

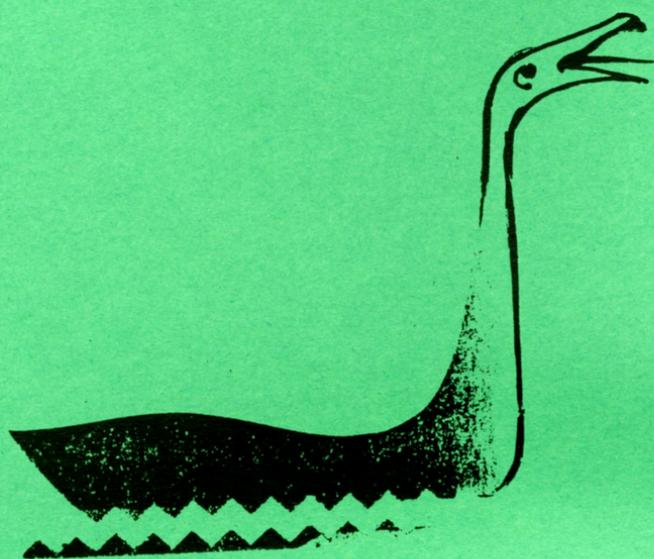
PERSONALITIES

Doodles

+ Poems

by Helen Ludwig

HAIGHT ASHBURY VF



Party Conversation 1951

**Midst all the smoke
And whispered whims of subtle insights
Of psychosomatic sounds insinuated,
Life now seems quite unofficial.**

**Words wear their grill work out front
And display tender little cuffs of fantasy
Clothed like the world's little darlings
To dramatize themselves.**

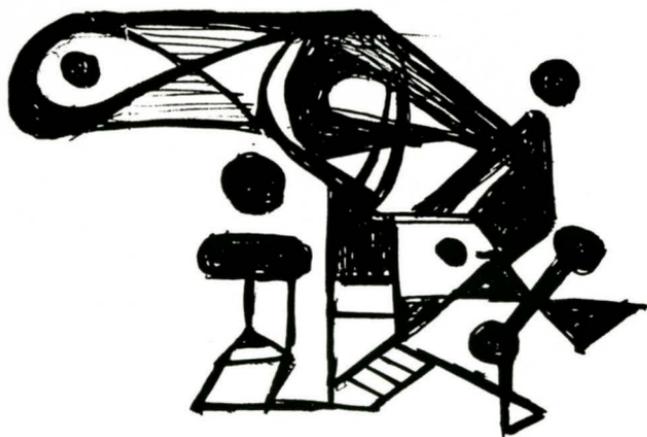
**There's argument on the carpeted area
And some toss the hot pot of guilt
Back and forth
Forth and back
While ideas grow stale
With their own slightly civil certainty.**

Insomniacal Talk

People like plants vary in their requirements for existence.
Some seem to develop nicely alone in the shade
Or on arid soil
And some require moist warmth
To grow clustered in a riot.

Without great love others cannot resist
Blights, distortions and phobias.
They carry on a pathetic struggle
And then wither
Or maybe go on with puny little spurts of effort —
Meaningless runts.
Some would rather die
Than not to flower elegantly.

