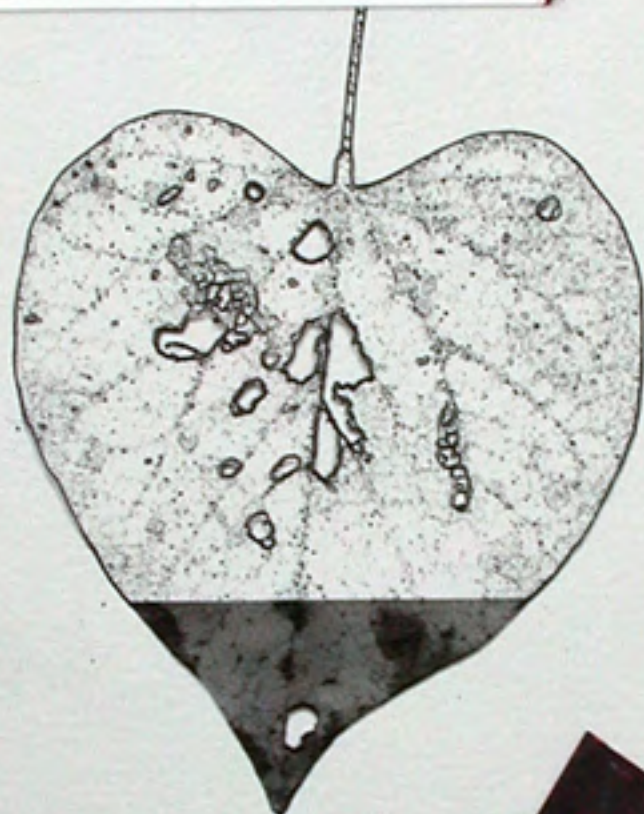


yes, that is four hundred ninety

70x7



Eve Faulkes

1998

A Journey in Forgiveness

June 15, 9am
and then there
was nothing

grasp onto it or branch out?

Didn't have a chance. That's why
to play taking all of your energy
protests. Just gone. Where's the

God, I can't even think of what to ask
run up this next hill, this next block, to
at the same time are such a strain on

This is unreal. A movie. An old script you've seen
what could you do to be radically different? Forgive them? For
years down the road. Remember how you always like to defy conven-



June 15, 9am
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was nothing

Didn't have a chance. That's what they say in car wrecks and shootings. One minute you have five roles to play taking all of your energy, the next minute you have nothing. You're history! No negotiating. No protests. Just gone. Where's the transitional phrase? Even paragraphs end better than this.

This is unreal. A movie. An old script you've seen before. So, imagine yourself the screenwriter. If you were improvising, what could you do to be radically different? Forgive them? Right now. Novel idea. Think of the big picture. Think of harmony years down the road. Remember how you always like to defy convention? Here's your big chance.



June 15, 9am
and then there
was nothing



How could you not have known? You are such a fool!
grasp onto something. work at it.

God, I can't even think of what to ask for... I just need to move. Please just give me the strength to run up this next hill, this next block, to keep putting one foot in front of the other. Running and crying at the same time are such a strain on your respiratory system...





voices chasing me...

run from the voices



listen



OK, let's get a plan here. You have sun
the cleanup and

objectivity of you

There are always good things
instance. Ok, where is she
must be honest. Tell the

So, if he's forgiven and I still hurt this bad, then it must be my fault. I was going to
what, I'm drowning in this vortex of cycling thought. What didn't I do? Didn't I gi
love, Sweetie. Don't you watch TV? Love is a gif



OK, let's get a plan here. You have survived before with that weird objectivity of yours. *Knowing that probably gave you the courage to go.* SHUT UP! This is about YOU! So you don't understand. You don't get calculus either. You have forgiven. Fuck. Move on. Get a grip. God, help me, what's the plan? What do I do now?

So, if he's forgiven and I still hurt this bad, then it must be my fault. I was going to make this marriage work no matter what. I'm drowning in this vortex of cycling thought. What didn't I do? Didn't I give enough? **You can't earn love, Sweetie. Don't you watch TV? Love is a gift.**

