

Joe Massey 75209, P.O. Bot 511, O. S. 21, 47,
Columbus 15, Ohio

IN THE DOOR MOTHER STOOD,
AS I ROMED IN THE WOODS,
A FEW VILOTS I TOOK,
THEN WATER FROM THE BROOK,
WITH THE PAIL IN MY HAND,
I COULD HARDLY UNDER STAND,
SO OFTEN STOMPING MY TOES,
YET MOTHER HEALED MY WOES,
I PLAYED AS SHE COOKED,
AS SHE READ I LOOKED,
SAFELY TUCKING ME IN,
KISSING ME AGAIN AND AGAIN,
IN THE DEAD OF THE NIGHT,
MOTHER COMES WITH A LIGHT,
GATHING MY TOYES OF THE FLOOR,
TIPPING NOISLESS AS SHE GO,
MORNING WHEN I AWAKE,
TO THOSE ARMS I DID BRAKE,
HOW ARE YOU FEELING MOTHER DEAR,
WHY ARE THOSE EYES FILLED WITH TEAR'S,
SON I HAD A DREAM LAST NIGHT,
IT JUST DONT SEEMED TO BE RIGHT,
IN MY DREAM I WENT TO HEAVEN STARTED THROUGH THE
GATE, HEARING A VOICE SAYING TO ME YOUR SON
WILL BE TO LATE.

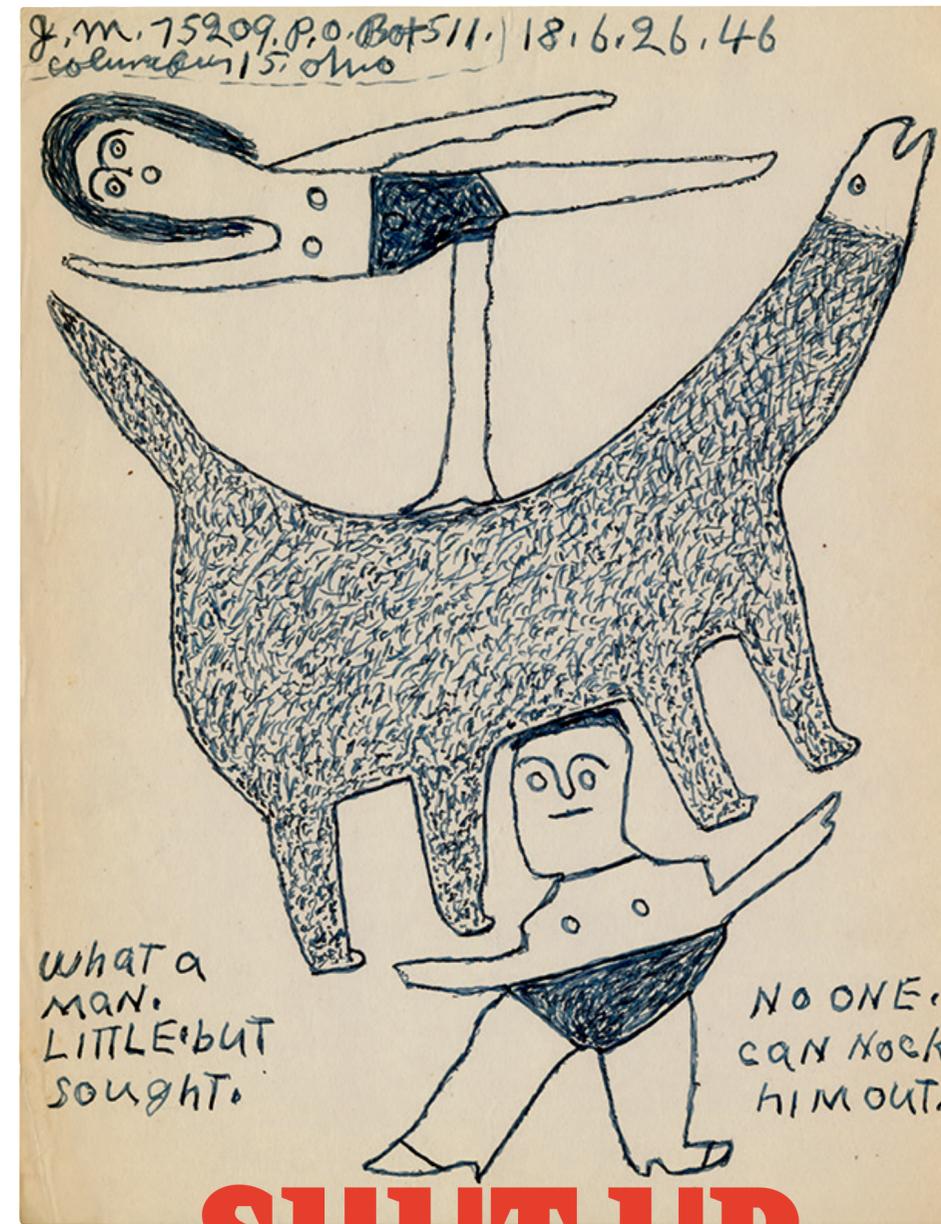
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Columbus 15, Ohio

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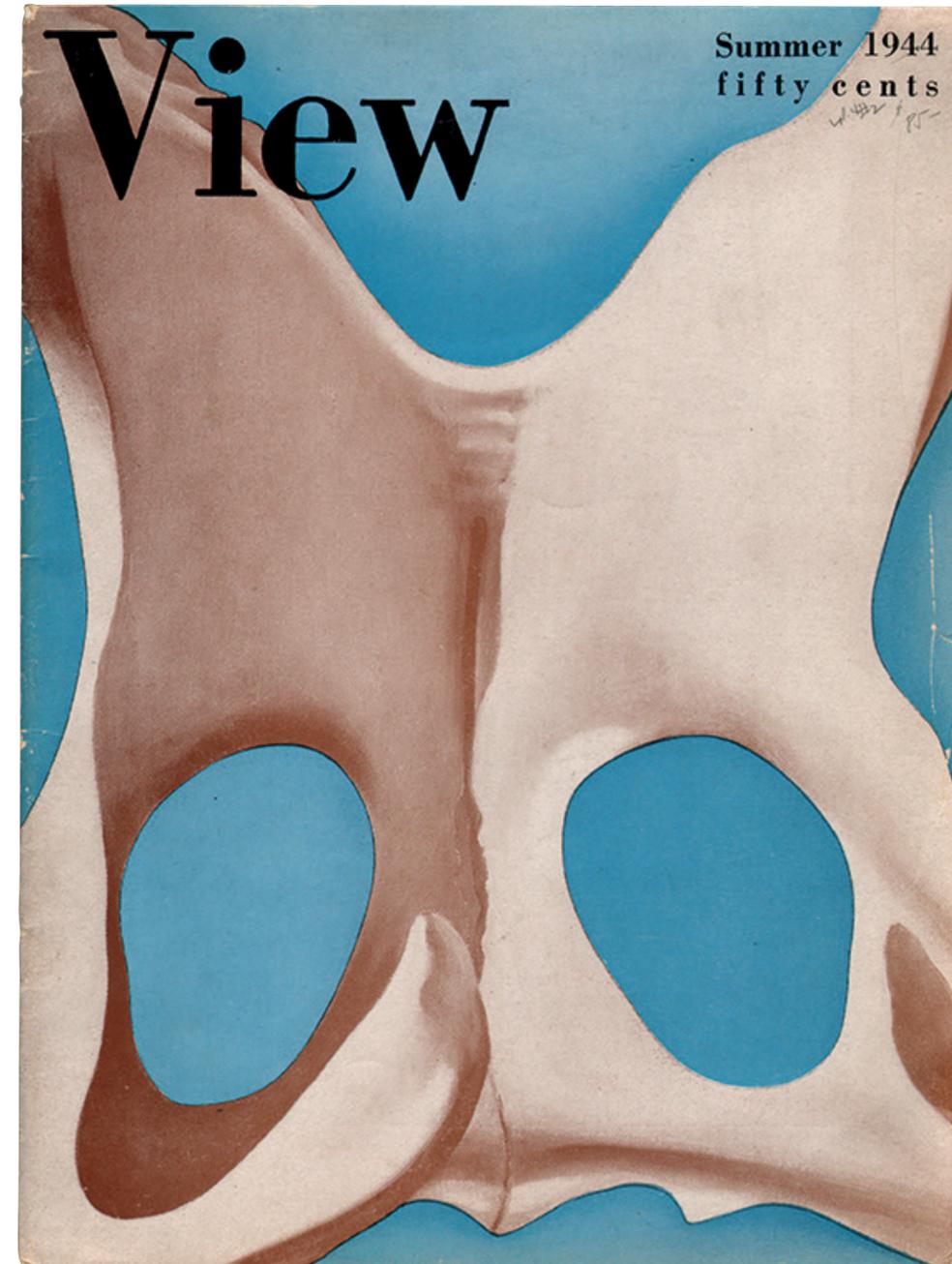
SHUT UP JOE MASSEY'S MESSAGES FROM PRISON

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SHUT UP

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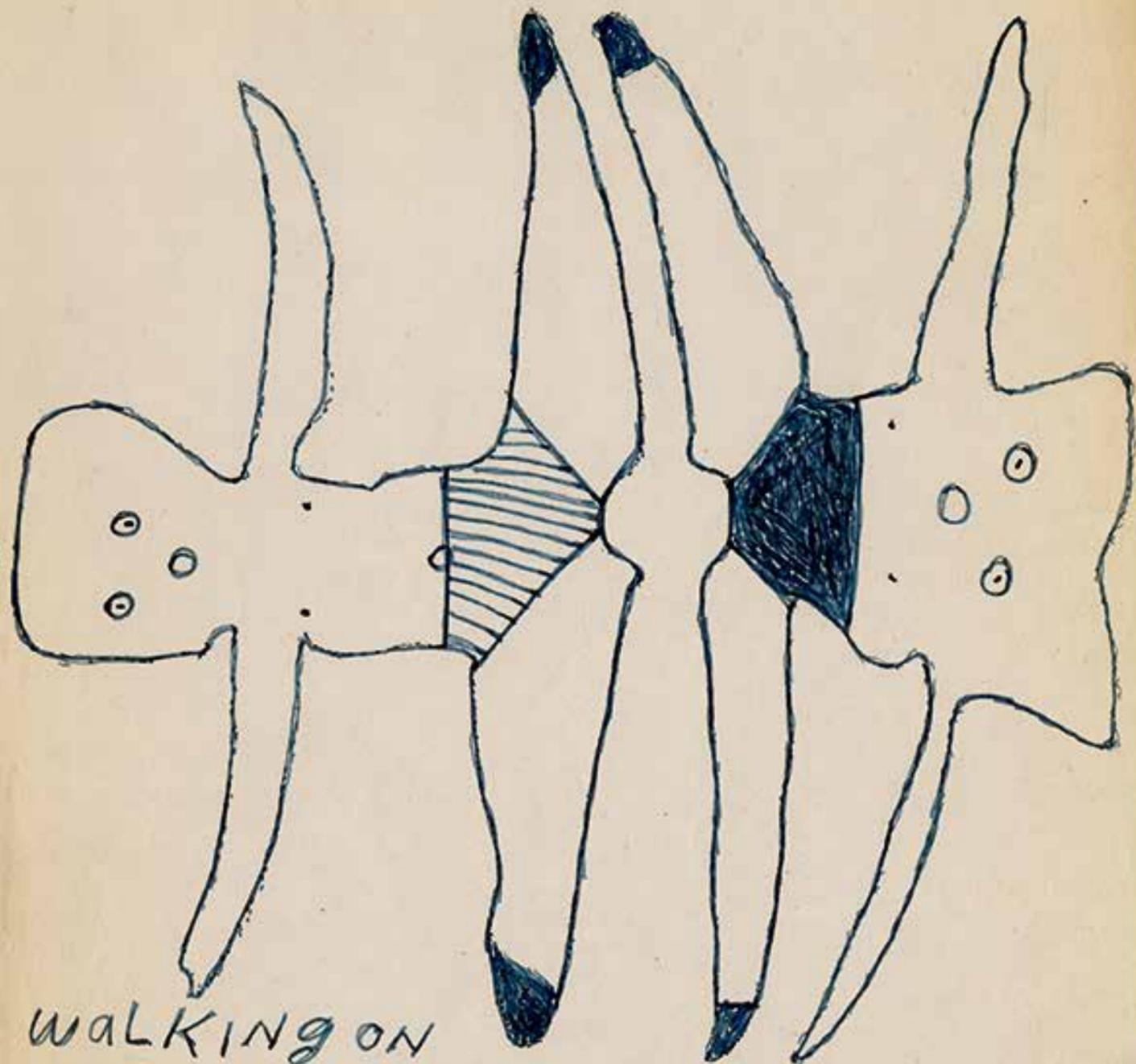


SHUT UP

JOE MASSEY'S MESSAGES FROM PRISON

J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511
Columbus 15, Ohio

23.7.3.46



WALKING ON
ONE LEG AND
HAND.

PROVE TO BE
A MAN

SHUT UP

JOE MASSEY'S MESSAGES FROM PRISON

PREFACE BY KIMBERLY REYES

INTRODUCTION BY ALEJANDRA RUSSI

RICCO/MARESCA

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WAITING FOR A BETTER DAY

“Like an artist with no art form, [he] became dangerous.”

—Toni Morrison, *Sula*

the cage, construct
|| structure || a still
concrete, to stand /straight
serenade \ a tilted land
for and after Joe Massey

I didn't know my place in this project at first—should I (we) be shining a light on the work of a Black man who killed at least one Black woman? As a Black woman, this seemed at odds with everything I believe(d). But what do any of us believe when confronted with one of the biggest quandaries of our time: properly separating a flawed person from his edifying art?

There is no excusing or placating Massey's crimes but, as someone who believes in redemption and rehabilitation, I couldn't turn away from the fact that his art was (is) a salient reflection of (his) postbellum life, in addition to a meditation on what rehabilitation can look like.

Like many of the Great Migration, Massey was a man who lived in an extrajudicial world where justice, humanity, hope, security, safe expression, and a future eluded too many. This, of course, does not justify murder, even one of passion, but it helps us to see Massey's full, complicated history.

From my time teaching incarcerated men I know that prison was often the first time many of my students encountered relative still and reflection while becoming some of the most keenly analytical, wise, and accountable people I've ever met. Massey is not dissimilar.

His poems, sometimes mounted over drawings of what could be pieces of a flattened heart, beg to be in dialogue with a world that could never really see him. There is a play with shape, form and symmetry in his visual art that his words are equally determined to explore. Both forms can be campy and cartoonish, which could be the result of the music, movies, and papers that he ingested in place of formal training, but it could also just be the work of a playful and childlike person who spent little time playing or being a child.

Musicality and romanticism permeate his work, a site where innocence and informality meet hunger and plunder. Massey's art takes in all he's learned, all he's seen, and he sings it all back to us in a sometimes innocent, sometimes coy, and often downright ominous, omnipresent verse.

We live in a time when rightly scrutinizing the art of dangerous men is not only (finally) acceptable, but necessary. It's also necessary to put a life into proper context. Massey was an imperfect man who found art a bit too late to help him navigate the imperfect world he lived in. But the world may be discovering Massey and all of his complications at the right time, a time when we can no longer turn away from what we think we don't want to see.

There has been no peace,
Since the new world order began.
There will be no peace,
If the new world order wins.

—Joe Massey

—Kimberly Reyes, author of *Running to Stand Still*,
Warning Coloration, and *Life During Wartime*

Joe Massey, "Dont be Afraid," n.d. Ink on paper. 11 × 8½ in.



INTRODUCTION

All that we currently know about the life of African American visual artist and poet Joseph Cyrus Massey are a few cold facts found in official documents, vintage newspaper clippings, and a handful of letters. According to his World War I draft registration form, he was born on August 9, 1895, in Texas. His entry in the Ohio Penitentiary Register of Prisoners, where he was admitted on March 7, 1939, indicates that he was previously incarcerated in Little Rock, Arkansas, Michigan City (under the pseudonym Lester Brown), and Jeffersonville—two Indiana towns.

The long-demolished Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus, where “Bugs” Moran, O. Henry, and Sam Sheppard also did time at different junctures—and where an astonishing number of capital punishments were carried out between 1885 and 1963—was the bleak outpost where Massey’s story rose above what was, by all accounts, a dejected life. Whether in the past he pursued artistic endeavors is unclear, but only a few years into his Ohio incarceration, the pioneering surrealist magazine *View*—whose contributors included Picasso, Duchamp, Nabokov, and Sartre—began printing inmate no. 75209’s drawings and poems.

At some point in the early 1940s, Massey started sending letters and submissions, addressed to Charles Henri Ford (“Editor Sr”), to the *View* headquarters at 1 East 53 Street in New York City. A sample of this correspondence is archived in The Beinecke Research Library at Yale University: some letters are written on blank pages and others on prison mail office forms, always in urgent, scribbled longhand and often embellished with sketches and stamped CENSORED. Massey fastidiously itemized drawings and poems that he had sent, received back (or not) as well as those that had apparently been mislaid—always finding an opportunity to convey his desire to publish a book (“or booklet or pamphlet”) of his poetry.

We know from the artist that Ford sent Massey issues of *View*, checks, and art supplies, but the absence of Ford’s written responses (most likely lost in the flux of prison administration) means that the full dynamics between Massey and Ford or the extent of the race-class divide in the roles of benefactor and protégé will forever be unknown. Whatever the case, Ford was surely intrigued and impressed with the radical otherness of Massey’s letters and creative output; they were windows to a world drastically unlike his own yet very much in tune with the spirit of the avant-garde.

The December 1943 issue of *View* included the following excerpt from Massey’s letters:

Sir in regards to the no. after my name This no. emphasises the fact that I have made a mistake in my life and I am trying to make the best of it I was charged with second degree murder. I am trying to overcome my past mistakes, And to rehabilitate myself by learning and writing. I am studying Christian Science.

I used to be a bell boy and a table waiter.

Now I am writing for a better day. Yours Respectfully

Joe Massey 75209

In April of 1918, the Little Rock *Arkansas Gazette* published the headline SHOOTS AT WIFE: KILLS A NEGRESS. Massey was sentenced to ten years in prison for killing the wrong woman, but he escaped a mere year later, found employment with the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which employed millions of unskilled blue-collar workers during the Great Depression and lived as a fugitive for almost two decades.

In December of 1938, outside the Mount Nebo Baptist Church in Toledo, Ohio, Massey shot and killed his second wife, Jessie Bates, and injured her male companion. Headlines of clippings from the *Toledo Blade* read, SHOOTING LAID TO JEALOUSY; WOMAN SHOT BY MATE DIES; MASSEY TRIAL NEARING JURY.

