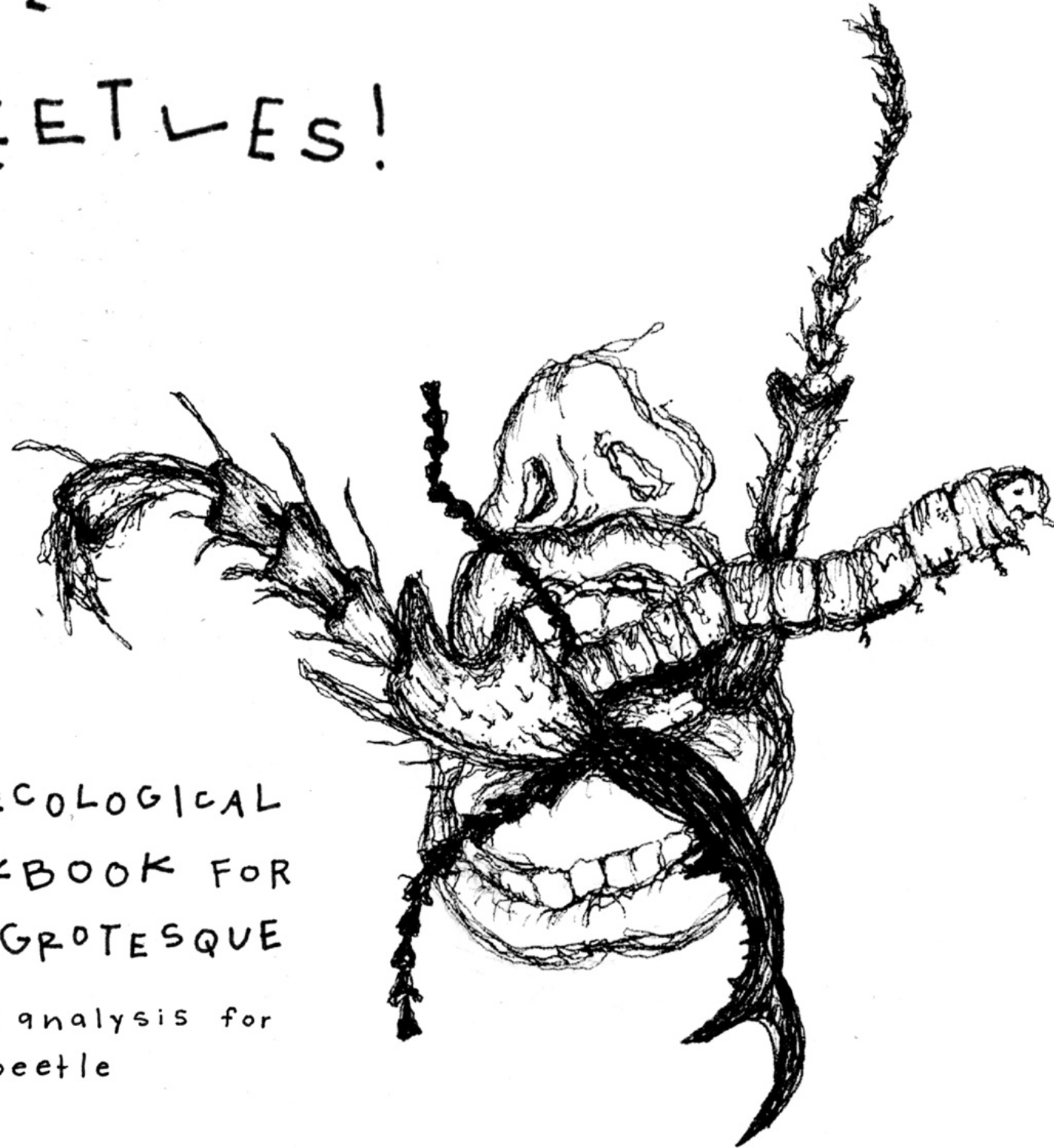


BEETLES!

BEETLES!

BEETLES!



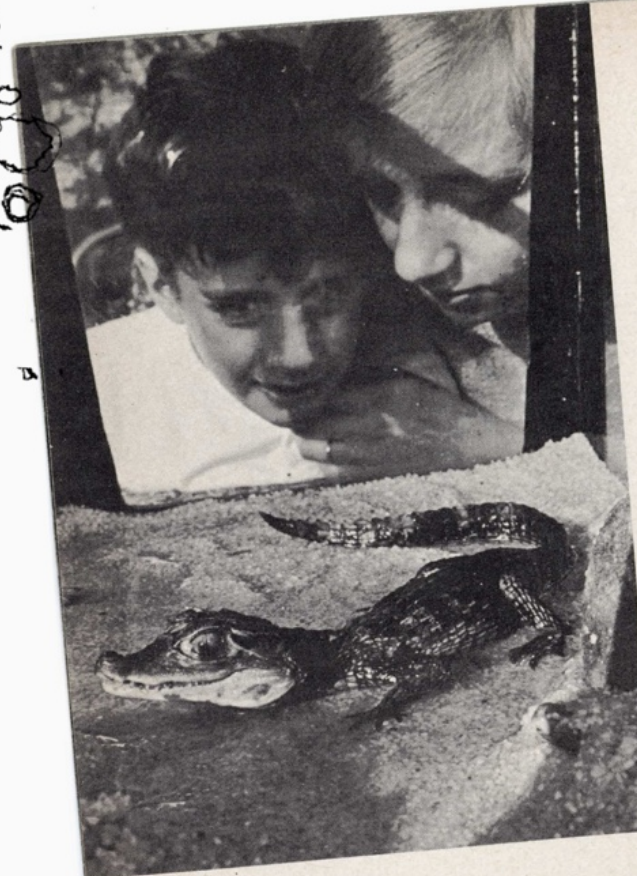
AN ECOLOGICAL
COOKBOOK FOR
THE GROTESQUE

a site analysis for
the beetle

ABIOTIC
EKP

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George Adds Snap To Suburban Life

Life with George was not the easy task we expected when he arrived in a gift box for my son Anthony.

We wanted to treat him like one of the family, but, being a spectacled caiman, George had his own ideas about life.

Caimans are South American crocodilians often passed off as North American alligators by Florida vendors. My children soon learned that George was "homesick." They tried to cure him with tender loving care (below).

George helped us, too. He cured my daughter Diana of a frequent nightmare - big alligators climbing up the stairs to her bedroom.

Story by Jeanne A. Davis, PhD
Richard M. Crum, both Scripps Institution of Oceanography



Painting George with mercurochrome cures his skin fungus, an infection common to aquatic reptile pets. His recovery delighted us since the disease can be fatal. Refusal to eat (left) prompts force-feeding of hamburger meat.



I

APPROACHING ABJECTION

JULIA KRISTEVA

No Beast is there without glimmer of infinity,
 No eye so vile nor abject that brushes not
 Against lightning from on high, now tender, now fierce.
 Victor Hugo, *La Légende des siècles*

NEITHER SUBJECT NOR OBJECT

There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated. It beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire, which, nevertheless, does not let itself be seduced. Apprehensive, desire turns aside; sickened, it rejects. A certainty protects it from the shameful—a certainty of which it is proud holds on to it. But simultaneously, just the same, that impetus, that spasm, that leap is drawn toward an elsewhere as tempting as it is condemned. Unflinchingly, like an inescapable boomerang, a vortex of summons and repulsion places the one haunted by it literally beside himself.

When I am beset by abjection, the twisted braid of affects and thoughts I call by such a name does not have, properly speaking, a definable *object*. The object is not an object facing me, which I name or imagine. Nor is it an object, an otherness ceaselessly fleeing in a systematic quest of desire. What is abject is not my correlative, which, providing me with someone or something else as support, would allow me to be more or less detached and autonomous. The object has only one quality of the object—that of being opposed to I. If the object, however, through its opposition, settles me within the fragile texture of a desire for meaning, which, as a matter of fact, makes me ceaselessly and infinitely homologous to it, what is *abject*, on the contrary, the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses. A certain "ego" that merged with its master, a superego, has flatly driven it away. It lies outside, beyond the set, and does not seem to agree to the latter's rules of the game. And yet, from its place of banishment, the object does not cease challenging its master. Without a sign (for him), it beseeches a discharge, a convulsion, a crying out. To each ego its object, to each superego its abject. It is not the white expanse or slack boredom of repression, not the translations and transformations of desire that wrench bodies, nights, and discourse; rather it is a brutish suffering that, "I" puts up with, sublime and devastated, for "I" deposits it to the father's account [*verse au père—père-ersion*]: I endure it, for I imagine that such is the desire of the other. A massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome. Not me. Not that. But not nothing, either. A "something" that I do not recognize as a thing. A weight of meaninglessness, about which there is nothing insignificant, and which crushes me. On the edge of non-existence and hallucination, of a reality that, if I acknowledge it, annihilates me. There, abject and abjection are my safeguards. The primers of my culture.



