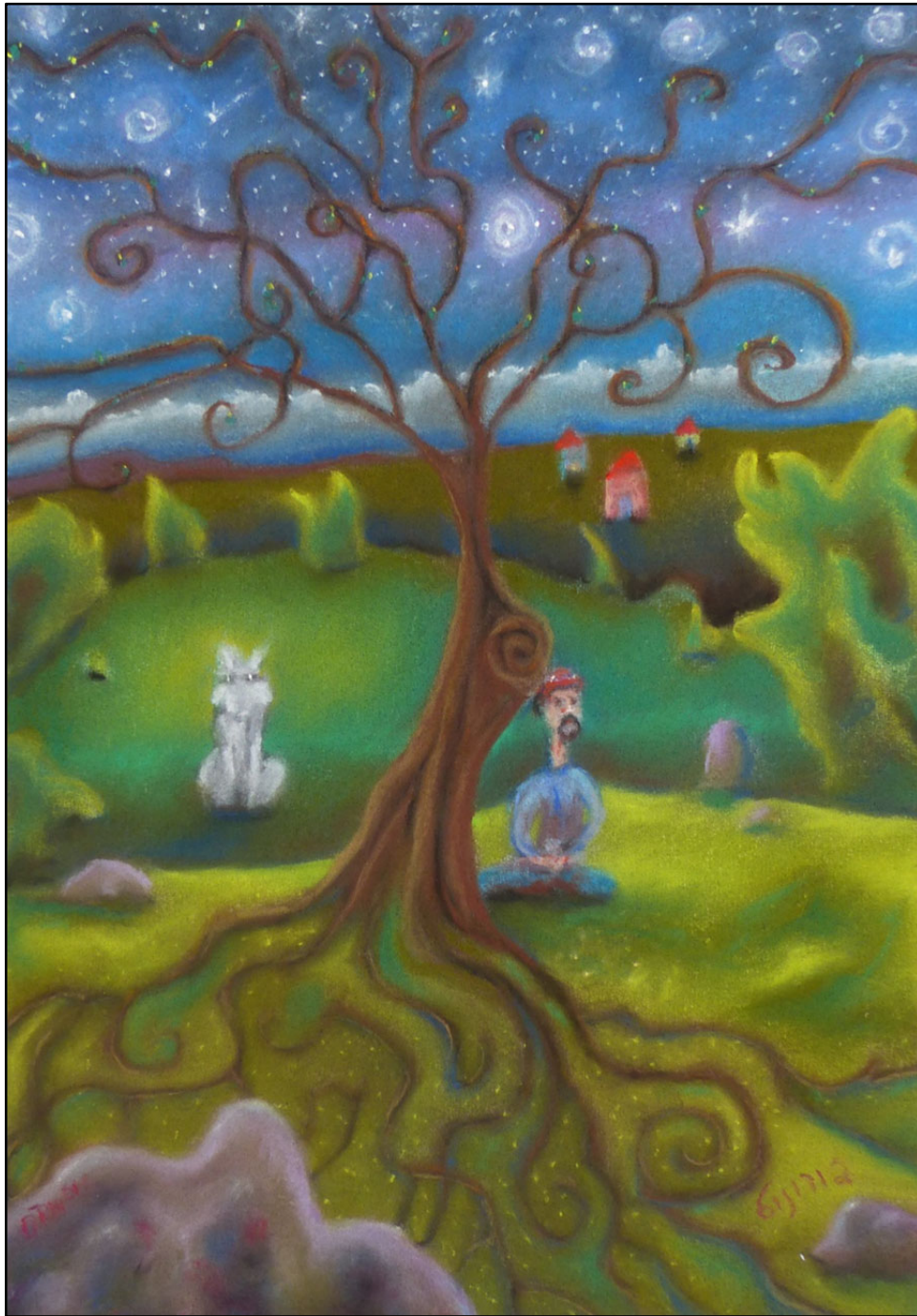
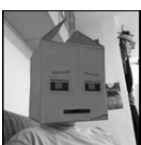


Inside the Garden

By Drew T. Noll



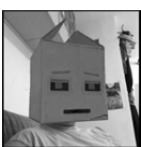
Chalk on paper, D.T.Noll, 5.2015 © all rights reserved



