



*A reflection on drawing as meditation
by Linda Brown Holt copyright 2010*

THE ZEN DRAWINGS OF H.D. THOREAU

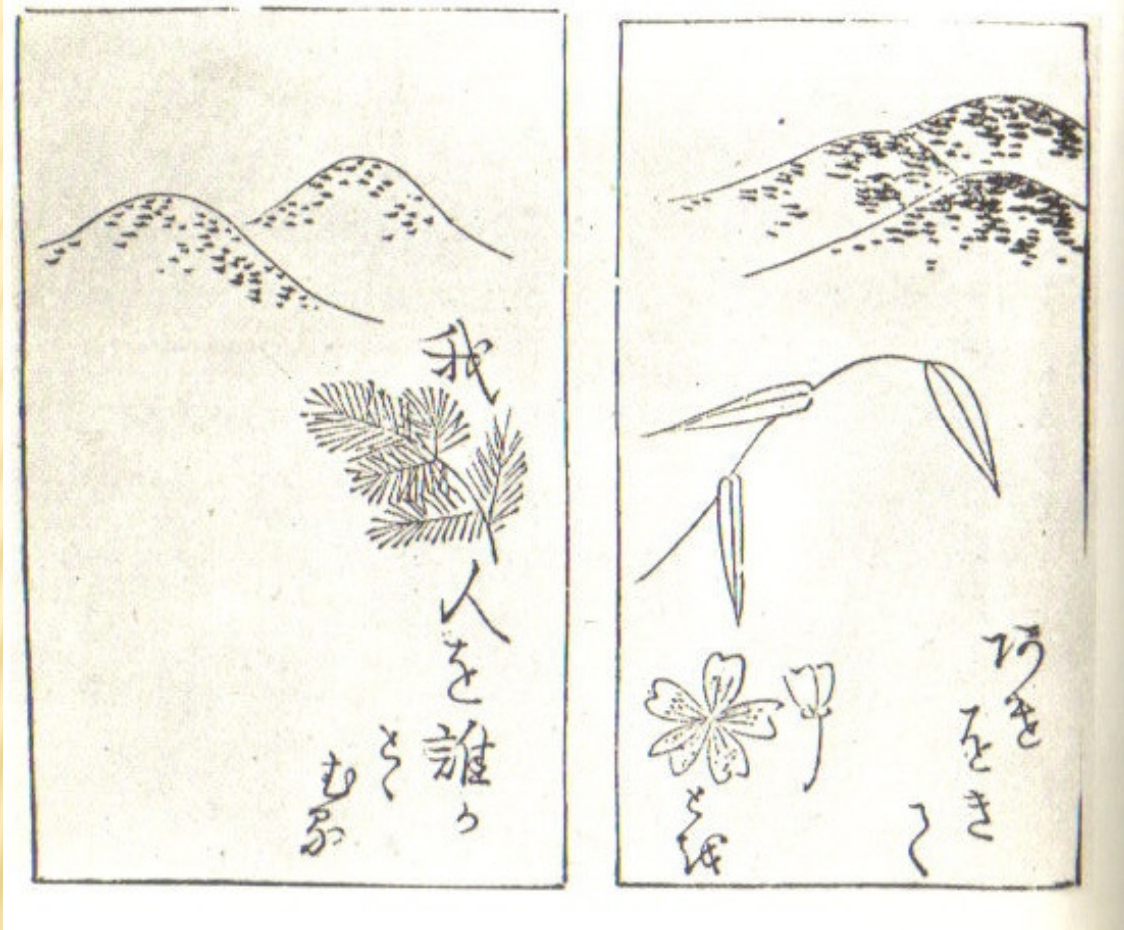
INTRODUCTION

What is drawing?
What is “Zen drawing”?

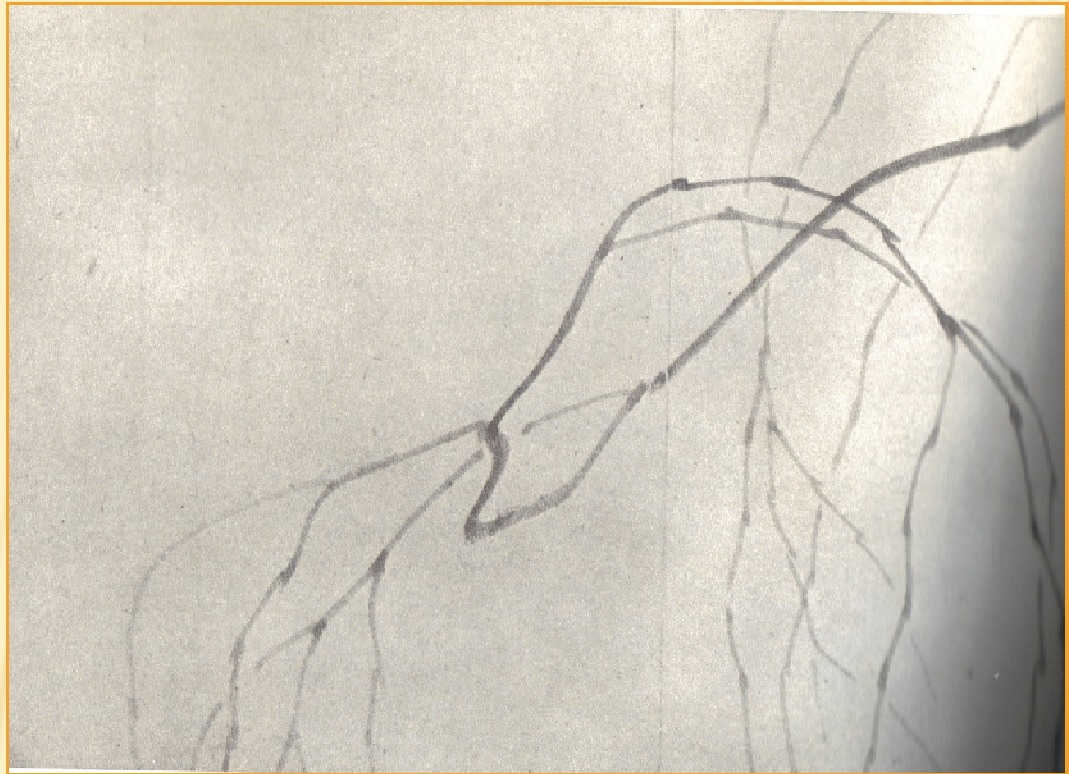


Lobster, from the Indian Notebooks

SIMPLE DRAWINGS WITH WORDS



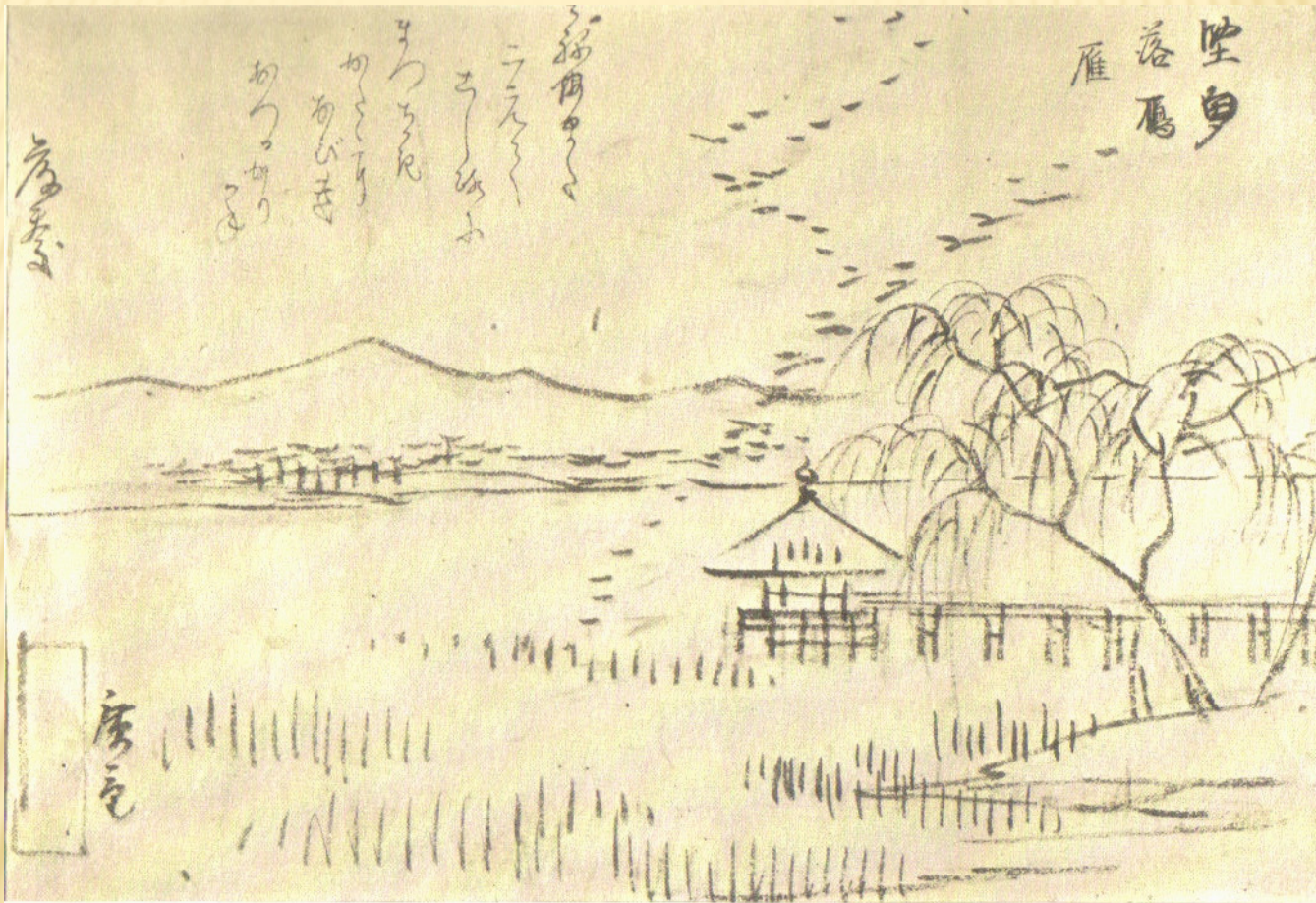
Anonymous sketches from Masaharu Anesaki's *Art, Life, and Nature in Japan*, 1973, Charles E. Tuttle Company.



BRANCHES BY MATSUMURA KEIBUN (1779-1843)

From *Birds, Beasts, Blossoms, and Bugs: The Nature of Japan* by
Harold P. Stern, 1976, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, New York

HIROSHIGE (1797-1858), WILD GEESE



From J.R.Hillier's *Drawings of the Masters: Japanese Drawings from the 17th through the 19th Centuries*, 1965, Shorewood Publishers, NY