N.Y.C. 1953



N.Y. City Noise

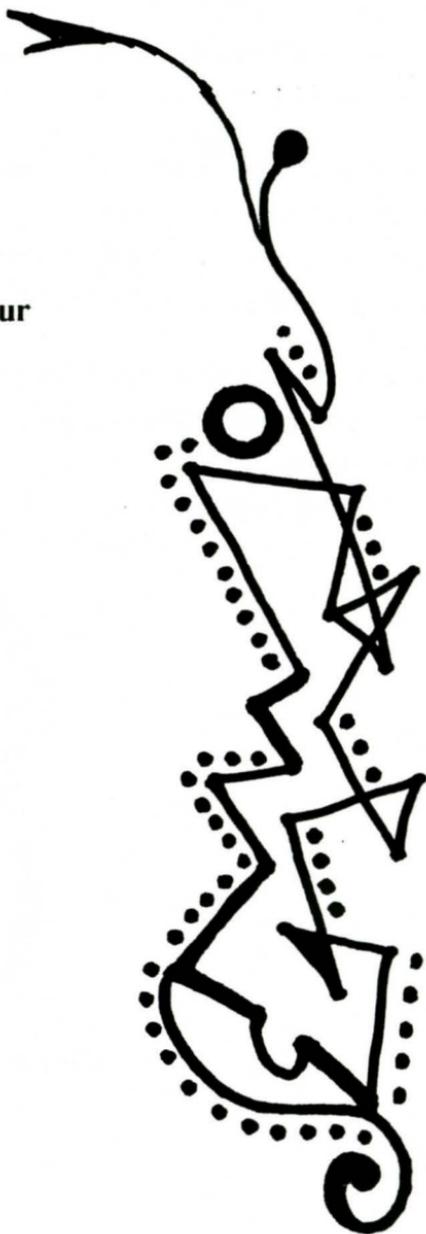
At night-time I awake and
hear every metal city sound.

A screech — a clang —
and thousands of watches
being wound.

Then there's the sweet murmur
of my little room

The bureau creaks — draws
large and dark and near.

I hug my pillow — and
remember deaths I've died
and long to die again.



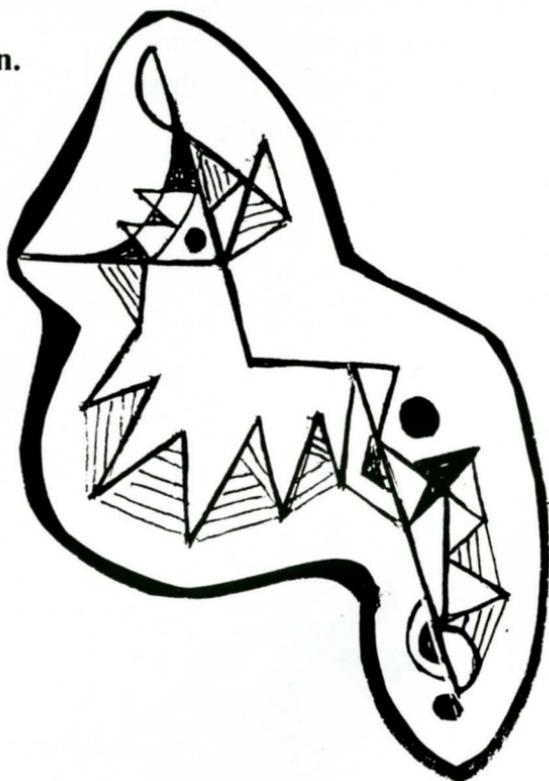
Bitter Words to a Rationalist

Grow your garden of precise verbosity
Transplant your tender little seedling thoughts
In discreet circles
All carefully nurtured to conceal behind trellised logic
The things you cannot understand.

Build your calculated structures
With philosophical devices
And meticulously eliminate all traces of emotion
Bemoan and deride those who don't.

I prefer in people a tepid smear of yellow ochre
Or even the sentimental spark
Remaining
Of all that might have been.

1957





**Humor is always there
like the sun
It may disappear
in darkness
Behind clouds of rain**

**But after a night's rest
It smiles at you again.**

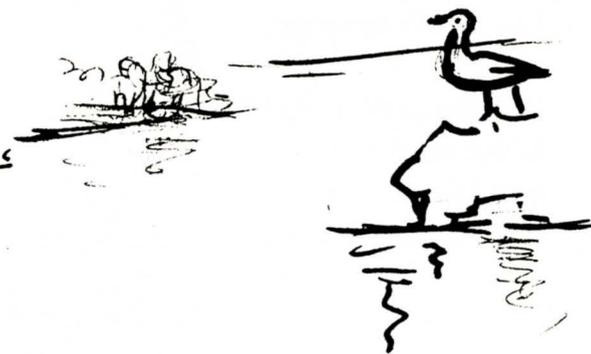
4/9/1983

At night time I lie in bed
And dream
About a stream

The clear blue water
Mirrors reeds and tall grasses.
And then beyond
It ripples past rocks
All smooth and grey and shiny .

The roots of an ancient evergreen tree
Are bared by the waters.

