

## Identifying Problems

### Link to Previous Class:

In the previous lesson, students have been introduced to the concept of close reading and will have practiced their skills on Virginia Woolf's "A Sketch of the Past."

### Learning Goals:

By the end of the class, students will be able to:

- Identify intellectual problems (especially those at the intersection of memory/imagination/writing)
- Frame intellectual problems as questions
- Closely analyze images as well as text, and the relationship between the two

Total estimated time: 75 Minutes + 10 Optional

Course work or assignment underway: Progression #1

### Lesson plan

#### 1) Discussion on Lynda Barry's comic "Resilience" (15 Minutes)

Ask students to free write their thoughts on the comic, and, by underlining its autobiographical nature, the motives of the author. Open the floor for discussion.

During the discussion make sure you address questions of trauma, and how writing about it

- a) Is a working-through of the past (as opposed to writing in real time)
- b) Shows the will to expose issues to the light of day is an attempt to make a political, collective claim by testifying to the very ordinariness of her trauma.

Also, remind students (this will have been mentioned at the beginning of the term) that in autobiographical writing the author is distilling any situation where there are a number of people who are part of it, hence the outcome is going to be only one of many versions... e.g., if I tell a story about my childhood, my version of it is not necessarily the same as my brother's. There's nothing made up, but it might not have happened in the exact way, as we might remember it differently.

#### 2) Exercise from *What It Is?* (15 Minutes)

Distribute the handout with the exercise from page 159-162, 172-173. Read the theoretical framework and the prompts out loud and explain it to students. Emphasize the instructions provided on page 172: never stop moving your pen/pencil.

Once the exercise is over, ask students to share what they wrote/drew.

### 3) Identify Problems (45 Minutes)

Ask students to write their impressions on the process. How did the exercise make you feel, and why? What did the exercise suggest about remembering via writing (the central conceptual question of Progression #1)? Ask students to share, and attempt to highlight the patterns that emerge from their answers.

As students write, distribute a hand out with the following strategies to identify intellectual problems. Project these on the screen as well.

Do you observe that your exhibit itself is a significant example of a pattern/trend/genre?

Do you observe that your exhibit is an anomaly or deviation from a pattern/trend/genre?

Do you observe patterns or anomalies within your exhibit? (within)

Do you observe an ongoing debate (i.e. differences in interpretation) about your exhibit?

Do you observe that existing popular ideas/arguments about your exhibit overlook or misinterpret other aspects you observe in your exhibit?

Put students in groups of four (possibly following the patterns that emerged from the answers they provided, although I realize this might not be possible), and ask them to work together put this into practice by observing and write “how” and “why” questions that a scholar might want to address about memory and writing in Lynda Barry’s, Virginia Woolf’s, and their own work. If necessary, prompt them to think deeper:

- a. What are internal patterns/anomalies in “Resilience”?
- b. How is Lynda Barry’s work (and the relationship between writing and memory in it) similar to Virginia Woolf’s?
- c. How is Lynda Barry’s work (and the relationship between writing and memory in it) different from Virginia Woolf’s? How do they both stand in relationship to your own?
- d. How is your own piece similar/different from any of the two?

#### 4) Optional (10 Minutes)

Project images from *What It Is* to show how Lynda Barry theorizes about her own writing practices, and how intellectual questions are very central to the production of her own work. (self awareness).

*What It Is* is about capturing the structure of remembering. “When you put something out of your mind, where does it go?” at the center of her aesthetic, Barry is haunted by her experience. The layered space in Barry’s book indicates that the past is not linear but all around us; we think of time, or the past, as moving from one point to another, Barry says, “[but] if you think of these images, they can move every which way, and you don’t know when they’re coming to you.” The form of collage is ideal to depict the simultaneity of our experience. (Source: Hillary Chute – *Graphic Women*)

In keeping with the discussion about comics consider informing students how the genre and the movement, or act, of memory share formal similarities that suggest memory, especially the excavation of childhood memory, as an urgent topic in this form. Cartoonist Chris Ware suggests that comics itself is “a possible metaphor for memory and recollection”. Images in comics appear in fragments, just as they do in actual recollection; this fragmentation, in particular, is a prominent feature of traumatic memory.

Please note: the book is full of exercises that can be used as warm up exercises or as journal/blog posts.

STUART DYBECK  
WROTE A BOOK CALLED  
*Childhood and  
Other Neighborhoods*

AND I THINK THIS  
BEGINS TO DESCRIBE  
IT, THE idea OF OUR  
CHILDHOOD AS A  
NEIGHBORHOOD with  
something like  
streets  
and houses,  
SCHOOL YARDS  
AND CEMETERIES,  
short cuts and  
LONG WAYS.