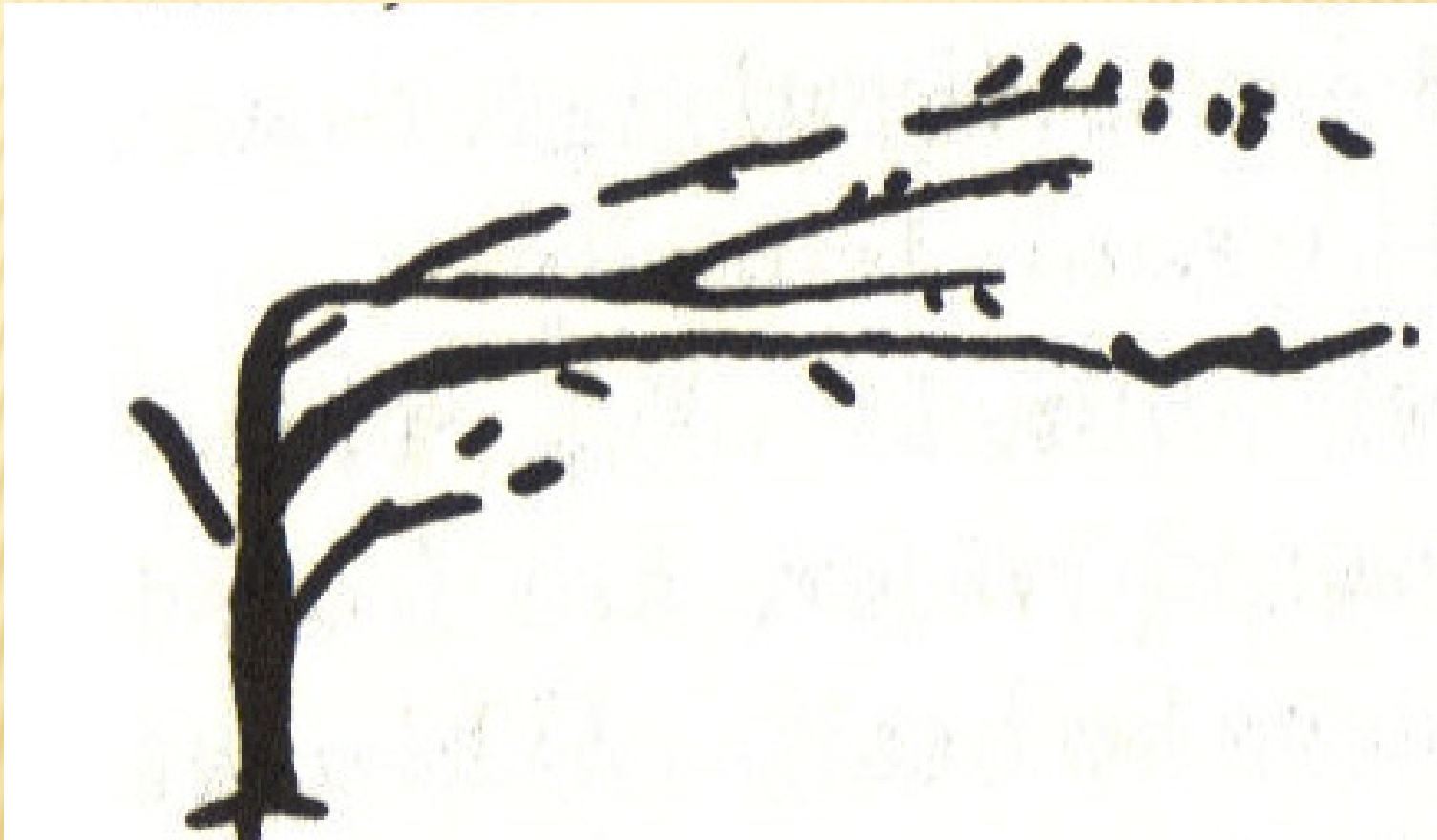
THE ART OF DRAWING, THE ACT OF WRITING

- ✘ Drawing as an adjunct to writing
- ✘ The contemplative mind and drawing
- ✘ The line that leads from the eye...to the hand...to the empty page...



The Journals, Jan. 26, 1856

TUPELO - JOURNAL 2/11/1859



INFLUENCES ON THOREAU'S ART

- ✘ The teaching of drawing in early 19th century New England: home and school
- ✘ Learning through copying
- ✘ Map-making and draftsmanship
- ✘ Life as a pencil maker and surveyor
- ✘ Ruskin, 1857, *The Elements of Drawing*

OTHER WRITERS/COMPOSERS WHO WERE ALSO ARTISTS

- ✘ Amiri Baraka
 - ✘ The four Brontë siblings
 - ✘ William S. Burroughs
 - ✘ Jean Cocteau
 - ✘ Hermann Hesse
 - ✘ Felix Mendelssohn
 - ✘ Beatrix Potter
 - ✘ Kurt Vonnegut
- ...and many others



Heartsease by Charlotte Brontë 1832

Source: David Friedman,
TheWritersBrush.com

A DRAWING BY FELIX MENDELSSOHN



Grove at Interlaken, 1842, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

EMILY BRONTË'S DRAWING IN HER DIARY

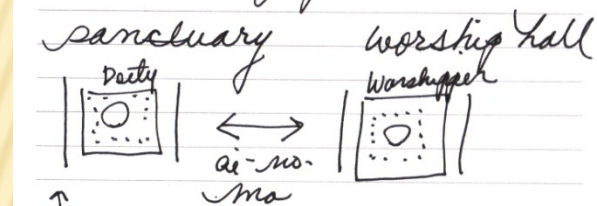
From *The Art of the Brontës*, Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars, 1995, Cambridge University Press, Plate 316



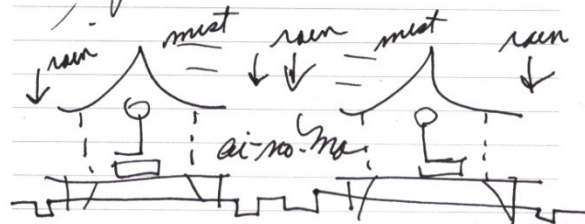
LIV Emily Brontë, Diary paper, 1837 (316)

...AND MY NOTES FROM A WEBINAR 9/27/09

③ Hachiman Shrine
in Kamakura,
Japan



↑ rain gutters
connecting / merging
space



prerational sense
of wholeness

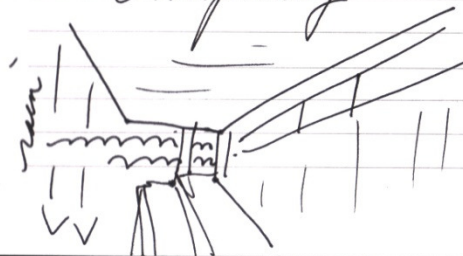
many modern Japanese
unfamiliar w/ ai-no-ma
en-ga-wa - side
rever

Daisen-in, Kyoto, Japan
part
of Daitoku-ji
gravel carefully raked
every day

2 mounds
asymmetrical

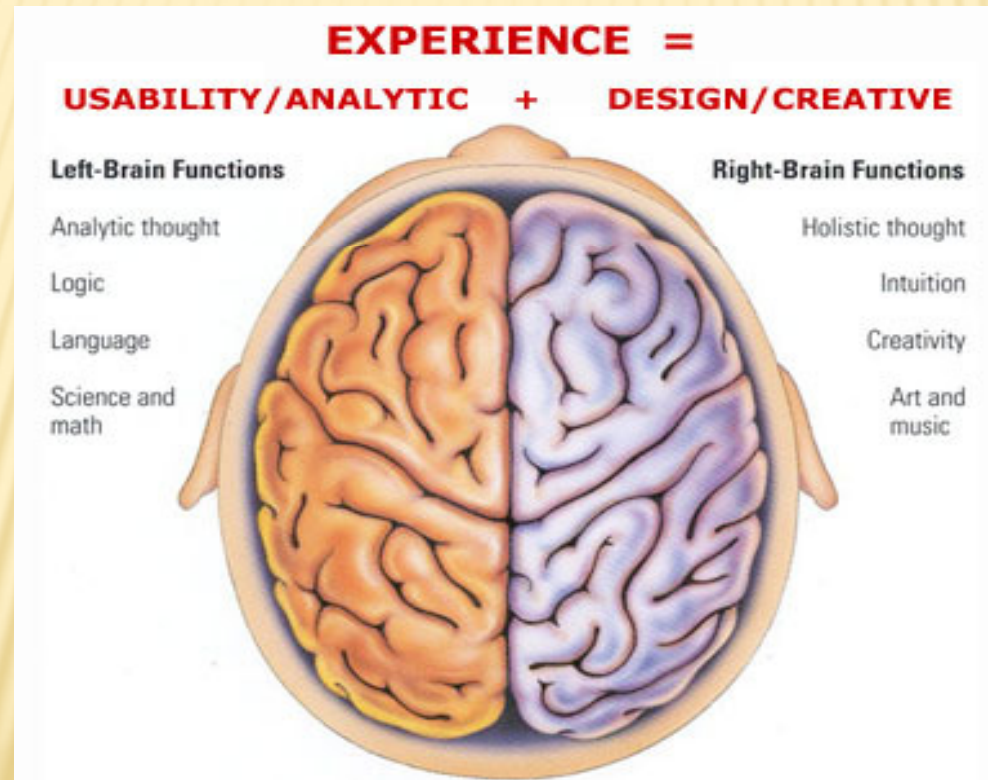
Soen Ozeki is abbot
of Daisen-in

preparation for
mystery



DRAWING AND THE BICAMERAL BRAIN

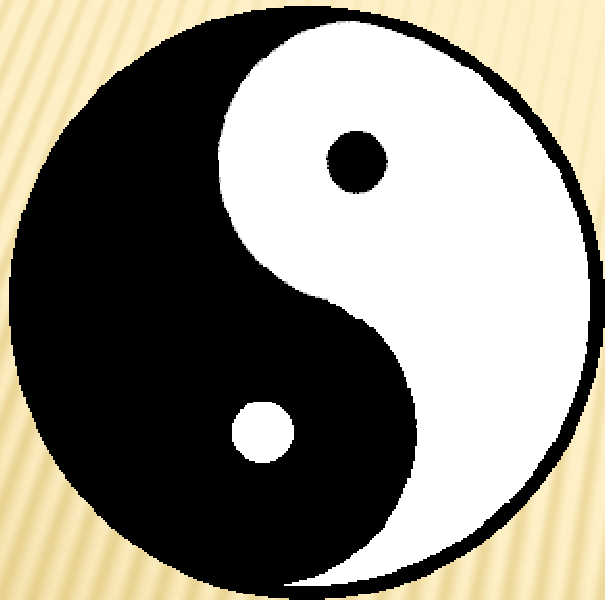
Processing information, expressing the self



Source: squidoo.com/braintest

A MATTER OF BALANCE

✘ The bicameral brain and the taiji symbol



- Asian principles of balance
- Practice, focus, and spontaneous expression
- Thoreau's reading and practice in Indian and Chinese philosophy

EXAMPLES OF CHINESE WISDOM LITERATURE AVAILABLE IN BOSTON IN THOREAU'S TIME

- × **The Four Books:**

- ×
- × The Great Learning
- × The Doctrine of the Mean
- × The Analects of Confucius
- × The Mencius

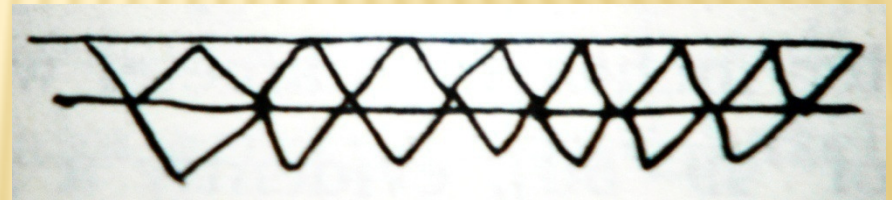
- × **The Five Classics:**

- ×
- × Changes (the famous *Yi Jing*, also romanized as *I Ching* and *Yi King*)*
- × Poetry
- × Rites
- × History
- × Spring and Autumn Annals

* There is no evidence that HDT read or had access to the *I Ching*

ZEN DRAWINGS FROM THE JOURNALS

- ✘ The first image is dated Nov. 26, 1850 in Volume 2 (the inner, pointed part of a hemlock knot)
- ✘ The last is dated Nov. 17, 1860 (the Heywood lot between the railroad and Fair Haven)



START OF A DATABASE ON DRAWINGS

Database of Thoreau Drawings of Interest - Microsoft Excel non-commercial use

Home Insert Page Layout Formulas Data Review View

Normal Page Layout Page Break Preview Custom Views Full Screen Workbook Views

Ruler Formula Bar
 Gridlines Headings
 Message Bar Show/Hide

Zoom 100% Zoom to Selection

New Window Arrange All Freeze Panes Split Hide Unhide View Side by Side Synchronous Scrolling Reset Window Position Window

G59 makes me think of Picasso's line drawings

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Volume I	Journal Vol.	Year	Journal Date	Page Number	Drawing
2					in 2-Vol Edition	
3						
4		Vol. 2	1850	26-Nov	173	inner, pointed part of a hemlock knot
5						a birch bark vessel for water
6						three views of a log trap
7			1851	12-Feb	183	ice flakes
8				3-Jun	201	fallen oak
9				10-Jul	218	forms of clouds (seven or eight slanting to the right)
10		Vol. 3	1852	11-Apr	375	reflection of hillside in the water
11						reflected maples
12				18-Apr	383	corded wood
13				19-Apr	385	the undulating motion of three blue herons
14						(very simple graphic, indicative of <i>movement</i>)
15		Vol. 4		1-May	402	little peeping frogs
16				3-May	404	nice sketch: hill and opposite woods dark with fine effect
17				26-Jun	438	a skater insect casts seven flat globular shades
18				8-Jul	451	a luna moth
19				18-Jul	460	pontederia along the river's meander in Sudbury
20				30-Sep	493	the shape of a bee's flight (3 shapes)
21				16-Dec	508	the reflection of the snow on Pine Hill from Walden

