

"The rural needs of the urban child are not just the sites of the farm or the pleasures of running untrammelled through the woods or exploring the country park. They include vital personal experiences and discoveries like silence, solitude and the sensation of utter darkness."

- Colin Ward, *The Child in the City*, 1978

December 19th, 2008. Weather Outlook: Showers with highs in the 50's, falling to the low 40's by evening.  
Dec. 21st 7:04 AM (Eastern) marks the Winter Solstice. New Moon on Dec. 27th, 10:23 AM.



"...I am a complete city person. I grew up in the desert in Dubai. I am a banker. My family is from Mumbai, they have been traders for centuries. They traded nonfood. The family originated in Pakistan. The first farm I saw was in upstate New York a month ago. In the orchard I picked my first apple." - museum visitor, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Nov. 2008

December 19, 2008, San Francisco, CA

While The Meadow Network project is rooted in a series of ongoing conversations with city residents, it also has a "double life" as an art project. The ongoing newspapers that the project generates circulate throughout the city and will also travel outward, to other cities and other points of view. With this in mind, we decided that we would, on occasion invite other artists and writers to collaborate as guest editors and contributors. We saw this as a way to open up the project to other voices and methodologies, and also as an opportunity to circulate ideas from "outside" the city back into the local conversations that the Meadow Network is centered upon.

This issue is produced in collaboration with the European artists' collective myvillages.org. On the pages of this issue are drawings and stories by city residents and gallery visitors to the exhibition, *The Gatherers: Greening our Urban Spheres*, at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Drawing was used to facilitate storytelling and to notate experience, personal histories and memory. They were collected through a series of conversations led by Wapke Feenstra and Antje Schiffers, two members of the myvillages.org collective along with the editors of this newspaper.

Send us your own rural background drawing or any comments to [www.fieldfaring.org](http://www.fieldfaring.org). We look forward to hearing from you.



**Imagining Rural America at Home.**

My father's cousin once visited our farm in Wjelsryp in Friesland, in the north of The Netherlands. This American lady was wearing a rose-coloured coat and I had never seen that

## Drawn from Rural Backgrounds

colour before. My mother told me that Americans had their own fashion and especially liked strange bright colours. I touched the coat when it was hanging in our cloakroom. This was the end of the sixties, 20 years after the ending of the Second World War. Since that war, having a farm and producing food has been seen as a good thing. Back then farmers helped hungry citizens from Amsterdam by supplying them with food and hay piles were a safe place to hide refugees.

After the war the Frisian farmers did not have enough land to farm and there were a lot of young men that wanted to work, so the Dutch government promoted emigration. Many of my father's cousins emigrated. Two of them went to Wisconsin. My image of American rural life was shaped by this family history. This family that emigrated had much more land than we ever could buy and had a lot of employees working on their farm. That was the good side. They also had to drive hours to meet other people and had winters in which it was so cold and snowy that they couldn't leave the house for weeks. This was their horror story. Later when pictures accompanied their letters we saw the machines that worked their land and saw the size of their fields. I saw a gleam in my father's eyes when he talked about their land and I came to believe that Wisconsin was a place for rich farmers. - Wapke Feenstra

I grew up on a farm in northern Germany. My parents had a copy of John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath". I read it for the first time when I was 13, and reread it at least two times. The image I made for myself of the draught and dust in a country called Oklahoma impressed me as much as the vision of California's orange trees and never-ending harvests. I still am beside myself with rage when I think about the powerlessness and the injustice the Oklahoma farmers experienced.

There was also Hemmingway, berries, lakes and

Indians in some seemingly northern landscape. There was the description of a rose-coloured prairie that came from Truman Capote. There were farmers that never would talk and a hopeless atmosphere in books like Faulkner's "As I Lay Dying".

In school we had to learn the names of all the American states and where they were located. Virginia north of Carolina, east of Kentucky ... I loved the names of the states, as I filled them with the mysterious world that my mind had composed from the adults' books I read when I had not the age to understand them. - Antje Schiffers



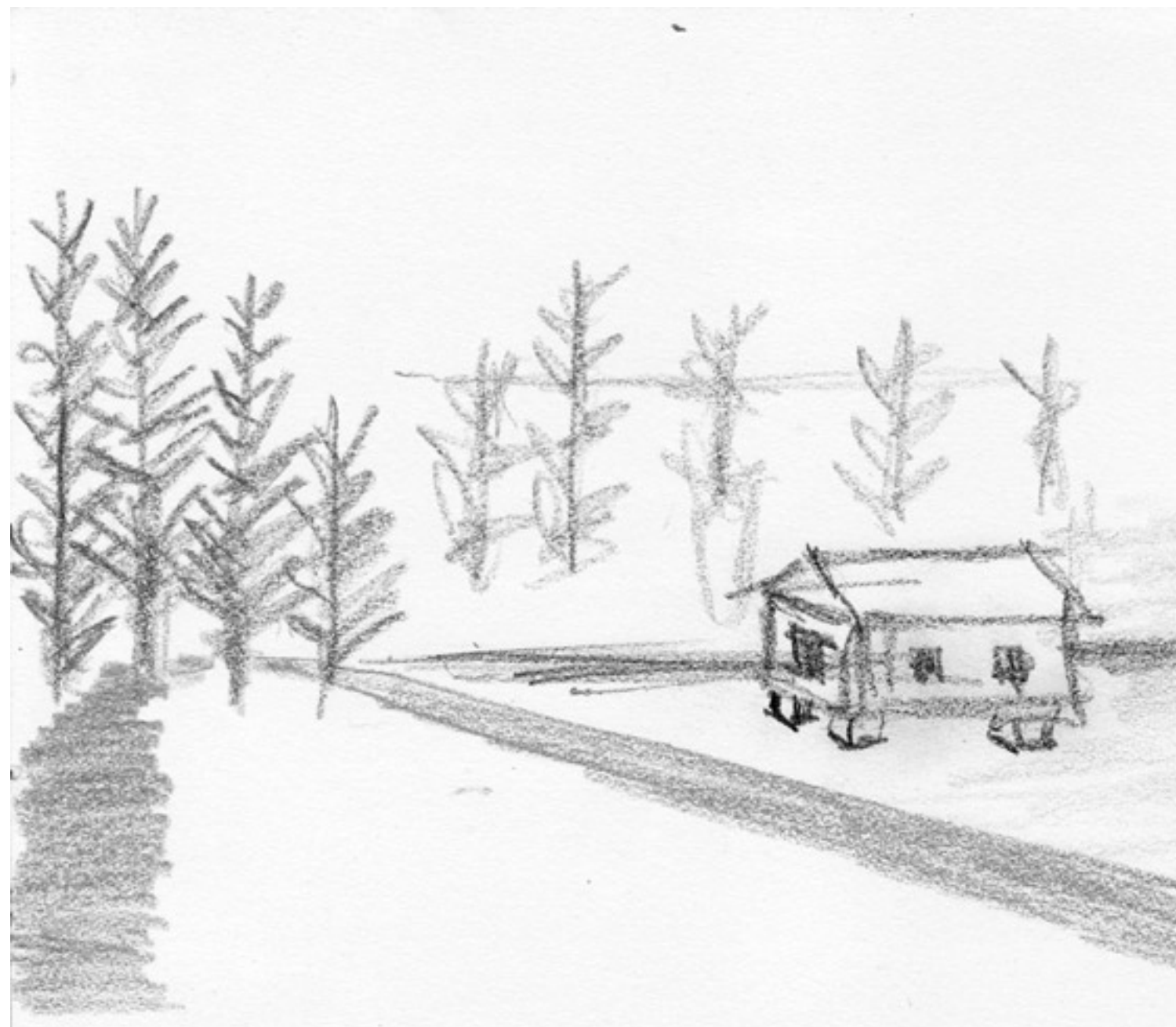
Myvillages.org is founded by three artists that grew up in small rural communities: the artists Kathrin Böhm (DE/UK), Wapke Feenstra (NL) and Antje Schiffers (DE). We now live respectively in London, Rotterdam and Berlin. In 2003 we started to work as an artist cooperation. For years we had chatted about the farms and villages where we grew up. - Because lets

