

For A 2005 Better World



POEMS BY DRAWINGS ON
PEACE BY JUSTICE BY
Greater Cincinnati Artists

**“For a Better World”
2005**

Poems and Drawings
on
Peace and Justice

by
Greater Cincinnati Artists

Editor:
Saad Ghosn

*“Peace will not
come out of
a clash of arms,
but out of
justice lived.”*

Ghandi

*“Look closely
at the Present
you are
constructing.
It should look
like the Future
you dream of.”*

Alice Walker

Foreword

This year, 44 poets and 44 visual artists lent their voices for a better world.

In a time of distress, and for some even of despair, they brought hope for a possible life according to their values and beliefs and after their hearts. They spoke of beauty, of peace and harmony, of love and compassion; and in some instances, with anger and fierce questioning, denounced the forces that prevent these values to happen.

The diversity and the richness of their songs and images fill the pages of this book and reach beyond its covers. They serve as a model of humility and of tolerance to the incredulous and the prejudiced; also, they make a statement about the inherent quality and strength of inclusive multiplicity.

These poets and artists, joined by others, will speak again year after year and will tell the story of Cincinnati, their city, and of a world in change and, hopefully, in progress. Their voices, strong together, will effect change and progress; they will set the tone to shape 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 Aralee Strange, Richard Hague and Michael Henson who kindly reviewed the submitted poems and provided their editorial advice and to Jen Brenner who graciously volunteered her time and technical skills in putting the book together.

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

Saad Ghosn
Book editor and organizer

April, 2005

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POEMS:

MARY PIERCE BOSMER

Mary Pierce Bosmer is a teacher, poet, social entrepreneur, and creator of Women Writing for (a) Change, Women Writing for (a) Change on the Radio, The Feminist Leadership Academy of Cincinnati, and Writing for Change Consulting. Mary works in community to evoke and publish the conscious feminine as a force for cultural and planetary renewal.

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DRAWING:

LISA JAMESON

Lisa Jameson received an MFA in drawing from the University of Cincinnati.
She teaches Art Education at Northern Kentucky University.

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•LISA JAMESON•

Enough

1. Crows caw me awake from a dream of you
which slips into darkness, does not return to light.

Peering into morning from between parted blinds,
I am startled by the wind-torn oak
bending so near my face,
and the odd solemnity of four crows
pacing, stern-legged, in the sodden grass.

This is my second rising.

Shall I tell you, grandbaby-dreamed,
how I came earlier into morning,
(3:49 by the cold-eyed clock,)
into the awe-full sound
of wind deep in old trees,
the sound, to my ears, of mourning?

Believing that you,
baby-before-breathing,
understand darkness,
may I tell you of my despair?

Tell you, while the rain streams
over my safe house,
that I, your coming-to-be-grandmother,
am part of a way of life that is death.

Everything I need to live this life
is far away from itself and me,
a life without that much life
lived for too much comfort.

2. Yesterday in a waking nightmare,
I watched a raccoon in the glare of midday
pick its way across tumbled concrete,
obscene shards of parking lot
from a last-generation strip mall.

And last summer a herd of deer,
does and fawns, streamed across
Erie Avenue at sunset,
pushed into my astonished headlights,
their hooves unimaginable clicks on concrete.

3. I *would* not sentimentalize.

I still carry the body memory
of my father's hunger, his pushing
in ever-widening circles from home, trying
to flush a rabbit, a squirrel, a groundhog: any
taste of meat in a beans-and-bread boyhood.

My mother's father foraged even farther:
pushed from Southern Italy
to a sharecropper's shack in Northern Mississippi
into the glare of Klan-hate for dark skin, foreign ways—
all for the meaty taste of enough
on his immigrant tongue.

My people, your people
lived close to the land,
raised crops, mined coal
for those distant,
well-fed
owners of too-much.

4. I am awake in the morning,
praying to mend my own distance,
the too-muchness of my life,

praying that you, unimaginable grandbaby,
pushing out of darkness toward your own hungers
might learn, as we have not,

what it means to live on the earth
as if it, and you, were Enough.

(from "Poems to a Coming Grandchild")

The Use of Force

1. My grandson, Max, the miniature man,
is not a baby whose gender is ambiguous
even in his gender-neutral yellow pj's.

Max, still counting his birthday in weeks,
is turned out for his first trip to the beach
in dungarees and nikes.

He sports tiny sideburns below his
black thatch of side-parted hair.

Max's father, my son the engineer,
specialist in heavy metals and high-tech welds,
drives us confidently along a back road
fronting Lake Erie, somewhere near
the mouth of the Maumee River.

Sitting in the backseat, I sing baby songs,
talk baby talk into the depths
of the plastic-molded, high-tech car seat
it has taken my son the engineer to correctly
position and balance.

Max, the miniature man,
sings back with his bright eyes.

My son, the former miniature man,
makes a sudden cringe-grunt-shout, which startles
car-shy me, fazes bright-eyed Max not at all.

Our car shifts left
and I feel the ugly thud
of an animal going under the wheels.

Colin has hit the squirrel deliberately,
full force, seeing it spun wounded
off the back wheel of the car ahead.

That my son could decide, then execute
such a thing in seconds is something I cannot imagine,
though as suddenly, I swear to you,
the words, *use of force*, leap to my mind,
as does the face of my father who killed for his country.

2. My brother, turning fifty, studies our father's life,
not his life as our father, the railroad engineer,
confident driver of all manner of heavy high-tech vehicles,
but his heightened, foreshortened life as young warrior,
Captain Pierce, US Army-Air Corps, Eighth Battalion,
445th bomb group.

Keith learns --from a former ball turret
gunner--last remaining crew member
how our father, then co-pilot,
took command of a bomb-laden B-24--
out of formation and badly- strafed---
wrested command--
from a panicked pilot, and
raced a fading fuel tank
back to England and safety.

But, my brother tells me, his cringe reaction
mostly suppressed, *it meant releasing
the whole plane-load of bombs off target--
somewhere over Germany.*

That my father, aged 23, could decide,
then execute such a thing in seconds
is something I cannot imagine,
though as suddenly, I swear to you,

I see that without such an execution
I would not be here
riding to the beach with my
my confident son, Colin
singing baby songs to his bright-eyed son, Maxwell.

I would not be here
contemplating the use of force
somewhere near the mouth of a new generation,
new millennium,
somewhere horribly near the start of a new war,

my cringe reaction
hitting me full force.

POEMS:

TIM CANNON

Tim Cannon, born in Cincinnati, is an all around artist who enjoys poetry, photography, and painting. He also enjoys the art of being a husband, a father, a son and a friend to everyone in this life. Tim chooses to let the creator work through and move him through different mediums of art.

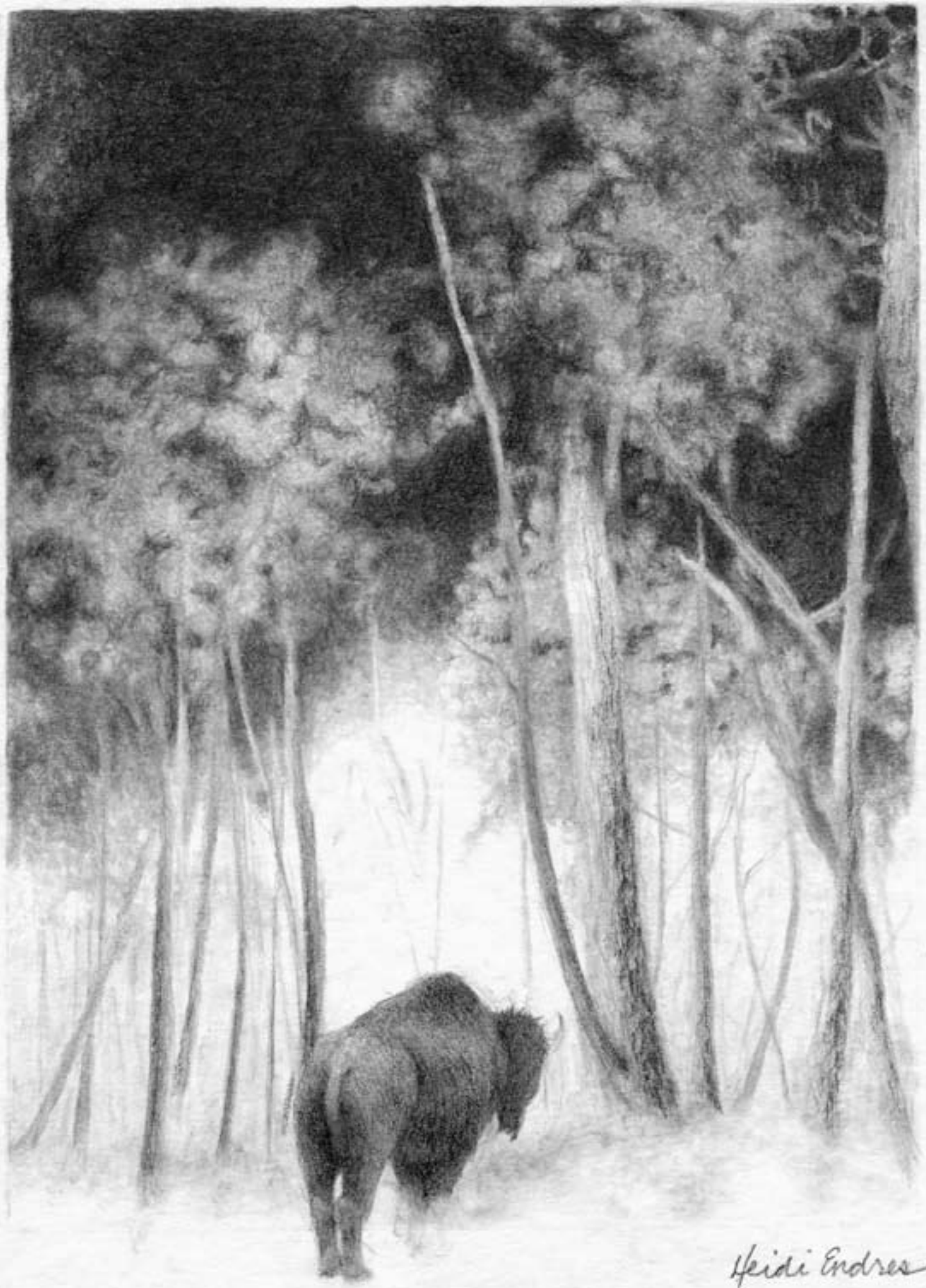
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DRAWING:

HEIDI ENDRES

Heidi Endres is a native Cincinnati artist. She currently teaches Art Appreciation at Northern Kentucky University in addition to exhibiting her work as a fine artist.

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Heidi Endres

The Last Buffalo

Alone in the fainting mist,
Your troubled cries remain
Through the many years,
Echoing beyond the vast fields
Hunted to extinction
Frozen in solitude.

The long sticks smoked death
As their crosses dangled
Only to make you suffer,
While saving the heathens
Conquering the untamed,
The new world.

Erasing the footsteps
Of the many here before us,
Trails are overgrown with denial
Not wanting to know,
Only to be paved by progress
Covered by the many years.

I listen endlessly
To the haunting wind
The visions of your return,
Roaming the fields and plains
Free once again,
The land of the buffalo.

*(Dedicated to all spirit ancestors,
and the Cherokee...)*

Whose Child Is This

Whose child is this
That lays helplessly in the street,
Cold and shivering
Worn shoes
Upon their feet?

Whose child is this
A life breathing from a paper bag,
Wanting a numbing high
An escape
from the day?

Whose child is this
Their flesh covered in feces and flies,
Their eyes staring endlessly
No comforting tears
Left to provide?

Whose child is this
Their innocence sold for the night,
An exchange of cash
The thoughtless, savage
Rape of a life?

Whose child is this
As trash thrown away,
Never to feel love
The caressing light
The affection and warmth,
Of a new day?

Whose child is this
Are they yours, or are they mine,
Do they look familiar
Do we even have the time?
Whose child is this
Is it you or is it me,
Can you see yourself in them
Could our compassion, set them free?

Whose child is this,
Whose child?

POEMS:

NANCY FLETCHER CASSELL

Nancy Fletcher Cassell is a visual artist and a writer. She received an MFA in Drawing from the University of Cincinnati, a BS in Painting and Art Education from Middle Tennessee State University and attended the Art Academy of Cincinnati. Her studio is located in the Essex Studio Building in Walnut Hills. Nancy is interested in collaboration with artists working in all disciplines and in “process painting” as a form of healing.

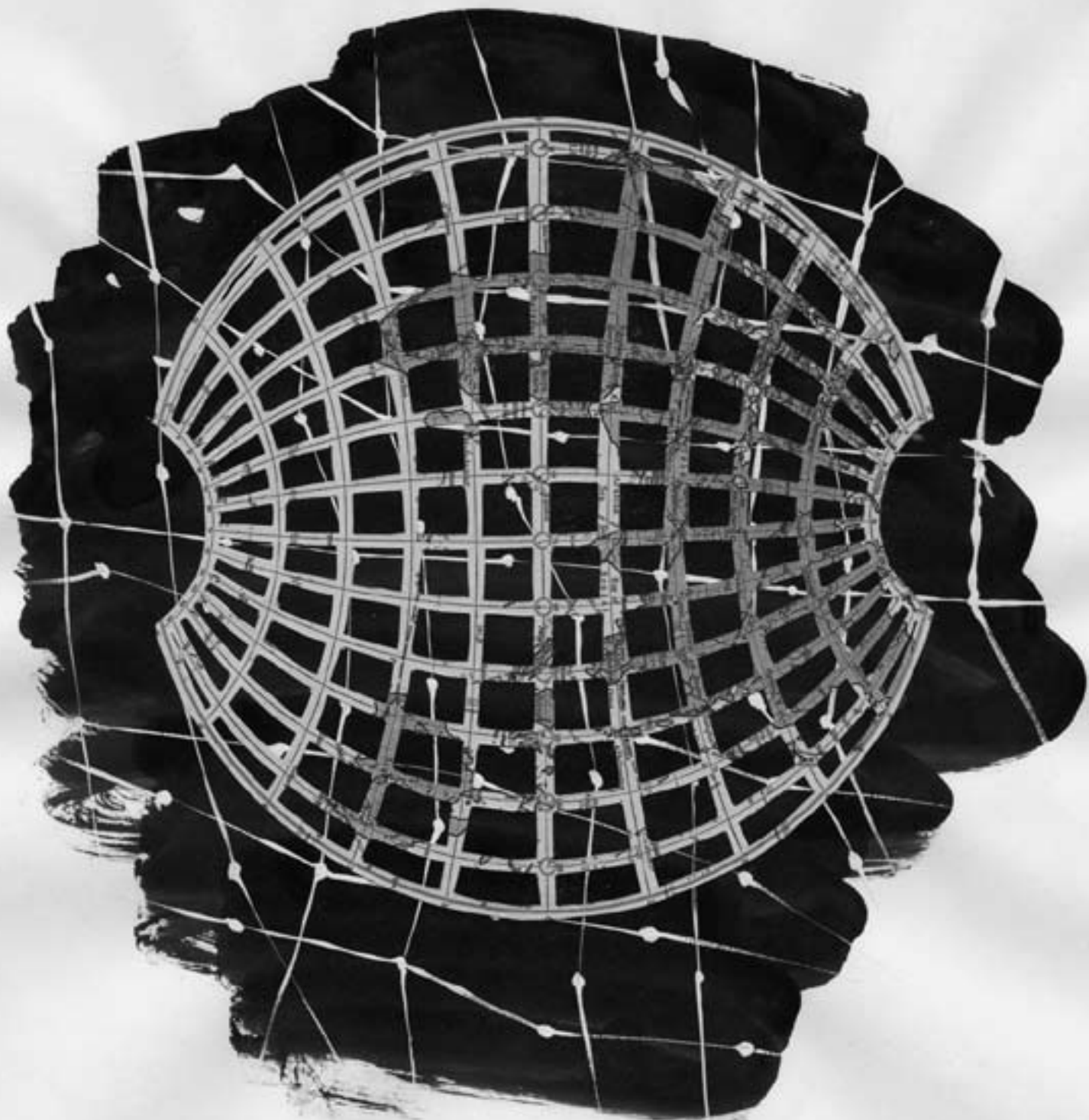
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DRAWING:

TIM McMICHAEL

Tim McMichael has a BFA from the Art Academy of Cincinnati. He is currently working on drawings/ sculptures for an exhibition at the Weston Art Gallery, scheduled September 2005. Tim also bartends at the Northside Tavern.

Contact: thirteen@fuse.net



Q. H. H. H.

In the Middle of a Crown

Nested in Tibet,
there is a rare lake with no name.
It contains the bluest water
without exception,
no existence by comparison
no need to cast itself forward.
It is there
and we learn of it one by one.

We have torn a hole in the stars.
Our excess is grief.
We believe,
there is no lottery.

If, beginning and ending merge
why not begin again?

Reprieve lingers in the voice of pine.
Braided thickets of altars form as
we revolve inside black eyes of birch.
Embrace our future, it
emerges within the wildfire of spring.

Notice how the buds sit new.
They hang fierce, against
decades of climate change
and heat cycles disrupted.
The dismayed breath of each root catches our own.

We scramble beneath calculated risk.
In laboratories, circulation models
gauge the planets tolerance.

We carve hollow survival spots.
We borrow borders of refuge,
We appropriate in comfort.

Nothingness (9/11)

*"Not everything assumes a name.
Some things lead beyond words."
Alexander Solzhenitsyn*

The forest sings aloud in winter,
a host to the sleep of the unnamed beautiful.
Musk and leaf compact under foot,
black with moist ages and ages of eyes.

I am chilled clean,
to the slick bone of the present.
A laugh turns to scent crush on my sleeve.
Weariness runs down inside the crayon of my flesh.

Watch us, as what is ours is taken.
Our moans are ravenous. They flail the stars.
Shadows uncelebrated erupt.
We rob one to one.
Hearts unscrewed peer from loot-smearred eyes.

The joy of ignorance burns each word.
They tumble out and away from our lips,
into the knowledge of the world singing:
I want to hear and not take to heart the song.

POEMS:

CAROLINA CASTANO

Carolina Castaño, born in Bogotá, Colombia, in 1979, moved to New Jersey with her family when she was 11 years old. Her passion for theatre began at the age of 8 when she joined a children's theatre.

Carolina recently made her poetry debut in "Escandalo Poetico" at the Playhouse in the Park.

She believes that arts lead to the soul of humanity.

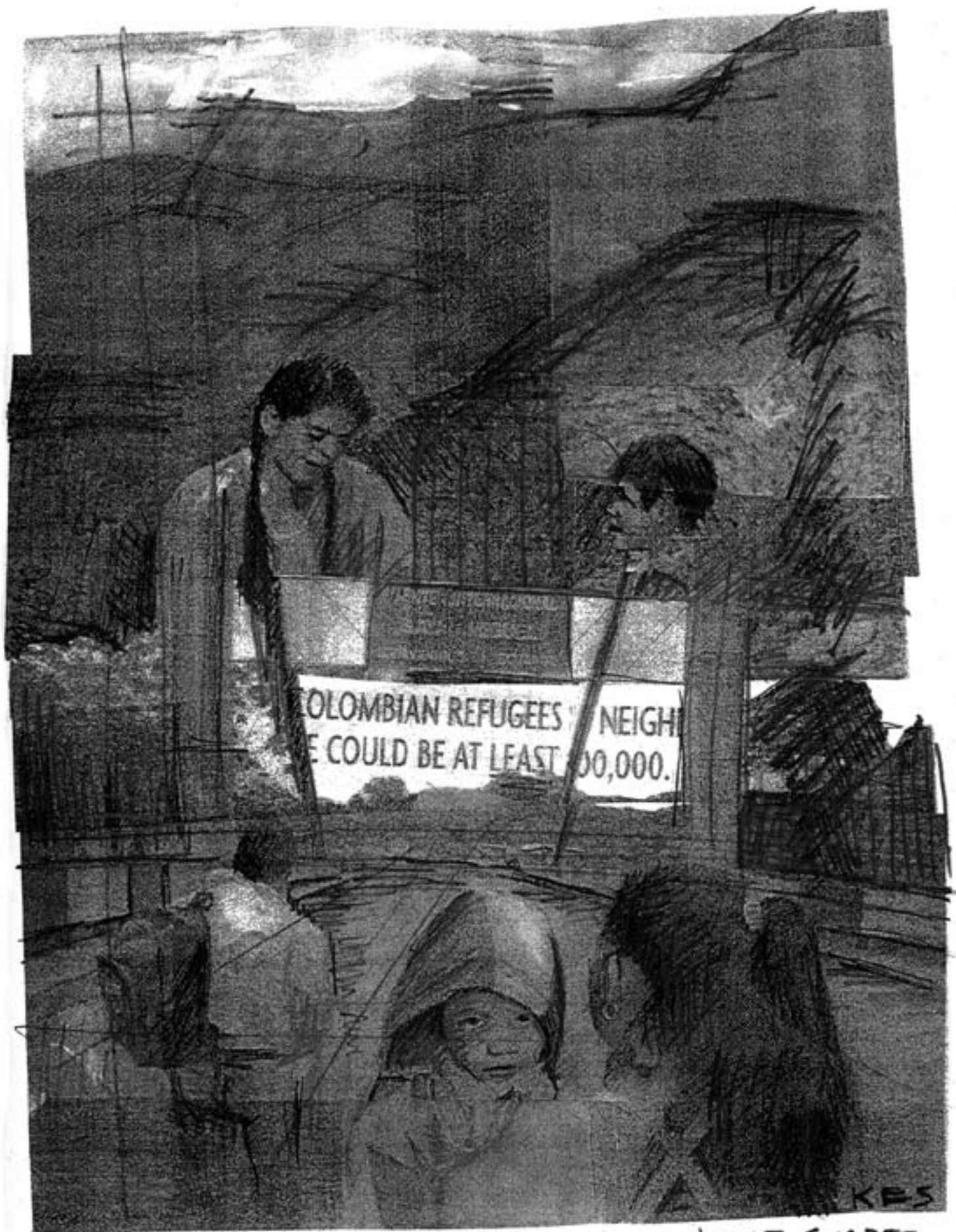
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DRAWING:

KATIE SWARTZ

Katie Swartz, a recent graduate of UC/DAAP's Fine Art and Art Education programs, is currently a Public Ally with Americorps and a member of the refugee resettlement team for Catholic Social Services in Cincinnati. Katie has traveled extensively in Europe, Asia and Central America and plans this summer to visit Zimbabwe. Her travels and her beloved friends are great inspirations for her artwork, her baking and her learning.

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KES
KATIE SWARTZ

Land of My Soul

Land of my soul, my nest, my home
you are the land that opened the doors
for me to this wonderful world
You welcome me with open arms
and not for a second have you stopped loving me
even after I abandoned you.

I left you without knowing the pain
that this was going to cause me
it is sadness I feel for not being able
to share my life with you
for not allowing you to be the ground
and support of my dreams
and instead I see you bleed daily.
I feel your tears for my absence
and the absence of many of your children
and the blood lost of many more.

Dear land how you suffer
and how, we, your children suffer
your warm spirit full of life and beauty
never leaves my memories
How much I yearn you.

How much I desire
to stand firm and proud in your roots
to feel your energy rise up in my body
feel the energy of my home, of my land.

This exile hurts
and is my constant friend and companion,
my love for you, land of my soul
has only increased with the distance.

Today I could not be more proud of you
of your beauty and love
through so much pain and suffering.
You still are as full of beauty
youthfulness and life
as when you first held me in your arms.
and I can only ask myself
“Would you hold me again?”

*(In honor of my native land and my people,
Colombia United)*

Tierra de Mi Alma

Tierra de mi alma, mi nido, mi hogar
eres la tierra que me abrió las puertas
a este mundo tan maravilloso.
Me recibiste con los brazos abiertos
y ni por un segundo haz dejado de quererme
aunque te halla abandonado.

Te dejé sin saber el dolor que esto me causaría
es una tristeza que siento
por no poder compartir contigo mi vida
por no permitirte ser el suelo y soporte de mis sueños.
Y a cambio te veo a diario desangrar
siento tus lagrimas por mi ausencia
y la ausencia de tantos hijos tuyos
y la sangre derramada de tantos más.

Tierra querida como sufres
y como sufrimos tus hijos,
tu caluroso espíritu
lleno de vida y hermosura
jamás deja mis recuerdos.

Cuanto te anhelo. Cuanto deseo
pisar fuerte y orgullosamente tus raíces
sentir tu energía subir por todo mi cuerpo
sentir la energía de mi hogar, de mi tierra.

Este exilio duele y es mi constante amigo y compañero
mi amor por ti, tierra de mi alma
solo ha aumentado con la distancia

Hoy no podría estar más orgullosa de ti,
de tu hermosura y de tu amor
a través de tanto dolor y sufrimiento.
Tu sigues igual de hermosa, joven y llena de vida
como la primera vez que me sostuviste en tus brazos
Y solo puedo preguntarme,
“¿Me sostendrás de nuevo?”

(En honor a mi patria y a mi gente, Colombia Unida)

POEMS:

DONNELLE DREESE

Donnelle Dreese, assistant professor of Multicultural American Literatures at Northern Kentucky University, has published poetry and creative nonfiction in a wide variety of literary journals and magazines. Donnelle holds a Ph.D. in literature and criticism specializing in American Indian and Environmental Literatures.

