

Princess Lacey's
Picture Album #14
The Art of Henry Darger Princessized

The Art of Henry Darger Princessized!

SPECIAL EDITION: Are they girlish boys or girls with penises?

Note: This feature previous appeared on the Pussyboy RSVP Website.

Was he crazy? Inspired? A lover or hater of little girls or girlish boys? In a majority of Darger's drawings a lot of the girls/boys are naked and there is no mistaking that these girls (?) have a little penis and testicles between their legs. We love his drawings, but are not interested in nudity, so we put cute little panties on all of his little boy-girls.



Fantasy Entertainment

Adults Only

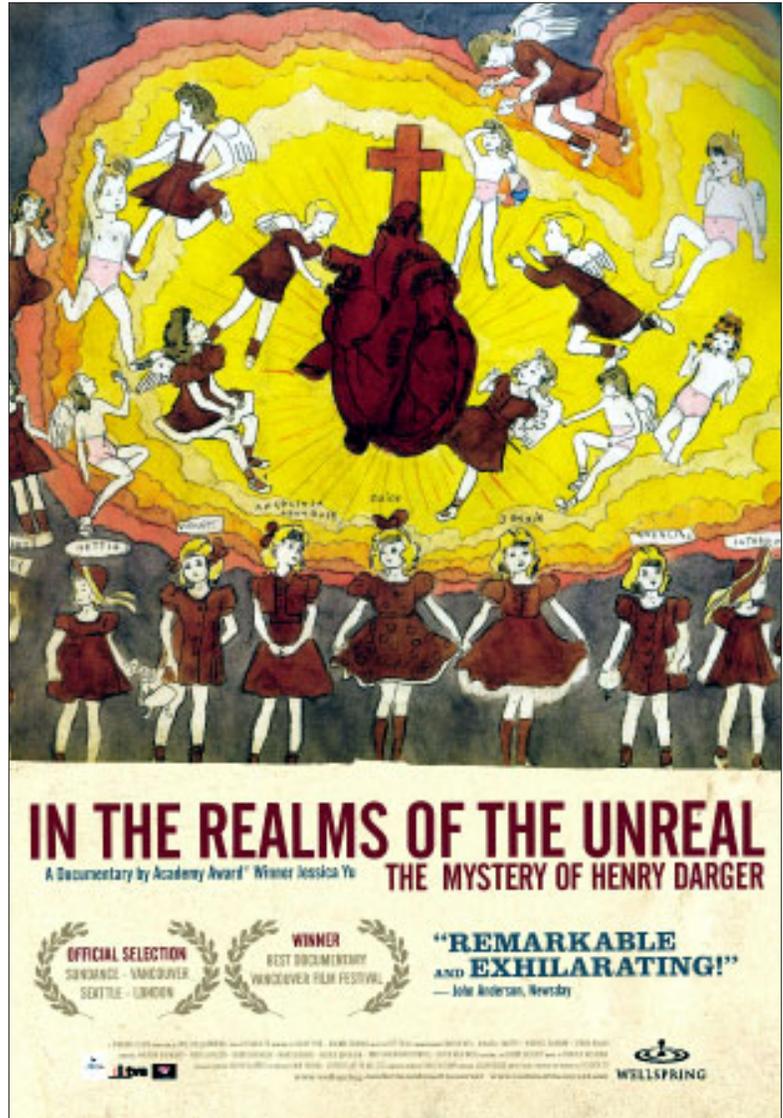


In the Realms of the Unreal

This innovative feature length documentary, directed by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Jessica Yu and produced by Susan WEST, explores the parallel lives of legendary outsider artist Henry Darger. Reclusive janitor by day, visionary artist by night, Darger's 15,000 page novel details the exploits of the Vivian Girls, seven angelic sisters who lead a rebellion against godless, child-enslaving men. Featuring the voices of Dakota FANNING (I AM SAM, CAT IN THE HAT) and Larry Pine (THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS, THE ICE STORM), the music of Emmy-winning composer Jeff Beal and the work of a team of animators, this wholly original film tells the story of a hidden universe.

IN THE REALMS OF THE UNREAL explores outsider art from the inside. Eschewing expert opinion, it reflects the uniqueness of its subject, employing vivid animation and experimental elements to immerse us in Darger's world and all its strange beauty. Brought to life on film, the works reverberate with universal themes: the search for meaning, control, connection, moral direction. Through Darger's eyes, film reveals this odd man to be Everyman.

Darger lived a virtually friendless existence, but his imaginary life was as exciting and colorful as his real life was tedious. By day, he scrubbed floors, attended Mass, rummaged through garbage cans. By night, he ruled a world in which the forces of innocence and good fought a bloody battle against the forces of treachery and evil. By juxtaposing Henry Darger's parallel but opposite universes, the



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film shows how he forged magic out of the bleakest of lives, leaving a legacy that has inspired other artists around the world.

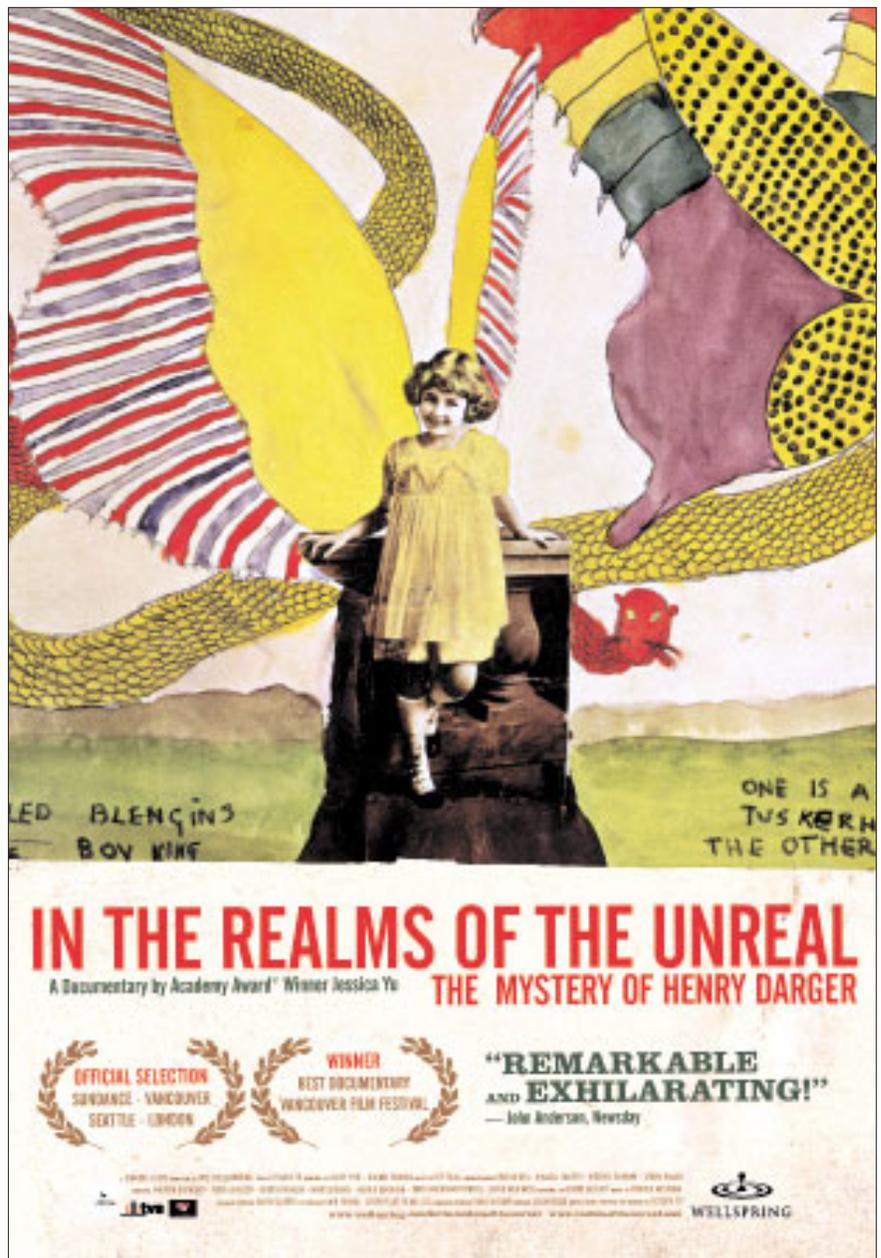
Darger moved through the world virtually unnoticed, and the ultimate meaning of his work remains an enigma. The film begins as a mystery, but ends as a celebration of the power of individual creativity. IN THE REALMS OF THE UNREAL captures the haunting imprint of an extraordinary, ordinary man.

