

So, Why Sit Still

Steve McGuire

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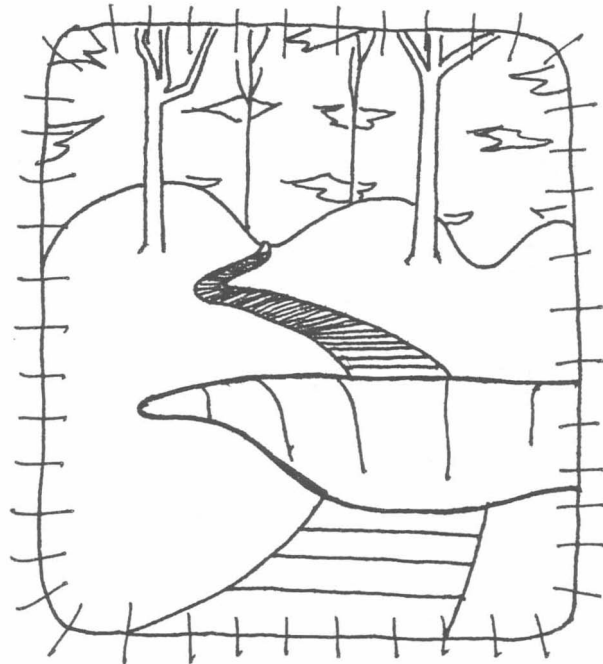
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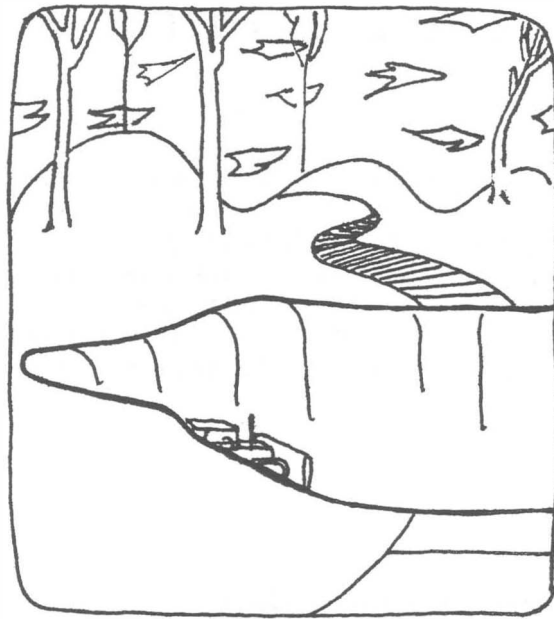
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Steve McGuire

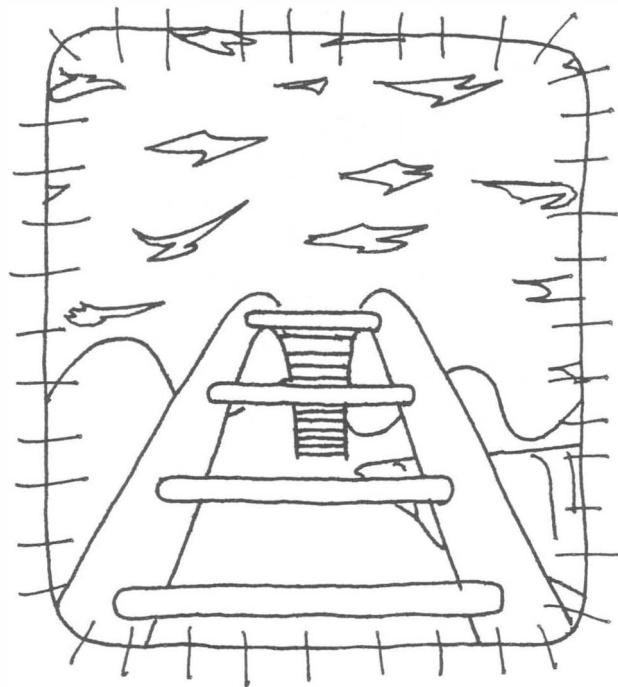
As I rounded the corner my sense of location stuttered and became very lost. This detour sign is having me walk across the place I used to swim. I feel very displaced, in a very familiar spot, in a most awkward sense. I've gone this way for fifteen years, and suddenly nothing. No swimming pool, no teetertotters, no jungle gym. Yesterday I could have crossed the park blindfolded, without tripping once, knowing with secure satisfaction that the steps I took had been taken many times before while playing here. I wish I would have taken a picture of the park before they started building this hotel.