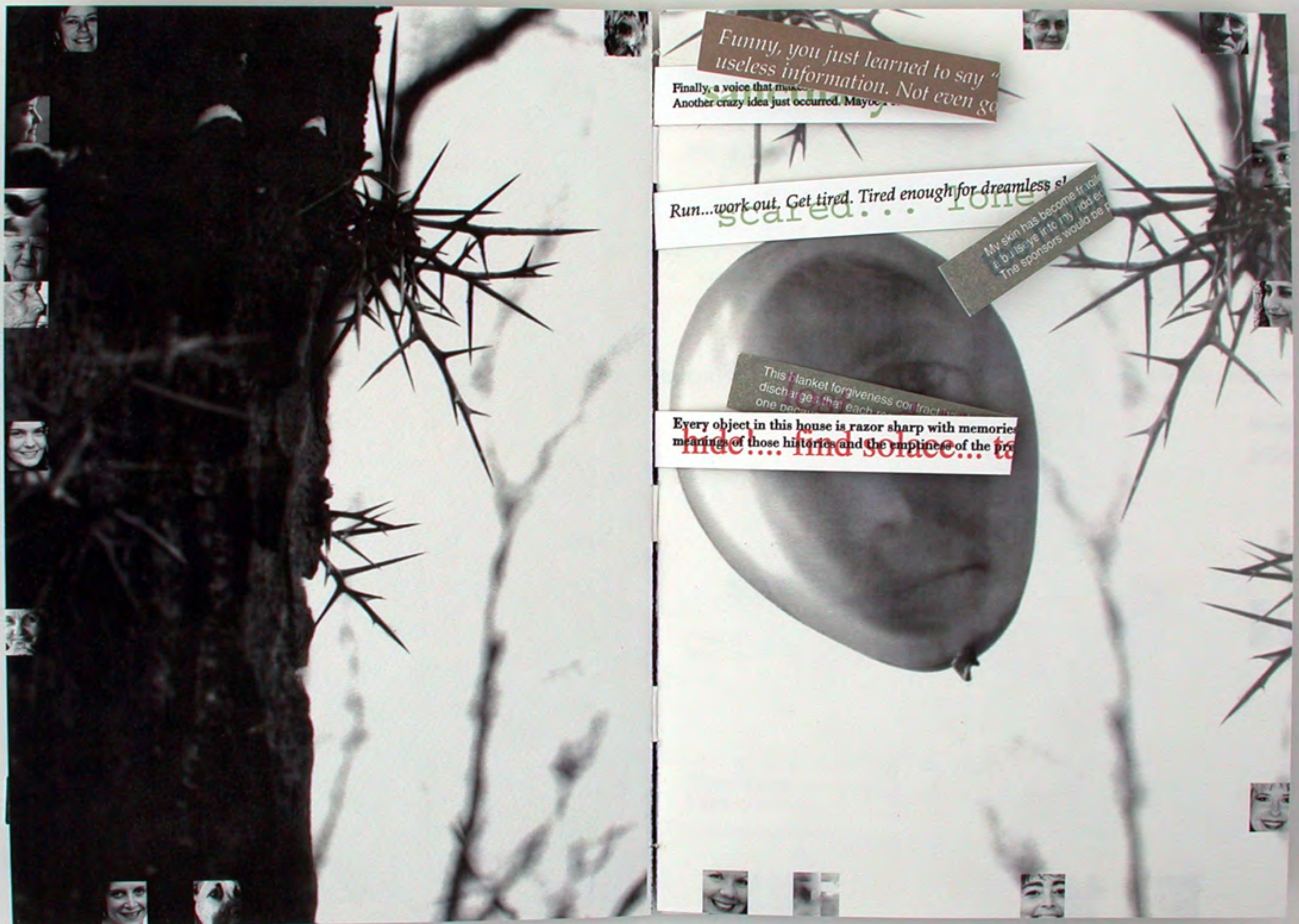


My thoughts are slippery. I can't hold them. Who am I now? It's like trying to catch parts of my reflection in moving water. Who is this? Have we met before? How do I extricate the parts of Me from the blend that was Us? It's like untwining rope. No, separating colors of clay marbelized in marriage. Difficult.

There are always good things in every bad situation. More time with your daughter for instance. Ok, where is she? Joint custody was your generous idea. Can't burden her, but must be honest. Tell the family. I'm so embarrassed. I'm such a failure!



170X7



Funny, you just learned to say "useless information. Not even go

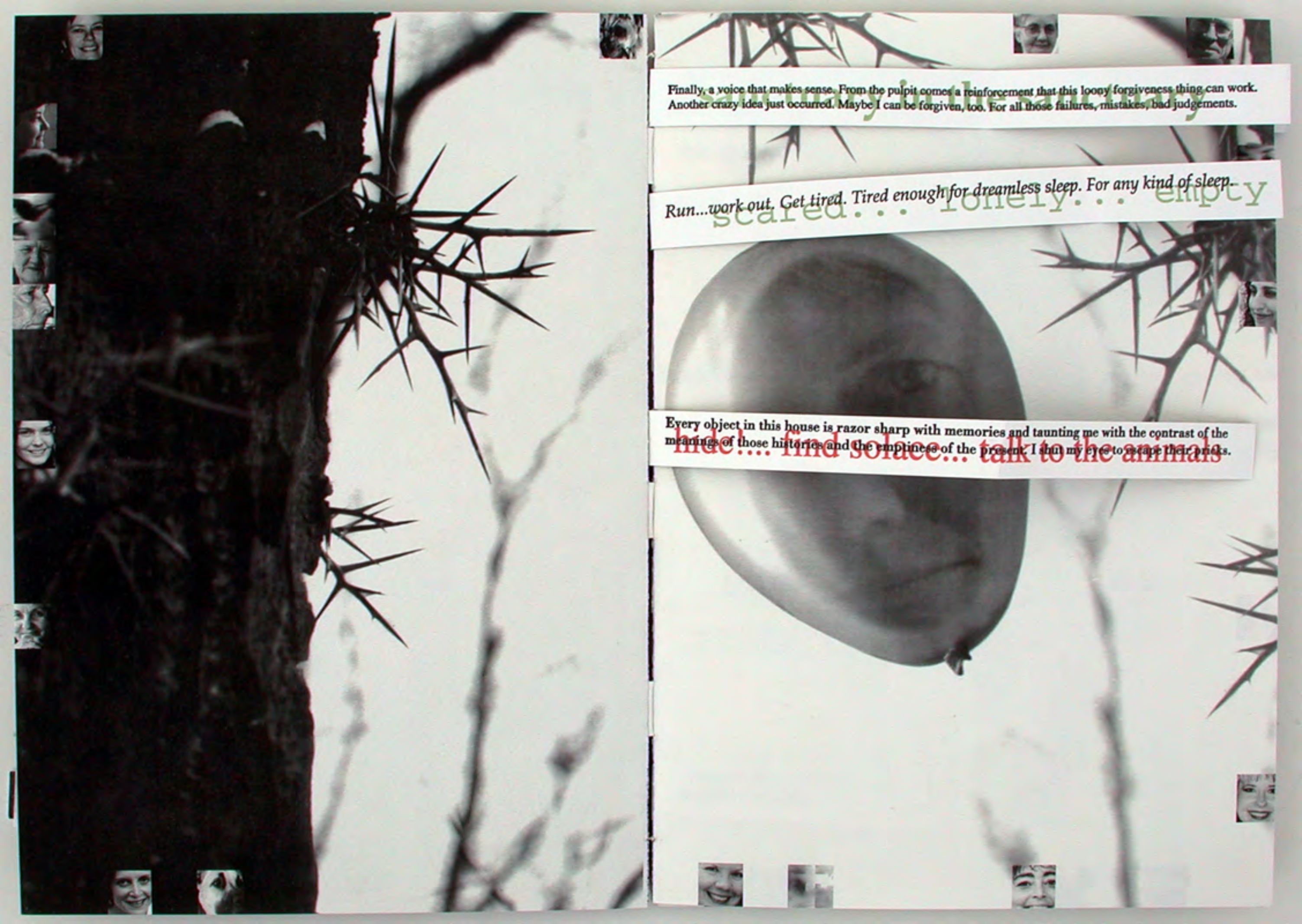
Finally, a voice that makes
Another crazy idea just occurred. Maybe

