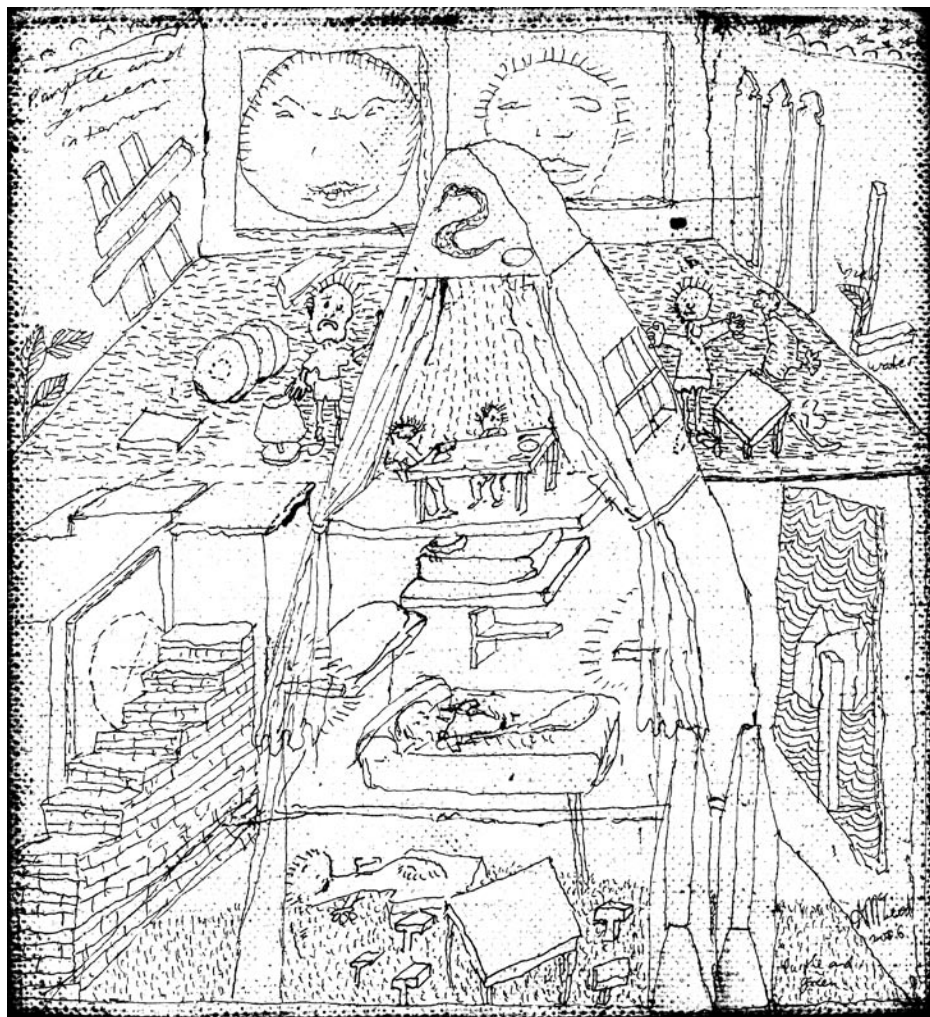


Art Morality

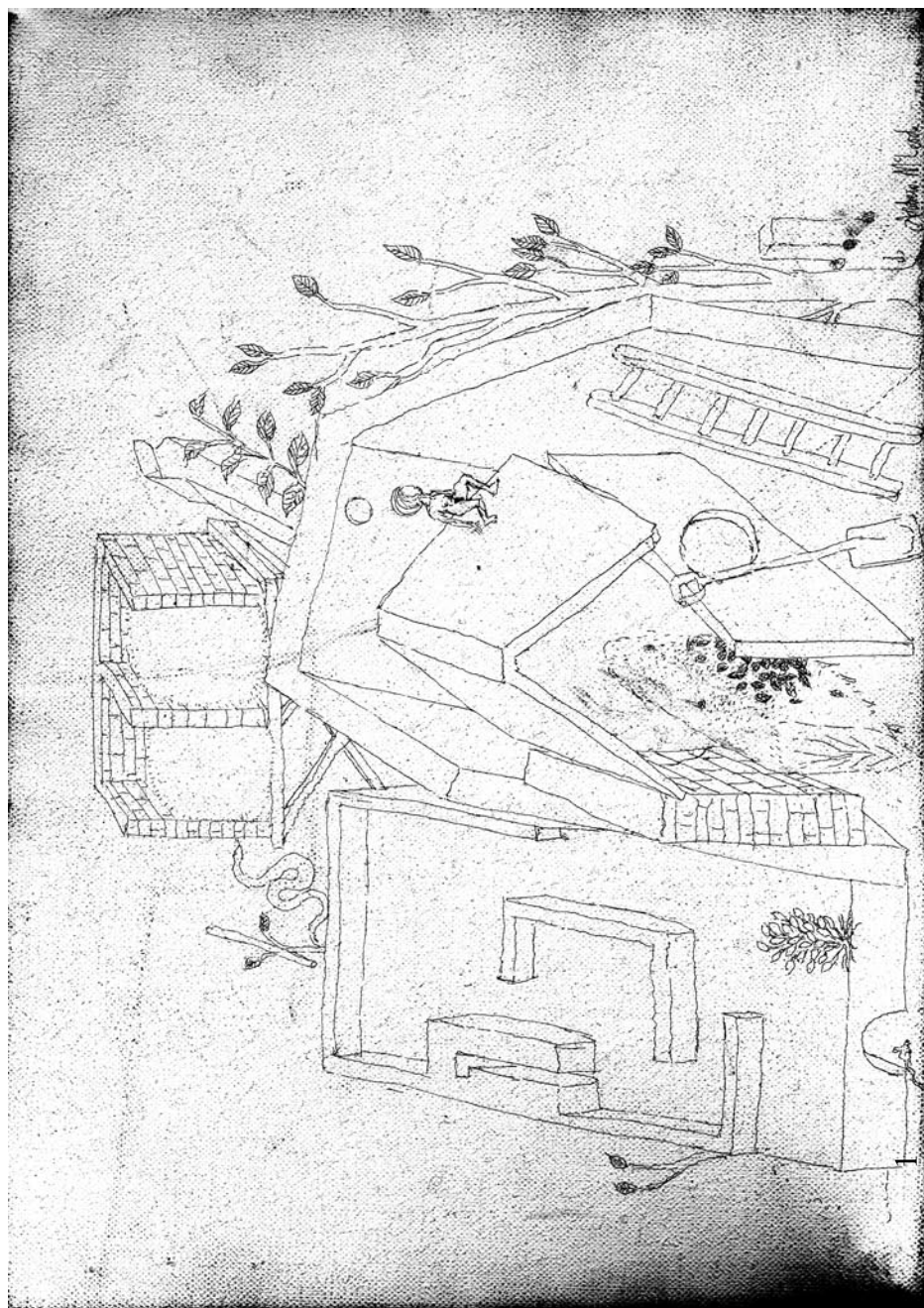
for children

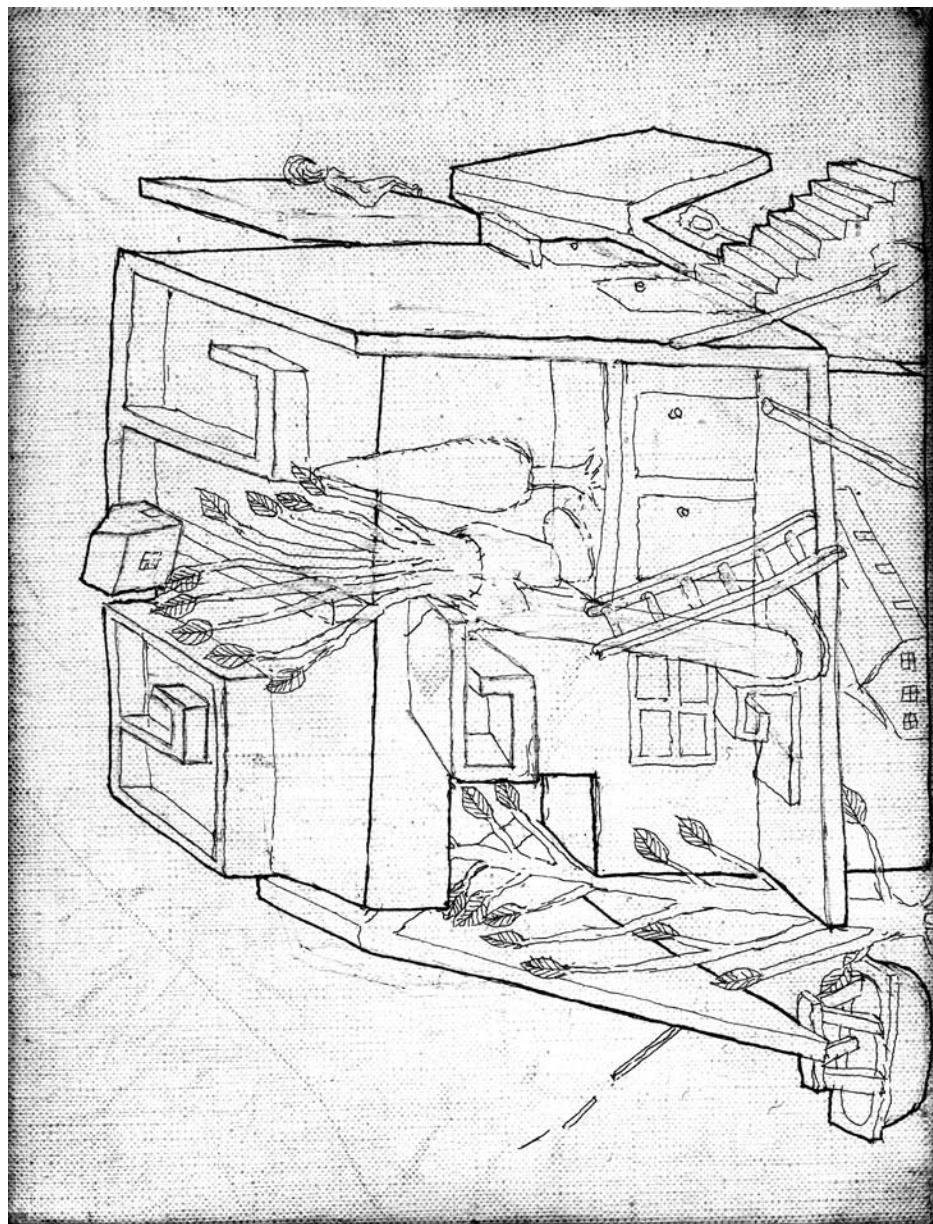


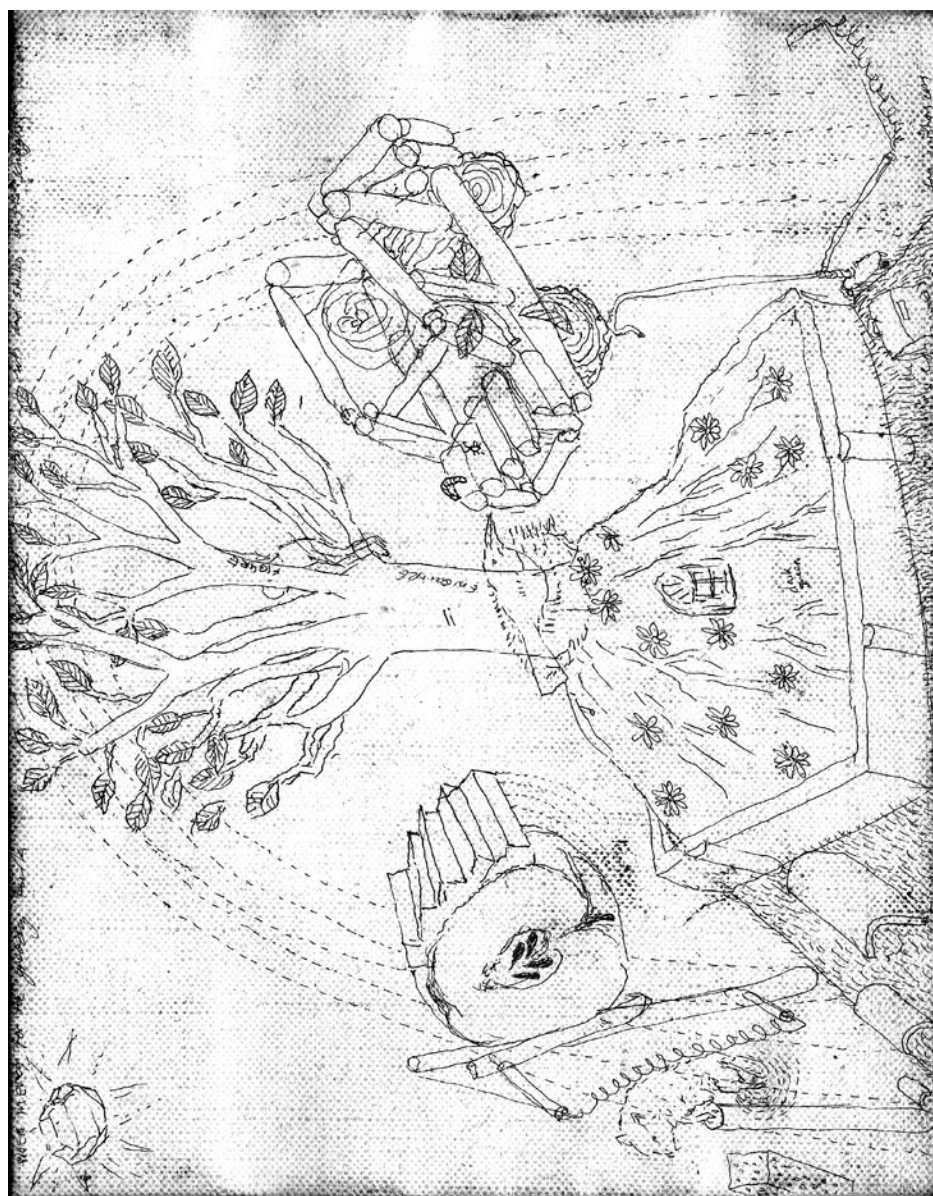
by Andrew McLeod

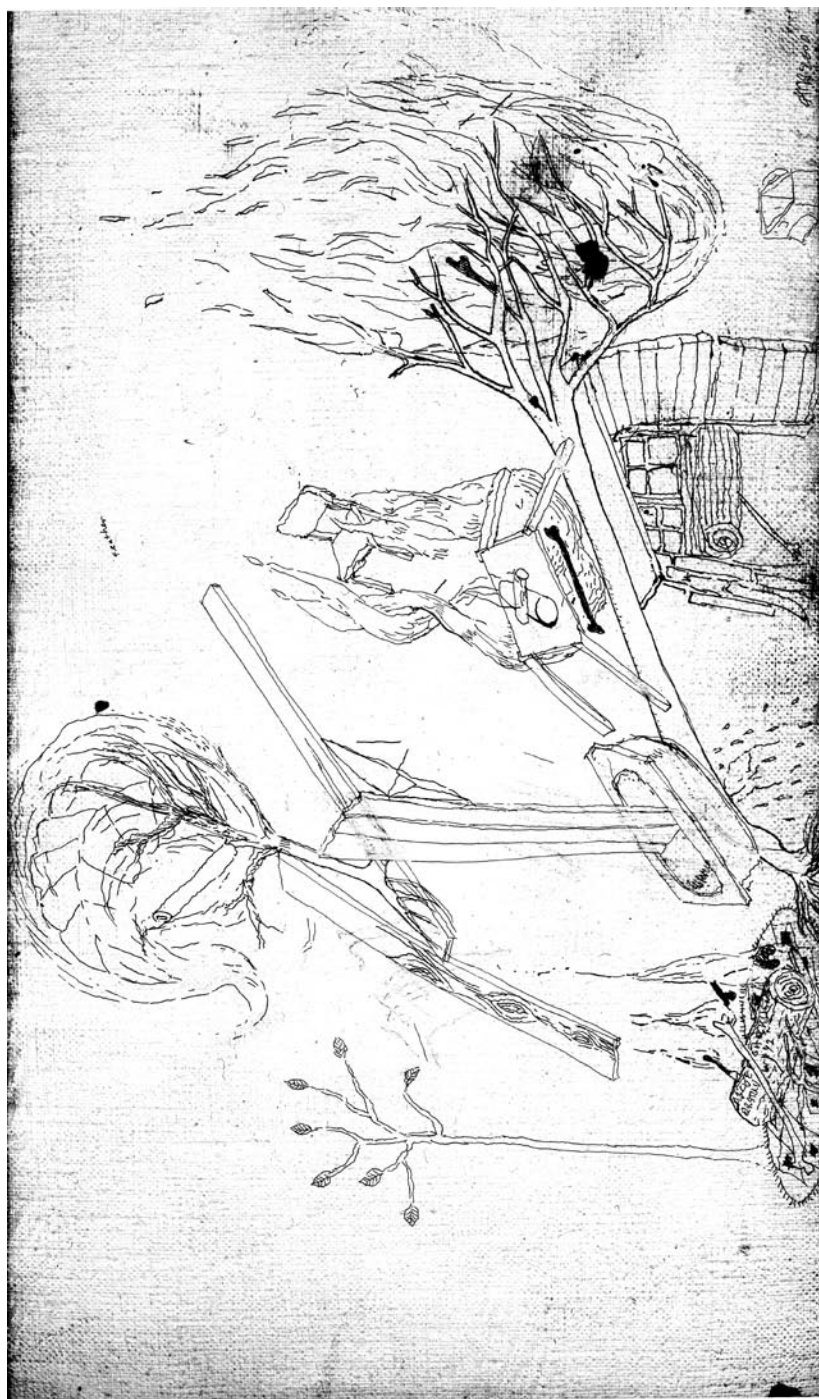
On the face of this aged queen of our cathedrals, by the side of a wrinkle, one always finds a scar. ~Tempus edax, homo edacior~; which I should be glad to translate thus: time is blind, man is stupid. * Time is a devourer; man, more so. If we had leisure to examine with the reader, one by one, the diverse traces of destruction imprinted upon the old church, time's share would be the least during the last two centuries. And, in the first place, to cite only a few leading examples, there certainly are few finer architectural pages than this faade, where, successively and at once, the three portals □ its two lateral windows, like a □ columns; and lastly, the two black and massive towers with their slate penthouses, harmonious parts of a magnificent whole, superposed in five gigantic stories;--develop themselves before the eye, in a mass and without confusion, with their innumerable details of statuary, carving, and sculpture, joined powerfully to the tranquil grandeur of the whole; a vast symphony in stone, so □ sister it is; prodigious product of the grouping □ the artist start forth in a hundred fashions □ character;--variety, eternity. And what we her churches of Christendom in the Middle Ages. All things are in place in that art, self-created, logical, and well proportioned. To measure the great toe of the foot is to measure the giant. Let us return to the faade □ its chronicles assert: ~quo mole sua terrorem incutit spectantibus~. Three important things are to-day lacking in that faade: in the first place, the staircase of eleven steps which formerly raised it above the soil; next, the ancient kings of France, which garnished the gallery of the first story, beginning with Childebert, and ending with Phillip Augustus, holding in his hand "the imperial apple." Time has caused the staircase to disappear, by □ majestic height of the edifice, to be devout □ away, for it is time □ But who has thrown down the two rows of statues? who has left the □ that commonplace and heavy door of carved wood, la Louis XV., beside the arabesques of Biscornette? The men, the architects, the artists of our day. And if we enter the interior of the edifice, who has overthrown that colossus of Saint Christopher, proverbial for magnitude among statues, as the grand hall of the Palais de Justice was among halls, as the spire of Strasbourg among spires? And those myriads of statues, which peopled all the spaces between the columns of the nave and the choir, kneeling, standing, equestrian, men, women, children, kings, bishops, gendarmes, in stone, in marble, in gold, in silver, in copper, in wax even,--who has brutally swept them away? It is not time. And who substituted for the ancient gothic altar, splendidly encumbered with shrines and reliquaries, that heavy marble sarcophagus, with angels' heads and clouds, which seems a specimen pillaged from the Val-de-Grace or the Invalides? Who stupidly sealed that heavy anachronism of stone in the Carolingian pavement of Hercaudus? Was it not Louis XIV., fulfilling the request of Louis XIII.? And who put the cold, white panes in the place