I now see beyond
A bend in the stream
It narrows
At a snowy white water falls.
Then gushing down
To another flat surface
Where gulls glide high overhead.



**My Love lies under an acacia
And clings to the wind sculptured dunes
Gulls glide high and murmur
Will it still be there
When the mimosa blooms?
It fills the sea
Flows o'er the cliff
And touches every grain of sand.**

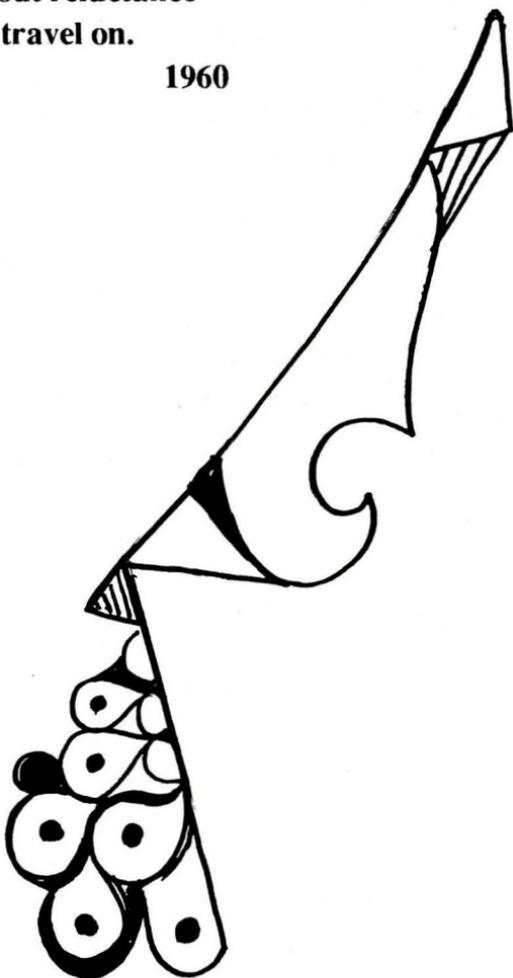
**My love lies under an acacia in bloom
Sea,
Sun,
A wind-combed succulent dune
And the gull-swept sky
Our wedding room.**

**Will the gulls still glide
In the summer
Will the sea still be
And will my love live on ever after me?**

1963

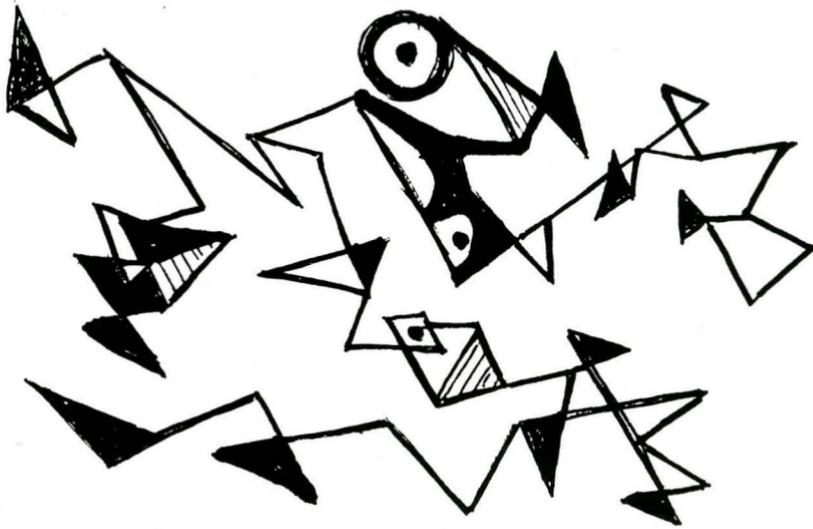
**To enjoy being alive
Never focus far to the horizon's signs of doom advancing
Nor back to the sorrow of time expired
But greet each tender moment as it comes.
Gently caress and undress every one by one
And without reluctance
Let them travel on.**

