

AN EXPLANATION OF SYMPATHETIC MAGIC

By

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April, 2017

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These supernatural stories come to life from my research as new photographs appropriated from my family albums and vernacular images to create visual folklore about the Appalachian Mountains of Eastern Kentucky. The images are my interpretations of family stories, memories, history, things I have read that make my birthplace a unique region where magic happens.

AN EXPLANATION OF SYMPATHETIC MAGIC

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the School of Art and Design

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Fine Arts in Art

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April, 2017

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my parents, Paul and Ruby Banks for providing me with opportunities they and many from Appalachia have not had.

My Uncle Randall passed away April 18th 2017. He let me know that he was disappointed in a portrait I made of him, while I was an undergrad in the 1990's. This stayed in the back of my mind and pushed me to make this work and want to show the beauty and uniqueness of Appalachia.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the storytellers in my family: Dad, Mom, James, my aunts Ann and Alice, and my cousin Russell. Without your time and stories, I would not have a thesis. I would also like to thank my committee for their time and patience. Daniel Kariko for saying if I could make an image of an old childhood story then I would have a Thesis. Angela Franks Wells for saying the word Folklore when I needed to hear it. The way I think about making images has changed in the three years of graduate school, thanks to both of you. Tim Lazure for convincing me I was capable of craftsmanship and object making. Scott Eagle for completely changing how I think about digital printing. Finally, I want to thank my fellow grads. I have learned from all of you. Addison Brown for pushing me at 4am when I thought I had nothing left. Sarah Lazure for your kindness and being a voice of reason. Brian Culbertson for all the jokes and the road trips.

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“A photograph passes for incontrovertible proof that a given thing happened. The picture may distort; but there is always a presumption that something exists, or did exist, which is like what’s in the picture.” - Susan Sontag, *On Photography*

INTRODUCTION

I am connected to the people of the Appalachian Mountains of Eastern Kentucky by blood, sometimes memories and place, but mostly through an oral history of who they are. With so few details, I let my imagination run wild and fill in the blanks. My images are compilations of family portraits, memories, religion in the Holiness Church and oral history, or factual history in the context of the Appalachian mythology and folklore. Playing with the old family archive of mysterious snapshots as well as photographs of important mythical figures in Eastern Kentucky’s history, my work weaves together a personal narrative with the folkloric history of the area through the belief in the supernatural. I take certain liberties with the original family photograph by reimagining them to create a sense of what it feels like to partake in witchcraft, to work in a coal mine, to be anointed by the Holy Ghost, to handle snakes, fire, to heal the sick, to levitate or even raise the dead. I am not solely interested in telling the story of Appalachia and its people but, also reckoning with my own thoughts, feelings and beliefs about the afterlife. I too hope to raise the dead; only for me, it is symbolically through photography. These photographic reinterpretations connect me to the Appalachian Mountains of Kentucky through family stories, my own memories and nightmares, history and even tall tales.

MY OWN FAMILY FOLKLORE

I have always been aware that there are mystical aspects to the mountains of Kentucky. Those memories began at a very young age when I lived in the Old Holiness Church House in Harlan, Kentucky, where my grandfather once handled snakes. My mother tells stories of him catching snakes for the services in her youth, but she was too young to attend those services.

While we lived in the church, extraordinary and mysterious events occurred, which have become a part of my own family's folklore. My earliest memory is at about the age of two, I was sitting in an empty plastic pool outdoors, as my young mother ducked her head inside for a minute. My brother pushed the pool down the hillside, with me still inside of it. My mother returned to see me in the pool gliding 20 feet or so down onto the road. Had I been positioned anywhere but the center, I would probably be dead.

Another memory I have involves me waking up while my dad was sleeping. I grabbed a lighter and ignited the old wool mattress with him still lying in it. He woke up and put the fire out and took the mattress outside. My dad always told me that the wool mattress burned for days.

