



Bottom Creek, Bent Mountain Va.

Genesis Chapman





The sound of the spring in the morning

bubbling  
and  
gurgling...



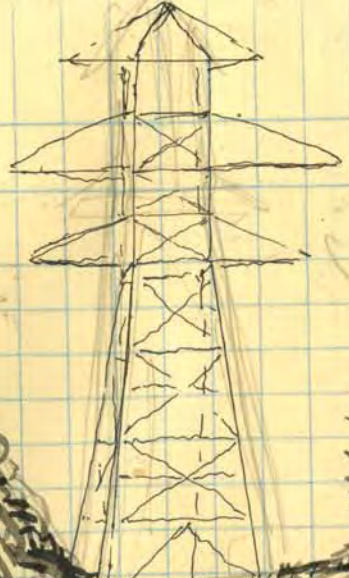
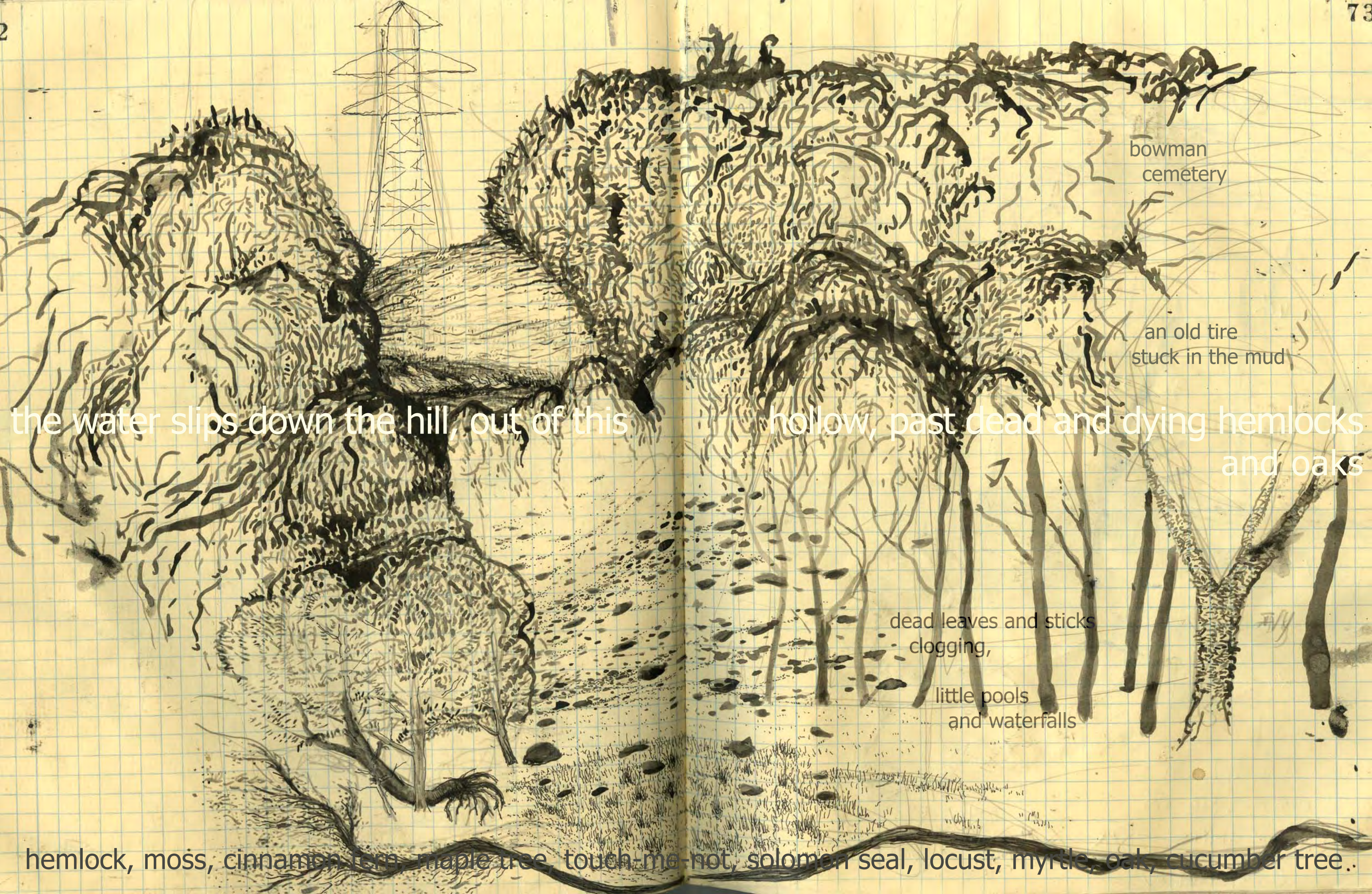
the water trickles out of the hillside from

in the summer  
disappearing  
into  
mud

under a huge ash tree, through the yard  
meeting another branch on the left.

ash tree, bleeding heart, maiden hair fern, trillium, ostrich fern, daffodil, black-eyed-susie, watercress, daylily





bowman cemetery

an old tire stuck in the mud

the water slips down the hill, out of this

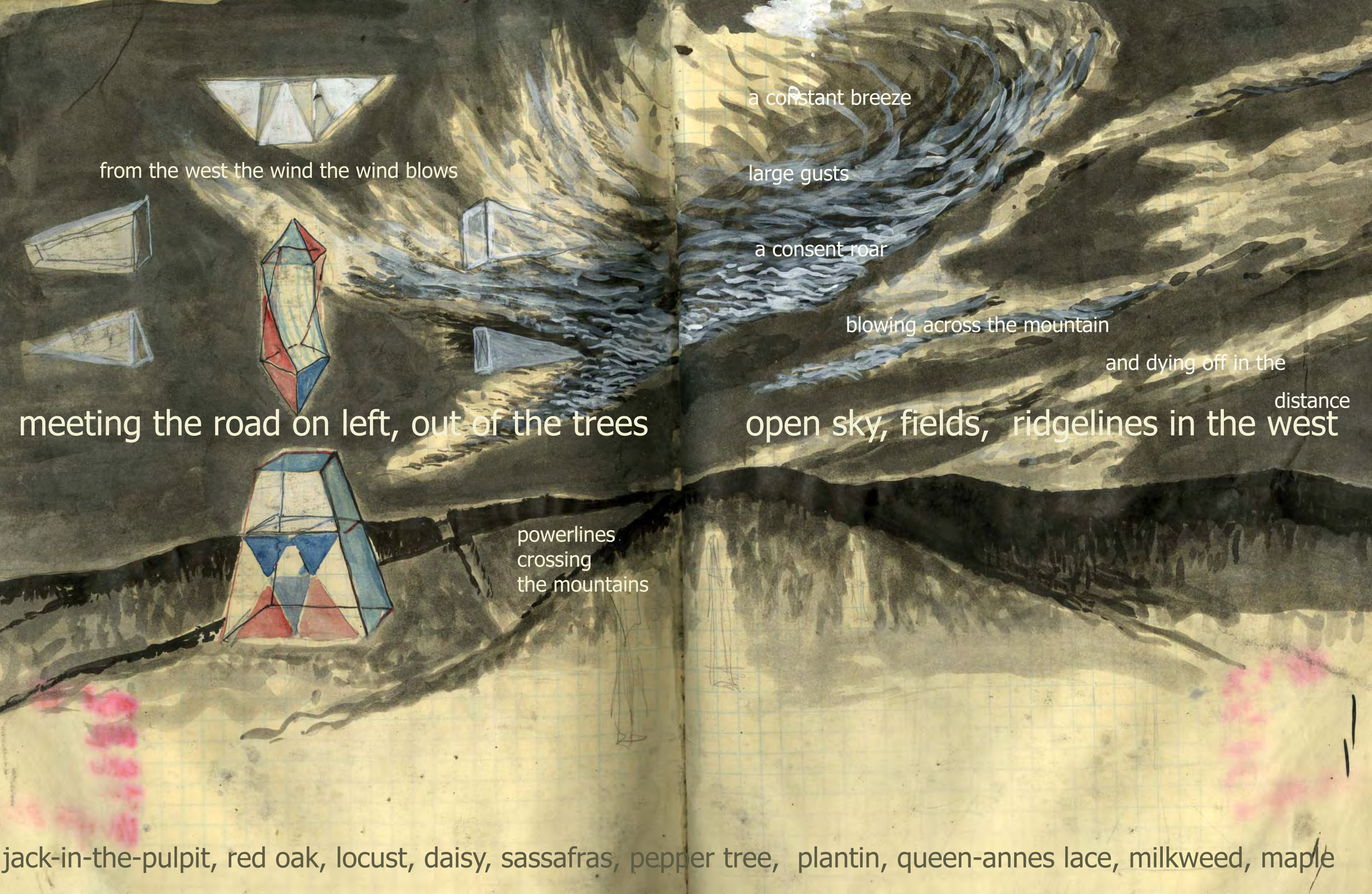
hollow, past dead and dying hemlocks and oaks

dead leaves and sticks clogging,

little pools and waterfalls

hemlock, moss, cinnamon fern, maple tree, touch-me-not, solomon seal, locust, myrtle, oak, cucumber tree.





from the west the wind the wind blows

a constant breeze

large gusts

a consent roar

blowing across the mountain

and dying off in the

distance

meeting the road on left, out of the trees

open sky, fields, ridgelines in the west

powerlines  
crossing  
the mountains

jack-in-the-pulpit, red oak, locust, daisy, sassafras, pepper tree, plantin, queen-annes lace, milkweed, maple





gunshots in distance during hunting season

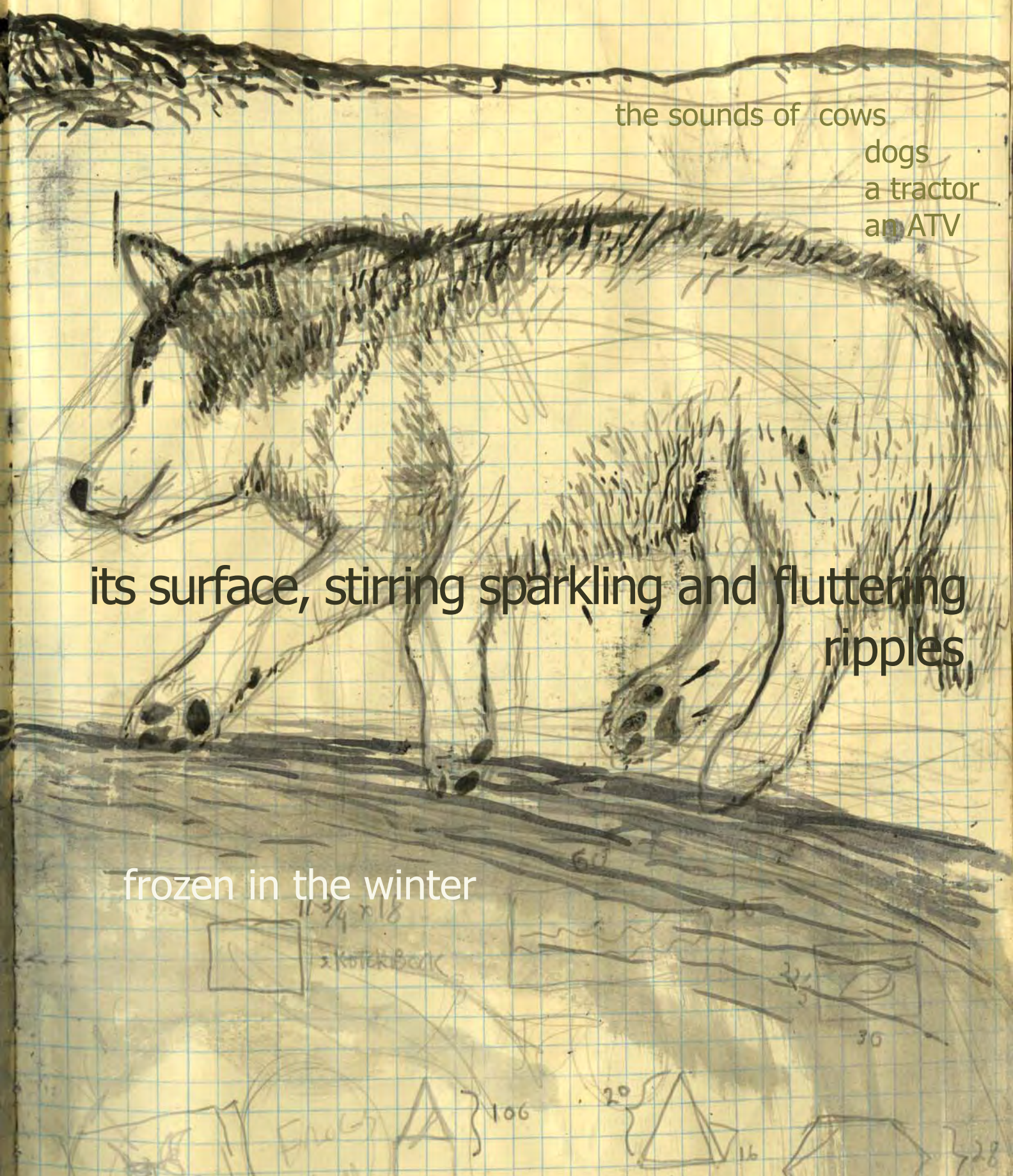
above the pond, there is a little spring,  
its water making a bell like drone,  
in the quiet of a snowy day

past the pond, with the wind blowing across

bullfrogs in summer

brush piled into creek

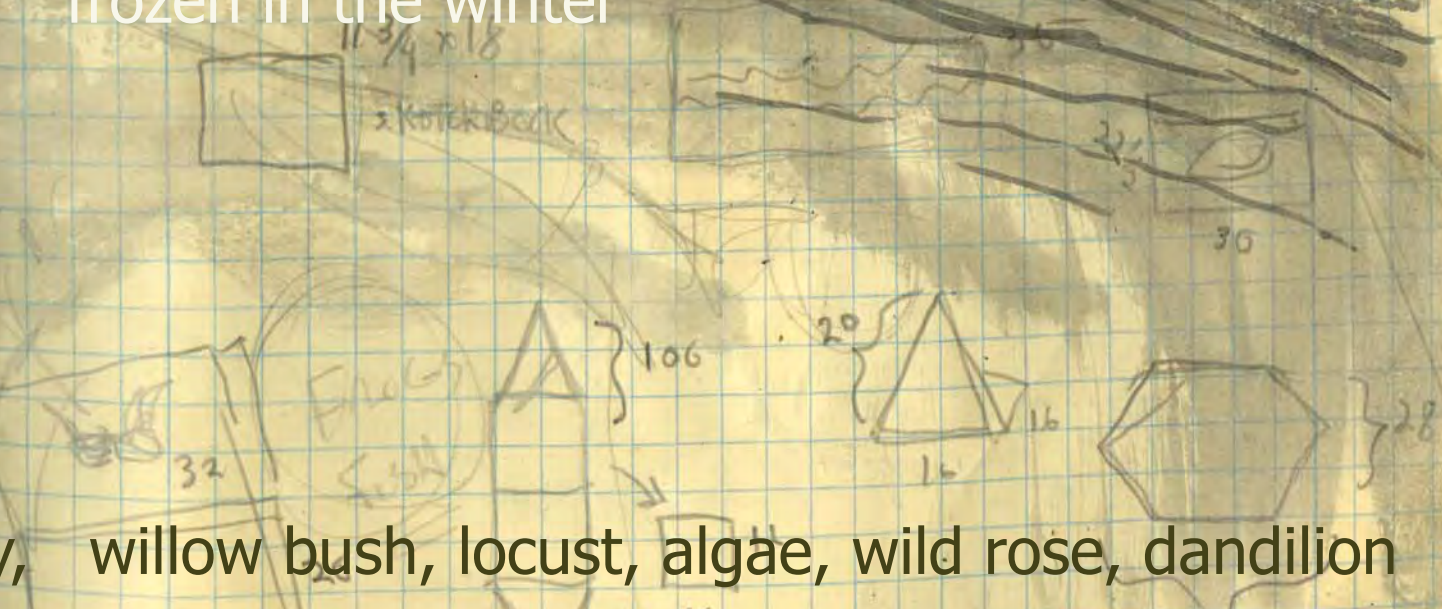
apple, white pine, blackberry, dutchmen's pipe, wild cherry, willow bush, locust, algae, wild rose, dandelion



the sounds of cows  
dogs  
a tractor  
an ATV

its surface, stirring sparkling and fluttering  
ripples

frozen in the winter





Tinsley cabin  
on top of hill  
on left  
100 years ago

clear-cut on top of  
ridge on right  
gypsy moth damage

the creek crosses under the road, and joins a larger branch of Bottom Creek which

the smell of horses  
the smell of horse shit

winds its  
way

BOTTOM CREEK

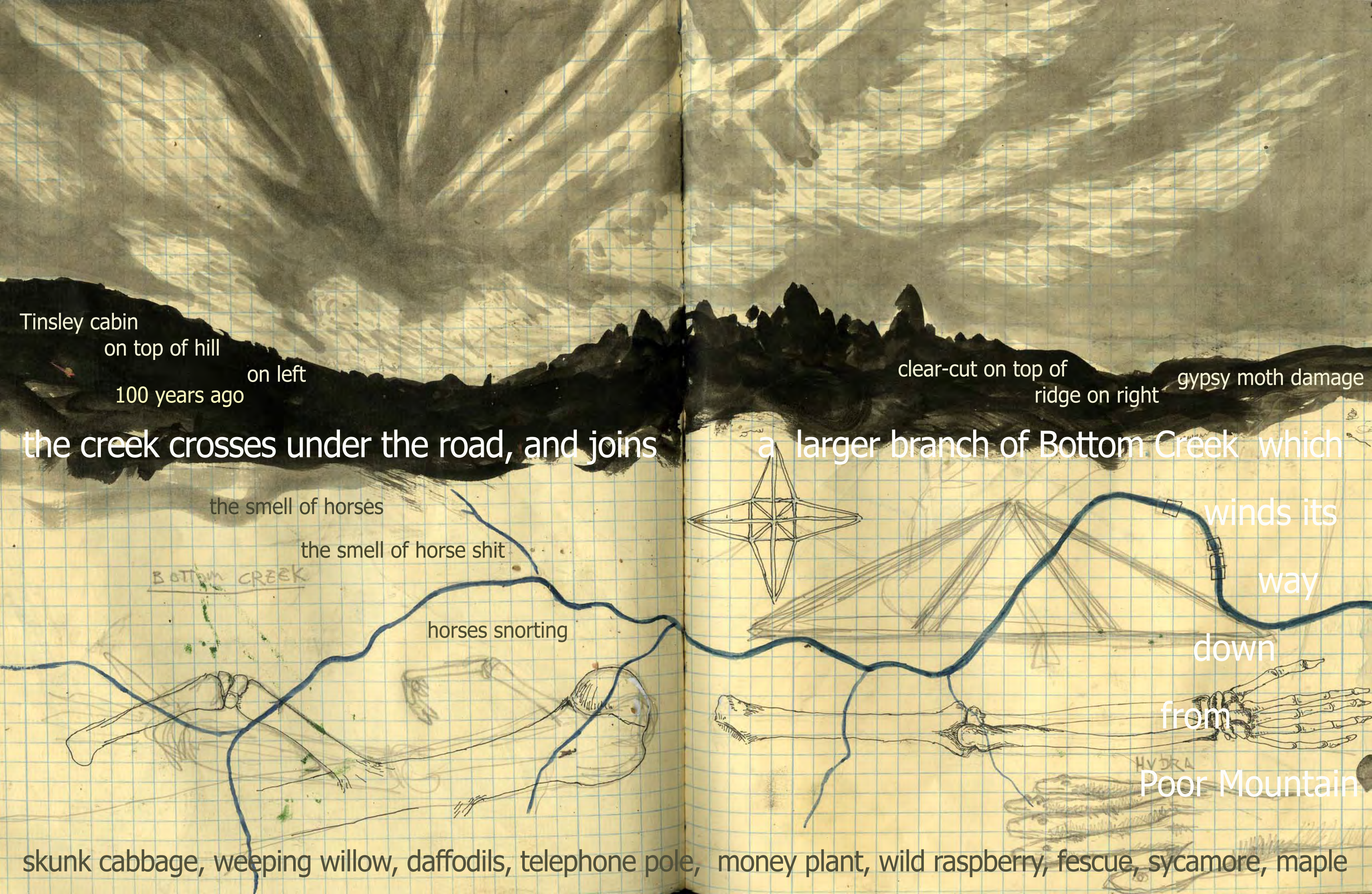
horses snorting

down

from

Poor Mountain

skunk cabbage, weeping willow, daffodils, telephone pole, money plant, wild raspberry, fescue, sycamore, maple







it winds its way through open horse feilds

and pastures, cutting through dirt banks

large rocks  
piled up  
along banks

watersnakes sunning

trail of trash

leading up through the woods

spread by bears

deer bones

hickory, poison ivy, poison oak, virginia creeper, willow bush, hemlock, white pine, field grass, blueberry bush



