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write on!

handwriting as memory

Sarah Patterson



Paul + I walked at 10am today + saw many unusual things. It was a busy busting time. Tiny Amish girls, toddlers, we talked with the townships maintenance guy, Pat, about the local road sweeping activities. We talked about the condition of the road (good). I asked if there were plans to pave it. No. (good). Then two Amish women gardening, talking in PA Dutch. Six Amish men + boys filling plastic over a greenhouse. Paul talked about Zen Buddhism + Tibetan Buddhism. We turned the corner and saw a balloon in the distance. It was tied to the scooter of a small child. An older man walked next to the child. He was carrying a plastic bag + I assumed he had picked up something from our only store. Maybe a treat for his grandson? But no, he was picking up cigarette butts + litter with a litter grabber. We talked about litter + how we sometimes pick up litter too. (I wish I had a litter grabber). I thanked him for picking up litter. Then there were small calves, lambs + a kitten. More Amish women working in their yards. A garbage truck went by driven by a litter woman trash collector in tossed boots. All of this is remarkable since I walk this route a lot + frequently nothing of note happens.

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design in the Graphic Design program at Vermont College of Fine Arts, Montpelier, Vermont.

By Sarah Patterson

2020

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write on!

handwriting as memory

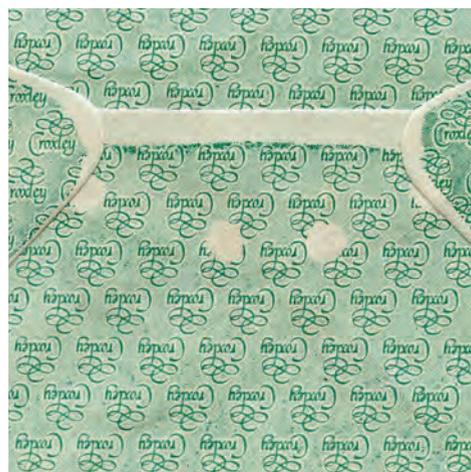
Sarah Patterson



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Abstract



This thesis is about the place of handwriting as a method of communication both in graphic design and in our personal narratives. Also, what handwriting signifies in our digital landscape.

The impetus for this idea developed after my mother's death and my relationship with letters from her and how these letters told a story of our relationship. It is also tied to the ways handwriting is connected to the touch world; our human need to be connected, and the role handwriting has as a signifier for human touch and making.

Handwriting is tied to our personal identities: We might be proud of our beautiful or eclectic writing or shamed by its perceived messiness. We may be judged as unintelligent by our handwriting. I examine the ways we attempt to bring the handwritten into our design practices in a culture that looks to handwriting for meaning when we design digitally.

My wish is that this thesis is of interest to you and how you define your relationship with your own handwritten artifacts and personal archives. Perhaps you are in custodial care of such ephemera.

Dear Reader—

First of all, my apologies for the delay in replying. Don't take that as any indication of my fondness for you (you know I like you), or the fact that I don't think of you every single day. I can't measure it empirically, but in the past few months, I'd say I think of you above all else.

There's so much I want to tell you! But I'm rushing headlong into everything about me, me, me. First—tell me about you. What are you listening to, watching, thinking about? Are you well? Take your time in replying and remember that there is no detail too small, none of your insights insignificant.

Me— I've been absorbed in going through letters from the past. I know you have kept all your letters. You say you'll read them when you get old. Did you and your dad write letters to each other? I feel like I should know that. So, I have all the letters I have ever received (at least it seems that way)— a lot of them are from my mom.

I remember you telling me to enjoy my time with my mom the last few times I saw her. It was hard to see her losing her memory— herself— and you taught me how to be with her. To be in the moment, since your dad lost his memory, too.

Oh, man! I hope I'm not making you sad. That is not my intention because what I wanted to write to you about is handwriting. Let me back up.

I also know you're making stuff all the time. Remember when we drew on the beach on Christmas Day? I didn't want to say that I don't really draw because I wanted to be with you and have tea on the beach and draw. So, I did draw and since then I have been drawing and writing and now I am down with drawing. It is kind of like telling a story and kind of like writing. And I liked that special pencil you gave me (and I had to buy a whole expensive box of them— damn it).

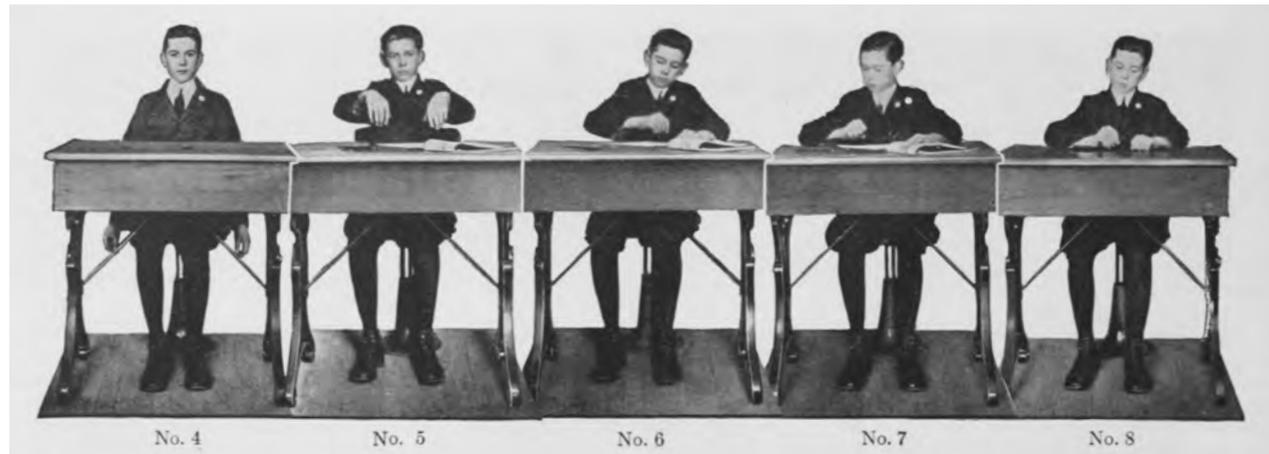
But the writing— I like your handwriting and it is like everything you make. Maybe what I'm trying to say is that it's distinctive. Do you remember learning how to write? I don't really, but the actual forming of words was not a struggle and I have always written letters. Now, I just don't actually handwrite many of them. And you and I— we mostly email or text.

So, I know you're interested in what I'm doing, which is really nice of you. And I've been out of touch, because I've been doing this thesis. I researched the learning of writing, signatures, mail-in ballots, digital handwritten fonts, forgery, handwritten books (think: Moosewood Cookbook). I've examined my own letters as a window into my own history through the handwriting of others.

See what you think— I always want to know what you think.

—Sarah.

How Do We Learn to Write?



Muscular movement and action drills in order to practice the Palmer Method, 1915.

My first bachelor's degree was in elementary education. I have no memory of instruction on how to teach children how to write. I do recall my experience as a student teacher and loving the texture of children's handwriting, decoding what they had written, the wildly creative spelling. It gave me some insight into who they were. Being able to write is a window into self-expression. The method usually begins with handwriting and moves into keyboarding, but through learning how to form letters, words, and to find a voice.

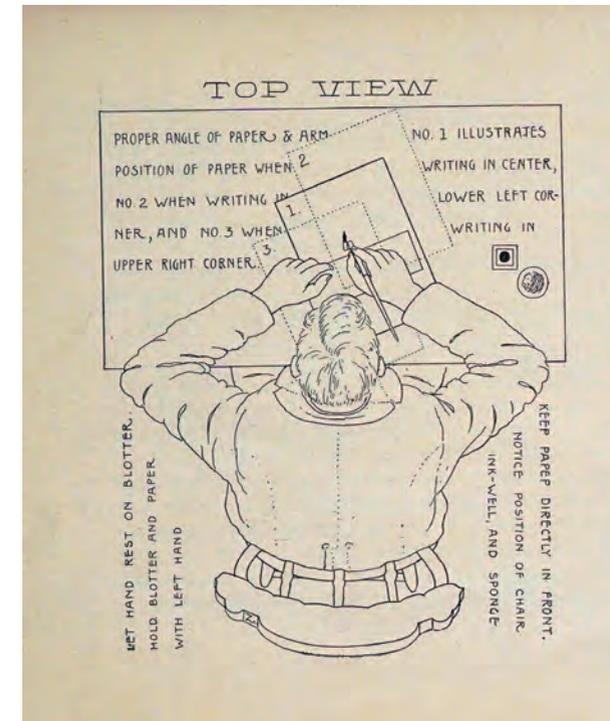
"The key neurological function that we want to bolt into children's brains is cognitive automaticity, the ability to write without consciously being aware one is doing it. When the brain has automatized the slopes of letters or their place on the keyboard, it is freed from low-level demands."¹

The U.S. version of handwriting education is based on a 100-year-old model. Printing (also known as manuscript writing) is taught in grades K-2. Third grade is the traditional point where children learn how to write in cursive. Some children are taught cursive (script) and some are not. For people who don't know how to write

cursive, they may not know how to read cursive. This situation is similar to the U.S. in 1740: "... being able to read and being able to write were two very different things. People were taught to read in order to read the Bible. Businessmen and the rich learned to write and read handwriting. For the average person, script was alien. It wasn't until after the turn of the 19th century that schooling (at least to the 8th grade) became universal, with handwriting as part of the curriculum."²

Spencerian Script was developed as an American version of English Copperplate by Platt Rogers Spencer. Its forms are based on those found in nature, very ornate, and were the basis for penmanship taught in most public and private schools across America in the 1800s.

Learning this very fancy method of writing required many hours of grueling practice. Spencer's pedagogy was centered around the idea that the rigor involved in learning the script instilled a sense of discipline not only in the physical movements, but in the mind. It was impressed upon students from public high schools to business colleges.



Zaner-Bloser instruction, 1920

Spencerian Script was replaced by the Palmer Method, developed by Austin Palmer. Spencerian Script was possibly considered too feminine, too ostentatious, too flamboyant. The Palmer Method was designed for commerce, to simplify penmanship, to transfer it into "rapid, plain, unshaded, coarse-pen muscular movement writing."³ Palmer was interested in consistency, legibility, and speed in writing.

Like Spencerian, the Palmer Method was advertised as a way to uplift people. Palmer was more vocational and reform-minded. His script had an "ethical value": "Penmanship training ranks among the most valuable aids in reforming 'bad' children" and is "the initial step in the reform of many a delinquent ... in order to preserve social order ..."⁴

The expectation in writing in the Palmer Method was that everyone's handwriting would look the same. Industrialization in this era imposed the idea of an assembly line and mass production.

The pedagogical method was based on posture, drills, repetition and consistency in writing. Left-handedness was discouraged. This instruction was widely adopted by U.S. schools and is very similar to the script that is taught today. The Palmer Company went out of business in 1987.

The Zaner-Bloser method is another cursive style and was developed by penman Charles Paxton Zaner. The Zanerian College of Penmanship was founded in 1895 in order to teach handwriting, develop master penmen and sell handwriting supplies. Zaner-Bloser exists to this day and hosts an annual handwriting competition for children.

Initially, learning how to write is a lesson in conformity. We are given a model of what a letter should look like, how to form it, and we perfect the making of it by practice. In Colonial America, penmanship was taught as a mercantile skill on par with bookkeeping and had an element of public self-presentation.

"In the eighteenth century, calling cards, trade cards, mercantile letters, even the mundane bill of exchange involved just such a presentation of the self—before society, before one's clientele, before one's business associates—and handwriting acted as the proper vehicle for that enterprise."⁵

In Victorian America, advanced penmanship training was associated with an introduction to the business world for boys. For girls, penmanship was used for social skills such as letter writing and keeping a journal. For girls and women, writing was more of a visual art, rather than a literary skill, on par with embroidery.

During this time, the teaching of penmanship was deskilled in urban schools in order to have a greater impact: Writing masters were displaced by classroom teachers. There was a strong emphasis on gaining control over the body through rigorous constraints.

Looking at the types of cursive taught, I believe I was taught the Palmer Method in third grade. I can picture the script alphabet marching along the top of the blackboard for reference.

In fifth grade, I went to school in Australia and their way of writing was very different from what I had learned. I wanted to do it their way (much cooler). In my research, I believe italic writing is taught in Australian schools, which was considered more legible and based on the secretary hand used by clerks toward the end of the 15th century in Italy. There was a movement in the U.S. in the 1970s toward italic writing. It was popularized in Portland, Oregon, by Barbara Getty and Inga Dubay, and their books were published by Portland State University. Italic writing is popular with American homeschoolers and used by about 7% of U.S. schools. The Getty-Dubay method also publishes a course for adults to improve the legibility of their writing.

Learning how to write not only involves the mechanics of forming the letters, the rote practice. There is continually a debate about whether learning handwriting is important at all. However, there is evidence that the act of writing creates a mental stimulation in the brain and learning becomes easier.⁶

There is a messiness in learning how to form letters and a variability in their forms as we learn to write. The neuroscience points to better cognition for both adults and children when we write by hand. There is further evidence that when children learn cursive writing, it may promote an ability to self-control.⁷

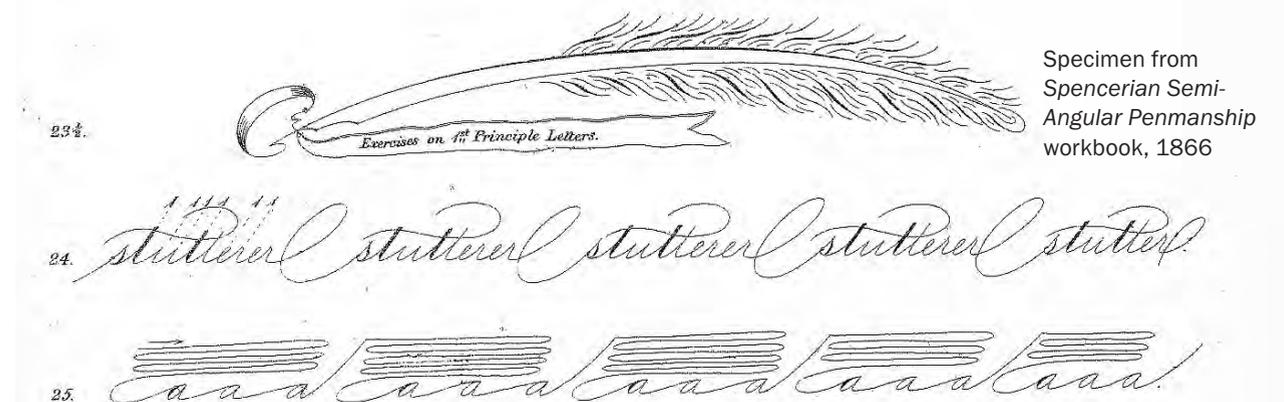
The notion that children are not being taught

penmanship in some schools calls into question values. It threatens some people's idea of what is important, fundamental, and the general erosion of the educational system.

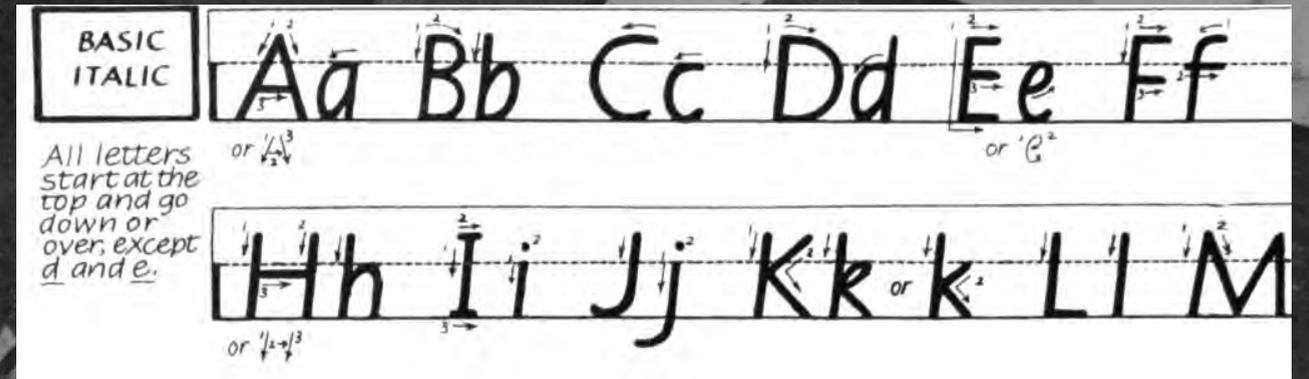
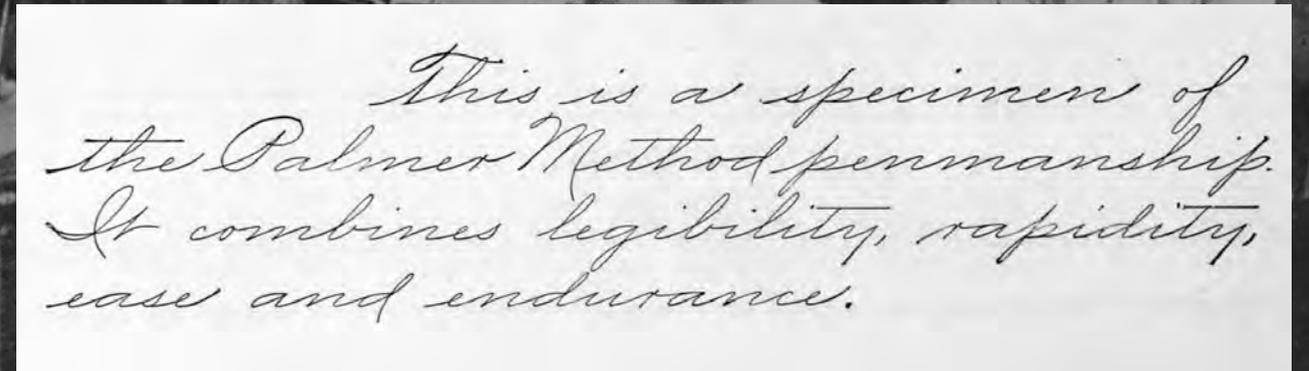
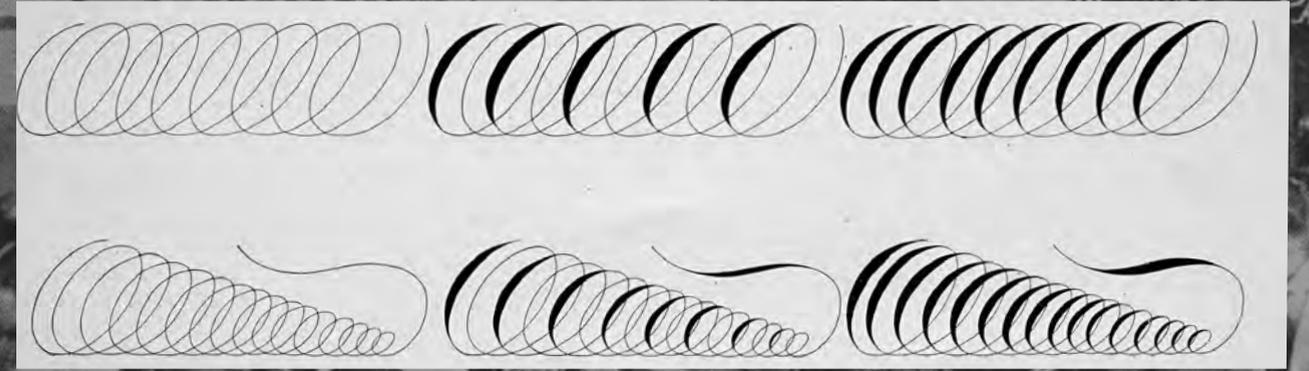
The Dutch graphic designer, typographer and educator Gerritt Noordzji posits that excluding handwriting in education "places the entire civilization at risk." He continues: "This may appear immoderate, but what is western civilization if not the cultural community that avails itself of western writing? Pedagogues pride themselves on the fact that they do not burden school children with an introduction to writing. In so doing they undermine western civilization at its foundation. The frightening increase in illiteracy begins with the neglect of writing in the schools."⁸

With a heavy emphasis on teaching to the test in schools to prepare students to perform well on standardized tests, and replacing keyboarding with writing by hand, there is less focus on being able to write by hand. There is simply less time in the school day.

What's the first thing we want to learn how to write? I would guess our own names. Maybe a parent or grandparent or friend shows us how. It is an act of defining ourselves. It's not the same as learning to find the keys on a keyboard or tapping them out in a text. It is unique: It might be used to sign what we made, to identify what is ours in a sea of drawings hung up on a bulletin board; it helps to tell our story.



Specimen from
Spencerian Semi-
Angular Penmanship
workbook, 1866



FROM TOP:
Zaner lessons in ornamental penmanship
The Palmer Method of business writing
Getty-Dubay italic workbook sample

Handwriting as Punishment

Dear Pat and Marty:

Thank you for the \$20 but my mom won't let me have it until I'm done with these thank you notes!

Love,
Jackson

My stepbrother had told me about this note (and it was, indeed, mailed to Pat and Marty, unedited). Since I always had my daughter write thank you notes (forced, coerced, bribed), I can picture the scenario: small child sits down in front of notecard, grips pencil, sighs, forehead flops down on tabletop, arms droop at side.

Negotiations begin: How many do I have to write? (start with one). What am I supposed to say? (thank you for the money, gift, etc.). Why do I have to do this? (because it is important to say thank you and, sometimes, if you don't bother to say thank you, the person will not know you got the gift and perhaps not send you one next year). Can't you do it? (no).

As a parent, I don't see this as punishment, I see it as a valuable social exchange. It is important to acknowledge a kindness. It is important to thank and it is *nice*. However, I can appreciate that a kid would see it as kind of a penance to receiving a gift. Now I have to write a thank you! Children may find it boring, insincere if they didn't like the gift, unnecessary, old-fashioned.

Handwriting may be a skill that is just being mastered, spelling, punctuation, expressive thoughts, the formal conventions of a letter. These may all be new things. It might be challenging and, therefore, feel like punishment, and there is a documented history of handwriting being used in a punishing way.

In his article "About Education; The Evil in Using Writing to Punishment," author Fred M. Hechinger notes that writing was used as a

punishment: either repetitive writing or some type of essay to express how sorry/wrong you were.⁹ The author noted that chemistry labs were not frequently used as punishment.

For slow-writing kids, any type of writing becomes a chore and leads them to hate writing.¹⁰ The writing of a thank you is not a punishment, but children may find it a punishing activity. Writing is a slowing down, a form of contemplation. Learning how to write is an exercise that requires muscle memory through repetition and practice. If writing is a new skill, even writing a short note can be difficult.

If one has learned how to write, there is a freedom: It comes naturally, thoughts come to mind and can be committed to paper. There is strong emphasis on writing in elementary school even if there may be cursory teaching of penmanship.

In her book, *The History and Uncertain Future of Handwriting*, author Anne Trubek describes her son's struggle with writing. His experience was ultimately her reason for writing the book:

"He began to worry about not having anything to say, not knowing how to say it, or he would come up with ideas that he would not write down because they would take too long, and thus he would write nothing. Perennially being told his handwriting was bad transmuted in his mind into proof that he was a bad writer—a poor student incapable of expressing ideas. He simply hated the physical process of writing. And since handwriting dominated his education in grades one, two, and three, he hated school too."¹¹

There is a shame associated with handwriting that is difficult to read. This is often used implicitly or explicitly in judging character or intelligence. Students are subject to a researched bias of teachers known as the "handwriting effect" where a student's work is judged either positively or negatively based on its overall legibility, not the

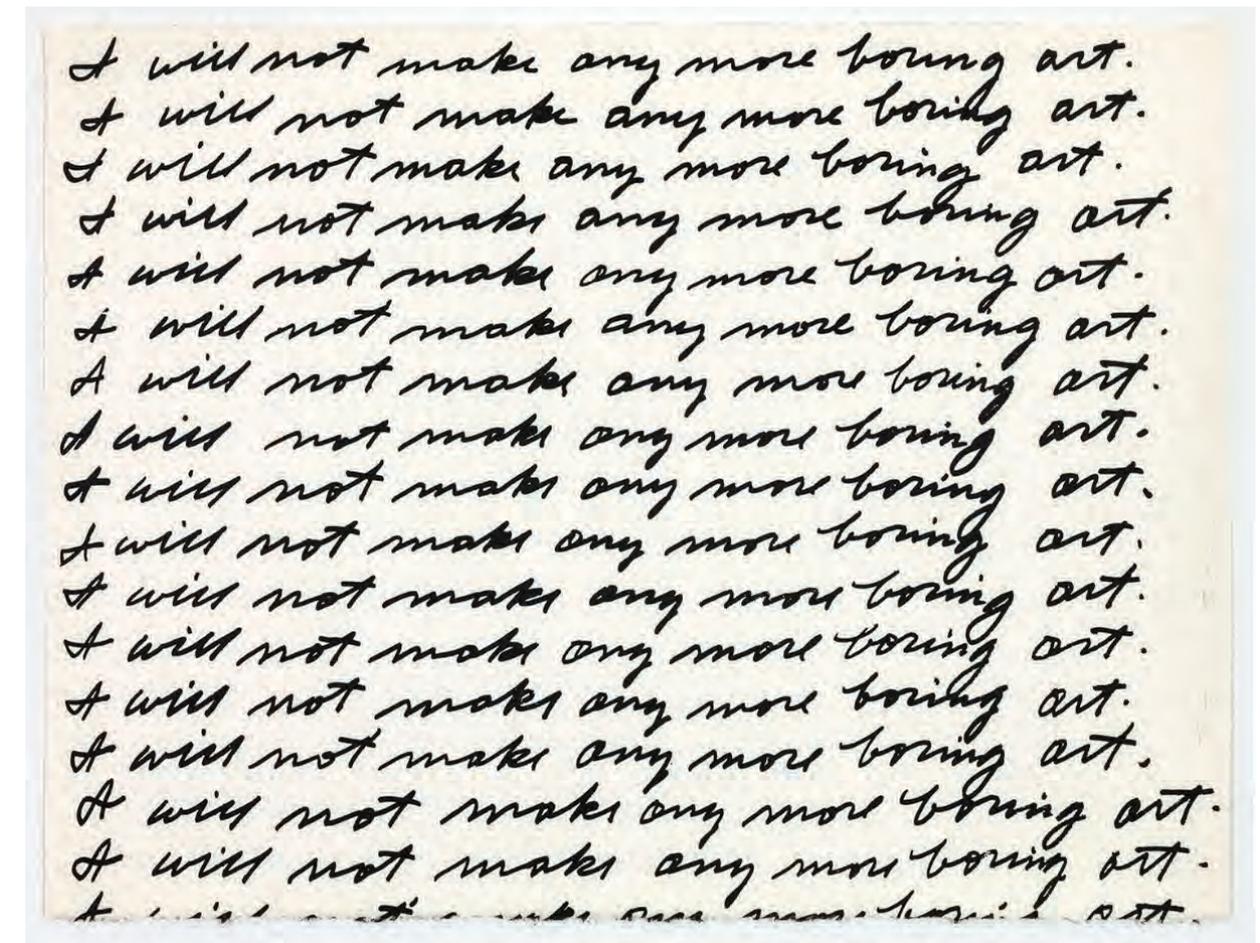
content. In a study done by the College Board, those who chose cursive over printing received higher scores.¹²

Adults may feel shame over their handwriting as well. In her interview on *Design Matters Live* with type designer Matthew Carter, Debbie Millman leaps in with: "The first question I want to ask you about is your handwriting... you believe your handwriting is pretty appalling. Is that true?" Even at the age of 82, he responded: "I wish it were better, when I was a school boy there was a revival

of interest in italic writing... but I could never make the pen go where I wanted it to go... my lettering is really awful." He paused, he seemed maybe a little embarrassed and closed with: "Why do you ask that?"¹³

In the ultimate punishment, one of the few groups of people who still write by hand are those incarcerated in prison. In that setting, it is the dominant writing technology.

The conceptual artist John Baldessari wrote the statement repeatedly: "I will not make any



John Baldessari, *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art*, 1971
Published by Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Edition of 50

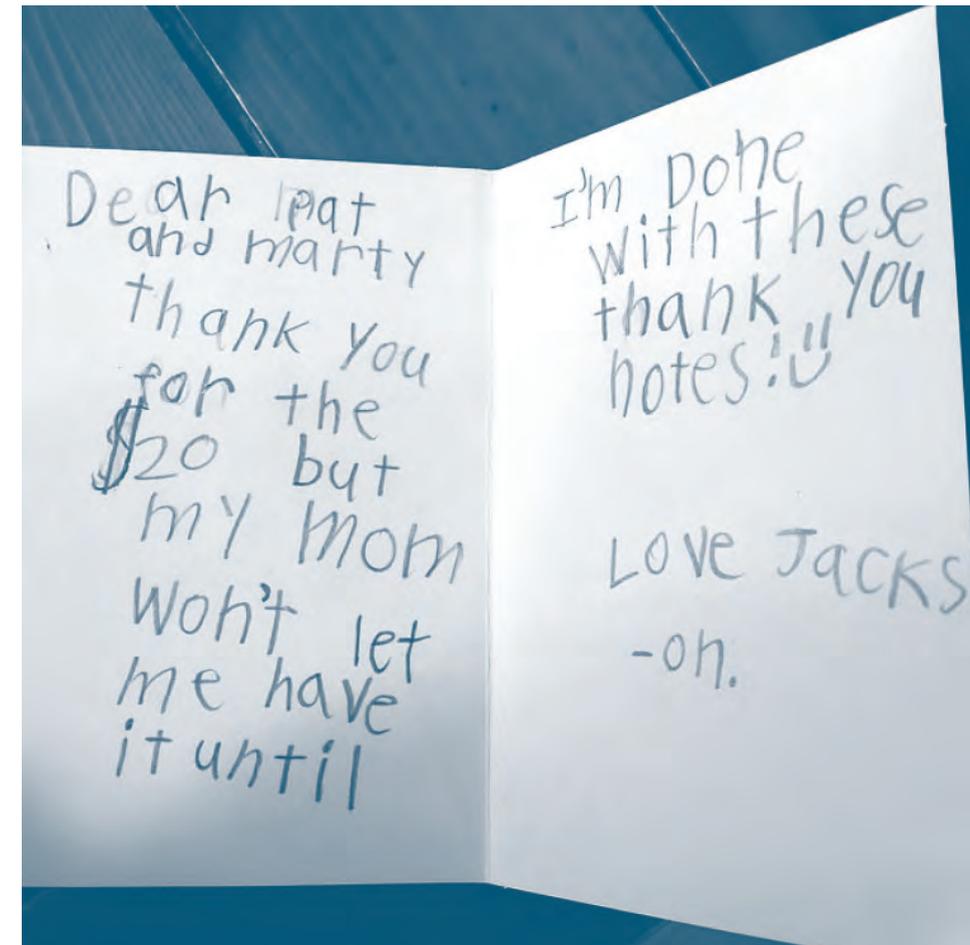
more boring art” in 1971 and documented it in a 13-minute video. We recognize it as a type of self-punishing practice due to the repetitious, punitive medium employed.

Baldessari went one further when invited to exhibit at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. He charged the students to create a punishment piece with the following instructions:

“The piece is this, from floor to ceiling should be written by one or more people, one sentence under another, the following statement: I will not make any more boring art. At least one column of the sentence should be done floor to ceiling before the exhibit opens and the writing of the sentence should continue every day, if possible, for the length of the exhibit. I would appreciate it if you could tell me how many times the sentence has been written after the exhibit closes. It should be hand written, clearly written with correct spelling ...”¹⁴

When handwriting for punishment is meted out in a school room, perhaps up at the blackboard, there is a performative quality. An act of penance that a student endures. It might require a long time, it might be painful to stand, concentrate, reach. The child’s hand may become cramped. The notion that a public act of punishment should be instructive to others is enacted.

Baldessari was essentially asking students to take on his punishment. I imagine the task he assigned them was taken on willingly: It was a chance to do something collaboratively, in the name of art, at the bidding of an artist. How different, perhaps, were the student’s motivations and the punishment was flipped into an opportunity.



Voting: to make your voice heard, you'll still need to sign

I just received my election ballot in the mail. Typically, I like to vote in person. I like the formality of it. I like to see the ladies who staff the voting operations. They are older women, and they are dressed up. There is a table in the center of the room in our township building and there are two big ledgers: last names A through O and a second book P through Z. And there are four women sitting at the table, two at each book. I sit down in front of the P through Z book. I say my last name. My daughter Pearl is registered to vote there, but although they don't know me very well, I have been voting there long enough for them to know I am not Pearl.

I say my last name and then they repeat my last name and find it in the ledger. The ledger is oriented two ways: They can see my name and then I can sign my name and they don't have to turn it around for this to happen. The women confer and confirm that I am Sarah Patterson; there are pens on the table and I sign the book.

I look over at the table the voting volunteer women have crammed with crockpots and cookies and other snacks. They are here for the long haul and need to keep their strength up. I stand in what is probably a very short line at the electronic voting machine, and I stick my card in and vote. It is a pretty quick operation.

Now, with COVID-19, states are making voting by mail more accessible. There are lots of potential logistical problems that are anticipated: Will the postal service go bankrupt in this effort? Can our local election officials quickly pivot to this widely used method? Will the polls still be open, and will people want to gather at unsafe distances to vote anyway?

And then there is the question of signatures. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures:

"This process of comparing and matching signatures is done by election officials or temporary election workers, sometimes assisted by technology, and often working in bipartisan teams during this review process. In some states, especially those that send mail ballots to all eligible voters, the individuals verifying signatures undergo training to analyze signatures for potential fraud."¹⁵

The NCSL refers the reader to Colorado's "Signature Verification Guide" for how one state guides election officials and volunteers to conduct this verification step for vote-by-mail ballots. The purpose is to identify if the signature on the ballot matches the signature on file for each voter. There are exercises at the end of the guide.

The methods used were derived from a book first published in 1910 by Albert Osborn titled *Questioned Documents*. Osborn is the founder of the American Society of Questioned Document Examiners, established in 1942.

The Colorado guide scales the original 500-page book into a PDF of 20 pages.

Voter, sign or mark here



STEP ONE

Evaluate the signature's broad characteristics.

The type of writing (for example, cursive v. print)

The speed of writing (for example, harmonious v. slow and deliberate)

Overall spacing

Overall size and proportions

Position of the signature (for example, slanted v. straight)

Spelling and punctuation

If the broad characteristics of the signature on the ballot-return envelope are clearly consistent with the broad characteristics of the voter's signature in SCORE [Statewide Colorado Voter Registration and Election Program database], you may accept the signature and move on. If not, move to step two.

STEP TWO

Evaluate the signature's local characteristics.

Internal spacing

The size or proportions of a letter or letter combination

Curves, loops, and cross-points

The presence or absence of pen lifts

Beginning and ending strokes¹⁶

There are two exercises in the guide: Try to disguise your writing and then give your sheet to another election judge to determine which is your real writing. Also, a worksheet where the word "State" is handwritten 30 times and you need to match the 15 identical pairs. It is a real study in detail.

Anyway, if you are an election judge, you need to study this guide and you need to make determinations quickly. You are encouraged not

to "labor over" the verification process or try to "explain away" discrepancies you may encounter.

In Georgia, the new secretary of state has announced an "Absentee-Ballot Task Force." It is a 12-member team whose responsibilities include, among other things, investigating every signature mismatch on mail-in ballots.

In Emily Bazelon's article "Will Americans Lose Their Right to Vote in the Pandemic?," she reports:

"One big question for 2020 is how states will verify absentee ballots to guard against fraud while also ensuring that voters are treated fairly. Many states lack uniform criteria or training for matching the signature on a ballot with the copy of the voter's signature that the state has on file. As a result, rejection rates can vary a great deal from county to county. States including Pennsylvania and Michigan don't require election officials to notify voters if their signatures are missing or have been rejected, so those voters don't have a chance to fix the problem. The gaps in the law leave the decision up to county and local officials."¹⁷

When I got my absentee ballot in the mail, there was a whole page of instructions, a "secrecy envelope" to put the ballot in and then a second outer envelope with a bar code and a place to sign. I would have thought it would have to be on the ballot. I would deduce that when the ballots are opened that it is necessary then to keep the ballot with the envelope. Pennsylvania does not provide postage-paid envelopes as some states do, creating a barrier particularly for younger people who may not buy stamps.

This is going to make the hanging chad look like child's play.

Handwritten Digital Fonts

In the era of digital fonts, many handwritten versions are created to mimic the touch world of handwriting. In his book *Just My Type*, Simon Garfield notes that even the reviled font Comic Sans is meant to mimic handwriting.¹⁸

As designers, we are sometimes bothered by handwritten fonts, mostly because, while they may be evocative, we all know they are digitized because this is the world we live in. Some are very beautiful; many have odd quirks that make them unworkable. They are novelties.

New desktop programs developed in the 1990s enabled designers (many of whom had never designed a typeface) to whip up handwritten and hand-lettered fonts into downloadable packages available to anyone.¹⁹

At myfonts.com, handwritten fonts are described as such:

“As the name suggests, handwritten fonts are fonts that look like they were written by hand, usually with a pen or marker. Within that broad category, you’ll find a range of styles that reflects the variations and subtle differences found in actual handwriting. The difference between script and handwritten fonts is, perhaps, a bit pedantic, but is based in the fact that script fonts are decorative or calligraphic in nature, while true handwritten fonts reflect the penmanship one would use in a letter.”²⁰

Occasionally, I will get a note on a design brief to “use a handwritten font.” I will cringe. Depending on the brief, I will offer alternatives as in: digitizing actual handwriting, tapping a message out on my manual typewriter, or hand lettering, adding some warmth and texture to the page. Ultimately, we want to convince our audiences that it is them we are talking to. They are important, so I have sat down and handwritten 20,000 letters.

The cringing part that comes with a handwritten font request is because the demographic I am designing for (largely high school juniors and seniors) may not be taught penmanship. If seeing something handwritten is not part of their lived experience, at best, it could be perceived as novel, at worst, out-of-step and dated.

Handwritten fonts have their place, as Nick Shinn suggests, in his essay, “Scriptomania”: “In both packaging and advertising, retail is full of scripts. This is particularly true for packaged foods, where the naturalness of scripts disguises the unappealing factory processed quality of the product.”²¹

We strive to create graphic messages with emotion, a feeling of connection, and handwritten fonts can lend an appearance of casualness. It is problematic when they communicate the exact opposite due to the fact that they are digital imposters to actual handwriting.

In these types of light applications (a word or two), a handwritten font can break through the noise. We are not asking our audience to wade through paragraphs of text in ersatz handwriting.

I have used the term “hand lettering” above. Hand lettering involves drawing letters as opposed to simply writing them. It is a very specific skill and generally used for logotypes and branding. Think: chalkboard lettering, ribbons, swashes, graffiti.

Calligraphy is another animal altogether, like fancy old-fashioned penmanship with thick and thin strokes. It is also a specialized skill. Only three major institutions have calligraphers on staff: American Greetings, Hallmark, and The White House.²²

In a closing chapter of *Just My Type*, “The Worst Fonts In the World,” Garfield identifies Brush Script:

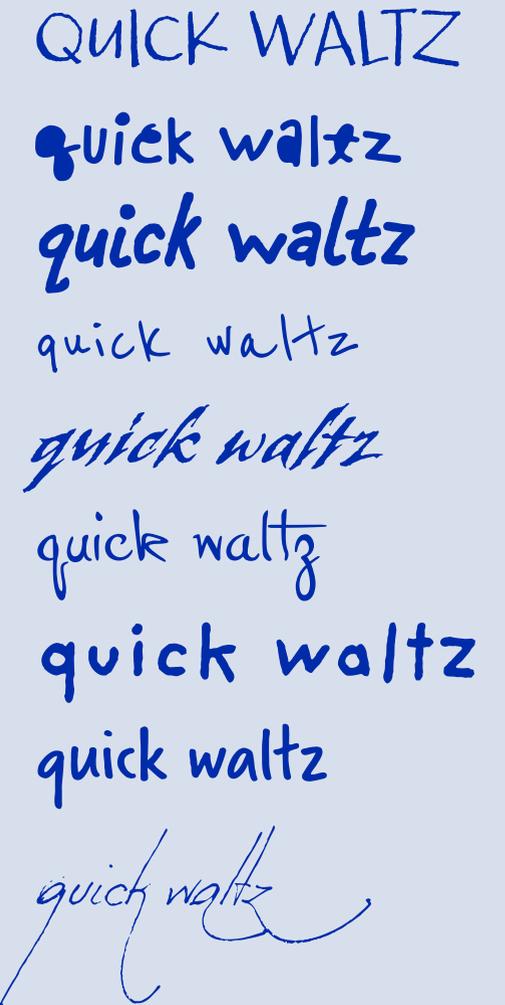
“Brush Script inspired a hundred more handwriterly alternatives.... Many of these are rather nice, and some are lavishly beautiful. Every leading digital foundry offers an extensive list, ranging from childish scrawl to technical precision. But they all have one thing in common: they are trying to fool you into thinking they are not made on a computer, and they never succeed.”²³

As one consequence, Kitty Burns Florey writes: “The famous smeariness of ballpoint has acquired an unusual modern use: fundraisers... are beginning to phase out those phony-looking computer fonts that address envelopes in what is supposed to look like script. Everybody’s on to them. Instead they’ve begun hiring actual humans to write addresses in ballpoint, whose crude authenticity can’t be faked by a machine. Expert penmanship is not called for, apparently—only legibility; the clumsier and more earnest the handwriting, the more convincing it is.”²⁴

Are digital script fonts an act of trickery? If I write something by hand, it is really me writing. If I type that same message and then set it in a font that mimics handwriting, does it feel like I am trying to trick you into thinking I wrote it by hand?

This led me to examine the concept of authenticity in Andrew Potter’s book *The Authenticity Hoax*. Potter’s thesis is that our culture is focused on individualism and consumerism. There is a quest for what is considered authentic in order to imbue our lives with more meaning. The search for what is authentic turns into a consumerist status competition to acquire or experience what is most real.

“... we are trying to find at least one sliver of the world, one fragment of experience, that is innocent, spontaneous, genuine, and creative, and



Sample of fonts categorized as “hand” from Adobe Fonts. There are 117 font families offered in this category.

not tainted by commercialization, calculation, and self-interest.”²⁵

When I use the term “authentic” as it relates to handwriting, perhaps this would be better termed as what is tactile, what is human. There is certainly a cultural quest and need for what feels “real.” When large portions of our lives are lived in a virtual world, this feels more topical than ever. You are making sourdough. Is it authentic? We are nesting and finding our real homes. We search out meaningful interaction online. We call people we haven’t spoken to in years. We write them letters using our own handwriting.

The Hand in Handwriting

Handwriting is a tactile activity. In early penmanship manuals, there are very specific instructions on relaxing the muscles and holding the pen without gripping it. Posture is emphasized and feet are firmly planted on the floor.

Drills were the main pedagogical strategy. The Palmer Method drills were deemed essential not only to build character or discipline the body, but to imprint the memory of motion into the muscles.²⁶ In fact, before the era of the typewriter, the human engaged in writing is often referred to in penmanship books as the “writing machine.”

In his 1913 book, *The Teaching of Penmanship*, Harry Houston gives the following pedagogical instruction:

“The wrist and hand should not touch the paper. Keep the large part of the arm that comes in contact with the edge of the desk from sliding

forward and back. This means that the skin stretches along the arm, allowing it to roll forward and back or round and round for exercise.”²⁷

I can’t quite picture this. He also instructs that the paper should be pushed forward as opposed to moving the hand down the paper.

Other than Houston’s instruction that we move the paper up the desk (presumably with the hand we are not writing with), writing is a one-handed activity.

Keyboarding and texting, however, are two-handed activities. We are taught keyboarding in school using the QWERTY keyboard, developed in 1867. The layout of the keys was designed to keep the keys from jamming. We use the same keyboard for two-thumbed texting which has zero relation to mechanically jamming typewriter keys. It’s what we are used to. We teach ourselves to text. Some

teach themselves to keyboard, using all fingers or just two.

Historical records of writing typically begin with the Sumerian cuneiform technology, developed in ancient Mesopotamia. The history of writing is beyond the scope of this thesis and is mentioned here as related to the fact that it was a method that involved two-handedness. Marks were made in clay tablets using a sharpened reed as a stylus. Cuneiform writers held the stylus in one hand and the tablet in the other, turning both as they went, an action requiring practice and training to master.²⁸

The loss of the physicality involved in present-day graphic design changed when designers moved from paste-up methods to computer: Motor skills were lost where efficiency was gained.²⁹ There was more movement involved, creating designs by

hand. Art directors would mock up copy on tissues for graphic designers or paste up artists to replicate, creating the final layouts. These instructions were communicated with handwritten notes regarding fonts, type sizes and leading, color, and any other details of the project.

Even today, I rely upon handwritten proofing notes from editors in my professional work. Some editors like to hold the paper in their hands and mark up hard copies. Others are noted in PDFs. As long as I can read the handwriting, I find the paper/handwritten method easier. It also offers a welcome break from screens.



Signature Style

> Signature / noun ³⁰

- 1a: the act of signing one's name to something
- b: the name of a person written with his or her own hand
- 2: a feature in the appearance or qualities of a natural object formerly held to indicate its utility in medicine
- 3a: a letter or figure placed usually at the bottom of the first page on each sheet of printed pages (as of a book) as a direction to the binder in arranging and gathering the sheets
- b: one unit of a book comprising a group of printed sheets that are folded and stitched together
- 4a: key signature [music]
- b: time signature
- 5: the part of a medical prescription that contains the directions to the patient
- 6: something (such as a tune, style, or logo) that serves to set apart or identify also: a characteristic mark

> Signature / adjective

closely and distinctively associated and identified with someone or something

- a musician's signature style
- a chef's signature dish

Autographs, signatures of the famous, are collected and become valuable because we deem them to be valuable. Of course, there is nothing intrinsically valuable about a name signed on a piece of paper. It is the notion that someone who is publicly admired for their intellect, talent, scholarship, or beauty has signed their name with their hand. It is proof of their existence and, for autograph collectors, it is like having a little bit of that person. Signatures are tied to a sense of self.

“The conception that handwriting might offer insight into the writer began to gain traction in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Romantic era, when spontaneity, originality, and individuality were prized. In America, such a

Romantic interest in handwriting took the form of autograph collecting and analysis of the signatures of famous people.”³¹

Autograph collecting became a popular hobby by the 1830s and the famous found themselves increasingly bombarded with requests. Collectors might create a ruse to gather a signature, as those dashed off without any forethought were deemed most valuable. They were a product of the writer's innermost self.

Due to this dynamic: “... even a straightforward request for an autograph could be experienced as not merely an irritation or embarrassment but a violation of the most intimate and threatening kind.”³² Which, in turn, caused the famous to withhold their signatures at times.

Authors often go on book signing tours. They may do a reading and then readers queue up to have the author sign their book, perhaps including the reader's name. Canadian author Margaret Atwood found book touring and signing tiring and conceived of a technology called LongPen™ to sign books for fans remotely. The technology was debuted in 2006. While she is signing, there is a video conferencing capability between the author and the fan and the remote pen technology inscribes the book in ink with a robotic hand.³³

Even though a signature is a personal mark, people can just get fed up with the activity, as with Margaret Atwood. Not the same technology as the LongPen™ where one is signing remotely, but the AxiDraw is a pen plotter than uses curves to execute your handwriting for you. The promotional materials suggest that some of the many uses include:

- Digital artists, using AxiDraw to plot their artwork
- Celebrities, politicians, and elected officials, using AxiDraw as a signature machine
- University officials and other educators, to sign



Marguerita Mergentime, Cocktail Napkin, *Wish Fulfillment*, 1939. American textile designer, Mergentime tapped into the interest in pseudo-sciences to spark conversation at social gatherings.

diplomas and certificates

- Personalization for hotels and online retailers ³⁴

As much as we might feel our signature is important, we may still find doing it odious, especially if we have to do it repeatedly. It can be tiresome and, for the famous, perhaps they feel a little bit of themselves erodes every time.

Graphology is the analysis of handwriting with the object of revealing personality and character. Its history is associated with other offbeat pseudo-psychological theories like phrenology, mesmerism and hypnotism.³⁵ However, it lent credence to the idea that your handwriting “means” something and could be used to interpret your character or to categorize people into various personality types. It still holds some popularity today at parties and celebrity events.

Graphology is not forensic document evaluation. There are experts trained in spotting forgeries, which in itself lends credence to the act of signing. Handwriting samples can be examined to determine authenticity of documents, but it is often inconclusive. If a forger creates a convincing copy of your signature, is something intrinsically lost of you? Historically, forgers could counterfeit not

only bank notes, documents, and signatures, but entire identities.

