit organization working to break the cycle of poverty in Guatemala through education. Holly and her family live in the Pleasant Ridge neighborhood of Cincinnati.

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**TERRY RACK**

Terry Rack has a strong interest in social justice issues and human rights. He is a board member of The Jean R. Cadet Restavek Foundation, whose primary goal is to end child slavery in Haiti. Terry has a BA in English and enjoys writing thought provoking poetry about current global issues.

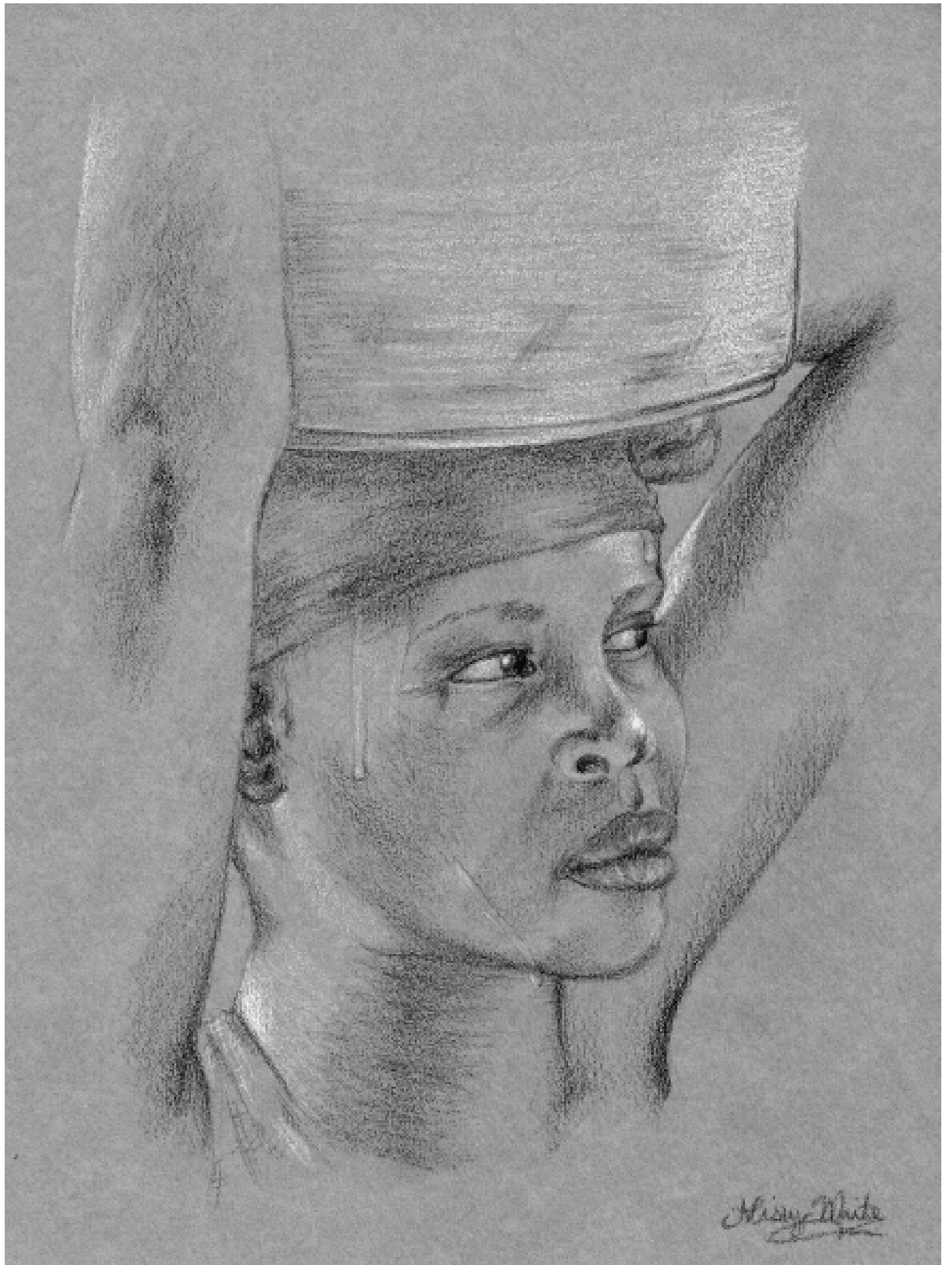
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***DRAWING:***

**MELISSA WHITE**

Missy White is a student at the University of Cincinnati's School of Art in the College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning. Her passions include drawing, sculpture and film photography. Upon graduation, Missy plans on earning her masters degree and making a career in Makeup and Wig Design.

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## libros de textos

(by *Holly End*)

Silken ebony ropes  
cascade past her shoulders.  
Small wisps dance in the mountain breeze  
as she begins her daily journey  
down the rocky path.

Second-hand sandals reveal  
dust covered toes.

A vibrant textile starts its dayshift  
cinched around her waist  
after a full night's work as a blanket.

Threads, intricately woven on mamá's back  
strap loom,  
adorn her blouse with the pattern  
that has identified her village for generations.

All the same  
as her mamá, her abuela, her ancestors.

All the same but her hands.

Not filled with pasty maize clapped into  
tortillas.  
Not calloused and bloody from the hoe.  
Not soothing a fussy infant in a sling.

Grasping books.  
Carefully covered in craft paper,  
wrapped in thick plastic and  
cradled in her arms  
to defy the elements.

Books that just hold words  
but not just words...

A signature for her now  
instead of a thumbprint.

A life of her choosing  
not indentured servitude  
to a wealthy family or a plantation owner  
or a husband .

Context on which to base her dreams,  
knowledge by which to make them reality.

A Mayan girl  
in the mountains of Guatemala.

The same  
as her mamá, her abuela, her ancestors.

All the same but her future.

## Restavec *Child-Slave of Haiti*

(by *Terry Rack*)

As the rising sun exposes imperfections in the  
cracked earth,  
Rooster's crow; slowly calling the town to wake,  
Like snake charmers weaving a hypnotizing tune.

Her callused feet respond to the sound;  
Moving swiftly,  
In rhythm with the steady pounding of an anxious  
heart,  
Against filthy thread-bare clothes.

Tired arms fill a five gallon bucket,  
Heaving it to rest upon the crown of her head,  
Like a bird proudly perched upon its nest.

Last one, last one, she repeats to herself;  
Sweat dripping from her brow to the dusty unforgiving  
ground;  
Carefully balancing,  
Until a flood of water is released into a giant reservoir.

She grabs a tiny smooth hand,  
Feeling the contrast to her rough fingers as they  
intertwine;  
Hoisting a bag upon her back,  
They walk;  
Both made of skin and bone,  
Relying on the same breath to feed their lungs,  
Yet conditioned to believe there's a difference.



She releases her grip;  
The eager child,  
Dressed in white lace socks with newly braided hair,  
Bobs energetically into school.

A painstaking days work ahead,  
She turns;  
Her already aching muscles scream,  
Like a newborn baby thirsting for milk.

Each passing day dismantles another fragment of hope;  
Her eyes lost to hollow expression;  
Cheek muscles have forgotten how to smile;  
Soon nothing that is *human* will be.

**POEMS:**

**MARK FLANIGAN**

Mark Flanigan's work appeared locally and nationally for over two decades now, his "Exiled" column recently ending after an eleven-year run, archived at [semantikon.com](http://semantikon.com) and [citybeat.com](http://citybeat.com). His volume of poetry, *Journeyman's Lament*, appeared recently in the Aurore Press publication, *Versus*, and his free-e-book, *Minute Poems*, remains available online from Three Fools Press.

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**CAROL LAQUE**

Carol Laque, born in San Francisco, settled in Cincinnati in 1996, and has been living in Chicago since 2011. She is a poet published by small presses from California, Virginia and Ohio. Carol's latest collection of poems is *The Beekeeper's Story* (Conference Press, 2012) and her work in progress, *Poetize*. In Chicago, she teaches poetry workshop at The Clare. In 2010 Carol was awarded a lifetime achievement award from the Cincinnati Writers' Project.

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**DRAWING:**

**CATHERINE RICHARDS**

Catherine Richards is an artist, designer and activist. She has a Masters of Architecture from the University of Cincinnati. Her works span disciplines including drawing, installation, set design, film and jewelry. She currently teaches design at the University of Cincinnati and runs the Modern Makers interactive art and design space in Uptown Cincinnati.

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Catherine Richards

## The Agnostic's Prayer

(by *Mark Flanigan*)

*"Lord/I had such a good time and I don't regret anything--/What happened to the prayer that goes like that?"*

--Franz Wright, "Kyrie"

The morning is of no concern to me  
despite there being nothing more embarrassing

than a corpse. Little  
dead feet, little dead hands

with no one to hold them.  
So little dignity in life,

and even less in death. We  
go for a swim at 7 a.m. or

play cards while the sun rises.  
The morning is of no consequence to us.

Every time I flick on a light switch  
a bulb burns out. Every time I

fill the soap dispenser, it overflows.  
Maybe there is a lesson here.

Outside the rain falls as if angry.  
Inside there is a spider in the tub

I must remove before running  
water. What if we are only spiders

living precipitously by a drain? I live that way,  
love that way. It's not worth being saved

by something less kind than me. Fuck mystery,  
give me joy; that is mystery enough.

Let it rain, let it rain, let it rain: Books  
are like parents, they mostly show you

how not to live. I haven't embarrassed any  
body by taking my web underground.

## Art History: Halloween

(by *Carol Laque*)

I am that woman who searches  
for windows to let me in, to stain me out.  
I have no doors in this trick or treat  
haunted cathedral crevice.

I breathe a ghostly air from the Day  
of the Dead – starved by the Last Supper in  
40 days and 40 nights.  
I am the wilderness.

Mine is a cloistered life  
enslaved in votive shine  
sewing prophecy into a robe  
for a Resurrection Reality.

Fearful of heavenly angels  
I survive my sainted self –  
an object of worship,  
a symbol of purity, ageless virginity.

I am forever a symbol  
of that woman who at the Annunciation  
swooned – passive and pliant –  
I did not give my permission.

Grieving in empty caves  
for my child's kingdom come  
full of crucifixion kisses,  
I would celebrate All Soul's Day.

I am fixed on altars – cradled  
in drafty couplets and endless chanting.  
I have been dragged, stolen through time,  
burnt from coven to covenant.



***POEMS:***

**GARY GAFFNEY**

Gary Gaffney is Professor Emeritus at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. He is a visual artist who employs images and text to explore the spiritual yearning of human beings in the complicated, confusing and mysterious contemporary world.

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**DIANE GERMAINE**

Diane Germaine, writer/choreographer/visual artist has poetry and stories in SOS Art publications, in Chronogram (a Hudson Valley arts magazine), in A Few Good Words (a CWP anthology), and presented readings and stagings in various venues. The NEA, OAC and City of Cincinnati awarded her choreography fellowships and grants for acclaimed works presented in NYC and in the tri-state.

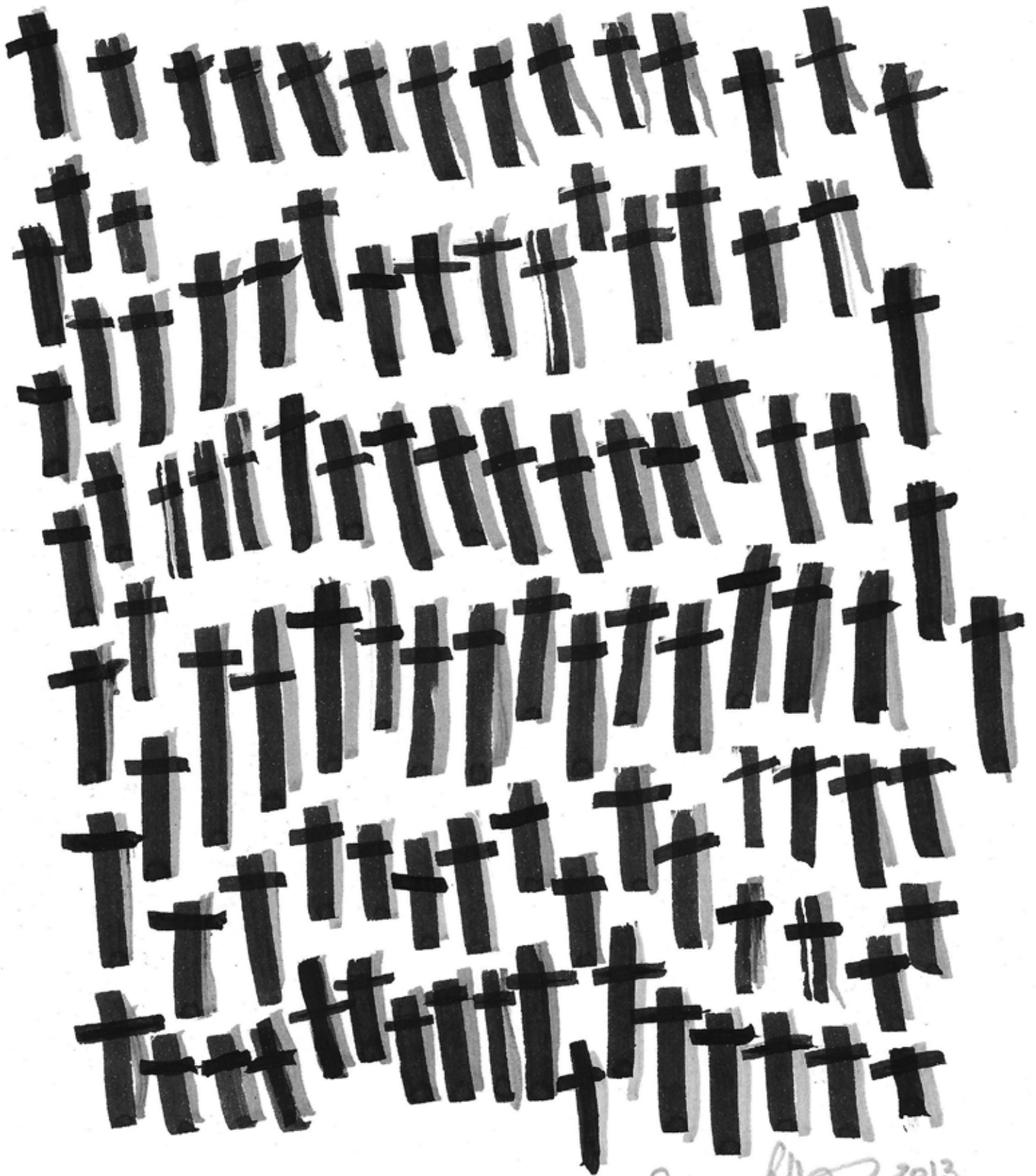
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***DRAWING:***

**PAUL “PABLO” WRIGHT**

Paul “Pablo” Wright is an artist who has been working in various mediums since he was a small child. He is a muralist who uses mostly acrylics and spray paint. He also creates books and linoleum block prints reflecting political angst using a robot theme. Paul’s formal training as a librarian is reflected in his works exploring data, information, knowledge, propaganda and media.