of those windows," high in color, "which caused the astonished eyes of our fathers to hesitate between the rose of the grand portal and the arches of the apse? And what would a sub-chamber of the sixteenth century say, on beholding the beautiful yellow wash, with which our "accursed" edifices; he would recall the Hotel du Petit-Bourbon, all smeared thus, on account of the constable's treason. "Yellow, after all, of so good a quality," said Sauval, "and so well recommended, that more than a century has not yet caused it to lose its color." He would think that the sacred place had become infamous, and would flee. And if we □ , which rested upon the point of intersection of the cross-roofs, and which □ farther forward than the towers, slender, pointed, sonorous, carved in open work. An architect of good taste amputated it (1787), and considered it sufficient to mask the wound with that large, leaden plaster, which resembles a pot cover. 'Tis thus that the marvellous art of the Middle Ages has been treated in nearly every country, especially in France. One can distinguish on its ruins three sorts of lesions, all three of which cut into it at different depths; first, time, which has insensibly notched its surface here and there, and gnawed it everywhere; next, political and religious revolution, which, blind and wrathful by nature, have flung themselves tumultuously upon it, torn its rich garment of carving and sculpture, burst its rose windows, broken its necklace of arabesques and tiny figures, torn out its statues, sometimes because of their mitres, sometimes because of their crowns; lastly, fashions, even more necessary decadence of architecture. Fashions have wrought more harm than revolutions. They have cut to the quick; they have attacked the very bone and framework of art; they have cut, slashed, disorganized, killed the edifice, in form as in the symbol, in its consistency as well as in its beauty. And then they have made it over; a presumption of which neither time nor revolutions at least have been guilty. They have audaciously adjusted, in the name of "good taste," upon the wounds of gothic architecture, their miserable gawgaws of a day, their ribbons of mal □ flames, bronze clouds, pudgy cupids, chub □ centuries later, tortured and grimacing, in the boudoir of the Dubarry. Thus, to sum up the points which we have just indicated, three sorts of ravages to-day disfigure Gothic architecture. Wrinkles and warts on the epidermis □ Luther to Mirabeau. Mutilations, □ Vitruvius and Vignole. This magnificent art produced by the Vandals has been slain by the academies. The centuries, the revolutions, which at least devastate with impartiality and grandeur, have been joined by a cloud of □ ~chicore~ of Louis XV. for the Gothic lace, for the □ heap the measure full, is stung, bitten, a □ of Diana at Ephesus, "so much lauded by □ structure."