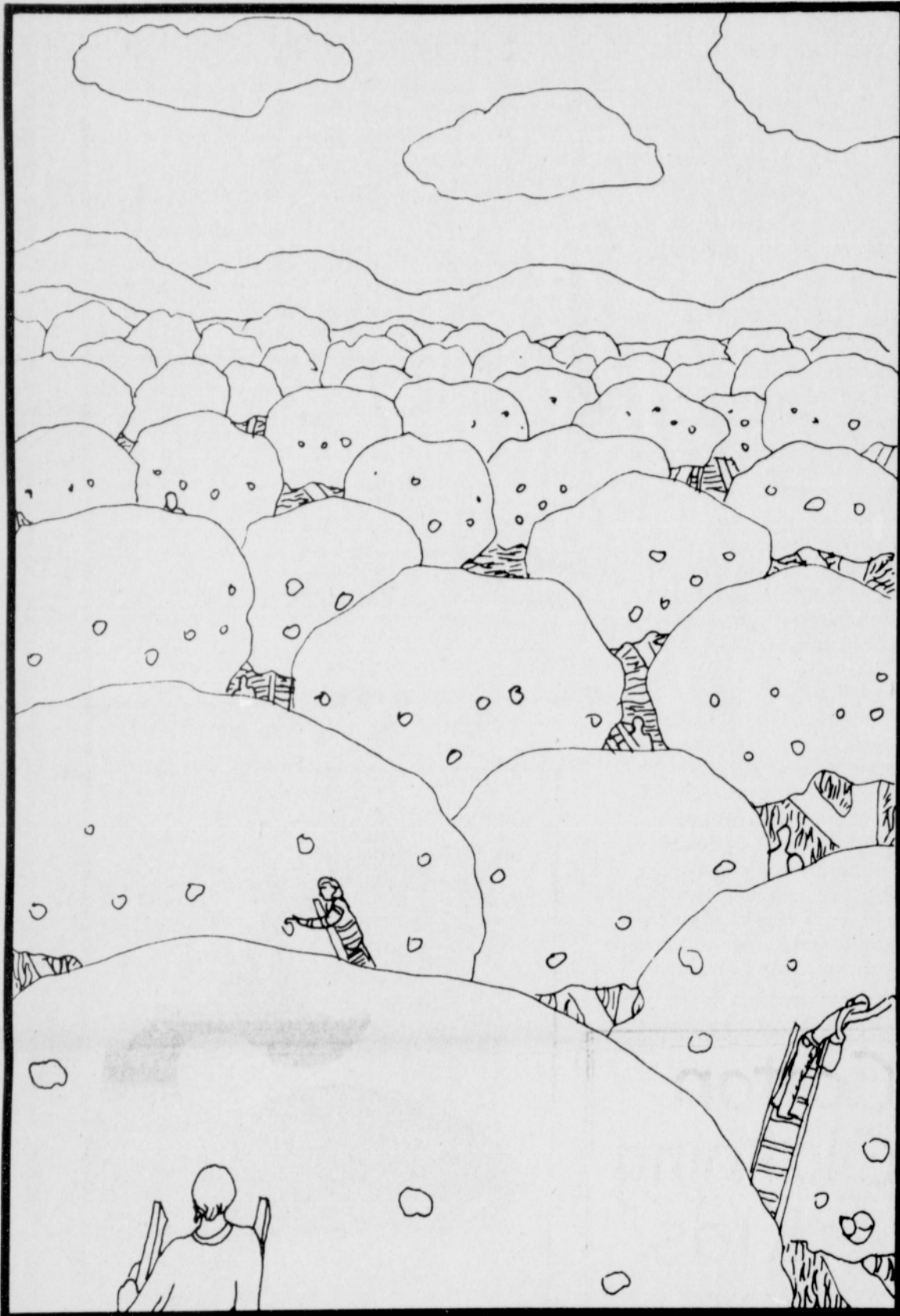




OREGON THE STORY



Joan Mumper



J. MUMPER

Memoirs of a Pear Picker

by Loyola

August, 1982/Tuesday

Evening... dark, summer cool. I am bedded for the night with pen, book and candle in this cozy old home on wheels among the cluster of migrant worker cabins here in Hood River Valley, Oregon. David, my friend, has the cabin to the right of where I lie and write this evening. The kerosene lamp in his cabin is out. Perhaps he is already asleep.

Pears... Bartlett Pears... The season for this variety will begin the day after tomorrow, we hope. We had thought to come to the valley to pick apples but found that apple picking season doesn't begin until the middle of September.