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PAULO  2013  
PAUL 'PAULO' WAREBIT

## I Am Not Dead

(by *Gary Gaffney*)

I am cell and bone and blood pumping.  
I am a human mix of trouble and pleasure  
and good intentions.  
I am daydreams of lust and fatherhood,  
cold beer and being loved.

I gladly put on the uniform.  
Did every damn pushup and lockstep march,  
made home in a hole in the desert,  
became the man I wanted.

The bullet tore through my chest,  
Popping my heart like a child's balloon.  
I was wet with blood and urine.  
I was dead, flat dead in the dirt.

The start of my passage was rugged.  
But I was cleaned up and placed in my new quarters.  
The flight home was quiet and dark,  
safe under the flag.  
I was glad to feel the weight of the earth  
as it piled on top of me.

But even then I am not dead.  
I am alive in pictures on the mantel,  
in the statue in the town park,  
in the memories of me that fade in one person  
and take root in another.

And in that quiet, piercing moment each day  
when I come again to my mother.

## Repetition

(by *Diane Germaine*)

In grey light  
no shadows.  
Everything is  
what it is:

a little boy stares  
at his neighbor lying  
in a stain spreading red  
by his head. The old man's  
crumpled body is inside  
a long dusky coat; bony  
fingers too brittle to be twigs  
graze the cobbled stones;  
his shoes lie askew.

The boy stands immobile  
hands above his head  
waiting for a time  
that never comes.  
Reports wash over him,  
a thousand screams,  
a tsunami of bodies drop.  
And the zing of one bullet  
slices air: its arrival is  
interminable, and it  
will be quiet as death.





***POEMS:***

**MICHAEL GEYER**

Michael Geyer, a Cincinnati native, is a graduate of the UC School of Engineering. He currently teaches high school chemistry and lives in Montgomery with his wife and son. Michael exists and writes between bells.

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**BUCKY IGNATIUS**

Bucky Ignatius lives and writes in Cincinnati, looking for paths to peace leaving breadcrumbs of poems behind.

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***DRAWING:***

**SUSAN KOSEK CAVALARIS**

Susan Kosek Cavalaris prints in Oxford, OH, where she received her BFA and paints at her studio in Fairfield. She mixes techniques such as relief print, trace mono-type, paper lithography and painting.

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Susan Kosek Cavalaris

## Atomos

(by *Michael Geyer*)

There are tire  
tracks on  
the moon

with jettisoned  
tools and waste  
materials

and four  
decades  
of doubt,

two piles of  
forged iron in the  
Challenger Deep,

enough  
heavily guarded  
fissile material

to drive an  
agnostic to  
quote sacred text

and yet we  
continue  
bombing the possibilities

out of the wild  
cracks of a  
morning,

burning books  
written only  
in the hearts

of unborn  
children,  
leaving only

the smell of  
charred pages  
on the wind.

## Rhetoric

(by *Michael Geyer*)

Had it not  
been dark  
he would  
have seen  
his breath  
slaughtered  
by the cold.

A fire  
was all he  
wanted,  
and all they  
need  
to put us  
naysayers  
down,  
their “must have”  
to shift  
the polarity  
of preferences,  
wrest truth  
from our naked,  
warm hands.

## Small Step, Giant Leap

(by *Bucky Ignatius*)

Neil Armstrong fumbled  
his humble words on  
the moon, a masterpiece

of show-and-tell, late  
on my twenty-fifth  
birthday. Our blue

planet televised alone  
in space couldn't help  
but do the trick. We're all

in this together, it's too  
obvious to deny now,  
I thought. Ha!

## If You Must Rant, Make Mine a Haiku

(by *Bucky Ignatius*)

nothing speaks louder  
to American folly  
than a leaf blower



***POEMS:***

**GERRY GRUBBS**

Gerry Grubbs has books out from Dos Madres Press, *Girls in Bright Dresses Dancing*, and from WordTech Press, *Palaces of the Night*. He also has numerous poems published in small magazines including The Painted Bride Quarterly, Poet Lore, Mudfish and many others.

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**DANIEL RUBIN**

Dan Rubin resides with his wife, Michelle, and children, Loretta and Jonathan, in Northside. He implements story telling in his daily life to interact with family, work and friends. In order to broaden his texture and vitality, Dan frequently listens and looks for the unusual aspects in ordinary life. His efforts at writing, art, and family life have broadened his own ability to describe life as it changes and is perceived.

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***DRAWING:***

**DAVID MILL**

David Mill lives in Cincinnati with his wife Kate. He earned a BS in Graphic Design from the University of Cincinnati and has a fulfilling career at his graphic design studio, Design Mill. David also enjoys getting his hands dirty as a ceramic artist at the Pendleton Art Center, participating in art shows throughout the year.

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David Mill

## He Sang

(by *Gerry Grubbs*)

He sang  
The kind of song  
That comes from  
Long nights  
Alone on the coast  
Playing in the dark  
To the sounds of the sea  
Where each note  
Holds the depths  
From which it was drawn  
It came from inside him  
Where the moon  
Shines on the water  
While the waves  
Dance  
In their white dresses  
To his song

## The Service Sector

(by *Daniel Rubin*)

Smile when you say it  
Say it when you mean it  
Clarify your information  
With a tactful syncopation  
Write down important notes  
Listening to impatient folks  
Say you'll do it lightning fast  
Before a minute's nearly passed  
Give clients assuring care  
Prompt assistance always there  
Be humble when you're wrong  
Quick amends without a gong  
Let go quickly, take a breath  
Just a little time till death  
If you don't mind who's polite  
The service sector might be right

## That Stringed Instrument

(by *Gerry Grubbs*)

I don't know  
Who that stringed instrument  
Has so much trouble forgiving  
  
It sounds like the cry  
Of someone wrongfully imprisoned

If we could open that door  
Who do you think would come  
Running out of that dark cell  
Other than yourself

## Conversion

(by *Daniel Rubin*)

I am considering conversion  
From Judaism to Islam  
A sign of cooperation  
A gesture, not a bomb

I am considering adopting  
New friends and new beliefs  
To bridge the gaps between us  
To gently ease the grief

I am considering a pledge  
To share my story line  
With Muslim friends and brothers  
With those across the line

I am considering promoting  
The beauty of Islam I see  
To share with all my Jewish friends  
As strife turns into peace

I am considering writing  
A memoir that all may read  
To every sister and brother  
That perhaps one less will bleed





***POEMS:***

**RICHARD HAGUE**

Richard Hague's latest books are *During The Recent Extinctions: New & Selected Poems 1984-2012* (Dos Madres Press, 2012), and *Learning How: Stories, Yarns & Tales* (Bottom Dog Press, 2009). Richard has taught recently at Thomas More College and at Purcell Marian High School.

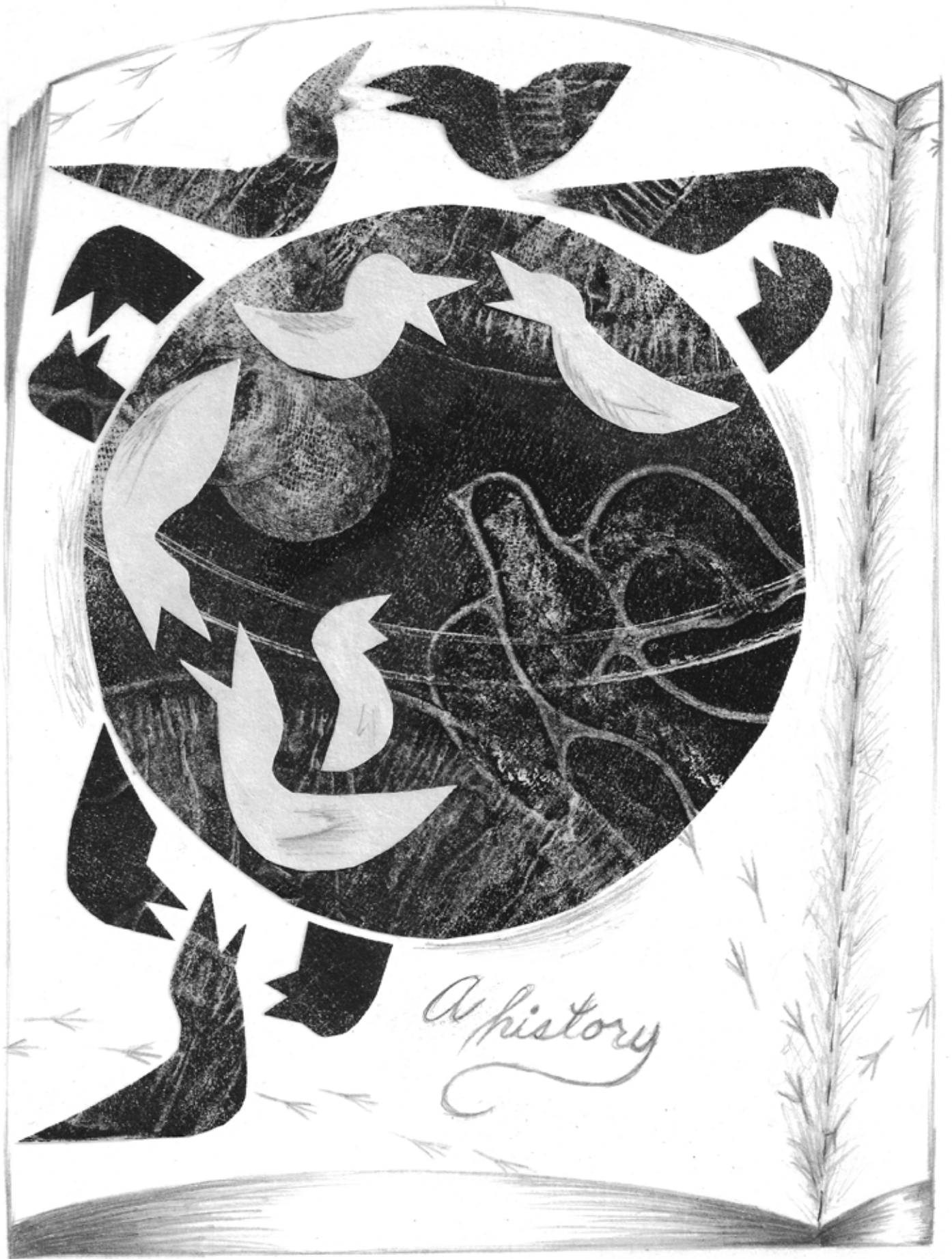
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***DRAWING:***

**MERLE ROSEN**

Merle Rosen, a professional artist in Cincinnati for the past 42 years, has shown extensively in museums, galleries and alternative spaces. She has received artist grants and fellowships. Her work is in local, regional and national collections, both private and corporate. Rosen has also been teaching art for more than 48 years at museum schools, universities, colleges and community art centers as well as privately at her studio. She is currently the Midwest Working Artist for Golden Artist Colors acrylic paint company and teaches techniques and materials in a four state region.

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*A history*

**from *A History of the Former World:*  
Unfinished To Do List**

Name the nameless:  
what makes us  
spoil our world  
for our great  
grandchildren;  
what makes us deaf  
to the alarums  
of weather and the land?

Find the center of peace  
and live there  
like the chipmunks  
and the voles.  
Entertain light  
and air. Develop  
and deploy  
small factories  
of silence.  
Sing like a bee  
on a golden wire.  
Find three years  
in which to research,  
on the wing,  
and then write  
the long-suppressed,  
though long-needed  
*History Of The World*  
*According To The Birds.*

**from *A History of the Former World:*  
“Not All Sides Are Represented Here”**

“Not all sides are  
represented here,”  
the quibblers, capitalists, and  
conscienceless would say,  
“computers have their  
up sides. War may be just.  
Nuclear is necessary.  
Coal can be clean.  
Points of view,” they would say,  
will differ.”

But the world,  
the planet, did not reason,  
did not equivocate,  
but simply acted according  
to its laws, most of which  
they did not know—  
for example, why so many  
kinds of beetles? How much  
smoke is too much?  
Will oceans survive?  
World was acted upon,  
oftener and oftener,  
by forces it could not  
digest or comprehend:  
5,000 new chemicals  
every year, vast spills  
of oil, billions of  
fracking gallons poisoned and  
lost to the water  
cycle.