Massey escaped the electric chair but was sentenced to life and remained in the Ohio Penitentiary nearly sixteen years. He was transferred in 1954 to the Marion Corrections Institution, paroled in 1959, and finally released in 1965. In 1961 Greenwich Book Publishers in New York published a selection of his poetry in a book titled *Singing Stars*. To this date, it remains unknown what became of him as a free man or when he died.

Most of the works included in the exhibition accompanying this catalogue are drawn in blue-black ink most likely using a rough-tipped dip pen—only four works are slightly larger and made in color temperas. Massey fluidly navigated between abstraction and figuration and choreographed each composition to shine within the constraints of a limited pictorial space, arranging his components with skillful rhythm and balance.

In his drawings the dark cloud of Massey’s past has lifted and the sun shines with a smirk. With an absolute economy of means he created a visual lexicon that speaks with vigor and whimsy; Massey presents surreal visions as matters of fact; his everyday vignettes cast a dreamlike glow. Multiheaded

anthropomorphic figures with outstretched limbs and mythical beasts reminiscent of cave drawings gleefully float in negative space in some works. In others, a host of cartoonish human characters, their eyes peeled and mouths ajar, participate in various scenes, often surrounded by architectural and environmental props and a cheeky fauna (birds, canines, mules, horses, and indeterminate animals with protruding open snouts and teeth like needles).

The viewer is dropped into a kind of vaudeville that's packed with action, motion, and emotion—and reinforced by Massey's consistent use of words, sometimes a fragment of dialogue or a call and response between characters: "which way mister/after you sister," "You keep out. Of this / did you call me miss," "who me/yes you/telling me what to do." Other times the voice of an indeterminate speaker who sounds somewhat like a proto-rapper: "They were on ice./once or twice," "Two on. One. Mule./Arent no fool. But / they dident. Go/to school," "A human being. Aren't been seen. Yet shall be the greatest queen."

Charles Henri Ford and his sister (the actress Ruth Ford) were born into *well-to-do* Mississippi family. Charles dropped out of high school and started publishing the monthly magazine *Blues: A Magazine of New Rhythms*, which had a short life, between 1929 and 1930. Openly gay, he was photographed as a handsome youth by Henri Cartier-Bresson, Carl Van Vechten, and Cecil Beaton—wearing a flamboyant costume designed by Dalí. He was a denizen among the intellectual circles of New York City and Paris, where he frequented Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas's salon. In 1940 he founded *View* in collaboration with film critic Parker Tyler. Published quarterly until 1947, the magazine drew content from the displaced European intelligentsia during World War II and introduced the avant-garde, particularly surrealism, to an American audience. After *View* folded, Ford went on to live a long, eccentric life as an artist, writer, and filmmaker—having reached into the trenches of unsolicited submissions to give an artist like Massey the possibility of transcending oblivion.

In a very real sense, Ford stands for the insurgence of the art world in the first half of the twentieth century and Massey for the marginalized artists that it made visible. Such unknown artists were fundamental to the ideals of modern art: self-expression unrestrained by the academic establishment; the democratization of art; seeing beauty in the unexpected; the artist as iconoclast. In this context, Massey was the epitome of crossover, not only because he established a line of communication with the nucleus of the art elite, but also because his imagery was experimental and autonomous—independent even from any conceptual or ideological framework. If his poetry was a vehicle to reformation,

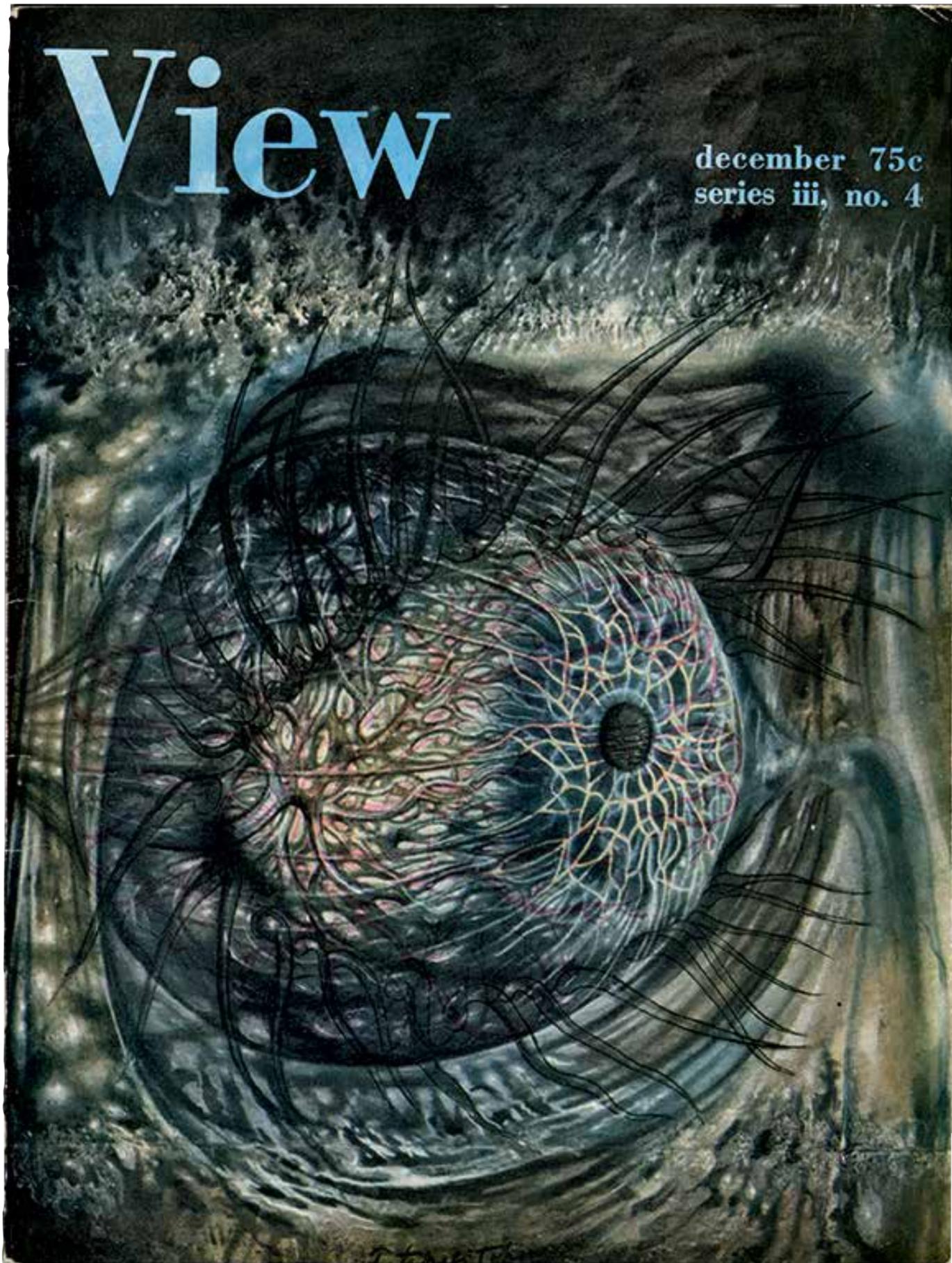
Massey's drawings seem the distillation of his core experiences and world view—its truest expressions being caricature, hyperbole, and surrealism.

Massey's life is a testimony of the unfathomable complexities of being human, but his art remains thrilling and irreducible—flourishing as much from seclusion as it did from exposure and a profound yearning to be heard. The manner in which the artist signed all his work ("J.M. 75209. P.O. Box 511. Columbus 15. Ohio") mirrors this dichotomy: the convergence of Massey the person and Massey the prisoner in the genesis of the artist—he who creates and therefore exists.

—Alejandra Russi

View

december 75c
series iii, no. 4



They cannot
stop



Death

by

Joe Massey

THEY cannot stop death.
When He comes to take their breath.
They cannot say death you flee
Or lock him up He is bothering me.

No man nor woman nor Girl or boy
Can get back at him for He is death
And have the win.
You may be a king or a queen but when
Death come you will be seen.

You cannot lie to him because
He bring the news you ware new dress
New Hat new shoes pay you dues
Now you wont be heard or seen while
Here you was might mean.



Comproably
got money
75209



Sir in regards of the no. after my name This no. emphasizes the fact that I have made a mistake in my life and I am trying to make the best of it I was charged with second degree murder. I am trying to overcome my past mistakes, And to rehabilitate myself by learning and writing. I am studying Christian Science.
I used to be a bell boy and a table waiter.
Now I am waiting for a better day. Yours Respectfully
Joe Massey 75209
Columbus 15, Ohio

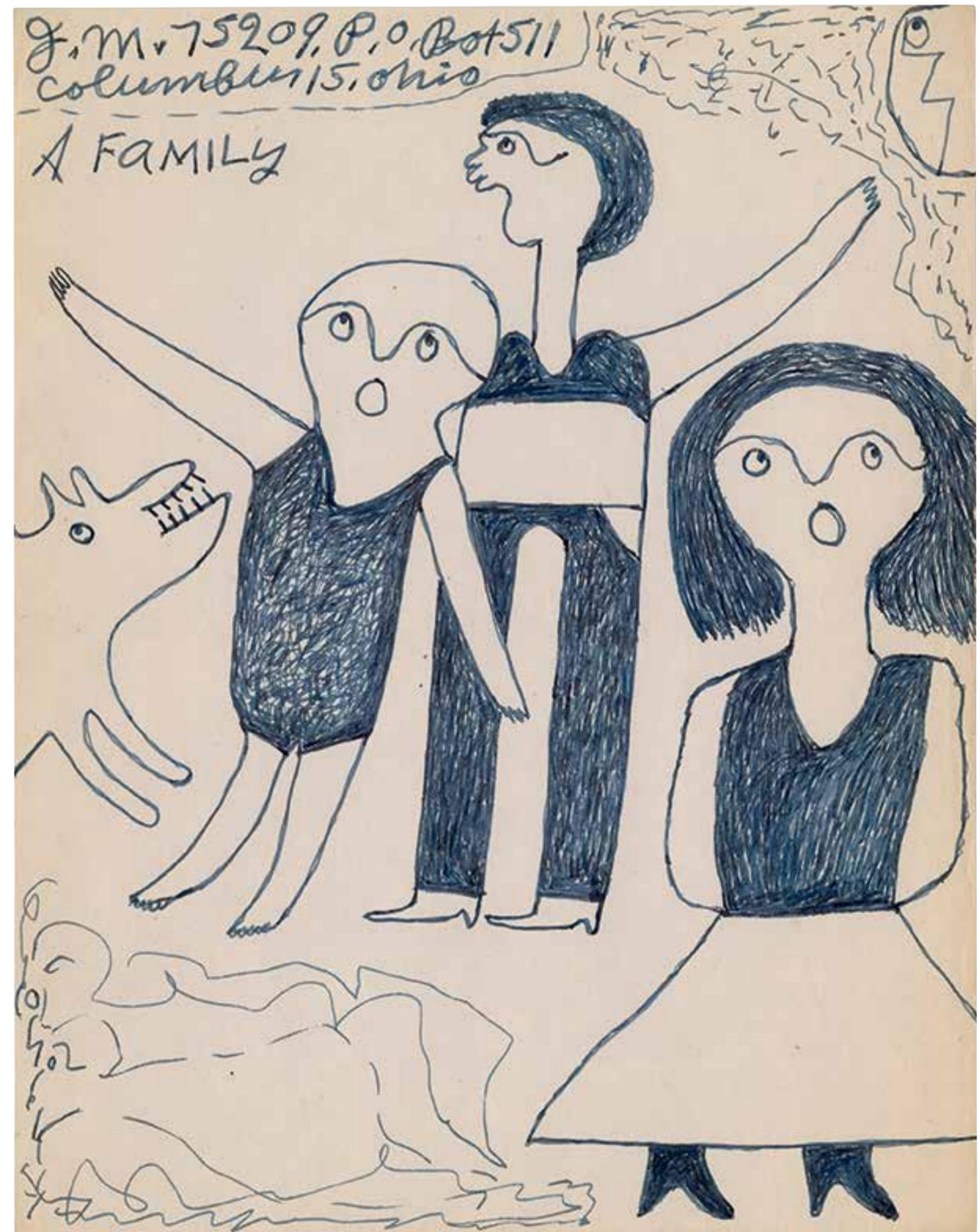
My heart, my heart,
You give me my start,
Every moment you beat,
Now, don't you cheat.

The moment you stop,
They say you will drop,
So help me to love,
Everything here and above.

I'm depending on you,
Just to carry me through,
Don't you never depart,
My wonderful heart.

Give me my thoughts,
Through you I am taught,
Even in dream-land.
You make me stand,

So everything, have a heart,
That's why they start,
Talking about your breath,
Get away, get away, breath.



They tried to conceal,
To me it was revealed.
I could simply feel,
That they would steal.

They stole my thoughts
That I was taught.
After them I sought,
But they had been bought.

They knew they were wrong,
But they, they went on,
With men and fought;
Without one being caught.

Now that is stealing.
They sold my feeling,
What could I do,
When they were through?

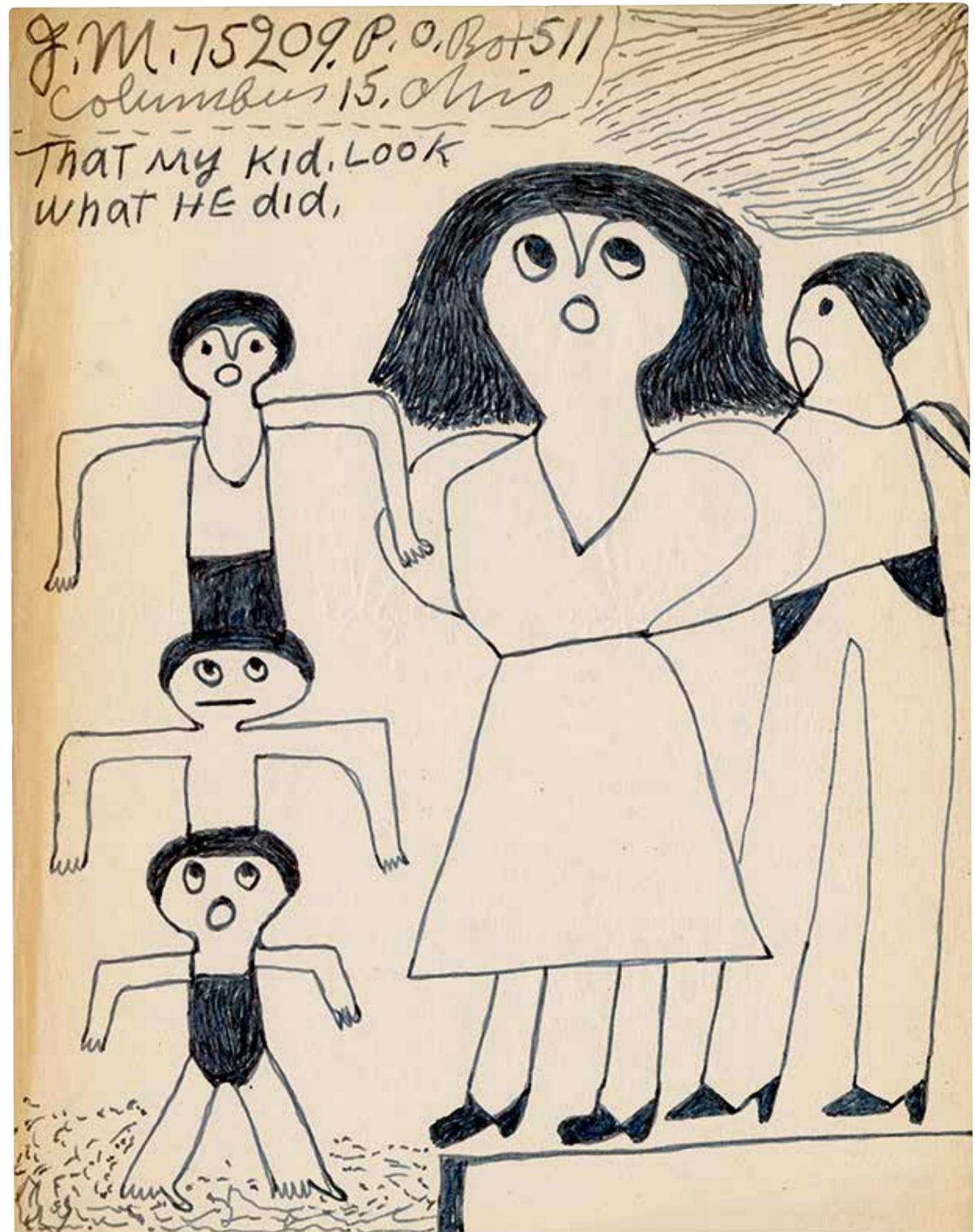


Wash your little feet, your little toes,
While washing, wash your hose.
Wth thoughts wash your woes,
Oh darling, there she goes.

Where has she been all these years?
First time I saw her, she was shedding tears.
Seemed to think nobody cares,
Why not surrender all those fears?

I am interested in your part.
To me darling, you can spill your heart.
If there be a secret you want kept,
From me there won't be one yelp.

For you I know, swim 'neath the cliffs of Dover,
In my arms, I bore you over,
Those little feet, those little toes,
Not even water touched your hose.



