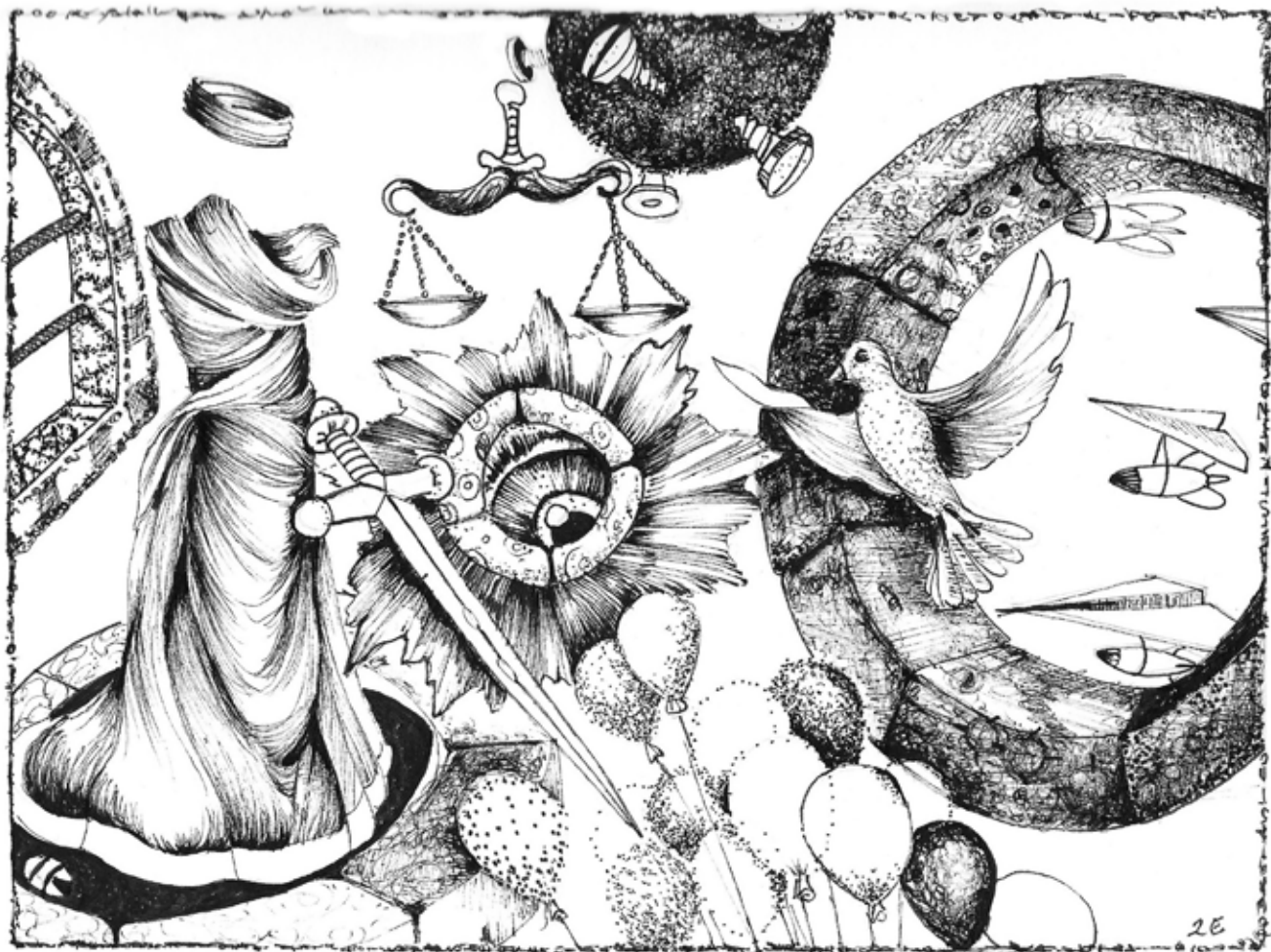


For A 2015 Better World



POEMS AND DRAWINGS ON
PEACE AND JUSTICE BY
Greater Cincinnati Artists

**“For a Better World”
2015**

Poems and Drawings
on
Peace and Justice

by
Greater Cincinnati Artists

Editor:
Saad Ghosn

“Human rights are not only violated by terrorism, repression or assassination, but also by unfair economic structures that create huge inequalities.

These days there is a lot of poverty in the world, and that’s a scandal when we have so many riches and resources to give to everyone. We all have to think about how we can become a little poorer.

We must restore hope to young people, help the old, be open to the future, spread love. Be poor among the poor. We need to include the excluded and preach peace.

Money has to serve, not to rule.”

Pope Francis

Foreword

“...to cause a shadow to disappear, you must shine light on it,” writes New Age author Shakti Gawain. “There are only two ways of spreading light - to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it,” adds American novelist Edith Wharton.

In this 12th edition of “For a Better World” fifty three poets and thirty seven visual artists use their voice as their light to combat darkness, violence and evil, and to spread the light of love, peace and justice that they would like to see prevail. They speak for a world after their heart and values, a world of hope, of fraternity and unity. Of all ages and backgrounds, their art and talent state their concerns and affirm their beliefs and values. By doing so, they also strengthen each other’s diverse voices and give life to their hopes and dreams.

In a world still 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 and forgiveness. 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 Joanne Greenway, Sue Neufarth Howard, 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 2015

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POEMS:

MAURA KENNEDY ANAYA

After graduating from the University of Dayton in International Development, Maura Kennedy Anaya became a US Peace Corps Volunteer. She worked and traveled throughout Latin America, also worked stateside in social services of all kinds. Maura is the founder of the social enterprise RISE TO SHINE. She lives in the Pleasant Ridge neighborhood of Cincinnati with her family where she writes and day dreams of a better world here and now.

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DRAWING:

CATHERINE GILLIAM

Cathy Gilliam, born in Cincinnati, Ohio, graduated from the University of Cincinnati/DAAP with a BFA in the Spring of 2015. Her work consists of sculpture made from ceramic and metal that can be worn as both Avant-garde fashion and armor.

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W. H. Sullivan

On My Way

On my way to save the world
with my boot straps pulled up tight
Volcanic enthusiasm oozing out
I began teaching people how to fish
I read a book about modern techniques
But people by the water
have been fishing since time began
The hooks I brought were not available in the country
I garnered attention and laughter as a novelty
Can you get some more hooks?
A boy stole the ones I had
then used them in front of me
He taught me
how to collect the right bait
pointing to strategic places
fish like to bite

On my way to save the world
with my boot straps holding on
I read a book on how to conduct a meeting.
It did not tell me that people only said they would come
to be polite.
Those who would show up
wanted to know
if I had the money to
replace a community water pump
or if I would teach their son English
so he could go to the states.
With free seed and fencing from the USA
I went to plant a vegetable garden
charged with teaching
farmers to eat green vegetables
with their rice and beans
But the old man they call 'Chino'
took my shovel
dug up the whole garden
Not women's work
He was 70 with elegant chivalry
sweating in 100 degree heat
in a task for no one but me.
He demonstrated the seeds
need a higher mound
to keep slugs away.

On my way to save the world
with my bootstraps wearing thin

Women who knew the value of a good breeze
showed me
what a sad state I was in
Could not get my whites white in the river
Did not have a man or a baby
Did not know
the difference between a clean dirt floor and a dirty one
How to light a wood stove with a piece of rubber
How to shine floors with coconut husks
How to cheerfully wait for men who did not come
How to feed a family
when all the wages were lost to the cantina
How to serve men first respectfully
even if
they were cause of all money
gone to drink.

On my way to save the world
with boot straps losing sway
Fauna and flora were in control
Rules well lived
Do not fall asleep on top of mosquito net
Scorpions are not deadly but make tongues numb
Flip flops destroy feet on rocky roads
Spiders monkeys are thieves and bandits
The poisonous toads that circled at dusk were protection
from the Men peering in cracks of my shack at night
Starting rumors of who I was sleeping with
Some followed me and asked me to marry
thinking my eruptions of enthusiasm
attraction
Passing la cantina,
Overhearing drunken arguments
as to who had imaginary
sex with la gringa

On my way to save the world,
my boot straps thrown away
I lost myself
In playing with children
In exotic rashes and dysentery
In breathing the fire of sugar harvest
In whispers of the ocean
In offerings of the sun's passion to close the day
In using a machete to open my door and butcher a pig
In the pangs of holding a baby willing it to live
In cooking and bathing and pooping outside
In patience and hospitality I did not deserve

My safety was threatened
My world in pieces thrown about the planet
I could not find myself as I swam in the fishbowl
Good intentions, hard work nor books could find me
No one human could have all what was needed
A girl out of context can only live into answers
Knowing the kindness received greater
than any change left in my wake

On my way to save the world
I was saved
over and over
by people with no bootstraps to pull up

Pantry Days

Cramping and sleeping through bad news
Sick and tired like nobody and everybody I know
Kids are opening cans
Making up delicacies
poverty sandwiches
of beans and spaghetti – o' s
Only one calling is bill collectors
In desperate moments I speak to them
Tell them all the reasons I cannot pay ...
How sickness is in my blood
and the last no good man let me down
How I gave up my life to men and babies
and do not know anyone to help me now
How my mama didn't believe her man was messing with me
How my kids know if I give them money to go on that field trip
we will not have lights next month
How there is nothing NOTHING
after I pay rent and utilities
How food is touch and go
How my tooth is rotting but my appointment at free clinic
ain't til summer
How I can feel that rot to my core

Gatherin bags for the pantry with this feeling
like I'm cheating by asking when I know
this line is mandatory to choices I had no choice at
Some people say they down on their luck
but I never met luck that was more than an extra dime
Hoping I don't get any creamed corn or beets
Those workers are kind and smile

I yearn for space in this life
where every minute's not a 'mergency

I can plan some time
To be all smile and give things away
I would wear my best jeans and put on makeup
I would look folks in the eye so they know they ok
My kids would be proud of coming there and seeing their mom
doing something good
instead of laying in bed losing her hair.

Complicity

Her rainbow aura made
a sloppy entrance
like jello on the runway
As the girls rolled their eyes
at all those colors
jiggling around the room
She silently spoke the
6 elements of tragedy
Spectacle being the loudest
They got an urge to wash their hands
They said it plain enough
No one wants to be seen talking to
nor touching her
She got on the merry go round
They all got off
getting off myself
but glancing back at her
giggling, hair flying round
She waved at me
I did not wave back
Unworthy of that wave

POEMS:

ELLEN AUSTIN-LI

Ellen Austin-Li is a poet, free-lance writer, wife, mother and nurse. Formerly from Upstate NY and then Boston, she has now lived in Cincinnati for 18 years. Ellen's life of service, combined with her colorful life experiences, informs her art. A member of the American Academy of Poets, she has been published in the "For a Better World" series as well as in LA Writers Tribe Review.

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RITA COLEMAN

Rita Coleman is a poet and a photographer residing in rural Greene County. An alumna of Wright State University, she has been a journalist, newsletter editor, and university professor. Rita has written one book of poetry, *Mystic Connections*, and is compiling a second book. She enjoys reading, writing, gardening, walking, yoga, spiritual exploration and family activities.

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DRAWING:

BRIAN LEVEL

Brian Level, Man-Child, Artist, Foul-Mouth, Lover, Baller, Metalhead (in no particular order).

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BRIAN LEVEL

Climbing the Dawn Wall

(by *Ellen Austin-Li*)

While the heart of Paris was torn open
by the medieval mind of murder,
twelve lives of substance erased;
two men grasped at Yosemite's face of sheer
granite,
torn fingers cramped,
echoes of birdsong surrounding silence, pierced
by the jagged breathing
of their dreams.

While the two murderers ran, dripping a trail of
blood
flowing hatred in France,
five more innocent lights extinguished;
two men embraced the cool rock of El Capitan,
hands and feet outstretched,
dressed in swirling clouds, caressed
by the gentle breeze
of a passing bald eagle.

While millions filled Paris streets
with anguish and grief, fervent
hands folded in prayer became peace;
two men pulled upwards on Dawn Wall,
the summit of their hope reached
in the grandeur of setting sun,
just as purple shadows of twilight bowed
across the immutable Dawn Wall

The Killingest Man in History

(by *Rita Coleman*)

What is it like to be the most hated man in the
history of the world?
The greediest?
The killingest?
The maddest man?
The black patch on your lip
So neat it was ruthlessly trimmed
Never allowing a hair to go astray
Controlled like the utopia
you imagined you'd create.

Yet you were once a baby,
a toddler finding the rhythm of walking
a schoolboy learning to spell
then a patriot, a warrior.
They say World War I
clicked you into a monster.
But you were already a madman
Hatred in your pores, washing over your
brain folds,
hardening into a tumor until you,
after years of trying,
killed the only force you'd known:
yourself.

Aryan Brotherhood

(by *Rita Coleman*)

"It's not exactly what you're thinking--
Nazi Germany--
but you're close.
It's the superior white guys
in prison,
the ones who make and enforce
the rules
the ones who surprise you and leave
you unconscious in the shower
in a pool of blood
your eye still black six weeks later
because you said *No*.

No surprise the name.
It's all about superiority
in prison
who's on top
who to watch (out) for
in the yard
Who's got your back
Who's ready to stab you in the back.
Watch the sparks fly when
a shiv pierces a body
and strikes cement floor.

You see it all--if you live long enough
screams, muffled, fatal,
glances, nods, the strut,
the formula for hate.

You put yourself in
protective custody to
save your life
await a transfer
dare to hope
for hometown return
because when you get out
if you get out
you'll have to sit on your bed some days
because it's all you can do."

POEMS:

MATT BIRKENHAUER

Matt Birkenhauer teaches English at Northern Kentucky University's Grant County Center, with an emphasis on Composition and Rhetoric. He lives in Ludlow, KY, with his wife and two sons, Matthew and Benjamin, both of whom are in college. In his free time, Matt likes to read, write poetry, and spend time with his family.

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DRAWING:

MAMIE SCHOLLE

Mamie E. Scholle is a multimedia artist who is way too deep into the clay of the earth to come from anything else. Her art loves to play on the fantasy and dreams of a young girl still trying to grow up. She is an emerging artist from the University of Cincinnati's DAAP program whose work evolved around the idea that a child's work can also be a master's work.

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Towmotor Driver

Old woman's facial features fatigued by
sweat, cigarettes, childbearing and rearing
and twenty-five years of factory drudgery.
Breadwinner for seven younguns' and a husband
(disabled and mostly drunk).

She arrives at 7:00 am promptly and punches in,
cackles at a quip from a maintenance man:
her early morning aged eyes a cheery and human blue,
her stout and round body laughing with her eyes,
hops on towmotor and begins another day of *weerhousin'*.

Twas the Night Before Congress (with Apologies to Clement Moore)

Twas the night before Congress, and all through the House
Not a creature was stirring, except for some louse
Who took down the stockings hung by the chimney with care
In hopes that a square meal might soon be there.

Poor children were nestled all snug in their beds
While visions of breakfast danced in their heads.
Their mom in her work clothes, and dad with no job
Looked long at their children and withheld a sob.

When out from the Capitol, there arose such a clatter
That Christ sprang from his Throne to see what was the matter.
He peered down to earth and saw in a flash
How the Kochs had bought Congress with ill-gotten cash.
Their gold on the breast of the new fallen snow
Gave a luster of greed to the building below.
When what to Christ's wondering eyes did appear
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer.
With a prickly old driver with a heart filled with sand,
Christ knew in a moment, she must be Ayn Rand.

More rapid than eagles her coursers they came,
And she whistled, and drove them, and called them by name:
"Now *Bachmann!* now *Barton!* now *Duncan* and *Cassidy!*
On, *Rand Paul!* on *Ted Cruz!* *Tim Scott* and *Mike Lee!*
To the Capitol dome and its wholly-bought members
Now burn away! Burn away! Burn all to embers!"

So up to the dome top the coursers they flew
With a sleigh full of noise, and St. Ayn Rand too.

As Christ walked to the Rotunda, and was turning around,
Down the chimney came Ayn Rand with hardly a sound.
She was dressed in a pant suit, from her head to her foot,
And her soul all tarnished with ill-gotten loot.
A bundle of moochers she had flung on her back.
She looked like McScrooge with his gold-laden sack!

Her eyes—how they burned! And her expression, how bitter!
That Christ shook his sad head to have made such a critter.
The butt of a cig she held tight in her teeth
As the second-hand smoke formed a ghastly death wreath.
She had a pinched face and a sickly-thin frame--
She was stingy and cranky and filled Christ with shame.
She spoke not a word, but went straight to work
And emptied her sack and called all those poor “Jerks!”

“You deserve to go hungry, you dumb parasites!
You’ll get no food here! Get out of my sight!”

Then Rand sprang to her sleigh, and gave such a yell,
That the Devil awoke from his slumber in hell.
But Christ heard him exclaim, as he rubbed his red eyes,
“Thank God for Ayn Rand, and her greedy allies!”

POEM:

MICHEL CASSIR

Born in Egypt, with Lebanese background and French nationality, Michel Cassir is a multilingual poet and intellectual who is also an internationally known scientist in the field of renewable energies and fuel cells. His extensive creative work explores a combination of French, Arabic and Spanish cultures. Michel has published more than 20 literary works (poetry and prose) and translated two books of poetry from Spanish into French. He has also an editing activity and directs the poetry collection “Levée d’Ancre” (L’Harmattan, Paris). In 2008, Michel received the French literary award “Le Jasmin d’Argent” for all his poetry works. In 2014 he was invited as a visiting poet at the University of Cincinnati.

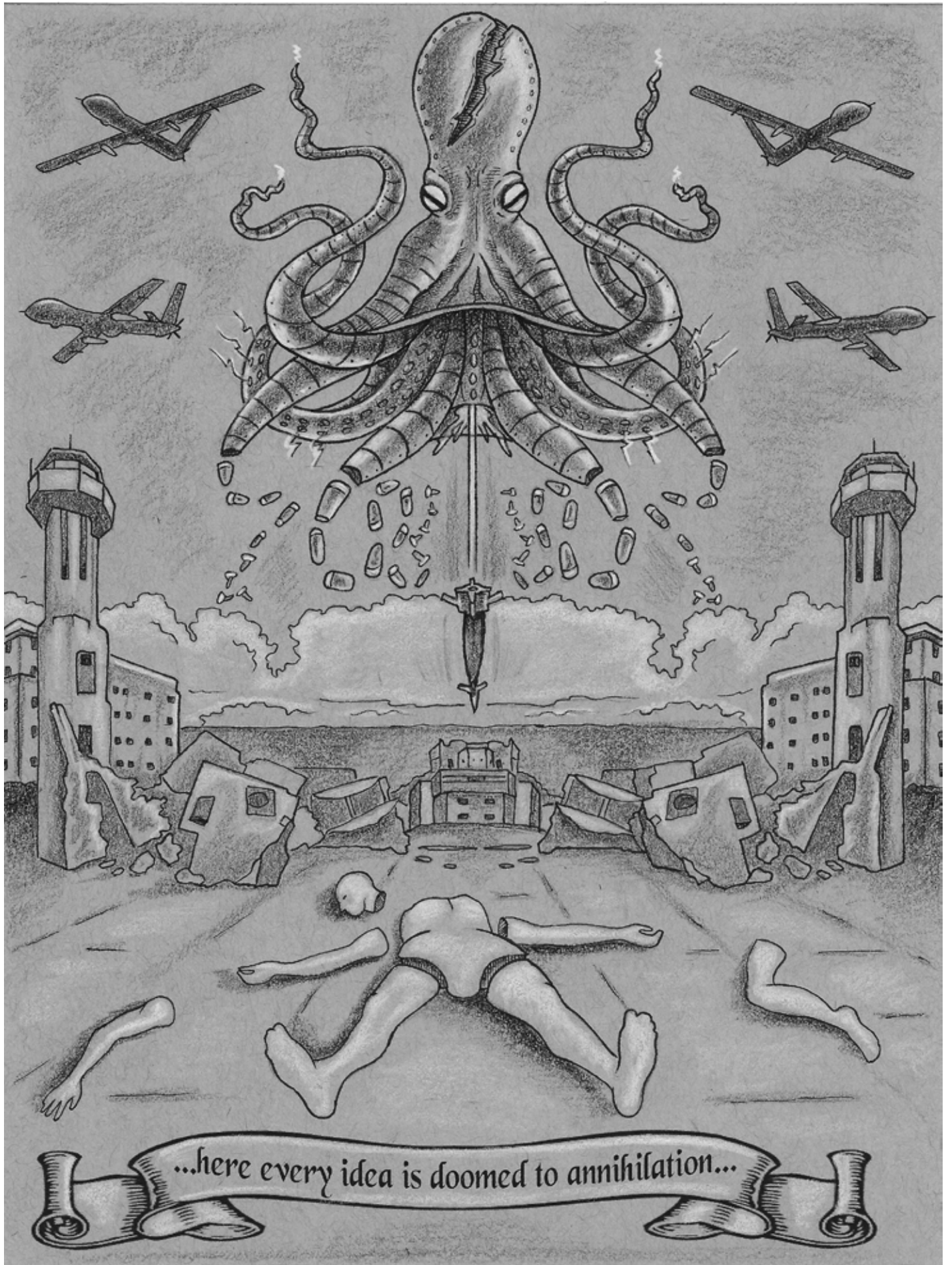
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DRAWING:

MATT REED

Matt Reed is an artist, educator, and radical leftist currently living in Cincinnati, OH. His work has appeared in galleries in Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Louisville, Los Angeles, and Munich. His illustrations have been used for magazines, comic books, t-shirts, and music album covers.

