

IN PIECES:

Someplace which
I call home

KURT ANKENY

Ipswich is
a small cold town
clustered like
barnacles on the
rusted banks of
its namesake
river.

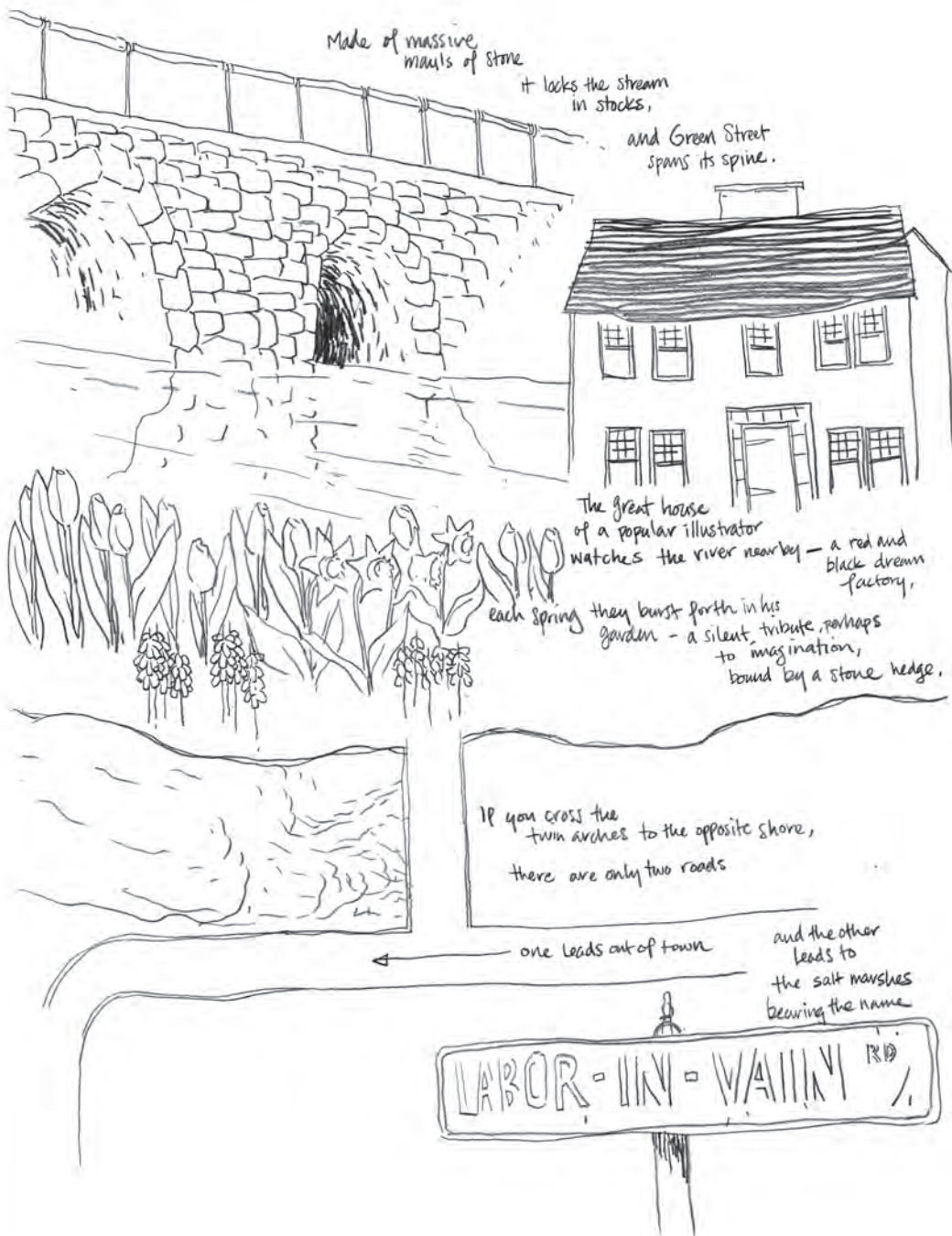
Camaraderie is
thin;
the tang of
yeast soaks the
air.