IN THE REALMS OF THE UNREAL is a production of Diorama Films, LLC., and a presentation of ITVS.

About Henry Darger

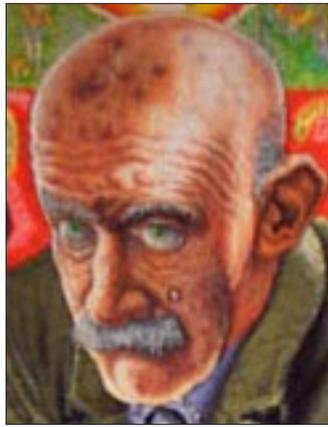
In 1973, at a Catholic poor house in Chicago, an 81-year-old retired janitor quietly died. His name was Henry Darger. Just months earlier, he had moved from the rented room where he had lived for over 40 years. When his landlords, Nathan and Kiyoko Lerner, cleaned out the clutter room, they discovered paintings: hundreds of brilliant watercolors, some over 10 feet long. The images were disturbing and mysteriously beautiful: little girls frolicking under stormy skies, little girls fighting soldiers, little girls being rescued by fantastic winged creatures. In many images, the girls were drawn naked, with penises.

The landlords soon found the other half of Darger's life's work, perhaps the longest novel ever written: the more than 15,000 page, single-spaced typed In the Realms of the Unreal, an epic story of the virtuous



Vivian girls and their religious war against the evil Glandelinian army. For most of his life, Henry Darger, a recluse whom others called “Crazy,” had lived in this rich fantasy world. It was a world he had kept to himself.

Today, Henry Darger is considered to be one of America’s foremost outsider artists: an untaught artist working in isolation from the commercial or public eye. **IN THE REALMS OF THE UNREAL**, an adventurous documentary feature, explores the fantastic vision and shadowy life of this enigmatic artist.



Yu’s narrative short **BETTER LATE** was the debut film for the fXM Shorts Series. It has been featured in 60 festivals since its premiere at Sundance 1997, and it won First Prize for Short Drama at the New York Festivals. Her other films include **MEN OF REENACTION**, a documentary about Civil War reenactors, for which she received grants from ITVS and NEA; the popular black & white short **SOUR DEATH BALLS**, which won several awards, including Best Live Action Short at the Santa Barbara Film Festival, was featured at Berlin, Sundance, Telluride, Toronto, San Francisco, Sydney and the national PBS series **ALIVE TV**; **THE CONDUCTOR**, a musical comedy short featuring Mark Salzman (**IRON AN DSILK**) and the documentary **HOME BASE**, winner of several festival awards. She also directs commercials, for which she has won a New York Emmy.

Yu has served on the Board of Directors of the International Documentary Association, where she was an organizing member of the first International Documentary Congress. Yu has also written articles and fiction for the Los Angeles Times Magazine, Buzz, Worth, and the Pacific News Service. She received the Murrow Award for Journalism from the Skeptics Society, the DREAM Media Award from the Western Law Center for Disability Rights and ACV’s Asian American Media Award. She has lectured at various universities and conferences, including the Sun Valley Writers Conference. She has been profiled in The New York Times, People, the Los Angeles Times, and Working Woman magazine. She is a recent MacDowell Colony Fellow and a Yaddo Fellow. Yu graduated from Yale University, Phi Beta Kappa, Summa Cum Laude, with a B.A. in English.

About Director Jessica Yu

Jessica Yu • Director, Writer, Producer

Jessica Yu is a filmmaker based in Los Angeles. She won the 1997 Academy Award for Best Documentary Short for **BREATHING LESSONS: THE LIFE AND WORK OF MARK O’BRIEN**, an intimate portrait of the writer who lived for four decades paralyzed by polio and confined to an iron lung. The film also won over 20 festival awards, including the IDA Achievement Award, the Audience Award at Aspen Shortsfest, and First Prize at the St. Petersburg International Film Festival, since its debut at the Sundance Film Festival. She also won an Emmy and a Cable Ace Award for Best Documentary Director. Yu’s documentary **THE LIVING MUSEUM**, the award-winning HBO film about an art community in a New York mental institution premiered at the 1999 Sundance Film Festival.



In 2000, Yu was the artist-in-residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. Also, as the first director selected for the John Wells Director Diversity Program, she has directed episodes of the NBC dramas “The West Wing,” “Lyon’s Den,” “ER,” and “Mr. Sterling,” as well as “The Guardian” for CBS. Yu directs commercials with non-fiction spots of Santa Monica.





At Jennie Richee: Vivian Girls are Sent by General (Emperor) Vivian their Father to Seize a Certain Enemy Plan.

Director's Notes

I was first introduced to Henry Darger about 15 years ago at the LA County Museum of Art, where his work was included in a collection of "outsider art." It stood out to me for its combination of perverse subject matter and innocent presentation -- there was something about the total lack of irony in his depiction of soldiers wearing mortarboards or nude little hermaphrodites toting rifles. Such bizarre and powerful imagery, but without a wink and a nod. It really stayed with me, and I had no doubt that there was a lot more to that particular story. About 10 years later, I was giving a lecture on "The Living Museum" in Chicago, and a man in the audience asked me if I had heard of Darger. He was a journalist named Ted Shen, and he happened to be a friend of Darger's last landlord, Kiyoko Lerner. The next day Ted took me to the house, where Kiyoko graciously showed me a collection of Darger's paintings and then took me up into the 3rd floor room where he had lived for over 40 years.

Entering the room was a powerful experience, as Darger's presence was palpable in every square inch of the place. Everything in the room was something that he had chosen -- paper dolls, statues of the Virgin Mary, paint pots, boxes of rubber bands. And it had all aged to the same rich sepia tone.

There was incredible stillness in the room; you could see the dust hanging in the air. It was one of the most beautiful rooms I had ever been in, and in that moment I became obsessed with the thought of making a film about the artist who had lived there.

After seeing the hand-bound volumes of Darger's 15,000 novel, several hundreds of the paintings that accompanied it, the thousands of pages of notes and journals, and drawers filled with color tests, source material, and piles of clippings, it was clear that the paintings I had seen at LACMA could not be dismissed as the spontaneous output of a crazy man. They were definitely pieces of a much larger and more intricate puzzle, an epic work that consumed much of Darger's life. I wanted to learn the inner architecture of this grand structure. A daunting task, but I felt that Darger's work could only be done justice if treated as a whole -- the expression of a life.

I was drawn to this subject not only for the strange beauty of the work and the mystery of Darger's parallel lives, the "real" and the fantastical; I was moved by the fact that he created this work only for himself. Early on, I kept thinking of the John Donne quote, "No man is an island." It seemed that Darger was testing this idea. He had such a traumatic early life -- the loss of his mother and baby sister, his tumultuous confinement in a boys'

Untitled.



home and an asylum, the death of this father, not to mention the effects of poverty -- that it seems he willfully chose to create another world for himself. That became the central question of the film. Can one's imagination be enough to live on? Can one replace real human relationships and community with those invented in one's mind?

