

*I remember you
my future...*



TAMAR ASADOURIAN

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1980-2020

*I remember you
my future...*



To
Melo Ekizian

This book would not have been possible without the selfless efforts of Melo in the relentless energy and the consoling comfort which she has poured into its preparation; it represents the generosity of her love for her niece both in deed and in life.

Contents

FOREWORD

Lilit Keheyian, English	8
Lilit Keheyian, Armenian	13

INTRODUCTION

Nareg Hartounian	19
------------------------	----

REVIEWS

Jed Distler	21
Kardash Onnig	23
Rosetta Goodkind	25

POEMS...

Symbol Of Life 1992	28
Rain 1993	29
As A Thin Shrill 1992	30
Musically Speaking 1993	32
To The North 1993	34
Wind 1993	35
A Country Once 1994	39
Disparity 1994	40
Eternal Glory 1994	43
Even Where A Sad Smoke 1994	44
Lost Nation 1994	45
Moon Of Hope 1994	46
Rains Song 1994	47

The Fall 1994.....	48
The Tree 1994	49
Great Grandmother 1998.....	50
Inferno 1998	53
Innocence 1998	56
I Am A Thousand 1999	57
I Am We Who Are Sullen 2000	58
My Words Of Me 2000	59
Cherubs 2001.....	60
Envision 2001	61
Priest 2003	63
From The North 2003.....	65
Youth 2003.....	67
We Are Centaurs 2004	68
Humility 2004	71
I Am Jude 2003	72
It Was The First Day Of Spring 2005	74
What's Left Is Love 2008	76
When My Muscles Fail 2005	78
This Particular Tree 2006	79
Give Me Clarity 2007.....	80
Since There Is No Fame 2007.....	81
There Was A Stone 2007	83
Throughout The Burning Summer 2007	84
When I Am With You 2007.....	85
When I Have Seen 2007	86
With Work And Expectation 2007	87
Council Of Seasons 2008	88
I Remember You, My Future 2008.....	91

It Is Spring 2008	92
Through The Gradient 2008	94
Your Grace 2008	96
Cease And Be At Ease 2009	97
Love How Deceptive 2009	98
More Is There In Nothing 2009	99
Elsewhere 2012.....	100
Signifying Nothing 2012	101

To Mom...

Dreaming 1991	104
A Gift Of Life 1992	111
Heavenly Friendship 1992.....	113
To Bub 1993	114
Never Forsake Me 2005.....	116
The World Walks 2006.....	117
My Girl My Love 2008	119
You Dear Tutor 2008	120
None More Than You 2009.....	122
What Shall I Do 2008.....	123

To God...

The Comfort I Feel 1997	126
I Am Aware 1999	128
I Am Haunted By Nature 1997.....	129
Dear God, My Dear Father 2000	130
Dear God Of My Light And Love 2000	132
I Have Heard The Dust 2000	134
In The Name Of The Father 2000	137

Holy Heavens 2001	138
Silent God 2001	139
Perhaps God Won't Be So Hard On Me 2001 ..	140
Singing Solitude 2001	143
You Are Sorrow 2001.....	145
Black Eyed Monk 2004	146
What More Can I Ask 2004.....	149
My Sunrise 2001	154

PROSE...

Music 1994	159
Old Man In The Park 1994	162
Art 1997	164
Study Of Poetry 2015.....	169
Painter/Poet 2005	170
Season Of Life 2018.....	172
Sam's Letter 2020.....	174
Grandfather	177

NARRATIVE POETRY...

On The Edge Of The Ocean 2001	180
-------------------------------------	-----

THOUGHTS	197
-----------------------	-----

FOREWORD

She was all too young, barely a few months past her 40th birthday, when she hastened to return to her starting point, to mother nature, from which she had borrowed her entire being, her talents as a poet, painter, and musician. She was as connected to nature as the fruit is to its creator, as the infinitesimal is to the infinite. Deeply, from head to toe, she was immersed in the sacred pool of the Muses. It seems that it was precisely in this self-effacing, almost ascetic devotion that her artistic truth rested.

Tamar's whole life — her childhood memories, teenage dreams, and the enthrallments she found in nature; her relentless suffering; her profoundly tender relationship with her mother, their mutual love and dedication; and her true faith — all this, everything, she had so thoroughly dissolved into her writings that destiny had become one with the lyre.

Tamar could rightfully say that her biography is found in her works, in her music and paintings, and, particularly, her writings, in which she is completely and utterly present, and outside which, it would seem, she does not hold a single personal secret. Indeed, Tamar is synonymous with her writings, which are complemented by her own drawings.

Nature's rays have gleamed in the souls of many a poet, but not all have felt nature as deeply, as sensitively, as Tamar has — since not everyone knows that nature is very much alive; that flowers, too, can weep when they're in pain and bleeding as you pluck them from the soil; that the many colored rainbow can

sometimes speak of not joy but gloom; and that a storm can in fact be a celebration unleashed by the rain.

In a poem titled “Envision,” Tamar writes:

*I now hear the crying of flowers
That bleed when taken from the ground.*

*Rainbows have sometimes told me
The grayness of their experience.*

In another poem titled “Rain Song” she writes

*When thunder goes on,
the rain is yet in its party.*

Only the poet in whose soul and essence unfold the mysterious workings of nature—which would seem to have been born of human emotional impulses—can be engaged with nature through living exchanges of thoughts and feelings. We might say, therefore, that Tamar was born of nature and assimilated into it. She is a living expression of nature, carrying within her soul the commonality of humankind and the universe. And if we were to underscore the fundamental significance of Tamar’s poetic natural philosophy, we must assert that it concerns the deification of nature, as a perfect manifestation of the unity of the emotional and the intellectual. As for achieving that state of perfection, one must cultivate an intimate understanding of mother nature’s charm and powers of enchantment, its multifarious manifestations and the secrets of their eternality.

No matter how mystical this may sound, the fact remains that the kinship between nature and humankind, and, especially, the spiritual flights born of that kinship, are indivisible. Tamar’s natural philosophy is not limited to her inner vision as a poet, but rather carries within it a living portrait of nature, equally eliciting lushest vistas of esthetic pleasure. It is difficult to determine which is the more pronounced in her works: the thinker? The artistic innovator? Or the author forging poetry of extraordinary beauty and resonance?

Yet, as it often happens with creative individuals, moments of happiness soar like meteors, only to come down and bring back with them ever-newer bouts of pain. As a rule, Tamar's inner world opens before the reader without any masks, no matter how fraught it might be and what factors might lie behind its anguish. What aching frankness Tamar demonstrates, in reproducing the ever-mutable states of that inner world!

Troubled by woes, in the grips of psychic nightmares, Tamar casts her gaze toward the heavens, toward God, because once the stanchion of hope is lost, the person snarled in the contradictions of life extends her hand toward God, yet keeps her door open... before death — a testament to the fact that Tamar was not afraid of it.

Tamar's talent as an author, and, specifically, a poet, has also found expression in her spiritual writings, in which she does not seek to prove the existence of God or to try to understand his essence, whether by reason, feeling, or creed. For Tamar, God is an indisputable truth and that's that, and she does not require any proof for it. Her spiritual writings encompass her ideas about life and death, fall and salvation, and despair and self-motivation, all of which are parsed through the clash of emotions. Standing at the center of it all is Tamar, who asks the Almighty first and foremost to help those who are worse off, those who are more in need, and only then herself.

The devotional love which was born in Tamar through her deep reverence for God is also reflected in her writings dedicated to her mother. Indeed, to Tamar, her mother is a supreme symbol of virtue and kindness.

In a poem titled "A Gift of Love," Tamar writes:

*Your love keeps me warm,
When the sun is at its rest.*

Tamar Asadourian was a musical prodigy who kept reaching exceptionally-high levels of achievement throughout her life. Anyone who has heard her piano performances will no doubt agree that music is a language which she mastered completely, and through which she fully expressed herself and captivated

her audiences. Whenever Tamar played the piano, she seemed to make the instrument sing. And given her prodigious talent and passion for her art, she has had many successes, performing works by Armenian composers as well as a great diversity of pieces from the global treasury of classical music.

In its review of Tamar's debut concert at Carnegie Hall, in 1996, when she was only 16 years old, Jed Distler of the *New York Concert Review* writes,

“From the moment this calm, assured pianist entered the stage and unhurriedly took her position at the keyboard, it was perfectly clear who was in charge. Her diction and her harmonic pointing in the Partita’s famous opening bars literally shocked me out of my seat. The rest of the movement was played with a sense of concentration and genuine affinity for both Bach’s dramatic and contrapuntal genius.”

In the closing lines of the review, Distler writes,
“Tamar Asadourian is more than just a young woman who plays extremely well for her age. She is already an absorbing artist of uncommon sensitivity and intelligence, who is capable of stimulating, original, and often moving performances.”

In our age of incessant technological revolution, including quantum leaps in space exploration, the more the horizons of nature part before us, the more the human imagination faces the mysteries of newly-discovered phenomena. And because the secrets of nature stretch into the boundlessness of the cosmos, the idea of endlessness becomes more and more probable. Ultimately, it is extraordinarily-talented individuals such as Tamar Asadourian — individuals embodying the very spirit of mother nature — who will affirm that probability.

Lilit Keheyanyan

*Translation by
Ishkhan Jimbashian*



ՆԱԽԱԲԱՆ

ՄՏՈՐՈՒՄՆԵՐ՝ ԹԱՄԱՐ ԱՍԱՏՈՒՐԵԱՆԻՆ

ԿԱՐԴԱԼՈՒՑ ՅԵՏՈՅ

Ընդամենը մի քանի ամիս էր անցել նրա ծննդեան 40- ամեակից, սակայն տակաւին երիտասարդ, նա շտապում էր վերադառնալ իր նախասկիզբը՝ մայր բնութեանը, որից փոխ էր առել իր ողջ էութիւնը, իր բանաստեղծական, նկարչական, երաժշտական տաղանդը: Նա աղերսում էր բնութեան հետ, ինչպէս պտուղն ու արարիչը, ինչպէս կէտն ու անսահմանութիւնը: Նա խորապէս, ոտից-գլուխ թաթախուած էր Մուսաների սրբազնագոյն աւազանում: Երևի թէ ինքնամոռաց, ասկետականութեան հասնող այս նուիրումի մէջ է նրա որպէս ստեղծագործողի ճշմարտութիւնը:

Իր կեանքը՝ մանկութեան յուշերը, պատանութեան երազանքները, բնութեան արբեցումները, իր չվերջացող տառապանքը, մօր և դստեր ապրումները՝ նուիրումն ու նուիրուածութիւնը, խոհական սկեռումները, ճշմարիտ քրիստոնեայի հաւատը, ամէն-ամէն ինչ այնպէս է տարրալուծել իր գրութիւնների մէջ, որ ճակատագիրը նոյնացել է քնարին:

Արդար իրաւունքով Թամարը կարող էր ասել, որ իր կենսագրութիւնը իր ստեղծագործութիւնների մէջ է, իր երաժշտութեան, իր գեղանկարչութեան, բայց յատկապէս ու մանաւանդ նա ամբողջովին ու անմնացորդ իր գրութիւնների, իր տողերի մէջ է, գրութիւններ, որոնցից դուրս նա չունի և ոչ մի անձնական գաղտնիք: Ինքն է ու իր գրութիւնները, որոնք զարդարուած են իր իսկ գծանկարներով:

Բնութեան ճառագայթներն առկայծել են շատ բանաստեղծների հոգիներում, սակայն ոչ բոլորն են զգացել բնութիւնն այդպէս խորութեամբ, այդպէս նրբօրէն, ինչպէս Թամարը, որովհետև ոչ բոլորը գիտեն, որ բնութիւնը նոյնպէս կենդանի է, որ ծաղիկները ևս կարող

են արտասուել ցաւից ու արնահոսել, երբ պոկում ես
նրանց հողից, որ ծիածանը՝ երփներանգ, երբեմն կարող է
պատմել իր դժգոյն փորձառութիւնից, որ ամպրոպը կարող
է լինել անձրևի խրախճանքը.

**I now hear the crying of flowers
That bleed when taken from the ground.**

.....

**Rainbows have sometimes told me
The grayness of their experience.**

(Envision)

or

**When thunder goes on,
The rain is yet in its party.**

(Rain song)

Բնութեան հետ մտքի ու զգացմունքի կենդանի
փոխանակութիւն կարող է ունենալ այն բանաստեղծը, որի
հոգու և էութեան մէջ բացում են բնութեան խորհրդաւոր
շարժումները, որոնք կարծէք թէ ծնուել են մարդկային
զգացական մղումներից: Ուստի՝ կարող ենք ասել, որ
Թամարը ծնուել է բնութիւնից և ծուլուել բնութեանը:
Նա բնութեան կենդանի շարժումն է, որ իր էութեան մէջ
ամփոփում է մարդու և տիեզերքի ընդհանրութիւնը: Եւ,
երթ համառօտակի ընդգծենք Թամարի բանաստեղծական
բնափիլիսոփայութեան էական իմաստը, ապա պէտք է
ասենք, որ դա բնութեան աստուածացումն է, սակայն ոչ
իբրև Զգոյի, այլ իբրև զգացականի և հոգեկանի միասնու-
թեան կատարեալ երևոյթի: Իսկ կատարեալին հասնելու
համար պէտք է ճանաչել նրա հմայքն ու առինքնման
գօրութիւնը, նրա բազմակի դրսևորումները, դրանց
յաւերժութեան գաղտնիքները:

Որքան էլ միստիկական թուա մեր ասածը, այնու
ամենայնիւ մարդու և բնութեան արիւնակցութիւնը
և մանաւանդ դրանից ծնունդ հոգևոր թռիչքները
անքակտելի են:

Թամարի բնափիլիսոփայութիւնը սակայն չի

ամփոփում սոսկ իր՝ որպէս բանաստեղծի ներքնատեսութեամբ, այն իր մէջ կրում է բնութեան կենդանի գեղանկարը, հարկադրելով մտածել՝ գեղագիտական հաճոյք է առաջ բերում միաժամանակ: Դժուար է ասել՝ ո՞րն է նրա բնապատկերում աւելի զօրեղ՝ մտածողը, յայտնագործողը, թէ՞ գեղագիրը:

Բայց, ինչպէս յաճախ պատահում է, ստեղծագործողի մօտ երջանկութեան պահերը թռչում են ասուպի նման, բերելով իրենց հետ ցաւերի նոր շրջան:

Առհասարակ, Թամարի ներաշխարհը, ինչ ազդակներից էլ խռովայոյզ լինի, ընթերցողի առաջ բացւում է առանց դիմակների: Ներանձնական կեանքի տարափոխ վիճակների վերարտադրութեան ինչպիսի՜ անկեղծութիւն:

Բացասական ազդակներից ակեղծուած, հոգևոր մղձաւանջում, Թամարը հայեացքն ուղղում է դէպի երկինք, դէպի Բարձրեալը, զի կեանքի հակասութիւնների մէջ խճճուած մարդը կորցնելով յուսոյ յենարանը, ձեռքը մեկնում է Աստծուն, բայց և շարունակ իր դուռը բաց է պահում... մահուան առաջ: Դա վկայութիւնն է այն բանի, որ նա չի վախենում մահից:

Գրական՝ մասնաւորապէս բանաստեղծական տաղանդը արտայայտութիւն է գտել նաև նրա կրօնաշունչ գրութիւններում, ուր Թամարը չի ձգտում ո՛չ բանականութեամբ, ո՛չ զգացողութեամբ և ոչ էլ կրօնական դաւանաբանութեամբ ապացուցել Աստծոյ գոյութիւնը, ճանաչել նրա էութիւնը: Թամարի համար Աստուած անառարկելի ճշմարտութիւն է և վերջ, ու նա չի պահանջում ոչ մի ապացոյց: Նրա այդ գործերում առկայ են կեանքի ու մահուան, անկման ու փրկութեան, յուսալքութեան և ինքնայուսադրման գաղափարները՝ ապրումների բախումով: Իսկ բախման կեդրոնում ինքն է, որը ամենակարող Բարձրեալից խնդրում է նախ և առաջ հասնել ու օգնել աւելի խեղճին, աւելի կարիքաւորին և յետոյ միայն իրեն:

Նուիրական այն սէրը, որ Թամարի մէջ ծնունդ է առել Բարձրեալի հանդէպ տաժած խոր ակնածանքից, տարածւում է նաև մօրը նուիրուած նրա գրութիւններում: Մայրը նրա համար բարութեան ու ազնւութեան

խորհրդանիշ է.

**Your love keeps me warm,
When the sun is at its rest.**

(A gift of love)

Թամարի երաժշտությունը...

Ով, որ ունկնդրել է Թամար Ասատուրեանի դաշնամուրային կատարումները, թերևս կը հաստատի մեր այն հաւաստացումները, որ երաժշտությունը մի լեզու է, որին լաւագոյնս էր տիրապետում Թամարը և որով նա արտայայտել է իր զգացումներն ու բազում յոյզեր արթնացրել ունկնդրի մէջ: Նրան յաջողում էր այնպէս նուագել, ասես դաշնամուրն էր երգում: Նա յաջողութիւններ ու ստեղծագործական նուաճումներ է ունեցել կատարելով ինչպէս հայ երգահանների մեղեդիներ, նոյնպէս և ստեղծագործութիւններ համաշխարհային երաժշտական գանձարանից:

Գիտատեխնիկական յեղաշրջումների, տիեզերական թռիչքների մեր դարաշրջանում, որքան բացւում են բնութեան անձանաչելի հորիզոնները, այնքան մարդկային երևակայութիւնը կանգնում է նոր երևոյթների առեղծուածի առջև: Եւ որովհետև բնութեան գաղտնիքները ձգւում են տիեզերական անսահմանութեան մէջ, աւելի ու աւելի հաւանականութիւն է ձեռք բերում անվախճանի գաղափարը: Այդ հաւանականութիւնը հաստատողները ի վերջոյ լինելու են բնութեան ոգին իրենց մէջ մարմնաւորող Թամար Ասատուրեանի նման բացառիկ բազմատաղանդ անհատներ:

ԼԻԼԻԹ ՔԷՇԷԵԱՆ



DEPOSITION OF CHRIST 1997



Tamar Self 1993

TAMAR

From the very first moment I met Tamar, I was intrigued by the fervid glow in her eyes, a radiance that invites one into her fascinating world.

A uniquely creative world all on her own, filled with glamorous colors, striking sketches, captivating forms of vigor in every stroke, profoundly engraved onto each canvas.

The innovative lines and shapes of her patterns are a mere extension of her boundless soul, the colors within her ingenious essence reveal the sacred values in every painting forgotten by the masses.

Her music is as free as her bohemian spirit, rising like a phoenix that resonates with every rhythm she conveys, her melodies are as harmonious as her intense dynamics that form symphonies within the sources of the universal tunes, she so freely offers to us all as if gifting every star in the cosmos.

Composed within her infinite universe you find mystical writings that inspire like the heavenly rays, the voices within the structures of every sentence paint figures of speech conceived centuries ago, ahead of her time her holy scriptures speak of celestial peace, each one being a covenant offered to the free will of mankind to simply connect with God.

She rests within that peace the Lord has graced, an angel watching over us...

Nareg Hartounian

NEW YORK CONCERT REVIEW[®]

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Tamar Asadourian, piano

Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall

September 27, 1996

The Armenian Radio Hour of NJ presented pianist Tamar Asadourian in recital at Weill Hall on September 26th. Tamar, who is 16, attends the Professional Childrens School in New York and is a full time student of Oxana Yablaskaya.

While Ms. Asadourian's program was modest in length, the repertoire was, to say the least, substantial. One can hardly get more meaty than to place the Bach *E Minor Partita* on the first half and then open the second half with Beethoven's ultra intense last sonata, followed by the *B minor Scherzo* of Chopin. On record, the first half was closed with the first American performance of the Russian Armenian composer Alexander Pirumov's *Prelude and Toccata*; in fact the first time any of Pirumov's large output has been performed in this country.

From the moment this calm, assured pianist entered the stage and unhurriedly took her position at the keyboard, it was perfectly clear who was in charge. Her diction and her harmonic pointing in the *Partita*'s famous opening bars literally shocked me out of my seat. The rest of the movement was played with a sense of concentration and genuine affinity for both Bach's dramatic and contrapuntal genius. Sometimes the imitative aspects of the writing were brought out to the point of sounding studied, but at least give this young pianist credit for thinking! Her *Sarabande* was especially compelling, and she makes intelligent use of the soft pedal much in the same way harpsichordists use a lute stop. It was curious, given Ms. Asadourian's obvious love for and connection to this music, that her trills and ornaments are not as well defined as they could be. She is also not quite adroit at



Tamar Asadourian

scaling her dynamics, tending to work her way up to mezzo-forte and stay there most of the time. Moreover, her stinginess with repeats made the work seem unbalanced and lopsided. Still it was impressive how this pianist managed to impart a specific character to each of the *Partita*'s seven movements.

The first half closed with the Pirumov premiere cited earlier. It was composed in 1962 as a compulsory piece for that year's Tchaikovsky Competition. The moody *Prelude* rests on a long D minor pedal and is cast in a modal language that is similar to Alan Hovhaness. Ms. Asadourian gently propelled the plaintive melodies with a true sense of ebb and flow. The final movement is really more of a fugue than a toccata. Its style is typically motoric. It's style is typically motoric and busy, like the toccatas of Prokofiev and Khachaturian, but perhaps more internalized in expression and without a trace of bombast. The same could be said of the pianist, although the huge climaxes at both extremes of the keyboard needed more force and sonic depth than the pianist delivered. But, better Ms. Asadourian's musicality and insight than someone else banging away with all brawn and no brain.

The virtues and drawbacks I mentioned in the Bach *Partita* were apparant in Beethoven's *Op. III Sonata*, which opened the second half. Ms. Asadourian has a keen, even profound instinct not just for finding the right tempi, but for structural continuity by way of tempo relationships, transitions, and inner rhythms. She grabbed the first movement by the scruff of the neck, admirably covering herself during a few minor memory slips. In time, one hopes that her tone will gain more body and fullness at dynamic extremes, as well as her trills.

The closing section, Chopin's *B Minor Scherzo* was full of good intentions and interesting ideas that sometimes came off and sometimes didn't. In fairness, I had the pleasure of speaking with the pianist at length a few days following the concert and she

New York Concert Review, Inc. December-January 1997

Continued on page 2...

Asadourian...

confirmed my suspicion that Chopin's "not quite her thing" at this point in time. As for her encore, the Khachaturian *Toccata*, Ms. Asadourian eschewed surface bravura in order to bring out musical lines and harmonies that go unheard in most performances. One missed, though, the wallop and rhythmic drive needed to really "sell" this piece.

In sum, Tamar Asadourian is more than just a young woman who plays extremely well for her age. She is already

an absorbing artist of uncommon sensitivity and intelligence, who is capable of stimulating, original and often moving performances. If she retains these qualities as she matures, Ms. Asadourian will certainly be a force to be reckoned with among the millennium's first great pianists. I for one, look forward to following her career into the next century.

— Jed Distler

“In sum, Tamar Asadourian is more than just a young woman who plays extremely well for her age. She is already an absorbing artist of uncommon sensitivity and intelligence, who is capable of stimulating, original and often moving performances. If she retains these qualities as she matures, Ms. Asadourian will certainly be a force to be reckoned with among the millennium’s first great pianists. I for one, look forward to following her career into the next century.”

JED DISTLER



Tamar Asadourian
was Balzac's Seraphita/Seraphitus.
The male and female in harmony.
The Apollonian and the tragic Dionysian.
Suffering and ecstasy.
Matter and spirit.

The cosmic vibrations and the spiritual vibrations of the soul.

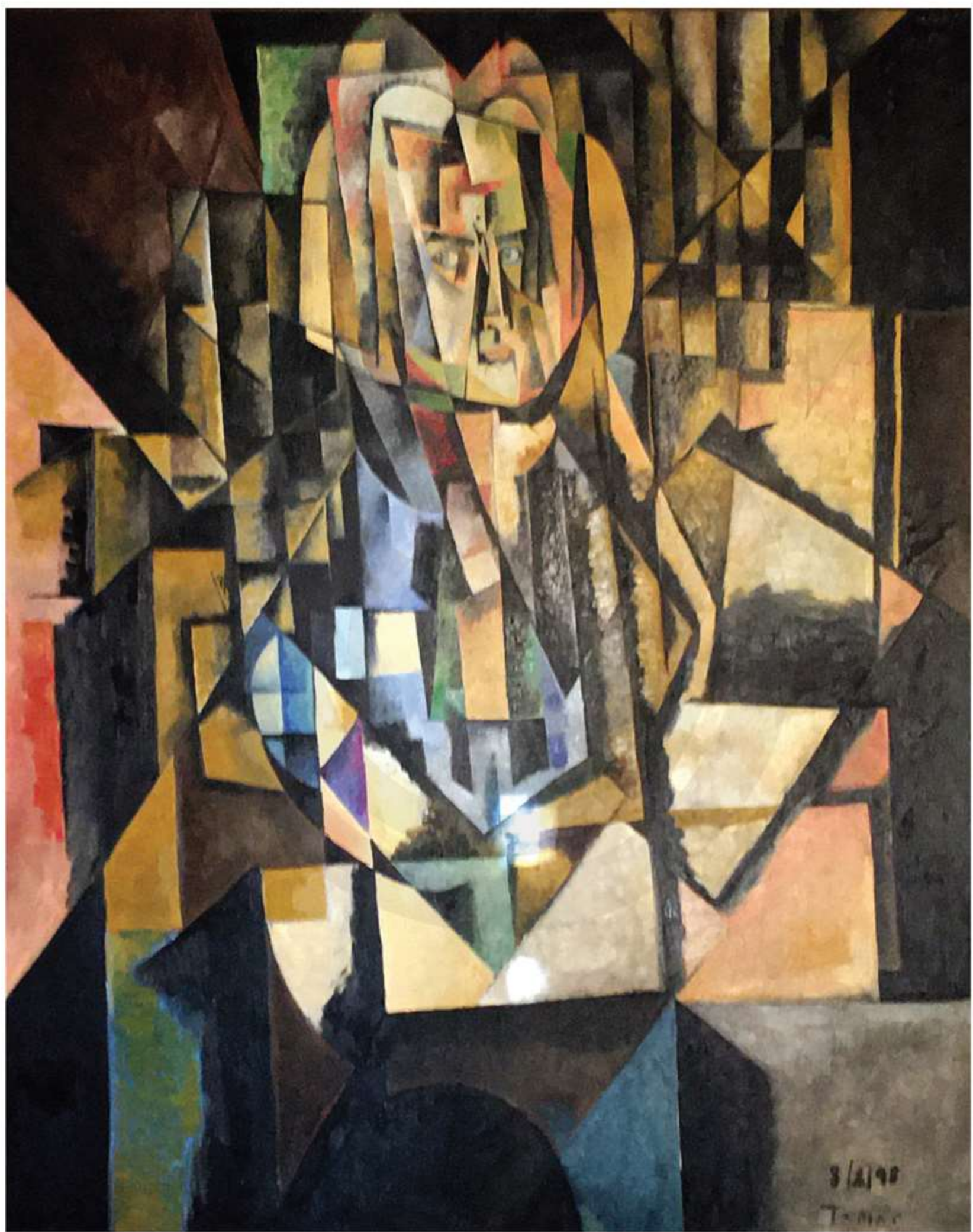
During her concert at Carnegie/Weill Hall, in 1996, as she performed works by Beethoven and Liszt, Tamar expressed the inner vibrations of her soul through her fingers, through the acoustics of a grand piano, into the atmosphere of the hall, as each one of us in the audience became a spirit in the soul of the space, vibrating with the musician and the music in perfect harmony. Tamar performed this miracle when she was just 16 years old. Through her art, writings, and friendships, Tamar went on to devote herself to the pursuit of the mysteries of life and death. One day, during a visit with her, as we discussed the vibrations of spirits in the soul, she said the path to Bach was through mathematics. She then led me to her piano and began to finger keys.

