

# HABITAT artists' books

## *More Civilized Folk*

In these three stanzas, woven into a landscape, the artists explore the intersections and interactions of various ecologies and our human responses to the high desert environments where we reside.

Folio; woodcut, polymer plate relief, lithography



ARTIST:

**Mark E. Ritchie**

Laramie, WY

[markeritchie.com](http://markeritchie.com)

WRITER:

**Zach Hively**

Abiquiu, NM

[zachhively.com](http://zachhively.com)

### **Statement**

*More Civilized Folk* emerged from a shared sense of high-desert places, and from pint-worthy conversations about feeling at home in lands where we lack ancestral roots. The artists speculated various ideas of what belonging in a physical environment means as humans—ideas without clear beginnings or conclusions. An exchange of sketches, both written and drawn, between poet Zach Hively and visual artist Mark Ritchie engaged their common concerns for the intersections and interactions of various ecologies in their chosen homes. The collaborative results are a trio of stanzas (readable in any order) that speak to each other and flicker in prominence within a layered landscape, as words and visual relationships shift within the open and closed folio.

### **Artist's Biography**

Mark received the B.F.A. degree from the University of Kansas in 1986 and was awarded the M.F.A. degree in Printmaking from Indiana University in 1990. He resides in the windy solitude of Laramie, Wyoming where he teaches printmaking at the University of Wyoming and exhibits nationally and internationally. An exploration of “wild” and “domestic” through human-equine interactions and a consideration of tumbleweeds informs his most recent work in drawing and printmaking processes.

### **Writer's Biography**

Zach Hively writes poetry, music, and creative nonfiction. He is the author of the poetry books *Wild Expectations* and *Desert Apocrypha*, and the forthcoming humorous essay collection *Call Me Zach Hively Because That Is My Name*. He is the founder and publisher of Casa Urraca Press. His music with Oxygen on Embers is available on vinyl, CD, and wherever you stream your music. He lives near Abiquiu, New Mexico.

**Content of text included in artwork (stanzas can be read in any order)**

Creature of habit, inhabitant  
beast on land that doesn't need me  
doesn't feed me — I eat bread off trucks  
stomp scars in the crust, all the while  
hope hard to shrink my mark like a good boy

Who am I to think I must tread lightly?  
The goal among those of us who feel  
we self-appointed stooges of the campsite rule  
hold in our breath and hover over the dirt  
imagine the earth could forget we exist

Sometimes I wonder if my bones remember  
how to swing from trees until, until, until  
my feet turn to rocks and my arms to  
branches  
and my senses slip together into other shapes  
and more civilized folk can't tell the difference