UNLESS USELESS

other small

streams trickling

down

from

hollows

willett cemetery  
hill above,

the creek turns slightly and rolls under a bridge, casting out quivering reflections

red efts

deep pools

blackberry, deer tongue grass, jewelweed, deer fern, christmas fern, burr dock, chicory, sumac, virginia pine







it passes an where a house once burned

spring time

late afternoon sunlight

two jays

a lone spring peeper chirps

and a barred owl

up on the ridge

blueberry, sumac, chokecherry, sycamore, virginia pine



edging the old yard, undercutting roots



apple ,white oak, forsythia, wild garlic, spread-leaf moss



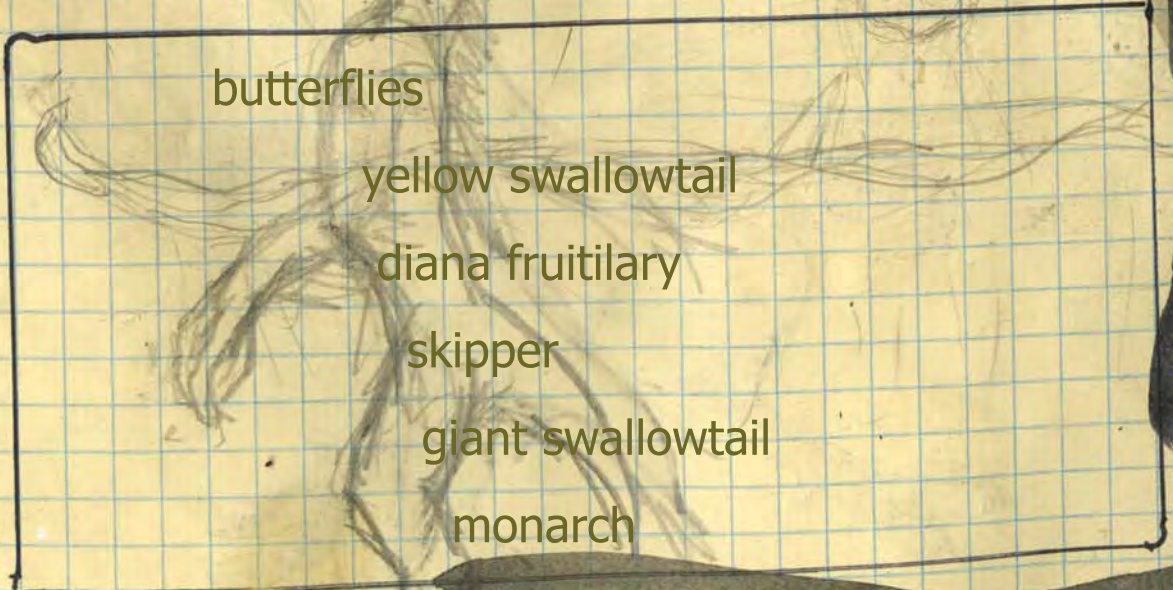


deeper and deeper pools

it bends to the left, through more fields,

more horses

sticks, branches and leaves, washed down



butterflies

yellow swallowtail

diana fritillary

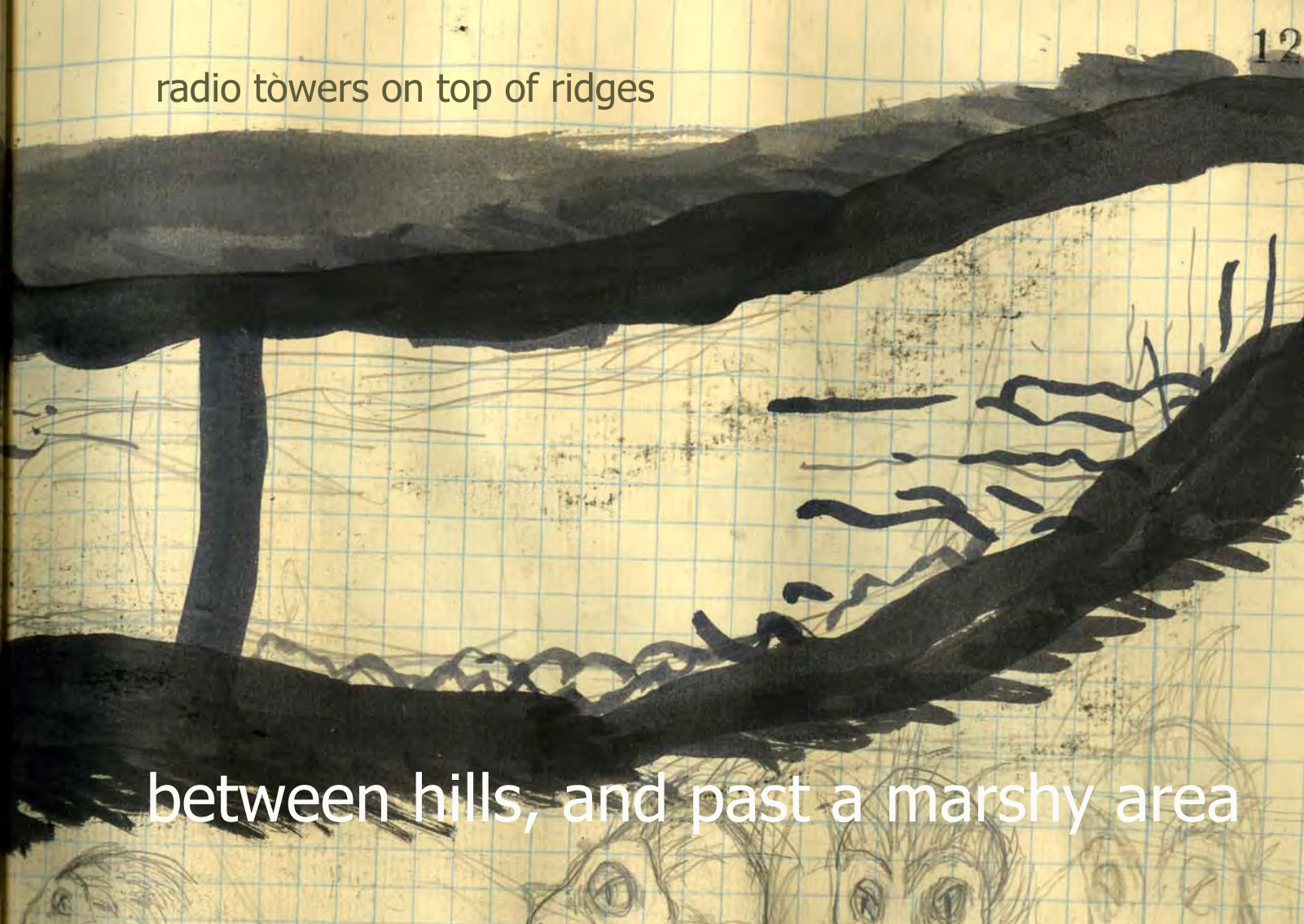
skipper

giant swallowtail

monarch

skunk cabbage, ash tree, maple, creek willows, yellow

radio towers on top of ridges



between hills, and past a marshy area

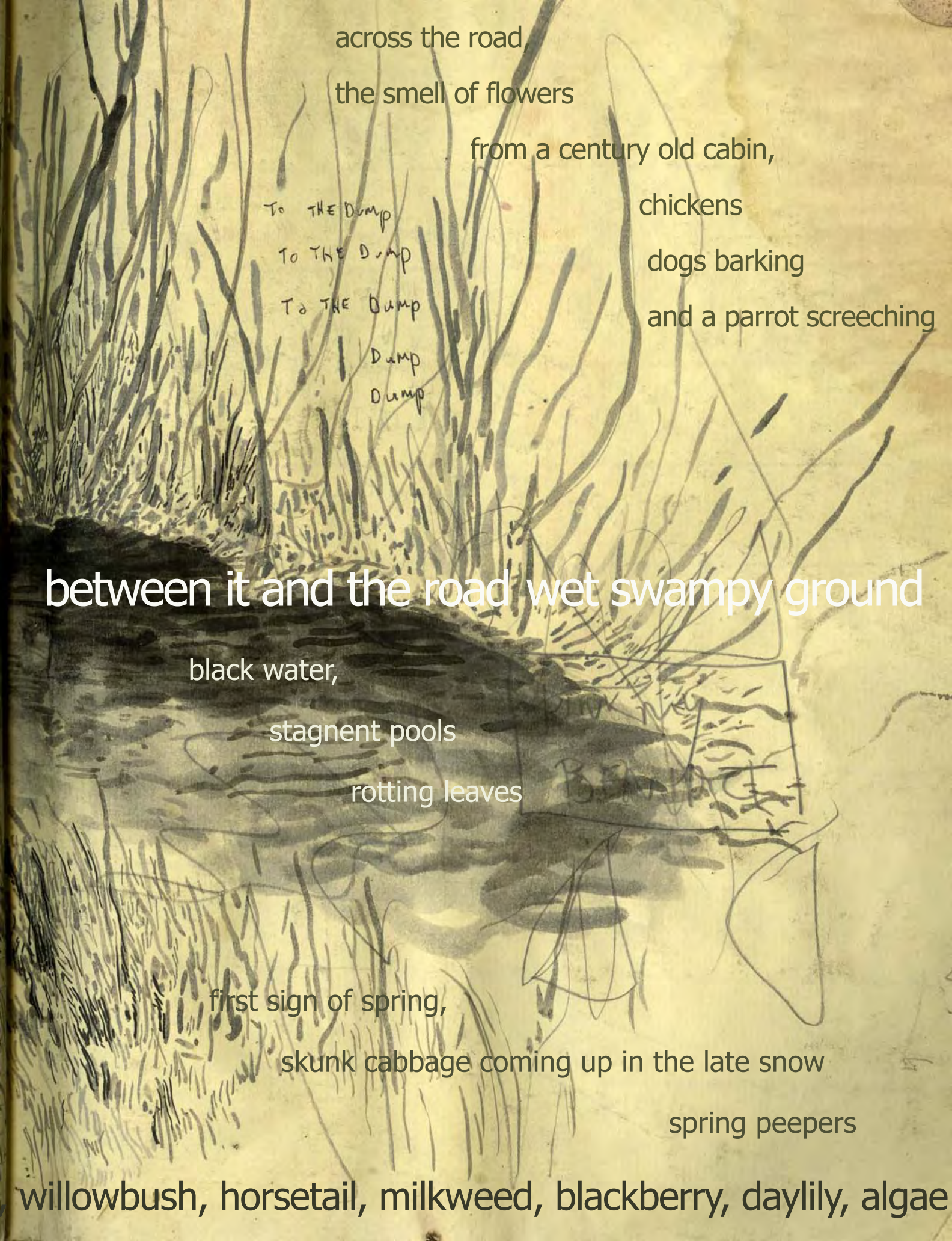


a common snipe

woodcock

nutsedge, joe-pye weed, iron weed, wild rose, milkweed





across the road  
the smell of flowers

from a century old cabin,

chickens

dogs barking

and a parrot screeching

To THE DUMP

To THE DUMP

To THE DUMP

Dump

Dump

the creek courses straight, through a hollow,

between it and the road wet swampy ground

black water,

stagnent pools

rotting leaves

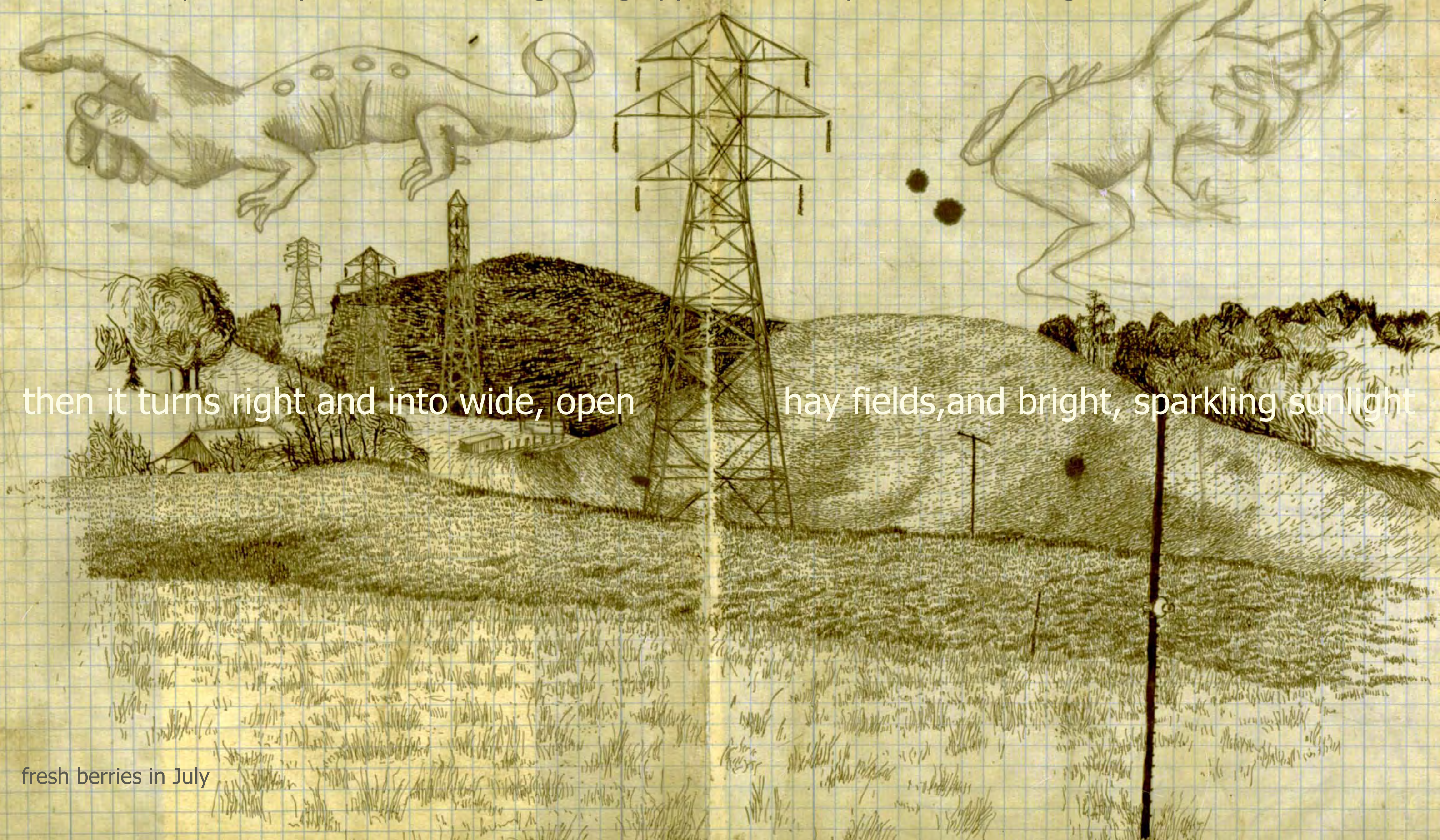
first sign of spring,

skunk cabbage coming up in the late snow

spring peepers

delicate fern, skunk cabbage, may apple, moss, fern moss, willowbush, horsetail, milkweed, blackberry, daylily, algae