### WHILE CLEARING LAND:

- WE WOULD USE HATCHETS, AXES, MACHETTIES, CHAIN SAWS, SHOVELS, HOES

### • WE WOULD WEAR:

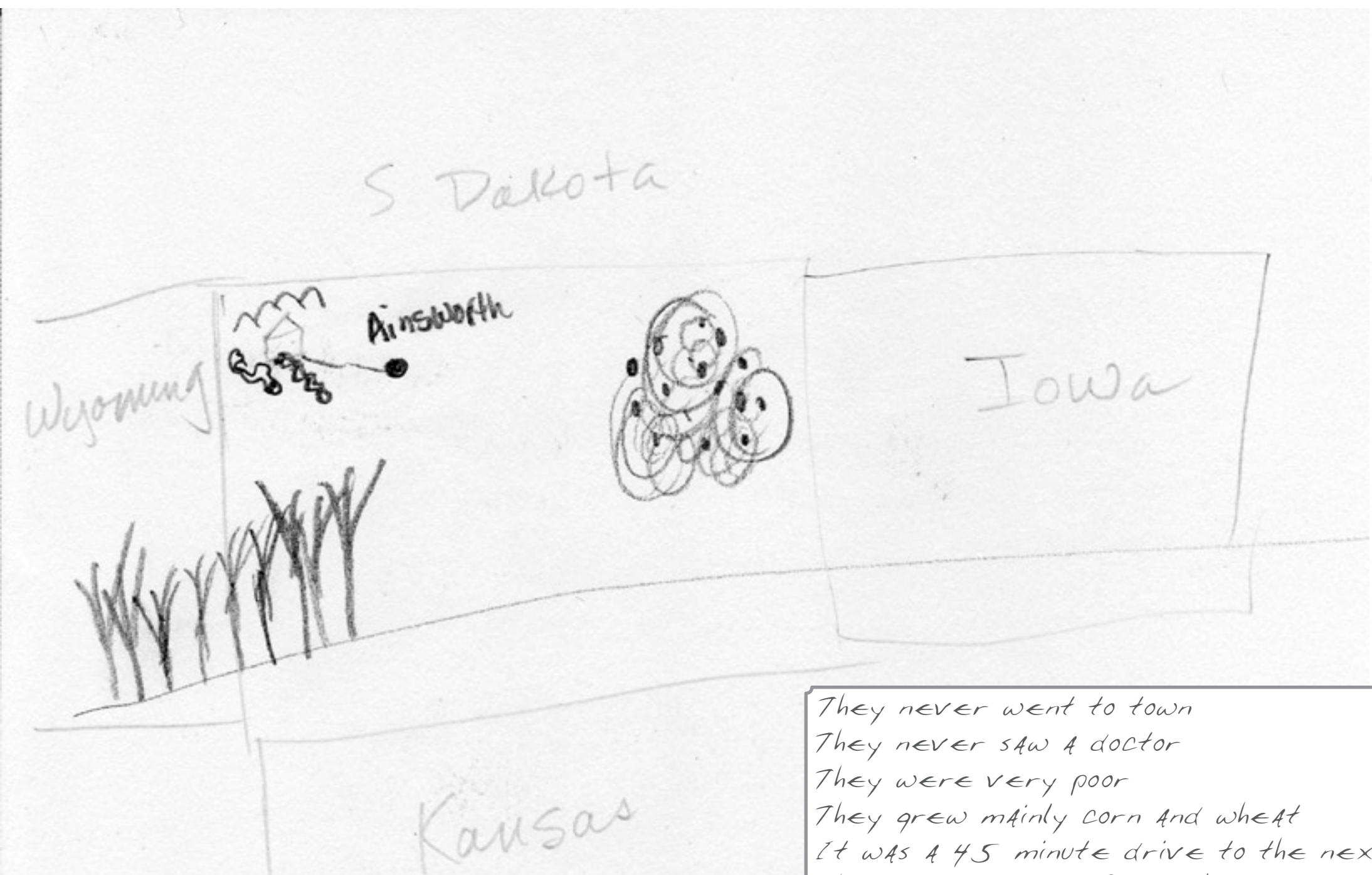
- JEANS/PANTS
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  - T-SHIRT
  - HAT/BANDANA
  - GLOVES
  - BELT W/UTILITY KNIFE
- HEADBAND  
SWEATBAND