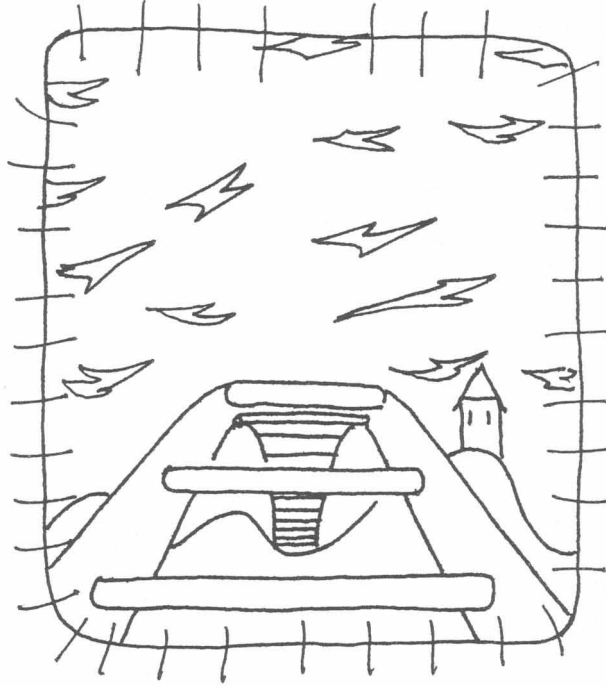
During lunch, I went back to the site to watch the bulldozer. As I looked for a place to sit, I noticed the jungle gym. It had been moved but not taken apart. I remember it. I perched myself at the top. It used to be so hard to get up here.



I tell myself, "You're up here, so what, you're big now, it's easy."



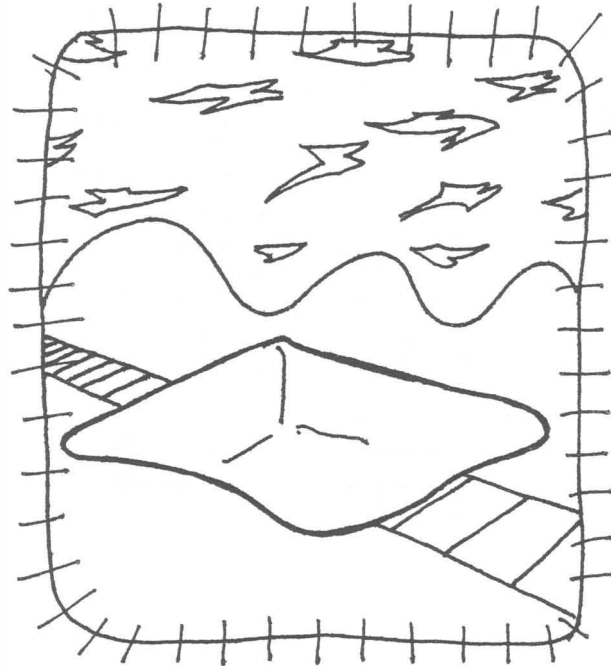
Caught up with this acquaintance, I find myself hanging by my feet.
I'm only three feet from the ground.....



..... I used to think how brave I was hanging off by my feet, knowing that one false move would render a split head. My mom's repeated warnings went in one ear and out the other, but always seemed to linger in my finger tips as I released my grip and hung by my feet. When I was ten I could walk across a single bar with perfect balance, never falling. If I did fall, the alligators would get me. At least that's what I told my brother would happen if he fell off. When I fell off, I would kill all the alligators, climb back on and walk across with my brother yelling, "You can't do it, the alligators ate you."

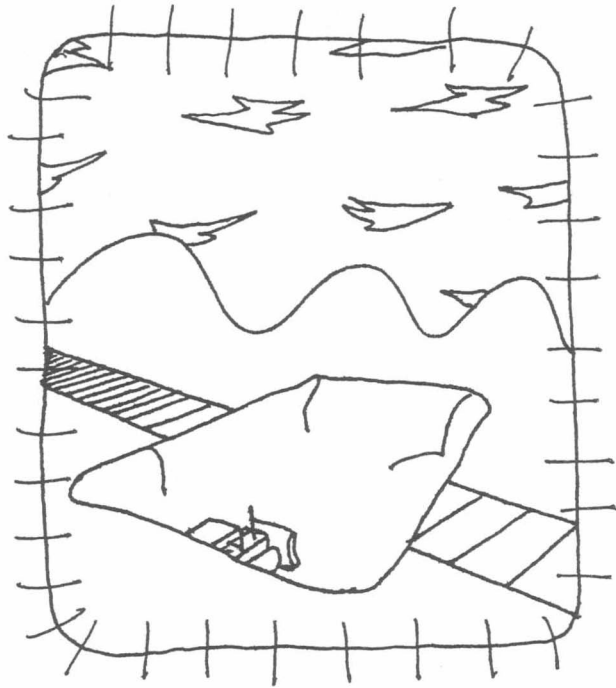
I don't mind climbing on playgrounds at the age of twenty-five, not that I should. But you know every time I climb on a playground I feel as though I'm being reminded of something I've lost. Now when I hang off I touch the ground. Being here, I feel like asking this place to take me back forever.

It's nice to sit up here and remember. There's excitement in remembering but satisfaction has long since left with the lack of challenge. This playground used to be a frontier of sorts. Now it's a place I used to think was a frontier. This hole in the ground could've been anything when I was ten.