then it turns right and into wide, open

hay fields, and bright, sparkling sunlight

fresh berries in July



helicopter following powerlines over mountain

high voltage tower silhouetted black against sunset

bright white contrails pointing south

turkey buzzards

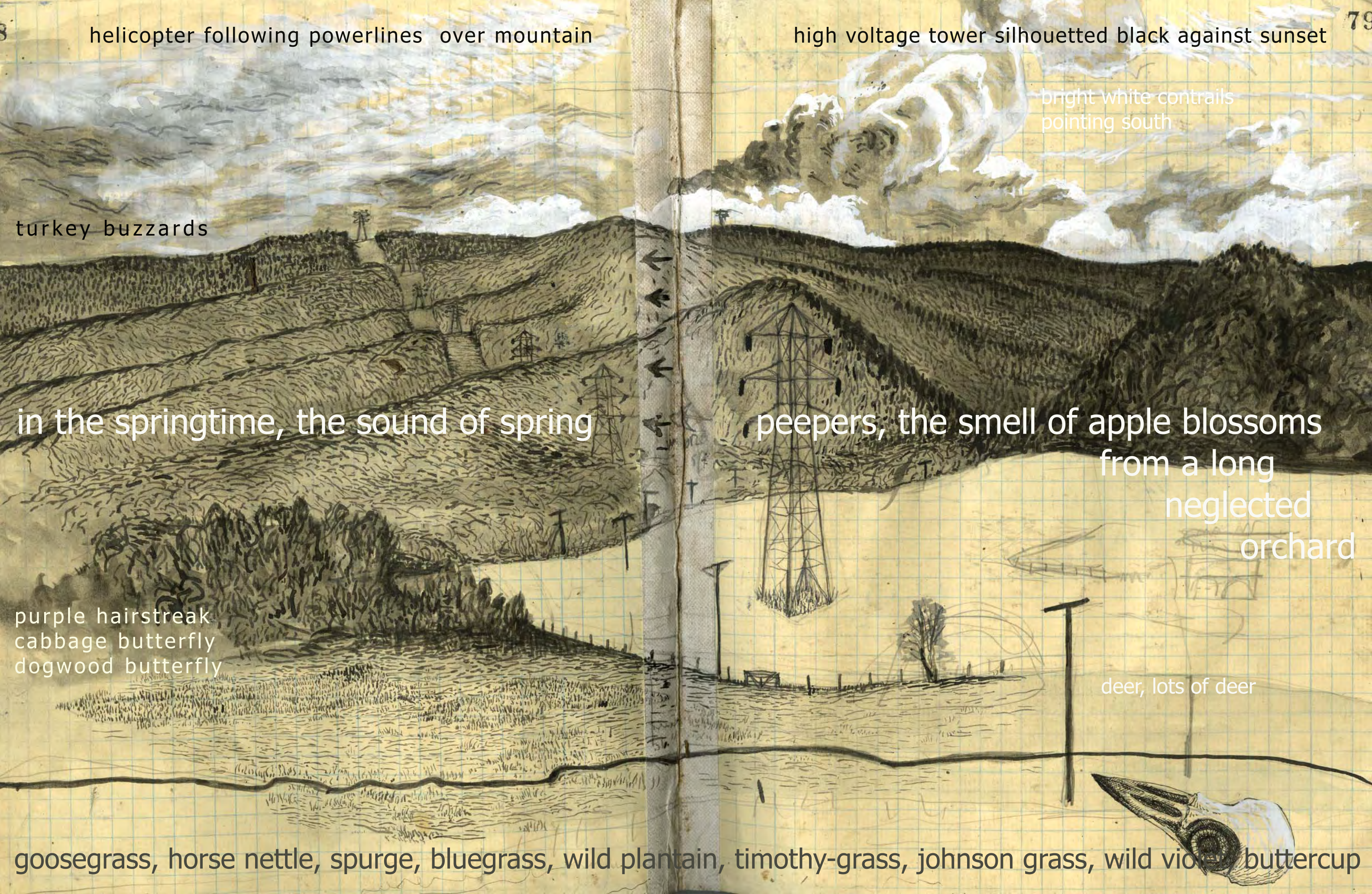
in the springtime, the sound of spring

peepers, the smell of apple blossoms from a long neglected orchard

purple hairstreak  
cabbage butterfly  
dogwood butterfly

deer, lots of deer

goosegrass, horse nettle, spurge, bluegrass, wild plantain, timothy-grass, johnson grass, wild violet, buttercup





deer trails  
deer shit  
deer beds



as the road turns away, the creek plunges down into the forest, away from the field

large sycamore on edge of creek  
roots undercut by creek

deep pools  
dark shadowed water  
native trout darting

blackberry, raspberry, goldenrod, poison ivy, sumac, thistle, sycamore, jerusalem cherry, tulip poplar



following a deer trail....

through roadside grass,

gap in the briars

as the creek rushes through woods, bright

rays of sunlight pierce the canopy of leaves

sitting

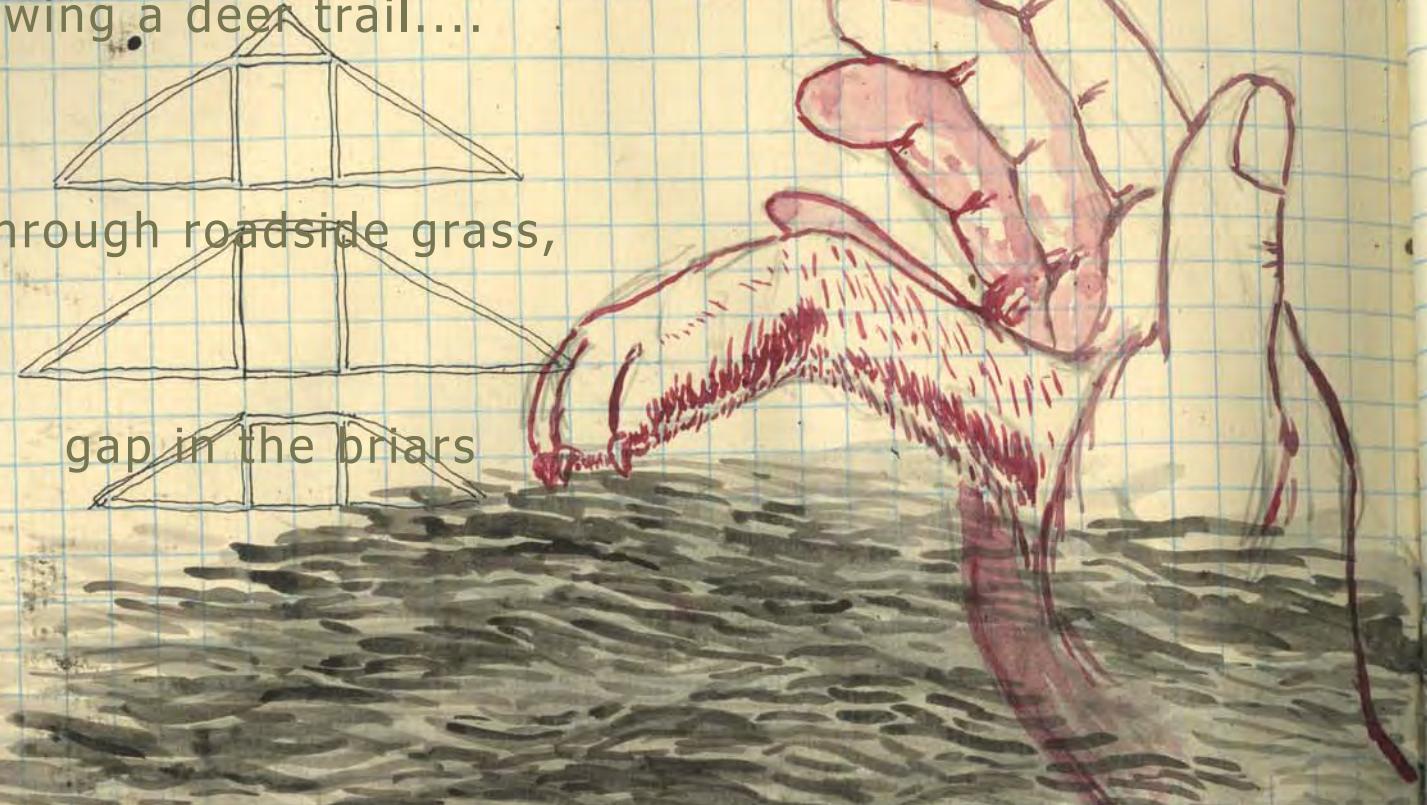
drawing

looking at water

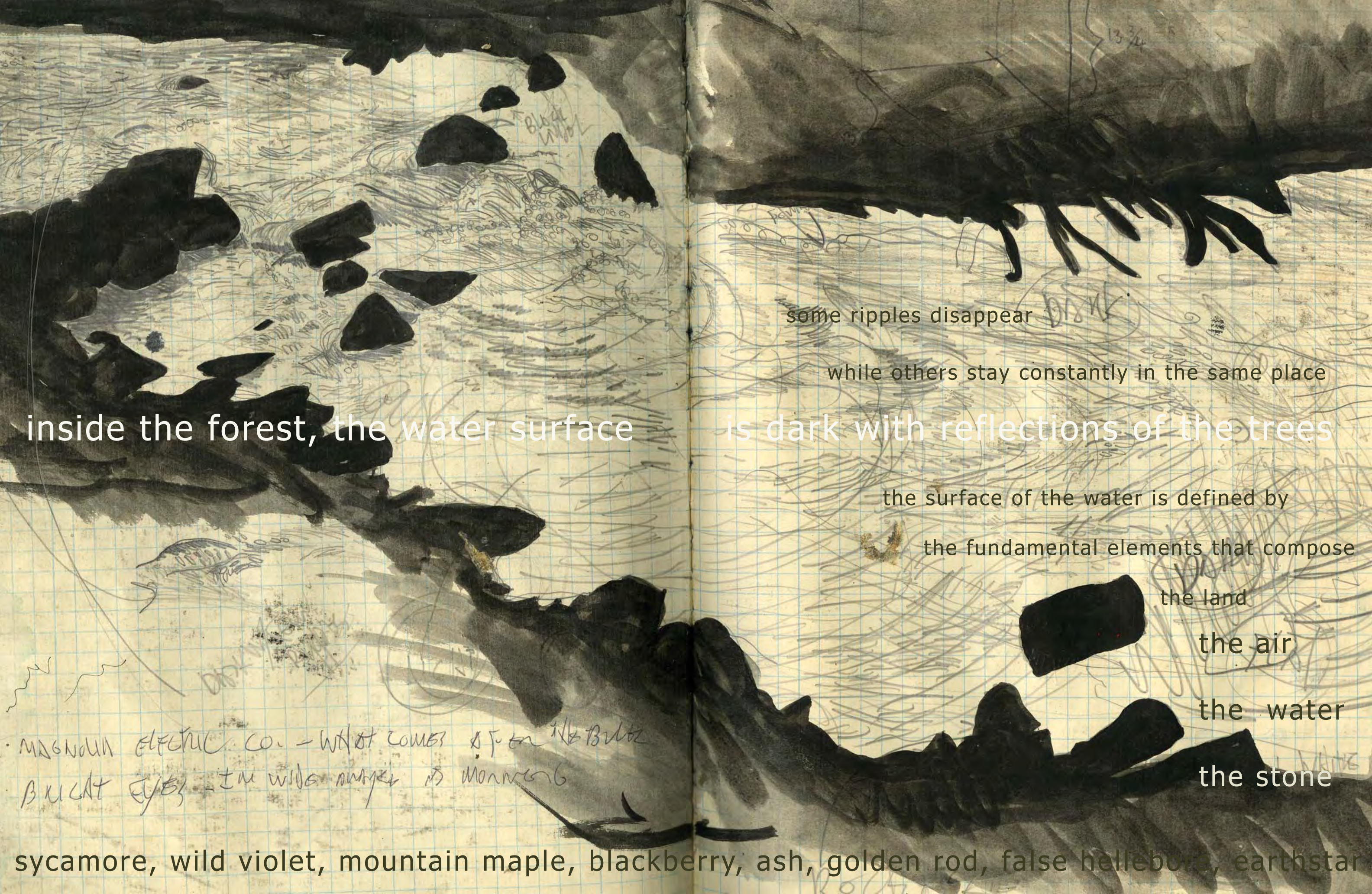
the way it moves through the creek

the way it flows

tulip poplar, yellow birch, sugar maple, false hellebore, lady fern witch hazel, wild parsnip, elderberry, sorrel







inside the forest, the water surface

is dark with reflections of the trees

some ripples disappear

while others stay constantly in the same place

the surface of the water is defined by

the fundamental elements that compose

the land

the air

the water

the stone

MAGNOLIA ELECTRIC CO. - WHAT COMES AFTER THE BUBBLE  
BLACK EYES - IN WILD SWAMP IN MONTANA

sycamore, wild violet, mountain maple, blackberry, ash, golden rod, false hellebore, earthstar



rock

stone

quartz

granite

shale

retaining the suns heat

rocks and stones cause patterns that swirl

as the water negates underwater topography

minerals sand stones pebbles rocks boulders

the stone flows in a different,

slower time.....

slowly eroding.....

rolling ....

flowing

down stream

to the sea

tulip poplar, indian strawberry, goatsbeard, poison ivy, black cherry, hawthorn, stinging nettle, wild violet, solomon seal





air

weather

wind

air moving across the surface, its pressure

pushes down, imprinting with its presence

making patterns that are not

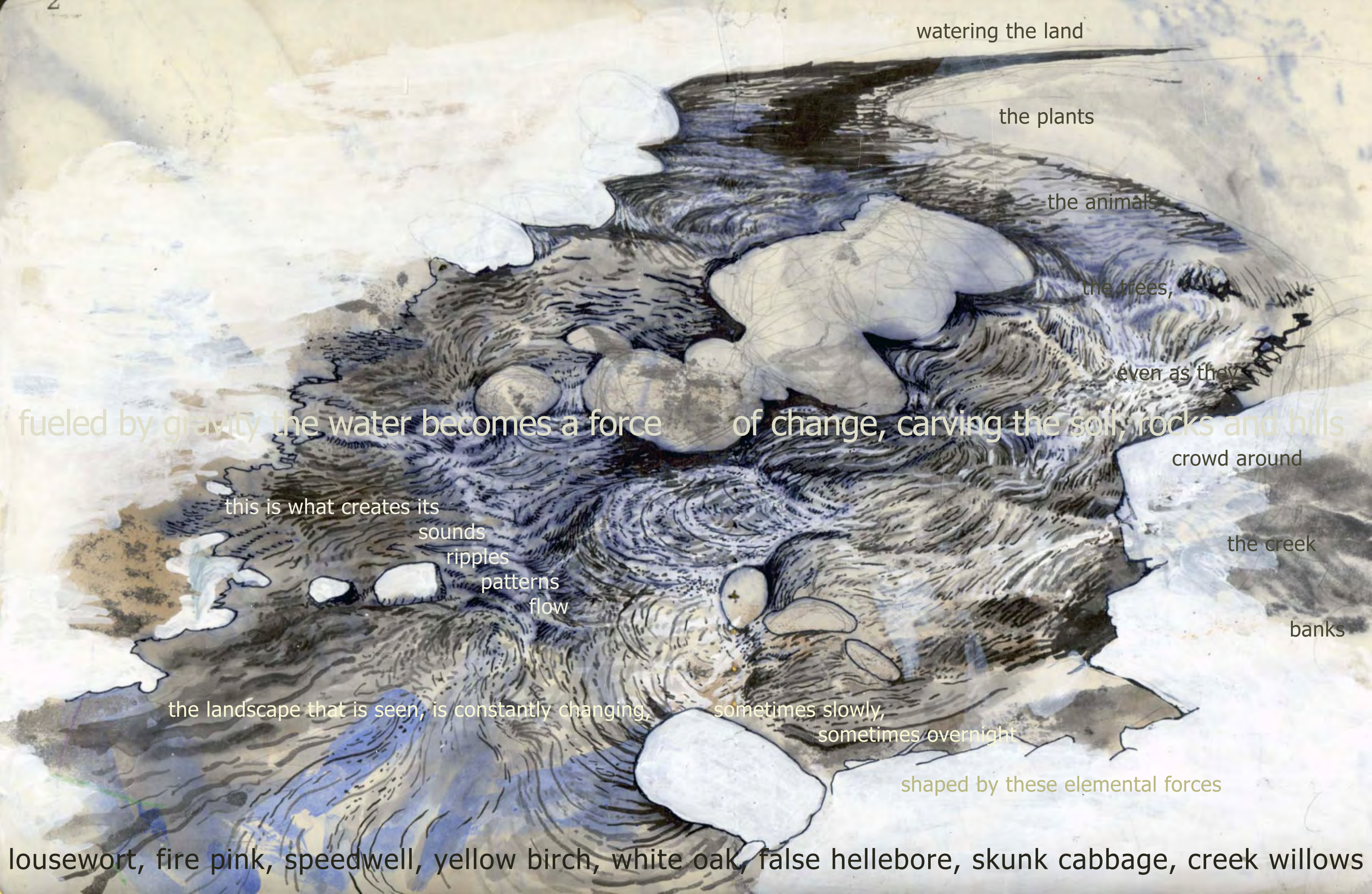
reflections of light

these three

elements represent the most basic, fundamental parts of the landscape

indian cucumber-root, speedwell, elderberry, sphagnum moss, boxelder, sourgrass, chesnut oak, flame azarea





watering the land

the plants

the animals

the trees,

even as they

fueled by gravity the water becomes a force of change, carving the soil, rocks and hills

crowd around

this is what creates its

sounds

ripples

patterns

flow

the creek

banks

the landscape that is seen, is constantly changing,

sometimes slowly,

sometimes overnight

shaped by these elemental forces

lousewort, fire pink, speedwell, yellow birch, white oak, false hellebore, skunk cabbage, creek willows





dammed by deadfall, and leaves, it seeks

short cuts, branching across level ground

water cutting though soil

wood that was a field 30 years ago

now a young forest

the musty smell of speedwell throughout this place

mountain maple

witch hazel

rose thickets

bowmans root, oak fern, service berry, yellow birch, mountain maple, creeping charlie, sensitive fern



it cuts and though a wood that is young  
not long ago  
this wood was  
an open field

now it has gone fallow, filled with weeds,  
brush,  
shrubs  
now trees grow here

the soil sliced open,  
by the  
streams

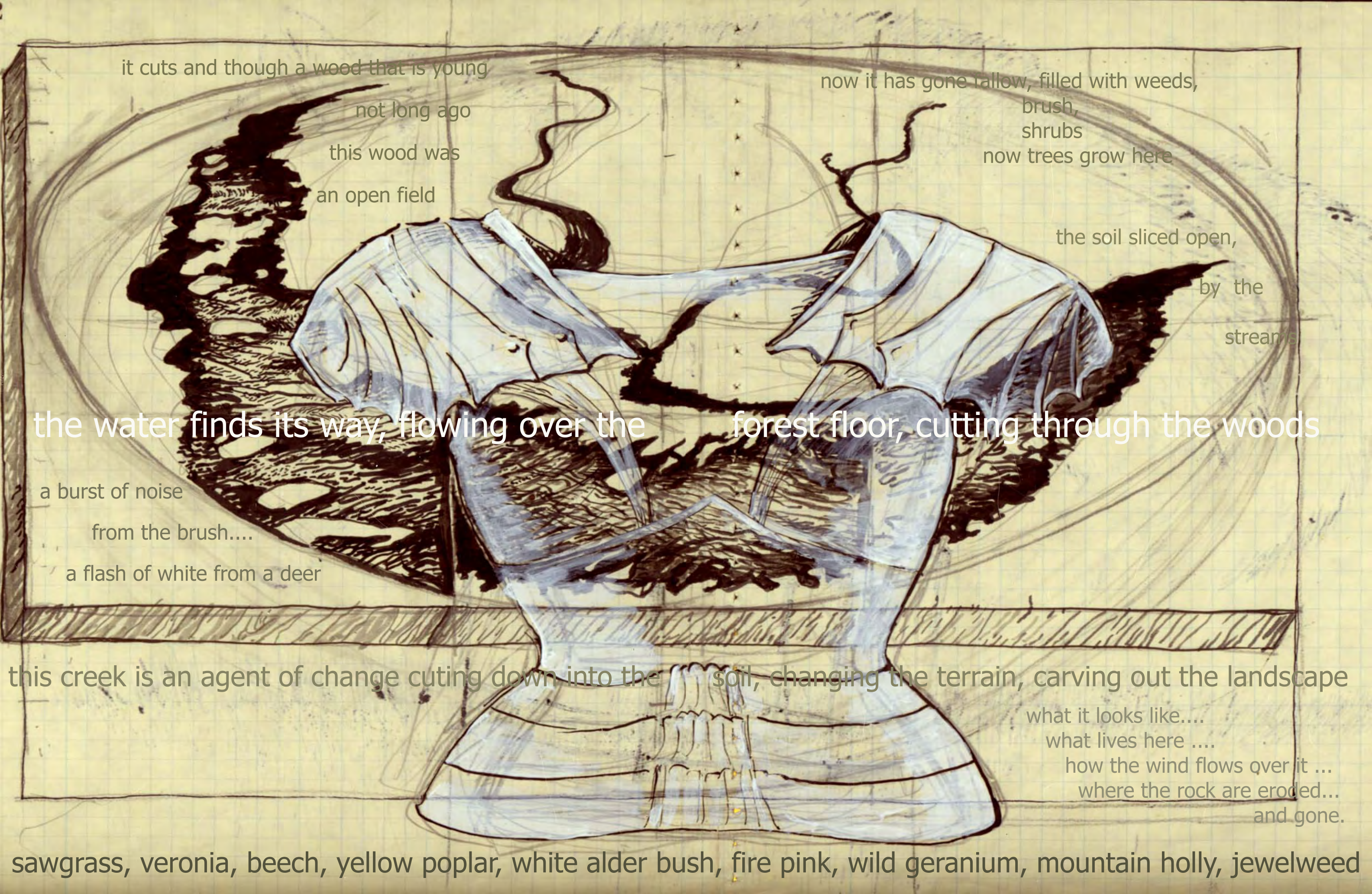
the water finds its way, flowing over the forest floor, cutting through the woods

a burst of noise  
from the brush....  
a flash of white from a deer

this creek is an agent of change cutting down into the soil, changing the terrain, carving out the landscape

what it looks like....  
what lives here ....  
how the wind flows over it ...  
where the rock are eroded...  
and gone.

