

For A 2007 Better World



POEMS AND DRAWINGS ON
PEACE AND JUSTICE BY
Greater Cincinnati Artists

**“For a Better World”
2007**

Poems and Drawings
on
Peace and Justice

by
Greater Cincinnati Artists

Editor:
Saad Ghosn

*“Our only hope today
lies in our ability to recapture
the revolutionary spirit
and go out into a sometimes
hostile world declaring
eternal hostility to
poverty, racism, and militarism.
With this powerful commitment
we shall boldly challenge
the status quo and unjust mores
and thereby speed the day when
‘every valley shall be exalted,
and every mountain and hill
shall be made low, and
the crooked shall be made straight
and the rough places plain.’”*

Martin Luther King

(from “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence”, 4 April 1967)

Foreword

Artists recreate the world after their hearts, their dreams, their beliefs. Their messages are potent and powerful, with no self contempt; their witnessing, truthful and lucid. Artists often make the invisible clear and the desired possible and real.

In this fourth year's book of poems and drawings on peace and justice, poets and visual artists from Greater Cincinnati combined their voices and their visions for a better world. Forty nine poets and 40 visual artists, with eloquence and acuity, strengthened each other's hopes and dreams. They rejected a grim status quo, denounced unjust societal wrongs, renounced violence and its consequences, and welcome a change in values towards compassion, forgiveness and understanding.

In a world torn apart by wars and injustice, these artists wept for the dead, cried with the desolate mother and friend, screamed at the abuse of the child sex slave, revolted for the oppressed poor and weak. They challenged the prevailing societal values of materialism, consumerism and domination, and painted a beautiful world, one of diversity and equality, where peace is based on truth, justice, equal opportunity and kindness.

With their lucid song, these artists also confronted the evil in this world and promised 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 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 Jerry Judge, Michael Henson and William Howes who kindly reviewed all the submitted poems and provided their editorial advice; and to Andrew Au who graciously volunteered his time and technical skills in putting this book together.

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

Saad Ghosn
Book editor and organizer

April 2007

“For a Better World” 2007

Poet	Poems/Visual Artist	Page
Robyn Carey Allgeyer	Cut Flowers <i>Drawing by Thomas Hieronymus Towhey</i>	3
Leah Aronoff	Small Talk Brother’s Keeper Land of Oz <i>Drawing by Donald Kelley</i>	7 7 7
Valerie Chronis Bickett	Fall/America Anti-War Demonstration <i>Drawing by Aaron Cowan</i>	11 11
Rita Bosel	Stolen Childhood <i>Drawing by Timothy Gold</i>	15
Mary Pierce Brosmer	Watching the Dead on Television While Eating Supper; October, 2006 <i>Drawing by Kurt Nicaise</i>	19
Robert Bullock	When Tom Peacock Came Home Junk Bond Bail Jumpers A Lawyer for an Ass <i>Drawing by Jeff Casto</i>	23 23 24
Janie Cashon Mary Jo Sage	Monday, October 9, 2006 Oklahoma City, April 19, 1995 <i>Drawing by Charles Grund</i>	27 27
C.J. Cauley Susan Hayes Harrington	A Letter to My Rapist What Is a Dream, if You Are Hungry <i>Drawing by Diana Merida</i>	31 31
Madeleine Crouse Janet Self	I Want to Tell You Compassion <i>Drawing by Farron Allen</i>	35 35
Donelle Dreese	American Isolate Whole Daughter <i>Drawing by Derek Toebe</i>	39 39

Patricia Garry	I Am Connected	43
	The New Way to Peace <i>Drawing by Billy Simms</i>	43
David Garza	Tonite and In Stills	47
	<i>from</i> She No Longer	47
Sue Neufarth Howard	The Legacy of Wounding Words	47
	<i>Drawing by Stephen Rea</i>	
Anni Macht Gibson	Rosa Parks	51
	Holocausts	51
	<i>Drawing by Kelly and Kyle Phelps</i>	
Susan Glassmeyer	The Strafing	55
	Is There One Soldier	56
	<i>Drawing by Victor Strunk</i>	
Michelle Goldman	Ramzi	59
	Millenium	60
	<i>Drawing by Michelle Red Elk</i>	
Richard Hague	Passing the Graduation Exams	63
	<i>Drawing by Raymond Miller</i>	
Susan Hayes Harrington	See pp. 25-27	
Carol Joy Haupt Lonna Kingsbury	Dancing Girl	67
	Step Sisters	67
	<i>Drawing by Ellen Price</i>	
Michael Henson	To Tom McGrath in Heaven: A Letter from the Ark	71
	<i>Drawing by Stephen Geddes</i>	
Sue Neufarth Howard	See pp. 45-47	
Stuart Jaffe Aho Tabatabai	We'll Build a Wall	75
	Love Poem	75
	<i>Drawing by Traven La Botz</i>	
Nancy Johanson	Death Poem	79
	Valentine's Day	79
	Clay Oracles	79
	<i>Drawing by Jennifer True</i>	

Jerry Judge	The Look	83
	Ode to Depleted Uranium	83
	Doomsday	83
	<i>Drawing by Tom Lohre</i>	
Lonna Kingsbury	See pp. 65-67	
Linda Kleinschmidt	Murmurs from Murrah	87
	God Is Weary	87
	Bitter Immortality	87
	<i>Drawing by Rachel Krause</i>	
Carol Feiser Laque	Chicken Little	91
	History	91
	Wars Destroy	91
	<i>Drawing by Roscoe Landon Wilson</i>	
Richard Luftig	City Park – Los Angeles	95
	Faith	95
	Annexation	95
	<i>Drawing by Susan Naylor</i>	
Larry Mabry	Cain’s Hammer	99
	Insurgents	100
	<i>Drawing by Daric Gill</i>	
Neil Marks	On Peace Within	103
	<i>Drawing by Julie Roessler</i>	
Justin Patrick Moore	Gasahol	107
	Access Limitless Light	107
	<i>Drawing by Fred Tarr</i>	
Mike Murphy	A Prayer for All Troops	111
	When Did We Stop Being Philosophers	111
	<i>Drawing by Jennifer Meridieth</i>	
Kathy Neus	Teaching Peace	115
	<i>Drawing by Nicholas Paddock</i>	
Mick Parsons	Babylonian Towers - An Open Letter to George W. Bush	119-120
	<i>Drawing by Amber Reis</i>	
Rhonda Pettit	History of the Child Sex Slave	123
	God for the Sex Slave	123
	Babylonian Numbers	124
	<i>Drawing by Emily Storch</i>	

Armando Romero	Sugar on the Lips (Azucar en los Labios)	127
	Delta	127
	Valparaiso	127
	<i>Drawing by Heidi Endres</i>	
Mary Jo Sage	See pp. 21-23	
Linda Ann Schofield	Anniversary Gifts	131
	Home from War	131
	<i>Drawing by Lauren Wells</i>	
Janet Self	See pp. 29-31	
Aralee Strange	Stop Look & Listen	135
	<i>Drawing by Frederick Ellenberger</i>	
Steve Sunderland	The Anne Frank File Is Closed	139
Amanda Wolfe	My Uncle Is a Clever Hunter	139
	Cincinnati Sears the Sky	139
	<i>Drawing by Ashley Novak</i>	
Jean Syed	Sovereignty of Self	143
	On the Bus	143
	<i>Drawing by Erica Cooper</i>	
Ahoo Tabatabai	See pp. 73-75	
Victor M. Velez	Eulogy to El Hombre Taino	147
	It's Not Only About Black and White	147
	Our First Color TV	148
	<i>Drawing by Peter Huttinger</i>	
Kathleen Wade	Barking Dog	151
	Joshua	151
	City Stoop	152
	<i>Drawing by Jim Pendery</i>	
Fran Watson	In Cologne	155
	The Beast in the Next Valley Over	155
	<i>Drawing by Paige Wideman</i>	
Larry Watson	Rain Peace	159
Terri Weir	Earth's Visionary Fire Has Begun to Fade	159
	<i>Drawing by Fran Watson</i>	
Amanda Wolfe	See pp. 137-139	

POEM:

ROBYN CAREY ALLGEYER

Always a poet in spirit, Robyn Carey Allgeyer, is a new participant in the Cincinnati Poetry Workshop. A former jazz DJ, she has dedicated the past 26 years of her working life to public relations and fundraising for non-profit organizations across the country. A mother of three, she and her husband, jazz pianist Rob Allgeyer, live in Glendale.

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DRAWING:

THOMAS HIERONYMUS TOWHEY

Tom Towhey makes his living as an artist; he mainly paints in oil and recently started working in clay and metal. Tom lives in Cincinnati, OH, most of the time.

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Cut Flowers

Primroses from a roadside hedge,
A handful of Black-eyed Susans
Tied with ribbon.
Zinnia, dahlias, daisies, cornflowers,
Gathered by the armfuls and

Placed under his photo.
Wreaths of carnations, of grapevines,
of roses
Damp with dew tears
Freshly shed this morning.

Nineteen years old
Life on the brink of meaning.
Dreams a month away from
Reality.

Was he thinking of college
In January, of home
In Glendale at his
Mother's Thanksgiving table
When the IED* ended all thoughts,
All feeling?

Today a village mourns a life.
Flags held tightly as flowers
In a child's fist.
Tears run down cheeks of

Strangers united in grief.
Do we fill this empty place with
Hate for faceless, nameless men?

A mother lies in bed seething.
Hate eating at her heart's remains.
She wonders how small it will become.

While a speck of her son,
Placed in a flag-wrapped box,
Is her only evidence
This was once a man.

Neighbors waiting respectfully,
Clutching flags and grim faces,
Watch the hearse pause for sixty seconds
Before an empty porch.

(Sixty seconds –the time it takes
A young man to bound from his car
And run the distance to his front steps.

Sixty seconds – the time it takes
A young man to change
His mind at the recruiter's office.

Sixty seconds - the time it takes
A young man to jump off
An armored vehicle before it explodes.)

Today a village mourns.
A mother looks at life without
Her son in it.
A war continues undeterred
By the sacrifice.

A well-tended garden, less a few blooms,
Goes to seed only
To flower another Spring.

**Improvised Incendiary Device*

POEMS:

LEAH ARONOFF

Leah Aronoff, 88 years old, started writing ten years ago. For many years she was the art librarian at UC DAA (now DAAP), then joined the faculty of the UC Graduate Planning Department. She retired in 1971.

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DRAWING:

DONALD KELLEY

Donald Kelley teaches printmaking at the University of Cincinnati School of Art.

His prints are in the permanent collections of the Cincinnati Art Museum, the National Gallery of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Norton Simon Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County Artist's Book Collection.

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Don Kelley 2007

Small Talk

Whatever are people talking about?
Everyday people in everyday places
Go about very small business.
Sound seems to fill odd gaps,
Little voids in lives unfulfilled
Unless conversation is constantly
Occurring.

The world is not changing.
Lives are not easing.
Small diseases as well as large
Create enough havoc to keep
a lot of people busy,
or would, if enough people paid
Attention.

War remains an acceptable way
to resolve issues great and small.
War is also an acceptable way
to create issues where none exist.
Large and small patches of hunger
abound throughout the world,
and a great many people go
Tsk.

I have a hard time with small talk.
How many times can I say
I love your shirt?
How many ways can I say
Your child is adorable?
But big talk is an even greater challenge
for one who has no clue about
how to end the scourges of the
World.

Brother's Keeper

If you get spat upon
I get sprayed
If you're not served
my belly growls
If you're not hired
I can't buy food
If you're sent to jail
I shiver in the cell
When you were hung
I died.
I am measured by
what happens to you.

Land of Oz

The teeny bopper president
trashed everything meaningful
in an uncertain, shaky world.
Kyoto. ABM. World Criminal Court.
All gone on a petulant whim.
In their place a superstitious religion,
an I'm right you're wrong philosophy,
guilt by appearance,
governmental snoopiness,
reverse Robin Hoodness,
and a land of disappearing striped bass.

POEMS:

VALERIE CHRONIS BICKETT

Valerie Chronis Bickett is a writer, teacher and massage therapist living in Northside with her husband and children. Her poetry appeared most recently in *Snakebird*, an anthology published by Anhinga Press. A solo chapbook, *Valerie*, was previously published by Anhinga. Valerie is working on a book length manuscript of poems and prose.

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DRAWING:

AARON COWAN

Aaron Cowan, Cincinnati native, father of two, local artist, Graduate of the Art Academy of Cincinnati; currently attending University of Cincinnati's MFA program and working at the Contemporary Art Center as a Preparator.

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Aaron Cowan

Fall / America

I read the Winter Silks catalogue,
wonder about the *Ladies Midriff-length,
Heavyweight, Spunsilk, Turtleneck, Dickey.*
#907 / \$29.95.

I see the photo for details--
a librarian kind of woman
smiling with closed lip-sticked lips
pulling back one side of her sweater
to show us an exposed arm,
something she might not want
the general public to see. Her secret
on a day when the weather in her office
might not be cool enough for a sleeved
turtleneck underneath her outer wrap.
She looks bright
like she slept well the night before
knowing that in her drawer
there was this dickey safely resting.
Not the typical dickey
*perfect for adding turtleneck style to outfits
when you only need some extra protection
for your neck and chest, a Unisex
Mid-weight Filament
Silk Turtleneck Dickey #61 / \$14.95*
but a midriff-length dickey
*which covers breasts and upper abdomen
stopping just short of the belly.*
I can't imagine any woman
in the third world owning one of these,
even a woman with money and education;
so I have come to the conclusion
that we here in the United States
own 99% of the world's Heavyweight
Midriff-length, Spunsilk, Turtleneck, Dickey
and I am scared.

Anti-War Demonstration

The weekend therapy workshops are over,
all of them everywhere over.
The people go back home
where they can better see
the mistakes they are making
and they breathe so they can live
with the new seeing
which might and might not change anything
beneath their vine and fig tree
and for this effort,
not just they are closer
to living in peace and unafraid,
but all of us.

POEM:

RITA BOSEL

Rita Bosel, a native of Germany, lived and worked in Belgium, Italy, China and the US. Rita rediscovered her love for writing at *Women Writing for (a) Change* - a feminist writing school that inspires women to craft more conscious lives through writing and the practices of community. Extensive writing about her country's heritage has helped Rita believe that, rather than carrying the past as a burden, one must learn from it to create a better future.

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DRAWING:

TIMOTHY GOLD

Local artist Tim Gold, lives, paints and works in Northern KY. He has a BA in Art Education from Edgecliff College and an MA in Art Education from NKU. Tim's work has been exhibited in coffee houses, galleries and competitive shows throughout KY and Southern OH.

He is a 2004 grant recipient from Summerfair Inc.

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Timothy J. Gold

Stolen Childhood

My mother spent most of her
Childhood years on a camp bed on the
Damp stone floor in the
Cellar of my grandparents' house in
Germany.
By age three she had learned to
Dress and undress in the complete dark
and to
Recognize the different meanings of the
Siren codes announcing
Curfew or fires or
Bomb raids.

Her parents thought she would forget;
Did not explain what was happening;
Who was fighting whom and why and who
had
Started the war because she was an
Innocent child.
They thought they were doing the right
thing,
Protecting her with their
Blanket of silence.
They did not talk about their
Fears either, but they didn't have to
Because she saw it in their eyes;
In the way they hurried downstairs with
Her little sister wrapped in too many layers;
Her older sister grasping the bread that she
had
Stood in line for half a day.

The cold she felt could not be warmed by
Her woolen coat.
It was the cold that comes from
Fright and longing for safety.
Her hunger could not be stilled by bread.
It was the hunger for
Peace and hope and laughter,
For life instead of survival.
A child should have had the
Chance to take being alive for granted,
Not having to be reminded each day to be
Grateful for it.

When the war was over and her
Childhood stolen,
The adults said "The children will forget.
What's the use in talking?
We need to build a new life;
Let's look forward, not back!"
They meant well and didn't know that the
Memories had been burned into the
Little souls and damaged them for good;
That the children would
Never forget and that the only thing worse
than
Not forgetting was not talking about it.

So, unintentionally they burdened
Them even more with their
Silence, their suppressed guilt, and their
Pretense that all was fine now.
The children learned that there was
No room for tears; that there would be
No answers and that feelings only got in the
way of
Moving forward.

My mother is now almost 70.
She does not want to talk about
Those years and she does not understand
why she has
Always been overly frightened and worried;
Why she gets panic attacks when she
watches the
News and why she cries at the sight of
Children in countries at war.

POEM:

MARY PIERCE BROSMER

Mary Pierce Brosmer is a poet, teacher and social entrepreneur. She is Founder of Women Writing for (a) Change, which has grown from one class of 15 women writing the truths of their lives into an arts, social justice, and community-building process helping individuals and organizations in seven states and across diverse cultures craft more conscious lives.

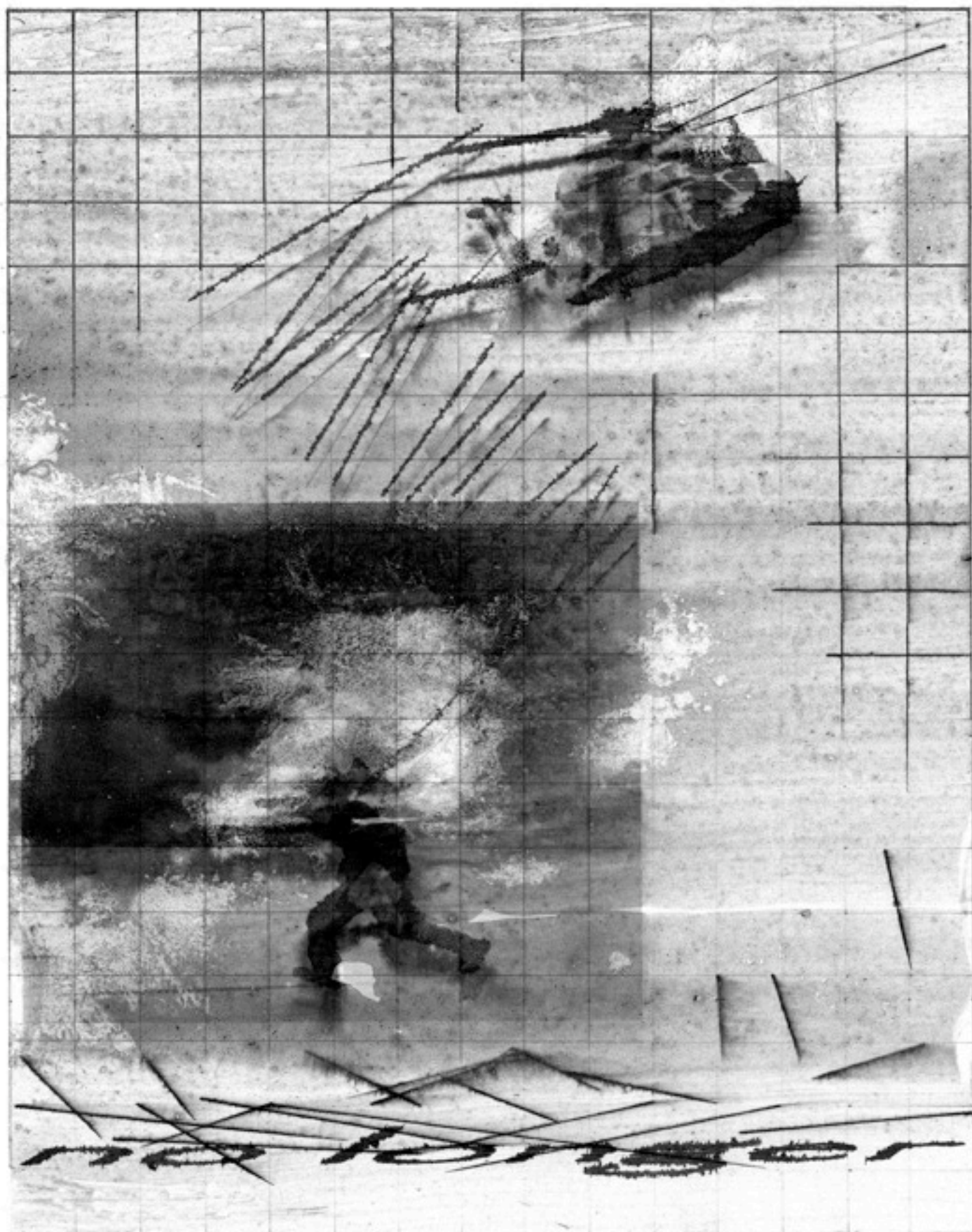
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DRAWING:

KURT NICAISE

Kurt Nicaise is a visual artist living and working in Covington, KY. Inspiration for his drawings and paintings come from the land, its terrain, and our place within its environment. Kurt is currently instructor of drawing at Cincinnati State College and at the College of Mount Saint Joseph. He is also active as a community artist and had many years of experience in the commercial gallery business.

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Kurt Nicovic

Watching the Dead on Television While Eating Supper; October, 2006

for Tom

*It is difficult to get the news from poems,
yet each day men die horribly from lack of
what is found there.*

William Carlos Williams

You lay down your fork and come to
attention.

Someone not paying attention would miss
it,
but I attend to your
no-fail attention, so frail
in the realm of what can be done.

Each evening the line of faces grows
longer.

My attention falters and I mutter
sweet Jesus, only 19. . .
that one could be a grandfather...
impatient for it to be over.

You lay down your fork,
food cools
time deepens
October is closing.

We are closing in on four years
of a war to bring freedom to Iraq.

Bodies stacked in Baghdad morgues
and loaded in secret onto troop planes
are free of souls, the only mission
accomplished.

Each evening the line of faces grows
longer.

Impatient for it to be over,
I remember other missions:
wars to end all wars
ones to stop the spread of communism
the one in Afghanistan to find Osama bin
Laden,
protect women from the Taliban.

What would my father think
of his war, the one to thwart fascism
if he could see our president on television.
Our president's attention falters,
he says he never said
stay the course.
he does pay attention
to critics
to the *need for a new direction*
in Iraq, that his mission is now,
and always has been
freedom

Each evening the line of faces grows
longer.

We eat fall foods: soups and stews,
ripe pears, an apple cake,
Soon Thanksgiving recipes will appear
in newspapers.