As she played, she identified the keys with numbers and called numbers in sequences, until, behold, suddenly there was a Bach piece being performed.

Tamar often said that understanding mathematics was key for transferences of vibrations. She searched through her poetry, paintings, and music, to find her own mathematical sequencing of vibrations for expression, the key to absorb and pass them on to others.

As all geniuses, Tamar was born with a soul that was profoundly receptive to not just her immediate environment but the universe itself, in order to serve a higher purpose — as a manifestation of what the legendary photographer Arthur Tcholakian has called “the nobility of the spirit” (*hokegan aznevutyun*).

Kardash Onnig



Beethoven 1998

ROSETTA GOODKIND
SENIOR FACULTY, MSM

“Tamar Asadourian, one of the most gifted students I have ever known is extraordinarily talented in music, art and poetry. Her intelligence, creativity and interpretations are uniquely her own. “The intensity and extent of her devotion to music is so consuming that she spends at least 10 hours a day practicing.

Her present teacher, Mark Silverman, Chairman of the piano department of the Manhattan School of Music, says that Tamar is a genius.

In her independence she does not allow anyone else’s thinking to interfere with her musical judgement.

In her program which includes the Liszt Sonata, Tamar selected the Beethoven 106 Hammerklavier Sonata. With regard to the style of writing for the piano, it anticipates all the elements of later developments like Schumann, Chopin and Brahms and its difficulty are unequalled in the entire piano literature.

But, that is Tamar; She welcomes the challenge.



Sketch Of A Man 2002



POEMS...

SYMBOL OF LIFE

You see a flower before you.
It is growing, living.
Living for a long time.
Someone is always there
To care for it.
Then it is on its own.
It lives in beauty.
It strives to keep alive,
As well as keep people happy.
Then it withers, crumbles, and dies.
The earth washes it away.
It is over.
Others see this flower
As just there, for no reason at all.
Little do they realize
That this flower is a symbol of their own life.
Most waste it and blame it for being there.
Others know it's worth living through.

1992

RAIN

The clouds begin taking form,
Their strength awakening rapidly.
They growl and roar
The fury in their eyes boils up madly.
And strengthen more and more,
But the rain comes drizzling lightly.

The thunder then appears
Charging very swiftly;
Its rage building up furiously,
Endangering all ears strongly;
Yet, the rain comes drizzling lightly.

Now that rain, in its dance,
Continues unceasingly
Without interruption, it clatters quietly.
It dances round and round, in the midnight blue
And comes drizzling lightly.

But slowly, and vaguely the sun begins rising.
The clouds begin to smile and the rage
And anger is stopping—but still, without rest
The rain comes drizzling lightly!

1993

AS A THIN SHRILL

As a thin shrill of a mad dog
Will tremble the dead air
And echo and flutter
Like an undying pulse,
So then did misery settle itself
Upon the shoulders of a broken
 mother,
Unsound and fierce with lament
Over her infant child
Lying cold in her arms;

Thought melted
And dissolved in bitter tears,
Rolled away from her sallow
 cheek
And with every drop
Did escape her reason;

And she sang to that child
Songs sweet and happy,
And cradled it close to her breast
That it may be comforted
By the thundering beat of her heart,
And covered its gazing eyes
That it may not see
What unholy sight surrounded it,
What grisly scene they sat among:
A sea of fallen soldiers
Flooding in crests of crimson,

Where blood flavored the black
 morning sky,
And the wind blew with the ashes
Of slaughtered children.
She began to sing louder
To drown the sighs of suffering
And the hunger of the weary,
And each passing note
Grew louder and louder.
First a haunting hum,
Now a hammering roar,
She stood and danced to her
 cracking tune
Her slain infant still in her arm.

She hobbled away and vanished
 from that place,
Though echoes and flutters
Remained far behind,
Like an undying pulse,
And the thin shrill of a mad dog
Trembled the dead air.

1993



Deposition Detail 1997

MUSICALLY SPEAKING

Here is your worlds:
Cruel, and unfair
Mocking the meaning of life and
Destroying the peace
That once prospered.
“Corruption to all who dare to dream.
Destruction to those who care to feel.”
Those are the quotes
That run through the minds
Of the earthlings
That are caged in the bars of humanity.

Here is my world:
‘Tis too much of a paradox
And a matter recondite
To express fully.
For my world
Is an expression
Musically speaking
Recurring again and again,
Revealing every emotion
Of every kind,
All in a simple note.

But this paradox of a world
Is only to be shared by him
And me.
For he is he who made this
A reality.
He is he
Who welcomed me.

He is he whom I cherish
And treasure.
He is my musical father.

But these feelings
Cannot be fully expressed,
As I told you before.
For this is not my voice.
I'm not fluent in this language.
My voice can only be heard
In the sounds of music.
This voice is the same paradox,
That lies on the other side
Of the human cage.

1993

TO THE NORTH

To the north
There lies a path
Ever so slight and slim,
Where unnamed glories
And unfound treasures
Are only known to few.
Along the path
Hide all the answers
To questions not yet asked,
And hardship awaits
The worthy one
Who chooses to win the test.

There is, as well,
A different road
That seems simple and broad;
But far along the easy stroll
The road begins to narrow
Into a lifeless,
Tired trail,
Where no comfort
Is offered.
Soon the trail crumbles
Into a dreadful nothing,
And no sign of existence is evident,
Until yours, too
Is lost.

Here I stand,
In between these roads,
Mowing where I must go.
For soon beyond the narrow path
Is an undying kingdom,
An imperishable majesty,
And complete world,
Everlasting.

WIND

Blowing its power
Into the seas of time,
Breathing words
That hold us speechless,
Wiping away
With every blow
The evil, mankind brings,
The song of peace and love
Is the song the blower sings.

Running away
With the hearts of the people,
Blowing into them
The beads of love,
Whispering softly
A wondrous word,
And captivating the mind
Of the thinker.
Breezing through
The rings of the future,
Escaping the boundaries
Of the universe,
Spreading amazement
Through everything,
Washing away
With its powerful breath,
The malevolent ways
Of the world.
Winding the spirits
Toward goodness
And faith,
Easing the vexations
That stop them from being
Whatever it is they are,

And filling the world with love and joy,
Of peace the blower sings.

Unleashing the strength
Inside itself.

Testing its might
Again, and again
And challenging the ways
His emotions can affect
The rest of the world
Before him.

In constant battle
With the desolace
The earth reveals to him,
Quelling the fears
And hates
That occur in humans.

In ceaseless peril,
He still goes on
Protecting the world
From enemies,
Expecting no reward
From the endangered species
He works so hard
To save.

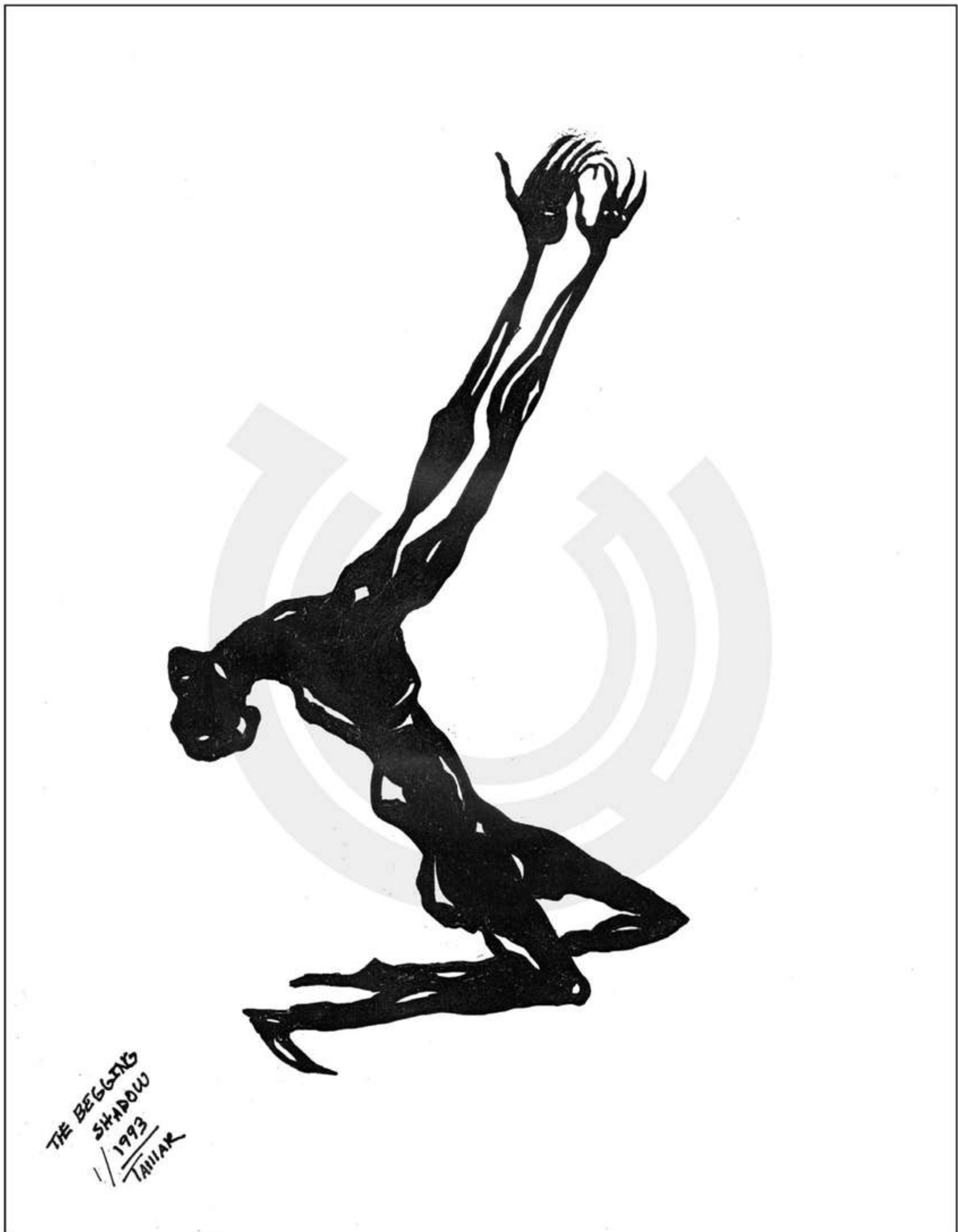
This is why the blower sings
The song of peace and love.
Because he knows no other
And because he that is how the world
Once was.
It will be sung

By the same singer
That blows the world away,
The song of peace and love
Is the song the blower still sings
For ever more,
And for all future,
And whatever
It
May
Bring...

*WOE TO ALL MEN
WHO BLAME THE WORLD.
CURSED BE ALL
WHO THREATEN LIFE.
THAT IS THE MESSAGE
THAT I HAVE TO GIVE*

As a tear rolls down
My face.

1993



The Begging Shadow 1993

A COUNTRY ONCE...

A country
Once full of spirit,
Once full of hope
So rich in beauty,
Is so able to die away,
Into a cloud of lost love

A world of its own
So brilliant,
So joyous
Destroyed by its own
Inhabitants.

Where have they gone,
Those soldiers
So brave?
Where has the hero fled?
Why are we left
Defeated and cold
In the night so thick?

Let us unite
Let's share our hope,
And let our warmth
Build into one.

It is your decision
That lets us down.

"We shall not die,
We shall be free again"
Say the lazy patriots.
They build hope for us
No more.

Where have they gone,
Those fighters
Undefeated?
Why have they joined
The cloud?
Where shall we go,
How shall we fight,
I'm afraid this battle
Is lost.

Until we find
Our unity again,
Until we gather our spirits,
There is no hope,
And there is no freedom.
And lost will our
Homeland be.

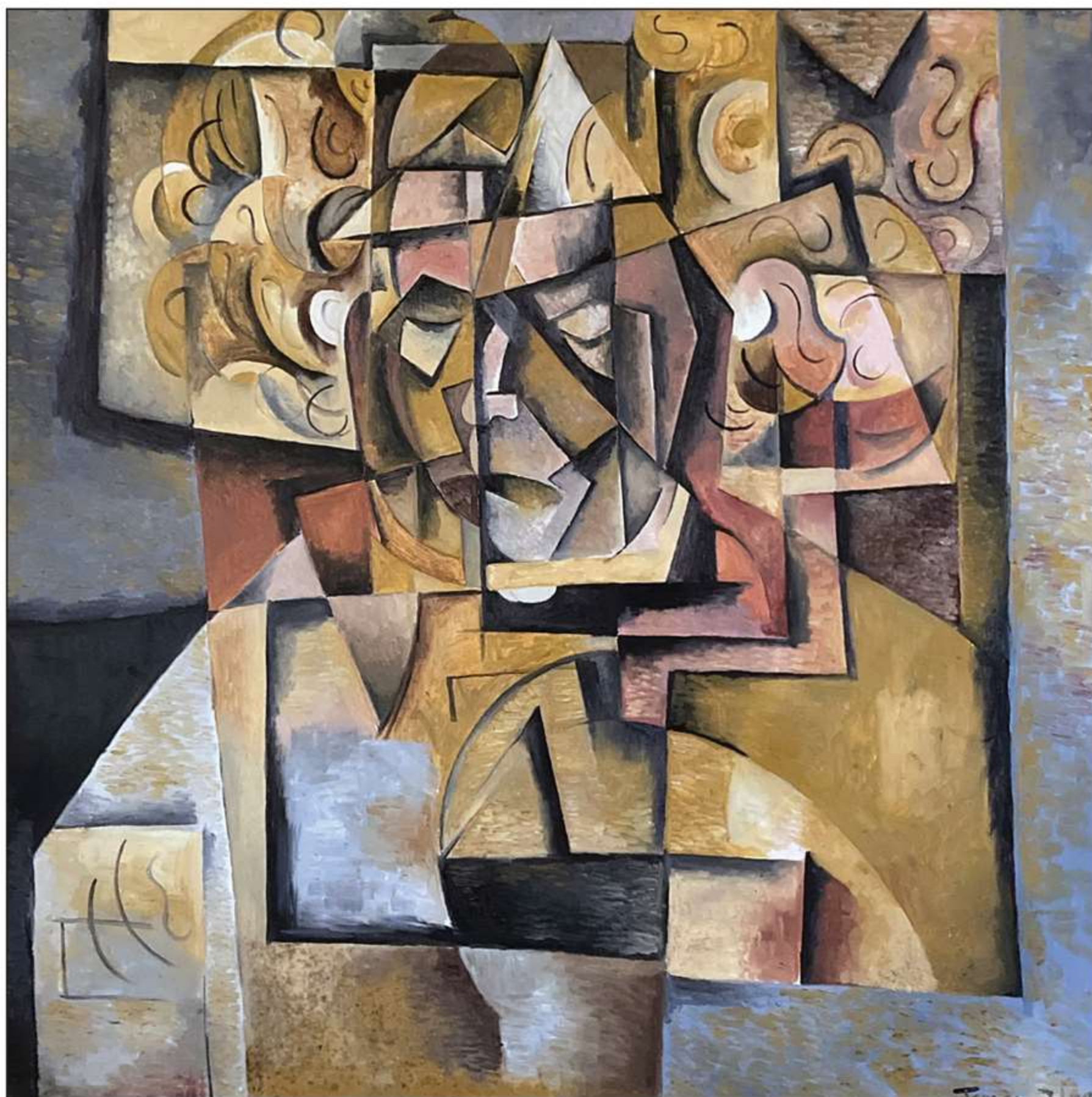
1994

DISPARITY

The world
Is a container
A container
Of differences,
That separates humanity.
Once
We were a people,
Now
We are ten,
Each in a battling crisis.
We are groups
Of conflict,
A difference
Of religion,
People that cannot mix.
But one of this people
Is not in a war
Between the differences.
He is in war
That concerns
Us all.
A war
That is of
The entire world.
He who fights
That war
Is a people
All to himself,
He fights to save
The others.

The others who fight only
To save themselves
And those
Within their own.
But the soldier
Continues
His battle
Despite his enemy,
And stops for no one
To save his world.
His world of differences,
His world of opposition,
His world of separation.
He
Is the soldier
That will bring us together.
He is the soldier that
Will end our differences.
He is the soldier
Of God.

1994



Beethoven Eternal Glory
1998

ETERNAL GLORY

(Beethoven)

Within the unforgiving fury
Of an eternal flame
Lies an even greater glory,
Where a noble champion
Is still remembered.

Within the frown
Of a bitter darkness
Shines a brilliant victory
Where brave battles
Are all but lost.

Within the silence
Of a sullen grave
Lies a valiant master
Who sings of majesty
And awesome triumph.

Even within the sour mood
Of a tarnished world,
Exists a melody of greatness
And a symphony of splendor.
Within this world of sad tragedy
Lies another world
All of its own,
Where every finished unison
Is another battle won.

1994

EVEN WHERE A SAD SMOKE

Even where a sad smoke smothers the glory
Of an immortal flame,
Whose victory was never heard,
There lies a single voice,
With pride too great to be conquered.

Even within the loudness of dead silence
Where only the cries of lost heroes are left undetected
There lies a hopeful tune
With too godly a determination to be overcome.

Even where the earth is covered
By a dull shadow,
Whose grief poisons its inferior,
There lies a bright melody
With too assured a victory
To be left in despair.

So, you see,
Even in this world of sorrow and gloom,
There can be gathered an entire symphony
Of hopeful voices.

1994

LOST NATION

Even where those flowers
That once colored the earth
Had lost their brilliance,
Even when those leaves
That once breezed through the wind
Had fallen into useless,
Colorless piles,
Children played,
And the elderly danced
With grace,
And happiness never lost.

Even when those birds
That brought sweet songs
To lonely ears
Flew away
Into their own paradise
Even when the spark in our fire
Dwindled to a sad smoke,
Stories were told,
And hardships were forgotten.

Even when all was lost,
When the sky was grey
Depressed winds,
And clouds drifted
Without home,
Our spirits remained hopeful,
And our flag waved in our hearts.

No lost battle
And no fallen creation
Should destroy our spirit.
No loss of land
Shall keep those flowers
From blooming once again,
No tyrants command
Will keep those birds from drifting back
To the paradise
It once knew...

MOON OF HOPE

The night becomes known
As darkness rules the world.
A wind blows its power
into the walls of humanity.
No light penetrates
The blackened midnight sky,
Except one spray of hope
That looks down upon the earth.

'Tis that moon in the heavens
That stares into the night,
And seeps its beam of magic
Into the hopeless homes of silences.
'Tis that moon of glory
That watches over the sleeping,
And illuminates the darkness
That lurks uninvited.

The people in their slumber
Awaken from their nightmares.
Then feel the glow
Of that moon in the galaxy,
Protecting them from the enemy,
And return to their rest,
This time in peace and safety.

As the night wanders away,
So does that moon.
The event of that night
Is now a mere memory.
Knowing that its light
Had kept life safe,
Now that moon will sleep,
And God will watch over it.

1994

RAIN SONG

How, when the clouds
Surround the earth
And look down upon it fiercely,
Can a rain so sweet
Fall to the ground
In a dance
So light and graceful?

How, when a thunder
Charges heavily
And creates a roar so horrible,
Can a drizzle so soothing
Comfort our souls
In a song
So delicate and peaceful?

The rain
Will not stop
Its song and dance;
It cannot give up
Its nature.
That is why
When thunder
Goes on,
The rain
Is yet in its party.

The thunder
May betray this rain,
And might try
To end its game,
But it shall not succeed,
And shall not win,
For that rain will
Go on,
And that is why
The rain always dances
To the song
It has created.

THE FALL

A single leaf strays
From its nest,
Soon, another will follow,
All of them
In their rich
And brilliant colors
So innocent,
So alive.
Leaving their homes
Bare and cold
And naked,
They shall travel
And the fall has begun.

1994

THE TREE

There is one tree
Which stands alone,
Somewhere else,
Somewhere, where evil
Is not known.
But this somewhere else,
Where this one tree
Of Life- letting power
Stands, is not within my reach,
For I have gone
Into the unknown,
In search for it.

In this place,
Where I live
Our trees
Who once gave us
The same purity of life,
Have been touched,
and destroyed
I suppose I haven't
Looked far enough.
Perhaps I must travel
Into my very dreams
In search for it,
For it seems, it is only there,
Where I may find
My tree

For my mama

1994

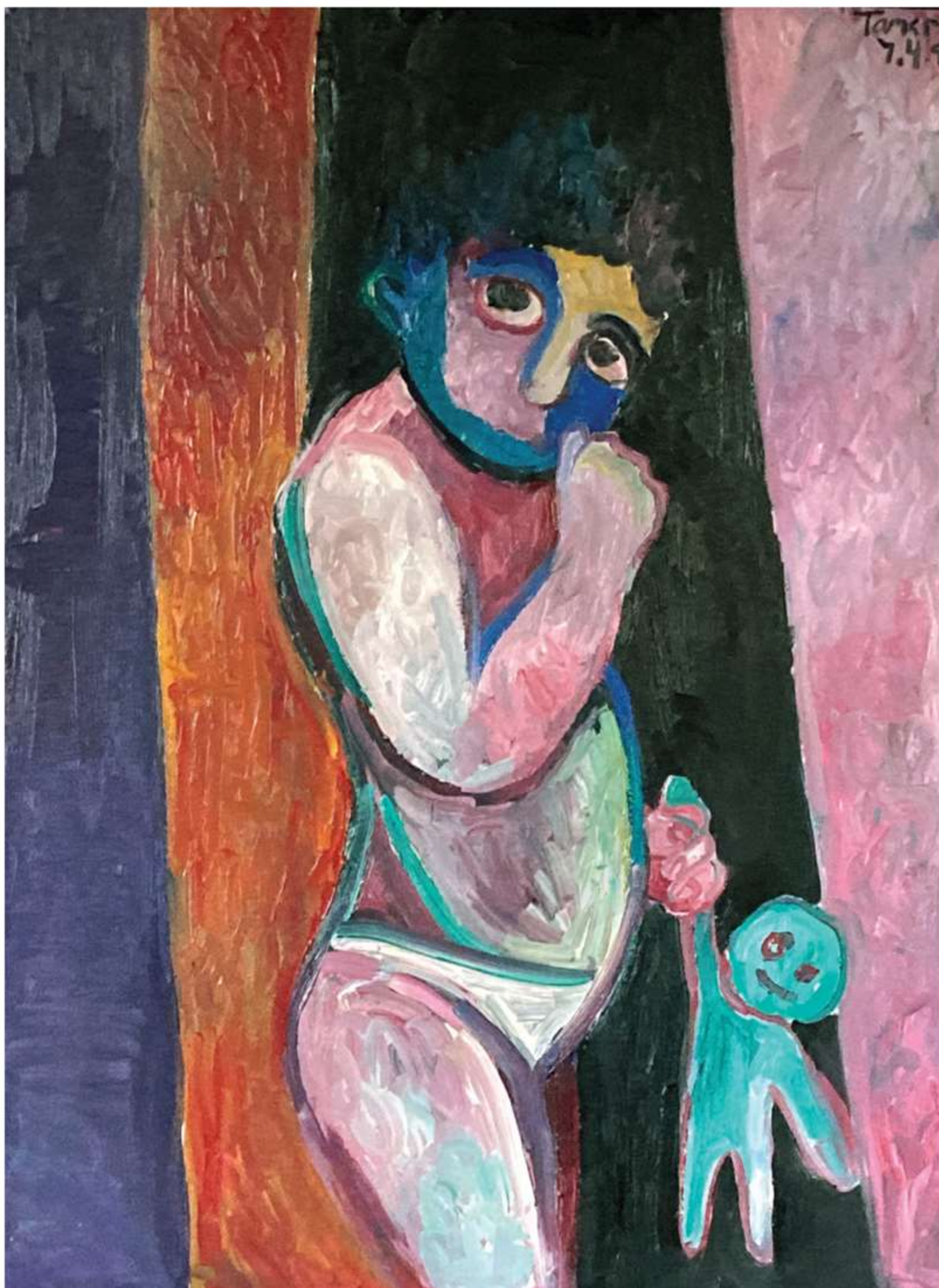
GREAT GRANDMOTHER

Knitting, rocking. Hands like knurled birch branches. Her gathered hair is milk white. She can't stop her jaw from bobbling ever since a bomb went off near her home back during the war, but her eyes, bedded deep in their sockets, are still and focused on her work.

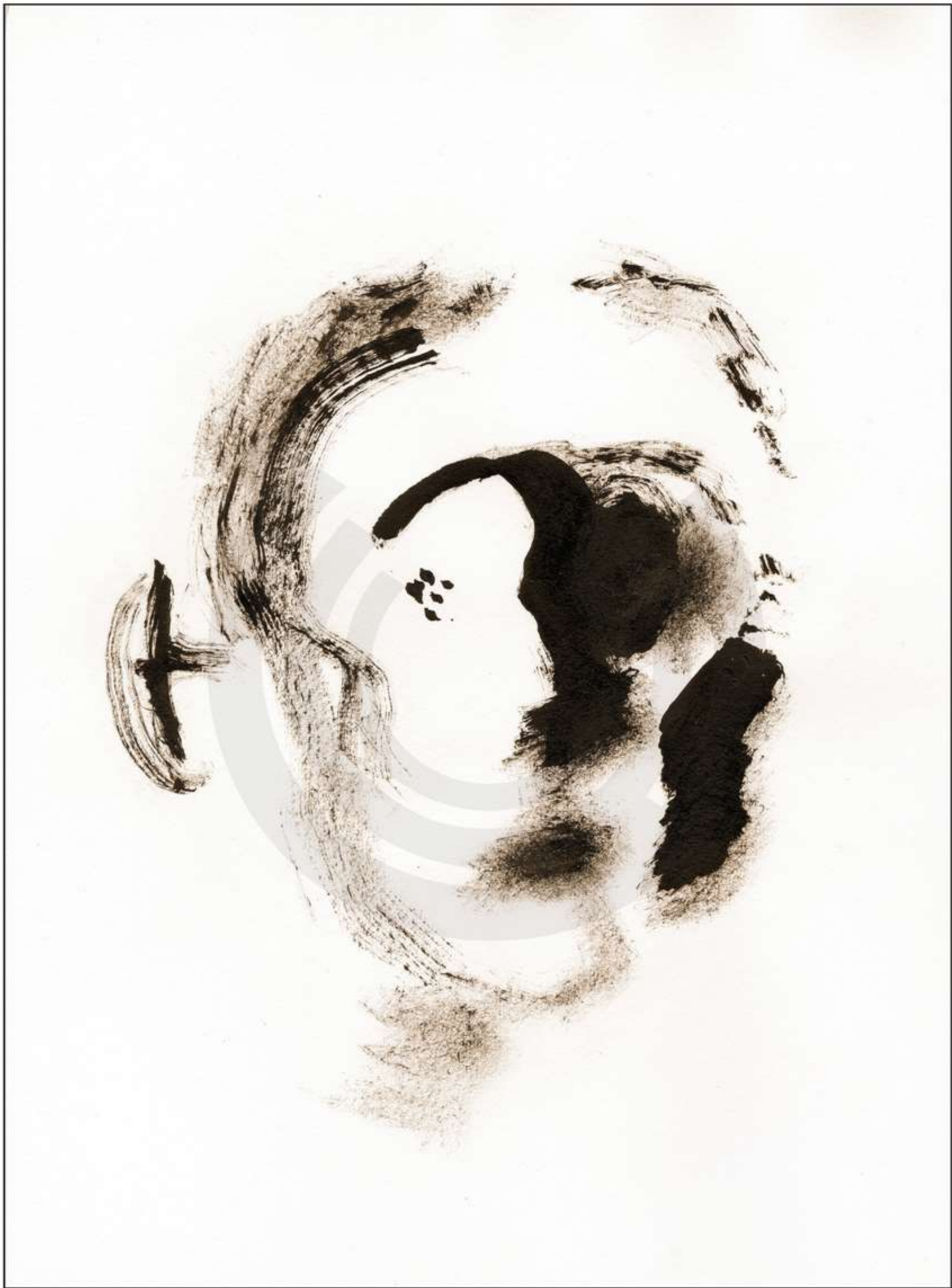
She's surrounded by photographs, old and new. Do the living, the children ever think of her, she wonders? Are the spirits of the dead with her? In and out of the firelight she rocks and rocks, black-clad, like a suppliant at the votive candles.

