



SLOW TIME

The Works of Charley, Noah, & Haz

Design: Matt Collinsworth
Art Photos: Geoff Carr, Adrian Swain

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INTRODUCTION

Anyone with wits about them who visited the Kinney farm had to conclude that there was something quite extraordinary taking place there, but the relative otherness of the Kinneys' existence could easily lead one to be distracted by the "old-timey" details of their lifestyle.

Charley and Noah Kinney were born 6 years apart—1906 and 1912 respectively—into a life of subsistence farming not so far removed from that eked out by early white settlers in northeast Kentucky. They died within 6 months of each other in 1991. Their lives spanned a tumultuous era in history, a time of unprecedented economic, technological, socio-political and cultural change: the advent of radio, flight, rural electrification, mechanized farming, television, chain saws, repeating rifles, indoor plumbing, and other technological marvels. There were two World Wars, and the Great Depression. Many of these developments disrupted, and made an anachronism of the way of life and world view the Kinney brothers had inherited from their parents.



Italy, Charley Kinney, early 1980s, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, KFAC



Charley Kinney, 1988, KFAC Archives

of their culture, and of a way of life that after most others had abandoned it for general America. Recognizing the roles they played, this exhibition fulfills a long-held goal for Kentucky

Tradition only remains relevant when it is alive in music, the Kinneys, and all who came to the essential element of their birthright cultural heritage. In his memoir, *At The Head of Salt Lick*, John Harrower anyone in conjuring up the exquisite magic of the Kinneys' barn.

Charley and Noah Kinney were about music, and about making just picked up new ways of life and ignore the few who adopt, and survive just thank you there's no addition to wife in 1991 missed three

The Kinney brothers from which so easily of musicians, were local



Noah Kinney, 1988, KFAC Archives

Folklorists have an easier time embracing the Kinney bothers for their music, unambiguously identified as the living transmission of folk tradition. The music they inherited in their community was kept alive by being played and replayed, enhanced through individual interpretation, and handed on to the next generation of musicians. For several decades, the barn served as the spiritual epicenter of fiddle music in northeast Kentucky.

Lee Kogan's sensitive essay, *A Sense of Place*, rightfully designates a place for the Kinneys' art among 20th century American masterworks, and art was the other main way by which the Kinney family expressed and reaffirmed their cultural identity. This is not always interpreted by scholars as a traditional activity, and grass roots art making as personal expression has little historic precedent in Kentucky. But, that really begs the question. Broaden your sense of storytelling to embrace the proposition that what is transmitted by the oral tradition can similarly be accomplished in visual

media—a pictorial tradition—and the Kinneys use art effectively as a vehicle for cultural transmission.

All that discussion notwithstanding, the art is in the gut. The Kinneys are the real thing.

The cover photograph of Charley and Noah Kinney was chosen as a portrait of them in their 70s, an effective metaphor for their achievements: they are in transition to the present; contextualizing their history and culture; and bridging the gap between the individual, artistic expression.

--Adrian Swain
Morehead, KY
April, 2006



Tiger, Noah Kinney, 1987, painted wood

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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We owe a significant debt of gratitude to Hazel Kinney, a unique and vital source of information about the family, their art and music. We have long been fortunate to have had Hazel close by throughout the years, but her ongoing assistance, encouragement and unfailing good humor, in spite of recent health problems, have been invaluable assets.

We wish to thank two special individuals, Lee Kogan and John Harrod, who wrote illuminating new material for this catalog. Their work significantly broadens the published body of knowledge on the Kinneys. Beyond the information they provide, each has enhanced the range of insights that can be gained through engagement in the creative work of these artists.

We are extremely grateful for the financial support provided by three funding organizations. A Folk Arts Program Project Grant from the Kentucky Arts Council helped initiate the research required to broaden the body of scholarly work on the Kinneys. A generous

award from the Judith Rothschild Foundation for the Arts as part of American Masterpieces: Artistic Genius.

Works from the KFAC permanent collection featured in this exhibition. Recently, the collection was expanded by collector Richard Edgeworth who offered several Kinney pieces we wanted as a gift from his collection. Of the numerous Kinney pieces that are featured in the exhibition.

Finally, we greatly appreciate the footage of John Harrod, and John Simon, dating from the 1990. Thanks also to KFAC Museum Education for her painstaking, sensitive editing of that material into a video, which further illuminates our insights into them 'live' to a far wider audience.



Deer, Charley Kinney, c 1985, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, color

A SENSE OF PLACE

The Kinney family's creative expressions epitomize the traditional arts of East Kentucky as studied and described by folklorists and cultural anthropologists, but they also speak to the aesthetics of the unique, highly personal voices to which folk art historians direct their attention. This essay focuses on the latter — the vigorous, distinctive paintings and three dimensional works of Charles Kinney (1906-1991), the carvings of Noah Oliver Kinney (1912-1991), and the paintings of Hazel Bateman Kinney (b.1929).

The art of the Kinney family reflects centuries old cultural traditions rooted in an agrarian way of life that was brought to Appalachia by early settlers, predominantly from Northern Ireland and other parts of the British Isles. For the Kinneys, “art and life” were “inextricably entwined.”¹ For these Toller Hollow residents in Lewis County, “art was a natural, essential part of life.”² They actively shared their paintings, carvings, and music making with their neighbors and with a larger community of visitors. Charley Kinney was also an expert basket maker.

Appalachian crafts, like basket and pottery making and musical arts like ballads, fiddle tunes, and even clogging and square dancing, are well known outside the region. Kentucky's visual folk artists, known in specialized circles through publications and exhibitions, deserve broader exposure. This exhibition furthers that end. Charley, his younger brother Noah, and Noah's wife Hazel are three gifted Kentuckians whose art provides significant cultural context and sensitive personal vision. Their painted narratives and

portraits and their carved and assembled figures and machinery offer a glimpse into East Kentucky life going back to the early twentieth century. The stark existence softened by harmony with nature and its inhabitants, both animal and human, communicate the interrelationship of their lives and the cultural context of which they are an integral part. It stirs the emotions, makes the viewer smile, and helps us to revere life and become one of its positive actors.