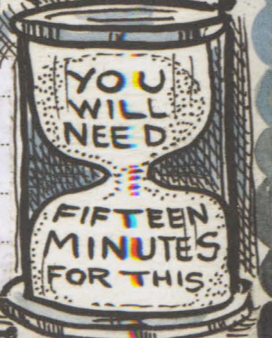
It's a good way  
TO START, BY THINKING  
OF CHILDHOOD AS  
A PLACE rather than  
a time. A PLACE THAT  
ALREADY EXISTS Like  
An unplayed-with  
PLAY SET, needing  
ONLY ONE THING TO SET ALL  
things in motion

May We  
Suggest...  
YOU NUMBER  
YOUR PAGE FROM  
ONE TO TWENTY  
AS IF YOU WERE  
MAKING A LIST.

OR USE THE  
SPACE AT THE  
BOTTOM OF  
THESE PAGES

HEAD  
EYES  
EARS  
NOSE  
CHEEKS  
JAW  
SHOULDERS  
SPINE  
BELLY  
PELVIS  
LONG LEG  
BONES  
KNEES  
ANKLES  
FEET

- BRUCE
- KAREN
- MARTIN
- JANET
- GARY\*
- STEVE
- HILDA
- CHARLES
- JAMES
- SHIRLEY
- DONNA
- CLARK
- BILL\*
- SUSAN
- LEON
- TOM\*
- JOYCE
- RENEE
- DAVID
- BRENDA
- DONALD
- ALAN\*
- JEFF
- THERESA
- IVAN\*
- JEAN
- CAROL
- SANDRA
- CHRIS
- RICHARD



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

- KATIE\*
- RONALD
- MARY\*
- KEN
- JIM\*
- DIANE
- NICK
- SCOTT
- DAN\*
- PATRICIA
- DENNIS
- MATT
- ANNE
- TIM\*
- CHERYL
- JOAN
- DUANE
- ANDY
- HOWARD
- NANCY
- DEAN
- AMY
- JANE
- KEITH
- JEN\*

THIS PART WILL TAKE FOUR MINUTES

There ARE other  
NEIGHBORHOODS OF  
images. NEIGHBORHOODS  
OF THINGS WE HAVE  
HATED, THINGS WE  
HAVE BROKEN, THINGS  
WE HAVE LOST. AND  
the opposite neighborhoods  
are all there, THINGS AND  
PEOPLE WE HAVE  
LOVED, LUCKY THINGS,  
THINGS TURNING OUT  
ALL RIGHT.

Things not forgotten  
but UNREMEMBERED UNTIL  
WHEN DID THE ICE AGE END?

HOW ARE ICEBERGS FORMED?

We may think of icebergs as exciting and interesting things to see, but Most people think of the Ice Age as something that happened so long ago that not a sign of it remains.

SET YOUR TIMER FOR  
4 MINUTES AND WRITE  
DOWN THE NAMES OF  
THE FIRST 20 CLASSMATES  
THAT COME TO YOU FROM  
EARLY SCHOOL DAYS

- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.

- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.



He was not hunting for treasure. He wanted to study the living things of the sea.

NOW SET YOUR TIMER FOR ELEVEN MINUTES

A rock pool is a fine place in which to start your study of sea life. On this page some creatures of the rock pools.

CAN YOU WRITE TWO SENTENCES ABOUT EACH PERSON ON YOUR LIST?

has glowing spots  
has rows of gleaming lights on each side  
glow in the dark

diving to explore the sea

You

YOUR LIST?

HINT

DON'T

STOP

TO

THINK

JUST

KEEP

YOUR

PEN

IN

MOTION

FOR

11

MINUTES

"Hey, Shorty!" "Hi, Skinny." "There's Fatso."  
Sound familiar to you? It's a perfectly natural way to call people—

THE CHAPTER SUMMING UP

1. RELAX YOURSELF

2: NUMBER FROM 1-20  
TIMER SET 4 MINUTES

3: LIST FIRST 20 CLASS MATES WHO COME TO YOU

4: SET TIMER FOR ELEVEN MINUTES  
WRITE 2 SENTENCES ABOUT EACH PERSON ON YOUR LIST

5 GOOD!

as a fēt'ī da  
asp'en  
awk'ward  
bār'on  
ba zāar'  
bel'fry  
blithe'some  
bril'liant  
bus'y bod y  
buzz'ing  
cār'a van  
cār'ol ing  
cau'tious ly  
chānt  
char'ac ter  
chīr'rup  
com part'm  
coun'cil

ac curs'ed  
ac quaint'ed  
af fair'  
af fec'tion  
af flict'ed  
a muse'ment  
an'guish  
an'i mal  
anx'ious ly  
coun'se lor  
cur'tain  
dān'ger ous  
deaf'ened  
del'i ca cies  
d'a mond  
dif'fi cul ty  
dis ease'  
dodg'ing  
dy'nas ty  
ēar'nest ly  
el e men'ta ry  
en'e mies  
er rā'ta  
ex am'ine  
ex cite'ment  
ex pē'rī enced  
ex'qui site  
ex tin'guish e  
ex trav'a gant  
fair'ings  
fa tigue'  
fer'tile  
ferule (fēr'ool)  
fla min'go  
fōr'ei bly  
fōre'head  
fōr ti fi ca'tion  
fur'ni ture  
gā'bies  
gauz'y  
gnarled  
griev'ous ly  
hedge'row  
hēr'it age  
ho ri'zon  
hor'ror  
ho'gen

# extra CREDIT!



① Pick 10 people from your list and imagine each of them is doing the last exercise and you are on their list. Write two or three sentences from each person's point of view about you.