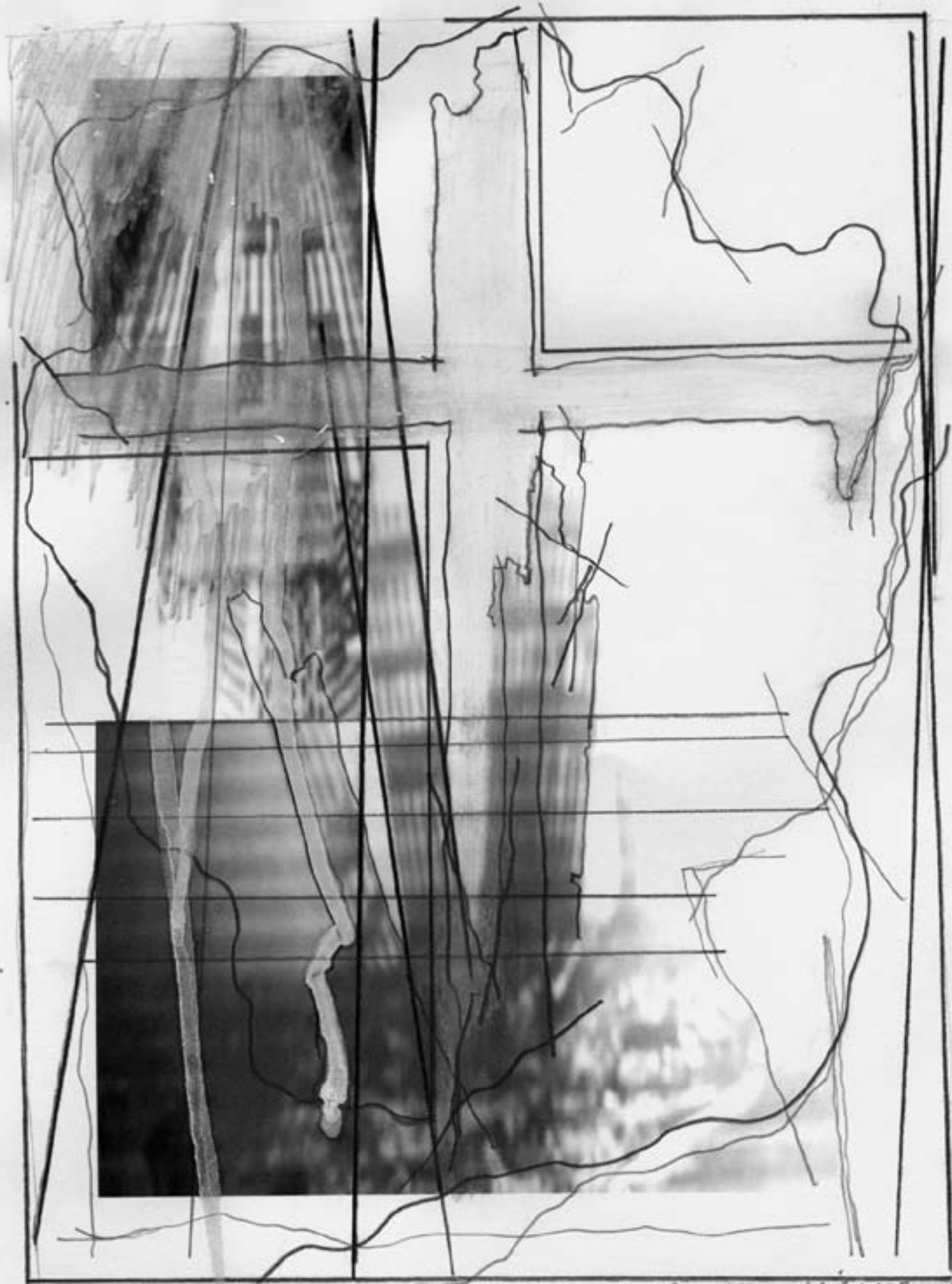
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DRAWING:

ROBERT MORRIS

Robert J. M. Morris was born in Australia in 1949. A sculptor and a painter he has shown his work extensively in Australia, Europe, Japan and the USA. Robert moved to Cincinnati in 1990; he has been living here since. He is the owner of Dicere Gallery.

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Roberto M. Urdano 2005

The Request

what if one day
God became tired of all this

decided to end
his cosmic experiment
by lifting the earth
cracking it against a galaxy
pouring the molten middle
into a starry bowl
discarding the broken crust
into the universe as space debris
and start all over?

i am hoping he keeps the moon,
green summers, mountains, and fruit,

but would he consider
keeping the human heart
settled in the rubble at ground zero,
covered with dust,
disguised as stone?

would he consider
saving the soldiers
too young to know
their poems would weave
the flags that drape their coffins?

would he consider
forgiving the policy makers
who lost their humanity
with the oil and blood
that seeps into desert crab holes?

and would he consider
forgiving us all
if we gathered
like young yellow birds
at the foot of a smoking mountain
to sing for the fallen dead to rise?

The 121st Street Memorial

no bridges, no statutes
no plaques, no parks
this memorial is
concrete and chalk
street grease and gum

the head is a feather edge mound
daisy and rose, leaf and lily
whose fingers point in the wind
toward a soot alley entrance glistening
with broken mirrors and wrappers

lining each limb
purple blossoms breathe
the exhaust and rapier of street life
product fumes of human expatriates
who have left this world for dead

a mother tells her young black son
*when it is hot, you can see their
souls rise from the pavement
waving toward the sky
the way leaves dance
on a moonlit road*

but the young boy
trimmed and collared
can detect injustice
no matter how softly it walks
as his mother's words shrink and spin
like untied balloons

6 Million Paper Clips

(for the 8th grade students at Whitwell Middle School, Tennessee, who collected paper clips to represent the number of Jews killed in the Holocaust)

if we could hear the floor of the classroom
that bears the millions of paper clips creak,
it might sound like a little girl coughing
or a gun cocking, or the door of the crematorium
turning on its tight hinges after the last prisoner is issued in

what does the number 6 million mean
to those who count years
pennies, sheep, falling stars
when in the spring we absorb
the energy of tree buds
and watch pollen
the color of lemon peel
glow like halo dust
on the pregnant ground?

it's an awkward time to think of hate
herded luggage never to be claimed
belonging to ashes that blew like book pages
unbound and undone over Eastern Europe

i wish i could send you
all the paper clips
i could buy and carry
in my slight-made arms
ill-furnished for bearing
such swollen anguish

though it still wouldn't be enough
to fathom the railroads
leading to Auschwitz
the barbed wire
the medical tables
the mass graves

instead i send you this one
shaped like a butterfly
with a prayer to bind us all
beneath its silver wings

POEMS:

KATIE FADICK

Kate Fadick has worked as a community organizer around issues of economic justice, racism and homophobia. She is currently an instructional assistant with the Cincinnati Public Schools.

Kate sings with MUSE, Cincinnati's Women's Choir. She lives in Northside.

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DRAWING:

MARK HAAP

Mark Haap has a BA in Philosophy and a BS in Anthropology. He works as a mold maker for a theatrical supply company and as a musician. His art has been in nine exhibitions since March of 2004. His works are part of several collections. Mark has a cat.

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MankHaap

Because I Need It

I want to write a poem that shelters
details, small ones easily forgotten
or cast off by disaster.

Hand-painted china bought
at the neighborhood yard sale
from the young woman moving
to join a lover whose
grandmother's china it was in the first place;

the Virgin of Guadalupe
candle pulled from the grocery's
international section that sits on the kitchen

table, holds intention for all good things;
midnight wind song
in North Carolina pines; blueberry scones
on Sunday mornings; the new recipe
for fresh salsa; Scrabble at three in the afternoon;

the blue heron in preserved wetlands
between mile markers two and three
on the bike trail; a discarded journal, found,

creamy lined paper between red and black
leather, a clipping glued inside: *in northern China*
a couple drowns five daughters;
an old woman's chipped blue cup in Falluja;
fine grounds, water, sugar boiled to overflowing,

shatters with the house around it;
Sabbath loaves, candles at sunset
so close to Gaza even desert mothers rest;

the hushed chants of orthodoxy
under onion domes that echo laughter
of school children before terror;
flatbread made slowly, tea steaming in glasses,
unfinished letter on the table in Tel Aviv.

POEMS:

MARK FLANIGAN

Cincinnati native Mark Flanigan has been writing and performing locally and nationally for the past decade. His column, "Exiled on Main Street," appeared first in X-ray and then later online for over three years. Mark is also well known for his periodic live performances in places as varied as the CAC and Northside Tavern. Mark's new column, "Exiled from Main Street" now appears monthly at semantikon.com. Mark is currently working on his first album with musician Steven Proctor.

Contact: mflanigan@semantikon.com

DRAWING:

THERESA KUHR

Theresa Gates Kuhr has a BFA in Printmaking from the Ohio State University and an MFA in Printmaking from the University of Cincinnati. She is currently living in Cincinnati with her husband and three children and working as Co-Director of Tiger Lily Press, a community printmaking studio. Theresa has taught printmaking courses at the Northern Kentucky University, Tiger Lily Press and to children in the homeschool network.

Contact: tkuhr@fuse.net



THERESA GATES KUHR

Why I Didn't Answer

*(for ole' fifty-cent Harry,
who passed away
this sad day
September 8, 1996)*

Sometimes I think about
all the people
who lost themselves
in drugs like alcohol
like television like sporting events

And I wonder

At how, to lose myself,
I don't need such
things.

For me it's more
the early morning phone calls
late night 2 A.M. knocks
at the door
the workweek that never finds
a seventh day.

And I'm left with the notion
that I am not like most people

I tend to
move slower
towards those things
worth tending to
and not at all
towards
the others.

And though I am not like
most people, this
does not bother me;
only them.

I sit inside the door
or near the telephone,
I stare
I listen
to the even beat or ring
and I wonder, 'Who is it?'
but never say as much.

I need to know what they want
what they expect to find.

It's only me in here, I long to shout.
I love you, but
not enough
not as much as
you should yourself,
and if I open the door
no sooner
even I won't be here
anymore.

Some days I am birdseed
for birds
drowned in alcohol
and other shiny things.

Today is not one of them.

POEMS:

SHERRY GELS

Sherry Gels is a poet, visual artist, and bike shop employee. A former teacher of writing, she opted for early retirement in order to pursue her goals of expression and creativity.

Sherry now pedals to and from work, runs marathons, takes yoga classes, writes, and paints for survival--and fun.

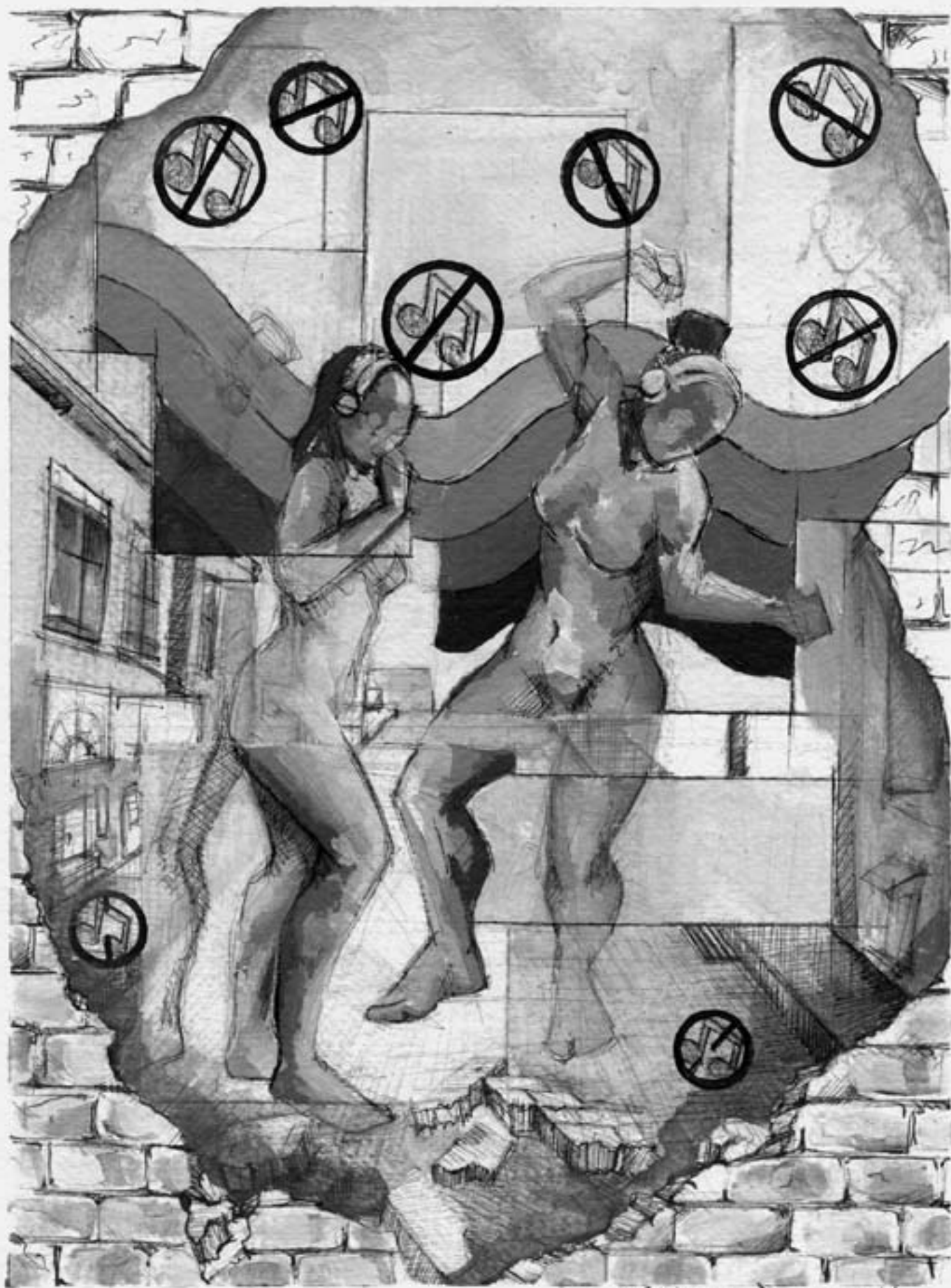
Contact: sherrygels@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

MICHAEL EVERETT

Michael Everett is currently completing a Masters degree in Arts Education at the University of Cincinnati. Even though his undergraduate degree is in painting and drawing, Michael uses as well various mediums such as photography and bronze sculpture. His works deal with themes of environment and with the body as a machine.

Contact: trane81@hotmail.com



Michael D. Everett

The Wall

Try to dance,
if you can,
without the music.
Feel what it's like
to deny yourself
your sense of hearing.
Cover your ears
because the little bones
are tired
of being rattled around
like tambourines.
See what happens
when you block
the admittance
of the waves
that have always flowed
freely
through the canal
leading to your mind.
Feel the pressure
against the wall
and pile up
the sand bags
in order to stop
the flood.
Then listen
through the gaping hole
that you couldn't keep plugged
and allow yourself
to hear
the enticing music
of the little band
that still plays
just beyond the wall.

Avoid Crap

Avoid crap.
Who's the enemy
when there's no greed?
Don't throw rocks
except into the lake
or money at matter
you can't afford

And stop buying crap
from Wal-Mart
Just because you can.

What You Can See

Don't say
stop complaining
when somebody calls
to your attention
something amiss
Like when you yelled at me
about being positive for once
Don't just think about bad stuff.
It's hard to understand
what you can't see
People tell it
how they heard it
And a kid walks
downtown wearing the phrase
of the minute
on a T-shirt

But right now
my view of the world
includes a lot of portraits
of people I could know
Red yellow and purple walls
Wood floor
Black ceiling with exposed rafters
Big windows
with event flyers taped to them
A bank next to a tanning salon
next to a bistro
along the sidewalk
lined with parking meters
spat out gum
Next to the red brick road
A No U-Turn sign
A mailbox
A tree without leaves
And a picture of a basset hound
Wearing sunglasses
in the window
Of the optician's office
On the other side of the street

POEMS:

BEN GRABOW

Ben Grabow is a Cincinnati native and a recent graduate of Ohio University. He works as a technical editor for Kendle International, and is a nationally syndicated columnist for the Scripps Howard News Service. Ben currently resides in Bellevue, Kentucky.

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DRAWING:

APRIL FOSTER

April Foster is Professor of Fine Art and Foundations at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. She works in lithography, intaglio, egg tempera and drawing. Her imagery involves evolving relationships among the world of natural forms and the human figure.

Contact: aprfos@artacademy.edu



A P R I L F O S T E R

Shotgun

It is an hour after the storm
And rain is still thick in the tree
That shades my roof and porch.

Through the cool haze I see the spires
And belfries of a town on a hill
Across the river
Where people walk purebred dogs
In the park and drink imported beer and domestic opportunity
On shaded patios.

As the thunderstorm pushes on and away
I survey my side of the river.

Rows of shotgun houses, weathered
By generations of want.
They have seen their share of the rain.
Tenants sit in windows,
Slam the doors,
Press themselves to the floors and walls.
The houses are stained and pitted, leaning.
But they are bruised fruit,
Still ripe. Still full of life.

The houses open,
Parents, sons, daughters, dogs,
In the streets and shouting, truck engines growling,
Most children will remain here for children of their own,
But I want them to go.
Young mothers and dirty strollers
In these houses.
Little hope for little else.

The rain lingers in the wood and the plaster
And when the children are called from their puddles to dinner

They come inside to breathe the mold
And the wet.

When the storm heaves again, they scramble
To place pots and pans and bowls
On the floors and against the walls.

They bend down and lean close, and I speak,
Quietly as a doorknob, but loudly as I can.

Smell the storm in my beams and floorboards.
Take the storm with you when you go.
Let the memory of lightning guide you,
And let the thunder push you on.

Smell the storm in my beams and floorboards
And remember:
You were born on this side of the river
But the rain falls everywhere.

POEMS:

NICOLE GRANT

Nicole Grant is a Lecturer in Sociology and Women's Studies at NKU. She writes prose and poetry with a group called Sisterswriting in Cincinnati. Nicole has been involved in peace and social justice work for 37 years. She still believes that what one does and says matters - no matter how terrible the opposition!

Contact: grantn@nku.edu.

DRAWING:

MATT REED

Matt Reed is an artist, illustrator, and art educator who lives in Cincinnati. His work has been shown locally, as well as in Louisville, Pittsburgh, and Los Angeles; it has also appeared in magazines, comic books, and record albums.

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When Will We Ever Learn?

I feel like apologizing
for planting flowers
trowel in hand
ready to turn the soft earth
yesterday's news of soldiers
severed limbs haunt me
suicide bombers younger
than the sapling in my garden
watch as I kneel on knees
grown old and stiff with years
of bending and planting
I remember one soldier his legs
and hands shorn off by explosives
no knees to bend in supplication
no fingers to wrap around love
twenty two years too young
I feel like apologizing
for planting flowers
for peace at home just
waiting for revolution.

Any God: Poem to Iraqi Women

Three cold words foretold our connection.
I remember how they stopped me
no breath, no movement,
as I heard the march of history
repeating
storm troopers in the streets
gas canisters falling
into darkened rooms
fires burning,
the people, naked and afraid
begging for mercy and none came.

Three words: New World Order.
Iraqi women,
you are not my enemy

I do not choose to be yours.
madmen play their games
with the bodies of our children.
only money matters, and oil,
and power
we have none of these.
we have fragile bodies
faint hope and soulful prayers:
may someone's god stop the terror,
stop the torture
stop the death squads.

Any merciful god will do.

At the V.A. Hospital

Soldier no more
in that stained bed
oxygen tubes
bothering his nose
black and yellow bruises
up both arms
across his chest
meds gone awry again
he searches for glue
trying to stick
words into phrases
trying to make sense
of incomprehensible
sorrow
his thoughts collide
names, places, events
slide off track
couple and uncouple
getting him nowhere.

This is how our veterans come home.

His dinner tray arrives
I lift the plastic cover
If this looks good
I tease him
I'm going to eat it
on the plate
a stale sandwich
thin flesh limp
between stiff sheets
of hard bread
you're safe, I say
and he chuckles
humor dry
as the food
before us
he chooses to eat
packaged saltines
sips the soup
and saves the orange.

This is how we feed our veterans.

Later he reaches
trembling
for that orange
wants to peel it
himself
says he can do
that much
If we were in
a pretty meadow
he says in a lucid moment
I would share this with you
but not in this hospital
oranges scarce
as compassion
for soldiers laid to rest
in this derelict place
walls painted beige
black floral trim
the ceiling dirty white.

This is how we house our veterans.

He holds my hand
tight before I go
I thought you'd already gone
he says, tears visible
and I have
eyes sliding away first
saving one of us
embarrassment
offering a measure
of hospital gowned
privacy
looking away
from feces stained sheets
from the unemptied urinal
hanging from the bedrail
from drug induced
incontinence
from rubber gloved
nurses called to tidy up.

This is how we care for our veterans.

I walk the hall
old legs dragging sad
getting out of this place
going home
I was a girl back then
I didn't have to go to war
I pass an old man
with no legs at all
scowling from his chair
long gray hair thin
across bony shoulders
my buddy needs help
I hear him tell a nurse
that howl from down the hall
unheeded for half an hour
the presumed
buddy in distress
I press the elevator button
going down.

This is how we leave our veterans.

Locked in the psyche ward
younger faces now appear
in shock and awe
another war
women and men this time
side by side
with older men angry
about coercion
*do this and we'll give you
back your cigarettes*
(yell loud enough and you'll get
something more to forget)
I recall our young men
thousands upon thousands
before they were sent to war
legs strong and minds on hope
trembling hands pinning corsages
on pretty young girls
who nurse them now.

This is how we remember our veterans.

It is 1968, 1990, 2004
marching in D.C.
we carry signs
"Bring Our Soldiers Home"
alive we mean, and whole
too late, too late
on crutches, canes
in wheelchairs
soldiers lead the march
we follow chanting rage
"One, Two, Three, Four
We Don't Want Your Obscene War!"
hundreds of thousands
feeling impotent in streets
where the war makers
respect no life but their own
where profit excuses carnage
where democracy lies
deserted and ignored.

This is how we honor our veterans.

POEMS:

BARB GUTTING

Barb Gutting is a member of New Jerusalem Community that has been involved in Peace and Justice since its conception forty years ago. Barb is semi-retired from teaching and directing the dramas at Madeira High School. She is presently attending a poetry class with Women Writing (for a) Change.

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DRAWING:

ALLEN MANN

Allen Mann has a BFA from Columbus College of Art and Design. He currently lives in Cincinnati working in drawing, painting and printmaking.

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Emperor

A. Mann

We Said Your Names

I am just home from church where we told Fathers' Day stories

filled with memories of our fathers'
race track coins
reversed baseball bases
renderings in watercolor
riding the Coca Cola truck with Dad
red toboggans

flattened by how many of our fathers were
drained with work
distant
drinking
dying young

what I hold to is how many fathers,
mellowed with age,
finally had time at the end to say
I love you

and how important it was for each of us to hear it

A Lesson

A Northside mother said:
my little girl was four when it happened
and I know she should'na been playin in the street

we don't have a yard
all the kids around here play in the street
I can't be watchin her every minute

my little child ran out into the street
out from between two parked cars...
I've told her a hundred times!

A La Rosa's delivery car, goin real slow
(thank you Jesus) hit her
she plunked down in the street like a dead bird

the driver, a white girl in her twenties,
acted like it was her baby she hit

she phoned the hospital, and came to visit too.
A couple of weeks later she even came to my girl's birth-
day party
and seemed real glad that everything was back to normal

later she told me
after the Life Squad left, a white policeman took her out of
my hearing
and said to her
"maybe this will teach those people to keep their kids
outta the street"

Rehearsing “The Diary of Anne Frank”

a bare stage
a scattering of metal folding chairs
three rows of work lights washing colors into white
teenage actors... gray scripts, pencil stubs in hand
I expect to be burdened with heavy sorrow

we begin

a real live Mouchi’s meowing brightens our rehearsal
my heart warms as
they light a menorah secreted from Germany,
carried to America by one cast member’s father
I begin to love the Franks and the actors
Celebration brightens their attic room
singing...dancing...teasing...fighting
creates family
in an island sanctuary of Life
surrounded by dark, surging seas of violent death

later

when we rehearse the final scene,
when I hear the “soldiers” voices in the dark,
hear their guns battering the door
when the actors
silently follow them out from beneath the lights
into blackness

my tears begin to fall

POEMS:

RICHARD HAGUE

Richard Hague is the author of eleven collections of poetry and one of prose. His 'Alive in Hard Country' was winner of the 2004 Appalachian Writers Association Book Award in Poetry. Richard is also the 2004 winner of the James Still Short Fiction Award. 'Lives of the Poem', his writing/teaching memoir and poetry collection, has just appeared from Wind Publications.

