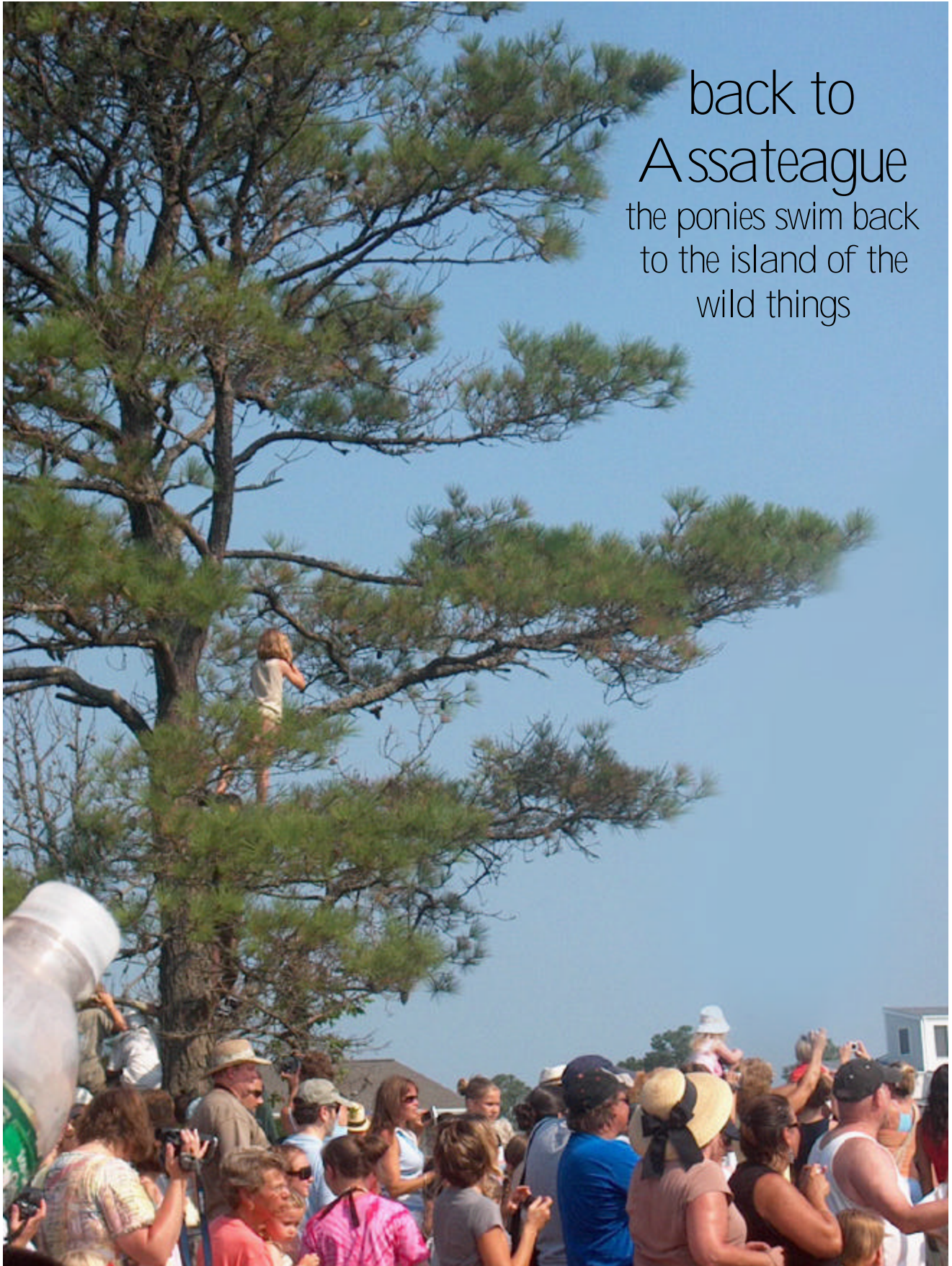


back to
Assateague
the ponies swim back
to the island of the
wild things







First page: return swim watchers crowd the banks of Assateague Channel, one in the branches of a loblolly. Opposite page: Boats line up to catch a closer look, you can see the thin stroke of the lighthouse on the treeline... viewers right along the ponies' path are contained behind an orange safety fence... the first outrider appears. One translation of Assateague is "outrider"; it's the outlying island, its dragon curve protecting the round egg shape of Chincoteague. Above: homemade hipwaders. Crabs and snails climb the pilings under the viewing dock. Below: kids amuse themselves with an impromptu seesaw.













Cracking their traditional bullwhips, with a sound like a shot, and splashes of spray, the saltwater cowboys drive the herd into the channel. Once there, they head for home, another year of freedom on the big island... or at least till they're rounded up briefly in the fall for maintenance (hoof-trimming and such). Next page, bottom: a bay swaybacked mare and a black colt with white stockings turn back to Chincoteague while cowboys trade horses for boats to keep the herd on track. Or most of it, at least.

















Riders return through a marsh puddle. Below: prints on Pony Swim Lane. Next page: the black colt and the bay swaybacked mare back in the pen at the Carnival Grounds.



