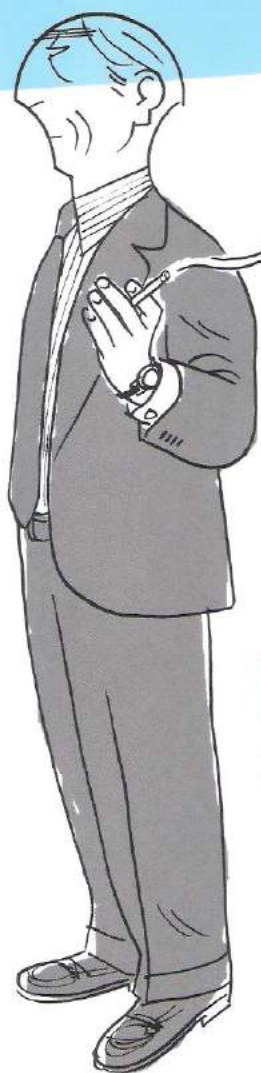


Asterios



DAVID MAZZUCHELLI

Foupp





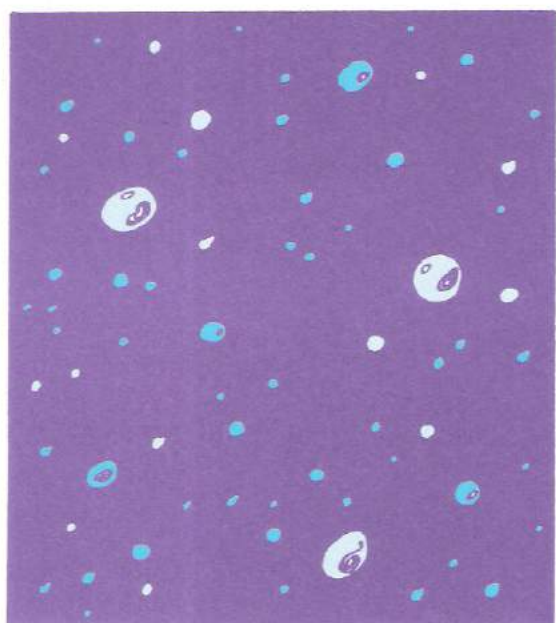
# Asterios

DAVID MAZZUCHELLI



PANTHEON BOOKS  
NEW YORK

# Polyp

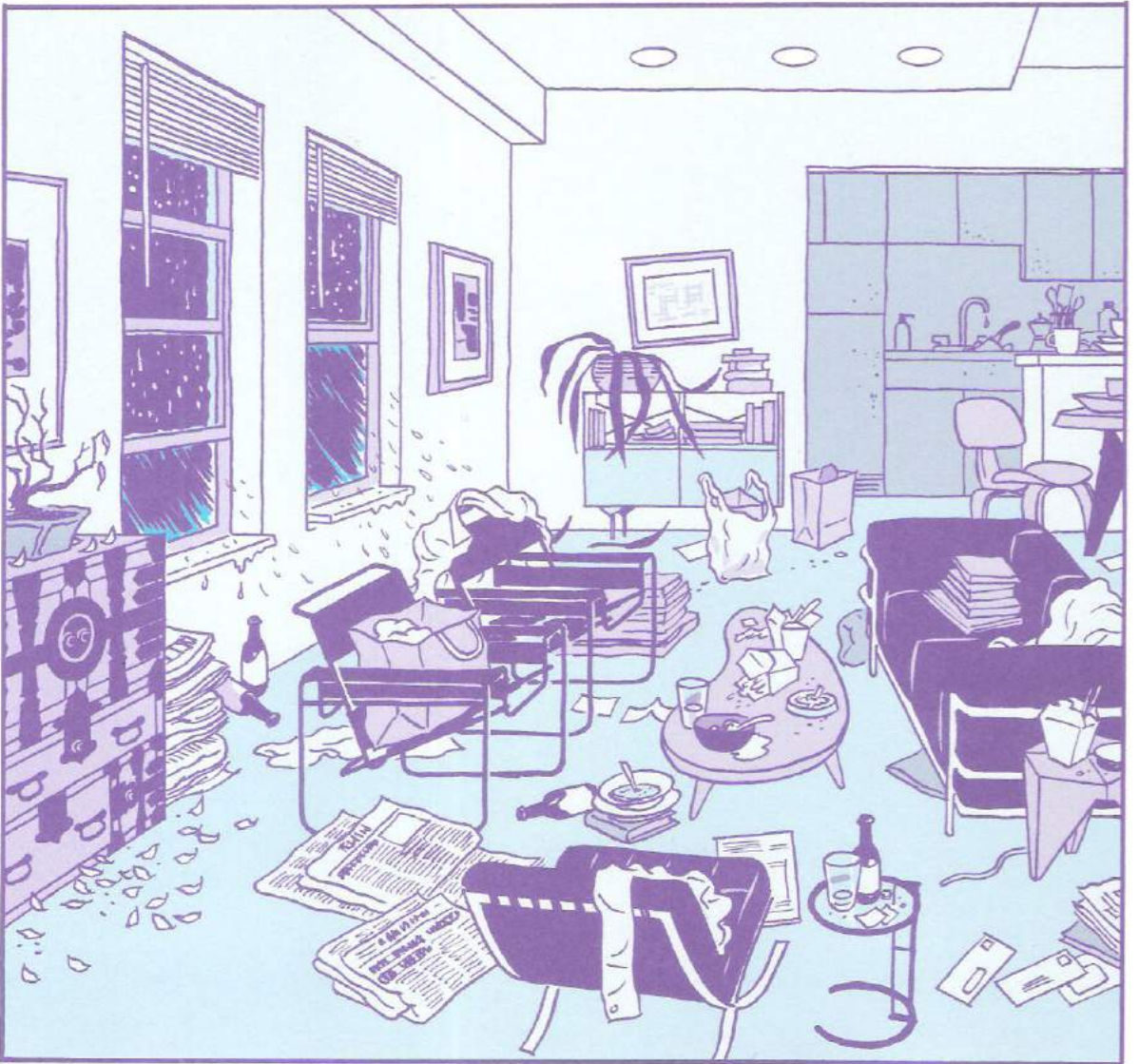
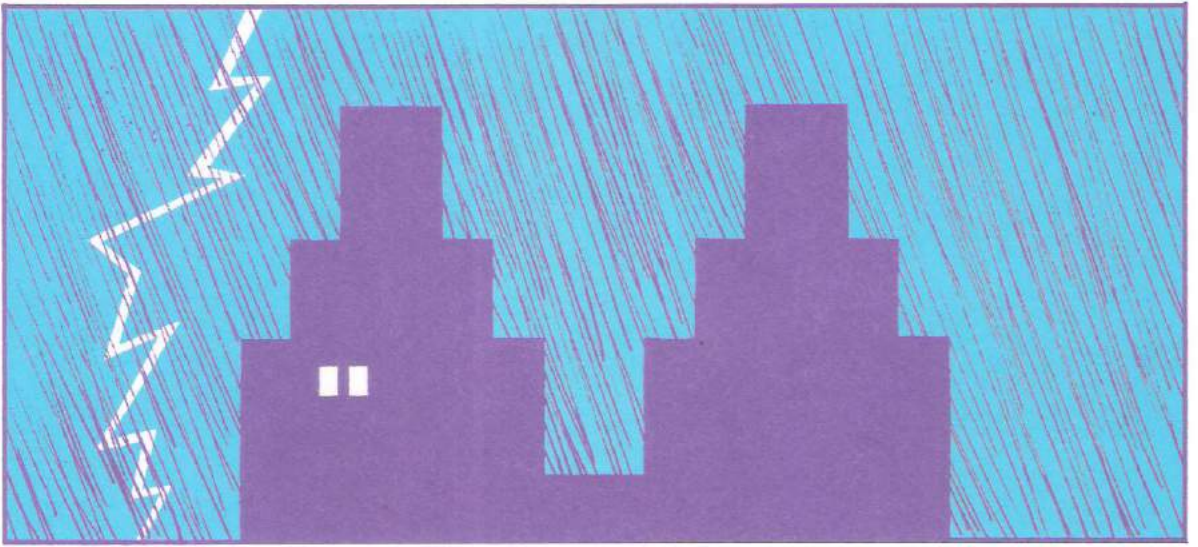


















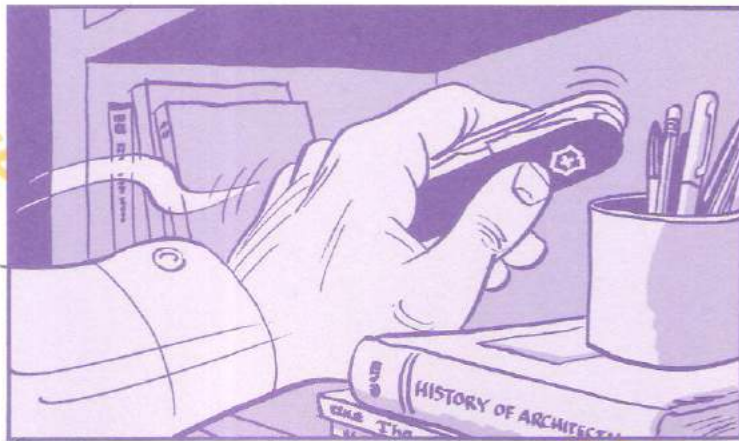
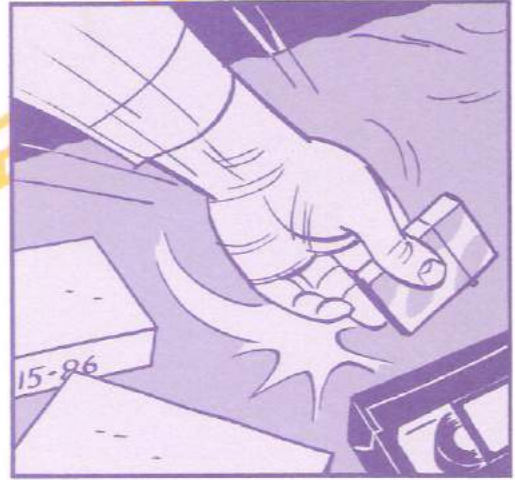


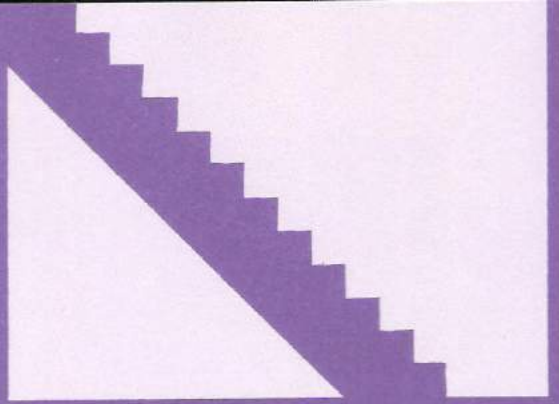












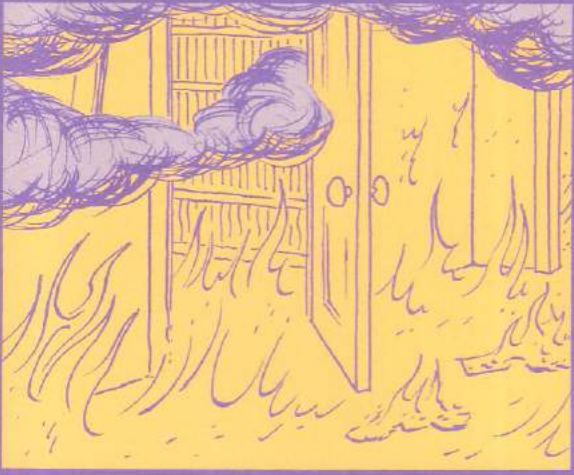
















# THIS

IF IT WERE POSSIBLE FOR  
ME TO NARRATE THIS  
STORY, I'D BEGIN HERE.

IS ASTERIOS POLYP.

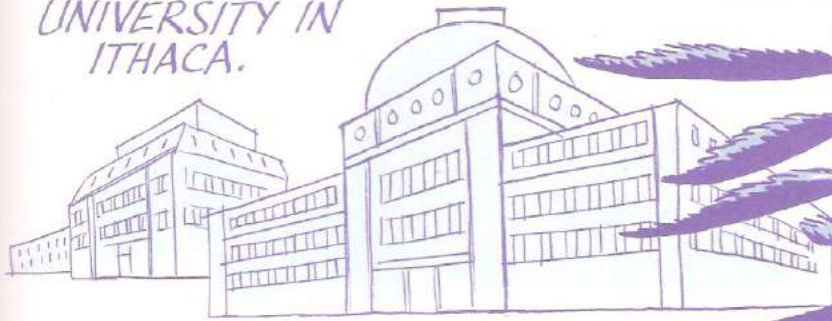


RIGHT NOW,  
HE'S WATCHING  
HIS HOME  
BURN UP.

TODAY - COINCIDENTALLY -  
ALSO HAPPENS TO BE HIS  
FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY.



ASTERIOS LIVED IN THIS MANHATTAN APARTMENT FOR ALMOST TWO DECADES, BUT UNTIL SEVEN YEARS AGO HE SPENT MOST OF HIS TIME UPSTATE, TEACHING AT A UNIVERSITY IN ITHACA.



HE WAS A TENURED PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE - A POSITION BUTTRESSED BY HIS RENOWN AS A "PAPER ARCHITECT."

THAT IS TO SAY, HE WAS AN ESTEEMED ARCHITECT WHOSE REPUTATION RESTED ON HIS DESIGNS, RATHER THAN ON THE BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED FROM THEM.

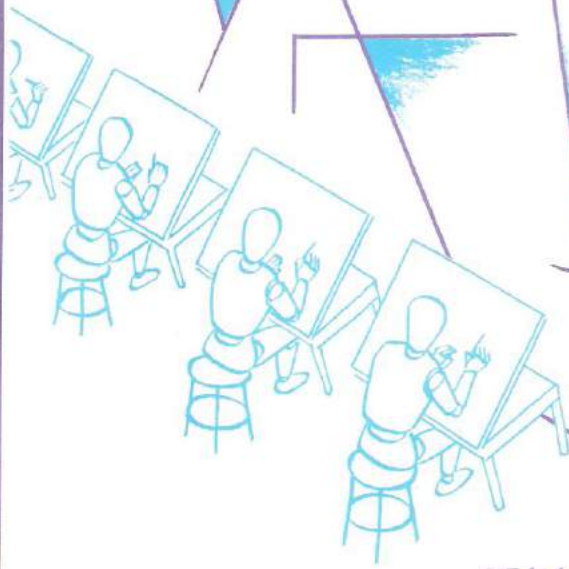
IN FACT, NONE OF HIS DESIGNS HAD EVER BEEN BUILT.



NONETHELESS, HE HAD WON NUMEROUS COMPETITIONS AND AWARDS, ENOUGH TO HAVE EARNED HIM A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL CAREER.



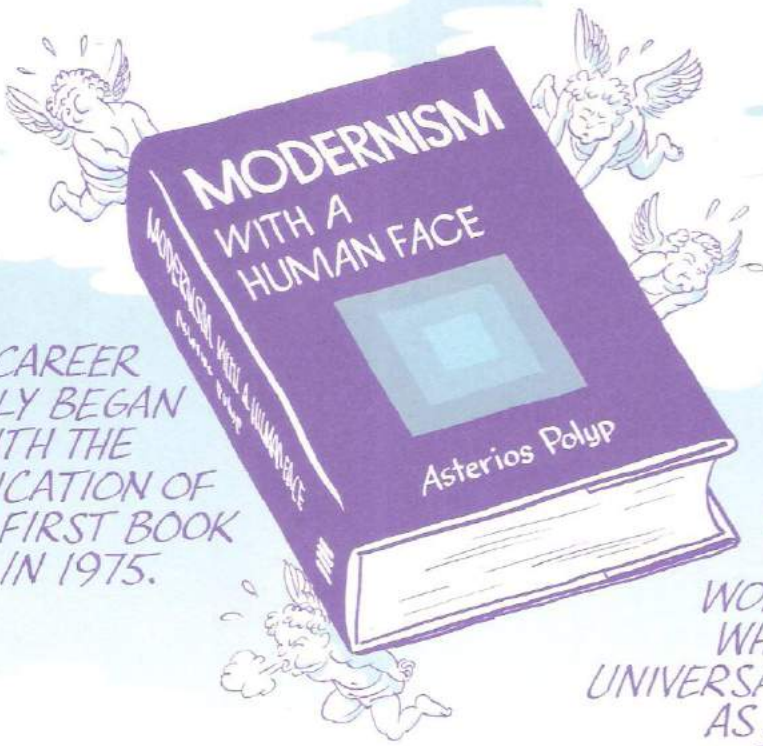
HE TAUGHT BECAUSE HE ENJOYED THE INTELLECTUAL ENVIRONMENT.



IT WAS AT THE UNIVERSITY THAT HE MET HIS WIFE.







HIS CAREER  
REALLY BEGAN  
WITH THE  
PUBLICATION OF  
HIS FIRST BOOK  
IN 1975.

IT WAS  
BASED ON HIS  
GRADUATE  
WORK AT OXFORD,  
WHERE HE WAS  
UNIVERSALLY REGARDED  
AS A BRILLIANT  
STUDENT.

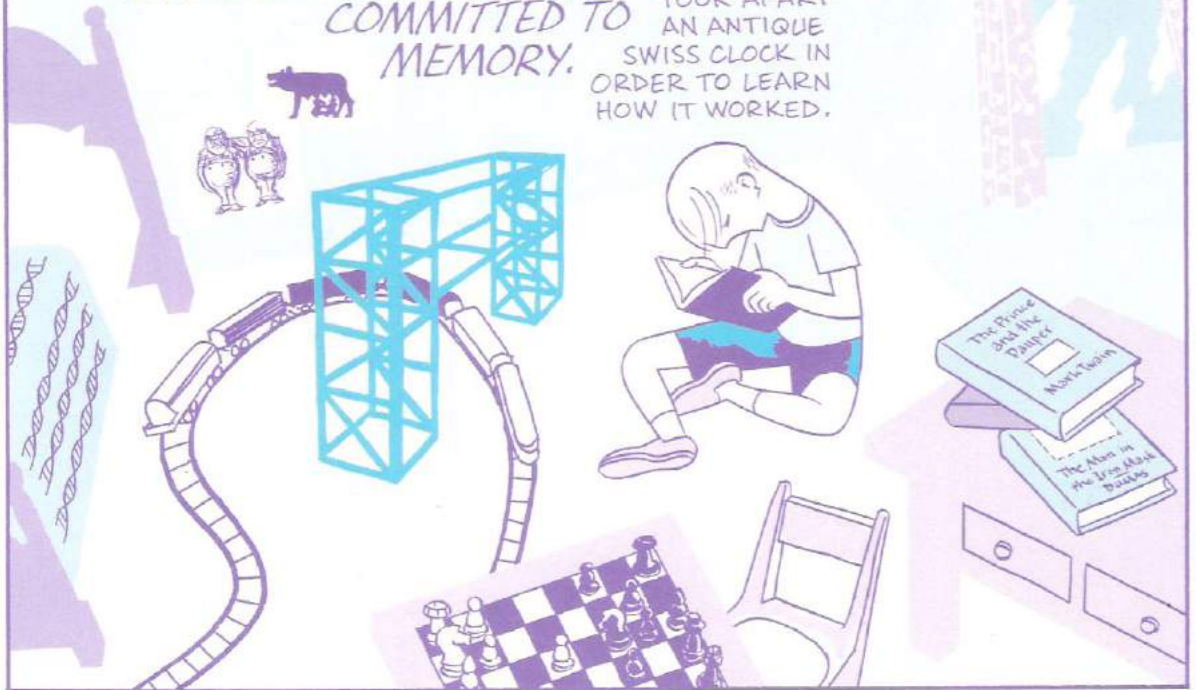
IT HAD BEEN  
THE SAME  
AT  
HARVARD,



AND IN HIGH  
SCHOOL BEFORE  
THAT.

AS A BOY HE HAD A VORACIOUS  
CURIOSITY, AND PRACTICALLY  
EVERYTHING HE READ, HE  
COMMITTED TO  
MEMORY.

AT FOUR, HE  
TOOK APART  
AN ANTIQUE  
SWISS CLOCK IN  
ORDER TO LEARN  
HOW IT WORKED.



HIS FATHER, DR. EUGENIOS POLYP, HAD  
IMMIGRATED AS A CHILD WITH HIS  
FAMILY IN 1919.

AN EXASPERATED ELLIS  
ISLAND OFFICIAL HAD  
CUT THE FAMILY NAME  
IN HALF, LEAVING  
ONLY THE FIRST  
FIVE LETTERS.



EUGENIOS  
MARRIED  
A HOPEFUL  
YOUNG GIRL  
NAMED  
AGLIA OLIO,  
AND ON  
JUNE 22, 1950,

AFTER A PAINFUL, THIRTY-THREE-  
HOUR LABOR, AGLIA GAVE BIRTH BY  
CESAREAN SECTION TO IDENTICAL TWINS.

HER HUSBAND DEFERRED  
TO THE EXPERT IN  
OBSTETRICS.



ONE WAS ALIVE,



THE OTHER DEAD.

THE LIVING ONE  
WAS NAMED  
ASTERIOS.

THE DEAD ONE  
WOULD HAVE  
BEEN CALLED  
IGNAZIO.



THAT'S ME.

AND NOW  
(FIFTY YEARS LATER),  
ASTERIOS IS STANDING  
IN THE RAIN, WATCHING HIS  
HOME BURN UP,  
THINKING ONE  
THING:





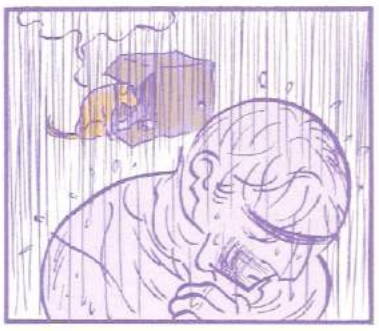




SO I'VE GOT IT  
"ZITO VA/MO"!!



...AND THEN THEY'RE  
COMPLAINING THAT NOBODY  
READ THEIR MINDS  
BEFORE THEY WERE BORN







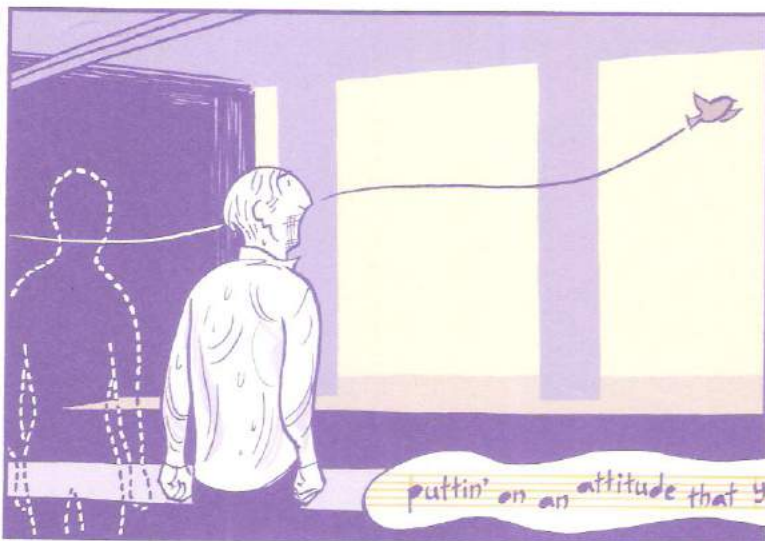




...slidin' down the aqueduct, swimmin' in the gene pool,  
you wanna do the job right, get the right tool.



Splittin' me in two with a smile so Euclidean,

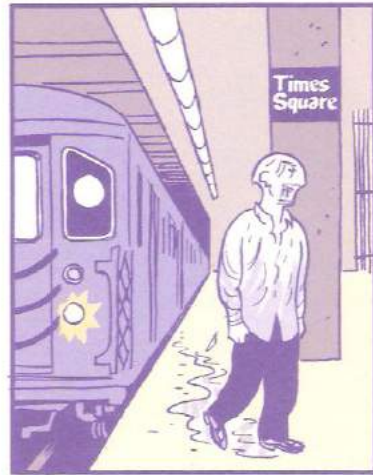


puttin' on an attitude that you can look pretty in.

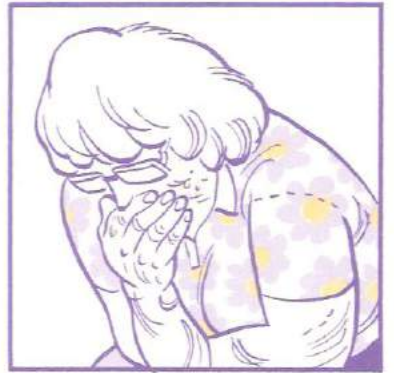


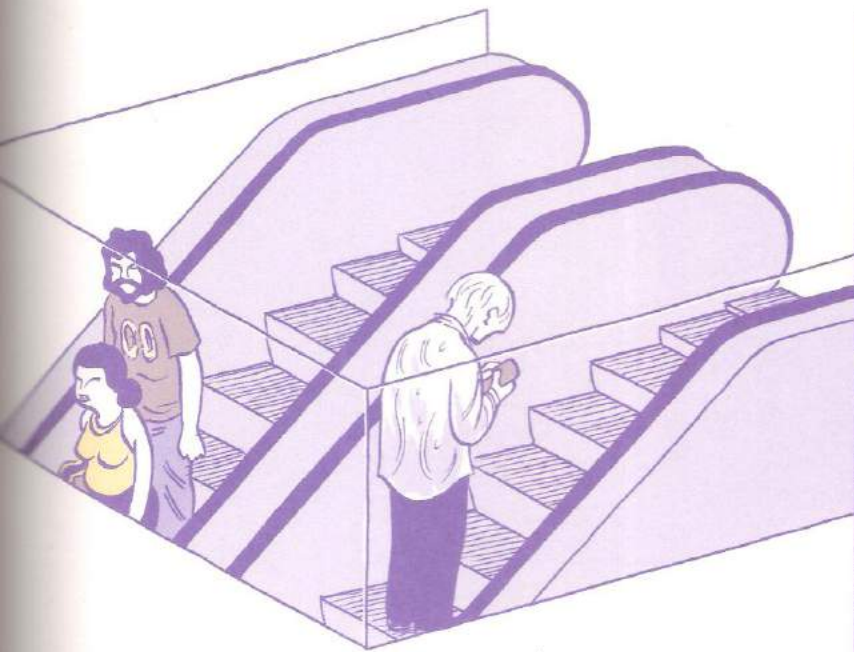












HOW FAR WOULD THIS TAKE ME?

GREYHOUND











THAT MIGHT  
EXPLAIN WHY  
SOME PEOPLE  
SEEM TO GET  
ALONG SO  
EFFORTLESSLY,

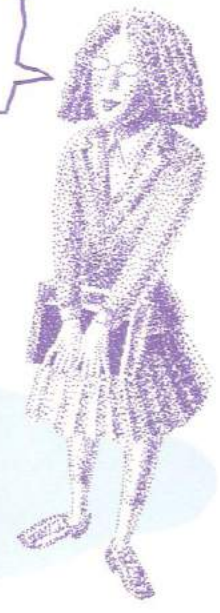
WHILE  
OTHERS  
DON'T.



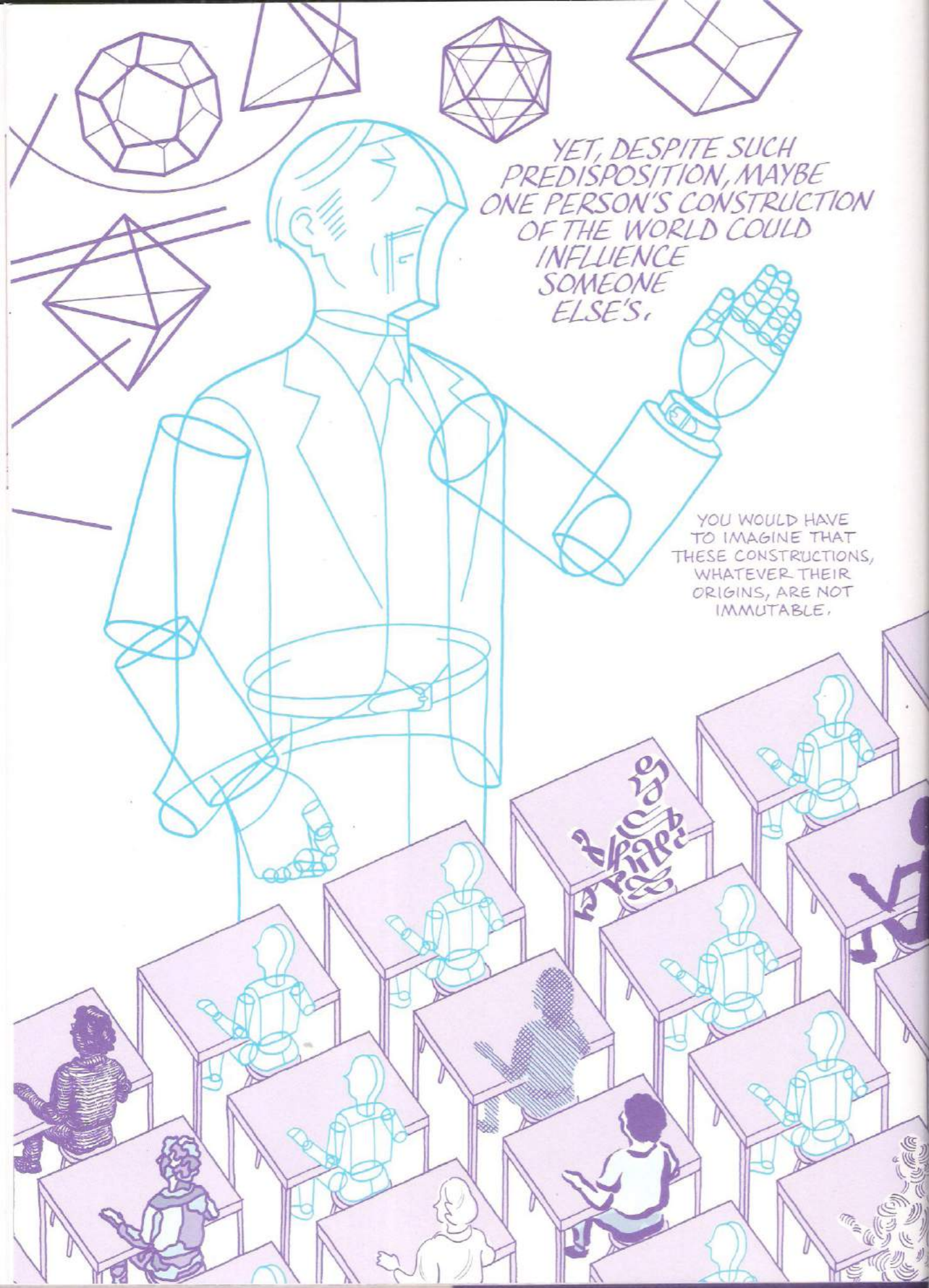
Hello  
ALOHA SHALOM



ALTHOUGH  
PEOPLE DO KEEP  
TRYING.







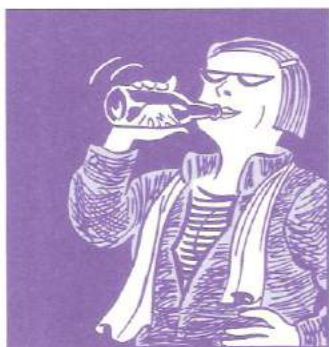
YET, DESPITE SUCH  
PREDISPOSITION, MAYBE  
ONE PERSON'S CONSTRUCTION  
OF THE WORLD COULD  
INFLUENCE  
SOMEONE  
ELSE'S.

YOU WOULD HAVE  
TO IMAGINE THAT  
THESE CONSTRUCTIONS,  
WHATEVER THEIR  
ORIGINS, ARE NOT  
IMMUTABLE.

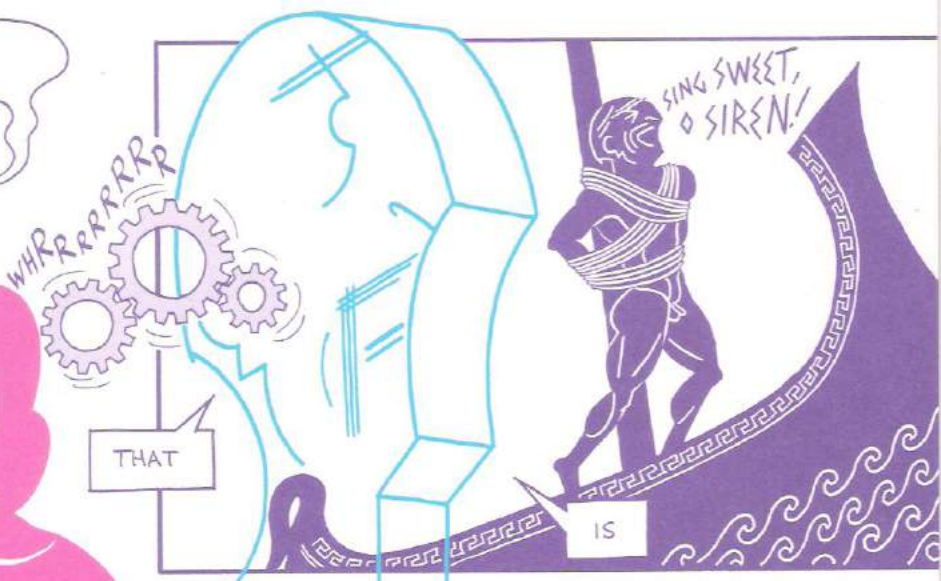


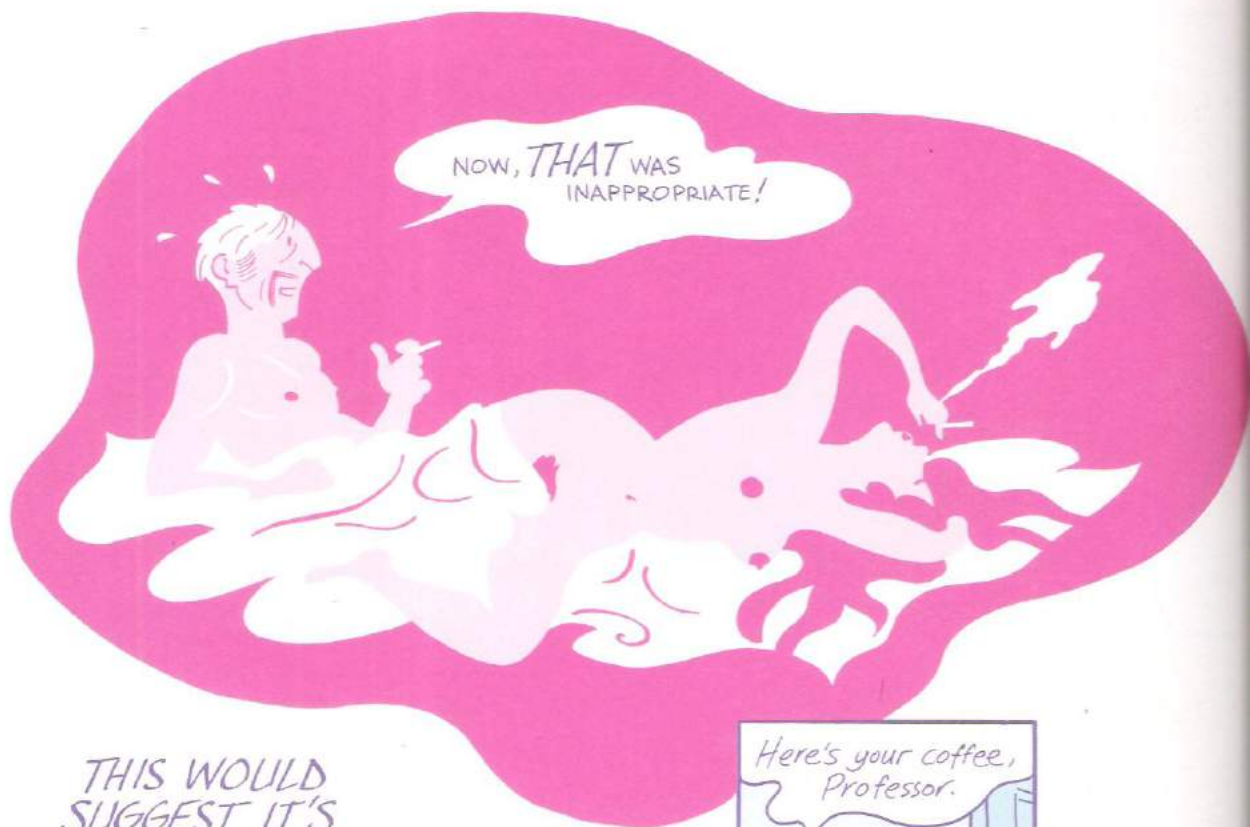












THIS WOULD SUGGEST IT'S POSSIBLE FOR SOMEONE TO FREELY ALTER HIS OWN PERCEPTION OF REALITY IN ORDER TO OVERLAP WITH THAT OF ANOTHER.