* * _Histoire Gallicane_, liv. II. Periode III. fo. 130, p. 1. Notre-Dame is not, moreover, what can be called a complete, definite, classified monument. It is no longer a Romanesque church; nor is it a Gothic church. This edifice is not a type. Notre-Dame de Paris has not, like the Abbey of Tournus, the grave and massive form, the large and round vault, the glacial bareness, the majestic simplicity of the edifices which have the rounded arch for their progenitor. It is not, like the Cathedral of Bourges, the magnificent, light, multiform, tufted, bristling efflorescent product of the pointed arch. Impossible to class it in that ancient family of sombre, mysterious churches, low and crushed as it were by the round arch, almost □ with lozenges and zigzags, than with flowers, with flowers than with animals, with animals than with men; the work of the architect less than of the bishop; first transformation □ William the Conqueror. Impossible to place our Cathedral in that other family of lofty, aerial churches, rich in painted windows and sculpture; pointed in form, bold in attitude; communal and bourgeois as political symbols; free, capricious, artistic, progressive, and popular, □; nor of pure Arabian race, like the second. It is an edifice of the transition period. The Saxon architect completed the erection of the first pillars of the nave, when the pointed arch, which dates from the Crusade, arrived and placed itself as a conqueror upon the large Romanesque capitals which should support only round arches. The pointed arch, mistress □ ger, restrains itself, and dares no longer dart upwards in spires and lancet windows □ Romanesque pillars. However, these edifices of the transition from the Romanesque to the Gothic, are no less precious for study than the pure types. They express a shade of the □ , a curious specimen of this variety. Each face, each stone of the venerable monument, is a page not only of the history of the country, but of the history of science and art as well. Thus, in order to indicate here only the principal details, while the little Red Door almost attains to the limits of the Gothic delicacy of the fifteenth century, the pillars of the nave, by their size and weight, go back to the Carolingian Abbey of Saint-Germain des Prs. One would suppose that six centuries separated these pillars from that door. There is no one, not even the hermetics, who does not find in the symbol □ complete a hieroglyph. Thus, the Roman abbey, the philosophers' church, the Gothic art, Saxon art, the heavy, round pillar, which recalls Gregory VII., the hermetic symbolism, with which Nicolas Flamel played the prelude to Luther, papal unity, schism, Saint-Germain des Prs, Saint-Jacques de la Boucherie,--all are mingled, combined, amalgamated in Notre-Dame. Thi □ the haunches of another, something of all. We repeat it, these hybrid constructions are not the least interesting for the artist, for the antiquarian, for the historian. They make one feel to what a degree architecture is a primitive thing □ that the greatest products of architecture are less the works of individuals than of society; rather the offspring of a nation's effort, than the inspired flash of a man of genius; the deposit left by a whole people; the heaps accumulated by centuries; the residue of successive evaporations of human society,--in a word, species of formations. Each wave of time contributes its alluvium, each race deposits its layer on the monument, each individual brings his stone. Thus do the beavers, thus do the bees, thus do men. The great symbol of architecture, Babel, is a hive. Great edifices, like great mountains, are the work of centuries. Art often undergoes a transformation while they are pending,--pendent opera interrupta--: they proceed quietly in accordance with the transformed art.