I am going to admit here that I forged my daughter's name on a legal document. She was away at college and it just seemed easier to sign her name for her (it was). But it made me uneasy and, in reflection, it just feels unethical and dishonest.

So, I am a petty criminal. But what of larger forgeries? Artworks that are replicated and then signed using the name of the original artist by a forger. Does it matter if you are looking at the original or the forged version?

“Almost everyone believes that it matters a great deal... It is central to our concept of authenticity that the past infuses the present, and that the mark of the authentic work of art is that it has, by some measure, the right origins and the right history.”³⁶

Walter Benjamin says what we value is the object's aura and that aura is embedded in the “fabric of tradition.” What is authentic was created at a certain time for a specific purpose. The notion that the original work has an aura and it is worthy of our respect.

Sign Me Up

“He doesn’t know how to sign his name.” My friend Megan was going to a parent-teacher conference and her son Finley was with her. There was a sign-in sheet and a greeter, instructing the students to sign in. A few weeks previously, my father had been talking to Megan about signatures. He had been on a mild rant about the fact that since many schools were not teaching cursive writing, how were people going to know how to sign their names?

And here Megan was, with her son, and indeed, he did not know how to sign his name. Of course, he could print his name, but that is not the same as “signing.”

Printing is something small children are taught to do, but the signature is more mature. The signature is your own personal mark. Other people could print your name, but only you can sign your name.

You may have to sign important documents. You might have to have someone witness you signing documents in person. You might have to pay this person to watch you sign an important document and then they might emboss it with a cool stamp.

There is an historical reason for the necessity of having a witness for legal documents: “In early eras of writing, it was expected that handwriting would all be the same. My signature was not unique from your signature. Here is where the notion of having someone witness a signature was considered necessary because handwriting could so easily be faked.”³⁷

The signature is an official thing. It is legally binding. The simple act of signing your name, in person, in the only way you can write your name has a power. Maybe you are giving something up. Maybe you are acquiring something. If you are writing a check, you will need to sign it.

You might have to use a certain color pen for a legal document. Blue, not black or red. There is a formality and order, a method.

This type of signature is known as a “wet signature.”

It is also special in that it has a distinctive look. Some signatures are lovely and readable and some are wild scrawls that are indecipherable. Like those that a doctor makes on a prescription pad. People sometimes practice their signature to imbue it with something a little special: a touch, a flourish.

In some instances, the digital signature is replacing the physical signature. What does the digital signature look like now?

There is an effort to employ either electronic signatures or digital signatures for more ease, fewer logistics and also the reduction in paper and paperwork. Requiring “wet signatures” slows down processes.

With the passage of the digital signatures law in 2020, we can now click “I agree.” This saves paperwork, is faster, easier, cuts down on bureaucracy.

When we think of writing by hand, there is a slowing down. There is a level of concentration and attention. For either wet, electronic or digital signatures, there is a process, but where speed and efficiency are valued above the tactile and analog, methods to use digital or electronic signatures are more convenient.

I hereby certify that I have
sighted the original of this
document.



COMMISSIONER FOR
DECLARATIONS

Keeping Corrections

Corrections in writing can be revealing. We are drawn to the original manuscripts and diaries of writers. What did they choose to keep in or leave out? When we see the corrections, these give us an insight into their working methods, practice. If the drafts are handwritten, perhaps we inspect the paper they used. Lined or unlined, pencil or pen. We look for meaning and clues in their choices. We inspect their handwriting.

We may seek out original manuscripts in order to bring us closer to the source. They are valuable in showing primary historical documentation. I have found this to be the case in visiting library archives. Viewing and handling original documents shows a process, a way of working that is not evident in the final design, book, or poster.

The Herb Lubalin Study Center in New York City opened in 1985, and was created in order to preserve an unprecedented resource: Herb Lubalin's vast collection of work. Its goal was to provide the design community with a means to honor Lubalin and to study his innovative methods. He was best known for his illustrative typography and ground breaking magazine design.³⁸

Lubalin is also known for his Spencerian script lettering, which is often incorrectly referred to as calligraphy.

There are finished works as well as myriad "tissues" where Lubalin sketched and wrote headlines and mocked up copy for junior designers to execute. The Study Center is not a "white glove" archive, meaning you can take things out and carefully handle them. You get a real feel for the scale of the work, and his apparently quick way of working through ideas and copy to convey concepts to clients. The expectation now when working digitally is for very finished-looking designs for clients even in early phases of a project.

At The Harry Ransom Humanities Center, University of Texas archive, handwriting is

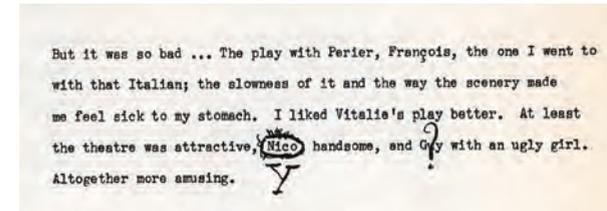
becoming more important due to the curating of its director: "It is rising in literary and financial value as it ceases to have much practical function. Libraries adding to their handwritten manuscript collection might be better prepared for the future ... because their holdings are singular ... Many librarians are going through their files and taking out the handwritten items in their archival boxes, scanning them to create digital copies, and putting them up on their websites. ..."³⁹

This is also true on the *Open Culture* website where a quick search of "handwriting" yields original notes from Helen Keller, Freud, Shakespeare, Quentin Tarantino, and Kurt Cobain among dozens of others. These ephemera lend texture to a life and insight into their thinking and decision making.

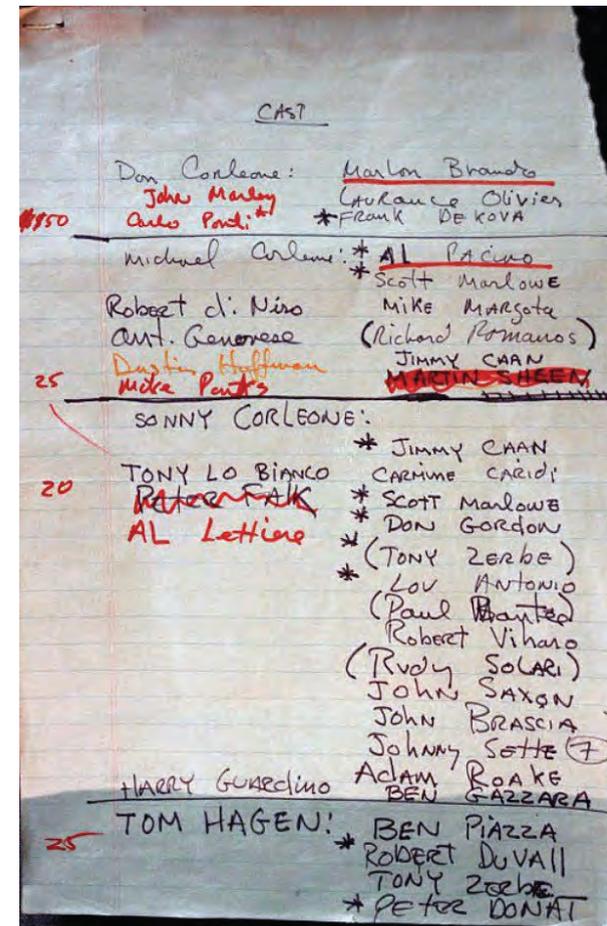
Corrections made when using word processing software become invisible: as we are writing, we are perpetually editing ourselves. All the decisions regarding word choice, notes to self, organization are erased. We are working in real time and make changes on the fly. It is easier. It is the way I am working right now. Sometimes it is important to share corrections and we can choose to digitally "track changes" to indicate corrections or allow edits to a Google doc. In one keystroke, we can blindly choose to "accept all" corrections.

In the 1964 book *Toxique*, Bernard Buffet illustrates excerpts from Françoise Sagan's diary when she was detoxing from an addiction to morphine after a car accident. He uses an energetic illustration style, typewriting, handwritten corrections to the typing, and handwritten page numbers penned in a loose calligraphic style.

The corrections let us into the narrative, into a transparent way of working. It is an invitation to study working methods, what is not perfect. It echoes the revealing nature of Sagan's diary and struggle with addiction.



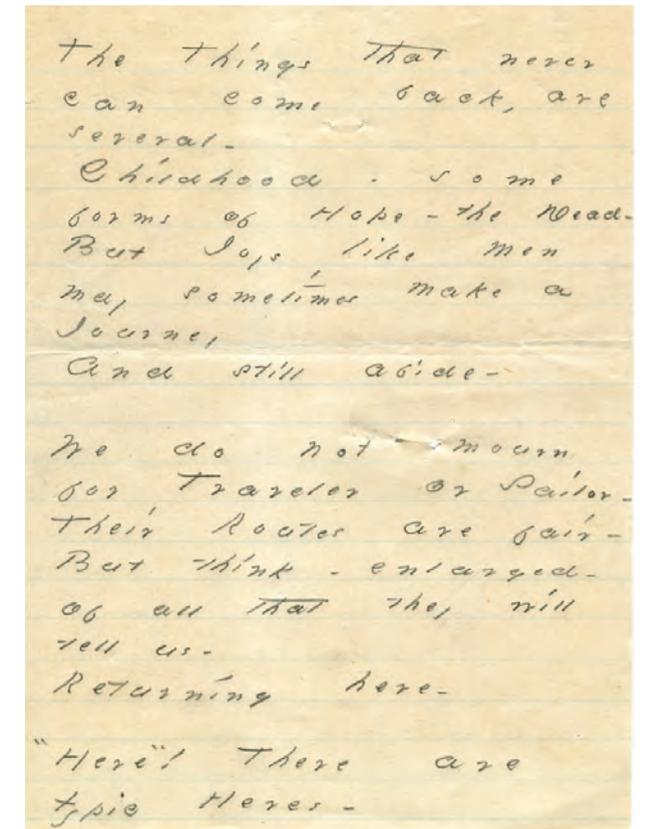
Handwritten corrections add to the narrative in *Toxique*.



Francis Ford Coppola's casting notes for *The Godfather*, 1972.



Flat files at The Herb Lubalin Study Center reveal sketches, finished pieces, and handwritten design briefs.



Emily Dickinson pens a poem on the back of her coconut cake recipe.

There is writing a book, which is a big deal, and then there is *really* writing a book: as in writing a book by hand using your own handwriting.

There is a very distinctive aesthetic of the handwritten book and reasons for creating one in this way. Before the printing press, this is how all books were created: by scribes who handwrote books by copying from original texts. Scribes were suspicious of the printing press and worried about the loss of handwriting, which focused on the same points about losing handwriting today: “The new technology will prove less durable than the old and will lead to historical amnesia, lesser levels of education, and decreased standards. Unsurprisingly, the most vocal opponents of new technologies are those who dominated the old.”⁴⁰

Even during the Colonial era in America, handwritten texts were uncensored, while print was regulated by the state:

“Print was public, openly available to all with the money to buy it; furthermore, in an age of government censorship it was regulated by the state. In other words, there was no controlling the readership but there was plenty of control over the authors. In contrast, handwritten texts circulated among an exclusive, handpicked audience, most usually a circle of social equals with similar tastes and interests. And because the texts were privately distributed, they were uncensored. Scandalous gossip, anti-government propaganda, pornography—all were free to circulate in handwritten form. If print was the realm of social promiscuity and ideological control, script was the realm of exclusivity, privacy, and freedom.”⁴¹

The reason for creating handwritten books in the 1960s and '70s was tied to people who wanted to be self-sufficient and do things on their own. Writing books without the need to set type or other specialized equipment was one way to do this. The use of handwriting makes each book

unique. Peer-to-peer information sharing was a radical action.

There was a desire not to have information framed by large corporations. In countercultural publications of the 1960s, topics included political and cultural concerns such as: civil rights, the antiwar movement, drug use, sex, new age spirituality, astrology, and music. Periodicals such as *Oz*, *San Francisco Oracle*, *The Chicago Seed*, and *The Berkley Barb* used methods like hand lettering, overprinting, borrowed text, and DIY graphic design.

This is tied to the notion of deskilling, which means to reduce the level of skill required to carry out a job. In this case, the job at hand is sharing information, making a newspaper, flyer, or book. Deskilling takes the proprietary knowledge of how to accomplish a task and democratizes it. As the educator and critic, Gwen Allen, notes in her essay “Design as a Social Movement,” deskilling was used (among other techniques) “to challenge official representations and to counter traditional notions of expertise and cultural authority.”⁴²

It was a reaction to the real and symbolic implications of professionalism and a challenge to the design language at the time. Handwriting and hand lettering became a powerful symbol between alternative and mainstream methods of design. It also became a code for youth culture.

The two volumes of *Nomadic Furniture*, published in 1973 and 1974, were handwritten. The guiding principle of these books is: The less we own, the less we have to move, and the more freedom we have if not burdened by material goods. No matter where we are with a few tools and techniques, we can whip up some simple furnishings.

I wrote to one of the authors, James Hennessey, for some insight into how the books were designed:

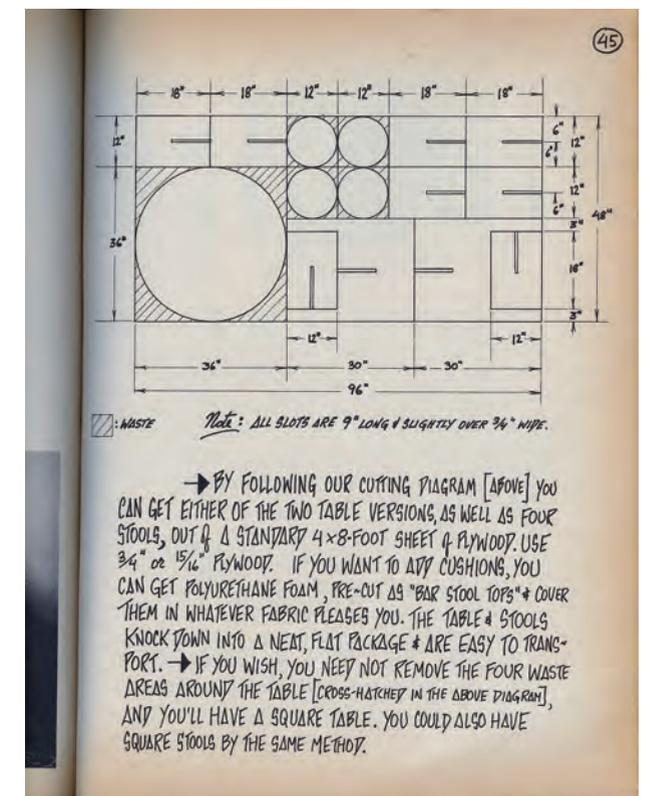
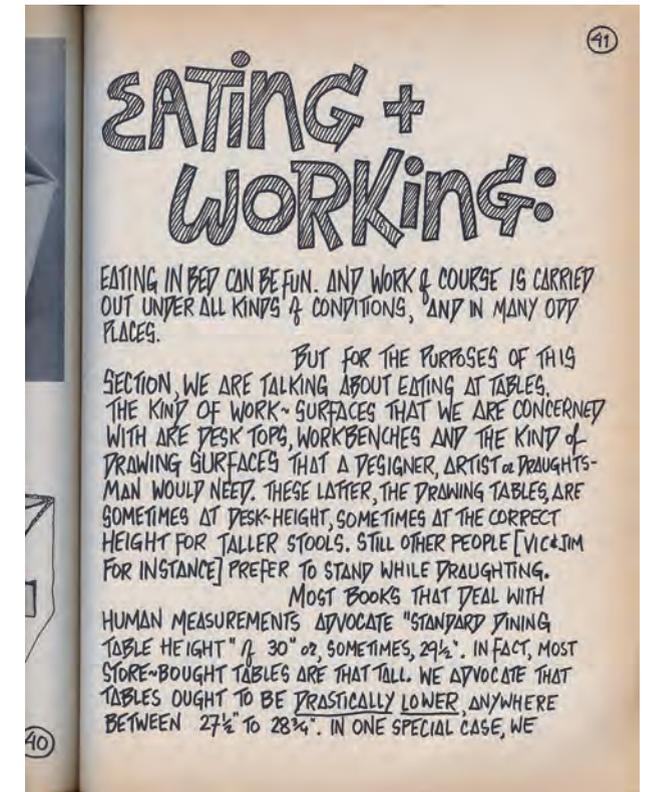
“All the pages were done during a Summer School session at CalArts on 8.5 x 11 pieces of paper which provided ‘camera-ready’ artwork for the publisher. Very straightforward.

“So, how were they created? Typically, Vic and I would discuss a project and I would generate some sketches. If we had a photo, we would add that too. My wife, Sara, took most of the photos and processed them in our own darkroom. That was beneficial because we needed a fast turnaround to meet the end of Summer deadline. For the most part, Vic stuck these things down on paper and began to write the text around them. We didn’t use a grid or try to unify the imagery by scale or orientation. Some sketches need to be bigger than others... some photos too. So it all became more ‘cut-and-paste’ than conscious design. In a sense, that contributed to the ‘hands-on’ appearance for the books... a little like the *Whole Earth Catalog*... Vic Papanek, and his unusual printing style, can be attributed to the final page layouts.”⁴³

As readers of these types of books, we are drawn to the ways and techniques people use to make things by hand. In her essay for the book *Power to the People: The Graphic Design of the Radical Press and the Rise of the Counter-Culture, 1964-1974*, the artist Harmony Hammond writes:

“To this day, I don’t like the seamlessness of most Photoshopped graphics. I prefer, indeed invite, the indexical presence of maker and making—the possibilities of juxtaposition, interruption, disjuncture, intervention, rupture and suture... they still indicate the hand of the maker.”⁴⁴

The handwritten leaves something up to chance and possibility. There is a freedom and designers employ this aesthetic as a respite from the rigor of traditional typography and as a way of loosening up their work.⁴⁵



Nomadic Furniture, 1973

characteristically
Saturday, April 22, 1967
at Kyoto

characteristically
characteristically compressed.
compressed
characteristically
spaces between and between
and so it should easily take
on a columnar shape. The
problem of composing the lines
into a pleasing pattern of
black and white also becomes
less. Under the circumstances
mentioned above, we tend to
find a number of lesser ques-
tions of space and
layout. These
must come
later.

MUCH LATER.

19: V: 67

I have lots of answers; all the questions
elude me:

That was Donald Duck on the phone,
a minute ago—
Is this Porky Pig?

Remember:

tomatoes.	DANCING IN THE DARK
post office.	BESSA ME MUCHO
sincerity.	DINNER FOR ONE, PLEASE, JAMES

Claribel Cow?

Joris-Karl Huysmanns!

turn out the lights.
Nobody will know
we're in here.

PERFIDIA	Tomato Surprise	NoLA
LA COMPARCITA	Remodeled Postoffice.	JARDANELLA
JALOUSIE	Abnormal Sincerity	CHARMAINE

DAFFY DUCK?

walter De La Mare?

walter Gieseking?

walter Lanz?

PHILIP WHALEN

SHAPE UP OR SHIP OUT

SHAPE UP!

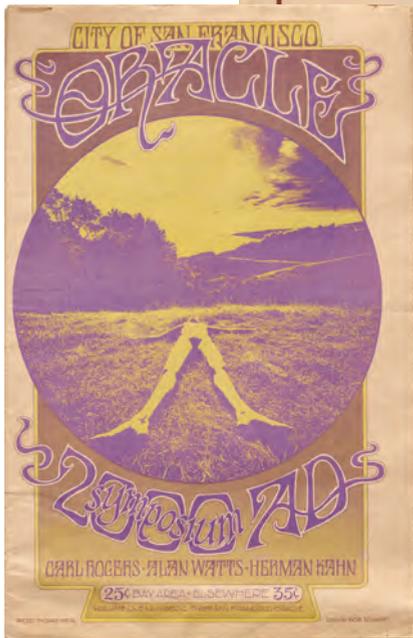
I said to my soul,
Come, Do not write
so fucking big. try
to fit the pen and the
letter shapes together.
what's wrong with
you anyway?

I said to my Soul,
"Come. Let us flee
into the distant
rainbow hued clouds
of infinite beauty
and delight. Arise
and go while yet
the swallow slumbers
in the alce
tree

YES.

"Come on," I said.
"Try again one more time.
It was the telephone &
not the lark that whis-
pered in the boughs of
that sovereign tree—
O do not go and leave
me here in the mad
green light of dawn &
the purple wings of morn-
ing flap the crystal
airs and the silkworm
scarfs all the mulberry
leaves and none is left
which can shade my
giddy head alas!

UP!



FRISCO SPEAKS

FOREVER, FELLOW BLOWN-MINDS... YOUR
SUPER-COOL GURU OF INNER-SPACE REPORTS
FROM NIRVANA... A WARNING ABOUT THAT
BANANA SCENE... ITS A HOAX, MAN,
I ATE 37 LAST WEEKEND A JUST GOT
VERY SICK, MAN, VERY SICK... VERY UNCOOL.
BUT BLOWNMINDS YOU'LL BE PLEASED TO
HEAR IM INVESTIGATING THE MESSAGES
OF OTHER POP SONGS AND AT PRESENT
(NOW)... IM CONCENTRATING MY
CONCENTRATION UPON STRAWBERRIES AND
EDIBLES. SOOOO... KEEP IN TOUCH

STOP PRESS FELLOW BLOWN-MINDS
I HAVE JUST CONSULTED "I CHING"
ABOUT WE ALL KNOW WHAT, DONT WE,
AND CAN NOW CONFIDENTLY REPORT DIRECT
FROM THE LAP OF BUDDHA-"PI" STANDSTILL
(STAGNATION) - THINGS CANNOT REMAIN UNITED,
HENCE THERE FOLLOWS THE HEXAGRAM OF THE
STANDSTILL!! THE JUDGEMENT! EVIL
PEOPLE DO NOT FURTHER THE PERSEVERANCE
OF THE SUPERIOR MAN. THE GREAT DEPART
THE SMALL APPROACHES.. UPPER AND LOWER
DO NOT UNITE.. AND IN THE WORLD STATES
GO DOWN IN RUIN - WHEN RIBBON GRASS IS PULLED UP,
THE SOD COMES WITH IT!! SO NOW YOU KNOW YOU
KNOW YOU KNOW.. THAT'S THE SCENE FROM NIRVANA.
FREAKOUT FOREVER-ER ER **FRISCO**. XXXX

FACING PAGE: San Francisco Oracle #12, 1968, cover and inside page
ABOVE AND RIGHT: Oz #3, 1967, cover and inside page

Handwriting: connecting to the touch world

Do you remember when digital cards were a thing? I think they still might be. Do you like to get a digital card? Do you print it out and put it in a box with your other digital cards and keep it for posterity to show your progeny? Maybe you have created a digital archive for your digital cards. No—this is absurd. I am teasing you.

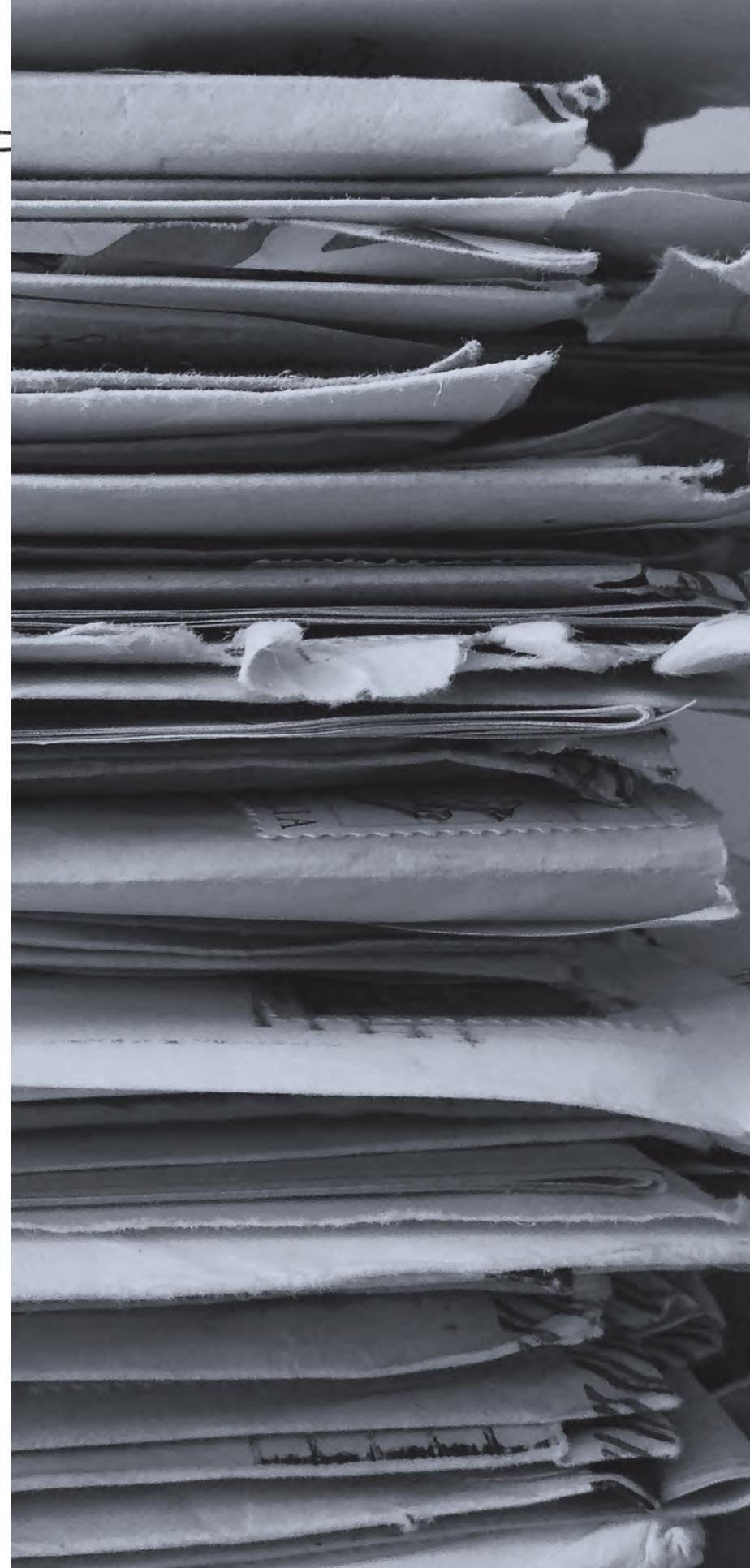
Maybe your digital card is adorned with a brush script or other handwritten-inspired font to give it that tactile feel. It might look like it is on watercolor paper. The handwritten font signifies an intimacy: “I am here writing a card to you.” But the receiver knows you are not writing them a card since they just got it as an email.

We hold fast to the idea that it should look like it was handwritten.

For me, it’s exciting to get a letter in the mail. Maybe there are people you still write letters to: a friend or an old-time pen pal. Do you write to them because they don’t text or email or want to FaceTime, or does it signify something special about your relationship?

There are books, printed volumes of collected letters. A collection of emails does not hold the same fascination, capture the imagination. They may be interesting in their subject matter, but lack the visual interest.

What makes a letter good? “Letters should aspire to the condition of talk,” Iris Murdoch wrote in one of her own. “Say first thing that comes into head.”⁴⁶



Dear my favorite person

You are so special that I am going to sit here in the sunshine with my cup of tea.

I am going to describe the world around me so you can get a picture of where I am.

When you read this, it’s going to be like we are together.

You can keep this letter, and maybe reread it or put it in a pile of other letters, or maybe just toss it in the recycling.

No matter the outcome, that’s fine, you have read the letter.

I’m writing to you because

I know you want to know every detail. You will want to know what I had

for breakfast, what the sky looks like from where

I’m sitting, what’s been bothering me, and the nutty thing that happened at the

store. The strange phone call I got and how I am about to feed my sourdough starter.

I will tell you about how I made crumpets from the discard starter and that

I will make them for you when I see you again.

I would like to amuse you.

**Love,
Sarah**

Signing off

It would be weird if I wrote you a letter or sent you a card and I didn't sign it. Maybe I will write the word "love" at the bottom and not put my name. That's probably the only thing you would remember about the card.

When your mother sends you a birthday card, what does it mean if she signs your father's name, too? But really, she would probably sign it: dad, papa, or father. He couldn't be bothered, wasn't around, has a great disdain for birthday cards. Or this is just one of the things she always does and your dad would have liked to sign the card. Too late. She already did it.



Unravel together

My dear friend was unraveling this winter and she had to go far away into a residential therapeutic setting. It was odd not to be able to talk with her on the phone, or to text her to see how she had slept. It was unsettling. I would text her husband for any detail.

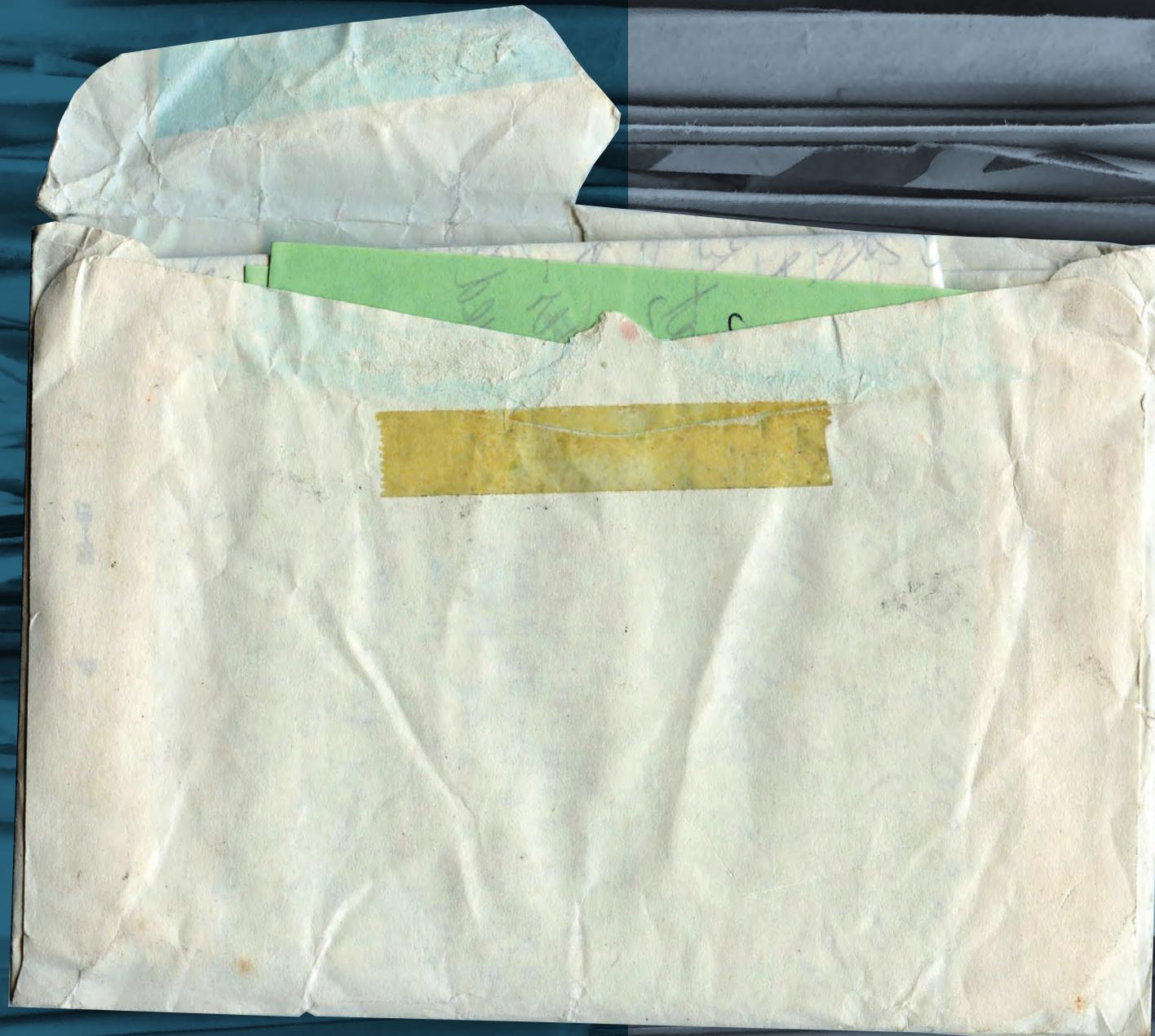
She could talk on the phone occasionally and that sometimes made me cry because she was crying. Or sometimes we would laugh and I still worried and I wrote her postcards and she got them. And it made me feel better.

Maybe I'm in love with you

And I am going to write you a letter EVERY SINGLE DAY. I am going to pass you a note in the hallway when you are on your way to Photography and I am on my way to Geometry II (which I am having to take for the second time). I sat in my room last night and wrote to you how my father is annoying and always up in my business, what Francesca told me about Ronnie, and how there will be a party on the beach on Saturday. And how we will get the wine coolers. The friends from Brooklyn will come and can they stay at your place? Your parents are old and they live in the finished basement and chain smoke and you and your five siblings live upstairs and it's like you have your own house. Your sister goes to Cooper Union. Very cool, and she scares me, but I don't say that part.

I tell you what I'm listening to on my record player: the one I won in a coloring contest in fifth grade. It's actually a pretty good record player.

I slip the folded-up paper into your hand. You slip one into my hand.



Maybe I might marry you

You said you loved me before you even met me when you saw my picture. I think that this is a true story. My friend said: "Stay away from her."

Which was fine and made sense, really, because you fell in love with every woman.

Except you loved me the best and I know because every morning you get up extra early to write me a letter even though you are hungover and have to weld a new pipeline. The thing about you when you are hungover is that you act extra peppy and all robust *good morning!* because you are feeling rough.

So, every morning I go into the carpenter shop and reach into my Sorel boot and pull out a note. I put it into the center pocket of my bib overalls and when my nerdy workmate is distracted, I read it.

I'm pretty sure I didn't write back because I saw you all the time, so this correspondence was a one-way street. It's something you did. Because now that we have been married for 25 years, I know you are given to passions and you get on a tear and you are never hungover in the morning, which means you are pretty silent until about lunchtime.

Maybe I engage in light forgery

A greeting card is circulating through the office. It's in a tattered orange file folder. It has a routing slip inside with everyone's names on it. Except for the birthday person: Their name is crossed out so we don't accidentally route the greeting card to them. The list is not alphabetical and the folder floats around from inbox to inbox.

Some people write a tiny note. There are twenty people in the office, so there is not a lot of space to write. Several of us just write our names. I don't know how it started, but it was actually agreed that we would not write greetings. This was several years ago.

As the office staff grew, the number of circulating cards has ballooned. They are kind of sweet, but also done out of a sense of duty as they go marching around the office in their orange folder. Everyone knows what it is.

Sometimes the greeting card goes missing and someone has to hunt it down. This takes time.

Megan decided that she didn't want to sign the greeting cards any more. We discussed this endlessly. The reason we could engage in this extended examination of this topic is that we are distance runners and we run together so we have a lot of time to dig into all the details.

Mostly we like to talk about food, but sometimes we drift into office politics. We have worked together for a long time.

I told her it would be more disruptive to not sign the cards than to just sign the card. But since it was causing her a lot of psychic pain to sign the cards, this was not a workable solution. She resented the fact that she had to sign a card for some people she barely

spoke with. It signaled a disingenuousness that was disagreeable to her. She found it disruptive to the workday when the cards went missing. "No! I don't have the card." And she would be thinking: "I hate those cards. Don't ask me about the card. I hope I never see another office card again." She might rant to herself. And then she might replay the rant on a run. This is fine... ranting is allowed.

It was decided that I would sign her name for her. Megan signed her name on an yellow Post-It note for my reference and I tucked it away in a drawer where I keep my snacks.

For a couple years now, I have been forging Megan's name on greeting cards. I use two different pens: one for her name and another for my name. I don't sign our names too closely together. I don't even have to look at the Post-It note any more to sign her name. In fact, I think I sign her name the same way I sign my name, just with a different pen.

There are some situations where she signs her own name: bereavement cards (depending on her relationship) or people who she is genuinely friendly with. I can usually determine under which circumstances she would like to sign her name, but occasionally there is some gray area.

Megan has to suck it up and sign the birthday card for me in November since those cards are not circulated to me.

I forget how it came to light, perhaps in a staff meeting. No matter, but Megan disclosed that I sign cards for her. Now everyone knows and, really, it is fine.

Return to sender

I did a double-take as I pulled the yellow envelope out of the mailbox. What was I looking at? It took a moment to register that it was a card I had mailed to my mother on August 7, 2018. The date I took it out of my mailbox was January 25, 2019.

I remember going to the post office to get the right postage for international mail. I remember asking for a stamp and not a meter and there was a nice round one with an image of a succulent plant. She would like that.

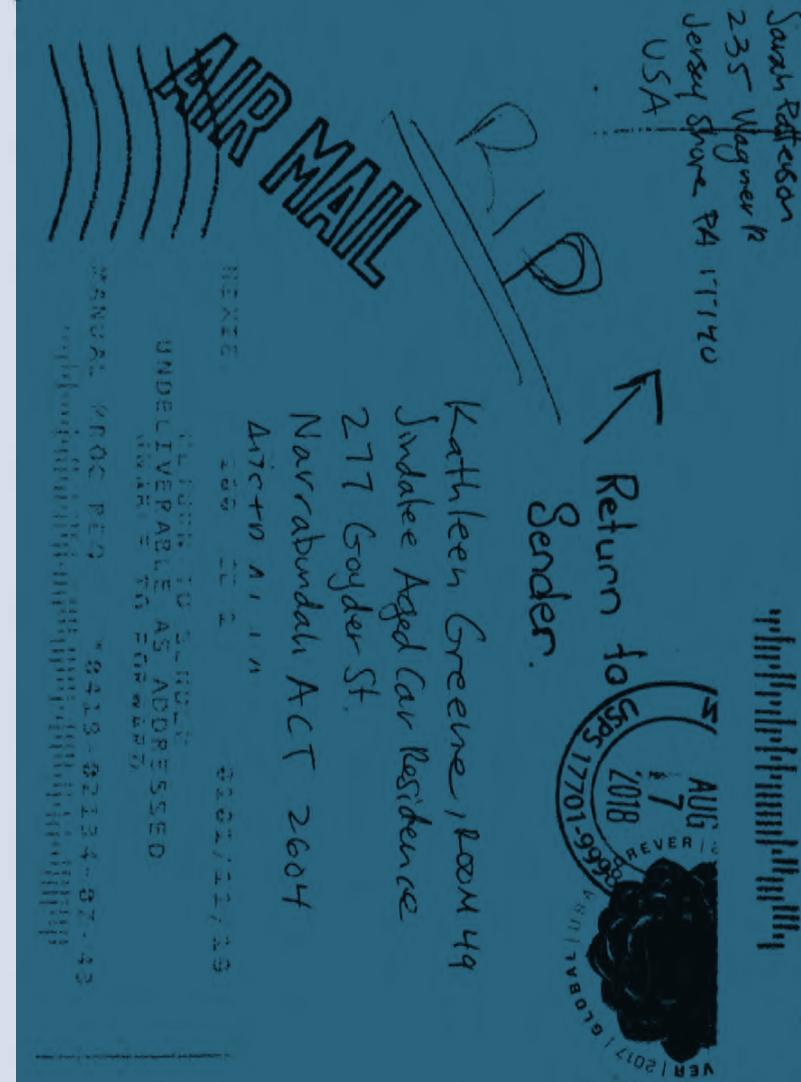
At the nursing home where I had visited my mother in May, she had a few cards on a little table at the end of her bed. She enjoyed looking at them, and although her comprehension was diminished by Alzheimer's, she still tried to read them.

When I wrote the card, I can remember just keeping the message short. Probably "I miss you." "I love you." And my name. Maybe that would register.

Why did I wait until August to write the card? Even if I mailed it on August 7, I think it would have gotten to the Jinadlee Nursing Home in Canberra, Australia, in about a week? Maybe two? At any rate, before she died on August 31. Even if she couldn't have opened it, my brother would have opened it and set it with the rest of the cards on the little table.

Why did it take so long to get back to my mailbox? Why does it say RIP? My friend suggested that it meant Return International Postage, as opposed to Rest In Peace, or just plain Deceased.

I don't want to open the envelope, but I don't want to get rid of it either.



I mention my mother's letters in a thesis writing workshop. I mention my mother's letters with my future adviser. I like them and I don't like them. I cherish them and I would like for them to go away. Maybe that is what grief is like? Well, yes, it is, grief is confusing. And when I look at those letters, I feel confused.

Those letters are filled with handwriting. My mother tells me her story, what is going on. And also writes about what is going on with me. Since the letters date back to 1985, there is a lot of historical reconstructing of my life that goes on when I read them. There are some parts of my life that I would rather not reconstruct. I want to look away, and I can't look away.

In the book *When Women Were Birds* by Terry Tempest Williams, she described what happened when her own mother died. They are a Mormon family and there were two things a Mormon woman was required to do: keep a journal and raise a family. I think the journal served as a record of the family. The woman is the scribe, the keeper of history. Before her mother dies, she tells Williams that she can have the journals.

There are 54 bound books on a shelf. They are all blank.

Williams says: "To withhold words is power. But to share our words with others, openly and honestly, is also power."⁴⁷

The ways my mother shared her words in her letters and in her poetry, holds a power. Clearly, the letters still hold a power over me. It is not just the words, but the writing on the page. She is writing to me. An audience of one.

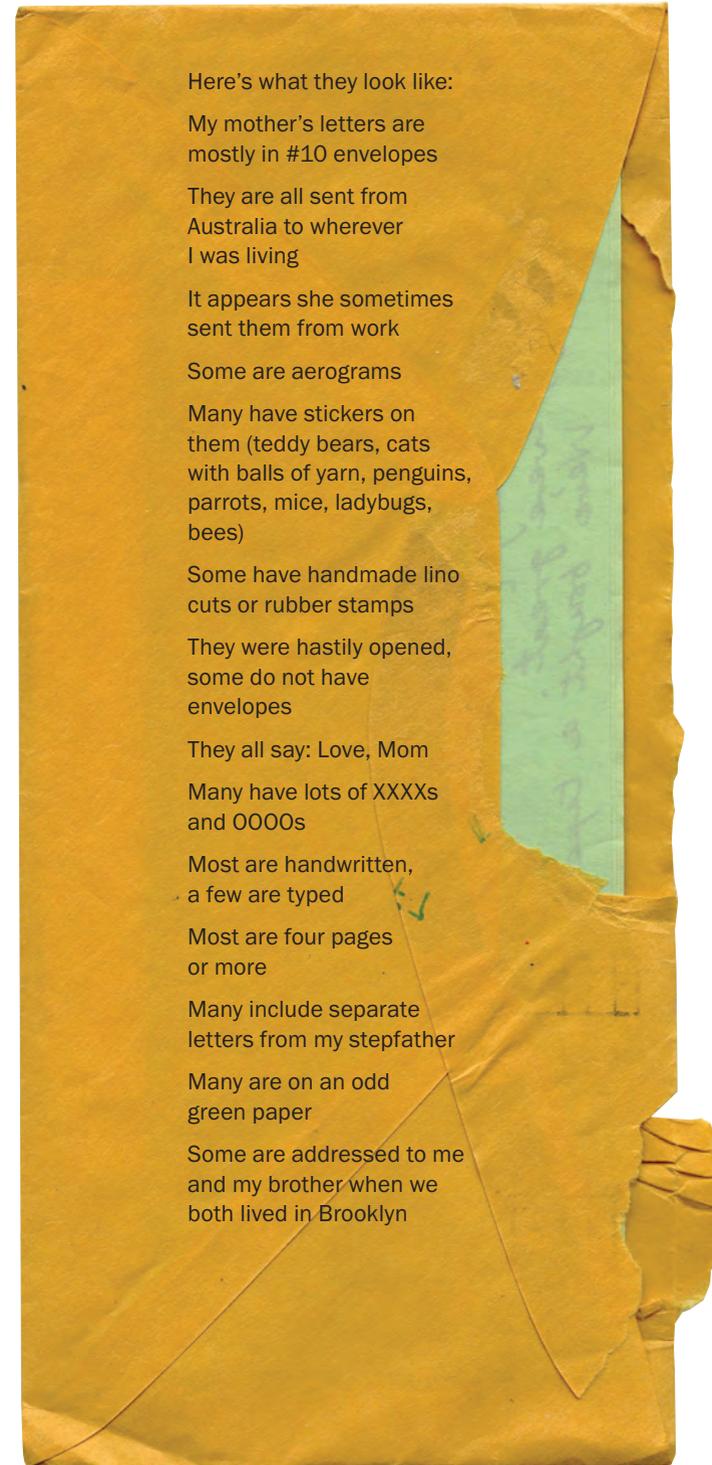
Williams captures the sentiment of rereading: "These handwritten words in the pages of my journal confirm that from an early age I have experienced each encounter in my life twice: once in the world, and once again on the page."⁴⁸

Rereading is an encounter with my life again. The letters jog my memory; a cast of characters walks out of the shadows. Remembering her friends and neighbors, incidents, projects, travel plans, the details of her life.

"I turn the card over and read it again. Her script is beautiful in its floral nature, each letter unfolding to the next, generous and open. I always loved Mother's handwriting it is easy to read, consistent in its thoughtfulness. Even now it reassures me. Can a type of penmanship be optimistic? I felt my mother's writing always slanted toward the positive."⁴⁹

My own mother's handwriting was always cursive. She wrote with a ballpoint pen. Blue or black: doesn't matter. She always began the letters: "Dearest Sarah," and she closes "Love, Mom." Her handwriting is easy to read, it is open and not too small, I do not struggle to discern what she is writing. My mother makes it easy. My mother smooths the way. My mother keeps in touch and the letters pile up. I have moved them with me from New York to Maine to Pennsylvania. When I have been away, I have kept them in storage.

Looking at the envelopes with no pressure to read the letters gave me a more oblique angle to study them, to examine my reasons for keeping them. They do have a loveliness and they fill me with a "sad-beautiful feeling," which the author Leonard Koren identifies as wabi-sabi.



"Wabi-sabi is about the minor and the hidden, tentative and ephemeral, things subtle and evanescent."⁵⁰ What is said in the letters and what is unsaid? There are the words and then there is the quality of the letters, their physicality. Over time they have developed a quality, this wornness, they have traveled so many miles, they exist in multiples giving them a sameness, but they are all unique.

The beauty inherent in what is wabi-sabi is also characterized by a dynamic event between a person and an object. Koren identifies the subtle beauty of wabi-sabi as a state of altered consciousness. Reflecting on the letters in this context helps me to understand why I feel so unusual when I am reading them, or just around them. I feel altered by them—it is like traveling through time, looking backward.

Wabi-sabi also implies an acceptance of the inevitable.

Williams closes *When Women Were Birds*: "If my mother had written the truth of her life, she both believed and feared it would be at someone else's expense. She did not want to hurt those she loved if her journals were read. And we are raised to believe our journals will be read by the future."⁵¹

Maybe that is the thing: what is the connection of my 16-year-old self to my 52-year-old self? I think only my mother could tell me.

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resting the
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been present
were yet

unwashed hair. He a mucked -
blond hair. George likes his parents
too. George & Travis plan on taking
A trip to the coast & staying at a
we got a letter from Tony & Mary
telling us that Max had had a
Stroke & they were glad they were

What My Letters Tell Me

I have a lot of letters. I must have written a lot of letters because I got a lot in return. My mother immigrated to Australia on June 23, 1985. Overseas phone calls were very expensive, the connections were typically horrible, the time difference is a pain, so we wrote a lot of letters. I still have them and mixed in with them all are letters from a lot of other people. Some people are dead, like my grandparents; some I am still friends with; others I have broken up with or they were just part of another life.

I am looking at a pile of letters right now. Yesterday, I tried to go through them. And, when I say I tried to go through them, I had this idea that I wouldn't read them, I would just sort them by who they were from. Easy! But really not so easy. There are too many and some were not in envelopes and I would be tempted to read them. And then my mind goes back to the past and sometimes I don't really want to be in the past, alone with my letters.

There is this whole art to the letters. My mother often made her own stationery. Her

first job when she immigrated was with the Health Authority in an office with the ominous title The Radiation Safety Section. Easy access to photocopiers was a new thing as was word processing. My mother was a clerk of some sort, so she had free time. I have worked as a clerk and secretary so I know what that feels like. You have to keep your brain engaged, and the work is not going to fill that void. She would experiment with the copier to make stationary: copy photos, leaves, flowers, tinfoil forms, poems she wrote, and eventually she would make copies to make turpentine transfers. Collage was what she did. My mom would pen long letters at her desk, talk with her coworkers who became characters in the letters, and report on morning and afternoon tea breaks.