J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511
Columbus 15, Ohio



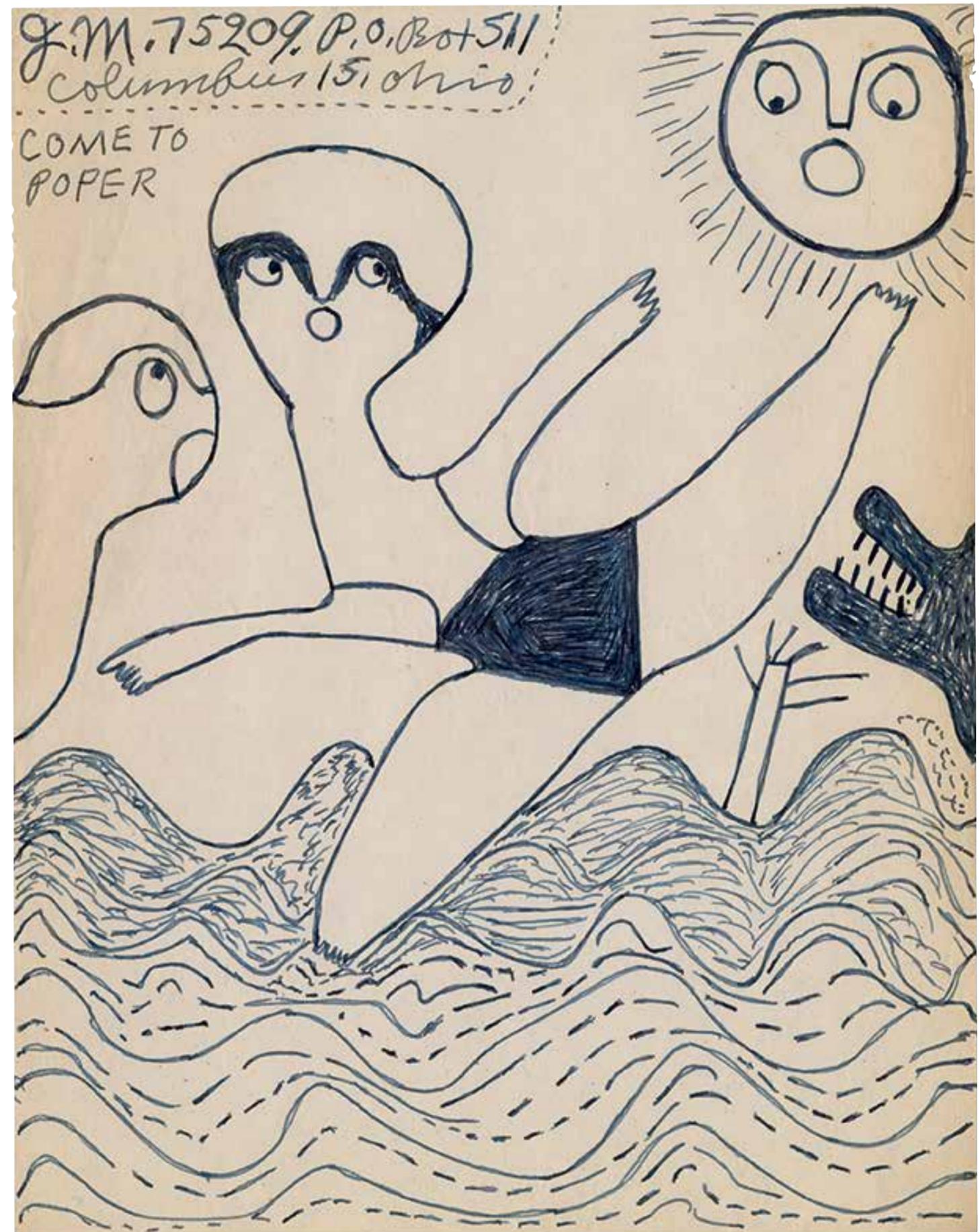
THAT MY WIFE LAD.
THAT WHAT SHE SAID.

Dear, your paper in the chair,
You need not scream, I hear, I hear.
You have a good day?
Same old usual way.

Something bothering you?
What do I care, what they do, do.
Never once are you blue,
Because they all seem true.

Things are so quiet,
Are you on a lite?
Having on those slacks,
I am trying to relax.

Listen to those kids,
What have you done?
Can't you get rid,
You want to keep it hid.



A picture within,
Is how things begin.
Before they come out,
Without a doubt.

More and more they think,
Before they use ink.
Then use words,
That will be heard.

Try to be a Saint,
As a picture you paint.
As you paint a beautiful life,
Destroy all strife.

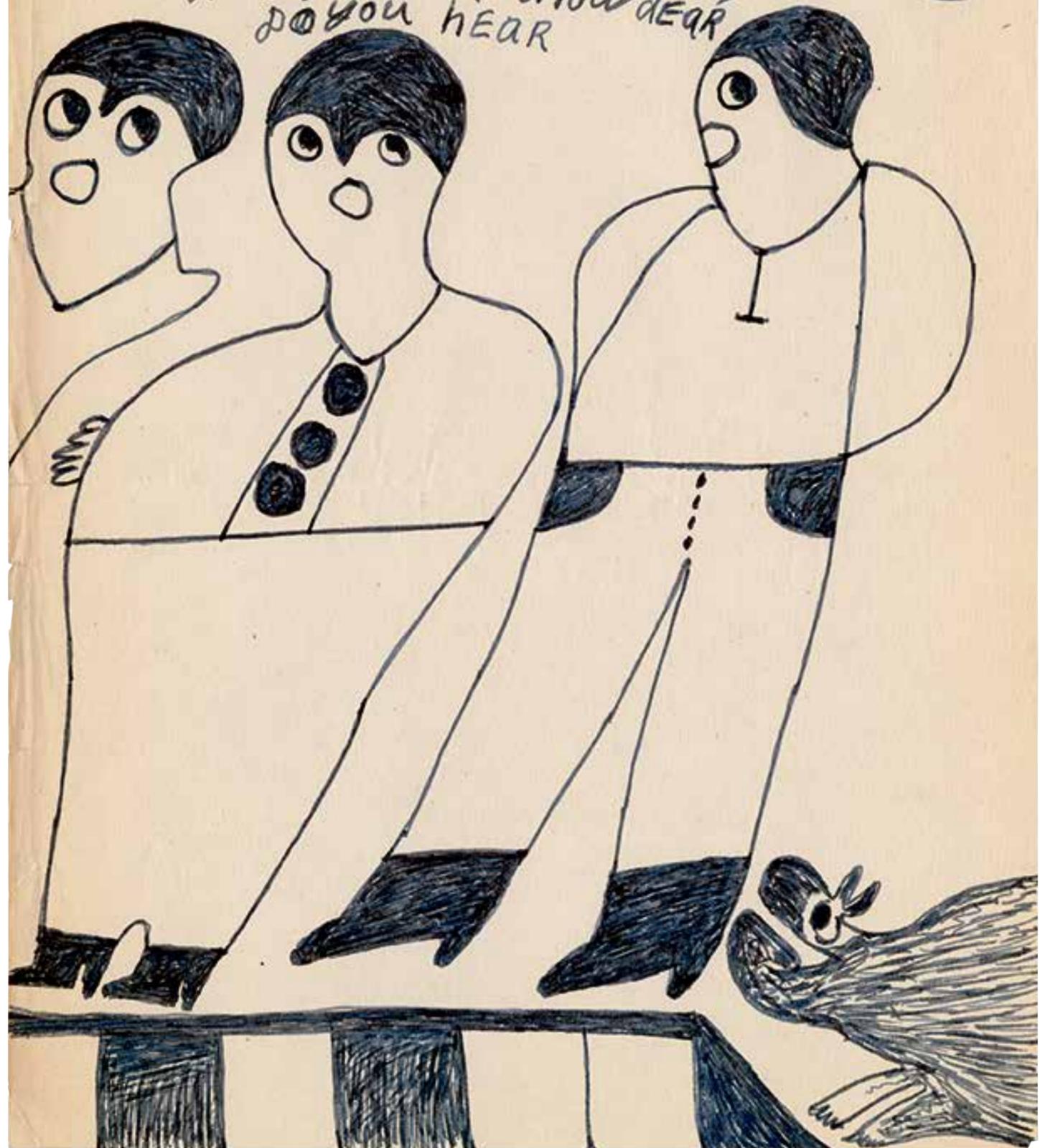
A picture is so beautiful,
When it is truthful.
It makes one's friends,
That never shall end.

What one could,
Is what he would.
By thoughts one is sought,
As by thoughts one is taught.

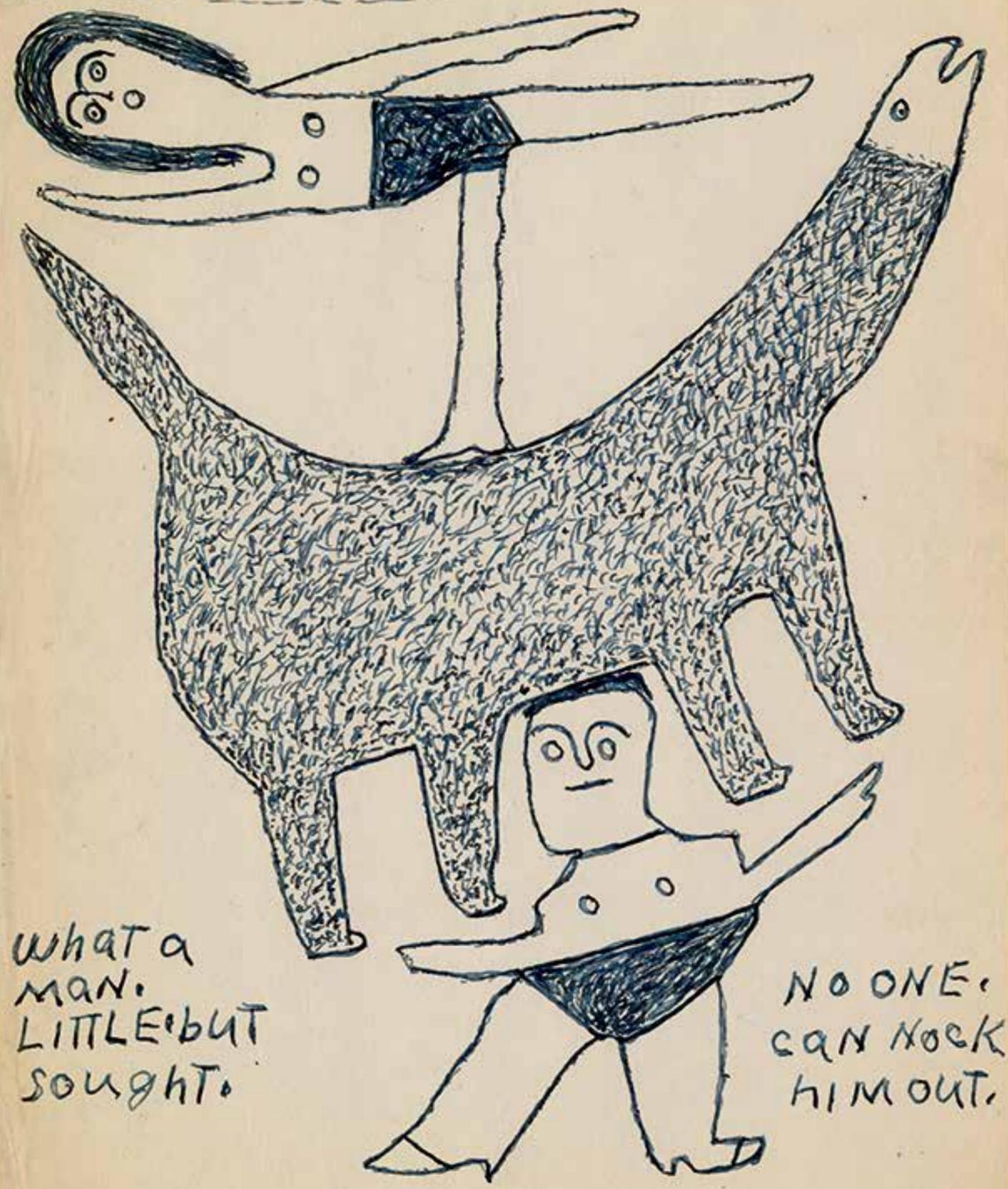


KIM, 75209, P.O. Box 511
Columbus 15, Ohio

LESS GO TO THAT SHOW DEAR
DO YOU HEAR



J. M. 75209, P. O. Box 511, Columbus 15, Ohio 18, 6, 26, 46



What a
MAN.
LITTLE BUT
SOUGHT.

NO ONE
CAN KICK
HIM OUT.

Those beautiful stars,
How high they are.
Were up in the blue,
So loving and true.

Those stars are singing,
As those bells are ringing.
And those stars hear,
As we do, dear.

They shine and live together,
Even though it be rainy weather.
They hear and they see,
And everywhere be.

Twinkling, twinkling, twinkling star.
Oh, there you are.
From the moon you never hide,
You are faithful by its side.

Even though there be a tide,
On it you seem to ride.
You will always abide,
With God being your guide.

J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511 } 22.7.3.46
Columbus 15. Ohio



I am fire and never bow,
I make things so red.
Their head they lower,
For red, I blow, blow.

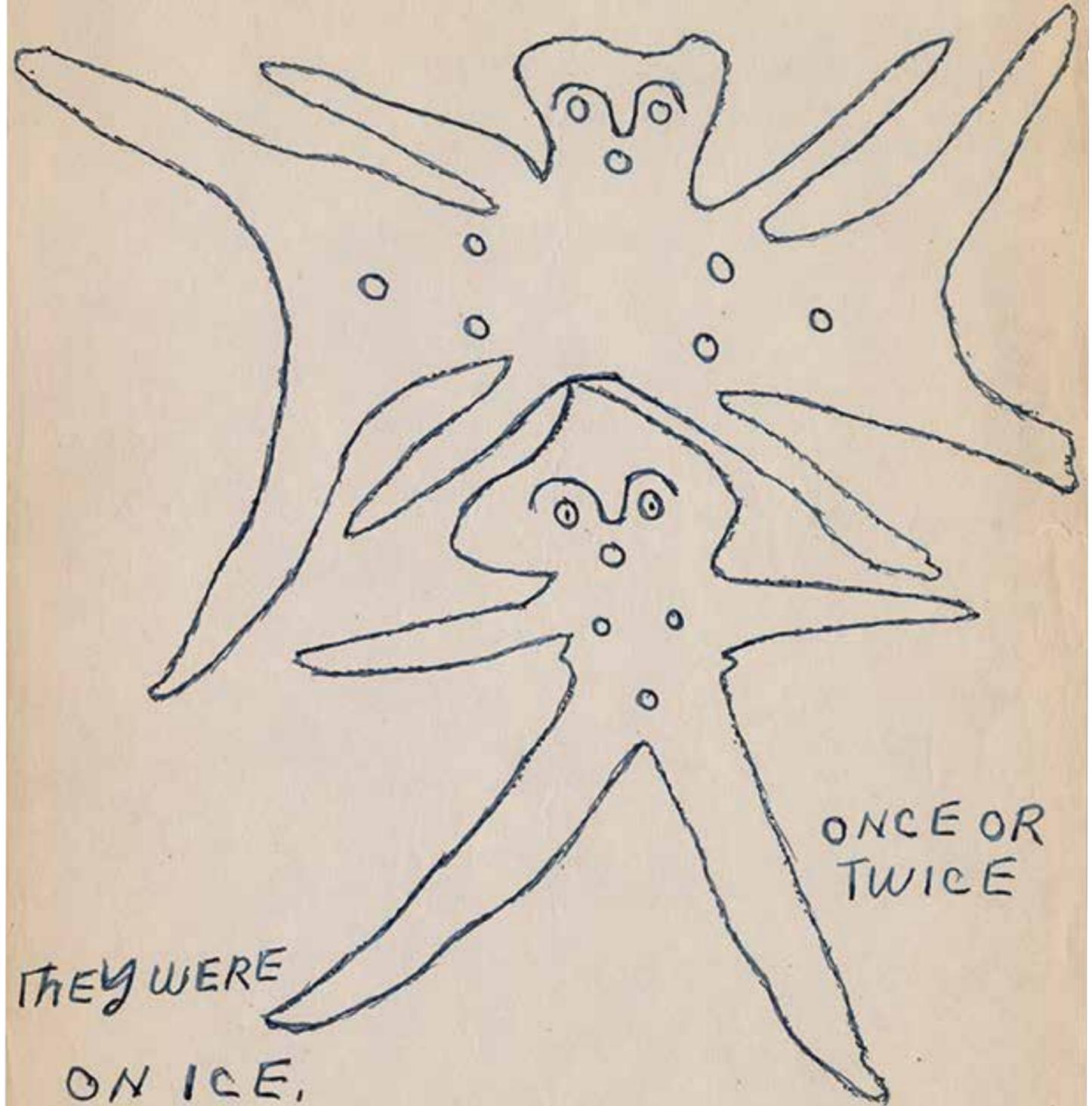
In a forest I started one day,
And almost had my way.
I swore I had them licked,
But they laid a trick.

Hearing someone squeal,
Please let the water fall,
I hurried as fast as I could,
Rushing through those woods.

Tell me I can run,
And boy, that was fun.
That water screamed at me,
And stung like a bee.

But I did fight,
I stood up for my rights.
We fought and we fought,
Yet, I was caught.

