



# For A Better World

## *The Best of 2004-2015*

For A Better World The Best of 2004-2015

Saad Ghosn, Editor

For A Better World,  
A yearly Anthology of  
Poems and Drawings  
on Peace and Justice by  
Greater Cincinnati Artists

### POETS:

- Robyn Carey Allgeyer
- Maura Anaya
- Karen Arnett
- Franchot Ballinger
- Valerie Chronis Bickett
- Matt Birkenhauer
- Barbara Bonney
- Forrest Brandt
- Mary Pierce Brosmer
- Robert Bullock
- Timothy Cannon
- Neil Carpathios
- Michel Cassir
- Ella Cather-Davis
- Vickie Cimprich
- Cynthia Perry Colebrook
- Madeleine Crouse
- John Cruze
- Angela Derrick
- Donelle Dreese
- Spike Enzweiler
- Kate Fadick
- Mark Flanigan
- Gary Gaffney
- Karen George
- Diane Germaine
- Michael Geyer
- Susan F. Glassmeyer
- Nicole Grant
- Gerry Grubbs
- Arturo Gutiérrez-Plaza
- Barbara Gutting
- Richard Hague
- Tierney E. Hamilton
- Pauletta Hansel
- Karen Heaster
- Jimmy Heath
- Mike Heilman
- Michael Henson
- Judi Hetrick
- Jeffrey Hillard
- Sue Neufarth Howard
- W. B. (Bucky) Ignatius
- Carol Igoe
- Manuel Iris
- Eric Jefferson
- Nancy Jentsch
- Nancy Johanson
- Jerry Judge
- Victoria Kahle
- Steven Paul Lansky
- Carol Feiser Laque
- Jacob Lucas
- Richard Luftig
- Anni Macht
- Stanley Mathews
- Juanita Mays
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- Amber Mikell
- Frank D. Moore
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- Christopher Morriss
- Clark Mote
- Ali Miramor
- Miike Murphy
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- Nicole Rahe
- Mary Anne Reese
- Kathleen Riemenschneider
- Timothy Riordan
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- Brian Ross
- Mary Jo Sage
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- Susan Scardina
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- Tom Strunk
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- Steve Sunderland
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- Frank Herrmann
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- Jimi Jones
- Terri Kern
- Andrea Knarr
- Theresa Gates Kuhr
- Tom Lohre
- Anthony Luensman
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- Stacey Vallerie Meyer
- Casey Riordan Millard
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- Spencer van der Zee
- Yvonne van Eijden
- Albert Webb
- Paige Wideman
- Roscoe Wilson
- Joseph Winterhalter
- John Wolfer

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- Barbara Ahlbrand
- Derek Alderfer
- Farron Allen
- Julie Baker
- Kevin Barbro
- Jay Bolotin
- Kenton Brett
- Matthew Bustillo
- Susan Byrnes
- Cole Carothers
- Jeff Casto
- Jan Brown Checco
- Suzanne Michele Chouteau
- Halena V. Cline
- Chrissy Collopy
- Lisa Hueil Conner
- Stephanie Cooper
- Cedric Michael Cox
- Claire Darley
- Holland Davidson
- Lizzy Duquette
- Bruce Erikson
- Tracy Featherstone
- Diane Fishbein
- Kim Flora
- Gary Gaffney
- Stephen Geddes
- Jonathan Gibson
- Curtis Goldstein
- Cynthia Gregory

# For a Better World

*The Best of  
2004–2015*

Saad Ghosn, *Editor*

# For a Better World

## *The Best of 2004–2015*

\*Select poems by 100 poets from the 2004 to 2015 "For a Better World," the yearly Anthology of Poems and Drawings on Peace and Justice by Greater Cincinnati Artists

and

\*Accompanying illustrations by 100 Greater Cincinnati visual artists

Saad Ghosn, *Editor*

**A Publication of SOS (Save Our Souls) ART**

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### Special thanks and heartfelt gratitude to:

All the poets and visual artists included in this book

The twelve reviewers who donated their time and knowledge in the selection of the poems included

David Maley who generously donated his time, skills and talents in designing this book

Bill Howes who has been a staunch active supporter of SOS ART and For a Better World from their beginning

SOS ART is very grateful to the DATER FOUNDATION for its support of this book project and of its publication



“For a Better World” is a publication of  
**SOS (Save Our Souls) ART**



### **SOS ART is a 501c3 Organization which Mission is to:**

Encourage, promote and provide opportunities for the arts as dynamic vehicles for peace and justice and for a change

Encourage artists to use their art as their voice on issues of peace and justice that concern them, their community and the world

Facilitate the creation of a local community of artists who will network and collaborate together using art as a means to impact issues of peace and justice in the community where they live

Use the arts to speak about, inform, educate and create a dialogue on issues of peace and justice and thus bring about positive change

Use the arts to introduce basic values of peace and justice in the youth

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use their art as their voice  
for peace and justice  
and for a better world”*

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Langston Hughes in his entreatings poem, "Harlem," wrote:

"What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up  
like a raisin in the sun? [...]

Maybe it just sags  
like a heavy load.

*Or does it explode?"*

In this *Best of For a Better World* edition, one hundred poets and one hundred visual artists express their artistic passion to making our community and national dreams of peace and justice a reality. These dreams have been tragically deferred. In the 2004 first edition of *For a Better World*, Saad Ghosn and Michael Henson wrote ... "the role of artists is that of visionaries, of revolutionaries, setting the path to change, to effacing the wrongs." That role continues and maintains a long tradition of the arts striving for social justice.

The women and men artists featured in this volume are of all ages and ethnic/cultural background. Their words and visual art articulate a world of peace, justice and love that they believe will and must prevail. They are not afraid to confront the evil in our hearts and in our country. The poems and drawings reveal rage and sorrow at intolerance, racism, sexism, poverty and lack of caring for the environment and our future. They write and draw of a future which can and must embrace diversity, equality, kindness and peace. Each of these lofty concepts is broken down into life and death real examples. As in life, many of the poems and images are raw and painful, but hope and faith still permeate the pages.

In an interview with Bill Moyers, Adrienne Rich said, "If poetry is forced by the conditions in which it's created to speak of dread and of bitter, bitter conditions, by its very nature poetry speaks beyond that to something different. That's why poetry can bring together those parts of us which exist in dread and those which have the surviving sense of a possible happiness, collectivity, community, a loss of isolation."

The desire of all featured in this collection is to help end isolation and to bring us together to make our dreams a living reality and to accept and love each other.

Thanks to all who contributed and, of course, thanks to Saad Ghosn for all he does to make a better world.

**Jerry Judge**  
Poet

*For a Better World*, a yearly anthology of poems and drawings on Peace and Justice by Greater Cincinnati Artists, was published for the 1st time in 2004, following the 1st SOS (Save Our Souls) ART exhibit and event of creative expressions for peace and justice by local artists.

The 1st SOS ART was held June 2003 at SS Nova (later The Mockbee), on Central Parkway, Cincinnati, Ohio. It took place right after the invasion of Iraq, in the wake of the Patriot Act and of the War on Terrorism, initiated by the Bush Administration in response to the Sept 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on America.

SOS ART's initial intent was to break the isolation of artists who wanted to say something through their art regarding the then ongoing events, but who could not find a venue allowing it, and/or who were intimidated of doing so due to the prevailing climate of fear. SOS ART also meant to bring these artists together as a networking community, strengthen their voice and facilitate their dialogue around issues important to them.

At the 1st SOS ART, a group of poets called "Poets against the War," spearheaded by local poet Michael Henson, also participated in the event, reading their poetry and engaging the audience. This triggered the beginning of a friendship with Michael and the idea of a yearly book of poems and accompanying illustrative drawings to give voice to local artists on

subjects of peace and justice. The book would then become a companion to the yearly SOS ART event at which it would be launched, and its participating poets invited to read their poetry during it.

*For a Better World* was then born. It has been published yearly since, from 2004 until now, and has been very successful at providing an opportunity for many local poets to be heard on issues of peace and justice of concern to them. Included in the fifteen yearly issues published to date have been more than 400 local poets and more than 400 local visual artists, all ages, backgrounds, academic achievements, notoriety. Many of them are well known published artists, and others exposed to the public just for the 1st time. *For a Better World*, in this respect, has maintained the well established tradition of SOS ART, that of being democratic, open to all, and inclusive of all voices.

A couple of years ago, an idea emerged to select the best poems of the 1st 12 issues (those of 2004 to 2015), to pair them with invited well established local artists for illustrations, and thus to create a book to celebrate the best of our artist community. Twelve local reviewers including poets, writers, literary critics were then invited. They were each given one of the books to review and asked to select from it what they would consider the best 15 poems. The invited reviewers were Valerie Chronis Bickett, Mary Pierce Brosmer, Daniel Brown, Donelle Dreese, Mark Flanigan, Richard Hague, Pauletta Hansel, Matt

Hart, Michael Henson, Jerry Judge, Sherry Cook Stanforth and Gary Walton. Based on their selections, a *Best of For a Better World* book was compiled; it comprises poems by 100 local poets and illustrations by 100 invited local visual artists.

This book, presented here, contains diverse poems by their form, style, and content. Depending on the year, some address marking events of the time; others, more general in their dealing with issues of peace and justice, speak variably of war, violence, freedom, equality, poverty, racism, immigration, politics, love, spirituality, kindness, compassion... Each poem, like a song, propels the voice of its poet for what can be changed, also for its dream of a better world. Many of these poems are accompanied by also diverse illustrative drawings by invited local visual artists. The illustrations, using various media, dialogue with the poem, adding their own vibrancy, beauty and power to the poem's already strong message.

I hope that the beauty and poignancy of both included poems and drawings will travel beyond this book, touch the many, and plant seeds of peace and justice and of a better world wherever they fall. That they will also celebrate our rich community, bridging it with values of love, tolerance and compassion.

Sadly, some of the included poets and visual artists are no longer with us. This book is a salute to them and to the many marks of peace and justice they added to a better world through their lives and their literary and visual art. They are Jimmy Heath, Frank D. Moore, Mike Murphy, Timothy Riordan, Merle Rosen, Aralee Strange, Fran Watson. May they rest in Peace! They are being missed.

My many thanks go to all those who helped, directly or indirectly, in the making of both this *Best of...* book and all the *For a Better World* books published to date. They also go to all the included poets and visual artists who contributed their art and vision to them; to the twelve reviewers who donated their time and knowledge in the selection of the poems included here; to David Maley who donated generously his time, skills and talents in putting this book together, creating its elegant design; to Bill Howes who has been a staunch active supporter of both SOS ART and *For a Better World* from their beginning, always helping with all the minute details of their achievements and success.

May peace and justice and a better world always prevail!

With gratitude,

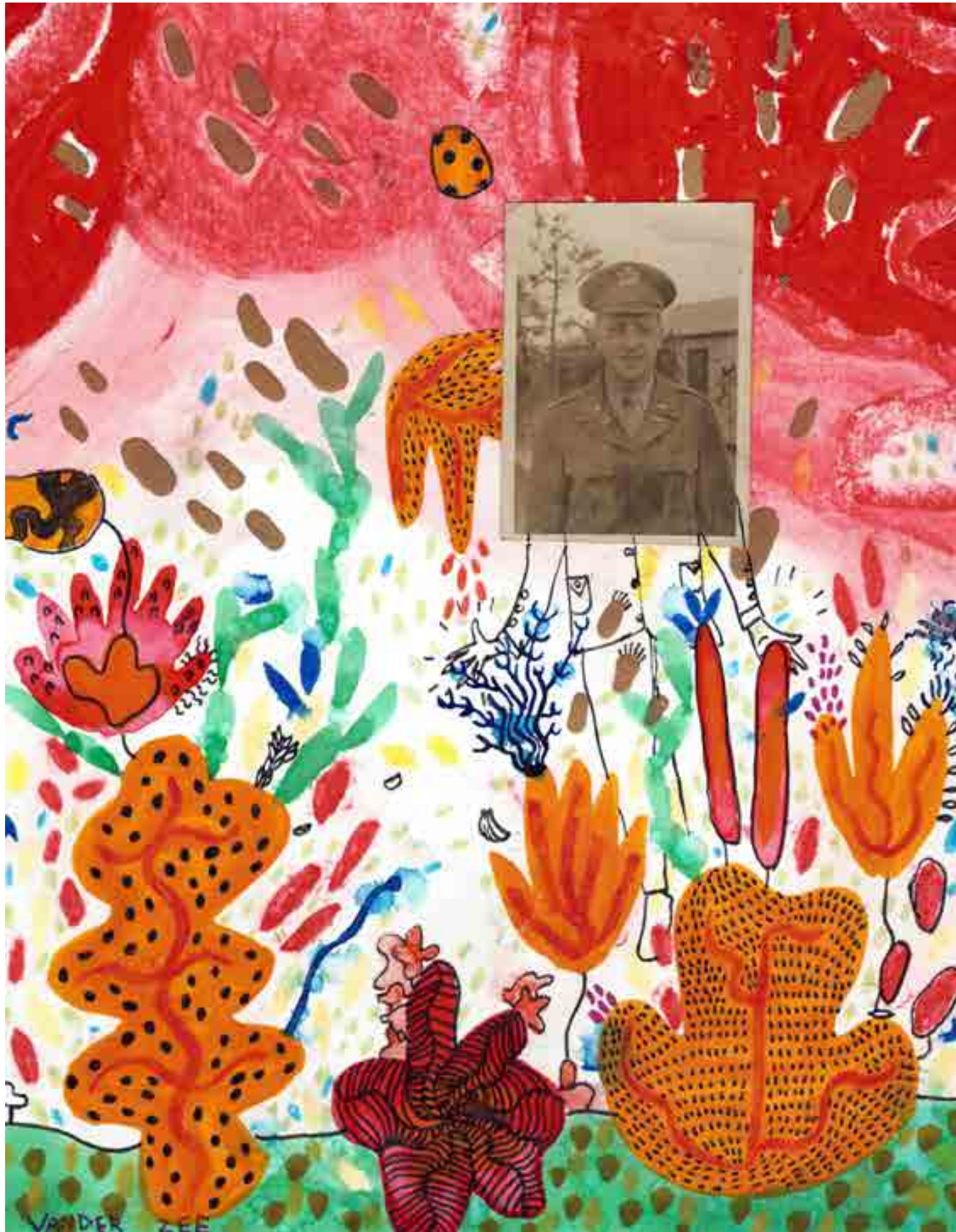
**Saad Ghosn**

Editor, *For a Better World*  
President, SOS ART

*drawings*

*and*

*poems*



*mixed media, collage, on paper; 11"x8.5"*

**Spencer van der Zee**

## Robyn Carey Allgeyer

### Cut Flowers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*\*Improvised Incendiary Device*

(Published in *For a Better World 2007*).



watercolor, on paper; 9"x6.25"

**Jan Brown Checco**

## Maura Anaya

### On My Way

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

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

On my way to save the world  
with my bootstraps wearing thin  
Women who knew the value of a good breeze  
showed me  
what a sad state I was in.  
Could not get my whites white in the river.  
Did not have a man or a baby.  
Did not know  
the difference between a clean dirt floor and a dirty one.  
How to light a wood stove with a piece of rubber.  
How to shine floors with coconut husks.  
How to cheerfully wait for men who did not come.  
How to feed a family

when all the wages were lost to the cantina.  
How to serve men first respectfully  
even if  
they were cause of all money  
gone to drink.

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

On my way to save the world,  
my boot straps thrown away  
I lost myself  
In playing with children  
In exotic rashes and dysentery  
In breathing the fire of sugar harvest  
In whispers of the ocean  
In offerings of the sun's passion to close the day  
In using a machete to open my door and butcher a pig  
In the pangs of holding a baby willing it to live  
In cooking and bathing and pooping outside  
In patience and hospitality I did not deserve.  
My safety was threatened.  
My world in pieces thrown about the planet.  
I could not find myself as I swam in the fishbowl.  
Good intentions, hard work nor books could find me.  
No one human could have all what was needed.  
A girl out of context can only live into answers  
Knowing the kindness received greater  
than any change left in my wake.

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

(Published in *For a Better World* 2015).



watercolor, charcoal, ink, on paper; 8.5"x11"

**Stephen Geddes**

## Karen Arnett

### Imagine the Shoes

Today we witnessed our president duck  
as shoes whistled past his head.  
We owe the thrower our gratitude, for imagine  
if it caught on, next year's headlines: "Shoe fight  
in school blackens eye" or  
"Innocent bystander bruised in  
drive-by shoe throwing". Kids trade in  
their guns for wingtips, hightops.  
Metal detectors are scrapped, airport  
security personnel file for unemployment,  
emergency rooms take on  
the deserted look of late night laundromats,  
police take off their body armor,  
the Olympics introduce a whole new sport,  
and kids stop killing kids for their Air Jordans  
since even kids know better than to throw away  
good money. Our economy returns to solvency  
as war becomes an exercise in thrift:  
weapons of mass destruction give way  
to the \$20 casual loafer, that must be thrown  
from a range so close that soldiers see themselves  
reflected in their enemy's eyes.  
Even world leaders begin to hurl  
their shoes at each other in staterooms  
to defuse international tensions, settle territorial disputes.  
Streets will be named for this hero:  
Muntadhar al-Zaidi Causeway,  
and schools, and airports. He receives  
a peace medal for the courage  
to hurl his anger at Goliath wrapped  
only in a piece of shoe leather,  
after which George W. Bush magnanimously  
insists he be released from the prison  
where, even now, interrogators are sending  
their carefully aimed shoes flying  
into his brave face.

(Published in *For a Better World 2009*).

### Mohammed's Return

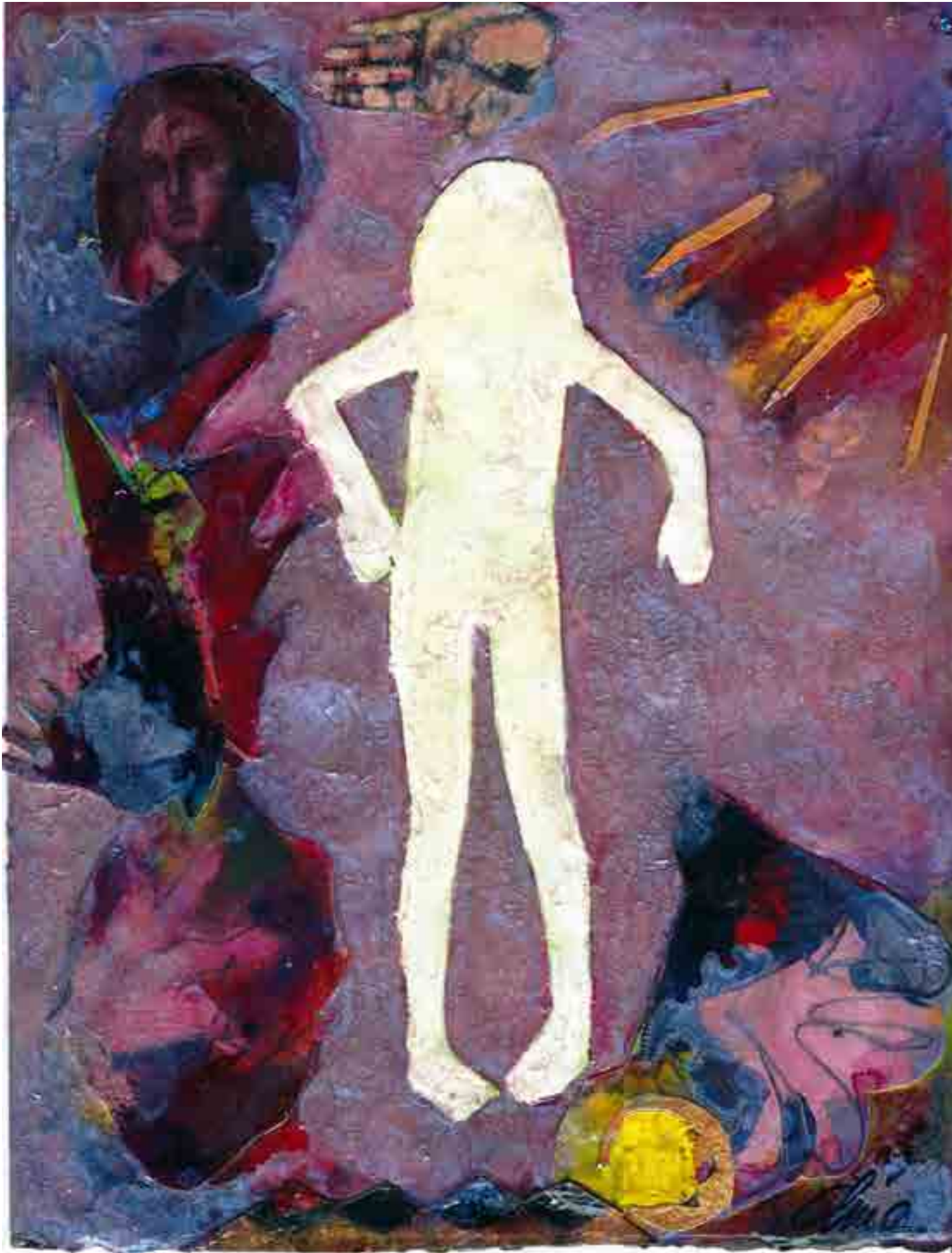
I.  
I want to see the tables turned,  
George Bush stopped at the border  
incoming, stripped of his cowboy boots and jeans,  
his counterfeit dignity.  
Made to kneel and bend, protesting as latex fingers probe  
*God damn, I'm an American*  
words that fall on deaf ears as he's pushed  
behind bars, where there's one toilet for two dozen  
and no privacy.

II.  
Mohamed returns,  
steps from the plane  
as he has for years  
to his beloved American soil.  
Half a lifetime of summers spent here,  
long enough to grow deep roots.  
He wants to see the grapevines  
he planted last summer, and the Yankee friend who  
gave them, saying *your friendship  
is worth 10,000 grapevines to me.*

III.  
A perfect evening – the light articulates each  
blade, each leaf, flowers of every imaginable  
color drenched in golden light. Sparrow and finch  
chirp thickly from the trees and a pair of doves  
flies over, wingtips singing their gentle song.  
Here is home, where roots sink deep  
and Mohammed will be once again warmed  
by the secure blanket of belonging.  
*Here is home.*

IV.  
Five hundred detentions per day, in this land where we are free  
to ignore the truth, home of the brave and patriotic  
bumper sticker.  
Mohamed's deportation followed three days in a concrete cell,  
his only crime was the fact of a Muslim birth.  
The German Foreign Ministry  
continues to inquire why  
their good citizen was barred.  
His wife can't sleep, and keeps the doors locked.

(Published in *For a Better World 2009*).



mixed media, collage, on paper; 11.5"x8.75"

**Halena V. Cline**

## Franchot Ballinger

### Precious Seed

Framed in the open window of the rusting red door,  
she's pretty as a picture, the seed of light  
shines so in her brown face.  
Too young to pick, old enough to be burden,  
she waits in a migrant's pickup at field's edge,  
waits for another August dusk.  
In the hot and hazy Ohio air, her mother and father  
are bent in the field's mid-distance, vague question marks.  
She watches, murmurs a child's tuneless song,  
not knowing yet the songless days before her,  
not knowing how she will be about her father's business.

The sun lays its dusty smolder across the field,  
and a darkening veil falls over the eastern sky  
under which her parents now return, faces drawn,  
bearing the heavy sheaves of their days.  
Her voice flutters about them in the parched light.  
Was she ever a song carried in their hearts?  
I imagine her mother at some past day's hot and brittle  
end waiting  
while her man—harrowed and harvested himself—  
hovers over her, sparrow frail, embracing her with dusty wings.  
No annunciation here, his finishing grunt the only Magnificat  
for more fruit to be bruised at our tables.

(Published in *For a Better World 2008*).

### Fine Dust

"Grandpa was Austrian, not German," my mother repeated,  
a fine distinction missed by little Yakov  
as Hitler trod the Judenplatz during my childhood.  
It mattered to her, of course, after the war,  
after the inescapable knowing: the gas, the ovens,  
the Jewish ash rising sacrificially, the fine dust of guilt  
settling over everything spoken *auf Deutsch*  
and further, finding its smothering way half the globe distant  
and powdering perhaps even my little Yankee tongue  
which had not yet tasted my other, closer inheritance,  
the bitter fly ash of names like *Pit River, Sand Creek, Wounded Knee,*  
*Tulsa, Birmingham, Mississippi,* and more and more,  
falling unseen but no less searing  
and burning in the same cinder night.

(Published in *For a Better World 2004*).





*gouache, on paper, 11"x8"*

**Emil Robinson**

## Valerie Chronis Bickett

### Grounded

When I bring it up with friends  
they forget I told them,

so while I'm thinking about it,  
let me tell you again

about the couple I know who spend  
three hours every morning

making love  
and let me emphasize

every and  
love.

No exceptions.  
5:30-8:30 A.M.

A man and a woman around sixty  
follow a protocol—

meditation, yoga, chances  
for emotional release and

plenty of time for union  
as they put it,

staying in union.  
Eleven years now,

this couple has been making love  
every day.

Getting up early for music and oil  
and touching

in their suburban home,  
indistinguishable from the ones next door

where couples like us  
are finding more and more good reasons

to skip it.  
Twenty-one hours a week.

All their movie time and date nights  
rolled into the mornings

when they lower their sights  
on the lower chakras

and see the world from there,  
there where the Mid-East

Peace Talks and Global Warming  
seem manageable,

there where the mother feeds,  
and the baby finds her lovely.

### A Spade A Spade

Ninety years and one tenth of it  
with a deteriorating brain  
and yet you were there—  
the same body, the same fight  
for privacy; so much so that  
at first it took four attendants  
to bathe you and this only  
two months before you died.

We put you out in the cold,  
sent you finally to the place  
where we subdue our elderly  
with poison darts, kill  
under cover, administer the  
regulated anti-psychotic  
with the black box warning  
all of us ignore.

Death to our elderly, quicker.  
Death to the long siege  
of weightlifting, waiting.  
Death when we want it.  
Death when the powers  
of attorney vote for the drug  
they say brings back life  
to the dying brain.

(Both Poems Published in  
***For a Better World 2010***).



acrylic, on paper; 7.5"x10"

**Dana Tindall**

## Matt Birkenhauer

### 'Twas the Night Before Congress (With Apologies to Clement Moore)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World* 2015).

## Barbara Bonney

### Finding Baseball

I have not thought much about baseball since she died.  
The Tigers rise and fall without my notice;  
stadiums are debated, built and worshipped in  
while I buy groceries.

She never knew she loved sports  
until my brother asked her to catch final scores  
for him on the radio on school nights.  
So she listened while ironing in the dining room—  
Ernie Harwell's voice floating over Dad's white shirts,  
Al Kaline and Norm Cash just names she heard over and over  
until they stirred hope.

On Michigan nights in July, they listened together,  
the iron and her face steaming over sheets  
and more white shirts,  
my brother sprawled on the floor sharing the box fan.  
When Ernie's voice gained momentum, climbed higher  
and higher,  
the iron paused...

hits, runs, steals and nabbed catches  
all brought whoops from my timid mother  
but grand slams elicited a near-dance from this woman  
who was never allowed to dance.  
The church and her marriage kept her ironing;  
her son gave her dance.

(Published in *For a Better World 2006*).

### Freeway Sins

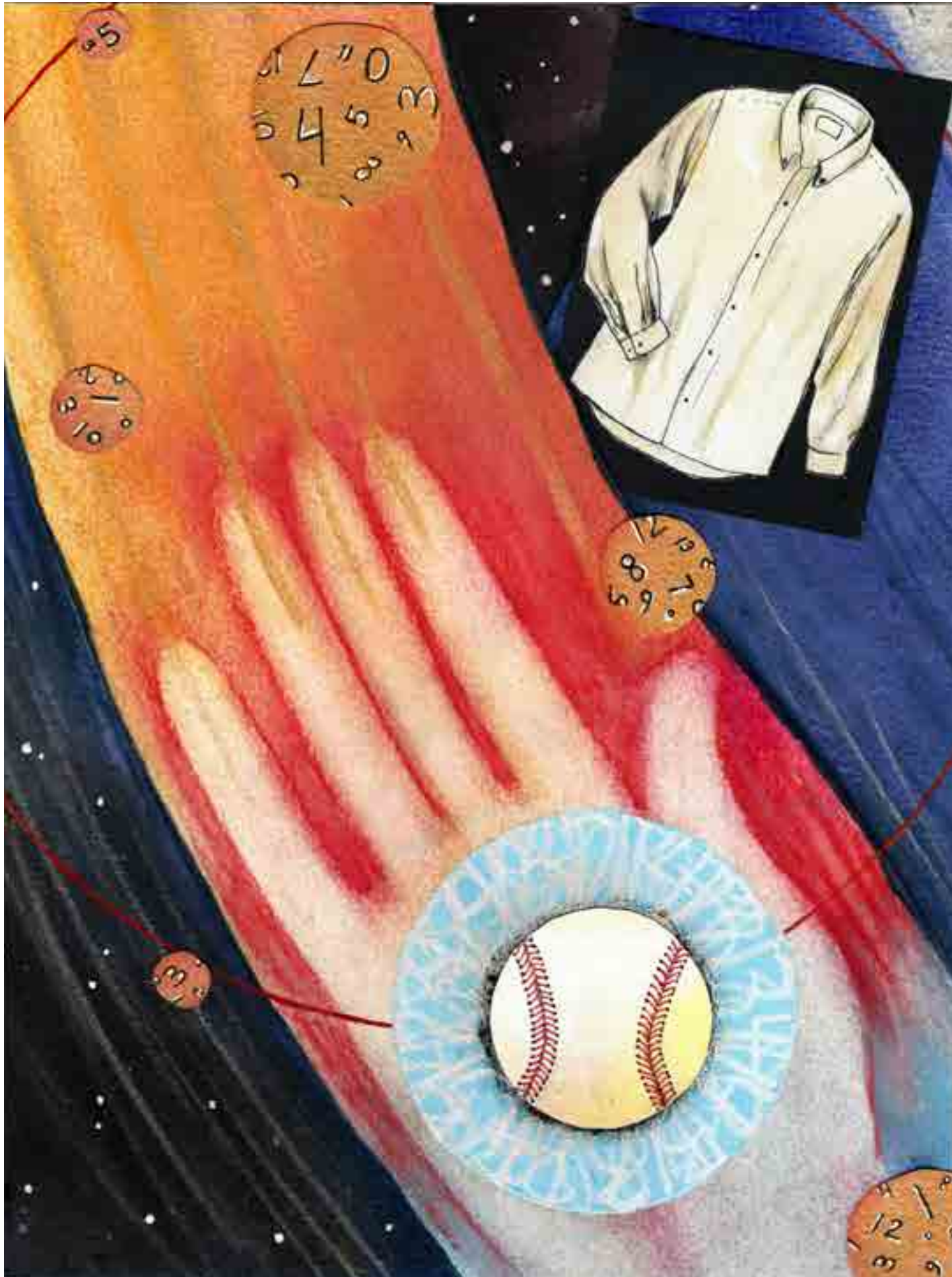
I passed Jesus on the freeway doing 70;  
he was 62 vertical feet of white fiberglass and Styrofoam.  
Ohio ground mired him to the waist;  
his arms stretched up like a referee on a touchdown.  
He tilted his face heavenward.

Behind him stood the "Solid Rock Church"  
who chose his icon over a gymnasium,  
a BMW for the pastor and feeding the poor.  
They probably didn't intend for travelers to laugh  
or run off the road gawking. I'm sure they meant  
for motorists to think holier thoughts  
and to sense Jesus lifting their burdens.  
I get the metaphor.

But I don't get the pain on his otherwise cherubic face  
and his being stuck in an island of a pond.  
Every time I whiz by him I feel guilty, but not for the usual sins.  
I hear him pleading through his clenched teeth,  
"Get me out of here. Take my hands and PULL."

But I can't stop, Jesus.

(Published in *For a Better World 2006*).



mixed media, on paper; 10"X7.5"

**Lisa Jameson**



acrylic, on paper; 11.5"x9"

acrylic, on paper; 11.5"x9"

**Robert JM Morris**

## Forrest Brandt

### Hidden Rituals

It's a hell of a party.  
Lieutenants let off steam,  
take risks with booze, cigarette  
dinky dau and army authority.

I leave early,  
wander along an unfamiliar path,  
listen to the sounds of the Vietnamese night:  
a lone chopper circles overhead,  
jeeps and trucks lumber  
and whine around the base,  
bits of conversation float upon the evening air  
as I pass tents.

From a doorway comes the sound  
of running water and voices,  
rock music rumbles in the background,  
I peek inside:  
two soldiers, naked to the waist,  
wrestle with a garden hose and a body  
that dangles from stirrups in the ceiling.

It's the brigade morgue.  
The shiny pink skin of the corpse  
is pierced by hundreds of tiny holes.  
Water washes down the torso,  
flows along the arms and head,  
plunges in a crimson stream,  
curls into the drain in the floor.

I step away,  
shake my head,  
breathe deep.

I wonder how these two young boys,  
forced to wash the dead,  
will blot the scene from their minds.

I imagine them,  
years from now,  
lost to booze and nightmares.

I wonder why I have been spared  
the war's dirty jobs.  
What star of grace keeps me safe  
in this base camp?

My sleep comes in small snatches,  
disrupted by nightmares:  
scenes of combat,  
of steel and explosives and soft tissue,  
of kids tenderly washing the bodies of kids.

(Published in *For a Better World 2011*).



color pencil, on paper; 12"x9"

**Tom Towhey**

## Mary Pierce Brosmer

### I Have Two Orchids: February, 2010

I have two orchids in a chill window.  
Their backs to the snow, they proffer  
fuschia heads on fragile spines,  
curving toward this room where I sit,  
chill and not so gracefully curving  
toward the work of blooming.

We have two wars that we know of,  
Both, we are asked to believe  
against all the odds and all of history  
as I read it, will bring safety to the homeland,  
whose homeland I raise my head to wonder?

I have two choices every morning  
One: to create a day of purpose and practice,  
The other: to hunker down in my discomfort  
zone failing to imagine how my efforts might lift  
by so much as a snowflake's weight  
the mantle of senseless suffering,  
might slow the blizzards of spin  
while systems fail.

I have two friends in the nuclear winter  
of grief. One: her daughter murdered,  
makes art and community in a fury.  
The Other: his son dead to despair,  
will marry, come spring, his longtime love.

Taking my cues from orchids,  
from friends avalanche-swept and  
willing to claw upward toward air,  
I turn my hand, however inexpertly,  
to the task of continuing to raise  
fragile blooms, this poem for instance,  
out of the random and deepening snows.

(Published in *For a Better World 2010*).

# Mary Pierce Brosmer

poet

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

*for Tom*

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

*William Carlos Williams*

You lay down your fork and come to attention.

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

Each evening the line of faces grows longer.

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

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

We are closing in on four years  
of a war to bring freedom to Iraq.  
Bodies stacked in Baghdad morgues  
and loaded in secret onto troop planes  
are free of souls, the only mission  
accomplished.

Each evening the line of faces grows longer.

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

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

Each evening the line of faces grows longer.

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

Each evening the line of faces grows. . .

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

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

(Published in ***For a Better World 2007***).



white color pencil, on black Stonehenge paper; 11"x8.5"

## Robert Bullock

### When Tom Peacock Came Home

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

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

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

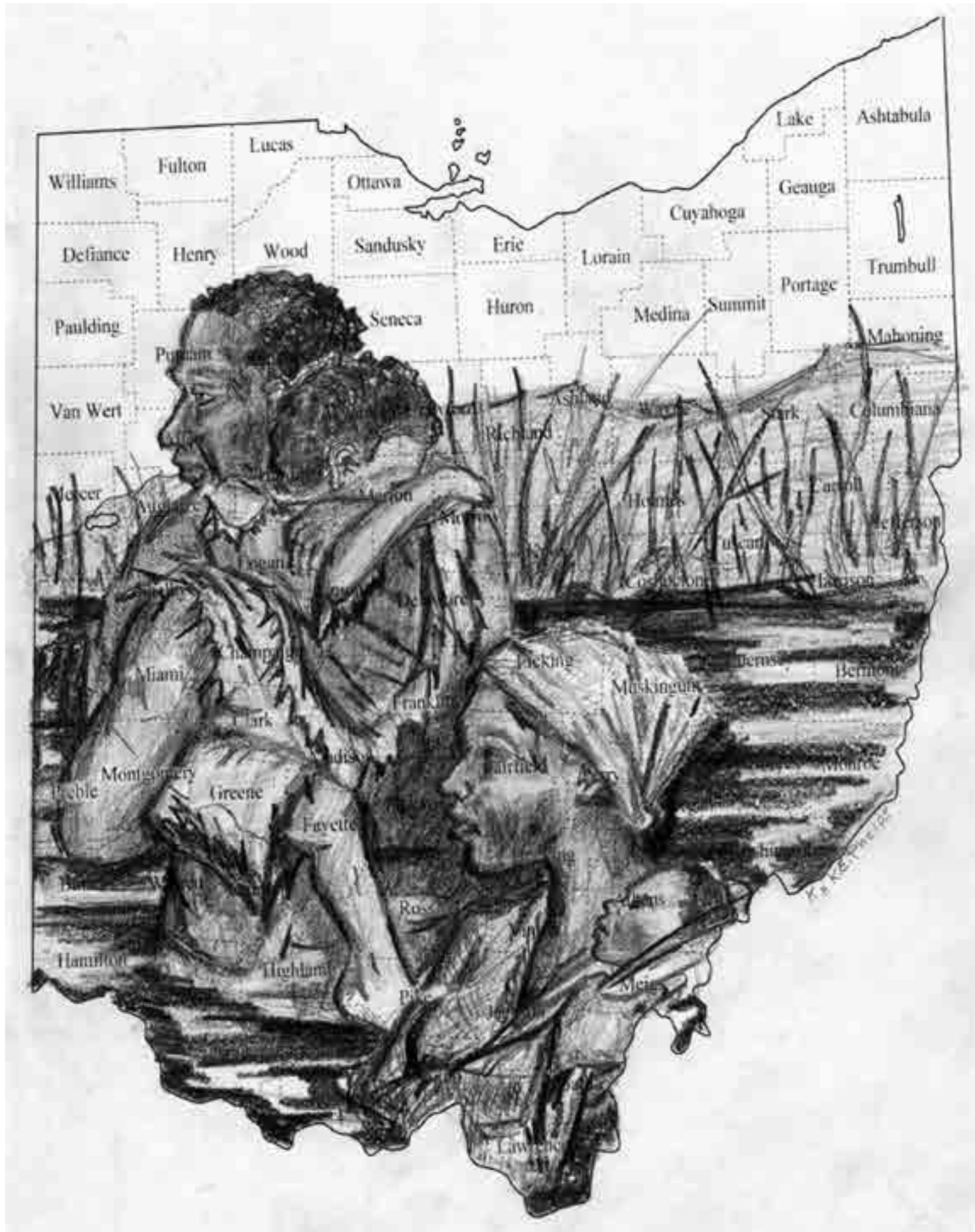
and we altar-boyed together at St. Sylvester's,  
for all the good it did either of us. He waxed his  
black hair up in front, spit-shined like a porcupine's.

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2007*).



graphite, on xeroxed paper; 11"x8.5"

**Kelly & Kyle Phelps**

## Timothy Cannon

### River of Freedom

Into the undying night  
To the river of freedom,  
Less the shackles rattle and clank  
They speak the sound of my name.  
If I'm caught, the rope will swing  
Never to see "the beautiful river,"  
The river of the Ohio.

One hundred lashes  
Bound to an old cypress tree  
I helped my wife and child to escape,  
"To that river in the north  
Just follow that bright star,  
Cause someday, someday  
We'll be together, someday."  
Fifty more lashes,  
For setting my family free,  
Never to see my only child  
Tied to this old tree.

Just one chance you have  
At the fall of dusk  
After the fields,  
The breaking heat of the day.  
To escape into the night  
And to the north  
That lantern of light sings.  
Freedom, freedom, freedom  
Those sweet words echo  
In the hollow of my mind,  
Freedom, freedom, freedom  
The hound dogs are a calling my name.

Into the undying night  
To the river of freedom,  
Less the shackles rattle and clank  
They speak the sound of my name.  
If i am caught, the rope will swing  
Never to see my family,  
Beyond "the beautiful river"  
The river of the Ohio.

*(In mermory to all who gave their life for  
pure freedom...)*

(Published in *For a Better World 2004*).



## Neil Carpathios

### Pain Is Weakness Leaving the Body

I read on the back of my son's shirt,  
this saying, a shirt given to him  
by the marine recruiter.

I've never seen it leave, though,  
even when my father's bone tore through  
his shin and he screamed, almost operatic,  
in the yard,

and later when he spasmed  
on the hospital bed near the end. Or when  
Jimmy Galloway chopped his thumb off  
in middle school woodshop and blood  
shot out like a hose full-blast  
and we stood, our mouths agape.

Or me,  
my sprained ankles,  
colonoscopy,  
cracked ribs.

Is it a perfect replica of us,  
a body within our body,  
expanding, pushing till there's no more room  
for it to grow, so like a chick in the egg  
it starts to pound on walls till the shell  
cracks and it hatches, invisible, like a ghost?

Does it fly to the moon?

Does it take a swan dive into grass?

Does it meet-up with all the other weakness  
in a secret place where they join hands  
and dance a secret weakness dance?

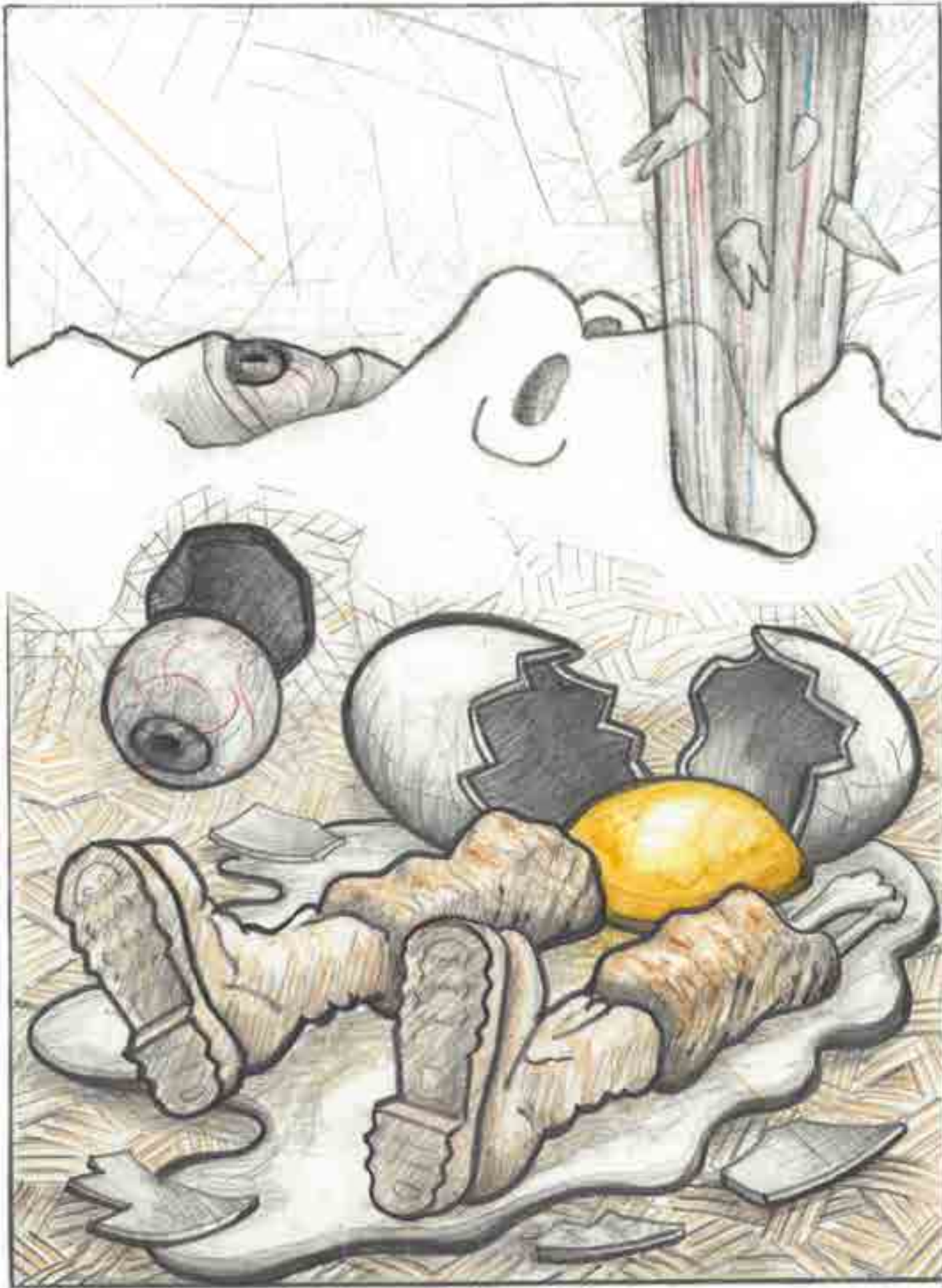
Does it hover above our twisted, aching flesh,  
thinking Geez to think I was kept prisoner so long  
in that stink-mobile husk of meat armor?

Or does weakness need us to avoid, itself,  
feeling pain? Without gristle and bone, sweat  
and blood, saliva and tears, does it get so depressed  
floating around that it also feels a smaller version  
of itself inside swelling and inside that  
an even smaller replica and inside, smaller still,  
more weakness hatching, and it never ends, even  
if we trace it to a subatomic seed because  
inside the seed is a smaller seed?

I wonder if the saying rises, in haze,  
from memory, in a kid somewhere who wore the shirt  
proudly, if it in some way helps as he squirms  
on dirt, his chest ripped open by a roadside bomb,  
his legs lying like two logs a few yards away,  
his one eye searching the sky

for the weakness leaving his body  
as his other eye rolls away like a marble.

(Published in *For a Better World* 2011).



graphite, color pencil, acrylic, brush and ink, on paper; 9"x6.5"

**Kevin Harris**



graphite, ink, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Kevin Barbro**

## Michel Cassir

### Gaza the Summer

sea frowning eyebrow of an admiral  
 land barbed wire that unrolls its arabesques  
 sky assemblage of drones of all nuances  
 sky electronic octopus its forehead gouged by the sun  
 land giving birth to incarcerating towers  
 land parched skin  
 sea optical illusion its fish belonging to the  
 high strategy of the state  
 sky shower of spears nailing to the ground any spurt  
 of humanity  
 sky capsule remotely guided by divine justice which has  
 delegated its power to democratic masks  
 sea dries out in the mouths of children playing in the scrap  
 iron of tomorrow it flays the echo of the seashell  
 the child tracks the adult with his muted fear like  
 the blood drum  
 panic and resistance old mirror of the teen  
 land enclave that breathes through its underground tunnels  
 dug out with fingernails  
 these diabolic arteries must be eradicated from memory  
 they will be sunk in a lake of complacency under the eye of the  
 presumed master  
 sky pot of empty stomachs the land filling them with dust  
 mixed with metallic chips  
 sea it drowns in the black gaze of asphyxia  
 contrary to this old Arab poem which said that the sea is in  
 front and the enemy in the back  
 here every idea is doomed to annihilation  
 neither ahead nor behind only the tangle of nightmares  
 roaring like wild beasts  
 outside sea is not the sea nor land is the land  
 and sky has hardly its likeness with its murmurs of  
 supersonic spy  
 inside big fatal circus where at times we enjoy everything,  
 run desperately, or hide to the ground  
 no place is spared when lightnings seize the poor saturated sky  
 breathless unicorn  
 how long will this sky hold  
 not only an experimental theater of fire and tactician silence  
 but at the heart of seduction  
 or of the invective rain of messages to arouse the  
 indigenous fear  
 inside the heart is no more at counting heads and bodies that  
 detach like the petals of a daisy  
 it seems that this land is ours and with it  
 parody of a sky and at least a view of the sea  
 with close stealthy fishing  
 not to push too far the patience of the gods of war  
 these zealous gods chess players have many roles  
 to punish to besiege but also to educate  
 gifted and sly democracy  
 we are nothing here in Gaza a few stubborn people all  
 qualified terrorists women children adults all equal  
 the ignominy  
 plucked and transformed into abstract entities  
 to purify the settler's mind to free it from our haunt  
 each operation against us a new biblical episode

### Gaza l'Eté

*mer sourcil froncé d'amiral  
 terre fil barbelé qui déroule ses arabesques  
 ciel assemblage de drones de toutes nuances  
 ciel pieuvre électronique dont le soleil creuse le front  
 terre engendrant des tours carcérales  
 terre peau de chagrin  
 mer illusion d'optique dont les poissons appartiennent à la  
 haute stratégie d'état  
 ciel pluie de lances clouant au sol tout sursaut  
 d'humanité  
 ciel capsule télécommandée par la justice divine qui a  
 délégué son pouvoir à des masques démocratiques  
 mer se dessèche dans la bouche des enfants jouant dans la  
 ferraille du lendemain écorche l'écho du coquillage  
 l'enfant traque l'adulte de sa peur sourde comme  
 le tambour sanguin  
 panique et résistance vieillard miroir d'adolescent  
 terre enclave qui respire à travers ses tunnels souterrains  
 creusés à même les ongles  
 ces artères diaboliques devront être extirpées de la mémoire  
 elles seront noyées dans un lac de complaisance sous l'œil du  
 maître présumé  
 ciel marmite de ventres creux la terre les emplissant de  
 poussière mêlée de brisures métalliques  
 mer se noie dans les regards noirs d'asphyxie  
 contrairement à ce vieux poème arabe qui disait que la mer  
 est devant et l'ennemi dans le dos  
 ici toute idée est acculée à l'anéantissement  
 ni devant ni derrière seul l'enchevêtrement de cauchemars  
 rugissant comme des fauves  
 dehors mer n'est pas la mer ni terre la terre  
 et ciel en a à peine la semblance avec ses murmures  
 d'espion supersonique  
 au-dedans grand cirque fatal où tantôt on s'amuse de tout,  
 on court éperdument ou on se terre  
 nul lieu épargné quand les foudres s'emparent du pauvre ciel  
 saturé unicolore à bout de souffle  
 combien de temps tiendra-t-il ce ciel  
 non seulement théâtre expérimental de feu et silence tac-  
 ticien mais au cœur de la séduction  
 ou de l'invective pluie de messages pour susciter  
 l'émoi indigène  
 au-dedans plus le cœur à compter têtes et corps qui se  
 détachent comme on effeuille marguerite  
 il paraît que cette terre est nôtre et qu'avec elle  
 parodie de ciel et au moins vue sur mer  
 avec pêche rapprochée furtive  
 ne pas pousser trop loin patience des dieux de guerre  
 ces dieux zélés joueurs d'échec ont plusieurs rôles  
 punir assiéger mais aussi éduquer  
 démocratie surdouée et sournoise  
 nous ne sommes rien ici à Gaza quelques entêtés tous  
 qualifiés terroristes femmes enfants adultes à égalité  
 l'ignominie  
 plumés et transformés en entités abstraites  
 pour purifier l'esprit colon le libérer de notre hantise  
 chaque opération contre nous nouvel épisode biblique*

# Michel Cassir

poet

verbose delirium of generals  
our imaginary labyrinth in a pocket handkerchief  
our feet wander crazy dancers in a cage  
that no monkey would envy us  
but we have largesse of oppressed  
we cause daily vibrations to make  
secret music

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

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

*Translated from French by **Saad Ghosn***

(Published in **For a Better World 2015**).