TYPES OF DRAWINGS AND SUBJECTS

- ✘ Leaves, twigs, trees, plants
- ✘ Landscapes and cloudscapes
- ✘ Ice and snow
- ✘ Map-like drawings
- ✘ Animals and birds
- ✘ Man-made objects

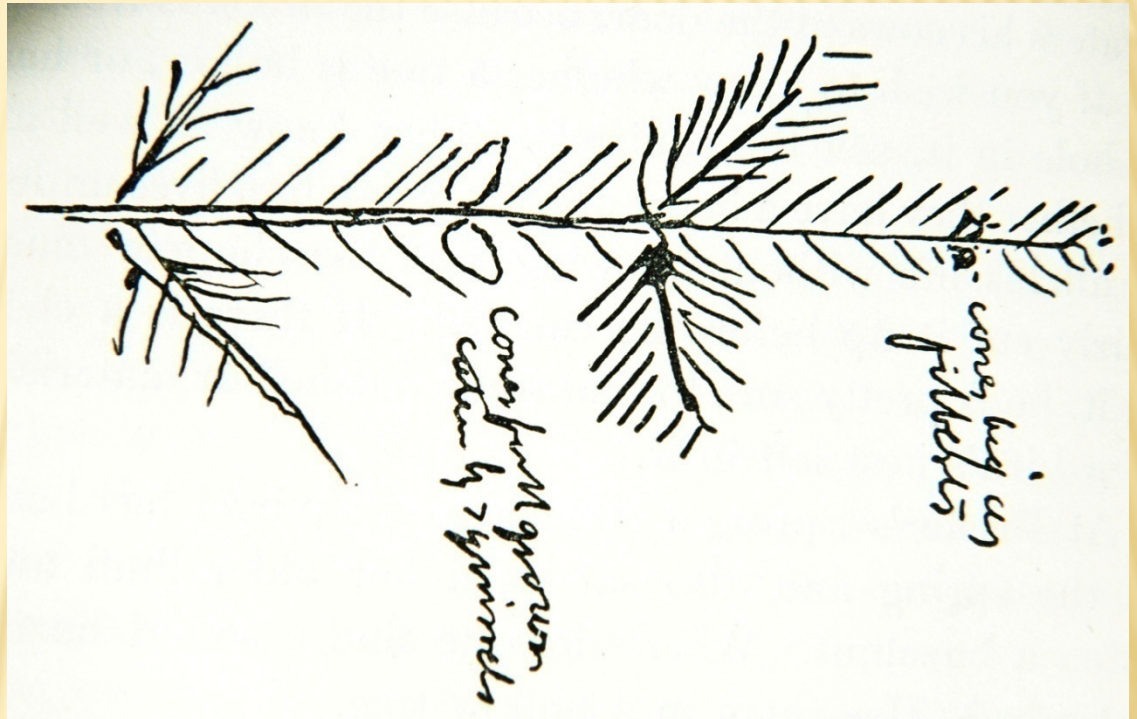
DRAWING STYLES

- ✘ Sketches with choppy lines
- ✘ Single flowing lines
- ✘ Dots (“pointillism”)

TYPES OF DRAWINGS, STYLES, AND SUBJECTS IN THE JOURNALS

A rabbit had "gnawed off the sides or cheeks of the twig to come at the stem of the cone..."

Text right reads, "cones big as filberts" and to the left, "cones full grown eaten by squirrels"



JOURNAL - VOL. 8 - JAN. 22, 1856

Leaf crystals
in ice, Jan. 1,
1856, Journal

ing from this, commonly opposite,
ringing again from these last, as in

t run-

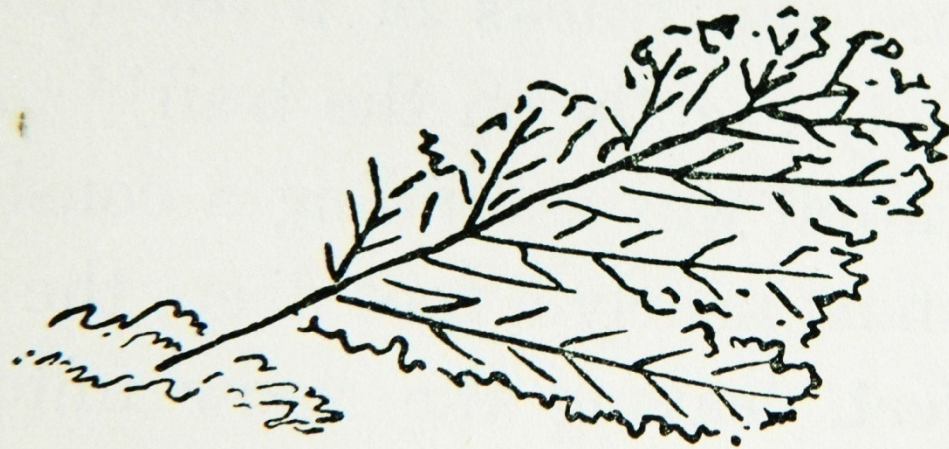
ion in

much

subdi-

e can-

re so



they melt under your breath while
them. A fisherman says they were

A DRAWING IN CONTEXT

ON THE POND (JOURNAL, MAY 14, 1853)



CY TWOMBLY'S *QUATTRO STAGIONI: INVERNO*, 1993-4 ("WINTER")



<http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/cytwombly/resources.shtm>

SENGAI (1750-1837)