Going to the Mill, Hazel Kinney, 1991, oil on canvas



Lion, Charley Kinney, 1970s, tempera on window shade, 35½ x 69, KFAC, gift from Richard Edgeworth

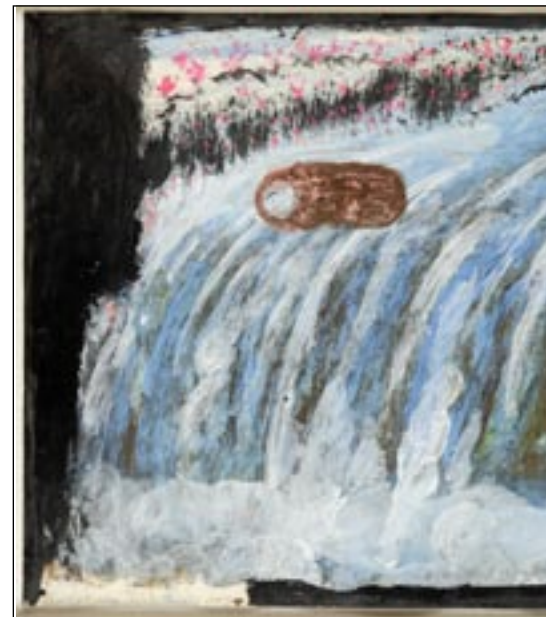


Saw Mill, Noah Kinney, 1975, painted wood, chain, fabric and cotton, 11 x 42 x 11, KFAC

While the Kinney brothers showed aptitude for and interest in art from their early years, consistent art making began later in life. This is true for many remarkable American self-taught artists who came to it upon such life “passages” as retirement, illness, accident, or the death of a spouse. The memories, beliefs, faith, and personal and social commentary expressed through their paintings and sculpture were active responses to their experiences and function as a life review that psychologists agree is important for good mental health. Through the act of art making, the Kinneys controlled their lives and traveled without limits through the continuum of time and space. They lived on “slow time,” and did not find it necessary to seasonally change the clocks.

“You can’t outdo nature, boys... nature’s got everything beat... whatever you’re cut out for, that’s what you’ll do for the rest of your life,” said Charley Kinney in 1990.³ As stated, he and his brother Noah demonstrated early ability and interest in art and in music. They drew pictures when they were children, but not until the 1970s did their art making intensify. For years, Charley made small clay animals, baked them in his home oven, painted and sold them for a few cents to a dollar. Eventually though, he returned to drawing which he called as easy as “falling off a log.”⁴ He remarked with pride that he drew what was “pictured in my mind” and, with an occasional exception, did not copy from pictures.⁵ He copied the likenesses of his heroes, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, from US currency because he “never met them and did not know how they looked.”⁶ Noah turned to carving in 1970 when illness forced him to retire from farming. His first work, a small saddle, was carved for a neighbor as a joke.

The brothers’ parents, Frank and Anna McC... American subsistence farmers, raising chicken. Their 35 acre property in Toller Hollow near... hen house, workshop, and other outbuildings. Edgar, the eldest son, died young. Charley w... When Charley was two, the family moved across... cabin that was to be their home for the rest of... played the fiddle and nurtured Charley and... Charley attended school for three years, and... elementary school. Charley and Noah farm... farm work was limited by a disability, cut hair, oak-splint baskets to help the family economic...



Niagara Falls, Charley Kinney, 1987, tempera on wood

Charley Kinney painted the landscape and scenes of daily rural life, recording memories of past decades. Aware of changes in technology in the twentieth century, he documented the occasional automobile, truck, steam engine, airplane or dirigible. Pictures sometimes reflected current events, both local and national. Often his subject matter was rooted in religious beliefs, folklore, and local legend. Indigenous and exotic animals, as well as imaginary creatures, appear often in Charley's paintings. His art, whether descriptive or anecdotal, is imbued with intensity and, at times, subtle humor.

While tornadoes are rare in the Kentucky mountains, they occur with regularity in the central and western parts of the Commonwealth and an occasional twister will settle in mountain valleys. In fact, Kentucky was hit directly by the legendary tornado outbreak of 1974 and prior to that by another serious outbreak in 1971. These outbreaks and other instances of tornadic weather may have inspired several versions of Kinney's tumultuous natural disaster drawings.⁷ In these works, a massive centrally positioned black cloud spews smoke in swirling rhythms; the wind thunders against uprooted trees, dislocated houses, and overturned automobiles.

While Kinney never visited Niagara Falls, he captured the sublime beauty of the New York State natural wonder using a variety of colors, and once again, rhythmical, painterly brush strokes delineate the powerful torrents of water gushing over the crest creating immense foamy spray clouds as the water beats against the rocky bottom. Kinney probably remembered the scene from familiar popular sources.



Covered Bridge, Charley Kinney, tempera
22 x 28, collection of D

The covered bridge was a familiar sight to hundreds that existed in the Kentucky, only Lewis County, site of the Kinney farm, and the County. The Goddard Bridge in Fleming County, known and earliest covered bridge, dates back on Kentucky Highway 32 between Morehead. While the bridge painting appears to be Kinney was familiar with the Goddard Bridge a Methodist Church. In this work, Kinney do in the early years of the twentieth century with creek below and a horse and buggy about years, some bridges were crossings for school buses.^{8,9,10,11}



Moonshine Still, Charley Kinney, 1984, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, KFAC

Work-related and recreational pursuits were recorded by Kinney with drawings of plowing, cherry picking, raccoon and bear hunts, and square dances. He also captured the relaxed atmosphere of Election Day in the years before women's suffrage in *Men Voting, No Women*. A visit from Santa Claus in overalls and a cowboy hat marked a jovial Christmas holiday celebration as Santa is pictured approaching a house on his sled, guided by text to "come down chimley."

In *Grinding Corn* multiple aspects of corn harvesting are shown with text. The "fodder shock," identified in the text, is now associated with Halloween house decoration, but in earlier years "corn shocks" were corn stalks gathered and tied for later use as farm animal feed. An attenuated figure is at work at a long grater, making meal for corn bread. Another figure in the foreground stands with arrows that point to the text "corn bread for dinner" and "dinner pumpkin." The artist also draws a large decorative pair of pumpkins associated with the autumnal harvest season.