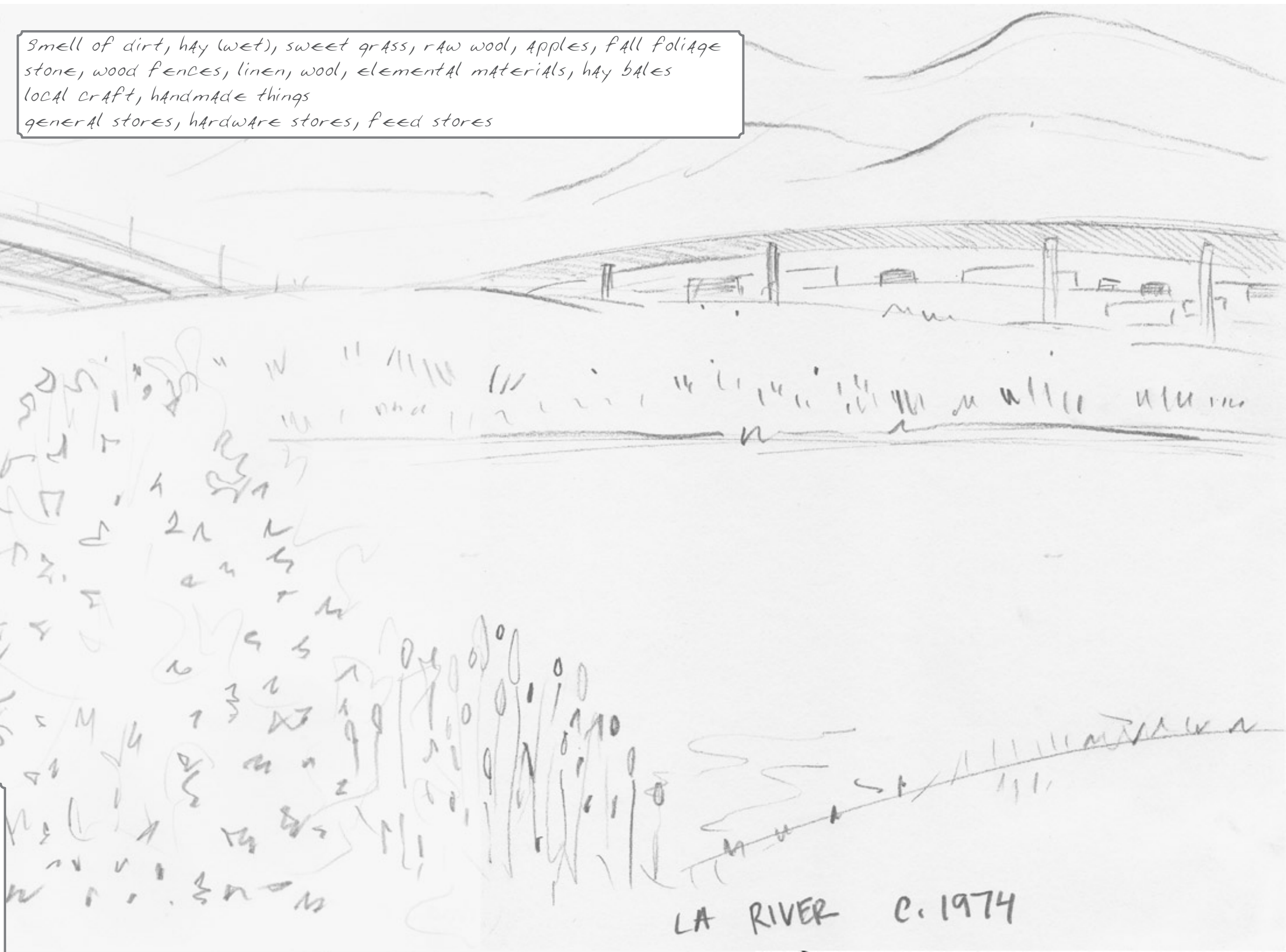
The Meadow Network #3 • Mid December 2008

The Meadow Network is a project by Susanne Cockrell and Ted Purves. Issue #3 was produced in collaboration with myvillages.org (Antje Schiffers and Wapke Feenstra) and published in conjunction with the exhibition, *The Gatherers: Greening our Urban Spheres* at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA. For information on the exhibition, please visit [www.ybca.org](http://www.ybca.org). For more information on the collaborative projects of Susanne Cockrell and Ted Purves, please visit [www.fieldfaring.org](http://www.fieldfaring.org).

The drawings and texts in this issue were generated during conversations held at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and the Golden Gate Senior Center. This issues contains material by Renato Reyes, Cynthia Hooper, Carli Fullerton, Allison Smith, Brin Webster, Matthew Bryant and D.J.



