

NORTH COAST

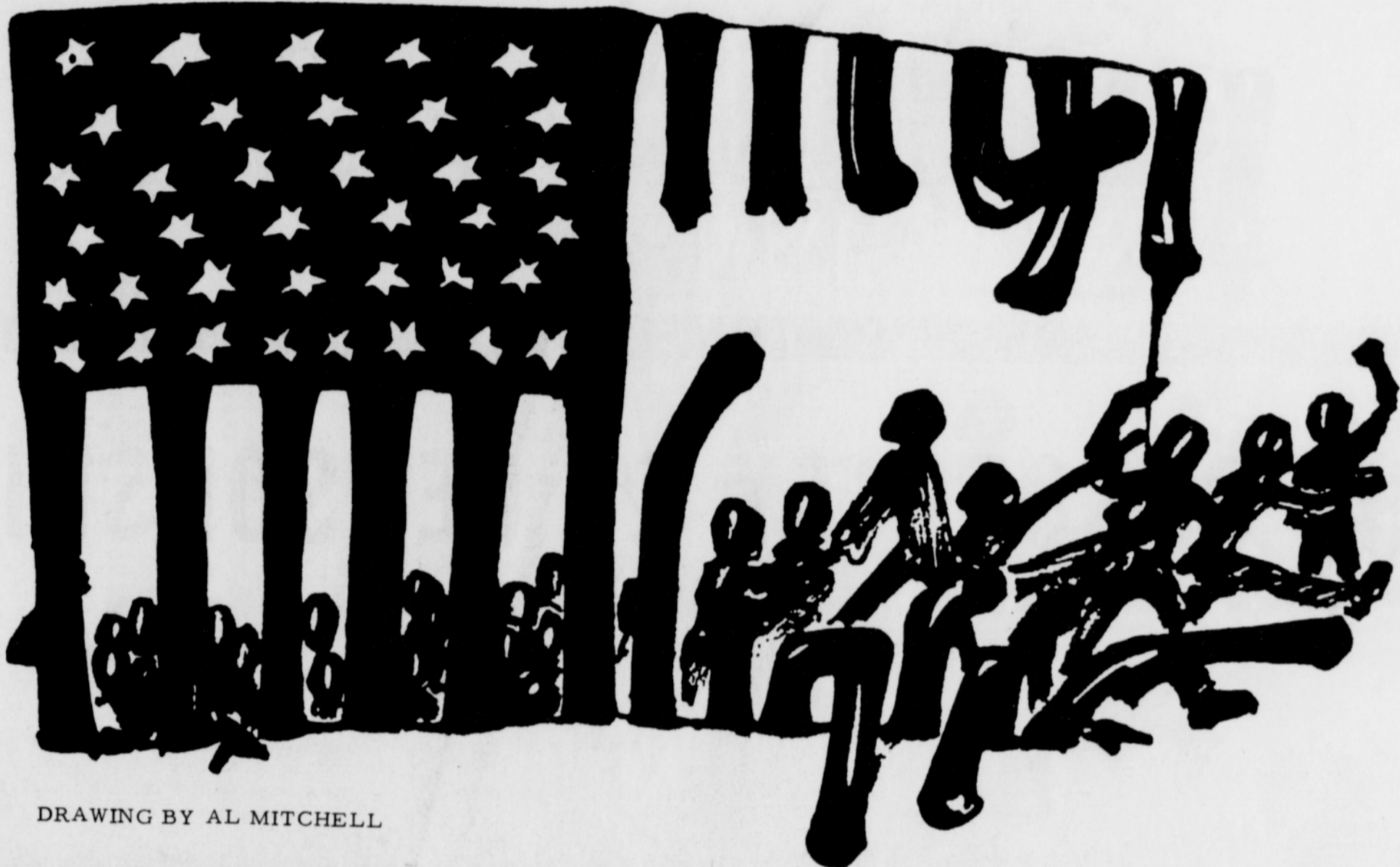
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In a dark time the eye begins to see.
- Theodore Roethke



DRAWING BY AL MITCHELL

ANGEL CITY'S LESSON

BY ROBIN SAWYER

Once again California has been the stage for a progressive reform movement. In Los Angeles, where 50% of the black population is unemployed, people have finally found the courage to stand up to the government and just say no to oppression. Los Angeles is a city where the newly wealthy like to flaunt their newfound wealth. The same people who have gutted many of this country's businesses, and left millions of average folks with the carcass of what was a fairly sound economy, are now witnessing the consequences of uncontrolled greed. Rodney King is merely the proverbial last straw. L. A. (along with the rest of this country) has been shattered by the social injustices that have become exponentially greater for the last twelve years. When a looter is stealing food and clothing, there is more to the scene than just a welfare case pilfering.

America's economy is collapsing. Our great legal system has become a mockery of justice. Nearly every aspect of our society is, somehow, deteriorating. Have we had enough? Is it, indeed, time to "stop making it horrible for the older folks and the kids"? Can we answer Rodney King's pleas and work it out? The answer is a resounding yes.

It is time that we realize that people are not on this earth to be exploited by other people. This earth is not here to be exploited by humankind. Greed and exploitation are terrible things with terrible consequences. We must recognize that evil is not a drug, a homosexual, or a person who has chosen a life of crime because they don't know any other way. Evil is the lifestyles of the rich and famous who have left a wake of poverty and despair behind them. There can be no pride in this country while people live without medical care, food, and shelter. In fact, we should all be deeply ashamed of ourselves for allowing this to happen in our country.

A ray of hope has shone through the hellish darkness in Los Angeles. Our delusions can no longer be held. Our world will become desperate during the next century if we don't make drastic changes now. The United Nations must assume a greater governing role. Population growth must be controlled. There must be international cooperation if the global environment is going to be healthy. Power must be held by democratic societies with a common goal: The preservation of a peaceful, livable habitat for all life. All of these things are merely manifestations of love. In our hearts, and our cultures, we know that caring and concern for all life is good, and right. The artists we admire and immortalize often share images of love with us. It has been, and is time to truly listen to the message we have been sent. "C'mon people now. Smile on your brothers. Everybody get together. Try to love one another right now."

In my own experience I know it is easy to judge, criticize, and condemn. It is tempting to just look after number one, forgetting that we are part of a whole unit. The interrelationship of all parts of this planet make it impossible for us to stand alone. In truth, "no man is an island." None of us can be truly content while others suffer.

We cannot allow the great lesson we have recently been given pass without learning. The positive changes that have taken place in the world should give us all great hope. There is no time for despair now. Angels have descended on Los Angeles and shown us what happens when power consolidates in the hands of a few and is abused. Now it is up to us: as Rodney King would say, to "work it out."

Robin Sawyer lives in Seaside.