

HOUSE

Between January of 2014 when I was living in the desert in southern California, through the 2014-2015 winter in the Lotus Hotel in Vancouver, then through the 2016 winter in the grasslands near Cache Creek, and then to the 2017 winter in Merritt, I was intermittently taken by drawing houses in SketchUp. The models I drew in these temporary homes include many of the actual places I've lived but they also include houses I'd imagined at various times while I was living in those actual houses. The sketches shown here are jpg screengrabs taken from these 3-d models. They're sequenced by order of making.

Next to the sketches are texts written at two kinds of time. For each model there are journal passages written while that model was being made. Sketches of places I've actually lived also have texts written in that place while I was living there. Sketches of fantasy houses have texts from the time that place was first imagined. Texts and sketches are given with both time and space coordinates. Journal texts span June 1959 - April 2016.

The SketchUp platform includes an open library of models - for instance of furniture, plants, door hardware, and even food - contributed to the warehouse by other users. My models include many elements taken from this warehouse, some modified, some used as is. It isn't possible to credit the makers of these elements but I gratefully acknowledge their help. I also very gratefully acknowledge the SketchUp software itself, developed by Brad Schell and Joe Esch of @Last Software in 2000.

During the two and a half years I spent drawing these spaces I didn't think of what I was doing as art but rather as indulgence in a guilty pleasure. I loved working all day with driven focus but was suspicious of a drive that seemed escapist. I'd had to notice that many of the imagined houses have come into being when there was attachment sadness of some sort, a breakup or an
unrequited crush. Sometimes they were houses for imaginary persons I wished I knew.

At the same time I've seen that it's a particularly personal absorption that goes a long way back. I've imagined houses since I was a kid. Stories I'd tell my sister as we walked home from the school bus would begin and often end with a description of a house. When I discovered floorplans in my city aunt's Good Housekeeping magazines I learned a way of imagining whole spaces. Many years of rough sketches followed before I moved up to graph paper. When I learned SketchUp it was an instant thrill to be able to pull up walls into three dimensions. From there the software hauled me along into a whole kit of swift capabilities: surface textures from Google Images; finishing details from the online warehouse; shadow-function calculated for geological coordinates, date and time of day; and even a calculator for degrees of ambient fog.

Imagined spaces have a long history of use as memory palaces; I organized the chapters of a massive dissertation on spatial imagining and the brain by laying them out on twelve long tables in an imagined studio. There's also a natural glide from fantasy indulgence to architectural comprehension. Modeling rainspouts, attic vents, a window's brass handle, brings a clearer sense of how details articulate a structure, and inventing houses for specific uses sets up actually architectural problems to be solved.

- In all a sense of architecture as expressing ways of loving to be.

760 WEATHER VANE DRIVE



There's world at the door, a small palm, a blue-powdered mountain, an early chill, two lines of wires, a rooster's voice, a woman's, a long slant of shadow on grit.

Cygnus such a distinct emblem almost overhead. The sky is another desert, a dry reach. They are kindred archetypes, something like that, homologues, I thought, sitting on the wall next to the hooded lamp.

I'd come home on S22 in the dark, Handel blasting, switching to high beams when I could, cutting a lit swath ahead of me through the Gothic blackness of badland dips and curves feeling the strangeness of there being somewhere on the earth's surface I was going to with so much effort.

Sore and lonely this morning - thought what can I do - got out the house files - graph paper - remembered SketchUp - pulled in the app - found Youtube tutorials - and then was well and eager till 8:30 at night learning it.

All I want to do all day is draw houses. I could begin now - it's 10am - and it's all I'd do till 8 at night. None of my respectable projects have any grip.

I modeled this house and then I made up an improved version of it. When I stopped to talk on the phone I'd be seeing geometrically as if I were drawing. The house felt different because I'd built an alternate space in it. I was enraptured with the guestroom, where I'd put a writing table under the west window and brought in a quite lovely chair.

I like the way there's constant consideration and action. I figure out how to do things.

It's like dollhouses isn't it.

## MAC'S HOUSE



Mac's place, my dream of a responsible man. Do I need that dream to help me feel young? So I can open to places where I am - yes, I think. This morning I'm with his house, steel and glass, and is the floor concrete or terrazzo? Warm stone? The library roof is a solar grid that tracks the sun. In the library there is a long table where sometimes his foreman's kids come and do homework with him.

Near Portland. We're skirting the Columbia. The sun has come out. Raspberry rows, apple trees, rail cars, a lumberyard.

In the ditch mint blooming, wild oats, rye grass, teasel. Smooth new asphalt with fresh yellow stripes. Everywhere Queen Anne's lace in the grass. California poppies in roadbed gravel.

A woman was left behind on the Eugene platform. We watched her realize the train was moving away.

We're next to a smooth glossy river, dark green in this suppertime light, nice with magenta wild pea. Llamas under plum trees.

Ladies and gentlemen, now arriving at Davis. Latino men waking in camps under trees by the tracks. They'll ride their bikes to work. These are the first golden hills. It's storming up. Tall fennel bobbing. Tule fields, we're coming to the estuary. Channels brimming.

Last night when I went downstairs to brush my teeth, the window was open. We were in high country south of Klamath. The sky was black. There was the Dipper, Casseopia laid across the Milky Way. Red lights flashed at a crossing with no traffic. Blue running lights one each car.

Is that daydreaming alright? I sat dreaming Mac while I watched the flow of land. When the coach was darkened after ten I was on my back across the seats in my sleeping bag imagining it was with him, feeling the jolts and bounces of the car. It was after that I stood happy at the window looking at the stars. And then I took my sleeping bag and pillow through many cars to the lounge car. The train was full after the 4th of July holiday; each seat had someone folded into it unconscious. A child and mother fitted across two seats, the child away from the edge on the inside.

In the morning when I woke in the lounge car I popped my head up and there were people sitting around me looking at the red sun on the horizon. Good morning! said a woman with thick grey hair, amused.





## uly 2014

These nights before I go to sleep I lie on the concrete in front of the house cooling in company with the Milky Way, which is arching almost at apex, showing the broad dust lanes of Scorpio's tail. We are coming into our first stretch of days over 110 degrees. It's hottest in the house toward the end of the afternoon. I swelter - that word I like. Maybe the way to tell how hot it is, is if the pillows are hot to the touch.