Charley Kinney created a stark visual narrative in *Moonshine Still*. Two men set in a spare landscape, with the suggestion of the "cover" of a large tree in an open space, map out the site. With no extraneous visual detail, the larger figure, in a red hat and shirt and dark pants and shoes, appears to be watching and directing the production of the still. The smaller figure, also in a red shirt, stokes the open flame that fires the bullet-shaped copper still. A spiral pipe from the still's neck feeds the distilled liquid into a barrel that empties from a bottom spout channeling the liquor into a container ready for the jug. A nearby larger covered barrel contains the raw "mash" of fermenting, moistened corn and malt.

Moonshine (homemade corn whiskey) produced back to the beginnings of white settlement in the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794, when Kentucky's Federal excise tax, the moonshiner began the status. For two hundred years, moonshining by an accepted cottage industry in Appalachia. A tax made moonshining illegal, but moonshiners trade until law enforcement and bloody battles. Before racketeers sullied the high quality, moonshiners supplied liquor to the local community protected by their community. For Kentucky, it was a practical way to use and process commodities.¹² Moonshiners' and bootleggers roes went beyond the mountains and men's consciousness, spawning movies like 1956's *Gun Road* starring Roger Mitchum and leading to stock car racing.



Santa Claus, Charley Kinney, 1986, 22 x 28, KFAC, gift from Sara Aldridge

In Kentucky frontier life, self sufficiency was paramount. People cleared their own land and built log houses, outbuildings, and fences from lush forests. While they made many of their own implements, they relied on itinerant peddlers for wares they were unable to produce. Early in the twentieth century, the pack peddler served rural populations with a wide variety of basic household goods—tools, pots and pans, cutlery, clothing, and sewing notions to name a few. In an era before general stores, strip malls, and Wal-Marts, mountaineers welcomed the traveling salesman. In the picture *Pak (sic) Peddler*, the peddler is jauntily walking on a path, his red hat slightly tipped as he approaches his eager, waiting customer.



Pak Peddler, Charley Kinney, 1984, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, KFAC

Zeppelin, a type of rigid airship pioneered by Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin in the early twentieth century, gained international publicity during the 1930s, with reports that he claimed to have seen one moving over the Ohio River during that period. The idea of the Zeppelin recaptured the public imagination in the mid-1980s. The Kentucky artist's various depictions are embellished with a series of patterned colors and designs, those used on his tigers and boogers, different from the longitudinal girders and rings characteristic of the original alloy, skeletal features of the cylindrical airship. This treatment adds a witty touch to the otherwise serious subject. Zeppelin history was dramatized when the Hindenburg caught fire in May, 1937, in Lindhurst, New Jersey before thousands of spectators, with more than 20 of the 97 passengers and one ground crew member killed.

As with the zeppelin catastrophe, Kinney's work responds to current and historical events. He has been reported about government officials in a recent work, the killing of wild hogs by National Guard soldiers landing by parachute are firing. Kinney was extremely critical of killing of the hogs, but this feeling is absent from the picture.

Boasts and tall tales are common to many cultures. A local tale or oral tradition could be found in Kinney's *Big Fish*, the exaggerated "fish" story that speaks for itself. The large fish may also represent renditions of the Biblical story of Jonah.



Graft Ziplen, Charley Kinney, 1990, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, Arient Family Collection



Wild Hogs, Charley Kinney, 1985, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, K FAC



Big Fish, Charley Kinney, 1989, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, K FAC



Lion and Rabbit, Charley Kinney, late 1980s, 22 x 28, collection of Audrey Heckler

Kinney may illustrate larger lessons in some of his animal works. In *Hawk and Rattlesnake*, the predatory bird and fearsome reptile pitted against each other, demonstrate “the survival of the fittest,” the rattlesnake succumbing to the hawk’s strength. Newspapers or periodicals or the natural environment surrounding his rural home may have been a source for this painting.¹⁵

Kinney’s *Lion and Rabbit* may be interpreted in more than one way. The artist may have simply chosen to depict indigenous and exotic animals side by side. But, one is tempted to look for a local legend and fable that brought these animals together. Though not specifically from Kentucky, there are stories in which the rabbit survives the animal of superior size and strength by outwitting him.



Who Look Snak Never Die, Charley Kinney, 1980s, 28 x 22, KFAC, gift

The penciled text, *Who Look (at a)Snak(e) Never Die*, accompanies a drawing of people who surround a centrally placed yellow snake wrapped around a tree. This painting references a Biblical story found in Numbers, Chapter 21:

4 They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way;

5 they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!"

6 Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died.

7 The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

8 The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live."

9 So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.¹⁶

This story gave rise to a regional myth that was accompanied by an oft heard children's rhyme, "Look a snake in the eye and never die."¹⁷

Kinney's tigers and lions are among his most frequently rendered subjects; without a doubt, their power, strength, and beauty fascinated him. He may have been especially impressed with

stories brother Noah told following a visit to his wife and collector friends, Richard and M. mountain lions, wild cats, tigers, even wild rendered with side view bodies and frontal eyes directly confronting the viewer. An animal drawings is *Cat's Eye* an enigma according to Hazel Kinney, when he was eight drew deer and elk. Deer were common near 1950 when herds were reestablished. Elk herds reestablished in the region, after being hunted by settlers in the 1800s.



Mountain Lion, Charley Kinney, 1989, tempera



Cut Cherry, Charley Kinney, late 1980s, tempera and pencil, 28 x 22, collection of Erick Moeller



Abraham Lincoln, Charley Kinney, 1989, tempera and pencil, 28 x 22, collection of Erick Moeller



Wild Booger, Charley Kinney, 1987, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, KFAC

Charley Kinney's haunted house and haint paintings sprang from the artist's imagination but are rooted in Kentucky folktales. These works are the embedded with haints, boogers, spirits, or haunts that populate haunted houses. Charley believed in haints and knocking spirits.¹⁹ While these spirits are often formless, Kinney's haints take on supernatural, animal characteristics.²⁰ In *Haint*, a dark building is in the left upper portion of the picture while in the foreground slightly right of center is a large dark creature of staggering size, with a huge lion-like head and unfurled long red tongue and glinty red eyes. With a striped reddish, blue, and black body, it has whirling back paw-like legs and huge black,

extending, hairy, frontal paws. Men, women to be running away from the fearsome being. Appalachian region have long told "haint" tales. These are often imagined as a Big Booger creatures haunting the shadows in the dark. Beyond their obvious entertainment value, they are told to children to keep them near home, especially



Honted House, Charley Kinney, late 1980s, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, KFAC



Devil Burning Wicked, Charley Kinney, 1985, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, KFAC

The Kinneys had Catholic and Protestant parents, but Noah and Hazel were drawn to Catholicism after a long friendship with the sisters at the Glenmary Mission in Vanceburg. Many Appalachians tended to embrace the more emotional aspects of religious worship. Pentecostal/Holiness groups and evangelical churches promote monotheism, salvation, and fundamentalism. Charismatic ministers gave “fire and brimstone” sermons that carried warnings of the punishment of hell and dire consequences if sinners refused to repent.^{21,22} This stern rhetoric is captured in several drawings. In *Far Bramton (Fire and Brimstone)*, *Where We’ll Go*, the artist literally showers the farm landscape with fire and brimstone, eclipsing the land and subsequently killing the people.