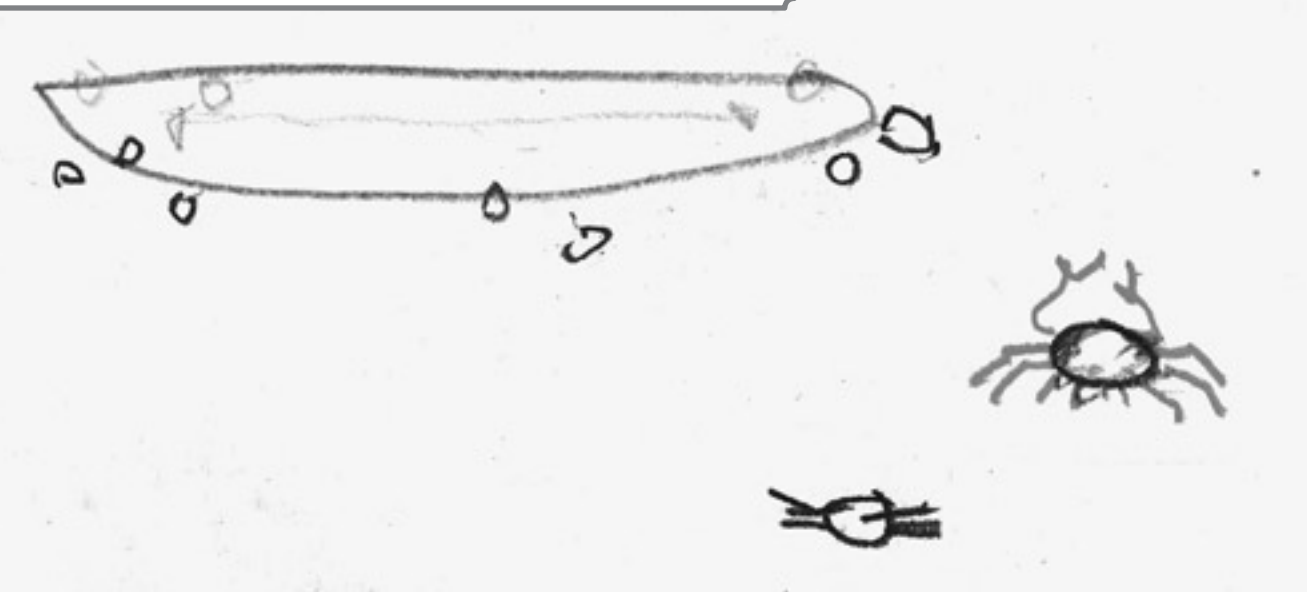
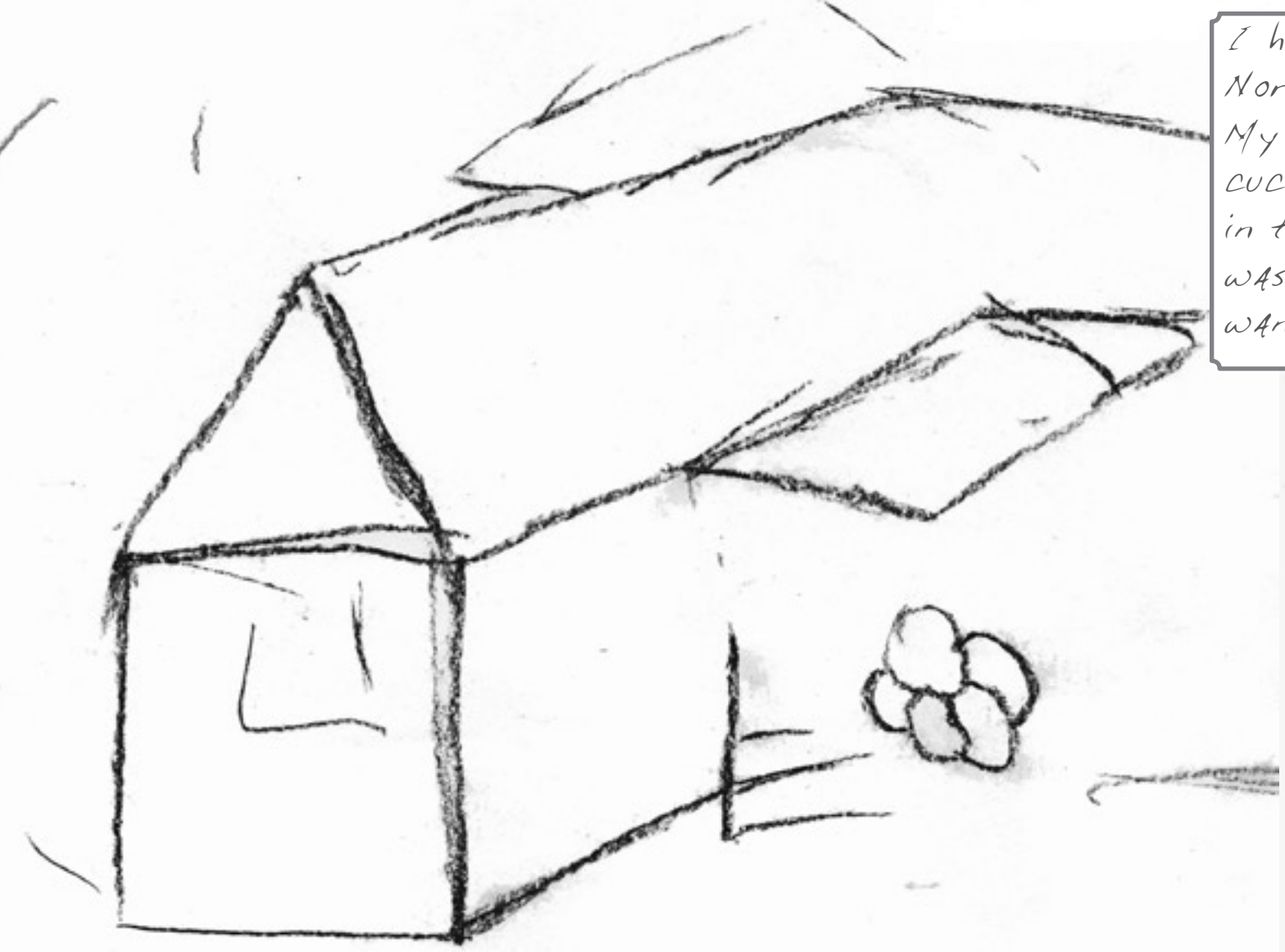
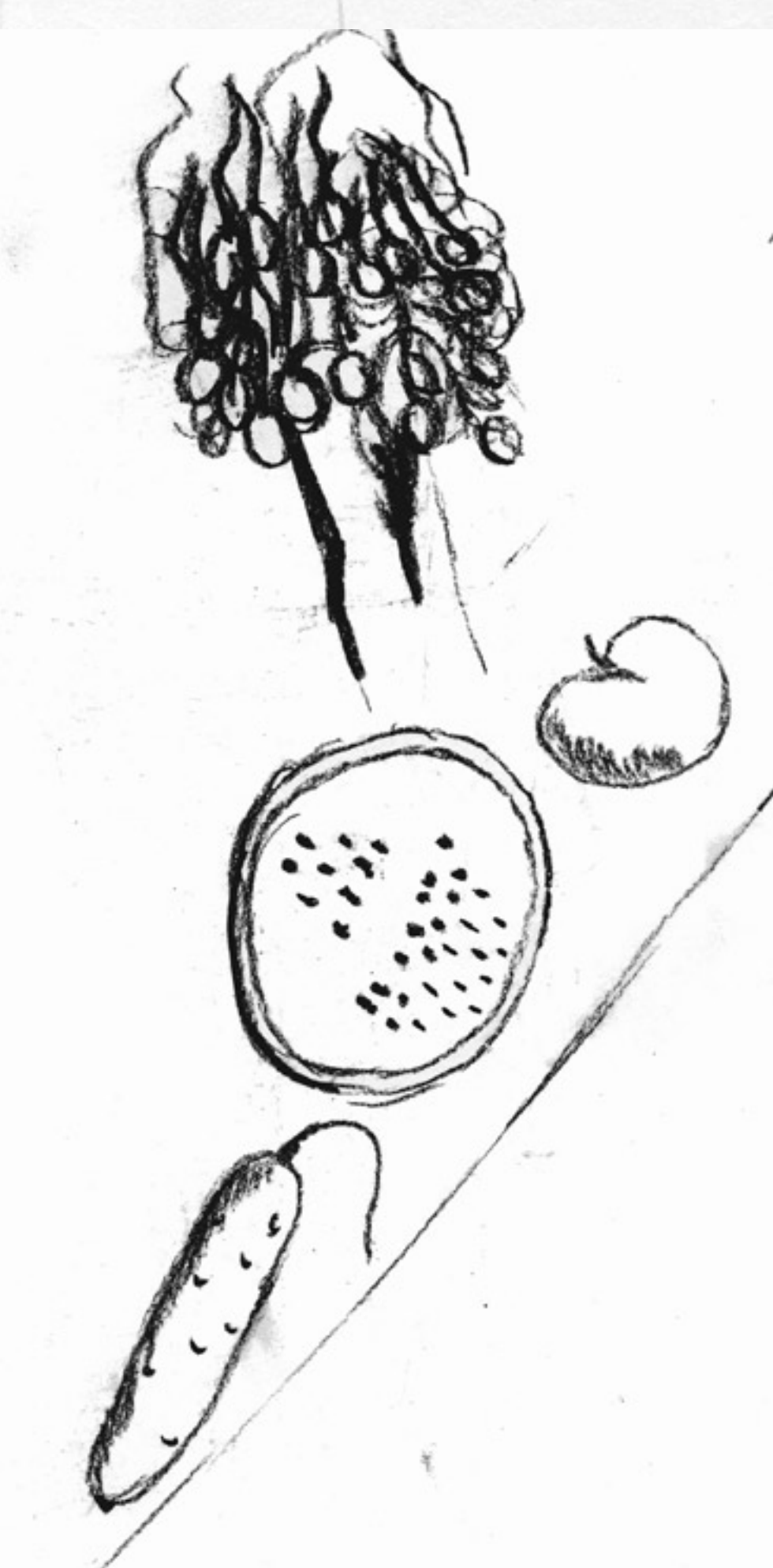
animals cats killed  
 Squirrels  
 birds  
 ducks  
~~bat~~  
 mouse



