

Bill Gainer

A Cat Named Kevorkian

The bird stood on the ledge
threatening to jump
the cat paced below
hoping to assist
in the suicide.

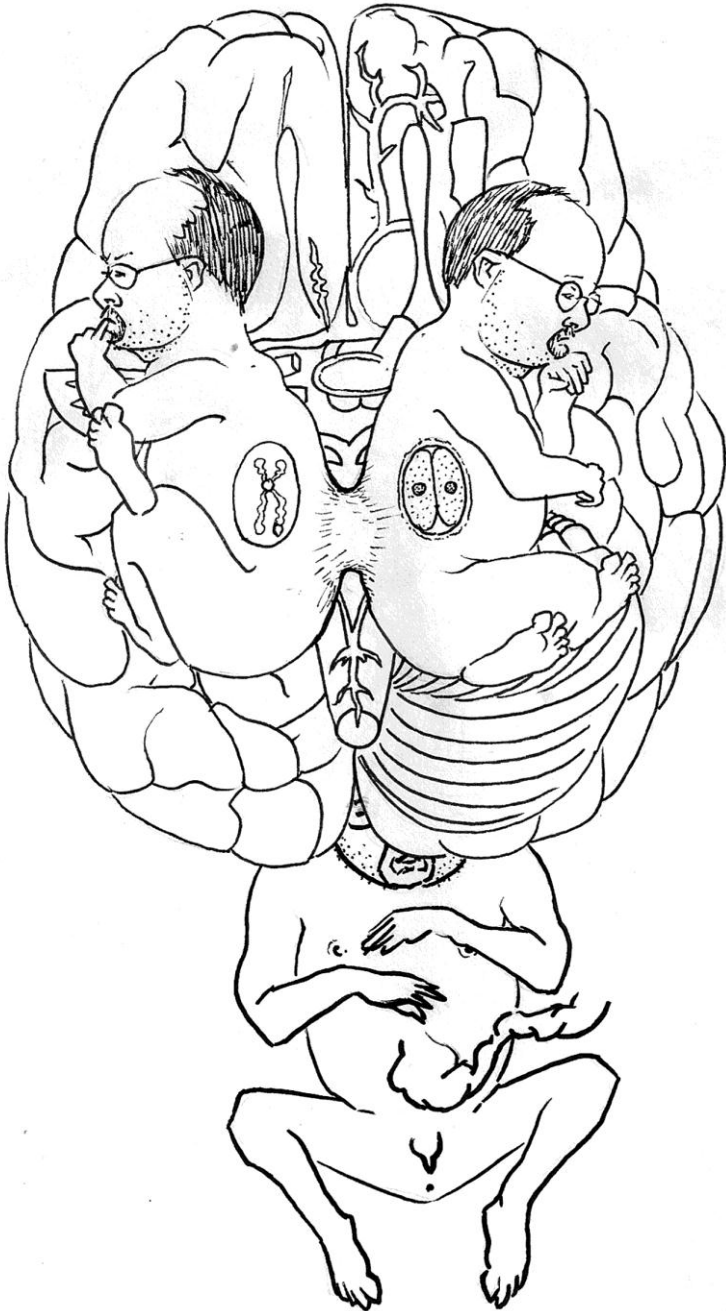
Flying Over Texas

for Janey

I looked for you
when we flew over
Texas,

but you must have been inside,
sitting on that corner stool,
legs jack-knifed,
talking those sweet things
to that other guy –
the lucky bastard...

Miss you, love you,
think about you
a lot –
even at
30,000 feet.



The Fine Art of Poisoning

On our 20th anniversary
I said,
I think I've survived
four poisoning
attempts.
She said no
six.

On our 25th
she brought out a cake.
There was a knife
with a bloody handle
driven in the middle of it
and an inscription saying,
you won't make
26.

These days I eat out
more than usual.
Sleep with the door
locked
and make sure
none of the guns
are loaded.

She says the cremation
is paid for,
she has a spot
picked out
in the garage
for my urn.
She wants me close,
but not too
close.

She leaves her favorite
book,
The Fine Art of Poisoning
on the coffee table.

Bill Gainer

Says she likes to thumb
through it
whenever I'm out late
with the boys,
doing whatever it is
boys do
out late.

She leaves notes to herself,
Christ I love him,
but
he's gotta-go.
One drop
in the turkey gravy
wasn't enough.