J. M. 75209, P. O. Box 511) 20.6.26.46
Columbus, Ohio

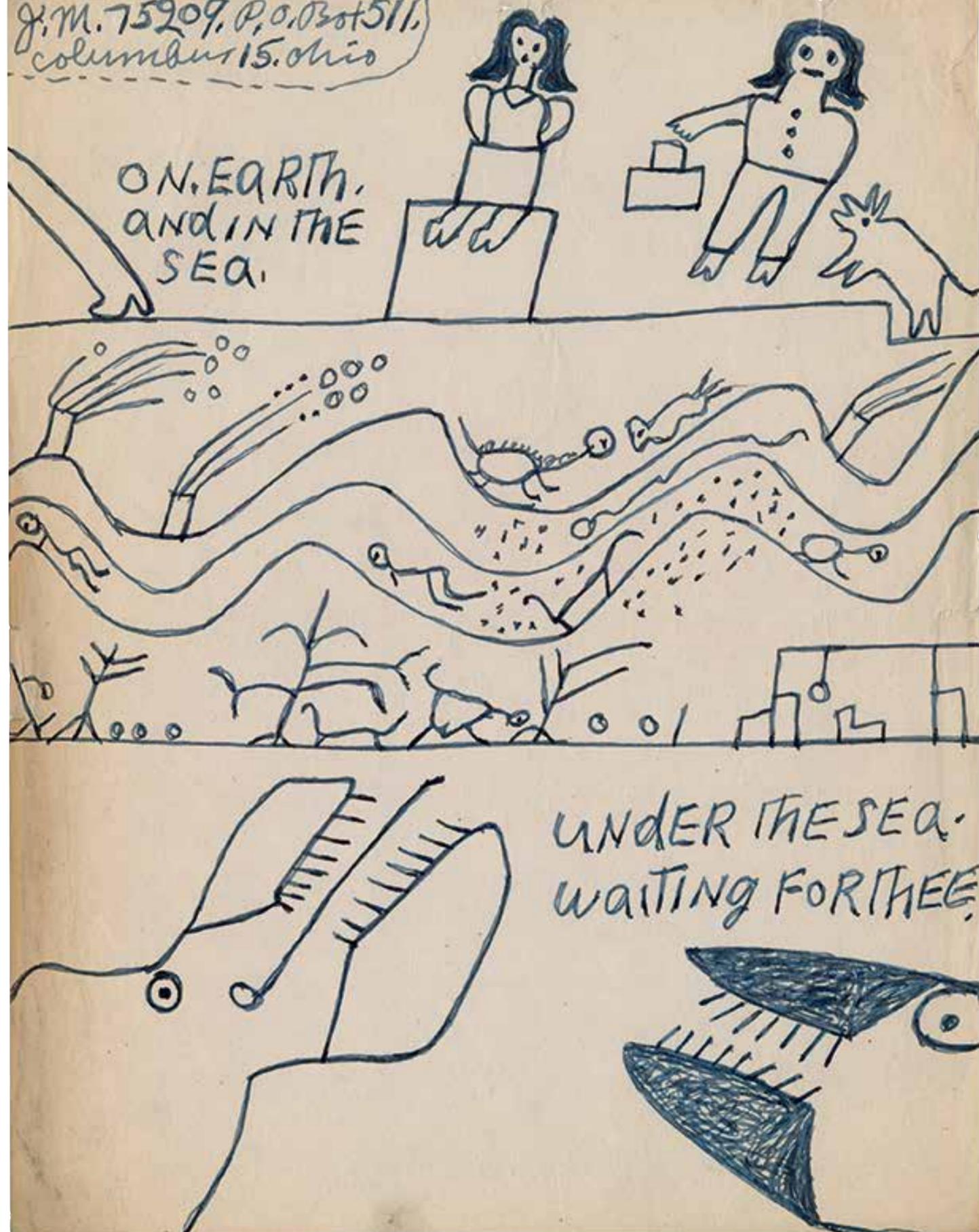


Joe Massey 75209, P.O. Box 511, Columbus 15, Ohio
000000.5.21.47

IT WERE DARK AS PITCH
AS I STUMBLE INTO A DITCH.
BECAME SO DUMB.
AS MY BODY GOT NUMB.
A DOOR SWUNG OPEN.
NOT A WORD I SPOKE.
THERE WERE A RIVER AND A BOAT.
SOMETHING TUG AT MY COAT.
I COULD BARELY DESIRE.
YET WITHIN ME WAS A FIRE.
THERE STOOD A MIGHTY BEING.
THE LARGEST I HAD EVER SEEN.
EYES SPARK WITH FIRE.
WITHIN HIS HAND A BAR.
AS THOUGH TO CRUSH ME.
FAR I COULD NOT FLEE.
ARE YOU LOOKING FAR THEE BOSS I AINT HIM.
THAT THEE ONE THEY CALL SLIM.
FAR KNOW MERCY HE GIVE THEM.
BUT IN THAT LITRE LAKE THEY SWIM.

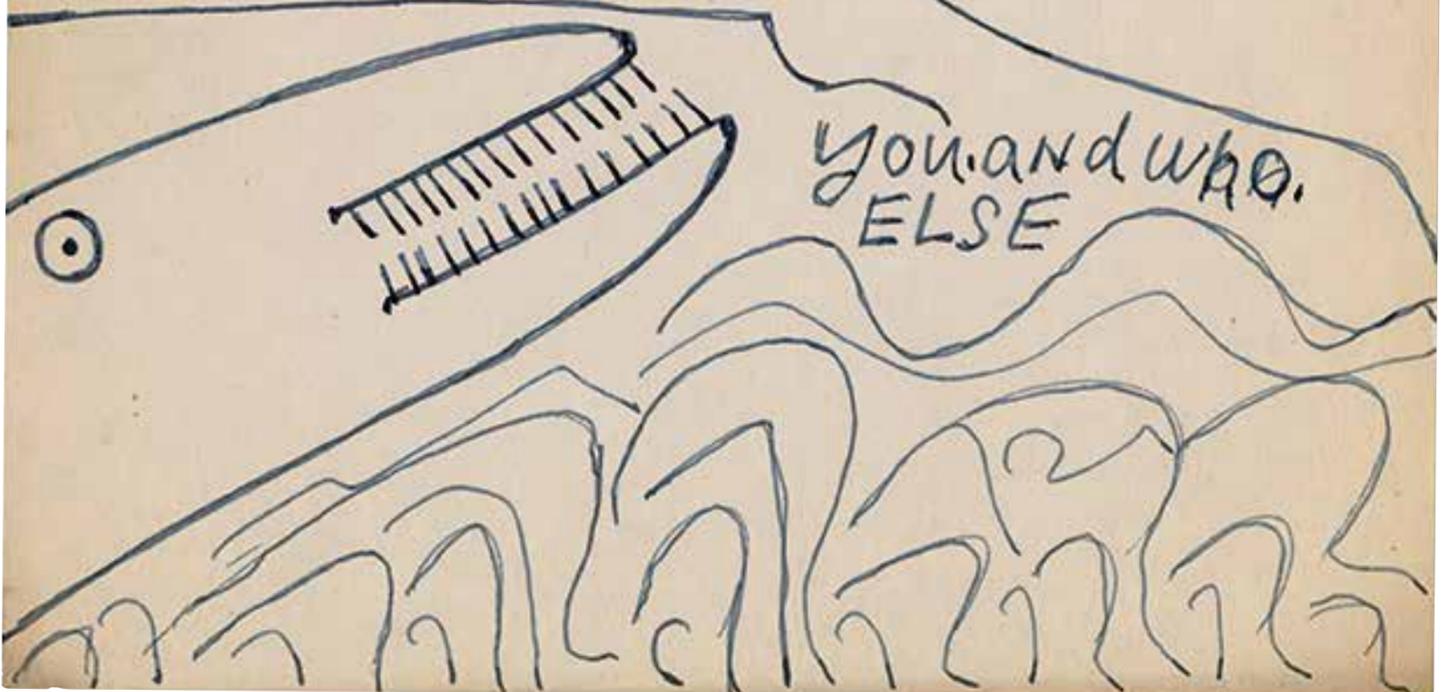
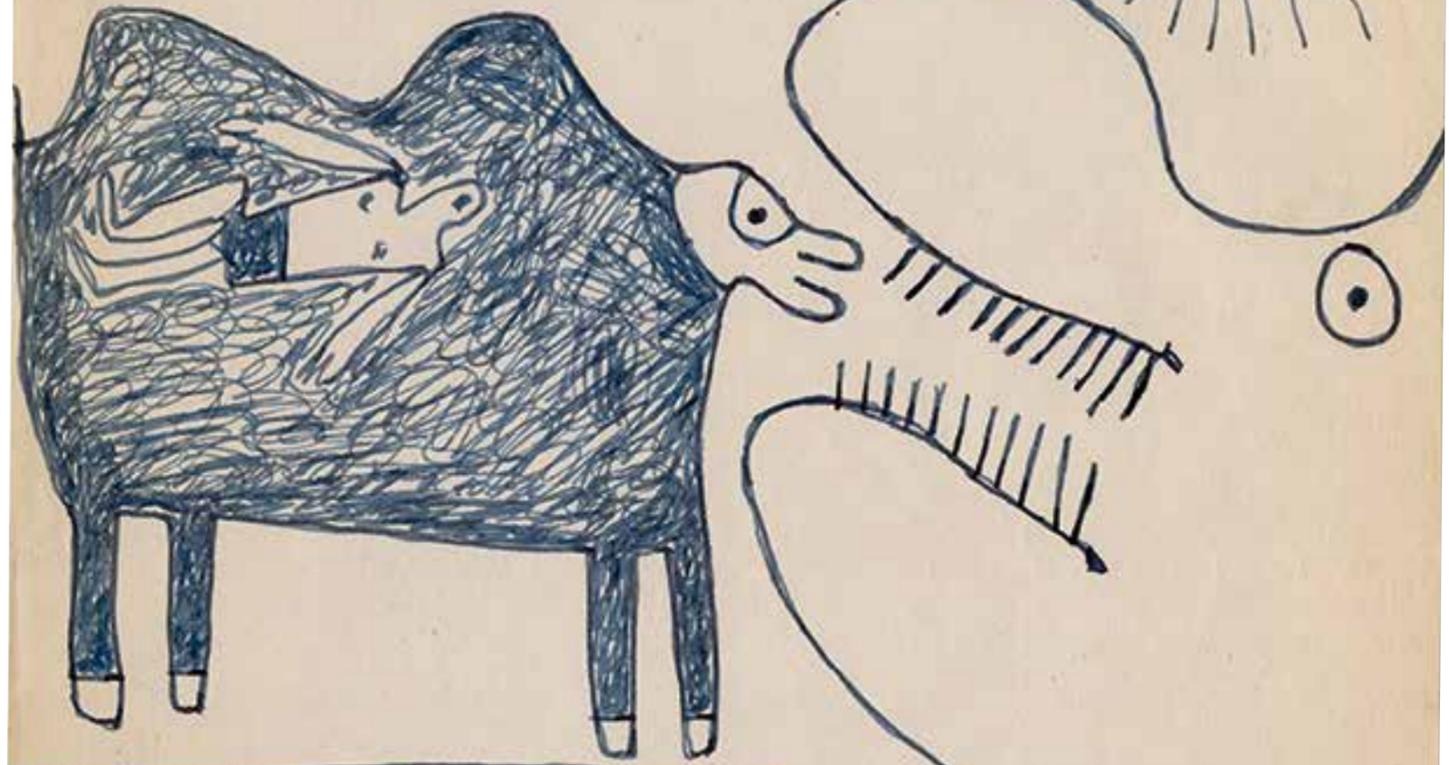
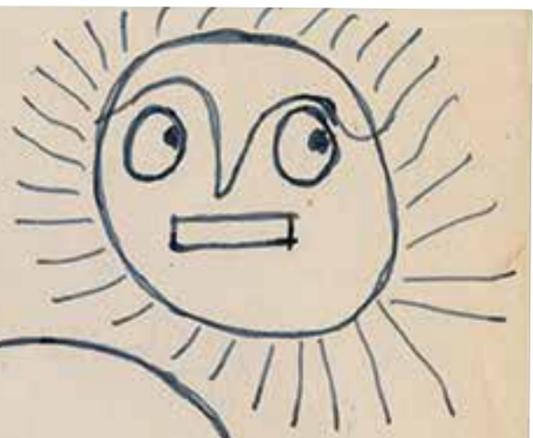
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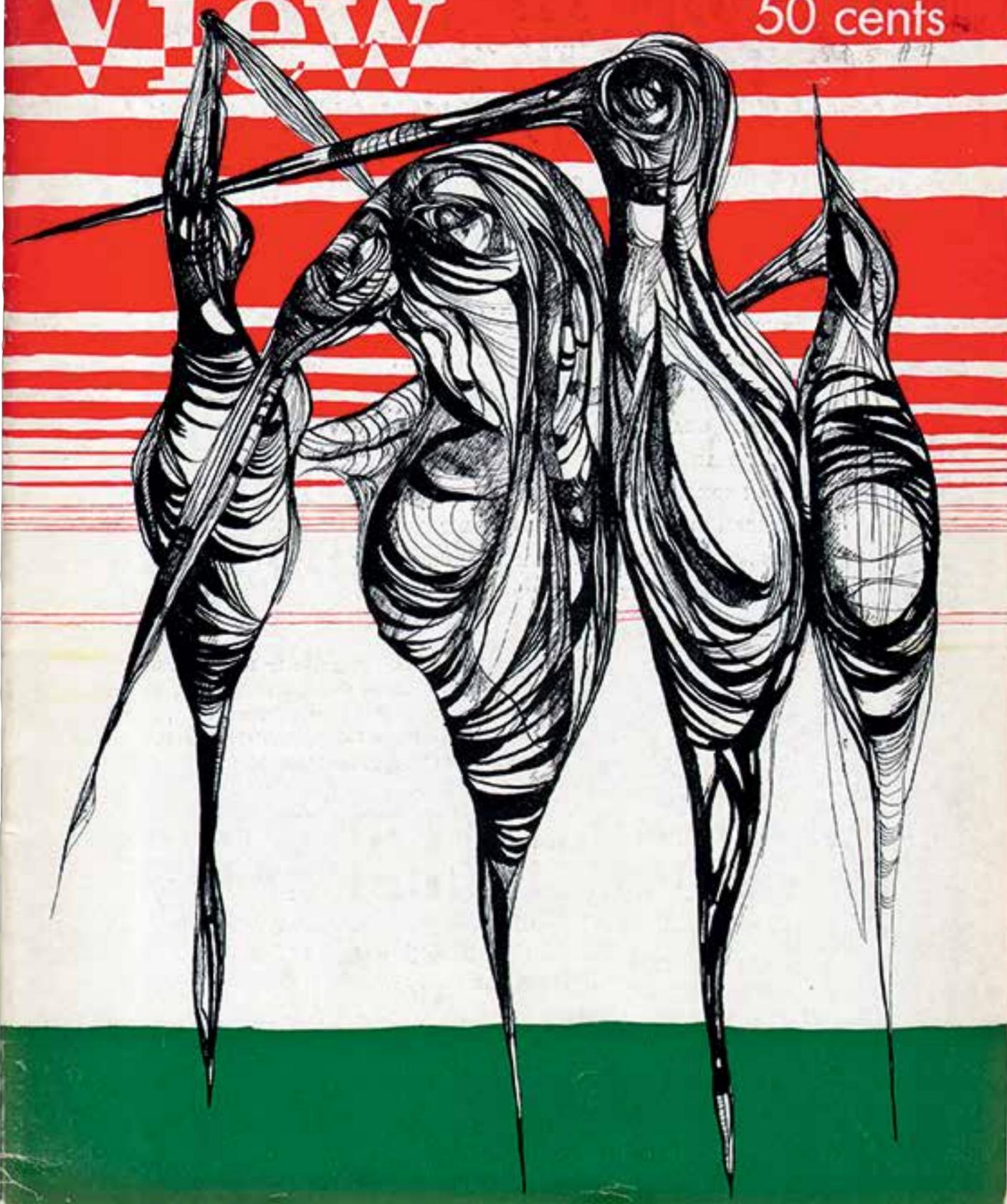
J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511, Columbus 15, Ohio



J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511
Columbus 15, Ohio

FEAT. YOU UP.





fore his dancing. Evidently, a libidinal struggle took place in Nijinsky as in all of us. The manner in which he relates that he scorned Diaghilev's sexual advances and ran after girls, frequenting whores, indicates that he wished to dispose of his sexual feelings spontaneously and without moral obligation to the object. When we learn that he submitted himself to treatments of auto-suggestion in order to identify himself more entirely with the Faun while on the stage, it is not hard to guess that Nijinsky rationalized his sexual expression into the spiritual form of Mallarmé's conception of onanistic trance. Nijinsky feared the ravages of onanism and in symbolizing them in dance motion and gestures, he probably took away some of the power of the actual impulse. Eventually he seems to have been disillusioned with whoring, not for his own sake but for the sake of the girls, who felt little or nothing, their spirits having been ruined. Nijinsky's spirit could not be ruined, but it was fearful. Out of fear he was married, for a wife proposed a tentative answer to his animal need that likewise promised spiritual sustenance. But apparently the animal need and its satisfaction became an onerous domestic duty, rather than the physical safety-valve permitting him to achieve spiritual freedom in the dance.

To finally comprehend the pattern of Nijinsky's fear of life and profound need to dance, as well as what he refers to as his "nervousness," it is necessary to invoke the incident described at the head of this article: his father's act of throwing him into the water. Although Nijinsky's recollection (as is natural enough) emphasizes his own self-rescue and its manner, the "boy of six or seven" must have felt that his father might have succeeded in killing him, but at least that the desires of his father entailed the risk of the boy's life. "I am life," he wrote Diaghilev. "You are death." Clearly the man who wanted him to swim by violent edict and the man who wanted him to dance by parallel violent edict are one and the same in the deepest realm of Nijinsky's feeling. Nijinsky was mortally afraid of not pleasing Diaghilev because he identified him with public suc-

cess; not with art, that is to say, for of that he was inwardly confident, but with the worldly reward of art: a livelihood. But more than to live as an animal (even a luxurious animal), Nijinsky wished to live as spirit. He was constantly "nervous" because Diaghilev had convinced him that it would be fatal to make a "mistake," and if he did not take his (Diaghilev's) advice, he would make a mistake. Nijinsky sought in the woman he had married an escape from Diaghilev's tyranny as he must have turned to the tenderness of his mother from the severity of his father. But Romola Nijinsky was not a genius, and she could only extend the tyranny of the ordinary "power-world" of success by providing its semi-private nature: the success of marriage and the home. To Nijinsky, every success but one, the act of dancing well, was alien and a nuisance.

