

A SET FOR MY CHILDREN

1. HORSES (for Alison)

We had an old stables in the backyard
under the chopped Weeping Fig.
If you peeked inside the narrow door you would see
that hay rack
the chaff troughs—
there were rusty rings for tethering
but
where were the horses?

We dreamed of horses in those stables
stamping hooves, snorting
stamping against the floor
raising their tails
we dreamed their hot breathing
the shovel loads of manure
in our cobwebbed stables.

Our stables look deprived but friendly.
We live in a suburb. There could be no
exercise, certainly not for big sweating fly
attracting smell-of-confinement-and-paddock-deprived
horses. Our stables have been left for
children.

2. MOUSE (for Richard)

Is there, looking at you
under a corner, outside an edge
is certainly there
 watching you, certainly watching
 your breakfast, the crumbs, your biscuit
is looking
 very close
to a mouse.
 You know him? Mouse with tail
very tiny mouse with tail and no-colour fur
with teeny teeny feet to make you open your mouth

4. KANGAROO (for Isabel)

Remember the little kangaroo you patted

he stayed there

you put out five fingers

to touch

remember little kangaroo brown and without fear

how quiet he was

how his nose

asked

if your fingers

held

something given.

The little kangaroo in other paddocks not far

is shot, hunted, his fur

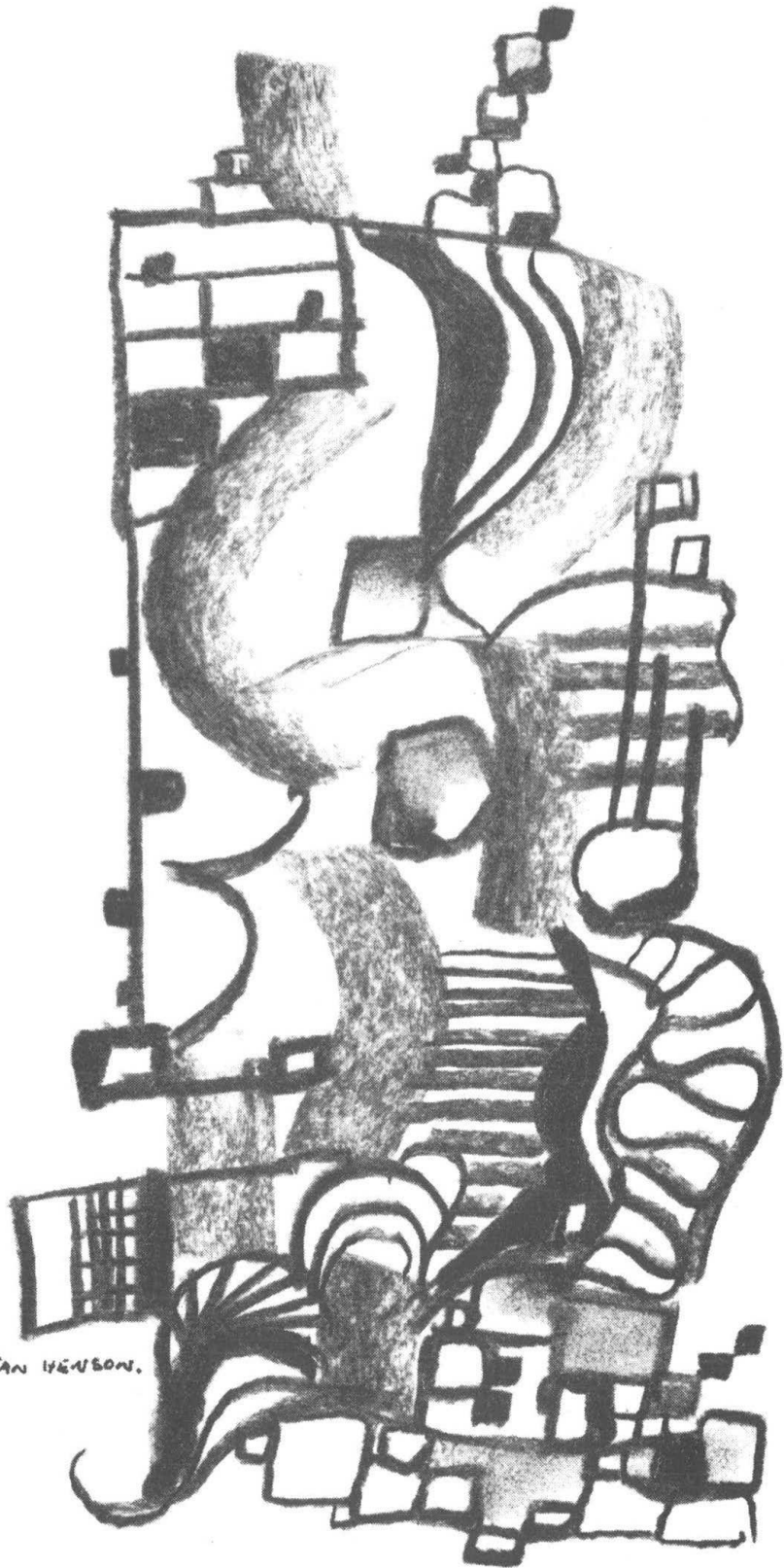
the souvenirs, his softness

marketed

for someone, for you,

for touch, Touch.

Touch.



JAN HENDON.