

Remember me.



Jane Waggoner Deschner





Remember me.

Jane Waggoner Deschner

*"I don't want viewers to discover;
I want them to recognize."*

~Christian Boltanski

Published on the occasion of *Jane Waggoner Deschner: Remember me.*
an immersive installation at the Yellowstone Art Museum (September 11, 2022–January 15, 2023)

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Published by the Yellowstone Art Museum

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Foreword

Jessica Kay Ruhle, Executive Director,
Yellowstone Art Museum

Jane Waggoner Deschner excavates individual and collective histories through her work with previously-owned objects. The exhibition *Remember me.* invites viewers to imagine the inner worlds and interpersonal relationships of strangers, while also prompting reflections on one's own lived experiences and family histories. Her use of stitching combines visual imagery and written text in ways that weave together humor and poignant truths. Her hand stitching spotlights the generational underrepresentation of artwork by women, prompting discussions of the historical treatment of women's work—in the arts specifically, and throughout society more broadly.

Importantly, Jane's reclaiming of everyday family and personal objects creates accessible museum experiences. The installation design of *Remember me.* draws visitors into the gallery space and encourages engagement with a mix of pieces created by Jane and found objects she curated. In deliberately creating an experience that welcomes visitor engagement, Jane prioritizes the expansion of museum audiences and the democratization of museum spaces.

The Yellowstone Art Museum is pleased to share this exhibition, and a full schedule of related public programming, with audiences from across the region. Additionally, this catalog is a comprehensive examination of Jane's work that contextualizes this exhibition and examines the broader cultural relevancies of her artistic practice.

The YAM appreciates Larry and Ruth Martin, and Jon Lodge for their major sponsorship of this exhibition. Additional support comes from Aunt Dofe's Gallery, Gordon McConnell and Betty Loos, Linda Shelhamer and Stephen Haraden, Dr. Ralph and Sheryl Costanzo, and Mary Hernandez. This exhibition is also supported in part by a grant from the Montana Arts Council, an agency of the State Government.

Work on this exhibition began while Susan Barnett was Curator at the YAM. I am grateful to Susan for her initial planning, research, and writing related to this project. Her excellent work provided a strong foundation for the exhibition and her contribution to this catalog offers essential insights.

Jane enthusiastically welcomed me when I first arrived in Billings. Her relationship with the museum has been lengthy and committed. We are grateful to her tireless work on this exhibition, and for all the ways her love for the arts improves the YAM and the arts throughout Montana.



Acknowledgements

Since 2015, *Remember me.* has evolved in fits and starts. It's both very exciting and somewhat frightening to finally have convergence in the museum's galleries. I'm indebted to many.

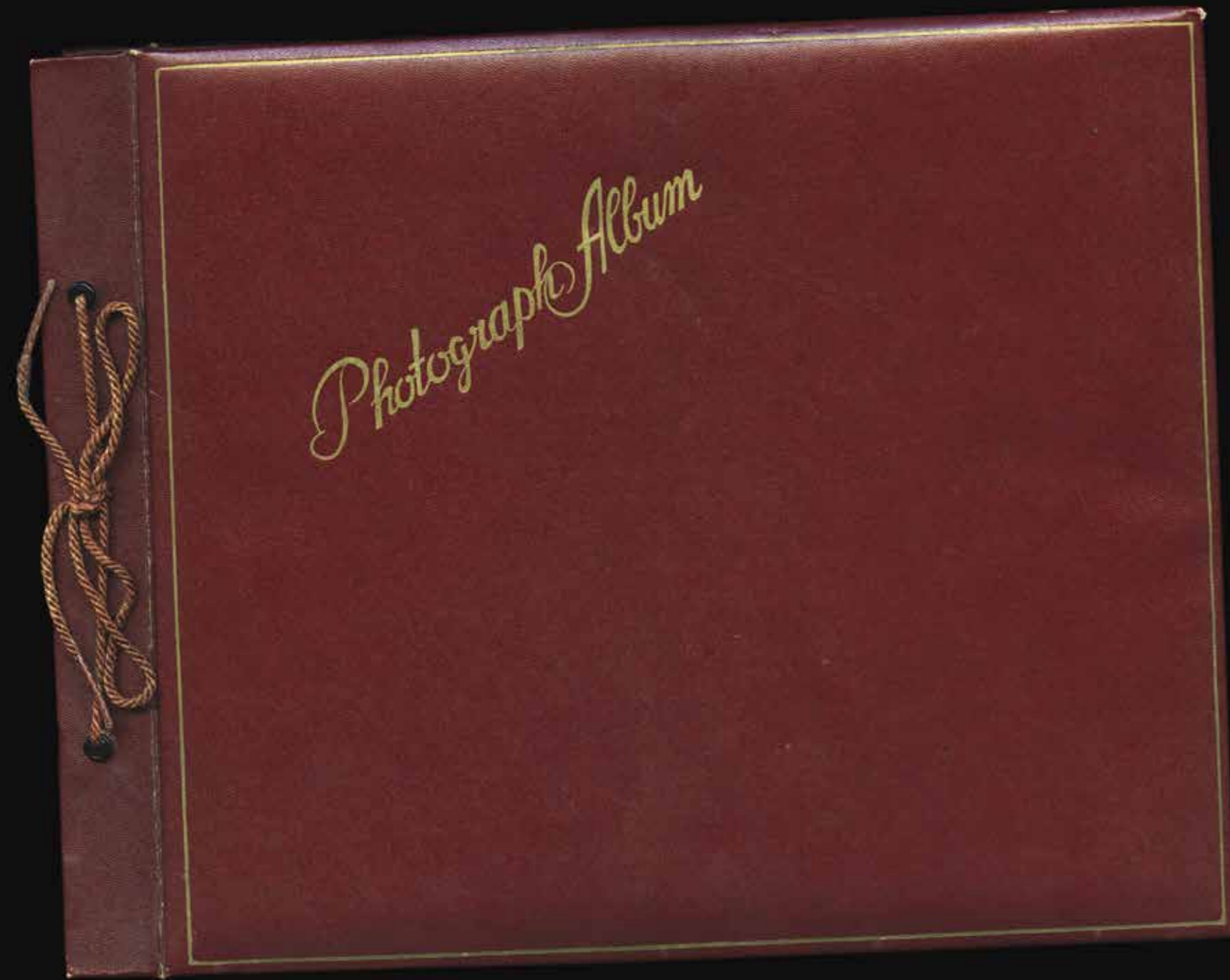
- Of course, Jon Lodge, who is my most consistent, constant swirling vortex of support and love.
- Family, friends and fellow artists — when I started a list, I was overwhelmed. Since I've been making art for over 40 years, I fear that I'll leave someone out. On my list are teachers, fellow artists, friends, generations of family, unknowns or barely-knowns who I engage with on Facebook and Instagram, acquaintances from residencies, inspirational folks I can only read about. We are, each of us, part of whoever is alongside us, whether up close or far away, in the unique universe we inhabit together.
- The catalog contributors who graciously agreed to write about their areas of expertise to help me explain to you some of what goes into the work that I make — Susan Floyd Barnett, Elinor Carucci, Linea Crowther, William Davies King, Barbara Levine and Clay Routledge. And, my wonderful photo friend, Robert E. Jackson who introduced me to the world of passionate found photo collectors.
- Financial assistance from the Montana Arts Council, an agency of state government, for recognizing and supporting my work with a 2019 Artist Innovation Award and a 2022 American Rescue Plan Act grant.

- The Yellowstone Art Museum's incredibly dedicated staff, volunteers, patrons and, importantly, sponsors of my exhibit — Ruth and Larry Martin, Jon Lodge, Aunt Dofe's Gallery, Gordon McConnell and Betty Loos, Linda Shelhamer and Stephen Haraden, Dr. Ralph and Sheryl Costanzo, and Mary Hernandez.
- The artist residencies, large and small, where I experienced undistracted time, indispensable support and invaluable feedback on this body of work since 2015 — Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, Gatlinburg, TN; A.I.R. Studio, Paducah, KY; McCanna House, North Dakota Museum of Art, Grand Forks, ND; Newnan ArtRez, Newnan, GA; New York Mills Cultural Center, New York Mills, MN; OFAR Residency, New Market, VA; Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Amherst, VA; Atlantic Center for the Arts, New Smyrna Beach, FL; Main Street Arts, Clifton Springs, NY; Von Hoffman House, Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, Medora, ND; Surel's Place, Boise/Garden City, ID; Taleamor Park, LaPorte, IN; Ucross Foundation, Clearmont, WY; Playa, Summer Lake, OR and The Banff Centre, Banff, Alberta, CA.

I'm most grateful. Many, many thanks!

Jane Waggoner Deschner





Remember me.

Susan Floyd Barnett

Jane Waggoner Deschner began working on *Remember me: a collective narrative in found words and photographs* in 2015, in response to what she experienced as the “caustic tone arising in our country.” Since then, she has hand-embroidered over twelve hundred found family photographs with snippets of text collected from obituaries.

The photographs in Deschner’s collection span decades of popular black and white photography, chronicling people and pets, places and times. While studio portraits tend toward intentional self-representation, family snapshots often capture random, unintended elements. Obituaries, written by loved ones, are another form of familial self-representation and collective memory. These brief anecdotes highlight noteworthy aspects of an individual’s life, attempting to distill and fix the departed’s essence in memory. Deschner thoughtfully pairs each vernacular photo with obituary text written about a different person. She explains, “The photos ‘read’ the texts and vice versa, teasing pretension, tragi-comedy and profound truths about the human condition from sentimental artifacts.”

The immersive installation is both humorous and poignant, weighted by an accumulation of personal stories that span and connect across time and place. The rhythmic arrangement of standard frames imposes a formal structure that contains and unites the sentimental artifacts. Mid-century furniture and mounds of hand-crocheted textiles support the nostalgic themes of the exhibition, alluding to the familiar spaces of homes and offices and the invisible work that sustains them. The viewer continually shifts their awareness between the facial expressions and vintage styles represented in individual images, the content of the texts, the details of the stitching, and

The aggregation of memories calls attention to the universality of human experiences, especially love and loss. Engaging with the anonymous, remixed tributes stimulates nostalgia, evokes warm personal memories, and reminds us of our social connections.

*“We see our personal truths reflected, through photos and words, in the lives of others.
We are reminded, in this divisive time, that we are more alike than different.”*

~Jane Waggoner Deschner





...volution, and fantasy.
-Susan Sontag



Timeless

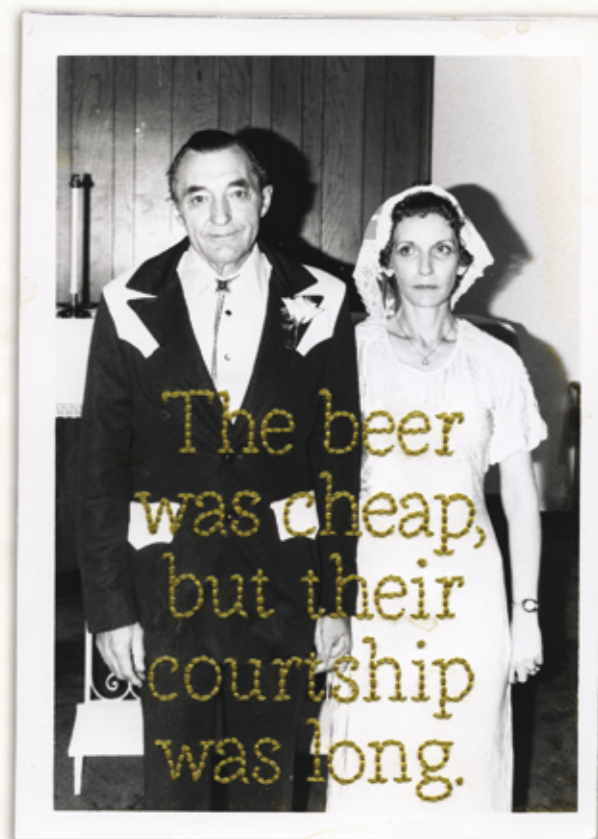
Barbara Levine

The allure of looking at other people's family photographs is powerful. We imagine lives lived, relate to faces and places different than our own histories and if there are captions on the backs of the photos, we feel let in on a secret. How found photo mysteries exert a hold on our imagination and how we create remembrances is at the heart of Jane Deschner's ongoing photographic project, *Remember me: a collective narrative in found words and photographs*.

Since 2015, Deschner, also a found photo collector, has hand embroidered text on over 1,200 snapshots, studio portraits, proofs, and press photographs. The text ranges from quotes about regret and time to sentences from obituaries she finds online and in newspapers. The effect of her coupling studio portraits of unknown people

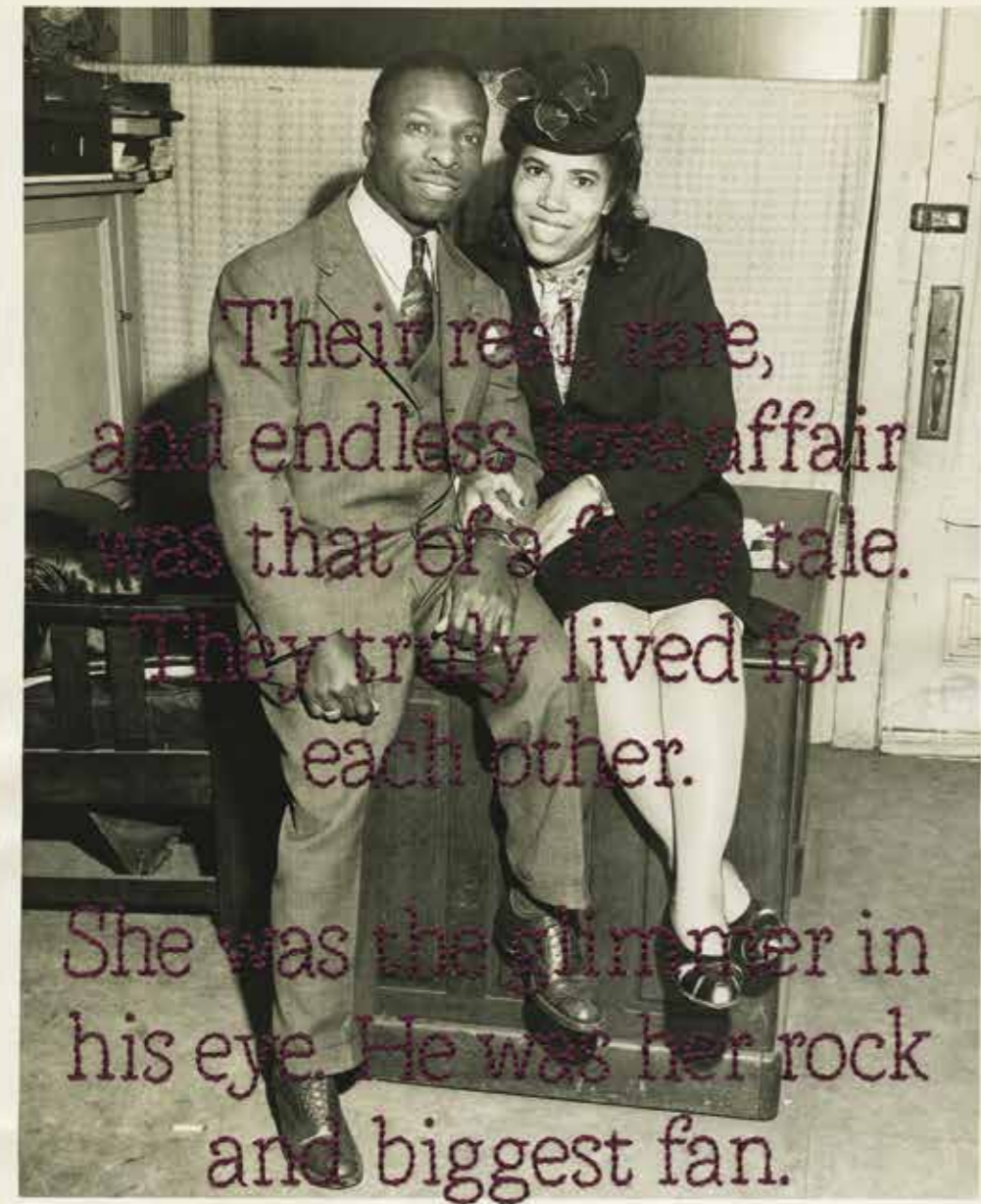
and excerpts from random biographies of the deceased is both startling and oddly familiar.

The seemingly banal portraits and testimonials come alive and confront us with questions. How would we express the weight of a person's life and what photograph would we want to be remembered by? These are just a few of the reactions one has when experiencing Jane Deschner's installations of embroidered photographs. The universality of remembering each other in words and pictures is ultimately life affirming and the artist plans to stitch photos for her *Remember me*. project indefinitely. According to Deschner, "the anecdotes I find in obituaries and the faces in the found photographs continue to bring me joy and hope every day."



"The ultimate wisdom of the photographic image is to say: 'There is the surface. Now — think — or rather feel, intuit — what is beyond it, what the reality must be like if it looks this way.' Photographs, which cannot themselves explain anything, are inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation, and fantasy."

~Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, 1977



Their real, rare,
and endless love affair
was that of a fairy-tale.
They truly lived for
each other.

She was the glimmer in
his eye. He was her rock
and biggest fan.

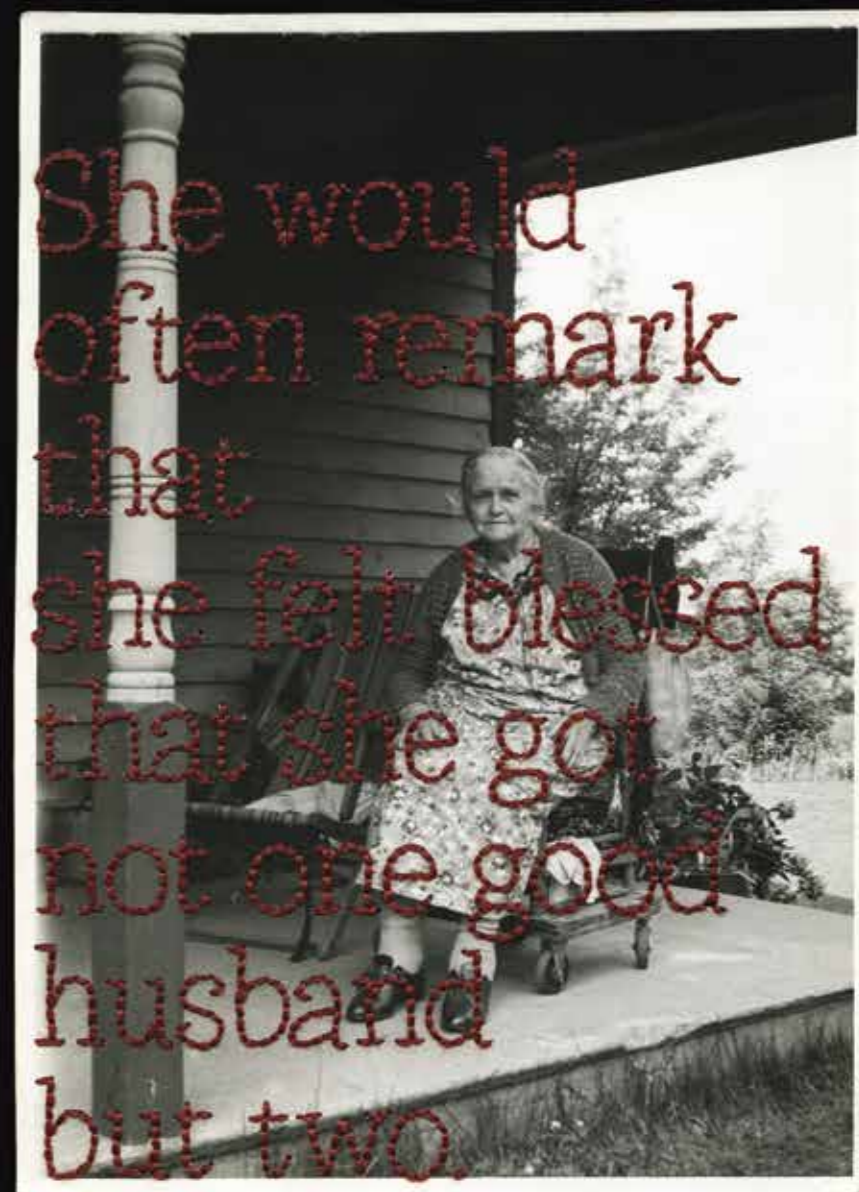
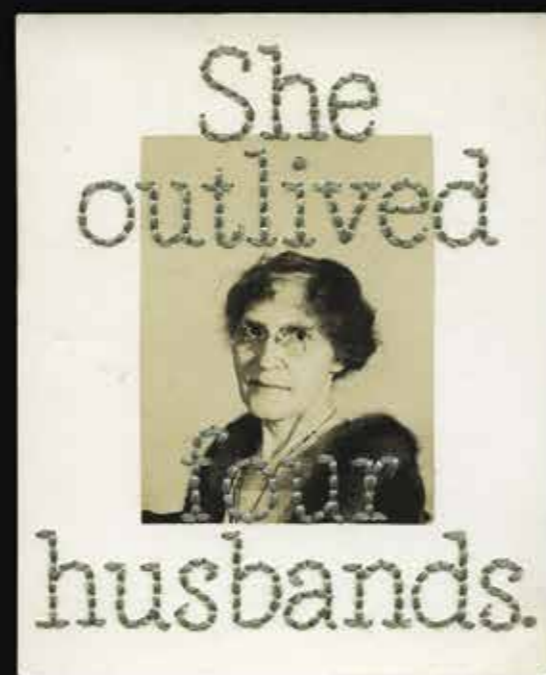
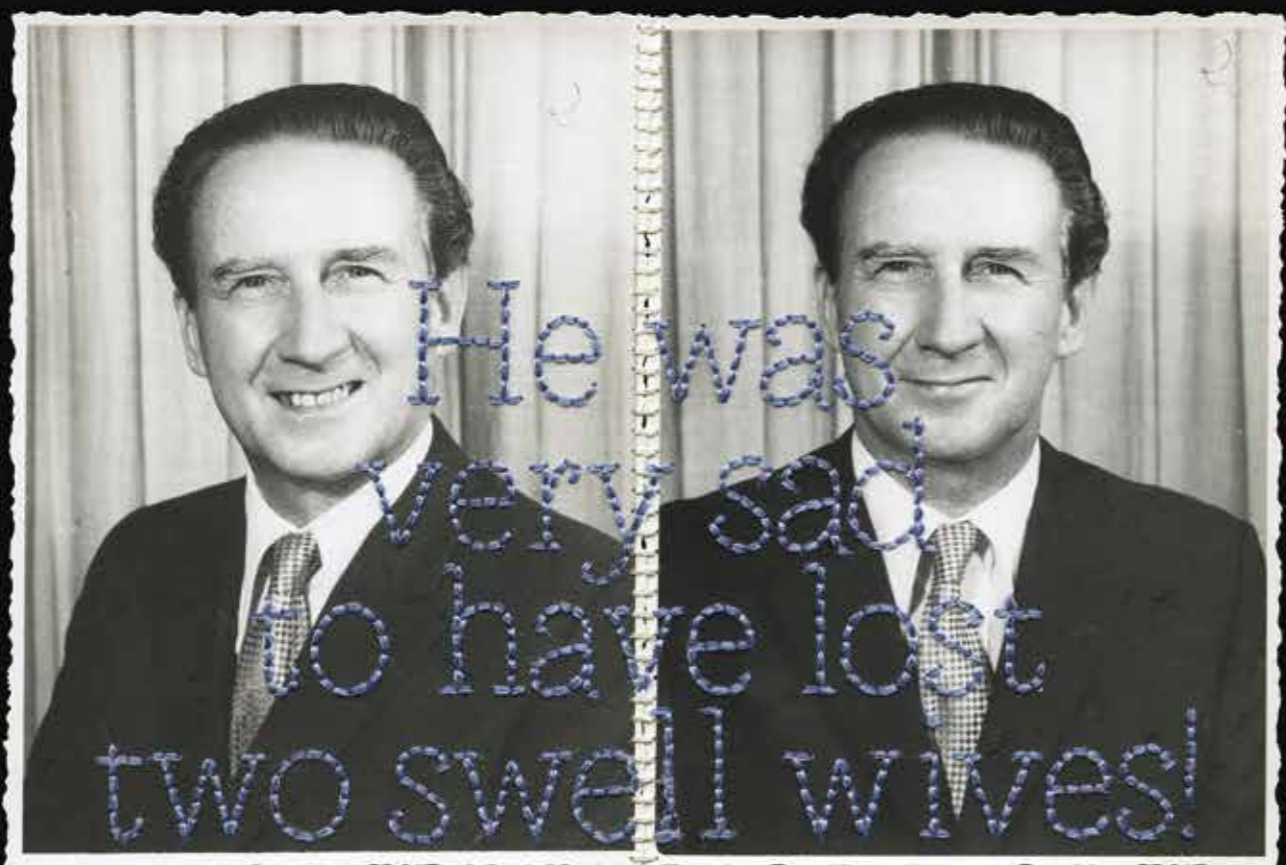


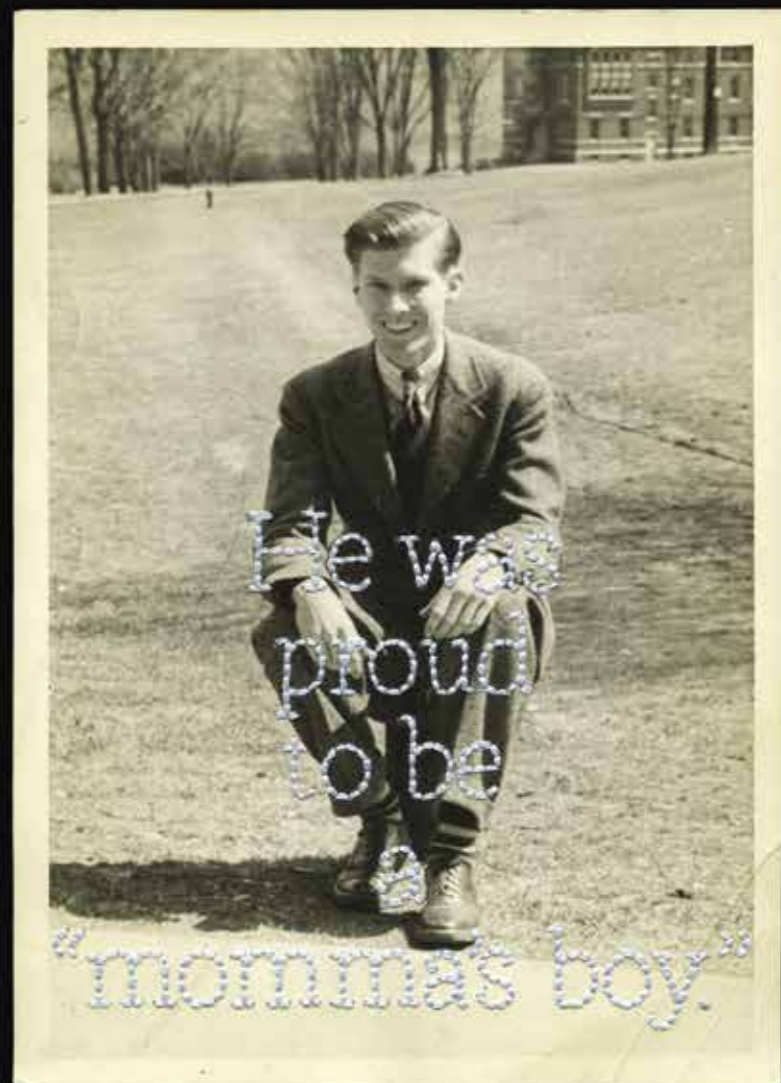
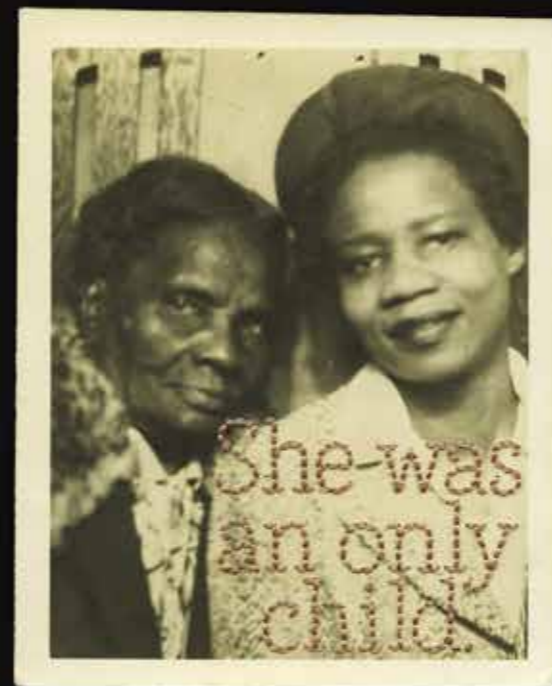
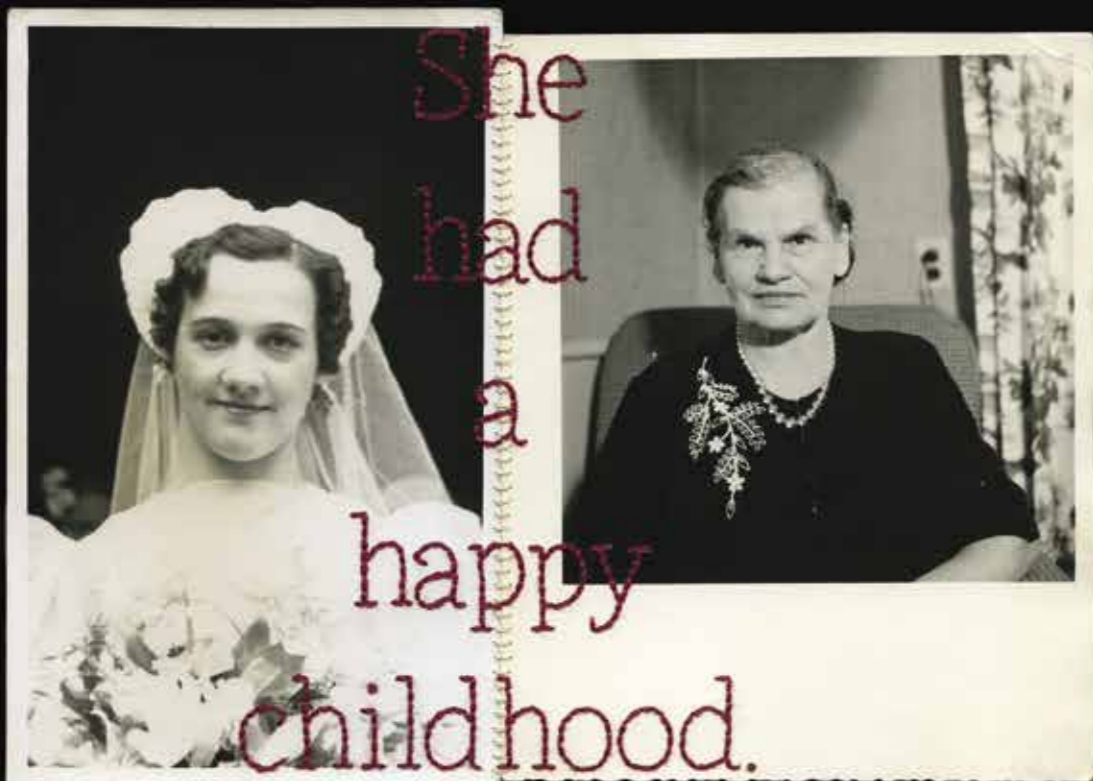