So, I am going through the letters yesterday and one of the first things I pull out of the bag is a letter to the Australian Consulate General in New York as an application for my mother to sponsor my migration to Australia. She signs off "Yours Faithfully," which I find kind of wrenching.

The letter is typed, but she has signed her name. Attached are photocopies of her and my stepfather's passports. The Commissioner for Declarations has signed these with a most intriguing signature.

There is a copy of their marriage license from The City of New York. There is the original sponsorship form for my immigration filled out by my mother. Signed and dated October 9, 1987.

I have no memory of any of these plans. It was at a point when I was unmoored. Clearly, I changed my mind... I went and lived with my aunt and uncle in rural Maine. I also think paperwork was beyond me. Documents were mysterious. I lost things. At one point, I lost my passport.

I'm uncertain if I don't have a memory of this plan because it was a long time ago or if it can be attributed to personal trauma. My mother immigrating was traumatic on some level, I can see, looking back to my 16-year-old self, but I wouldn't have had the perspective at the time to describe it as such.

In Bessel van der Kolk's book *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, he describes writing as an expressive therapy. Muteness is associated with trauma and terror. When my mother and I wrote letters, there was always an effort to connect—to translate our experiences into writing. The day-to-day, the mundane, the details, relationships, plans. It was a natural thing for us to do, to write to one another. I believe we were both in a state of loss—trauma sounds like too strong a word—and the writing helped. Translating experience into writing and the act of writing by hand cements a mind/body connection between thoughts and expression of those thoughts. They are real now, on the page. There is a physicality in the transmission of ideas.

The letters now are unruly, messy, funny, mysterious, sometimes burdensome, touching. Is writing essential to healing? I can't say, but I do know that in looking at my pile of letters, there is evidence of being loved, of lives being lived.

Yours faithfully,

Kathleen Greene
Kathleen Greene



Dear Sir, Madam,
I'm sponsoring my daughter Sarah Pizer's migration



The Secretary,
The Australian Consulate General,
636 Fifth Ave.,
N.Y. N.Y., 10111

"Sharewater",
Manar Mailbox,
via Braidwood,
N.S.W., 2622,

“A stamp is an image on a journey.”
-Hans Gunter Schmitz

I am done going through the pile of letters. I sorted them by who sent them to me. Some I can easily distinguish from the sender’s handwriting. Easy. Some I had to look at the return address. A few names I had to go deep into my memory to recall who this person was. Some I could not believe I even had a correspondence with.

As I was sorting the letters, I also found some I have written and never sent. It could have been laziness, change of heart, forgetfulness. I wrote letters in lots of places: I am on the bus, on a plane, in a class, in my bed, sitting on the front steps. It was important for me in these letters to set the stage.

Philip Roth, in *Reading Myself and Others*, called the unsent letter “a flourishing subliterate genre with a long and moving history.”⁵²

Two of the tallest piles were from my mom and my friend Francesca who I met in the first grade. Each envelope Francesca sent me was unique, including a drawing or a special way she wrote my address. We wrote to each other from elementary school through college, and now, we send the occasional text. We have emailed each other when our parents have died.

These letters are in my care. It really was enough—there is an overwhelming abundance of them. I will take care of them, but now half of them are organized by sender and they are tucked away in a box, except for the ones from my mother and another category that emerged: those letters that were sent to me “c/o”: in care of.

The c/o designation means that the recipient is not a permanent resident at the address.

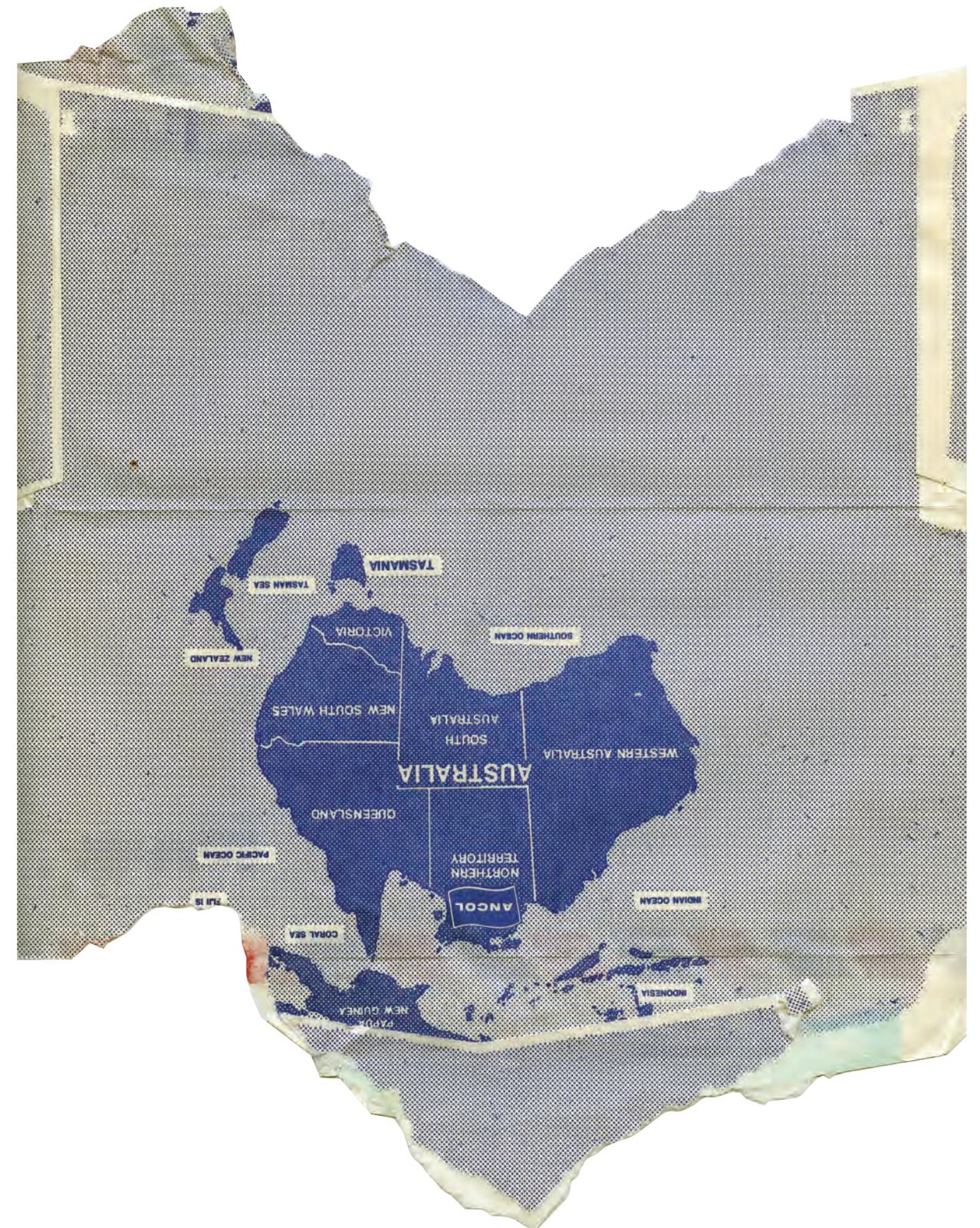
Over the years, I have found myself in “c/o” other people. I have moved around and stayed with other members of my family for long periods of time. I have counted these places among my homes. And these people have taken care of me. They cooked for me, let me drive their cars. In my young mind I believed these were reciprocal relationships, but because I was young, let’s agree they probably were not.

I am reminded that there are people who have never addressed an envelope or bought a stamp. They don’t know where the stamp goes or the hierarchy of:

Name
Street
City, State Zip Code

“Stamps are a particular barrier for young people who have grown up communicating digitally.”⁵³

It is just not something they have done. I know this because I work at a college and was designing some postcards for students to send. The woman who manages the mailroom told me that I would need to provide instructions on addressing and stamping and then how to mail them. Sending something personal through the mail can be a novel activity or just unfamiliar.



The No-Draw Rule

“Sarah’s apparent lack of interest in painting and drawing hampered her progress in this class. Although she has a very good color sense she needs to work on problems of composition and to feel more relaxed with the painting medium.”

-K. Bradford, April 1987
State University of New York, Purchase

I discovered this document amongst my letters (see page 53). It is handwritten which makes it feel all the more of a personal slight. Although when I read it now, May 2020, I busted out laughing.

It is titled “Student Evaluation Report.” There is a letter grade (C+), but also a written evaluation on a multipart form. My copy is the pink copy. I think at SUNY Purchase they offered these evaluations along with the letter grade as a compromise between not giving grades at all, but I guess they probably had to.

Clearly, this teacher didn’t know what to do with me. This was a studio class at a college known for its visual and performing arts. I loved art in high school, but was way out of my league in this studio class. It scared the shit out of me. There were easels, and it felt like a performance. It was quiet and serious. I was shy and depressed. I’m sure the teacher was probably smart and talented, and I don’t harbor any ill feeling for her. She probably just wanted to do her own painting, but here she found herself teaching.

In her book, *Chasing The Perfect: Thoughts On Modernist Design in Our Time* by Natalia Ilyin, she describes the “No-Draw Rule” for graphic designers as it relates to modernist biases in design education:

“...we designers have forgotten the original reason that we don’t draw well. We just somehow never get around to learning. We respond to an

invisible prejudice embedded in our design culture, react to a stimulus we do not recognize, mold our lives with rules we do not see.”⁵⁴

It was a relief for my development as a graphic designer to not draw any more. I would occasionally do the odd sketch, but no more drawing. No more painting. K. Bradford’s handwritten evaluation about my lack of skill and interest kind of knocked it all out of me.

Now, almost accidentally, I have developed a drawing and writing practice. It makes me feel vulnerable to draw. It’s scary sometimes. Sometimes it is ridiculous and I wonder why I keep going. But I am on this path with a daily practice, and I feel like I would be letting myself down if I didn’t do it.

I started drawing again with the help of a 1964 book called *Creative Drawing, Point and Line (Creative Play Series)*. It illustrates simple drawing methods aimed at educators, and there are a lot of children’s drawings in the book. I really liked the kids’ methods of drawing and followed their lead. I liked their drawings more than my idea of what I thought my drawings should look like. Techniques are stressed: line and point and not exclusively finished work.

I get ideas for my drawings on my daily walks. I coax cows to the edges of fields. I look at the weeds. It causes me to look closely for patterns and textures and the way I feel about the landscape

around me. I incorporate handwriting in the drawings as a journaling practice. You can read the writing or not. It serves as part of the texture.

The writing part of it evolved from a failed daily journaling practice: Write for 30 minutes. I wanted to include handwriting in my daily practice and merging it with the drawing was a natural fit. The words become part of the picture. Sometimes, I can’t read them myself. Sometimes when I am feeling that the drawing is not very good, adding the words makes me feel a little better about the whole experience.

I have rules for this practice:

- the timer is set for 30 minutes
- two pencils are sharpened (I’ve gotten very particular about my pencil. I now have an opinion about my pencil and I think I am a pencil snob.)
- two lines are drawn around the page for a frame
- the drawing is from a photo I’ve taken, or drawn while sitting outdoors
- the writing can be about... anything
- sometimes I snap a picture of the drawing and send it to someone who has shared an experience with me and I have either drawn it or written about it
- the date is indicated at the bottom

I like this practice because it involves handwriting, and it gives me an anchor. I do it every day. It is grounding. I either print (the easiest), write in script (very difficult), or all caps (very slow, but I like the visual effect). I also do it because there is no reason not to, there are no excuses. The tools and rules are simple.

This practice also surprises me: It’s not perfect in the ways in which I was taught the methods of modernist design should be. Clean, defined, tied to consumerist wants and needs.

“When something is perfect, when something is perfected, it is finished. It is complete. It is dead to change, to the world, to life. What are we so afraid of that we are constantly trying to put the brakes on life, on change, on difference?”⁵⁵

Suddenly, I draw. It is goofy and flawed and, some days, I think ridiculous. But I will keep showing up and drawing and writing. And, what’s more, I’ll show you what I’ve done.

See one hundred days of handwriting and drawing in Appendix A: second nature, page 56.

feel more relaxed feel more relaxed
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STUDENT EVALUATION REPORT
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
COLLEGE AT PURCHASE

PLEASE TYPE & COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS

STUDENT NAME: PIZER, SARAH KIM BOX # 1521	COURSE TYPE: STUDIO	SOC. SEC. #: 083705918
FACULTY MEMBER: BRADFORD	ACADEMIC TITLE: LECTURER	COURSE #: VDR.121.01
COURSE TITLE: DRAWING & PAINTING: NON-M	SEMESTER & YEAR: SPRING 1987	ADVISER: FONER
SEN. PROJ. SPONSOR:	SPONSOR'S FIELD:	DIVISION: INTERDISPLN
FIRST READER:	1ST READER'S FIELD:	CREDITS: 2.00
SECOND READER:	2ND READER'S FIELD:	

1. Describe briefly the nature and extent of the subject matter covered:

2. Evaluate briefly the student's accomplishments and competence in this subject. Should the student do further work in this field? In what area is the student particularly strong and in what area does the student need more work? If more space is needed attach another sheet.

4
8
4
8
4
8

Sarah's apparent lack of interest in painting and drawing hampered her progress in this class. Although she has a very good color sense she needs to work on problems of composition and to feel more relaxed with the painting medium.

3. Grade C+ PLEASE REFER TO GRADELIST FOR APPLICABLE GRADES.

INSTRUCTOR

PROJECT SPONSOR

HEAD OF BOARD OF STUDY

SIGNATURE K Bradford

DATE 4/87

INSTRUCTOR KEEPS LAST COPY



Historically, in the pedagogical methods used for teaching penmanship, there was a strong emphasis on consistency. Repetitive exercises and drills were taught so everyone formed letters in the same way. This was an era of mass production and uniformity was stressed. Penmanship for business was taught in colleges and sameness was valued.

Our eyes today are very quick to pick out digital handwritten fonts. We know that they are not actually handwritten and we are accustomed to seeing them as part of the typographical landscape. Our own handwriting is not consistent from letter to letter. There are variations and idiosyncrasies.

If handwritten digital fonts were available in 1900, perhaps they would be highly valued: They are wildly consistent. Now we may find handwritten fonts disingenuous or only acceptable if confined to wedding invitations and greeting cards. Their place in typography is nostalgic.

Physical letters also call into question what and how we save things. I am conflicted about my personal letters, yet they tell a story of lives lived, they create a narrative, they reveal a humanity. The conflict comes with artifacts that force me to reflect when it is hard to.

My mother's letters helped me look at the grief of losing her in a different way. Seeing her handwriting was revisiting our relationship. It had been a real thing and the letters are like proof. My memories are right in front of me. It's what she wrote and handwriting as the medium makes it all the more human, real, tactile. They leave a record in ways digital media do not.

I began my MFA degree five weeks after my mother died, and I wasn't sure if I could start school or not. It seemed like too much. And it didn't seem like a place I could talk about grief, nor did I expect it to be, but it is.

Maybe you like to write things down, maybe it is not your thing. Handwriting is but one method of self-expression. Digital modes are more commonplace and, at times, more accessible than they were in the past. Leaving a legacy of objects that require custodial care is a matter of personal choice, and when there are no "objects" to care for but digital artifacts, we will engage with them in different ways. We may not hold a handwritten letter in our hands, but Facebook will prompt us with a memory from three years ago. It is unsettling to see the faces of dead relatives pop up, unbidden, in morning emails. We have willingly put our memories in the hands of multinational companies to write our history for us, dole them out as they see fit, according to their algorithms.

Writing by hand can itself be a radical action. As seen in ephemera from the 1960s and '70s, people wanted to share information separate from corporate culture, to tell their own stories. Today, handwriting can be used in the same ways: unfettered from digitization, deskilled, expressive. We see handwritten protest signs for racial and social justice in our present day and they are powerful signifiers, defining a historical moment.

To this I say: Write on!

Appendix A

second nature: 100 days of handwriting and drawing

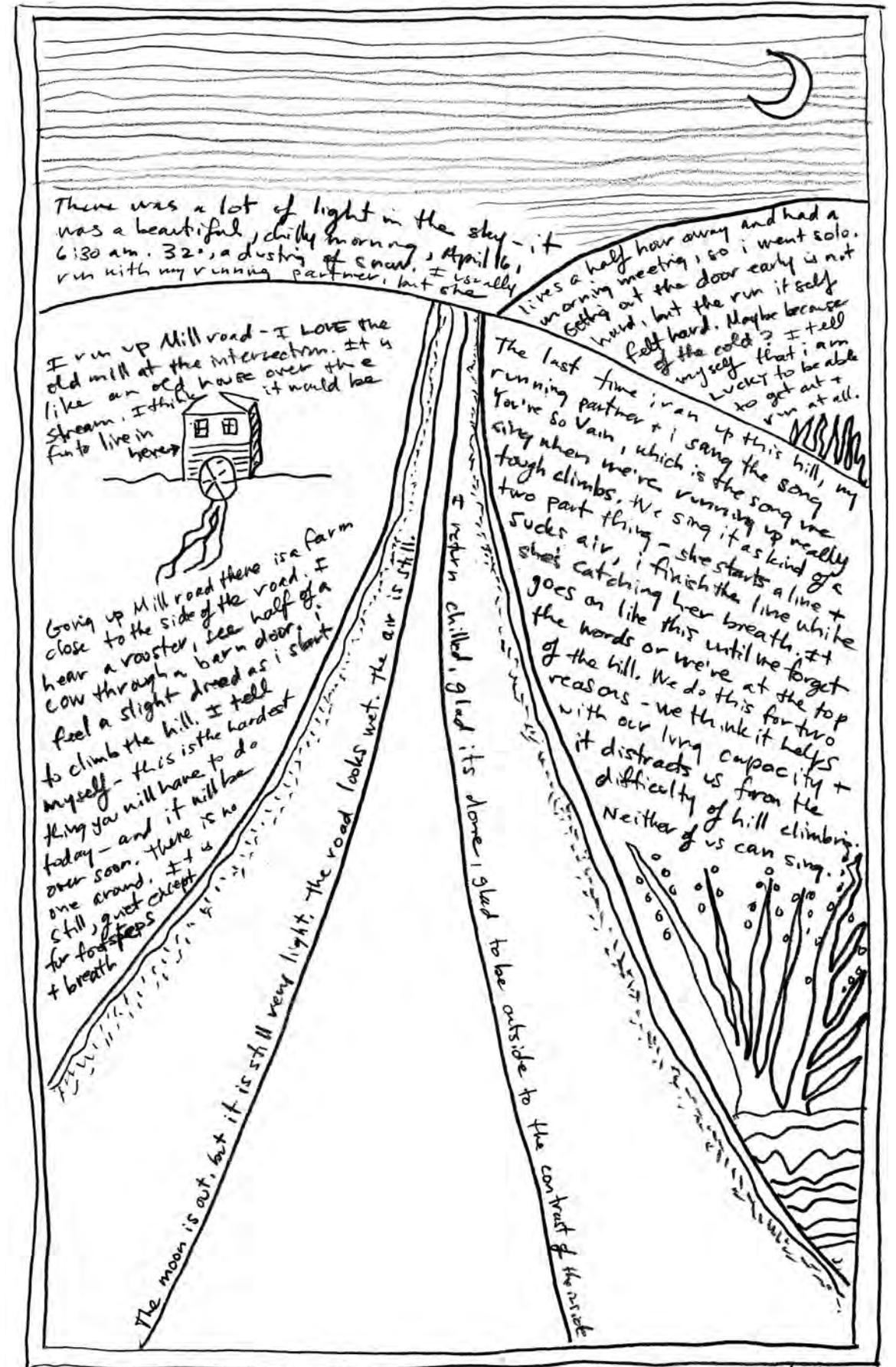
DAY 1	you're so vain	DAY 51	just a function
DAY 2	spring is tough	DAY 52	tucked under her
DAY 3	defer to her	DAY 53	some tense situations
DAY 4	warns of checkpoints	DAY 54	unexpected and expensive
DAY 5	darlene in ozark	DAY 55	this simple twig
DAY 6	several fishing reports	DAY 56	actually be kinder
DAY 7	once ran over	DAY 57	seem too lean
DAY 8	in separate directions	DAY 58	no neighbors yelling
DAY 9	the virgin mary	DAY 59	practice target shooting
DAY 10	spread her windbreaker	DAY 60	every possible angle
DAY 11	make me nervous	DAY 61	i'll never know
DAY 12	reading me excerpts	DAY 62	as if engaged
DAY 13	hammer their way	DAY 63	your own breeze
DAY 14	our respective tasks	DAY 64	a crucial turn
DAY 15	nasal swab test	DAY 65	awkward or freaked
DAY 16	opposing expansive directions	DAY 66	waste of time
DAY 17	getting wicked tidy	DAY 67	abundance and collecting
DAY 18	a fuzzy appearance	DAY 68	in my wallet
DAY 19	casting long shadows	DAY 69	little boy announced
DAY 20	walk by unmolested	DAY 70	make no plans
DAY 21	slightly different rate	DAY 71	the safety officer
DAY 22	situation was settled	DAY 72	at impossible angles
DAY 23	changed my mind	DAY 73	are feeling lazy
DAY 24	breathing will change	DAY 74	close to dying
DAY 25	scout master's house	DAY 75	an odd lethargy
DAY 26	might be pregnant	DAY 76	egg laying parts
DAY 27	pretty obnoxious attitude	DAY 77	a tiny breeze
DAY 28	in tasseled boots	DAY 78	stuck and died
DAY 29	make some sacrifices	DAY 79	a strong inkling
DAY 30	staring into space	DAY 80	cracked and frozen
DAY 31	bright green umbrella	DAY 81	flap at yourself
DAY 32	real soft spot	DAY 82	something very big
DAY 33	burgundy creeper guy	DAY 83	unravel all plans
DAY 34	aspiring bird watcher	DAY 84	heavy cloud watching
DAY 35	quietly seated pose	DAY 85	i get tired
DAY 36	with my emotions	DAY 86	smooth river stones
DAY 37	hopping along behind	DAY 87	that delightful thing
DAY 38	old washing machine	DAY 88	necks knees armpits
DAY 39	a hollow log	DAY 89	that's my job
DAY 40	like flight risk	DAY 90	drain an abscess
DAY 41	i love backgrounds	DAY 91	locust popping up
DAY 42	like rain dancing	DAY 92	together skimming along
DAY 43	friends for company	DAY 93	has to hibernate
DAY 44	air conditioned forest	DAY 94	whiff of something
DAY 45	completely willy nilly	DAY 95	get the harness
DAY 46	half a worm	DAY 96	behind the screen
DAY 47	feeling of tenderness	DAY 97	in perpetual motion
DAY 48	haven't been alone	DAY 98	starting to think
DAY 49	weak present situation	DAY 99	a death counter
DAY 50	spent in speculation	DAY 100	pleasant staring contest

the rules

- > set timer for 30 minutes
- > sharpen two pencils
- > draw two lines around the page for a frame
- > draw from an object, a photo, or outdoors
- > writing can be about anything
- > indicate the date at the bottom

DAY 1

you're so vain



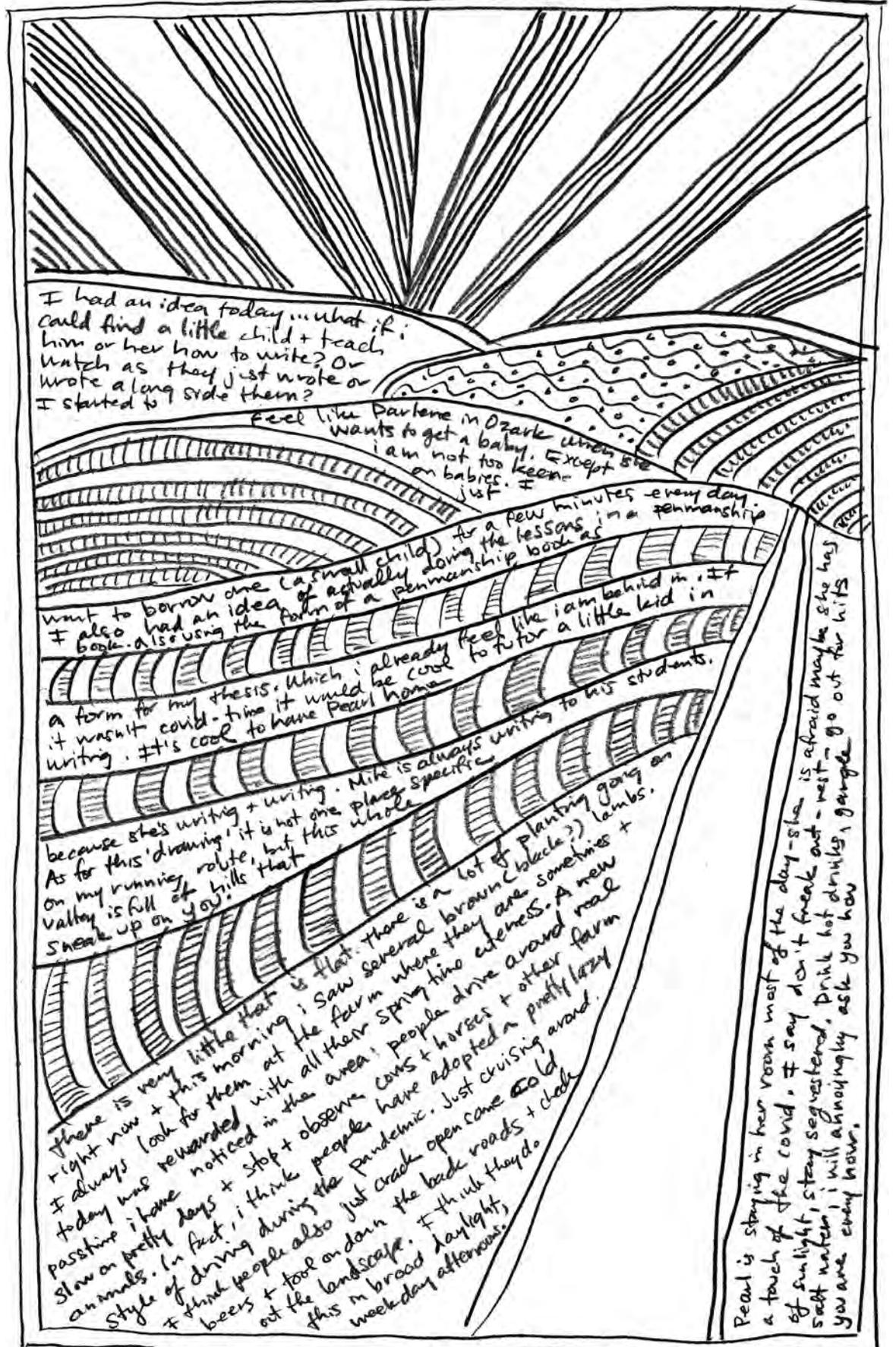


I leave home at 7am to drive to Monroe
 up at the ashram. There has been a kind of
 anxiety for weeks as we weigh the pros & cons of her
 staying vs returning amidst the pandemic
 a mask, gloves, hand sanitizer, breakfast + coffee for my self.
 Luncheon for me + Pearl. The advice is to stay home, which is
 what I have been doing, but the time has come. My dad
 warns of checkpoints. As I leave it is 290
 the rest areas will be open. As I leave it is 290
 Frosty. The roads are pretty quiet in the
 morning. There are no problems. Pearl is
 standing at the entrance with her front
 door as I pull up - which kind of surprises
 me. I had hit called her. She has
 a bag, but still more bags at her boat
 house (below). We don't hug. We put on
 our masks. Pearl + Joe parade up the
 car - I wander around, stretching
 out my tight hips. Pearl
 goes to say
 good bye to
 Bill, the head teacher.
 I drive out to draw a trishe
 around with Joe. Pearl +
 she plays away. We talk +
 songs by the Barn.
 I have a Crig + an
 Robbie Robinson.
 Rick Danko is an
 makes me
 disappear +
 Levon
 Helm
 kills
 me
 with
 joy.

4/19/20

DAY 4

warns of checkpoints



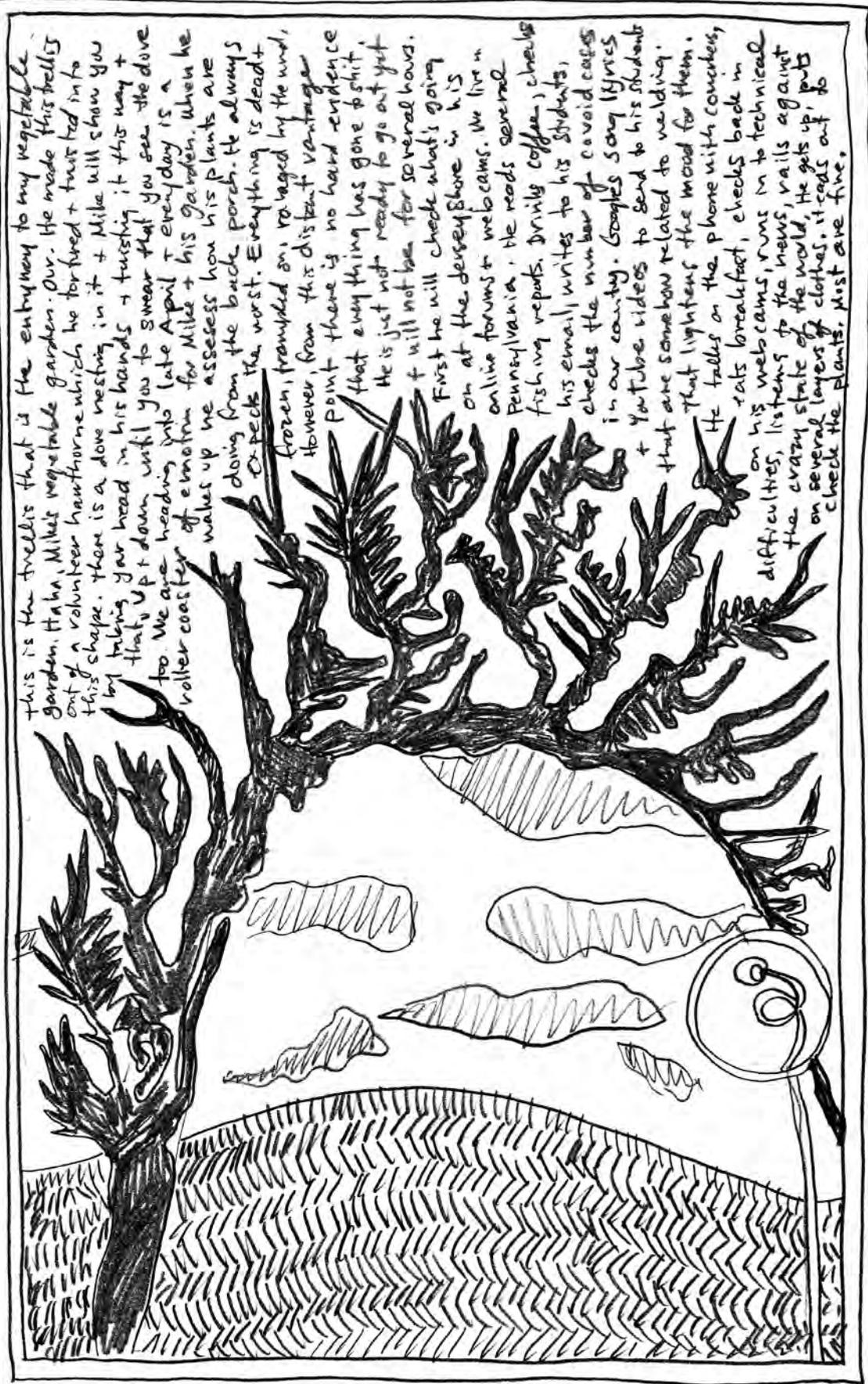
I had an idea today... what if I
 could find a little child + teach
 him or her how to write? Or
 watch as they just wrote or
 wrote along side them?
 I started to
 feel like Parlone in Ozark when
 wants to get a baby. Except she
 I am not too keen on babies. I
 just
 want to borrow one (a small child) for a few minutes every day.
 I also had an idea of actually doing the lessons in a penmanship
 book. Also using the form of a penmanship book as
 a form for my thesis. Which I already feel like I am behind in. I
 it wasn't covid-time it would be cool to tutor a little kid in
 writing. It's cool to have Pearl home
 because she's writing + writing. Mike is always writing to his students.
 As for this 'drawing', it is not one place specific
 on my running route, but this whole
 valley is full of hills that
 sneak up on you.
 there is very little that is flat. There is a lot of planting going on
 right now + this morning I saw several brown (black?) lambs.
 I always look for them at the farm where they are sometimes +
 today was rewarded with all their springtime awesomeness. A new
 passtime I have noticed in the area: people drive around road
 animals. In fact, I think people have adopted a pretty lazy
 style of driving during the pandemic. Just cruising around
 + think people also just crack open some cold
 beers + tool on down the back roads + other farm
 at the landscape. I think they do
 this in broad daylight, + think they do
 weekday afternoons.

Pearl is staying in her room most of the day - she is afraid maybe she has
 a touch of the covid. I say don't freak out - rest - go out for bits
 of sunlight, stay sequestered, drink hot drinks, gargle
 with water, I will annoyingly ask you how
 you are every hour.

4/20/20

DAY 5

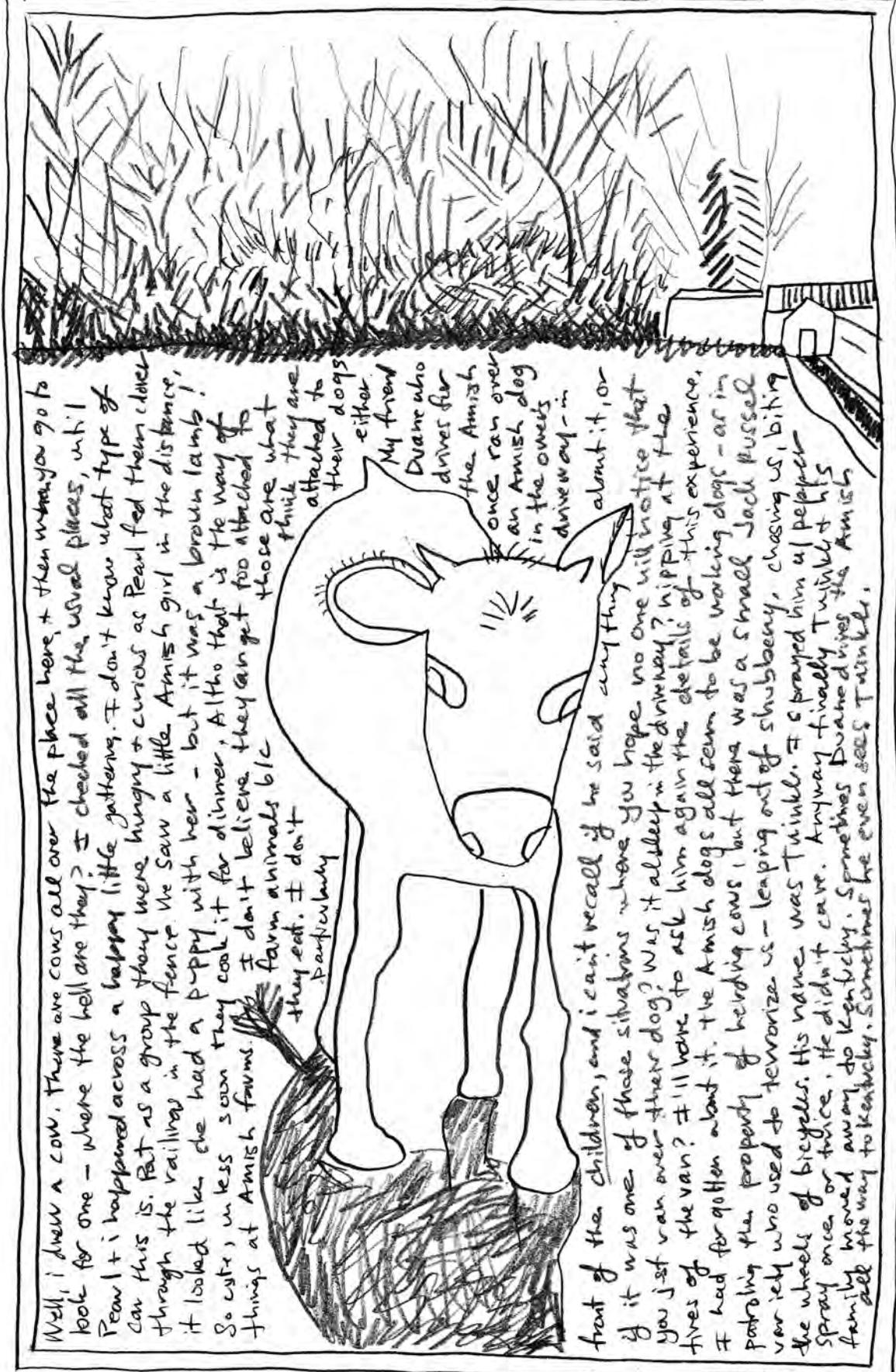
darlene in ozark



This is the trellis that is the entrance to my vegetable garden. I had, Mike's vegetable garden. Our. He made this trellis out of a volunteer Hawthorne which he forked + twisted into this shape. There is a dove nesting in it + Mike will show you by taking your hand in his hands + twisting it this way + that. Up + down until you swear that you see the dove too. We are heading into late April + everyday is a roller coaster of emotion for Mike + his garden. When he wakes up he assesses how his plants are doing from the back porch. He always expects the worst. Everything is dead + frozen, trampled on, ravaged by the wind. However, from this distant vantage point there is no hard evidence that anything has gone wrong. He is just not ready to go out yet + will not be for several hours. First he will check what's going on at the Jersey Shore in his online forums + webcams. He lives in Pennsylvania. He reads several fishing reports. Drinky coffee, checks his email, writes to his students, checks the number of covid cases in our country. Google song lyrics + YouTube videos to send to his students that are somehow related to welding. That lightens the mood for them. He talks on the phone with cousins, rats breakfast, checks back on his webcams, runs in to technical difficulties, listens to the news, rails against the crazy state of the world, he gets up, puts on several layers of clothes, it cools out, he checks the plants. Most are fine.

4/21/20

DAY 6
several fishing reports

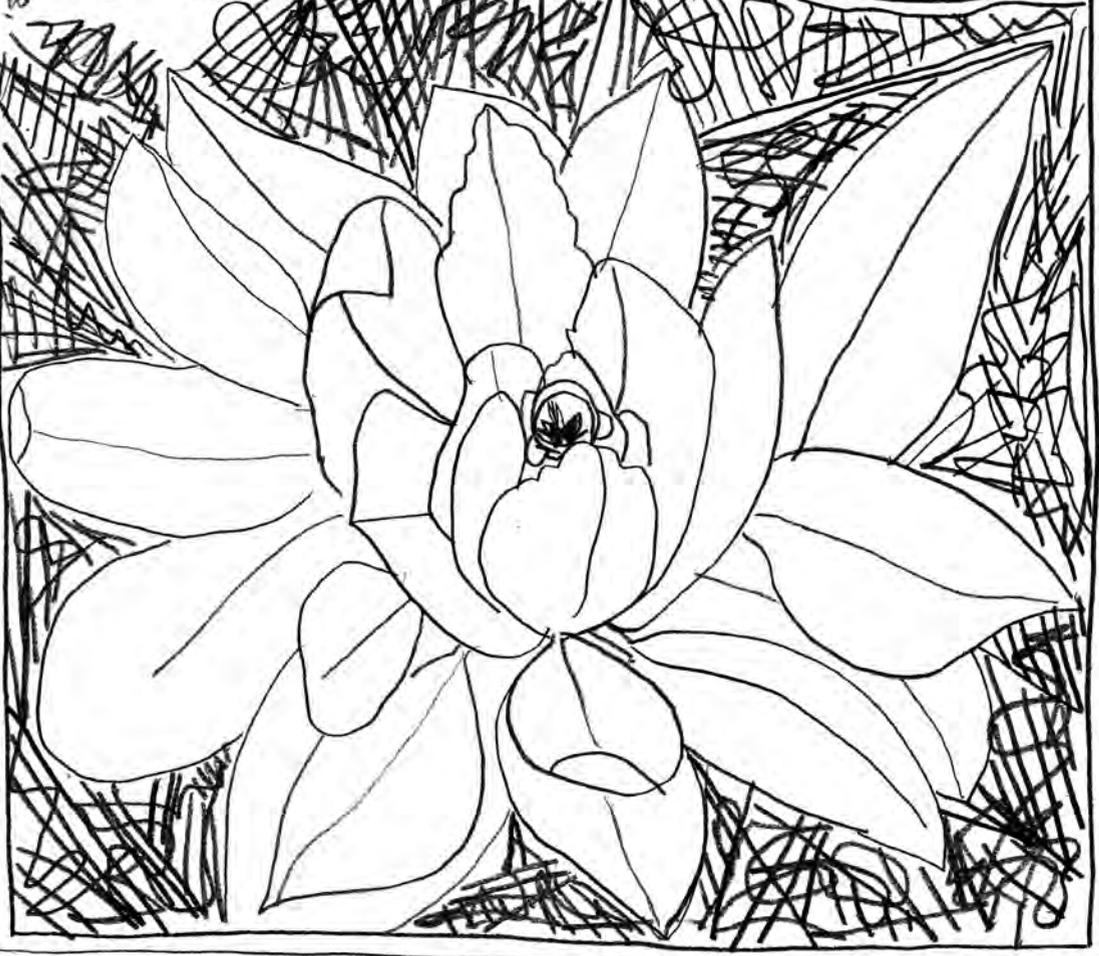


Well, I drew a cow. There are cows all over the place here, + then when you go to look for one - where the hell are they? I checked all the usual places, until Pearl + I happened across a baloney little gathering. I don't know what type of car this is. But as a group they were hungry + curious as Pearl fed them closer through the railings in the fence. We saw a little Amish girl in the distance, it looked like she had a puppy with her - but it was a brown lamb! So cute, unless soon they cook it for dinner. Altho that is the way of things at Amish farms. I don't believe they can get too attached to those are what farm animals b/c they eat. I don't think they are attached to their dogs either. My friend Duane who drives for the Amish once ran over an Amish dog in the owner's driveway - in about it, or if it was one of those situations where you hope no one will notice that you just ran over their dog. Was it asleep in the driveway? Nipping at the tires of the van? I'll have to ask him again the details of this experience. I had forgotten about it. The Amish dogs all seem to be working dogs - or in patrolling the property of herding cows, but there was a small Jack Russell variety who used to terrorize us - leaping out of shrubbery, chasing us, biting the wheels of bicycles. His name was Thinker. I sprayed him w/ pepper spray once or twice. He didn't care. Anyway finally Thinker + his family moved away to Kentucky. Sometimes Duane drives the Amish all the way to Kentucky. Sometimes he even sees Thinker.

DAY 7
once ran over

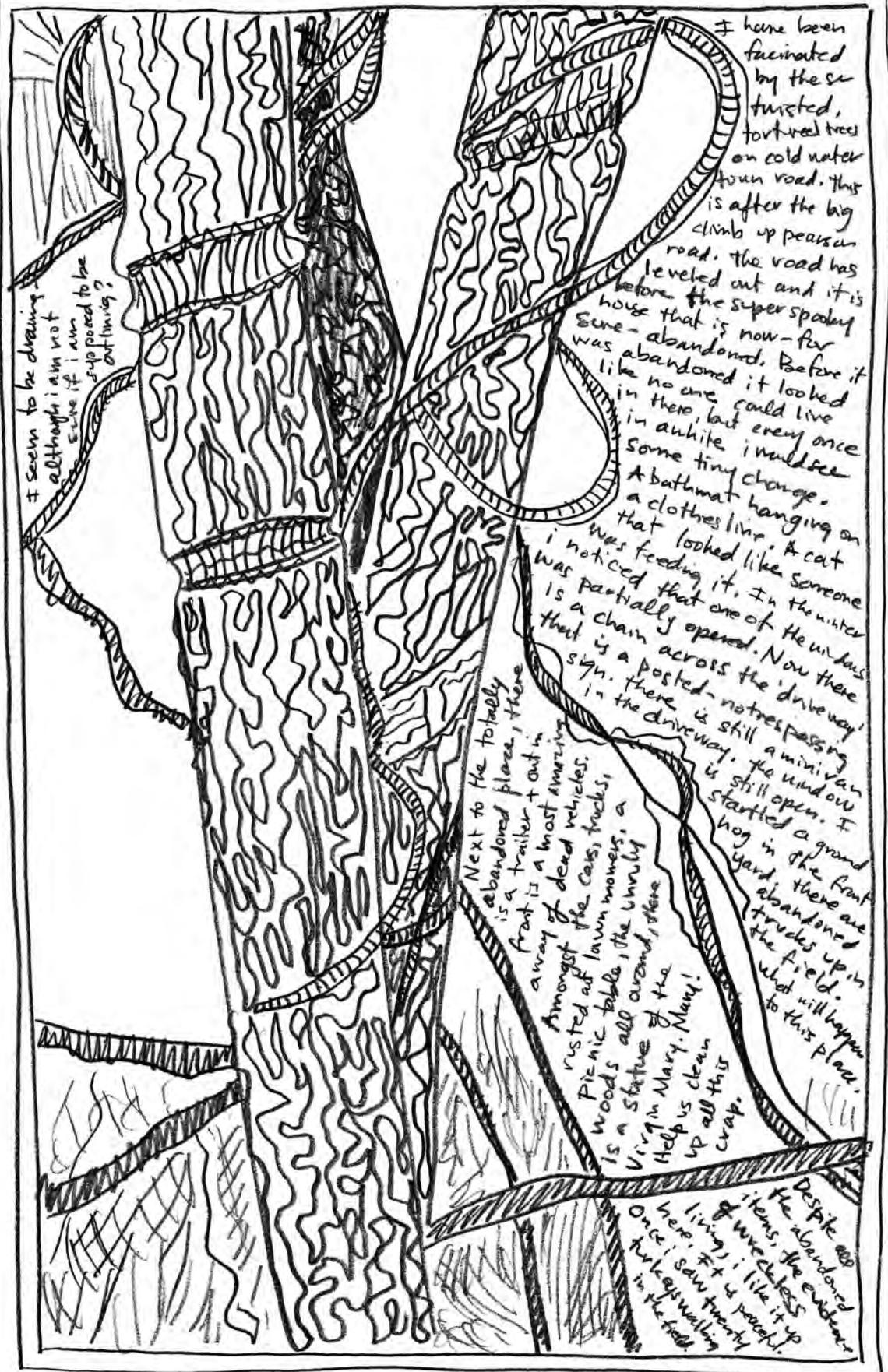
4/22/20

I think this may be a skunk cabbage. Not sure. Pearl + I got to talking about them yesterday + I could kind of see in my mind's eye what one might look like. Today we took walks in separate directions then I saw this plant that may be the skunk cabbage, but you may not be able to tell from this drawing. The walk up Pecos Rd was great altho I had to bend my psych myself up for the hill. It was fine. And there were lots of things to take photos of + I also recorded some bird songs. It was very quiet. I walked over the field that the woman who may be my future boss is calling my references tomorrow. That is for sure a good sign, but I am not 100% sure I want this job. Like how much does it pay? I'm sure they would need to go thru some kind of wild calculation before they told me. And then I would not be able to do my early retirement at SC, which is just an idea now anyway - but an exciting one. So there is really nothing to decide, but it is an interesting development. When I am doing this am I working on my thesis? It is hard to say. Just checking the calendar today + sorting out how many weekends before packed #1 is done. It is fine. There is time + very few (none) weekend conflicts. I have plenty of writing in a word file to get started. What if I started a new job now? Isn't everyone working at home for the whole summer? Few weird would that be? Maybe it would be fun to be a faculty in my field today + it looks like they won't be paid. (11 Aug 21)



4/23/20

DAY 8
in separate directions



DAY 9
the virgin mary

I have been fascinated by the scrawled, tortured trees on cold water town road. This is after the big climb up Pecos road. The road has leveled out and it is before the super spooly house that is now - for sure - abandoned. Before it was abandoned it looked like no one could live in there, but every once in a while I would see some tiny change. A bathmat hanging on a clothes line. A cat that looked like someone was feeding it. In the winter I noticed that one of the windows is partially opened. Now there is a chain across the 'driveway' that is a posted-notrespassing sign. There is still a mini van in the driveway. It is still open. I started a grand yard in the front abandoned. There are what will happen to this place.

It seems to be drawing although I am not sure if I am supposed to be outlining?

Next to the totally abandoned place, there is a trailer + out in a way of dead amazing amongst the cars, trucks, rusted up lawn mowers, a picnic table, the unruly Virgin Mary. Mary! Help us clean up all this crap.

Despite the abandoned items, the evidence of wrecked living is like it up here. It is a piece of shit. I saw twenty turkeys walking in the field.