Sengai's hanging scroll "The Willow," Idemitsu Museum of Art

TUFTED GRASS COATED WITH ICE
JOURNALS 12/30/1855

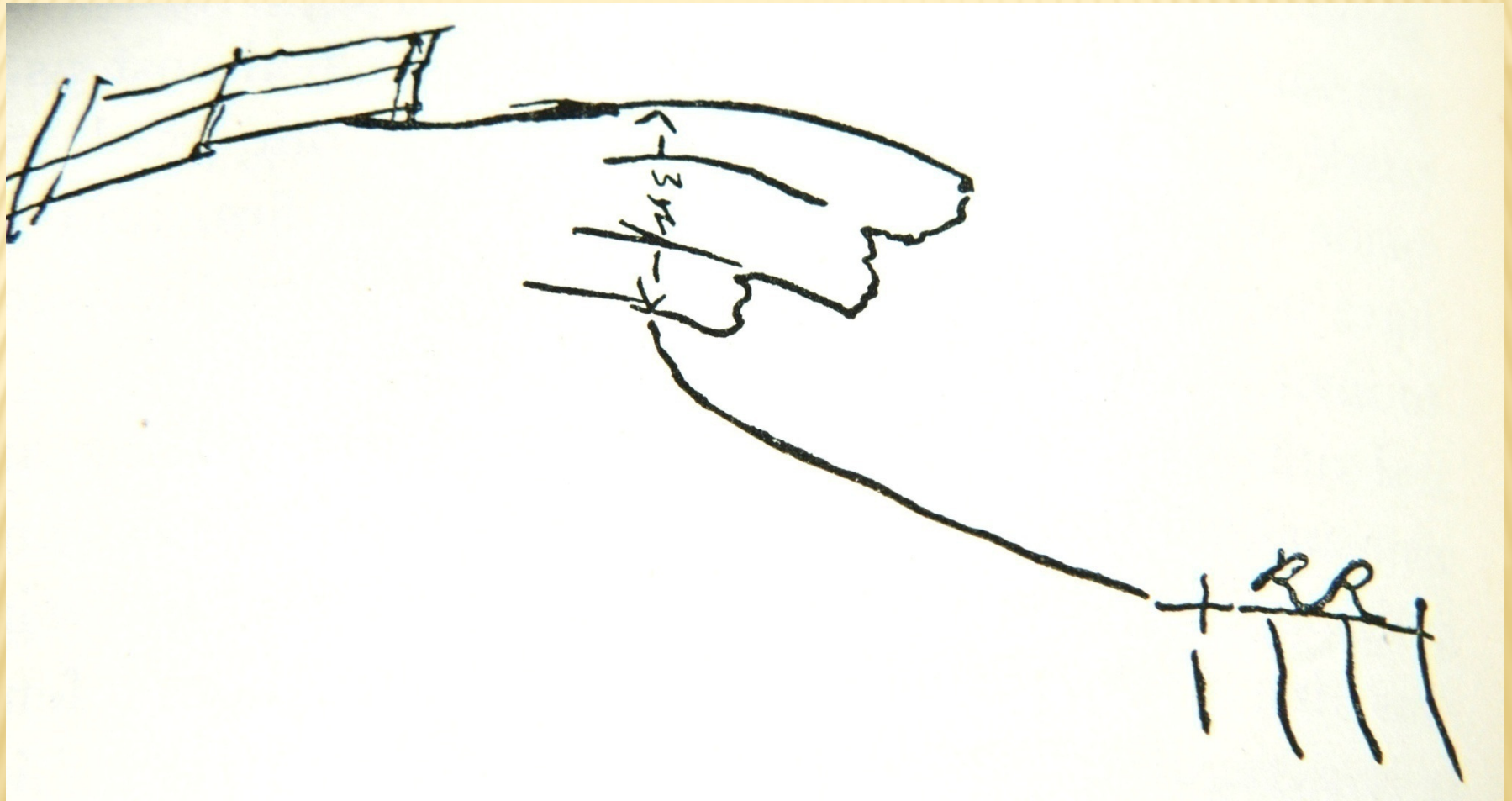


GERANIUM
JOURNAL 6/13/1854

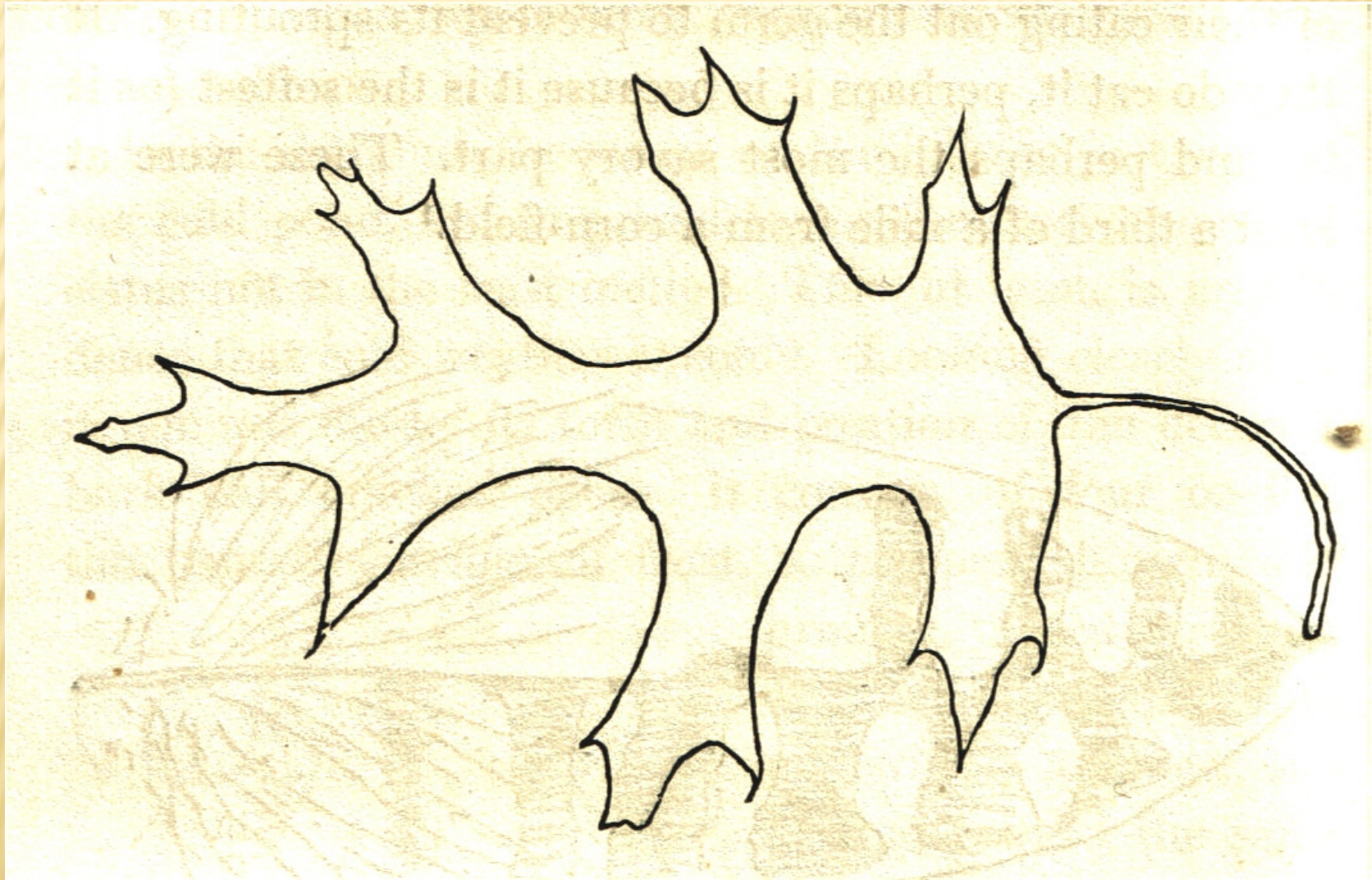


TWO STYLES OF BOTANICAL DRAWING

SNOW DRIFTS - JOURNAL 1/6/1856



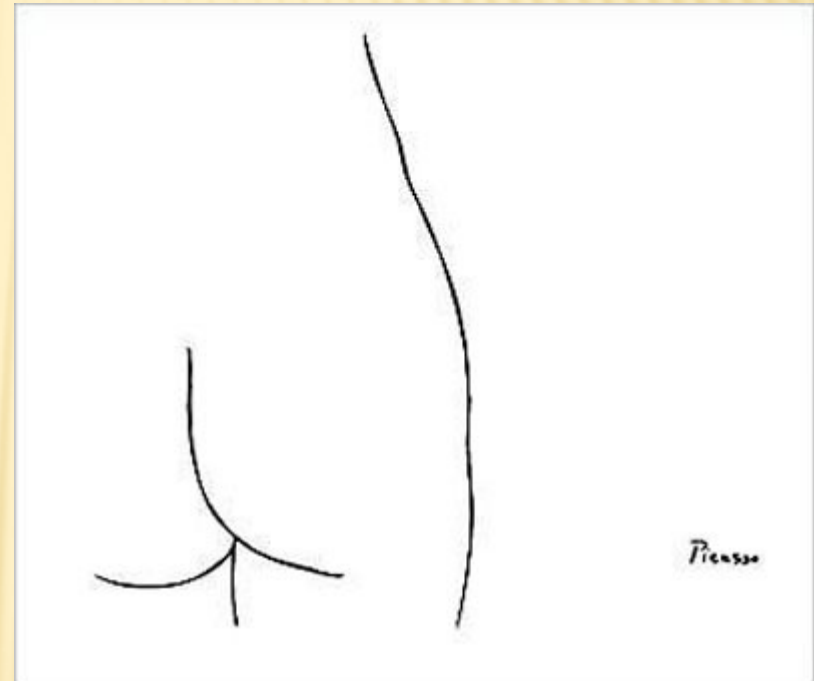
SCARLET OAK LEAF – JOURNAL 11/11/1858



MATISSE TREE STUDY 1941

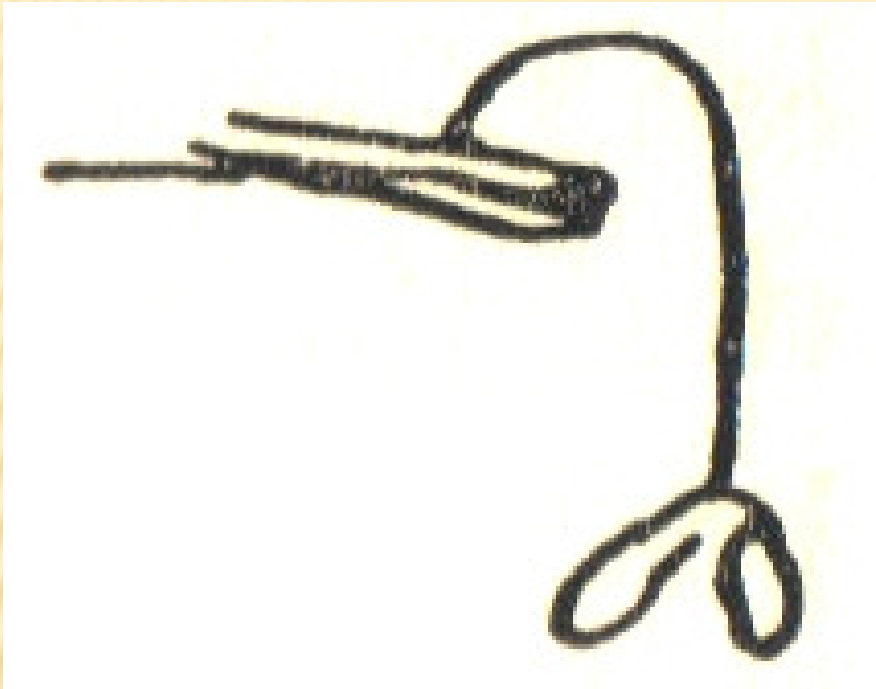


PICASSO FEMME 1931

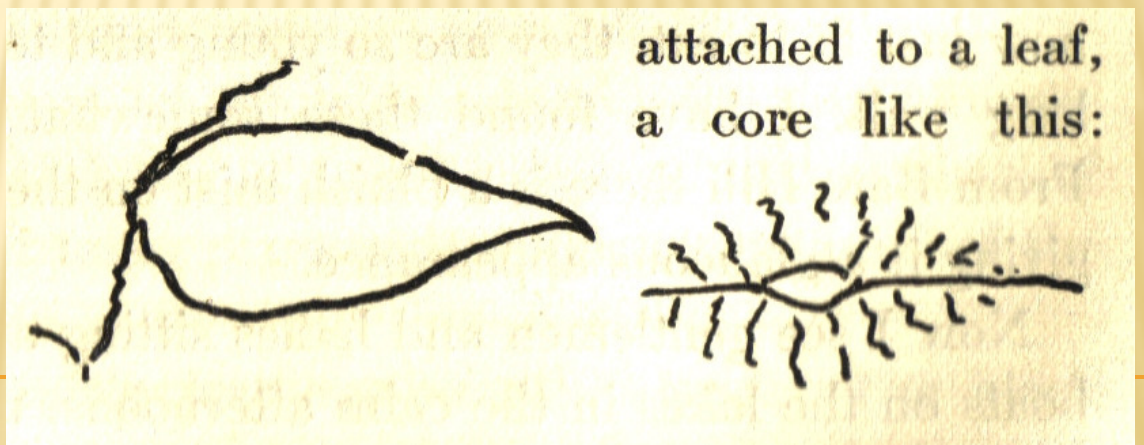


USE OF FLOWING LINE BY 20TH CENTURY ARTISTS

DOUBLE SAMARAE 5/16/1860

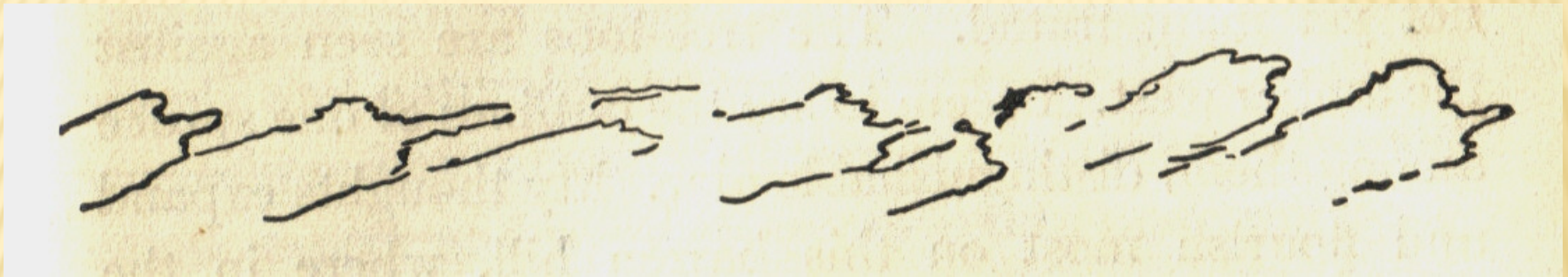


OAK GALLS 6/2/1854



attached to a leaf,
a core like this:

CLOUDSCAPES



Clouds – Journal 7/10/1851



Clouds and Rain – Journal 4/24/1857

JOHN RUSKIN'S DRAWINGS FROM THE ELEMENTS OF DRAWING 1857

II. SKETCHING FROM NATURE

93

... terminate in the heart of the tree, but the idea
... purpose in every branch are to carry all its child
... well out to the air and light, and let each of them,
... small, take its part in filling the united flow of
... ling curve, so that the

each separate bough is

... *a*, but *b*, Fig. 18;

... ting, that is to say,

... the structure of a

... broccoli as to throw

... mass of spray and

... at to a rounded sur-

... therefore beware of getting into a careless habit

... g boughs with successive sweeps of the pen or

... hanging to the other, as in Fig. 19. If you look

... ee-boughs in any painting of Wilson's you will

... structure, and nearly every other that is to be

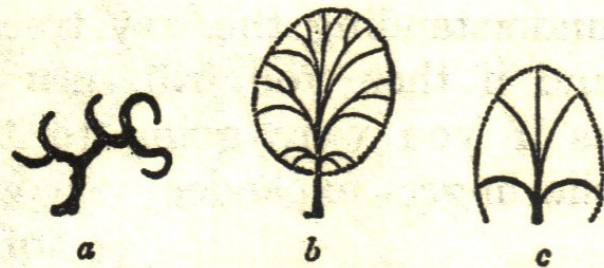
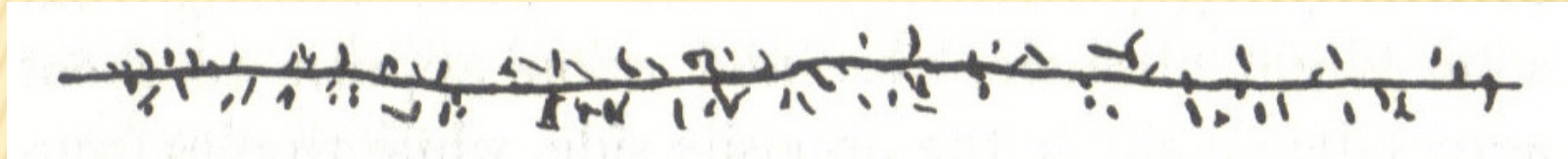