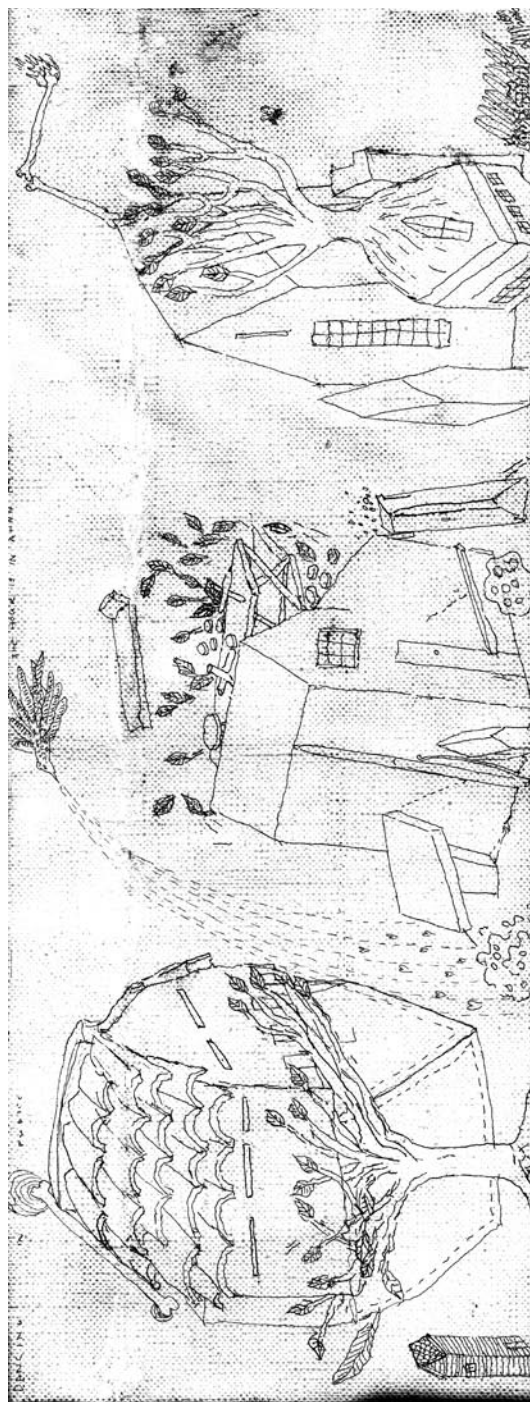


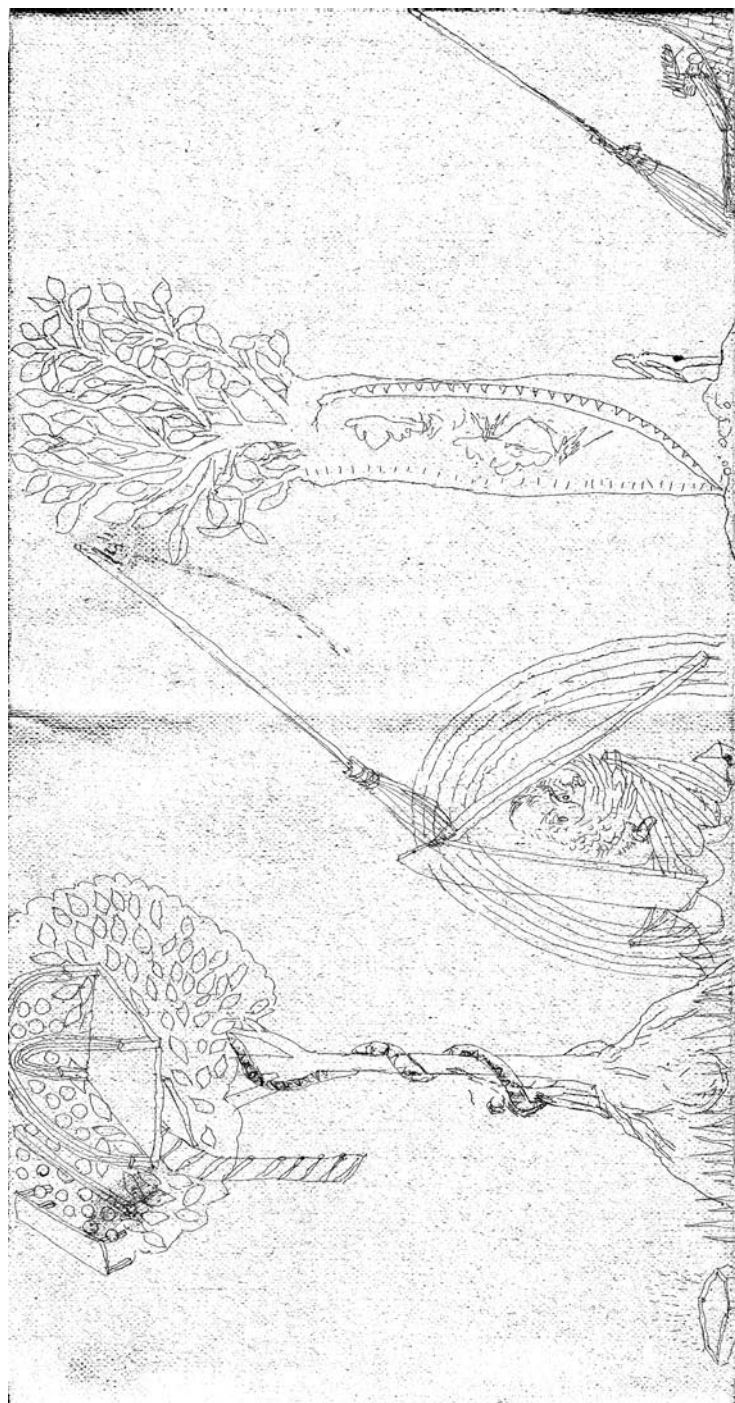


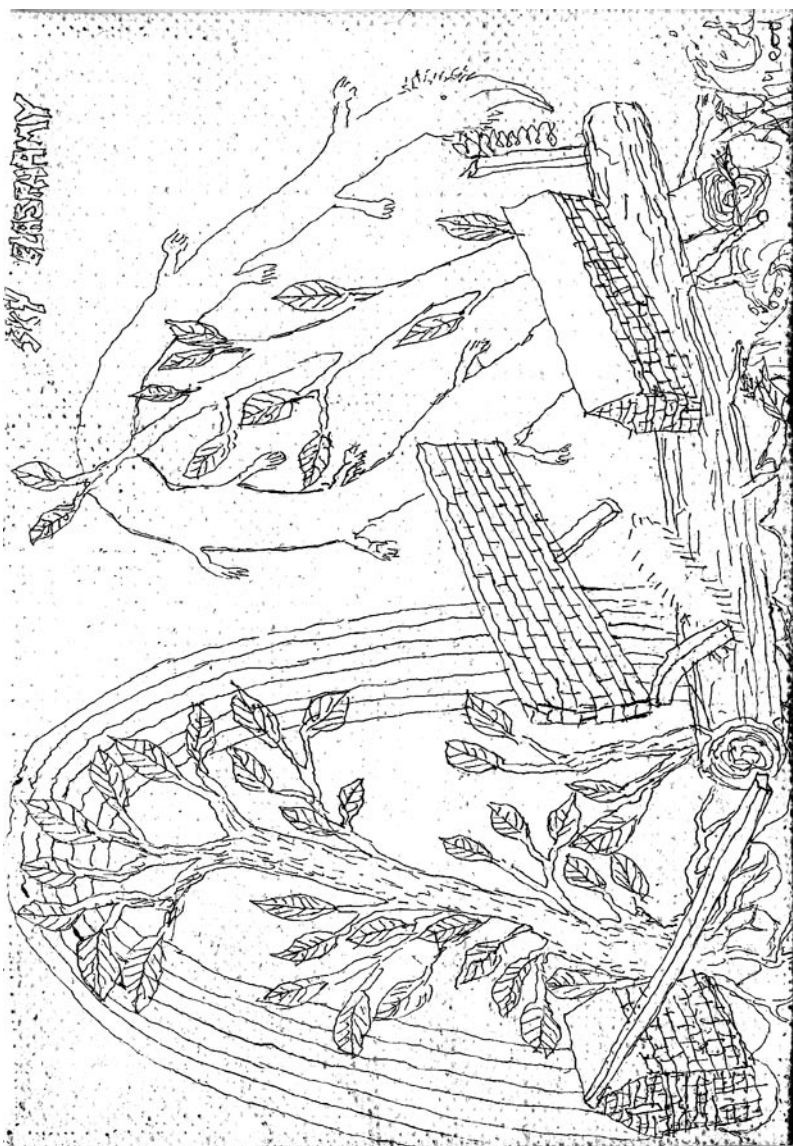




