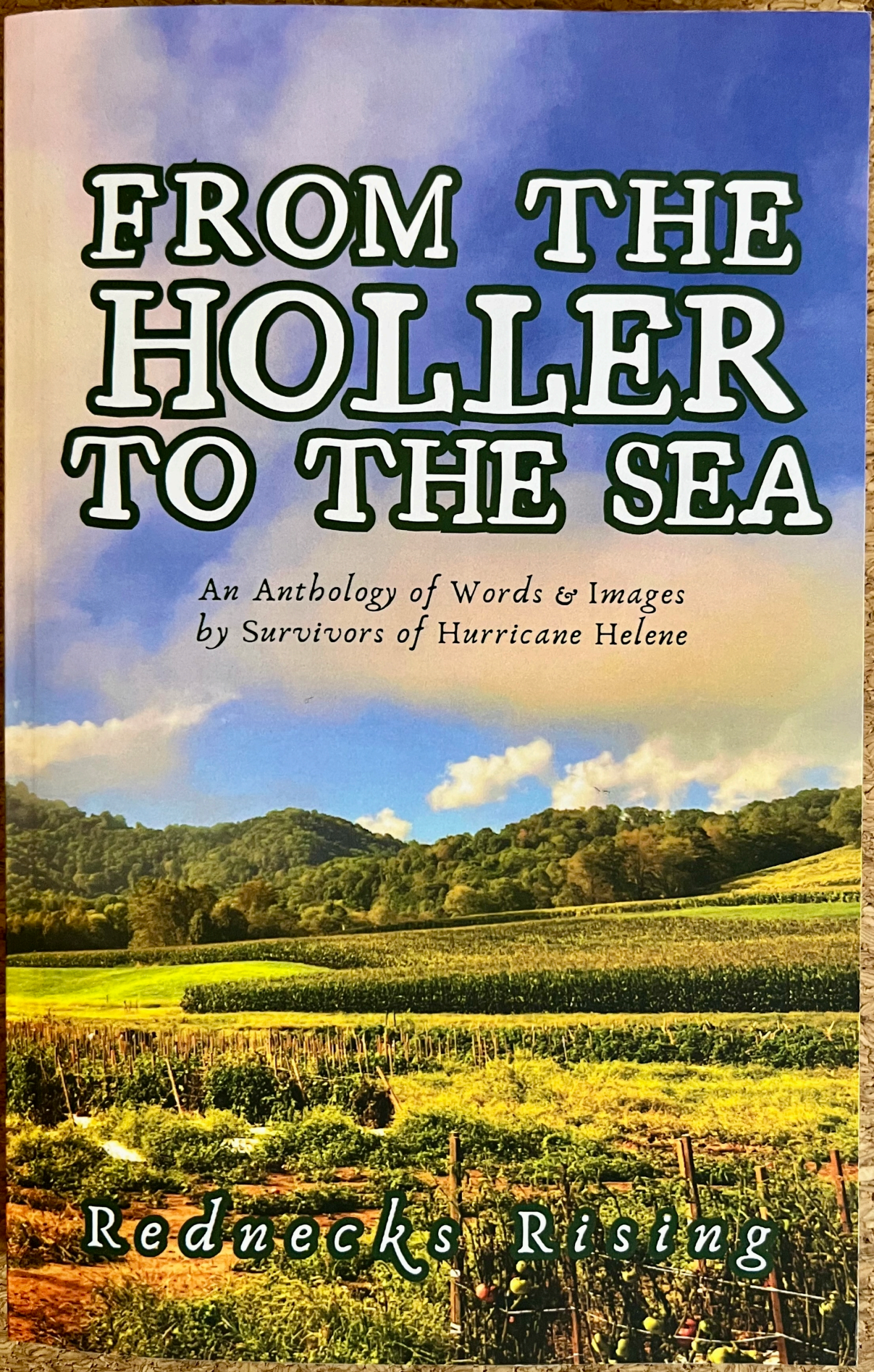
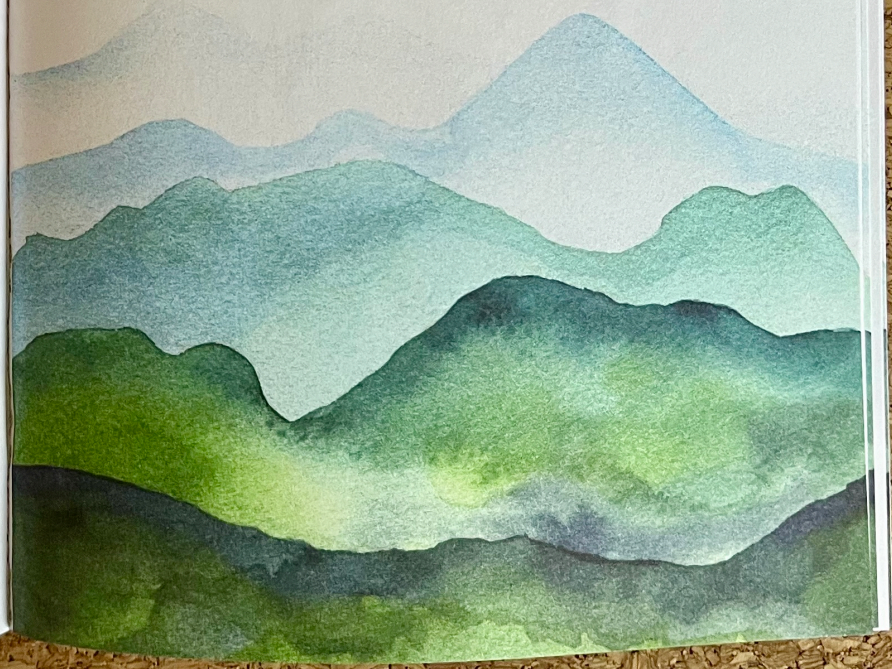