Mac's house. Found a rock someone had drawn and stretched and rotated versions of it to crush together to make the ridge he built it on. Planted cottonwoods in crevices and pushed some of their trunks down into the rock to make shrubs. Then saw I could cantilever the bathhouse out over its edge. -
I sit down I expect briefly at 7 in the morning after I've made tea, made my bed, swept, assembled orange juice and put it in the freezer for later. Sometime in the afternoon I notice blasts of oven air from the open door. Don't want to stop to eat. Forget to drink. Doves croon. There is a small seismic jolt. It is Sunday, the monitor says. There are blasts of wind. The screen door jitters. Once the side window's venetians fly out and crash back. Rochelio came with a chainsaw to trim back the broken lemon trunk. Providencio's roosters crow in the afternoon. I don't get tired. It's constant action and decision. Sometimes I reconsider and back up 20 steps or more.

The happy thing I did today was devise Mac's outside bed. I'd thought a bed on rails that can slide forward onto the decking, but yesterday after I'd shut down the computer I realized I could make a nook off the end of the deck for a permanent outside bed. I liked the bed itself because I'd found a rumpled one with a blanket I could turn dark green. It was a nice bed, and I set it down three shallow steps between boulders. There it was fitted into a platform its size with just enough of a rim next to it to keep him from rolling onto the rocks. Up on the ridge it's next to open sky pivoting on the polar star.

Mac's study now fitted out in detail with library table, a Constable, one lamp over the sofa where he reads till late, walks across to look things up online, stops at the long table to lay out printed sheets and images. Showers in the dark, goes naked to his outside bed, lies looking up, feeling the air. Wakes early. The kitchen is streaked with sidelight. Cats at his ankles, makes tea, sits with it at the outside table for phone calls overseas.

It's about what is unsatisfied in a life too - the fantasy houses are - naked longing for more beauty and money and scope, happier loves.

Why is it Mac's house rather than mine? Because it's Mac's house, but what does that mean. I want his life in it. David McAra's house on the London roof was like that, and before it the poet's house by the river. Are the men I invent what's missing in me. Mac is success and mobility and unfailing commitment.

## POINT LOMA STUDIO HOUSE



walked up an alley behind Dupont Street, mild golden winter afternoon. It's an earth track and has odd structures built against it, thick bushes, odd views into nooks. Came to a back yard with a broken-down fence, worn-down dry grass, quail with their heads down in the warm light next to the house pecking at the shabby ground. I was charmed by little quail, which I'd seen nowhere else in town, and something about the look of the house. It seemed empty and had weathered stucco walls that looked like adobe. There was an old-time California farmhouse feeling about it, a faded print curtain at what I thought must be the kitchen window, a south-facing sunroom. I wanted it. The open south-facing back yard made me imagine a garden. Went home and tried to draw the floor plan.

The house with the big garden which I see as if I'd been there, now has a big clean studio. At the window the desert garden blazes, the quail scratch. What was it today. I worked this morning but not much. I'm scared of the first chapter. It has been raining every day. Dumbly resisting going back into monk discipline again. Daydreaming the California house, wanting the light at the windows. The high window that's the south wall looks onto olive trees with tufts of silver grass, California poppies, sidelit this time of day, backlit later, all the way to the wall. Many long tables set around the studio each with outlines, notes and images. Two tables back to back in the center, introduction and conclusion.

## 2001

A night of many tones between waking and sleeping. I would try to put myself to sleep, and almost would, by coming into the studio with high ceiling and looking at the tables standing around three sides. Now each table was lit by a candle. I could so clearly see the candlelight in the big room. It was an image of my pleasure in what I've achieved. A strong joy. Say what I think I have, an epistemology for art, an epistemology for environmentalism. An epistemology for dreaming, mysticism, craziness, for all the religions to the extent that they know anything. Epistemology an account of aboutness not 'knowledge.'

At the defense should I introduce the whole of it to them as the studio room? And use that as a demonstration of spatial imagining. Should I imagine the defense happening in that room. Think of it as a celebration in the room of the work. Of the patient tracking, the willing crashes. The strategy, the poverty, the boredom, the years of isolation, the days without light.

## 2002

A deeper graduation. The night before the defense I imagined the room with the tables and when I was thinking of the introduction and the conclusion on the two center tables I called up the child whose suffering in her bed was also accomplished in this time, and the young woman who learned to be an honest and responsible love woman, and felt them, or gave them to feel, as graduating too.



## April 2015

At 5:30 this Sunday morning I was outside in the dark about to go fetch the blanket off the lamp post. Heard light footsteps, two people walking west along the empty and dark street. They came past, an Indio Mexican couple, small, he slender and white haired. We looked at each other.

Then I work on the Point Loma studio house for the rest of the day. It's partly remembering and partly inventing.

This one has always been mine. The dissertation house.
The space I've kept going back to in the years imagining this house has been the little winter sun spot that juts forward a bit in front of the fireplace room. If the chimney stack is a spine my nook in the sun is the heart space. It has an armchair. I could put a cat in it. And then the studio at the west end of the long corridor is an extension of the right hand.

Shadows, textures. Setting longitude and latitude, trying the sun on different dates. Lot of time placing little things: bar of soap in a white dish, bread on a plate, journal on the dining table, blue suitcase at the guestroom door. I love the Buddha of the stairwell and the little Emily Carr over a bookcase next to a casement window with April midmorning sun coming in sideways through windows ten feet high. The upstairs bedroom took my breath, windows on all four sides, a well of light.

Drawing these models and maybe especially this one there's a strong sensation of actually making something and making it I suppose with magical speed.

- What I started to say was that I was happy working. After the windows and doors were in, satisfied, pleased with it. It does away with sadness, the dream of a house.

Room 662, Lotus Hotel, Vancouver



662, top floor of the Lotus. Two windows like good eyes. Casements, deep white sills. It's the western edge of Chinatown, on Pender where the street begins to rise toward the Sun Building and the Avalon Hotel. Expensive.

This morning as I was making tea I plugged in the Mac Pro, turned it on. The monitor lit up, asked me for the mouse. It was 45 days and 1800 miles since I shut them down in Borrego.

What dirty windows. Through which level sun from its equinox east. The street roistered until four. Something bit me, firey spreading bites that this morning don't show. I can feel the walls trembling with Hastings traffic. The street's hell-folk already yelling. White plume boiling straight up off the top of an International Village tower. Single gulls catching light on their white underwings when they turn. To the south, a bit of False Creek at the end of the street, prosperous Asians streaming out of the complex across the road. Drug deals in the alley.