② pick someone who is vivid from this list and picture yourself with them in a place you would have been and repeat the 'Other people's mothers' exercise.

a: answer the questions.  
b: look around in the image  
c: write for 7-8 minutes



③ Repeat this but this time, write from the other person's point of view. Pretend you are them and write in the first person present-tense.

④ Try the whole thing again with someone else on the list. This is how we can begin to write fiction, by pretending to be someone else

Write, because -   an image has no shape of its own.



1. SET ONE TIMER FOR 4 MINUTES AND THE OTHER FOR 7 MINUTES

I am--

2. PUT YOURSELF AT THE 'START' POINT OF THIS IMAGE. BEGIN WITH THE WORDS 'I AM', WRITE IN THE PRESENT TENSE TOWARD YOUR DESTINATION

3. WRITE IT AS IT COMES TO YOU AND FOLLOW ANY SUDDEN MEMORY.

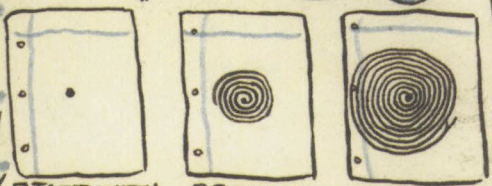
YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET TO THE END POINT

READY SET GO!



TRY MAKING A SPIRAL

hint  
WHEN WRITING, IT'S GOOD TO HAVE A SCRIBBLE PAD NEAR-BY --



START WITH A DOT -- IF YOUR STORY STOPS --

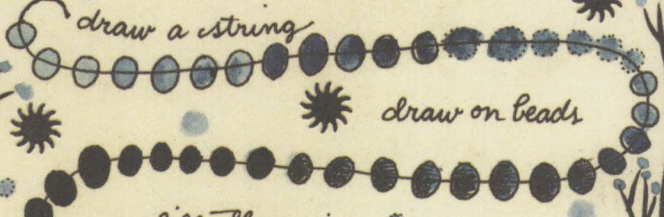
BEGIN TO CIRCLE IT UNTIL YOUR STORY STARTS AGAIN --

THE TRICK IS TO GO SLOW

A PLACE TO KEEP YOUR PEN IN MOTION WHEN THE IMAGE SUBMERGES....

A WAY TO BE THERE WHEN IT RISES UP AGAIN ----- KEEP YOUR PEN IN MOTION FOR THE ENTIRE 7 MINUTES.

When you get stuck, work on your spiral or draw beads on a string



draw a string

draw on beads

fill them in

or draw waves draw eyeballs on the sea Demon

ANY METHOD OF KEEPING YOUR PEN MOVING IN A SLOW, STEADY WAY WILL WORK



n \* around,  
nd 6: Sl st  
ame sp, \* 5  
n \* around  
nd 7: Ch 3  
\* ch 1, dc  
eat from \*  
nd 8: Ch 3  
c, \* ch 2, d  
repeat from  
nd 9: Same  
ch 3 betwe  
nd 10: Sar  
ing ch 4 bet  
nd 11: Ch 3  
c, \* ch 3, d  
n each of ne  
ound ending  
nd 12: Ch 3  
c, \* ch 2, d  
in next lp,  
t 5 dc, rep  
ing to corr  
nd 13: Sl  
in each of n  
next lp, rep  
2, sk 1 dc, d  
repeat from  
to correspo  
nd 14: Sl  
in next lp, \*  
eat from \* tv  
next dc, ch 2,  
m first \* aro  
nd, ch 2, jo  
nd 15: Sl  
next lp, \* c  
eat from \* a  
rd st of ch.  
nd 16: Ch  
dc in next  
in next dc,  
xt dc, 2 dc ir  
repeat from  
dc in next  
\* around,  
as last rnd  
en each dc  
ne as last  
ween each  
3, dc in eac  
lc in next  
xt 5 dc, ref  
to corresp  
3, dc in eac  
lc in next  
ch 2, dc in  
eat from  
espond, jo  
st to next  
ext 2 dc, \*  
eat from  
lc in each  
first \* aro  
nd, join.  
st to next  
ch 2, dc in  
vice, ch 2, sl  
dc in next  
nd, ending  
in in third  
st into lp,  
ch 3, dc in  
around, ch

QUIZ QUESTIONS

Alive or Not Alive

What makes the difference?

sky drifted clouds idly white the across calm harbor across travels boat a back and ferry forth

small draw any says large sharp darken heartless began matches snapped pattering places waiting daisies dainty maple faint array repay shoe who storm work done once does wonder top lost long gone rogne hopper beyond nobody nose hose grows grown bushy busy hurry burden just clutch bunch autumn blue confuse amuse excuse twig live frisked drifts five hind climb skies



# SEEDS THAT GO TRAVELING

Test on Methods of Transportation



### 1. True-False

Test

images may be found in ordinary things --   how?



hint: PRACTICE DOING THIS FOR NO REASON.



unless I'm serious about becoming a writer I shouldn't spend time at it.   why?



if no one ever sees what I've written there was no point in writing it to begin with   why?