1960



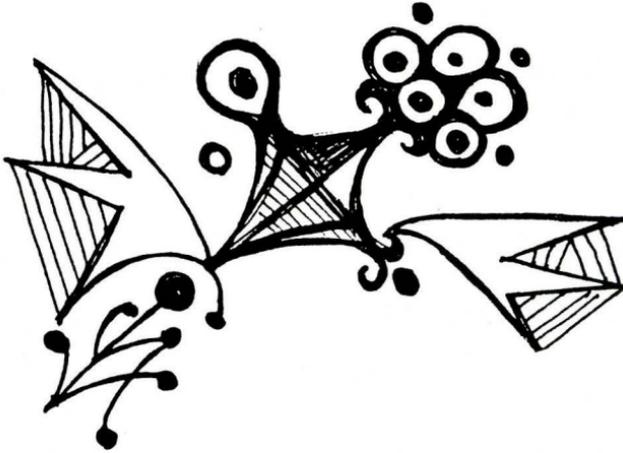
**Is death like sleep with no morning
Images going on a pathway
Through the forest
With a trickling stream
And out into a vast field of flowers
With smooth sculptured hills beyond**

**Did Christ teach kindness and love
For the environment
and for limiting the vast numbers
of unwanted starving children.**



**Which of the 10 commandments
do we so-called Christians obey?
When a psychotic individual
Kills someone he is to be executed?
When your thoroughly trained military
murders millions they are honored!**





The Song of Our Garden

**The lady of the house
Lounges in the sun**

**We enjoy the greens
The weeds grow and vanish**

**Let us please the lettuce
Now that the chard has vanished
You know there'll be more**

**Where has all the parsley gone?
Oh pray tell me
Where has all the parsley gone?
But you'll plant more
That's no chore!**

I Was a Seagull

**Love cannot
be one sided.
It must travel
back and forth
and forth and back.**

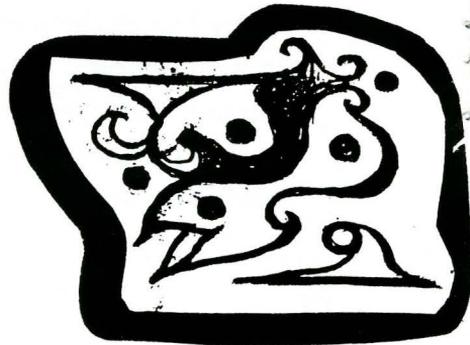
**If it's brittle and fragile
it will topple over
and shatter
into a thousand pieces.**

**If it is too possessive, sloppy or lush
or made of plastic**

**It could pour over the earth
and pollute the ocean.**

Seagulls wouldn't like that.

Helen Ludwing



**It's a long, long way to heaven.
You travel along the Pacific
Past a few black Angus cows
Green velvet slopes
Between the forested areas.**

**There's some of it here now
In the vast display of yellow blossoms
Fluffing on and on and on
to the silhouette of evergreens far away
Against the sky.**

**Along the roads to eternity
You see what you look for
Especially when your eyes are closed.**





When a raccoon out of tune
Is distracted by an itch
You'd put him back on pitch.

A fish in a dish
Might sigh because he can't fly
Should he use his fins?

If you
Were two
We'd know you were twins.

If a giraffe
Started to laugh
Would the laugh ever get out?

If a dicky bird
Can't be heard
Somebody should teach him to shout?

If a dromedary on his knees
Would sneeze
Would his hump jump?

If a monkey
Rides a donkey
Would you rather be the monkey or the donkey?

But could a monkey
Tell a donkey
What to do if his left foot is in his right front shoe?

But a pear
Is bare
And you just don't care.

If a pig
Were not very big
You'd think he was on a diet.

If a snake
Didn't wiggle and shake
You'd consider him very quiet.

If a quail
Fell in a pail
You'd want to try it.

When a bull frog
Wears glasses
He should attend biology classes.

If a yak
Never came back
You'd wonder where the heck we went to

If a tern
Showed no concern
And lost hope you'd say he was at the end of his rope.

If a buzzard is both bold
And old
Should he be told?

If a fly
Were shy
Alas! You'd wonder why.

If a baboon
Were bare
You'd get him some long underwear.