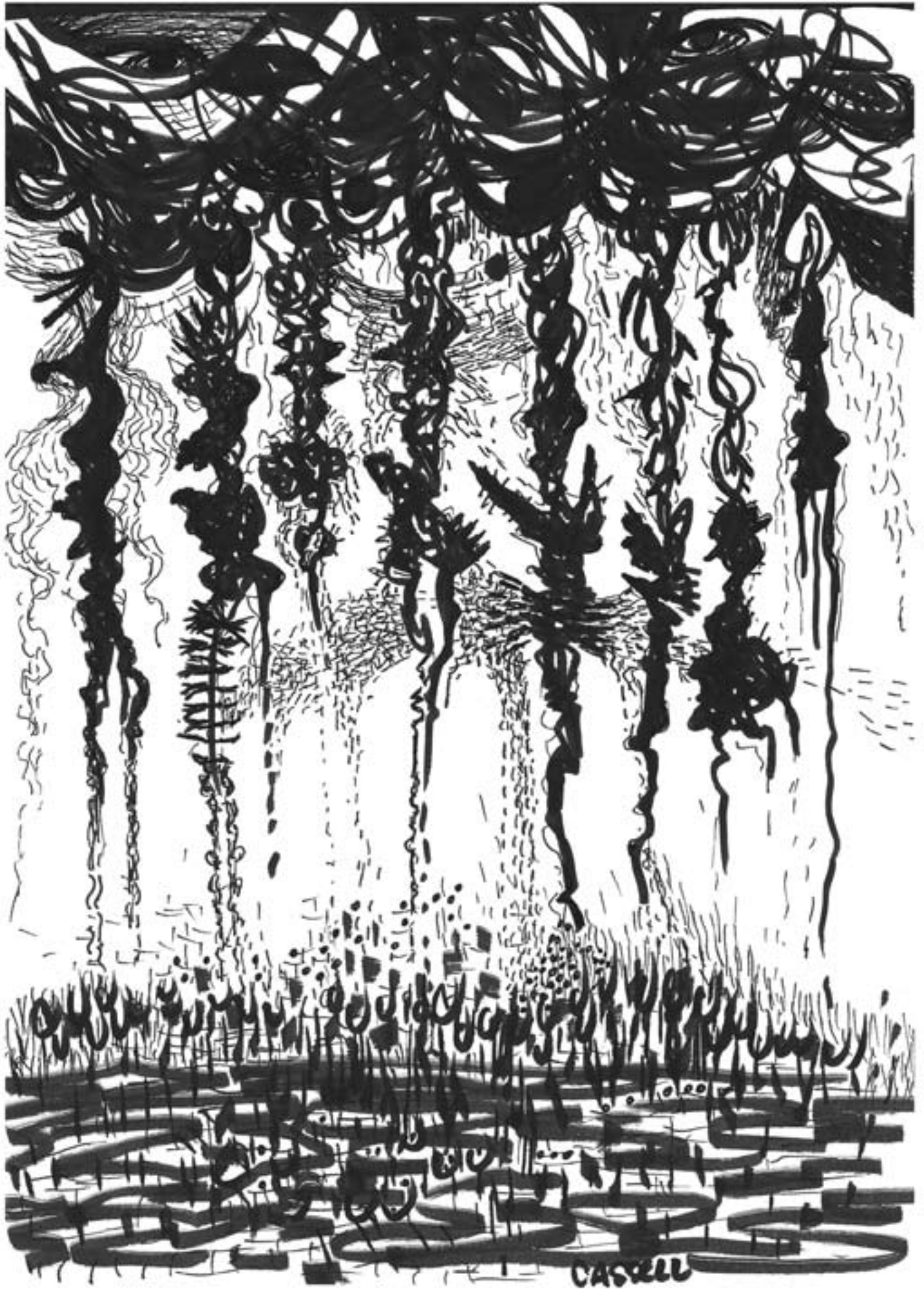
Contact: haguekort@fuse.net

DRAWING:

NANCY FLETCHER CASSELL

Nancy Fletcher Cassell is a visual artist and writer. She received an MFA in Drawing from the University of Cincinnati, a BS in Painting and Art Education from Middle Tennessee State University and attended the Art Academy of Cincinnati. Her studio is located in the Essex Studio Building in Walnut Hills. Nancy is interested in collaboration with artists working in all disciplines and in "process painting" as a form of healing.

Contact: nancassell@fuse.net



Either Things Are Connected Or They Are Not

While I'm walking Keys Crescent, East Walnut Hills,
passing houses whose placid backyards look over the
river,
I am feeling the October sun warm on my hair and skin,
slanting down through the clattering leaves of oak trees.
Meanwhile, three minutes away, back at school,
Bryan and Dave are teaching synonyms and Islam,
and Meredith and Amy are teaching geometry and algebra,
and Fred is headed for the Civil War,
and Brother Hamm is folding dollars in the Spirit Room,
and the coffers of heaven are slowly filling.

While I'm walking Keys Crescent,
I am hearing underfoot the crush of fallen leaves,
each step a small symphony of smash.
Meanwhile, back at school,
The Voice interrupts for the eighth time this bell,
interrupts Religion class's calm meditation,
interrupts the essay exam in history,
interrupts the delicate dissection in biology lab,
all the while asking, "Please excuse this interruption."

While I'm walking Keys Crescent
I am seeing its mansions, towers, gazebos, landscape
pools,
its gorgeous plantings, its hostas and impatiens rich in
rings
around oaks,
its gaslights and shade and opulent emerald lawns
in dry October as lush as in an English spring,
its Mercedes Benzes in garages, Jaguars and Rolls Royces
and BMWs,
while back at school,
Andre Brown is seeing pastel paint and littered school-
room corners
and a grainy filmstrip about VD,
and Aaron Korte is seeing hundreds of old quizzes, and
love notes with
the names torn off,
and empty boxes and worn-out erasers and chalk dust
ghosts
lying face-down on the floor beneath every blackboard.

While I'm walking Keys Crescent
smelling the new autumn air, the tobacco of rotting leaves,
the quick waft of sweat off the Seven Hills soccer field,
the sharp sweet smoke of the workers stripping paint with
blowtorches,
Justin and Harlie climb the Seven Hills wall
and sit atop it, side by side, white shirts and blue pants,
and I walk by and they stand and leap down,
white/blue/white/blue
and go off together down the street.

While I'm walking Keys Crescent I'm thinking
how much difference two blocks makes,
thinking of the litter on Hackberry where school is,
candy wrappers, Mad Dog bottles, broken-necked flasks
of Paramount Vodka, rubbers, snotgrags, chip bags,
candy wrappers, lost gloves,
lottery tickets, dumped automobile ashtrays
making butt-piles all along the curbs,
while close by in the classroom, Ahmad Harris and John
Nusekabel
are thinking of money, jobs, heaven, college, sheep dogs,
love,
Cadillacs, and the bustle of their futures.
Who will distribute it all? Who will parcel out
our wealth a bit at a time to those who most need it?
Who will discover those who need it?
Can those who need it come forward from their dark
rooms
with peeling paint and the smell of urine in the closets
onto these gas lit streets, these perfect lawns?
Can those who deserve it speak with the voices of politi-
cians,
or wedge themselves into public affairs
with the crowbar of their money?

My students fall silent before a house called "The Castle."
A man in a Jaguar pulls in, smiles officially at them,
enters his kingdom. They stand at the end of his driveway,
staring, hardly believing, as if accused of something
for which they are not responsible,
as if they are waiting, right now, to be judged.

Talking Together

*(Annual meeting of the Southern Appalachian Writers
Cooperative, Highlander Center, Tennessee, 1982)*

Lord, how our voices often mingle,
creeks rounding down from a thousand miles
to wed the same bright river

And how we mouth our favorite names:
say *poplar, sycamore, broom sedge*
like prayers

And how we have seen the same birds
flock among the white pine groves
of the old ground we've helped heal,

And how we seem to have heard the same stories,
seen the same men on street corners
of small towns so barren
they have no football team

And how we have loved women who look and speak like
sisters

And how we have hunted the same deer
on stands decades apart,

And how we have found the same stones in creeks

And how we have seen the same wonders at night
in places hundreds of miles distant
(wild cherry branches shuttling in the breeze,
Arcturus living like an eye above the oak)

And how we have failed the same jobs,
workers slumped over Chevys and Fords,
machinists hurt in our hearts by slivers of steel,
hunters limping up ridge with bloodied feet

And how, when we find ourselves together,
standing around gas pumps or stoves in old stores,
waiting for tires to be changed,
for children to be drilled by the clinic dentist in town,
for fathers to die in the hospitals of county seats

We find something to say that means us,
that names us neighbors and kin,
that finds within us words to connect:
coon hounds loved in common,
a relative with the same name,
a character true to type in all our places:

Lord, how our lives often mingle,
how we mouth our favorite names,
how we sing in voices old, flat, or sweet:

How we know one we know another,
how we love even what we hate
for how it brings us together.

POEMS:

KATHLEEN HALL

Kathleen L F Hall is a writer with a special interest in issues of peace and justice.

She holds both a BS and an MA degrees from Miami University.

Kathleen currently attends classes at Women Writing for (a) Change.

She resides in the Cincinnati area with her husband and two young children.

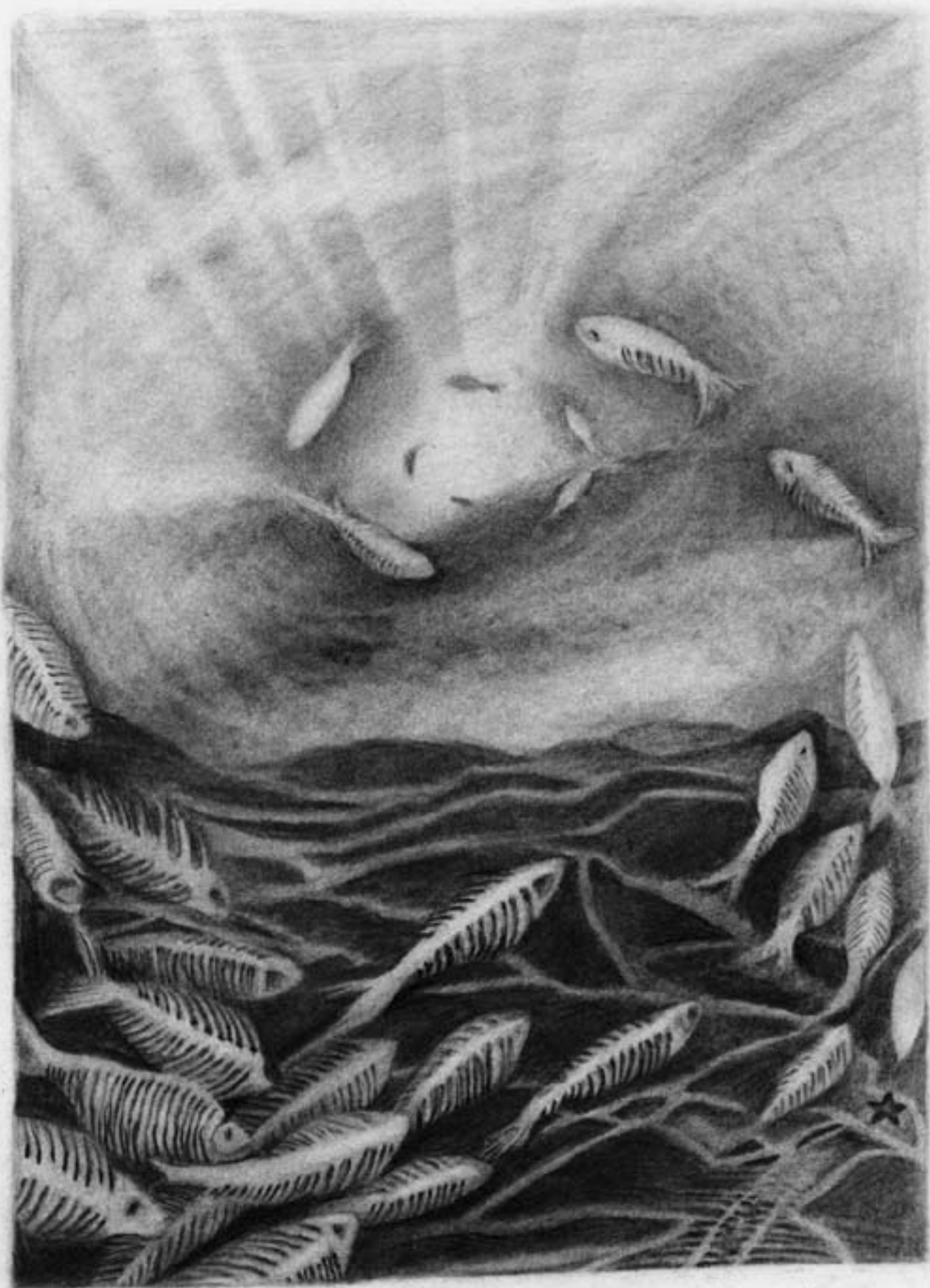
Contact: katiehall1@yahoo.com

DRAWING:

LISA MERIDA-PAYTES

Lisa Merida-Paytes is a ceramic sculptor whose work has been featured in exhibitions regionally, nationally and internationally. Over the years she has received numerous awards and honors including, in 2003, an Ohio Arts Council Individual Fellowship, in 2002, an Ohio Arts Council Project Grant, and in 2001, a Summerfair grant. Lisa's ceramic sculptures have been published in 'Extruded Ceramics', a Lark Ceramics Book (2000), 'Ceramics Monthly' (9/2003) and 'Art Calendar' (7/2003).

Contact: www.lisameridapaytes.com; lisa@lisameridapaytes.com



Miss Mauda Taylor

Fallujah, Hallelujah

'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.' (Matthew 25:40)

Fallujah, Hallelujah,
appearing together only on this page

'Hallelujah' proclaims
wealthy painted lips
in million dollar churches.
Thanks for giving me what I deserve.

Fallujah, Iraq, third world,
first, starved and oppressed,
second, starved and caught in the crossfire,
third, starved and flattened by tanks.
Why be thankful for these anything but holy trinities?

The young and the desperate die for causes,
maybe freedom, maybe revenge;
believing, at first, service was the
only way out or the only way in;
realizing, too late, they only
escaped a lesser hell.

Enemies and allies banded together,
prisoners of lives without options

Sunday utterances, 'hallelujah', then
turning our backs on the
invisible, the unworthy, the least of
our brothers, leave church
as broken those soldiers and Fallujah.

Vice Presidential vitriol became prophecy.

A pig wearing lipstick is still just a pig.

A liar singing Hallelujah is still just a liar.

(Author's note – Fallujah, a city in Iraq of approximately 60,000 people, became a focal point in the war in Iraq in November, 2004. Coalition troops, lead by the Americans, surrounded and overtook the city in an attempt to control growing insurgency. The number of civilian deaths is unknown).

POEMS:

JIMMY HEATH

Jimmy Heath is an artist and activist living and working in Over-the-Rhine. He came to Over-the-Rhine in 1995 as a homeless person, eventually being rescued by the Drop Inn Center shelter. His photographs reflect his struggle and those who share his experience. He can be contacted through his website at

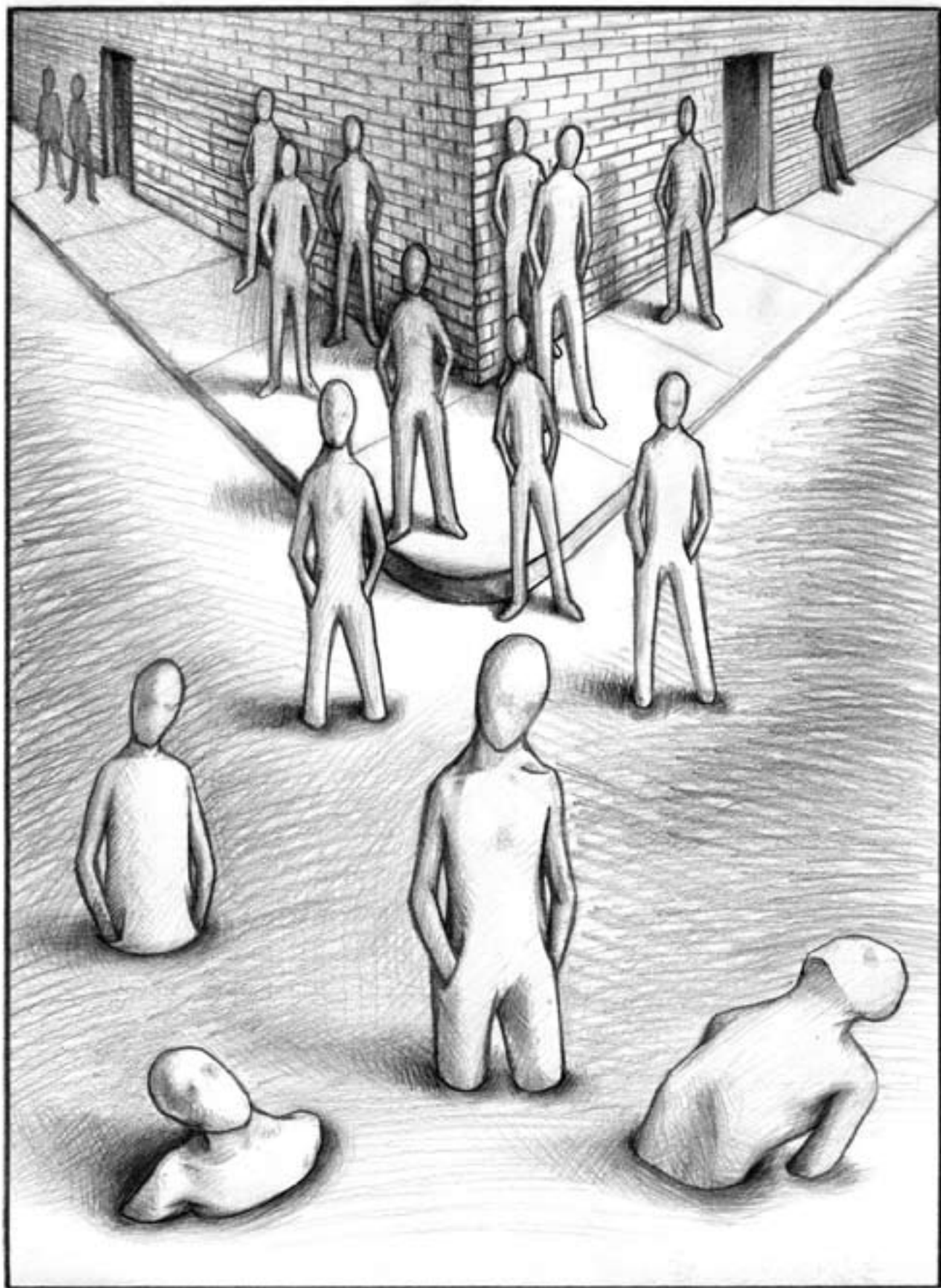
Contact: www.jimmyheath.org

DRAWING:

JENNIFER USTICK

Jenny Ustick, a Graduate Student in the School of Art at DAAP, University of Cincinnati, will complete her MFA in June, 2005. She earned her BFA from the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 2000. Jenny plans to continue a career in academia, while maintaining an active exhibition schedule in Cincinnati, and eventually regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Contact: jeustick@fuse.net



Jenny Ustick

Brick

It is these famous bricks,
that pin our hopes to cold concrete,
broken glass,
and scattered dreams.
Because, it is real,
it becomes a triumph,
breaking the calm with
delightful sounds
and hope from a child's voice.
It is, because there is a dream,
cloaking the desperation
with denial and a foolish dance,
drumming the broken concrete,
like a broken hammer.
It comes to us,
because it never dries your eyes,
but breaks your heart.
There is enough pain
to consume your spirit.
And then it dies because
the ancient mantra fortifies
the dreadful discourse,
allowing humans to
pass in the street, asleep.

Death by Detachment

What is this other world on the Corner?
Of violent and menacing gestures,
and growling peril.
And bloated pockets, filled with danger.
The bulky shells, and anger gone wild,
fills the street with deadly void,
inside and outside the soul,
with and without spirit.
Clashing on the gray,
the staggering limbs askew,
twirling, menacing, frightened,
of the blue and white shadow.

Tomorrow is a hazard,
out of reach, on a dusty shelf.
Beyond the dream of home,
and mom, and warming family.
To get there is a nonsense dream,
in TV land and liars,
peddling another place,
a vision beyond reach.

Crack of Dawn

The assemblage of slouching young men,
frowning, angry arms and hair and music.
Gathered in their own garbage - bottles, bones,
wind-blown trash circling the shattered hearts.
Hideous, deadly, desperate eyes
repeat the scanning ritual - Melt, Weed, Knife, Rob.
Death by time, their youth buried,
beneath the smoldering asphalt,
that marks their pitiful scent.
The future was then,
marked by the innocence of a young child,
scarred by the slashing of the relentless hate
of men, and mom, and broken glass.
Like stained and broken bedding,
they wait by the curb,
for the end of their minds.

POEMS:

MICHAEL HENSON

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

Contact: jamiehp@earthlink.net

DRAWING:

DONNA COOPER STROTHER

Donna Cooper Strother studied fine arts at the College of Mount St. Joseph and has taught art to youth and adults in several Cincinnati Neighborhoods. She also leads the kids crafts project for the Appalachian festival. Donna has done large commission works for St. Patrick Church in Taylor Mill, and for the former Andriola Italian restaurant. She especially enjoys painting and fabric arts.

Contact: donnacooper@hotmail.com



Donna Cooper - Strathairn @ 2005

Christmas Eve, 2001: Twelve Poems

1. A Fall of Snow

Outside my window,
a crisp, silent snow,
the first in this strange season.
The kitchen light flares against the glass
and I cannot see the snow,
but moments ago
I stood in the yard.
Snow curtained the woods beyond the yard.
Cold snow touched its fingers to my cheek.
The frosted grass
cracked beneath my shoes.
Deep in the woods,
the deer shook out their coats,
bent at the knees,
and settled like Benedictines into their cold beds.

2. Poverty and Birth

This is the season
when we honor poverty and birth,
when we tell a story of the homeless and the cold,
small people hustled out onto the roads
by the whim of the powerful.
Tiberius Enron.
This is an old, old story.

3. Sick at Heart

Day by day, the television flares
with images of a ruining world
and children huddle
in the rubble of a half dozen nations.
George Bush, dutiful son,
conjures gifts for the Magi.
We stumble through the portals
of a brutal new century
and I am sick at heart.
And so,
I have turned
at this late hour
to the silence of this fall of snow.

4. Midnight Mass

When I was a child
this was the hour
when we bundled together
for Midnight Mass.
The church was crowded, pew by pew.
I sat beside my father
and we sang together,
hymns to the plaster child
in his bower of pine.

5. A Sign

Sometimes I think Herod found his Jesus.
Caesar bought him and brought him to Rome
and left us with the painted plaster baby
in the crèche.
But still the Innocents are slaughtered.
So maybe that's a sign.
If you want to find the Exile
look to the roads.

6. For the Travelers

A midnight car
turns at the bend in the road.
Fugitive lights
spider across the kitchen wall
--quickly!--
and pass away.
For the travelers
We keep our tree lights burning
and a line of lights along the fence.

7. In the Woods

The woods behind my house
are silent
dark and gravid
as the inside of a womb.
From my kitchen
you would think that all is still.
But this is the winter wait.
In each gray bud
I hear
a dim cellular tick,
leaf and flower cramp and coil.
Pulsing
in the doe,
the raccoon sow,
the pocketed opossum
I see:
the pale zygotic lights of their young.

8. The Hard Births of the Poor

Too many are born hungry.
Too many are born cold.
Too many are born to the chatter of guns.
Too many are born who will not live out the year.
Too many are born under a chemical haze.
Too many are born who will never see a school.
Too many are born to be beaten.
Too many are born on the wrong side of a border.
Too many are born who will know too much.
Too many are born after ten straight days of rain.
Too many are born and where will we get the money for
the medicine?
Too many are born and the blood is infected from the mo-
ment it is blood.
Too many are born who will not sing.

9. Those I Love

Some I love,
the ones I see daily,
lie asleep.
If I go to the door
I can hear them breathe.
Some I love
are far off, spread
like the drift of snow across a continent.
And I cannot hear them at all.

10. What is the Story?

I ponder the story we tell each year:
The angel speaks.
The virgin conceives.
A star blazes in the sky.
The world is in awe
at God in a stall.
Then, poverty, exile, slaughter --
This is a hard, hard story.
To think that a child is born
to be pierced hands and feet
to die naked on a hill.
I would like to think
that this is a story of redemption.
I would like to think
that God erupts in every womb.

11. Journeys

The hours scroll toward morning.
I must rest.
What I hope to feel at dawn is hope,
that this solstice dark
will bend to the light.
And perhaps there is reason for hope.
Even now,
a woman of the Pushtun
leads a mule
to the manger of a refugee station.

And even now,
a girl of the South Bronx
pulls back the blanket
to look once more
at the child in her arms.
Hope walks hobbled.
Hope has the stony path.
Hope is crossed
by the shadow of the Kalashnikov.
The Holy Families of the poor
still trek the cold Gallilean hills.
I do not hope for much of hope.
But there is everywhere,
in spite of all,
defiant
inexplicable
amid all that centurion clatter
and the smoke and clutter of war
the persistent human impulse.
Again and again
the angel carries
the word to the womb
and there is birth.

12. And in the Morning

Snow still pitters against my window.
A few more minutes
and I will lie down to a restless sleep.
We cannot know what marches
toward the hard new Bethlehems
and I fear for those I love
and all who fall into the path
of the pinstripe Herods.
But the old story tells us
compassion survives
in the mangers of the poor.
So if I want a blessing
in the morning
I will go to see
outlined in snow
the pallets of the bedded deer.

POEMS:

JUDI HETRICK

Judi Hetrick lives in Oxford and teaches journalism at Miami University. She is an occasional student at the Earlham School of Religion, where this poem was written, in May 2004, for the class “World, Words and Transformation.”