Each evening the line of faces grows. . .

I see your mission, my love,
how it is now and always
has been, attention.

Each day men
and women
die horribly for lack
of what is found there.

POEMS:

ROBERT BULLOCK

Bob Bullock lives with his wife, their kids and animals under some old beech trees in Kennedy Heights. His recent poetry collections, *Reptiles and Amphibians*, *Mt. Zion Copperhead Church* and *The Alkie Who Isn't Dead* are available in text and audio at szymbolic.net.

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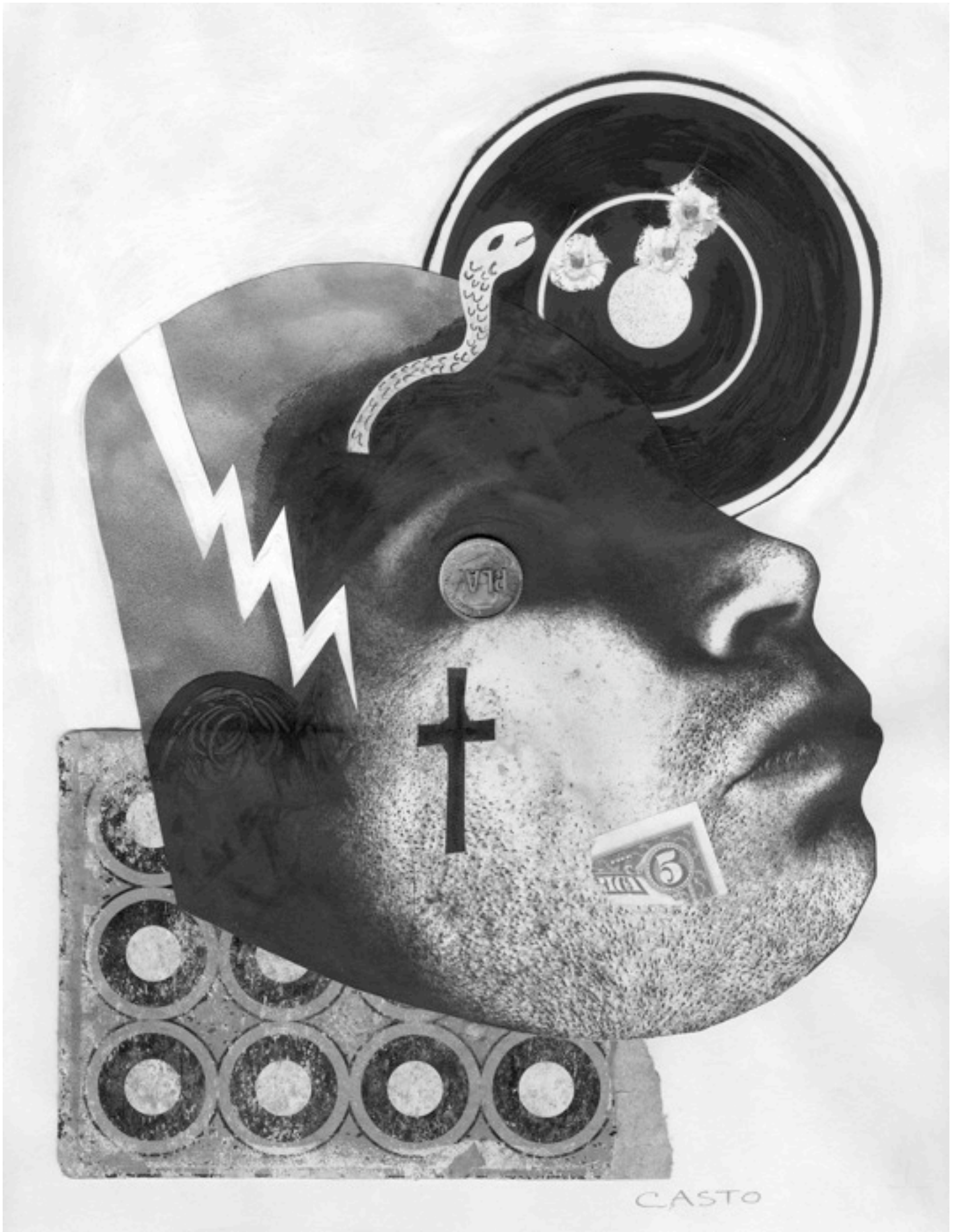
DRAWING:

JEFF CASTO

Jeff Casto has been living and working in Cincinnati for the past 25 years. He has an MFA in Painting from the University of Cincinnati. Jeff's artwork fuses painting with sculpture, found objects with two-dimensional surfaces, and personal concerns with social issues.

He has exhibited throughout the Mid West and New York.

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CASTO

When Tom Peacock Came Home

In a box
they swapped it out for something dressier
in bronze. His parents weren't rich.

What was left of him, his former shell,
lay there in dull green, puffy at the chest, no
lipstick on his collar, the top button still too tight.

We weren't big friends; he was a guard,
I was a halfback. But he made some daylight
for me in that one good game against Belpre,

and we altar-boyed together at St. Sylvester's,
for all the good it did either of us. He waxed his
black hair up in front, spit-shined like a porcupine's.

His mom had started falling out and I just had to split.
The way home under rain marooned maples in the dark,
cold mud oozing out all around me like circles

in a pond, I began to feel something too
bright in the bushes across the street, crouching
to pounce or hide, I couldn't tell.

Just that the jungle we'd sent him to was in
our own backyards; and that many more would follow
so that Tom didn't have to come all this way for nothing.

Junk Bond Bail Jumpers

If I had to choose between inviting a crack addict
home for dinner or investing in a Christian Mutual Fund,
I'm afraid I would need some time to mull my options.
It may be the key decision of the age; I'd like to get it right.

You may ask, what the hell is that supposed to mean?
Or as my brother put it: what am I so angry about? My anger
is rooted in the fallacy of duality, which is that it pisses me off
to see hard-won meaning routinely shucked like jive.

All misery starts here. For example, red number five,
red sails in the sunset, ready for blood, red wooten, and read
any good books lately. If this ain't a recipe for disaster,
then who you got to blow to find out what is?

A brilliant if troubled man, Soren Kierkegaard, is said to have said that purity of heart is to will one thing. His mentor, a Jesus of Nazareth, is said to have noted on numerous occasions that the kingdom of God is here, at hand and within our grasp.

Plainly, under this model, the only reality is immaterial. Now, I may have it backasswards, but who's the better to break out the good silver for -- he who would be eaten by his soul's hunger, or the rational christianist bent on multiplying his bread?

A Lawyer for an Ass

There may be no order of magnitude in miracles, but it's a hell of a cliff he makes for himself who aims to both climb and dive, is all I can say.

Saint Francis taught that the only good ego is a dead one. But the body was barely cold before his homeboys went medieval, so it's hard for me to see from here how his point stuck.

There's that not so famous passage in Mark that goes on about expecting miracles proven by signs and wonders that are sure to follow the truth around like beggars.

How will we know them? Why, by the snakes they wave like Alice Cooper, the torches they take their arms to, the strychnine they chug like cold sodey pop. Oh, Jesus, is this really what you

had in mind? On the same theme, Paul ranted to the Corinthians (what a master blogger!) that they were kind of missing the point about the gifts of the spirit, and like that, tongues and their

interpretation achieved separate but equal status, not necessarily found in the same neighborhoods, either. Hear the door opening for the left hand to be kept in the dark, while the right recants away.

Does anyone here recall waiting in line for this precious human birth? Those hosannas they were handing out were free, right? Did anyone ever actually see any trained-on-high counselors standing by?

All I remember thinking was, how hard can this be? At the jump door, blue skin suit three sizes too big, wind scalding eye lids to balls blind, who can even care

what a solipsism is, or if it will open, or why?

POEMS:

JANIE CASHON

Janie and her partner Judy live on five acres in Clermont County. Writing with Wednesday night writers at Women Writing for (a) Change has given expression to many peace and justice issues that Janie has explored as a member of the St John's Unitarian Universalist Church.

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MARY JO SAGE

Mary Jo Sage, an Environmental educator and writer, is currently an Adjunct Faculty Member at The Union Institute and University. Mary Jo lives in Cincinnati with her husband Roger and spends part of each year in the high mountains of Colorado.

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DRAWING:

CHARLES GRUND

Charles Grund has lived and worked as an artist in Cincinnati since 1978. He runs a decorative arts business in town, has published a book on mural painting, and maintains a large studio near downtown. Charles has recently completed his first triptych and continues to explore new ideas in the traditional medium of oil paint on canvas.

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Charles Sumner

2007

Monday, October 9, 2006

(by *Janie Cashon*)

I made my drive into work this morning
Mindlessly passing the slow pokes,
Smiling about the past weekend
Spent with friends, playing cards,
Laughing. chatting about the past week,
Making plans for our thanksgiving.

*In the background NPR news announces
An underground test on the 9th anniversary
of Kim Jong Il's ascension to power.*

The weekend vanished.
My hands tighten on the wheel.

*Twenty nine thousand seven hundred ninety
warheads
Accounted for in the U.S, the "old" Russia,
France, China, Britain, India, Israel.*

I park by the homeless man,
Walk up the hill,
Chat with our security guard,
Buy a coffee, unlock my desk,
It's Monday;
There is much work to do.

Oklahoma City, April 19, 1995

(by *Mary Jo Sage*)

On a sunny Oklahoma morning, children's
laughter
suddenly became the wailing of Rachel
Mothers weeping louder than a bomb blast,
Tearing of hair and beating of breasts.

Digging frantically, the strong sob:
too late to save the babies
Clawed bloody hands raised in helpless rage
voices screamed to heaven: A why, God,
why?

Hateful stirrings in a near-mad mind
wrought this horror,
in anger over another massacre of children
When will Rachel's weeping stop?

When life becomes as dear as power?
Or when Rachel's tears drown us all

POEMS:

C.J. CAULEY

C.J. Cauley, a recent graduate of the College of Mount St. Joseph, is a freelance writer, editor and poet from Cincinnati, OH.

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SUSAN HAYES HARRINGTON

Susan Hayes Harrington is a resident of North Avondale and has called Cincinnati home for 24 years. An avid student of Women Writing for a Change, her works include both poetry and short stories.

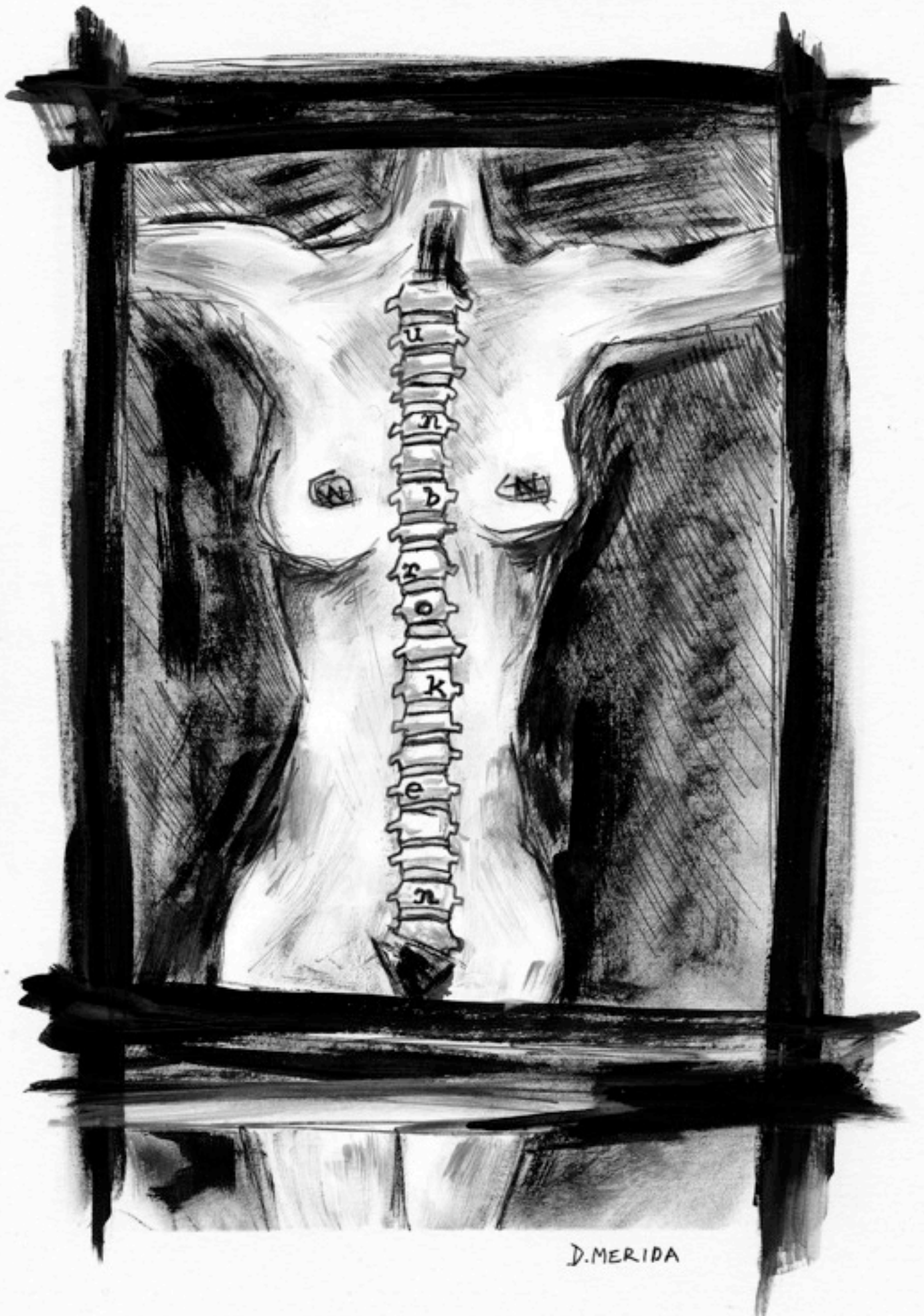
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DRAWING:

DIANA MERIDA

Diana Merida received her BFA from the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 1996. She is a freelance artist working in the Cincinnati area. Diana works in various mediums such as mixed media, painting and printmaking.

Contact: scratch-dcd@hotmail.com; www.smileyboy.com



D.MERIDA

A Letter to My Rapist

(by C.J. Cauley)

There was a time I thought I was broken
But you didn't break me
How could you
I survived the deaths of both of my children
And compared to that
You are insignificant
You are long ago and far away
An irrelevant blip on my radar
Did you really think
I would let someone so pathetic
Break me
You are weak and unimportant
An amoeba feeding off of the delicate,
The neglected,
The vulnerable
You are a coward who preys on children
I was fragile and unprotected
You think you got away with it
But someday
Someday
I will dance on your grave
And I will still remain unbroken

What Is a Dream, if You Are Hungry

(by Susan Harrington)

Tonight's entertainment, more of the same,
violence, hurt and pain
Acting, reacting, well meaning society
picking at the scab of tragedy
Death is expected, anticipated like the wind
gathers the rain
Prejudice is the historical mask of ignorance
and apathy

Acting, reacting, well meaning society
picking at the scab of tragedy
Blind man on Vine, can't see the attitude on
your face, but he can feel the hate
Prejudice is the historical mask of ignorance
and apathy
Boys in hoods, hear no inspiration, only
useless political debates

Blind man on Vine, can't see the attitude on
your face, but he can feel the hate
Old fail to protect the young, leaves ripped
from blooming buds
Boys in hoods, hear no inspiration, only
useless political debates
What is a dream, if you are hungry; futures
evaporate in pools of blood

Old fail to protect the young, leaves ripped
from blooming buds
Happiness and heaven found in a teaspoon
of twisted metal
What is a dream, if you are hungry; futures
evaporate in pools of blood
On the battlegrounds of poverty, turning the
other cheek is fatal

Happiness and heaven found in a twisted
teaspoon of metal
Death is expected, anticipated like the wind
gathers the rain
On the battlegrounds of poverty, turning the
other cheek is fatal
Tonight's entertainment, more of the same,
violence, hurt and pain

POEMS:

MADELEINE CROUSE

Madeleine Crouse has been published in The Comstock Review and in several Cincinnati Writers Project anthologies. She has been a participant at the Kenyon Writers' Workshop and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, MA. Madeleine is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Writers League and the Cincinnati Writers Project Poetry Group.

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JANET SELF

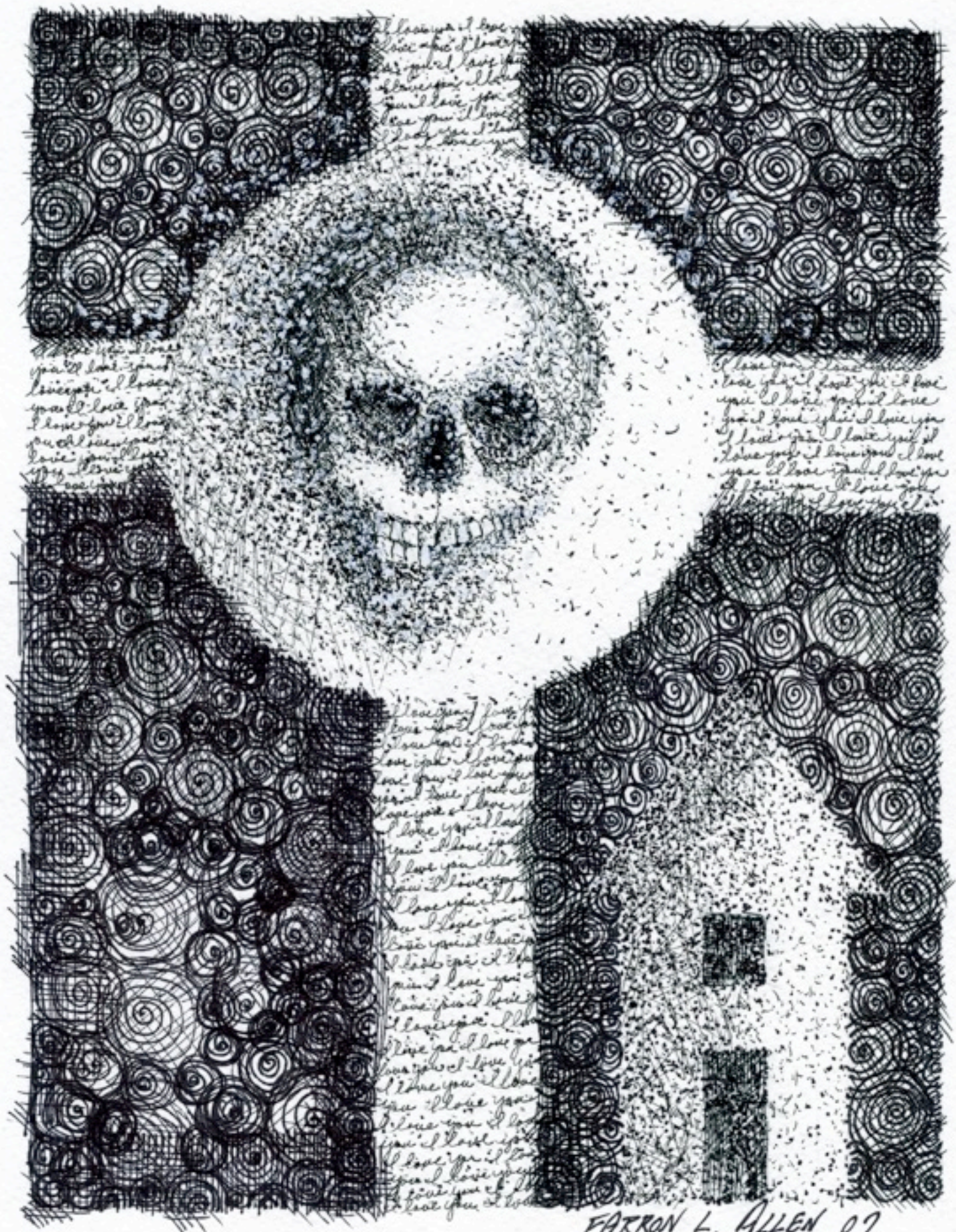
Janet Self has been a practicing attorney in Cincinnati since 1988. She is a member of the 'Living and Leading Like a Poet' class at Women Writing for a Change.

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DRAWING:

FARRON ALLEN

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



FARRON L. ALLEN 07

I Want to Tell You

(by *Madeleine Crouse*)

For Nancy

about this day, and
a little more, too:

the sun is in charge; potent
shadows man the grass,

and, there is that ancient
unfurling of fern. The earth

quivers as acres
of corn break ground.

All the while,
my son is in Iraq

assigned to the 2nd Marine
Expeditionary Force

patrolling a trail of towns along
the banks of the Euphrates.

“With infrared goggles,” he says
“our guys see in the dark –

own the night.” Mouthed
between bombings, clenched

in the jawbones of war’s hell – *How long
can he own his breath and blood?*

Each morning, in my mind,
I watch him rise.

Compassion

(by *Janet Self*)

Who speaks out for
the young gay man
who the hustler
confounded by his own sexuality
striking out
in his own pain
stabbed to death

What does it matter
to the young man’s fear
and horror
in his last minutes
that his murderer spent
every day of his life
feeling misery
that even he
did not deserve

Who is to tell the mother
who lost her son
whose final years stretch ahead
alone
who carries his death
into every room of her life
to pity the man
who wanted to see
what killing was like

POEMS:

DONELLE DREESE

Donelle Dreese is an Assistant Professor at Northern Kentucky University where she teaches Poetry Writing, Multicultural literatures, American Indian and Environmental literatures. Donelle has published poetry and creative nonfiction in a wide variety of literary magazines and journals.

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DRAWING:

DEREK TOEBBE

Derek Toebe; 1999 graduate of Covington Catholic; BFA, 2005, NKU; two-time NKU Art Department scholarship winner.

Contact: toebbebear@hotmail.com



American Isolate

Maybe it's because
we all know OJ was guilty
and that Rwanda and Darfur
with their gravel roads made of
diced bones and calcified sweat
need us more than Iraq.

Maybe it's because
we want the road all to ourselves,
all the world a 4 am highway,
or a two hundred unit apartment complex
where no one says hello.