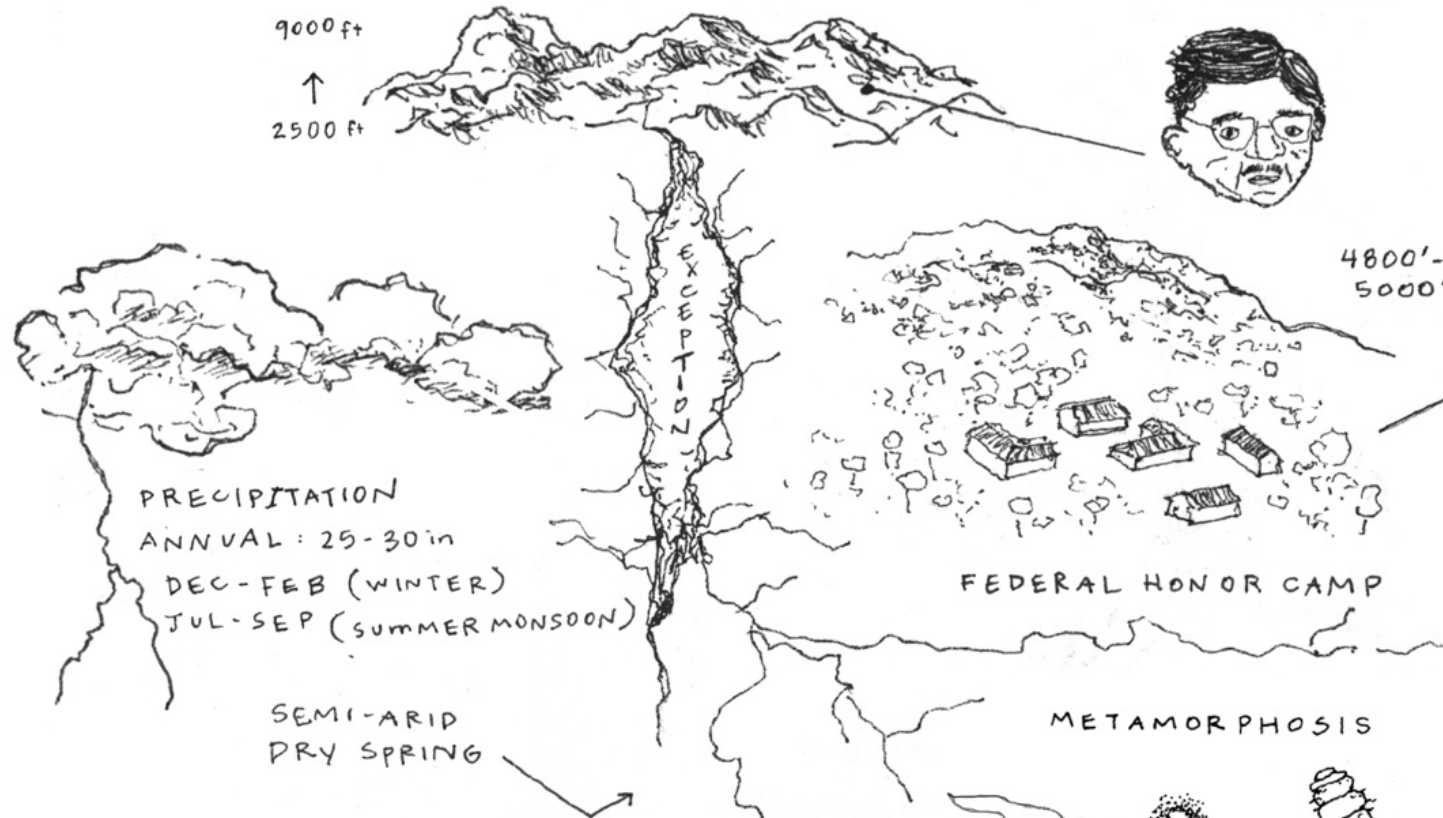
SANTA CATALINA MOUNTAINS
MADREAN SKY ISLANDS

GORDON
HIRABAYASHI
CAMPGROUND

EVERGREEN OAK WOODLAND

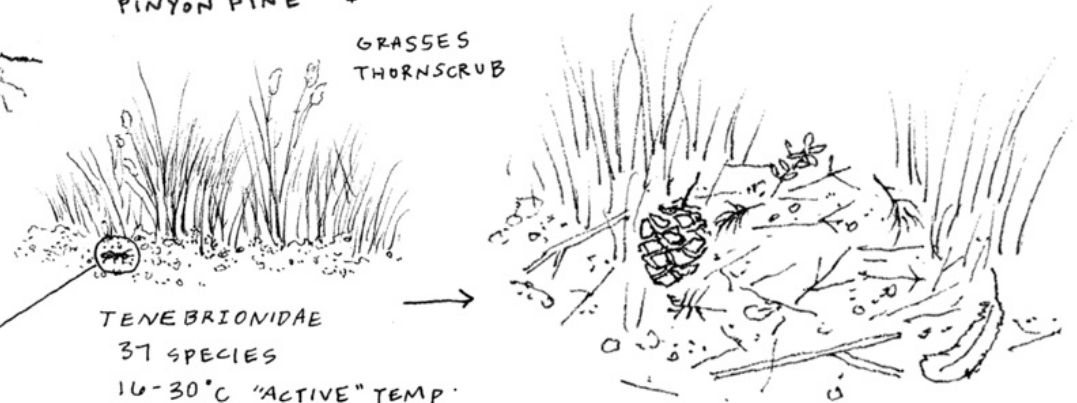
TUNING

9000 ft
↑
2500 ft



EVERGREEN OAKS
EMORY OAK
ARIZONA WHITE OAK
JUNIPERS
PINYON PINE +

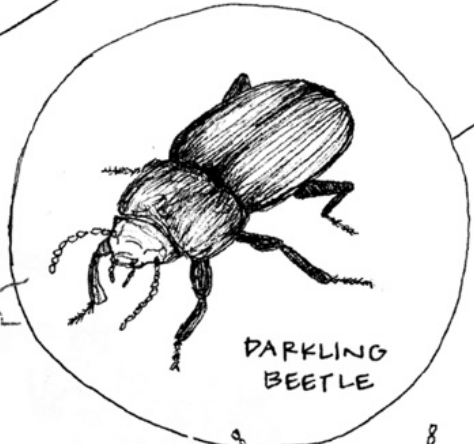
GRASSES
THORNSCRUB



DECAYING PLANT
MATTER
FUNGI
DEAD INSECTS

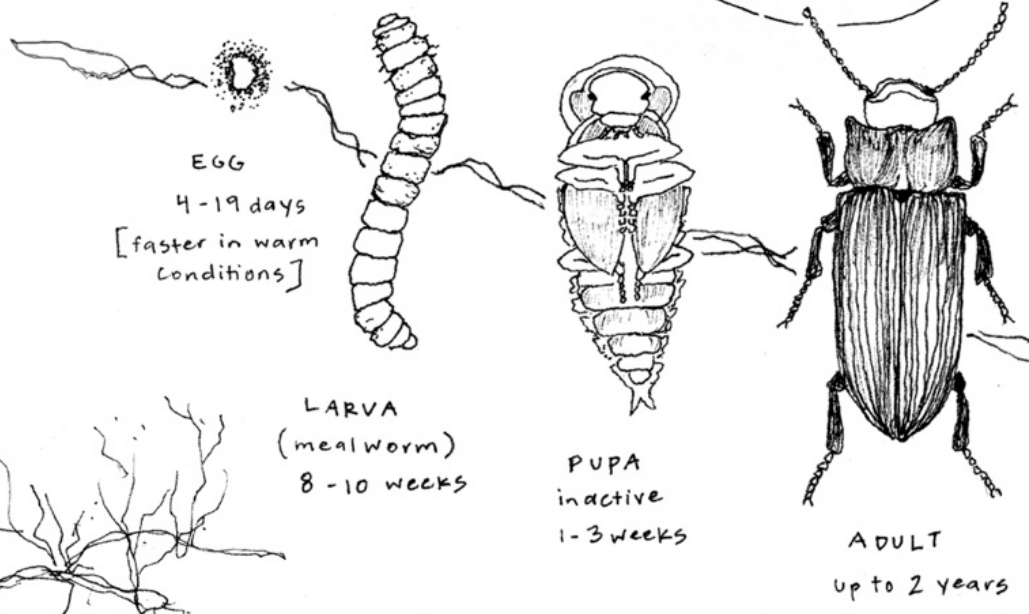
TENEBRIONIDAE
37 SPECIES
10-30°C "ACTIVE" TEMP
DIURNAL/NOCTURNAL
DETRITIVORES/OMNIVORE

DARK
HARD BODIED
FLIGHTLESS



DARKLING
BEETLE

METAMORPHOSIS



EGG
4-19 days
[faster in warm
conditions]

LARVA
(mealworm)
8-10 weeks

PUPA
inactive
1-3 weeks

ADULT
Up to 2 years

NAVIGATE USING MOISTURE + TEMPERATURE
HYDRORECEPTORS ON ANTENAE
SHRUB FLOODPLAINS HAVE LOOSER SOIL
+ HIGHER AMOUNTS OF DETRITUS
SCALE DEPENDENT HABITAT SELECTION

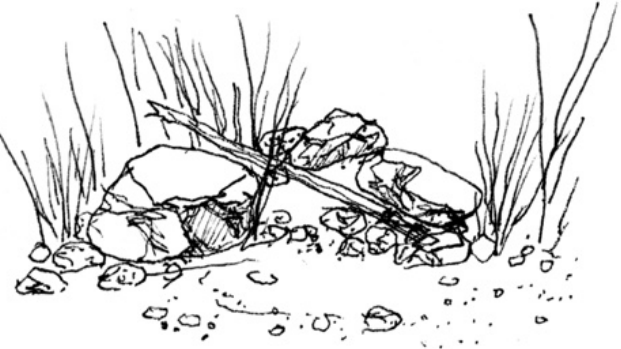


A SLIGHTLY
DAMP TREE
WHICH FELL 5
YEARS PRIOR,
FALLING INTO
PIECES FROM
DECAY

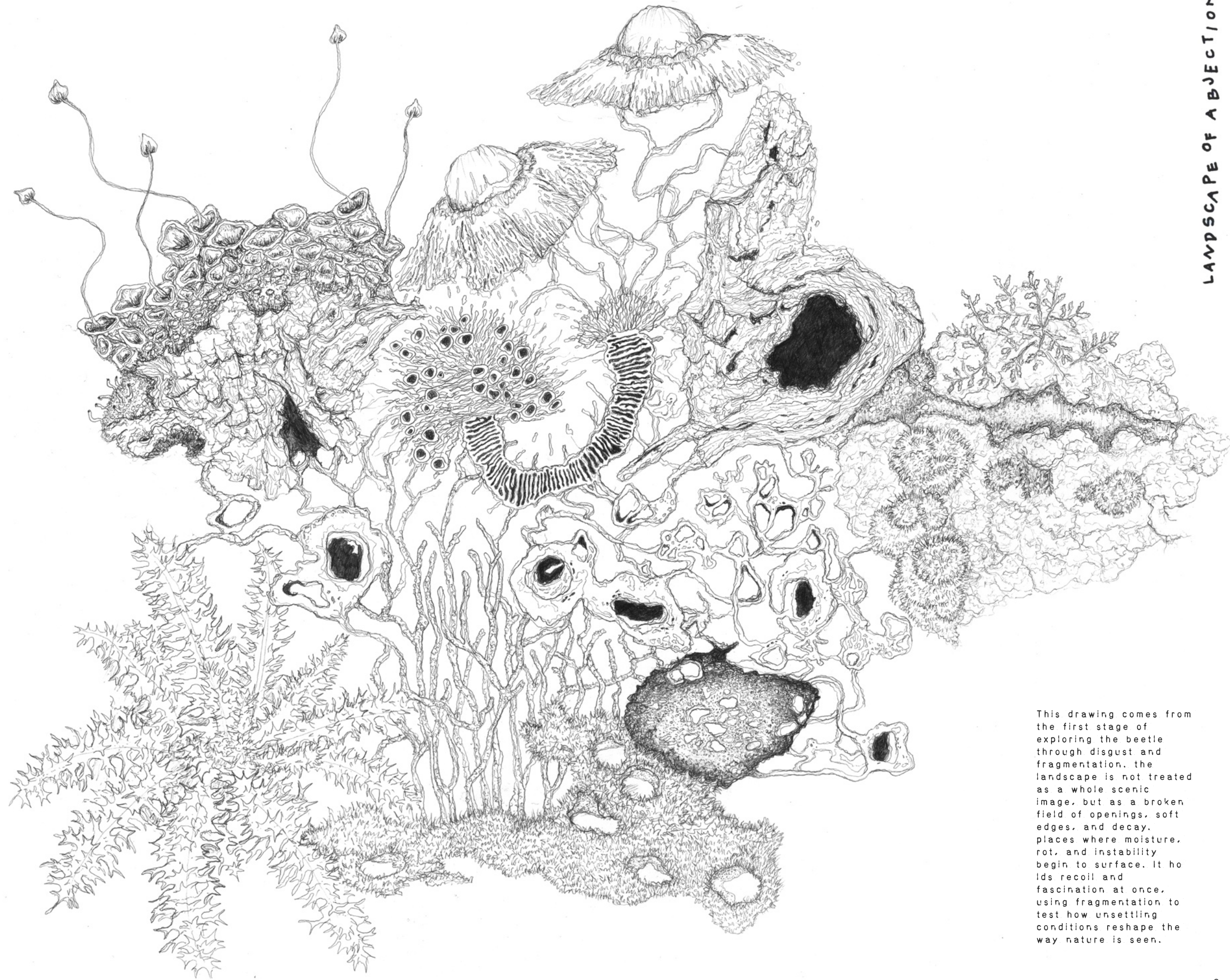
NO STRICT HOME
RANGE
CAN TRAVEL SEVERAL
DOZEN M A DAY



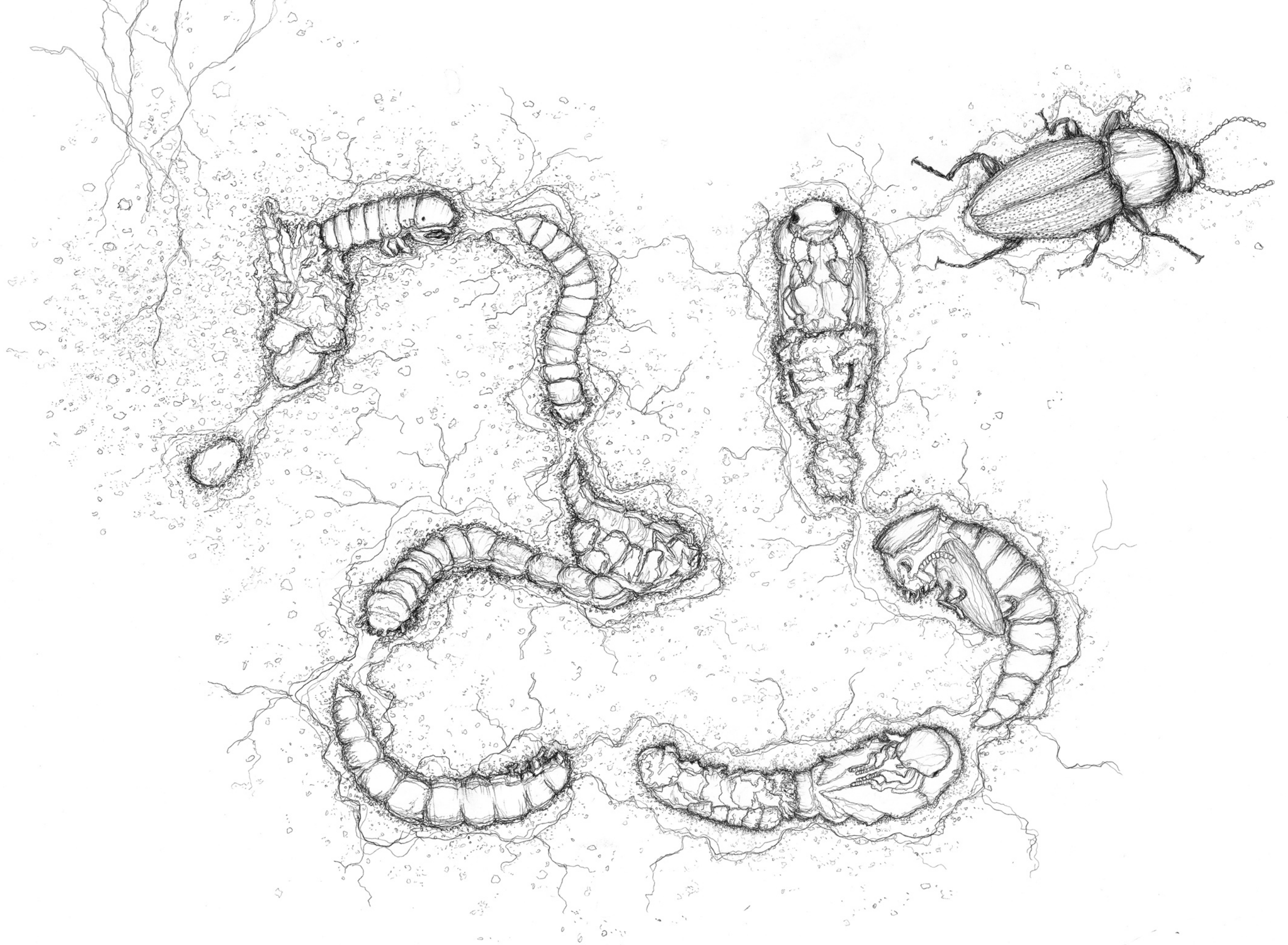
A PILE OF ROCKS
AND STICKS
SURROUNDED BY
TALL GRASS.
A NICE PLACE TO
SIT FOR AWILE,
AWAY FROM THE
LIZARDS BASKING
IN THE SUN.

