

# The Messenger

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## Untitled

Beth Thomas

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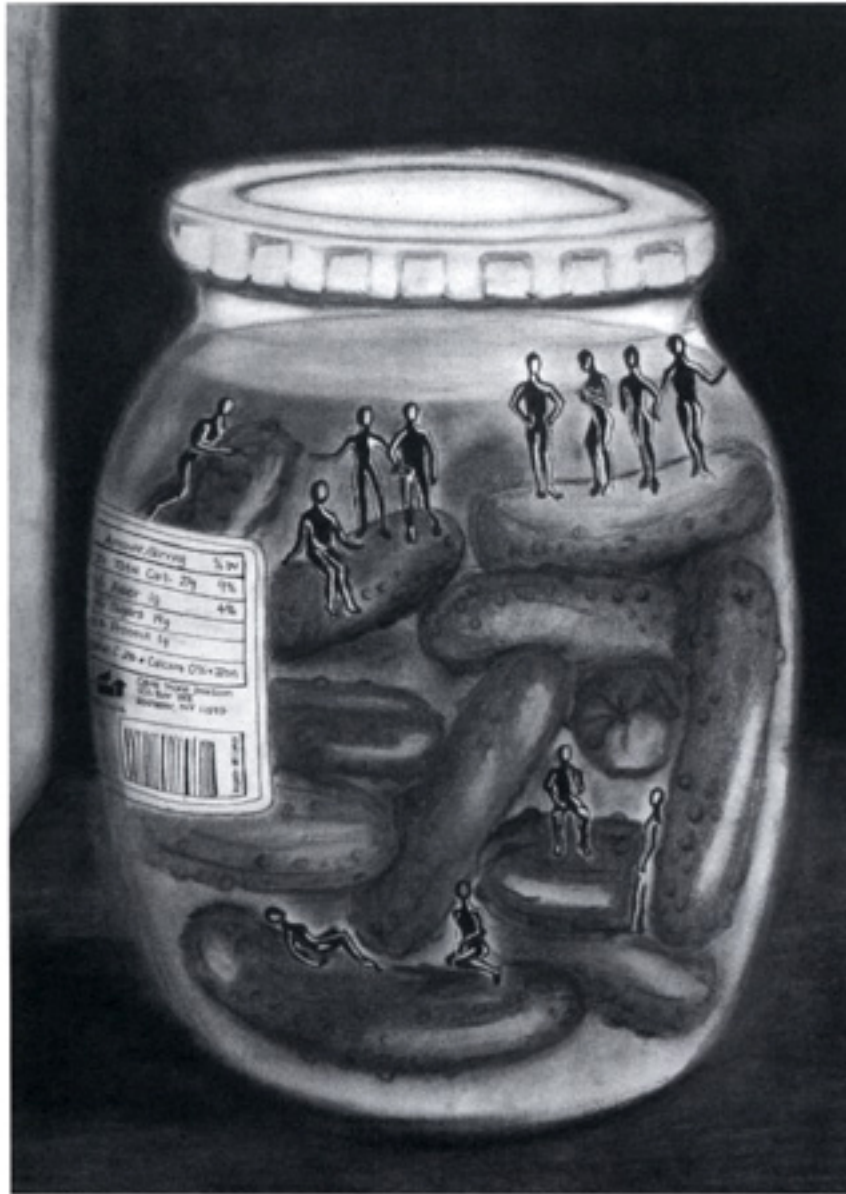
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**SHARON BRICKER** {LEAVING FRANKLINVILLE  
 (Nominated, Margaret Haley Carpenter Prize for Poetry)

"Can I help you?" she asked from behind the counter.  
 "Probably not," I said with my best dapper smile  
 And sighed as I put the tin of coffee and the  
 package of bolts in front of her.  
 She fixed on her polite smile. She was probably  
 thinking of the weather.  
 For the one-hundredth and twenty-first time  
 (or at least that many)  
 I almost begged for something different to happen:  
 A gun pointed at me! A tornado at my apartment!  
 The aliens have landed!  
 (Another sigh.)  
 There I was, with the pretty lawn ornament cashier,  
 wearing an old shirt  
 And buying two things I really didn't  
 give a shit about.  
 "Honey, you know, I've changed my mind," I said,  
 and left the store carrying nothing.

**BETH THOMAS** {UNTITLED