A bad bite last night - woke me as I was just fading - couldn't go back to sleep violent slashes of noise - dark broad slashes - skateboards, a truck, a plane - and it went on - so then the day was lost to bedbug efforts - washing sheets, heating pillows and covers in the dryer - going to Army \& Navy to buy vinyl mattress and pillow protectors - sprinkling diatomaceous earth in edges - laboring to reconstruct the bed - tired.

Men in the street yell fucking as if it's what they are mad at, angry at what begot them, angry at what's cursed in them.

Stuck two images up on what I feel as the chimney wall, the two old black and white NASA images that still have such magic of full black sky and not just lights
but airs and intimations, sifts and small bursts, with simplest human shapes they show against: a ship, a post. They are a perfect pair in a way I don't think I can analyze.

I had a moment thinking of the furthest work I could do, feeling that if I were doing it I would never again need to say anything bad about anyone, I would live beyond everything I've needed to defend myself against.

Housetruck


In the laundromat the tall shy man I used to see downtown. "How's Tom?" "I don't know." "You guys break up?"

When I woke at night there was that hollow-hearted loneliness. I don't find anything else to say about it.

## March 2010

Can I see well enough to do this. The power went out. I thought it was my fuse and then saw in one of the facing windows a flashlight moving. It's happened when I've been intensely imagining living off-grid in a housetruck.
[Opposite pages: notes on electrics, water, windows, built-ins and sheathing.]
The number I'm pulling out of the air is $\$ 30,000$. I've half designed it already. It would be well finished, sycamore cabinets with strong tiny latches, open space above waist level and dense dedicated storage below, venetian blinds allowing slats of light onto a green velvet sofa - or teal, an $8^{\prime}$ wide $3^{\prime}$ deep work table, moonlight through clerestory windows.

The days' drive of this housetruck fantasy. The seek system, dopamine, getting turned on when there's attachment loss.

Couple of things I'm seeing. One is that it's a diagram of me, now minimized to a capsule. The other is how I have this kind of fantasy drive when I lose someone. The first time it was the Point Loma studio house. Others in earlier years, but the first ones when I was a kid.


The street is quiet at 6 before daylight. All-night methadone dispensary lit up across the road, the Chinese towers mostly dark. A bright planet. Cloud streaks across the pale east. Old men shelved behind fine dirty windows across the way Flamingo feathers over the inlet, pigeons wheeling against. Abbott \& Pender.

Last 3 days in Sketchup, finished this room and the housetruck too.

A new bite wakes old bites and the whole surface of the skin to some extent. A bite can revive over 3 or 4 days.

I have a little feeling for bedbugs. They are so small, small ovals like black sesame seeds, and they are so valorous: they desire me with such intensity that they quest over vast terrains, in and out of such dead-ends of folded materials, some too smooth to hold their feet, some, like my green blanket, too gigantically hairy. They know when they're discovered and dart for the nearest darkness, a crease in my sleeve.

The Native man digging into a dumpster in the alley has his arm in a slot under the lid, which is locked. He's dancing in a drugged state. The alley around him is tagged, grey, very dirty. Supposing Shakespeare knew many scenes like this one.

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sometimes I am
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All wound with adders
In the journal the decisions between emotional balancing and reporting accuracy.

4000 holes, John Luther Adams. I was thinking about sound-sight relations all the while. Beethoven's banged chords making mountains, it seemed to me. Not desert mountains, thickly forested gigantic solid granite Alaskan mountains. Plinking percussion hits were the holes, which were stars. It took me a while to
be all the way there and then it was like when the chord/cloud water shapes bloom up from the lower frame line in OB Pier 5 later on. His electronic background was long broad sweeping dark shapes. Something moving, air, cloud, freighted wind, I didn't know what, and the piano in front of it was building solid shapes with sharply lit massive stone cuts as there are in a range.

What sort of day - platinum-colored - a few light rain streaks on the window, short slanted lines of rain-specks. Vivaldi on CBC's Baroque stream. There's a gull plodding north along the opposite roof-edge. Entwined melody-lines of two sirens converging somewhere near. Pigeons on the Abbott Mansion cornice with their necks drawn down. The gull shaking its wings on the point of the vent stack is a suitable day-monument, turning to look this way and that.

London roof

"I have to go" I say, and wake.
Something of the quality of the shaft of light through a slamming door.

Where does he live. Top floor of a business building. Rooftop open north over the lane. A winch. A Landrover he knows how to fix. Three feet of notebooks. Reference books. Piano. Blue-green wood. Heavy big rugs for curtains on the south. Candle brackets. He's lit some. He's gone to get ... Indian food! I sit on the piano bench, he comes in, puts the bag on the counter, sits by me with his coat smelling wet wool, plays something he made. He doesn't forget it's the universe around him. Does he know about pain? Great pain. What about? Loneliness and limits.

It's raining. I come back on the plane, stagger into the $Y$, intend to wait 'til I'm beautiful, but go out again onto the wet pavement, past the caffé bar. The Landrover's there. Someone out of the offices lets the door close slowly enough so I'm in. The smell I know, up through first floor, publisher's office, occult books; second floor, booking agent; third floor. His door at the top of the stairs propped so I can see pink rain sky.

His curtains are open. He's there in white shirt suspenders bare feet at his drawing board. Cat sleeping. I stand looking or would want to but he senses me before he can see me, sits staring at what would be just head and shoulders against cloud. It's like a light growing in both. Staying still to know it. And then he comes not to the door but to the sliding window, and opens it and steps out, and looks. Unbuttons my coat. A sharp pain, tears of rain. Holds its edges and pulls me near.

Alright, inside, and close the window, and come by the fire, and take off your coat and your wet shoes and walk all around looking at what's new in my house. Have some soup, I'll heat it. By his drawing board there's the pile of my letters.

Eats with me, wants to know the flight, how were the clouds, who was sitting by you. Just the candles. Sings something. Says, Sing this. We sing it from opposite sides of the room. Sleep here please. As I begin to drift the little sound of his pencil scratching goes through me as if I had become transparent.