Run...work out. Get tired. Tired enough for dreamless sl
scared... lone

My skin has become fragile
it b j l s c y e i r t o m y i d d e n
The sponsors would be p

This blanket forgiveness contract
discharges that each
one because

Every object in this house is razor sharp with memories
meanings of those histories and the emptiness of the pro
hide!... find solace... to



Finally, a voice that makes sense. From the pulpit comes a reinforcement that this loopy forgiveness thing can work. Another crazy idea just occurred. Maybe I can be forgiven, too. For all those failures, mistakes, bad judgements.

Run...work out. Get tired. Tired enough for dreamless sleep. For any kind of sleep.

Every object in this house is razor sharp with memories and taunting me with the contrast of the meanings of those histories and the emptiness of the present. I shut my eyes to escape their pricks.

Funny, you just learned to say "we." Now it falls into the category of useless information. Not even good for Trivial Pursuit.

My skin has become fragile and transparent. Emotions are raw, unprotected. Every song on the radio scores a bullseye into my addled heart. Nowhere is safe. She who never cried now cries at Kodak commercials. The sponsors would be proud. But I'm not buying film.

This blanket forgiveness contract has loopholes—new infractions, indiscretions, misunderstandings, emotional discharges that each require an individual unspoken act of forgiveness. Sometimes I have to repeat the initial one because I'm afraid the first one didn't stick. It's got to get easier. Doesn't practice help?





1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1995 1996 1997



Now wait a minute! I seem to be disappearing altogether. Lost relatives. Lost history. Lost businesses. Lost pastimes. It was hard enough to make conversation with my original personality. Now with censorship of so many subjects I am left speechless.

No one likes a complainer. If you can't say anything nice...



I need to be needed. Crave honesty. Make a reacquaintance from the past. Too soon. Must have been too needy. Am asked to hit the road. Double rejection. Where's my shell?

Trying to forgive the losses without counting. Seems like I'm turning the other cheek so often I am dizzy.



Where am I needed? I used to be needed incessantly. Now all that puts any schedule to the day are the biological needs of my less than human companions. Right scale, wrong species. Doesn't mind tears on his fur, though.

I forgave you for taking my present and future. Now you are taking my last eight years as well. That's harder to forgive. But I'm in this for the long haul, the lasting benefits. Seventy times seven, huh? The count is climbing.



1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1995 1996 1997

Other people must be lonely. You know some who live alone, who can't get away. Visit them. Listen. Absorb their stories. Time passes. United in need if not in generation or background. A good thing.

My world is too small. I am destined to watch my old role played better by a fresh new actress. Pride-swallowing time. Who are you kidding? Pride went long ago. Get over it. Can't you write a script of your own? Writer's block?







The shields are down, Scotty. What will we do? The armor's tough facade of self-confidence discarded. I am aware of my lightweight. The arms were heavy.

THE DISGUISE: Three months of no some side benefits. Had to buy new a tramp initially. Got contacts.

Ok, it's showtime! no more hiding, come out, come out

Hold your horses, I look for

My spine has become jelly. Lord, stiffen up

A friend with no lines
take a break...let it go
Trust, shared stories, pain, empathy. Talking is good

My students need me for something. They can have all of me now. I can feel their problems like I never could before. Unspoken understanding. They help me find my keys, my train of thought. I can pour out some of that love that's been piling up with no outlet. Relief. Some sense of purpose.

kindness... patience with me



The shields are down, Scotty. What will we do? The armour failed. It's scrap. That tough facade of self-confidence discarded. I am aware of being vulnerable, but lightweight. The arms were heavy.

THE DISGUISE: Three months of no appetite and working out to kill lots of nervous energy has had some side benefits. Had to buy new clothes—three sizes down. Tried makeup for the first time. Felt like a tramp initially. Got contacts. Unexpected compliments. Helps combat the shame.

A friend with no links to my past. Start fresh. Can pour out feelings. Discovering women as a new phenomenon.
take a break...let it out...new friend...Moving!? Ouch!
Trust, shared stories, pain, empathy. Talking is good. Pots and pots and pots of coffee.

My students need me for something. They can have all of me now. I can feel their problems like I never could before. Unspoken understanding. They help me find my keys, my train of thought. I can pour out some of that love that's been piling up with no outlet. Relief. Some sense of purpose.

Hold your head up. Look Professional. Look like you can concentrate on your job. Crack your face trying to smile.

OK, it's showtime! School's in!
no more hiding. come out, come out, whoever you are

My spine has become jelly. Lord, stiffen my backbone and push me out the door to work.

I feel like a turtle crossing the road in heavy traffic. Some folks veer around, avoiding me, some find the resulting splat entertaining.



SO

WHO AM I

TO CAST THE FIRST STONE?

