

“The Evidence of Things Not Seen”: Contemporary Spiritual Poetry and Its Visual Implications

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Editor’s Note: This article, which includes four color reproductions of art works by the author, is not available online. The pieces illustrate the following poems: “hunchback girl: she thinks of heaven,” by Gwendolyn Brooks; “Night of the Scorpion,” by Nissim Ezekiel; “Digging,” by Seamus Heaney; and “Prayer to Masks,” by Léopold Sédar Senghor. Only the general introduction of the article is provided here.)

There are poems about pictures, but few pictures about poems, especially contemporary poems. Working with Dr. Taura Napier of the Wingate University English department, I completed a project of illustrating various contemporary poems that carry spiritual themes. Together we wrote a paper on our research and exhibited sixteen of my artworks. Four of the pieces and my commentary appear here.

The study of spirituality in art and literature is nothing new. However, the intermingling of the fine arts and English language in relationship to this topic is relatively rare. Our goal in the study of the chosen poets is to provide a clear and accurate interpretation of the emotions, themes, and spiritual subjects the poems embrace. Although the texts of the poems are not given here, I hope readers will be inspired to enjoy the richness there and to compare their responses to those communicated in my illustrations.