to the Barn and Back
At any moment, one can look west at the adjacent range of mountains and, if one is new to the area perhaps visiting from a place that orients itself by the presence of ocean or lake, possibly mistake the mountains for a large, hazy blue body of water. The range’s crest is rather flat and evokes the horizon of a great lake with a soft serrated edge of treetops that blend up into the sky. The Uphill home has gradually been enclosed in thick trees so one can’t view this mirage-like effect. I was trying to conceive of how to put a hole in the wall of forest, so when I eat my meal I can look out onto the sea.

Apparently this phenomenon of mistaken identity happens regularly in wooded parts. 500 miles to the west, this beach sits above the tree canopy and is waterless; it has a sea of green which washes ashore and produces what I call a ‘Reverse Oasis’ of isolated sand dunes. Taking turns, picnickers run uncontrollably down a steep sandy slope into the depths of modern and semi-modern camping outfits of southwest Michigan.
There are horizons appearing and disappearing everywhere. I moved out of the .5 mile radius last year and have missed it ever since. Its a radiant site. A spot on the fringe of Los Angeles County where ‘environmental warfare’ takes place.
In West Virginia a demon is growing out of this tree. I pass it when I walk up or down the drive-way. I’m walking down again; passing the demon I hear tarp sounds ahead of me. I stop because I want to go unnoticed. Then a boy walks past, crossing the driveway with a large bag of something swung over his shoulder. Chicken feed, likely. I avoid human interaction because I want to write and sing to Bucket.
This family in WV must get used to artists coming to stay at the residency. I suddenly become aware that I am the first one they might see, or come into contact with.

“Hello.” “Hello.”
This barn will be the print studio. Its exterior will not change, however the inside will be a fully finished space, housing many different forms of printmaking.

Do these trucks care?
Do these plastic barrels care?
Does the pesticide sprayer?
West Virginia
The future woodshop-toolshop.
Bucket hears me coming towards the barn and jumps out of her bucket that sits atop the hanging ladders. She seems excited to see me but pauses at the barn door because the rain has just picked up again. A bee lands on a leaf of clover to drink from a raindrop which is caught there. Bucket circles my legs. I think writing this photo journal might be a good idea. It might make a compelling log which describes a very certain moment at this certain place in the beginning of another transition.
The bee containers are supposedly out of use. As I stand here I observe a nearly constant passing of worker bees, one at a time, flying in and out of the box.

I revisit the five ladders hanging on the wall of the barn, below where Bucket sleeps, to gauge their form and mobility for an idea I have to make a farm sculpture. It goes like this:

Four of the five ladders are more sinuous and have a graceful sloping curve in their side. This is what initially attracted me to them. The fiberous sinew and the bending sinuous allure. They once brought apples down from the tops of apple trees, by workers with buckets strapped to their waists. It is hard for me to imagine an apple tree on this farm tall enough to require a ladder of this length. I am reminded of cherry picking on the Good Music Berry Farm and approximate these ladders’ length to those of the cherry picking ladders we used. The cherry ladders had a double side, which opened up in triangular support, unlike these apple ladders which are only themselves. They depend on the form of the tree to rest upright on. This sculpture is a stile. The word ‘stile’ is one that I just learned here. A stile provides passage to humans, but not to animals, to cross a boundary of somekind (likely a wall or fence, as one would find at the horse pasture here). My mind has projected many nuances onto this piece. It’s back and forth, up and down, climbing over imaginary and real borders, segregating the human bodies from the nonhuman bodies, a physical outline and exercise routine for the imaginary. Sometimes you gotta rearrange the furniture to make new rules and meanings.
These are apple boxes. The name means something different in Los Angeles. Here it means, boxes that carry apples.
Bucket drinks water collecting on the top of a plastic barrel.

Robert Smithson would here offer something crafty about entropy and from this photograph extend a poetic visual action. I remind myself that Robert Smithson was not just Robert Smithson and look for a good place to squat.
I imagine myself at 16. I have a striped turtleneck on and a blue cotton workers coat which velcros at the neck. I conceal the white of the velcro by only wearing the coat closed, I find myself embarrassed when it shows. I am learning guitar from the Beatles song book that my mom gave to me on my birthday, it came from a trunk which was stuffed with many little gifts. I can’t remember the other gifts now, but I do remember the smell and sensation of lifting the lid to reveal a cache of birthday presents. I kept the gifts as they were in the trunk for weeks after to preserve the objects in their state as presents. Having a birthday and coming home to find a helium balloon tied to the dining room chair for you was always a little embarrassing.
I imagine the ladder project behaving like the fallen branches of these trees.
Attracted by the tree branches to the backside of the shed, I find more bee cabinets that are managed and in use. I photograph them and worry that I am fetishizing the rural features beyond what's normally comfortable.
On cue, Ruth starts barking from the front porch of Doug and Cindy.

Clouds rise like steam off the hills. The postwoman refuses to drive her mail truck up the drive way, so a rock holds down the green plastic tub for packages at the foot of the drive. Irises gone to seed, mostly conceal a blue kayak. I suck on the stem of a young Queen Anne's Lace blossom and consider the view.