

*Ezekiel in the Valley of Dry Bones*, by Cody F. Miller

art selection and comment by [John Kohan](#) in the [January 27, 2021](#) issue



(Used by permission of the artist)

Can these bones live? The answer to this question posed to the prophet Ezekiel seems painfully obvious in such a macabre setting, depicted in this mixed media collage by Cody F. Miller as a place of skull heaped on skull, where all hope is lost. In one of the great reversal narratives of the Bible, Ezekiel's visionary vista of desolation and destruction undergoes an astonishing transfiguration. The jumbled bones knit together, take on flesh, and come to life as a sign of the future national

revival of the Jewish people, held captive in Babylon, an image with universal meaning for other peoples in other valleys. Building up his composition from drawings and patterns made from magazine clippings, Miller depicts the moment of divine empowerment as coming with wind and fire like the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In a pose that plays off the graveyard soliloquy scene in *Hamlet*, the prophet delivers God's call to new life to just one of the many dead in this charnel heap, suggesting that collective renewal begins with transformed individuals. "My pieces are about hope," says Miller. "Not necessarily in a bright way, but in a way that reveals the hidden fingerprint of God, letting us know, 'I was here all along.'"