### 2. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO WHEN YOUR IMAGE SUBMERGES DURING YOUR 7 MINUTES OF WRITING?



- keep driving ahead? \*
- stop the car and wait.?
- turn around and go home?
- ?
- ? \*

### 3. Writing for the Week Suggestion :

LOOK THROUGH THE PIECES YOU'VE WRITTEN AND MAKE A LIST OF ALL THE NOUNS YOU FIND



USE THESE NOUNS TO REPEAT THE EXERCISES IN THIS ACTIVITY BOOK.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

TRIED \_\_\_\_\_ RIGHT \_\_\_\_\_ SCORE **A++! GOOD!!**

When I was a seed of grain I had many friends. But one day someone took me away. **NOW**  
Jan 9, 1951

All seeds travel.  
Some drop to the ground.  
Some travel on the wind.  
Some travel on the water.



WHAT YEAR IS IT IN YOUR IMAGINATION?

What are tides?

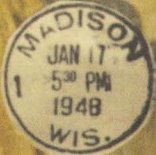


There are seeds, then plants, then more seeds, over and over again.

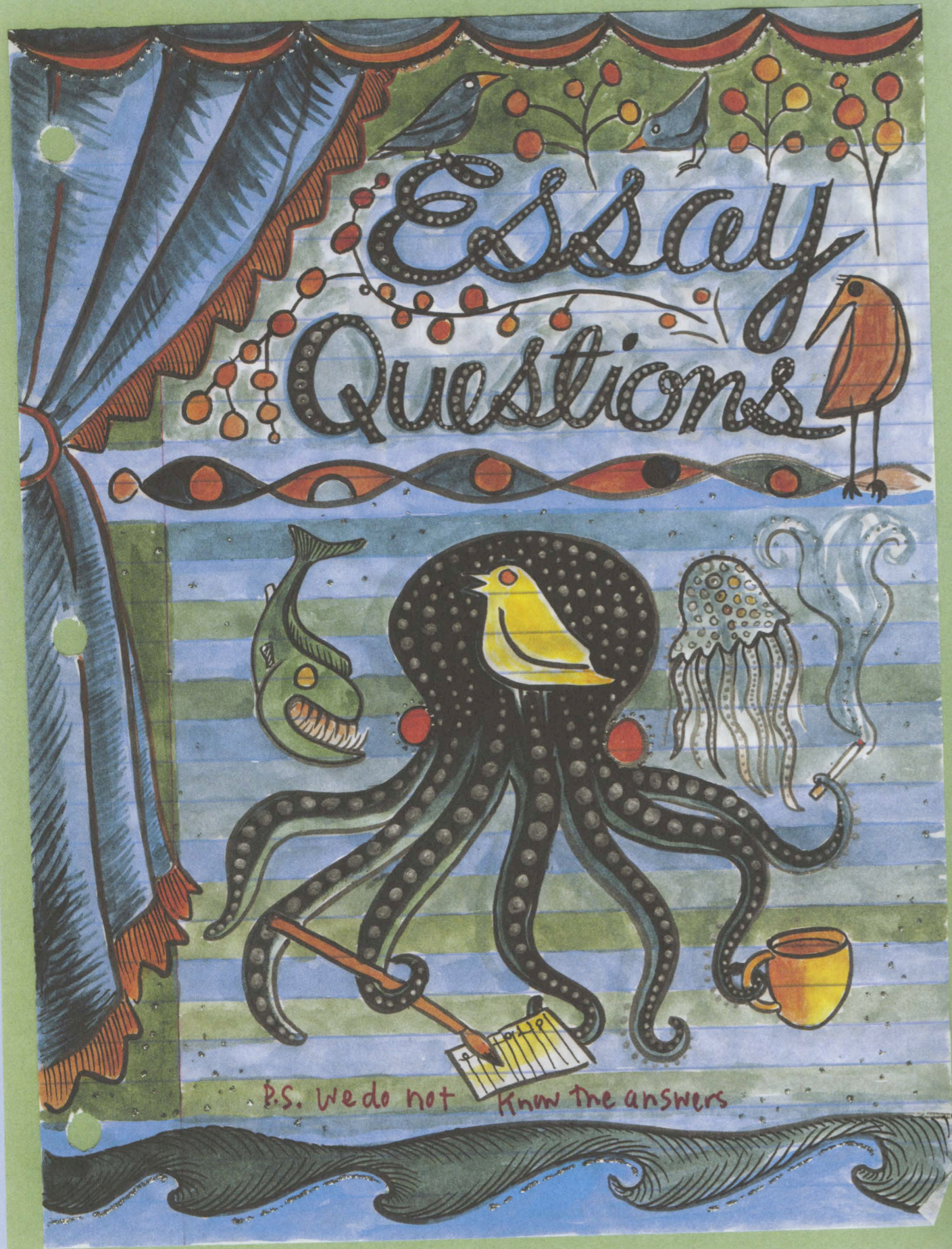
DOES YOUR IMAGINATION KNOW WHAT YEAR IT IS?

what is the difference between imagination and memory? WHICH IS STRONGER?