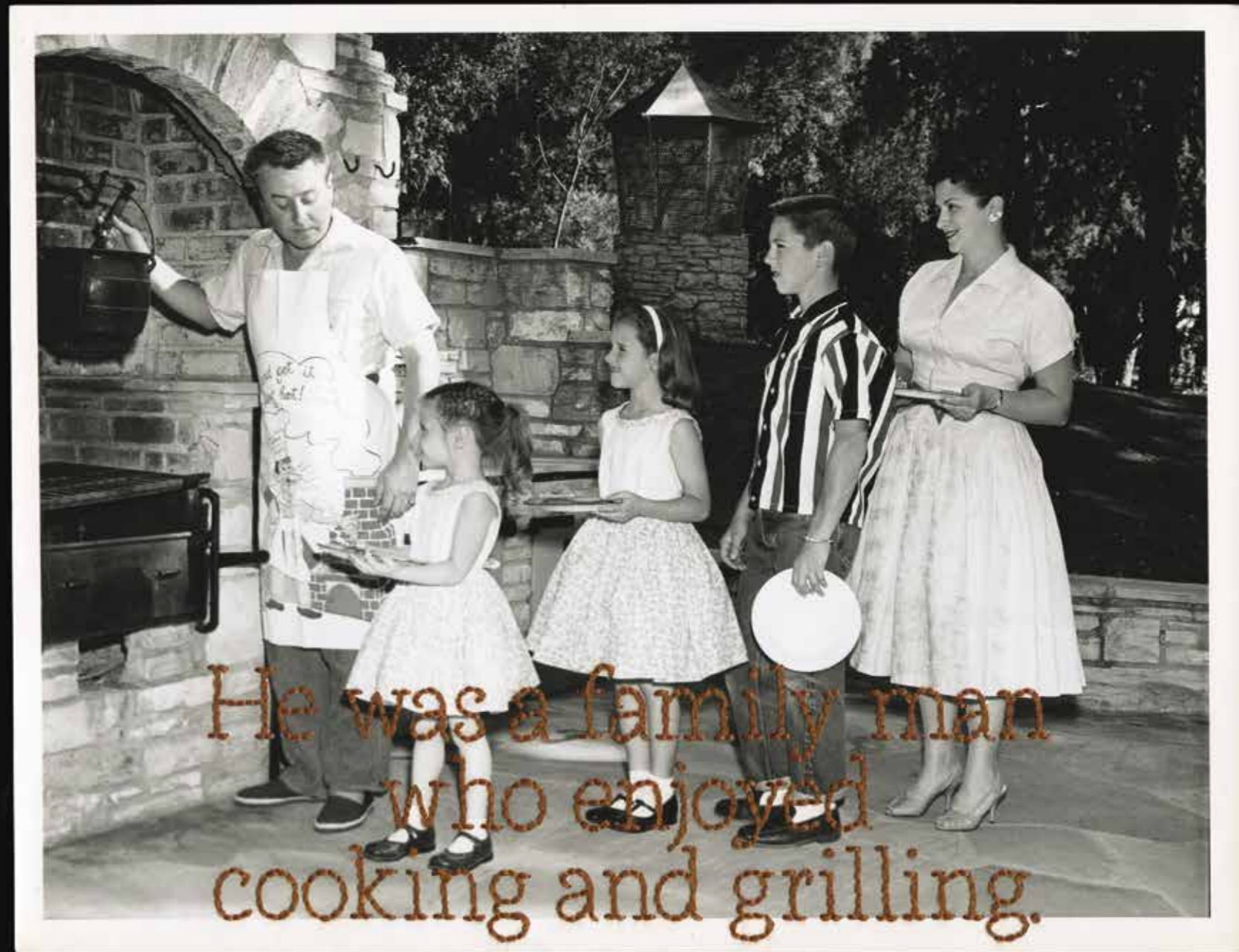
Mom was
undeniably
Dad's better
and smarter half

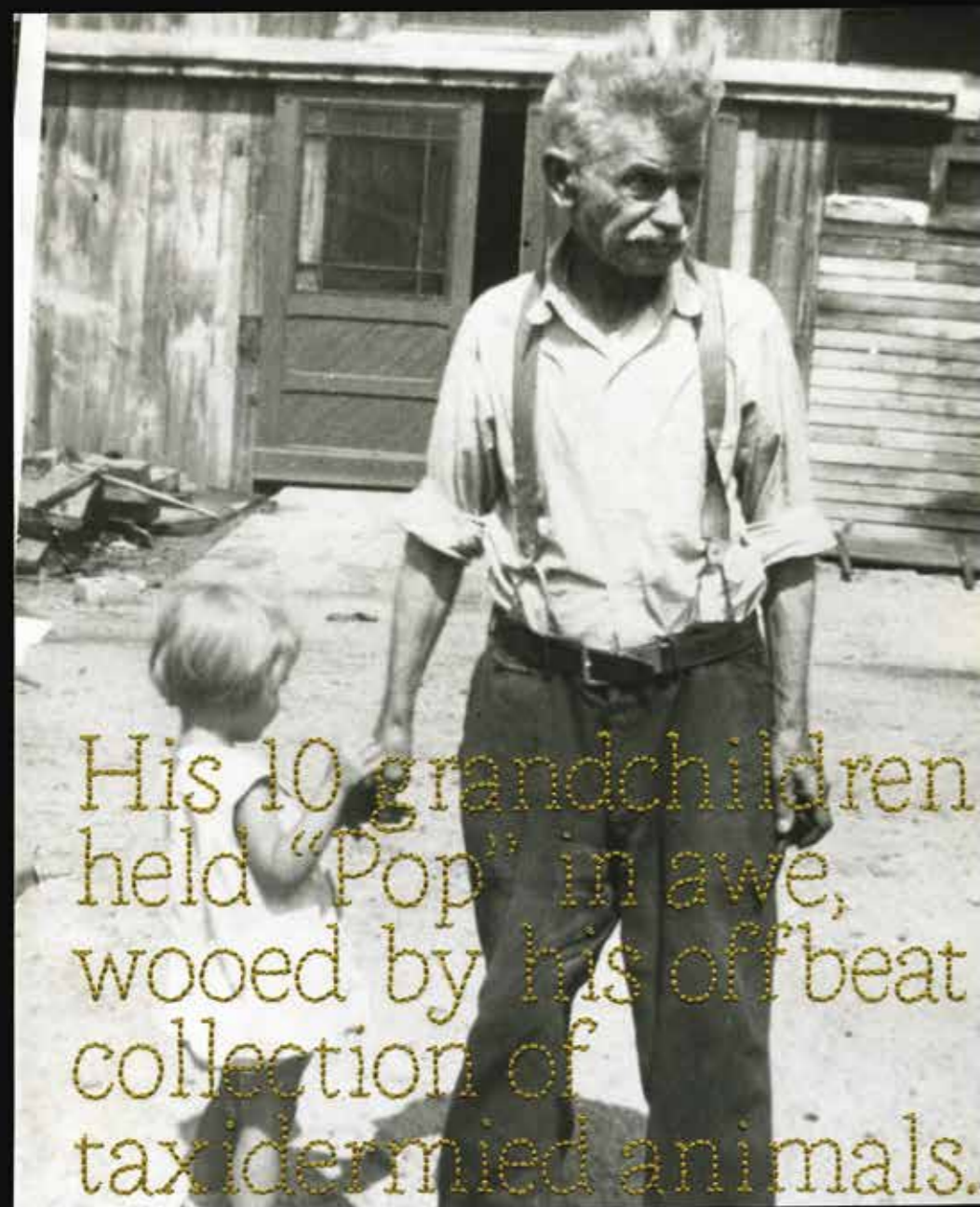


After a fifty-six-year
domestic partnership,
Mr. and Mr.
were married.

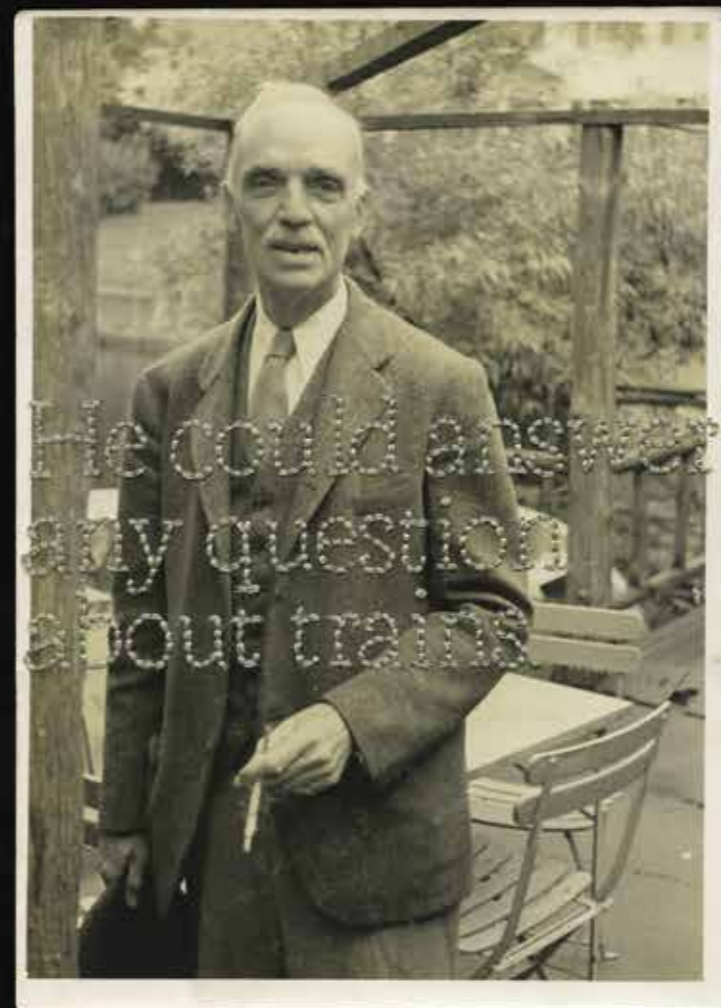




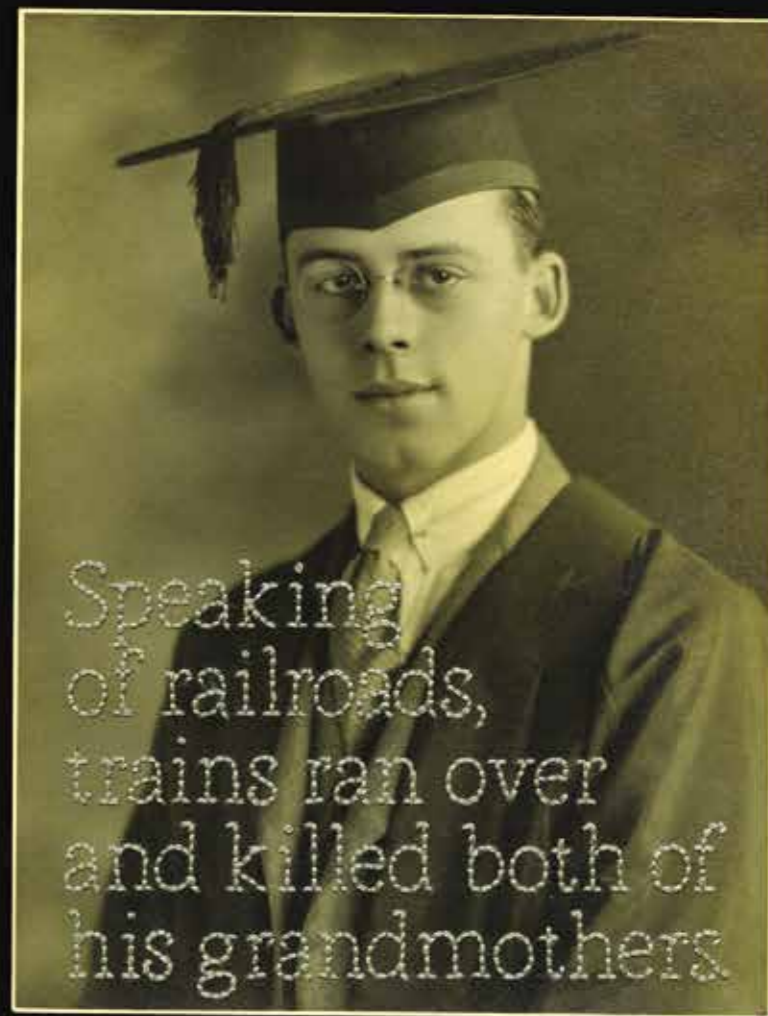




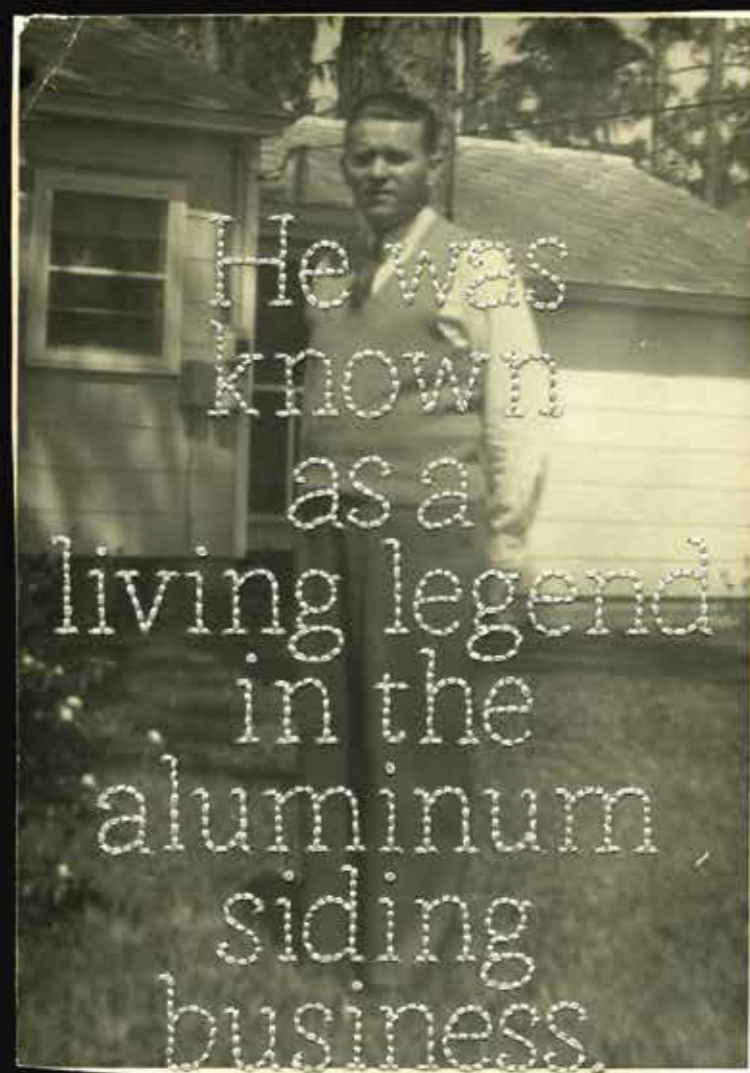
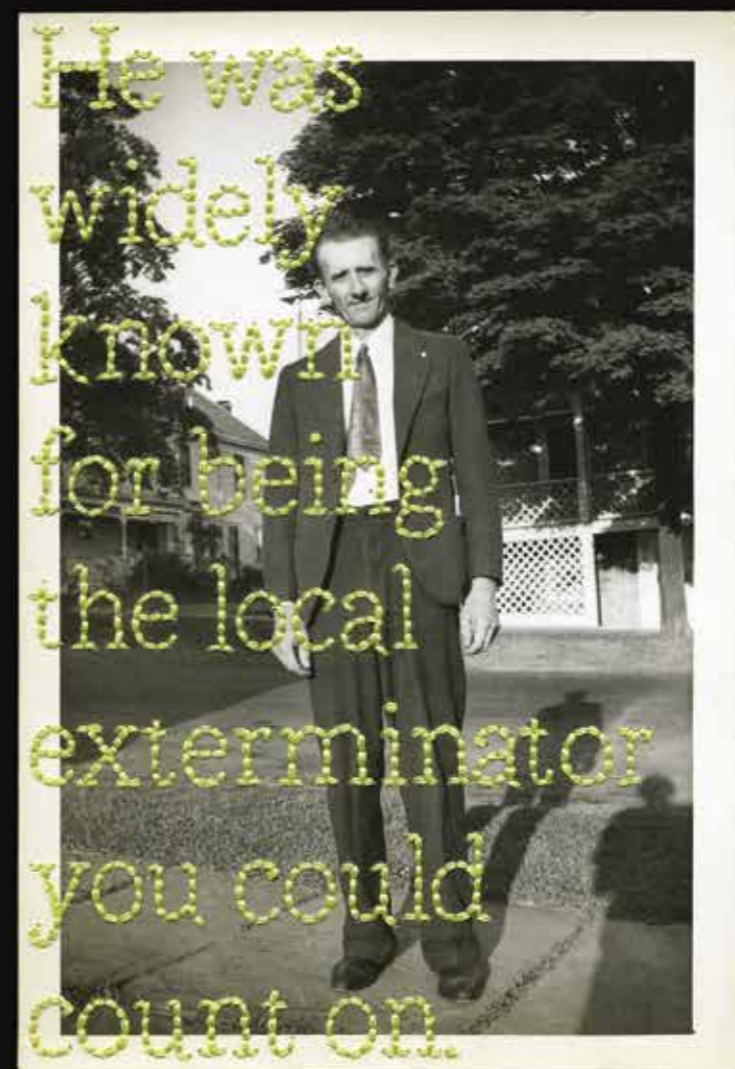
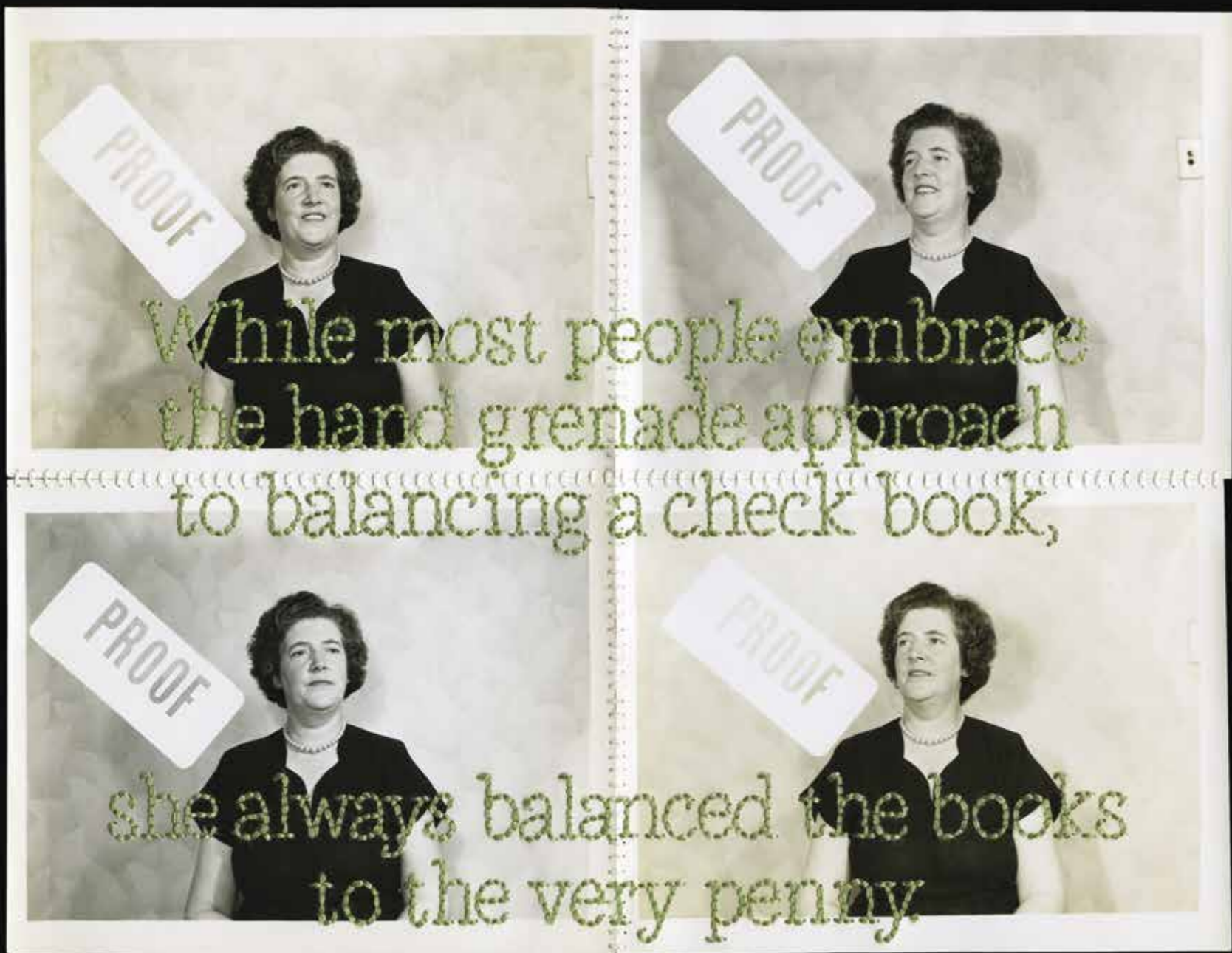
His 10 grandchildren held "Pop" in awe, wooed by his offbeat collection of taxidermied animals.



He could answer any question about trains.



Speaking of railroads, trains ran over and killed both of his grandmothers.

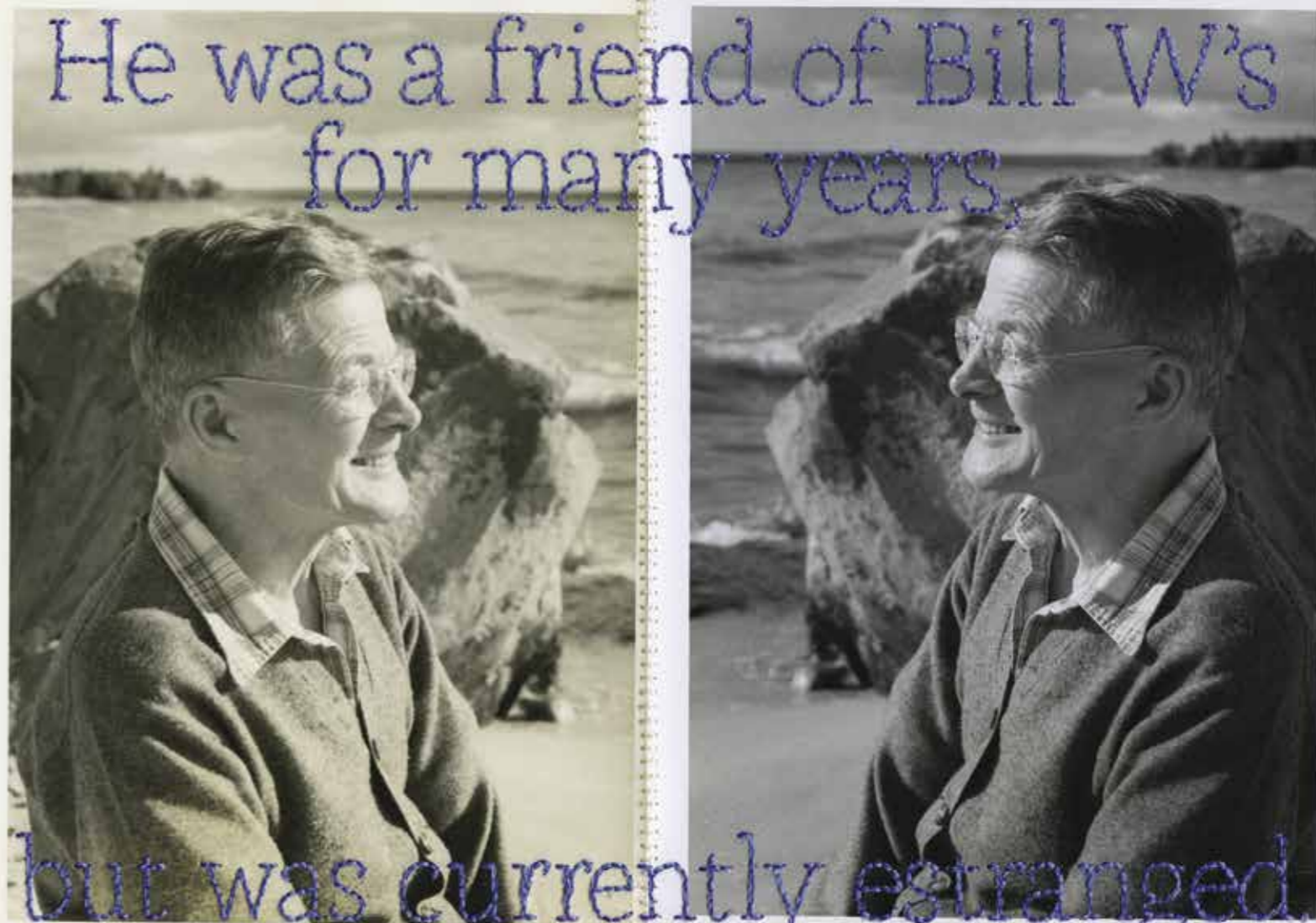


He dreamed of owning
a mine and motel



but never did.

He was a friend of Bill W's
for many years,



but was currently estranged.