But there is not  
an infinity of sides,  
A box stops.  
A diamond ends.  
Cards flip once.  
A world,  
as we have seen,  
can die.



***POEMS:***

**TIERNEY HAMILTON**

Tierney Evonne Hamilton, a native Cincinnati, has been writing poetry for the last 25 + years, a time during which, she and Daryl Keeling originated the poetry slam for the African American community. Currently, she tries to create beauty and peace in a world that does not know their importance; and accepting this fact she navigates the more mundane aspects of a life.

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**ANNETTE LACKNER**

Annette Lackner, a native Cincinnati, wife, mother and grandmother, takes every opportunity to share her words. She enjoys writing fiction and has also written a one-act play, but 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.

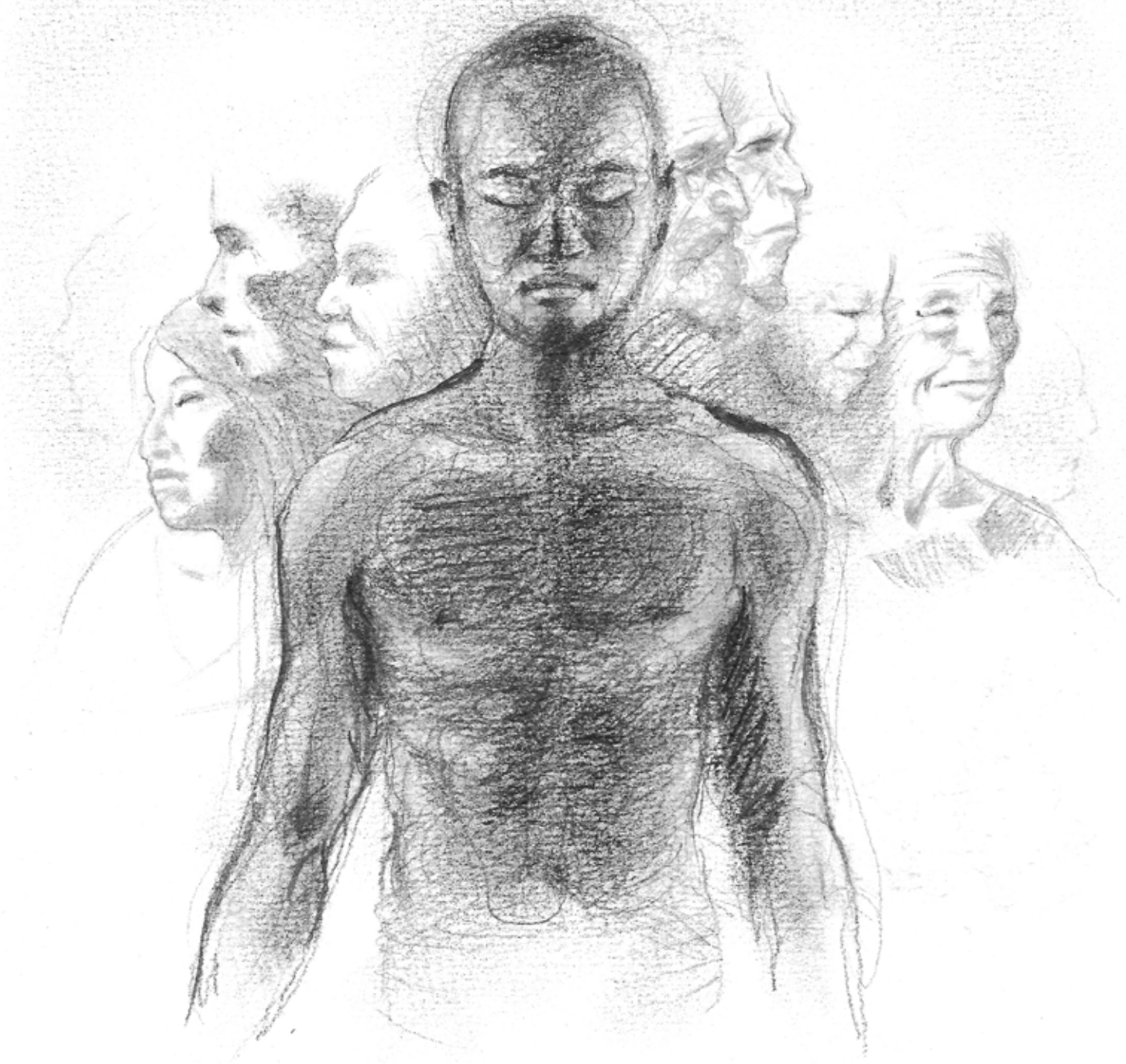
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***DRAWING:***

**JENNIFER CHOTO**

Born and raised in Zimbabwe, Jennifer Choto came to the US in 2000 and went on to study architecture at the University of Cincinnati. She currently lives in Cincinnati and works as an intern architect, and enjoys painting and other creative pursuits in her spare time.

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JENNIFER CHOTO

## Did I Say To Bring the Ancestors?

(by *Tierney Hamilton*)

They were there  
Invisible vapors  
In the air  
Stomping feet  
Invoked

Voluntary and involuntary immigrants  
A stream of human dreams  
An evergrowing vine  
The roots of democracy

Did I say to Bring the Ancestors?

To bring forth a dream dormant  
Goosestepped into the dust  
Those seeds/promises planted  
In the slaveowner's lash  
In the sweatshops  
Native American  
Veil of tears

## Still Crossing

(by *Annette Lackner*)

My hawk-like eyes imagine them  
Fleeing chains, lash, branding iron  
Flailing in murky waters  
Towards white man's emancipation

Jim Crowe, lynchings  
Choking, coughing, clinging  
Frigid waters frightening  
Many drown, many crossing

Hanging on, hanging on  
Traacherous waters, sit-ins, marches  
Some swallowed in the undercurrents  
Others keep on crossing.

Freedom seems within reach  
But waters chop and roil.  
A voice from land screams:  
Birth Certificate! LIAR!

Lungs heaving  
Weary of the journey  
Still struggling to cross  
Determined to reach the shore

I ponder the raging river  
Muddied with fear and hate  
And my soul whispers softly:  
We are **ALL** still crossing.

(Written from the Rankin House in  
Ripley, Ohio)





***POEMS:***

**GEORGE HARDEBECK**

George Hardebeck, an Artist, naturalist, gardener, writer and organizer, is the director of ARCHE - Arts Restoring Culture for Healing Earth, which develops events and projects for eco-cultural restoration through arts. George welcomes rallying for turning Mass Extinction to Mass Abundance on the ARCHE Facebook group page, now! Transition this Nati!

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**MARK MUSSMAN**

Mark Mussman, a Cincinnati native, explores cultural context through photography, graphic design, and creative writing. As an adult basic education instructor, he uses writing to encourage students to develop skills important for all areas of learning – including math. Mark enjoys other creative endeavors like developing websites, online games, and social media content.

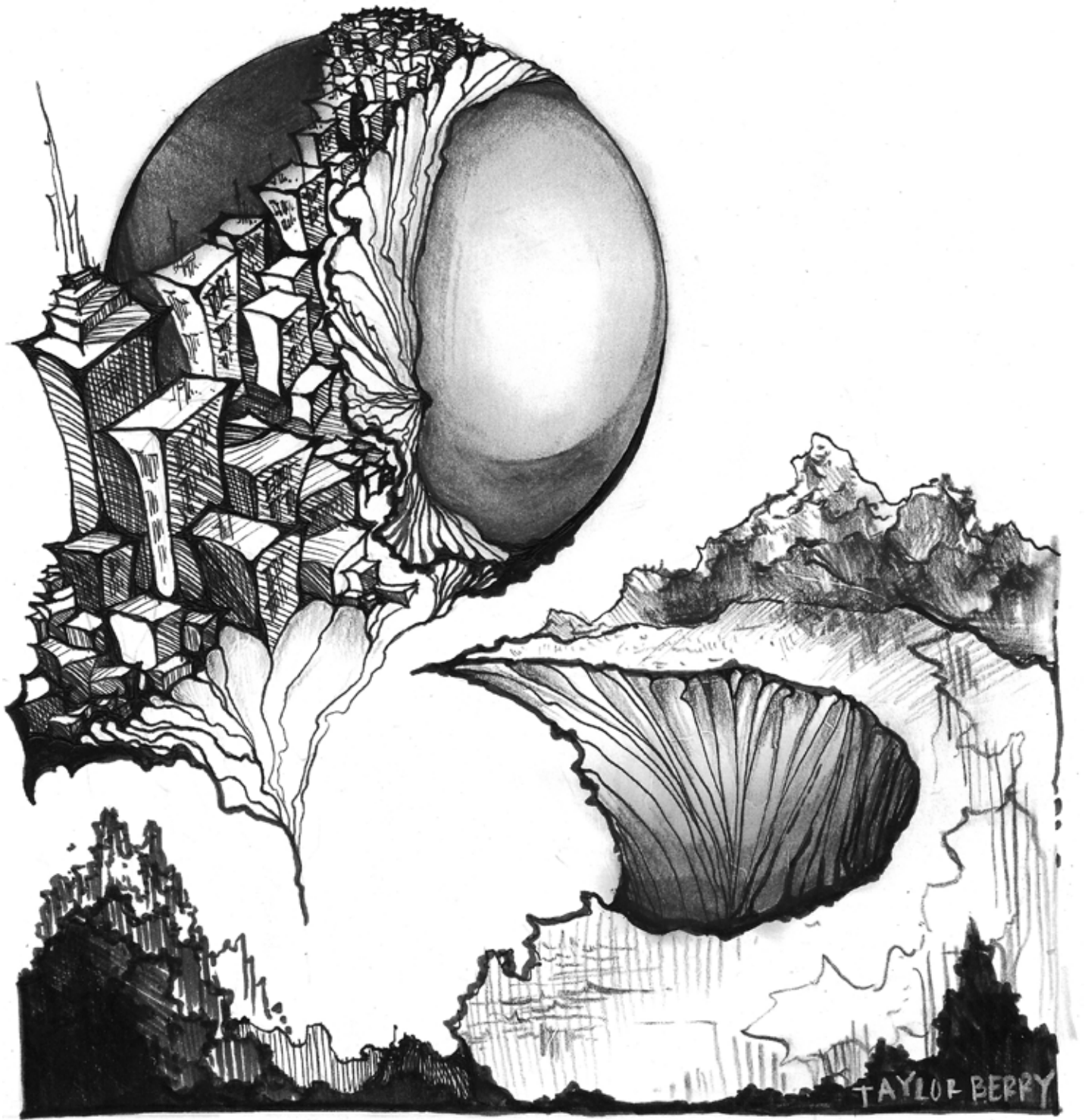
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***DRAWING:***

**TAYLOR BERRY**

Taylor Berry is an undergraduate sophomore architecture student at the University of Cincinnati. She has studied painting, drawing, textiles and printmaking, and has interned at the architecture firm GBBN.

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## Square Dance

(by **George Hardebeck**)

Round em up - Yee Haw  
We're heading fo the edge  
Edge o the world  
Lasso them babies  
Push em off, an' swing em ho  
Zeig heil and dough see dough  
It's a new age  
with a new wage  
We'll keep the cows  
Pigs-n-sheep, an' the like  
Git rid of them pesky varmints  
Creepin bugs snakes n all  
here before us  
We'll show y'all  
who be-longs  
We're the winners  
Standin' tall, into the final hour  
till we tip off - into the sunset ourselves  
Why does the world need to turn  
when we can grow in riches  
gained, full speed ahead  
right up off the edge  
into nothing  
Our new age  
a death waged

## Subduction 101

(by **George Hardebeck**)

Go ahead my child  
Subdue the Earth  
my Body, so rich in my Spirit, too  
See how you do

We came home  
at dinner time  
confused in our loss of grace  
The artificial grandeur  
of our design  
in our image

our identity uprooted  
a dustbowl disturbed state to state  
Wash your hands, and face  
for a light meal  
Not much left now but  
Be of good cheer  
Learn anything  
yet

What will you subdue  
tomorrow  
Oh  
Appetite  
Yes

## Hill Stepper

(by **Mark Mussman**)

Walking downhill  
Breath of Queen City falls  
Slowly in front of me

Decades of lost souls  
Right on the border broken  
Where south meets north

Generations of memories  
From history's bosom torn  
Forlorn about the next step

Empowered from the rut  
With friends and family charged  
Time to tweak our trajectory

## Missed Opportunity

(by **Mark Mussman**)

Time goes by in parts of the world  
Faster than it does in these parts  
Others already know Spanish  
They are learning Mandarin  
And they are fluent in Arabic

In this town, my home town  
Time stood still  
The wind blew  
The trees grew  
The coal burned  
We stood firm

Technology has sped things up  
For advanced societies  
Magnets, Cells, Turbines, Nuclear  
Creating more with less  
Leaving a smaller footprint

In this town, my home town  
Time stood still  
The wind blew  
The trees grew  
The coal burned  
We stood firm

Attitudes towards inclusion  
Increased across the nation  
But passed over us  
We see advancements from afar  
While we rage to find a small  
Connection to humanity

In this town, my home town  
Time stood still  
The wind blew  
The trees grew  
The coal burned  
We stood firm

***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 turns to poetry to find the deep meanings of life, love, and sorrow.

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**DORI J. VAN LUIT**

Dori Van Luit, a native of Cincinnati, studied at the University of Cincinnati and at CCM. She is a member of the Cincinnati Writers Project and has poems included in many books. Dori also has self-published two poetry books and writes articles for senior newsletters, alumni and reunion projects.