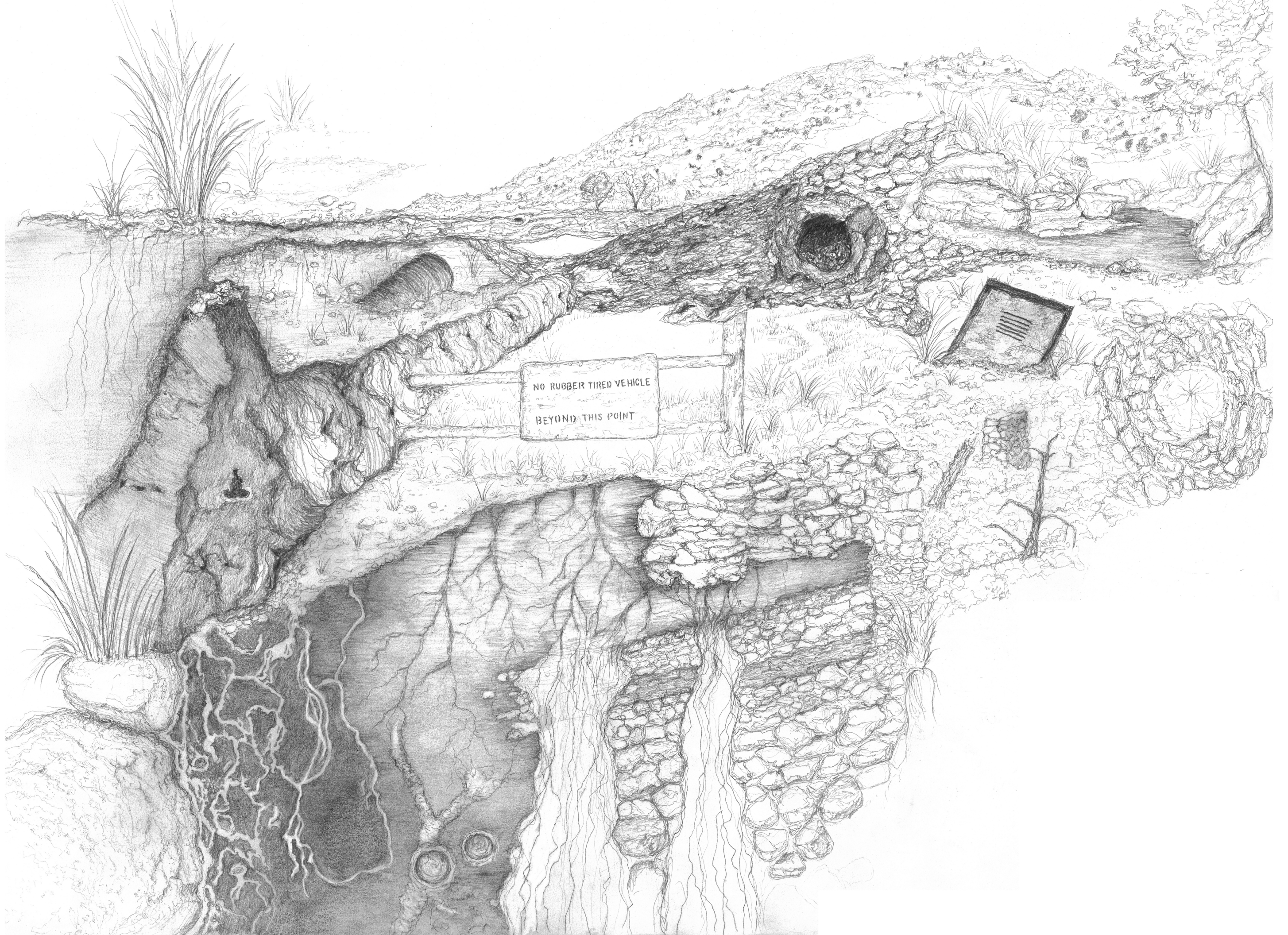


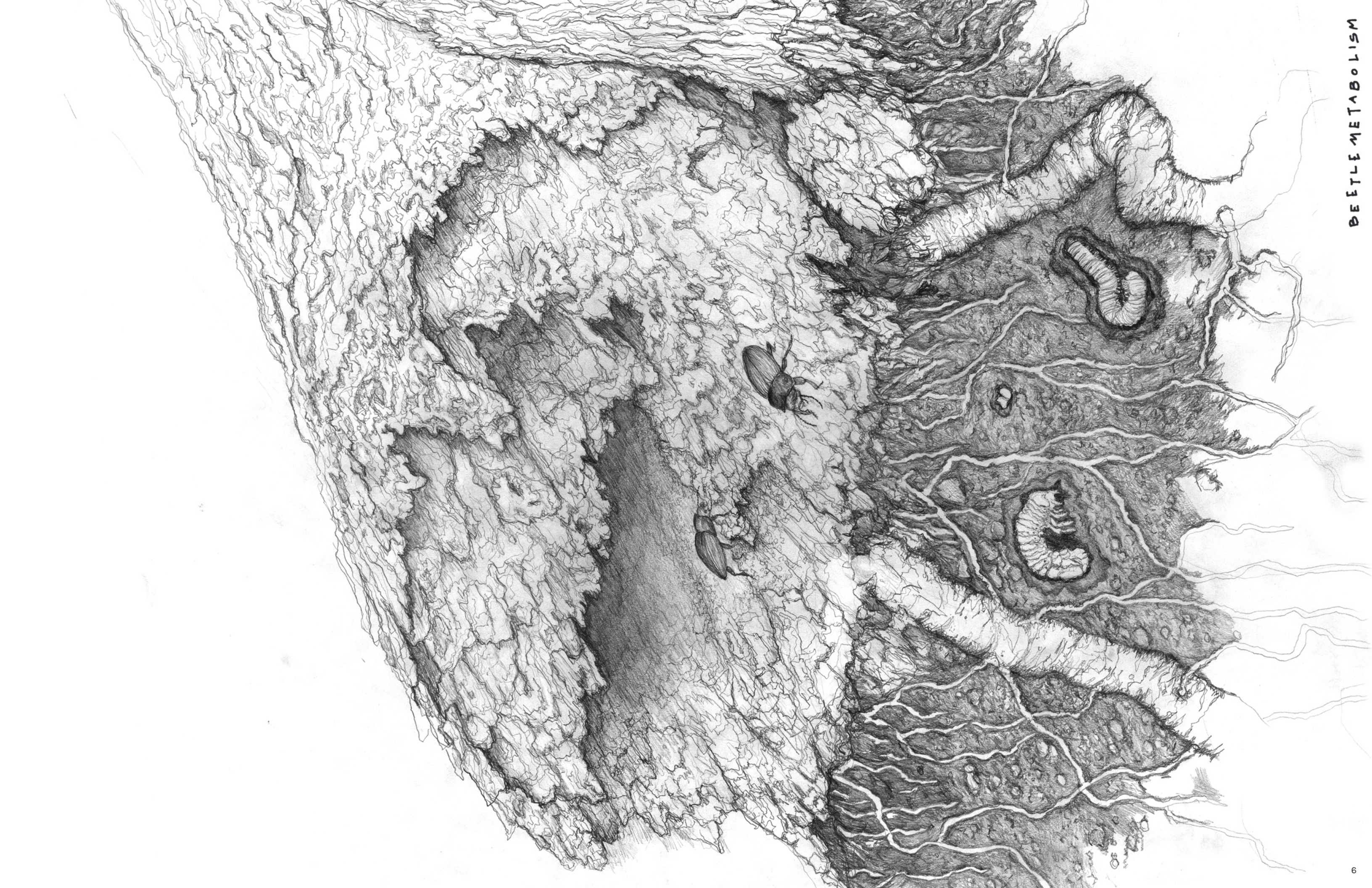
WHAT IS BEAUTY TO A BEETLE?

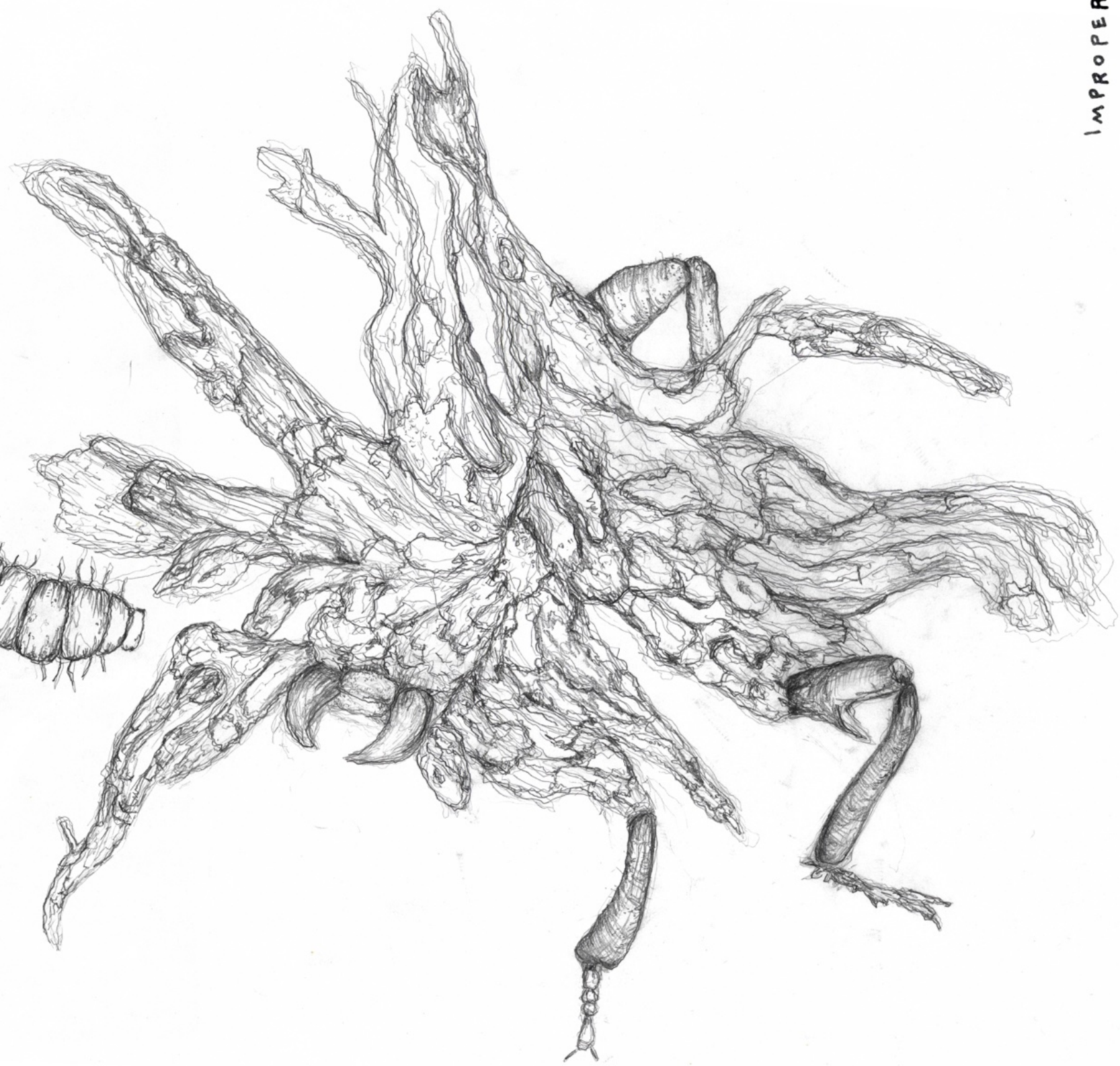
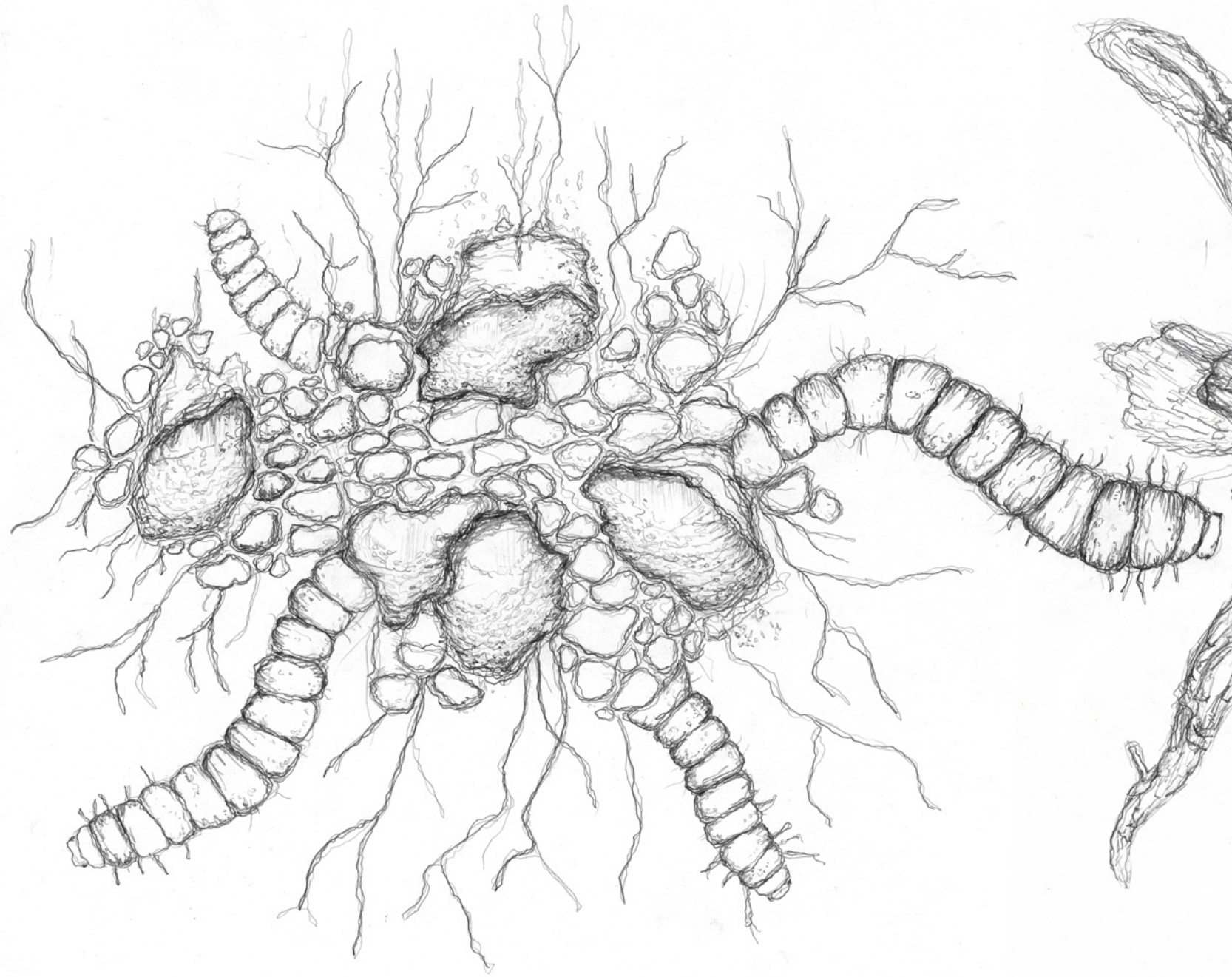