Fig. 17

FINE STRINGS OF CLOUDS



Journal – 2/24/1860



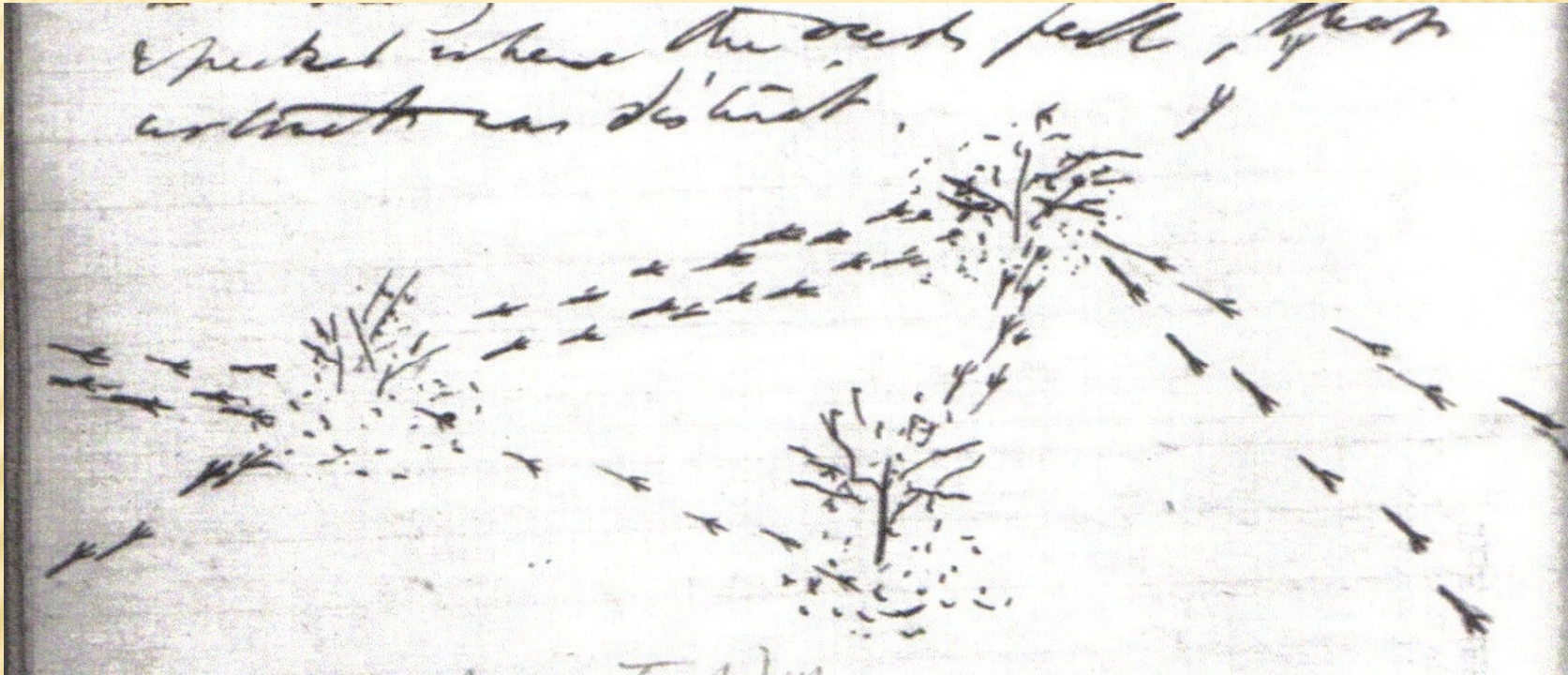
Journal – 8/10/1852

CIRRUS CLOUDS - 1822

BY JOHN CONSTABLE (1776-1837)



LANDSCAPES, TRACKS, AND MAP-LIKE DRAWINGS

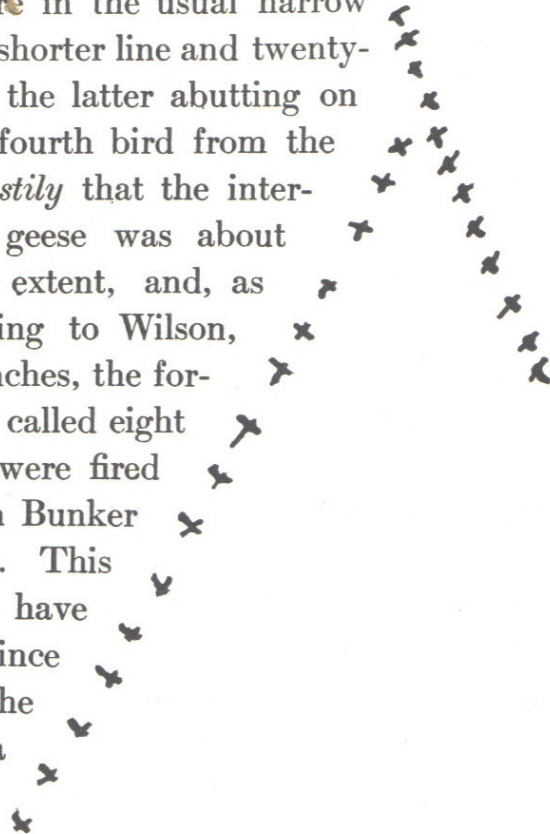


1/6/1859

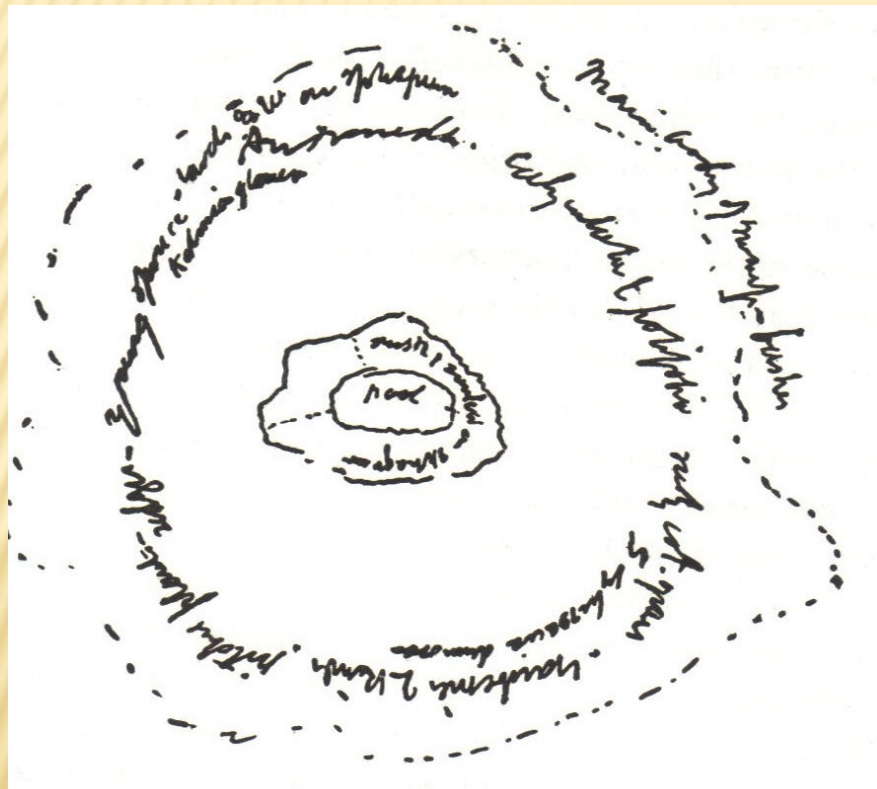
"(snow buntings)...leaving distinct tracks raying from and to them, while the snow immediately about the weed was so tracked and pecked where the seeds fell that non track was distinct."

A "V" OF GEESE – JOURNAL 11/23/1853

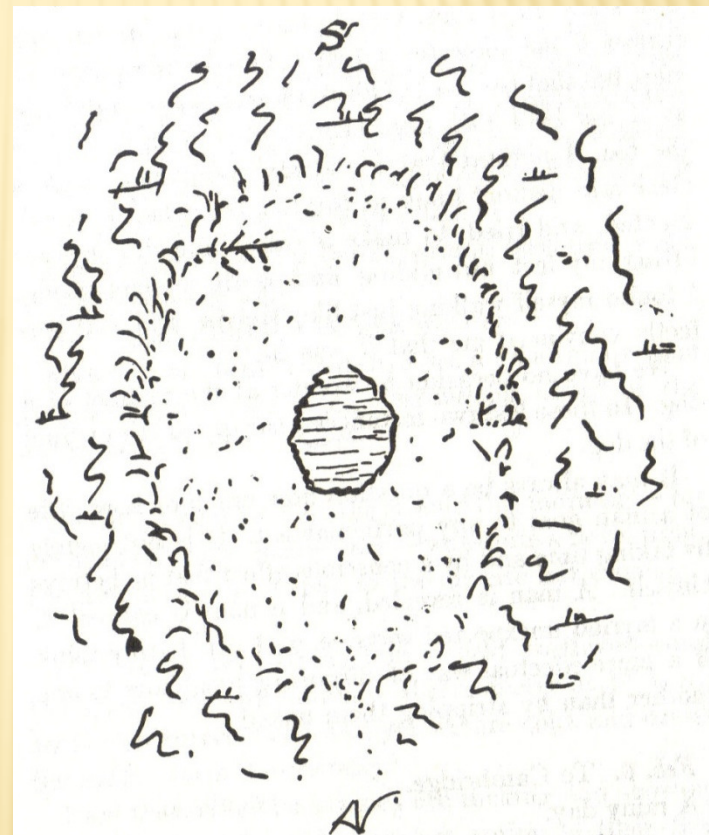
At 5 P. M. I saw, flying southwest high overhead, a flock of geese, and heard the faint honking of one or two. They were in the usual harrow form, twelve in the shorter line and twenty-four in the longer, the latter abutting on the former at the fourth bird from the front. I judged *hastily* that the interval between the geese was about double their alar extent, and, as the last is, according to Wilson, five feet and two inches, the former may safely be called eight feet. I hear they were fired at with a rifle from Bunker Hill the other day. This is the sixth flock I have seen or heard of since the morning of the 17th, *i. e.* within a week.