I have repeatedly heard from my mother that a higher power was looking out for me. Was the higher power some kind of protection from being in the church, or just luck? Did I misremember, and my dad had the ability to handle fire? My life would be very different if my father did not wake up.

I had nightmares about both of these incidents for years. My awareness of the supernatural shifted when my grandfather died in 1977. I was six years old. Although I went to the wake, I was too afraid to go to the burial, which was just up the hill from my grandparents' house. I stayed with a babysitter until I started thinking about my mother, dad and brother being at the service. I cried until the babysitter took me up there. I remember being confused by the

open casket and all the tears. I am still aware of the close proximity of the cemetery to my grandparents' house.

From the funeral on I became aware of the supernatural. As a child when I visited my cousins, who lived below the cemetery but above our grandparents' house, I would run down the hill, away from my grandfather's lingering presence. We would all say we saw his ghost in the window of the old smoke house or in the coalhouse. My grandmother tore down the barn and the pigpen and got rid of the animals after his

death, but there were still many reminders. It was hard to escape his material things, his clothes, or farming equipment. Over the years his belongings have disappeared. My grandfather represents a mythological figure for me. I barely knew him. Most of what I know, are these stories that became family lore. My memories are how I had perceived



Figure 1. *After the Family Farm*, 2016

him walking in the spirit world, because that is where I imagined him for most of my life, haunting the mountain where he once lived, as well as his gravesite.

My memories of living in Kentucky are from a long time ago. The photographs are not factual, because as a child every event felt larger than it really was. When I started making these images, I began aggrandizing the experiences. Looking back, I believed I had a pretty typical childhood. I began sharing the experiences and realized these memories were a great resource to mine for my work. It became clear that for a brief period, my childhood in Appalachia's haunted landscape was a time of learning about life, death, good and evil, and heaven and hell in

Kentucky's mountain culture. As I began to make images, I realized that if I took a neutral approach to making the images they were not as interesting. The family photographs are altered from my point of view.

My grandmother passed away 22 years later, in 1999, and one of the most surreal experiences of my life followed. My uncle Randall ask my dad, my brother, and I to help dig her grave. He made his living in the coal mines, but had buried several family members in the Smallwood Cemetery. After hours of digging in as much rock as dirt, a few young men showed up on their day off from working as gravediggers. The men said they wanted to pay their respects to my grandmother by helping us dig. I was blown away by this gesture because I had not seen these actions anywhere else that I have lived.

On the day of the funeral, my brother and I were in the back seat of the car. My mom was seated in the passenger seat while my dad drove from the church to the gravesite. Every car had stopped and I began to re-evaluate my own feelings about the region. For all of the problems in Appalachia, there is a certain gothic beauty in the culture's respect for the dead. Since my grandmother's funeral, it seems like the only time I go to Kentucky is for more funerals. My brother and I had often associated the mountain that accommodates my grandparent's home and the cemetery with family, but also poverty and death. My parents are fixing up my grandparent's house. Since my parents have retired and turned 65, I have felt a growing need to visit and ask questions about our family history. I realized that if I did not ask now, I would never understand our past. The newly renovated house has painted walls and hardwood floors. Again, most of the reminders of my grandparents are now gone. Everyone on my mother's side of the family is buried on that mountain, and I cannot say that I will not be buried there as well.

EASTERN KENTUCKY

Appalachia is a merging of faiths, superstitions and magic, beginning with the fearful European's entry and Native American traditions. The African slaves also introduced a unique belief system in Appalachia. Eastern Kentucky contained a group of people from diverse backgrounds, which led to many unique ideas and customs. There are Celts, Native American, Scotch-Irish, Spanish, English, Melungeon, German, Italian, Dutch, African, Swiss, Welsh and French influences. In the words of Haley and Jackson, "with all these diverse groups come great stories, folklore, legends, strange customs, traditions and beliefs that are infused with ghosts, spirits, charms, faith healings and mystical creatures" (Haley and Jackson v). The shortage of Caucasian women on the frontier led to the frontiersmen kidnaping, raping, and forcing Cherokee or Choctaw women to marry them and bear their children. Both the frontiersmen and his brides brought their own beliefs and superstitions to the union.