Louise, Al and Jeffrey Garsowski



With sincere wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

SEASON'S GREETINGS



Merry Christmas
Happy New Year

This is our baby & Have A Nice Holiday



BEST WISHES FOR A

Merry Christmas



Best Wishes FOR THE MERRIEST KIND OF A HOLIDAY SEASON

Mary, Frank & Ronald

Merry Christmas



The Hendersons
Wm. Louise



Nostalgia: A Redemption Story

Clay Routledge, PhD

The term *nostalgia* was coined in 1688 by a Swiss physician named Johannes Hofer to represent what he thought was a medical condition confined to Swiss mercenaries longing for their mountain homeland while fighting wars in the lowlands of Europe. Symptoms included sadness, bouts of weeping, fainting, stomach pain, disordered eating, fever, heart palpitations, and suicidal thoughts. This medical disease view persisted through the 18th and 19th centuries, though diagnoses expanded beyond the Swiss. For instance, nostalgia was observed among British, French, and American soldiers. In the 20th century, nostalgia was no longer treated as a disease but began to be thought of as a psychological ailment.

In the later part of the 20th century, nostalgia was beginning to be viewed by some scholars in a more sympathetic light as it was distinguished from the more unpleasant state of homesickness. Consumer psychologists and marketing researchers started documenting the ways that sentimentality toward the past predicted product preference and consumer decision-making. But still, even by the start of the 21st century, researchers had not conducted the types of systematic studies needed to truly understand nostalgia. This changed in the first decade of this new century when researchers, including my research team, began to approach the study of nostalgia using the modern tools of behavioral science.

"Nostalgia increases positive mood, self-esteem, feelings of social connectedness, optimism about the future, and perceptions of meaning in life."

~Clay Routledge, PhD

In our research, we observed that contrary to past theorizing, nostalgia does not cause distress. Instead, distress causes nostalgia. Nostalgia can be triggered by external cues such as running into an old friend, finding a family snapshot or hearing music from one's youth. But when it comes to internal psychological triggers, people tend to experience nostalgia in response to feeling sad, lonely, meaningless, and uncertain about where they are in life.

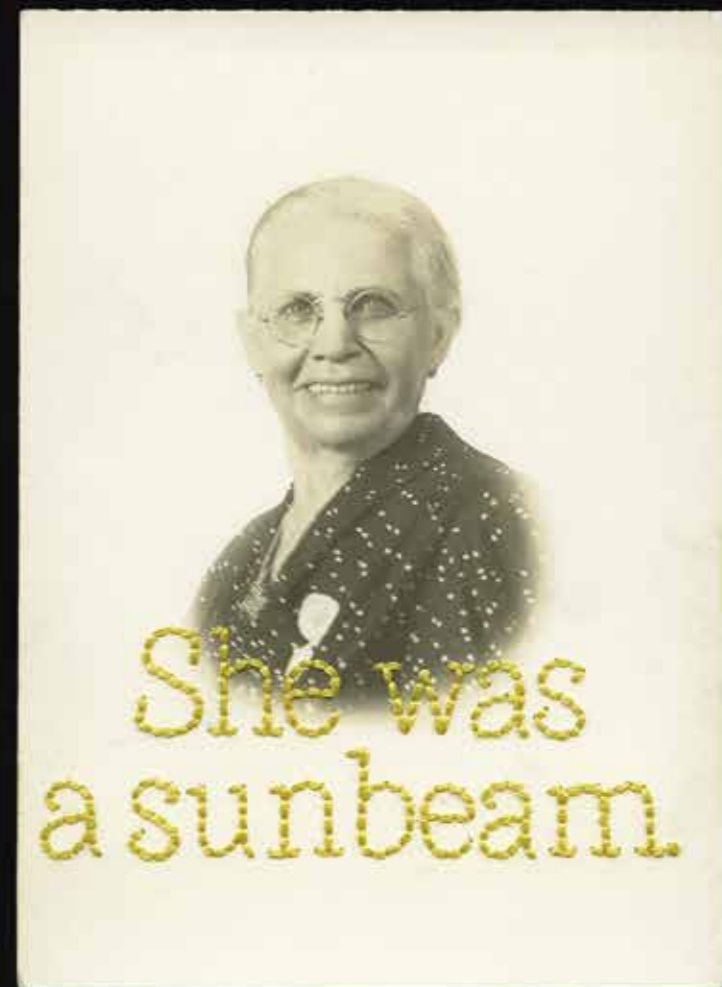
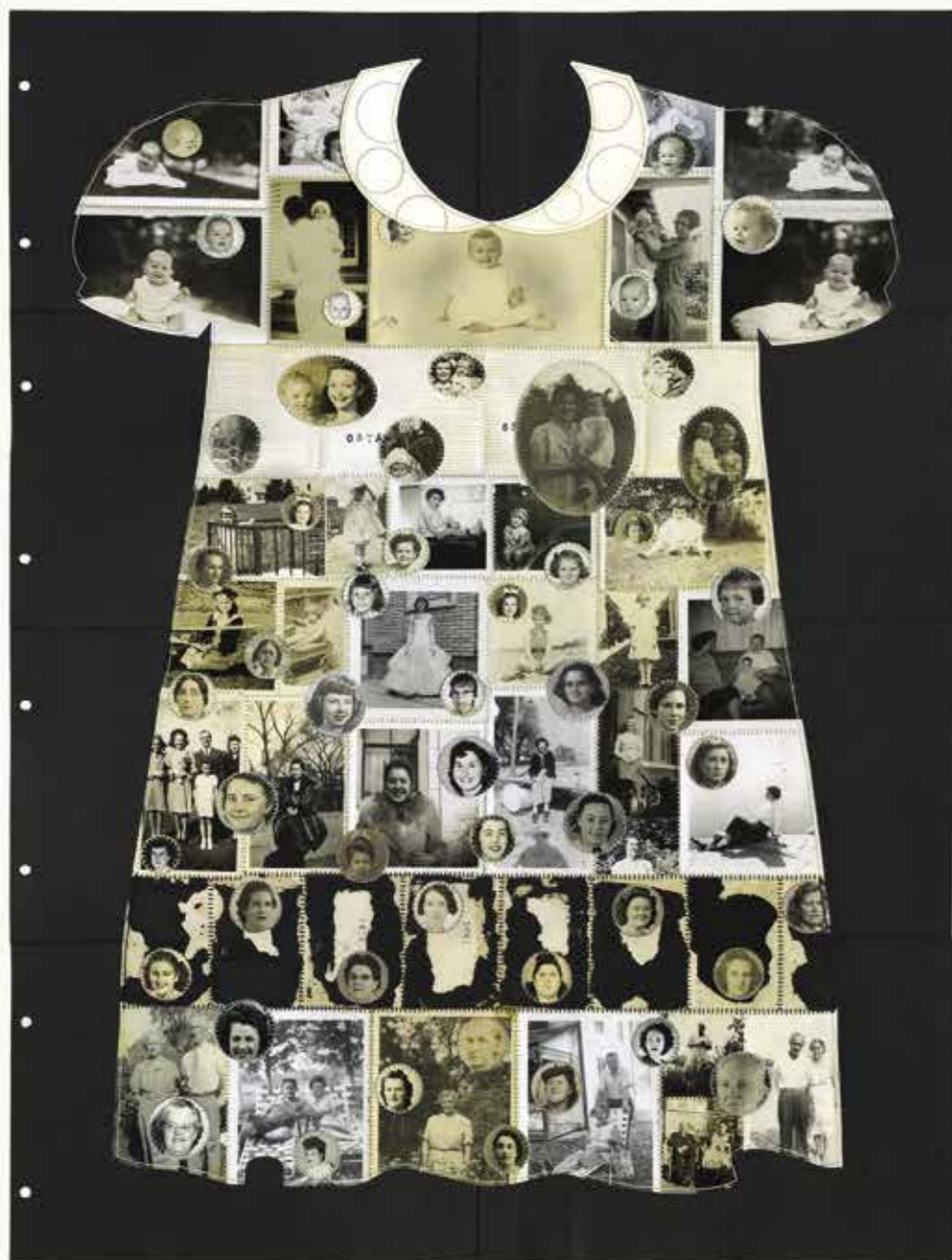
We have also studied the details of nostalgic memories by having people from all over the world describe in writing a memory that makes them nostalgic. The content of these nostalgic memories helps explain why negative psychological states trigger nostalgia. Nostalgic memories typically focus on cherished life experiences that involve close others such as holidays, family gatherings, vacations with family or friends, weddings, and religious rites of passage. Nostalgic memories are personally meaningful social memories.

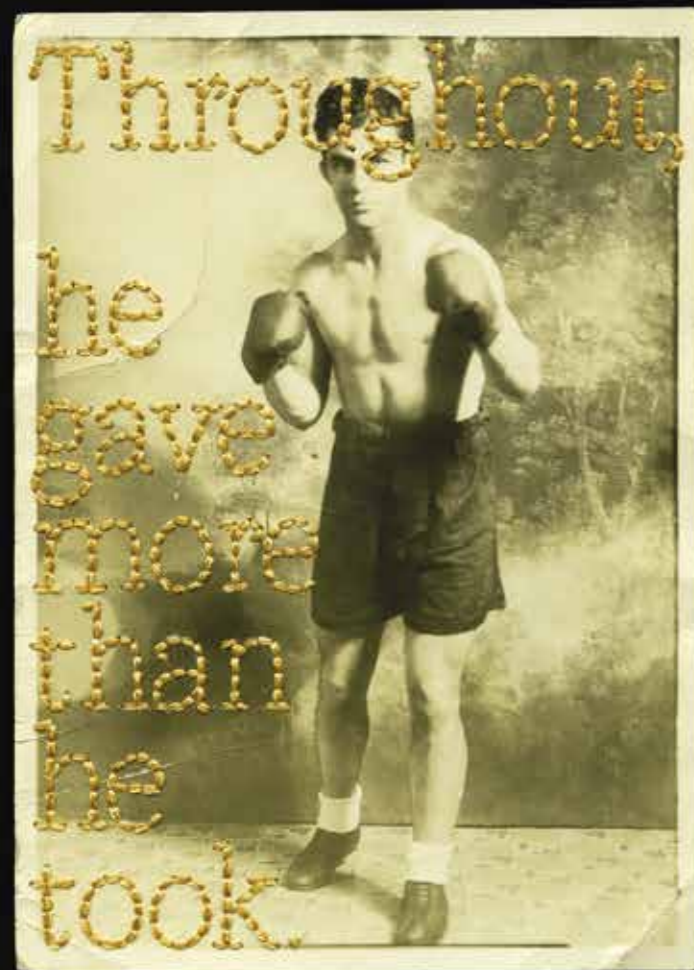
In terms of emotion, nostalgic memories often contain a mixture of positive and negative feelings but the positive tend to outweigh the negative. *Critically, nostalgic memories tend to follow a redemptive sequence in which feelings such as sadness and loss are overwhelmed by pleasant and even energizing feelings such as happiness, love, gratitude, and hope.*

Unpleasant psychological states motivate people to revisit cherished memories but what do such nostalgic exercises do for people? Our team has examined this question with experiments in which we have individuals spend a few minutes writing about a nostalgic memory or listen to music that makes them nostalgic. Participants in control conditions reflect on non-nostalgic autobiographical memories or listen to music that they do not associate with nostalgia. Participants then respond to questionnaires that assess psychological states or complete behavioral tasks that reveal motivated action. In all, the research indicates that nostalgia serves important psychological functions. It makes people feel more self-confident, more connected to those they care about, a greater sense of meaning in life, more optimistic about the future, and more determined to pursue life goals.

Nostalgia was once viewed as a brain disease, but modern science tells a different story. Revisiting the cherished memories of times shared with those we hold dear reminds us that life, even though sometimes painful and difficult, is also full of experiences that make it worthwhile. When we feel alone or without purpose, or experience uncertainties and life disruptions that make us feel anxious and pessimistic, nostalgia focuses the mind on what is most important for the good life: family, close friends, community, and the experiences and goals that help people feel like significant contributors to a meaningful cultural drama.



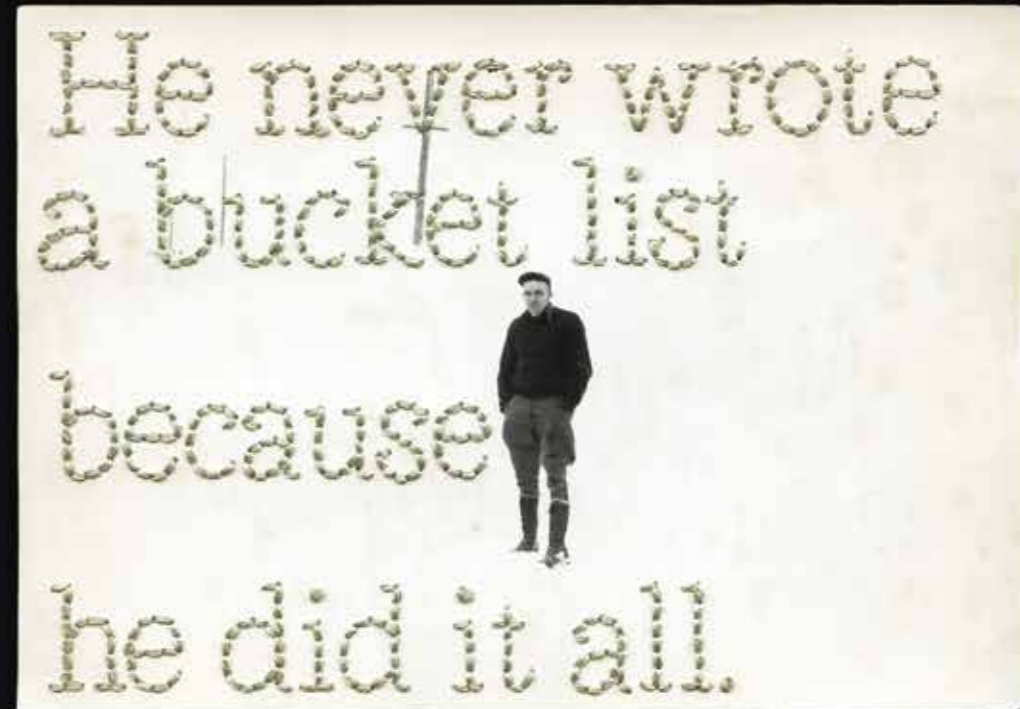




Throughout
he
gave
more
than
he
took.



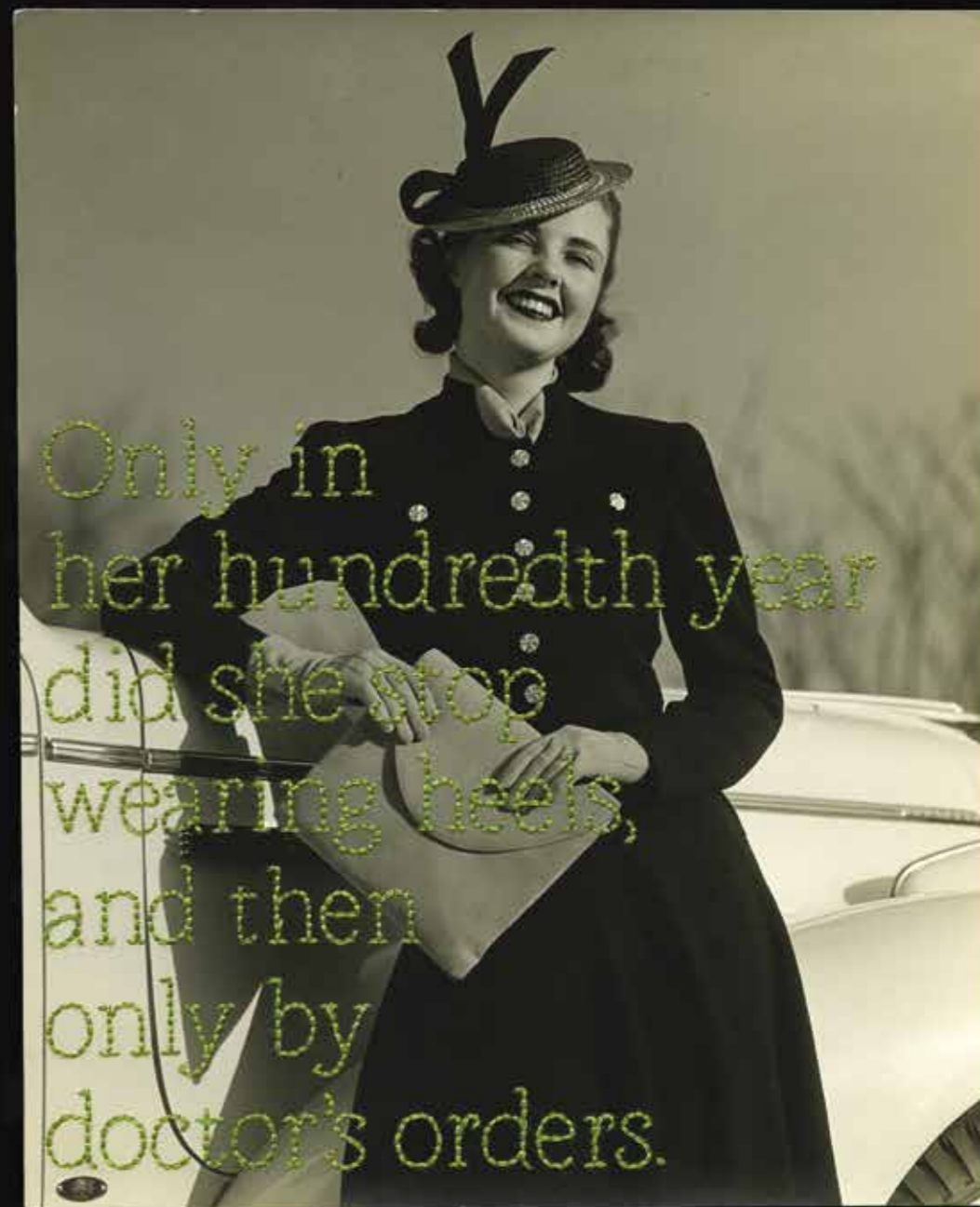
She was old
far longer
than most.



He never wrote
a bucket list
because
he did it all.



He danced
through life
in the direction
of the lyrics
of his soul.

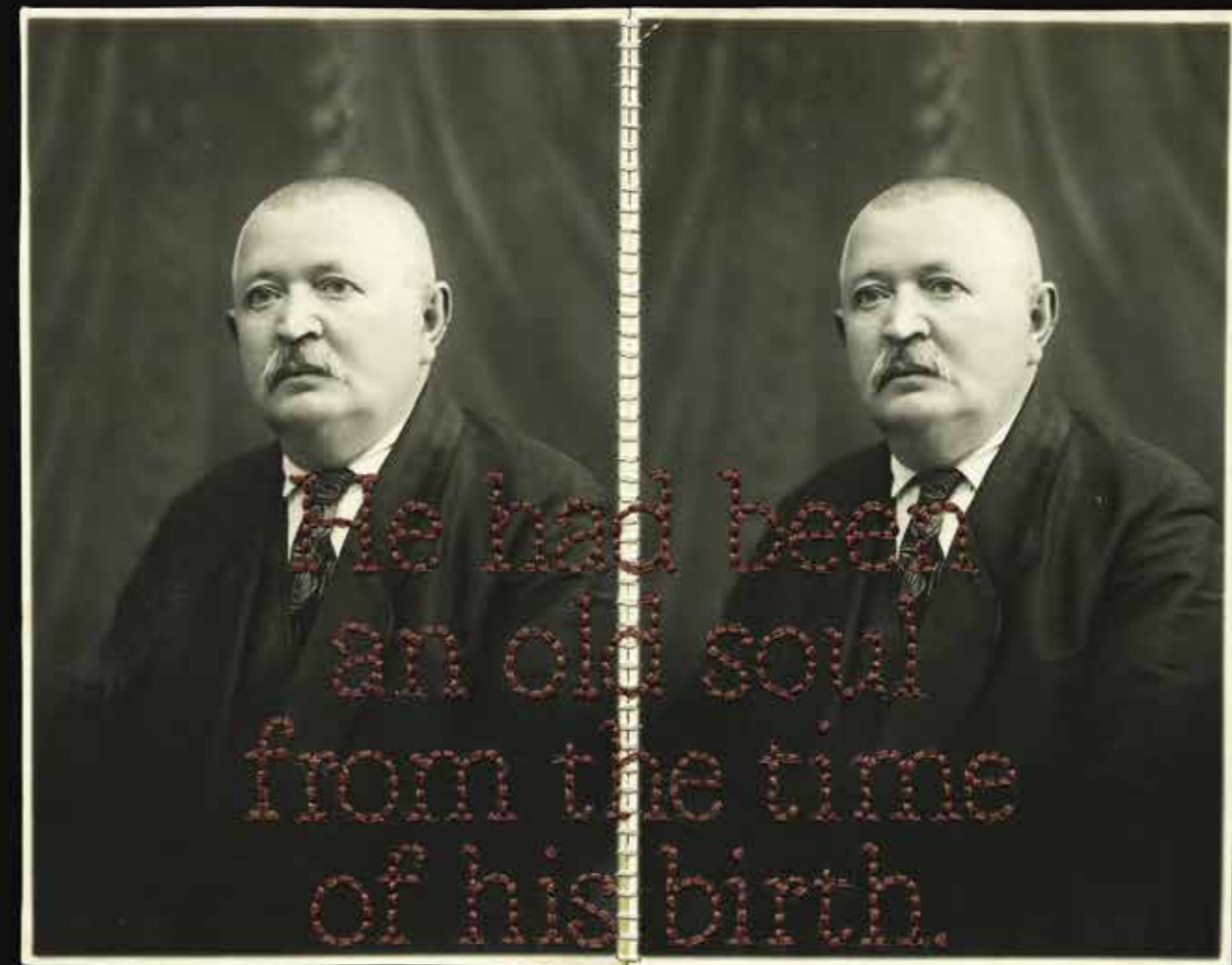


Only in
her hundredth year
did she stop
wearing heels,
and then
only by
doctor's orders.

As she would often say,

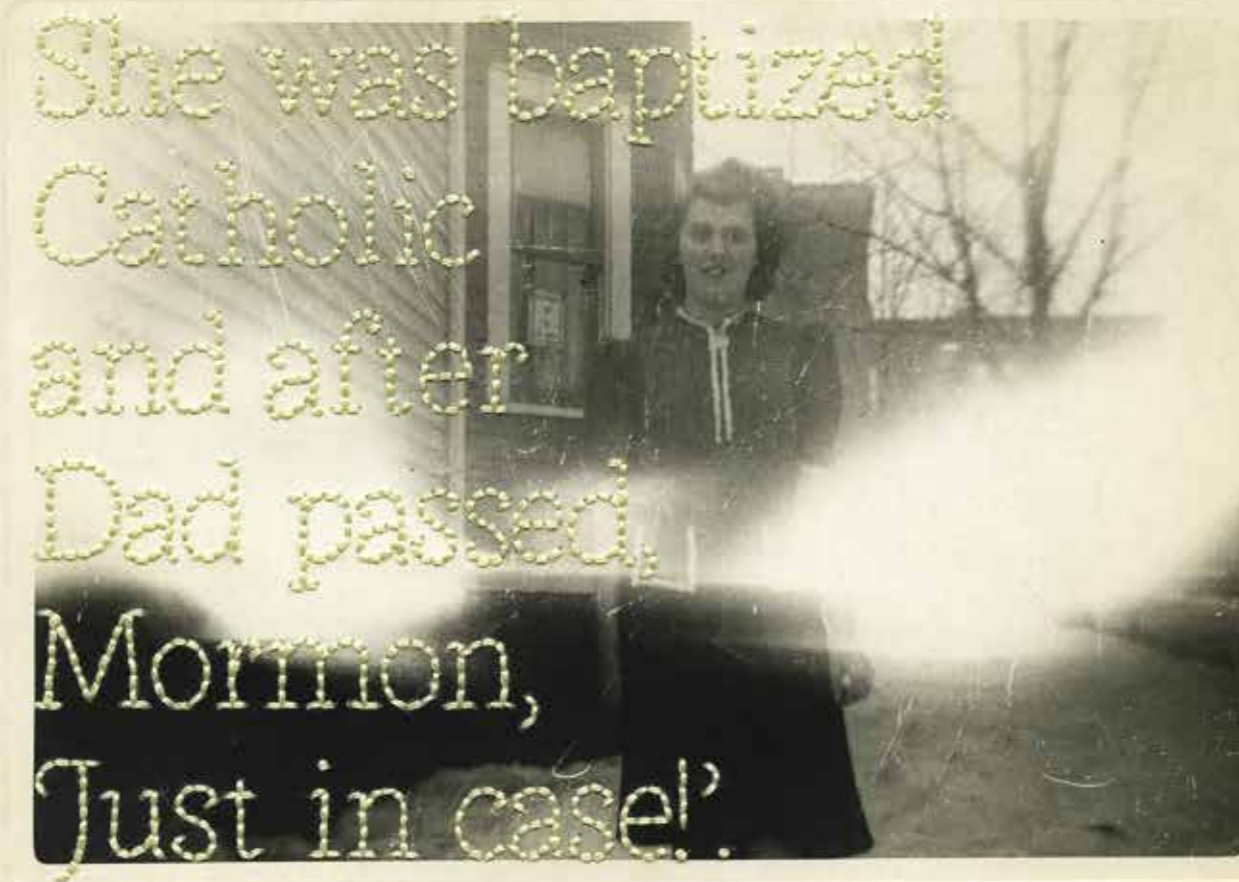


"we're never
promised tomorrow".

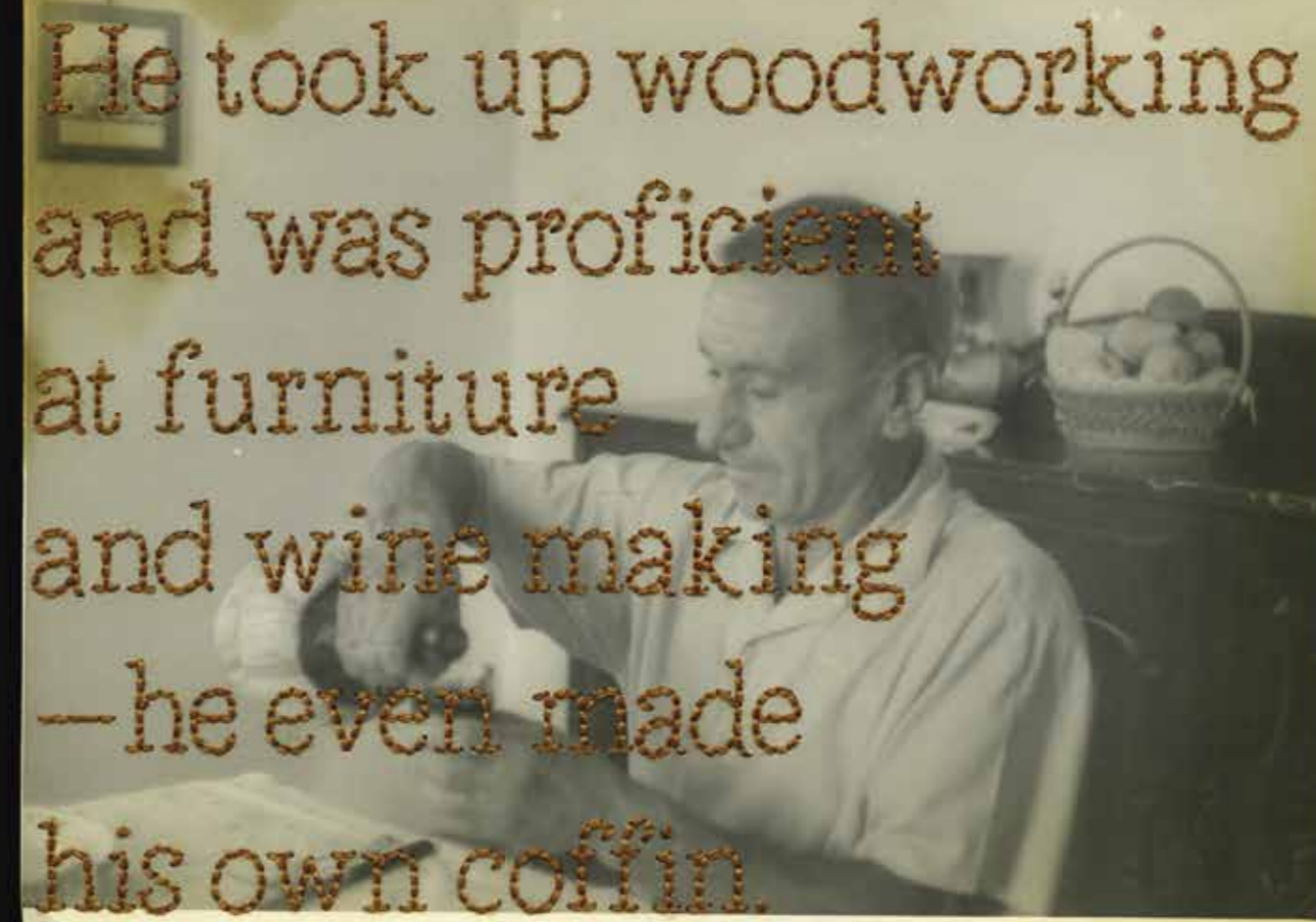


He had been
an old soul
from the time
of his birth.