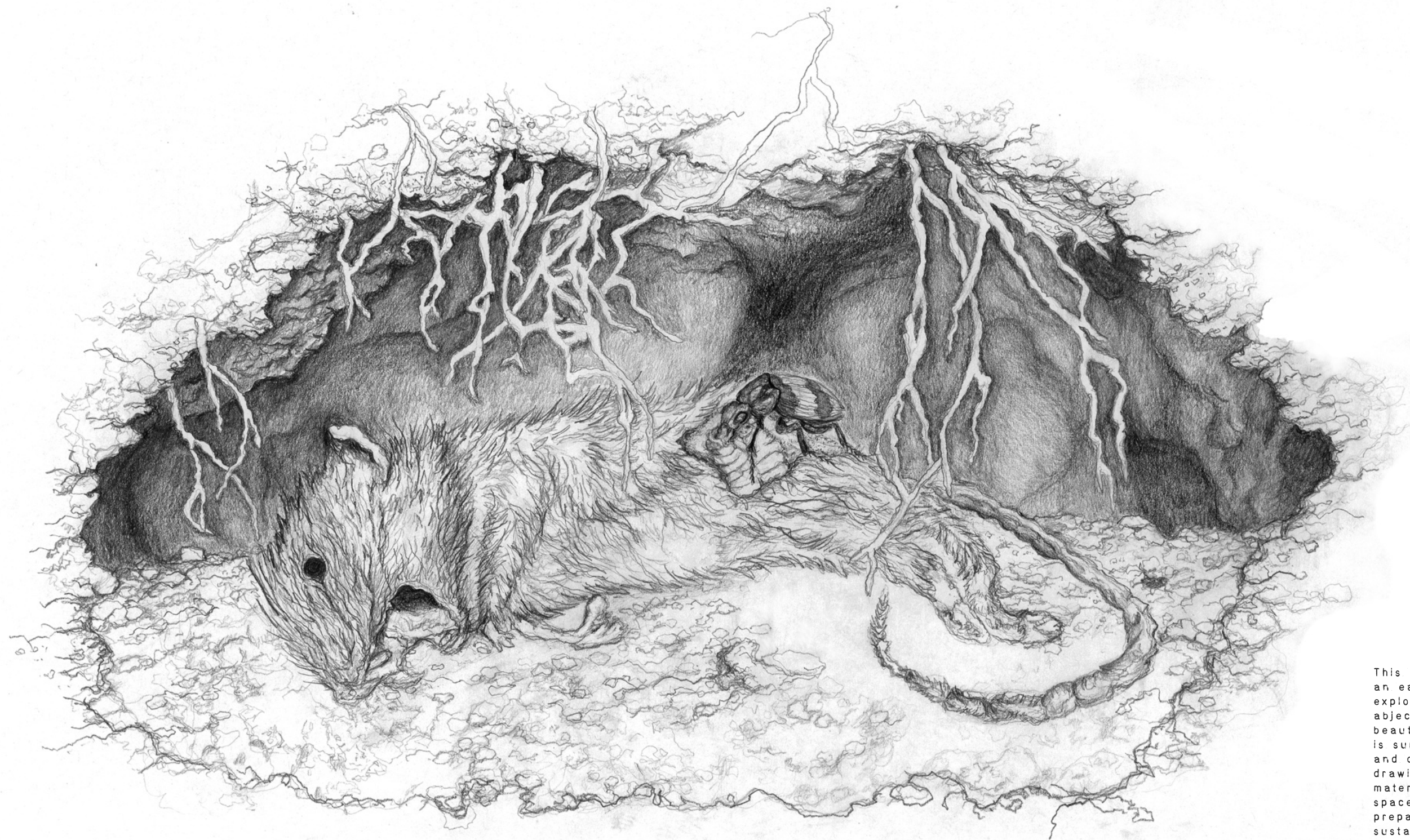
This drawing comes from the first stage of exploring the beetle through disgust and fragmentation. the landscape is not treated as a whole scenic image, but as a broken field of openings, soft edges, and decay. places where moisture, rot, and instability begin to surface. It holds recoil and fascination at once, using fragmentation to test how unsettling conditions reshape the way nature is seen.







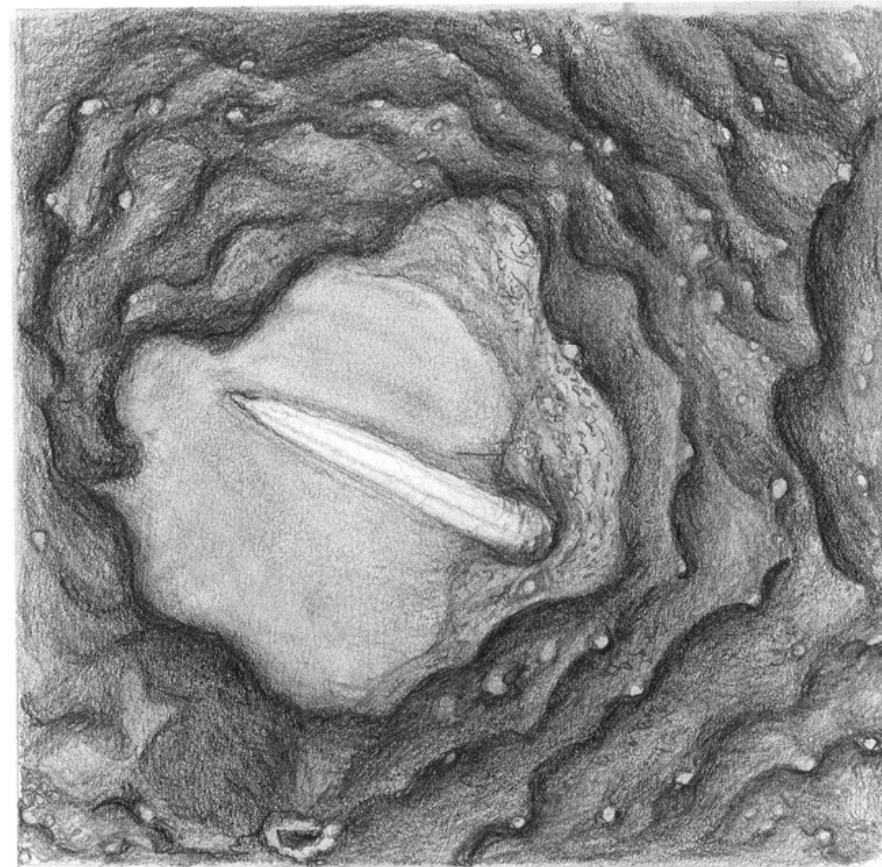
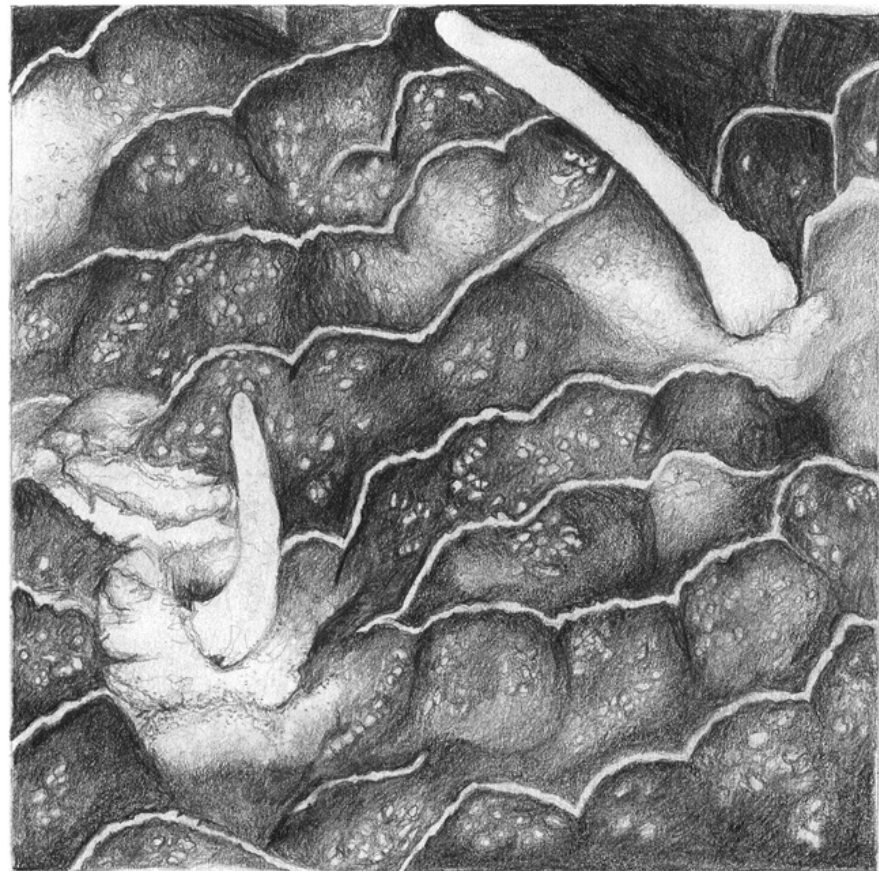
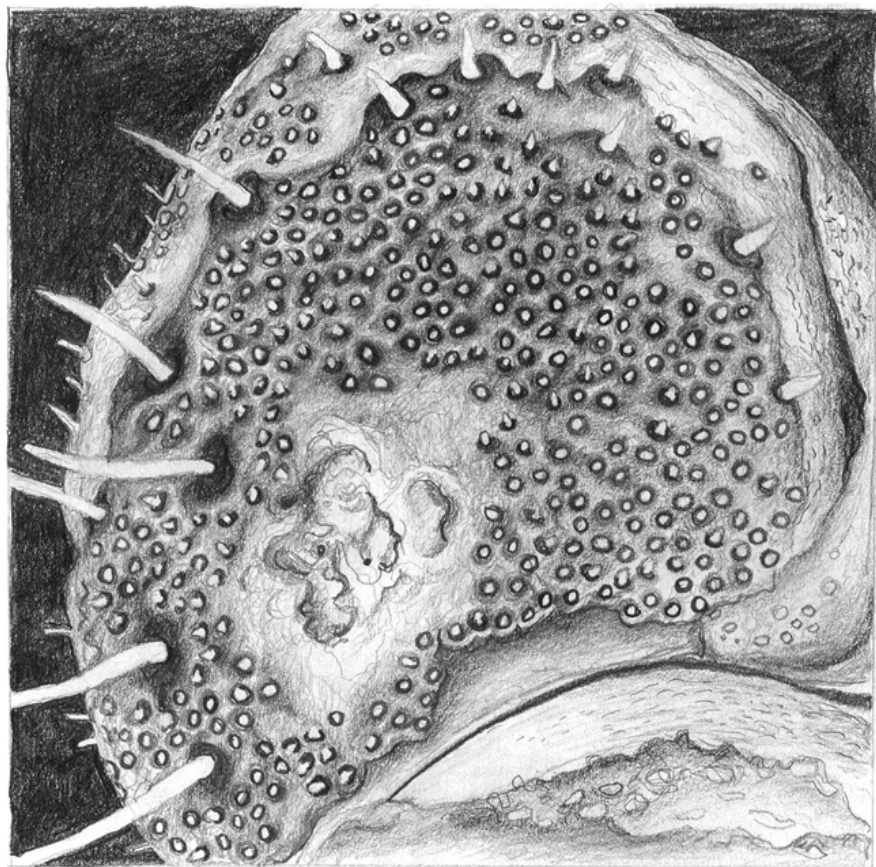