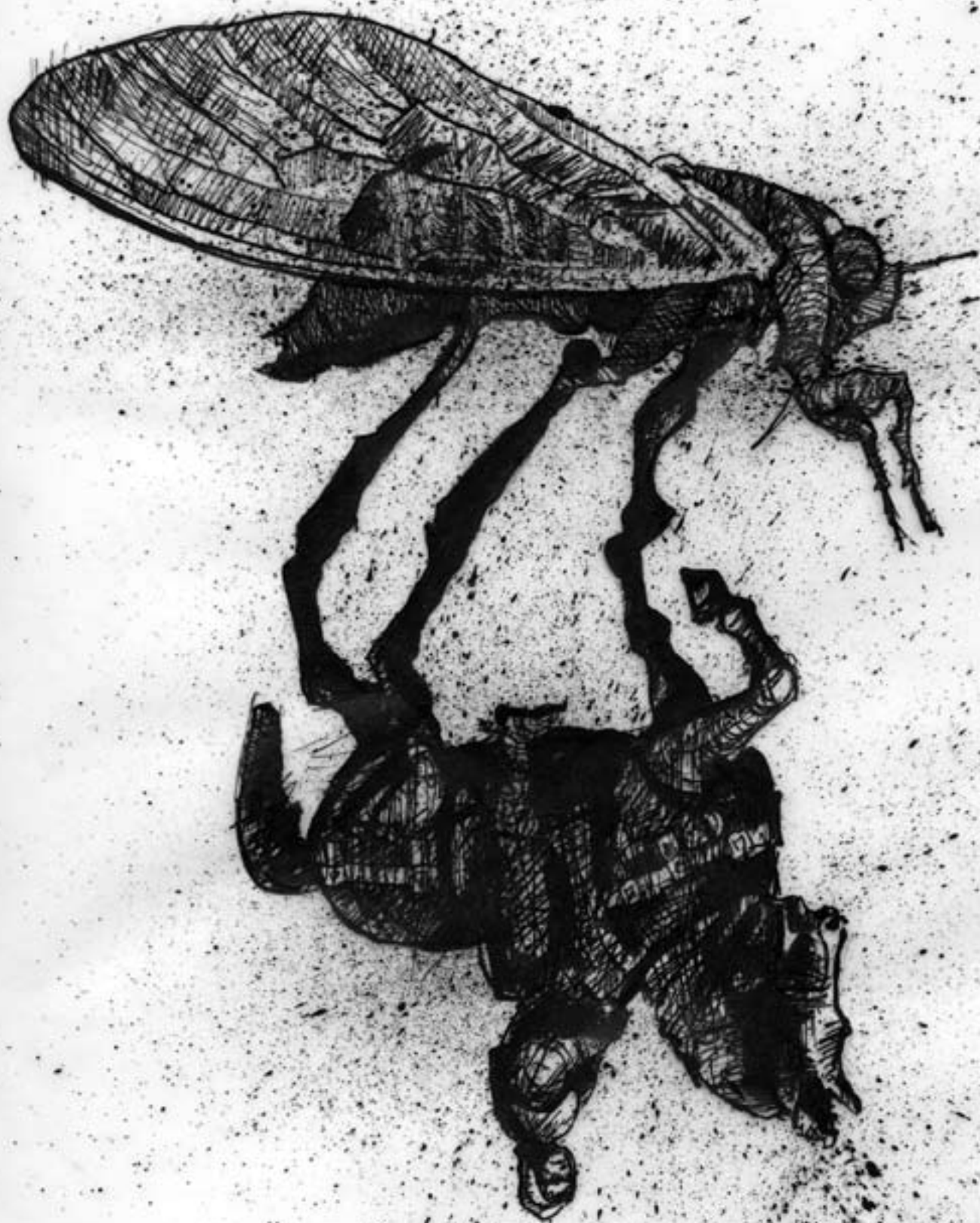
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DRAWING:

STEPHEN GEDDES

Stephen Geddes comes from a fine arts background with degrees in art education and in sculpture. He lives in Cincinnati and works as a commercial sculptor and as a fine artist.

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Stephen Geddes

Praise

underground so long
you'd think them dead

living in dirt
could they know time?

forced to seek sun
by something inside

without a thought
they squeeze through holes

first one, then two,
then millions strong

they vie for space
to rest and grow

at branches' tips
potential hangs

then wings emerge
and stop to dry

it takes some time
the hours tick

and then they're gone,
shells left behind

their life renewed
they sing with joy

underground so long,
my prayers emerge

Lament

our memories gone
as decades die

is Sun Tzu's wisdom
our art no more?

it could stay gone
but we're too sure

we know what's best
across our world

first one, then two,
then thousands strong

on Tigris' banks
our future looms

we vie to sap
the crescent's soil

we loot the art,
dismiss the law

at Abu Ghraib
we fix the hood,

attach the wires,
rip off the veil

then, life disgraced,
we moan in pain

underground too long,
my prayers emerge

POEMS:

JEFFREY HILLARD

Jeffrey Hillard is the author of four books of poems, the last one, 'Havana Riffs: Poems on Cuba'. Jeffrey has received from the Ohio Arts Council two Individual Artist grants and in 2000, a fellowship as Resident Writer at The Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts. In 1993, Jeffrey received the Post-Corbett Award for Literary Artist, and in 1998 the Sister Adele Clifford Award for Excellence in Teaching at the College of Mount St. Joseph where he is an associate professor of English.

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DRAWING:

THOMAS HIERONYMUS TOWHEY

Thomas Hieronymus Towhey is a native Cincinnati of Irish decent. He is a self-taught accomplished artist whose work revolves mainly around the physiological consequences of the human condition. Tom is currently on sabbatical in Santa Fe, New Mexico. His work has been exhibited widely, in galleries and museums, nationally and internationally.

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As I Watch the War in Iraq, I Consider Two Poetry Books Carried by Yusef Komunyakaa in Vietnam

If, like Yusef, one American soldier embedded
in the blast of a sandstorm
carries even one page of poetry in a breast pocket,
it would lean against his heart.
Words nudging gun ammo, the smallest lines
on a page would hold up
the Arabian sky filling his eyes with oil-smoke.
I think of how the bunker
could inspire his own lines: *Dear Mr. President*, he'd start.
You've screwed us this time.
*A poet named Yusef carried two poetry books in Nam
and they saved his life. Where are mine?*
Glad I am not this soldier who may be my student,
the one whom I taught
form and detail, and never expected that he would
engage rifle and gas mask,
convoy in lock-step, do those almighty U-turns.
It's my fault if I forgot
to remind him that a line of any good poetry
can drive a wedge in desert,
untangle him from darkness like a curtain
pulled to offer morning light.
I want to believe he'd jot sentence fragments,
his other eye on an MRE:
Dearest Lord, how do I get out of this shithole?
When? Why wasn't I told...
Where, in his lines, a shooting star is an escape route.
Where earplugs drown cries.
Where food and water are carried to those still alive
on the backs of scorpions.
Where these words of his do not die like black clouds
bringing missiles, but live,
always, far removed from the land of falling bodies.

Iraq Bathed in the Rainbow of CNN

The finger pointed at us is not a real
finger but the gauntlet of a cartoon bank
on the screen. Bursts of yellow and red yield
a map flashing out of control like myriad tarmacs.
They yield American tanks that encircle cracked roads.
From channel to channel, video spins a desert
wrested from Iraqis who know the luxury of water.
And there's the gnashing of front-lines we do not hear.
It appears that sand is infinite, a scar of grid lines.
With missile fire, any building is poised to be plowed.
A totem of cities lights up the screen on one side.
The map's flashing. Borders diminish once quickly shown.
Who can miss the flag flapping like Christmas tinsel?
The map numbs. Gauntlets are pointed to vanquish desert.

On a Billboard in the Pioneer Cemetery

(Near downtown Detroit)

The bike wheel suddenly turns inward,
and the bicycler lurches
to clutch the cemetery's iron fence,

short of falling, short of tumbling head-first.
Short of the spike under his chin.
He regains his balance and, before leaving,

reads the pool-green letters of the billboard,
a scar above the names of century-old
stones in near oblivion, on a weedy slope

between the Diamond Lounge and Vic's Barb-B-Q.
From my apartment window, I see
the purple S-T peeling away from BAPTIST,

the inscription, *Please Come Over and Join Us*,
fading like brown grass. A homeless man
sleeps against the fence, near litter in rain puddles.

How could anyone pray in the cemetery when the sign
has crowded out these few stones?
Even if I wanted to pray, how could I after seeing

that mildew invades the cross on a tombstone?
Sometimes I think the bones
just tolerate the addicts and weeds, and I imagine

that they rise invisibly to wave at windows
or at the man either asleep or dying,
his arms intrigued with only the lay of sidewalk.

Or, they wave at the passerby who stares at the billboard
and the enormous stones,
the passerby who pulls a jacket tighter, squints hard

to see the stones sinking under such invasion.

POEMS:

KATHY HOLWADEL

In June 2000, and after spending 23 years as a financial consultant, Kathy Holwadel resigned her position as Vice President of Merrill Lynch and devoted herself to writing. She is the Founding Director of InkTank, a writing center that aims at fulfilling the writing needs of Cincinnati.

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DRAWING:

AMY BOGARD

Amy Bogard is a native Cincinnati artist, who lives in Pleasant Ridge with her husband, two children and a menagerie of pets. She is currently pursuing a BFA in Sculpture at the University of Cincinnati School of Art.

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Alerted a... something was... At 8:28, an American... sharp turn and... According to inform...

Federal Aviation... United Flight 175... from its flight plan... New Jersey... flew almost due north before...

On board one of the two... flights, an official said... made a desperate call... operations center... using a cellular telephone... other flight attendants... the attendant... had broken... the flight attendant... number of one of the... apparently was... of what was going... number of attacks... only imagine that... official said... American Flight... airport... called... when airports... usually buzzing... when vacationers get an early start... on long days of travel and business... people leave the East Coast expect... to arrive in time for meetings in... the afternoon.

The planes, two Boeing 767's and two 757's, were not especially full. Each had two pilots and none had more than nine flight attendants on board. But all of them carried thousands of gallons of fuel, more than enough to make a cross-country flight.

Experts... that the pilots of the two Boeing aircraft... the 757 and the 767, are virtually the same. Some time in a flight simulator, or even with a computer program, might have been enough to accomplish the terrorists' goal, they said.

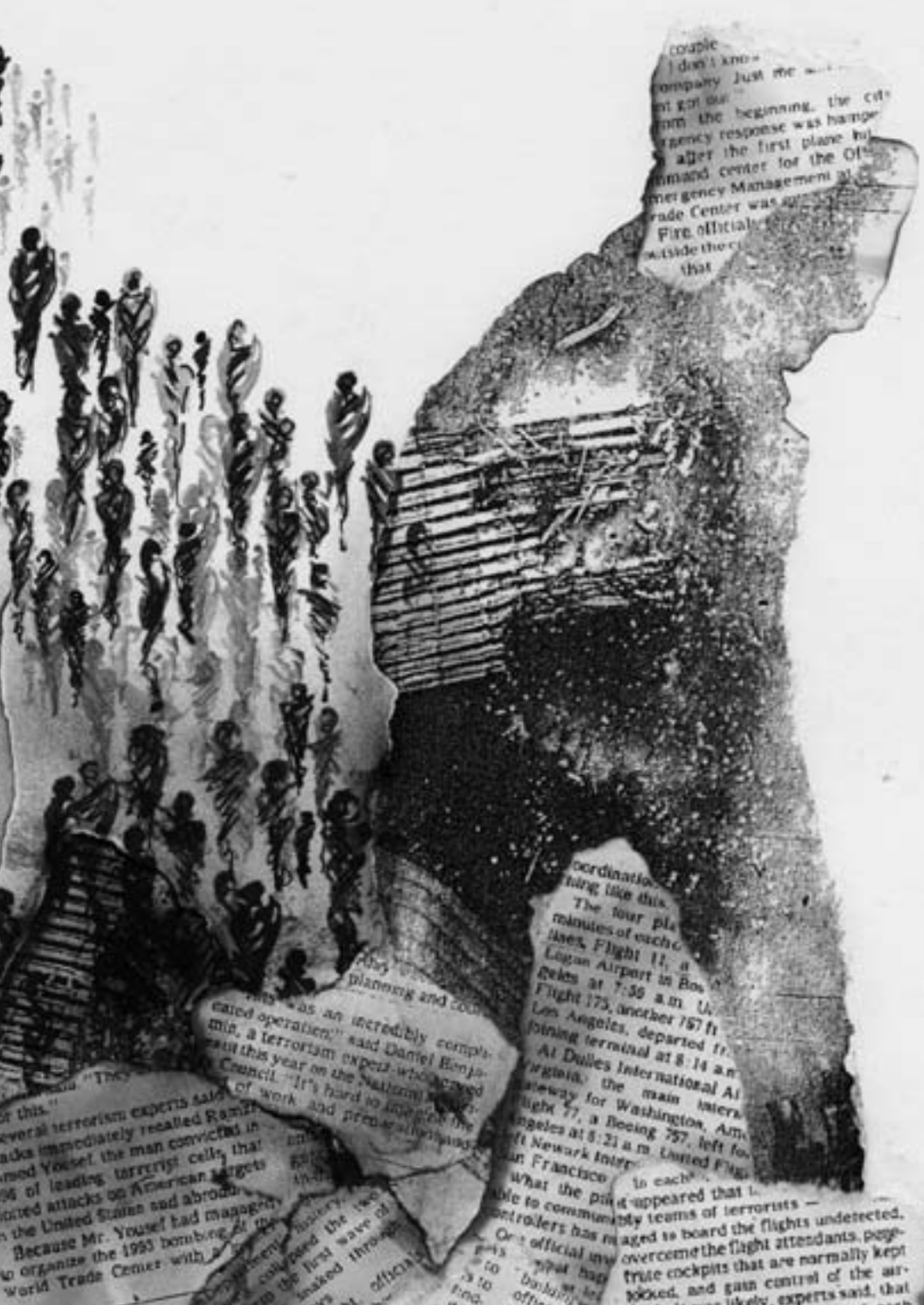
Another question that remains unanswered is how much the authorities knew about the hijackings as they unfolded. But in Pennsylvania, an emergency dispatcher reported receiving a cellular telephone call from United Flight 93 from a passenger locked in one of the bathrooms.

Several terrorism experts said... attacks immediately recalled Ramzi Yousef, the man convicted in 1995 of leading terrorist cells that plotted attacks on American targets in the United States and abroad.

RESPONSE

Rescue Workers Rush To Aid Survivors But Many Do Not Return

By JAN...
...when she reached the...
...You couldn't...
...said That's...
...icked Every...
...fire people...
...the way.



corable... I don't know... company just the...
...the beginning, the city...
...agency response was hamper...
...after the first plane hit...
...command center for the Of...
...Emergency Management...
...Trade Center was...
...Fire officials...
...outside the...
...that

...planning and...
...was an incredibly complex...
...operation," said Daniel Benjamin, a terrorism expert who served on this year on the National Security Council. "It's hard to imagine the... of work and preparation...

...what the pilot appeared that...
...able to communicate with terrorists...
...teams of terrorists...
...to board the flights undetected...
...overcome the flight attendants, pop...
...frustrate cockpits that are normally kept...
...locked, and gain control of the air...
...craft. It was likely, experts said, that...
...at least one attacker aboard each...
...These know something about flying a...

...coordination...
...ing like this...
...The four planes...
...minutes of each...
...lines, Flight 11, a...
...Logan Airport in Bos...
...departs at 7:59 a.m. United...
...Flight 175, another 767 fr...
...Los Angeles, departed fr...
...joining terminal at 8:14 a.m...
...Virginia's main inter...
...airway for Washington, Am...
...Flight 77, a Boeing 757, left fo...
...Los Angeles at 8:21 a.m. United...
...Newark Inter...
...San Francisco...
...in each...
...what the pilot appeared that...
...able to communicate with terrorists...
...teams of terrorists...
...to board the flights undetected...
...overcome the flight attendants, pop...
...frustrate cockpits that are normally kept...
...locked, and gain control of the air...
...craft. It was likely, experts said, that...
...at least one attacker aboard each...
...These know something about flying a...

...with the 1998 bombings of United...
...ambas... in Kenya and...
...and a foiled plot to bomb...
...American jetliners in East...
...over a period of a few days...
...July 1995, the synchroniza...
...locks in New York and...
...appeared to be part of...
...than any previous...
...the United States...
...of 2001

Amy Bogard '05

Obligatory Poem

The plane that's going to fly from Newark to Los Angeles,
doesn't.
The skyscrapers engineered to withstand the unthinkable,
don't.
The body that's not supposed to free-fall a hundred floors,
does.
The video camera bought to capture first steps and other
communions, doesn't.
The husband who's not permitted to use his cell phone
during flight, does.
The passengers who should sit still and wait, don't.
The news anchor who's not allowed to cry, does.
The black box that's expected to explain, doesn't.
The neighbors who know they have to go on, can't.
The flag so often taken for granted, isn't.
The firemen passing buckets, desperate for rest, don't.
The clear blue morning sky that should never darken,
does.
And will not ever go clear again,
Scraps of all those lives
Lived in the air
Fluttering to ground
Forever.

Poem Inspired by Bill's Comments on the Election

When I was six
Uncle owned a Texaco station
at the corner of Bramble and something.

That year,
not by normal grace of birthday or seat on Santa's knee,
but by my first sweet kiss of corporate largesse,
The man who wore the star
brought us a stack of red, plastic fire hats,
shiny, new and never-worn.
Obtainable by the general public
for a limited time only, just one per fill-up,
Our family got more hats than we had heads.

Then, two days later,
pride of possession not yet worn thin,
I saw them. The Jacobs boys,
late afternoon sun glinting off matching head gear.
And I knew. It was my mom,
of that generation trained to love by weight or measure,
distribute it in dollops.
Perhaps I screamed,
"Where'd you boys get MY hats?"
Or maybe their mother simply sensed the
stinginess of a skittish heart too close.
Something made her steam down the sidewalk,
hats in hand. "Take them back," she insisted.
"Take them back if they're so important."

Forty-three years after-the-fact
I'm still not absolutely money-back-guaranteed sure
there will ever be enough.
Enough love. Enough time. Enough anything.
But this year, I voted for the Democrat anyway.
I decided to vote by faith instead of fear,
to live my life that way from here forward,
as, to date, I have always been blessed with what I need,
Which is more than enough.

My candidate lost.
But who can be sad at the momentous opening of a hu-
man clam,
Much less, at 47 percent of us
Committed to sharing our hats.

For what is love without weight or measure?

POEMS:

SUE NEUFARTH HOWARD

Sue Neufarth Howard, a Cincinnati native, is a published poet, a visual artist and a business writer. She is the former Poet Laureate of Fairview/Clifton Heights, an Ohio Poetry Day contest winner and the Current President of the Greater Cincinnati Writer's League poetry group.

Sue's poems have appeared in local publications.

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DRAWING:

ELAINE MULLEN

Elaine Mullen, a native of Cincinnati, graduated from its Art Academy in 1987 with a B.F.A. in Printmaking. Elaine is co-director of Tiger Lily Press, a printmaking cooperative that has been active in Cincinnati for over 25 years. She works and teaches classes in all printmaking media.

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Elaine Mullen 2005©

Peace (I)

Elusive, mysterious
translucent as the day moon
Peace lives in quiet spaces
soft as moss
fleeting as the wind's gentle kiss
transient as a butterfly
innocent as a baby's smile
teasing as a firefly's blinks
as beautiful and rare
as a rainbow

ephemeral
as the setting sun,
the morning mist
fluid as the mountain stream
gentle as the touch
of forest fern
still as the fragrant hollow
deep inside the rose
epiphany
behind the waking dream

Peace (II)

Alone without fear
in predawn awokeness
warm, painless, untroubled
mind forsaking body
to cohabit with creation
in timeless suspension

floating on a sea of clouds
unlonely as children laughing
comforted by the nearness
of tiptoeing, whispering stars

while the moon beckons
venturing further
far from electronic jungles
swarthy with conflict
to the welcome shores
of the universe

Rekindling the Flame

Dry leaves beneath footfalls
crunch like Ground Zero rubble

Slim silver planes streak
like airborne bombs of 9/11

Dense fog obliterates the near and far
as smoke obscured the fallen

Tree frames stand stark, lonely, barren
as twisted girders free of their load
my tape rewinds, replays
the silver nose penetrates
steel/glass skin

hypodermic needle of terror

black ash spurts like blood
from a gunshot wound

Yet seeds of the souls departed

spirited by wind

sprinkled by mist

glowing like stars

seep into hearts
sow grace

rake spirit fire embers
to life.

POEMS:

LUCY JAFFE

Lucy Jaffe is a visual artist and a writer. In Cincinnati, when she's not writing with WWFC, she's renovating a 78 year old stone house with her husband. Her paintings have been shown in many galleries and at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC.

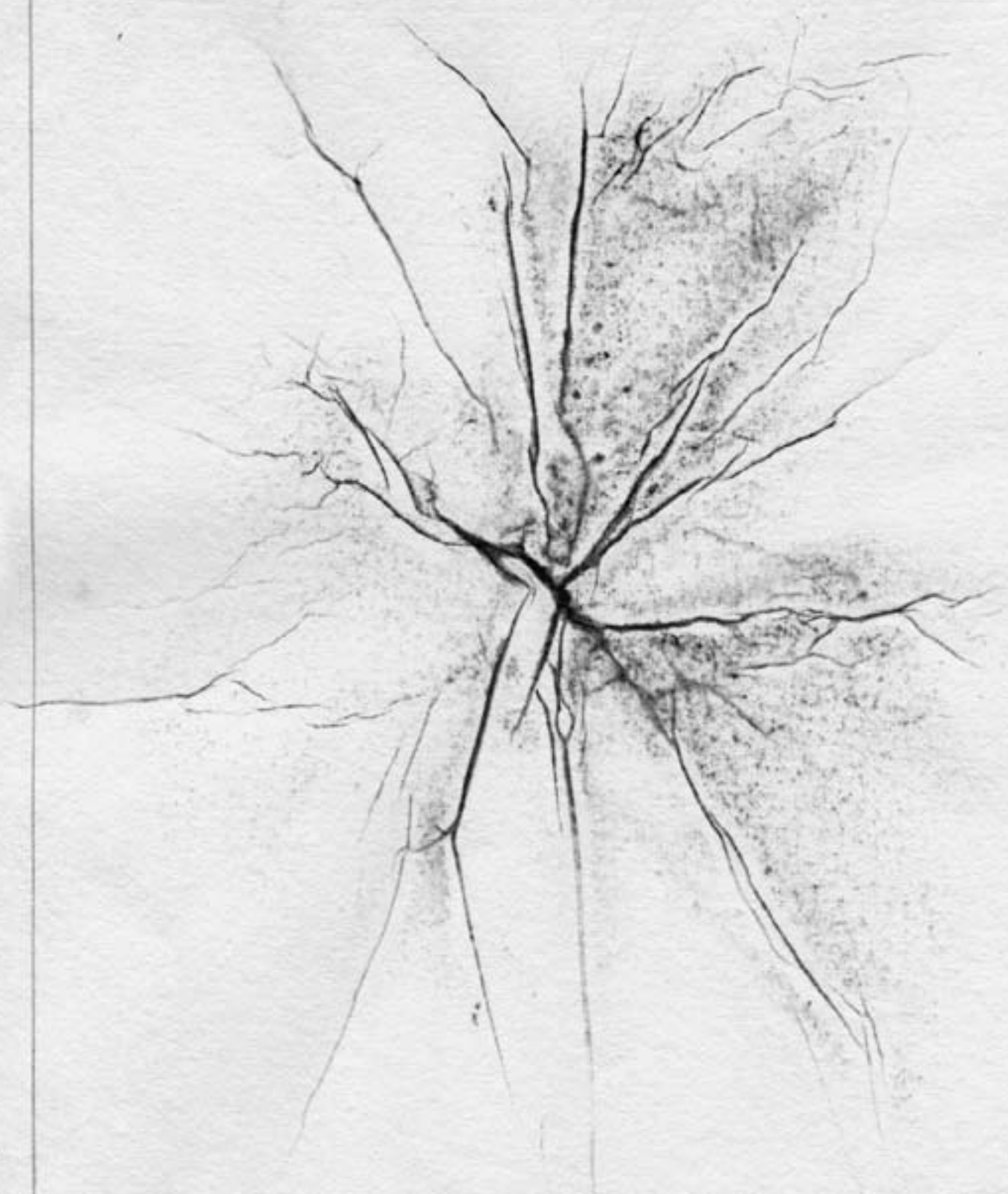
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DRAWING:

HOLLY CAHILL

Holly Cahill received her BFA from Syracuse University in 1998 and her MFA from the University of Cincinnati in 2004. At present, Holly is an Art Foundations Instructor at Northern Kentucky University and works out of a studio located in Cincinnati.

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Holly Cahill 3/15

Joy

Monday night our yoga teacher told
that every peaceful act contributes to world peace.
A warm blanket nestled around my life, my intentions,
many little troubles did cease.

In the dream, my sister
takes my arm and twirls me round and round.
I give over, my body
will receive no harm when I meet the ground.

When she finally let's go
I skim above the grass
floating like a spinning top.
My heart is set free. At last.

Don't postpone joy - a friend writes,
it begins to spread, out little cracks and under the floor-
boards.
It flows through my circulation and to Gaia's waterways.
I tore the message up surrendering it to the wind – I could
afford.

I drive toward the distance, gray green hills
gently meet the shallow blue sky.
White, wispy clouds whisk close above me,
scumbling through today's pale ceiling, they fly.

Glue, a thumbtack?
A single gray cloud stuck up, over all.
An error in nature, a mistake?
I smile, grateful for all.

Wherewithal

In the hall the mahogany secretary stood watch. With a
fingertip I could trace a stealthy message on it's grimy lid.
“*Dust me*” was sure to send Mother into a frenzy. Blind
anger at one who'd point out her housekeeping had back-
slid.

I closed the doors in that hallway years ago and didn't look
back. Time passed while I thoughtlessly forgot the yelling,
scolding, and punishing hands of hers. Entry was a habit
withheld a long time ago. Joy –not allowed in that dwell-
ing.

Those doors were closed so long I forgot my guard. When
the berating, verbal assaults, and demanding letters of
rage
arrived I went back Angry words rushed out and lashed
my
face. I looked at the dusty secretary tall and withered in
age.

I closed the door that was open. I turned and saw the
words
drawn out on the secretary's brittle and thin-skinned wood
were now “*Forgive me*”. I thought, “*Forgive us both*” and
rubbed it all out. For good, this time it withstood. For
good.

POEMS:

NANCY JOHANSON

Nancy Johanson, a poet, is currently finishing her first novel. She has written since childhood. Nature, ordinary life and longings, peace and justice, inspire her. Nancy states: "The holy well of Spirit nurtures my work. As artist, healer, seeker, and mother, I am guided."