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Gaza the summer

sea frowning eyebrow of an admiral
land barbed wire that unrolls its arabesques
sky assemblage of drones of all nuances
sky electronic octopus its forehead gouged by
the sun
land giving birth to incarcerating towers
land parched skin
sea optical illusion its fish belonging to the high
strategy of the state
sky shower of spears nailing to the ground any
spurt of humanity
sky capsule remotely guided by divine justice
which has delegated its power to democratic
masks
Sea dries out in the mouths of children playing
in the scrap iron of tomorrow it flays the echo
of the seashell
the child tracks the adult with his muted fear
like the blood drum
panic and resistance old mirror of the teen
land enclave that breathes through its under-
ground tunnels dug out with fingernails
these diabolic arteries must be eradicated from
memory
they will be sunk in a lake of complacency un-
der the eye of the presumed master
sky pot of empty stomachs the land filling them
with dust mixed with metallic chips
sea it drowns in the black gaze of asphyxia
contrary to this old Arab poem which said that
the sea is in front and the enemy in the back
here every idea is doomed to annihilation
neither ahead nor behind only the tangle of
nightmares roaring like wild beasts
outside sea is not the sea nor land is the land
and sky has hardly its likeness with its mur-
murs of supersonic spy
inside big fatal circus where at times we
enjoy everything, run desperately, or hide to
the ground
no place is spared when lightnings seize the
poor saturated sky breathless unicorn
how long will this sky hold
not only an experimental theater of fire and tac-
tician silence but at the heart of seduction or

Gaza l'été

*mer sourcil froncé d'amiral
terre fil barbelé qui déroule ses arabesques
ciel assemblage de drones de toutes nuances
ciel pieuvre électronique dont le soleil creuse
le front
terre engendrant des tours carcérales
terre peau de chagrin
mer illusion d'optique dont les poissons
appartiennent à la haute stratégie d'état
ciel pluie de lances clouant au sol tout sursaut
d'humanité
ciel capsule télécommandée par la justice di-
vine qui a délégué son pouvoir à des masques
démocratiques
mer se dessèche dans la bouche des enfants
jouant dans la ferraille du lendemain écorche
l'écho du coquillage
l'enfant traque l'adulte de sa peur sourde comme
le tambour sanguin
panique et résistance vieillard miroir d'adolescent
terre enclave qui respire à travers ses tunnels
souterrains creusés à même les ongles
ces artères diaboliques devront être extirpées
de la mémoire
elles seront noyées dans un lac de complaisance
sous l'œil du maître présumé
ciel marmite de ventres creux la terre les emplis-
sant de poussière mêlée de brisures métalliques
mer se noie dans les regards noirs d'asphyxie
contrairement à ce vieux poème arabe qui disait
que la mer est devant et l'ennemi dans le dos
ici toute idée est acculée à l'anéantissement
ni devant ni derrière seul l'enchevêtrement de
cauchemars rugissant comme des fauves
dehors mer n'est pas la mer ni terre la terre
et ciel en a à peine la semblance avec ses mur-
mures d'espion supersonique
au-dedans grand cirque fatal où tantôt on
s'amuse de tout on court éperdument ou on se
terre
nul lieu épargné quand les foudres s'emparent
du pauvre ciel saturé unicorne à bout de souffle
combien de temps tiendra-t-il ce ciel
non seulement théâtre expérimental de feu et
silence tacticien mais au cœur de la séduction*

of the invective rain of messages to arouse
the indigenous fear
inside the heart is no more at counting heads
and bodies that detach like the petals of a
daisy
it seems that this land is ours and with it
parody of a sky and at least a view of the sea
with close stealthy fishing
not to push too far the patience of the gods of
war
these zealous gods chess players have many
roles to punish to besiege but also to educate
gifted and sly democracy

we are nothing here in Gaza a few stubborn
people all qualified terrorists women children
adults all equal the ignominy
plucked and transformed into abstract entities
to purify the settler's mind to free it from our
haunt
each operation against us a new biblical epi-
sode verbose delirium of generals
our imaginary labyrinth in a pocket handker-
chief
our feet wander crazy dancers in a cage
that no monkey would envy us
but we have largesse of oppressed
we cause daily vibrations to make
secret music

without sea without land without sky our cry
falls back on our heads with projectiles
to teach us to kowtow

gas in Gaza
Gaza prison with gas in the offing
Gaza strip of land with no paid reverence
Gaza poem stuck in the guts
Gaza fiction modernity walking a tightrope

(translated from French by **Saad Ghosn**)

*ou de l'invective pluie de messages pour sus-
citer l'émoi indigène
au-dedans plus le cœur à compter têtes et
corps qui se détachent comme on effeuille
marguerite
il paraît que cette terre est nôtre et qu'avec
elle parodie de ciel et au moins vue sur mer
avec pêche rapprochée furtive
ne pas pousser trop loin patience des dieux de
guerre
ces dieux zélés joueurs d'échec ont plusieurs
rôles punir assiéger mais aussi éduquer
démocratie surdouée et sournoise*

*nous ne sommes rien ici à Gaza quelques
entêtés tous qualifiés terroristes femmes en-
fants adultes à égalité l'ignominie
plumés et transformés en entités abstraites
pour purifier l'esprit colon le libérer de notre
hantise
chaque opération contre nous nouvel épisode
biblique délire verbeux de généraux
notre imaginaire labyrinthe dans un mouchoir
de poche
nos pieds errent danseurs fous dans une cage
qu'aucun singe ne nous envierait
mais nous avons largesse d'opprimés
faisons vibrer quotidien pour en faire
secrètes musiques*

*sans mer sans terre sans ciel notre cri
retombe sur nos têtes avec projectiles
pour apprendre à courber l'échine*

*gaz à Gaza
Gaza prison avec du gaz au large
Gaza langue de terre dont on tire révérence
Gaza poème coincé dans les entrailles
Gaza fiction modernité à la corde raide*

POEMS:

ELLA CATHER-DAVIS

Ella Cather-Davis, now retired, holds an Associates of Arts degree in English Literature from the University of Cincinnati where she currently attends the Osher Life Long Learning Center. She is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Writer's League, the Ohio Poetry Society, and has been involved with classical choral music for 50 years. Ella writes poetry, essays and children's stories. She has been published widely.

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ZAI JOHNS

Zai JohnsJohns, a sophomore at Thomas More College, is studying Creative Writing and Accounting. She published her first book Animal Adventurers Book 1: Murder At Thompson Manor in 2013, with 80% of the profits going to animal welfare non-profits. Zai plans to continue writing her series to save animal lives, while working for an intelligence agency to save human lives.

Contact: zjohns@cinci.rr.com

DRAWING:

GRAHAM VOGEL

Graham Edward Vogel is a third year Ceramicist at Rookwood Pottery and a recent graduate from the Art Academy of Cincinnati. His most recent work has been black and white fantasy like poster drawings that contain both bold pattern, and a visual vocabulary that resonates differently through the series.

Contact: grahamedwardvogel@gmail.com



E. V. Rieu

The Prostitute

(by *Ella Cather-Davis*)

The young girl is hovering by the corner bus stop,
evening is approaching, the work crowd has departed.
Her face is heavily painted on – expressionless,
as she furiously chews her gum, eyes darting
surveying each passing cars for the one

which has just pulled over to peruse her.
“How old are you?” a voice drawls thickly
from the far side of the darkened vehicle.
She leans in now, “Nineteen,” she lies.
“Nah, I don’t think so the voice mocks”

The car speeds away down the deserted street,
knocking the girl off kilter. She turns shakily
to regain her post, the expressionless face
begins to watch again for the dwindling
anonymous cars who cruise by sporadically.

Desperately, now the girl begins to attempt
To posture provocatively. Teetering on her
tall-heeled shoes, she smoothes her
meager clothing, smiling too brightly
she stumbles clumsily against a bench.

Please, stop, she whispers inwardly
Please, please notice me . . .
Staving off despair, she stops chewing,
I am so hungry and tired now.
I can make you happy.

More than Numbers

(by *Zai Johns*)

We have spent our entire lives in a cage.
Never free to play fetch outside,
Or feel the grass beneath our paws.
Instead we have been trapped in a cold cell,
Exiled from love and family.

We are each given a number instead of a name,
As if inmates in prison.
Yet, we haven’t broken any laws or hurt anyone.
If anyone deserves to go to prison, it’s them.

They do unspeakable things to us,
Things that you only see in your nightmares,
After watching a horror film,
They slice us open without hesitation,
And fill our bodies with poison.
The worst part is,
IT NEVER STOPS.

They are worse than concentration camp doc-
tors,
Who get pleasure from seeing others in pain.
Do they forget that we are living creatures,
With feelings,
With ears,
And with a heartbeat?

POEMS:

VICKIE CIMPRICH

Vickie Cimprich is a Northern Kentucky writer. Her poetry collection *Pretty Mother's Home - A Shakeress Daybook* (Broadstone Books, 2007) was researched at the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, and supported by the Kentucky Foundation for women. Her work has appeared in many journals including *The African American Review*, *The Journal of Kentucky Studies*, *The Licking River Review*, *The Merton Journal*...

Contact: vjc1@zoomtown.com

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.

Contact: veganeearth@roadrunner.com

DRAWING:

LINNEA CAMPBELL

Linnea Campbell, a Cincinnati based artist, works primarily in ceramics. The natural world, insects, and the organization of their habits and communities inform and inspire the process of her work which aims to shed light on them and on the large impact they have on our world.

Contact: linnea.e.campbell@gmail.com; linneacampbell.wordpress.com



ES LINNEA CAMPBELL

Recipe

(by **Vickie Cimprich**)

Store the perishables
in the microwave.

Put all the microwaves everywhere
into the polar ice cap.

Set on High.

When Manhattan and the Keys
melt into the salted water,

cream the Midwest
into a startled froth.

*(written in collaboration with the
Wild Soft Collaborative poets
**Wendy Creekmore, Nicci Mechler,
and Hilda Weaver**)*

My Spherical Garden

(by **Mary-Jane Newborn**)

My gorgeous garden delights me with its endless colors and
shapes.

Trees and grasses root deeply in my rich black soil,
tenderly whispering with one another
through intricate networks of fungi and microbes.

Worms dance with moles and beetles.

Myriad four-leggeds enrich the earth, as do wingeds, celebrat-
ing sky.

Fishes swirl in my pools and streams, big ones, tiny ones, all in
between.

The bald apes pose an enormous challenge with their cease-
less brains,

nimble feet and manipulative hands,

digging and drilling and burning all my carefully sequestered
carbon,

releasing a hundred million years' worth all at once.

They move mountains, scatter humus to the winds and waters,
toss their novel poisons everywhere.

Some of them are singing my song:

Look, listen, heed my garden.

It has flourished for billions of years.

Rest, see, hear, smell.

Enjoy my fruits and nuts and herbs.

There is more than enough for everyone to be fulfilled.

Laugh, play, take your time.

Let my garden grow itself.

Let my garden grow itself.

Water it with your sudden tears.

Love one another and all forms of life.

Share the bounty I have provided.

Return all you don't need to my Earth.

Stash spare seeds in my fertile beds.

Let my garden grow itself.

Let my garden grow itself.

Let our garden grow.

POEMS:

JOHN CRUZE

John Cruze's work has appeared in WORDS (Thomas More College), For A Better World and Express Cincinnati. He is a hiker, poet, photographer, mediator, teacher, trainer and proud member of the Greater Cincinnati Writers League whose members have midwived much of his poetry.

Contact: cruzelegal@comcast.net

CURTIS SHEPARD

Curtis Drake Shepard is a writer, actor and spoken word artist, actively touring his critically acclaimed one man show, *UnMasked*, in which he plays nine different characters and the stage play, *Trapped*, written by Greg Stallworth, that blows the doors open on domestic violence. With more than twenty five years as a performing arts activist, Curtis concludes that, sometimes, the greatest difference that we can make is making memories that make a difference.

Contact: cdshepard@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

JOHN FAUGHENDER

John Faughender is a 19 year old artist from Louisville, Kentucky who is currently attending school at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. Even though a sculpture major, he started out early foundations in illustration and print media. John is currently the Studio Assistant at Tiger Lily Press in Cincinnati, OH.

Contact: jpfaug95@yahoo.com



“Now climb to the highest place
you can get to, like this.”

but even she didn't comfort him

Long Season

(by *John Cruze*)

one day Grampa Doc
took my big brother
down to the old West End
to see Jackie Robinson
brave his first contest
against the Reds
and their red faced fans
at Crosley Field

up in Price Hill
some of the kids
in our neighborhood
said their dogs
barked at the garbage men
because they were colored

my brother said that was wrong

Blue Mute

(by *John Cruze*)

Miles mutes misery
draws it from blood
lungs
bellowed neck

spits disgust
into mouthpiece
winds it through
twisted horn
turns anguish
to quiet dignity

ushers it through
this bell blue chamber
where it's shadow
pours dark honey
on our wounds

the unspent heartache
is canted in blackness
for his voodoo muse

Black Boys Dream

(by *Curtis Shepard*)

Black boys dream.
They dream that black lives matter.
They dream big,
A birth canal too narrow for their wings;
Mommy's belly sliced to let them breathe,
In their pressing impatience to be free

In America, black boys dream not because they can
They dream because they know that one day
They will need their dream to feed on,
To hold onto, to believe in.
Like heart beats they dream of rhythms,
And their music sustains their dream.

Black boys dream of conquering, overcoming, rescuing,
Of providing and protecting, in ways only they understand.
Black boys dream of becoming black men who can,
Can feed families, shelter the homeless, give direction to the lost,
Bring clarity to the confused, speak calm to the chaotic.
Black boys dream of entrepreneurship and even with no permit,
Sell CDs and cigarettes, find hundred uses for a peanut.

Black boys know, the world ain't after their freedom.
It wants to stop their dreaming; just like for MLK.

POEMS:

ANDREA ELCHYNSKI

Andrea Elchynski, a junior at Mount Saint Joseph University, is an English major and a written communications minor. Her poetry has been published in Lions Online (Mount St. Joseph's literary magazine). Andrea would like to further pursue writing as a career.

Contact: andrea.elchynski@msj.edu

JULIE HERNDON

Julie Herndon is a composer and performer working with internal/external space, text, graphics, improvisation and movement. Her work has been performed at Wintergreen Summer Music Festival in Virginia, Zen Mountain Cloud Center in New Mexico, and The Northern California Performance Platform at San Francisco Art Institute. Julie holds a B.A. in music from St. Mary's College of Maryland and is pursuing a M.A. in music composition at Mills College.

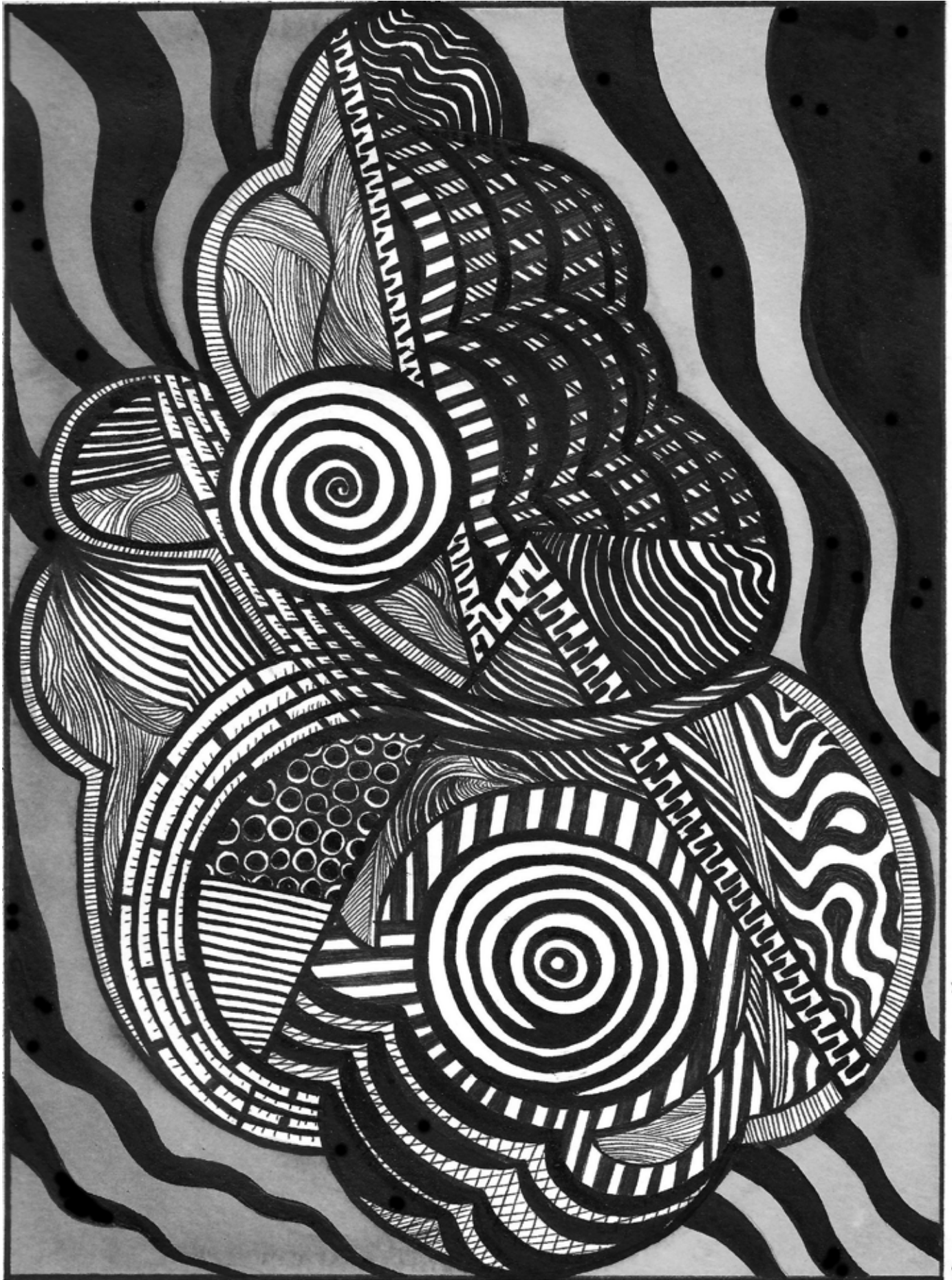
Contact: julieherndon@gmail.com; www.julieherndonmusic.com

DRAWING:

SUSAN BYRNES

Susan Byrnes is a visual artist whose work encompasses traditional and contemporary forms and practices, including sculpture, multimedia installation, radio broadcasts, writing, and curatorial projects.

Contact: susanbstudio@gmail.com



SUSAN BYRNES

"CLOUDS FLY IN" 2015

Beast of the Southern Wild

(by *Andrea Elchynski*)

It has begun
the light-hearted creatures
crawl out from under their breath entrapping
houses
getting into position
lining the charcoal coated streets
buckets in hand

children soon follow
with their dirt-caked bodies
romping around like elephants lost from their
herd

clouds fly in
sucking the life out of the tangerine rays
that had been warming the people

the splishing and splashing
of the bacteria-filled pool
that the children every so joyfully
bathe in

the mighty Beast of the Southern Wild
swallows Bourbon Street
along with the hopes
and dreams it had
carried on its back

It has begun
the careless life of these people
no worry about what they do
or say
their children's safety
or even the mere cleanliness
of their place of habitation

Journey through Foreign Fires

(by *Julie Herndon*)

I followed the yellow
dotted line
through a landscape I thought I might have
touched the fringes of before
(I have been driving for a while now)

I walked into
green-as-far-as-I-can-see,
my feet trampling
the small things,
that grow well
within the grass,
and some nearby creatures took notice
of me and nodded
upwards to warn one another.

I wandered
out
into the faded sky-meets-land,
crossing an ice cold creek on half-submerged
stones
and the once nervous animals began taking
an interest in my picking
along.

Gradually,
seamlessly,
stretched under the white billowing clouds
I understood
what I had been holding
under my breath,

that

I was
not going back.

POEM:

MARK FLANIGAN

Mark Flanigan, a Cincinnati native, has been writing and performing ever since he can remember. After an 11 year run, his *Exiled* column is now archived at semantikon.com and citybeat.com, while a compilation—*Exiled on Main Street*—is forthcoming. His volume of poetry, *Journeyman's Lament*, appeared in the Aurore Press Publication, Versus, and his free e-book, *Minute Poems*, is available online from Three Fools Press. In January 2014, Mark co-founded a monthly open/feature reading called Word of Mouth Cincinnati at MOTR Pub, and is currently working on a body of new work (poems, stories, screenplays and novels).

Contact: mf@markflanigan.com

DRAWING:

J. DANIEL GRAHAM

J. Daniel Graham, raised in a military family, moved every two years for most of his life. He comes from a family of storytellers and was encouraged into creative outlets from an early age by his mother, a basket maker and calligrapher, and by his father, an engineer. Daniel holds a BA from the University of Florida and an MFA from the University of Georgia both in Printmaking. Between the two programs Daniel lived in Washington DC and trained as a furniture maker under woodworker Dennis Sitka. Currently he is an Associate Professor of Art at Georgetown College, Georgetown, KY, teaching Sculpture, Printmaking, 3D Design, Ceramics and Furniture making. Daniel lives in Georgetown with his wife Holly, his daughter Olive, his son Thatcher, and their dogs Clover and Cricket.

Contact: daniel_graham@georgetowncollege.edu; www.jdgraham.net



"Hover"

X

J. Daniel Boham

gone doctor

for Aralee Strange (1943-2013)

ding
the elevator rings
door opens
someone's there

to think how many eons the peons walked up here
watch your step

isn't it something?

this here is the mondo condo
this here is the *i* in the middle of *hurricane*
the lighthouse amidst the heavy tempest
where the bucks stop
to rest their cloven feet

see that gilded handrail? hold onto it and it'll take you
deep into the hip of chic

hear that air conditioner hum? you're not the only one
merely the only *cool* one

see that space age kitchen? constructed such that you forget both
your space and your age

outside things may wax and wane
but inside here they stay the same

for I flip the real in real estate
I hide the bones under a finished basement

you want to let your eyes ramble outside that window, do
to the tourists as they stroll down main street

here there is no proof

you can't hear the sound
of the man on the street saying to no one
hey your phone is ringin'

you can't hear the sound
but you can see
the street being widened such that he's running out of sidewalk to walk on
you can see

the light rail replacing the railroad itself
you can see the only cheap sleeps a stoop
see the underbelly under a 200-dollar shirt
see a Lexus sharing space with a beat to shit Chevrolet
hasn't moved in 20 years
bird-shit on both

no discrimination here
it's for the birds

here what you choose to see and what you do
is entirely up to you
they don't call em blinds for no good reason.

would you believe this once was a doctor's office?

doctor's out now
if you catch my drift

they say his ashes run along where the Rhine ran
all the way down to where timber danced
whatever that means

probably not a hill of beans

for that was then
this is now
business is even better and how!

Over the Rhine

but wait, what is that ringing?
I don't know who set that alarm clock.

where is that music coming from?
I don't know who turned on the radio.
I don't know why the big clock suddenly tick tocks
or why the sky darkens and a mist starts to fall
thunder shakes the very foundation.

I didn't think such a thing was possible.
I don't know why or how or

Who blows there? Loud enough now for us to hear the man on the street
say with urgency to no one
hey your phone is ringin'!
HEY, YOUR PHONE IS RINGIN'!

I don't know why a crow alights on a wire across the way
nor why the dogs bark and scratch at the basement.
I can't tell if that's a raven or a snake
crossing main street
the only certainty is it's an evil eye

don't leave just now

I don't know why
the power went out
or where the steps are even

I don't even know what I'm saying
or who's saying it
I don't know why I kiss like this

I only know

someone wants my advice

say you standing inside looking outside the mind's eye

say you look long and hard
say you see the bus finally come
say you see a moundless grimy tribe dismount

and you look up in the sky
and your mind is southern fried
by a large bolt of lightning
splitting the clouds
triangulating
Old St. Mary's Gabriel's Corner
and The Office all alight

and you feel a finger touch your high right cheek
and you wonder if you locked your car
check your pocket for your knife

while down below the old crone
she stops pissing on the power company plate
long enough to point to the sky and cry

dr. pain rides again!
dr. pain rides again!

while the long gone coffee shop lights up like a movie set
and an unplugged jukebox on liberty frees itself and plays Amazing Grace
and a mini cooper heads south the right way on main

all the stoplights flashing green arrows
and the beat to shit Chevrolet will will wills itself to start
a faint but forever beating heart

and you stand there in the dark
and you say to yourself while smirking
the rich voice welcome but not your own
you say to yourself

you bet, bubba

yeah buddy, you bet

POEMS:

TERI FOLTZ

Teri Foltz is a retired English teacher from Northern Kentucky and an active member of the Women Writing for (a) Change organization. She is also a playwright. Her first full length play *The Faculty Lounge* was produced at the Carnegie Arts Center in Covington, KY, in October of 2014.