Cold. Remembrance Day yesterday, streets closed around the war memorial in all directions. Save-On Meats is a long narrow diner now. My waitress was a lighfooted young woman carrying her head beautifully on a long neck. Red lipstick. Her hair was close-shaved on the sides and grown out in a strip of pelt from forehead to nape. It suited her, gave her a regal profile. I was sitting at the counter. When she was handing my check across to me l said "I love your hair." It startled me how she lit up at that. Her pleasure was like a long-held flash of light. I was a bit dazed by it

It's the quietest moment of the day. No one is yelling. Gentle swish of cars and buses on Hastings a block away. It must be overcast because there's no dawn showing yet in the eastern sky. I'm sitting with my feet on the desk - keyboard a bit sideways - in the sort of lamplight I like in a room - three sources spread around - with a large tin cup of my sort of elaborated tea.

Figured out how to do moonlight in Sketchup just now. David McAra's house on the London roof. I'm inventing it at the same time as seeming to remember a real place and time I should describe accurately. I'd imagined it only at night, only the kitchen area near the door was lit. There was an upright piano along the south wall at the far end of the room but the rest of the long space was in the dark, so now when I'm filling in those farther spaces I've been uncertain.

I want it for the moment when I haul myself up the many stairs and come out onto the roof. It's late and raining. The door onto his roof is a heavy warehouse door. The curtains next to his bed are partly open. I stand in the rain looking into his cave of light. He's there in a white shirt with sleeves rolled up. Barefoot. Wearing reading glasses, looking down at something in a pool of lamplight. He feels me looking, starts up, comes not to the door but to the long bedside window where I am. Opens it. There is soup on the stove. He sets out a bowl for me. I am sitting on a bench facing his table - I don't know why it is a bench rather than a chair.

It's David McAra rather than the California Mac, now, why, because he's a computer musician and not rich and for the kindness of soup and a bed, and for the age I was? Early forties. He lives on the roof of a business building. Is it in Bloomsbury? Drives a green Landrover. Has devised a winch strong enough to haul a piano up to the 4th floor. Near the British Museum. He can see the river

Photo I took in the dark this morning. Man standing in front of the methadone pharmacy holding a Styrofoam cup that's a white spot at his chest. Behind him is his supermarket cart full of all he owns. On the other side of the frame a tree holding up its arms into the golden light of a streetlamp pointed down

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\text { Epps' house about } 1952
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## September 1962

Last night there was a thunderstorm. Judy and Paul and I went out to get the cows. I drove our round-backed old Merc and kept killing it. We were afraid of Buck. He was nervous, pacing in tense circles, bolting suddenly. Because they'd been nearly trampled a few evenings ago, Judy and Paul were afraid. We hesitated beside the fence in the dark. There were a few blurred thunder sounds among the wind sounds

Paul ventured up to the fence. We were cowards but who can admit it. We crawled under the fence. Again, a most awful stroke of lightening, nearly on us. (Father said, in the morning, that twenty fence posts were splintered in the same pasture - lightening ran along the barbed wire.) We flattened. The cattle bolted. It began to rain in long hard diagonal strokes. The wind rose. I turned the car and the lights pushed through rain and wind erratically, blown about, as I slid on the newly wet earth.

I was excited when we got home, elated. There was no kerosene; the one lamp burned very low. In the kitchen window, crowding the reflection of my face, was the grey sky racing south and streaks of calm near the horizon. I love rain and lightening and thunder-fear.


## December 2014

Chiffonier, chesterfield - those old words. Have spent a couple of days trying to model the little house I grew up in. Epps' house about 1955. I run up against things I'm not sure of - what colour was the floor in their bedroom? Was the lino in the kitchen blue or green? The northwest corner of my and Judy's room is still a blank. - Lots more like that. And the exact dimensions. I was guessing $24^{\prime}$ square. Were all the interior doors hollow core?

A few details came back as I worked on it - the kitchen floor had a browny-beige pattern.

Modeling the house has been a way of thinking about my dad too. What he had in mind when he designed it. Family politics in the way he built it: their bedroom was nicely finished but he never painted the drywall in our bedroom and Paul was exiled to a built-on lean-to porch with no insulation on the $2 \times 4$ studs.

Showing it seems more intimately revealing than any language could be. The awkwardness and backwardness we were, where we come from. But I like to think of Paul and me in that house sitting with encyclopedia volumes on our legs absorbed in learning taste. 15 volume 1950 Richards Topical Encyclopedia and its accompanying 7 volume geography set called Lands and Peoples bought from a traveling salesman when they couldn't have been able to afford them. Am still moved by the aspiration and hope in that.

I should model the outhouse too. Fascinating frozen cones of many colours of shit to be seen down the holes in winter. There were old boards laid down through the bush to keep our shoes dry when it rained or in spring melt. We'd try to run them as fast as we could, the boards squelching when our feet hit. That grove was a dank realm of mosquitoes, in spring with an acrid smell of saskatoon flowers. In winter the run wouldn't be shoveled. I'd forgotten staggering through deep snow in our dad's footsteps till just now. We'd get snow down our boots.

## July 2015

Here's the Epps' place pretty much erased but still a place I can find. There's the gas well or pumping station, whatever it is, but it's silent now. The pasture's bluff has been carved back to a strip on the fenceline. The Hill Sixty field is back in grass, not much of it baled. Prairie. The run-off strip of couch grass on the hill is still interrupting the barley field. The yard hasn't been seeded, is still brome and I think I see the well's marker. Ed Epp is dead; Mary Epp has faded into dementia; Ellie Epp is 70 years old listening at the culvert there still is where the driveway used to begin. The road is more graveled than it was. Today there's a quilted overcast. It's a gentle day. The breeze is inconstant. A brown dragonfly has lit on a bit of gravel.