After the wish comes hope –

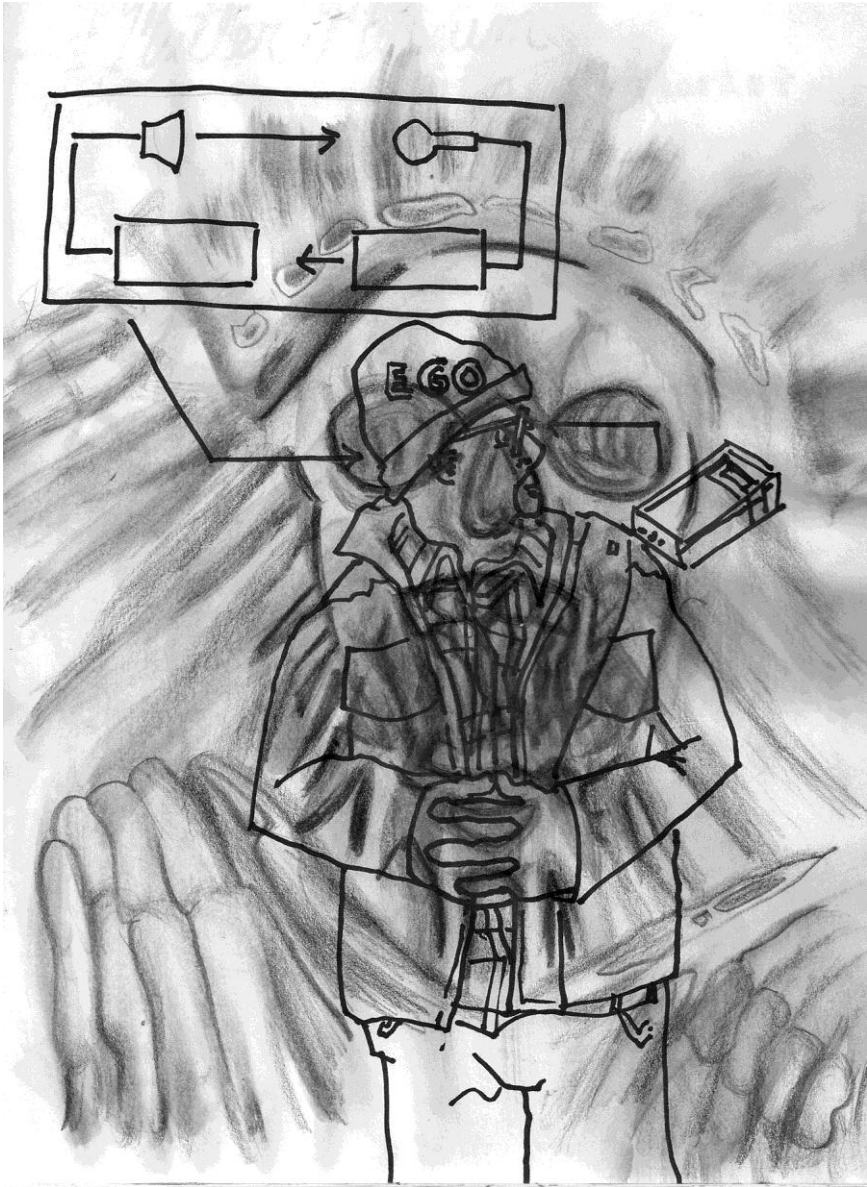
and with hope
comes the juggling
of snakes –

It's never known
which end
the head,
the tail
will be caught

how deep
the fangs
might set

or if anyone
will notice
the wound.

Still,
after the wish
we hope...



How Deep the Wound

The doctor wants to know,
“What is it – you need?”
You say, “Something
to make it
go away.”
He wants to know,
“What –IT – is?”
You say, “It’s all around,
the pain.
Don’t you feel it?”
He looks for a pen,
say there’s
a lot of writing
to be done.

Yes,
the conversation
doesn’t necessarily
go exactly like that
and the doctor isn’t
necessarily
the only reason
for you being
the way you are.

There’s the mechanic
who leaves you a quart low,
the butcher
with his thumb
on the scale,
the editors
who should be convicted
of mayhem,

the newspaper snitching
the politician,
the politician
paying off the crowd
and the crowd being –
just out of touch.