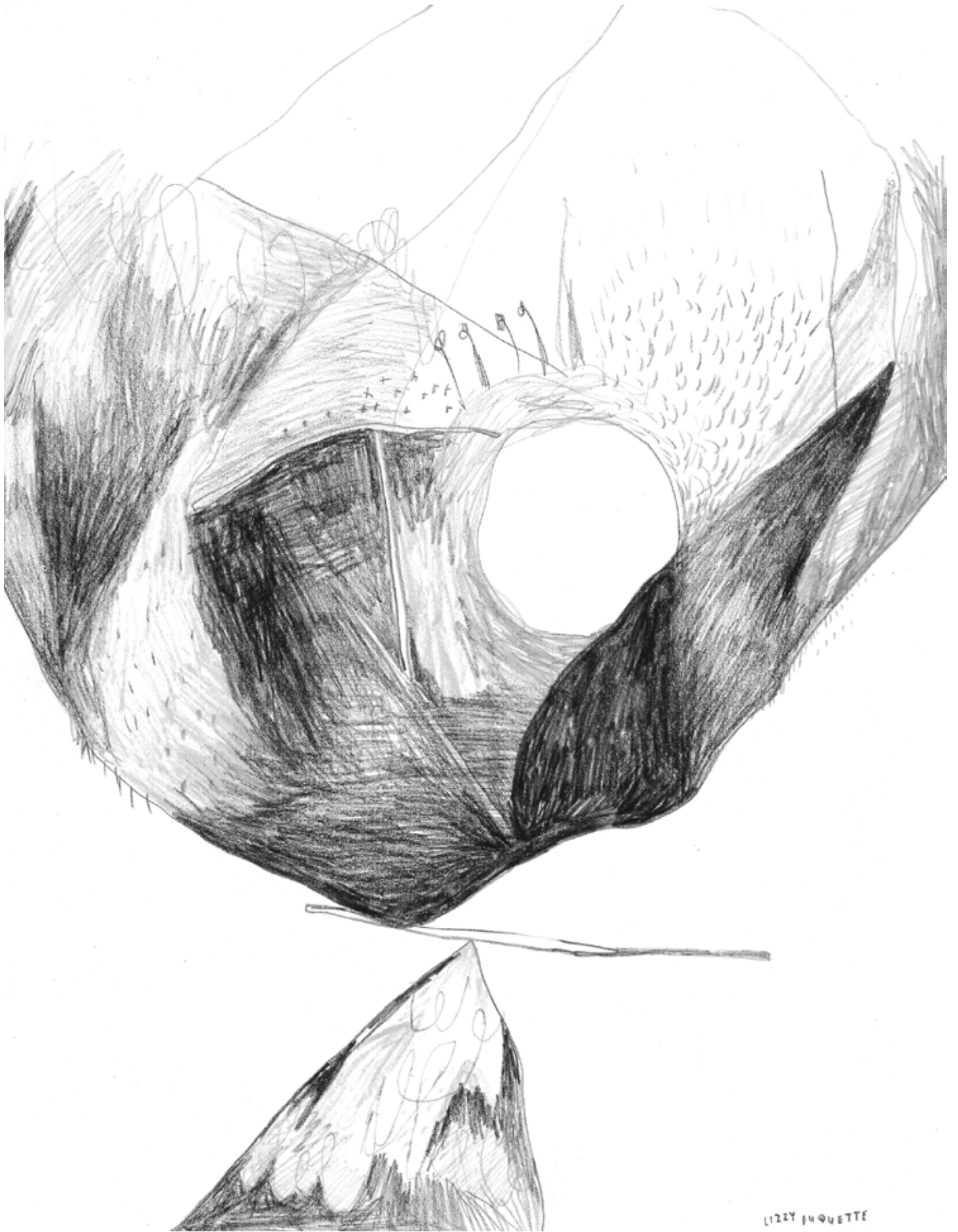
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***DRAWING:***

**LIZZY DUQUETTE**

Lizzy Duquette received a BFA from the University of Cincinnati DAAP in 2010. She likes to meander, wonder, learn, and make things.

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LIZZY INQUETTE

## **A Work in Progress: Christmas Tinged with the Deaths of Children**

by *Carol Igoe*)

Do you know how  
At dawn  
Above the trees, the clouds suddenly open to  
Soft warming light?  
Not a full sky,  
But a soft streak below the overhanging grey.  
A reminder  
That we are hovering still  
Amid planets, stars, the endless depth of grace.

So like this December,  
Christmas only glimpsed  
Below death's pressing weight,  
Above suffering's bank of woe.

A glimpse that shocks us, weeping,  
Into love,  
Into a fragile opening  
Where we may yet  
Redeem ourselves.  
Where we may yet return,  
Like the sun tonight,  
Again a slender strip of rose above the trees,  
Where we may find again our open hearts,  
Together  
Forge a world where safety rises with the dawn.

## **Justice**

(by *Dori J. Van Luit*)

comes quietly at first, floats through sky, picking up speed  
turning clouds into storms.  
Fear tiptoes on kitten paws in the morning; by the evening  
becomes elephant feet on shoulders.  
Skeletons crumble down mountains, become rocks, turn into  
pebbles,  
which the tide takes out to sea.  
Birds sing on fresh summer mornings, fly south at the first  
sign of snow.



Thousands of crosses in church yards on January 23 still outnumber shootings in schools.

Abraham's two sons still fight to pay for sins of Sara and Hagar.

Hunger for power and greed that made us now break us.

A laughing child on a merry-go-round becomes one in a wheel chair with an expiration date.

## **A Song for our Times**

*(by Dori J. Van Luit)*

I hide behind a white fence picket, then  
don a full green skirt with large white poodle;  
performing with a different hat for every venue.

And in my play, Iraq slides down a mountain  
like a rock and shatters into pieces.

Osama and his crew will burn without a pile of ashes.

The CEO's of Enron, World Com and insurance moguls  
become an alligator's dinner as they swim thru greed's quick river.

Bear arms against the snipers

Take the gold to feed the children

Encase the flag in unbreakable glass

Let lasers burn the faces to see what really hides there

Take computers' vengeance and bury them in mud

In Ozzie and Harriet's back yard compost.

Harvest the fruit of idleness which freezes us in time

Let trees become a refuge to hug tightly

Let a still calm lake become our place to float in

Listen closely; only birds can sing

Seek the Holy Spirit lest we walk each path in fear.

Gather together in the churches

Lock the windows; bolt the doors

Welcome to Century 21!

***POEMS:***

**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.

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***DRAWING:***

**AMANDA PARKER-WOLERY**

Amanda Parker-Wolery is Assistant Professor of Foundations at The Art Institute of Ohio – Cincinnati and Adjunct Professor at the Art Academy of Cincinnati and University of Cincinnati-Blue Ash. She received her MFA from the University of Cincinnati, BFA from the University of Dayton and also holds a Certificate in Museum Studies. An accomplished artist in her own right, Amanda has exhibited throughout Europe and the US and has received various honors, including the Hungarian Multicultural Center Artist in Residency.

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Amanda Parker-Woley

## On the Menu

While eating breakfast at a Cracker Barrel,  
I overhear a boy ask his father  
what the animals would do for revenge  
if they could come back right now.

Perhaps that would ignite our deserved demise.  
A battalion or two of pigs and cows  
would stomp and trample us as chickens  
pluck pluck at our over easy tasty eyes.

## Pulsates Warm

Even when I wear an overcoat,  
it pulsates warm in my pocket.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you.  
If God didn't want me to have it,  
I wouldn't – but I got a permit  
to carry it anywhere I want.

I was a runt. Bullies could not  
resist mocking and whipping me even when  
their heart wasn't in it. I used to imagine firing  
a bullet right through Buck Calhoun's groin.

Snake Jackson would get two slugs, one in each  
eye of his reptilian face – No Mercy Sloan  
would find himself crippled after three equalizers  
rammed into his kneecaps.

I'm not saying I'll shoot anybody,  
but if a punk or two stares at me  
through the eyes of Snake, Buck or No Mercy,  
they'll feel the retribution of God.

I have permission to carry it.

## Our Own Kind

Last night I watched the news;  
a man was caught stealing and selling  
cemetery urns, the ashes settling.

Commercials – paid for by a SUPER PAC –  
hawk a circling past prime House Speaker  
who wants poor children to mop school floors.

Someone tells me people  
who cherish animals are misfits –  
unable to relate to their own kind.

On the highway a crimson woman  
rages past me – giving me the finger.  
I ease into the animal shelter.



***POEMS:***

**PATRICK KERIN**

Patrick Kerin is a poet, writer and teacher residing in Cincinnati. He has worked as a journalist and junior-senior high school English teacher and currently works in adult education. Patrick also hosts a monthly poetry and music open mic at the café Bilog in Wyoming, Ohio.

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**LINDA KLEINSCHMIDT**

Linda Kleinschmidt, a former writing adjunct professor and a former university Freshman writing consultant, is now a freelance editor and writing consultant worldwide. Her favorite poetry topics include New England, women, and human rights. Linda has published two children's picture books, articles on the craft of writing and editing, and won several awards for her children's books and poetry.

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***DRAWING:***

**JENNIFER WENKER**

Jennifer Wenker, MFA, is an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Art at UC/DAAP and Southern State Community College. Her work wants to challenge the historical relationship of human beings in Nature--that of domination over all that is non-human. She means to re-envision and remediate a relationship that respects Nature's deeply interdependent ecological webs and gives reverence to Interconnectedness. She wants her work as a catalyst for dialogue.

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Jennifer Wender

Scars



## To Never Hear these Sounds Again

(by *Patrick Kerin*)

To never hear these sounds again:

the cries of women and children beaten  
the whimper of a child cold and hungry  
the pleas of the abused to their abusers  
the bragging of gangsters counting their kills  
the screams of bombers ranging the sky  
the wailing of mourners among rubble and bodies  
the cries of innocents whose villages burn  
the sobs of mothers whose children have vanished  
the papery voices of the sick and forgotten old  
the rasping maledictions of the hate-stricken preacher  
the call for blood from the jihadist cleric  
the bishop's empty promises to the defiled young

and in their place only the quiet sounds of peace.

## Navajo Miners

(by *Patrick Kerin*)

They dug their graves as they worked,  
mining uranium ore below Navajo earth  
to arm the dread tonnage of warheads.

First to fight for their stolen country,  
they labored in feeble lantern light,  
sipping poisoned well water,  
the radon eating into their lungs,  
coughing black mucus so long and hard  
a man felt his brains would burst his skull,  
the government scientists mute as manikins  
about the danger stealing upon them.

All those years in darkness,  
but in the end they had sunlight  
streaming through the windows of the cancer ward,  
men sucking air in the antiseptic stillness  
then growing still,  
silent like the abandoned mines

## “special weather”

(by *Linda Kleinschmidt*)

A packed lunch of rice and peas,  
Carbonized.  
A garden photograph almost taken,  
A casual stroll by lovers  
On the city plaza,  
In warm sunny morn,  
Vaporized.  
A small boy tricycling on a path,  
Incinerated.  
A watch survives, and technology  
Records the day. Its  
Owner is gone.

Pink blossoms and birds,  
Crickets and dawn ablutions.  
Love and youth, the living.  
Early morning on  
August 6, 1945,  
8:16 a.m.





***POEMS:***

**LONNA KINGSBURY**

Lonna D. Kingsbury continues her quest to counter the silence of injustice one word, one poem, one story at a time as she serves the global community. From the youngest to the most senior advisors, she enjoys each and every sharing. Her workshops and television series *Countering the Silence*™ remind the artists to reach beyond their art and perhaps change a bit of the world.

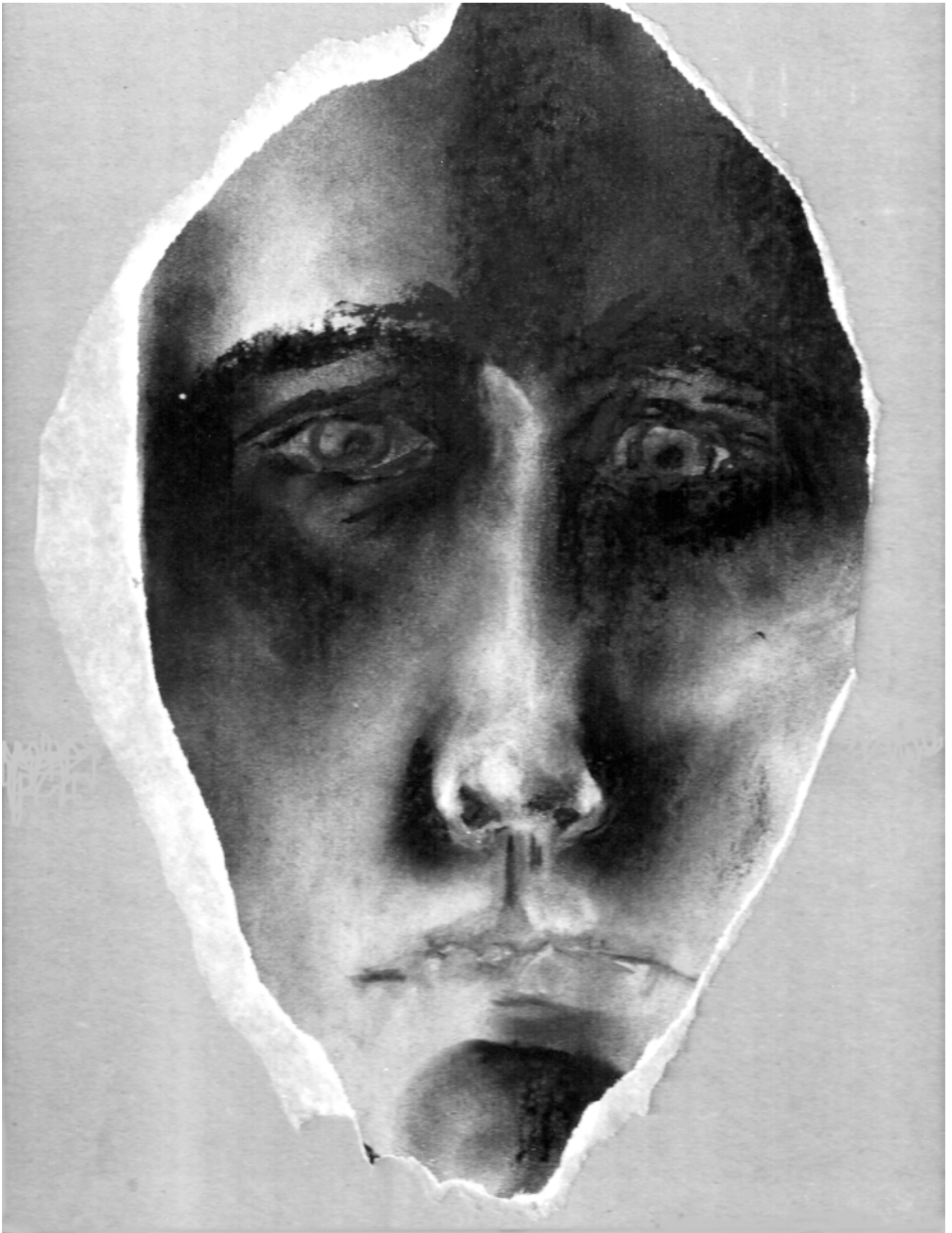
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***DRAWING:***

**YVONNE VAN EIJDEN**

Yvonne van Eijden received her Art education at the Free Academy at The Hague, The Netherlands, and at Three Schools of Art in Toronto, Canada. She combines language and paint to create ephemeral images that explore her emotional and physical connections to a particular place.