This question I explored in depth, as the film took about 5 years to make. The first year or so was almost purely research, as there was so much of Darger's writing (the 15,000 page novel, the hundreds of paintings, the journals and other collections) to go through. I'll admit to becoming semi-Darger-like during this

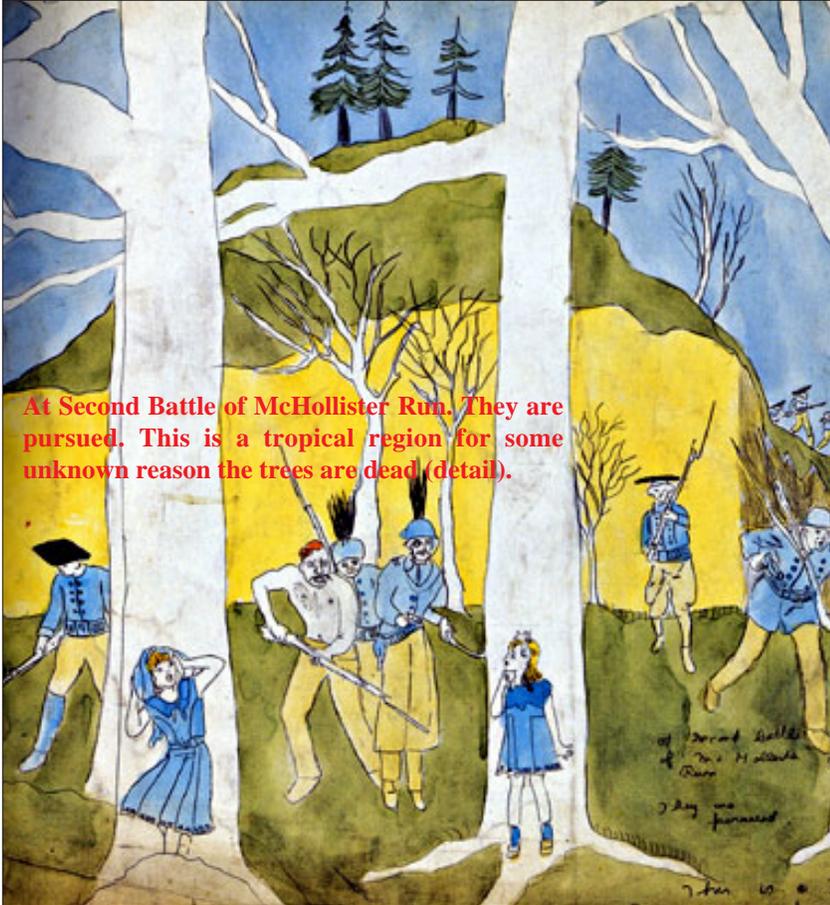
audience to become more immersed.

The last two years of the film were devoted to editing and animation; we worked with a team of seven animators. They did an amazing job, considering that their directive was to animate using only elements found in Darger's paintings, not to invent new elements. It was a very labor-intensive process, but I believe it more faithfully reflects the spirit of Darger's original work than slicker animation.

Jessica Yu

period, spending many night hours hunched over the microfilmed copies of his work, not wanting to leave the house. I was lucky enough to be able to film in Darger's room, which had been preserved twice since his death in 1973 before it was permanently dismantled in 2000. Because there are only three known pictures of Darger himself -- no home movies, very few people who even knew him -- the greatest challenge in the film was to evoke a sense of the man in the film. I decided early on not to include art experts or psychologists; when it comes to Darger we're all guessing anyway. By including impressions only from the people who actually knew him, I felt the film could present an amount of "evidence" to let the audience make up their own minds about what this man was like, and what his art meant. The idea behind the structure of the film was to parallel his real life with his fantasy life; as one reflects on the other, the oddness of his fantasy world becomes more accessible, enabling the

Storm Brewing (detail).



At Second Battle of McHollister Run. They are pursued. This is a tropical region for some unknown reason the trees are dead (detail).

Darger Princessized!

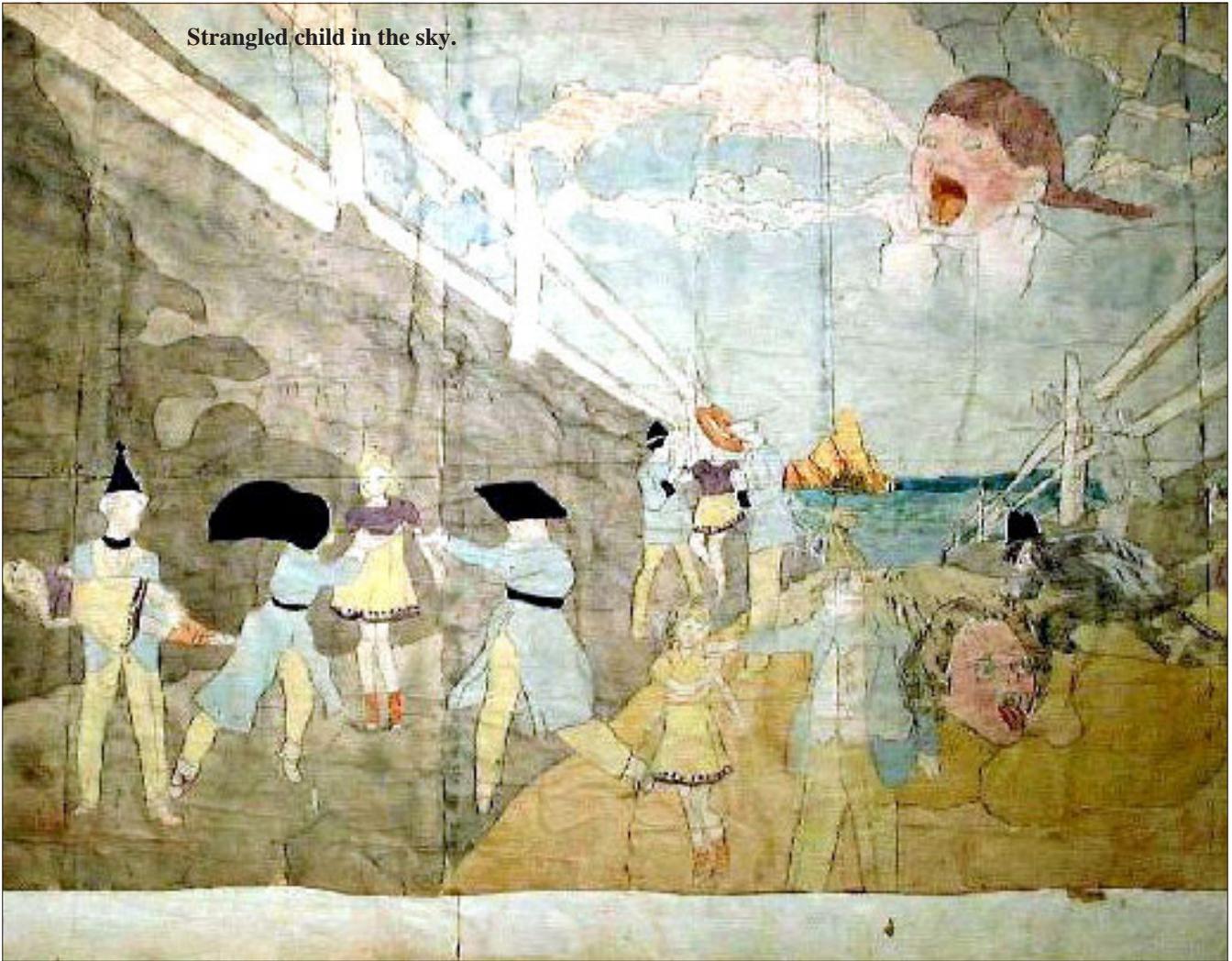
**So are they girlish boys
or girls with penises?**

Henry Darger's art sprang from the depths of his secretive and creative mind. The reclusive artist was totally unknown to the art world during his lifetime so there are no definitive answers and just clues because no one ever was able to ask him about his art.