During the last ten years, articles and photographs have continually appeared in the press, announcing that Nijinsky's "recovery" might be near at hand, that he was coming to America, or that, recently, he had "danced" before the Russian soldiers. These articles presumably arouse the hopes of dubiously sensitive beings who would find pleasure in contemplating Nijinsky's "return to sanity." Although enfeebled somewhat in body, the man is far too clever to do anything so stupid as voluntarily to return to "sanity"; however, it is possible he may be conscripted. In terms of space and visual variety, his present world is much narrower and humbler than in the days of his glory, but the world he has gained has a relative freedom: a choreography of the mind that is unshackled by any professional and social exactions. I do not mean that madness was a con-

POEM ☆☆☆ Joe Massey

This is a wonderful earth to Rome
All thing want a home
The smalles things you see
Fight fight to be free

On this earth they build
More room more room to live
So they won't starve out
Moving here and moving there don't die out

Must get thing to build with
Plenty for all to get
Thing are made to live together
Snow rain what kind of weather

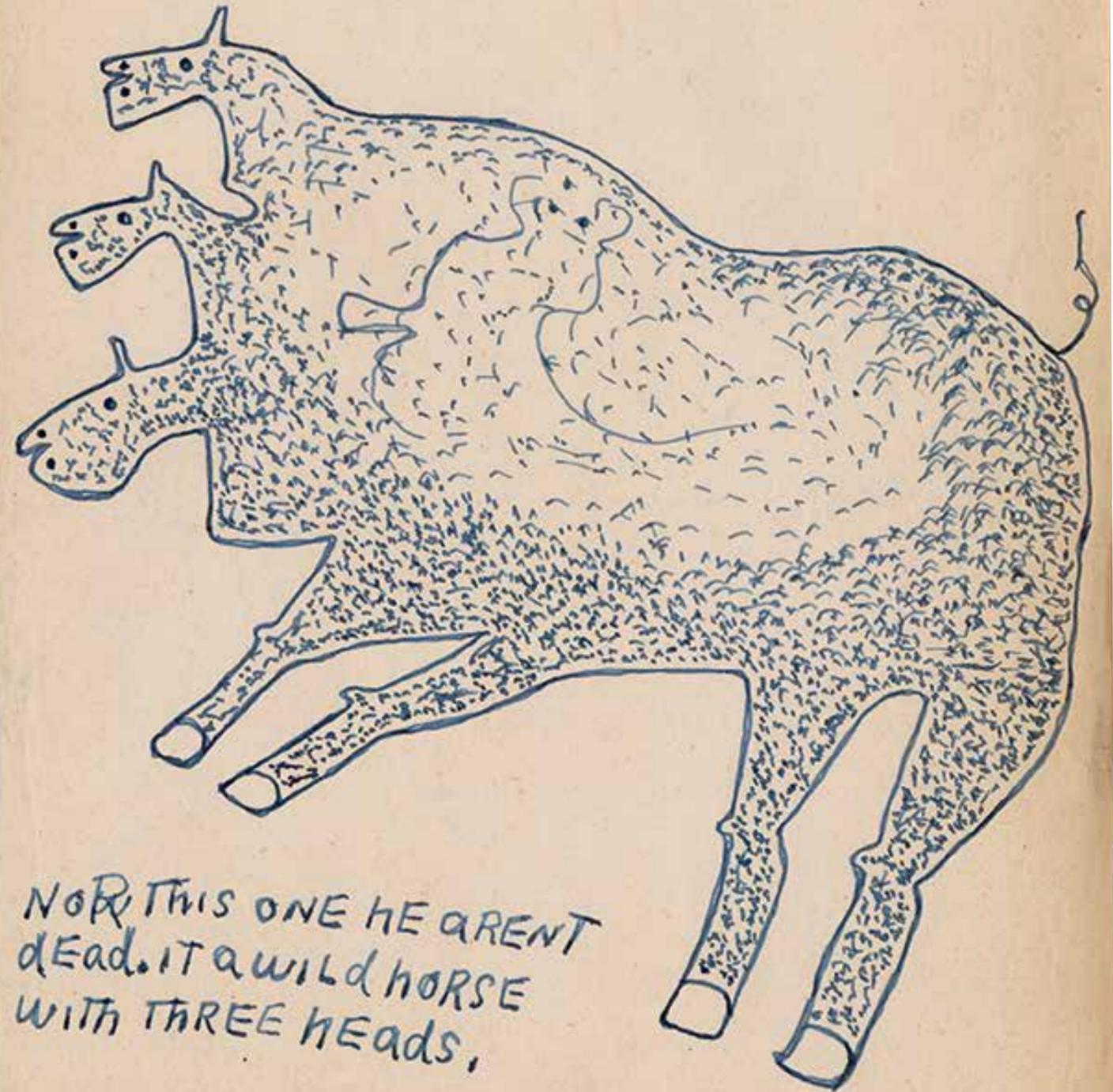
Make no difference how much water fall
It is good for us all
You can not destroy anything
Not even the life of man

Although you put him to sleep
He rise again and be a sheep
No matter what on earth you eat
Inside of you it a treat

scious device of Nijinsky's to escape from the world, although the feigning of madness has often been proven close to "the real thing," but that the positive greatness of Nijinsky, his genius as a dancer, may have had its innately spiritual impulse in the trauma of fear probably incurred when his father plunged him into the swimming pool, and—lips shut tight—he sank helplessly to the bottom. . . .

The genius of life is that it offers to very exceptional beings the unique challenge of death that, shaking them to their deepest depths, causes them by reaction to reach the heights for which they are destined. Nijinsky has described without flaw the sublimity of his self-resourcefulness in the terrible moment when he might have died. His words and tone leave no room for doubt that he was certain of the transcendent strength of his legs to make the life-saving leap that he completed over the window-sill into the chamber where the young girl dreamed of the rose. But if Nijinsky always leaped into life (even if it was life as a dream, half-illusion and half-reality) he leaped from death. ". . . children do not forget what happens to them," wrote Nijinsky. "I saw my father diving into the water," he says, "but I was afraid. I disliked somersaults." The leap is always upward, and the body is not inverted, merely being momentarily in air and stretched in all directions to its uttermost. Air and life replaced water and death for Nijinsky. Only the shut mouth of subsanguine terror could reply to Diaghilev's quick tongue and implacable will. Only the birdlike surge of the leap could provide escape from the remorseless paternal critic that was magically revived in Diaghilev, who was immeasurably terrible because he criticized the very form of Nijinsky's life-saving "device," which had revived as *the dance*. In the eyes of the child, the father's dive was a descent, a descent into death, and that is why Vaslav feared seeing it. When forced into the same situation, therefore, he had to use his utmost strength to convert the descent into the rise, to complete his father's downward arc by leaping over the wall-of-death that was the side of the swimming pool. The suspended elevation of Nijinsky's leap was the eternal moment of life.

J. M. FOUR. 75209. P. O. Bot 511. Columbus 15.
Ohio



NOT THIS ONE HE ARENT
DEAD. IT A WILD HORSE
WITH THREE HEADS,

• 5, 22, 46.

811. 75209, P.O. Box 511
Columbus, Ohio

TWO ON ONE MULE,
AREN'T NO FOOL,
BUT THEY DIDN'T GO
TO SCHOOL.



JOE MASSEY 75209, P.O. Box 511, 00000, 5, 21, 47
Columbus 15, Ohio

WASHING THE FACE OF THE EARTH,
FROM WHERE IT WERE BIRTH,
TO TOUCHING EVERY THING,
AS DOWN IT SWING.

AS IT LIVE UP,
AS IT LIVE DOWN,
THEN COME UP,
WHEN IT COME DOWN.

WHAT IS IT NOT IN,
DONT SAY THE T I N,
SO VERY IMPORTIN,
HERE THOSE HORSES SNORTIN.

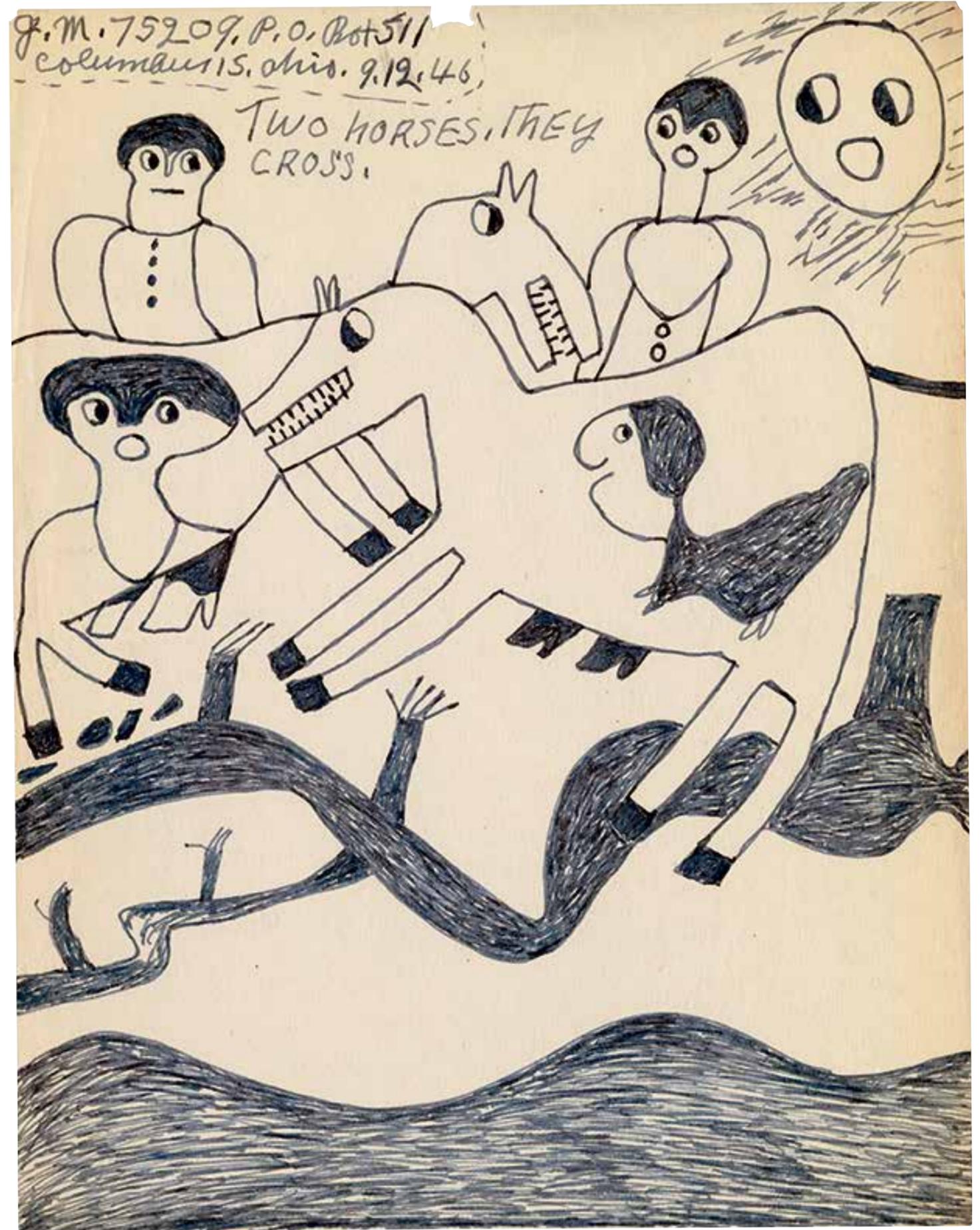
THERE IN THAT PLASTER,
ISENT IT IT MASTER,
NOW YOU JUST THANK,
TAKE THAN A DRANK.

IN USE NIGHT AND DAY,
IT WONT GO AWAY,
NOT MANY CAN DO WITHOUT IT,
TRY TO STAY OUT OF IT.

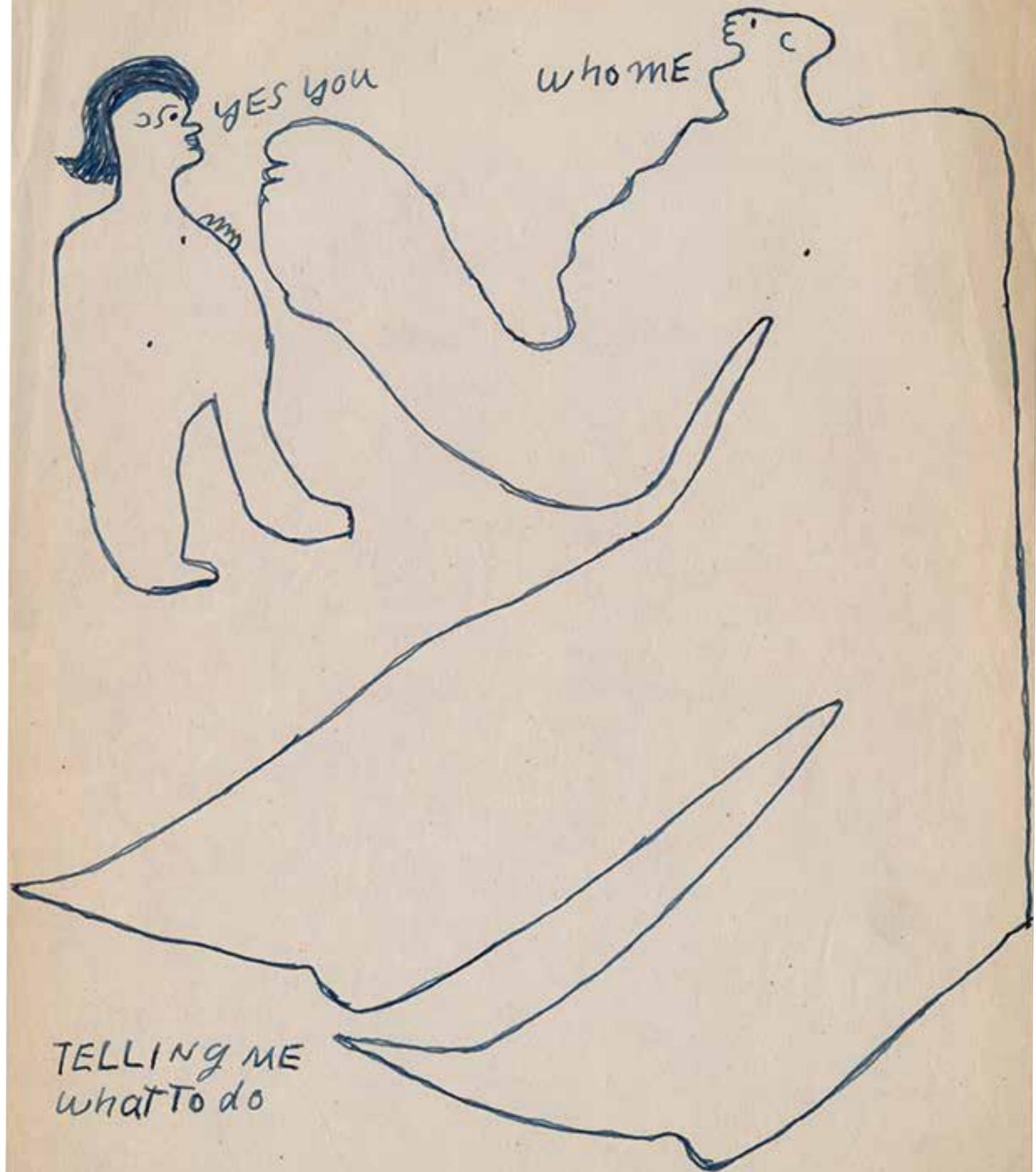
Composed by JOE MASSEY -
75209, ON. 07, Before 5, 21, 47.
P.O. Box 511,
Columbus 15,
Ohio

J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511
Columbus 15, Ohio. 9.12.46

TWO HORSES, THEY
CROSS.



J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511 } 9. 5. 29. 46.
Columbus 15, Ohio



Oh man, wake up,
Before you drop my cup.
Sitting there cooling a nog,
You should be digging sod.

You, a child of God,
Why carry a Rod?
I don't want to take up,
What you break up.

Having me in fear,
My, my what a dear.
You are so funny,
When you want honey.

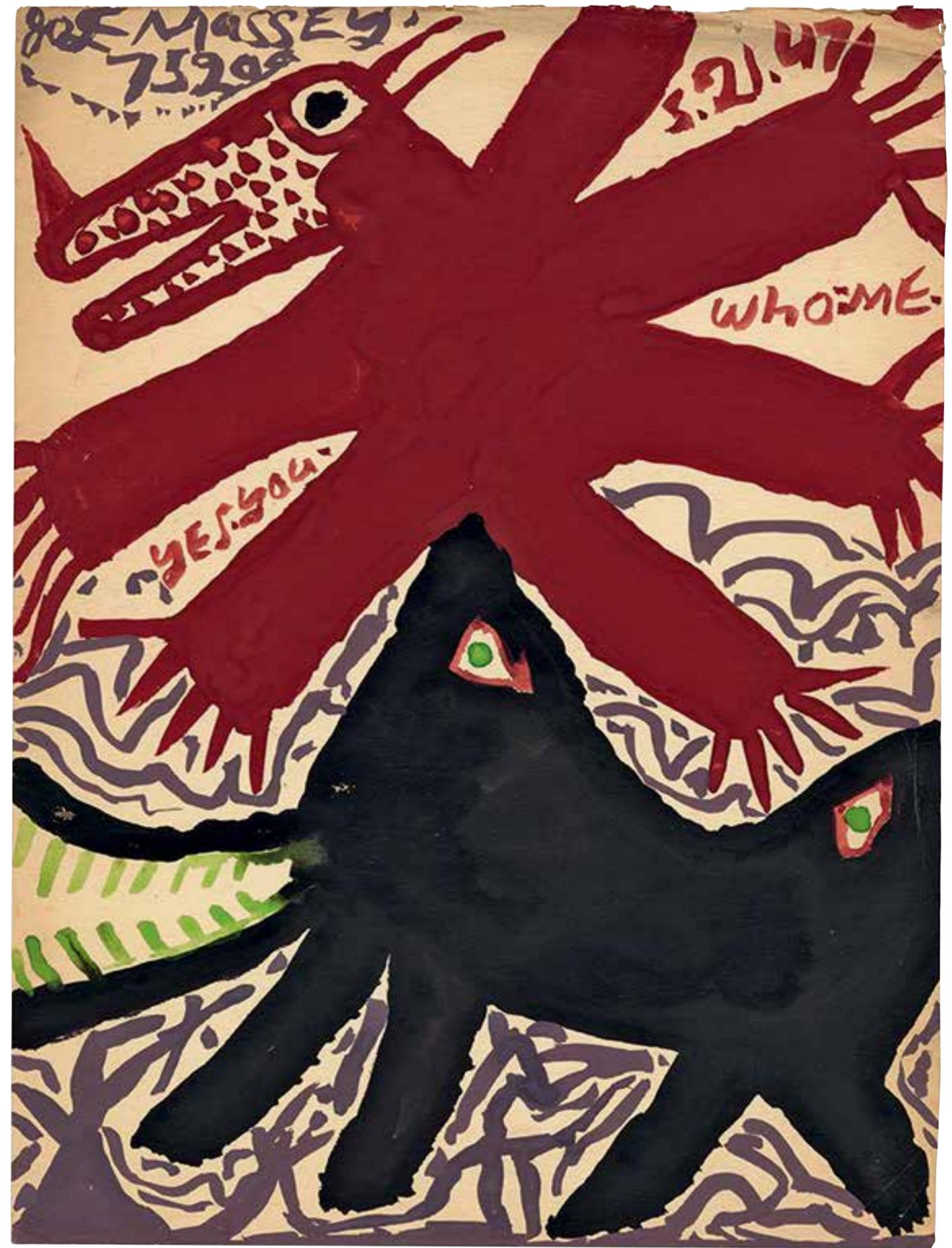
Why be afraid to go to sleep?
For I know you want to creep.
If there be any creeping done,
I will know who is the one.

J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511 | 21.7.3.46.
Columbus 15, Ohio



TALKING ABOUT.
WHAT I WONT DO.
ARENT I A COW BOY
TO.

PUT ME DOWN.
AFTER I TURN
YOU A ROUND.



J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511
Columbus 15, Ohio



G.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511
Columbus 15, Ohio
NOW LISTEN MUG. & GIVE
YOU A SLOW



Thee, worms that are in earth,
For what cause give they birth?
Here they come from the ground,
Wigling, round and around.

Were they here before,
Don't speak, except you know.
Were they the first human beings?
Many, many things have they seen.

Swimming in some clear stream,
Never once I had a dream.
No one does. They hurt.
And I have no right to flirt.

They serve many people,
Even, take the rose,
From the earth it came,
But using no slang.