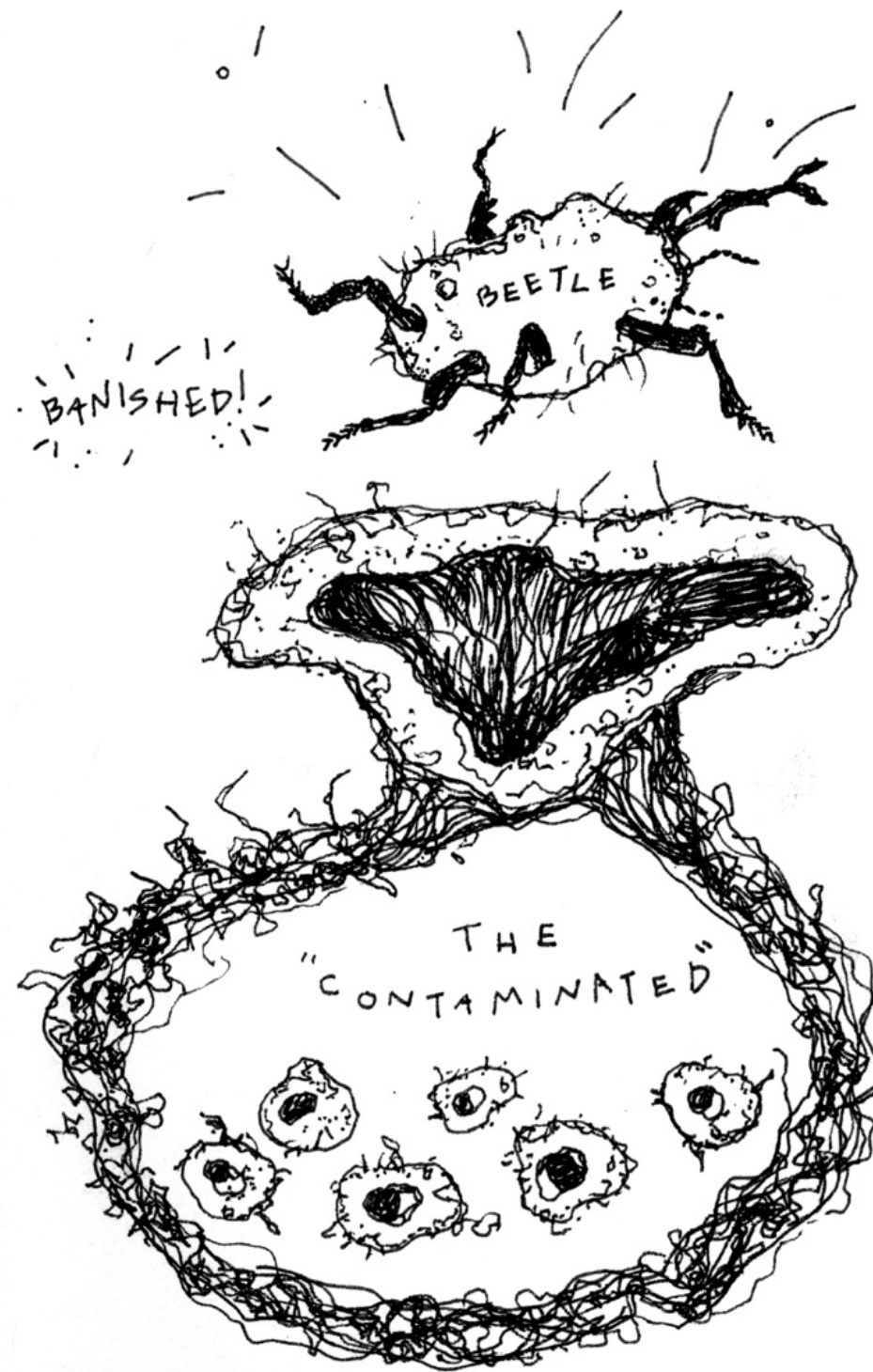
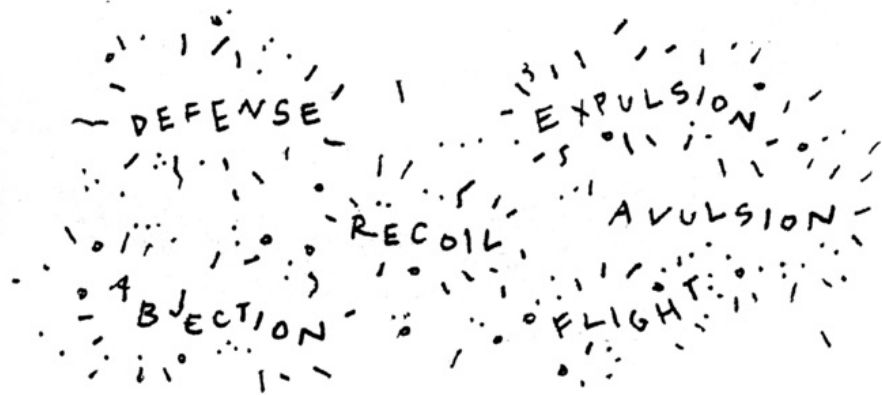
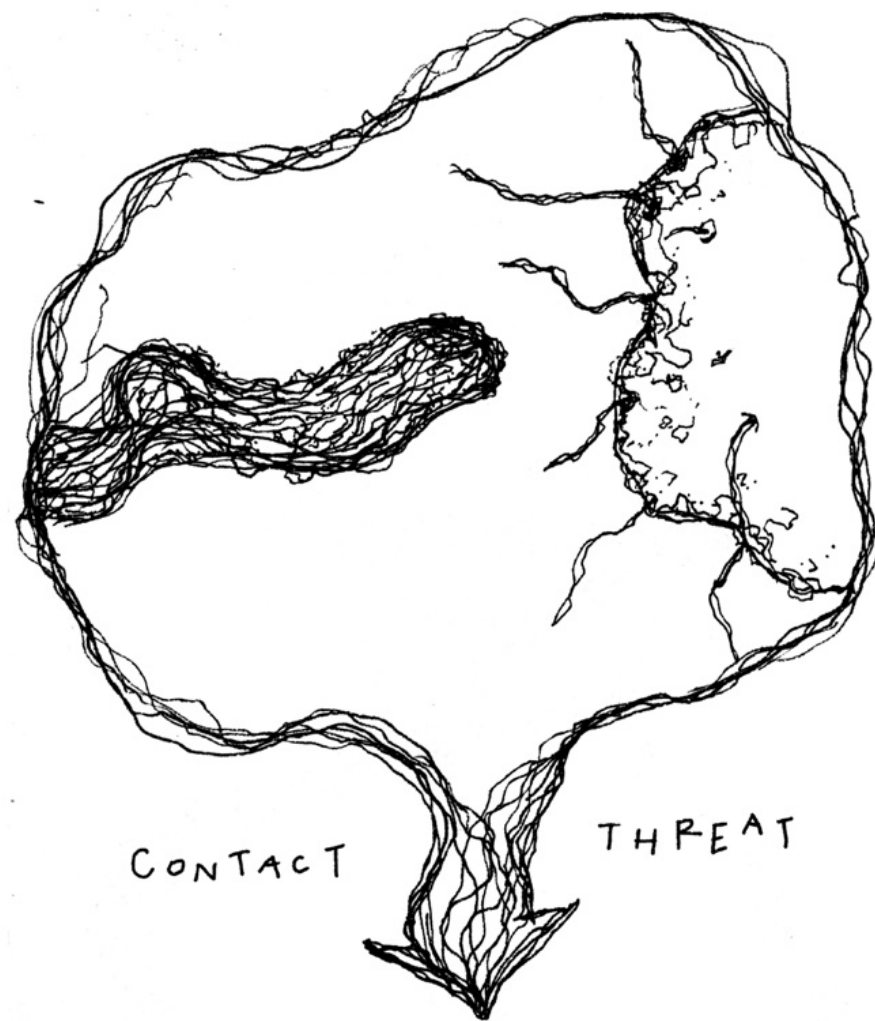
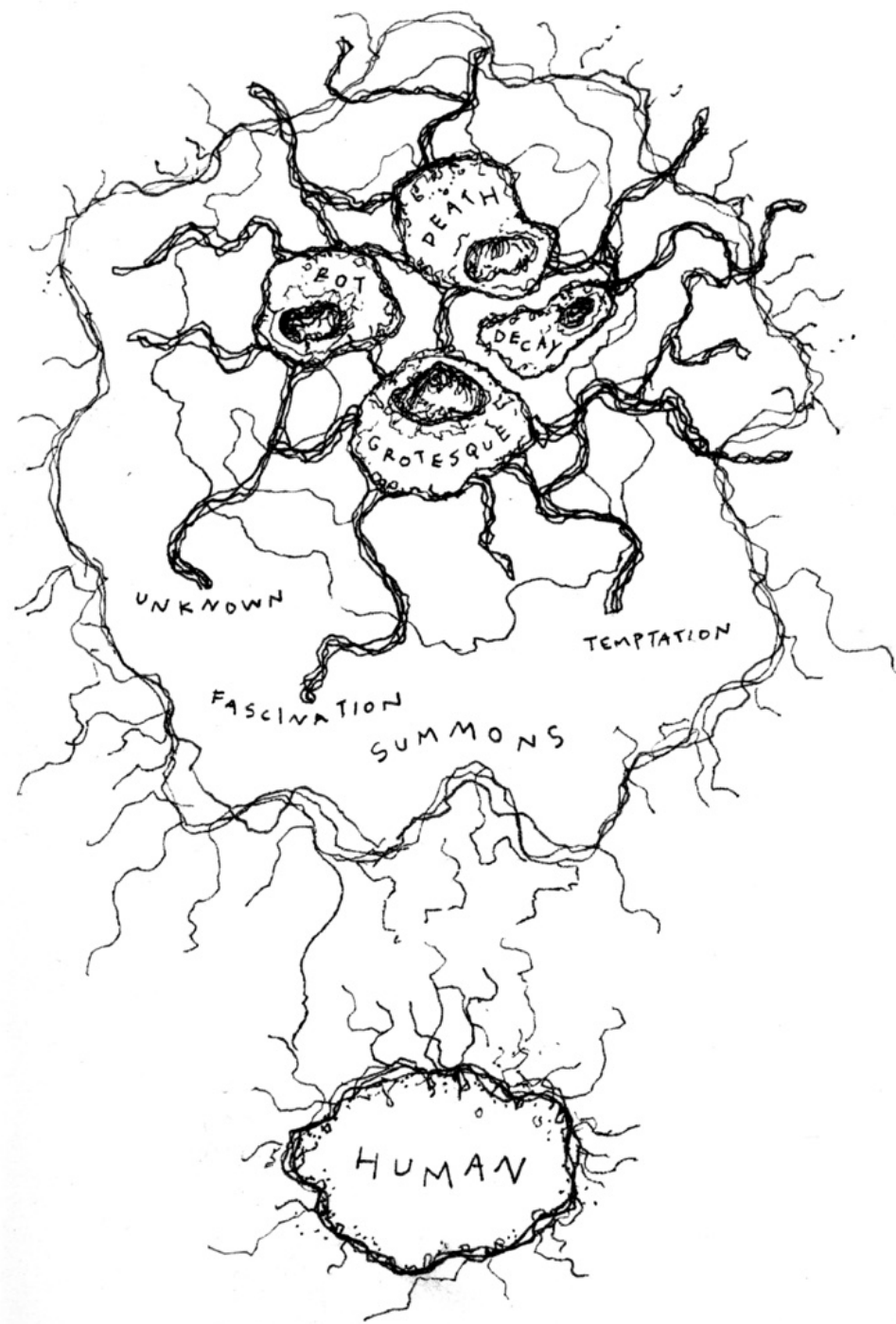


This drawing comes from an early stage of exploring how disgust and abjection can conceal beauty. the burying beetle is surrounded by death and decay. but the drawing stays with the maternal care inside that space- the work of preparing, protecting, and sustaining new life. it studies the tension and contradiction between beauty and disgust: something read as abject and repulsive can also be deeply natural and tender. something labeled disgusting can still hold one of the most direct and elemental forms of nature- a mother caring for her young.