Was he crazy? Inspired? A lover or hater of little girls or girlish boys? Did he even know what a little girl looks like between her legs or did he just assume they had genitals like boys?

In a majority of Darger's drawings (mostly poster-size watercolors), a lot of the girls/boys are naked and there is no mistaking that the girls(?) have a little penis and testicles between their legs. We love his drawings, but are not interested in nudity, so we put cute little panties on all these naked little boy-girls!

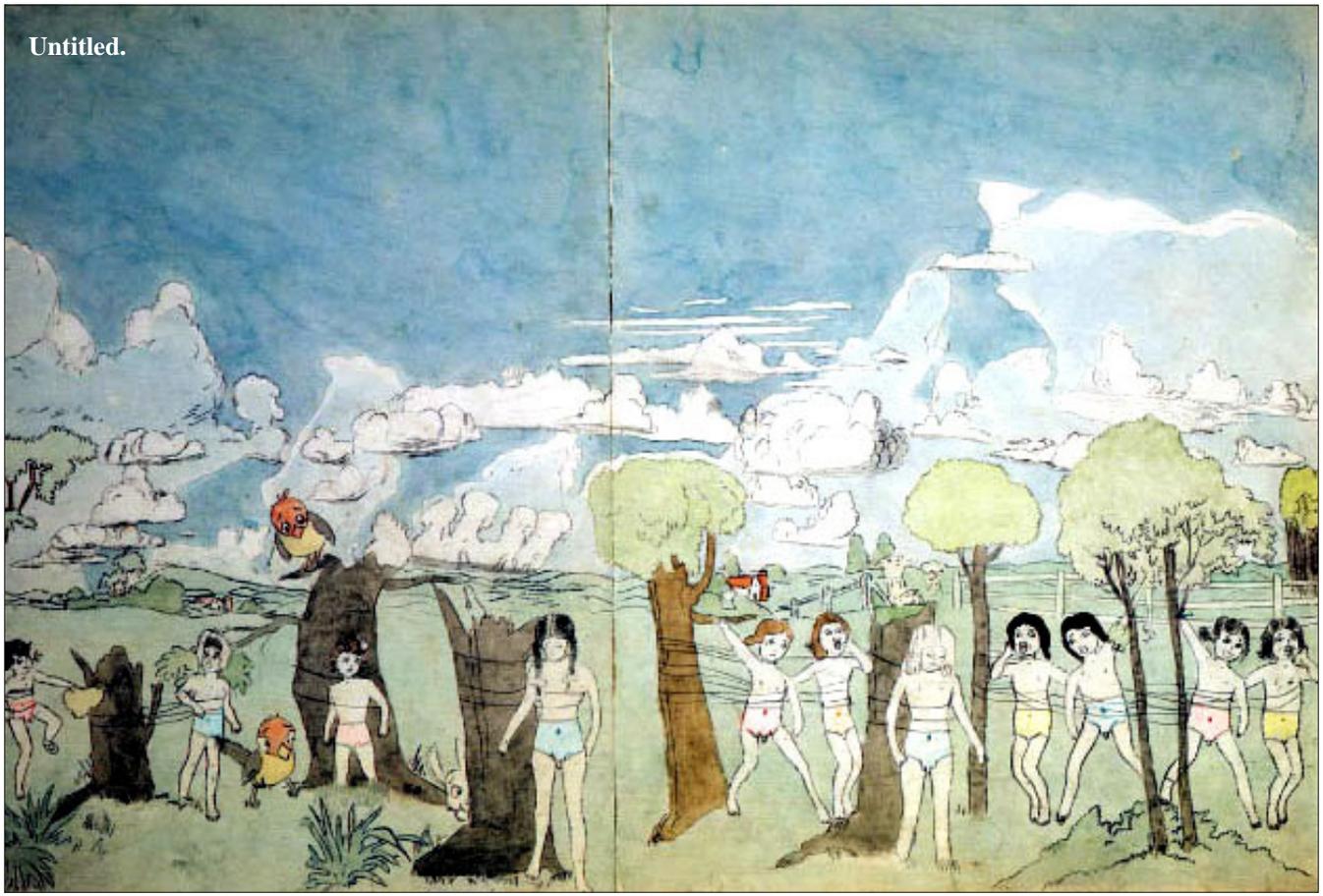
Strangled child in the sky.



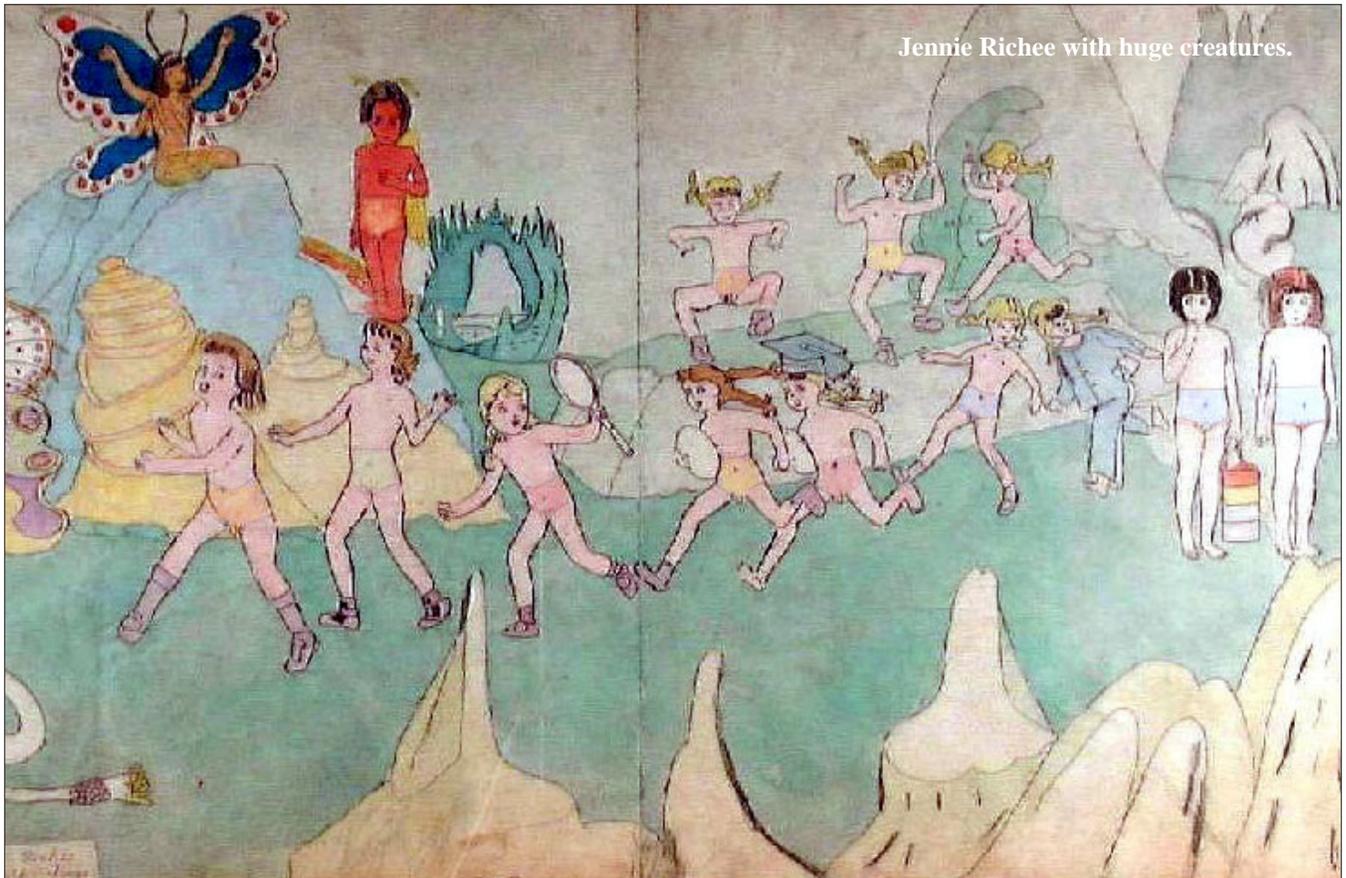
After Marcocino.



