To The United States Copyright Office:

As an illustrator currently attending school and pursuing a future career as a freelancer, I beg of you, the lawful body responsible for copyright, to severely reconsider the proposal for supposedly “orphaned” works to be available for public use. Freelancers and creative drive an important industry that provides enrichment to the lives of people around the world, but it cannot be sustained without proper protection.

Illustrators work hard for their living, and the standard pay for most jobs has not changed in the last twenty years regardless of inflation. To burden us with the additional problems of protecting and having to set aside even more for the protection of our works, when so many cannot afford to do so, would be sacrilegious. While there are certain copyrighted properties that could stand to be made available for public use, this mostly applies to corporations that have held the same copyright for decades upon decades and have the legal muscle to protect themselves. Most images and art made are made by independent artists who either do not pursue it as a source of income, or pursue it, but will never have the same amount of money and power to legally wrangle infringements. To say that someone else should be able to profit from an artist because the artist does not have the means to protect their art and earn what little they are able to earn is to agree with the death of the American tradition of illustration, innovation, and independent creativity.

Sincerely,

Catherine Li