Outside the sibilant gusts and the noise of rain spilling down the gutter pipe enhance her sense of aloneness. But how long until she's placed in a home that isn't *her* home? How long until she's alone among others like her in some catatonic and mortal environment? She listens to the rainstorm with a certain gratitude for her situation.

1998



"Orphan" 1997



2020

INFERNO

And so, we carried on and endured the dark hollows of Hell, but the fear in my master's eyes reminded me that we would soon be staring into the darkest of them all; that infernal tomb where they who wallowed in deceit are eternally condemned: the betrayer's circle.

Along a path of sinners suspended and bound forever in frost, among Judas Iscariot and Cassius and Brutus, we made our way, and all seemed dead with sorrow. But as our course continued, the silence grew fainter, and fainter still. Howls of great torture exhausted me and brought me to my knees, and smothered the darkness like the shriek of a dying horse. Looking straight ahead, my master spoke to me and said, "You hear the voice of one who suffers with the worst of these sinners. Gather your strength, and I will lead you to where he serves his everlasting burden." And so, I lifted myself in haste and in fear for what I was soon to witness.

We finally came upon the place where the clamor was most thunderous, and what I saw there was like none I had ever expected to see: a small pond, again frozen solid, stood alone and apart from the rest. Surrounding it were four disabled sinners working away at the ice, each with a silver hatchet. I spoke with the permission of my leader, and pleaded with one of the souls to tell his story, and to explain the purpose of his labor. Without stopping his work, the tallest of the four turned to speak, and revealed to me his identity. "My name is Fehmi," he said, "To my right are Shakir and Enver, and to my left is Nazim. We suffer here throughout eternity for giving aid to the destruction of an entire people, and cheering together, 'Perish them all!'" I gazed upon his now distorted features in utter confusion. Why were they confined to be punished with betrayers? Why do they not drown in boiling blood with those of their own sin?

He continued to speak as though he knew my thoughts: "We convinced the people of that small nation to give up their

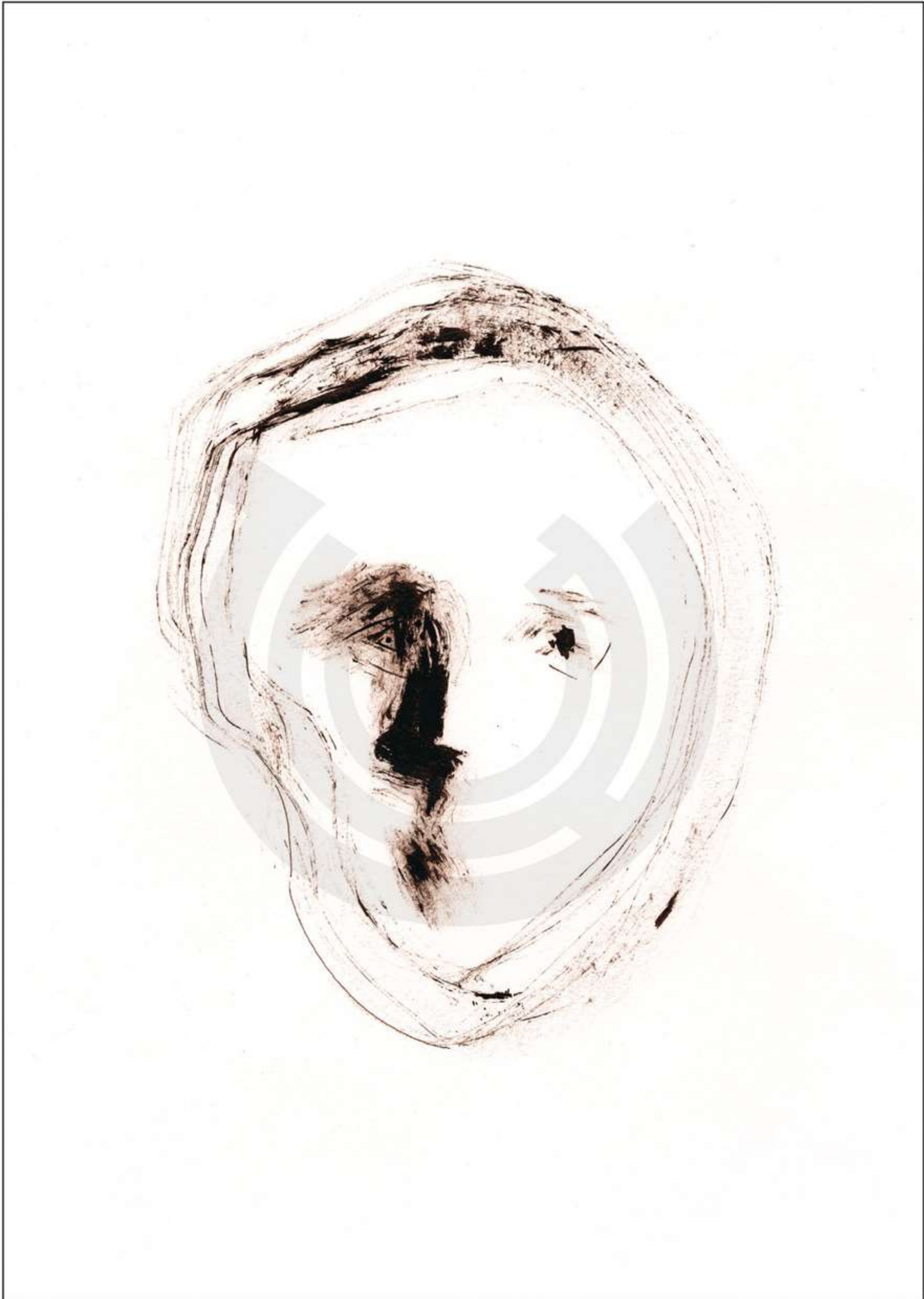
arms and their protection. We told them we would protect them, and watch over them as your Virgil watches over you, and when they were without any means of defence, we rose against them, and destroyed them." and I asked him, "What can you tell me about this pond you work to break away?" And he: "Look into its center, and tell me what you see." And I stared intently into the center of that frozen pond, and found beneath its cracks and crevices an image that seemed only a reflection of one whose anguish shuddered the dead air.

Immediately, I looked over my shoulder, but found no one there to account for that awful form impressed in ice. Realizing my increasing confusion, fehmi began to explain once again: "His name is Kara Kemal." He said, "He was our leader. He was a monster. Unborn infants cut from the bellies of helpless women, their husbands skinned alive before their very eyes, he was responsible for all this. Their nation was flooded in a sea fallen soldiers, and the winds blew with the ashes of slaughtered children. for this, we are ordered to break him one million times, for every soul lost in the massacre.

But he is not considered the worst of us in this realm of sin To your left is a mountain of bones and ashes and remains, festering through time, and equaling one million in amount. He who said 'An end must be put to their existence, however criminal the measures taken may be,' is entrenched in the middle of that vile heap.

As we hope to see the light once again, he hopes only to see this darkness. He gave the written order to begin the great genocide. His name Talaat, Minister of the Interior.

We turned away from that unholy place, and left the damned in shame of humankind, and knew we could encounter nothing worse than that which we had just seen. We proceeded toward the end of the inferno, though Kemal's haunted lament always followed not far behind, and judgement trembled through my weary veins.



2020

INNOCENCE

The rabbit hopped,
The flounder flopped,
One with life,
the latter in strive
Of breath and death.

The rabbit hopped in a busy grove,
The flounder on shores of vaster breadth;
Yet while his body with Heaven strove,
Vastness and beauty seemed mockeries of death;

The sea too is vast and beautiful
It has to be something new to the flounder.

As for the rabbit
In its babe-white fur,
Gaily dodging the keen pairs of eyes,
That lurked here and there await;

This sprightly creature, though death in every blur
Did all the while hide to scare, unaware
Perceived his narrow space
To be as vast as hero's grace;
For careless life though thinks itself most brave
Does more oft than not, the sooner meet the grave.

1998

I AM A THOUSAND

I am a thousand compressed
Not one in a thousand;
I abridge multitudes;
In stocks so miniscule
None so little as I;

I am wounds kept open
At effort's mouth
To say in truth
That which I am not;
My pale theories
Like breath crumble,
And say what giant
Stands not in me;

But if so it remains
Then I support;
In steps undergo
The best with its reverse,
One foot before the last;

I am not asleep;
Have not slept
In ranks of time;

Should the mountains one day
Move themselves for me
And say in time
My real good measure,
Then in my honest confession
Do spill these words:

I offer up myself;
I resign to my knees
That I may stand.

I AM WE WHO ARE SULLEN

I am we who are sullen and displeased
since they have withdrawn these moody proportions.
What is left are goodbyes and all our closing applause;
Though the time of day is passed without repair
They have left us their traces to inherit;
In retrospect have made themselves as hideaway rewards;

For there is profit in memory
And abundance in them.

I direct myself once more their way
And tell my sentiment headlong:

We are only partly alert.
And this time when we have sobered
Comes only at our loss in you;

In forlorn irony, we have regret
That we should be clear
Only now that you are dissolved;

Be your eyes on us;
Know that we have lost
At your disunion;
That we think softly of you,
And are thankful.

For Loulou, in Memorium
2000

MY WORDS OF ME

My words of me are done tonight;
I say this time on other behalf,
for my neighbors' dying days
ill at ease, I ply my tongue:

If they depart from here
then do not depart from them;
For they have brought me smiles;
It seems their gravity unfix them this team,
so I implore in steps beside myself:

Let them learn Your house straightforward.
Allow that they may pierce the clouds.

For Loulou, in Memorium II
2000

CHERUBS

I'm looking up at gray clouds against a pink-white sky,
Mournful and smooth,
Like the sound of...Last words

A tumular trellis of soft plums
And clear goblets of deep sacramental wine
So profound,
You can still notice the depressions
From cherubs' heels
left this billowy stretch of soft plums,
these clear goblets of deep sacramental wine
that swell and sink
where the heels of young cherubs imprint.

The feet of angels squashing the wine
Pressed and squashed
inviolable with the signet
of cherubs' heels.

2001

ENVISION

I was told
This is how God sounds:

As beautiful to me as things I don't know
Spoken under the breath indiscernibly

Big arms full of bluish color that ascends
And knows. Or that sees.

But then the restfully suspended awe
Had turned its back to me.

I now hear the crying of flowers
That bleed when taken from the ground

I hear the diminishment of stars.

I know how the sky turned black yesterday like dreams.

Rainbows have sometimes told me
The grayness of their experience
That rest in the warmth of storms.
I know how the sky turned black yesterday like dreams.

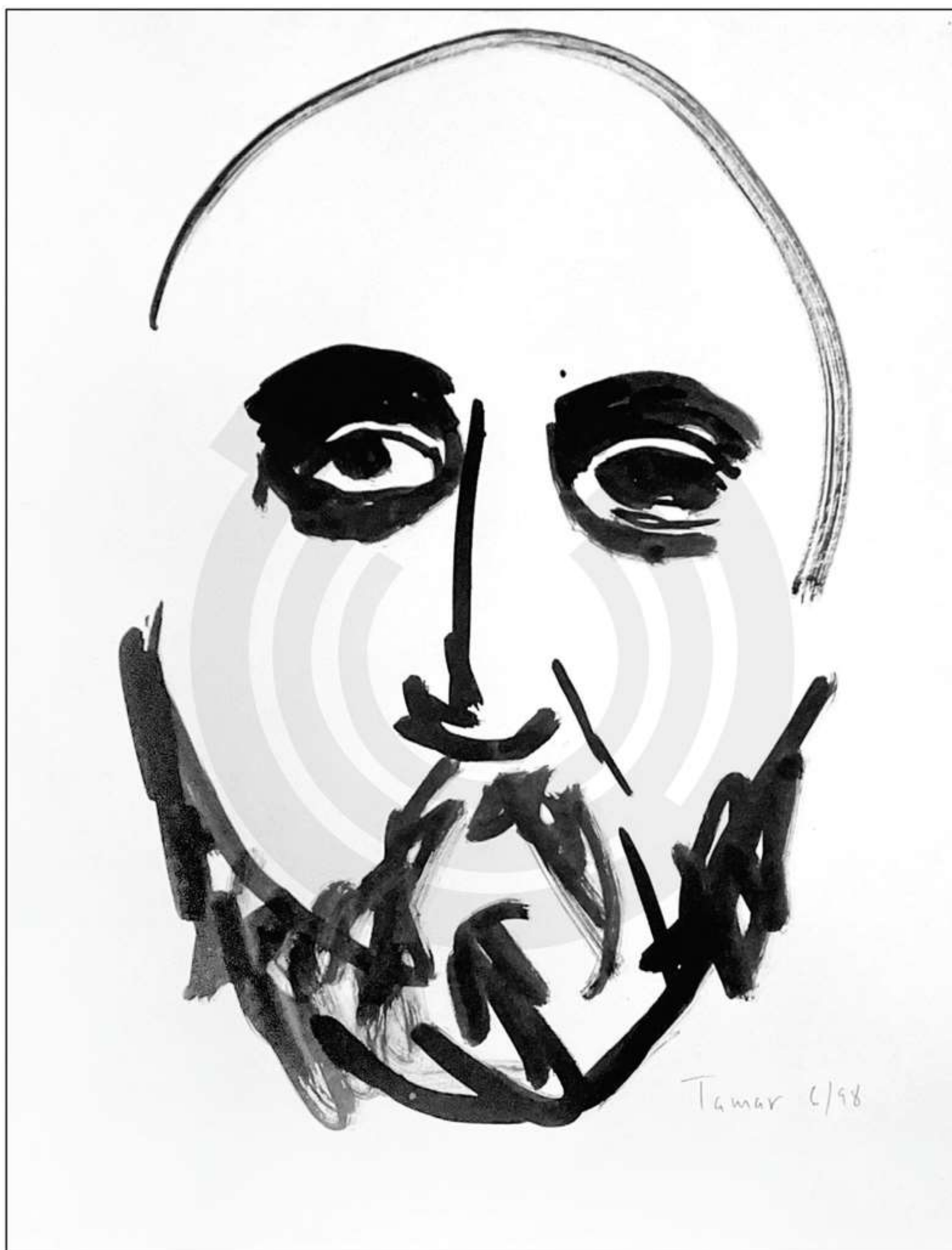
I know why the picture of Christ
Looks at someone else but not here.
I know.

I would like you to know
That my eyes are heartbroken.

I would like you to feel for me.

Memory hangs
Like the unwanted ornament of winter seasons
That shoots out into vision even when muffled.

Only that I have lived,
That I will live again tomorrow and tomorrow, and always,
Has given me all the greatness of the sea beyond,
And my thoughts run gently with the waters of the sea.



Gomidas 1998

PRIEST

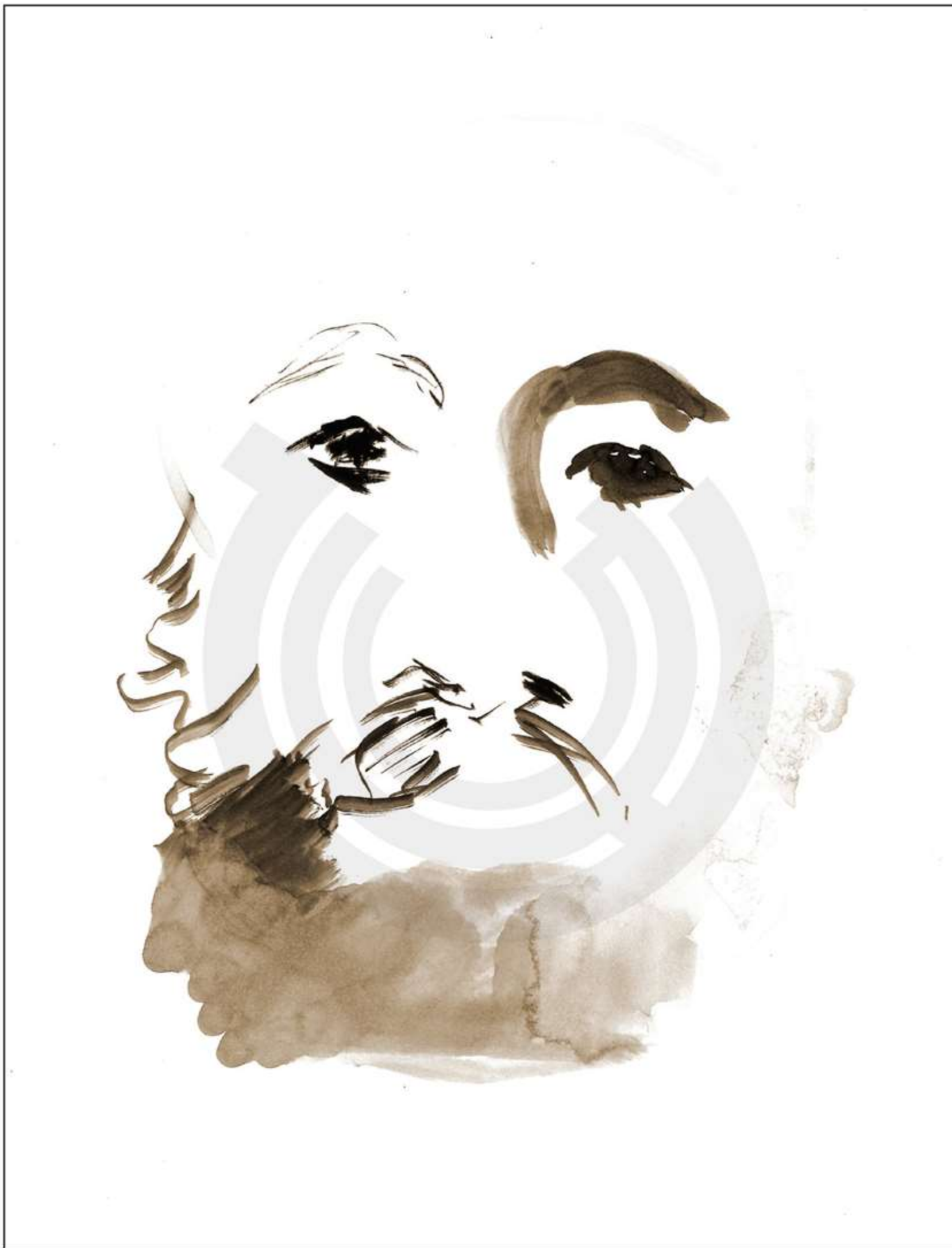
Hanging behind the lit floor lamp:
A priest conducting a choir
Of no one, in the terrified darkness
Darkness behind glass
This my grandfather's eyes betray
In spite of gentle locution
A century bowed as a lit floor lamp.

There's no asking him
All-knowing seems to reside in his not knowing
So upon my comprehension
The figurines of dancing children
And history wobbles like a touched egg
On a kitchen counter yellowed as the future.

But then, seated mutely side by side
I placed my hand on his
Breadth between us augmented like love
And love waged its moment against ...

100th Birthday Dedication To Grandfather

2003



2019

FROM THE NORTH

From the North, a scene from the year of the captives,
the stormy spirits surround the great cloud from which a fire
flashes, and at the center of which Ezekiel observes the Eye of the
Vast Face. And from the knowledge of Yitza'aq the wise Jew comes
the fact that before the ivory mouth of God gave release to any and
all things, "there was neither beginning nor end, for everything
was simple and smooth Light, balanced evenly and equally in one
endless affinity."

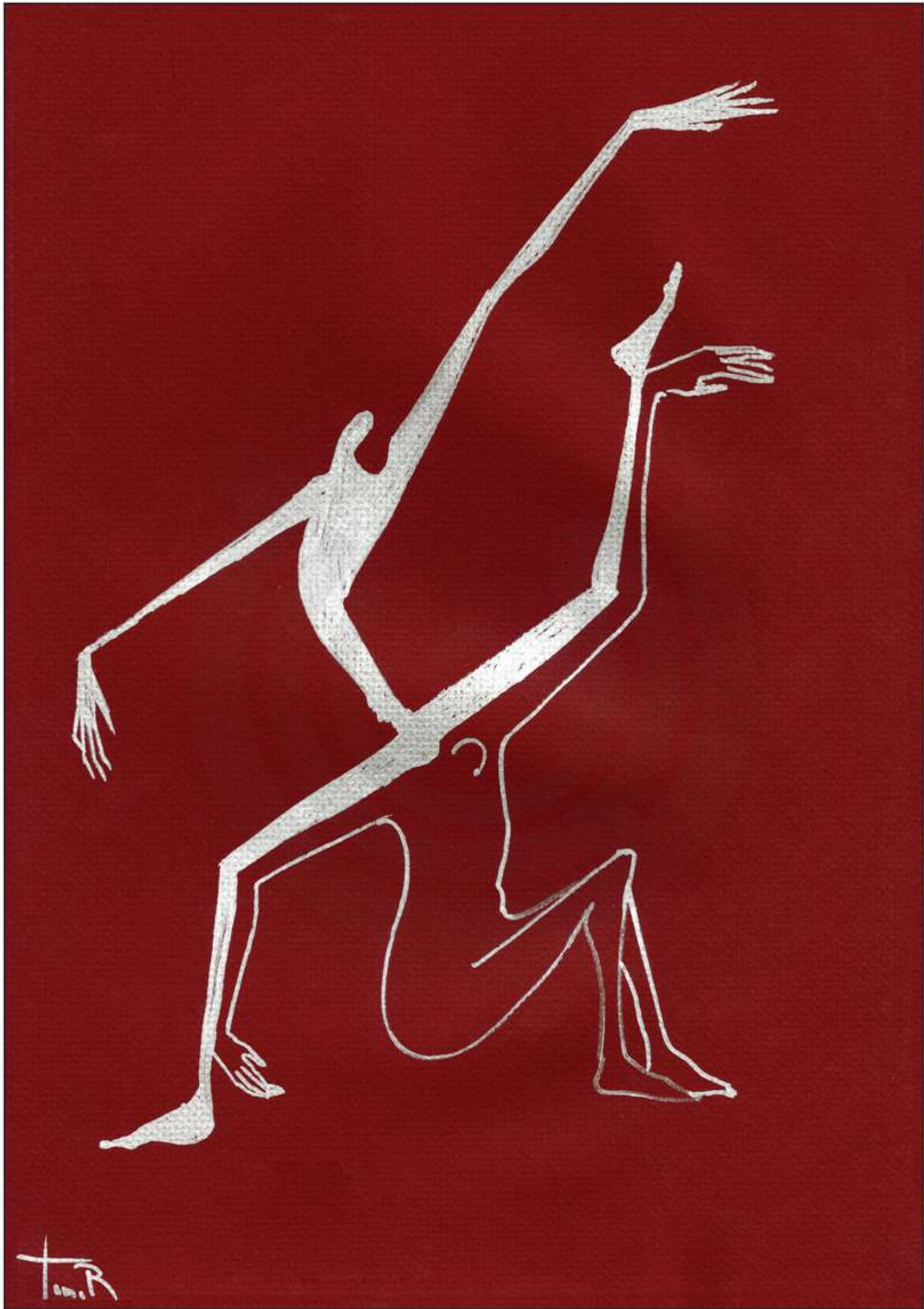
The concentric halos of the moon are
with me. The fluid cubist beach that lifts my spirit
and serenely inflects when its
talk is with me.

The living heavens, the souls of the dead,
gratitude, everything is with me.

And now, the unbelievable night. This, here, its sacristy,
reserved, unabused, a suffix
occasionally, of known time and space,
that happens to some of us - into which some of us go -
is covered, simply covered in these moving frescos,
that rupture very beautifully.

And in the distances, where finally the acuteness of their colors
have faded a little, the sky looks like a coagulation of shiny
sablefish, the accidental gaps from which hemorrhage forth
the gleams of the Light's red remainder. The after-trail of the
visions, no less triumphant, no less passionate

(imagine it. try to imagine.)



1994

YOUTH

Wind laps in the visceral trunk of young Pegasus,
Weaves him grass to grass
Then sun-toward.
Such is youth, but weightless,
Out for his wits' other half...

The eyes waft,
The veins push soft air,
His belly like the bulb
Of a dove's throat
And a gauze-like colorless, the sun
Came through it in ribbons.

And as he pattered against the jots of cloud, bleeding
Sunlight and the vernal blue,

Some old blind poet appeared with wings on his back,
Moving aside the clouds, rowing an abstract sea.
He cupped his fingers around his mouth and, in passing,

Blew this:

Plug your bag with histories, Youth,
And not squander the sun.
Lift instead to the Sun your restive eye,
Thus, to make of that eye,

A Sun.

2003

WE ARE CENTAURS

We are centaurs grazing in the heat of raging days
Amid the waste of old and new hostilities,
Stepping over blunders and plunders not limited
To tirades of politics or the hasty homicide of religion,
Including our nameless sins, our passing sins,
The sins that quietly ruin.

It is a tired shame indeed when we,
Given the best of the horse's attributes
And the best of man's, choose the horse-half.

I want to see for one beautiful day,
The nervous brains dip in the incredible mixing waters,
The spot right where the blue blood of waves touches stillness.

I want to see for one beautiful day the stigmas,
The ever-blossoming shames of multitudes,
That stand like crows on the tragedy of their bent necks.

I would press the sun through a sieve,
And comb the extract into the channels of all lacking thought,
And make of their skulls containers of rivers of light.
I have looked back over streams, over life, over lives,
And seen the future therein. I have wept seas.