Maybe it's because
we know too much.
We know about the priests
playing doctor behind the pulpit.
We know about the lies
every politician tells
so old it smells of fish carcass.

Maybe it's because
some of us are still throwing corn
on the ground waiting for a good reason
to curl its black eyes from behind
the bushes and tell us why
we've turned from each other.

Maybe it's because it's autumn
and fear is the underside of every leaf
turning as it falls
looking up
looking down.

Maybe it's because our parents
had to learn to love themselves
before they could love us but
by then, for some of us, it was too late.

Whole Daughter

*To bear children unwanted is to be used like
a public sewer. –Marge Piercy*

I watch her button her tailored jacket
eyes bright as bay windows with June flower
falls.

She zips her briefcase after filtering through
its lofts
and staircases where her college courses
live.

She is my whole daughter who broke the
spell
who redressed the far moon with no role
model.

I am her half mother who didn't know about
the choices
who felt her womb open and close each time
in the rhythm of sobs

who walked away when they called for me in
their vomited beds
because I hated them most when they
needed me

who laughed her guilt away with the clamber
of glasses
and friends howling late into the night

who spent a decade trying to shake the oil
off her fur
not knowing who to burn for the forgery of
my life

who chided her daughter for exposing the
invention
that I defended like a drafted soldier,
programmed and proud

who watches her now in the eve of my
resting
and wants to know her, everything about her.

POEMS:

PATRICIA GARRY

Patricia Garry, a long time Cincinnati community activist, is the Executive Director of the Community Development Corporations Association of Greater Cincinnati, a trade association for nonprofit neighborhood and faith-based development groups. An intuitive and healer, formerly a columnist for the Cincinnati Enquirer and the Post, she now writes columns for several regional publications. Pat is also the proud mother of City Council candidate Brian Garry.

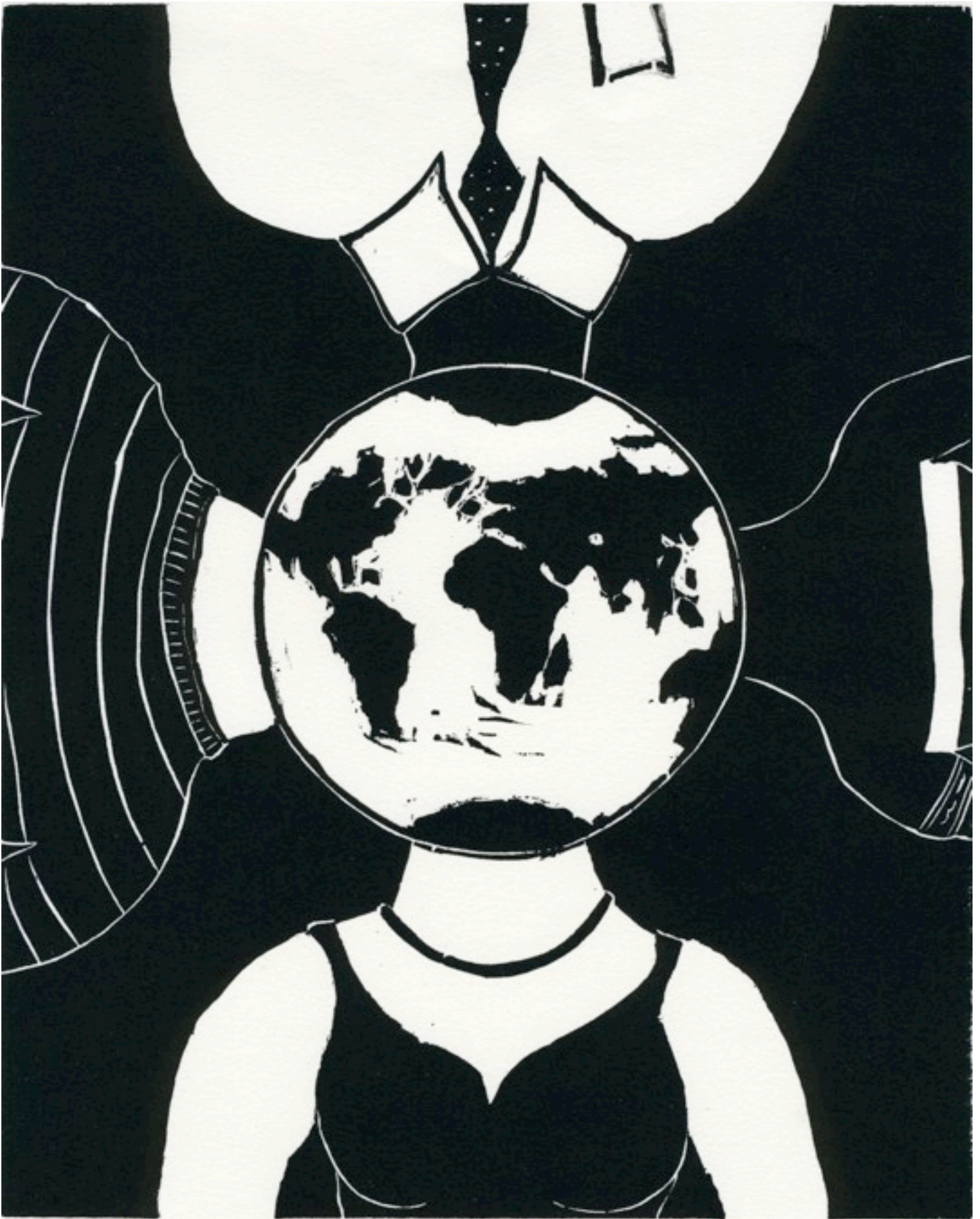
Contact: patgarry@fuse.net

DRAWING:

BILLY SIMMS

Billy Simms has a Bachelor degree in Theatre and a Masters degree in Special Education. He works at Talawanda High School in Oxford, OH, and lives with his wife and two cats in Hamilton, OH.

Contact: m67simms@aol.com



Billy Simms

I Am Connected

I am connected to my cousin in Naples,
My namesake in Dublin, my friend in Slovakia.
I am connected to my friend's mother in Mexico,
A long ago friend in Katmandu, friends on an island in Puget Sound.

You are connected long distance with fellow students from all the schools
You've attended. Via the news with those whose faces in pain are now
In your memory. Via your work with factory managers in China, bankers
In Taiwan and London, websites round the world selling what you need.

This small and shrinking planet as it suffers through early stage
Global warming is connecting us more tightly. Our sisters and brothers
On the Gulf Coast, our friends and neighbors on those islands
Washed by the tsunami, have such familiar and beautiful faces.

Connection brings respect. Respect brings willingness to listen.
Listening brings a full heart of understanding. Compassion,
The larger Justice, lives in that heart. In our heart. When we are
Conscious of our connection, peace exists within and without.

The New Way to Peace

Cooperation. Collaboration.
Working with, listening to, supporting.
Circle enlargement - including more ideas
And continually more people.

Adding everyone's issues, all those concerns,
Building consensus. Over and over and over again.
Giving new members time to absorb organically
Through their skins this new culture.

Moving forward where you are ready to move.
Moving with the group forward where it is
Ready to move. Balancing time and need
And urgency. Looking for middle steps.

Dropping either / or concerns.
Letting go of rules. Small changes
Are still changes. Be cooperative.
Model the world as you wish it to be.

POEMS:

DAVID GARZA

David Garza has been involved with Tokyo Rose Records, Chapultepec Press, and Trained Monkey Press. His work has appeared in various anthologies and chapbooks, including *Pudding House & Cincinnati Writers' Project* publications.

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SUE NEUFARTH HOWARD

Sue Neufarth Howard: city native, poet, visual artist, retired. 1983 Poet Laureate - Cincinnati Recreation Commission Neighborhood Poetry Contest. Graduate - Miami University (Oxford) and UC Evening College. Member - Greater Cincinnati Writers League. Several poems have won Prizes in Ohio Poetry Day Contests since 1998. Poems published in *Creative Voices: The ILR Anthology*, *Poetic Hours Magazine* and other publications.

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DRAWING:

STEPHEN REA

Stephen Rea has been an artist his whole life; he just didn't notice it until a few years ago. Now making art of all kinds is all that he does, it consumes him.

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Stephen Rea

Tonite and in Stills

(by *David Garza*)

++++ Tonite and in Stills
I wonder who taxes the bottles
Bang's bottles, my bottles, these bottles
Bottles hanging from basement ceilings
I think upon this as I get heavy by morning
A chilly supermarket lane pretending to be
dragons, combustibles,
a new New Year's promising to be new,
swearing freshness and eyes like the 1st
time.

Most often, it's this gaudiness I swear at,
Preferring the subtleties of the areas behind
the bottles,
The unbearable gradations from pale blues
to blue-greens
I keep up the illusion of The Fates

+++++ Tonite and in Stills
Everybody pays the same rate
The ceremony of the buck, to the left, to the
left,
It circulates throughout the blue-green room
The circle almost filled
...give it 3 minutes more.

from **She No Longer**

(by *David Garza*)

no, the war is but flowers, their petals intact,
and who is the wind to spread peace like a
virus,
smothering the colors and sound of the
prairie
as it screams galloping grave
we in conquest of the forest.

The Legacy of Wounding Words

(by *Sue Neufarth Howard*)

Choking plum clouds
purple bruises
hang low, concealing
tempest roil and ruffle

just as smudgy
grey lies,
no foil for a spate
of relentless sharp teeth memories

Shards of once-uttered
hurting words rend reveries
glibly, as claws
tearing into cheesecloth

The anger genie
once released
from the rubbed lamp
will not return

spews a hot wormy
venom that burrows
to the deepest recesses
of its prey

where it roots
and nests
vitrifying tears
brewing bad blood

POEMS:

ANNI MACHT GIBSON

Anni Gibson is a writer living with her husband and two children in Cincinnati, OH. Anni has been writing since she retired in 2001 as a marketing manager for a Fortune 100 company. She is currently on the faculty of the Women Writing for (a) Change writing school. A book of her collected poems, *Unfinished*, is being published in May, 2007, by Woven Word Press.

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DRAWING:

KELLY AND KYLE PHELPS

Kelly and Kyle Phelps are identical twin brothers who share almost everything; most amazing is their collaboration in their expressive artwork. Much of their work is about the working class (Blue Collar) struggle and race relations. Kelly is a Professor of Sculpture at Xavier University and Kyle, Professor of Ceramics at the University of Dayton. Kelly and Kyle's Working Class sculptures are in numerous collections and galleries. Film actors/directors Morgan Freeman and Michael Moore are among a few who personally own a "Phelps" sculpture.

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



Kyle & Kelly & Phelps "Defiance"

2007

Rosa Parks

What was she thinking?

Measuring hems,
taking fine stitches
with thimble hand in 1955,
a department store
seamstress
to Montgomery's finest ladies.

What alterations
to Alabama,
the seat of segregation,
did she contemplate
that destined day?

Inquisitive, Jim Crow
peered over her shoulder.
She sat
in middle seats
reserved for those of fated birth.

Quiet dignity
urged her to stay
when driver James Blake
ordered she stand
on worn feet
in sensible black shoes.

"To the back of the bus."
Matter-of-fact,
he threatened
to call the police.

"You may do that,"
she rejoined, soft yet steely,
her proper grammar
and Mama's good manners
an honorable hallmark.

Ejected,
arrested,
fined ten dollars
and court costs,
courage took the reins.

Quiet icon making headlines --
erect, worthy of birthing
a movement she never intended.

"You may do that."
A dignified refusal,
the fight song of a generation
whose cup of intolerance overflowed.

Holocausts

"Beware, do not repeat the past,"
choirs of risen souls cry out,
accused, reviled, discarded fast.
Callous crowds repress all doubt.

Choirs of risen souls cry out,
from ashes of the Holocaust.
Callous crowds repress all doubt;
cowardly hoards ignore the cost.

From ashes of the Holocaust
lunge terrors buried long ago.
Cowardly hoards ignore the cost,
hands washed clean as driven snow.

Lunge, terrors, buried long ago
from ghettos, camps, graves en masse,
hands washed clean as driven snow,
screams still echo choking gas.

From ghettos, camps, graves en masse,
ghosts of torture emerge as one.
Screams still echo choking gas -
newly hunted begin to run,

Ghosts of torture emerge as one:
Rwandan, Christian, Muslim, Jew
Newly hunted begin to run.
Midst tears, God sees man kill anew.

Rwandan, Christian, Muslim, Jew:
accused, reviled, discarded fast.
Ghostly choirs their pleas renew:
"Beware, do not repeat the past."

POEM:

SUSAN GLASSMEYER

Susan F. Glassmeyer's high school art teacher encouraged her to write after her first serious poem was published by the journalism department. Susan understands poetry as an alchemical and healing art, one that creates beauty and movement out of sometimes painful and improbable materials. She tries to do the same in her work as a Feldenkrais® Practitioner at the Holistic Health Center of Cincinnati.

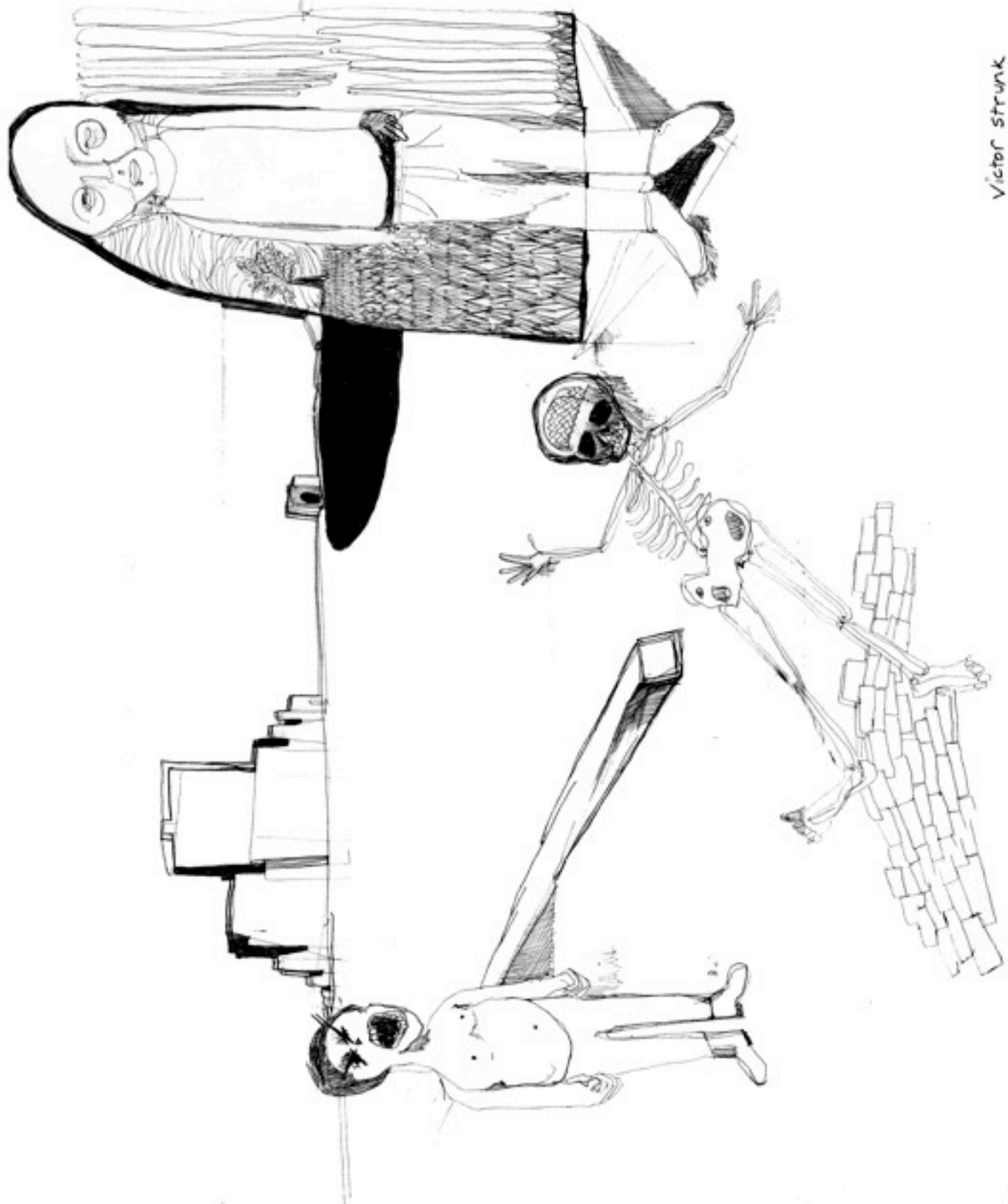
Contact: susannaglass@yahoo.com

DRAWING:

VICTOR STRUNK

Victor Strunk is a Cincinnati native traveling through the ages. When not battling angels or demons, Victor is Executive Director for Visionaries and Voices, a visual artist, an active musician, and an amateur tomato farmer.

Contact: victorstrunk@yahoo.com



Victor Strunk

The Strafing

strafe: to rake with fire at close range, especially with machine-gun fire, from low-flying aircraft, and by ground troops.

(a partly found poem)

1.
July, 1950.
Hundreds of Korean refugees in white
peasant garb
mostly women and children packed like
animals
in bridge tunnels outside their villages.

They thought it was safe but Yang Hae-sook
twelve when she lost an eye and seven
members of her family, remembers:
Bullets ricocheted off concrete
like popcorn in a frying pan.
Mother wrapped me in a quilt.

They thought it was safe but Lee Yoo-ja
a 26 year-old housewife then, remembers:
U.S. planes came raining down bombs
bullets shrieked past repeatedly.
Oxcarts burning, dead bodies and cows
everywhere spewing blood. Something hot
dropped on my back— it was the severed
head of a baby.

They thought it was safe but Park Sun-Yung
twenty-five in 1950 remembers: It was dusk.
My five year-old son kept crying for food,
my two year-old daughter, already killed
when her grandmother took her outside
in hope of appealing to the American
soldiers.

I crawled out with my son to climb a hill.
Terrible crackle of shooting came down.
My son was hit in his thighs, torn with
bullets.
It was strange, but my son kept saying,
I want food and I want to see my father.

I begged an American soldier for mercy.
Shouted to him, We are not bad people!
But he shot at us again. A bullet
ripped through my waist hitting my son's
chest.
I lay there still. My son dead. My mind blank.

2.
Yesterday in the news legal experts note:
U.S. military code condemns indiscriminate
killing
of civilians, but prosecution so many years
later
is a practical impossibility.

3.
Today in a homily on The Transfiguration
Father Bob is bothered by our preoccupation
with what he calls "Evil" in the world.
Shaking his head like an empty bell
he presumes to give us his two favorite
examples:
Drunk drivers, he says and then he says -
Mothers who drown their children.

I thought it was safe in the pew. My mind
far from blank, tolls out a litany of its own:
Greed by corporate gougers
Deceit of the Patriot Act
School of The Americas
Torture at Gitmo and Abu Ghraib
Racism, Sexism, Ageism
Pillaging of Baghdad
Plundering of Mother Earth.
And how can we forget -
The arch conceit of pedophile priests.

Meanwhile,
Father Bob wraps things up,
tucks his talk back into his holster
and with the power bestowed on him by the
Vatican
prepares to place the Body of Christ
upon our hushed tongues.

Is There One Soldier?

*a question asked on behalf of all the nameless girls
collectively gang raped by soldiers during wartime—*

After you capture the daughters and cage them for raping in a neighbor's root cellar,

Their families forced to listen
from the living space above;

After the initial goring, the puncture of screams fading to prolonged guttural yowling,

The thuds and thumps of heads and limbs
growing duller and duller,

The oomphs of air rising like foamy clouds of blood from the young girls' mouths;

After four godless days when all
the pink flesh has been shredded to red—

Is there one soldier among you willing
to place a pistol on the bed of his own tongue?

POEMS:

MICHELLE GOLDMAN

Michelle Goldman wrote, produced, photographed, modeled, through two decades of underground resistance to the political, cultural and spiritual darkness in Israel and the US. She was part of a handful of visionaries who sought to bring hope, higher standards and a different discourse to the Middle East. Michelle's clear voice was heard through published poetry and prose and through her work as a columnist, broadcast journalist, military correspondent in the Israeli army and commentator for Israel's NPR. Her award winning novel *CityZen* examines the forces at work in the creation of 21st century Jewish identity.

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DRAWING:

MICHELLE RED ELK

Michelle Red Elk, born in Lawton, OK, lives in Cincinnati, OH. She is a member of the Comanche Nation. Michelle is currently doing drawings and working with glass seed beads. She knows that peace and justice are on the way.