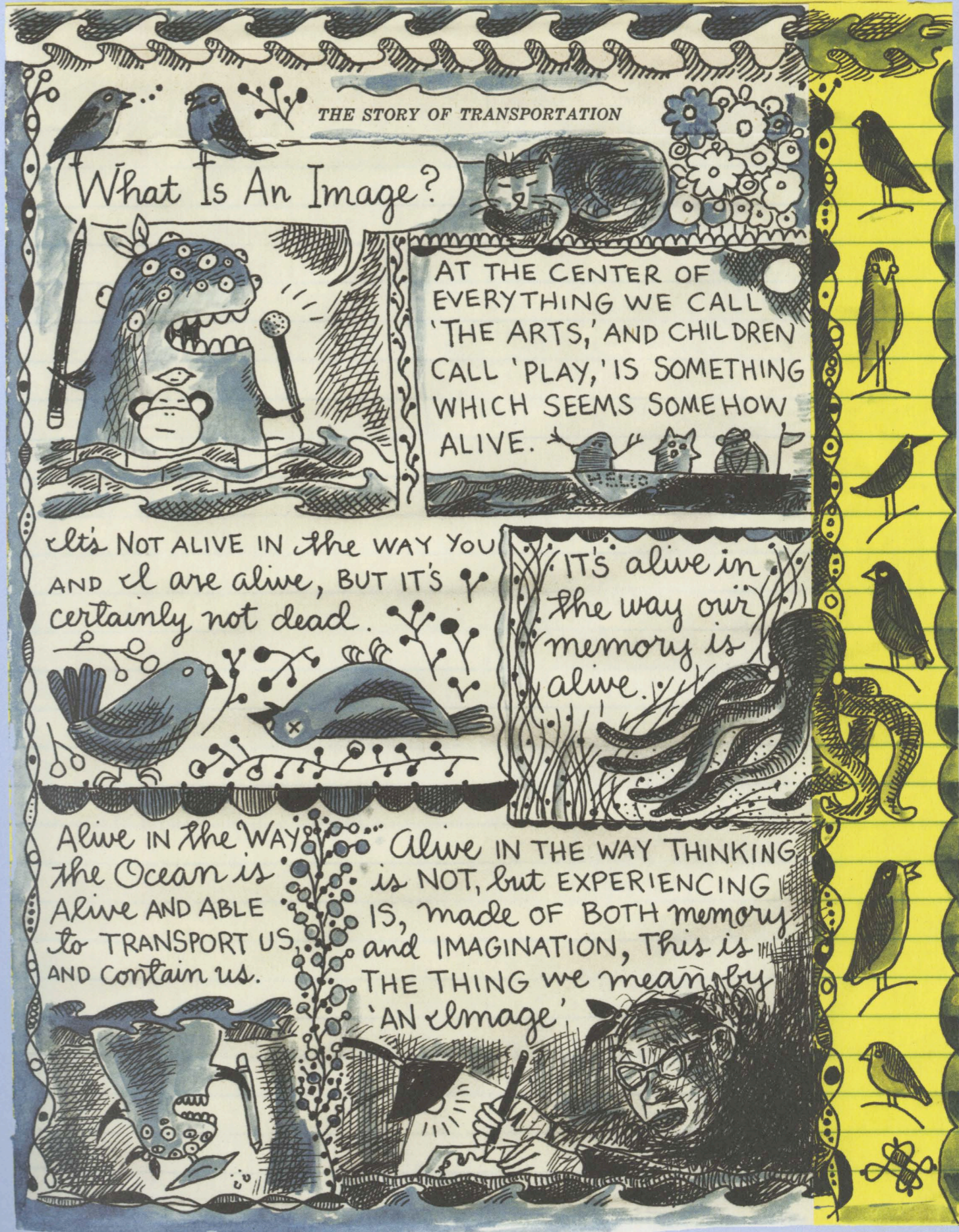
607 vs. Gold Fingers: y esee que aubque TER







P.S. We do not know the answers



THE STORY OF TRANSPORTATION

What Is An Image?

AT THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING WE CALL 'THE ARTS,' AND CHILDREN CALL 'PLAY,' IS SOMETHING WHICH SEEMS SOMEHOW ALIVE.

It's NOT ALIVE IN THE WAY YOU AND I ARE ALIVE, BUT IT'S CERTAINLY NOT DEAD.

IT'S ALIVE IN THE WAY OUR MEMORY IS ALIVE.

ALIVE IN THE WAY THE OCEAN IS ALIVE AND ABLE TO TRANSPORT US AND CONTAIN US.