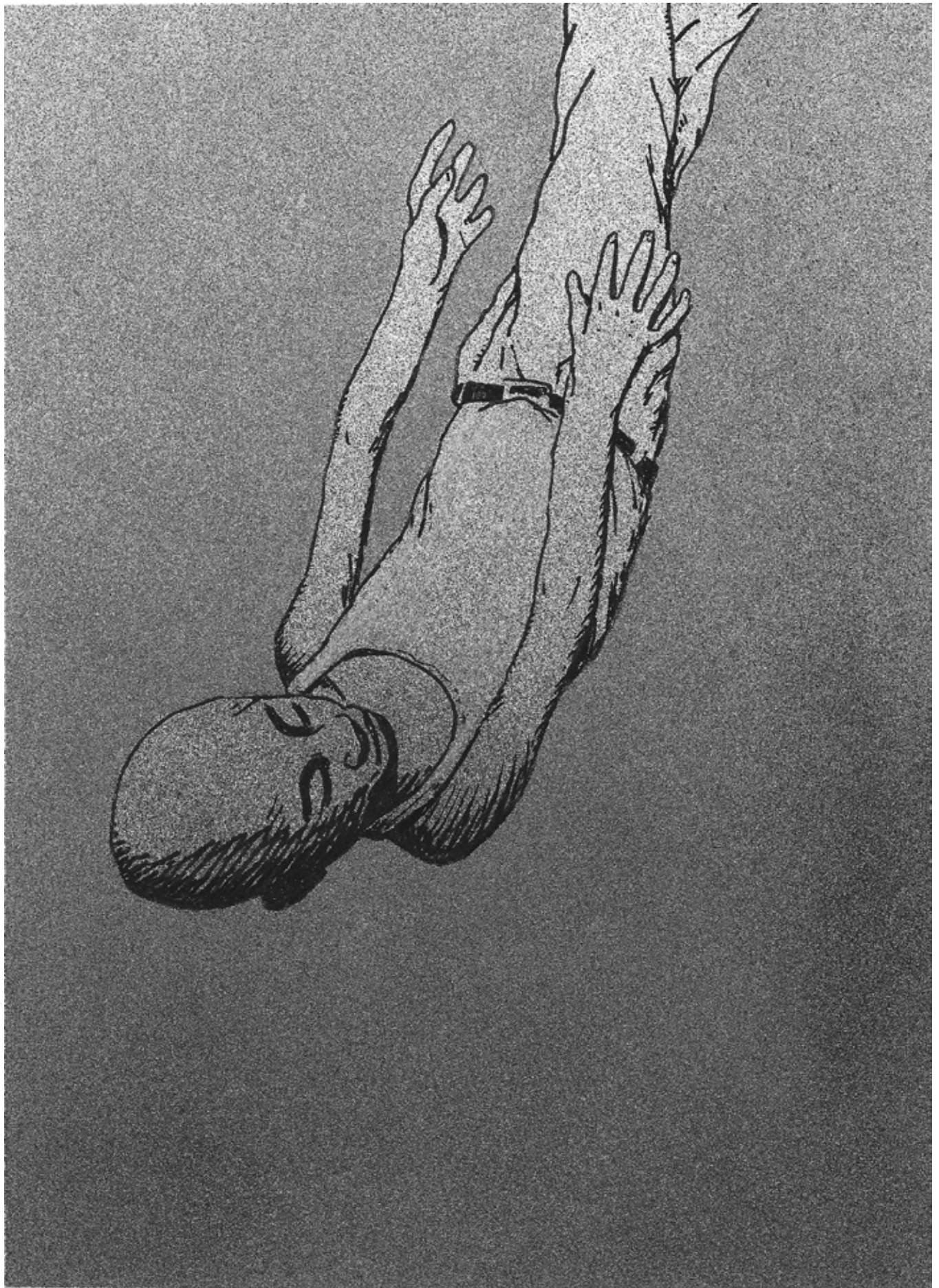
Contact: terifoltz2@gmail.com

DRAWING:

ROB JEFFERSON

Rob Jefferson, born in 1970, is an American painter/illustrator and a graduate of The Art Academy of Cincinnati.

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R. JEFFERSON—

Next Saturday

Next Saturday, I am calling a world armistice.
All weapons are to be placed on the ground
at the feet of those who own them for protection,
for revenge, for insurance.
Just put them down for 24 hours
and use your arms
(the ones God gave you)
for something else.
Hug someone.
Call someone.
Help someone up who has fallen.
Do the YMCA dance
or the wave
or just cross your arms
or swing them as you talk a walk.
Just for 24 hours.
We can start at midnight,
if that makes it easier.
If you sleep for 8 hours.
Then you'll have just 16 left.
Put your hands in your pockets for an hour.
Now only 15.
Drink coffee for another hour- slowly. 14.
Hold a book in your hand for another hour. 13.
Take a long nap. 11 left.
Do you doubt you can do it?
Is the fear rising in you?
The anger?
Clasp your hands together and pray perhaps?
Wash the dishes.
File some papers.
Play the guitar or the piano.
Google anything but violent images.
Watch TV if you can find a show
without police or criminals or soldiers.
I promise you can have your gun back at midnight
if you still feel the need.
But on Saturday thousands of people will live
who would have died.
People available to hold your hand,
or put a hand on your shoulder
in case you feel the need to turn
your gun on yourself.
One more day just to see
if things indeed look better
in the morning.

Falling

I know children born falling.
Born on the edge of a cliff and pushed at birth
By mothers who are falling too
And fathers who fell away too soon.

Some children spend their lives falling,
arms and legs flailing,
Never knowing what happened.
They never breathe in air that's thin.
They never feel the dizziness of looking down
from high places and wondering
what it would be like to leap.
They simply fall.
And not like we do on patches of ice
One moment we are fine,
the next our feet can't find the ground.
No, they fall like slow motion film
And never know the relief of landing.

They fall behind in school.
They fall between the cracks.
They fall for lies they're told.
But they never fall into place.

They live mid-air
until the day they die
far too young
and the undertaker introduces them to
ground.

POEM:

DIANE GERMAINE

Diane Germaine - a writer, choreographer/performer, and photographer - is a graduate with English Honors from Performing Arts High School (NY), where she became Principal Soloist of the Paul Sanasardo Dance Company (NY) and won critical acclaim for her performances in *Fatal Birds*, *The Path*, *Metallics*, *Shadows*, and her portrayal of Anne Sexton, poet, in *A Consort for Dancers*. The New York Times called her “a superstar modern dancer” and she went on to receive Fellowships and Grants from the NEA, City of Cincinnati, and the Ohio Arts Council for choreography and spoken word/mixed media productions. Diane’s poetry and stories have appeared in the “For a Better World” series, Chronogram Magazine, A Few Good Words (anthology of Cincinnati writers) and have been presented at Cincinnati readings as well as in concert with dancers.

Contact: dgermaine.writer@gmail.com

DRAWING:

CEDRIC COX

Cedric Michael Cox is best known for his paintings and drawings, which fall between surrealism and representational abstraction. As a student at the University of Cincinnati’s College of Design, Architecture Art and Planning, Cedric was awarded a fellowship to study at the Glasgow School of Art in Scotland. After receiving his BFA in Painting in 1999, he began to exhibit locally and regionally and still exhibits today.

Contact: cedricmcox@yahoo.com



"The Wilderness in the Mind By Cedric Michael Cox 2015
graphite on paper

Stroke

...There's almost
an anxiety, almost a feeling of
urgency -
a deep need to
breathe outside
air where it is cool.

Shadows of shrubs
and limbs of bare
trees are illuminated
against sky by a sliver
of moon.

I have a perfect sense
of just is, an everything
is familiar but not
knowing where
kind of feeling.

Like having been here before or
had been
here for an unknown amount of
time.
Forever maybe.

A door is open.

I go inside to sit
on a couch in a house
that I think might
be mine and a woman comes to sit
by me
and she says,
- *Are you okay?*-
And I smile.

I have an urge to hug her.
So I do. She says,
- *Is this some kind
of joke?*-

I press my cheek
to her breast near her heart and
she says,
again,
- *Is this a joke?* -

The embrace is the essence
of everything
to me. But it's far away.
We are like two in a
photo of the Dust Bowl.

She picks up a phone
like a walkie-talkie
and announces,
- *This is Karen
I think my husband
has had a stroke.* -

My wife?

I have a desert feeling. Wait-
ing. A suspension
between two eras -
the I before and the
me after.

An ambulance arrives. They
don't know
how much I understand.
I might as well be
The Man Who Fell to Earth.

Many questions follow - an
endless loop of stupid
interrogations:
- *Who is the President
of the United States?* -

...I know that.

- *George W...* -
But 'Bush' has
scrambled.
They think I mean
George Washington.

- *Is this your wife?* -

But I don't feel certain
after the couch episode
so I just smile. I repeat over
and over in my

head karen, karen
karen karen.

- *Who is this?* -
comes accompanied
by a photo of a cute
little girl with black curls.
A button.

- *Ahhh, baby* -
I answer.
But I do not know
her name. I am not
her father. I'm too old.

All sorts of object
naming follows: TV,
bed, food stuffs,
clothing items,
utensils, sky, sun....

But I want to talk
about feelings, about
thoughts not about
objects no matter
how difficult it is.
They bring me
Dr. Seuss books -
Nonsense limericks.

I zone out. I follow
from above somewhere I
like through a telescope.

Next come first grade
readers from my era,
Run Spot! Run!
Look Jane! Look!
It makes me mad.

I do stupid things
in my annoyance
until I learn that
to get out I have to
comply.

One morning friends
of Karen come to visit.

*(Shave and a haircut.
Two bits.)*

The thought of anyone
prepping me, pushing
and prodding me
like beef being corralled
is unacceptable.

I lock myself in the bathroom. I shower.
I shave. I forget my clothes.

There is nothing to do
but open the door
and proceed with
a flourish, with a
one, two,
- *Ta Da!* -

Draped in my towel
I jiggle out the door
but laughs I do not
get.

I think I'm pretty funny
but not one of these
dead heads has a
sense of humor.

Dead
silence.

*(Hey! I'm not senile.
I can hear you!
I understand everything
you're going to say.
Just give me back my
hearing aids!)*

I can't talk really
well. Not yet.
It takes a long time
to get back 'home'
but I learn:

Do nothing they can
misconstrue. Do

everything they plan
to contrive.

So now I'm here.

(At home at last.)
At home. At last?

Today Karen invited
*(my wife Karen...
I have to get used
to this...)* 'our kids'
for Christmas dinner.

There is Patrice, and
a granddaughter
(the button in the photo),
Linda, David, and his
partner Deirdre.

We eat spaghetti,
corn-on-the-cob,
breaded skillet
pork-chops.
(Too much starch.)

Dessert is strawberries
over angel food cake,
add whipped cream.
I pick up the bowl
to pass it, I say,
- *Want some... -*

but I can't get out
'strawberries.'
Karen thinks I want
some myself and begins
to prep a bowl for me.

(But that's not it.)
I want to help. I want
to show I'm still
in the game.

I begin pointing
like a dual-language
kid who mixes up

appropriate words.
And Karen states,

- *It may take him
two years to be able
to communicate.
I don't have the
patience. -*

Does she think
I can't hear her?
*(with or without
hearing aids)?*

My rhythm is off,
not my thoughts.

One foot behind
the other. Move.
I just can't dance.
I get up to remove
myself.

I get up to make us
coffee. And Deirdre
knows. She sees that
I know. She feels what
I am feeling. Hooray!
Here's one who gets it!

And she says to Karen -
- *Charles may be
able to use a
computer to help
him communicate. -*
And Karen snaps,
- *I want him to
communicate
with me, not with
some machine. -*

Does she think I can't
hear her? I'm not a
simpleton, not yet!

I head into the
living-room to watch

television - CSI - but
it gets complex.
I catnap.

There are 6 different
pills I have to take:
This one 4x a day,
that one for diabetes,
another for heart,
this other one for

sleeplessness caused
by the one of before,
that one to counteract
effects of the last one,
now a mood elevator...
and so on....

How can anyone
keep track even if
you own one of those
compartmentalized
pillboxes?

And who can
remember
who one is...
or who
you are?

When I wake up
David and Deirdre
are gone. Gone too
are Linda, and Patrice,
and the cute little
button.

- *What are you
looking for Charles? -*
I'm looking for
Deirdre. (*Karen
doesn't hear me,
I say it to myself*).

- *Charles, they said
to say goodnight
to you. They didn't
want to wake you up.-*

Okay. Goodnight.

I walk to the bedroom.
Nothing left to do.
No coffee to prepare.
No strawberries
to offer.

All quiet on my
Western Front.
Good evening.
Goodnight.
Goodbye....

POEMS:

MICHAEL GEYER

Michael Geyer, a Cincinnati native and graduate of the U.C. School of Engineering, currently teaches high school chemistry. An active member of the Cincinnati Writers Project, he lives in Montgomery with his wife and son.

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LINDA KLEINSCHMIDT

Linda Kleinschmidt has taught writing at Cincinnati State, Norwich University in Vermont, Franklin Pierce College in New Hampshire, and tutored writing at Dartmouth College. She is currently an editor and writing consultant worldwide. Linda writes about New England, women, human rights, and has published two children's picture books, multiple articles on the writing and editing craft, many poems, and won three Writer's Digest awards, the latest for poetry in 2011. She divides her time between Cincinnati, OH, and New England where she grew up.

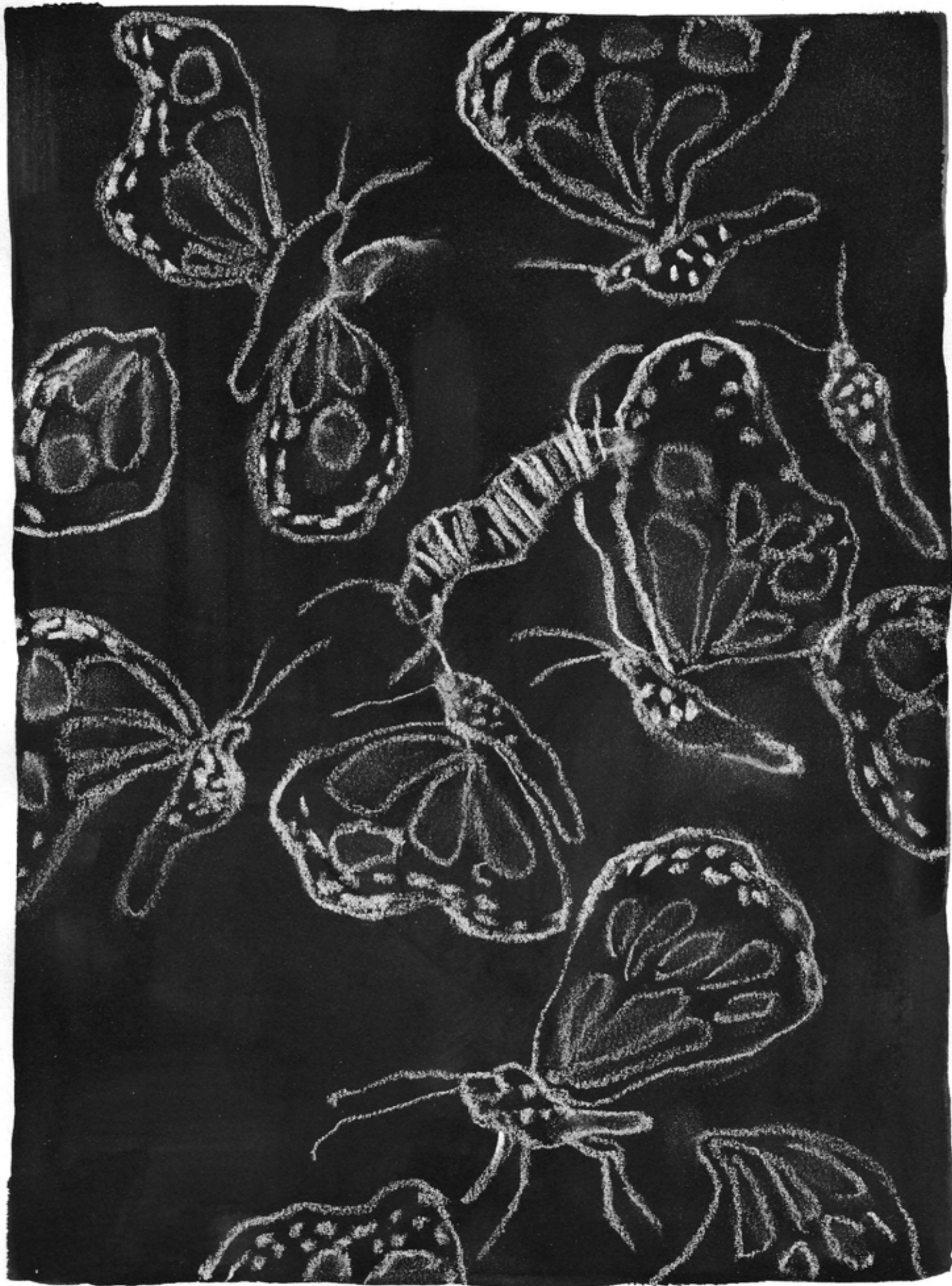
Contact: lmk42@earthlink.net

DRAWING:

JULIE LONNEMAN

Julie Lonnenman is a Cincinnati based artist, illustrator and graphic designer. As a member of Tiger Lily Press, a local printmaking co-op, she indulges her passion for making prints, primarily woodcuts, linocuts, and collagraphs. Julie received an individual artist grant from the City of Cincinnati in 2009. Her illustrations have been widely published in books, magazines, newsletters and on-line.

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Julie Lonnenman '15

June 13

(by *Michael Geyer*)

I hate
all the blurred
lines and the smell
of isolation,
the high-speed
way each moment
lines up before
the next, neatly
with staccato
pauses
interrupting the flow

of feeling.
Some never
admit,
say they
have found
no blue thing,
but I
confess
my focus
penetrates
to where

there's always
a sense
of being on
point
and never coming
home
to smell
the greener
breeze
of hope.

Why Butterflies?

(by *Linda Kleinschmidt*)

When we can choose
What we want to harm,
Why butterflies?
Why crush, stomp, de-wing,
Creatures who so
Delicately balance on streams of air?
They don't bite or sting, don't kill.
Butterflies are imagination, joy.
They show us wild fancy, give us
Freedom in their own bright flight from
The safety of cocoons into a dangerous world.

Choosing the most beautiful to destroy
Explains evil, defines control,
Trains the greedy to seek,
The powerful to embrace wrong.
A choice so made harms all,
Produces dire beginnings, sad promises,
A worse world sure to come.

Without Beauty

(by *Linda Kleinschmidt*)

Without beauty,
Art, jewelry, music,
Poetic phrase, indeed reflections
Of summer, autumn's recall, fresh
Spring, and winter's peace,
We would destroy more,
Be destroyed sooner.

Beauty offers wise glimpses of
Our early soul and pre-designed intervention,
Perhaps even the irony of a once true intent.
Beauty is the cut gem of an always changing act,
Humanity's troubled, original, yet possible
Princely state.

Endangered Species

(by *Linda Kleinschmidt*)

The wounded are endangered species,
Fallen warriors, the damaged and forgotten,
Neglected, abused, crudely harmed.
Too ignored, discarded,
Simply left to suffer.

Our task is to remember, rebuild these lives,
Restore their faith in us and in
What's good, what's redemptive.
Then maybe the world's reward
Will be no more wounded,
No more endangered,
No more weeping by
Either them or us.

POEMS:

JOANNE GREENWAY

Joanne Greenway retired in 2003 from a career in social work with HCJFS. She holds a Master's degree in French Literature from Indiana University and began writing poetry in 2004. Nostalgia and self-discovery are dominant themes in her work. At present, two cats permit her to share their home in Westwood.

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Laurie Lambert

Born and raised in Western Massachusetts, Laurie Lambert spent several years in Madison, Wisconsin, before settling in Ohio 25 years ago. She is the mother of adult triplets, a retired immunologist, and a labyrinth enthusiast. Laurie facilitates classes at Women Writing for (a) Change and writes poems and essays about the woods, river and fields that she is lucky to call Home in Warren County.

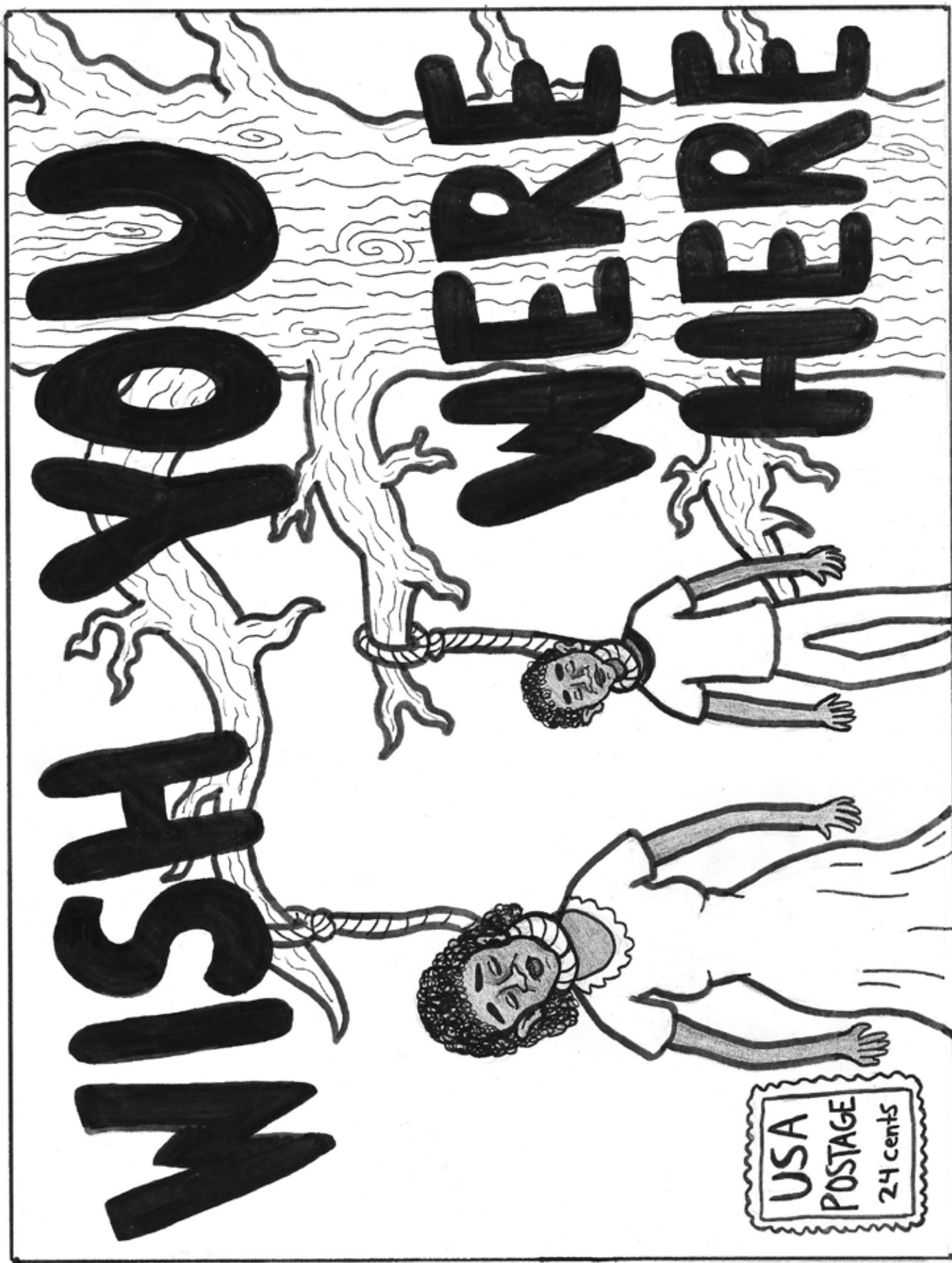
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DRAWING:

Tory Erpenbeck

Tory Erpenbeck, an illustrator from Cincinnati, OH, holds a BFA degree in illustration from the Art Academy of Cincinnati (2015). She works with ink and digital media to create cartoons and comics.