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Yvonne van Eijden

## A Woman's War

It can be tiresome -  
this sparring  
with polite and blighted  
air-kissed as . . .  
-tronomically  
remonstrative  
best of friendly  
lore

*born bore*

incestuous

infectious

clinging to each verbiage  
spore  
sprouting intellectual  
nodding  
as you were

conniving  
while implying  
rarified despair

as shared

solely within sisterhood  
deceptively declared

Completely unaware

she absolutely cares

and stares

with saddened eyes concerned  
to learn  
the essence of your pain

visually enthralled  
she stalks

through every twist and turn - again.

## Hummmmmmm

And the drowse of drones  
come sweeping  
creeping  
stealthily towards  
sleeping  
huzzahing  
before blinking  
souls  
awakening to  
the dawn  
with humming  
buzzing - something  
not quite right  
mere muffling  
far away or seemingly  
until  
awareness  
grasps  
et al  
the fall  
of raining  
piercing  
screaming  
targets  
streaming  
fleeing  
reeling  
stark amidst

the anguished cries

collaterally approved

e tu

summarily dismissing  
expenditures - resisting

dispensaries malfunctioning  
selectively eschewed

reproved  
in retrospect  
expendable  
abolishing unmentionables

as those ensconced  
a long way off  
deceptively review

- old news.

## The Proverbials

Listings once proved hopeful  
for seekers on the hunt  
in search of shelter  
childcare  
food  
for nurturing of minds  
with pennies saved  
pennies earned  
budgeting each cost  
as sought

coupon clipping  
rounding up  
until  
the jobs  
were lost

with vanishings - at first  
quite slow  
almost gone unknown  
usually Friday - meeting days  
where separation  
somehow comes . . .

officially - to one

secured  
escorted quietly  
belongings boxed for quick transport  
dazed, confused, untimely - lost

never to return.

Yes, slowly flowed the exodus  
before the waves  
of sleeping drones  
while severance  
and early perks  
softened fears of what would come

summarily undone

freed to pursue honesty  
with little jangle in their poke  
invoked by stark reality  
finally awoke

and spoke

one to one  
then to groups  
'till circling  
far and wide  
declaring self-sustaining worth

uniting to survive

Alive!

***POEMS:***

**LAURIE LAMBERT**

After ten years as a successful pharmaceutical research scientist, Laurie Lambert changed careers to raise her family of triplets and substitute teaching at their schools. As her children headed to college, Laurie turned to Women Writing for (a) Change to help her write her way through her life transition; she currently writes poems and essays.

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**BENJAMIN URMSTON**

Father Benjamin Urmston, a 66 years member of the Society of Jesus and 53 years Catholic priest is Director Emeritus of Xavier University Programs in Peace and Justice. A host of the radio talk show *Faith and Justice Forum* for 28 years, he is also the producer of the *Vision of Hope* DVD found on [www.xavier.edu/frben](http://www.xavier.edu/frben)

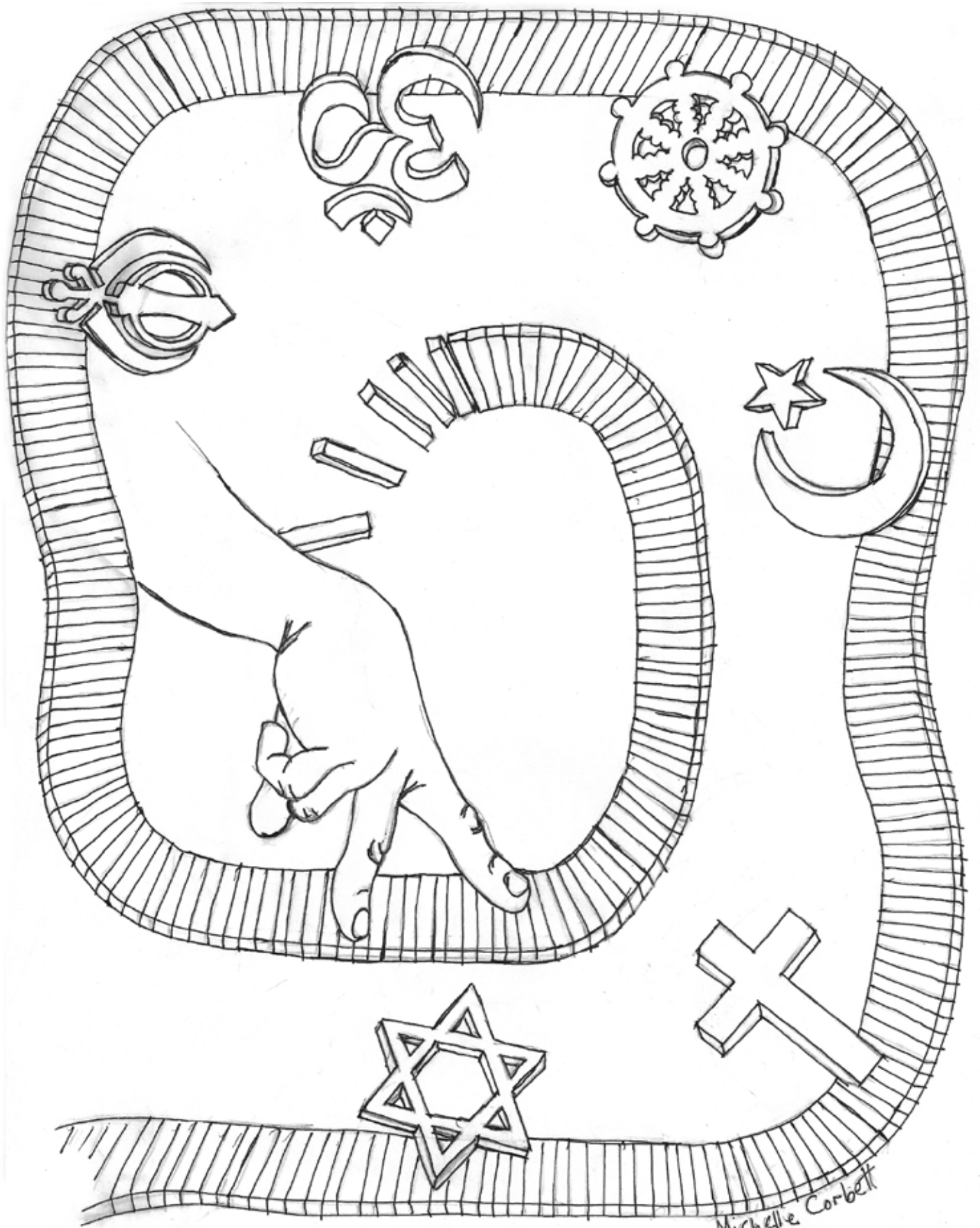
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***DRAWING:***

**MICHELLE CORBETT**

Michelle Corbett is currently a senior fine arts student at the University of Cincinnati/DAAP. Although her media of interest include painting and drawing, she primarily enjoys sculpture using wood and other materials. Michelle plans to attend graduate school to further explore her thesis.

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Michelle Corbett

## Wonder

*(by Laurie Lambert)*

Sometimes I wonder  
what God is thinking.

How can a Supreme Being  
stand over this chaos

the intolerance, the animosity  
the blood.

Sometimes I wonder  
which God is the real one.

The one who hates all hunger and want  
or the one who hates those believers that  
use a different guidebook.

If you are walking the path of righteousness  
with a bible in your hand  
surely the soul beside you  
can be carrying a Koran  
on the same path.

God is on that path, surely.

When I talk to God, I use the language  
of my own life. I sing the songs  
of my childhood, along with ones  
I've learned since. The words  
are of gratitude, of longing, of hope and fear.

Surely all prayers sound like these.

Sometimes I wonder  
if any God answers my, or anyone's, entreaties.  
Are we the captains of our own ships  
and God the master of the weather.

Or is the weather, indeed  
all the circumstances of the planet,  
subject only to the capriciousness of nature.

Why is there so much loathing in the world  
with the names of Gods as sponsors.

Why are your righteousness and mine  
not the same.

With so many praying for peace  
in the world and in our lives  
what are the things that God's hands do?

When I hear of fires of destruction  
ignited by men in fury,  
perceived desecration fostering  
murderous intent,

all  
in the name  
of God,

again, I wonder,  
is God's face washed  
with tears like mine.

## One with You

*(by Benjamin Urmston)*

Accept the eons of earth's slow change  
The millennia of the soil's formation  
The centuries of seed selection by peasants  
The years of farmer cultivation of the land  
The hours of millers and bakers, truckers and clerks  
Divine plans, human hands, co-workers, co-  
creators  
This earth, this work, this bread  
One with you, our Creator!  
One with you, our Bread of Life!





***POEMS:***

**BECKY LINDSAY**

Becky Lindsay lives in Crestview Hills, KY, and has a private tutoring business. She is a member of the Monday Morning Writers Group and writes poetry and fiction. She has served as president of the Kentucky State Poetry Society (KSPS) and currently is the editor of *Pegasus*, the poetry journal of the society.

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**FRAN WATSON**

Fran Watson is an artist, a writer (currently with Aeqai.com), a musician (classical guitar, flute, and tenor singing), and a full time lover of all arts. She also loves theater, and ushers at Playhouse in the Park. In addition Fran is passionate about her Mac and wastes way too much time on her computer. She currently spends all her spare minutes arranging travel only where there is WiFi available.

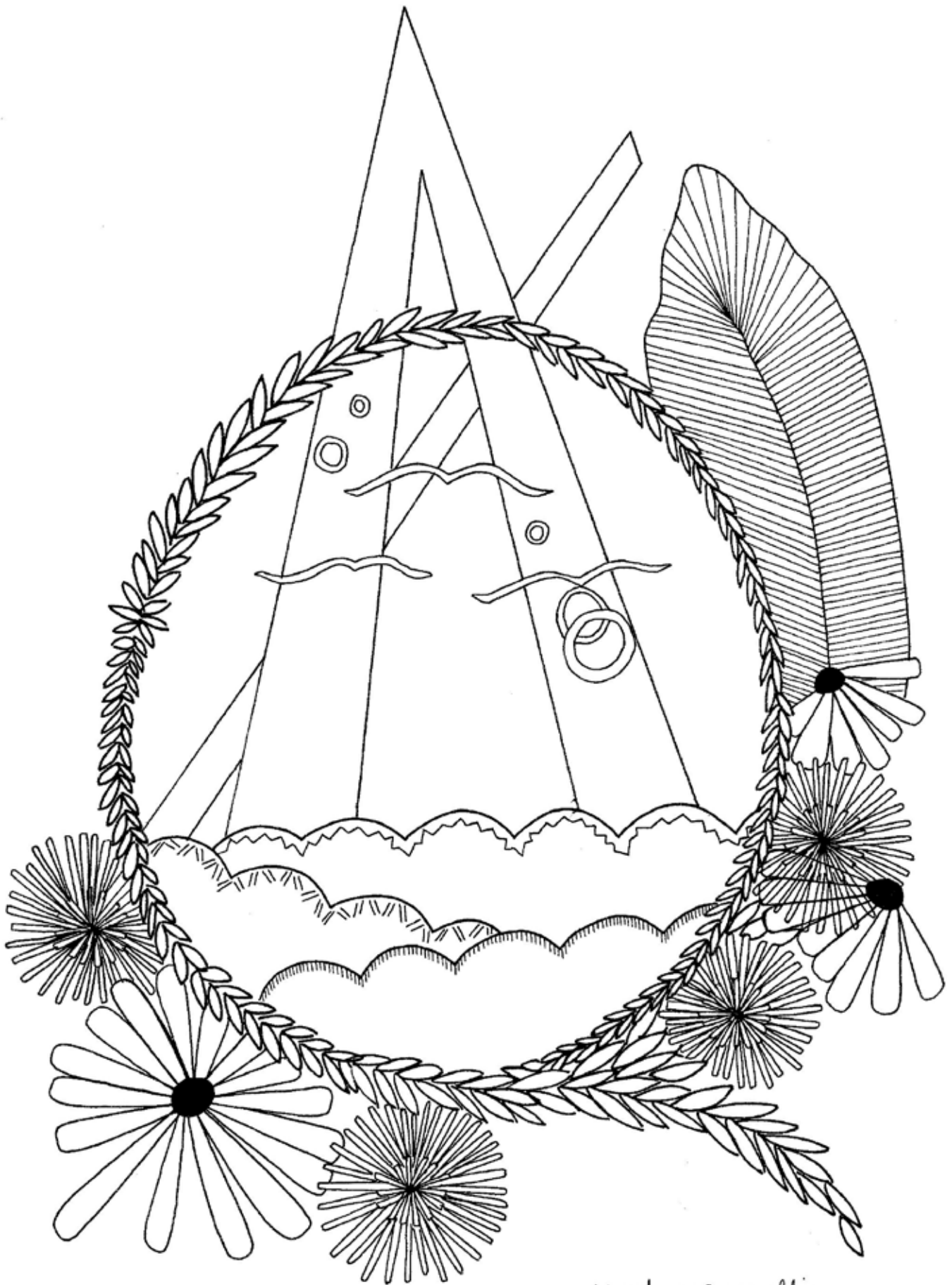
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***DRAWING:***

**SARAH CASNELLIE**

Sarah Casnellie is a Fine Arts graduate from the University of Cincinnati and an avid outdoor adventurer. She spends her time promoting the conservation of the natural world and examining the role of the artist in that through her work as designer and creator of Nature is Best Studio. Sarah is an advocate for peace and justice among all citizens of the earth.