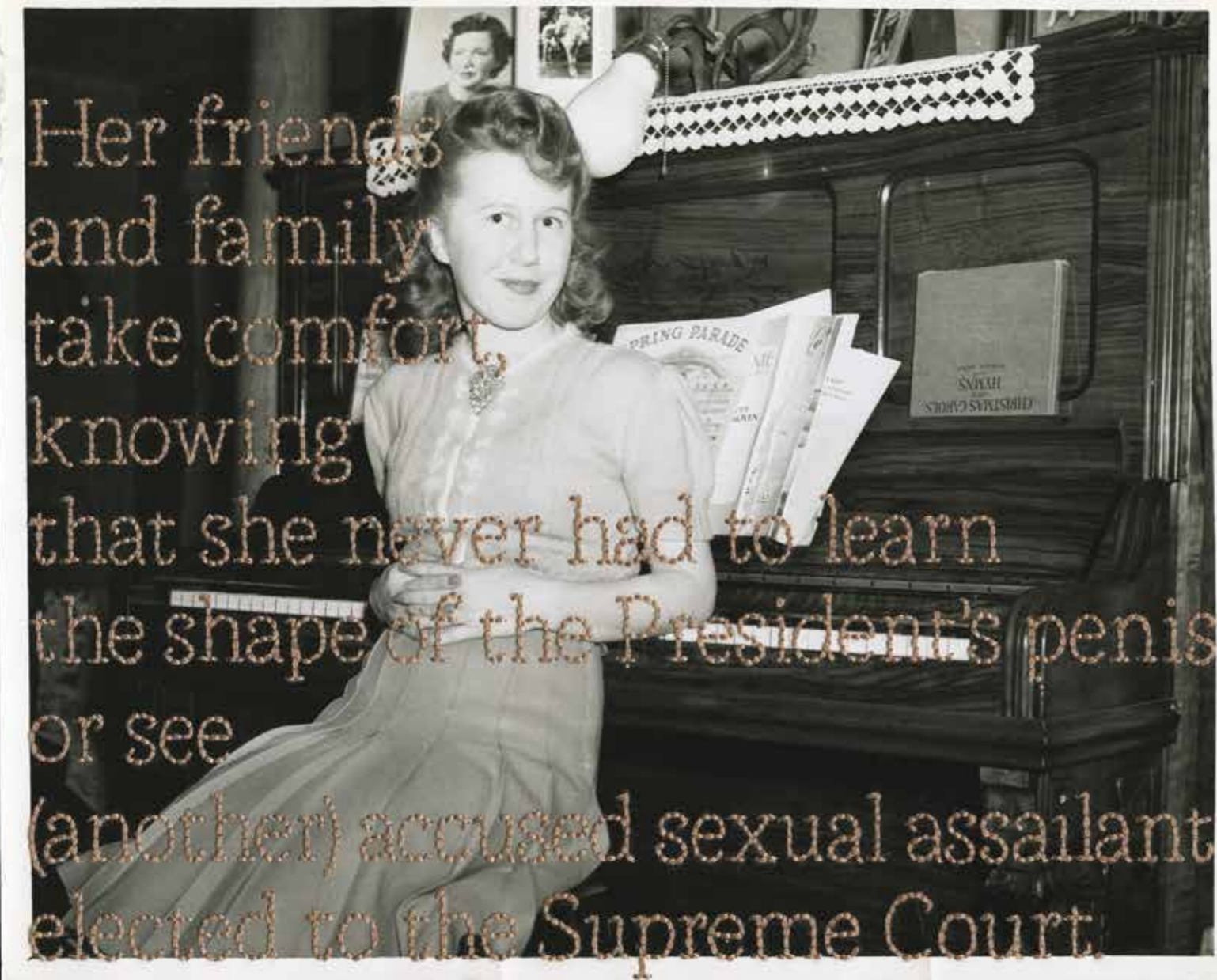




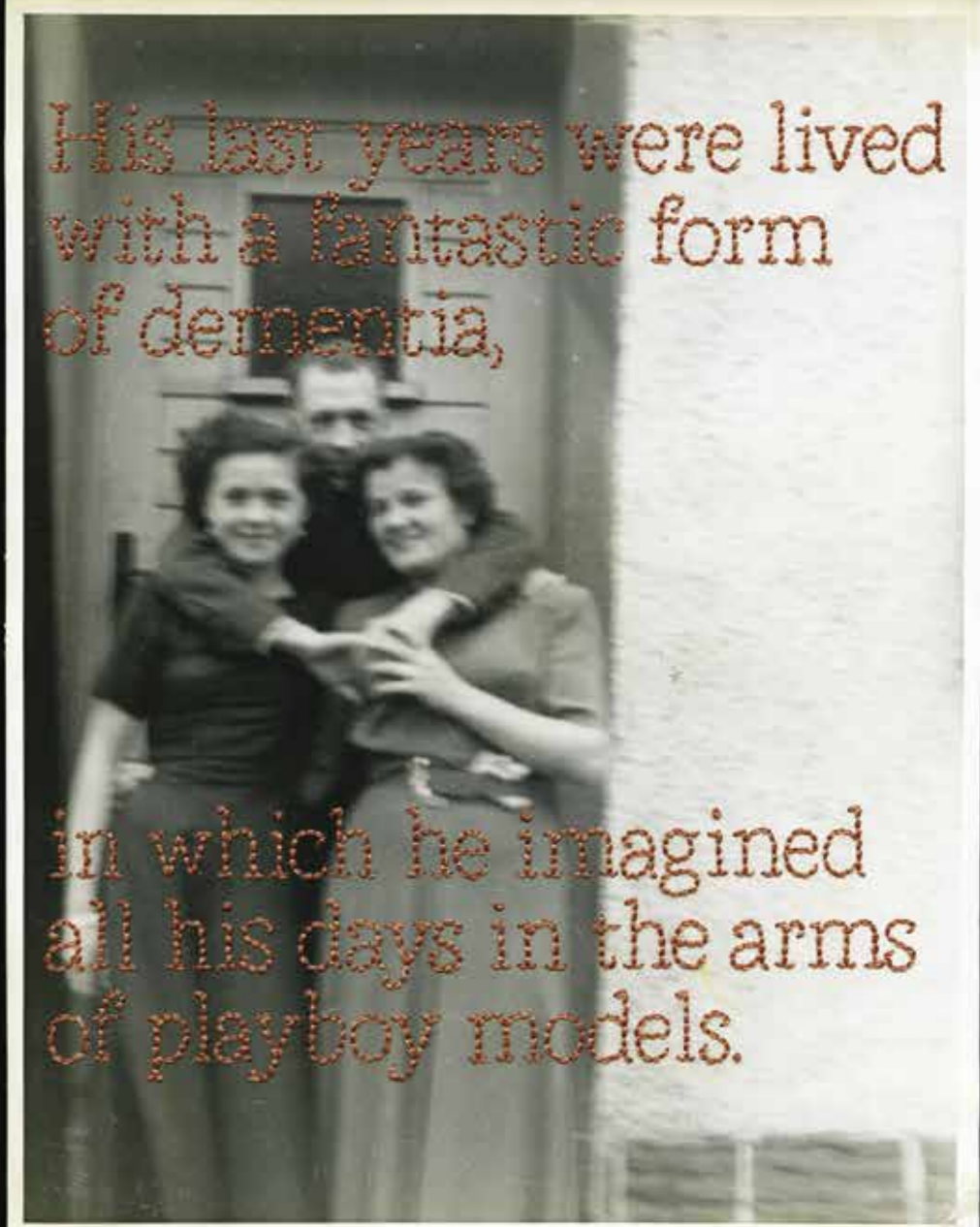
She was baptized
Catholic
and after
Dad passed,
Mormon,
Just in case!



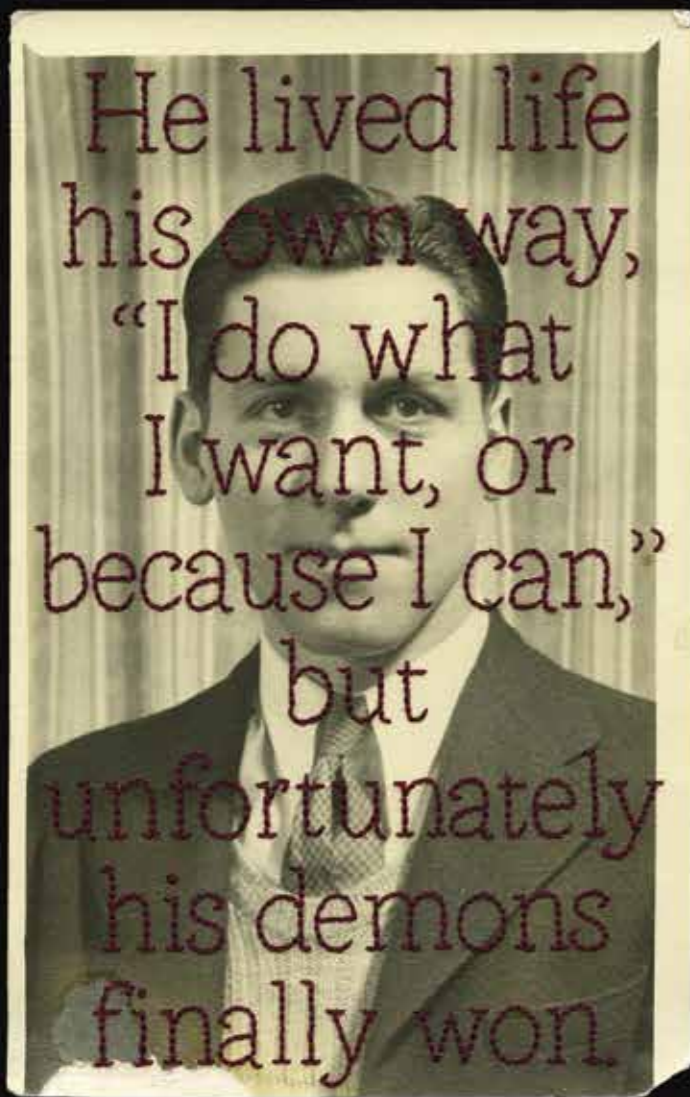
He took up woodworking
and was proficient
at furniture
and wine making
— he even made
his own coffin.

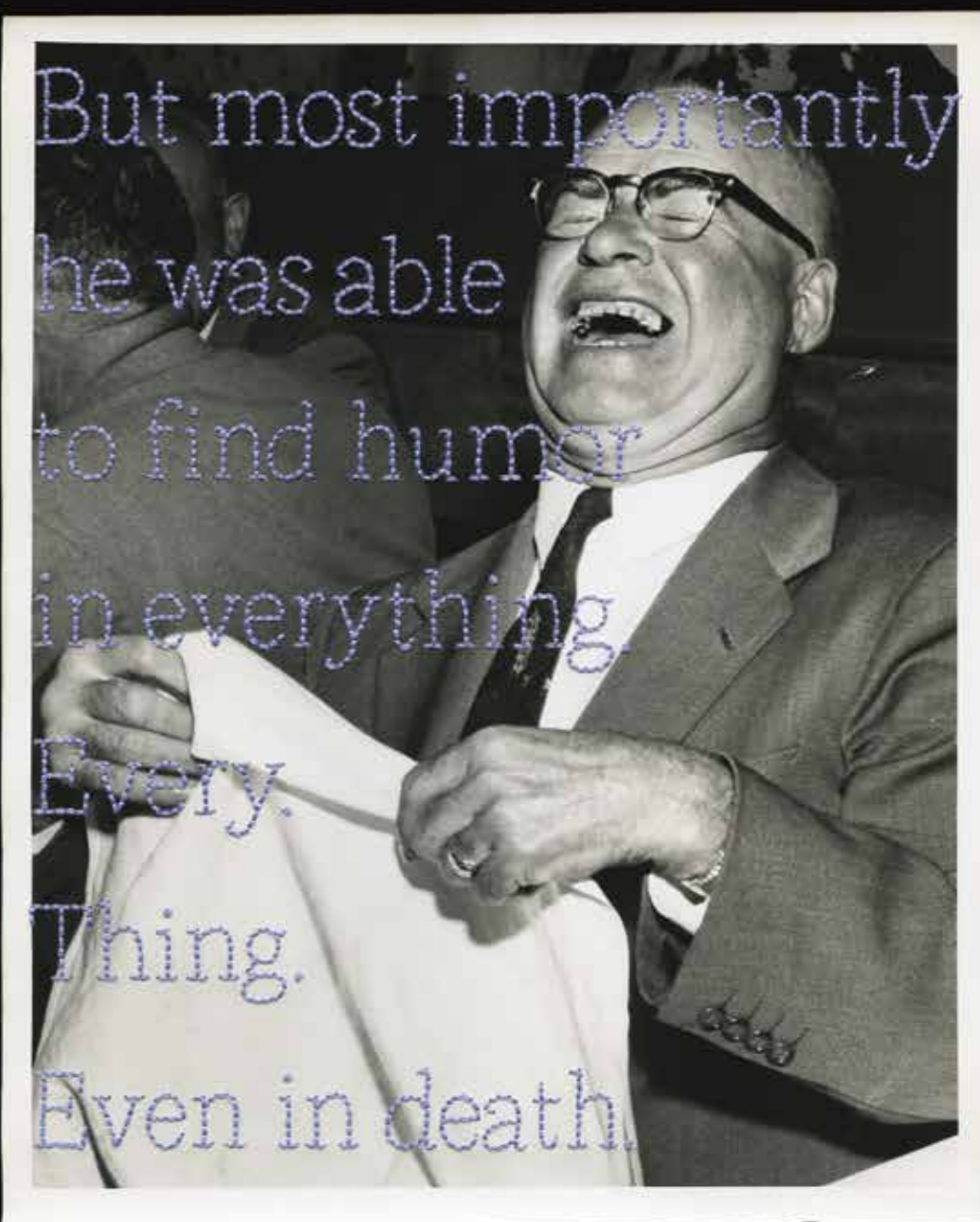


Her friends
and family
take comfort
knowing
that she never had to learn
the shape of the President's penis
or see
(another) accused sexual assailant
elected to the Supreme Court.



His last years were lived
with a fantastic form
of dementia,
in which he imagined
all his days in the arms
of playboy models.







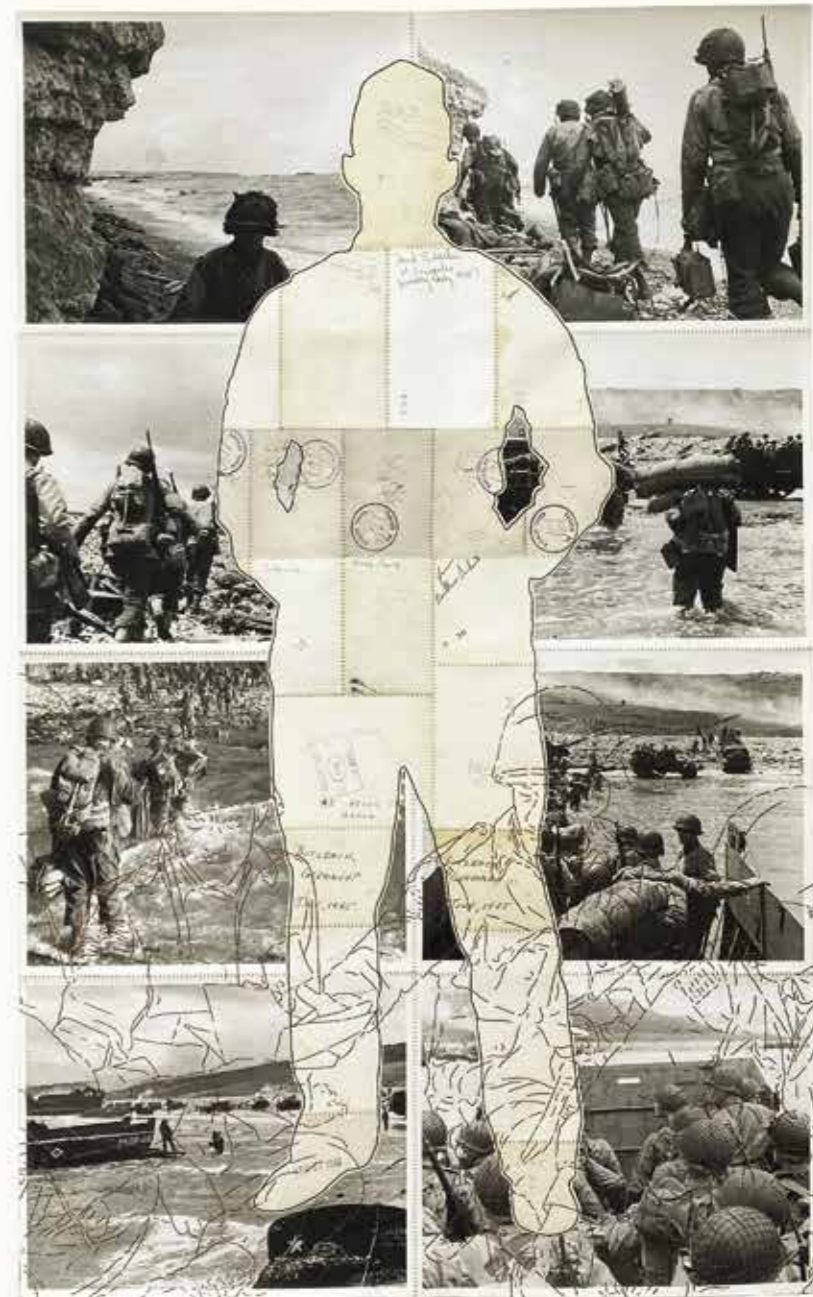
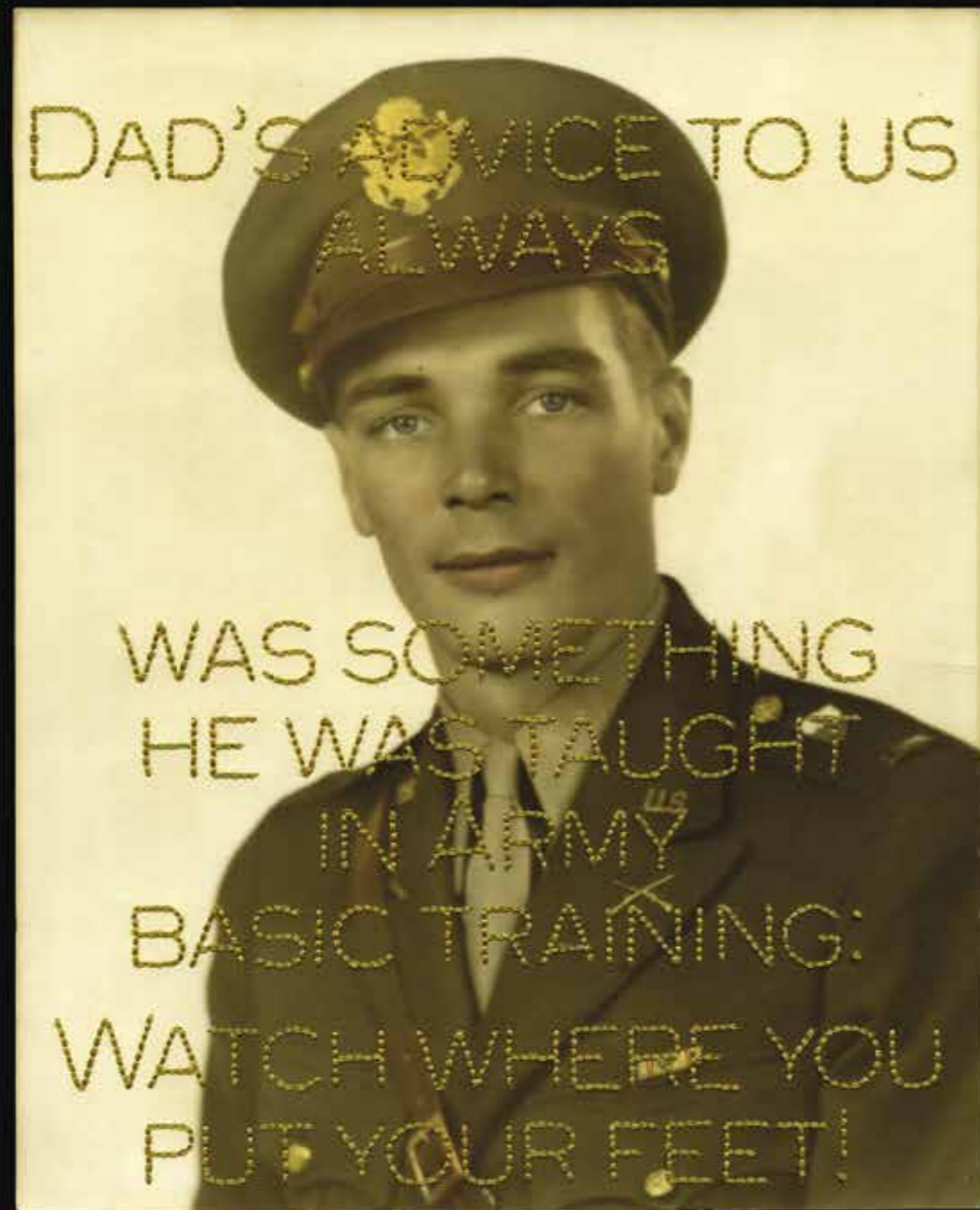
We wish
we could know

the man he would
have become.



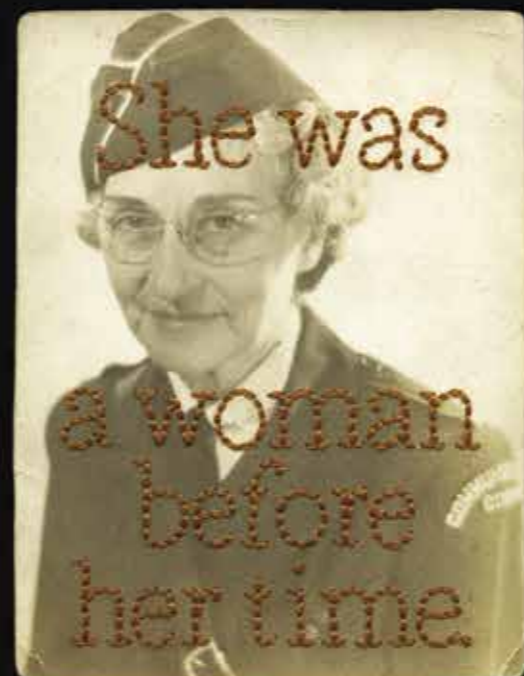
He has finally received
his ^{George W. Jones} crown and robe
in Heaven!

Jemson Studio
SANFORD, FLA.

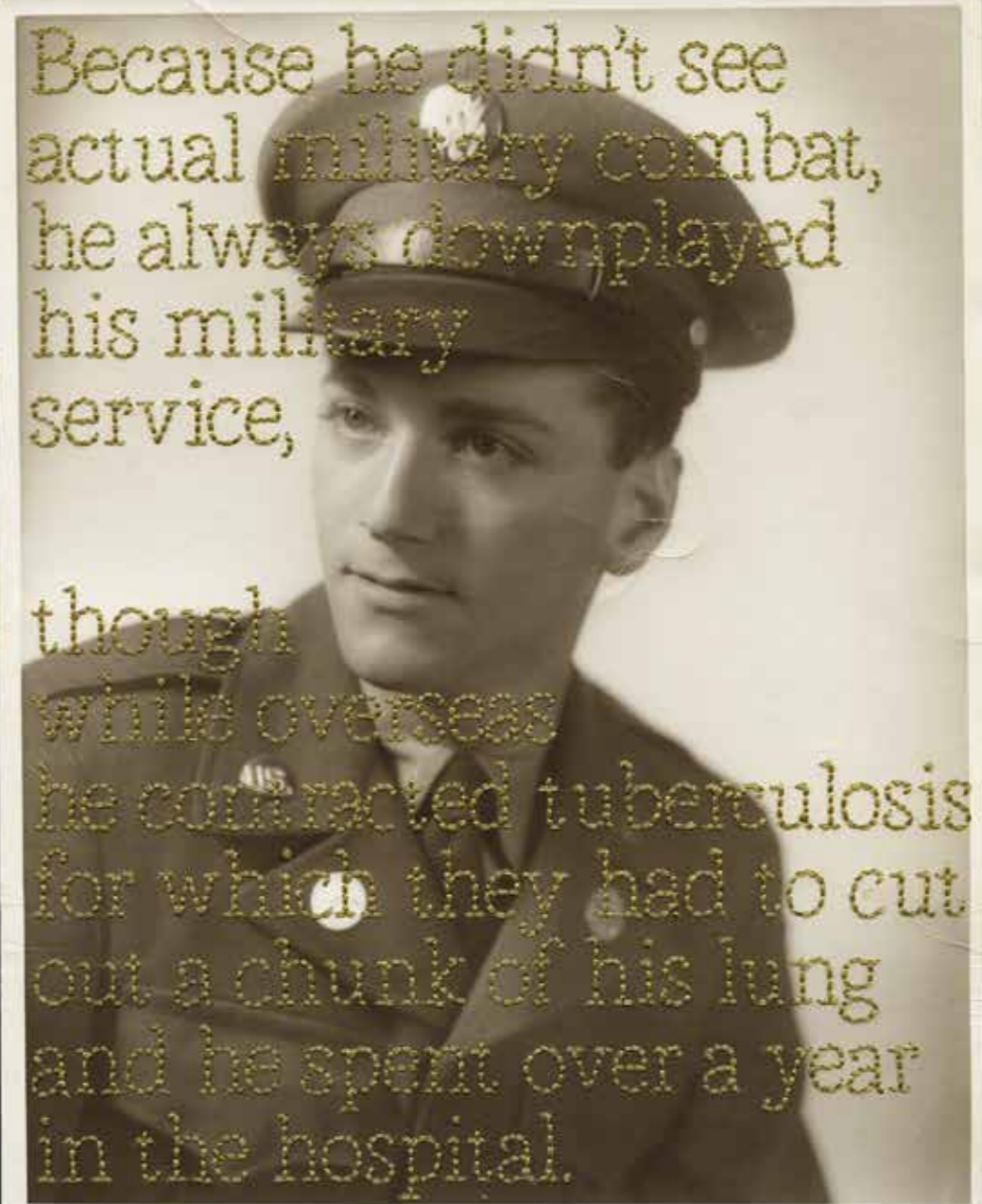




All the kids at the pool
would gather round to see
the huge American flag tattoo
on his chest.