*délire verbeux de généraux  
notre imaginaire labyrinthe dans un mouchoir de poche  
nos pieds errent danseurs fous dans une cage  
qu'aucun singe ne nous envierait  
mais nous avons largesse d'opprimés  
faisons vibrer quotidien pour en faire  
secrètes musiques*

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

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

## Ella Cather-Davis

### Broken Things

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2013*).



*mixed media, on paper; 9.25"x6.75"*

**Kim Rae Taylor**



collage, on paper; 10"x7.5"

**Gary Gaffney**

## Vickie Cimprich

### Seven Little Portions

(for St. Francis of Assisi)

#### *Nobility, 1204*

Below Monteluco, Francesco,  
the dream that grabbed you,  
by your crested shield,  
is stellar with the pieces  
that are missing.

#### *The leper, 1205*

Francesco, dare un bacio a Elena.  
Francesco, give a kiss to Elena.  
Give. Give.  
Il gusto di Elena gradisce il sale.  
She tastes like the beginning of the sea.

#### *Chiara, 1212, 1234*

Low on Mount Subasio lives Clare  
with her own at San Damiano,  
ever the center of your hold on light.  
In her own hands she lofts high the bread  
over the valley of any threat.

#### *The Creche, 1223*

At Greccio your beasts  
have invented for all winters  
the glint of light of the world  
off the brown globes of their eyes.

#### *Hunger*

Not all the fear that kept things small  
as the children or chickens of Gubbio  
locked inside during months of wolf siege  
assuaged any politics.

It was the wild noises and smells exuding  
from this colloquy between the grizzled  
that bought the settlement.

#### *Stigmata, 1224*

In every direction the cross  
blasts seraph wings into birds,  
till you are blind  
to any wanted Assisi.

Any day your dream  
has always bled under the skin.  
Leo felt it every day.  
Now, though, helping you  
off Alverno,  
it soaks his own tunic.

#### *Relics - 1226*

Your bones move from grave to grave.  
Cimabue's colors vault over them,  
until the earthquake of 1997  
spreads fresco dust like a tsunami  
down the basilica's aisles.

Buried intacta  
not many miles away  
at Dunarobba's foresta fossile  
are trees that know songs  
sparrows sang in the Pliocene.

(Published in *For a Better World 2008*).

# Vickie Cimprich

poet

## Package from Home

Cheetos!  
Star Kist Tuna Lunch to Go.  
Canned Fruit Cocktail in Heavy Syrup  
and a righteous foot long pepperoni stick.

U.S. troops cut through the packing tape  
to a feast of stateside home, and the love

most cannot taste in the sesame bread rings  
once baked in a blasted Basra bakery,  
in olives or figs grown on  
any country hillside, nor  
any lamb roasted whole with its flock  
in a field of flaming oil.

(Published in *For a Better World 2006*).

## Rogation in a Time of Terror

We must pray to the crickets  
who keep the night company

we must pray to the cows  
who grow gentle at dusk

we must pray to the deer  
who hide

(Published in *For a Better World 2009*).

## Cynthia Perry Colebrook

### Detritus

It takes discipline  
 looking over the navy gray railing  
 on this Harbor Walk  
 to have my eyes  
 stay focused  
 on the swollen globes of kelp  
 waving at the water's edge  
 or on the young gull  
 webbed feet standing firmly  
 on the seaweed-covered remnants of a piling  
 or on the mesmerizing movement  
 of wind on water  
 with its liquid interplay  
 of light and dark  
 so great  
 are the distractions  
 of discarded Dunkin' Donuts cups  
 crinkled cigarette packs  
 and even  
 the long-stemmed dandelions  
 lying dejected and forgotten  
 by the careless hand  
 that earlier picked them  
 then threw them  
 onto the rocks below.

(Published in *For a Better World 2009*).



ink, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Roscoe Wilson**



acrylic, on canvas; 11"x8.5"

**Mark Patsfall**

## Madeleine Crouse

### Colonel Roberts aka W.W. to the Residents of the Bishop Gadsen Retirement Home

I've heard that years ago he was partial to gin  
and would go days ingesting juniper  
berry, clear-colored drinks. It's been told

one night while thoroughly tanked he returned  
from the store with a hundred jars  
of pickles (all dill). At times,

while still in the punch he would punch  
the air, roll on the floor, fight lions  
or remember his war. Now, he lives

amid sober white walls, and is told  
to hush while his roommate rests.  
At ninety, the Colonel does chin-

ups, eighteen at a crack, from a bar  
on a doorway. His mind, not as strong,  
resists reality. Crouching to the floor,

he yells to my uncle whose room  
is next door: "keep your head down  
George - hunker into the trench -

the bastards have hit." Blood pours  
from his buddies' ragged shell holes;  
he sees red pools gathering.

The ground girds its loins afraid  
to accept them - and souls fly  
from their human nests.

(Published in *For a Better World 2006*).

### I Want to Tell You

*For Nancy*

about this day, and  
a little more, too:

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

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

quivers as acres  
of corn break ground.

All the while,  
my son is in Iraq

assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine  
Expeditionary Force

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

"With infrared goggles," he says  
"our guys see in the dark -

own the night." Mouthed  
between bombings, clenched

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2007*).



## John Cruze

### Blue Mute

Miles mutes misery  
draws it from blood  
lungs  
bellowed neck

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

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

the unspent heartache  
is canted in blackness  
for his voodoo muse

(Published in *For a Better World 2015*).

### Long Season

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

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

my brother said that was wrong

(Published in *For a Better World 2015*).



*mixed media, on paper; 10"x7.5"*

**Christopher Hoeting**



color pencil, on dark brown paper; 8.5"x11"

**Tina Tammaro**

## Angela Derrick

### Who We Are

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

We are the loved ones,  
We might be you.

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

We travel millions of miles.

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

We wait. Period.

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

We pass through  
eleven gates,  
razor wire,  
barb wire fences,  
metal bars  
security doors  
stun guns  
only five through the gate  
at a time  
to the park  
that isn't a park at all.

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).

### On the Way to the Prison

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).

## Donelle Dreese

### 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?

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).

### The Torchbearers

Leaving Camp Lejeune,  
we were called soldiers.

We returned as roped spirits, ash trays,  
middle class crates of shrapnel.

The highway splitting Hatteras  
bordered peach sand, ragged bushes,  
a path through the dunes  
where the fisherman left footprints,  
drippings from their tackle boxes.

We watched the tips of their rods  
march away from the surf  
mimicking tall grasses, property stakes,  
images from sniper school, supply depots.

We wanted to be the torchbearers  
with growing crowns of fire  
crying "freedom!"  
but instead we are broken children crying  
for the green chambers of summer.

Sand is a bed of bullets  
where fear waits  
to poke a wing  
through its gritty cocoon  
and fly out to sea.

(Published in *For a Better World 2008*).



acrylic, graphite, on paper; 7.5"x10"

**Lisa Merida-Paytes**

# Donelle Dreese

poet

## Invasive Species

Dandelion in the daffodil patch  
Garlic mustard choking lily of the valley  
The common reed consuming the wetlands  
McDonalds in Shanghai,  
    eighty-two of them, some open all night long.

Microbial agents in the spinach and tomatoes  
Engineered organisms in the corn and potatoes  
Walmart on Main Street, Side Street,  
    Front Street, and Back Street.

Heat in the Arctic  
Mercury in the water supply  
U.S. Troops in Iraq  
Terrorists swarming with their hotel bombs  
    and westerner roll call.

Should we call an exterminator,  
a conservationist,  
an herb doctor,  
or a priest?

(Published in *For a Better World 2009*).

## White Coat Syndrome

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

You, prescription writer  
who always spells my name wrong.

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

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

We, the herd of cattle  
bottleneck at the door.

(Published in *For a Better World 2013*).

## The Black Flower

In a swarm of hailstones  
a woman crosses the city street  
and tilts her umbrella that  
bows like a black flower.

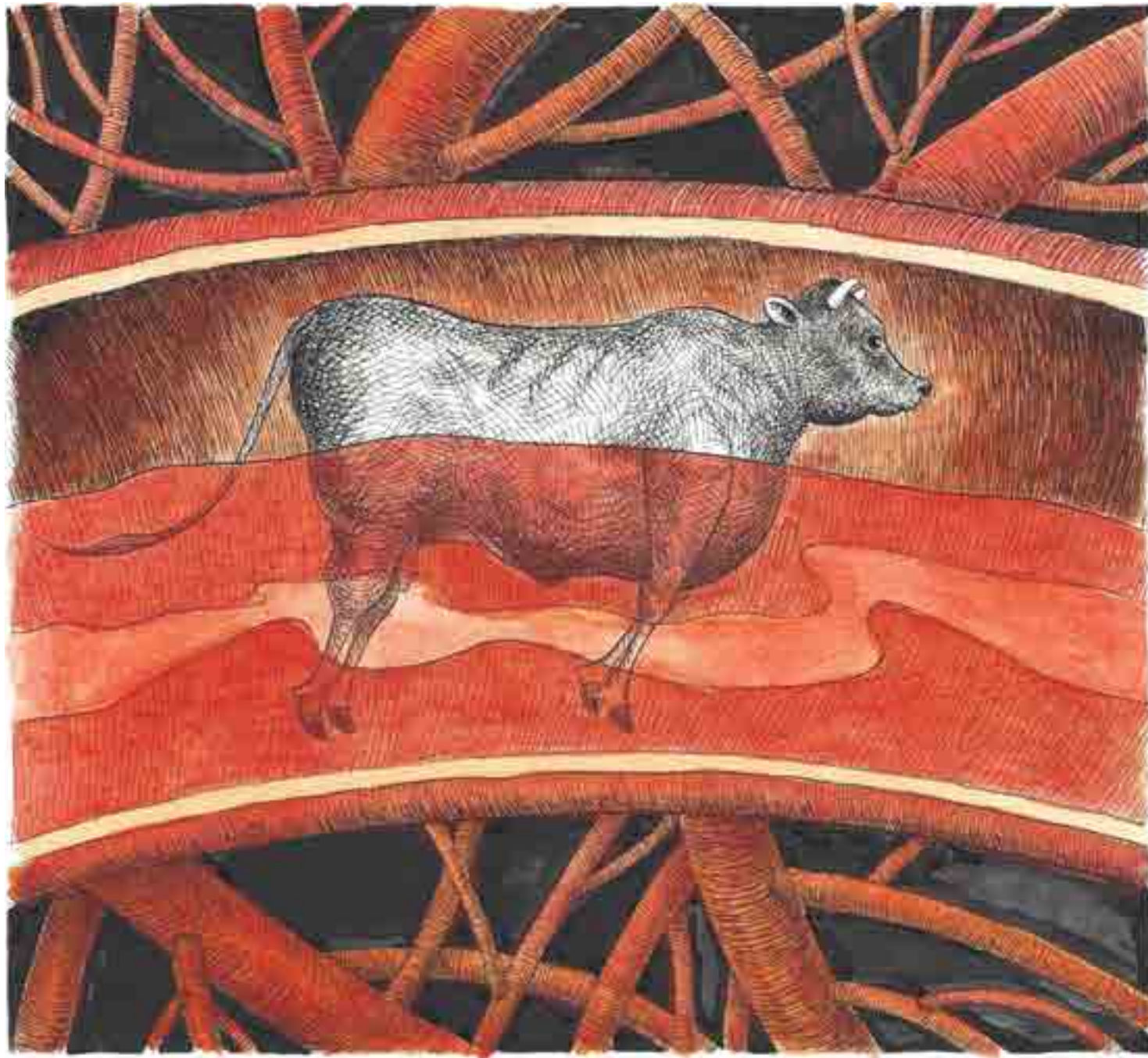
Politicians on the steps of the pillared building  
remind her of a painted troop of mimefolk  
rehearsing their gestures  
gathering for a false dance.

The woman's mind is a dark plankboard stairwell  
leading down to a motley assemblage  
of memories crumpled together  
like a ball of ransacked linens.

I want to tell her that things will get better  
that kindness and clarity can be found  
on another street framed by  
the sashwork of window lights.

But she keeps walking  
through the muttersome sea of rain  
crabbing sideways between garbage cans  
hiding beneath the wire petals of a black flower.

(Published in *For a Better Wolrd 2010*).



watercolor, ink, on illustration board; 10"x7.5"

## Spike Enzweiler

### The Far-Flung Effects of Donating Blood

I used to hate myself  
 Until the night I emerged from the cold  
 And stepped into the white room,  
 Ready to sacrifice my entire consciousness  
 In order to feel I was a person.

As the chair grew like wax below me  
 And the tubes acted as thirsty spiders at my arm,  
 I remembered the hasty steak scrambled down my windpipe,  
 Cow's flesh somehow returning the purple to my blood.

There was a thin-shirted lady with hands as great as ladles,  
 Grown accustomed to driving in the needle,  
 Every thirty minutes a different-hued vein.

I lay, twitching feet to convince myself  
 That I could still feel what was below my skin,  
 And I watched the ceiling, pale as the polish  
 That shines on the womb of an Apple computer.

However many trees were executed to build these walls,  
 More lives were saved within them  
 When our dark bags were shipped away  
 To return life to a split vein.

Perhaps my pint would go to some soldier,  
 Burr-haired and round-shouldered, mouth agape  
 As he stared at his arm severed on a silver table;  
 I could give him the knowledge that a limb's absence  
 Had not decapitated hope, at least.

Perhaps I would give life to a woman with a face of bark,  
 And therefore to her husband, too,  
 As he sat waiting on the little couch,  
 Sucking fear from his cuffs.

Or, maybe, to a paper-skinned child,  
 Bound to me only by his blood type,  
 And the awareness that, by taking my gift,  
 He had bestowed on me something far greater:  
 The knowledge that seventeen years of rotating on one axis  
 And the second-degree murder of a cow  
 Had not been totally in vain.

(Published in *For a Better World* 2009).



watercolor, on tan paper; 7"x9"

**Christian Schmit**

## Kate Fadick

### 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.

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).

### Autumn Rituals, 2001

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).

### For the Anniversary of Any War

after Jane Kenyon's "Three Small Oranges"

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

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

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

again.

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).

# Kate Fadick

poet

## Lectio Divina I

*(Syrian poet Ibrahim Qashoush revitalized an old folk melody with rhythms and words to create the revolution's anthem. He was murdered in July, 2011.)*

Just before dawn  
I read

about the revolutionary  
poet whose words flame  
in the crowd

the one whose body  
is pulled from the river  
throat cut voice

stolen I gasp  
for breath

when the bird strikes  
my window its beak  
splintering the icy film

as if swords  
could be beaten  
into ploughshares

(Published in ***For a Better World 2014***).

## Lectio Divina II

*-for the poet in Toledo*

*(Nine Trappist monks lived peacefully with those around them in the mountains of Algeria. Seven were assassinated in 1996.)*

I read  
your poem

of neon  
signs faded

constellations  
fall back

two decades  
onto the snow

covered path  
through blue

cedars  
only silence

broken  
as monks  
chant *O*  
*Magnum*

*Mysterium*  
and stars

die once again

(Published in ***For a Better World 2014***).

## Lectio Divina III

*(More so in the first half of the 20th century than now, Syrian women would gather in each other's homes to sing and dance and form lifelong relationships. They were known as banat ishreh).*

It is late  
still

I make tea  
read on

wanting memories  
of what I have not  
seen or heard

the lamentations  
of the banat ishreh

on Aleppo evenings  
before the bombs

the wedding singer  
who dresses behaves  
like a man lives

with a woman  
alone now

braving  
a sniper to join

the bread line  
return home to hold  
a cup of tea

fire in our hands  
both of us

craving kindness  
on this shining night

(Published in ***For a Better World 2014***).

## Lectio Divina VI

*-on the anniversary of a school shooting*

I search  
until I find  
the poem

scan  
for two lines  
I remember

*Y en las calles la sangre de los ninos  
Corria simplemente, como sangre de ninos\**

lay  
the book  
aside

listen  
to the solo  
violin

*(\*And in the streets the blood of the children  
ran simply, like blood of children.)*

*Pablo Neruda  
"Till Explain Some Things"  
translation Galway Kinnell*

## Lectio Divina IX

I read  
of burned out  
villages

on precarious  
borders,  
see pictures

of refugees  
standing  
in what's left.

I go to the kitchen.

Little wonder  
I am taken  
by surprise

as spicy  
sweetness  
of parsnip fills

the room  
at first cut.

(Both Poems Published in ***For a Better World 2014***).

**For a Better World**

## Mark Flanigan

### The Agnostic's Prayer

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

—Franz Wright, "Kyrie"

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

than a corpse. Little  
dead feet, little dead hands

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World* 2013).

### gone doctor

*for Aralee Strange (1943-2013)*

ding  
the elevator rings  
door opens  
someone's there

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

isn't it something?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

here there is no proof

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

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

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



wood, playing cards, ink, on illustration board; 10"x7.5"

**Tim McMichael**



# Mark Flanigan

poet

no discrimination here  
it's for the birds

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

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

doctor's out now  
if you catch my drift

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

probably not a hill of beans

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

Over the Rhine

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

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

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

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

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

don't leave just now

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

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

I only know

*someone wants my advice*

say you standing inside looking outside the mind's eye

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*you bet, bubba*      *yeah buddy, you bet*

(Published in ***For a Better World 2015***).



bleach, ink, chalk, on colored paper; 11"x8.5"

**Kate Rowekamp**

## Gary Gaffney

### I Am Not Dead

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World* 2013).



oil, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Ken Swinson**

## Karen George

### Give and Take

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).

### Newly Homeless

In the booth near mine he shivers  
despite a wool calf-length coat.  
An oversized suitcase serves as footrest,  
backpack bulged beside him  
like a stuffed animal.

He looks sixteen, so thin, bleary-eyed,  
pale hands clutching a foam coffee cup.  
It's sixty outside, but all day rain  
weeps into you.

He slides off a knit cap,  
secures it below a thigh,  
lays head on table,  
arms like a nest enfold his skull  
barely bigger than a child's,  
inch-long blond hair in tufts.  
Down only a minute,  
he raises up, scans the room.

I ask if he's okay, if he needs food,  
has any money. *A little*, he says.  
When I give him a twenty, he thanks me,  
asks if I'll watch what I suspect  
is all he owns, crosses the lot  
to a liquor store. I release  
a sigh along with any notion  
of what he should have bought.

He returns, hand tucked deep  
in a pocket, grabs his cup.  
Back from the bathroom, he sips,  
eyes closed, belly breaths.

I say, *take care*, as I leave,  
the scent of wet wool, liquor rises  
rancid as regret.

(Published in *For a Better World 2014*).

## Diane Germaine

### Today the Ash

Today the ash became no more.  
With each year another set of trees  
becomes so diseased they are uprooted  
or cut down - too costly to try and  
cure them.

Before the ash, the great sycamore  
came crashing, lost weight, lost  
appendages, lost beauty - became  
a scathed monolith overtaken by  
creeping ivy, mold, fungus, termites.

This morning I watched for hours as a  
tree man straddled the ash creeping  
upwards, leaning out at crazy angles,  
twisting in the currents - an inch worm  
in the distance. He pulled up his saw,

buzzed and cut, buzzed and cut.  
Dust came flying out as one dead arm  
after another fell, littering the leaf floor  
below. Soon he became taller than the  
old ash - wrapped 'round the wind,

his yellow helmet a bulls-eye cap.  
Outside the kitchen window my maple  
still lives, is still smiling with her shade in  
summer, is still majestic against the  
pre-winter sky. But for how long?

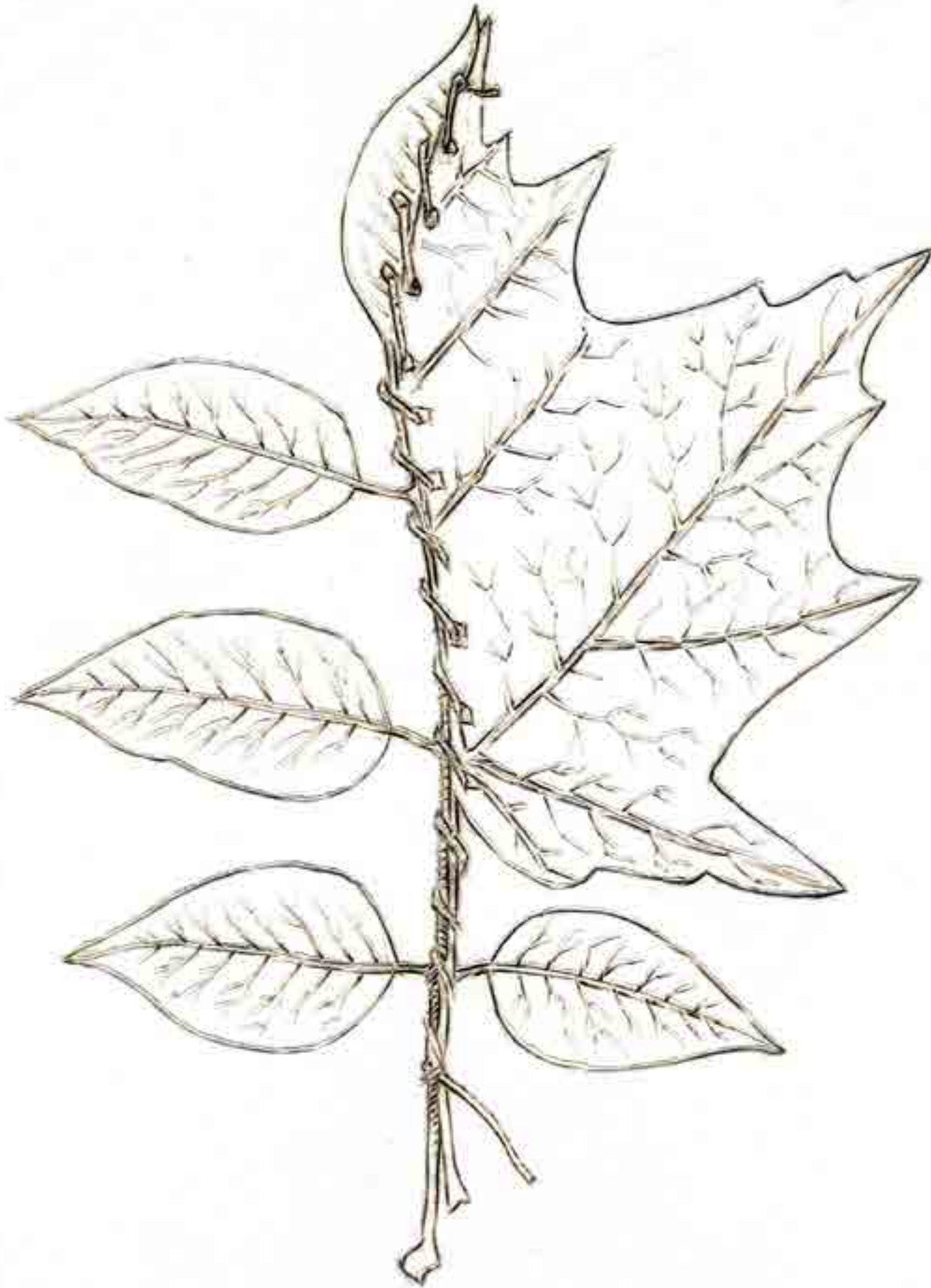
She still has squirrels skittering in and  
out - small moving balls of fur running  
vertical, making nests in the aeries way  
up; a bird or two still flits from branch  
to branch eyeing the view.

I should be grateful - my maple tree  
relives herself every year, and though  
I hate gathering up the leaves every fall  
this year her leaves spanned large as giant's  
hands and they were an abundant crop.

This afternoon I'll line up the leaf bags  
a-plenty all along the garage walls.  
They'll be filled with the crunch and  
crackle of her largesse. Then I'll  
go sit at my kitchen table, stare out,

ponder her bounty for the spring that  
may come, and I'll deny again her  
inevitable demise.

(Published in *For a Better World 2014*).



pyrography, on Bristol board; 9.5"x7"

**Rod Northcutt**

## Michael Geyer

### Atomos

There are tire  
tracks on  
the moon

with jettisoned  
tools and waste  
materials

and four  
decades  
of doubt,

two piles of  
forged iron in the  
Challenger Deep,

enough  
heavily guarded  
fissile material

to drive an  
agnostic to  
quote sacred text

and yet we  
continue  
bombing the possibilities

out of the wild  
cracks of a  
morning,

burning books  
written only  
in the hearts

of unborn  
children,  
leaving only

the smell of  
charred pages  
on the wind.

(Published in *For a Better World 2013*).

### Tacking

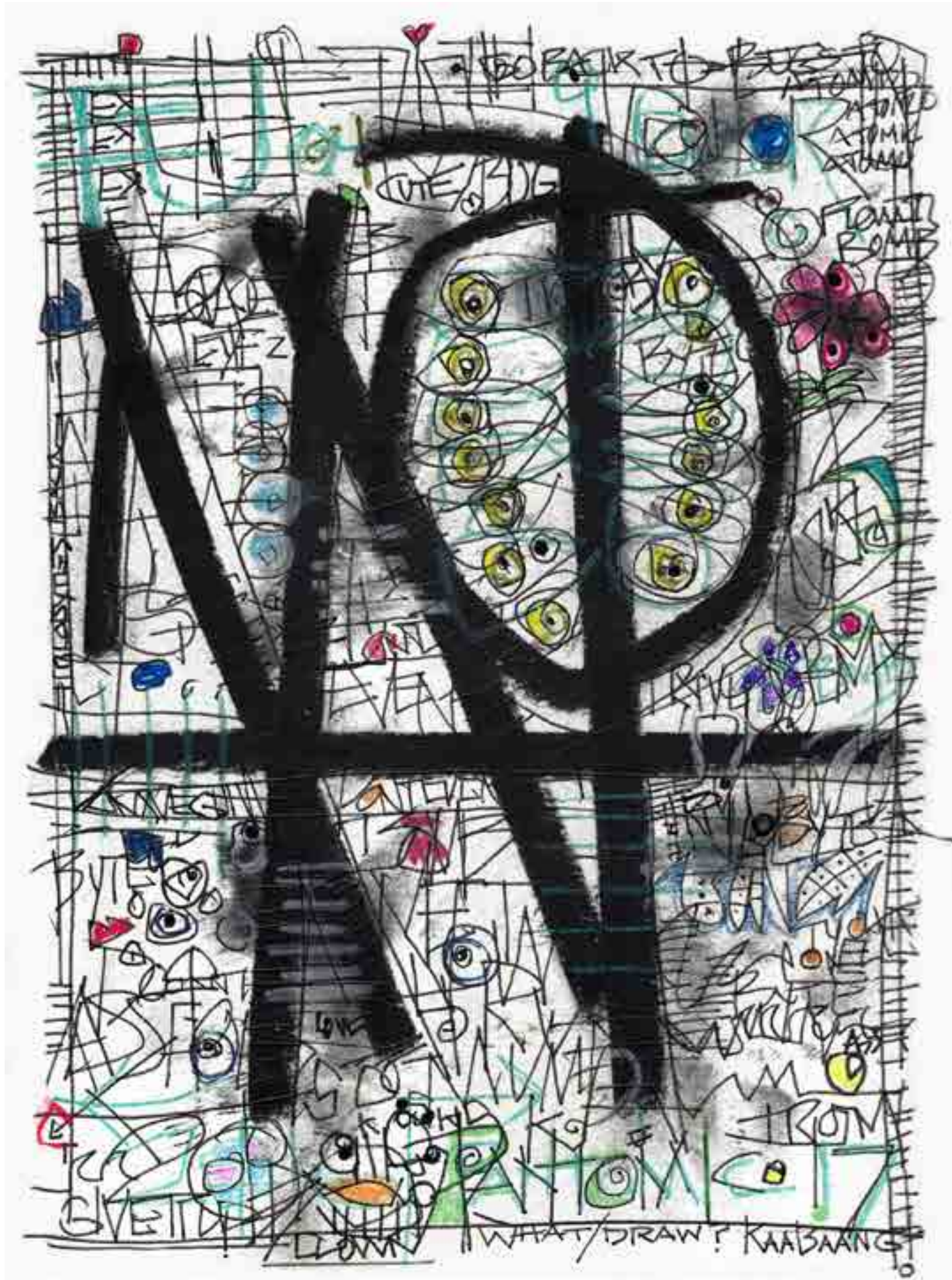
Nothing I do  
will keep me  
from being buried  
under my flag

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

forcing me  
to exist  
on the blind side  
of power.

I can only hope  
for collateral damage  
to save me.

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).



charcoal, pen, color pencil, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Holland Davidson**

## Susan F. Glassmeyer

### The Strafing

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

*(a partly found poem)*

1.

July, 1950.

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.

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

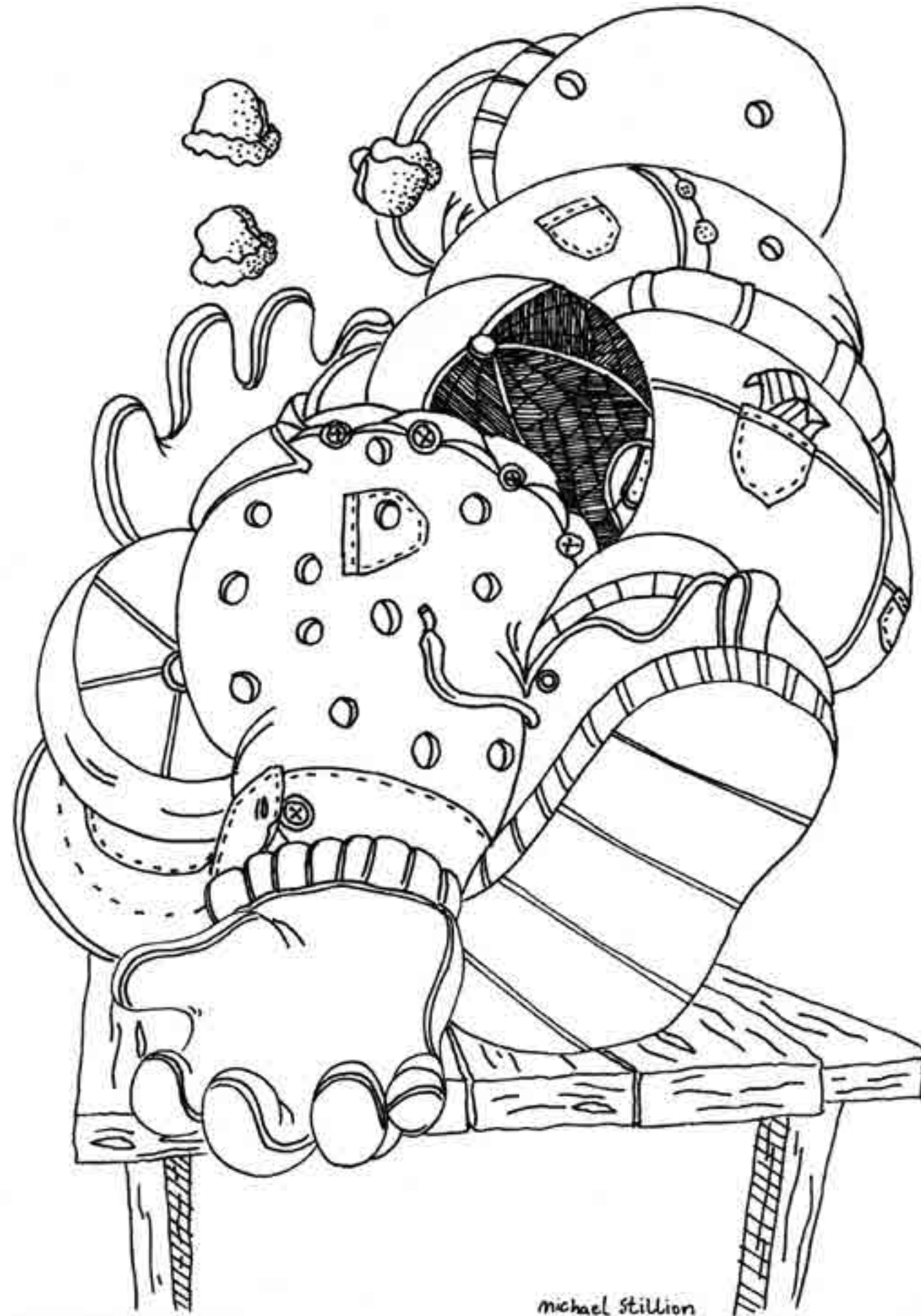
3.

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World* 2007).



black ink, on paper; 11"x8.25"

**Michael Stillion**



collage, on paper; 10"x8"

**Brenda Tarbell**

## Nicole Grant

### 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.

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).

### 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.

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).



ink, graphite, color pencil, on paper; 10"x7.5"

**Billy Simms**

## Gerry Grubbs

### In the Orchard

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).

### He Sang

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2013*).





color pencil, graphite, on tan paper; 11"x8.5"

**Lisa Hueil Conner**

## Arturo Gutiérrez-Plaza

### Mrs Gardner

She was born three years after  
and died two before her husband.  
She is lady Gardner,  
whose maiden name  
used to be Bertie Miller.

She did not live the end of the first war  
but knew that her son would die in the second.  
I suppose she was happy, at some moments of her life,  
even though no photos are there to show it.

On this gray, cold and foggy afternoon  
this is all I am able to see  
when I read her name on her tomb.

We both know that this will be  
our only encounter.  
I will not return, I will not set foot again  
in this city, nor in this cemetery.

Maybe one of her granddaughters  
will pick up a flower already wilted  
at the base of her epitaph.  
A rose still alive  
and left there, at the beginning of fall,  
by an anonymous visitor.

Translated from Spanish by **Saad Ghosn**

(Published in **For a Better World 2009**).

### Mrs Gardner

*Nació tres años después  
y murió dos antes que su marido.  
Se trata de la señora Gardner,  
cuyo nombre de soltera  
acostumbraba a ser Bertie Miller.*

*No conoció el cese de la primera guerra  
pero supo que su hijo moriría en la segunda.  
Sospecho que fue feliz, en algún instante de su vida,  
aunque no hay fotos que lo testimonien.*

*En esta tarde gris, fría y con neblina  
es todo lo que alcanzo a ver  
cuando leo su nombre sobre su tumba.*

*Ambos sabemos que éste será  
nuestro único encuentro.  
No volveré, no pisaré de nuevo  
esta ciudad, ni este cementerio*

*Tal vez alguna de sus nietas  
ha de recoger una flor ya marchita  
al pie de su epitafio.  
Una rosa que aun está viva  
y que dejó aquí, al inicio del otoño  
un anónimo visitante.*

# Arturo Gutiérrez-Plaza

poet

## Song for Phillip, My Spanish Student

Phillip attends classes  
daily  
in his green uniform.

Phillip is almost a child  
who confuses  
Mexico with Madrid.

Phillip likes  
to be recounted  
stories of overseas.

To be told the victories  
of Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus  
and his legacy in Gettysburg.

Phillip knows only three things:

Faith in his country,  
money  
and God.

In this prison he has always lived:  
with no evil.

Phillip soon  
will go to war  
like Johnny.

Which forgotten language  
will he bring back from Babel?

In which tense will he learn  
to conjugate  
'to kill'?

Who will occupy his desk  
and follow his lessons  
when he will cease to be?

*Translated from Spanish by Saad Ghosn*

(Published in *For a Better World 2008*).

## Canción para Phillip, Mi Estudiante de Español

*Phillip asiste a clases  
diariamente  
con su verde uniforme.*

*Phillip es casi un niño  
que confunde  
México con Madrid.*

*A Phillip le gusta  
que le cuenten  
historias de ultramar.*

*Que le hablen de las victorias  
de Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus,  
y su legado en Gettysburg.*

*Phillip conoce sólo tres cosas:*

*La fe en la patria,  
el dinero  
y Dios.*

*En esa cárcel ha vivido siempre:  
sin maldad.*

*Phillip pronto  
se irá a la guerra  
como Mambrún,*

*¿Qué lengua olvidada  
traerá de Babel?*

*¿En qué tiempo aprenderá  
a conjugarse  
matar?*

*¿Quién ocupará su pupitre  
y seguirá sus lecciones  
cuando no esté?*



mixed media, acrylic, marker, on paper; 9"x6.5"

**Frank Satogata**

## Barbara Gutting

### 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 birthday 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"

*(Published in **For a Better World 2005**).*

### 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

*(Published in **For a Better World 2005**).*



watercolor, on paper; 11.5"x9"

**Merle Rosen**

## Richard Hague

### Galway Kinnels Reads James Wright, Martins Ferry Ohio, April 13, 1991

#### 1: *He Reads, And Is Interrupted*

Galway's voice, rich and plain  
as his linen shirt after he sheds his jacket  
(we wait for the workman next  
to roll his sleeves, forearms  
over the lectern  
as over the fenders  
of a car, wrenches and hammers  
rattling in the pocket of his tweed)  
—his voice moves out among us, slow, tentative,  
tough supple garfish probing the banks.  
Bly presides to his right, *ex cathedra*,  
the wild scud of his hair  
a squall, his eyes closed  
so that the words may enter his skin  
as wrens might hallow red air.

Then three quick blasts  
from the emergency airhorn three  
more *hahn hahn hahn* three  
more:  
sound stunning as falling I-beams,  
torpedoed propane tanks,  
colliding reefers or coalcars.

Galway smiles, blinks, gapes about, unsettled.  
The audience, outlanders mostly, scholars,  
poets, a few working stiffs from somewhere else  
in the world, all shift and mumble  
till the silence focuses again.  
Gurgle of a coffeemaker somewhere,  
library murmur: Galway reads on.

Meanwhile, slipping outside,  
I see the life squads, four or five  
ambulances, pulling into the millgate by the river.

Outside Dutch Henry's bar, three men  
stand smoking on the curb:  
of course they have lived the lives of tough angels,  
Wright would have had it no other way,  
would have had them step out of a joint  
as out of the river's darkest channel,  
wiping their hands on their pants and cursing,  
as they do right here.  
Nor would they have faces other than these:  
Coleridge, Goethe, the old Leonardo,  
that dusty-browed mechanic.  
Nor is there around them any nimbus  
but graylight and the stink of slag.  
There's blood, maybe, in the mill down there,  
freshly broken bone, flesh snagged, flayed, scorched—  
the thousand wounds this place inflicts—  
and where the railroad bends along the river,  
old snow like drifts of broken fathers  
slumps ashore.

#### 2: *Life Here*

No fault of Robert's or Galway's  
that they do not understand  
the three blasts on the horn.  
There are birds that live here  
whose names remain, even to the natives,  
completely unknown,  
birds that walk the depths of river  
among chains and broken towboats,  
nesting in the silted skulls of virgins.

There are animals in these parts  
that eat fire, chlorine, slag,  
and that have eighteen stomachs to  
digest them into willow leaves and flies.  
Poetry means nothing.

There are teachers walking the streets here  
wearing brass knuckles, married to  
iron bridges and drowned Buicks.

There are restaurants just upriver,  
along the railroad tracks,  
where a thousand last meals  
have been eaten, and bars where  
no one drinks.

Churches that scream.

Hillsides bleeding children.

Catfish that will not be opened,  
even by fishermen's knives.

#### 3: *Wright, Speaking From Heaven*

*I ran away from this place  
forty years ago, and was smart to do it:  
why do you come back, friends of mine,  
strangers with pens in your pockets,  
talking a load of pious crap among those I avoided  
and those who often hated me?  
Listen: places hardly ever want their poets.*

*Ah, Christ, you know I love you.  
Come clean. Nothing has changed.  
The rich still devour the poor.*

*Tell them what America has done,  
what America has failed to do—  
tell them why you keep coming back,  
putting my words in your mouths.*

(Published in *For a Better World* 2006).

# Richard Hague

poet

## Xenia

(from *A History of the Former World*)

*But here is a poor homeless man,  
and you must look after him.  
—Princess Nausicaa, The Odyssey, Book VI*

You may have seen him—  
friend, father, brother, son—  
at Vine and Elder, Over-The-Rhine,  
brightfaced in late winter  
low-west light,  
beard gray-gold and sparse  
as Ithaka’s scraggly wheat.  
Now empty bottles glint  
in the gutter like  
wave-washed wine-dark stones, and  
the shades of his dead comrades  
stumble and moan  
in piss-stinking doorways  
while he does not sleep,  
still lion-like in the habit watchfulness  
of the soldier and survivor.

His arrival in our city?  
Washed ashore, unconscious,  
at the Public Landing,  
he crawled up granite cobbles,  
coughing oily water,  
eyes burning.  
The police were called:  
they smelled wine on his breath  
(the last of casks he’d scavenged  
behind a Pittsburgh 7-Eleven  
to share with his thirsty crew)  
and he was unshaven;  
nor would he tell them his name;  
when they roughed him up  
he blurted, I am *Everyman*, I am *Nobody*,  
so they punched him.  
Into a squad car  
they finally hustled him, silent  
where he had been thrown,  
then to the Justice Center,  
fingerprinted  
(to no avail—not in the system,  
no more than Laestrygonians),  
told to strip and shower  
then dressed in coarse clothes  
(offered no oil, no soft hands  
of servants to soothe him,  
no banquet in his honor  
where he could tell his tale,  
name his father,  
recount his greatest adventures)  
rather, he was smacked and shackled,  
bum-rushed, cursed, made sad sport of,  
then, in cold and wind,  
thrown back on the street,

Because we have forgotten  
the ancient wisdom, the deeply  
human way: help poor  
strangers, outlanders,  
pilgrims: offer *xenia*,  
“hospitality,”  
because our distressed,  
our homeless, our  
unfortunate and lost,  
all “pale forms  
fainting at the door”  
may well be heroes,  
gods, saviors, and we must  
welcome them among us  
or suffer wraths and ruins,  
the “mechanism of  
enforcement” which may be  
the forfeit of our souls.

(Published in *For a Better World 2014*).

## Under His Garden the Sounds

*re: horizontal hydraulic fracturing*

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).

## Think Again, O Pilgrims

I.

### *Failing To Make It To The New Frontier*

They settle in anonymous utopias

near the outerbelt, close to sports malls,  
furniture outlets, putt-putt courses

not far from the ruins of abandoned small towns

where the churches are now warehouses  
for discontinued Christmas items

and the mayor’s into blondes and real estate

in Florida and the grade school has been  
abandoned too and a new one put up,

multiple-building style in the middle of a field.

No trees. High fence.

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

II.

### *Fifteen Mile Drive To School*

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

Where once a barn shone, full of calves.

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

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

Now it’s algebra, keyboarding, or the only  
events that even remember the word “field”:

football, God help them, or hockey.

III.

### *Driving Drunk In The Subdivision*

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

No one prays or imagines  
that he might drive  
off the edge  
of their new nowhere,  
out of the subdivision  
with its expensive starter  
castles and drifts  
of mulch, and come home  
close to the woods:

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2015*).

## Unfinished to Do List

(from *A History of the Former World*)

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

Find the center of peace  
and live there  
like the chipmunks  
and the voles.  
Entertain light  
and air. Develop  
and deploy  
small factories  
of silence.  
Sing like a bee  
on a golden wire.

Find three years  
in which to research,  
on the wing,  
and then write  
the long-suppressed,  
though long-needed  
*History Of The World  
According To The Birds*.

(Published in *For a Better World 2013*).

## Tierney E. Hamilton

### Did I Say to Bring the Ancestors?

They were there  
Invisible vapors  
In the air  
Stomping feet  
Invoked

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

Did I say to Bring the Ancestors?

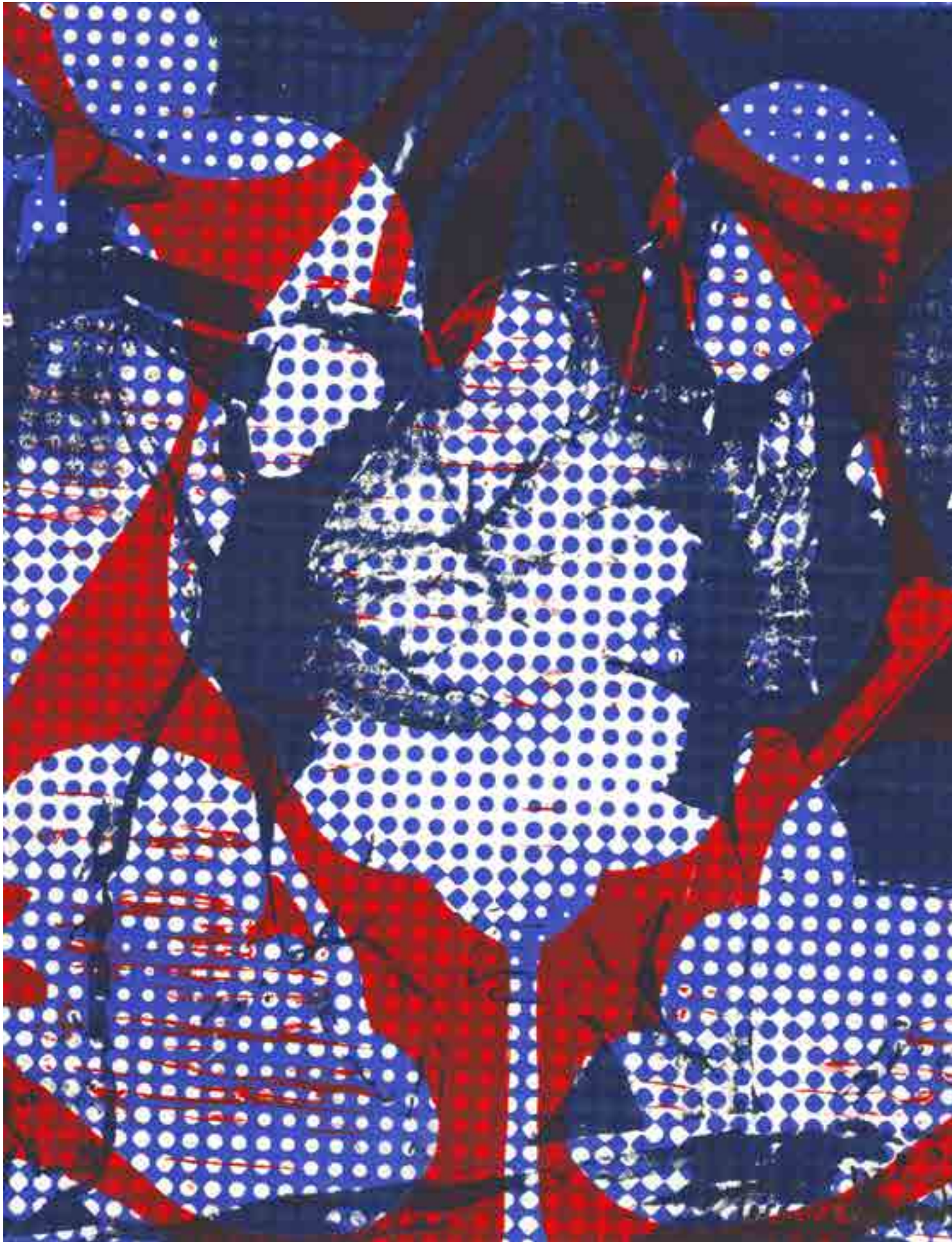
To bring forth a dream dormant  
Goosestepped into the dust  
Those seeds/promises planted  
In the slaveowner's lash  
In the sweatshops  
Native American  
Veil of tears  
Sharecropper's blues

The American Dream was about to be hijacked into a Halliburton nightmare  
Sliding in an oil price rigged armed classes and race warfare.