FROM THE HOLLER TO THE SEA
An Anthology of Words & Images by Survivors of Hurricane Helene
Rednecks Rising

– Chapter XIV –

IN GRATITUDE

by Beth Godbee





IN GRATITUDE

How do I thank the trees who protected?
Those who fell between bedroom and car
Those who didn't crush the house
Those whose roots held strong
Those whose didn't
Those who remain and those who've fallen

How do I thank the people who provided?
Those who responded first, after, and later
Those who brought food and drink
Those who cut trees and cleared roads
Those who said "I'm here" and "here!"
Those who showed up and those who couldn't

How do I thank the organizers?
the communicators?
the caregivers?
the engineers?
the artists?
the arborists?
the educators?
the cooks?
the healers?
the responders?
the recipients?
the neighbors near and far?

I bow down,
body low,
humbled to the core,
and repeat:
thank you, thank you, thank you.

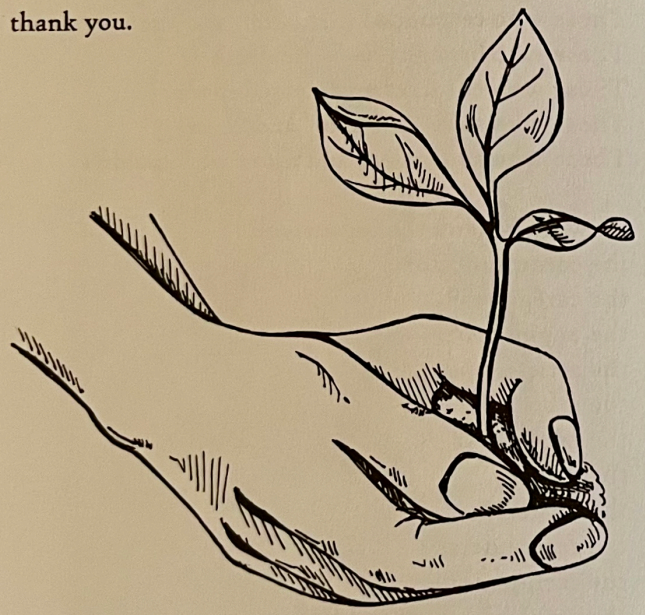
I pour out grief,
shaking and wailing,
and then find myself laughing, of all things.

I walk among trees,
hoping each step offers a gentle, nourishing touch.

I learn more how to receive with grace.

I text and call,
seeking connection and saying again:

thank you.



HERE, THERE? WHERE DO I PUT MY ENERGY?

As life unfolds beyond my knowing,
As I happily unlearn the distance between us,
As I change into what I hope will be a more resourced,
  showing-up self,
I touch the earth with ever-deepening fortitude.
In gratitude.