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TORY ERPENBECK

Postcard from Okemah, 1911

(by *Joanne Greenway*)

(For Laura and L.D. Nelson, a Black mother and son lynched from a bridge near the town of Okemah, Oklahoma, on May 24, 1911)

The photo captures the scene
in perfect, unflinching focus.
It was a special event, like a
square dance at the grange hall.
You can almost hear the hum
of the all-white crowd gathered
along the bridge, baking in
the glow of a mid-day sun.
The woman hangs impossibly still.
No breeze ruffles the folds of her dress.

They lynched mother and son
from the bridge railing and left
them strung up, the way hunters
do with a harvest of game birds.
They had been charged,
never tried, with stealing a cow
and shooting a deputy.
The photo of their hanged bodies
was made into a postcard.

Decades later, a troubadour
learns his own daddy had
taken part in this crime and
writes a song about it.
The town is still haunted
by the cries of the doomed,
he claims. Their killers are
riven with guilt and will
never again rest easy.

I wonder about the gawkers
on the bridge. Men, women,
even children, smug and
staring straight ahead.
I search their faces for a single
furtive tear, proof that someone
felt something like shame. But
their empty eyes betray
no remorse, no humanity,

The image of those bodies,
high above the river,
broken and defiled,
hovers in my mind
like thistle down,
spinning
in the
air.

Bent

(by *Laurie Lambert*)

All day today, and yesterday,
I have carried this,
carried her heart,
I can feel the weight
straining my shoulders, bending me.

She is the mother of that poor soul
executed by immolation.
I have been carrying her with me
since yesterday, when I was driving
my car along and heard a description on NPR
that made my breath stall in my chest.

A cage, a fire, screams.
All recorded and posted with words.
I could not, cannot stop my mind
from seeing, imagining, feeling.
I cannot stop my heart from reaching
toward the loved ones of that poor soul.

On my walk through the fields today
I was asking myself Why
not why did this happen but
Why is it that I, half a world away,
cannot put this burden down?
Why am I still bent,
still carrying this heart
this loss, this pain, this sorrow
this outrage, this hopelessness.

because he is my brother
his mother is my sister
I cannot put it down

Shift

(by *Laurie Lambert*)

the world is not the same
from one heartbeat to the next
even breathing
changes the composition of things
oxygen in, carbon dioxide out
and the planet is altered

surely not surprising then
that when you and I meet
share words, ideas, feelings
and our eyes and souls focus
on each other

voila

the day, the hour
the moment
before we spoke
I was this
and then
never this again

POEM:

RICHARD HAGUE

Richard Hague is author of 15 volumes of prose and poetry, most recently *During The Recent Extinctions: New & Selected Poems 1984-2012* (Dos Madres Press 2012) and *Learning How: Stories, Yarns & Tales* (Bottom Dog Press 2011). His 45-year teaching career ended in May 2014, when he refused to sign an anti-gay, anti-worker's rights contract from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Richard operates Erie Gardens, a small organic urban farm in Madisonville. His *Beasts; River, Drunk Men, Garden, Burst & Light: Sequences and Long Poems*, is forthcoming from Dos Madres Press.

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DRAWING:

JEFF CASTO

Originally from West Virginia, Jeff Casto came to Cincinnati in 1982 and had been making art ever since. He has a BFA from the Art Academy of Cincinnati (1987) and an MFA from the University of Cincinnati (1989). Jeff is a two time recipient of Cincinnati Artists Allocation grants. He has exhibited in the Mid-West and New York. His work is in several corporate and private collections.

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CASO

Think Again, O Pilgrims

I.

Failing To Make It To The New Frontier

They settle in anonymous utopias
near the outerbelt, close to sports malls,
furniture outlets, putt-putt courses
not far from the ruins of abandoned small towns
where the churches are now warehouses
for discontinued Christmas items
and the mayor's into blondes and real estate
in Florida and the grade school has been
abandoned too and a new one put up,
multiple-building style in the middle of a field.

No trees. High fence.

It looks like barracks, Dachau or Treblinka,
except for the cute swings by the parking lot.

II.

Fifteen Mile Drive To School

Past two or three hundred places
whose names and stories are lost.

Where once a barn shone, full of calves.

Where three willows let their hair down over lovers
weeping in a gully.

Where two hundred eighteen years ago a bear walked,
and someone cocked a rifle.

Now it's algebra, keyboarding, or the only
events that even remember the word "field":

football, God help them, or hockey.

III.

Driving Drunk In The Subdivision

No one prays, or even imagines
to pray, that he might make
the right turn
at the place where
he usually goes wrong.

No one prays or imagines
that he might drive
off the edge
of their new nowhere,

out of the subdivision
with its expensive starter
castles and drifts
of mulch, and come home
close to the woods:

there the creek warbles past
a quiet corn field
where every ear listens to
its roots, gone sweet
on the good old news.

POEMS:

PAULETTA HANSEL

Pauletta Hansel is a writer, teacher and author of five poetry collections, most recently *The Lives We Live in Houses* (Wind Publications, 2011) and *What I Did There* (Dos Madres Press, 2011). Her poetry has or will be featured in journals including *Talisman*, *Appalachian Journal*, *Atlanta Review*, *Postcards Poems and Prose*, *Appalachian Heritage* and *Still: The Journal*, and anthologized in *Listen Here: Women Writing in Appalachia* and Ted Kooser's *American Life in Poetry* on The Poetry Foundation Website. She is co-editor of *Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel*, the literary publication of Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative.

Pauletta leads community poetry workshops and retreats in the Greater Cincinnati area and beyond. She is Writer-in Residence at WordPlay and Thomas More College.

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DRAWING:

KATHERINE TOBIN

Currently living in Cincinnati, Katie Tobin, 23, is a dean's list college senior at University of Cincinnati/DAAP, graduating in 2015 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. Katie enjoys more than just traditional methods of drawing, painting, and constructing; she utilizes building materials, leftover scraps of trash and recycling, and other found objects to create abstracted shapes and play with scale and narrative in images. She has also worked in mixed media collaging photographic, drawn, and painted elements into sculptural work.

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Katherine Tobin

Familial Tremors

My mother's hands
pinned patterns she unfolded,
thin brown
as last year's leaves,
onto cotton, rayon, double-knit, velvet,
wool for our coats
laid out on the maple table
with extra leaves
bought with the dollars and coins
her sewing had earned.
Her hands pinned hems and seams
as we stood (*Straight, now!*)
on chairs wearing
the cloth cut neat,
wrote checks for what
they could not make and
kept the family books that tracked
that money in and out again.
Those hands could not
keep still even when she sat,
made lace
for the table
with thick needles and thread.
On slow days
they'd polish the silver
we seldom used.

Today my mother
holds out her hands
to show me how they
tremble, leaves
about to fall, they'll not
steady now for pin or pen.
She pulls
them close again
as hands would soothe
some dream-shivered child—
Rest now.
Day's done.

Forgiveness

How a rock,
a boulder wedged
so hard the river
streams around it
is reshaped by water's
nearly weightless flow
and will not hold
but find its way
to land where I will bend
to gather up this once
immutable force
into my palm
to slip it in my pocket
or send it skipping back
to be again remade.

The Purpose of Poetry

That you might love your grief,
yes, even that,
as the place where grace begins.

That you might love all
that's broken in you
as places words might start to mend.

POEMS:

JOY HAUPT

Joy Haupt is a graduate of Antioch College and a retired social worker. An avid reader, she is passionate about music, dance, travel and engaging with others to share ideas and generate positive action. At the age of 80, Joy still believes in the transformative power of words.

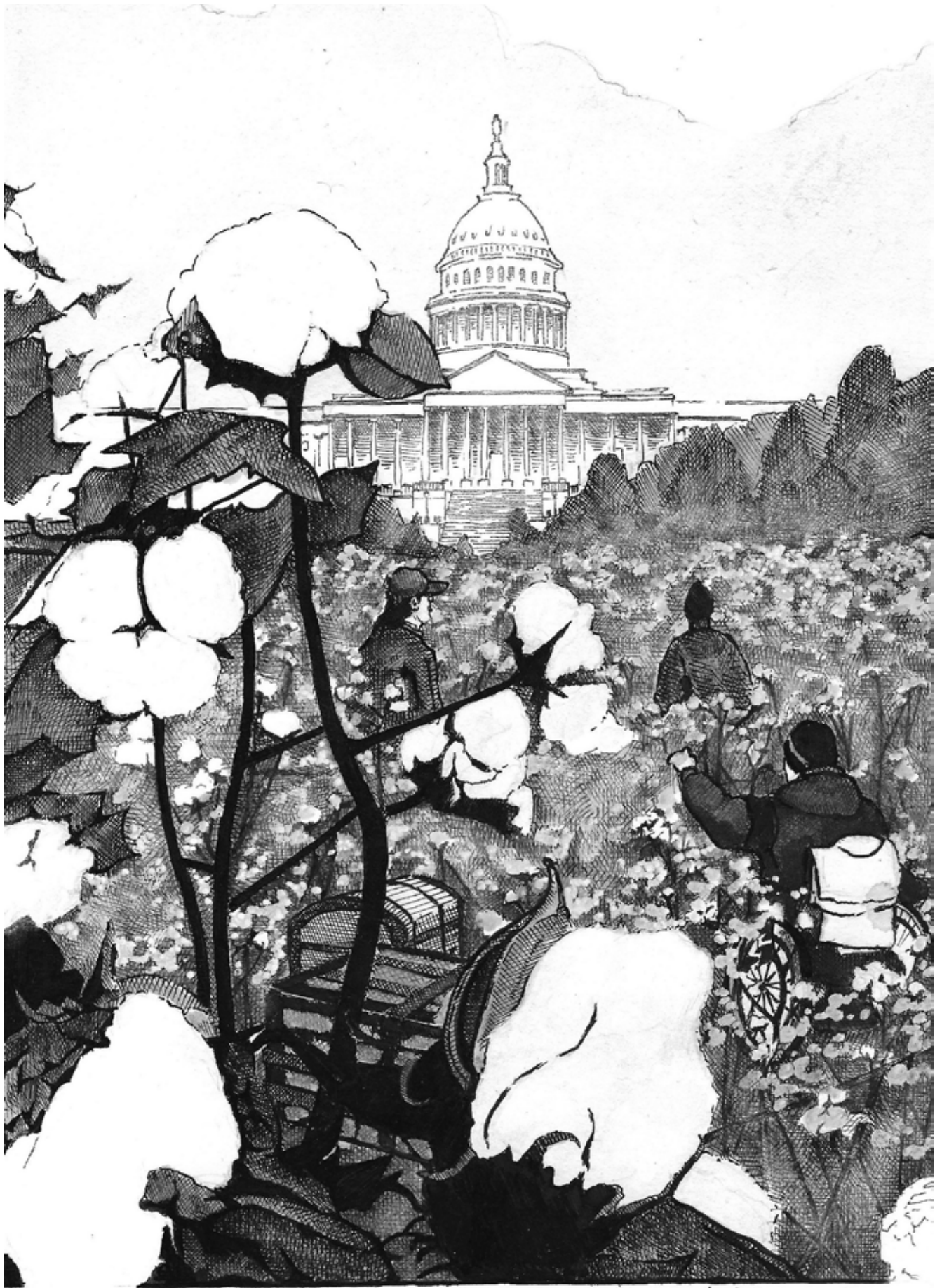
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DRAWING:

CHRISTIAN BERARD

Christian Dirk Berard, raised in St. Charles Missouri, currently lives and works in Cincinnati, OH. Christian studied at the Richmond University in London, the Ringling College of Art and Design, and is now attending the Art Academy of Cincinnati. He has also studied under the mentorship of Leonard Kessler, a children's book author and illustrator. Christian's work has been featured in a Samsung commercial for their Smart Touch debut. He has contributed to the logo redesign of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Cincinnati and is currently working on a banner for the Cincinnati Beaux Arts Ball.

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Christian Bierard
'15

Ida

She crept bareheaded
along unfamiliar streets
that used to be farmland
cotton fields surrounded
by lopsided shacks
sweaty dust seeping
through gaping walls;

walked to the busy intersection
once the pride of General Lynch.
Shuddering with cold apprehension that
nobody noticed, saw not even a shadow
of the 'whites only' fountain, only
passers-by carrying see-through containers
of pure water untouched by other lips.

She journeyed northward, invisible until
entering a modern clothing store
she stopped to look at a simple scarf, suddenly
aware
that two stern salesladies were close behind;
left empty-handed for a nearby eatery
ordered food with wavering voice and never saw
a raised eyebrow, a smile or sign of welcome:
unacknowledged still.

In the nation's capital
a Black man now President;
the statue of another, obviously revered by many
and slave to no one,
felt her heart warming,
her spirit flying but then

in a moment of clarity
she slipped away to contemplate:
It is true, I have seen no public lynchings,
there are no written laws detailing the ownership
of one human over another;
such outward displays of scorn, superiority, rage
are no longer necessary when their object is
invisible.

General Delivery

At 10 am the door unlocked
the people move straight
to the window

slide photo IDs under the glass
the woman inside takes, retreats
to the galaxy of envelopes

Sometimes she comes back with mail
but usually empty-handed.

First in line a man in a wheelchair
his legs amputated
behind him a man nodding off on his feet.

People walk past
keep it moving

(Erasure poem from the article "A Manhattan Post Office is the Only Address Some People Have", by Mike Wilson, the New York Times, September 6, 2014)

Ghosts of Ellis Island

Cardboard boxes tied with coarse string
hand-woven baskets overflowing
clothing, photos, candlesticks...

volumes of books, some leather bound
pages withered as windswept leaves
foreign names scribbled inside:
Tuchman, Viccaro, Szyllinski, Khazian.

Tourists stare in silence, shed a tear or two
for the lives of unknown ancestors,
for broken dreams abandoned
to a dusty display.

POEMS:

KAREN HEASTER

Karen Heaster lives in the Northside area of Cincinnati and holds an MSW degree from the University of Cincinnati School of Social Work. She has been employed for almost ten years as a writer of educational materials by Chard Snyder, a company that provides administration of various tax-free benefit plans. Karen is a member of two writing groups and writes poetry in her spare time.

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LONNA D. KINGSBURY

Lonna D. Kingsbury, born in Chicago, remains Second Congressional District of Ohio Poet Laureate. She serves her community as a poet, educator, director and producer and always furthers the power of the word. Lonna remains true to her tenement roots and the continual migrant nature of her Appalachian experiences while embracing all of Ohio's amazing wonders. She is currently working on her latest book *In Essence*.

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DRAWING:

LISA SCHERRA

Lisa Treelynn Scherra attended the Art Academy of Cincinnati graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (2004). This exposed her to a variety of philosophies and theories that have aesthetically assisted her in delving deeper into the universal oneness within the multidimensional realms of our collective consciousness. Lisa's art fuels her existence to an immeasurable value, a real act of spiritual practice or prayer.

Contact: lisascherra@yahoo.com



Lisa Scherra

Love's Boundaries

(by *Karen Heaster*)

Should love be bound
By race or gender
Or thrive where found
When true and tender
Should religion trump
A love so pure it's blind
To differences that bump
Against another kind
Or pour itself across the world
As giving, caring hearts unfurl

Michael

(by *Karen Heaster*)

All he wanted was to love and be loved
He never understood why
Mildly autistic, he was never accepted
Never achieving his dreams

He never understood why
As a trained chef he couldn't keep a job
Never achieving his dreams
Not managing to support himself

As a trained chef he couldn't keep a job
His social skills not up to the task
Not managing to support himself
He looked for love

His social skills not up to the task
He had short term relationships with three women
He looked for love
They created three children

He had short term relationships with three women
He loved and was loved
They created three children
That he couldn't support

He grieves the separation from his children
Never achieving his dreams
He languishes in jail
All he wanted was to love and be loved

Coal-Blooded

(by *Lonna D. Kingsbury*)

It had been a while
this coupling
of ancient pathways
veering off
mountainous
and marvelous
so very long ago
perhaps
remembered
incorrectly
thus
no plus
at present gaze
comes to mind
while passing
peering
beyond the silent
eerie state
of silence
inactivity
down and up
where once
men pushed
through dim-lit carve-outs
hustling
bustling
proving worth through heavy toil
past stores of dues and "company owned"
dependent "on the dole"
where coal was king
and blood was kin
as miners one to one
beckoned to each family - gather
live stories yet untold
rally within songs of freedom
strengthen proudly
know your worth
until there came abundance
extracted from Great Mother Earth
and slowly came the changelings
impacting portent words
to spin correctly - then abridge
to casual tall tales.
songs revered through ages
reduced beyond the pale.

POEMS:

SUE NEUFARTH HOWARD

Sue Neufarth Howard is a poet and visual artist, member of the Greater Cincinnati Writers League (GCWL) and Colerain Artists. She received Third Prize and/or Honorable Mention in several Ohio Poetry Day Contests since 1998. Her poems have been published widely. Her poetry chapbooks include *TreeScapes*, *EarthWords*, *In and Out of the Blue Zoo* and *Haiku Moments*.

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PAUL SHORTT

Paul Shortt, professor emeritus, UC-CCM, is a periodically obsessive writer, poet, and playwright - a creative diversion from past, continually obsessive, stage design and teaching. With his wife Marcia he splits his time between California and Cincinnati, between adult children and fledging grandchildren.

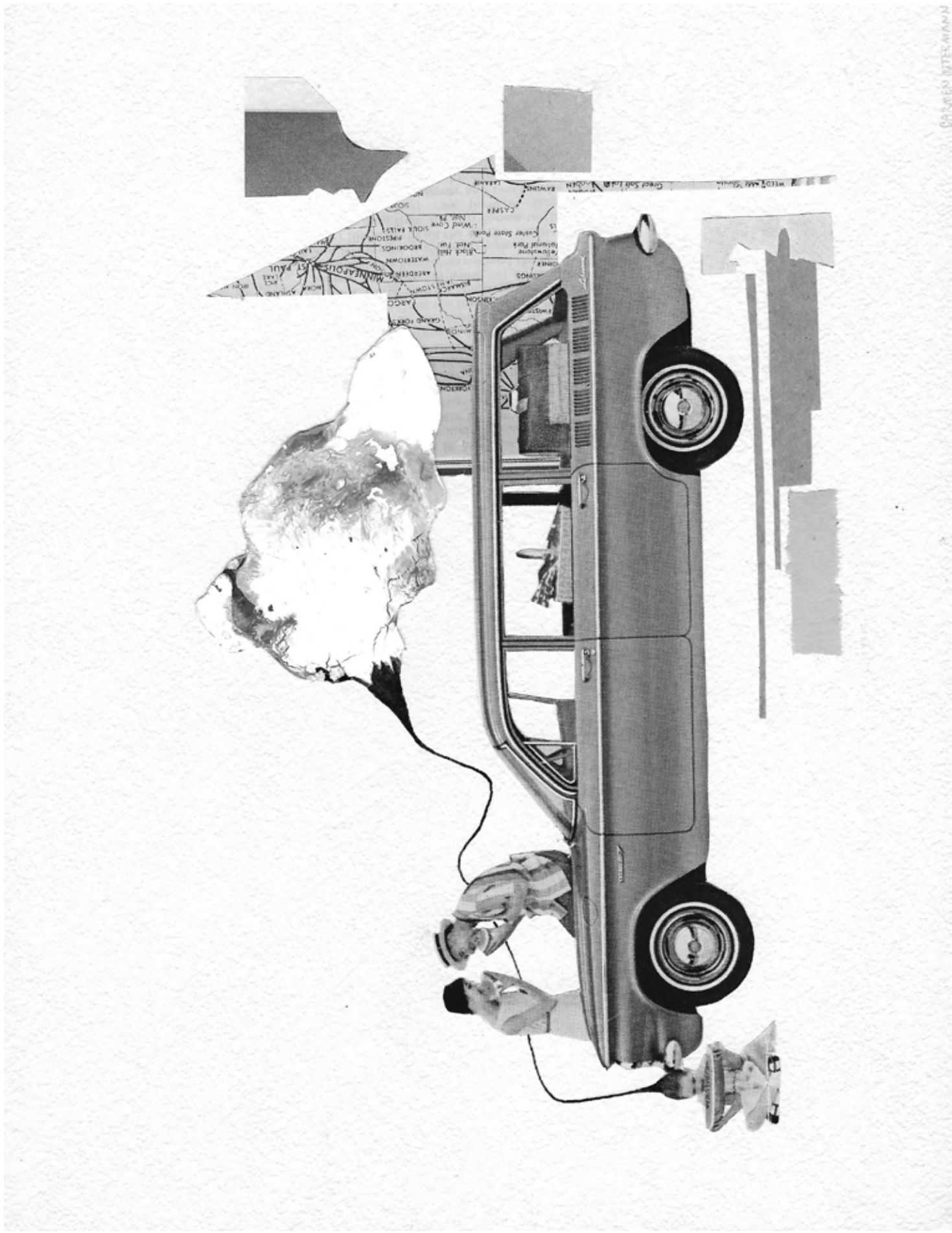
Contact: paulshortt1@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

CARMEN OSTERMANN

Carmen Ostermann is an artist and art educator. She received her undergraduate degree in Fine Arts and her license to teach K-12 at the University of Cincinnati/DAAP. She was sponsored through the Wolfstien Scholarship to travel to Frankfurt, Germany and study at the Darmstadt University. Carmen grew up in Japan, the Philippines, and Canada and is currently living and working in Ohio.

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After

(by **Sue Neufarth Howard**)

After
the uptown movie, late;
grad student in his car,
with his freshman date.
He joy rides past
campus, pulls into
a dense copse of trees.

Parked, he leans in
for a kiss and more,
the after-date candy
he bargains for.

“You can walk home
from here or...”
foils her resists.

This candy man preys
on her innocence;
date rape were words
she'd never heard.

Maelstrom Words

(by **Sue Neufarth Howard**)

Maelstrom Words
some cut
like swallowed glass
There's a chaotic
dance of words
media bombasts
that create
hurricanes in my
brain - wild things
undulating, scorching
birthing drear fears

Ferguson

“Don't Shoot”

Ebola

air strikes

Isis beheading

“I can't breathe”

Enterovirus

21 months old - dead

Words that threaten
to strangle
sparks of poetic pearls
painted visions
How to unfreeze
the fears
How to transform weeping
into words and images
that mend the soul;
the only path, to choose...

what to forget
what to remember

to savor, to say, to do
how will we act

the only way to relight
the soul

Opposites

(by **Paul Shortt**)

Men spill blood everyday
Women but once a month

In fierce passion, men take lives
While in love, women create

Women build a home
While Men destroy civilizations

What an oddity
These opposites of Life

That together they still enact
Life's ironic plot
Woman below, Man atop

POEMS:

CAROL IGOE

Carol Igoe works in the field of disabilities and advocacy. Her experiences have shown her that advocacy is essential to support what we value, so she tries to express and support Peace and Justice and Fairness and Our Planet's life where they are ignored or threatened - sometimes in the Middle East, sometimes right here on our streets and even in our gardens. Carol feels that poetry is a good way to do that.