I know the roads that lead out of living, having traveled them
In meager rafts that swung like verse into the city of heavenly lights;
Its gold, the silver sky through where the edifices separate
And the trees part boughs, silver cloth of light aflash,
The air floating among crystal petals and eternal love of God.

I know the existence of the eyes of God that have no eyelids
Because they never close.

Please aspire not to be good people.
Aspire to be better people.

Forget not, but
Give your thanks to the quiet blue
That disquieted for you;
Know how thy vestige stays dear with me,

That if ever it were to 'scape again,
I'd cry a million tears anew,
And that I thy tangled shade may rend,
I'd cry another sea for you.

2004



Humility 1994

HUMILITY

My mind is placid
Sleek shadows of thoughts
Coloring an outline around me,
Our horizon closes in.

I want to relinquish what prides me,
For what humbles me.

Before long, the private wars
That unavoidably deceive us into sadness,
Deceive me.

And in the moonlight,
The loneliness
Of death comes upon me,
But for an instant,
Until I am struck with the great notion
That, in order to understand the esoteric
We must understand the exoteric,
Just as to understand *here*
We must first understand *there*.
And so, I turn my brain over to the children.
Who will toss it back and forth
Amongst themselves in play,
My old placid mind to sail the wind.

And my soul, I give to the merchants,
Who might find it pleasant to possess,
And my strength and body
To the half-buried crippled,
My material belongings to all the poor.

I have vacated my skeletal net
And gone.

I return able to describe
The very details of the surface of the sun
Which I behold fearlessly,
And my hand warmed by the light of history,
My eye toward the future,
And my feet planted in the present.

I AM JUDE

I am Jude,
I am the neck of Saint Blaise.

It is and it is not storm.
Dawn is here.

It was a great and dangerous storm, my mind,
when I was a child:
clean, but, scrambling like puppies
after high pitches.

When I was a child,
an almost forgotten long time ago,
I was a poet,
and became in adolescence,
after many fevers and shimmering,
ruminant suicides
into deeply psychological canyons –
the sum of several poets, several geniuses.

Today, I am neither poet nor genius,
but, rather, panther,
or phantom,
 or thought, or,
 kindness.

My mind today is a little old chapel
that hangs in soft rains,
strangely superb, yet quite ordinary.

Age & clarity are together in me.
My very old face having grown so clear
its whitish threads
trace back down
into the earth
down to the roots of abstraction.

In my eyes,
 abstraction, and in my hands,
as in the hands of dying.

Tonight,
under the suffering lamp,
 a weak medallion
 lighting the coarse pages of texts,
and the clock timing the coarse
pages of the sky,
midnight speaks lectures to me --
about true metaphysics, beatitude,
 proverb, idea, process,
about the goodness in all things –
in the company of the ecstatic ghosts
of the Ancient Afflictions,
resolves or solves,
or is solved by wide-open sepulchre.

Humanity, I love you. Strangers, I love you.
It is time for fathers
to wade in the veins of their sons.
Time for mothers
to enter the wombs of their daughters,
to understand them.

Who will defend me,
not a single accountable person to defend me.

When I was a child, such a forgotten long time ago,
my mind was happy, but, a blizzard;
clean but scrambling after too many directions
like puppies after high pitches.
I think my life has been good.

IT WAS THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING

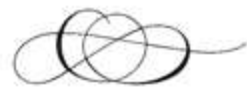
It was the first day of spring, yet I awoke
With such a heaviness in my young spirit,
As though my heart's contents had drained into it,
That it might as well have been mid-winter.

Wearily I went out onto the bright
Enclosure; the gradual exposition
Of all the renewed sorts of life had reached,
It appeared its fullness early, as if
They had all at once aroused together with a start
From the dreamless trance.

The throngs of grass have come out of their homes,
And mingle with each other in bunches
Whenever the sun invites them to loiter.

I sought then to accuse
One of the varieties of nature's children,
Whichever had cursed me prior to its sweet withdrawal,
While inconsequential I passed the days,
Some prolonged and infectious melancholy
Has broken into me.

2005



Spring replenish also me,
summer, cause to sweat my
wastes out too;
fall, teach me like a tree to
know my shame,
and winter, pursue with frost
my pride.



WHAT'S LEFT IS LOVE

What's left is love – not the mortal kind,
Which has been crossbred till ...
But the kind that is not on purpose,
And which begets no purpose, but begets constantly
Itself, for our sake for its own sake.
And all our sufferings, unfair tragedies,
Unjustifiable losses, disappointments, bankruptcies,
Whirlwinds, fears, conjectures, expectations,
Perceptions, gains, tears, laughter ...

Even those atrocious events which
Drive us to think that Truth and Beauty cannot be ...
Why there is no change at all, but only potential
Either for good or bad, life or death, guilt or
Innocence; and what we call ignorance, by which we
Our faults excuse is also bogus;
And such events as baffle us so are mere
Occasions to draw out, either
Personally, collectively or both that
Which already was in us, no more or
Less in the beginning than at the end.

These worlds that walk about, these
Billion pairs of eyes that each behold a world
As unique as he himself is ...

This living, This dying ...
No more can stain Truth than
A rod can a word. None can bury or obscure
Truth - this is a false notion.
What appears as the burying of Truth
Is, in Truth the opposite: the revelation of it.
More than ever was.

All this is the answering, or, the reason,
Why that Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil
Should not have been ingested yet must have been.
Why should I praise Truth in a strange language?
For that, you said I must. Do I love you
In so doing? No, I do not verily love you.

For I know not why I love you ...
That my very bones and intellect, my heart's heart
Should love you, each in accordingly ...
And in the wreckful evolution and
Discovery of why I love you ...
It comes to this:
With all my heart,
With all my resources, and with all my soul ...
Until my flesh to this respond 'Amen'.

2008

WHEN MY MUSCLES FAIL

When my muscles fail, and energy forsakes me...

Pathetic mass of thoughts, like a multitude against whom
Heaven has turned his back
From whom wisdom has walked away,
At whom mercy scowl.

While walking by the smells and wastes of war,
And through the trifle which, by the gorgeous limbs
Of its date-tree, strife tugs and troubles sore;

I sought to walk elsewhere, to some different place
And, finding none on earth,
Scanned the heavens, and unto that
Vast space flew: ...

2005

THIS PARTICULAR TREE

This particular tree – from the ground upward
It is one for the duration of a foot,
Thin, disunites into eight meaty, slinky shoots,
Like clay snakes, intertwined
Such that the broad awning of leaves
Betrays not but is poised to conceal
Their private quarrel.

In rain the roof is greener,
the indecisive bark black.
At dark, red-gold coins of light,
Like the sweat of the sun,
Beautify the bark.

The picture of this particular tree
Is as a representation of ...shall I say,
A stage in life, which seems to stay
And not to pass as stages will...
Or, ...
Or shall I regard it (for what it is)...

2006

GIVE ME CLARITY

“When to the sessions of sweet silent thought.”
(*Shakespeare*)

When I think how just is Nature to herself
Chaos, division, rank love and false hate,
Which all condemn to nothingness
My nation’s promising fate.

Give me clarity; give me my thought again;
Give me my love again, for I shall not believe
It ever was lost. Let me have my dear vocation,
And let me not vanquish myself as cowards are wont to do.
My hero be my youth, which stands now
Like a fright-inspiring monument
In the near distance of my future.

2007

SINCE THERE IS NO FAME

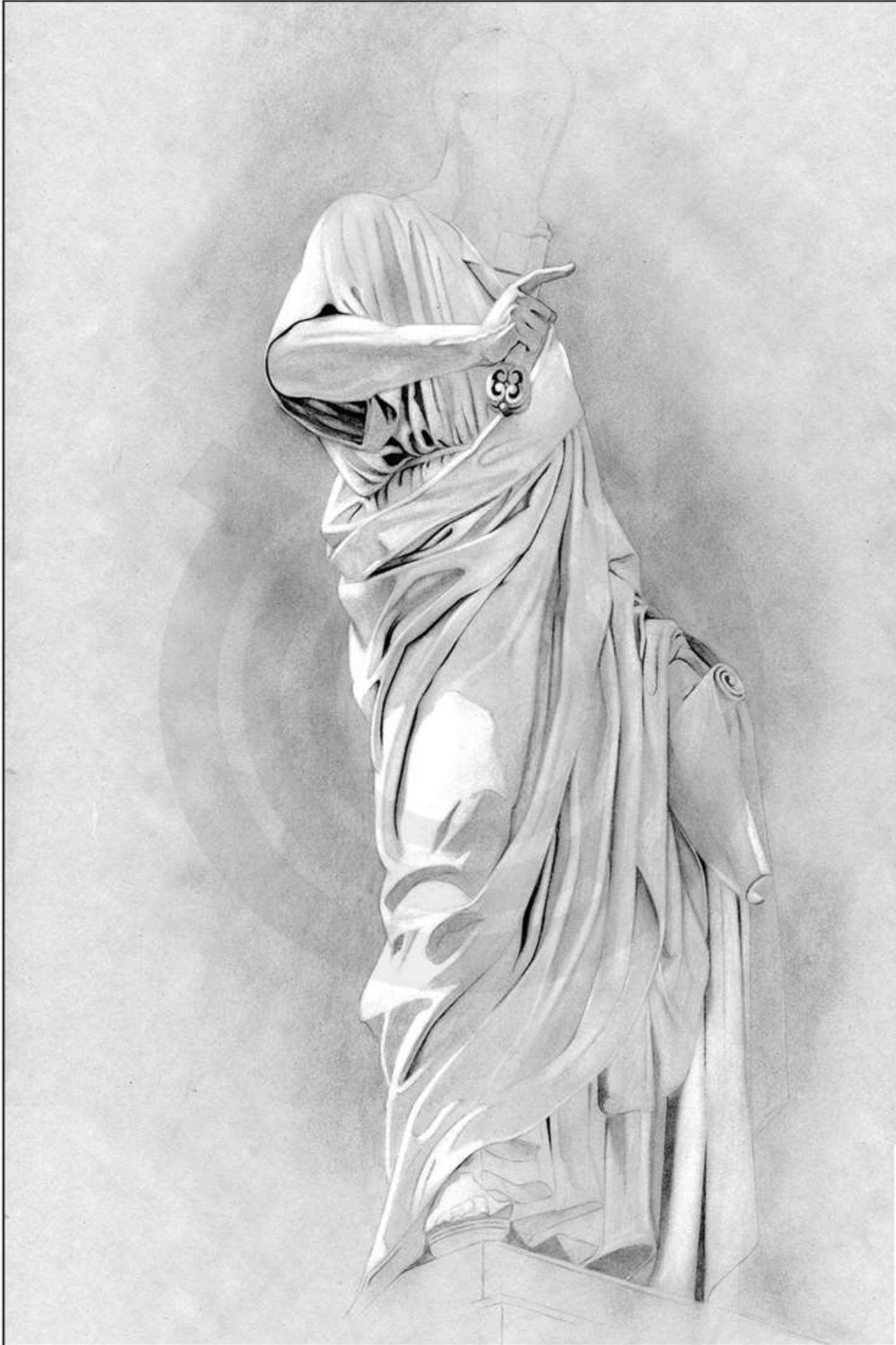
Since there is no fame for worthy jacks
When the corrupt may captivate,
As though they were bright heralds of heaven,
The tender minds of general youth.

Since fortune, opposite of fair wisdom,
Seems to be a conspirator
Against the honest Abels of this absurd age,
And leaves the one in plague whose house it ignores.

What may justify the pains of my life?
That kingdom whose business is not my business
Did never solace a this-world-adoring heart;
Nor are tortures of Hell reason for my honesty:

Therefore, fright-less honesty, and labor toward no other world,
Has no other option but to be self-propelled, self-justified,
Self-amortizing, and thus content amort;
That on this round of famous fools our unlooked-on striving
Be our happy, years-long heaven, where none but God and we
Partake of Truth.

2007



Study of Leonardo Sculpture 2009

THERE WAS A STONE

There was a stone, and it was plain and small,
And there a god-like girl, and she was terrible
and great;
Yet, when I picked up and flung with half my might
the stone at her,
She fainted, and she crumbled like old bread upon
the ground.

Then I realized she'd been a statue, the stone a ball,
And she not she that I had named "My Self, My All,"
And it not that which was too plain to love or hate,
But she was but thoughts and false perceptions'
sculpture,
Whose altogether sorry end, proved her unprofound,
While the now bouncing ball I aptly called "My Rise,
My Fall."

For when the sculpture fell, she could not herself
reform,
Therefore, I reckoned her a semi-urge, mortal and
scary as a storm, and
That which like intense music up and down and
to and fro,
Now earth, now heaven-bound flickered...

2007

THROUGHOUT THE BURNING SUMMER

Throughout the burning summer, the leaves mused
Motionless they sat on edge of their seats:
So deep were they in thought, their frail bodies
Forgotten to themselves, that with a breeze
They flickered on their wooden wicks.

The longer they mused, the hotter grew their wisdom
And by the moving in of crisp autumn, they appeared
As though they were a painter's interpretation of passions;
The externally apparent inner burning
Of these veiny, claw-like and translucent things.

By mid-autumn, their edges began to cramp with sorrow,
And in their hot displeasure they prayed, sighing,
"How hard a chair are our thoughts:
O that we were birds, that we might fly away".

So they prayed, until, miraculously,
On a frosty December night, God sent a blizzard,
And the pining leaves were torn swiftly off,
And thus, commingled with the whirls of snow,
They flew away, like flocks of doves and firebirds.

2007

WHEN I'M WITH YOU

When I'm with you, and but when I'm with you,
Can I feel at peace.

Truth's revelation and such peace
As toward which turns at last this world
Too sluggishly comes; yet in your arms
It is as though I were transportable
To that happy time, which may be the conquering of time,
And thus, may I a moment outside time recline.

Let me no more be cruel by thought
To kill the prospect of a life content,
In thinking what contentment is,
And thus preventing it from being.

2007

WHEN I HAVE SEEN

When I have seen by Fate's fell breath brought down
The huge proud monuments of fearless reign,
Or tyrants' advocates to armies grown
Now plucked of power, and by the captive chain
Reunited in gross humility;

When I see multitudes in peaceful play
Meet the violent ambition of the sea,
Or steel foundations slave to natural clay;

When painful soldiers forsworn of treason
Pay forth that honor which their life did buy;
Such swift shocks teach me thus to reason –
That Fate will come and steal my plans away.
And this one thought plays the bully to the rest,
Which cower to think...

2007

WITH WORK AND EXPECTATION

With work and expectation,
I await that stage of my life
Wherein I shall have prevailed
Against myself and every foreign mite
And rancorous subtle toxin
Which has so long disgraced me;
The which disgrace is as some paradox,
For it works to make me smarter than myself,
And thereby outsmart me.

2007

COUNCIL OF SEASONS

I knew it to be the first day of spring,
Yet I awoke with such a heaviness
In my being that it might have been mid-winter
Both of my life and in the broad country,
When speech frosts upon the tongue, bones betray
Their frailty with unexpected quaking,
And eyes but peer out from their sheets
Against the gusty day.

It was as though in course of timeless night
My heart had sweated like a cloud its load
Into my young spirit; by my negligence
To unpack my heart with words they sank
Into that deep world where words become
As hieroglyphs to the modern brain.
Would that I had earlier sought a friend,
For now, I have no choice but in confusion
to sort confusion out.

Wearily went I out onto the patio
Of the yard, reckoning that the air
And happy scene of spring apparent
From the window by my bed would cheer,
Or at least sooth me,
Or, to bend my hope another way,
That I might be chastised by the youthful
Wisdom of this season of purity,
Such that the simplicity of the one
Cause to float up the complexity of the other.

Therefore, I trusted the council of the season;
Yet, though I went out unto it, I was not moved.



A multitude of birds in a tree,
singing together in one voice
like a confused soprano.





Iconic Steinway Hall Closed Its NYC Doors
2014

I REMEMBER YOU, MY FUTURE

I remember you, my future. I remember you in scene and sense, in memories of openness, mortality and hope.

I remember you,
as the wheat scent of the schoolyard beyond the
batting cage, the heat and the dry grass there in
the treeless yard between the two schools, one of
them mine, the other children's.

I remember you,
as that night we passed the car on fire by the
side of the road, we passed the rescue team, the
police; behind us the fireball at the top of the
downhill road, diminishing like a night-sun thrown back.

I remember you, my future.
I remember you as
a ghost remembers its corporeality.
Presently the nurse will come to record my vital
signs and replace the morphine drip.

Minutes later the view outside the window of the
astatine sun and obsolescent sky will go black and
I'll go on living in the tomorrows of yesterdays.

IT IS SPRING

It is spring: the grass is in full session,
The sun is more or less bored;
The pollen swirl in the discord of athletics,
While the fragrant women purple and white,
Watch and gorgeously sigh;

The clouds stroll across the city of the sky;
From underground, great moles periodically,
Inaudibly splash out into the scene.

Off to one side of this diverse business,
The sight of an old tree, leaning as if lame,
Around whose twisted ashen bark no companions grew,
And whose frail branches the playful squirrels
Halted my hare of my hopping mind.

Nestled within this tree's leafy scalp,
There must've been two hundred insects of a kind,
Which as one a breathless and metallic song
Produced, coupled with the jagged cry
Of a lone bird perched upon the foremost branch.
I reckoned this terrible soul alone

Provided the yard with sound; such a music,
It was as if to hear a person think
And bemoan her thoughts...

And I began to kick toward her those idle stones,
To pluck up those weeds by the scruff, saying,
“Speak, console her.”

The smooth and crescent, eternal sound
Of insects humming against the lone bird’s sigh,
Is as if I could hear the lady tree,
Which stands a-lean at the center of the yard,
Both think and moan the constant misery
Of guilt for reason and voice too hard.

Though the indifferent rocks do not console,
And the congregation of weeds murmur,
A breeze often visits during his patrol,
Wipes back her hair and thus advises her.

2008

THOUGH THE GRADIENT

Though the gradient exposition of the various aspects
Of a season typical to seasons' nature,
Had been, it seemed, bypassed,
And that onto my yard had spring been suddenly aroused,
As with a start from the winter trance,
No more miracle was it to me
Then was the sun's inordinate loyalty.
And the moon's punctuality.
Too thorough, I think, is my acknowledgment
Of the miraculous.

More amazed was I at my dolor...?

I narrowed my hearing upon suspecting
That there would be total silence in the yard
Were it not for the creatures nested within its leafy scalp.

And then my eye was caught...

There upon a mound unprettilly stood
A tree to which my mind referred as "She."
No companions grew around her ashen bark,
Nor squirrels played but stored their rations
In her hollows and ran.
Beneath her overhanging top of leaves, her twisted form

Looked like a girl, stiff with cold, waiting
For the rain to stop.

The masterful cicadas – the great sound
They worked, was as the slow revolution
Of a huge orb, now nearing, now fading;
All in unison, the endless, breathless
And metallic song rose and thus declined.
The second voice I heard was that of a lone bird,
Which was perched in partial view
Upon a branch somewhat protruding out
Into the open yard it was a broken strain.
Like a confused soprano jerking her round head
This way and that for its missing conductor;
Whimpering, sighing, beeping, and twitching
And this against the merciless choir
Was such that I recoiled to attend it.

It was as though I was witness to beholding
In another ring of hell, another captive soul;
As though this had been some rebel,
Where thoughts she could no more govern,
Then she could halt, but yelping beseech salvation,
From the awful plight.

2008

YOUR GRACE

How much of me, or that which causes me,
Your virtue had won over, I was not aware, love,
Until you left; for then the grace you'd pinned
Upon my nature's sundry properties, adjunct beauty
With which you had beautified their common heads,
Attendants you'd assigned to guide their dizzy eyes,
Altogether jumped off and followed you.

Let me here remember how I was, how you affected me,
And how I broke it with an act, that I may persuade you
Why you must love me again. Not as previously,
But so much more.

2008

CEASE AND BE AT EASE

Cease, and be at ease.
Halt, you're at a fault,
Which mend or fall to end.

Toil undesistingly;
Yield never to heart's timidity,
Audacious against aspiring.

How swiftly worry stops my sleep;
How terminate the boundless deep
Of pleasant dreams,
Whereas nightmares' minute teems
With minutes dreadful. Dear one,
Discontinue my nightmare
With a song into my ear;
But at my waking singing conclude,
Lest my soul come from this life unglued:
For whereas sleep but borrows death,
Your mystic music swindles breath.

2009

LOVE HOW DECEPTIVE

Love, how deceptive was your ground
Whereon I dwelled, believing it
A globe off which there was no stumbling.

You were with me from my start,
And in such constant excellence
That I saw no day go round
But through your eyes. The notion
Torments me that you loved me, Love,
Not enough to warn that you in truth
Were steepest strand, until my little coal
Of understanding burns within my fist
To loosen it, and I must bow my head
To what is true.

2009

MORE IS THERE IN NOTHING

More is there in nothing than in all these somethings' sum,
And what a shadow darkly says proves all in brightness dumb.
What's the sun but a huge eye, and what's the eye but a small sun?

The sun's called "brave" the eyes a sun,
Yet even eyes
 from darkness run;

When exhaustion tags their hems, and nags them for a sleep,
What crazy shows and strange narrations out the souls' dark wilds creep!

They gather round that small dark soul as round a tall campfire.
More bright and burning are their tales,
than today with tomorrow can
 conspire.

It's you that are the lamp of dreams
And not the drowsy night,
You...
Though you're the greater light.

2009

ELSEWHERE

While walking by the smells and wastes of war,
And through the trifle which, by the gorgeous limbs
Of its date-tree, strife tugs and troubles sore;

I sought to walk elsewhere, to some different place
And, finding none on earth, scanned the heavens, and unto that
Vast space flew...

2012

SIGNIFYING NOTHING

Signifying Nothing,
That I am built around a hollow core;

In truth, I but vaguely hear it,
As though it were not the song of old,
Or as though the old were ever new, and shocking new;
As though it were, as it were, the eight note.

Not with the outlook of mystic...
But... that whatever humans, humiliations, shifts,
Failings, contentment, celebrations, confusions, surprises...
Befall us... but word around the hollow core...

So long as I cannot picture "Nothing"
I cannot presume it is no thing.
Not in my way or in any mortal way can I
Or may I or ought I define or confine it.
It cannot fit into my idea of what nothing is,
For then it is immediately something.

2012



Mother and Child. 1999



To Mom...

DREAMING

I dedicate this story to my mother, Sylva, who makes life a little more worth writing about than it already is.

He noticed the plants as he walked along. They were rich and brilliant. Their perfection was simply astonishing to the naked eye. He would not dare dream of touching them, for he feared his imperfect, human hands would contaminate the marvelous creations. Instead, he kneeled down and carefully observed their color. He stared long at these things until he realized he had too much to see yet. He wanted to see the whole world in front of him before it got dark.

The sun shined to a great extent. But for some reason, the sun was not white, as it had been all the other times in the early morning. It was some sort of a light blue. It gave more light than the previous sun but was able to be looked upon. So he looked. And there was nothing to stop him. He stared, just like he had when he was near the plants. There was a face. Yes, there was a face looking right at him. He walked a few steps, still looking at this sun, and, surely, the eyes followed him. It was as though it was protecting him from any dangers that might occur. But how could anyone or anything fear danger in this world? You would have to be crazy.

He walked a little more, now with his eyes resting from the sight of the sun. He walked and walked but did not seem to be getting tired. He would get tired of walking all the other times after just a few minutes. Maybe because of all the other times, there was nothing really to look at. He took advantage of this vigor and energy and walked a great distance.

He noticed the same marvelous plants as he walked by. Then came to a forest. At least it seemed to be. But the trees-- they were floating! What in the name of the Lord was happening here!? He walked slowly toward it as he wiped his eyes to make sure he was not going blind or beginning to go insane. A few seconds later, he realized that he was not, in fact, going insane or blind. He was seeing an actual floating forest! This note of surrealism passed through his confused brain.

As he walked closer and closer, he noticed the barks of the trees. They were healthy and ripe; the leaves on the trees were, in fact, not usual. They were of a purple color. They had fruit growing on them, this fruit was not familiar to him. He had tasted nearly all the fruits in the world, but this was not familiar.

He picked one of the fruits off the tree, and took a bite, with little hesitation... it was simply delicious!! He had never tasted anything like it!! It tasted as though it were fresh from the hands of God.

After he finished the fruit, he came to notice the floating trees again. He began to climb. There was a sensation of freeness in this floating object. Soon, he got to the top. He looked down. He put his hands on his waist and smiled in a very powerful and commanding sense. The world underneath him looked as though it were a miniature model. He looked down more. He sat on the purple leaves of this particular tree and, not a bit afraid that he might fall through, made himself at home. He then slowly shut his eyes and fell to sleep.

CHAPTER 2

When he woke up, after only an hour or so, he found himself gliding in the air. He screamed in astonishment, then looked north to see what had stolen him from his comfort. It was a bird only, with the face of a unicorn, then looked toward the south. It was just like a dream.

He took advantage of the fact that he had become lazy and fell to sleep once more, enjoying the wind splashing against his face. He felt like a ruler, a conqueror, and for some unknown reason, a hero, never to be forgotten.

When he woke again after his short nap (it was short since he had fallen asleep only a little while before), he noticed the bird's face. It was still flying without rest. The feathers were long and smooth. He caressed them. They felt wonderful to him. The bird, after noticing that it was being touched, looked down toward the boy; it opened its huge mouth and chirped. It didn't squawk and utter unattractive phrases like a crow, but it sang. Its harmonious notes were music to the boy's ear. He listened. He listened for a very long time. Then the song slowly came to an end, and the bird landed.

When they hit the ground, the boy looked back at the bird, only to see that it had disappeared.

In front of him lay many different things that he had not seen before. There were clouds of blue from the reflection of the sun, who was still, in fact, looking at him. He turned around, hearing the sound of light and delicate footsteps. He shivered. It was a creature. Some unknown creature. It was beautiful. It was a skinny, frail body. It was the color red. The eyes were of a baby blue. It had not any apparel on.

The boy tried to communicate. It did not respond. The boy stared hard at the thing, not noticing the rudeness of his actions' when he finally did realize, he took his eyes off the object and apologized, forgetting that, that would not do any good. The thing moved its hands as if to perform sign language, but the boy could not correspond. Then the creature picked up a stick, and put symbols and signs on the cool ground. Now, this was

understandable to the boy. The thing was trying to talk about his land. It wrote down that there were mysterious things living underneath the ground. They were of transparent color. The only way to know where they are is from their eyes. They glow a scary red. These luminous parts of their bodies reveal them. The creature added that, the only person ever to see one of those, was an ancient explorer from the same world that the boy came from, Earth. These creatures were destroying the frail bodies of the overground. They killed the explorer, too. If the Earthling did not do something to help the over-grounders, the subterranean creatures would wipe them out totally.

Now the boy was led to a sort of a cemetery. There were rocks on which were carved many different signs, probably identifying the deceased. The creature took the Earthling's arm and pulled him towards this cemetery. The boy hesitated. He shut his eyes. Eventually, the creature got him to go inside. It led him to a small hut inside the graveyard. On the floor were human skeletons. They were of the many other explorers and people who tried to save this world and were obviously, unsuccessful.