You know, as long as everything is blown away, you might as well do something you
Join something. Play softball. Good idea. Women hugging, cheering, encouraging
everything. In fact, winning is unheard of.

Just what makes you so special and
than anyone else? This
This may be your introduction to beco
about participation in life. It may e

You spend way too much ti
enough, if you would have

When I catch myself sharpening my wit like cat's claws
on their reputations, I am not proud

Maybe bitten nails will become the r
give classes and pick up extra inco

Afraid I will be perceived as pretty wearisome
Stifle any references to him. Focus on their pro

SO

WHO AM I

TO CAST THE FIRST STONE?

You know, as long as everything is blown away, you might as well do something you've never done before. Join something. Play softball. Good idea. Women hugging, cheering, encouraging, laughing. Winning is not everything. In fact, winning is unheard of.

Just what makes you so special anyway? Think you're the only one in the world to get hurt? Think your pain is worse than anyone else's? Think you're incapable of doing anybody else wrong? Think again. Think real hard, sister.

You spend way too much time looking in the mirror. Touching your body. Testing yourself to see if you've changed enough, if you would have been acceptable now if now were then. Stop competing, the race is over.

When I catch myself sharpening my wit like cat's claws on their reputations, I am not proud.

Maybe bitten nails will become the next fashion statement. You could give classes and pick up extra income.

Afraid I will be perceived as pretty wearisome to my friends by now. Better try a new mantra. Stifle any references to him. Focus on their problems. Focus period. There's a worthy ambition

Let's talk about real pain. Let's talk about people who don't have anything instead of you who don't have any appetite and throw food away. How about some real physical abuse instead of your little emotional upheaval?

This may be your introduction to becoming a real person. Welcome to the human condition. It's about participation in life. It may even improve your powers of observation, if you're lucky.

Why don't you drop this fantasy that he will ever tell you you look nice or that he made a terrible mistake. You don't want the past back. He didn't make a mistake. Respect has to come from within.

After 40, only a tiny percentage of women ever get remarried. Still, this guy has wrong markings. Physical is not enough. What did I prove? Get out while I'm in one piece.

Why does it seem that I am working so hard when his life looks so easy. The grass is always greener, or is my face colored with envy? Yet, it must be nice to be adored.

Forgiving takes concentration, like walking a tightrope. Look away and you slip off. Maybe you should tie a thread on your finger—and sew your mouth shut with the rest of it.



Immobilizing pain has given way to a great itch, and distractions slow down. Remember, few weeks if you know what to look for.

Some days it still takes all my strength to get on a full present and make a discipline, it's a

Enough time has passed that the rippling fear my grief is unwelcome. Old news. It would

Time is blunting the knife points. Busyness is working. You can forget it for moments at a time and then you

When it itches, don't scratch



Immobilizing pain has given way to a great itch, a nuisance of thoughts that come to visit whenever distractions slow down. Remember, jewelweed, the antidote to poison ivy, always grows nearby, if you know what to look for.



Time is blunting the knife points. Business is working better. Sleep is coming. What's left is a rash. You can forget it for moments at a time and then your eyes tear with the effort not to scratch it raw.

Some days it still takes all my strength to go to work and pretend that I am who I was, that I am a fully present teacher, and to make them believe I can concentrate on their needs.



Enough time has passed that the ripples have quieted in the water. They are accepted. Life goes on and I fear my grief is unwelcome. Old news. It would now be seen as a weakness if I let down my guard.



negative thoughts away

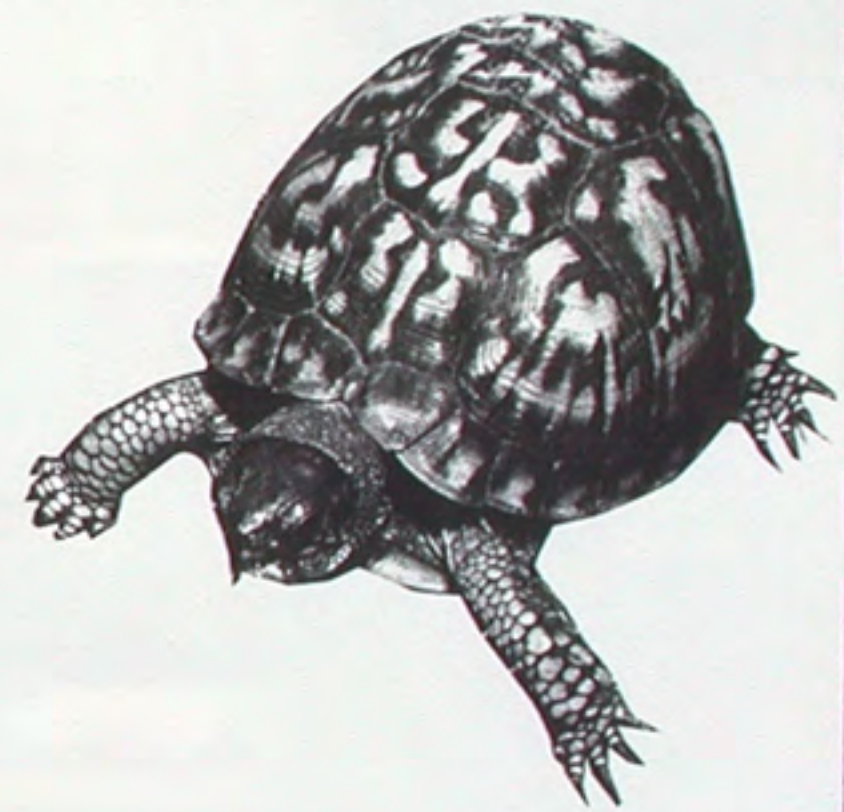
to evolve. I watched it emerge again
beyond Hallmark. It really happens

to breathe. Almost every day God offers a metaphor
th; the fiddled bursts through the ground cover,
branches transform into living trees.