4/24/20



THESE ARE DRY DEAD GRASSES THAT I AM KIND OF IN LOVE WITH. THEY ARE GOLDEN BROWN. WITH THE WIND AND RAIN THEY GET MATTED DOWN INTO WILD SHAPES. WITH FLEXIBLE BRAMBLES UNDER THEM THEY GET PROPPED UP HERE + THERE TO CREATE TUNNELS OR CUBBY HOLES AMONGST THE BLADES. THEY FORM THEMSELVES INTO SHAPES AND CONTOURS. THEY ARE DENSE. IT'S SATURDAY - THE DAY OF THE LONG RUN. MEGAN + I ARE KEEPING OUR MILEAGE UP, SO TODAY WAS 12. THERE WAS LOTS OF STOPPING + STARTING IN THE FIRST MILES - CLOTHING ADJUSTMENTS, DRINKS OF WATER. MEGAN GOT A STONE IN HER SHOE, SO I SPREAD HER WINDBREAKER OUT ON RT 44 TO SIT DOWN + GET IT OUT. IN NORMAL TIMES, I WOULD OFFER HER MY ARM - BUT IN THE AGE OF COVID, THERE IS NO TOUCHING. ANYWAY, THE WIND BREAKER ACTION MADE IT SEEM LIKE SHE WAS GOING TO BE SETTLING IN ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD FOR SOMETHING MORE LIKE A PICNIC. WE REALIZED - VOICED - THAT WE WERE ONLY OUT TO COVER THE DISTANCE. AT A LITTLE OVER THE HALFWAY MARK, MEGAN THOUGHT SHE COULDN'T RUN, BUT THEN FOUND IT IN HERSELF TO KEEP PUSHING. DURING A 12 mile RUN, A LOT CAN HAPPEN - STOPPING, STARTING, SNACKS, DRINKS, NATURE WATCHING, TAKING CLOTHING OFF, PUTTING IT BACK ON, DECIDING WHETHER OR NOT TO MALE A DOG, GREETING OTHER RUNNERS (RARE) OR WALKERS (MORE LIKELY), TALKING, LAUGHING, MARVELING.

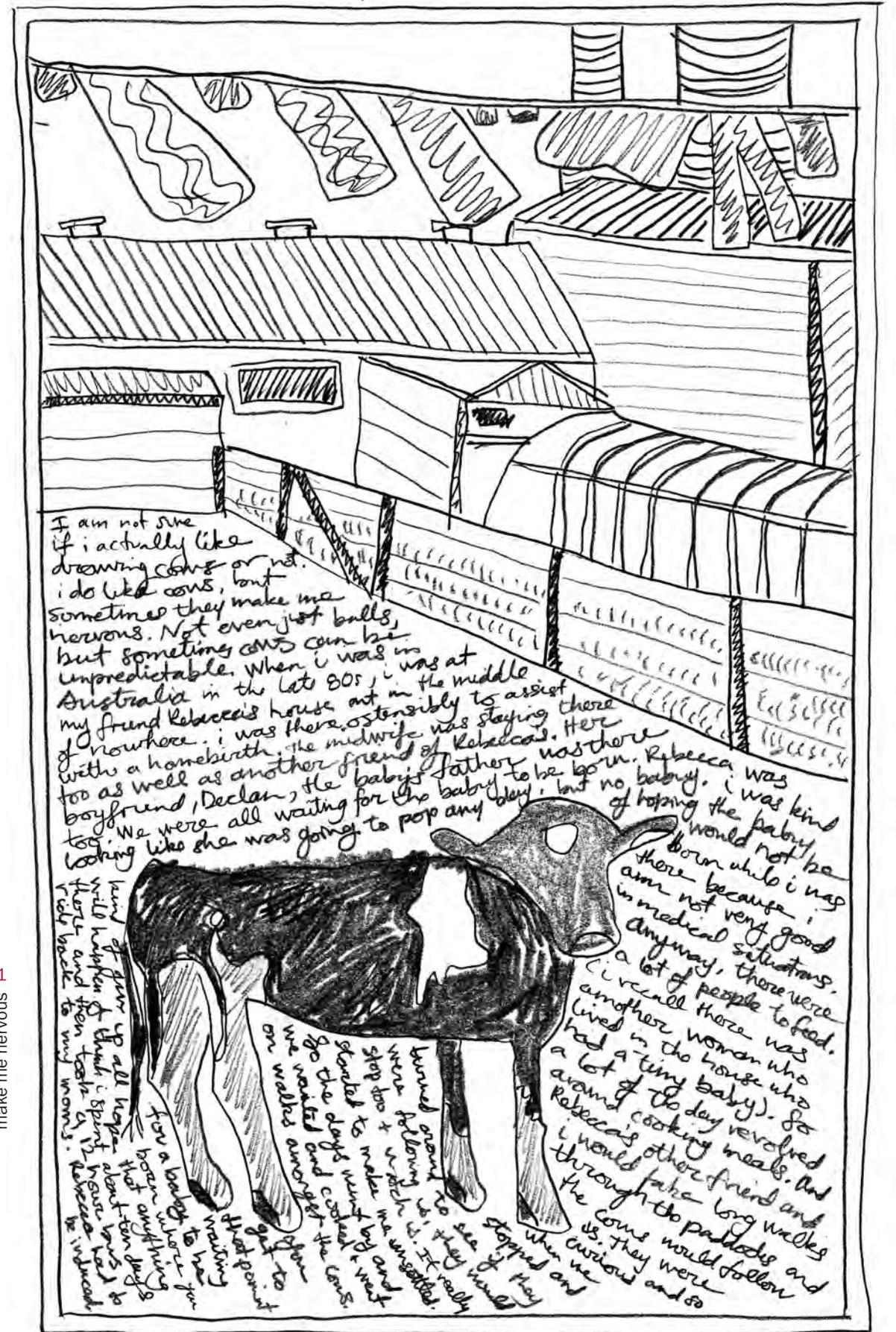
DAY 10

spread her windbreaker

4/25/20

tools used

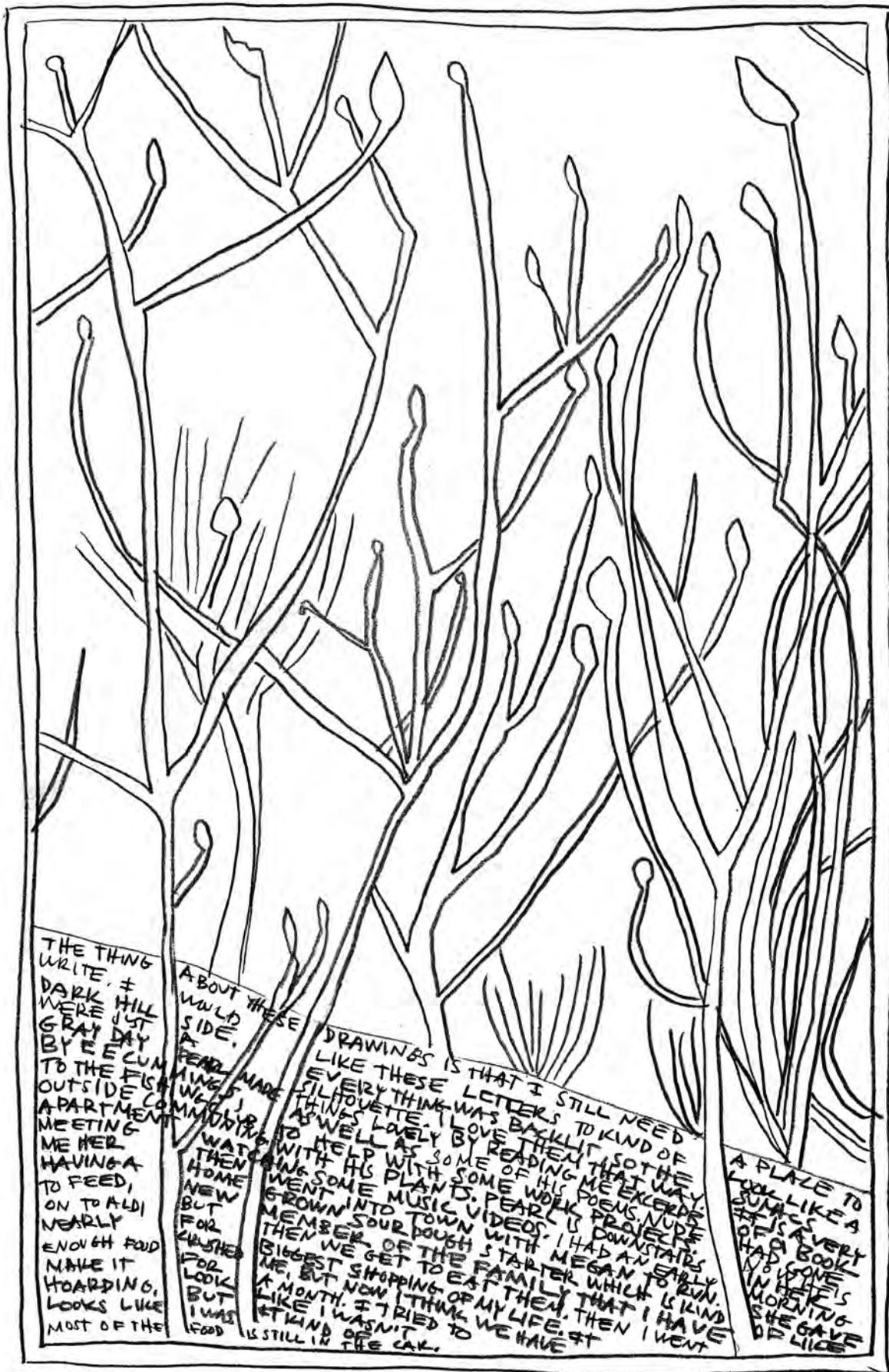
- > pencil for drawing
- + blackwing 602
- + it has an eraser on the end, which i try not to use too much
- + it makes for smooth drawing
- + when i'm done drawing it's necessary to have a second pencil, nice and sharp, to start the writing
- > pencil for writing
- + papermate mirado HB2
- + round, wood pencil also with an eraser
- > sketchbook
- + 7x10 spiral-bound
- + opens flat and is a nice size for 30 minutes of drawing and writing
- + easy to fit in a bag



DAY 11

make me nervous

I am not sure if i actually like drawing cows or not. i do like cows, but sometimes they make me nervous. Not even just bulls, but sometimes cows can be unpredictable. When i was in Australia in the late 80s, i was at my friend Rebecca's house out in the middle of nowhere. i was there ostensibly to assist with a homebirth. the midwife was staying here too as well as another friend of Rebecca's boyfriend, Declan, the baby's father was there too. We were all waiting for the baby to be born. Rebecca was looking like she was going to pop any day, but no baby. i was kind of hoping the baby would not be born while i was there because i am not very good in medical situations. Anyway, there were a lot of people to feed. i recall those another woman was lived in the house who had a tiny baby. So around that day revolved Rebecca's cooking meals. And i would take long walks through the paddocks and the cows would follow us. They were curious and so when we stopped and they would see it they really stopped and were following us. It really started to make me nervous. I went to the days and camped in the woods overnight. We waited and camped in the woods overnight. I was nervous that I would be a baby to have you born. I was nervous that I would be a baby to have you born. I was nervous that I would be a baby to have you born. I was nervous that I would be a baby to have you born.



THE THING
WRITE, +
DARK HILL
WERE JUST
GRAY DAY
BYE BYE
TO THE FISH
OUTSIDE
APARTMENT
MEETING
ME HER
HAVING A
TO FEED,
ON TO ALDI
NEARLY
ENOUGH FOOD
MAKE IT
HOARDING,
LOOKS LIKE
MOST OF THE

ABOUT THESE
WOULD THESE
SIDE,
A
PEARL
MADE
WAS
COMMANDING
WATCHING
THEM
HOME
NEW
FOR
KUSHED
FOR
LOOK
BUT
I WAS
FOOD

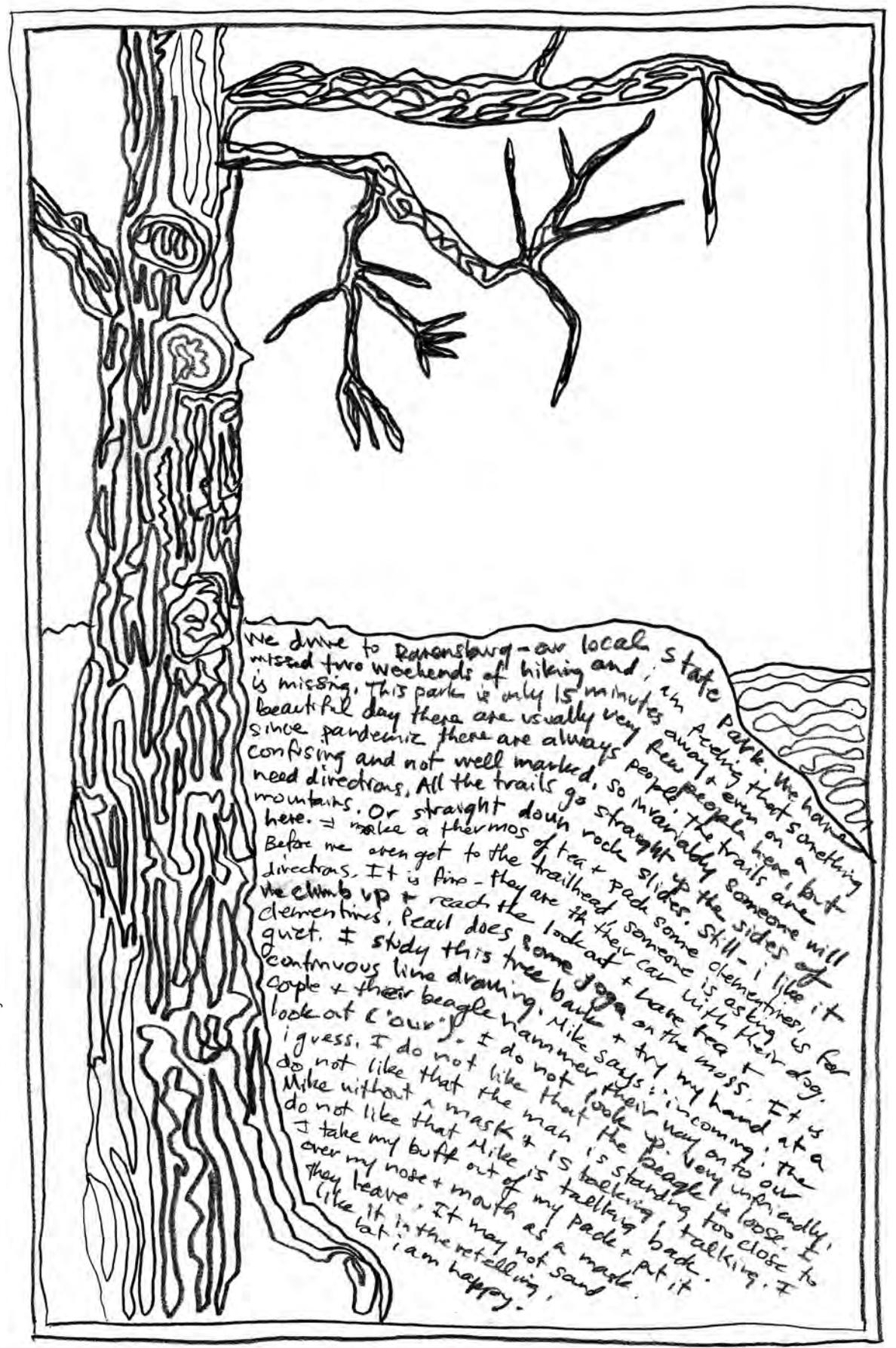
DRAWINGS IS THAT I STILL NEED
EVERY THING WAS BACK TO KIND OF
SILVER THING WAS READING THAT WAY
THINGS LOVELY BY LOVE THEM
AS WELL AS SOME OF HIS ME EXERCISES
TO HELP WITH SOME OF HIS PROJECTS
WITH HIS PLANTS. PEARL IS DOWNSTAIRS
WENT SOME MUSIC VIDEOS. I HAD AN
GROWN INTO TOWN WITH MEGAN EARLY
MEMBER OF THE STAR MEGAN EARLY
THEY GET TO EAT THEM WHICH IS KIND
BIGGEST SHOPPING OF MY LIFE, THEN I HAVE
A MOUTH, I TRIED TO WE HAVE
LIKE I WASN'T IN THE CAR.
IS STILL IN THE CAR.

A PLACE TO
LOOK LIKE A
SUNNY
IT IS
HAD A BOOK
AND SOME
IN THE
MORNING
SHE GAVE
ME LICE

4/27/20

DAY 12

reading me excerpts

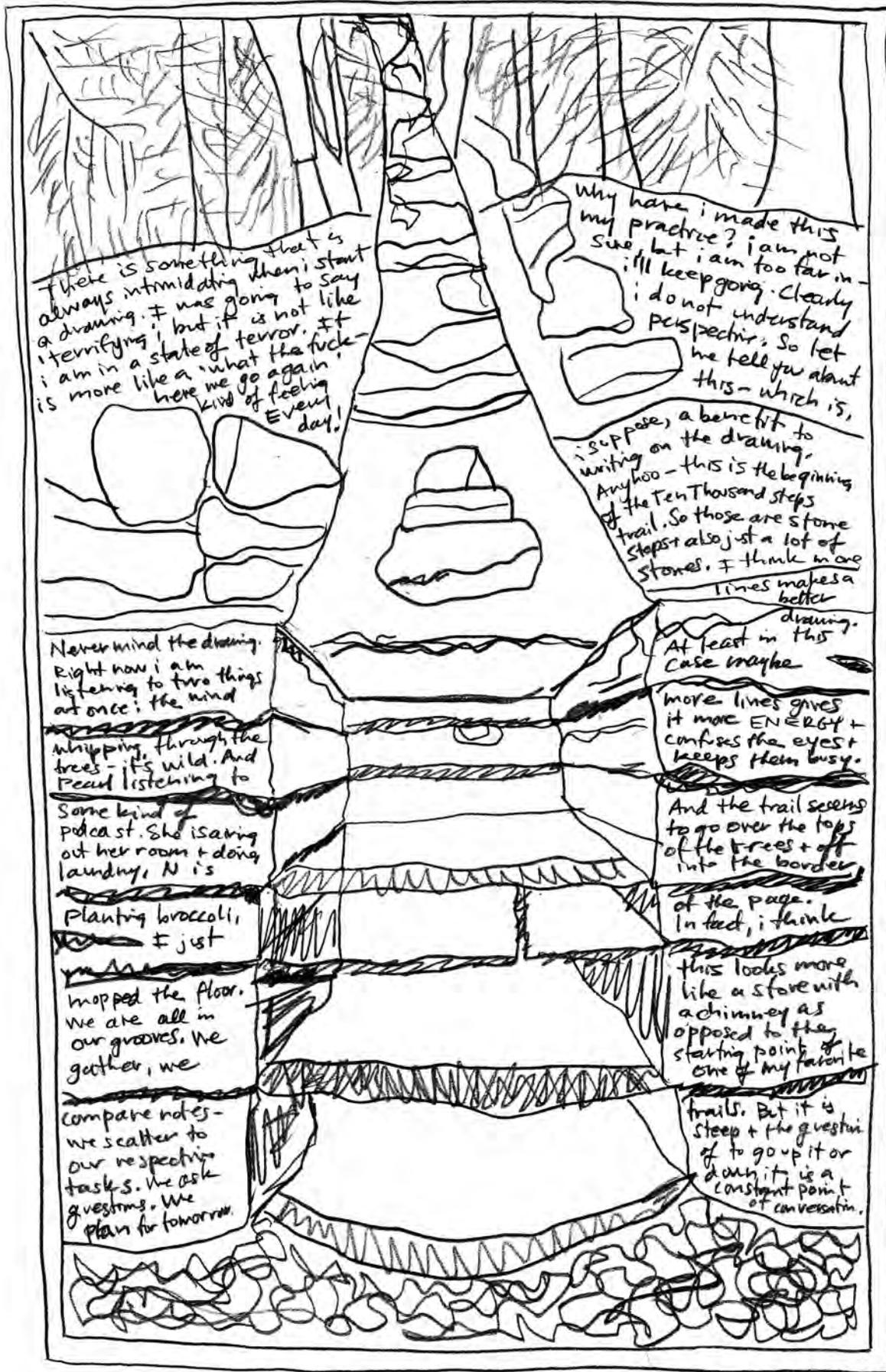


We drive to Ramonsburg - our local state
missed two weekends of hiking and
is missing, this park is only 15 minutes
beautiful day there are usually very
since pandemic there are always
confusing and not well marked, so
need directions. All the trails go
mountains. Or straight down
here. => make a thermos of tea + pack
Before we even get to the trailhead
directions. It is fine - they are
we climb up + reach the top some
clementines. Pearl does the lookout +
quiet. I study this tree bark +
continuous line drawing. Mike +
Cople + their beagle hammer their way
look at ("our"). I do not like that
i guess, I do not like that
do not like that
Mike without a mask + I take my
do not like that
I take my nose + mouth over my
they leave. It may not sound
like it in the retelling,
but I am happy.

DAY 13

hammer their way

4/28/20



There is something that is always intimidating when I start a drawing. It was going to say 'terrifying', but it is not like I am in a state of terror. It is more like a 'what the fuck - here we go again' kind of feeling. Every day!

Why have I made this my practice? I am not sure but I am too far in. I'll keep going. Clearly I do not understand perspective. So let me tell you about this - which is, I suppose, a benefit to writing on the drawing. Anyhoo - this is the beginning of the Ten Thousand Steps trail. So those are stone steps - also just a lot of stones. I think more lines makes a better drawing.

Never mind the drawing. Right now I am listening to two things at once: the wind

whipping through the trees - it's wild. And Pearl listening to

Some kind of podcast. She is sitting out her room + doing laundry. N is

Planting broccoli, I just

mopped the floor. We are all in our grooves. Together, we

compare notes - we scatter to our respective tasks. We ask questions. We plan for tomorrow.

At least in this case maybe

more lines gives it more ENERGY + confuses the eyes + keeps them busy.

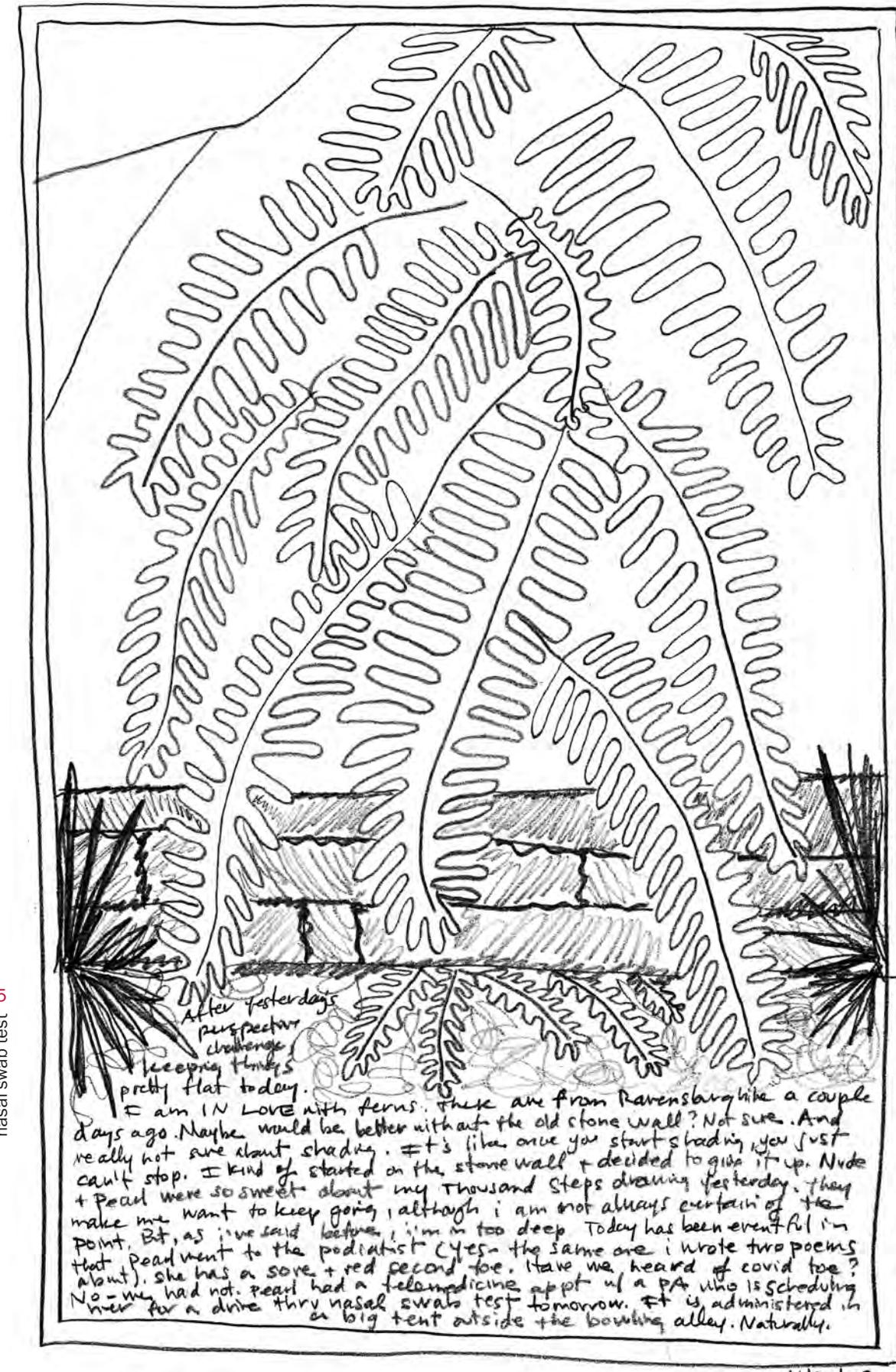
And the trail seems to go over the tops of the trees + off into the border of the page. In fact, I think

this looks more like a stove with a chimney as opposed to the starting point of one of my favorite

trails. But it is steep + the question of to go up it or down it is a constant point of conversation.

4/29/20

DAY 14
our respective tasks



After yesterday's perspective challenge, keeping things pretty flat today. I am IN LOVE with ferns. These are from Ravensburg like a couple days ago. Maybe would be better without the old stone wall? Not sure. And really not sure about shading. It's like, once you start shading, you just can't stop. I kind of started on the stone wall + decided to give it up. N + Pearl were so sweet about my Thousand Steps drawing yesterday. They make me want to keep going, although I am not always certain of the point. But, as I've said before, I'm in too deep. Today has been eventful in that Pearl went to the podiatrist (yes - the same one I wrote two poems about). She has a sore + red second toe. Have we heard of covid toe? No - we had not. Pearl had a telemedicine appt w/ a PA who is scheduling her for a drive thru nasal swab test tomorrow. It is administered in a big tent outside the bowling alley. Naturally.

DAY 15
nasal swab test

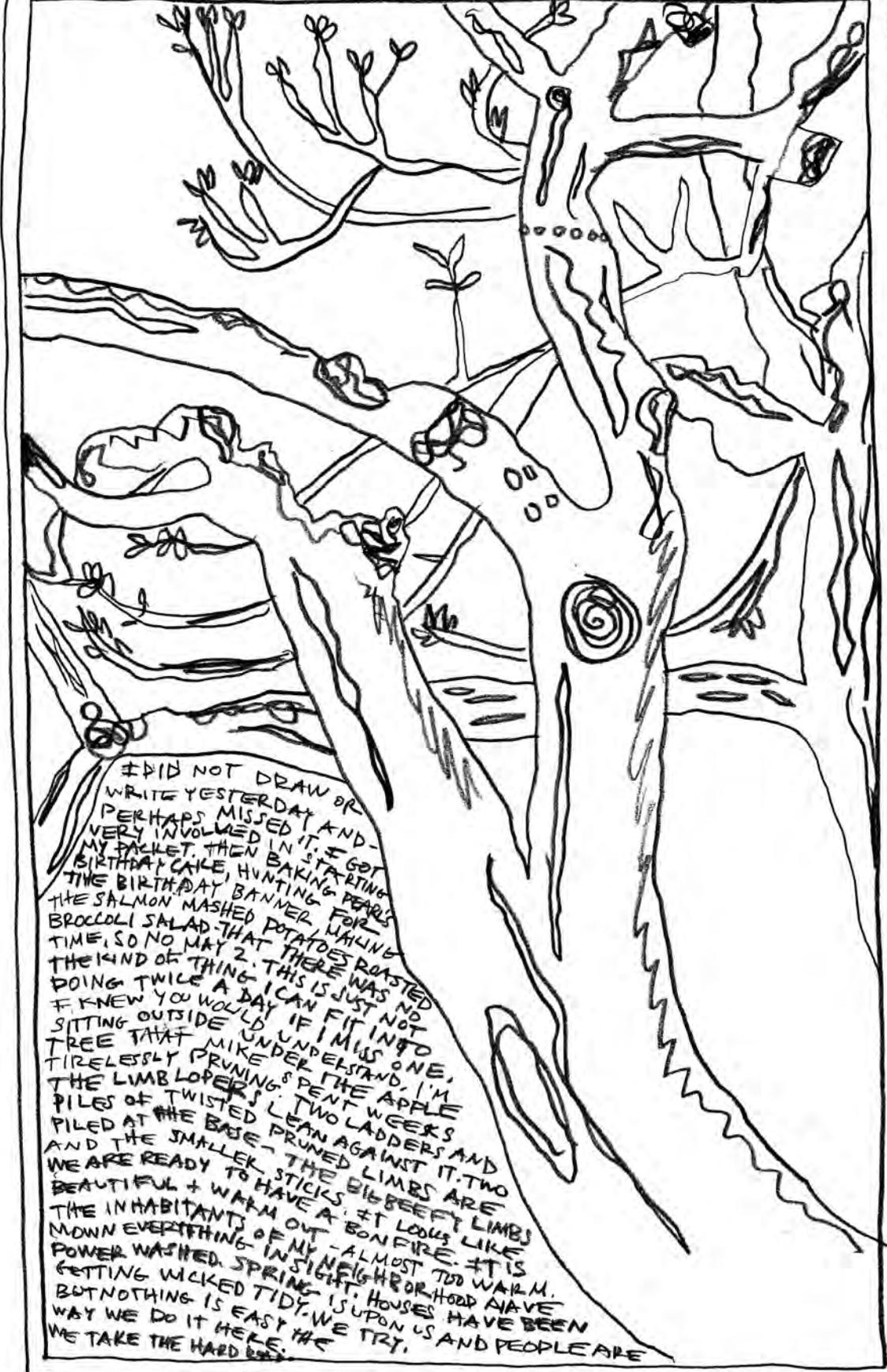
4/30/20

Can I tell you about my stomach? I don't mean the organ my stomach, I mean my belly. Now I'm not even sure I want to tell you about it. Sometimes I really do not like my stomach, and in these days of covid I think about my stomach more and more. Maybe it is sticking out more. Maybe I am eating too much? I try to remember that it is the center of creativity and symbolizes fertility, womanhood! And I get mad at myself for thinking about this one part of me that is never right. Never as it should be. It is too much. If I sit up straight, it is sometimes better. If my shirt does not ride up over it, exposing my belly, that is better. Will my work trousers still fit? Will my ass and stomach, working in opposing, expansive directions, foil me? Last night Pearl read to me extensively about the theory of arveyda as I drew. It was really interesting and then she gave me a quiz to help determine my dosha. At this point, I was cooking dinner as Pearl peppered me with questions, causing me to reflect on the shape of my nose, the condition of my skin, the state of my lips. I had to peer at my belly button for one of the questions. Am I thin or medium? Am I a normal weight? I would say on the thinner side, I am normal weight. The belly button is normal. To say these things out loud was good. We laughed at the selection of I can't really say if my chin is pointed or rounded. Or dreams involve snow and romance. Pearl tilted every cup + declared I am pitta/kaffa - Same as her. We are the same. I look at her + love the fact that she is comfortable in her own skin. And she astounds + confounds me every day. And my stomach is fine. It's just a stomach.



5/1/20

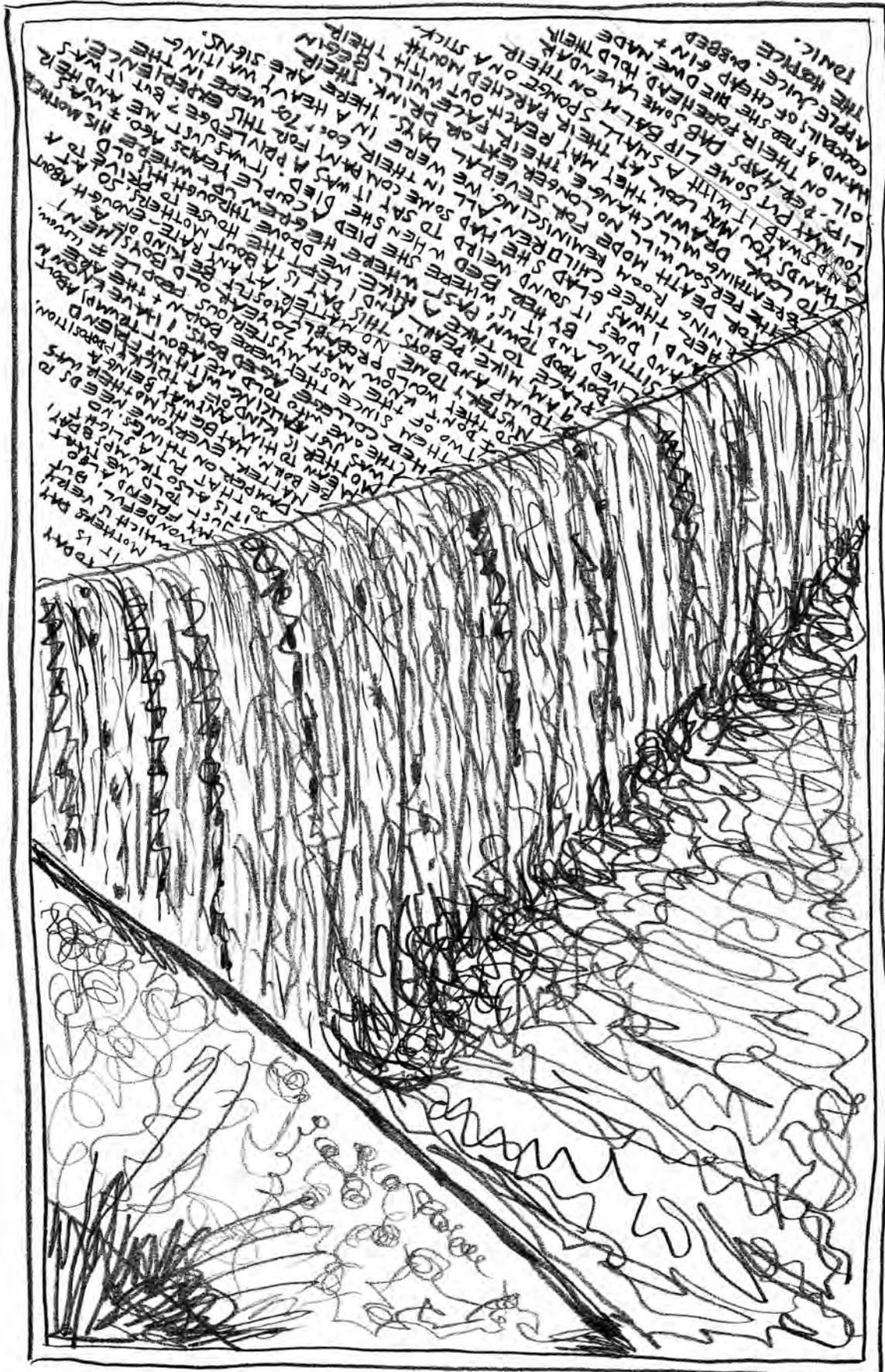
DAY 16
opposing expansive directions



I DID NOT DRAW OR WRITE YESTERDAY OR PERHAPS MISSED AND VERY INVOLVED IN MY BIRTHDAY HUNTING & BAKING PEARLS THE SALMON MASHED BROCCOLI SALAD THAT TIME, SO NO MAY 2. THERE WAS DOING TWICE A DAY. THIS IS JUST NO SITTING OUTSIDE IF I MISS ONE, TREE THAT MIKE UNDERSTAND, I'M TIRELESSLY PRUNING. THE LIMB LOPEERS, I'M PILES OF TWISTED L TWO WEEKS AND THE SMALLER PRUNED AGAINST IT. TWO WE ARE READY TO HAVE A. THE BIG BEEFY LIMBS BEAUTIFUL + WARM. IT LOOKS LIKE DOWN EVERYTHING OF MY - ALMOST TOO WARM. POWER WASHED. SPRING IS UPON US AND PEOPLE ARE GETTING WICKED TIDY. WE TAKE THE HARD WAY WE DO IT HERE. WE TRY.

DAY 17
getting wicked tidy

5/3/26



5/10/20

DAY 24

breathing will change

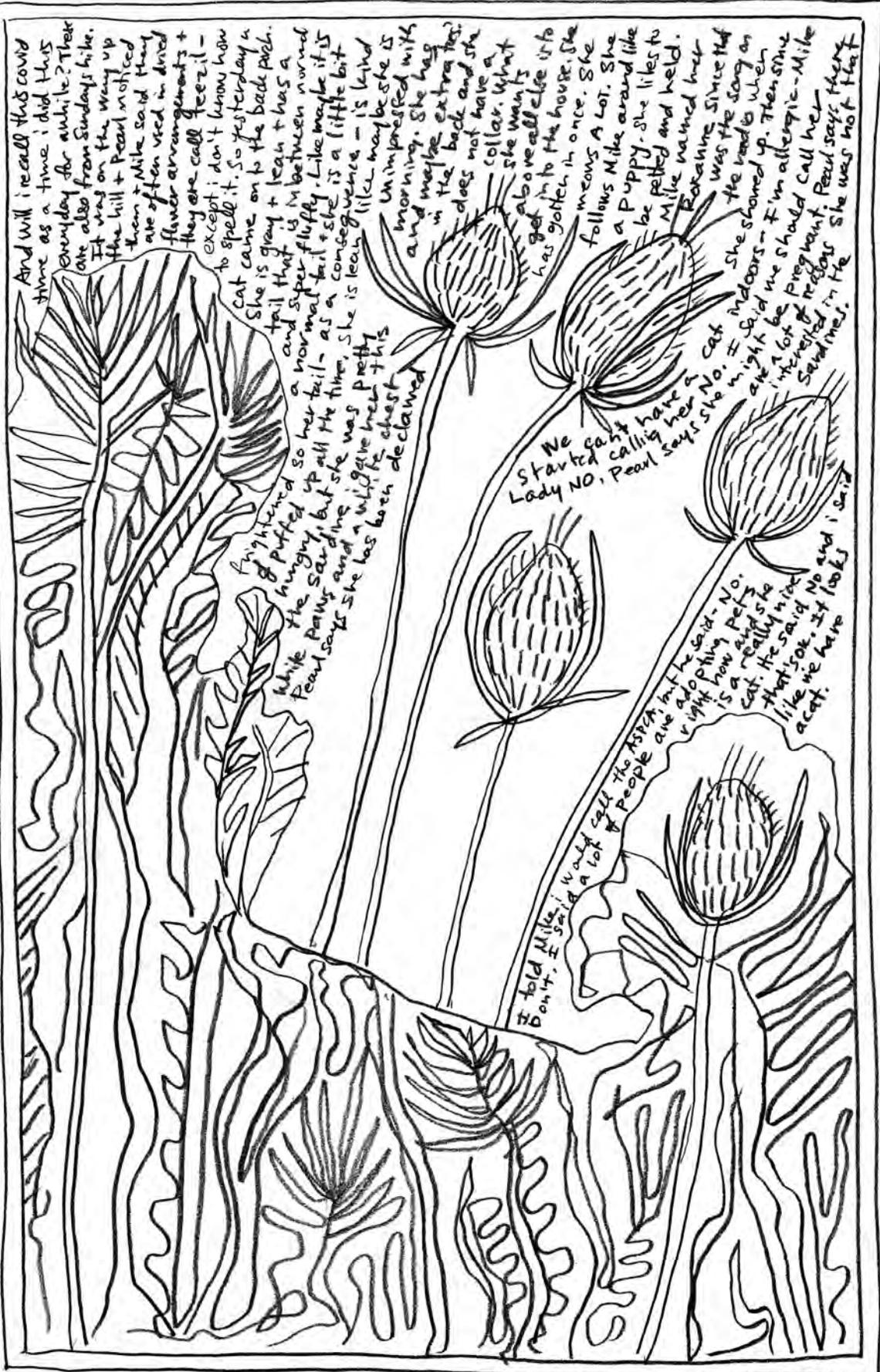


5/11/20

DAY 25

scout master's house

We walked up to the dam. used to come when I was a boy. In the stream we passed is where I learned to swim. No my bikes up here after school and fish rode a twenty inch stream. Yes, I would just come here anywhere on the brook tract. No, you're not permitted to swim in the dam. No, you're not allowed to swim in the dam either. The water is really cold, but that's not the reason. My friends and I would wade out to the island above the second dam and fish and hang out for whole days. Do you see that big field? That's where my friends and I watched them blow up the Neelbhatam Bridge. The old bridge. I could walk through that field to get to my old Scout master's house. When he had his wife come over and take care of me. Tropical fish and take care of me over there? That's Roundtop. You and I have been in there. See that mountain? That's Roundtop. I can see where I grew up.



And will i recall this covid
 time as a time i did this
 everyday for awhile? These
 are also from Sundays hike.
 It was on the way up
 the hill + Pearl noticed
 them. Mike said they
 are often used in dried
 flower arrangements +
 they are called teezil -
 except i don't know how
 to spell it. So yesterday a
 cat came on to the back porch.
 She is gray + lean + has a
 tail that is in between normal
 and super fluffy. Like maybe it's
 a normal tail + she is a little bit
 fluffy. She is lean - is kind
 of unimpressed with
 morning. She has
 a white patch on the back of her
 head. She does not have a
 collar. What
 she wants
 to get in to the house. She
 has gotten in once. She
 means A lot. She
 follows Mike around like
 a puppy. She likes to
 be petted and held.
 Mike named her
 Poraine. Since that
 was the song on
 the radio when
 she showed up. Then she
 said we should call her
 a lot of pregnant - Mike
 said we should call her
 pregnant. Pearl says they
 were in the house. She was not that

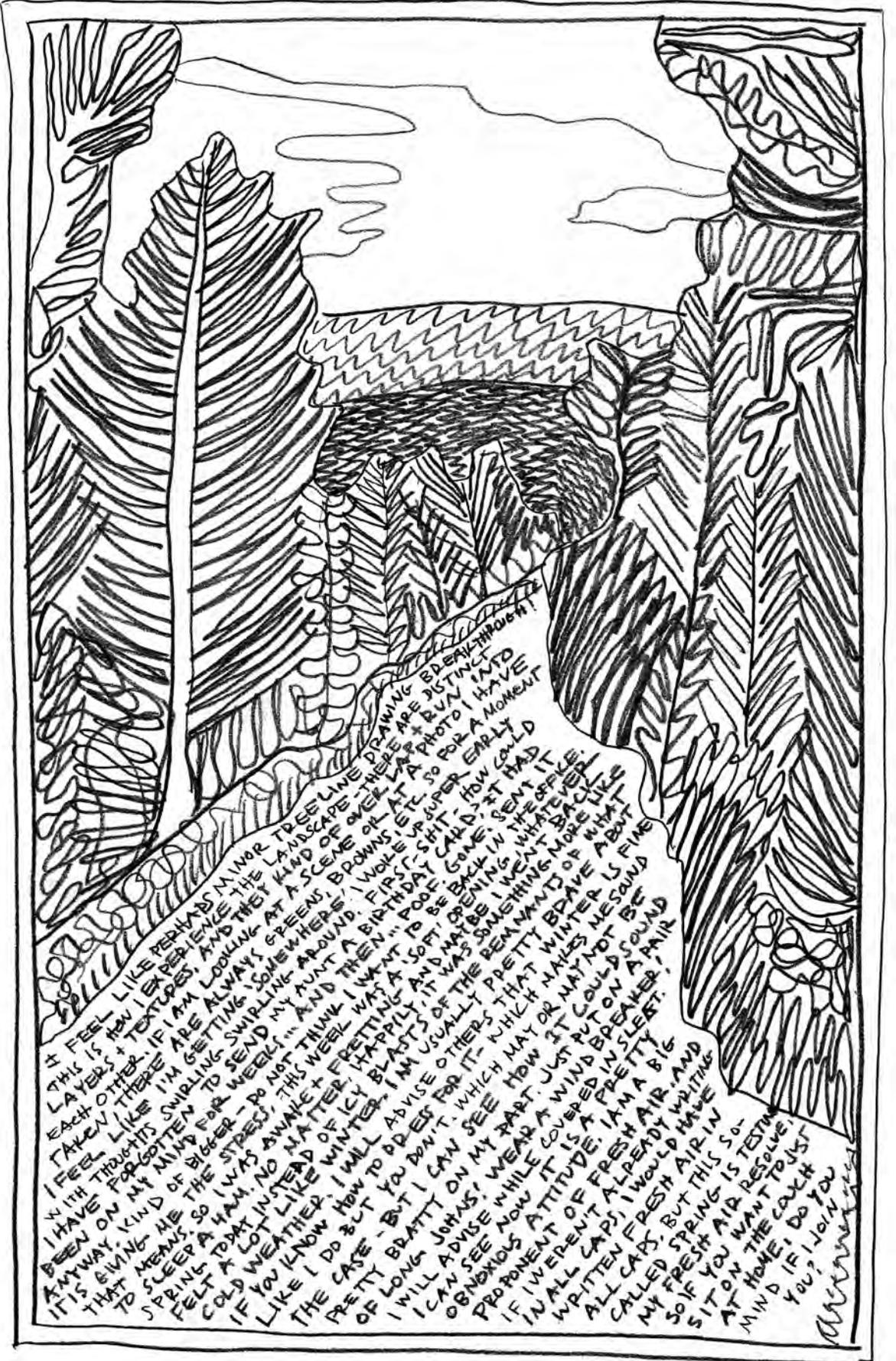
Angry because
 she puffed up
 a normal tail - as a consequence
 she is lean. She is lean
 and maybe extra fat?
 she does not have a
 collar. What
 she wants
 to get in to the house. She
 has gotten in once. She
 means A lot. She
 follows Mike around like
 a puppy. She likes to
 be petted and held.
 Mike named her
 Poraine. Since that
 was the song on
 the radio when
 she showed up. Then she
 said we should call her
 a lot of pregnant - Mike
 said we should call her
 pregnant. Pearl says they
 were in the house. She was not that

We can't have
 Lady NO, Pearl says she
 No. Cat
 she said the song on
 the radio when
 she showed up. Then she
 said we should call her
 a lot of pregnant - Mike
 said we should call her
 pregnant. Pearl says they
 were in the house. She was not that

He told Mike, I said a lot
 of people
 call the
 people
 are
 adopting
 a really
 nice
 cat. He
 said
 that's
 not
 like
 we
 have
 a cat.