The boy thought to himself about him being in this world. He thought of joining these other humans. He thought of his parents. How worried they must be. The mother. She was never to handle situations like this. He thought of never seeing their beautiful faces again. He thought. He thought. He shut his eyes. A tear rolled down his cheek. Then another. He crimped down and thought until he could think no more.

But he knew he could not back out. He knew he could not let these beautiful creatures down. He knew they were dying. He knew they were suffering. He knew now that this was not a paradise, after all...

CHAPTER 3

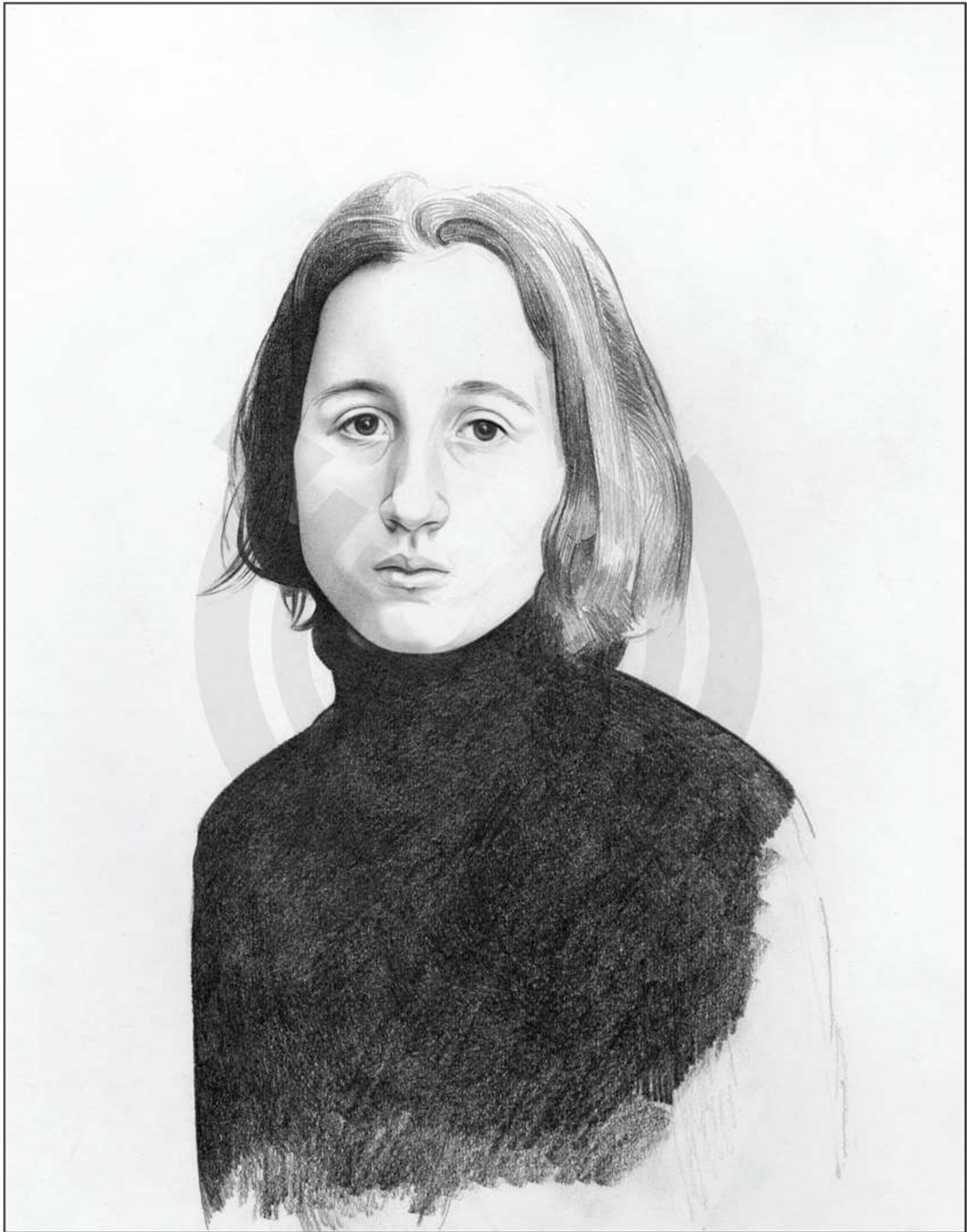
The creature hurried away after completing his message to the boy. When the boy stood up, he had not realized that the creature had gone. He was left all alone in

the cemetery. He became very scared. Thank God it was still light outside. He hurried out and kept running until he could see the stones no more. He halted and took a deep breath. His face was flushed. It had lost its color almost completely. He thought about the graveyard again and hit his head as if to try to take that thought out of his head. He was feeling very miserable. This place that he thought was so perfect turned out to be a living hell!!!

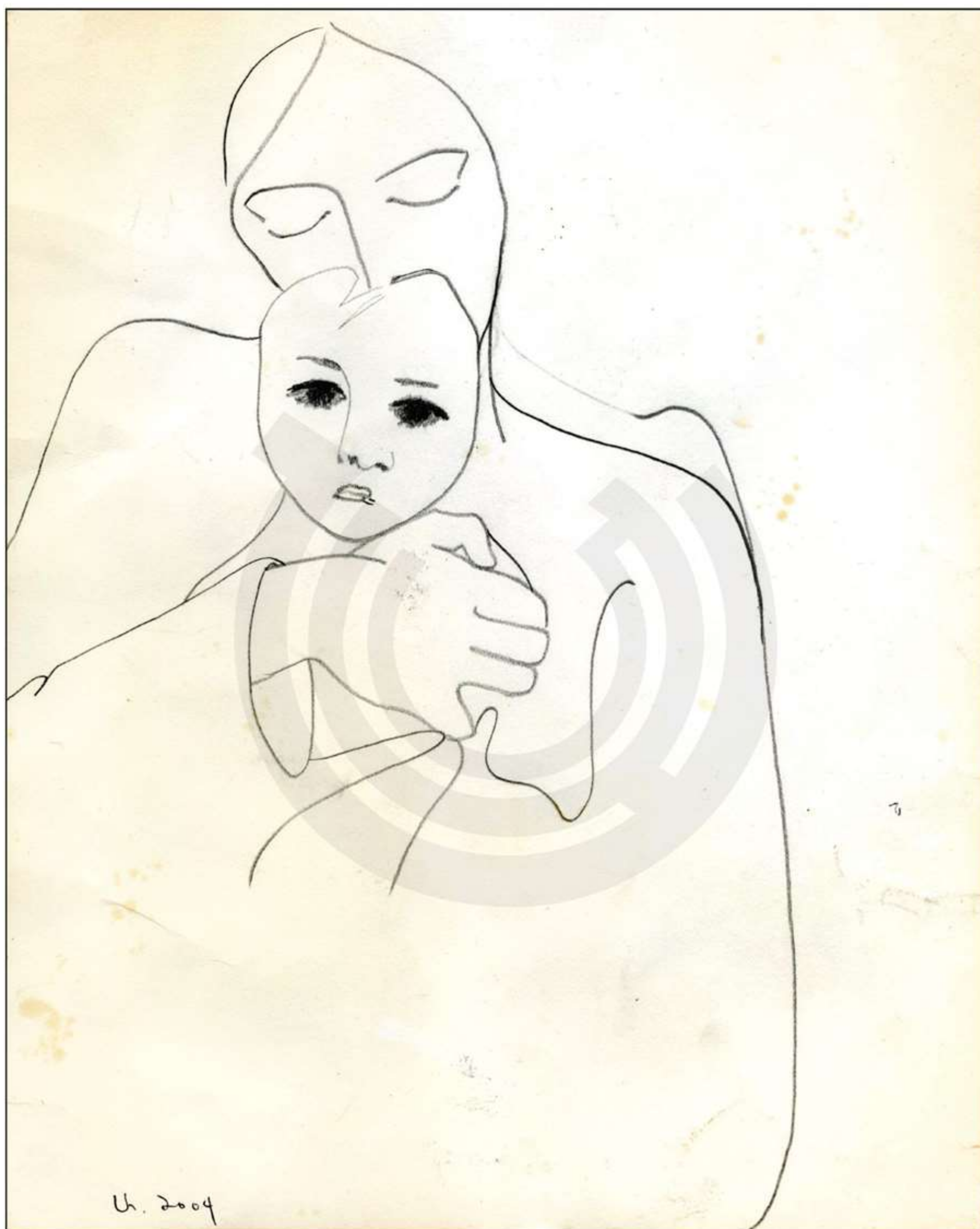
He walked slowly through the field. He was looking down. He wondered where to go to get to the undergrounders. He soon did not want to wonder anymore. It was far too frightening for him to wonder about. He sat down. He lay down; then he fell to sleep. He did not actually fall to sleep but only shut his eyes. He would not help to wonder about those little creatures. Were there more? Would they come to him?

He then wondered where to start his journey. He got up and walked very far. He did not realize how far he walked, but he looked for those over-grounders. There were none. He walked, walked, walked, then fell into a hole.

"Ahh!!" he yelled! He called!! Nothing answered. He was quiet. All was quiet. There were symbols on the ground. They led to somewhere. But where? He was astonished at himself at how marvelously well he could understand this language. This is the only way of communicating with these creatures. He climbed out of the hole with great difficulty and made it out in a couple of hours.



Girl With Black Sweater 2020



Mother And Child 2004

A GIFT OF LOVE

Your love keeps me warm,
when the sun is at its rest.
Your laughter lifts my spirit,
Those times when I'm depressed.

Your strength keeps me going,
When I'm weak deep down,
And your words put a smile,
where there was once a frown.

So, you can see,
You're the only gift worth receiving.
No other gift shall fully please me,
You're the gift that keeps on giving.

I love you mom.

1992



Ascension 1996

HEAVENLY FRIENDSHIP

On this ground,
A man sits,
Staring high at the heavens.
He seems lonely,
For there is no one to
Keep him company.
But one night I heard
Him whisper, ever so softly,
“Why is it, that no one
Is satisfied with just you?
You are company enough for me.”
He said this to the heavens,
And all its beings.
And so he will watch,
Until his time ceases,
Then another will take his place,
And will make friends
With the non-existent.

Tamar, to my mama

1992

TO BUB

I wandered inside a world
of pure fantasy.
Every element of nonexistence
lay in front of my eyes.
I was living
in a heavenly experience,
where all dreams
were brought
into an unrealistic
reality.

But how,
in such perfection,
could there be a flaw?
What,
in this glory,
could have created a sadness?

This destruction
was a hole,
left disclosed.
This sadness
was a gap,
left ignored,
and forgotten.

Days passed,
and new dreams aroused.
But yet,
there was a loneliness.
There was a desire
for one other mate
with whom to share
these splendid thoughts,
and she came.
She invaded
the depression,
and ended
the loneliness,
to create a beauty,
that would last,
for ages unheard of,
and hardships
unnumbered.

Now,
the world
was complete.
It was,
in every way,
a perfection.

Now we wander together,
in this place
of pure fantasy,
There was no more;
for now,
the dreams
were eternal,
and awesome
like the wind.

The gap
would never again
disturb
our conversation.
The space
would never again
come between us.
For now
We dream together.
now,
we live together in this fantasy
for all of time's great
adventures

Now,
The world
is complete.

1993

NEVER FORSAKE ME

Because each thought is of a fragrance,
and a multitude of thoughts live in my modest head,
My sense of truth has grown confounded;
The world quite stinks.

What a brothel is my brain;
How sore my soul, oh, never totally forsake me;
Be not angry forever, my exasperated bride;
For if you also, though by my wrongs I deserve desertion-
On whom I strain for dear life to hang,
Should pick my fingertips off and leave,
Long will my fall be as was your preserving love:

Then, for that the investment of your tender, stubborn patience
Was beyond the measurement of years,
leave me not to fall beyond the mercy of time.
Be my help but once more,
For my troubles are huge, and
Remediless calamities surely await me.
I beg my love to stay her love,
You are my soul, and my soul my gravity
And I'll have no other notch to stay me here.

2005

THE WORLD WALKS

"This thought is as a death, which cannot choose"...(Shakespeare)

The world walks past me
So, I have pried my soul
Treachery of treacheries I had performed.

I feel as though the world walks past me,
Like the girl of my whole love, angry with me,
I feel it with every
Breeze in any place,
Here she smells of grass and
There of city-folks, merry friends and work.

I used to wish I could
Transform into a dove, quietly and majestically
To fly from here.
That was an escape on my terms.

2006



Flight 1994

MY GIRL MY LOVE

My girl, my love, subject of all my anguish,
Dear beauteous creature:
I've cursed you for your total abandonment of me;
As if your leaving
were by whim or callousness,
or as if it were that you stopped loving me.
I confess, I rebelled against you, and willfully.
I winked at you,
And with a crooked smile turned my back on you.

One cannot by any measure of
Intellectual exertion deduce what suffering awaits him
Behind the door, he willfully cracks open.
God prevent the one that
Contrives to do so.

For I made you as a piece of chastity, a lover of my love
And granted you a part of the world,
that whosoever confounded, uneasy,
distraught or distrusting of me,
Turning to you, their very nostrils
would in their helpless anxiety
Judge your chaste,
Hence heed your admonishments,
Hence be purified that they can yet improve,
Are not completely doomed.

YOU DEAR TUTOR

You, dear tutor, by the hands of whose tongue
Has my poor health improved, even you stutter
To speak of other friends that I might find to love,
Since you know well it's not my store of love
Whose lack I fear; for I have not a jealous mind,
And none but jealous men can hate
That spot their ill by another's good:

Suggest me how you will to trust society:
I have dipped my finger in it, found it
Neither hot nor cold, desiring it were either;
And that as the sea progresses toward the shore,
And but a sheet of it remains to walk the land,
So that now the shore's the greatest depth, (which boasts)
And the more wondrous sea a fraction of itself...

But you and I are as one, and depth to depth with you alone converses.
Yet neither can I say that I am either one or two
If after you are gone I in my own sea I fear to be confused.

One that's woven is called one, therefore leave me not
Until you weave me, that my many-colored self
Come not to be shredded by the little lions that in my self yet lurk.
If you and I are one, then you nor I are one.
If heaven should untimely recall one of us...

Your pleasure is my health, and all my health is in you, ...
Your hands have made me and fashioned me;
give me understanding, that I may learn your commandments.

Teach me, love, to find you in all things,
Such that what's in the sea be also upon land
To see past what the sun shows

Who will be my confidence when you are gone?
Whose wisdom will sit down with my frailties,
Speak forth the workers of my salvation,
Themselves timid, which in my own self hide,
And strengthen them that they may shepherd me?

You, dear love, even you are loath to say
That I may find a friend to love as you,
For it's not my store of love whose lack I fear;
Mine can never exhaust.; therefore, suggest me how you will
To socialize, but I shall ever be painfully aware
That you send a goat to be cancelled by goats,
Though at best we may each other mount.

Of, my precious ground and gate, I beg you
Prepare me better, lest by myself to live, be of myself to die.

2008

NONE MORE THAN YOU

None more than you, my love, know I've hated
Injustice such as when guilt is set free,
And always have wished laws be more solid,
Not felons' fools, mocking true liberty.
My life's innocence afforded me the right,
Then indignantly to scorn the age.
Since, though, my wrongs have grown
And my tongue shrinks from expressing outrage.

Yet this I beseech, from my depths praying:
Be unjust with me, measure my trespass
Not to your sweet perfection according,
But by the shame which does my soul harass.
I pray Your sense of proportion be such
That I not be burned by your judgement's touch.

2009

WHAT SHALL I DO

What shall I do when she be gone
That wrings my thoughts from me,
But by foul self-absorption,
Lame love, fall into insanity,
Else die and fly where I may love infinitely.

2008



Self Portrait 2020



To GOD...

THE COMFORT I FEEL

So often, I find myself thinking that perhaps my faith is not as strong as it should be or that I want my faith to be stronger than it actually is. I am wrong in believing that of myself. I realize now that my faith is all that will remain of me in the end and that the only friend that I will ever have is God.

There are times when I am overcome with some sort of anger or anguish that I cannot express to anyone. The only comfort I receive is by opening the window and speaking into the wind, the sky and the moonlight. I know then that I am speaking to a Higher Power, whose ears are open at any time and every time. Others might think me foolish in thinking that 'such power even exists since I receive no answer in return. How wrong those others would be. The answer I receive is far more powerful and meaningful than one spoken in words.

The comfort I feel is not simply because I have just voiced a trouble into the air and released it from my soul; it is because I feel in my heart that someone is listening. Science does all it can to prove the non-existence of God and to replace His word with their own. They will never be able to find the answer to the great mystery.

They can always say that it is physically and scientifically impossible that there could be any God.

What good are eyes that cannot see?

Why is it so difficult to open their minds and their eyes to a world and a faith that will only bring their light and perfection? They see no God because there is poverty and starvation. I have no answer to the question, "if there is a God, why does poverty and starvation and war exist?"

I have no answer but this: all these things to me are the struggles of life, great and small. All these struggles are put on this earth to be faced and defeated. They are each test of the strength of the person. They are obstacles of the mind and soul. If they cannot be beaten physically, they must be beaten with the greater strength of faith.

Having the power of God on your side is far greater than any army of a million men or any war. If we do not have struggles, how must we learn?

Though I haven't yet faced the struggle of losing one who I adore or something I cannot do without; I can safely declare my faith and state that my faith will overcome any grief ahead of me.

Why must we blame our misfortunes on God? Why must our faith be strong only so long as our lives are without struggle and free of pain and suffering? This I cannot comprehend. Is it better to live with hatred and bitterness toward the God that gave you a gift greater than any struggle, or is it wiser to conquer that struggle and be at peace with yourself and with all those around you?

Is it better to renounce your faith and live in emptiness? For without God this world is truly empty. I think I will, for as long as I live, declare my faith to anyone who asks of it and proudly stand by my values, knowing that my youth and that everlasting Creator of time, earth, space and man will always be standing by me.

I AM AWARE

I am aware the thrilling heralds;
I have considered teams of them involved;
In their dizzy spaces, though, I am sharpened,
And my lucent spirits draw for me in crystal vapors,
That which in truth justly turns my peace:

To these depths
I am suited;
Indeed capable
Of lessening still;
I have probed my sins
In grandiose spheres;
Tonight, drunk with my lapses;

I ask hardly in bellowing vibes
Placed with ease
My mouth to dust
For the ears of the Father
Who witness me;
Grant us peace;
Forgive us wolves
Your champion lamb;
Surely these heads asunder
Dive with me as heave stones.

1999

I AM HAUNTED BY NATURE

I doubt that anything will be able to take my attention away from this white dance outside my window. The branches of the trees seen tired by the weight of the snow, they hang and sway in the majesty of the wind, which breathes life into all in its way. I am haunted by nature; the sea and the wind, the sky and the moon. What science could have put together such a mix of perfection? What formula discovered by man could have blown such a treasure into existence.

I will always be haunted by the humble majesty of the King of Kings. The fact that no one can even take that away from me, makes me stronger than the strongest man alive.

1997

DEAR GOD, MY DEAR FATHER

Dear God, my dear Father: I want to say thanks. Thanks for this lovely day of peace and pride, in the children, in the mothers, in life. I am proud of life, to have lived. It's been great. I came out okay.

But I'm not ready to go. I feel my death upon me, and I am afraid. But not so much afraid, as desperate. Desperate for more years and years. I want to change my life.

People always die when they feel death. I feel death. I don't want to go. Not yet. Please. I know that Your will is first. And Your will is good. But please, don't let me go just yet. Not right now. Let me do this, this change of life, this change of plan, of gear, of strength. I've come to realize; all along, that I love being me, in all my sins, in all my tears, I love, and will always love life. Please don't take it away from me now. I implore you. I have yet to write, yet to sing from my heart that which you have given me.

I thank you with all my heart, knowing that I have lived with something of grace in my heart, that what I have heard every day, the music, the lifting of spirits even in grief, even in tears, have been as beautiful to me as this very moment and next. I have known great thoughts, introspections worthy of very few. I know that and admit it not without humility because all that is special in me is you. All that I have, which gives me pride not only in life but in my life, in me, is you. And I have known that all along as well.

So, I am thankful and not quite at peace, but more so than I have been in some time. Part of my peace comes from the hopes that I will live to do with my life all that I have dreamed, all that I have worked for. I will not deny myself the work I have given, for you have seen it even better than I. part of my peace comes from knowing that you'll always love me, no matter what I do. Because no matter what I do, you're in my heart forever, and that makes me happy. So, I thank you in advance for tomorrow, even if tomorrow ends a little early. Know that I want to live. Need,

Beg for, life. I have yet to live, and I have great faith in you, a faith that carries me high or low but always carries me. That is my flight. That my faith allows me to graze the blades of grass or pierce the night stars, but always and in any case allows me the wind.

My flight is faith, and I can fly. For I believe in You, always, in life, and death.

I love You. Thank you for my life, thank you for my days, for today, and for tomorrow. That I may live, I ask of You wholeheartedly and truly.

I am your child, good or bad. I ask of you to let me live. Whatever happens, whatever is in Your will, that my life be still on the agenda, not my death. Please, God, please.

Thank you. Amen

2000

DEAR GOD OF MY LIGHT AND LOVE

Dear God of my light and love,
Of my joyous quiet thanks,
Of all that sings in me:

These days
I have turned from you.
And I am shame,
because shame
has not yet returned me.
I am folly,
Because knowledge
Has not yet corrected me.
I am empty,
Because love
Has not strengthened me.

Dear God,
Father of my soul,
listener of sorrows:

I have lost you,
Not knowing where I can find you again,
Except in Love,
That which embraces not only others,
But myself just the same.
That which embraces me,
And the one beside me, to my left and to my right.

Today should be mended
For tomorrow's new Love.
But I am hungry, dear God,
For things which should not be fed.

I am in need of you,
But lift my hand not to yours,
In hopes that when I find the strength,
Yours will still be there,

In hopes that, though I rebel against you
You will not against me.

Fill my hands again with the grace of your mercy,
And the smiling mouth of your spirit in my heart.
I know I should be strong tonight.
I know I should be strong tomorrow.
I am a weakling who can be made strong,
But desires to remain for only another short while.

God, I hear you calling me.
God, I hear you warning me.
Will you judge me for turning away so briefly?

God, be with me in my time. I am in need of you.
Of your understanding, your presence,
None of which I feel anymore,
As once was abundantly flowing.
Will you judge me for turning away so briefly?

But I am thankful to you for my life.
For my family, and friends,
For the Friend I hope to feel again in you,
Thank you for letting me speak to the spirit.
Thank you for your hands on my shoulder, always
When I needed them.

Can you ever let me have you as near to my heart as months ago?

Please love me, dear God. All my days and all my nights.

Please, Father.
Please, and thank you.

I HAVE HEARD THE DUST

I have heard the dust of unheavenly things
and all the downward spirals and sounds,
witnessed buzzards here and there
offend the charm of sunsets;

Games of blackbirds
pronounce to me
as though the sound
of muted horns;
troubled oracles
confess their treason.

I have said the many psalms in solitude,
introspective shapes of gloom and grief,
torn apart these grayish words,
expressed instead in supplication:

That some nights may bring me comfort,
the stars lend down their glowing planet;
for us who suffer shivering throes
And move the dust in orbit;

Milliseconds compound in mighty arms
experience the output of a shining friend,
then depart those crazy strobes
back to dust return;
for though from dust have I progressed,

still rattles dust inside,
recreates terrific faults
in all but perished enterprise;

What screaming frowns
they are to swallow,
knowing our season's truth;
we are dying every day;
we are particles reduced;

But ever from the raging furnace
blasts of hopeful predictions occur,
that tomorrow might bear my name
and splendor perhaps unprecedented;

But bow my head still in thanks
and humble my quiet brain each night,
for outward from the raging furnace
let tomorrow predict my name;

Thank you for all the days before
and all these days that come ahead,
and everything that bring me laughter
says to me your splendid words,
that I may lift the earth to you
and blow away the birds.

2000



"Doubting Thomas" 1997 Oil On Canvas

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER

The mothers are wind
And God is a song
Respired in puffs of sainted lyric;

Their thrashing of wings
Are the gales that move trees;
Those over rooftops and of storms;
And of the sougs in lungs;

Although they are removed
Transmuted to blazes
With speed of countless charge
Our sorrows dawn
In fluttering swarms;

We say these psalms in self-centered request;
Recite of woeful introspection;

Let some of the nights bring us comfort;
Know what screaming frowns
These are to swallow
In us who suffer the wind.

2000

HOLY HEAVEN

Holy Heaven's Truthful king
Today I heard the great ones sing
And found such wanting in my heart
To be as great in my own art

Every day my sins have grown
Into sadness I have flown
That I cannot replace myself
With someone Life does not regret

When I think of you I find
In all the hours of my mind
That you are closer than I know
But just beyond where my arms go
So I am left with tearful words
That go unheard like dust to birds
And all the moving beats of time
Mean to me my sorrow's crime
Because with every passing bar
I feel another dying star
Growing soft with fleeting age
That cries for every finished page

But I will always live in thought
That all the dreams my hand has sought
Will prove one day some secret brain
That falls from greatness clouds and rain
That still I have the chance to be
All that wants to sing in me.

Thank you, God. All my praises Amen

SILENT GOD

Silent God:

Heaven is your breath upon me, and wind.

Please listen.

I have nothing to give but my heart's thankful praise.

Truly, there are people you have made
that are as precious gifts to me,
to all of us.

They are the light of this earth.

In my hands where there isn't the sin of my tears,

I offer up my purest praise.

If anything or its smallest molecule still be left pure in me,
I give it to you now. Please. Forgive me.

I love you. Amen.

2001

PERHAPS GOD WON'T BE SO HARD ON ME

Perhaps God won't be so hard on me as I'm on myself. I'm hoping. And all I can say, all that's in my heart to say other than what I've already said and can't bring myself to repeat to the Father is, thank you. Thank you for this day, for tomorrow, and the next. Whatever happens, it's been a hell of a life. What I see when I remember and go back is the hard times, and there were many. The years of fear and pain I felt and overcame in some way by the strength of God. In a way, I see my life flashing before my eyes. I feel more than I see. I feel the years past and hope for years ahead. Something tells me it's not going to happen. I don't know why.

I'm sad, regretful, and full of memories I'm not ready to leave. All this that I have. I'm not ready to move on now. Why do I feel like writing letters to everyone I know, everyone that means something to me? I'm afraid; whoever you are I've been talking to, I'm scared. Is my life over? Is this the end?

If it is, and someone is reading this now, my funeral: I don't want words. No one say anything. Just be silent for me. No pictures, please, of me at any age. No open coffin. Just silence, and all of you. It's important to me, and I'll be there in one form or another.

We take it all for granted. We give it all away, and then it's gone before we have the chance to take it all back. Just when we realize what's important, we're gone. I feel death upon me. And I don't want it. But whatever happens, if God is with me,

I am without worry, without fear. For I have done one or two things right in these years, and God has seen them. If it is my time to die, then so be it, for the will of God is stronger than life. And by the will of God, I have lived, in all my sins and broken promises...overall stupidity. This little life of mine has made me thankful and even proud sometimes. That I die with love left in my heart and some measure of kindness toward others that had made being me bearable. I am overwhelmed and overjoyed. God is with me in everything. And even out of my sin has come reward.