Contact: nokoni@cinci.rr.com



Ramzi

Ramzi walked out from his grey
house at the mountain
side on the terraces above
dark orchards sat by the yard smoked
a cigarette life is slow thoughts are fast feelings
are complex anger raises carries away
the site above the hills lonely monastery on the skyline
small butterflies on his hands like in
Japan every Japanese child
has a butterfly net he thought the valley is
quiet and tense the sky is grey and closed today maybe
he will go and visit Ian or
find him at the market next to the café next
to the immediate danger the soldiers the settlers the Americans the UN Europe
Asia the cross on the wall
the dark library where he read the old books until
he met Ian the teacher who appeared
like emerging from his mind when you will be ready I will arrive
said Ian together they walked in the empty fields talked
about the small things sat by the wild
wheat grass sometimes they were silent and looked at the present
moment that had no limit and no measure Ramzi at noon
thinks about Ian or the friends
at the café now he is quiet and focused Ian
will show him a new way neither relative nor
absolute Ramzi walked in the shadowed
street sat at the gloomy café saw the APCs*
“she-cruel” approaching Boris
an automatic soldier in sunglasses yesterday
in Europe now he is here in the cold
autumn sun maybe he could call
someone on his shiny phone like
a commercial of himself a toy
soldier with his gadgets the ad
agent celebrated his profit the Chief
of Staff rubbed his forehead bewildered climbed
the stairs to the small jet around him just
sand as far as the eye can reach purple
hills in the twilight soon they will be up
there will see the small streets next to the café next
to the toy tanks the lights of the land will warp
their mind with calmness
and ease they can actually see the lights
stretching in every direction as far as the eye can reach

*Armoured Personnel Carrier

Millenium

To all the teachers alive
and dead in the name of all the boys dead
and alive and the girls living
somehow Millennium arrived
before there was no limit or measure to the extent
and methods in which they destroyed her life now
she is here in a place in which there is no immediate
danger her hair spread in golden
wind at the edge of descent of history
Millennium arrived life is
ordinary the evening is
warm people are tense
uncertainty and restlessness in all the rich
get richer the poor lost
interest the rock'n'roll undergrounds
withered the students' anger lost power
now they think about a place in which there is no
immediate danger Millennium arrived
before history was organized God
was one now great pain all over the
sky anxiety and uncertainty in all open
limitless world every man for himself the teacher said
it's always been this way look
at the Greeks I looked at the Greeks with
some lack of interest they always mention the Greeks
the Romans the Jews the Crusaders the Liberals the
New Conservatives what's the difference
between a conceiting and true heart between
a world class charlatan and
the one who does a faithful work between the doer and
the not doer the one who causes and the one who
is effected the one who loves and the one who is
being loved because big heart will save
the world and the rest is details Millennium
arrived personal details in a non
personal non connected world Hunter S. Thompson sat
on the porch shot at the
peacocks thought about Las
Vegas wrote the account of times: The world was
destroyed the desert remained
as it was five cold cans
three cats at the hills small planes in the warm
evening signaling last letter to
purple skies the valley is sleeping the Koreans
are quiet now

POEM:

RICHARD HAGUE

Richard Hague is most recently author of *Alive in Hard Country* (Bottom Dog Press), *The Time It Takes Light* (Word Press) and *Lives of the Poem: Community & Connection in a Writing Life* (Wind Publications, 2005). Over the past few years, he has had poems in *Smartish Pace*, *Birmingham Poetry Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *Margie: A Journal of American Poetry*, and *Pine Mt. Sand & Gravel*. He teaches in Cincinnati and Boston.

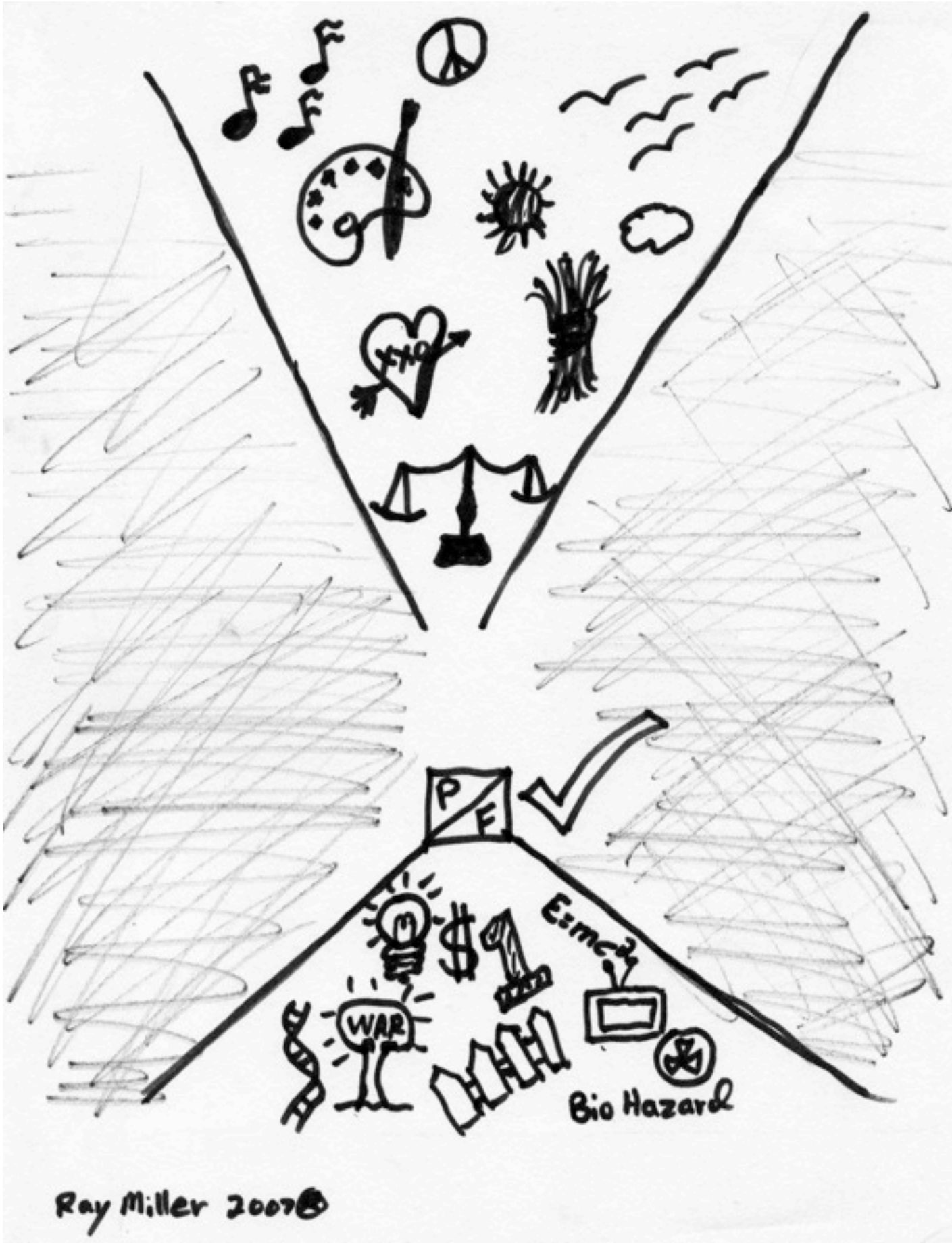
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DRAWING:

RAYMOND MILLER

Ray received his BS in Fluid and Thermal Sciences from Case Institute of Technology. While at Case, he learned welding, machining and fabrication processes. Since graduation Ray has built power plants, taught engineers and sculptors at UC and won a grand prize in a juried exhibition at the Sculpture Center in Cleveland, OH. Ray maintains a 5400sf studio in Norwood. He manages UC's utility operations.

Contact: raymiller@fuse.net; www.raymillerstudio.com



Ray Miller 2007

Passing The Graduation Exams

"By their fruits shall ye know them."

Civics

Though he aced it in school,
he knew nothing about councilmen, ward
politics, or civil disobedience.
When you showed him the money he took it,
no questions asked.
He obeyed all the laws he wanted to and
none that were inconvenient.
He pushed things around a lot, and people,
and told few his name.
He amassed wealth, ulcers, pretty kids,
volleyballs, internet porn,
and a file of mediocre recommendations.
Even when all in the running were fools, or
worse, he voted.

Science

Though he passed bio and chem and
physics in school,
he behaved as if the origin of tomatoes was
in supermarkets.
Peas came from little freezer boxes with
pictures of peas on their covers.
Light came from factories, where several
hundred hours' worth
was loaded into each bulb. 40 watts had less
than 60 watts
had less than 100 watts.
40 watts, he believed, was lighter.
Evolution had something to do with DNA and
monkeys.
Despite an A in ecology, he littered and
steered a Hummer
through a lapsed paradise of suburbs.

Economics

He believed in advertising, malls, and online
shopping.
He bought everything he could.
If you were poor, you deserved it.

Social Ethics

He put nothing of his wages or labor aside
for crazy people,

or orphans, or magnificent lost causes.
He was all for nuclear power and all against
forests
full of bugs and snakes.
He ate nothing raw or unmicrowaved.
He gated his community.

Writing Poetry

No exam.

Community Organizing

No exam.

Private Prayer in Times of Danger

No exam.

The Apprehension of Beauty

No exam.

The Performance of Music

No exam.

Making a Drawing or Painting

No exam.

Feeding Yourself 101

No exam.

The Dangers of Globalization

No exam.

Alternatives to War

No exam.

The Just Distribution of Wealth

No exam.

Getting Along With Neighbors

No exam.

Surviving Unsustainable Systems

No exam.

Long-term Views of the Future

No exam.

What To Do After All The Fish Have Died

No exam.

POEMS:

JOY HAUPT

(Carol) Joy Haupt grew up in Brooklyn, NY. After graduating from Antioch College with a BA in English Literature, she settled in Cincinnati with her husband and 3 children. In 1968 Joy received a degree in Social Work from OSU. A retired social worker, she is now actively engaged in civic affairs, poetry and journal writing. She facilitates groups using writing as a powerful tool for personal and social development.

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LONNA KINGSBURY

Lonna Kingsbury, Poet Laureate of Miami Township, is once again thrilled to be a part of *For a Better World*. Lonna's works also appeared in numerous publications including her latest *I Am Migrant* featured among other writers and artists calling Chicago one of their "homes".

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

DRAWING:

ELLEN PRICE

Ellen Price, born in New York City, is currently on the faculty in the Art Department at Miami University, Oxford, OH. Ellen received her BA in Fine Art from Brooklyn College and her MFA in Printmaking from Indiana University in Bloomington. Her artwork concerns issues of identity, race, family and history.

Contact: priceej@muohio.edu



Ellen J. Price

Dancing Girl

(by *Carol Joy Haupt*)

Driving down a narrow city block...
blazing heat on broken pavement,
brick tenements, screenless windows,
alleyways littered with dirty food wrappers
and empty whisky bottles.

Women lean eagerly into one another's ear,
men huddle and hover, fingering their hip
pockets
children chasing, taunting, shrill voices fired
by mid-day sun.

A child of eight or nine stands apart...
pink sundress, chocolate skin glistening,
bare arms, raised, feet a tap tapping,
body swaying gently, now gyrating faster,
wilder, wilder, she is

dancing the dance inside her bones,
lost in its pulse as the jazz tune
soars from my car stereo, each beat
punctuating her frenzied motion
encircling us and

*I am the rhythm
I am the dancing girl
we are the dance, the song
mountains, rivers,
sun and stars, breathing
a common language that has no word
for fear.*

Step Sisters

(by *Lonna Klingsbury*)

Hermetically adorned
shorn
uniformly fashioned
slyly passing intimates
beyond forbidden doors

Sisters all impassioned

Sisters all imprisoned

Sisters all enslaved

who know only what they're told
emboldened by step sisters
stepping out and reaching
beyond all walls and tenements
sharing what they know
to grow

POEM:

MICHAEL HENSON

Michael Henson's *Crow Call*, poems written in response to the killing of Cincinnati activist Buddy Gray, was published fall 2006 by West End Press. Michael is also author of two works of fiction, *Ransack* and *A Small Room with Trouble on My Mind*, and *The Tao of Longing*, poems

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DRAWING:

STEPHEN GEDDES

After receiving an MFA from Ohio U., Stephen Geddes worked as an Artist in Residence for the Kentucky Commission on the Arts, then in Cincinnati for the toy industry as a product sculptor. Stephen continued his fine art work with numerous exhibitions. He is currently concerned with head forms in carved wood and forged metal. Influenced by years of industrial involvement, these pieces reflect the often uncomfortable interface between the mechanical and biomorphic worlds.

Contact: slgeddes@cinci.rr.com



To Tom McGrath in Heaven: A Letter from the Ark

Forty days, forty nights,
dollars rained down.
Banknotes choked the rivers
and backwatered into the cornfields.
Quarters washed out the gullies
and the hillsides were gouged by rivulets of
small change.
It rained cancelled checks, money orders,
stocks,
bonds, letters of credit, IRAs.
It rained certificates of deposit, debit cards,
entire ATM machines.
It rained toaster ovens, second cars, iPods.
Things you never heard of, my friend.
It rained SUVs, Hummers, all-terrain
vehicles.
It rained cell phones and digital cameras,
hand-held electronic games,
And all manner of cheap plastic toys.
A day-long, night-long greenback rain
that eroded the farms of the Dakotas,
washed out the forests of Oregon,
doused the fires of every steel mill on the
Monongahela,
and flattened the mountains of West Virginia,
stripping them down the naked stone.
The rained clotted the floodplain with silt,
black water, Styrofoam, ranch houses,
home entertainment centers,
and the lacerated bodies of young soldiers.
And still it rained, until
we could see nothing but water
horizon to horizon.
It's been hard, my friend,
to see the green waters rise to take
everything we knew.
It's still hard
and I'm deadly scared.

But we float on these waters in an ark of
hope.
Cubit by cubit, we built it together
and two by two we staggered up the
gangplank.
It's crowded and it stinks
and the nocturnals won't let the diurnals
sleep
and it seems this trip will never end.
But you taught us well, my friend;
we're all still here, plugging the leaks and
patching the sails
Day by day, we scrape the bat shit from the
rafters.
Day by day, we stop the lions from devouring
the lambs.
Day by day, we send out the little dove of a
poem.
Day by day, we watch
for that little sprig of olive
that tells us
the blessed land is near.

(Thomas McGrath was a major American poet, author of the epic "Letter to an Imaginary Friend." He was blacklisted during the Fifties for his political beliefs.)

POEMS:

STUART JAFFE

Stuart Jaffe: Mortgage Financer by trade; Peace lover, not a fighter in orientation;
Journalist/writer to work through day-to-day frustrations.

Contact: sjaffe@cinci.rr.com

AHOO TABATABAI

Ahoo Tabatabai is a native of Iran. In 1988, she left Iran with her family and settled in Montreal, Canada. She came to the USA in 1996, to attend UC. She is currently working on her PhD in Sociology.
Ahoo lives with her partner in Corryville.

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DRAWING:

TRAVEN LA BOTZ

Traven La Botz is a 19-year old student of art at Cooper Union in New York City. Traven grew up in Cincinnati and graduated from Walnut Hills High School.

Contact: la@cooper.edu



TRAVEN LABOTZ '07

We'll Build a Wall

(by *Stuart Jaffe*)

We'll build a wall
700 miles long
High enough that it will not be spanned
Strong enough that it will not be demolished

We'll build a wall
To keep them out
To force them to consider other paths
To keep us unaware of how they live

We'll build a wall
To keep us safe?
To protect our jobs?
To live in peace?

We'll build a wall
First to the south
Then to the north
Then...

Love Poem

(by *Ahoo Tabatabai*)

It's you
The boy who throws rocks at tanks
The teenager who picks up tear gas and
throws it back to the cops
The woman who locks arms with another
and another and another and will not let the
riot police through
The peasant who refuses to leave her land
The laborer who occupies a factory
It's you
The girl who organizes and cripples a
sweatshop
The man who marches to stop the eviction of
the poor
It's you
It's you who kicks down the police barricades
You burn down Guantanamo Bay
You kill Empire
It's you.

POEMS:

NANCY JOHANSON

A resident of Clifton, Nancy Johanson is a potter artist who writes fiction and poetry; she also has an energy healing practice. Nancy's passion for peace and justice informs her writing and took her, in recent years, to three peace marches in the nation's Capitol.

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DRAWING:

JENNIFER TRUE

Jennifer True is a student at Northern Kentucky University pursuing a BFA with a concentration in painting.

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Death Poem

Oblique trees
stand wrapped in fog
like bandaged soldiers

ghost people
returning home
from Iraq

missing limbs
so many leaves
lost

Valentine's Day

The News Hour ends
with radiant photographs,
fourteen young women and men,
the heart of our armed forces.

My television is out of focus.
Their bright faces
bleed into the background
of stars and stripes.

Even their names,
rank, and hometowns
at the bottom of the screen
too fuzzy to read.

But the message is clear.

They have all died.
Their silent eyes, look out at me,
so beautiful the promise of youth,
I see through a blur of tears.

Clay Oracles

Jugs, bowls, and cups,
thrown on wheels like mine
with glazes as blue
as New Mexico turquoise,
sit in exquisitely lit glass cases,
prizes of our museum.

Made by people of Persia
this pottery of twelfth
and thirteenth centuries
is renowned. Stunned
by colors, elegant handles and forms,
I sit down.

I see a wall,
where a finely rendered map-
the Islamic world-
shows the origin
of all this beauty:
Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Syria, Turkey, Saudi
Arabia,

I learn the history.
These ordinary pieces
crafted in dynasties:
the Safavid, the Ilkhanate, the Seljuk.
I hear the name Persepolis.

Suddenly I remember,
the White House announced today
it does not rule out
military attack on Iran.
I stand up, stunned.

POEMS:

JERRY JUDGE

Jerry Judge is a Cincinnati-based poet and social worker. He is a member of the Cincinnati Writers' Project and the Greater Cincinnati Writers' League. Jerry has published in many journals and has published three poetry chapbooks.

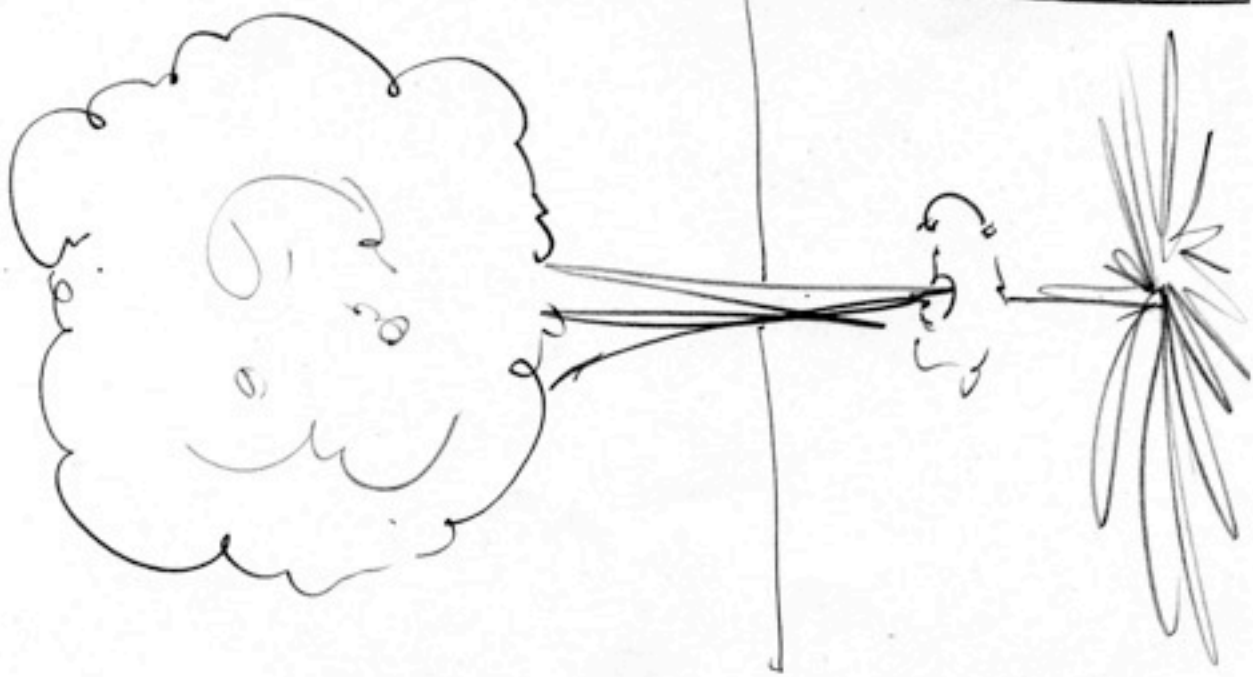
Contact: jerryj871@aol.com

DRAWING:

TOM LOHRE

Tom is a life long full time fine artist who paints portraits, landscapes, seascapes, cityscapes, outer space scenes, and commissions. Tom also creates robotic artists and art machines.

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The Look

The look in that soldier's eye
telling volumes about his future.
He was just twenty then.
Death was already riding him like a jockey,

and telling me volumes about his future
scrawled across his face and every gesture.
Death was already riding him like a jockey.
It was too late to warn him.

Scrawled across his face and every gesture
was a future bleak as a burned landscape.
It was too late to warn him.
I tried to avert my stare.

A future bleak as a burned landscape
awaiting him and his fiancé.
I tried to avert my stare,
stop worrying about what I can't change.

Awaiting him and his fiancé,
were seeds from the Devil's War.
Stop worrying about what I can't change.
Easy to say, but I won't forget.

Seeds from the Devil's War.
He was just twenty then.
Easy to say, but I won't forget
the look in that soldier's eye.

Ode to Depleted Uranium

All the military brass and politicians love you.
Who else can kill and protect like you?
Shells coated with you explode enemy tanks
into crematoriums; our tanks coated with you
repel assaults like men shooing pesky flies.

Yes. Some cry babies complain about your
effects:
contaminated soil and water, deformed
babies,
tumors, debilitating aches, and premature
death.
You know you're beautiful—your dust lasts
4.5 billion years, almost immortal.

Doomsday

not the Rapture...
just the imperceptible
melting, melting

POEMS:

LINDA KLEINSCHMIDT

Linda Kleinschmidt, a long-time college composition instructor, is a full-time freelance editor working with authors in the US and abroad. Linda has been in love with writing since childhood; she writes poetry, short stories, juvenile material, and articles on the crafts of writing and editing. Her poetry has been published and won a few awards. She has published two picture books and won a Writer's Digest Honorable Mention for Juvenile Writing. Linda divides her time between Cincinnati, OH, and Hanover, NH, where she is completing her graduate degree in liberal studies at Dartmouth College.

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DRAWING:

RACHEL KRAUSE

Rachel Krause is a current University of Cincinnati student, majoring in Urban Studies and Historic Preservation. Rachel has an associate degree in Building Preservation and Restoration from Belmont Technical College; this is where she gained interest in ornamental plaster, stone carving and architecture.

Contact: krauserl@email.uc.edu



Rachel L. Krause

Murmurs from Murrah

Murrah is now murmurs,
Voices on the winds that play
Off cold stone chairs.
The sounds catch shadowed reflections,
Skipping across a gleaming pool,
Where ghosts sit and argue to their mirrors.
Why? Talk heals.

God Is Weary

God is weary I think, of what
S/he must see of strife, of war,
Too many self-imposed sides
Calling in strident voices for
Victory as their right.

Humankind sees unclearly,
Riches, power, glory,
Not vast conceit, nor
Profane violation,
Not the heart that never heals,
Nor who has fallen or who will fall
To grieve precipitously.

