



The Electric Pencil: Drawings from Inside State Hospital No. 3

James Edward Deeds Jr.

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Deeds's subtle, meticulous, and wildly imaginative pencil and crayon drawings portray an unusual cast of characters: nineteenth-century dandies, Civil War soldiers, antique cars, fantastic boats and trains, country landscapes dotted with roaming animals, and fanciful architecture. None of these existed in the actual mid-twentieth-century landscape of Deeds's own life, but rather were representations of his inner world—an artist's poignant tribute to a faded past.

Deeds lovingly bound his artwork in a cardboard and leather portfolio, a present for his mother. After being accidentally discarded in 1970, the album was rescued from the trash by a young boy and, thirty-six years later, came into the hands of artist and collector Harris Diamant, who provides the book's foreword. *The Electric Pencil* features all 283 of Deeds's arresting drawings—now avidly collected—done on ledger sheets from State Hospital No. 3 in Nevada, Missouri, and reproduced in the sequence of the original album. *The Electric Pencil* introduces readers to an astonishing record of one man's unwavering artistic vision in the face of the most inhospitable conditions.

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