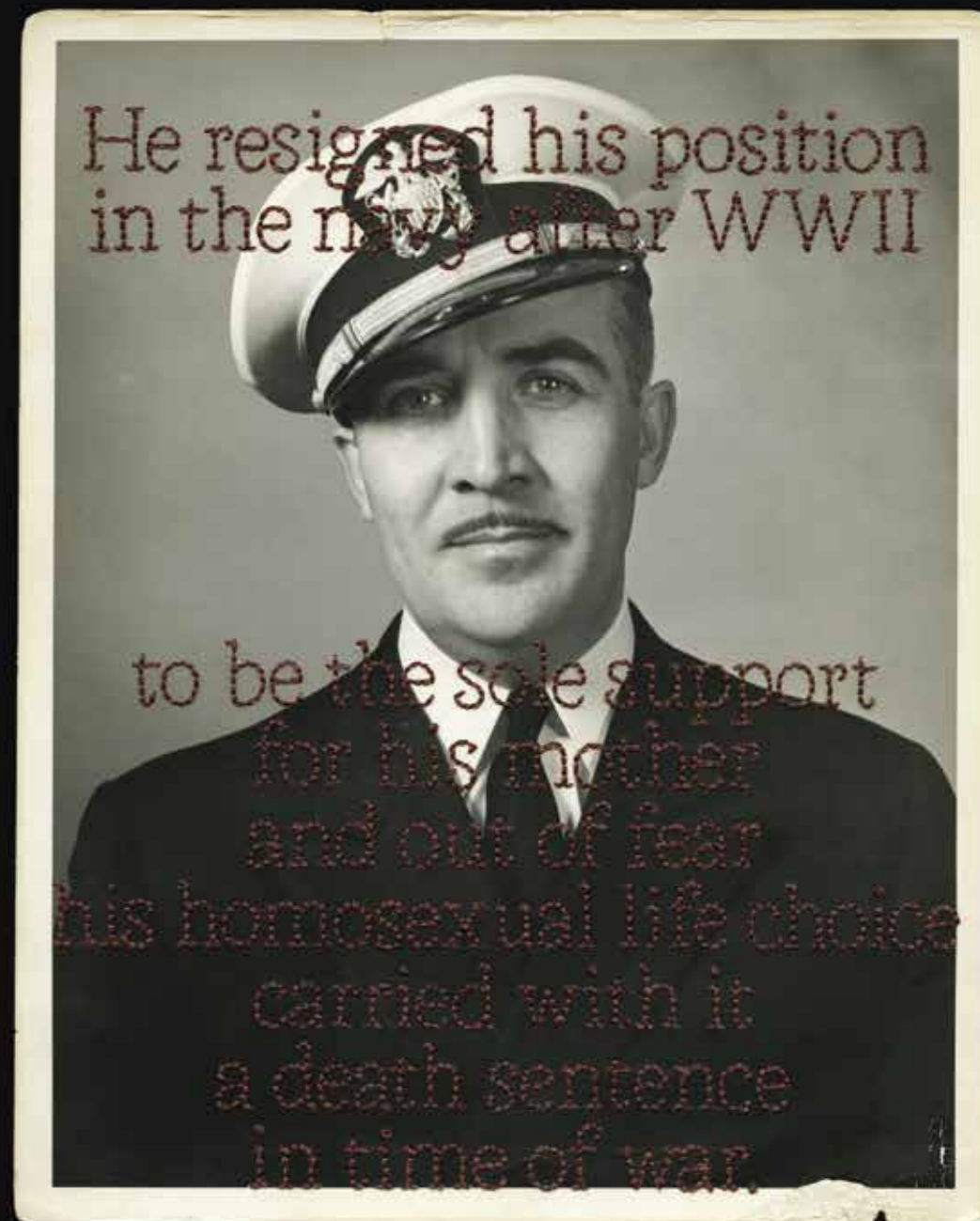


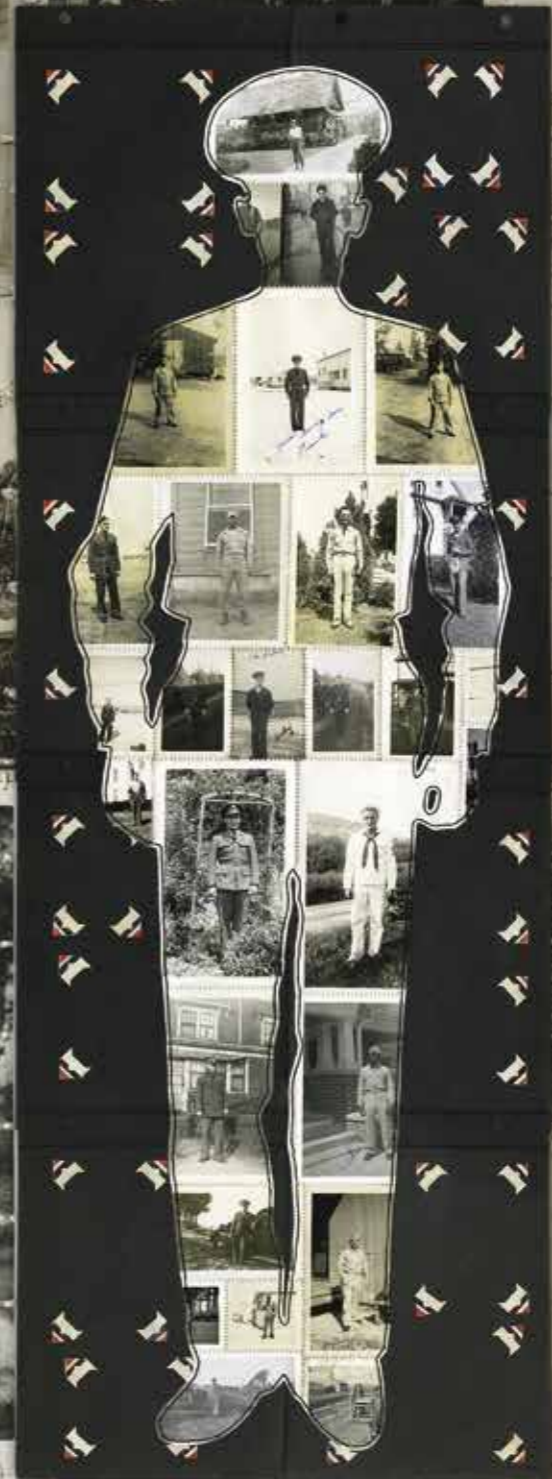
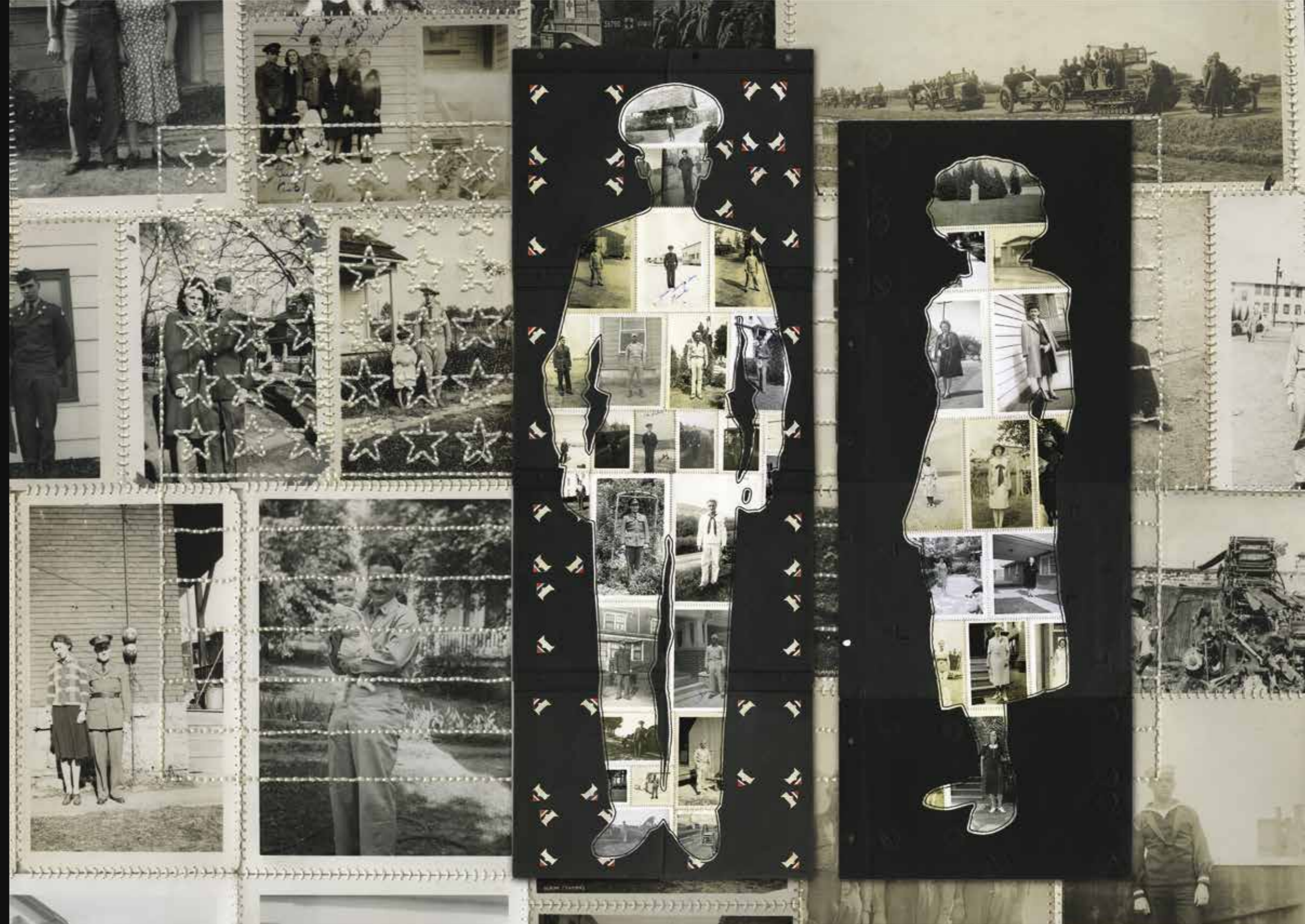
She was
a woman
before
her time.



Because he didn't see
actual military combat,
he always downplayed
his military
service,

though
while overseas
he contracted tuberculosis
for which they had to cut
out a chunk of his lung
and he spent over a year
in the hospital.





Executive • **Dave Edwards**, 48, New York City, college basketball assist wizard • **Dez-Ann Romain**, 36, New York City, innovative high school principal • **Laneeka Barksdale**, 47, Detroit, ballroom dancing star • **Carole Brookins**, 76, Palm Beach, Fla., early woman on Wall Street and a World Bank official • **George Freeman Winfield**, 72, Shelburne, Vt., could make anything grow • **Harold L. Upjohn**, 91, Burlingame, Calif., conducted clinical research at Walter Reed Army Medical Center • **Terrence McNally**, 81, Sarasota, Fla., Tony-winning playwright of gay life • **Joseph Graham**, 67, Chicago, school custodian • **Theresa Elloie**, 63, New Orleans, renowned for her business making detailed pins and corsages • **Sterling Maddox Jr.**, 78, Arlington, Va., developer known for his friendliness • **Alan Finder**, 72, Ridgewood, N.J., unflappable New York Times journalist • **Floyd Cardoz**, 59, Montclair, N.J., Indian chef of fine dining • **Kious Kelly**, 48, New York City, nurse in the Covid fight • **Romi Cohn**, 91, New York City, saved 56 Jewish families from the Gestapo • **Kenneth R. Going**, 87, Grafton, Wis., Green Bay Packers season ticket holder for 50 years • **Frederick Carl Harris**, 70, Massachusetts, an exuberant laugh • **Irvn Herman**, 94, Indianapolis, Army man modest about his service in the Pacific • **Ricardo Castaneda**, 64, New York City, caricaturist and psychiatrist who served his patients until the end • **Mark Blum**, 69, New York City, Obie Award-winning stage and screen actor • **Robert Earl Schaefer**, 87, Seattle, radiologist, woodworker, artist and scholar • **John C. West Jr.**, 71, Camden, S.C., avid observer and participant in South Carolina politics • **Gerald Anthony Morales**, 91, Louisiana, an encyclopedic knowledge of old Hollywood • **Landon Spradlin**, 66, Concord, N.C., preacher and blues guitarist • **Maria Linda Villanueva Sun**, 61, Newport News, Va., organized food programs for children in the Philippines • **Susan Rokus**, 73, Hamilton, Virginia, reading tutor focused on student success • **Freddy Rodriguez Sr.**, 89, Denver, played the saxophone at Denver's oldest jazz club for 40 years • **Christine McLaurin**, 86, Chicago, never at a loss for words • **Peggy Rakestraw**, 72, Matteson, Ill., loved reading, especially mystery novels • **Thomas A. Real**, 61, Newtown, Pa., was at peace on his Harley • **Julian Anguiano-Maya**, 51, Chicago, life of the party • **Sandra Piotrowski**, 77, Tinley Park, Ill., worked as a meat-cutter for Jewel supermarkets • **Robert Rust**, 88, Greensburg, Ind., competitive athlete, up until his last years • **Melvin Pumphrey**, 80, Chicago Heights, Ill., relished his role as a mentor • **Angel Escamilla**, 67, Naperville, Ill., assistant pastor • **Marguerite M. Horgus**, 86, Sweetgrass, Mont., her hospitality was known throughout a Toole County and beyond • **Joseph Micajah Thomas II**, 88, New York City, represented theatrical, TV and movie personalities • **Beryl Bernay**, 94, New York City, actress and children's TV host • **John Joseph Reed Jr.**, 74, Edmonds, Wash., passionate about retaining his town's small-town atmosphere • **Sidney Siegel**, 92, Woodbury, N.Y., pioneer in the promotional products industry • **Robert M. Weintraub**, 96, New York, a long career in the import-export business • **Joe Diffie**, 61, Nashville, Grammy-winning country music star • **Herman Boehm**, 86, Florida, retired architect always eager to travel • **Horace Saunders**, 96, Mount Airy, Md., tailor • **Gary Holmberg**, 77, Mount Airy, Md., retired firefighter • **Chad Capule**, 49, Fond du Lac, Wis., I.T. project manager remembered for his love of trivia • **Robert Garff**, 77, Utah, former speaker of the Utah House, auto executive and philanthropist • **Phillip Thomas**, 48, Chicago, his Walmart co-workers were like family • **Alan Merrill**, 69, New York City, songwriter of "I Love Rock 'n' Roll" • **Peter Sakas**, 67, Northbrook, Ill., ran an animal hospital • **Joseph Yaggi**, 65, Indiana, mentor and friend to many • **Mary Roman**, 84, Norwalk, Conn., shot-put champion and fixture in local politics • **Lorena Borjas**, 59, New York City, transgender immigrant activist • **James T. Goodrich**, 73, New York City, surgeon who separated conjoined twins • **Janice Preschel**, 60, Teaneck, N.J., founded a food pantry • **Jean-Claude Henrion**, 72, Atlantis, Fla., always rode Harley-Davidsons • **Joseph J. Deren Jr.**, 75, Turners Falls, Mass., retired meter-reader • **Gerald Cassidy**, 66, Peachtree Corners, Ga., owner of Shamrock Salvage & Appraisal Inc. • **David Reissig**, 82, Vermont, retired from the U.S. Customs Agency

the Malone Sisters • **Terrence George Driscoll**, 87, Plymouth, Mich., father figure • **Lucius Hall**, 87, Chicago, dubbed the "pistol-packing preacher" • **Ronnie Estes**, 73, Stevensville, Md., always wanted to be near the ocean • **Anita Fial**, 87, New York City, marketing expert who brought exotic foods to green grocers • **Patricia Bosworth**, 86, New York City, actress who wrote biographies of famous friends • **Azade Kilic**, 69, New York, two-time cancer survivor • **Marco DiFranco**, 50, Chicago, police officer who was never at a loss for words • **John E. Broadly**, 84, Scituate, Mass., honored to march with the American Legion in many parades • **Julia Maye Alexander**, 81, Upland, Calif., taught math, English and history for over 30 years • **Bruce W. Sowalski**, 68, Sand Lake, N.Y., found his special place at Big Bowman Pond • **Samuel Kramer**, 91, Potomac, Md., congregation's founding member • **Sean Boynes**, 46, Annapolis, Md., pharmacy manager with young daughters • **Norma Hoza**, 101, Wilmette, Ill., mom to six sons • **Nancy Ferguson**, 77, Chicago, true community activist • **Harold L. Hayes**, 96, Fort Wright, Ky., original member of the Navy's elite Underwater Demolition Team • **Glenn Daniel Bellitto**, 62, New York, town councilman • **Robert Lee Amos**, 66, Columbus, Ind., expert marksman and firearms instructor • **Lula Fitzpatrick**, 85, Dolton, Ill., part of a tightknit family • **Judith Plotkin-Goldberg**, 88, Massachusetts, noted voiceover artist for radio and TV • **Coby Adolph**, 44, Chicago, entrepreneur and adventurer • **Steven J. Huber**, 64, Jefferson City, Mo., loved creating perfect smiles • **Charles Miles**, 72, Chatham, Ill., retired therapist and mentor • **Don Whan**, 67, Indiana, sports fan who loved Purdue University • **Albert K. Webster**, 82, New York City, executive behind New York Philharmonic's economic growth • **Kevin Masterson**, 74, New York City, joined Goldman Sachs in 1975 • **Randy G. Addison**, 64, Carrollton, Ga., survived being shot in the line of duty in 1984 • **Ronald Willenkamp**, 75, Wisconsin, proud to have logged over five million miles behind the wheel • **Lloyd Paul Leftwich**, 91, Louisiana, inveterate harmonica player • **Helen Molina**, 85, Washington, all-around supporter of the Washington Huskies • **Ronald Burdette Culp**, 84, Redding, Calif.,

to support his family • **Clara Louise Bennett**, 91, Albany, Ga., sang her grandchildren a song on the first day of school each year • **Iona Murai Kerman**, 96, New York, featured in multiple Broadway productions • **Mauricio Valdivia**, 52, Chicago, wanted everyone to feel welcome • **Robert Dugal**, 58, Oak Park, Ill., advocate for others with disabilities • **Sharyn Lynn Vogel**, 74, Aurora, Colo., photographer, gourmet cook, sparkling hostess and traveler • **Robert Charles Bazzell**, 88, Novi, Mich., helped drive the family car along Route 66 • **Claudia Obermiller**, 73, Nebraska, deep-hearted country girl • **Reggie Bagala**, 54, Lockport, La., Republican freshman in the state Legislature • **Richard Joseph Lenihan Jr.**, 55, Pearl River, N.Y., man of faith and a proud Irish-American • **Deyrold Artega**, 66, Central Valley, N.Y., made friends everywhere he went • **Estelle Kestenbaum**, 91, Leonia, N.J., secretary to a New Jersey judge • **Artemis Nazarian**, 88, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., opened a Los Angeles preschool • **Myles Coker**, 69, New York City, freed from life in prison • **Richard Alexander Ross Jr.**, 66, Boynton Beach, Fla., lifelong karate instructor • **Helen Boles Days**, 96, Wynnewood, Pa., made what she had work for her • **Marcus Edward Cooper Jr.**, 83, Louisiana, he loved his wife and said, "Yes, dear" a lot • **Nelson Perdomo**, 44, Middlesex County, N.J., veteran corrections officer and father of three • **Rosemarie Amerosi**, 87, New York City, retired bank teller • **Timothy H. Gray**, 66, Orleans, Ind., worked for the Orange County Highway Department • **Tommie Brown**, 82, Gary, Ind., security worker who died the same day as his wife • **Doris Brown**, 79, Gary, Ind., wife who died on the same day as her husband • **Marie Scanlan Walker**, 99, Louisiana, never drew attention to herself • **Frances M. Pilot**, 81, Wall, N.J., known as Big Momma to all who loved her • **George J. Foerst Jr.**, 99, New Jersey, called "The Captain" by friends and family • **John B. Ahrens**, 96, Newton, Mass., lifelong pacifist • **Parker Knoll**, 68, Indiana, a decades-long career in ministry • **Kerri Ann Kennedy-Tompkins**, 48, Garrison, N.Y., worked as a special education teacher for many years • **Rosemarie Franzese**, 70, Nevada, former hairstylist and avid car raffles, fund-raisers and picnics • **James V. Walsh**, 78, New Jersey, volunteered his time to church

Theodore Gaffney, 92, Washington D.C., photographer of the Freedmen Riders • **Alan A. Potanka**, 68, Berlin Conn., collector of stamps and coins • **Harold Davis Jr.**, 63, Chicago, radiologist and youth advocate • **Michael Giangrande Sr.**, 78, Bellmore, N.Y. "Mayor of Martin Avenue" • **Timothy Ross**, 68, Michigan, worked more than 30 years for General Motors • **Sherrill Stokes**, 54, Chicago, active in the church • **Larry Jones**, 61, Chicago, longtime high school referee • **Shirley S. D'Stefan**, 90, Florham Park, N.J., reader of books on birds and other wildlife • **Billy Ross**, 53, Milwaukee, staff member and mentor at the Milwaukee Rescue Mission • **Helen Silvia**, 96, Brockton, Mass., known as the "fashionista" in her nursing home • **Davis Begaye**, 48, Cudei, N.M., worked at the Home Depot • **Rose Mary Infantino**, 88, Rye Brook, N.Y., daughter of Italian immigrants • **Ann Sullivan**, 91, Woodland Hills, Calif., animator for Disney films, including "The Little Mermaid" • **Norman Gulamerian**, 91, New Providence, N.J., art supply businessman with a romantic streak • **Kenneth L. Jewel**, 78, Mountain Lake, N.J., exceptional radiologist • **Jerz Glowczewski**, 97, New York City, last of the WWII Polish fighter pilots • **Joan M. Heaney**, 77, Upper Brookville, N.Y., built the family heating-oil business into a successful company • **Diana Regina DiTullio**, 91, Jamaica Plain, Mass., always put her children first • **Jeanne Stone Rusnak**, 84, Endicott, N.Y., classy lady with style and elegance • **Anita Robinson**, 94, Minnesota, shared her knowledge and love of reading • **William U. Roulette III**, 91, Stroudsburg, Pa., enjoyed being a witeman on his work boat on Chesapeake Bay • **Antoinette Meyer**, 91, Crownsville, Md., trailblazing deputy sheriff • **Michael Wrotniak Jr.**, 92, Gle Cove, N.Y., brought the family to church every week • **Marvin L. Thomas**, 81, Sun Lakes, Ariz., a million-dollar smile • **Edmon C. Carmichael**, 71, Detroit, pillar in the Detroit community • **Linda Nute**, 61, Hazel Crest, Ill., home helper for many years • **LeReed**, 95, Country Club Hills, Ill., babysitter for the local church • **Joan Cecilia Berngen**, 69, Burbank, Ill., known for her amazing sense of humor • **Gwendolyn A. Carmichael**, 72, Detroit, definition of love, loyalty, and the ability to come through for others • **James Lewis**

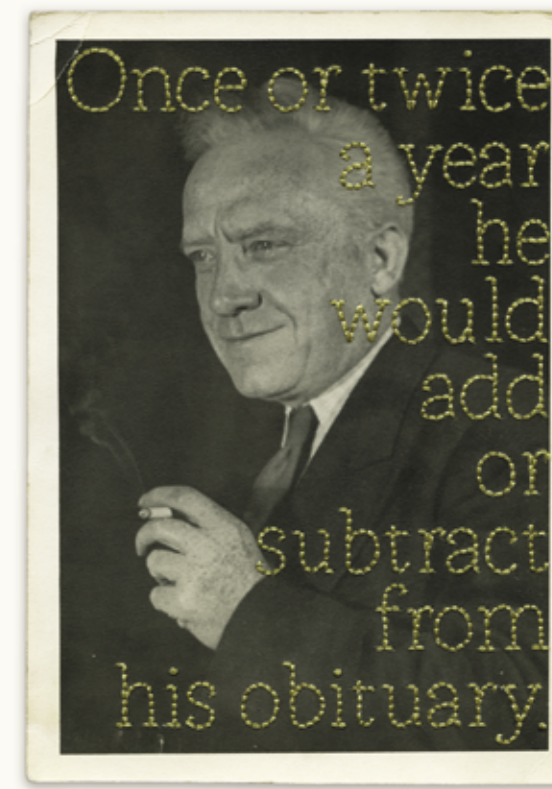
Storytelling in 21st Century Obituaries
Linnea Crowther

Obituaries spent a couple hundred years living on the pages of local newspapers, rarely changing much beyond reflecting the writing styles of their day. But when obits made the jump to the internet, they quickly evolved.

The traditional death notice, placed in the newspaper by the deceased's family, offered important facts — who died, where they lived and worked, who survives them, when and where the funeral will be — and little else. Some were dressed up with a few lines of verse or a flowery euphemism for death. But the obituary wasn't often the place for personal storytelling.

In the 21st century, though, obituaries have exploded with creativity as families embellish them with anecdotes, cautionary tales, song lyrics, lists of favorite things, jokes, exhaustively detailed work histories, and whatever else feels important as they remember a loved one.

Some obituaries today are hilarious; others are heartbreaking. Some people write their own



opposite: detail of *The New York Times* front page, Sunday, May 24, 2020 "U.S. DEATHS NEAR 100,000, AN INCALCULABLE LOSS"



Once he brought
two baby goats home
he found in the woods
on Christmas Eve
and they had to be
fed with baby bottles!



She played
the piano by ear
and could actually
play it with her toes.

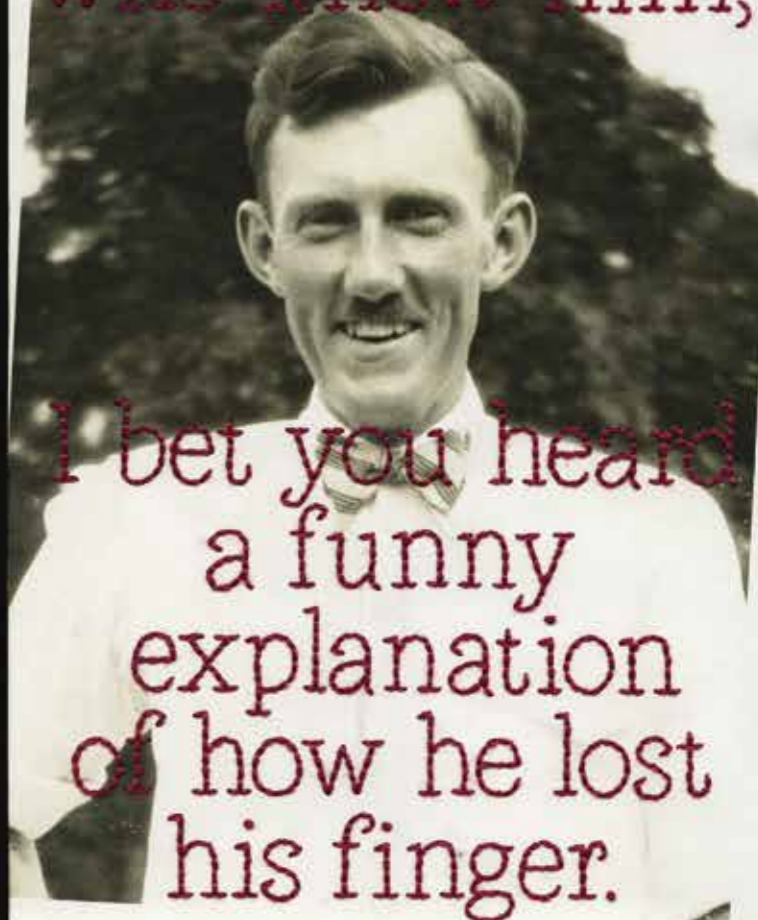


She was an avid bowler,

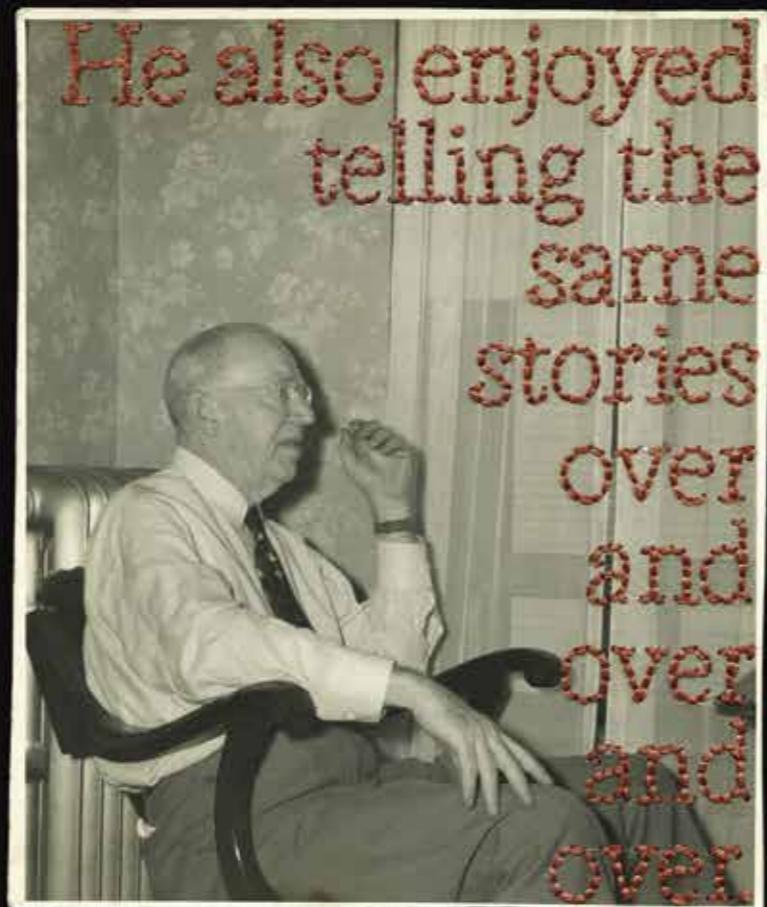
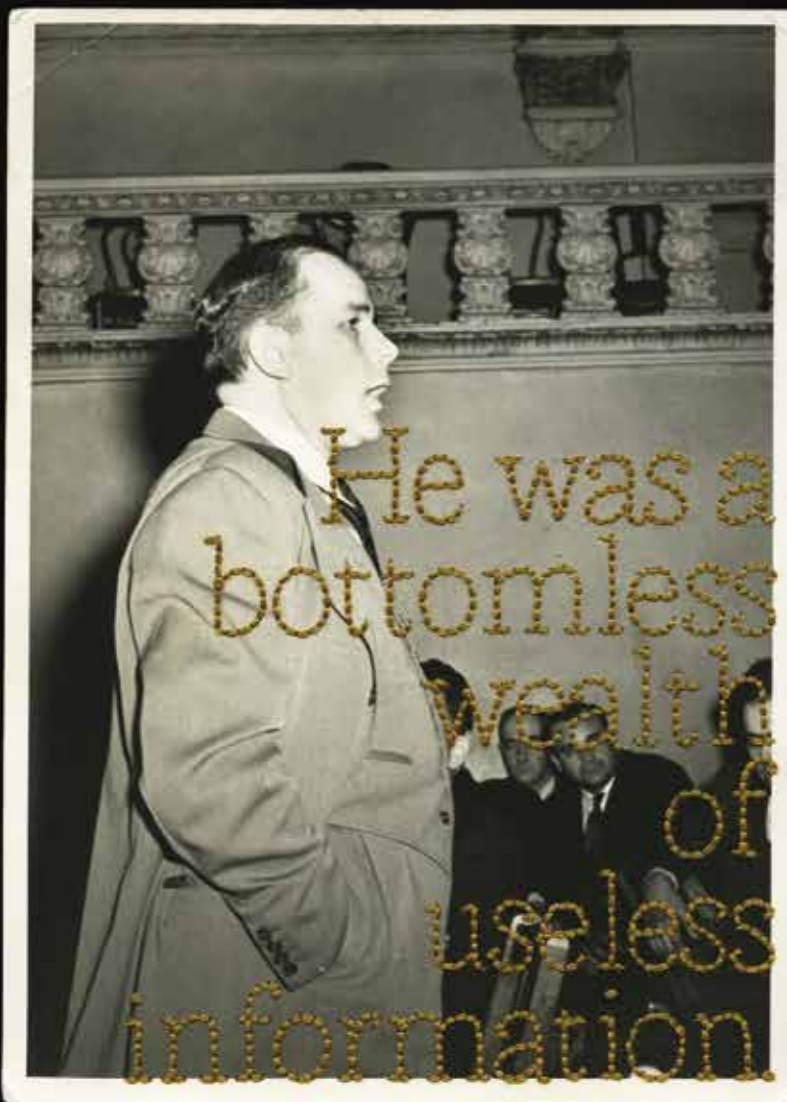


even after the amputation of her right leg.