5/12/20

DAY 26
 might be pregnant

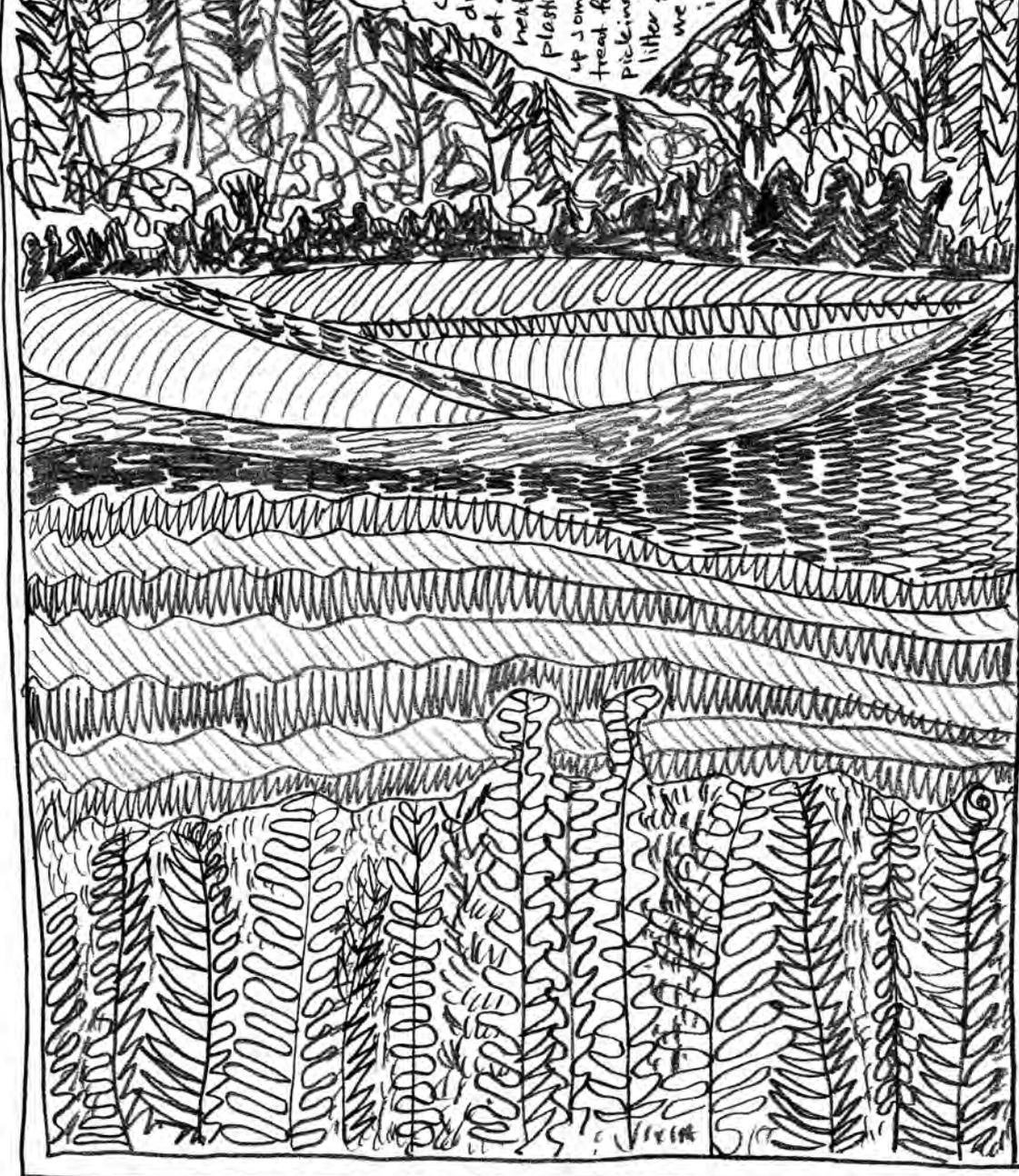


I FEEL LIKE PERHAPS MINOR TREE LINE DRAWING IDEAS THROUGH
 THIS IS HOW I EXPERIENCE THE LANDSCAPE. THERE ARE JUSTICE
 LAYERS + TEXTURES. AND THEY ARE ALWAYS GREEN. BROWN. OR AT A PHOTO I HAVE
 EACH OTHER IF I AM LOOKING AT A SCENE OF A BIRTHDAY PARTY. HOW COULD
 TAKEN LIKE I'M GETTING SOMEWHERE. I WAKE UP SUPER EARLY
 WITH TRAFFIC SWIRLING AROUND. AND THEN I WANT TO BE BACK IN THE SEASIDE.
 I HAVE FORGOTTEN TO SEND MY BIRTHDAY CARD. IT WAS BEING IN THE SEASIDE.
 THAT MEANS SO I WAS AWAKE + FRETTER. HAPPILY AND MATE. I WENT BACK
 FELT A LOT LIKE WINTER. I AM USUALLY PRETTY BRAVE ABOUT
 IF YOU KNOW HOW TO ASK FOR IT - WHICH MAKES ME SOUND
 THE CASE - BUT YOU DON'T. WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT BE
 PRETTY BRATTY ON MY PART. JUST PUT ON A SOUND
 OF LONG JONAS. WEAR A WIND BREAKER. I AM A BIG
 I CAN ADVISE WHILE COVERED IN SLEET.
 OBNOXIOUS ATTITUDE. I AM A PRETTY
 IF I WERE NOW IT IS A PRETTY
 WRITTEN FRESH AIR. I AM A BIG
 ALL CAPS. I WOULD HAVE
 CALLED FRESH AIR. I AM A BIG
 MY FRESH AIR. I WOULD HAVE
 SO IF YOU WANT TO JUST
 SIT ON THE COUCH
 AT HOME. I DO YOU
 MIND IF I JOIN YOU
 YOU? JOIN YOU

DAY 27
 pretty obnoxious attitude

5/13/20

Paul + I walked at 10am today + saw many unusual things. It was a busy bustling place. Tiny Amish girls, toddlers, we talked with the township maintenance guy, Paul, about the local road sweeping activities. We talked about the condition of the road (good). If asked if there were plans to pave it, No. (good), then two Amish women gardening, talking in PA Dutch, six Amish men + boys filling plastic over a greenhouse. Paul talked about Zen Buddhism + Tibetan Buddhism. We turned the corner and saw a balloon in the distance. It was tied to the scooter of a small child. An older man walked next to the child. He was carrying a plastic bag + I assumed he had picked up something from our only store. Maybe a treat for his grandson? But no, he was picking up cigarette butts + litter with a litter grabber. We talked about litter + how we sometimes pick up litter too. (I wish I had a litter grabber). I thanked him for picking up litter. Then there were small calves, lambs + a kitten. More Amish women working in their yards. A garbage truck went by driven by a litter woman trash collector in tattered boots. All of this is remarkable since I walk this route a lot + frequently nothing of note happens.



5/14/20

DAY 28

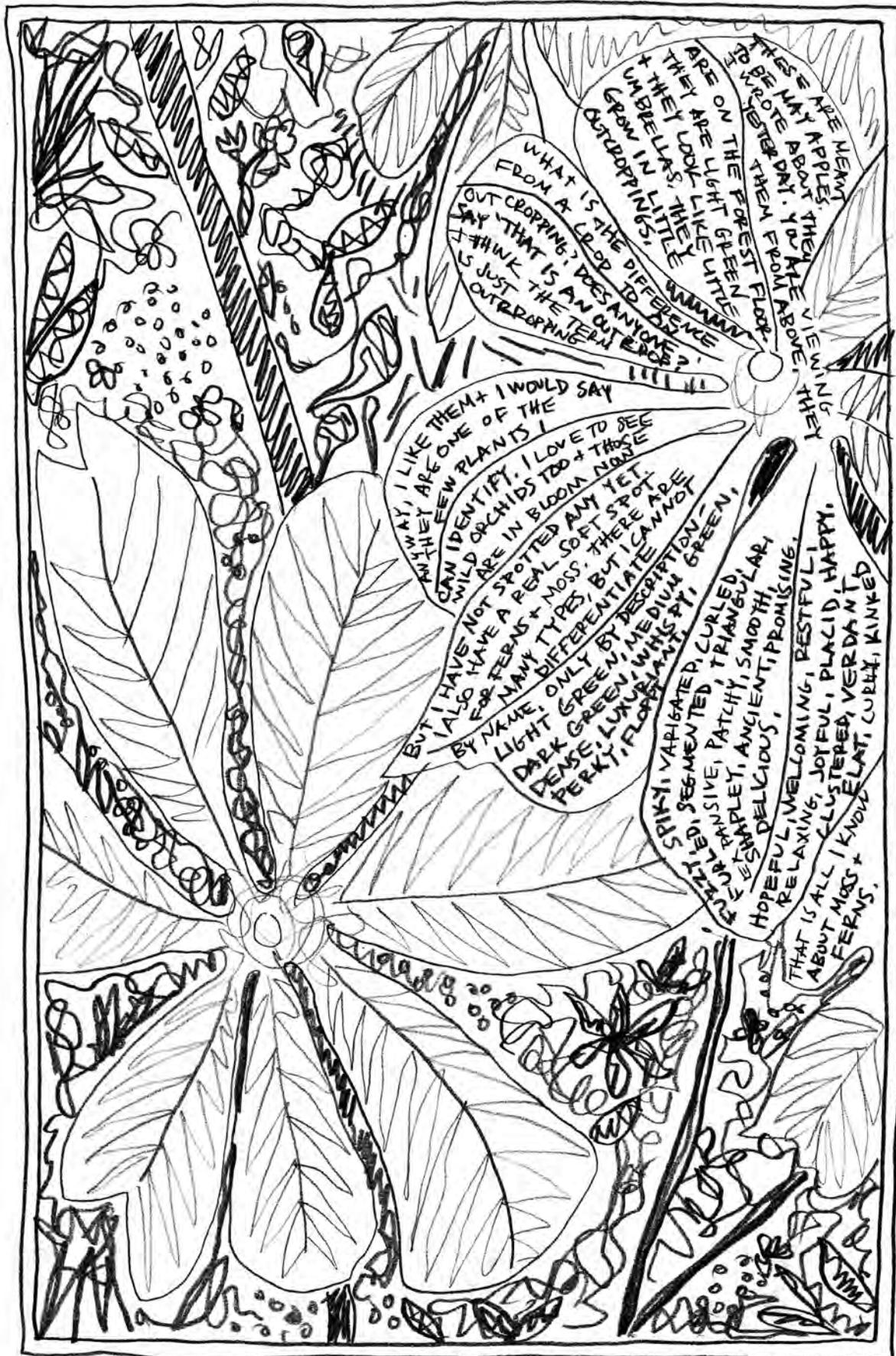
in tasseled boots

DAY 29

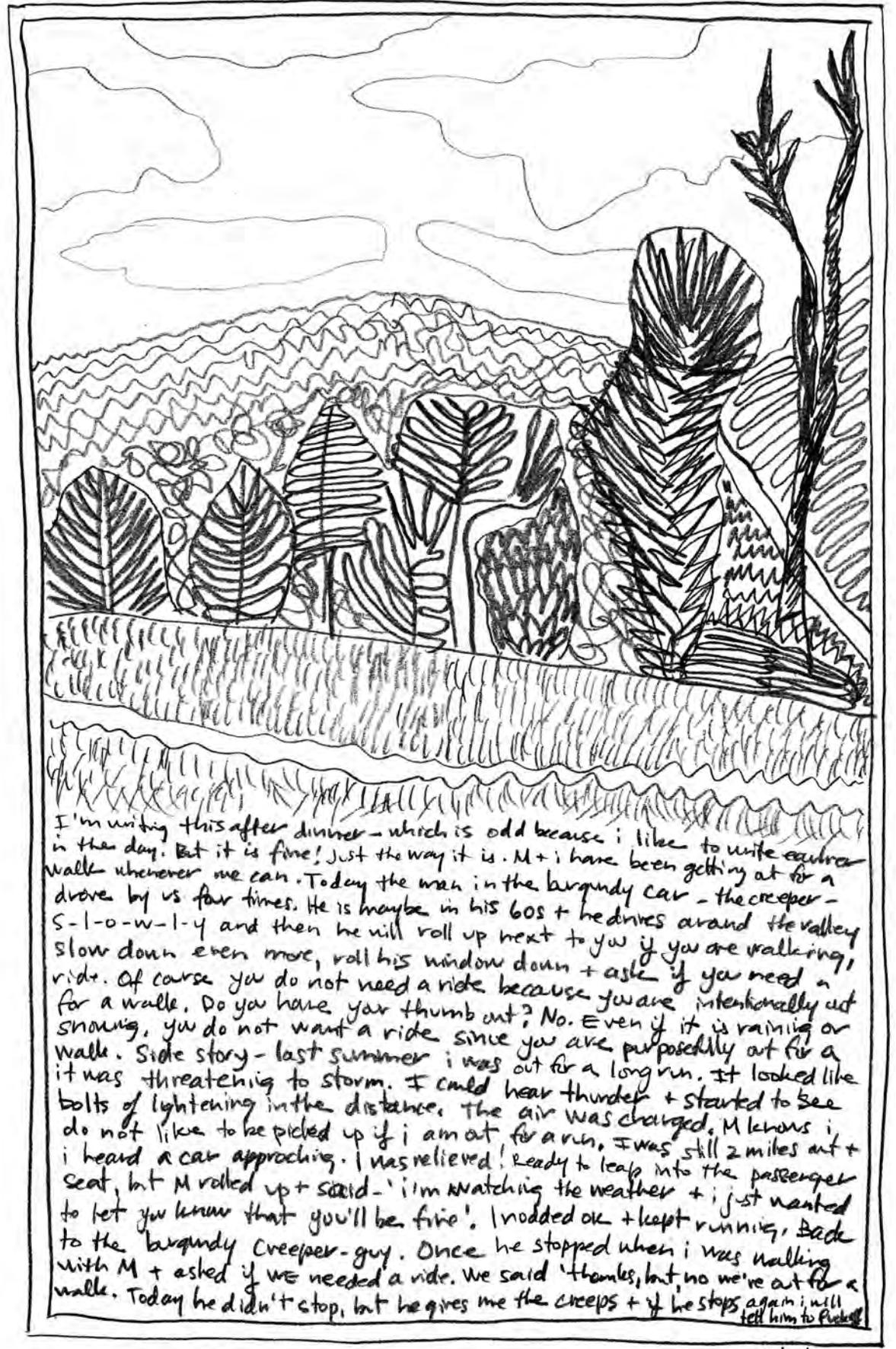
make some sacrifices



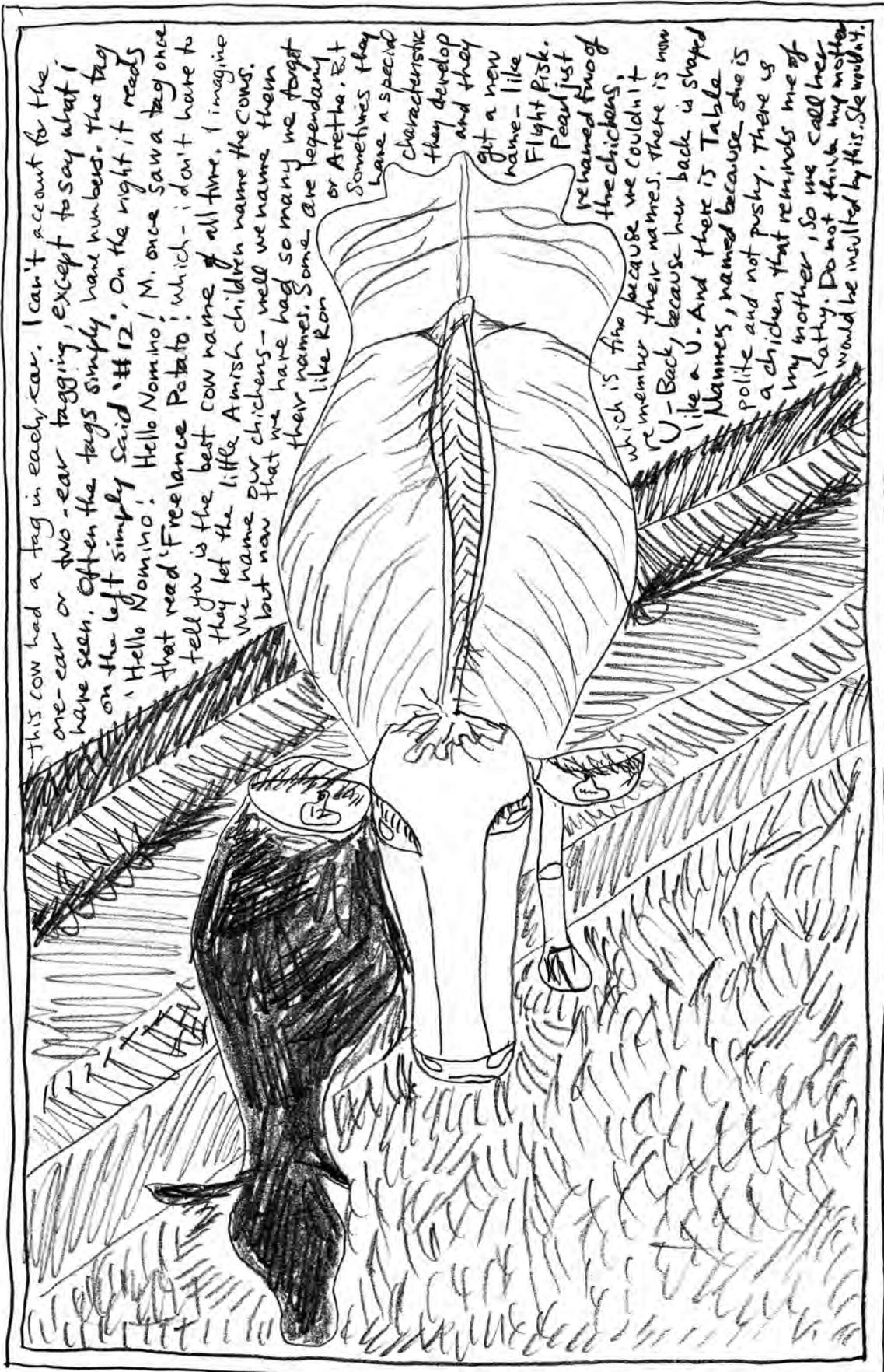
5/15/20



DAY 32
real soft spot



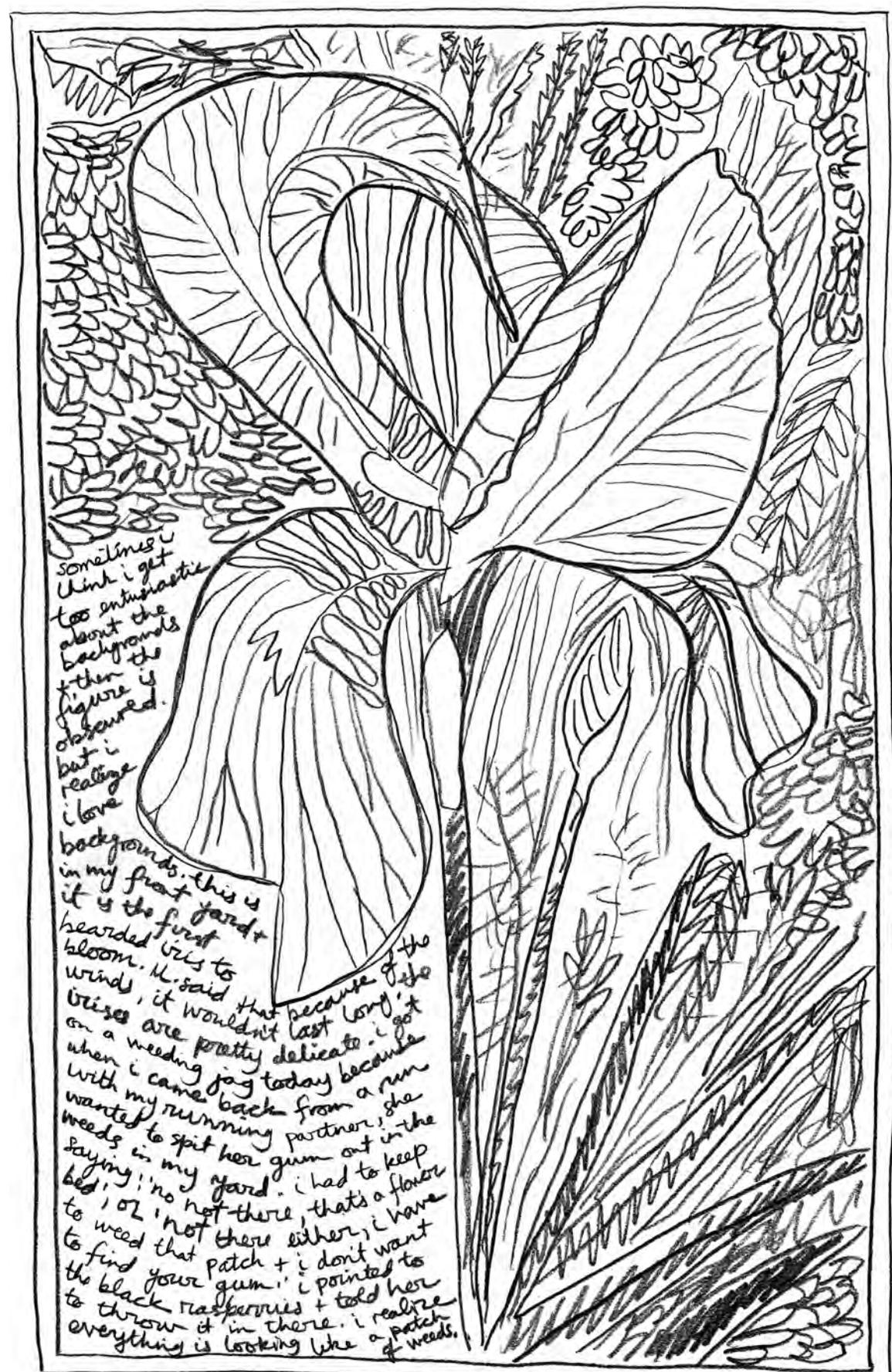
DAY 33
burgundy creeper guy



This cow had a tag in each ear. I can't account for the one-ear or two-ear tagging, except to say what I have seen. Often the tags simply have numbers. The tag on the left simply said '#12'. On the right it reads 'Hello Nomino! Hello Nomino! M. once saw a tag once that read 'Freelance Potato'; which - I don't have to tell you is the best cow name of all time. I imagine they let the little Amish children name the cows. We name our chickens - well we name them but now that we have had so many we forget their names. Some are legendary like Ron or Aretha. But sometimes they have a special characteristic they develop and they get a new name - like Flight Risk. Pearl just re-named two of the chickens, which is fine because we couldn't remember their names. There is now U-Back, because her back is shaped like a U. And there is Table Manner, named because she is polite and not pushy. There is a chicken that reminds me of my mother, so we call her Kathy. Do not think my mother would be insulted by this. She wouldn't.

5/26/20

DAY 40
like flight risk



Sometimes I think I get too enthusiastic about the backgrounds & then the figure is obscured. but I realize I love backgrounds. this is in my front yard & it is the first hearded iris to bloom. M. said that because of the winds, it wouldn't last long. irises are pretty delicate. I got on a wedding today because when I came back from a run with my running partner, she wanted to spit her gum out in the weeds in my yard. I had to keep bed! or not there, that's a flower to weed that patch + I don't want to find your gum. I pointed to the black raspberries + told her to throw it in there. I realize everything is looking like a patch of weeds.

DAY 41
I love backgrounds

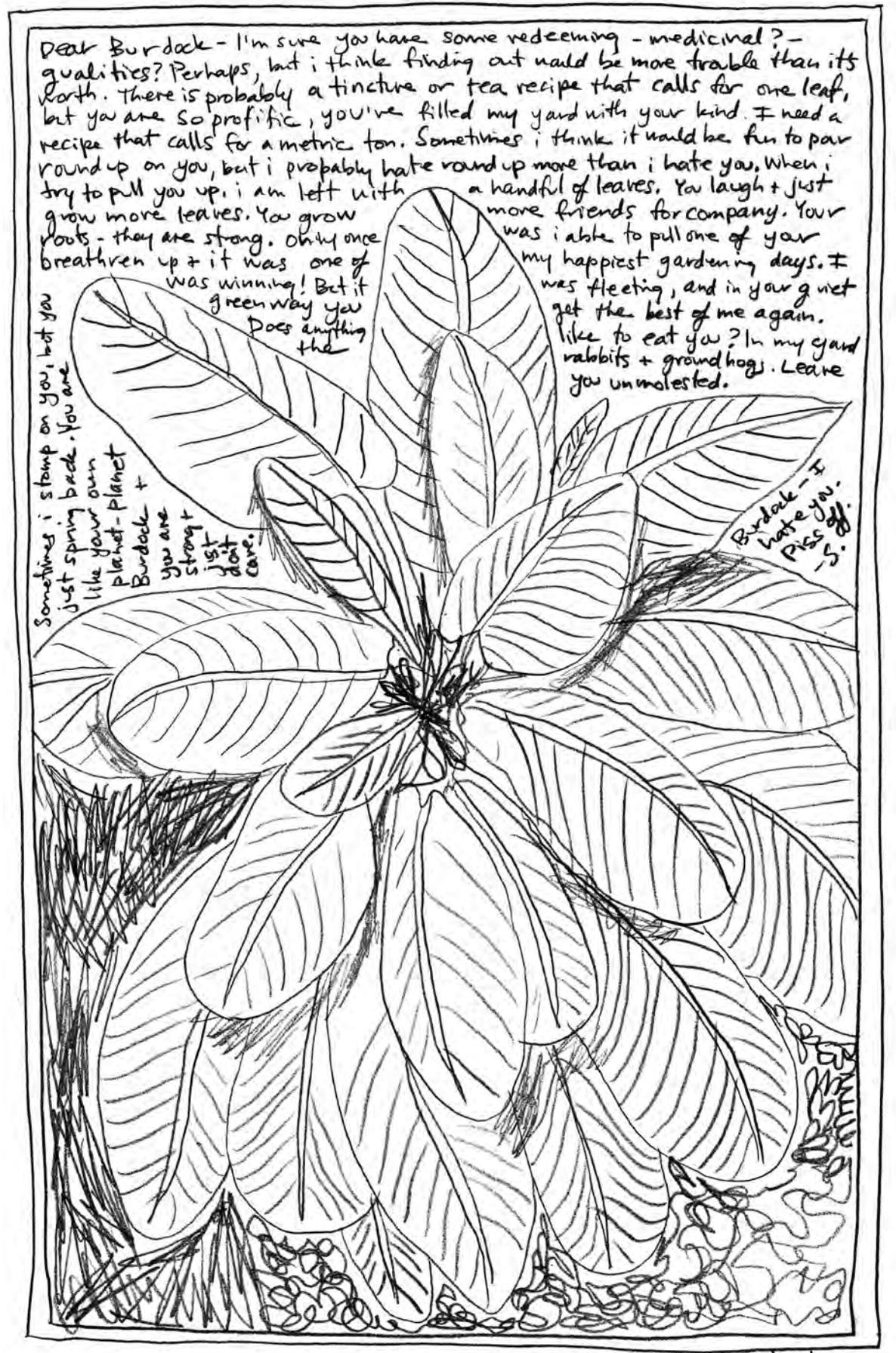
5/27/20



I CAN TELL MY NEIGHBORS HAVE PEOPLE OVER - MAYBE HIS NOT SCREAMING AT HIS PARENTS THE DAD HAS TWO SONS HE'S TAKEN AN ALMOST PLEASANT TONE BECAUSE WE CALL HIM 'THE E' BECAUSE THAT IS HIS FIRST INITIAL AND IT IS CARVED IN A STUMP IN HIS FRONT YARD. TO BE CLEAR - THE STUMP HAS ACTUALLY BEEN CHAINSAWED INTO A 3 DIMENSIONAL LETTER E. I KIND OF LIKE IT. ANYWAY, HE FOR SURE HAS ANGER ISSUES. OVER THE WEEKEND HE SCREAMED SO LOUD THAT N. COULD HEAR HIM IN THE BACKYARD. MY DESK IS ACROSS FROM THEIR DRIVEWAY SO I PEEKED OUT TO SEE WHAT KIND OF CRIMES THE CHILDREN WERE COMMITTING, BUT THEY WERE JUST DANCING AROUND IN THE PAIN LIKE THE COULD CARE LESS. MAYBE IT WAS THE PAIN LIKE THE PAIN DANCING THAT WAS THE PROBLEM. I'M NOT SURE, BUT I DID KIND OF WANT TO ASK 'DO YOU LIKE BEING A FATHER?' MAYBE THAT SOUNDS SCARCASTIC, BUT I REALLY AM CURIOUS. I MEAN, BEING A PARENT CAN BE A REAL NOTHING GOOD CAN COME FROM IT, ANYWAY, HE'S NOT SCREAMING NOW BECAUSE OTHER PEOPLE ARE OVER. I ONLY KNOW A COUPLE OTHER THINGS ABOUT HIM - HE REALLY LIKES TO WASH THINGS - ESPECIALLY HIS TRUCK WHICH HE DEEP CLEANS EVERY WEEK, HE ALSO LIKES TO POWER WASH HIS HOUSE, AND I'M NOT GONNA LIE - I KIND OF WISH I HAD A POWER WASHER. HE ALSO LIKES TO BLOW LEAVES OFF HIS DRIVEWAY, I DO NOT LIKE LEAF BLOWERS. DO NOT NEED ONE.

5/28/20

DAY 42
like rain dancing



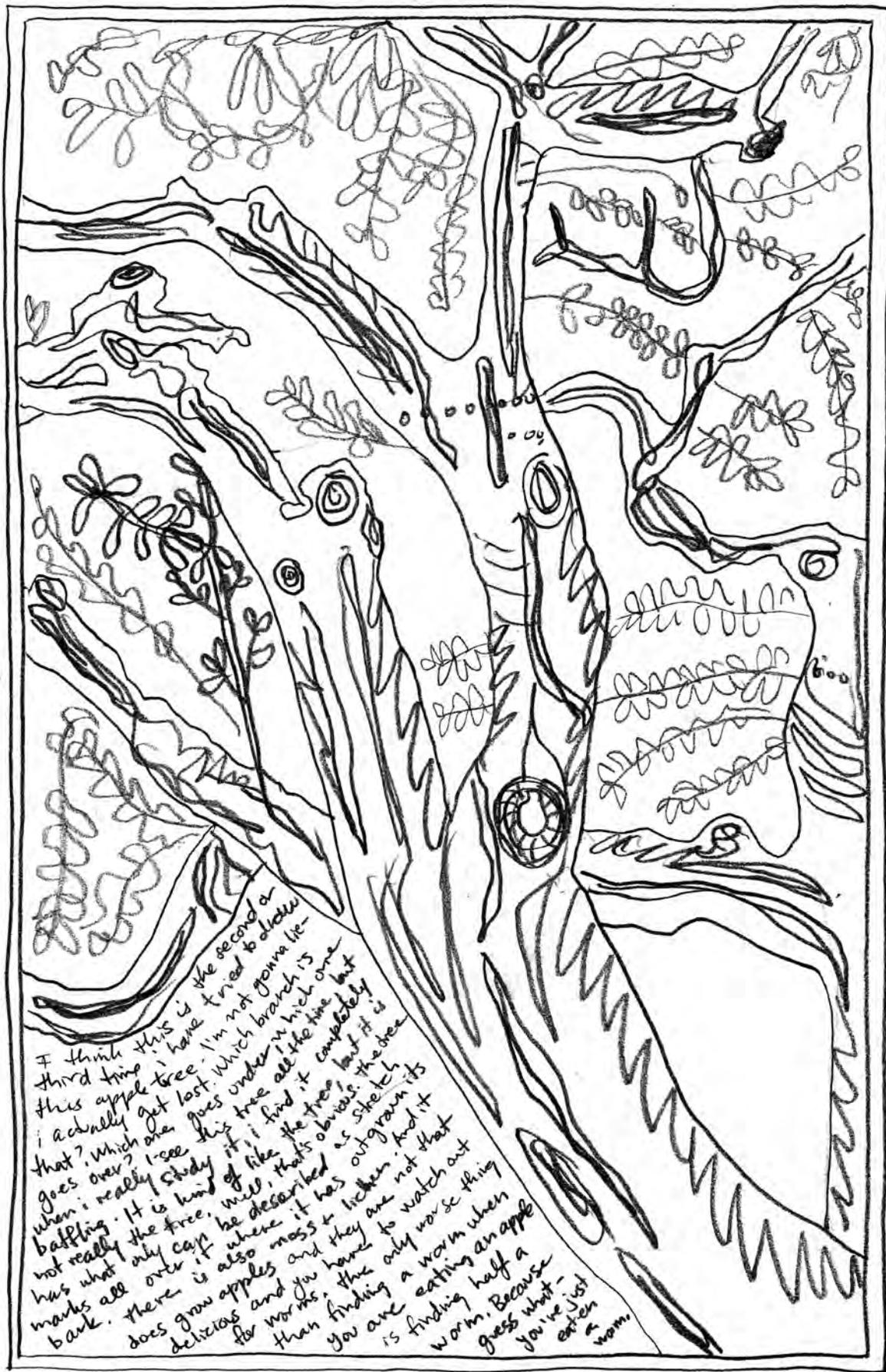
Dear Burdock - I'm sure you have some redeeming - medicinal? - qualities? Perhaps, but I think finding out would be more trouble than its worth. There is probably a tincture or tea recipe that calls for one leaf, but you are so prolific, you've filled my yard with your kind. I need a recipe that calls for a metric ton. Sometimes I think it would be fun to pay round up on you, but I probably hate round up more than I hate you. When I try to pull you up, I am left with a handful of leaves. You laugh + just grow more leaves. You grow more friends for company. Your roots - they are strong. Only once was I able to pull one of your brethren up + it was one of my happiest gardening days. I was winning! But it was fleeting, and in your quiet green way you get the best of me again. Does anything the like to eat you? In my yard rabbits + ground hogs. Leave you unmolested.

Sometimes I stomp on you, but you just spring back. You are like your own planet - Planet Burdock + you are strong + just don't care.

Burdock - I hate you. piss off. -S.

DAY 43
friends for company

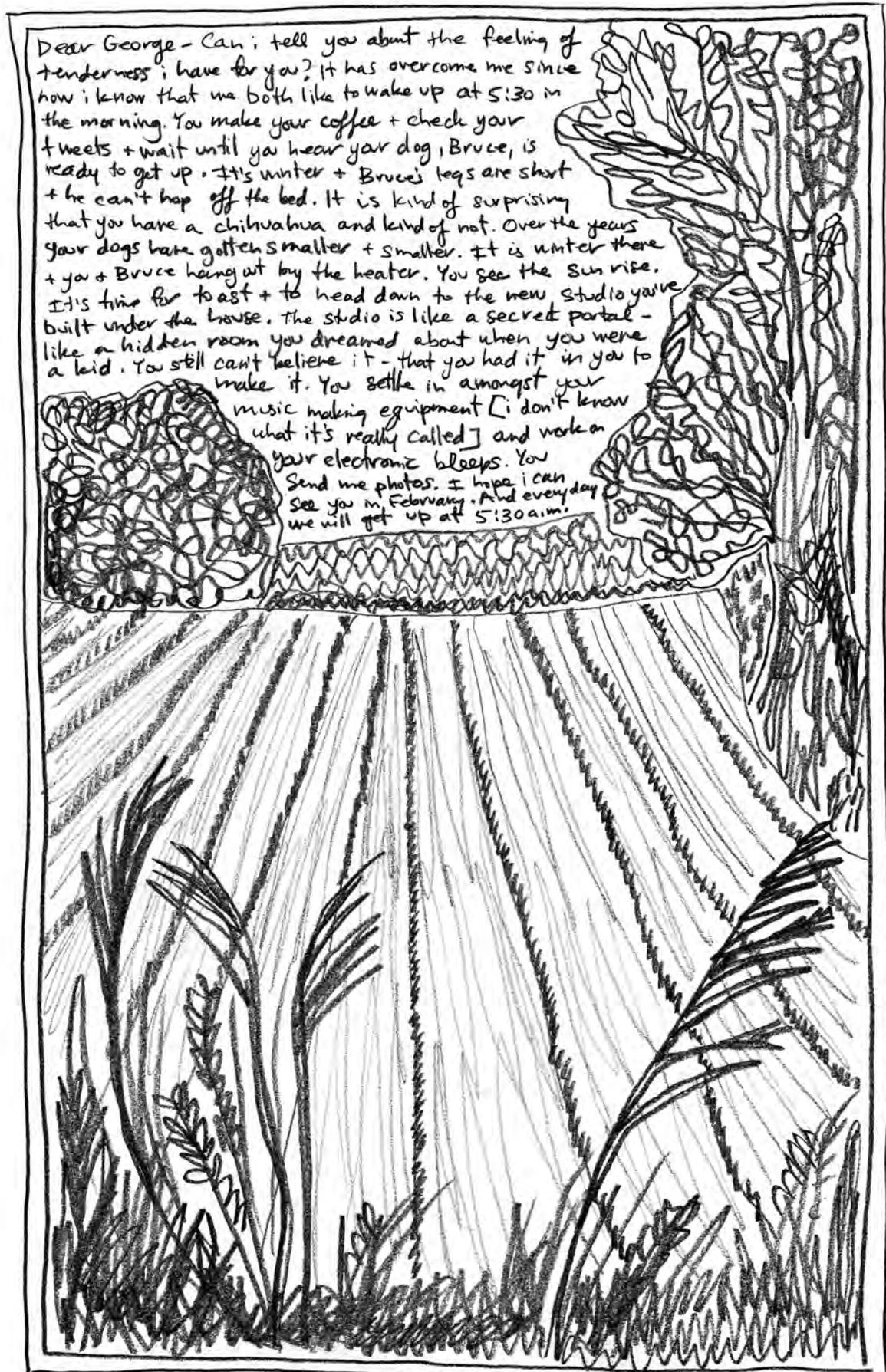
5/29/20



I think this is the second or third time I have tried to identify this apple tree. I'm not gonna lie, I actually got lost. Which branch is that? Which one goes under which one goes over? I see this tree all the time but when I really study it, I find it completely baffling. It is kind of like the tree but it has what only can be described as snake-like marks all over it where it has outgrown its bank. There is also moss & lichen. The tree does grow apples and they are not that delicious and you have to watch out for worms. The only way to watch out is finding a worm when you are eating an apple worm. Because you've just eaten a worm.

6/1/20

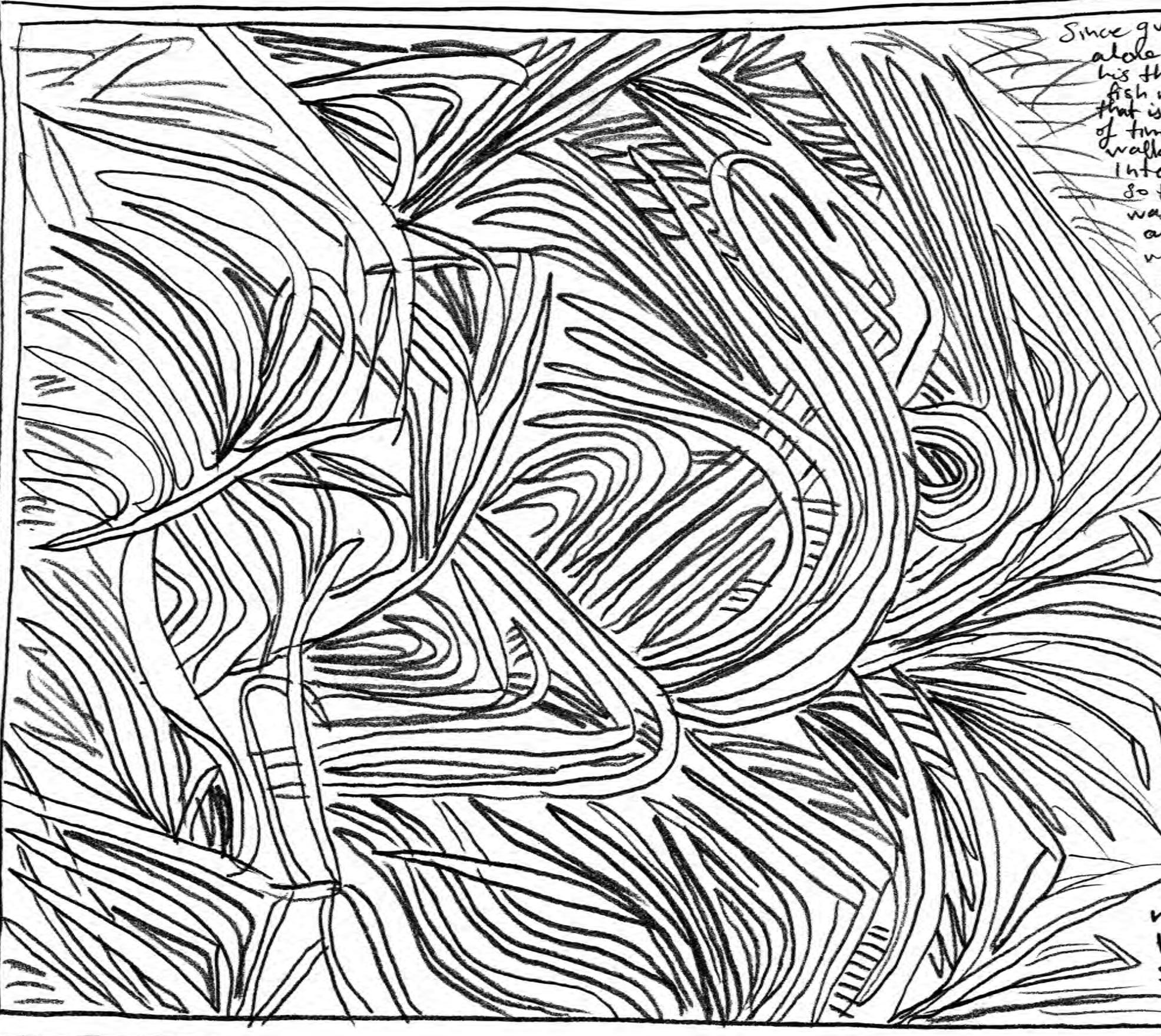
DAY 46
half a worm



Dear George - Can I tell you about the feeling of tenderness I have for you? It has overcome me since now I know that we both like to wake up at 5:30 in the morning. You make your coffee + check your tweets + wait until you hear your dog, Bruce, is ready to get up. It's winter + Bruce's legs are short + he can't hop off the bed. It is kind of surprising that you have a chihuahua and kind of not. Over the years your dogs have gotten smaller + smaller. It is winter there + you + Bruce hang out by the heater. You see the sun rise. It's time for toast + to head down to the new studio you've built under the house. The studio is like a secret portal - like a hidden room you dreamed about when you were a kid. You still can't believe it - that you had it in you to make it. You settle in amongst your music making equipment [I don't know what it's really called] and work on your electronic bleeps. You send me photos. I hope I can see you in February. And everyday we will get up at 5:30 a.m.

DAY 47
feeling of tenderness

6/2/20

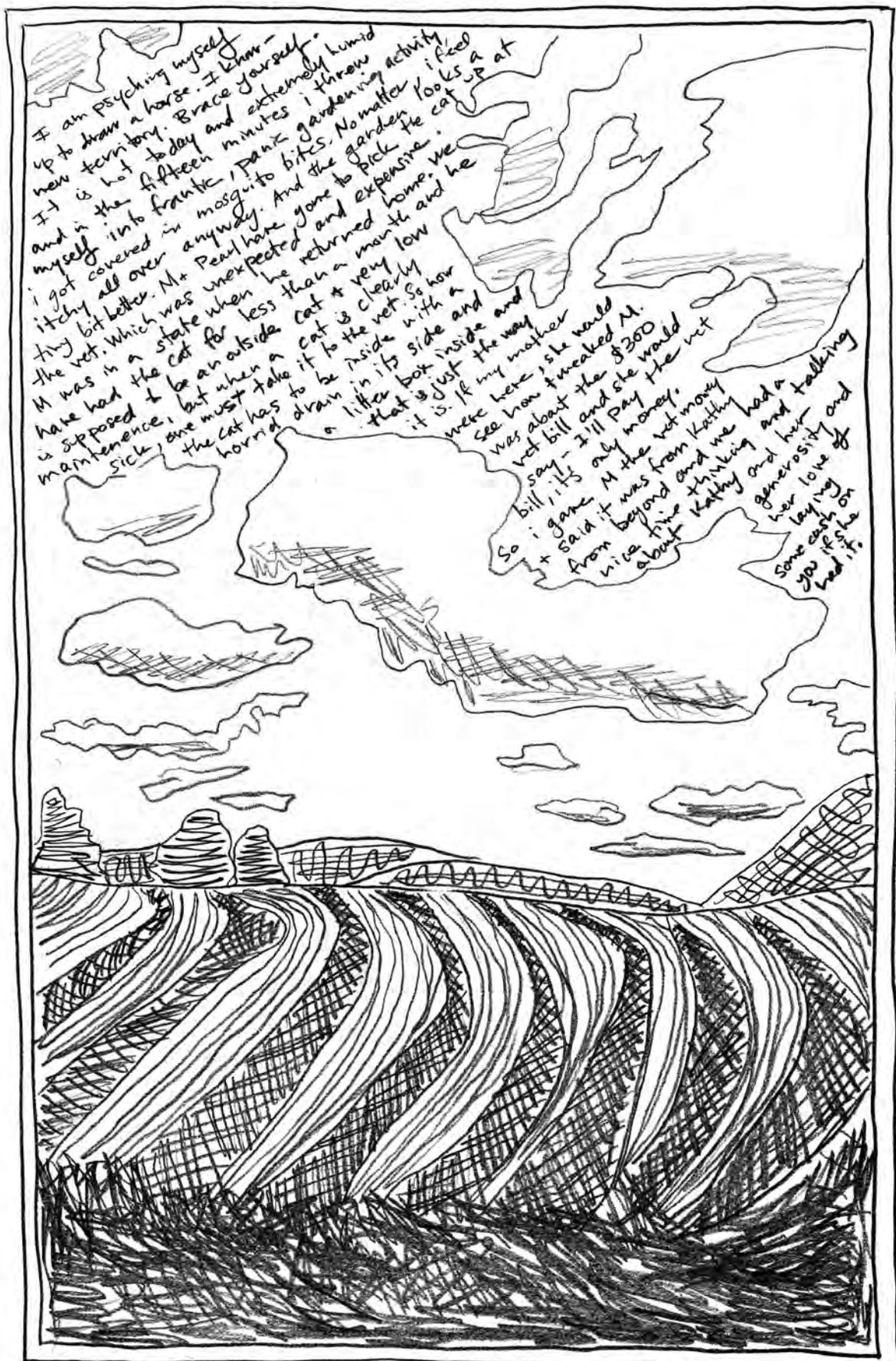


Since quarantine, i'm pretty sure i haven't been alone for the whole day. N. left at 7 am to have his thyroid scanned and then to Pine Creek to fish with his childhood friend for the day. So that is since March 15. I mean there are lots of times when i am inside or outside or walking alone, but never without an intention of being with either N or P. So the day had a different quality and i was in my own head. Doing school work and writing-writing. And i wrote and i wrote. And although i have become captivated with the notion of learning how to write script - specifically italic script, i don't know if the history of script is that compelling, or perhaps in the first draft it is not completely captivating. But the bottom line is that i want to learn italic script + then write that way all the time. But it is a little unsettling - this idea of changing your handwriting, i think i've written this way for a long time. We recognize people by their writing, will no one recognize me in this way? Does it matter? Do i have the discipline to re-learn how to write? It does seem like it would take discipline, which sounds like a dirty word. And something i could immediately fail at doing. For now it is shelved for 'nothing to do after October'. I think i dabbled in italic writing when i was a kid in Australia in the 5th grade. My friends writing did not look like my writing, + i wanted mine to look like theirs, I can't recall if i was successful, but i can say that now i can't really recall their method or my way.