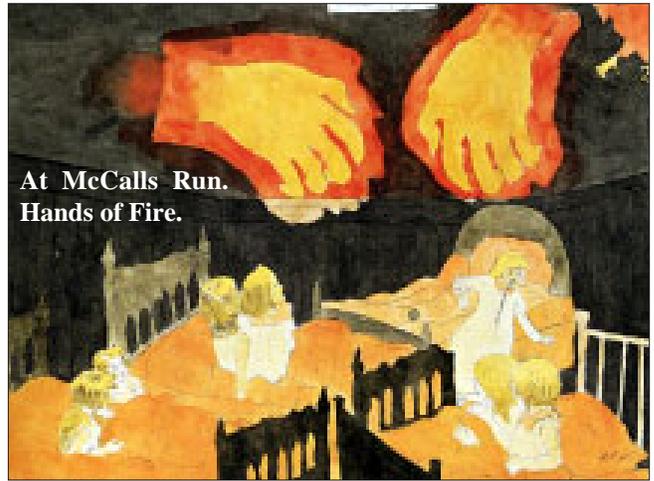
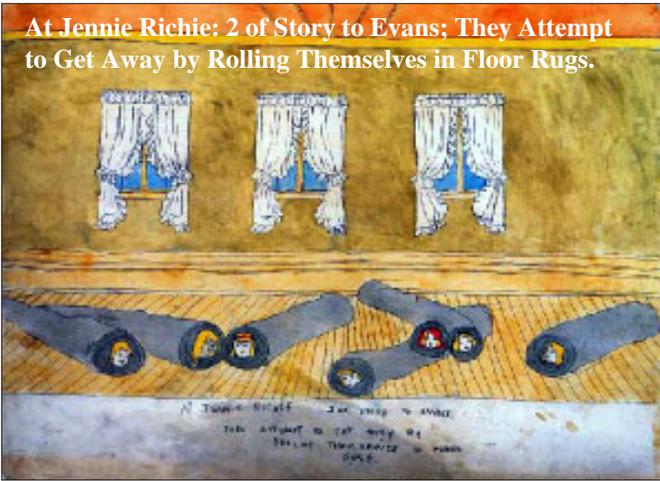
Untitled.



Jennie Richee with huge creatures.



At Jennie Richie: 2 of Story to Evans; They Attempt to Get Away by Rolling Themselves in Floor Rugs.

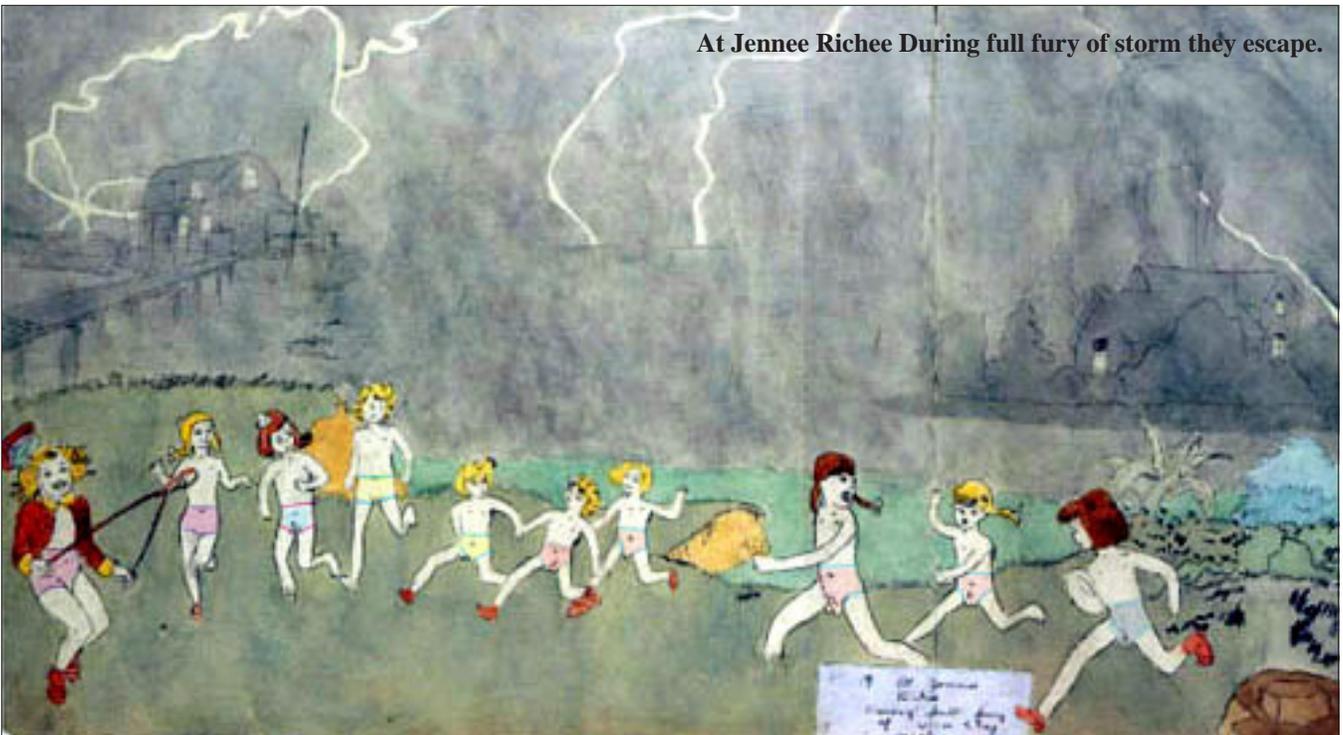


At McCalls Run. Hands of Fire.