JOURNAL - 8/22/1854

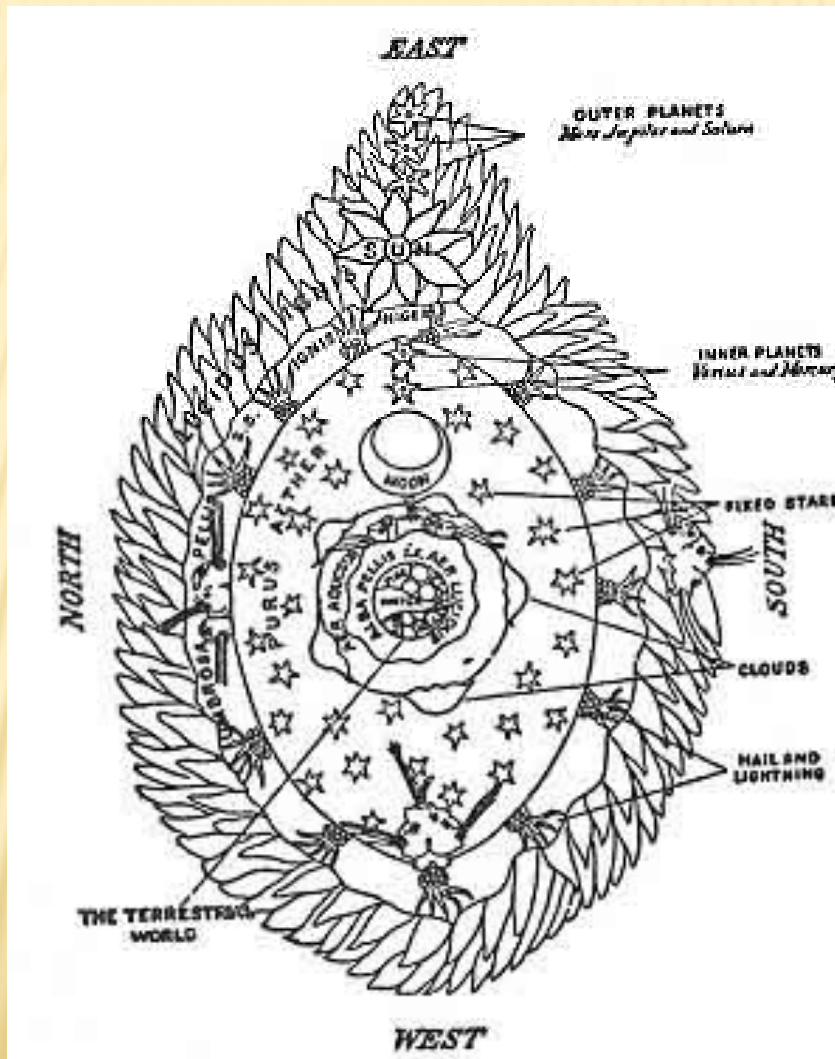


JOURNAL - 2/2/1860

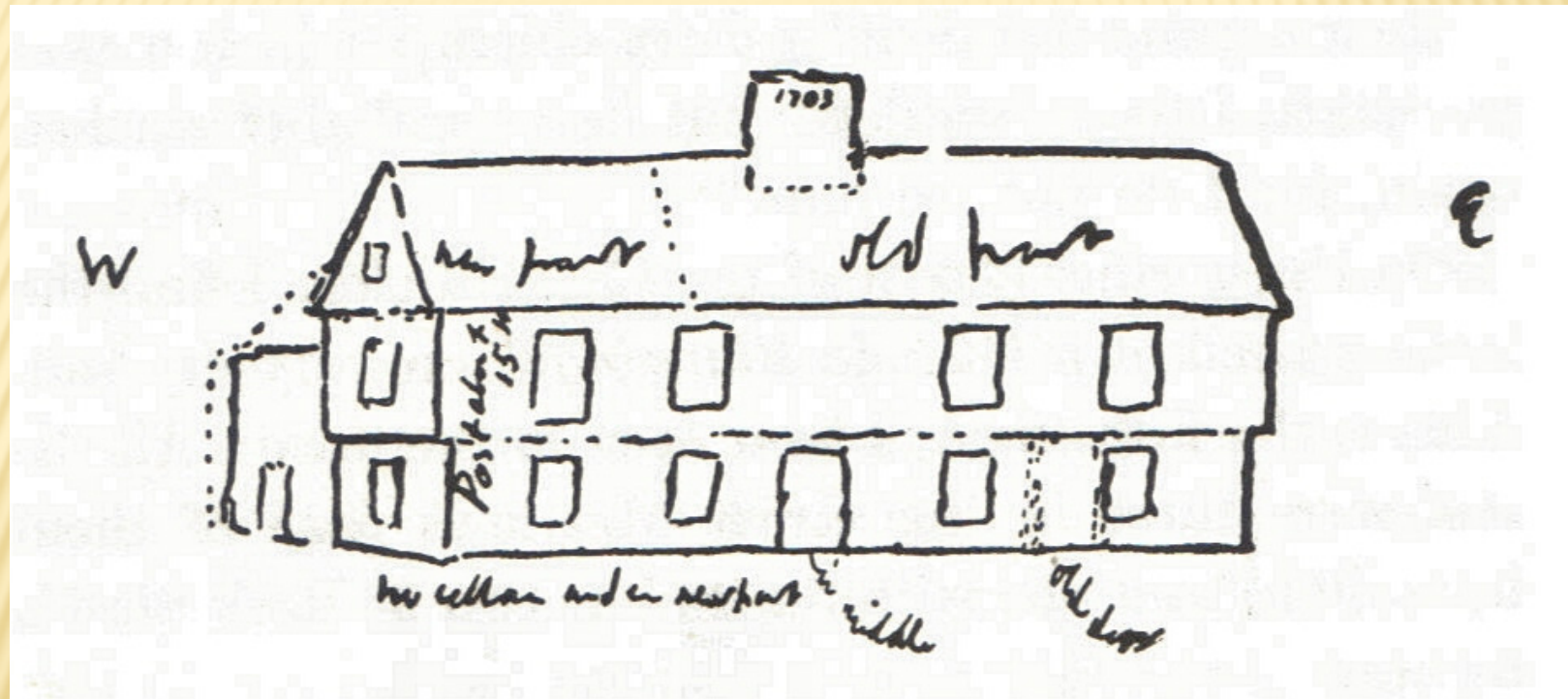


GOWING'S SWAMP

COSMIC EGG – HILDEGARD (1096 – 1179)

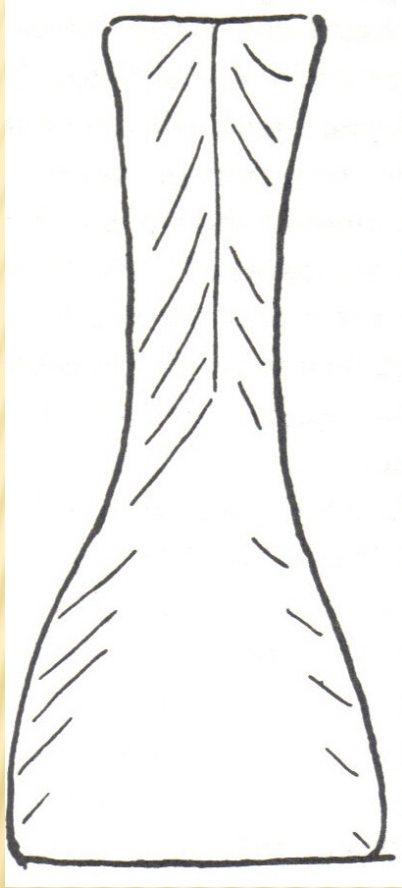


BUILDINGS AND OBJECTS



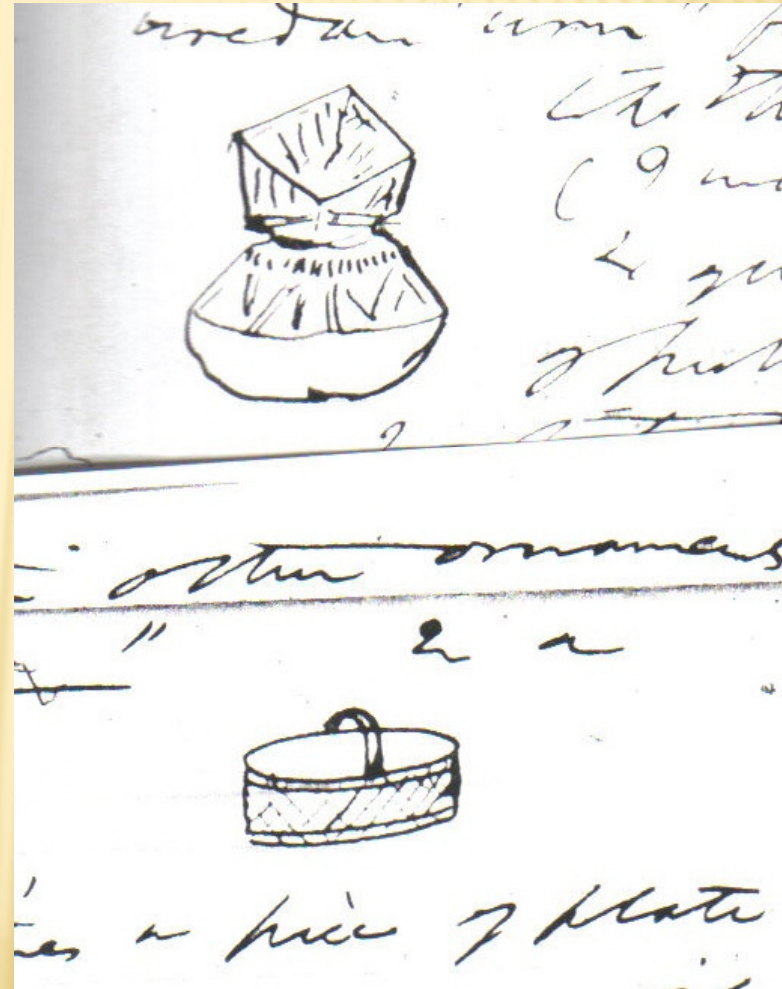
Hunt House, drawn from memory 3/13/1859

STONE TOOL - JOURNAL 8/22/1860

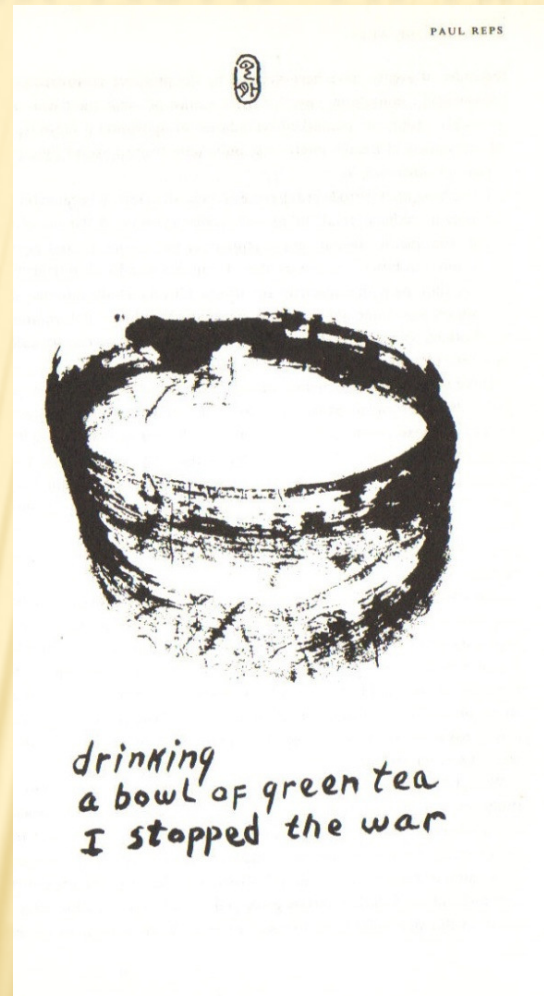


OBJECTS

BASKETS FROM INDIAN NOTEBOOKS
(COURTESY MORGAN LIBRARY)



ZEN SKETCH BY PAUL REPS (1895-1990)



From *Square Sun, Square Moon* by Paul Reps, 1967, Charles E. Tuttle

ANIMALS: BIRDS



Hen Hawk 8/22/1860



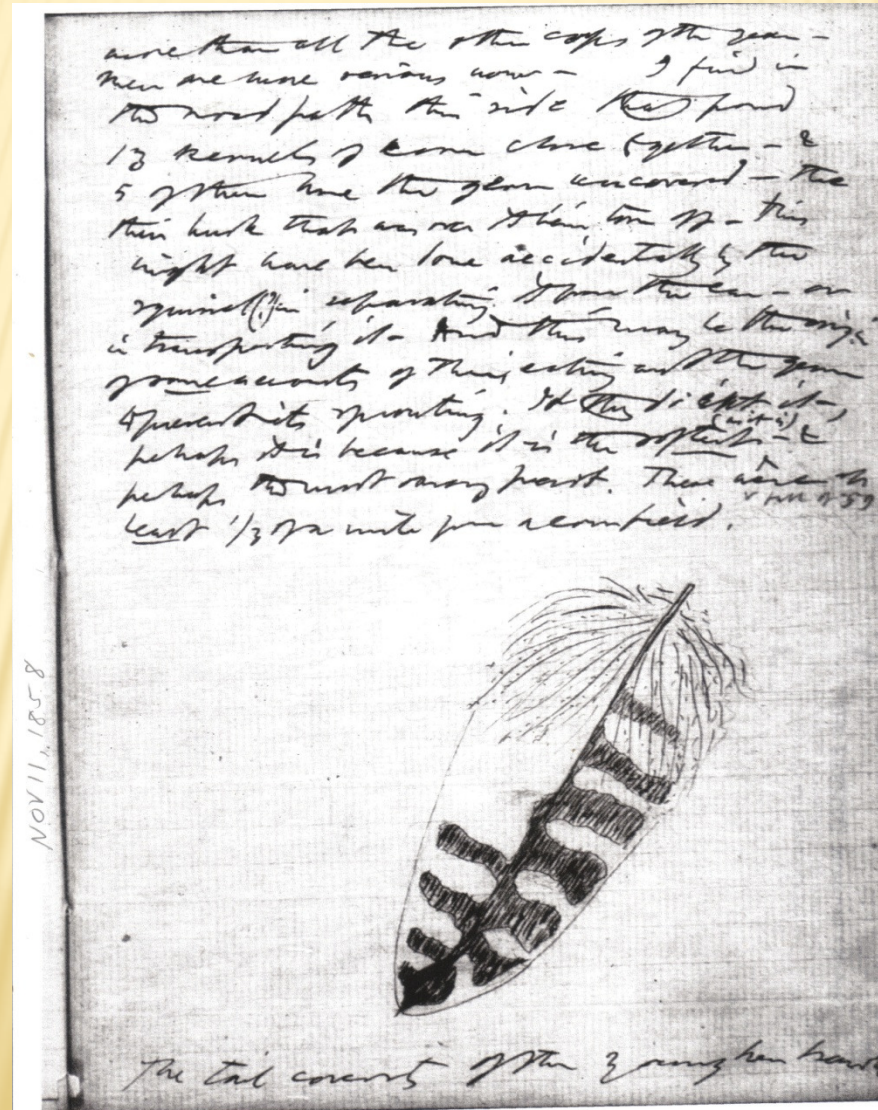
Vireo 5/28/1860



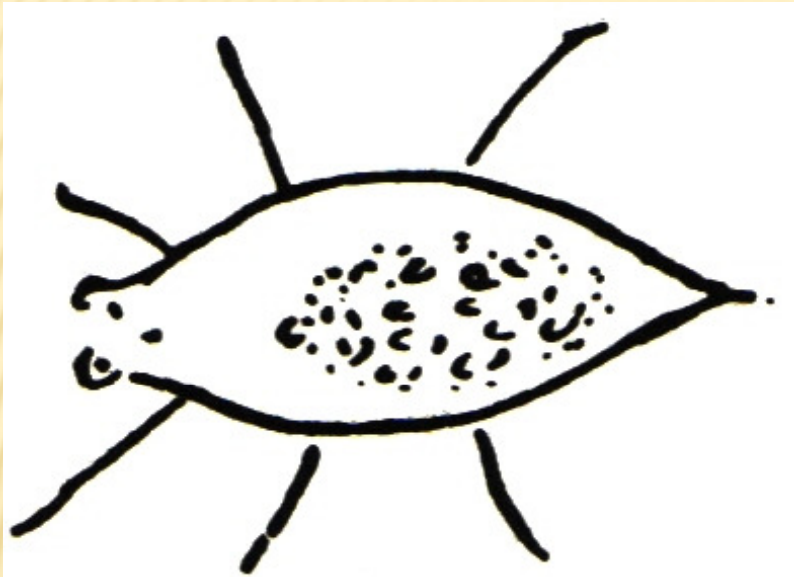
Meadow Hen 8/30/1854

FEATHER IN CONTEXT OF JOURNAL

11/11/1858 (COURTESY MORGAN LIBRARY)