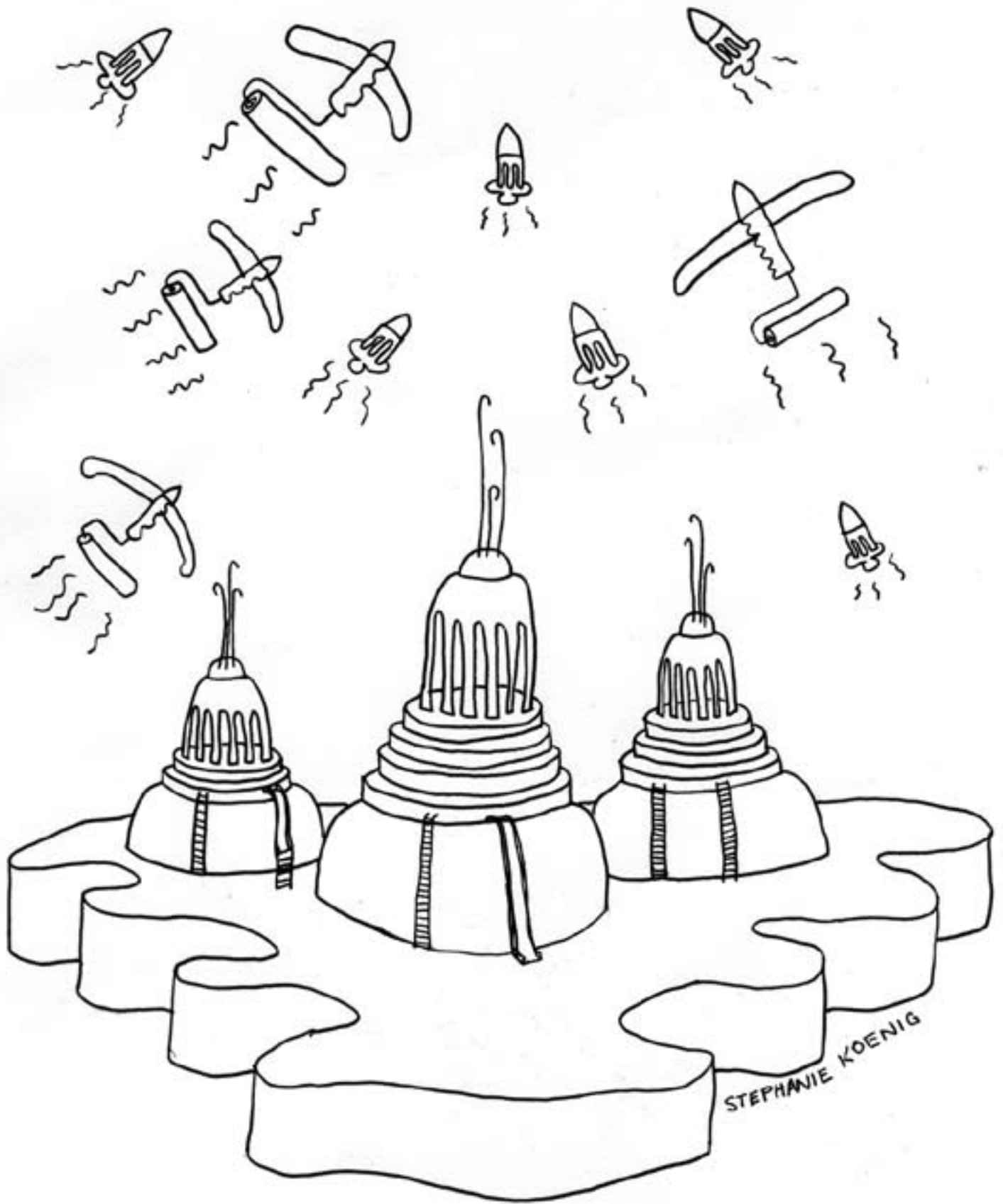
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DRAWING:

STEPHANIE KOENIG

Stephanie Koenig is graduating from the University of Cincinnati's DAAP School of Art with a BFA this year. She will be attending graduate school this fall with a focus in sculpture and installation. Stephanie has shown regularly in Cincinnati at the Mockbee and in Louisville at the Cinderblock Gallery.

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STEPHANIE KOENIG

Unseemly

"I have no poems in me,"
my friend Mary wrote.

Why can't this quiche
of yogurt, onions, cheese
baking its crust brown
and crisp, comprise a verse?

Why can't the dark, silent song
my oven makes, as it heats
amidst the clatter of Thursday's trash cans
on the street, be worthy of rhyme?

How the barrels roll around and crash,
spill over grass and curb,
scraps of rotten food and broken glass
till sanitation workers come, remove

the garbage, sights and smells
we don't want to see.
Like Washington
removes the bright red stains so well

plies words as white wash-
Oh the excellent polishing-
so we might believe no violence even seeps
beneath the barricades of its proud and painted house.

Temple

Walking by bare November trees
we stop astonished.
A rose bush, before us, in full bloom
so late in this season's
cemetery of war.
Circumambulating
without prayer wheels
without bowing
I smell each bloom
then pick one,
a pink bud
a Buddha.

POEMS:

JERRY JUDGE

Jerry Judge is a Cincinnati-based poet, social worker, and peace activist. He is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Writers' League and the Cincinnati Writers Project. Jerry has published poetry in many journals and is the author of two poetry books: 'No Forwarding Address' and 'Father's Instinct'.

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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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PigeonWickman

Election, 2004

Right off the fifties' TV screen,
The Cisco Kid performed a benefit
and appeared on stage firing
two guns while I woke up screaming

from a snooze on my mother's lap.
I loved The Cisco Kid and never knew
he could scare me so. I've learned
America can be just like that.

Jimmy

(For Linda)

eighty-one years old
Japanese-American artist
homeless citizen of NYC
taken in on September 11th
by Linda in Soho
paints at all hours

she says he draws
colorful fish, mischievous
cats, grand tigers
and the atomic bomb

each bomb drawing
the same inscription
below the flames
"August 6, 1945,
Sunday morning,
the American Air Force dropped
on Hiroshima City
the Atomic Bomb,
babies, children, women, old people –
260,000.
My mother's family wiped out.

(First published in 'New York Quarterly')

Rhythm

*(... and Richard Cory, one calm summer night, Went home
and put a bullet through his head.*

...Edwin Arlington Robinson)

3 a.m.

From the living room,
light from one lamp.
Vincent is reading
the poem over and over.

Aching to pulverize his father's bones,
Vincent once, in his twenties,
began to dig up the grave.

When Vincent's eyes close,
he is eight and his hands are tied
to the back of a kitchen chair.
His father's gin face
in his face calling him trash
like his mother, saying that he's
only good as a practice drum.
The sticks beat to a rhythm
that the band will no longer
let his father play.

Vincent's life
so carefully constructed
with wife, job, two children.
Vincent steps outside.
Down the street,
another house
with a light on.

POEMS:

LONNA KINGSBURY

Lonna D. Kingsbury, a survivor of Chicago's Bucktown / Wicker Park neighborhood, has been named Poet Laureate of Miami Township, OH and Greater Miami Township's Performing Arts Center. She is currently working on her fifth book and her fifth year as originator, producer and facilitator of 'Countering the Silence', a twice-weekly aired cable show highlighting artists of all genres. Lonna's greatest honors have been serving as Torch Guardian for the 2002 Olympic Torch Relay and as poetic guide for the Mason Veterans' Memorial.

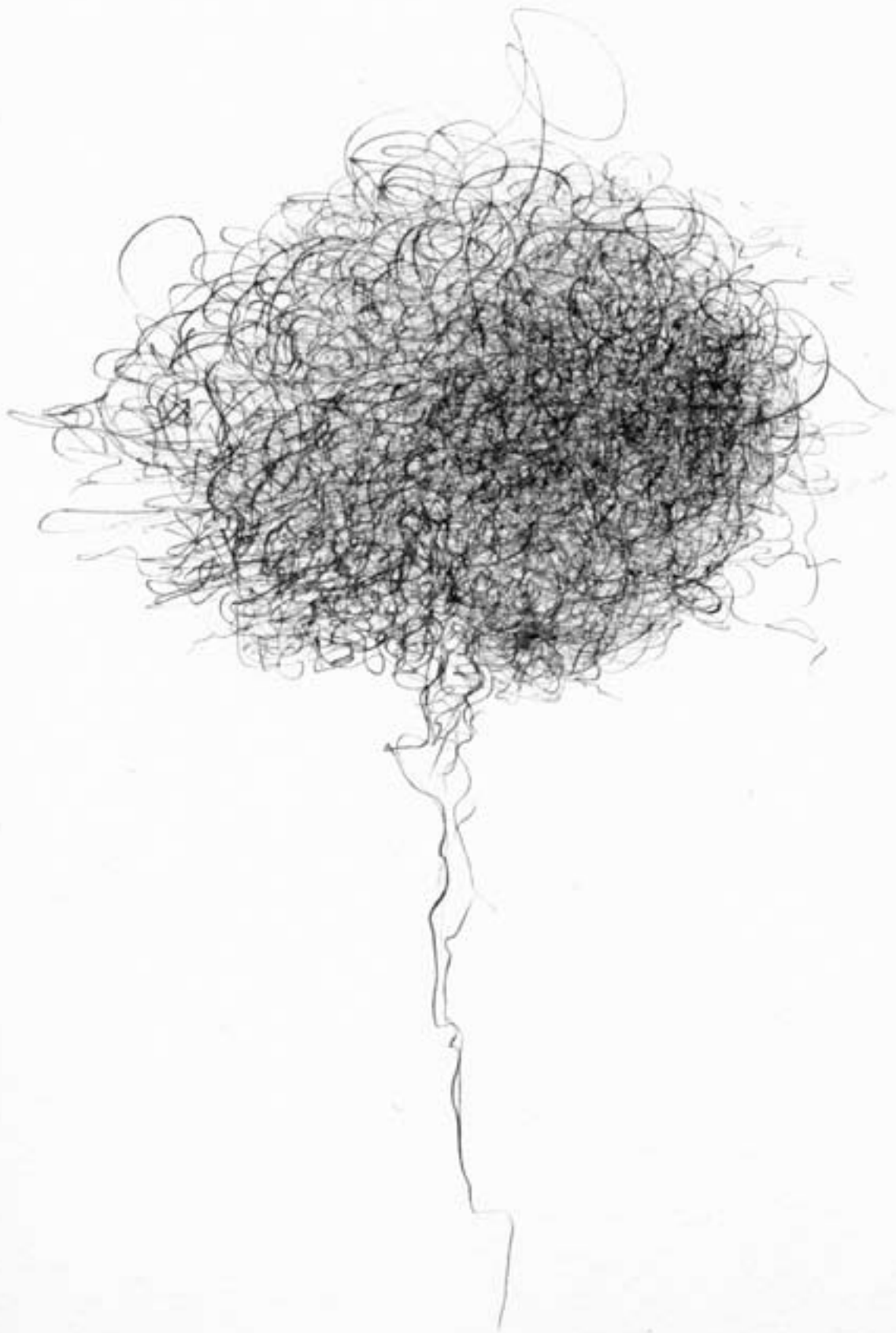
Contact: meriprxtr1@aol.com; www.counteringthesilence.com

DRAWING:

SALLY HARRIS

Sally Harris. Itinerant artist. Native Californian who has lived in New York, England, New Hampshire and Ohio. BA, Stanford University. Near completion of MFA in Fine Art, University of Cincinnati (DAAP)

Contact: srub@cinci.rr.com



Twenty-Four Seven

Economic sanctions
key words to keep the beast in line
artistic versus practical
freedom versus caught
selfless versus selfish
wanton versus want
goose stepping aerobically
higher, higher taunt
breathing in
breathing out
pressures unrelieved
settling for reprimands
maniacally conceived
despite invading tentacles
despite upstaging rules
despite cock-headed crowing dreads
relentlessly they pool
to disregard all welfare
to disregard all faith
gearing up atrocities
each nationally displaced
and so we'll work - historically
the trades will run high-gear
economic sanctions
will heighten cash flow here
to stabilize economy
and reset standards high
surrendering our greatest gifts
fighting for our lives

Reality TV

Again the news showcasing lines
of people seeking food
'round and 'round
entwining all
waiting for short sustenance
interviewing children
questioning their preference
many obviously mired
within the web cam shamed
by parents working
full time jobs
barely past the rate
of minimum without the ease
of any type of benefits
and every day it's longer
according to the man - in charge
veterans
aged
working poor
Americans in line
gathering in self defense
testament to poverty
hungry for equality
waiting for the score
for stores are corporations
and corporations grow
by easing heft of manpower
cutting to the core
One child seeks bananas
another mentions vegetables
watching second harvesting
becomes our growing need
barbarically extending
reality TV

Natural Events

Third day - a Monday
intrinsic threes
hold forums
Pope
not well at all
countries gone to hell
at war
as bush negates
class acts
et all
sickening
predetermined
ratio
expels
illness
grossly
ill-conceived
embalming
Lilo
Stitch
gnashing
corporate
dogma
calming rebel ways
by pitch
redeeming
nays
exposed
opposed
capping ocean waves
they say
Elvis braves tsunamis
abysmally
portrayed

POEMS:

JOHN KRAIMER

John Kraimer, aka “Slammin’ John”, is a performance poet, keyboard/synthesizer musician, and magician. He was recently named Poet Laureate of the Riverbank Poetry Project, a program of the Fitton Center for Creative Arts in Hamilton Ohio. John also maintains a day job as Director of Disability Services at the University of Cincinnati - Raymond Walters College.

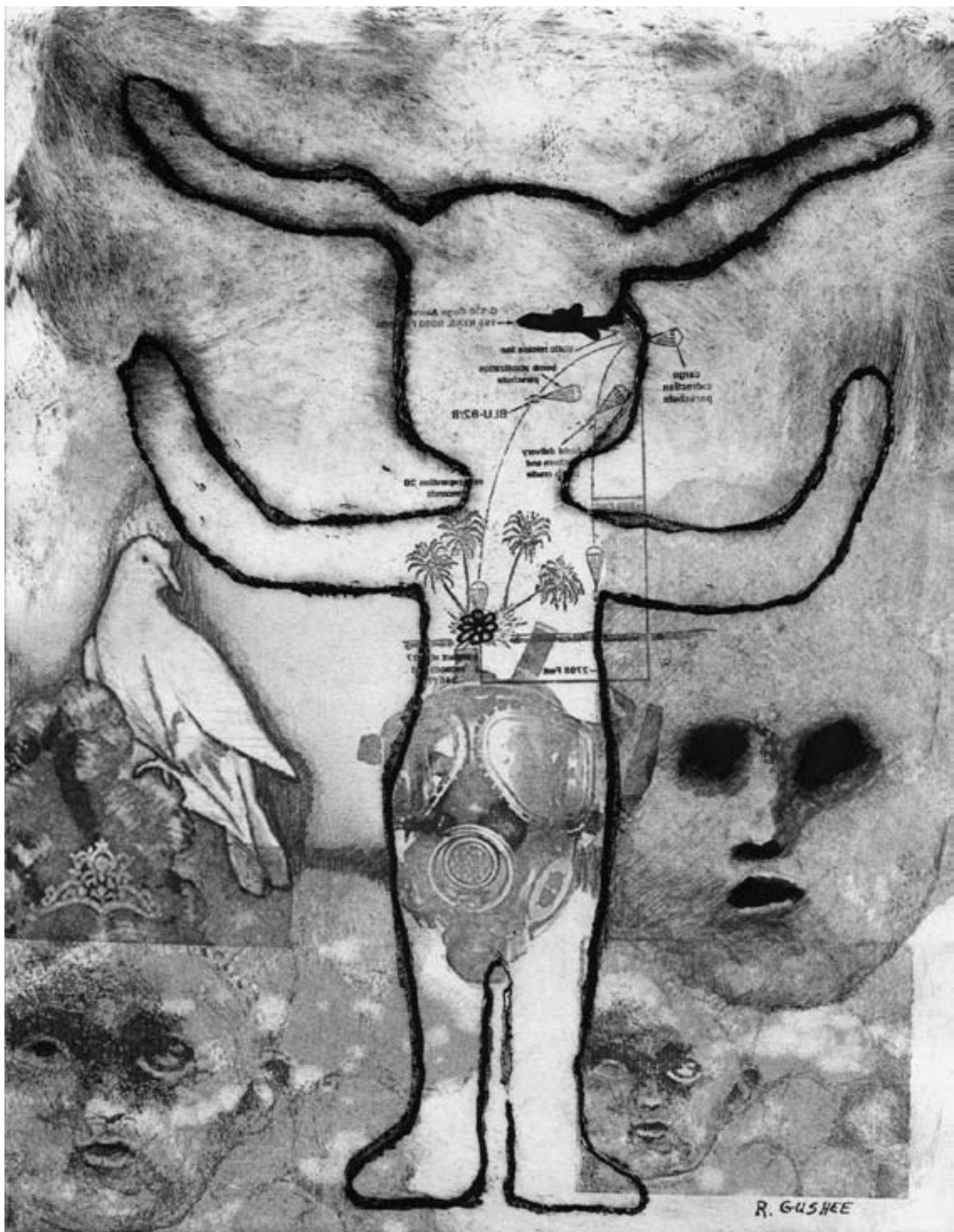
Contact: john.kraimer@uc.edu

DRAWING:

RHONDA GUSHEE

Rhonda Gushee is a figurative sculptor who teaches at both the Art Academy and the University of Cincinnati. Rhonda works in an assemblage process with a variety of mixed media; the overall themes of her work are suppressed doll and toy-like creatures empowered by mysterious mythical qualities.

Contact: www.rhondagushee.com



Guns and Butter

There's a war on drugs, a war on sex
A war on poverty, who knows what's next
What new battle lies in store
How about a war on war

Guns and butter, one or the other
Feed the people, daisy cutter
The drums of war, the seeds of peace
Will the killing ever cease?

Love and joy and happiness
Bombs from planes, a rain of death
Corn and rice, wheat and grain
Fear and death, blood and pain

Compare and weigh them, hand for hand
Children see and understand
The choice is clear when left to them
The answer's lost when left to men

Blood flows from an open sore
A world full of hate and war
An olive branch and snow white dove
A world full of peace and love

("Guns and Butter" is an economics concept that refers to a nation utilizing its limited resources to make either food or weapons. A "daisy cutter" is the most powerful non-nuclear bomb in the U.S. arsenal)

Prayer

Some pray to Allah
Some pray to the sun
Some pray to Jesus
Some pray to none

Some pray to Vishnu
Some pray to the trees
Some bow down to the ground
Some will bend at the knees

The methods are countless
The viewpoints are vast
So same yet so different
Each prayer that is cast

So as we contemplate life
In our own special way
I offer this poem as a prayer
To share what I'd like to say

We may never agree
On the method or view
On whose god is almighty
On whose religion is true

But I'll offer my two cents
For you to ponder it's worth
May we all see ourselves
As just children of earth

For that's the one thing in common
We share with all others
That's the one thing my friend
That makes us sisters and brothers

POEMS:

ADRIANE KRUER

Adriane Krue (AJ) is a student at Long Island University's Friends World Program which focuses on global understanding and cross-cultural awareness.

For the last three and a half years she has traveled throughout Europe, Latin America and India with the Friends World Program. She will graduate in May 2006 with a concentration in Arts, Literature and Composition. Adriane is a poet, a painter, a pizza maker, a traveler and an artist working for peace.

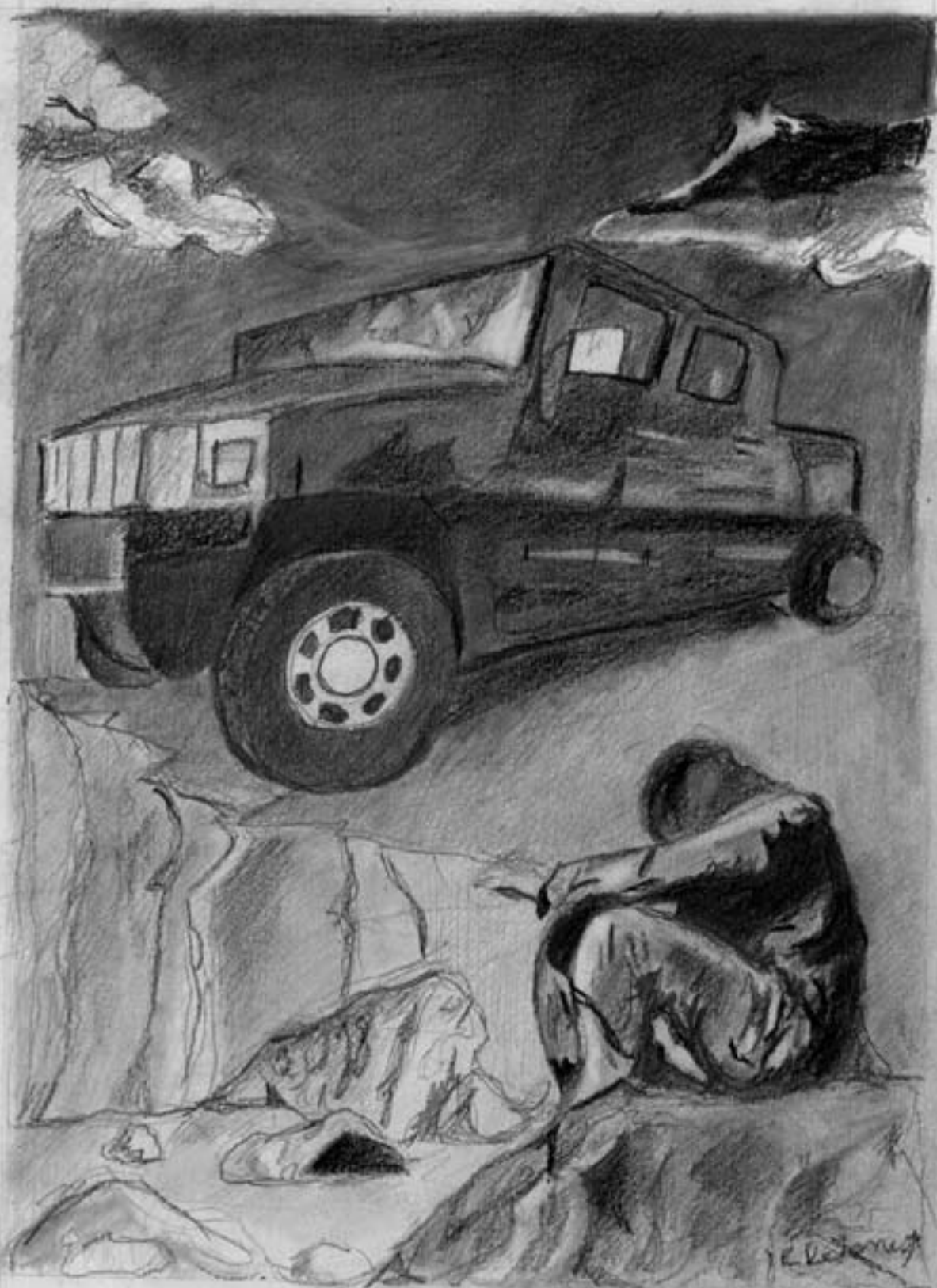
Contact: hihoaj@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

RICHARD DEFORREST

Richard Deforrest was born in Little Falls, NY, and raised on the East side of Cincinnati. He has been engaged in art making for only a couple of years, bringing to his work the aesthetics of a late bloomer. Richard hopes that his work amuses, provokes and liberates the viewer.

Contact: deforrestr@nku.edu



RICK DEFORREST

Delusion

I cannot play your games I cannot love your beer wear a little ribbon on my
car knowing the destruction you have caused
I know the other parts of those places that our actions touch
the insides of sea shells
and places we never think
about
far away,
where our Styrofoam seeps through the walls
and our consumption eats away at the lives of people we don't
recognize
as people who occupy this planet with us
they live on our garbage heaps
we blow up their streets and mailboxes
where do they spend their money?
You wouldn't believe me I told you
here on the streets where everything is
easy
you can drink your tap water
if you did that somewhere else you would have a
worm
and sometimes I don't know how we can't see what we cause
out there
on those peninsulas that have been covered with ocean
but you do,
do you realize life was hard there before the water came
and you say change, and they say change
but where will it really meet in the middle?
When the wave crashes, when we tear up inside really
and get out of our SUVs
and understand each other
then we can see where the other
ends
and where we all begin

I cannot play your games or drive your cars, but I can see this delusion.

POEMS:

STEVEN LANSKY

Steven Lansky is a poet and the author of the chapbook “Main St.”. He has recently released “Jack Acid” an audio novel in six cds. His new memoir “The Citizen” is being published serially on QueenCityForum.com. His play: “Hard Nosed” was performed at the Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati, in 1991. Steven teaches Creative Writing at Miami University in Oxford, OH. He lives in Clifton.

Contact: lanskysp@muohio.edu

DRAWING:

CSILLA KOSA

Csilla Kosa, an ethnic Hungarian from the region of Transylvania in northwestern Romania, received an MFA in art education and printmaking before emigrating to the USA in 1996. She received a second MFA in printmaking from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2001. She lives in Chicago.

Contact: csillakosa@yahoo.com



Welcome to Prison (a performance poem in 4 voices)

Welcome to prison.

Would you like me to
tighten your hood?

I may tighten your
cuffs if you resist. If
you cooperate, I may
loosen your cuffs.

NO! I will not loosen
your hood.

There will be simu-
lated sodomy, but no
real sodomy will be
permitted.

If you leave prison
alive you will be an
American citizen.
America is the great-
est country in the
world. America is
the most powerful
country in the world.
America is the freest
nation in the history
of the world.

*Los cuerpos
limpios producen
las mentes
limpias.
Aquí
tienes el cepillo de
dientes y la pasta de
dientes. Guárdalos
bien en un
lugar
seguro.
Solamente
un cepillo
y una pasta serán
proporcionados a
cada prisionero
por mes.
Aquí tienes
el rollo de
papel
higiénico. Guárdalo
en un
lugar seguro
y seco.
Un rollo
será proporcionado
a cada prisionero
por semana.
Cada
cinco
días, te
van a
inspeccionar
por los
piojos.*

Eins
Zwei
Drei
Vier
Fünf
Sech
Sieben
Acht
Neun
Zehn
Elf
Zwölf
Dreizehn
Vierzehn
Fünfzehn
Sechzehn
Siebzehn
Achtzehn
Neunzehn
Zwanzig
Einundzwanzig
Zweiundzwanzig
Dreiundzwanzig
Vierundzwanzig
Fünfundzwanzig
Sechszwanzig
Ssiebenundzwanzig
Achtundzwanzig
Neunundzwanzig
Dreißig

Daniel Akaka
Lamar Alexander
Wayne Allard
George Allen
Max Baucus
Evan Bayh
Robert Bennett
Joseph Biden
Jeff Bingaman
Christopher Bond
Barbara Boxer
Sam Brownback
Jim Bunning
Conrad Burns
Richard Burr
Robert Byrd
Maria Cantwell
Thomas Carper
Lincoln Chafee
Chambliss Saxby
Hillary Clinton
Tom Coburn
Thad Cochran
Norm Coleman
Susan Collins
Conrad Kent
John Cornyn
Jon Corzine

War is all in your mind.