There are many kinds of them,
Some ate through a "him,"
They are seen in many places,
Even in the fine faces.



F.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511
Columbus 15, Ohio

DONT THINK CAUSE
YAMOUNT OF SHAPE.



YAM GOING BEA
APE.

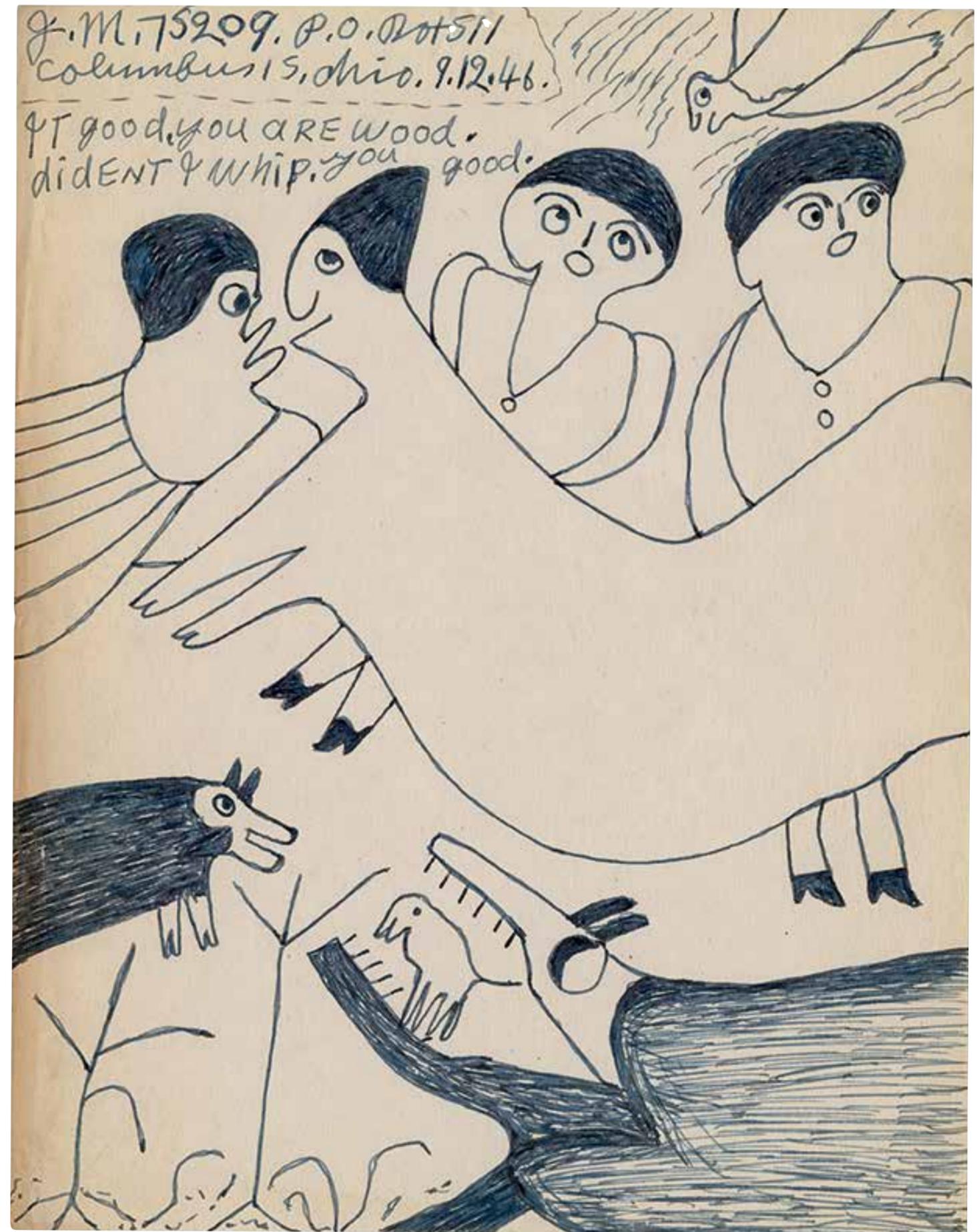
Man, stepping into the frost,
Hearing the echo of his voice.
Falling in the direction,
With no protection.

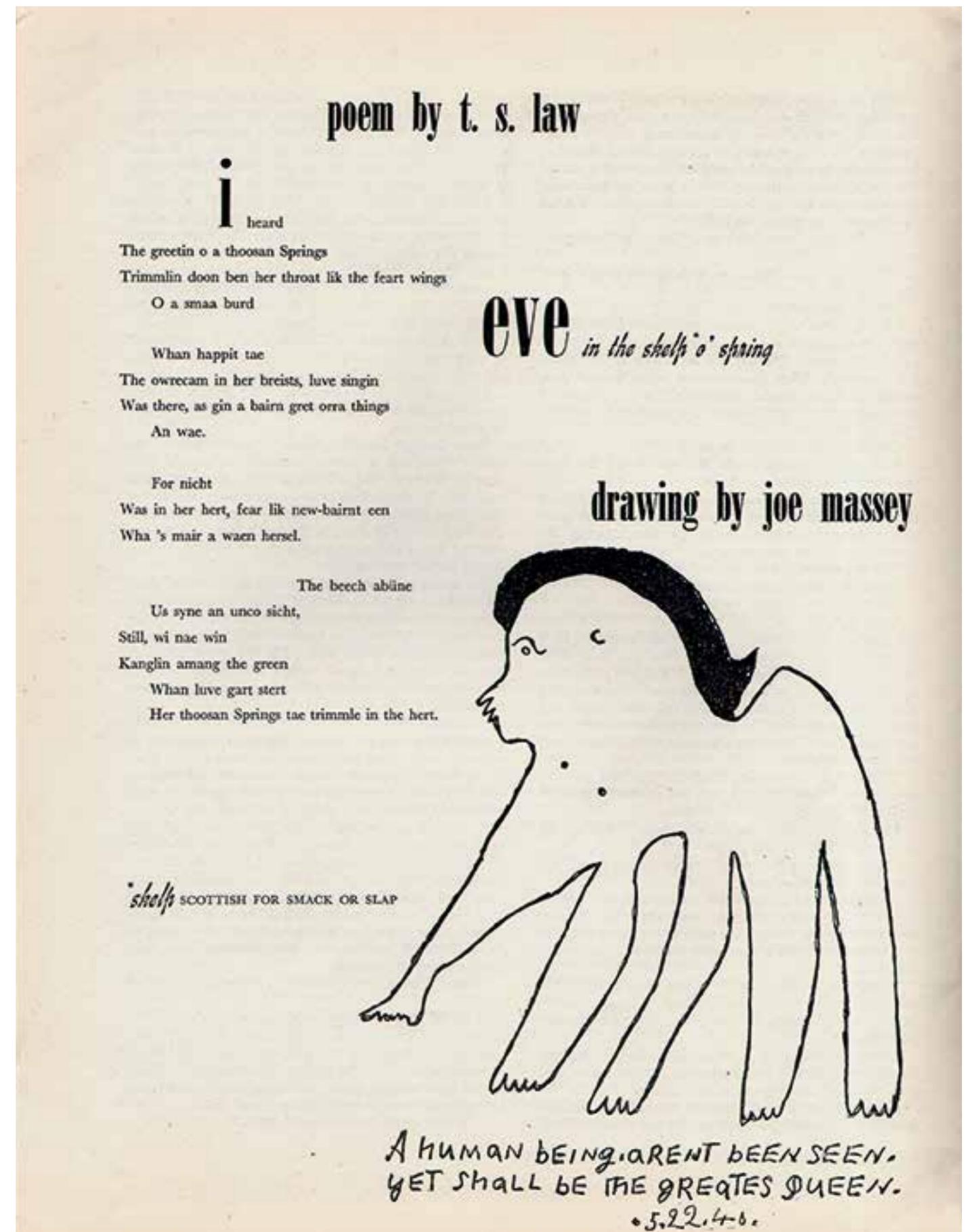
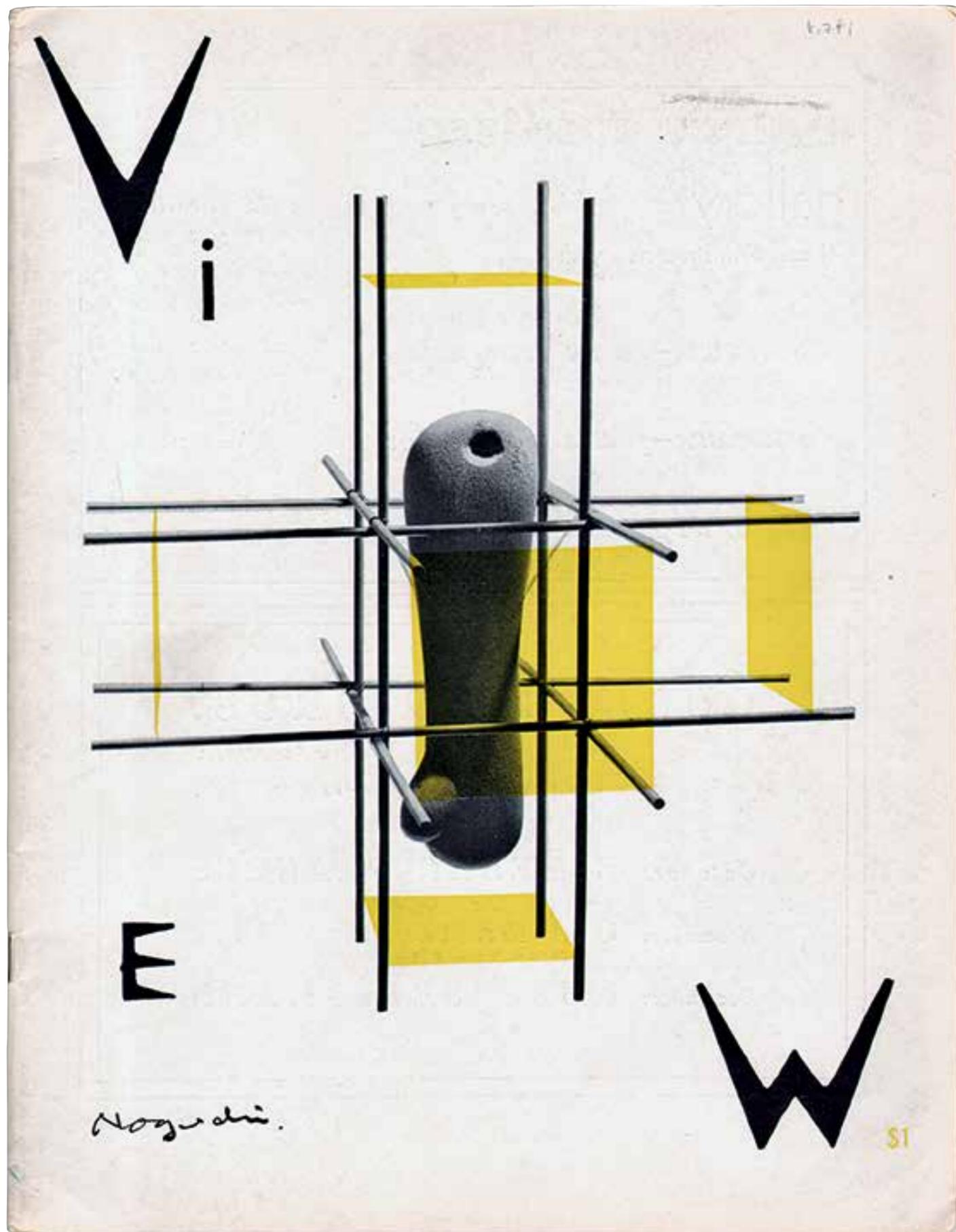
From where he first woke,
To him, His voice spoke,
He though nothing could speak, but He,
Until he met a bee.

The birds, they laugh in the tree,
When he began to flee.
On and on he went,
Not knowing a word they meant.

In the forest he was shut in,
Using first, to make it thin
No train was to be had,
He had no son, to call him Dad.

Nothing from him did run,
For there was no gun.
But the idea came to him,
And he picked up a Lim.





José Marez 75209, P.O. Box 511 } 35, 7, 17, 46
Columbus, S. Ohio



Why RAISE
SAND

you WANTED
a SUN TAN

Beautiful moon above,
What are you thinking of?
With your different faces,
In all kinds of places.

You beautify the sky,
As those clouds go by,
You, and the stars together,
In all kinds of weather.

Lovely moon, lovely moon,
Do you want, to spoon?
You see the birds and the bees,
You smell the flowers and the trees.

Moon, you hear the voice,
Of the beast in the forest,
The fishes of the sea,
Cannot hide from thee.

J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511
Columbus 15, Ohio



9 hi, so high.
AS THE SUN, STAND BY.

Slowly, so slowly we waste away,
Where we go, we stay.
I haven't seen anyone yet,
Come back here, sit down and eat.

Reclining I shall live,
Within me something gives,
I know what he says is true,
With no more fear of me of you.

Saying I have come to stay,
Listen to the things I say.
Taking a deep breath,
Being master of himself

Rearing back in a chair,
Ears revived to hear.
His eyes shine bright again,
Within this heart there is no sin.

Saying that I shan't forget,
In the earth where I got wet.
But I've seen so many things,
And none shall be in vain.



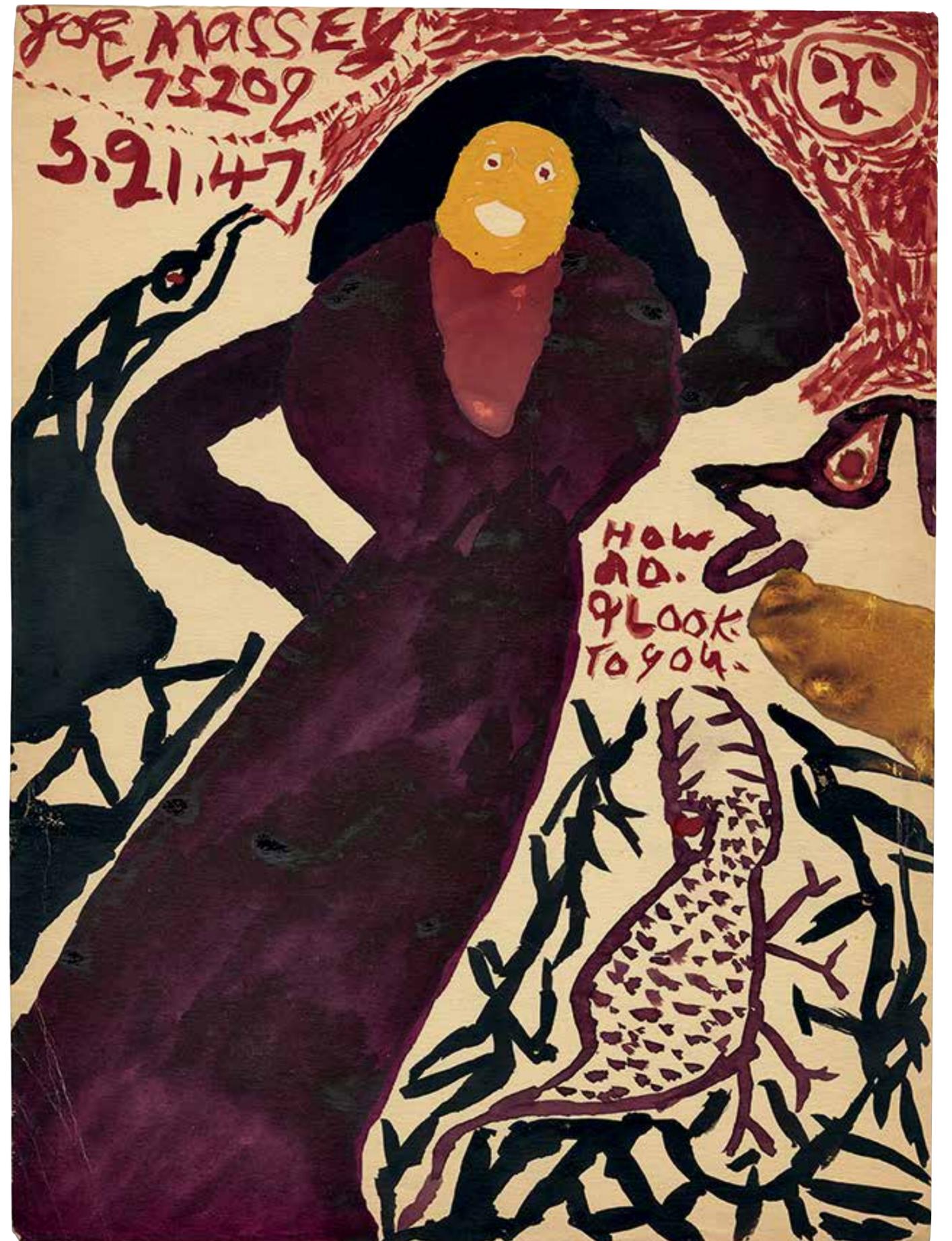
There I be at half past four,
Hear me knocking on the door.
Let me in there,
After the old mango.

When, there you awake,
Got a pill for you to take.
Swallow it down, gob, gob,
I am the one that robs.

You won't get rested,
For I be the one protested.
And what you got,
It will be very hot.

Honey, let's cool things down,
With another round.
You had better turn on the fan,
For here comes the man.

I thought you said he went to work,
For that I did expect.
Now he's going to make a check,
On you he takes his text.



JOE MASEY 75209, P.O. Bot 511 0000, 5.21.47,
Columbus 15, Ohio.

IN A PIT SHE FELL
THEN BEGUN TO YELL
OUT OF CONTROL
SHE LOST HER SOUL
EVERYTHING SHE TOUCHED
CRYED WHY WONT YOU IN CHURCH
SHE MET HER BROTHER
WITH MANY OTHER
AS SHE SPOKE
OUT CAME FIRE AND SMOKE
BEAUTIFUL AS SHE COULD BE
TO ENTER THAT FIREY SEA
ON AND ON SHE WENT
TO A VAMPIRENT
PERSUME YOU ARE FAR DIGGING GOLD
THEN DO AS YOU ARE TOLD
FROM WHERE YOU COME HAD YOUR WAY
Y BURN YOU LIKE A FIELD WITH HAY
SHE YELL AND SHE YELL AND SHE YELL
NO MORE COULD NOR WOULD SHE SELL

composed by JOE MASSEY 75209,
on, or, before 5.21.47, P.O. Bot 511,
Columbus 15, Ohio

J.M. 75209 P.O. Bot 511
Columbus 15, Ohio



So, they, symbol on Calvary,
Nailed Christ to a tree.
I heard those Romans talking,
As down the hill they were walking.