The image presented in Kinney’s painting, where Satan lances his victims with a pitchfork in Appalachian country folk’s interpretation of sinners unable or unwilling to find salvation at the very end. Kinney portrays the devil as a feeble man who stands out against a light-rayed yellow background, which he pitches bodies, into a red, fiery pit.

Charley Comes Home from the Hospital is another work that recalls one admission to a local hospital. Automobiles are parked around the hospital, and the painting illustrates the time when an impetuous Charley came home from the hospital in his gown one evening, deciding to drive twenty miles away.^{23,24}

Charley Kinney generally painted in a flat, two-dimensional style. The rules of perspective and naturalistic modeling and lighting in his pictures lends equal importance to the pictorial surface. Size and placement of elements in composition accentuate the narrative. Kinney usually made a pencil sketch and then freely painted the surface. His work never took on a coloring book look. His use of color is expressionistic. Yet, he favored an economy of means.



Far Bampton, Where We'll Go, Charley Kinney, 1988, tempera

Not solely a painter, as mentioned previously, Charley Kinney created an important small group of articulated puppets that were an intrinsic part of his fiddling performance. They were hung on a crossbar and animated from a foot pedal, and they moved rhythmically as his arms were engaged with fingering and bowing. The puppets showed Kinney's mastery at reusing humble materials and magically transformed when he began fiddling. The result was a complex, total, artistically expressive performance.



One of Charley Kinney's female puppets, KFAC Archives



Charley Kinney plays fiddle with puppets, 1985, KFA



Animals, Charley Kinney, 1985, tempera and animal skin



George Washington, Noah Kinney, 1970s, wood, fabric, plaster, shoestring and buttons, 38 x 24 x 23, KFAC

Noah Kinney, who began to carve in 1960, painted and animals. His most ambitious works are other human figures clothed in recycled garments, including a wedding dress. They have a stoic reserve and presence. His carvings of George Washington and Theodore Roosevelt, respectful homages to heroes, reflect his patriotism.

Noah Kinney's animal carvings included cats, turtles, foxes, and opossums. He fashioned farm vehicles as well, some a testament to the change that came slowly to the isolated mountains.

Noah Kinney's replica of a log cabin, he carved together and his brother Charley's birthplace. The meaning for the artist, but the carving has become a symbol. The log cabin is a vernacular architectural form identified with Appalachian life.²⁵ Though the cabin is European in origin.²⁶ Kinney's log cabin is a V notch construction, one of several common types.

Kinney's carved steam driven portable Sawmill, the importance of logging in Appalachia and the rich forested resources of Appalachia by logging. Kinney respected selective harvesting of timber, critical of the raping of the land that caused damage.²⁹



Tractor, Noah Kinney, 1970s, painted wood, $11\frac{3}{4} \times 11\frac{3}{4} \times 18$, KFAC



Cat, Noah Kinney, date unknown, painted wood and bristles, $10\frac{1}{2} \times 14\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$, collection of Barbara Rose & Ed Okun



Horse and Buggy, Noah Kinney, 1970s, painted wood, wire, and leather, 11 x 24 x 7, KFAC, gift from Richard Edgeworth



Lion, Noah Kinney, late 1980s, painted wood and wood shavings, 16 x 27 x 11¼

Hazel Bateman Kinney, Noah's wife, was born in Mason County and grew up in Roberson County in a Methodist farming family. She completed eighth grade as did Noah and became interested in art in the 1980s, following Noah and Charley's example. Her paintings of animals and pets and the routines of daily farm life show sensitivity and humor. She also painted narratives based on the Old Testament, with many examples of the Garden of Eden personalized with colorful butterflies, Noah's Ark, and Moses crossing the Red Sea. Unable to paint at the present time, she lives in an assisted living facility in Flemingsburg.

As folklorist/author Bill Ferris noted in *Local Color*, American artists are identified with place. The Kinney family, as noted artists Minnie Adkins, Hugo Sperger, Tim Lewis, Linville Barker, and earlier Edgar Tolson, have and had deep ties to East Kentucky. The work of American self-taught artists has often revolved around histories and memories of place. Mario Sanchez created carved polychromed reliefs of his Cuban-American community in an enclave in Key West, Florida for more than fifty years. Clementine Hunter recorded life at Melrose Plantation in Natchitoches, Louisiana, where she lived and worked for more than a half century. Grandma Moses of Eagle Bridge, New York documented farm life and the changing seasons in anecdotal paintings executed over a period of two decades.

While a personal vision and a sense of place shaped the awareness and identity of each of them, the art of Charley, Noah, and Hazel Kinney transcends each one's personal history, communicating universal human values. One cannot help but react to the Kinneys' self sufficiency, ingenuity, humor, sense of community, wisdom, imagination, and talent, all put to good use. Their uniquely

expressed artworks, including several masterpieces, offer relevant messages for national and global audience.