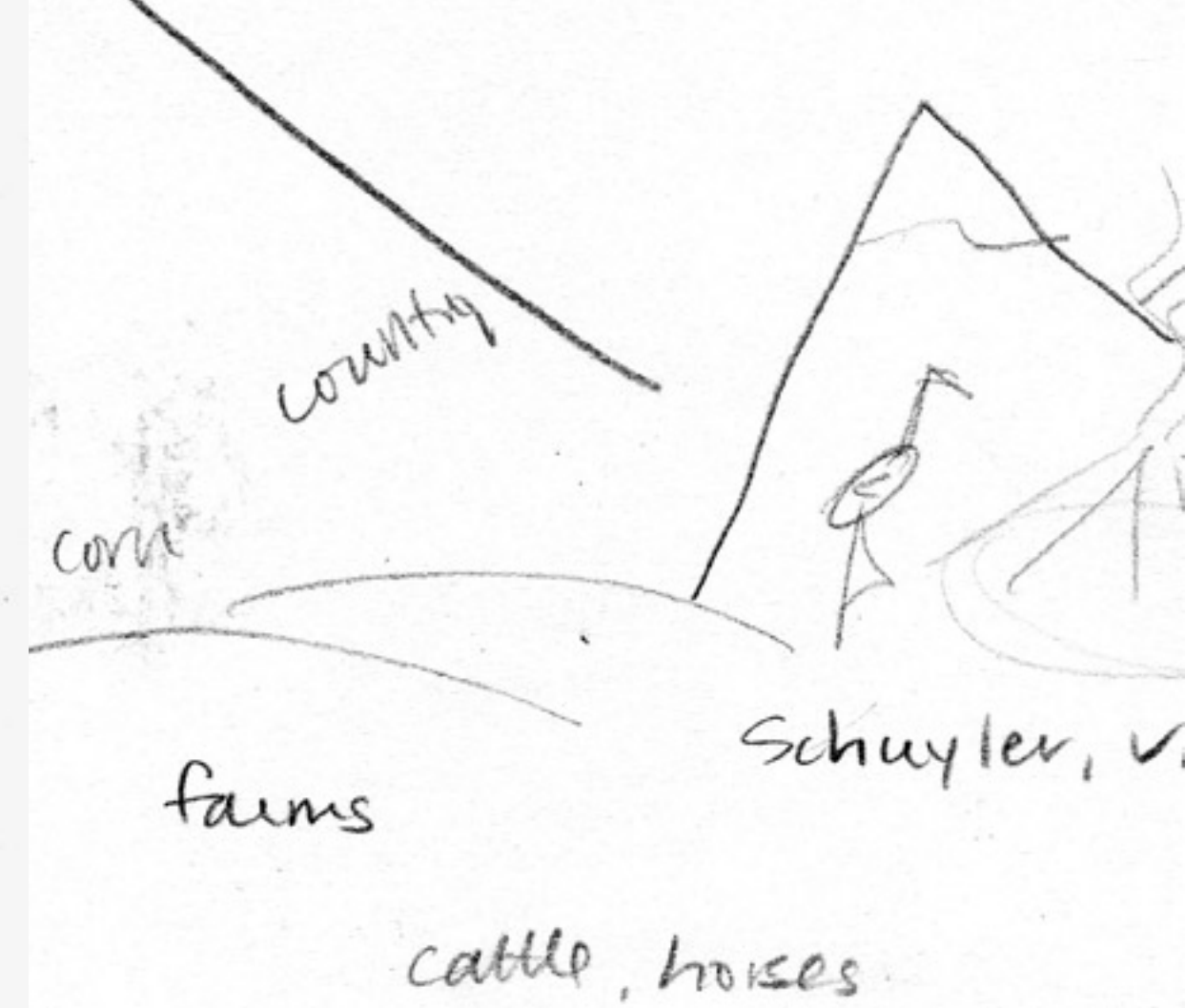
Smell of dirt, hay (wet), sweet grass, raw wool, apples, Fall foliage  
 stone, wood fences, linen, wool, elemental materials, hay bales  
 local craft, handmade things  
 general stores, hardware stores, feed stores

They never went to town  
 They never saw a doctor  
 They were very poor  
 They grew mainly corn and wheat  
 It was a 45 minute drive to the next town  
 They moved to California because my parents did not want another winter  
 My mother took us back there once.  
 The farm was abandoned.  
 I remember the whole time my mother told us to be careful of snakes

I have never been to a village.  
 Nor have my family members.  
 My grandmother used to grow cucumbers, watermelons and grapes in the front yard. She quit; she was not very successful. She just wanted to do something different.

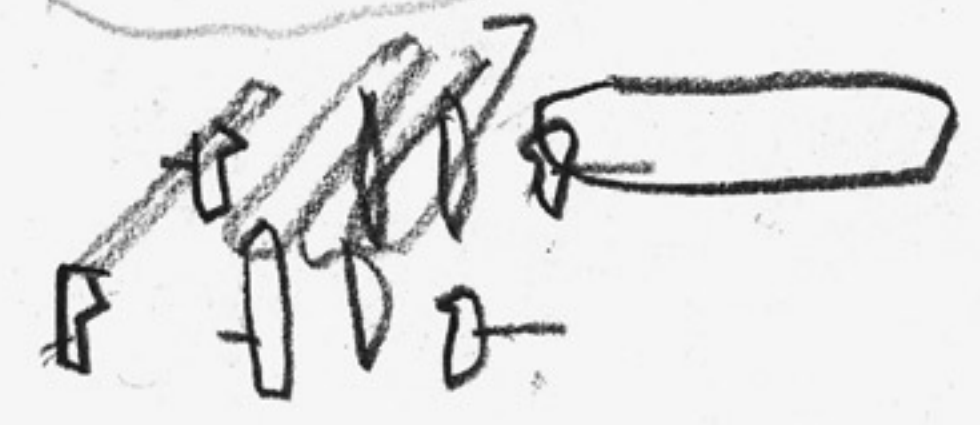
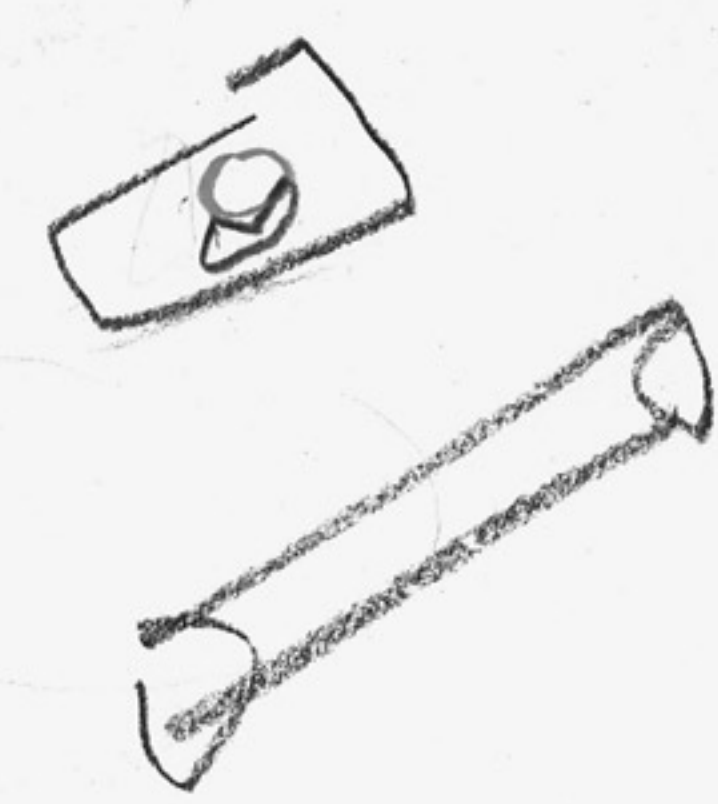


I would make a pilgrimage on my bike to the LA river to the one section of the river that flowed above ground at Van Nuys. This was when I was 11 or 12, usually when I was by myself. This was a piece of wilderness with snakes, lizards and birds. I would wade up to my waist to get frogs and I would get soaked. The railroad tracks were there and also the 405 in the background.