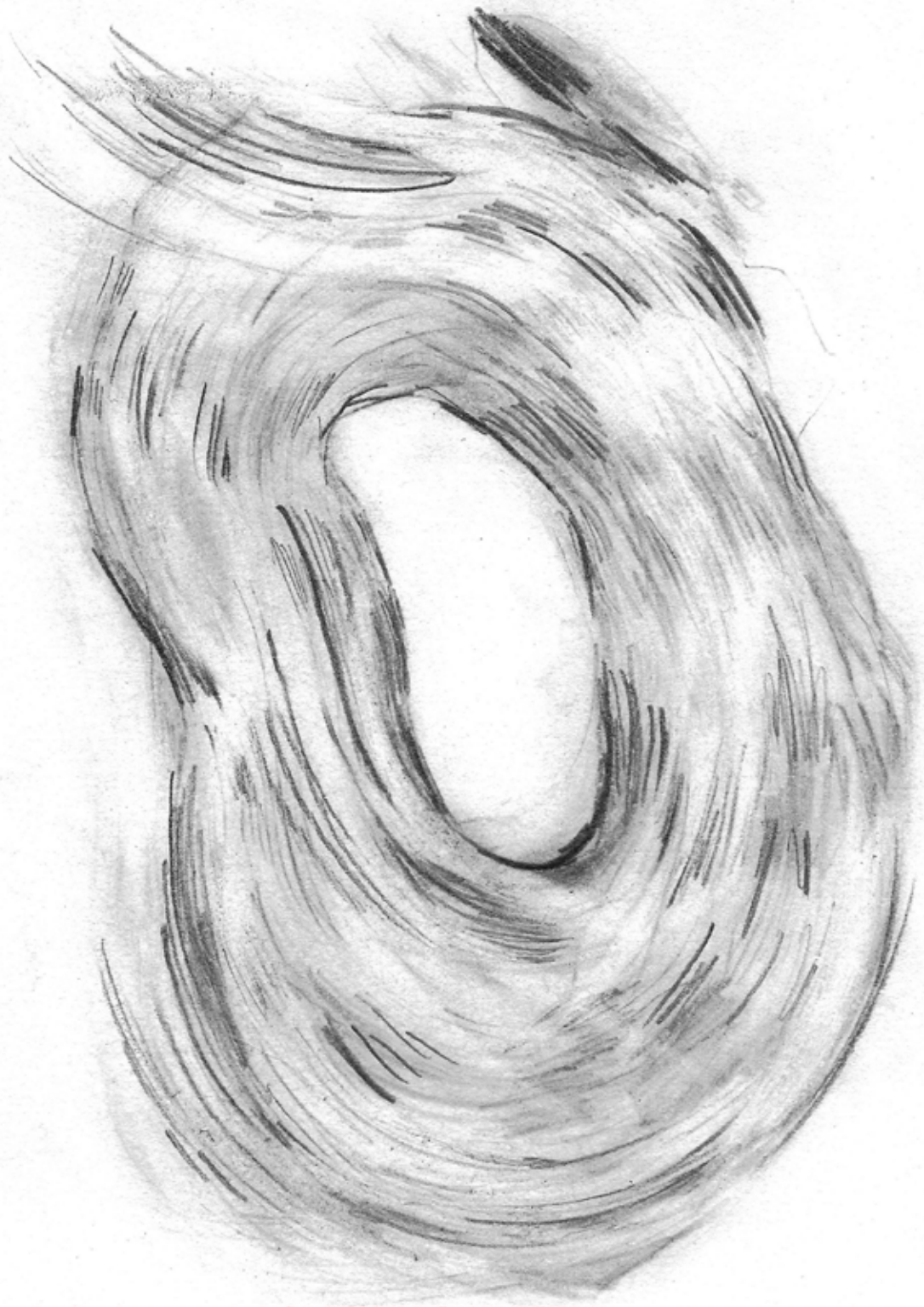
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DRAWING:

JULIA LIPOVSKY

Julia Lipovsky is a multidisciplinary artist from Cincinnati, Ohio, wrapping up her degree in fine art and creative writing from the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in Baltimore. Her work spans from soft sculpture and fiber to drawing and printmaking. Julia looks forward to returning to Cincinnati after graduating from MICA in May 2015.

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Julia Lipovsky

No Breath, No Life They Can't Breathe:

Faded postcards show
Bodies
Hanging from trees,
Heads askew, hands limp, feet slack.
Sometimes naked, or burned, sometimes still
dressed.
Sometimes, women,
In their modest ankle length skirts,
Who seem composed, remote.
They can't breathe.

We thought this nightmare belonged to our
country's past.

I can't breathe:
Video tape made public
For all of us to see:
A heavy set black man,
Gasping out 11 times, I can't breathe.
(Not hung in a tree)
Collapsed on New York's sidewalk,
Not surrounded by ENT,
Not given CPR,
Giving him back his breath.
No.
Forced down by five Police,
Choked to death by hand,
For selling cigarettes.

We thought this nightmare belonged to our
country's past.

Breathing to Heal a Wounded World

Do not try to escape your pain;
It is your bond with our human tribe,
Even with all life that suffers and dies.

For your pain to dissolve, all pain must be dis-
solved.

How your child struggled against an early death,
How it tore a hole in you,
This empty space belongs to all parents
Whose children's lives are gone.

How your lover broke the bonds of love,
Carelessly, or with deep regret,
How it split your life apart;
This sundering belongs to
All lovers who are bereft.

How your home, your work, the land you tilled
Was taken
Indifferently or amid the shudders of the earth,
How it left you groundless;
Rootless, you are like all wanderers.
Who have lost the place where they belong.

How evil grasped you,
How it broke you,
Even this is shared,
Belongs to the tortured and all their torturers alike.

All this suffering must be owned
For healing; this is the human state.

When you pray,
First breathe in your pain,
Then breathe out love, safety, joy,
This is what we have to share,
To heal our world, all of us,
Ourselves.

Nothing can be rejected,
No one can be disowned.
All pieces must be reconciled,
In love.

The Year Turns: How Our World Still Withstands Our Carelessness

1. July Rivers:

Even in the city
Along the Freeway's edge,
Littered strips of tires,
Styrofoam beads like froth,
Plastic cups and bags,
Ebb and swirl.
Even in the city,
Wild flowers
Reflect their timeless grace,
Black eyed Susans,
Chicory and clover,
The sudden white of Queen Ann's Lace.

2. Blessed Fall:

The summer's scorching heat
Is quenched, finally,
Sated at last,
By October's drumming rain,
Too long athirst.

Beneath the crab apple tree
Veronica spikes awake, open their dear blue
blooms,
Seduce the humble bees.

Once more the gifts;
Seed, fruit, the bumbling bees,
In spite of die-offs, urban sprawl, pesticides,
Once more,
The gifts.

Bless flowers, ripe fruit, drenching rain.
Bless faithful bees.
Speedwell.

3. Winter Solstice:

Menorah like
Bare trees
Thrust up
Their winter prayer:
 Forgive us our sins,
 Teach us compassion,

 Once again send
Green life out of cold death.

4. Resurrection:

Spring wind pushed back my hair,
 Cupped my ear,
 Whispered:
Bird song has reclaimed the air!

Cardinal, Robin, Mourning Dove
Stake out their trees.
Waking branches pull in sun and rain,
 Leaf the sky, proclaim sweet life again.

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

Resurrection!

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

POEMS:

JERRY JUDGE

Jerry Judge, a Cincinnati based social worker and writer, has had seven poetry chapbooks published and poems or fiction in over fifty journals. Jerry volunteers at two no kill animal shelters (STAF & OAR) and serves on the boards of Mamluft & Co Dance and The Council on Child Abuse. He is an active member of the Cincinnati Writers Project and The Greater Cincinnati Writers League.

Contact: jerryj871@aol.com

ARMANDO ROMERO

Armando Romero (Cali, Colombia) is distinguished Charles Phelps Taft Professor at the University of Cincinnati. In 2008 he received the title of Doctor Honoris Cause from the University of Athens, Greece. His novel The wheel of Chicago won best novel of adventure at the Latino Book Festival (New York, 2005), and his novel Cajambre, the Award Pola de Siero for short novels (Spain, 2011). Armando has published several books of poetry, short stories and novels.

Contact: armando_romero@msn.com

DRAWING:

ALBERT WEBB

Albert Webb is a printmaker currently living in Oxford, Ohio. His work often reflects hybridized subjects involving play and war in relation to his childhood ideologies about war and his adult understanding of conflict.

Contact: webbba@miamioh.edu



Smith & Wesson

(by *Jerry Judge*)

She says guns
without bullets
are sleek, alluring.
She sketches them.
Bullets without guns,
she whispers,
also make perfect
still life.

Once shot,
it's the nature of bullets
to want to nestle
within a warm host.

Urban gunshots
echo
within sleeping children.

Jack Thompson Highway

(by *Jerry Judge*)

Our friend saved his fellow
soldiers in Vietnam by taking out
a sniper at the cost of his own life.
At the high school reunion we imagined
he would have married a brunette named
Karen –
stunning with green eyes and alluring,
yet smart and meditative.
There would have been three children
plus a golden retriever and a rescued black cat.
The family would travel our Beechmont Avenue
every day to shop or soccer or cheerleading
practice.
Jack would work at Proctor & Gamble.
He would root for the Reds and be devoted to
family.
Instead, Jack has a highway named for him.

Terror

(by *Jerry Judge*)

small animals shriek –
the hoot owl's
midnight forest feast

children in war time –
if they live
they'll scream when
they dream

bully after school –
just grinning
at terror's profit

Domestic Assignments

(by *Armando Romero*)

I remembered my father telling me about it.
That night, playing cards he knew from the sirens
that the curfew was in force and one shouldn't go
outdoors.
But he lived several blocks away.
He was walking along silently when a black car
pulled up out of nowhere.
Four men with masks and revolvers got out.
They pushed him against the wall
and he trembled in terror before them
as they shone a flashlight in his face.
One, the head of the death squad, said:
"Shit, it's you Alfonso!
Didn't you hear the curfew, you old bastard?"
My father never found out who it was.
When they dropped him at his door,
he was told regards to my mother and love to the
kids.

(translated from Spanish by *Alita Kelly*)

Oficios Domésticos

(by *Armando Romero*)

Al leerlo en B. recordé que ya me lo había con-
tado mi padre.
Aquella noche, jugando a las cartas, supo por la
sirena que se le había pasado la hora y que el
toque de queda prohibía salir a la calle.
Sin embargo, él tenía que regresar a casa, dis-
tante unas buenas cuadas.
Caminaba sigilosamente cuando de la nada un
carro negro lo detuvo.
De su interior descendieron cuatro hombres con
el rostro cubierto y armados de revólveres.
Temblando de temor lo empujaron contra la pared
haciéndoles frente.
Con una linterna le iluminaron el rostro.
Al verlo, uno de ellos, el que hacía de jefe
en este escuadrón de la muerte, dijo:
"Pero, carajo, si sos vos, Alfonso, y a estas horas,
¿No oíste el toque de queda, pendejo?
Mi padre nunca supo quién era, aunque al des-
pedirlo en la puerta de la casa dejó saludos para
mi madre y besos para los niños.

POEMS:

DYANE KIRKLAND

Dyane Kirkland recently graduated from Northern Kentucky University. She is a writer, poet, photographer and occasional musician, and lives in Cincinnati with her roommate, a menagerie of small animals, a cat named Loki, and her Bichon Frise, Pixie

Contact: d.kirkland2010@gmail.com

MIKE MURPHY

Mike Murphy, aside from writing occasional poetry, does gardening, and is planting a permaculture orchard in Georgetown, OH. He and his partner, Birdie, welcome visitors--for a day, a week or longer--who are interested in gardening, orchards, poetry, and other ways to make this a better world.

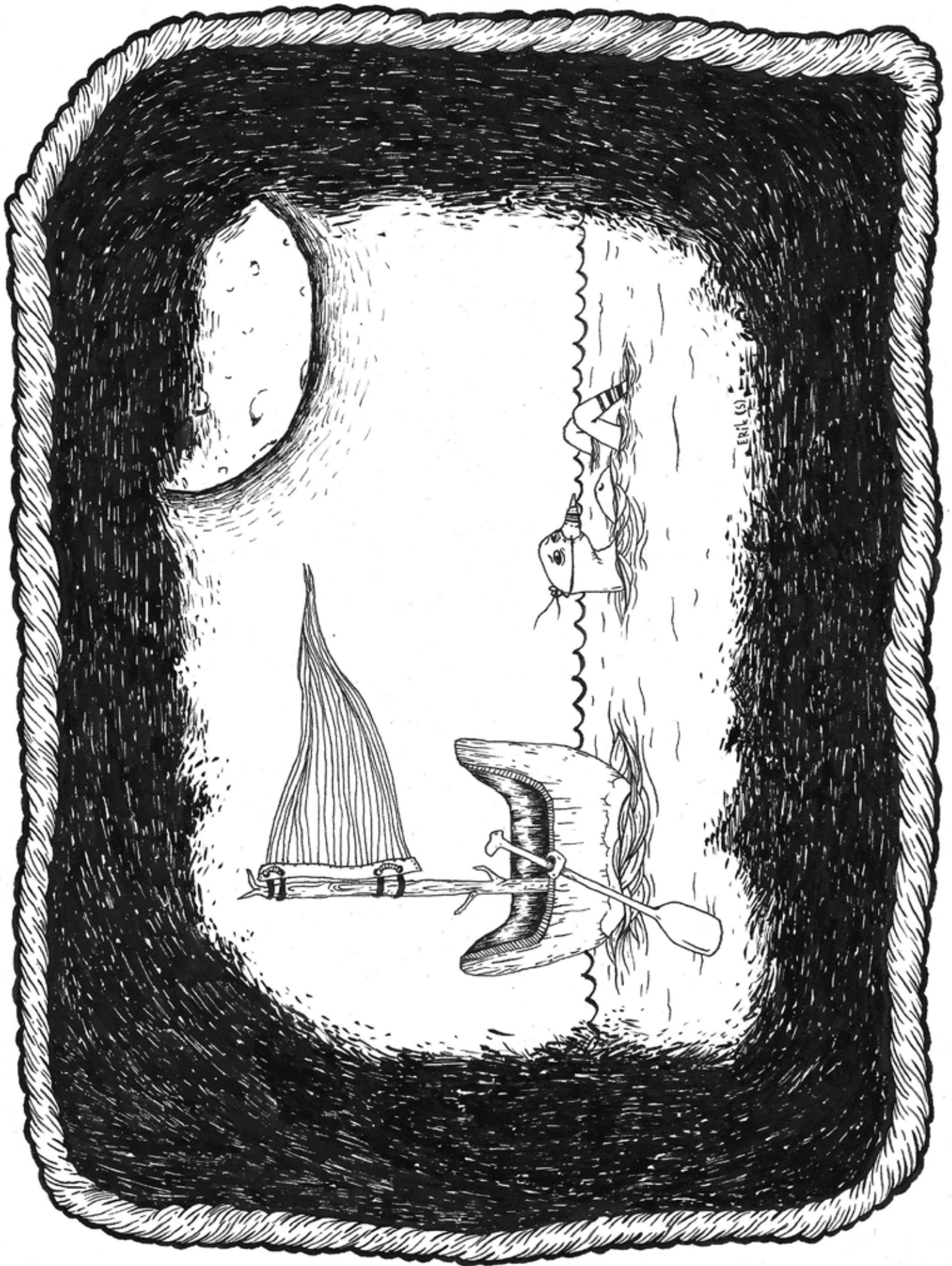
Contact: michael1938murphy@gmail.com

DRAWING:

ERIK SCHEIDT

Erik Scheidt is a creator of things that are weirdly sad. He always works with black ink on white canvas, being afraid of colors and not yet ready to face his fear. Erik is currently enrolled in the Fine Arts program at the Art Academy of Cincinnati.

Contact: scheidterik@gmail.com; www.eri088.wix.com/erikscheidt



Us Like a River

(by *Dyane Kirkland*)

We too should flow
 swift or languid
 past life's rocks and sand bars
 and all the works of man.

Know only what
 experience tells
 us of each other in
 human community.

Accept the forms
 without complaint;
 while questing and probing;
 move around, move beyond.

Act upon -
 blunt trauma or
 sharp slice of razor edge -
 water yields and reforms.

Like the river
 we move forward
 healing the ancient scars
 absorbing the new ones.

Forgive the past and
 ripple toward a day
 when we speak the same voice
 when we move past the pain.

Like the water
 our strength endures,
 clearing the path toward
 worldwide human family .

Shopping for Peace & Justice at the Free Will Attitude Store

(by *Mike Murphy*)

We humans
Are like teenagers
Presently hanging out
On Planet Earth
Yet we are
Gods-in-the-making....
Creating ourselves
With every choice
We make
By shopping
At the local
Free Will Attitude & Outlook Store
We seek no clerk to advise us
What to choose
What we shall wear
Who we shall become
We try on
Love & Hate
Killing & Curing
Blaming & Forgiving
Some rules here
Some punishments there
Like sandbox children
Draping ourselves with this or that notion
Then appraising ourselves
And others in
Mirrors of
Reality
Posted through
Space & time...
We may do
Sweat Lodges in forests
Temples in mountains
Synagogues in cities
Churches in towns
Mosques in villages
Saunas in snow
Meditations on a stone
And create governing councils
And meeting places
And rituals of cleansing & respect

And choose our
Peace & Justice
Ensembles... &
Begin to see
We must be the change
We wish to see
When we
Shop at the Free Will Wear & Share Store
We humans who are
Actually gods-in-the-making
Laughing & playing
Talking & listening
Singing & dancing
Inviting discourse & dialog
Sometimes arguing
On this rolling planet
Deciding who
We really choose to be
Right now
This time
This year
Today
Here
Now
We let no one tell us...
Anything!
Who? Who should we let tell us
How to be?
We ourselves choose...
With every breath we take
With every move we make
Whether to
Create a community
By shopping
At the Free Will Attitude & Ensemble Store
We will not bow to any god
Nor do we surrender to any god
We greet others as equal gods
We do what we do
Because we humans ourselves are
Gods-in-the-making,
Making communities of
Love & cooperation
By shopping at the
Free Speech, Free Will & Love Co-op Store.

POEMS:

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.

Contact: tonibell@fuse.net

JEAN SYED

Jean Syed, a member of the Cincinnati Writers' Project, has been broadcast locally and published by Dos Madres Press and Kelsay Books of California. She appeared in the "Lyric" and "The Road Not Taken: The Journal of Formal Poetry." She recently won 1st prize for a bawdy limerick and will appear in the Raintown Review.

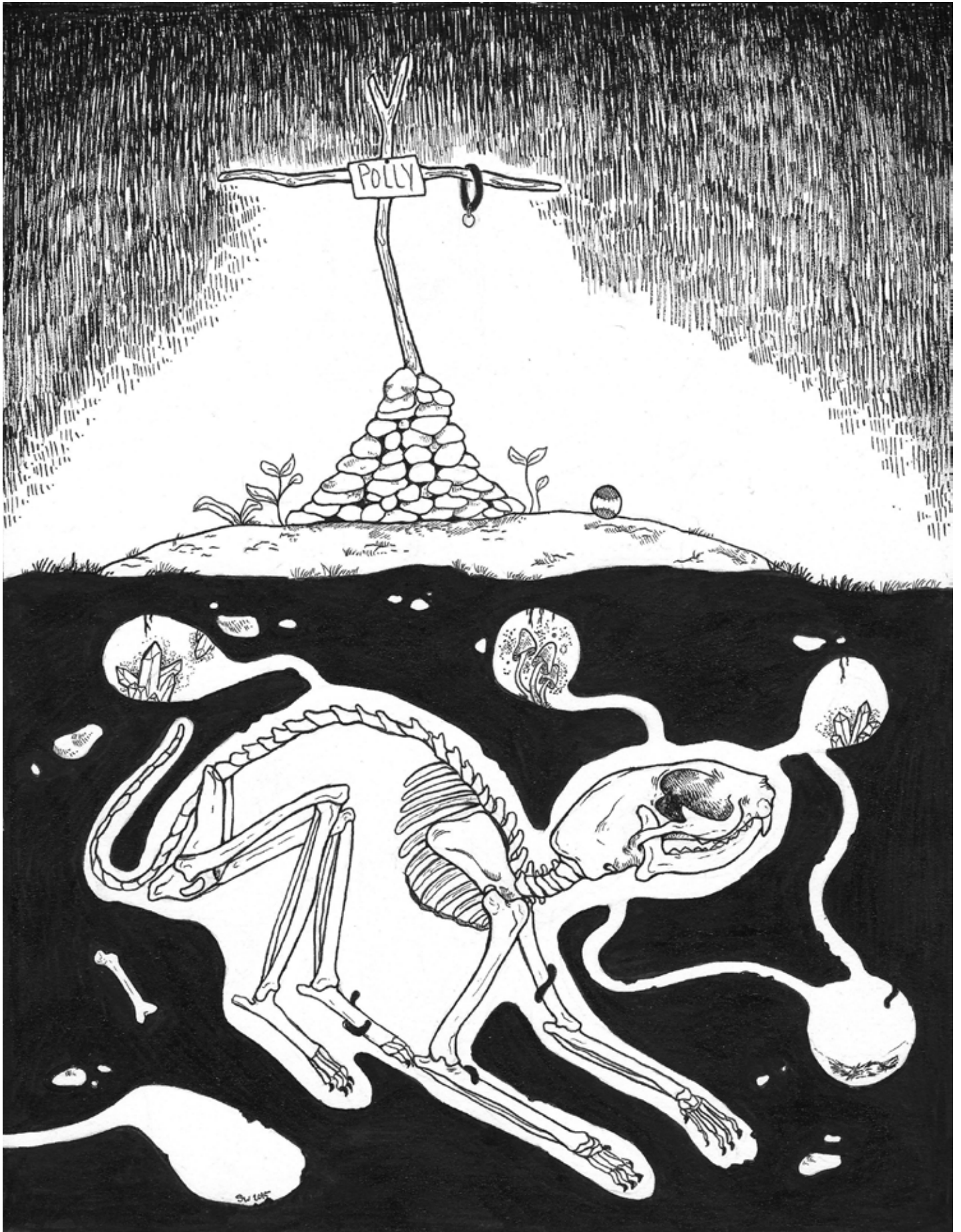
Contact: jsyed@cinci.rr.com

DRAWING:

SHILOH WROBEL

Shiloh Wrobel, originally from Virginia, came to Cincinnati to attend school at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. Currently a senior working towards a BFA in photography, Shiloh works in both illustration and photography, as well as in print media and collage.

Contact: shilohwrobel@gmail.com



An Invitation to Congress

(by *Annette Lackner*)

I'm going to give a tea party
Set little tables just so with
China dishes of pink and purple
Every little girl's favorite colors

Perhaps some dandelions
Freshly picked from spring lawns
Set them in the center, and
Dainty napkins beside each plate

I'll cut out place cards
Smiley faces with each name
Place cookies on each table
Beside a singing teapot

All their friends will be invited
I'll seat them in every other chair
Raggedy Ann, Dora the Explorer,
Hello Kitty, "Tickle Me Elmo", too

But what about the boys
They don't attend tea parties
They like trains and gadgets
The noisier the better

We'll have Thomas and Percy
And all of their playmates
Tooting their whistles
From station to station

Or perhaps action figures
Will save the day
With capes and ropes
And parachutes that pop open

I will hold the party
In the capitol rotunda
The place where dignitaries
Lie in state for all to view

Should I leave the chairs empty
Bustling little trains unattended
Or place photos on every other seat
As vacant as their parents' hearts

I want you to view them as you file
Through that hallowed hall
Honor those empty chairs
And ghost-like train stations

I fear it will not move you
"We must protect gun rights," you say
"Who protected their rights," I ask
Our children don't need status quo

THEY NEED SUPER HEROES

Young and Green

(by *Jean Syed*)

Tender, tiny bush
Amid the wood so bare.
Oh! You are lush
In the bitter air.

You flourish under a maple
Premature you stand
In your upwards struggle
In the forsaken land.

Warmth is what you lack
Though you strain to the sun,
But harsh rains smack
Your growth to stun.

A shelter could I build
To guard you from the wet
But I am unskilled
To guard from any threat.

All your precocity
Will spoil and decay.
Dear God have pity
For children today.