This drawing emerged when the discovery of maternal egg-eating under extreme heat made care feel more unstable and difficult. it explores how rising temperatures in the anthropocene are reshaping the beetle's patterns, as the mother eats her young when conditions are too hot for them to survive. the drawing also suggests how that change begins at the beetle and starts to ripple outward through the larger ecosystem tied to its role. it stays with that contradiction: an act that reads as violent and unbearable, but is still tied to protection, survival, and the limits of an environment humans are changing. it holds care and loss together.







Nightmare Creatures

Inventions of Man Imitate Nature

Untold centuries ago when the caveman was still stumbling around in the darkness of his subterranean haunts, the weak-eyed bat nimbly navigated the darkest twists and turns of the cave. The winged creature skillfully dodged stalagmites and stalactites by using its echolocation that m...

The bat emits squeaks so high in frequency they cannot be heard by the human ear. These high-pitched vibrations travel through the air like ripples on a pond (below). When bat beeps strike a solid object, they bounce back to the bat. In the case of food, guiding it to the target.

World War II would see the use of sonar, a scientific invention that uses sound waves that bounce back for themselves on objects. Many of the inventions that many have arrived...

Before the cameras of space scouts brought the moon into sharp focus, the best view of the moon was through the eye of an earthbound telescope. Two confident astronauts (below), who may one day land on the moon, study moonlike terrain near Cimarron, New Mexico.

LOOK AROUND

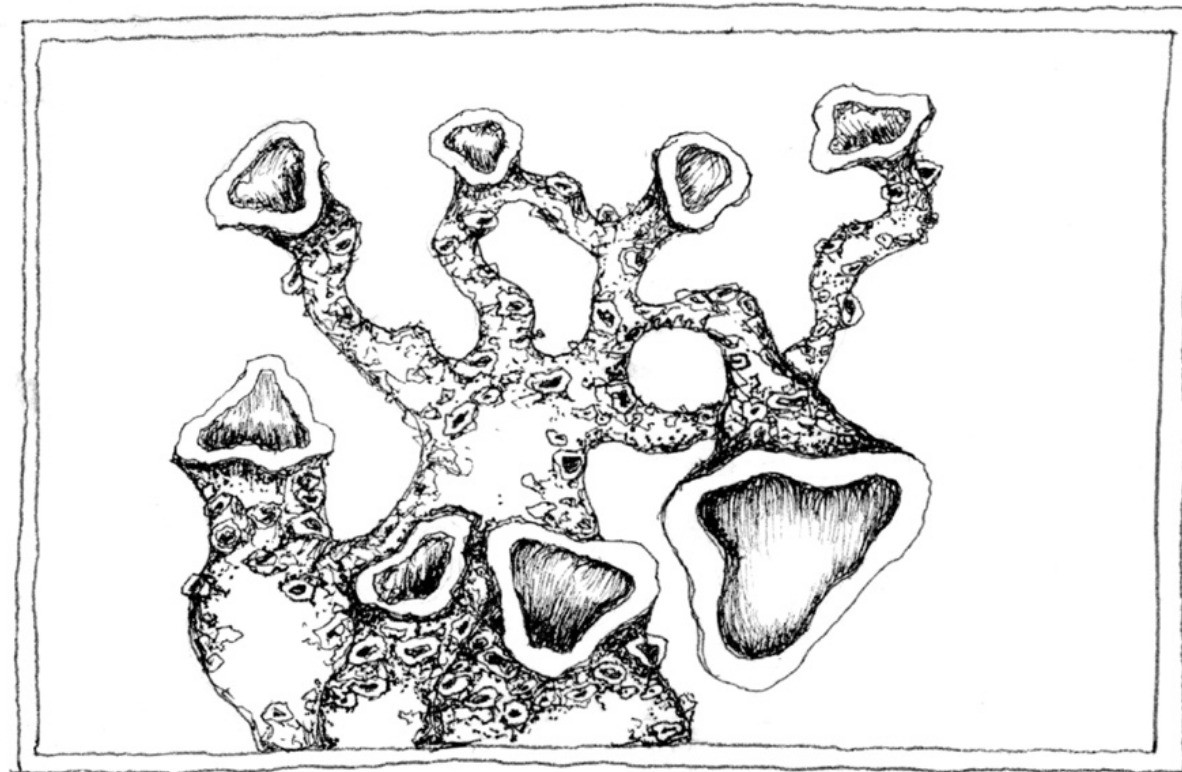
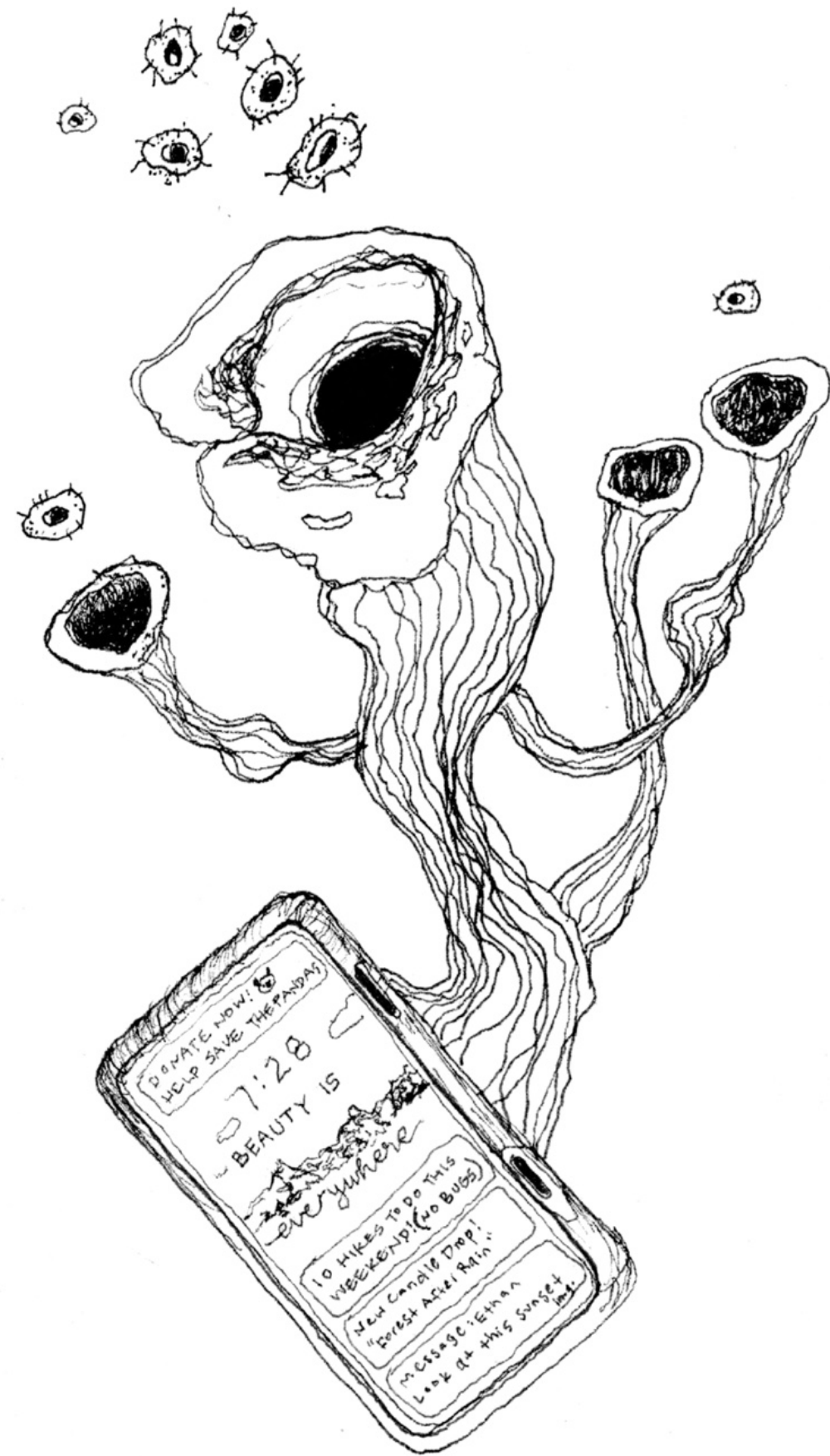


Eager young hands cradle a salamander found beneath a rock. The little amphibian was studied, then released to return to its moist lair.