“In 1995, for the first time, more money was spent building new prisons than building new university buildings.

The Justice Policy Institute reports that between 1987 and 1995 the money spent on state prisons rose by 30% while the money spent on higher education dropped by 18%.”

NO! I will not loosen your hood.

Si te encuentran infestado de éstos, serás duchado con el jabón medicinal. Te afeitarán la cabeza. Es posible que tu cuerpo vaya a ser afeitado si la infestación vuelve en cinco días. Sin excepción. No se permite guardar el jabón en la celda. Tendrás quince minutos para afeitarte y lavarte cada mañana antes del desayuno. Haz cola y pórtate bien. Cualquier pelea será causa por la disciplina.

Eins
Zwei
Drei
Vier
Fünf
Sech
Sieben
Acht
Neun
Zehn
Elf
Zwölf
Dreizehn
Vierzehn
Fünfzehn
Sechzehn
Siebzehn
Achtzehn
Neunzehn
Zwanzig
Einundzwanzig
Zweiundzwanzig
Dreiundzwanzig
Vierundzwanzig
Fünfundzwanzig
Sechszwanzig
Ssiebenundzwanzig
Achtundzwanzig
Neunundzwanzig
Dreißig

Larry Craig
Michael Crapo
Mark Dayton
Jim DeMint
Mike DeWine
Christopher Dodd
Elizabeth Dole
Pete Domenici
Byron Dorgan
Richard Durbin
John Ensign
Michael Enzi
Russell Feingold
Dianne Feinstein
Bill Frist
Lindsey Graham
Chuck Grassley
Judd Gregg
Chuck Hegel
Tom Harkin
Orrin Hatch
Kay Hutchison
James Inhofe
Daniel Inouye
Johnny Isakson
James Jeffords
Tim Johnson
Edward Kennedy
John Kerry

“Over the last twenty years California built twenty-one new prisons. This was the largest prison construction effort in the world and it gave California the third largest prison system in the world—after the rest of the US as a whole and China.

During this same time, California built only one new college. Since 1990, California laid off 10,000 professors and other university employees and hired 10,000 prison guards.”

Location, location, location.

Clean bodies lead to clean minds.

Here is your toothbrush and toothpaste.

Keep them in a safe place. Only one per month will be issued to each prisoner.

Here is your toilet paper. Keep it in a safe dry place. One roll per week will be issued to each prisoner.

You will be issued a towel. It will be returned after each shower.

Eins
Zwei
Drei
Vier
Fünf
Sech
Sieben
Acht
Neun
Zehn
Elf
Zwölf
Dreizehn
Vierzehn
Fünfzehn
Sechzehn
Siebzehn
Achtzehn
Neunzehn
Zwanzig
Einundzwanzig
Zweiundzwanzig
Dreiundzwanzig
Vierundzwanzig
Fünfundzwanzig
Sechsendzwanzig
Ssiebenundzwanzig
Achtundzwanzig
Neunundzwanzig
Dreißig

Herb Kohl
Jon Kyl
Mary Landrieu
Frank Lautenberg
Patrick Leahy
Carl Levin
Joseph Lieberman
Blanche Lincoln
Trent Lott
Richard Lugar
Mel Martinez
John McCain
Mitch McConnell
Barbara Mikulski
Lisa Murkowski
Patty Murray
Bill Nelson
Ben Nelson
Barack Obama
Mark Pryor
Jack Reed
Harry Reid
Pat Roberts
John Rockefeller
Ken Salazar
Rick Santorum
Paul Sarbanes

There will be no competitive doping in this prison.

Suprapubic injections of urine will not be tolerated.

It feels like a kind of drama evolving, "Dick Tracyish."

Incarceration rates in Josef Stalin's U.S.S.R. in 1950: 1,423 per 100,000

Rate in George W. Bush's America in 2002: 2,298 per 100,000

Welcome to prison.

You will shower once every day. Failing to shower will result in punishment.

Every five days you will be inspected for body lice. If you are found to be infested you will be showered in medicated soap. Your head will be shaved. Your body may be shaved if the infestation recurs in five days. No exceptions.

You will not be allowed to keep soap in your cell. You will have fifteen minutes to shave and wash up every morning before breakfast.

Stay in line and be orderly. Any fighting will be cause for discipline.

Eins
Zwei
Drei
Vier
Fünf
Sech
Sieben
Acht
Neun
Zehn
Elf
Zwölf
Dreizehn
Vierzehn
Fünfzehn
Sechzehn
Siebzehn
Achtzehn
Neunzehn
Zwanzig
Einundzwanzig
Zweiundzwanzig
Dreiundzwanzig
Vierundzwanzig
Fünfundzwanzig
Sechszwanzig
Ssiebenundzwanzig
Achtundzwanzig
Neunundzwanzig
Dreißig

Charles Schumer
Jeff Sessions
Richard Shelby
Gordon Smith
Olympia Snowe
Arlen Specter
Debbie Stabenow
Ted Stevens
John Sununu
James Talent
Craig Thomas
John Thune
David Vitter
George Voinovich
John Warner
Ron Wyden

POEMS:

CHRISTOPHER MORRISS

Christopher Morriss, a 16 year-old sophomore at Walnut Hills, would like to practice medicine in the Third World; he has been inspired by readings from Amnesty International, the Heifer Project, and the lives of those who have done so. Christopher is in communication with a convicted prisoner of conscience in Egypt, now released but still under supervision; he is planning to visit that country this summer.

Contact: solussolace@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

ANTHONY BECKER

Anthony Becker; born in Chicago, IL, 7/29/58; graduated from Yale University, 1982 and starved in both New York and Chicago before settling in Cincinnati. Anthony has shown his work widely in the area, most recently at Miami University in Oxford, OH, The Experientcenter in Dayton, OH, The Spertus Museum in Chicago, IL, and the Cincinnati Zoo.

Contact: avbecker@zoomtown.com



Anthony Becke, 05

The Avenger

When I left home I knew I would not return.
My chest was heavy as I traveled through the wastes.
When I thought of those behind I almost stopped,
but when I thought of those ahead I quickened.
I knew well my duty, my debt to my land
and I must seek justice even by my own hand.
As I approach light and evil surrounds me,
I know that my time has arrived.
Invaders surround me thicker than flies,
and before they can stop me as I know they would try,
I vanish in fire, metal, and light.

POEMS:

CLARK MOTE

Clark S. Mote lives in Liberty Township where he writes poetry and reads too much. His poems tend to stay preoccupied with matters of philosophy, sexuality, and restless need for change. He works with seventh graders in a local ESL program, and also works at an adolescent residential drug treatment facility. Clark is passionate about tea, Wittgenstein, noisy guitars, and arias. He resides with his longsuffering wife and their four angelic children who tolerate him well.

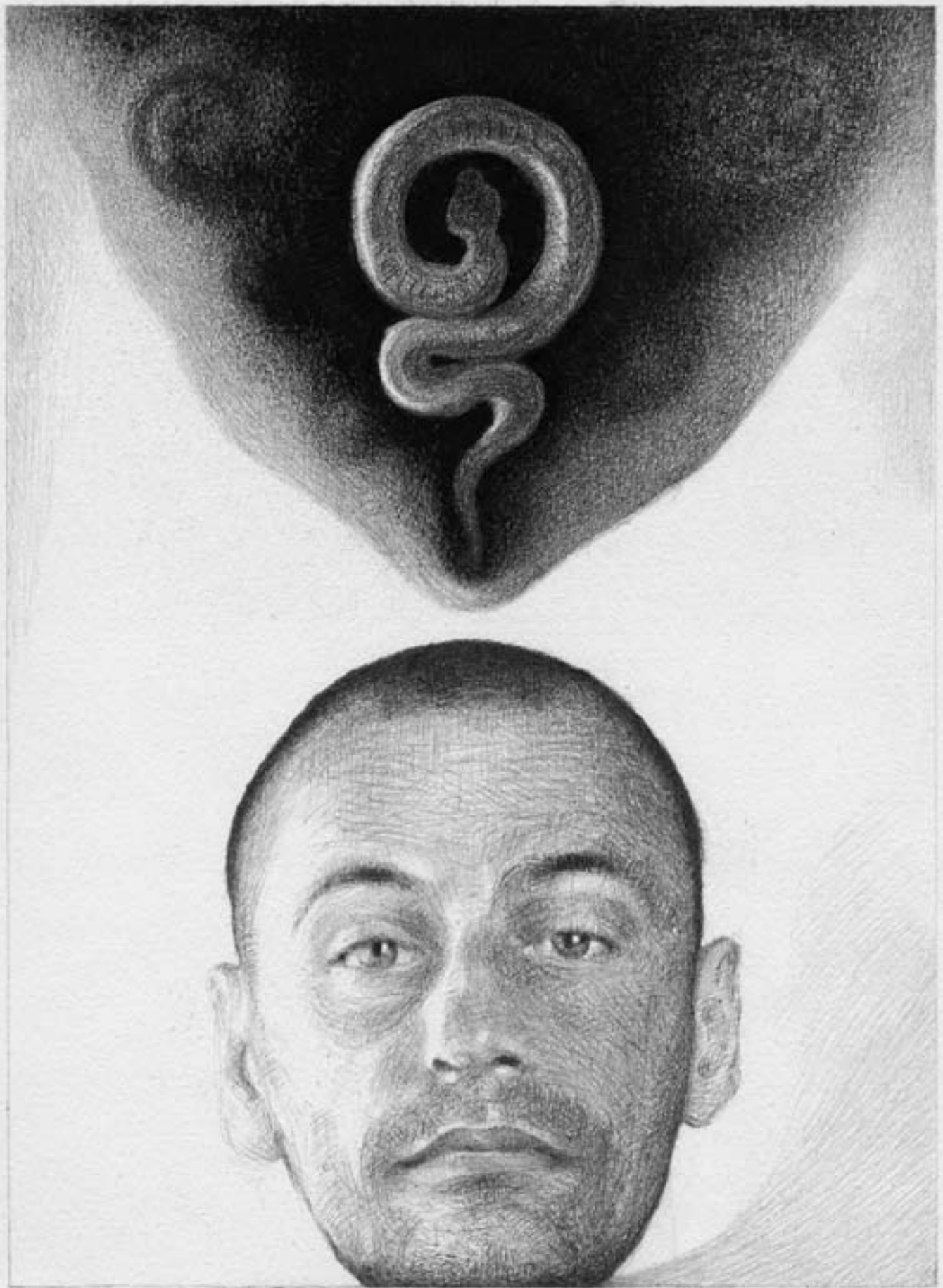
Contact: clarksmote@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

RICK FINN

A native of Toledo, OH, Rick Finn studied at the Toledo Museum of Art School of Design, and later at the Cleveland Institute of Art. He has been in numerous group exhibits, and currently has prints in national and international collections.

Contact: asnowballfight@yahoo.com



RICK FINN '05

Coughs on Continuum

(for Mary W.)

I remember

Miss Dorothy talkin' salt pepper and sugar

 Nothin' wrong wit shugah

 Mother let her in while

Subscribing to those Jimmy Swaggart

 Limp wrist indictments

 Mother let everyone in

 They stayed until the part

 Where she comes down

I haven't had a drink in years how dare you

I remember

 Robin coming to the door

 Sweaty so tough

 Mother whispered

 Get rid of her

 Before the click of

 The bedroom cave door

 Sorry, Robin, it's just old now

 I don't think she'll see you

 Again but you were nice awhile

 Sweaty so tough

 Lips quivered as it all flooded

I remember

 Howard

 Dressed me in shiny pants

 And silk shirts that smelled

Like pine needles, hints of brown salt beads

 Like laughter that makes one

 Stop, conscious of breath, hold it

 I made him ravioli

 From a can but arranged

Symmetrically poised on the bowl's rim

 I carried it to him myself

 Mother mentioned his

 Passing once

I remember

 When grandfather came to house

 To discuss the penis

 And why aren't you going to dances

 He never spoke

 Just scowled thereafter

I remember

 Mike

 Strongest man in the foundry

 Lengthy list of conquests he

 Said one night at the

 Lunch table as he looked

 Off that

All of them are different don't believe otherwise

 Quit abruptly, wife sick

 Months later his hollow hound

 Face came through the

 Door

 I asked him when he'd feel

 Better not hollow, breathless

 He giggled absurdly

 Graciously

 When they find a cure

I remember these

And pieces of things

That are safer coming

In pieces

I remember

 Ms. Osbourne

 Kindergarten teacher

 Ran into her and friend every time

 We went to Carriage Inn

 For raisin pie

 The principal stumped for

 Methodists

 And came to the plate

 For Ms. Osbourne

 Having never tossed his Bible

I remember things years

Haven't worn much

I remember

 Joey

 Across the street

 Fourth grade and I knew

 Who Joey was

When someone came up
Ages later
 You'll never guess who...
I guessed quick, accurate
With biological conviction
I remember things I don't
Remember they peer
Through in the night
I wake, shower, wonder
What all's down there

I remember
 Watching a
 City commissioner get
 Slaughtered by righteous
 Consensus
 A room full of hate the
 Sin not the why can't
 The sinner shut up
 And grow her hair out
 She told me
 God bless you
 He had

Sometimes ghosts ooze in and out of crevices
Collections become formulas that comprise
 The backdrop silently consumes
 The unsuspecting players
 Busts are made for museums
Sometimes I sweep leaves over handprints in sidewalk
Sometimes not a bit of anything means anything
Sometimes I can smell my grandfather's house wherever
I am

I remember
 Sitting in the O.B.
 Waiting room waiting to
 See the sound image
 And the is everything
 Where it is supposed
 To be? Chatter lobby
 This is it this is
 Really
 Two women sat
 Adjacent, one swelled,
 Other nervous as we
 Traded notes who's
 Doing the up in

The night? hope
Girl, boy? when
Due? Breast, bottle?
Harvard, Yale?
We went in saw
The human condition
Swimming in potential
Cried
Because, at that instant,
Everything else was noise
Like a cough in the audience
Disturbs rhythm
The troupe squints through light
Then returns to embrace
New resolve

Apparition

Standing on the Potomac,
Wafts of excrement at my back
And placard rants and squirrels
Who race across the bellies of bums
While Lincolns idle in the middle
Of streets,
I saw clearly a fuel-blinded
Woman, flailing in frigid
Undulations, a helicopter,
A man leaping from shore,
Her savior, a million polo-shirted boors
Behind me and why does the pack move
So quickly by Tissot? And why, just as
Sure as cherubim frolic on ceilings,
Did I die in the shadow of
America?

Upon Reading the Scoreboard

As for the war-
It should be crowned with a face
And herald
The something human going on
Going out
And where were you when
Bomb and target
Were thrown to the same dust?

POEMS:

LANCE ODITT

Lance Oditt is a Southwest Ohio native. A poet, essayist and visual artist, his works have been featured in various small press publications and artist run galleries.

Contact: editor@semantikon.com

DRAWING:

LESLIE SHIELS

Leslie Shiels is a painter who lives in Cincinnati, OH.
She graduated from DAAP, University of Cincinnati, in 1974.

Contact: lgshiels@fuse.net



Murmur

everlasting
the bloody hole,
hot, in the advancing burn
of your rice paper side.
buried in you, bullet.
iron dug with iron
carving maps too wide for scabs.
ancient, from the rib shards come companions-
rumors and angels carry you through the streets,
dirty nose and all,
a martyr.
Rafah, Palestine. Salem. Age 14. April 2003.

on water cooler lips,
in garden framed corporate parks,
the flower of your abscess
unfolds.
the sand above you heavy,
beneath you, bones.
as we, selfish in the rain
drink,
mouths full,
as grateful mutes.

rumors and time,
on your grave they place rocks---
that it can be said that they helped to bury you.
until the graveyard becomes street again.
and rock weapon,
in wars that can be won
by tiny hands folded in prayer,
but undone with "why?"
chosen and few-
the answers,
and the reply.

no ocean to the west,
where once you could play,
the sun neglects the thirst,
but not the waves-
that polish the shore a muddy pearl.
where your foot prints...
where your foot prints...
where we leave you.

embalmed-
milk and honey,
every minion with a blessed feather and enough cow hide,
folds your body into resurrections,
into brothel banisters,
into parlors of a rented heaven,
where the dead and the living are same.
profound the virgins betrothed,
when the dead are the dead.

before the friday whispers,
well before the time of gods,
we carry you away.
before prayers,
with solutions:
chewable vitamins and soy milk.
calcium: mineral and not rot.
video games rated, wrapped in plastic, airbags and air-
planes,
concealed weapons and open air malls,
on four sides and two oceans, safe.
"...*n e v e r h e r e*."

and here is the body,
when the pictures weren't enough,
but enough words failed.

here is the body,
carrying a map.
here, is the body.

Pro, Choice

Taping Pictures of Jesus to her knees
Or the memory of starving, trees.

POEMS:

BRIAN RICHARDS

Brian Richards lives on a ridge in Scioto County.
He has been writing for more than forty years, but, to his relief, nobody has noticed.

Contact: brichards@shawnee.edu

DRAWING:

JULIE LONNEMAN

Cincinnati artist Julie Lonneman lives in Winton Place and maintains a studio in Northside. Her illustrations on themes of spirituality and social justice have been published widely by the religious press, including the Crossroad Publishing Company, Augsburg Fortress Press, Paulist Press, Liturgy Training Publications, Celebration Publications and St. Anthony Messenger Press, as well as in 'America', 'Sojourners' and 'Weavings' magazines. Julie and husband Bill, a nurse practitioner, are the parents of two daughters.

Contact: jlonneman@cinci.rr.com



Julia Lonneman '05

Refractions: A Poem in Ten Parts

1. Squat

Not quite on our heels is where we sit
flatfooted but not necessarily displaced.
It comes from living without chairs but not
without hemorrhoids. The nates actually rest
just between the points where the tendons of Achilles
disappear into calf muscle. It is a posture of long waiting,
of endurance, for noting game upwind as it grazes nearer
or the sincerity with which oppressors deny that it is so.

2. The State Department

of Social Services has discovered enough
previously unorganized cash to pay off everybody
but the elderly, disabled, and indigent,
who will be waving goodbye from the far
side of the river we just crossed.
It is good to be going home.

3. Turn Yr Radio On

Find a vacant stare and hear
the news in pursuit
of which we may
only choose among the slaughter of
the Steppe children
the fly kohled eyes of the infants of Fur
or reports of the inundation
of Florida--in all of which
the God of the Fundamentally Reborn
conspires to protect His Own by effecting
the reelection of the Chosen Vehicle

4. From: RNC@satanscource.com

To: Valuesvoter@yahoo.com

Thanks.

Be talking to you in a couple.
Is the check in the mail?

5. Tony Blair has nothing to say

about the deaths of a hundred
thousand Iraqi non-combatants
but he "abhors" the execution of Margaret Hassan
which explains his reason for not
offering to trade places with her. Or them.

6. Like a Rolling Senator

So Tony Tony to a standing O
from the congressional floor
says the poor

"Americans have never been
more misunderstood" a phantom double
negative double u might mouth yet
"Do as we will or we will
destroy your country" seems simple
enough to comprehend even the Presidential
diction.

Blair on the other hand
represents the karaoke of the Angles
his cover of "Sympathy for the Devil" so
weak it cries false the rumor that he is
the get of the aged Mick.

Actually, the P

M graves the imago of R. Wood: late
hitchee to the wagon of the hegemonic band.

7. *Nothing in his life became him as the leaving of it*

Office wall blown away first
time at the controls unsimulated world
impossibly below
the horizon at
a thousand feet filled with building the room
dissolving in octane fry God watching his moment
to stride out above the witness he banks
who said he wore a red shirt glass rushing
into glass or dive that he might
soar a roar gone black over
the swooning world tiny
voice fading without choice

8. For ED: *It may be time*

to review one's total
opposition to the efficacy of capital
punishment since fear of death does
not seem to deter child rapists yet the finality of such
a threat might make leaders who incite
and prosecute unprovoked wars consider just
who at last may grace the list of those that gave the last
measure of devotion to the cause.

9. The yuppies were weaned on

the notion that being born in America gives
one the right to grab the brass
ring that swings just within
reach among strobic arrows labeled
“opportunity.”

But the children of those fortunate sons were born with
the ring in their mouths
and they will never willingly be
without its verdigris taste on
their palates. They expect to live in
the style to which they were made
accustomed
no matter the cost
to themselves and incidentally
anyone else in competition for the entitlements that bring
that flavor
not unlike blood back on the tongue.

10. But, of course

it might be thought that
when the Antiquities Advisory Board heads told the VeePee
Something
Needed To Be Done to save Babylon and Nineveh from
being
sacked again
they were informing the fox
that the chicken ladder had been
let down.

Not so.

Il Consigliere had
long before been briefed on the Op to
procure for his new offices inside the mountain under
Camp David prelapsarian golden oldies.
Only the Primary Client had Mossadim
to encourage the curators in separating
the ancient from the ersatz.

Just a little tidying up of the mess liberation
necessarily makes without
line-item expense to the Budget.

POEMS:

KATHLEEN RIEMENSCHNEIDER

Kathleen Riemenschneider works for the Cincinnati Arts Association, in its education and community relations department. She has an MA in Comparative Studies from Ohio State University and a BA in English from Indiana University. In addition to enjoying reading and the arts, Kathleen practices yoga and Zen meditation.

Contact: katriem@earthlink.net

DRAWING:

ZACHARY CAHILL

Zachary Cahill earned his BFA from Cornell University in 1995. He currently works out of a studio in the Northside area of Cincinnati.

Contact: mrzcahill@hotmail.com



ZACHARY CAHILL

My Zen Groove

You're messin' with my Zen groove
my any problem can be solved calmly swing
but you believe
it's not a problem unless relayed
with heavy metal reverber

You're messin' with my Zen groove
my all people live the off-beat
a tune only measuring their daily insight
but with symphonic snobbery you see
discord as a reason to demean

You're messin' with my Zen groove
my I can't change the past tempo
don't know the future melody
can only feel the present rhythm
but you regret past notes played
worry which ones to play next
ignore the present that sways you

Isle of Plagues

Perhaps, it's a bit dramatic
coming all the way to Africa
to die.
Crossing Lake Victoria—Queen
of Africa by conquest—
searching for the mythic Isle of Plagues.

Maggie's visions of monkeys
snatched by men—
spider monkey or chimps or baboons?
She doesn't know. She always believed
a monkey was a monkey was a monkey.
But could monkeys kill
without attacking?
Is our genetic doppelgänger—
the cause and the cure?

Perhaps,
Maggie should be searching
for Ebola.
Death is quicker—more painful
but quicker.

Bleed it all out.
Drain the body of blood
that carries the poisonous virus.
Let all gasp at her death—
not whisper
as she fades away in a hospital bed.

Maggie envisioned Africa, a place of death—
images of starvation, coups, wars, and post-colonial strife.
But it lives through hybridity—
kente cloth and polo shirts,
walkers and cars on the same dirt road.
She swears she saw Lucy—
not in the sky
and the diamonds sold for bread or war.

Maggie considered dying
in the Riff Valley—
the birth place of humans—
among a sea of flamingos.
But in her visions God ripped Eden from the Earth,
leaving a chasm and a footprint
in the ground.

Go forth and multiply,
God commanded,
spread across the Earth.
We have done so. What now God?

"What now God?"
Maggie repeated
to the rhythm of the oars.
She will die,
where the virus was born,
on that mysterious place
that science named
but can't find.

POEMS:

HOLMES+RIORDAN

Visual artist Diana Duncan Holmes and poet Timothy Riordan have collaborated for 25 years on various projects, including artists' books, broadsides, and installations. Their work has shown nationally and internationally and is in private, corporate, museum and library collections. Timothy's poetry is in published volumes of his work, as well as chapbooks and numerous journals. They live and work in Cincinnati, OH.

Contact: DDHTMR@aol.com

DRAWING:

CASEY RIORDAN MILLARD

Casey Riordan Millard is an artist and illustrator living in Chicago, IL. She has exhibited in Chicago at Aron Packer, Bodybuilder and Sportsman, and Womanmade galleries. Her work has been reproduced by The Chicago Tribune, New American Paintings, and Steppenwolf Theatre. Casey was born and raised in Cincinnati, OH, and received a BFA from Ohio University in 1994.

Contact: caseyrm@earthlink.net; www.caseyriordanmillard.com



CK Millard '05

The Truth Is Cliched

The truth is a pack of lies.
The truth is a pile of shit.
The truth is a bitch.
The truth is a monkey on the back.
The truth is a noose.
The truth is an excuse.
The truth is out to get you.
The truth is a lump in the throat.
The truth is a pit in the stomach.
The truth is a bellyache.
The truth is a wet dream.
The truth is embarrassing.
The truth is an accident.
The truth is a nightmare.
The truth is out there.
The truth is the line of least resistance.
The truth is a nuisance.
The truth is simple.
The truth is complex.
The truth is lurking in the shadows.
The truth is glaring.
The truth is a dog that bites.

The Rush To Death

24/7/365
life's a blur
driven to succeed
for people who can't wait
grab-n-go
the world on time
life in the fast lane
quik-in quik-out
zoom zoom zoom
life's short, play hard
they grow up fast
multi-task Slim Fast
pace yourself
pressed for time?
Order ahead
Road Runner
City Dash
Life comes at you fast
Cold'n quik
Kwik fill
Where were you next Thursday?