In David L. Kimbrough's book *Taking Up Serpents: Snake Handlers of Eastern Kentucky*, he writes of some of the folkloric beliefs in Eastern Kentucky. For example, the owl was believed to be a spy for the devil. Many people fired a gun to keep the owl away from their cabin. It was believed that if the owl flew to the left of the cabin door, bad luck was impending. If the owl flew to the right of the cabin, the occupants were absolved. If the owl flew directly over the cabin, death was coming to at least one of the inhabitants (Kimbrough 66). Several other superstitions are written about in *Night comes to the Cumberlands: a biography of a depressed area* by Harry M. Caudill. For example, spider webs in a door were a sign not to exit the door until after sunrise. "A child born on January 6th or his father's birthday was endowed with the power to understand the conversation of wild beasts" (Caudill 27). Dreams were believed to be warnings of things to come and fire, blood and birds held distinct significance. Typical

superstitions were also prevalent, such as a black cat being evil or a broken mirror being bad luck as well many devil sightings. The images I create are inspired by memories, stories passed down from my family, readings and these superstitions.

PROCESS

For this body of work, I am appropriating family photographs, as well as vernacular images, to tell supernatural stories about my family history and the region of Eastern Kentucky that I come from. I am manipulating the images through modern tools such as Photoshop and smartphone applications. This process enables me to create new stories that were not documented with a camera. These actions allow me to layer information pertaining to reinvented family photographs. The concept may start with a family story, such as when I ignited the old wool mattress while my father was sleeping in the Holiness Church. After reading about the Holiness belief that if a person was anointed they could not be burned, I changed the image from the bed being on fire to a more folkloric image where my father is on fire.



Figure 2. *A Memory of Living in the Holiness Church with an Anointment, Fire, and My Father*, 2017

Once I have scanned the old family photograph, I either start with Photoshop or import the family photo into a smartphone app, juxtaposing the modern and traditional. I usually experiment in the apps by working intuitively. Once I have as many different versions of the photograph as possible, I look to see if there is a version that I feel is complete. If not, I will bring it back into Photoshop as a layer and continue to manipulate it until I feel like it communicates the story I am trying to tell. I have used maps, text drawings and other sources when I believe the images need another element.

The unpredictability of the use of the smartphone apps for making art is akin to how a folktale evolves. Each app is changing the story; as a person might magnify the tale when they

pass it along to another individual who modifies the tale when they tell the story. By assembling family photographs and appropriating historical images, I construct stories with the contemporary tools for manipulation and passing them along as a visual record of this folklore.

The way in which these images are printed is exciting to me and changed my feelings about digital printing. The old sometimes small, fading, family photograph is scanned and given new life as a digital file that can no longer be touched in its contemporary form. It does not matter if it goes into the smartphone or Photoshop, it is no longer tactile. I can touch the screen with my finger or click a mouse, but I can only see the image, not touch it. At this point, the reality changes in the photograph, the characters are thrown into a supernatural folktale that may be fiction, but becomes their new reality as I hit print.

The prints are tactile, not only with the surface texture of the brushstrokes from the digital ground, but also the visual texture that is usually in my images. Digital ground is a printing medium that allows any surface that will go through the inkjet printer to be printed on. That texture has not only allowed for my hand to be a part of the images, but also allows each print to be unique because no two sheets of paper are coated exactly the same.

THEMES IN MY WORK

God, Witches, Devils, Mythical Creatures and the Holy Ghost anointing people to enable them to handle snakes, fire, and raise the dead, all exist in the Appalachian Mountains of Eastern Kentucky. The following are documented cases, superstitions, and folklore.