POEMS:

CAROL FEISER LAQUE

Carol Feiser Laque's most recent collection of poetry, *Poetize*, derives its subject material from a lifetime of recess. Carol sends her love from Chicago where she has been residing for the past few years.

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DRAWING:

PAIGE WIDEMAN

Paige Wideman received a BFA in sculpture from the Kansas City Art Institute (1989) and a MFA in sculpture from the University of Cincinnati (1999). She is currently a Lecturer II at Northern Kentucky University.

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2015

Eve

My kisses echo from one rib -
Crying out sensually to be alive.
I am Edenic -
next to me coiling
a flickering tongue
speaks sweetly to me.
I am in a garden
Of Good and Evil - I feel that much.

I pick the fruit, and my urge to live comes
From my fears of life and death,
Because my sexuality pounds me -
I risk all to become a woman.
Suddenly the Revolution with the man
Is knowing - is temptation.

As I rise into my womanhood,
Ironically I fall from Grace
Into Grace. Cast out, into shame
I am full in my flesh. Sin
Means separation from God.
Inside my leap of Faith is Believe.
Believing is Seeing:
My sin is my salvation.
This is the Tree of Knowledge,
the Tree of Life.

Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely: A SIN-ICAL View of Institutions

It is not Evil
I fear and fight,
but the facile
the sleight of hand
the Institutional.

The Church, the University, the Corporations,
The Government are all
Roach Motels: what goes
Inn goes up with Interest.

Power is a Monger
The Ruthless, Mediocre,
Sociopaths Rise like cream to the top
In their own crematoriums.
They define Morality (the cause, the effect)
into their own 'Paradisio.'

"The Other" is an object
to own, to exploit, to worship, to fire,
to brainwash, to promote, to burn – let's burn
(artists, poets, witches, gays, women, retards,
the mentally ill, Republicans, protestants,
gypsies
Jews – did I leave you out?)

Every promotion, gift
has a string at the No Tell Motel.
Let's throw a Party
and fix the vote
along with the drinks.

Sell High, Sell Low
Sell Out, It is who and
How you know – connections.
Be a Born Again Democrat
Convert the world, or
Kill a commie for Christ, or
Let's Make a Deal
Let's all Steal.
Let's not Feel.

A Horse of Honor

*(dedicated to a slain Chicago Police Officer;
Rush and Pearson)*

His widow Jen, at 40, said his death
In 2010 was hardly time to reinvent
Herself - and grief, of course -

We all stood in a warm October
Afternoon - sunny, hardly a breeze.

He was a mentor and friend to all
Especially the rookies he taught,
And prepared for the streets. A triathlete,
He partnered with blind athletes.

Now crowds of police, photographers,
Neighbors gather to dedicate the
Horse - covering it with our
Finger prints.

He and his partner, Philly, shared
Trail Mix between them in their
Cruiser. Each man loved the cashews the
best, so when the
Other wasn't looking ----

As people fingerprinted the beautiful
Statue of a horse, we all forgot
How old he was. He was the
Regular "good guy" full of drive
And go. He never sat still.

They were in a bad neighborhood.
As his partner changed out of
His uniform, Philly took off
The other way, never seen
The bad guy breaking in.

Philly drove 10 minutes until he
Saw a stream of cruisers coming
Against him - he circled back
To see, and then - what if, what if -
If I only had stayed or driven out
The other way.

A bullet killed his partner.

We, the living, touched the horse
As if we could touch a vision,
A project of love, a work of art,
A man's spirit.

His name is Thor.
In Norse mythology, Thor is a
Hammer-wielding god associated with
Thunder and the protection of mankind.
He wasn't a gog.
He is a slain Chicago police officer.

That night in 2010
He and Philly mixed trails -
One Living - the other Dead.

Thor is larger than one officer.
Larger than a work of art.
Large enough to take a bullet
In the line of duty.

So for him, we want
That Light to a
Perpetual Life -
A Trail to heaven -
Loved, admired and honored -
With enough cashews
For the road.

POEMS:

JUANITA MAYS

Juanita Mays writes, as she lives, through the prism of her Appalachian heritage.

She is never far from lessons and stories learned from the creek, woods, stones and earth of her childhood. She is a current member of the Ohio Poetry Association and the Phoenix Writers. Juanita, as a volunteer, conducted a yearlong series of creative writing workshops with women who were recovering from abusive relationships.

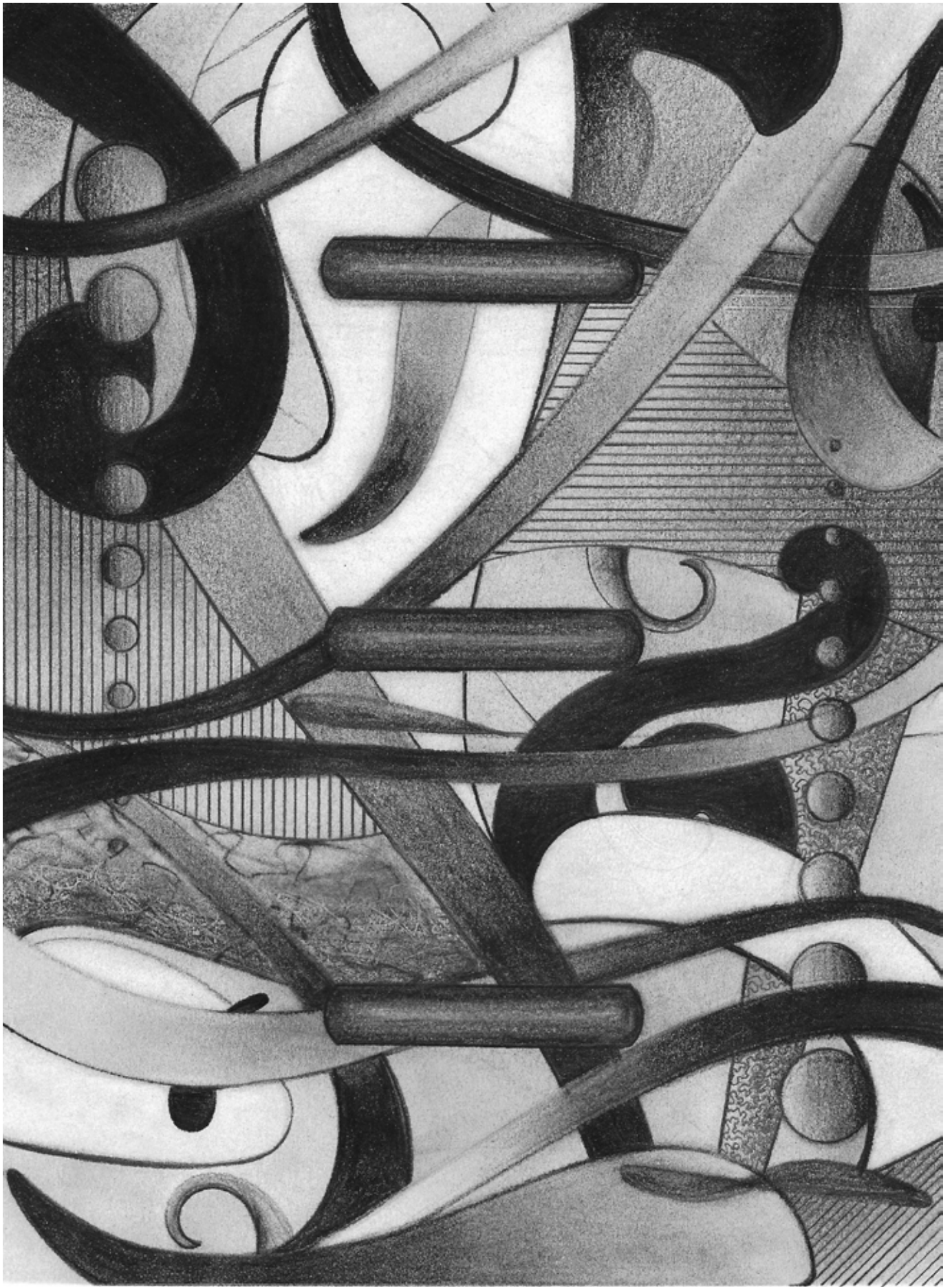
Contact: juanpoet1939@yahoo.com

DRAWING:

CARTER HAMMOND

Carter Hammond grew up in New York's neighboring towns and villages along the historic Hudson River Valley. He received his B.A. in Art from Arizona State University (2006). In 2011, he launched a series he called *Untitled* which was drastically different from his previous works. Throwing out his conventional academic training and working from the subconscious and an emotionally charged base, his work shifted to an abstract expressionistic style. In 2012, Carter opened a new studio at the Pendleton Art Center in Cincinnati, OH, and he has continued exhibiting in Ohio and Colorado. His work is in private collections nationwide.

Contact: hammondartbycarter@gmail.com



HAMMOND

Innocent as Sunshine

Oh, how she believed
that the world would melt
all bayonets and guns
into shiny new tractors --
John Deeres,
as green as needles
that hung from the barked-back
of a giant spruce tree.
The one that spied
through fringed lashes
at her splashing in the creek.

And there at the bent knee
of McCullough Creek,
elbow of the hollow,
she made her promise to God.
The minister waded
into cold, spring-fed water,
so that she might lay down her sins
and wash them away.
The girl did this
in the name of
the Father, the Son
and the Holy Spirit of peace.
She rose up, an eight year old
as innocent as sunshine.

And she believed
the fiercest of lions would
curl his paws and shaggy mane
around a weakling lamb,
his big cat tongue
licking white wool,
nuzzling the lamb's dwarfed nose.

And in the church on Sunday night
they sang *We're Marching to Zion*
and an elder instructed the congregation
to march around the pews --
and how stupid she felt.
When would the guns be melted?

And she prayed,
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy will be done, on earth
(just) *as it is in Heaven*

And before she was eight years old
she knew there would be no guns
in Heaven -- and
someone needed to begin
collecting them, now.
Kids could carry big baskets
and knock on doors
like Little Red Riding Hood.

And sixty-seven years have passed
since she was eight years old.
Another hymn comes to her mind,
Work for the Night is Coming.
Night rushes past pillows
and quilts at three in the morning.
It smothers her and pulls
asthmatic breath
from slumber.

And guns around the earth
continue to kill the children.

Blood-Notes

Strange fruit hanging from the sycamore tree,
song lyrics from the soul of Billie Holiday.
White-sheet terrorists made sport of hanging black men,
but God revealed His promised land to Martin Luther King.

Song lyrics from the soul of Billie Holiday,
a haunting refrain from the Jim Crow South –
but God revealed His promised land to Martin Luther King:
little children, black and white, walking hand in hand.

A haunting refrain from the Jim Crow South,
blood-notes raining purple as plums.
Little children, black and white, walking hand in hand,
red children, tan and yellow singing songs of peace.

Blood-notes raining purple as plums,
We shall overcome some day,
red children, tan and yellow singing songs of peace.
Fathers of the Earth, lay your weapons down.

*We **shall** overcome some day.*
White-sheet terrorists made sport of hanging black men --
fathers of the Earth, lay your weapons down.
Strange fruit hanging from the sycamore tree.

Stay the Hands of Hatred

three mothers
mourn
knife blade pain

three
students
dead

three
silver
coffins

three
whose
likenesses
shall
never
be seen
but in dream

no weddings
no babies
no PHDs

pray
oh pray
you poets
to our different
gods

to
stay
the hands
of hatred.

POEMS:

BILL MCCORMICK

Bill McCormick is a retired high school teacher of German and English. At the age of 83, he is ever amazed at the cruelty human beings display toward one another and their fellow creatures

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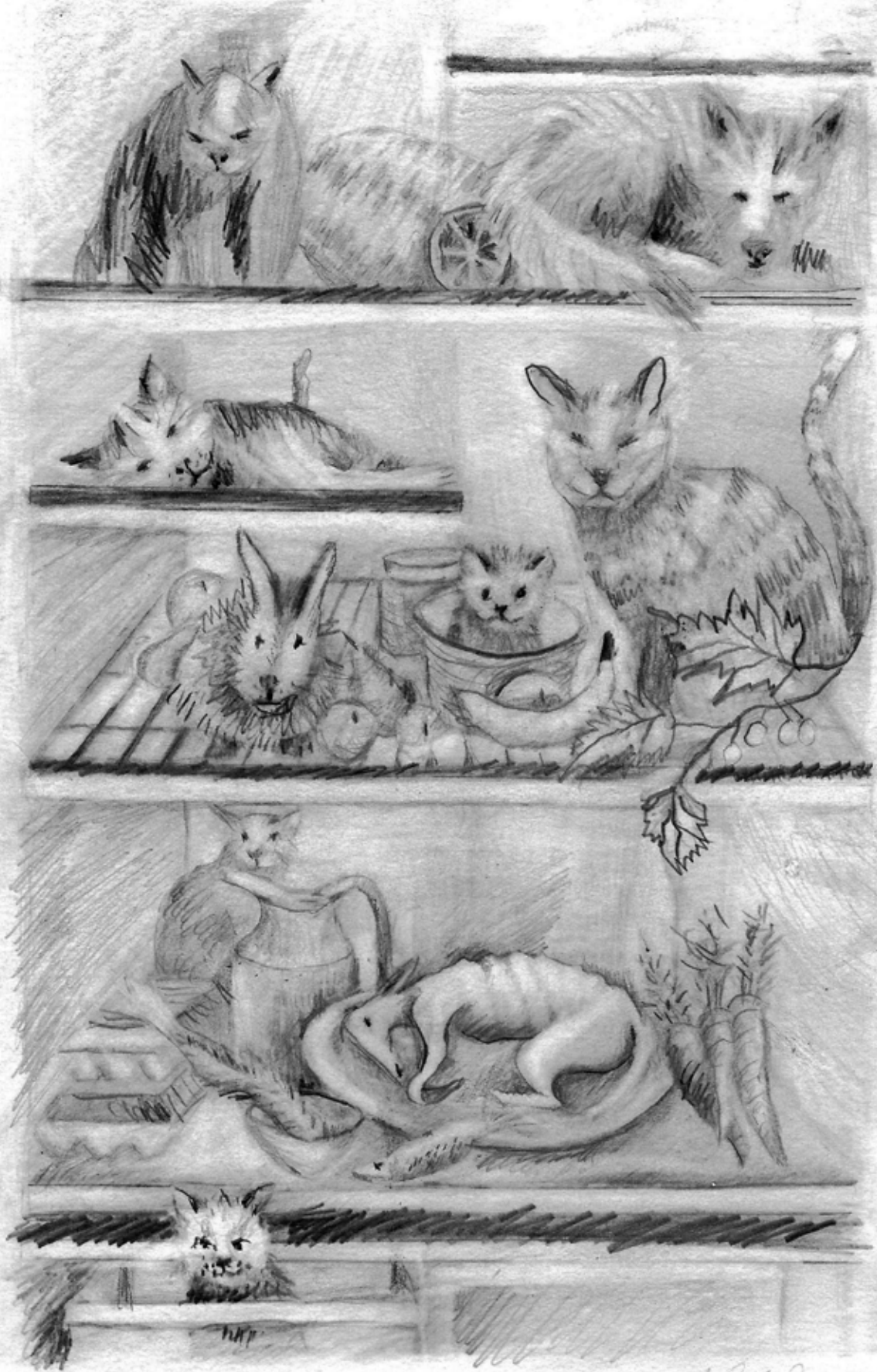
DRAWING:

LISA MERIDA-PAYTES

Lisa Merida-Paytes holds an M.F.A. from the University of Cincinnati (1997) and a B.F.A. from the Art Academy of Cincinnati (1991). Her work has been featured in exhibitions and publications, regionally, nationally and internationally; it is also currently on loan at the West Chester Hospital in the Women's Medical Suite.

Lisa has written and published her own curriculum, *Special Studio Teaching Manual Series: Preserving Memories with Paperclay*, an Art-to-Art Palette Books publication. Her work has been included in and written about in many prestigious journals and publications.

Contact: spaytes@fuse.net



Ruby 2015

at our house

at our house
we do not eat
CATS
no, would not think
to do that

also, we
do not eat our
DOGS
oh, that would be
inhumane

we draw lines
to specify
CREATURES
which are the ones
for eating

it's alright
to consume a
PIG
a less cuddly
animal

we raze our
forests to raise
CATTLE
to put meat on
our table

if markets
did not provide
CHICKENS
feathers would fly
guaranteed

if it's wild
we call it fair
GAME
which sounds very
logical

at our house
we coddle our
PETS
while feasting on
those others

across the border

just across the border
sitting amid squalor
I and thousands others
contemplate our losses

why it was not sacrosanct
our going on living
as we wanted and where
we wanted to be at home

how they could take away
our freedom of movement
make void our image
of where contentment lies

they've done it so often
built walls and spread fences
sowed barbed wire and land mines
claimed there's no vacancy

why do they sign off on
fabricated tenets
mindless chauvinism
arrogant bigotry

as if with a stiff neck
you can deny reason
employ rigidity
to thwart basic desires

but, why do we only question
sit idly in the blowing sand
what's left to lose
if we take the sword in hand

just across the border
housed and well-fed
they and thousands others
ought not feel safe in bed

POEMS:

KEVIN C. MCHUGH

After teaching writing for over thirty years, Kevin C. McHugh served as proofreading/copy manager for local offices of international branding agencies.

He currently works as a freelance editor, writer and proofreader. Kevin is the author of professional and historical articles, an editor of/contributor to poetry collections, literature and writing texts. He lives in Cincinnati with his wife Chris.

Contact: ader@hotmail.com

ROBYN STONE-KRAFT

Robyn Stone-Kraft, an aspiring crazy cat lady and yarn collector, sometimes takes a break from being warm blooded furniture to work and write. She heads the Poetry Division at Oloris Publishing. Her poetry collection, *Uncertain Rustling*, is being released as a second edition in April 2015 when her second book of poetry, *The Emperor and His Rose Garden*, will also be published.

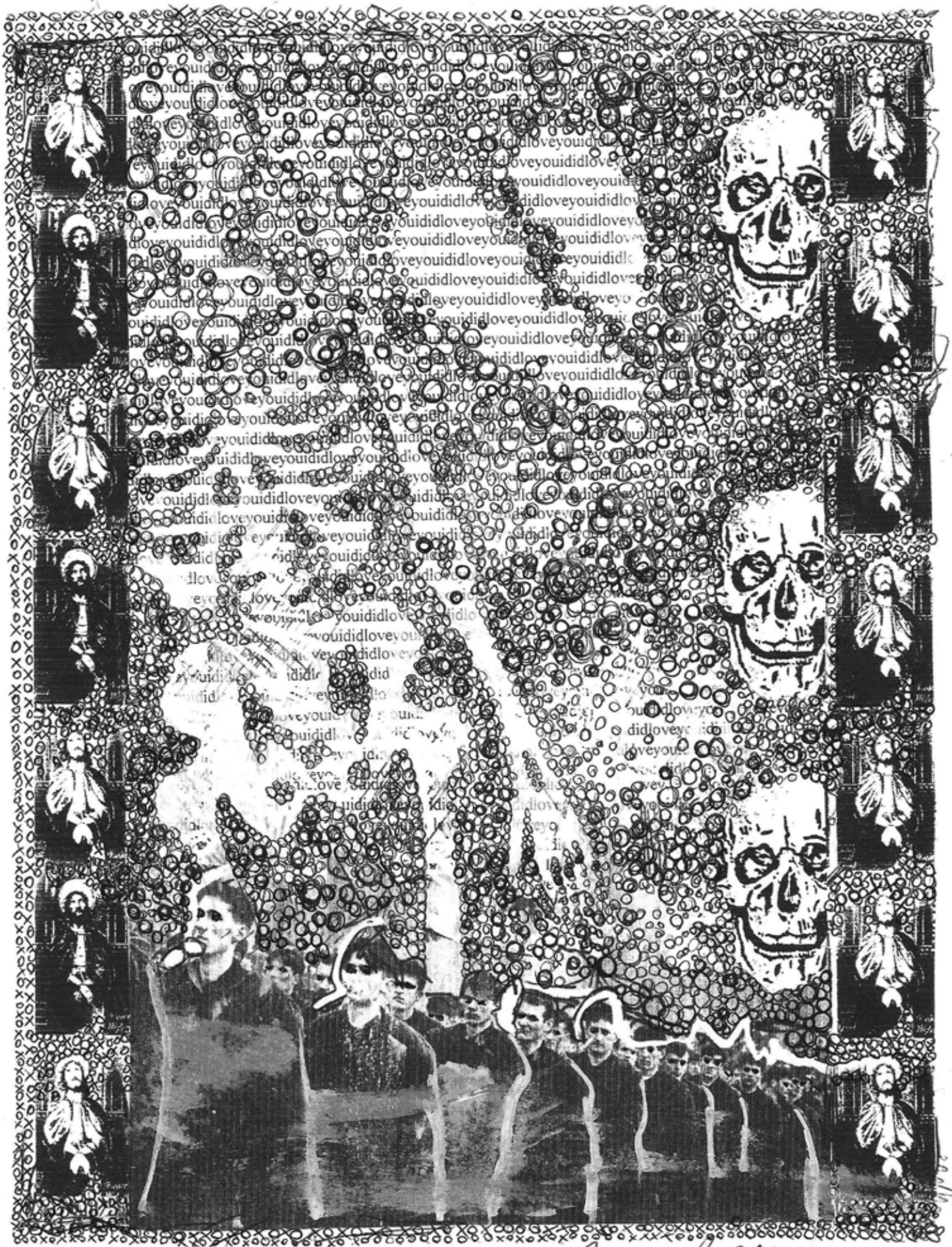
Contact: rstone0904@gmail.com

DRAWING:

FARRON ALLEN

Farron Allen grew up in the mountains of West Virginia, the product of three generations of coalminers. He currently teaches Sculpture Foundry at the University of Cincinnati.

Contact: allenfl@ucmail.uc.edu



Janel Allen 2015

Pretenders, Young and Old*

(by *Kevin C. McHugh*)

The snare drums rattle across
the riot of fractured years.
Their racket carries on and on
and on so it forces us to do the same.
To persevere. To dare to hope
that the persistence of the pauses -
the fitful echoes of quiet between
each cadence call to arms -
is growing. And in each breath
to hear anew, a silent refrain.

This is the unremembered memory.
The sometimes stillness that pacifies
but mocks us too in the "Extras!" -
the obscenities of old 24/7 news.

We have supped full of horrors.
And so at last we turn to prayer,
beseeching by any and by all means
the panoply of God that this,
this abomination is not by God
just one more all too familiar
rerun of war to end all wars.
Another naïve entr'acte before
the messianic miasma rises
from the muck and gut
like the gorge, like the walking dead
of modern media and ancient myth -
to sanctify the current chaos.
Are we so hard-wired to be
throughout time the atavistic brutes
who fall prey to the pretense
of *cleansing* social *solutions* and
engineering, *inquisitions*,
and *jihads* du jour?

Still, the silence summons us.
A memory as antique as the first
Paleolithic stone cast by all
that for every Cain there is an Abel.
A heavenly legion of brothers
and sisters who give witness to the calm,
able to prove for all and for all time
that we not only can forget to remember
but remember as well to forget.

Or Hope, Or Need

(by *Robyn Stone-Kraft*)

Things are getting better
I think.
But how can I
know when I am
one person
and there is
so much misinformation.
So many lies, so
much fear.
Much unneeded, much
needed.
When a girl
gets shot in the head for
wanting to learn.
When girls get
abducted
for going to school.
When hate speech
claims freedom of speech-
successfully.
It's hard to move
beyond the dark, to
see the tidal wave of
change, of
hope.
It is real -
I think.
Or hope.
Or need.