Valhalla Lake, Alberta

you might have one going by here, he might go by those spruce, they're real tame
put your legs apart
a little more
that would be the two poles you'd put the trap there and then you'd have some kind of a stick, with pricks, they don't like to step on that they won't step on it
so they'll step over it into the trap?
they'll step over it into the trap. i usually cover it with one of those men's kleenex, pull it apart, lay that over it, for the snow
what they say i don't know if it's true they say if a link goes by here, in three weeks he'll come by again, like he's got a
like he's got
... round.
... a circuit?
yuh like he's got a circuit
often looking across to the pretty head by the typewriter will you put this earring in for me?
it's in the hole but i cant get it thru to the back, there's a little skin, there, feel it
does it hurt? i think it's coming through
walk them to the truck through cold air she runs ahead jumps in turns on the engine
she knows how to do that? she can reach the pedals?
oh yeah, she can drive
well she has to reach down
she's turned on the headlights darkness behind him miles white day whiskers and the blurred eye
moon in its white above the pickup some brown grass standing in the beam clods blue west much further on
h HELMER AND ELLIE AND BRIDGETTE TNH THE EEND



## December 2014

The bedbugs are less, much less, and the street noise is less because it's cold.
Four or five days on the lake house, which mostly is done. I've rotated in the air and peered through a window, and there's the attic space lined with unpainted wood, the chimney stack as I'd see it when I was on the porch roof fitting glass.

It's a complex little form with a lot of well-fitted parts. My proportions aren't just right and yet there is the barrel heater with Grandpa Epp's bench behind it, where I sat reading a book of Chinese stories when it was 40 below and Jam was away in Hythe shopping and didn't come home for days. Drawing the bench I remembered I had a green pillow - it was a tie-dyed African fabric with a pattern in the weave, beautiful dark green.

Jam's pale pink silk quilt. Yellow plastic washbasin. Red Le Creuset pot with a wooden handle. I leaned a broom behind the screen door on the kitchen porch

Then reading some Up north journal chapters exhausted by them. Then reading another chapter and liking the sparse balanced flow of time noted - the way it's written seems an accomplishment - the way it's lived too, attentive, more attentive than now. That inside-out attention. By the end of the lake house a real find in writing. That kind of writing - I automatically worry whether it reads but that misunderstands any writing - like my movies - make something for people to make something of - something that will be them not me - it's a more mature sense of writing though I still do long to have company in myself.

Not 'symbols' but things that speak, have spoken, can speak, from, for, the unconscious self-sense.

## July 2015

The turn-off is Range Road 102. Getting to it was like breaking through the hundred-year spell on the house of Sleeping Beauty. Many of the windbreak spruce were standing dead. There was chest-high grass I had to stumble through and then a complete ring of overhead caragana and then more long grass. I'd fall into its cushioned tangle holding the camera. And then there was the front porch completely collapsed off the house and the unsheltered south face weathered to bare wood. Pushing back through the spruce to the jeep a thick ring of aspen.

When I was going to drive away something said to give a gift and said what gift it should be and where I should put it. I believed it. I knew the boon I was asking.

824 East Pender Street

a room with a candle, black space with a fire swaying in it. microscopic polish of particles the light is swaying against.
who is working. i know the mind. it hovers. it sends a hawk, calls one. who else. a girl who floods, who's fear, who sees more than she knows, who's hard to endure.
it's a night whose walls dissolve, a room continuous with night. a night so granular, so changeable. night with a platform and only that. a breeze. sometimes a table, sometimes a black dress.
inside the extent of granular night there's color, there are people in stories of journeys and days.
a woman writing, a girl on the floor. she can't stop her visions, but they are forming around them both. the woman is writing them. the hawk partitions them, flies into them, cuts them with its wing. flies above them cutting a shape for their acts of decision
the writer at her table, the schizophrenic girl with arms around her knees. the hawk flashes down. the writer holds out her wrist
the schizophrenic girl holds her palms to the warmth of his feathers.
it becomes an I, there is only one who sees rides decides and writes, who's fear and fearless, traveling and still.



Somewhere in there a memory of Jam at her best, a moment she was brightfaced in a womanly way, her best fine-focused fine-grained gleam. In the dream I also remembered remembering, saying to myself that I should recover the mind had with her

Now there's blue dusk at the window where white and red tulips are standing in glass and the celadon bowl is holding oranges. Fridge humming. Haven't wanted to record these days but this is a buoyant moment, I don't know why. An untethered creative bubbling.

It's warmer and last night was dry so the Saturday night baccanale went on till probably 4.

Was it 12 hours of Sketchup today? Working on 824 East Pender
824 is the house of color. Sketchup doesn't show either the shabbiness or the radiance for instance of the middle room's blue. Such elaborate mouldings. Skirting boards, door and window frames, V-joint wainscoting in the bathroom. Ridiculous balustrade and stair posts yet to come. I get away from slog by making or finding furniture - the metal filing cabinet, the little crib, the kitchen table with holes cut for ma jong tile drawers. The old typewriter. The dial phone in the bathroom. Peter Epp's bench.

Layers of layout - I was there so many years, need to sort furniture position into different eras on different layers I can turn off and on.

Detail I forgot and recovered. The ratty rug in the bathroom. Where exactly were the doors into the closets.

There maybe isn't a lot done in a day? And yet the rooms are more real-feeling tonight, much more.

North room's summer 5am: pale green, silver mirror, dames rocket mauve and white in a jar. That's the essence: green, white, silver, glass. Later it was Aphrodite but that one was Artemis.

So can i take her with me? Yes
No, she's a poet. She lived in the lake house too

Luke talking about the house on Pender. This conversation was happening in a kind of dazzle of pleasure that he and I had lived mortal hours together there and loved them and still have them and can be together in them. That I made it the place he loved, its colors, its sightlines, the table on the porch. The way Luke himself is a place I hold in memory that way. That someone holds him in memory from little, that I can give him that, am giving him that.

Grassland House


This plan for a $14^{\prime} \times 25^{\prime}$ studio house with a $12^{\prime}$ ceiling is designed for an arid, isolated place such as eastern Washington or Oregon. The structure is basically 6 weight-bearing pillars, a floor and a roof. It develops certain small-house architectural ideas I've liked for a long time.

One is a unified space, and a space in which all functional areas are lit from all four directions. In this plan, for instance, not only is the bed part of the living room, but neither kitchen nor bathroom have doors. Instead they are functionally defined by a 6 -inch step up.

Another idea is consolidation of utilities in a core. Here a t-shaped structure between kitchen and bathroom has cupboards and drawers sunk into it from all three sides; holds all large appliances (gas fireplace, undercounter fridge, washer-dryer, water heater, induction stovetop, wall oven, ground-source heating/cooling pump); contains solar batteries with their control systems; and includes plumbing, gas, ventilation and electrical conduits; all while also acting as a space divider.

Another notion is an extended above-ground foundation, technically a plinth. It gives an edge to sit on and a bit of height to look around from, and it can accommodate any number of pipes and ducts, including rain-drains and subfloor heating.