Only when a soul pays true homage
To its heart, can peace from justice spring
Become a seed that sprouts in hope, then
Grow to tolerance and bear fruit that
Smothers the weeds of hate.

Bitter Immortality

Some days bring massive hurt,
(12.7.41, 4.19.96, 9.11.01),
But a day of gassing, Gulag death,
A Darfur rape, a market bombing,
These are lone terrors, lost individuals
We pass over quickly, do not memorialize.
We do not know them.
If we did, we'd have to act.

Time is a convenience we do not have,
A false idol to assuage guilt, dull real pain
We should feel, but don't.
Time lets daily horror
Fade quickly, easily,
Allows us to blend each evil that reappears
With another.

Anonymous sacrifice not honored
Breeds no urgency in man,
No rehabilitation or change,
Just bitter immortality.

POEMS:

CAROL FEISER LAQUE

Carol Feiser Laque wrote her first poem in the fifth grade. Since then she has written or edited over a dozen collections of her own poetry or anthologies from the poets' workshop she founded. Carol lives to write poetry. She earned an AB, an MA, and a PhD. Her most favorite class, all things considered, is recess.

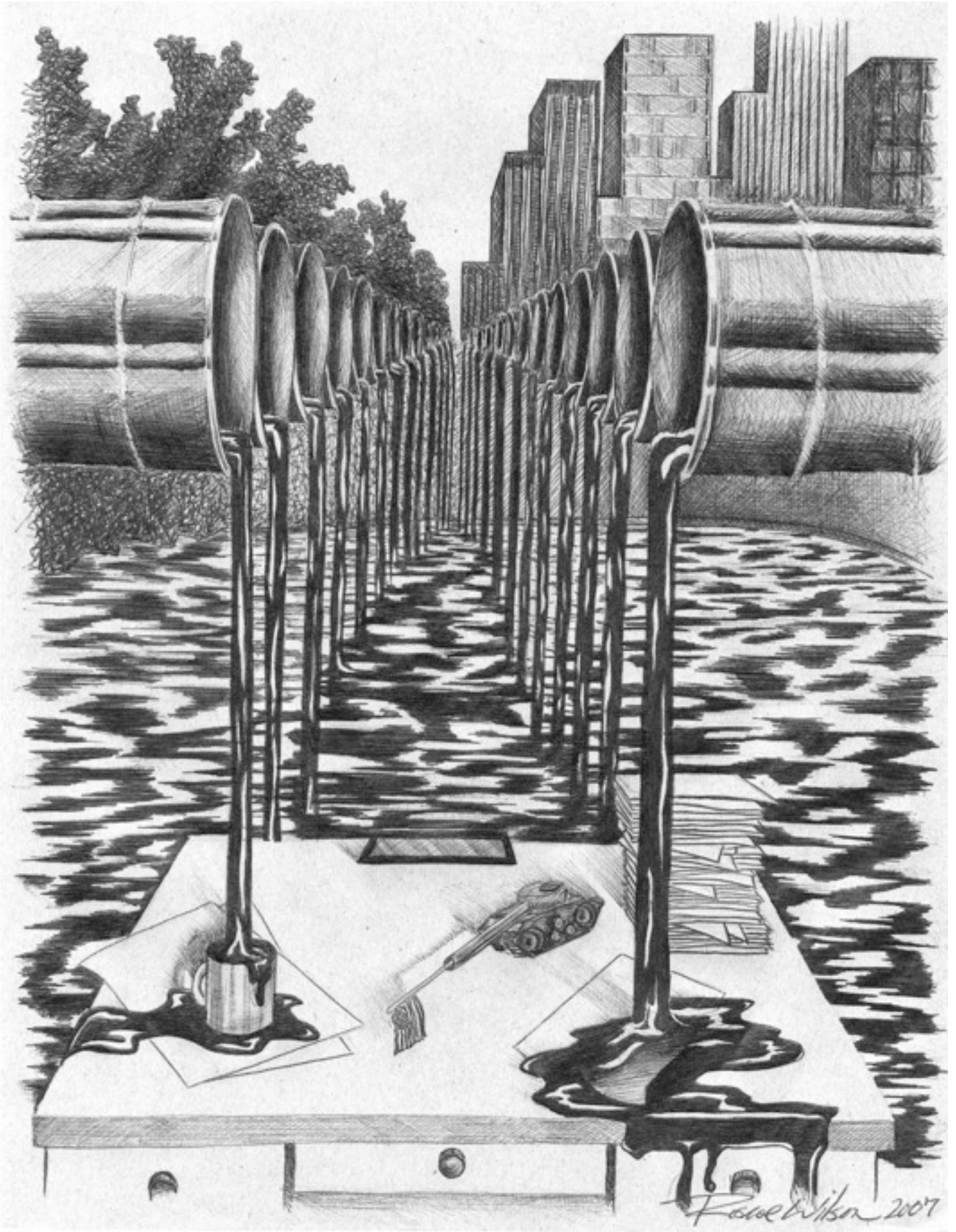
Contact: claque@fuse.net

DRAWING:

ROSCOE LANDON WILSON

Roscoe Landon Wilson, born in Bluffton, IN, received a BA from Wabash College, an MA from Purdue University, and an MFA from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Before moving to Ohio in 2003, he lived and worked in Boston, MA. Roscoe is currently an Assistant Professor of Art at Miami University, Oxford, OH.

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Chicken Little

Chicken Little swears all night long
that the sky is falling down.
Bankers bicker about loans due
as battered wives stay bruised and hidden.

The wilderness outside City Limits
nurtures robins from everywhere,
from shanty to rocky cliffs –
the sun, rain, wind, snow writes the news.

Children's books are all that is left.
Charlotte's web saves Wilbur and
generations of children forever.
News is hidden – before school – at recess.

War as Big Business, Violence
Promoter, Protester have the same Hate:
Purple and Spouting Vitriolic Vomit
reduces civil to uncivil wars.

All the while Satan's wife, Adam's Ex,
has her ravaged face botoxed,
Plastic by surgery, she drinks coffee
with cream from her creamatorium.

Bizarre as car commercials – Bankers
and Battered wives die.
Lids from the sky fall down
forgetting global warming.

History

A plate of cold stories
mumbled rhuemy
hard of breathing.

Time's broken stained
glass – stains
elementary schools.
Lincoln's Truth
his beautiful speeches
digested a civil war

Into a reality of Freedom –
Eliza crossed the river
freeing Uncle Tom's Cabin

Starting, finishing a war
that we still fight.

Our poet's eyes are fireflies
burning ice, healing
wounds, stalking compassion
memorizing all of history's tears.

Wars Destroy

Snuff the wick
Villagers die
as I awake.

Indifferent pastures
accept seeds while
trees sway a rising sap.

The weight of stones
as planted promises
assassinates spring.

This poet's withering silence
complains of gunshots
as we grow famished –

For a knife for
our throats and
a weedy prayer.

POEMS:

RICHARD LUFTIG

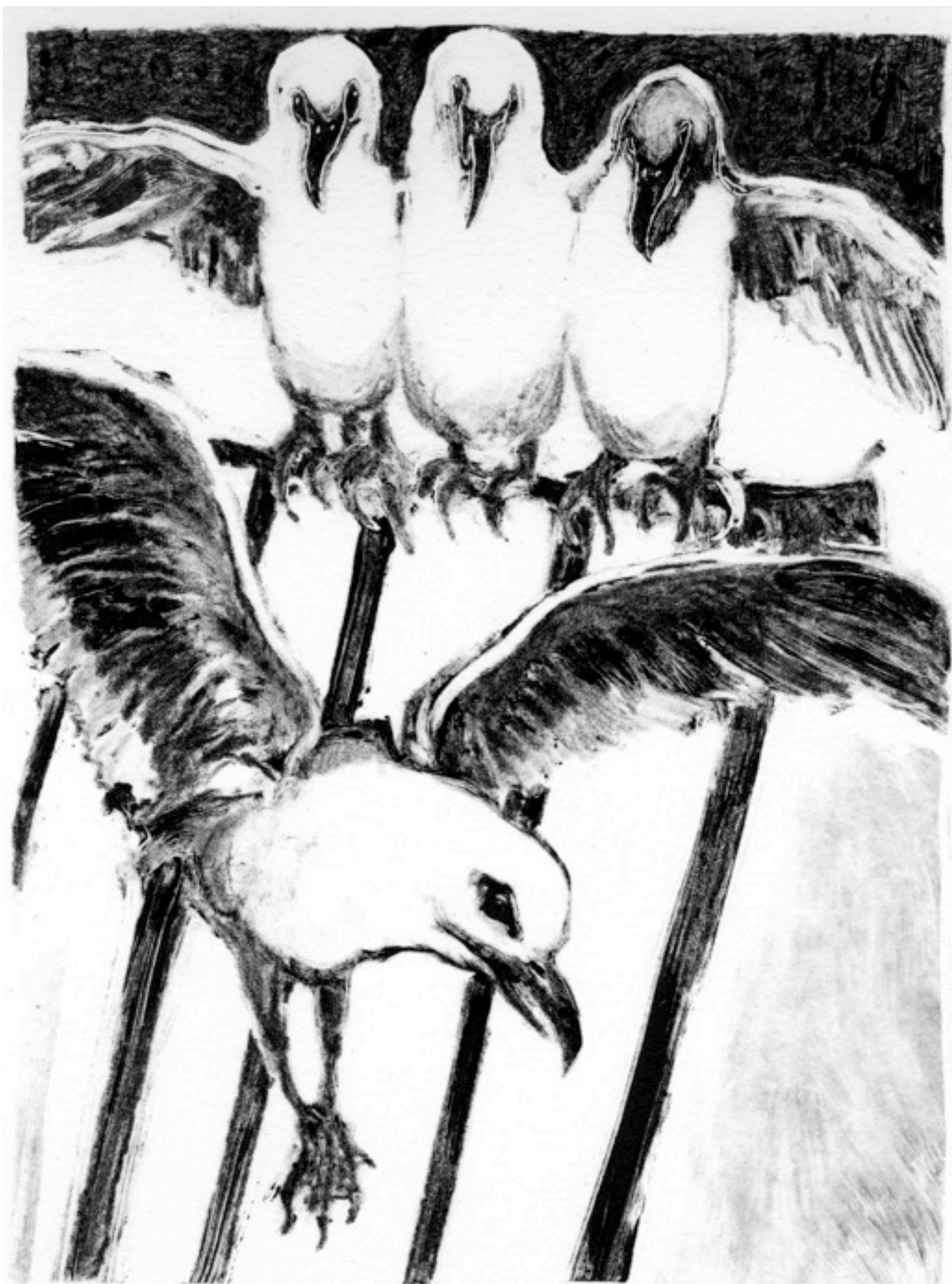
Richard Luftig, professor of educational psychology and special education at Miami University, OH, is a recipient of the Cincinnati Post-Corbett Foundation Award for Literature. He is also the winner of Ohio Poetry Days competitions, and a semi finalist for the Emily Dickinson Society Award. Richard's poems have appeared in numerous literary journals in the US and internationally. His 3rd chapbook was published in 2006 by Dos Madres Press.

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DRAWING:

SUSAN NAYLOR

Educated at The University of Maryland in the 60's, Susan Naylor has widely exhibited her pastel paintings and monotypes. While making her living as a jeweler, she has been the Director of Tiger Lily Press from 1994-99, continues to make artwork, and is currently enjoying grandmotherhood.



Susan Ray Or

City Park-Los Angeles

On his own broken bench,
he learned long ago
that life does not do well

in full sun. But he can still
close his eyes and name all the trees
by the sound of their leaves.

Now, his beard gray- flecked
and foxed by wind,
he shares his day-old sandwich

with gulls, their acrylic
yellow bills screeching arias
of discontent. They stand

on the bench like funerary
guardians, his own aviary
flock, yielding to the divine.

Faith

For this familia de buhonero¹,
Sunday is no holiday
but a necessity. For fourteen
August hours, the mendigua²
mother scours the Zocalo,

walking around the square,
two children in tow,
touting braids of string-
a peso apiece-
for tourists who have all

the string they will ever need.
They have called a truce
with dusk as they sit on a bench,
sipping juice from a bag.
The mother, drowsy

with pregnancy, rubs feet
worn and raw as stones.
High in a heavy sky

a jet sprints home due
north to Miami and two

barefoot boys jump up,
wave to the pilot,
secure in the knowledge
that they have been seen
from 30,000 feet.

¹ *family of peddlers*

² *indigenous/indian*

Annexation

Out on the edge where streets turn
to plats, sweat bees flit across
Queen Anne Lace, ignoring gnats
who dart about doomed daisies.

Blue jays, crows with color,
play tag on the lip
of the road, using half
a hamburger bun as home.

Almost swallowed by weeds,
an orphaned Bud bottle
whistles blues in the wind,
its ebony neck hitching a ride

the way it wished it could go
if only someone would give
it a lift. And off to the north,
a willow sags its shoulders

as table-saws, their fangs
bared, rip at tree flesh,
poised for the vote that will tear
the plat back to usefulness.

POEMS:

LARRY MABRY

Larry Mabry lives in Northern Kentucky and writes poetry and fiction when his time is not occupied by work and single parenting. His themes tend to range from the everyday experiences of fear, faith, inner and outer struggles, to larger topics such as the night sky and good coffee.

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DRAWING:

DARIC GILL

Ohio native Daric M. Gill is an adjunct professor at the Columbus College of Art and Design and a Graduate Instructor of Record at the University of Cincinnati, where he is also receiving his Masters of Fine Arts. Daric is a high caliber, interdisciplinary artist who focuses on creating positive social environments through the use of playfulness in his work.

Contact: daricgill@aol.com



ABEL

David Gill '07

Cain's Hammer

It strikes.
Its force rolling out
accelerating from its tiny start.
Causing the silent earth
to tremble in its wake.
Its wave reaches outward,
flooding the landscape.

A gigantic thunderclap,
consuming all in its path,
spitting out death and debris
as afterthoughts.

This ravenous force,
awakened from its slumber,
safely hidden
in matter's woven fabric.
Far away from small hands,
Hands not ready for its power.

But the search began,
Long ago.
Started with Cain's knife,
a simple tool,
transformed by rage
into an instrument of hate and terror.

Step by step
century by century,
Cain's children marched forward.
Each new discovery
examined and exploited
for its lethal practicality.
Finally it was found:
as the Creator's grand design
was pulled apart,
revealing a hammer,
hidden in the threads of the universe.
Picked up as quickly
without thought, with little remorse.
Grasped in our hands,
to strike our brothers

*And the Lord said unto Cain,
Where is Abel thy brother?
Genesis 4:9 (KJV)*

Insurgents

Once again the line gathers,
stretches down the block,
even down to the painted brick building
used only on Election Day.
Full honors are out in force today,
all that our rituals will allow
All for this soldier who lost his war.

One battle too many,
this one with terror,
not his acolytes.
No fighting retreat in order to
return to another day.
no. This one was his last.
A veteran of Baghdad, a hero,
A survivor of Fallujah, who fell in
this battle against relentless insurgents.
Fought against the backdrop of
the coal and corn fields of Illinois
instead of the Tigris and Euphrates.

Did he run out of ammunition?
End up surrounded?
Was he just plain outgunned,
or did he succumb to a saboteur
a foe in friends clothes?
What we know for sure is another
brave soldier lost his war.
Leaving mothers to cry and
governments to deny.

If he could only see
those who stand with him today.
Many would have stood with him then,
an armor column,
that would have raced to his position
if he'd only radioed it in.

No one saw the action,
no. That night the soldier engaged
the enemy all on his own.
Seeing only muzzle flashes,
feeling only the hot breath
of the foe on his neck.
As they silently struggled
in this damp hot jungle,
with reinforcements
just a foxhole away.

Now,
Hundreds stream by to mourn his loss.

POEM:

NEIL MARKS

Neil B. Marks, Associate Professor of Decision Sciences at Miami University, Oxford, received a BS (Applied Math) and MBA from Washington University, St. Louis and a PhD (Quantitative Business Analysis) from The Ohio State University, Columbus. Neil has been inspired by British poets from Chaucer to Tennyson, most profoundly affected by the Romantic voices of Keats, Wordsworth, and Shelley.

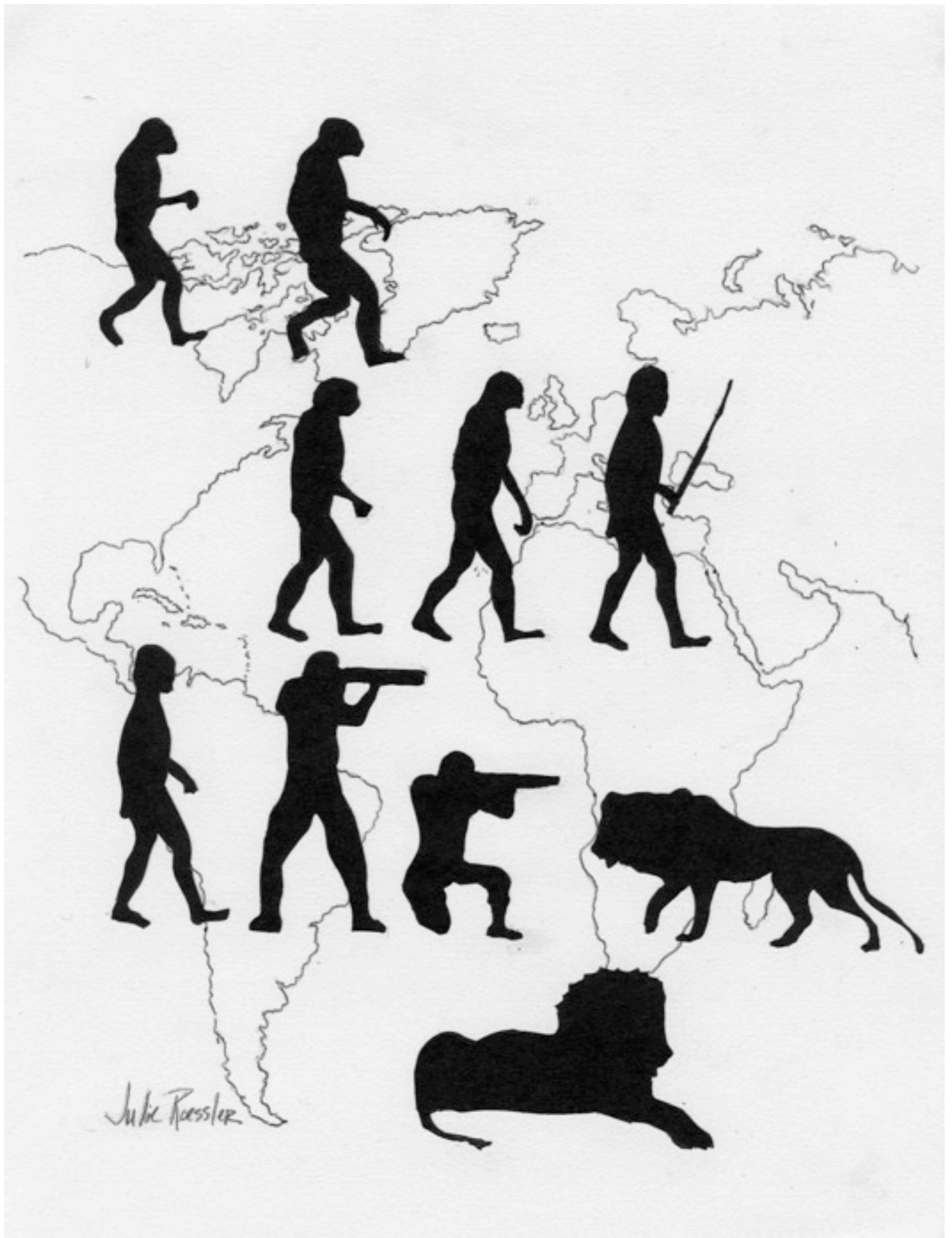
Contact: marksnb@muohio.edu

DRAWING:

JULIE ROESSLER

Julie Roessler is originally from Cleveland, OH. She moved to Cincinnati in order to attend UC DAAP where she received a Bachelors in Fine Arts with a concentration in sculpture. Julie currently works out of a studio in the West end. Her preferred medium is clay or oil paint.

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On Peace Within

Darfur, Sri Lanka, and Somalia—war
Is waged against one's fellow citizens
Or government with marked ferocity.
The Hindu fights the Muslim, Shiite shoots
The Sunni, who responds in kind, and Jews
In many places wrath from hate receive.
King Henry wrecked the homes of monks
and priests;
King Richard tried to take the Holy Land;
Those Protestants across the Irish Sea
Have shot at members of the mother faith,
Who were not bashful 'bout returning fire.
Attila, Genghis Khan, and Alexander
With fierceness conquered peoples in their
way.
Leaving the peaceful of their faith betrayed,
Islamofascists spread their words of hate
With bombs and gunfire as in ages past.
Hitler and Stalin held their realms in check
With vicious rule. Pursuing destiny,
Our pioneers of old displaced and shot
The Mohawk, Iroquois and Seminole.
This is the human legacy, and yet
From many quarters cries ring out for peace,
Expressing hope, expecting miracles.

A group of lions kills a wildebeest;
An antelope is by a leopard slain;
A tiger makes a feast of feral pig;
Hyenas' teeth strike fear in smaller prey.
A red-tailed hawk descends upon the hare
And with his talons stops its flow of air;
An osprey diving from a distance great
For supper grabs an unsuspecting fish;
The peregrine with speed unmatched
pursues
And overtakes a lagging chickadee;
The eagle plucks a serpent from the sea
Before its poison can be injected.

For reproductive rights two rams compete
Until one's throbbing head requires relief.
Giraffes and zebras, hippopotami
And elephants desire a peaceful day,

But threats abound. Some can defend
themselves
With shrieking, speed and strength, or
fearsome kicks
While constant vigilance protects the young.

The human is in primal state a beast
So should one be surprised as some spill
blood?
Survival instinct guides the lower ones,
But what is man's excuse? He slaughters,
maims,
And conquers, dwellings overruns, as might
And brain a deadly combination form.