--Lee Kogan
New York, NY
April, 2006



Tiger, Hazel Kinney, 2002,
collection of



Moses Crossing the Red Sea, Hazel Kinney, 1992, mixed media

Endnotes

- 1 Robert Penn Warren in William Ferris' *Local Color/A Sense of Place in Folk Art* (New York: Anchor Books Doubleday), p xi.
- 2 Ibid
- 3 Charley Kinney interview with Adrian Swain, 1990. "Local Voices," video
- 4 Ibid
- 5 Charley Kinney, interview with fiddler/archivist John Harrod, 1990. Unpublished video
- 6 Ibid
- 7 http://kccserv1.esth.wku.edu/factsheets/ky_tornadoes and <http://www.disastercenter.com/Kentucky/tornado.html>
- 8 Dale Travis, *Covered Bridges in Kentucky*, Feb. 6 2006. Kentucky Covered Bridge Association <http://www.dalejtravis.com/cbky.htm>
- 9 <http://www.uky.edu//KentuckyArts/CoveredBridges/goddard.html>
- 10 Tresia Swain, telephone interview, March 16, 2006
- 11 Hazel Kinney, telephone interview, March 20, 2006
- 12 John B. Rehder, "Making and Hauling Moonshine" in *Appalachian Folkways* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2004), pp 196-202.
- 13 "Hindenburg Burns in Lakehurst Crash: 21 Known Dead, 12 Missing, 64 Escape." *New York Times*, May 7, 1937, pp 1,1,2
- 14 Adrian Swain, March 16, 2006
- 15 Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study SCWDS Briefs report Rattlesnake and Hawk Duel Death, April 1989 5.1 pdf www.uga.edu/scwds/topic
- 16 <http://bibleresources.bible.com>
- 17 Matt Collinsworth, telephone interview, April 13, 2006
- 18 Adrian Swain, telephone Interview January 11, 2006
- 19 Adrian Swain, e-mail March 17, 2006 carried text about haints and knocking spirits shared by Matt Collinsworth at the Folk Art Center. The first two told to him by his grandfather, also when he was very young, by an elderly retired school teacher
- 20 See also Charles Edwin Price, *Haints, Witches and Other Supernatural Beliefs of Upper East Tennessee* (Winston Salem, N.C., John F. Blair, 1990)
- 21 There are many biblical references to fire and sulfur including them Genesis 19; Deuteronomy 29; Isaiah 30; Ezekiel 38; Revelations 19-21
- 22 See also Isaiah 47:14; Matthew 41:10; Revelation 19:15
- 23 Adrian Swain, February 20, 2006
- 24 Hazel Kinney, March 20, 2006
- 25 Rehder, pp 75-76
- 26 Rehder, pp 86-88, 320
- 27 Rehder, p 77
- 28 Rehder, pp 173-179
- 29 Kinney Interview with fiddler/archivist John Harrod, 1990. Unpublished video



Garden of Eden
14 x 22, oil on canvas

IN THE HEAD OF SALT LICK (

The old barn leans in just about equal proportion to the fences, the gates, the sheds, the old house, and even the people who live here, Charlie and Noah Kinney, and Noah's wife, Hazel. Past the barn and the garden, a tiny shed crowded with Noah's wood carvings: an ensemble of life-sized female musicians with guitar, mandolin, Dobro, and fiddle; a miniature old-time threshing machine; a fire engine; a horse-and-buggy; and a mule pulling a plow. The front porch of Noah's and Hazel's house is piled with rocks and lumps of coal that Hazel, not to be outdone, has painted with faces, flowers, and forests. Charlie's shanty across the creek is littered with strips of hickory bark he uses to make garden baskets. The old house the brothers were born in is now inhabited only by Charlie's puppets, bizarre creations assembled from rags, aluminum foil, and bits of junk that hang from the end of a tobacco stick and dance while Charlie fiddles. The stripping room and barn display Charlie's paintings: crayon, house paint, and acrylic on window shades and poster board. No farming has gone on here for a long time. The gate beside the barn keeps nothing in and nothing out. As visitors arrive and enter the yard, the last one through is left to figure out how to stand it back up and get it to stay. To pass through that gate is to enter another world.

For years neighbors and visitors have entered this world, struggled comically to replace the impossible gate, and settled themselves in the barn on apple crates and old car seats for a Saturday night round of music. Nearly everyone here is a "musicianer" of some kind or a dancer, but the fiddle is the instrument of choice, and the



Noah Kinney playing the fiddle

pickers, dancers, and listeners align themselves. Fiddlers like filings pointing to the pole of a country," Brooks Mineer explains. Indeed, America could provide such a collection of fiddlers from the same neighborhood as the Lewis County, Kentucky.

Unlike the typical jam session today where familiar tunes all together, in the Kinneys' barn, everyone sits around the circle and each fiddler plays and sings. A guitar and sometimes a banjo, are likewise passed, giving everyone the opportunity to s



Noah, Hazel, and Charley Kinney in front of barn, 1984, Hazel Kinney Archive

The order of performing is set by a custom long established among themselves—no one better to lead off than Brooks Mineer, who always claims he has to play first because he's not even supposed to be here and has to leave early. When he plays his "Gray Eagle," his fiddle held low on his left arm the old-fashioned way, his body swaying in counter-rhythm to the rolling of his bow, his eyes gleam and sparkle as he seems transported to another realm beyond this brief instant of time in the old barn.

"What? Play the 'Gray Eagle' AGIN?" he whines in mock disbelief. Gus didn't have the tape recorder on, so Brooks will oblige, but with a condition: he will play it again if someone will dance. The plywood board is dragged out into the driveway and another instrument is added to the ensemble, its partner in evolution, the ancient rhythm of the feet. Now he plays for a longer time and puts a young lady through a real workout until at last, when one or both of them has finally had enough, they end with a flourish, bow strokes and feet together! Brooks protests he has already stayed too late: "I'm a dead man when I get home," and passes the instrument to his brother-in-law, Bob Prater, the premier dance fiddler in Lewis County, and the music continues as different ones, from old men in overalls to adolescent girls in designer jeans, try out their steps on the plywood board.

The fiddlers are close observers and students of each other's playing. Noah leans over to me and allows, "Bob's got a keen cut with the bow, don't he?" In fact, there is a similarity in the playing of all these fiddlers, owing to their having grown up and learned from a previous generation in the same place, an exaggerated emphasis on the bowing, artful, flamboyant and graceful,

articulating difficult and complex phrases that would not attempt. As we were learning, the had to be seen as well as heard. It could not or records.

And so it goes—the circle turns and the fiddle. Bob Prater, Clarence Rigdon takes the fiddle beautiful and lively old tunes learned from them from men who came down the Ohio on Roger Cooper, a generation younger than the heir to the local tradition, whose playing reflected learning from the late Buddy Thomas, who, was the greatest of the Lewis County fiddlers. I take our turns, feeling honored to get to play



Charley Kinney playing the fiddle w

The evening wears on and now the fiddle is passed to Charlie, who being the oldest, always plays last. Noah seconds him on the guitar as only a brother can with runs that weave in and out of the tune like the shuttle through the shed of a loom. Charlie remarks that he can “catch a feller’s bow-hand” if he can study it a while, and I am relieved to know the reason for his unnerving stare as I was playing one of his tunes. Now he takes the fiddle and imitates first Gus’s, and then my style of bowing. We didn’t play at all alike, but Charlie had captured each of us perfectly. Over the years he had picked up tunes from us just as we had from him, and now here he is giving us his rendition of our renditions of his tune!