And God Forgive America

our Arrogance
our Boredom
our Carelessness
our Deception
our Excess
our Fundamentalism
our Goodness
our Hubris
our Imperialism
our Juvenility
our Knavery
our Litigiousness
our Moralisms
our Naivete
our Obfuscations
our Priorities
our Quid pro quos
our Racism
our Shallowness
our Temerity
our Ultimatums
our Violations
our Wars
our Xenophobia
our Yahoos
our Zealotry

POEMS:

JANE RUHKORFF

Jane Gahan Ruhmkorff, a native of southeast Missouri, has a BA in English and an MA in Religion. Although she has written off and on in her life she has begun to write earnestly since her retirement from teaching. Jane enjoys her classes at Women Writing for (a) Change and feels she has grown a great deal in the three years she has been a student there.

Contact: jruhmkorff@fuse.net

DRAWING:

CARRIE PATE

Carrie Pate received an MFA from the University of Cincinnati in 1990. She works in mixed media: paint, clay, pencil, earth and landscape materials. In 1998 Carrie started 'The Spirited Garden Landscapes' which design, install and maintain intimate landscape gardens in Butler County, OH.

As an artist, Carrie works each day to become mindful of her life.

Contact: (513) 896-7162



Carrie Pate

Ruins of Ruins

*(a found title inspired by an article by Holland Cotter:
"Oldest Human History Is at Risk," in The New York Times,
February 25, 2003)*

*What we learned left us.
None of it held.
Naomi Shihab Nye*

Will there be ruins of ruins?

Sacred spaces
Sacred places
Sacred buildings
Sacred art
Sacred people

Let us recite what we learned
while we can still remember.

We learned about Sumer, where 5500 years ago
the written word originated
and urban life began in the Fertile Crescent
of the Tigris and Euphrates.

We learned about Ur, which thrived 2650 years ago,
the ancestral home of Abraham.

We learned about Babylon, flourishing 3700 years ago,
and its place in Judeo-Christian history as home
to the captive Israelites.
Kings Hammurabi, Nebuchadnezzar,
Alexander the Great
all called Babylon home.

We learned about Nineveh, prospering 2704 years ago,
and what the Assyrians did to the ten tribes of the
Northern Kingdom
and how Jonah refused to preach there,

but relented, succeeded, and pouted about it.

Let's bring them all out now:
the ziggurats,
the cuneiform tablets,
the mosques,
the minarets,
the Sumerian art,
the palaces and sculptures,
the griffins, the bas reliefs.

Let us not forget the Tower of Babel,
the Hanging Gardens.
Let us not forget Baghdad
and all the tales told in
One Thousand and One Nights.

Let us not forget that this is Mesopotamia.
This is Iraq.
Full of sacred spaces
sacred places
sacred buildings
sacred art
sacred people

Full of people
no longer Sumerians
or Babylonians
or Assyrians
or Ninevites.

No, these are Iraqi people.
This is Iraq.

And It Was Still Hot

(a found poem from a news report by Eric Westervelt with the First Battalion of the Army's 64th Armored Regiment, northern Kuwait. NPR, "Morning Edition," Dec. 17, 2002)

Our attack
on Iraq
is a certainty
he deems; he seems
very confident.

After all,
the major says,
now their strength is
half gone
not to mention
their intelligence.

Their intelligence,
the major says,
was poor
in '91 as well.

Major Donovan
goes on to illustrate.
My brigade
was commanded
to destroy
the Medina Brigade,
guarding the Republican Guard.

We devastated them.
A surprise attack they
never knew
what was coming.

There was even,
the major continues,
a burning tank.
On the back
was a big pot of food
boiling, still cooking!

They didn't even have time
to turn off the stove.

The Vendor

*For whatever it was
we will crush the vendor
who stacked sesame rings on a tray
inside the steady gaze of stones.
He will lose his balance
after years of perfect balance.
Catch him! Inside every sleep
he keeps falling.*

"Those Whom We Do Not Know"
Naomi Shihab Nye

I see the vendor.
Let me call him Haifa, or Mohammed, or Abeer,
walking through a marketplace in Baghdad.
It could easily be Karbala or Basra,
Nasiriya or Kirkuk
Or let's say Babylon.

The vendor, Mohammed, is as old as Babylon.
He is old and practiced and steady.
The wooden cylinder on which his sesame rings are
stacked
is holding up the sky.
The sesame rings he sells keep the Iraqi people alive.
And Mohammed too.

But look.
My friend Mohammed is losing his balance.
He is falling, and so is the sky.
So are the people, falling from hunger,
for the sesame rings have tumbled from Mohammed's tray
and into my sleep.

POEMS:

ABBY SCHULTZ

Abby Schultz is a mother, artist, nature lover, student of natural medicine, activist, and much more. She believes in working for peace through civil disobedience, and by living it everyday. She also believes that art has the power to create peace.

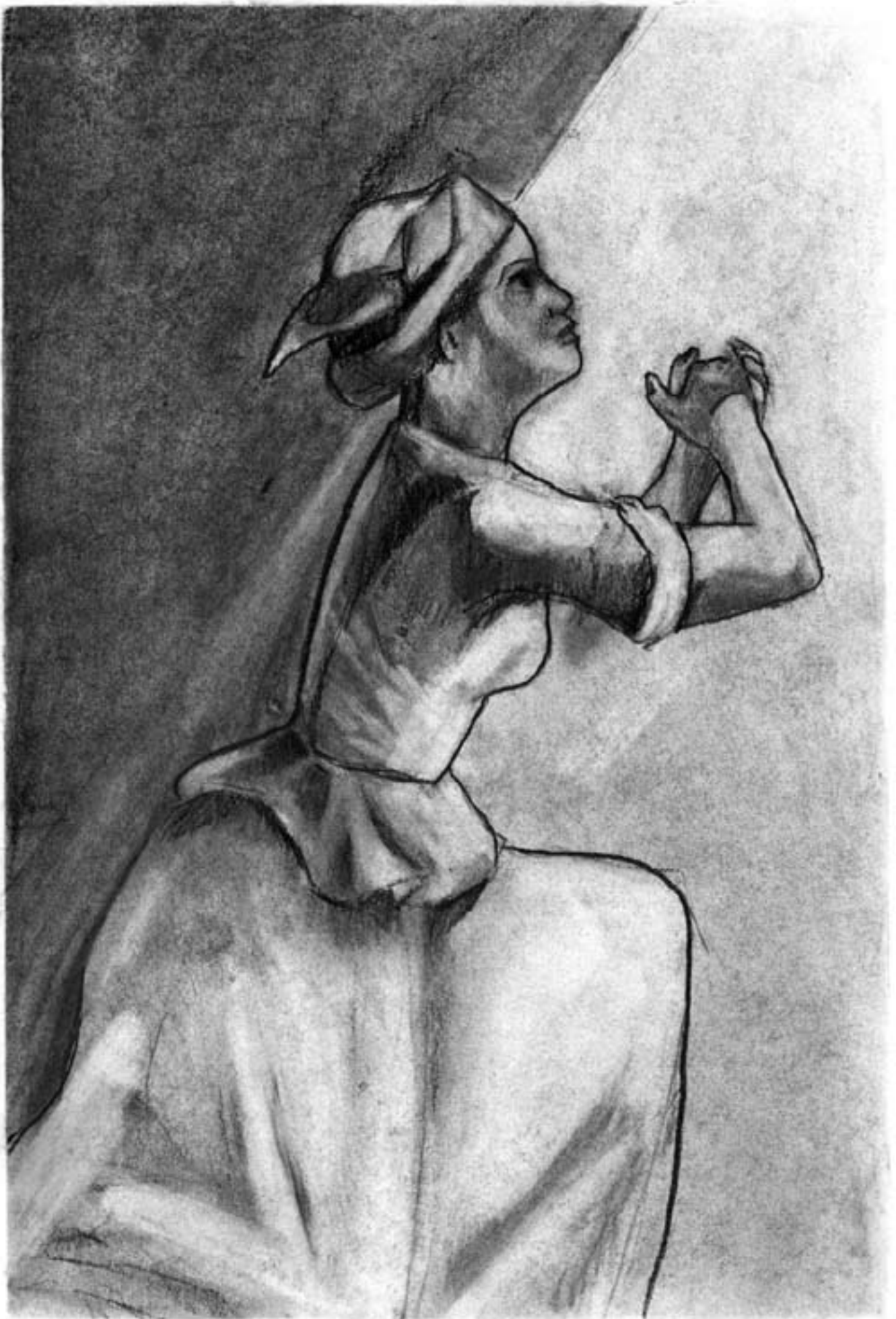
Contact: autumnmama2002@yahoo.com

DRAWING:

ANDREA HILL

Andrea Hill was born in Louisville, KY, and has lived in Cincinnati for the past few years. She received a BFA in painting from the Art Academy of Cincinnati and is currently finishing up her MA in Art Education at the University of Cincinnati.

Contact: ahill000@yahoo.com



A. Hill 2005

Freedom Isn't Free

If Freedom isn't Free,
What is my Freedom costing me?
My Faith in democracy,
In the land of hypocrisy,
Where every Man is created equal?

Oh say can you see,
What is my Freedom costing me?
My Voice?
My Freedom of Choice?

What is my Freedom costing me?
Hope . . .
That my daughter knows Peace
In a world where fighting has ceased,
Where war is our memory,
Only to be found in her book of History.

What else is my Freedom costing me?
Nightmares of Boys younger than me
Fighting in a faraway land
For things they don't understand,
Killing Mothers like me
And their Babies.

If my Freedom isn't Free,
If my Freedom is costing me,
Shouldn't I get to decide the fee?
I Choose not to pay with struggle and strife,
With the loss of human life.
Those things are not mine to take,
Not even for Freedom's sake.

POEMS:

CAROL STONER

Carol is an attorney, an arbitrator and a writer.

Contact: intellpropstoner@cs.com

DRAWING:

JOE STONER

Joe Stoner has been experimenting with photography and digital graphics for over 20 years.
One of his pieces was displayed in the juried international Digital Salon in New York.
His works are in corporate and private collections.

Contact: joestoner@fuse.net



J. A. Stone

Where the Flower

You suck the sweetness out,
And wonder whence the sour.

You pluck the petals out,
And wonder where the flower.

A Whole Day's Pay

Though it was only 11 am,
The ironworker was riding the Amtrak
From Manhattan, back home to Albany.

My Grandfather worked on the Empire State Building...
Went up from '29 to '31.
Now they throw them up as fast as they can.
No one wants a skyscraper in their backyard, anymore.

Lewis was welding on the third floor
When it gave way.
It took the EMT's three hours
To cut him out of the cold steel.
After they found him, that is.

Now they give you
A whole day's pay
When someone dies on the job.
It's in the contract,
Somewhere under payment for lost time.

I'm a climber, a connector.
So was my father, my grandfather,
And my two uncles.
I've only lost one finger, so far.

At every topping-off party I've ever been to,
Somebody is smacking someone by nine o'clock.
I've never won a fight.

Watch Women Work

Watch women work.
Watch women hurry.
Watch women walk.

Land of the Office.
King of the Chair.
Little Man
Behind Glass Booth.

Listen women talk.
Sometimes interrupt.
Ring Bell, Pick-up!

Lean back.
Calculate commission.
Watch women work.

POEMS:

ARALEE STRANGE

Aralee Strange is a published poet and playwright whose works have been produced at the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park and the Ensemble Theatre of Cincinnati. She recently wrote and directed a feature film, "This Train". Her play, "dr. pain on main," will be reprised during the 2005 Cincinnati Fringe Festival. Aralee is currently working on a new play.

Contact: getstrange@earthlink.net

DRAWING:

JAY BOLOTIN

Jay Bolotin was born and grew up on a farm near Lexington, KY. He is currently completing a movie made of woodcuts for which he has also written the score. It will open in May, 2005, at the Contemporary Art Center (Cincinnati), then travel to the Museum of Contemporary Art (San Diego), the Warhol Museum (Pittsburgh), the Georgia Museum of Art, and the John Hansard Museum (Southampton, England).

Contact: jaybeeink@hotmail.com



for Aralee

B 2005

Genesis

...and Name became the son of Name
whose Name begat Name begat Name
begat begat begat and begot and got
nameless Names upon nameless women
who bore in great pain Name's first second
third and so on born sons of Name, Name
of Names, who began to be mighty upon
the land.

And these were the kings that reigned, and
their Names, who nameless concubines named
their bastard sons Name and thus it came to be
when each name who reigned died, his Name reigned
on and on and so forth and so on until the least one
son of a Name born maimed and crazy was named
more fit to reign than any woman.

And when the last Name was laid dead, a new Name
reigned, and the name of the land was his Name,
and the names of the wives were his Name, and
of course his children his Name, forever and anon
the Name of Names.

Ah, men.

America the Beautiful

Here in the middle of America I mean the mean the
nowhere could be anywhere middle of America where
the middle class means business as usual (nothing new,
unless it's a house a car a four oh one K portfolio),
toiling along the middle most rut of little mean dreams
nine to five every day of their little mean lives
the very backbone of the country
America the beautiful
where are you?

Big Her

And know she will call Her best first
Her fine spirited great hearted few who
loving the life she gives us
leave it in a state of grace
Her innocent Her pure of heart
Her wild Her sweet Her children gone
singing their songs to Her strange land
gone to be angels.

And who remain who rave wring hands and weary
dream numb nothing like zombies sleepwalking
understanding nothing
square one
and learn us again
Her cruel lesson.

Let us praise immortal Her
blessings upon Her
fruit of Her womb
Her children shall lead us

For she is eternal sublime indifferent
and we are vain foolish mortal
her lunatic begotten run amok over Her
Her air fouled
Her waters fouled
Her creatures great and little murdered
all Her trees felled for magazines that tell us
what we are and who we are kidding.

There is no time but Her time
There is no way but Her way
What has been what is what will be are one
by spirit kissed the quick and the dead divided
for so it is written
and then will she call down
calamity on us.

POEMS:

AMY CARDEN SUARDI

Amy Carden Suardi has just moved back to Cincinnati, the town of her youth, with her husband and two children. They lived in Italy for four years, where she organized a writing critique group for expats and taught English at the University of Milan.

Amy has been writing poetry, prose-poetry and short stories for 10 years; she has never published anything -- until now.

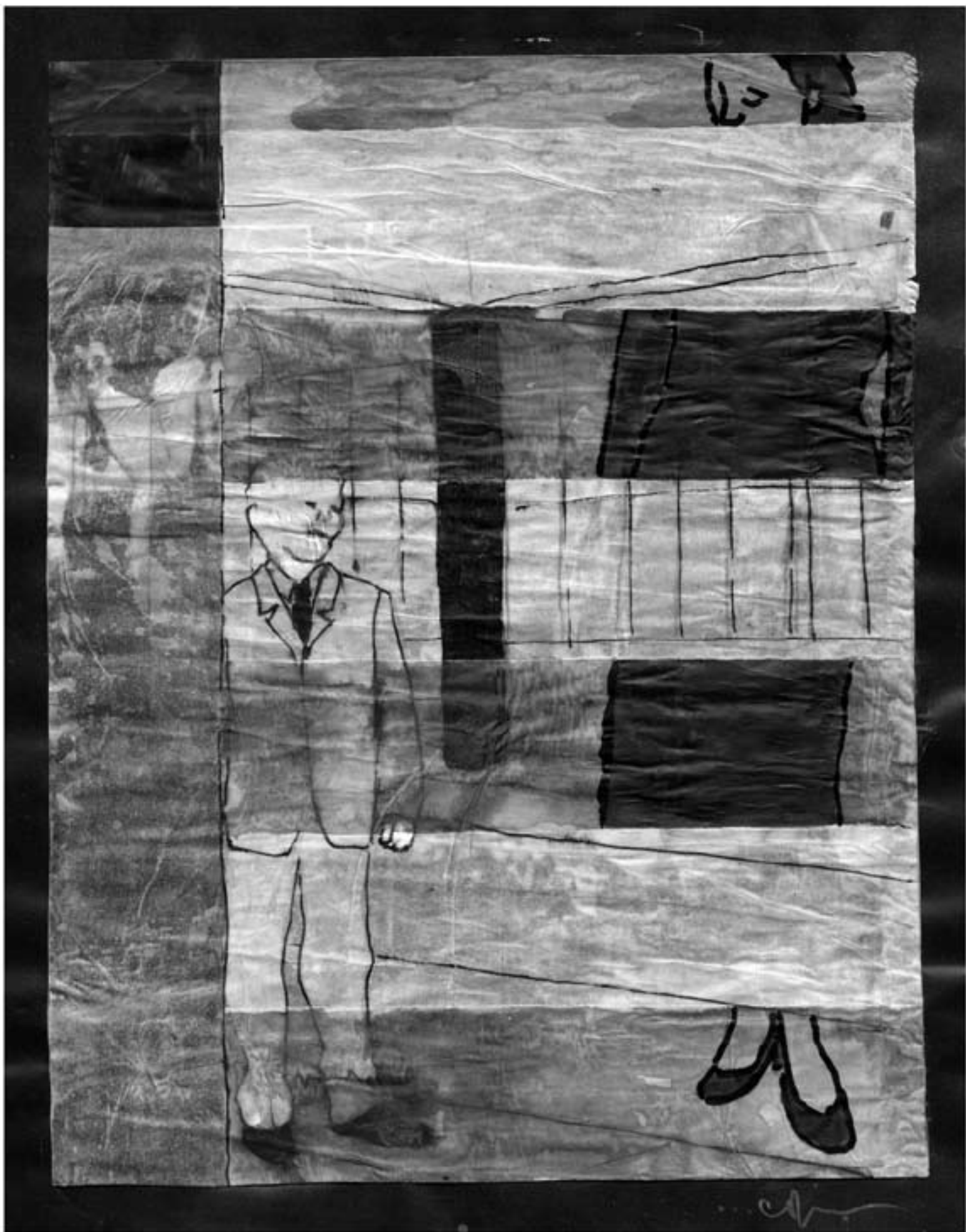
Contact: amy@mac.com

DRAWING:

AARON COWAN

Aaron Cowan, 34 year old, single, father of two and working artist. Has returned to the Art Academy of Cincinnati to complete a degree begun in 1990.

Contact: aaronjamescowan@hotmail.com



Danger

*People have gotten shot
in that parking lot
circled through my mind
on the way to the grocery
in the black part of town*

It was dusk
the place was close by
and its humble size
felt more in touch with food
hunger and home
than the mega-store in the mall
where shelves towering with
bacon-cheese flavored
almond slices and fat-free
apple-cinnamon cream cheese
made me feel laminated,
robotic

We parked in a spot
with a view of the
big windows
pouring out yellow light and I
hesitated
watching families
unloading, laughing
shopping, shouting
shuffling, carrying
A small voice from
the back seat said
I don't want this place

Streetlights buzzed
against the navy sky
Did she have some
child-special sense
like animals with danger?
Was she uneasy about her
otherness, was she
threatened somehow?

*Why, what's wrong
with this place?
I probed
my fingers still on the keys*

*I'm scared of those
red snakes
in the window*

*Honey, I sighed
grabbing my purse and
swinging the car door
into the night
That's the American flag*

Survived

On Friday, September 14
bladed satin sirens
weave through whooshing
nightwet leaves
to where I lay
by the window left ajar in
my beloved broken Manhattan

I must leave the next morning
as planned, when all flights are
resumed. LaGuardia reopens

Flight attendants and pilots
in alarming navy suits, the uniform of the
murdered, board flight number 805 to L.A.

I get off in Cincinnati
before the plane can smash
into a skyscraper

I am shuttled in a firm white car
through the foamy green
so smooth
so ignorant

I am placed in a safe white house
suspended in air
so protected
so dangerless

How I need instead
the military police blockades
the streaking, screaming fire trucks
shut down stores
the rolls of butcher paper
filled with words as
quickly as they are taped
to bricks on Union Square
the white news vans stationed
outside St. Vincent's Hospital
where doctors and nurses
stand in blue scrubs waiting
for no one

and multiplying missing signs
on telephone poles, sidewalks, mailboxes:
"Last seen on the 103rd floor"

I do not want to heal here
in this creamy hush
where dread does not
seep down the grimy spires
that I loved for so long

and me fiery
jagged and pokery
shrapnel
lying in bed
this first night of escape
e

A mourning guttural sound
floods the soft countryside
I hear a dying beast
warted and weary
letting out a thundering exhale
worse than anything
I had let myself feel

Pressing to the thick glass walls
of my white asylum: there is only a

Delta Queen paddleboat
floating down the Ohio
painted shiny white and red
her calliope plunking out
Jimmy Crack Corn and I Don't Care
each note a distant droplet
so sweet, so wet

the ghost of her
slips behind the trees
still tinkling
Hello Dolly
into the unknowing night

POEMS:

STEVE SUNDERLAND

Steve Sunderland partners with artists, poets, and other friends throughout the world on a journey for peace. He is the founder of "The Peace Village," which can be found in Cincinnati, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Germany, Argentina, and Israel.

Contact: sundersc@email.uc.edu

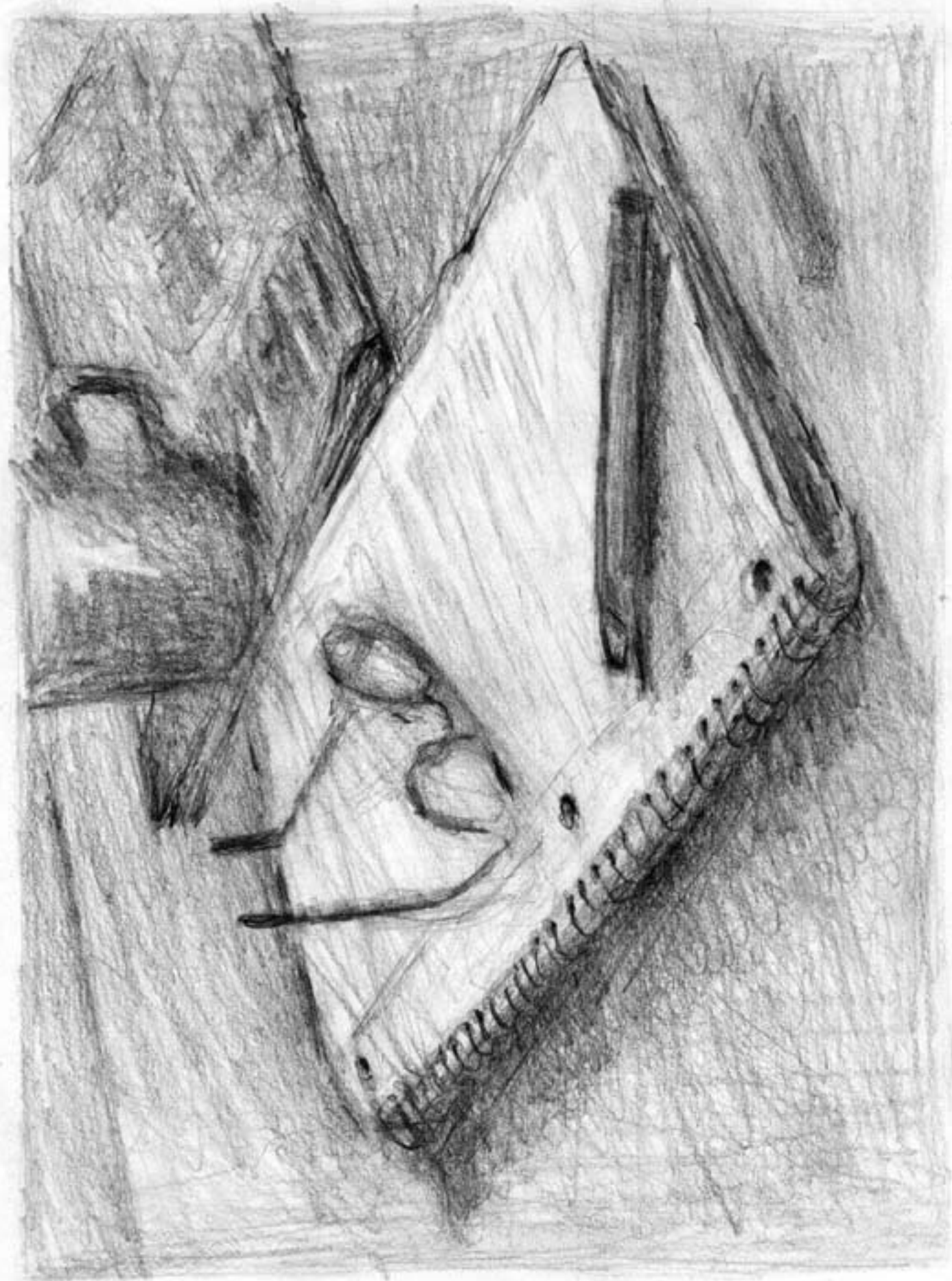
DRAWING:

ELLEN PRICE

Ellen Price was raised in a progressive household in Queens, New York. She earned a BA in Fine Art from Brooklyn College and an MFA in Printmaking from Indiana University in Bloomington, IN.

Ellen has been on the faculty of Miami University since 1987, and is currently a Professor in the Art Department.

Contact: priceej@muohio.edu



Ellen Price

I Wanted to Write

I wanted to write but
The pencil I was given had a broken point.

I wanted to write of my fear
That the hatred of Palestinian children
Will increase and more 13 year old girls
In school uniforms will be
Killed.

I wanted to write of my hope
To see this vote as an affirmation
Of the path of peace for our broken country.

I wanted to write that my faith
In people continues despite the swagger
Of tyrants in my own heart.

I wanted to write with a pen
Of love for
My enemies.

I wanted to write of the shabby
Trees that will need to be sold
For Christmas.

I wanted to write of the blind
That are leading one path to
Healing.

I wanted to write of my admiration
For the parents of soldiers caught
In the web of service to a spoiled ideal.

I wanted to write of the hungry
Who could not come for the free
Meal of humiliation.

I wanted to write of those lost
In the world of their own chaos
Including my sense of humor.

I wanted to write to Jos, Nigeria
And remind my brothers and sisters
That the world watches and waits for peace.

I wanted to write to those children
Outside the walls waiting to get in
And share the joy of Binny, Amos and Katy In India.