INSECTS

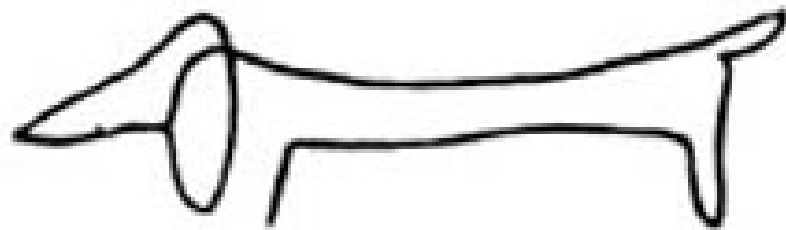


Brown bug 7/27/1860



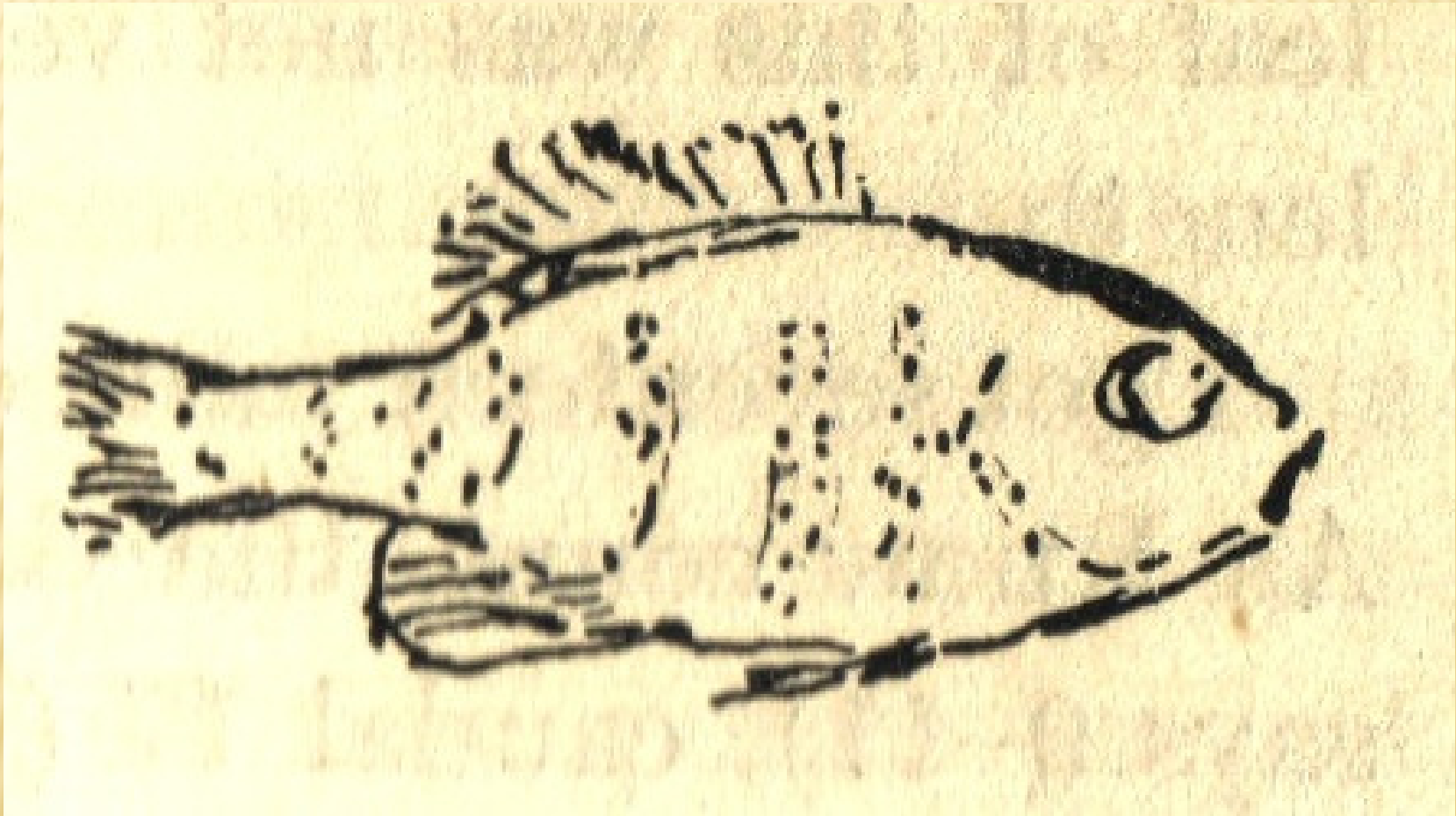
Black bug 1/16/1860

PICASSO'S DACHSHUND

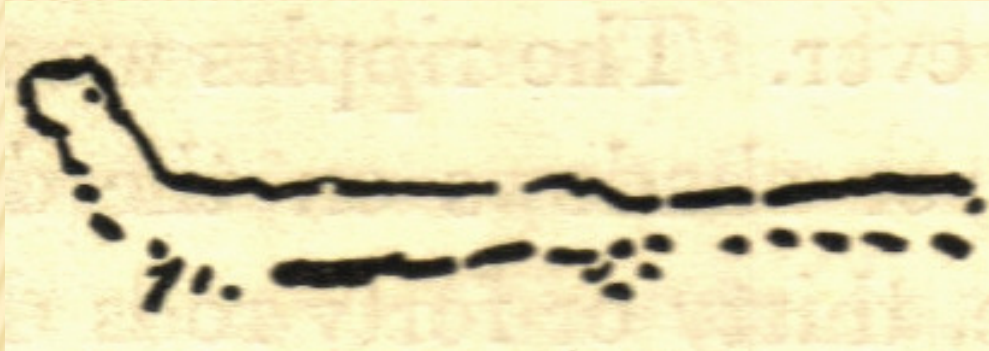


PICASSO

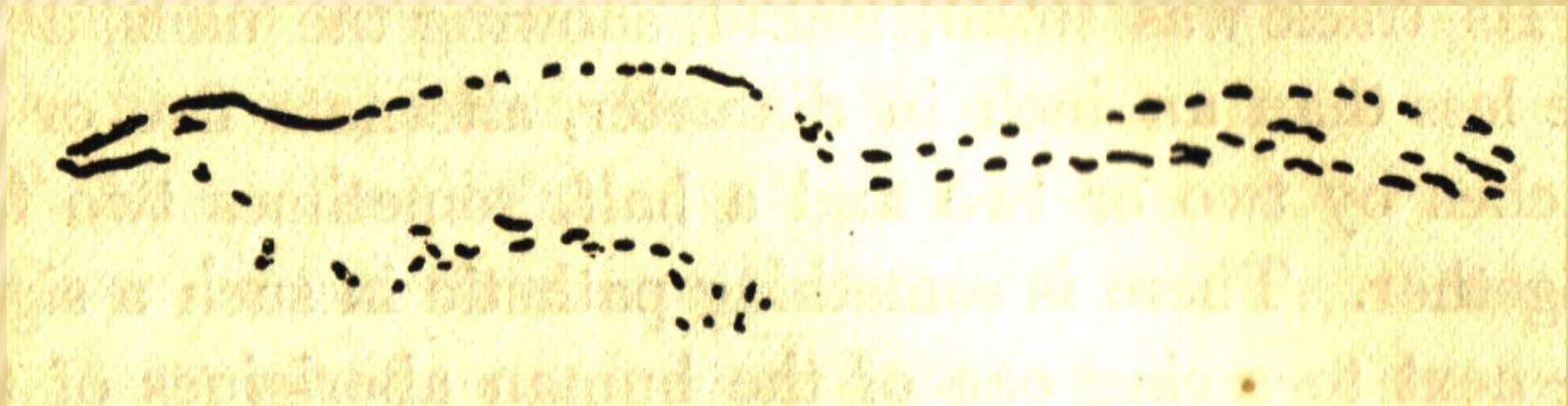
FISH (BREAM OR MINNOW) 11/27/1858



MAMMALS



Mink 12/2/1852



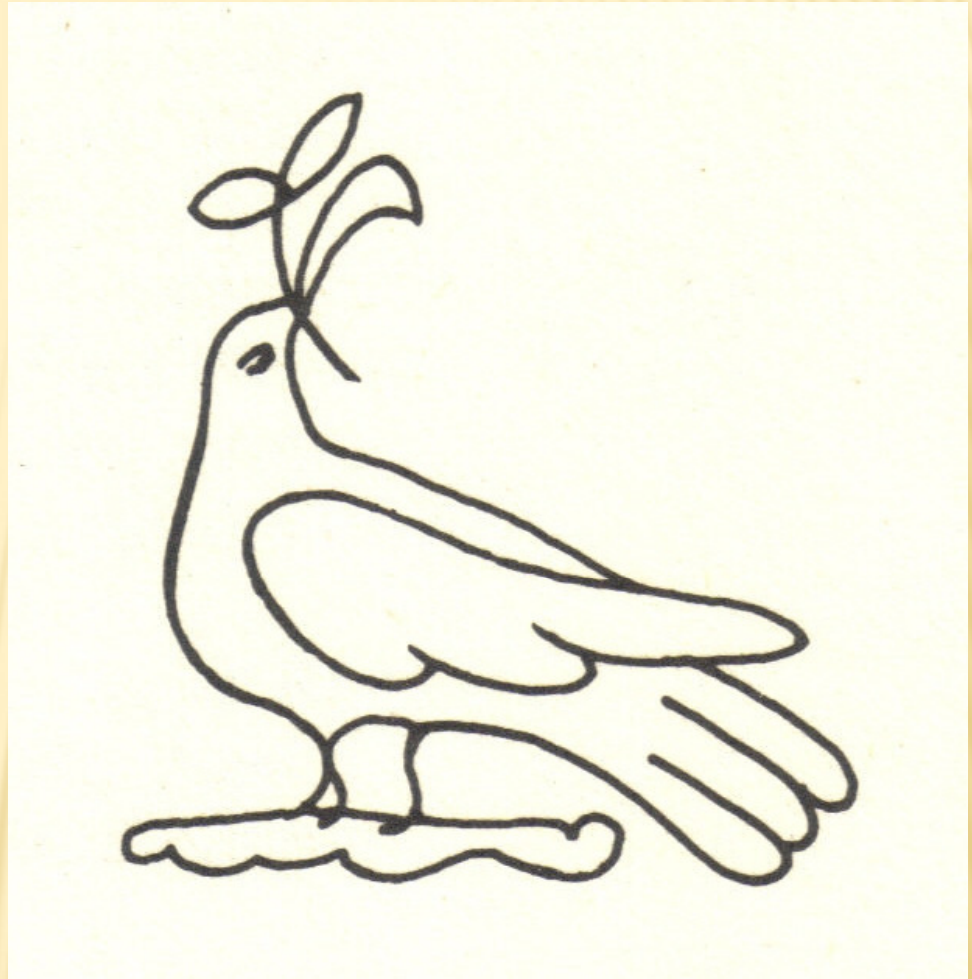
Skunk 3/10/1854

RED SQUIRREL - JOURNAL 12/16/1855



Philip Van Doren Stern includes this drawing in *The Annotated Walden*. (1970, 1992).