DAY 48

haven't been alone

6/4/20

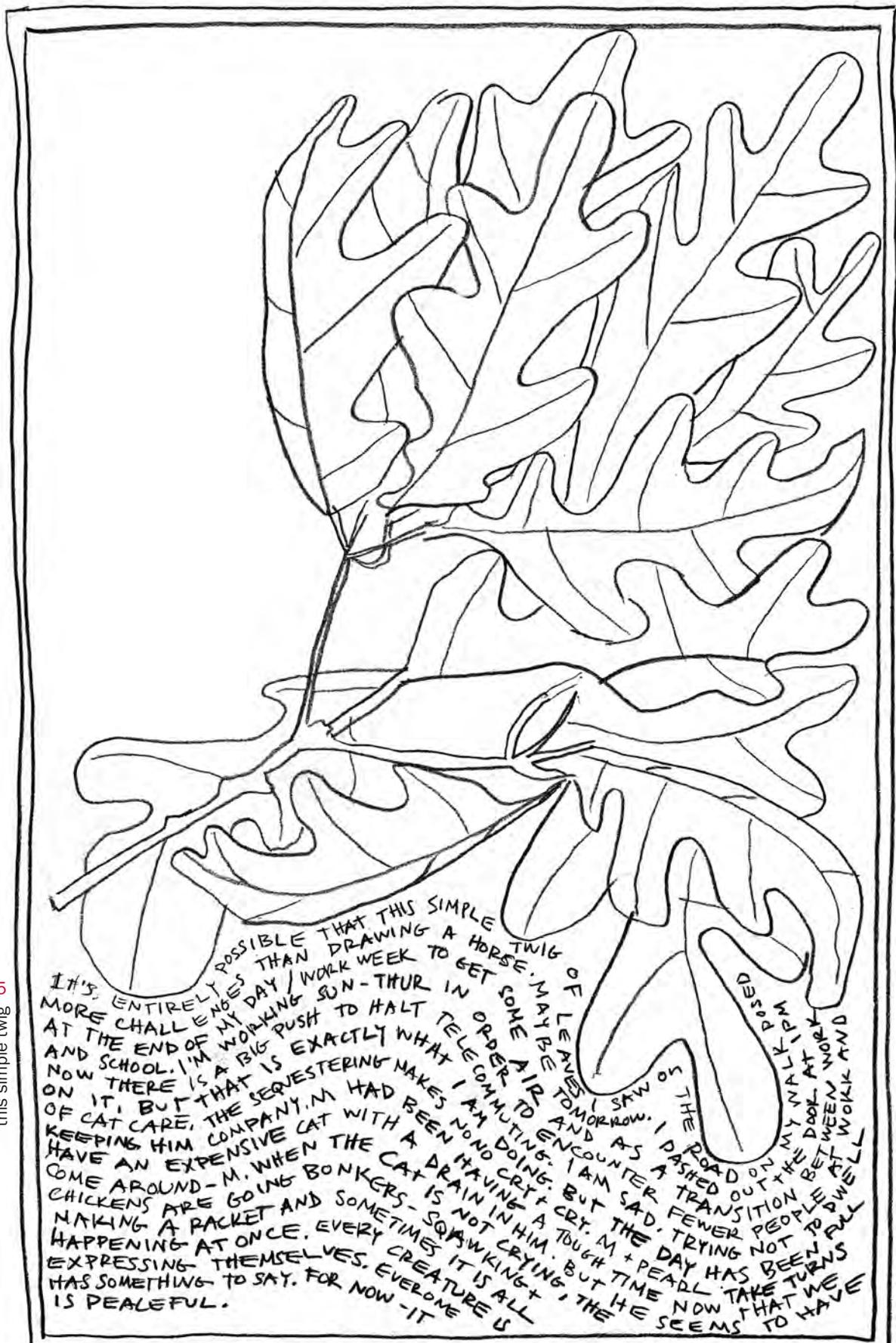


I am psyching myself up to draw a horse. I know - new territory. Brace yourself. It is hot today and extremely humid and in the fifteen minutes I throw myself into frantic, panic gardening activity I got covered in mosquito bites. No matter how I tickle the cat, he looks up at the vet. Which was unexpected and expensive. M was in a state when he returned home, we have had the cat for less than a month and he is supposed to be an outside cat & very low maintenance, but when a cat is clearly sick, one must take it to the vet. So how the cat has to be inside with a litter box inside and that is just the way it is. If my mother were here, she would see how I treated M. So I gave M the \$300 vet bill, it's only money. I said it was from Kathy and she would pay the vet from beyond and we had a nice time thinking and talking about Kathy and her generosity and her love of laying on her back for you if she had it.

DAY 54

unexpected and expensive

6/10/20

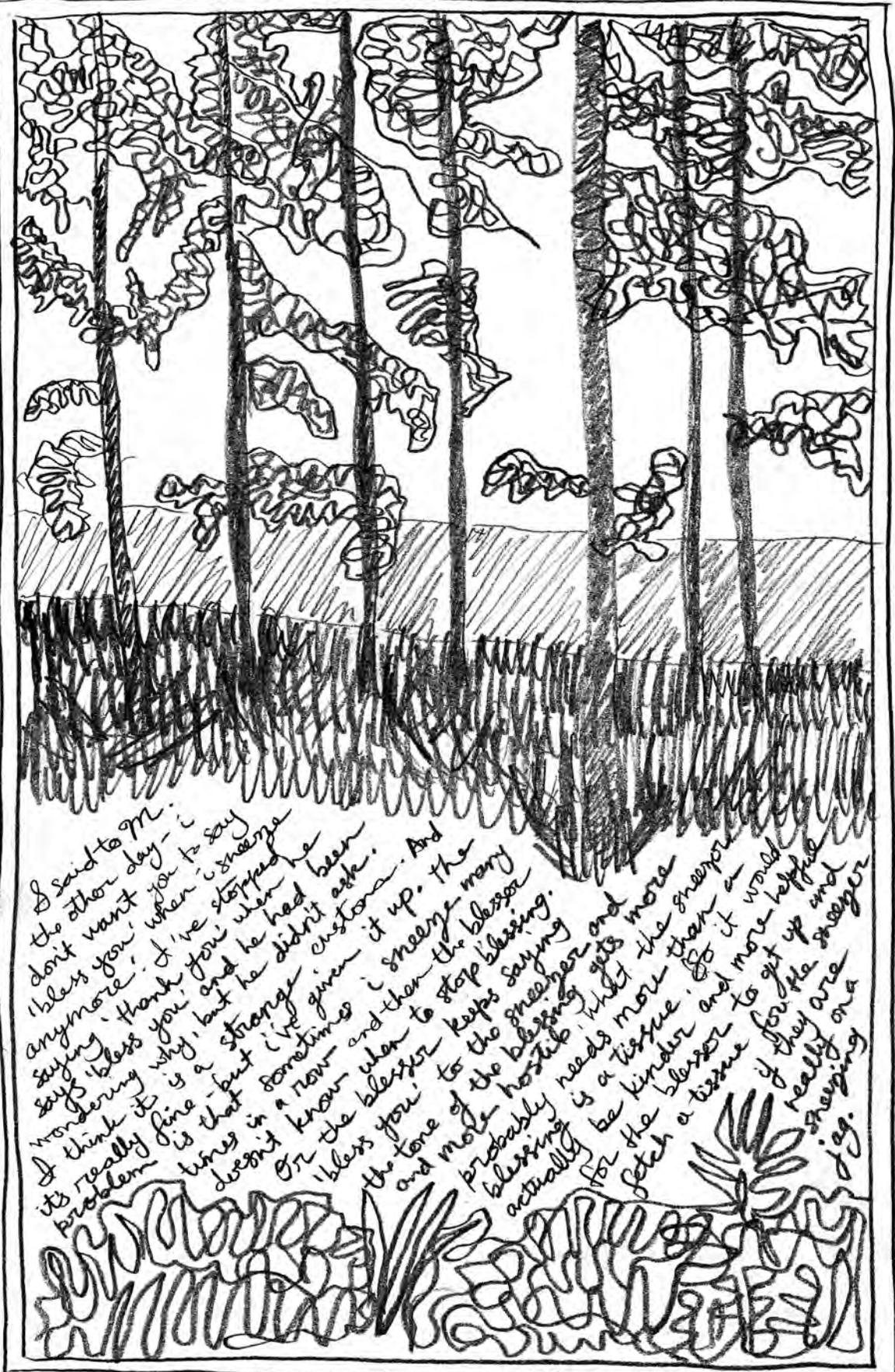


IT'S ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT THIS SIMPLE TWIG OF LEAVES MAY BE TOMORROW'S MORE CHALLENGES THAN DRAWING A HORSE. MAYBE I'LL LEAVE IN ORDER TO GET AT THE END OF MY DAY / WORK WEEK TO HALT TELECOM. I SAW ON THE AND SCHOOL. I'M WORKING SUN-THUR IN ORDER TO GET AT THE END OF MY DAY / WORK WEEK TO HALT TELECOM. I SAW ON THE NOW THERE IS A BIG PUSH TO HALT TELECOM. I SAW ON THE OF CAT CARE, THE SEQUESTERING MAKES I AM DOING. I AM DOING. I AM DOING. KEEPING HIM COMPANIE CAT WITH A DRAIN IN HIM. BUT SAD, FEWER PEOPLE HAVE AN EXPENSIVE CAT WITH A DRAIN IN HIM. BUT SAD, FEWER PEOPLE COME AROUND - M. WHEN THE CAT IS NOT IN HIM. BUT SAD, FEWER PEOPLE CHICKENS ARE GOING BONKERS - SQUAWKING. BUT TIME HAS BEEN TAKEN HAPPENING AT ONCE. EVERY CREATURE IT IS ALL EXPRESSING THEMSELVES. EVERYONE HAS SOMETHING TO SAY. FOR NOW - IT IS PEACEFUL.

DAY 55

this simple twig

6/11/20

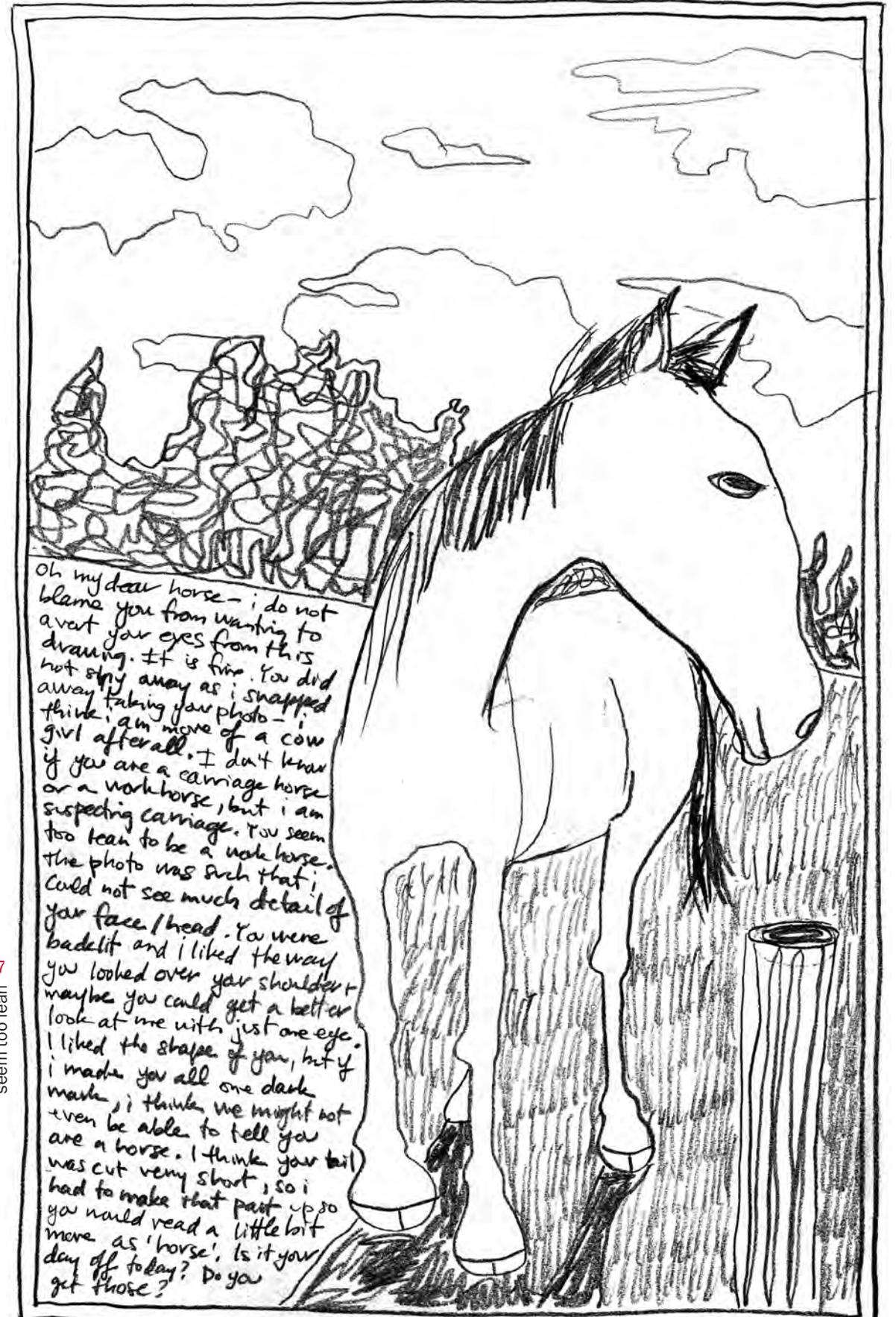


I said to m.
 don't want you to say
 'bless you' when i sneeze
 anymore. i've stopped
 saying 'thank you' and he had
 wondered why, but he didn't ask.
 i think it's really fine - but i've
 given it up. And
 the tone of the blessing
 and more to stop saying.
 probably needs more than a
 blessing is a tissue. So if
 for the kinder and more helpful
 fetch a tissue if they are
 sneezing on a
 dig.



6/12/20

DAY 56
 actually be kinder



Oh my dear horse - i do not
 blame you from wanting to
 avert your eyes from this
 drawing. It is fine. You did
 not shy away as i snapped
 away taking your photo -
 think i am more of a cow
 girl after all. I don't know
 if you are a carriage horse
 or a workhorse, but i am
 suspecting carriage. You seem
 too lean to be a workhorse.
 The photo was such that i
 could not see much detail of
 your face / head. You were
 badelit and i liked the way
 you looked over your shoulder -
 maybe you could get a better
 look at me with just one eye.
 I liked the shape of you, but if
 i made you all one dark
 mark, i think we might not
 even be able to tell you
 are a horse. I think your tail
 was cut very short, so i
 had to make that part up so
 you would read a little bit
 more as 'horse'. Is it your
 day off today? Do you
 get those?

DAY 57
 seem too lean

6/13/20



I HAVE ONLY DONE MY DAILY DRAWINGS / WRITING IN ONE OF TWO PLACES AT MY WORK TABLE IN THE LIVING ROOM AND THREE TIMES OUTSIDE IN THE BACKYARD. TODAY - TOTALLY NE LOCATION - MY DESK AT WORK. INSTEAD OF HEARING THE BIRDS, I HEAR THE LOW HUM OF THE AIRCONDITIONING SYSTEM. IT KIND OF FEELS LIKE BEING ON A PLANE EXCEPT I BROUGHT MY OWN IN-FLIGHT MEAL AND THERE IS NO MOVIE. ONLY THE MORNING NEWS. IT IS HARD TO BE BACK IN THE OFFICE AFTER THE FREEDOM OF HOME, BUT I AM MAKING A STAB AT BEING BRAVE. PEARL REPORTS THAT THE CAT IS FINE AND THAT SHE HELPED OUT DOING SOME GARDENING TODAY - PRAISE BE. SHE GOT HER FINAL PAPER FOR THE WEEK INTO HER TEACHER - ONE DR CHAMPAGNE WHO TEACHES THE COURSE LOVE + SEX. I THOUGHT MAYBE HIS NAME SHOULD BE DR BOX-OF-CHOCOLATE OR DR A-DOZEN-ROSES. IT IS MY JOKE. PEARL IS TIRED OF HEARING ME SAY IT AND I CAN'T REALLY BLAME HER. BACK TO THE OFFICE SETTING - NO BIRDS, BUT ALSO NO NEIGHBORS YELLING AT THEIR CHILDREN, NO LAWN MOWERS, NO BLASTED LEAF BLOWERS. IT IS CALM.

6/14/20

DAY 58

no neighbors yelling

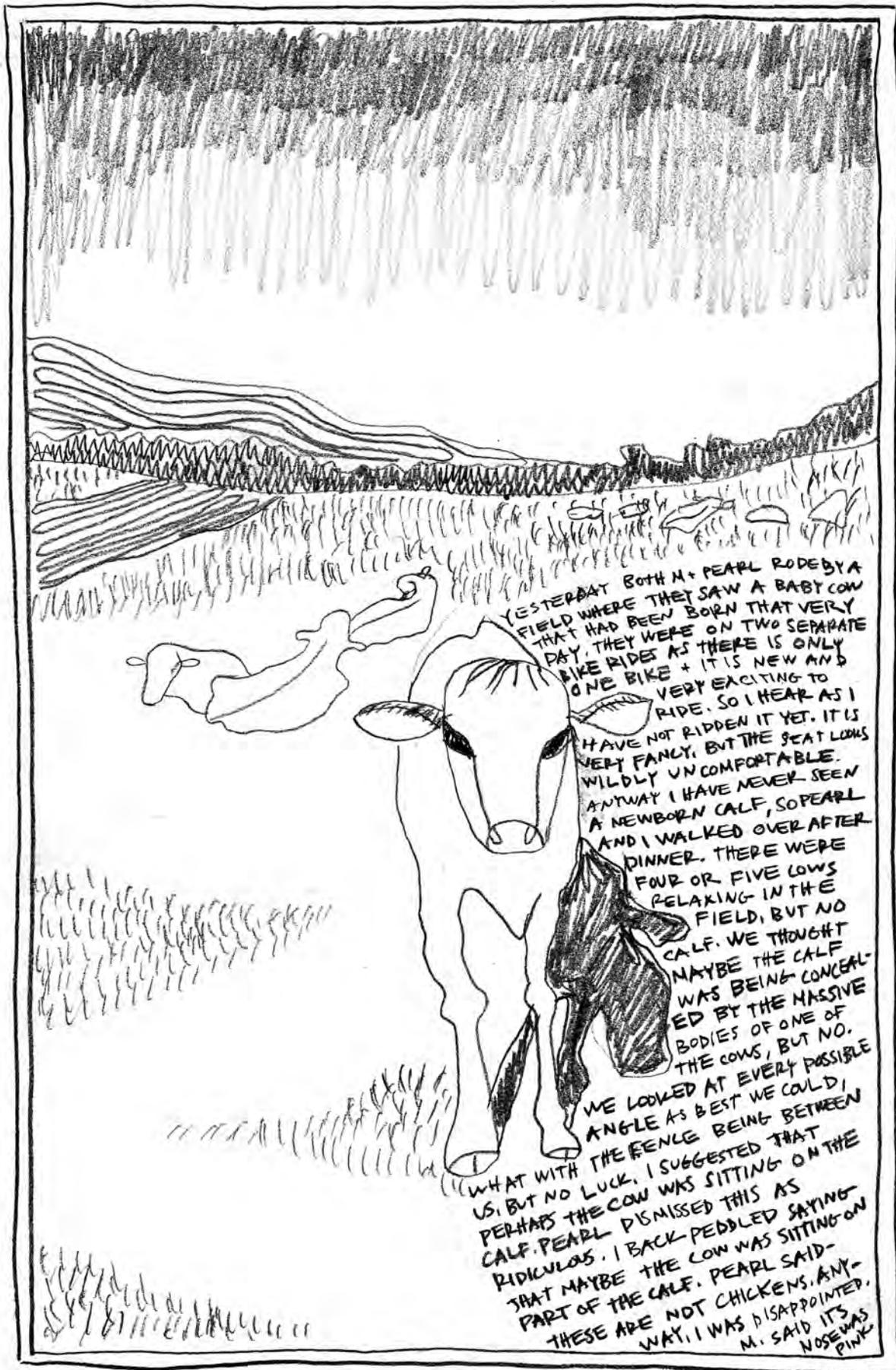


I WAS WORRIED ABOUT COMING BACK INTO THE OFFICE AND WORRIED ABOUT COVID AND THE PANDEMIC AND ALL - AND FEELING LIKE I WAS GOING TO BE IN A PETRI DISH / GUINEA PIG SITUATION. WHICH MIGHT BE THE CASE. WE'LL KNOW IN ABOUT 14 DAYS. AND I WAS WORRIED ABOUT GETTING A DRAWING IN, WHAT WITH ALL THE WORK HOURS AND I WAS WORRIED ABOUT LACK OF MATERIAL GIVEN THAT I WORK ON A VERY MANICURED CAMPUS. BUT GUESS WHAT? THERE IS WILDNESS EVERYWHERE! THIS IS OVER ON THE VERY EDGE OF CAMPUS. IT'S A SWAMPY AREA WHERE THE ARCHERS USED TO PRACTICE TARGET SHOOTING. I THINK IT IS TOO WILD, SO THE ARCHERS ARE ELSEWHERE. ANYWAY I HAD NEVER REALLY PAUSED THERE BEFORE, BUT IT IS A TREASURE TROVE OF WILD TEXTURE. THERE IS A MAGNIFICENT PATCH OF DRIED TEELIL ALL BROWN + LOOKING WITH THESE FUZZY TREES, POKE SEED PODS, UNRULY LOCUST, ODD BERRIES, MULLIN, GRASSES.

6/15/20

DAY 59

practice target shooting



YESTERDAY BOTH M + PEARL RODE BY A
 FIELD WHERE THEY SAW A BABY COW
 THAT HAD BEEN BORN THAT VERY
 DAY. THEY WERE ON TWO SEPARATE
 BIKE RIDES AS THERE IS ONLY
 ONE BIKE + IT IS NEW AND
 VERY EXCITING TO
 RIDE. SO I HEAR AS I
 HAVE NOT RIDDEN IT YET. IT IS
 VERY FANCY, BUT THE SEAT LOOKS
 WILDLY UNCOMFORTABLE.
 ANYWAY I HAVE NEVER SEEN
 A NEWBORN CALF, SO PEARL
 AND I WALKED OVER AFTER
 DINNER. THERE WERE
 FOUR OR FIVE COWS
 RELAXING IN THE
 FIELD, BUT NO
 CALF. WE THOUGHT
 MAYBE THE CALF
 WAS BEING CONCEAL-
 ED BY THE MASSIVE
 BODIES OF ONE OF
 THE COWS, BUT NO.
 WE LOOKED AT EVERY POSSIBLE
 ANGLE AS BEST WE COULD,
 THE FENCE BEING BETWEEN
 US. BUT NO LUCK. I SUGGESTED THAT
 PERHAPS THE COW WAS SITTING ON
 THE CALF. PEARL DISMISSED THIS AS
 RIDICULOUS. I BACK-PEDDLED SAYING
 THAT MAYBE THE COW WAS SITTING ON
 PART OF THE CALF. PEARL SAID-
 THESE ARE NOT CHICKENS. ANY-
 WAY, I WAS DISAPPOINTED.
 M. SAID ITS
 NOSE WAS
 PINK

DAY 60

every possible angle

6/17/20



I am just staring into space. My mind is a
 total blank. It is kind of a good feeling - just
 giving up on thought altogether. Done with
 thinking. Plus I am in the library and there
 is the low, soothing, dreamy hum of the air
 conditioning. It is not unlike the white noise
 app I like to use when I am staying somewhere
 unfamiliar. Maybe since it is a library it is
 actual white noise and not air conditioning.
 I feel pretty certain I'll never know. And it
 doesn't matter because I am busy thinking
 about nothing. I chose this scene which was
 from a 6 a.m. walk a couple of weeks ago.
 Everything was super hazy and fuzzy looking

which matches my mood.
 If fuzzy is a mood.
 I recall the soft feeling
 to everything and I also
 took the photo from a
 low angle because I
 really like the weeds with
 the dots on their ends.

DAY 61

I'll never know

6/18/20



PEARL IS ON A ZOOM CALL I CAN TELL SHE REALLY DOES NOT WANT TO BE ON BECAUSE EVERY FEW MINUTES SHE POPS INTO THE LIVING ROOM AND POPS UP INTO A HEAD STAND. SHE IS ROAMING AROUND + DRINKING WATER. SHE IS TAKING IBUPROFEN SHE IS MAKING NOISES AS IF ENGAGED IN THE MEETING

TERRY HAS JUST DRIVEN BY IN HIS BLUE PICK UP TRUCK. HE IS OUR ALCOHOLIC NEIGHBOR. ALSO A HEAVY SMOKER. HE LIVES ALONE - ABANDONED BY HIS WIFE + KIDS. HE IS BUT LOOKS ABOUT 10 YEARS SO EVERY DAY HE DRIVES FEW YARDS TO HIS CIGARETTE HANGING MOUTH, CHECKS HIS GOES... SOMEWHERE. MORE BEER

MAILBOX, OLDER THE HOUSE IS FALLING DOWN. HE LOOKS LIKE HE MIGHT DIE ANY SECOND. BUT WILL PROBABLY OUT LIVE VS ALL.

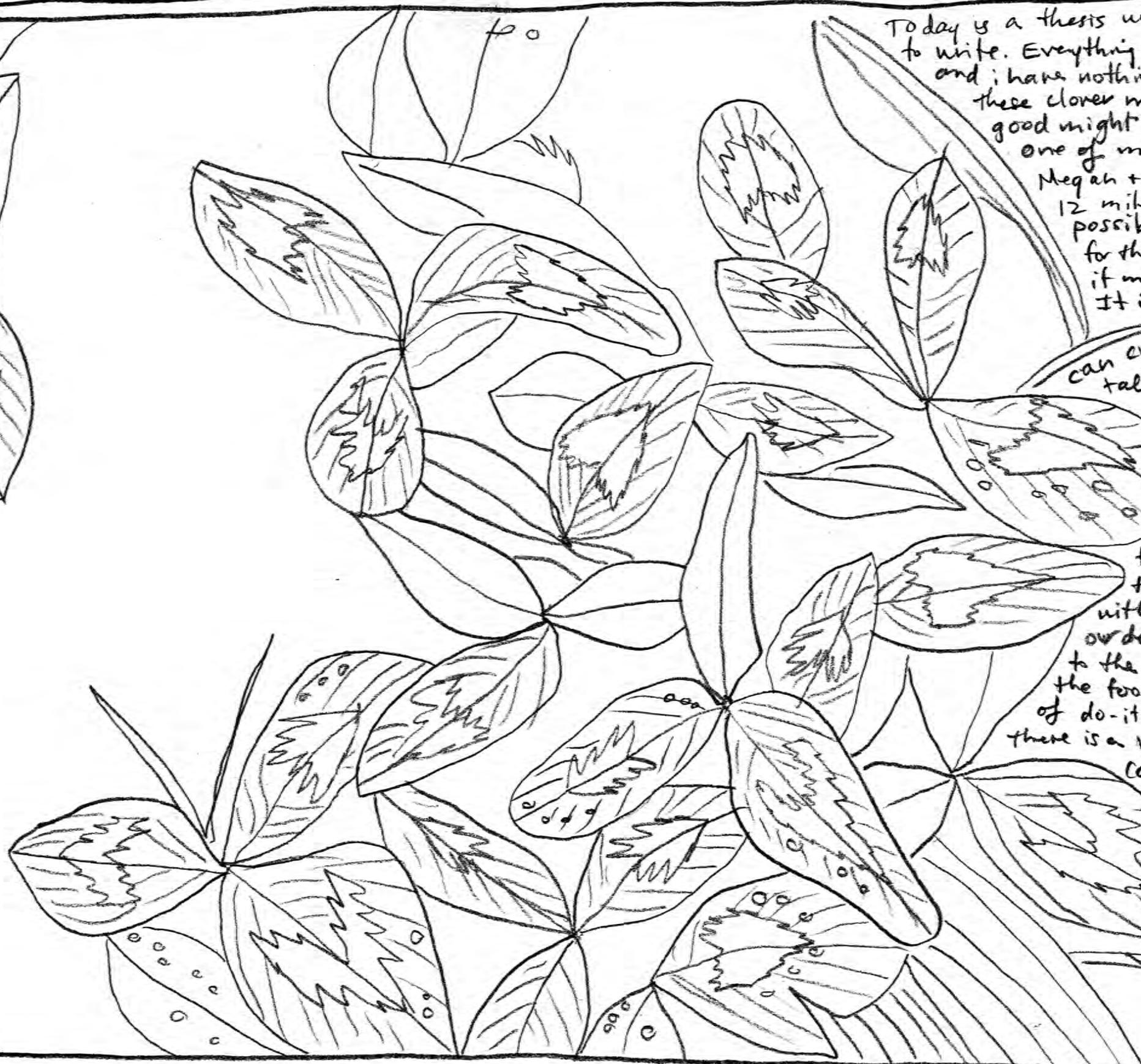
6/19/20

DAY 62
as if engaged

- themes emerge
- weeds
 - fields
 - pasture
 - crops
 - trails
 - roads
 - cows
 - trees
 - bark
 - rocks
 - clouds
 - sky
 - plants
 - streams
 - one horse
 - one mule

Today is a thesis writing day and it is impossible to write. Everything feels like one big citation and i have nothing to say. So i decided to draw these clover more slowly to see if anything good might come of it. It is the solstice! one of my favorite days of the year. Megan + i observed it by going on a 12 mile run. It felt like it was possible, which was good since for the first 6 miles it felt like it might not actually be possible. It is humid with no breeze. It actually felt a little

cooler while running can create your own breeze. We talked about how we can get an invite to a members-only restaurant called The Wheel Inn. We are not members, but we have been there before and we want to go back. (It is way out in the country and you have to go with a member. they fill out your order on a slip of paper + give it to the waitress. Then they bring the food. It is a funny combination of do-it-yourself and table service. there is a book at the bar where you can make a wager and maybe win a prize. there are taxidermied animals all over the dining room, including a rare cinnamon bear (not very big). I don't want to be a member of the Wheel Inn, but i would like to go back. Now would be nice.



DAY 63

your own breeze

6/20/20



This is from a photo i think i took on my last hike that i can really recall... well not true as i have been on several hikes at Ravensburg, but one of the last and it was April 12. Really, it has been some time and i am feeling the effects in that i feel like there is something big missing. Time on the trail. The word 'depleted' keeps bubbling to the surface in my thoughts. And i do not want that to be a word that defines me - especially as it appears i cant spell it - depleted - that looks more like it. (It is not like a 'pleated' skirt. I would like my word to be 'energized', but it keeps getting nudged in the side + budged out of the way by depleted. I remember this hike because M. + i were trying something new on kind of a whim on the trail and we missed a crucial turn. We knew we were doing an out-and-back + it didn't really matter. It's not like we were in the least bit lost, but when we saw where we should have turned on the way back we couldn't believe that we both missed it. It was beyond obvious when we saw it on the return. Pearl is just back from two nights of hiking + camping + i want to know every detail of the trail. This is my first attempt to draw leaf litter under a tree. The roots were exposed + there were vines and lots of leaves everywhere. Today is father's day.

DAY 64

a crucial turn

6/21/20

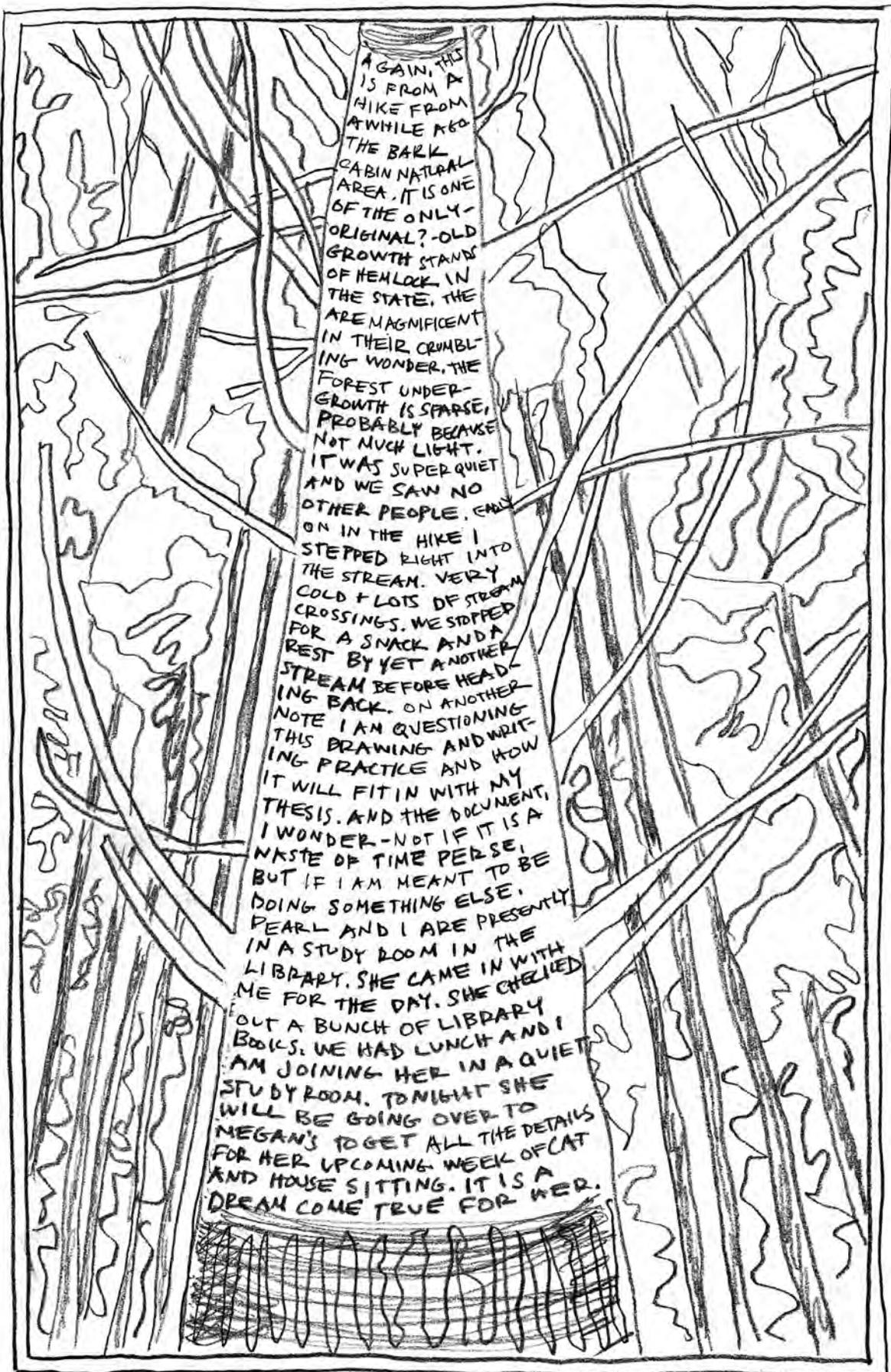


This was from a magical day on March 19 when we first were in quarantine and had been home for a few days + decided to get out on the trail. It was 1130 in the afternoon + super misty like we were in the rain forest. This is when we first started noticing more + more people on this very infrequently used trail (up until that point). Since i haven't gotten out in so long i would be curious (i am curious) if the situation is still the same - people are still getting out on the trails. This may have been the day when we got to the top most trail and there was a small group of hikers on a parallel trail. We weren't talking, so they didn't notice us. We decided to stand still quietly until they went by. And that was a weird feeling - like we were spying on them and eavesdropping, but what we were really trying to do was avoid them on a narrow trail. It would have been awkward or freaked them out if one of them had happened to notice us. I recall they were talking very loudly about toilet paper. It's when everyone was talking about toilet paper + you suddenly knew way too much about peoples toilet paper buying + preferences + habits, for god's sake. Even total strangers in the woods. One could not get away from the relentless potty talk.

DAY 65

awkward or freaked

6/22/20

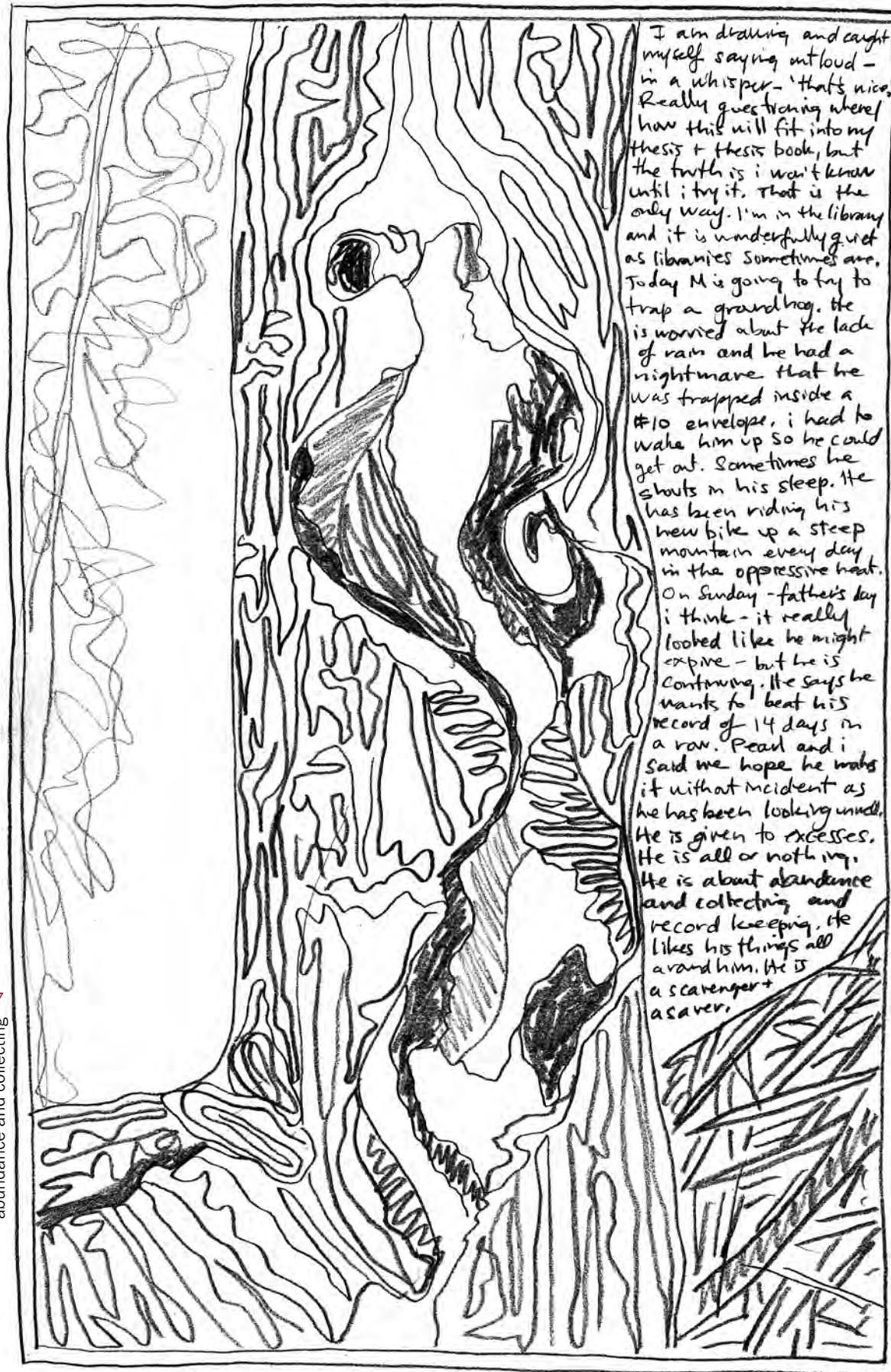


AGAIN, THIS IS FROM A HIKE FROM AWHILE AGO. THE BARK CABIN NATURAL AREA. IT IS ONE OF THE ONLY-ORIGINAL?-OLD GROWTH STANDS OF HEMLOCK IN THE STATE. THE ARE MAGNIFICENT IN THEIR CRUMBLING WONDER. THE FOREST UNDER-GROWTH IS SPARSE, PROBABLY BECAUSE NOT MUCH LIGHT. IT WAS SUPER QUIET AND WE SAW NO OTHER PEOPLE. ONLY ON IN THE HIKE I STEPPED RIGHT INTO THE STREAM. VERY COLD + LOTS OF STREAM CROSSINGS. WE STOPPED FOR A SNACK AND A REST BY YET ANOTHER STREAM BEFORE HEAD-ING BACK. ON ANOTHER NOTE I AM QUESTIONING THIS DRAWING AND WRITING PRACTICE AND HOW IT WILL FIT IN WITH MY THESIS. AND THE DOCUMENT, I WONDER-NOT IF IT IS A WASTE OF TIME PERSE, BUT IF I AM MEANT TO BE DOING SOMETHING ELSE. PEARL AND I ARE PRESENTLY IN A STUDY ROOM IN THE LIBRARY. SHE CAME IN WITH ME FOR THE DAY. SHE CHECKED OUT A BUNCH OF LIBRARY BOOKS. WE HAD LUNCH AND I AM JOINING HER IN A QUIET STUDY ROOM. TONIGHT SHE WILL BE GOING OVER TO MEGAN'S TO GET ALL THE DETAILS FOR HER UPCOMING WEEK OF CAT AND HOUSE SITTING. IT IS A DREAM COME TRUE FOR HER.

DAY 66

waste of time

6/23/20

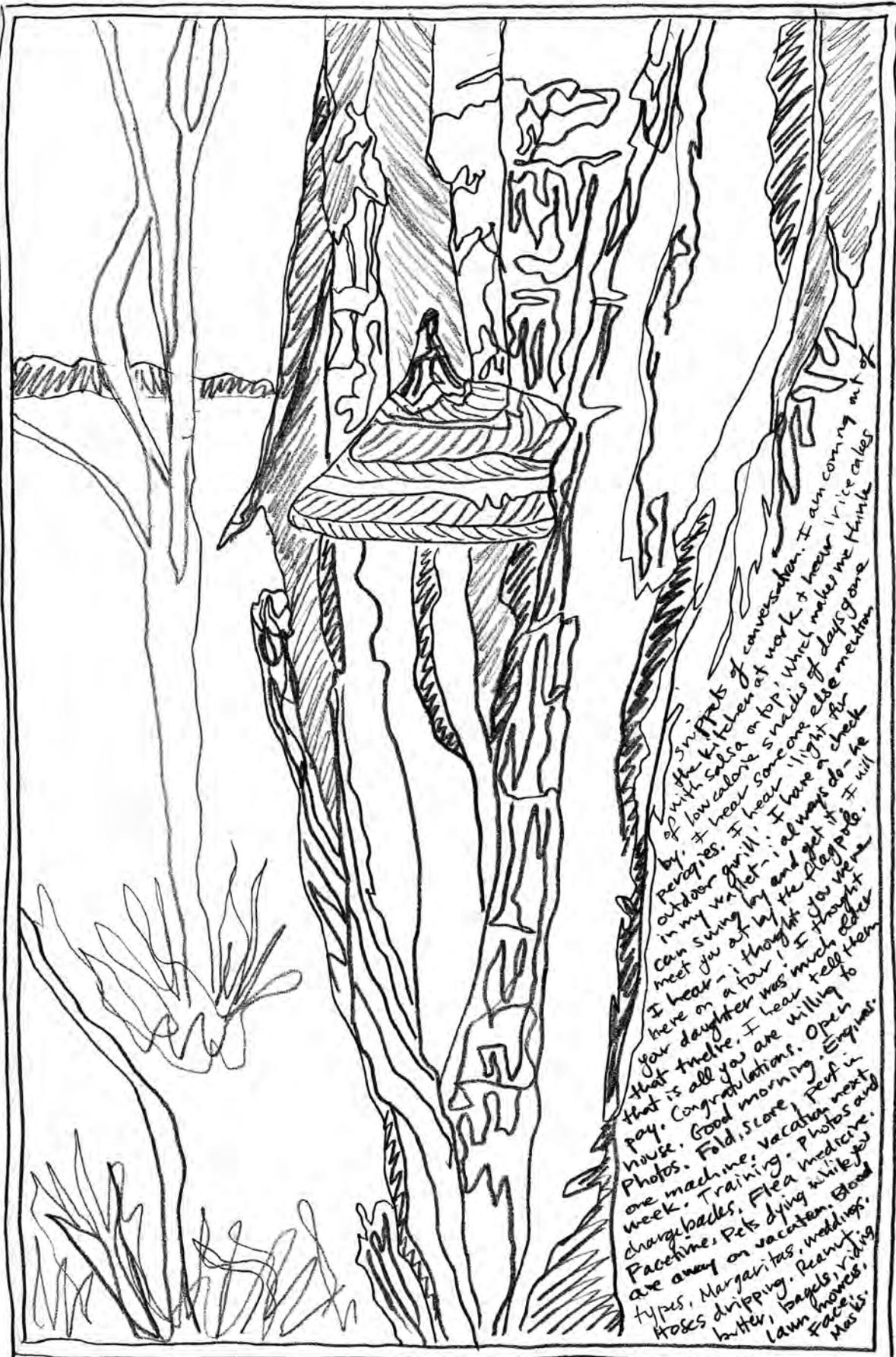


I am drawing and caught myself saying out loud - in a whisper - 'that's nice.' Really questioning where how this will fit into my thesis + thesis book, but the truth is i won't know until i try it. That is the only way. I'm in the library and it is wonderfully quiet as libraries sometimes are. Today M is going to try to trap a groundhog. He is worried about the lack of rain and he had a nightmare that he was trapped inside a #10 envelope. i had to wake him up so he could get out. Sometimes he shouts in his sleep. He has been riding his new bike up a steep mountain every day in the oppressive heat. On Sunday - father's day i think - it really looked like he might expire - but he is continuing. He says he wants to beat his record of 14 days in a row. Pearl and i said we hope he makes it without incident as he has been looking unwell. He is given to excesses. He is all or nothing. He is about abundance and collecting, and record keeping. He likes his things all around him. He is a scavenger + a saver.

DAY 67

abundance and collecting

6/24/20

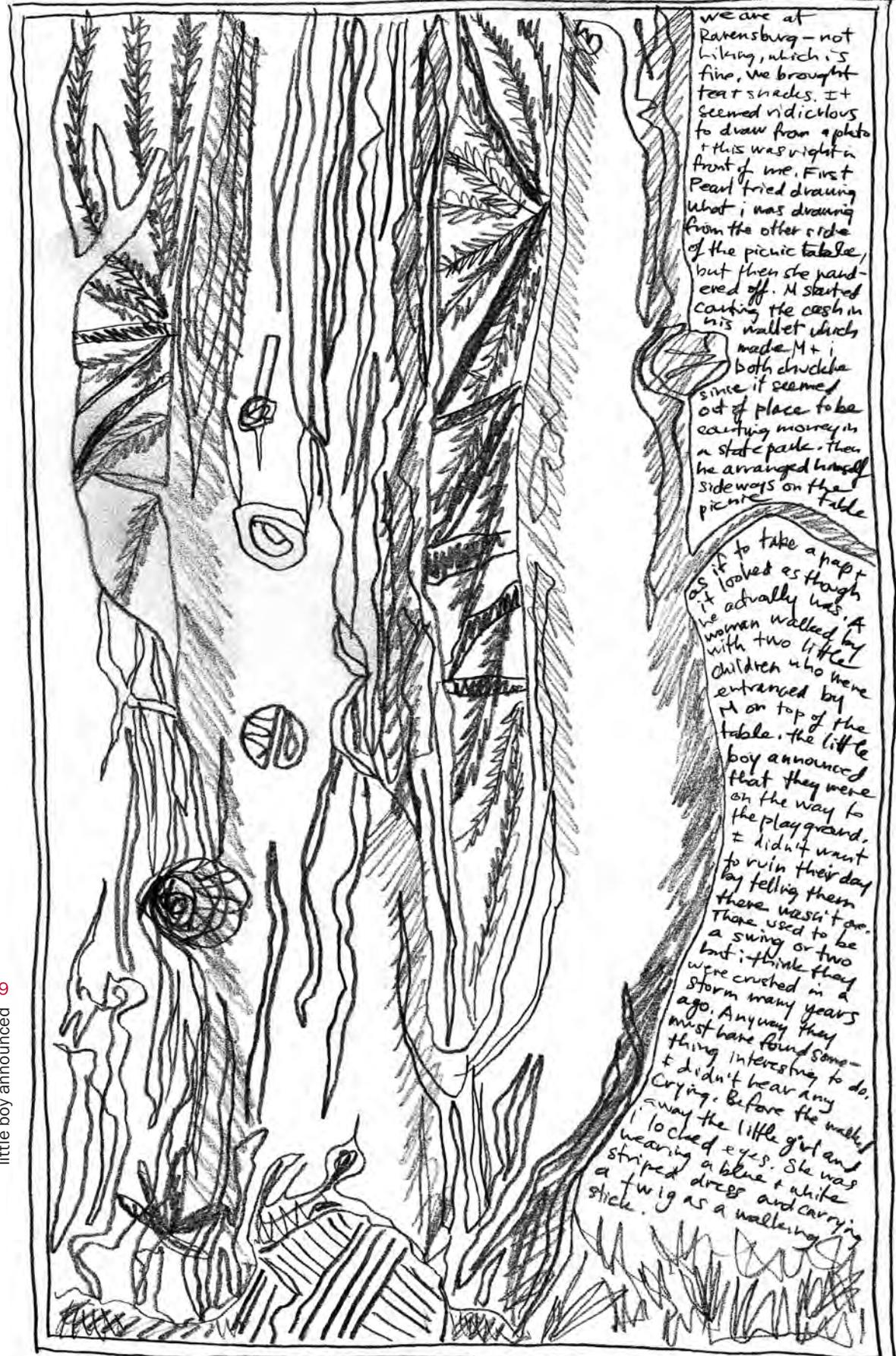


snippets of conversation. I am coming out of
 the kitchen at work & hear voice calls
 up with salsa on top, which makes me think
 of low calorie snacks of days gone
 by. I hear someone else mention
 peaches. I hear some light for
 in my wallet. I have a check
 can swing by and get it
 meet you at the playground.
 I hear on a tour. I thought you were
 your daughter was much older
 that twelve. I hear tell them
 that is all you are willing to
 pay. Congratulations. Engines
 house. Good morning. Feet in
 Photos. Fold, score, put in
 one machine. Vacation next
 week. Training. Photos and
 charge pads. Flea medicine.
 FaceTime. Pets dying while you
 are away on vacation. Blood
 types. Margaritas, wedding
 roses dripping. Peanut
 butter, bagels, riding
 lawn mower.
 Mas.