**What do you love, my love?
Do you love the germination of seeds
And the way come cotyledons
Turn up and out to the sun?**

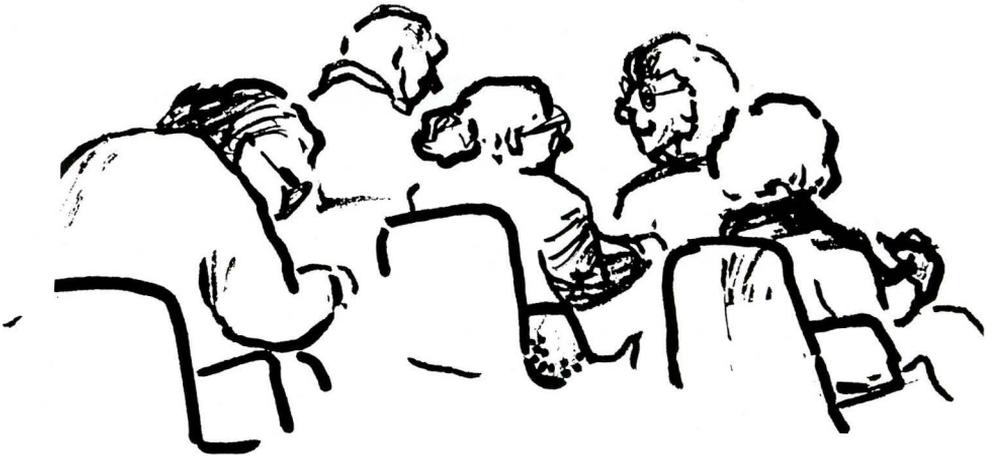
**Do you love the lace of leaves
Quivering in the green breeze
Of a cool morning
After a long still night of rain?**



**Advice to myself in the
middle of the night**

**When you can't sleep
don't lie there worrying
about it! Use the
time well — visualize
all the things you want
to make. Breathe deeply!
And lovely images will
take you on a ride.**

**Then at dawn you
wonder whether or not
you have slept and who
cares?**



At Hillhaven Retirement Home

**Like petals all withered and faded
That floated here in the breeze**

**Remember the glory of their full bloom
All pollinating and magnificent in the spring
Then producing delicious fruit**

**Trees and bushes never last forever
But the imagery lives on.**

Apr. 13, 1994

**In our so-called Democracy
on this planet why can't
we give jobs to the homeless
planting trees, recycling and
cleaning up the environment?**

**We could stick to the earth
and cut a billion from military spending
Work for
Peace while we're here now!**



Walking around Stow Lake

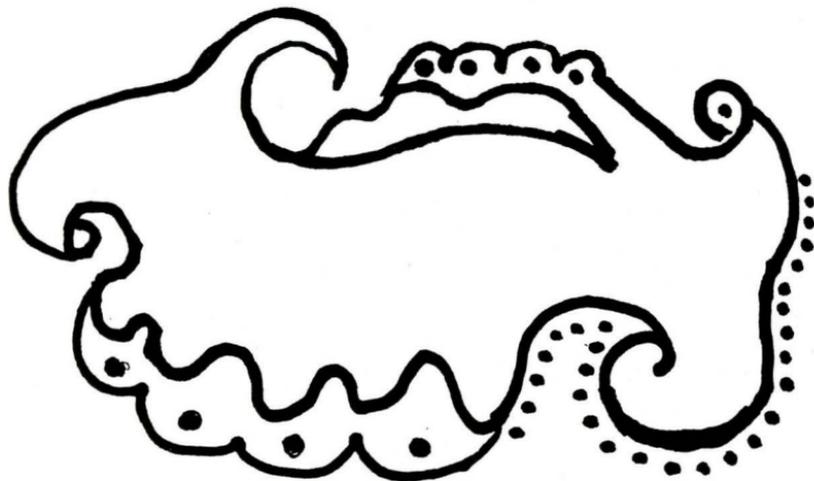
Trees with their gnarled roots
Tapering off into the ground
Branches reach high into the sky
Like Handel's Semele

People feeding pigeons
That alight on the sand
No grass alas!
Behind lacy leaves and long reeds
Mirrored in glass-like water
Along a curved pathway
Comes a procession of children
Spots of color like birds
Moving slowly away

Wild radish is flowering
Blackberries and iris too

Three mallards
Come up for food
While flocks of gulls
Glide high overhead.