Another is terrazzo floors, which are durable, reflective, and easy to clean
There are a couple of reasons why the columns are the size they are. One is the way they anchor the main room's cabinet half-wall. Another is the way they give an offset to the long-side facades that shelters the doors somewhat. Another is the way they define the main room level as somewhat separate from the kitchenbath level. They give a bit of a classical small-temple feeling too, or maybe the house can be thought of as a pavilion.

It isn't a cheap house. The door-window modules and window-window modules might or might not be found ready-made at close-enough sizes, but would be costly in any case. There's a lot of custom cabinetry, and custom cabinetry is fabulously expensive. Then too terrazzo artisans are not to be found in remote country, would have to be put up in motels with travel paid, etc. There's a big whack of concrete in the plinth. I don't know much about flat-roof materials but there's a large solar unit up there. Always thousands for permits and inspections. AND finally all those beautiful stainless steel appliances at thousands of dollars each. For most of us it's likely too high-end to be anything but a dream house, but if its design elements appeal maybe they can be adapted.



Dullest of grey light. People in their winter clothes excessively bundled - it's not cold, they're as if bundled against the oppressive light.

The man-woman I meet in the elevator has a sweetness I think of as held through hardship. She's a skinny thing, tall, dressed mostly in trans-girly fashion, but sometimes with a fur-lined ear-flapped aviator's hat too. She has such a sweet vulnerability I always like to be in her elevator company.

Banging and slamming next door, Brian. There's a drugged-out scrag of a hooker with him.

Last night a random radio site gave me Phill Niblock's Feedcorn ear, which I could see the way I like to, sheets of texture, a constant foreground I was looking through to grainy small movements behind it. Later the foreground broke up, juddered as if interacting with background. I was thinking of the Pale hill airplane and the Last light track. Niblock is an old NY minimalist with an ugly beard and narrow eyes - minimalist in several media. They like him in Europe. I have a lot more to learn in audio.

Early Sunday. Quiet and black. The streets sound wet.

I've resolved the $14 \times 25$ grassland house for one person. Things I like - as always the slant of light, simple small kitchen, Persian carpet in the bathroom, many doors to the outside, pale terrazzo floor, tub with lot of sky, leafy shadows, raised foundation platform. It's a bit of a Greek temple - the pillars could house speakers, wiring, rainspouts, vents - have just installed rain vents outside the doors and scuppers where they'd discharge. Scuppers! There were scuppers in the warehouse!

It's pretty but so solitary and isolated. What work could be done there. What companions could eat with me at that table.

## March 2015

I sent the small house site my $14 \times 25$ petit palais and it's been ignored, perhaps because it's architecture by a woman. The housetruck was publishable because it's a modest space and I came across as humble, but this one uses the words plinth and temple. Maybe it's a model of self that scares people? Bathroom with open double doors, unshamed clear colors, a lot of white, bed not hidden away.

## Poet's House



## September 1983

Waking at night the whole solar plex raw as if it's the unhealed site of the yanked attachment.

Charcoal hours, turning in bed, waking in agony from Luke lost again. Read and eat. Lie on the bed. Large drops banging down on the sidewalk and garden, the slanted roof. Womb a little fire.

October 1983
[Page of house photo clippings and floorplan sketch]
Last night with color pictures imagining the poet's house under dark trees. He comes in at night, makes a fire that heats the upstairs too. Cup of tea, bowl of something. His books are here when he's away. In his bed he can listen to leaves.

From no other instinct are so many and such powerful wishes left over.
Drawings to make little ideal spaces where a love story is going on.



Caffe latte at Acme sitting in the window in dazzling sun. 14 bus pulls up. Shabby persons. Persons with laptop bags. Bald person sunning his head, carrying his cap. Plane tree across the street catching light in a whole net of straggling lower branches. Weird tall man in an overcoat, one of those tall men with small heads. Male and female police officers, comely both, strolling, she with hands behind her back. Many people with sore feet. Have I seen anyone look happy. That American tourist woman maybe.

Yesterday the kind of day I love, working almost every moment, not stopping till midnight, hours vanishing. Sketchup of the poet's house from the early ' 80 s, a simple farmhouse somewhere in the Fraser Valley near a river. Goodwill furniture, lino in the kitchen,
Robert Maclean's big rubber boots on the step. What I love in this kind of work is the mix of minutely focused technical slog, spatial intuition, romantic memory and beautiful invention; for instance last night after I'd already shut down the model I thought of making a painted chest for the guest room, like the one in Violet Thompson's little family hotel in Cannon Beach. I found a chest, colored it red, and then realized I could paint it with Mary Frank images I've collected. There it is now in an attic room with a white-painted floor, similar white board ceiling, single bed, reading chair, small writing table, and worn carpet.

It takes many days to finish a model. They are days I'm not finishing my movies but they are happy days.

I love to look at this room. It's unlike any room I've invented, it's a different palette, grey-green and white. The big soft coverlet looks like silk. It's not the poet's bedroom, which was plain and bare with the bed in a different position.

This morning I sat down immediately to put a dormer over the stairs. It took all morning. It's a tricky problem of two parallel planes intersecting two other
parallel planes at three different angles. I kept getting it wrong and trying again. Tiny errors where lines meet can put everything off. All of this is complicated by the intersections of groups on different layers, which need to be opened and closed correctly to make different but related lines and surfaces. I'd hide something to get at something else and then not be able to unhide it because couldn't figure out what group I was in when I hid it, or else maybe had erased something accidentally. But anyway the dormer is made and I sent late afternoon summer light through it and took its picture.

The kitchen is still really the poet's kitchen. Big open space, armchair to sit by the cookstove, kitchen table by a double sash window. Old fridge, old stove, screen door, pale blue lino of the same era as the stove and fridge.

- Here come the crows, it's 7:15 on a morning of streaked cloud.

Tom's place on Georgia Street, San Diego


## October 2006

Brought chicken soup and made a pumpkin pie. We ate two pieces each and put the other two into the fridge and not much later got them out and ate them up.

$$
\text { November } 2006
$$

Woke under the window. There were pink clouds. Tom had a boner - there's a jay - and said ardently that he loves my big hairy fat-lipped pussy that I have along with my Palladian mind. I never get used to his overstatements.