They said, "The night is awfully late,"
That's one thing I hate.
Those thieves take long to die,
Yet I know not why.

I saw two women weeping,
And a host of others peeping.
As down the hill they came,
One was like a flame.

Thee other like a broken rose,
Saying, now, men shall rue,
The deeds their hands have done.
Through tears the others cried, My Son, my Son.

There were no bells a ringing,
As the Angels were singing.
Yet the dawn was bright,
And their robes were crowns of light.

Had death failed in its call,
Love had conquered, conquered all.
We listened to those golden voices,
Crying heaven and earth rejoice.



J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511, 34 Columbus 15, Ohio 7.17.46

YOU KEEP OUT OF THIS.



did you
CALL ME.
MRS

My kid sister in Hollywood,
Wonder, wonder if she's doing good?
Get me Hollywood on the 'phone,
My kid sister, cannot be alone.

Hello there, hello there, kid,
Why have you been hid?
You say there's someone you can't get rid of,
Is it because of me? Something I did?

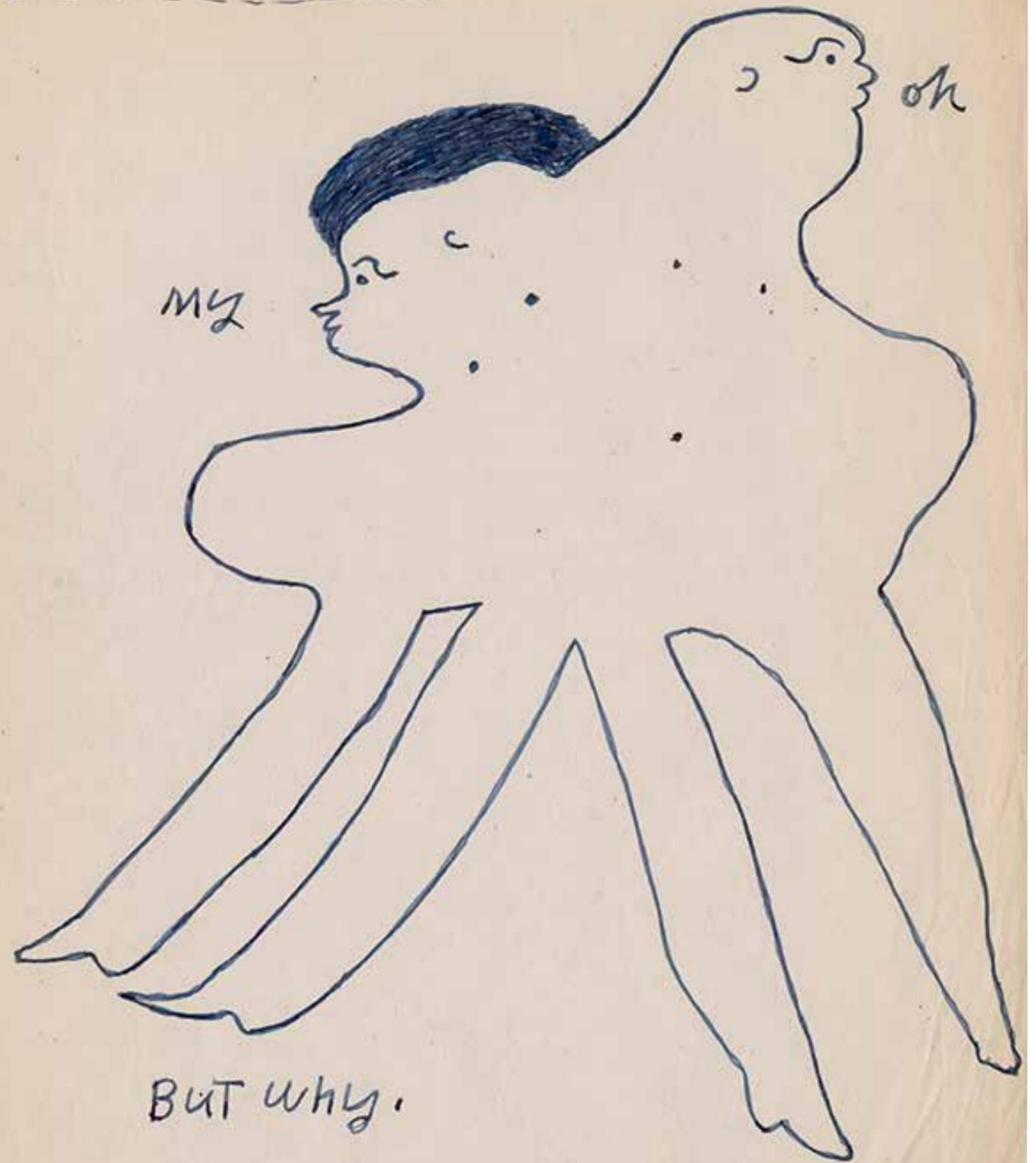
There be no need for you to shed those tears,
Your big brother will be there.
I just want to tell you, I got my ticket.
At the studio door, you better be a picket.

I'll be on that midnight train,
Make no matter whether it snow or rain,
I have his name in your locket,
I will keep my hand in my pocket.

There's no need to talk about the rising sun,
From Hollywood you're going to make the run.
Hello there? Hello there?, she done hung up,
I'll see who's pouring cream in her cup.



J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511 } 8.5.29.46.
Columbus 15, Ohio



View

Summer 1944
fifty cents

Two Negro Poets

Joe Massey

THREE POEMS

THIS IS MY LIFE FROM A TO Z

THIS IS MY LIFE FROM . A . TO . Z.
I AM BEGGIN FOR LIBERTY.
I WAS A SLAVE BEFORE BOOKER . T . .
I KNOW WHEN THEY BUILT TUSKEGKEE.

I WAS BORN IN TEXAS SOMETIME AGO.
THERE WHEN THE BAY OVERFLOWED,
THE WATER FLOODED NINETY MILES OR MORE.
I WAS IN ST. LOUIS IN 1904.

IN LOUISIANA AND WORKED AWHILE.
STAYED IN MISS TWO OR THREE WEEKS.
MOVED TO ARK WHEN A CHILD.
LIVED IN MIMPHIS ON BEAL STREET.

I WAS ON THE TITANIC WHEN IT SAILED.
HEARD THE WOMEN SCREAMING.
I KNEW THEN IT HAD FAIL.
SAW THE CHILDREN CRYING.

BUT THAT SHIP HIT NO MINE.
I KNEW CAPTAIN SMITH KNEW HIM WELL.
SHE WAS SAILING HER FIRST TIME.
I ADVISED HIM TO RING THE BELL.

SUN BEAUTIFUL AS CAN BE

SUN BEAUTIFUL AS CAN BE.
SMILE ON THE FISH IN THE SEA.
MOON SO HIGH BEAUTIFY THE SKY.
STARS SO BRIGHT GIVE LIGHT AT NIGHT.

DARKNESS COME WHERE FROM.
LIGHTING FLASH AT DASH ON THE WENDER SASH.
THUNDER ROW WHO KNOW,
RAIN IT CAME THROUGH THE DRAIN.

SNOW FALL ROLE INTO A BALL.
WIND BLOW WHERE IT GOES.
IT SPEAK TO QUEEN HEAR HER SCREAM.
IT SEE THING THAT THEY HAVE NOT SEEN.

SPEAKING ABOUT BEING KEEN.
THEY CAN NOT TOUCH THING UNSEEN.
YET THEY ARE HUMAN BEING.
THERE ARE THING ON EARTH THEY AINT SEEN.

WATER SPEAKING ABOUT YOU.
NOTHING ON THIS EARTH THAT YOU HAVE NOT
BEEN THROUGH.
SEEN THEM ALL KNOW WHAT THEY DO.
THEY CANNOT GET BACK AT YOU.

THERE HAVE BEEN NO PEACE

THERE HAVE BEEN NO PEACE
SINCE THE NEW WORLD ORDER BEGAN
THERE WILL BE NO PEACE
IF THE NEW WORLD ORDER WIN

PEACE IS SOMETHING MUST BE DEFENDED
WHEN IT IS GONE IT HARD TO BE MENDED
FOR IT IS TO BE LENDED
FEACE SHOULD BE SURRENDED

NOW THEY TALK ABOUT PEACE
WHEN EVER THEY ARE AT A FEACE
AWAY THEY GO THEN IT CEASE
IT HAVE HAD NO TIME TO INCREASE

THERE MUST BE PEACE IN ONE SELF
PEACE IS MORE THEN SPEAKING A WORD
TO CREATE PEACE IN SOME ONE ELSE
WHEN ONE SPEAK THEY MUST BE HEARD

Childs Zapaulski

DUROSA'S DUROSAGRAM

PART I

I love my color adore my race,
Though many bedull'd in fone of face,
And I am she Durosa appraise me not too pretty,
More fond my new negrosia to be one of your committee
And I'm your princess copy
You'll never read it white
Fast gone is the hobby
And generations, out of sight.
And though few we are against so many
You are mast valiant, of all or any.
And this inheritance shall be to all grand l'se of dark
dignity

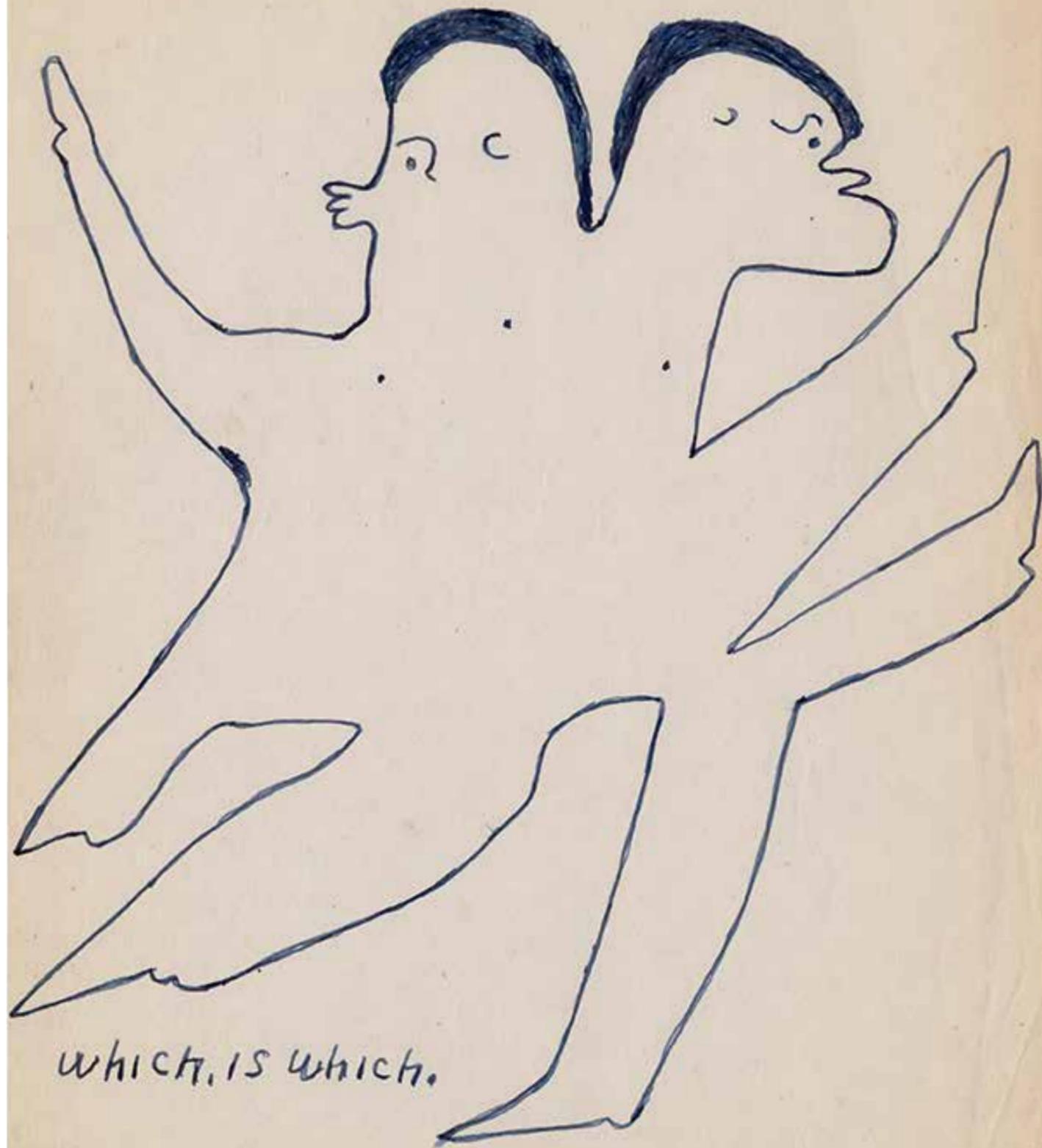
PART II

Your sister is a blunett,
Yo all worth wife a dawn,
No sir mister, we're not through yet,
The blacks preside the lawn
And in extall they glow on,
Yes our black folks, admire red hair and our doctor Filup
makes it
You see our downs or a blunett pair
Glowing off when they shakes it.
Their faces are much yellowed up, like rouged in sweetest
blue
The charming mouth, a mellowed cup.
Kiss it and you'll sure want two.
A love art which you can't get through.

PART III

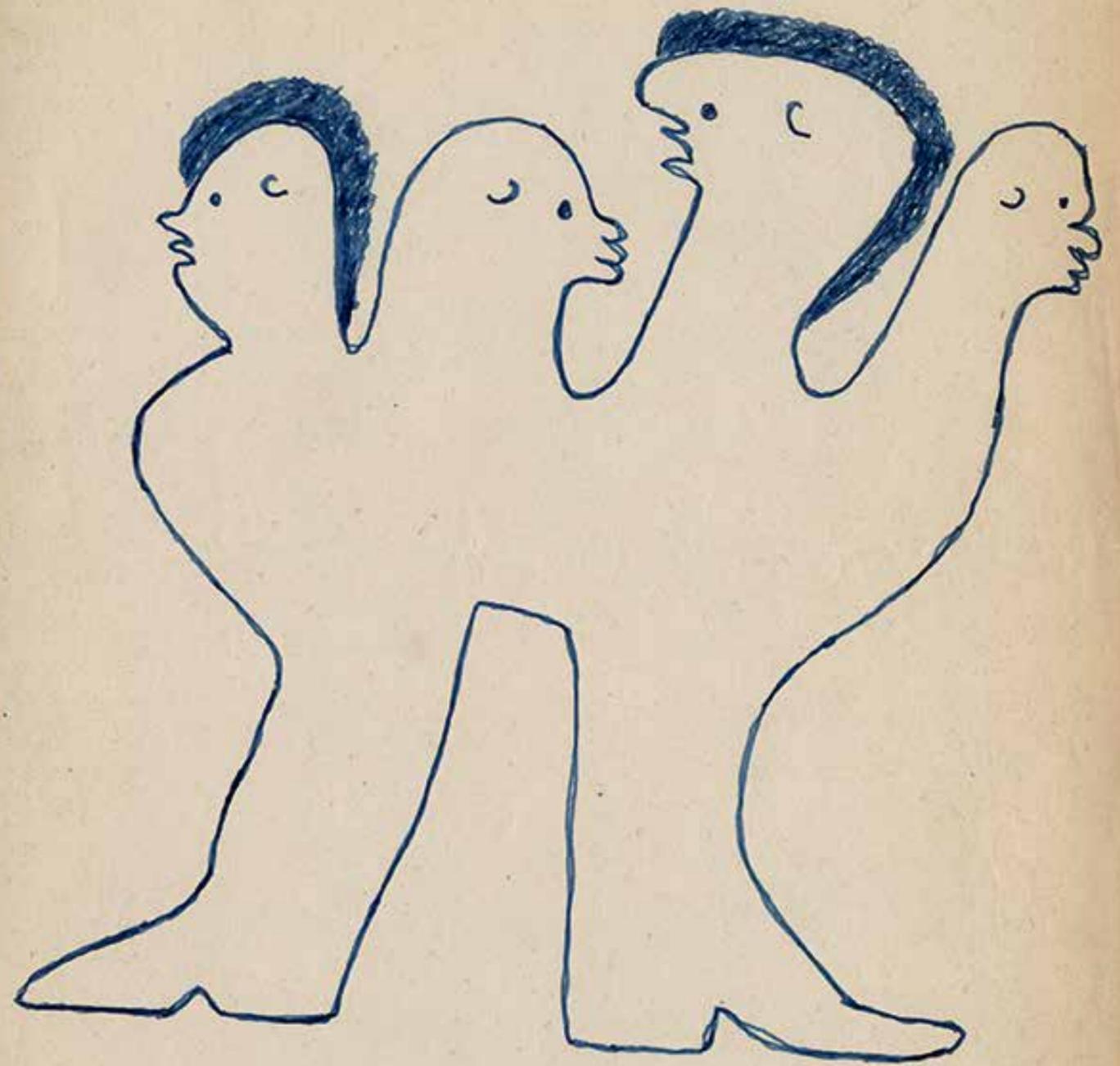
My foks they've versed us cheap an brown
That's why for year we had to weep an down
But now has come the day of grace
The now and hour of race
And you had better fill your space,
For what comes after, may vanish laughter,
So hear your tooture, grasp the future,
Grand l'se, of dark dignity, will newture.

J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511, Columbus 15, Ohio, 7. 5. 29. 46



which, is which.