For those of you who knew him,

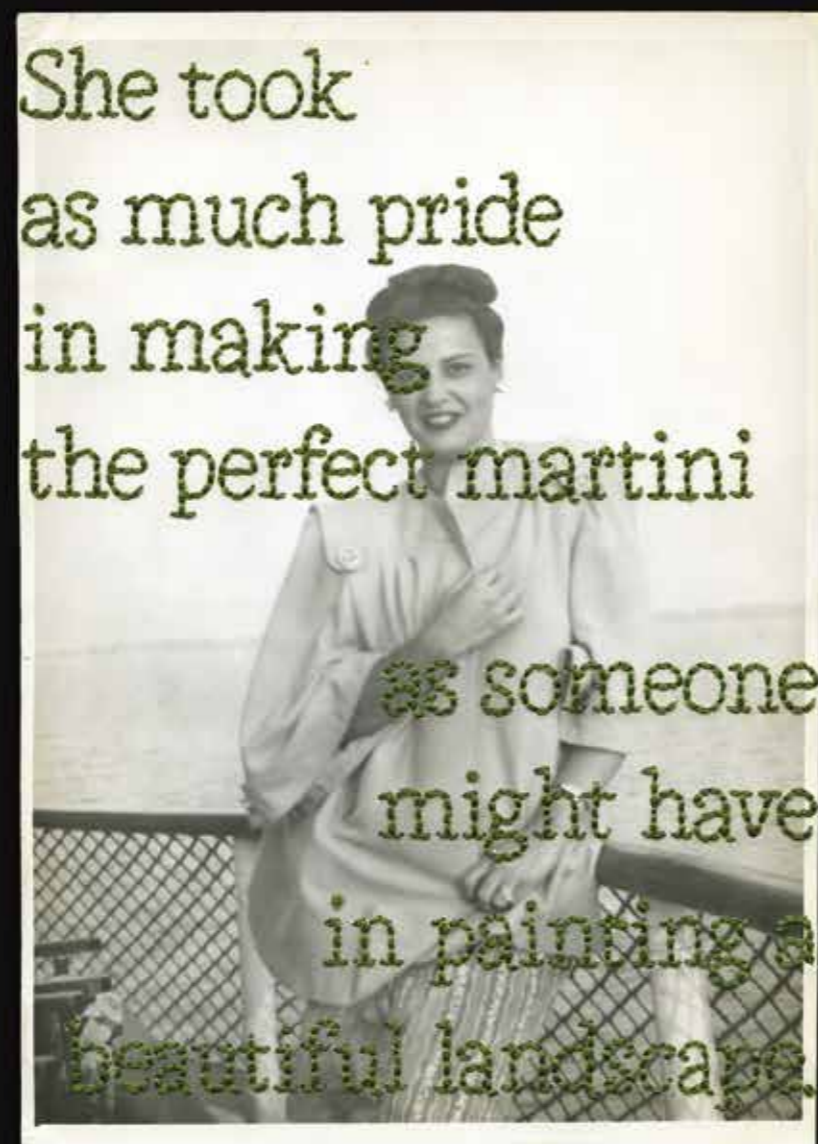


I bet you heard a funny explanation of how he lost his finger.

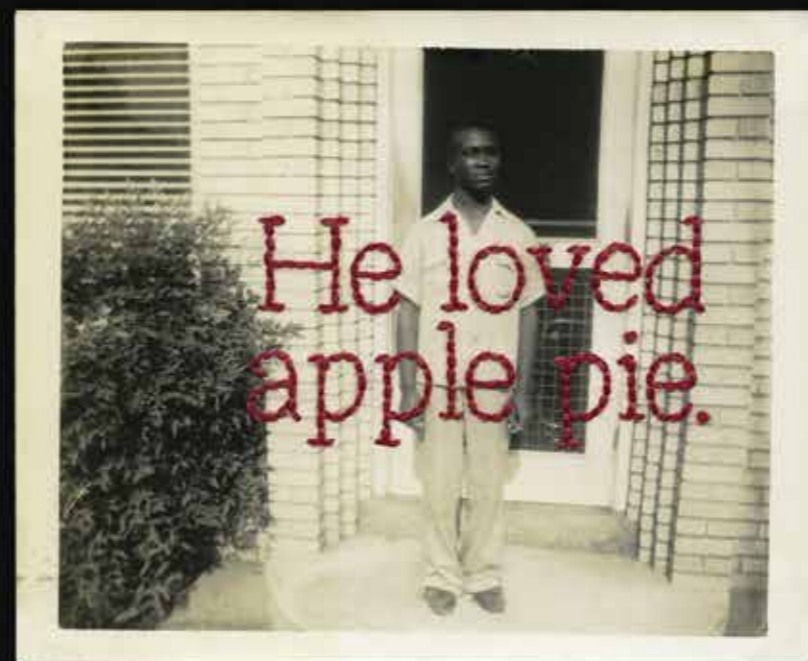




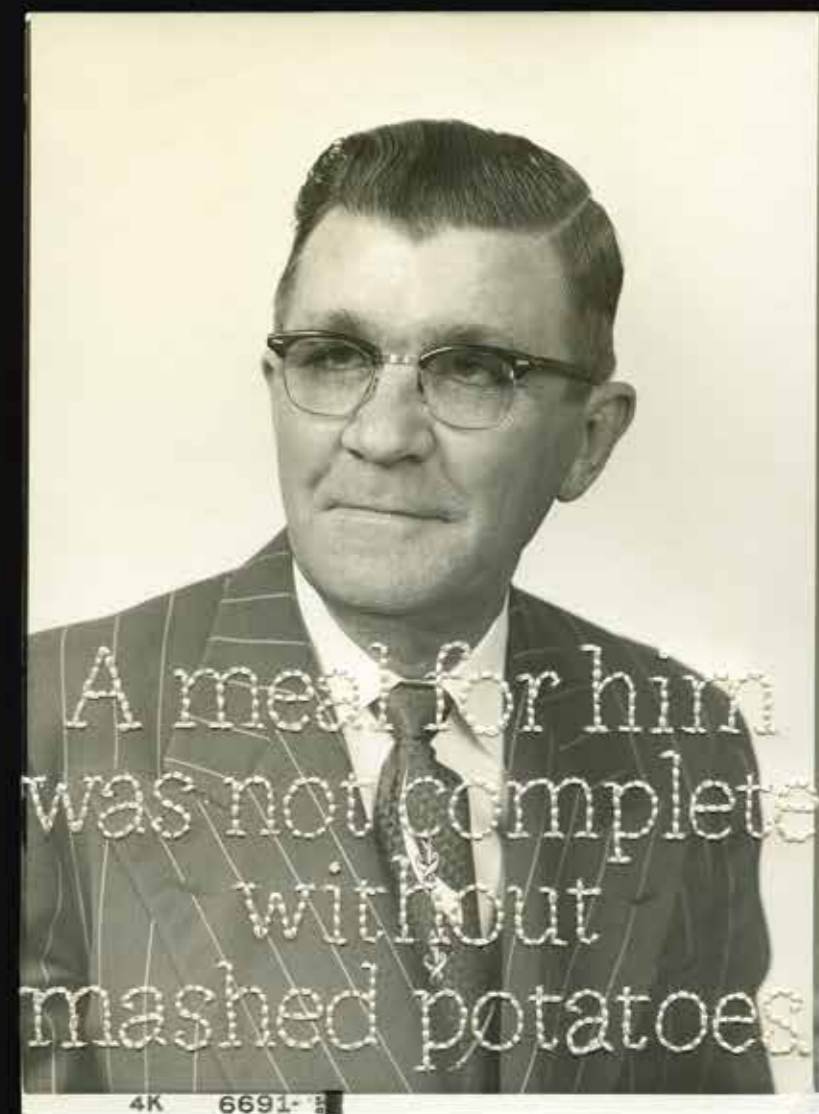
She was not
fond of
green
vegetables,
but loved
sweet corn
and
watermelon.



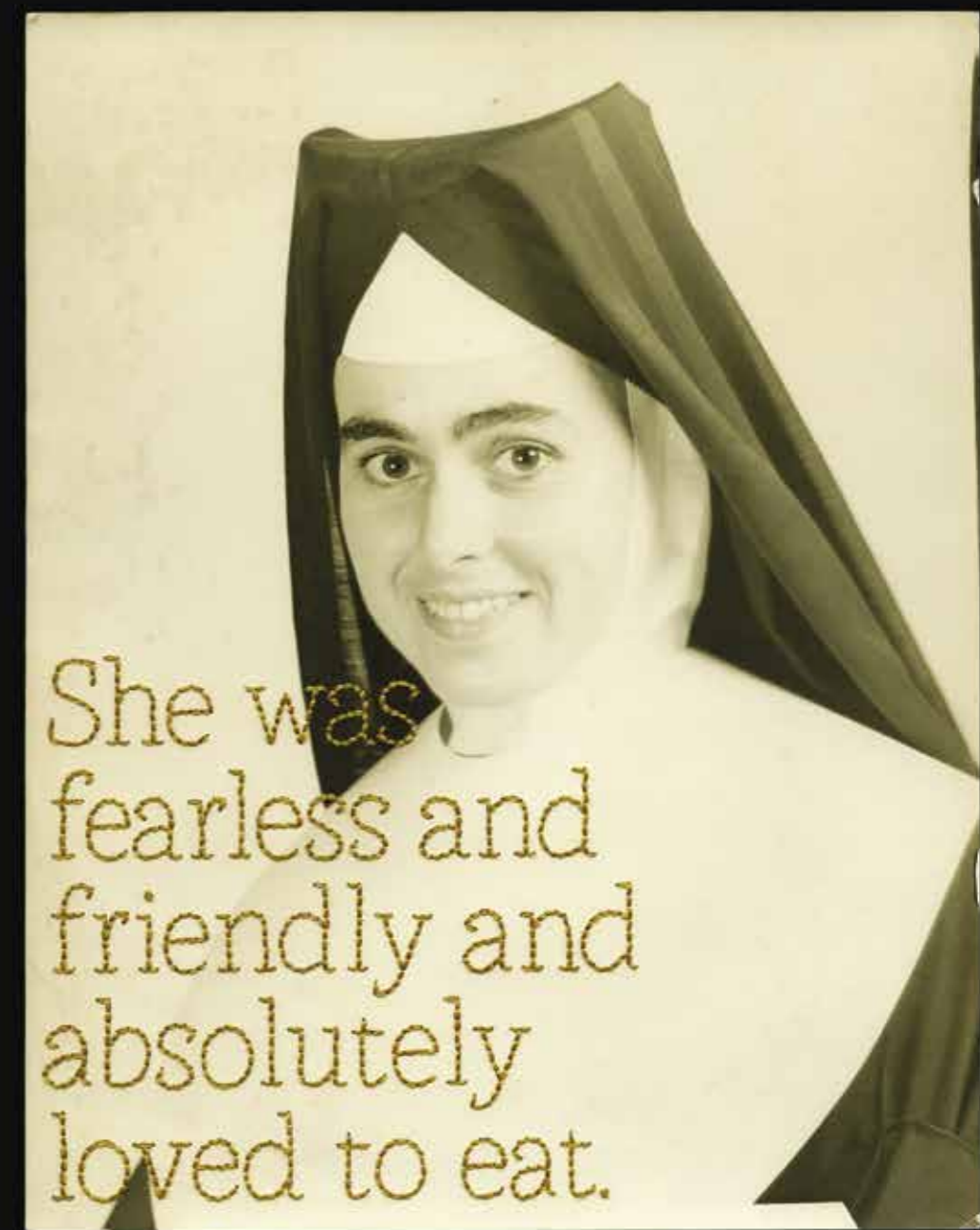
She took
as much pride
in making
the perfect martini
as someone
might have
in painting a
beautiful landscape.



He loved
apple pie.



A meal for him
was not complete
without
mashed potatoes.





He loved his dog
as much as
his children,
possibly more
depending on the child.



He loved life.
He loved
everything
about being a dog
(besides actually
liking other dogs.)



He was one of a kind,

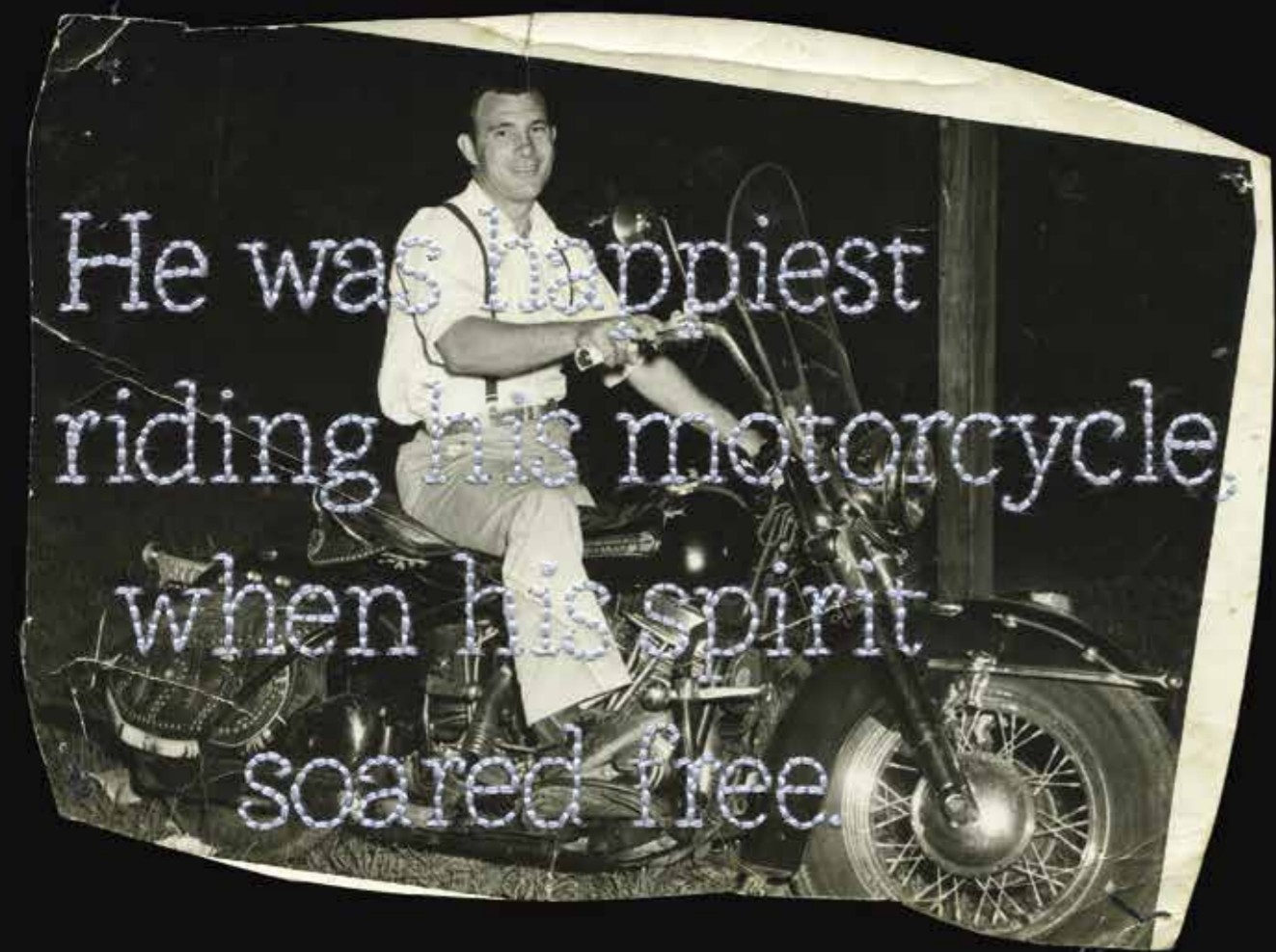
and
he was a GROUCH.

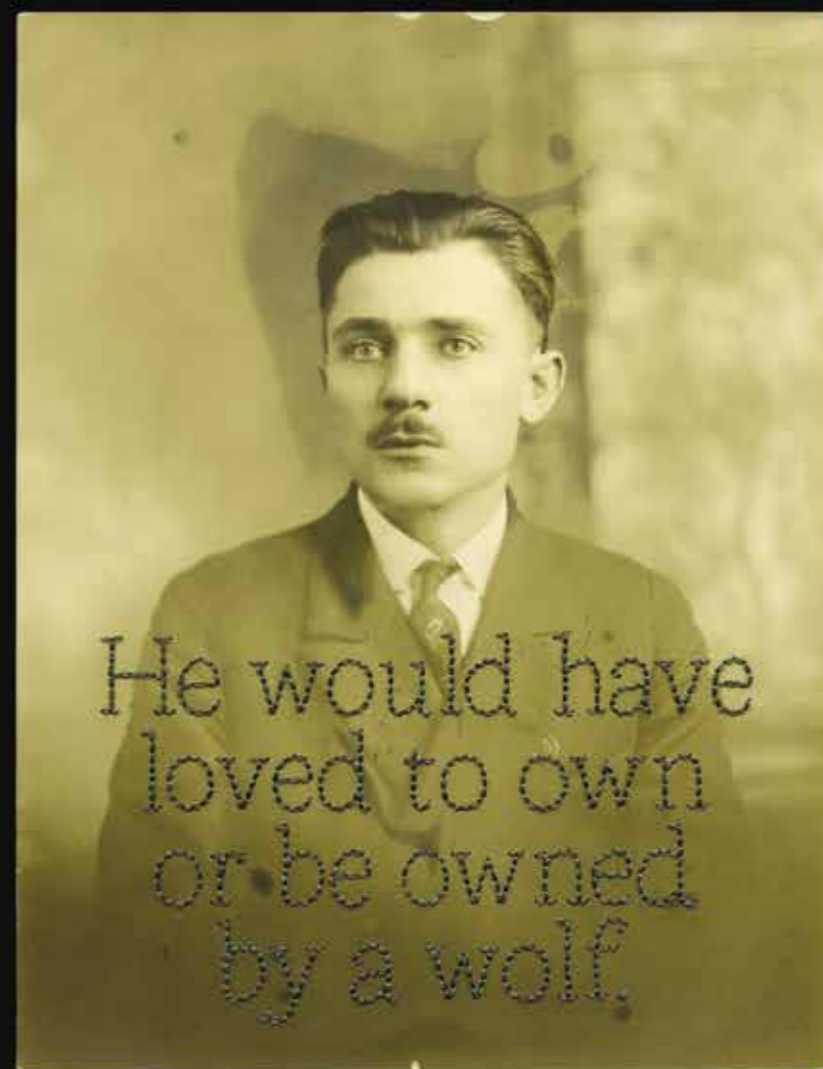
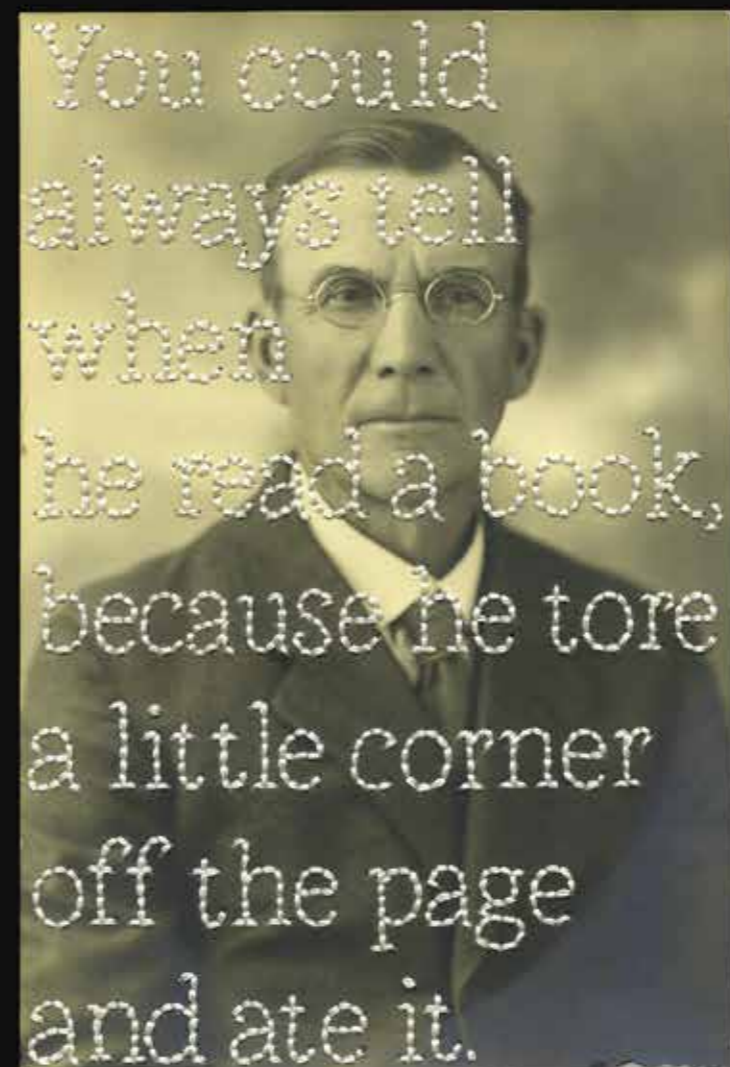


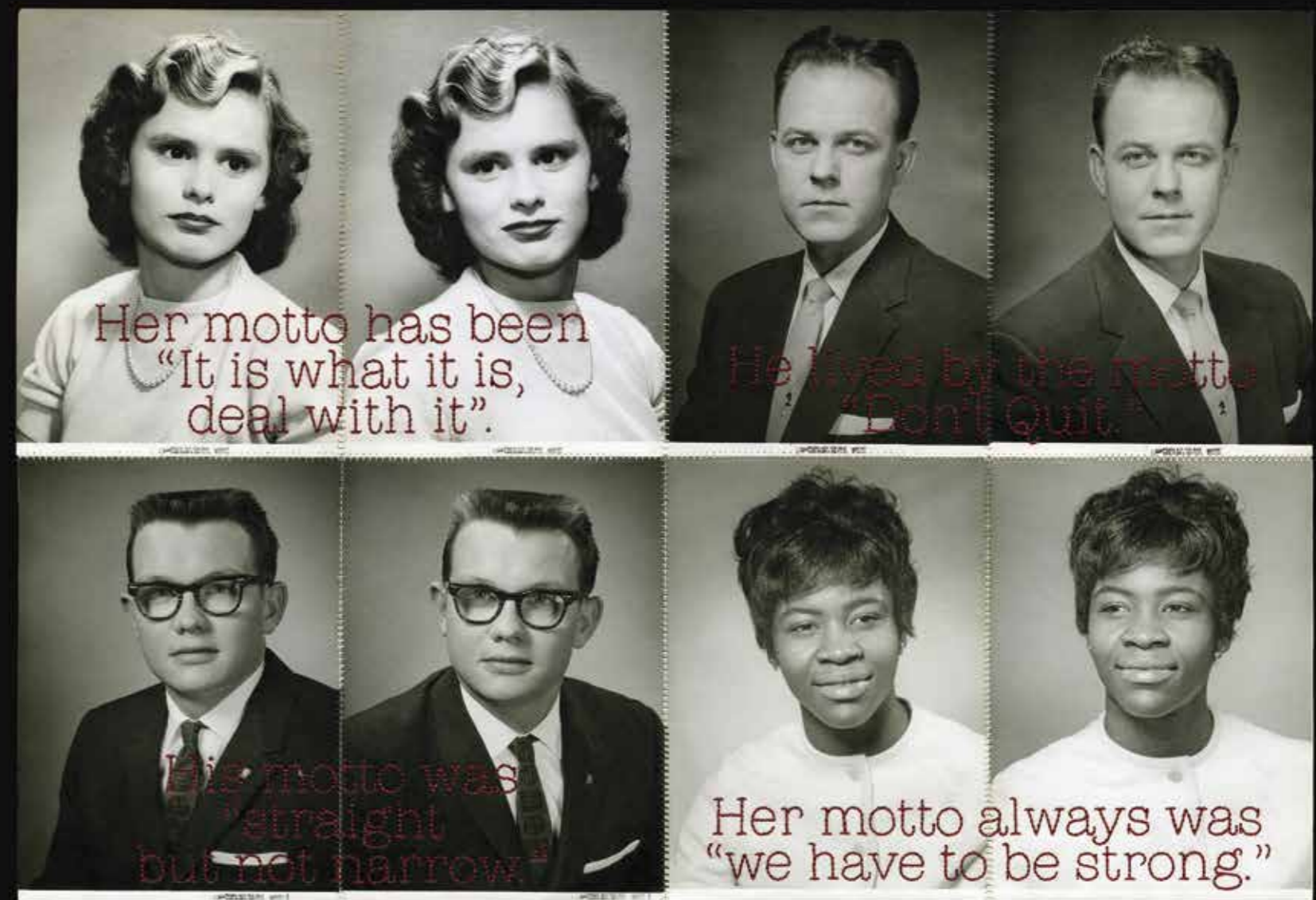
She loved Siamese cats

and
had
one
after
another

—all named "Sweetie." Don Mills









The feminist elements of Jane Deschner's work

Elinor Carucci

In 2020, at the first time I saw the work of Jane Deschner, I could not help feeling the pain of the female artist throughout most of the art's history. Somehow this was my very immediate reaction, and Jane and I got into discussing it, while looking deeper at her work, and the different points of view it can be seen through.

I am an artist myself, one who cannot imagine life without making art, without expressing my voice, and the way I see and feel the human experience. Luckily, I was born in 1971. Not 1871. I can only imagine the pain I would have experienced had I not been able to get the training, the exposure, and so necessary — getting an audience for my art and the dialogue it creates, so essential for an artist's development.

And so when looking at Deschner's work, *the obituary, a family photo*; at the found photographs, the hand-embroidered words, when thinking about loss, family, and the role of photography in those two, when thinking about her installations, I found myself also thinking about the anonymous way of which women had to create art, many times ending up with what we perceive and define as a craft; somehow lesser. Art they did by doing embroidery, knitting, sewing, as well as some of the photographs Deschner collected, some probably taken by women, even though I know that it was mainly the men who were allowed the purchasing and training of photography in those days.

Even though Deschner's central theme is deeply morbid and deals with the loss of life of a loved ones, her motivation to collect these photographs revolves

around death, and the obituaries. This theme is referred to in the title she gave the body of work: *'Remember me.'* In some way, in her *'Remember me'* title, I sensed an underlying theme, I heard a feminist cry, the cry of women artists that we never remember, who never got the chance to fully become artists and to develop their skills and voices as ones. As Jane is talking about our collective narrative and personal truth reflected through photos and worlds and the lives of others, I felt that there is an undertone of also referring to what might not be remembered.