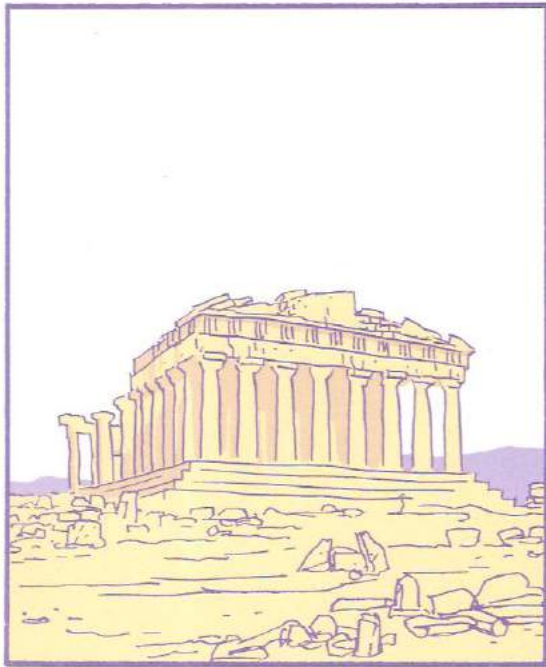
THIS CHOICE MIGHT BE SEEN AS A REFLECTION- AND NOT NECESSARILY A RESULT- OF ONE'S GENETIC ARCHITECTURE.



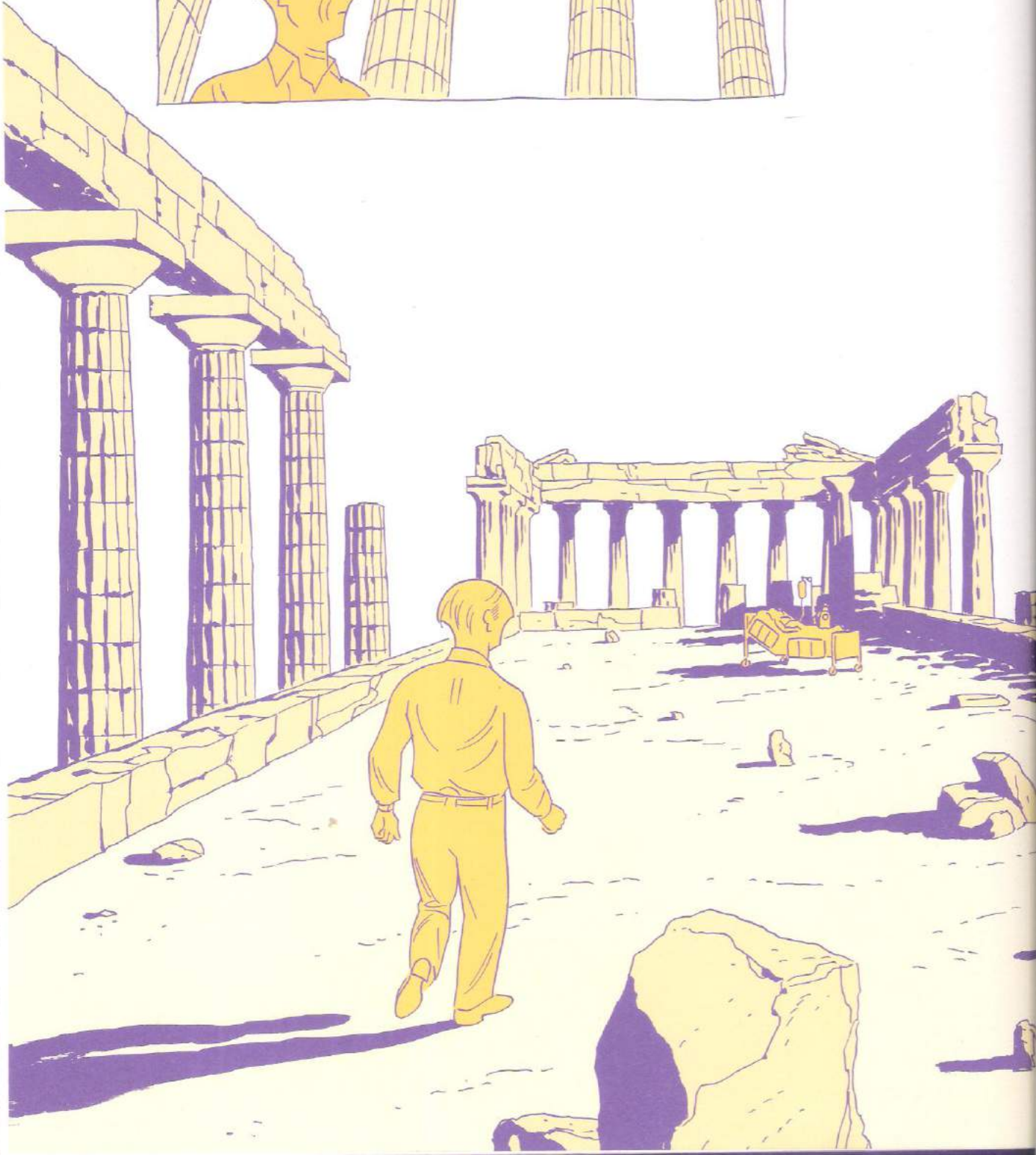


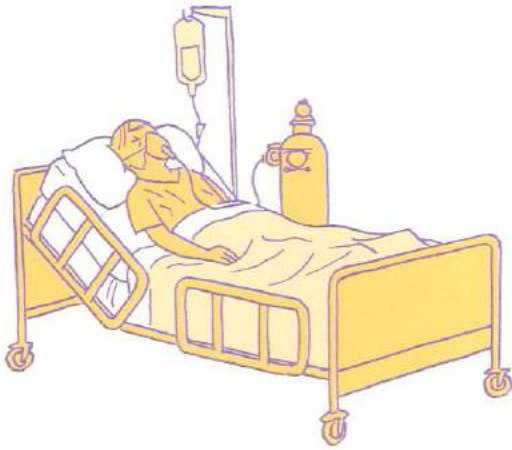


WOULDN'T  
THAT BE  
NICE?

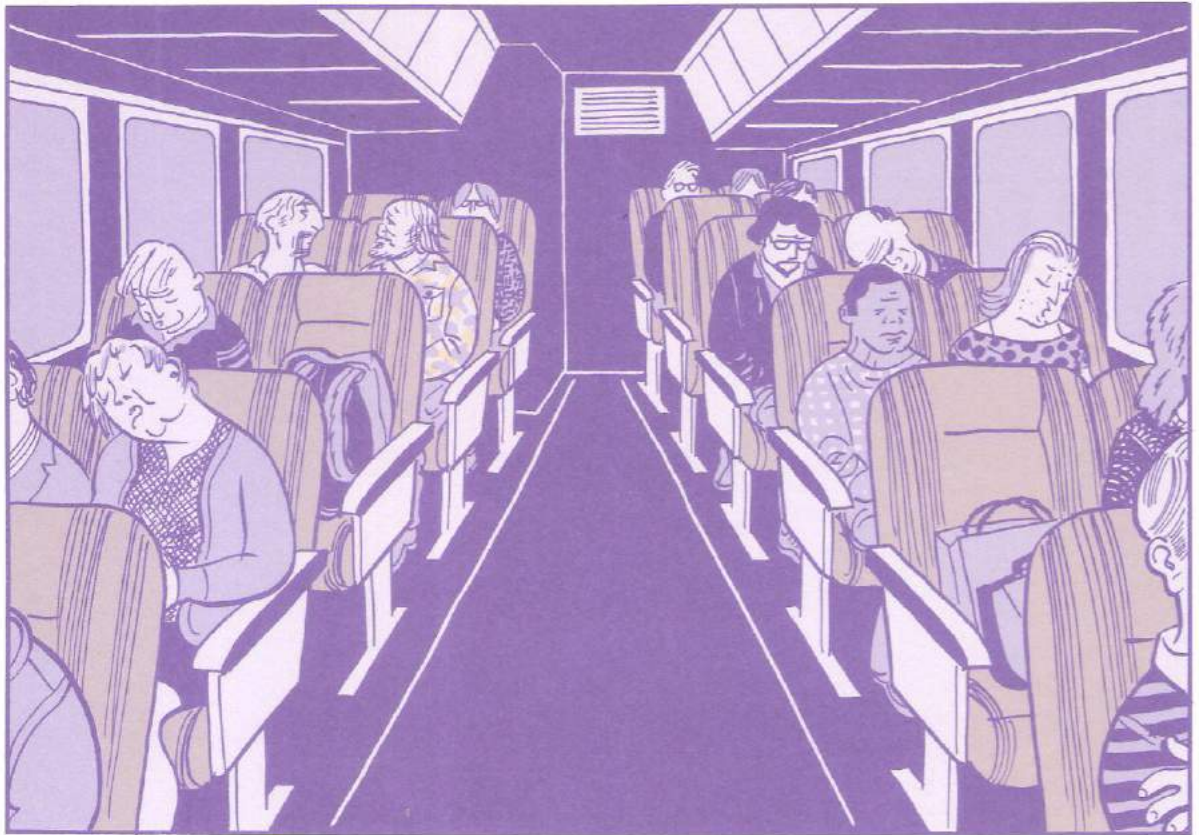




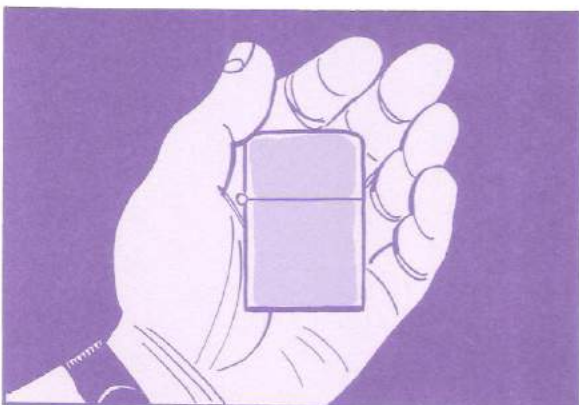




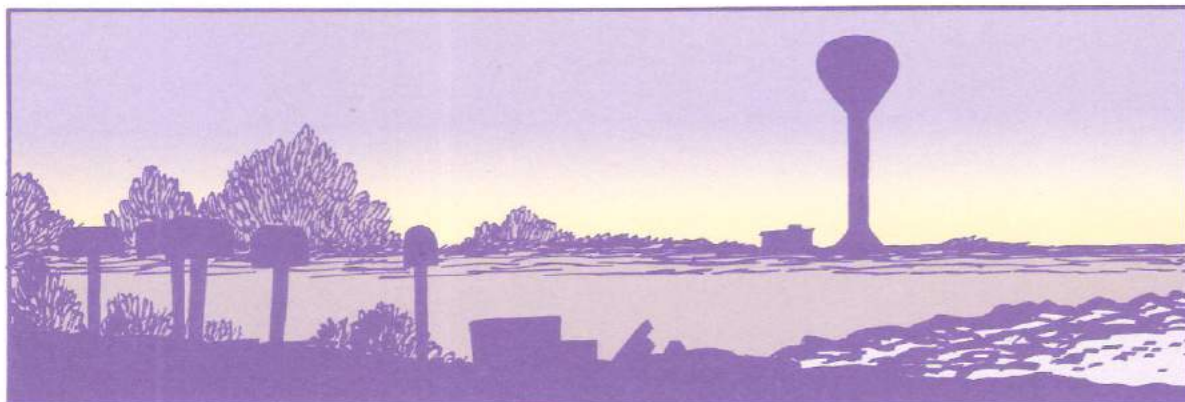




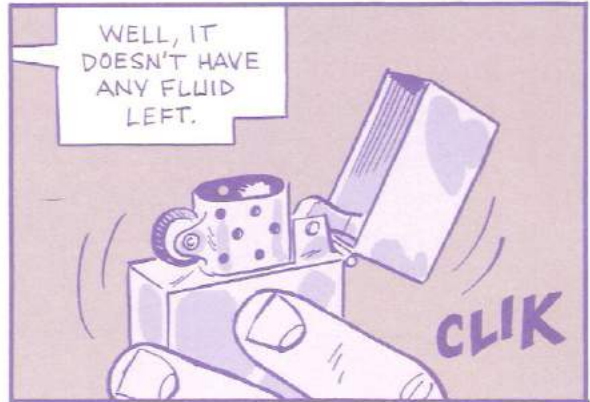




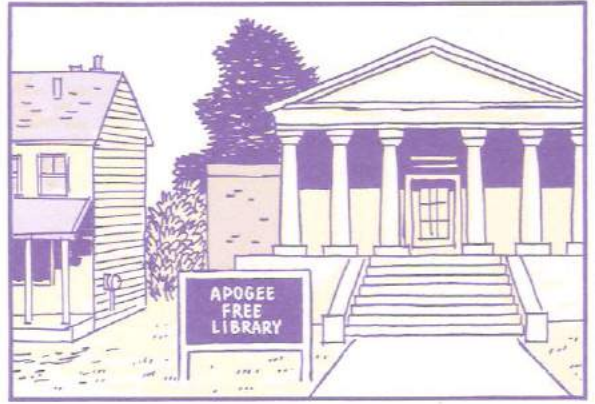


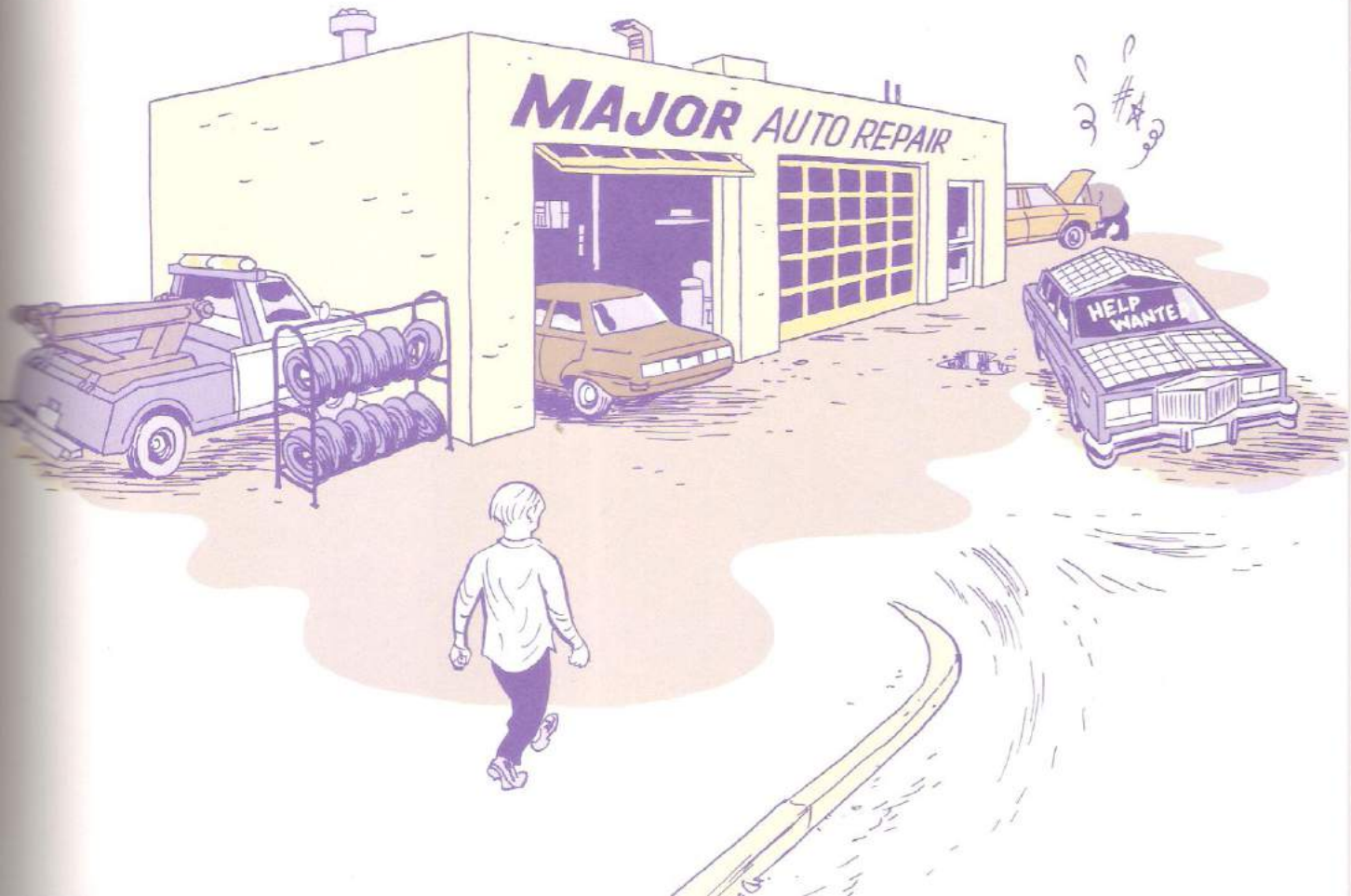






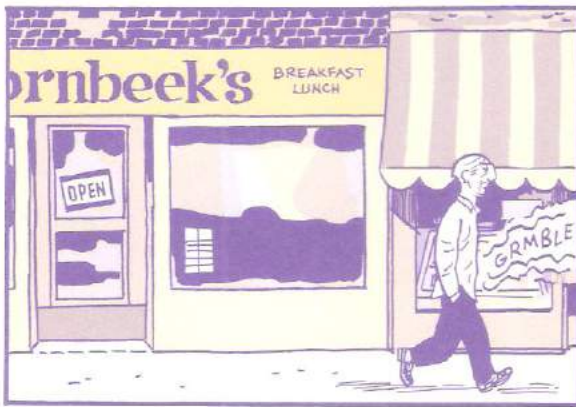
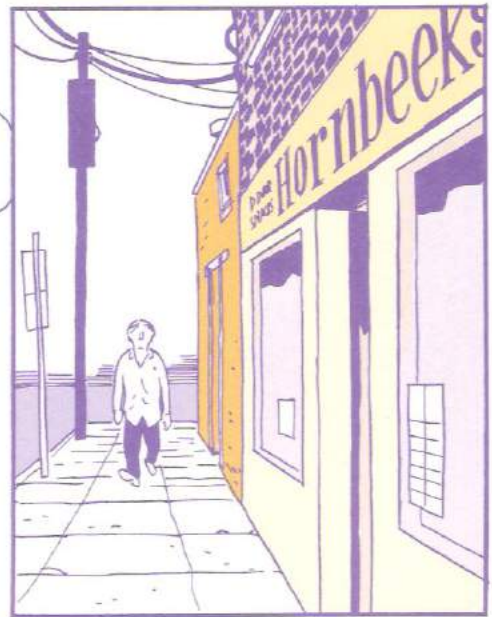
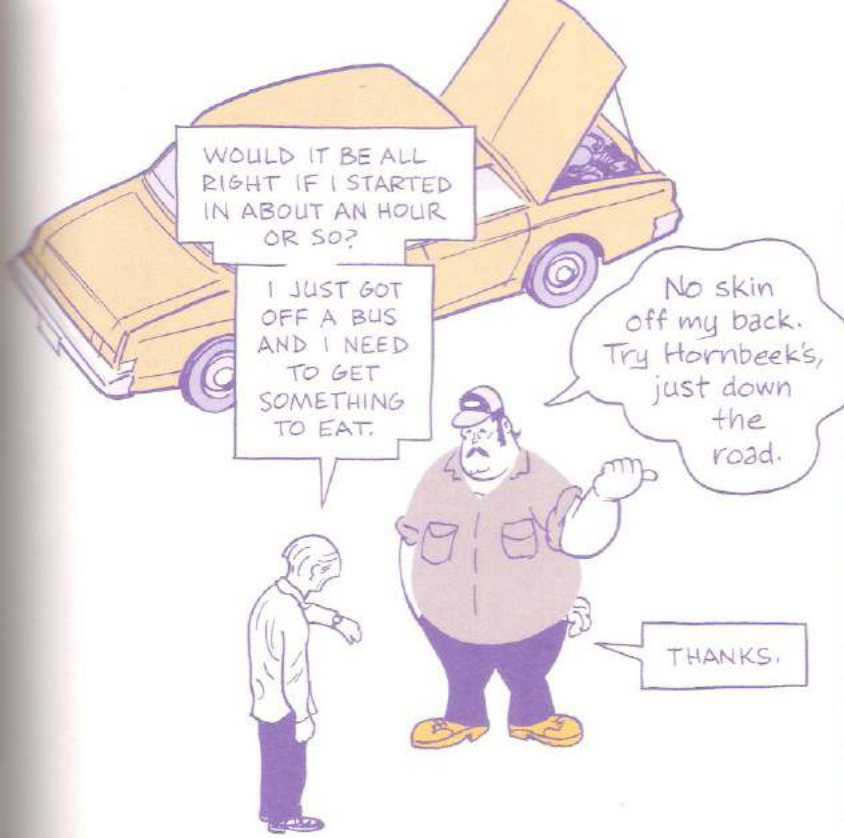




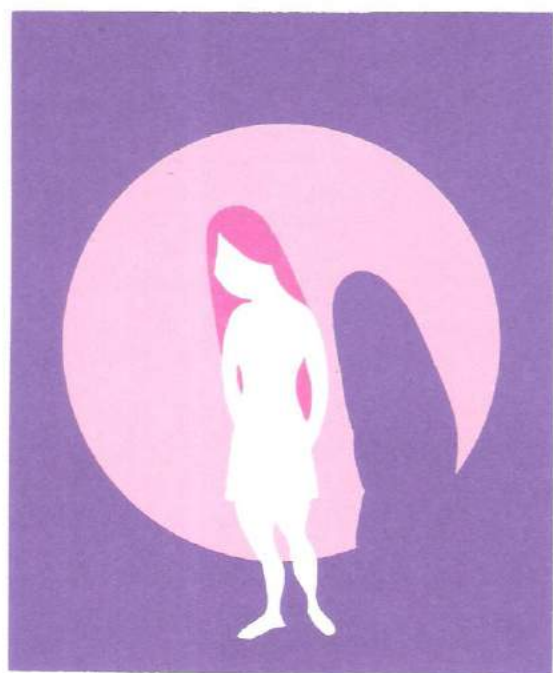












**AT** A FACULTY PARTY IN 1984, ASTERIOS WAS REGALING THE ASSEMBLY WITH HIS INSIGHT INTO COMMUNICATION,



HIS UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR,



AND HIS SENSITIVITY.



HE WAS QUITE CAPABLE OF HOLDING FORTH ON A VARIETY OF TOPICS.





HE TOOK IT UPON HIMSELF TO GREET THE NEW ARRIVAL,



AND TO MAKE HER FEEL WELCOME.





HANA'S FATHER, LIEUTENANT ERNST SONNENSCHNEIN, WAS MARRIED WHILE STATIONED OUTSIDE TOKYO IN 1948.

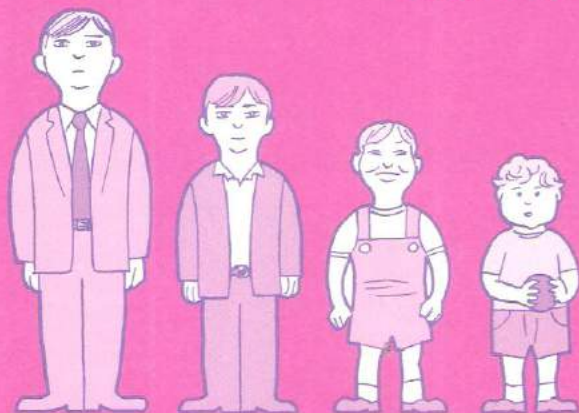
HE COULDN'T SPEAK A WORD OF JAPANESE.



HIS WIFE, MUTSUKO, WAS THE DAUGHTER OF A PROUD WAR VETERAN WHO LATER TOOK HIS OWN LIFE FOR FAILING TO PROPERLY PROTECT HIS COUNTRY.



UNMARRIED AT TWENTY-SIX, SHE WAS ALREADY CONSIDERED AN OLD MAID.



MUTSUKO SONNENSCHNEIN BORE FOUR SONS IN FIVE YEARS.

SHE QUICKLY MADE UP FOR LOST TIME.

IT WAS ANOTHER SIX YEARS BEFORE SHE DELIVERED HANA.

PREMATURE BY A MONTH, HER MOTHER NEVER LET HER FORGET HOW SHE HAD SPOILED AN ELABORATELY PLANNED DINNER PARTY.



GERMAN AND JAPANESE? WHERE DID YOUR PARENTS MEET - AT AN AXIS POWERS REUNION?

Actually, my father was born in Minnesota.





HANA WAS A HAPPY CHILD WHO SPENT A LOT OF TIME ALONE.



HER PARENTS SEEMED CONTENT TO LET HER DO WHATEVER SHE WANTED.





HANA ATTENDED A PRESTIGIOUS COLLEGE OF ART IN RHODE ISLAND ON A SCHOLARSHIP. HER PARENTS, THINKING A COLLEGE FULL EDUCATION UNNECESSARY FOR A GIRL, ALLOWED ONLY THIS COURSE OF STUDY... SHIP.



ALTHOUGH SHE WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY STUDENT, SHE ALWAYS WORRIED ABOUT BEING THE WORST IN THE CLASS.



...NOT REALIZING THAT ART WAS THE ONLY THING SHE EVER WANTED TO STUDY.

SHE HAD A FEW BOYFRIENDS, BUT ONLY BECAUSE THEY SOUGHT HER OUT.

SHE WORKED SO HARD, SHE HAD LITTLE TIME FOR A SOCIAL LIFE.

AFTER FOUR OUTSTANDING YEARS, SHE WAS CHOSEN TO DELIVER THE VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

SHE DECLINED BECAUSE SHE WAS TOO SHY TO SPEAK IN THE CROWDED AUDITORIUM.



PROVIDENCE? THE CITY THAT ALWAYS SLEEPS?

I liked it.





TO PAY FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL IN NEW YORK, HANA DESIGNED STORE WINDOWS.



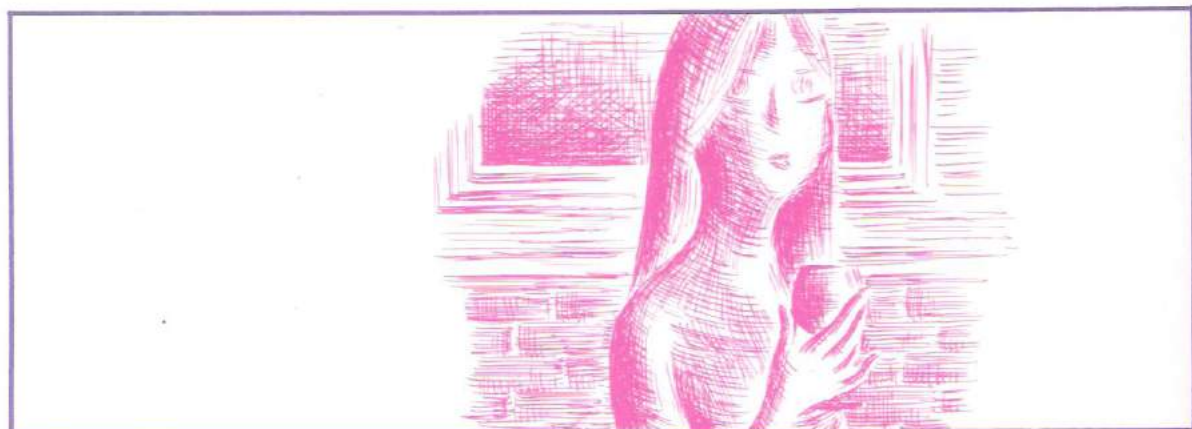
MAKING THINGS CAME EASILY, BUT SHE HAD ALMOST IMPOSSIBLY HIGH STANDARDS.



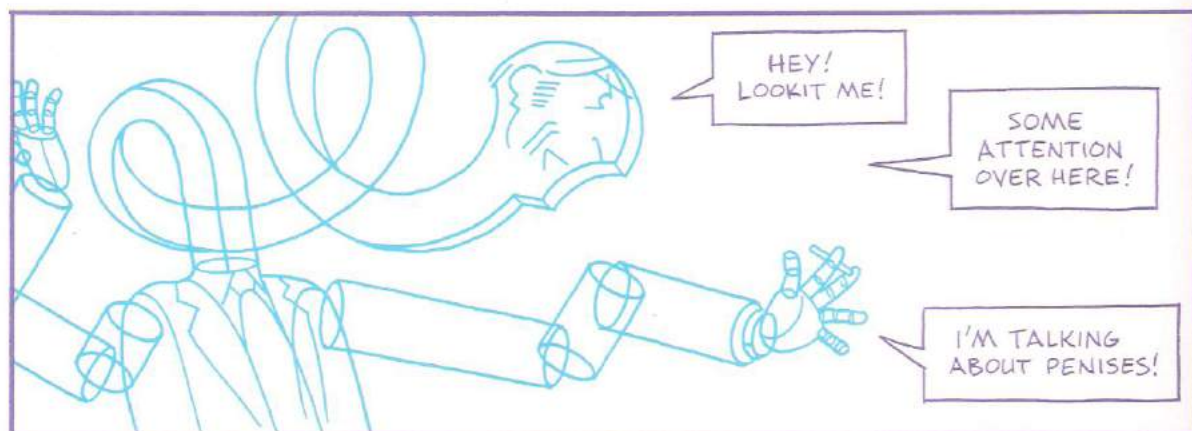
IN 1984, HANA SONNENSCHN EIN ATTENDED  
HER FIRST FACULTY PARTY.



SHE DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE THERE,

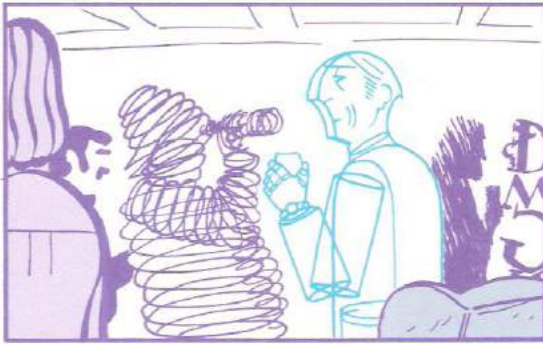


BUT ONE PERSON CAUGHT HER EYE.



DON'T ASK ME TO  
EXPLAIN THESE THINGS.



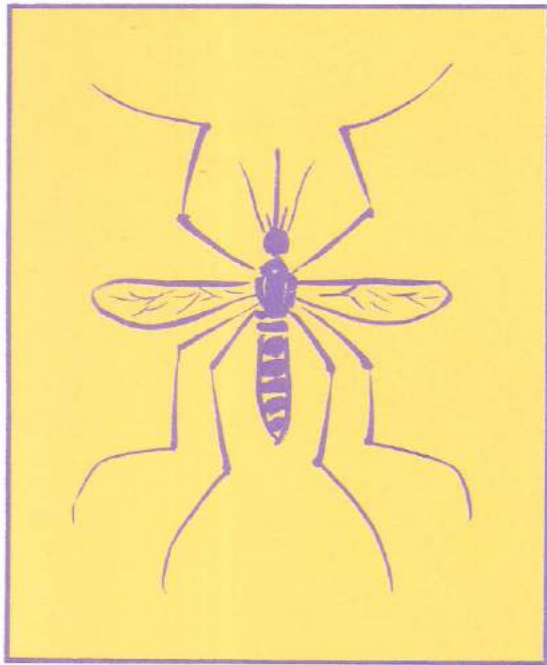


AND WHEN HE CAME  
OVER TO INTRODUCE  
HIMSELF,

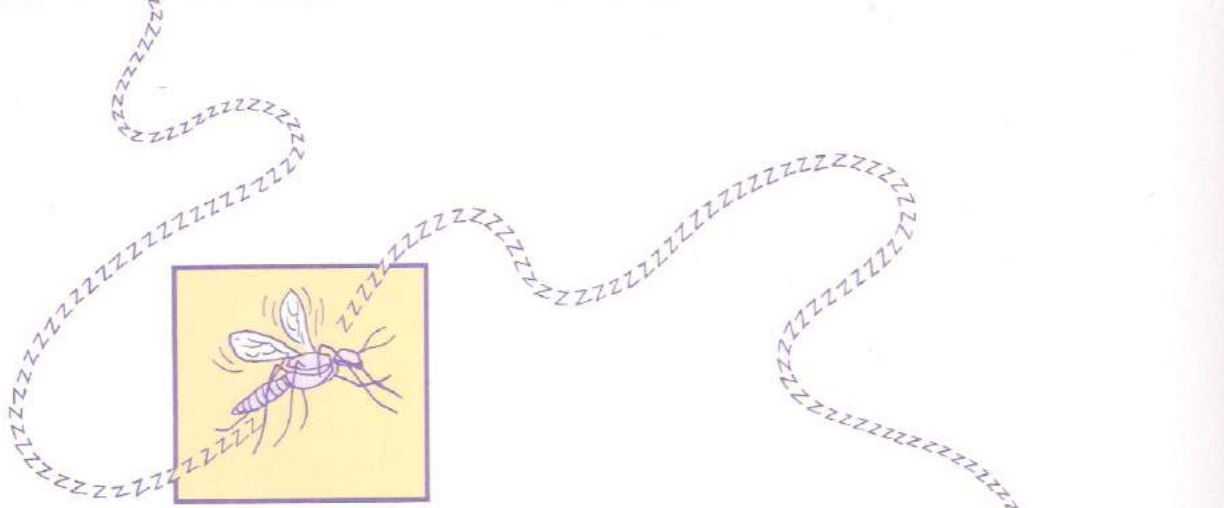


SHE FELT SHE WAS STARING  
STRAIGHT INTO THE SPOTLIGHT.

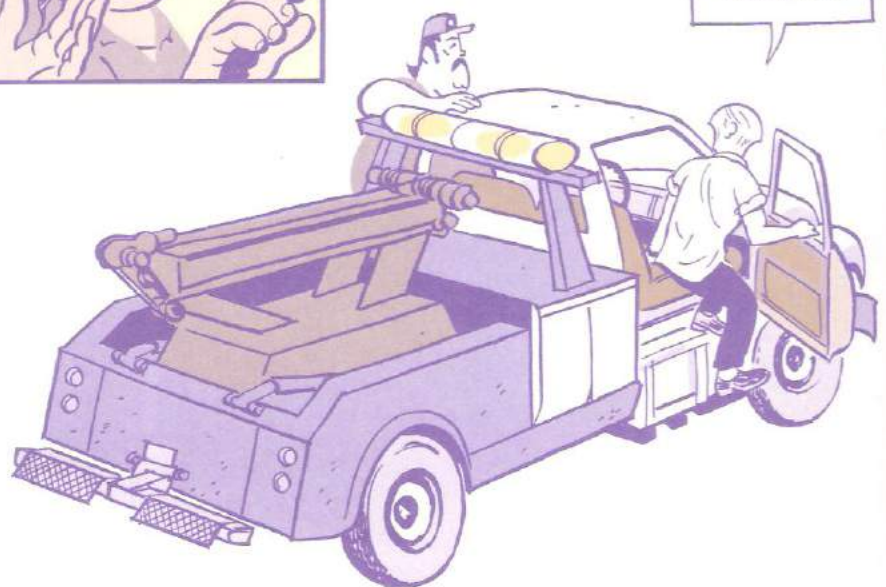
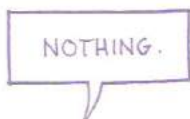








SMACK







We had some flooding.













HOW COULD YOU GO  
AND RENT THAT ROOM WITHOUT  
DISCUSSING IT WITH ME  
FIRST? DON'T YOU THINK











ALL THE OBSERVATORIES, THEY HAVE THEIR TELESCOPES FOCUSED ON DEEP SPACE - THEY'RE NOT PAYING ATTENTION TO WHAT'S HAPPENING RIGHT HERE!



SOMEBODY'S GOTTA BE PREPARED. SOMEBODY'S GOTTA BE ON THE LOOKOUT. WE DON'T WANNA END UP JUST LIKE THE DINOSAURS!



The dinosaurs?



MR. DRIZZLE IS REFERRING TO THE ALVAREZ HYPOTHESIS, FIRST PROPOSED IN 1980, AND NOW RATHER WIDELY ACCEPTED.



IT SUPPOSES THAT A COMET -OR AN ASTEROID- ABOUT FIVE MILES WIDE STRUCK NEAR YUCATÁN SIXTY-FIVE MILLION YEARS AGO.