So pray and wish and walk and shout for
peace;
The past suggests it will elusive be
Except within one's soul; the world is
doomed
To suffer from barbaric acts, but one
Need not succumb to inclinations foul.
The Line Divided* is a way to rise
From tremors in the senses to a realm
Of higher knowledge wherein yearning stops
As everything of value has been gained.

So as the outer world a beastly state
Maintains, one's inner space must
compensate.
While brutes by force are seeking to
increase
Despotic rule, its lack of want breeds peace.
This is the only locus of control;
One cannot mend another's shredded soul.
So tame the beast within and be content
To others see below on your ascent.

**A concept from Plato's epistemology*

POEMS:

JUSTIN PATRICK MOORE

Justin Patrick Moore, a dreamer, writer, sound artist, and radio broadcaster lives in Northside with his partner Audrey, her daughter Ilia, and their pets: Lucy, New Kitty, Mango, Emily, Sadie and the Turtle. Justin's primary interest is to give birth on the physical plane, to visions conceived in imaginal realms, bringing gifts of magic, healing, faith and courage into being for the Earth and its people.

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DRAWING:

FRED TARR

Fred Tarr, native Pennsylvanian, living and working in Kentucky, published author, poetry, fiction, embarks weekly on a 50 hour odyssey in trucking to the Philadelphia area. Fred is currently working on an album of polyphonic morphisms called "Therdony for Darfur" a compendium of thirty voices with orchestra accompaniment , world premiere this fall in Atlanta, GA.

Contact: ibidnah@yahoo.com



mother room



GASAHOL

The oil in my mouth
tastes like lies
all the chemical untruths
are slick petroleum
on my tongue that slide

I want to spit it out
but the distillates are between my teeth
gumming up the works
a smoldering fire water
that chokes me as I breathe

my lip linings are saturated
the wound sutured, washed with gasoline
a sick alcohol poison
that bites with a venomous sting

and my words
are fossil fuel fumes
burning up dangerous emotions
sending them off into the atmosphere
of fear
tetrafluorocarbons
invisible monoxide gas
released in daily portions

sitting at the bar, I have another glass.

Access Limitless Light

I have evidence of time's cruel heart.
I heard it, burning at the stake
I claimed it as my own
when, with doubt and fear
I pushed on life's brakes.

Slowing me to a halt
so I could hit the default button
renounce the cadence, the dance
any sense of flow.
whether it was moving slow or fast

I took with frenzy to my daily repast
feeding my hunger to consume,

resume, unpause the frame of images
flickering by this screen of my mind.
Fast forward, rewind, replay the moment
for a second chance, for a second
resolving into a minute
my own resolve dissolving
with nothing solved,
my endurance eroded,
corroded and corrupt, I hit stop.
Abrupt.

Feeling it slip past, peeling it back
I see the reel of wheels
and I'm sliding off,
hanging by the boot heels,
waiting to be kicked.
Like a nasty habit,
something that's gone too far
just as the day grows short
the fuse of my patience licked
I might just snap, or grow sick.

A shutting out and a clamping down,
no fools aloud in this court here,
I sit on my empty throne
A dictator of what is real.

Fanciful imaginings stir
from when I was a child
my spirit untamed
an explorer in this wild world,
all round and wide,
before I heard the passage of sand
before I learned contempt
for all of life's demands
I was blazing the trail
the shining eye of a shooting star.

And how do I reclaim
What has now been tamed?
Access Limitless Light
unhinge the creaking machinery of mind.
I find the Poet's Way
in Shepard pastures
in twilight vales of peace

between sleep and dreams.

POEMS:

MIKE MURPHY

Mike Murphy grew up in Ohio farmland, attended Quaker-run Wilmington College, graduated from NYU (1965), then discovered Sirius Community Conference Center in Massachusetts. Mike is a 'powerdown, relocalize, sustainable village' advocate.

Contact: mmurphy10@fuse.net

DRAWING:

JENNIFER MERIDIETH

Jennifer Meridieth, a Cincinnati native, got her BFA in painting from the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 1991. Jennifer is a prolific artist who has exhibited her work nationally and internationally. She believes in good spirits and represents them in her paintings.

Contact: 513-878 9149



A Prayer for All Troops

It's Thanksgiving dinner, and Dad says:
"Let's say a prayer for our troops."
Prayers being of the 'pot-luck' style in our
home,
Where anyone can add whatever he or she
thinks,
A child adds, "For all the troops."
Another, even younger child adds, "On both
sides,"
Older family members clear their throats,
Shift their feet, & think about this.

A philosophical one quietly asks, without
raising his
Bowed head, "Would they all
Fight harder? Kill faster?"
Another offers, "They'd pile up more dead,
on both sides."
A third says, "Hmpf, might finish their jobs
sooner."

Silence.

"Well," says a thoughtful adult, clearing her
voice,
Continuing this odd, bowed-head prayer/
conversation,
"Since most all wars end in peace talks,
Maybe lots of prayers for all troops
Would lead to troops on both sides skipping
the war and
Going straight to the peace talks..."
More silence, shifting feet, clearing throats.

Finally, a voice offers:
"Good Lord, are our
Troops forever and always doomed
To be troops and *only* troops?
God, I mean, are they *never* to be peace-
makers?
No matter how many prayers are piled on?
Even if you, the Great God, threw your
prayers on the pile?"

Look, are you not God of all?
And if you are God of all, shouldn't we
Pray for all, and not just for one side?
Shouldn't we pray for both sides?
Shouldn't we pray to turn all warriors,
uniformed or not,
Into peace-makers?"
A long silence.

"Yes, Lord," Dad finally says, ending this
prayer/dialog,
"Let us pray for all the troops & warriors, on
all sides,
"And may they all become peace-makers."

"Amen," say all.

When Did We Stop Being Philosophers

"What is grass?"
Asked the child,
Bringing handfuls
To Whitman.
Why is the Sky
Blue?
Asks every child.

When do the
Stars sleep?
Who made the
Tiger?
What is good?
What is God?

What is love?
Who made me?
Why do I ask 'Why?'?
When did we
Stop being
Philosophers?

POEM:

KATHY NEUS

Kathy Neus has been a member of the Women Writing for (a) Change (WWfaC) community for six years. Her writing has been featured in WWfaC public readings and performances, including "Soundings II" a concert collaboration with MUSE - Cincinnati Women's Choir, "Writings from the Goddesses Within" at the YWCA Women's Art Gallery and on WVXU-FM.

DRAWING:

NICHOLAS PADDOCK

Nicholas Paddock attended the University of Cincinnati and graduated with a license in art education and a BFA in Drawing. Nicholas' love for art and artists inspired him to open, in 2006, a contemporary art gallery named Nicholas Gallery. It is an inviting space that exhibits local and national artists with the intent of inspiring the downtown Cincinnati community.

Contact: nicholas_gallery@yahoo.com



Teaching Peace

I've always tried
to answer my daughter's questions
truthfully,
as completely as she needs
at that moment.
Now she is nine years old,
old enough to know about war,
not old enough
to truly understand it.

She has read books about
Revolutionary, Civil and World Wars,
knows the stories of Paul Revere,
North versus South and Pearl Harbor.
She hears about this war,
wonders about its stories,

asks me questions:

Why are we fighting Iraq?

*Because President Bush said Iraq
had bad weapons,
he was wrong.*

Then why are we still over there?

*Because we started it, now we have
to help the Iraqis.*

Who is fighting with us?

England.

What about France?

*No, they have been against the war
from the beginning.*

Why?

*Most of the world and a lot of
Americans were against it.*

Like you and Dad?

*Yes, we didn't agree with it then or
now.*

*Will the war ever come here, near our
home?*

No, it won't.

I wonder
if we are now to the heart of the matter.
Is this her main concern?
Some might say it is here
in the form of terrorists.
I could say the war isn't here,
but it is elsewhere,
near the homes of other nine-year-old girls,
thousands of miles away,
whose cars, buses, schools, homes,
whole neighborhoods
with families and children
are being bombed.
I don't tell her any of this.

Our conversation is a fine line
between truth, my opinion
and too much information.
So, I try to explain it,
not just that this war is wrong
but that all wars are wrong,
and stand by my ideal of truthfulness.
I just want to teach right from wrong,
find the balance of explaining war
while teaching her peace.

POEM:

MICK PARSONS

Mick Parsons is a native of the Greater Cincinnati area, currently relocated to the Arizona desert. He is the founder and publisher of One-Legged Cow Press. (www.oneleggedcowpress.org.) Mick's first collection of poetry, *Fragments of Unidentifiable Form*, is available from Publish America. His work has been published on semantikon.com, <http://litdispatch.com>, and in The Licking River Review.

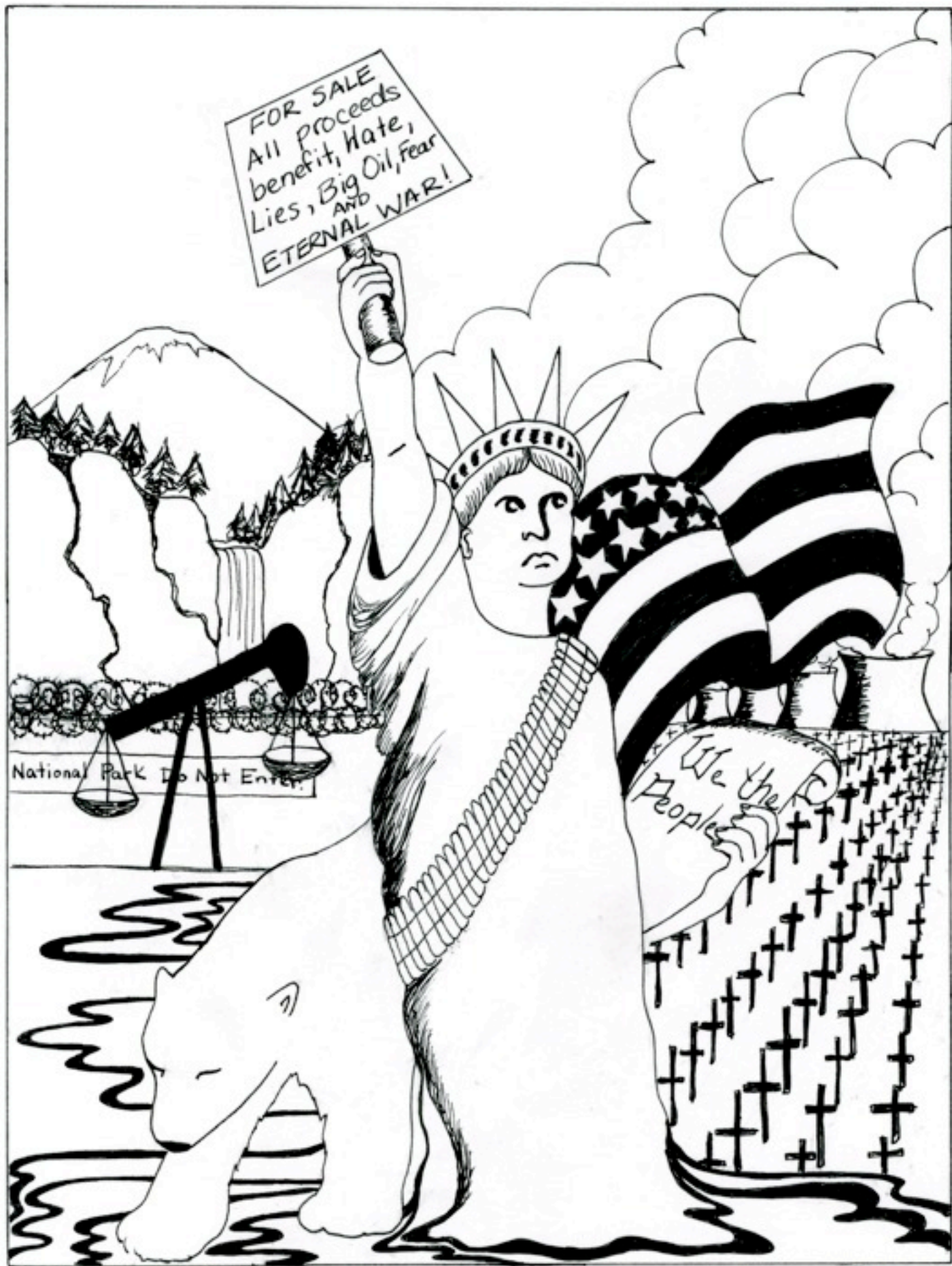
Contact: contact@mickparsons.net; www.mickparsons.net

DRAWING:

AMBER REIS

Amber Reis grew up on a farm in rural Campbell County, KY. In 2005 she graduated from Northern Kentucky University with a BFA degree. Amber's specialty is Printmaking with an emphasis on Serigraphy; she enjoys, however, making all types of art.

Contact: amberprints@gmail.com; www.aareis.dyndns.org



Amber Reis

Babylonian Towers—an Open Letter (to George W. Bush)

Dear George,

Sorry I missed you last week
on your regular trip through town;
another \$10 grand-a-plate soiree
where the only thing they worry about
is whether the homeless guys crept back
under the overpass to muddle the view
of the shiny new city
your decadent Base has built.

Sorry I missed you— but the family's doing fine.
We do our best to get by in this post 9-11 world
where our enemies have us by the balls.

Sorry I missed you
because I wanted to tell you
because I wanted to let you know
that while the interstate was constipated by the armored-blockade
my tax bucks bought
another 200 people choked to death
under a butterscotch scented haze.
The only thing anybody noticed
was the smaller number of bums to make your base
feel bad for being rich, or responsible for the piss poor condition of the poor:
for 46 million uninsured workers whose jobs'll be outsourced next year;
for the disappearing middle class, and for the division of needs;
for the legion of grandmothers and World War II veterans splicing heart disease pills;
for the fucking gas prices,
that don't stop your armored caravan
'cause I pay for the gas, too.

(mr. president)
if I dare refer—
if I dare presume—
730 days left and I wonder
what your daily planner will dictate
if Jerusalem will drown in a sea of nuclear glass,
if another 2000 soldiers will die in the name of the new corporate strategy,
and for the grand skyscrapers yet to be built
with executive elevators to Heaven.

But there ain't no room for me. I can't afford the cost of a ticket,
or the plate you'd use to serve up my heart.

Georgie Porgie Puddin' Pie
pissed on tree huggers
and made 'em cry.

How many National Forests burn?
How many coal mountains collapse
so the stock market won't fall a point?

There are a thousand union organizers buried in your basement;
when Cheney's shot his last campaign contributor
they'll be ripe for target practice
on some East Texas farm
where common sense and hunting licenses are optional
and morals are hung at the door
like every other dead carcass.

I guess I'm just wondering, George,
where the promise is. I realize
I shouldn't expect it
but even now,
in this age of decay
and rot in the streets,
I still look for it.

I bury politics in my poems
like the bones in White House backyard,
and 20 years from now academics will dissect my words
and they will know
what your biographers blotted out of history books.

I still look. I'll always be looking
beyond the bland cityscape
beyond this apocalyptic vision you've set loose-

and even if my poems are dark
the place my eye sees is beautiful,
far beyond the shadow
of all these Babylonian towers
where you eat off \$10,000 plates
in company of robber barons & kings

while outside, angels and demons wrestle for the scraps.

Before your next visit,
be sure to call so I'll know
when to let the dogs loose.

POEMS:

RHONDA PETTIT

Rhonda Pettit teaches literature and creative writing at UC Raymond Walters College. She is working on a manuscript of poems titled *The Global Lovers*.

Contact: rhonda.pettit@uc.edu

DRAWING:

EMILY STORCH

Emily Storch, a Cincinnati native, will graduate in 2007 from DAAP at the University of Cincinnati. Emily draws and paints.

Contact: emilystorch@earthlink.net



History of the Child Sex Slave

I had a name,
I had a mother inside of me,
I had a father inside of me,
all of these telling me
(even when silent)
who I am –

I was a cloud containing
the good rain.

At times I seemed to be bursting
with what would make
the growing world.

I felt I gave it
just by walking to school,
setting the table, or taking
my father's hand,

just by being
I felt I gave it,
I felt glad to give it,

but now knowing is gone
and making has changed.
Cloud has turned
to burning,

a choking light
never out, smoke in the shape
of the man inside

who owns and vapors
my blood, who says
I deserve

this
and more,
(*stanza break*)

nothing inside but the man inside,
nothing inside the man inside.

God for the Sex Slave

I was taught
that the world is round,
but now it is my body
that is round, that is full
of roundness

and I know too well
what roundness can be made
to repeat – I know too well
the rolling infinity of flesh,

the pull of this globe,
how nothing falls off it,
how even in spinning
nothing escapes the gravities
it weaves and nothing
stops its spinning.

If only I went around once.

If only I could be the world
before we knew it too well.
If only I could be as flat
as the world in our ignorance.

How I would laugh
at the ones who launch their ships across
and through me reaching the edge
to fall and never stop
falling.

How like thunder and fire
my laughter would be.

Babylonian Numbers

I am the whore called Who.



I can be the bitch
or the pimp.

I can be the dollar
or the needle.

I can be the street
or the portal.

I can be the bed
or the closet.

I can be the illness
or the pill.



I can be the little girl
or the city father.

I can be the blue dress
or the gray suit.

I can be the statehouse
or the outhouse.

I can be the little boy
or the priest.

I can be the church
or the collection.



I can be the student
or the teacher.

I can be the athlete
or the wino.

I can be the college
or the party.

I can be the sponsor
or the program.

I can be the knowledge
or the image.



I can be the movie
or the viewer.

I can be the Caddy
or the Chevy.

I can be the suburb
or the downtown.

I can be the bank
or the starving.

I can be the engine
or the earth.



I can be the animal
or the totem.

I can be the Christian
or the Atheist.

I can be the Muslim
or the Jew.

I can be the Buddhist
or the Hindu.

I can be the vision
or the blind.



I can be the story
or the word.

I can be the grammar
or the chaos.

I can be the writer
or the page.

I can be the named
or the nameless.

I can be the joke
or the murder.

I can be yours or you.

POEMS:

ARMANDO ROMERO

Armando Romero was active in the Colombian avant-garde movement El Nadaismo during the 1960's. He has traveled extensively throughout Latin America, Europe and Asia. He lives in Cincinnati, where he is a Charles Phelps Taft Professor in Latin American literature at the University of Cincinnati.

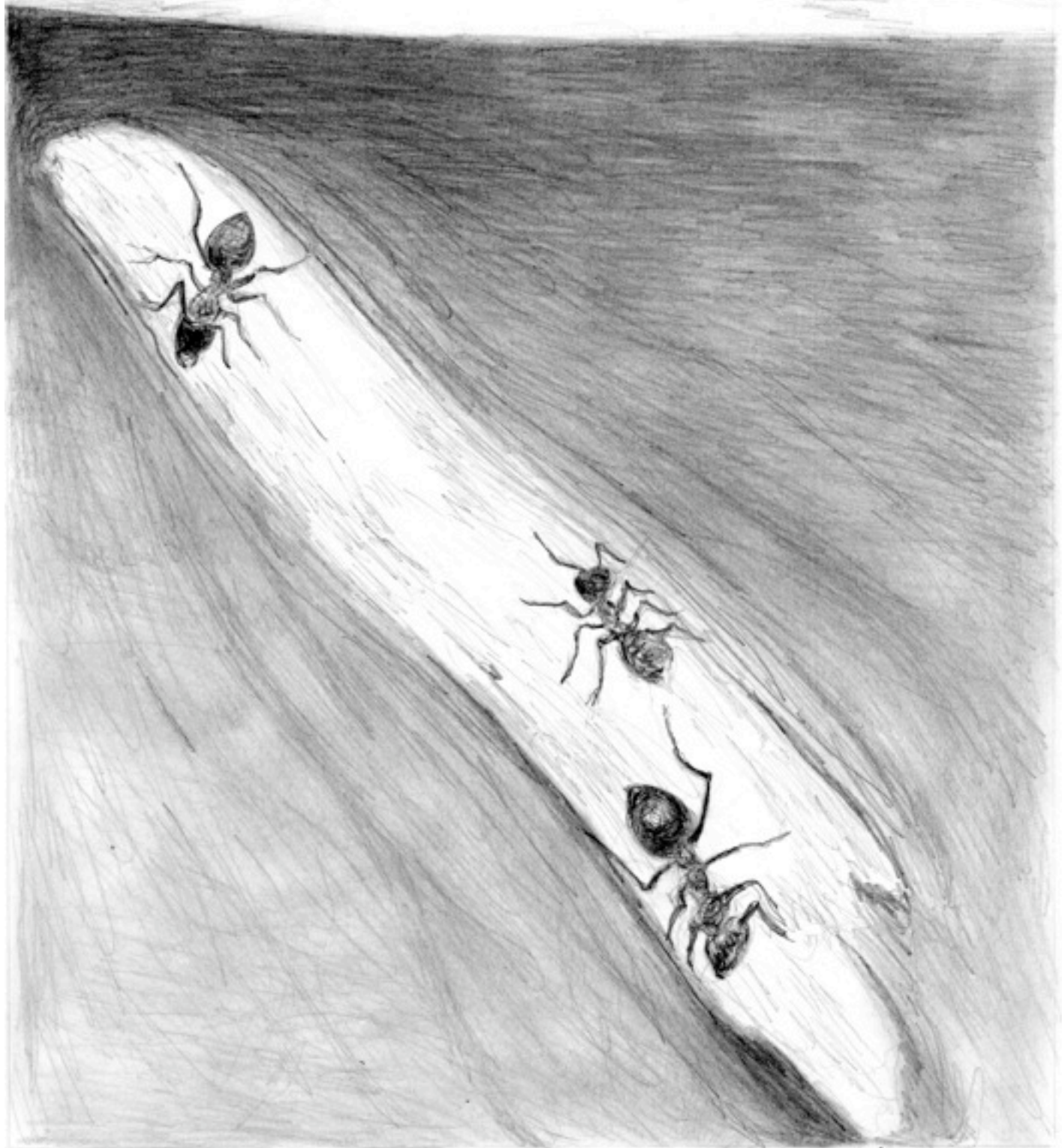
Contact: armando_romero@msn.com

DRAWING:

HEIDI ENDRES

Heidi Endres is a native Cincinnati artist who currently teaches at Northern Kentucky University in addition to exhibiting as a fine artist. Heidi's drawings, prints and handmade books have been exhibited in national and international exhibitions.