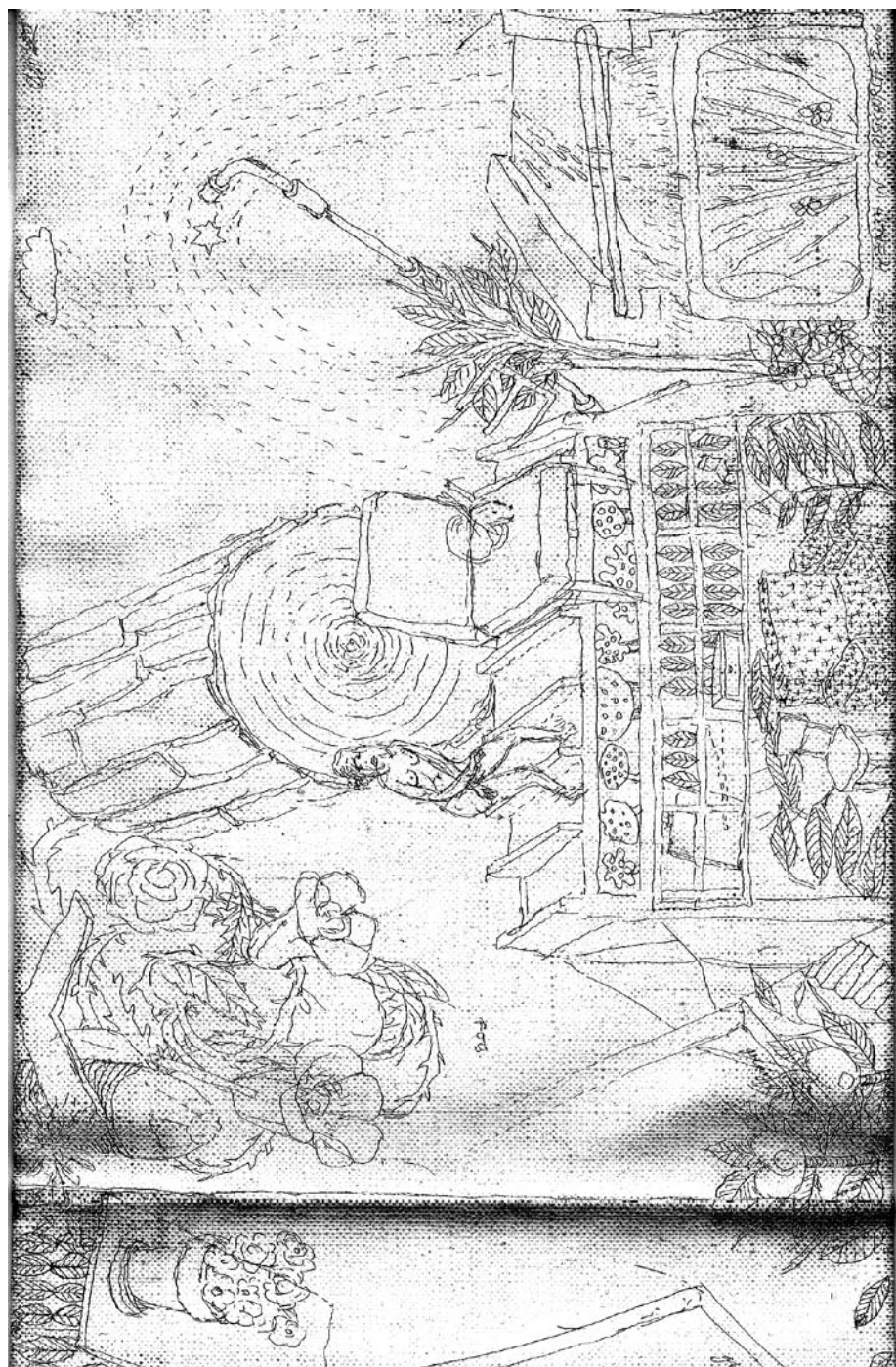


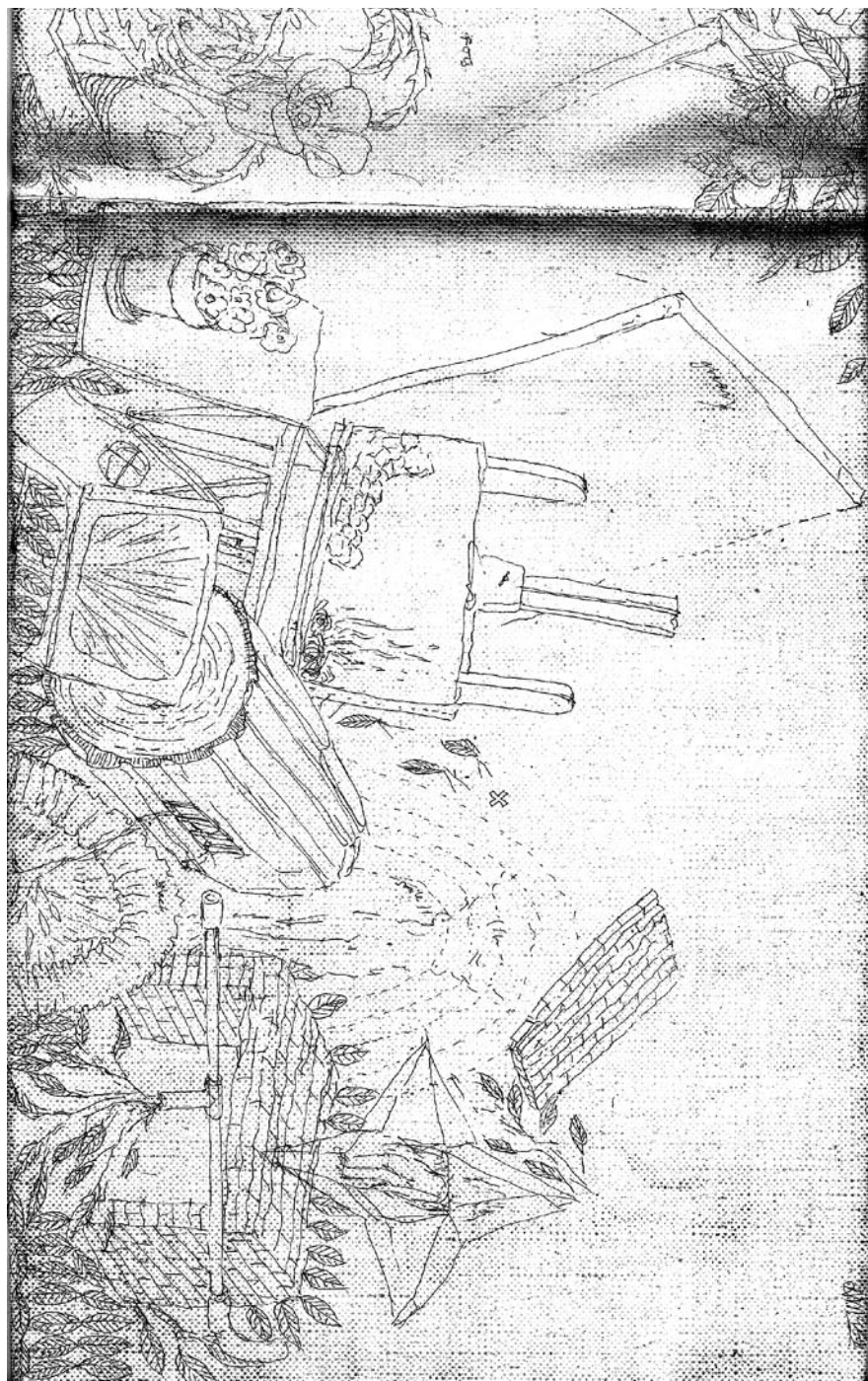


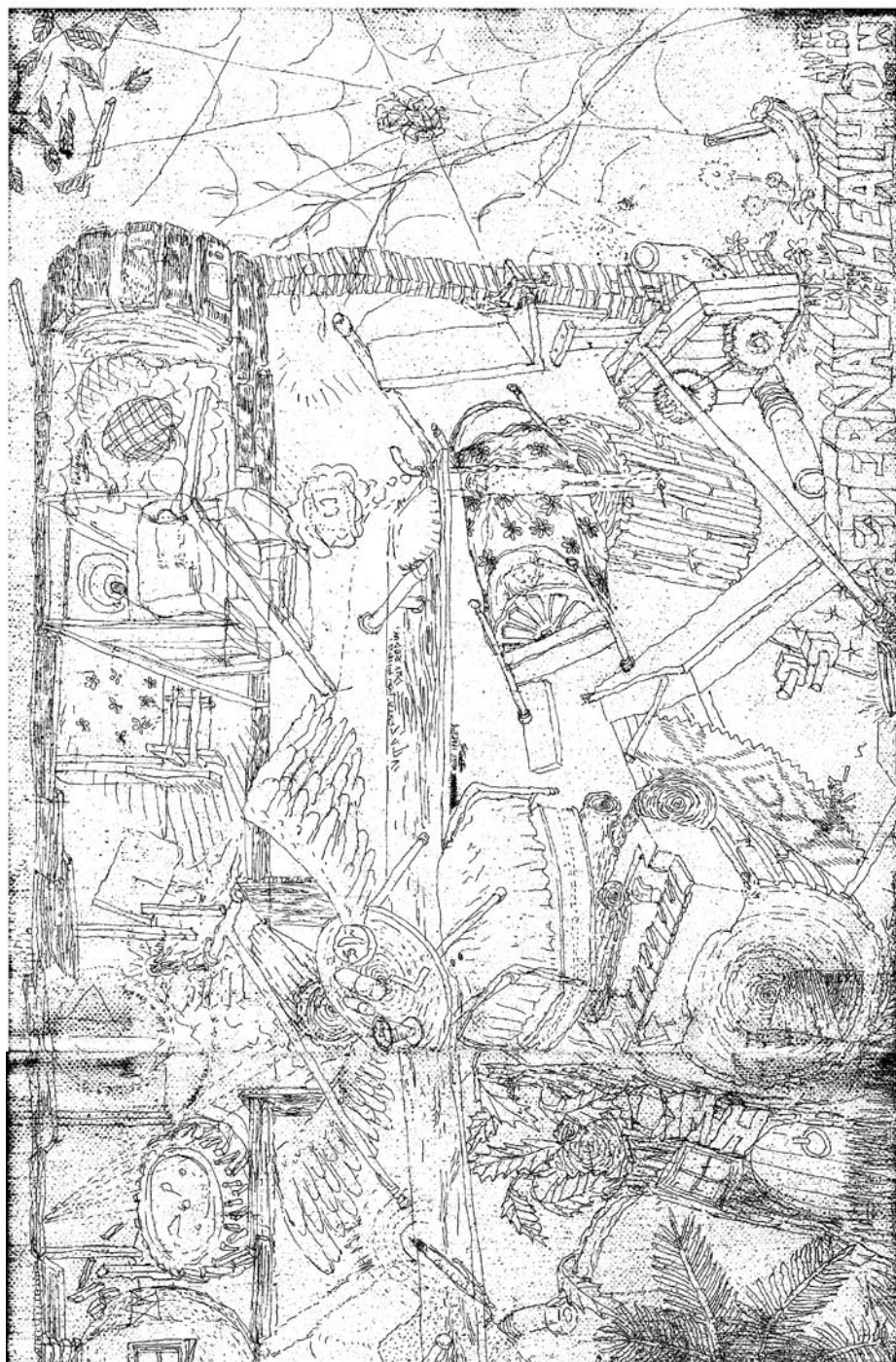


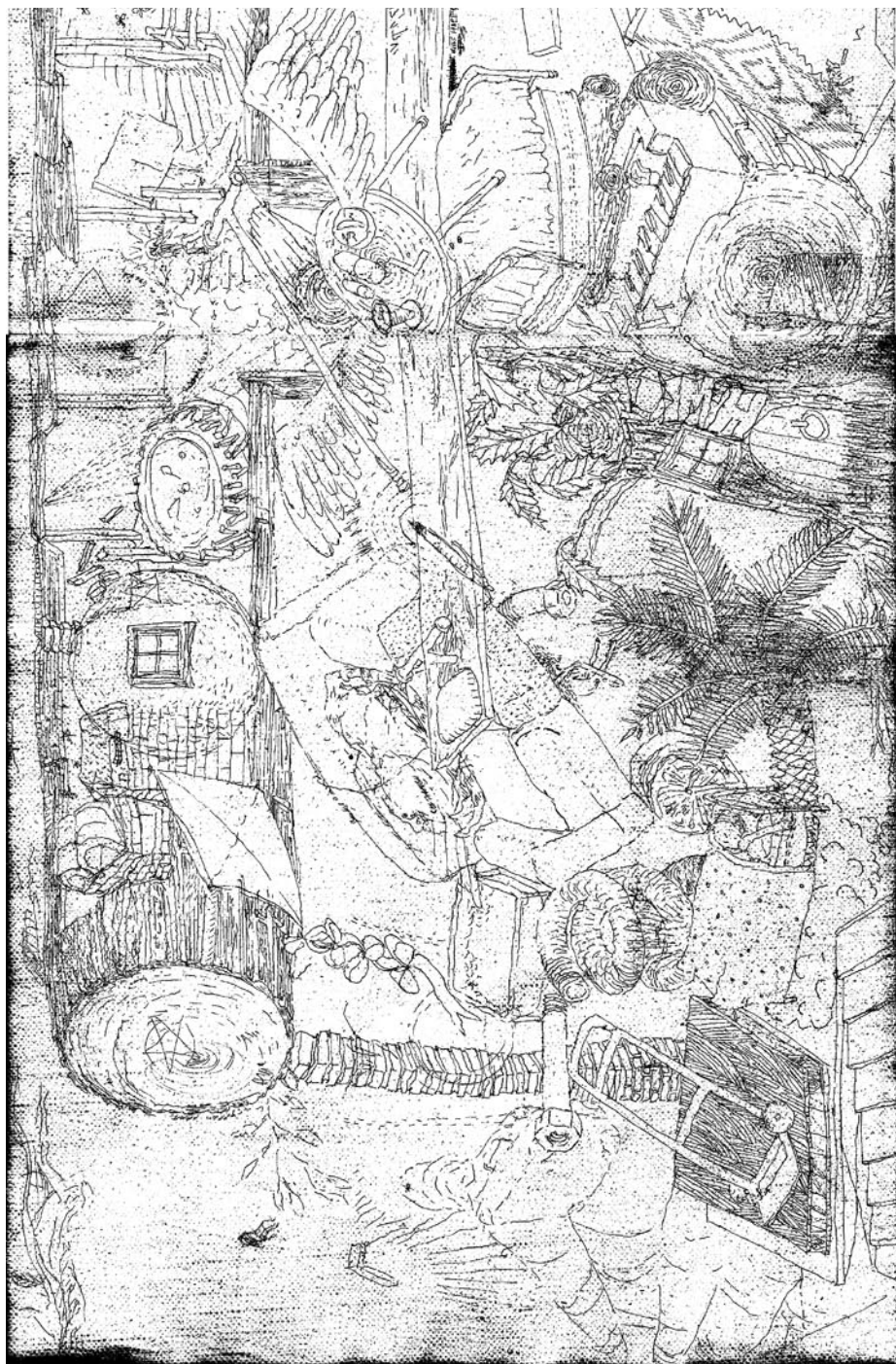