THE EXPLOSIVE IMPACT SENT ENOUGH DUST AND SOOT INTO THE ATMOSPHERE TO BLOCK OUT THE SUN AND CREATE A TOXIC ACID RAIN...



... A DEADLY COMBINATION FOR PLANT LIFE, AS WELL AS EVERYTHING ELSE UP THE FOOD CHAIN.

FORTUNATELY FOR US, A COMET THAT SIZE COLLIDES WITH THE EARTH MAYBE ONCE IN A HUNDRED MILLION YEARS.



BUT THE SKY IS FILLED WITH SUCH THINGS. THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF SMALLER ASTEROIDS WHOSE ORBITS CROSS OURS.



IN FACT, A METEOR THE SIZE OF A GRAPEFRUIT - IF IT DOESN'T SKID OFF THE ATMOSPHERE - LANDS SOMEWHERE ON THE PLANET ALMOST EVERY DAY.



EVEN THE DUST ON THIS COUNTER CONTAINS MINUTE FRAGMENTS OF DEBRIS LEFT OVER FROM THE FORMATION OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM.



"Here's your coffee, 'Professor.'"

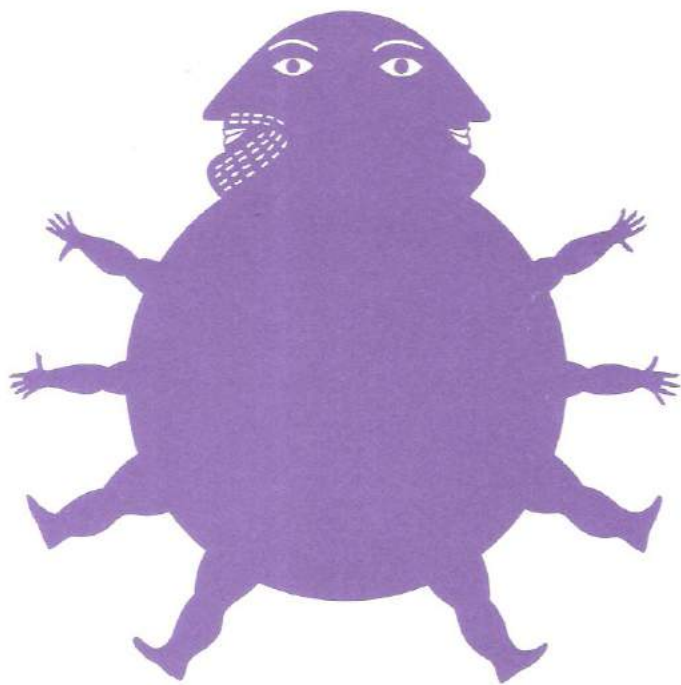


I GOTTA GO.

...damn flies...





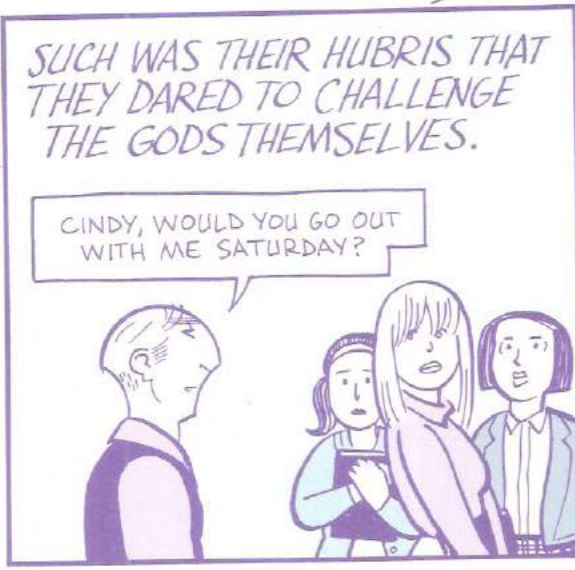


# ARISTOPHANES, IN PLATO'S "SYMPOSIUM," IS PURPORTED TO SUGGEST THAT HUMAN FORM WAS NOT ALWAYS AS IT IS TODAY:

ORIGINALLY, HUMANS WERE SPHERICAL, WITH FOUR ARMS, FOUR LEGS, AND TWO FACES ON EITHER SIDE OF A SINGLE HEAD.



IN EVOLUTIONARY TERMS, IT'S HARD TO SEE THE ADVANTAGE OF THIS CONSTRUCTION.



SUCH WAS THEIR HUBRIS THAT THEY DARED TO CHALLENGE THE GODS THEMSELVES.

CINDY, WOULD YOU GO OUT WITH ME SATURDAY?

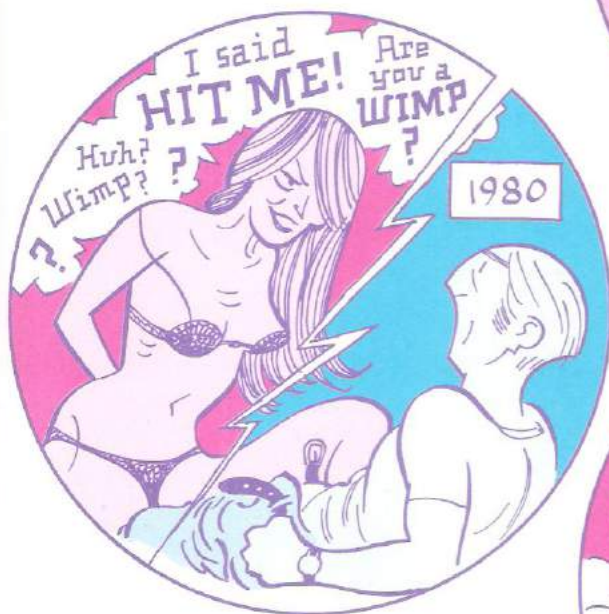


I, uh... have to wash my hair.

PLATO MAKES CLEAR WHAT HE THINKS OF THIS THEORY BY HAVING SOCRATES CASUALLY DISMISS IT.

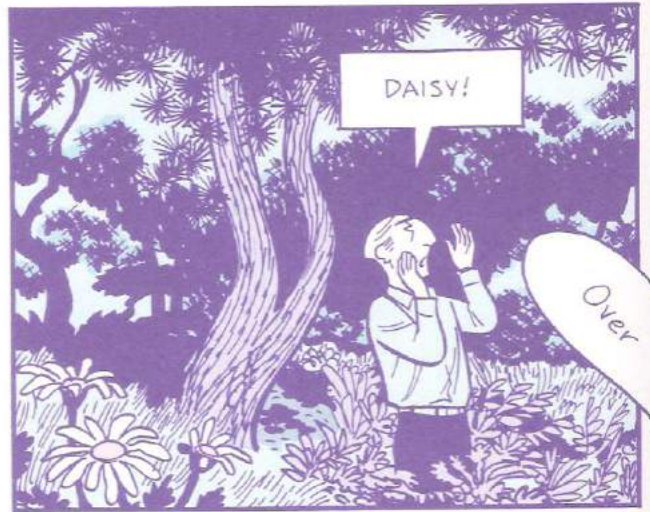


SINCE THEN, MEN AND WOMEN HAVE BEEN  
RUNNING AROUND IN A PANIC, SEARCHING  
FOR THEIR LOST COUNTERPARTS,  
IN A DESIRE TO BE  
WHOLE AGAIN.



WE SHOULD AT LEAST  
GIVE SOME CREDIT TO  
ARISTOPHANES FOR  
ORIGINALITY.







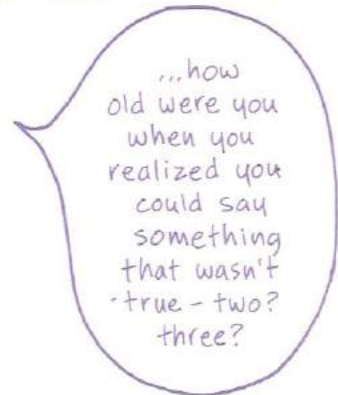




ASTERIOS' AND HANA'S LIVES FOLDED INTO EACH OTHER'S WITH BARELY A WRINKLE.







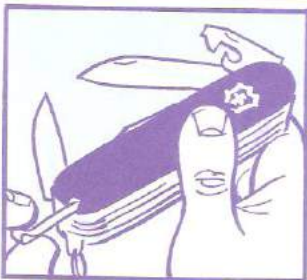
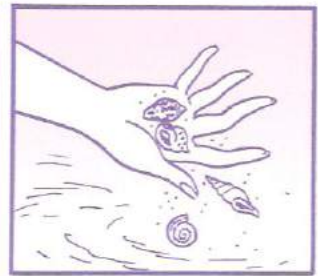
AND SO THEY WERE  
MARRIED IN THE SPRING  
OF 1986.

This  
is  
nice.

I CAN'T SEE  
THE HORIZON.





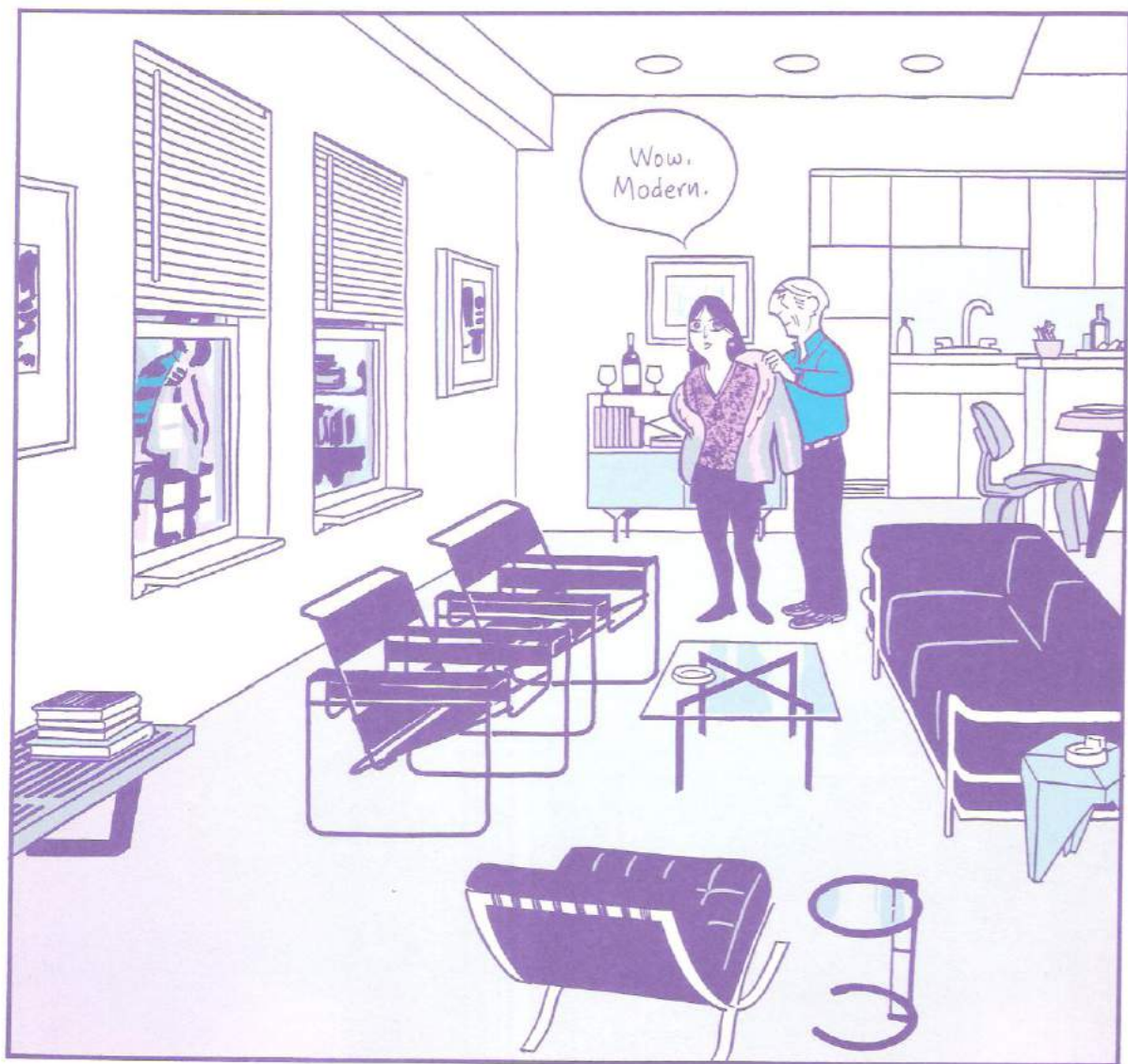




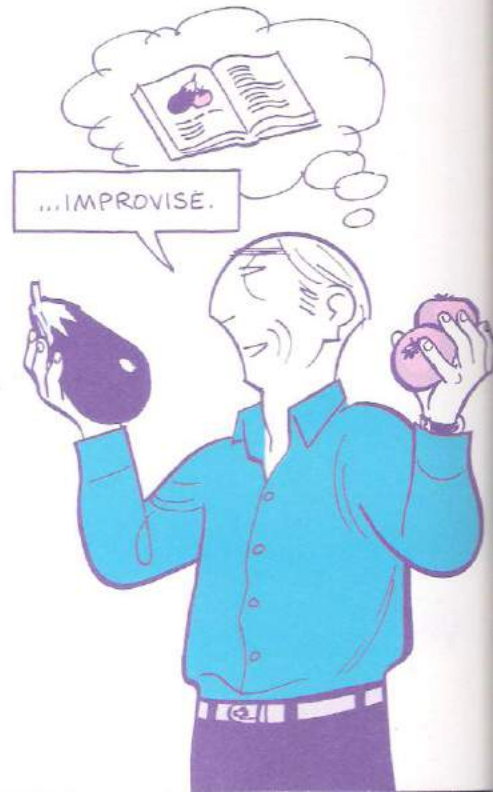
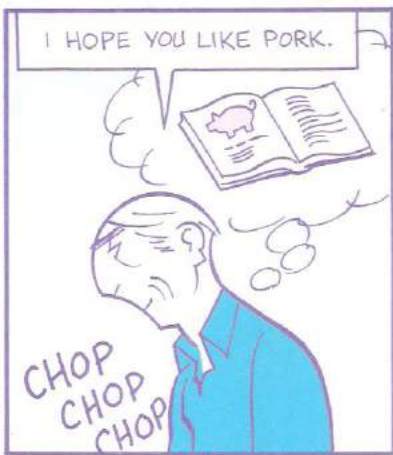


*THE FIRST TIME HANA  
VISITED ASTERIOS IN NEW YORK WAS  
SOON AFTER THEY MET, IN 1985.*

SHE HAD TO COME TO  
MANHATTAN TO DISCUSS  
AN EXHIBITION WITH A  
SOHO GALLERY, SO HE  
INVITED HER TO DINNER.

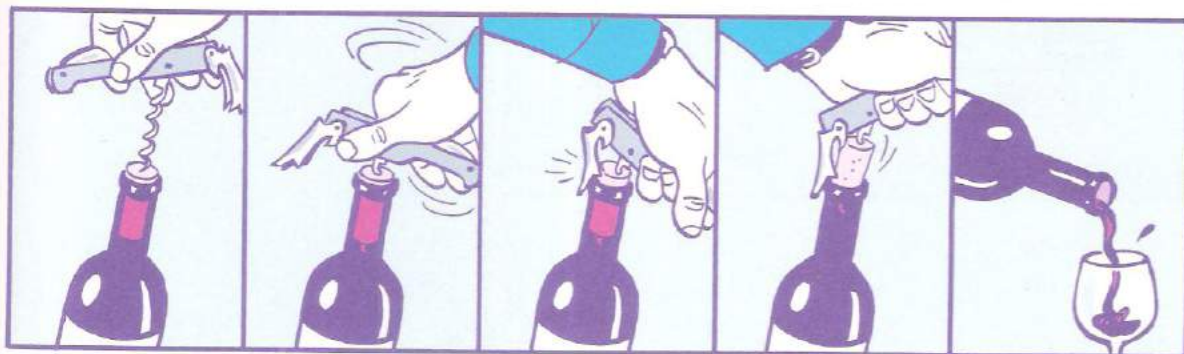


SHE WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THEY WEREN'T GOING OUT.



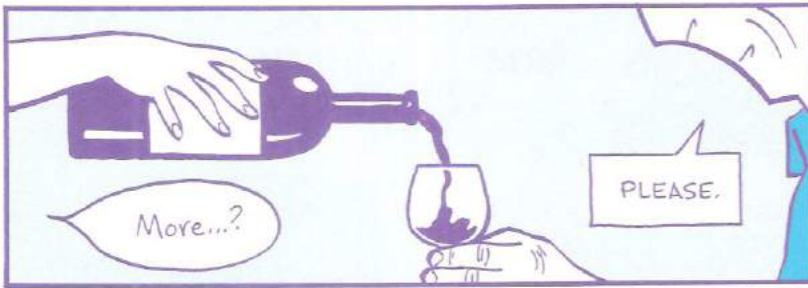


ASTERIOS TOOK GREAT PRIDE IN COOKING—  
IN MAKING DINING A CELEBRATION OF HUMAN INVENTION.

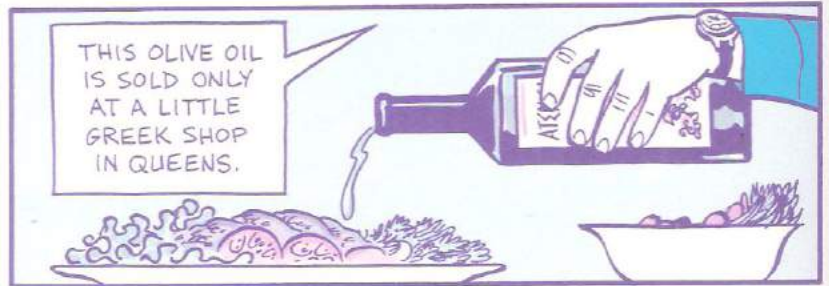


IT WAS OF A PIECE WITH HIS VIEW OF ARCHITECTURE: FOUR WALLS AND A ROOF MAKE A SHELTER, BUT EXQUISITE DESIGN IS TRANSPORTING.





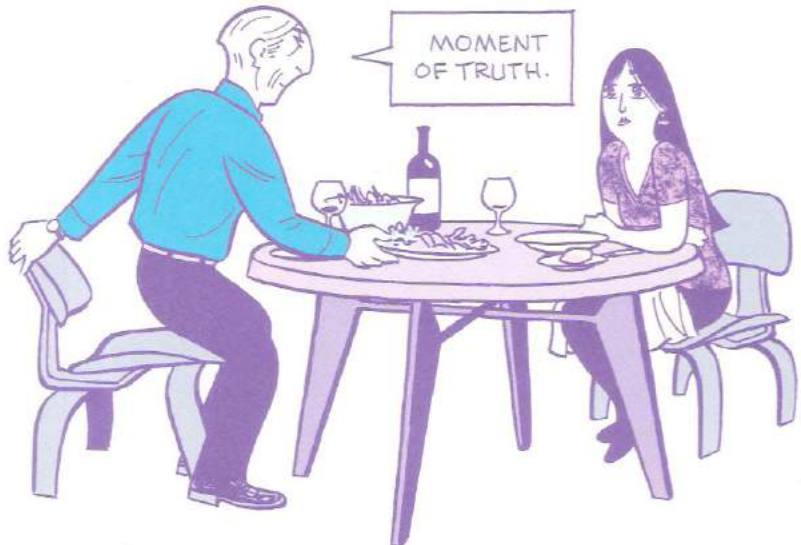
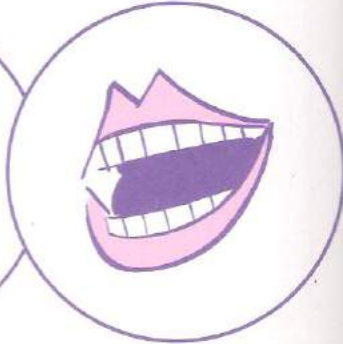
NO INGREDIENT WAS INSIGNIFICANT, AND HE WOULD TRAVEL OUT OF HIS WAY TO PROCURE THE FRESHEST PRODUCE OR THE FINEST SPICES.



TO BE HONEST, THOUGH, IN ASTERIOS' MIND THE OFFERINGS THAT EVENING WERE NOT PURELY GUSTATORY.



AND EVERY LAUGH HE ELICITED SEEMED LIKE A TINY PAROXYSM OF RAPTURE.



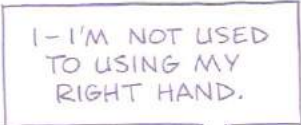
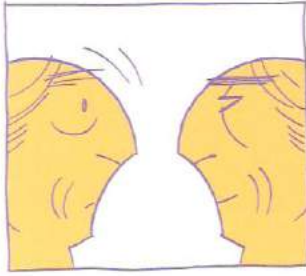


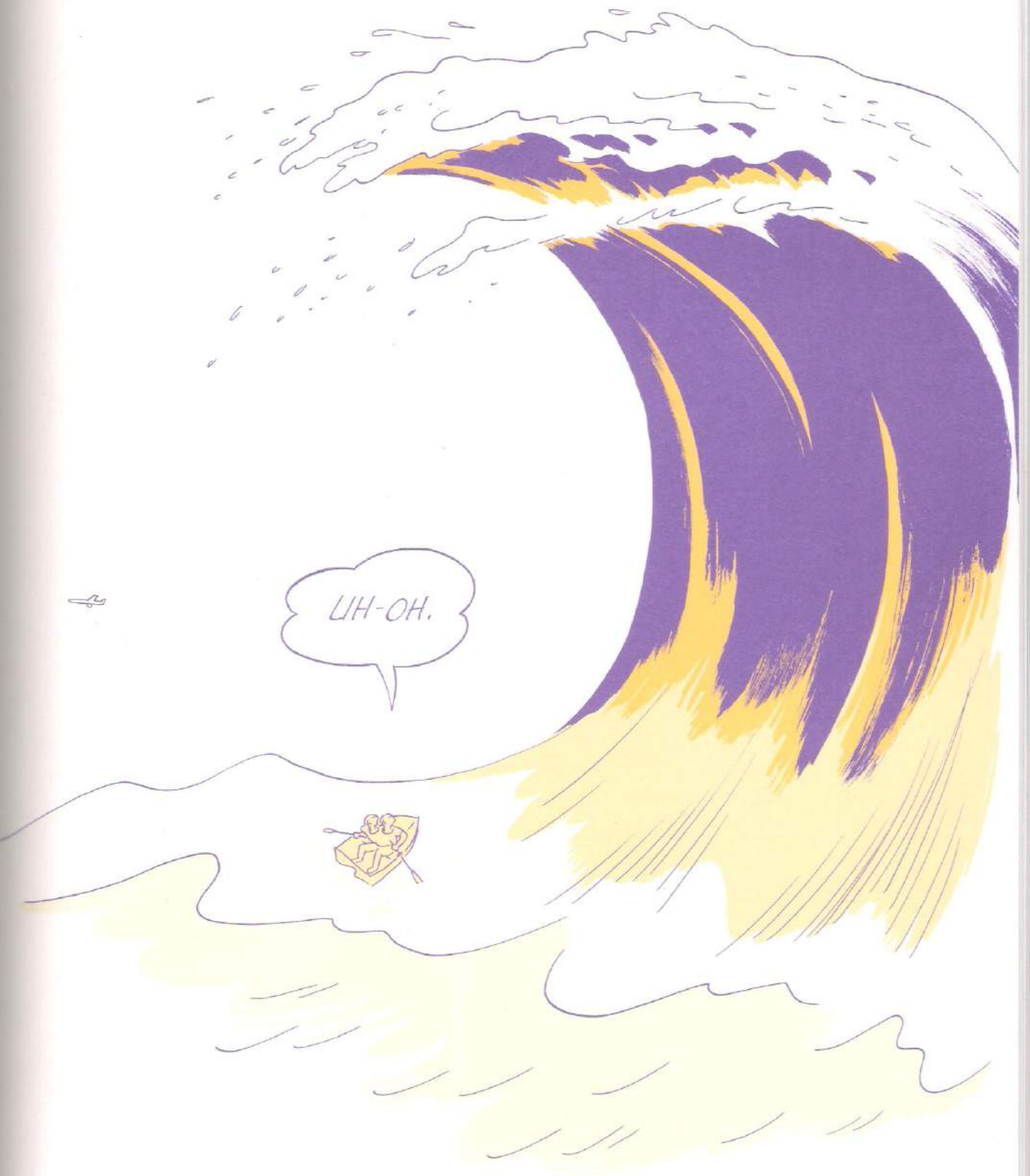


THAT WAS A NIGHT  
HE WOULD NEVER  
FORGET.









UH-OH.









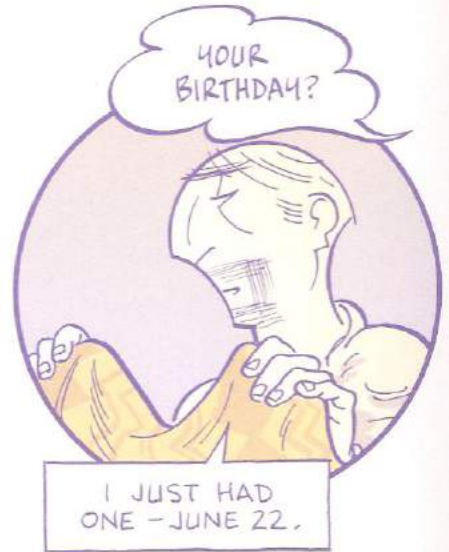
GOOD MORNING. I'M URSULA MAJOR.



I'M SORRY YOUR ROOM WASN'T READY LAST NIGHT, BUT, Y'KNOW, STIFFLY SPRUNG THIS ON ME SO SUDDENLY.

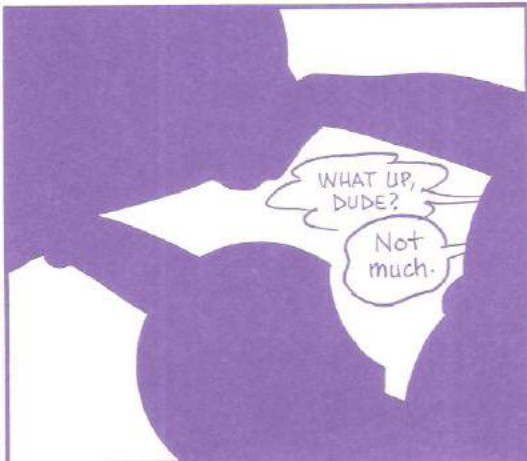
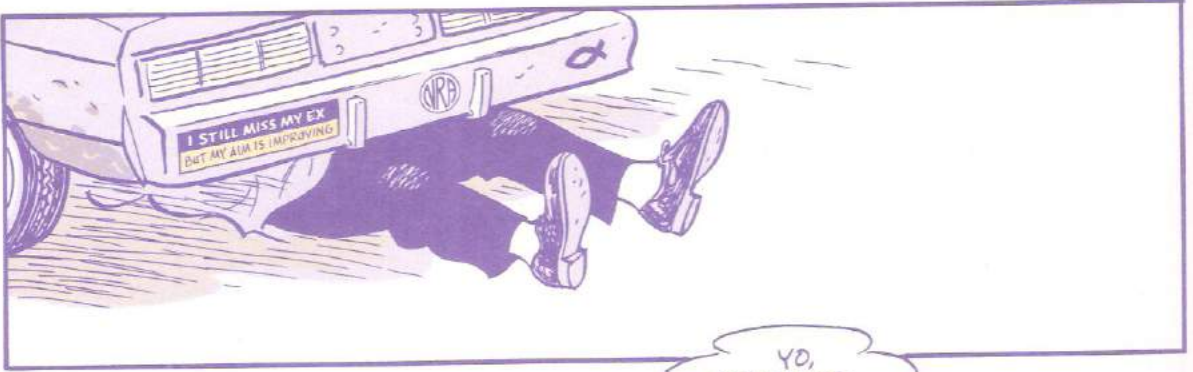
































ALTHOUGH TO REALLY DO IT RIGHT, I'D NEED TO KNOW THE EXACT TIME OF YOUR BIRTH SO I COULD, Y'KNOW, WORK UP YOUR CHART.



I WAS A C-SECTION.

YOU'RE SKEPTICAL, I CAN TELL. I'M SENSITIVE IN THAT WAY.

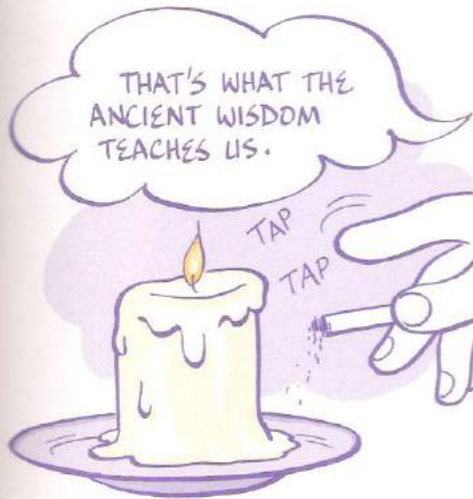
LET'S JUST SAY I HAVE TROUBLE WITH THE IDEA THAT OBJECTS WHIRLING THROUGH THE FIRMAMENT HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON MY DAILY LIFE.



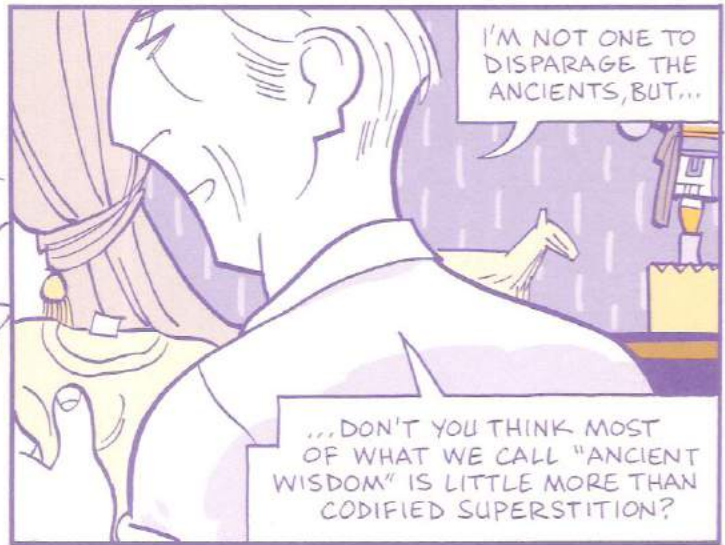
WELL, Y'KNOW... EVERYTHING IN THE UNIVERSE IS LINKED TO EVERYTHING ELSE...

...AND WHAT HAPPENS IN THE COSMOS IS, LIKE, A MIRROR OF YOUR LIFE HERE ON EARTH—

— IF YOU KNOW HOW TO LOOK AT IT.

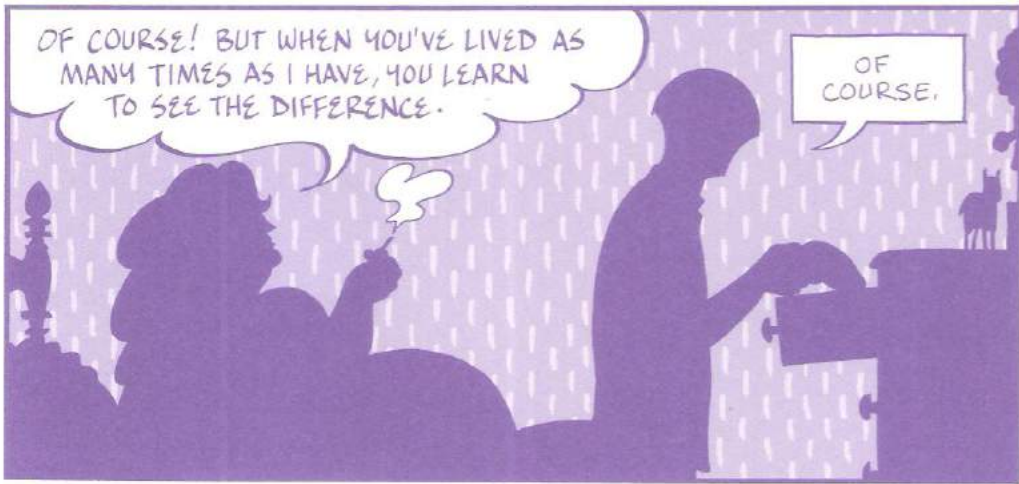


THAT'S WHAT THE ANCIENT WISDOM TEACHES US.



I'M NOT ONE TO DISPARAGE THE ANCIENTS, BUT...

...DON'T YOU THINK MOST OF WHAT WE CALL "ANCIENT WISDOM" IS LITTLE MORE THAN CODIFIED SUPERSTITION?



OF COURSE! BUT WHEN YOU'VE LIVED AS MANY TIMES AS I HAVE, YOU LEARN TO SEE THE DIFFERENCE.

OF COURSE.




SO, I SUPPOSE IT DOESN'T BOTHER YOU THAT, VIEWED FROM EARTH, THE CONSTELLATIONS HAVE SHIFTED BY ABOUT A MONTH SINCE PTOLEMY'S TIME?



NOT AT ALL. YOU SHOULDN'T CONFUSE THE CONSTELLATIONS WITH THE SIGNS.

BESIDES, GAIA KNOWS WHAT SHE'S DOING.






LOOK, Y'KNOW,  
SCIENTISTS TOOK  
MOLLUSKS AND FOUND THAT  
EVEN IN THE LAB, THEY  
ORIENT THEIR MOVEMENT  
ACCORDING TO THE PHASE  
OF THE LUNAR  
MONTH.

AND  
OYSTERS TAKEN  
FROM LONG ISLAND  
AND RELOCATED  
TO DARK TANKS  
IN THE MIDWEST  
ALTER THEIR  
OPENING AND CLOSING  
TO COINCIDE WITH TIDES  
THAT, LIKE, COULD EXIST IN THAT  
LOCATION, BUT DON'T.

SOLAR  
ACTIVITY  
CREATES  
EXTREMELY  
LOW FREQUENCY  
ELECTROMAGNETIC  
WAVES, AND THEY  
AFFECT ALL  
KINDS OF THINGS, LIKE  
THE WAY WHEAT SPROUTS, AND  
THE WAY BACTERIA GROWS,  
AND THE WAY INSECTS  
BEHAVE...



SO WITH  
ALL THAT GOING  
ON...

... MAYBE  
THE  
CHALDEANS  
WERE ONTO  
SOMETHING  
WHEN THEY  
DISCOVERED  
THE ZODIAC,  
Y'KNOW?



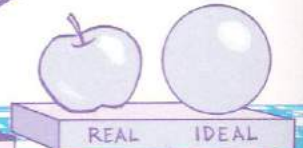
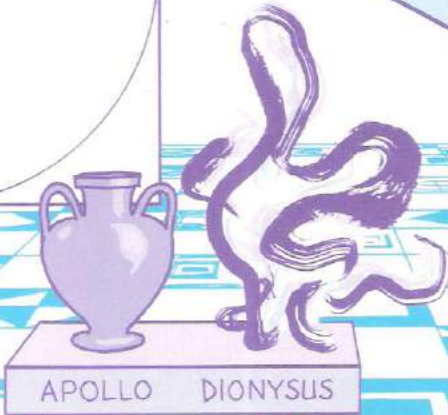
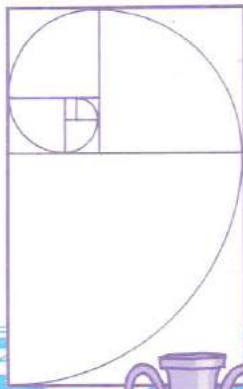
IT'S WORTH  
CONSIDERING.





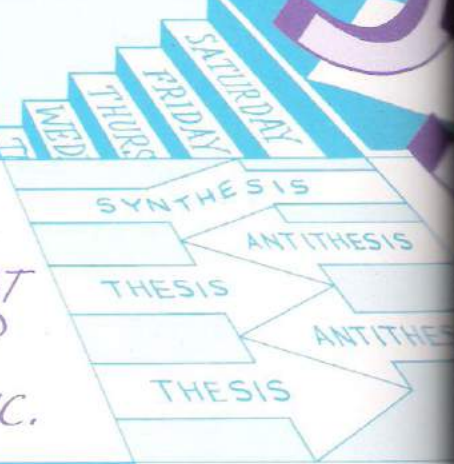


# ABSTRACTIONS



8 O 15.9994	9 F 18.9984	10 Ne 20.183	2 He 4.0026
16 S 32.064	17 Cl 35.453	18 Ar 39.948	36 Kr 83.8
34 Se 78.96	35 Br 79.909	36 Kr 83.8	54 Xe 131.3
52 Te 127.60	80 Hg 200.59	81 Tl 204.38	82 Pb 207.2

-ESPECIALLY SYSTEMS AND SEQUENCES THAT ARE GOVERNED BY THEIR OWN INTERNAL LOGIC.





