

## BILL TAYLOR

*Occidental Overview, Church, 1981*  
Watercolor on paper, 24 x 18 in



COURTESY RISK PRESS GALLERY

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# Save Our Snap

Laura held the phone away from her ear and started scribbling a list of things she disliked—lima beans, people who talk during movies, the smell of disinfectant in restaurants. At the top of the list she wrote, “early morning phone calls from Connie” and drew two stars. She wasn’t sure when the best time would be to get a call from her sister, but the moment she got to work was definitely the wrong time.

“Slow down. I can’t understand what you’re saying. What happened? Is it Jeff? One of the boys?”

Connie sniffled. “It’s Snap. He’s not going to make it.”

“Snap?” Laura scanned her memory for a mention of that name. The family’s dog was Molly. When they were younger, her nephews had brought home snakes and various reptiles, but the terrariums had been empty for years.

“Haven’t you been watching? The bald eagle chicks in Minnesota.”

Laura held the phone away from her ear and made a hurry-up, circling gesture with her free hand, glad that her sister couldn’t see. She checked the time: 8:45. She had a meeting at 9:00. “Michael and I don’t watch much TV during the week.”

“It’s an eagle cam, not TV. Snap, Crackle and Pop hatched in February, but Snap’s not getting enough to eat. He may be stuck in the mud.”

“He’s not in a nest?”

“Of course he is. They haven’t fledged yet. The mud’s on the nest floor. Sometimes they need a little jiggle to get free, but the woman at the Raptor Wildlife Program claims it’s not their policy to intervene.”

“Makes sense.”

“It does not. We’re talking about letting a helpless chick starve to death while we stand by and watch.”

Laura knew better than to suggest Connie stop watching. Her sister’s causes were sacrosanct and any interference only provoked tears. She picked up the folder for the meeting. “I need to go. I’ll give you a call later.”

But Connie had more to say. “If Snap’s not better soon, I’m calling the governor. If I need to, I’ll hop on a plane to Minnesota and go see him.” Connie and Laura lived in California. Connie in San Luis Obispo and Laura a two-and-a-half-hour drive up the coast in Santa Cruz. This had always seemed like a good distance: close enough for holidays, but too far for casual visits.