I am inviting all the ancestors here to bring forth a dream  
A dream rising like smoke  
Asking Duke, Ella, Thelonious, Langston, James B. to write the dream  
Across the people's heart.

\*\*\*The ancestors showed up.  
And showed out.....TWICE.

(Published in *For a Better World 2013*).



screen and relief print, on Rives BFK paper; 11"x8.5"

**Terence Hammonds**

## Pauletta Hansel

### Coal

By the time I knew that coal  
was something more than grit and fire  
in the belly of the house  
and had been held in deeper  
vessels than the bucket

that once sent me sprawling  
down the cellar steps  
and on then to the gleaming room  
where the doctor stitched  
a crescent moon above my eye;

by the time that coal  
was more than just the crack  
in daddy's windshield, black rocks  
flung from trucks careening daily  
up and down our narrow road,

the coal that lined the bellies of the mountains  
where our houses perched precarious  
as hawks' nests or nestled in the hollowed  
places at the joining of those hills  
was spent.

Only the ashy seams stitched just below  
the sassafras and pine, beneath  
the redbud, dogwood, hickory and ferns,  
under the leaf-mulched soil and sandstone  
still endured.

Now that's gone too,  
blasted and stripped away,  
the hills a moonscape up above  
the sagging houses and the towns.  
The road, its hairpin

turns and crumbling berms  
is gone as well;  
a new highway rumbles through  
the place that doctor sewed my eye:  
all scars remain.

(Published in *For a Better World 2011*).

### The Purpose of Poetry

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2015*).

### If I Ever

If I ever make a movie about war,  
there will be no death

without a story,  
no life a sprawling body on a field.

It would be too long, I know,  
this movie about war

where every body has a mother  
and a turtle or a cat.

He broke his leg when he was seven,  
and his sister called him names.

In school he hated science, could not bear  
to slice into a beating heart.

And now his girl proclaims his feet  
too cold in winter,

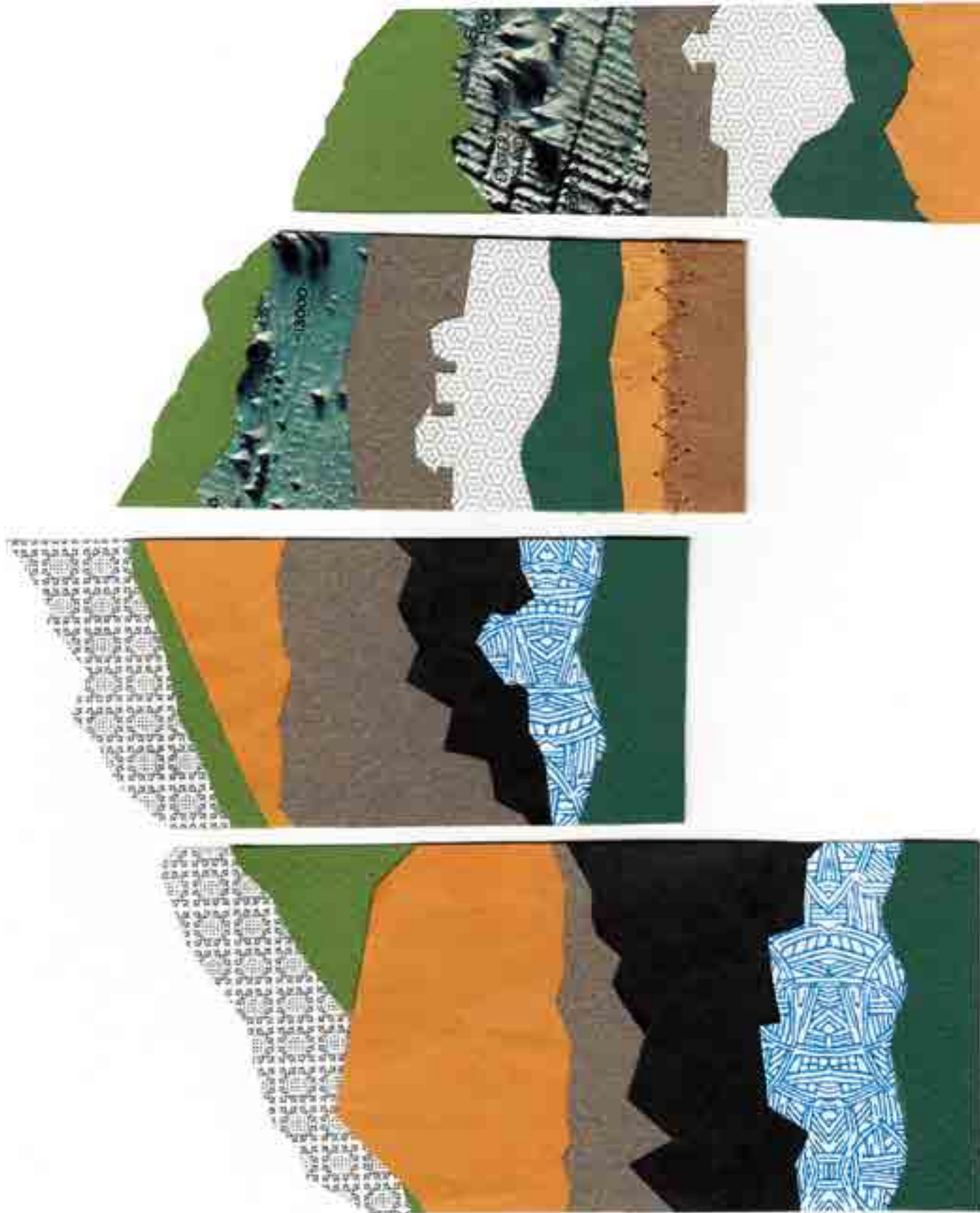
but forbids him socks in bed:  
she will warm them here

between her own,  
shivering in his arms.

No one would want to watch  
when every bullet breaking bone

begins a life told backwards,  
death to birth.

(Published in *For a Better World 2004*).



*mixed media, collage, on paper; 7.5"x9"*

**Cynthia Gregory**



*mixed media, painting, on paper; 11"x8.5"*

**Lisa Treelynn Scherra**

## Karen Heaster

### Richard

He stands at the end of the exit ramp almost every day  
 Holding a sign that says "cancer" and "I'm humiliated"  
 I've seen him there during my commute home since last fall  
 I give him a dollar every day I see him  
 Holding a sign that says "cancer" and "I'm humiliated"  
 I look for him now on my homeward commute  
 I give him a dollar every day I see him  
 He pays someone rent to live in their garage  
 I look for him now on my homeward commute  
 We've exchanged first names and have traffic light conversations  
 He pays someone rent to live in their garage  
 He says he works harder now than he ever had to on a job  
 We've exchanged first names and have traffic light conversations  
 It's not the best location for a man with a sign  
 He says he works harder now than he ever had to on a job  
 The local police run him off but he keeps coming back  
 It's not the best location for a man with a sign  
 I've never seen another person make a donation  
 The local police run him off but he keeps coming back  
 As he says, "A man's gotta eat and have a roof"  
 He makes no move toward my vehicle until I wave  
 I give him a dollar every day I see him  
 He thanks me politely – a small, sad man  
 He stands at the end of the exit ramp almost every day

(Published in *For a Better World 2014*).

### Love's Boundaries

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2015*).





*mixed media, collage, on paper; 9"x6.5"*

**Tracy Featherstone**

## Jimmy Heath

### 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.

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).

### 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.

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).



relief print, spray paint, on illustration board; 13"x9"

**Emily Sites**

## Mike Heilman

### Caution

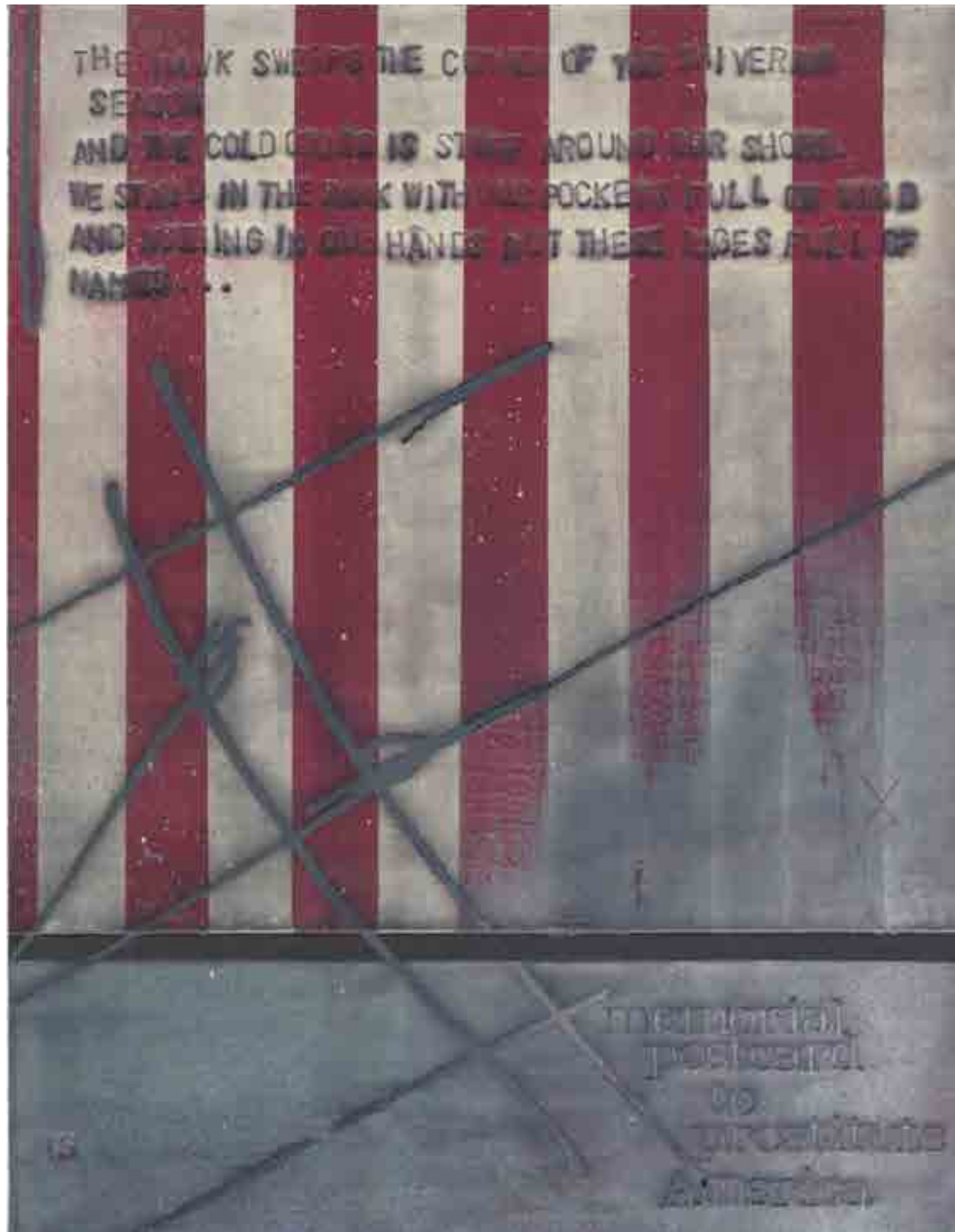
Caution  
 There is a poet among you.  
 A subversive, a spy  
 mind your tongue,  
 keep your secrets secure.  
 He could be anywhere.  
 Among your sunrise,  
 your silos,  
 tobacco fields or fountains,  
 under the street lamp, out front,  
 nonchalant,  
 or polite in your sitting room.

Caution  
 there is a poet among you.  
 A glutton, a thirsty parasite  
 laying in wait,  
 in the shallows, lecherous for skin.  
 Your discarded conversations  
 are his acquisitions.  
 Stealing crumbs and morsels  
 to make a meal.  
 A bite of beauty  
 ingested image  
 gnawing on your shy nudity.  
 until you're malnourished, left alone,  
 and his page is bloated with words.

Caution  
 There is a poet among you.  
 A pick pocket, a bandit  
 roll up the scrolls  
 and double back to camouflage  
 the X mark in the sand.  
 Keep the combination safe,  
 sleep with one eye on the Gold.  
 He'll find it with intuition  
 steal it on impulse  
 and be gone before the investigation.

Caution  
 There is a poet among you.  
 An infidel, a sniper  
 you won't see him before he sees you.  
 take cover, stay out of the open  
 out of his cross hairs  
 he's a high powered lens  
 examining angles, wind speeds  
 resistance and distance.  
 His passion is pulling triggers  
 blowing minds  
 filling godless graves  
 with the faithful.  
 One man's freedom fighter  
 another man's terrorist.

(Published in *For a Better World* 2014).



latex, spray paint, powdered graphite, vinyl, oil, wax, die-stamped embossing, on Arches paper; 11"x8.5"

**Joseph Winterhalter**

## Michael Henson

### Memorial for the Homeless Dead

The winter wind they call the Hawk  
 rounds the corner of the season  
 and skitters the last leaves to the fencelines.  
 We stand in a park with a paper in our hands  
 and down the paper runs a list of names  
 None of the names will answer if we call them  
 but we read them to remember that they had names.  
 these people of the underbridge,  
 the condominiums of the shelters,  
 the apartments of park benches,  
 the cardboard havens and bedrooms of the poor.  
 What can we know about these names but that they died  
 ---some in the usual way  
 and some in ways it hurts to think on.  
 They died of violence, accident, and neglect.  
 They died of untreated disease,  
 of over-dose and under-attention.  
 They were cold, they were hungry,  
 they were sick, and they died.  
 And now they are nothing but a list of names running off  
 into the wind.  
 The Hawk sweeps the corner of the shivering season  
 and the cold grass is stiff around our shoes.  
 We stand in a park with our pockets full of wind  
 and nothing in our hands but these pages full of names  
 and the names are fading from our sight.  
 They were cold, they were hungry, they were sick.  
 They were over-dosed and under-funded,  
 displaced from the neighborhood of the living  
 and now their names trickle into the cold, stiff grass.  
 The Hawk tests the currents of the turning season  
 and strips the warmth from the downtown towers.  
 We stand in a park with our hats full of dust and we ask,  
 who decided which doors would open and  
 who decided which doors would close  
 and who decided these names would be on the list that we  
 read this day.  
 They were cold, they were tired,  
 they were gentrified and they died  
 and now their names fade into the light.  
 The Hawk calls once in the sweep of the changing season  
 and wickers away the last of the leaves.  
 We stand in a park with our hands full of light  
 and in the light a list of eternal names.  
 They were cold, they were sick, they were hungry.  
 They were over-dosed and under-guided and they died.  
 If we call these names now and it seems they do not answer,  
 we can learn to listen in the grass, in the wind,  
 in the shower of sunlight that falls around us.  
 We can listen in the cold cry of the Hawk.  
 Listen close:  
 They are a whisper now on the tongue of God.  
 We call their names to remember they had names,  
 these people of the underbridge,  
 the condominiums of the shelters,  
 the apartments of park benches,  
 the cardboard havens and bedrooms of the poor.

(Published in *For a Better World 2008*).

### Postcards to America

America,  
 I'm writing from a very far place  
 called America,  
 One of us is in the wrong place.

America,  
 I'm steering an eight-cylinder Conestoga  
 down the Trail of Tears.  
 There are no exits.

America,  
 I'm blind and deaf and my heart is breaking  
 but if I touch the hem of your garment,  
 I might win the Lottery.

America,  
 The walls of the abandoned factories  
 are slathered with graffiti.  
 I can't read a word of it,

America,  
 Is it me?  
 Each part of you looks the same.  
 Your elbow looks exactly like your elbow.

America,  
 What's up with these angry waves of grain?  
 These toppled mountain majesties?  
 These out-sourced fruited plains?  
 America, I think the suburbs  
 Are very close to hell.

America,  
 I can't argue anymore.  
 When I hear the blonde men bicker on the radio,  
 I want to go someplace and die.

America,  
 I don't think I can bear  
 the weight of your sins any longer.

(Published in *For a Better World 2010*).

# Michael Henson

## Prostitute at Walnut and Liberty

She stands her corner,  
squares her shoulders,  
and scans the streets  
with a professional, fire-hardened eye.  
There is much for her to watch.  
Cars nurse at the pumps of the Shell station.  
Carpenters glance back at her at they shoulder their lumber.  
Dope boys, arrogant shadows on the opposite corner,  
study the noontday traffic.  
And so does she.  
A BMW passes an aging Toyota,  
a patrol car spreads blue light  
across an Audi with tinted windows,  
and a pickup truck stops short,  
cut off by an SUV  
the size of a small Midwestern town.  
And on it goes.  
Impatient,  
she strides one way,  
then another.  
Some cars cruise slowly round her corner  
and the men who drive the cars  
turn their eyes from the traffic to gaze at her.  
She stares them back  
with a question in her brow  
and sometimes a word  
and sometimes a shift of her shoebox hips  
(She has gone, you see, so very slim.  
She has that hollow in the jaw;  
she has that shadow below each eye.)  
I do not know what these men see when they see her  
but I know  
she has a golden brain  
and a rapid heart  
and internal organs shapely as fruit  
and silver nerves  
that have been frailed and fouled by crack cocaine.  
And I know that  
when she was small  
she was greeted with joy  
and she was greeted with dismay  
and when she cried she was comforted  
and when she cried she was ignored  
and she was fed and coddled  
and she was not-fed and she was cursed  
and her life which was perfectly normal  
and her history which was utterly cruel  
have brought her to this corner  
where she studies the passing cars  
and the glances of the men in the cars.  
She sweeps the street with a hungry eye  
and she is not satisfied.  
She strides one way, then another,  
down one street and back.

Her arms swing like hammers  
but she always comes back  
to her post on the corner  
where, quickly, she looks right, she looks left,  
then right and left again,  
like a hawk on a rail.

(Published in *For a Better World 2004*).

## Poem for Esme

*in memory of Esme Kenney (1996-2009)*

I do not understand what God was thinking  
when the earth split and swallowed the song.  
A stippled hawk barked across the sky.  
The caterpillar dog howled in the pit of the forest.  
And in the forest, the silent, littered forest  
chapeled itself a chapel out the tangled limb and vine  
and fractured flowers of the grass.

There is a circle broken now.  
There is a cello strangled and its heart torn open.  
There is an aria choking in the throat of the guitar.  
The world is a tangled, tumble-down fracturing place.  
And we have only a little riddle of a song  
to make it holy.  
And still the earth cracked open  
and swallowed the song.  
So I do not understand what God was thinking.

Can you open the gates of the sea?  
Can you mine the sky?  
Can your arms embrace the shivering earth?  
We are small, you see, too small  
to ever understand what God was thinking.

But I will make my little fiddling song,  
my twelve bars with the bark of the hawk,  
my little fractured chapel of a song.  
I will dance my little stumbling dance of a poem  
up through the halls of the hawk  
and to the workshop of the weather.  
For there is no place to take my complaint  
but to God.

Though I do not understand what God was thinking.

(Published in *For a Better World 2009*).

poet

## The Poets Drive East into Albuquerque

*For Fred Whitehead*

Route 66 falls  
straight as an Acoma arrow  
down into the valley of the Rio Grande.  
We roll past signs of twisted neon,  
the white bearded ghosts of the Okies,  
fast food endless fast food restaurants,  
a pipe metal cross wreathed in plastic flowers  
for some poor anonymous saint  
martyred by the caesars of internal combustion.  
A girl crosses Coors Road with her hands going pitapat.  
A man and woman argue in the asphalt of a McDonald's.  
Children burst into furious desert flower.  
I want to know,  
what detoured the pilgrims  
who stay in these sad faux-Navaho motels?  
And are they under a curse?  
I want to know,  
whose souls are kicking up the dust of the trailer park?  
But we are silent as a pair of Trappists gone AWOL.  
For the wide, scattered city lies before us.  
The low, salmon-colored houses of the neighborhoods,  
the sun-struck downtown towers  
and above it all, solid and somnolent  
as gods who have just made love,  
the sun-mottled Sandia Mountains.

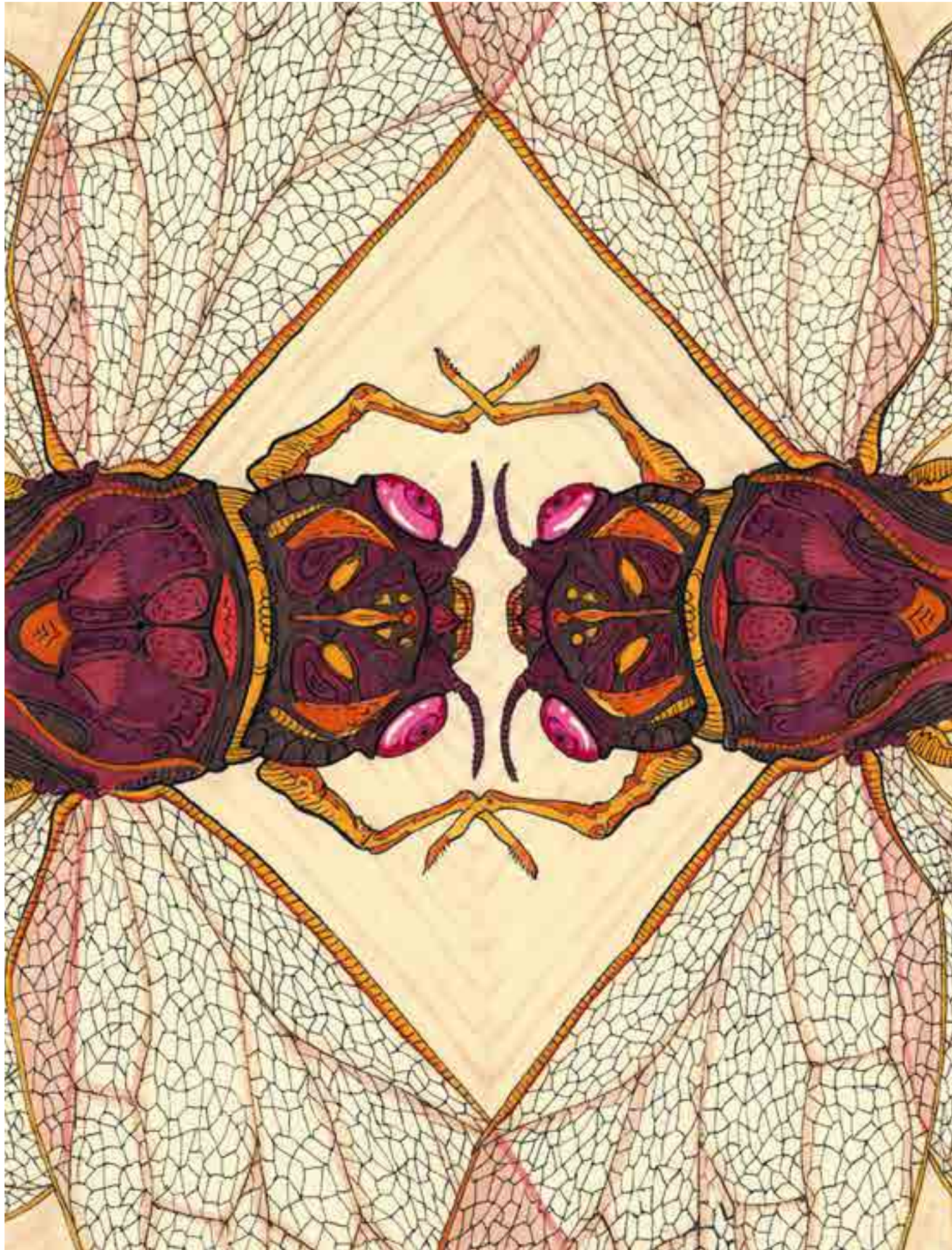
(Published in *For a Better World 2011*).

## To Tom McGrath in Heaven: A Letter from the Ark

Forty days, forty nights,  
dollars rained down.  
Banknotes choked the rivers  
and backwatered into the cornfields.  
Quarters washed out the gullies  
and the hillsides were gouged by rivulets of small change.  
It rained cancelled checks, money orders, stocks,  
bonds, letters of credit, IRAs.  
It rained certificates of deposit, debit cards, entire ATM  
machines.  
It rained toaster ovens, second cars, iPods.  
Things you never heard of, my friend.  
It rained SUVs, Hummers, all-terrain vehicles.  
It rained cell phones and digital cameras,  
hand-held electronic games,  
And all manner of cheap plastic toys.  
A day-long, night-long greenback rain  
that eroded the farms of the Dakotas,  
washed out the forests of Oregon,  
doused the fires of every steel mill on the Monongahela,  
and flattened the mountains of West Virginia,  
stripping them down the naked stone.  
The rained clotted the floodplain with silt,  
black water, Styrofoam, ranch houses,  
home entertainment centers,  
and the lacerated bodies of young soldiers.  
And still it rained, until  
we could see nothing but water  
horizon to horizon.  
It's been hard, my friend,  
to see the green waters rise to take everything we knew.  
It's still hard  
and I'm deadly scared.  
But we float on these waters in an ark of hope.  
Cubit by cubit, we built it together  
and two by two we staggered up the gangplank.  
It's crowded and it stinks  
and the nocturnals won't let the diurnals sleep  
and it seems this trip will never end.  
But you taught us well, my friend;  
we're all still here, plugging the leaks and patching  
the sails  
Day by day, we scrape the bat shit from the rafters.  
Day by day, we stop the lions from devouring the lambs.  
Day by day, we send out the little dove of a poem.  
Day by day, we watch  
for that little sprig of olive  
that tells us  
the blessed land is near.

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2007*).



marker, pen, on paper; 10"x7.5"

**Kenton Brett**

**Judi Hetrick**

## A Cicada War, or Praise and Lament

### *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

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).



mixed media, ball point pen, acrylic, marker, on matboard; 9"x6.5"

**Rob Jefferson**

## Jeffrey Hillard

### 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.

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).

### 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.

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).



watercolor, acrylic, on paper; 10.5"x6"

**Kimberly Shifflett**

## Sue Neufarth Howard

### Boss Rant

we need to talk

that tsunami business  
its outta my hands

you gotta understand  
I was just the builder

built this planet  
put you in it

just set things in motion  
no easy task

that 7 day rap  
way off base; don't work that fast

so its out of my control, forces collide  
shit happens, cause and effect ya know

love you all, but forces unleashed  
will have their way with you

after my so called Sunday rest, took up  
recycling; can't keep up with the work

what with tsunami, hurricanes,  
mudslides, crashes

floods, fires, cancer  
and what not, been working overtime

spirits stacked sky high  
understaffed – get my drift?

you disaster survivors, stop saying  
I yanked you out of harms way

I don't have time, don't have reason  
to pick and choose, you dig?

my job now, get those spirits back in action,  
repackage for a second shot, newborn

and by the way, I sent  
those commandments for a reason

check out the no kill clause  
what I really said – don't murder

and if you just can't control yourself  
you suicide bombers, Al Quaida guys

don't say it's on my account  
don't expect any sympathy from me

child-murderers, hopped up freaks  
when your time comes, you're goin' straight down

Listen up – don't ask for special favors either  
I got enough problems up here

there's that computer I put in your head  
and I gave each of you a piece of me

so get with it, get on the stick  
you've got the tools

do me a favor, give me 110% effort down there  
I'll hack out this disaster backlog up here

(Published in *For a Better World 2006*).

### Haiti Quakes

Tissue paper structures  
destined to fail;  
build weak to keep weak.  
No mercy in subsistence.

A feather on the back  
of a moving turtle  
blows away.

Earth yawns and stretches,  
its light load tumbles  
matchstick bodies topple.

In bedrock and sand,  
shifting soil, no feelings.  
Too late, we care.

Our comfort - our  
transgression; our self  
interest, their splintered  
bodies, their demise.

In post-shame, our penance;  
in atonement, hope for justice.

(Published in *For a Better World 2010*).

# Sue Neufarth Howard

poet

## A Mystery

In the dark and cold  
identified only by two words  
on a white tag  
*Unknown (River)*

Five feet four inches tall  
one hundred twenty-four pounds  
pulled from the Ohio River  
November – a week after Thanksgiving  
muddy riverbank, North Bend

She has a name – maybe a family  
maybe children

Now June – in a black plastic bag  
in a freezer – coroner’s office  
fan blows cold air constantly above her  
*“the lady from the river”*

The body will talk to you.  
Blond or gray hair  
curled toes – sign of Arthritis  
likely 60 or early 70’s

Found in white Easy Spirit gym shoes  
black skirt, black blouse  
around her neck – string of black and white beads  
maybe a waitress

Suffered trauma – possible high fall from a bridge  
only a few days spent in the water – identifiable  
if only someone could look at a picture and say  
*“That’s her”*

There is still hope her story will end differently  
fliers bearing her picture are handed out  
neighborhoods canvassed near  
where she was found

The riverbank will be searched again  
maybe something missed  
something with a name  
she has a name  
maybe they can find her family, too

Maybe someone will be grateful to know  
what happened to their missing  
sister, Mother, daughter

Maybe they will come for her  
give her a proper burial  
have a chance to say  
Goodbye

*\*Found poem, based on an article in the Cincinnati Enquirer.*

(Published in ***For a Better World 2008***).

## Whatever It Takes

A leap from the roof with hope  
for serious harm

two swallowed ballpoint pens,  
no accident

a hit man paid to maim –  
bullet in the leg

meds taken in  
triple doses.

In record numbers, our soldiers  
home from Iraq tour of duty

again...

and again

the fortunate  
unwounded, intact.

Family holds tighter,  
war ardor grows dimmer

tugged between nurture,  
risk of annihilation,

frayed, afflicted – visions  
of red angst, raw miasma.

Desperate acts of the combat  
weary, called for another round.

Whatever it takes, not  
to go back.

(Published in ***For a Better World 2009***).

## Rounds

Murder No. 18, Cincinnati, 2011.

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

Murder No. 35, yet not unfamiliar.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

bearing the pain, the endless pain.

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

(Published in ***For a Better World 2012***).

## Locked Away

Willard Asylum for the insane  
1910 - 1960, upstate New York.  
Committed patients arrive  
with a suitcase, holding all  
possessions thought needed.

Patients sent there for any reason:  
Epileptic seizures, homosexuality,  
promiscuous behavior, mothers’  
grief too long for a lost child.  
They were prisoners there,  
family abandoned.

Most never left. Average stay,  
30 years. Died there. Buried  
in graves - no name, marked  
only by number. Suitcases  
locked in an attic - forgotten.

Decades later, attic re-entered;  
Four hundred cases discovered.  
Contents of 80 photographed -  
window into lives and minds  
of those deemed not normal, unwell.

What’s found inside: Ladies’  
gold lame belts and sashes,  
fancy hats and shoes, perfumes,  
silver napkin ring, curling irons,  
sewing kit, personal letters,

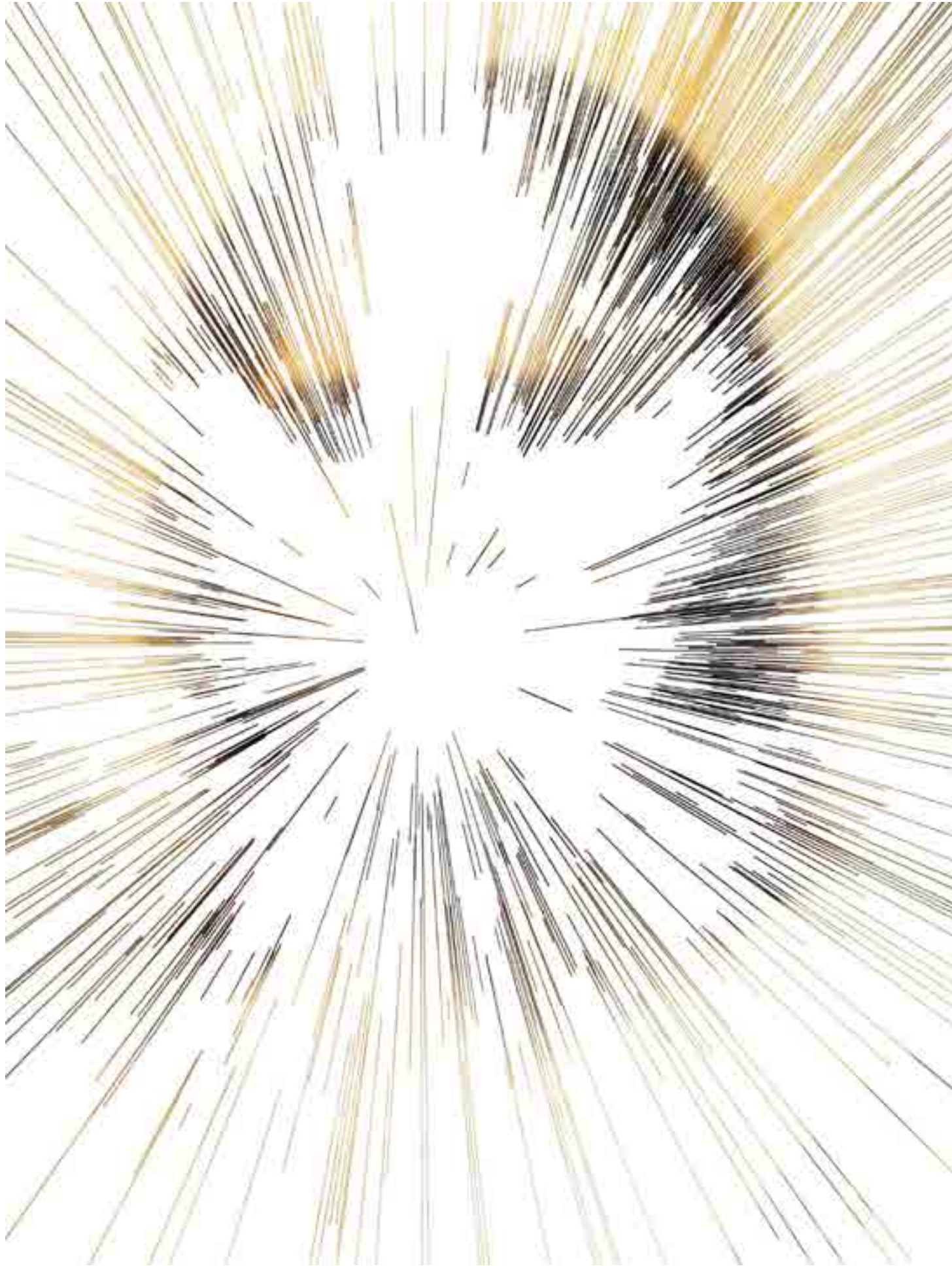
a man’s army uniform, grooming kit,  
bread ration card, toy pistol,  
photos of self and family, injection  
needles and epileptic drugs.

In others: Prosthetic leg, a newspaper  
bought the day before commitment,  
a zither, corked bottle of glycerin,  
paperweight from 1893 Chicago  
World’s Fair. Suitcases’ photos

on public view, 2013, an exhibit to show  
“The Changing Face of What is Normal,”  
mental health now and then,  
San Francisco Exploratorium Museum.

(Published in ***For a Better World 2014***).





digital drawing, print, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Jonathan Gibson**

## W. B. (Bucky) Ignatius

### Beatitude Adjustment

Mercy those who rush to render  
what is worldly, due to Caesar,  
to themselves, in Jesus' name.

With Jesus' name a useful tool,  
a lure, a crutch,  
smokescreen, crowbar,  
whatever's needed for the goal—  
Caesar illusion of control  
and lust for power—  
this base profanity lies safe  
inside the fortress  
of denial.

Mercy those who public pose  
as Christian, while in heart and speech  
discard the poor, scorn the meek,  
spend righteousness for victory,  
trade pure-in-heart for legal.

Beatitude adjustments  
to enhance the poll positions  
of those blessed with ambition  
and good circumstance.

If you must play the power game,  
please, not in sweet Jesus' name.

(Published in *For a Better World 2006*).

### Small Step, Giant Leap

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2013*).

## Carol Igoe

### Ike Blows In from Texas

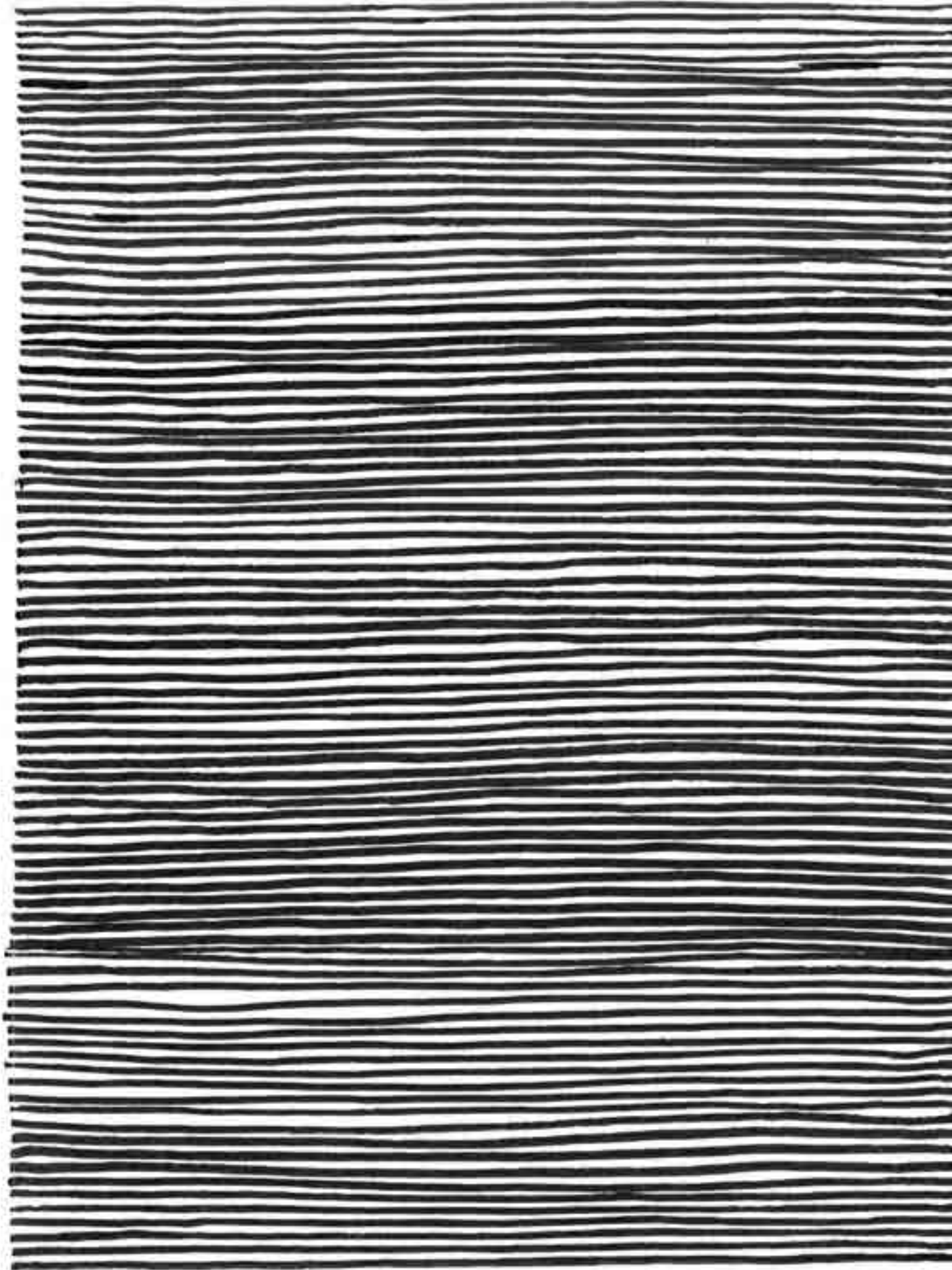
No power all week!  
 Wind spun out from the Gulf  
 Knocks down our Midwest trees, turns off lights,  
 Melts our ice but keeps our ovens off.  
 Guffawed back to a simpler time,  
 We go to bed with the dark, wake with the birds.  
 Space holds us close, like a mother,  
 Our neighbors' tribulations are our daily news.  
 Brought to slow attention, across the fence we share,  
 Hot dishes, ice, candles, power saws, ourselves-  
 Time visits to a siren past, luring us back.

(Published in *For a Better World 2009*).

### Thomas Merton Speaks to January 2012

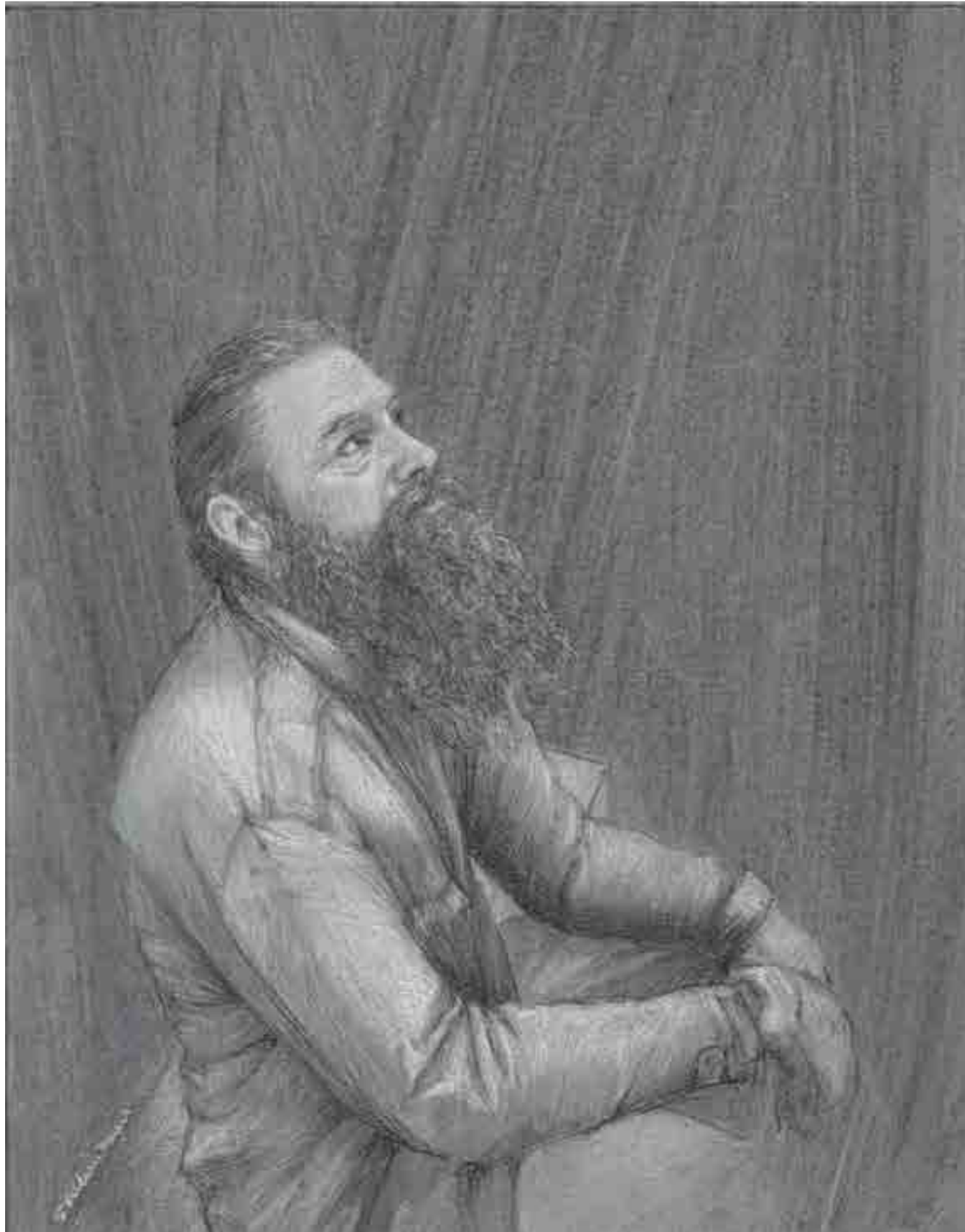
At the corner of Fourth and Walnut,  
 Downtown Louisville,  
 He awoke  
 From the dream  
 That we are  
 Strangers among strangers.  
 Awoke from a dark dream  
 Of closed hearts,  
 Apart,  
 Deprived of the hope "that help is always  
 And everywhere,  
 Present".  
 Awoke, laughing, to see'  
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

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).



*gouache, on paper; 8.5"x6"*

**Catherine Elizabeth Richards**



carbon, pastel, on grey paper; 11"x8.5"

**Stacey Vallerie Meyer**

## Manuel Iris

### Homeless

Yet it is snow that falls  
on the stump of the beggar, on the empty  
socket of his eye.

Yellowish, opaque,  
toothless whiteness  
in the middle of the face  
mocking the face  
of snow, beauty  
that does not hide the ugliness  
on which its light, sterile silence  
that masks decays,  
minute deaths  
which elicit  
neither disgust nor tenderness,  
lands softly.

With vigor the body above the stump  
remakes a war in a distinct place  
where was never seen before a whiteness  
more burning than the flame of napalm.

I do not know if the man was a murderer.

On his stump, in the emptiness of his eye  
got stuck, useless and cold,  
the beauty.

*Translated from Spanish by Saad Ghosn*

(Published in *For a Better World* 2010).

### Homeless

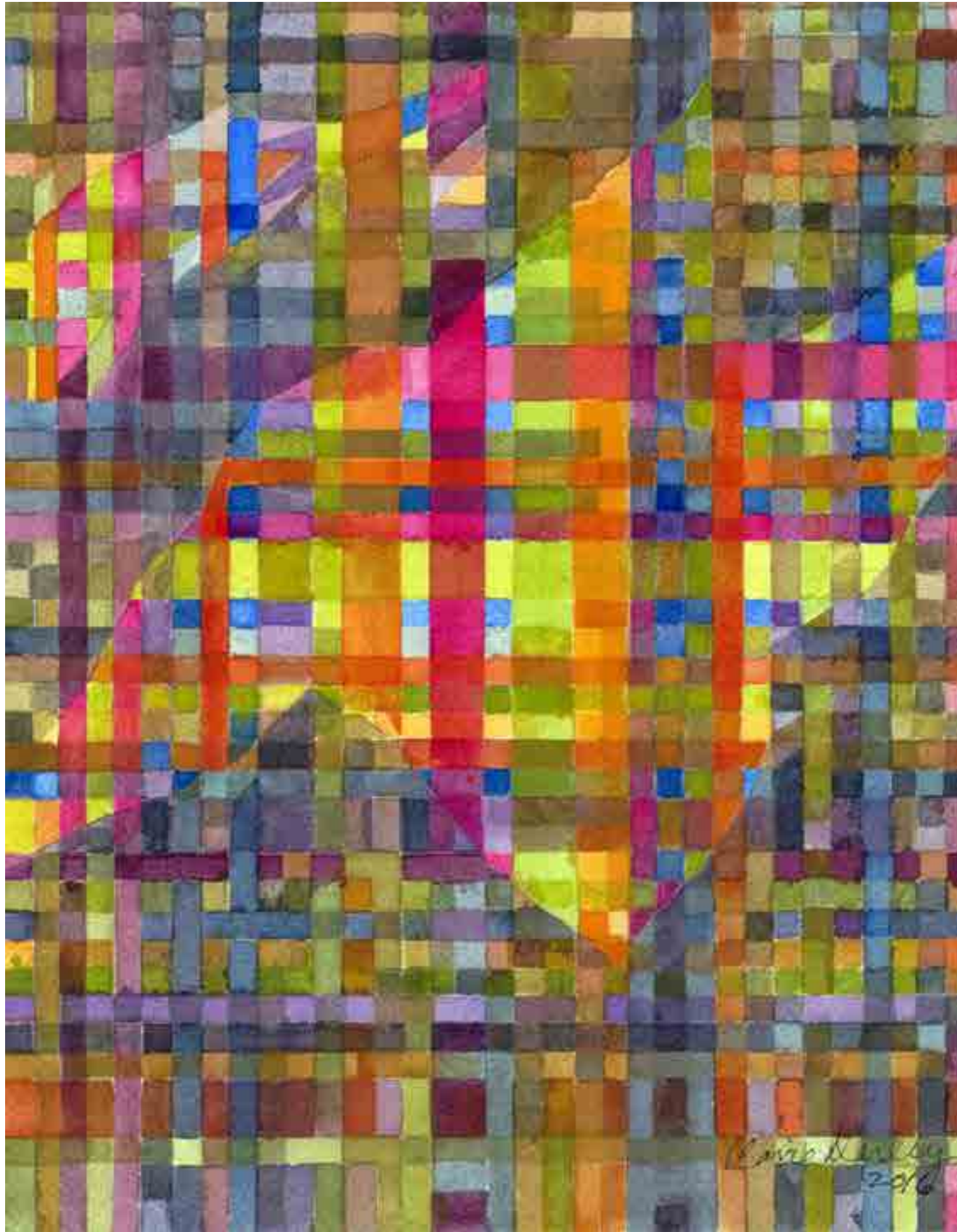
*También es nieve la que cae  
en el muñón del limosnero, en la vacía  
cuenca de su ojo.*

*Amarillenta, opaca,  
desdentada blancura  
a la mitad del rostro  
va burlando el rostro  
de la nieve, belleza  
que no ahoga la fealdad  
en que su luz, silencio estéril  
que enmascara podredumbres,  
muertes diminutas  
a las que no acuden  
ni asco ni ternura,  
se posa levemente.*

*Desde su aliento el cuerpo encima del muñón  
rehace una guerra en un lugar distinto  
en que jamás se ha visto una blancura  
más quemante que la flama de napalm.*

*No sé si el hombre ha sido un asesino.*

*En su muñón, en el vacío del ojo  
se ha atorado inútil, fría  
la belleza.*



watercolor, on paper; 11"x8.5"

## Eric Jefferson

### patience

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World* 2012).