This theme was highlighted even further by Jane's installation work. *doily mounds and dollhouse (doilies)* are made from doilies and stands she bought at thrift stores, where she stacked up the doilies, used a knitting needle to keep them together. In a conversation with Jane, I learned more about the work and the intention behind it, her words further confirm my initial thoughts: "I started going to thrift stores to buy frames to refurbish and use for the stitched photo pieces. I looked in the 'linens' department for a special kind of placemat that one can't buy anymore. I'd run across all these handmade doilies for 49¢, 99¢, etc. I started buying them because I could see the amount of work and skill that went into crocheting one. And I'd read in obits about how the woman's passion was crocheting and knitting. Often giving pieces away to family, friends, church raffles, etc. It's my feeling that, for these women, it was their personal creative outlet. These beautiful delicate things remained the next day after the cooking, cleaning, childcare, laundry. Vanished. When my children were little and in bed for the

night, I knitted or sewed. The next morning, it was evident that I had done something the day before... I present these pieces as art — to show how beautiful they are and how prolific the women were."

Those installations by Deschner are bringing the craft done by women to our attention, bringing them to an audience. They are elevating them to a 'fine art' level. In order to create them, Jane also worked in some of the same technics that — most likely — the women who made these pieces worked. Their art could only exist as craft, created for their family; for their children to wear, for their mothers to be covered by, for the table to be ready for a meal.

Today, even while when women are allowed access to training and exhibiting, their choices, identity, and many lives led by female artists, do not fall to the stereotypes of the male artist, some who historically, were neglecting their familial responsibilities. Although I was born in the '70s, I grew up on those stereotypes of male artists such as Pablo Picasso and Jackson Pollock. Today, many women artists create art in the context of being caretakers, being mothers, daughters, partners. From Cheryle St. Onge to Sally Mann, LaToya Ruby Frazier to Lissa Rivera. They create art about being mothers, daughters, partners, or while being one.

And so this thread of creating art as women, whether it is useful arts for the people women love and are involved in caring for, or whether we continue making art while caring for other people, this thread exists and is reminded to us by Deschner's work. The work of a woman artist. The work of a feminist.

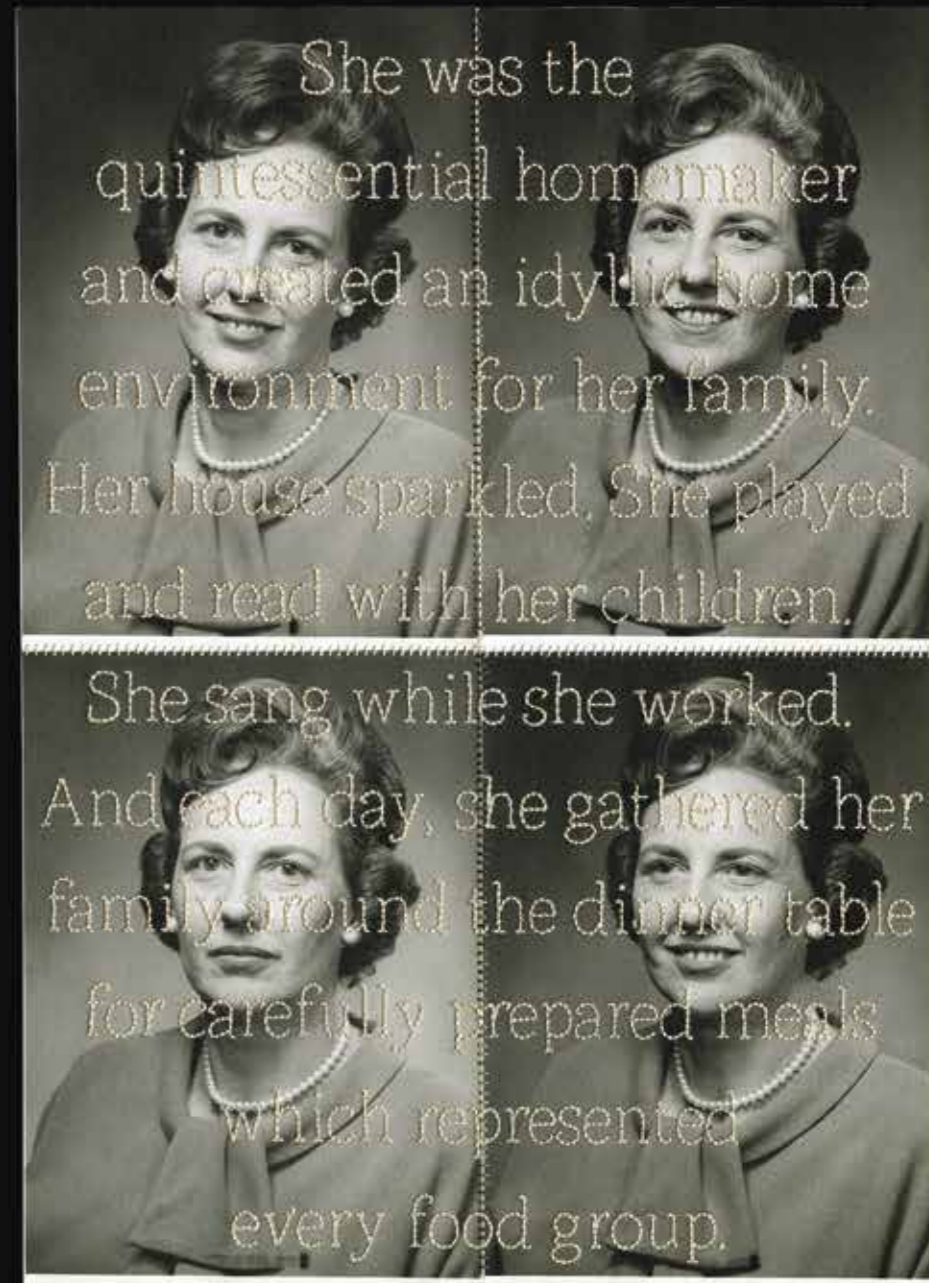
Her passion

was
Peace,
Justice and
Kindness.

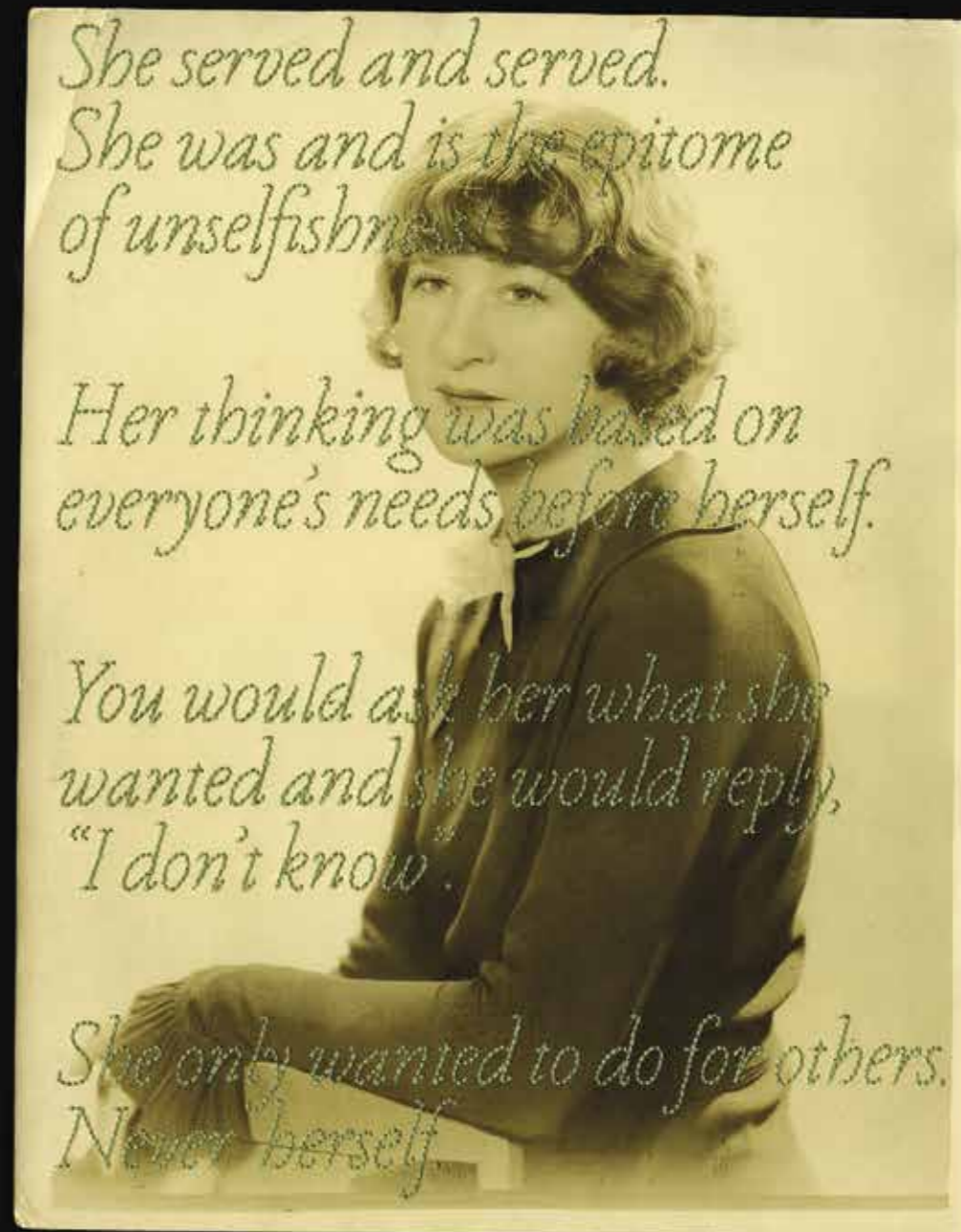
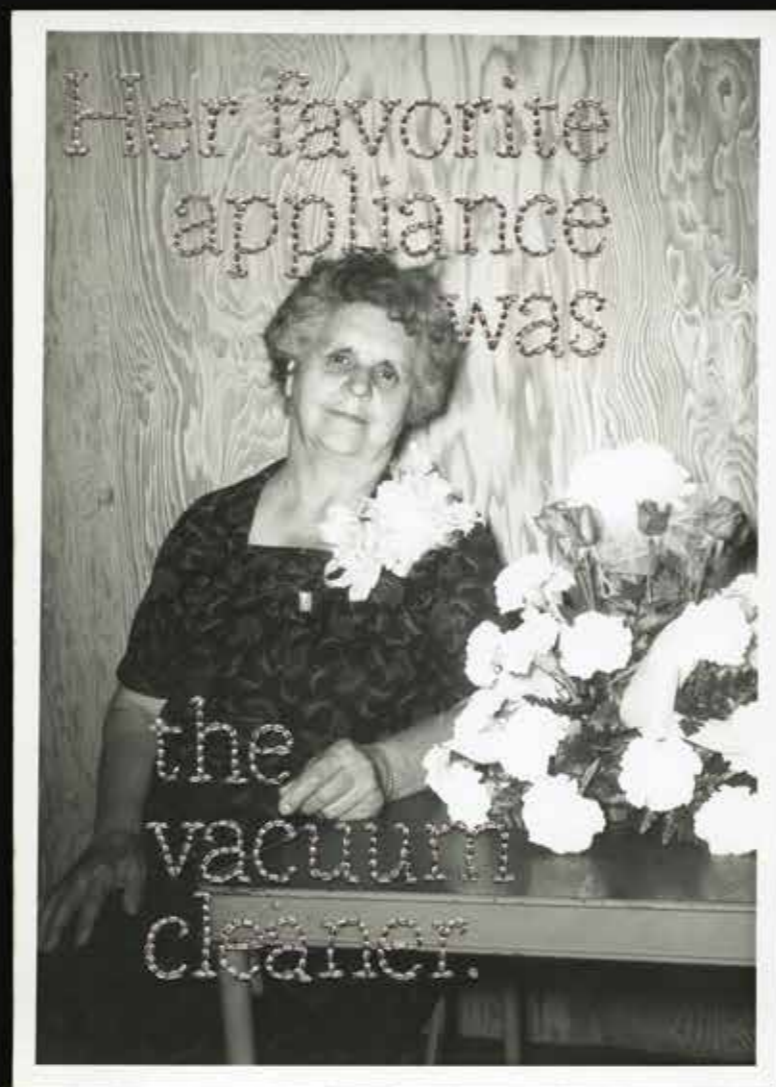
...she put her
amazing
analytical
mind
to
good
use
every
single
day.

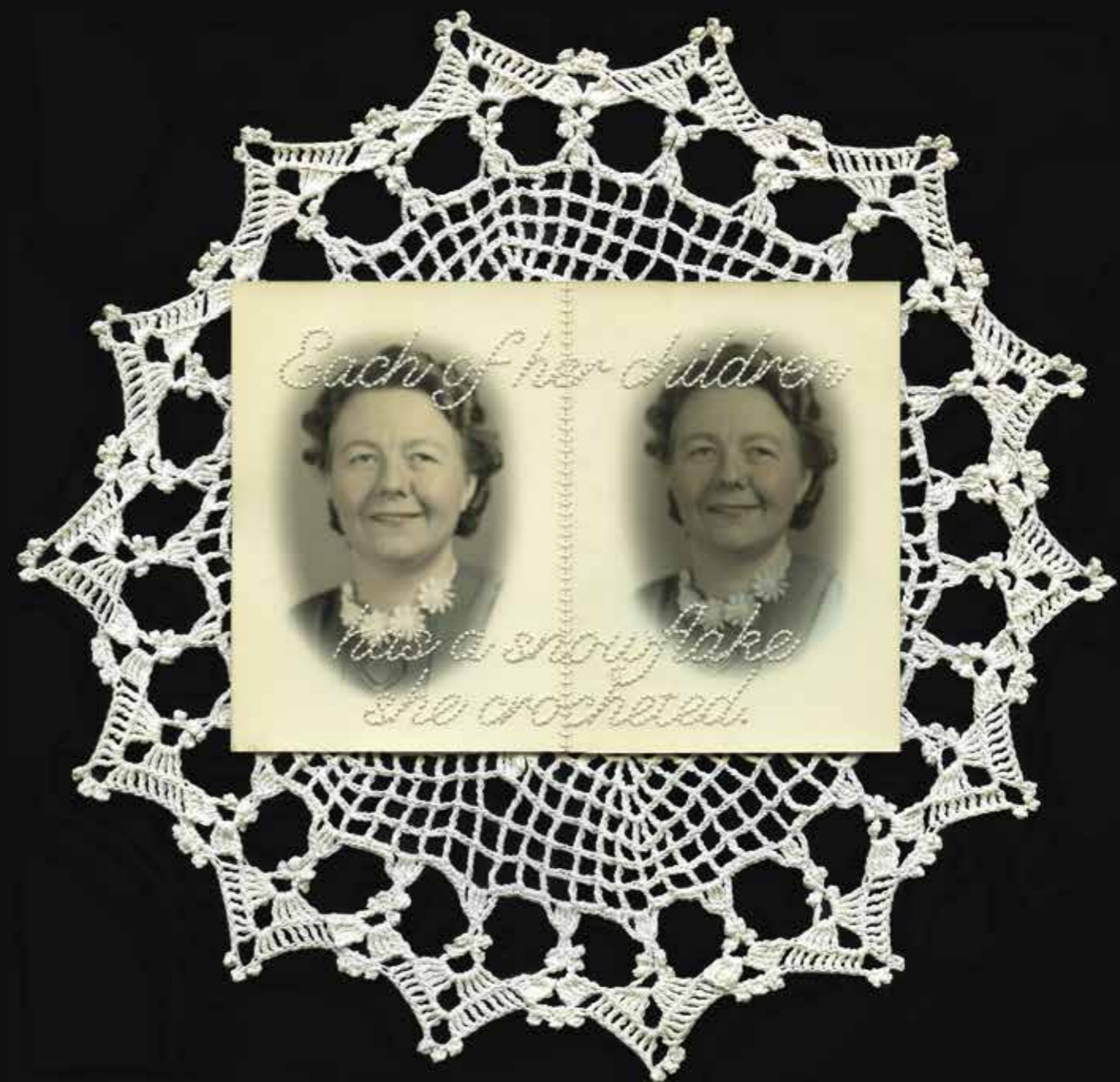
She was a woman
who had seen
98 years of changes,

but a woman
becoming President
was the one change
she realized
she would never
be able to witness.











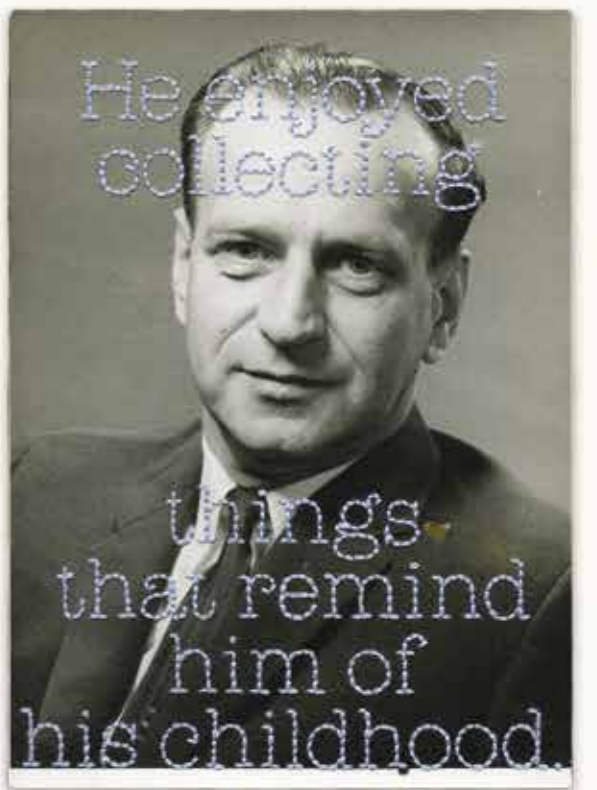
Taking Care
William Davies King

The moment of taking a photograph vanishes forever, but a paper print perpetuates itself, even when lacking name, location, date of birth, date of death, day or hour or millisecond of living in light. It takes a collector/artist like Jane Waggoner Deschner to understand that in those stubborn relics we might find new ways of grasping the present, which we are forever losing.

Collectors *care*, especially for what others carelessly leave behind, such as a heap of portraits. Collectors *show concern*. They *register* the accumulation. They *worry*, as a tongue worries

a broken tooth. They *look after, provide, fend for*. These are among the possible translations of the German verb *sorgen*. Collectors, such as Jane, *sorge!*

Athena embroidered, and so did Arachne, Penelope, and women forever. To *embroider* is to mend, and it's apt that the word shares a prefix with *empathy*, because both words entail taking *in* a wound — feeling for, involving, stitching up. Collectors have long gone *in* — to the undervalued, under-examined, under-owned. Why? As Jane's photos show, to trouble, to love.



"I know that many collectors, including myself, cling to 'compensatory objects' in answer to early trauma. If human objects have proven unsteady, material objects might stand in."

-William Davies King



We are proud to have collected through the years and we are proud to be able to share them with you. We are proud to be able to share them with you.

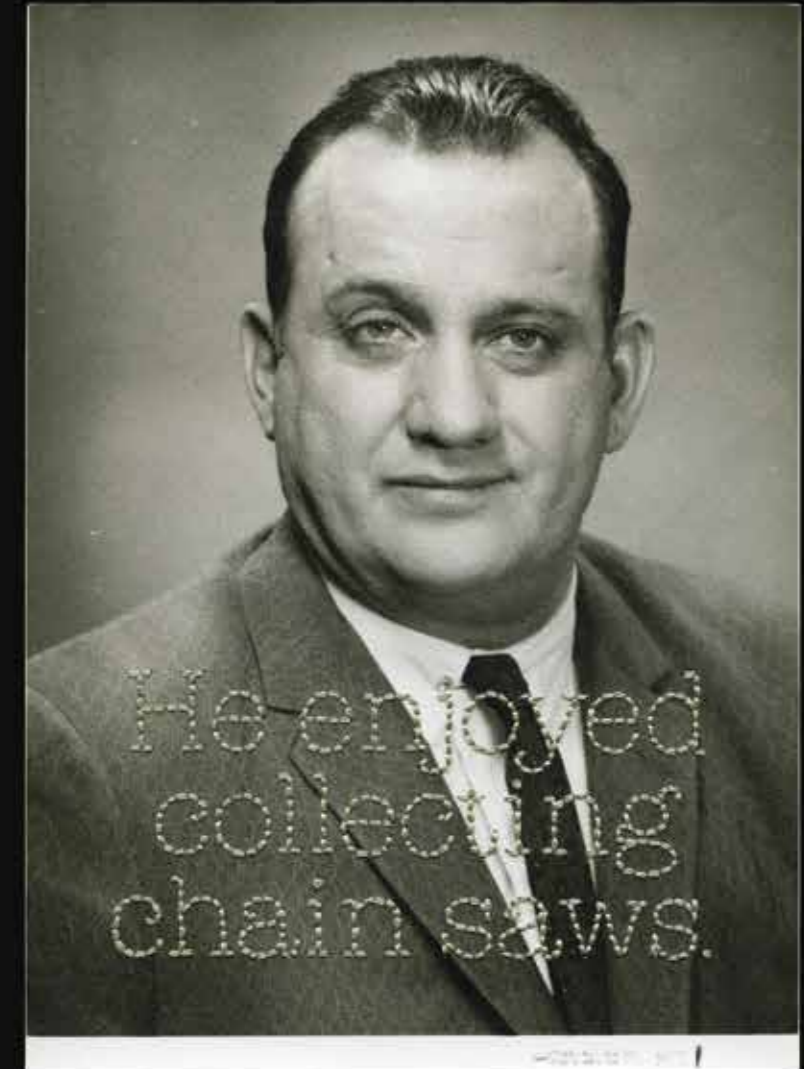
Joe Higgins' collection began with a few photographs and a few items. Over the years, he has collected a large number of items, including photographs, letters, and other items. His collection is a testament to his passion for collecting and his desire to share his collection with others.

The photographs in this collection are a mix of black and white and color photographs. They are arranged in a way that tells a story. Some are of people, some are of places, and some are of events. They are all part of Joe's collection and they are all part of our collection.

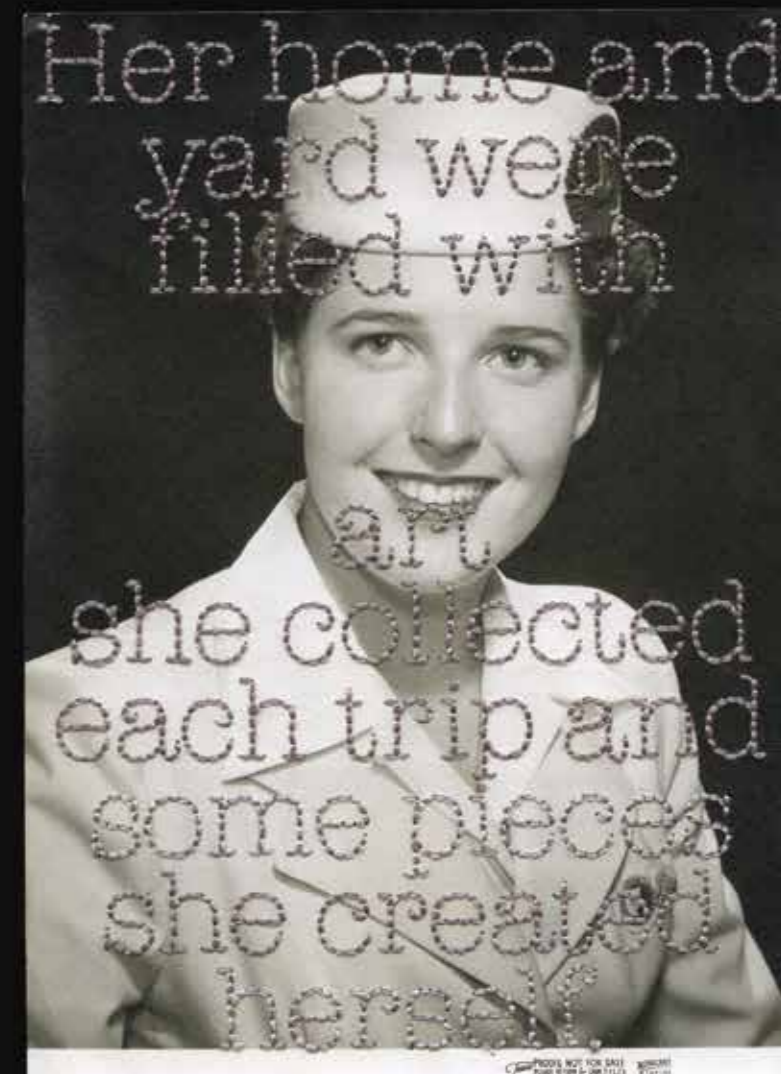
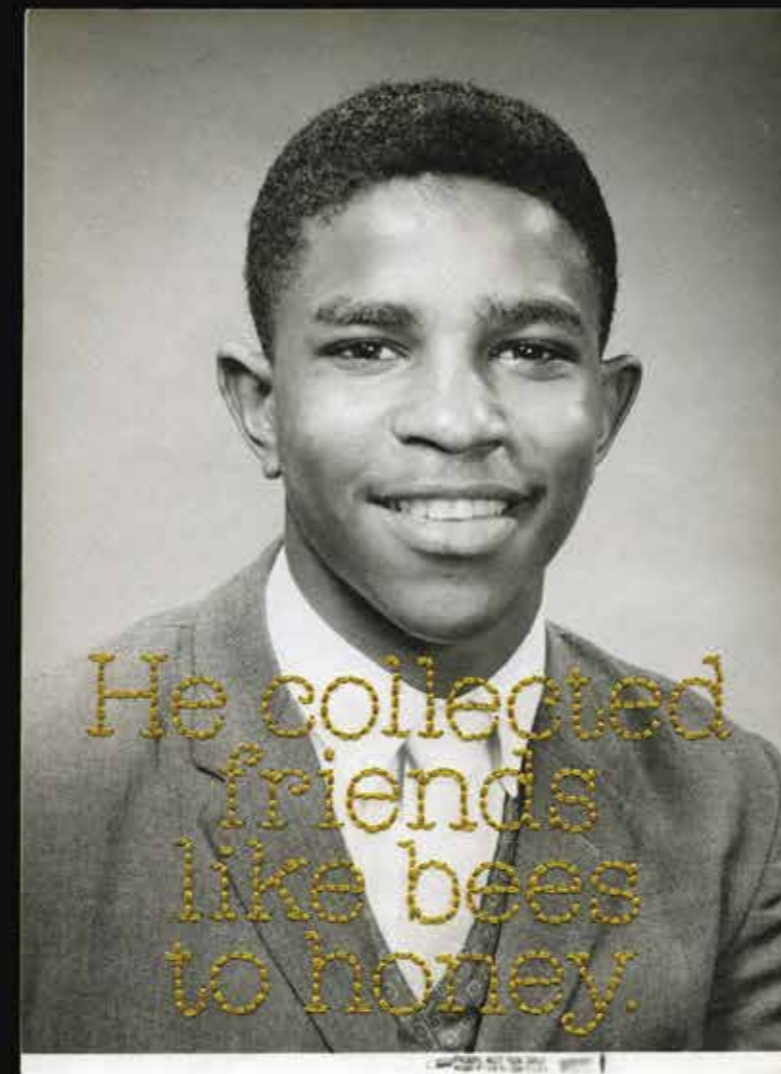
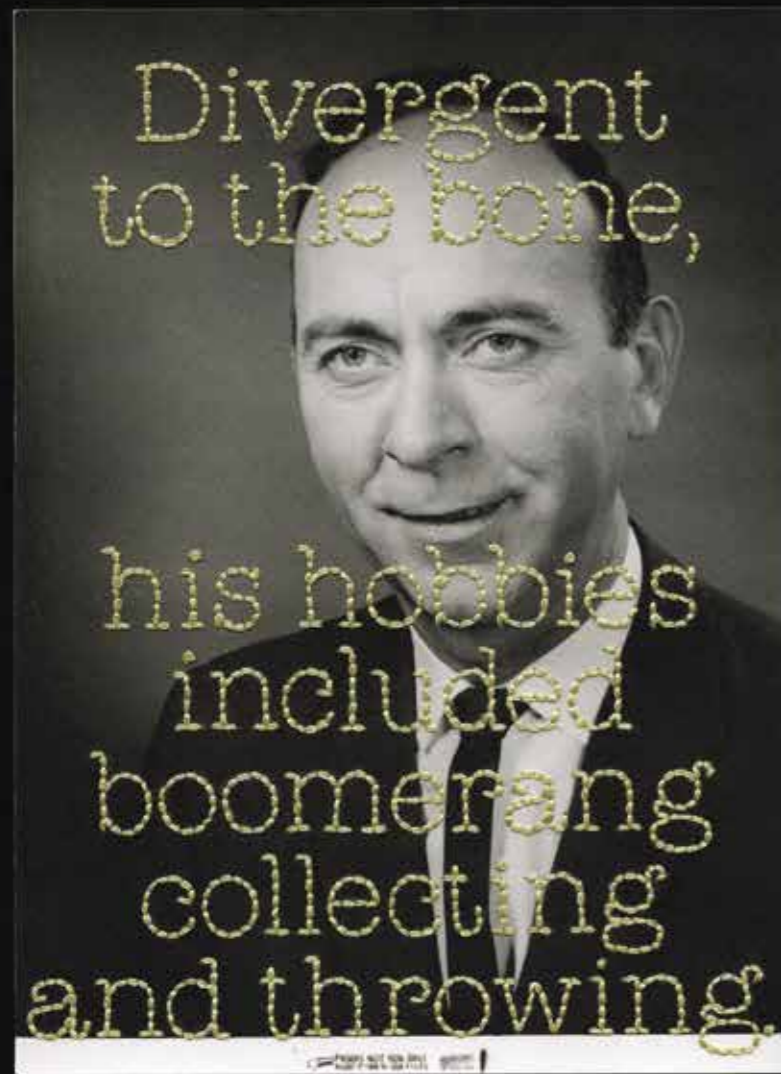
The collection of items is also a mix of things. There are letters, photographs, and other items. They are all part of Joe's collection and they are all part of our collection.