IN ADDITION, HE'S ALWAYS BEEN FOND OF ANALOGUES AND METAPHORS - SUCH AS THE DIVISION OF AN HOUR INTO WEDGES OF A CIRCLE -



-AND THE MORE UNLIKELY THE CORRESPONDENCE, THE MORE HE ENJOYS IT.

• Ithaca

ONCE, ON A DRIVE FROM ITHACA TO NEW YORK, HANA WAS KNITTING IN THE PASSENGER SEAT.



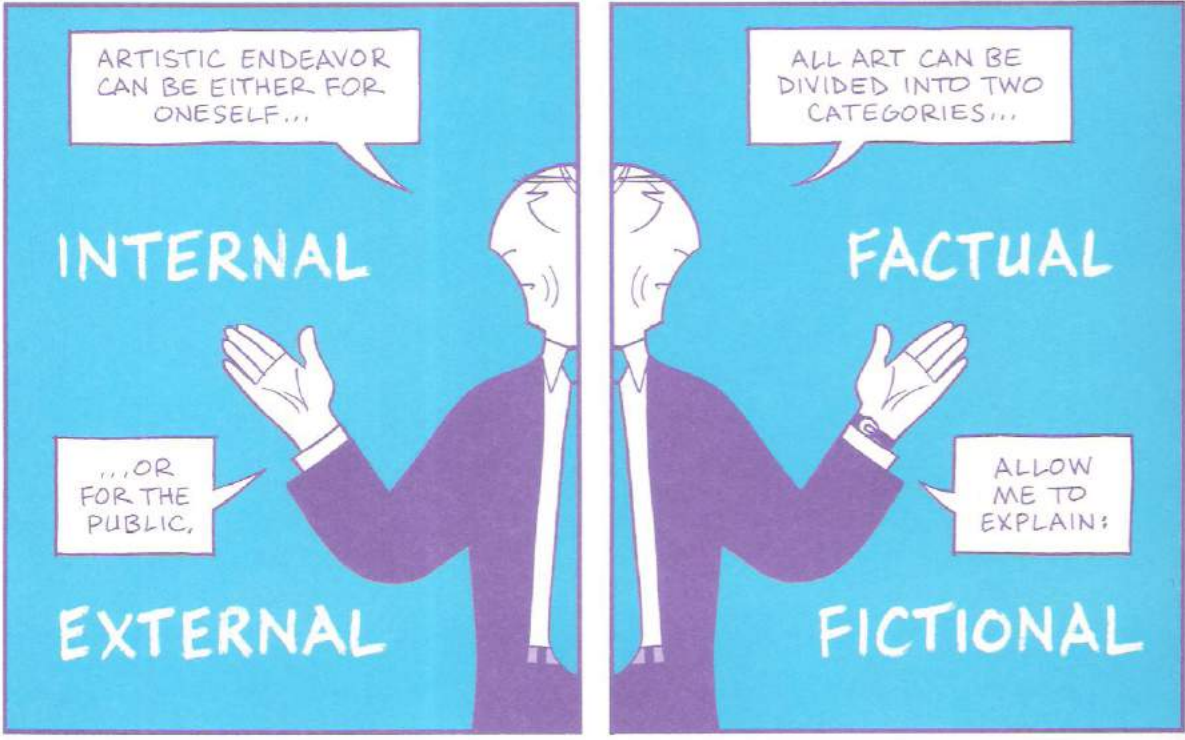
• New York

EVER SINCE, HE'S THOUGHT OF THE DISTANCE AS A MATTER OF YARN-INCHES.

THIS DESIRE TO VIEW THE WORLD THROUGH A FILTER - TO SUPERIMPOSE A RATIONAL SYSTEM ON TO ITS SEEMING RANDOMNESS - IS REVEALED IN HIS OWN FAVORITE IDEATION.



IT IS A FORMULATION THAT IS APPLIED WITH PRISMATIC VARIETY.

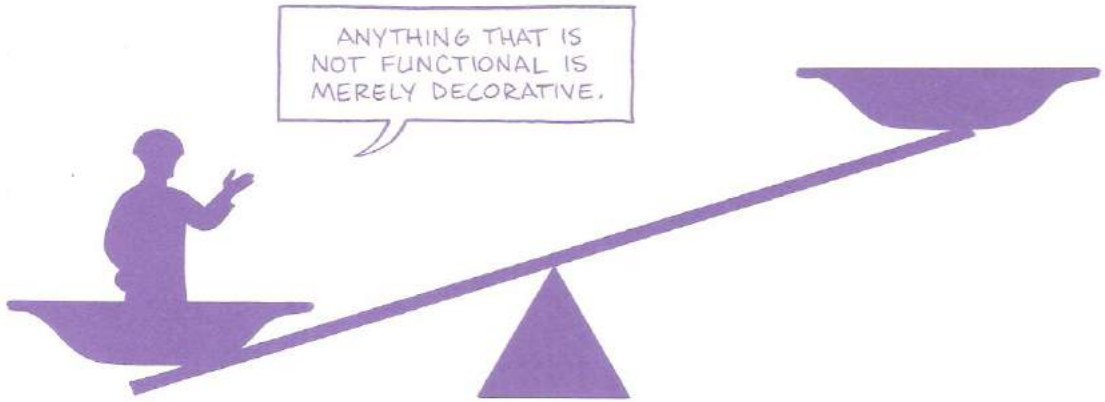




*THIS CONSTRUCTION APPEARS TO CONFER EQUAL CREDENCE TO BOTH SIDES.*



*BUT ELABORATION OFTEN EXPOSES ASTERIOS' PREDILECTIONS.*



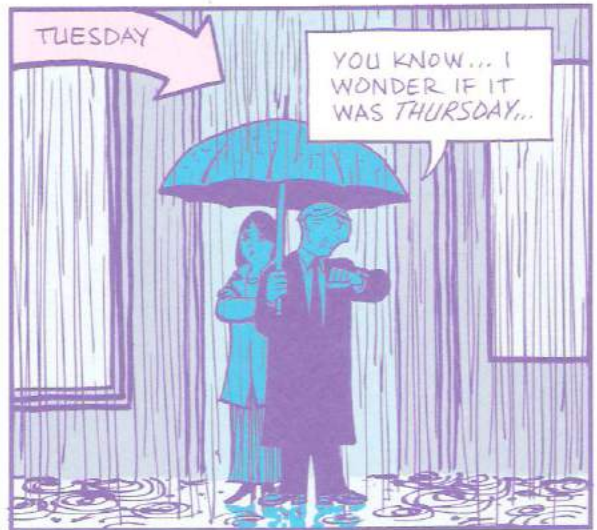
*THIS, "TRUTHFULNESS" HAS BECOME HIS POLESTAR.*

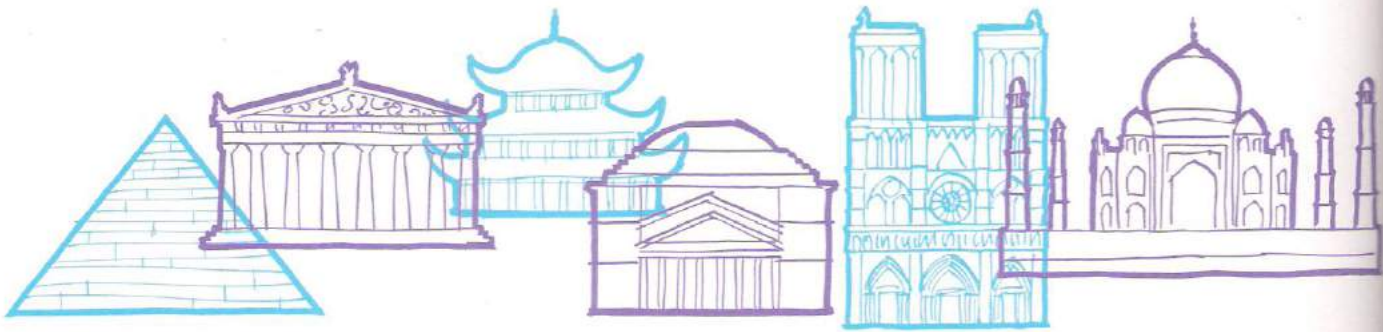


HIS ASPIRATION TOWARD THE TRUE MANIFESTS ITSELF IN OTHER WAYS AS WELL.







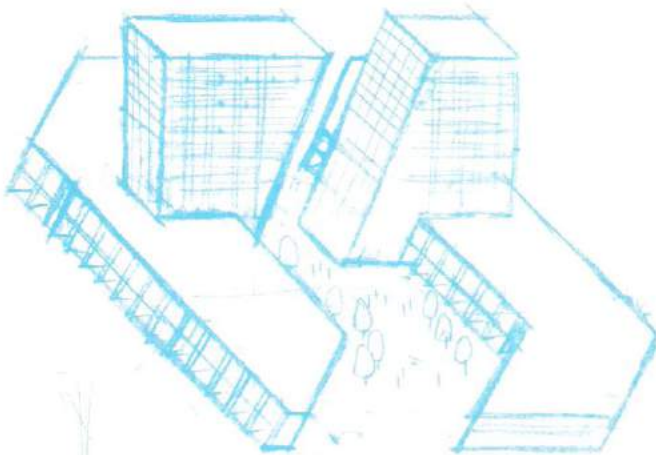


*IN THE CERTITUDE OF SYMMETRY, THE CONSONANCE OF COUNTERPOISE, ASTERIOS FOUND A MEASURE OF SOLACE.*

HE WAS AN EARLY DEFENDER OF THE MUCH-MALIGNED WORLD TRADE TOWERS.

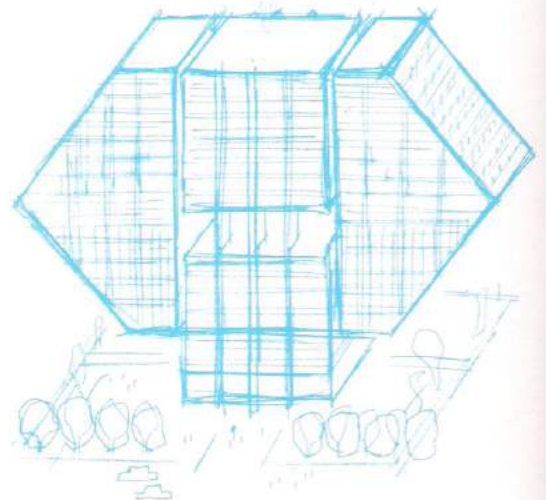


*HIS OWN DESIGNS ECHOED THIS ELOQUENT EQUILIBRIUM.*



PARALLEL PARK  
MIXED-USE COMPLEX, 1981  
(FUNDING WITHDRAWN)

THE AKIMBO ARMS  
APARTMENT BUILDING, 1983  
(NEVER BUILT)





DUALITY IS ROOTED IN NATURE: THE BRAIN IS DIVIDED INTO RIGHT AND LEFT HEMISPHERES, ELECTRICAL CURRENT IS EITHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE - OUR VERY EXISTENCE IS THE RESULT OF HUMANS BEING MALE AND FEMALE. IT'S YIN AND YANG.



I DISAGREE. DUALITY IS AN INVENTION THAT **SEEMS** TO BE TRUE, BUT ONLY BECAUSE THE EXAMPLES YOU CITE SHARE SUPERFICIAL SIMILARITIES THAT **APPEAR** TO BE DUALISTIC BECAUSE WE **DEFINE** THEM IN THAT WAY.



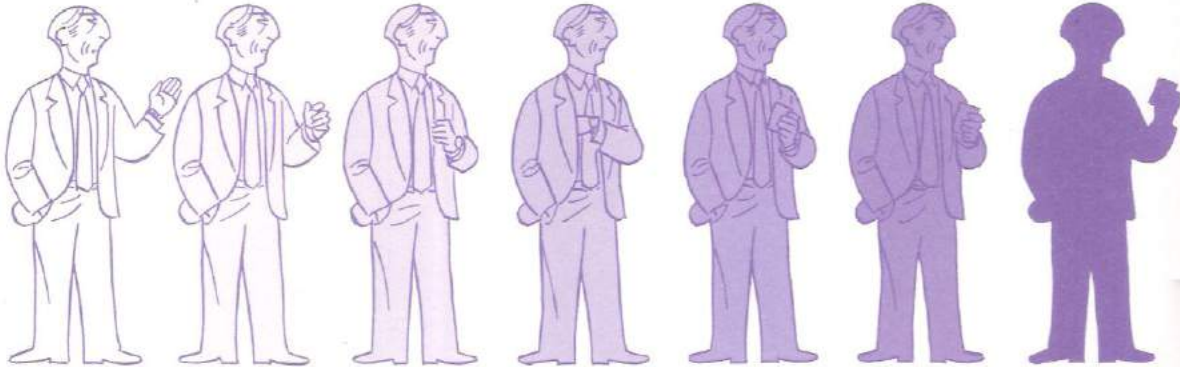
AH! BUT IT'S ONE OR THE OTHER, RIGHT?



(SIGH) I'LL GIVE YOU THIS: THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD - THOSE WHO BREAK THINGS INTO TWO KINDS AND THOSE WHO DON'T.



OF COURSE I  
 REALIZE THAT THINGS  
 AREN'T SO BLACK AND WHITE—  
 —THAT IN ACTUALITY  
 POSSIBILITIES EXIST  
 ALONG A CONTINUUM  
 BETWEEN THE EXTREMES.

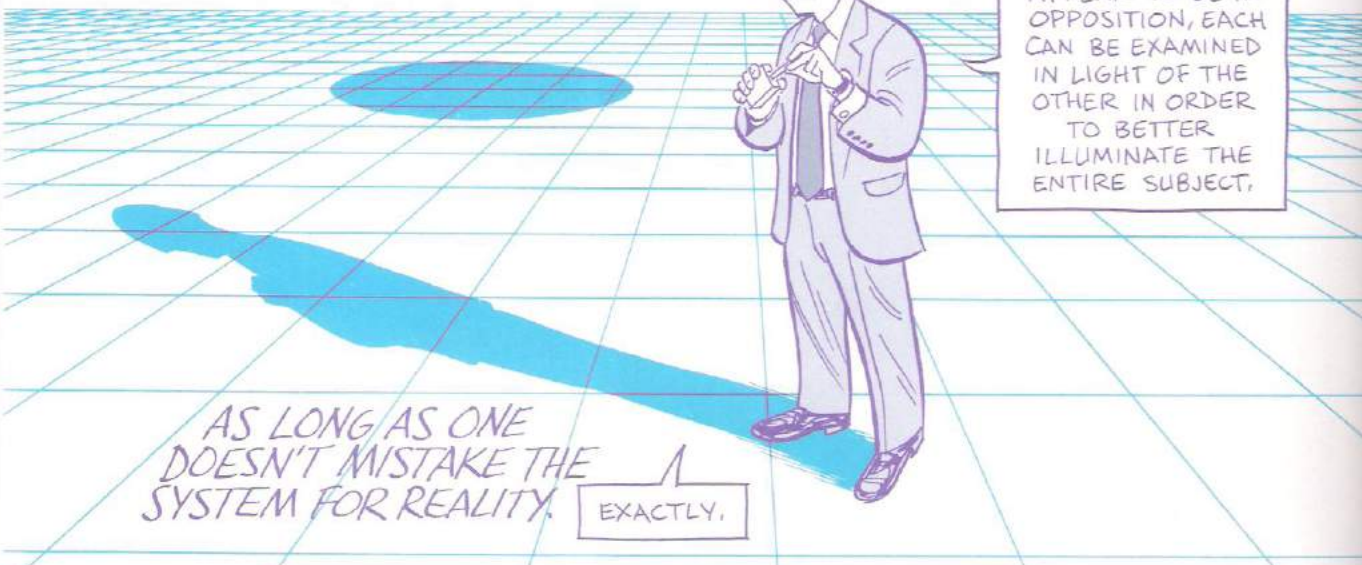


*BUT WHY MUST CHOICES ALWAYS LIE ALONG A LINEAR SPECTRUM, WITH TWO POLES, INSTEAD OF, SAY,*

*AMONG A SPHERE OF POSSIBILITIES?*

IT'S JUST A CONVENIENT ORGANIZING PRINCIPLE.

BY CHOOSING TWO ASPECTS OF A SUBJECT THAT APPEAR TO BE IN OPPOSITION, EACH CAN BE EXAMINED IN LIGHT OF THE OTHER IN ORDER TO BETTER ILLUMINATE THE ENTIRE SUBJECT.



*AS LONG AS ONE DOESN'T MISTAKE THE SYSTEM FOR REALITY.* EXACTLY.

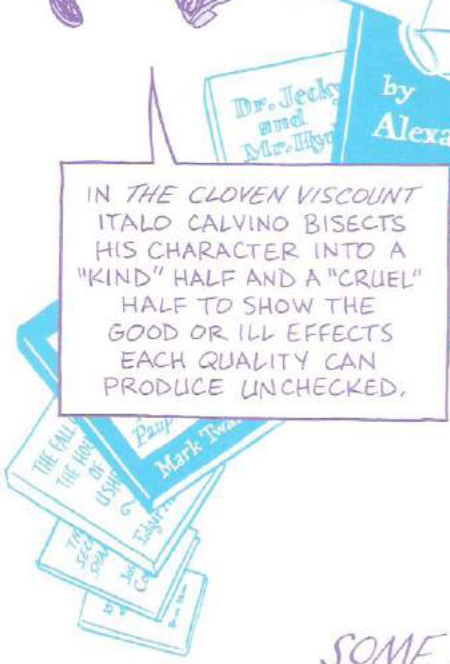
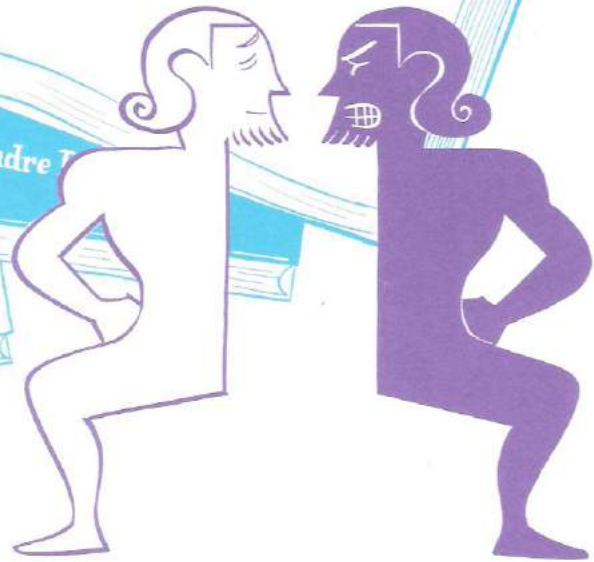


IN LITERATURE, ONE CAN FIND SIMILAR EXAMPLES OF DELIBERATE EXAGGERATION,

HERMANN HESSE'S *NARCISSUS AND GOLDMUND*, FOR INSTANCE, EXPLORES HUMAN NATURE BY CONTRASTING THE LIFE OF A HEDONIST WITH THAT OF AN ASCETIC.



IN *THE CLOVEN VISCOUNT* ITALO CALVINO BISECTS HIS CHARACTER INTO A "KIND" HALF AND A "CRUEL" HALF TO SHOW THE GOOD OR ILL EFFECTS EACH QUALITY CAN PRODUCE UNCHECKED.

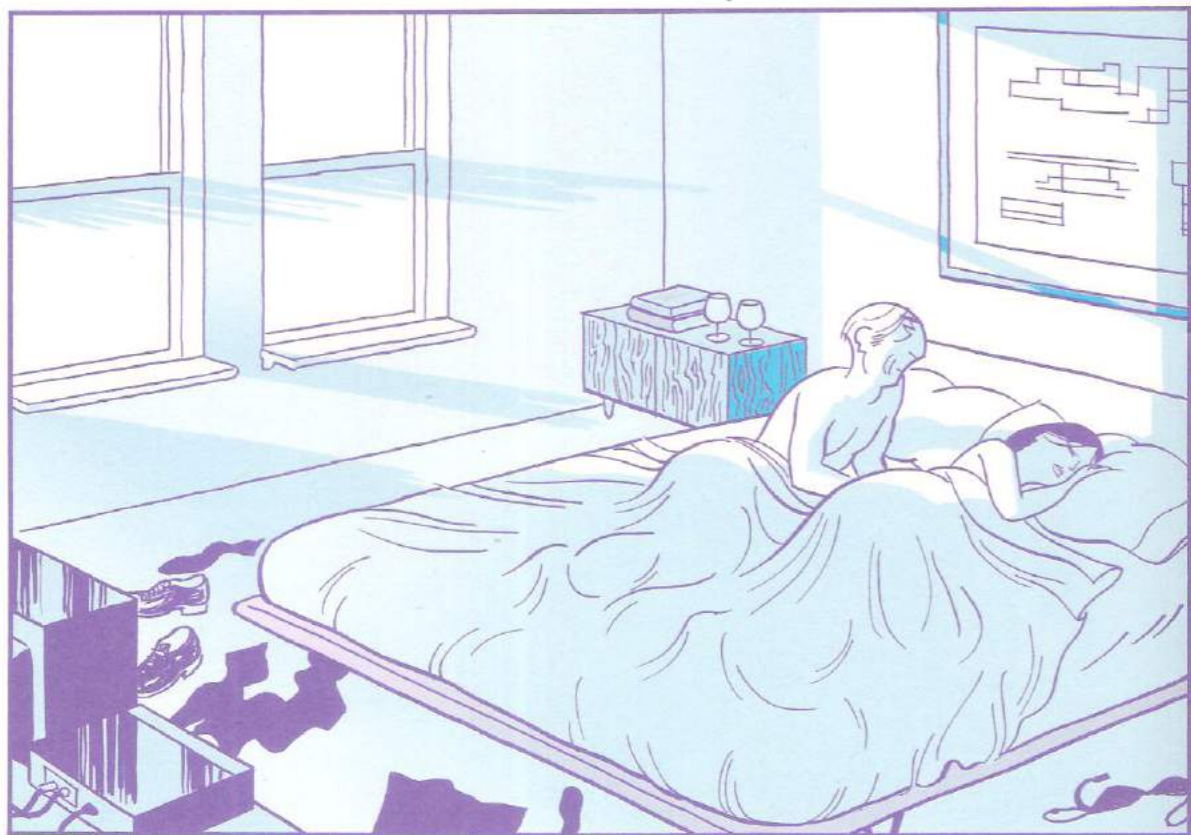


SOME MIGHT ARGUE THAT SUCH SIMPLIFICATION IS BEST SUITED TO CHILDREN'S STORIES, OR COMIC BOOKS.

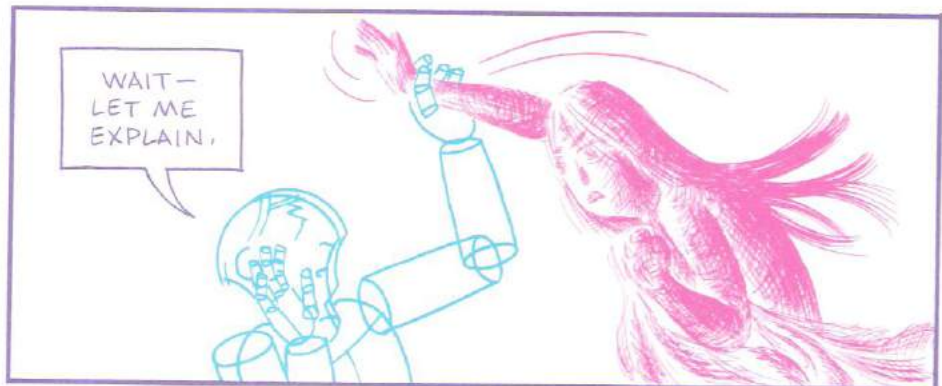
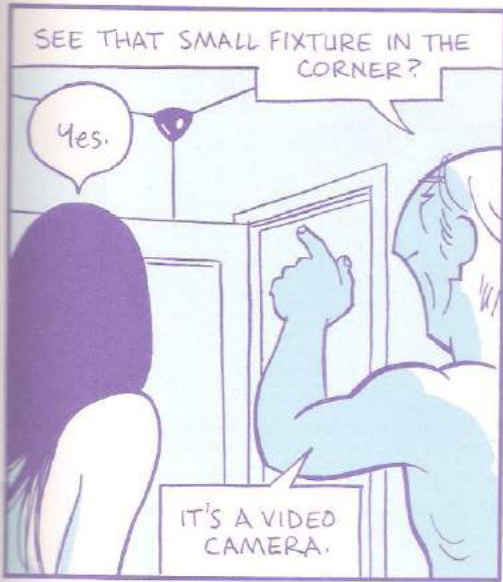


THAT'S ENTIRELY DIFFERENT.

WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE, MAYBE ASTERIOS' PARTICULAR VISION HAS A MORE SPECIFIC SOURCE.







IT,  
UH...



...IT ALL  
STARTED  
WHEN  
I WAS  
BORN.

"THAT IS, WHEN I WAS GROWING UP, I KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHING DIFFERENT ABOUT ME -"



"- WELL, REALLY, I THOUGHT THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME."

"WHENEVER I WAS WITH OTHER KIDS, I FELT ISOLATED, ALONE, AS IF I WEREN'T ALL THERE."



"BUT WHEN I WAS ALONE, I FELT - WELL, I USED TO LOOK OVER MY SHOULDER ALL THE TIME, EXPECTING TO SEE SOMEONE."



"IT WAS A WEIRD SENSATION... LIKE SEARCHING FOR YOUR REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR."

ANYWAY, WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER, I FOUND OUT: I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A TWIN. I MEAN, I HAD A TWIN BROTHER, BUT HE DIED WHEN I WAS BORN.



IT'S FUNNY... I'VE NEVER TOLD ANYONE THIS BEFORE.

THE REVELATION OF A PHANTOM SIBLING SHOULD HAVE EASED MY MIND ABOUT THE STRANGE FEELINGS I HAD.



BUT INSTEAD, THE OLDER I GOT, THE MORE HE HAUNTED MY THOUGHTS.



"EACH OF US HAD HAD AN EQUAL CHANCE INSIDE THE WOMB."



"WHY WAS I THE ONE TO MAKE IT OUT ALIVE?"

"WAS IT JUST MUTE LUCK? OR SOME DOCTOR'S MISTAKE?"



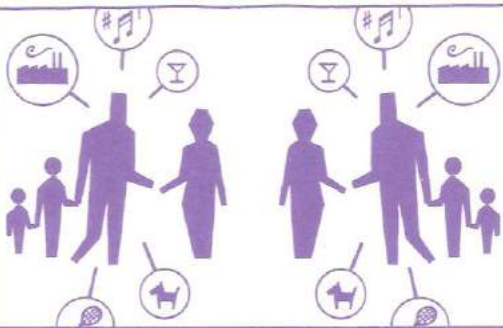
OR HAD I SOMEHOW SUFFOCATED THE POOR BASTARD?



WE WERE IDENTICAL TWINS - WHO, IT TURNS OUT, MAKE FASCINATING CASE STUDIES, BECAUSE THEY OFTEN LIVE REMARKABLY SIMILAR LIVES,



"EVEN WHEN SEPARATED AT BIRTH, AND RAISED IN DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES, THEY TEND TO CHOOSE THE SAME PROFESSION, GET MARRIED AT THE SAME AGE, HAVE THE SAME NUMBER OF CHILDREN..."



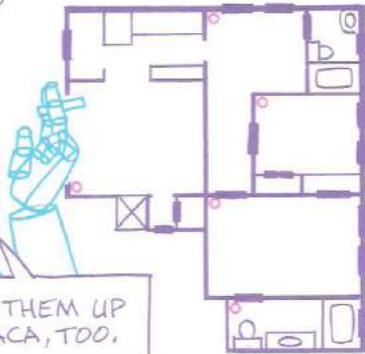
WHAT IF IT HAD BEEN THE OTHER WAY AROUND? I WONDERED.

IF HE HAD BEEN THE ONE TO SURVIVE, WOULD HIS LIFE HAVE FOLLOWED EXACTLY THE PATH MINE HAS?

AM I LIVING HIS LIFE NOW?



SO, A FEW YEARS AGO, I HAD THESE CAMERAS PUT IN. THEY RECORD EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON HERE, TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY.



I HAVE THEM UP IN ITHACA, TOO.

IT'S NOT LIKE I EVER WATCH THE TAPES - I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE MINUTE OF THEM.



IN FACT, I CAN'T IMAGINE EVER WANTING TO WATCH THEM.



SOMEHOW, THOUGH, IT'S COMFORTING TO KNOW THEY'RE THERE, IN THE NEXT ROOM...



...MY OWN VIDEO DOPPELGÄNGER.

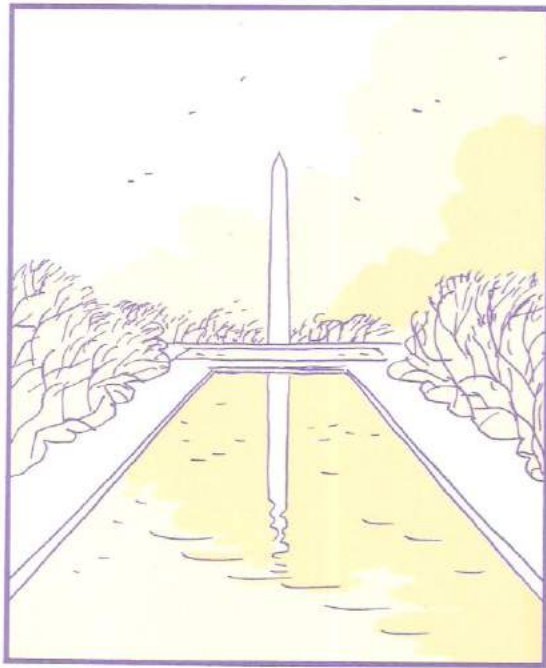


It's...



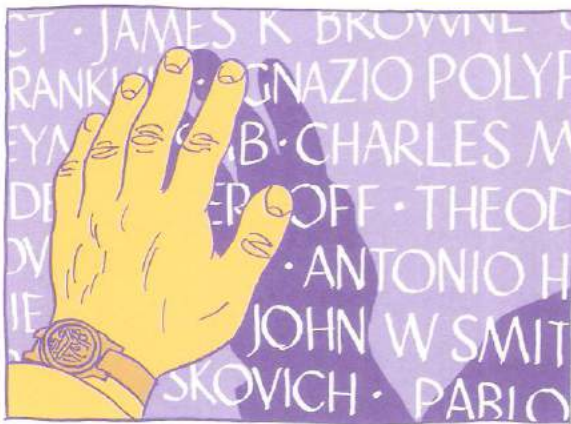
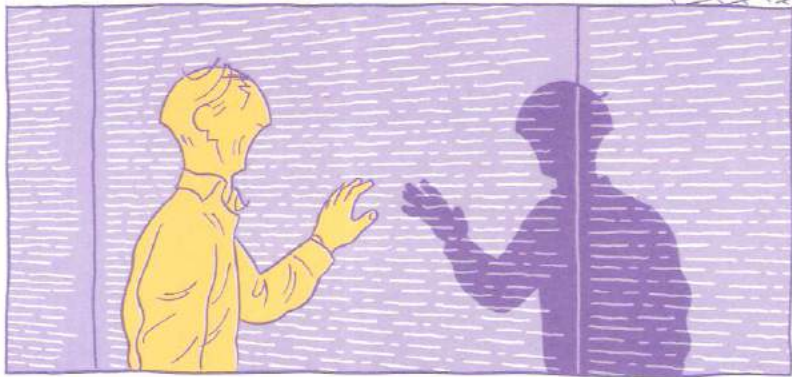












...I'M SORRY...



MY NUMBER  
NEVER CAME UP...



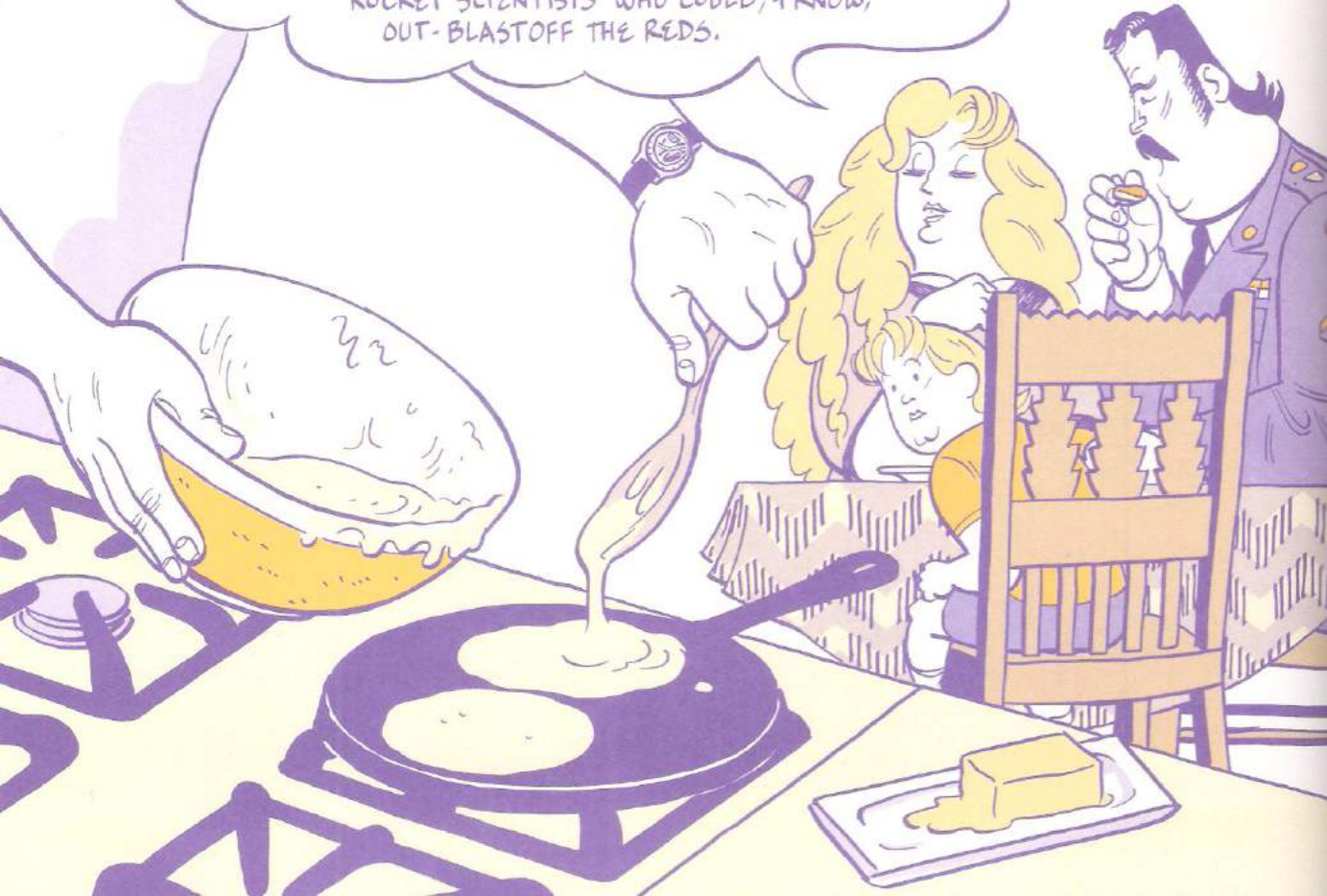




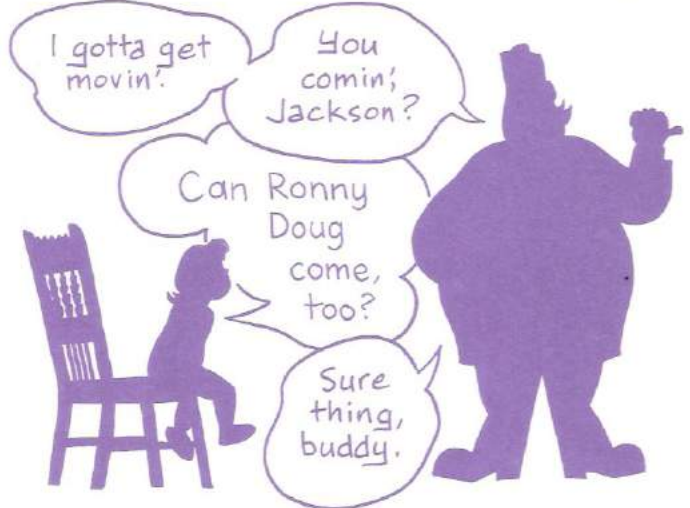




AMERICA WAS, LIKE, SO WIGGED-OUT BY THIS UNPRECEDENTED DISPLAY OF TECHNOLOGICAL PROWESS THAT THE GOVERNMENT BOOSTED PUBLIC EDUCATION SPENDING - WITH THE SOLE PURPOSE OF PRODUCING A GENERATION OF ROCKET SCIENTISTS WHO COULD, Y'KNOW, OUT-BLASTOFF THE REDS.