**(The Pretenders, the sons of the deposed King James II (Stuart) of England, brought nothing but death and destruction to the Scots who fought disastrously to restore the Stuart kings but pined for them nonetheless in romantic ballads such as "Will Ye No Come Back Again?")*

POEM:

JUSTIN MOORE

Justin Patrick Moore is a writer concerned with dreams, magic, art and culture at the end of the industrial age. His writing looks at ways to effect the near-to-long term future during this time of ongoing collapse within the Anglo-Imperialist hegemony. Justin realizes that the years ahead are critical moments for Western civilization in deciding how to respond to the converging crises of climate challenge, political fallout, and cultural death.

Contact: justinpatrickdreamer@gmail.com; www.sothismedias.com

DRAWING:

DAVID BIRKEY

Originally from Indiana, David Birkey attended the Art Academy of Cincinnati. After graduating he spent two years restoring elaborately painted ceilings in a big old house in Walnut Hills. Eventually finding his way back to his home state, David now shares a sunny studio with his wife where he enjoys hand lettering, illustration and painting strange scenes often featuring figures clad in animal-esque spacesuits.

Contact: info@davidbirkey.com



DAVID BIRKEY

poured down the sink
with all the crap from the hole that stinks

all creep into this divided basin
the east side from the west side
pigskin tiger pelts are our pride
in this pork chop metropolis.

False industry hides behind its tail.

Even the good ol' boys
in the Mill Creek Yacht Club
have a hard time setting sail.
Those boys gotta make sure
they got all their doctors shots
keep their immunity up.

Cause you ain't recovered
from your days as an open sewer
& you sure did stank it up.

III.

Underneath the bridge
sad old bums set up camp to sleep
next to sad twenty-something bums
who stay up all night, to keep warm
on burned shipping pallets
tomorrow, maybe, brings better luck
sign flying, hitching out his thumb
for someone to pluck a few singles from their wallet
& place into a worn out Starbucks cup.

The forks in the road of fate seem as dry
as Dry Fork Creek in high July
& these fellas are just as thirsty
enough to make a grown man cry.

Living broke off the Mill Creek is hard work
fishing for carp with nylon lines
all those bones to pick, like with Fred
who they had to kick out of camp
as he was fixin' to bring the popo down on their heads
what with his needles & all, & no thread
anyhow, it ain't like america's got a shortage of tramps.
It's been a long time since the stream was full of trout.

But the down & out? We got that.
The wretched & tired, deep fried & true
we got them too. The poor from the harbor
the tempest-tost masses new to these shores
just up from West Virginia's door, last of the
mountains
removed, yearning to breathe
free from the coal dust, but ain't no jobs
up here, no more, no more, no, no.

Floater is what the coroners get
when persons unknown hit the road
& they get dragged up onto the ridge.
It's a pretty short bridge. So did they jump
into your thick cut loins lined with concrete
slabs?

Prefab answers just won't do
when pulling jagged glass out of soles.
Children, you gotta wear your shoes!

& remember, don't drink the water.

POEMS:

DIEGO MORA

Diego Mora (1983), Vásquez de Coronado, Central America, is a writer, docent and investigator, currently pursuing a doctorate in Latinoamerican cultural studies at the University of Cincinnati. Diego holds a Master's degree in Latinoamerican Literature (State University of New Mexico) and is licensed in Psychology (University of Costa Rica). He has published among others: *Tótem Suburbano*, San José, 2006. *Estación Tropical*, Guatemala, 2010; *Educación con Medios*, Berlín, 2011; *facebookatura*, ebook, Amazon, 2012; *Las meseras del Park Ave Cafe*, México DF, 2013; *Peter Pan 220*, Quito, 2014.

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DRAWING:

HOLLAND DAVIDSON

Born in St Petersburg, Florida, Holland Davidson has been living in Cincinnati since 1983. A well established visual artist, she earned a BA degree in Fine Arts at USF/Tampa (1982). Holland has received several awards for her work which has been exhibited nationally and internationally, and which is part of private and public collections, including the permanent collection of the Cincinnati Art Museum.

Contact: hollanddavidson@yahoo.com



The Red Path

By the red path
we see the huts and the smoke
By the red path
go up the old tribes
in search of their land
By the red path
one sees in the distance the path
even more red
And the dry leaves
merge with the red path
because the path is red
oxygenated blood
that feeds our steps
The spirits dance
on the branches
like a tide of wind
By the red path
appears the river
winding around the mountains
and we go down the red path satisfied
because below awaits the red earth

Káspaspa*

There are some who speak of cataclysms
of celestial hecatombs
that the earth will break
at any time
with no sustainable alternatives
to be happy

There is the one who expects the moon
to shine no more
who ignores every internal voice
those who stick to the walls
like city dust

I write these verses
lulled by sea currents
this littoral riddled with vital signs
where everything speaks to me of survival

I agree with the stars
like grains of sand

Camino Rojo

*Por el camino rojo
miramos las chozas y el humo
Por el camino rojo
suben las viejas tribus
en busca de su tierra
Por el camino rojo
se ve a lo lejos el camino
aún más rojo
Y las hojas secas
se confunden con el camino rojo
porque el camino es rojo
sangre oxigenada
que alimenta nuestros pasos
Los espíritus danzan
sobre las ramas
como una marea de viento
Por el camino rojo
aparece el río
serpenteando montañas
y bajamos el camino rojo satisfechos
porque abajo espera la tierra roja*

Káspaspa*

*Hay quienes hablan de cataclismos
hecatombes celestiales
que la tierra se parte
en cualquier momento
sin alternativas sostenibles
para ser feliz*

*Hay quien espera que la luna
no brille más
quien ignora toda voz interna
los que se adhieren a las paredes
como polvo de ciudad*

*Yo escribo estos versos
arrullado por corrientes marítimas
este litoral plagado de signos vitales
donde todo me habla de supervivencia*

*Me comprometo con los astros
como granos de arena*

I leave testimony of this world
decided to endure
while there is someone who defends it
who lets the time pass
unnumbered

The passage of people like footprints
absorbed by the tide
the invisible sound of cicadas
the discrete solitude of mountain ranges
to land at sunset in an abandoned port

The cry of the mother giving birth
peaks on each coast
wind that creeps
loaded with the voices
of everything that moves
with the will of others

We are therefore to attest to life
to defend ourselves of death
with all that we still are

**(Monte Verde in bribri)*

*dejo testimonio de este mundo
decidido a perdurar
mientras haya quien lo defienda
quien deje transcurrir el tiempo
sin numeración*

*El paso de la gente como huellas
absorbidas por la marea
ruido invisible de chicharras
la discreta soledad de las cordilleras
atardecer en un puerto abandonado*

*El clamor de la madre pariendo
crestas en cada costa
viento que se arrastra
cargado de voces
de todo lo que se mueve
con voluntad ajena*

*Estamos pues para dar fe de vida
para defendernos de la muerte
con todo esto que aún somos*

**(Monte Verde en bribri)*

(poems translated from Spanish by
Saad Ghosn)

POEMS:

COURTNEY NELTNER

Courtney Neltner, a Northern Kentucky native and sophomore at Thomas More College, is pursuing BAs in English, History, and International Studies and an AA in Spanish. Her primary interests include Victorian culture and creative writing.

She has received the Appalachia Poetry Award in WORDS (2014) and the Appalachia Pros Award in WORDS (2015).

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SUSAN E. SMITH

Susan E. Smith is a teacher, tutor, mother and caregiver. She gets lost in books, symphonies and baking cookies. This is her 2nd time inclusion in the “For a Better World” series.

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DRAWING:

CHRISTINE BARRON

Christine, raised in Northeast Ohio, is a recent graduate of the University of Cincinnati's school of fine arts. She studied printmaking, foundry and illustration, and her works in these media are inspired by authors such as Neil Gaiman and Clive Barker as well as by her interest in animals, insects, and anatomy. Fantasy and mythology are predominant themes in her art. Christine currently lives in Fairview, OH, with three cats and two snakes.

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The Voice of the Ringmaster

(by **Courtney Neltner**)

*Come one, come all,
to the greatest, most amazing,
funniest, scariest, breathtaking
performance you've ever SEEN!*

In the circus,
only one voice, one man matters
He brings the business,
calls the shots

*We've got it ALL!
Elephants, fire-eaters,
strong men, trapezists,
clowns, mystics, and midgets!*

It's he who holds our lives
tight, oppressive grip
Don't leave- he'll ruin you,
don't complain- he'll cut your act

*Have your palm read,
watch the breathtaking show,
or try some of our world-
famous roasted peanuts!*

Master puppeteer
pulls the strings-
We jump,
happy and smiling
for waiting faces

*How about you, little girl?
You ever seen a LADY
with a beard? Or a man
with eight fingers on ONE hand?*

Like he says,
we'll always be freaks,
so why not his?
Besides,
reality is too cruel

Who's ready for a GOOD time?

History Unrepentant

(by **Susan E. Smith**)

With a confident denial
Of any difficult reality,
A stubborn linear thinking
Born of this country's roots;
The brashness of an adolescent democracy.
We declare: We are America!

Imaginations
Allowed to bolt,
Unbound and unrealistic,
Infusing the great communal delusion of social dis-
course
With boring, dangerous inanities.
We tweet: Solvency!

Pasts are lost, gone without reflection,
Morals are unspoken,
The stinging lessons lost.
Elders cry knowing veracities,
Outstretch loving arms from sidelines,
Knowing all too well the paths ahead.
They whisper: Take care!

But America's race is underway.
Ahead is the only thing.
Heedless go our leaders,
Arguing for entitlements born in minds
That consider familial legacies, political gain and
strong, market increases.
They shout: Good for all!

So many left behind,
Crippled in poverty:
From temerarious execution, poor choices, bad luck.
Faults are many,
Viewed through the critical lenses of those who can-
not conceive.
Charitable donations well accepted, poorly funded.
Not the people to sit with at table.
Not the people from whom we need to learn.
Not the people we need to listen to.
From them: Nothing at all.

POEMS:

TERRY PETERSEN

Terry Petersen writes with the purpose of diving into the much of life and coming up with a gem. Her short stories can be found at <http://pikerpress.com> and she maintains a blog about positive thinking at <http://terrypetersen.wordpress.com>. Her first book, a middle-grade chapter book, will be coming out later this year.

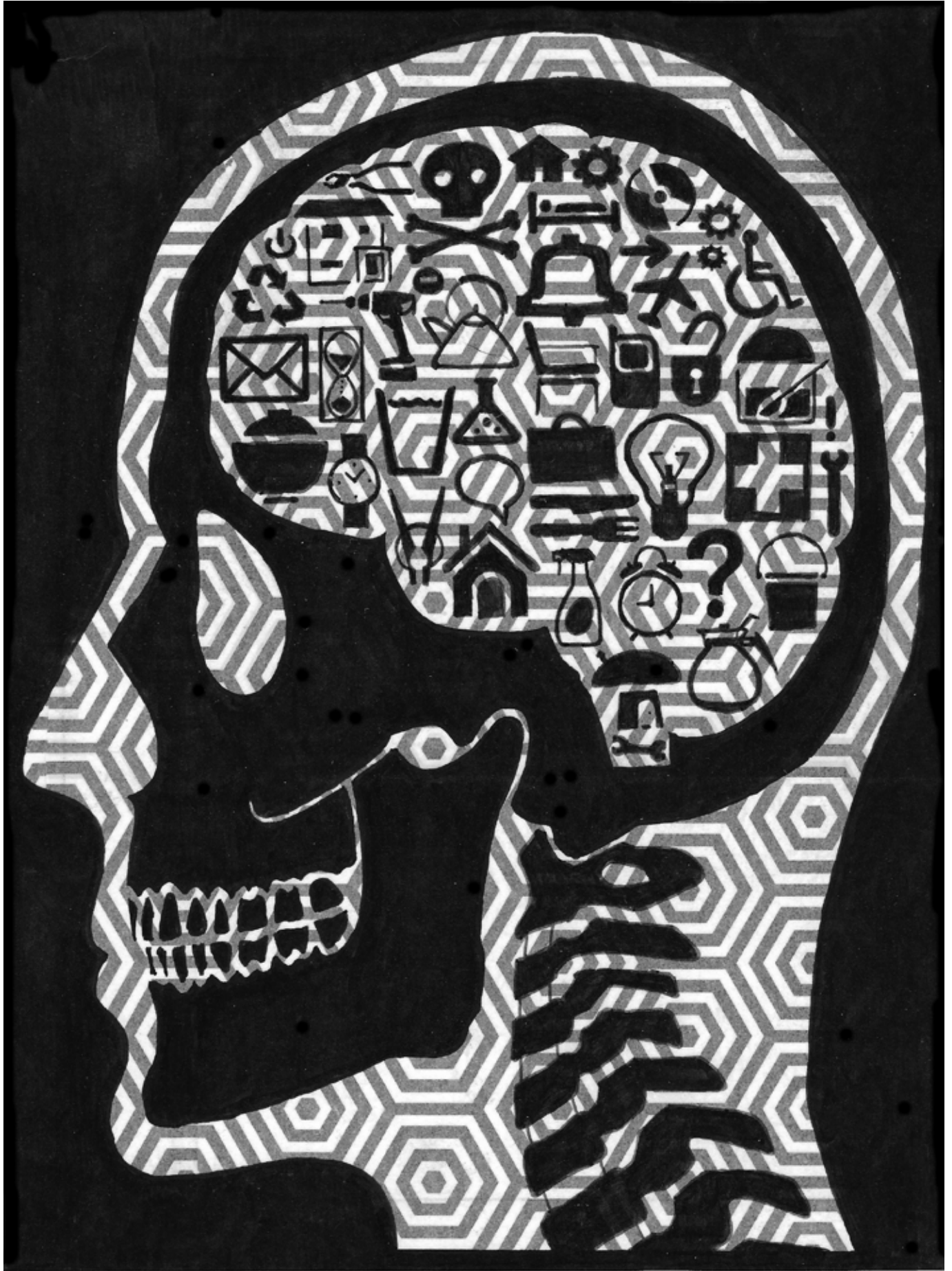
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DRAWING:

JONPAUL SMITH

Jonpaul Smith, born in Logansport, Indiana, received a B.A. from Hanover College and an M.F.A. and graduate certificate in museum studies from the University of Cincinnati, DAAP. Jonpaul is currently the working artist in residence at Tiger Lily Press in Cincinnati, Ohio. His work has been exhibited extensively and he is represented in private and public collections, nationally and internationally.

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Jonathan Smith

The Neighborhood, Delicatessen, and Baby Squirrel

I hold my delicatessen number as if it had first-class boarding-pass value.
No neat queue waits for meat and cheese sliced as if
a thousandth-of-a-millimeter difference per slice mattered.
Customers stand scattered.
The woman with the number before mine
buys one slice of bologna. I wonder if that is all she can afford.
Her cart holds one marked-down loaf of generic white bread.

My thoughts wander to a neighbor.
Yesterday he asked my husband for a small loan.
This man performs chores for sub-adequate fees.
I want to contact him, give him a small job,
call the score even, then give him a tip.

I know the cashier. She rescued a baby squirrel after a predator
snapped off his mother's head. I ask how he is.
Died on Monday, she answers. She continues to scan my purchases
I tell her she did her best.

And we agree we can't save the world
yet can't stop trying.
I notice her silent tears but don't mention them.
My neighbor's phone number
is pegged on my home corkboard. Earlier, when I called
to offer him a gift, some loaves of bread,
more than what we needed,
his number had been disconnected. I nod
We can't stop trying.

Survival Stories

My sister died when she was three,
a fellow water aerobics class member tells me.
A brain tumor. The power of his words
blends with pool water as if it contained
a vat of long-ago tears instead of chlorine,
opened again, joined with other great losses.

I wonder what his sister looked like,
the bond he had with her,
one child sitting next to another
in a family photo, that space emptied, stolen.

Other seniors have told me their stories
as we kick higher than we could on land

and run from one end of the pool to the other.
The water allows us to open the past
and empty it into churned waves.

One of my pool friends had a vital, strong husband.
Then he had a stroke—never fully recovered.
She found the better part of herself.

I allow the water to seduce me
into believing all is well since I can kick
to the surface of the water, leap back, sideways.
I don't always choose to listen before speaking.

That's my husband.

I tell a woman next to me
about his humor, his way with practical matters.
I continue to brag until she tells me
her husband died when they were newly married.

My words have already escaped.
An opportunity to hear remains.
The water accepts, is ready. So am I.

Tell me about him.

Family Values

Nephew flinches as Uncle drops a fork
onto a metal plate. It responds with a shrill ping.
Uncle grumbles, *There's dried dog food on
these tines.*

The waiter steps away from an adjoining table
where a young woman feeds
a girl in a wheelchair.

No excuse for this, Uncle says.
The waiter offers to get him fresh silverware.
Nephew sends the waiter a silent eye-rolling apology.

He cuts his salad into small bites,
his focus on beans and rice while
Uncle speaks about how the nation has lost

family values, allowing abortion clinics,
gay marriage, welfare for fools. Uncle slices filet mignon
and complains about the quality of his chardonnay.

Uncle leaves a two-dollar tip.
Nephew drops a twenty on top of it.
Uncle smirks. *Insane.*
*You don't have the funds to support
a hamster.*

Nephew nods toward the adjoining table.
Meet the waiter's wife and daughter.
They live in the apartment behind mine.

See you at the next town hall meeting,
Lyle, he calls to the waiter.
Family values, he whispers to Uncle.

POEMS:

NICOLE RAHE

Nicole Rahe, a native of Cincinnati, OH, is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Writers' League. She balances time writing while raising three young children with her husband. Nicole works in the auto industry and wishes all to embrace peace and justice.

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MICHELE WRIGHT

Michele Pam Wright is the author of four children's books based on the seasons. She has over 20 years of experience as a graphic designer and photographer and lives in Ft. Thomas, Kentucky, with her family.

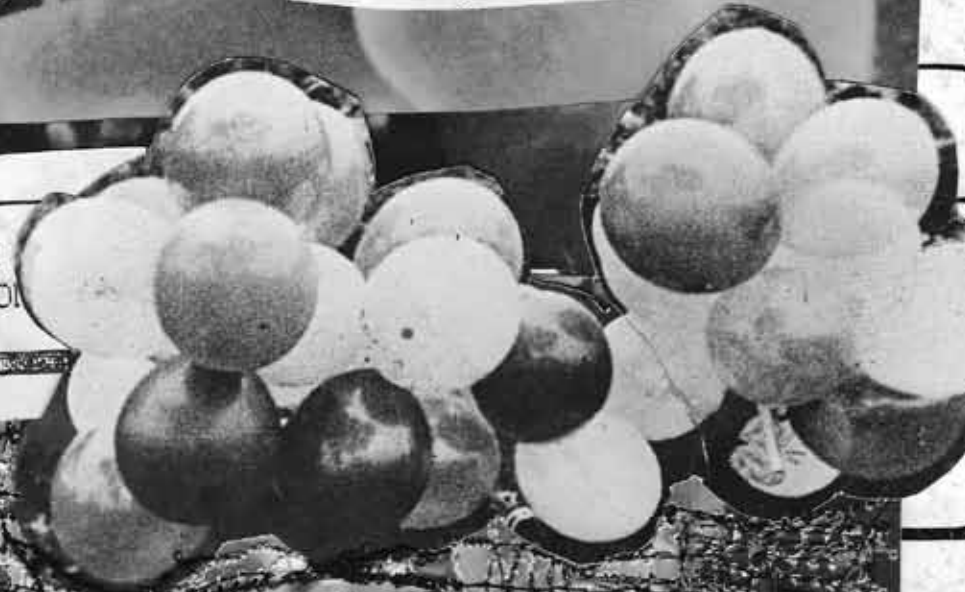
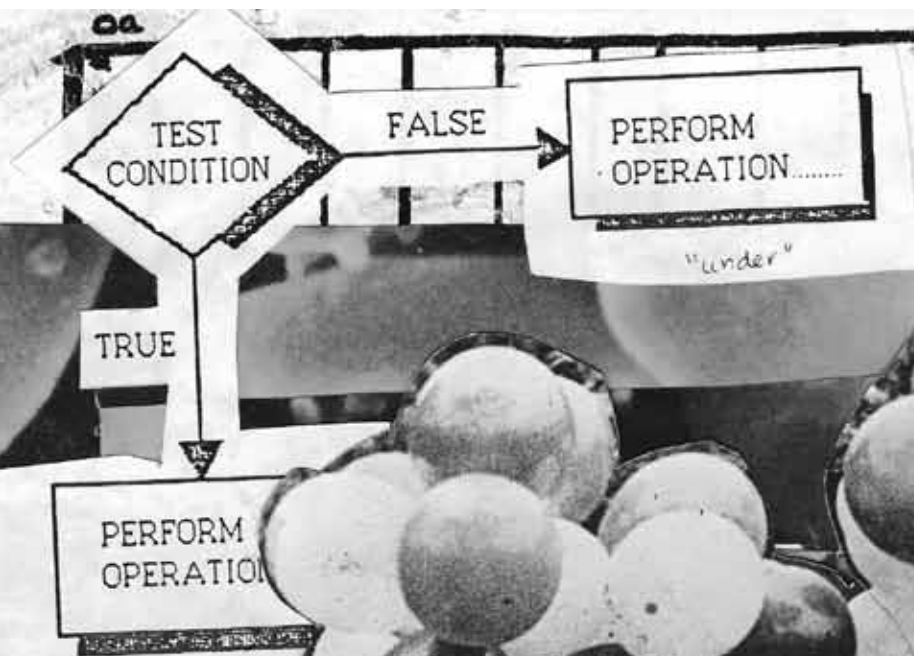
Contact: mwright@wrightdesigns.com

DRAWING:

ABIGAIL FRIEND

Abigail Friend is a visual artist with a BFA in fine arts from the University of Cincinnati. Her work deals with issues of social and environmental justice through a critical feminist lens.

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PART NAME
 ACE TONE
 20 Liter

Indeed, isn't it the hurt child (of yesterday that makes for the dysfunctional adult of today?

ER
 ONLY
 BUBBLES
 FED
 64

Handwritten signature or initials

without fear, a conference

(by *Nicole Rahe*)

the heart shaped placard lay
on a tray surrounded by blue
hibiscus five women fumbled
to find Table 16
as strangers, they sat down
cuddling sleeping babes
nursing to calm the littlest ones
and one contentedly rested
her hands on her swelling belly
but no one knew how
to start the plastic box passed
hand to hand each taking up
the stick scratching words in white
and black grains of sand

Fear. Trauma. the Last. the Lost. Regret.

stories drained out of mouths
wet clumps pushed between their teeth
past their tongues to fall on the table
these women, these mothers
speaking out where the world had failed
where the shift from mother to medicine
cut into soul and body
we wiped away the shards
the minute glass
embedded under our skin
we had given away our voices
lost our choices but were here
to believe again
in birth in nature in self
five women created a village
and found peace

Mr. didn't fix it

(by *Nicole Rahe*)

miles of sand sought refuge
in the blue and gold horizon
leaving those on shore with no where

to stand. man stepped in
flying ivory grains to the new edge
of water, rebuilding nature's dam

after the hurricanes hit. white
beaches with dunes mounded
high and long were decimated. now

the sea oats are stubble
on the chin of a beard grown
from human determination.

but maybe, some things were meant to run
toward greater depths maybe
some grains need to seek

the bottom of the sea
maybe some man cannot rebuild
what mother has torn away.

Broken Shells

(by *Michele Wright*)

Pale moon floats
over the sea
drifting on
waves of fury

The foam
left behind
casualties of
crashing rhythms

Grains of sand
part of the whole
forgetting their
common core

Sea of tears
trace familiar paths
Broken shells
tell the story

POEMS:

MAXWELL REDDER

Maxwell Redder is a native Cincinnati who graduated from the University of Cincinnati's school of Art with a Bachelors of Fine Arts. Maxwell is a constant observer of surrounding, including the way light reflects off of objects, the way sound dances in waves because of its joyous freedom, the way war never really helps anything. ..