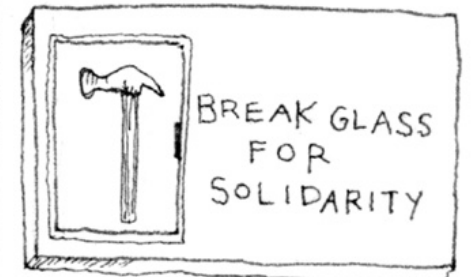


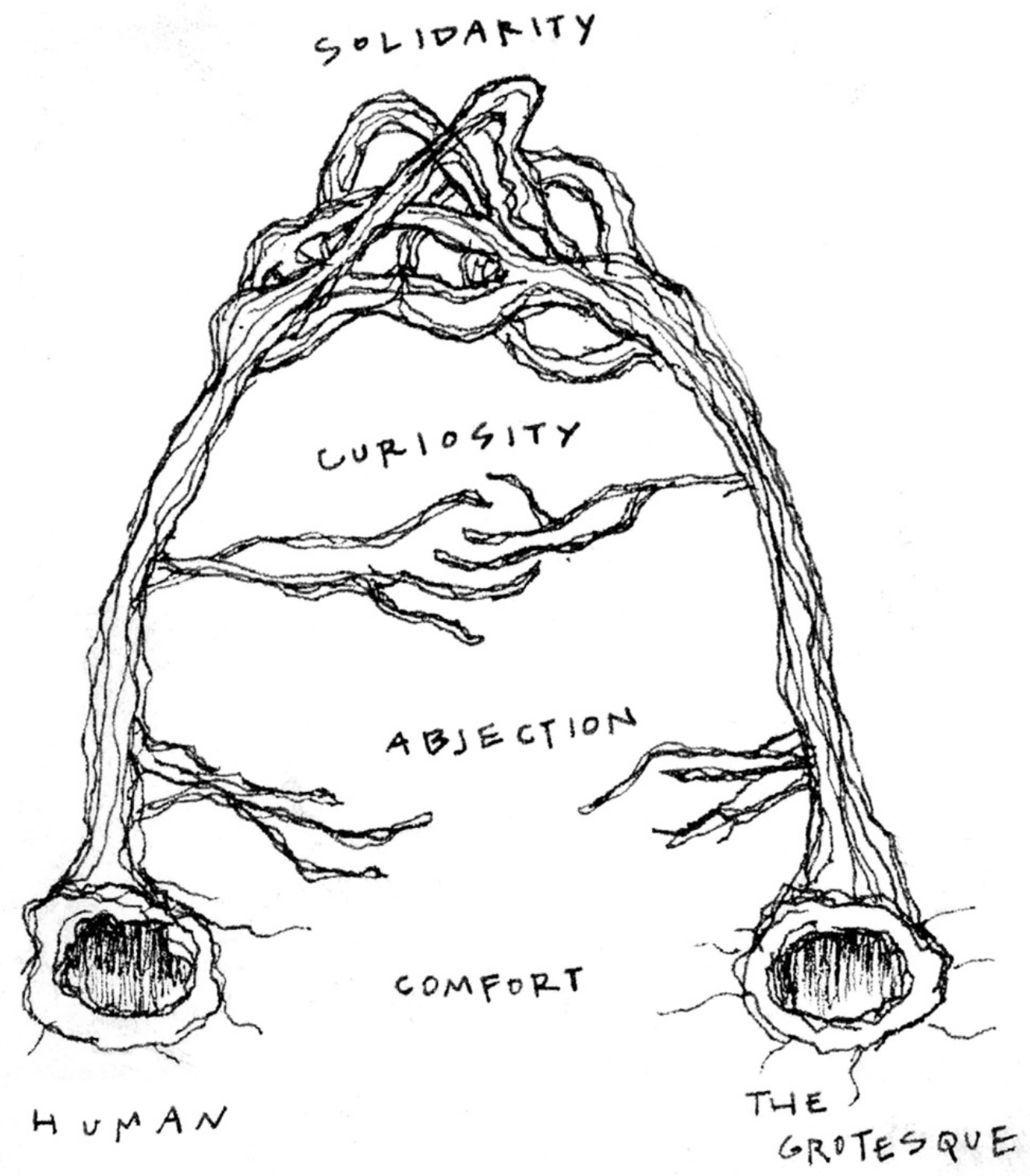
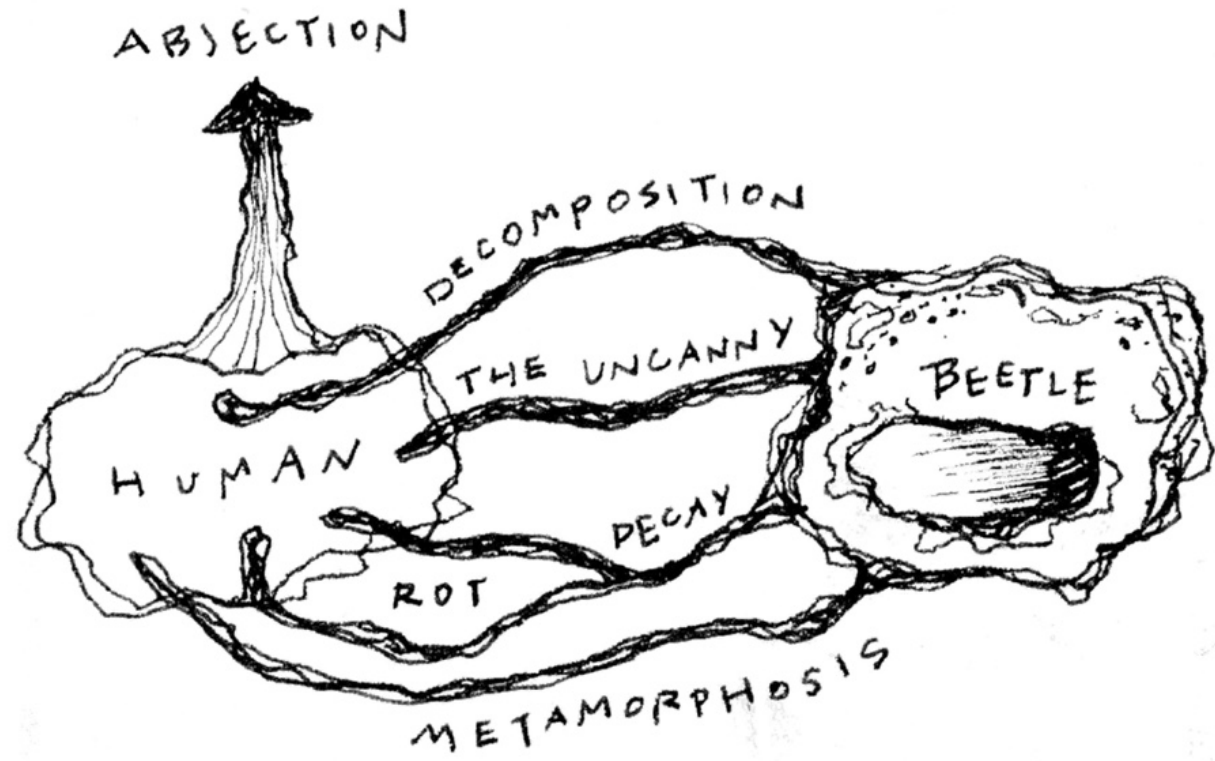
What looks like out upon inv be a young hatched fr Students poles hato and develo frogs. Rel to maturit ers find, be are eate and ponu





SPECIES:
DISGUST



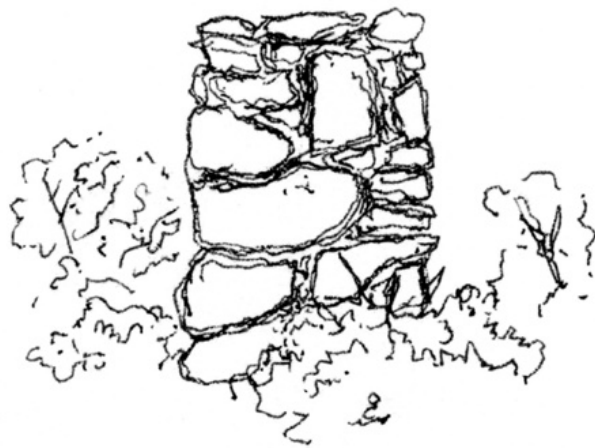




A SIGHT IN
THE DISTANCE



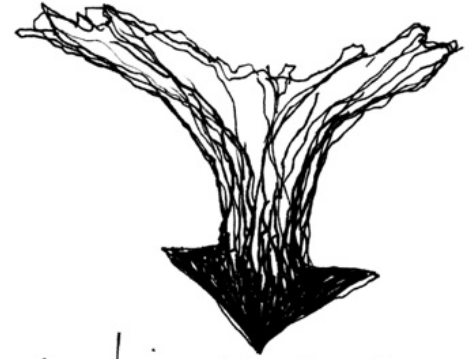
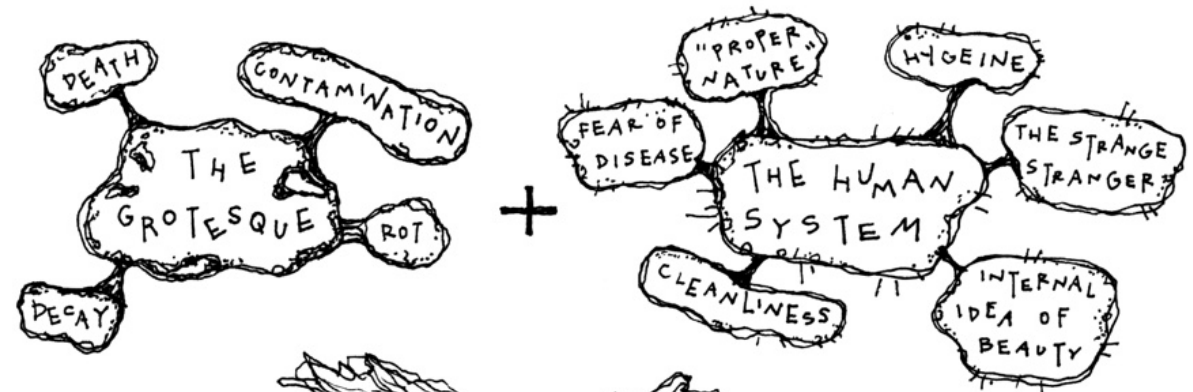
A CLOSE
ENCOUNTER