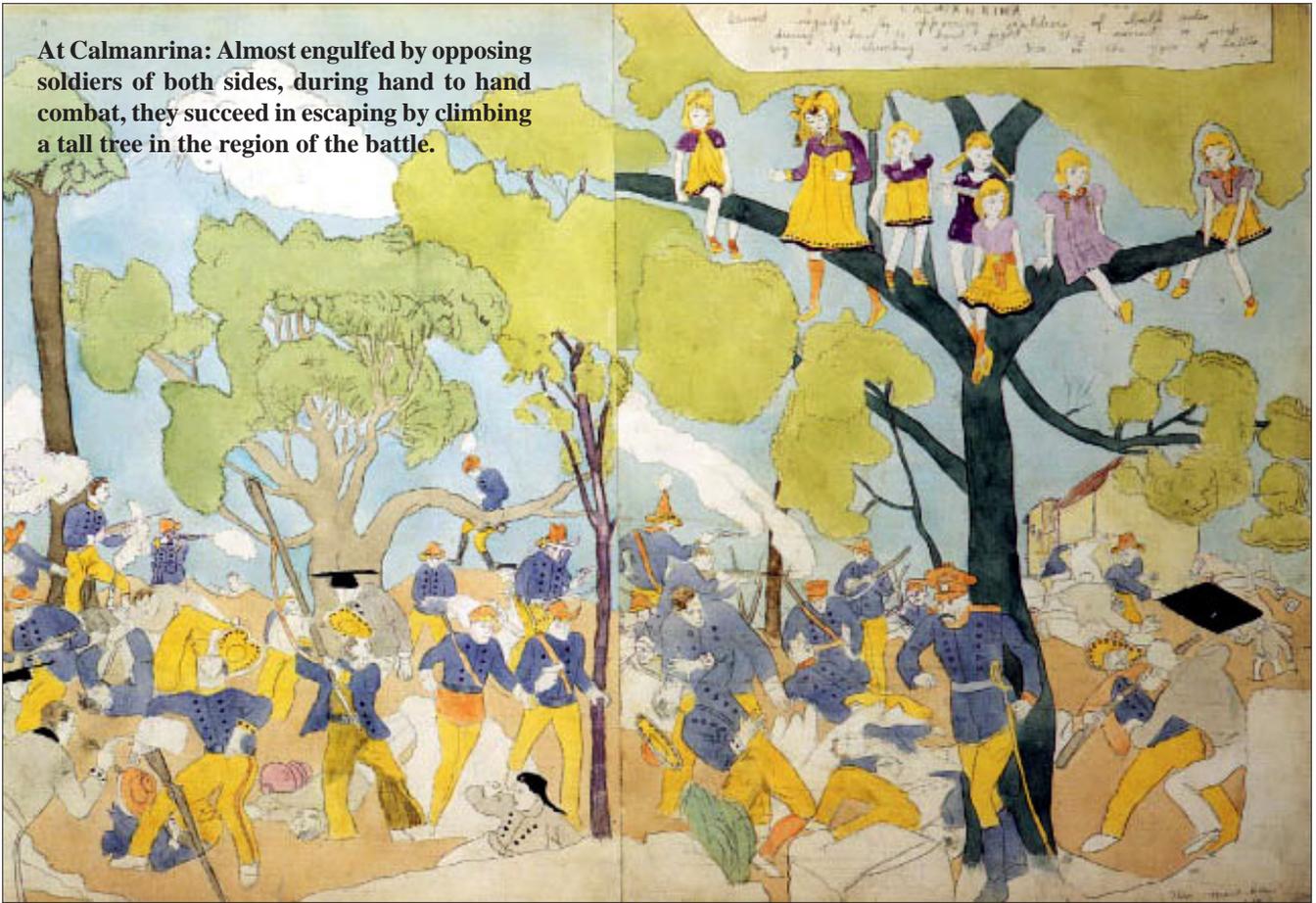
Episode 3 Place Not Mentioned.



At Jennee Richee During full fury of storm they escape.



At Calmanrina: Almost engulfed by opposing soldiers of both sides, during hand to hand combat, they succeed in escaping by climbing a tall tree in the region of the battle.



Untitled (detail).