Contact: endresh@nku.edu



Heidi Endre

Azucar en los Labios

Desde la mujer del tendero
hasta Conchita la pelirroja,
y desde Jesús el zapatero
hasta Roberto que dirigía la escuela,
todos, sin excepción, amanecieron
con un terrón de azúcar
en la punta de los labios.
Sin embargo, los únicos en enterarse de lo
sucedido
fueron los que se besaron por la mañana

Delta

The Orinoco was flowing through the streets
and reed flats at Tucupita,
it was overflowing into boats
yellowed with rust and urine,
climbing the belfries like a monkey,
entering the Indians' huts,
the shacks of half-breeds,
into beds where bodies made love overcome
by sweat.
The river overpowered all with its Vishnu
arms,
stripping all in its path.
And there in the hungry mouthed center,
hand in hand the two of us watched a piece
of wood race by,
peopled by yellow ants.
Now I know for sure,
one way or another,
this sky is either coming or going for all.

(Translation: Alita Kelley)

Sugar on the lips

From the wife of the shopkeeper
to Conchita the redhead,
and from Jesus the shoemaker
to Roberto the school principal,
all, without exception, woke up
with a lump of sugar
on the tip of their tongues.
The only ones who realized what had
happened, however,
were the ones who kissed each other in the
morning.

(Translation: Constance Lardas)

Valparaiso

I might have formed a wrong impression of
Valparaiso
if five things had not happened to me.
First, on top of one of the hills,
two men were carrying a piano,
their silhouette against the sky was music
itself;
second, a fisherman on the jetty had fallen
asleep
with several fish spread across his chest.
Third, in Echaurren square
a whore with a hole in her forehead
told me to give everything up
and follow her to the hilltops;
fourth, I looked for you among the colors of
the doors
and the noise of the cable cars
but you weren't there;
fifth, night passed
and the beauty of the morning
was all the dawns of creation.

(Translation: Alita Kelley)

POEMS:

LINDA ANN SCHOFIELD

Linda Ann Schofield lived most of her life in western OH. In June of 2005, after retiring from 31 years in the education field, most as a high school librarian, she moved to the Cincinnati area to be near her two daughters and three grandchildren.

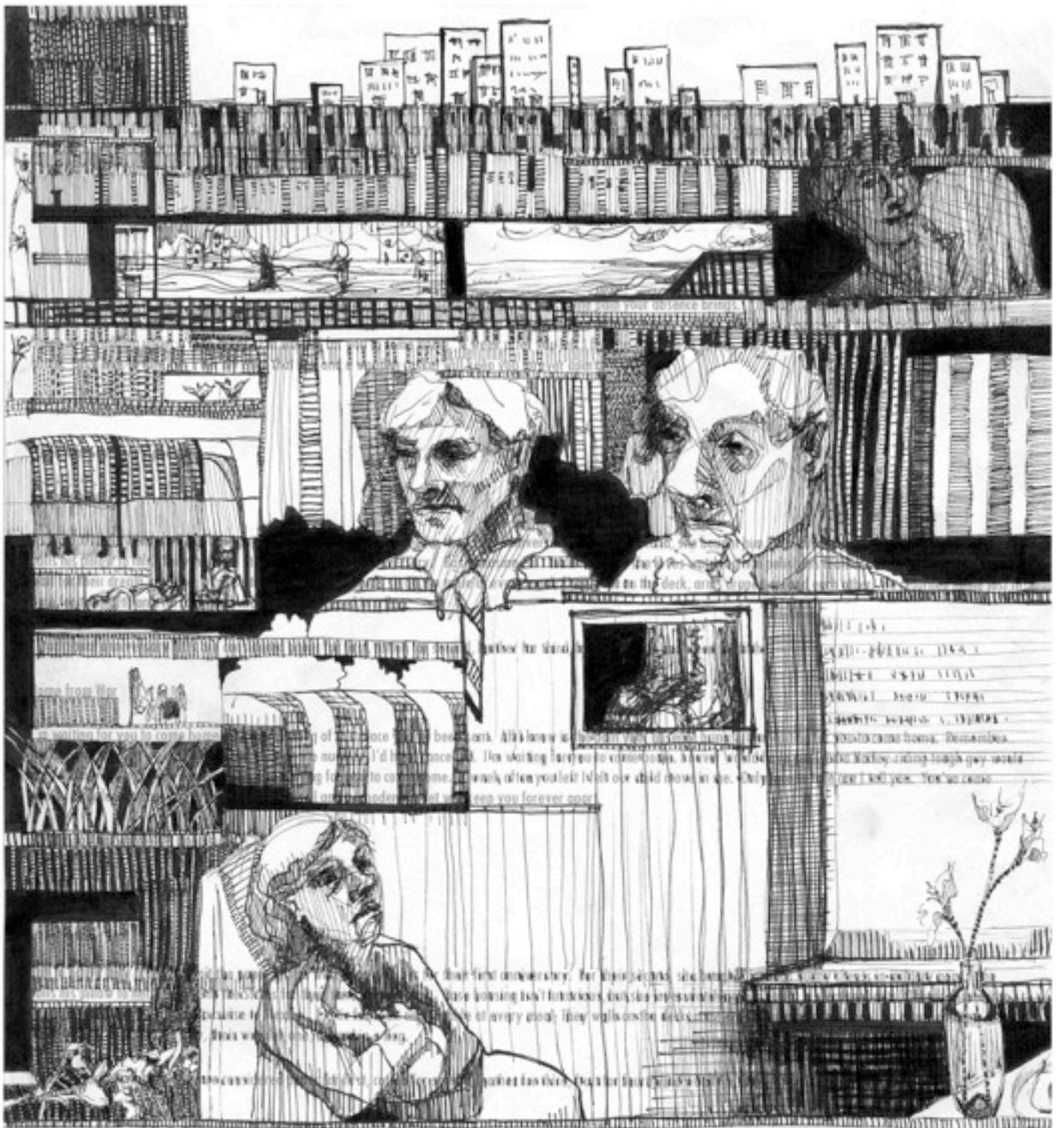
Contact: librarylady369@roadrunner.com

DRAWING:

LAUREN WELLS

Lauren Wells is a Northern Kentucky native. She currently attends Northern Kentucky University as a full time student pursuing a BFA in drawing. A senior, she aspires to graduate within a year. Lauren's goals include going to graduate school and being a gallery curator.

Contact: wellsl@nku.edu



Larsen Wells 2007



Anniversary Gifts*

Call to active duty orders
wasn't the paper gift
he wanted to give her
for their first anniversary.

For their second,
she bought him Bugs Bunny
sheets in military gear.
She pulls his pillow to her.

They're in the States
for their third anniversary.
Base housing isn't luxurious, but
she loves watching him polish his leather
boots.

They decide not to wait for their dream
vacation: a cruise to Mexico.
Exotic fruits sit on the table at every meal;
They walk on the deck, arms draped
around each other.

He returned home just in time
for their fifth anniversary,
their wooden one,
draped in a flag.

**Traditional anniversary gifts are considered
paper for first, cotton for second, leather for
third, fruit for fourth and wood for fifth.*

Home from War

I'm waiting for you to come home.
I know nothing of this place
you've been sent. All I know
is the pain your absence brings.

I'm waiting for you to come home.
Remember the blind date when we met?
If I'd had your phone number, I'd
have cancelled.

I'm waiting for you to come home.
I never would have guessed
a Harley-riding tough guy
would agree to a wedding under a rose
arbor.

I'm waiting for you to come home.
A week after you left
I felt out child move in me.
Only face to face can I tell you.

You've come home.
Only face to face can I tell my child
that soil and a wooden casket
will keep you forever apart.

POEM:

ARALEE STRANGE

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

She also wrote and directed *THIS TRAIN*, a feature film.

Aralee's poetry has appeared in: *semantikon's In the Stomach; Forklift, Ohio; For a Better World, 2004-6; WORC'S; Pavement Saw; Jawbone: SplitCity; X Ray; Soaptown, Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel; evil dog*; and others.

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

Contact: getstrange@earthlink.net

DRAWING:

FREDERICK ELLENBERGER

Belgian born and raised abroad, Frederick Ellenberger is an award winning artist whose work unites the mind and the eye in pleasure.

He currently lives in Cincinnati.

Contact: fellenberger@cinci.rr.com



Frederick Ellenberger

Stop Look & Listen

for Johan

Stop

the mind flux
what we think we see
spirit lives beyond our pale reality
playing hide & seek
we are It
count to ten
ready or not here we come!
we lose our way
spirit loves us
any way

Look

spirit's afoot not in a book
at strut and spawn and fuck
ten thousand tongues bee busy building spring
the promise and all the proof we need
spirit moves in mysterious ways

&

spirit tells us
hand knows accomplishment
work on
night dreams abundance
reap what you sow
dog loves heart
forgive yourself
traffic in love
let You go

Listen

spirit knows us
on this we agree
the way we were
the way we could be
if only we
if only
if
spirit wants to know
not now
when?

POEMS:

STEVE SUNDERLAND

Steve Sunderland, director of the Peace Village, is a professor of peace and educational studies at UC College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services. Since the Cincinnati riots and the terrorist attacks of 2001 all of Steve's work has been to encourage peace through the arts, youth leadership education, hunger reduction, understanding Islam, improving inclusion in higher education.

Contact: sundersc@email.uc.edu

AMANDA WOLFE

Amanda Wolfe graduated from Xavier University in 2006 with a degree in English. She grew up in Chillicothe, OH, and has been writing for as long as she can remember.

Contact: then_play_on@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

ASHLEY NOVAK

Ashley Novak will obtain her BFA with a concentration in sculpture and art education from the University of Cincinnati in June of 2007. Upon graduation, she plans on pursuing art in Madison, WI.

Contact: ashley.novak@gmail.com



Ashley North
Co. '09

The Anne Frank File Is Closed

(by *Steve Sunderland*)

Who knows in what kind of
Hell they died?
Disease, gas, murder are
All known about.
What we have learned
Is that their attempt
To escape via visas
Was killed by the American
State Department.
How does a father accept
The rejection of a bureaucratic,
Anonymous murderer?
There didn't need to be an attic.
There didn't need to be a diary.
There didn't need to be a traitor.

There didn't need to be Belsen.

Only Miep Gies, friend,
Prophet,
And citizen of our world,
Saw the rejection as the
World closed down the escape.
We bow to Miep and Jan, today.
Our hearts darkened for Anne.

"VISA DENIED."

My Uncle Is a Clever Hunter

(by *Amanda Wolfe*)

My uncle is a clever hunter.
In November, he buys corn by the bushel.
Carefully, he spreads it out, just beneath
the trees.
In the mist of their breath, mistrust—
yet hunger always wins. They come,
trembling,
ready to bolt, but nothing happens.
They relax; they feed. They don't even look
up
until the bullet reddens their skin. They fall.
My uncle is a clever hunter.

Cincinnati Sears the Sky

(by *Amanda Wolfe*)

A hundred odd miles southwest of my
hometown,
Cincinnati sears the sky with its light
pollution,
city of concrete and glass and highway
corridors.

Here, the earth has lost her voice.
She clears her throat to make us listen;
we hear the hiss of sewer steam.
She yields her firstborn and everything after
to our lawn mowers and weed killers and
progress.

Sometimes, when heaven forgets her own
pain,
it weeps for her, and the pavement sizzles
with her fever,
and the streets run wet with rain and tears.

POEMS:

JEAN SYED

Jean Syed is a member of the Cincinnati's Writers Project and of the Greater Cincinnati's Writers League. She is English and studied at the University of Birmingham (England) where she obtained a degree in Russian Language and Literature.

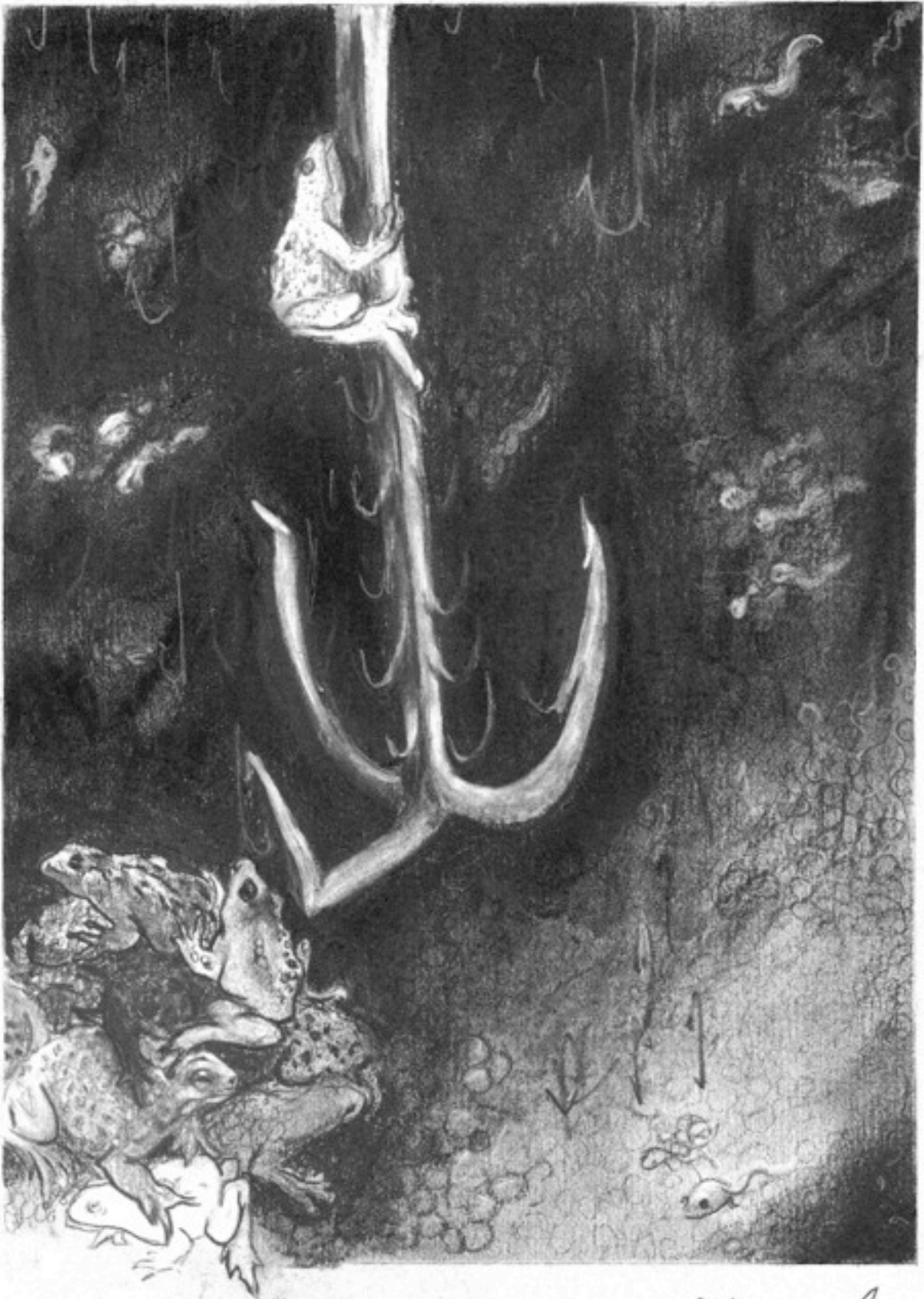
Contact: jsyed@cinci.rr.com

DRAWING:

ERICA COOPER

Erica Cooper, a 24 year-old artist and mother from California, KY, received, in 2005, a Bachelor of Fine Art (BFA) and a minor in psychology from Northern Kentucky University. Erica is currently working towards a Master's of Business Administration (MBA). Her work consists of figurative paintings and drawings that deal with social issues and single parenthood.

Contact: erica.cooper@yahoo.com



Eric Cooper

Sovereignty of Self

“War is the normal occupation of man.”
Winston Churchill

I will decide my body's need.
Forbidden this, forbidden that,
How dare you rule the life I lead?
I am myself the autocrat.

The president is not a king,
Nor are conservative priests
Each is flawed human being
Like kings themselves, but sane as beasts.

If I want to abort, I shall abort.
Mankind fills up the whole spoiled earth,
Is this the kind of doom we've sought
Our mother gets sick from giving birth

But birth results in poverty,
Global warming, greenhouse gasses,
For who would want nativity
With population piled in masses?

While the ultimate end is war
Over who owns the fruitful land.
I am the earth, I'm not a whore,
But wise men won't understand.

On the Bus.

Environmentally aware, we parked
the selfish vehicle at the mall and rode the
bus
downtown (such a hoot, to slum it now and
then).
On the way back a bum plonked opposite
as if we were long lost bosom buddies.

No toad expecting to share my Jacuzzi could
have thrilled me more; and yet, despite the
whiff
of breath and clothes, my manner stayed
quite

non-discriminatory, polite,
societally approved—till he pawed

my necklace below my throat. I swatted him
(thank God he didn't have a gun or knife!)
and quickly turned away my face to friend,
engaging her in earnest conversation
about an absorbing something through the
window;

while maybe she was perceiving, too, just
then,
why the bus line ended nowhere near the
safe,
the well-behaved, green acres where we
lived,
detecting a tacit policy that made
none of us press to have the route extended.

Well, he shriveled those impudent rags on
bones.
One drunken sigh and he shrank against the
seat,
a loser huddled over his defeat
as if he hugged a precious babe in arms
nursing its putrid corpse whose miasma
spreading

embarrassed our lightheartedness to
death.

Oppression vanquished our joy, to lie
entombed
nor rise again—until he bore his burden
off the bus and blended with the buttress
propping up the block. To mall returned

philosophers of trite compassion we
grew more large-hearted as we burned more
gas,
nicely insulated in the Hummer
homing to our superior ghetto
from the contagion of the underclass.

POEMS:

VICTOR M. VELEZ

Victor M. Vélez, a native of Puerto Rico, is a Cincinnati-based writer, poet, photographer and a Latino percussionist with “Son del Caribe,” an 11-piece band playing classical salsa. Victor is a published author of “*A Quest for Answers: A Personal Journey*,” and has completed his 2nd poetry manuscript “*Conga Blues*,” in which these poems appear.

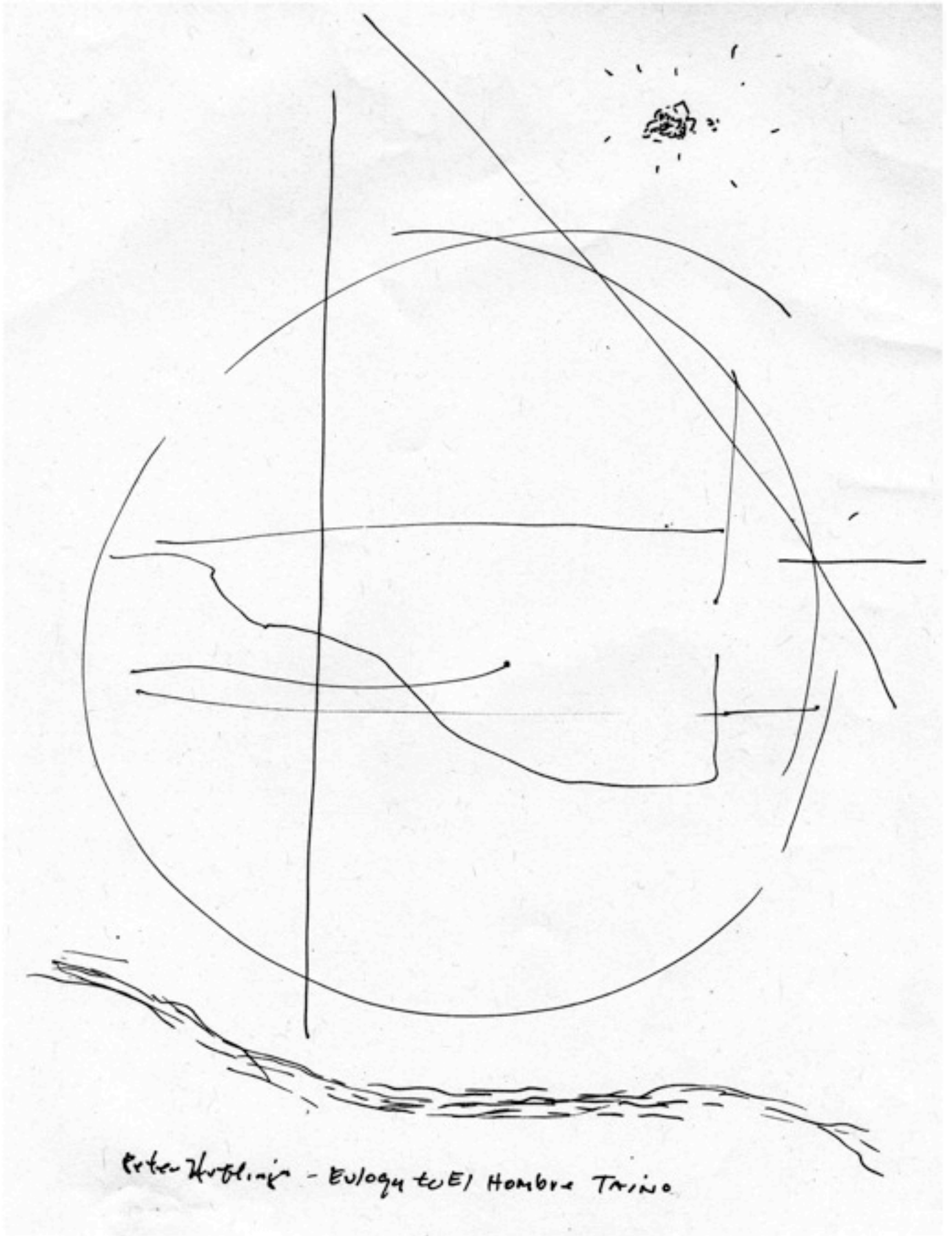
Contact: alasinc77@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

PETER HUTTINGER

Peter Huttinger, currently a coworker at Homeadow Song Farm, a center for community-based education, owns and operates Volatile Art, Books and Editions, a small press publishing with a focus on artists' books, editions and performance art. Peter was for several years Project Manager at Village Green, a not-for-profit community based organic/sustainable garden and greenhouse facility; from 2001 to 2004 Operations and Public Relations Coordinator at the Cincinnati Waldorf School; and from 1993 to 2001 Archivist for The Robert J. Shiffler Foundation, Greenville, OH.