sawgrass, veronia, beech, yellow poplar, white alder bush, fire pink, wild geranium, mountain holly, jewelweed





the current moving

around large rocks

and boulders that

have rolled into

the creek bed

undercutting large rocks

slowly.....

gradually rolling them forward....

then the creek makes a sharp turn away

in the turn of the creek,

a burlled and gnarled maple with

owl droppings and bark fragments

in the ferns at its base

SAT - 12-4:30	7.5
SUN - 11:30-7:00	2.5
8-10:30	2
6-8	1.5

hawthorne, witchhazel, veronia, ash, mountain maple, firepink, delicate fern, loosestrife

then

swept away....

from a hillside of exposed granite bedrock

leaving deposits of sediments,

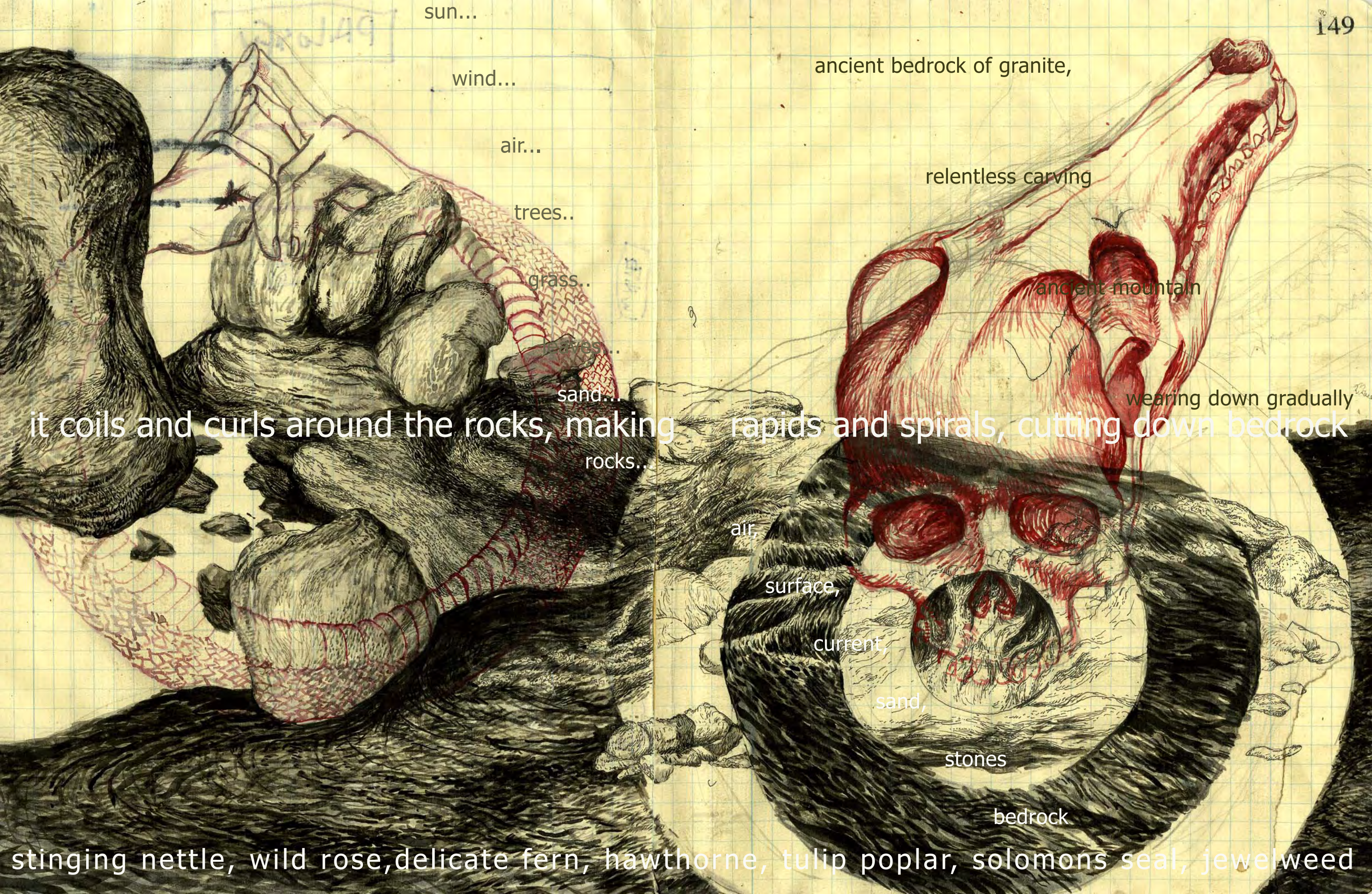
sand,

pebbles,

rocks

SEWER





sun...

wind...

air...

trees..

grass..

sand...

ancient bedrock of granite,

relentless carving

ancient mountain

wearing down gradually

it coils and curls around the rocks, making rapids and spirals, cutting down bedrock

rocks..

air,

surface,

current,

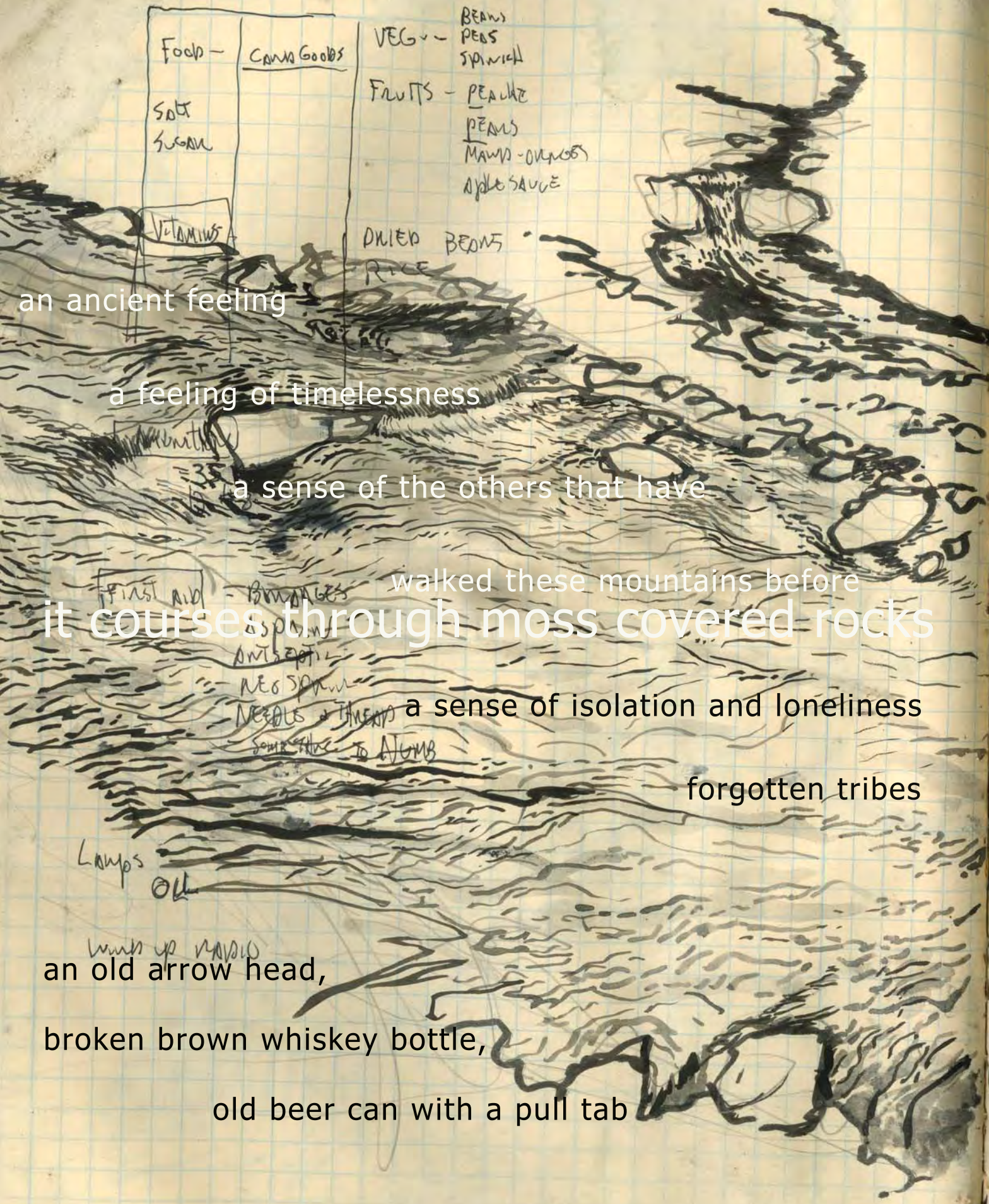
sand,

stones

bedrock

stinging nettle, wild rose, delicate fern, hawthorne, tulip poplar, solomons seal, jewelweed





Food -  
Canned Goods  
SALT  
SUGAR

VEG -  
BEANS  
PEAS  
SPINACH  
FRUITS -  
PEACH  
PEARS  
MANS - ORANGES  
APPLE SAUCE

DRIED BEANS  
RICE

VITAMINS

FIRST AID  
BANDAGES  
ANTISEPTIC  
NEOSPORIN  
NEEDLES & THREAD  
SOME THING TO STITCH

Lamps  
OIL

WIND UP RADIO

an ancient feeling

a feeling of timelessness

a sense of the others that have

walked these mountains before

it courses through moss covered rocks

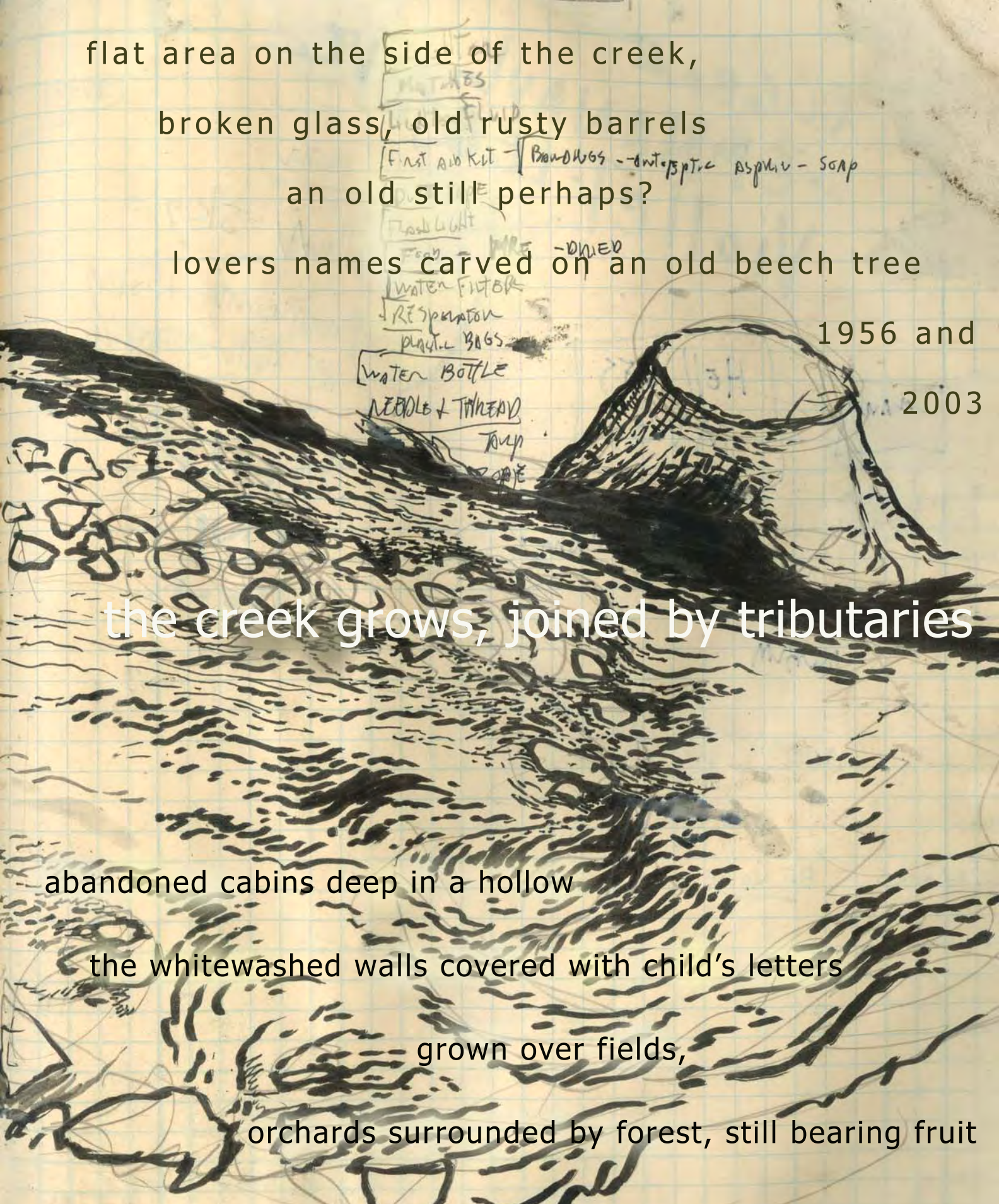
a sense of isolation and loneliness

forgotten tribes

an old arrow head,

broken brown whiskey bottle,

old beer can with a pull tab



flat area on the side of the creek,

broken glass, old rusty barrels

an old still perhaps?

lovers names carved on an old beech tree

1956 and

2003

the creek grows, joined by tributaries

abandoned cabins deep in a hollow

the whitewashed walls covered with child's letters

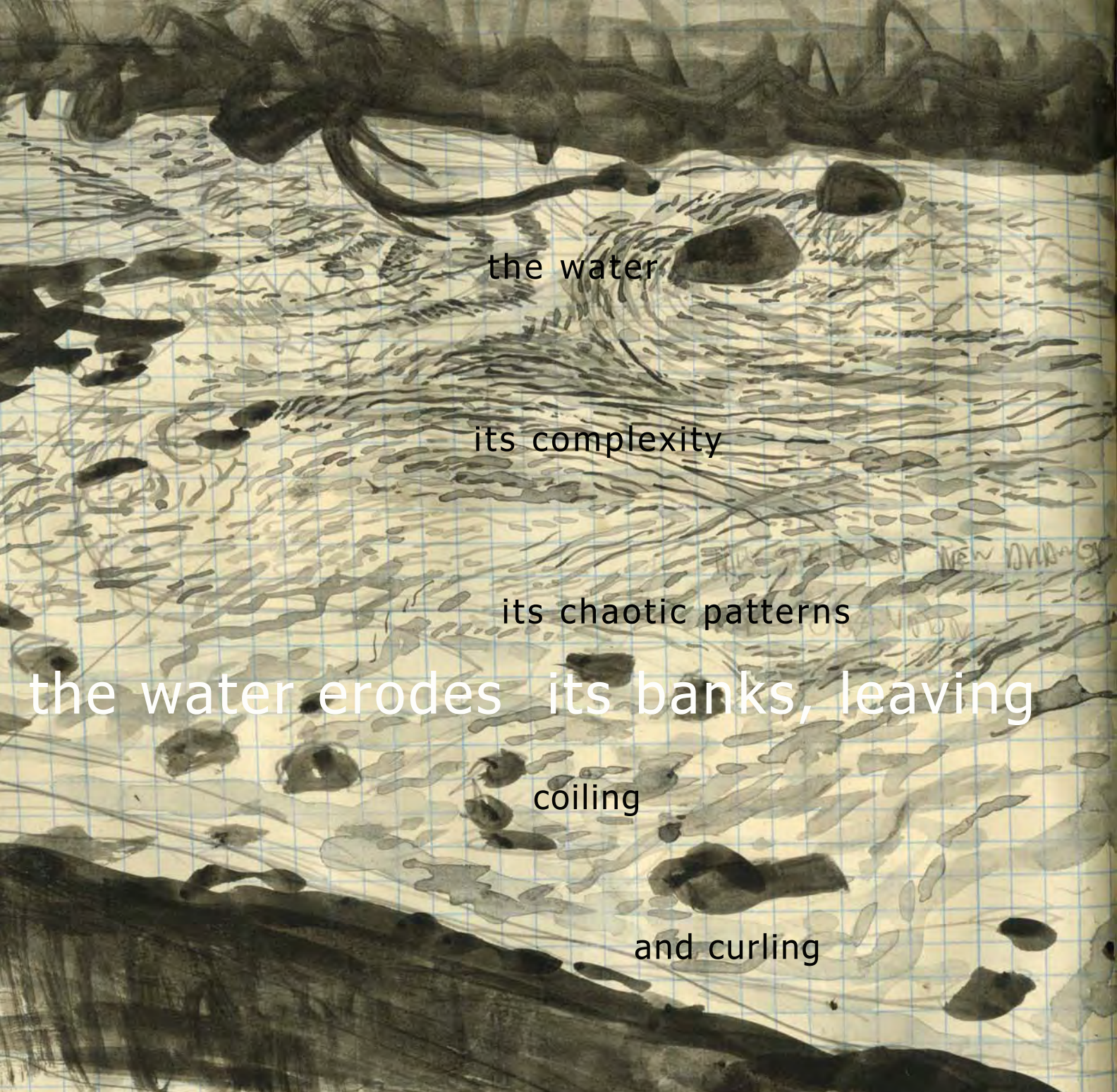
grown over fields,

orchards surrounded by forest, still bearing fruit

beech, delicate fern, hickory, goats beard, birch, oak, bee balm, fire pink, rattlesnake plantain