It is a vision I will never forget: Old Charlie with his legs crossed, sitting on a crate, the old felt hat partly hiding that inscrutable gaze, his right arm hanging loosely at his side while his bow hand draws curves in the air. As I watch and listen, I look at Charlie’s paintings tacked up on the inside of the old barn: hounds trailing a fox into a mountain sunset while a little girl stands peacefully fishing in a tiny pond; a man hauling dogs in a horse-drawn sled, the dogs with seeming dog-smiles sitting up on their hind legs enjoying the ride; and the one that speaks to me now across the years: a hawk’s eye view of this valley from the top of the mountain, with a hawk life-size on a limb in the foreground, and far below in the distance this same barn caught in this same instant: brush-strokes and bow-strokes, the signature patterns of our lives.

--John Harrod
Frankfort, KY
March, 2006

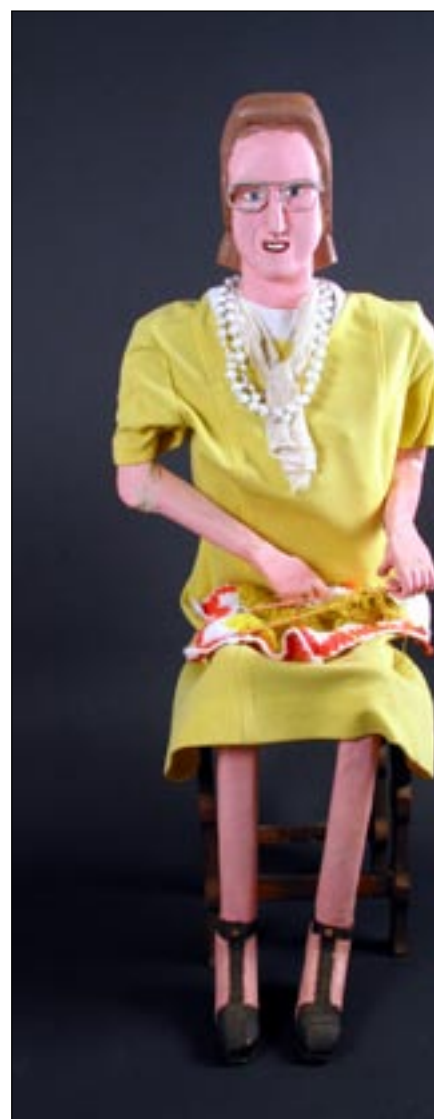


Charley Kinney playing the fiddle

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Lee Kogan serves as Director of the Folk Art Institute, the educational arm of the American Folk Art Museum in New York City, where she has been the Senior Research Fellow since 1987. Prior to assuming the directorship in 1993, she served for four years as Assistant Director of the Institute. She taught music in public and private schools in New Jersey from 1951 to 1983, and served as Assistant to the Director of the Folk Art Institute from 1983 to 1987. Since 1982 she has also served as Adjunct Assistant Professor at New York University. Ms. Kogan holds a Bachelors degree in music from Queens College and a Masters degree in music teaching from Columbia University. She received a second Masters degree in Folk Art Studies in 1993 from New York University. Recently, Ms. Kogan served as Editor for the *Encyclopedia of American Folk Art*.

John Harrod, a native Kentuckian and former Rhodes Scholar, first learned old-time music from Darley Fulks, Bill Livers, Asa Martin and Lily May Ledford. In the 1980s he worked with Gus Meade and Mark Wilson to collect a large and influential body of field recordings of musicians around central and northeastern Kentucky. These can be heard on Rounder CD's *Fiddle Music of Kentucky* and *Kentucky Old-Time Banjo*. A new CD of John's field recordings, *Along the Ohio River*, is being issued in 2006. He has taught fiddle workshops at Appalshop, Berea College, and the Ed Haley Old-Time Fiddle Festival. John Harrod is among the most knowledgeable and well-researched experts on old-time and traditional Appalachian music in Kentucky. He retired from teaching high school in Frankfort, KY in May 2006.



School Marm, Noah Kinney, 1980s
fabric, beads, wool and knitted
46 x 16 x 24, collection of George