George Went Hensley and Snake Handling

I needed to understand snake handling better, and why my grandfather would choose it as a part of his religious worship. George Went Hensley is credited with starting the Snake Handling tradition in Appalachia and the South. Hensley moved his family in 1932 to Eastern Kentucky to work in the coal mines (Kimbrough 50). The Holiness movement began in 1910

when Hensley, the onetime moonshiner, climbed White Oak mountain at Rainbow rock in Tennessee during the winter, and prayed about the passage Mark 16:18 then grabbed a large rattlesnake that had appeared. In Kimbrough's words, "Snake Handlers believe that God granted Hensley a strange power that day to render the reptile harmless" (Kimbrough 40). Hensley then brought a serpent to his congregation and then commanded the church-

goers to prove their faith. Hensley claimed he was called upon to minister and even though he could not read. He claimed God told him what to say. When anointed with the Holy Spirit, he began to speak in tongues, handle serpents, and drink poison. Hensley survived more than 400



Figure 3. *And These Signs Shall follow To George Went Hensley*, 2016

snake bites. He received his final bite in 1955 while he was giving a sermon. After Hensley refused medical attention, he died the following day.

Appalachian Witches

The article “Sympathetic Magic in the Kentucky Mountains” was written in 1914 by Josiah Henry Combs about the mid 1800’s belief in witchcraft and charms in Eastern Kentucky. It was believed that witches could transform victims into other animals such as horses that were

ridden “while their rational attributes remain intact throughout” (Combs 328). Witches were thought to transform themselves into black cats or toads as well as put spells on other animals. For example, preventing a cow from giving milk. The way to protect oneself was to seek out a witch doctor or use charms. In the diary of a traveling preacher named James J. Dickey, it is written how witchcraft erupted in about



Figure 4. *Witchcraft: Allegations and Misfortune*, 2017

1850 in Harlan County. A man named Woodard Lyttle recounted the events to Dickey.

According to Haley and Jackson, “Mr. Lyttle says that cattle died and hair balls were found in them, the cattle hides would be whole but their insides had been shot to pieces” (Haley and Jackson 26). “Combs had a theory about how this was possible; A small bunch of hair from a horse or cow is rolled between the two hands into a small round ball, and this ball is used as a bullet” (Combs 328). Belief in witchcraft and charms remains today in certain parts of Appalachia. According to Kimbrough, Hensley’s second wife, Irene...

“believed she had been cursed by a witch at birth. The sorceress was her aunt, who had a particular score to settle with the family. When Irene married George Hensley, She believed he could cast the demon out of her and relieve the spell. It appears that Hensley never accomplished this feat, however Irene’s belief that she was hexed followed her to the grave” (Kimbrough 48).

Witchcraft Allegations were levied against individuals who were perceived as not being integrated into the social life of the community, gaining at the expense of others, or using unnatural means for their own empowerment (Callahan 52). In his book, *Salvation on Sand Mountain: snake handling and redemption in southern Appalachia*, Dennis Covington maintains that there remains a belief in some Holiness churches that, “if there’s witchcraft spirit in the church, it could zap your anointing and you’d be left cold turkey with the serpent in your hand and the spirit of God gone off of you. That’s when you’ll get bit.” (Covington 155). Typically, Witchcraft is associated with misfortune and levied against those who tried to change the culture.

Sherman Lawson



Sherman Lawson was a preacher in Harlan, Kentucky who in 1912 believed the Lord moved on him and told him to walk fourteen miles across the mountain from Path Fork to Wallins Creek, the place where my grandparents would later live. Lawson came upon a big white house where a young girl named Norma Blanton, who was deceased for over 24 hours,

Figure 5. *Sherman Lawson's Resurrection Miracle*, 2016

was laid out for burial. While the coffin was being made, he walked over to the girl's mother and asked if he could pray for her daughter. Lawson then walked up to the dead child, grabbed her by the hand, and began to pray. The girl then rose from the dead! Norma Blanton lived until she was 80. In 1932, Lawson also raised another person named Mary Christian from the dead (Kimbrough 80-81).