FLASHLIGHT  
FIRST AID KIT - BANDAGES - ANTISEPTIC ASPHERIN - SOAP  
WATER FILTER  
RESPIRATOR  
PLASTIC BAGS  
WATER BOTTLE  
NEEDLES & THREAD  
TAMP  
TAP





the water

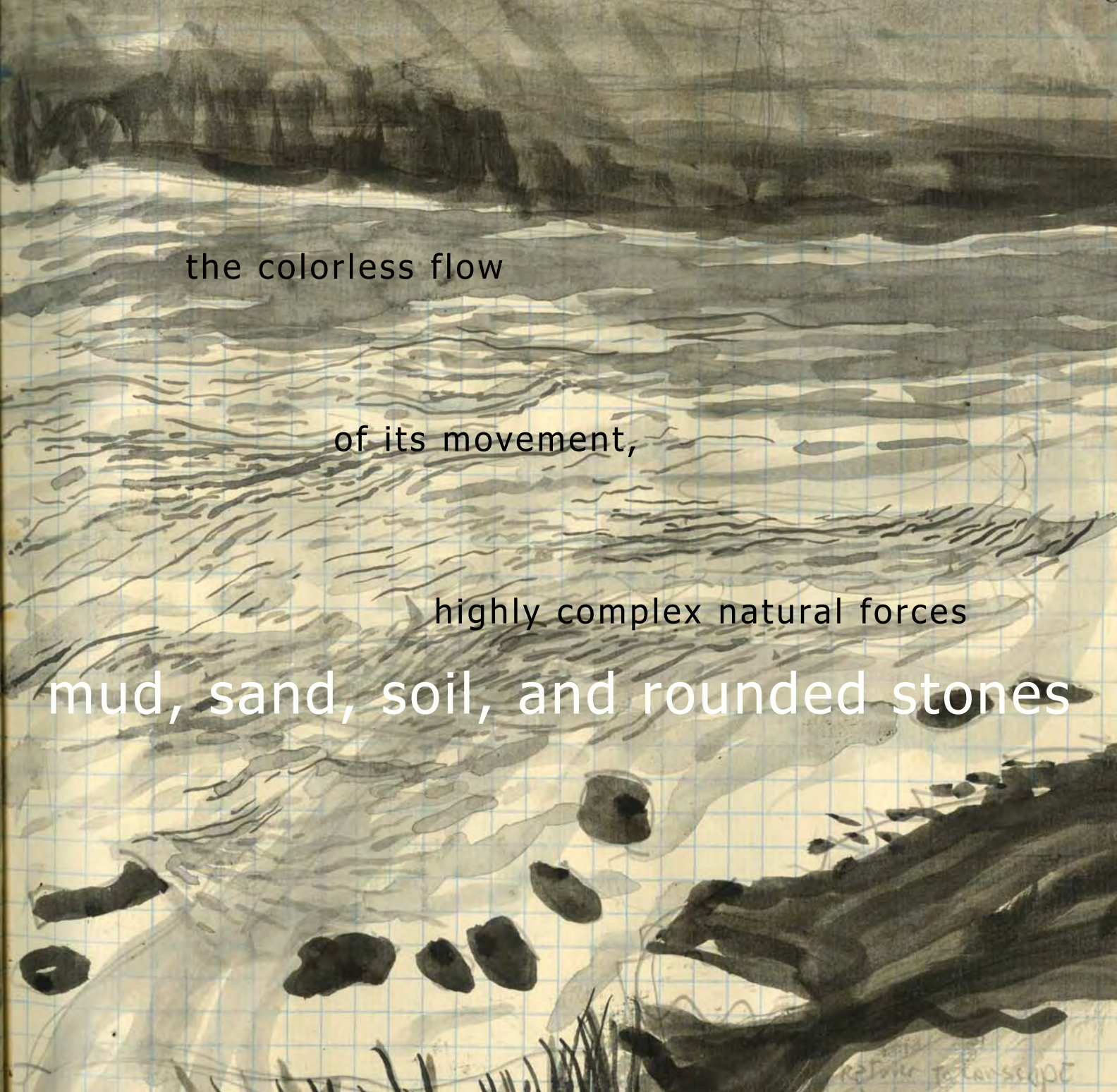
its complexity

its chaotic patterns

the water erodes its banks, leaving

coiling

and curling



the colorless flow

of its movement,

highly complex natural forces

mud, sand, soil, and rounded stones

*THIS (SERIES) OF DRAWINGS REPRESENT WORK THAT STARTED IN MY SKETCH BOOK FROM MY OWN CONSTANT OBSERVATION OF THE ELEMENTAL FORCES IN MY ENVIRONMENT BY UNSTAYING WORKING IN MY SKETCH BOOK & WHILE I WORK ON OTHER 2D+3D PROJECTS (I AM FUTURE & REFLECTING MY SURROUNDINGS LANDSCAPE THIS WILL HELP INFORM THE WORK IN OTHER MEDIUMS)*

*return to landscape  
not only looking at landscape  
looking at forces of  
that shape landscape*

tulip poplar, blood root, wood anemone, black cohosh, false solomon seal, ash, maple, sassafras



each ripple, eddy, furrow, whirl, composed of layer after

gliding along, the water forms pools that

energy  
and  
movement

stinging nettle, henbit, alderbush, bee balm, birch, fire pink, rattlesnake plantain, cinquefoil

lines,

grids,

layer of complexity

v-shaped,

s-shaped

radiating out,

seem still, but run with fluttering currents

feathering out,

fracturing,

reflecting,

quivering

pulsating



the troubles w/ hot air

turkey vulture circling

catching heat thermals

the complexity of the water is betrayed by its seemingly chaotic appearance

a couple of crows

it passes through thickets and brambles,

a trail of turkey feathers mixed with the leaves

wild geranium, leosestrife, goats beard, tulip poplar, (morels) cherry, sumac, blackberrybush, black locust, serviceberry

the structure of each ripple, a symphony of physics,

the delicate interplay of

water and rock,

gravity and motion,

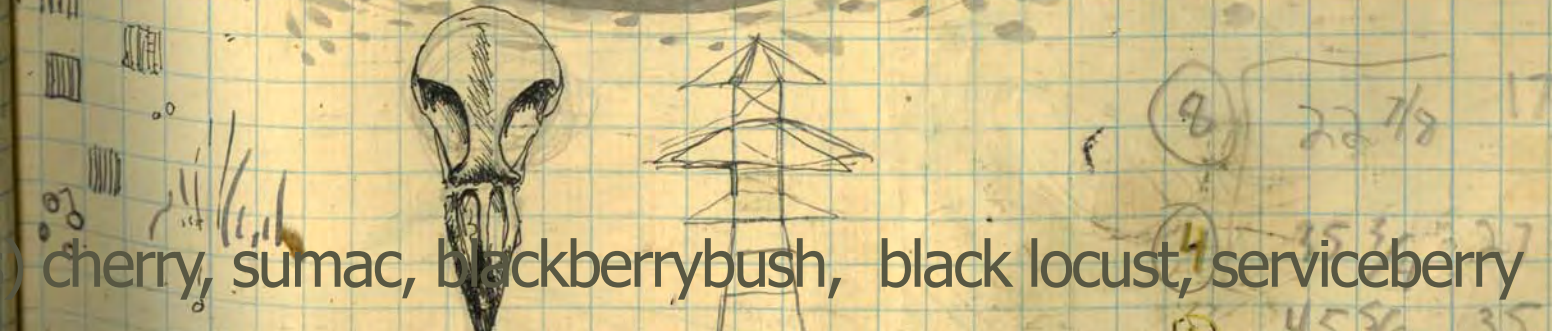
light and shadow

under the power line, past an old orchard

deer trail, cutting

across the creek banks

dirt and quartz stones trailing down the bank into the creek







each stone, stick, leaf causing a reaction specific to this place

each part of this creek, has its own feel, smell

animals, plants, rocks

temperature, speed, light

each part, causing patterns completely individual

each pattern specific to this place

marking the individuality

the creek surface reflecting shadows

from the trees that crowd its banks

of this place

the patterns and ripples small and insignificant,

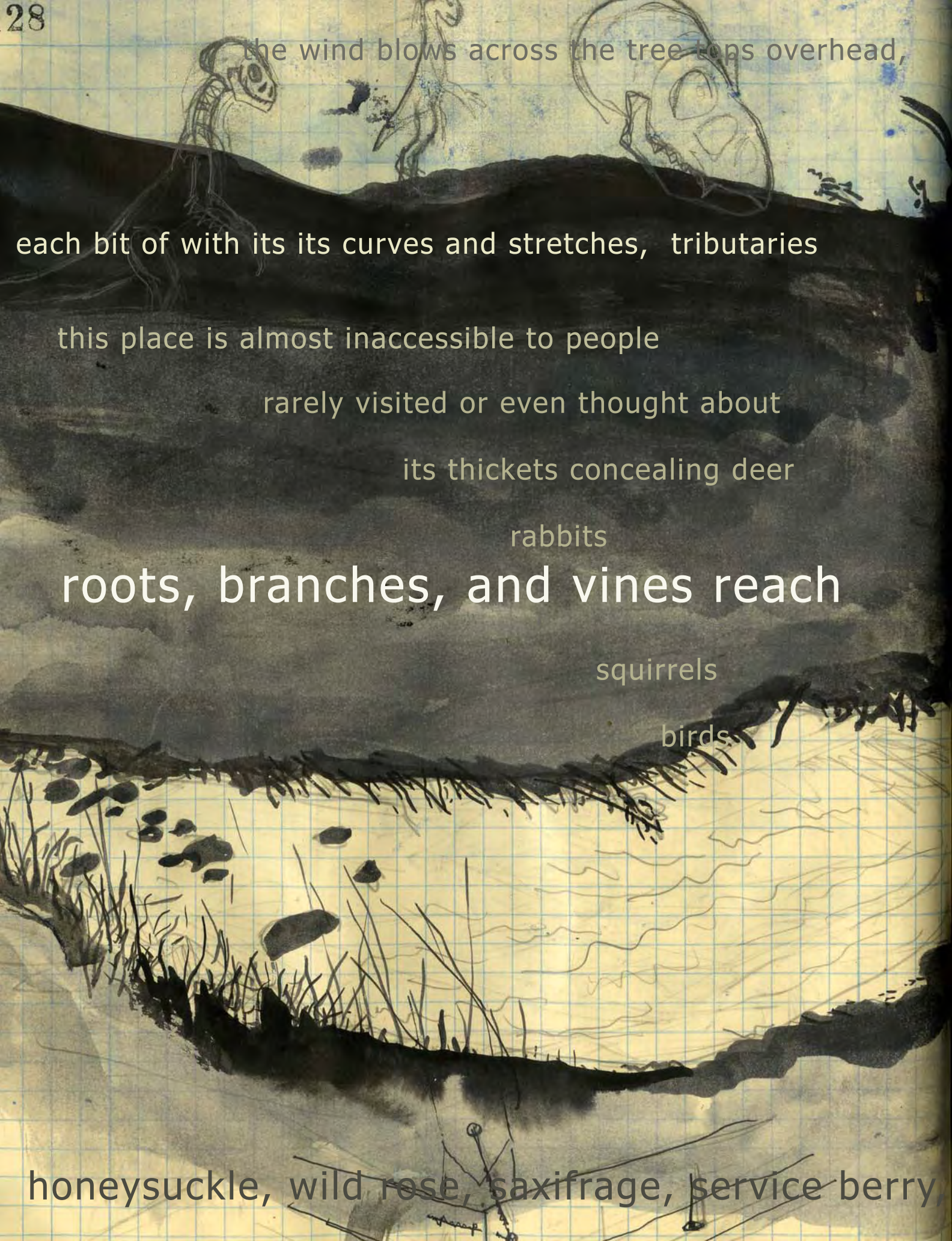
indicate each little feature of this creek,

its action,

its complexity

witch hazel, wild alder, beechnut, sourwood, black cherry, white oak, wild geranium, stinging nettle, tulip tree, cinquefoil





the wind blows across the tree tops overhead,

each bit of with its its curves and stretches, tributaries

this place is almost inaccessible to people

rarely visited or even thought about

its thickets concealing deer

rabbits

roots, branches, and vines reach

squirrels

birds

honeysuckle, wild rose, saxifrage, service berry

passing rustling; leaves in waves

flowing out from each hollow, or draw, joining it

...part of the greater whole

still in the distance

the system of water

a car passes

that makes up Bottom Creek

a train

an airplane overhead

into the water, clogging its current

driven past,

flown over,

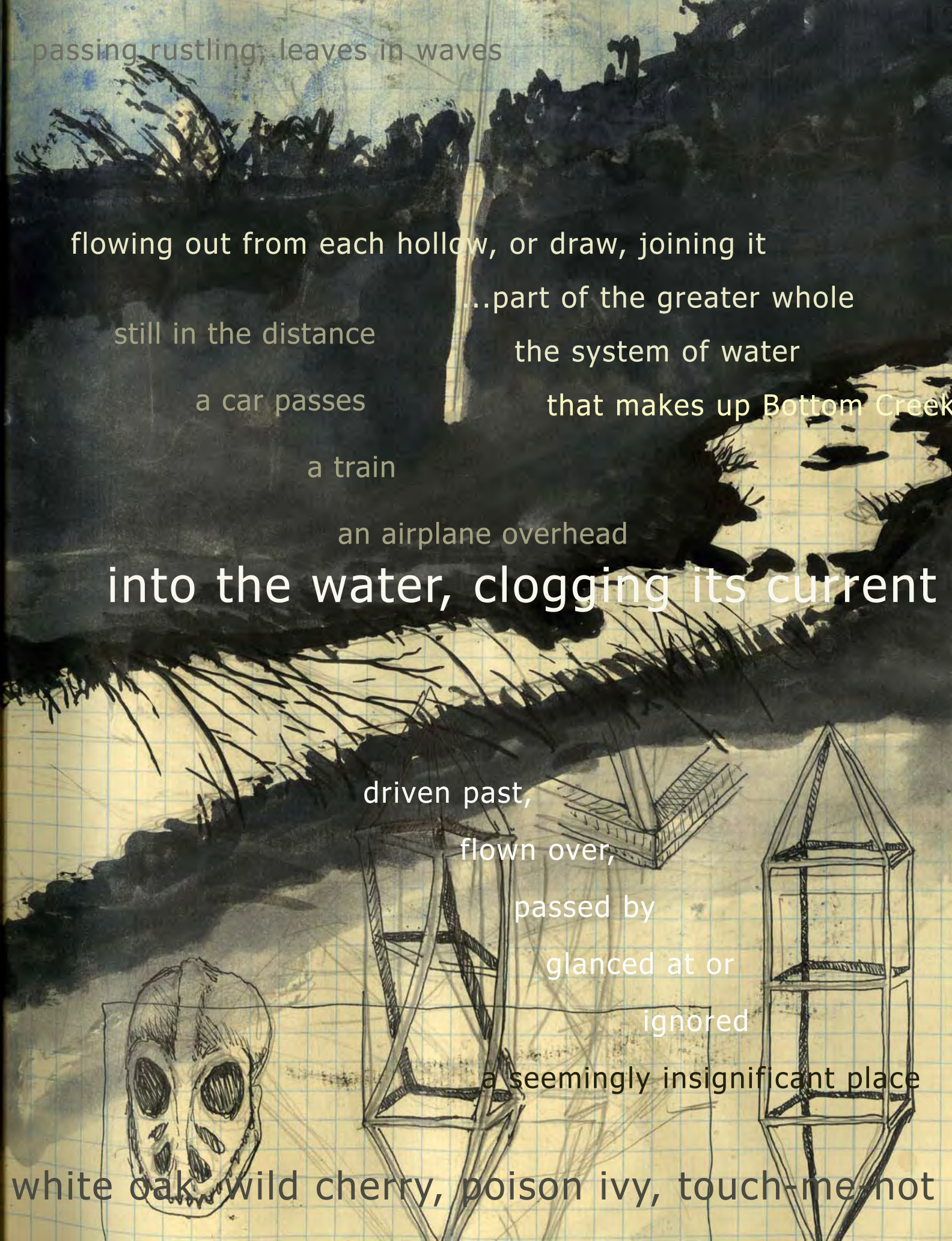
passed by

glanced at or

ignored

a seemingly insignificant place

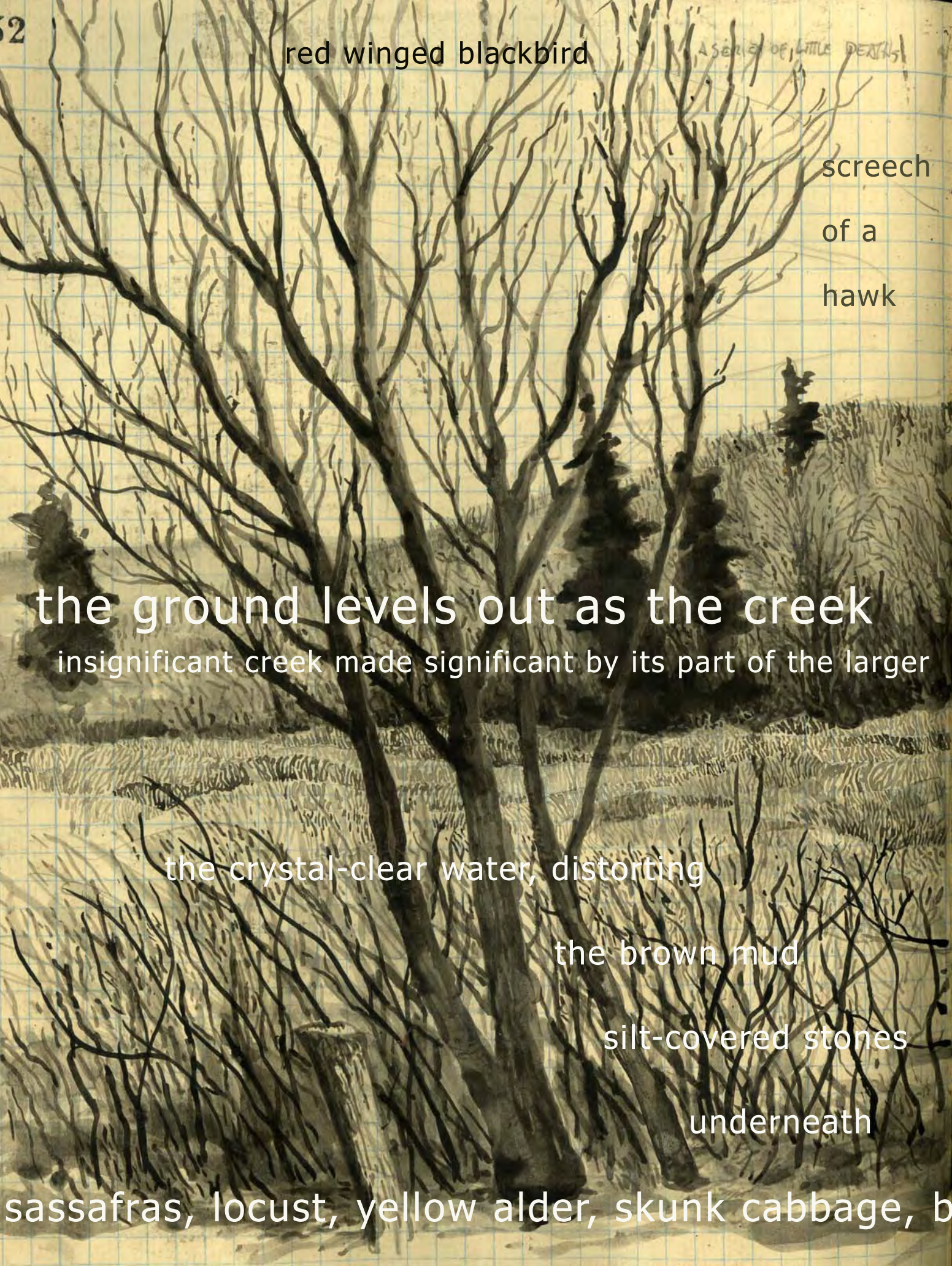
white oak, wild cherry, poison ivy, touch-me-not