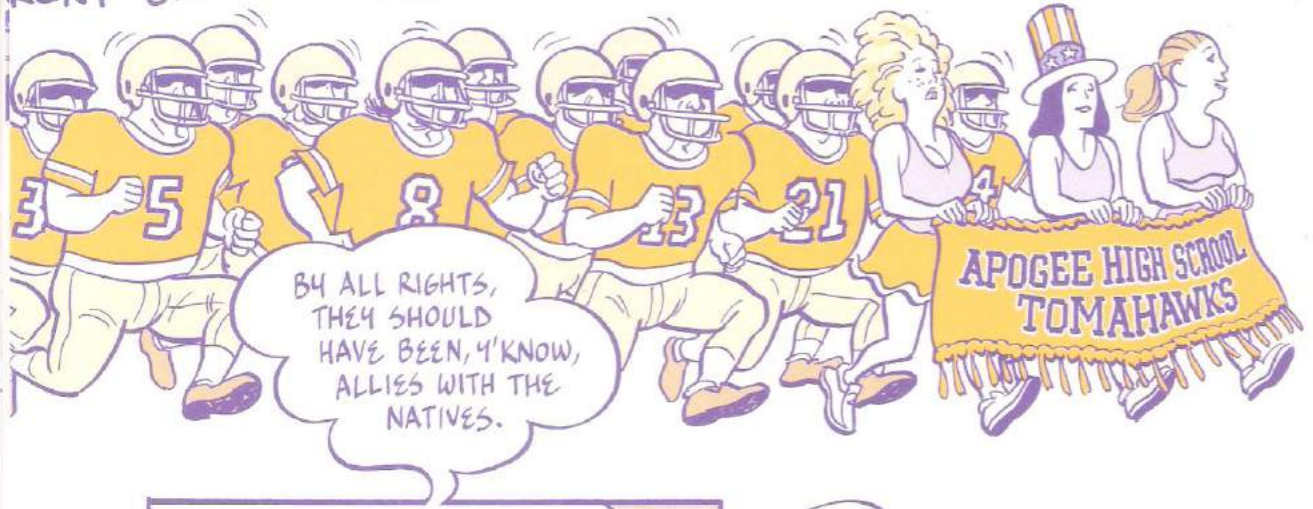






...IT WAS THE "BUFFALO SOLDIERS," AS WE CALLED THEM - NEWLY EMANCIPATED SLAVES WHO WERE NOW PART OF THE U.S. MILITARY.

GRUNT GRUNT GRUNT GRUNT GRUNT GRUNT



BY ALL RIGHTS, THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN, Y'KNOW, ALLIES WITH THE NATIVES.

APOGEE HIGH SCHOOL  
TOMAHAWKS



BUT INSTEAD, TO EARN THE RESPECT OF THEIR FORMER MASTERS, THEY BECAME THE TOUGHEST, MOST PROFESSIONAL FIGHTERS IN THE ARMY.



THERE'S MY BABY!

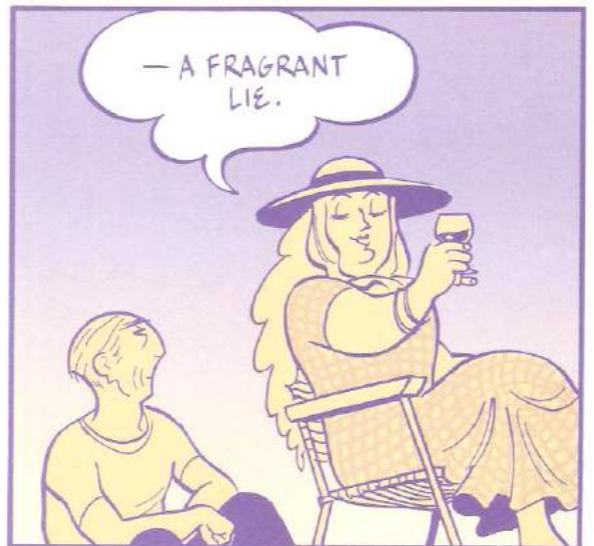
B  
BEEP  
BEE







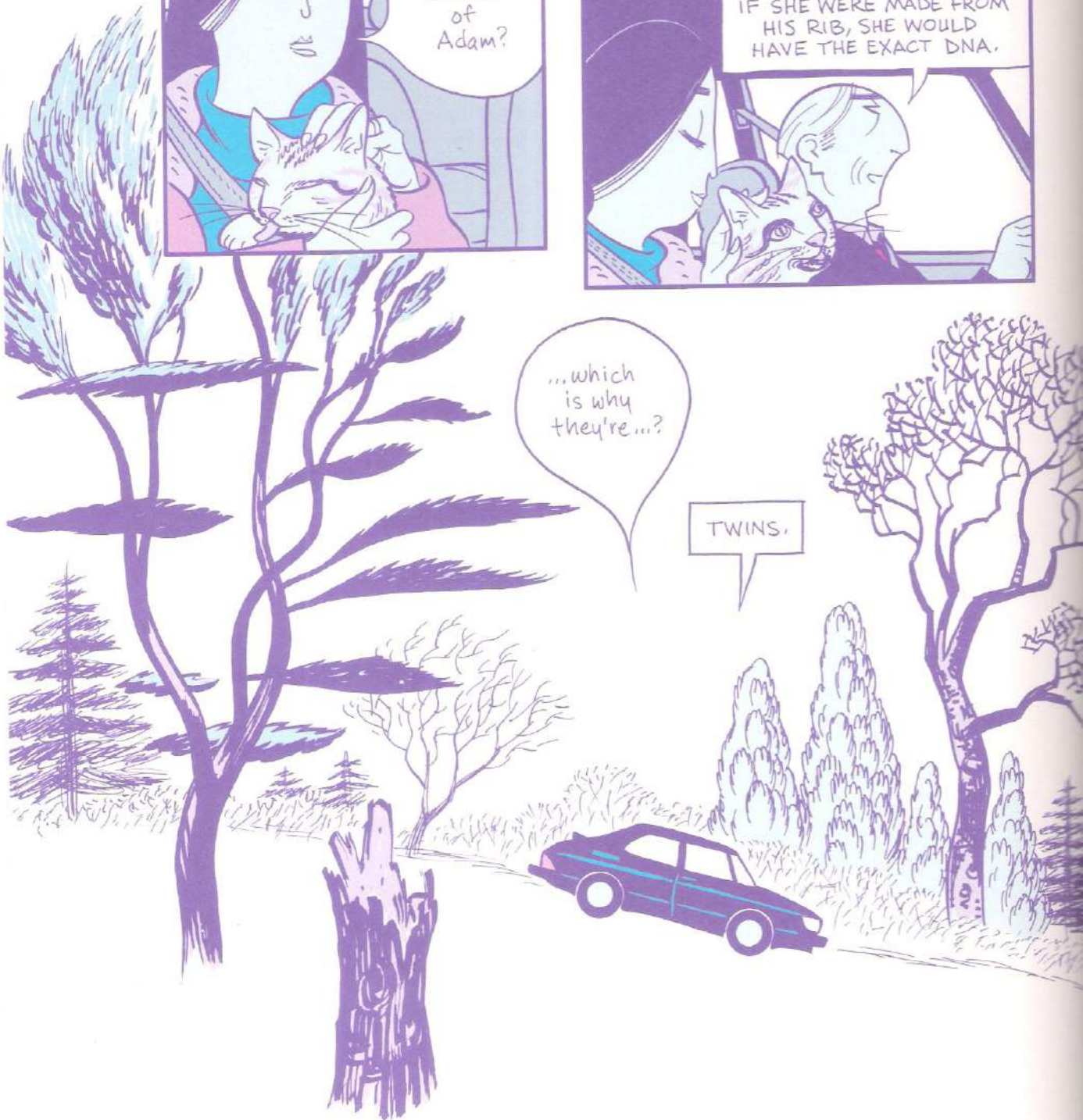








# OUR FATHER, EUGENIOS (THE DOCTOR), THOUGHT LITTLE ABOUT RELIGION.







I had  
this strange  
dream last  
night...



mrmh

999hg

..99ghhg..

eeeeeeeee

STOP MAKING SO MUCH NOISE.  
SOMEONE WILL HEAR YOU.

I'm  
sorry...

ummm

ahem

mrmhm



OUR MOTHER, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD BEEN A PRACTICING CATHOLIC.







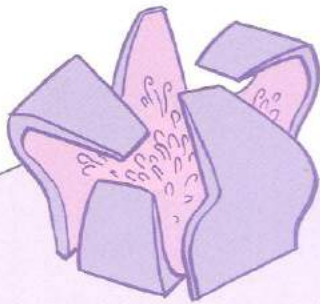


HANA'S UPBRINGING WAS UNDERSTANDABLY MORE COMPLEX.



I was raised a Buddhist, but I've always had a soft spot for Francis of Assisi.

ASTERIOS FIRST SAW HER SCULPTURE IN A STUDIO SHE HAD SET UP ON CAMPUS.



THAT MAKES SENSE.

Um... everything here was made from found materials.



THESE ARE REALLY STRONG.







Thank you.



AND I CAN SEE HOW YOU'RE GRAPPLING WITH THE RECONCILIATION OF OPPOSITES,



... I guess that's one way of looking at —

THERE'S THIS PALPABLE TENSION BETWEEN ORDER AND CHAOS, THE CONCRETE AND THE IMAGINED, MAN AND NATURE...



Well, actually, I don't see man and nature as being —

...THE RATIONAL AND THE IRRATIONAL, HUMOR AND HORROR, FRAGILITY AND FORTITUDE...

umm  
...ahew..

...MMM...

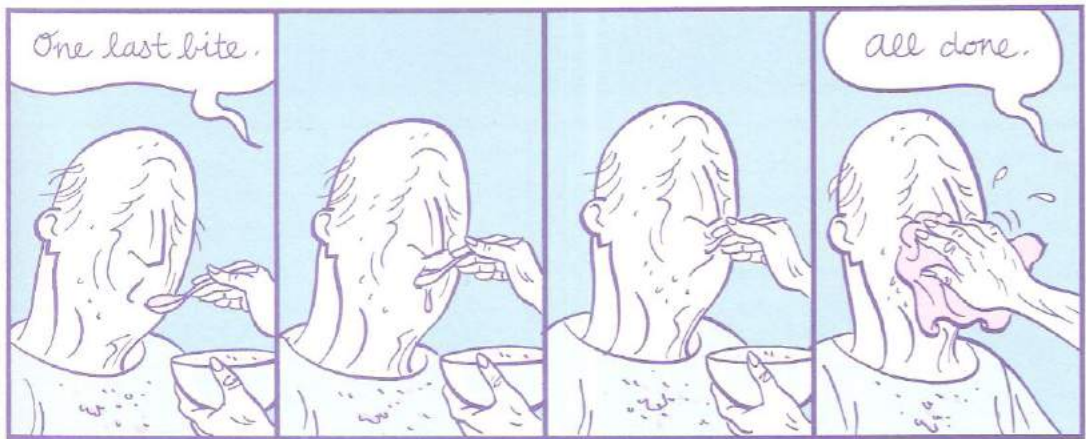


BUT YOU FEED DEAD MEAT TO YOUR CAT.

...Aaand...?









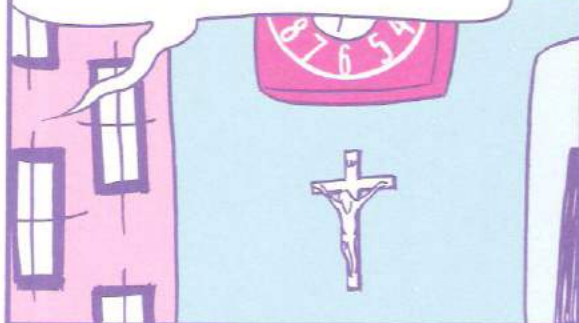




He stayed the same - can you imagine? - the same for years and years.



It sounds terrible, but I started praying for God to **take** Gene - I thought, He's suffering, nobody should live like this.



But still, your father didn't die.



This is what my life turned into - feeding him and washing him and talking to him, and never knowing if he understood...



To be honest, I was angry - but ashamed, too. God was keeping my husband alive, and I was praying for him to be dead.



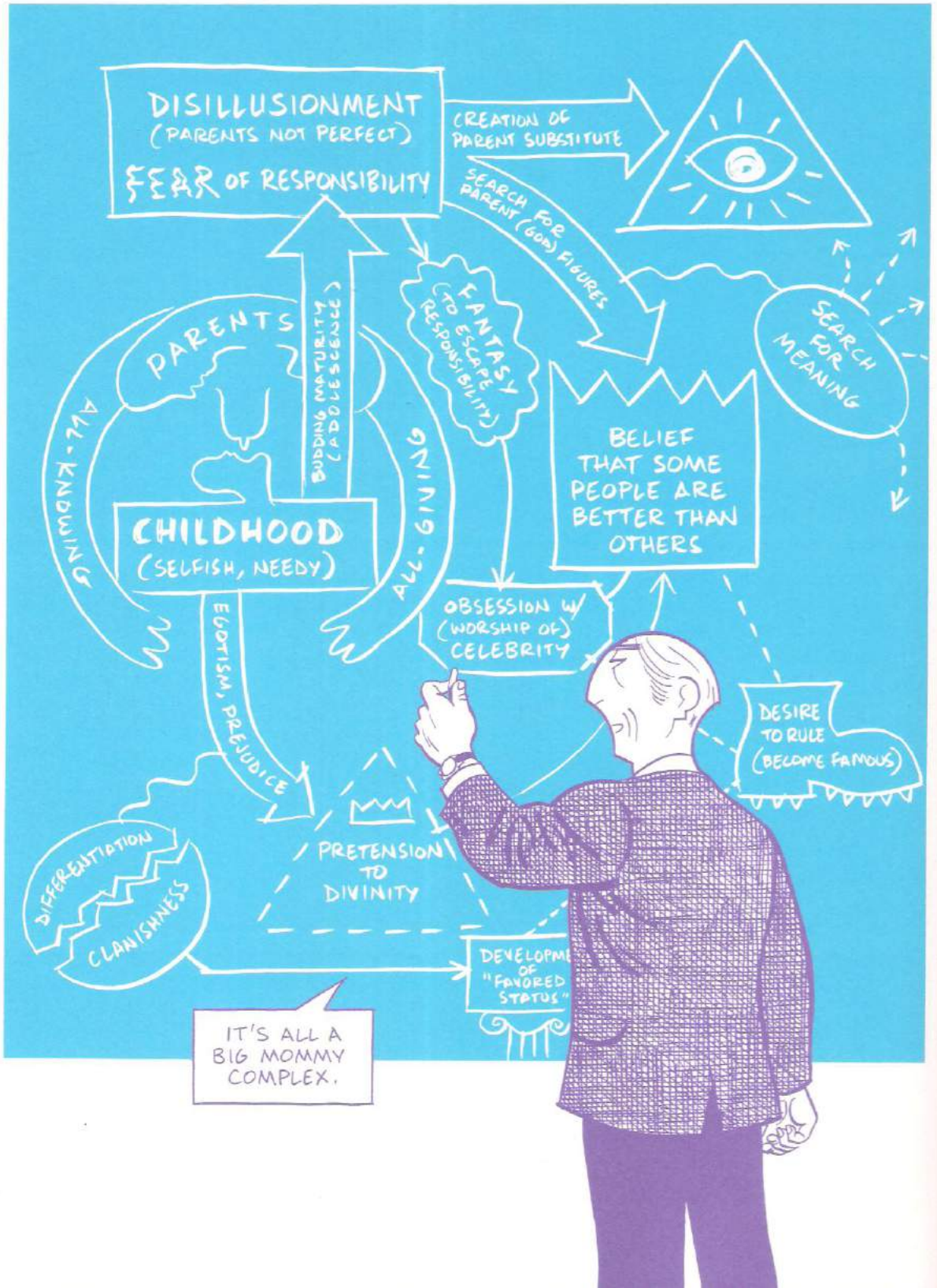
But now I know what God was trying to tell me. After all those years taking care of your father, washing and feeding him while he was staring straight ahead...



It was this: just because we don't hear the Lord, it doesn't mean He's stopped talking to us.



ASTERIOS, OF COURSE, HAD  
A DIFFERENT THEORY.



IT'S ALL A  
BIG MOMMY  
COMPLEX.



WHAT I REALLY FIND AMUSING IS THAT THE HISTORY OF RELIGION IS BASICALLY THE STORY OF "HOLY MEN" WHO HEARD VOICES, SAW VISIONS, AND BELIEVED THEMSELVES PERSECUTED FOR THEIR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE DIVINE.



TODAY WE'D CALL THEM PARANOID SCHIZOPHRENICS,



Well... there must have been some truth in what they said, or they wouldn't have had so many followers.



HARD TO SAY -



- APART FROM BEING OVERLY CREDULOUS, THOSE FOLLOWERS HAVE HAD CENTURIES TO DISTORT THE ORIGINAL MESSAGE.

BESIDES, CRAZY PEOPLE CAN OFTEN BE VERY CHARISMATIC,



Look who's talking!

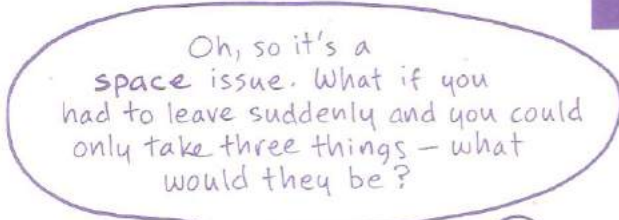
TAKE IT FROM ME, IF LITHIUM HAD BEEN AVAILABLE A FEW THOUSAND YEARS AGO, THE WORLD WOULD BE A VERY DIFFERENT PLACE.



ACCORDING TO HANA, THOUGH, ASTERIOS PRACTICED HIS OWN RITUALS OF DEVOTION.







STILL, DESPITE HIS SKEPTICISM, ASTERIOS IS QUICK TO ADMIT THAT RELIGION ACCOUNTS FOR SOME OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WORKS OF ART IN MANKIND'S HISTORY.











# MAJOR AUTO REPAIR







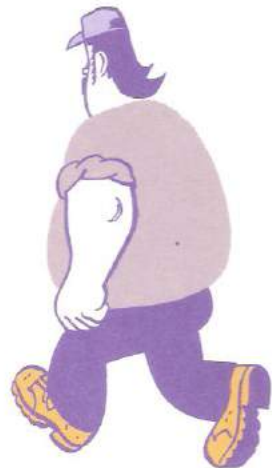


I SUPPOSE THAT MEANS IT'S OKAY.

ALL RIGHT, THEN. SEE YOU BOYS FOR DINNER.



WHAT'S WITH THE PHOTOVOLTAIC PANELS ON THE CADDY?



You know we got a flooding problem, right? One time, a few years back, we lost the electric for two weeks.



I started thinkin' how everythin's connected to the power gridiron...

... and two weeks - that's not even a fraction of what we coulda lost.

So I put some solar panels on the house, and that made me think about playin' with this old heap.



I even got her to putter around a little...

... 'cept for when you had too many rainy days in a row.















I CAN NEVER WEAR A WATCH. MY MAGNETIC FIELD ALWAYS SCREWS THEM UP.

NOW, WHEN THE TUNING FORK IS VIBRATING - SHAKING - IT MAKES A SOUND, LIKE A MUSICAL NOTE.



IT'S LIKE WHEN YOU PLUCK A GUITAR STRING - THE STRING MAKES A SOUND, AND THAT SOUND LASTS UNTIL THE STRING STOPS VIBRATING.



IN HERE, THE MAGNETS WON'T LET THE FORK STOP VIBRATING, SO IT KEEPS HUMMING.



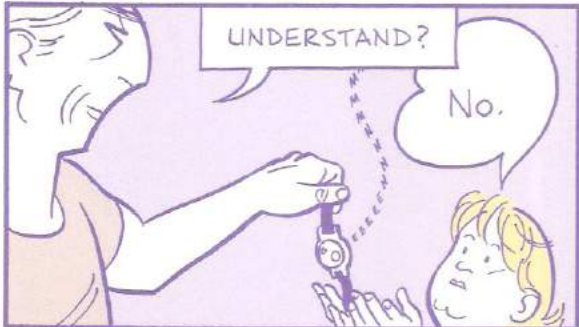
OF COURSE, THE SOUND IS LITTLE BECAUSE THE WATCH IS SO SMALL...



...BUT IF WE MOVE THE VIBRATION TO SOMETHING BIG AND HOLLOW...



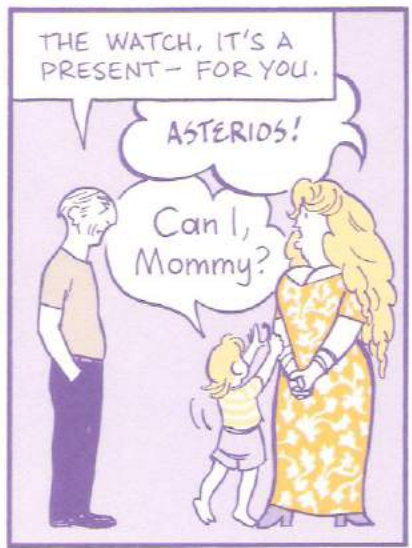
Cool!



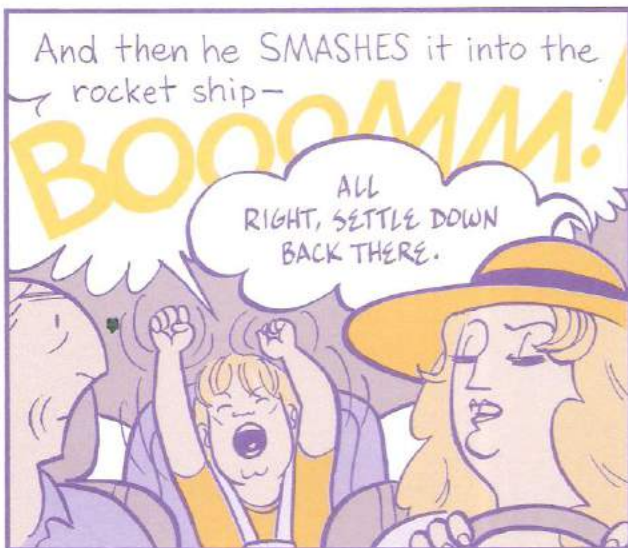
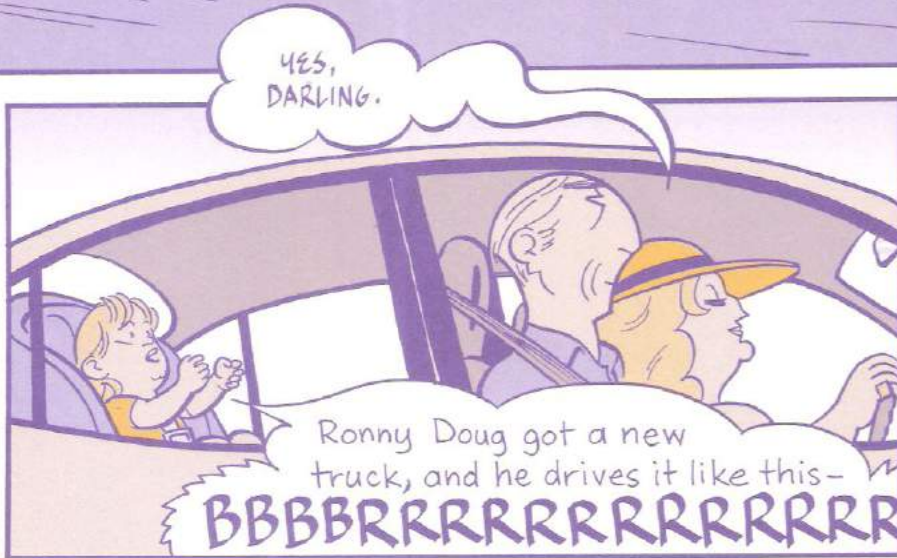
UNDERSTAND?  
No.



I like the way it sounds.









YOU MUST HAVE KNOWN IT WOULD BOTHER THEM, THEN, WHEN YOU TOOK HIS NAME.

OH, I'VE HAD SO MANY NAMES. IT'S LIKE, THEY'RE NOT IMPORTANT, Y'KNOW?





MY FATHER HAD BEEN ILL FOR A LONG TIME. THEN IT TURNED OUT, ALL THE YEARS MY MOTHER HAD BEEN TAKING CARE OF HIM, SHE HAD CANCER AND DIDN'T KNOW IT.



ANY SIBLINGS?



NO,



Come down and hang out on Poppyseed Ave...



WHO'S RONNY DOUG?

MMM...





STIFFLY SAYS HE'S JACKSON'S IMAGINARY FRIEND, BUT...



... LIKE, WHO AM I TO SAY?



I MEAN, NONE OF US IS HERE BY ACCIDENT - WE ALL ASKED TO BE HERE, SO...



... IF HE SEES HIM, IF HE HEARS HIM - HELL, EVEN IF HE DID MAKE HIM UP -



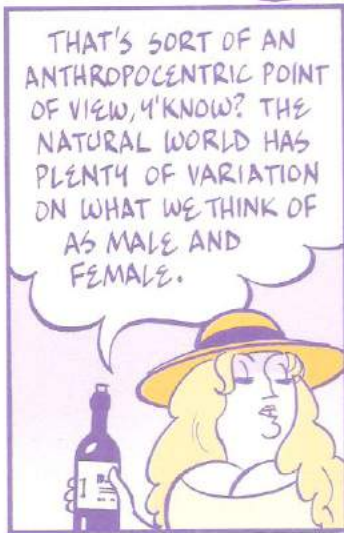
- HE MUST EXIST SOMEWHERE, Y'KNOW?





NOW, THAT'S  
A HOLE.







IN FACT, THESE TWO OFTEN BECAME SHAMANS BECAUSE THEY WERE RESPECTED FOR THEIR, Y'KNOW, DUAL NATURE.

THE WIDESPREAD ADOPTION OF A VIEW LIKE THAT WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE PRECLUDED A LOT OF MISERY IN THE WORLD.



WELL, Y'KNOW, IN LIFE, THINGS ARE SELDOM EITHER/OR.



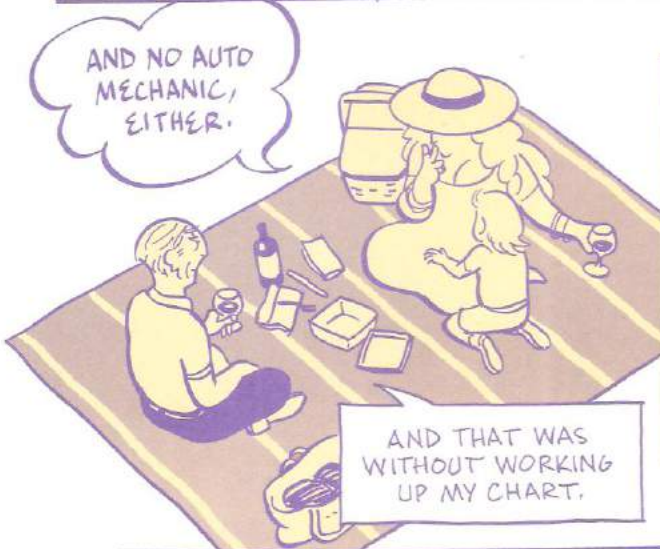
IT'S THAT KIND OF SIMPLISTIC THINKING THAT CREATES FANATICS.

Murderer!

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I'VE PROBABLY ENGAGED IN SOME OF THAT SIMPLISTIC THINKING MYSELF.

WELL, AS STIFFLY WOULD SAY, HINDSIGHT IS FIFTY-FIFTY. AND HE'D BE RIGHT!









LET'S TAKE YOU.



YOU'RE A SAD MAN.

FOR SOME REASON.



LIKE YOU'VE SUFFERED SOME GREAT LOSS...

...OR AT LEAST YOU THINK OF IT THAT WAY.



AND YOU'RE TRYING TO RUN AWAY FROM SOMETHING.

SNUFF

BUT, Y'KNOW, YOU CAN'T.



THAT ABOUT RIGHT?

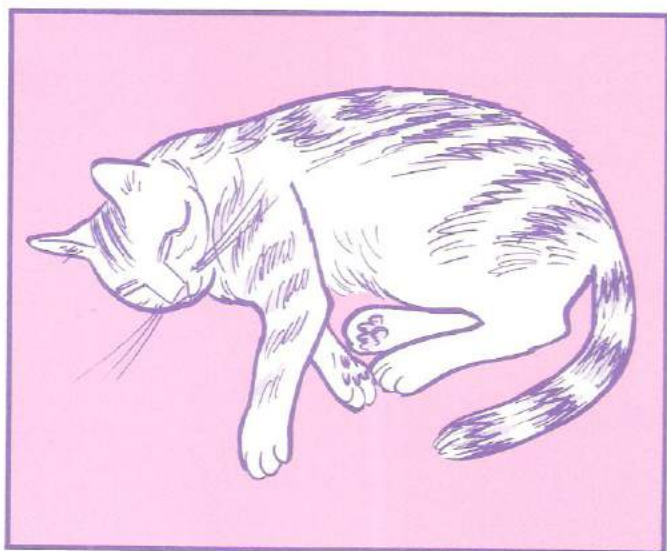


SHOULDN'T WE START THINKING ABOUT HEADING BACK?



HMMM...

AND I DIDN'T EVEN NEED MY CRYSTAL BALL.



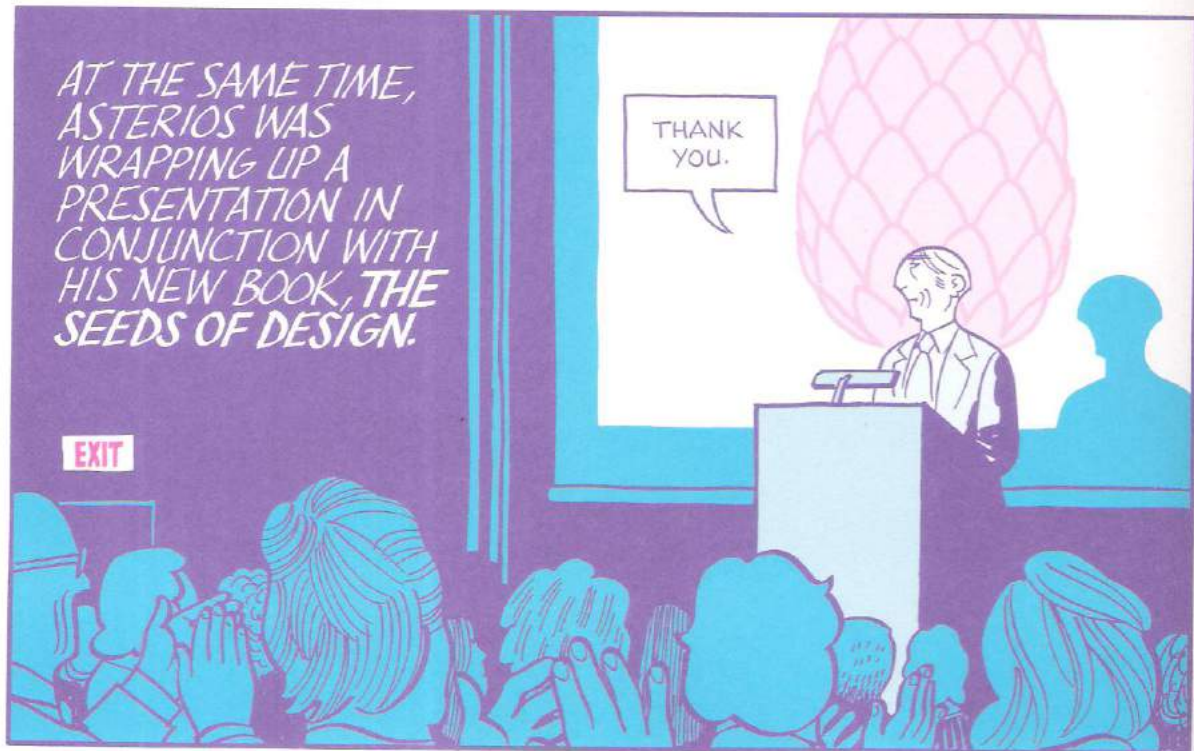


**IN** THE FALL OF 1991, WILLY ILIUM  
ROLLED ONTO CAMPUS IN A  
FOG OF IMPORTANCE.



HE CLAIMED HE HAD COME TO DELIVER  
A LECTURE, BUT NO ONE COULD  
REMEMBER HAVING INVITED HIM.

AT THE SAME TIME,  
ASTERIOS WAS  
WRAPPING UP A  
PRESENTATION IN  
CONJUNCTION WITH  
HIS NEW BOOK, *THE  
SEEDS OF DESIGN*.



A marvelous reexamination of "organic" moderns like Wright and Neutra viewed in the context of indigenous architecture and sustainability...

...but delivered with the giddiness of discovery, as if seeing a tree for the first time.

And that bit about "the humble pine cone" - I loved it!

WELL, IT'S JUST A MATTER OF PAYING ATTENTION.



I AM WILLY ILIUM. I WON'T BEAT AROUND THE BUSH - OR ANYWHERE IN ITS VICINITY, ONE OF THE REASONS I VENTURED HERE WAS TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE. I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING YOUR ENDEAVORS FOR SOME TIME.



I WISH TO PROPOSE A COLLABORATION. I HAVE BEEN ENGAGED TO CREATE A NEW THEATRICAL PRODUCTION, AND I WOULD LIKE YOU TO DESIGN THE SETS AND COSTUMES.



THAT'S VERY FLATTERING, MR. ILIUM, BUT I'M NOT SURE I'M INTERESTED IN TAKING -



EXCUSE ME. I WASN'T TALKING TO YOU.





WILLY ILIUM WAS A CHOREOGRAPHER WHO, TEN YEARS EARLIER, HAD EXCITED THE NEW YORK DANCE WORLD WITH HIS AUDACIOUS APPROACH TO CHOREOGRAPHY.



ESSENTIALLY, HIS PIECES WERE FORMED BY EXCISING SEQUENCES FROM FAMOUS DANCE COMPOSITIONS AND REASSEMBLING THEM INTO NEW WORKS,

HE SEEMED TO HAVE APPLIED A SIMILAR METHOD TO HIS OWN NAME AS WELL.



SO THAT BALANCHINE, PERROT, GRAHAM, AND THARP (TO NAME A FEW) RUBBED ELBOWS—AND ASSES—ONSTAGE.



ALMOST IMMEDIATELY, ASTERIOS DUBBED HIM "WILLY CHIMERA!"





FORGIVE ME, WILLY, BUT YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE MY IDEA OF A DANCER.

I DON'T DANCE, THE IDEA THAT AN ARTIST MUST BE A PRACTITIONER IS TRÈS RETARDATAIRE.

Thank you.

MY DEAR, ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE SUBCELLAR?

I don't think so...

IT'S A VERY IMPORTANT PERFORMANCE SPACE, VERY CUTTING-EDGE. THEY HAVE COMMISSIONED - FROM ME - A NEW PIECE, AND I HAVE CONTRIVED SOMETHING SO BOLD, SO ORIGINAL - SO MONUMENTAL, IT WILL MAKE OSSA LIKE A WART.

AND THAT IS?

ORPHEUS (UNDERGROUND)!

I HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU, WILLY, BUT STAGING ORPHEUS IS HARDLY ORIGINAL.

NONSENSE, OF COURSE IT'S ORIGINAL - IT'S MY VERSION. BESIDES, ALL GREAT ARTISTS REVISIT THE CLASSICS.

THIS ONE'S BEEN VISITED MORE THAN MECCA,

CIGARETTE?

DISGUSTING HABIT.

Finally! Somebody who agrees with me!





AH, YES...  
YES! THIS  
IS -



**WHIP**



**WHIP**



- EXACTLY  
WHAT I'VE  
BEEN  
LOOKING  
FOR.



WHO WOULD BELIEVE THAT WITHIN THIS DELICATE FLOWER COULD GERMINATE TITANS THAT SPEAK OF SUCH OPPRESSIVE DECREPITUDE?

Well...  
I just put  
discarded  
things  
together...



IT'S A VERITABLE VORTEX FOR THE DETRITUS OF INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY!







HANA ACCEPTED THE JOB,  
AND SET TO WORK WITH  
HER CUSTOMARY  
DILIGENCE.



AND (AS USUAL), FEARING FAILURE,  
SHE OBSESSED OVER EVERY  
MARK IN EVERY DRAWING.



