

BEVERLY SKY

*The Biblical Narrative:
The Tree of Knowledge, 2014*
Fabric collage on canvas, 36 x 36 in



COURTESY: STEVE DUNWELL

JAMES REISS Strongbox

The little metal strongbox she'd owned since college
held dozens of old letters, snapshots of 1960s Tanzania,
and two hundred and fifty dollars in cash. Its combination,
the year of the Norman Conquest of Britain, no longer worked.

She dreaded the blow of a hammer
and chisel on a time capsule for knickknacks
and cake recipes. She wanted its combination, 1066,
to make her out-of-date passport pop up like a jack-in-the-box.

But it said no when she went outside and heaved it
at the sidewalk. It said no when she used a pry bar to give it
the staved-in face of the geezer who lived in a room with a Mosler
safe—till she wept and she laughed and cried yes and its lock gave way.

James Reiss's sixth book of poems, *The Novel*, was published by CW Books in 2015. His work has appeared in *The American Poetry Review*, *The Atlantic*, *Esquire*, *The Iowa Review*, *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review*, *Poetry*, and *Slate*. He has received grants from the NEA and awards from the Academy of American Poets and the Poetry Society of America. Professor emeritus at Miami University, he is the founding editor of Miami University Press. His surname rhymes with "peace." www.jamesreiss.com