## Nancy Jentsch

### Persistence of Memory: Ludwig

1914: At seventeen you go to war,  
spend the years in prison –  
thin soup  
threadbare blankets  
peace at last but  
prison walls hold you still.

1920: An interlude of farming  
cows  
chickens  
crops  
tending rebirth every spring  
from your house in town.

1944: A desperate draft  
pulls you from your fertile fields  
and the Russian front  
draws your name.

In Russland vermisst  
are the words on the  
monument to  
yours and scores of men's lives.  
Worn words belie what  
could have been

1986: Your brother,  
your sister  
believe  
in what might yet be,  
holding fast to your house in town.

But its emptiness,  
a womb become vault,  
is all that's left

of what  
could have been.

(Published in *For a Better World 2010*).

### Snapshot

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2013*).



acrylic, on paper; 10"x7.5"

**Charles Grund**



*mixed media, ceramic, on wood; 11"x8.5"*

**Diane Fishbein**

## Nancy Johanson

### Clay Oracles

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

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2007*).

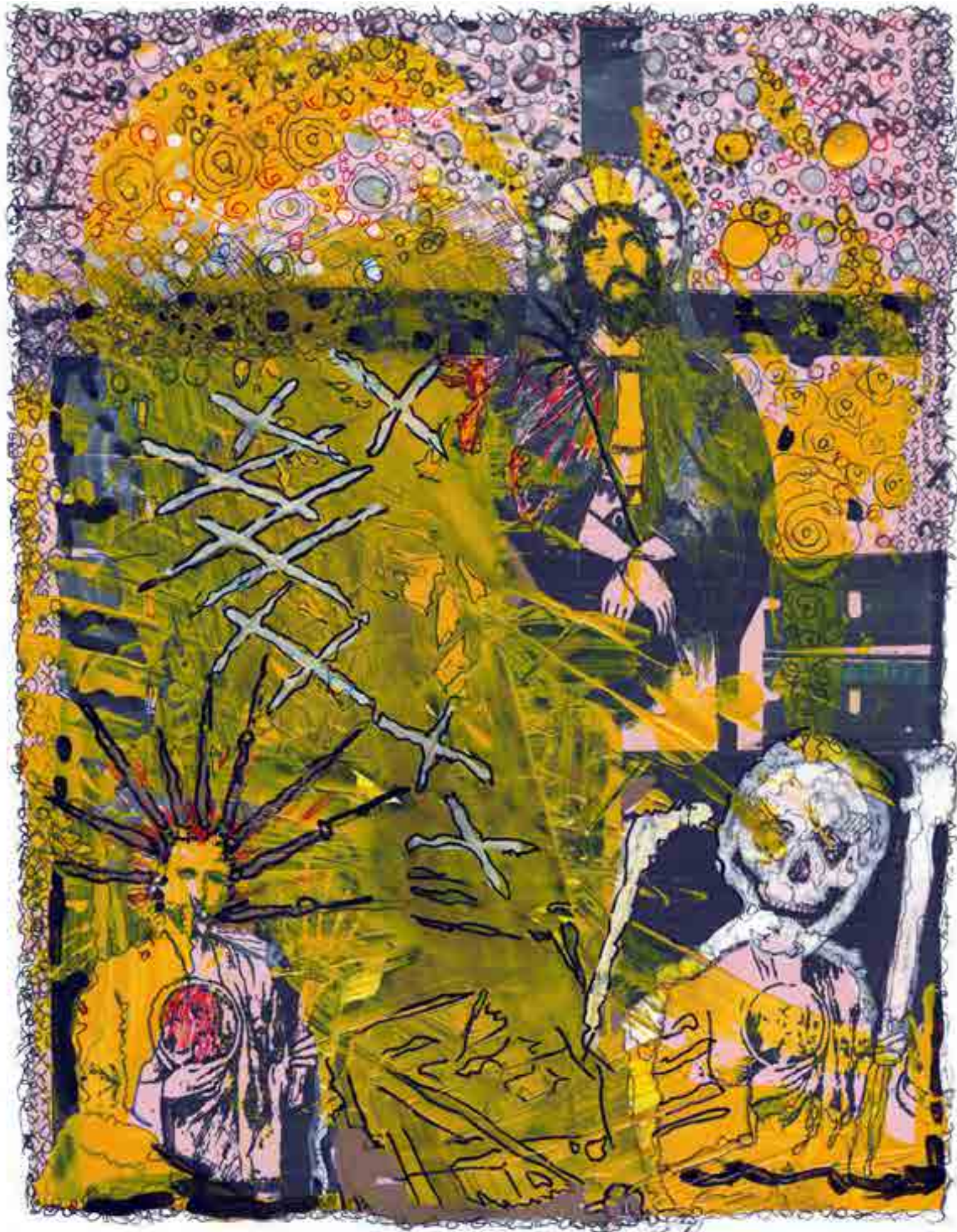
### Death Poem

Oblique trees  
stand wrapped in fog  
like bandaged soldiers

ghost people  
returning home  
from Iraq

missing limbs  
so many leaves  
lost

(Published in *For a Better World 2007*).



mixed media, markers, ink, on paper; 10.5"x8"

**Farron Allen**

## Jerry Judge

### Happy Hour

Iraq battle scenes  
no longer captivate  
this crowd as a brunette

in a tailored blue suit  
orders barkeep to switch channels  
or turn off the carnage before

it ruins the chicken dinner  
she'll soon be picking up  
on her way home to the condo.

The bartender hops to the TV  
on his one good leg  
and turns the sound up.

(Published in *For a Better World 2006*).

### Deep in the Heart

How right to have a President  
dedicated to the super rich.  
Their happiness is important, too.

When I was young, my favorite  
comic book character was Uncle Scrooge.  
True, he never shared with Donald and

Huey, Dewey and Louie, but his joy  
was so pure when he lounged around  
in his vault of money and jewels.

At strategic points across America,  
certain men will pause and contemplate  
their wealth. The gleam from their smiles

will light the skies of Afghanistan and Iraq.  
Uncle Scrooge will paddle through green  
quacking, "The stars at night are big and bright..."

(Published in *For a Better World 2009*).

### The Lizard

*After "At the Bomb Testing Site"*  
by W. Stafford

Until I die,  
perhaps in the john  
or watching under a callous sky,  
I'll remain gripped, haunted

by you at that desert bomb site,  
your panting and tense little elbows  
just before your oblivion  
ended our humanity.

(Published in *For a Better World 2014*).

### Friendly

My Uncle Paul was friendly. He flopped  
to the floor and played with my kids and helped me  
assemble those daunting Christmas toys.

Betty, waitress at the Corner Café, is friendly.  
She asks how I'm doing and cares about  
what I respond. Sometimes she doesn't charge for pie.

Bill, a retired co-worker, was friendly.  
Always a big grin and laugh, we kidded about how  
he would make a great Walmart Greeter.

However, friendly fire is confusing. It blew off  
the skull and more of my neighbor's son.  
Military personnel who delivered the news were friendly.

(Published in *For a Better World 2010*).

# Jerry Judge

## 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.

(Published in ***For a Better World 2005***).

## The Psychology Class

In Psych 101  
he never spoke  
more than necessary.

We kept our distance –  
repelled by the bitter smell  
of rage barely contained.

One classmate dreamed  
he laughed, then cried blood  
after shooting her parents.

The professor and grad assistant  
never aimed criticism at him  
or teamed him with other students.

Once the professor asked our class  
which profession has the most members  
who commit suicide.

His one good arm shot up.  
The voice ricocheted off the walls,  
“It should be Army recruiters.”

(Published in ***For a Better World 2010***).

## Smith & Wesson

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

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

Urban gunshots  
echo  
within sleeping children.

(Published in ***For a Better World 2015***).

poet

## Cleansing for Americans

We will march and bomb.  
We will bomb and bomb.  
We will bury our dead and bomb.  
We will bury their dead with our bombs.  
We will wave our flags and bomb.  
We will attend church and bomb.  
We will watch on TV the bombs bombing.  
We will watch on instant replay the bombs bombing.  
We will watch on slow-mo the bombs bombing.  
These are holy bombs.  
We will bomb bomb bomb.  
Bombs will cleanse.  
Hallelujah!  
Bombs. Bombs. Bombs.  
These are holy bombs.  
Hallelujah!  
Take us back home. The bombs.  
Show us the way. The bombs.  
These are holy bombs.  
Hallelujah!  
Forgive us our sins. The bombs.  
Forgive us our trespasses. The bombs.  
Hallelujah!  
Bombs. Bombs. Bombs.

(Published in ***For a Better World 2004***).

## Heather

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

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

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

(Published in ***For a Better World 2012***).





acrylic, on paper; 6.25"x8"

**Susan Byrnes**

## Victoria Kahle

### A Piece of Peace

I'd take only a piece of Peace and  
 I'd share it with my neighbor  
 Just a small piece of Peace I would share  
 And then I wonder,  
 What else would be there?  
 Something there would open up between us,  
 Inside, outside and repair  
 With that little piece of Peace I'd share  
 And then I wonder what would happen?  
 If we both took a piece of Peace to share?  
 For from that something that opened up between us  
 We found a bigger piece of Peace to share,  
 Each in turn found another and another  
 And a quiet came about beyond compare  
 Ease, Joy, Play and compassion  
 Just from that little piece of Peace I shared

(Published in *For a Better World 2009*).

# Steven Paul Lansky

## Onion Poem

got my onion. my onion, see.  
a pain. a hurt. pain, maan, see, hurt, see.  
the man want my onion. i say NO. NO you take pain.  
take pain. leave my onion. leave my onion alone, see.

there's a window. a window, see. don' break no window, see.  
windowframe paint, need to paint my windowframe, see.  
ain't the same, man. ain't the same, man. see, i ain't been the same.  
pain. pain. man, the pain i feel, man. see. you don' understand, see.

so, i'm leavin'. gonna get on the plane and go away. not gonna live  
here no more. take my onion an' go. go, see. go away where there  
ain't no pain, see. where, see. where, see. sinners gonna drive me away.  
so many sinners drive me away. take my onion and go across the sea.

where have all the flowers gone? long time passing?  
flowers in the windowbox. cactus flowers on the windowsill.  
red and pink and purple. lovely bruise. lovely. paint my onion purple.

hello? hello? (my friend hands me a cell phone) it's george W. bush for you!  
george? how do i know it's you? dubya for warmonger? yeah, that's what i say.  
he says, "steve, could i use your onion for a few days?"  
no. "steve, you still hanging with that folksinger crowd?"

my friend george, we got two words for you. REGIME CHANGE!  
we want the same thing, just for different countries! let's disarm the USA.  
let the UN monitor US elections, and inspect US weapons of mass destruction.

the phone goes dead. george is gone. gone. he don't know no onion.  
i had a mad dream that we snuck into the White House and removed the top three  
floors so there was just an empty shell and dubya was another homeless man.  
he had to walk to another town 'cause all of DC was closed.

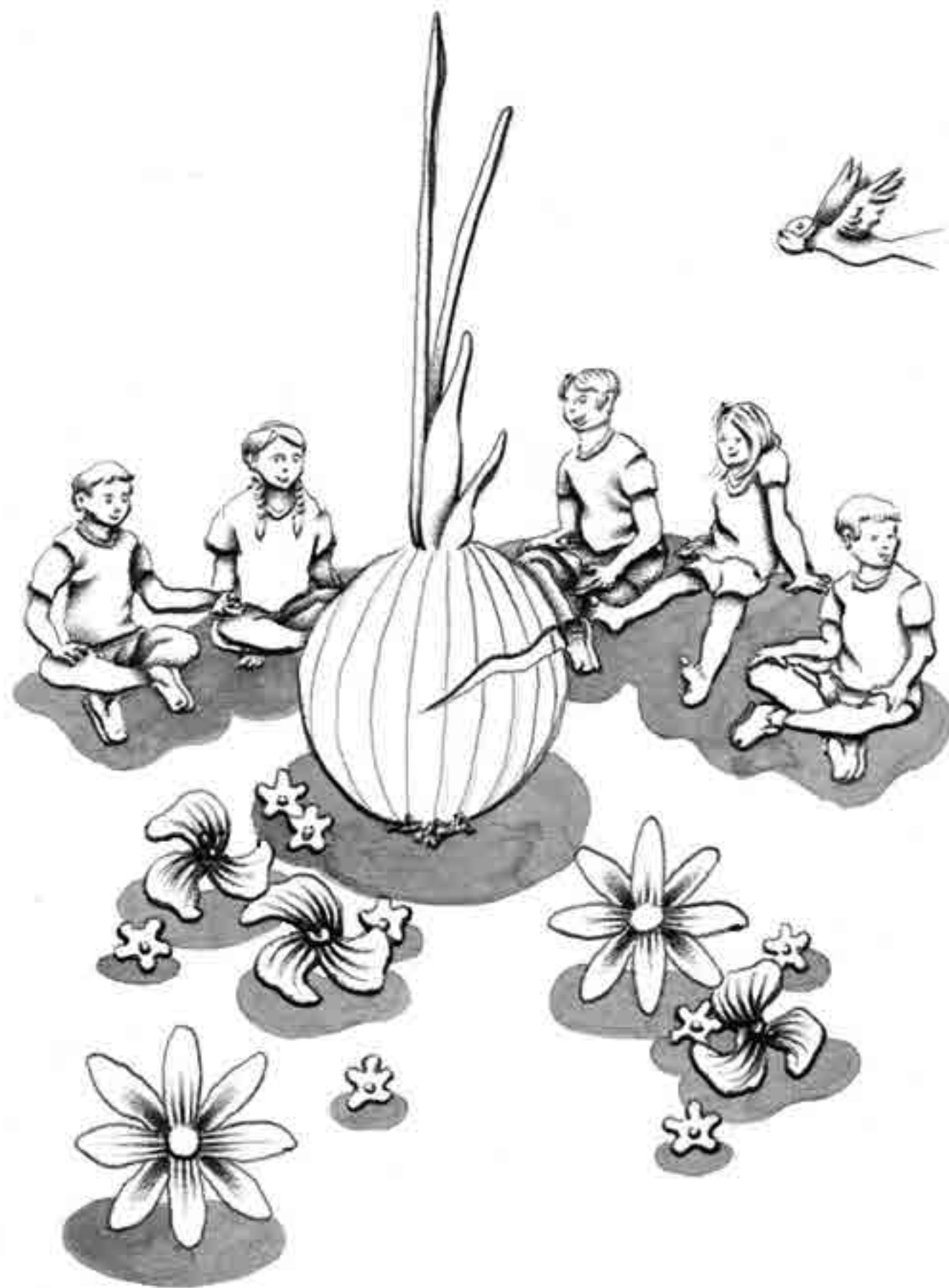
morally bankrupt, socially stratified, politically isolated, and we all sat back,  
turned off the TV rattle of war and watched the children grow. watched the flowers grow.  
sat around in the onion patch hand in hand,  
peaceful as the wild city critters, squirrels, raccoons, pigeons, and robins.

(Published in *For a Better World 2004*).

## Oilface

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).



pencil, ball point pen, ink wash, on paper; 9"x7"

**James Alan Sauer**



watercolor, pen and ink, on illustration board; 10"x7.5"

**Matt Reed**

## Carol Feiser Laque

### Footnotes

Stepping into my shadow  
at the end of light,  
I sing "row, row, row your boat"  
being the little engine that could.

I step on every crack  
all the way home from school.  
Everyone has a sidewalk,  
a front porch, spaces for silence, for sitting.

Lawns are bushy, full of weeds  
that swarm. Iris, snapdragons,  
lilies, roses are all but one names of girls.  
A moment later – the bees die.  
No flowers, no food – starvation –  
No Gross National Product. All of us –  
and no soup kitchen, or energy  
to fight a profitable war.

We murder the smallest of us.  
County Fairs are footnotes in poet's poems.  
A soprano sings "Amazing Grace" to  
a congregation of skin covered bones, and  
the babies don't fuss or cry anymore.

(Published in *For a Better World 2011*).

### The Help

Some days it doesn't pay to  
get out of bed – or brush your

Teeth or Hair. I entered this  
country illegally and immediately

Found work. I never knew this  
land was "purchased" from us –

That it was ours first. I rock to sleep  
other people's children. I smuggle my money home.

I can't afford to go back, and  
so I bring my family here one by one.

Our Hispanic Heritage survives in  
our honor of being who we are: hard workers.

Quietly we clean houses, do yard work  
while we look to excellence with our eyes:

Life, Liberty, and the pursuit  
of getting out of our own beds.

(Published in *For a Better World 2010*).

### Art History: Halloween

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2013*).

# Carol Feiser Laque

poet

## A Palestinian Woman's Lament

Today I lost my children  
to a fiery nightmare -  
of the war outside my body.

My flame of justice  
hangs on the wick  
into midnight noon.

I try to stay awake  
shattered by armies  
where stars are invisible.

I am a mother's smoke  
rising to a suicidal sun.

(Published in *For a Better World 2006*).

## Nighty Night: Spring in Iraq, a Musical

Every dawn without fail,  
I puke daffodils.  
Yellow peril blooms everywhere.

This story is about debauchery.  
Pricks and Cocks bomb and loot  
the land - destroying history.

I should shrug, I know  
the way I did  
after 9/11. Welcome to my world.

Baghdad is full of guerillas  
and aborted baby girls.  
Let's throw a party  
in my uterus.

(Published in *For a Better World 2004*).

## Chicken Little

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2007*).

## Dorothy Following the Yellow Brick Road into the Yellow Brick Wall

It gets cold some nights -  
bitter. In the heat I sleep  
under the freeway off-ramps.  
Then I can't hardly breathe.

When the library opens i am there  
to get warmed or cooled down.  
I've slept in cars below zero  
with other men. You need a man  
so you're not raped all year long.

I lived in a concrete storage  
shed for a while once.  
Nobody hires you for a job  
when you get no address.

I've been from one shelter  
to another, one church  
to another for food.  
Now I live in Tender Mercies  
which is where I hot T.B.  
No roaches though.

(Published in *For a Better World 2004*).

## An American Dream

I want to be in a car  
commercial. You know  
the ones that conquer  
the wilderness. You know  
the one where the woman  
is sexy and mates with the  
steering wheel for  
forty days and nights.

Then all promise and  
possibility are mine.  
My children eat cocoa puffs  
and Kool-Aid for breakfast.  
Even Jesus drives to church.

(Published in *For a Better World 2004*).

## First Communion

Stalking corridors of light,  
Priests steal innocent children,  
and close their eyes  
to Heaven and Hell.

Purgatory punctuates the children's silence –  
saturates the entire Vatican.  
Drunk with stolen chants,  
the clergy saves freedom's

Jam and peanut butter  
for sandwiches to  
lure hungry children.  
The innocent bare -

a refined and sanitized  
sin where Holy Robes  
hide hopes of Paradise –  
hide communion's poison.

Speaking as God,  
the clergy consumes  
the body and blood  
of small children.

These children cannot speak  
or walk corridors candlelit...  
after Priests prey them  
into rancid little graves.

(Published in *For a Better World 2008*).



*mixed media, collage, on board; 11"x8.5"*

## Jacob Lucas

### Dreams That Never-Were

Berated,  
beaten, busted black and blue,  
gay jokes spit at his face,  
he waits until everyone leaves,  
or gets out first.

He can't stand with the crowd without shaking in fear,  
waiting for the abuse of his so-called team-mates.  
He doesn't understand,  
what has he done?  
It used to be ok,  
football and theatre meshed, perfect balance.  
He dreams of those days,  
when he could smell the fresh cut grass of the field,  
then go smell the fresh sawdust from the set.

He loves both.  
He can't stand having to choose one or the other.  
Reality hits him square in the back, "hit hard or do it again."  
The screams startles him out of his dream,  
he wants to get away,  
away from all the abuse,  
away from the terror and the pain.  
He suffers it all silently,  
showing it affects him will only make things worse for him,  
he doesn't want to be "pussy" or "bitch".

Then he gets home or at least to one of his homes.  
His parents' separation blatant and obvious.  
They dump their feelings onto him,  
loading him down with extra problems,  
problems he can't handle alone,  
but that's what he is, alone.  
So he jokes, playful, never taking anyone or anything seriously,  
screaming inside "notice me please".  
No one does.

Next the coach joins in,  
degrades him for no reason.  
Throws him on the cross, an example of what not to do.  
He still doesn't understand, what has he done?  
He contemplates, alone, quietly.  
Will the knife at his wrist save him?  
He takes the first cut, it's shallow but deep,  
his innocence gone forever as the liquid rubies drip from his arm.  
He stares at it, afraid that someone will notice,  
but relieved from the torment inside.  
Terrified that he is relieved.  
Terrified that he hates himself.

(Published in *For a Better World* 2014).



color pencil, acrylic, graphite, on paper; 9"x6.5"

**Jenny Ustick**

## Richard Luftig

### In the Free Clinic

They have learned to sit and wait  
on queue, their weighted eyes turned  
down, dark and doubtful.

It is a hard earned skill to wear time  
like rocks being rubbed away  
by water until you become invisible,

learning to wait and not expect anything  
to change, keeping your face a blank  
slate, to-be- written on, erased,

written on again in a longhand  
of hurt. Out of chances and choice,  
they sit, worn and dog-eared

as the two-year old magazines  
lying unread on the splintering  
end tables. Tired of wilting

wall paper flowers, they watch  
without seeing the tiny girl  
sprawled across the floor, coloring

with broken crayons, going off the page,  
giving testimony to the hardwood  
that she has indeed been here.

(Published in *For a Better World 2006*).

### Faith

For this familia de buhonero<sup>1</sup>,  
Sunday is no holiday  
but a necessity. For fourteen  
August hours, the mendigua<sup>2</sup>  
mother scours the Zocalo,

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

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

with pregnancy, rubs feet  
worn and raw as stones.  
High in a heavy sky  
a jet sprints home due  
north to Miami and two

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

1. family of peddlers
2. indigenous/indian

(Published in *For a Better World 2007*).



paper plate lithograph, on rice paper; 11"x8.5"

## Anni Macht

### Rosa Parks

What *was* she thinking?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Quiet, erect – a lamb sent into the jaws of the lion.  
Worthy matriarch of a movement  
she had not yet fully imagined.

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

(Published in *For a Better World* 2007).

## Stanley Mathews

### Pierre and Rosetta

*(a love story)*

Everyone gave Uncle Pete a wide berth  
at family gatherings. Even Uncle Art,  
a large man who had started at offensive tackle  
as a freshman at Southern Illinois,  
was circumspect and I noticed that  
Uncle Bill, a proud Navy gunner  
who fought at Midway, would stop  
recounting tales when Pete was around.

We cousins never got the full story  
and what we got was probably only half right.  
We knew enough to understand that Art,  
Bill, Uncle "Red" and even Dad  
had been trained to kill in WWII,  
a hard enough idea to get your mind around  
but Pete was designated to be an assassin  
and, as it turned out, he was good at it.

More than once I've wondered  
what went through his mind  
as he crawled on his belly through the night  
with the other Rangers on their way  
to deploy their special skills –  
piano wire around the throat,  
a knife in the gut –  
all in exotic places far from home;  
the Port of Arzew in Algeria,  
Tunisia at Sened Station  
and Djebel Ank  
the critical mountain pass  
where they surprised the enemy at dawn  
creating the crack for Patton's final  
thrust which led to victory in North Africa.  
Without the dedication and sacrifice  
of that generation  
there would be no Rangers today  
(and maybe no US of A).

But the price of success was "Crazy Pete".  
Red said he killed a man in a bar fight  
near Lake Pontchartrain after the war  
before they put him away in the "looney bin"  
while the feds tried  
to program out of him  
all the things they had programmed in.

They patched up his brain  
and sent him home to Rosetta in Huntington  
but he was never again the man she met  
at the Baptist Church social in Cincinnati.  
He never killed again; at least no bodies  
but Rosetta, formerly sunny and outgoing,  
never ventured to speak much  
when he was around  
and she never never crossed him.

After he died, I asked her why she had stayed  
with him, through all the long painful years.  
There was no hesitancy in her reply,  
"I just always figured we were both casualties of war".

(Published in *For a Better World* 2011).



watercolor, on Strathmore paper; 9"x6.5"

**Albert Webb**





mixed media, pen, ink, graphite, on paper; 9.25"x12"

**Reid Radcliffe**

## Juanita Mays

### Billy Goats Gruff

The fevered man  
peers from under the night,  
routed from sleep again.  
He fears his own sleep sounds:  
the wheeze, crackle and cough,  
lung-squeak noises,  
bat songs escaping  
from beneath his bridge

Afraid to sleep, for fear  
of being wakened from delusions of  
Carolina skies,  
seventeen percent Fire Wine  
going down easy and warm and  
Dennis-green vineyards,  
body-hot nights,  
hands near scorched over roasting sticks  
and a summer-fun-bonfire.

Not wanting to wake up  
one more time  
cold in Cincinnati,  
apprentice of grizzled men  
who have learned to exist  
cold and cold, then damp cold  
until honeysuckle drapes  
the city's seven hills.

In and out of dream,  
he drives a dune buggy  
under bronze sun  
but someone is standing  
in naked-sand,  
gasoline fire and char.

The north wind spits ice-shots,  
shrapnel, he doesn't feel.  
Yet overhead  
he hears horses' hooves  
clip-clop, clip-clop,  
and remembers a soft voice reading  
at bedtime  
*Three Billy Goats Gruff*,  
one walks tonight,  
over his bridge.

(Published in *For a Better World 2014*).

### Stay the Hands of Hatred

three mothers  
mourn  
knife blade pain

three  
students  
dead

three  
silver  
coffins

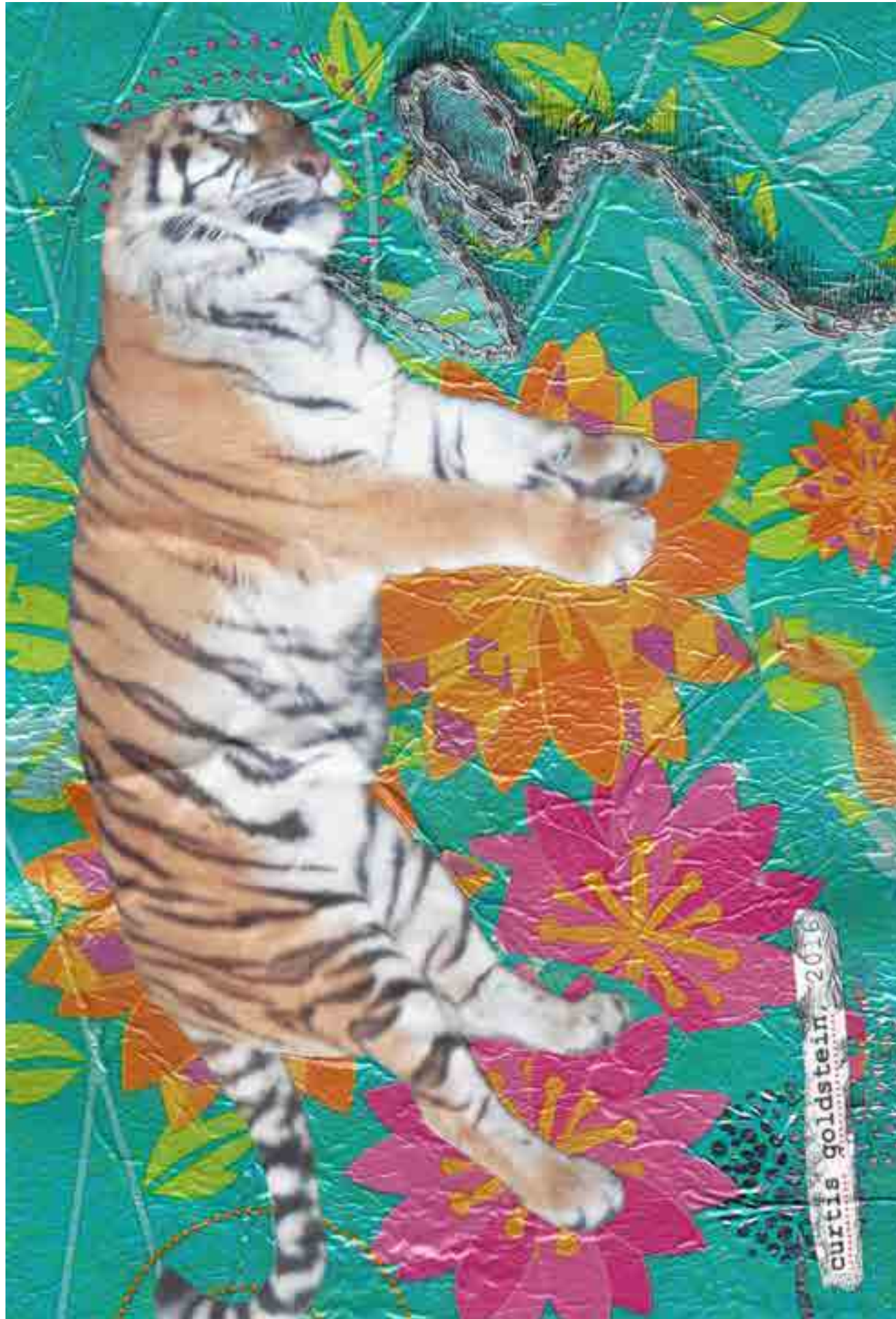
three  
whose  
likenesses  
shall  
never  
be seen  
but in dream

no weddings  
no babies  
no PHDs

pray  
oh pray  
you poets  
to our different  
gods

to  
stay  
the hands  
of hatred.

(Published in *For a Better World 2015*).



*mixed media, collage, on paper; 7.75"x11"*

**Curtis Goldstein**

## Constance Menefee

### The Other Soc Trang

Please, doc, god,  
 call me a drunk a lush  
 a loser drinker no good bum,  
 but don't say PTSD,  
 it can't be PTSD,  
 I was at Soc Trang  
 and nothing much happened  
 to me, not the real stuff  
 that makes you swallow  
 your puke so normal people  
 can't see how screwed up you are;  
 the booby traps,  
 you remember those  
 don't you,  
 and all the Charlies  
 every at night  
 moving around like  
 they owned the damn  
 country or something,  
 weren't you there  
 at Soc Trang  
 the night we were mortared  
 sure you were there  
 you screamed with your  
 mouth closed jammed  
 under the bunk  
 as they dropped and dropped  
     incoming  
     incoming  
     incoming;  
 what's the matter  
 you only remember  
 daylight and driving supplies  
 around in the steam bath  
 delta;  
 thought you were there same  
 as me,  
 must have been  
 the other Soc Trang  
 where not much happened.

(Published in *For a Better World* 2009).

## Kate Merz

### A Simple Question

I sent a purple fairy North

for answers

and she discovered  
the Universe  
drinking tea,  
toasting his toes,  
beside a hearth  
fired with the pages  
of our poetry.

Words,  
drifting paper  
embers about the room,  
land in random order.

“Tragedy”  
teeters on the corner  
of the kitchen table.

“Grief”  
floats in the stopped-up  
water sink.

“Dying”  
curls fetal  
on the sill.

Outside snowflakes  
strain to see,

if only to grasp  
a word  
before joining the drift.

It’s here my fairy  
jockeys for her view.

Wings pattering the pane,  
she flaps—  
undeterred—  
to have it make sense,  
to return assured:  
*It does have meaning after all.*

Doesn’t it?

The Universe wouldn’t  
just sit warm and aloof  
while all our prayers  
went up in flames.

(Published in *For a Better World 2010*).



color pencil, on paper; 9"x6.75"

**Chrissy Collopy**



acrylic, on paper; 9"x7"

**Nicole Trimble**

## Amber Mikell

### The Symmetry Is Man-Made

The goddess is Durga, or maybe Hecate, an oval, green, cracked,  
the chain is arms and legs streets in the north and southeast  
night, driving rain, running in front of headlights, wound round wrists,  
round ankles, necks, jewelry tight, long, the living ends of street goddesses

Have fallen off, the women are cropped, segmented.  
The immense sorrow perhaps not intended.

Girls of silver, pretty but less valuable, lie beneath baubles  
dangle from earlobes, girls peek teasingly from curtains of black hair,  
ride crests of cleavage, with helpless, following eyes.

I'll let the silver black the blue, a girl says, as if letting were possible,  
as if allowances had to be made as if she herself had anything to do with it.

The silver blacks the blue; you don't have to have a permit.  
Blue, green, silver, and blue again.

When the ore was mined they took the whole beauty,  
levered rock out of the ground, shine sun-catching eye-catching flecks  
to shine, shine, rain on a sunny day, the strands rolled and twisted  
like women, after the fire hot as hell silver poured from the rock,

Bodies condensed, origins of caves were created in pockets of air.  
Before blue, before green, movement was hammered out,  
bodies pierced by awls with knobbed wooden handles, hung on chains,  
hung in the holes pierced in ears, drifting.

Women are accessories of creation; they accent the genesis.  
The rock always did shine, that's why they liked it, why they pierced it  
like they did the better to hang from the ears of their wives, their baby girls.  
They wear themselves; the women do what they can with the colors they have.

Men give the goddess weapons, the goddess gets weapons,  
they arm her with arms on arms, torpedoes on the end of life  
wound like bows, like legs, the brownest brown hair spread on sheets.

Leaves and dried grass, in the dream in which a tree is alive  
it slips across the street in front of cars, roots and branches  
take over the world one finger at a time, breaking concrete,

But silver, yes, silver, to line clouds, to gild redbrown eyes.  
Blue veins rise upon her, she lies on a shelf, shining.

Yes really thank you, and she says thank you, sir,  
may I have another and they laugh and she thinks Oliver Twist

And they think Animal House and she says it again because it is funny.  
Something bolder moves, a light shines, she is reflexively loving,  
not knowing why, loving, the way blue shines, the way the blackbirds

Turn green, faceted, the blue black, the silver black, desirable  
and full of holes, full of sorrow unintended.

# Amber Mikell

poet

She loves to be played, a song of breath, of holes covered with fleshy pads  
of thick fingers, she loves to be whistled, a melody blown through a hollow body,  
hauntingly, haunting you. Play it a thousand times.

At the end of every line a lift, a question, when she lists her names.  
The configuration of holes, the lips filled with color, the mistakes  
unintended as the tide, the slant of beginning and end, uplifted notes

Which like silver bars of time clasp silence black and silver,  
hollow and filled, the thinness of her skins shiver musically.

The men spit their breath, tiny lips take the wind and worm in their ears,  
into their brains, and the men clap backs, throw bucks, and punch arms,  
call themselves players, and the women think the song beautiful and horrible.

They hear almost all the words but one letter of one name is changed, one note  
is played differently, and they think *that's funny* but know not why.  
And the women will sing not the song men hum but a fantasy.

The women will sing a dream in which one line is wrong  
and universal wind blows down on the men, blasts the hair from their heads,  
their sweaty foreheads, scatters their hands, whiplike grasses of silver jewelry  
clinging to dunes which rise and fall.

A hurricane in green beside the ocean blue, which is a woman coming, a mother,  
but when the wind blows it is always a father and the fantasy is just that  
dependant on the light; the wind comes from the south to the north.

Cyclones braided together pull tightly back from her head with turquoise beads  
spreading out, as she shakes her head metallic bullets of rain are cast,  
the child is the mother; the mother never gets there.

This is the goddess. This is the symmetry that man made.  
This is what jewelry knows, a mother's body, flat, empty.

The wind drives through, the lamp is blown out and she cries  
into the night, cries into herself, and the cry itself is beautiful.  
The immense sorrow perhaps not intended.

(Published in *For a Better World 2014*).



collaged paper construct, on paper; 10.25"x7.75"

**Jonpaul Smith**

## Frank D. Moore

### COWBOY PREZ

COWBOY PREZ  
 winks at his toadies  
 as he strides forth  
 remembering his practice  
 in front of the 3-  
 way mirror of  
 holding his arms way  
 out from his sides  
 remembering to carry  
 imaginary bricks  
 end to end  
 between arms and ribs  
 so that a foot or more  
 of space is seen  
 between  
 so that he is  
 a Texas cowboy  
 biceps the size of "mush-  
 melons," thinking John  
 Wayne & Prez Reagan  
 stalwart and twinkling  
 now calling out  
 to the sycophants  
 milling near his aura  
*Spike, Old Buddy, Hey,*  
*Mule, Tractor Man*  
 wink wind slap slap  
 no one man enough  
 to call him aside  
 suggest that his "style"  
 is more simian than  
 studly (apologies  
 to apes and monkeys)  
 and that "built like a brick  
 shithouse" is not necessarily  
 a compliment

(Published in *For a Better World 2006*).



watercolor, pencil, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Michelle Red Elk**

## Justin Patrick Moore

### After the After Party

After  
     the after party  
 America woke up  
 with a hangover  
 After  
     all the oil was guzzled  
 doing keg stands  
     at wells around the world  
 guns held  
 to the face of foreign frat boys.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

and we wonder, still wasted  
 after

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).

# Justin Patrick Moore

poet

## Mill Creek Blues

I.

Maketewa you were once called,  
Maketewa once held in awe, you were  
once a marshland  
    below the hillside forest  
banks of cattails, otter families, dragonflies

sacred ground for those who made a home in  
this valley!

Alas Maketewa, what you once were  
& what you have become  
is no fault of the water itself.

As if you asked to staunch the flow  
    of the little piglets blood  
back in the day when  
Spring Grove was a street of swine and mud  
you stayed the course  
even as the trickle of trichinosis  
was sprayed downstream.

Now white ghost pigs fly  
over the graves of the grove  
as the trains squeal on by  
past slaughterhouse remains  
your shores still slick from the last flood.  
    Even your bloated carp  
    got sick off the hot dogs.

& it was all a Kahn anyway

    Even the raccoons  
    wanted nothing to do  
    with the dumpsters  
    but washed their marbled hands  
    in your

malodorous brown soup of

lye & lime, black ink of  
concentrated tanning liquors  
hide trimmings, offal  
glue, fertilizer, grease  
    where herons now wade in the shallow  
workers wallowed, dumping the tallow  
thinking you were just some serpentine ditch

who like the arms of a forgiving lover  
continued to receive & remained open  
even as the abuse compounded

your banks now home to impound lots  
junk yards of reclaimed metal, car parts

the springs that dotted the valley capped  
with sewer lids

    crows & vultures  
    circle diesel tracks

Mill Creek you were once called Maketewa!  
Mill Creek you are now held at bay, arms length  
even by those who just live a few blocks away.

We are not privy to your long suffering moods  
as we no longer stand knee deep in your mud  
in your water, we do not swim & play.  
Maketewa you hold us in dismay  
we who pissed in your pot  
& left our chemical trails of dirty vapors  
to mark where we settled, the way we came.

II.

    Alas!  
The plastic bags tuck on sticks  
choke hyperventilating frogs covered in black ick  
now glow in Fernald fumes of marsh light  
from everyday humdrum spills  
as Proctor and Gamble empty their sink  
as the MSD puts shit in our drink.

The creeks have been diverted to storm drains  
the storm drains aimed at the Mill Creek  
the bedrock converted to long channels of  
concrete  
& fish don't swim but sink  
from the bathwater bleach, from the poison  
keep out of reach,

    children, keep out  
poured down the sink  
with all the crap from the hole that stinks

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

    False industry hides behind its tail.

Even the good ol' boys  
    in the Mill Creek Yacht Club  
    have a hard time setting sail.

Those boys gotta make sure  
they got all their doctors shots  
keep their immunity up.

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

III.

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

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

Living broke off the Mill Creek is hard work  
fishing for carp with nylon lines  
all those bones to pick, like with Fred  
who they had to kick out of camp  
as he was fixin' to bring the popo down on their heads  
what with his needles & all, & no thread  
anyhow, it ain't like america's got a shortage of tramps.  
It's been a long time since the stream was full of trout.  
But the down & out? We got that.  
The wretched & tired, deep fried & true  
we got them too. The poor from the harbor  
the tempest-tost masses new to these shores  
just up from West Virginia's door, last of the mountains  
removed, yearning to breathe  
free from the coal dust, but ain't no jobs  
up here, no more, no more, no, no.

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

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

& remember, don't drink the water.

(Published in *For a Better World 2015*).





acrylic, on paper; 9.5"x7"

**Frank Herrmann**

## Diego Mora

### The Red Path

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

*Translated from Spanish by Saad Ghosn*

(Published in *For a Better World 2015*).

### Camino Rojo

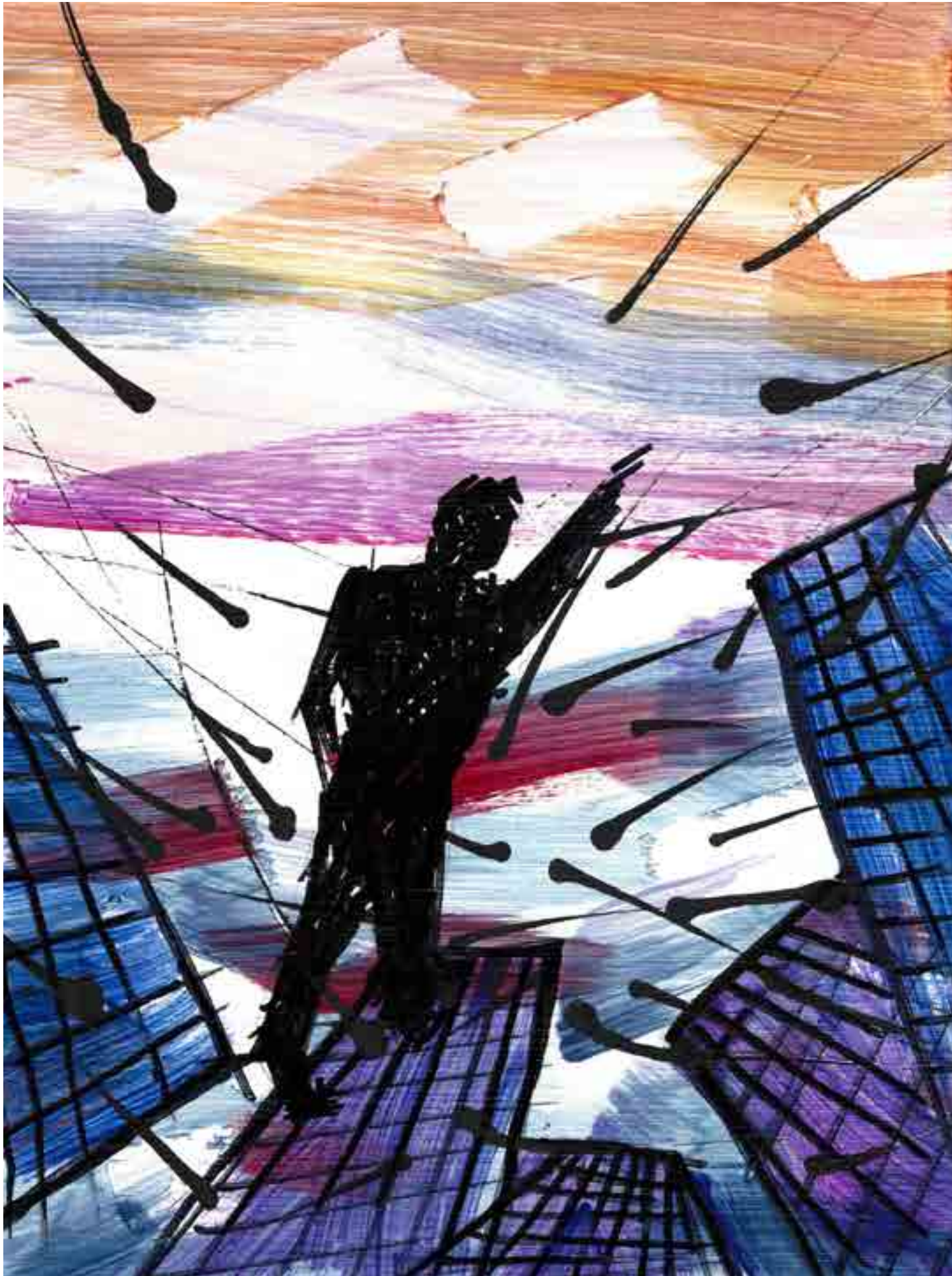
*Por el camino rojo  
miramos las chozas y el humo  
Por el camino rojo  
suben las viejas tribus  
en busca de su tierra  
Por el camino rojo  
se ve a lo lejos el camino  
aún más rojo  
Y las hojas secas  
se confunden con el camino rojo  
porque el camino es rojo  
sangre oxigenada  
que alimenta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

## Christopher Morriss

### 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.

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).



acrylic, gesso, ink, on paper; 9.5"x7"

**Kurt Nicaise**



*mixed media, on cardboard; 12"x8.5"*

**Yvonne van Eijden**

## Clark Mote

### 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?

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).

### 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?

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).



acrylic, oil, on illustration board; 9.5"x7"

**James Oberschlake**

**Ali Mramor**

### Undoing the Babylon Within

How much of you is really You?  
 How much is really the product of the programming  
 taking place every second of every day?  
 Each way my head turns  
 my eyes are struck with their wishes  
 and my insides slowly begin to turn to ashes.  
 But the Phoenix will rise.  
 The Phoenix will rise.  
 Once the Babylon within is undone.  
 The constructs that began when we were small  
 are now larger than us all.  
 We can't break free until we can see  
 That the true Babylon only exists within  
 The cages we put ourselves in  
 They bombard us with expectations and lines to stay between  
 But in the end it's us who put ourselves in-between.  
 Turn your head  
 See what lies beyond  
 The walls of deception  
 Where the free winds blow  
 Where the eyes know  
 The Truth that lies beyond  
 The walls  
 Of Babylon  
 Within  
 Me.

(Published in *For a Better World 2009*).



colored paper collage, on paper; 10"x7.5"

**Jeff Casto**

## Mike Murphy

### Come! Bring Food & Music!

Come, now--  
Let's not  
Completely blame  
Bush or  
Cheney.

Bush is a  
Psychiatric  
'Dry Drunk'  
(Google-search  
This term)  
With imaginary  
Enemies &  
Imaginary friends &  
Delusions of  
Grandeur.  
Cheney,  
They say, is  
The same,  
Only worse.

And Powell--  
The 'nice' one--  
Once told  
Congress  
He wants  
The US  
To be the  
'Bully on the  
Block' (1992).

Okay.  
These & others  
Neocons  
Have realized  
Their wish,  
Their fantasy--

But should  
We the People  
Let these  
Fanatics  
Tell us  
What to think,  
What to say,  
What to do?