DAY 68

in my wallet

6/25/20



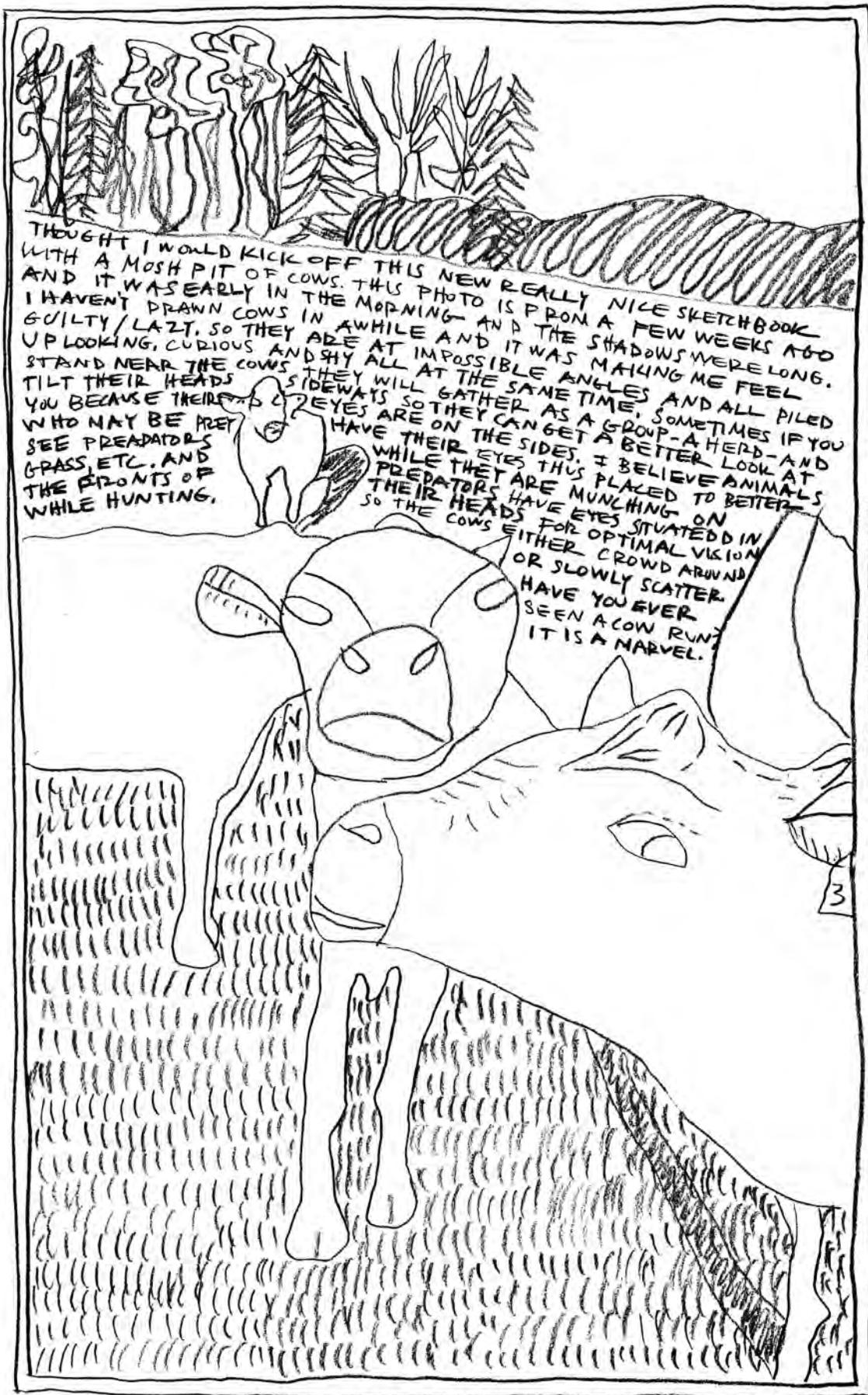
we are at
 Ravensburg - not
 liking, which is
 fine, we brought
 tea shades. It
 seemed ridiculous
 to draw from a photo
 & this was right in
 front of me. First
 Pearl tried drawing
 what I was drawing
 from the other side
 of the picnic table,
 but then she paid
 ered off. I started
 counting the cash in
 his wallet which
 made M + I
 both chuckle
 since it seemed
 out of place to be
 counting money in
 a state park. Then
 he arranged himself
 sideways on the
 picnic table

to take a photo
 as if to take a photo
 it looked as though
 it actually was. A
 woman walked by
 with two little
 children who were
 entranced by
 M on top of the
 table. The little
 boy announced
 that they were
 on the way to
 the playground.
 I didn't want
 to ruin their day
 by telling them
 there wasn't one.
 There used to be
 a swing or two
 but I think they
 were crushed in a
 storm many years
 ago. Anyway they
 must have found some-
 thing interesting to do.
 I didn't hear any
 crying. Before the walk
 I loomed the little girl and
 wearing a blue & white
 striped dress and carrying
 a twig as a walking
 stick.

DAY 69

little boy announced

6/26/20



THOUGHT I WOULD KICK OFF THIS NEW REALLY NICE SKETCHBOOK WITH A MOSH PIT OF COWS. THIS PHOTO IS FROM A FEW WEEKS AGO AND IT WAS EARLY IN THE MORNING AND THE SHADOWS WERE LONG. I HAVEN'T DRAWN COWS IN AWHILE AND THE SHADOWS WERE LONG. GUILTY/LAZY. SO THEY ARE AT IMPOSSIBLE ANGLES AND ALL FEEL UPLOOKING, CURIOUS AND SHY ALL AT THE SAME TIME, AND ALL PILED STAND NEAR THE COWS THEY WILL GATHER AS A GROUP - A HERD - AND TILT THEIR HEADS SIDWAYS SO THEY CAN GET A BETTER LOOK AT YOU BECAUSE THEIR EYES ARE ON THE SIDES. I BELIEVE ANIMALS WHO MAY BE PREY HAVE THEIR EYES THUS PLACED TO BETTER SEE PREDATORS GRASS, ETC. AND THE FRONTS OF THEIR HEADS HAVE EYES SITUATED IN EITHER OPTIMAL VISION OR SLOWLY SCATTER. HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A COW RUN? IT IS A MARVEL.

6/30/20

DAY 72
at impossible angles

outcomes of the practice

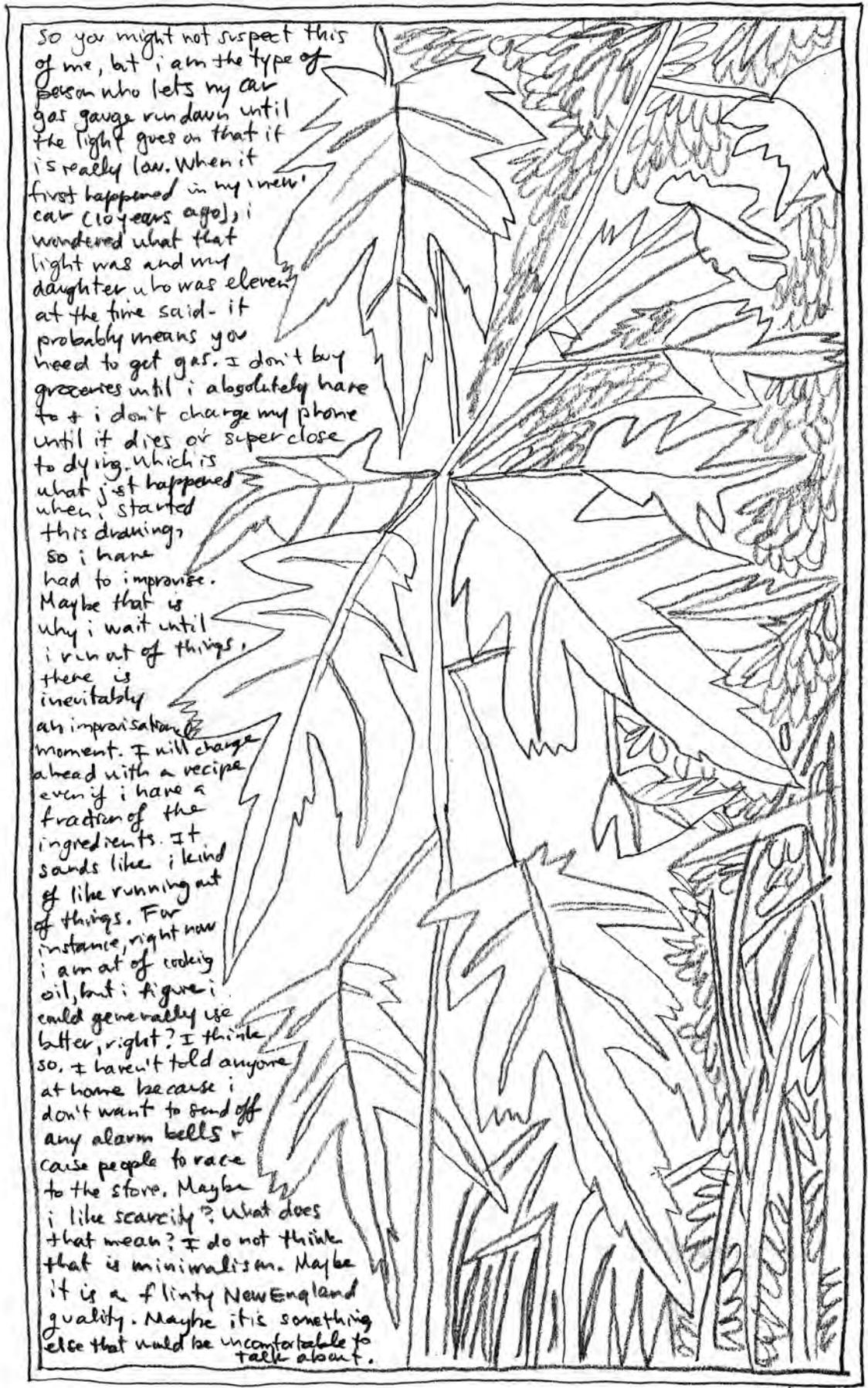
- > switching gears to draw is sometimes a pain
- + it feels like an interruption, but it's not
- + sometimes it is hard and this never really got easier
- + this is ok
- + i never regretted taking the time to draw
- > a slowing down happens, a shift of the brain, a change in the way of seeing
- > by drawing the two lines around the page (easy), it's already started, i'm drawing (which is hard)
- > judgement is suspended
- > some self-talk helped me get through this, such as
- + they are only shapes
- + pretend you're 6 years old and you just don't care
- + make more lines
- + more lines = more fun
- + start anywhere
- > having done lots of drawings and writing brings with it a sense of abundance
- > the writing can add a narrative to the drawing or be a place for reflection
- > now i can walk around with a sketchbook and draw and am a much cooler person



I didn't leave my feet to day and this is a creek. We are walking behind us. Our walking bugs, but on an is hot, but there is a little way to lie on a picnic table. We are walking behind us. Our walking bugs, but on an is hot, but there is a little way to lie on a picnic table. We are walking behind us. Our walking bugs, but on an is hot, but there is a little way to lie on a picnic table.

7/1/20

DAY 73
are feeling lazy

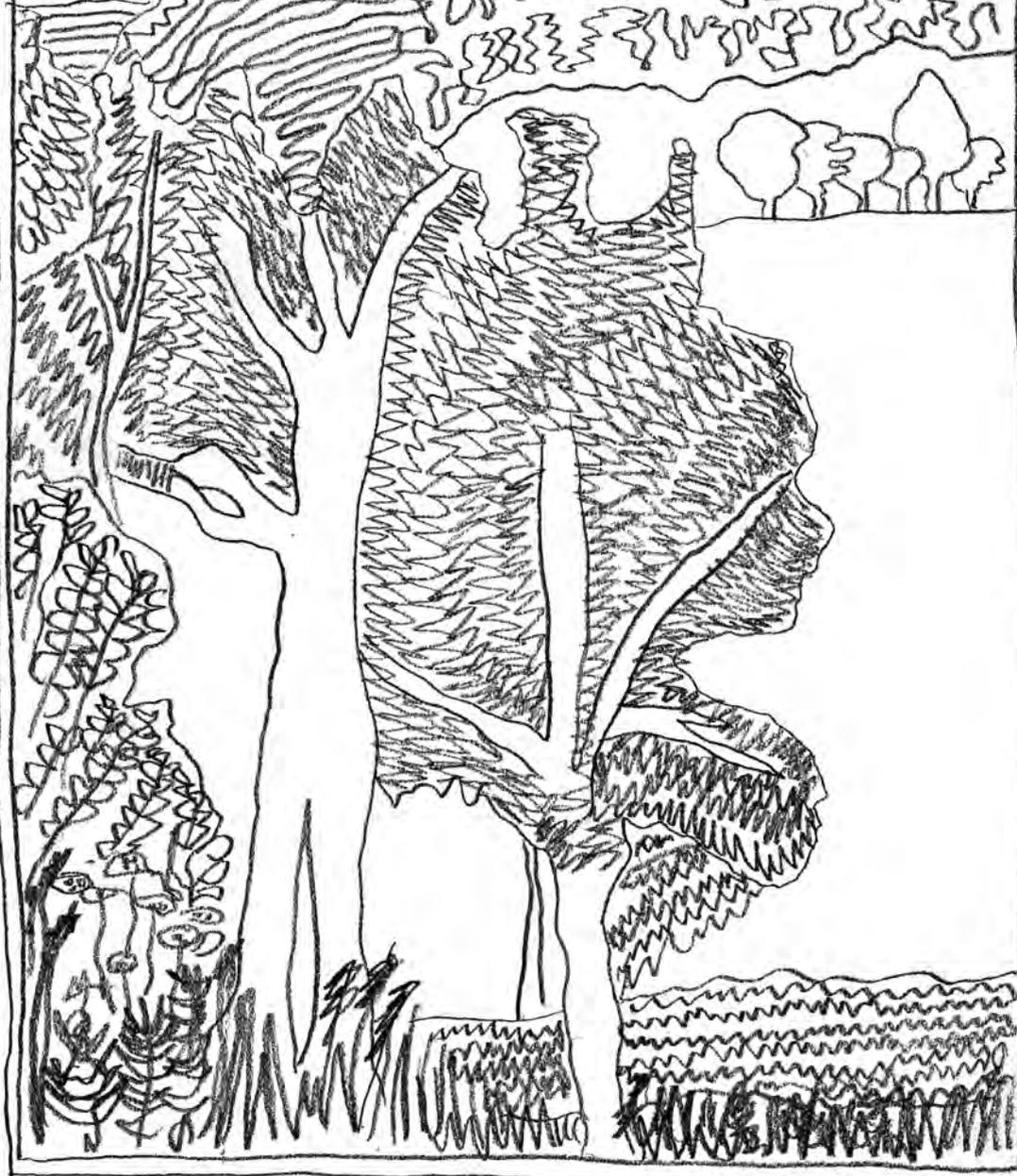


So you might not suspect this of me, but i am the type of person who lets my car gas gauge run down until the light goes on that it is really low. When it first happened in my new car (10 years ago), i wondered what that light was and my daughter who was eleven at the time said- it probably means you need to get gas. I don't buy groceries until i absolutely have to + i don't charge my phone until it dies or super close to dying. which is what just happened when i started this drawings. so i have had to improvise. Maybe that is why i wait until i run out of things, there is inevitably an improvisation moment. I will charge ahead with a recipe even if i have a fraction of the ingredients. It sounds like i kind of like running out of things. For instance, right now i am out of cooking oil, but i figure i could generally use butter, right? I think so. + haven't told anyone at home because i don't want to send off any alarm bells + cause people to race to the store. Maybe i like scarcity? What does that mean? I do not think that is minimalism. Maybe it is a flinty New England quality. Maybe it is something else that would be uncomfortable to talk about.

DAY 74
close to dying

7/2/20

I am trying to sit completely still and move only my hand because it is so beastly hot out. I am in the shade + I have a fan and sometimes there is a tiny breeze. Yesterday I was out here drawing and writing and watching the failing chicken, who was enjoying her time pecking around in the grass and leaves. Remember? It is like she was having her second wind. I was done drawing + she seemed OK, so I went inside. She finally settled over by the garden, but in the blazing sun. Pearl moved her under the apple tree, into the shade. Ten or 15 minutes later she went out to check on her, but she was gone. I went out + searched all around, but no sign of her. No feathers - nothing. M looked around. We decided if she was just under a bush somewhere resting, she would wander out at dusk to go back to the coop. But no. She hasn't. In some ways this is the best scenario, but w/others, the worst. Best in that maybe she just wanted to fade away on her own - worst in that no feed back.

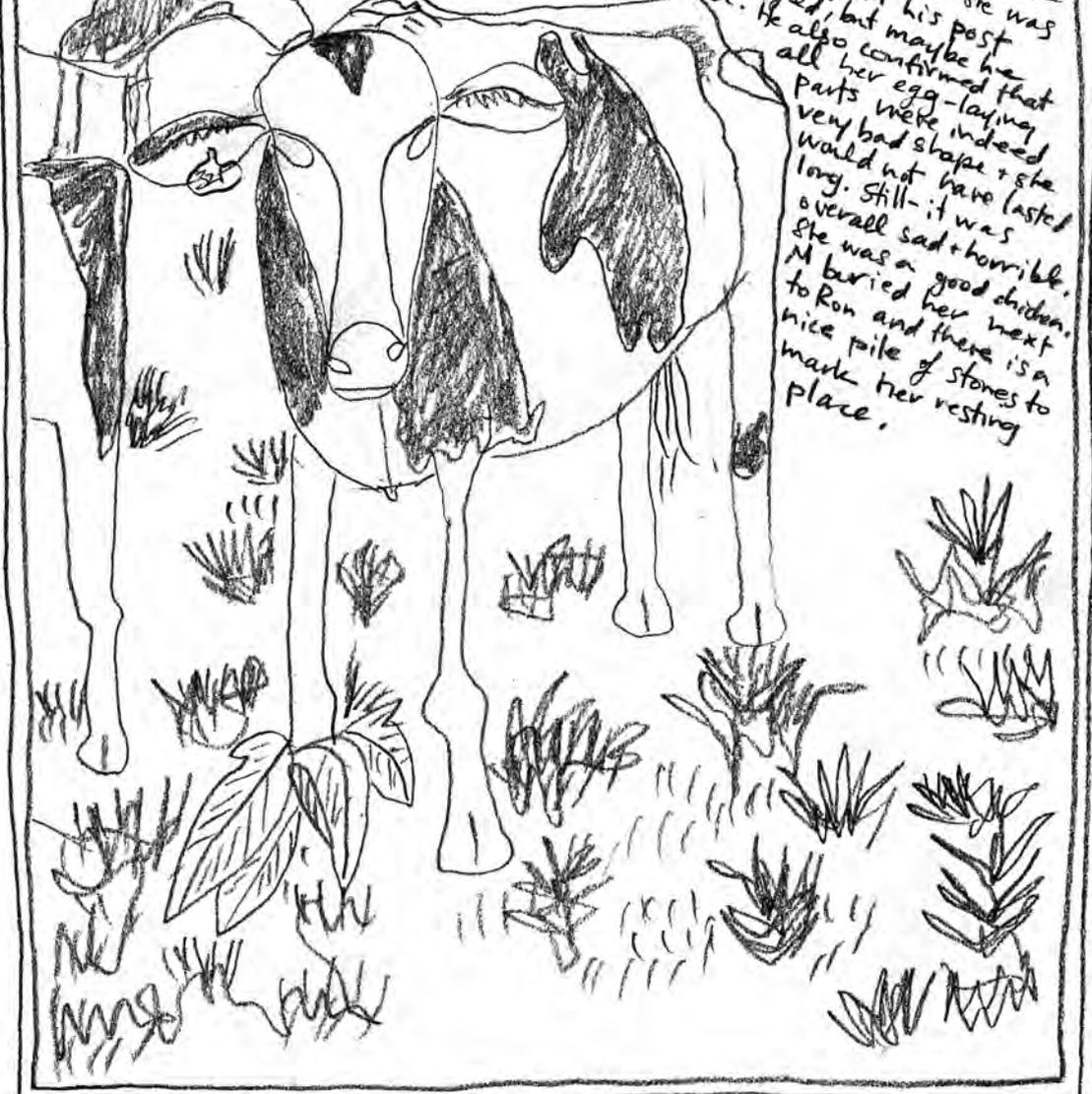


7/5/20

DAY 77
a tiny breeze



It's a let's kids this week off with a cow drawing and get it over with. I had taken several nice photos of cows over the holiday weekend, but then decided to just draw what was around outside. So am Cow photos. They were a nice bunch in the morning mist just now revisiting the other livestock news - the missing chicken. The body and not too shabby. In watching the six remaining chickens and picking blackberries, Bea got stuck and died there. I feel terrible for not finding her and coop. She found the alone and struggling when she died. Although M says in his post mortem that it didn't look like she struggled, but maybe her parts were indeed very bad shape + she would not have lasted long. Still - it was overall sad + horrible. She was a good chicken. M buried her next to Ron and there is a nice pile of stones to mark her resting place.



7/6/20

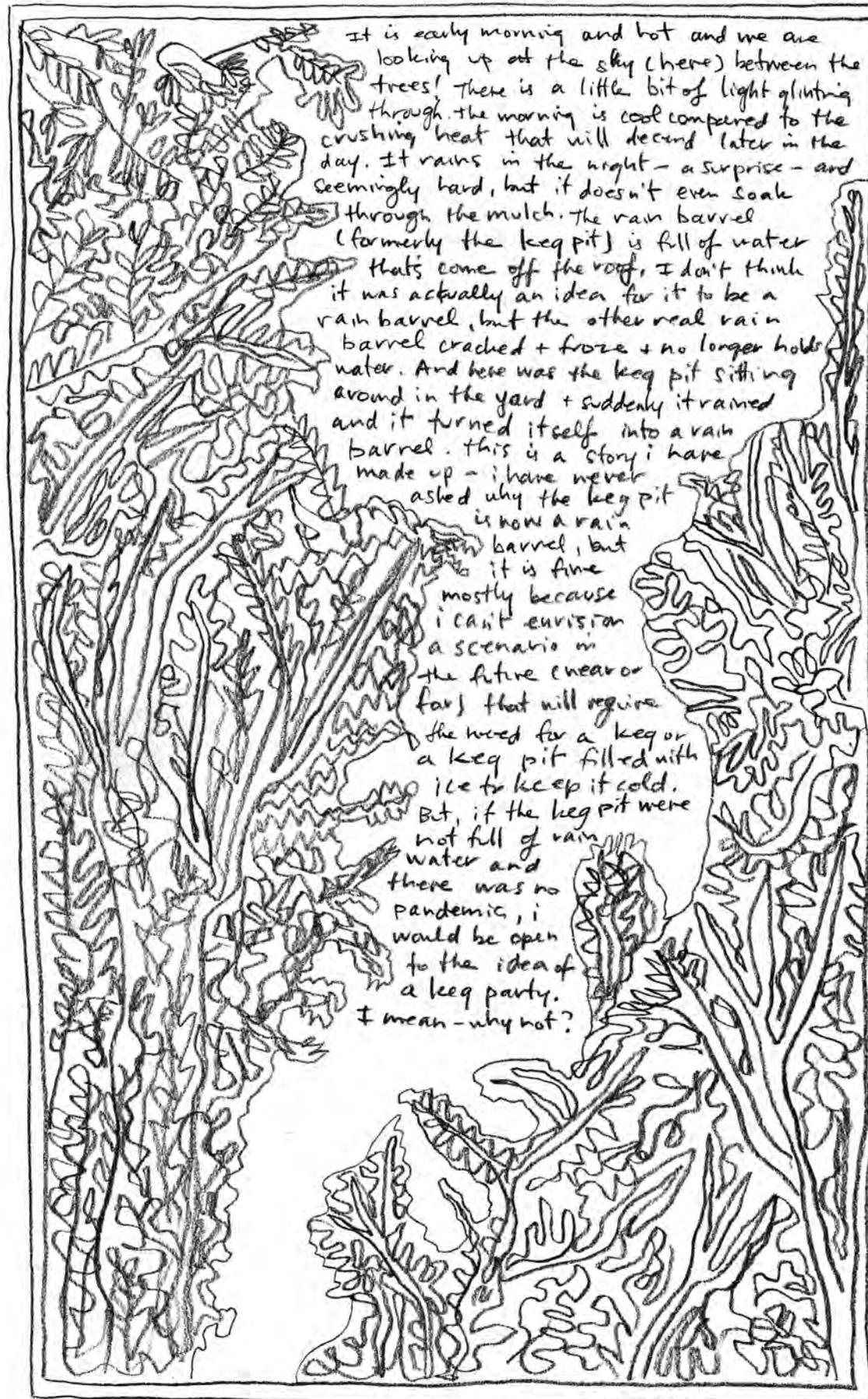
DAY 78
stuck and died



Pearl has gone back to Eric -
 her first night in her apartment
 - Aug 1st. So Pearl - wanting more
 consider stoner curtain but does not
 No matter - she will walk it out
 a strong inking
 that her first
 shaver curtain was
 will ask her first
 after new Annie &
 the thought of all this
 camps next month at
 together me the fear of
 embracing and returning
 to Thanksgiving? All that
 to Thanksgiving? she has to
 of them all! Perhaps she will
 stay on campus.

7/7/20

DAY 79
 a strong inking

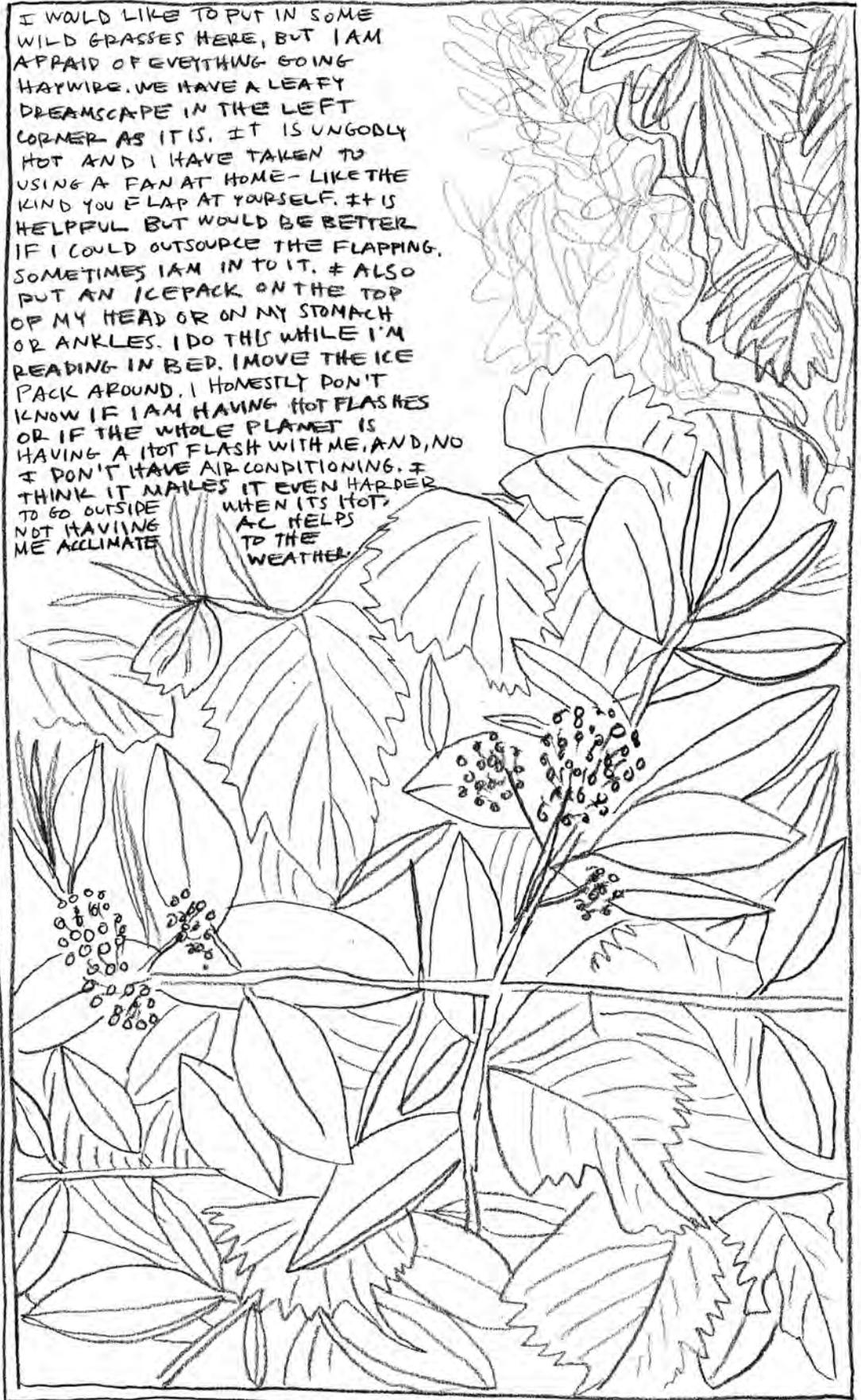


It is early morning and hot and we are
 looking up at the sky (here) between the
 trees! There is a little bit of light glinting
 through. The morning is cool compared to the
 crushing heat that will descend later in the
 day. It rains in the night - a surprise - and
 seemingly hard, but it doesn't even soak
 through the mulch. The rain barrel
 (formerly the keg pit) is full of water
 that's come off the roof. I don't think
 it was actually an idea for it to be a
 rain barrel, but the other real rain
 barrel cracked + froze + no longer holds
 water. And here was the keg pit sitting
 around in the yard + suddenly it rained
 and it turned itself into a rain
 barrel. This is a story I have
 made up - I have never
 asked why the keg pit
 is now a rain
 barrel, but
 it is fine
 mostly because
 I can't envision
 a scenario in
 the future (near or
 far) that will require
 the need for a keg or
 a keg pit filled with
 ice to keep it cold.
 But, if the keg pit were
 not full of rain
 water and
 there was no
 pandemic, I
 would be open
 to the idea of
 a keg party.
 I mean - why not?

7/8/20

DAY 80
 cracked and frozen

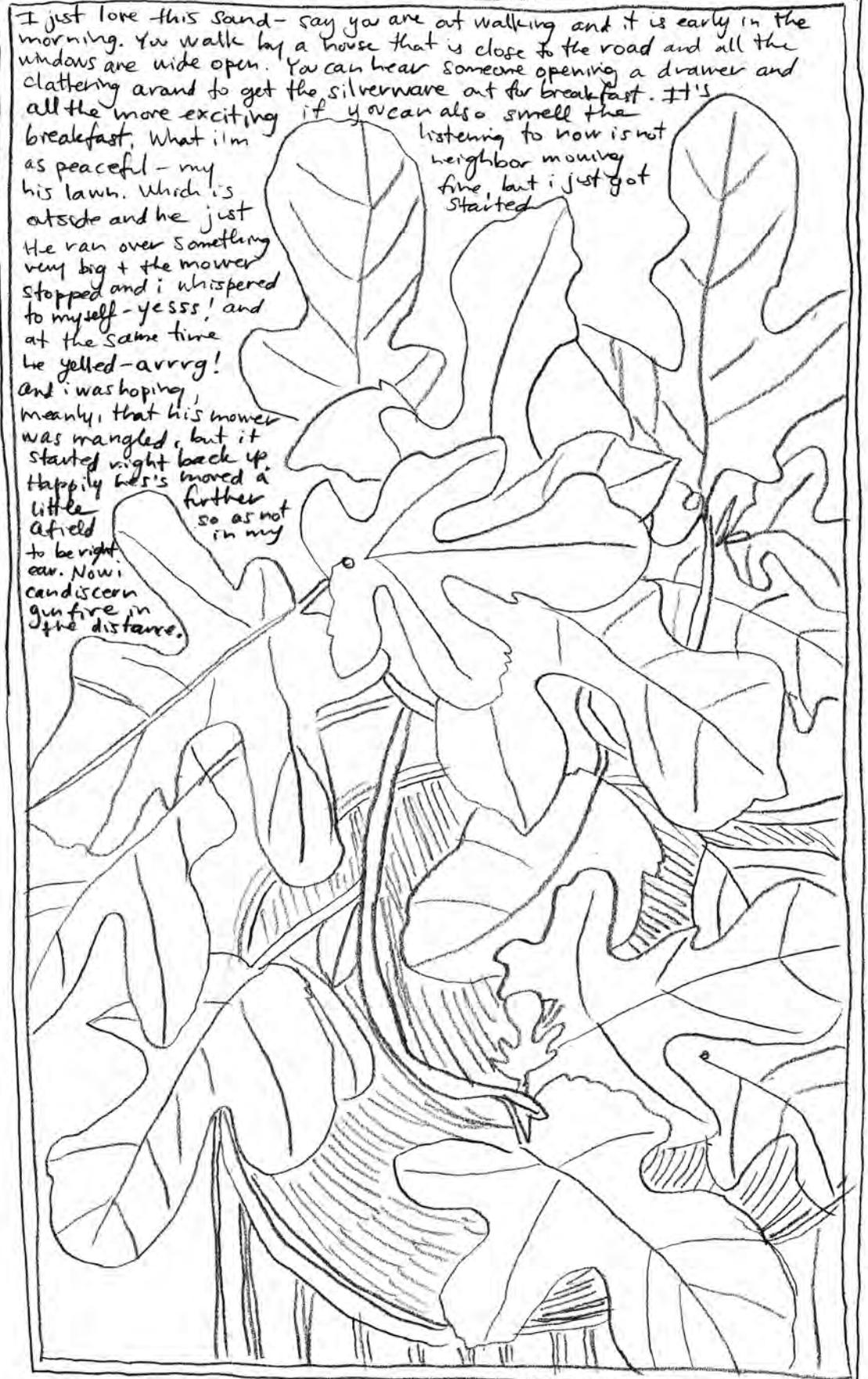
I WOULD LIKE TO PUT IN SOME WILD GRASSES HERE, BUT I AM APPRAID OF EVERTHING GOING HAYWIRE. WE HAVE A LEAFY DREAMSCAPE IN THE LEFT CORNER AS IT IS. IT IS UNGODLY HOT AND I HAVE TAKEN TO USING A FAN AT HOME - LIKE THE KIND YOU FLAP AT YOURSELF. IT IS HELPFUL BUT WOULD BE BETTER IF I COULD OUTSOURCE THE FLAPPING. SOMETIMES I AM IN TO IT. & ALSO PUT AN ICEPACK ON THE TOP OF MY HEAD OR ON MY STOMACH OR ANKLES. I DO THIS WHILE I'M READING IN BED. I MOVE THE ICE PACK AROUND. I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW IF I AM HAVING HOT FLASHES OR IF THE WHOLE PLANET IS HAVING A HOT FLASH WITH ME, AND, NO I DON'T HAVE AIR CONDITIONING. I THINK IT MAILES IT EVEN HARDER TO GO OUTSIDE WHEN ITS HOT. AC HELPS ME ACCLIMATE TO THE WEATHER.



7/9/20

DAY 81
flap at yourself

I just love this sand - say you are out walking and it is early in the morning. You walk by a house that is close to the road and all the windows are wide open. You can hear someone opening a drawer and clattering around to get the silverware out for breakfast. It's all the more exciting if you can also smell the breakfast. What I'm listening to now is not as peaceful - my neighbor moving his lawn. Which is outside and he just He ran over something very big + the mower stopped and I whispered to myself - yesss! and at the same time he yelled - awww! And I was hoping, meanly, that his mower was mangled, but it started right back up. happily he's moved a little further afield so as not to be right in my ear. Now I can discern gun fire in the distance.



7/10/20

DAY 82
something very big



THESE ARE MILKWEED PLANTS FROM MY EARLY A.M. WALK YESTERDAY. I JUST LOVE DRAWING THESE GRASSES. MAYBE THEY ARE TOO PAUK COMPARED TO THE MILKWEED. NOT SURE - BUT WAS FUN. IT IS RAINING ON + OFF THIS MORNING AND THE WORLD SEEMS PRETTY QUIET.

M. + I HAVE MADE HARD DECISION NOT TO GO TO MUCH ANTICIPATED PARTY. THE REALITY OF GOING TO A PARTY AMIDST A PANDEMIC JUST SEEMS NUTTY. RELIEVED. DO NOT THINK PEOPLE SHOULD BE HAVING PARTIES AT THIS MOMENT IN TIME, SO WHY WOULD I GO TO ONE? IT IS JUST HARD TO KEEP SAYING NO TO EVERYTHING. AND TO UNRAVEL ALL PLANS.

7/11/20

DAY 83
unravel all plans



I had thought I wanted to draw clouds, but as you can see, it is a trick proposition. But you got the idea. And this was a very beautiful morning. I was very special to see the dawn light. You have to go out of your way at my place in order to see dawn or dusk due to the way our house is oriented. We have had some spectacular situations in a north/south orientation. These were layers upon layers of clouds and the god-light was beaming across the valley since we didn't go to party yesterday, we did some heavy cloud watching. It's not quite the same.

7/12/20

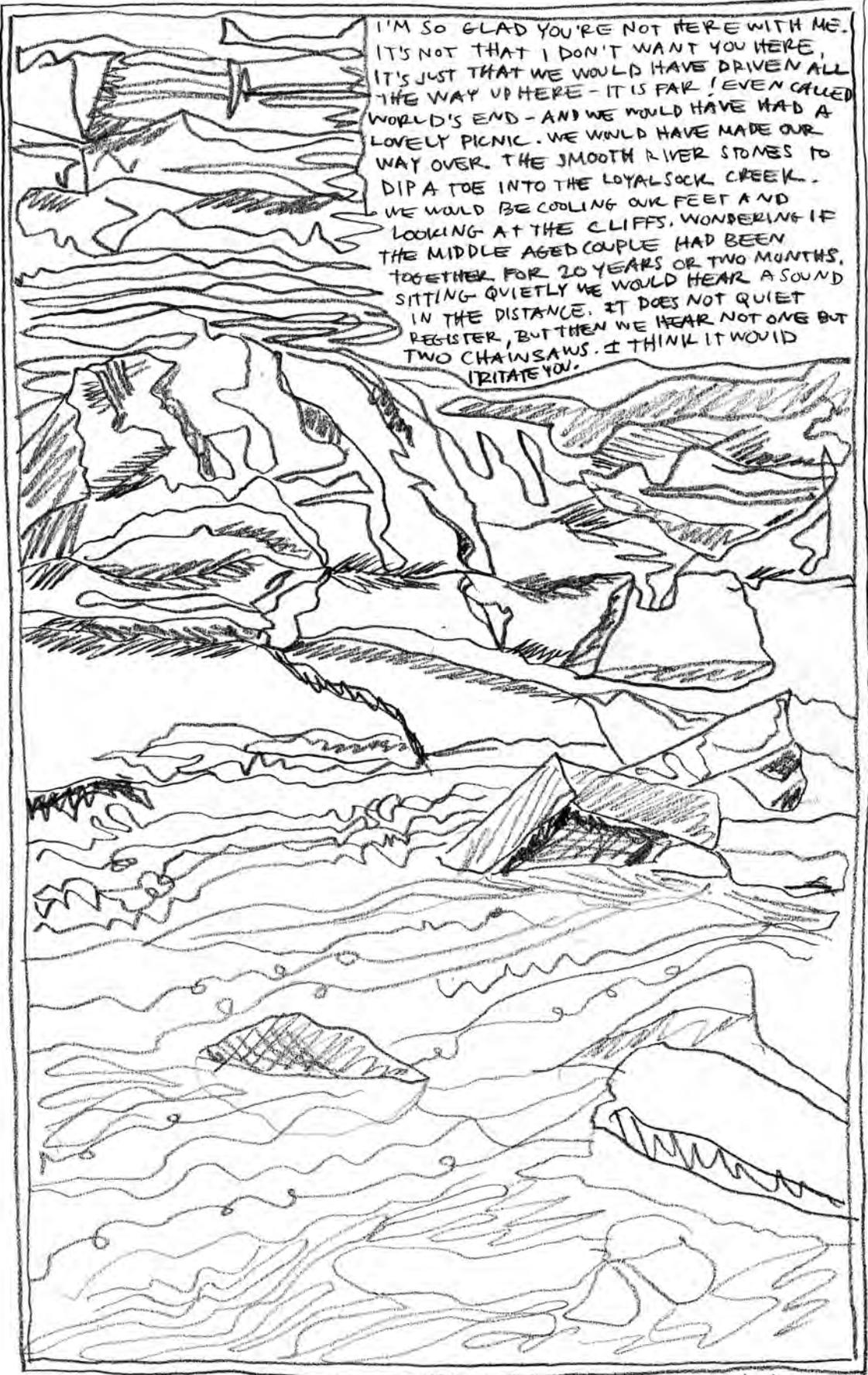
DAY 84
heavy cloud watching

I am in the part of the yard we call the Lee Christine Kathleen Memorial Garden, or more simply, The Motherland. The mothers' ashes are in this patch. Or most of them - we are coming up on the anniversary of Lee's death - July 24. Kathy is August 31. Some of Lee's ashes are in the creek at Ravensburg. Some of Kathy's are in Australia (maybe a few in Florida?). But we like to have the mothers here together. They were friends. We try to keep this patch nice + it does look really pretty right now, save for the knockout roses which were decimated by Japanese beetles recently. They were very pretty when they bloomed + maybe the roses will come back? Time will tell - we're not going to rip it out, there is larkspur, bee balm, echinacea, lilies, pampas grass, stock, opium poppies, irises, milkweed, redbud. There's a lot going on. Sometimes if I'm gardening and I get tired, Lee will say - 'oh honey, you've done enough - take a rest, go inside'. Kathy will agree.



7/13/20

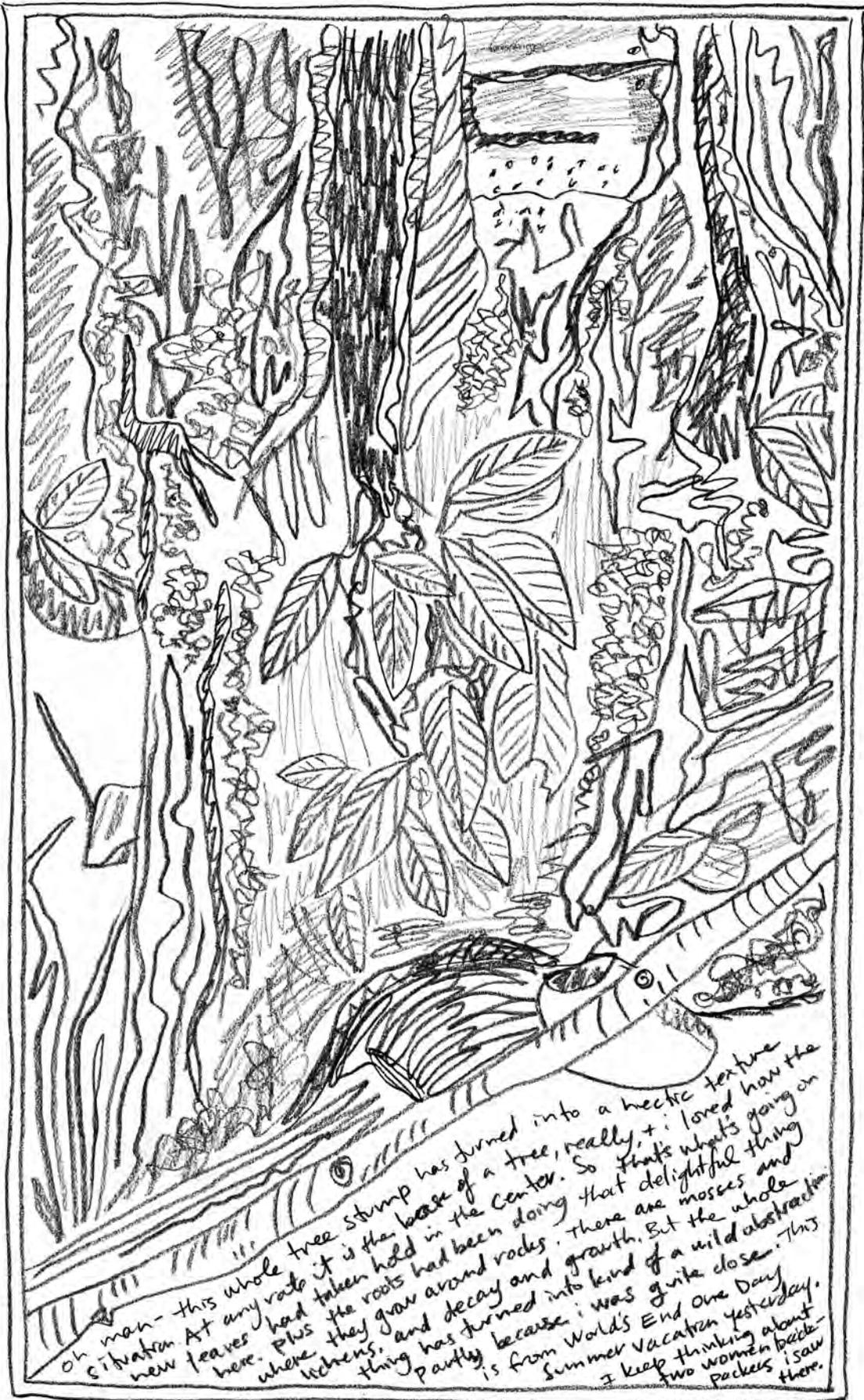
DAY 85
I get tired



I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE NOT HERE WITH ME. IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T WANT YOU HERE, IT'S JUST THAT WE WOULD HAVE DRIVEN ALL THE WAY UP HERE - IT IS FAR! EVEN CALLED WORLD'S END - AND WE WOULD HAVE HAD A LOVELY PICNIC. WE WOULD HAVE MADE OUR WAY OVER THE SMOOTH RIVER STONES TO DIP A TOE INTO THE LOYAL SOCK CREEK. WE WOULD BE COOLING OUR FEET AND LOOKING AT THE CLIFFS, WONDERING IF THE MIDDLE AGED COUPLE HAD BEEN TOGETHER FOR 20 YEARS OR TWO MONTHS, SITTING QUIETLY WE WOULD HEAR A SOUND IN THE DISTANCE. IT DOES NOT QUIET REGISTER, BUT THEN WE HEAR NOT ONE BUT TWO CHAINSAWS. I THINK IT WOULD IRRITATE YOU.

DAY 86
smooth river stones

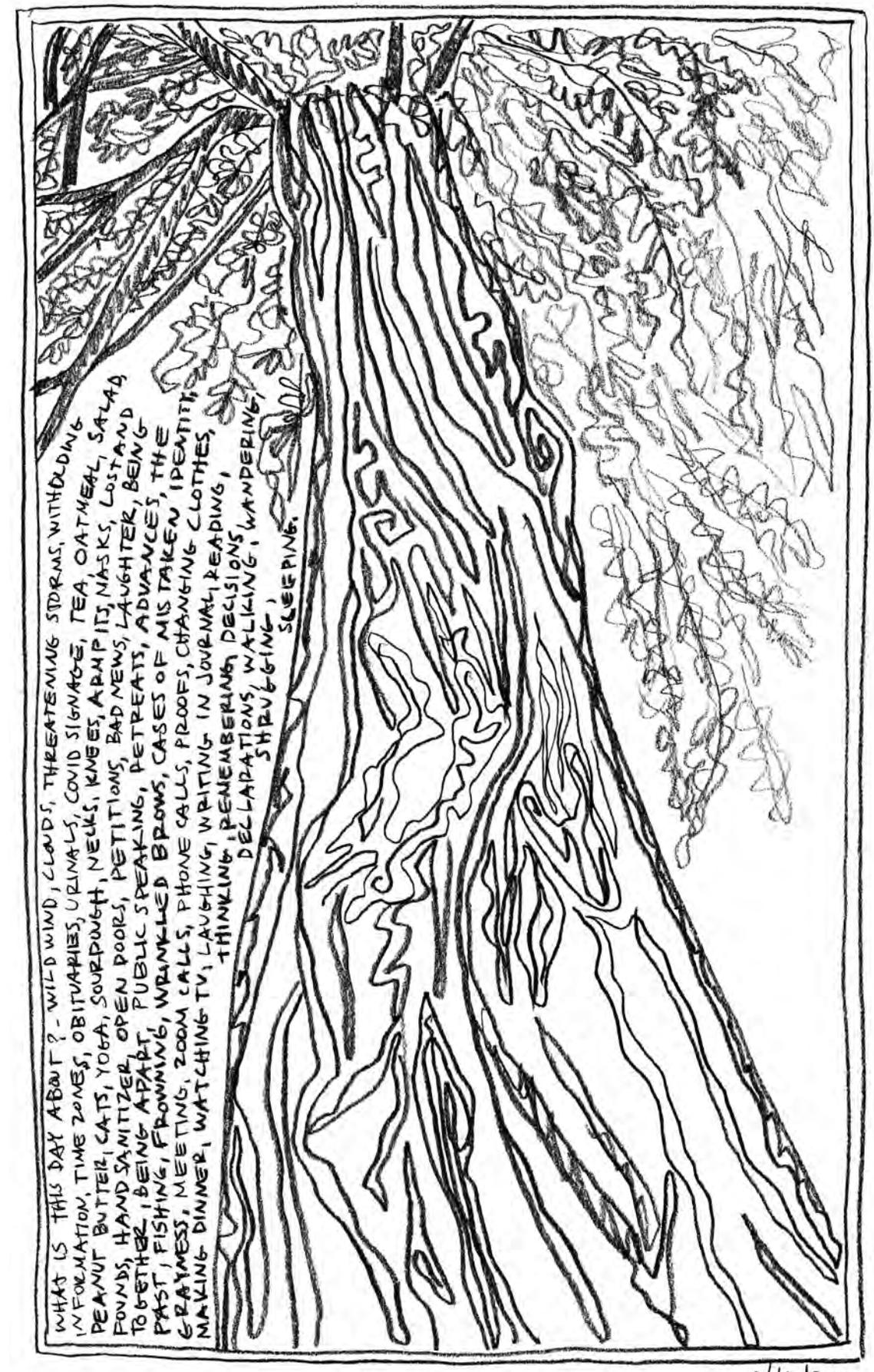
7/14/20



Oh man - this whole tree stump has turned into a hectic texture situation. At any rate it is the base of a tree, really, + i loved how the new leaves had taken hold in the center. So that's what's going on here. plus the roots had been doing that delightful thing where they grow around rocks. there are moscs and ticks, and decay and growth. But the whole thing has turned into kind of a wild abstraction partly because i was quite close. This is from World's End one Day Summer vacation yesterday. I keep thinking about two women packers there.

