July 20, 2015

U.S. Copyright
Orphan Works

Dear U.S. Copyright Office,
I am an artist and writer with over a decade of professional experience. I received my BA in Art from the University of Maine at Augusta in 2009 and my MFA from the University of Houston, School of Art in 2012. I worked throughout my educational process as a fine artist, comic artist, commercial illustrator and fiction author.

Copyright is essential to the long term viability of my work and my career. With my move to digital illustration formats it is often the ONLY way in which I can license or secure payment for my time and energy.

Being able to control the means by which my work is reproduced helps it to hold its value. Created works are part of my inventory. Copying without payment or permission is theft of that inventory. Monetizing works without my knowledge or consent is theft of that inventory.

I believe that we need a fair and credible system to determine copyright permission- and that Orphan Works laws and copyright revisions for the digital age are important legislation. But the system requires transparency, clarity of intent, fairness for creatives, and a reasonable understanding of the creative process in order to function properly. U.S. copyright law was established and has been revised along its historical track for the defense of creative individuals, and not for the exclusive benefit of corporate entities. New laws should reflect this history and this understanding.

Sincerely,
Ted Closson