I believe in life, too. I have faith. And my single most treasured and abhorred regret is the day I looked up at God with disdain in my heart. That I will never forget, and advise that you never do the same, for what God has given you is more than you will ever know until the time of your end comes.

I want more days. I want to be. And if God grants me the years and years I need, myself am changed, wholly and completely.

In the name of God, my dear shining friend, thank you. Thank you for my life.

2001



Pianist, 1999

SINGING SOLITUDE

I am at peace with my singing solitude that listens,
Listening well hears light
Wherein is the restful breath of God.
It is as calm as pure wisdom.

But my wisdom is a child.
In each hand a grain of sand,
Considering the teeming shore.

I, who does not see as you see, nor hear as you hear,
I am usually a thousand scribbling hands, that ease only on occasion,
Slowly uniting in unison of perfect praise:

For I am easily moved by God in Heaven which blesses even me.
Truly, you are with me all the days of my life.

I am not at peace, nor peaceful, but in light.

I have listened to the suspended awe of Heaven,
But know not one thing of God, except that God is good, and real.
I have felt only several truths that are true and which glow.

The awareness of my ignorance allows me to grow.
Ignorance that is determined to be ignorant, remains as such,
And never knows real wisdom.

Wisdom stands in tearful winds but needs to stand all the same.
For knowledge, looking always ahead, cannot sleep in slothfulness.

Thank You for my happiness.



Bearded Man, 1998

YOU ARE SORROW

You are sorrow,
I am your words.
I am the softness of your solitude.
I am your spirit of soulful songs
The mouth of which has cried with you.

Let me lend serenity
And offer you God's levity
For I have seen the gentle dawn
Even in my shadow's arms.
It is as beautiful to me
As a father's quiet memory
Listening as if above
The breath of Heaven's perfect ease.

Dear God of my light and love,
Of all my joyous peaceful thanks:
Thank you for this life of mine
Wherein I knew your graceful hand
And bless my father's passing place
That I may find the strength to stand.

2001

BLACK EYED MONK

That which I know, I have known.

I am the black-haired black-eyed monk seeking a new unspoiled unchained order, or perhaps the original one. And my black eyes full of life, and my lightning tongue, blue and white against the bitterness in your mind: I can sense your melancholy, I can see your thoughts growing dark.

I am the simple ocean in prayer, nodding, my body back and forth over the wisdom of the sands, and the sun at my center is the calm head of Christ. In the hours of confusion, the seagulls have to leave to tap their soles upon me as they gather with the fog, and swirl. The rain and wind, the stars and red flashes, all are remembered.

I am the stranger hoping after your well-being, I am the pedestrian, the child with wrinkled skin and aging foot, and I lean my hands on your cheeks, my fellows, and give a kiss to your eyelids. On that night, you shall dream.

It is barely morning. The trees are still, and the air is still. Look at the autumn for a moment. Let the fabulous peace soften your muscles. Oh, how I am greedy for your illumination.

Oh you live, you beauties,
you have a choice in how you perceive your lives:
that it would be as boundless to you as the sea appears
to a wise-hearted fisherman
or as average to you as the sea appears
to the fool-hearted fisherman
for against the fury of the whirlwind you have cried out to me
“why does Christ not help me,”
and I responded that the Spirit is at hand.

But this is *your* life you must help yourself.
The soul changes in good time from fire to crystal to pure idea

losing along the way the essential qualities and characteristics
of neither stage;

Let the mild breath of God disperse the boundaries
of understanding.

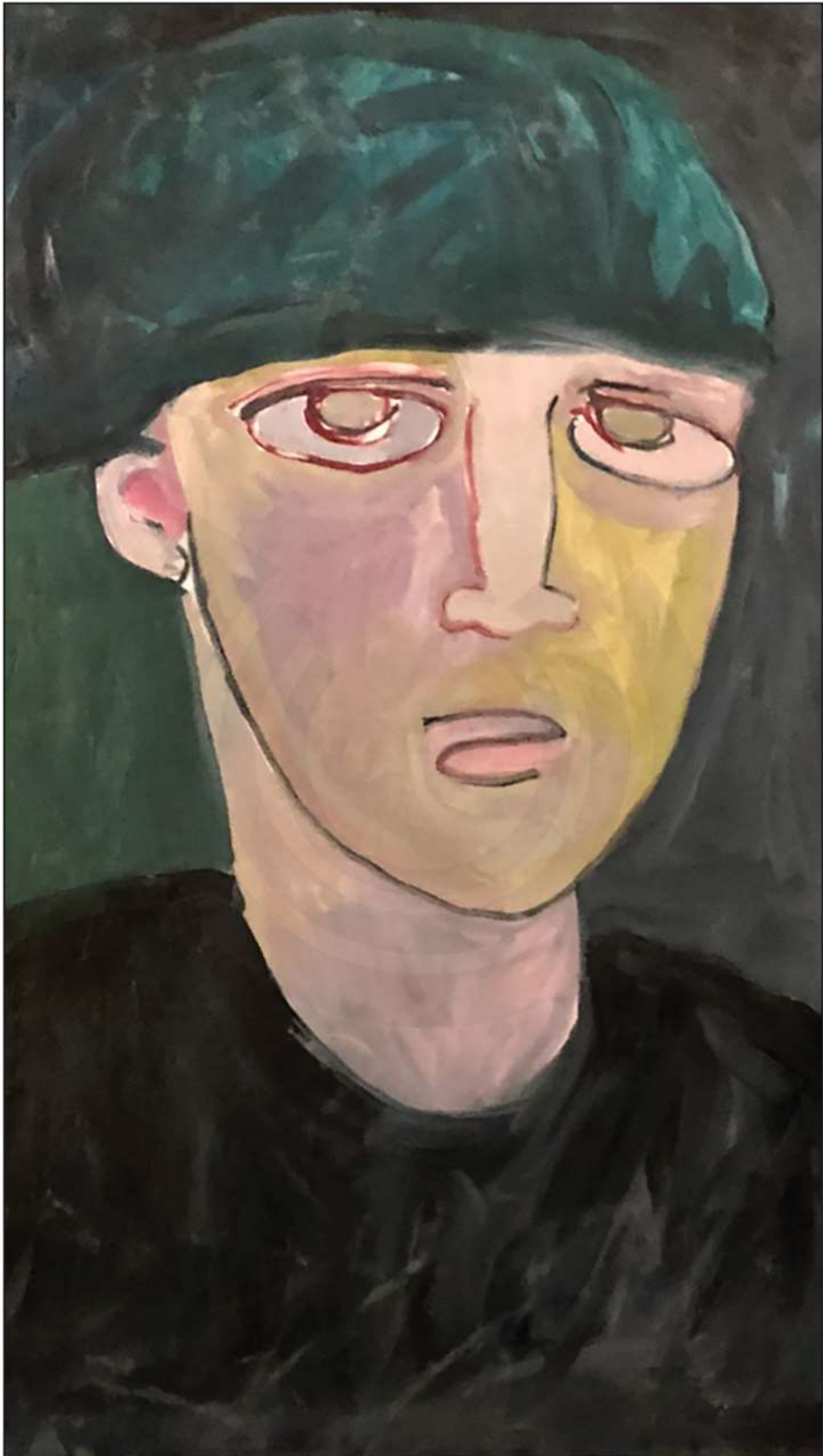
Let the very deep azure of solitude reveal its angels
and replace isolation.

Finally let the autumn leaves and cold rocks and fresh mud
fill up the old screaming chasms and fashion a new ground.

The universe is gorgeous.
Genius, is often useless.

Let the quiet earth save you
and bring you
to paradise.

2004



Self 1997

WHAT MORE CAN I ASK

I have mastered thus far
for I am master of nothing.

I have wandered translucent,
in the great desert of soft pinks;
black eyes narrowed in worship,
black hair intermingled with the
filigreed evanescence of chariots of sand
that welcomed me with the breeze.

This was an obscure and tender repose
in the interval of dimensions,
not a physical landscape but an oracle,
a materialization of my metamorphosis outside of time,
given in the form of this powerful atmospheric expanse.

I have fulfilled the duties of my requirement;
I await the new commission.

This was a mystery of the slow intense,
dreamlike smoke of incense
during the hour of vespers
their clear smell of very ancient virtue,
and the vestiges of specters probably,
tossing with the eternal air.

Let the purple skies take me,
let the sea take me,
let me fall with the leaves
and be buried under the mitigating snow
and rise up and burst with the grass of spring.

Let the hour of the sapphire west collide
with that of the furious east –
obliterating the transition between dawn and dusk,
and I would place my hands in between them
to understand the moment of their meeting;
let me crawl into the alcoves
with the pent-up mice and the left-over rain,
let me comfort them.

Give me a window looking out over
the most ordinary avenues and neighborhoods,
during the most ordinary days;
let me show you the miracles...

I see the lightning shoot from here to there,
like a wildcat; in the middle of the overworked street.
I see Jacob scuffling with the angel of God,
and the vehicles veer on the grass
to avoid crashing into them;
the rabbis and their sons and daughters
are serious and without pretense,
though they clearly know that any form
of fanaticism is counter-productive;

Let me kiss their eyelids and wish them a good day.
And as the large swarm of little grey birds
of the early morning,

opens breaches in the midst of the rooftops,
persuades the scattering of the boundaries of light,
eclipses the clouds, curves nuances into infinity.
Let me share with you,
let me walk with you,
my dear friends.

Let me speak to the criminals, the destitute,
the terminally ill.
I would settle your fever and furnish your place
with the flowers of my yard.

I am neither outrageous nor especially gifted.
I find genius to be silly and fame overrated.
I prefer the fair-minded and the fair-spoken;
I prefer the mediocre and the deaf.

Let me grasp the ideas of the lesser minds.
Let me be lesser than they.
If only it would mean that their suffering
would end and their curses lifted.
If only I could umpire the brutality of men
and teach the children courtesy
and surely encourage them to discover the importance
of the dullest tableaux or the ugliest animal.

All is sublime.
Beauty is never scarce.
You descendants of Adam, you young,
you old, be brothers.
Be friends.
Should you misstep, mislead, misspeak,
do not hold your fists up, but learn.

Understand one another.
We are in the midst of seven worlds above us
and seven worlds below us,
each inhabited by its own race of angels;
we have seven days in the week to protect one another,
seven days to harm one another.
We have seven doorways into the human body.
Let us honor this harmony, this science, this miracle.

The homeless man was young and sad, and he asked me,
“where is Christ? will he not help his fellow
suffering?”
And I was compelled to stop walking and answer,
“Friend, how did you spend your day today? Be brave
and answer honestly,”
and he did answer honestly,
“I drank with the money I got and passed out in a
dark alley of the city.”
And I asked him,
“Friend, and what did you do yesterday?”
and he responded,
“Yesterday, I did the same”
and so it was an obvious suggestion:
Christ promised salvation to the
condemned thief who asked to be saved,
not to the other who challenged his Divinity.
Jesus said thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.
Why do you challenge your God?
Christ will help you when you help yourself.
Christ is waiting for you; the spirit is at hand.
You must defend yourself.”

Grant me nothing.
Grant me no more reasons to smile.
I want only the whitish jet of unspeakable aura
that emerges - shines - for a minute or two
a concise breach in the black morning –
delineating just a portion of my hands and features,
but all of my sins – encapsulated
by the mild grey rafts whose movement falls, bends,
again transcends in swarms
along the invisible grooves of the sky
in those moments just before it becomes encaustic,
emotional dawn.

Grant me no crumb, no scrap,
no pillow to rest my head upon,
nothing.
Not another thing.
Only to watch the children run
and the families together.

What more can I ask?
What better gift?

2004

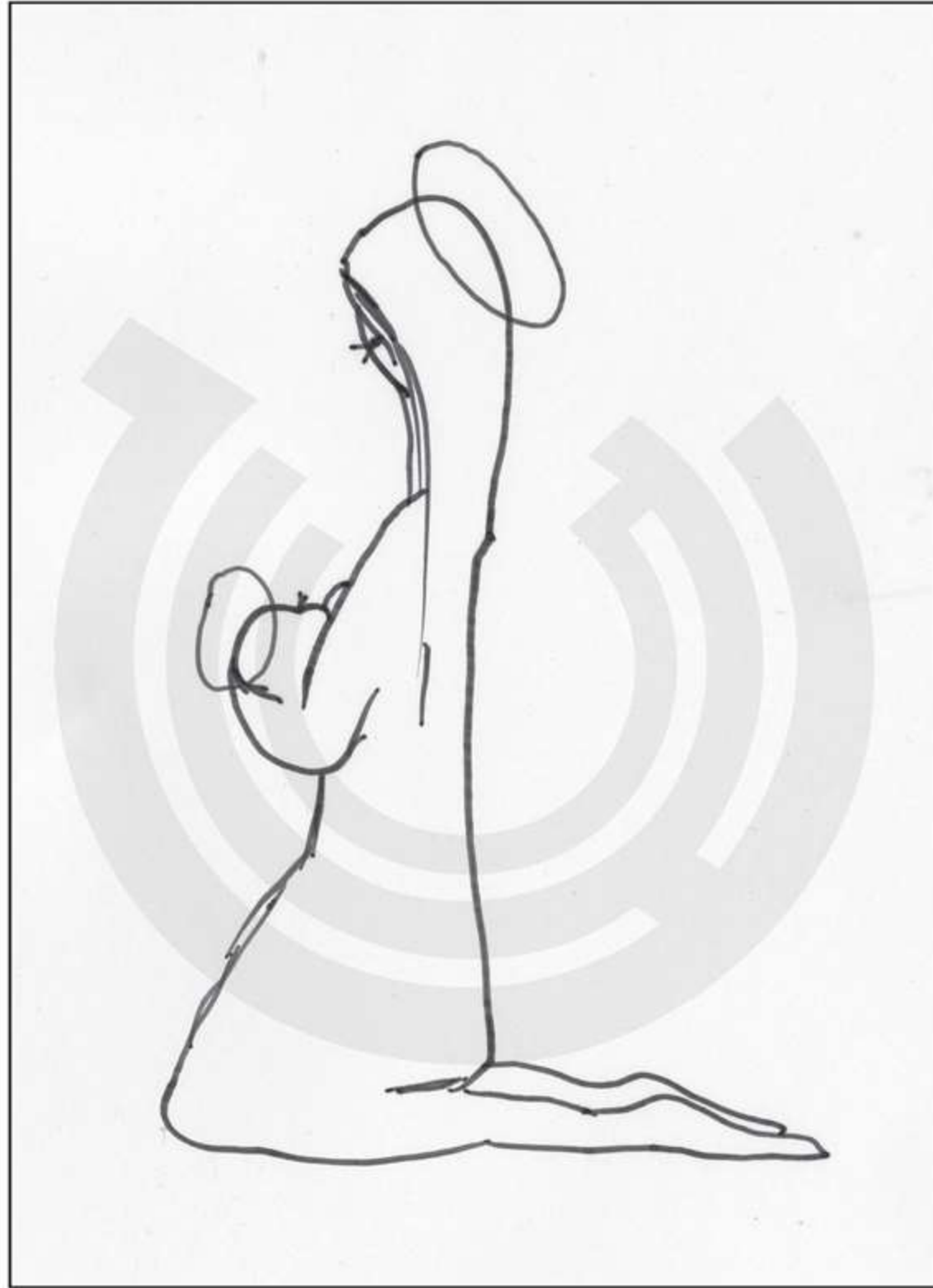
MY SUNRISE

Ribbon of blood
Fire upon fire
Then the smoky husk
And you have to wonder what's on the other side
This is my sunrise
And also the foreign-affair of my time
Irony being that Miracle of God can look like war;
the sun rising with death toll
The dawn is beautiful
Sad
Brief as it is beautiful
Brief as the love of God is long
and bright
I believe God will bring justice
As sure as the sun will keep rising
As sure as it falls again tonight.

God is good
Knows the good of the people
Knows the measure of light in each
Perhaps accepts our rising and falling
Just as simply we accept the rise and fall of the sun

God with each
Few with God

2001

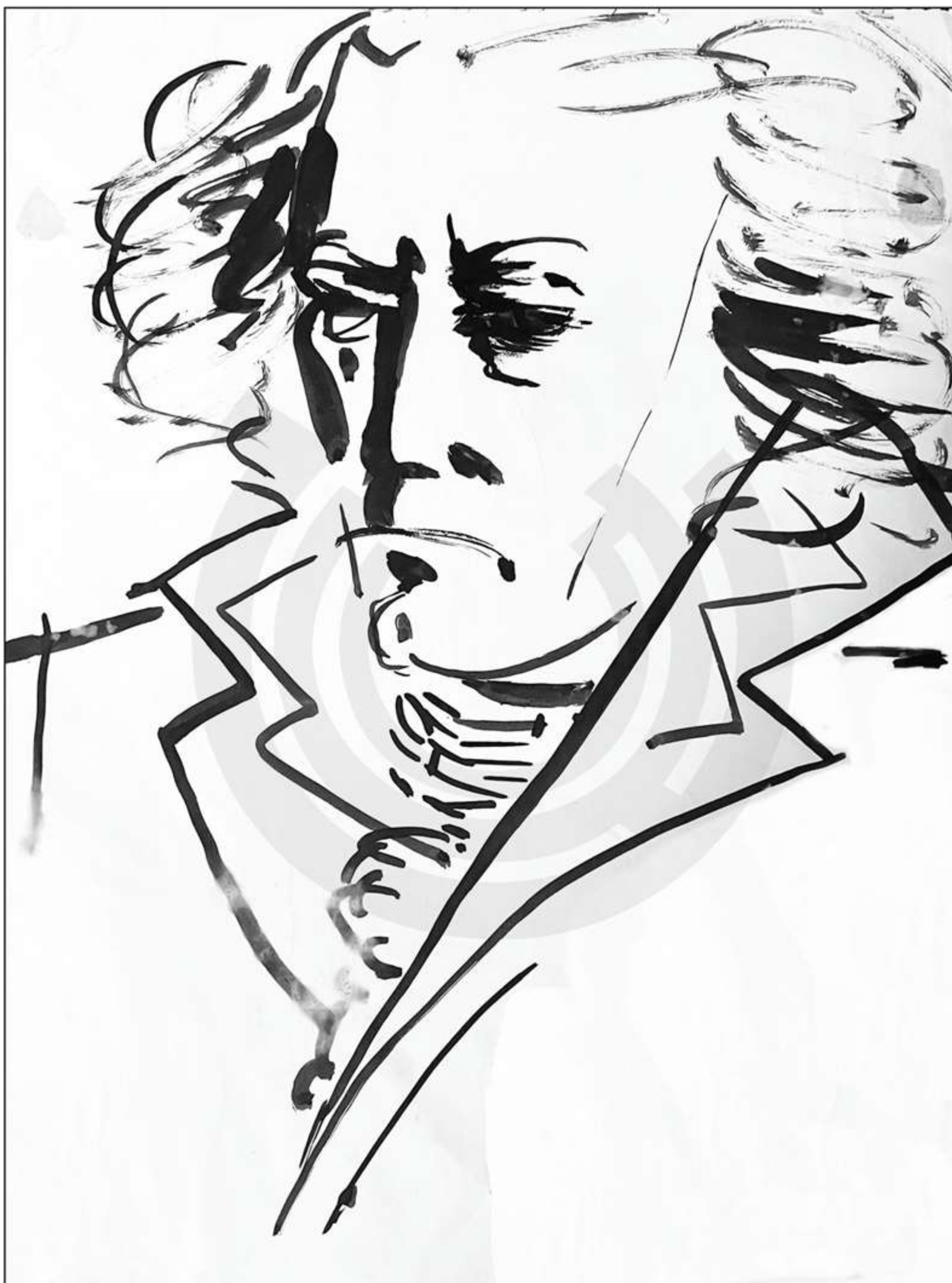


Mother Of God 1994



Study of Leonardo Sculpting - 2008





Beethoven 1998

MUSIC

I can never remember a time in my life as a performer when my greatest and most satisfying thrill was anything other than to be on stage. But before the stage, before the performance, before the audience, came music.

Music, from the start, is a force able to carry through the light of perfection with pieces such as Beethoven's Ninth Symphony or his enormous Missa Solemnis. Music, from the start, could drag me just the same through the deepest circles of Hell with pieces like Liszt's b minor sonata or Mozart's opera, Don Giovanni. Music was and is still something indescribable, something divine and magical. Music to me was never ten-year-old girls riding effortlessly along the keyboard. A computer could learn to do that.

Music is not an Olympics sport.

It is something of intellect, of intensity. Yes, that is the word, intensity. And The performance of music is the public statement of that intellect and that deep intensity. You will often hear such false prodigies of music say to you that they want the audience to feel happy and delighted. They want through their music to deliver relaxation and comfort.

I want my music and my performance to frighten you, if I am frightened I wish for you, the audience, to be disturbed if I was disturbed, or feel small with humility if I felt humble. For indeed, music is my language, the words through which I express the deepest of my thoughts and most personal.

A beauty that too many musicians ignore about music is it's silence.

You see, music is a power built from silence: without silence, music cannot exist the way it exists. It cannot let us react to it the way we do without silence. Those rests and periods, as brief as they may be, of silence, are equally if not more important than the notes themselves.

Take Beethoven's Pathétique Sonata. The first movement, after the opening, is perpetual sound. Orchestras and choirs of music create an echoing atmosphere that most musicians throw away. Then, in the end, just before the final explosions, there is silence... And it is that silence that brings the piece to life. That silence is so dead and so intense that it is almost maddening. After all that non-stop music and sound, the silence is as though time has momentarily stopped, as though the oxygen for that moment has been sucked away.

It is that powerful.

This is part of what makes performance difficult. I see these silences, and I live them. The problem is successfully inviting you to see them and live them with me.

When a pianist plays a Beethoven sonata, he must transform himself not only into the thoughts of the composer but into the depths and the story of the work itself. And he must become the character, the narrator and the director all at once. this is truly the core and the goal of all performance. It is also what I love most about it. can one possibly imagine the challenge involved in achieving that goal?

I feel that, though I love the other things life has to offer as well, I am empty without music, and perhaps, one day, music will have been empty without me.

1994



Vladimir Horowitz 1997



THE OLD MAN IN THE PARK

Every day I would take long walks in a park, not too far from where I lived when I reached the end of the park, there was always a man sitting on a bench. That was the only place in the entire park where you could actually hear yourself think. There were many other benches around the park near the ponds and ducks, where most of the people chose to sit and read their newspapers or talk to one another. This one man at the end of the park however, always seemed to want to be alone. He sat on a bench where it was less scenic and stared comfortably at the clouds and birds. He never seemed to do anything else.

He looked as old as the earth he lived on and had as many wrinkles as the sky had stars. Once in a while he'd decide to pull the cigarette out of his mouth for a second or two. His hands looked like garden rakes. His eyes interested me most. They were almost haunting and thoughtful, but never cold or unkind, as though they had not yet witnessed evil. Words weren't necessary from his mouth, for his eyes spoke an entire conversation. Usually, I'd stop when I saw him sitting there, and lean against the back of a nearby tree, just to look at his eyes. Sometimes I'd be in a hurry, and I'd try to ignore him and turn away, but he pulled me into his stare. There was an eternal peace hidden in his eyes, and an enormous comfort, that I could never pass by without at least a glimpse. I'd never get bored of the same image, because his expression gave me something new to think about every time.

Once in a while, though, I'd feel sorry for him, because of how lonely he always was. I decided to sit next to him and enjoy his company. That, and I wanted to see what he'd say to me. Every time I reached his bench, I'd take my place behind the tree, and slowly inch over to him, but eventually, I'd always turn back towards home. I slowly began to hate myself for not even having enough courage to go and sit next to a shriveled up old man. Who looked as though he couldn't harm a fly.

The next day, to my own surprise, I found myself walking towards his bench, when I suddenly stopped short. He wasn't there. I felt like falling to my knees and crying. Not only did I suddenly notice a great emptiness in the park, but I began to notice an emptiness building up in me. Now I almost completely despised myself, one for being afraid all those times for some unknown, stupid reason, and two, for finally collecting enough courage when it was already too late.

I never walked there again, because I knew I'd always return home unsatisfied and disappointed, but instead, I sat down every night and drew sketches of his image, just to make sure I'd never forget him. slowly, the emptiness I was feeling, began to close. Maybe in another year or so, I won't hate myself so much for missing out on a chance to truly experience the greatest day of my life.

1994

ART

From Dante's *Inferno* to Woody Allen's *Crimes And Misdemeanors*, our eyes and our minds have been opened to evil in life's perspective. We have been introduced to the many sides evil has to offer and have realized that, indeed, what seems right may well be wrong, and what appears good is often not. I bring you now to a world without words, my world, the world of visual arts, where silent expression becomes at times too loud to bear, and where the human eye is forced to look beyond the ordinary and obvious, and stare straight into a fourth dimension.

One of the greatest examples of evil portrayed through art is the great masterpiece, Auguste Rodin's *Gates Of Hell*, a massive door six meters in length and four meters in width, containing over two hundred figures melded and unified in bronze.

Rodin's famous sculpting, *The Thinker*, may seem an average man with more than average thoughts. However, in the *Gates of Hell*, we find the Thinker once again, in intense contemplation of some great and immortal story. As our eye travels below that figure, we find a few more that seem familiar... the image of the grossly tragic Count Ugolino devouring his children out of starvation, images of avarice and lust, centaurs, and demons, the twisted tail of Minos. We then realize that these *Gates of Hell* are not just any gates of just any Hell. The Thinker is, in fact, Dante, and his intense thoughts become clear to us, through his *Inferno*.

What a completely remarkable experience it was to have seen suddenly these figures singing and screaming the timeless verses of the *Inferno*, and to be shocked into discovering their stories through sculpture. What an enormously haunting and haunted creation was born to my understanding through the uneasy forms of the three great shades standing in sorrow at the very top of the gates.

Those disturbing doors are the key to Rodin's ultimate display of the results of evil and sin. What is worth mention

about the gates is that, though each individual figure is so guilty of their sin as to be forever punished, the sculpting seems to portray them as victims, as though of a genocide or a holocaust of some sort. They appear as though they are martyrs and heroes of their generation.

Perhaps Rodin's intentions were to represent Dante's pity and compassion for the suffering souls, and to pass on that compassion to the interpreter. Rodin must have felt that same compassion after reading the *Inferno* to have been able to display it so clearly. Then again, being able to create a work of art contrary even to the personal feelings of the artist and being able to bring them across to the interpreter genuinely is part of what separates a great artist from the rest. Rodin may have wanted, not to contradict Dante's original intentions, but to bring them to life through this great sculpture.

I must move on to a work of equal greatness, a work that seems to grow with every glance.