red winged blackbird

A SERIES OF LITTLE DEATHS



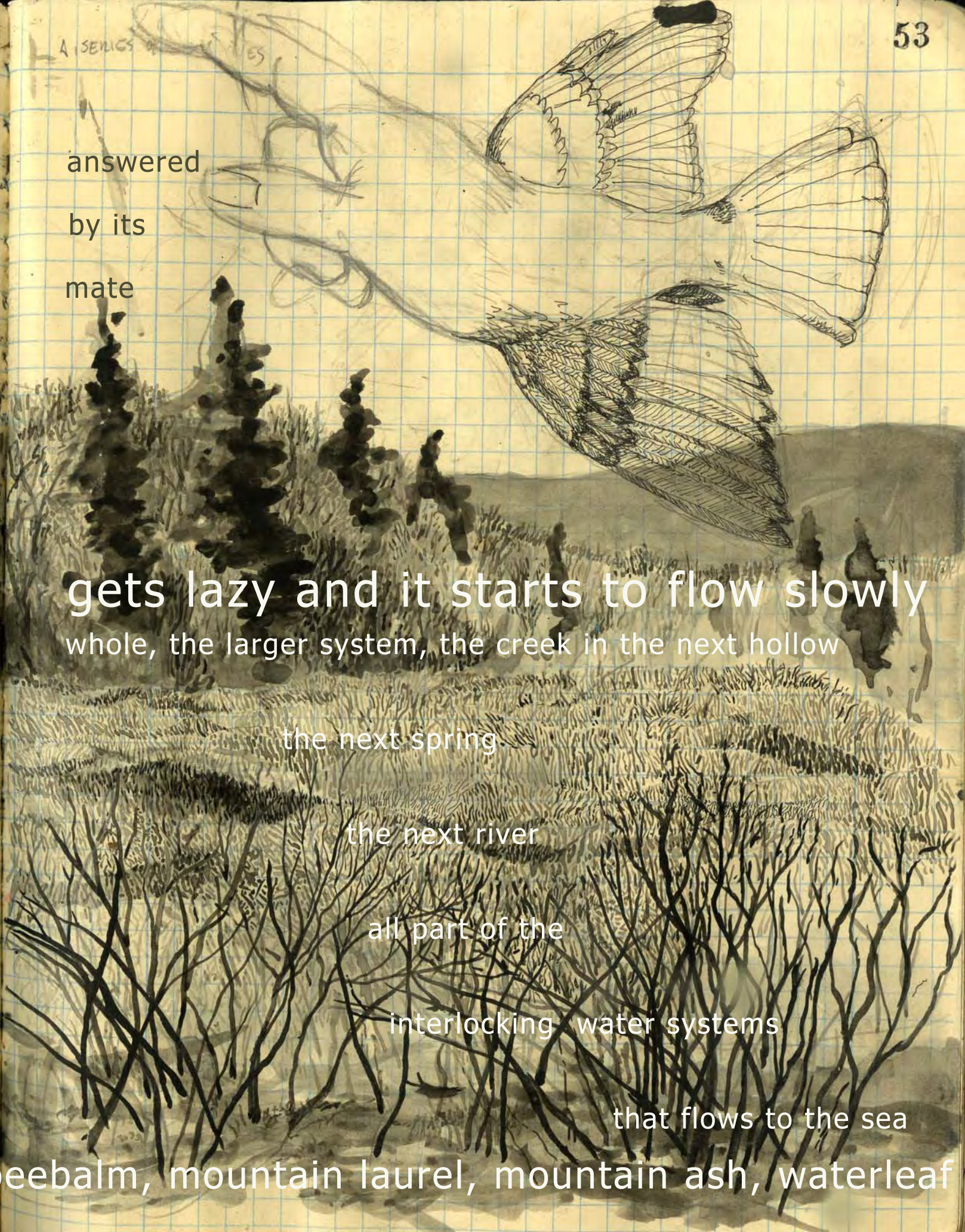
screech  
of a  
hawk

the ground levels out as the creek  
insignificant creek made significant by its part of the larger

the crystal-clear water, distorting  
the brown mud  
silt-covered stones  
underneath

sassafras, locust, yellow alder, skunk cabbage, beebalm, mountain laurel, mountain ash, waterleaf

A SERIES OF LITTLE DEATHS



answered  
by its  
mate

gets lazy and it starts to flow slowly  
whole, the larger system, the creek in the next hollow

the next spring

the next river

all part of the  
interlocking water systems

that flows to the sea

sassafras, locust, yellow alder, skunk cabbage, beebalm, mountain laurel, mountain ash, waterleaf



Bottom creek flows over Bent Mountain,

through

farms and fields

forests and trees

pastures and playgrounds

deep hollows thick with hollyhocks

soon the creek surges to the left, into swamps

old cars

through forest that were once virgin

a rocky area, then the current quickens past stumps that were once huge chestnut trees

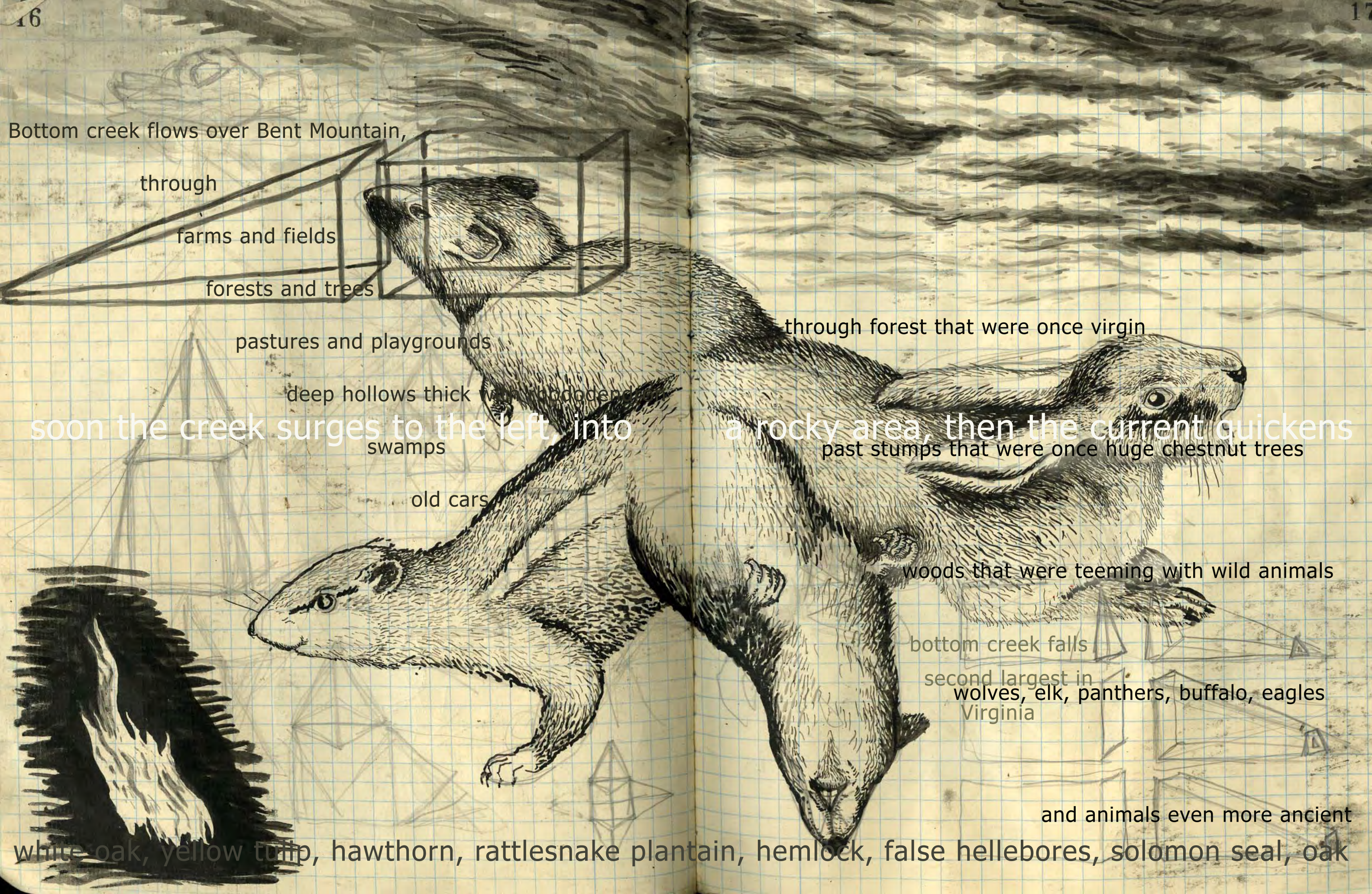
woods that were teeming with wild animals

bottom creek falls

second largest in Virginia  
wolves, elk, panthers, buffalo, eagles

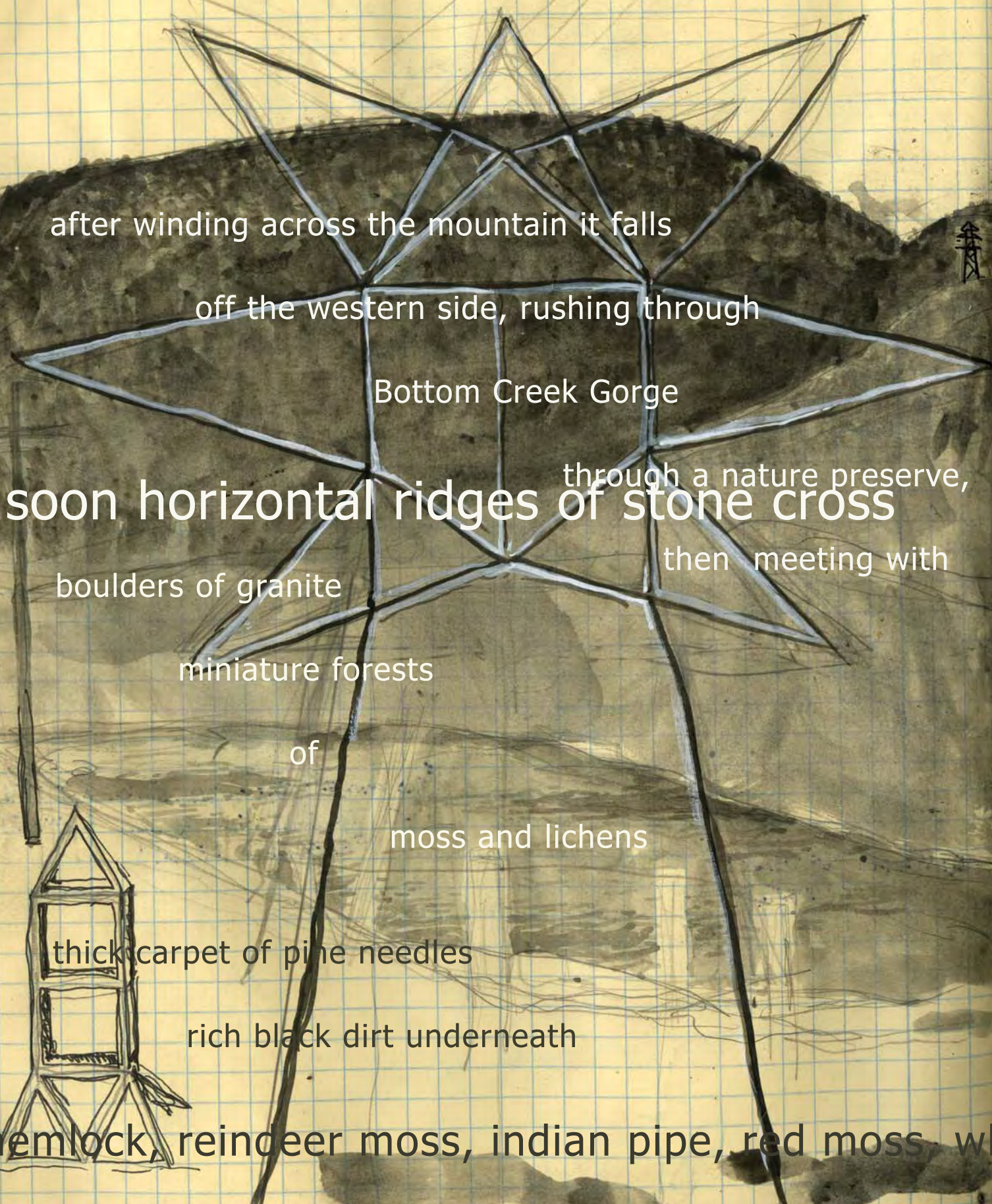
and animals even more ancient

white oak, yellow tulip, hawthorn, rattlesnake plantain, hemlock, false hellebores, solomon seal, oak





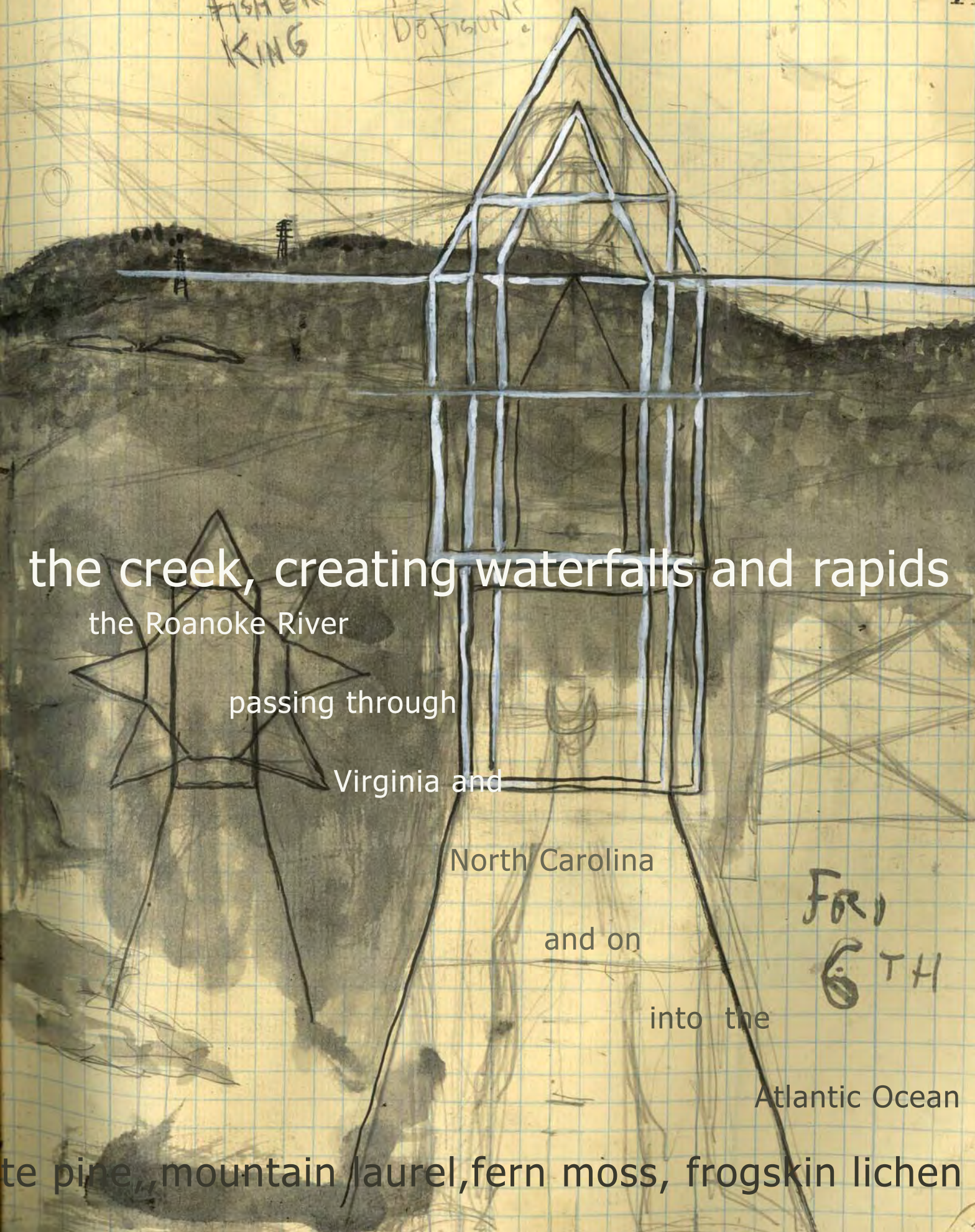
great blue heron



after winding across the mountain it falls  
 off the western side, rushing through  
 Bottom Creek Gorge  
 through a nature preserve,  
 soon horizontal ridges of stone cross  
 then meeting with  
 boulders of granite  
 miniature forests  
 of  
 moss and lichens  
 thick carpet of pine needles  
 rich black dirt underneath

hemlock, reindeer moss, indian pipe, red moss, white pine, mountain laurel, fern moss, frogskin lichen