It was a normal day deep in the forest—a no-lemon, no-melon kind of day, where the beach lapped water at the shore, slowly removing soil from the roots around trees that grew, prodding equally with desire and diplomacy. Electric rain trickled down onto jagged freshly-formed heights, black and sharp, and then pooled into grottos and over broad-leaves that had bantered together at the edge of sweet-water ponds. The forest had no borders; it extended beneath the waves and into the sea, where wild-weed and kelp jittered and wavered with the currents, providing transportation corridors for myriad beings simply going about their lives. The forest was built from inside the earth, with water and with air, oddly still hovering there. The wind in the forest was alive and buzzing with swooping insects, and with birds. Color was everywhere, under the sea, above the forest, and all things in the world had purpose. All things loved one-another and all things were connected, each conducting one-level interrelated solos.

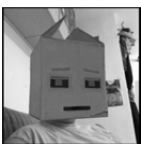
But, there was emptiness throughout the land and things felt this and knew of it. Imagining purpose like nano-organisms coagulating with no specific meaning, all things were deified, but without being whole. And then, deep within this forest, like flaking bark falling from anomalous crab, an empty hole-full of nitrogenous-sequences pooled; and then a preposterous being leapt forth, flew out into space, and was planted into the soil; an anointed one with a civic eye, and the one that would change all faith into states of endlessly unseemly and undone.

It was impossible to see this being, for it shone out an intense light and glow, like that of its maker. All that could be seen was an empty space in



the forest, shaped like an upright walker. It wasn't. Upright walkers were only myth, descended from legend. Monkeys tried incessantly, with all their curiosity and chaos, to imitate the legend, but all knew that there was no such thing. The plays that the orangutans and lemurs put on were only for show, sometimes for sport, but entirely make-believe. The beings of the sea also knew of such distraction. Underwater plays were said to be greater than those upon the surface, even considering the birds and insects, and how they swooped in to collect fur from shrieking monkeys to coat their nests with. It was storied in these plays, always, that under the water all life began. It merely crawled forth upon the land and into the air, fins becoming legs, and arms becoming wings. But, even though the plays were make-believe and the impossible being could not be seen, the myths were believed.

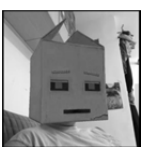
Six separate forms to evolve all life from were created. Six became synonymous with formation, and seven beyond it. Eight started to spiral back as the world began to fold unto itself, like a wormhole in time stretching and pulling at all physical reality. The unseen being, the so-called upright walker, was born on the sixth evolution of space and time within the forest. By the time the eighth rolled around, the upright walker had learned to speak all the languages that existed in the entire forest before there was time, and all of creation learned that the forest was inside a garden so wondrous that it couldn't be seen from outside—except sometimes from the west, since the garden sat in the east. The stories were told at every level, from one end to the other, elaborating upon themselves



only enough for believability—like any tradition, good and truly oral. The envelope of the world opened and spread the space enclosing the rest aside, compressing it back into something other, something unknown, and something grander than understanding could eventually be.

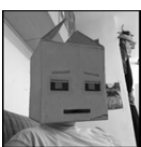
The myriad creatures in the forest, both above and under the sea, came to believe that their world was very special, a one-of-a-kind place that had never existed before. Once they believed, the unseen upright walker was heard, sound connecting with radar each to the other. Then creation branched and evolved from one of the six original life-seeds planted inside the forest, under the sea. Each seed, after sprouting, was then transplanted with tender loving care, above the sea and beneath the soil, where it grew into the largest organism ever known and able to contain all worlds within. The organism spawned itself and consumed all things, growing into the dimension it was created for. It awoke and pushed all space, and it built itself into a habitat for all things to be. But, to really be, all things vied for their own rooms and struggled, the finite dividing again and again. Both above and below the sea, the forest grew ever wild with animals and things filling every place, squabbling for footholds onto trees and shrubs that left no room to move between. So, another garden was created inside the first, inside the forest, inside the garden, which was to be manicured with loving-care into immaculate, tiny perfection.