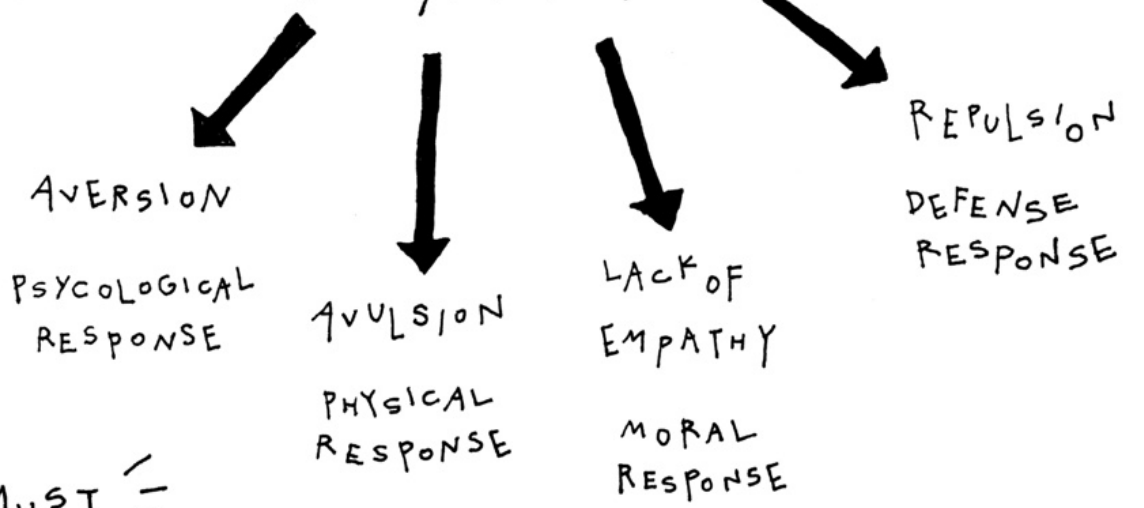
A NEW
PERSPECTIVE



SYCAMORE RESEVOIR DAM

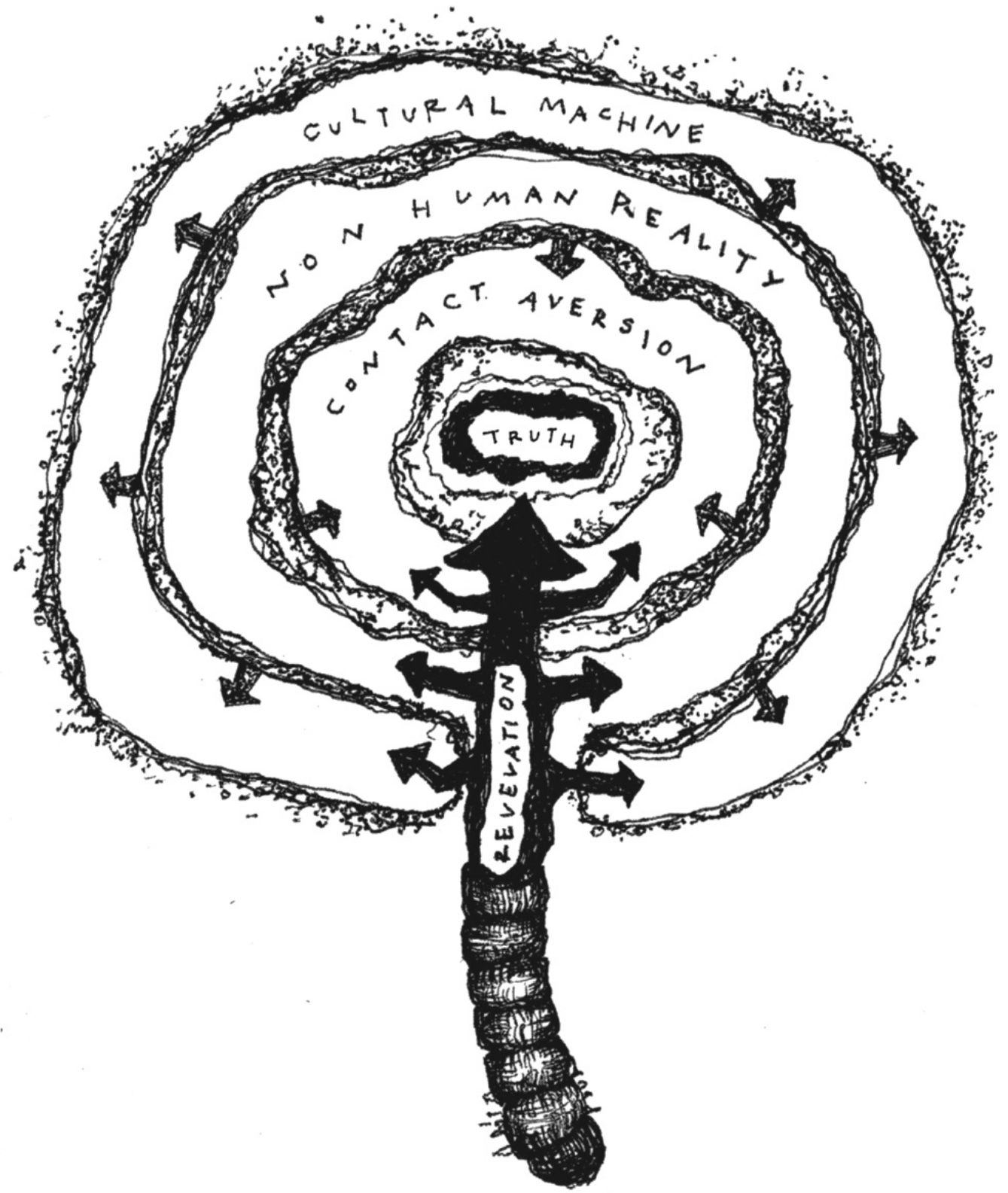


ABJECTION

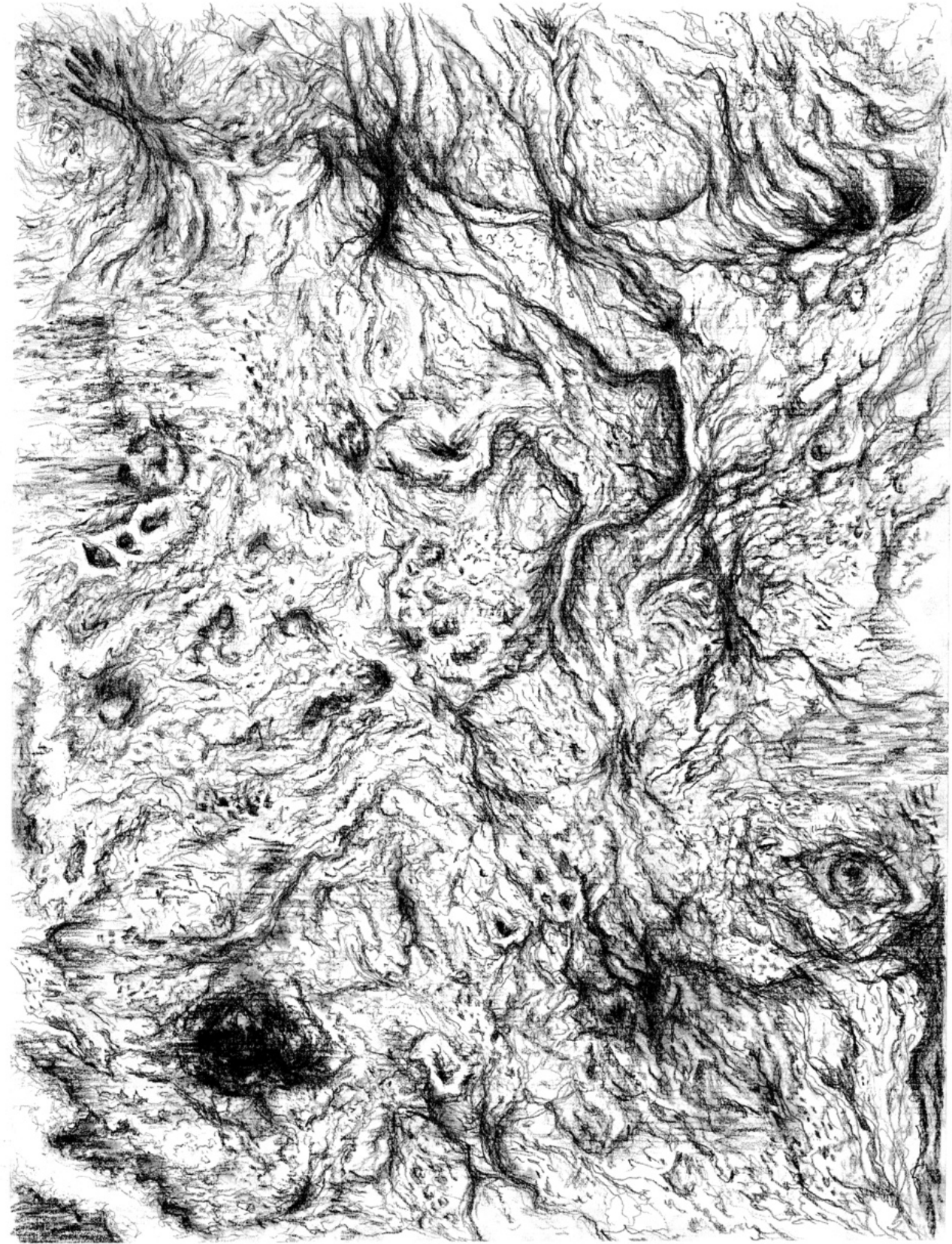


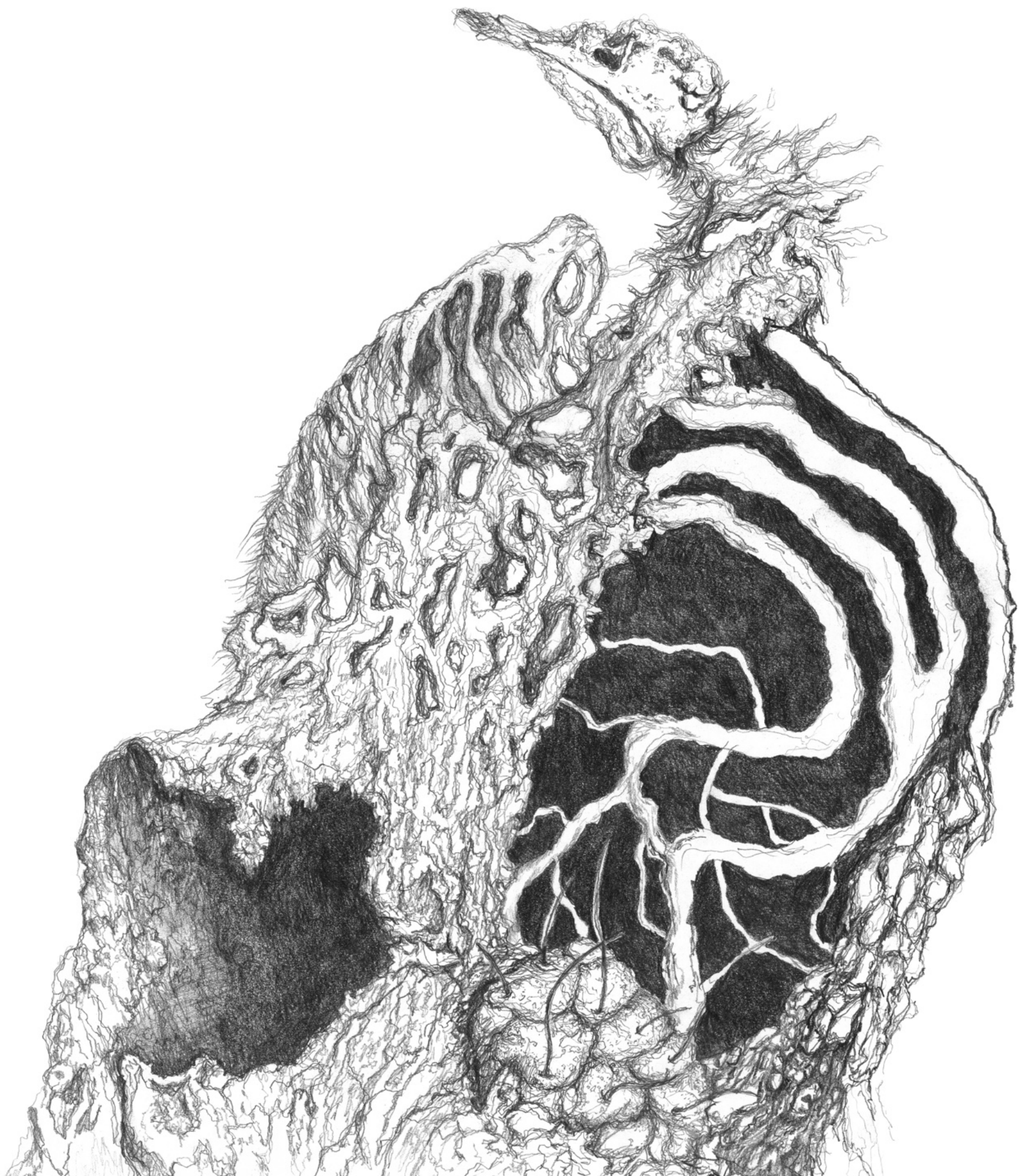
MUST REVEAL SYSTEMS TO REVEAL BEAUTY!

ECOLOGICAL SOLIDARITY!

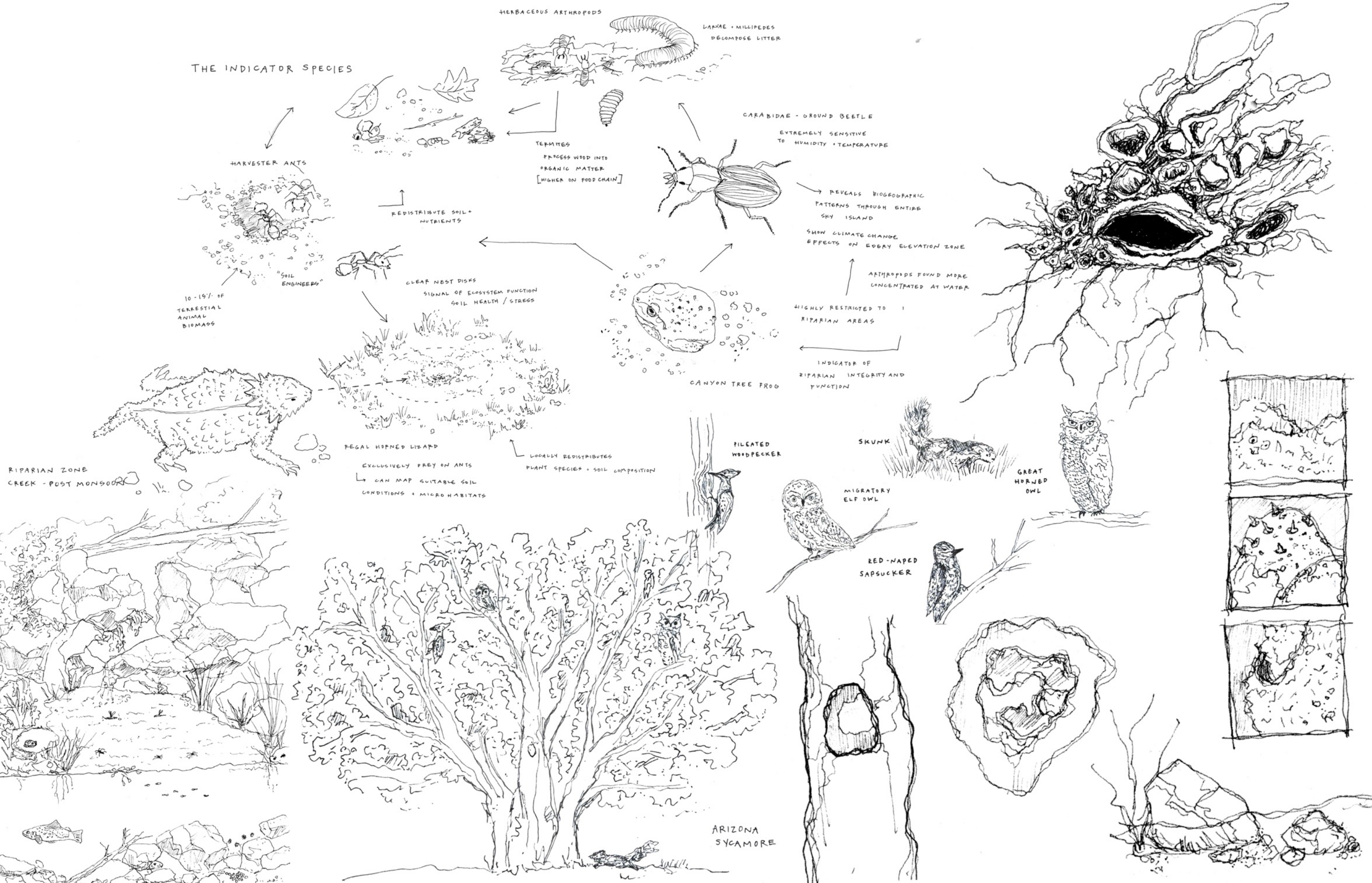


"BEAUTY"





THE INDICATOR SPECIES



HERBACEOUS ARTHROPODS

LARVAE + MILLIPEDES
DECOMPOSE LITTER

CARABIDAE - GROUND BEETLE

EXTREMELY SENSITIVE
TO HUMIDITY + TEMPERATURE

TERMITES
PROCESS WOOD INTO
ORGANIC MATTER
[HIGHER ON FOOD CHAIN]

HARVESTER ANTS

REDISTRIBUTE SOIL +
NUTRIENTS

10-15% OF
TERRESTRIAL
ANIMAL
BIOMASS

"SOIL
ENGINEERS"

CLEAR NEST DISKS
SIGNAL OF ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION
SOIL HEALTH / STRESS

CANYON TREE FROG

HIGHLY RESTRICTED TO
RIPARIAN AREAS

INDICATOR OF
RIPARIAN INTEGRITY AND
FUNCTION

ARTHROPODS FOUND MORE
CONCENTRATED AT WATER

RIPARIAN ZONE
CREEK - POST MONSOON

REGAL HORNED LIZARD

EXCLUSIVELY PREY ON ANTS
CAN MAP SUITABLE SOIL
CONDITIONS + MICRO HABITATS

LOCALLY REDISTRIBUTES
PLANT SPECIES + SOIL COMPOSITION

FILEATED
WOODPECKER

SKUNK

GREAT
HORNEB
OWL

MIGRATORY
ELF OWL

RED-NAPED
SAPSUCKER

ARIZONA
SYCAMORE