**When negativism creeps in
and swells up like a fungus,
illness takes over forcing
creativity to hide in the background**

DON'T WORRY

**Just encourage it
to come out on
Center Stage to display itself and flaunt
its virility**

**Encourage the positive
even though it may be weak
and minute! Tiny seeds need
just the right environment to germinate.**

Jan. 1987

Van Gogh Country

The trees are like patches of olive green far
Between the fields
As they roll by
Moving patterns
Beneath the sky
With clouds of infinite variation
Gliding up high
Huge areas of sun flowers
And I almost cry.



Left Albergo Hotel in Pavia for Milano & Konderstaq

**My mind is filled with
The Glory of the Mountains
And my heart floats down
The green slopes to the river
Winding its way
Past tiny villages
And up the great cliffs above.
Then again comes darkness
In another long long tunnel
and sudden splendors
Again and again and again.**

1989



**Trees make me cry
Evergreens growing their lace
Against the sky
Twisted trunks bent in ancient pain
Yellow green leaves
Quivering in the rain**

**Some clustered in crevices
Where the hills roll down
Miles and miles of redwood
And eucalyptus
Swaying in sorrow
Trees tomorrow?**

Earth Day 1990

**Millions—billions of people on earth
Like tiny fly specks
Each of us is given a life to live
And to make the most of it
Before the jig is up!**

**To encourage nature
And respect our bodies
For health
To produce Peace in the world
And love for all creatures
Human and animal species.**

**Before the first light appears
birds chirp to announce it.
I stretch, inhale deeply and *there* are
the solutions with inspiration.**

**Sometimes when I'm up high
like a bird, I see everything in
place — the pattern of streets
below, many small houses and
wooded areas.**

**It's not like the images of
ant-like people busy in box-
sized rooms — story after
story in skyscrapers. Each
tiny person has its biological
function. Do some of them
know Inverness or about
Austin Creek or walking
among the redwoods?**

Nukes know no difference!

**Some pray to a modern god of reason
Who's clear and lucid as transparent plastic
Not cruel and gory
Like the gods of the ancient Aztec.**

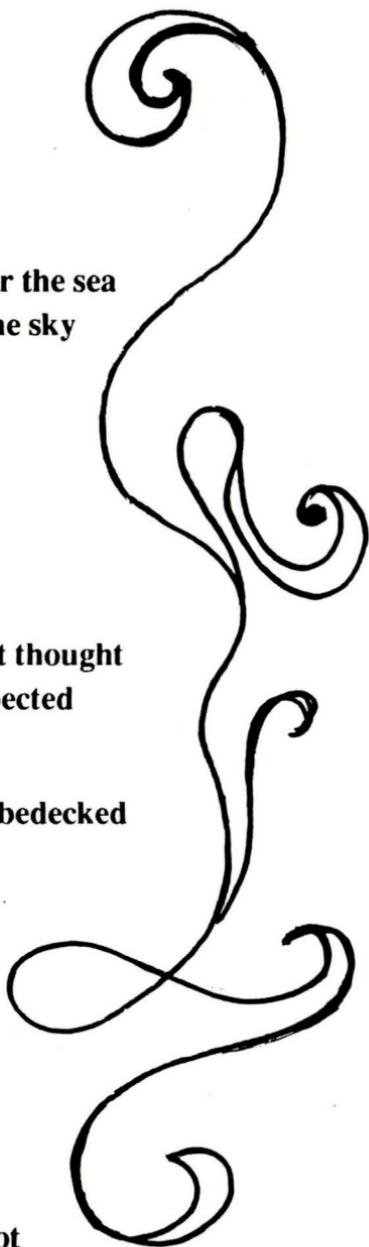
**I listened to the B Minor Mass
of Johann Sebastian Bach**