I don't know exactly
why but to me the
town has a hollow
feeling. A facade
that conceals nothing.

Blank dark window glass.

It is purgatory on
Earth.

I suppose I am
being unpair. Time
will tell.



Made of massive
maults of stone

it locks the stream
in stocks,

and Green Street
spans its spine.

The great house
of a popular illustrator
watches the river nearby - a red and
black dream
factory,

each spring they burst forth in his
garden - a silent tribute, perhaps
to imagination,
bound by a stone hedge.

If you cross the
twin arches to the opposite shore,
there are only two roads

one leads out of town

and the other
leads to
the salt marshes
bearing the name

LABOR - UN - VAIN

1819

For a town that has been in existence since the 1600s, there is a surprising lack of ghost stories and legends about the place. As if 400 years would pass without the dust of myth settling on the town.

But there is one tale that may explain a bit why there so few yarns.

It is called...

THE LOSS OF JACOB HURD.

[adapted from the books "Myths and Legends of Our Own Lands", pub. 1896, and "New England Bean-Pot", pub 1948.]

JACOB HURD WAS A STERN AND MIRTHLESS WITCH-HARRIER FROM IPSWICH.



RIDING HOME FROM SALEM WHERE HE HAD WITNESSED AN EXECUTION OF A WITCH, HE FRETTERED ABOUT HIS ONLY BOY PAUL, WHO WAS FULL OF FANCY -



- EASILY LED OFF THE LORD'S PATH.

HE WORRIED AT THIS AS THE SUN SLOWLY SUNK BEHIND HIM.

HE APPROACHED THE HILL THAT HID HIS TOWN TO THE NORTH. PAUL WATCHED FROM THOSE TREES ATOP THE HILL, AS ALWAYS.



PAUL COULD NOT WAIT UNTIL JACOB CRESTED THE HILL TO JOIN HIM.



FATHER, AS YOU RODE
UP THE HILL, I SAW
A GOLDEN MAN ON A
GOLD HORSE WITH A
SILVER MANE AND
TAIL, A KING BACK
FROM BEYOND HIGH
MOUNTAINS AND
WILD RIVERS!

AS A WITCH
HARRIER,
JACOB
KNEW
WELL ALL
THE SIGNS
OF POSSESSION
AND BLACK
CRAFT.



THOU
KNEWEST
THOU ART
LYING!

JACOB
BEAT THE
DEVIL OUT
OF THE BOY.

AS THEY
NEARED HOME
LITTLE PAUL
FELL UNDER
A FEVER.

JACOB
PRAYED AND
WATCHED
OVER HIS ONLY
BOY ALL NIGHT.



BUT THE DEVIL
TOOK HIS SON
ANYWAY.

TIME PASSED SLOWLY.
MONTHS WENT BY.