He indicates this dove appears on the margin of two Thoreau manuscript pages, but does not indicate which. It is probably not by Thoreau since the wing would have needed to be drawn first, not in keeping with Thoreau's approach or usual drawing styles.



THOREAU'S DOVE? PROBABLY NOT.

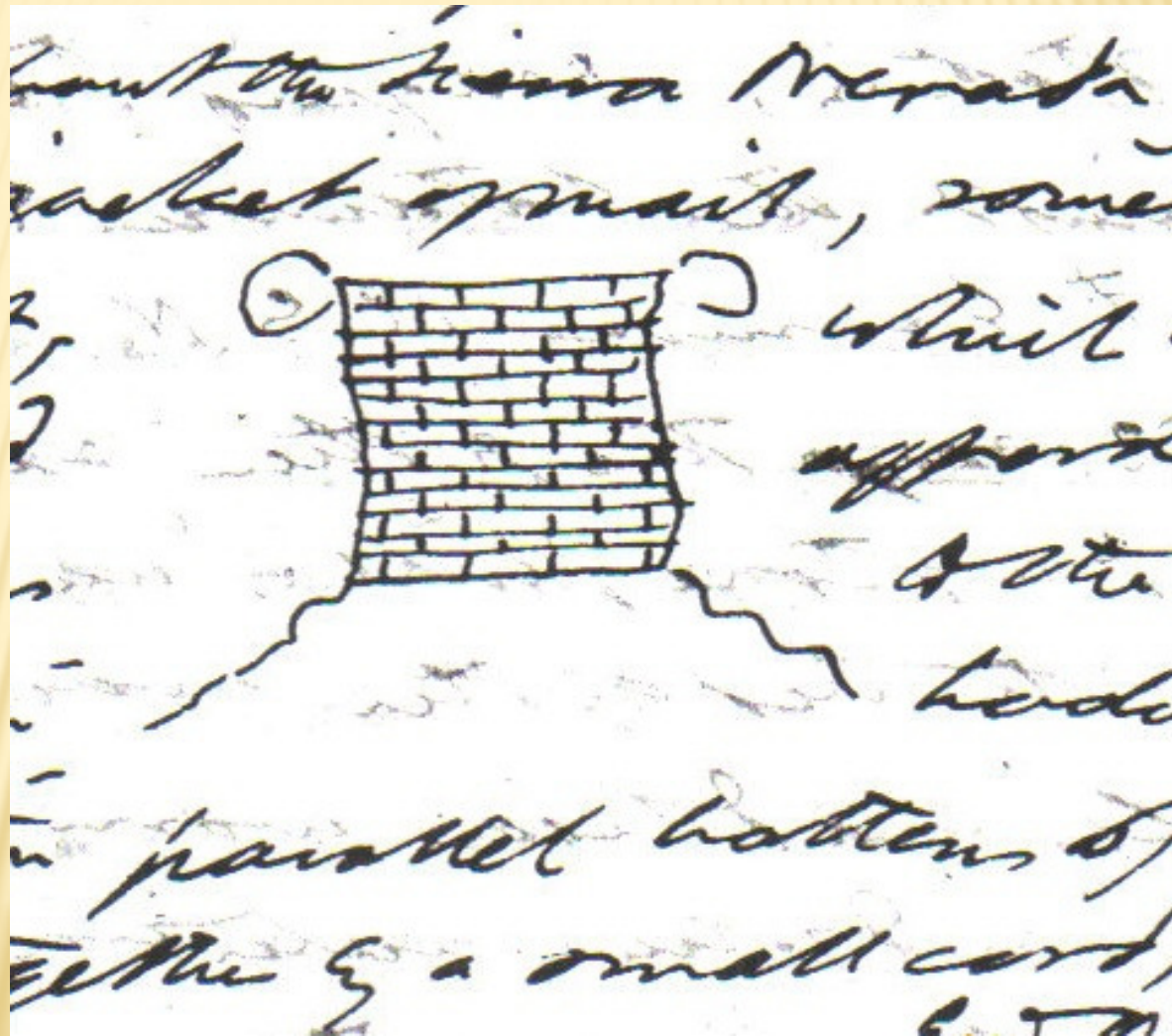
For comparison, here is the famed Dove of Peace by Pablo Picasso.
www.biographyonline.net/.../pablo-picasso.html Drawn for the 1949 World Peace Conference.



PICASSO'S DOVE OF PEACE

...GLIMPSES OF THE INDIAN NOTEBOOKS

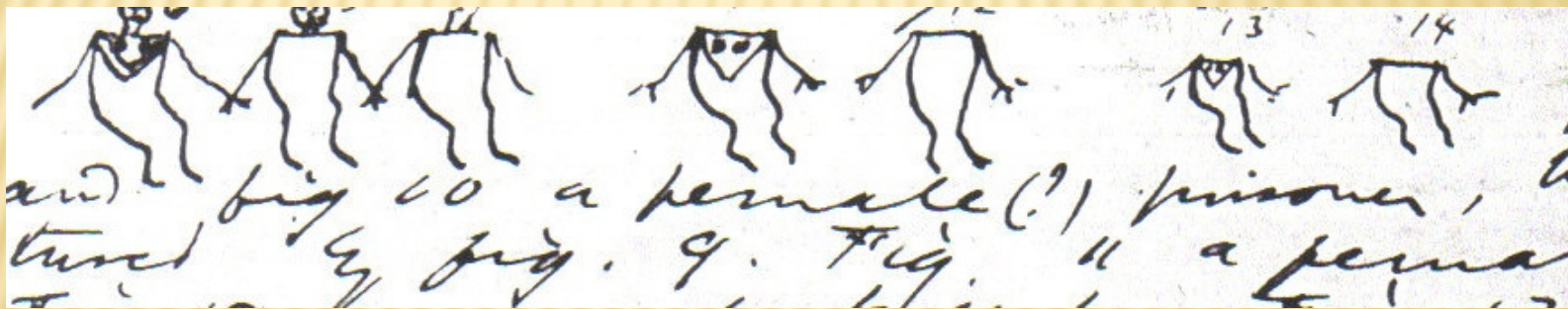
A brick-like
basket pattern,
Tape 3, Number
7, Morgan
Library



...AND INDIAN SYMBOLS...

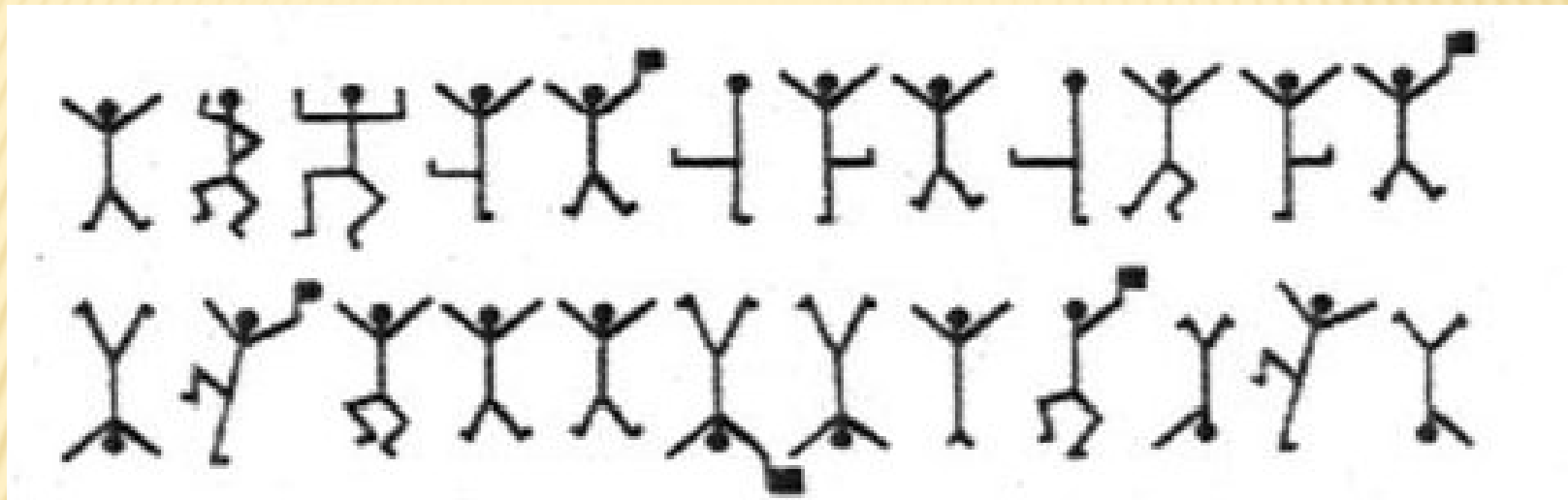


Symbols from Tape 3 Number 4, Morgan Library



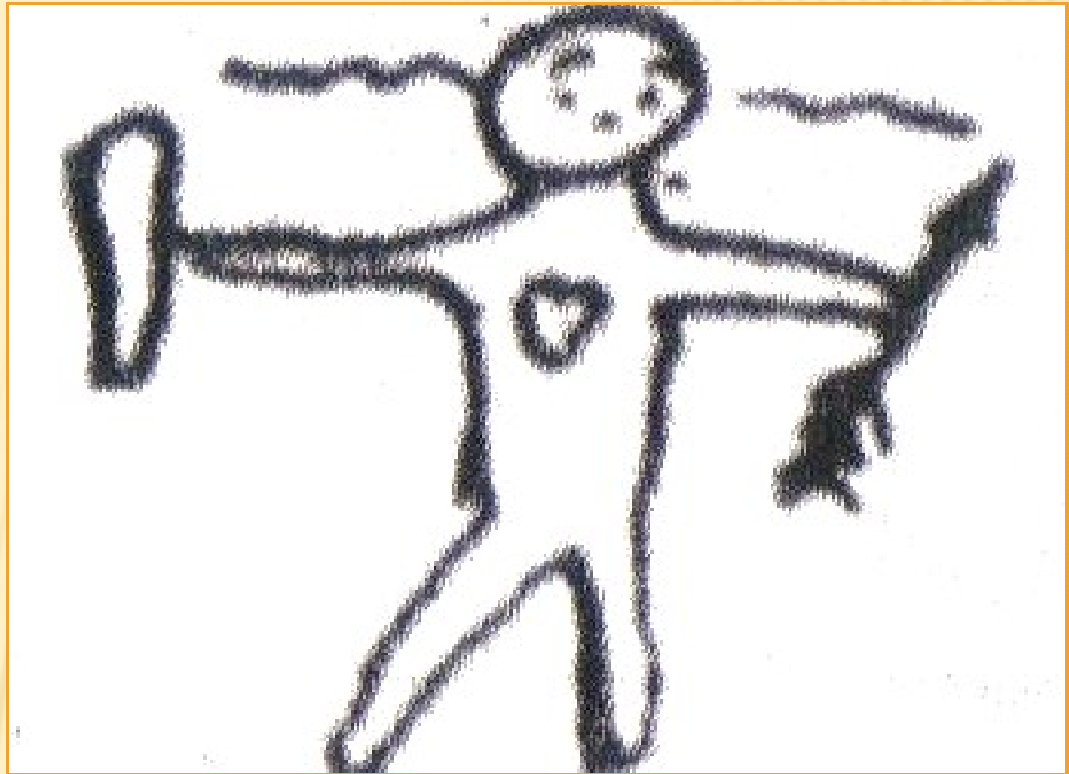
"...his enemy. Fig 8 indicates a male (?) prisoner and Fig 10 a female (?) prisoner, both captured by Fig 9. Fig. 11 a female killed, Fig. 12 a male killed, and Fig. 14, a boy killed..."
Morgan Library

ANYONE FOR SHERLOCK HOLMES? 😊



“The Adventure of the Dancing Men,” 1903. Wikisource,
“Conan Doyle.” Just having fun here! ;-)

*The Eastern Woman
(Venus the Evening
Star) calls.*



I'M TAKING THIS FOR MY OWN LOGO 😊

*Strong Indian woman,
Bright-braided, warm-heart,
One hand, arrow; quiver in other:
Brave, leader, individual, Earth mother!*

SOON TO BE POSTED TO MY WEB SITE:

ReligiousScholar.com/Thoreau

THE END



Croakers on a Little Pond
The Journal – 3/28/1858