ALIVE IN THE WAY THINKING IS NOT, BUT EXPERIENCING IS, MADE OF BOTH MEMORY AND IMAGINATION, THIS IS THE THING WE MEAN BY 'AN IMAGE'



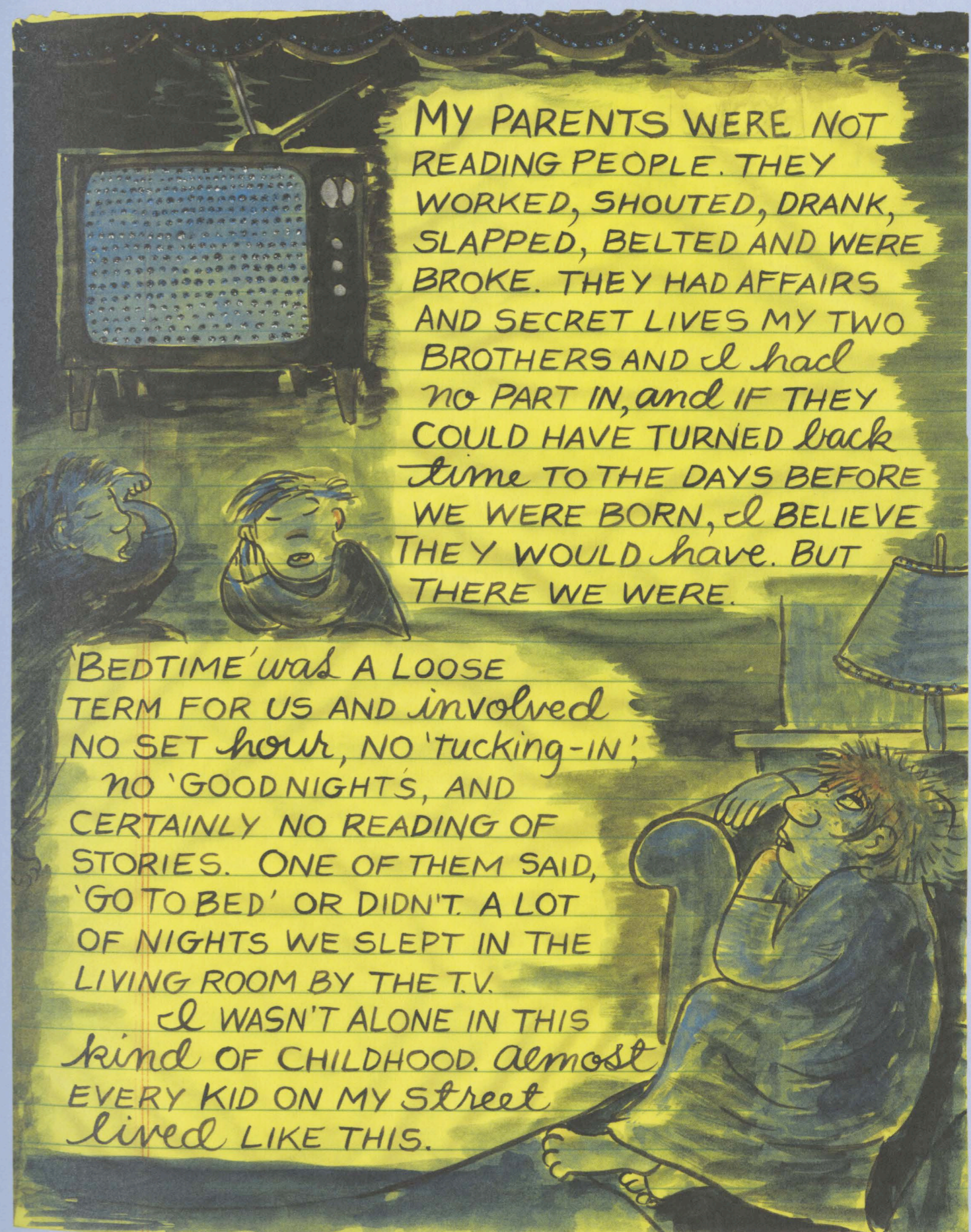
There ARE IMAGINARY FRIENDS AND IMAGINARY enemies. I WANTED an IMAGINARY friend, BUT I WASN'T SURE HOW TO Get ONE. I MADE FRIENDS WITH A LOT OF BUGS, but NONE EVER spoke to ME IN THE WAY creatures SPEAK in FAIRY TALES.

C'MON, LITTLE GUY, CLIMB ON.

IT'S A SHADOW JUST A SHADOW WHEN A CAR GOES BY

JUST A SHADOW JUST A SHADOW JUST A SHADOW JUST A SHADOW

You COULD SAY I KNEW THEY NEVER WOULD, Not DURING the DAY, AT least. THE NIGHT WAS another SITUATION. THE NIGHT WAS WHEN YOU NEEDED AN IMAGINARY FRIEND. Mine DIDN'T come UNTIL I LEARNED to READ.