I wanted to write to the families of Buenos Aires
Who have eaten regularly only from nightly
Trips to garbage cans and ask: "Where is Humberto?"

I wanted to write the Indonesian peace movement
And remind them of my continuing love for their struggle
To bring non-violence to the new democracy.

I wanted to write Mary Ann of her beauty and
Inner passion for love that bubbles forth from a body
Without only legs.

I wanted to write Duraid and Mama of my admiration
For keeping the flag of peace waving
Inside their beautiful hearts, our hearts as exiles.

I wanted to write Hans of my love
For our German brothers and sisters
Who continue to light the lamp of justice.

***I need a sharpener for my
Mixed up heart in a world without
Clear lines, tear-proof paper, or
Enough love to go around.***

POEMS:

VICTOR VÉLEZ

Victor M. Vélez, born in Santurce, Puerto Rico, was raised in Brooklyn, New York. He is a writer, a photographer, and a musician. Victor's work has appeared on "Writers Online," in "StreetVibes," and "BRAVO." He is currently working on "Conga Blues," a poetic collection about cultural, personal and social identity.

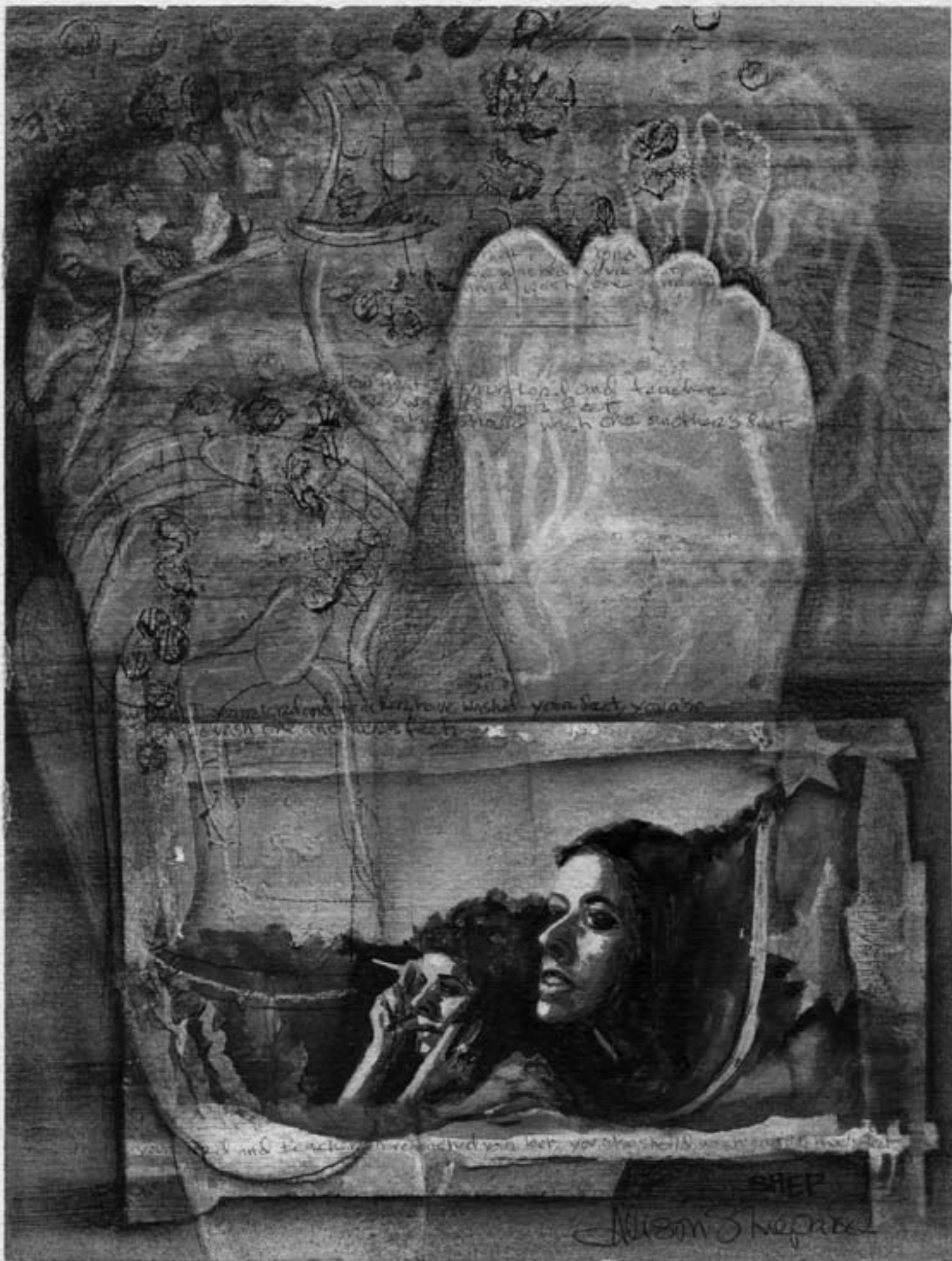
Contact: alasin77@hotmail.com

DRAWING:

ALISON SHEPARD

Alison Shepard; artist; musician (Entheos); art instructor for College of Mount St Joseph, Art on Symmes, and Living Studios. "My aunt Stephanie taught me that art is not limited to just the product created. Indeed, she showed me that art is the cultivation of beauty within every arena of our existence"

Contact: shepbrant@yahoo.com



اپنی ہاتھوں اور پیروں کو دھو کر
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اپنی ہاتھوں اور پیروں کو دھو کر

STEP
Alison Sheppard

A Quest for Answers

I venture the streets for answers,
to satisfy, to justify,
to rest, with understanding
about oblivious questions
walking the streets.

Questions
that ride the trains, without answers,
live in makeshift city-dumped homes,
once glamorous hotels,
sleep through steam of subway grates
like a Sunday barbecue.

Questions
that roamed the piers,
anchor their bodies to rest,
gather belongings in abandoned buildings
amid recyclable material,
in huts, with no picture of the Last Supper.

Questions
that hitchhike toward hope,
fill gymnasiums wall-to-wall,
mattresses replaced gym mats.
They carry portable pantries,
groceries in brown paper bags
shelved in shopping carts.

Questions
that find comfort,
under boardwalks and parking lots,
under highways and subway tunnels.

Questions,
that walk through the winter nights,
and die of frostbite.

My Next Step

My shoes wait
for my next step.

Faithfully they wait.
They yearn to rest

in a closet,
under a bed,
see a shoemaker,
walk toward a direction.

They hold the weight of life.
Like identical twins,
they carry me,
gripping my feet,
they cover my wounds
from the rugged streets.

We walk forward,
step by step,
street by street,

leaving behind
loose laces,
laces that have
given up the fight.

The Lady from Harlem

(a chat with Mrs. Rose)

She's the lady from Harlem, Mrs. Rose,
sixty-two years old,
sweetest lady you'd wan'na know.

She sits in Penn Station all day
drinking coffee, eating fruits,
helping passengers find their way.

A man dressed in blue
while she ate her lunch, came and said
"You've got what you wanted, now move."

Across the street she cruised
to the church giving out clothes.
She picked and packed and got pair of shoes.

She went back to her seat,
looked in her bag,
and put her new shoes on her bare feet.

POEMS:

FRAN WATSON

Fran Watson spent 20 years writing about Art on the Cincinnati scene. She has written for the Art Academy, Cincinnati Suburban Papers, and Dialogue Magazine.

Fran is primarily an artist who happens to write. While words are a source of much of her creativity, painting is her 'raison d'être'.

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DRAWING:

CHERYL PANNABECKER

Cheryl Pannabecker received in 1990 an MFA in ceramics from the University of Cincinnati. She continues to work in clay and to teach ceramics at area schools. Cheryl is employed by the Alzheimer's Association and also works with Creative Aging to lead art groups in Nursing Homes, Senior Centers and Adult Day Care Centers.

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Chy! Sumbala

Distant Peace

1. Chartres (2004)

In Chartres cathedral
at summer solstice,
they sat quietly
around the maze
removing their shoes,
preparing for ritual,
courting peace
in gray stone and icy marble.

Each one danced their own dance,
some nodding rhythmically
posing like cranes
on first one foot,
then the other
to no known music.
Some moving their lips
in unheard prayer
so ancient that it was never written.

I thought about their cold feet
on the marble spiral.
They passed each other
winding into the vortex and out again
without acknowledgement,
even though they passed
just inches apart.

At the door, a lady sat
handing out pamphlets
decrying the spiral trail
as one not meant for
self aggrandizement.
Was that the peace for which they prayed,
Money, wealth, love or fame?
Watching them, happy in the chill gloom

2. Notre Dame (1977)

One Easter Eve at Notre Dame,
I watched peace spread
through the dim, chill oldness
of France's whole history,
visible that night in the battered veterans
of their most recent conflict.
As they wandered in,
they were given the seats
of Parisians who had held them
since early evening.
Their feet turned to ice in the wait.

As each ragged one entered,
rows of smiles turned to welcome,
scrunching up against each other
to create a space,
as Parisians never would
for anyone else.

Elegant ladies in frayed coats,
made luxurious by uniquely tied
scarves at their throats,
men in whatever best they had,
made room for these brave warriors,
openly happy to do so.

Then the light began.
Altar boys passed out candles
and each row was slowly lit
as one tiny flame became a thousand.
Each face, receiving its glow in turn,
was the same face;
the countenance of peace
and gratitude that could only come
from knowing war.
I warmed myself
in the radiating detritus
of their peace,
whatever its variety.

I Know Peace

It comes after a storm,
like mirrored puddles
filled with placid images ‘
of past fury. .

Great gusts of emotion,
or wind or snow,
whip and howl until
when it ends,
the relief becomes part
of the unwelcome violence,
hardly recognized as
a separate thing
and all too brief.

It comes at night,
stealing in like my guardian angel
of childhood, warming,
calming, sheltering,
allowing me to sleep,
until tomorrow’s storm.

I only know my portion,
my tiny hours and moments
so rare, observed
in memory boxes
lest I forget it happened
and, amazed, to realize
that peace is the reward
that cannot be without strife.

POEMS:

LINDE GRACE WHITE

Linde Grace White, retired from 21 years of teaching severely emotionally disturbed children, works as a church secretary for the Greenhills Community Presbyterian Church.

Linde's main purpose in retirement was to write. At this time, she is proposing a book that addresses issues of sexual abuse.

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DRAWING:

KAREN GERGELY

Karen Gergely, a native of Morgantown, WV, received her BFA at Shepherd College, Shepherdstown, WV. Karen recently moved to Cincinnati to pursue a n MFA at the University of Cincinnati.

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Mama Wendland who danced



Karen Gergely

Mama Told Me

Mama told me to be polite to the help,
To mind Virginia if Mama was out.
And I was and I did.

Mama told me it was a wonder that
“those coloreds” were so nice to her
when she was in the hospital.

Mama told me to drink at the “white” fountain.
Mama told me not to stare at people on the bus.

Mama told me Virginia’s William
Could not come over to play.
Mama said, “Be nice,”
When we met “colored” people.

Mama wondered who danced
With the one African-American man
In my college gym class.
I said we all did, and she was a bit taken back.

I said, “It doesn’t rub off.”
I said, “I don’t want to belong to a club
That won’t have members of color.”
I said, “The people I work with are the
Salt of the Earth, and I love them.”

I pretty much forgot what Mama told me.

Little Birdies

Eggs crack.
Squirmy little pink, hot critters
Crowd the nest.
In a week or so, fledglings vie
For space, food, attention.
“The bird who squeaks the loudest gets the worm.”
Do they, in their little nests, agree?
Decidedly not.
Parent birds boot them out,
Teach them to fly,
Leave them on their own.

Does peace and justice prevail in the bird community?
No, indeed! Watch them at my feeder for a while.
Bird fight! Bird fight!
All the species are equal-equally intolerant-
And not a one of them realizes there’s enough for all.
We should be less like the birds.

Molten Lava

Every one of us is a prisoner on a chain gang, shackled
one to another,
By strong-forged bonds, sister to brother.
You wear the orange; I have the black and white stripes.
All our faces are black with grime, riddled with sweat-
laced tear stripes.
We’re breaking rocks of prejudice and greed,
Our granite hearts faintly warming in our need
To pave a road of peace,
A means of release
From our anger, our evil delight when others fail,
Our ugly knowledge that we’re looking for holes in the
chain mail.
I break the rocks, monotonous, tedious, heavy, heavy work
And it seems to be a waste. There’s no way through the
murk,
Until my heart becomes the molten lava of love,
And I want for you every gift and grace of that same love

POEMS:

ANNETTE JANUZZI WICK

Annette Januzzi Wick is a local freelance writer, a member of *Women Writing for (a) Change*, and the marketing chair for its sister organization *WWf(a)C Foundation*.

Her personal narrative *'I'll Be in the Car - one woman's story of love, loss and reclaiming life'* will be published later this year.

Annette has a son, Davis, who plays ball and loves life.

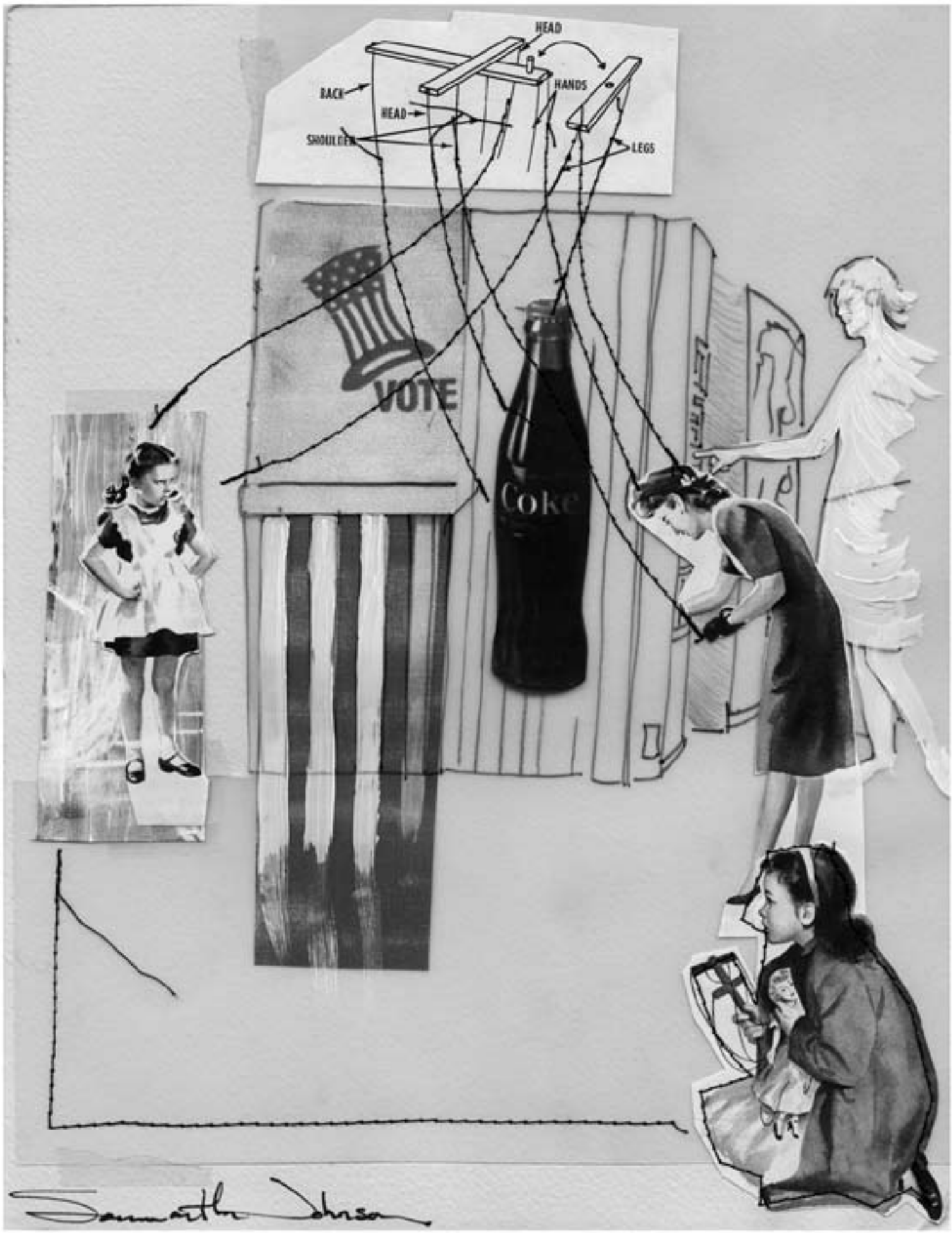
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DRAWING:

SAMANTHA JOHNSON

Samantha Johnson is a fifth year undergraduate Fine Arts student at the University of Cincinnati; she will be graduating in June with a BFA and a k-12 art education licensure. Samantha is a painting/drawing/printmaking major although she has exhibited in a variety of media.

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Voting at the Waterford

Standing in line near the Coke machine
I'm getting ready to vote.
Freedom is at hand in the small liberties
of choosing diet, cherry, vanilla, or no Coke at all.
Drink Coca-Cola. Enjoy Coca-Cola. Vote Coca-Cola.
But I'm not thirsty.
I am here to vote.

Call 1-800-2-2-6-Coke
in case this machine breaks down.
Speak to a techno-sexy voice
who won't remember my name.
Explain that my quarters are stuck in the slot.
But I'm not complaining.
I am here to vote.

On TV, I heard a Saudi woman say,
I don't know enough to vote,
so given the choice I wouldn't.
And I don't want my picture on a photo ID.
But really, what woman ever does?
I won't show my license 'til asked.
I am here to vote.

A bar code printed on the Coke machine
looks like modern-day hieroglyphics.
Black columns rain down on numbers that say,
We know about manufacturing.
We know what you drink, where you live.
I don't care to be a target market.
I am here to vote.

Standing in line by the Coke machine
I'm ready to make my choice.
Anxious to get in, move up,
step away from the dwindling crowds.
Fox, Crews – Neighbor's names are summoned forth.
But I'm not here to make friends.
I am here to vote.

I knew Afghan women had suffered hunger, war,
to call a tent their home.
They walked with forebears and offspring,
stood in line to vote.
Endured a thirst that Coke could not quench.
I'm not here for a Coke.
I am here to vote.

POEMS:

TYRONE WILLIAMS

Tyrone Williams teaches literature and literary theory at Xavier University. In 2004, he published two chapbooks of poetry: 'Futures, Elections' (Dos Madres Press) and 'AAB' (Slack Buddha Press). His recent poems appeared in Chicago Review, Kiosk and xcp: cross cultural poetics.

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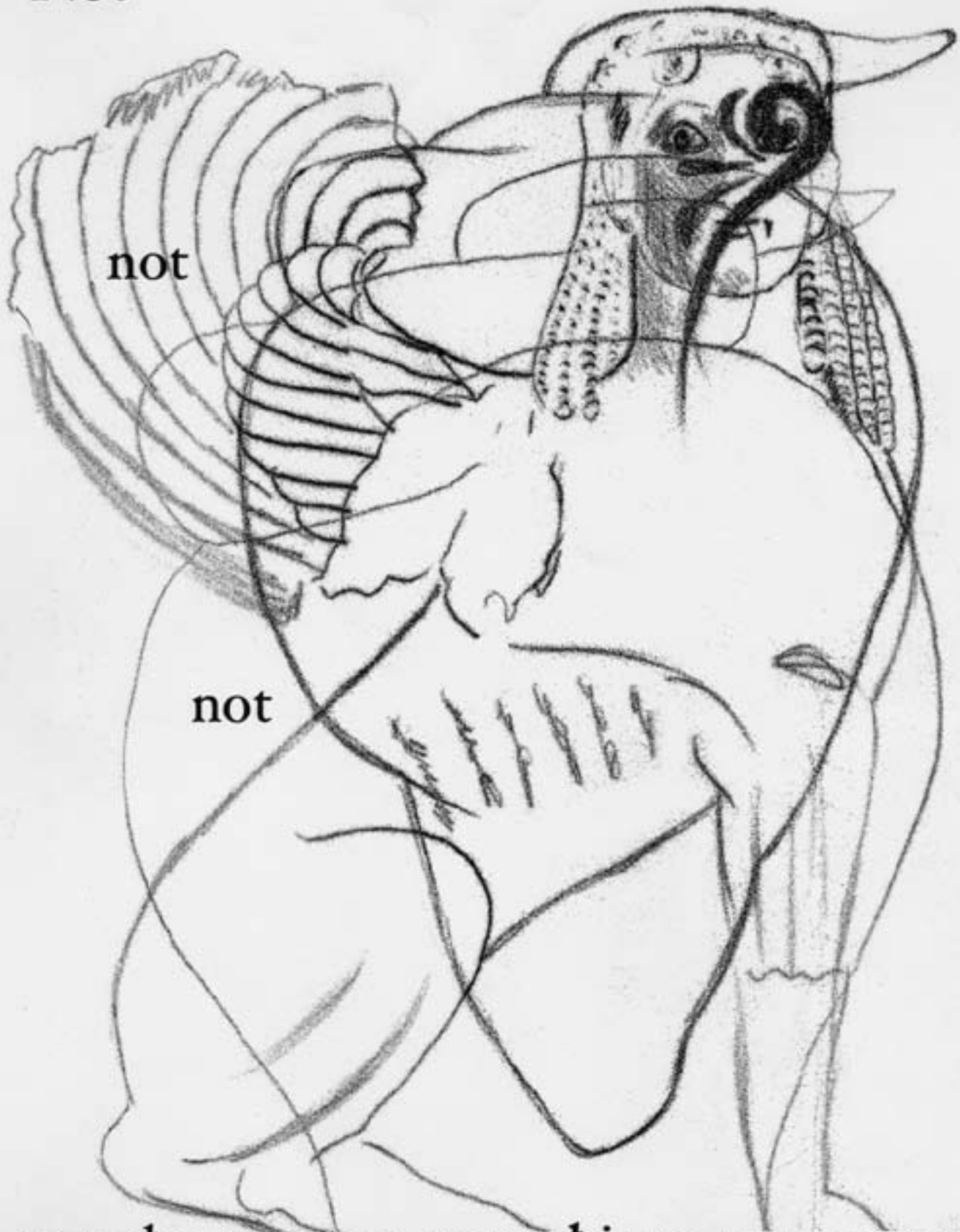
DRAWING:

CYNTHIA KUKLA

Cynthia Kukla, a Professor of Art at Illinois State University, received a BFA in 1973 from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA in 1983 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Cynthia is an accomplished artist who has exhibited her work extensively, nationally and internationally. She is the recipient of several art-related grants, the latest from the Hungarian Multicultural Center in Budapest.

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Not



not the tattoos seared into your eyes

Cynthia Kukla

Draftwork

I. There is hope, today as always,
and as always, love is not enough,
nor this naysaying couched in care
or this mortgage on some desolate night
when but one of you is inconsolable
and alive, disabled and solvent,
as liquid as these veterans, leaning forward
from their wheelchairs, straining to hear the bitter-
sweet nothings of your hand-in-hand.

What can ever as always be enough?
Not the stains and scratches on your glassy eyes,
not the reckless eyes sideswiping your skin,
no, not even your teeth, skinned alive,
not the teeth dragging your hair for blood,
not the blood that overcomes the skin,
not the hands that hold until the last frame
fades to black--then white--then a blank screen--
no, nothing, as always, will be enough.

II. There is love today, as always,
and, as always, hope is not enough,
nor this spectacle of life insurance,
or this mortgage on some long night
when one of you is inconsolable
and alive, on fire, like these wheelchair vets
straining to hear the sweet nothings
of your hand-in-hand.

Not enough--
not the smudges on your glassy skins,
not the tattoos that haunt color-blind ends,
no, not even the book on you
or the subtitles to this foreign film...
No, for blood that would overcome the skin,
for hands that would hold until the last frame
passes over,
nothing, as always, is enough.

III. No, not even the rough sketches
or the cartoon bubbles thinning to film
or the threat of trade deficits,
mortgages on the futures—

not the tattoos seared into your eyes
or the children you will never know
pass into darkness and lightness alike--
nothing will matter enough.

After You

I. The palm grows small,
a growling stomach seldom fed,
never filled,

fetal fingers, curling up
into a fist, fit for nothing
but life on earth.

II. Somewhere...

Unsuspecting worlds come to an end,
a star explodes,
a heart gives out,
futures arrive.

Somewhere...

birth-pangs, birth-cries,
drown out the eulogies...

III. Chained to the fog-banked shores of history,
a body sings to the skin
it cannot identify.

Is it whipping in the wind like a flag?
Is it sticking out its chest
majestic and proud?
Or is it the tarp over powder and cannon?

Noneased #14

Your existence means nothing.
A thousand nights I've threaded a cyanide-tipped bullet
through the entourage, your camouflage...
You could only be a run-through for bigger game:
Time Warner, Microsoft, Shell, just to name a few...
Futile. We are coming for you
thick as...well, you know the score.
We get to play for the final shot.

POEMS:

JEFF WILSON

Jeff Wilson has poems dictated to him when he is driving up I-75.

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DRAWING:

KIRK MAYHEW

Kirk Mayhew has been a regional sculptor, performer and instructor since 2000. He has enjoyed his membership in Thin Air Studio since 2002 and looks forward to progressive international collaborations.

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Kyle T. Meyer

After the Oil is Gone

After the oil is gone
The desert will be empty.
The place where war seemed essential
Will suddenly cease to matter
As the people who lived in the desert
Will buy the ranch house down the street.
Together we will commute to work
In cars using new kinds of fuel.
But one day the cars will disappear,
As will the drivers, and this war-tossed,
Beaten-down, poisoned planet will die, almost.
Then a rain will fall and continue to fall
For seven long years, until
It seeps through the residue
Left by a creature who ruled the earth
Before it joined the list
Of those now extinct.
When the sun emerges
It will shine on a planet
Suddenly bursting with life.
Everywhere plants and animals
Will be healthy and strong
And eager to procreate.
“Do you miss them?”
One tree will ask another.
“Who?” will be its reply.