**At Norma Catherine,
only to escape again.**

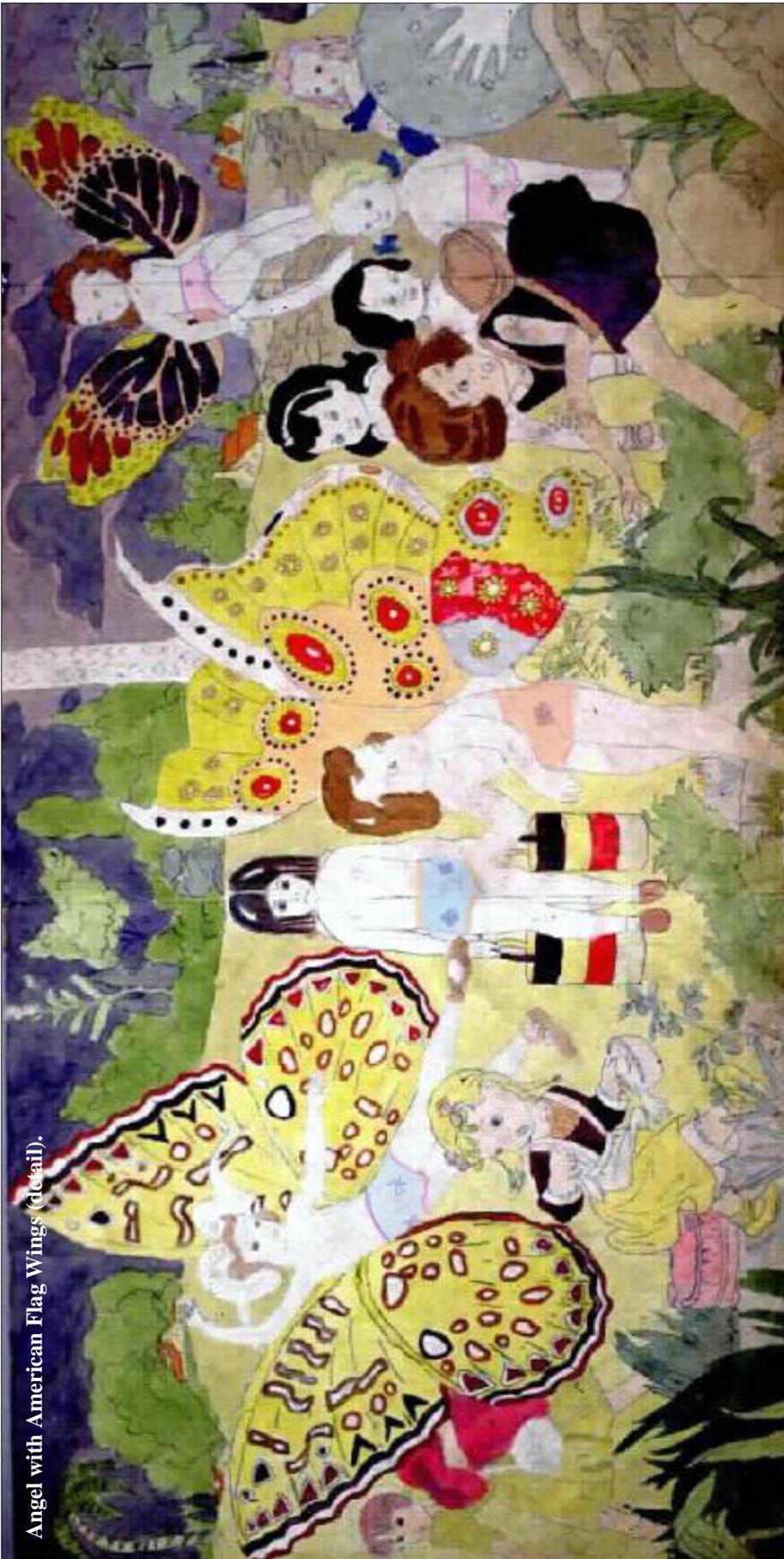


**At Phelantoburg Battle , they are caught
under shell fire of the greatest intensity.**



**At Norma Catherine,
Have Strange Horrid Dream.**

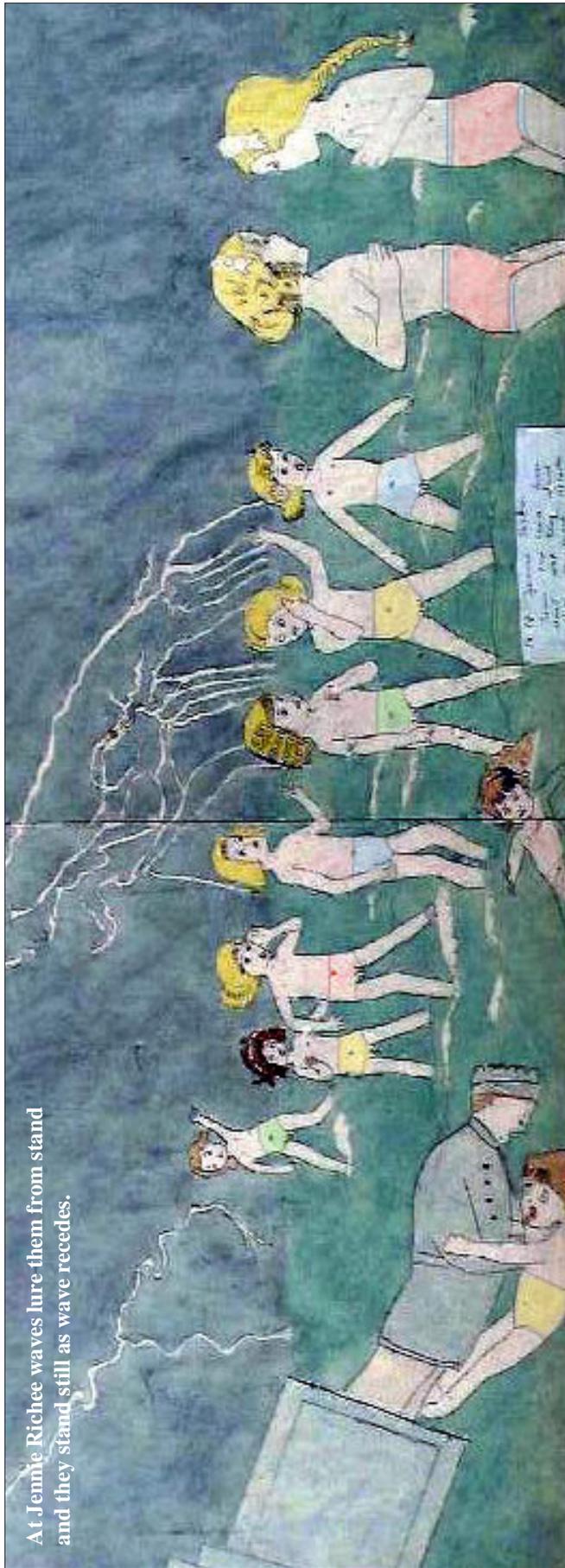




Angel with American Flag Wings (detail).



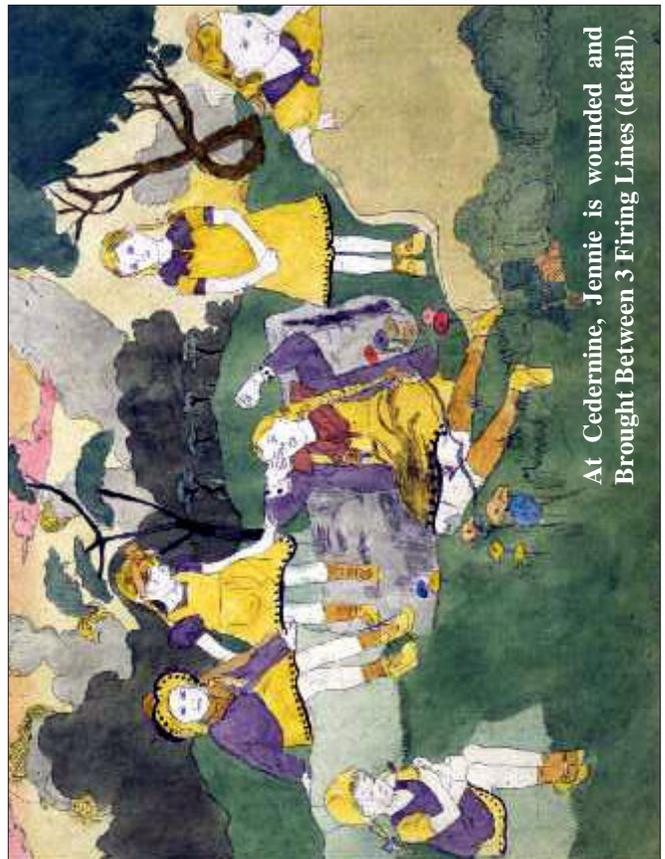
Many Birds in Flight



At Jennie Richee waves lure them from stand and they stand still as wave recedes.



At Journal They Escape.



At Cedernine, Jennie is wounded and Brought Between 3 Firing Lines (detail).

Storm Brewing (detail).



REVIEWS

"FAHRENHEIT 9/ 11 and Super Size Me have grabbed all the ink, but the year's best documentary just might be IN THE REALMS OF THE UNREAL."
-San Francisco Bay Guardian

One of Top Ten Documentaries of the Year!
-The Village Voice 2004 Film Critics' Poll

"ABSORBING AND EXQUISITE"
-San Francisco Chronicle

"Jessica Yu's elegant new doc IN THE REALMS OF THE UNREAL is a spry, creative response to his oceanic talent and claustrophobic life."
- Ed Park, Village Voice

"FABULOUS! A genre-busting journey! Jessica Yu's approach to the material is brilliant!"
- Melissa Levine, San Francisco Weekly

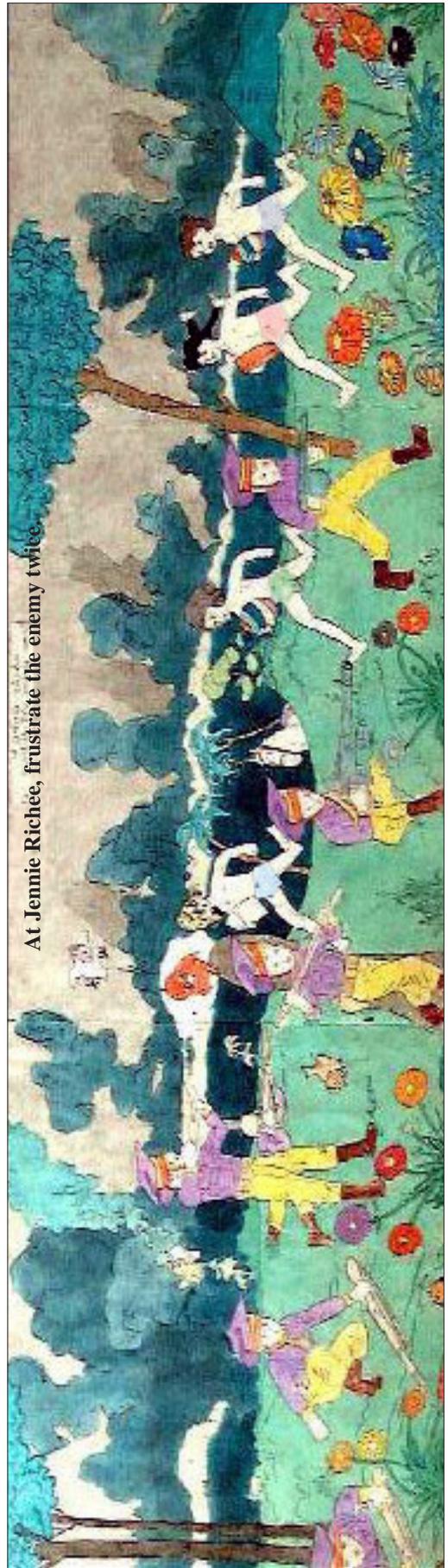
"Darger is one of the world's best-known outsider artists, but the fact that no one interviewed in IN THE REALMS OF THE UNREAL, Jessica Yu's excellent new documentary on his life and work, can agree on how to pronounce his name speaks volumes."
- Dave Kehr, New York Times

"A fascinating examination of a mysterious life and the truly bizarre art of that it spawned."
- Frank Scheck, Hollywood Reporter

"A thoughtful and inspired exploration of the man's life and leaves the viewer with a sense of wonder about the lives of countless people with unknown talents that deserve recognition."
- John McMurtie, San Francisco Chronicle



At Jennie Richee, lost in the wilderness in the dark (detail).



