

1. The Martyrdom

--Inspired by artist Frances Myers, 1936-2014

She stands front and center wearing her true colors:
a heart of love, a dove whose wings fan out across
her breast, and stars upon a skirt tight around the pelvis,
as if she is tied into a corset or a flag. Bound, too,
her long, capable arms. See, her manacled left wrist,
the drops of blood below the barbed-wire neck.
She is so tired, listless. Her head is tilted to one side
as if for all its weight she cannot hold it up. You cannot
see below her cut off legs, her toes, if they are planted,
digging tunnels in the loamy ground. Behind her what
remains are opposing columns, one squared, the other round.
Wonder Woman, Mother of Peace, Lady Liberty.
Does she dare imagine the silvery bracelets, their youthful
brilliance, the ringing music around the marbled halls?

Ronnie Hess