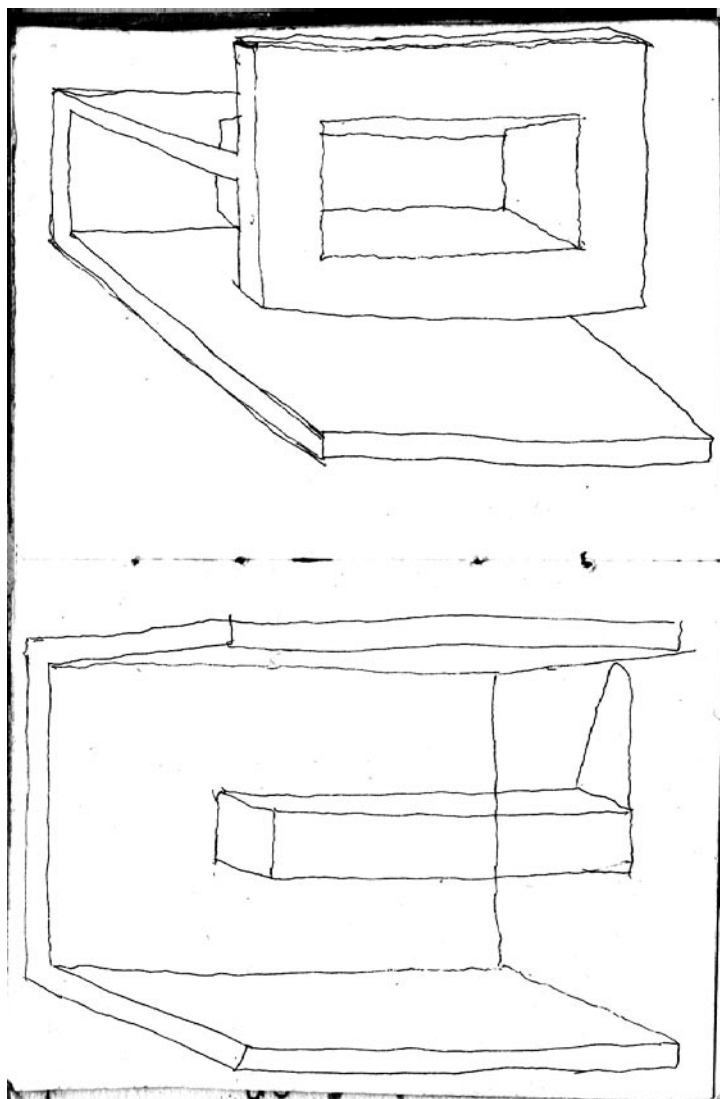
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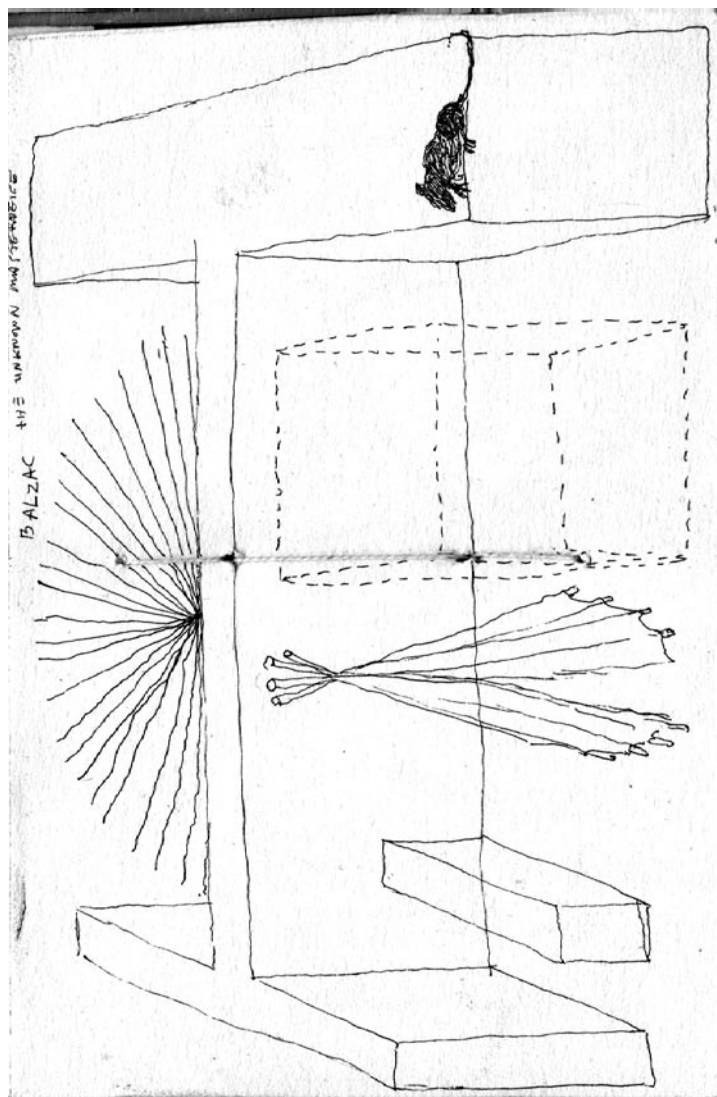