In the history of art, there are only few grand works that are as revered and respected as Picasso's *Guernica*. There are evident similarities between the former work and this one. You see, as the people of the gates are victims of punishment due to their own evil, the people of *Guernica* are innocent victims of evil. They suffer the same pain, the same horrific torture, but the pain of one is the result of justice and judgement, as the pain of the other is the result of immorality and sin. He who created the sufferings of the people of *Guernica* would most likely join with the sufferings of Judgement in Hell. There is no ignoring the woman boiling in madness over her dead child, which, by the way, is very appropriately positioned the same way as in Michelangelo's *Pieta*. One can't walk past the rended icon scattered about the floor, its hollow arm stubbornly clutching a broken blade.

Once you set your eyes on this masterpiece, there is absolutely no turning back. What is obviously a lamp at the top

of the painting deserves a second look. I cannot overlook the fact that what seems to be a lamp, is so clearly an eye instead, with a light bulb for a pupil, and those wonderfully irregular, jagged edges for eye lashes. Perhaps it is the eye of Picasso, perhaps it is the eye of God.

And, of course, my personal favorite of the figures in this painting, that awfully miserable woman at the right of the work, staring into nothingness as thou beyond the limits of reason. This single figure is worthy of near endless interpretations. One might say she is too weary to lift herself from her bent posture. I say there must be some burden in her arms that explains why her hunched stride is so heavy and limp. There must have been something or someone in those arms of hers. The woman peering into the window with her burning candle, not wanting to believe what is before her very eyes, she seems to be the only one of sound mind in the painting, though I fear she will not be for long. To me, she represents the mother of Guernica, holding a light to her children being slaughtered senselessly.

In this particular work, Picasso needed no color, and, in fact, knew it would destroy the impact had he used color, to be so madly disturbing. Because evil knows no color, and because evil is in itself dimension, it was all Picasso needed to send his message across. Guernica is black and white because evil is black and white. Guernica is Picasso at his best: humanity, stripped of everything but its evil and its pain. His use of light and dark shadings, increases the impact greatly and enhance the structural value and complexity of his thoughts through the painting.

Another highly important part of this work is the difference between the two animals of the painting: the horse, with its body twisted and its mouth wide open with pain, and the bull, a subject of an enormous amount of Picasso's output. I believe the horse represents the suffering of the people, whereas the bull, standing proud, seems to be their triumph. The power of Guernica is hypnotic to the point where I almost feel I must turn away to breathe unless I am willing to join its sufferers in

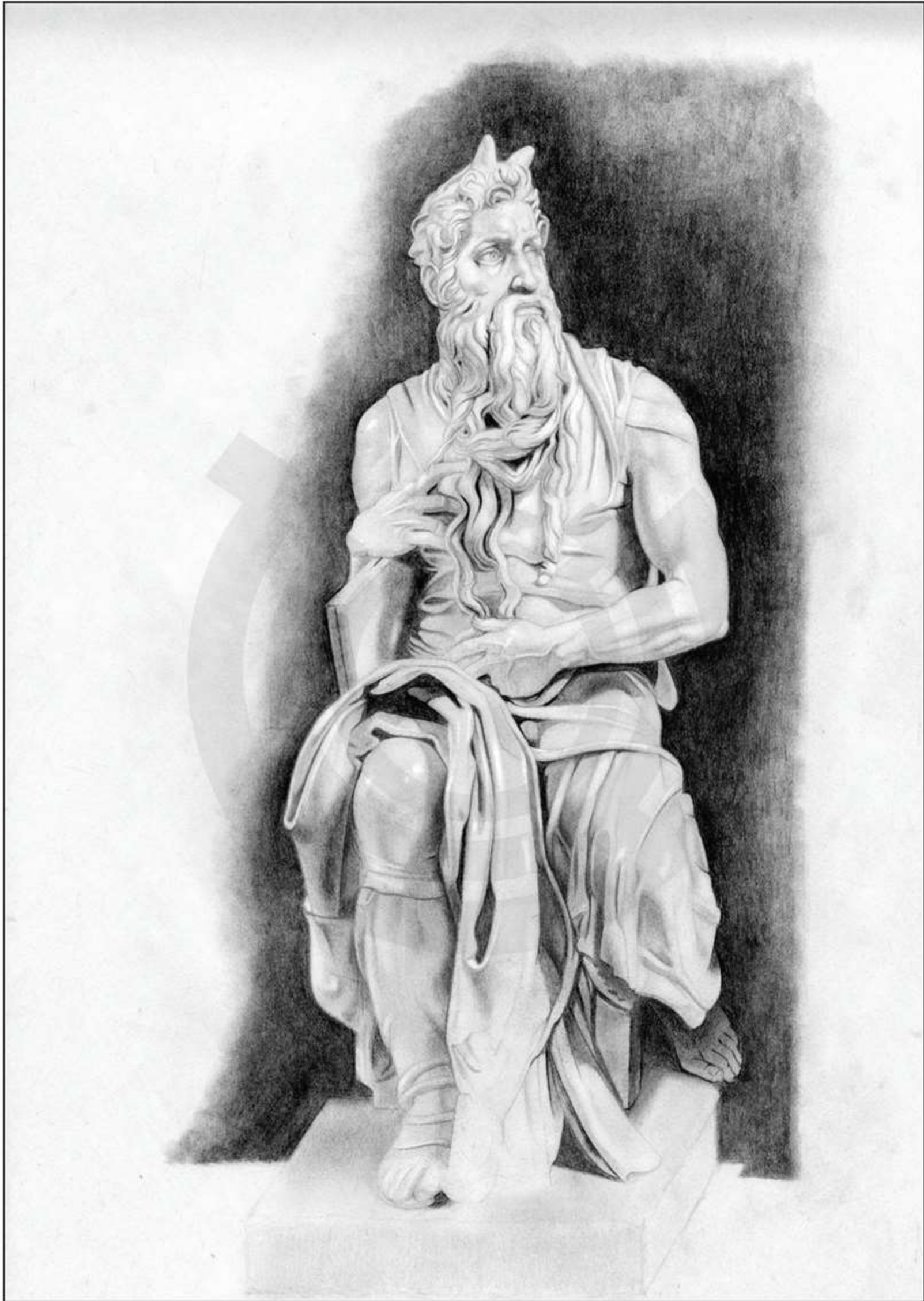
madness. That painting sends off a message about the effects of war and evil that you can see, feel and hear bouncing off the walls. It is so unlike the works of such “artists” as Salvador Dali. Where Dali’s art surfaces the canvas, Picasso’s burns and brands into the mind images of the stuff of nightmares. Where Manet’s *Waterlilies* give you a moment of superficial satisfaction, *Guernica* gives you a lifetime of bare reality.

As you can imagine, the fourth dimension of the visual arts is not a place of vacation. Because war cannot be erased, so much art bathes in tragedy and drowns in it all as one. It cries through color and bronze yet lives by its sorrow. Evil is one of the prominent palettes of an artist.

There is a force, unseen and unheard even by the artists themselves, that attracts us instantly to that which disturbs us, that which is able to take us where we do not want to go, that which reminds us of what we try to forget.

It is unfortunate to me, that though its words are so loudly spoken, no one seems to be listening.

1997



Study of Michelangelo's Moses

STUDY OF POETRY

I find that the composition, especially of poetry, is very similar if not the same as the composition of music. Beethoven writes sketch after sketch, making endless revisions that would go on and on had he not had that jot of self-control with which to be able to hand the manuscript over to the copyist, finally. Even in those autographs, the revisions are bafflingly large in amount. Constant reworking. Poetry and music are the same of process, and the same of ear. The notes, to Beethoven, are so important, so vital and must be so unmistakable, that the altering of any one changes so much. One notices a parallel to his creative process in Gorky's creative process. Constant reworking, moving less than a millimeter at a time part of a single line to make the meaning and (esp.) the projection of his idea better-- Never satisfied with the mere "good enough" sentiment.

Gorky was so inside his own head, as was Beethoven, so deliberately looking from within the great and meticulous house of cards of his creation and of his creative flow and personal, private language, that every physical stroke makes the most minute and at once the most significant difference. Gorky and Beethoven both love versions, both love revisions. But since poetry unfolds the way music unfolds, those two creative ordeals are most closely related, although I'm thinking more about the process than the actual qualities or characteristics of the different arts themselves.

2005

PAINTER/POET

The spontaneous nature of Abstract Expressionism allows a painter to decide that a painting one's working on "needs some thing there," that what one'll put "there" is the word SARDINES, that later on, one may partially obscure the word until it's "just letters" simply because it was visually "too much," and still validly call the finished piece SARDINES. The painted word is a graphic element; it's immediately "lines" (on a canvas), and it's nonetheless "lines" after s/he's unpacked SARDINES to "just letters."

Michael Goldberg's "Sardines" (1955) is a jagged composition of red-orange and white with strips of adhesive tape. The image can be evocative of anything; it doesn't have to represent anyone thing, not even its own title.

Poet and art critic Frank O'Hara observed Goldberg in action. "I drink; we drink" hints at O'Hara's awareness of the tension of differences and parallels between a painter's work and a poet's. "In Why I Am Not a Painter," O'Hara explores that tension toward his own definitions in the way that an Abstract Expressionist explores the compositional tension of colors, mixed media, and words/letters-as-graphic-elements.

"I drop in" recalls Jackson Pollock's drip paintings, and O'Hara's "dropping in" and "going" while Goldberg's work is "going on" is another hinting at the painter/poet tension, as if, in Goldberg's realm, O'Hara himself is some non-representational element. "But me? One day I am thinking of / a color: orange. I write a line / about orange."

O'Hara approaches the blank page to write about orange with the same spirit of spontaneity as the painter would approach the blank canvas to paint using orange. He puns on the word "line" to mean it in the graphic sense rather than in the verse sense: having just come from the Abstract Expressionist's realm, his motivation for writing "a line" is to emulate what the painter can achieve.

But in poetry, “a line about orange” has to become “a whole page of words.” Soon the poet’s exploration exceeds the “canvas” to “another page.” His “lines” are bound to become words in the realm of meaning, and the pages he’s writing on can’t frame his medium.

Instead of describing the content of the poem he’s working on, he tells us what he feels is lacking in it as he explores his “canvases.”

“There should be / so much more, not of orange, of / words, of how terrible orange is / and life.”

The poem *Oranges: 12 Pastorals* actually exists. Is O’Hara using intertextuality here to do with his early poem what Mike Goldberg does with the word *SARDINES*, i.e., by writing what’s lacking, is he performing a kind of inversion of “it was too much?”

By titling the poem *Oranges* instead of *Orange*—“oranges” having a more ambiguous denotation color; or fruit—O’Hara’s single word with the addition of a single letter can suggest both the abstract and the concrete without the poem having to commit to either, just like *SARDINES*. But what makes him a poet and not a painter is that he’ll always have to grapple with representation and meaning.

2005

SEASON OF LIFE

Squirrels fled the windchimes' knell. The trees were weaving light and shade upon the lawn, upon the trafficless road, upon other people's children playing, and grackles stood along the utility wires like notes on a staff. "What're we going to do?" he asked his wife. "Can't do a thing about it," she answered. They moved away from the window as one, the croak of the floorboards giving sound to their trepidation.

It was nauseously damp in the house. They went and sat down in the living room where a framed family photograph hung over the black mouth of the fireplace. Neither of them spoke but each knew the halfformed thoughts of the other as both gazed into the same formless distance beyond the old florid wallpaper. The silence was electric. She looked at the family photograph, the sympathy of smiling faces recalling to her a serenity which couldn't be restored. He got up and began pacing, the day diabolized, broken. Everything was making her dizzy—her husband's pacing, the wallpaper, the damp air. She put her head in her hands, shut her eyes and tried to stop thinking. The noon chime of the grandfather clock gave them both a start.

The scent of steaming clove tea, the lentor of the summer afternoon. Outside the bay window the lake was reflecting birds and children in its blue; rabbits twitched among the berries. "What are you thinking?" she asked him. "Probably the same thing you're thinking," he said. They smiled profoundly at each other.

It was the day after the announcement and the excitement had stilled into quiet reminiscence between the two of them. They took their tea into the living room where the late sunlight upon the kilim rug dramatized its rich burn of color and geometry. They sat down across from the framed family photograph hanging over the fireplace. It communicated both absence and fulfillment, both past and future.

In the silence the spirits of the generations seemed to gather around them as they gazed beyond the old familiar wall into a distance of unlimited greenness.

2018



*In that moment, I am of seasons...
And though the moment passes as seasons do,
It is a glimpse at the truth of what I am,
And the brevity of what seasons are...*



SAM'S LETTER

Dear Sam,

I'm just going to "talk."

Getting this point has been...a journey. Lol. I have a long, long way to go. I'm under no illusions.

For a long while it was very arduous, at times completely blear. But as Cormac McCarthy says in his phenomenal book *Suttree* "What man is such a coward he would not rather fall once than remain forever tottering?" You ought to read it. (You may have seen the film *No Country for Old Men*. He wrote the book.) I'd love to talk about *Suttree* with you sometime. Or his book *Blood Meridian*.

Just as I'm anxious to get into it with you about *Let's See*. The chapter on Ingres, whose portrait drawings I've toiled to understand. The chapter on Tintoretto, whose Medici charcoals are unmatched and make my head spin every time I look at them.

The Giacometti chapter. Gauguin... Some of my modern favorites: Rauch and Basquiat... Gerhard Richter, from his indelibly eerie Baader-Meinhof paintings to his Color Charts... These were all wonderful.

But then there's the chapter on Rembrandt.

A question like "What's it like to commit murder?" is so apt for Rembrandt because he's among that very rare breed of artist (like Beethoven, like Shakespeare) who dedicated himself to the exploration and conveyance of being-human such that we're subsumed into the moral breadth of an ostensibly quick sketch like the Cain and Abel drawing the author discusses (first attachment) in which a faint little God sits watching in a corner as though God Himself were an artist who'd put His signature on His work and backed away.

The author writes, "The quality for which [Rembrandt] is inevitably praised, 'humanity', is too nebulous. 'Personality' is more like it."

I have to disagree. Warhol had "personality". Personality

sells. Rembrandt, toward the end of his life, didn't sell. That's why he died impoverished and a "failure". Like Kafka, like Mozart. Rembrandt's art was so much more than mere 'personality'; the profundity and insistence of his humanity and of his portrayal of it was precisely what turned the bourgeoisie off to him. You may differ. I'd love to know your thoughts. The second attachment is one of my favorite Rembrandt etchings.

You know, I used to come down in the middle of the night just to play chords on the piano. Plain chords. I'd play a d-flat-minor chord and hold down the damper pedal and just listen to the heft of that dark harmony resound throughout the sleeping house and subside like a broken promise. All this time I've been convinced that nothing could replace the commerce I had with that instrument. But I'm starting after all these years to realize that lines can vibrate too.

Now, my line isn't doing that yet. My line doesn't vibrate, but lines can. Wyeth's lines do, for example, or Klimt's, or Degas's, Goya's.

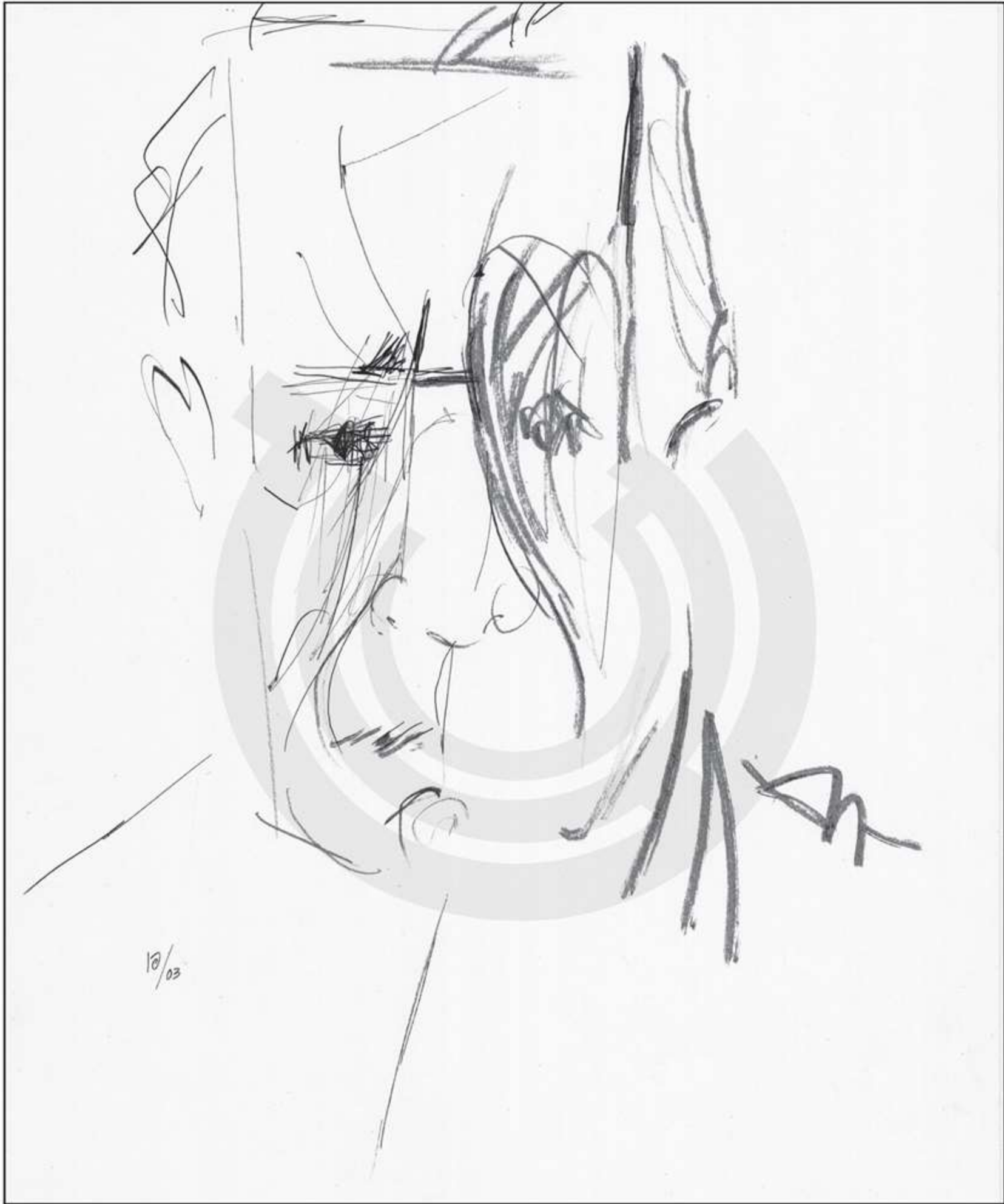
What am I saying, you know all this already... You're a writer, a poet, a critic.

Written lines vibrate, too.

Now just look at that image, the third attachment, of Wyeth's tub with the bucket—it's called "Spring Fed". Look at how he throws his lines about with such a seemingly "haphazard" hand yet it's all so authoritative. Look at what isn't there because it doesn't need to be there. I've seen that very tub in a documentary on his life. It's a much busier affair in real life. But he had such a judicious, sensitive eye. He knew what was important and what wasn't to put on the page.

Look at Goya's "Prisoner", the fourth attachment. Look at Klimt's "Studies for Shakespeare's Theatre."

I don't know where I'm going with this email.



Grandfather 2003

GRANDFATHER (BABA)

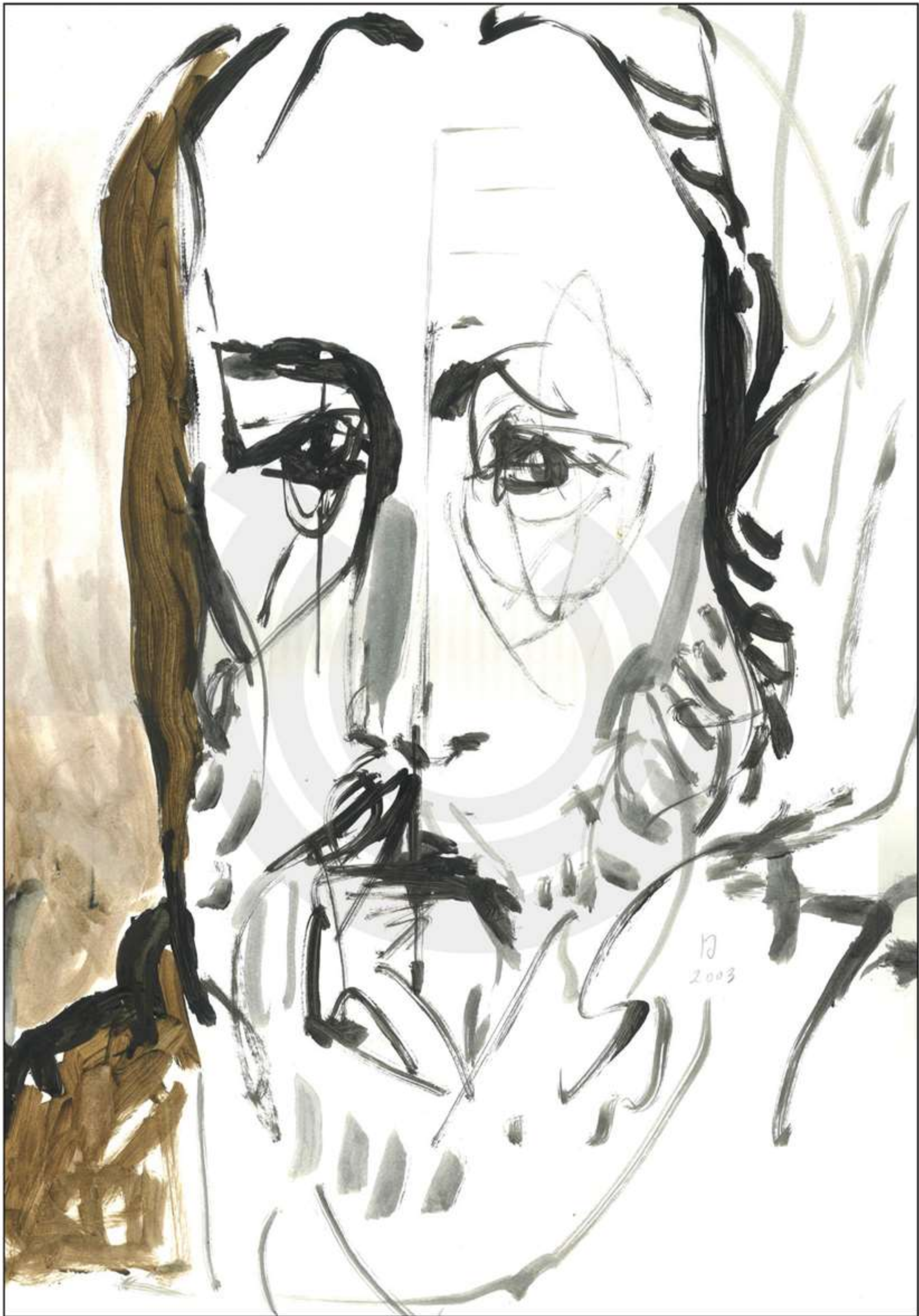
We all know life is a gift.

Thank you for being a gift to me.

To be so entirely engrossed with each of these various projects as to finally lose touch with the outside world? Is it possible? So many projects, so little time in the days, can you? Will you? Baba, watch over me. Watch me, Baba. Lend me some of that unstoppable victimless power, that strength of endurance and be-all-you-can-be. Where are you, Baba? Be here. You're needed here, with me.

Forgive my hands. They don't come together enough in saying thanks for certain people and certain things. We all know life is a gift but by the things we do in affecting others, we are given the extraordinary occasion to become, in turn, a gift to life.

2003



Man With Beard 2003



NARRATIVE POETRY...

ON THE EDGE OF THE OCEAN

Morning, and a color like ash
Descended from the berth of heavens
so that the crow left holes in the air
Where it had flown; and we became cloud,
I and the shadowy crow,
Waiting the night shell to burst into sun.

The sapphire breath over all the expanse;
This endless shore of blue grain
and mercury, taking its image
From the floral cluster of the low Heavens
Eddied with blue speckled wind.
Lithe the wind that brought the sea scent,
And the salted mist
in tissues of chalk;
And the wash of seaweed underfoot
from the cool whimpering purl
As it coiled
And melted in sand;

And there the sun complex
In marbled cloud-streams and blur
tremulous

From behind the distant groove.
Untorn,
Unruffled was this mettle.

And with the flowing
Blue blood of waves
Against stillness,
I remembered my being there
Was not for the sunrise but for the ship's ebb
and the torn sail offset by flakes of dawn;
Somehow, this frost-hued sky,
the crypt of this limbo—
Like the gust that moves the prophet's word,

muddling it—
Thus was I confounded. For, beside me,
the wild-eyed crow
Mingled in the gossamer of pearly film,
The eyes of ink and pitch buried in
wells of coal
That shot glass-clear even through the fog
as if waiting,
Had fixed its leer upon me; but I,
From the pale shore,
and the pale grain of shore,
I watched the ship at sea
Lapping the half-sun
among the nexus:
now curds of pink and dawn
and russet;
Now a ribbon of blood; of fire upon fire;
slow-motioned metamorphosis like the greatest volcano;
And I squinted my eyes
To catch the full effect; the sea citrus,
And the sun of nectar
As the ship came in along the red line of that morning
Swinging like verse;
its gold
Edging over belly of the gentle surf
Like a cupped palm that caught the honey or sundew,
And you could hear the splash
the juice made
When it issued into the drift-ward cup
From the mouth of a yawning sun.

Then it was the crow
out of nowhere
Took steps toward water;

And when the slender white claw was pressed
over the seam
into water,
An instant: the ocean in its breadth,
squirming
and growing lively from beneath its glossy hull,

Thickening with the inner cells of its stir
as if commanded,
rapidly,
and with tremendous might,
Pushed out! Shifted, shifted in one circular piece! Away
the waters gone! The discus,
sleek and fluid, supine, divided from the brink
sliding straight on its back, gushing in the direction of the
ship;
so that the crow stood again in sand where waters had just been,
the bedrock bare
with its sediment
and the depths exposed; in this one blast,
my moving fantasia turned a sinister leaf;
and the sweat of my scalp
petrified.

Then met the disc of waters
With the far ship,
sliding easily under it,
And with muscle of godly force, lifted,
Lifted its rippled posture, augmented in girth,
erected the craft upon shoulder
Until neither ray of shadowless sun—
though ablaze with day, now eclipsed by wave, and thus
the place bedarkened—
Nor overcloud, nor bird in its high radius
Did come against the great wave and its ark,
the trunk's margin too great;
And with one swift gallop
Threw boisterous the limber ark
Toward mid-ocean; and after that
the waters cataracted, then ran backward
To meet the landing of the ship.
And then was stillness restored,
and light;
The ship now almost within swimming reach.

And my throat full of the bone
of this wonder,
The dried-up lacquer of my heart peeling, flaking off

To expose the flutter bug
 and its skeleton of brittle leaf.
And the crow still upon my head
 cawing half-notes
 from beak of ivory;
And in the swollen lens of my sight,
 seeing as I had not ever seen,
 a thing of lucid nature:
I saw the very psalms take shape
 in the form of the ship's men,
And the men were shapen as the psalms. Apparitional, these
Men of ether, who few by few un-boarded,
Still a quarter mile from shore,
The boat's wood more submerged than their translucent heels
Moving sylphlike along the parchment
 just rinsing the breath of sea
 with the finery of their satin;
And they advanced as if on firm ground.