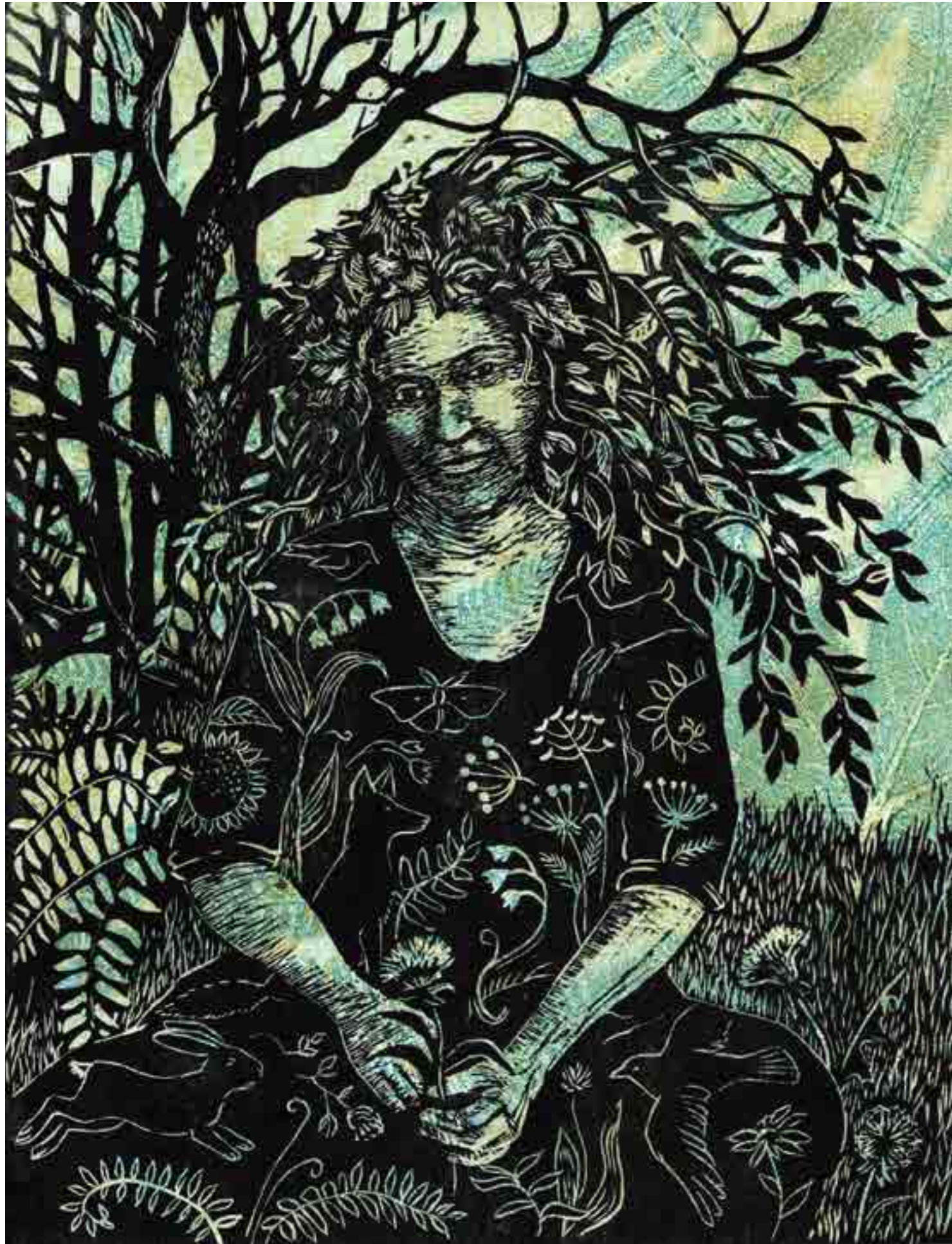
Come, now!  
We are  
Adults.  
We have  
Common Sense.  
We know  
How to  
Seek & find  
Heartfelt  
Sensible  
Solutions.

Are we not  
Brothers?  
Are we not  
Sisters?  
Are we not  
Friends?  
Are we not  
Lovers?  
Are we not  
Stewards of  
The same  
Earth?  
Children of  
Same God?

Come!  
Let us  
Put down  
Our guns  
& Bombs...  
Come,  
Let us  
Each  
Bring food &  
Eat & drink  
Together--  
Let us talk...  
Perhaps we'll  
Even sing--  
&, Yeah,.o  
Maybe even dance.

Come,  
Let us have  
Food & Music!  
Come!

(Published in  
***For a Better World 2004***).



linocut, collagraph, monotype, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Kathleen Piercefield**

## Mary-Jane Newborn

### Denaturing

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).

### As the World Warms (*Lyric*)

You sit in your car with the engine running  
So you can stay nice and cool.  
Hey, you can buy all of the gas that you want to,  
But you never learned this math in school:

So much blood for oil, so many oceans polluted,  
As the world warms more every day.  
But you like to believe that the price at the pump is  
All you'll ever have to pay.

Just because you can pay the price,  
You think you can afford the cost,  
But not even if you had a million dollars  
Could you ever buy what's been lost.

You water your lawn in the midst of a drought,  
And your driveway and the sidewalk and your car.  
And it streams down the gutter with the topsoil in it,  
Out of sight, out of mind, way too far.

And the waterworks says, use all the water you want to,  
'Cause it's cheap at twice the price.  
And then you mow, burning gas, no roots to hold the rain.  
To kill Mother Nature is not nice.

Just because you can pay the price,  
You think you can afford the cost.  
But not even if you had a billion dollars  
Could you ever buy what's been lost.

You pay guys to hack down a tree that was fine,  
'Cause you just don't want to have it by your yard.  
And the leaves that give oxygen and take out CO2  
Flutter down to the pavement cold and hard.

And the very next day, a hurricane blows your lights out  
Where no hurricane has blown before.  
But you say you don't want to hear about global warming,  
'Cause you think you won't be live 'then' any more.

Just because you can pay the price,  
You think you can afford the cost.  
But not even if you had a billion dollars  
Could you ever buy what's been lost.  
No!  
Not even if you had a trillion dollars  
Could you ever buy,  
Ever buy  
What's been lost.

Cha cha cha.

(Published in *For a Better World 2011*).



monotype, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Andrea Knarr**

## Nicole Rahe

### Mr. didn't fix it

miles of sand sought refuge  
in the blue and gold horizon  
leaving those on shore with nowhere

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

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2015*).

### without fear, a conference

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2015*).



watercolor, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Tom Lohre**

## Mary Anne Reese

### Inauguration

Catherine's arm drapes  
across my chair, Elaine's toe  
is tapping my foot,

my knee pushes Tim's  
ribs. Soon, we are all breathing  
as one. After eight

long years of holding  
our breaths afraid to inhale  
toxic hate, we gasp

for natural air.  
When the slim young president  
raises his right hand,

we're huddled as close  
as immigrants entering new  
land, packed as tightly

as the throngs who fill  
the chilly D.C. mall. We  
have waited lifetimes

for this hour. Two words  
he does not speak today are  
*I* and *me*; his world's too

wide for that. Instead,  
he sounds an urgent cry: none  
should prosper while so

many plummet. Here  
in our small valley nestled  
in Kentucky's knobs,

his message is not  
new. We've been practicing two  
hundred years to get

it right. When speeches  
and oaths end, tables and tears  
are wiped dry, Tim fills

Susan's glass, Elaine  
leads Catherine out, JoAnn  
scrapes the plates, Mary

brings me home. I hear  
a new and ancient chorus  
rising like the hum

of locusts in these  
cursive hills and grassy fields:  
*Yes we can. We. Yes.*

(Published in *For a Better World 2010*).





color pencil, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Stephanie Cooper**

## Kathleen Riemenschneider

### Genocide: It Happens Everyday

We construct otherness so that I  
can exist with clear definition

I carve my world with the razor-sharp  
knife that severs, dissects your wrong parts

The one percent difference in our  
genetic code, the most important

We are made in God's image and you  
certainly fail to resemble him

Through your nostrils you breathe the wrong air  
Inhale the sting of toxic gases

Your speech is filled with inadequate  
expressions, no tongue should utter them

I will never be all that you are not  
Genocide: it happens everyday

(Published in *For a Better World 2006*).

### ABU GHRAIB One-Step

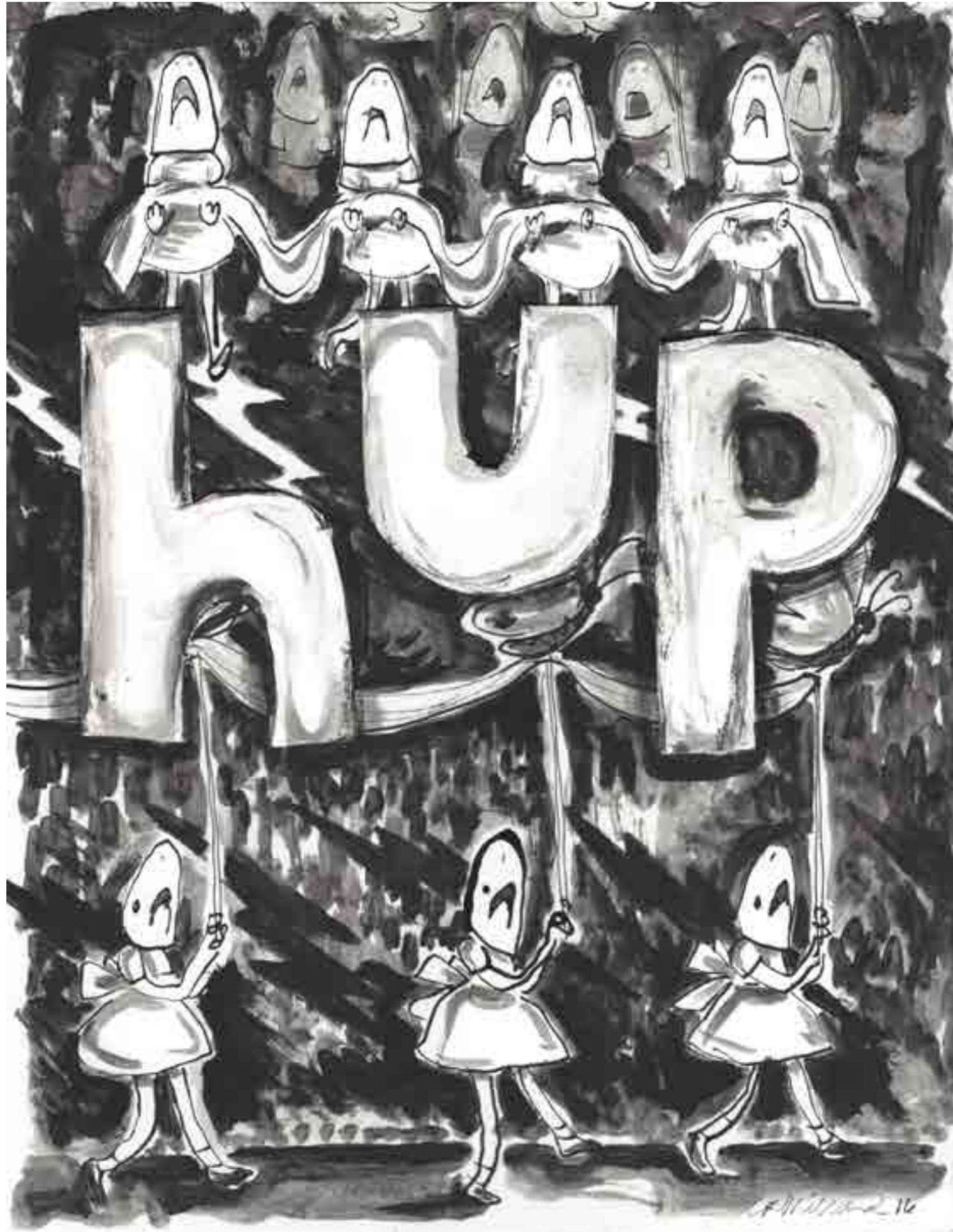
I want him to dance  
the one so often displayed  
in the Virginia Reel of Pentagon photos  
his black sack costume  
with the black pointed hood  
like an initiation outfit for the Klan

simply at first—an arabesque  
then build slowly—the movement  
until it's an expressive modern dance  
revealing—what his face must show  
under the hood  
finale—his body collapsed by fear

his arms spread out  
as if experiencing a revelation  
at least he should swirl endlessly  
like a dervish

No.  
Neither is allowed.  
Only the promenade of military intelligence  
he—the one in the black sack costume—  
is cast as a statue—motionless  
no movement—no shockwave  
flicker of a hand—a trigger  
one step off the box. . .

(Published in *For a Better World 2006*).



watercolor, collage, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Casey Riordan Millard**

## Timothy Riordan

### A Curse of Words

Of course there are  
words analogous to war—  
like Kosovo, Rwanda, Bosnia,

and the ongoing slaughter of souls.  
Lives lost, swallowed up  
by fire across the lines.

The body gone, voiceless,  
teeth holding tight; words  
left wanting on a rigid tongue.

Whereas I write cursive,  
and curl my R's,  
Retribution's pen

against the verbal suffering  
I count as daily battle.  
The war is over words

and the spirit of a ravaged landscape,  
news of destruction  
that never makes the headlines.

(Published in *For a Better World 2011*).

### Slogan World

The Navajo call America,  
*Slogan World*.  
They speak it in native tongue  
and suck their teeth,  
holding back the laugh.

*We've seen your deals, paleface,  
heard the words of Indian givers,  
crossed fingers behind your backs.  
We remember broken treaties,  
boarding schools,  
the forced marches of relocation.*

Now Uncle Sam offers slot machines,  
casinos and the lure of profit  
to appease their seething anger,  
the cynicism of open wounds.

(Published in *For a Better World 2011*).

### Veterans Day

We  
let machines  
commit our sins  
and call them accidents,  
victims of our wars  
and other casualties.

(Published in *For a Better World 2011*).

### Waste Management

In South Africa,  
teams compete  
against the merciless clock  
of World Cup soccer,  
not a second to waste.

A mantra of buzzing horns  
reverberates  
throughout the stadium,  
indistinguishable  
who the bees drone for:  
everyone friend & foe,  
opponent & mate:  
a microcosm  
of the new global order.

On the field,  
players move—  
now staccato, now legato—  
coaxed & cajoled  
by sideline coaches  
dependent on marauders  
restrained & unified in sport—  
war the ultimate  
waste of tribal fanaticism.

(Published in *For a Better World 2011*).

# Timothy Riordan

poet

## dulce et decorum est pro patria mori

*it is sweet and honorable to die  
for one's country*

what to die for?  
cherry pie without a stone,  
a getaway to countryside  
and moments sweet  
but green no more.  
to cherish, not betray  
the intimacy of fires  
that surged and simmered,  
burning embers  
cooling in night air.

how we dreamed another life  
and lived it.  
and now we're gone  
from where we were  
to where we are.  
our time, we had it then  
and live it now.  
and what to die for?  
our right to give  
and hope for nothing done in vain.

(Published in *For a Better World 2010*).

## Armando Romero

### Valparaiso

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

Translated from Spanish by **Alita Kelley**

(Published in **For a Better World 2007**).

### The Digital Tree

This was a man whose right hand had been buried who would spend his days in an empty room resting his feet against the upper corner of the window while holding a ship's porthole in his left hand; rhinoceroses would pierce it with their horns and allow their metallic hides to shine through

He had taken up the notion of being a poet and spent so much of his time talking about the war that he had neglected his right hand. It had grown slowly and furiously and, without his being aware of it, had crossed through the very center of the earth and surfaced at the other end.

When the children of northern Sumatra suddenly saw a tree without leaves and without fruit, they rushed off to summon their parents, When they came, they brought heavy swords and felled the tree at its roots. A white liquid seeped from its ravaged bark.

From that moment on, this man as a poet, feels a sharp, cutting pain, but he cannot tell exactly where in his body it is contained.

Translated from Spanish by **Alita Kelley** and **Janet Foley**

(Published in **For a Better World 2008**).

### Valparaiso

*Tal vez tendría una falsa memoria de Valparaíso si no me hubieran sucedido cinco cosas. Primero, en la cima de uno de los cerros, dos hombres cargan un piano, y su silueta recortada contra el cielo es la misma música; segundo, en el malecón un pescador se ha quedado dormido con varios peces atravesados en el pecho; tercero, en la plaza Echaurren una prostituta con un hueco en la frente me dice de abandonarlo todo e ir con ella hasta las alturas; cuarto, te busqué por entre los colores de las puertas y el ruido de los funiculares y no estabas; quinto, se fue la noche y vino una mañana de todos los cielos.*

### El Arbol Digital

*Era un hombre al que le habían enterrado su mano derecha Pasaba sus días metido en una pieza vacía Donde se sentaba Los pies contra el ángulo superior de la ventana Y su mano izquierda sosteniendo un ojo de buey Por el cual los rinocerontes Ensartaban su cuerno Y hacían brillar su corteza metálica*

*Le había dado por ser poeta Y se pasaba todo el tiempo hablando de la guerra De tal manera Que había descuidado su mano derecha Esta creció lenta y furiosamente Y sin que él se diera cuenta Atravesó el mundo de lado a lado*

*Cuando los niños de la parte norte de Sumatra Vieron aparecer un árbol sin hojas y sin frutos Corrieron espantados a llamar a sus padres Estos vinieron con sus gruesas espadas Y cortaron el árbol de raíz Un líquido blanco lechoso salió de ta corteza tronchada*

*Desde ese entonces El hombre como un poeta Siente un dolor terrible Agudo En un sitio del cuerpo que no puede determinar*



pen and ink, on paper; 10.5"x7"

**Matthew Bustillo**

# Armando Romero

## Sugar on the lips

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

*Translated from Spanish by **Constance Lardas***

(Published in ***For a Better World 2007***).

## Blossoms of Uranium

The three of them arrived at the same spot  
They ordered foaming drinks  
They greeted the courteous multitude

All three went up to the same table  
They drank smoking potions  
They knew nobody  
They were not uncomfortable

And lo and behold,  
When all three jumped together  
Over the cornice  
Over the window  
Over the hole  
The woman at the bar said there was no reason to be afraid  
Since they were a new flower brought from the East

But when they came down again and killed the whole multitude  
She said before dying that there was nothing to fear  
That she had come upon the wrong garden  
That she was mistaken about the flower  
And that instead of blossoms from Buddha  
She had brought blossoms of Uranium

*Translated from Spanish by **Alita Kelley** and **Janet Foley***

(Published in ***For a Better World 2008***).

## Azucar en los Labios

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

## Flores de Uranio

*Llegaron los tres al mismo sitio  
Pidieron espumeantes bebidas  
Saludaron a la amable concurrencia*

*Llegaron los tres a la misma mesa  
Tomaron humeantes pociones  
No conocían a nadie  
No estaban incómodos*

*Y he aquí  
Que cuando los tres se encaramaron  
Sobre la cornisa  
Sobre la ventana  
Sobre el agujero  
La mujer de la cantina dijo no se asusten  
Que ellos eran una nueva flor traída de Oriente*

*Pero cuando descendieron y mataron a toda la concurrencia  
Ella dijo antes de morir que no había nada que temer  
Que se había equivocado de jardín  
Que se había equivocado de flor  
Y que en vez de traer flores de Buda  
Había traído flores de Uranio*

poet

## The Poor

And the poor do not quiet with screams  
the fear that covers them,  
do not return to undo the sacred  
in their nocturnal prayers.  
They just walk by the edge  
of the sidewalk  
thinking of the precipice.  
In them remain bits of rage  
enough to light the fire,  
to curse the beautiful  
and the ugly,  
the harsh and the tender.  
For in the poor has died the patience,  
the hole where lied the wait.

*Translated from Spanish by **Saad Ghosn***

(Published in ***For a Better World 2011***).

## Domestic Assignments

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

*Translated from Spanish by **Alita Kelley***

(Published in ***For a Better World 2015***).

## Los Pobres

Ya los pobres no calman a gritos  
el espanto que los cobija,  
no vuelven a deshacer lo sagrado  
en sus oraciones nocturnas.  
Solo caminan por el borde  
de la acera  
pensando en el precipicio.  
Les queda rabia a poquitos  
para encender la candela,  
blasfemar de lo lindo  
y de lo feo,  
de lo espeso y lo tierno.  
Ya de los pobres se acabó la paciencia,  
el hueco donde yacía la espera.

## Oficios Domésticos

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



*mixed media, collage, on illustration board; 10.5"x8"*

**Kurt Storch**

## Brian Ross

### I've Got a Great Life Here

I've got a gum that keeps me from choking on smoke.

But what can keep me from seeing  
little yellow flags on a dry Angolan plain  
that mark where land mines were buried,  
like Easter eggs for curious, rebellious children?

I've got a girl that keeps me company at night.

But who can keep me from feeling  
the hopelessness of Rio urchins forced to beg and rob,  
and whore with fat businessmen,  
and cut tourists in fetid alleyways?

I've got a job that keeps me from going hungry.

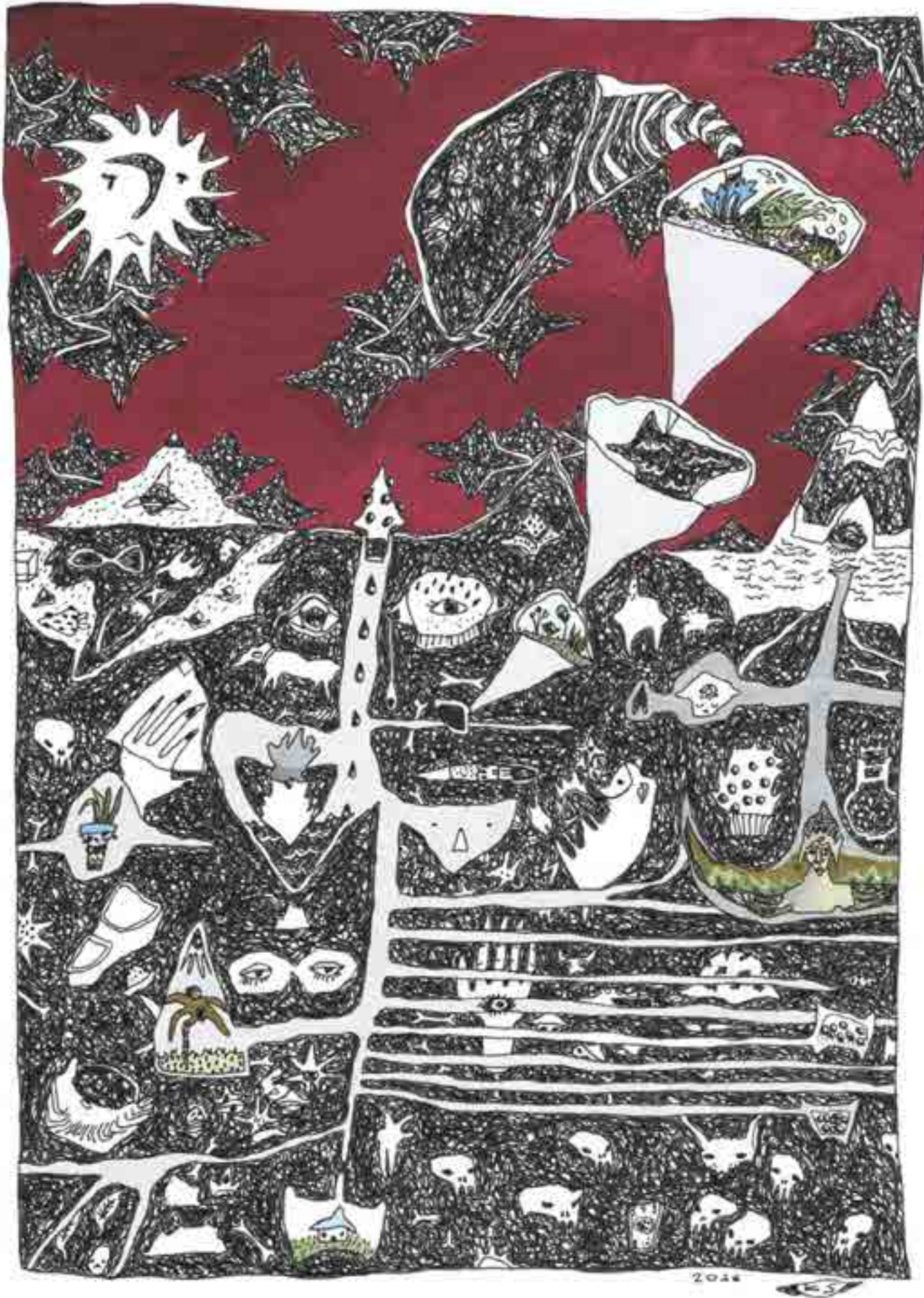
But money can't keep me from knowing  
that a billion people don't have enough food or clean water,  
that two billion people shit in buckets  
and live in filth and die of diarrhea?

I've got a country that keeps me safe from all that unpleasantness.

But nothing can keep me from hating  
this American ignorance, filthy rich and getting richer,  
the know-it-all right, illiterate leaders who start wars for more profit,  
who won't stop till they start World War 3 just to prove the liberal media wrong.

I've got a great life here, near the end of the world.

(Published in *For a Better World 2006*).



Faber-Castell and Copic markers, on illustration board; 9"x6.5"

## Mary Jo Sage

### Night Invasion

Quiet night, deep in slumber.  
Wind whistles through the trees.  
The mountain shines in moonlight  
Still and watchful.

Elk steal from hillside to meadow  
seeking water from the stream.  
Birds rest with heads pulled low  
Fluffing feathers for warmth.

Small mammals forage  
dark providing safety.  
But owls alertly watch them  
Waiting for their chance.

Bears snuffle in slumber  
Full to bursting with berries.  
Mountain goats sleep standing  
the better to escape danger.

All is calm, wind has died down.  
Water flows slackly in the stream  
Freezing at its source.  
Rocks rest, poised on one another.

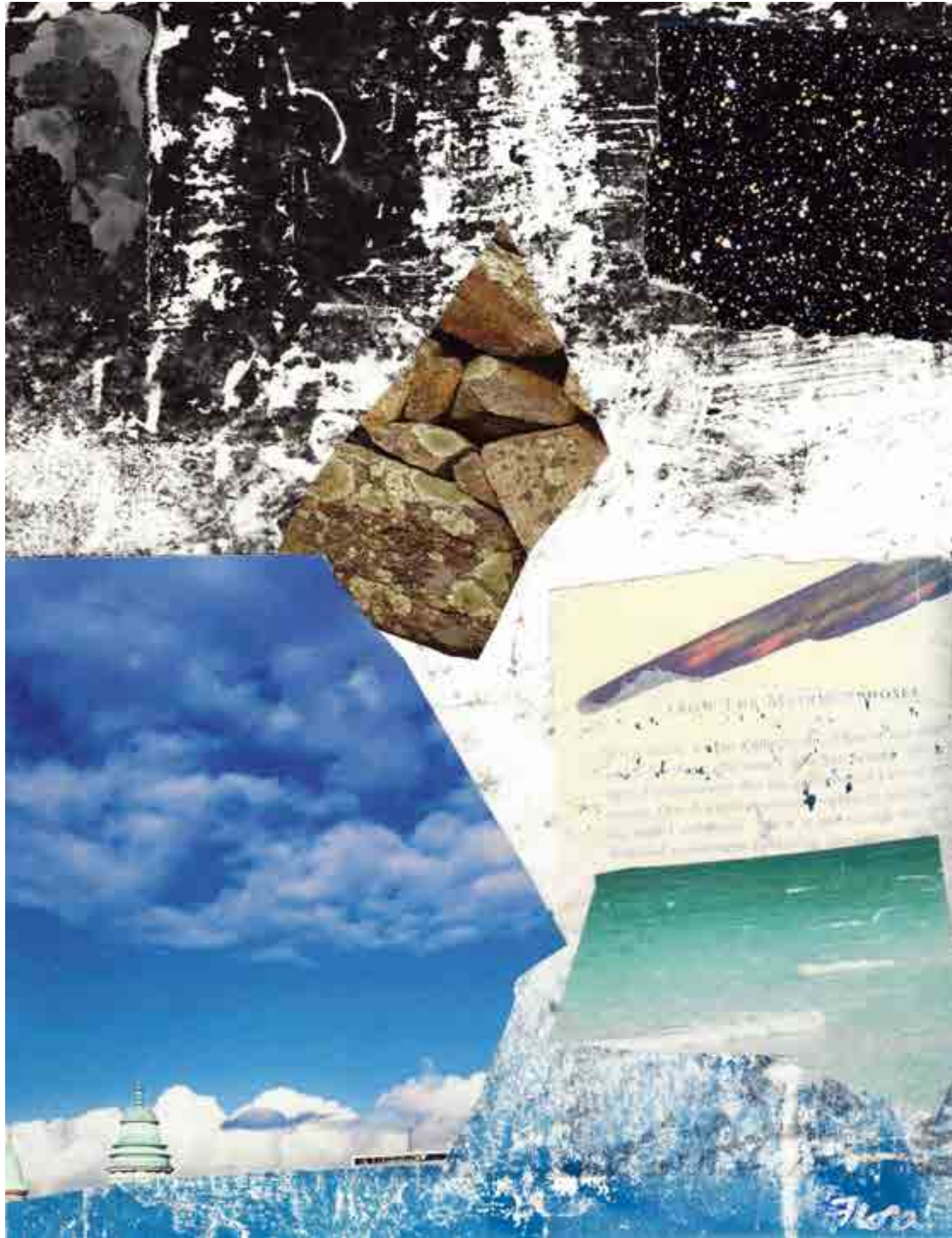
Noise tears open the night, machinery grinding through the air.  
Bent helicopters surge overhead, forever destroying peace.

Birds erupt from their nests,  
Elk run for the woods.  
Bears rear up with a startled growl,  
Mice dive into tunnels.

War machines invade  
This hidden valley  
To practice the art of killing  
Other men in other places.

It is the wrong time, the wrong place,  
For this rehearsal of war  
Here, where life proceeds  
According to its age-old plan.

(Published in *For a Better World 2011*).



*mixed media, collage, on paper; 11"x8.5"*

**Kim Flora**

## María Clemencia Sánchez

### Limoges

*What awaits me in the direction I don't follow?*  
Jack Kerouac

Here are all the heavens  
I have never visited  
the nightmare of trains at night  
that don't move  
like the laughter of the pointsman  
threading his days.

Ancient ruins and seas from elsewhere  
flow inside like a betrayal  
of what I look for.  
The kiss I leave on Salome's lips  
sculpts the mouth I'm losing  
and since Heraclitus I mistake  
the course of my icy itinerary.  
I will lose the stars again  
when walking down  
the inhabited streets of Austerlitz at night  
the marble sky of the Saint Pierre de Corps station  
where in a fraction of a second  
I saw all my life fall to pieces like an Autumn.  
I passed you on the Avenue Diderot,  
you terrible boy Jean Nicolas  
and I knew, as seaweeds know of silence,  
that the passion for gold and beauty  
is the same passion for death.

*Translated from Spanish by Nicolás Suescún*

(Published in *For a Better World* 2010).

### Limoges

*¿Qué me espera en la dirección que no tomo?*  
Jack Kerouac

*He aquí todos los cielos  
que nunca he sido  
la pesadilla trenes en la noche  
que no se mueven  
igual que la risa del guardagujas  
ensartando el hilo de sus días.*

*Ruinas antiguas y mares de otra parte  
fluyen adentro como una traición  
a lo que busco.  
El beso que dejo en los labios de Salomé  
esculpe la boca que pierdo  
y equivoco desde Heráclito  
el rumbo de mi itinerario de hielo.  
Perderé de nuevo las estrellas  
al descender a la noche  
inhabitadas calles de Austerlitz  
mármol cielo de la estación Saint Pierre de Corps  
donde en una fracción de segundo  
vi mi vida toda derrumbarse como un otoño.  
A ti te crucé en la Avenida Diderot,  
terrible niño Jean Nicolas –  
y supe, como saben las algas del silencio,  
que la pasión por el oro y la belleza  
es la misma pasión por la muerte.*





color pencil, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Julie Baker**

## James Alan Sauer

### Save Our Shit

(by Alien Sour)

The movement of our hearts stilled by laws and allegiance.  
 In a state where pets are pissed that you hate their masters,  
 they push their domesticated faith on everything around them.  
 Like pavement over everything that grows,  
 like junkies who need you high with them,  
 like lapdogs sneering at wolves for not doing what they're told.

Politics skipping like flat rocks across the surface of half-functioning dreams,  
 hoping to gain flight mysteriously.

Building guns that shoot knives.  
 Projecting bruises on the sky.  
 Plugged in, unborn, never having taken their first breaths.  
 Killing blooms for the comfort of stability when nothing here lasts forever  
 (I imagine flowers spitting in our faces and calling us ugly).

I had a dream last night;  
 I was a soldier in my city  
 along with people I knew.  
 We had no uniforms.  
 Then soft and slow,  
 like central heat  
 in the heart of a meaningful prayer,  
 my thoughts bleached pure  
 like a bone in the sun  
 silenced by light and made accurate.

Q: What can I say?  
 A: I'm a nation under skin without perfect teeth.  
 I govern myself in dirty shoes.

Not just on TV or in the paper  
 but even out my door,  
 I see what we have agreed on as acceptable:  
 cut, comb, shave, polish, tame, paint, and engineer.  
 I see that  
 all men were created equal,  
 but they don't stay that way.

That's exactly how I know we're nuts.

(Published in *For a Better World 2004*).



oil, on canvas; 11"x8.5"

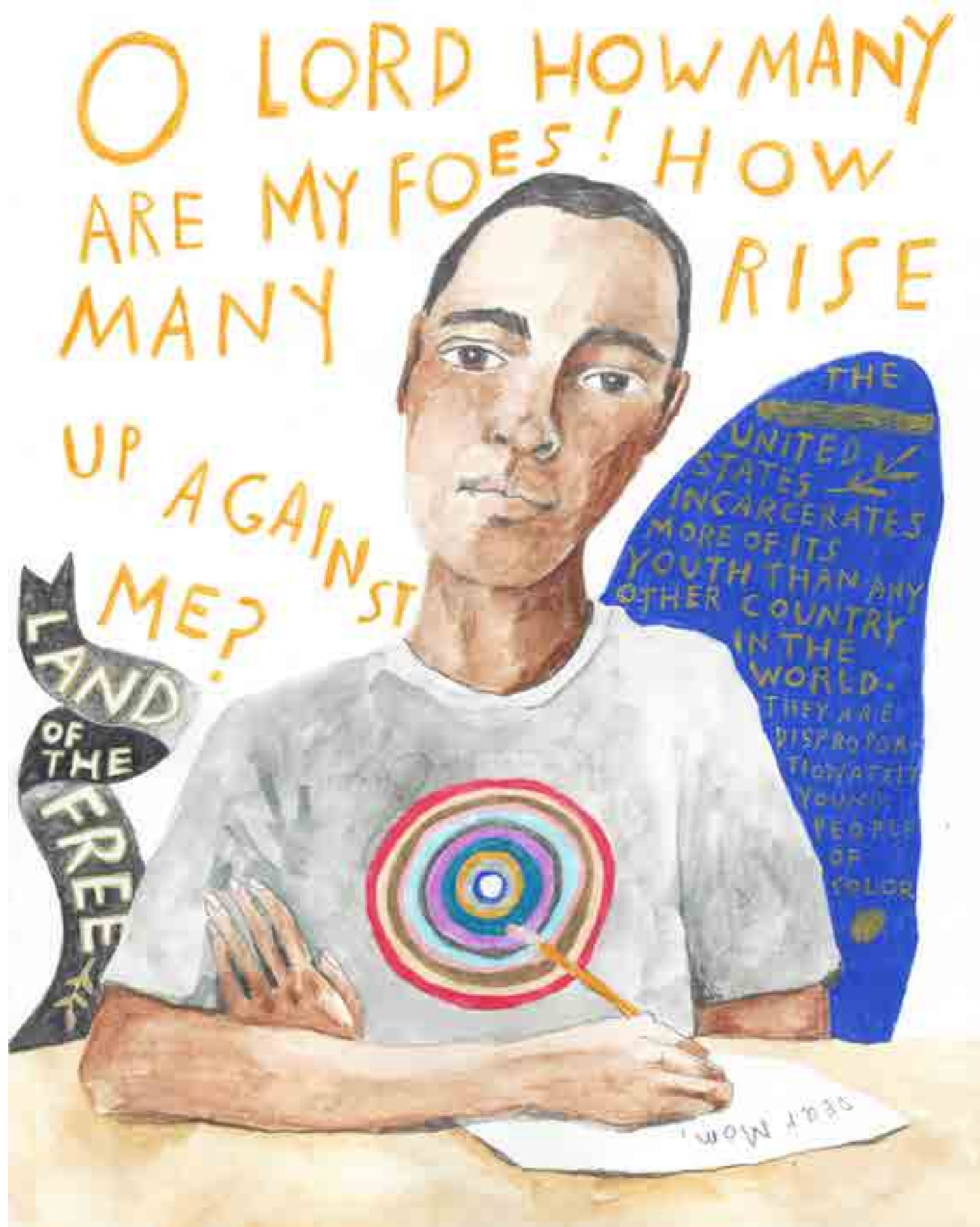
**Jimi Jones**

## Susan Scardina

### U. S. Probation

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).



watercolor, color pencil, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Lizzy Duquette**

## Linda Ann Schofield

### Anniversary Gifts\*

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2007*).

### Consequences

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).



graphite, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Cedric Michael Cox**

## Curtis Drake Shepard

### Black Boys Dream

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World* 2015).



acrylic, on illustration board; 11"x8.5"

**Derek Alderfer**

## Larry C. Simpson

### Arribada

1

They seem drawn to the beach  
like sea turtles that struggle ashore to lay eggs  
by the lemon light of the rising moon.  
These pregnant women, each from diverse places,  
distant lives, now share a common state.  
They wade in the roil, hands on hips,  
comparing due-dates,  
laughing about little kicks inside their bellies.  
One lies on a towel, allowing her mate  
to rub oil into her mammalian skin,  
massaging the soft mound  
that has become a living nest.  
A sea within a web of blood carries  
this projection of braided chromosomes,  
a sleeping creature, already loved.

2

When the mother turtle  
finds her way to shore  
from some unknown ocean reach,  
alone but with a thousand more,  
she pulls herself above the highest tide  
to dig a nest with clumsy dorsal feet.  
Stone faced, she strains to release  
each leathery bubble of life  
until she has filled the hole with hope  
of future progeny.  
Her only signs of relief or agony  
are rhythmic hissing sighs and tears  
that fill her eyes like minute seas.  
Quickly she buries her eggs  
with desperate kicks of flippers legs.  
Then, with full weight of her shell,  
she drops herself to tamp the mound of sand  
and exhausted, pulls herself back to the sea,  
swimming far from land,  
leaving her treasure to months  
of sun and storm and chance.

3

A mother stands  
in the rushing froth  
letting the sea suck sand from her toes.  
Watching a tongue of foam flow back and forth,  
she poses for a photograph.  
A husband wipes salt water from his eyes  
to get a better look at his swimming son.  
One child gathers shells.  
Another throws scraps of bread  
to the gulls that swarm and cry  
plucking food from the air  
like swift white fingers of the sun.  
A woman lies back in the waves with arms out straight  
letting the sea fill her hair and take her weight.  
The surf hushes her worries of motherhood.  
For a moment she floats  
in a saline womb  
like the child she carries into her dreams.  
She feels the swells,  
the lull of a hidden moon  
dissolving her cares in a flood of tranquility.  
She drifts like a water-borne bloom.

4

On a remote beach,  
vacant of hotels,  
where scavengers have not dug for eggs,  
neither humans nor dogs have ripped  
apart the shells,  
there comes a time  
when the sand simmers with reptilian lives.  
Already sensing the direction of the waves,  
the turtle young fight their way from the eggs  
to rush for their first taste of the sea.  
But frigate birds shadow the turtle brood.  
They circle, dive,  
snatching an easy harvest,  
abundant food emerging from the nests.  
Ghost crabs wait near the edge of tide  
to catch hatchlings with precise pincers,  
another step on the pyramid of protean.  
Some turtles find refuge  
in the hungry womb of ocean  
to flee groupers and sharks or other predators,  
perhaps to return one year to this same beach.  
So it is and has been  
for ten million years or more.

# Larry C. Simpson

poet

5

A woman and man  
slip alone from their room  
for an evening walk among the dunes.  
Like a golden turtle,  
the moon emerges from the waves  
sending yellow ripples to ride the swells.  
But the man and woman do not think of turtles  
or eggs or endangered species  
any more than they think of the submarines  
that haunt the seas  
or the guided missiles  
perched like predatory birds around the world.  
Their thoughts lie in a closer closer orbit  
of a child-to-be.  
With fear and worry and pride for this woman  
who carries the culmination  
of his life inside her abdomen,  
the man is relieved to lose his thoughts  
to the whisper and thunder of the ocean.  
The woman is a sponge of sensations,  
a vessel overflowing with care, emotion.  
They hold hands and watch the moon  
climb into rolling clouds.  
Their hands find places of shared secrets,  
the warm reunion of excited flesh.  
They kiss.  
They swim in moonlight on a towel  
tasting sea in merging sweat.  
Two becoming three, as one, they embrace.  
They burrow into mutual tenderness  
to create a single egg of faith.  
And when the surging tide carries their hearts  
higher than their minds, they lie back in sand  
until they again can see the stars,  
feeling the peace that follows passion,  
peace that overcomes  
their private wars.

(Published in *For a Better World 2014*).



flashe paint, on paper; 11.5"x9"

**Terri Kern**

## Sherry Cook Stanforth

### That Mountain

That mountain cradled me  
in a twilight bed of vetch  
its shadow bent to kiss me  
with fairy bells snow blossoms  
promising fat ripe fruit  
rounding a Cooper's hawk  
hunted the helium skies high  
scree bouncing on the rocks  
when the bird dove down

That mountain tasted musk-damp  
loamy with maiden hair cotyledons  
unfurling painted trillium hiding  
behind old log-rot some bloodroot  
gripping darkened furrows there  
I sat in the arms of a hemlock  
dreaming of life see me scaling  
barefaced lines of rock rising  
from the stream bed I spy prism  
minnows zipping glinting  
in a pool tucked away

That mountain wrapped itself  
in bridal veil lace smelling sharp  
cold and sure streams soft-bending  
hugging the land as a forever lover  
a God-line of trees sunning spelled  
out sassafras ash and shagbark bent  
sparking each season branches touching  
wild with longing then morning time  
fog wove all the shapes together

What mountain crow cawing out  
a grief song hear now how  
the laurel hell falls twisted bent  
beneath shale mounds ridgelines breaking  
as bones of some ancestor plowed  
from ash to dust with no end  
stumplines standing raw flat faces  
circling up the sun memorials to trees  
they say the rains a-coming to wash  
the valley ammonium nitrate baptism  
fulfilling a spirit-driven thirst  
for the pinnacle past  
in a present progressive  
move to unmask heaven

(Published in *For a Better World 2008*).

### This Time

*For Danny Miller*

That story you sometimes hear tell of  
tells its truth again: a woman living  
in the green land that spawned her steel-  
spined movements demands the end  
translation—no man will live  
to rip her tight seams or strip  
the laurel hell, collapsing the wells  
she once divined inside an hour  
of need. No tree, no bent weed  
ever escapes her parched gaze.  
So she grows into a snaking briar,  
a wailing haint, a mountain  
sprung right out of her own fill  
to suck back blast and boulders.  
She will reclaim each bit of ash leaf  
and the little wet copse of birches  
draped to be a shady-sighing cradle  
to warblers, trembling shrews.  
When he pushes in to cut  
she strikes back, then packs up  
her skipping stones, grottoes  
and strange-spotted beetles  
scuttling the felled logs. Mud  
puppies flip inside her veins  
and she flexes glowing ginseng.  
This, her life...the way to be  
tall. Tall, they used to whisper  
in her ear. She carries tall  
inside her heart, despite her tears.  
Everything in its place—even  
that ridge, her hardest bone,  
will not be broken twice.

(Published in *For a Better World 2009*).

# Sherry Cook Stanforth

poet

## On Locust Hill

We didn't expect an early shedding  
the stripped arcs of locust branches  
sweeping against travertine skies  
yawning fields of unmown fescue, timothy  
frosted hillsides shimmering a blinding light

That morning, we walked and wondered  
over the mysterious edges of change—  
watched the deer slipping along the old road  
then bracing for their run, white-tails flipping  
away the image of solitude and safety

Nothing stood still for that picture we wanted  
to capture—sweeps of evergreen bowed  
low, glazed and splitting with the burden  
of ice. The wind hissed and kicked up  
in a way to make us ache for home

We stood vigil for you, tuning in  
to hear your laughter ghosting  
down the gully but nothing bloomed  
out of season. That cold was enough  
to still our blood, splinter our bones

(Published in *For a Better World 2010*).

## Dog Day Cicada

The web quivered so she  
snapped off a switch of green,  
to sweep it all away. No, no,  
I told her—just be still  
and you'll see the simple  
circle spun around  
every living thing.  
She cried. The cicada buzzed  
and quarreled with the strings  
jailed from the sloped bough  
of the ash. Why? she asked,  
eyes on the spider carrying out  
its fatal task. She shuddered,  
poking at the fat blackness  
centered to bite, asked how  
such bloodlust could ever be  
right. I said, well, we all eat  
to live. Claimed the ache  
to be my own and hers, too:  
gulps of meat and milk,  
oil and coal and war.  
Everywhere you look,  
there's the web, I said.  
How will you escape it?  
She dropped her stick  
into the muddy ditch, dried  
her eyes. We stood by while  
the story spun to its end—  
and the cicada died.

(Published in *For a Better World 2013*).

## Las Calles de Granada

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2015*).





charcoal, on paper; 11"x8.5

**Theresa Gates Kuhr**

## Gwyneth Stewart

### Unrooted

*for Wendell Berry*

How do we manage to live,  
unrooted?  
We who never lived three generations  
in one place, who are always  
just passing through, who own not land,  
but real estate?

But how can we live rooted?  
Those of us who never pulled  
sustenance from soil or milk  
from cow, nor wore a path over  
one hill, knew its moods in June  
and October?

How do we find our place  
in a world that turns out sameness  
after sameness, where houses,  
streets, stores reproduce like  
photocopies, making everywhere look  
like anywhere?

How can we learn the covenant  
of care—of soil, water, air  
of creatures domestic and wild  
when we don't know where  
our bread comes from,  
the names of birds in our own back yard?

How can we live rooted?

(Published in *For a Better World 2011*).

### The Gospel of Trees

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

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

in summer, lush and languid  
in winter, stark calligraphy

who shelter and nourish  
beetle, nuthatch, squirrel

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

who breathe in our faults  
exhale forgiveness

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

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

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

who show us we need not hurry.

(Published in *For a Better World 2015*).



woodcut print, graphite, water color, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Jay Bolotin**

## Aralee Strange

### 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.

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).

### Stop Look & Listen

*for Johan*

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2007*).



acrylic, pen, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Carrie E. Pate**

## Tom Strunk

### As You Stood before the Soldiers

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

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

You fell to the ground  
defiant in your rage.

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

angelic and alone.

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).

### Streets and Alleys

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).



*mixed media, on black paper; 18"x12"*

**Todd Reynolds**

## Amy Carden Suardi

### 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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).



watercolor, pastel, india ink, on paper; 10"x7.5"

**Barbara Ahlbrand**

## Steve Sunderland

### Vet's Sangha: 2005

1. Where is my voice?  
Where is my voice for peace?  
I, too am lost in the bloom of anger.  
I do not want to speak about the pretty  
pictures of Viet-Nam and They's return.

Will someone go "back" to Baghdad in 20 years?  
Will there be an Iraq so full of  
graveyards that the "prettiness" is obscured?

2. Where is my voice of compassion?  
I, too, am so glad to listen to the vet's stories--  
their victories with PTSD on lips that quiver.  
Yet, my heart stays too cold, too closed,  
too violent. I want to stay in the  
mob, throwing rocks of protest.

3. Where is my voice of forgiveness?  
I, too, did not go when my number was called.  
Someone went for me--increasing their fear  
as I reduced mine?  
I want to say to my twin--"thank you,"  
And, "I am sorry"--and to the dark brother who went for me  
And never returned,  
I want to say, rather, to scream,  
"IT SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN!"

4. Where is my voice of hope?  
Sometime in the 1940's and 1950's I was "drafted"  
Into the peace army.  
I bow to my parents, brother and sister  
For their complicity.  
I bow to Jackie Robinson  
For his inspiring example.  
And to all of my Teachers.  
Yet, my voice of hope is weak.  
I am late to the chorus of daily singing,  
Only Now awakening to the perpetual need of loving care.  
I am recognizing my voice for me.

5. Where is my voice?  
It is here, in this veteran's sangha, reflecting the deep thunder  
Of memories one half recovered;  
it is here in the body's roots,  
And you and I can hear the sweet bell of love.

(Published in *For a Better World 2006*).

### Gentleness

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

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).



oil, on illustration board; 11"x8.5"

**Leslie Shiels**

## Jean Syed

### Starvelings

*(Or, the Woods and the Wide, Wide World)*

The sun's a color control knob gone kaput,  
Turning on only a monochrome day.  
The far woods are eroding into lime,  
The nearer barely stir. Stark, black limbs cut  
No capers,  
as starvelings too worn out to play  
Endure in last rags till a bitterer time,  
And millions gasp, in sound bites, at the plight  
Of junior stoics too numb to despair,  
At apathetic children hosting flies

As trees host birds. The same quick appetite  
Probing cracks in bark, nuthatches share

With flies that salivate round nostrils, eyes.