The Goatman

The Goatman in Kentucky is called the Pope Lick Monster. Even though the Goatman is a Western Kentucky apparition, he is a mix of religion, superstition and great story telling that is as complex as the tales that come out of Eastern Kentucky. According to Nathan J. Crouch's book, *Goatman: flesh or folklore?* the Goatman legend started as a "Lover's Lane" legend, with fathers telling their



Figure 6. *The Precautionary Tale of Goatman*, 2016

daughters these folktales in the 1960's to keep them from going with a boy to lover's lane. The Goatman is believed to come out of the Greek mythology of the satyr and the Roman mythology of the fawn. Crouch adds "Though sometimes depicted as tricksters with an occasional tendency toward violence, satyrs, whether portrayed as horse like or goat like, were most often described as drunkards who danced across the landscape lusting after females." The satyr was seen as lusty and worldly! "It's no accident that Satan's physical appearance is described as strikingly similar to that of the satyr" (Couch 28). Crouch continues "The Christian church modeled its earliest depictions of the devil's appearance after satyrs and fauns and paganism, and since the Goatman

is often described as one of these natural spirits, the Goatman is ----in a roundabout way ----a devil” (Couch 31). In Louisville, Kentucky, the Goatman was named after the Pope Lick Creek and Trestle, or bridge. In the late 1800s, a goat-like creature was captured in Canada by a circus owner. The train carrying the Goatman was struck by lightning in Western Kentucky, and the train derailed killing everyone but the Goatman. Reportedly, the Goatman has been hiding under the 100 feet high Pope Lick Trestle ever since. It is believed that he lures his victims on to the 772 feet wide, trestle with his supernatural power. The Goatman can only be seen on the railroad tracks on the bridge. The victim then will jump or fall as the train crosses the trestle.

Coal and Devil John Wright

Starting in the 1880s, land speculators began to take over Eastern Kentucky as they bought up land and mineral rights in the area. Kimbrough states, “Most Appalachian farmers, unaware of the market value of their coal, sold mineral rights and untillable land to these speculators for as little as \$.25 to \$5.00 per acre” (Kimbrough 83). However, after the farmers signed the broad form deed, they gave up all their undiscovered mineral wealth on the property and gave the new owner the right to do whatever was necessary to get the coal. In the early 20th century, industrialization began to take over the farmer’s way of life. Devil John Wright helped one speculator, John C.C. Mayo, acquire over 700,000 acres in Eastern KY (Callahan 58). The name “Devil” might not have originally derived from Wright’s association with modernizing forces, but it was sustained and reinforced by them, and showed him to be at odds with community values, even perceived as a threat to community members (Callahan 56). Kimbrough writes “The capitalist used every means possible to gain a total grip on mountain society. Toward that end, missionaries and educators played a particularly important role. Their function was to make legitimate the exploitation, to eliminate some of the worst abuses, and educate and change

values so that people would accept the new ways” (Kimbrough 86). The farmers were uprooted into these coal communities and exploited by the capitalist land speculators. Kimbrough concludes that, “Schools, churches, movie theaters, ballparks, and other recreational facilities were built by mine owners as disguised means of achieving these ends” (Kimbrough 86). Harlan, Kentucky earned its reputation as Bloody Harlan from the coal wars of the 1930s. During this time, Harlan was a place where mine operators owned the towns, the labor, the police, and the judges. Mine operators even had their own currency. A miner could be fired, evicted, blacklisted, shot, jailed or blown up just for joining a union. It was equally as difficult for the labor organizers to establish unions as they were not welcome in the community.