7/15/20

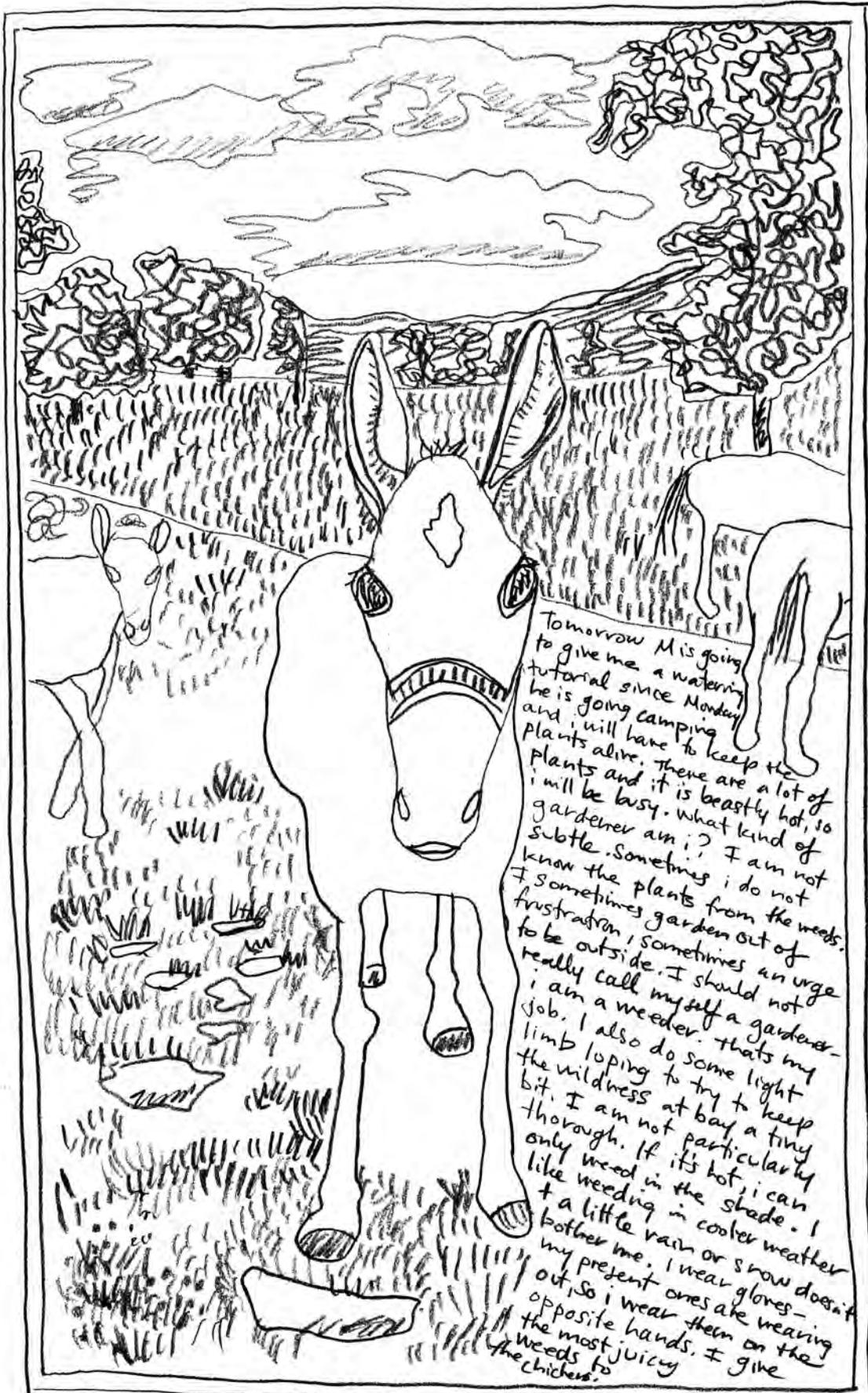
DAY 87
that delightful thing



WHAT IS THIS DAY ABOUT? - WILD WIND, CLOUDS, THREATENING STORMS, WITHOLDING INFORMATION, TIME ZONES, OBITUARIES, URINALS, COVID SIGNAGE, TEA, OATMEAL, SALAD PEANUT BUTTER, CATS, YOGA, SOURPOUGH, NECKS, KNEES, ARMPITS, MASKS, LOST AND FOUND, HAND SAMITZER, OPEN DOORS, PETITIONS, BAD NEWS, LAUGHTER, BEING TOGETHER, BEING APART, PUBLIC SPEAKING, PETREATS, ADVANCES, BEING PAST, FISHING, FROWNING, WRINKLED BROWS, CASES OF MISTAKE, IDENTIFYING GRAYNESS, MEETING, ZOOM CALLS, PHONE CALLS, PROFS, CHANGING CLOTHES, MAKING DINNER, WATCHING TV, LAUGHING, WRITING IN JOURNAL, READING, THINKING, REMEMBERING DECISIONS, DECLARATIONS, WALKING, WANDERING, SHRUBBING, SLEEPING.

DAY 88
necks knees armpits

7/16/20



Tomorrow M is going to give me a watering tutorial since Monday he is going camping and i will have to keep the plants alive. there are a lot of plants and it is beastly hot, so i will be busy. what kind of gardener am i? I am not subtle. Sometimes i do not know the plants from the weeds. I sometimes garden out of frustration, sometimes an urge to be outside. I should not really call myself a gardener. i am a weeder. thats my job. I also do some light limb loping to try to keep the wildness at bay a tiny bit. I am not particularly thorough. If its hot, i can only weed in the shade. I like weeding in cooler weather + a little rain or snow doesn't bother me. I wear gloves - my present ones are wearing out, so i wear ones that are opposite hands. I give the most juicy weeds to the chickens.

7/18/20

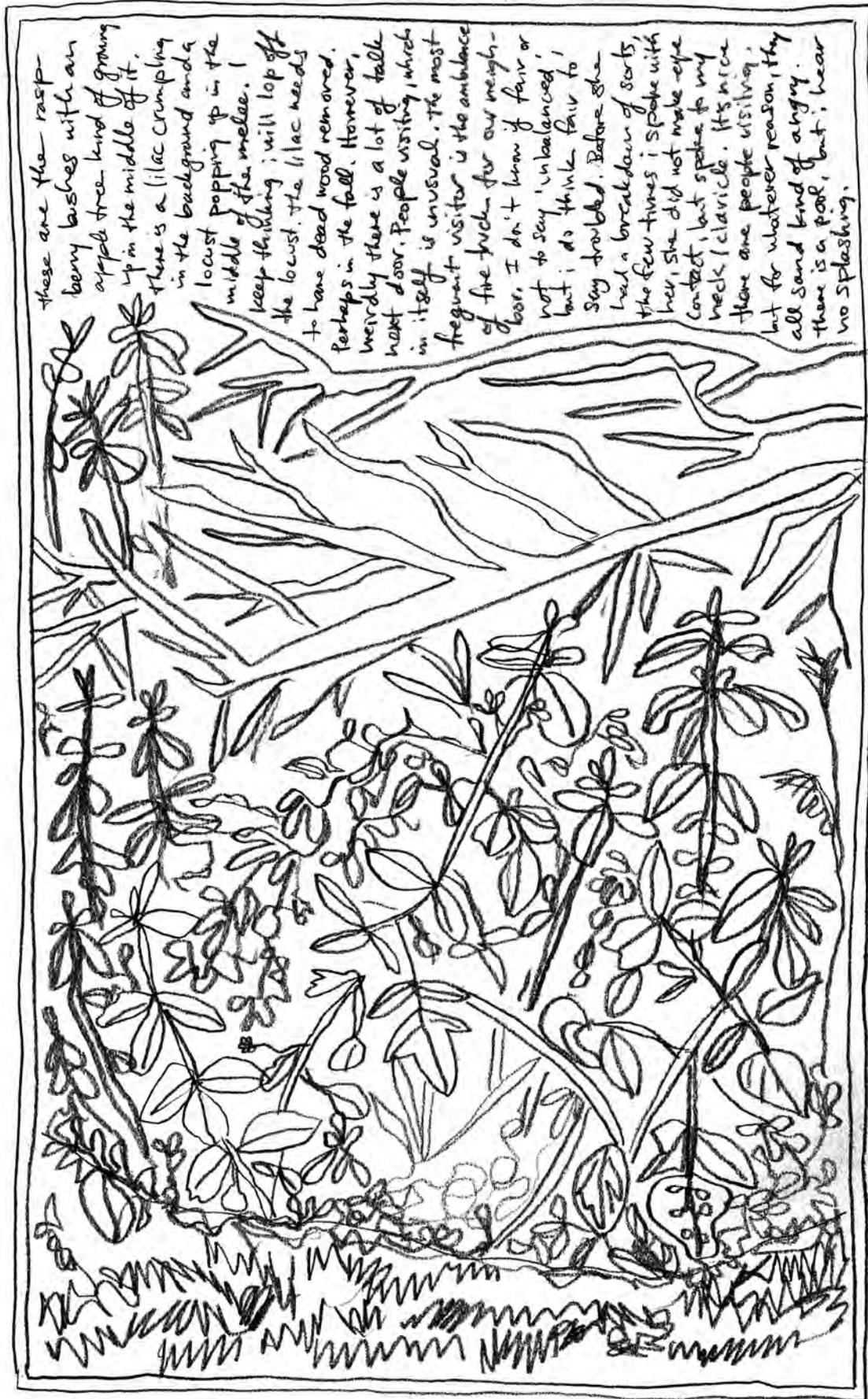
DAY 89
that's my job



SO MANY ZOOM CALLS THIS WEEK. I KIND OF LIKE THE HALF HOUR ZOOM. IT IS JUST ABOUT PERFECT. WE HAD A ZOOM HAPPY HALF HOUR WITH OUR FRIENDS ROD + KARRI YESTERDAY. NATURALLY THE CONVERSATION STRAYED INTO HOW TO DRAIN AN ABSCESS IN YOUR CAT AT HOME. AMAZING - AND KARRI CAN DO ANYTHING. NEXT TIME OUR CAT IS SICK, I WILL CALL KARRI FIRST, SINCE WE WERE TALKING ABOUT PUST ABSCESSSES, WE TALKED ABOUT RATS AS WELL. AND THEN - POOF - IT WAS OVER.

DAY 90
drain an abscess

7/19/20



7/20/20

these are the rasp-
berry bushes with an
apple tree kind of growing
up in the middle of it.
there is a lilac crumpling
in the background and a
locust popping up in the
middle of the meadow. I
keep thinking i will top off
the locust. the lilac needs
to have dead wood removed.
Perhaps in the fall. However,
weirdly there is a lot of talk
next door. People visiting, which
in itself is unusual. the most
frequent visitor is the ambulance
of fire truck for our neigh-
bor. I don't know if fair or
not to say 'unbalanced',
but i do think fair to
say troubled. Before she
had a breakdown of sorts,
the few times i spoke with
her, she did not make eye
contact, but spoke to my
neck / clavicle. It's nice
there are people visiting,
but for whatever reason, they
all sound kind of angry.
there is a pool, but i hear
no splashing.

DAY 91

locust popping up

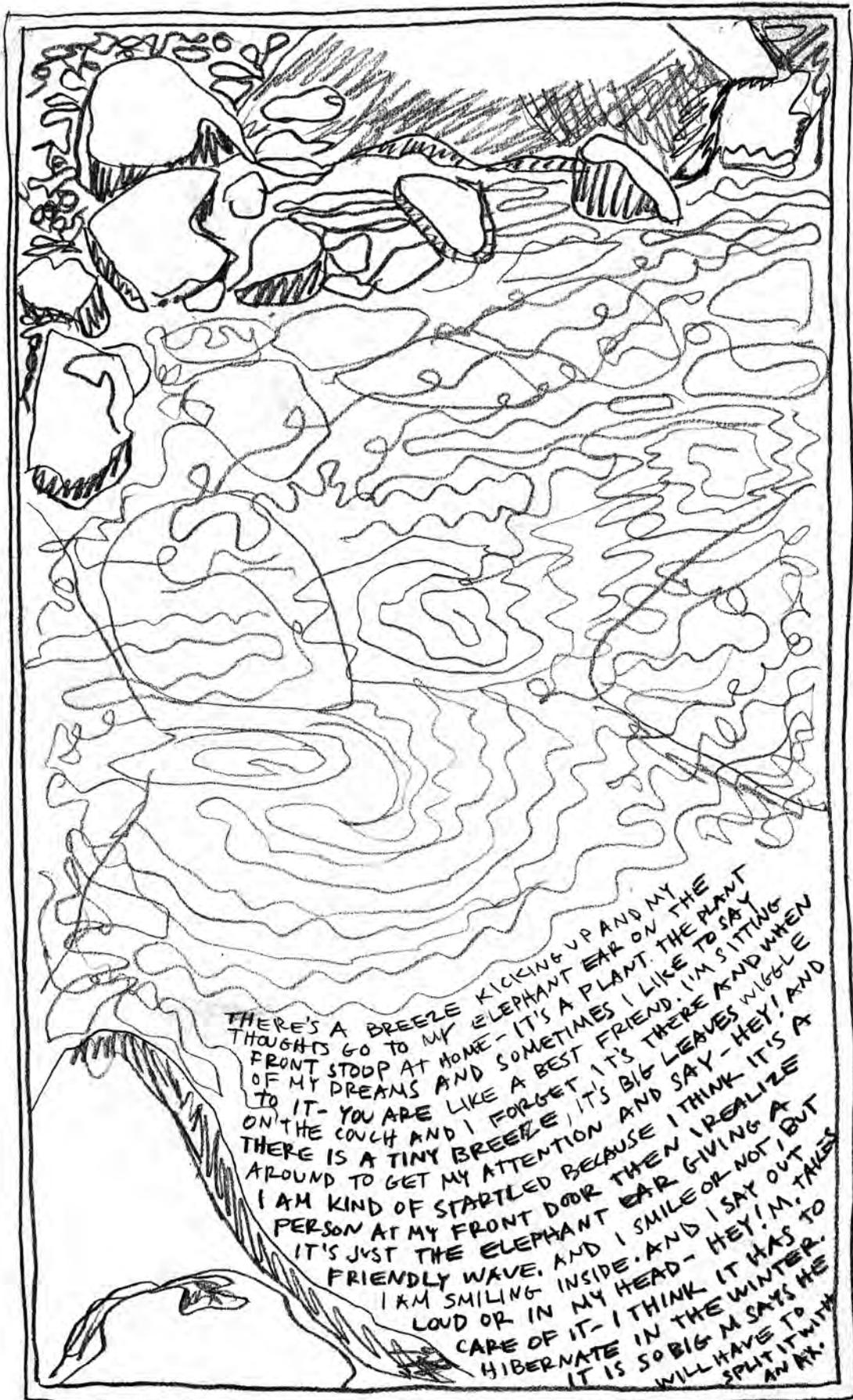


7/21/20

DAY 92

together skimming along

I am mad, so that is always a good time to draw. I won't bore you
with the details, but after i drew i was a tiny bit less mad. I am
noticing that my neck is quite tense and i think that is from being
mad and nothing to do with the act of drawing. I am looking at the
window - they have put new blackout all over campus and it looks so
amazingly smooth. It does not smell very good though. But if i had
roller skates. it would be fun to roller skate all around on that
smooth blackness. I had roller skates in junior high school and was
always searching for the smooth sidewalks. I remember going over
to Francesca's house by the beach to roller skate and her mother only
let us skate on one very short bumpy street. I was ticked - so many
other streets were smooth. I remember it was a big deal to have
roller skates like other kids had - i think this was the era of
roller rinks, but i don't think i ever went to one of those. I did take
Pearl to a roller rink a time or two when she was small. I did take
still small enough to want to hold hands while we skated around
the rink together, skimming along to the Heart song Barbra Streisand.



THERE'S A BREEZE KICKING UP AND MY THOUGHTS GO TO MY ELEPHANT EAR ON THE FRONT STOOP AT HOME - IT'S A PLANT. THE PLANT OF MY DREAMS AND SOMETIMES I LIKE TO SAY TO IT - YOU ARE LIKE A BEST FRIEND. I'M SITTING ON THE COUCH AND I FORGET IT'S THERE AND WHEN THERE IS A TINY BREEZE, IT'S BIG LEAVES WIGGLE AROUND TO GET MY ATTENTION AND SAY - HEY! AND I AM KIND OF STARTLED BECAUSE I THINK IT'S A PERSON AT MY FRONT DOOR EAR GIVING A FRIENDLY WAVE, AND I SMILE OR NOT, BUT I AM SMILING INSIDE. AND I SAY OUT LOUD OR IN MY HEAD - HEY! M. TAKE CARE OF IT - I THINK IT HAS TO HIBERNATE IN THE WINTER. IT IS SO BIG M SAYS HE WILL HAVE TO SPLIT IT WITH AN AX.

7/22/20

DAY 93

has to hibernate



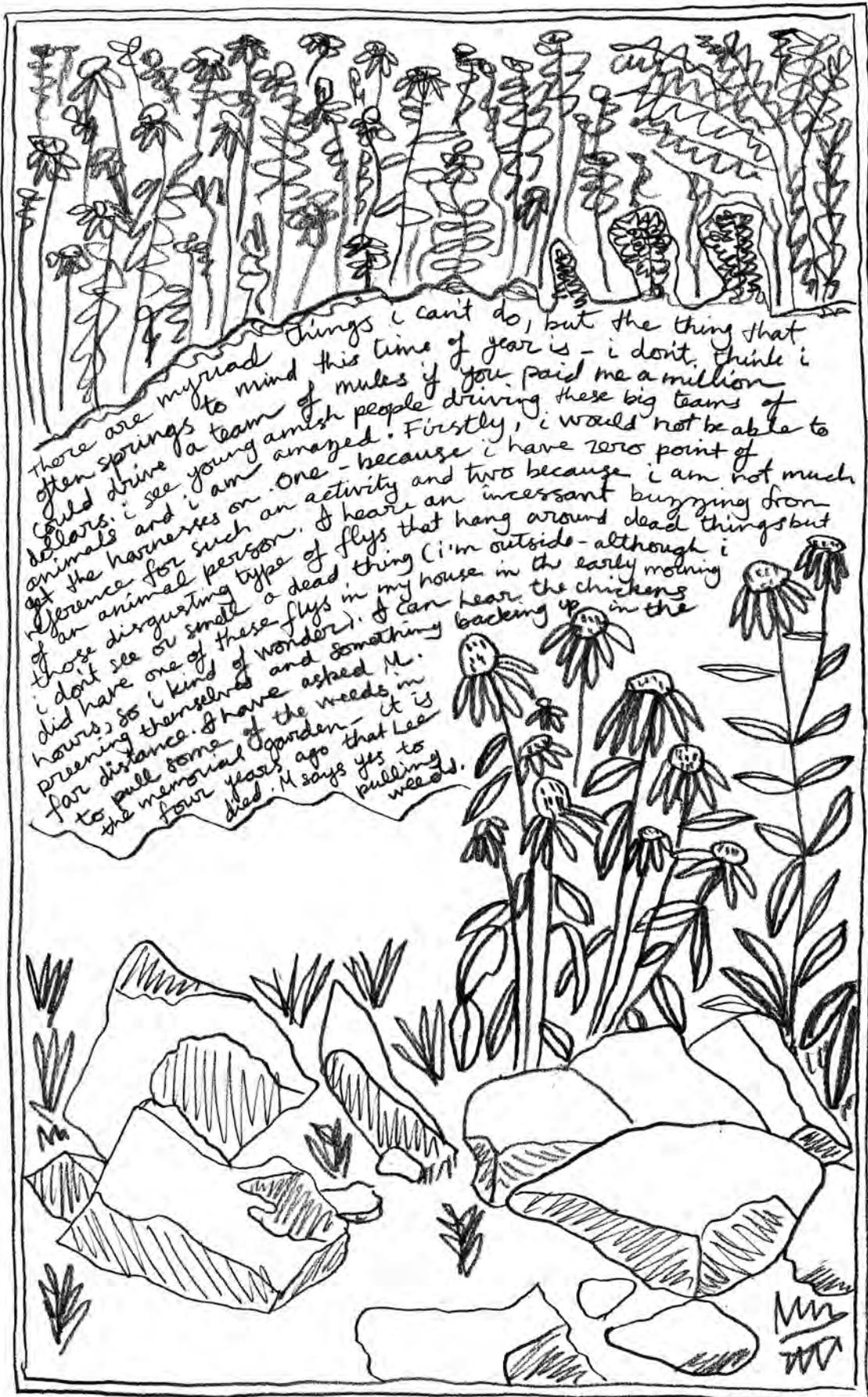
I was difficult to decide what to draw today. I'm sitting outside and it is very hot - well not as hot as it has been - but very humid. That is July for you. This is the vegetable garden + as I was drawing the fence from my vantage point I didn't know what was in there - I might wonder why a fence was needed around a crop of weeds? which would be a fair question. Well there are weeds.

but the area are a multitude of other plants. The weeds are just kind of winning at the moment. Sometimes a breeze kicks up and catch a whiff of something rotting.

DAY 94

whiff of something

7/23/20

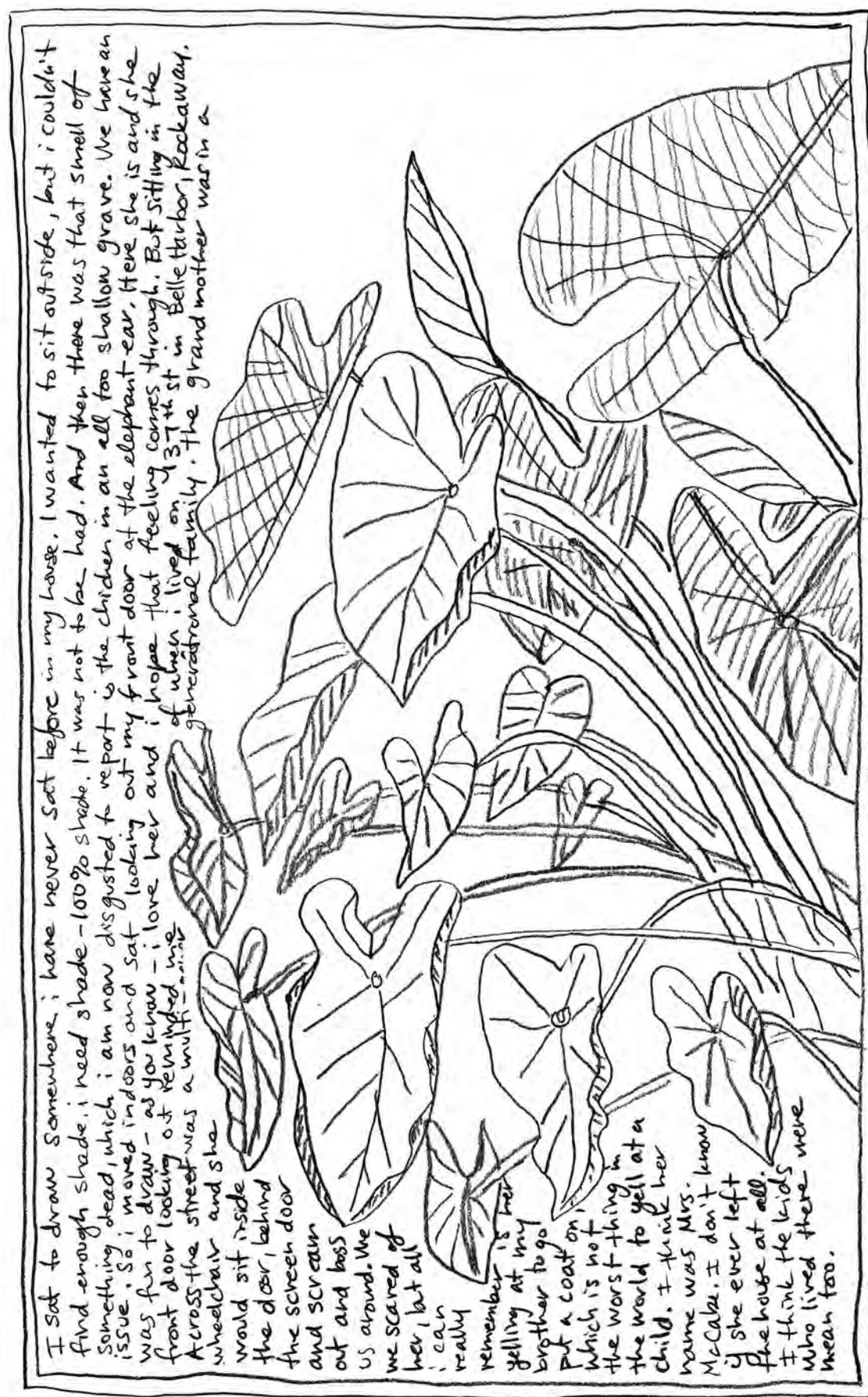


7/24/20

things i cant do, but the thing that
there are myriad things to mind this time of year is - i dont think i
often drive a team of mules if you paid me a million
dollars. i see young amish people driving these big teams of
animals and i am amazed. Firstly, i would not be able to
get the harnesses on. One - because i have zero point of
reference for such an activity and two because i am not much
of an animal person. I hear an incessant buzzing from
those disgusting type of flies that hang around dead things but
i dont see or smell a dead thing (i'm outside - although i
did have one of these flies in my house in the early morning
hours, so i kind of wonder). I can hear the chickens
preening themselves and something backing up in the
far distance. I have asked M.
to pull some of the weeds - it is
the memorial garden - yes to
four years ago that Lee
died. M says yes to
pulling
weeds.

DAY 95

get the harness



7/25/20

I sat to draw somewhere i have never sat before in my house. I wanted to sit outside, but i couldn't
find enough shade. i need shade - 100% shade. It was not to be had. And then there was that smell of
something dead, which i am now disgusted to report is the chicken in an all too shallow grave. We have an
issue. So i moved indoors and sat looking out my front door at the elephant ear. Here she is and she
was fun to draw - as you know - i love her and i hope that feeling comes through. But sitting in the
front door looking out reminded me of when i lived on 37th st in Belle Harbor, Rockaway.
Across the street was a multi-generational family. The grand mother was in a
wheelchair and she
would sit inside
the door, behind
the screen door
and scream
out and boss
us around. We
were scared of
her, but all
i can
really
remember is her
yelling at my
brother to go
put a coat on,
which is not
the worst thing in
the world to yell at a
child. I think her
name was Mrs.
McCabe. I don't know
if she ever left
the house at all.
I think the kids
who lived there were
mean too.

DAY 96

behind the screen

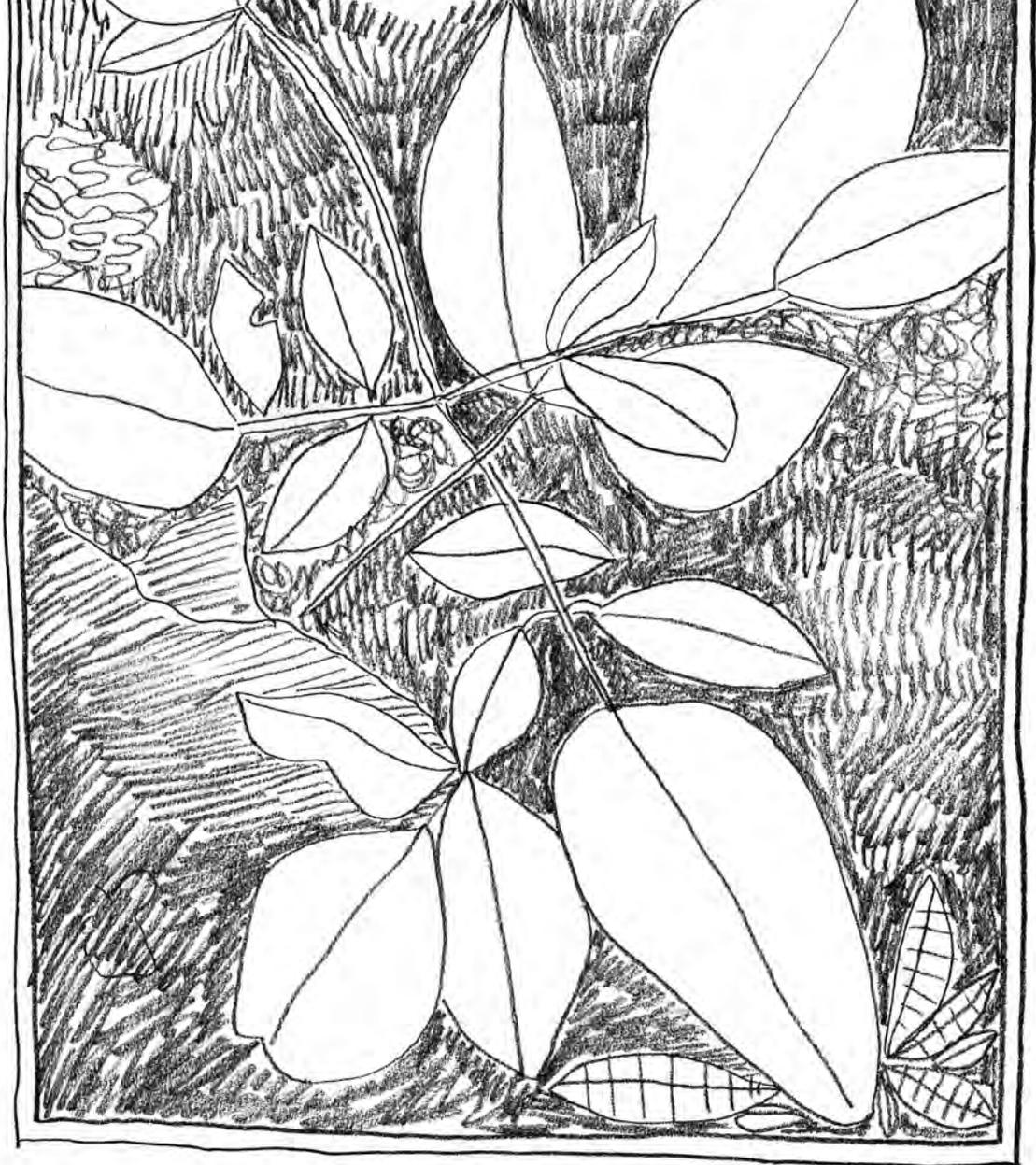
We are at Ravensburg again and it is even hot here, which is unusual - it speaks to the overall hotness of this July. Lately, it does feel better than home, temp-wise and i can hear the stream. I will dip a toe before we go back home. I like to draw rocks almost as much as i like to draw tree bark, which is a lot. N. has been very busy in the front garden this morning, which is nice. He has declared that he is going to be 'in perpetual motion', which sounds exhausting / wildly productive. Right now he is sitting completely still, so perhaps he was being hyperbolic. I'm not sure if that is the correct term or not, and i am also 100% sure i have never used that term before. But, when he was in a state of perpetual motion, he somehow missed the four tiny Amish boys walk by the house in their Sunday best, but without shoes. I think for them walking down our street is probably the equivalent of walking through the city. There is a golden retriever splashing around in the stream, making it sand very deep and refreshing.



7/26/20

DAY 97
in perpetual motion

This background was so much fun, i think i'd like to do that all day long. I'm starting to think of this as a 100 day project, but i am just not 100% on that. Maybe it would be nice to continue with just the drawing but maybe just a little or no writing? Maybe it would be fun to add in one color, or a bunch of colors. Maybe it would be motivating to do another 100 day project? Thinking of stopping makes me feel relieved and also a little sad. Like if i don't do something like draw every day i won't do it at all. What about drawing + then take all the small drawings + put them together to make a 10x10 big drawing. I like that idea.



DAY 98
starting to think

7/27/20

APPARENTLY TODAY I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS NECESSARY TO REALLY SLEEP AS WHEN I WOKE UP IT WAS STILL KIND OF NIGHTTIME. THE CAT IS UNDER MY CHAIR IN SOME HEAVY GROOMING ACTIVITY. I AM GAZING AT THE SEA OATS, WHICH WAGGLE ABOUT IN THE BREEZE. EACH OAT IS LIKE A TINY WEAVING. IN THE FALL THE CHICKENS LIKE TO EAT THEM. THE FIRST EMPLOYEE TO TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID WAS REPORTED TODAY. THERE IS A DASHBOARD ON THE COLLEGE WEBSITE WITH A BIG RED NUMBER 1. AND THEN THERE IS A BIG ZERO UNDER THE WORD

'RECOVERED' AND I WONDER IF MORE PEOPLE START GETTING SICK - THEY WILL - IS THIS GOING TO BE A DEATH COUNTER? IT IS A VERY UNSETTLING IMAGE.



7/28/20

DAY 99

a death counter

DAY 100

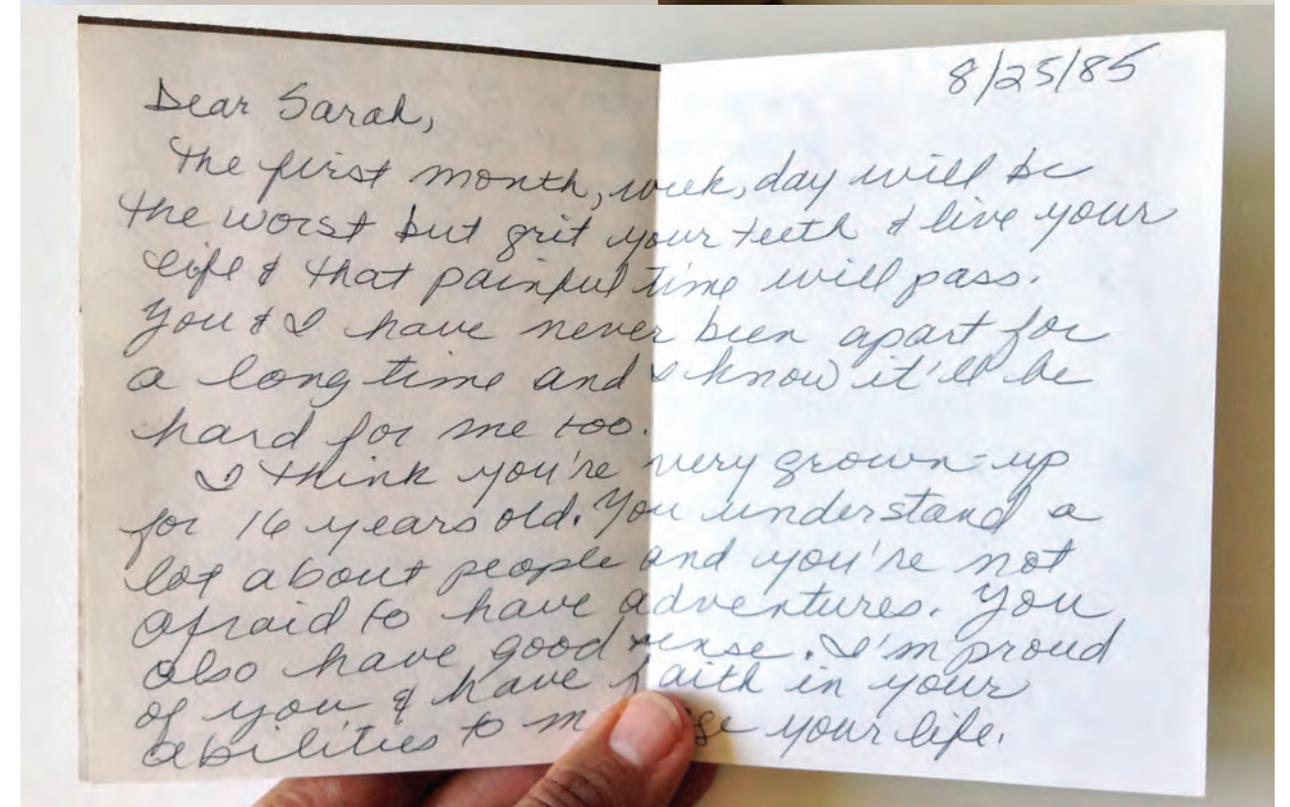
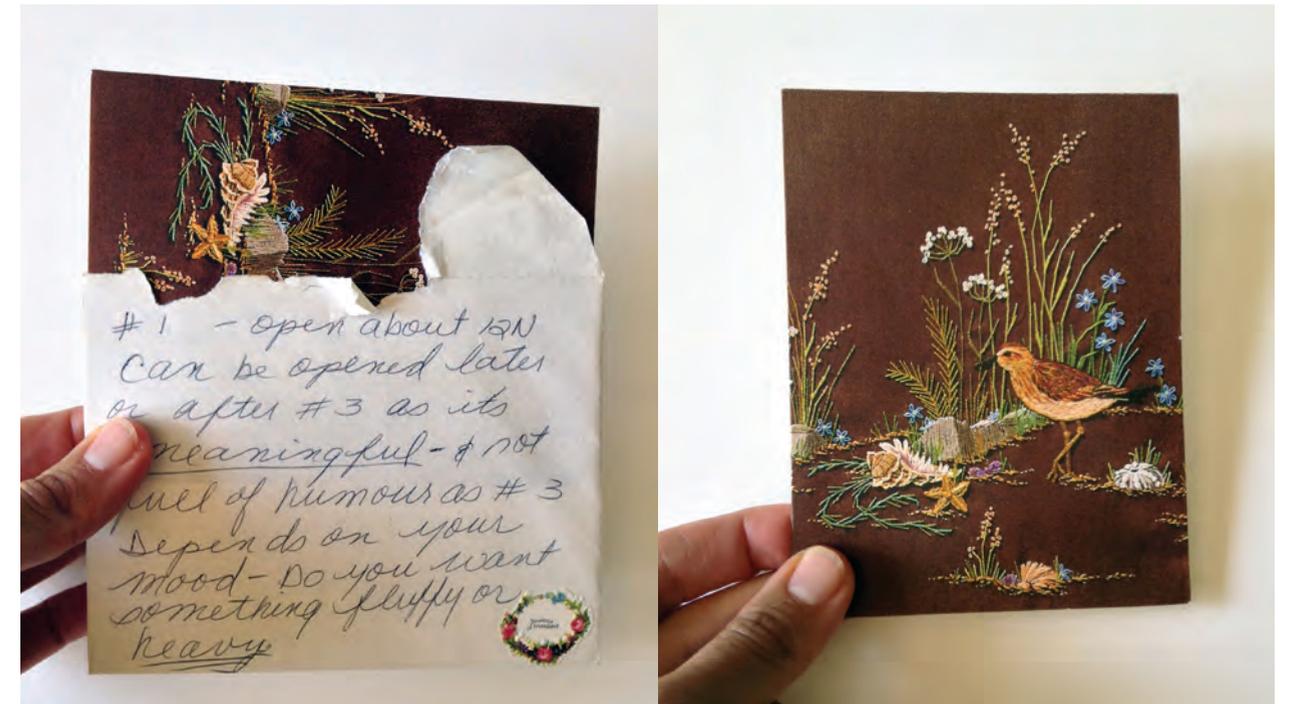
pleasant staring contest



IT'S POSSIBLE THIS IS DRAWING #100, + JUST AS POSSIBLE IT'S NOT QUITE. M. HAS BEEN SEEING A DEER + HER TWO SPOTTED FAWNS. I THINK I SAW THEM THIS MORNING. IT WAS ON MILL RD. AND I WAS RUNNING + NOTICED THEM IN A FIELD ON MY LEFT. I WAS WATCHING THEM AND THEY WERE WATCHING ME. AT SOME POINT IT SEEMED RIDICULOUS TO KEEP RUNNING, SO I STOPPED AND STOOD + WATCHED THEM AND WE HAD A VERY PLEASANT STARING CONTEST. THEN A MAN IN A PICKUP TRUCK AND A JOHN DEERE CAP PULLED UP NEXT TO ME. HE WAS CHEWING TOBACCO AND IT WAS 6 A.M., MIND YOU, AND WE HAD A NICE CHAT ABOUT THE DEER. IT IS POSSIBLE HE FEEDS THEM OR SEES THEM ON A REGULAR BASIS. THE AIR WAS COOL AND IT WASN'T HUMID FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A VERY LONG TIME, WHICH WAS REFRESHING SINCE NOW IT IS BACK INTO THE HIGH 90s. THE COOL MORNING BUT A MEMORY.

7/29/20

Appendix B
a letter



I often think of you when you were small & what a great small kid you were. Those days seem like yesterday. I remember when you were 1 year old & I took you to the doctor & she said we had a great rapport & I think we did over the years.

I know in the coming year there will be lots of times when we'll want to be together - you'll want to talk about something & things will happen that I'll want to tell you or I'll want to share something with you that we're doing. Those times will be hard for us, but then we'll write or phone. Sometimes I feel sad for you that you don't have the Bell Harbor house to hang out in & relax in but I'll tell you I truthfully feel this is a better place for you to visit or to live but probably ^{during} the year to come, you won't feel that.

I'm happy for you because you have two great places to live & that your life will be enriched by living in such different places.

You know when important things occur, I'll be thinking about you - your birthday, Christmas (my birthday), the prom, graduation. And maybe you'll feel I'm there in spirit if not in body. No matter how many oceans separate us, we'll always be together because you are my heart. Love always, Mom

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Colophon

Baskerville

An English businessman, John Baskerville was born in 1707. He had an early career teaching handwriting as a writing master before becoming a printer. He directed his punchcutter, John Handy, in the design of many typefaces. Benjamin Franklin, a fellow printer, was a great admirer of Baskerville's and promoted his typefaces in the United States. Baskerville is a transitional typeface and bridges the gap between Old Style and Modern type design. He was also an innovator in printing, paper, and ink production.

Franklin Gothic

Franklin Gothic was developed in the early years of the 20th century by the type foundry American Type Founders (ATF) and credited to its head designer Morris Fuller Benton. It was named in honor of Benjamin Franklin who was a prolific American printer. Franklin was an admirer of John Baskerville's work.



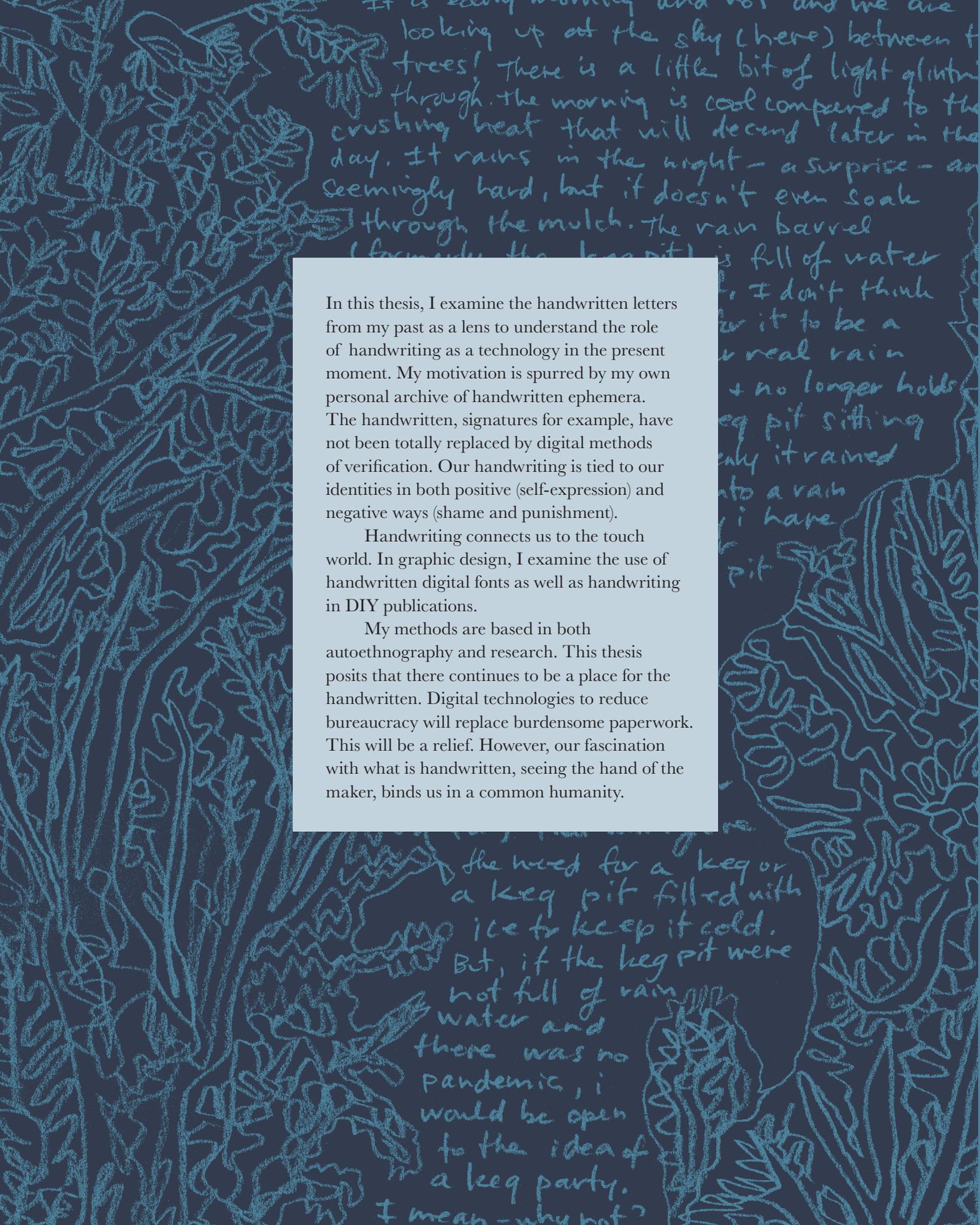
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Gratitude to my running partner. Anything can happen and probably will.

Mike and Pearl: sweet, generous people. All encouragement and love.



It is early morning and we are looking up at the sky (here) between the trees! There is a little bit of light glinting through. The morning is cool compared to the crushing heat that will descend later in the day. It rains in the night - a surprise - and seemingly hard, but it doesn't even soak through the mulch. The rain barrel (formerly the keq pit) is full of water.

In this thesis, I examine the handwritten letters from my past as a lens to understand the role of handwriting as a technology in the present moment. My motivation is spurred by my own personal archive of handwritten ephemera. The handwritten, signatures for example, have not been totally replaced by digital methods of verification. Our handwriting is tied to our identities in both positive (self-expression) and negative ways (shame and punishment).

Handwriting connects us to the touch world. In graphic design, I examine the use of handwritten digital fonts as well as handwriting in DIY publications.

My methods are based in both autoethnography and research. This thesis posits that there continues to be a place for the handwritten. Digital technologies to reduce bureaucracy will replace burdensome paperwork. This will be a relief. However, our fascination with what is handwritten, seeing the hand of the maker, binds us in a common humanity.

the need for a keq or a keq pit filled with ice to keep it cold. But, if the keq pit were not full of rain water and there was no pandemic, I would be open to the idea of a keq party. I mean - why not?