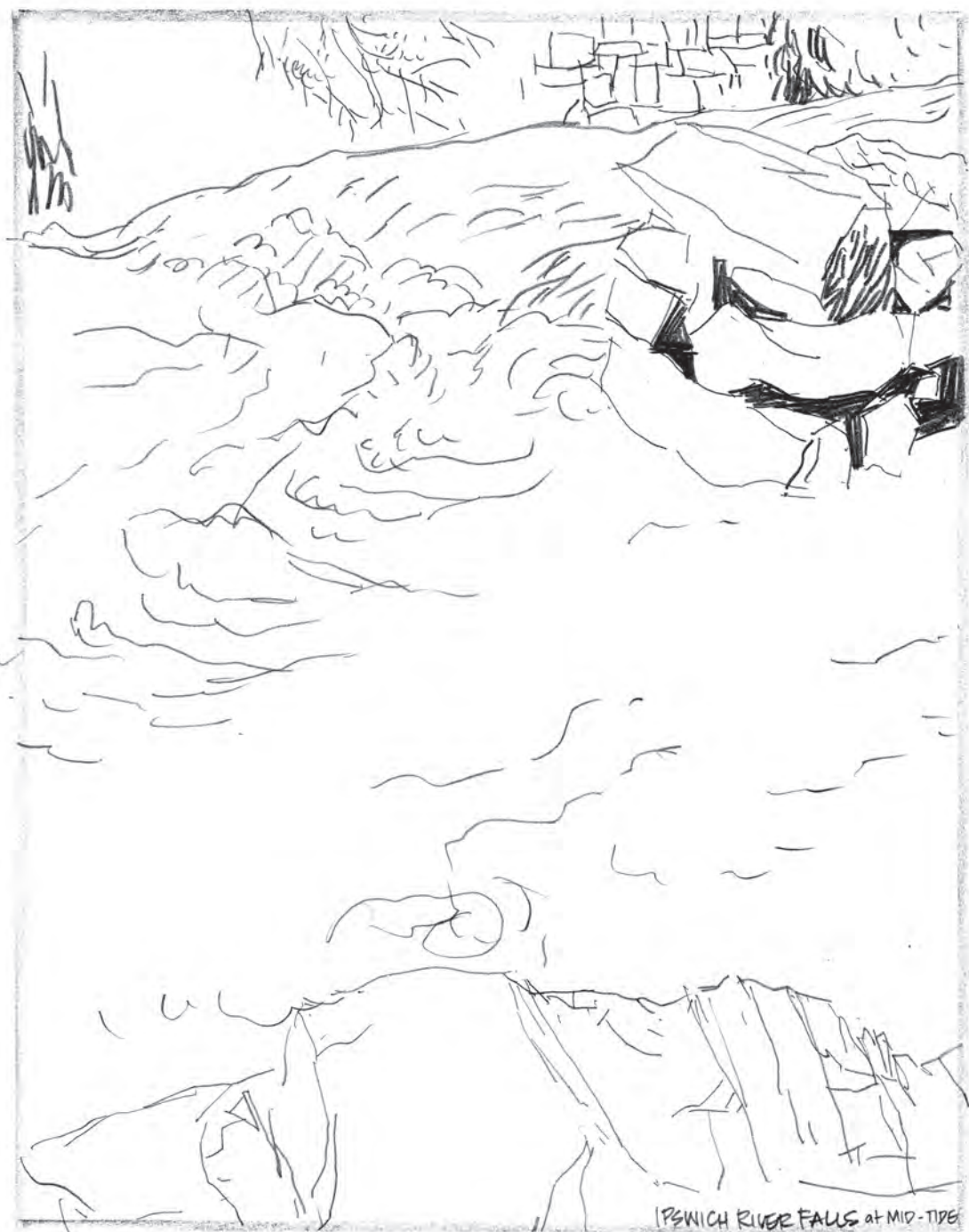
AND ONE DAY GOODWIFE
HURD STOOD ATOP THE
LOOKOUT HILL, WATCHING
FOR JACOB'S RETURN FROM
A TRIPLE-EXECUTION OF
WITCHES IN SALEM.

A HORSE CAME UP THE
HILL, GALLOPING IN FEAR.
IN THE EVENING LIGHT,
THE HORSE SHONE LIKE
GOLD AND ITS MANE AND
TAIL, GLOWING WITH THE
SUNSET, LOOKED JUST LIKE
SILVER.



NEARER, SHE SAW IT WAS ALSO RED WITH BLOOD. AND GOODY
HURD KNEW THAT JACOB WAS NOT COMING HOME AGAIN.





IPSWICH RIVER FALLS at MID-TIDE



CORNER OF MARKET AND CENTRAL STREETS

On
Central
Street,

there's a ramshackle tan
building that sells carpet
and linoleum.

And our main Fire
Department building.

It's
across
the street
from my
son's
elementary
school.

The linoleum store
owners never
shoveled the walk
in winter.

In the end, the linoleum store was
an ash and slush lake capped by an
island of char.
And people stepped through the mess,
because they still had to get by.



HA! THE OLD
HOUSES OF IPSWICH
SCOFF. THE WORST
FEBRUARY ON RECORD?
SURELY NOT.