Figure 7. *Canary in a Coalmine*, 2017

Coal and coal mining are themes in my images, because it is hard not to think of coal as the backdrop for Eastern Kentucky. My grandfather was a miner, and several uncles followed his footsteps. My grandfather’s death was a result of black lung disease, which is caused by long term exposure to coal dust from years of working in the coal mine. I have memories of him at the end of his life lying in bed while coughing non-stop. Another element present within the narrative of my photographs is the canary in the coal mine. I use it metaphorically for my grandfather’s release from jail for the murder of his father-in-law, from his first marriage before he married my grandmother. He went from that experience to working in a coal mine. The miners brought caged canaries into the mines in case carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, methane

or other dangerous gasses were present. The gases would kill the canary first, warning the miners to get out of the mine. I am also intrigued by the idea of a female symbolizing bad luck in the mine. Despite the belief that when women were hired in 1973 they would bring “cave-ins, explosions, fires and other ungodly disasters” (Klemesrud 16), Diana Baldwin and Anita Cherry broke down barriers by becoming the first female miners not only in Eastern Kentucky but in the United States. Despite the fear, the superstitions regarding women and mining were unfounded (Klemesrud 16).

Sympathetic Magic

Sympathetic Magic is a magic ritual in which events, people, animals or an object can be influenced magically by actions or objects representing or associated with them. Typically, voodoo dolls and puppets are examples of objects used (Wigington paganwiccan.about.com). In Eastern Kentucky, it is the belief that herbal remedies and charms have the ability to protect and heal, but also the ability to inflict harm. Haley and Jackson believe many went to the local Granny woman who often had “the sight” for charms (Haley and Jackson 11). Christian charms such as crosses are believed to protect the person wearing them. Combs describes several more interesting charms such as killing a black snake and hanging it up, which is supposed to bring rain within twelve hours. Another example is boiling the paddle of a goose's foot and give the water to your love interest to make someone love you (Combs 330). For me, altering the context of old family photographs with Photoshop and smart phone Apps is magically changing the mundane stories the photographs told about Appalachia to tell a larger tale about my thoughts and feelings about this place.

CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS

While most of the work in Appalachia has been documentary, there are several contemporary photographers who are dealing with Folklore in Appalachia. Aaron Blum's series of photographs called *Prevailing Winds of Hills and Heritage* are photographs his friends and family in West Virginia based on the false impressions of outsiders, as well as his idealizations and personal experiences. His friends and family are photographed as exaggerated versions of themselves in their homes. His work challenges the stereotypes with romantic images that have their own folklore. While my images do share in the romanticism of the Appalachian folklore, they are not



Figure 8. Aaron Blum, *Bleeding Hearts and Fables*, 2015.



Figure 9. Elijah Gowin, *Bird Woman*, 1999.

contemporary at least in their infancy. The black and white images look back at the past history and my family in Appalachia. His un-manipulated images scream now, with their beautiful color and light and contemporary subjects. While his images hint at a mystical place, there is no doubt that my images are about the supernatural.

While maybe not as contemporary, Elijah Gowin's *Hymnal of Dreams* contains dreamy images about magical realism and family lineage in the south. I relate to this work because I spent a good part of my youth in Virginia and made lots of surreal images. Much the way my images are nostalgic, these photographs are surreal family

portraits and had I had the opportunity to photograph my grandparents this way instead of altering appropriated family photographs my work may have been different.

The 2012 series of Antone Dolezal and Lara Shipley called *The Devil's Promenade* is about "the spook light" an orb of light in the Ozark backwoods along the Oklahoma-Missouri border where the devil may reside. Like my images, the work includes appropriated imagery that



Figure 9. Lara Shipley, *Known Beasts*, 2013

is included almost as evidence. There is little or no manipulation and it is a combination of folkloric contemporary and found photographs that speak to a narrative that is phenomenal. And while this work may be closer than Gowin or Blum to what I am doing, I was

interested in telling a series of supernatural folkloric stories rather than a single narrative, that comes together to give the viewer a sense of the magical belief system in Eastern Kentucky.

Of course, there are more traditional documentary photographers like Shelby Lee Adams who was born in Kentucky and documents poverty and religion with his portraits of people in the region. Matt Eich's work is of families in poverty in the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia and Ohio. It deals with the challenges they face, covering everything from



Figure 10. Shelby Lee Adams, *Holiness Hands with Serpent and Bible*, 1987

drug abuse to poverty. There is also the work of Roger May, who I believe is trying to elevate the discussion about Appalachia with his project *Looking at Appalachia* in which he is sharing images from Appalachia made by Appalachians. In his book *Testify*, he declares himself an insider and outsider, as he moved away in his youth, which I can certainly relate to. This love

letter to Appalachia is him trying to remember this place and returning to document it. I have returned to collected images to construct memories the way I wish to tell them now in hindsight.