FISHER KING  
FISHING DO FISHING?



the creek, creating waterfalls and rapids  
 the Roanoke River  
 passing through  
 Virginia and  
 North Carolina  
 and on  
 into the  
 Atlantic Ocean

FOR  
6TH



as it travels along, in some places paralleling the road

it is barely noticed by people driving past,

it flows through forests and hollows rarely traveled,

but it still carries out its process of

shaping and defining the landscape

the water surges forward as it cascades

over the edge of rocks in smooth sheets

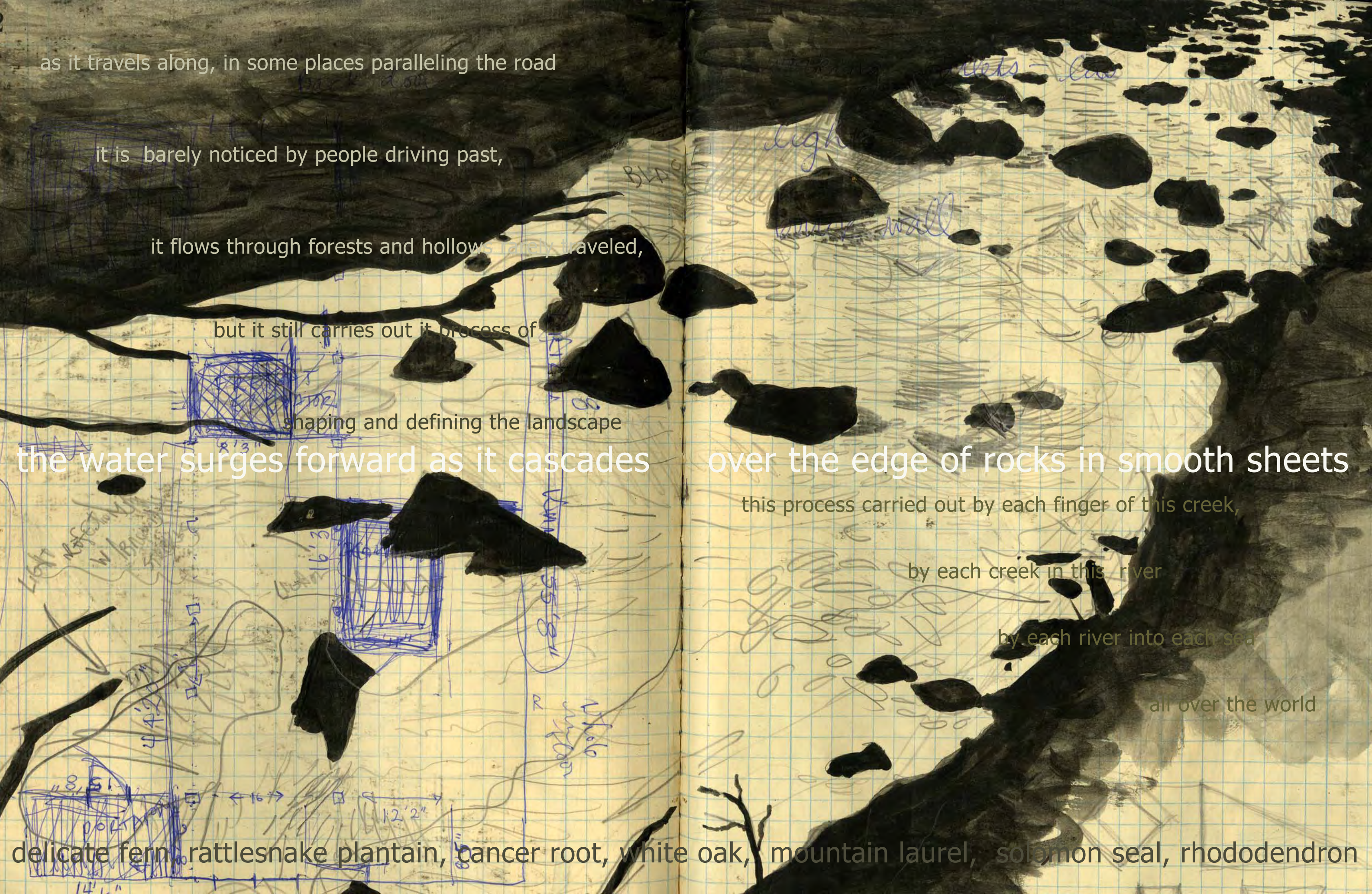
this process carried out by each finger of this creek,

by each creek in this river

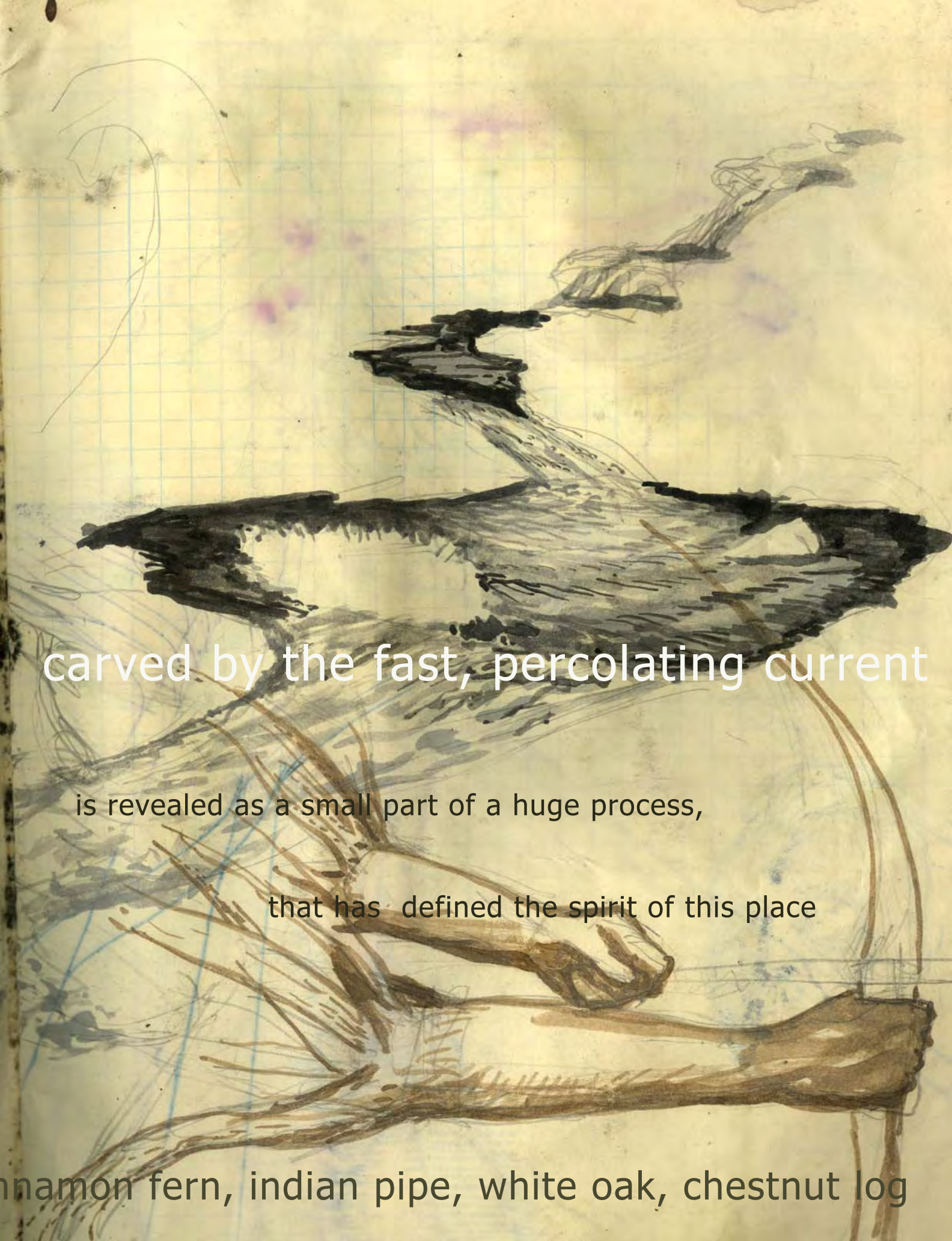
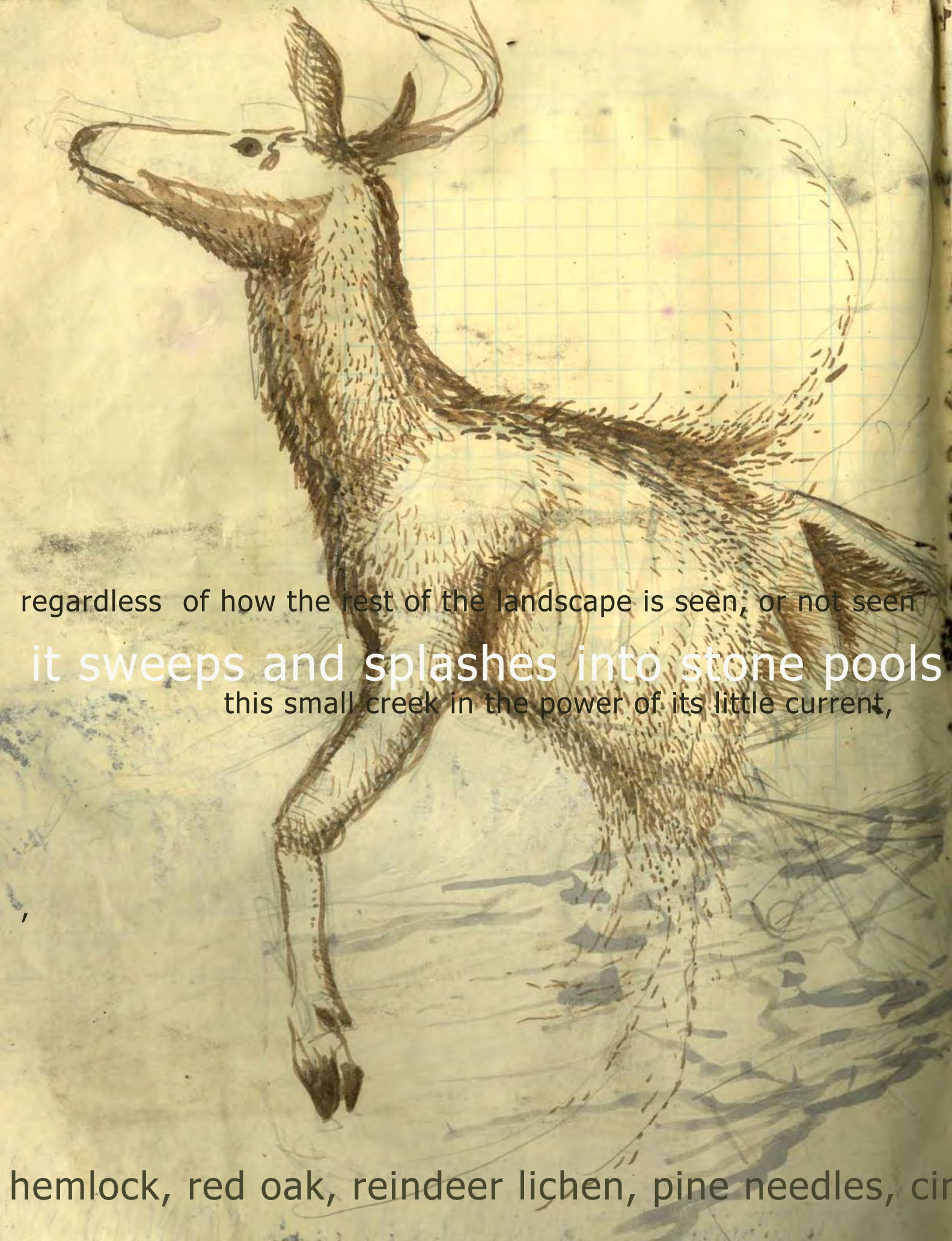
by each river into each sea

all over the world

delicate fern, rattlesnake plantain, cancer root, white oak, mountain laurel, solomon seal, rhododendron







regardless of how the rest of the landscape is seen, or not seen  
it sweeps and splashes into stone pools  
this small creek in the power of its little current,

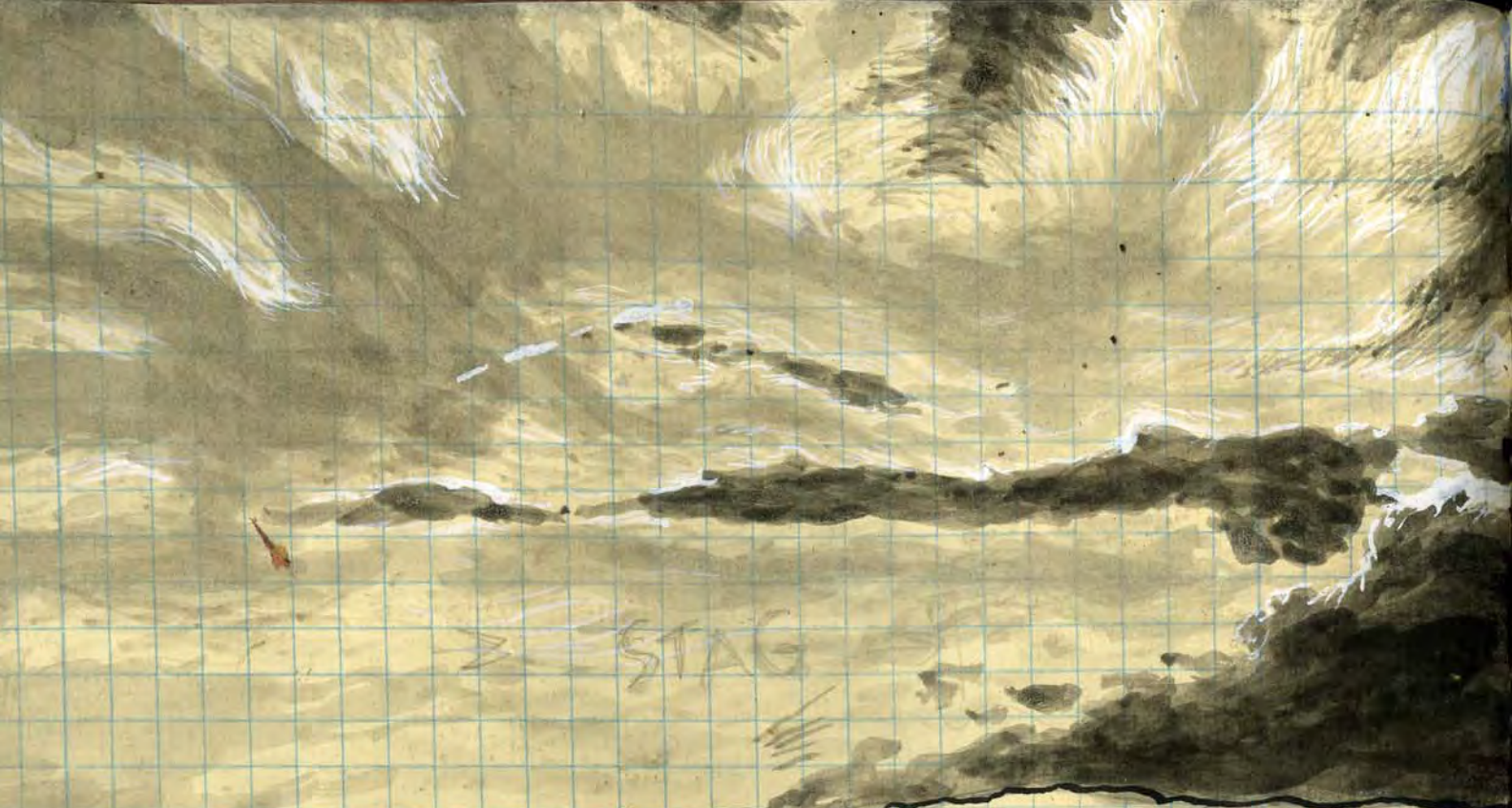
carved by the fast, percolating current

is revealed as a small part of a huge process,

that has defined the spirit of this place

hemlock, red oak, reindeer lichen, pine needles, cinnamon fern, indian pipe, white oak, chestnut log





the spirit that even once this mountain is used , its

ignored, minimalized, explored, hiked, mythologized,

the water then rushes down a slide of migrating to generations born, generations growing

cataloged, killed off, introduced, reintroduced,

replacing, burned, clear-cut, select-cut, bulldozed

fields cleared, stones split, dynamited, marked,

sold, resold, divided, developed, harnessed, paved,

Book on...  
GLASS CUTTER  
ROLL OF PAPER  
MASK  
MOLIN MAKING  
MOLIN SOAP  
BEAN SPRAY

chestnut stump, hemlock, dying hemlock, hemlock log,



fields, forests, rocks, soil, wind, wilderness, farms, houses, homes,

over valued, undervalued, settled, people driven out, people living

polished rock, frothing into the next pool old, dying, moving, displaced, its animals hunted, prized, captured,

displaced, trees cut, trees planted, species wiped out, species

the soil spent, fertilized, mined, rocks moved, walls built, posted

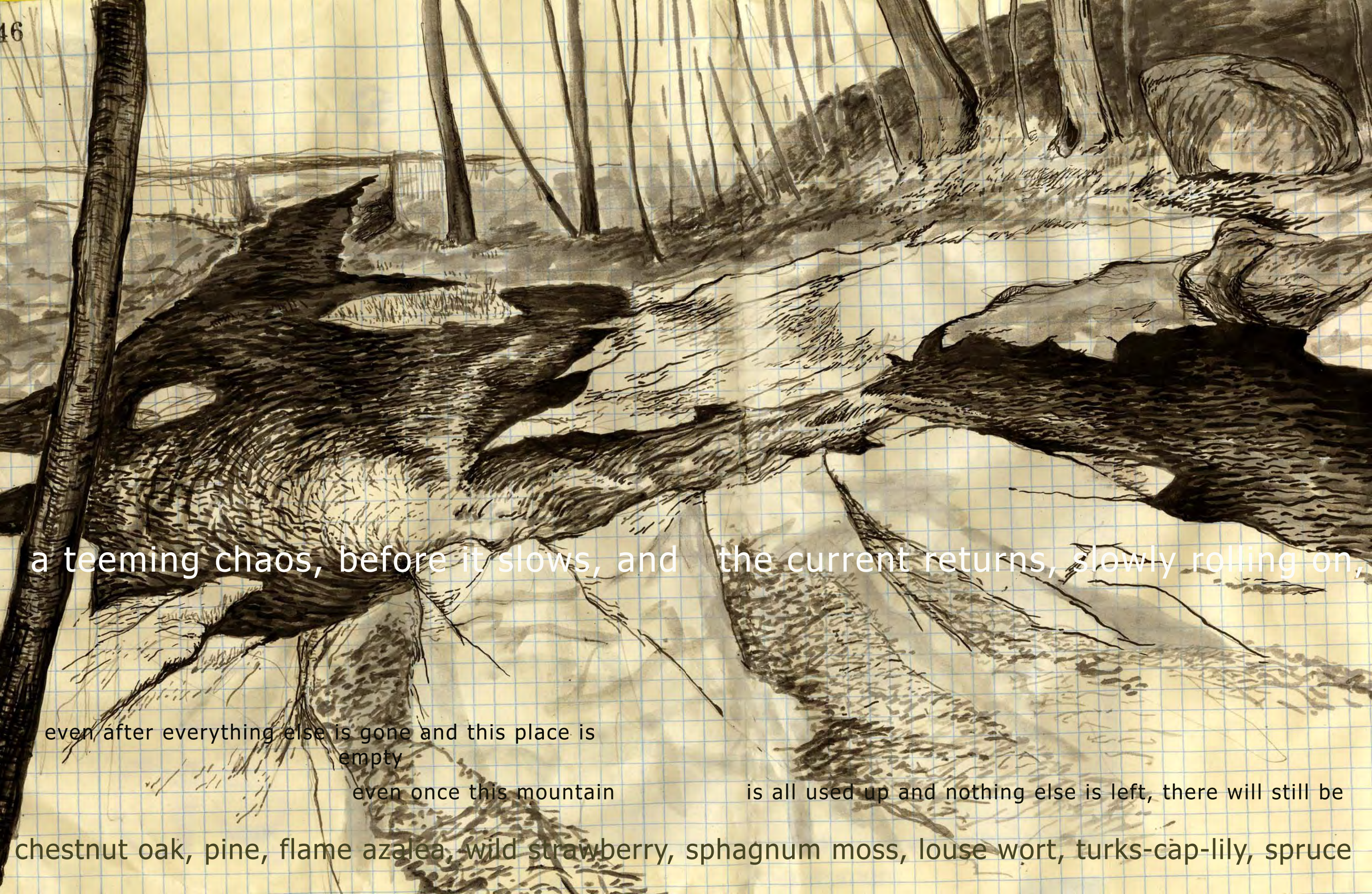
painted, farmed, fenced, grazed, abandoned, swamps drained

suburbanized, but, even then...