thead out, travels on

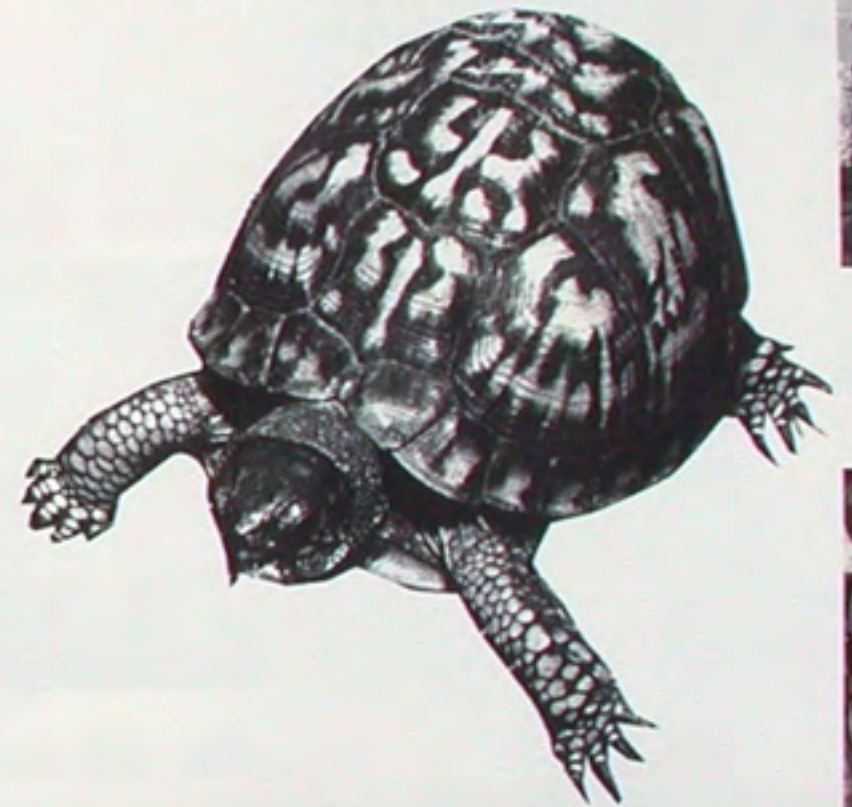
born. Ideas bud. A new kind of love emerges, one
first opens to extend wondering fingers to touch.

The Beginning



I watched the caterpillar turn itself inside out in the struggle to evolve. I watched it emerge again from its tomb to take its new life of flight. Cliché, you say. It's beyond Hallmark. It really happens

The Beginning



The turtle rights itself, pokes its head out, travels on

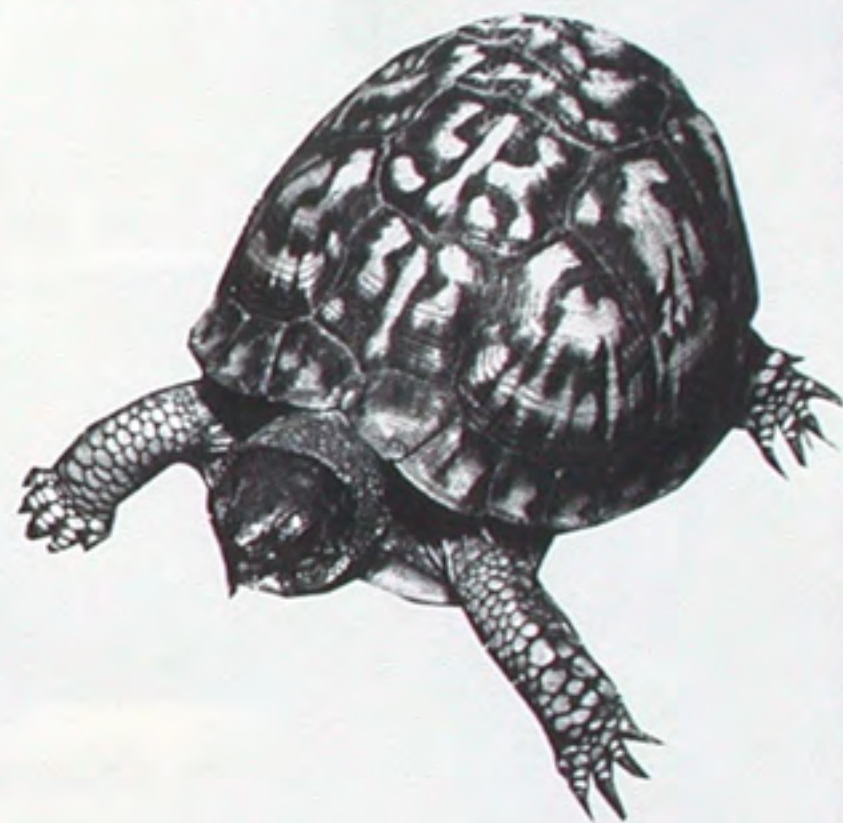


Walking every day in the woods to relax, to breathe. Almost every day God offers a metaphor of healing, of cycles of recovery, of strength; the fiddlehead bursts through the ground cover, unspiralng lacy beauty; dead sticks and branches transform into living trees.



Boundaries are stretching, breaking. Dreams are born. Ideas bud. A new kind of love emerges, one of appreciation, respect, awe. My stress-clenched fist opens to extend wondering fingers to touch.