Dear God! Please bear with us till tomorrow's  
Normal service brings its norm of sorrows.

(Published in *For a Better World 2006*).

### Split Screens on CNN

On the left: California burning,  
orange skies, dense smoke in the ravine.  
On the right: rockets also burning  
in blue skies on my television screen.

Oh yes! We have to get away from here,  
our sacred earth as long as there's the time.  
We have to go to some other bright sphere  
to repeat wars, mismanagement and crime.

We shook off, before, the Old World's dust,  
my great-grandchild will go to Venus, Mars.  
Yet I hope it would be for pioneer lust  
that he wants to explore the sparkling stars,  
and not because our earth is wind or fire,  
and our self slaughtering to be its pyre.

(Published in *For a Better World 2008*).



watercolor, acrylic, graphite, walnut ink, marker, on paper; 11"x8.5"

## Kathryn Trauth Taylor

### Property Line

Mesophytic heaven just being  
by its own knowledge

the Frisbee mom brought  
to the park instead

my favorite sassafrass  
on that mountain

from the park swing until  
I am that sassafrass,

run from mom's  
'Wind it up's by make-believing

tonight we'll eat green beans dad  
brought home from Yulip Mountain

brother's cloudy eyes on  
"Take Your Child to Work" day

dad's lunch pale riding shotgun  
to Black Mountain

TIMBER-ing onto humus,  
watch it crash into the hollow's cradle

dizzy sick with log rolling as we  
uproot chickweed and poison ivy

we can't hear that engine roaring  
through our heaven

where tomorrow,  
he'll mine.

(Published in *For a Better World 2008*).



color pencil, graphite, on Bristol board; 9.75"x7.25"

**Celene Hawkins**

## Sharon Thomson

### Advent

In this, the last part of winter, in the snow  
still shining, beaten in  
with all our footsteps that keep on  
repeating and each breath is white and light  
--one more letting go--that hovers  
like a shadow about to be entered.

We're here now and around us  
the trees are bones in the wind.  
Wailing. Ice snapping. It's the world coming apart  
in the arms of some dark mother. Rock me.  
Tell me the tales of India, songs  
of the swollen-bellied tribe  
in Rwanda, rumors of torture  
among the mountain people: how Jerusalem turns golden  
beneath the desert sun. Sing  
of hushed gatherings: guerillas  
slipping through the Salvadoran night. And a fire burning  
in the eyes in America, even. There are still  
ears pressed to the ground, imagining  
the sound of after  
the earth stops splitting.

(Published in *For a Better World 2004*).

### The Year of Our Lord, 2001

1.  
When the world goes dark and turns to ashes falling,  
the dream that we were chosen to be safe, forever blessed  
just falling like those two tall towers pressed like destiny  
against the sky now falling. Look: how small a body is  
when it is falling from the sky, how fast we run  
when concrete crumbles, when a cloud and wind  
and flying rubble come snapping at our heels.
2.  
So quick. The shining city turns to dust.  
What's left is smoke. We count the dead  
and smell the end of life as we have known it.
3.  
I wake each morning, search for signs, scan the sky for angels,  
omens, a long-lost prophecy written on the clouds, some revelation,  
some god's intention breaking through the daily news: the bombs,  
more threats, the loss of innocents, pictures  
of the unexpected casualties.  
So this is war.

Apocalyptic warnings: what might be, things we've not seen yet  
hiding in the food, lurking in the water, buried in the next day's mail.

The Holy Lands are far from here: the hay, what light?  
a virgin womb. Today, Bethlehem is one more outpost  
where missiles leave track, burnt tidings in the midnight sky.

(Published in *For a Better World 2004*).



# Sharon Thomson

poet

## Before the Bighorn

There is a picture of Custer on his first expedition:  
golden hair, long moustache, shining boots, buckskin pants.

I've seen the movie: how he came through here, polished,  
soldiers a thousand strong, scouts, trappers, Indian guides,  
reporters, photographers, geographers, a procession

a hundred wagons, more, each pulled by six sleek mules;  
a dozen caissons; seven ambulances; three hundred cattle;  
a lorry full of pickaxes, pans for sifting gold.  
And his buglers, the call:

American flag slicing the wind  
like a sharp blade to scratch away  
the promise

“as long as rivers run ad grass grows and trees bear leaves”

*Wasichu*, The People whisper  
the word for white man  
through the dark wood,  
*He who takes the fat.*

They watch from rocks and fallen trees  
as Wasichus hold their pans toward sun and pray  
for gold to shine from gravel, how they howl like dogs  
and claw each other when they find the dust, the glitter.

And when Wasichus climb  
the seventh sacred mountain,  
carve their names and etch  
the date, the curse is set:

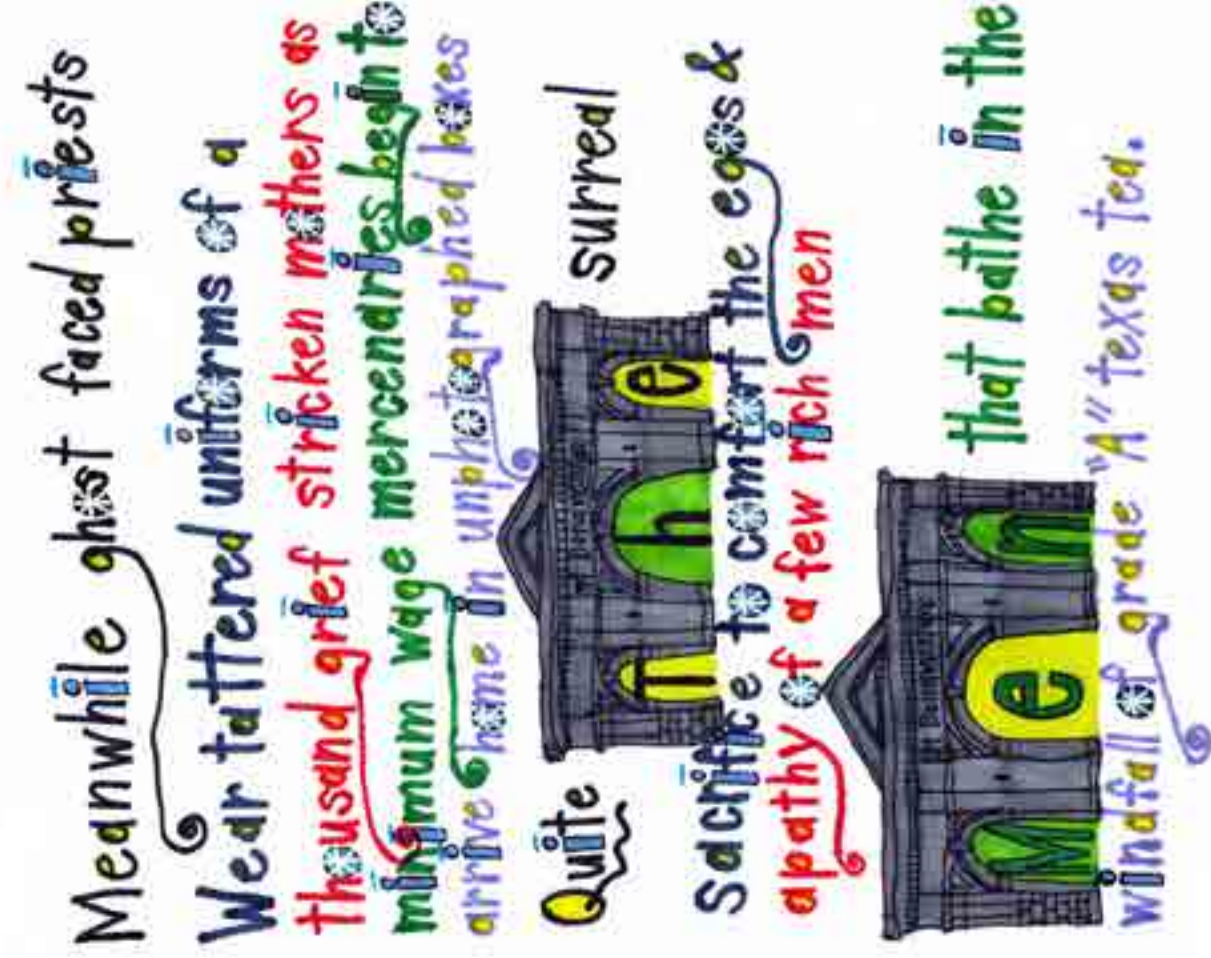
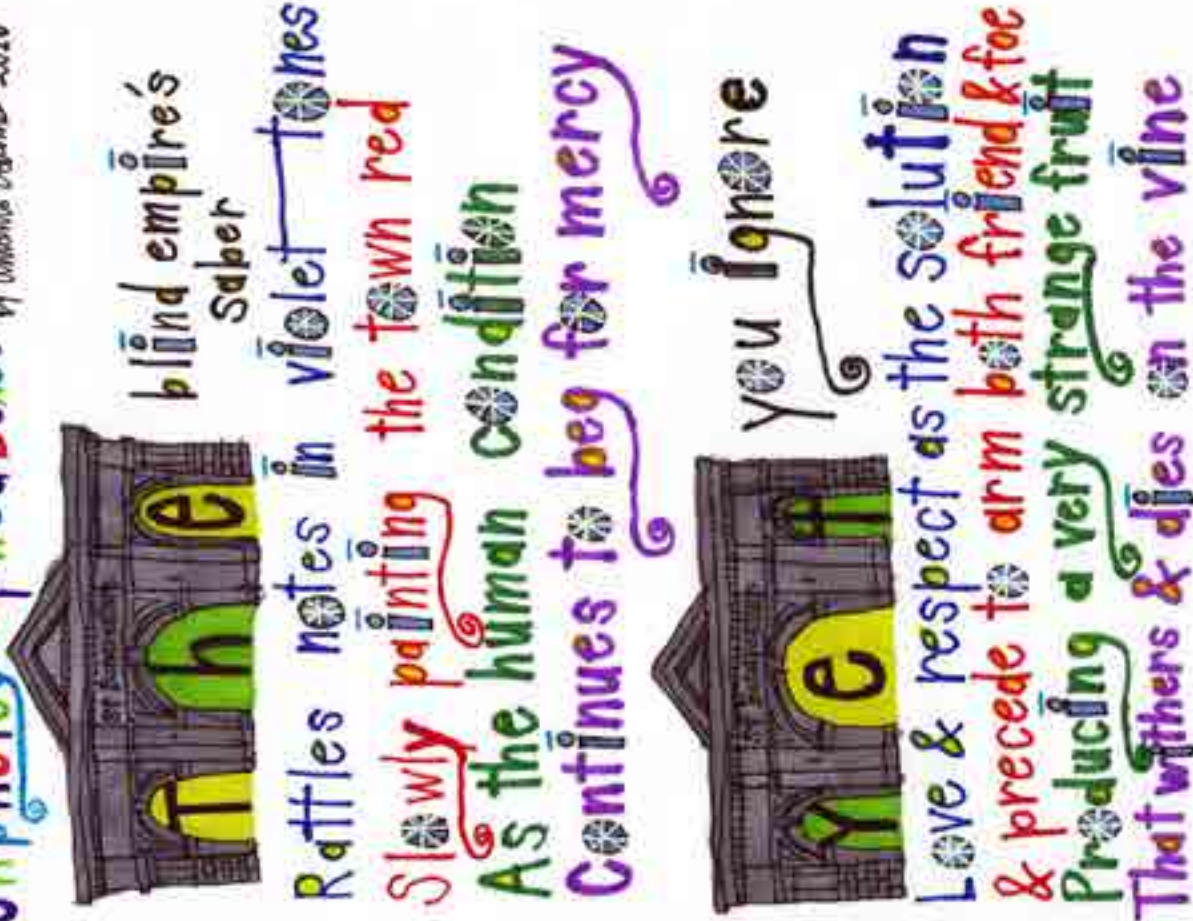
*They will die.*  
*All of them.*

There is a picture at the visitor's center:  
Custer and his smirking men, all  
sabers and carbines, cocky stance  
astride the place that was not theirs,  
their end.

Signed, William H. Illingworth,  
photographer,  
the only one left  
after the Bighorn, found later  
dead, by his own hand.

(Published in *For a Better World 2004*).

Unphotographed Boxes by Antonio Adams 2016



markers, on paper; 11"x17"

Antonio Adams

Michael Todd

Unphotographed Boxes

The blind empire's saber  
Rattles notes in violent tones  
Slowly painting the town red  
As the human condition  
Continues to beg for mercy

Yet you ignore  
Love and respect  
As the solution  
And precede to arm  
Both friend and foe  
Producing a very strange fruit  
That withers and dies  
On the vine

Meanwhile ghost faced priests  
Wear tattered uniforms of  
A thousand grief stricken mothers  
As minimum wage mercenaries  
Begin to arrive home  
In unphotographed boxes

Quite the surreal sacrifice  
To comfort the egos and apathy  
Of a few rich men  
Men that bathe in the windfall  
Of grade "A" Texas tea.

(Published in *For a Better World* 2008).



acrylic, on illustration board; 10"x7.5"

**Jennifer Grote**

## Kathleen Wade

### City Stoop

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World* 2007).



*mixed media, ink, on paper; 11"x8.5"*

**Cole Carothers**

## Frank X Walker

### Urban Architecture

Main street in Over-the-Rhine  
between 12th and 14th

is landscaped with lean black hustlers  
in long white tees

and young mothers who drag children  
down the street like leg irons,

has learned to ignore statistics and the ammonia scent  
of summer concrete soaked in piss,

stacks its poor twelve deep at bus stops, and wraps  
its homeless in empty store fronts and cardboard

blankets, at night. Around the corner  
from another new condo and secure off-street parking

something the size and color of hope  
dies every 30 seconds

so junior pall bearers crowd street corners  
practice pouring libations

dark suits in their pockets  
their neighborhood's last rites already waived.

(Published in *For a Better World 2008*).



*mixed media, collage; 11"x8.5"*

**John Wolfer**

## Gary Walton

### A Practical Self Improvement Program 2010

"I'm trying to become more shallow,"  
 Melissa Moon said softly,  
 After a particularly frustrating day

Of not writing, "I mean, who wants  
 To be reminded of the terrible shape  
 We're in—of the eight or nine

Charybdis swirls of plastic waste,  
 Amalgams of detritus, gyres of garbage,  
 That foment in the Pacific like some

Pathetic plastic soup the  
 Size of Texas, each a galaxy of  
 Twirling toothbrushes, toys, condoms

Bottles, cigarette lighters, septic syringes,  
 Unsightly strings of cargo wrap,  
 Tupperware, freezer bags, credit cards,

Pens, straws, razors, knotted  
 Clusters of computer components,  
 Eyeglasses, and Styrofoam pellets forming

Miles and miles of toxins, all  
 Degrading in the sun,  
 A veritable chemical Burgoo;

Who can take such an image  
 Stapled to the mind for a moment  
 Much less dwell on it for the

Interminable time it takes to craft  
 A paragraph or worse, a stanza;  
 Or who wants to imagine Kamilo

Beach on the Big Island of Hawaii,  
 Its white sand covered in a foot  
 Of polyethylene and polystyrene

Spherules that have been dumped  
 From cargo ships or garbage scows  
 Carting the dregs of a billion bustling

Bourgeoisie busily abandoning delayed  
 Gratification for the euphoria of  
 An immediate consumer surfeit;

Or, while we're on the subject—  
 That fracking for natural gas  
 Fills the aquifers on the mainland

With barium and strontium  
 (much less a slake of simple salt),  
 Or that local watersheds belch

Methane, ethane, propane and butane  
 Causing suburban spigots to shoot fire?  
 I mean, get real, everyone

Knows the glaciers are melting,  
 The ice caps in Glacier National Park  
 Are gone! Fresh water from the

Arctic is disrupting the Gulf Stream—  
 Ireland could have the climate of  
 Iceland soon—forget green energy,

China is building a new  
 Coal fired power plant  
 Every week. Meanwhile, the planetarium is

Empty, and never mind that the Hubble  
 Telescope can show us galaxies trillions—  
 Trillions, mind you—of light years away,

But the, by God, Creationist Museum  
 In Hicktown USA is filled to  
 The rafters and is building an

Amusement park where the kids  
 Can ride dinosaurs just like Adam  
 And Eve, because, after all,

The earth is only six thousand years  
 Old—did I mention the tar balls  
 Washing ashore on the Gulf Coast...?"

Here, Ms. Moon stopped  
 And stared in alarm and dismay  
 At her left hand—"To make matters

Worse," she said, "to make them  
 Categorically, indubitably, unequivocally,  
 Certainly, and, may I say, infuriatingly

Worse—." Here she stopped as if she were trying  
 To hold back a nascent crop of tears,  
 "I just broke another nail."

(Published in *For a Better World 2011*).

# Gary Walton

poet

## The Ghosts of Christmas

It is Christmas day and  
She is alone—hung over;  
There is no tree, no lights,  
No garish paper—  
Only silence, except for the  
Intermittent galumph of the furnace fan;

Her project today is to pump  
Air into her tires—not any easy  
Task in America on such a  
Special day when nothing is open  
Except Chinese restaurants and  
The gaping wounds of the  
Annual annunciation of recrimination—

Besides she wants to be ready for  
Marley's ghost or the imperfect  
Shades of defunct friends and family  
Who might stop by uninvited  
But whose memory might find  
A kind of welcome, none the less—  
They could all climb into her car  
With a cracked bottle of rye and  
Cruise around the neighborhood,  
Hooting at the hoar frosted windows and  
Haloed colored lights, haunting the  
Streets, pretending they were a  
Currier and Ives card sent to  
Brighten up someone else's day—

At least, that was the plan,  
If she could just find her  
Car keys and the will to open  
The garage door  
Once the motor is running—

(Published in *For a Better World 2014*).

## The Lack of Bees

There are no bees  
This summer:  
No honey, no sweat,  
No bumble;  
Something is happening  
To the fabric of nature,

A decided pull toward entropy  
And confusion and chaos,  
Like the stubborn frayed hem  
Of an old Calico skirt  
Flouting the law and order  
Of the design itself

By floating free and ragged  
In the swish of weary  
Decrepitude and ambivalence  
Or the worn patch at the elbow  
Of a favorite tweed that  
In spite of itself begins

To resemble the veil of a widow;  
Or the gabardine trousers  
Whose knee is found threadbare,  
Like the last wisps of  
Hair clinging to a bald man's pate;  
Or alas the very weave of

Your most stalwart sweater  
Who has given up even the  
Pretense of modest integrity and  
Is unraveling, returning  
Like a vague memory to a  
Simple wad of yarn;

II

My mother is losing her mind,  
Finding it again here and there  
In patches, like snow puddles,  
In the cruel and indifferent  
Weather of the dusk of herlife—

She searches still for those bits  
That escape her grasp feeling that they  
Are important but not really  
Remembering why—a name, a date, an emotion;  
The words will not come, though

She bids them with bitter tears and stutter;  
The syntax fades like the sound  
Of a distant drum into a mere echo,  
Like the beat of bats' wings into  
The night of a fading foreign horizon;

III

How can we have fruit this autumn,  
If the flowers are not courted  
With the sticky entreaty of the bees'  
Intrepid dance of love?  
There are rumors that the bees have

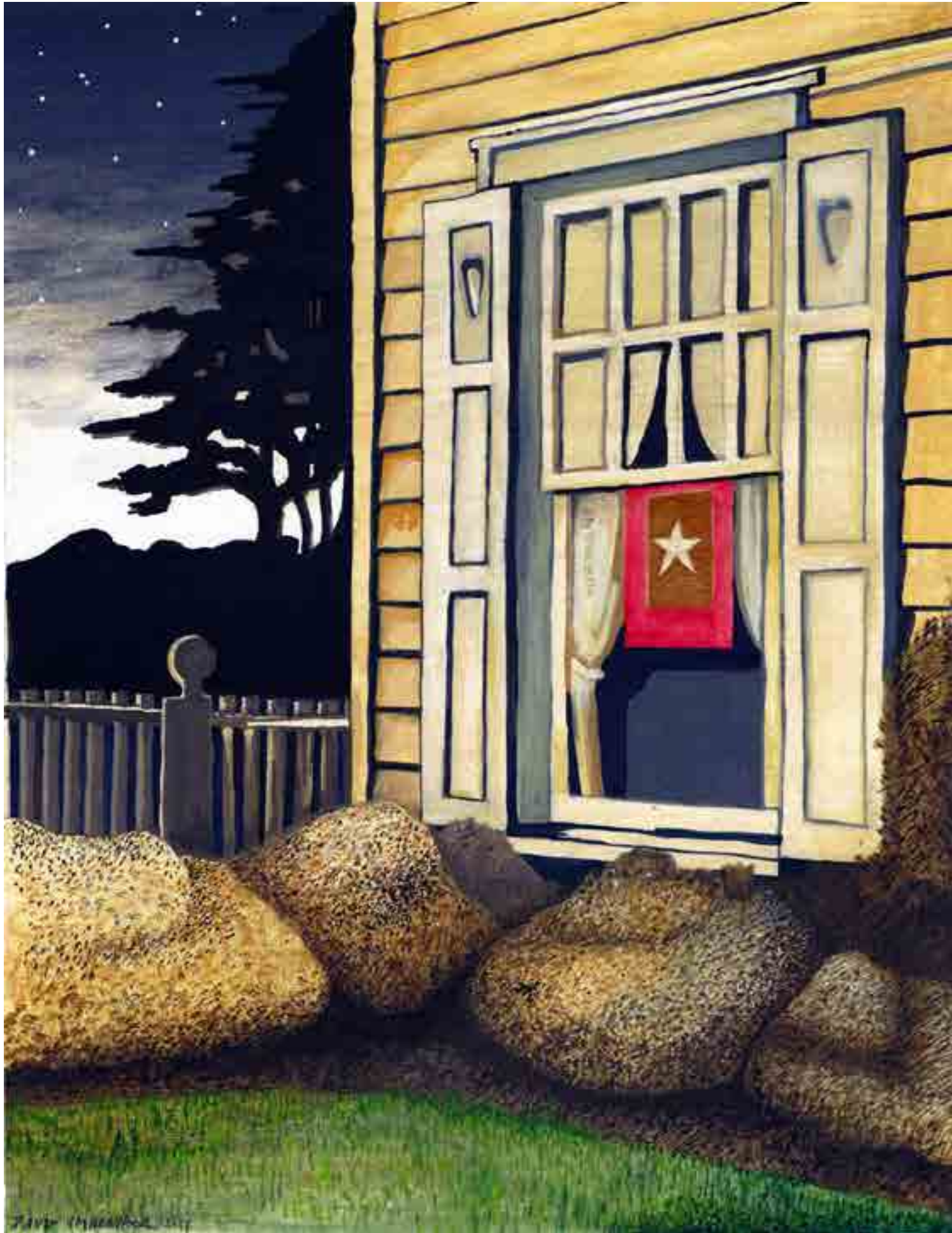
Forgotten how to fly home,  
That their mental maps are dissolving  
Like their own honey left abandoned in the rain;  
How lonely it must be to be lost,  
Away from the hive, from home,  
From your fellows who gave you identity  
And meaning, left flying arabesques  
In solitary, frightened desperation, searching  
For your own special cynosure,  
That place you can call your own?

IV

But wait, mother is at the door, crying out;  
She has fallen, her arm bruised and bleeding,  
Her head swollen like a dandelion puff ball—  
She asks if she can speak to my father,  
Her husband of 60 years—should remind her  
That he died two years ago?  
Will that information help guide her forward  
Or will it simply send her reeling  
Off course into the wilderness of her  
Own porous confusion and pain?  
In the pause between the question and  
The answer, I pray to hear the tiny

Beat of apian wings bringing an end  
To this sense of finality, of futility  
And for a sure and certain guide back from  
The brink and hope for the sweet  
Return of soft sensible summer, perhaps  
One worth remembering.

(Published in *For a Better World 2009*).



*gouache, on illustration board; 11"x8.5"*

**David Umbenhour**

## Fran Watson

**1944**

We gathered  
in dusty yellow pools of light,  
discussing life as it seemed  
in our beginning.  
There were no cars  
in nineteen forty four.  
The nine-o'clock street was ours.  
Curbs were warm  
in the evening air  
and everyone important  
was there.

From open doors  
sad songs of longing and missing  
dimly buzzed along with moths  
determined to mate  
with the hovering street lights.

There were few fathers, then,  
and little flags of stars  
in nearly every window told the story  
that we all knew, but never said.  
Names like deadly flowers  
sprouted in the newscasts,  
sending a chill of foreign malice  
around our supper tables.  
Places we would trace  
incomprehensibly  
on newspaper maps  
searching for a sliver of recognition  
in what we couldn't understand.

Sometimes the stars turned gold.  
Voices would hush as they passed that window.  
Prayers would be offered silently,  
all of them in fear of the next gold star.  
Out on the street corner,  
we kicked the can,  
confident that our dads  
were invincible.

(Published in *For a Better World 2011*).

**What It Is**

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

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

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

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

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

(Published in *For a Better World 2012*).



mixed media, collage, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Judith Serling-Sturm**

## Annette Januzzi Wick

### 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.

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).

### Missing Home

Cinder blocks stand  
like prehistoric Stonehenge  
holding up  
the bayou air  
as it wafts across the Lower Ninth.

The neighborhood bares its wounds -  
dilapidated sidewalks,  
graffiti masking cash machine as art,  
a lone mailbox with contents marked  
*return to sender*.

No man or woman is left  
to tell the tale  
of the wooden table and chair  
strewn along Flood Avenue,  
knobby leg poking through wildflowers  
chair seat matting down nearby weeds

Imagine,  
teetering atop that chair  
as flood waters rise,  
then stepping onto a wobbly table  
to reach the ceiling,  
crawl out a hole in the roof  
and wait

for rescue.

And return  
to the skeleton of a home  
lifted off its haunches  
and carried away.

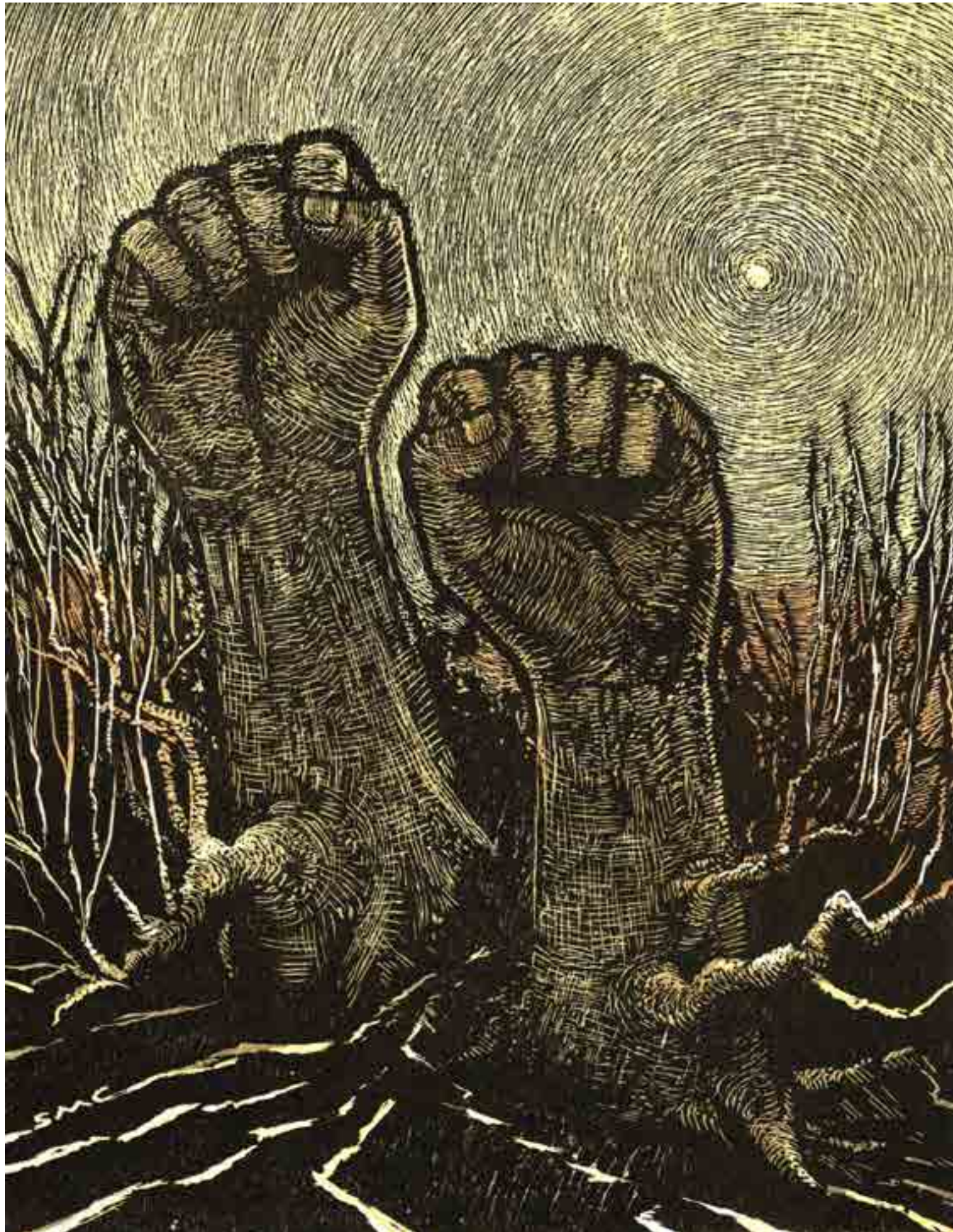
The burial of what died  
in the Lower Ninth  
comes slowly,  
as seasons surmount the work of man  
who long ago constructed canals  
that could not hold the surge.

A set of steps stays behind....  
to welcome home its ghosts.

(*Post-Hurricane Katrina, October, 2010*)

(Published in *For a Better World 2011*).





reduction woodcut print, on paper; 11"x8.5"

**Suzanne Michele Chouteau**

## Tyrone Williams

### The Sun Also Sets, Black-Eyed

Not being no radical  
but stemming from roots, branching out  
beyond limb edge, these fingers  
coil into fists  
box a blond sky  
until, puffed up with bruises  
red and purple as the sunset,  
it staggers back into its corner of the  
world.

(Published in *For a Better World 2004*).

### 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?

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).

### 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.

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).

### What Depends

In the blank moon  
a figure with wings

hovers. Colorless tableau,  
an effect of the sun in absentia

for half of those on earth.  
The sun is yellow, blue or red

as seen from earth, Venus, Jupiter.  
But we live here and nowhere

else, with colorless words:  
the moon is white, the figure,

black, a war, wrong,  
a war, right, all colors

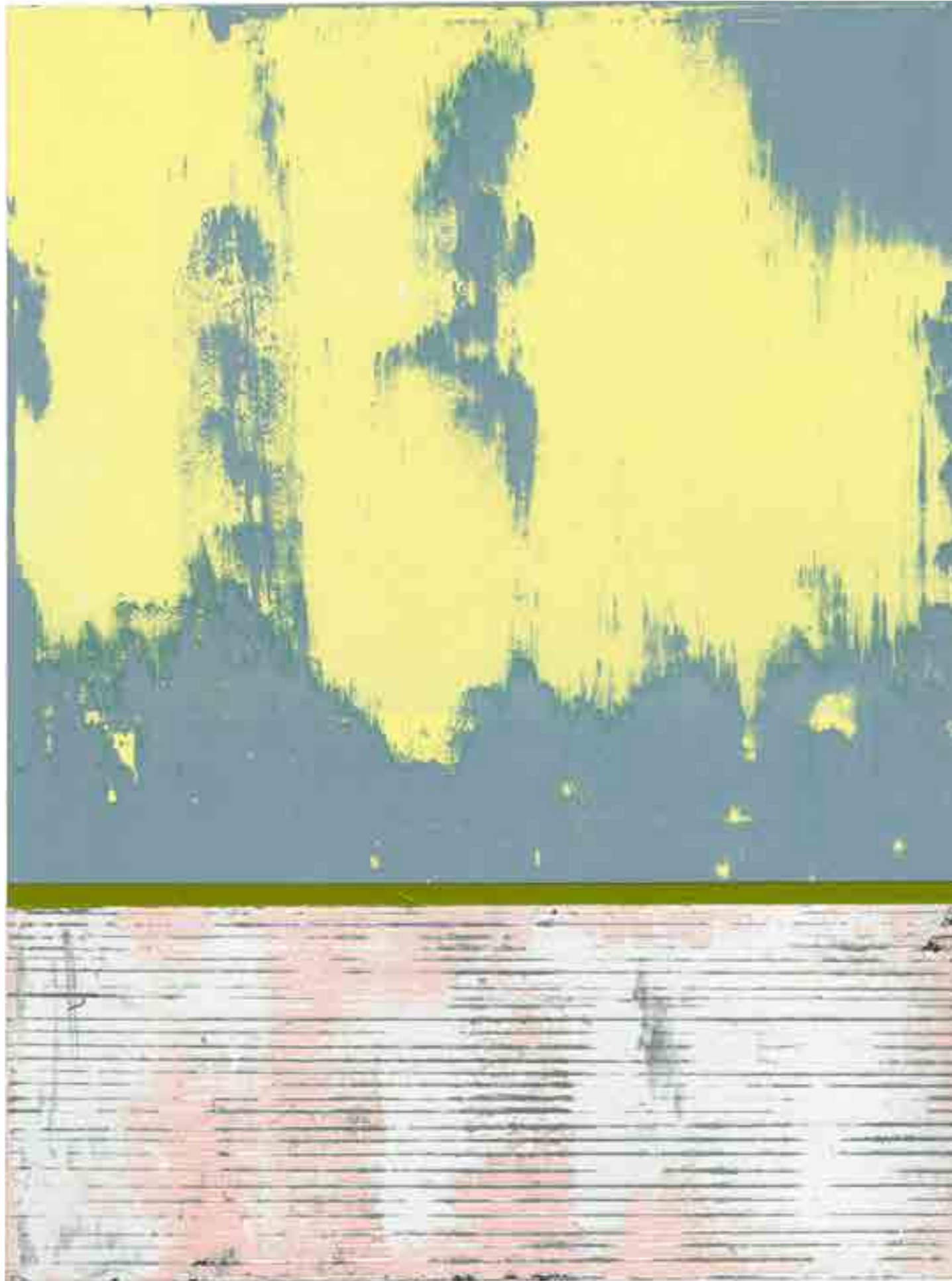
(Published in *For a Better World 2004*).

### Of Bootstraps and Grace

Not-yet finished, hope  
slumps  
down in the throne,  
some limp  
houseplant by a downed window,  
rain-streaked.

The jester dances in a figure of fire  
sewn into a rug.  
With special effects, the wizard doubles  
as Lazarus, as Jesus.

(Published in *For a Better World 2004*).



oil paint, rubber, wax, spray primer, pencil, on paper; 9.5"x7"

**Anthony Luensman**

## Ken Williamson

### The Rain, My mother and Common Sense

"You don't have enough common sense  
to get in out of the rain...  
you're going to get wet",  
my Mother would announce.

I was only seven.  
exploring a child's adventure.  
Playing in the rain  
with my friends.

Small, shallow areas  
in the pavement  
would fill  
with water.

Our feet made huge splashes  
as we purposely  
took aim  
in the puddles.

Our mission  
splashing  
ourselves  
and each other.

The rain ran down my face,  
dripped off my nose,  
filled my ears,  
and cooled my body.

When the summer shower was over,  
and the puddles were gone,  
I put on dry clothes  
and enjoyed the sweet smell of the air.

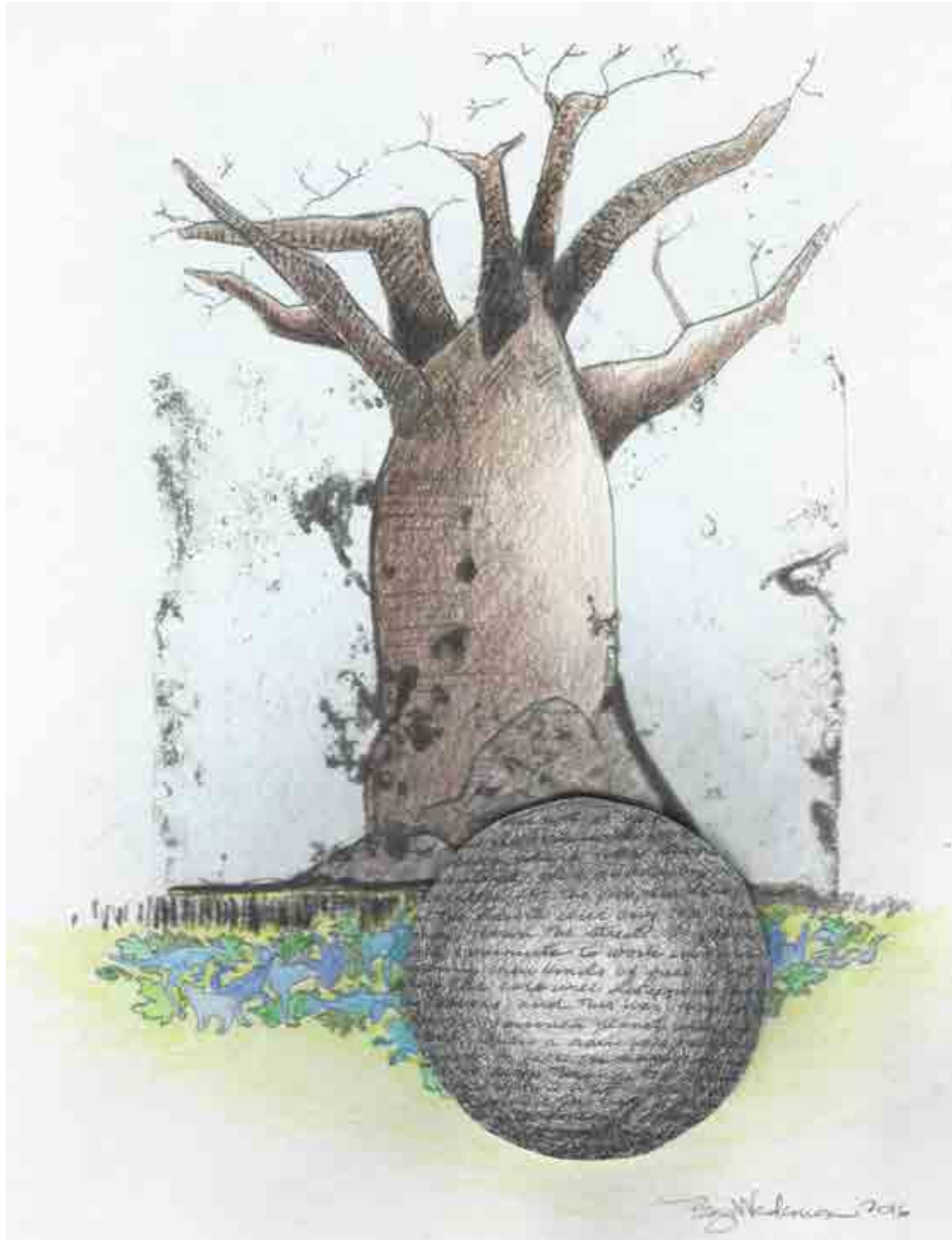
Today,  
49 years later,  
I sometimes work in my garden  
in the rain.

The water runs down my face  
drips off my nose  
and fills my ears  
transporting my mind  
to Vietnam  
and a different adventure.

The smells return  
mildew  
and the uniform that never dried.  
Fear and loneliness.

The sarge never said:  
"Son, git out of the rain,  
you're gonna git wet".  
And where was the  
common sense  
in that?

(Published in *For a Better World 2008*).



color pencil, on paper; 11"x8.5"

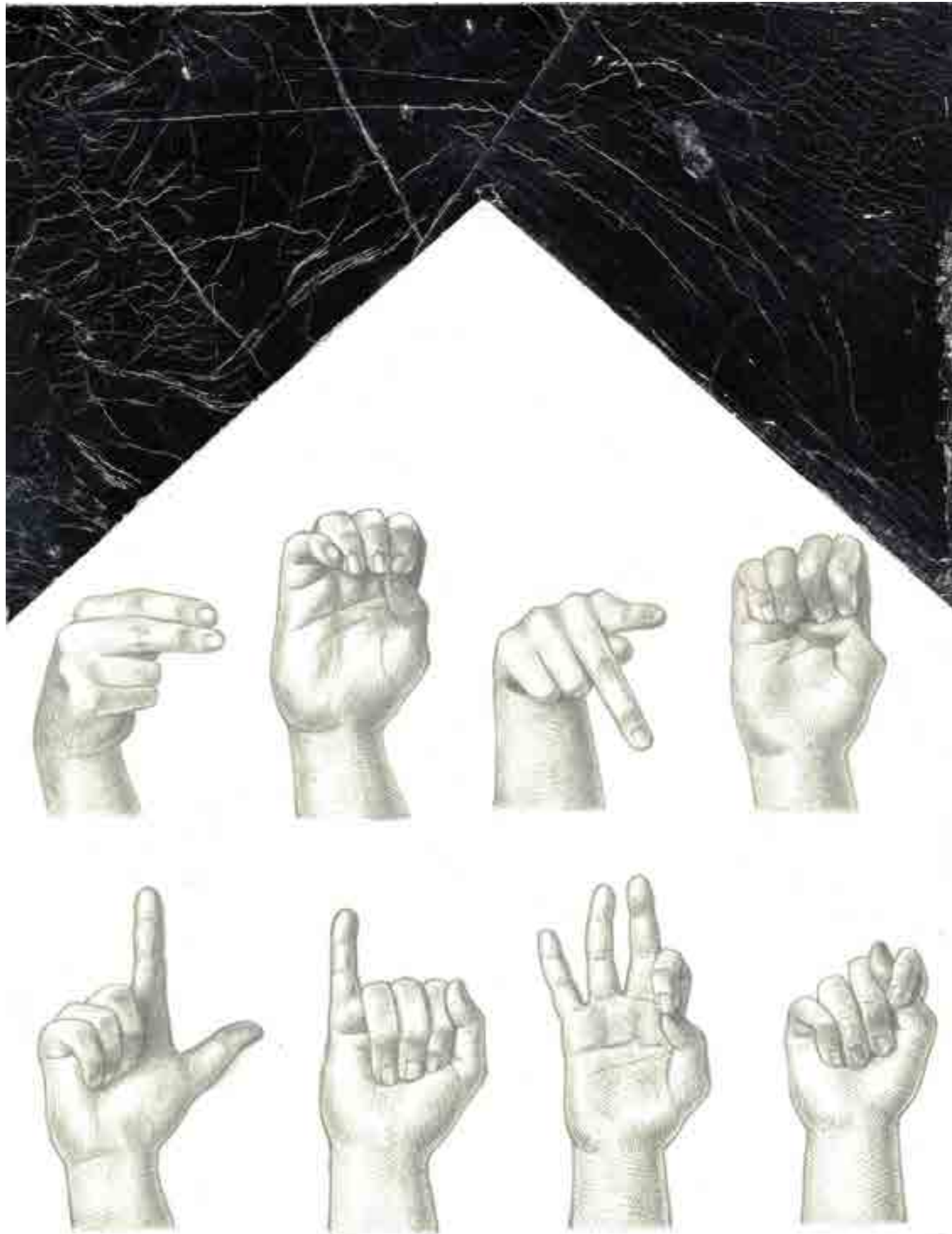
**Paige Wideman**

## Jeff Wilson

### 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.

(Published in *For a Better World 2005*).



silverpoint, aluminum-leaf, on coated paper; 10"x7.5"

**Constance McClure**

## Bea Wissel

### For Neda

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

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

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

#### II. Seeking Neda

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

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

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

# Bea Wissel

poet

## III. In Parting, Neda Speaks

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

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

## IV. Four Years Later

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

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

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

And in my country, too, we took to the streets and found our voices and felt strong,  
Felt power inside of us when we stood up, together, for what is right  
"Our streets, our city, our world!" We shouted. Though now the streets are quiet and a year Gone by,  
the bitter winter howling at the window. So inside I sit  
And stare at the photograph of the girl who I saw killed in the street  
And I write poems and wait for the earth to thaw and watch for signs of the spring  
When we will leave our scarves and coats and mittens behind for good  
To the chilly clutching of a dead and barren past.

(Published in *For a Better World 2013*).

## Robyn Carey Allgeyer

Robyn Carey Allgeyer is an announcer for WMKV 89.3FM/89.9FM and part-time at WGUC 90.9FM and WVXU 91.7FM. She has three children and a grandson living in Denver, Chicago and Nashville, while she and her husband, pianist Rob Allgeyer, are loving life in Glendale, Ohio. Robyn's sister is married to a career army officer, now retired. Robyn would like to dedicate her participation in this book to her sister and all military spouses for their service, dedication and sacrifice.

## Maura Anaya

Maura Kennedy Anaya is still trying to make the world a better place and in the process writing saves her. Mother, wife, lover of flowers, daughter, sister, aunt and she hopes a loyal friend. After 25 years in social services and brief stint as an entrepreneur she is changing gears to graduate student. Maura keeps an ongoing list of things she will do when she wins the lottery because magical thinking and hope have kept her alive. She thinks that without poetry and good stories we lose our way because compassionate imagination changes everything..

contact: [mkennedy@gmail.com](mailto:mkennedy@gmail.com)

## Karen Arnett

Karen Arnett's life has been a series of very different chapters: living on an Israeli kibbutz, forecasting weather in the Air Force, flying freight and teaching people to fly airplanes, working as an environmental activist, a market gardener, part-time writer for *City Beat*, and currently, helping to build community in her neighborhood of Mt. Healthy. Karen loves the different perspectives: seeing the earth from a bird's eye view, thinking of the atmosphere as a giant ocean that connects the entire earth, looking up close at a handful of soil. She dabbles at playing early music, singing sacred harp, and writing and beekeeping. Being raised by a Holocaust survivor mother taught her about suffering and displacement - early lessons in toughness and compassion. Karen's "church" is the natural world, which continually imparts wisdom and gives her a sense of connection to all that is.

contact: [karenarnett@gmail.com](mailto:karenarnett@gmail.com)

## Franchot Ballinger

Franchot Ballinger lives and writes in Cincinnati. He continues to publish poetry in print and online, his most recent acceptance being by the journal of spiritual direction, *Presence*. As volunteer with the Cincinnati Nature Center and a spiritual care volunteer with Hospice of Cincinnati, he continues to experience the beauty and depth of this moment whether in the forest or exploring with a patient the paradox of the diminishing outer but deepening inner.

contact: [hanshan12@gmail.com](mailto:hanshan12@gmail.com)

## Valerie Chronis Bickett

Valerie Chronis Bickett is a lifelong poet and teacher of writing in the Cincinnati area. She has taught at the University of Cincinnati, Northern Kentucky University and Mount St. Joseph University. From 1996-2006 she taught at Women Writing for (a) Change and since 2008 has been teaching writing classes on her own. Valerie had a chapbook published by Anhinga Press in Tallahassee, FL and in 2007 she was awarded an Independent Artist's Grant from the City of Cincinnati which allowed her to publish her first book of poetry, *Triandafilo*. She lives in Northside with her family.

contact: [valeriechronisbickett@gmail.com](mailto:valeriechronisbickett@gmail.com)

## Matt Birkenhauer

Matt Birkenhauer teaches English at Northern Kentucky University's Grant County Center, with an emphasis on Composition and Rhetoric, but also literature. He lives in Ludlow, KY, with his wife and two sons, Matthew and Benjamin. In his free time, Matt likes to read, write poetry and articles about pedagogy, and spend time with his family. He also enjoys spoofing politics and religion (both endless sources of satire) at Spoof.com.

contact: [birkenhauerm@nku.edu](mailto:birkenhauerm@nku.edu)

## Barbara Bonney

Barbara Bonney has published 2 chapbooks, *Liberry* and *In My Father's House*, has contributed to several anthologies, and has been published in national journals. She continues to wrestle with poetry in at least one critique group and was a featured poet at *The Poetry Forum* in Columbus, OH, in November 2016. Currently, Barbara lives and works in Lawrenceburg, IN.

contact: [bbbonney511@gmail.com](mailto:bbbonney511@gmail.com)

## Forrest Brandt

Forrest Brandt, born and raised in Dayton, OH, attended Ohio State university and was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Army through ROTC. He served in Vietnam 1968-69. Forrest completed his MED at the University of Cincinnati in 1977, and taught for 30 years, most as a reading specialist working with at risk students. He continued at the same time to serve in the Army Reserve and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1997 and retired from full time teaching in 2005. Forrest's writing has appeared in *The Ohio State Alumni Magazine*, anthologies *The Heart of the Matter* and *Illuminations* by Plymouth Writers Group, military publications... His poem, *Going Home*, was broadcast on NPR's Morning Edition on Veterans Day 2008 to honor veterans. He is currently an adjunct in the English department at Northern Kentucky University and working on a novel based on his days in Vietnam.

contact: [greenly@mac.com](mailto:greenly@mac.com)

## Mary Pierce Brosmer

Mary Pierce Brosmer is a poet and transformative educator who brings the art of writing and the practices of community to the work of organizational well-being and social healing in business, political, medical and educational settings. Mary is the founder of Women Writing for (a) Change, "bringing women to words and the words of women to the world" since 1991. She is a published poet and the author of *Women Writing for (a) Change: A Guide for Creative Transformation* (Notre Dame: Sorin Press, 2009), also a TED speaker, presenting "*Found: the Holy Grail of Organizational Wholeness*" at TEDxCincy, October, 2010.

contact: [mpierce@womenwriting.org](mailto:mpierce@womenwriting.org)

## Robert Bullock

2007: Bob Bullock lives with his wife, their kids and animals under some old beech trees in Kennedy Heights. His recent poetry collections, *Reptiles and Amphibians*, *Mt. Zion Copperhead Church* and *The Alkie Who Isn't Dead* are available in text and audio at [szymbolic.net](http://szymbolic.net).