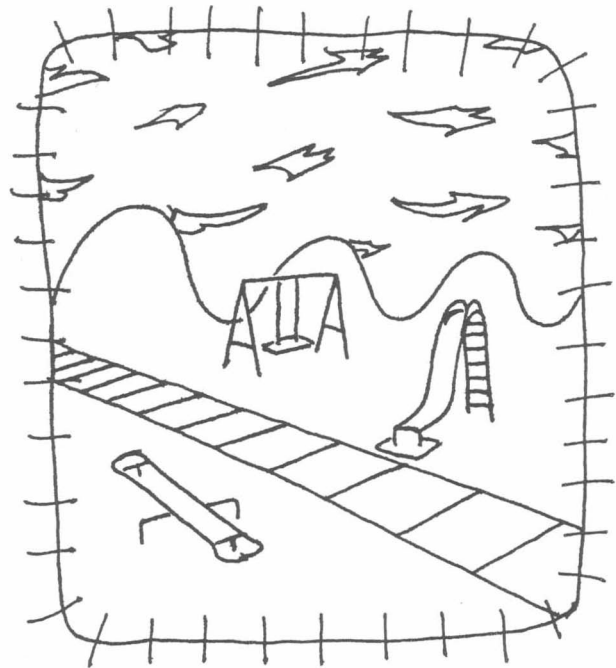


Now it's a location for a foundation. Don't misunderstand me, I'm not upset with the notion of a hotel. I just wish jungle gyms were taller and holes in the ground were anything and everywhere. I still have memories. Maybe it's better that I don't have photographs of this place. My experiences have always been bigger and better in my head. In there lies the correct vision.

As I sit here on this jungle gym I feel somewhat elevated. It's a sense of satisfaction, different than the challenge climbing up here brought me at younger ages. From here, I see that this is a whole place, complete with past and future. From this vantage point it appears as a particular place about its occurrences. I'm sitting here, viewing a stage, measuring an area by its events. I guess in many ways it's measuring me. When I was ten this was a much different place. This arena was filled with my head, excited by my feet and hands; filled with playground equipment, playing and the moments of glory that went with those adventures. The boundaries of the park were the boundaries of the world. Because I did decide to climb up here, I realize there are boundaries here, they contain me. Fifteen years later, this place is what it is, a foundation for a hotel.

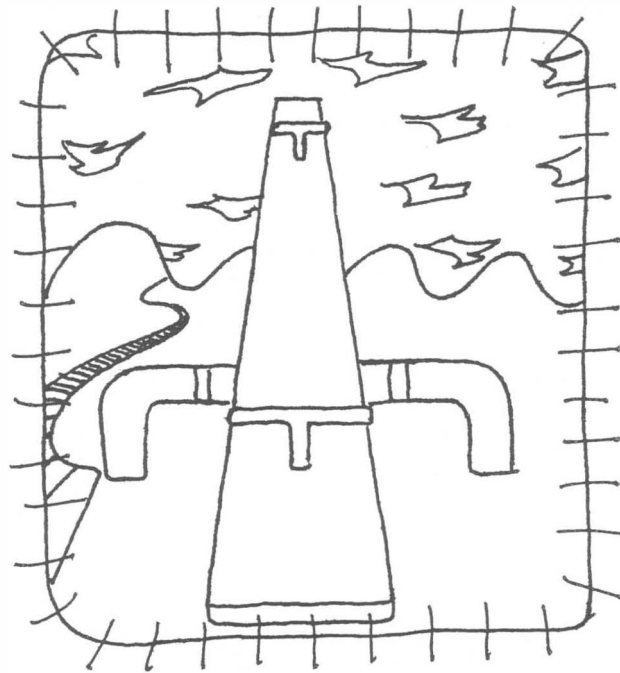


..... It was a bowling alley for my Dad and a playground for me.



Of itself, it is all these things and the experiences that happened. It will be all these things and the experiences that happened. It will be all these things and more, it just depends on who sits here, and what they did here, that made them notice the new hole in their playground.

Arenas, like playgrounds, are locations for occurrences. Specific occurrences at this location are significant living times for me. They are all part of this location's experiences in my life. If a teeter totter could talk, it would tell of the many people in its life.



The ten-year-old pair of eyes sitting just below me is seeing something very distinct from what I experienced at the same age. If she stays here for fifteen more years, she will know something very different of this place than I now know. If this place could speak, it would tell about both times here. Arenas don't change but new things do occur there. It's for this place to be what's happened here and for me to remember. In this arena changes become chances. The change from having been, became the chance of what it is for me at any particular time I'm here.

For me, being of these moments I've travelled, journeys are necessary. Passages take place, and the word then erupts to dance the ritual of reflected arrival. Recognizing now that I did come here, and how very much the activity that placed me on top of this jungle gym fifteen years ago placed me here today also, I am obliged to say to myself—so why sit still? This is not a remark to my remembrance as much as it is the most earnest recognition of the journey I've taken. Time to get my bike and go back to work. I wonder who else locked their bike here?