J. M. Tree, 75209, P. O. Box 511, Columbus
15.
Ohio



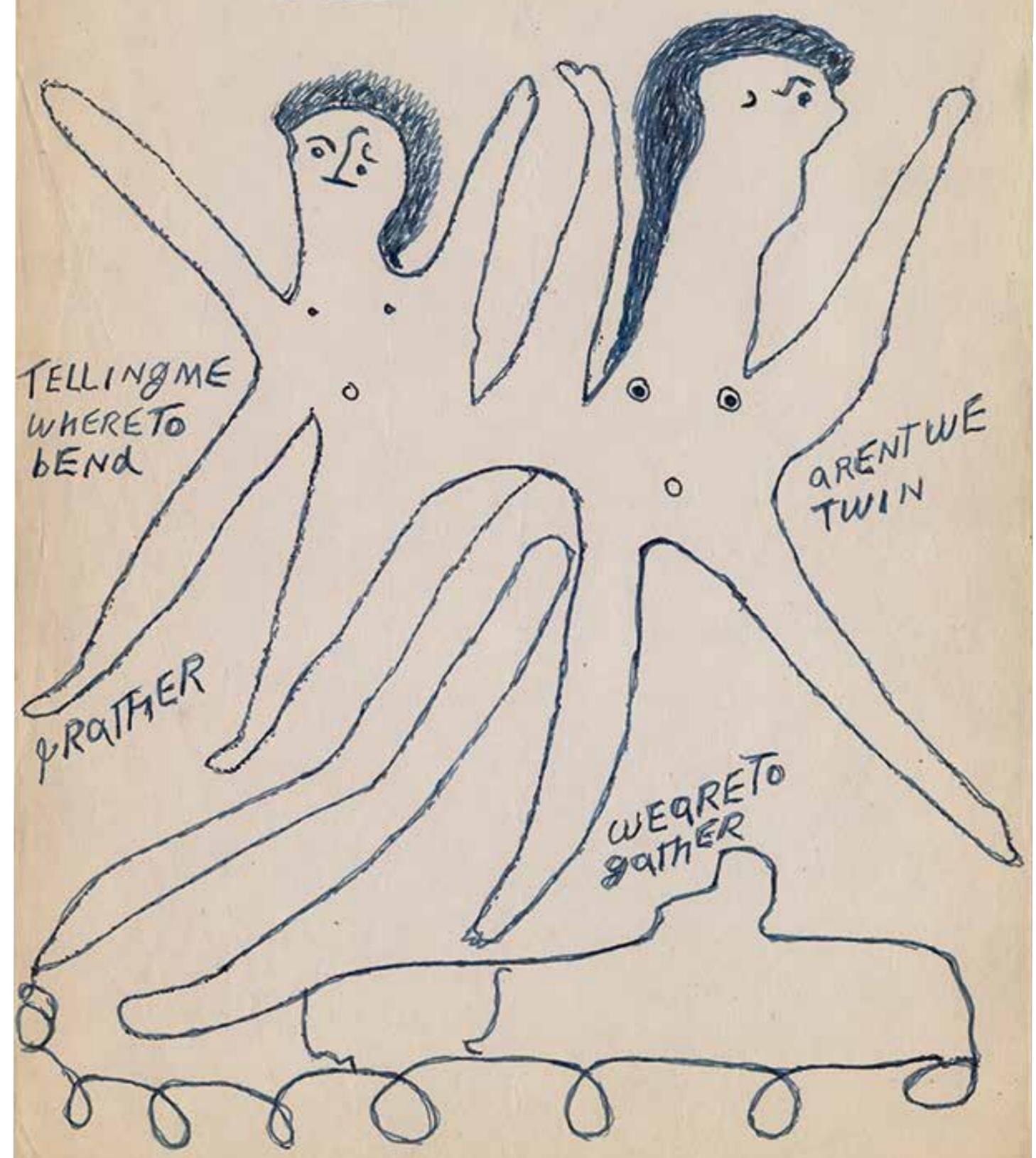
Now THIS IS ACTURE FACTS. Back To
back. Two men, and two women, in a
Bot a LIKe r5, 2246.

Joe Marney 75209, P.O. Box 511/00. 5.21.47.
Columbus 15, Ohio

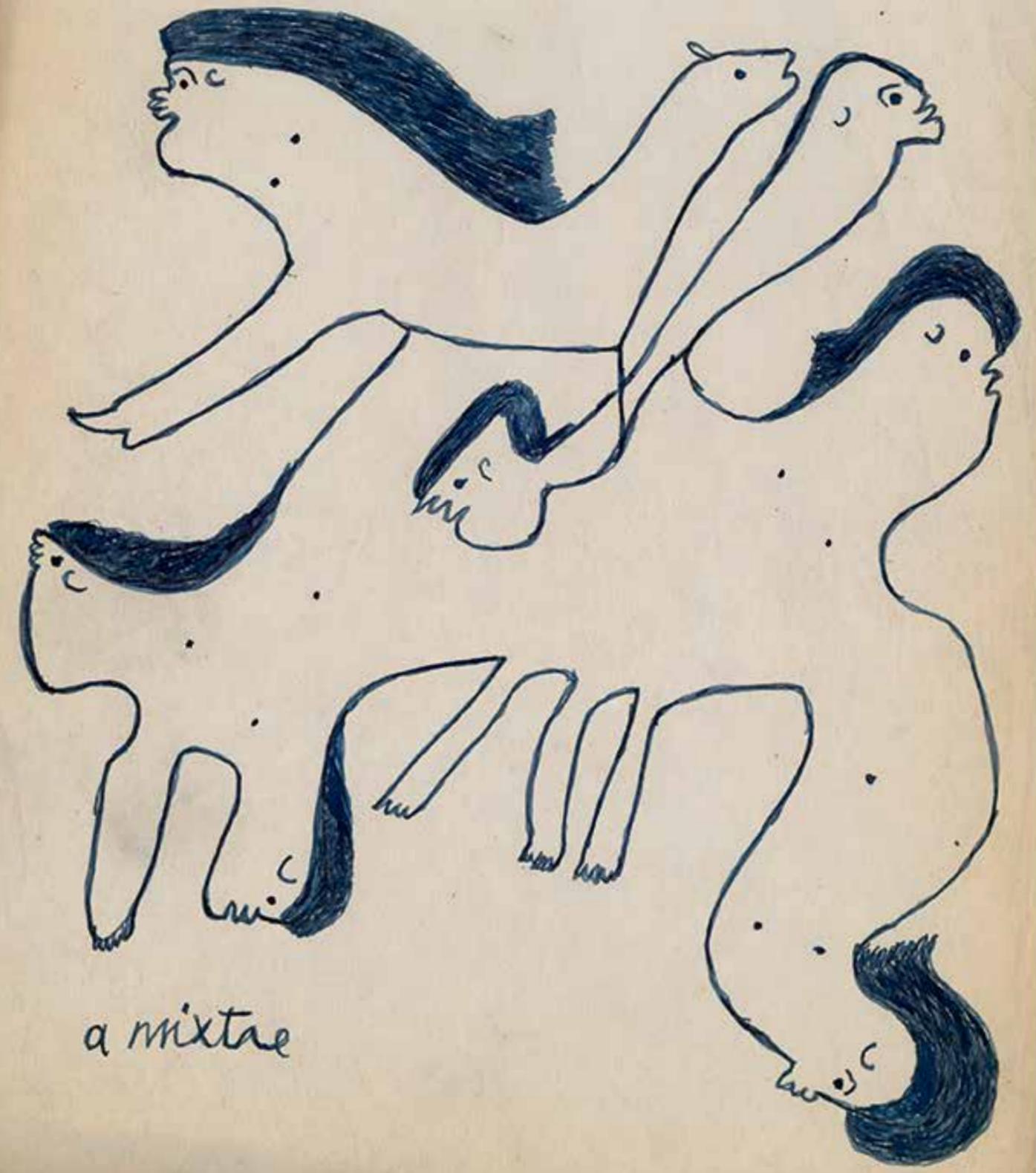
COME HERE BOY. COME HERE.
THERE NO NEED TO FEAR.
SAY YOU GOING TO MEMPHIS TAKE THE L.S.N.
IT CARRIE YOU THERE AND BACK AGAIN.
LEAVING LOUISVILLE BEGAN TO TROT.
PUT YOU IN MEMPHIS SOLIDE SOLIDE JACK ON THE DOT.
RUN BOTH DAY AND NIGHT.
THE SERVICE IS RIGHT.
IF YOU GET HOT IN THE COLLOR,
STROLL IN TO THE POLLOR.
THEY GOT A COCK TAIL BAR.
THAT NEVER HAD A BAR.
NO ONE EVER SEEN THE L.S.N. ON FIRE.
RIDE THE RAIR WONT TO SEE THE STAR.
GOT THE FINES TRAIN ROLLING DOWN THE LANE.
SEE THE CONDUCTOR WONT MAKE CHANG.
RIDE IT AND SALE YOUR SIGHT.
ON THE HEAD THEY HALE A LIGHT.
PACK YOUR. PACK YOUR GRIP.
FAR A WONDIFUL TRIP.
COME HERE BOY. COME HERE. YOU HEAR.
THAT L.S.N BEEN RUNNING FAR MANY YEAR.
MAN. OH MAN PARENT A FRIEAD.
DIDENT YOU JUST SAY THAT ENGEAR ISENT DEAD.

Composed by Joe Marney 75209,
on 5.21.47. P.O. Box 511
Columbus 15, Ohio

J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511. 15. 6.26.46
Columbus 15, Ohio.



J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511, FIVE. S. 29. 46.
Columbus, Ohio



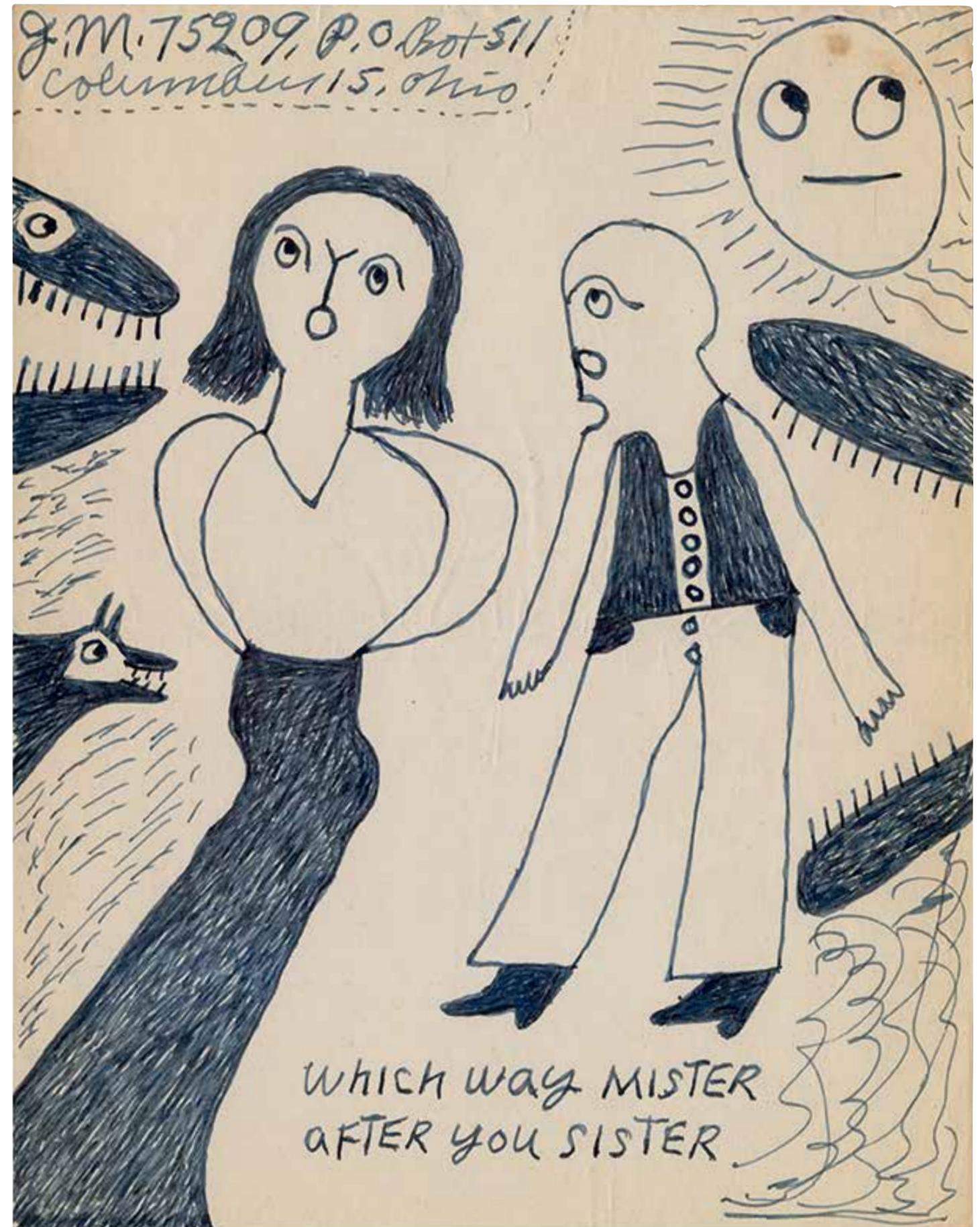
a mixtae

Through sleet and snow,
On and on we go.
Stumbling and falling,
But we continue crawling.

On this sea of life,
We contact so much strife.
Trying to keep peace within,
Closing our hearts to sin.

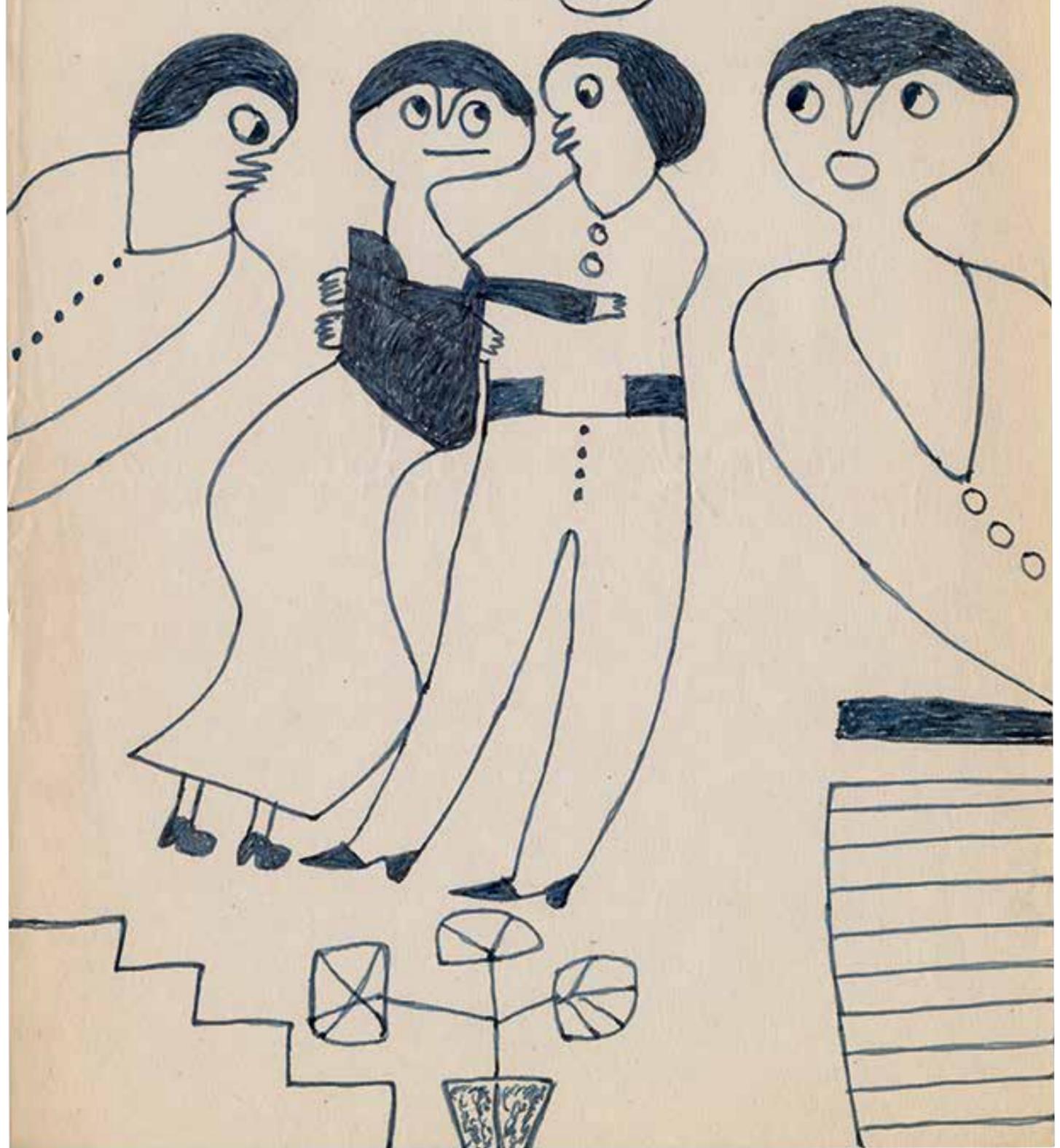
We refuse to be alone,
As we travel to the throne.
There are so many friends,
Trying to reach their ends.

But storms come and go
Just like the wind blows
Don't ever give up,
Though you have filled your cup.



J.M. 75209, P.O. Box 511,
Columbus 15, Ohio.

Went SHE BEAUTIFUL



DRAWINGS AND POEMS BY JOE MASSEY

Drawings

- p. 2 "Walking on one leg and hand," 1946. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 7 "Dont be Afraid," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 15 "A family," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 17 "Why mother look at my hand," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 19 "That my kid," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 21 "That. my wife lad"), n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 23 "Come to poper," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 25 "On. a show grown," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 27 "Less go to that show dear," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 29 "What a man," 1946. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 31 "Tell me I cant do the split," 1946. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 33 "They were on ice," 1946. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 35 "On. earth. and in the sea," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 37 "I eat. you up," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 41 "Nor this one he arent dead," 1946. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 43 "Two on. one. mule," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 45 "Two horses," 1946. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 47 "Telling me what to do," 1946. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 49 "Talking about. what I wont do ()," 1946. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 51 "Yes. you," 1947. Ink and tempera on paper, 12 × 9 in.
p. 53 "Watch your step," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 55 "Now listen," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 57 "Sit down. and dont get hurt," 1946. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 59 "Dont think cause. I am, out of shape," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 61 "It good," 1946. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 65 "Why rase sand," 1946. Ink and tempera on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 67 "I hi, so high," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 69 "Let them sun flowers alone," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 71 "How do. I look. to you," 1947. Ink and tempera on paper, 12 × 9 in.
p. 73 "Taking a strole," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 75 "I saw him first," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 77 "You keep out. of this," 1946. Ink and tempera on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 79 "I saw him. come in. here," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 81 "But why," 1946. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 85 "Which. is which," 1946. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 87 "Now this is acture facts. Back to back," 1946. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 89 "Telling me where to bend," 1946. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 91 "A mixtre," 1946. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 93 "Which way mister," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 95 "Isent she beautiful," n.d. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.

Poems

- p. 34 "It were dark as pitch," 1947. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 44 "Washing the face of the earth," 1947. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 72 "In a pit she fell," 1947. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
p. 88 "Come here boy. come here," 1947. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.
Back cover: "In the door mother stood," 1947. Ink on paper, 11 × 8½ in.