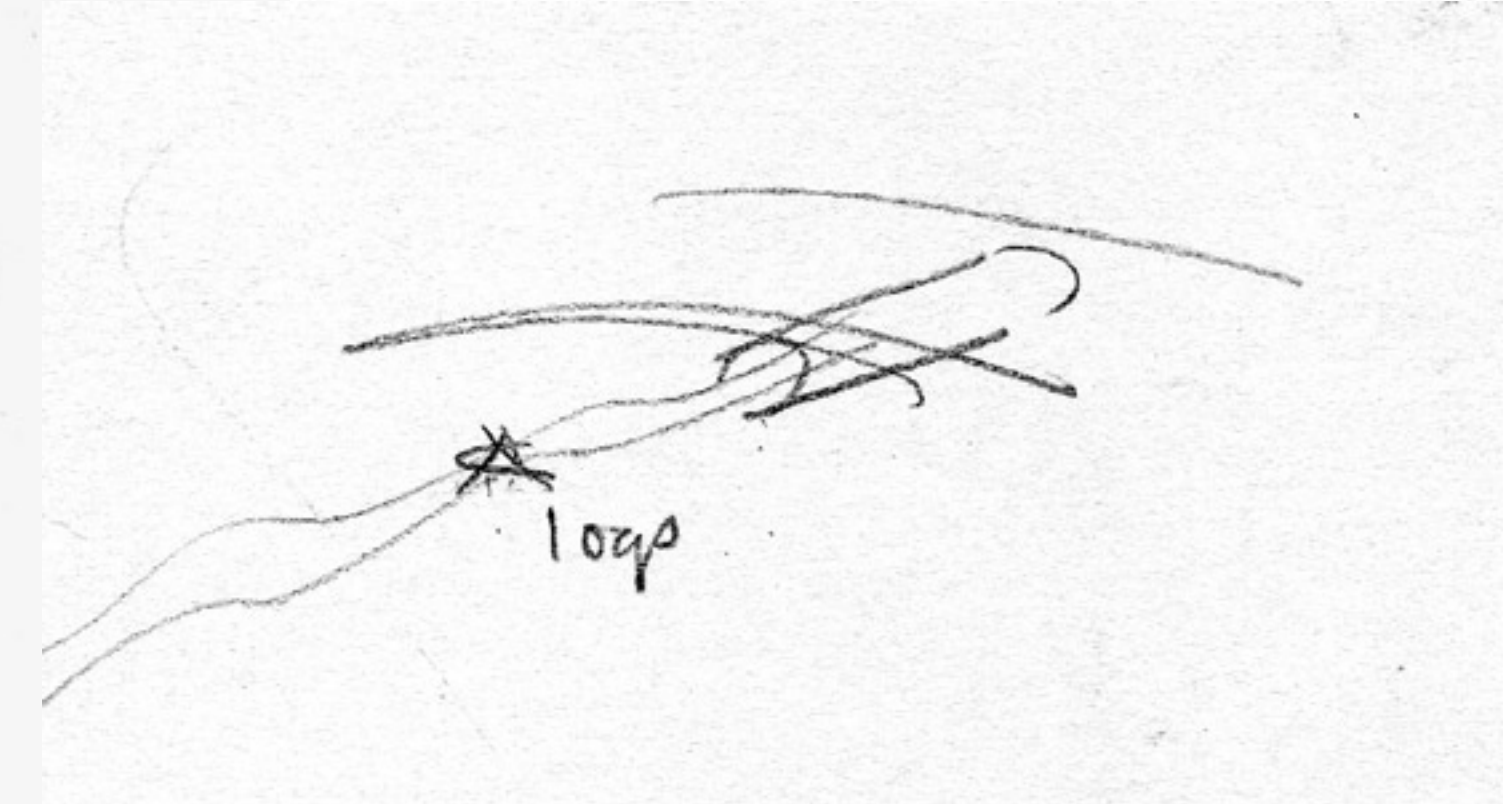


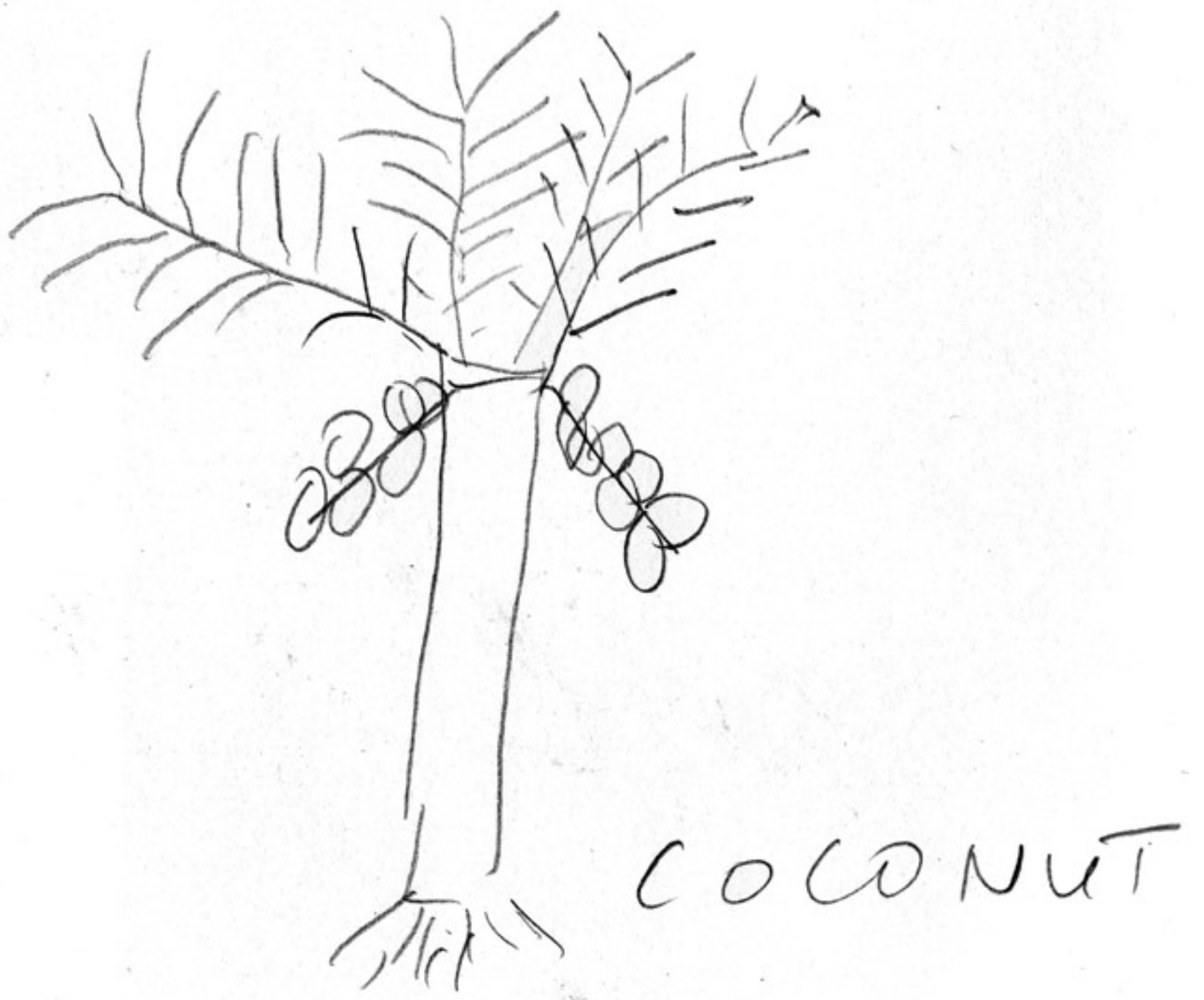
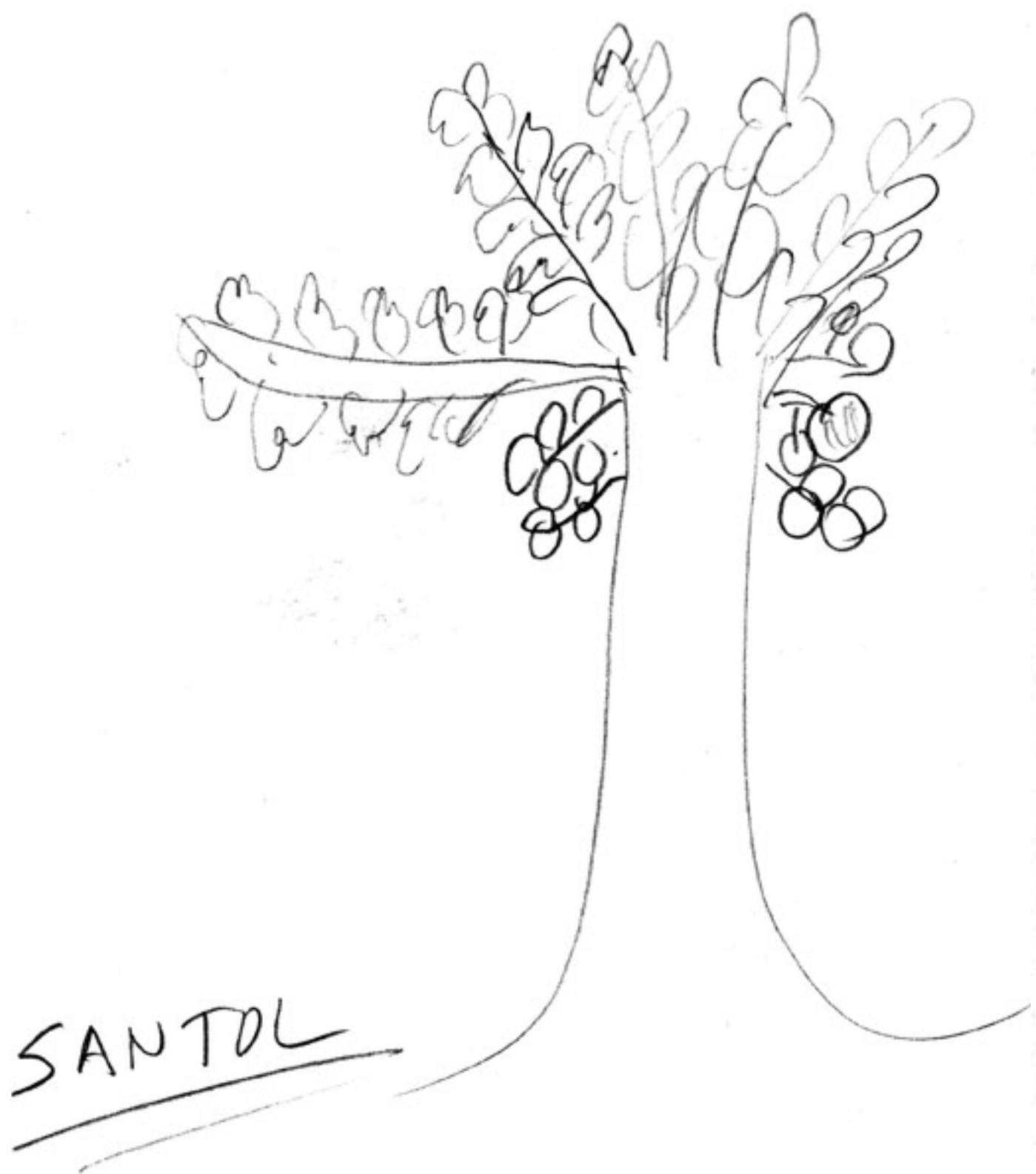
Destruction Woods - I see the same people everytime. People acknowledge you but you aren't ever friendly. There are boulders with small ponds at their base. A wild place, almost scary. That's what the country brings on.... There are horses there which people ride. It's safe enough to go pee without people seeing you.

DJ.