Both/and guides me
So I put energy
Both here and there
Blocking all that destroys life
Crying out to end genocide
Building all that creates justice
Crying out to end genocide
Being present to all before me
Crying out to end genocide
Crying out to end genocide
Crying out to end
Crying out
Crying
Both/and creates space
So I breathe through it all
Creating out to end genocide
And repeatedly writing
Try, try again.

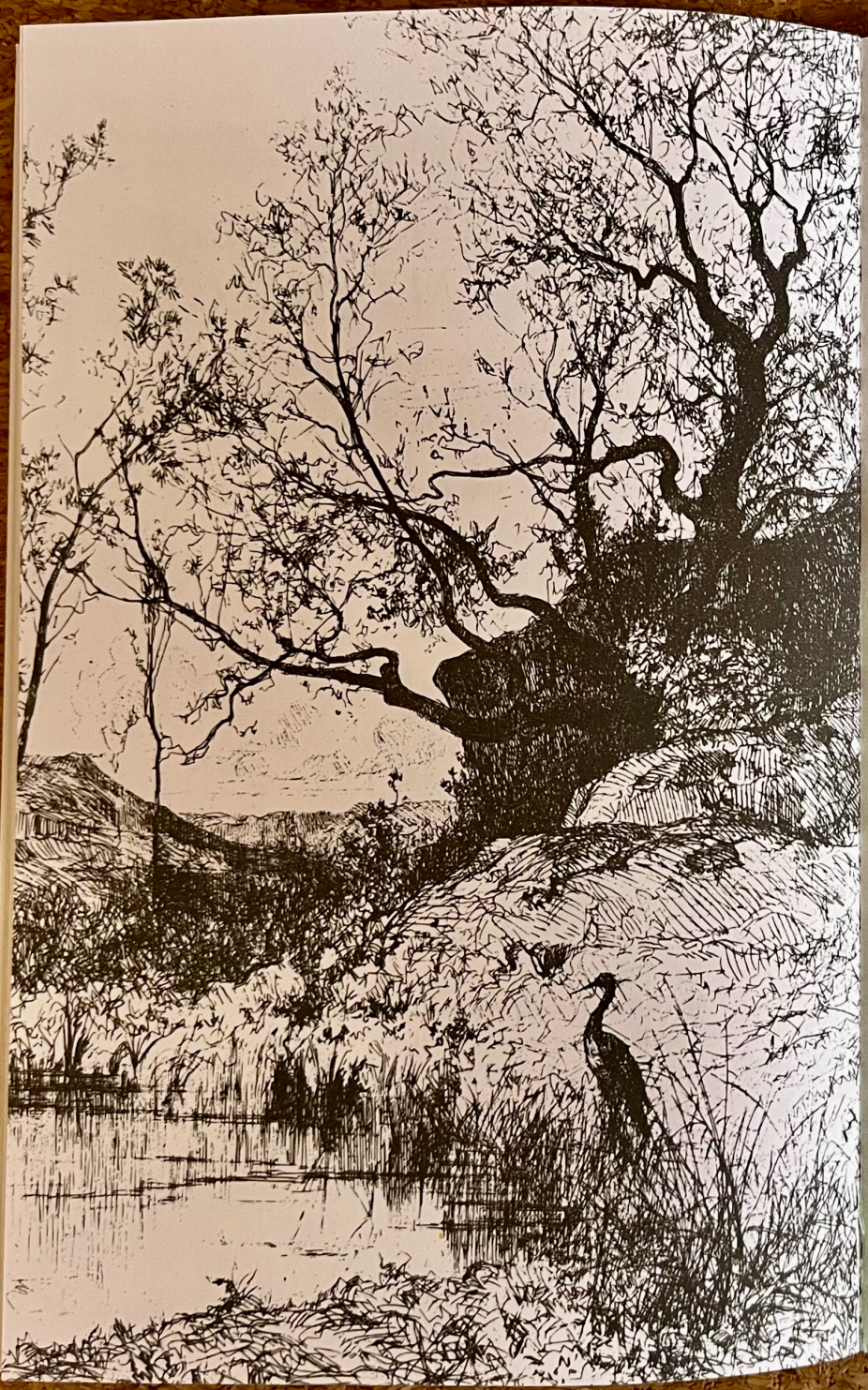




Photo taken mid-day on Friday, September 27,
when first venturing outside after the storm.

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