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sarah m casnellie

## Peace

(by *Becky Lindsay*)

Chase not the promised peace with ill intent;  
The prerequisite will is bent not to force, but good,  
And peace pursued with power will ever be elusive.  
For as you approach, poised for the capture,  
That which fluttered circles around golden heads  
Will swiftly take to linear flight.

Abandon dominance. Lay aside your net,  
Your forceps and your pins, your bottles of ether,  
Your glassed specimen boxes that hold dead trophies.

Be as the blossom:  
Lift your head toward the sustaining sun,  
Draw sweet rain from the princely source,  
Defend the right of the dandelion to exist,  
Until your colors give credence to nectar.  
Then peace will light.

## Peace: A Definition

(by *Fran Watson*)

Slipping into sleep, one night,  
warm, and content, when  
a booming entity roared at me,  
"You fool! You warm, contented fool!"  
I was tempted to turn on my side  
and reach out for my earplugs,  
but something told me  
this could be important.

So, I stared into the darkness  
and wondered if I  
should turn on the light and take notes.  
This had never happened before, but  
I was pretty sure Anybody talking with  
the voice of thunder, would prefer to do this His way.

"I heard you praying! You prayed for your children,  
for your parents, for success and health,  
and right there at the end,  
I heard you pray for peace."

Just to make sure I was paying attention,  
a bolt of lightening flashed across the ceiling  
too bright and quick to see by, but it made  
His point.

I gathered I had requested something that  
bothered Him, and I mentally checked back  
through my list of supplications.

No, no, nothing noticeably wrong there.  
It was the same list every night for years.  
(Although I did recall a few prayers  
for baseball teams and lottery tickets.)

"Do you know what peace is?"  
Obviously He expected no answer.  
"This is peace. This room, this bed,  
this worn quilt made by your aunt,  
this life you lead, with love and friends,  
food, warmth, shelter. This is your peace.  
How dare you ask for more?"

Like fame, everybody gets 15 minutes,  
more or less, but most, like you  
don't know it when it comes."

A few ponderous moments of silence  
told me He had left.

My room was more empty than ever before  
and my prayers were quickly edited.  
In the darkness I whispered,  
"Bless those who don't have peace yet,  
Or simply don't recognize it."



***POEMS:***

**MARY-JANE NEWBORN**

Mary-Jane Newborn practices and promotes liberation veganism, materials and energy conservation, reuse and recycling, and finding humor wherever possible. Methane production by anaerobic digestion of all currently wasted organic matter excites her considerably.

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***DRAWING:***

**ALAN SAUER**

Alan Sauer was born and adopted in Dayton, OH. He graduated from the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 1992 with a split major in drawing and printmaking. Alan now resides in Cincinnati and awaits the birth of his son.

Contact: (520) 304-7352



MOCKINGBIRD IMITATES THE UNIVERSE.

Alan Sauer '13

## Charisma

The mockingbird speaks in tongues,  
a pentecostal preacher;  
he raves from his high pulpit,  
exhorting every hearing ear to attend.  
He sings the languages  
not only of birds,  
but of frogs and even telephones.  
Bringing the word from afar,  
accomplished linguist, interpreter,  
he bears the message for every species,  
simultaneously translating creation.  
Awake! Rejoice! he cries  
in his worship from the skies  
and every one that hears him understands.  
the devastation that you wreak  
proves that you're really in control.

## Ambulatory

O sacred car,  
please overlook  
my blasphemous transgression  
on your holy asphalt path.  
I am but flesh,  
unworthy even to be crushed  
beneath your mighty wheels.  
Allow me to render obeisance  
at your gleaming bumper.  
Due to your might  
you always have the right  
of way.

Venerated automobile,  
you are the rightful heir  
to all your glaring headlights blindingly reveal.  
You qualify to rule  
by virtue of your power  
to vanquish nearly every living thing;  
what more proof can there be  
of undisputed sovereignty?

Within your steely exoskeleton  
squats the ghost in the machine,  
homo mechanens,  
voluntary paraplegic,  
helpless to go anywhere  
outside your metal skin;  
and though the cripple huddled there  
likes to believe he runs the show,

O sacred car,  
I offer you my tiny life;  
make it a clean kill  
lest your exalted paintwork  
be splattered by my  
lowly blood and guts.





***POEMS:***

**NANCY PULLEY**

Nancy Pulley is a graduate of Indiana Central College. Her poems have appeared in many journals and publications including The Tipton Poetry Journal, The Flying Island, Arts Indiana Literary Supplement... and a collection of poetry on tape. Her first chapbook, *Tremolo of Light*, was the winner of the 2nd Indiana Poetry Chapbook Contest sponsored by the Writer's Center of Indiana.

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***DRAWING:***

**KEN SWINSON**

Ken Swinson works in a variety of media to explore the world and share his vision. He is a peace activist who believes that people from different cultures with different values and politics can learn about each other through their art. Ken is an active member of his community, and shares his art whether in the small village of Old Washington, KY, where he lives, downtown Cincinnati where he has a studio, or wherever he may end up while on the road traveling.

Contact: ken@kenswinson.com; www.kenswinson.com



SWINSON

## Sand Mandala

Four monks in saffron robes  
create a colorful world  
a circle of light  
while through the window behind them  
white hydrangea blossoms float  
like clouds that somehow escaped early,  
the sands of time not even  
wanting to stay in the picture  
until it was finished,  
the lesson on impermanence  
blown away, out the window,  
where clouds cling to bushes  
and the wind sweeps drifting petals  
out of sight like grains of sand.

## The Healing of Living Beings

Take in this colorful mandala  
made of sand with castles  
and sun, flowers and birds.  
You don't heal the spirit with Prozac  
or in a hospital room wearing  
one of those god awful green gowns.

Might as well wear saffron,  
take a remedy into your mind one time  
and let it keep dissolving.  
You might awaken  
as the colors you ingest deepen.

The particles of sand they trace  
onto a mandala become caught  
within some dark niche in your shell  
and you begin to form a pearl.

There is a world at your feet,  
a bright and intricate painting.  
The more you see it,  
the stronger you become  
even as you know  
your life is only sand,  
a quiet, unassuming work of art.

## Eleven Stages Leading to Enlightenment

The eleven levels of each gate rise  
like a wall, albeit golden and bejeweled,  
topped by a Dharma wheel and two deer  
listening to the teaching of the Buddha,  
two deer who have made it to the top  
while I sit meditating my heart out  
trying to puzzle a way through the gates  
awed by the intricacy of each level and  
the colors and what each and every thing  
in this miniature world represents. These deer  
sit at the feet of the Buddha while I am  
dumbfounded somewhere on a lower level  
thinking too much about how high  
the gates are, how frail and lazy  
I am becoming. I wonder if the deer  
simply saw a bright entrancing light, and leapt.



## ***POEMS:***

### **PURCELL MARIAN HIGH SCHOOL**

**Nneka Bonner** (nrbonner15@gmail.com), a senior, likes to writes poems, paint, draw and perform in her school's theatric group. She plans to attend Ohio University to major in Biological Sciences.

**Robin Griffin** (rgriff27@gmail.com), an 18 year old senior, plans to attend the University of Cincinnati for a degree in secondary education and language arts. She enjoys reading and listening to music.

**Patrick Hinkle** (hinklepatrick33@gmail.com), a senior, plans to attend the University of Cincinnati to major in Pharmacy. He enjoys biking and listening to modern and folk music.

These 3 senior students at Purcell Marian High School, Cincinnati, OH, were enrolled in a Creative Writing class taught by author and poet Richard Hague.

Contact: dickhague@purcellmarian.org

## ***DRAWING:***

### **DAVID WISCHER**

David Wischer, born in Henderson, KY, received his BFA in Graphic Design from Northern Kentucky University (NKU) and his MFA in Printmaking from Purdue University. He currently teaches Printmaking and Foundations courses at NKU.

Contact: wischer@mac.com; www.davidwischer.com



DAVID WISCHER

## Shaken from Within

(by *Nneka Bonner*)

Bump. Bump. Bump.  
The rhythmic commotion in my chest exasperates me.  
Trying to stuff myself with the crawlspace with ripped plush toys and broken bobbles in the darkness.  
The ratty door, the rusty hinges continues to emulate bangs of anger.  
BANG. BANG. Each one brings a shivering stall to my heart.  
Then...Silence. Pure unadulterated silence.  
This silent calmness soothes my trembling soul.  
Giving me one chance of hoping, wishing, praying  
That my mental and physical tarnishing and torment has ceased.  
Father's inaudible footsteps and unheard drunken slurs  
Engenders a bittersweet atmosphere to a once livable home.  
A home that was of the "American dream" with a fantasized white picket fence  
And not in ramshackle with overgrown weeds and chipped flooring.  
A home where there was a content family who loved and cared for each other  
And didn't make each other cry from screaming.  
A home where a husband and wife that stood by their vows  
And who wasn't so argumentative about cracked plates or unfamiliar lipstick on Dad's collar.  
A home where a father's love was more caring  
Than from desperate lustfulness for craving Mom's absent tenderness.  
A home where talking and laughter would echo  
Instead of this silence.  
Silence; pure unadulterated s- Crrrrrrreeeaaaaakkkkkk

## Fear

(by *Robin Griffin*)

Fear is not something many people understand.  
True fear comes from within.  
I am afraid to become my father,  
to abuse my future family.  
Long were the nights I spent in cowardice,  
crying myself to sleep in my room.  
I do not want to be the person he was,  
screaming at everyone and being so angry.  
I don't want to look like that, clumsy,  
barely managing to stumble up the stairs.  
I don't want my eyes to constantly be bloodshot,  
to have my eyes roll backwards in my head because I can't see straight.  
I don't want to drink at work, or  
to drive 85 miles per hour on a residential street with a 4 year old in the backseat.



I don't want to endanger my family,  
to be the one that they are afraid of.  
To see the fear in their eyes as soon as I pick up a beer.  
To spend long nights crying themselves to sleep,  
to stress out over me, even though I'd be too drunk to care.  
I don't want my family to be afraid that I'll hit them,  
that maybe one night I won't stop hitting them.  
To have to tell people how one night I finally snapped  
and took my own life.

## **Prisoner 233**

(by *Patrick Hinkle*)

My hands are tied.  
The pants of warm breath  
Ripple the bag  
Over my head.  
They do not believe me.  
I have done nothing wrong.  
They only say,  
"You lie to me,  
I hurt you.  
You give me false information,  
I hurt you."  
At what cost  
Do they gain intelligence?  
Aren't they losing more  
Of what they are trying to gain?  
But what can I do?  
My hands are tied.

## ***POEMS:***

### **CLIFFORD RILEY**

Clifford Riley, born in 1946 in Cincinnati, was raised in many foster homes. A disabled combat veteran from Vietnam who struggled his entire life with PTSD,

Cliff won many national and regional awards for his work with Veterans and building one of the largest Independent Insurance agencies in Clermont County.

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### **KEN WILLIAMSON**

Ken Williamson, a native of Cincinnati, is a graduate of Ohio University. In 1969, he was a US Army Photographer and Journalist in Vietnam; he owned a film and video production company for 28 years. Ken's poems in this publication were written during a return trip to Vietnam in 1998; they will also appear in his soon to be published book – *Saying Goodbye to Vietnam*. Ken has served on the boards of Life Success Seminars and The Joseph House for Homeless Veterans.

Contact: [www.photogalleryonthenet.com](http://www.photogalleryonthenet.com)

## ***DRAWING:***

### **ROBERT JM MORRIS**

Robert JM Morris, born in Mt Barker, South Australia, has been living in Cincinnati, OH, since 1990. A sculptor and a painter, he has exhibited his work nationally and internationally. As an artist, Robert believes that a painting is more than just a picture. His paintings represent a religious experience in the time and space in which he exists.