FOR WE RECALL
FEBRUARIES
FAR MORE FELL.

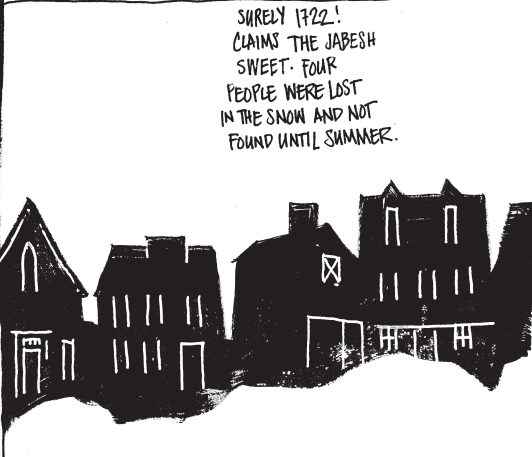
PERHAPS 1841
OFFERS
RIDGE-
PINDER?

THAT YEAR FOUR
HORSES DROWNED
IN THE RIVER AND THEIR

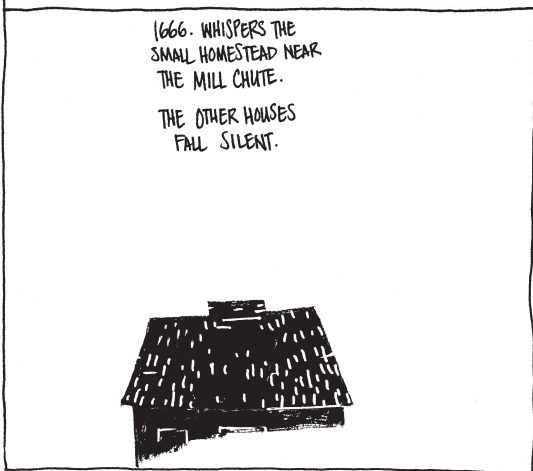
LEGS STUCK OUT OF THE
ICE LIKE A FOREST OF
BLACK BONE UNTIL
MAY...



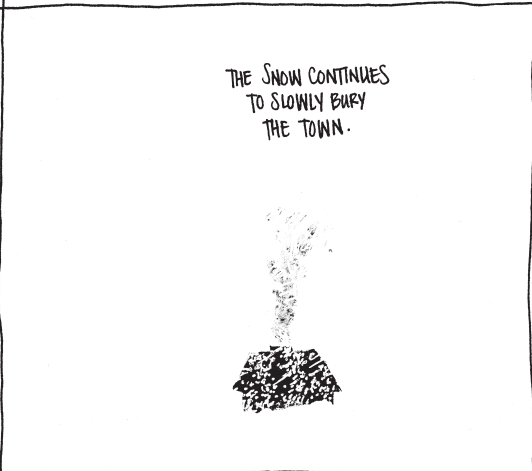
BUT
1805? WHEN
THE PARSONS DAUGHTER
DIED OF FEVER?
THE WHOLE TOWN
WAS SILENT FOR A FORTNIGHT.
SAID THE BRADSTREET HOUSE.



SURELY 1722!
CLAIMS THE JABESH
SWEET. FOUR
PEOPLE WERE LOST
IN THE SNOW AND NOT
FOUND UNTIL SUMMER.



1666. WHISPERS THE
SMALL HOMESTEAD NEAR
THE MILL CHUTE.
THE OTHER HOUSES
FALL SILENT.



THE SNOW CONTINUES
TO SLOWLY BURY
THE TOWN.

1

MADE SURE
THE TUB CONTAINED
LEMON

AND

out
into
the
icy
navy
night

My
car. Prismish,
split the sodium
light — yellow
out in front
& red trailing
behind, staining
the snow to
sorbet.

crunch
clunk
up
the salted
plank steps
& safely
home.

We served
ourselves
pad thai and
the television
served us
anger and
laughter.

The dog went
out to bark at
the dark.

Our screens
split and
multiplied.

all of the
blue and
yellow
vanished.

and in the dark, I felt her warm
lines against mine.