Contact: huttinger@fuse.net



Peter Kufelinger - Eulogy to El Hombre Trino

Eulogy to El Hombre Taino (November 19, 1493)

Seventeen ships sailed across the Atlantic-
parked on your shores.

They arrived with horses, swords,
bags full of mirrors
to an island you called, "*Boriken*"
They being, "*Los Conquistadores*."

While you watched
playing hide and seek
behind leaves, peeking into destiny,
pointing to the shores-
"*Yuquiyu*" has arrived.

Thinking they were Gods,
you emptied your rivers
of gold for mirrors,
to see like a crystal ball,
a forewarning reflection
of your own extinction-
you hibernated in the pores of my skin.

Human intuition roused
like the aroma of brewing coffee
to test your Gods.
You drown Diego Salcedo
while intoxicated,
to declare their mortality
or immortality, like a prophecy,
you waited. But,
Diego never resurrected
on the third day like their Lord.

Then you realized they were gods
with a small "g,-" for gold.

They carried their cross
around their necks, their sins dripped
from their swords, and the crown.

It's Not Only About Black and White

To record the world around me,
I bought myself a third eye called, a video
camera.

But the manufacturer made a crucial
mistake in their design.

They made the viewfinder, "black and white."

My natural eyes were programmed
to see the world in color.

The black and white viewfinder
did not capture the different
shades of a prism.

The primary colors of the spectrum.

It lacked the beautiful hues that separated
each subject from perspective.

I refused to record the world around me
in black and white.

I returned it to the manufacturer,
in exchange for one with a color viewfinder.

Now I could distinguish each color.
The features of each color had feeling,
warmth, characteristics, complexion.

Each color held its unique mood, a unique
identity.

Each color held its place in the world.

I was then able to film a beautiful mosaic
world,
called, humanity.

Our First Color TV

It was hard times in the mid-60's.
Living a shift in society,
a decade of racial tension,
like a perking coffeepot.
Technology was replacing
manual labor,
other uses were found for
your typical fire hose.

Martin Luther King Jr.
was always on the road,
until April 4, 1968.
Robert F. Kennedy's assassins
were preparing
to end the decade
with a big blast.
While the astronauts
were aboard their next
Apollo mission in a race
towards the moon.

Our black and white TV set
was our magnifying glass
to the events taking place-

in the world.

I sat drinking my *café bustelo*
and soda crackers
with cheddar cheese,
for snacks.
Newscasters wore
white shirts and black ties.
I couldn't see
the Technicolor feathers of
NBC peacock,
didn't know the grass
at Yankee Stadium was green.
Every image was black and white
like Martin Luther & Robert F.

Until one day *mi padre*,

my father came home
with color TV.
We turned it on
the first images I saw
were from the Vietnam War.
Flares of orange and yellow,
camouflage greens,
streaks of reds.

From that day on
I saw the outside world
in color.
From that day on
I saw a different shade
of mankind.

POEMS:

KATHLEEN WADE

Kathleen Wade is a faculty member and Executive Director of Women Writing for (a) Change. Kathy taught English, journalism, drama, writing and reading for 29 years from junior high through graduate school. She is a writer, editor and photographer, and has conducted writing workshops for teachers. Her work has appeared in *The Heart of the Matter*, *Love and Trouble*, *Ohio Teachers Write*, *Cincinnati Neighborhood Poets Laureate*, and other anthologies.

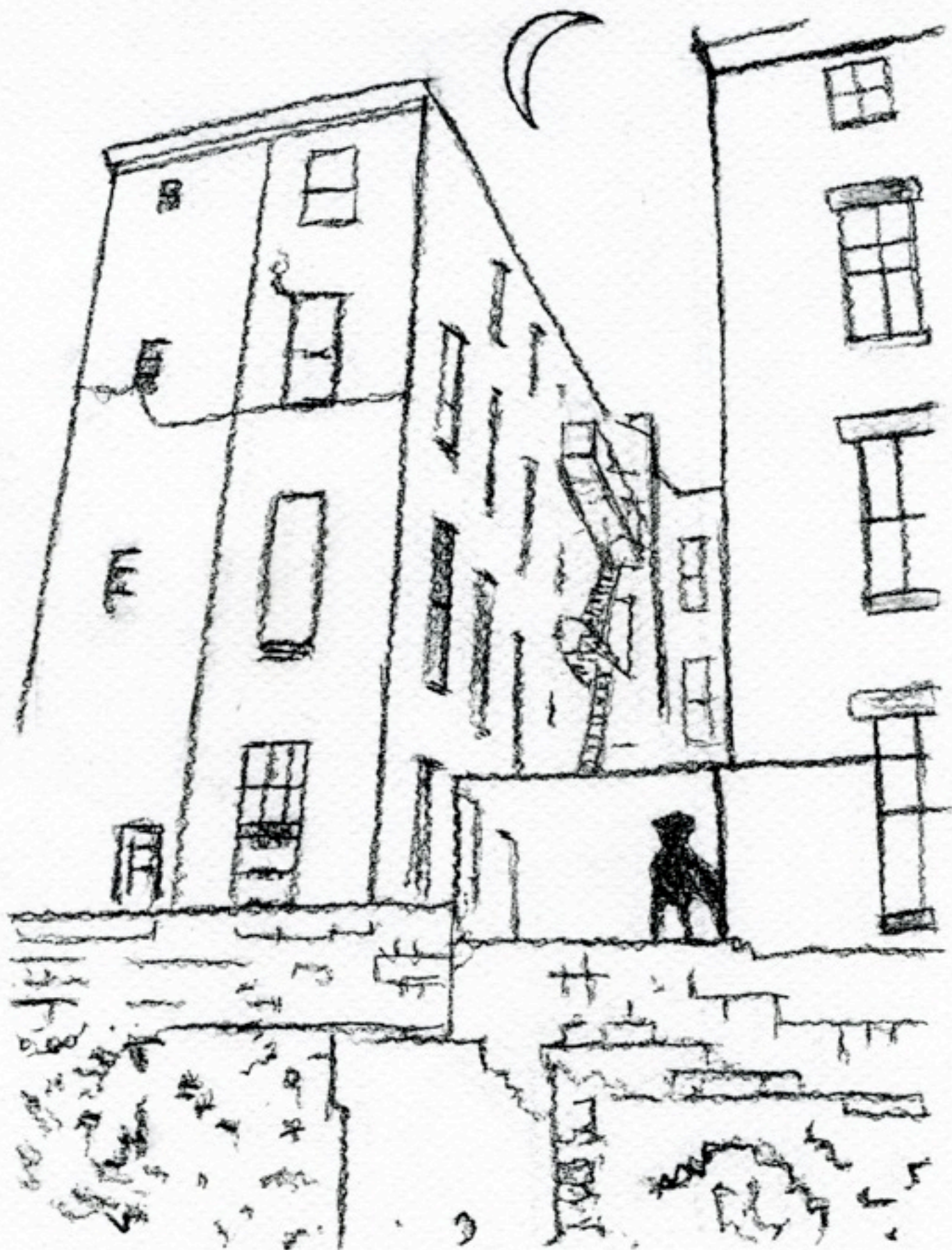
Contact: kwade@womenwriting.org

DRAWING:

JIM PENDERY

Jim Pendery started out studying sculpture with Richard Miller; later he worked for Northern Kentucky Arts Council and as a scenic artist. Currently Jim's focus is oil painting.

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James Pendery 2007

Barking Dog

All night he barks. tied to a post
or locked in a pen, I can't be sure,
a half-dozen backyards away.
A rhythm: four barks, a breath,
four barks again, a high-pitched cry
at first that sinks into his throat
as night deepens.

I have not seen his desperate eyes.
I do not know his breed, can only imagine
the slope of his back, his dry tongue,
mottled fur.
I am shocked by the anger I feel for the
owner allowing this dog to cry.

Is my indignation sprung from love
or disgust? Would I take this animal in,
give him his freedom?
I have to admit I would not, cannot.
My anger fades each night into
helplessness. This is only one creature's
misery.

I cannot save this lone dog from his
prison. Still, each night I listen,
and begin to think he speaks for those
in chains, fenced in by failure,
ignorance, fear, the ones
who do not bark,
who know just enough
not to disturb the peace.

Joshua

This is the story of Joshua
a doctor who fled the slaughter
in his native Congo
and ended up mopping floors
in a hospital in Vermont
while he learns the language
while he studies to pass the tests.

To overcome his despair
he talks to his God
who answers him in a voice
saying;
*You will get through this.
You are where you must be.
You are of value.
You are good.*

As he cleans the hospital corridors,
he remembers the woman
in his hometown
who scrubbed the floors
in the hospital where he was the boss.
He barely noticed her.
Now he wants her to know:
*I understand
how hard you worked.
I know how it feels
to be invisible.*

City Stoop

Delores planted herself on the front stone steps most days around one. "Settin' a spell," she'd say, but that didn't mean she was ripe for talk. I was a volunteer sent out to "meet and greet." I would teach these lost souls to hope, get a job, go to school, at the very least, bring them into the spiritual fold.

Delores smoked her Lucky Strikes, drank lemonade from a jar, and sat, eventually clearing a spot on the stoop for me. Her "Yup" and "Nup" left no inroads. I gave up trying and settled into a silence louder than her corner at 14th & Vine, darker than her musty stairwell, heavier than the greasy summer air.

Sometimes Delores sighed so deep it left her visibly lighter. Her losses floated around the two of us, dropped onto my sandals, fell into the folds of my skirt. Memories sat on our shoulders and slid down our backs with the sweat from our necks. Elbows propped on our knees, chins in the palms of our hands, we sat. After an hour or so, I'd pat her hand and move on.

Summer ended. I returned to my English classroom where I felt the need to dole out answers before the questions were asked. One day I held up a glass of lemonade during lunch and thought of Delores. I fell into mourning for those scorching afternoons when I first learned how to be quiet.

POEMS:

FRAN WATSON

Fran Watson: Art, literature, writing, music and theater; an incurable right-brain. Fran has been an editor and a contributor, has written about art for more than 20 years, exhibited, curated and been collected. She plays the flute and classical guitar, sings tenor. Fran feels she has a truly wonderful life, for which she is grateful hourly, daily.

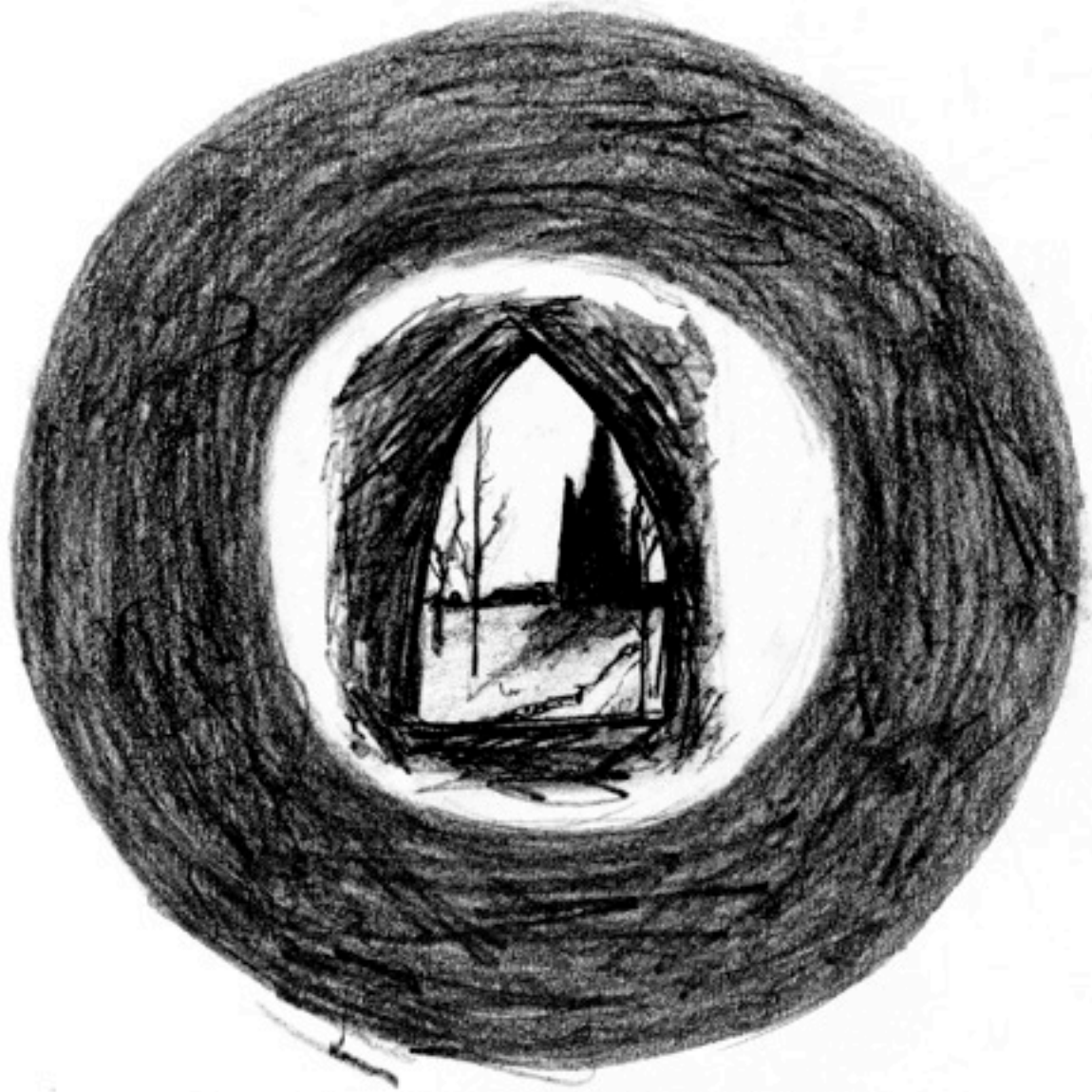
Contact: watson@fuse.net

DRAWING:

PAIGE WIDEMAN

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

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Richardson

In Cologne

There's a cold river rising
brushing against winter bracken,
carrying old leaves away,
depositing fresh spring mud,
yet bearing loss for some
who huddle on the shore
watching the slow destruction.

Wars are like the river,
rising to a chorus of disbelieving cries
smashing, destroying, uncaring,
leaving behind debris and sorrow
that seems insurmountable.

In Cologne, a city flattened once,
I saw the cathedral blackened by fire
bent and tired, but standing
in defiance of all it had witnessed.
All around, nothing rose higher
than one story, yet people lived,
moved, worked, walked past
this venerable history hardly aware
of its significance,
but feeling its constant presence.

It takes so little to heal -
a bandaid of hope,
an ancient tower,
a layer of fertile silt.

Not even chaos lasts forever.
Whether defeated by boredom
or lack of strength,
(even horror wearies in time),
its energy wanes, and peace returns.

Until the next time.

The Beast in the Next Valley Over.

just beyond that hill, fringed with winter
trees,
a low, threatening sound
hums tunelessly night and day.

windows reduce it to white noise
so that healing sleep interrupts
its inevitability.

but it rises in the morning again
permeating all life with its presence.

yesterday, paws appeared
on the horizon, foretelling progress
or doom.
as with all things, it must grow or die.

tomorrow, perhaps, eyes will glow
like twin suns at dawn,
lying atop the brown branches akimbo,
surveying our complacency.

it may be years or months or just moments
until the breathy presence becomes
mature danger, trampling even
the gentle clouds in love of violence.

we who swear we loathe it
have made it what it is.
we have harnessed the fear in our lives
and shoved it down into the next valley
pretending we don't hear it and taste it.

And there it is fed while we look away,
waiting for its year,
its month,
its day.

POEMS:

LARRY WATSON

Larry Watson is a professional artist working full time in clay sculpture and functional art. Occasional forays into writing have been published locally in City Beat, Cincinnati Enquirer, trade publications, and his Artist Blog at www.watsonclay.com. Larry's rural Kentucky home and studio provide the perfect setting for his creative expression.

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TERRI WEIR

Terri Weir, a Cincinnati native, is a published poet working on her first book of poetry. She is currently finishing her BA at Northern Kentucky University after spending a year at Columbia College in Chicago in the screenwriting program. In her spare time Terri collects supplies and art projects to take down to different organizations in Haiti.

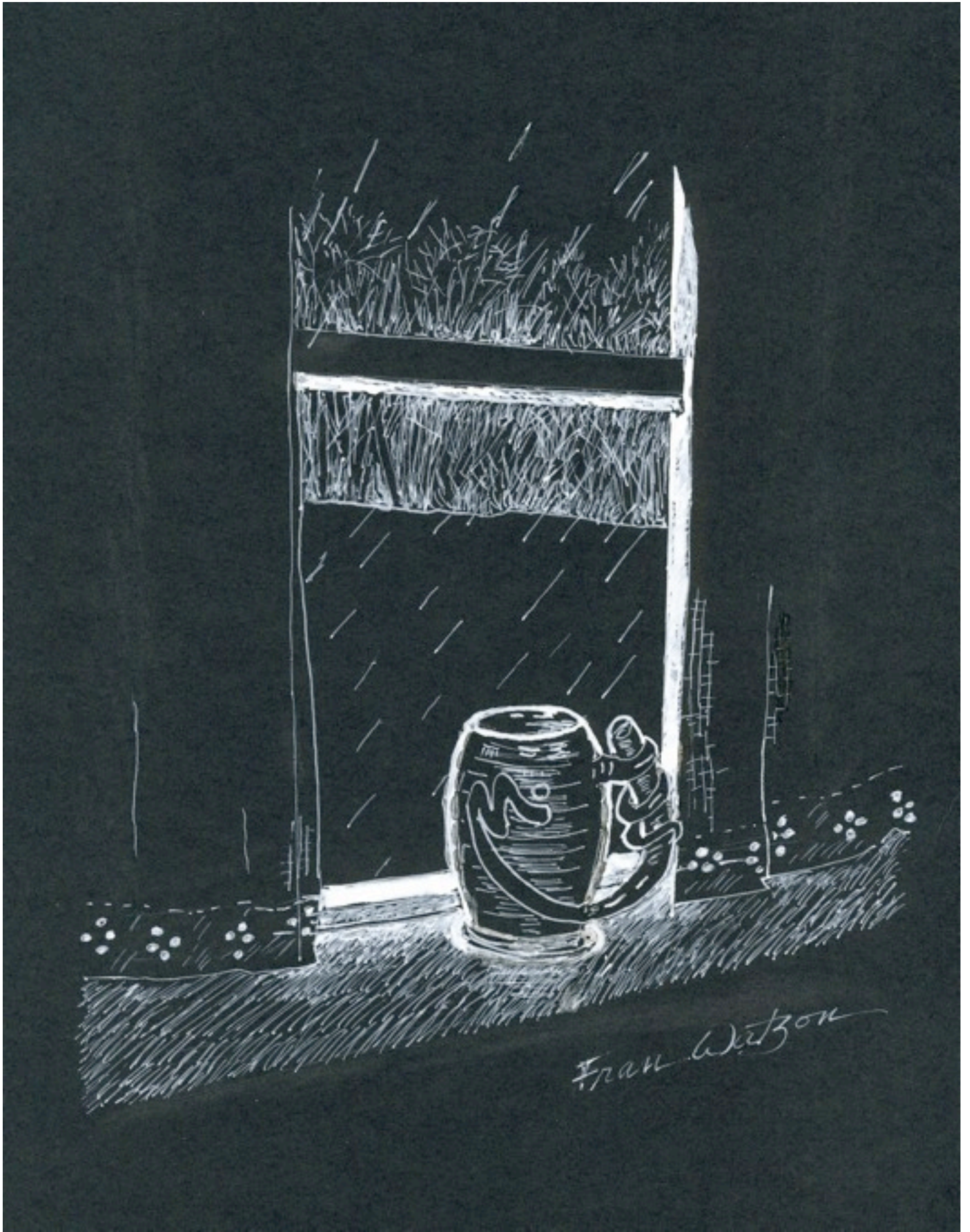
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DRAWING:

FRAN WATSON

Fran Watson: Art, literature, writing, music and theater; an incurable right-brain. Fran has been an editor and a contributor, has written about art for more than 20 years, exhibited, curated and been collected. She plays the flute and classical guitar, sings tenor. Fran feels she has a truly wonderful life, for which she is grateful hourly, daily.

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Rain Peace

(by *Larry Watson*)

At the start of the day
it was barely a sprinkle, a dusting
of moisture, not even wetting the sidewalk
though darkening slowly
till the drops, so infrequent and yet so
persistent,
accumulate in late morning to glisten
shining in monochromatic reflection of the
unseen gray
of the underside of clouds
unlimited.

The afternoon thickens
with layers of raindrops
parallel as a draftsman's rule
random as a forest of vertical rivulets
obfuscating hills in receding layers
hazily distancing neighbors and highways
and stores and cities
till this is the center of the universe.

Here is peace.
With the peal of silence ringing in my ears
in harmony
with the miniature rata tat tat of liquid
drumsticks thrumming the tin porch roof.

Here I am at peace.
A million miles from Justice and its
Anger and
Righteousness and
Control.
And necessity.

Here, now,
I just am.

Earth's Visionary Fire Has Begun to Fade

(by *Terri Weir*)

Earth's visionary fire has begun to fade;
Flowers dying from lack of rain,
Rivers losing their driving force,
Sun's radiance blinded by humankind's
misery.

Sense of loss,
Unnoticed by most;
A downward cycle,
Longing to be reversed.

Apply healing hands,
Softly mending cracks in Earth's worn
landscape.
As a people,
No longer recognizing color lines,
Destroying prejudices,
Limitations;
Disregarding all preconceived notions of
hatred.

Finally, conjuring a pristine world into view;
Made complete by luminous sunlight,
Pasted securely into our horizon;
A reality,
Only thought possible in dreams.