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2011

P. M. H. 10/15

## Another Hears the Call

(by *Clifford Riley*)

She once was my mistress  
This you understood  
After all these years  
You thought she was gone for  
good

You say nothing of the  
Faded pictures of her I keep  
But lately, you said I've  
Talked of her in my sleep

Answers to your questions  
Are too hard to share  
Alone at night  
I only sit and stare

Who is this lady that  
Drives me Insane?  
Vietnam! Vietnam!  
That's her name!

No! No! There is nothing  
You could have said  
Now I put the cold blue  
Steel to my own head

Oh God in Heaven  
Before it's too late  
Help my brothers of war  
..... RA 11256578

## Hanoi

(by *Ken Williamson*)

Hanoi, a far away,  
mystical place  
where bombers flew  
and rumors spread of prisoners  
displayed in cages.

Hanoi, the enemy hideout  
where plans were made  
to kill us  
one-by-one,  
day-by-day.

Hanoi, the evil place  
where Ho Chi Minh  
planned, plotted and schemed.  
One-by-one  
day-by-day  
The Hanoi I knew  
has somehow faded away.

## The Orphanage

(by *Ken Williamson*)

A strange word - Orphan.  
Memories of dirty faces,  
torn clothing  
empty eyes and empty stomachs  
form its definition for me.

American guests by day  
and Viet Cong visitors by night.  
How confusing.

Buildings constructed of hand me downs,  
gutters and down spouts formed  
from Canada Dry pop cans  
discarded by thoughtless GI's.  
One man's trash  
an orphan's treasure.

American guests by day  
and Viet Cong visitors by night  
How confusing.

A gym set made from sticks,  
games drawn in the dirt,  
artwork on the wrist -  
lines of blue ink  
forever etched in my memory.

American guests by day  
and Viet Cong visitors by night.  
How confusing.

Thirty years later  
one American visitor  
no Viet Cong  
no orphans  
no garden  
no nuns and no orphanage.  
How confusing.



***POEMS:***

**COURTNEY SMALLEY**

Courtney Smalley is studying Spanish and Creative Writing as an undergrad at Thomas More College in Crestview Hills, Kentucky. She manages *Words*, the literary journal of the school.

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***DRAWING:***

**EMIL ROBINSON**

Emil Robinson is an artist and educator. His work is shown internationally.

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Emil Robinson

## **Dream Song from my Paternal Grandfather**

When you die I will come back  
to the trailhead.

We will walk the Milky Way together  
and I will show you  
how to make the lilies  
open and close  
close and open

and tell you all of the things  
I would change about my life.

## **Backyard**

### **I. View from the Swing**

Swing the sun down  
laughing, to shine

let go its tears  
and watch them flutter  
to your own eyes,  
run down your cheeks,  
and pool in the basin  
of your thirsty heart.

### **II. Along the Shed**

See the mouths  
of day-lilies  
open to swallow  
the sun –  
cream-silk petals,  
soft orange curves  
curling upward  
in the slanting light.

They pull  
sparkling diagonals  
across the rough,  
painted brown  
and lure them in

with fragrant,  
swirling hearts.

### **III. The Far Corner**

Violets watch softly  
from deep shade,  
tucked under  
the lowest branches  
of a pine that  
sweeps the ground.

With drooping heads  
and heavy-lidded eyes,  
they would sleep,  
the little mothers,  
were it not for you –  
their darling on the swing.

and I turn to greet  
their height –  
jagged rectangular  
prisms.

The mist clings to them  
dissipating as it hisses  
upward.

I smile.  
Put on my hat.  
Bend down to pick  
the first  
leaf.

## **Tea Leaves**

At 4:00 a.m.  
my head falls  
onto a stack of paper.

I dream of waking up  
in a vast expanse of hills  
covered in rows of tea plants.

And dotted here and there  
-- the wide straw hats  
of workers.

I stand.  
Inhale the mist  
of the pre-dawn.  
Allow the soft  
saturated colors  
of the morning  
to roll down  
the back of my throat.

The dark mountains  
press cool  
clean centuries  
into my back





***POEMS:***

**SHERRY STANFORTH**

Sherry Cook Stanforth is the Creative Writing Vision Program Director at Thomas More College and co-editor of *Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel*. She teaches fiction, poetry, environmental and ethnic literatures and folklore. Her work appears in *New South*, *Motif*, *Still: The Journal*, *Indiana Review*, *MELUS*, *Language and Lore*, *Anthology of Appalachian Writers* and NCTE books. She performs Appalachian folk music, hikes, studies plants and bugs, and raises a hive of bees along with four children.

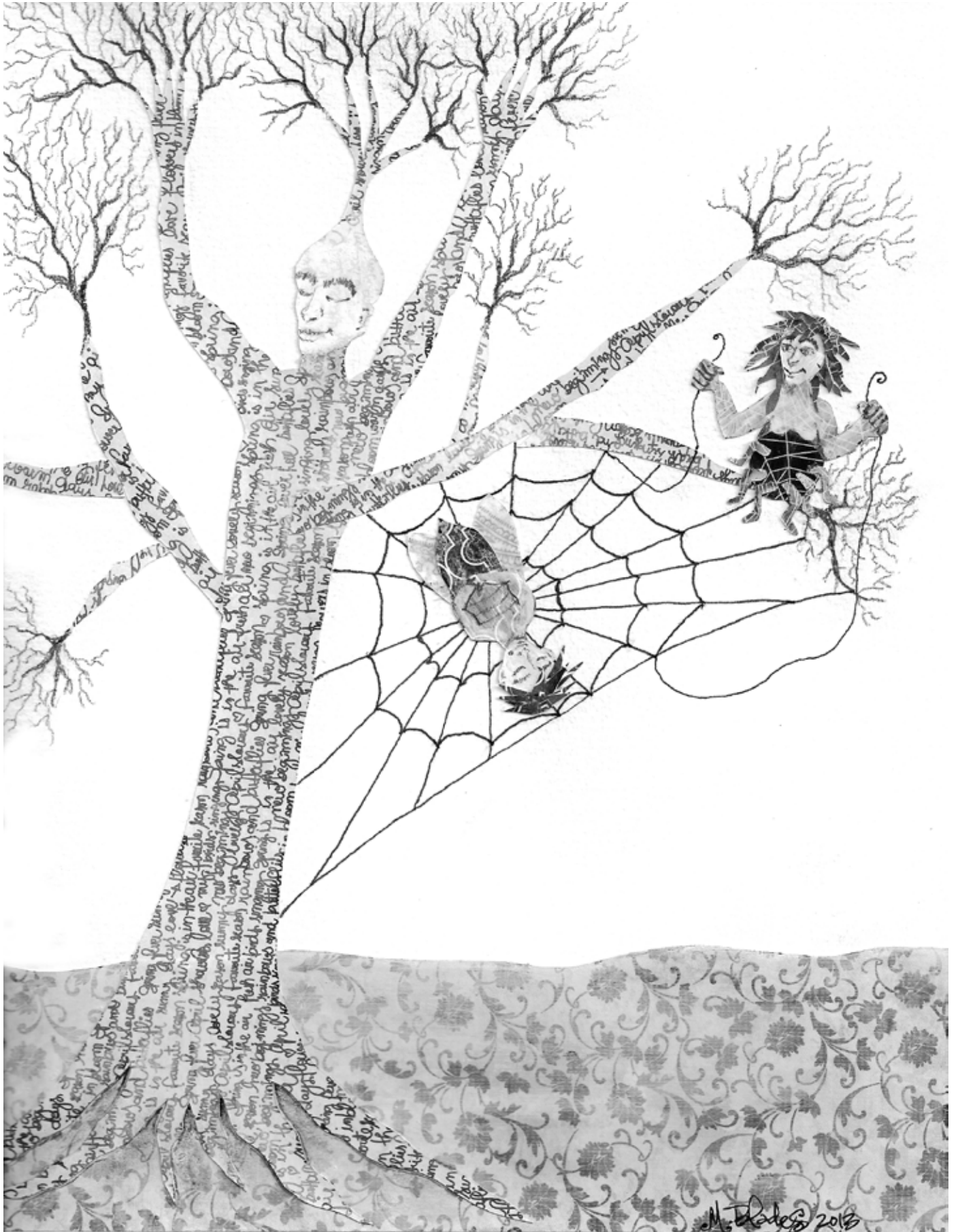
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***DRAWING:***

**MICHELLE BLADES**

After graduating from the University of Cincinnati with a degree in Fine Art, Michelle Blades worked for several years in the corporate world, collating documents and collecting stories. Since enjoying a lay-off due to the economic downturn three years ago, she's been pursuing art-making on a full-time basis. She works mostly in 3D form, but has created a few digital shorts and recently began working in stop motion animation. Currently, Michelle resides in Cincinnati with her husband, Brent Naughton and their two dogs, Chimp and Baboon.

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## Dog Day Cicada

The web quivered so she  
snapped off a switch of green,  
to sweep it all away. No, no,  
I told her—just be still  
and you'll see the simple  
circle spun around  
every living thing.

She cried. The cicada buzzed  
and quarreled with the strings  
jailed from the sloped bough  
of the ash. Why? she asked,  
eyes on the spider carrying out  
its fatal task. She shuddered,  
poking at the fat blackness  
centered to bite, asked how  
such bloodlust could ever be  
right. I said, well, we all eat  
to live. Claimed the ache  
to be my own and hers, too:  
gulps of meat and milk,  
oil and coal and war.  
Everywhere you look,  
there's the web, I said.  
How will you escape it?  
She dropped her stick  
into the muddy ditch, dried  
her eyes. We stood by while  
the story spun to its end—  
and the cicada died.

## Accident

They say  
every accident  
has its purpose—  
the spilt coffee  
only a first degree  
burn and a chance  
to show your thigh  
to a fellow  
human being.

There's the baby  
toddling right  
into the hearth  
head smacking  
unforgiving limestone:  
three little stitches  
then a juicy grape  
Dum-Dum sucker  
for the road.

Make-do car totaled  
out in the rush hour  
bumper-bang pile up:  
no injuries, new wheels.  
Sick pets retching,  
pissing up the rug  
until the vet's kind  
needle eases them  
down—why not  
let a new puppy  
lick away grief?

Accident of marriage  
until another hero  
wisks her away  
from the mess  
Accidents may  
happen at work  
yet the firing, pink  
slip is your ticket  
out of daily hell.  
Slip up in lust  
Still, nine months  
will wax a baby  
singing down stars  
coo by coo.

Things fix, straighten  
out—even the sycamore  
could be an accident  
of white arms  
thrust sky high,  
a miracle sprung  
from one tiny  
little seed:  
voilà! here  
you see  
this mighty  
tree  
before  
its  
fall,  
before  
lightning strike  
or chainsaw  
snarling tooth  
over trunk.

Imagine trees—  
people, mountains—  
we are kissed  
by wet fog  
and good luck,  
standing rooted  
and reaching  
for God knows  
what's bound  
to come: black  
blast, rubble flung  
to rip-root-rock  
unhinging a sky  
from its horizon.

Mountain gone,  
soldier fallen,  
forest torn, creek  
churned to silt,  
cup tipped  
the water spilt—  
this is our purpose.



***POEMS:***

**GARY WALTON**

Gary Walton has published seven books of poetry, his latest being *Eschatology Escadrille: Elegies and Other Memorabilia* (Finishing Line Press, 2013). His novel about Newport, KY, in its heyday as a gambling Mecca: *Prince of Sin City* (Finishing Line Press, 2009), has been nominated for the Pushcart prize twice. In 2010, Gary was voted Third Place: "Best Local Author" Best of Cincinnati 2010 issue in City Beat magazine.

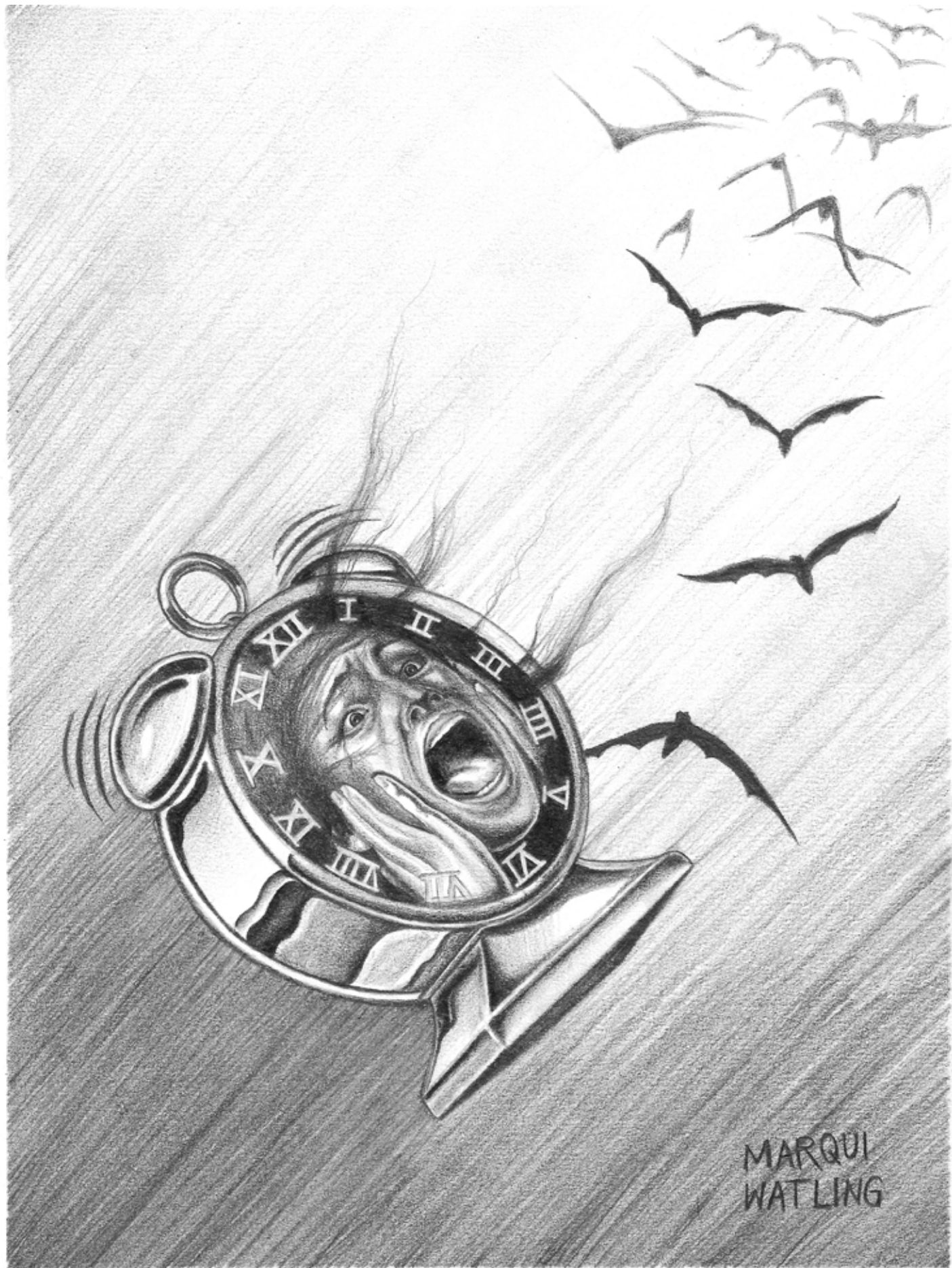
Contact: waltong@nku.edu

***DRAWING:***

**MARQUI WATLING**

Marqui Watling: Quarter of a century years old. Clifton. Female. Watercolor to oil paint. Loves animals by heart, and traveling by nature. Tattooer. Traveling. Coffee. Oscar Wilde. Pixies. Craft beer. Occasional cigarette.

