

Help wanted: Poets in the central city

BY ED BOWERS

POETRY has just about reached the end of its tether in this country; the poem recited at the president's Inaugural Address was so mediocre I wanted to puke. There was nothing wrathful or peaceful about it. It was just dull, which is what I suppose most people want.

Some months back, six people standing at Taylor and Turk, where I have hung out for eight years smoking cigarettes outside my favorite dive bar in the Tenderloin, the 21 Club, were shot in a drive-by shooting, one killed, five injured.

Buddhism is about transforming fecal matter into flora and fauna, ignorance into wisdom, and this romantic movie star gangster idiocy with shooting people has got to be transformed.

I didn't think it was funny when Martin Luther King got shot, or Malcolm X, and I am not amused either by the anonymous dead whose lives have been taken by cowardly pop-gun punks who are nothing but low-level corporate executives ready to sell out the human race for a buck and underpay their employees who boost their poison on the street.

This must be stopped. It is too

stupid. Stupid is boring.

I want to invite poets from the Bay Area to come to the 21 Club and be the internal representatives of the unity between peaceful and wrathful energy and to accomplish a synthesis of wisdom and compassion that transforms the Tenderloin GROUND ZERO into a work of art, and causes everyone in the bar to have a lot of fun.

Is that too much to ask? It's simple. Read a poem that you have written yourself. Anybody can write a poem because everyone has a "you." "You" are a poem.

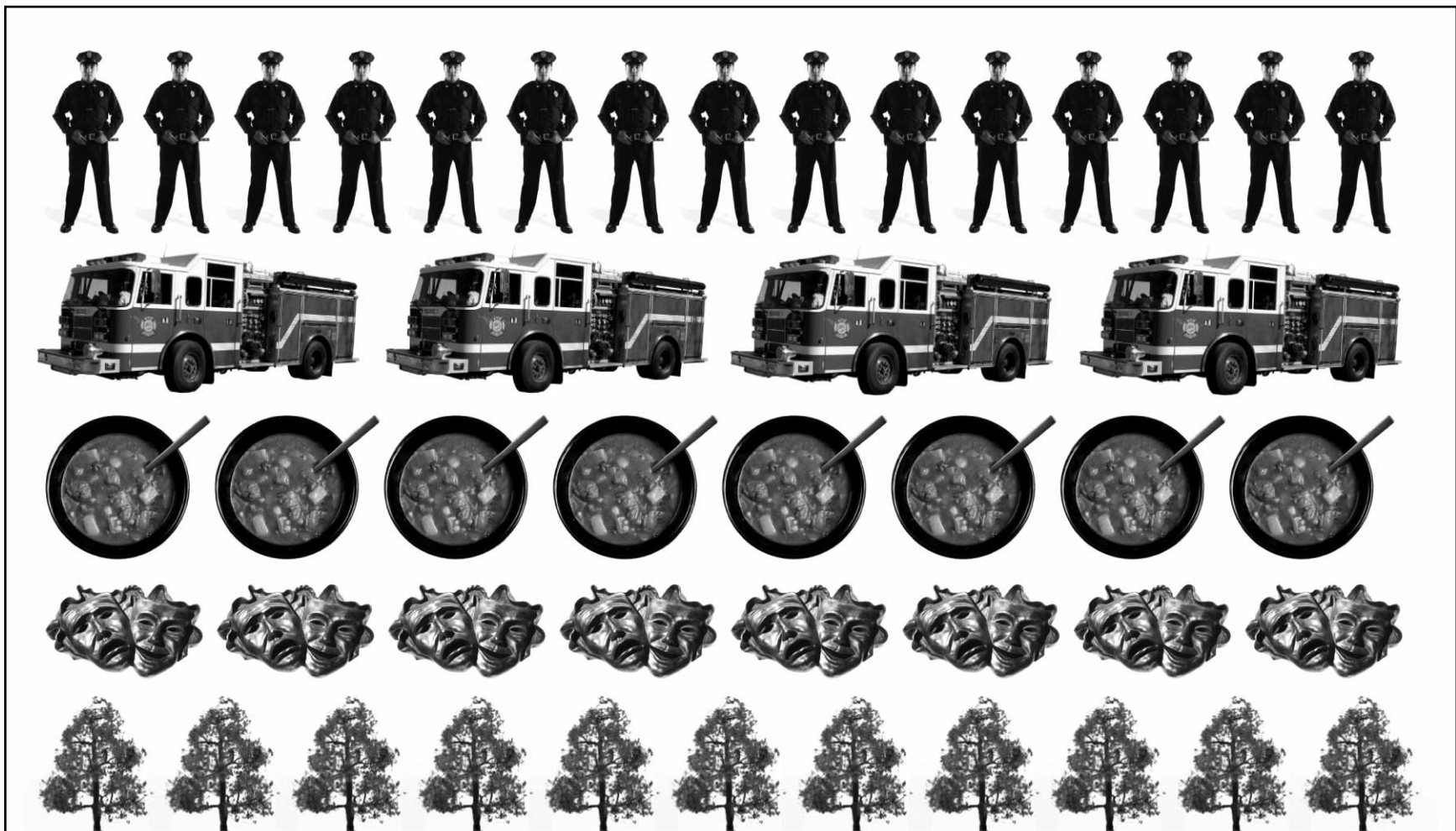
Have a beer. Express yourself by doing something other than shooting people. Let people know what you really think. Be a human being instead of a loser. Express yourself.

The 21 Club has been described as GROUND ZERO by the reputable respectable newspapers in this country that report on the carnage that occurs outside that I personally have observed for eight years, and by now find normal.

But I see pure beauty here, and this beauty can only be reported through the vehicle of poetry.

Plus, Frank, the bartender who owns the 21 Club, wants to open up his bar for you to read your poems.

It doesn't get any better than that. ■



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