It's quiet. What's that tree with dry leaves, our deciduous one. Row of pigeons on that wire they like. Our neighbours the tweaker queen and the illustrated boy, though she kicked Harry out and now there's a big old guy in a motorcycle gang teeshirt with is that a pit bull.

$$
\text { March } 2007
$$

I was in the tub in the dark and he carried in his open laptop to show me what he'd written that day. A book of light. Three-quarter page with a good line about being like a dog with its head out the window of a car.

$$
\text { May } 2007
$$

Sunday morning we got in the jeep, Tom driving, and cruised slowly up El Cajon and back on University. The ethnic neighborhoods, storefront churches and chiropractors, a warm quiet morning with a cool breeze, streets empty. We slipped into the gazing trance I like, silent together just looking. Gardens, houses, early summer, jacarandas and palms. Dire straits, Knofler's sharp fine precise soulful touch spinning out his perfect line.

$$
\text { May } 2008
$$

I was ragging on him about the way he takes a ridiculous round-about route. Nothing annoys him more than me telling him he's doing something wrong. He said I'm like a chipmunk gnawing on an elephant's foot and I just won't quit. We were shooting along 5 toward Pacific Highway by then. I said slyly, Does the elephant have a little owie. He sent me a look I saw in the corner of my eye. It was admiration. Scandalized admiration.

## August 2008

I like the thoughts I have when I wake, though they are often grim. They are thoughts about life. For instance this morning I saw a man carrying home a Christmas tree and said, There is so much of that, over and over.

October 2008
Monday morning, 6 o'clock, Tom's house. The Eastern rim is brightening slightly. I'm on the couch in the kitchen, peering through the second-to-the-bottom pane of the French doors at the greenish glow behind the leaves. Tom is across the room a long shape in the dark with is that a bare foot down the bottom end of his bed. I woke and couldn't sleep, came and did the dishes and organized Tom's shelves. He came in for a moment, I heard him laughing behind me and I laughed too - a sound I loved, two people one of them me laughing quietly in the dim light of the counter lamp, with the sleeping room still dark beyond us.

$$
\text { May } 2014
$$

Tom's place in the early morning light. Soft venetian shadows on the wall. Sweet air through the screen, geranium leaves, green valley with palms. Tom in the kitchen ironing a teeshirt. All the years.
He's gone predictably into sweet talk and I like it. My gloom lifts. I look younger I liked his strong hands on my spine. I liked hearing his sleeping breath. I fell asleep instantly last night and slept well. I liked his haircut - the right haircut again finally. His place looked nice when I arrived alone after the freeway miles.

$$
\text { June } 2014
$$

The pier zones. At the far end it's deep slow silent green, rolling surface constantly changing its angle to the light. As if a heavy roller is advancing under the wrinkling skin.

On our last morning in his flat he was sitting next to me on the bed with a look on his face. I said, Are you having solemn thoughts? He cried for a moment. I liked that he minded.


Waking on a clear morning. There is a perfect crescent moon over one of the towers. The world is right when I can see that. A covered sky is wrong, wrong.

Happy in these days getting movies ready. Pale hill almost done but I need another sound for the beginning, something clear and nearby to give a here before the there and to set the sound level correctly.

Funny how all it needs is an invitation, not even an important invitation, and $I$ can work all day with ease and such pleasure.

Finish last light tomorrow maybe.
Haven't said the trees on Abbott have new little leaves and magnolias are blooming along the steps up to the skytrain.
've been making Tom's place. There in front of me has been the front door with its confessional window, pink-brown paint faded and chipping; the rusted pipe of the walkway rail; the Ace Hardware bench; the harlequin kitchen floor; the 5-paned French doors; the red pantry curtain; the curved plaster mantelpiece. In the bathroom the green tile along the bottom edge of the wall. The front room venetians partly up. I carefully made the Danish desk. There are pin-positioned copies of the Japanese print, the California painting, the little square mirror, the Watch and Pray card. Blue enamel cup on the desk, another by the sink. The Stickley end table. Two candlesticks with dark blue candles. The ironing board closet, which actually opens. Two single beds with their heads together. A green shower curtain. Even the water heater back in the pantry. The concrete stairs down from the sidewalk with mailboxes a couple of steps down.

I tried the shadow command for the moment the sun rises and its angle from the horizon throws sudden slants of light all over the facing wall. A Tom moment, a moment of the sort of completeness there could be with Tom despite all his sleaziness and sloppiness and wicked rage.

52 Burghley Road, London NW5


Silchester Road. The feed man is gone. Therefore so are the horses. So are the pigeons most of the time. "The sartorial artist" says the milkman. "Wot's that" says the barber.

Tony was out with John Frick playing snooker. At 3:30 the light goes on and Tony snaps in happy to see me. I'm wide awake and we lie and talk on and on. At dawn yellow light sinks gradually from the top of the window frame to the bottom, the room fills from top to bottom with light. A jet swims coolly across the pane. The second tube train rattles past, perhaps the first returning. The clock stops and I don't notice but Tony does and smiles at me. "Thought I'd leave it stopped for a while;" at ten past six. We look at our two colours of skin. His has turned to silver.

Madge Herron shaking herself in her plastic raincoat hung with a chain and keys, slapping her thigh, telling me about a line in a poem. She quotes it, her mouth opens coyly because it's poetry she's saying. Pigeons falling asleep, darkness flooding in their eyes - she says she has to not read it for six months so that it will work again. She picks up my Seferis, "Oh he's good this man."

Tells me about a simple girl in Donegal, they used to tease for her English which she says she made up as she went along. She said oh no they needn't walk her up the lane, in the moonlight it was a "fair, white, night." When she was twelve she was in the fields, barefoot, "delving." Delving for what? Oh potatoes. All the men had gone to Scotland to work. Her father dead when she was five, her uncle telling them to pull their skirts down. She has been in London thirty four years. Came to go into service. She eats all my bread, with thick butter and bits of garlic, demands that I go make more tea. Sits here eyes pink, delicate for all she says about having been rawboned and ugly as a girl. When she goes home offers her cheek to be kissed

Miss Tugwell sitting on the stairs tells me about the rockets circling before they dropped, airplanes nudging them back to Germany.