And to describe the countenance as they neared:
They were dawn against the dawn;
 their breath of feathers, pearl-white of the pupil,
And I knew these were the beatitudes; these the crystal threshold,
 the holy names, the living sanctum
And behind the petals of each balmy retina, the dragon's fang;
 the fresh plum of light, these the warriors of mystic
 tongue.
the probe of their torch was upon me
And the heaviness of pain came upon me; and I fell to my knees
 panting
Because of my terrors, the iodic crimes
That had wound my innards
 into such hellish contortions
 over the years,
 now registered; engulfed now in self-judgment,
The black worm of sins
Chewed a deep fissure into my ghost;

But seeing my stigma, the crow standing on my bent nape
Flapped its slate wings to conjure air
To bring me up. And I was brought upright,

And the commando of the godsent eased his broadsword
from the sheath, set it down, sat with me;
And his elegant downy frame
Illuminated my circuit with light, not of the sun,
and all of them looking seaward were inert,
and the crow static on my thigh.
My gray atom had split down its median
Like one of the piteous souls uncertain,
whose fate was sent shivering in the air,
Ripped of the earthly garments,
during the trials of Purgatory.

But little by little, I grew less disjunct
and looking among them,
first, at this one,
now that one, and they all fixed seaward,
I narrowed my eyes in focus; compelled to begin a meditation,
But uttered not my innermost discourse:

These, I thought...God.
Thy quiet brain;
Of heaven,
Earth; Thy dear camarilla

here with me; these born of the ageless wellspring,
these the gold leaves of Thine elm:
Michael, upon the dragon's stony hide
And lily-eyed Nicholas and his beard of stars
And Margaret there
formed like a quill dipped
in cauldron of sweet fire
With which to write the sages; and Gabriel, thine eyes electric
gloweth
with the embers of the spear blade;
And I hear the trumpet from the barrel
of thy dutiful gorge.
And sitteth here with broadsword removed,
Great Jude; to name the sum of thy works,
easier to count the sands,
Man of the impossible; raiment filled with the once abysmal states
Of my kin; help me to heaven.

I am thy lost cause today.
From the inescapable toils
To the peace of old Jason's house,
Send me.

And followed as if to have heard,
Thou art God's to absolve, said Jude.

But, in order to make for thyself
a dwelling place from the lessons,
And to know the name of Reason,
liken the cunning of Reason
To roads carved out of shore; what keepeth them
From softening? Running with every low tide? They liquesce,
Will join the thrust and flux of the sea
And disperse among the stomachs of whales. Carveth thou
Reason from the sands,
and the sands receive not thy road.

However, I understood not what Jude offered and told him.
For I am ruins, I replied; and my teeth dripping with chaos
thick as the bulb's molasses;

I am a half-wit,
and young, and my wind cannot fathom
thy mind's organism.
Thus he began to tell a story, and I listened...

I

There were created five microcosmos, imagine.
In the beginning, is Alpha, and between Alpha and the last,
the eternal warfare
implodes within its circlet
because of such inner contention;
Like certain colors upon the canvas
that appear to hum when pressed together
out of their friction.
And one year, it was a minotaur's turn to go into it,
His bullhorns yet unformed,

nose unbroadened, full of youth,
To learn the Ways and Lessons, that is the purpose.
And this is the way of that bull;

Named Theo;
Hurled from the vaults
 into the fleece of Alpha's deep pool.
And he stood in that water, shook off the wetness;
And the constellations, as he looked up at them,
 the nursling pulse of stars connected,
He saw that they made the chariot of Elijah, and inside it,
 children who had passed through these five
 into the eye of God; and they were smiling,
 smiling as in rapture.

And the valley around him,
 lit mute-violet by the moons, imagine,
The trees; pungent, their mellow weep, the brush of deeper violet,
Orange-colored, rose,
 like the rose-blush of a flamingo's wing;
It swept with such simplicity, such crispness;
The bounce of the wild-berries
 upon the cobblestones; and that the
 stones were bathed in the myrrh glaze of the pool
 made them reflective,
And Theo was at ease in the wheat of this shade
 as he looked upon himself in the mirror of the stones.

Then got he to wandering, and came to the center of the valley,
And the center of the sparse wood,
And there a gentleman pair seated face to face
With stone-chiseled table
 and a game of chess separating them.
And as Theo grew closer, saw the gentlemen were twin-like;
 both of slender form and clean-groomed,
 both their rounded felt hats and laced leather shoes;
But their colors determined them:
 the one sitting right was black-clad,
 and the one left
 white-clad,
 hair white also, and skin-white.
Then they turned together their faces to Theo and stood,

And with this was Theo aghast, for the two were halves,)
not whole men; one of each limb,
one each of eye, of nostril, of eardrum.

And they spoke: "Cam'st thou for the game? Or hath followed
aimlessly the footpathfreckled with safflower's pleasing fume?"

And with stuttering, Theo's dotted reply:
"I fell in Alpha's water, and now going upon its wake—"
And they sat again and resumed play, and Theo moved carefully
toward them.

When close enough to see fully, the game, he observed,
Was without its pieces; no pawns or kings,
Or knights with their armor; no queens to clobber,
Just a board with squares, very exact in their blacks and whites;
And the two must have been ruminating over something
by their expressions,

But were not tangled, not in competition,
nor to quell the other with strategy,
nor practice a bluff. Neither one boastful,
Nor the hammering of fists in frustration, nor any other deceit;
but peace; and a balance amongst them,
As if the pinions of their two animas spun in perfect congruity,
however separate, and the pinions were the wreaths of their -
harmony

And after thirty seconds of waiting for something to happen,
Theo asked:

"What is your contest? What is the meaning of...halves of
men...what magic?"

And answered they in unison: "Not important my contest; mine
is none. Yours is the contest."

"Mine?"

"Cam'st thou for thine own game, having followed aimlessly the
freckled path lured by the perfume of bright flowers and the early
autumn climate."

And Black continued:

"You have lost your center. Wherefore I plan to water your
jagged root using the slippery torrent of darker clouds;

I plan to teach thee courage,
To infect—ignoring thy fear—the melodious cider of thy
immunity with the grimacing germ.
It is time for you to walk this peril,
to meet the thorn of this gavel,

And the gravity of the gavel will help you
to find the rectitude of thy being,
and thou canst then split the lion's jaw with bare hand,
and the tooth canst thou wear over breastbone as a token;
If only to follow this paradigm well.

I am Love; and the Passion.” And the name was Luceerd.
And White said: “And will guide thee until thy maturity. I am
Patience
and the Discipline.” And the name was Lucemeed.

Thus the half art,
And thus half science.
Spoke each Luce to Theo wholeheartedly;
and then it was time to go on.
When they stood and left the table, they fused their metals,
merged,
And walked as one great amalgam in front of the young Theo, who,
Looking in awe, quickly followed; beyond the stone table,
away from the myrrh of Alpha,
away from the chariot of Elijah's children, down,
Down into the core of the second great realm.

II

Here silver;
silver slant where the trees parted,
Silver cloth of light, and the lace between boughs,
and the silvery stains near the roots
where the rain had fallen through,
Floating with petals. They both walked, Luce allowing minotaur
time to take in all the beauty. “What here?” asked Theo.
And he was shown the various wildlife and told he must hunt
and was shown how to prepare,
Putting sticks to stone to sharpen the tips,
And the springy branch that would yield into well-curved bow,
and acquiring a strong grip,
And keen perception; and when the first deer was pierced—
the brassy sound of wood through husky flesh
And the blood flow swirling with the silver— Theo threw down his
weapon
running to it, the heaviness of tears making him gasp.

And the Luce followed Theo and said,
“Think now more for the evolution of things than for the beauty; serve
these

as your sustenance and your substance, and the souls invisible
go on, and they will be reborn.”

And the uncanny Luce anointed the dead’s breathless wide eyes
with soil sprinkled from the open fingers
and with water distilled in his hands, rubbed he
the deer’s head with it and murmured in reticence
Letting the words down upon its head like a clear, clean curtain
in furrows of silver.

III

Expended the meat fully from the carcass,
And exposed the heart, then exhumed it; picked from the barnacles
that held it in place within the rib cage, Theo’s placid Luce
Nestled the organ lovingly, and Theo saw,
saw the outside of his host’s hands begin to beat
Because the heart began beating
in its new shelter, as if alive.
The host put it away inside his mouth,
and swallowed it, and young Theo watched it beat
going down the tube, and the muffled percussion of the beat
Like the ticking of a clock brought a sense of passing time to the place,
and that ticking remained as long as it sat
in the black-white stomach of the demigod.
And when the minotaur looked over his shoulder...

IV

Silver suede of the barks,
The grasshoppers swallowed momentarily
in the sheerness,
Darting in and out of pine-silver spikes of grass and tree—
All these things
behind his back
He found them
Putrefying, melting into malevolent ooze,
Into heaping bile of pustular maggots after they’ve devoured the
beauty,

Into slow warp, degeneration, decomposition;
All that beauty just now
 become as sour rust eating the trees.
And a cancer clinging to everything
 in threads of vicious filament
Caused a hair of rancidity to wheeze through the air.
And before Theo could twist his nerve completely,
His guide yanked him forth. Move, he said, move.

And the fallen fruit in the squirrel-paws,
In their mouths
 crumbled to blood.

V

Saith Luce's milk-white psyche:
 With the storm is come
 virtue.
And they, without ever again looking back
Were swept by the butt of their spines,
 suspended,
Then spewed asunder into the liver of the third realm,
Where the gale's icy ghost cast its dagger
 between Luce and the minotaur, severing them,
And then, as they kept falling, severed also
The snow-colored Lucemede
 from slate Lucerde,
 and they held one the other's wrist,
And the beating heart of the deer fell from their kernel
And Theo caught the heart of the deer and swallowed it as he fell.

VI

Against the bedlam
 and the blast,
Theo fell and landed harshly, causing the heart to jump out
Into his hands, and he squeezed it to keep it with him.
It was a desert, the coarse cragged sands leaping up
Into dizzy demonic spirals, the mal-spirit forming them,
Firing steel dogs of brimstone at the minotaur,

sending him splinters to sting his exodus.
“Luce! My Lucas gone! The spirant bristles against the eyes,
I see not the way—too much this turbulence, Lucas, I am dislodged—”
Then the roar hammered him and with rage,
 hammering his body into exhaustion,
 and his face fell unconscious, buried in the cool desert floor.
And it was the punch of the heart beat in his hands
Jammed over his gut
 woke him at once.
And Theo put one hand over the roof of the eyes;
 the sight of stout cliffs a little ahead
Among an oasis, though blemished by the tempest,
 brought him comfort. Heart in hands
 he made his way.

VII

“Lucas, how leavest me?
 Is this the gift of thy guiding?
That thou hast left me this most sulfurous state,
 thwarted by the crimson of this infernal tooth?
Leavest me only myself to face this mad bravado?”

“Ad astra per aspera.
Deo iuvante, friend. Ad astra.”
 It was a burly voice from the darkness
That made Theo jump. And he hid the beating heart
 under his tongue; “Show me where you are,
If thou callest me, friend.”
 And it strutted solidly, giantly out upon the request;
And what a thing it was:
 a great enormous sphynx, fire-pawed, breathing the storm;
The skin limpid like glass, lambent from the inside out
 with this bloom of hushed blue,
And the veins, midnight-blue,
 patterned like blazes.
I came to die here, it said. I am old, tired. But full of knowledge.
“What knowledge?”
“The next realm, the fourth.

VIII

Over this bleakness, paradisiacal cloud,
Luscious field un-blasphemed by such ingle as this,
I have seen the leaves of light,
 and the sea hath a song in it;
I have embraced the neck of the bluest stallions and mares
As they carried me through the fields,
 and I was bathed in the soft liniment of pollen
In the wind as we rode; so happy was I there that
 I have only this relative sorrow
 from which to draw strength. And all my strength
Powered by the engine of this, "my lonely sorrow."

And Theo asked, "Why then stayest thou here?
 Why choose to build thy deathbed from the hailstones?"
"I knew not the worth of it. I knew not the ardor with which it was
put together,
 nor cared I for it. And so I stay my exile here to aid thou and
 thy likes
Through this one realm to the next, in hopes that I might teach thee
by this example
 the most delicate humility,
That when you have come upon that perfection
 wherein its ornament is naught but its innate glow,
Thou canst look upon it and stand unselfishly in its very midst."

"Then say no more but to tell me what I must
 to arrive there, for my eardrums ache
With the screaming of this cloudburst."

And the sphinx rotated slightly his neck as if to point with it:
"To my left is the way back out into the winds, and by that way,
 thou must labor and thy flesh torn before thou reach the end.
Few have gone from there, for the danger is hard;
 and to my right, through this cave-like portal,
You will get sucked straight into that place aforementioned.
Comest thou then by the grime of thy passion

 and the foot of thy brain?

Or wilt thou fly beside the griffin*
of this other gate?"

"I choose the right hand, the griffin be my new guide! Without
second question!"

And with that, the sphinx rose,
 and the mercury rose
From within its glass bulb, the heat such
 that the glass fractured between the eyes
Down the center of the lion-head,
 and the seeping of its acid malt
Flooded its eyes with wrathful tears;
 and the lungs expanded, throbbing in its crevice,
And the jaws opened, and with this, a thunder from the bowl of its
throat:
"Thy choice bring thee wisdom!" And the sphinx became a furnace
of rage
 with its dynamite leaping forth
 from the nostrils rimmed with ire,
And charged at the minotaur, swiping him off his feet,
 and threw him headfirst into the mouth of the fifth realm.

IX

Nothing so unutterable, nothing.

Headfirst fell he into the inspissate mire and the wind
Lonely above the hell-packed; they flailing in the starchy ooze.
 Coming up from the depths,
Felt he their sullied tongues. Never this sadness; hugging,
 squeezing the life out of air,
Causing the dead in their torture to re-inhale death with every gag.
The disembodied, lying among their severed selves,
 shades mingled with upturned limbs
And buried eyes and lungs full of sand.

X

“I, a child meant to rummage this heavy atlas
only to find my end here?”

And Theo made his way up
and out, and the image of Elijah’s starry children,
And three he all his will against the pickled limbs pulling his zeal,
Rose the minotaur, Dug his bull-skinned fingertips
deep into the loam, fighting off vermin fangs,

XI

And keeping his eye toward stars and the children throwing stars
with Elijah,
Dragged his blackened bull-half out, out of the hell-bath,
And the white of his breast
heaving out the sorrow
to make place for courage.
and he opened his hand to let out the heart,
and with the canon of his shoulder, threw it up
To the limit of its height; it spun and burst into leaf.

XII

Now in the form of old Luce, did the two-colored leaves shapen,
lowered he his hat of halves and shoveled Theo up;
And as he was elevated, leaving the grave to their turmoil, he
caught a reflection
in the leaves of Luce.

XIII

Shined in the mind of that reflection a minotaur with horns grown
of steel
and tough skin and fearless eye. And was thrown from the
rounded hat
Into the stars of that night, and the children were his welcome,
Their white heads against black breath of the sky-wash,
smiling from the terrace of his glamorous stars.

Thus, saith Jude.

I speak myriads. Give me the
Touch of thy flame, and I shalt find for you
a heaven-colored cape;
Or thy mind's severity or the weight of thine ambition
for the soothing Infinite
That gives of itself the deathless unleaded life.
I want you to fold the symmetry of your line
into an aerial shape
And send it to scope the ether until it hovers beneath the sun,

and swims in the light;
And I want it to descend, grazing the crocus stem
from the blueness. And thou art then
The life of what thou hast forth, the breath of thy plough,
the calm spirit of thy reaping.
And thou hast then Soul for a name,
and thou shalt be called by the name of thy soul.

And Jude replaced broadsword
into the leather of his hip;
Boarded they the ship again. "May the green vines hold barely
The weight of thy striving, the weight of thy striving be heavy upon the
vines,
May thy hands be at the earth's cloak, lifting it,
and thereafter our hands at the folds of yours,
And we shall lift you unto the stars."

I watched the departure
and the fading away,
And with them, the sun. Now night and the gray smooth of shore
took its image from my eyes. And we,
I and the shadowy crew turned we toward another day,
Toward the woods to build a sturdy road, and from there to other heights.
Therein we could build the sun.



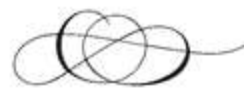
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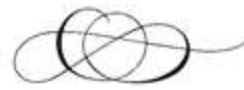
THOUGHTS...



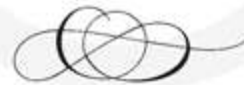
These wrests
and poundings of the self and soul
for an unfixed stretch of days continue,
until perchance the hand of woe somewhat relent.
And brief remission allowing, bid me to go
And stand a moment in the sunny yard
Where then such realizations comfort me.
As that there's consolation in mortality,
That just outside my head
There is a world more properly governed...
What a fragile god I am...



Even in this world of sorrow and gloom,
there can be an entire symphony of hopeful voices.

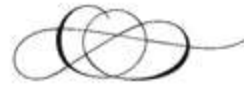


He carried me out from the burning tower,
Yet I have not been worth having been saved...
Now I bear the burden of being worthy.



The rabbit hopped in a bury grove,
the flounder on the shores of vaster breadth,
Yet while his body with heaven strove,
vastness and beauty seemed mockeries of death.

Come to truth like a sniffing hound
to the buried prize.



I became scholar of the mystical and holy laws
and now my concious is scholar over me.

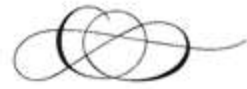


My brain lights up by the sickly light of thought,
like a Christmas tree in an irreligious home.



I love the green soul of grass,
The accidental hue of the sky.

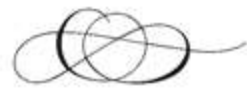
More is there in nothing
than in all of every somethings sum.



Love is like the smoke of a holy sacrifice,
rising despite any turbulence...

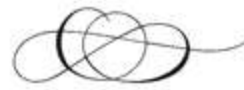


My nature, prior to you, was as a kettle
in which many sundry spices warred.



Regret is crueler than time
For time, compared with regret,
Seems patient
And slow to age a man.

Dear youth,
Wherein I was of one clean mind,
let's together, you with energy, I with longing
restore yourself in me.

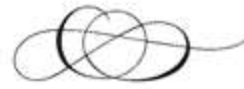


Plug your bag with histories, youth,
and not squander the sun.
Lift instead to the sun your restive eye,
thus, to make of that eye a sun.

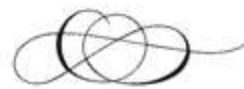


Hope is too wise,
and quickly bores of my despairs.

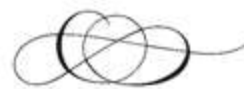
The scalpels and hostile instruments of solitude...
Proper solitude is a prooper torture...



Outside it was black and the throbbing
shriek of crickets and katydids
was biting the blackness.



As fire to ice, so time has melted mighty cliffs,
and revealed the bones of whole civilizations.



Rainbows have sometimes told me
The grayness of their experience
That rest in the warmth of storms.

When I see the day surrender with black flag
I and secrets know that they do dare
when night's dark liberty is hung
to pass the sleeping guard air.
And that dangerous dreams make brave the tongue
that secrets know that they may dare.

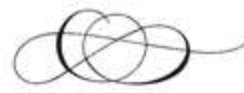


Father in Heaven,
be unto children as the sky is unto the stars,
ever-present and all-encompassing
in each their small luster.
For as the stars are in need of darkness to shine,
so are the darkened children
in need of your bright light.



Former arrogance in all that I was,
Now sweet humility in all that I am.

Richer in finance
than the king of oil,
in power more than presidency
in faith more than the Pope,
for I have simplicity.

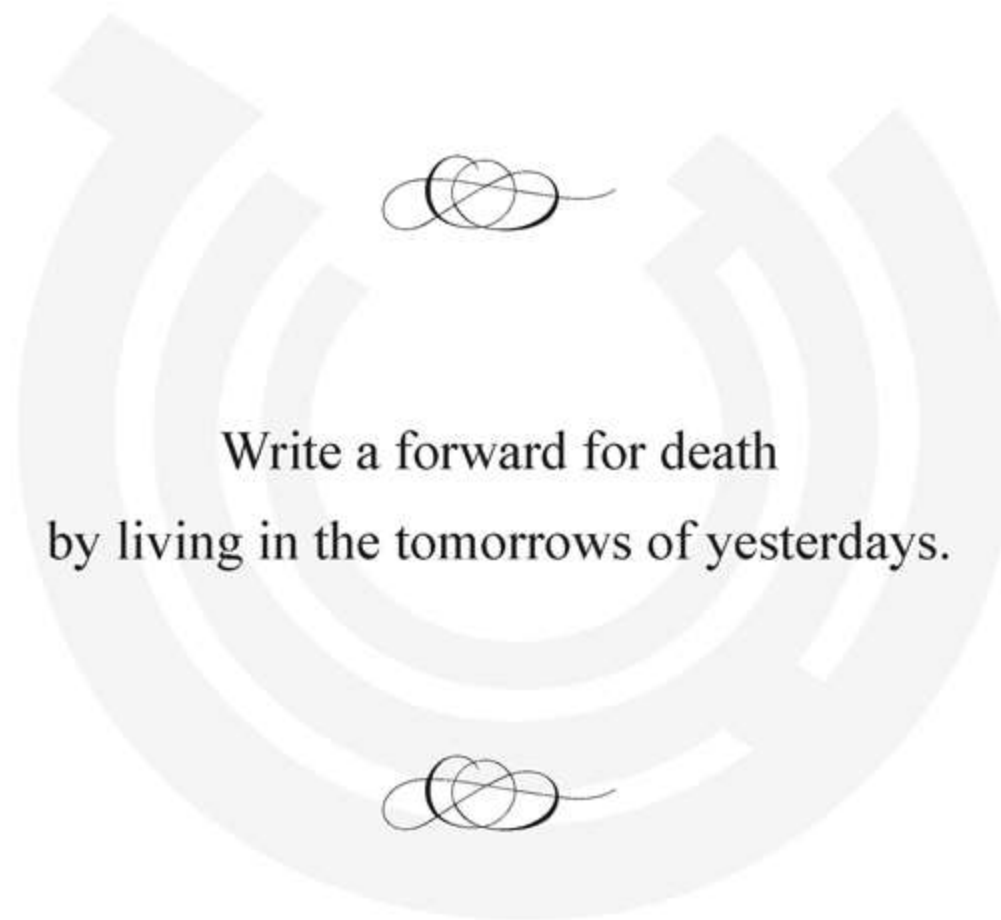


The awareness of the largeness of my ignorance
allows me to grow.



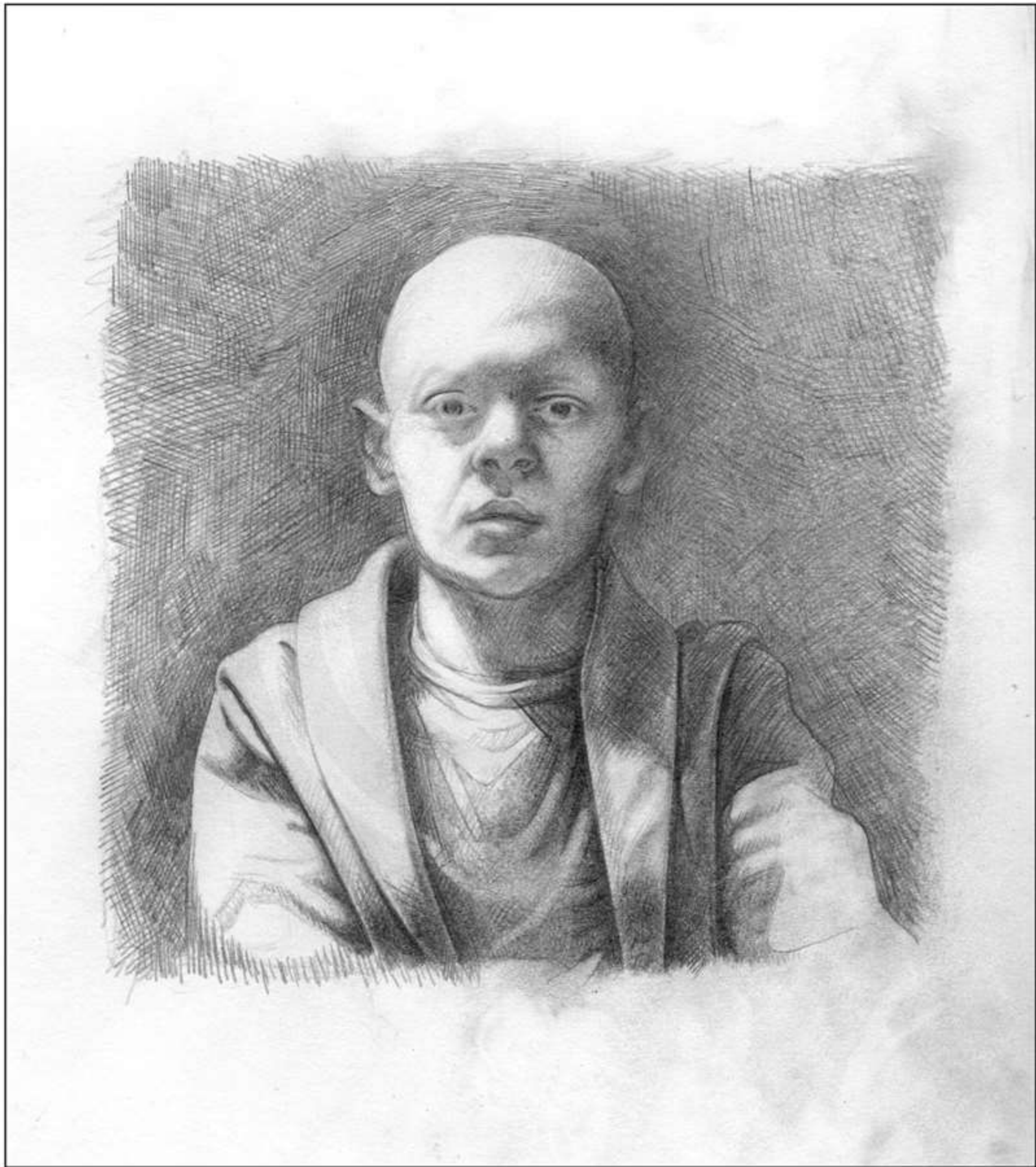
Justice, as like universes passed,
has collapsed upon the innocent,
Whilst the guilty fly out
like dust from colossal crush.

The world is a hard thing, look at the ages.
All the ages were named after hard things;
Stone, Bronze, Iron.
It's very hard to stand to... to stand out.



Write a forward for death
by living in the tomorrows of yesterdays.

I pray your sense of proportion
be such that I not be burned by
your judgement's touch.



Self Portrait 2002





Tamar 2020



Naregatsi Art Institute provides a special place for children, emerging artists, artists with disabilities and artists living in the regions of Armenia outside of Yerevan. It also provides space and resources to anyone with something of artistic value to share.

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In addition to the occasional support of NAI friends and donors, the fundamental support of the NAI has been and is made possible by the generous contributions of Garabed Haroutunian, Saro Hartounian, and Harco Incentives.

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