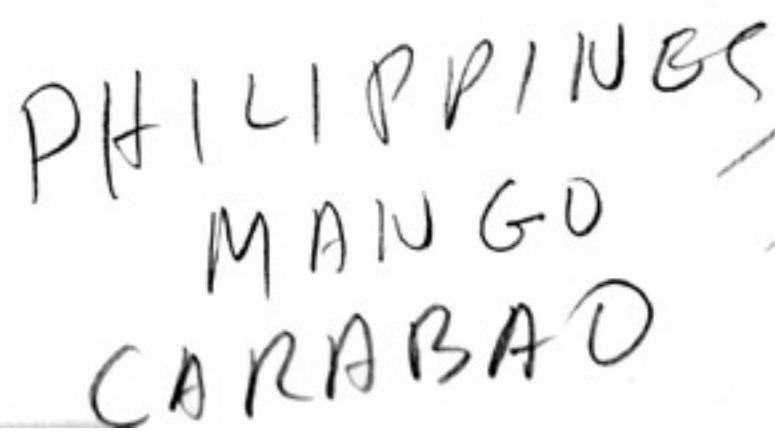
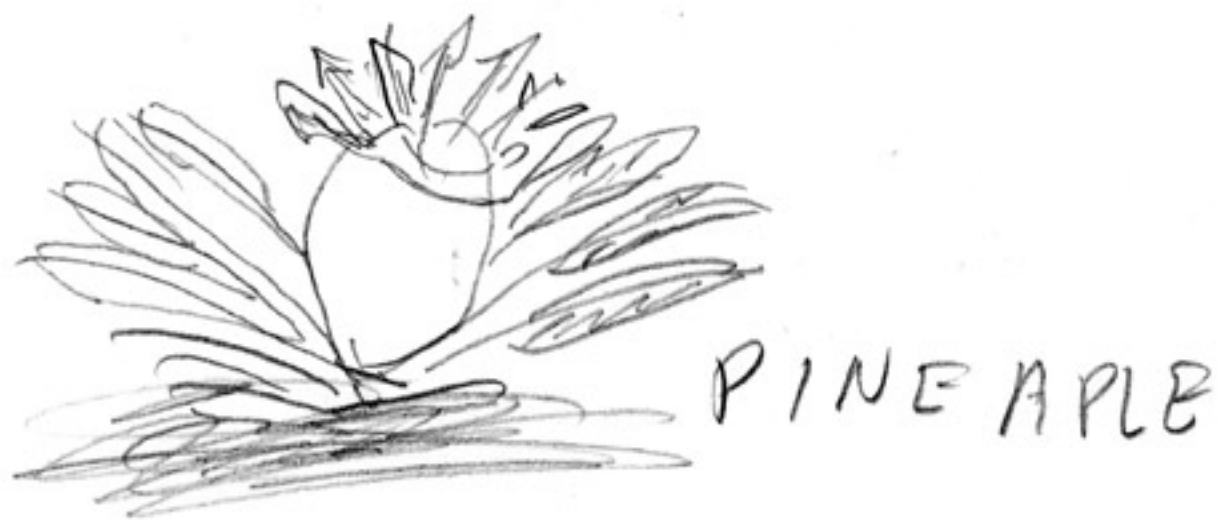
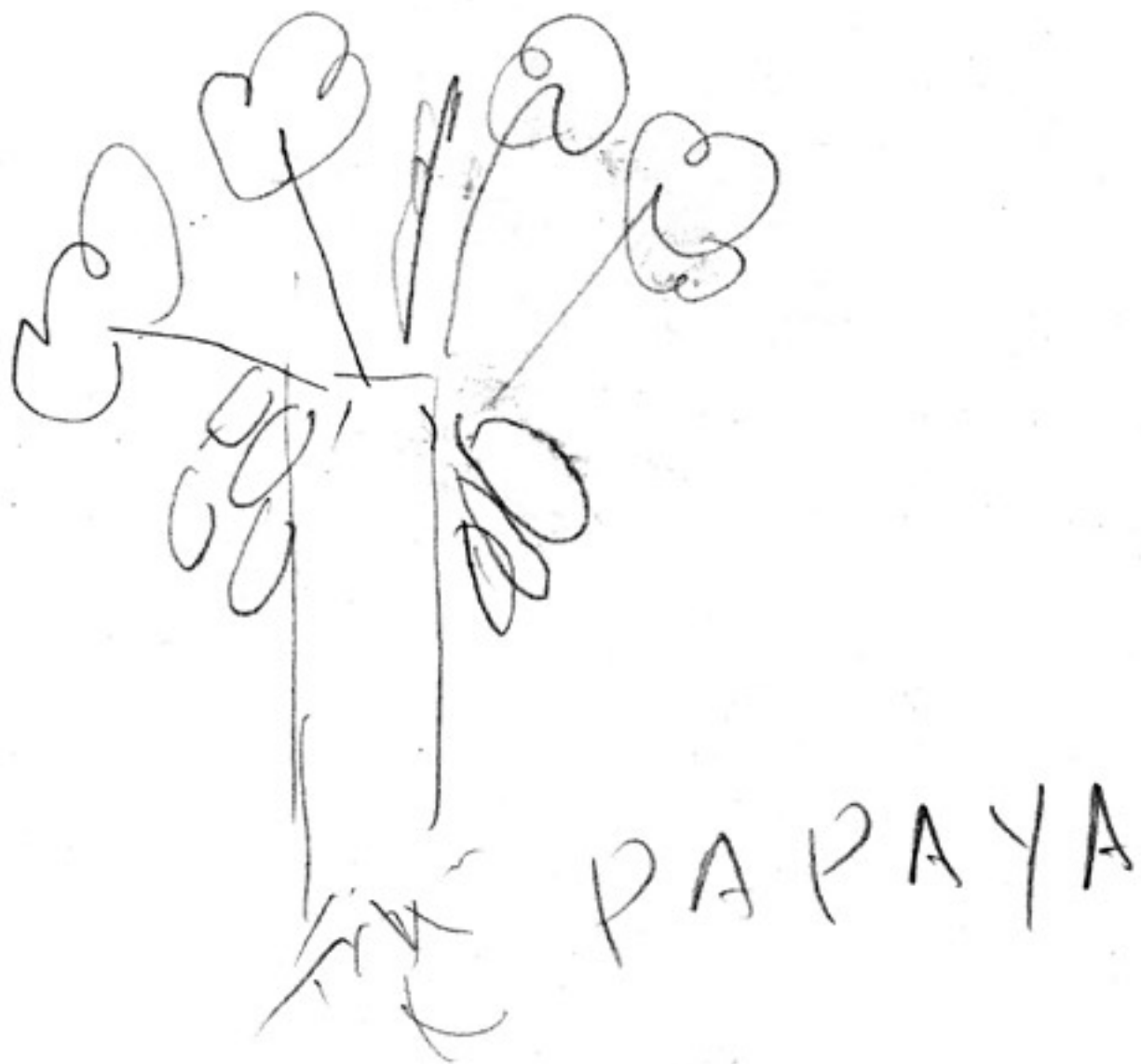


DESTRUCTION WOODS





*My grandfather planted all the trees.*



*It was not a garden. It was land, it was a field.*

"In the Philippines we had everything. Trees were big and gave shadow. Mango is the biggest tree, santol is the second big. When the mango is green, we eat it with salt. We add green papaya to chicken and ginger, ah! That is delicious. We had very big papaya. When it is ready to harvest, you open it and it is very sweet. Mango is ready in summer. Pineapple can be eaten all year. Mango trees are very big; you could never eat all the mango. Somebody comes and buys all mango of a tree when it is still small. You negotiate about the price. It depends on how many small mangos are there and how many big ones you can expect once they have grown. Depending on how many mangos are on the tree, they offer a price, can be 20,000 pesos. He gets the mango when they are ripe. You can preserve coconut. My grandmother and mother made lots of preserve. They sell coconut for chocolate. Very good chocolate is made with coconut. You also make preserve of santol. You slice it and put it in syrup. You make salad of papaya. In the harvest period you buy nothing." -drawn and told by Renato Reyes, November, 2008