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GWYNETH STEWART

Gwyneth Stewart is a recovering attorney and practicing poet. She wrote reams as a young girl, but then gave it up for more 'serious' pursuits, only to come back to it when she turned 40. Her work has been published in the Ohio Poetry Day Anthology and in Thomas More College's literary journal, Words.

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DRAWING:

GARY GAFFNEY

Gary Gaffney is a multi-media artist and Professor Emeritus at the Art Academy of Cincinnati.

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Worn Leather Brown

(by *Maxwell Redder*)

The soft spoken beggar's eyes
laden amongst a city of suits
who pass without smile, met with mine.
Worn, leather brown in color,
crooning without words; requesting
crumbs of respect. They could cause
a sinkhole just by staring at the road.
They had a smoldering lightness,
like a child writing letters on the wine-stained
sky with a lit and dancing Sparkler.

They met with mine; such power
held in eye contact. They were two shades
brighter than her worn leather skin.
They harvested sensitivity
from suburban mothers and fathers with lips
held firm between smile and frown.
They were dedicated like an osprey
with its meal: a fish venturing too near surface.
They transcended time like a mosquito
stuck in amber.

The soft spoken beggar's eyes
had the suction of sponges resting
in a moss bed; pulling clumsily
at water droplets. They pulled at mine.
They walloped me and skirted past
forgetting my face and hat, hair and glasses,
eyes and mouth. They gave me a chance.
They saw I could not help, not even change.
Immediately darting to the next pupils,
forgetting that they ever met with mine.

The Gospel of Trees

(by *Gwyneth Stewart*)

I believe in the gospel of trees
who start small, reach deep

who create beauty for no reason—
blaze in fall, blush in spring

in summer, lush and languid
in winter, stark calligraphy

who shelter and nourish
beetle, nuthatch, squirrel

who lose limbs and keep growing
give fruit to the hand that prunes

who breathe in our faults
exhale forgiveness

who befriend the lonely child
provide places to be lost and found

who dance standing still, weather
storms, ponder all in their hearts

who rise up from cut stumps
even in death, nurse life

who show us we need not hurry.

Free speech

(by *Gwyneth Stewart*)

What would you say
if you knew your words
would not be tripped, trapped,
left shivering, alone and lost,
far from home?

If you knew they could slip
in softly, the way rain
comes to spring
forests, rests a while
on leaf and needle
continues down
branch and trunk,
to silent moss
that absorbs
the sound
of falling
so fully,
the birds
never stop
singing?

POEMS:

MARY ANNE REESE

Mary Anne Reese is a Cincinnati attorney and writer. Her latest poetry chapbook is *Down Deep* (Finishing Line Press 2014). She also has poetry and essays published or forthcoming in journals such as *Sojourners*, *America*, *The Licking River Review*, *St. Katherine Review*, and *Still: The Appalachian Journal*.

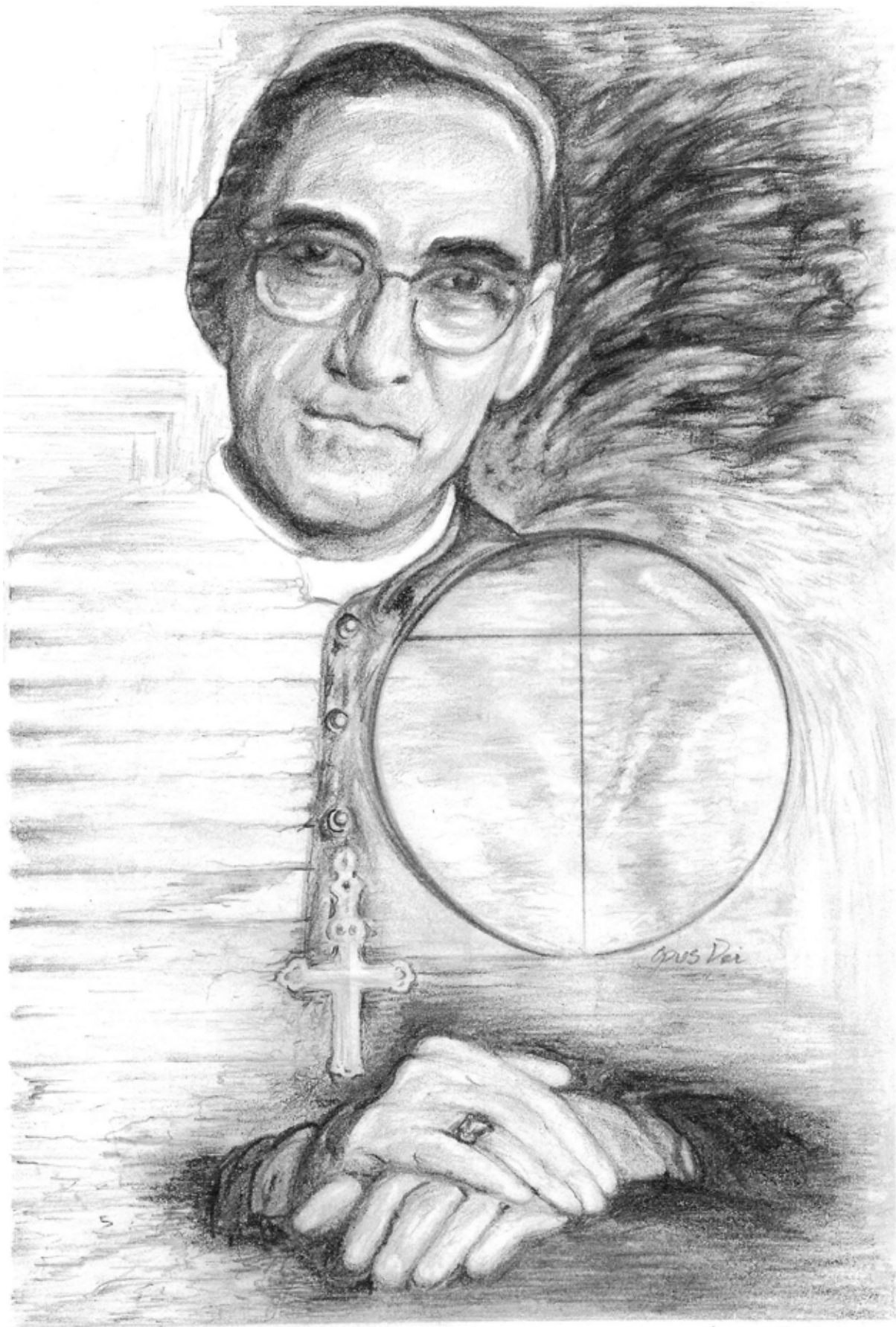
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DRAWING:

ALEXANDRA BERRY

Alexandra Berry, a 24-year-old native of Cincinnati, Ohio, is Graduate of Wake Forest University with a BA in Psychology and minors in both Sociology and Studio Art (2013) and Graduate of Wake Forest University School of Law with a Master's of Studies in Law (2014). She is currently enrolled at the University of Cincinnati College of Law (Class of 2018). A member of the Tiger Lily Press since 2014, Alexandra's medium is Intaglio Printmaking. She works mainly with copper plates using mostly drypoint, mezzotint, electric stippling, and burnishing. Alexandra also draws and paints

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gus pai

Ally Berg

You Are Responsible for Your Wake

--sign on an Annapolis dock

Hey you, atop three decks
of yacht, you are responsible
for loud engines and waves
that ripple out behind you
rocking every floating thing.
You are responsible
for this high-speed chase
across the harbor, where sunfish
leap out of their scales
and seagulls flee their feathers.
You are responsible
for the nuclear reactor that boils
this bay into a cauldron, raids
crabpots and leaves oyster
beds unmade. The end is near,
nearer my god and you,

you are responsible for your wake.

Archbishop Romero's Alb Speaks

*(Alb: A white liturgical tunic worn as prayer
for a heart protected from all stain and
washed in the Blood of the Lamb. Romero
was wearing an alb when he was assassinated.)*

He is not the only one pierced today.

I hold his body, gentle as linen,
surround him in my arms of flowing cloth:
a *pietà* in fabric and in flesh.
I remain with him, faithful,
as I have done since he was young.
Sorrow tears at the fiber of my being.

Decades ago when he lay prostrate
at the altar, we two were consecrated,
or fates interwoven. Since then, I have dressed
him in light white as the bread he lifted up,
bright as the rays of tropic sun shining
from his golden cup onto the crowds
of *campesinos* pressing close.

Now he lies at the altar once again.

I hold him still, but I have failed
to keep him free of stain or cleansed.
We both are soaked in the blood
flowing from his heart, his mouth,
his ears.
My grief cannot blot out a mortal wound.
I protect, but I am not bullet-proof.

Sin

You detonate
ten thousand
tons of dynamite
inside my skull.
Shards of bone
and brain
rain down.
You rattle
my house,
dislodge huge
rocks, bury
hardwood
memory.
You poison
the headwaters
of my blood,
leave dust
where skin
once lived.
All to expose
a thin dark
seam within.

POEMS:

SHERRY COOK 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. Sherry performs Appalachian folk music in a family band, hikes, studies plants and bugs, and conducts tapas and soup-making experiments in her kitchen every fall. She also raises bees and four children.

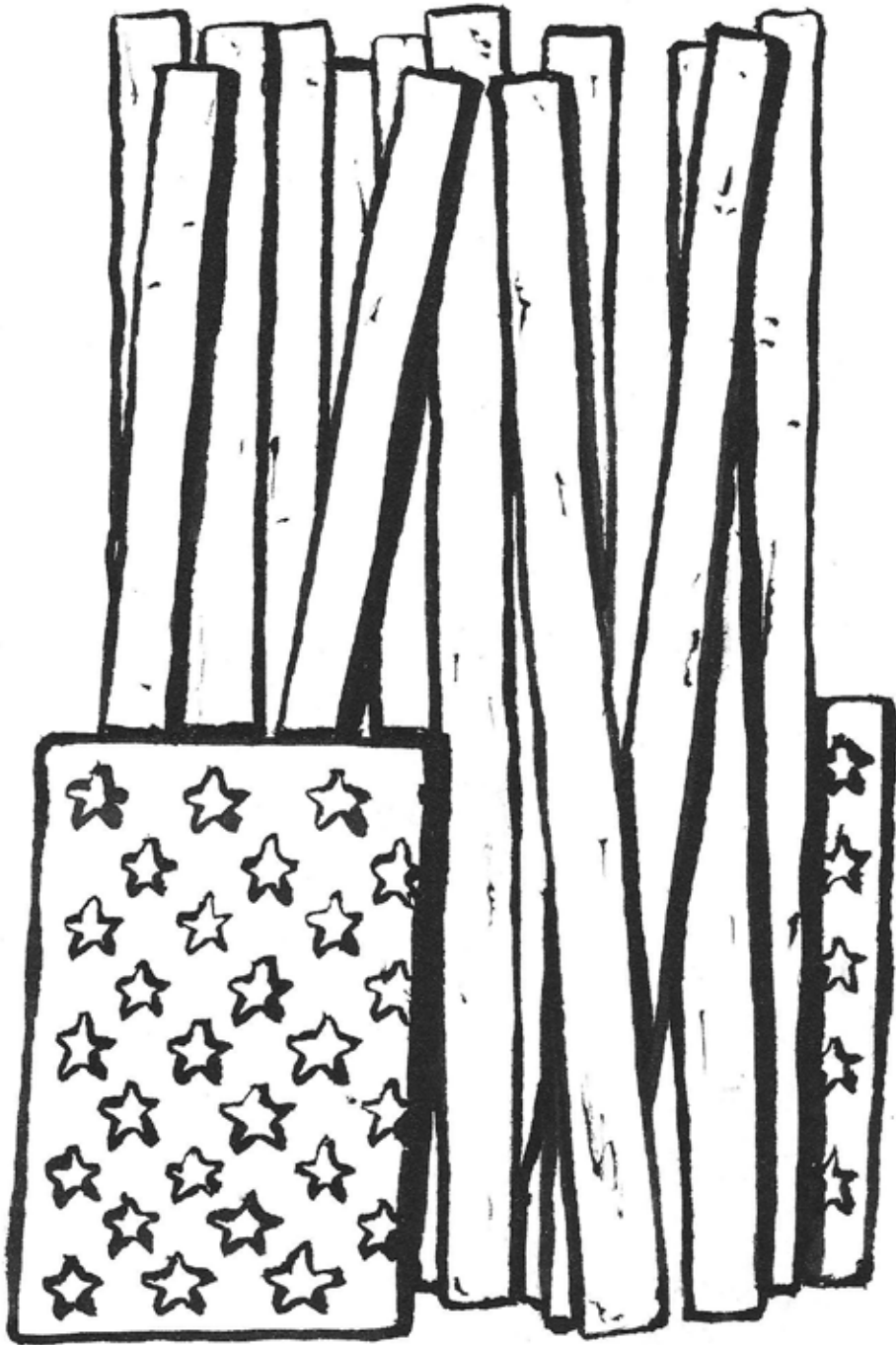
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DRAWING:

JON FLANNERY

Jon Flannery is a designer & printmaker living in Cincinnati, Ohio, working under the studio moniker Cryptogram. Graduating from the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 2009 (printmaking BFA), he has since been injecting print-heavy methodologies into client and self-initiated projects across the board. Rather than siphoning inspiration solely from other design and artwork, Jon's approach to design is intrinsically simple: open yourself to the everyday world around you, and strain it through your personal filter that is life's experience.

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JON FLANNERY '15

Yet, You Are My Mother

I am holding a telepathic interview with you, America. Your time has come. I am right here in the bed you've made for carrying out your long, hard labor. You sigh and pant white noise, pop out a squalling screen hungry generation of children tweeting about the true miracles you've spawned. Sing lullabies for genetically modified wheat tops waving, sing of oceans rolling in rainbow slicks and snow cone melting majesties, fruit of your womb choked to blue. Yet, you are my mother—I sprang from you. Who will rock the cradle, sing the song, croon poetry's secrets when you (we) are gone? See me there hobbling the last hill dazzled with ironweed and purple clover? I am bent, boned down and toothless except for these words I've learned to whittle into a stick for poking into factory-farm conveyors, for picking the locks of your black-packed chicken houses fast-feeding us all. I am flesh of your flesh swinging from cyber wires, floating above your dozer-pitted sludgescapes, shrieking and hungry for your kindest milk. I have unswaddled myself from the binding shrouds and I am wailing for you over and over again to cradle me close against your pulsing heart. Do you hear me? Virtual monsters hide in the shadows, waiting for you to send them away. You are my living mother. I love you. I want you to hold on to me, singing and shining. What can I do, America, so that you'll walk in beauty singing, shining your light in a way that means you'll never let go?

Las Calles de Granada

Shoeshine boy stretches out on the doorstep, palms up, slivers of earliest sun woven through his blackened fingers. At his side, the bone-strung dog snoozes, too, paws tucked under his belly, both dreaming in twitches.

Afternoon moneychangers slap *córdobas* into a stack for a man in linen pants, sports sandals—only a few coins buy *un cigarro*—smoking blue, sipping amber shots, he says no to the ocarina boy without looking up from the map

En las calles, dust blows asthma, *gripe*. Abuela's cat bite will not heal, the baby won't feed. Brigade docs and students dole out free antibiotics and rice as the hot dry thumb presses down *la mañana*. Two girls race after the truck, catching rainbow candy

Tres diablitos loot the clinic supply box—ointments, balloons and Advil, the last bottles of Vita Roja. In her bad Spanish, La Gringa shouts across cobble stones that their *mamás* would not want greedy *ladrones* for sons. Turning inside her current of words, they laugh, then run

Education Pantoum

They say that an education
is a privilege, not a claim:
the backbone of a nation
equals the content of its brain.

This gift we ache to claim
can now be purchased in most schools
where the content of your brain
is governed by big corporate rules.

If you make your business school,
there is no “seek and ye shall find.”
Just comply with business rules
about your quality of mind.

What you seek and what you find
inside pre-fabricated squares
renders the questions in your mind
irrelevant. Seriously—who cares?

A pre-fabricated square
is a comfortable place to dwell.
Who seriously cares
if what’s outside is going to hell?

You want an easy place to dwell?
Well, make good progress—embrace trends
and don’t complicate things all to hell—
ignore the means, pursue the ends.

The key to progress? Business trends.
You are the backbone of this nation
so stay blind to means. Skip to the ends—
just accept your education.

POEMS:

GARY WALTON

Gary Walton has published seven books of poetry, his latest: *Eschatology Escadrille: Elegies and Other Memorabilia* (Finishing Line Press, 2014). His novel about Newport, Kentucky in its heyday as a gambling Mecca: *Prince of Sin City* was published by Finishing Line Press in 2009. He has been nominated for the Pushcart prize twice and in 2010, was voted Third Place: “Best Local Author” Best of Cincinnati 2010 issue in City Beat magazine.

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DRAWING:

JOHN HANKIEWICZ

John Hankiewicz received an MFA in Printmaking from Miami University, where he currently teaches drawing. His prints have been in several juried shows. Since the mid-`90s, he has been drawing comics. *Asthma*, published in 2006 by Sparkplug Books, collects several of them. *Education*, a book-length comic, was self-published in a limited edition in 2014.

Contact: hankiejm@miamioh.edu



JH

Fear and Loathing: The Last Election

I can't write a poem
About politics -
They are far too distant
Or absurd -

I wish I could sing a sad song
About your son in Afghanistan,
The one with shrapnel in his
Brain from a roadside exploding
Surprise -

Instead, I think I'll watch the stars
Tonight and think how their distant
Light comes from billions of years
Ago - some of them may be dead
By now - some may have expired
Eons before I was born -

Later, I might watch Chrissie Hynde
On the telly and muse how beautiful
She is at sixty-three and how her music
Makes me wistful, and I wonder how
A girl from Akron escaped the acrid
Life of the tire factories -

And I wish I could divorce myself
From my country as she has done,
And I try not to remember the last
Election when all the wrong people
Won....again -

Instead, I force myself to focus on
How sweet this gewürztraminer is
And how deliciously this gouda,
Camembert and Gruyère compliment
The ruddy sweetness of a late ripe pear

And I pray there is such a thing as
Justice somewhere beyond the sun.

Afterwards

Since he's gone,
She only makes half the bed;
The other remains pristine, if not
Serene, untouched, unsullied,
Though her patch is sullen
Territory, confused, tortured
And unforgiving;

In the closet, his clothes
Hang like bitter memories,
But she can't bear to throw
Them out, although a few
Have been torn by hands
Filled with anger and
Frustration - some simply
Wipe tears when she can't
Resist holding the cloth
Up to her nose to smell
The linger of his aftershave;

This is what life has come to,
Living in these margins, like
Abandoned punctuation in a
Forgotten biography or some
Sentimental novel - this
Is the price one pays for love:
Loving too hard for too long -
God, if he were here now,
She'd kill him for leaving.

The Doomsday Clock

This poem does not want

To think about the Doomsday clock -
Tock. Tick. Clicking its way to

Armageddon, or worse - does not

Want to imagine a world frying
Like a donut hole in the fire of

Oppenheimer's high ball - nor does

It want to hear about those devotees
Who yearn like children at Advent

For the dawn of the Rapture to take

Their giddy souls to a paradise made
Of paper Mache and white paste or

Those chaste pre-martyrs who ache

For 72 heavenly virgins, men who have
Not considered carefully the inevitable

Conversations of their mates at breakfast on the 73rd morning,

Much less a year, a decade, a millennium
Later - nor their thorny subjects: cellulite, menopause,

Male chemical castration. Have these dreamers

Really thought the plan through? Nor does this poem
Want to consider the possibility of a great

Quiet culling caused by some underpaid

Lab assistant at Monsanto tinkering with
The genes of a cumquat when suddenly DNA turns

Vicious convincing all other seeds to change

Utterly until lettuce tastes like the upholstery of
A Buick and an apple crunches like an

Incandescent florescent tube and is as nutritious

As a lug-bolt on an Airstream trailer -
Just three minutes to midnight,

And this poem knows there are many

Paths to Nirvana, but some of them are
Very low roads indeed. Tick. Tock. Sigh.

POEMS:

FRAN WATSON

Fran Watson spent her life on learning, acting, music, painting, writing, and loving her kids. She wouldn't have wanted it any other way.

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NOEL ZEISER

For Noel Zeiser, poetry is a kind of meditation allowing him to understand both the world and himself a little bit better. Noel enjoys reading as well as writing, and tennis and golf aren't too shabby either.

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DRAWING:

ANDREW TREMBLAY

After living and studying in New York City, Andrew Tremblay has returned to Over the Rhine where he works to cultivate a prominent art and music scene for unknown creatives. Andrew has completed his art education at The Art Academy of Cincinnati and works independently pursuing his own business, "ILL" (short for illustration) as well as developing his other creative ambitions. Best known for his pen and ink illustrations, Andrew also works in a variety of other media including painting and sculpture.

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Charly 15

Sunshine

(by *Fran Watson*)

Does the sun ever shine on war?
It seems to flourish in peace, while
muddy fields, and snowy woods
depict the misery of battles, won or lost,
the pain of soldiers, whole or wounded.

Pelting rain, chilling cold, desert sand
are companions in the killing fields,
where mankind should not be facing its God.
Deeds are done here contrary to life,
tinging those innocent perceptions
of home and trust with ambushed violence
that lingers where memories of laughter fail.

Grey photos, turning grayer as they age, chronicle
war,
its players silhouetted aggressively against fog.
Or is it smoke blending with the field of ghosts
as if attempting to camouflage reality?

Perhaps the sunlight shows the red of blood
seeping into blackened soil too stark, too clear,
the flags dropped in battle too sadly brilliant,
the glint on weapons too much like misplaced bling
in this sea of chaos where survival is the only
reward.

And so we save our sun for better things, like peace,
parades, picnics, and Sundays where ordinary folk
know it belongs, and can appreciate its golden rays.
It would hardly be noticed shining on war's savagery.

Manna

(by *Fran Watson*)

Peace in a puddle of water
left behind from last night's storm
to make me see, today, a shred of
clear blue sky, ruffled by fresh breezes,
deepened by reflection and complimented
by the orangey-brown mud that holds it.

We shall never know complete peace
as long as there is profit in war,
but these sweet pockets of momentary
content
are scattered in our paths for respite.
Gather them up like the manna they are
and feed your soul.

I'd Rather

(by *Noel Zeiser*)

I'm tired of all this talk and nobody listening
Let's be silent, you and I, take a walk or climb a tree
We could sit on the swing in our neighbor's yard
Say not a word, just push and glide
Listen to the rush of wind outdoors
Sniff spareribs smoking on a grill
Stare ahead and chew our gum
I've had enough of everyday talk
I'd much rather watch the green grass grow
I'd rather share a quiet cloud somewhere with you

In Our Time

(by **Noel Zeiser**)

Peace sounds oh so lovely and soft
No more than a drifting branch riding on a river's current
A well-deserved time in the sun after a war

Peace is a notion
Foggy sweet to a clueless dreamer
Something wished for, a prize

Peace shifts like a heartache
A puzzle, five thousand pieces
Or fall leaves never finished falling

Peace demands grueling attention
The details hide, stomp, stumble
A languishing nation cannot prevail

Like a bold mountain, peace arrives
Challenging, appealing, dangerous
Yet only the steady climb to the top

An easy peace is a pipedream, but
A courageous peace can be real
For a people with wide open eyes