**I traveled with winds and storms over the sea
And heard a high clear note pierce the sky
For two thousand years.**

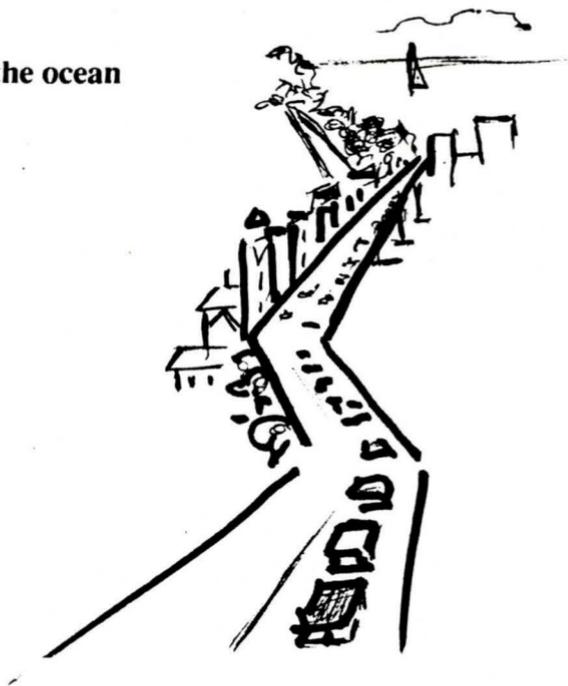
**Then a long loud quietness fell.
[Today in faded sacred sound
I fashion a garment to protect me
From other storms
And jewels to gladden a heart
Wounded by a sordid and discordant thought
How horses dogs and women are expected
to compete.**

**Tomorrow I will go forth belted and bedecked
Into a city of small pleasures
Strivings
And endless longings of people.**

**Mozart is marvelous
for making line drawings
Handel and Hayden help a lot
But the very best is
Johann Sebastian Bach!**



**San Francisco the city of views
Any you choose
Over the hills with quaint little houses
See the bay with boats
And streets with wooded areas
Eucalyptus and evergreens
Buildings high as the sky
Mansions on slopes
Then flat streets
developed beyond to the vanishing point
Cars cars and their relatives
City Hall
And the parks
One leading out to the ocean**





San Francisco Bay Today

Birds chirp and they've always chirped!

Over two hundred years ago

Here in the Bay Area

The Ohlone people heard them chirp.

Now there are other sounds

That would frighten the Oholines

Sirens and honking of horns

Car, cars and their big truck relatives

Going over the hills

That are covered with houses

Buildings of all kinds

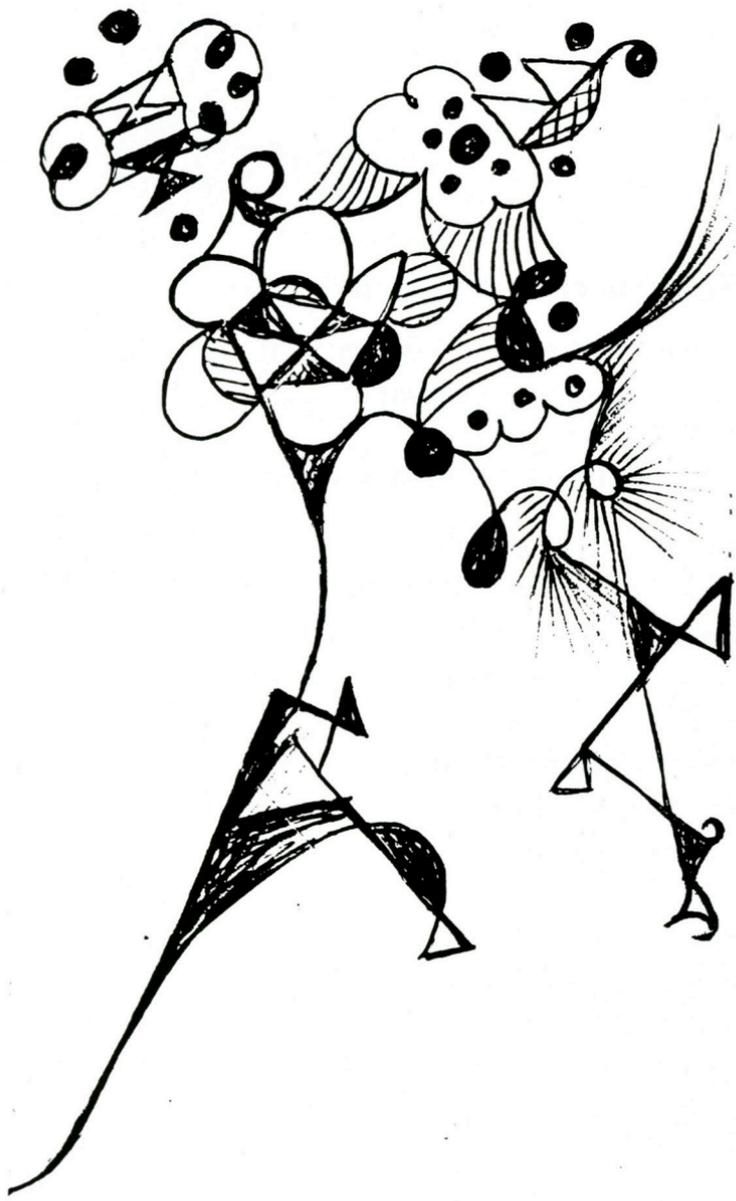
Some reaching the sky!