The Italian Gardens, Luke running between the pools, brief sun on all the yellow leaves. Andy in donkey jacket trying to teach me to waltz, to whistle with two fingers. Luke finding a real chestnut. Waiting at the Natural History Museum; rain, crowds of people, dreaming food. "I wish you were a side of venison turning over a fire, with roast potatoes." "I wish you were a raspberry pie with ice cream, I wish you were a roast of pork." The guard got out his key and ostentatiously watched the second hand going around. Then we ran and got into the great front hall like paradise with its trees named in Latin worked in mosaic on the ceiling.

Christmas night touring the Heath with A, moonlight, black tree shadows, curve of the city, distant lit windows a spaced fringe around the black park. A pink cloud. Supple flying spine of the hill itself. Frost underfoot, railings' diagonal shadows on the path. Hoofprints. Stream's sudden sounds easily lost. Quiet footsteps. Ear cold where silver pulls frost into it. British Rail employees, plastic hats on, chatting on the pavement at the end of College Lane. This London won't be here to come back to. Andy says "English people are still like foreigners to you aren't they."


When I was working on a model last night I'd look up startled because smal sounds of rain and wind had seemed to be sounds in that place not this.

The sky has shut down again. All day the sound of wet streets. I feel I have to run this sort of day out whatever way I can, it's good for nothing.

Corner table at the Prado, leaf-shaped foam. The young going to work in bright sweet light. The addicted broken-hearted shuffling past.
"Typical mid-Victoria terraced house on 4 floors."
52 Burghley has complicated baseboards and mouldings. It took more than a day just to figure out its geometry.

Yesterday I'd finally got to furnish Luke's end of the room. His bed. I'd forgotten the color of the quilt and then saw it in a corner of a photo. Blue of course. Then I found some alphabet blocks in the warehouse, imagine that. Spilled some on the floor and set a row of them on a shelf of the orange cupboard to spell LUKE, rotated them individually. Before folding up last night took a frame-grab photo of sun spilling through the window onto the Marsh Arab carpet next to Luke's puppy bed and the orange cupboard, tree outside

That lyrical young woman. Fond, sweet-natured. Simpler than I am. The objects in her space have such a charge, each with its recent story. The blue cushions Roy and I picked up in Germany on a curb day. The Devon pitcher. The orange cupboard from downstairs that I wrestled up the steps somehow on my own. Rosalynd's blue and white African banket. The striped bedspread from Heals. The rugs of course. The little icon I gave Sally. A filing cabinet the half-Siamese cat had her kittens in. The privet shadows. Greek bread toast with melted butter and honey. London splendours habitual.
osea4444.mov and OBpier5-4444.mov are ready to ship but very large. pale hill is hard. I have trouble deciding among possibilities and even seeing them exactly where to lay the rising and falling sound against the moving shadows, how to begin the sound to set a correct level. I've picked it up and set it down without resolving many times.

In paradisum - angels, martyrs, Jerusalem, etc. What other kind of In paradisum could there be. The idea of paradise is wrong because it's contrastive, paradise is the purely good. But this music isn't about that. This Kings College version goes to sat photos of earth and universe. It's in aetherium. It's solemn sailing among cosmic wisps. I can say that and feel ignorant the way I could feel ignorant staring at the form of the tremendous tinted clouds east of my windows these open days. That's paradisum, being in face of the ungraspable, seeing it, being it but not having anything to say about it. Which is making me see immediately what gardening has to do with it. It's participating in making something I will have that relation to.

University Hospital, Edmonton



## January 1952

## [Sound of a distant train.]

One week left in 662. The year has so turned around. Window open, a dozen flies zig-zagging in the center of the room.

Looking at the flowers on the table just now I was remembering hospital corridors at night with flowers set on the floor outside the doors. They don't do that now, it's something people may not even remember. The dim gleam of the terrazzo floors, a bulky Ukrainian janitor pushing a large round polisher trailing a long cord.

Am drawing the particular room I must have been in at least twice because I remember myself in two of the four beds. What's strongest in my memory is just the room itself. It had tall windows reaching to a high ceiling and a wide heavy door that sighed shut on a brass closer. The floors curved up onto the walls at their edges. Window sills were broad clean ledges in pale varnished wood. I was coming from such a crude little house. This room's coherent finished quality seemed magnificence and intelligence to me. I loved those qualities without knowing I loved them.

The two windows faced east over a parking lot, a large open space on the far side of which was a street where trolleys ran and in winter sometimes gave off blue sparks. I would lie in my bed in the dark listening through those windows to a distant train whistle somewhere toward the northeast in a city I didn't know. From those windows I could look down over the front entrance, that I had only passed through a couple of times. There were several concrete steps and then big double doors, then a small foyer with radiators on both sides and more shallow steps, and then the main double doors into the reception area with its information desk for visitors. I've often remembered that small anteroom I think it seemed beautiful to me, with its tall glass-paned doors on both sides and polished steps probably brass-edged. It was a warm bright room that had no function but passage between entries on two levels - is that it?

I've posted some jpgs of the 4-bed room. C said How does it feel to take authority over your historic places. I said I don't think authority is the word. It's more a taking-account of who I've been in relation to place. For instance with this room I remember many details of layout, color, furniture, light, orientation etc, but nothing at all about who else was in the room with me. Maybe a child who has been alone in strange places can become someone who takes great pleasure in architectural space.
"It was a warm, bright room that had no function but passage between entries on two levels." That's a psychological description isn't it.

When I was passing through Edmonton with Louie in 1992 that wing with its lovely front entrance had just been demolished, was lying behind wire hoardings a rubble of broken bricks and plaster and even some smashed furnishings no one had thought worth saving.

Breezy Bay, Saturna Island

the flow of fire
the sea's strong swimming
when the page turns a sign from the window
the baby looking out of the shade sees me and the cabin wall and the other images sees through the window beyond me branches, birds, insects, the wind's lines

I would see from my bed the tall crowned queen carrying a stick walk slowly
between two spaces
looking at the ground at plants
standing alert in the red light
feather leaves and eyebright
turned west from the slope above the water
laying strong shadows among their stalks
today the air white, the fields running, clean grass bent over in the current red mists in the twigs water afloat higher up, on the cliff, in the firs
thousands of miles east of here
is a thin man with grey eyes
bone hands. antlers. a turquoise necklace.
east is this still attention.
your eyes. any pale crystal.
the thin air. the wing's tip.
granular evening blue \& rose.
the open, the so-distant silk.
the slot, the gate, the curtain drawing a breath, the long shot, the run-up and launch