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

1. *Abraham Lincoln*, Charley Kinney, 1980s, tempera and pencil, 28 x 22, collection of Dick & Maggie Wenstrup
2. *Abraham Lincoln*, Charley Kinney, 1989, tempera and pencil, 28 x 22, collection of Jeff and Jennifer Grosman
3. *Abraham Lincoln*, Noah Kinney, 1970s, painted wood, 13½ x 12½ x 10 (KFAC)
4. *Abraham Lincoln*, Charley Kinney, 1980s, tempera and pencil, 28 x 22, collection of Steve Jones
5. *Animals*, Charley Kinney, 1985, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (KFAC)
6. *Bears*, Charley Kinney, 1980s, paint and pencil, 18¾ x 34½ (KFAC)
7. *Big Fish*, Charley Kinney, 1989, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (KFAC)
8. *Boy Fishing with his Dog*, Noah Kinney, 1925?, paint and ink, 8½ x 11½, collection of Dick & Maggie Wenstrup
9. *Cat*, Noah Kinney, 1985, painted wood and bristles, 11 x 17 x 7½ (KFAC)
10. *Cat*, Noah Kinney, date unknown, painted wood & bristles, 10½ x 14½ x 7½, collection of Barbara Rose and Ed Okun
11. *Cat's Eye*, Charley Kinney, c1914?, pencil, 8¾ x 5¾ (KFAC)
12. *Charley Comes Home from Hospital*, Charley Kinney, 1990, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (1)
13. *Covered Bridge*, Charley Kinney, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, collection of Dick & Maggie Wenstrup
14. *Cut Cherry*, Charley Kinney, late 1980s, paint and pencil, 28 x 22, collection of Erick Moeller
15. *Deer*, Charley Kinney, mid 1980s, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, collection of Steve Jones
16. *Devil Burning Wicked*, Charley Kinney, 1985, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (KFAC)
17. *Devil Burning Wicked*, Charley Kinney, late 1980s, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, collection of Steve Jones
18. *Far Bramton, Where We'll Go*, Charley Kinney, 1988, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (KFAC)
19. *Farmer and Cow*, Noah Kinney, 1980s, painted wood, 8 x 14 x 7 (1)
20. *Fire and Brimstone*, Charley Kinney, c1990, tempera and pencil, collection of Richard Edgeworth
21. *Fish*, Noah Kinney, 1980s, painted wood, 14 x 8½ x 3½ (1)
22. *Garden of Eden*, Hazel Kinney, 1991, crayons and markers, 24¾ x 30½ (KFAC)
23. *Garden of Eden*, Hazel Kinney, 1993, oil pastels and ink, 14 x 22 (KFAC)
24. *George Washington*, Charley Kinney, 1980s, tempera and pencil, 19¾ x 21, collection of Dick & Maggie Wenstrup
25. *George Washington*, Noah Kinney, 1970s, wood, plaster, clothing, shoe string and buttons, 38 x 24 (KFAC)
26. *Giraffe*, Noah Kinney, late 1980s, painted wood, 11 x 16 x 6¼ (1)
27. *Going to the Mill*, Hazel Kinney, 1991, crayons and markers, 14½ x 31 x 14 (1) (KFAC)
28. *Graft Ziplen*, Charley Kinney, 1990, tempera and pencil, collection of Family Collection
29. *Grinding Corn*, Charley Kinney, c1990, tempera and pencil, collection of Family Collection
30. *Grist Mill*, Noah Kinney, 1970s, painted wood, 14½ x 31 x 14 (1)
31. *Guinea Hen*, Noah Kinney, 1980s, painted wood, 11 x 16 x 6¼ (1)
32. *Haint*, Charley Kinney, 1985, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (1)
33. *Hawk and Rattlesnake*, Charley Kinney, 1988, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (KFAC)
34. *Hanted House*, Charley Kinney, tempera and pencil, collection of Barry Cohen
35. *Horse and Buggy*, Noah Kinney, 1970s, painted wood, 11 x 24 x 7 (1)
36. *Italy*, Charley Kinney, 1980s, tempera, 22 x 28 (1)
37. *Kentucky Farm*, Noah Kinney, date unknown, painted wood, 10½ x 13½ (1)
38. *Lion*, Noah Kinney, late 1980s, painted wood, 16 x 24 x 7 (1) Bill Glennon
39. *Lion*, Charley Kinney, date unknown, unidentified paint and pencil, 22 x 28 (1)
40. *Lion*, Charley Kinney, 1950s, unidentified paint and pencil, 22 x 28 (1)
41. *Lion*, Charley Kinney, date unknown, house paint and pencil, 22 x 28 (1)
42. *Lion and Rabbit*, Charley Kinney, date unknown, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, collection of Audrey Heckler
43. *Memories of the Kinney Home Place*, Hazel Kinney, 1992, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (1)
44. *Men Voting, No Women*, Charley Kinney, 1989, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (KFAC)
45. *Model T Ford*, Noah Kinney, 1970s, wood, paper and pencil, 14 x 22 (1)
46. *Moonshine Still*, Charley Kinney, 1984, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (1)
47. *Moses Crossing the Red Sea*, Hazel Kinney, 1992, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (1)
48. *Mother and Child*, Noah Kinney, 1980s, painted wood, 14 x 22 (1)
49. *Mountain Lion*, Charley Kinney, 1989, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (1)
50. *Niagara Falls*, Charley Kinney, 1987, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (1)
51. *Noah's Ark*, Hazel Kinney, 1992, paint on plywood, collection of Dick & Maggie Wenstrup
52. *Old Fishten Brig*, Charley Kinney, 1988, tempera and pencil, collection of Matthew J. Arient
53. *Old Hanted House*, Charley Kinney, 1988, tempera and pencil, collection of Arient Family Collection