Vast landfills and pollution

And huge ships in the Bay

No lovely little boats made of reeds

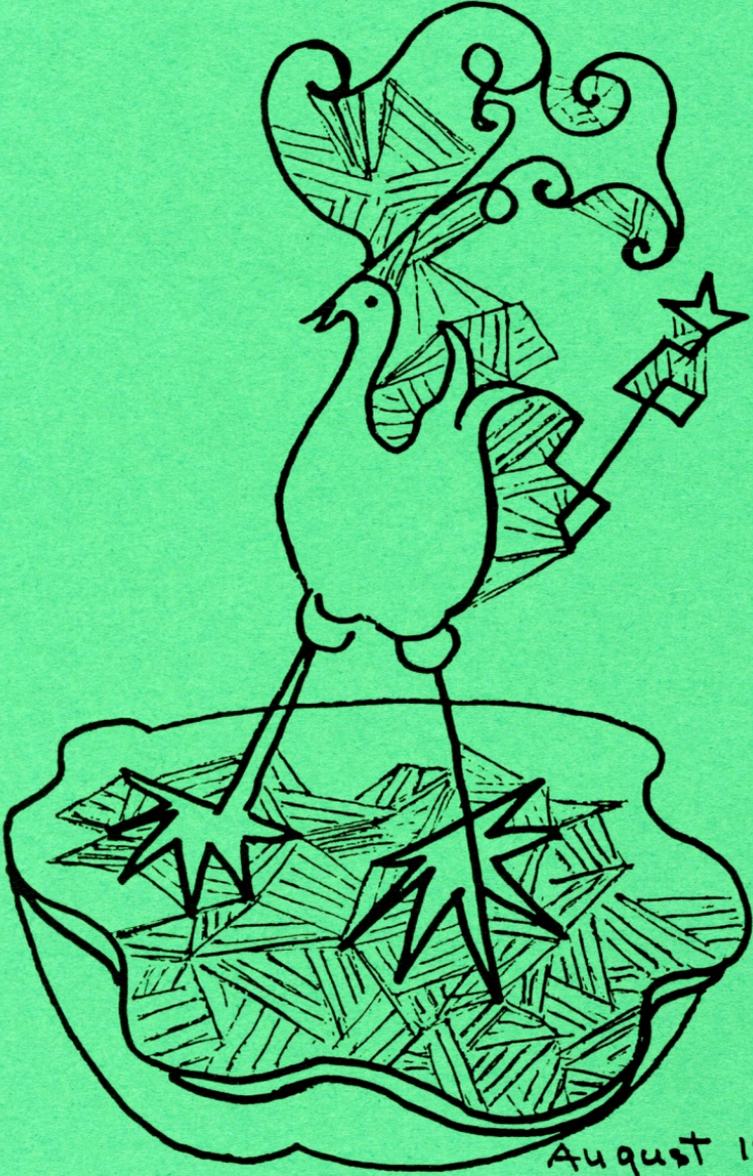
Nor hills all covered with wild flowers.



Helen Ludwig

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August 1995