## Timothy Cannon

Timothy Cannon is a Husband, Father, Grandfather, retired Licensed Hairstylist, Poet, Photographer, Artist, Idea Maker. He loves Marketing, Philosophy, Design, and Archeology. He has a rare autoimmune disease, Achalasia, also Action Myoclonus and Epilepsy, Parkinsonism, and Heart Disease; these conditions, however, do not define him. Timothy has studied ours and other cultures for a while now. Being pretty much confined for the past 15 years allowed him to observe the vibrational changes of the Earth and of its people. He thinks that we all need to change for the better, abolish wars and protect our planet for our children; and that we humans are all the same, and that we need to love, and be loved.

contact: [cannonimages@yahoo.com](mailto:cannonimages@yahoo.com)

## Neil Carpathios

Neil Carpathios is the author of four full-length poetry collections, most recently, *Confessions of a Captured Angel* (Terrapin Books, 2016). All of his chapbooks were published as a result of winning national competitions, the latest, *The Function of Sadness* (Slipstream Press, 2015). Neil is the editor of the anthology, *Every River on Earth: Writing from Appalachian Ohio* (Ohio University Press, 2015). He teaches at Shawnee State University in Portsmouth, Ohio.

contact: [cantoncarp@aol.com](mailto:cantoncarp@aol.com); [neilcarpathios.com](http://neilcarpathios.com)

## Michel Cassir

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

contact: [michel.cassir@chimie-paristech.fr](mailto:michel.cassir@chimie-paristech.fr)

## Ella Cather-Davis

Ella Cather-Davis is retired with her husband of 47 years. She writes poetry, essays and sometimes children’s stories to amuse her grandchildren. She holds an Associates of Arts degree in English Literature from the University of Cincinnati and currently attends the Osher Life Long Learning Center at UC. Ella is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Writer’s League and of the Ohio Poetry Association.

contact: [mikenella45@gmail.com](mailto:mikenella45@gmail.com)

## Vickie Cimprich

Vickie Cimprich’s poetry collection, *Pretty Mother’s Home – A Shakeress Daybook* (Broadstone Books, 2007) was researched at the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill with the support of two grants from the Kentucky Foundation For Women. Another grant enabled her participation in the Spoleto Arts Symposium 1999. Vickie’s work has appeared in *Dappled Things*, *Inscape*, *The Journal of Kentucky Studies* and *The Merton Journal* among others. She also co-authored *A Quilted Life* with Hazel Durbin (Contrary Bear Track Press, 2002). Vickie has taught English at Lees College, Northern Kentucky University and the University of Cincinnati. Her home is in Ft. Mitchell, KY.

contact: [vjc1@zoomtown.com](mailto:vjc1@zoomtown.com)

## Cynthia Perry Colebrook

Cynthia Perry Colebrook is a writer and poet currently living in San Francisco. She has been a consultant to not-for-profit organizations for almost thirty years, helping organizations achieve their mission through organizational assessments, board development, strategic planning, and fundraising. Having farmed with teams of horses in rural West Virginia for 10 years, and having lived aboard a 45-foot sailboat in the Atlantic Ocean for 8 years, her poems often deal with environmental justice.

contact: [cynthiacolebrook@aol.com](mailto:cynthiacolebrook@aol.com)

## Madeleine Crouse

Madeleine Crouse’s work has been published in *The Comstock Review*, *The Journal of Kentucky Studies*, and various Cincinnati Poetry Anthologies. Her chapbook, *The Edge of the Sky*, was recently published by Finishing Line Press. Madeleine lives and writes in the Cincinnati area.

contact: [madeleinecrouse@gmail.com](mailto:madeleinecrouse@gmail.com)

## John Cruze

John Cruze found his way to poetry through hiking and photography. His desire to put into words the things he saw, heard, felt, smelled, tasted and wondered at on the trail brought forth his earliest poems. He learned to see more and how to find the connection between the words and the spirit of the poem among the nurturing poets and talented critics at the Greater Cincinnati Writers League. The lessons learned through writing and delivering poetry find their way into his work as teacher, instructor and mediator.

contact: [cruzelegal@comcast.net](mailto:cruzelegal@comcast.net)

## Angela Derrick

Angela Derrick is an activist, poet/writer. *Melancholy Is When I Leave You: Poems from the Wife of a Death Row Prisoner*, her first book, has been called “An important addition to the canon on Capital Punishment and prison” by Sister Helen Prejean (author of *Dead Man Walking*). A 2nd book will be coming out shortly. When she is not writing or trying to rid the world of injustice, Angela more than likely can be found “playing” in the dirt in her gardens.

contact: [angela@angelderrick.net](mailto:angela@angelderrick.net)

## Donelle Dreese

Donelle Dreese is a Professor of English at Northern Kentucky University. She is the author of three collections of poetry, *Sophrosyne* (Aldrich Press), *A Wild Turn* (Finishing Line) and *Looking for A Sunday Afternoon* (Pudding House). Donelle is also the author of a YA flash novella *Dragonflies in the Cowburbs* (Anaphora Literary) and the novel *Deep River Burning* (WiDo Publishing). Her poetry and fiction have appeared in a wide variety of literary journals including *Blue Lyra Review*, *Roanoke Review*, *Louisville Review*, and *Quiddity International*.

contact: [dreesed1@nku.edu](mailto:dreesed1@nku.edu);  
[donelledreese.com](http://donelledreese.com)

## Spike Enzweiler

Spike Enzweiler, a native of northern Kentucky, graduated from Oberlin College in 2012. At this time, Spike lives in New Jersey, runs a soup kitchen/drop-in center, does case management at a homeless shelter, and plays church organs.

contact: [spike.enzweiler@gmail.com](mailto:spike.enzweiler@gmail.com)

## Kate Fadick

Kate Fadick’s poetry is influenced in part by her working and living in rural Appalachian communities as an ally for economic and environmental justice. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Still: The Journal*, *Indianola Review*, *Kudzu*, *Pine Mountain Sand* and *Gravel*, *Wind ‘97* and other regional journals. *Slipstream*, her first chapbook, was released by Finishing Line Press in March, 2013. Her chapbook, *Self-Portrait as Hildegard of Bingen*, will be released by Glass Poetry Press in early 2017.

contact: [kfadick@fuse.net](mailto:kfadick@fuse.net)

## Mark Flanigan

Mark Flanigan (Cincinnati, OH) is a poet, performer, columnist, fiction writer and a screenwriter. In January 2014, he co-founded an open/feature reading, *Word of Mouth Cincinnati* which takes place on the last Tuesday of each month at MOTR Pub, and in November 2015 his poem “*The Bell Ringer’s Song*” won the grand prize in the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra’s One City, One Symphony Poetry Contest. In April 2016 Mark was named one of three finalists for Cincinnati Poet Laureate.

contact: [mf@markflanigan.com](mailto:mf@markflanigan.com);  
[markflanigan.com](http://markflanigan.com)

## Gary Gaffney

Gary Gaffney, born in New Orleans, LA, is a visual artist and writer. He is Professor Emeritus at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. In his work, Gary tries to figure out what it means to be human.

contact: [ggaffney@artacademy.edu](mailto:ggaffney@artacademy.edu)

## Karen George

Karen George is author of the poetry collection *Swim Your Way Back* (Dos Madres Press, 2014), and four chapbooks, most recently *The Seed of Me* (Finishing Line Press, 2015) and *The Fire Circle* (Blue Lyra Press, 2016). Her work has appeared in *America*, *Adirondack Review*, *Naugatuck River Review*, *Louisville Review*, and *Still*. She reviews poetry and interviews poets at *PoetryMatters*: <http://readwritepoetry.blogspot.com/>, and is co-founder and fiction editor of the journal, *Waypoints*: <http://www.waypointsmag.com/>.

contact: [karenlgeo@zoomtown.com](mailto:karenlgeo@zoomtown.com);  
<http://karenlgeo.snack.ws/>

## Diane Germaine

Diane Germaine, writer/choreographer/performer/photographer, was named one of “8 to watch” by *Cincinnati Enquirer*. A graduate with English Honors from Performing Arts High School (NY), she was Principal Soloist of the Paul Sanasardo Dance Company receiving acclaim for many roles. *The New York Times* called her “...a superstar modern dancer in control of every kinetic nuance....” and she was awarded fellowships and grants from NEA, City of Cincinnati, and Ohio Arts Council for choreography and spoken word/mixed media productions. Diane has given readings of her poetry, stories, skits and plays in Woodstock, Cincinnati, and in performance concert with dancers. Her works have been published in *A Few Good Words* (anthology), *Chronogram Magazine*, *OhioDance Newsletter* and *Overseas Adventure Travel*.

contact: [dgermaine.writer@gmail.com](mailto:dgermaine.writer@gmail.com)

## Michael Geyer

Michael Geyer, a Cincinnati native and graduate of the University of Cincinnati College of Engineering, currently teaches high school chemistry. A writer since the mid 1980's and a current active member of the Cincinnati Writer's Project, Michael lives in the suburb of Montgomery with his wife and son.

contact: [geyer.mj@gmail.com](mailto:geyer.mj@gmail.com);  
[geyerpoetry.com](http://geyerpoetry.com)

## Susan F. Glassmeyer

Susan F. Glassmeyer has been working on words and poems ever since her grandfather taught her the language of train whistles when she was a little girl. She has two chapbooks of poems: *Body Matters* (Pudding House, 2010) and *Cook's Luck* (Finishing Line Press, 2012). Susan believes that poetry can save lives and supports that notion through her work at Little Pocket Poetry: [www.LittlePocketPoetry.Org](http://www.LittlePocketPoetry.Org)

contact: [susannaglass@yahoo.com](mailto:susannaglass@yahoo.com)

## Nicole Grant

Nicole Grant grew up on an island off the coast of New Jersey, and has lived in Northern Kentucky for almost 30 years. Involved in social movements opposing war and oppression for several decades, her focus now is primarily on building coalitions with indigenous activists. As a scholar/activist, Nicole currently teaches Sociology and Women's Studies at Northern Kentucky University and Gateway Community and Technical College.

contact: [4nicolegrant@gmail.com](mailto:4nicolegrant@gmail.com)

## Gerry Grubbs

Gerry Grubbs is an attorney practicing law in Cincinnati, Ohio. His most recent book, *The Palace of Flowers*, has just been published by Dos Madres Press. His previous collection, *The Hive Is A Book We Read For Its Honey*, also from Dos Madres, was a finalist for the Ohioana Library poetry book of the year in 2015.

contact: [ggrubbs@fuse.net](mailto:ggrubbs@fuse.net)

## Arturo Gutiérrez-Plaza

Arturo Gutiérrez-Plaza, poet, essayist, and professor, was born in Caracas (Venezuela) in 1962. His publications include the poetry collections: *Al margen de las hojas* (1991), *Principios de contabilidad* (2000), *Pasado en limpio* (2006), and *Cuidados intensivos* (2014). His works have earned the 1995 Third Biennial Mariano Picón Salas Poetry Prize, the 1999 Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Spanish-American Poetry Prize, and the Prize of the Foundation for Urban Culture, Venezuela in 2009.

contact: [arturogutierrezplaza@gmail.com](mailto:arturogutierrezplaza@gmail.com)

## Barbara Gutting

Barbara Gutting received her M.A. in theatre from The University of Minnesota and has taught high school English and drama for some thirty years. She is now retired.

contact: [turtlewomyn37@yahoo.com](mailto:turtlewomyn37@yahoo.com)

## Richard Hague

Richard Hague is author of sixteen collections of prose and poetry, most recently *Beasts, River Drunk Men, Garden, Burst, & Light: Sequences and Long Poems* (Dos Madres Press 2016) and *During The Recent Extinctions: New & Selected Poems 1984-2012* (Dos Madres Press, 2012) winner of The Weatherford Prize in Poetry. His poem “*Finding Freedom*” was First Place winner in the One City/One Symphony Poetry Contest sponsored by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and his long essay “*A Day And A Night On The Late Big Bone*” won the 2016 Spring Travel Writing Contest of Nowhere Magazine. He and his work are the subject of the “*Richard Hague*” issue of *Iron Mountain Review*. Richard is editor of two recent anthologies: *Quarried: Three Decades of Pine Mt. Sand & Gravel*, and *Realms of the Mothers: The First Decade of Dos Madres Press*. He is Writer-in-Residence at Thomas More College.

contact: [haguekort@fuse.net](mailto:haguekort@fuse.net)

## Tierney E. Hamilton

Tierney E. Hamilton, a 60 year old African American woman is tight roping between eldership, a youthful brain, navigating through a chaotic world looking for the possibilities of more life. Writing is her ride and die into understanding her worlds, both the inner and outer. She is looking to the future created in her imagination.

contact: [hamiltontierney@gmail.com](mailto:hamiltontierney@gmail.com)

## Pauletta Hansel

Pauletta Hansel is a writer and teacher who was recently named Cincinnati's first Poet Laureate. She is the author of five poetry collections, most recently *Tangle* (Dos Madres Press, 2015) and managing editor of *Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel*, the literary publication of Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative.

contact: [paulettahansel.wordpress.com](http://paulettahansel.wordpress.com)

## Karen Heaster

Karen Heaster began her writing career in advertising. She went late to college where she received a degree in social work, then on to graduate school. Karen now writes educational brochures for her employer. She originally refused to write poetry but got over it. She greatly admires Billy Collins and Ogden Nash.

contact: [karen\\_heaster@fuse.net](mailto:karen_heaster@fuse.net)

## Jimmy Heath (1954-2007)

Jimmy Heath was an activist and photojournalist who lived and worked in Cincinnati Over-the-Rhine where he came in 1995 as a homeless person, eventually being rescued by the Drop Inn Center shelter. His photographs reflected his struggle and those who shared his experience. Jimmy was for seven years the editor of *Streetvibes*, the Cincinnati street newspaper in Cincinnati, and at one time a Congressional Hunger Fellow at the National Coalition for the Homeless. He passed away after a long fight with a chronic health condition.

## Mike Heilman

Mike Heilman is a lifelong resident of Cincinnati, OH. His poetry has been published both online and in print. When he's not writing, you can find him tearing up some twisty back road on his '72 Harley chopper. Mike also spends a fair amount of time fixing things that other people break in order to support his small family. He may one day accomplish this with poetry and motorcycles alone, but hasn't done so yet.

contact: [mheilman1@gmail.com](mailto:mheilman1@gmail.com)

## Michael Henson

Michael Henson's most recent work is *The Dead Singing*, a collection of poems from Mongrel Empire Press. His book, *The Way the World Is: the Maggie Boylan Stories*, won the 2014 Brighthorse Prize in Short Fiction. Michael has published four books of fiction and four collections of poetry.

contact: [michaelhenson642@gmail.com](mailto:michaelhenson642@gmail.com);  
[michaelhenson.org](http://michaelhenson.org)



## Judi Hetrick

2005: 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.”

## Jeffrey Hillard

Jeffrey Hillard is an award-winning writer and teacher who is an Associate Professor of English at Mount St. Joseph University. In 2015-2016, he was Writer-in-Residence for the Library Foundation of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. Jeff's first novel, *Shine out of Bedlam*, was published in 2016. Among his numerous books, he is also at work on the *Shine in Bedlam* series for Young Adults.

contact: [jeff.hillard@msj.edu](mailto:jeff.hillard@msj.edu)

## Sue Neufarth Howard

Sue Neufarth Howard is a poet and a visual artist. She has poems published in *Zaira Journal*; *Accents Publishing Blog for Lexington, KY Poetry Month, 2014 and 2015*; *Her Limestone Bones: Selections from Lexington (KY) Poetry Month 2013*; *Tic Toc, Storm Cycle*, and *Gilded Frame Anthologies - Kind of a Hurricane Press*; *Cattails* online journal; *AEQAI* onlinemagazine; *the Journal of Kentucky Studies - 25th Anniversary Edition*; and the *Mid-America Poetry Review*. Sue has also poetry chapbooks published: *TreeScapes*, *EarthWords*, *In and Out of the Blue Zoo* and *Haiku Moments*.

contact: [snhpoet21@gmail.com](mailto:snhpoet21@gmail.com)

## W. B. (Bucky) Ignatius

W. B. (Bucky) Ignatius has lived in Cincinnati for most of his eighteen-something years. He has been trying, with a variety of strategies, to help make the world a better place, since he began to intentionally think for himself in the early 1960s. For the past twenty-five years, his chosen strategy has been through non-fiction writing and poetry.

contact: [bucky.ignatius@gmail.com](mailto:bucky.ignatius@gmail.com)

## Carol Igoe

Carol Igoe is a behavioral psychologist, focused on families and students with disabilities. To give herself a needed break, she writes poetry; it balances the work that goes on in her head and the challenges of working with public institutions that serve children with special needs and their families. Carol has been a peace advocate since the early 1990s and deeply values the increasingly needed venue for peace and justice that SOS Art has created for local artists. This year especially, poetry eases her heart in the face of international cruelty.

contact: [ckigoe@gmail.com](mailto:ckigoe@gmail.com)

## Manuel Iris

Manuel Iris (Mexico, 1983) is the author of 3 books of poetry. Manuel holds a B.A in Latin American Literature from the Autonomous University of Yucatan, a Masters of Art in Spanish from the New Mexico State University (USA) and a PhD in Romance Languages from the University of Cincinnati (USA). He is currently a member of the Research seminar on contemporary Mexican poetry of the National Autonomous University of Mexico and lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he teaches British and World Literatures at DePaul Cristo Rey High School.

contact: [manueliris65@gmail.com](mailto:manueliris65@gmail.com);  
[bufondedios.blogspot.com](http://bufondedios.blogspot.com)

## Eric Jefferson

After living in New York for 10 years Eric Jefferson returned to his roots in Cincinnati to search for the same things. He has had work published locally and in *Curbside Splendor*, based in Chicago.

contact: [ericcjefferson@hotmail.com](mailto:ericcjefferson@hotmail.com)

## Nancy Jentsch

Nancy Jentsch has taught German and Spanish at Northern Kentucky University for over 30 years. She has published numerous scholarly articles and her short fiction and poetry have appeared in journals such as *The Journal of Kentucky Studies*, *the Aurorean*, *\*82 Review* and *Panoply*. Nancy enjoys living in rural Kentucky with her family and her hobbies include knitting and Sudoku. She believes in the power of the arts to heal and unite.

contact: [jentsch@nku.edu](mailto:jentsch@nku.edu)

## Nancy Johanson

Nancy Johanson, artist and poet, lives in Clifton, Cincinnati, OH. Her book of poems, *Wild Grape Jelly Sky*, *White Stars* tracks the “ecstatically beautiful into its home in the ordinary hour...and shines the light of hope ‘for those who journey/from anywhere/to here and back,’” writes poet, Annie Stapleton. Nancy's earlier book, *Light Showings: Moments In Divine Presence* offers contemporary visions “reminiscent of Hildegard, and Julian of Norwich...profound in their simplicity yet deeply spiritual,” says poet, Edwina Gateley.

contact: [nancyjhohanson@gmail.com](mailto:nancyjhohanson@gmail.com);  
[nancyjhohansonpoems.com](http://nancyjhohansonpoems.com)

## Jerry Judge

Jerry Judge is a Cincinnati based poet and social worker. He has been a strong supporter and volunteer for SOS Art from the start. Jerry believes in the importance of speaking out through the arts against any form of social and societal injustice. As a poet, he believes in the duty of being a witness for our time.

contact: [jerryj871@aol.com](mailto:jerryj871@aol.com)

## Victoria Kahle

Victoria Munch Snyder Kahle, mother of two beautiful children and wife of a wonderful husband for 22 years, is a proud Norwegian descendant and a licensed architect who loves peace and continuous growth and development. After 38 years of abstaining from writing poetry, Victoria decided to write it again and found that it brings her joy, peace and freedom.

contact: [vkahle@mac.com](mailto:vkahle@mac.com)

## Steven Paul Lansky

Steven Paul Lansky is the author of *Main St.* (2002), *Eleven Word Title for Confessional Political Poetry Originally Composed for Radio* (2009) and of an audionovel *Jack Acid* (2012). His book *the citizen*, has excerpts in *The Brooklyn Rail* (2005), *ArtSpike*, *CityBeat*, *Streetvibes* and *Article 25*. His videos *Bratwurst* and *Exit Strategy* (both with Leigh Waltz), *Harvest*, and *The Broken Finger Episode A-8 or the Cigarette Break* can be seen on Youtube (lanskysp). More of his work can be seen in *Cosmonauts Avenue*, *Whole Terrain*, *New Flash Fiction Review*, *Black Clock 20*, *Journal of Kentucky Studies*, and *Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel*.

contact: [lanskysp@hotmail.com](mailto:lanskysp@hotmail.com);  
[cdbaby.com/cd/stevenpaullansky](http://cdbaby.com/cd/stevenpaullansky)

## Carol Feiser Laque

Carol Feiser Laque's newest collection of poetry *Mother of Pearl* was published by Circumference Press in 2017. In 2010, The Cincinnati Writers' Project selected her for the "Skyblue the Badass Award" for contributions in the literary arts.

contact: [carolfeiserlaque@icloud.com](mailto:carolfeiserlaque@icloud.com)

## Jacob Lucas

Jacob Lucas is currently a student at Northern Kentucky University. The poem in this anthology is his only published work to date, but Jacob does hope to make his way back into writing in the near future.

contact: [lucasj7@nku.edu](mailto:lucasj7@nku.edu)

## Richard Luftig

Richard Luftig is a former professor of educational psychology and special education at Miami University in Ohio, now residing in California. He is a recipient of the Cincinnati Post-Corbett Foundation Award for Literature and a semi-finalist for the Emily Dickinson Society Award. His poems have appeared in numerous literary journals in the United States and internationally in Canada, Australia, Europe, and Asia. Two of his poems recently appeared in *Ten Years of Dos Madres Press*.

contact: [luftigr@miamioh.edu](mailto:luftigr@miamioh.edu)

## Anni Macht

A native Cincinnati, Anni Macht has been a poet since 2001. After a 35 year long career in marketing, she is retired and enjoys writing, visiting her children in Washington, D.C. and Scotland and spoiling her little black & white dog, Sophie, rotten.

contact: [gracefullsunangel@gmail.com](mailto:gracefullsunangel@gmail.com)

## Stanley Mathews

Stanley Mathews is a local attorney. He holds a degree in English Language and Literature from the University of Michigan and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Cincinnati. He is a member of Delta Tau Kappa International Social Science Honor Society and is a supporter of all things poetry.

contact: [smathews@mmlawohio.com](mailto:smathews@mmlawohio.com)

## Juanita Mays

Juanita Mays, a native of Scioto County, Ohio, currently resides in Milford. She writes as she lives, through the prism of her Appalachian heritage and is never far from lessons and stories learned from the creek, woods, stones and earth of her childhood. A member of the Ohio Poetry Association and Phoenix Writers, Juanita has conducted creative writing play-shops for the Northwest Middle School in Scioto County and volunteered and designed a yearlong weekly series of creative writing workshops for women who have survived domestic violence through the Women of Worth Program, part of Clermont Counseling Center. Juanita has won numerous awards and has been published in a variety of literary journals. Her poems *The Coolest* and *Phyllis and the Wind* won first place awards in the Kentucky State Poetry Society (KSPS).

contact: [juanpoet1939@yahoo.com](mailto:juanpoet1939@yahoo.com)

## Constance Menefee

Constance (Connie) Menefee has been an intermittent poet since she was 11 years old. Along the way, she has given a number of poetry readings and received a 1998 Individual Artist's Fellowship for Creative Writing, Ohio Arts Council for poetry on the Vietnam War. She is a photographer (for sanity) and a technical writer (for paying bills).

contact: [constance.menefee@gmail.com](mailto:constance.menefee@gmail.com);  
[facebook.com/constanceleemenefee](https://www.facebook.com/constanceleemenefee)

## Kate Merz

Kate Merz is a Cincinnati native who was privileged to craft her creative writing skills under the tutelage of poets such as Richard Hague, Pauletta Hansel and Joseph Enzweiler. She currently serves as SVP of Content and Creative at PatientPoint, providing engaging health content in multiple mediums to help improve the doctor-patient experience. Formerly, she was Executive Editor of *Writer's Digest* magazine, helping writers to write better and get published. As a graduate of Xavier University, she wrote several one-act plays and assembled a poetry compilation that were staged for public viewing. Her poems have appeared in various local collections throughout the years.

contact: [kate.merz@patientpoint.com](mailto:kate.merz@patientpoint.com)

## Amber Mikell

Amber Mikell (aka Anne Marie Mikell-Paul) is a mother and writer with a Bachelor's degree in English from Florida International University. Her work has appeared in *FIU's literary magazine*, *Vox*, and *Mobius: The Journal of Social Change*. Amber also enjoys photography because it stills the world so she can take it in. She has been blessed with great teachers who guided, inspired, and encouraged her. She believes in courage, change, redemption, and the power of words to change the world.

contact: [rootiema@hotmail.com](mailto:rootiema@hotmail.com)

## Frank D. Moore (1938–2005)

Frank D. Moore received an MA in English from the University of Cincinnati in the 60s and taught for many years at the Community College of Philadelphia. He is the author of *The Traveller's Rest Poems* (1995). Frank died in Santa Fe in the summer of 2005.

## Justin Patrick Moore

Justin Patrick Moore is a writer, radio hobbyist, and student of the Mysteries. He is the author of the poetry collection *Underground Rivers*, and his essays have appeared in publications such as *AntenneX*, *Into the Ruins*, and *Abraxas*. His work can be found at [sothismedias.com](http://sothismedias.com). Justin lives with his wife Audrey in the Northside neighborhood of the Queen City.

contact: [justinpatrickdreamer@gmail.com](mailto:justinpatrickdreamer@gmail.com)

## Diego Mora

Diego Mora (San José, Costa Rica, 1983), holds a MA in Latin American Literature and Creative Writing from New Mexico State University and a degree in Psychology from Universidad de Costa Rica with a major in Media Education and a minor in Social Psychology. He also took cinema studies at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina. Diego has published one academic book, five poetry books and one fiction novel. He appears in poetry anthologies from Spain, Argentina, Chile and México among others. He has been editor of cartoneras publishing houses in Costa Rica, United States and Ecuador. He is a PhD student at the University of Cincinnati where he also teaches Spanish and is the Graduate Assistant for the Retention and Recruitment of Latino Students.

contact: [diegmora.costarica@gmail.com](mailto:diegmora.costarica@gmail.com)

## Christopher Morriss

Christopher Morriss graduated in 2011 from the University of Vermont with a double major in Biology and Spanish. He is currently finishing medical school at the University of Cincinnati and going into Family Medicine as specialty. Christopher is also a Returned Peace Corps graduate, having served two years as a Health Promotion volunteer in Ecuador. While there, he collected and wrote down the histories of the different communities in which he lived and compiled them in a book he titled *Parroquia Ventura Historias del Ecuador Rural*. Christopher has not written poetry now for a while, but he hopes that the inspiration will get back to him again soon.

contact: [solussolace@hotmail.com](mailto:solussolace@hotmail.com)

## Clark Mote

2005: 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 long-suffering wife and their four angelic children who tolerate him well.

## Ali Mramor

Ali Mramor lives currently in Southern California where she studies herbalism and works as an herbalist at a wellness retreat center. Since leaving Cincinnati in 2005, she has walked many paths including working with small children, teaching yoga, and exploring the mysteries of our consciousness. Ali lives with her partner, Robin, and together they grow what food and herbs they can, make music, explore the chaparral landscape, and live as simply as is possible on the outskirts of Los Angeles. Ali doesn't write as much as she used to, but is still deeply inspired by nature and the prevalent social issues. There will always be a special place in her heart for the City of Cincinnati.

contact: [alimramor@yahoo.com](mailto:alimramor@yahoo.com)

## Mike Murphy (1938–2017)

Mike Murphy, aside from writing occasional poetry, did gardening, and planted a permaculture orchard in Georgetown, OH. With his partner, Birdie, he welcomed visitors—for a day, a week or longer—who were interested in gardening, orchards, poetry, and other ways to make this a better world. Mike was a lover of nature and philosophy. He was involved with the development of sustainable farming projects, loved to read, write and was known as “a philosopher” to his friends and family who treasured his knowledge and insight. Mike passed away after suffering a stroke in May 2017.

## Mary-Jane Newborn

Mary-Jane Newborn is a native Cincinnati who practices and promotes liberation veganism, volunteering for VeganEarth. Certified by Hamilton County Environmental Services as a Master Recycler, she also maintains a registered Little Free Library, practices extreme composting, and her yard is a National Wildlife Federation certified Natural Wildlife Habitat. A Reiki Master, Mary-Jane has also done standup comedy, modeled for 26 years for art classes, and would like to buy natural gas produced exclusively by dedicated anaerobic digestion of currently wasted organic matter.

contact: [veganearth@roadrunner.com](mailto:veganearth@roadrunner.com)

## Nicole Rahe

Nicole Rahe is a native of Clermont County, OH, and has lived in the edge of country and city her entire life. She writes poetry in the time between raising three children with her husband of sixteen years. Nicole is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Writers League and enjoys being active in the local writing communities.

contact: [blaze\\_42nr@yahoo.com](mailto:blaze_42nr@yahoo.com)

## Mary Anne Reese

Mary Anne Reese is an attorney who lives and writes in East Walnut Hills. Her two poetry chapbooks, *Raised by Water* and *Down Deep*, were published by Finishing Line Press. Her poems and essays can be found in *America*, *St. Anthony Messenger*, *Still: The Journal*, and *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. She has also appeared several times on public radio and has read in the Cincinnati library's “*Poetry in the Garden*” series. Mary Anne holds an M.A. in English from Northern Kentucky University and an M.A. in Theology from Xavier University.

contact: [mareese621@gmail.com](mailto:mareese621@gmail.com)

## Kathleen Riemenschneider

Kathleen Riemenschneider has 20 years experience managing and creating arts education programs, including professional development workshops for teachers, teaching artists, and arts organization staff. She has also written and edited curriculum materials for education programs. Kathleen has a MA in Comparative Studies from Ohio State University, a BA in English from Indiana University, and is working on a doctorate in leadership studies at Xavier University.

contact: [kathleen.riem@gmail.com](mailto:kathleen.riem@gmail.com)

## Timothy Riordan (1944–2015)

Timothy Riordan's poems have appeared in *The Sewanee Review*, *North American Review*, *Envoi* (UK), *The Cincinnati Review*, *Journal of Kentucky Studies*, and *Santa Fe Literary Review*. He has published five collections of poems, most recently, *Observation Point* (2015), and numerous chapbooks: *simulacrum* (2008), *A Latin Vulgate* (2007), and *Foreign Correspondence: Poems in the Wake of September 11, 2001* (2002). Timothy was artist-in-residence in Prague, Czech Republic (2003) and in Reykjavik, Iceland (2006). He also collaborated with visual artist Diana Duncan Holmes on artist books and installation pieces, many in collections in the U.S. and abroad. A Professor Emeritus at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Timothy was born in St. Louis, MO; he died in Cincinnati, October 2015.

## Armando Romero

Armando Romero (Cali, Colombia, 1944), a poet, novelist and literary critic, belonged to the initial group of *Nadaísmo*, literary avant-garde movement of the 60s in Colombia. He received his PhD in Pittsburgh and currently lives in Cincinnati, OH, where he is a professor at its University. Armando has published numerous books of poetry, fiction and essays. In 2011 he won the First Prize for Short Novel, Pola de Siero (Spain) for his novel *Cajambre* (Bogotá, Valladolid, 2012). His book of poems, *Amanece aquella oscuridad*, was published in 2012, Seville, Spain, and in 2016, his book of poems *El Color del Egeo* (The color of the Aegean) was published in Spain and Colombia. Armando's literary work has been translated into several languages. In 2016 l' Harmattan (Paris) published a bilingual (French and Spanish) anthology of his poetry, and his novel *Cajambre* was published in Turkey.

contact: [armando\\_romero@msn.com](mailto:armando_romero@msn.com)

## Brian Ross

Brian Ross is still an advocate for social change, that he feels must be on a global level. He has just become a father for the first time and is determined to leave the world a better place for his son. He is finishing a book of philosophy which concludes with a call for a global constitutional congress. He is also learning how to swaddle and change poop diapers.

contact: [bigbriballs@yahoo.com](mailto:bigbriballs@yahoo.com)

## Mary Jo Sage

Mary Jo Sage is a poet, watercolor artist, and dedicated ecologist. She was the Director of Education at the Cincinnati Nature Center, and an Adjunct Faculty Member at the Union Institute and University.

contact: [ashhollow@fuse.net](mailto:ashhollow@fuse.net)

## María Clemencia Sánchez

María Clemencia Sánchez was born in Medellín (Colombia) in 1970. A poet and a translator, she studied Hispanic Literature at the University of Cincinnati, OH. Maria has published the following books: *El velorio de la amanuense* (*The Wake of the Scribe*, 1999), *Antes de la consumación* (*Nearing Completion*, 2008), *Paraíso precario* (*Precarious Eden*, 2010), *Recolección en rojo* (*Red Harvest*, 2012), *Tres romances para oboe* (*Three Romances for Oboe*, 2014).

contact: [sanchem@mail.uc.edu](mailto:sanchem@mail.uc.edu); [amanuense@live.fr](mailto:amanuense@live.fr)

## James Alan Sauer

James Alan Sauer, born in 1969 in Dayton, OH, graduated from the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 1992 with a bachelor's degree in fine arts, concentrations printmaking and painting. He currently lives in the Pendleton neighborhood of Cincinnati. Alan enjoys drawing and stone carving; he has also painted several murals privately and publically. He has shown his work locally and nationally including at the CAC and the Weston Art gallery in Cincinnati, OH.

contact: [jalansauer@gmail.com](mailto:jalansauer@gmail.com)

## Susan Scardina

Susan Scardina has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Hanover. She works at the United States Probation Office which provided the subject for her poem included in this anthology. She hopes readers realize everyone makes mistakes.

contact: [susanjane533@gmail.com](mailto:susanjane533@gmail.com)

## Linda Ann Schofield

Linda Ann Schofield has lived most of her life in western Ohio. She earned an M.Ed. from Wright State University in Dayton, OH, and an M.A. with a creative thesis from the Ohio State University. After she retired as a high school librarian in June of 2005, she moved to the Cincinnati area. In 2012 she was named Ohio Poet of the Year and in 2015, she published the *Psalms of the Hood*.

contact: [librarylady369@gmail.com](mailto:librarylady369@gmail.com)

## Curtis Drake Shepard

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

contact: [cdshepard@hotmail.com](mailto:cdshepard@hotmail.com)

## Larry C. Simpson

Larry C. Simpson: 1978, *Notes from an Emergency Ward*, later published on line; 1980, *The Cave with No Name*, a story poem with music, aired on WAIF & WGUC; 1983, Produced *Writer's for Radio* with local poets & musicians with a grant from OAC; 2007, self-published, *The Lost Cave of the Jaguar Prophets*, a novel. Larry is married, with four daughters, sixteen grandkids and one wife.

contact: [larrycsimpson@gmail.com](mailto:larrycsimpson@gmail.com);  
<https://sites.google.com/site/larrycsimpson/>

## Sherry Cook Stanforth

Sherry Cook Stanforth is founder and director of Thomas More College's Creative Writing Vision Program, often collaborating with regional authors and students to provide free arts events that blend creative writing with music and the natural world. She teaches fiction, poetry, environmental and ethnic literatures and serves as co-editor for *Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel*, the literary journal of the Southern Appalachian Writers Cooperative. Sherry performs regionally in a 3-generation Appalachian family band, Tellico. The voices of her mountain heritage inspired her poetry collection *Drone String* (Bottom Dog Press) and various recordings, including *It's Only September*, *From One Time to Another* and *Stone Soup*. With her husband, David, she raises four children, two trusty hound dogs, a hive of bees and a garden.

contact: [stanfos@thomasmore.edu](mailto:stanfos@thomasmore.edu)

## Gwyneth Stewart

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

contact: [ggailstewart@gmail.com](mailto:ggailstewart@gmail.com)

## Aralee Strange (1943–2013)

Aralee Strange was a poet, playwright and filmmaker, whose body of work includes *Etta Stone: A Film for Radio*; *dr. pain on main*, a play based on her series of poems by the same name; *The Chronicles of Plague*, a play; and *An Evening at the Sad Café*, directed scenes from her screenplay, *This Train*, a feature film she wrote, directed and edited. Strange also pioneered several open poetry readings, the last of which (Athens Word of Mouth) continues to this day.

## Tom Strunk

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

contact: [testrunk@gmail.com](mailto:testrunk@gmail.com)

## Amy Carden Suardi

A native of Cincinnati, Amy Carden Suardi lives with her husband and five children in Washington, D.C. Amy founded *frugal-mama.com* in 2009 and is active in her neighborhood and school communities.

contact: [amyacs@mac.com](mailto:amyacs@mac.com)

## Steve Sunderland

Steve Sunderland is director of the Peace Village Cancer Project/Cancer Justice Network, an organization which seeks to change the mortality of minorities in Cincinnati from cancer through the development of a new role: the navigator. Steve, along with a dozen agencies, two universities, two health clinics, and many volunteers is redefining cancer care ([cancerjusticenetwork.org](http://cancerjusticenetwork.org))

contact: [steve.c.sunderland@icloud.com](mailto:steve.c.sunderland@icloud.com)

## Jean Syed

Jean Syed was born in Lancashire, England, studied social work at Birmingham University, and came to America in 1980. Poetry is her hobby. Jean has been published by Dos Madres Press and Kelsay Books of California, and online "*The Ghazal Page*" and "*The Road Not Taken: The Journal of Formal Poetry*." She has been broadcast locally.

contact: [jeansyed721@gmail.com](mailto:jeansyed721@gmail.com)

## Kathryn Trauth Taylor

Kathryn (Katie) Trauth Taylor is CEO of Taylor Technical Consulting, a national writing consultancy specializing in professional communication, and long-term collaborator of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Katie earned a PhD in Rhetoric and Composition from Purdue University with emphasis on public rhetoric, community engagement, and professional writing. Her peer-reviewed publications span the fields of technical writing, composition and rhetoric, systems engineering, and healthcare.

contact: [katie@taylortechnicalconsulting.com](mailto:katie@taylortechnicalconsulting.com)

## Sharon Thomson

Sharon Thomson works as a community-based artist for the Grail, a United Nations non-governmental organization providing educational and cultural programs in 20 countries. In addition to the 2004 "*For a Better World*" anthology, her work has been published in: *Poetry*, *Pequod*, *Athenaeum*, *Louisville Review* and in anthologies such as, *Many Lights in Many Windows* (Milkweed Editions), and *Anthology of Magazine Verse & Yearbook of American Poetry* (Monitor Book Co.). Her chapbook, *Sharon Thomson, Greatest Hits 1973-2000*, was published by Pudding House Publications in Ohio. She is listed in *A Directory of American Poets and Fiction Writers* (Poets & Writers, Inc.).

contact: [sharonthomson2001@yahoo.com](mailto:sharonthomson2001@yahoo.com)

## Michael Todd

Michael Todd writes and performs spoken word poetry; he is also a painter. He lived in the San Francisco Bay area for 20 years and relocated to Cincinnati 6 years ago. California affected his work, adding to it freedom of thought and a focus on social issues.

contact: [michaeltodd14@yahoo.com](mailto:michaeltodd14@yahoo.com)

## Kathleen Wade

Kathleen Wade is a fourth-generation Cincinnatian. Her fascination with writing led her to spend 29 years as a teacher of English, journalism, speech and drama on the high-school and college levels. She also served as facilitator and Executive Director at Women Writing for (a) Change, a writing community for women and girls in Cincinnati. Kathleen's poems and essays have been published in a variety of anthologies. She currently directs a collaborative leadership-development program for women religious and remains an active writer of poetry and fiction.

contact: [kwade42@gmail.com](mailto:kwade42@gmail.com)

## Frank X Walker

Former Kentucky Poet Laureate, Frank X Walker, is a founder of the Affrilachian Poets and the author of eight collections of poetry including, *Turn Me Loose: The Unghosting of Medgar Evers*. Voted one of the most creative professors in the south, he is the originator of the word, Affrilachia. Frank has degrees from Spalding University and University of Kentucky, where he currently serves as Professor in the English Department and the African American and Africana Studies Program. He is a Lannan Poetry Fellowship Award recipient.

contact: [fxw2@uky.edu](mailto:fxw2@uky.edu);  
[www.frankxwalker.com](http://www.frankxwalker.com)

## Gary Walton

Gary Walton has published seven books of poetry. His latest is *Waiting For Insanity Clause* (Finishing Line Press, 2016). His novel about Newport, Kentucky in its heyday as a gambling Mecca: *Prince of Sin City* was published by Finishing Line Press in 2009. He has been nominated for the Pushcart prize twice and in 2010, he was voted Third Place: "Best Local Author" Best of Cincinnati 2010 issue in *City Beat* magazine.

contact: [waltong@nku.edu](mailto:waltong@nku.edu);  
[nku.edu/~waltong/](http://nku.edu/~waltong/)

## Fran Watson (1932–2016)

Fran Watson knew she would be an artist even before she went to kindergarten; writing, however, was nowhere on her horizon even though she had English teachers who kept pushing her in that direction. Once a friend was leaving town, and wanted someone to take on a column with some local papers; she thrust the material at Fran who in a day became a writer. Poetry had always been a secret sin, and SOS Art/For a Better World were her podium; it then spread to a daily facebook haiku. Fran sang tenor, loved music in all forms, did some award winning acting, raised 4 children, and was widowed twice. In the last years of her life she wrote regularly for Aeqai.com and loved it.

## Annette Januzzi Wick

Annette Januzzi Wick is a writer, community introducer, and author of *I'll Be in the Car*. For Women Writing for (a) Change, she facilitates writing workshops and hosts a monthly poetry event. She works with social services and Alzheimer's organizations to use writing as tool for healing and is active with *Books by the Banks* Writing Committee. Annette is currently seeking representation for *Find You in the Sun*, a novel about the power of music to rescue a life even when the mind is lost, and maintains a blog of the same name.

contact: [amjwick@gmail.com](mailto:amjwick@gmail.com);  
[annettejanuzziwick.com](http://annettejanuzziwick.com)

## Tyrone Williams

Tyrone Williams teaches literature and theory at Xavier University in Cincinnati, OH. He is the author of five books of poetry, *c.c.* (Krupskaya Books, 2002), *On Spec* (Omnidawn Publishing, 2008), *The Hero Project of the Century* (The Backwaters Press, 2009), *Adventures of Pi* (Dos Madres Press, 2011) and *Howell* (Atelos Books, 2011). He is also the author of several chapbooks, including a prose eulogy, *Pink Tie* (Hooke Press, 2011).

contact: [williamt@xavier.edu](mailto:williamt@xavier.edu);  
<http://home.earthlink.net/~suspend/>

## Ken Williamson

Ken Williamson, a native of Cincinnati, is a graduate of Norwood High School and Ohio University. He was a U.S. Army Photographer and Journalist in Vietnam in 1969 and owned his own film and video production company for 28 years. Ken is the author of *Vietnam Memories In Verse* and *Saying Goodbye To Vietnam*, a photographic memoir of his military service in Vietnam ([sayinggoodbyetovietnam.com](http://sayinggoodbyetovietnam.com))

contact: [ken@kenwilliamson.com](mailto:ken@kenwilliamson.com)

## Jeff Wilson

A resident of Cincinnati, Jeff Wilson has published fiction and poetry in *Clifton Magazine*, *Licking River Review*, *Ambergris*, *WORCS ALOUD/ALLOWED*, and other journals. He was involved in the creation of the Mud Music genre, a singularly unpopular musical style. The Music Editor for *The Absolute Sound*, he also writes a blog ([gaslightproperty.com/blog](http://gaslightproperty.com/blog)). He has some novels in his drawer that are eager to wander out into the world.

contact: [disdat@hotmail.com](mailto:disdat@hotmail.com) 513.281.3266

## Bea Wissel

Bea Wissel is an award-recognized poet and playwright whose work has appeared in various publications. She was a featured poet in this year's *Poetry in the Garden* series at the Cincinnati Public Library. Her first play, *Burning the Barn*, was produced at the Boston Center for the Arts in 2010 and received an IRNE (Independent Theatre Reviewers of New England) nomination for Best New Play. She is a member of the Greater Cincinnati Writer's League and currently working on several projects, including a collection of poetry.

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

## Antonio Adams

Born in Cincinnati in 1981, Antonio Adams has been drawing, painting and creating since he was a little boy. Now his work is exhibited and collected nationally. He is one of the co-founders of Visionaries + Voices, an arts organization for artists with disabilities, and of Thunder-Sky, Inc., an art gallery, both in Cincinnati. Antonio's sculptures, paintings and drawings have been collected locally, nationally and internationally. They have been featured at White Columns Gallery and at The Outsider Art Fair in New York City, The Contemporary Art Center, The Cincinnati Art Museum, Base Gallery and Visionaries + Voices in Cincinnati, the Pittsburgh Folk Art Exhibit and Symposium, Middletown (Ohio) Fine Arts Center, the Fitton Center for Creative Arts (Hamilton, Ohio), Kennedy Heights Arts Center (Cincinnati), Country Club Gallery (Cincinnati and Los Angeles), In the Gallery (Nashville, Tennessee) and at the Museum of Everything in London, England. Antonio is currently Artist In Residence at Thunder-Sky, Inc

*contact: [thunderskyinc@gmail.com](mailto:thunderskyinc@gmail.com)*

## Barbara Ahlbrand

Barbara Ahlbrand has maintained a strong sense of her own identity and has amassed an extensive body of work over a career that defines her unique vision as an artist. Unconcerned with the art world at large she has delivered her own brilliant perspective in portraiture, everyday objects and abstractions. Barbara is a life-long resident of Northern Kentucky working out of her Pendleton Art Center studio in Cincinnati, OH.

*contact: [b.ahlbrand@fuse.net](mailto:b.ahlbrand@fuse.net)*

## Derek Alderfer

Derek Alderfer is a Cincinnati-based illustrator who graduated from the Art Academy of Cincinnati's BFA Illustration program in the Spring of 2015. Derek enjoys exploring themes of nature, humanity and the cosmos through imagery that is stylistically colorful and fantastical. Visual narrative storytelling is something he grew up with and has become interested in exploring as an illustrator through painting and children's books. In addition to being an illustrator, Derek is also a freelance muralist who has designed mural installations and worked as a contract painter and teaching artist. His aspiration as an emerging artist is to balance fine art, mural painting, narrative illustration and his day to day work in the art field as he gains presence in the commercial spectrum of the illustration world.

*contact: [derekalderfer@yahoo.com](mailto:derekalderfer@yahoo.com);  
[derekalderfer.wixsite.com/portfolio](http://derekalderfer.wixsite.com/portfolio)*

## Farron Allen

Farron Allen grew up in the mountains of West Virginia, the product of three generations of coal miners. He has degrees in Social Work and Fine Arts. Farron currently teaches sculpture foundry at the University of Cincinnati.

*contact: [farron.allen@uc.edu](mailto:farron.allen@uc.edu)*

## Julie Baker

Julie Baker earned an MFA in Drawing from the University of Cincinnati and is currently an adjunct Drawing Instructor at Cincinnati State. The content of her work deals mostly with social commentary and how she views the world. Julie feels that given the current US and world atmosphere, there is a lot to be concerned about.

*contact: [julie.baker@cincinnatiastate.edu](mailto:julie.baker@cincinnatiastate.edu)*

## Kevin Barbro

Kevin Barbro was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. He attended the University of Cincinnati where he received a BFA and also earned a certificate in International Human Rights. He completed his MFA at the University of Arizona and currently lives and works in Louisville, Kentucky. His studies of political and social structures inform his work greatly. His paintings, drawings, and installations have been shown nationally.