SHE ALSO BEGAN  
MAKING WEEKEND  
TRIPS TO NEW YORK  
FOR CONSULTATIONS  
WITH WILLY ILIUM.



I'm back.

MR RRAAORRAO

SOMEBODY MISSED YOU.

How's my boy?



Well, Willy liked all the sketches I brought him.

WILLY CHIMERA?

PRRRP

He's been very encouraging.



He said he doesn't want me to hold back - he wants to see me naked, exposed.



DID HE REALLY?

Then he went on a half-hour tirade about how the dancers don't respect him because he's shorter than they are.



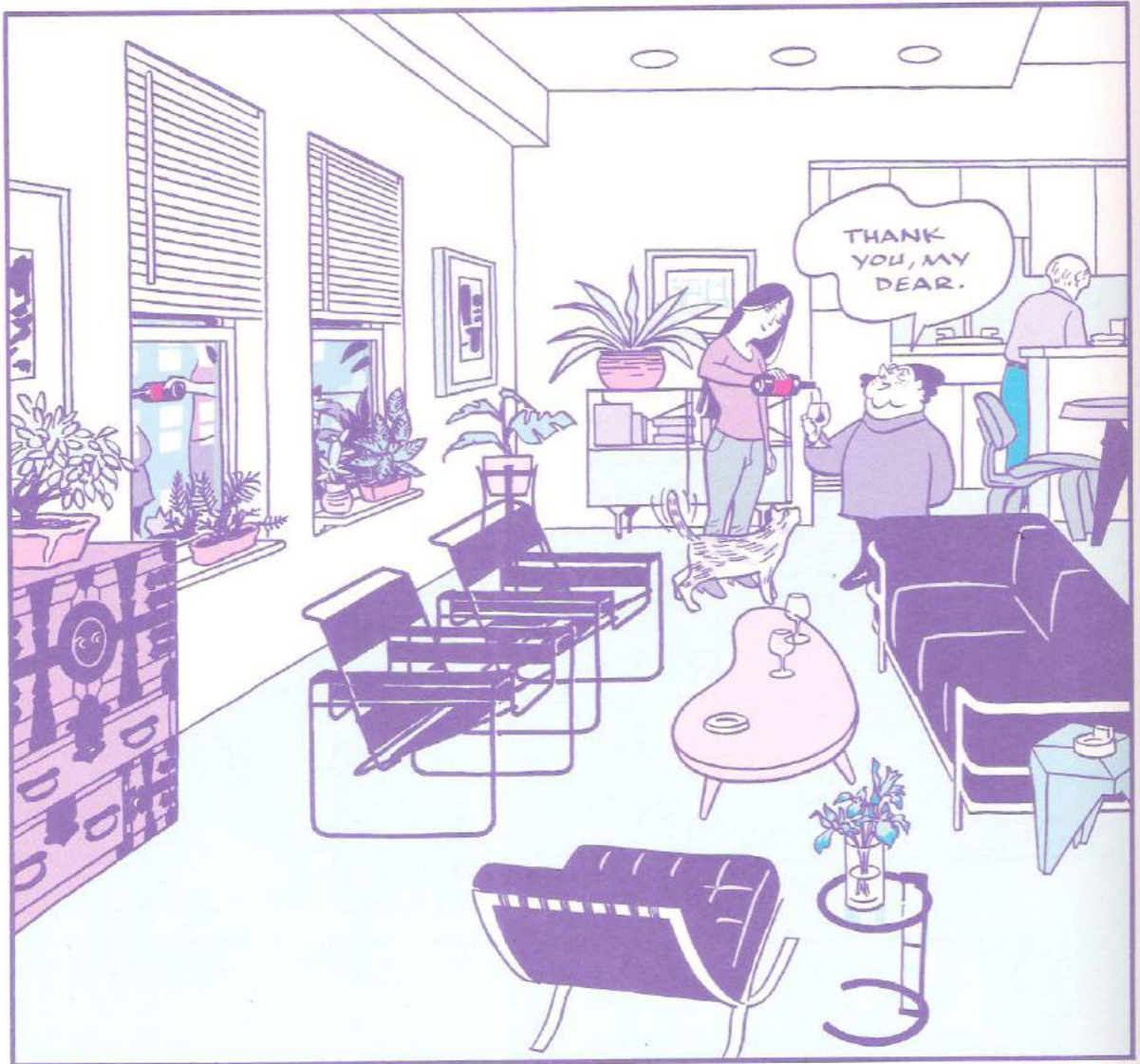
He said - you'll like this - they don't realize that a man of his stature, "engorged with genius," is really a giant.

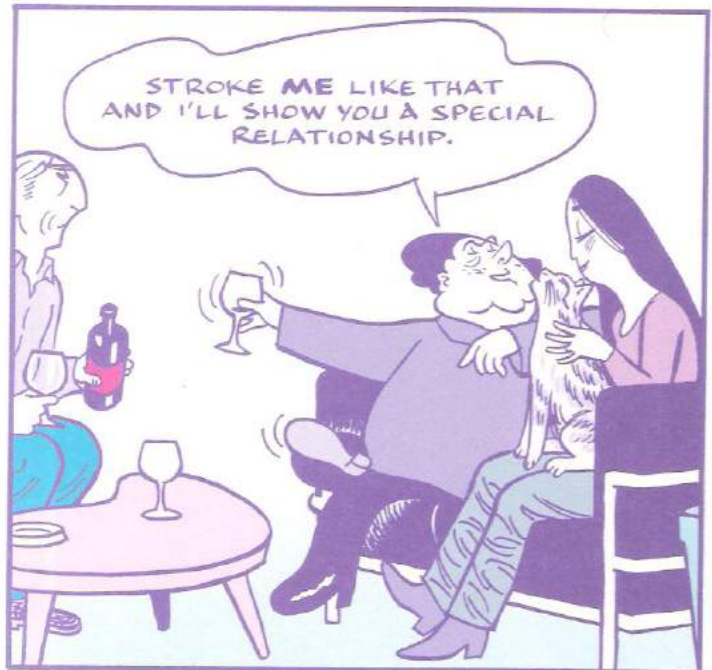
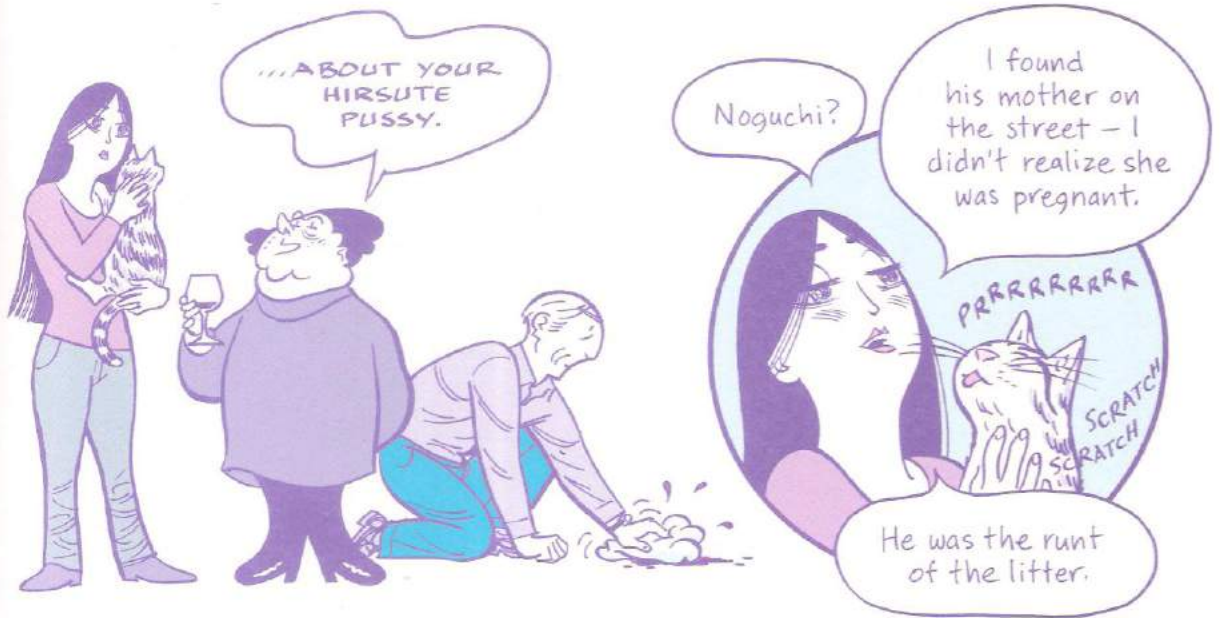
HE CERTAINLY HAS A WAY WITH WORDS.





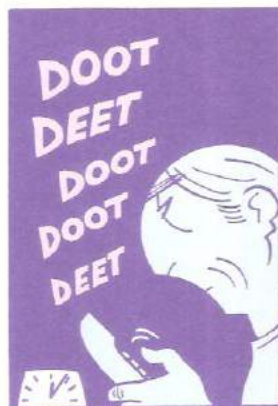
OCCASIONALLY, ASTERIOS ACCOMPANIED HANA TO NEW YORK.



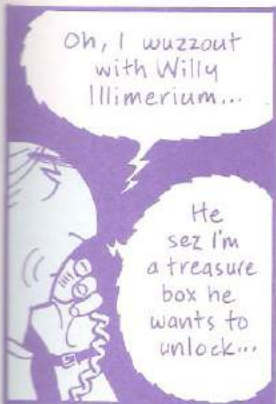
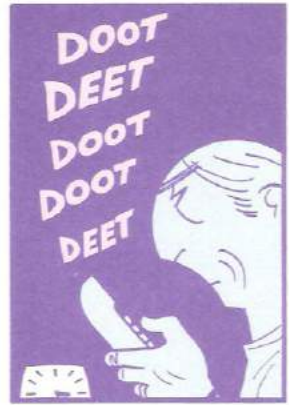
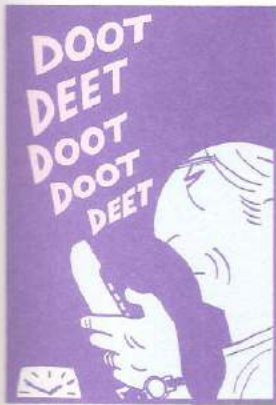




SOON, ALMOST ALL OF HANA'S FREE TIME SEEMED TO BE DEVOTED TO ORPHEUS (UNDERGROUND).

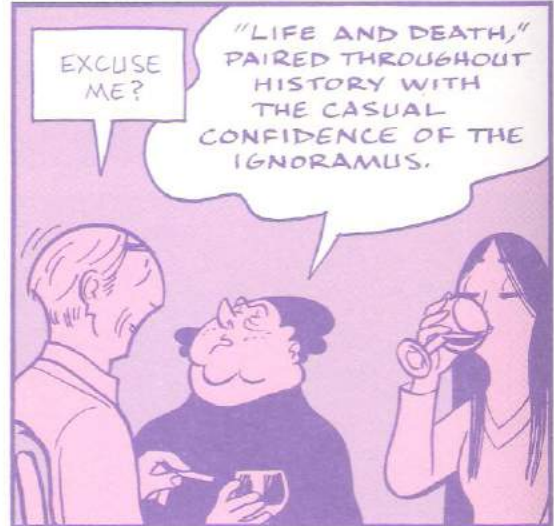


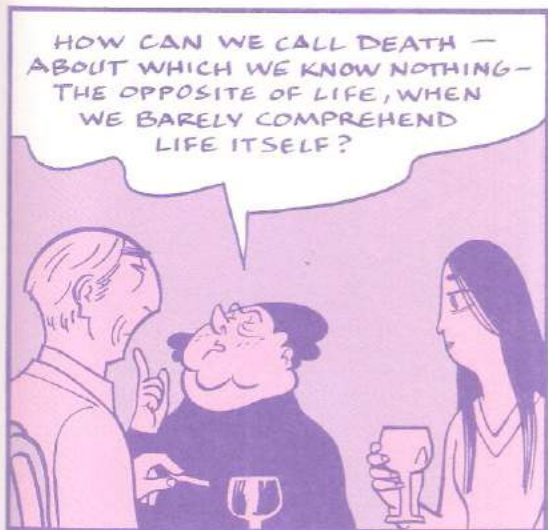






THIS MEANT THAT ASTERIOS WAS TREATED TO THE WILLY CHIMERA EXPERIENCE A LITTLE MORE OFTEN THAN HE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED.



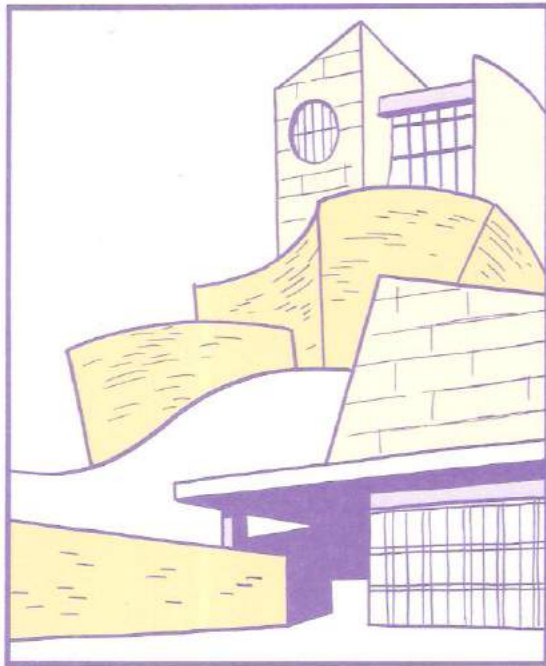


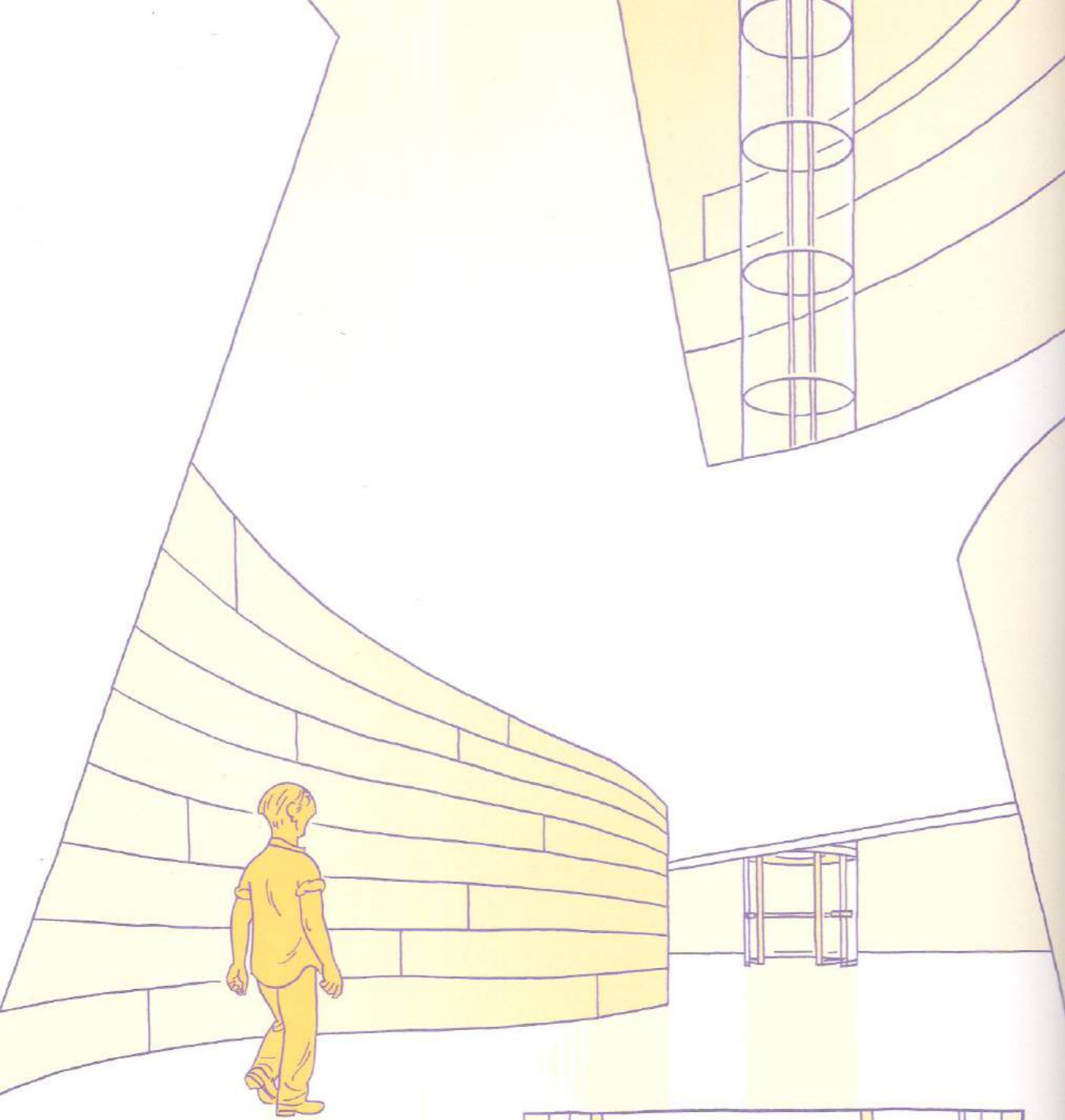




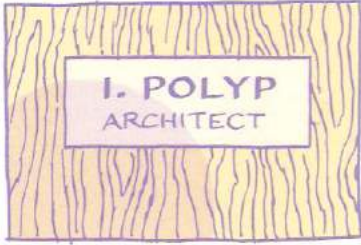
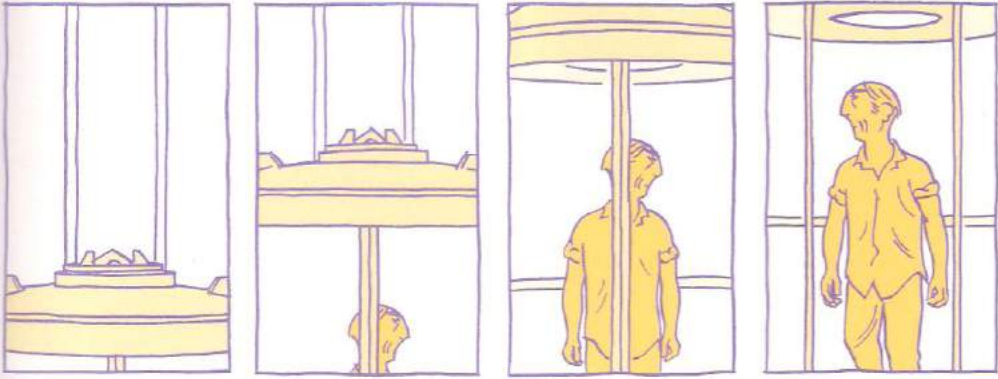
















I'M SORRY IT'S TAKEN  
SO LONG TO GET TOGETHER,  
BUT MY SCHEDULE'S  
BEEN CRAZY.



THERE'S THE  
MUSEUM IN SPAIN,  
AND A DOZEN  
OTHER PROJECTS...



...AND THIS MONTH  
I'M ACCEPTING THE  
PRITZKER PRIZE.

BUT REALLY,  
I OWE IT ALL  
TO YOU.



TO  
ME?

OF COURSE.



CLIK

YOU MADE  
ME WHAT I AM  
TODAY.



WHAT'S ALL THIS?

Can you believe this stuff was bein' tossed away?

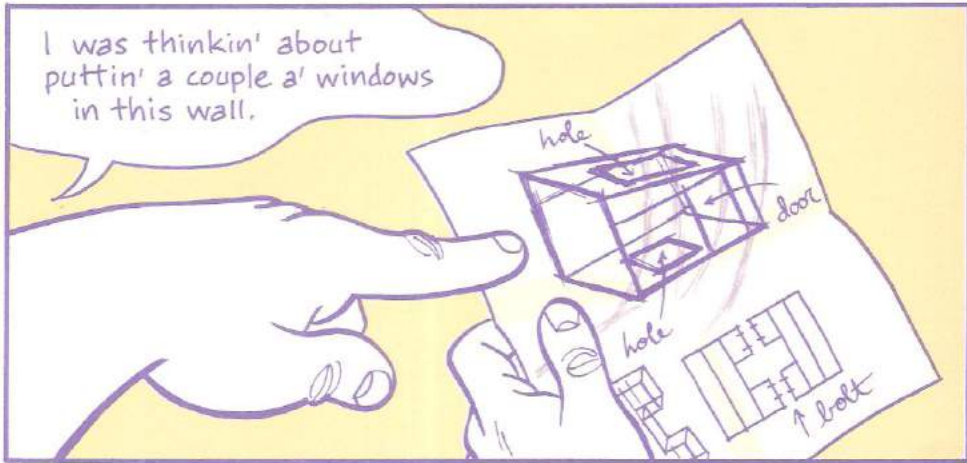


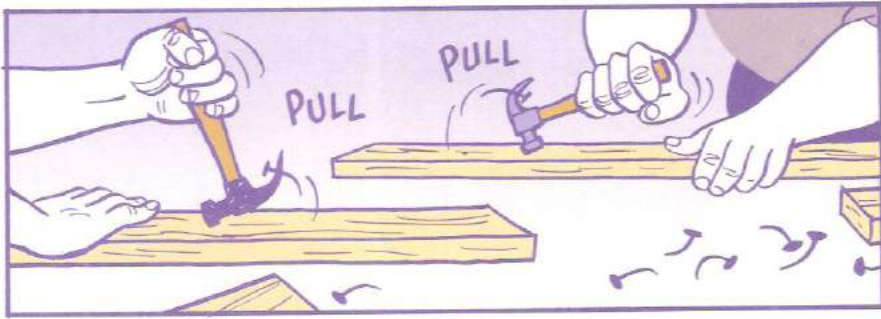
Lookit - the wood's all straight.

We just gotta pull the nails out an' it'll be perfect.

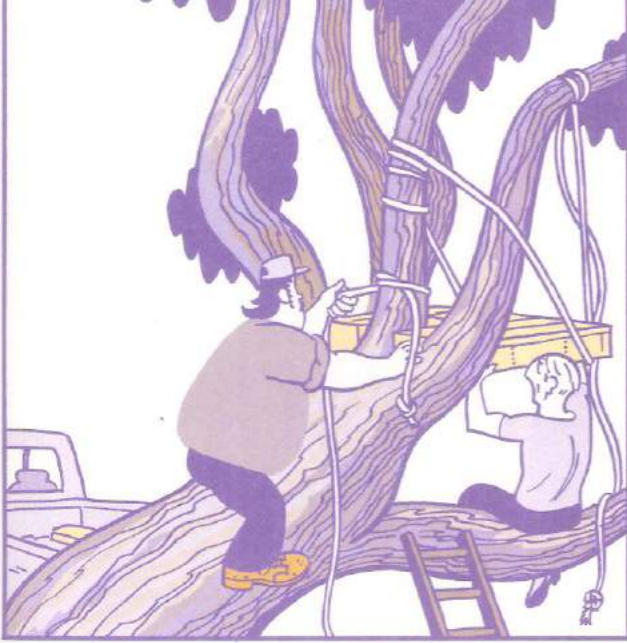
FOR WHAT?

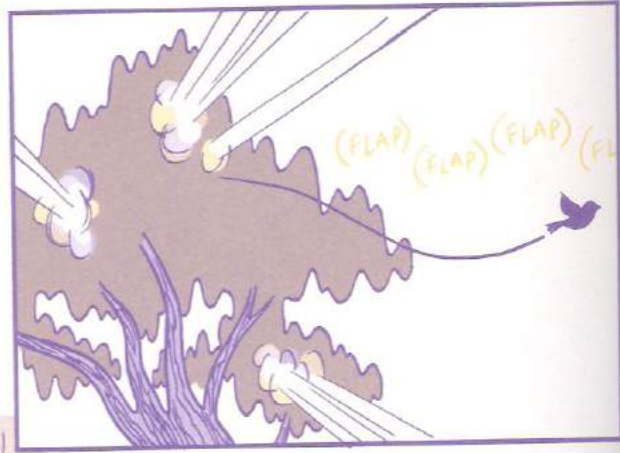




















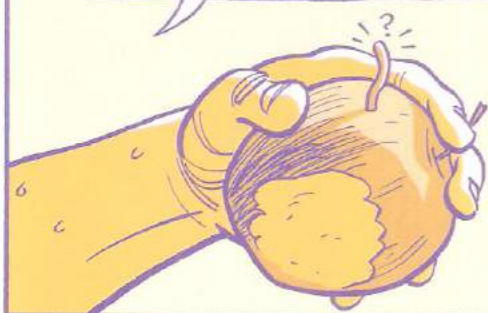
THERE'S A SHINTO SHRINE IN THE TOWN OF ISE THAT'S CONSIDERED THE MOST SACRED SHRINE IN ALL JAPAN.



IT DATES BACK TO THE FOURTH CENTURY, BUT SINCE THE LATE 800s IT'S BEEN CEREMONIALLY RAZED AND REBUILT EVERY TWENTY YEARS, USING TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS.



AT ANY GIVEN TIME, NO SINGLE PIECE OF THE STRUCTURE IS OLDER THAN TWO DECADES...



... BUT THE JAPANESE WILL TELL YOU THE SHRINE IS ABOUT TWO THOUSAND YEARS OLD.

THAT MAKES PERFECT SENSE TO ME.





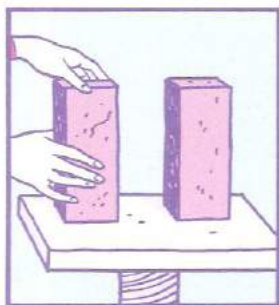
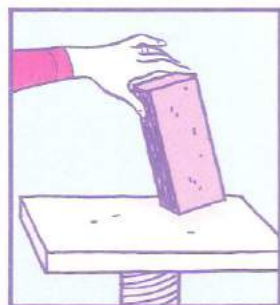


**ONE** OF THE THINGS ASTERIOS ADMIRIED ABOUT HANA WAS THE WAY SHE ALWAYS LOOKED FOR THE GOOD IN PEOPLE.

IN FACT, HE WAS SOMETIMES CONVINCED SHE SAW GOOD THAT WASN'T THERE.

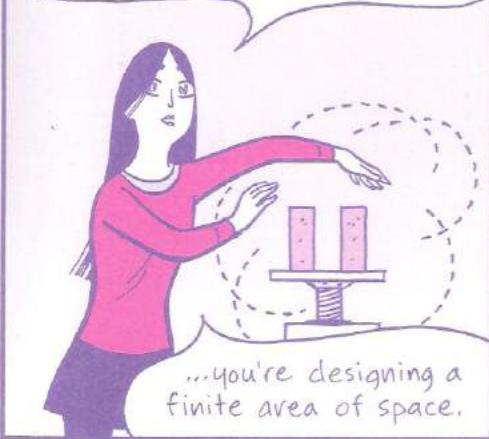


Everybody, gather 'round.





Good. Here's what I'd like you to remember: as a sculptor, you're not just making forms...





PERHAPS HER INCLINATION TO GIVE PEOPLE  
THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT  
COMPLEMENTED HIS  
IMPATIENCE.



...NOW, WHY DO WE HAVE  
TO SEE WILLY CHIMERA  
AGAIN TOMORROW?

He wants me to meet  
the composer. You might  
find it interesting.



YOU'RE STILL ENJOYING  
WORKING WITH HIM?

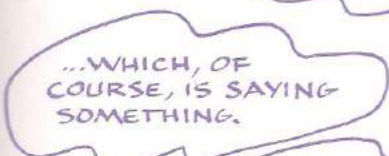
I am.  
It's a creative  
challenge.



BUT HE'S SO  
MIND-NUMBINGLY  
FULL OF  
HIMSELF.



Maybe I've grown  
accustomed to that.





KALVIN KOHOUTEK, A COMPOSER KNOWN FOR HIS ECLECTIC AND EXPERIMENTAL MUSICAL EXPLORATIONS, CALLED HIS STYLE OF LIVING "BOHEGEOIS."

ASTERIOS WONDERED BRIEFLY IF THAT WAS NOT HIS GIVEN NAME.





HIS WALLS WERE COVERED WITH TRANSCRIPTIONS OF PASSAGES FROM HIS FAVORITE COMPOSITIONS.





Actually, actually not, really. It's more like each page is a record of time passing in a certain way.



This one, for example, represents about thirteen seconds, while this one is about, about four and a half minutes.



For Orpheus (Underground), I'm writing a simple pattern in each of the Greek modes, layering one on top of the other in descending order - locrian, aeolian, mixolydian, etc. - until all of them are playing at the same time.



SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING ONE OF MY STUDENTS WOULD DREAM UP.

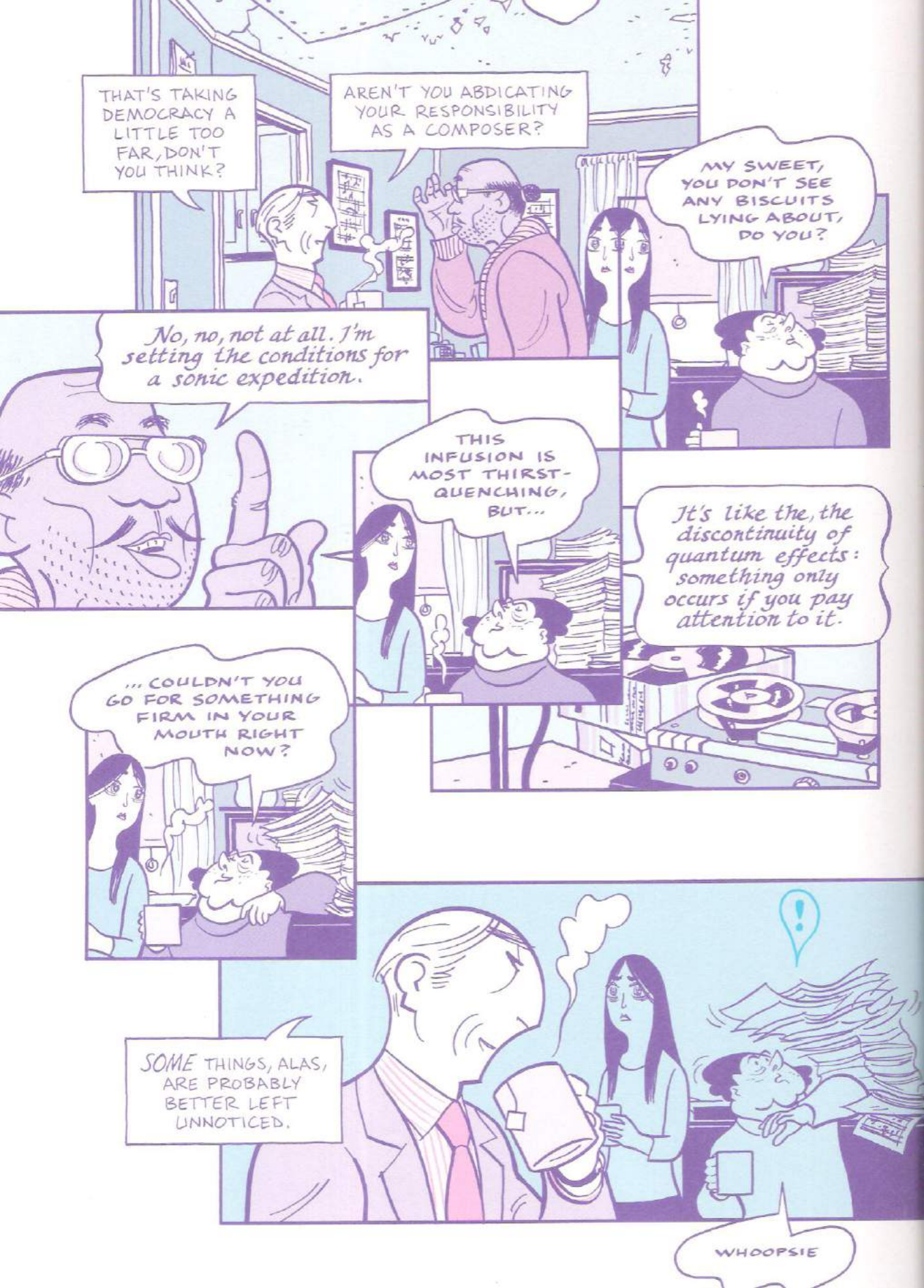
IT WILL BE LIKE PYTHAGORAS' MUSIC OF THE SPHERES!











THAT'S TAKING  
DEMOCRACY A  
LITTLE TOO  
FAR, DON'T  
YOU THINK?

AREN'T YOU ABDICATING  
YOUR RESPONSIBILITY  
AS A COMPOSER?

MY SWEET,  
YOU DON'T SEE  
ANY BISCUITS  
LYING ABOUT,  
DO YOU?

*No, no, not at all. I'm  
setting the conditions for  
a sonic expedition.*

THIS  
INFUSION IS  
MOST THIRST-  
QUENCHING,  
BUT...

*It's like the, the  
discontinuity of  
quantum effects:  
something only  
occurs if you pay  
attention to it.*

... COULDN'T YOU  
GO FOR SOMETHING  
FIRM IN YOUR  
MOUTH RIGHT  
NOW?

SOME THINGS, ALAS,  
ARE PROBABLY  
BETTER LEFT  
UNNOTICED.

WHOOPSIE



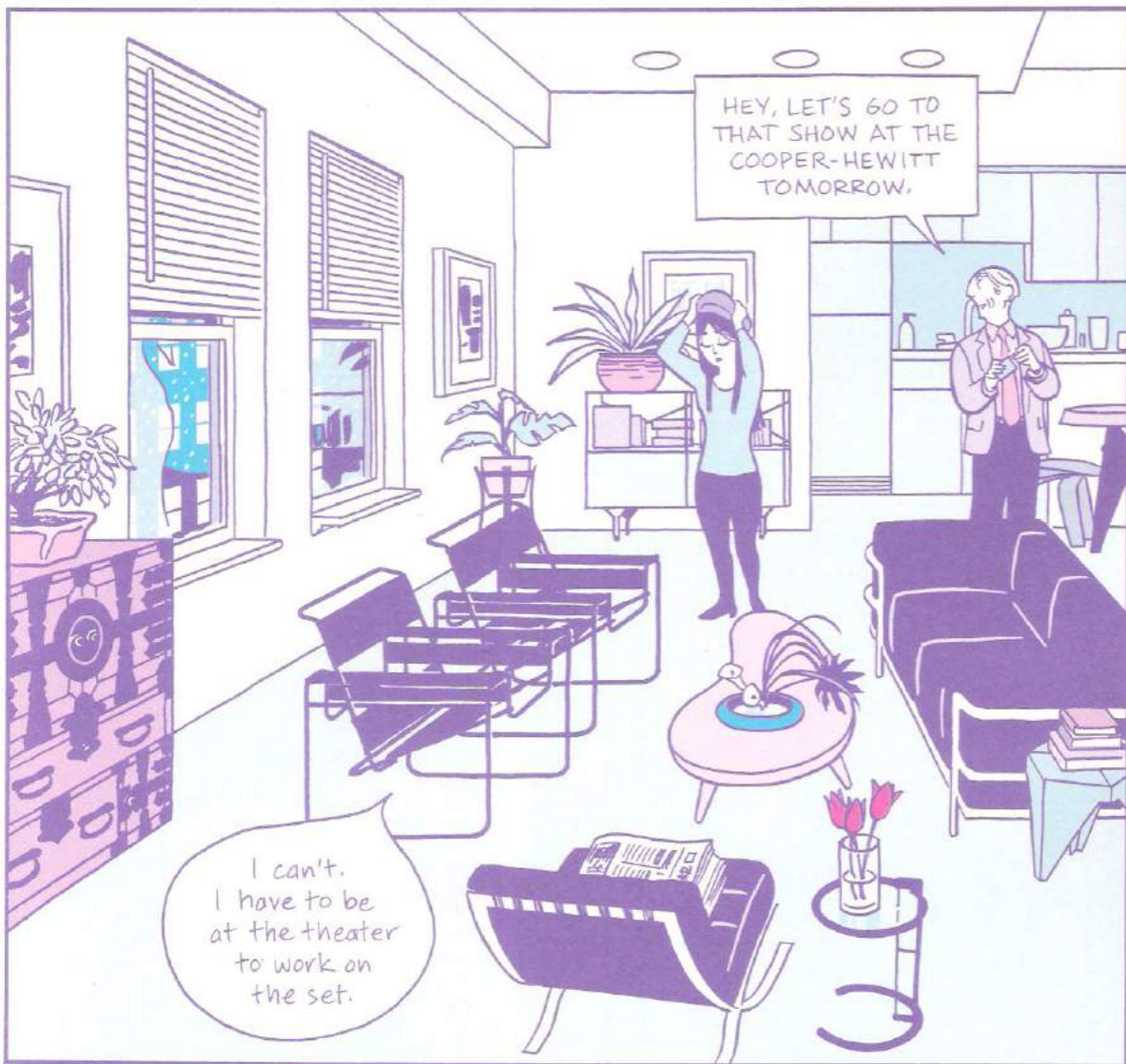




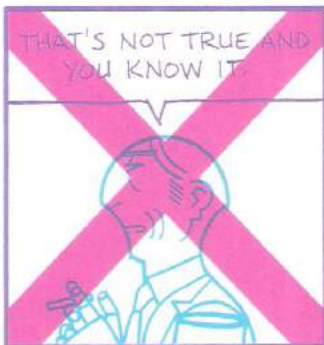
ASTERIOS CAN'T RECALL IF  
HANA HAD ANYTHING TO  
SAY ON THE WAY HOME.

