

The Art of Tony Auth

To Stir, Inform and Inflamm

Tony Auth
with David Leopold

Foreword

Jules Feiffer

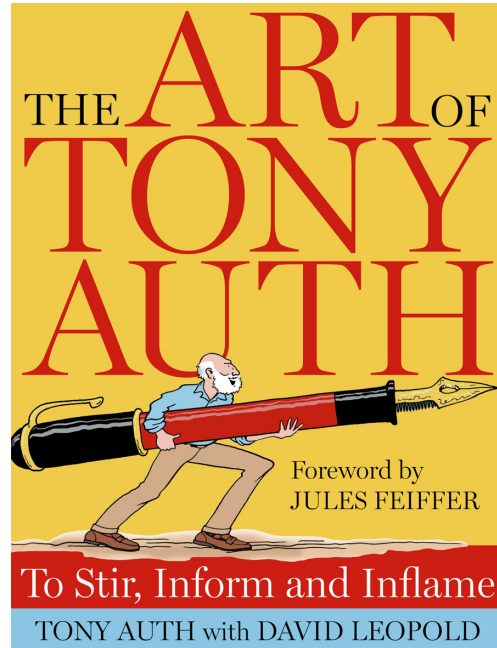
The scene is a big city. We are close in on a dark alley. Grimy brick walls lined with sleeping, standing, crouching, disheveled men in old and soiled clothing, two of them huddled for warmth in cardboard cartons, some asleep, some staring into space, all of them resigned. Standing at the entrance of the alley, a bearded man in camouflage hat and fatigues is addressing a down-and-out woman covered in a hood and shawl. He points away from her and says, “This is veterans’ housing. The mentally ill are one alley over.”

Who but Tony Auth?

The Art of Tony Auth: To Stir, Inform and Inflamm—that is the full title of this book. I don’t know if it was Tony who came up with the subtitle, or David Leopold or the editor, but it feels right. It has the simplicity and directness that readers will find on just about every page of this perceptive and distinctively American volume.

Tony Auth is a no-nonsense, New Dealish, Frank Capra kind of cartoonist. Five times a week for over 40 years, he clocked in on the editorial page of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* with his unique brand of wit and integrity, served up with an almost martini-like dryness, coolly stirred with iconoclasm and truth. He drew political cartoons that induced the reader to think with a smile, an “Oh wow!” kind of smile, an “If I didn’t know this before, I get it now” kind of smile.

Tony believed in—and still believes in—educating as he entertains, and he



doesn't like to do one without the other. His fine and exact pen line slices its way to the core of the matter with a deftness and precision that reminds me that he started out as a medical illustrator. His self-assigned mission is to be smart with a heart.

It's in vogue these days to speak of the United States in decline, as in, "Jeez, what a shame you weren't an American when this was a really good country." That is nonsense, of course, but if you look at editorial pages in newspapers today and note the scarcity of editorial cartoons and the lackluster, Leno-like quality of the few that remain, it's easy to see that this art form is very much in decline. From Art Young to Herblock to Mauldin to Conrad to Oliphant, Tony stands as one of our last town criers, doggedly waving his tattered pennant. And even after his old fort has fallen, like Beau Geste, Tony remains at the ramparts.

And for over 35 years I have been privileged to be his friend.