

CHARLES JENSEN

Our Mission Statement

We pledge allegiance
to the cause; we pledge our lives
for lives we do not own; we pause

in line for groceries to stare into
the eyes of homeless vets, their
bodies pooled like heavy drapes outside

the store; we brake for
animals, especially the baby ones;
we set our minds to making good

where only bad resides; we pledge
our faith to all, give all to all that
faith implies; we harvest what we

sow and pass it on to those with
nothing of their own; we build up
houses where there's never been

a home; we place our hands where
even doctors fear to heal, our skin
on skin as thick as Naugahyde or

lemon peels; we pledge ourselves
to everyone and all that work requires;
we go to bed and dream although

we never really tire of work for work
is not a curse; it calls us
from ourselves the way the mentally

disturbed hear voices whispering
conspiracies except our voices have
a conscience and a mission and we

never seek to harm; we prop the world
up on our shoulders; we live beneath
the mountain where we know we'll have

to spend our evenings returning lost,
untethered boulders to their craggy little
moorings; and when we wake each day,

the cause awakens too, all over again,
is born anew inside of us; we live
the cause and pledge allegiance to its

promise of a world in which a problem
fades away the way a comet points its
nose and flies into the distance,

so determined, so composed.

Charles Jensen is the author of six chapbooks, including *Story Problems* (2017). His second collection of poems, *Nanopedia*, is forthcoming in 2018 from Tinderbox Editions. His poems have appeared in *American Poetry Review*, *New England Review*, and *Prairie Schooner*. He lives in Los Angeles.

JOSE DE JESUS RODRIGUEZ

Untitled, 2016

Acrylic, airbrush, and parachute cloth on canvas, 46 x 50 in