The Beginning



TAKE THE

I am softened like meat tenderized
walk softly now
awesome awareness of the world and its

I suddenly realized that my focus

Softer is more comfortable, please

you are really not alone
say "we" after all. You

I am softened by too little sleep to stay sharp of wit, softened by too
supporters, softened by a constant rubbing against prickly situations

RISK

TAKE THE

I am softened like meat tenderized with a hammer, softened by an awesome awareness of the world and my place in it.

Softer is more comfortable, pliable, touchable. I like it.

RISK

I am softened by too little sleep to stay sharp of wit, softened by the verbal massage of friends, family, supporters, softened by a constant rubbing against prickly situations, softened enough to feel feminine.



TAKE THE

When you think about it, you have nothing to lose in taking some risks now. You already lost it all, so the worst that can happen is that you stay where you are. Step out.

I suddenly realized that my focus on other people has become genuine and not a distraction.

You are really not alone. You have never been alone. You can still say "we" after all. You can help, not burden. Do it.

RISK



forgotten preferences



nostalgic moments



missed anniversaries



unshared joys



ideas uncorroborated



insomnia



missed pets



meanings lost



isolation



longing for touch



stubbornness



cooking for one



lack of interruption



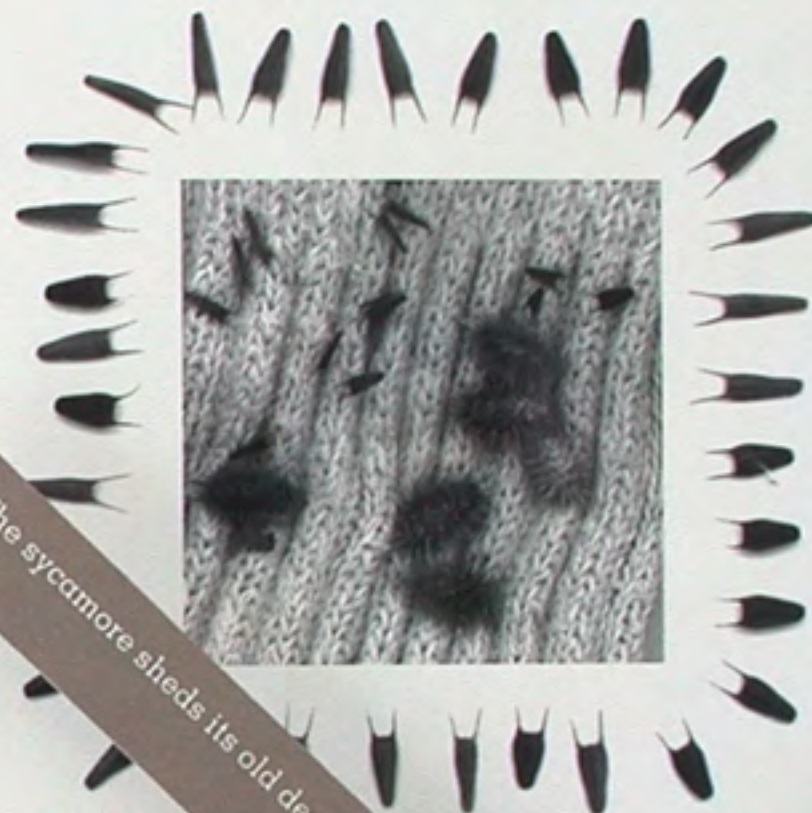
sentimentality



too few hands



faltering courage



The sycamore sheds its old dead bark to allow

The burrs in my clothes that prick my skin
that I am part of a world where suffering
awareness should be to give comfort.

I still don't know the plan, but the sense of adven

your serv

The voices are more in bed
it's usually because you stopped
that may smile because you stopped



forgotten preferences



nostalgic moments



missed anniversaries



unrequited joy



ideas uncorroborated



insomnia



missed pets



meanings lost



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longing for touch



stubbornness



cooking for one



lack of interruption



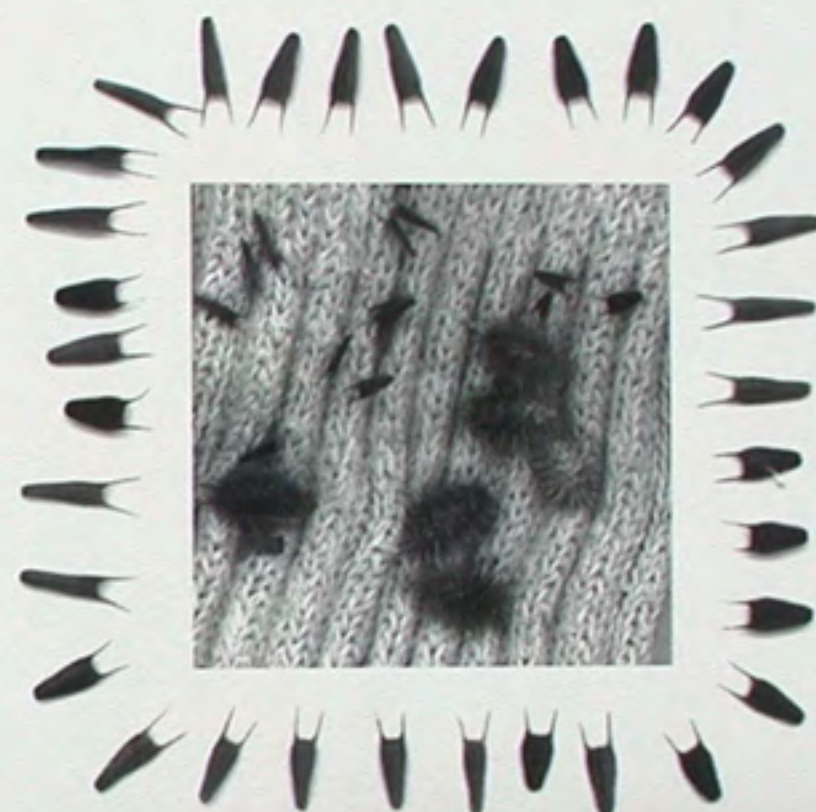
sentimentality



too few hands



faltering courage



The burrs in my clothes that prick my skin now and then keep me alert, aware that my feelings still work, that I am part of a world where suffering is real and everyday and part of life. What I do with that awareness should be to give comfort.