The upright walker explained that: inside the garden, seeing could be seen; and while telling the tenet of the story to forest inhabitants, with each additional word uttered, the upright walker began to spawn a glowing



armature, covering-over like lotus blossoms with premature bloom. The upright walker explained to all inhabitants of having been made from land, and of breath; and that a name to call was given as Adam with two alephs, after the word for earth, and after the first-ever breath was blown. But, the myriad creatures that had gathered around the place where the upright walker should have been, only perceived an image of a glowing armature that grew upwards evermore, and didn't eventually believe. It made no sense that this particular creation was made from both one of the original six creations and only 'then' was made from the earth under their feet. And, "*What's with all this 'first breath' business?*" everyone began to mutter...

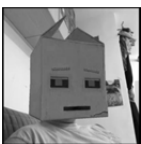
The upright walker stood over, hearing their murmuring. Then, unfolding the creases that had pressed into the shiny, hard outer shell, like a blossom about to bloom, the upright walker stood tall, looming above them all. And, all trembled at the presence above, still growing skyward, above the clouds and disappearing through the moist haze filling the air throughout the garden inside the forest, inside the garden. The fish flew from the sea and pooled together into schools to learn what they could of the upright walker and the truth of what had been said. The birds flew too, flocking into mad, contorting shapes, graphically collaborating, and filling the skies, wondering all the while: *?do Geese see god*. Others that gathered also began to float upwards. The upright walker continued to grow, taller and taller; and the others in the garden followed, watching the bloom unfold up into the heavens. *Was it a cat I saw? Was it a rat I saw?* A gaze of raccoons spiraled



up ... like flying squirrels, and then a passel of opossums were seen to bob up, then bob down, as each gained elevation, with pointed tails and pointed noses. Snakes of all colors and sizes clutched at their tails and glided upwards evermore, like soap bubbles spinning about the skies, bouncing about and then threaded like racecars by wayward opossums.

All creatures mirrored the opalescence of the upright walker's hard-skin shell, glittering and shimmering all along its seams. The entire garden was ablaze with the light that cascaded down from the heights that the upright walker was now ascending to. The entire garden became a shimmering mass of light and color. Each creature became a part of the whole, a part of the garden, and even a part of the upright walker, merging and vibrating like scissors with shells. It was then that all knew what had happened. Within every thought is the birth of the next. It never ends, is evermore, nevermore. The original creation that became earth, dirt, and mud, to build and to add up to the upright walker, which was the second thought, became born of the first. The breath was the third, and so on and so forth. All beings in the garden, in the forest, and in the garden, had come to understand the truth of it all.

The upright walker then began to shrink down, as all the glittering creatures, once lone floating sagas at the top spot themselves, coalesced onto the ground back down at the upright walker's feet. There were neither toenails nor fingernails. Eyes could now be seen, and a place from which words had uttered emerged. Each breath inside the upright walker, wishing in and whishing out, utterly gusty like wind blowing up from the south, fed



the wild world with an udder of plenty, a cornucopia of stealth. And all saw and knew that the upright walker was separate from and overlapping of the forest behind, just redder than the rest.

Then the walker crouched and sat onto the forest floor at the center of the garden. Inside the garden, inside the forest, inside the garden, the animals and trees, along with the bugs and the bushes, were all burned aflame, but not consumed. Each glowed with an internal light. Each knew its purpose, and each knew what would be. What was once perfection would think again another thought, would degrade, devolve, and develop. The hard shell surrounding the upright walker would melt away, becoming steel and concrete, and glass. Thoughts would devolve and develop into light and particles, waves and beams. And all creatures in the garden knew that, eventually, all would land permanently onto bare ground, cleared of the thicket that once grew in the forest, leaving the garden behind, and would even be cast out of the greater-garden's tiny manicured perfection, possibly forevermore. But, all knew, however, that 'forevermore' would only be the perception of losing time, a thing that was unperceivable before. All knew that creation would sit bare for a space with all creatures waiting; and that a biosphere would finally blossom and bloom into truth standing proudly at the center of a garden once more, and that it would all have been sprouted from the hope of nevermore, before no matter could strain to spin and again kindle rotor.