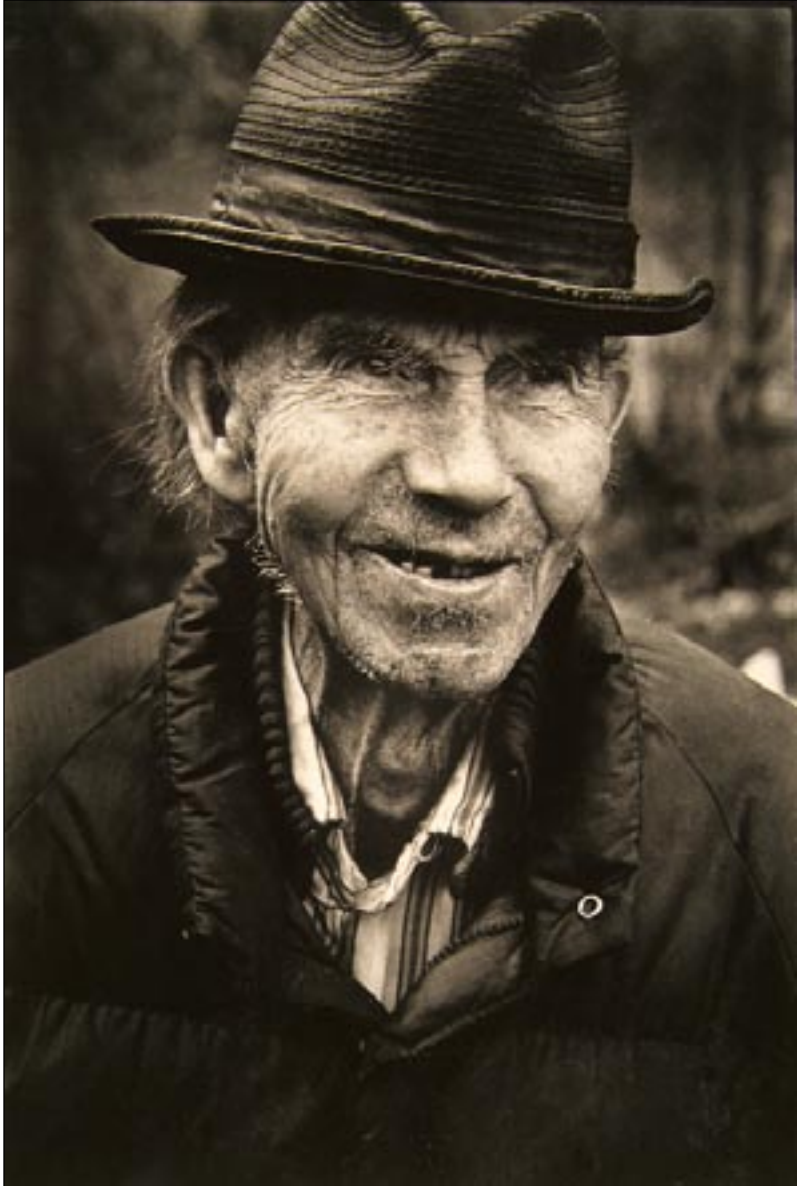
54. *Pak Peddler*, Charley Kinney, 1984, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (KFAC)
55. *Pickin Cherys*, Charley Kinney, 1988, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (3)
56. *Possum*, Noah Kinney, 1988, painted wood, 6½ x 25 x 6, Arient Family Collection
57. *Rattlesnake*, Noah Kinney, 1980s, painted wood, 2 x 28 x 2¼ (1)
58. *Red Fox*, Noah Kinney, 1988, painted wood, 12 x 26 x 3, Arient Family Collection
59. *Rooster*, Noah Kinney, 1980s, painted wood, 15 x 13 4½ (1)
60. *Santa Claus*, Charley Kinney, 1986, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (4)
61. *Saw Mill*, Noah Kinney, 1975, painted wood, fabric and cotton, 11 x 42 x 11 (KFAC)
62. *School Marm*, Noah Kinney, 1980s, wood, paint and clothing, 46 x 16 x 24, collection of George & Sue Viener
63. *Snapping Turtle*, Noah Kinney, 1989, painted wood, 3½ x 15 x 11¼ (4)
64. *Square Dance*, Charley Kinney, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, tempera and pencil, collection of Steve Jones
65. *Statue of Liberty*, Hazel Kinney, c 1992, tempera, 28 x 22 (1)
66. *Teddy Roosevelt*, Noah Kinney, 1970s, painted wood, 12½ x 9½ x 7¼ (KFAC)
67. *Three Types of Skunk*, Noah Kinney, painted wood, 32 x 26 x 6, collection of Dick & Maggie Wenstrup
68. *Tiger*, Charley Kinney, 1980s, tempera and pencil, 32 x 40, collection of Steve Jones
69. *Tiger*, Noah Kinney, 1987, painted wood and wood shavings, 15 x 37 x 8 (KFAC)
70. *Tiger*, Noah Kinney, late 1980s, painted wood, 21 x 30 x 8 (1)
71. *Tiger*, Hazel Kinney, 2002, markers, 22 x 28, collection of Dick & Maggie Wenstrup
72. *Tornado*, Charley Kinney, 1980s, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, collection of Barbara Rose and Ed Okun
73. *Tornado*, Charley Kinney, c1990, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (1)
74. *Tractor*, Noah Kinney, 1970s, painted wood and wire, 11¾ x 11¾ x 18 (KFAC)
75. *Walking Stick*, Noah Kinney, 1980s, painted wood, 35 x 2 x 7¼ (1)
76. *Wedding*, Charley Kinney, 1989, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, collection of Barry Cohen
77. *White Tiger*, Noah Kinney, late 1980s, painted wood and wood shavings, 15½ x 26 x 11¼ (1)
78. *Who Look Snak Never Die*, Charley Kinney, 1990, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (3)
79. *Wild Animal Kills*, Charley Kinney, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, collection of Barry Cohen
80. *Wild Booger*, Charley Kinney, 1987, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (KFAC)
81. *Wild Cat*, Charley Kinney, 1989, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (KFAC)

82. *Wild Hogs*, Charley Kinney, 1985, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28 (KFAC)
83. *Woman with Churn*, Noah Kinney, 1980s, painted wood, 11 x 15 x 12 (KFAC)
84. *Woman with Cow and Calf*, Noah Kinney, 1970s, painted wood, 11 x 15 x 12 (KFAC)
85. *Zeppelin*, Charley Kinney, date unknown, tempera and pencil, 22 x 28, collection of Jeff and Jennifer Grosman

Lenders of individual works of art are detailed in the following list:
(KFAC) = KFAC permanent collection
(1) = KFAC, gift from Richard Edgeworth, 2006
(2) = KFAC, gift from Jessie Cooper, 1991
(3) = KFAC, gift from the Arient Family, 1994
(4) = KFAC, gift from Sara Aldridge and Joanne Aldridge



Noah Kinney in his workshop. Photo by Jeff Grosman



Charley Kinney (1906-1991). Photo: Talis Bergmanis, 1989



Noah Kinney (1912-1991). Photo: Talis Bergmanis, 1989

CHARLEY PAINTS THE DEVIL

i.

Charley paints the devil
because he knows its face
and the dark hand that cleft
his narrow chest.

Hell burns
pink and yellow. Sinners
like you and I and Charley
are cast like pitch to the flame.

But on the spring hill, dogwoods
blossom like ghosts, and God
moves time like a fiddle bow
while Charley paints the devil.

ii.

Charley made his woman to dance
for friends and strangers gathered
round the sunny barn. His bow draws
out some old tune from ragged strings.
His foot taps and rolls the peddle,
and her loose limbs, all wood and wire,
set a freakish gait. She clogs
in his rhythm across the board,
making the children point and laugh.

But some hard nights when the world
flames like hell beyond the ridge
and sleep limps away, a wounded beast,
Charley takes down the fiddle and brings
her out by moonlight, and with he
in his bedclothes and she in her red dress
(always the red dress), he makes her
dance for him and him alone.

iii.

Charley knows the world
is strange and fearsome.
Though we set about
to kill all that we have left,

we exist yet by some unknowable
grace in the shadow of sure destruction.
Beasts, seen and unseen, cast wildly
about in the night. Death gathers
like a storm in the white summer sky,
and judgment comes too soon, too soon.
So Charley dreams in colors and fiddle tunes
and stares the coiled snake in its eye.

--Matt Collins
Morehead, KY
April, 2006



102 West First Street
Morehead, KY 40351
606.783.2204
www.kyfolkart.org

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