Figure 12. Roger May, *Wharncliffe, Mingo County, West Virginia*, 2008.

I think with all of the documentary photographers there are obvious themes that we share that are themes throughout Appalachia. For example, coal mining, snake handling and religion. They are looking at Appalachia in a

contemporary context documenting it as it is or how they see it. I am looking back trying to figure out the history

because I feel attached to it, even though I did not live in Kentucky very long. My images are folktales; they are not factual documents of Appalachia. I believe that if there is a connection between the documentary photographers and my work, that relationship is through a sense of place.

I find I am more inspired stylistically by the work of Roger Ballen's *Asylum of the Birds* than the traditional documentary photographers. His constructions of the haunting psychological



Figure 11. Roger Ballen, *Caged*, 2011

images with drawings are closer to what I have aspired to. Only for me, I am using mobile phone apps and Photoshop rather than constructing sets with drawings. His portraits are somewhere between unique documentary photographs and just surreally creative. As much as I like his work, I do not think I could go to Appalachia and do portraits in the same manner he photographs

his subjects, which is considered to be highly exploitive.

Finally, while her images look nothing like mine K.K. DePaul's *Only Child* is a brutally honest work about her relationship with her father who attempted suicide twice and her

grandfather, was hung. She then had to care for her ailing father until his death. The childhood photographs are dissected creating layers as if there are several versions of her or she has shed her skin and a new stronger version of herself is born. It is her sharing of this honest family narrative that is so inspiring. I am only giving hints of truth, but the images are harder to decipher because the truth is buried in all of the folklore and manipulation.



Figure 12. K.K. DePaul,
Hide and Seek, 2011.

CONCLUSION

The mystery and uncertainty of my family history has been passed on to me as incomplete stories and photographs. I began this journey in the hopes that if I understood the history of Eastern Kentucky, I might have a better sense of who I am. What I found were rich stories like that of Sherman Lawson and George Went Hensley that I wanted to tell visually. I became interested in a mythical history. I also discovered along the way that I am a storyteller, not unlike my father and my grandfather before him. This gave me the confidence to share my own narrative in the context of all the supernatural folklore that comes from Appalachia. This research has helped resolve my desire to understand this place I come from.

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APPENDIX A WORK CITED

[Figures 1-7] Greg Banks, Artwork images from MFA Exhibition, An Explanation of Sympathetic Magic, 2017.

[Figures 8] Aaron Blum, “Bleeding Hearts and Fables” from Prevailing Winds of Hills and Heritage Series, 2015.

<http://aaronblumphoto.com/hills-/>

[Figures 9] Elijah Gowin, “Bird Woman” from Hymnal of Dreams Series, 1999.

<http://www.thisiscolossal.com/2010/09/elijah-gowin/>

[Figures 10] Laura Shipley, “Known Beasts”, from The Devil’s Promenade Series, 2013.

<https://www.larashipley.com/devilspromenade/fkyzlg2tkkqo1kec6sbrlilcm7rer3>

[Figures 11] Shelby Lee Adams, “Holiness Hands with Serpent and Bible”, 1987.

<http://shelby-lee-adams-madrid.blogspot.com/>

[Figures 12] Roger May, “Wharncliffe, Mingo County, West Virginia" from Testify Series, 2008.

<http://www.rogermayphotography.com/testify/>

[Figures 13] Roger Ballen, “Caged” From Asylum of the Birds, 2011.

https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/roger-ballens-asylum-of-the-birds

[Figure 14] K.K. DePaul, “Hide and Seek” from Only Child, 2011.

http://www.kkdepaul.com/GAL_onlychild/fullsize2.jpg