tent caterpiller, dying hemlock, new oak sprout

ANTHROPOMORPHISM





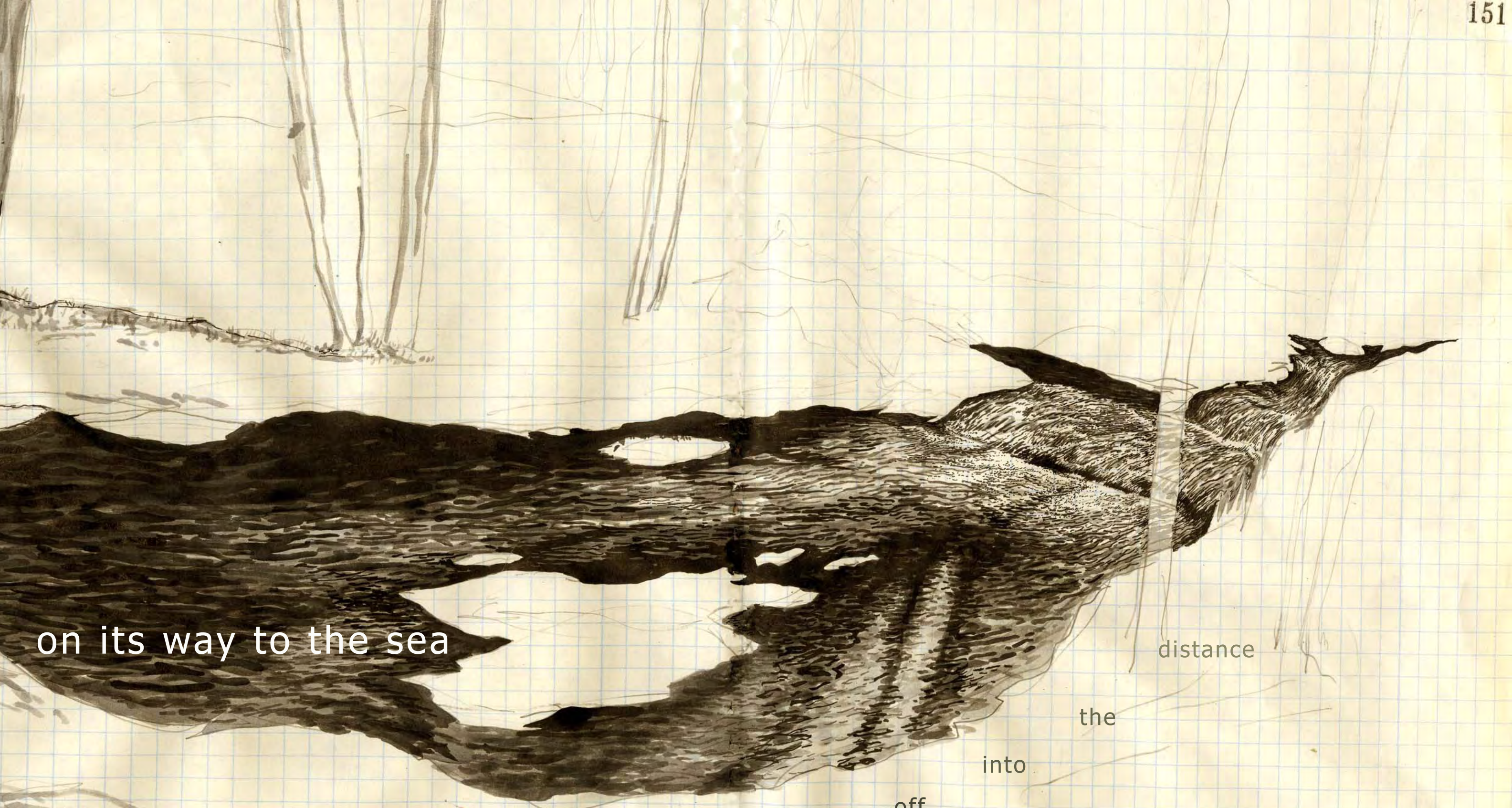
a teeming chaos, before it slows, and the current returns, slowly rolling on,

even after everything else is gone and this place is empty

even once this mountain is all used up and nothing else is left, there will still be

chestnut oak, pine, flame azalea, wild strawberry, sphagnum moss, louse wort, turks-cap-lily, spruce





on its way to the sea

distance

the

into

off

and

a small trickle of water winding through the land

yarrow, queen-anne's-lace, solomons seal, and one little buttercup.



# HISTORY OF BENT MOUNTAIN

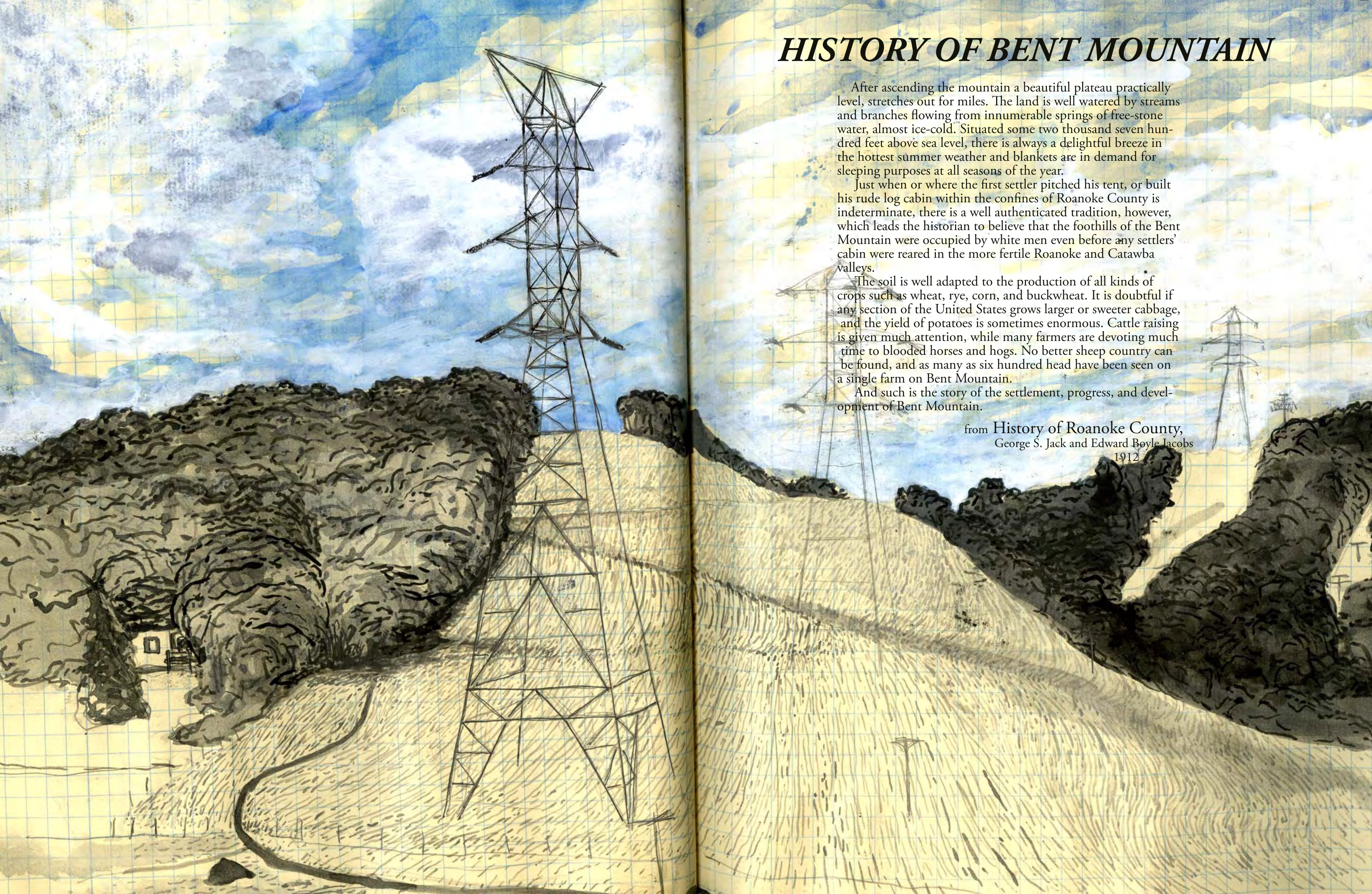
After ascending the mountain a beautiful plateau practically level, stretches out for miles. The land is well watered by streams and branches flowing from innumerable springs of free-stone water, almost ice-cold. Situated some two thousand seven hundred feet above sea level, there is always a delightful breeze in the hottest summer weather and blankets are in demand for sleeping purposes at all seasons of the year.

Just when or where the first settler pitched his tent, or built his rude log cabin within the confines of Roanoke County is indeterminate, there is a well authenticated tradition, however, which leads the historian to believe that the foothills of the Bent Mountain were occupied by white men even before any settlers' cabin were reared in the more fertile Roanoke and Catawba valleys.

The soil is well adapted to the production of all kinds of crops such as wheat, rye, corn, and buckwheat. It is doubtful if any section of the United States grows larger or sweeter cabbage, and the yield of potatoes is sometimes enormous. Cattle raising is given much attention, while many farmers are devoting much time to blooded horses and hogs. No better sheep country can be found, and as many as six hundred head have been seen on a single farm on Bent Mountain.

And such is the story of the settlement, progress, and development of Bent Mountain.

from *History of Roanoke County*,  
George S. Jack and Edward Boyle Jacobs  
1912





This body of work represents the culmination of work I started five years ago. From the beginning I used my sketchbook drawings to examine and investigate Bent Mountain, Virginia, which is the place I grew up, and a place I deeply love. As a small rural community in the Blue Ridge Mountains, Bent Mountain is known for its natural beauty and rich history. My art aims to reflect this place, to show the respect and love I have for nature and to highlight the changes, which have occurred to this place during my life time. These changes, (some natural and gradual, some, accelerated by technology) have left me with a deep sense of loss.

Through drawing and painting, I intimately describe Bent Mountain. Through meticulous marking, I distill my emotions, observations, ideas and experience to make sense of the changes that have occurred while attempting to preserve its fundamental essence for the future generations. I record the changing dynamics of the mountain in a historical, geological, and personal scale of time.



To do so, I investigate the *genus loci*, or spirit of this place. Historically, this spirit is often represented as a mythological creature such as a nymph or satyr. However, I choose to represent the *genus loci* of Bent Mountain in a more tangible form; as a natural force that existed before me, before the mountain, or before life itself. To me, this is embodied in the most basic elements of the land, and the processes that shape the landscape; the actions of weather, air, water, stones and rocks. While these forces act in concert to form the mountain, water is the most important, element to me. Not only is it the most dynamic and life-like, it is most primal element of life. Water is where life begins, it determines if an environment is habitable, and what organisms can exist. It is only by its continued presence that our own existence is assured. It also has the power to erode mountains and change the terrain of every facet of our planet.

I think that this creative and destructive power is embodied in the insignificant creek I choose to draw. The subtle flow of its water, moving across the land contains "the spirit" of my mountain. In my drawings, I depict "the spirit" through the water's action. Stripping out most of the landscape allows me to concentrate on the movements, currents, and flow of the water rather than the effects of light, color or surface reflections.

For me depicting water as energy is colorless and I choose to emphasize this power through the contrast of black and white. When I paint, the brush's movement across the surface of the paper is a metaphor for the water's movement across the ground. I want the viewer to be perceptually and physically submerged in water's natural rhythms and cross current complexities.

To exaggerate this affect, I use very large pieces of paper and paint the creek in sequential sections and shifting perspectives. I depict the creek winding its way from its source, across the wall, and from opposite banks. I show it through my eyes to convey where I stand, what I see, what I experience, what I pay attention to, and most importantly, what I value. By keeping it simple, my priority, is to keep it focused on the experience of being in this place.

The use of black and white India ink is important because of its directness and simplicity. It is the drawing media I take with me when I walk and hike and what I use exclusively when I draw the creek from observation. Through the ink's infinite shades of gray to black, I focus my brushwork on the patterns across the surface of the water. Metaphorically and literally, water carries the ink across the paper and evaporates to leave a sedimentary mark



which perfectly imitates water's natural evaporation cycle. The use of Yupo, (a plastic paper like substrate that does not absorb water) greatly improves this effect. When using Yupo, ink sits on the surface, leaving a mark created by the surface tension of the drop of water. The improvisational nature of the spontaneous mark empowers me as an artist who acutely observes nature. While part of me wants to describe the creek with scientific precision, I challenge myself to let go of a perfectly realistic rendering, to open up and pay attention to the spontaneity of my process. Consequently, through the drawing I experience the water's dynamic movement and flow. Instead of literally depicting the water, I describe its action and energy with obsessive marks, that range from large spontaneous gestures, to intricate detailed meditations.

I choose to depict the landscape as a white featureless void, rather than a romanticized version of the mountains. The trees, plants, animals, soil, rocks, light, sun, and reflections are present in their glaring and painful absence. This hollowness is further emphasized in the spontaneous shapes and voids the creek creates. While emphasizing what may disappear or is lost, this depiction also questions the transitional aspect of what we really see or experience in nature. These questions

are most relevant to the landscape of my childhood, and the place with which I most identify: the Appalachian Mountains.

The Appalachians are one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world. Prior to the evolution of the earliest fish, the mountains first rose 280 million years ago. Over time, they eroded and were worn down before being violently pushed skyward again in the Cenozoic era. They continued to erode, forming the rounded, folded ridges and fertile valleys I know today.

Ever since I was a small boy, I have tried to imagine what these mountains looked like long ago. What did its habitants see? How much has it changed? Would I recognize it? Unfortunately, the Appalachians have been subjected to several hundred years of change: precious little virgin forest remains as most has been clear-cut; the mountains have been plundered for coal and other natural resources; invasive species of trees, plants, birds and animals, have driven out native species or assumed positions in the ecosystem left vacant by extinct or over-hunted species. For example, one ridge near my home, Poor Mountain, earned its name for the collective opinion of its condition after years of over-hunting.



As lush and fertile as the mountains may seem now, it is difficult to comprehend that the southern Appalachians were once one of the most ecologically diverse areas in the world. Now lost, many species such as the Peaks of Otter salamander were found only in these mountains.

Early descriptions of the Appalachians forests describe a forest of huge trees measuring over an arms' width around. A hundred years ago, the American Chestnut was the dominant and most important tree in the forest. Once described as magnificent, it is now virtually extinct. The only ones I knew as a child were ghostly, dead, hollow logs found on the forest floor. The forests of my youth were not old; rather they were filled with invasive species. Sadly, the past ten years have seen more waves of blight and parasites, which have wiped out entire groves of trees I had known as a child.

The past hundred years of settlement have also left these mountains a ghost of their former selves. This region – its land and culture ignored, minimized, stereotyped and looked on as insignificant – has cleared the path for outsiders to harvest the natural resources. The Appalachians are manipulated for their minerals, coal, timber, wind, water, and open land. As I walk the ridges overlooking the valley, I see suburbs encroaching on my home. These developments diminish the wildness, diversity,

natural beauty and sense of individuality of Appalachia, in favor of the homogenized culture of suburbanized America.

The Appalachian experience is one of loss and loneliness. My time spent here tells me this: old friends, family, neighbors, distant memories and times are long gone. The timeless melancholy that hangs over this place is a reflection of the ancient worn and weathered mountains that bears witness to eons of life. Having seen much, these ancient mountains speak silently of the people who lived here. An arrowhead or spear point found in a creek bed affirms the past presence of Indian tribes that once hunted here. Stone piles and fences mark the isolation of the first settlers. The forest has reclaimed itself. Abandoned farms, empty cabins in distant hollows, and cemeteries grown over in vines are signs of what once was. The isolation and loneliness that hangs over these hollows and woodlands is reflected in the folk music and bluegrass associated with these hills today. The music's distinctive "high lonesome sound" preserves a longing for home and is an idealization of a simpler time.

It is this sense of loss that motivates me. While my experience is only a small part of the history of this place, it is my wish is to protect and preserve it through



through documentary drawings. For good or bad, these mountains are always changing. Through my work, I ask if it is possible to truly know this place, for my time on this mountain is but an instant.

Ultimately, I wonder and ask - what does it mean to love and identify with a place, to call it home, and to watch it change. Bent Mountain whether I like it or not, is going to change. Even this small insignificant creek is an agent of change, which trickles down from the spring outside my bedroom window taking with it the sediments, soil, stones, bones, ashes and memories.

Genesis Chapman, 2010