

Fall 12-1-1984

Untitled

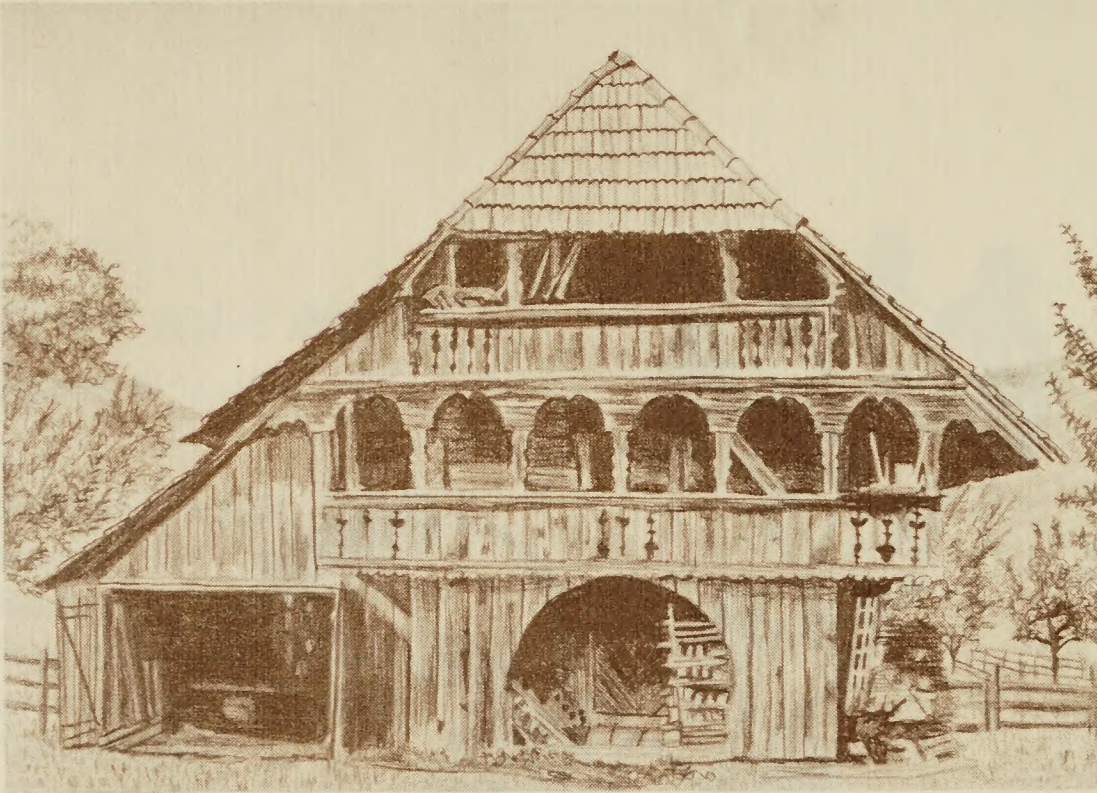
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Lisa Closterides

BELLE, THE HORSE ON THE HAY FORK

Ellen Hoffman

The barn sits on a knoll overlooking a pasture, like an old red hen, feathers ruffled and wings spread, as if protecting a nest full of baby chicks. The limestone foundation is gone, and vain attempts are made to contain its bulging bottom.

An old reliable team, pulling a load of hay, slowly makes its way up the bare sun-baked hill. Three-foot-high weeds skirt the worn machinery-trod trail where, several days before, a river of water had formed a foot-deep gully that weaved its way down the hill, past the machine shed, and through the gate below. The team, traces pulled tight, a horse on each side of the miniature canyon, slowly and faithfully bring the load up the steep incline. They plod across the yard, around to the shady east side of the barn and stop below the enormous gaping haymow-door.