She had a strong passion for her collection of 'anything roosters'.



He enjoyed collecting chain saws.





They visited

over
52 foreign
countries,
all 50 states
and all the
provinces
of Canada.

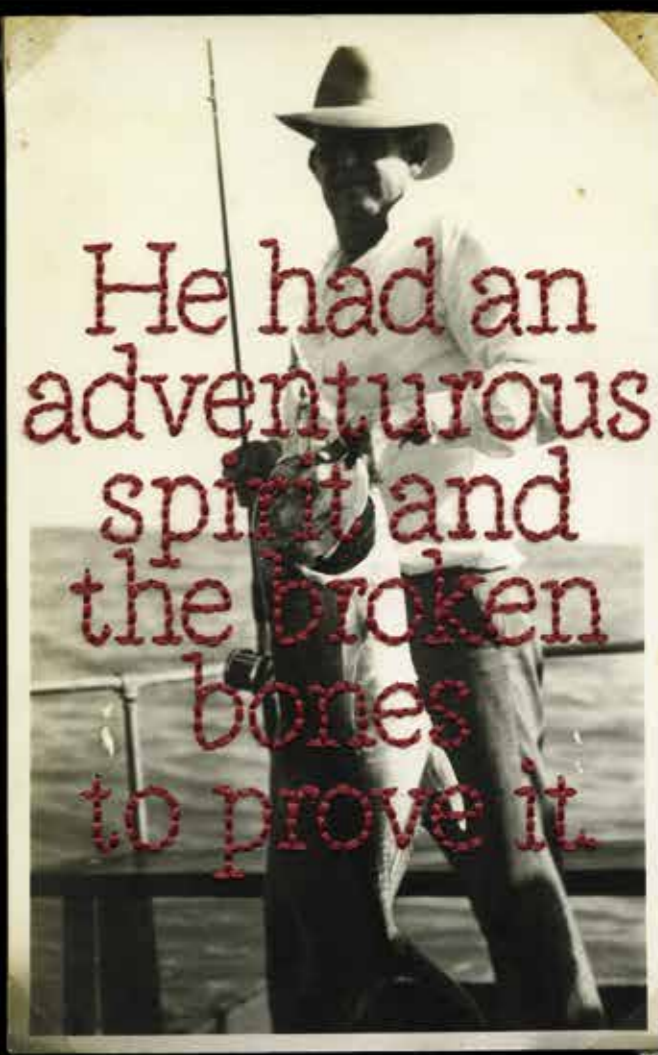
He and his bride
went on 43 cruises!

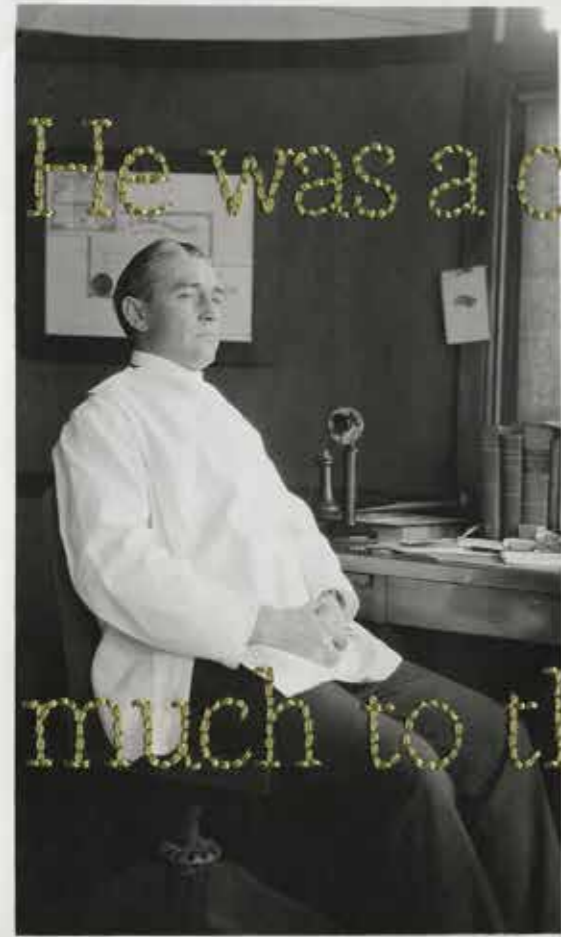


She loved
a good
mountain
trip!



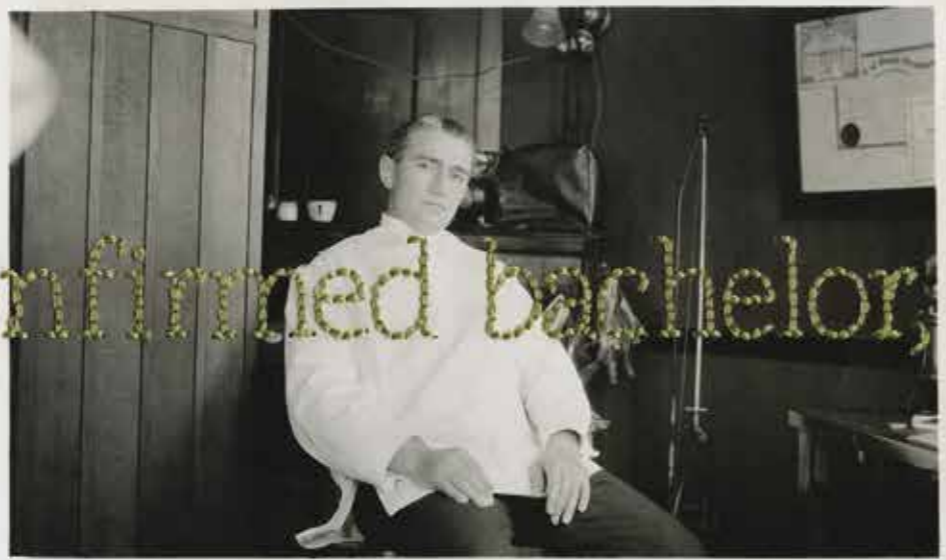
He had an
adventurous
spirit and
the broken
bones
to prove it.





He was a confirmed bachelor,

much to the chagrin
of many ladies.



After Dad's passing,
Mom spent

the better part of two years
crocheting afghans



...before getting bored.







*We sincerely thank
you for your
thoughtfulness*

Rocky + Betty



Elta De Blasio

*Many Thanks
for your
Thoughtful Gift
Mrs. & Mrs.
Celestina*





Jane Waggoner Deschner Stitches New Narratives Into Found Photographs

A conversation with Robert E. Jackson*

Robert E. Jackson: *A disclaimer before we begin the interview. I have known Jane since 2007 when she came to see the National Gallery of Art show in D.C. entitled "The Art of the American Snapshot" (which was based on my snapshot collection) and attend an associated symposium that the museum hosted. I love her work and am one of her collectors.*

Jane Waggoner Deschner: And, here's my disclaimer. Meeting Robert has been one of the most fortuitous events in my life. When I saw there was a day-long symposium all about snapshots, I knew I had to go. And then I was introduced to him and we became friends! I'm very honored that he agreed to interview me.



The first time Robert came to my studio in Billings to help me organize my photos.

photo: Jan Lodge

REJ: *You have had a long and varied career in the arts. Tell us about what you did artistically before you became involved with photographs and embroidering on them.*

JWD: I've always made things with my hands; I sewed and knitted. In my thirties, I decided to try making art and enrolled at the local college to pursue

*This conversation was originally posted in HAF New Photography blog in 2019 and has been minimally updated and condensed for inclusion in this catalog.

art, earning a second bachelor's degree. My preferred medium became photomontage using photographs from slick fashion and art magazines. In my early fifties, I wanted "to make better art" so I began an MFA program. I emerged from that experience still using found photographs, but now my focus was on snapshots and other kinds of everyday photos.

My last semester of grad school began in August 2001. And then the tragedy of 9/11 hit. My thesis exhibition was "The Anchor Project" in which I asked colleagues, friends, family members, fellow students and teachers to send me a snapshot of someone/something/someplace that "anchored" them during this bewildering time. I received over 200 photographs which I scanned and then returned to the sender. I Photoshopped the photos from each onto snapshots of my refrigerator and printed out the final pieces as large posters. The project was an absolute joy to create and I fell in love with the personal photograph.

REJ: *What individuals in the art world have been an influence on how you see the world and your approach to creating something tangible from that?*

JWD: I always return to guidance I received in grad school from Ernesto Pujol, an interdisciplinary artist. He counseled, "When you know why you choose the images you choose, you can choose more and better." The first artists I was asked to study were Hannah Höch and John Heartfield. From there, I discovered John Baldessari. I enjoy looking at art that has a strong basis in craft: Liza Lou, El Anatsui, Gee's Bend quiltmakers. And, of course, the Pictures Generation artists for using appropriation and montage, working in an area between high art and everyday imagery. I feel the closest affinity to Christian Boltaski, both for the way his art looks and the reason he makes it. These days I rely on thoughts/insights/support from artist colleagues as well as friends I've made in the community of collectors and dealers of everyday photos.

REJ: *What made you make the connection between photography and needlework such that you wanted to make art from the combination of the two mediums? Does this hybrid art form limit or free you?*

JWD: After I fell in love with the found snapshot, I began buying large lots on eBay. I wanted all the mundane ones that collectors rejected. Scanning in high resolution and then processing in Photoshop allowed me to identify and focus on the wealth of information captured within each. This processing involved tiresome hours at the keyboard. My hands needed to always be busy, so evenings while I watched television, I'd knit child-size sweaters. In 2008 I remembered how children's lacing cards utilized stitching, and the thought occurred to embroider a photo (a scary move...poking holes in a one-and-only artifact). My hand was back in my art. By stitching quotes made by famous people, I could moralize in addition to emphasizing how fascinating an everyday photo was.

I'm not a photographer or a skilled needleworker — which in some ways is both freeing and limiting. But I've found a way of artmaking that works well for me.

REJ: *For several years you've been focused on one project, "Remember me." Please explain.*

JWD: I grew up with Unitarians and their principle of "the inherent worth and dignity of every person." In 2015 the world/our country was becoming increasingly polarized. As with *"The Anchor Project,"* I wanted a way to process the situation and find hope. *"Remember me: a collective narrative in found words and photographs"* depicts our collective narrative, reminding us that we are more alike than we are different. I hand-embroider anecdotes from family/friend-written obituaries into found studio portraits or snapshots. I create empathetic connections, demonstrate our common humanity. I've made over 1200 pieces so far. Daily it brings me joy; unfortunately the need to be reminded of its thesis shows no signs of abating. I see myself continuing this project well into the future.

REJ: *In reading more obituaries than probably 99% of the people in the world, what did you discover about them which you hadn't thought about or realized and how did that affect your approach to using them in your work?*

JWD: While there are professional obituary writers, most obits we read in our local papers and online are written by the family or friends of the deceased, sometimes with the assistance of the funeral home. The goal is to memorialize the person in a thoughtful, loving way. In all the ones I've read, I've only seen two that contained bitter comments. After a life's details are given, insightful, often delightful, anecdotes are shared. "He had a great mechanical aptitude and could fix (or break) nearly anything." "She had a very busy nature about herself and could hardly stand to sit still." Sometimes the writer reflects: "We wish we could know the man he would have become." I want viewers who engage with my work to experience a range of reactions as they move from piece to piece — amusement, recognition, sadness, empathy — while realizing that all of these sentences were taken verbatim from published obituaries.

REJ: *Death can be a depressing and painful subject for an artist to confront.*

JWD: I chose other people's photographs as my art medium in 2001 I know why. My mother died when I was thirteen after being diagnosed with breast cancer three and a half years earlier. In the early 1960s, no one spoke about cancer, dying or death. I've tried, through my life, to "make friends with death." To engage, ponder, acknowledge, accept. Susan Sontag wrote, "All photographs are memento mori." Roland Barthes stated, "Every photograph is a certificate of presence." Obituaries by definition describe an individual's life because of the circumstance of it having recently ended. This project is about lived lives...within our shared specter of death.

REJ: *You have recently been fascinated with doilies as a subject in your work. Tell us a little about how that happened and how you wish to incorporate that object within your art.*

JWD: I started going to thrift stores to find affordable frames. I paint them with black gesso and mount the stitched photos on black mat board. While looking around, I noticed the discarded doilies and afghans that were for sale for less than the original cost of the yarn or thread and were most probably made by women. Because of my years of knitting, I knew the time, skill, expense and love that went into making them so I started buying them. I decided to stop buying afghans when such purchases totaled \$100 — that was over 50 blankets! But doilies I can't resist. There is a tactility in their intricately crocheted rounds and rectangles. I "feel" the hands that made them and want to honor that energy and skill. I'm rescuing something made with love that was discarded by loved ones and examining it/them in a contemporary context — paralleling my work with found photographs.

So far, I've presented doilies in two non-traditional ways: as curated stacks or mounds (of up to 100 or more) and in frames behind hand-colored photographs with quotes about handwork. (Since this interview I've devised a couple of other ways to incorporate doilies.)

REJ: *As a artist who has been working for many years, what advice would you give younger artists about their journey in the pursuit of making art and having their work acknowledged and shown?*

JWD: Here is what I tell young artists (when asked): I believe that everyone should make the best art they can — art that truly expresses what they want to learn about themselves and share with the world. That work will be authentic and better than making something you think people will like and buy — and eventually will generate acknowledgement and exhibitions. Start building a network with the people around you and work to a wider audience both in numbers and geography. No one will come and find the glorious work you make;

you have to put yourself out there over and over, time after time, place after place. Maintain old contacts and keep making new ones. Support fellow artists. Always show up and work. Make some sort of art every day. Get a day job if you have to, so you can make *your* work.

REJ: *A generation ago, you were asked to think about "why you choose the images you choose." Today, how would you answer?*

JWD: I want my work to affect change in viewers' hearts and minds. To answer my "why" question, substitute "create" for "write" and "art" for "literature" in this quote from James Baldwin. "You write in order to change the world, knowing perfectly well that you probably can't, but also knowing that literature is indispensable to the world. The world changes according to the way people see it, and if you alter, even but a millimeter, the way people look at reality, then you can change it."

REJ: *Where do you go from here? Where do you see your art work and vision taking you next?*

JWD: I entered my seventies several years ago. I feel the horizon coming closer and closer. I hope to make art for many more years (artists are fortunate because we never have to retire), but the reality of having limited time left is increasingly "real" as my body and brain age. I have now lived beyond the life spans of both my parents and a younger sister. I feel an urgency about making art now that I didn't have even five or ten years ago.

I'd never thought of myself as a feminist until receiving this comment from Ernesto Pujol during grad school: "She is a person in a small city, who is a woman, a mother, a former wife, a partner, who is making art about life...processing the domestic — what feminism was and is at its core. It's the hardest art to make — to take daily life that is so dismissed, unappreciated, under-appreciated in popular culture, and put it into a new spin." It is our interaction with the ups and downs experienced in daily life that I will continue to explore with photographs, quotations and thread.



Artist Statement

Jane Waggoner Deschner

Disappointing experiences and unmet expectations of “happy family” have zigzagged through my life. My mother’s parents didn’t raise her. I don’t know why. When I was 13, she died after a three-year-long illness — no one told me that was going to happen. Nine months later my father married a widow he’d met seven months earlier. I divorced before reaching forty, necessitating shared custody of two young children and causing an upheaval in the assumptions I came to realize I’d held about my life.

All this eventually led to my fascination with early and mid-twentieth century vernacular photographs. Nan Goldin wrote, “The snapshot (is) the form of photography that is most defined by love. People take them out of love, and they take them to remember — people, places, and times. They’re about creating a history by recording a history.” When I collaborate with another’s photo, I tease out a common humanity not confined by time, place or circumstance. I explore our shared human experiences to better understand my own.

There is a richness in vernacular photos whether or not we know the person, place or time. By asking viewers to look carefully — to react to quotations, decipher symbols and signs, and/or puzzle out juxtapositions — I renew and transform their experience of looking at old photographs. By engaging them with other people’s family photos, I alter the way they see their own. They come to realize, as I did, how universal this form of expression is — and how precious.

“The photograph is literally the emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here; the duration of the transmission is insignificant; the photograph of the missing being, as Sontag says, will touch me like the delayed rays of a star.”

~Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida, Reflections on Photography*, 1980



ADDENDUM

In 2020 halfway through grad school, I wrote this: “In *Camera Lucida* Roland Barthes shares the experience of viewing a photograph of his mother and the profound realization that he is seeing the actual light which emanated from the body and face of his loved one at a particular moment in a past time. Searching for images, I had found family vacation photos taken in the 1950s. Noticing that

I was not present in many, it struck me that my ten-year-old self had been the photographer. Then, looking at them with new (educated) insights, I realized not only was I seeing actual ‘traces’ of my parents now long deceased but I was looking again through my own young (still fundamentally innocent) eyes. I was turned on to the incredible potential of the personal photograph, the ‘snapshot.’”

CONTRIBUTORS

Susan Floyd Barnett works currently as the Scarlett Curator of the Whitney Western Art Museum, Buffalo Bill Center of the West. She has served as curator for the Yellowstone and Erie Art Museums, executive director of the Cedarburg Cultural Center and Copper Village Museum, project specialist at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, and intern at the Milwaukee Art Museum. Barnett has an MA in art history and a certificate in museum studies from the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, and a BA in fine art/printmaking from Montana State University, Bozeman. www.sfbarnett.com

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Elinor Carucci is an Israeli-American photographer based in New York City whose work has been in many solo and group exhibitions worldwide. Her photographs have appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *New York Magazine*, *W*, *Aperture*, *ARTnews* and many more publications. Her photographs are in the permanent collections of The Museum of Modern Art in NYC, Jewish Museum, Brooklyn Museum of Art, and the Houston Museum of Fine Art. She has received the ICP Infinity Award and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Carucci has published four monographs and she teaches in the graduate program of photography at the School of Visual Arts.

Written in a recent B&H Studio Visit with Carucci: her work consistently dives into the personal, yet always with the goal of finding universal meaning. Her photographs reflect qualities of the snapshot home-photo-album aesthetic, yet also that of the theatrically-staged image. www.elinorcarucci.com

Linnea Crowther is a senior obituary writer and news editor at *Legacy.com*, the world's largest commercial provider of online memorials. Its website hosts obituaries and memorials for more than 70% of all U.S. deaths. She covers topics related to death and dying, grieving and sympathy. She also writes obituaries for notable people and studies the data behind celebrity deaths and the trends that data uncovers. In 2017, she was named Obituary Writer of the Year by the Society of Professional Obituary Writers. Her 2016 series on celebrity death was covered by *CNN*, *New York Times* and *Macleans*. *Twitter: @Linnea_Legacy*

The non-profit **Humble Arts Foundation** is committed to promoting and supporting new photography, and dedicated to the artistic and professional development of those who practice it. Founded in 2005 and currently based in New York City, Seattle, Detroit and San Francisco, Humble has been a pioneering hub for new photography, and an international resource for photographers, art professionals, collectors and the public.

www.instagram.com/humbleartsfoundation/

For nearly 30 years, Seattle-based **Robert E. Jackson** has collected more than eleven thousand American snapshot photographs from the late 19th through the late 20th centuries. His collections have been exhibited throughout the United States, including the National Gallery in Washington, DC in 2007, the Amon Carter Museum in Texas, the Los Angeles Museum of Art, and at Pace/MacGill Gallery in New York City.

Jackson's practice lies somewhere between collector and curator, one that hinges on the photographs' anonymity and on his attention to their unique formal and aesthetic qualities. Jackson holds a MA degree in art history from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and a MBA from the University of Texas, Austin.

He regularly posts selections of his collection:

www.facebook.com/robert.e.jackson.75
www.instagram.com/robert_e._jackson/

William Davies King, as well as being a victim of his own pleasure in collecting, is Distinguished Professor of Theater and Dance at the University of California Santa Barbara. His *Collections of Nothing* (University of Chicago Press, 2008) was named as one of the top 100 books of 2008 by *Amazon.com*.

King is a collector of things of no commercial value — everyday objects he acquired and made into a collection essentially came from the way he lived his life. Cheez-It boxes, “Place Stamp Here” squares, and the little stickers found on fresh fruit are examples of the valueless ephemera that fascinate him, to the tune of collecting tens of thousands of items. The lowly and the lost, the cast-off and the undesired: objects that, merely by gathering and retaining them, he could imbue with meaning, even value. King also explores the ways the activity of the collector, who thinks through the world, connects to the work of the artist, who makes a world through things. www.williamdaviesking.com

Barbara Levine is a photo collagist, collector of vernacular photography, curator and author of several books on found photography (including *People Kissing: A Century of Photographs* [2019 with Paige Ramey]; *People Fishing: A Century of Photographs* [2018]; *People Knitting: A Century of Photographs* [2016] all published by Princeton Architectural Press). Her extensive photo archive (a.k.a. Project B) is the foundation of her artwork, exhibitions, publications and collaborations with other artists. Levine with her wife, Paige Ramey, built a vernacular photography collection over 30 years they call *PhotoMania*. In 2020, it was acquired by The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Trained as a photographer at the San Francisco Art Institute followed by a graduate degree in museology, she served as deputy director of The Contemporary Jewish Museum, and as exhibitions director at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

She is dedicated to collecting and preserving vintage vernacular photography, and equally fascinated by combining anonymous photos via contemporary artistic methods and technologies to reinterpret the experience of the photographic image. www.projectb.com

Clay Routledge, PhD, is a leading expert in existential psychology. His work examines how the human need for meaning in life influences and is influenced by different cognitive processes, self-regulation, momentous life experiences, personal and professional goals, creativity, social connections, spirituality and religiosity, entrepreneurship and prosocial behavior. He has published over 100 scholarly papers, co-edited three books on existential psychology and authored the books *Nostalgia: A Psychological Resource* and *Supernatural: Death, Meaning, and the Power of the Invisible World*.

His work has been featured by many media outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, CBS News, ABC News, BBC News, CBC News, CNN, NBC Today, MSNBC, *Men's Health*, *The Atlantic* and *The New Yorker*. He was the lead writer for the TED-Ed animated lesson “Why Do We Feel Nostalgia?” His excellent *Hidden Brain* podcast interview is titled “The Good Old Days.”

Dr. Routledge is the Arden & Donna Hetland Distinguished Professor of Business at North Dakota State University, a faculty scholar at the Challey Institute for Global Innovation and Growth, a senior research fellow at the Archbridge Institute, and an editor at *Profectus*.

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Descriptive Checklist

My titles are merely functional allowing me to keep track of individual pieces. I identify each hand-embroidered found photo with the number it was made within the project, the initials of the person in whose obituary I found the anecdote and the state in which that person lived/died. One looks like this: *505 JOT[MT]*. I'm not including that data here as it is only used for my record keeping and adds little. Hand-embroidered photos included in the catalogue are representative samples of the over 1,200 I've completed and are the essence of the project.

The *anecdotes* were copied from anonymously-written obituaries found in all 50 US states, Puerto Rico and most Canadian provinces. All were about persons unknown to me.

With three exceptions, the **people in the photos** are also unknown to me. There are photos of myself in the Christmas card detail on page 32 (baby in lower left card), the image on the back cover (proofs from photo shoot when I ran [and lost] for student council in college), and my former mother-in-law (before I met her) here on the facing page.

Over the years, *series* emerged sparked by my immersion in the material. Following is a list of different series with sizes and page numbers on which they can be seen. The titles are purely for description and identification.

In the *whole story series*, a photo, which in itself tells a complete story, is scanned, distracting scratches and dust removed in Photoshop, enlarged and then printed digitally.

- “*grim family*,” 34.25 x 51.5 inches (My second favorite snapshot.) page 15
- “*soldier and family*,” 39.5 x 23.75 page 62
- “*Gary, Rhonda and baby*,” 28 x 28 inches (My favorite snapshot.) page 128

Avid is a word often found in obits. In this diptych, mirror-image studio portrait proofs are covered with sentences telling what someone was avid about.

- “*Avid*” diptych, each 25 x 31 inches pages 30–31

In the *garment series*, found photos are stitched together and hand-embroidered to create pieces of non-wearable clothing.

- “*bowling shirt*,” 27 x 38 x 3 inches page 35
- “*t-shirt (soldier, Jasper John’s white flag)*,” 27 x 31 x 1.5 page 60

This *bowling alley* is a detail from one of two large pieces. 300 nicknames, written in 300 different people’s handwriting were hand-stitched to found photos (mostly the verso sides). I’d intended to stitch them onto the bowling shirt but there were too many; it would have been too confusing.

- “*bowling alley (Monkey)*,” (behind shirt) 56.5 x 21.25 inches page 35

In my *silhouette series*, an outline is filled with photographs that relate to the shape of the piece’s subject matter, often finished by stitching it to vintage photo album pages.

- “*little girl’s dress*,” 34.75 x 27 inches page 36
- “*soldier and shadows*,” 32.25 x 20.5 inches page 57
- “*soldier, official US Army D-Day photos*,” 32.25 x 20.5 inches page 57
- “*soldier*,” 36 x 13.25 inches; “*woman*,” 29 x 11 inches page 63

Each clock in the *regret series* is stitched with what someone regretted — or didn’t.

- “*900 (Claude), 901 (Ute)*,” 18.25 x 8.75 x 2 inches page 44
- “*1110 JFC Jr[NY]*,” 9 x 8.5 x 2.5 inches page 45

- “*1149 RH[MT]*,” 12 x 12 x 2.5 inches page 51
- “*1105 BA(W)R[ON]*,” 9 x 9 x 2 inches page 52

There are websites where folks post their *pets’ obituaries*.

- “*375 Harky*,” 8 x 10 inches page 77
- “*367 Sonny Boy*,” 5 x 7 inches page 78

Another series which evolved from reading thousands of obits were *mottos*. As are all the *collect* works, each motto piece was stitched into studio portrait proofs taken at Muralcraft Studios, LaPorte, Indiana, by Frank Pease, mid-20th century.

- “*mottos (Margaret, Ed, Bob, Ruth)*,” 14.25 x 20.25 inches page 85

Mounds and mounds of found anonymously-made *doilies* can be seen in installation photos.

- “*doily mound*” detail page 86

Many obituaries mention a woman’s “hobbies” of crocheting, knitting, sewing, etc. In the *handwork series*, I stitch the anecdote into a hand-colored studio portrait and frame it over a found handmade doily in a refurbished frame.

- “*658 (Corrine) (CH(G)P[NE])*,” 11.5 x 11.75 inches page 97

Wedding and baby/child photos are the ones that interest collectors the least. I use black gesso to alter the mundane-ness of the photos in the *blackout series*.

- pages 111–117

A *dollhouse* becomes a 3-dimensional frame. The first three were handmade; two from kits. The fourth was commercially produced. They can be seen in installation photos.



- “(Dr. Benjamin Spock’s ‘Baby & Childcare’ wallpaper, bundled photos)” on page opposite title page
- “(randomly selected Bible page wallpaper, doilies)” page 1, left in the back
- “(‘Little House on the Prairie’ wallpaper, framed school photos)” page 34, behind black chair
- “(dolls’ house papered with pages from ‘The Family of Man’)” page 1, behind table and chairs

Information about the photos preceding the texts:

page 8: vintage photo album
page 12: detail of bundled snapshots in dollhouse
page 32: detail from one of eleven vintage Christmas card pieces
page 64: detail of *The New York Times* front page, Sunday, May 24
page 86: detail of a doily mound
page 98: mass of “*Remember me.collect*” pieces
page 118: pile of random snapshots
page 122: skeins of DMC 100% cotton French embroidery floss



Yellowstone Art Museum
Billings, Montana