I still don't know the plan, but the sense of adventure has gained a certain appeal...



forgotten preferences



nostalgic moments



missed anniversaries



joy of pumpkin



ideas uncorroborated



insomnia



missed pets



meanings lost



isolation



longing for touch



stubbornness



cooking for one



lack of love

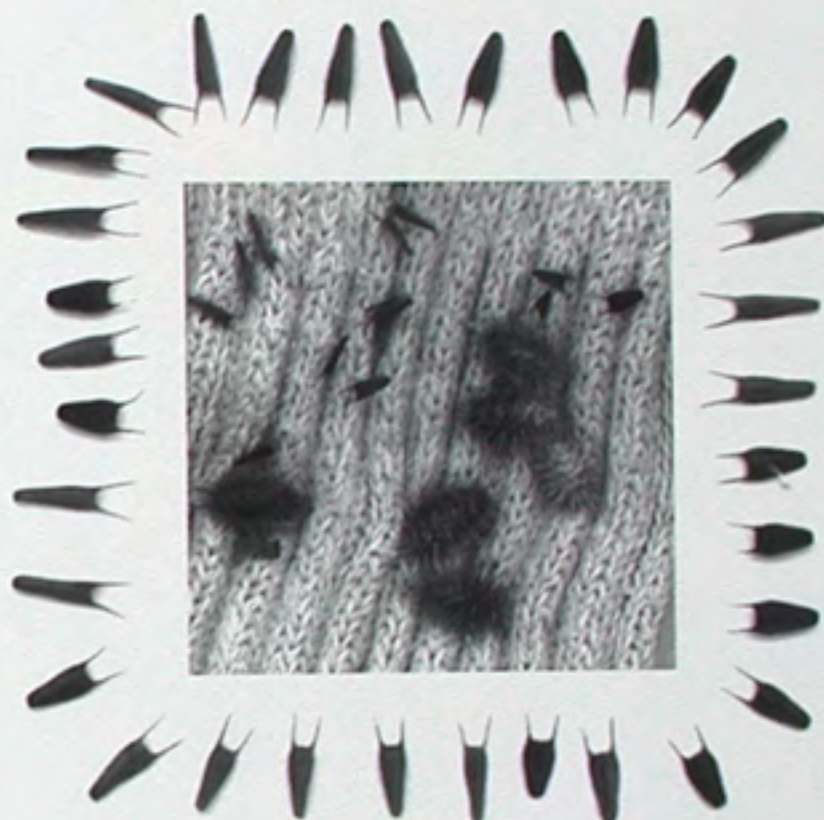


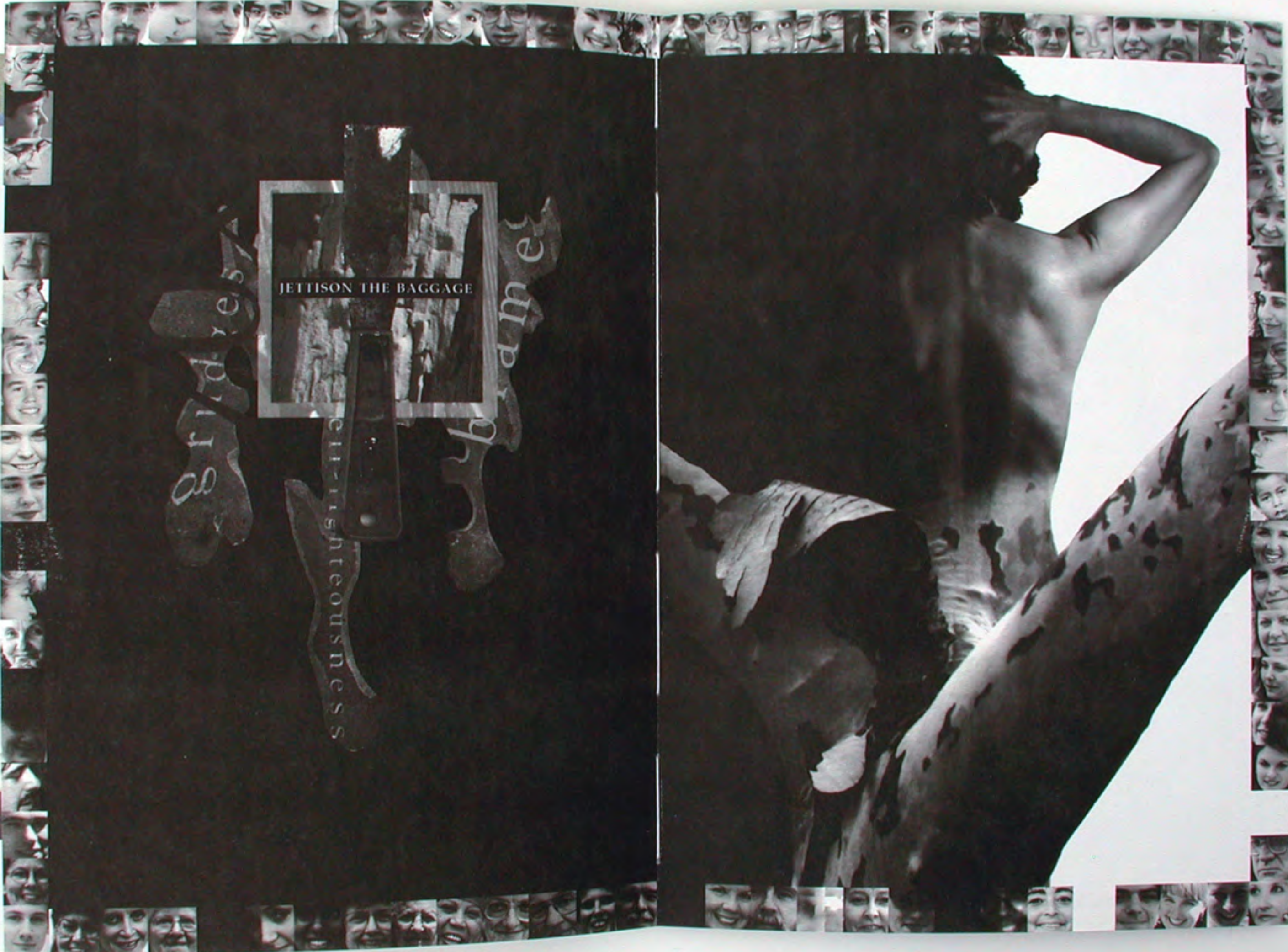
faltering courage



The sycamore sheds its old dead bark to allow new growth at the top. I must do likewise.

The voices are more united, satisfied. As I recently read, "When things start going your way, it's usually because you stopped going the wrong way down a one-way street." And I noticed that my smile came today without effort.





JETTISON THE BAGGAGE

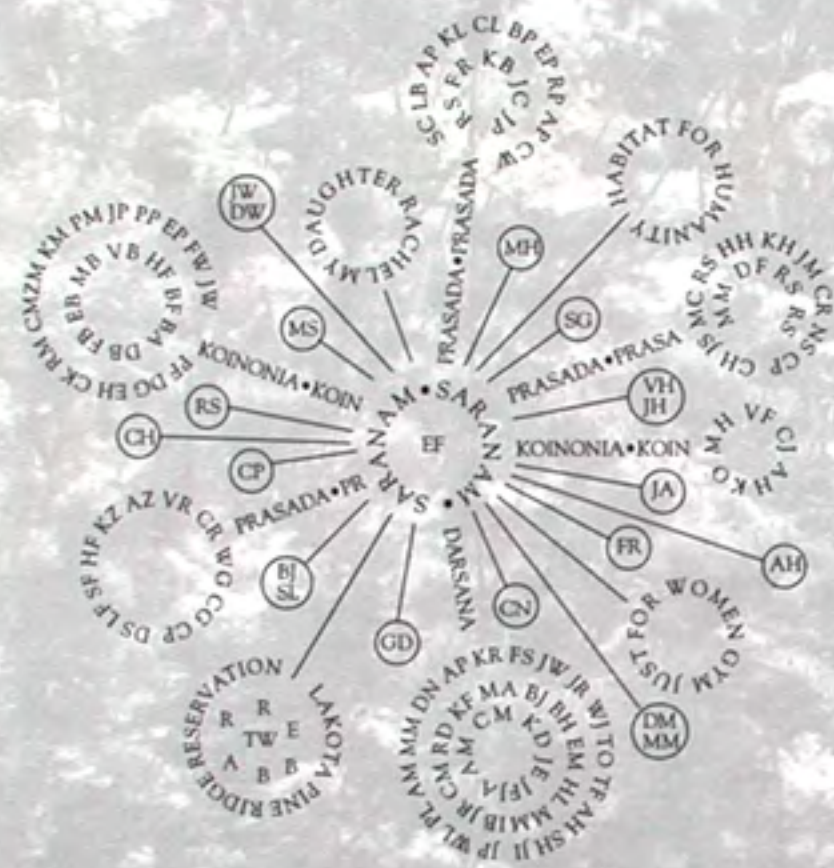
Stidley
clashfulness
bram e





I look around at my life and realize that I have friends all about me. I feel loved. Not by one, but by many. I had but one friend, one daughter. The friend was lost, but replaced 100-fold once I could listen. Jonah was stubborn, too.

I need to give and am needed. Need binds us together. In finding the willingness to minister to each other and the grace to receive from one another, the void is filled. This is living. Forgiving is completion.



Trees grow scarry bark around the carvings of lovers unaware of the near fatal damage they caused.

I am my brother's keeper, not my husband's wife.



Women's Studio Workshop

41/90

Rosendale, New York

If that ancient beech can make it, so can this one



70 x 7 / Eve Faulkes

My friend's Studio Workshop

If that ancient bench can make it, so can this one

70 X 7 COLOPHON

Created because it had to be, 70 x 7 became my way of understanding and processing the tumultuous changes that occurred at the unexpected ending of a second marriage. It was developed from notes and journals of thoughts during two years following the incident. This book has three layers of text: the main pages which are primarily nonverbal, the strips threaded through the book which serve as conflicting voices in my head, and the small border images. If the text is confusing and slow to read, it is because that's how it felt. If the images are a bit ambiguous, it is because there were multiple readings to every thought. While there should be a good deal of mystery in an artist's book to allow you to project your own story, a full set of text from the strips and some explanation of the images is available at the Women's Studio Workshop upon request.

The process of printing was Indigo digital printing on Arches and letterpress on Lana Royale and Rives BFK. Imagery is all original photography processed through Adobe Photoshop on a Power Macintosh. In this edition 50 copies were printed on Arches (numbers 1-50), and another 40 copies were printed on 80 lb. acid free Champion Carnival (numbers 51-90). The production was published by the Women's Studio Workshop, which is funded in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts. Copyright 1998 Eve Faulkes

This is copy number 42/90

Eve Faulkes