Had we missed the whole fruit season altogether, coming to this valley would still have been a rare joy. The daytime sky is as blue as a cornflower (Dutch blue for anyone unfamiliar with cornflowers), green orchards heavy with fruit as far as the eye can see, and the sleeping mountain called Hood in its summer majesty looms into view around every bend in the road, causing me to think unashamedly of sno-cones (I consume a lot of pop-suckles these days). Days are sunny hot, champagne clear air, nights are mountain cool. The flies are small, lazy and friendly and I have yet to see a mosquito.

And so... here at the cabins the heartbeat of a community begins to unfold. The little houses themselves (less than a dozen) sit in a fir grove and are all cherished works of after-thought fixed to original frames with pine sapling rafters. The interior of our place is dusty and warm, soot shaded pea soup green walls for background. The wall behind the stove is covered with bright orange and green mushrooms — three to six feet high they are, and almost magically alive they seem. Another wall bears an inscription as follows:

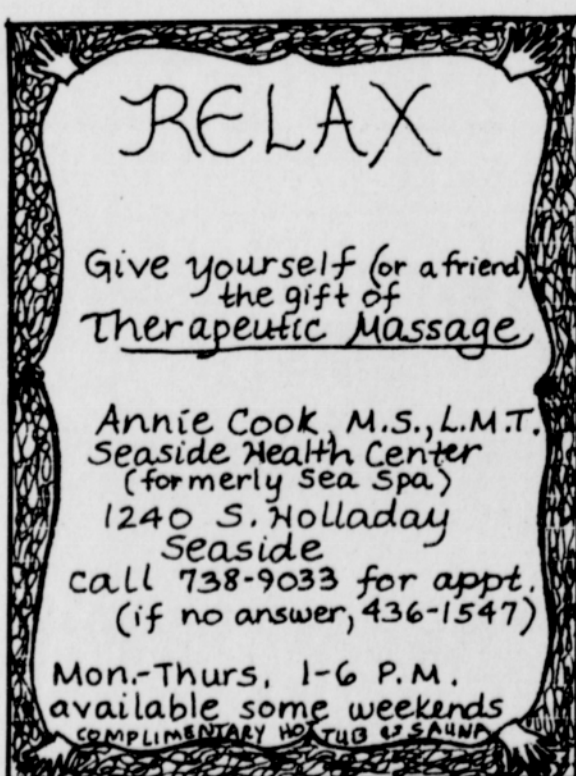
"Far over the misty mountains cold
To dungeons deep and caverns old
We must away, ere break of day
To claim our long forgotten gold,
Our gold is not materialistic to hold
Just a place in the mountains
To grow in the light of our Creator."

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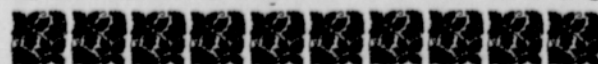
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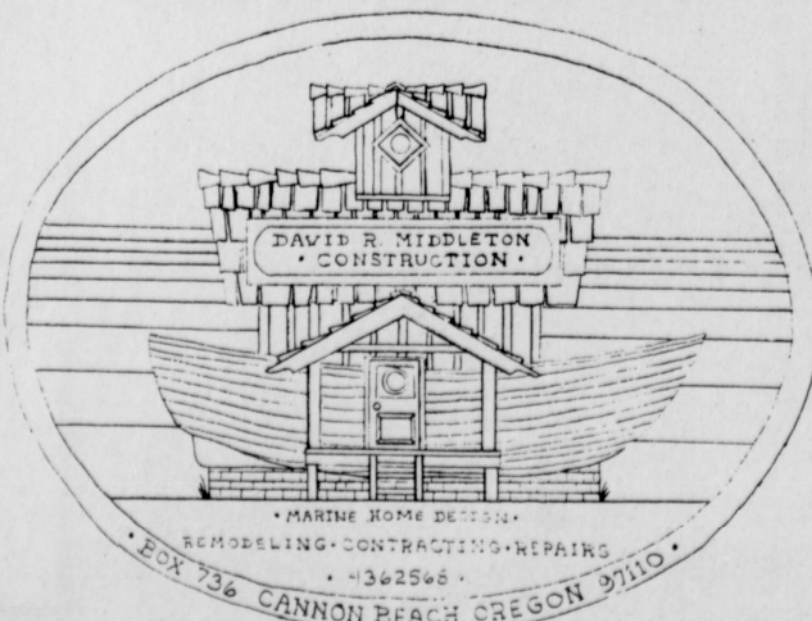


drawing by Farzahn Kamali



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