

# Forces

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## Art

Brian Cave

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## I AM 'THEM' and 'THEM' (while studying American history on a afternoon)

I am 'them,'

invisible now in your indivisible union.

I wore the chains of slavery,  
took the watery passage for bravery,  
and tore lost and bloody victories  
from your tyrant lies.

Betrayed, kidnapped, sold and sold again in  
a far away land

Three-fifths of a man.

When my freedom came it was a ragtag mockery  
dressed in hand-me-down poverty,  
with no place to go in the land of opportunity.  
Cry?

There were no tears left in my eyes.

I am also 'them.'

I fell before your bullets,  
projected from your pulpits  
of manifest destiny and blood-soaked  
demise.

I am them who yet tell the secrets of your  
broken lies.

At the hands of greed and your excuse for  
fear,

I am them who death-walked Missouri's Trail  
of Tears.

I lived the horror of a pawn's repeated mischance,  
and soothed hysteria with one last ghost dance  
at Wounded Knee.

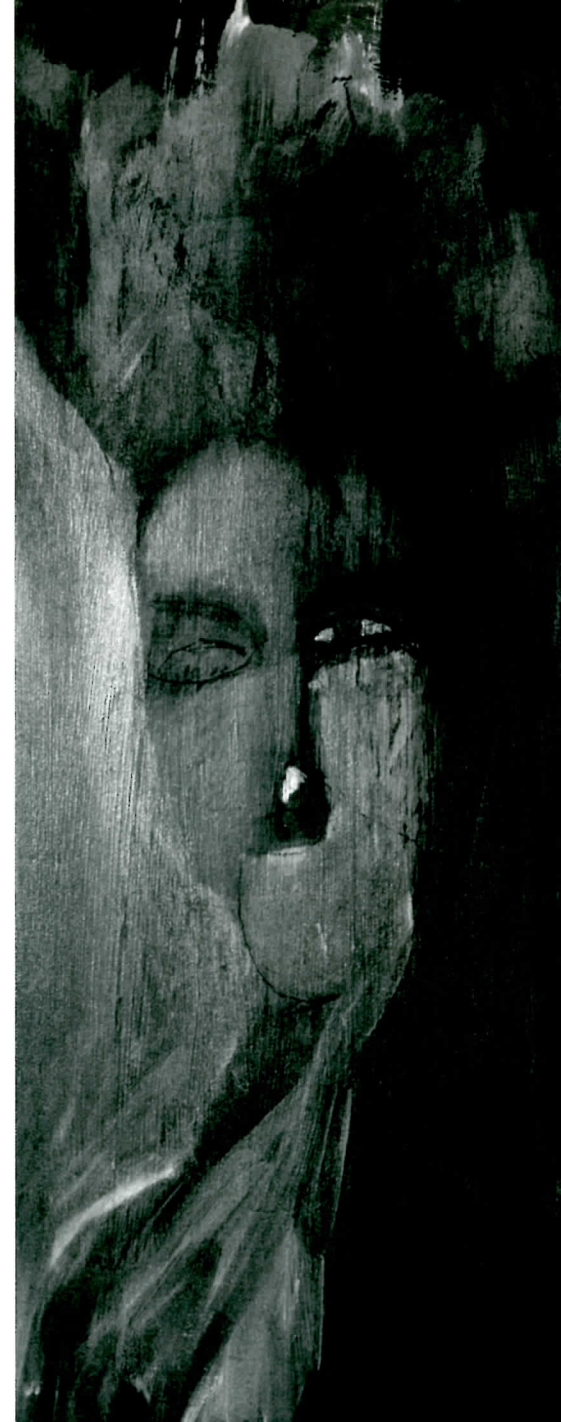
Wovoka Christ spoke to me  
of a new heaven and a new earth, of  
victory!

Or was it just one last beneficent dream for His  
dying people?

All of us swept away,  
wept away  
kept away  
from freedom's skies.

I am them and them:  
The Native and The African.

*Faith Bishop*





## let's call it even

I'm sorry that my head is sick  
and you spend your life  
fixing it.

I have reduced you to servitude.  
You are my indentured servant.  
I don't

know what to say when I know that  
You'd be better off with  
someone else.

My selfish heart will not allow it.  
I want you trapped in  
my broken

thoughts dancing in madness.  
I jumped off a cliff  
to see

where I'd land. The blood from my  
cracked skull stains your canvas  
and my

broken thoughts are to your benefit.  
So, I beg you to wrap me  
in your

silencing arms  
once again.

*Heather Millican*

## makeover

what if I turn the  
contours of this life  
caddy-corner or parallel?  
stretch the palette of my eye  
by a wild splash of red,  
or edge bouclé fabric  
with lace and satin?

what yearning would  
those broken rules,  
neatly bound by time  
and nature, yield?

what basic hunger  
feed, or fantasy cure?  
for I need to change,

form a different shape,  
to satisfy the hidden me  
who dreams of being  
what the mystic sees  
beyond beamed corners  
and mortared red brick,  
curious about my meaning.

*Molly Boyce*

*Art by Brian Cave*