*contact: [barbrokw@netscape.net](mailto:barbrokw@netscape.net)*

## Jay Bolotin

Jay Bolotin (born, 1949) is a visual artist, filmmaker, and songwriter. His work is included in many public and private collections, including the Museum of Modern Art (NY), the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, The Australian National Museum, Smith College Museum of Art, and the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. A collection of his earlier songs (1970's) has been released by The Delmore Recording Society (Chicago/Nashville) in 2017. Jay's work is handled by the Carl Solway Gallery in Cincinnati.

*contact: [jaybeeink@hotmail.com](mailto:jaybeeink@hotmail.com)*

## Kenton Brett

Kenton Brett is a Cincinnati-based artist and entertainer, incorporating a wide variety of media to promote the arts. Whether painting, performing, sculpting or producing video, his goal is to blend humor with craft to create new expressions and interactions with the public and make art fun for everyone. As a professional scenic artist, Kenton orchestrates the production of textural and faux-finishes for large-scale regional theatre. He is also co-founder of Golden Brown Enterprizes, LTD, makers of designer toys, collectibles and animations, since 2009.

*contact: [kentonbrett@gmail.com](mailto:kentonbrett@gmail.com);  
[goldenbrownent.com](http://goldenbrownent.com)*

## Matthew Bustillo

Matthew Bustillo is a pen and ink illustrator from Mount Vernon, Ohio. He graduated from the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 2015, with a bachelor's degree in fine arts.

*contact: [matt42993@yahoo.com](mailto:matt42993@yahoo.com);  
[matthewbustillo.weebly.com](http://matthewbustillo.weebly.com)*

## Susan Byrnes

Susan Byrnes is a visual artist whose work encompasses traditional and contemporary forms and practices, including sculpture, multimedia installation, radio broadcasts, writing, and curatorial projects. Her art has been exhibited in galleries and museums including Woman Made Gallery in Chicago, the Sculpture Center in Cleveland, the Dayton Art Institute, and 516 Arts in Albuquerque. In 2014, Susan was awarded a Cincinnati Art Ambassador Fellowship. She teaches as part of the Ohio Arts Council Arts Learning Artist in Residence Program, and is a contributor to the online art journal *AEQAI*. She earned an MFA from Eastern Michigan University and a BFA from Syracuse University. Susan resides in Cincinnati, OH.

*contact: [susanbstudio@gmail.com](mailto:susanbstudio@gmail.com)*

## Cole Carothers

Cole Carothers is a painter and former Adjunct Associate Professor at DAAP, University of Cincinnati. He was also Program Director for the Baker Hunt Foundation and Art Instructor at St. Andrew's School, Middletown, Delaware. Cole has exhibited paintings nationally and is included in many public, corporate and private collections throughout the US.

*contact: [colecathothers@gmail.com](mailto:colecathothers@gmail.com)*

## Jeff Casto

Jeff Casto has been creating art for over 30 years in the Cincinnati area. He is a graduate from the Art Academy of Cincinnati (1987) and additionally has an MFA from the University of Cincinnati (1989). His work fuses painting with sculpture and found objects, and with a fantastical imagery. Jeff is the recipient of two individual artist grants from the City of Cincinnati. He has exhibited locally, regionally and in New York. His art can be found in several collections both private and public.

*contact: [jeff5.casto@gmail.com](mailto:jeff5.casto@gmail.com)*

## Jan Brown Checco

Jan Brown Checco is a studio artist and arts administrator specializing in community-based projects. Her architectural ceramics embellish plazas in Munich, Germany and Liuzhou, China as well as walls and floors of several Ohio structures. She designed and directed the Sister Cities mosaic project at the TM Berry International Friendship Park Pavilion, art directed seven International Butterfly Shows at Krohn Conservatory and provided conceptual design for Carol Ann's Carousel, and conceptual design and art direction for The Black Brigade Monument, both at Smale Riverfront Park in Cincinnati.

*contact: [jan@brownchecco.com](mailto:jan@brownchecco.com)*

## Suzanne Michele Chouteau

Suzanne Michele Chouteau is Professor of Art at Xavier University. Her prints, drawings, paintings, and mixed-media combinations have been shown nationally and internationally in over 100 solo, invitational, and juried exhibitions. She is married to Chris Bedel, Director of the Cincinnati Museum Center's Edge of Appalachia Preserve in Adams County, Ohio. Their son, Elijah Bird Bedel, is a student at Xavier University.

*contact: [chouteau@xavier.edu](mailto:chouteau@xavier.edu)*

## Halena V. Cline

Halena V. Cline is a Cincinnati studio artist who has exhibited her work locally, nationally and internationally, including in Ohio, Kentucky, Alabama and Germany. In her work she expresses concepts of her experiences or perceptions. Halena's paintings reflect her response to social and/or intrinsic circumstances with ideas woven into them from personal points of view and current or historical events.

*contact: [halenacline@gmail.com](mailto:halenacline@gmail.com);  
[halenacline.com](http://halenacline.com)*

## Chrissy Collopy

Chrissy Collopy's art studio is located just outside of Oxford, OH. She instructs many art classes in her community, including teaching for Opening Minds through Art, and the Fitton Center for Creative Arts Outreach Program. Most of Chrissy's works are conceptual and inspired by nature, love, the abstract and the surreal.

*contact: [chrissycollopy@yahoo.com](mailto:chrissycollopy@yahoo.com);  
[chrissycollopy.com](http://chrissycollopy.com)*

## Lisa Hueil Conner

Lisa Hueil Conner, a lifetime resident of Cincinnati and a member of the Clay Alliance, received a Fine Arts degree from Edgecliff College (now part of Xavier University). She is a clay artist who works in her home-based studio in Westwood. When not working with clay, Lisa is working with 3-6 year olds in a public Montessori school, hiking, or enjoying her passion for gardening at home in her perennial gardens. She has received several local grants and has had her work published in local and national publications. Lisa participates in several local and national shows annually.

*contact: [lhueilc@hotmail.com](mailto:lhueilc@hotmail.com);  
[lhcpottery.com](http://lhcpottery.com)*

## Stephanie Cooper

Stephanie Cooper, born in 1951 in Arlington, VA, lives in Cincinnati, OH. She earned in 1980, a MFA degree in Sculpture, from the University of Cincinnati, and in 1973, a BFA degree in Sculpture, from Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA. Stephanie is a sculptor, a wood carver of figurative pieces, whose work is somewhat narrative, as the figures seem to be trapped in a scene of a play, or simply expressing a mood. Her drawings are abstract, but not completely as they make reference to sculptural elements in a landscape. Stephanie has been adjunct teacher at The Art Academy of Cincinnati since 1997.

*contact: [rabartsc@gmail.com](mailto:rabartsc@gmail.com)*

## Cedric Michael Cox

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

*contact: [cedricmichaelcox@cedricmichaelcox.com](mailto:cedricmichaelcox@cedricmichaelcox.com)*

## Claire Darley

Claire Darley is an adjunct professor, teaching primarily drawing courses in the BFA Program at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. She has exhibited nationally and regionally in the media of drawing, painting and printmaking. Two public sculpture projects, collaborations with Rebecca Seeman, are at Fountain Square and Dunham Recreation Aquatic Center. Claire also serves on the Boards of Northside Greenspace, Inc. and CAIN Food Pantry.

*contact: [cdarley@artacademy.edu](mailto:cdarley@artacademy.edu)*

## Holland Davidson

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

*contact: [hollanddavidson@yahoo.com](mailto:hollanddavidson@yahoo.com)*

## Lizzy Duquette

Lizzy Duquette is a multimedia artist and illustrator living in East Price Hill. As a designer and fabricator, she has developed projects for Queen City Chamber Opera, MYCincinnati Youth Orchestra, and Price Hill Will. Her work draws connections between visual art, music, and community. Lizzy received her BFA from the University of Cincinnati DAAP with a concentration in drawing and printmaking.

*contact: [ehduquette@gmail.com](mailto:ehduquette@gmail.com)*

## Bruce Erikson

Bruce Erikson earned a BFA in Drawing with Minors in Art History and Classical Guitar Performance from Edinboro University, PA. He also studied at the Illustration Academy in Kansas City and earned an MFA in painting from the University of Indiana at Bloomington, IN. Bruce has taught at numerous universities including The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Washington University in St. Louis and Carnegie Mellon University. He is currently a faculty member of Xavier University in Cincinnati, OH, where he teaches Drawing and Painting, also an Art Appreciation course in Paris, France.

*contact: [bmerikson@gmail.com](mailto:bmerikson@gmail.com)*

## Tracy Featherstone

Tracy Featherstone earned a BFA from the University of Cincinnati and a MFA from the University of Arizona. Her work is exhibited nationally and internationally. Tracy has taught art in three continents including the US, China, and Europe. In 2013 she was awarded an Ohio Arts Council Award for Creative Excellence in recognition of her creative work; in addition she was supported by the US Embassy for a 3 month residency in Prague, CZ. In 2016, Tracy completed an interactive sculpture for Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center. Her current work explores the notion of landscape and interactive sculpture inspired by an Asian perspective.

contact: [feathete@miamioh.edu](mailto:feathete@miamioh.edu);  
[tracyfeatherstone.com](http://tracyfeatherstone.com)

## Diane Fishbein

Diane Fishbein attended Antioch College, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and earned an MFA degree in ceramic sculpture from the University of Cincinnati/DAAP. She taught ceramics at both Thomas More College and NKU and is now retired. Diane had several artist residencies throughout Ohio, also in Mumbai and Kathmandu. She is currently a field consultant for the Artist in Residence program of Ohio Arts Council. Diane has an installation with drawings part of the Cincinnati Art Museum permanent collection, also a 7 panel mural in Gifu Sister city. Her last one person exhibit with textiles was at Ohio University South in 2013. Diane has a special interest in the evolution of Ganesh clay sculpture in colonial India. She has an extensive collection of ethnic textiles from Japan, West Africa and India.

contact: [diane.fishbein@gmail.com](mailto:diane.fishbein@gmail.com)

## Kim Flora

Kim Flora is a painter and collage artist working in Cincinnati, Ohio. Originally from Baltimore, MD, the industrial coastline continues to inform her work. Kim is a graduate of the Art Academy of Cincinnati where she received honors in both Fine Art and Art History. She is currently the Head of Design and Installation at the Cincinnati Art Museum. Kim has exhibited at Wright State University, the University of Wisconsin, Phyllis Weston Gallery, PAC Gallery, Manifest Gallery as well as the Cincinnati Art Museum. She was awarded a summer studio in Munich, Germany, through the Academy of Fine Arts, and received a City of Cincinnati Individual Artist Grant among other honors. Her work can be found in numerous private and public collections including Tente International, the Cincinnati Art Museum, and Jack Casino.

contact: [info@kimflora.com](mailto:info@kimflora.com);  
[kimflora.com](http://kimflora.com)

## Gary Gaffney

Gary Gaffney, born in New Orleans, LA, is a visual artist and writer. He is Professor Emeritus at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. In his work, Gary tries to figure out what it means to be human.

contact: [ggaffney@artacademy.edu](mailto:ggaffney@artacademy.edu)

## Stephen Geddes

Stephen Geddes is a figurative artist who works primarily in carved wood to which, on occasion, he adds forged metal, collaged paper, wax and other materials. Stephen's images range from portraiture to figures, to toy-like structures, and to reliquary-like objects. A strain of surrealism is apparent in many of his pieces. For instance, a rhinoceros on skates a possible escapee from Ionesco's roller derby, a sedan chair riding on Rube Goldberg's shoes, and a bust that morphs into a Smith and Wesson revolver are all part of his body of work. Stephen's work has been influenced by organic form, folk art, early German renaissance woodcarvings, political satire, and personal experiences. He is currently exploring faux monuments relating to social and political currents.

contact: [stephen.geddes121@comcast.net](mailto:stephen.geddes121@comcast.net)

## Jonathan Gibson

Jonathan Gibson is an Associate Professor at Xavier University where he teaches foundation art, graphic design, and photography. Jonathan received his MFA in painting from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY. His work focuses on the formation and restraint of identity.

contact: [jongibson1@gmail.com](mailto:jongibson1@gmail.com)

## Curtis Goldstein

By inverting the relationship between material and image, Curtis Goldstein's works are a critical examination of organic and cultural phenomena that shape memory and experience. In addition to his multimedia studio practice, Curtis, a Columbus born native, has painted public murals throughout the region.

contact: [curtisgoldstein@hotmail.com](mailto:curtisgoldstein@hotmail.com);  
[curtisgoldstein.com](http://curtisgoldstein.com)

## Cynthia Gregory

Cynthia Gregory is a Kentucky-based artist whose studio work integrates drawing, sculpture, and furniture making to illuminate themes of time, history, accumulation, and containment. Cynthia has exhibited her artwork widely in national and international exhibit spaces including the Evansville Museum of Arts, History and Science, Antioch College's Herndon Gallery, Bradley University Galleries, Indianapolis Art Center, Manifest Gallery, Kalamazoo Book Arts Center, Budapest's Raday Kesehay Gallery, and San Antonio's Blue Star Contemporary Museum of Art, which selected her work in 2015 for solo exhibition. Cynthia has received artist residencies in 2013 from the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts in Nebraska City, Nebraska, and in 2016 from Georgia's Hambidge Center for the Creative Arts & Sciences.

contact: [cynthiagregoryart@gmail.com](mailto:cynthiagregoryart@gmail.com);  
[cynthiagregoryart.com](http://cynthiagregoryart.com)

## Jennifer Grote

Jennifer Grote is a lifetime resident of Cincinnati and alumnus of the Art Academy of Cincinnati, who maintains a studio space in the west end. Being a wife, mother, grandmother, and registered nurse, all inform her work in the various ways. The environments of all these roles merge to create her style of investigation in painting and sculpture.

contact: [jennifergrote821@hotmail.com](mailto:jennifergrote821@hotmail.com)

## Charles Grund

Charles Grund did a detailed line drawing of his family's kitchen when he was about 6 years old. His mother put it into his baby book; it molded and was destroyed years later. His first oil painting, done around age 11, was a copy of a palette knife painting of a French city scene. Charles is now an artist, educator, writer and musician in Cincinnati, since he moved there in 1978. His murals and paintings grace many private and public spaces. Though rarely exhibiting he continues to challenge himself through paintings that attempt to grapple with the world around and within in ways that strive for honesty and essentials.

contact: [cegrund@fuse.net](mailto:cegrund@fuse.net)

## Terence Hammonds

Terence Hammonds was born in Cincinnati, OH, in 1976. He grew up on Main Street in Over-the-Rhine and attended the School for Creative and Performing Arts. He then attended The School of the Museum of Fine art, and Tufts University, Boston, MA (BFA, 2002). Terence's work has been exhibited at the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH, Crystal Bridges, Bentonville, AK, The Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA. It is in many private collections and in the collections of The MFA, Boston, 21C Museum and Hotel Cincinnati, and The Cincinnati Art Museum.

contact: [thammonds45210@yahoo.com](mailto:thammonds45210@yahoo.com)



## John Hankiewicz

John Hankiewicz received an MFA in Printmaking from Miami University, where he currently teaches drawing. His prints have been in several juried shows. Since the mid-`90s, John has been drawing comics. *Asthma*, published in 2006 by Sparkplug Books, is a collection of short pieces. *Education*, a graphic novel, was published by Fantagraphics in 2017.

contact: [hankiejm@miamioh.edu](mailto:hankiejm@miamioh.edu)

## Kevin Harris

Growing up in Cincinnati, Kevin Harris attended North Avondale Elementary School and Walnut Hills High School. He received a BA from Hampton Institute (1983) and an MFA from the University of Cincinnati (1988). He is currently a Professor in the Art Department of Sinclair Community College where he has been teaching since 2000, leading classes in Drawing and Printmaking and, most recently, Digital Media. While teaching at Lincoln University of Pennsylvania, Kevin also studied at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia. Since 2006, he has attended several workshops on a variety of non-toxic printmaking processes at MakingArtSafely in Santa Fe, NM.

contact: [k3v3nh@gmail.com](mailto:k3v3nh@gmail.com);  
[kevinharrisart.com](http://kevinharrisart.com)

## Celene Hawkins

Celene Hawkins runs a design and fabrication studio with her partner (sculptor Jarrett Hawkins). Together they create public and private commission works for a wide range of clients. Celene works in a range of media including sculpture, photo-based imagery, and installation work. Her work is in the permanent collections of Nationwide Children's Hospital, Fidelity Investments and the Hamilton City Schools, as well as in various other private and corporate collections. Celene periodically curates exhibits, has served in several faculty positions at area universities, and continues to teach workshops from her studio and in other venues.

contact: [hawkinscelene@yahoo.com](mailto:hawkinscelene@yahoo.com);  
[hawkinsandhawkins.biz](http://hawkinsandhawkins.biz)

## Frank Herrmann

Frank Herrmann is currently Professor Emeritus of Fine Arts, DAAP, University of Cincinnati. He holds a BFA from Western Kentucky University and an MFA from the University of Cincinnati, in painting. His paintings have been exhibited regionally, nationally and internationally and are held in numerous private and corporate collections, including at the Foundation and Center for Contemporary Art in Prague, Czech Republic. Frank has been awarded many grants, artist fellowships (including a 2006 John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship), and local and international artist residencies (including at The Studios, MASSMoCA, N. Adams, Massachusetts and at the Foundation and Center for Contemporary Art in Prague, Czech Republic).

contact: [fherrman@fuse.net](mailto:fherrman@fuse.net)

## Christopher Hoeting

Christopher Hoeting is a visual artist, educator, and curator based in Cincinnati, OH. He holds a BFA in Painting and Sculpture from the University of Dayton (2002) and a MFA in Painting from the department of art at the University of Maryland where he received the prestigious *David C. Driskell Award* for Excellence in the Fine Arts. Chris currently holds a full time position as a product designer and prototyping specialist at Axiom Product Development in Cincinnati and is also an adjunct professor within Foundation Design at Xavier University (2010–Current). He is also affiliated with the Taft Museum of Art as a contract exhibition specialist (2006–present), was the co-founder of the Cincinnati arts organization *parProjects* (2010–2012), and worked as the Art Director for the not-for-profit organization, *The Requiem Project: The Emery* (2011–2016). As an artist and curator, Chris's work has been reviewed in the *Washington Post*, *Washington City Paper*, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, *New York Times* (2012), *The Columbus Dispatch*, *Dayton City Paper*, as well as numerous regional periodicals.

contact: [christopher.hoeting@gmail.com](mailto:christopher.hoeting@gmail.com)

## Lisa Jameson

Lisa Jameson is the coordinator of the Foundations and Art Education programs at Northern Kentucky University. She received her MFA in drawing and MA in art education from the University of Cincinnati. Lisa is a visual artist who has been exhibiting for over 20 years. Her media for many years was pastel and charcoal, but her most recent works are collage and mixed media. Her work is included in many collections, including the Cincinnati Art Museum.

contact: [lisabjameson@gmail.com](mailto:lisabjameson@gmail.com)

## Rob Jefferson

Rob Jefferson, born in 1970, is an American painter/illustrator and a graduate of The Art Academy of Cincinnati (BFA 92). His work has been featured in various publications including *100 Midwest Artists*, *New American Paintings* and *Playboy Magazine*. It can be found in the permanent collections of the Cincinnati Art Museum, Otterbein College, and in private collections across the country.

contact: [cutliketecumseh@gmail.com](mailto:cutliketecumseh@gmail.com);  
[robjefferson.com](http://robjefferson.com)

## Jimi Jones

Jimi Jones, a Cincinnati artist and graphic designer, graduated from UC/DAAP, and recently retired after 27 years as art director in charge of display design at Procter and Gamble. Jimi is a founding member of the Neo-Ancestral art movement. He has exhibited his work widely in galleries and museums locally and nationally. He has a studio at the Carl Solway Gallery building in downtown Cincinnati.

contact: [jaj0421@zoomtown.com](mailto:jaj0421@zoomtown.com)

## Terri Kern

Terri Kern received her MFA Degree from Ohio University in 1991 and has taught and lectured at both the high school and university level. She has traveled the United States, selling her work at fine art and craft venues and has won more than thirty-five awards for excellence in the field of ceramics. Terri has exhibited her work internationally in Germany, France, Cuba, Japan and China.

contact: [terrikernstudios@gmail.com](mailto:terrikernstudios@gmail.com)

## Andrea Knarr

Andrea Knarr was the Printmaking Coordinator and Senior Lecturer in the Department of Visual Arts at Northern Kentucky University for twenty seven years where she taught a full program of fine art printmaking processes. Andrea's work has won numerous awards and has been shown extensively in galleries, museums and universities. Her prints are in the permanent collections of the Cincinnati Art Museum, College of Notre Dame Baltimore, Otterbein College Columbus, Kansas State University, Georgetown College KY, Chase Bank, Fidelity Investments, Cincinnati Bell Telephone, University of Cincinnati, among others.

contact: [andrea@andreknarr.com](mailto:andrea@andreknarr.com);  
[andreknarr.com](http://andreknarr.com)

## Theresa Gates 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 was the Director of Tiger Lily Press from 1999–2016, has curated several print exhibitions, helped manage print conferences, forums and a variety of printmaking based projects. Theresa earned a five week residency in Dresden, Germany in 2013. Currently she is living in Liberty Township, Ohio with her husband raising their four daughters.

contact: [gates299@zoomtown.com](mailto:gates299@zoomtown.com)

## Tom Lohre

Tom Lohre learned classical portraiture working in the studio of master portrait painter, Ralph Wolf Cowan. Later, he painted from life major events like Mount Saint Helens while it erupted, twenty miles to the south on Tum Tum Mountain, and the first space shuttle, 200 feet from it, under armed guard, the day before it took off. Tom learned that great paintings start in life but are finished in the mind; and that major events are not required for great art. The artist makes a silk purse out of reality.

contact: [thoslohre49@gmail.com](mailto:thoslohre49@gmail.com)

## Anthony Luensman

Anthony Luensman is a multimedia artist who recently moved his studio from Cincinnati to Tucson, Arizona as one means of making a clean break from his past work of the previous 25+ years. Anthony states: "Having had a successful career creating work in performance, sound, sculpture, video, photography, and installation, I began to miss focused time in the studio in order to confront the object(s) at hand. I am currently concentrating on painting and works-on-paper while maintaining my dedication to the belief that every work is a small invention begun at random or by accident."

contact: [aplpx@yahoo.com](mailto:aplpx@yahoo.com);  
[anthonyluensman.com](http://anthonyluensman.com)

## Constance McClure

Constance McClure, a professional artist and a Professor of art, has taught at the Art Academy of Cincinnati since 1975.

contact: [cmcclore@artacademy.edu](mailto:cmcclore@artacademy.edu)

## Tim McMichael

Tim McMichael lives and works in Cincinnati, Ohio.

contact: [thirteen@fuse.net](mailto:thirteen@fuse.net)

## Lisa Merida-Paytes

Lisa Merida-Paytes holds an MFA from the University of Cincinnati (1997) and a BFA from the Art Academy of Cincinnati (1991). Her work has been featured in exhibitions and publications, regionally, nationally and internationally for the past 20 years. Lisa's illustration, inspired by Donelle Dreese's poem "The Request", intends to evoke the human spirit that was destroyed and to make amends for one's mistakes. Uncovering the strength and beauty in frailty, Lisa's work hopes to leave viewers with a greater appreciation and respect for life.

contact: [spaytes@fuse.net](mailto:spaytes@fuse.net);  
[lisameridapaytes.com](http://lisameridapaytes.com)

## Stacey Vallerie Meyer

Stacey Vallerie Meyer received her BFA in Painting from Maine College of Art. Her work has been exhibited in various venues in the Northeast and the Midwest. Stacey is a commissioned portraitist as well as a scenic artist for Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. She is also the sole proprietor of a painting company specializing in custom murals.

contact: [svallerie1@gmail.com](mailto:svallerie1@gmail.com)

## Casey Riordan Millard

Casey Riordan Millard is a visual mixed media artist. Her character, Shark Girl, is frequently the subject of her work. Casey graduated with a BFA from Ohio University in 1994. She is an adjunct professor at the Art Academy of Cincinnati and lives in Cincinnati, Ohio with her husband and two children.

contact: [criordanmillard@gmail.com](mailto:criordanmillard@gmail.com);  
[caseyriordanmillard.com](http://caseyriordanmillard.com)

## Robert JM Morris

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

contact: [robertjmmorris@fuse.net](mailto:robertjmmorris@fuse.net)

## Lindsay Nehls

Lindsay Nehls earned her BFA from the University of Cincinnati in 2006. She is a maker of arts, designs, and weird things in Cincinnati, Ohio.

contact: [ld.nehls@gmail.com](mailto:ld.nehls@gmail.com);  
[ldnehls.com](http://ldnehls.com)

## Kurt Nicaise

Kurt Nicaise is an artist and educator, living in Covington, KY. His artwork is mainly in the mediums of painting and drawing, as he examines land, terrain, and human place within the environment. Currently, Kurt teaches Art and AP Art History at Saint Ursula Academy, a private Catholic high school for girls in East Walnut Hills, a historic neighborhood of Cincinnati, Ohio. Additionally, he teaches online Art History survey courses, which he has designed, at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College. Kurt has a rich history as an artist, community artist-in-residence, educator, and service learning expert. He is dedicated, energetic and passionate about art and life.

contact: [knicaise@gmail.com](mailto:knicaise@gmail.com)

## Rod Northcutt

Rod Northcutt is a social sculptor whose collaborative practice connects artists, designers, and students with multiple community groups through intervention and dialog. His projects and collaborations strive to address social challenges, connect community members, create a forum for the sharing of skills, and build creative confidence. He has exhibited and performed internationally, designing interactive projects that generate community dialogue through making-based practice. Rod received his MFA in Sculpture from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, a BFA in Painting & Drawing from the University of North Texas, and is an Associate Professor of Sculpture at Miami University, Ohio.

contact: [northcr@miamioh.edu](mailto:northcr@miamioh.edu)

## James Oberschlake

After some attention as a book illustrator in the late nineties, James Oberschlake returned to school and eventually received an MFA from the University of Cincinnati in 2011. He has since continued to refine a method of combining collage and paint, and also explore a variety of sculptural media. Even more recently, he has found a renewed interest in illustration with a bend slightly more toward character design. Throughout all his work, distortions in the human form have been James' common thread, most often realized by a free association approach, where ideas come after the drawing begins.

contact: [jeoberschlake@gmail.com](mailto:jeoberschlake@gmail.com);  
[oberschlake.com](http://oberschlake.com)

## Carrie E. Pate

Carrie E. Pate earned a BFA from Miami University in 1985 and an MFA from the University of Cincinnati in 1990. As an artist she works in mixed media: paint, clay, pencil and earth. She continually creates art and within the past 30 years has been in over 40 solo and group exhibitions. Carrie makes her living through *The Spirited Garden Landscapes*, a company she started in 1998. The company designs, installs and maintains intimate landscape gardens in Butler County, Ohio.

contact: [spiritedgarden@fuse.net](mailto:spiritedgarden@fuse.net)

## Mark Patsfall

Mark Patsfall is an artist, printmaker and publisher. He founded Clay Street Press, Inc. in 1981, a fine art print-shop and gallery where he has worked with many local, national and international artists in the creation of original prints and multiples. Mark's work is in many public and private collections, including a video sculpture at the American Broadcast Museum in Chicago.

contact: [mpginc@iac.net](mailto:mpginc@iac.net)

## Kyle Penunuri

Several decades of travel led Kyle Penunuri to the Art Academy of Cincinnati. He stayed, eventually earning an MFA from UC/DAAP, and now works and lives in northern Kentucky.

contact: [kylepenunuri@gmail.com](mailto:kylepenunuri@gmail.com)

## Kelly and Kyle Phelps

Identical twin brothers Kelly and Kyle Phelps are Professors at private Catholic universities in Ohio, Kelly, department chair and head of sculpture at Xavier University (Cincinnati) and Kyle, head of ceramics at University of Dayton. Much of their work is about the struggles of the working class and of the common man and woman. Kelly and Kyle work collaboratively to create their artwork and share a studio in Centerville, OH. Their work has been featured and reviewed in *Sculpture*, *Ceramics Monthly*, and *American Craft Magazines*. Outside of academia, they both regularly conduct professional artist workshops at the respected Penland and Arrowmont Schools for Craft Arts, and at the Baltimore Clayworks.

contact: [phelps@xavier.edu](mailto:phelps@xavier.edu);  
[kphelps1@udayton.edu](mailto:kphelps1@udayton.edu)

## Kathleen Piercefield

Kathleen Piercefield, originally from the Chicago area, now lives and works in northern Kentucky. Intense engagement with the natural world, a love of books and literature, and a vivid imagination all influence her work. Kathleen studied art at Murray State University, Baker-Hunt Foundation and most recently, Northern Kentucky University, where she earned a BFA in printmaking. She's a member of Tiger Lily Press and Northern Kentucky Printmakers, and her work has been exhibited regionally and nationally.

contact: [turtlewing@gmail.com](mailto:turtlewing@gmail.com)

## Ellen Price

Ellen Price was born in New York City and received her BA in Art from Brooklyn College. In 1986, she earned an MFA in Printmaking from Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. She is currently a Professor of Art at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio where she has taught since 1987. Her prints are included in public and private collections and her creative work was recognized with Ohio Arts Council Artist Fellowship Awards in 1996, 2001 and 2009 as well as a 1998 Cincinnati Summerfair Artist Award.

contact: [priceej@miamioh.edu](mailto:priceej@miamioh.edu)

## Reid Radcliffe

Reid Radcliffe lives and works in Cincinnati, OH. He received his MFA in drawing from the University of Cincinnati/DAAP. He is currently a full time Foundations faculty at the Art Institute of Ohio-Cincinnati.

contact: [reid45107@yahoo.com](mailto:reid45107@yahoo.com)

## Michelle Red Elk

Michelle Red Elk is based in Cincinnati, OH. She has several irons in the fire : artist, yoga studio owner, special education aide, and other directions. Her visual work is her longest passion and although it comes in fits and starts, she has learned to trust the timing and trust the process.

contact: [michelleredelk@gmail.com](mailto:michelleredelk@gmail.com);  
[michelleredelk.com](http://michelleredelk.com)

## Matt Reed

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

contact: [mrmatthewjreed@hotmail.com](mailto:mrmatthewjreed@hotmail.com);  
[crazymattreed.com](http://crazymattreed.com)

## Todd Reynolds

Todd Reynolds, born in Cincinnati, lives in Southeastern Ohio. He holds an MFA from Ohio State University and paints in both oils and watercolors. Todd teaches painting and illustration at Shawnee University, Portsmouth, OH. He has received several Ohio Art's Council Individual Artist Grants and his work has been shown widely in both solo and group exhibitions.

contact: [t.reynolds@shawnee.edu](mailto:t.reynolds@shawnee.edu)

## Catherine Elizabeth Richards

Catherine Elizabeth Richards is an artist and architect. She explores materials and perception on a variety of scales, from wearable art to sculpture and installation, along with city wide interventions. Catherine worked at OMA and RE X architects in New York City and at Metaphor Unlimited in London. Her studio practice and non profit works are process oriented, with a strategy of critical naiveté. Catherine founded the nationally recognized program *Future Blooms*, a model for abandoned buildings adopted by several US cities. She is also co-founder of the art collective *Hark+Hark* and the experimental arts program *Modern Makers*. Catherine's art and design work have been featured in Russia, the UK and throughout the US.

contact: [catherine.e.richards@gmail.com](mailto:catherine.e.richards@gmail.com);  
[catherinerichardsart.com](http://catherinerichardsart.com)

## Emil Robinson

Emil Robinson, an artist known for his psychological imagery, is Assistant Professor at the University of Cincinnati. His paintings have been exhibited at the Smithsonian, Taft Museum of Art, and in solo exhibitions internationally.

contact: [emil.robinson@gmail.com](mailto:emil.robinson@gmail.com);  
[emilrobinson.com](http://emilrobinson.com)

## Merle Rosen (1949–2017)

Merle Rosen, a professional artist in Cincinnati for 45 years, worked for decades in many 2D and 3D materials including drawing, painting, glass, bronze, wood, mixed media, ceramics... Her commissions pieces included restaurant murals, paintings, CD covers, logo designs, and furniture. Merle had shown extensively in museums, galleries and alternative spaces. She received artist grants and fellowships. Her work is in local, regional and national collections, both private and corporate. In addition to being a working artist, Merle also taught in the arts for more than 50 years at museum schools, universities, colleges and community art centers as well as privately from her studio. In the last years of her life she was the Midwest Working Artist for Golden Artist Colors, Inc., an international artist materials manufacturing company located in NY state. She taught acrylic paints techniques and materials in a five state region.

## Kate Rowekamp

Kate Rowekamp is a multimedia artist specializing in printmaking, animation, and illustration. She earned her MFA in 2-Dimensional Studio with a concentration in Printmaking from Miami University in 2015, and her BA in Studio Art and AA in Art History from Thomas More College in 2012. Her current work focuses on fusing concepts from zoology and developmental psychology to create imaginary creatures. She lives in Hamilton, OH, with her fiancé and two cats.

contact: [kate.rowekamp@gmail.com](mailto:kate.rowekamp@gmail.com);  
[katerowekamp.com](http://katerowekamp.com)

## Frank Satogata

Frank Satogata, born and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii, is presently a painter in Cincinnati, OH. Frank's main interest in painting abstracted landscapes and flowers was sparked by the beauty of nature that he observed growing up in Hawaii and from his many travels to places around the world.

contact: [satogatadesign@gmail.com](mailto:satogatadesign@gmail.com);  
[franksatogata.com](http://franksatogata.com)

## James Alan Sauer

James Alan Sauer, born in 1969 in Dayton, OH, graduated from the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 1992 with a BFA degree, concentrations printmaking and painting. He currently lives in the Pendleton neighborhood of Cincinnati. Alan enjoys drawing and stone carving; he has also painted several murals privately and publically. He has shown his work locally and nationally including at the CAC and the Weston Art gallery in Cincinnati, OH.

contact: [jalansauer@gmail.com](mailto:jalansauer@gmail.com)

## Kelsi Sauerwein

Kelsi Sauerwein is a working artist in Cincinnati, OH. By day she is applying dark and dreamy images and glazes to historic forms at The Rookwood Pottery Company. By night she is building a visual world, expressing her experiences as a human being through hieroglyphics. Ideas Kelsi is currently communicating include: daily life, ecosystems, inner peace, the good and the bad, space, the afterlife, death, being a human in the 21st Century.

contact: [kelsisauerwein10@gmail.com](mailto:kelsisauerwein10@gmail.com)

## Lisa Treelynn Scherra

Lisa Treelynn Scherra attended the Art Academy of Cincinnati and received a BFA degree in 2004. Her creativity is an immense force that conducts a visionary ride into her heart giving life to the interconnectedness within the universe. Lisa's art fuels her existence to an immeasurable value and serves as an act of spiritual practice, as a prayer.

contact: [lisascherra@yahoo.com](mailto:lisascherra@yahoo.com);  
[lisatreelynnscherra.com](http://lisatreelynnscherra.com)

## Christian Schmit

Christian Schmit is an artist and educator living in Northern Kentucky. He has shown his work all around Cincinnati, including a show at the Weston Gallery in 2016. Christian makes things out of paper and cardboard, and sometimes draws and paints.

contact: [christianschmit.com](http://christianschmit.com)

## Judith Serling-Sturm

Judith Serling-Sturm considers her work profoundly personal. Incidents in her life impact what she cares about and how she lives in the world and this is what she addresses in her work. Primarily a book artist, she is keenly aware of the way in which all elements of a piece communicate the intent of the artist. Her books often incorporate found objects and natural elements and address social justice issues. They have been exhibited in shows around the country and are in public and private collections. Judith also teaches book arts and hand binding, and has been a visiting artist in classrooms up and down the east coast. She is the current Chair of the Cincinnati Book Arts Society.

contact: [jssbookarts@gmail.com](mailto:jssbookarts@gmail.com)

## Leslie Shiels

Leslie Shiels, a painter, earned her BFA at the University of Cincinnati/DAAP. In 2016 her work was exhibited at the Canton Museum of Art, Canton, OH, "*Leslie Shiels: Conversations on Life & Conflict*"; the Attleboro Museum of Art, Attleboro, MA, "*Patterns*"; the Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH, "*80th MidYear Exhibition*"; the Cincinnati Art Galleries, "*Panorama 2016*"; the Museum of Art, Huntington, WV, "*Exhibition 280*".

contact: [lgshiels@gmail.com](mailto:lgshiels@gmail.com)

## Kimberly Shifflett

Kimberly Shifflett, painter, printmaker and fiber artist, is a believer in the power of art to promote social change. She has taught weaving to Bedouin women in Jordan as a USAID grant recipient, been an educator for Cincinnati's Art Links Adopt a School program, and a mural teaching artist for Artworks. Kim has a BFA from the Art Academy of Cincinnati, a MFA in painting from the University of Cincinnati, and currently operates an art and design business through her studio *ArtSet*, located in Cincinnati's Historic Over The Rhine district.

contact: [kimtheartist@gmail.com](mailto:kimtheartist@gmail.com)

## Billy Simms

Billy Simms has a MFA degree with a concentration in printmaking from Miami University. He lives in Hamilton, OH with his wife and three cats.

contact: [m67simms@aol.com](mailto:m67simms@aol.com)

## Emily Sites

Emily Sites received her BFA from the Design, Architecture, Art and Planning program at the University of Cincinnati with a concentration in sculpture and printmaking in 2010. She has since been producing and publishing fine art on paper at the Clay Street Press under the study of Director, Mark Patsfall. She has been a consultant for Everything But The House with print identification since December of 2014.

contact: [sites.emily@gmail.com](mailto:sites.emily@gmail.com)

## Jonpaul Smith

Jonpaul Smith received his MFA and Graduate Certificate in Museum Studies from the University of Cincinnati, DAAP, and his BA from Hanover College, IN. He has been featured in many solo exhibitions, private and public collections and has been widely exhibited in the U.S. and abroad. He has also been selected twice for "*New American Paintings Juried Exhibition-in-Print*." Jonpaul was the 2014 Working Artist in Residence at Tiger Lily Press in Cincinnati, OH. He is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor of Art at Hanover College, IN.

contact: [salmagundii@hotmail.com](mailto:salmagundii@hotmail.com);  
[jonpaulsmith.com](http://jonpaulsmith.com)

## Michael Stillion

Michael Stillion received his BFA from Columbus College of Art and Design, and his MFA from Indiana University in Bloomington. He has been the recipient of a Joan Mitchell Full Fellowship to attend the Vermont Studio Center, twice awarded an Ohio Arts Council Grant for Individual Excellence, as well as a One Year Full Fellowship to attend the Roswell Artist-in-Residence program. Michael's work has been exhibited in venues around the country including 1305 Gallery, Cincinnati; Antelope Valley College, California; Riffe Gallery in Columbus, Ohio; Vaudeville Park in Brooklyn, New York; and Caestecker Art Gallery, Ripon College, Wisconsin. His work can be found in many private collections and has been acquired by the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art in New Mexico, the Hilton Art Collection in Columbus, Ohio and Fidelity Investments corporate collection. He is represented by Linda Warren Projects in Chicago, Illinois and is a visiting assistant professor at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

contact: [stillim@miamioh.edu](mailto:stillim@miamioh.edu);  
[micahelstillion.com](http://micahelstillion.com)

## Kurt Storch

Artist/activist Kurt Storch lives and works in the Cincinnati area. He uses mixed media collage to explore issues of social ethics, mental wellness, and motorcycle maintenance.

contact: [storch225@hotmail.com](mailto:storch225@hotmail.com)

## Ken Swinson

Ken Swinson is a self-taught artist from rural Kentucky, whose work includes painting, printmaking, video, interactive and digital art. He considers himself to be a 'lifetime learner' and he uses art as the vehicle to explore and learn more about the world around him. Much of Ken's work focuses on rural folk culture, river life and simple pleasures. Even when dealing with difficult, or complex social problems, he tries to use his work to convey the spirit of optimism and possibilities of a better world.

contact: [ken@kenswinson.com](mailto:ken@kenswinson.com);  
[kenswinson.com](http://kenswinson.com)

## Tina Tammaro

Tina Tammaro is a figurative oil painter living in Cincinnati, OH. She has recently shown at Antioch College, the annual SOS ART exhibits, the Women's YWCA, the Weston Art Gallery, one person show at Shawnee State University as well as at the Blue 5 Art Space in West Hollywood, California. Her recent awards/fellowships include: Kentucky Foundation for Women and Summerfair Individual Artist Grant. For over 25 years Tina has given lectures on art history and contemporary art at such institutions as Playhouse in the Park, the Cincinnati Art Club, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Art, the Museum of Modern Art and the 92nd Street Y in NYC. She has been published in a number of prestigious international and national art periodicals. Tina teaches privately in her studio and is currently an Adjunct Instructor at the University of Cincinnati.

contact: [tinatammaro3@gmail.com](mailto:tinatammaro3@gmail.com);  
[tina-tammaro.com](http://tina-tammaro.com)

## Brenda Tarbell

Brenda Tarbell earned a BFA in Ceramics from Ohio State University in 1973, and studied ceramics for a summer at the Banff School of Fine Arts in Alberta, Canada, before moving to Cincinnati to teach pottery in exchange for studio space at the Clifton Earthworks. She has been living and working in Cincinnati since 1974 and is a member of the Clay Alliance. Brenda has received a City of Cincinnati Arts Grant, a Summer Fair Foundation Grant and two Artworks commissions, one of which is an installation at the Cincinnati Convention Center. Her work is in the collection of the Mercantile Library.

contact: [tarbellbrenda@gmail.com](mailto:tarbellbrenda@gmail.com)

## Kim Rae Taylor

Kim Rae Taylor, an artist and educator, is currently an associate professor at the University of Cincinnati Clermont College. She earned her MFA from the College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning (DAAP) at the University of Cincinnati, and BFA from The College of Fine Arts of The University of Texas at Austin. Additional studies include The University of Georgia in Cortona, Italy, and the Metáfora Center for Art Therapy Studies in Barcelona, Spain. Kim has been an artist-in-residence at the Cill Rialaig Project in County Kerry, Ireland, the Taipei Artist Village in Taiwan, and the Red Gate Residency in Beijing, China. Her work has been shown throughout the US and abroad.

contact: [kraetaylor@mac.com](mailto:kraetaylor@mac.com);  
[kimraetaylor.com](http://kimraetaylor.com)

## Dana Tindall

Dana Tindall has been an artist all of his life. Born in Hampton, VA, he moved as a child to Texas where he grew up. He received a BA in Art from Austin College in Sherman, TX, and an MA in Art from the University of Dallas. He recently earned an EdD from the University of Cincinnati. Dana's past work has traditionally focused on American glut and the things we own. His more recent work examines spirituality through landscape-like imagery.

contact: [dana.a.tindall@gmail.com](mailto:dana.a.tindall@gmail.com)

## Tom Towhey

Tom Towhey, a native Cincinnati, works in several mediums at a time. A narrative of rather dark humor represents a common thread to his paintings and sculptures. Tom's work can be found in many private collections, as well as in galleries, throughout the world.

contact: [towhey@gmail.com](mailto:towhey@gmail.com);  
[tomtowhey.org](http://tomtowhey.org)

## Nicole Trimble

Nicole Trimble is an Ohio-based artist and educator with a studio practice grounded in painting and observation of the human figure. Her work has been exhibited in galleries throughout the United States and in publications such as *Studio Visit* and *Professional Artist Magazine*. Nicole holds a BFA in painting and printmaking from Miami University, and an MFA from the University of Cincinnati's College of DAAP. She currently lives and works in Cincinnati, OH.

contact: [b.nicole.trimble@gmail.com](mailto:b.nicole.trimble@gmail.com);  
[nicoletrimble.com](http://nicoletrimble.com)

## David Umbenhour

David Umbenhour, an artist from Cincinnati, Ohio, has a BFA degree in graphic design and an MFA degree with concentration in printmaking. David currently works as a graphic designer, as a printmaker and as a draughtsman. He also teaches letterpress printing at the Art Academy of Cincinnati.

contact: [dumbenhour@fuse.net](mailto:dumbenhour@fuse.net)

## Jenny Ustick

Jenny Ustick is a Cincinnati-based artist who serves as Assistant Professor of Art and Foundations Coordinator in the School of Art at the University of Cincinnati. With a primary medium of drawing, her recent solo activity includes exhibiting in the Governors Island Art Fair in New York in 2015 among other national and regional exhibitions. She has been creating large scale murals every summer in Cincinnati since 2008, and will expand her mural work nationally and internationally in 2017. Jenny is also a member of collaborative group *Maidens of the Cosmic Body Running*, who showed at the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft in 2016, and at the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati in 2011.

contact: [jeustick@gmail.com](mailto:jeustick@gmail.com)

## Spencer van der Zee

Spencer van der Zee is a visual artist born in Cincinnati, OH, in 1986. His work is largely influenced by folk art and expressionism. Themes tend to focus on bizarre human interactions, as well as the natural world. Spencer works in a studio in Cincinnati's historic West End.

contact: [spencervanderzee@gmail.com](mailto:spencervanderzee@gmail.com)

## Yvonne van Eijden

Yvonne van Eijden was born June 6, 1956 in Oisterwijk, The Netherlands. She received her art education at the Free Academy, The Hague, The Netherlands, and at Three Schools of Art, Toronto, Canada. She came to the USA in 2000 and developed a very strong connection with the land and its people. Yvonne has always been intrigued by how communication takes place, how to read and listen between the lines. Living in the USA she speaks and thinks in a different language and rarely professionally uses her native language (Dutch) anymore. She has thus become very aware of the tenuous interpretation one can sometime obtain from the spoken or written word.

contact: [yvonnevaneijden@gmail.com](mailto:yvonnevaneijden@gmail.com);  
[yvonnevaneijden.com](http://yvonnevaneijden.com)

## Albert Webb

Albert Webb, a graduate of Miami University, is a printmaker and painter who frequently explores the subject of war and the military through his art. In doing so, Albert uses symbolic subject matters, often selected from war related objects, and that act as visual aids to express conflicted feelings regarding war and its roll throughout history. Albert's father and brother, both veterans who have served in the US Army, further his personnel connection to the military. It explains in part his need to explore war as a subject matter, in addition to his desire to explore history through a dichotomy of thought: his mythologized ideas about war once manifested from playing war as a child, and his later adult matured understanding of it.

contact: [webbba@miamioh.edu](mailto:webbba@miamioh.edu)

## Paige Wideman

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

*contact:* [paigewideman5@yahoo.com](mailto:paigewideman5@yahoo.com)

## Roscoe Wilson

Roscoe Wilson was born and raised in northern Indiana and southern Michigan; his environmental values were shaped in this mostly rural Mid-western setting. Roscoe received a BA (1997) from Wabash College in Indiana, a MA (1999) in Painting/Printmaking from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, and aMFA (2002) from the University of Wisconsin, Madison where he furthered his interdisciplinary education by studying Printmaking, Sculptural Installation, and Painting. Roscoe is currently a Professor of Art at Miami University, Hamilton, OH.

*contact:* [wilsonr2@miamioh.edu](mailto:wilsonr2@miamioh.edu);  
[roscoewilson.com](http://roscoewilson.com)

## Joseph Winterhalter

Joseph Winterhalter (Cincinnati, OH) is known for his large-scale paintings with meticulously worked surfaces that appear to have been scraped raw or peeled repeatedly to reveal previous layers of information or suggest a prior history. Rooted in a mixture of radical intellectual theory, geometric precision and with a keen sense of materials, his visually compelling paintings investigate the abstracted linkages and subsequent degradations of past and present historical narratives, suggesting new information that is still evolving and in the process of revealing itself. Joseph received his BFA in Painting from Ohio University in Athens, OH, in 1991. After living and working for two years in Chicago, he attended the graduate program in painting and drawing at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA. His work has been featured nationally in exhibition venues including the Lois and Richard Rosenthal Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati, OH; the Cincinnati Art Museum; the Contemporary Print Fair at the Baltimore Museum of Art; the E/AB Fair, New York, NY; the BBAC, Birmingham, MI; Firecat Projects, Chicago, IL; and the Weston Art Gallery at the Aronoff Center for the Arts, Cincinnati, among many others. Joseph's work is in the permanent collection of the Cincinnati Art Museum, and several international private collections.

*contact:* [jos.winterhalter@gmail.com](mailto:jws.winterhalter@gmail.com)

## John Wolfer

John Wolfer earned an MFA in Painting from Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, and a BA in Painting from Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH. He is currently a Professor of Art at the University of Cincinnati—Blue Ash College, where he is also chairperson of the Department of Art and Visual Communication. John teaches courses in the areas of Design and Fine Arts. He exhibits drawing, painting and sculpture in both local and national venues. He is interested in the collective perceptions of history and stories that are lost, forgotten, or mis-remembered. John's recent work combines painting and sculpture in a series of objects inspired by Cabinets of Curiosity.

*contact:* [wolferj@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:wolferj@ucmail.uc.edu)