MY PARENTS WERE NOT READING PEOPLE. THEY WORKED, SHOUTED, DRANK, SLAPPED, BELTED AND WERE BROKE. THEY HAD AFFAIRS AND SECRET LIVES MY TWO BROTHERS AND I had no PART IN, and IF THEY COULD HAVE TURNED back time TO THE DAYS BEFORE WE WERE BORN, I BELIEVE THEY WOULD have. BUT THERE WE WERE.

'BEDTIME' was A LOOSE TERM FOR US AND involved NO SET hour, NO 'tucking-IN', no 'GOOD NIGHTS', AND CERTAINLY NO READING OF STORIES. ONE OF THEM SAID, 'GO TO BED' OR DIDN'T. A LOT OF NIGHTS WE SLEPT IN THE LIVING ROOM BY THE T.V.

I WASN'T ALONE IN THIS kind OF CHILDHOOD. almost EVERY KID ON MY street lived LIKE THIS.





# WHAT IS THE PAST MADE OF?

Write the names of two stories that you think cannot be true.



What does 'taking place' mean?

NOT



THINGS THAT HAPPENED  
 THINGS THAT NEVER HAPPENED  
 BOTH

We are sorry we can't answer

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

While the pictures are being changed into picture signals, the sounds are being

changed into sound signals. The transmitter sends both these signals out into space.



# WHAT IS WHERE IS YOUR IMAGINATION?



existed first in the imagination

The Both of Me

HELLO

WHO WHAT CONTROLS IT?

WHEN WE IMAGINE THINGS WE DON'T WANT TO IMAGINE, WHY CAN'T WE STOP OURSELVES?

My little red cardinal

BUILT TO LAST FOR YEARS

Come every evening he talks to me

a lifelike figure that seems to move

a lifelike figure that

dreams

to wake the sleeping

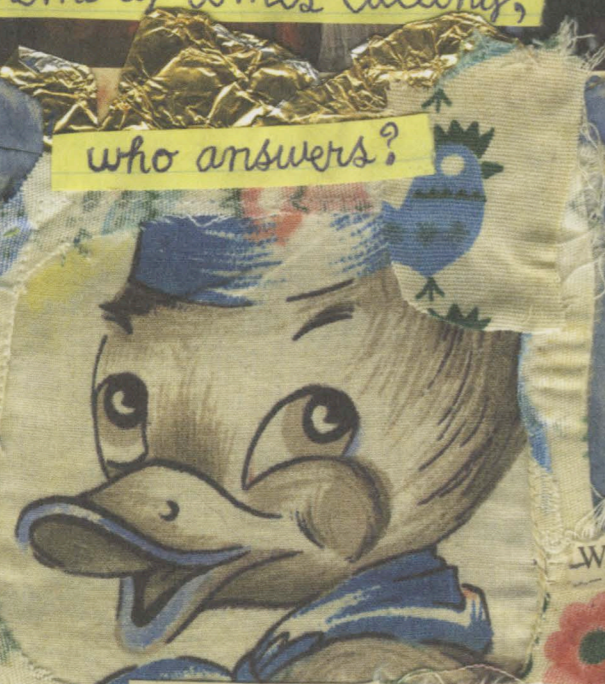
# WHAT IS A MEMORY?

WHEN THEN VISITS NOW  
WHEN NOW VISITS THEN



When an unexpected  
memory comes calling,

who answers?



Knock! Knock!

Who's there?  
an image

Will you ever

forget

Lakes -

Rivers (2)

AIR MAIL

AN IMAGE WHICH TRAVELS THROUGH TIME

the  
my  
your

Buzz! Buzz!

## Two Ways of Reflecting Light

A mirror reflects light, and so do you. Yet you are not a mirror. A person looking at you sees you, not his reflection. What is the difference between your way of reflecting light and a mirror's way? This experiment will show you. The light shines on you and it is reflected. It is this reflected light that reaches the mirror. If the mirror reflects it into your eyes, you see your reflection. If the mirror reflects it back into somebody else's eyes, he sees your reflection.

First  
phone #

other  
phone #'s

PA2-4435

WHERE WAS THIS  
NUMBER BEFORE  
IT CAME BACK TO ME  
THINKING

An image feels  
different than a  
thought. It feels  
somehow alive.

If you say your  
first phone number  
out loud, you can  
feel something  
that is different  
than saying your  
phone number now.

YOUR FIRST PHONE  
NUMBER AND  
WRITING YOUR FIRST  
PHONE NUMBER  
AND SPEAKING IT  
OUT LOUD ARE  
DIFFERENT  
EXPERIENCES,  
BUT THE IMAGE IS  
THE SAME.

WHILE YOU WERE OUT -  
WHO CALLED?

can you  
PICTURE  
THE PLACE  
WHERE  
YOUR FIRST  
TELEPHONE  
WAS - ??



He was convinced he could make permanent pictures from the fleeting images produced by his eyes. "I'm sure he is out of his mind," she said.

hello hello hello hello

"No," she answered, "one is of tin, and one of straw; one is a girl and another a Lion. None of them is fit to work, so you may tear them into small pieces."