HE WAS TOO BUSY THINKING  
UP NEW REJOINDERS TO  
KOHOUTEK'S COMMENTS.









You act like you already know everything about everyone,

Did you even notice his cane? Do you have any idea how Calvin got that broken hip?

I DON'T KNOW... WALKING...

...THROUGH HIS APARTMENT?

Trying to march in Selma in 1965!

OKAY, I GET THE POINT.

There's a difference between confidence and arrogance, you know.

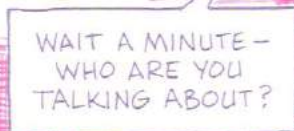
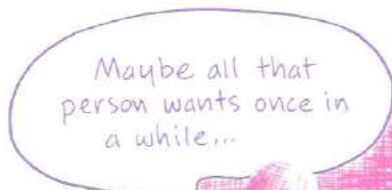
Not everybody feels the need to show off what he knows all the time.

A person might have strengths or talents that aren't obvious right away — especially if he's being drowned out by someone barreling over him.

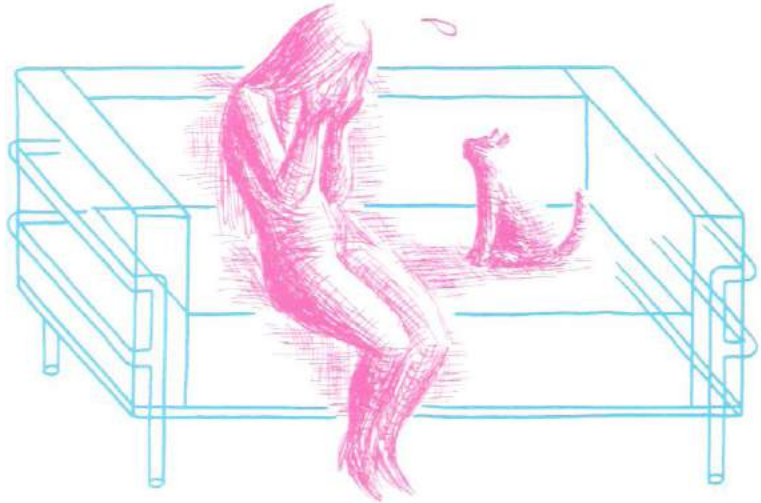
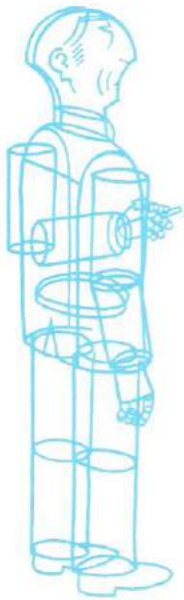
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'RE GETTING SO ANGRY.

AND BY THE WAY, THAT'S A MIXED METAPHOR.

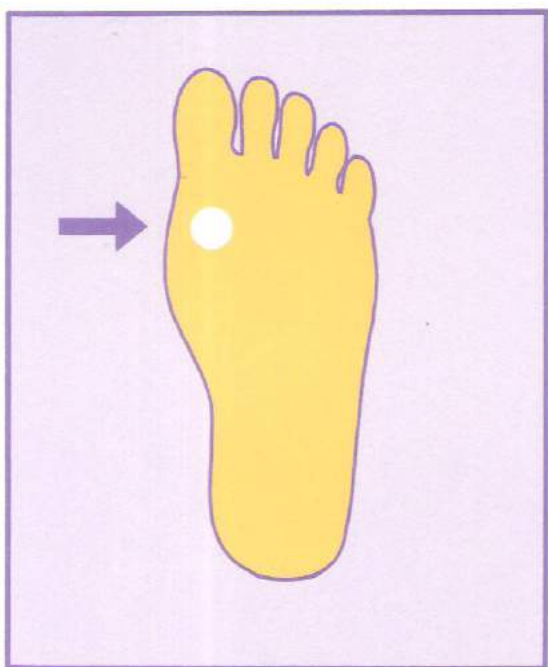




Why  
do you  
always let him  
talk to me  
like  
that?







I HAVE A  
BLISTER ON  
MY FOOT.





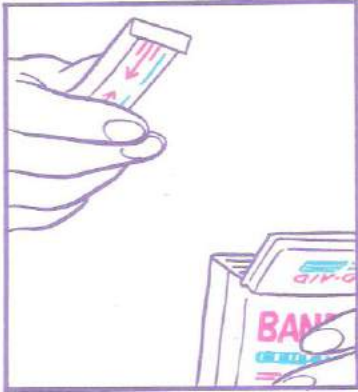


I HAVE A  
BLISTER ON  
MY FOOT.



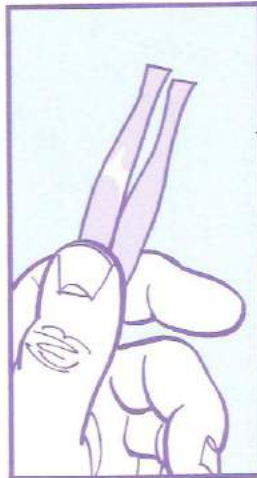




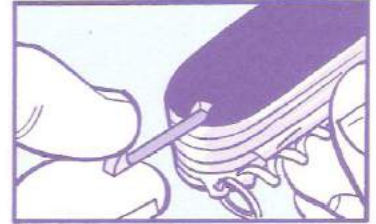
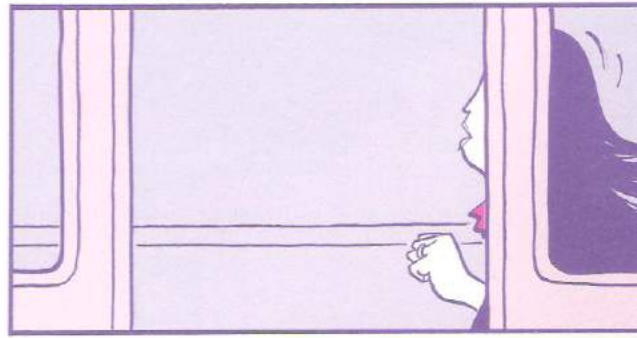




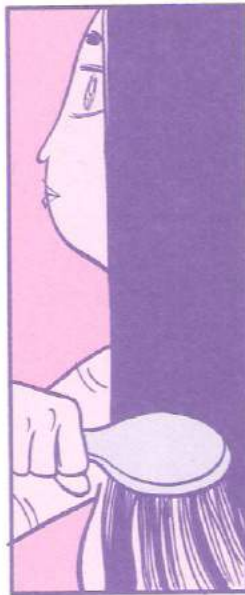




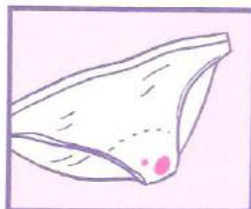


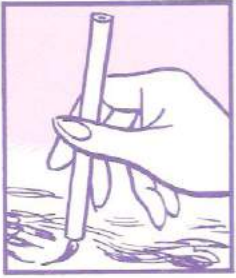














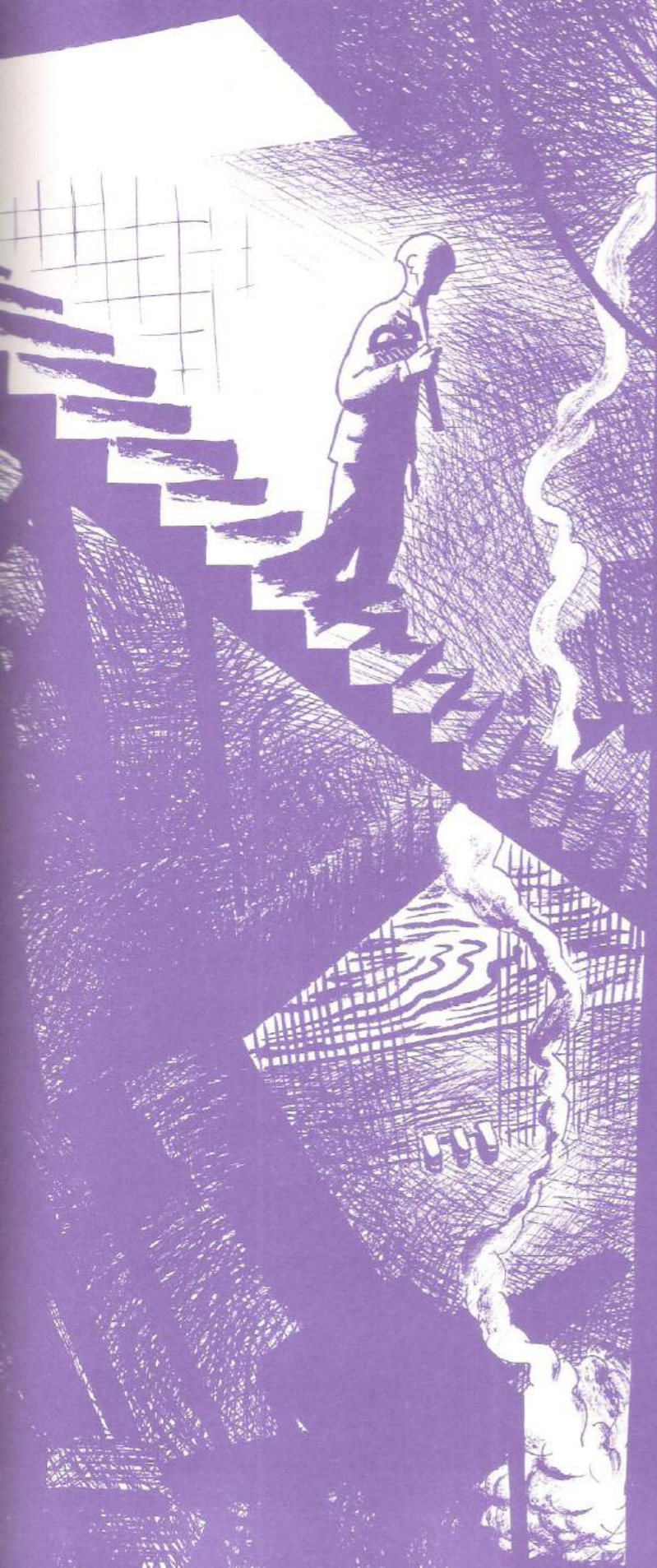












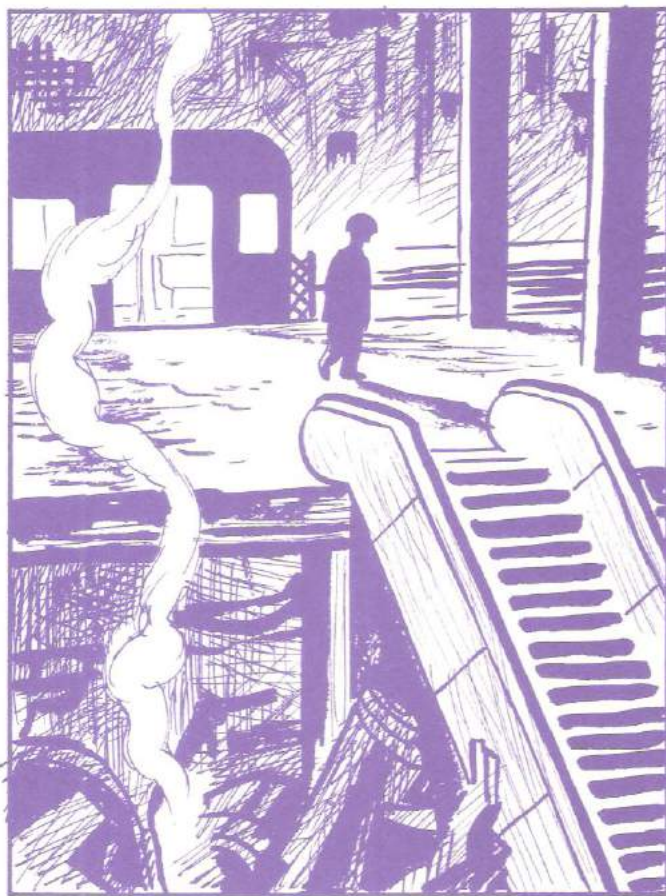












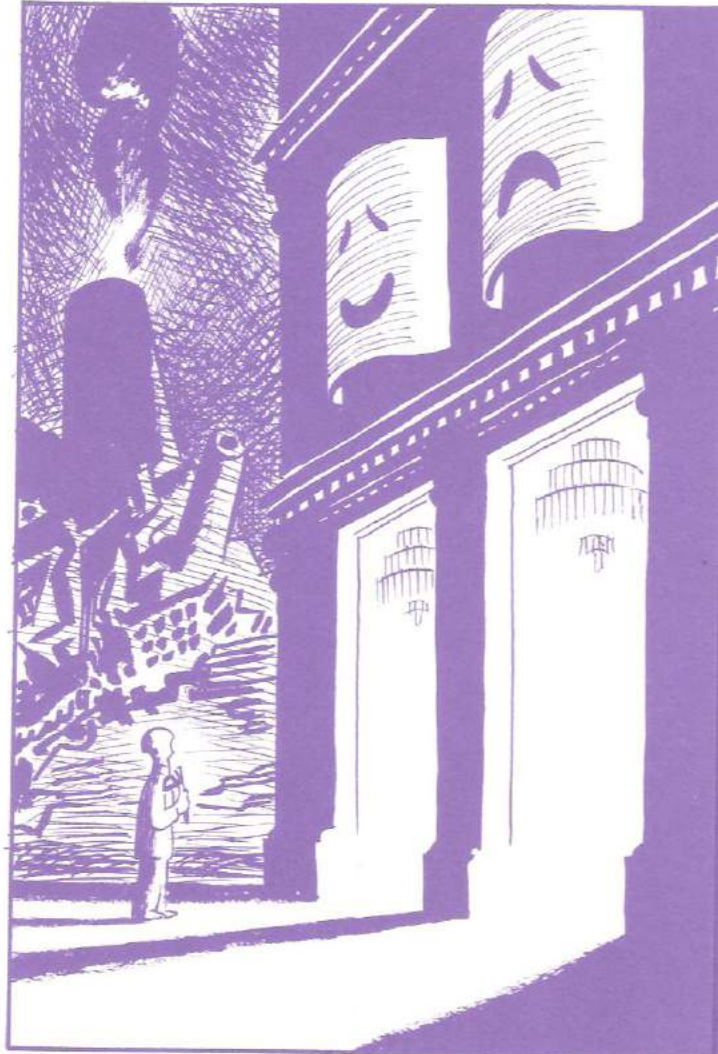




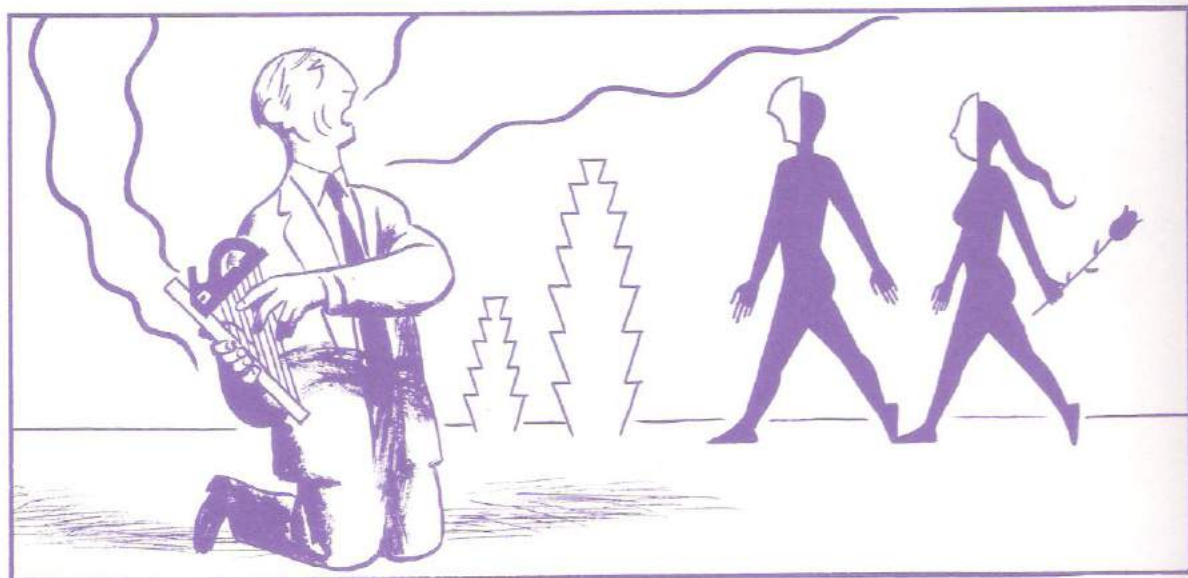
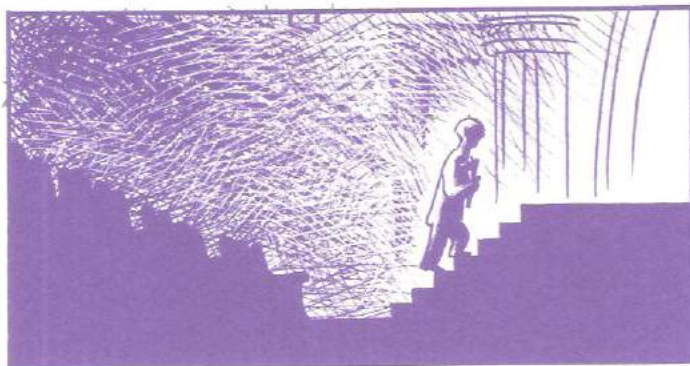










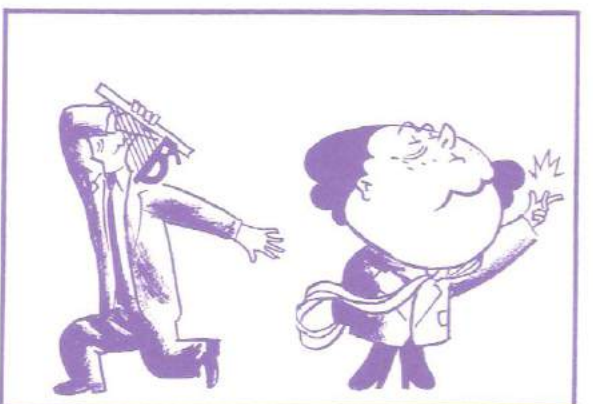
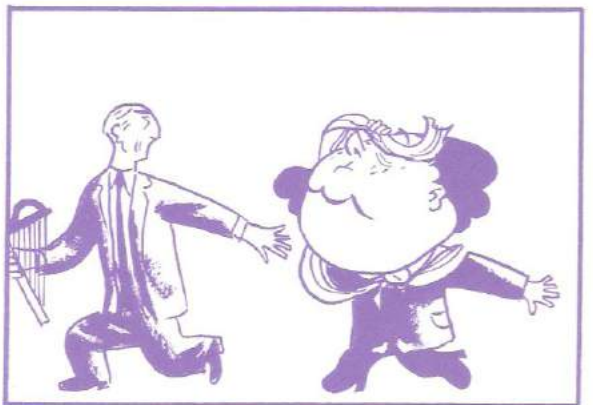
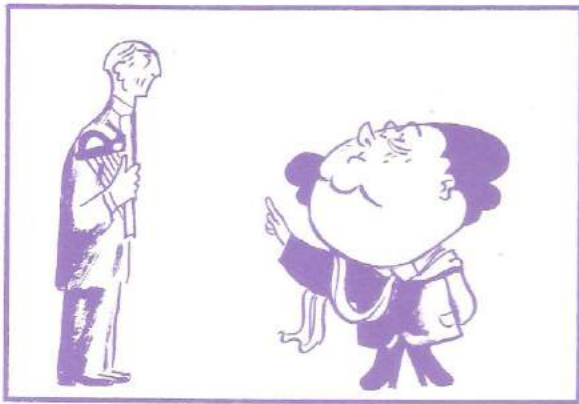




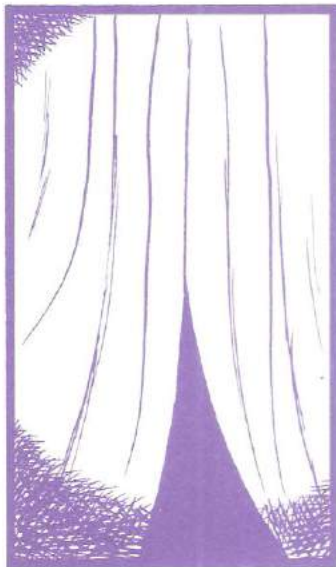
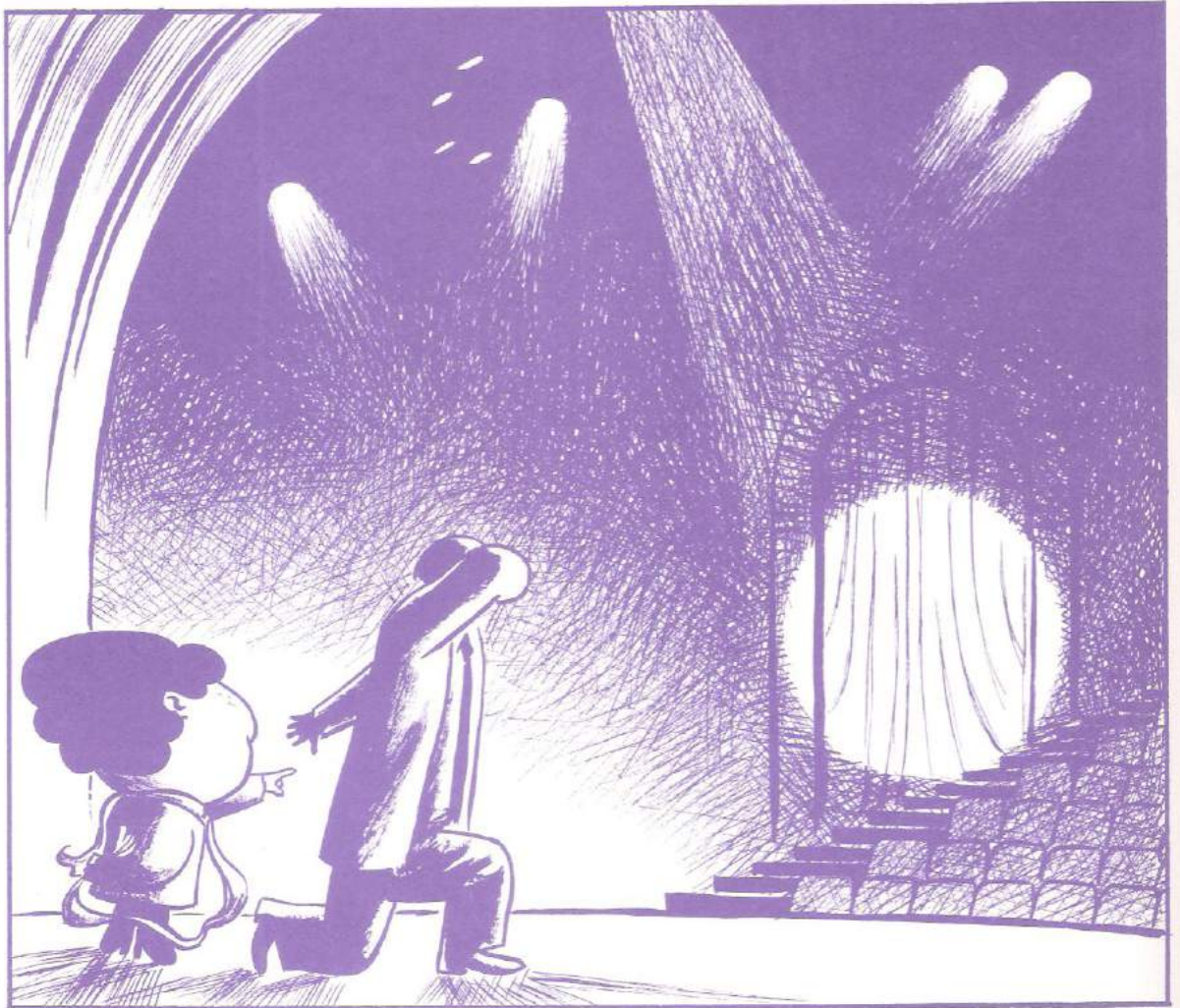




















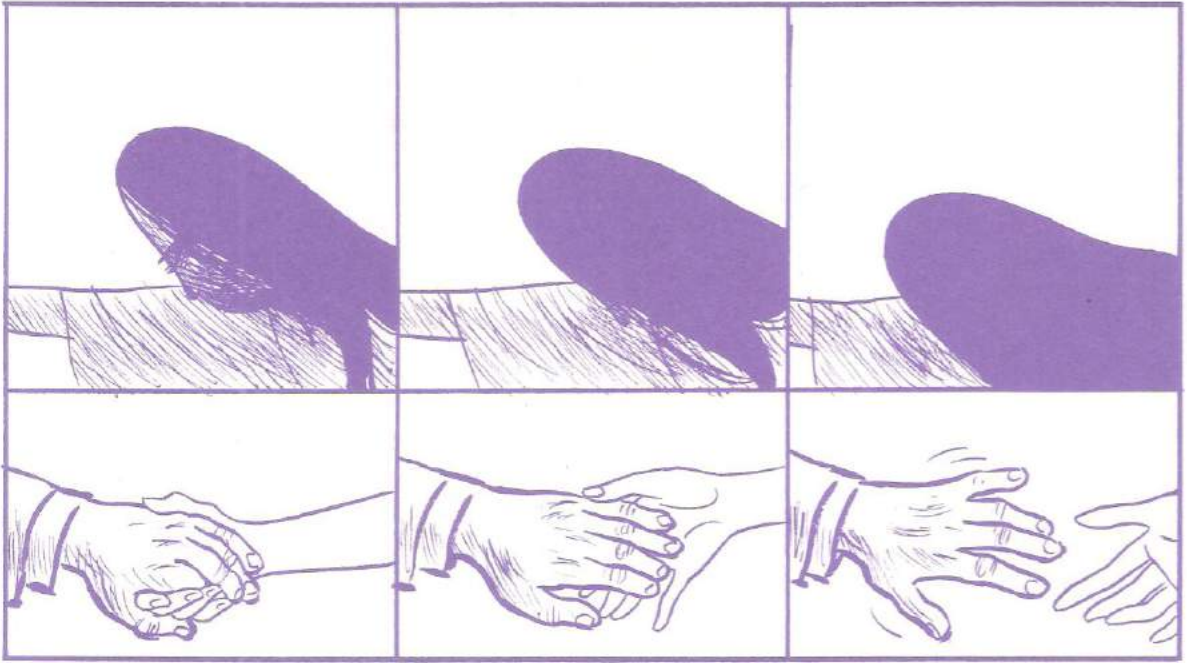




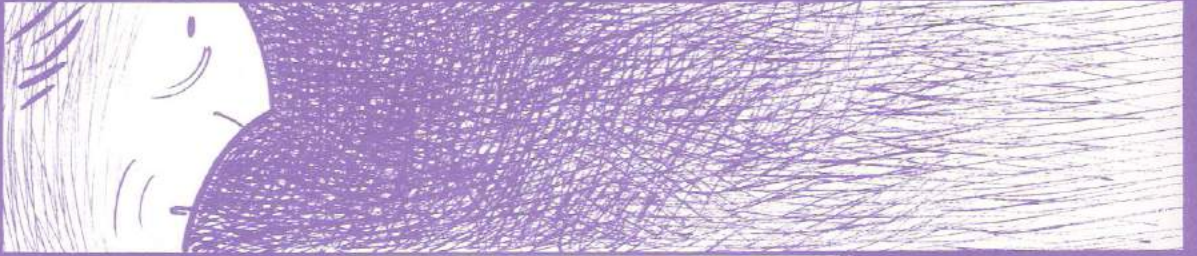


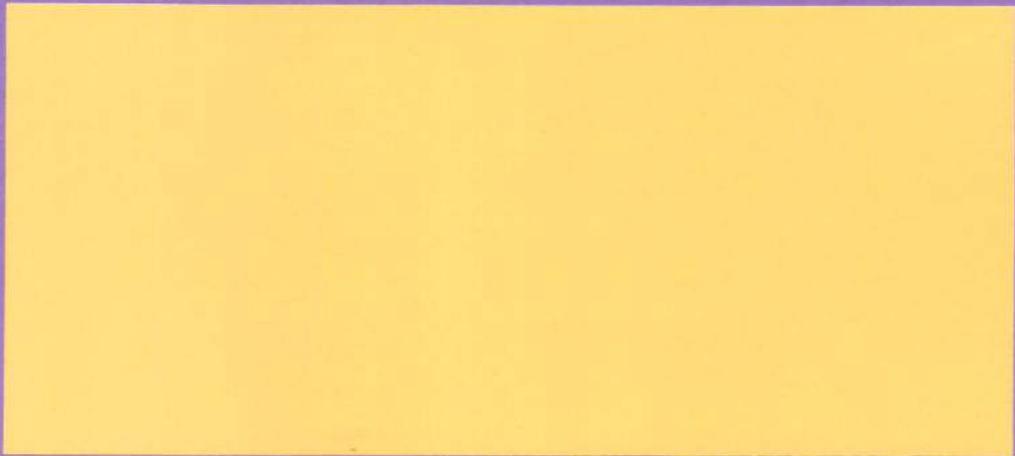














# ONE-EYED JACK'S

LIVE MUSIC



TONIGHT

11:00

## CELTIC SHELTER

10:00

OTHMAR'S EGGHELLS

9:00

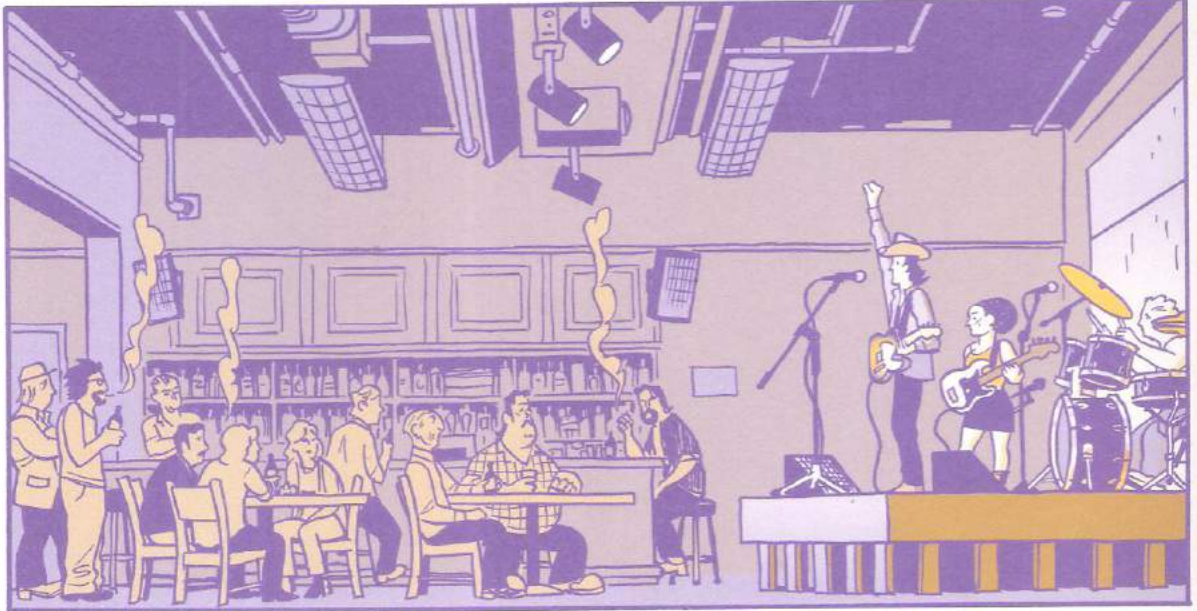
~~THE RUDNICKS~~ The RUDNICKS



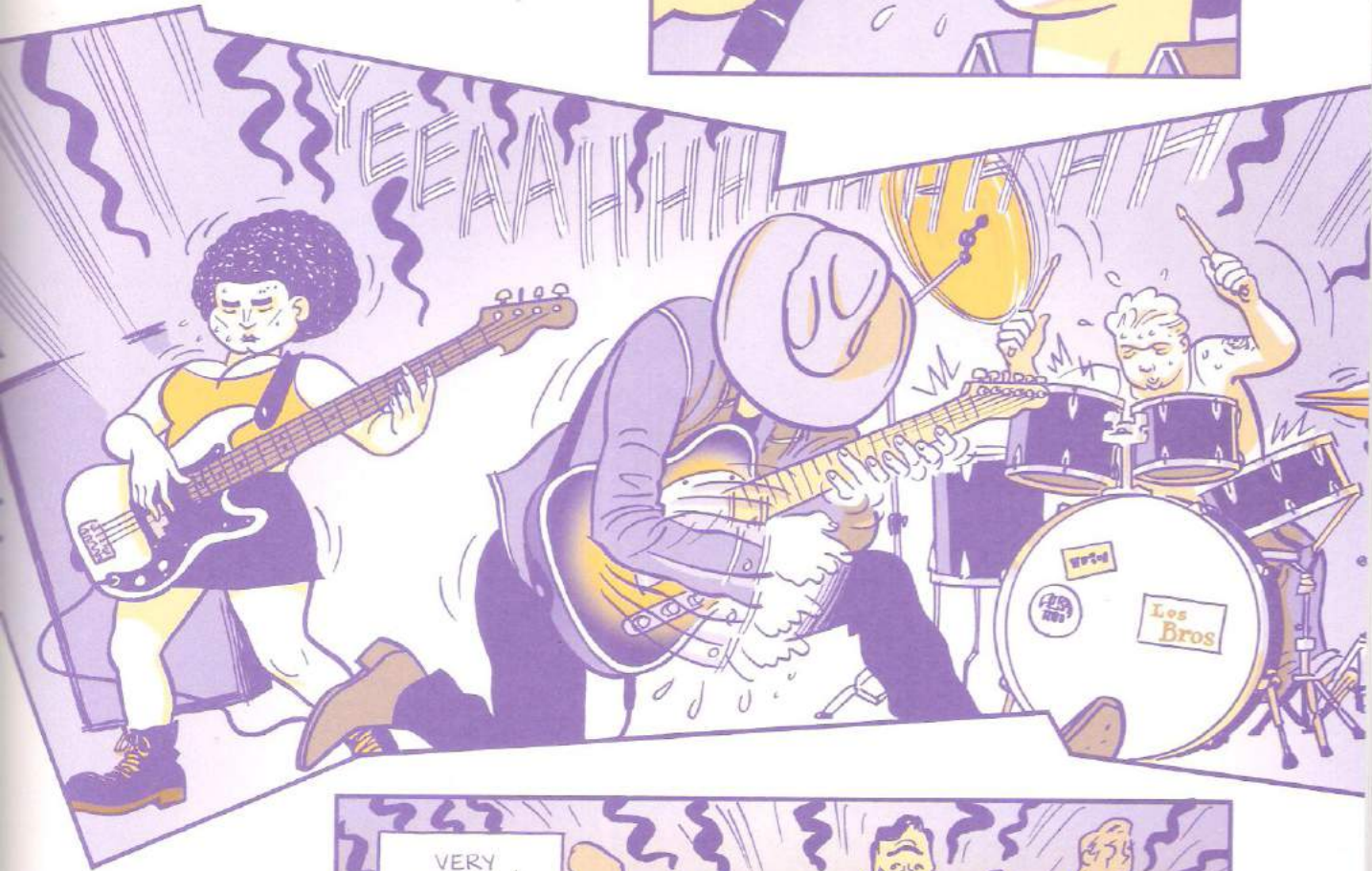


















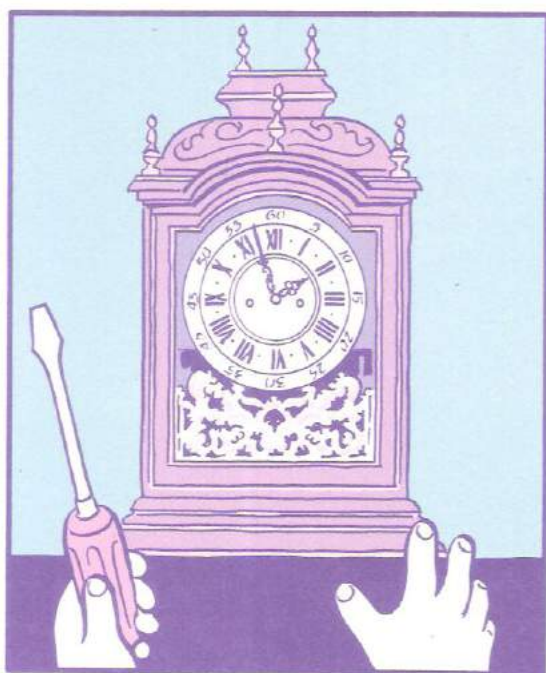




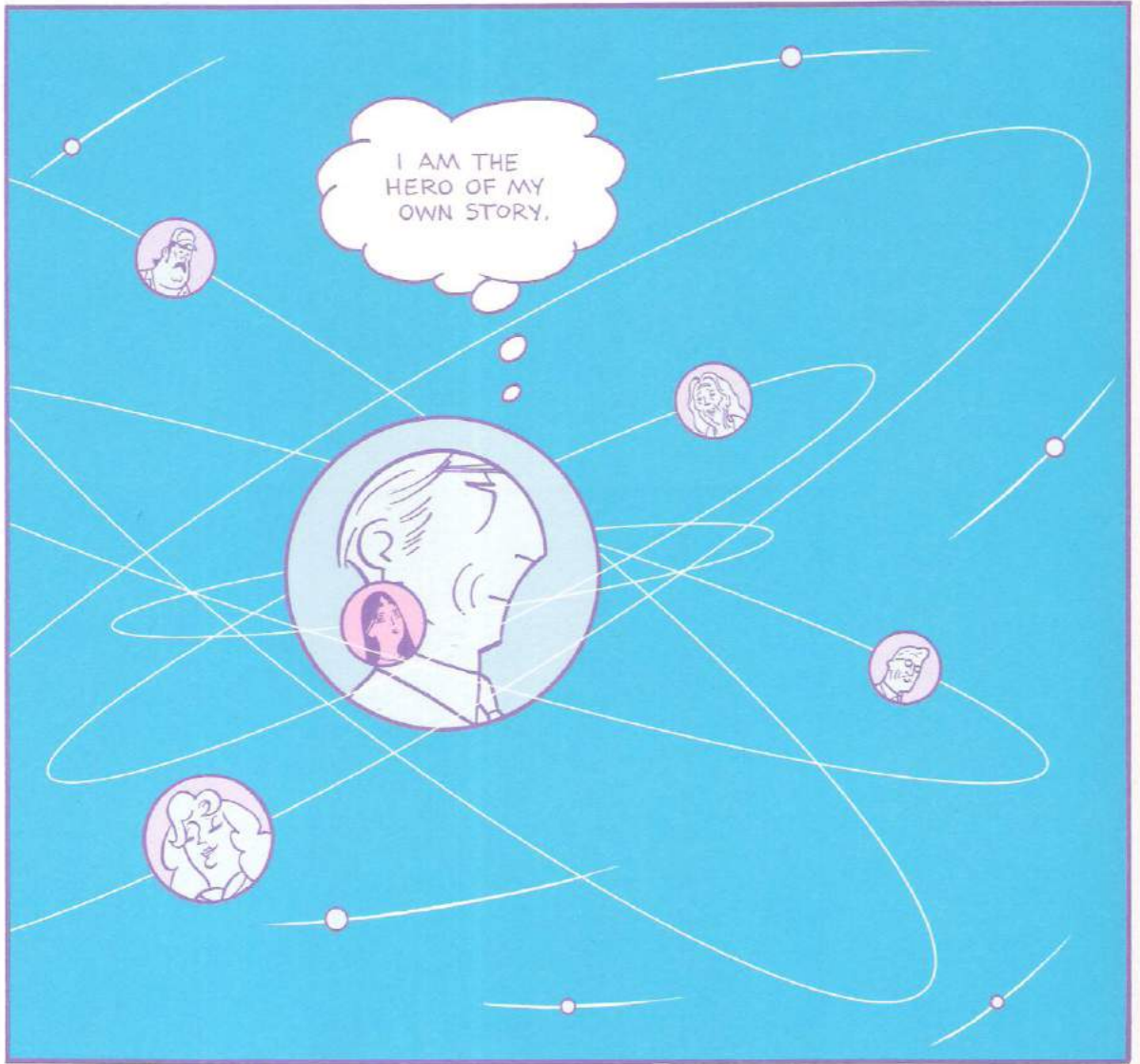






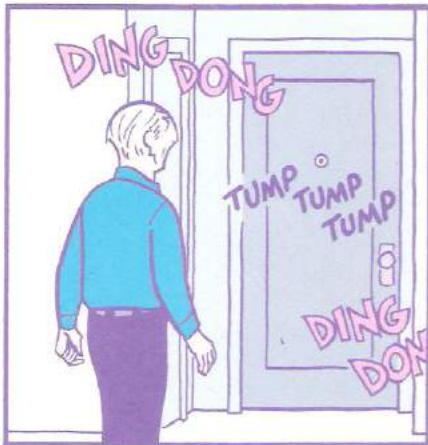






# ASTERIOS

THOUGHT HE UNDERSTOOD WHY PEOPLE BELIEVE IN A SOLITARY, OMNISCIENT GOD.