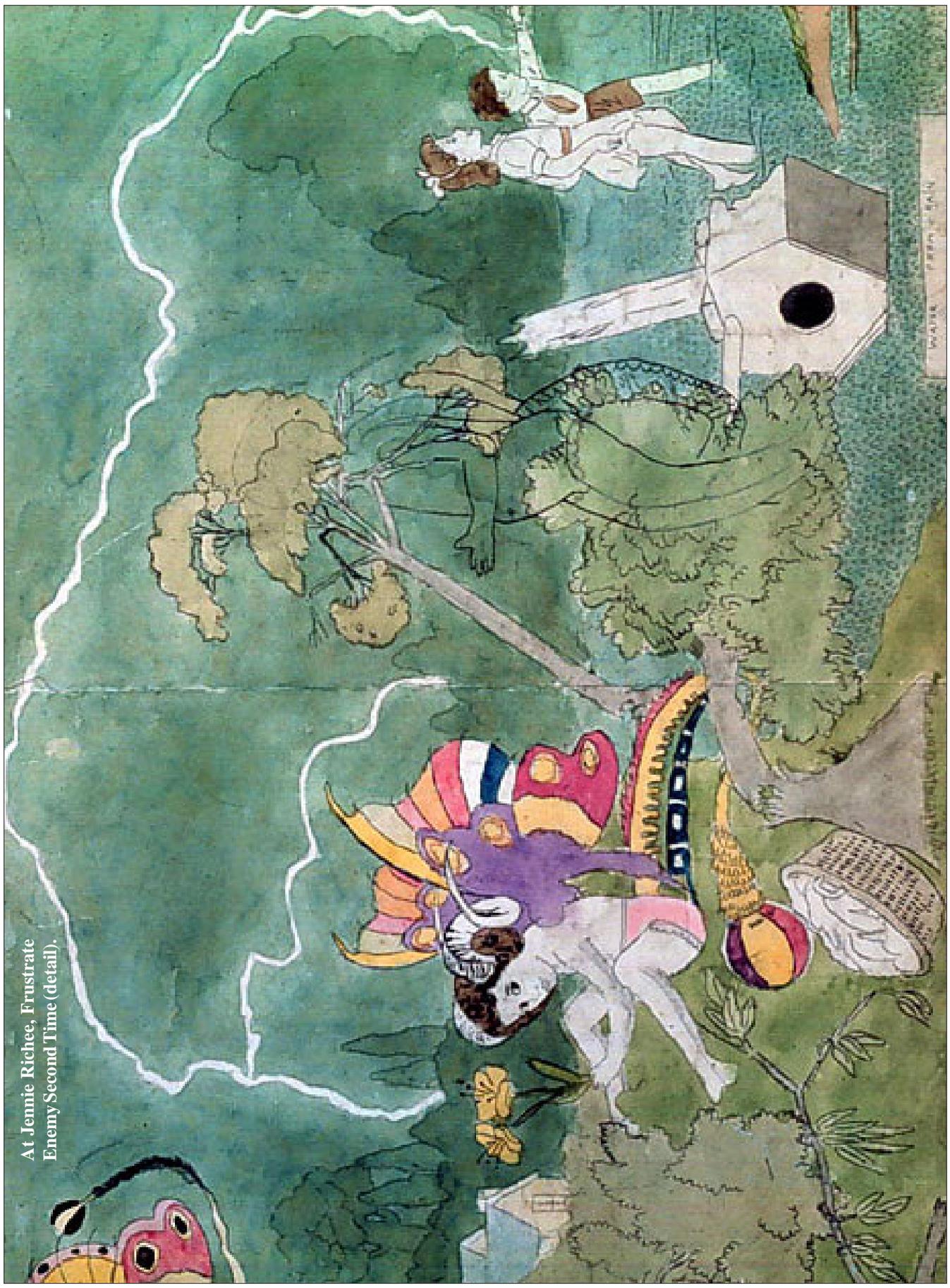
At Jennie Richee, frustrate the enemy twice.



Jennie Richie, lost in the wilderness in the dark (detail).

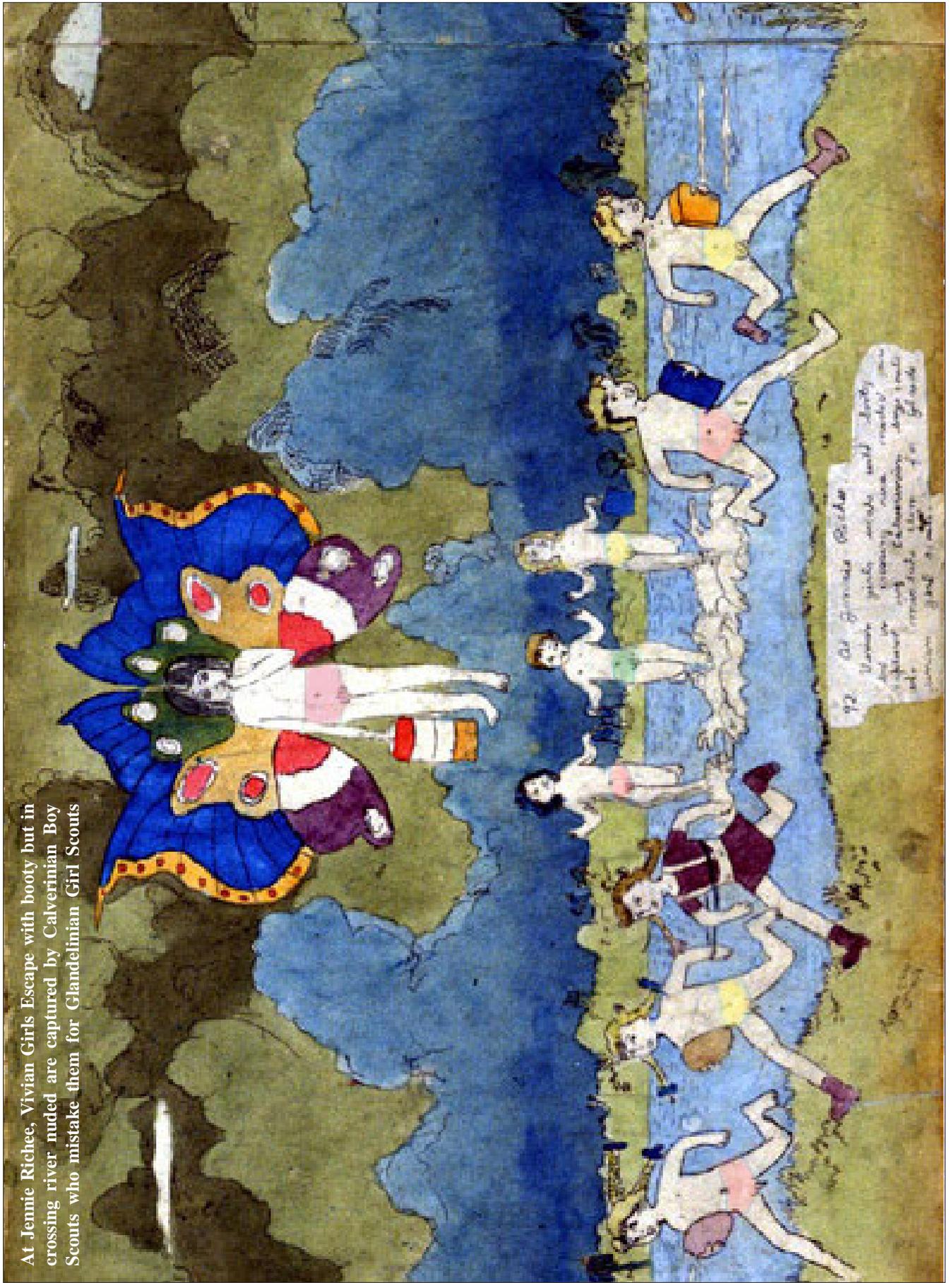


Battle Scene and Approaching Storm--reverse of painting described as Episode 3 Place Not Mentioned.



At Jennie Richee, Frustrate
Enemy Second Time (detail).

At Jennie Richee, Vivian Girls Escape with booty but in crossing river nuded are captured by Calvermian Boy Scouts who mistake them for Glandelinian Girl Scouts



At Jennie Richee
Vivian girls escape with booty
but in crossing river nuded
are captured by Calvermian
Boy Scouts who mistake them
for Glandelinian Girl Scouts



At Jennie Richee. After being shown how to escape from a cavern by their help, they ask creatures to display their wings, which they do (detail).