HOW?

CAN WE REMEMBER SOMETHING THAT WE CAN'T IMAGINE?

WHAT MAKES US ABLE TO IMAGINE SOMETHING?

Your description of the First Fight Really make me lonesome

at the risk of sounding over passionate

WHY DO WE SAY "RECALL"?

HOW?

In the afternoon the sun shone hot in their faces, for there were no trees to offer them shade



TWENTY FAMOUS FLOODS

DO MEMORIES HAVE MASS? DO THEY HAVE MOTION? DO THEY HAVE INERTIA?

CAN YOU HAVE THE SAME MEMORY TWICE?



ARE MEMORIES PICTURES OR the secret doorway?

When you press the button on your camera, the shutter is opened for a fraction of a second, and ghostly ships are seen floating in the sky. And sometimes images of towns

trees appear and taunt the thirsty

WHY DO WE USE THE WORD 'FLOOD' WHEN DESCRIBING A SUDDEN MEMORY?

Why do we say "It came to me"?

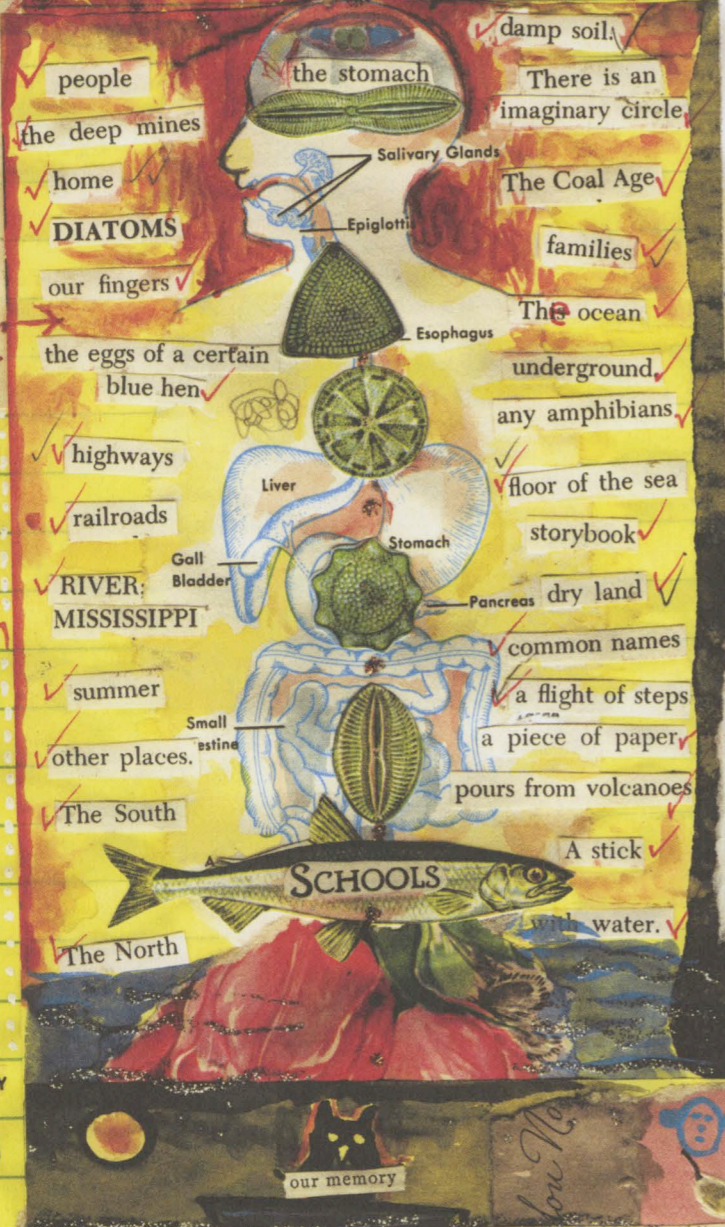
# WHERE ARE IMAGES FOUND?

LOOK  
READ  
SEE

THE ACTIONS  
INSIDE YOU  
THE OUTSIDE

IMAGES  
ARE FOUND  
by in through  
ACTION  
between  
INSIDE  
and  
OUTSIDE

CORRESPONDENCE-STUDY  
DEPARTMENT



Trace the source of energy that pulls a freight train.

FROM INSIDE TO OUTSIDE  
← ACTION →  
FROM OUTSIDE TO INSIDE  
↑ ACTION ↓  
Don't be too hard on the Kids

And year by year  
MEMORY



scrubs a prison  
From all the circle of the hills —

I haven't written to you. I have thought of you often but each time I sat down to write to you something came up to hinder me.  
SOMETHING CAME UP TO HINDER ME.

UNLIMITED HATCHERY

Sleep Sleep

When images come to us

INSIDE

OUTSIDE

receiver

THE PEN? THE SWORD?

THINKING OF YOU THINKING OF YOU

above

WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

Below

transmitter