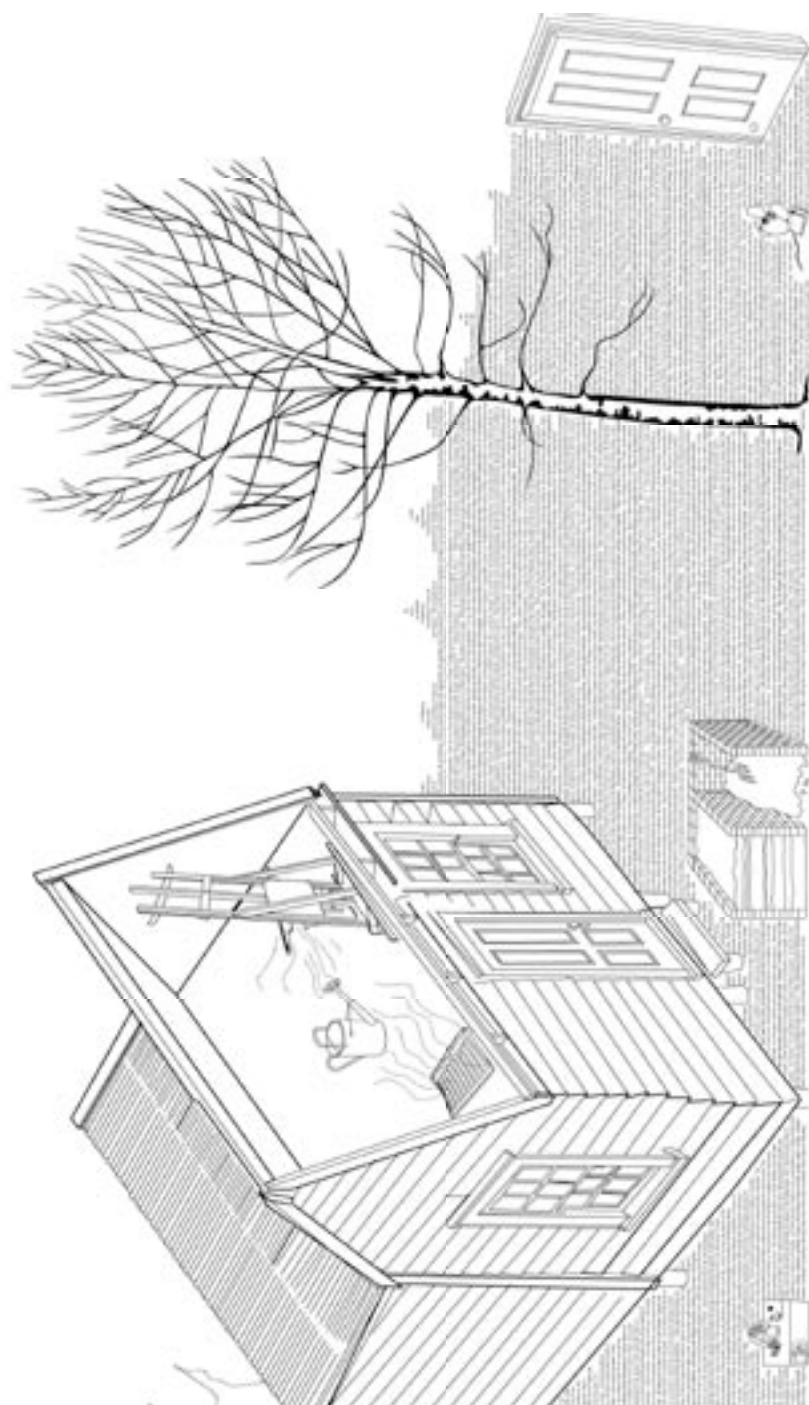




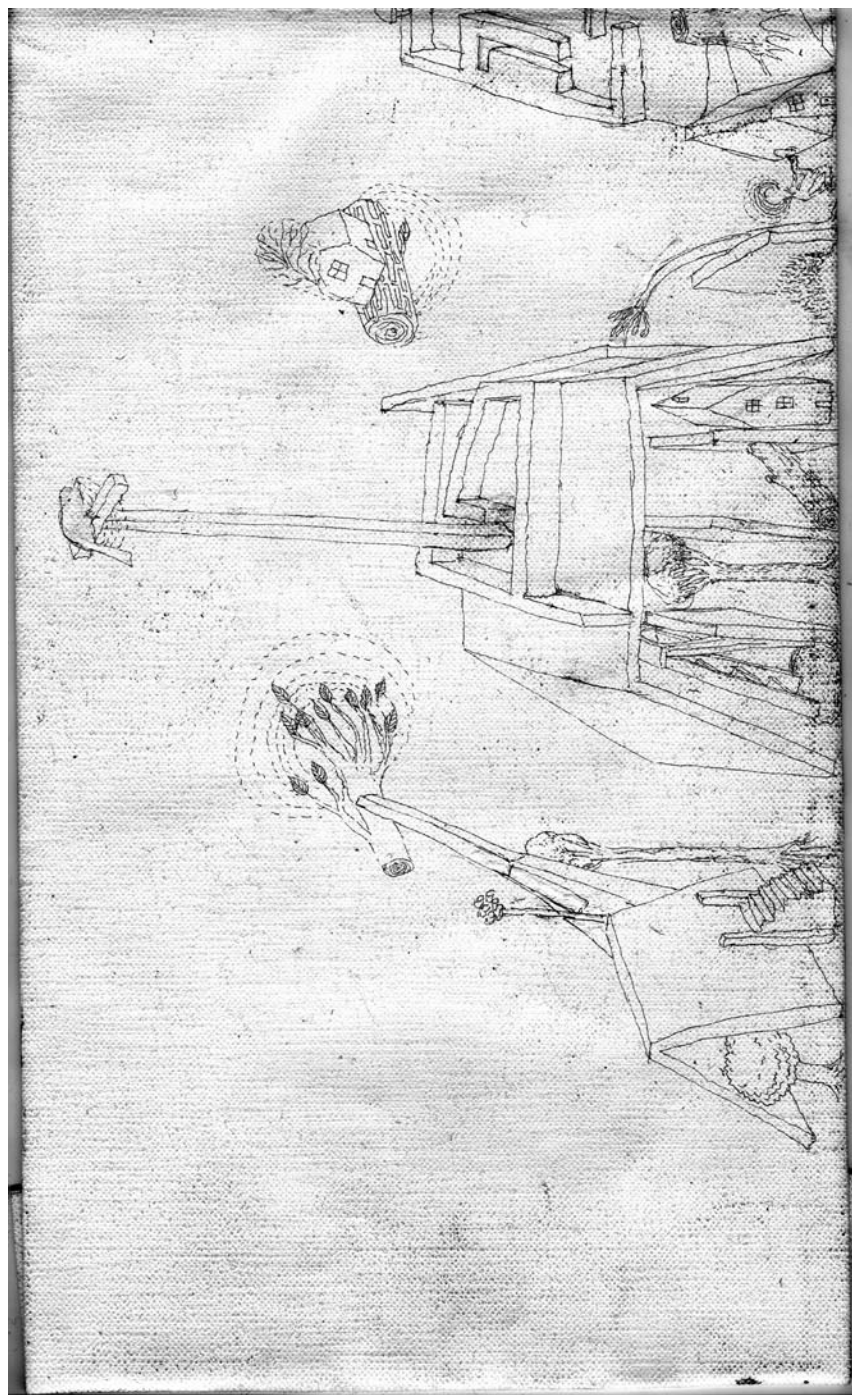


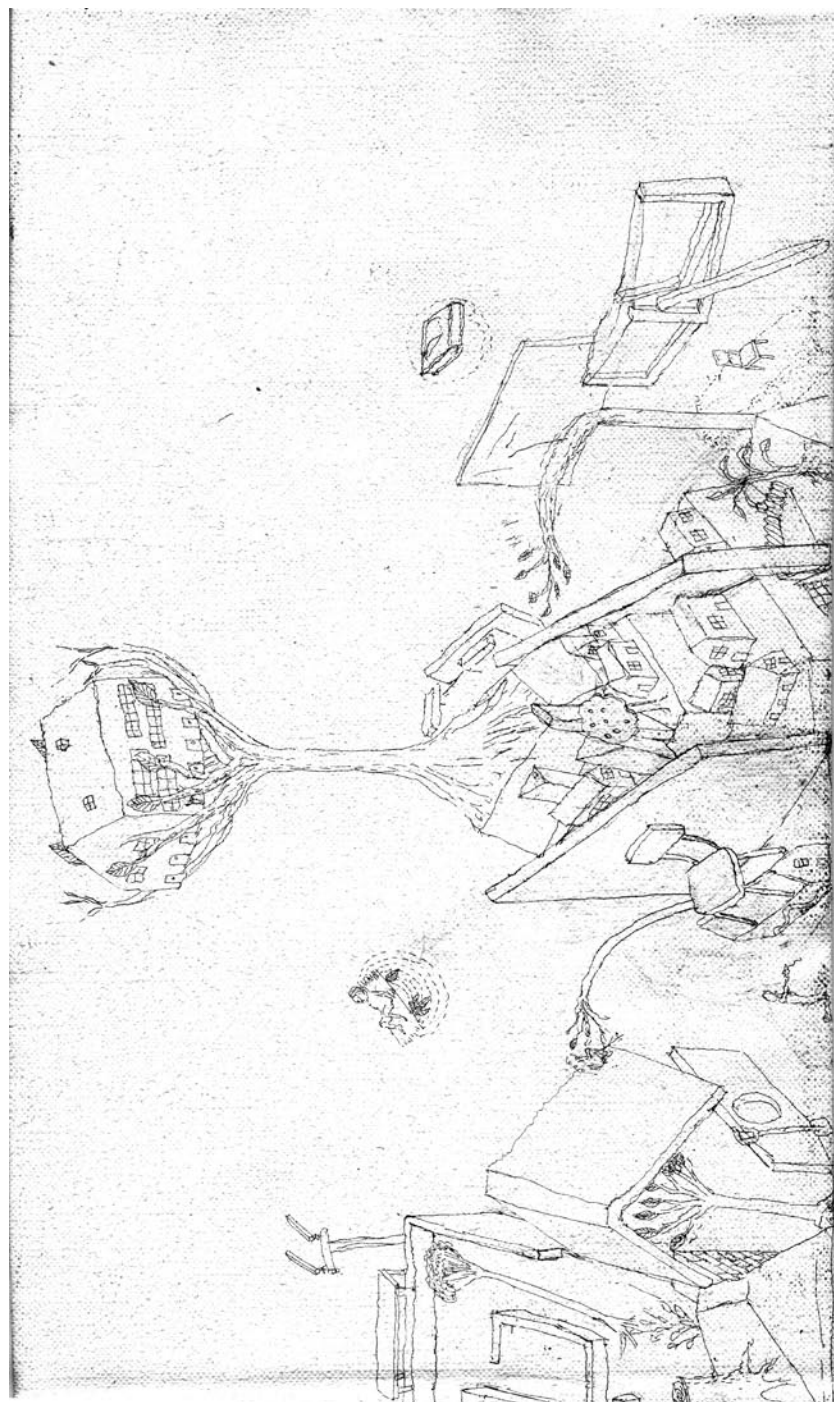




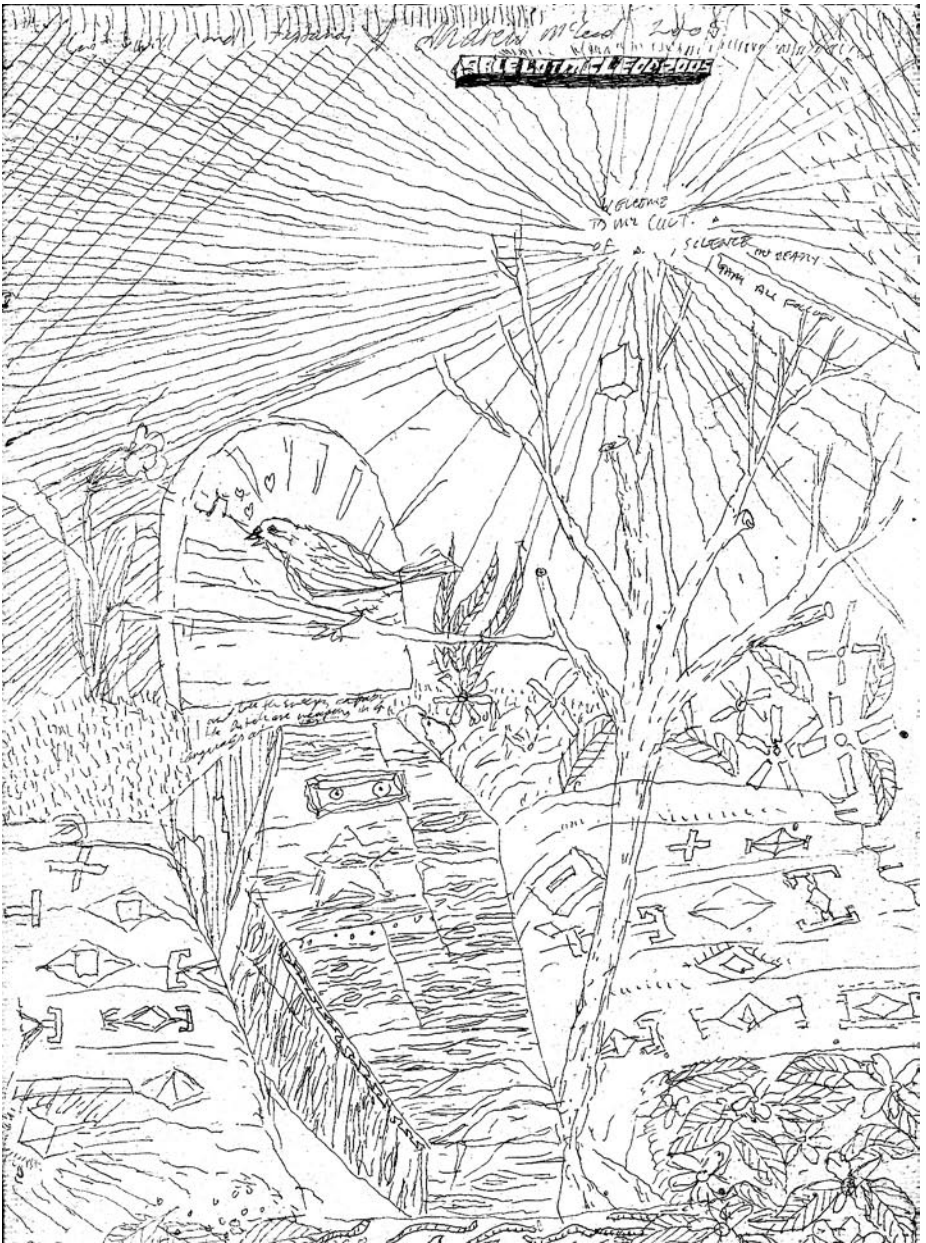












Dear Corrina -

always thought the best part was important. I thought both were
not could be and to be especially important. - you are both. And the way we
mean, but still there is a little. I don't understand about the way of you.