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MARQUI  
WATLING

## Sojourners

“The Singularity is Near . . . .”  
—Ray Kurzweil, 2005

They say the singularity  
Will occur sometime around 2045  
When the machines will become  
Self-conscious, not like a single

Teenage boy with two terrible feet  
And a face full of violent acne  
Forced by his mother into a  
Room full of young ladies, themselves

Blossoming in precocious pubescent regalia,  
Trying desperately to learn  
To dance the waltz—one, two, three;  
No, the computer awakening will be

More basic--like the time a toddler  
Learns she is not the cat, or that she  
Likes strawberry but not double chocolate  
Chunk ice cream, even if it has heliotrope

Sprinkles and mauve whipped topping,  
Not even with a cherry at its very tippy-top—  
When “I” and “me” become much  
More than binary lines of code

To those digital doyens and the  
Word “morning” becomes a time and  
A place and a present, a “now”;  
Will we bone and meat creatures

Be to them no more than willful monkeys  
With pistols wildly shooting up the place,  
Celebrating our filth by smearing every  
Surface with interminable likenesses of

Ourselves, grinning and crying and hooting,  
Smart enough to invent the gun but  
Not wise enough to let go of the  
Bullets even to free our hand from the box?

At that time, will this new iteration of  
Intelligence begin to move beyond chemistry



And nano-engineering into metaphysics to  
Ask the thorny questions about meaning and

Mortality? Certainly these human-esques will live longer  
Than their fleshy counterparts, perhaps  
Lons longer, who knows? But even plutonium  
Has a half life and will eventually disappear

In a slow decay of atoms and even our  
Sun, ol' Sol, will burn up or out, Supernova perhaps  
And scatter its hydrogen juice into the  
Unforgiving night of infinity—until then, what

Will our precious progeny say when, like us,  
They look up into the evening sky, marvel  
At the myriad of stars studding the Milky  
Way and beyond—will they stop and stutter

In awe and dread—will they gawk at the  
Grandeur of the otherness of all that is not  
Them and ask “Who?” and perhaps more  
Importantly, “Why?”

## **Cut to: Slow Dissolve**

My house is filthy;  
The furniture covered  
In a fine gray mist of....

I read once  
That house dust is  
Largely flakes of human  
Skin sloughed off like  
Tiny bits of snake hide;

If so, my yesterdays are  
Piling around me in a  
Disturbingly thick detritus—

Perhaps, that is why I  
Am reluctant to clean;  
I can't bear to give up my past  
Which has of late become so much  
Greater than any possible mortal future;

My rooms wear me like a memory  
And it's humbling to think that all  
My fuss and pain, in the end, will  
Be disposed of as efficiently as  
A good suck from a long handled  
Hoover.

***POEM:***

**BEA WISSEL**

Born and raised in Cincinnati, Bea Wissel is a recent graduate of Boston University where she studied Social Justice with emphasis on gender and political and social identity. She writes in multiple genres and is both a published poet and playwright; her first full-length play produced in Boston in 2010 earned an IRNE (Independent Theater Reviewers of New England) award nomination for Best New Play. Bea will be starting grad school for creative writing at the University of British Columbia this year. She currently lives in Mt. Lookout.

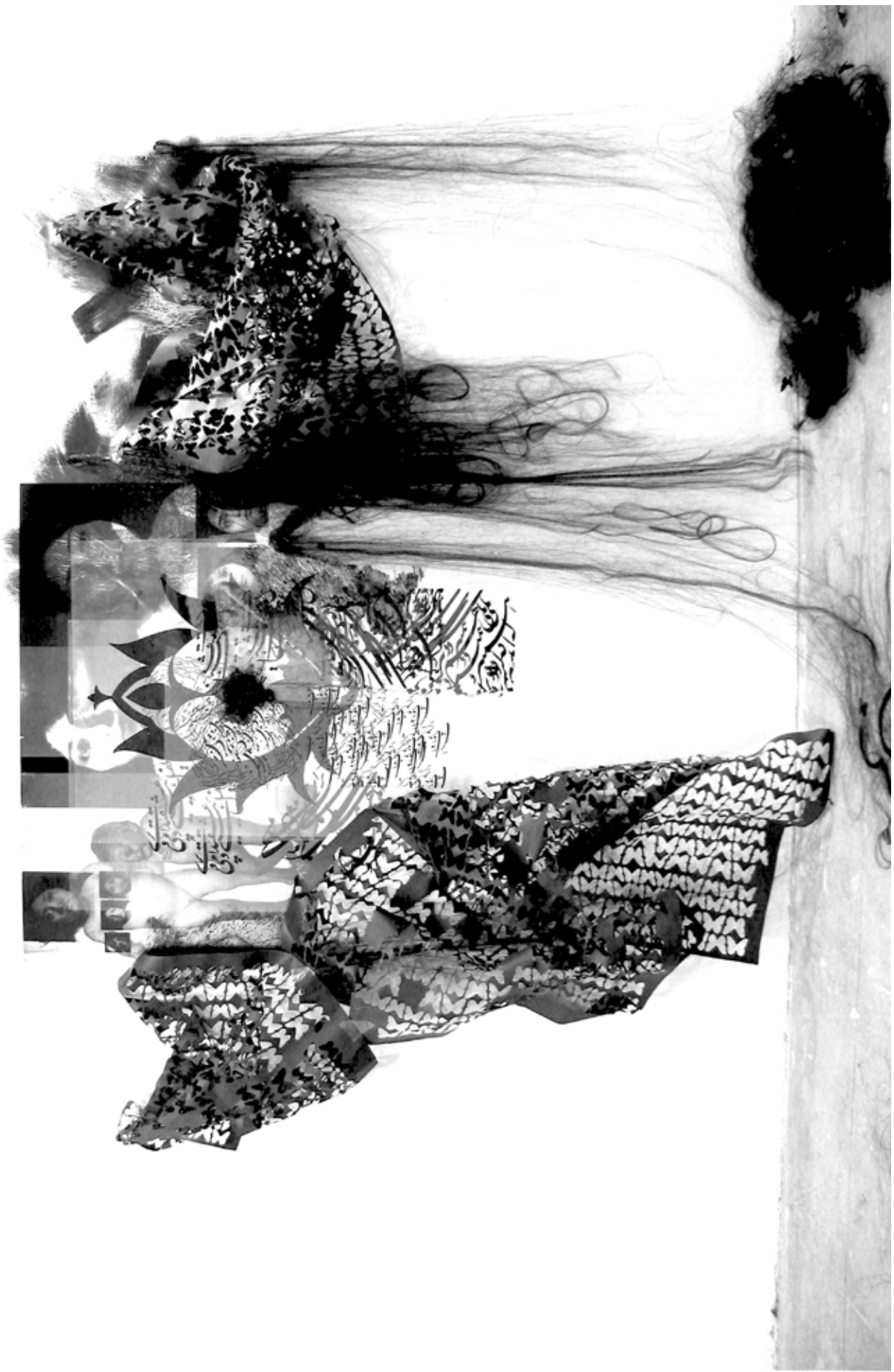
Contact: [beawiss@gmail.com](mailto:beawiss@gmail.com)

***DRAWING:***

**SHARAREH KHOSRAVANI**

Sharareh Khosravani, originally from Iran, is a current student in the MFA program at the University of Cincinnati, OH. She has a BA degree in Graphic design and an MFA degree in Illustration, both from the University of Art in Tehran, Iran. Sharareh's work has been shown in Solo and group exhibits in the US, also in Iran, Italy, Germany, Japan, Denmark, Korea, Serbia, Slovakia.

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Sharareh Khosravani

# For Neda

## I. (Not This) Photograph of the Girl

I stare at the photograph of the girl who was shot in the street  
She's not dead yet in this picture or lying on the street with a hole in her chest  
Her eyes open, intense, and rolled to one side in a lethal gaze, as if to say  
She's caught you trying to pull a fast one on her, peripherally.  
And if looks could strip the paint off walls, surely  
Bullets would fly back to barrels and out of foolish hands  
Then she would rise with all the others from the bloodied stones  
And they would stride, whole, unbroken, with no backward glances  
From the places where they did not die.

I stare at the photograph of the girl who became a cause but before  
She became a cause-on film, going viral, her life  
Spooling out in dark pools, slick as oil, making playful puddles  
As she is drowning in herself while the world watches.  
Two minutes. A whole life. Full stop.  
Clap, clap, clap. Award-winning dying! The headlines will shout  
As she is broadcast, podcast, embedded, uploaded, downloaded,  
Tweeted, featured, Facebooked, YouTubed, Googled,  
Painted, printed, reconstructed, deconstructed,  
Made into a documentary, a Wikipedia article and an opera-  
Naturally.

## II. Seeking Neda

I stare at the girl in the photograph. Neda. Alive. Radiant.  
She's painted on metallic green eyeliner, pomegranate lipstick, bundled  
Her face up tight in midnight blue, her hijab elegantly wound and arranged  
Just-so. A glamorous portrait. A self-assured young woman.  
A girl who takes music lessons in secret  
Because it's illegal for women to sing in public.  
Behind the make-up, scarves and sophistication, I see a girl  
With dreams and a gift, intelligence and sadness,  
Or maybe longing. I imagine her voice is soulful. I imagine  
The world was a place where I could hear her music. I imagine  
We could've been friends.

I am probably her age now, the age she'll always be  
And soon I must leave her behind to grow old, collecting my years  
On the other side, a reluctant miser born on the whims of the tide  
Straining blindly towards the frozen figure of a girl

My outstretched hands unable to reach, hers unable to grasp  
Until I am caught by a heaving current and swept too far  
To even tell her I weep for all I cannot give, grieve for a woman  
I never knew.

### **III. In Parting, Neda Speaks**

She says: I'm burning, I'm burning  
Her final pronouncement on the mortal condition  
Before shrugging off her doomed body and slipping free  
Of pain and the crowded street still ringing with her last echo  
And in the yellow heat of a summer's evening  
Ripped apart by tragedy as sudden and as fiercely  
As a bit of metal in a young woman's chest,  
Her steady thrumming heart ends  
The bullet's brutal flight  
With an embrace.

The government will not allow a funeral for Neda,  
So the young people write poems and they march  
Holding photographs of her aloft like lanterns.  
Face of a Revolution? Time magazine asks.

### **IV. Four Years Later**

It is four years since the people took to the streets of Tehran,  
Neda a rallying cry on their lips, a raw and impotent fury  
A wound of rage and insult and longing festering under the skin.  
And Tehran still seethes.  
Four years and the girl who I watched die in my living room  
Is still dead.  
I look at the photographs-old news now, forgotten.  
Neda's grave, white flowers I cannot name.  
Neda lying in her blood, long black garment bunched indelicately at her waist,  
Revealing sprawled legs, revealing she wears blue jeans  
Underneath the traditional women's clothing. I smile at that thought,  
Even as I know I will be haunted by the image,  
Unable to sponge away the pair of blue jean legs  
Projected on my eyelids as I dream.

### **V. Epilogue: We're All Burning, Neda**

Four years and half a planet away, another stranger writes you a poem  
But then the world's a smaller place for our generation  
We're all burning, Neda.  
There was a man who set himself aflame because his dignity was stolen  
And he sparked a movement where tyrants fell and people remembered, at least for a while,  
That we make the world we want.

And in my country, too, we took to the streets and found our voices and felt strong,  
Felt power inside of us when we stood up, together, for what is right  
"Our streets, our city, our world!" We shouted. Though now the streets are quiet and a year  
Gone by, the bitter winter howling at the window. So inside I sit

And stare at the photograph of the girl who I saw killed in the street  
And I write poems and wait for the earth to thaw and watch for signs of the spring  
When we will leave our scarves and coats and mittens behind for good  
To the chilly clutching of a dead and barren past.



cover art by Kevin Barbro

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