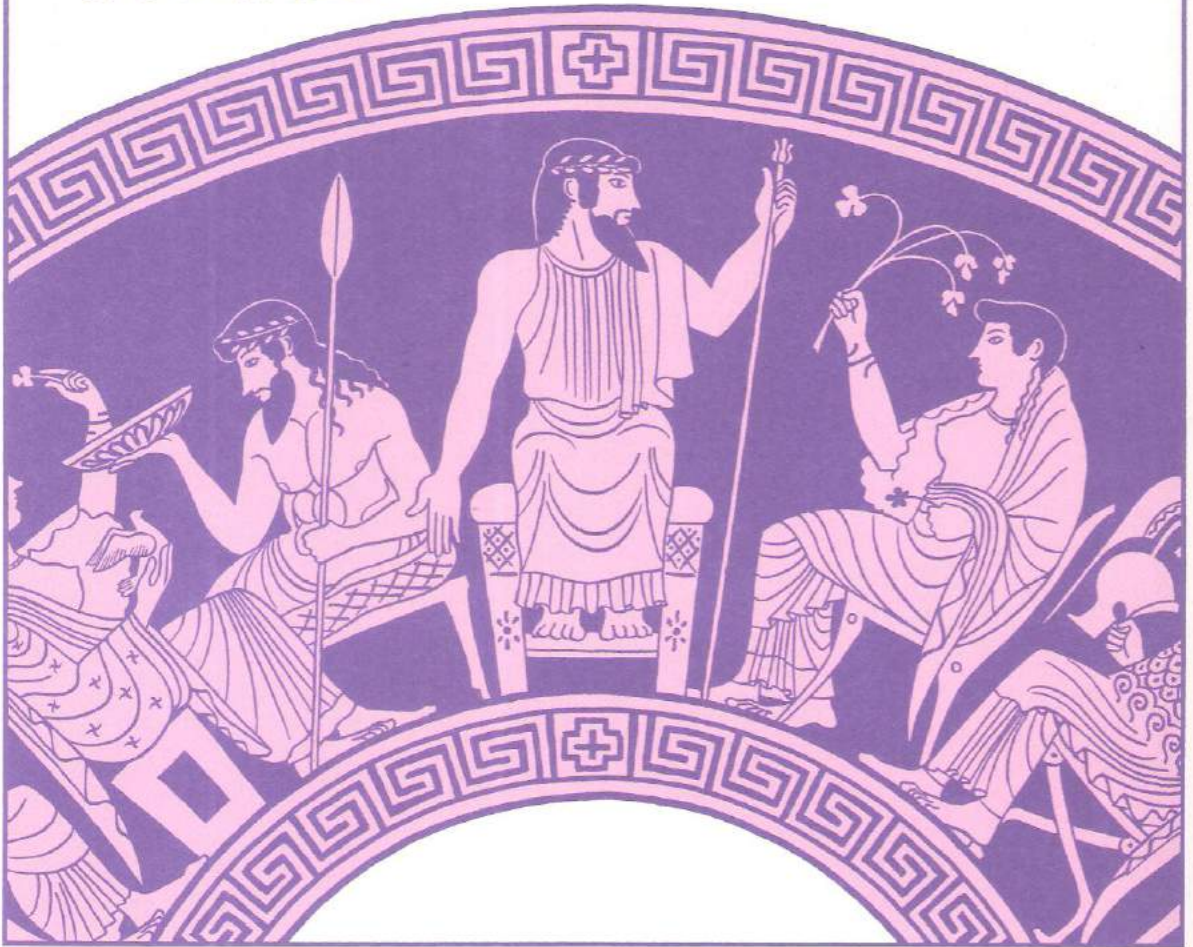




IF THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE IS SPENDING ALL HIS TIME WATCHING YOU, IT MUST SURELY BE BECAUSE HE LOVES YOU.



BUT MY BROTHER ALWAYS  
PREFERRED THE GODS  
OF OUR ANCESTORS.

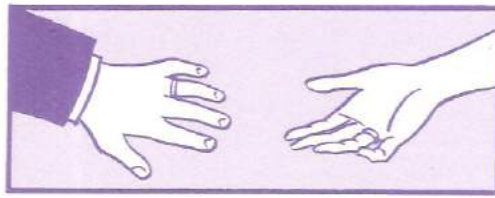


BY GIVING THEM HUMAN PERSONALITIES, THE ANCIENT  
GREEKS COULD FEEL THAT THE WORLD MADE SENSE...

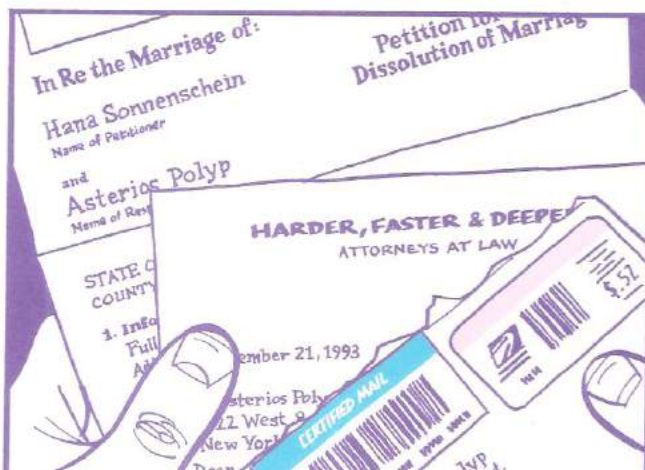




...BECAUSE ONLY THE WHIMS OF A BUNCH OF PETTY, BICKERING DEITIES COULD EXPLAIN THE RANDOM EVENTS OF JOY AND TRAGEDY THAT BEFELL HUMAN BEINGS.

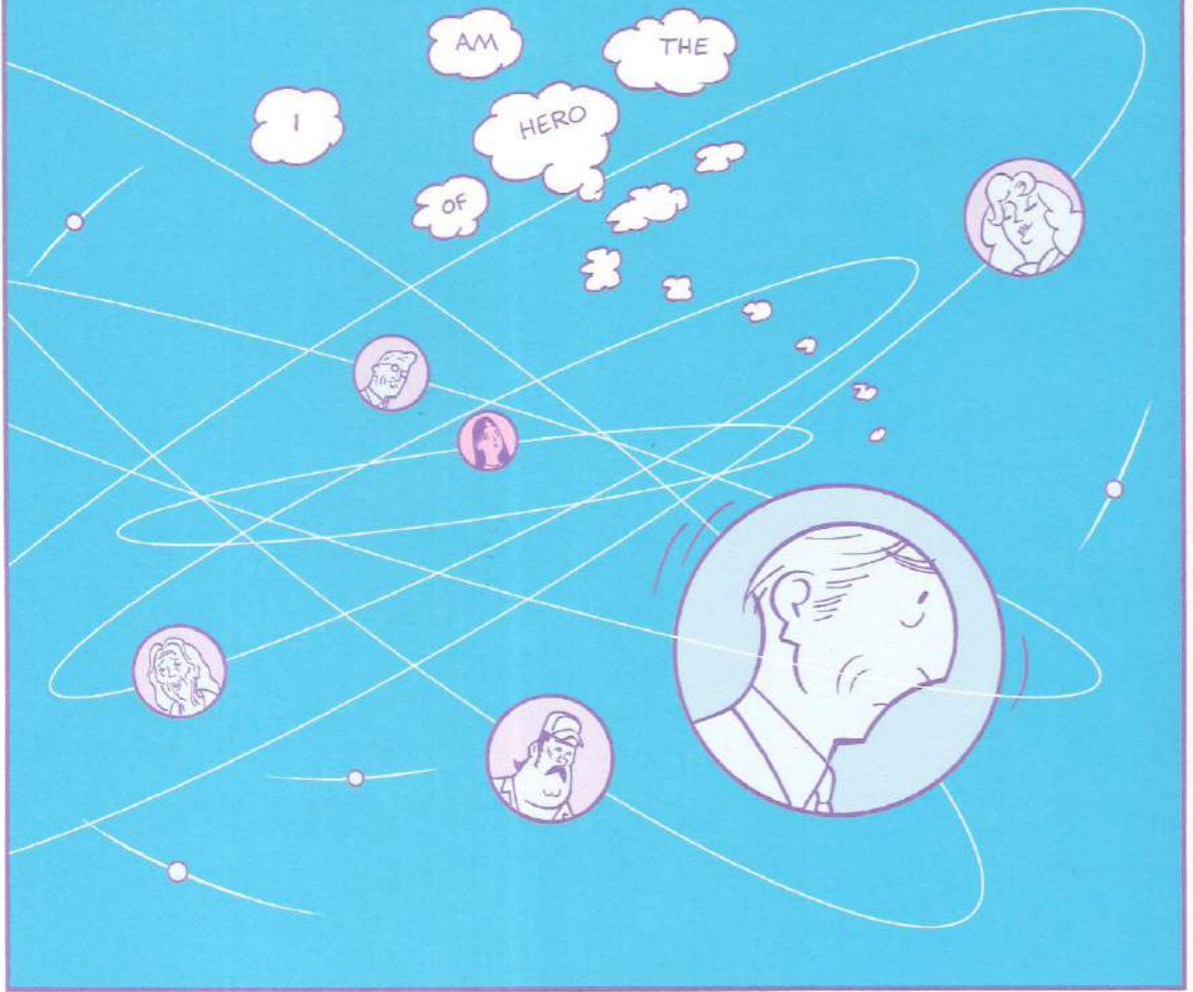


BESIDES, IT'S ALWAYS NICE TO HAVE SOMEONE ELSE TO BLAME.





WITH SUCH POWERFUL, CAPRICIOUS  
FORCES AT WORK,



THE PRESSURE'S OFF, AND EVERYONE CAN BE A  
SUPPORTING CHARACTER IN THE LARGER STORY-





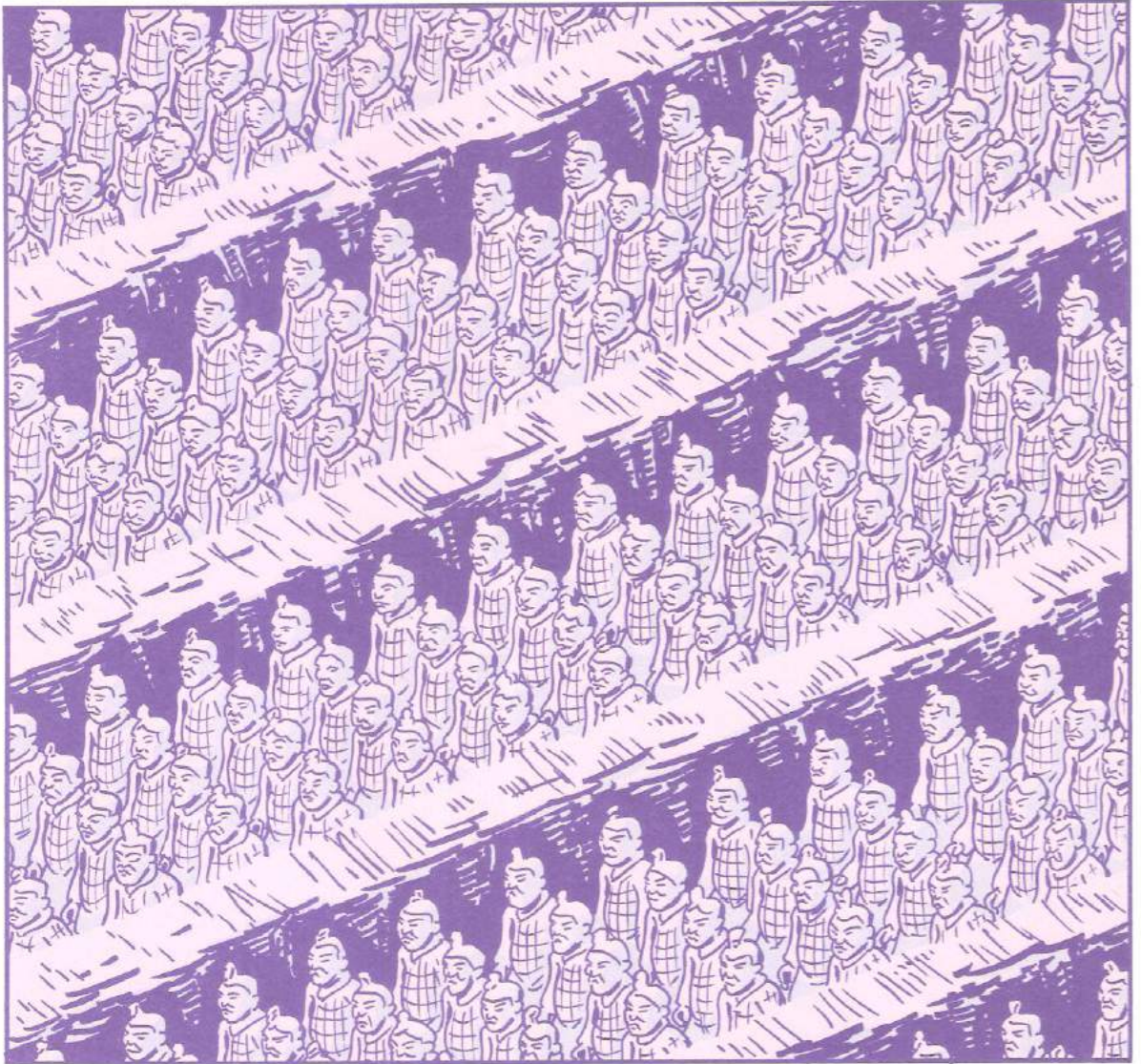
*-HOWEVER BRIEF OR COLLATERAL  
THAT ROLE MAY BE.*





THE FIRST EMPEROR OF CHINA, QIN SHIHLIANG, PREPARED FOR ETERNITY BY ORDERING THAT A REPLICA OF HIS VAST ARMY BE BURIED WITH HIM WHEN HE DIED.

THIS WAS CERTAINLY AN IMPROVEMENT ON THE LOCAL RULERS' TRADITION OF INTERRING AN ENTIRE RETINUE ALIVE.



SEVEN THOUSAND TERRA-COTTA SOLDIERS STOOD WATCH IN HIS TOMB, UNDISTURBED, FOR TWO MILLENNIA.

THE EMPEROR, BORN IN 259 B.C., EXPIRED IN 210 B.C., BEFORE HE COULD CELEBRATE HIS FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY.

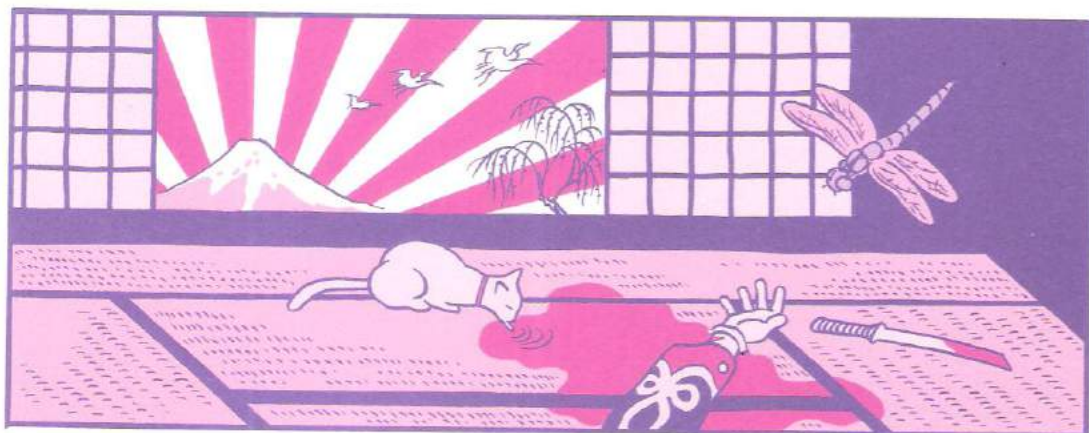


FROM THE VANTAGE OF  
TWO THOUSAND YEARS, THE  
SPAN BETWEEN 259 B.C. AND  
210 B.C. MAY SEEM NEGLIGIBLE  
TO SOMEONE LIVING TODAY,



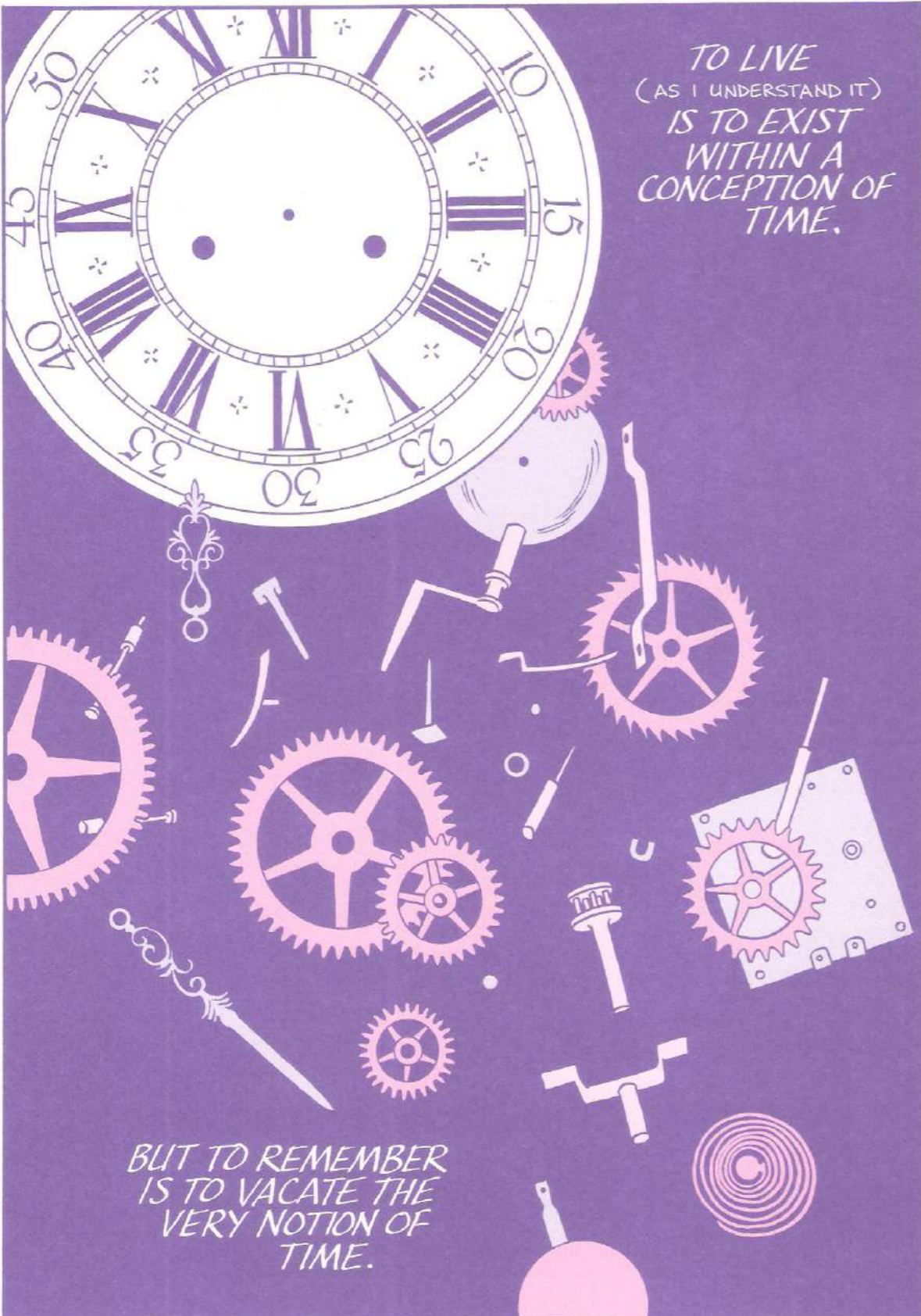
**TODAY**

BUT (ASTERIOS COULD TELL YOU BETTER THAN I) EACH OF THOSE  
EIGHTEEN THOUSAND DAYS MUST HAVE BEEN AS  
PRECIOUS AND UNPREDICTABLE AS THIS ONE.



AFTER ALL, WHO KNOWS WHICH DAY WILL BE HIS LAST?

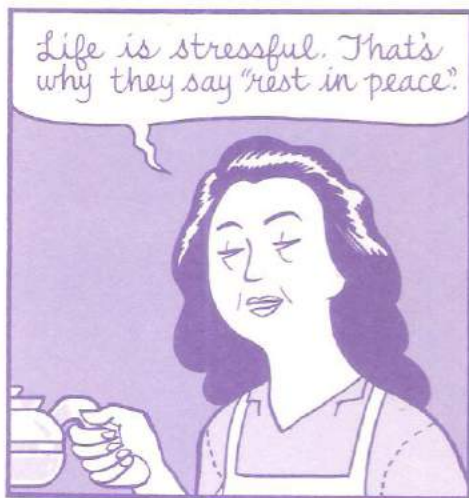




*TO LIVE  
(AS I UNDERSTAND IT)  
IS TO EXIST  
WITHIN A  
CONCEPTION OF  
TIME.*

*BUT TO REMEMBER  
IS TO VACATE THE  
VERY NOTION OF  
TIME.*

EVERY MEMORY, NO MATTER HOW REMOTE ITS SUBJECT, TAKES PLACE "NOW," AT THE MOMENT IT'S CALLED UP IN THE MIND.

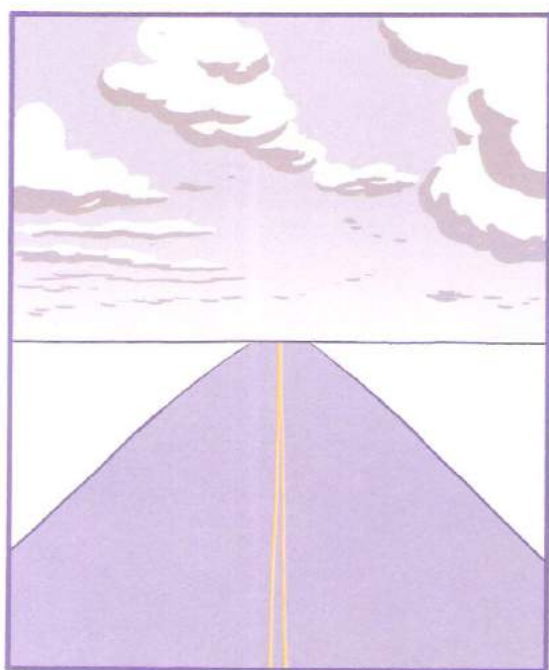


THE MORE SOMETHING IS RECALLED, THE MORE THE BRAIN HAS A CHANCE TO REFINE THE ORIGINAL EXPERIENCE,



BECAUSE EVERY MEMORY IS A RE-CREATION, NOT A PLAYBACK.







KA-THUNK  
KA-KA-KLUNK









EXCUSE ME, I SEEM TO BE HAVING TROUBLE WITH-



ASTERIOS!



IGNAZIO? WHAT...?

...WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...?

NOW, THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION.



LET'S SEE, WHERE TO BEGIN...?



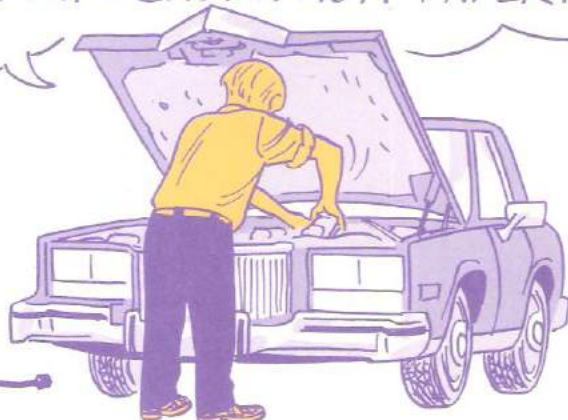
WELL, I WAS LIVING IN MANHATTAN...



...BUT UNTIL ABOUT SEVEN YEARS AGO, I SPENT MOST OF MY TIME UPSTATE, TEACHING AT A UNIVERSITY IN ITHACA.



I WAS A TENURED PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE - A POSITION BUTTRESSED BY MY RENOWN AS A "PAPER ARCHITECT."



IT WAS THERE AT THE UNIVERSITY THAT I MET MY WIFE.



WE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE DIFFERENT, AND YET...



... OUR LIVES FOLDED INTO EACH OTHER'S WITH BARELY A WRINKLE.

ARISTOPHANES WOULD  
PROBABLY HAVE SEEN IN US  
A VINDICATION OF HIS  
PURPORTED THEORY.



BY CONSOLIDATING  
OUR INDIVIDUAL DESIGNS, WE  
ERECTED AN EDIFICE OF  
ELOQUENT EQUILIBRIUM...

...BUT IT TURNED OUT  
THAT REALITY, AS I  
PERCEIVED IT, WAS  
SIMPLY AN EXTENSION  
OF MYSELF.



IN FACT, NONE OF MY DESIGNS  
HAD EVER BEEN BUILT.



SO SHE LEFT.





DENIAL BEING A CELEBRATION OF HUMAN INVENTION, I FOUND A MEASURE OF SOLACE IN WORK. I KEPT TEACHING. I TOOK ON NEW PROJECTS.



AFTER ALL, I WAS UNIVERSALLY REGARDED AS A BRILLIANT ARCHITECT, A MEMBER OF THE PANTHEON ALONG WITH SULLIVAN AND MIES, WRIGHT AND GROPIUS—

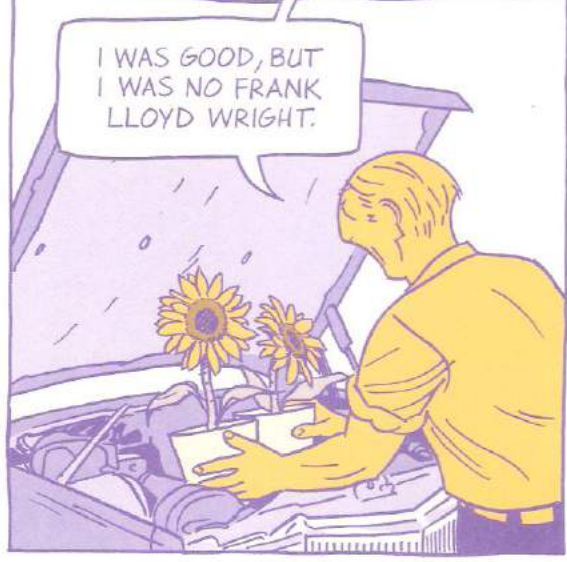


—I HAD WON NUMEROUS COMPETITIONS AND AWARDS TO CONFIRM IT.

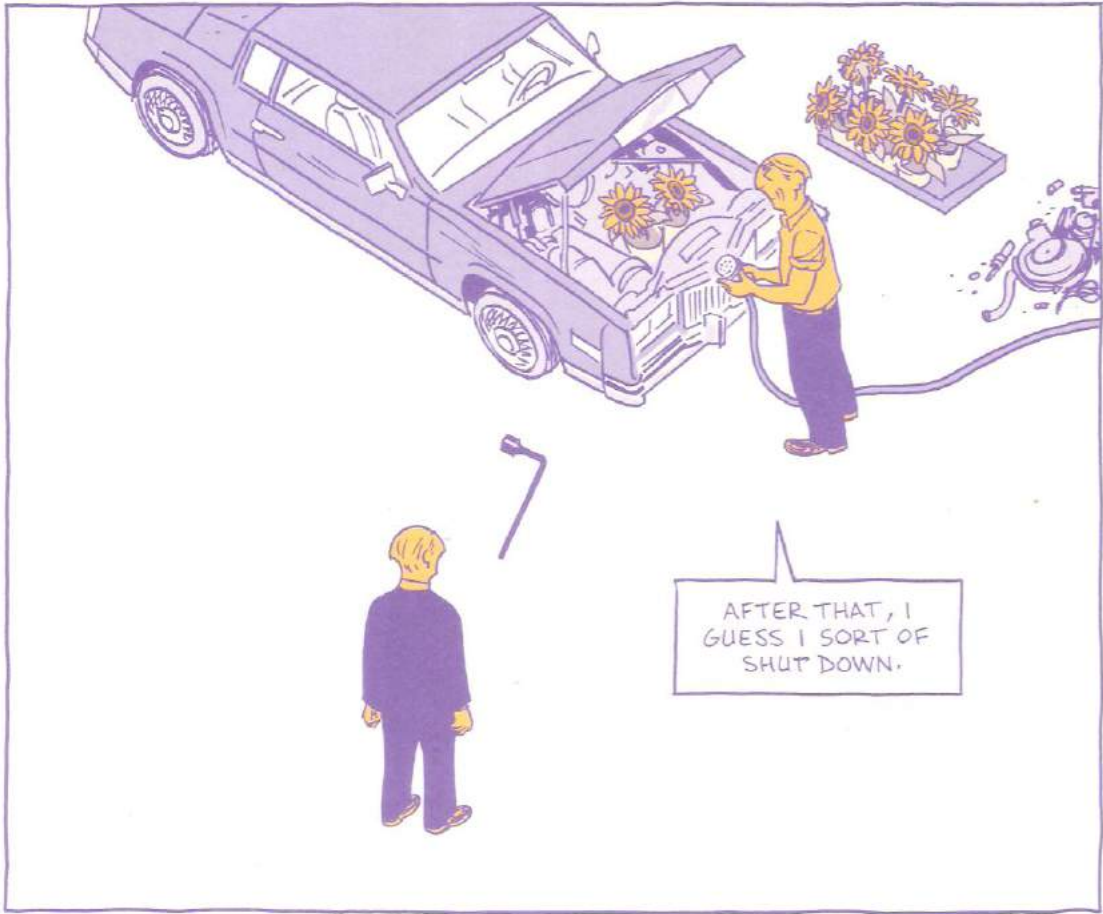


BUT WITH TRUTHFULNESS ACTING AS MY POLESTAR, I CAME TO SEE THAT HUBRIS HAD LED ME TO CHALLENGE THE GODS THEMSELVES.

I WAS GOOD, BUT I WAS NO FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT.



AND GIVING UP THE ONE THING I THOUGHT DEFINED ME PROVED A LOT LESS DIFFICULT THAN I EVER COULD HAVE IMAGINED.

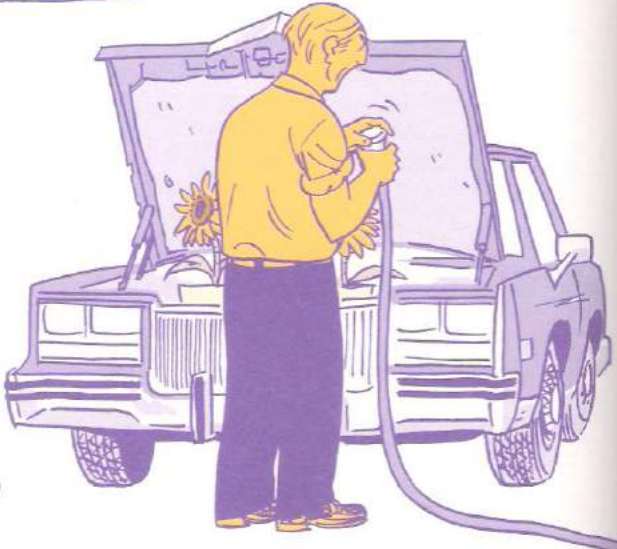


AFTER THAT, I GUESS I SORT OF SHUT DOWN.

ANYWAY...

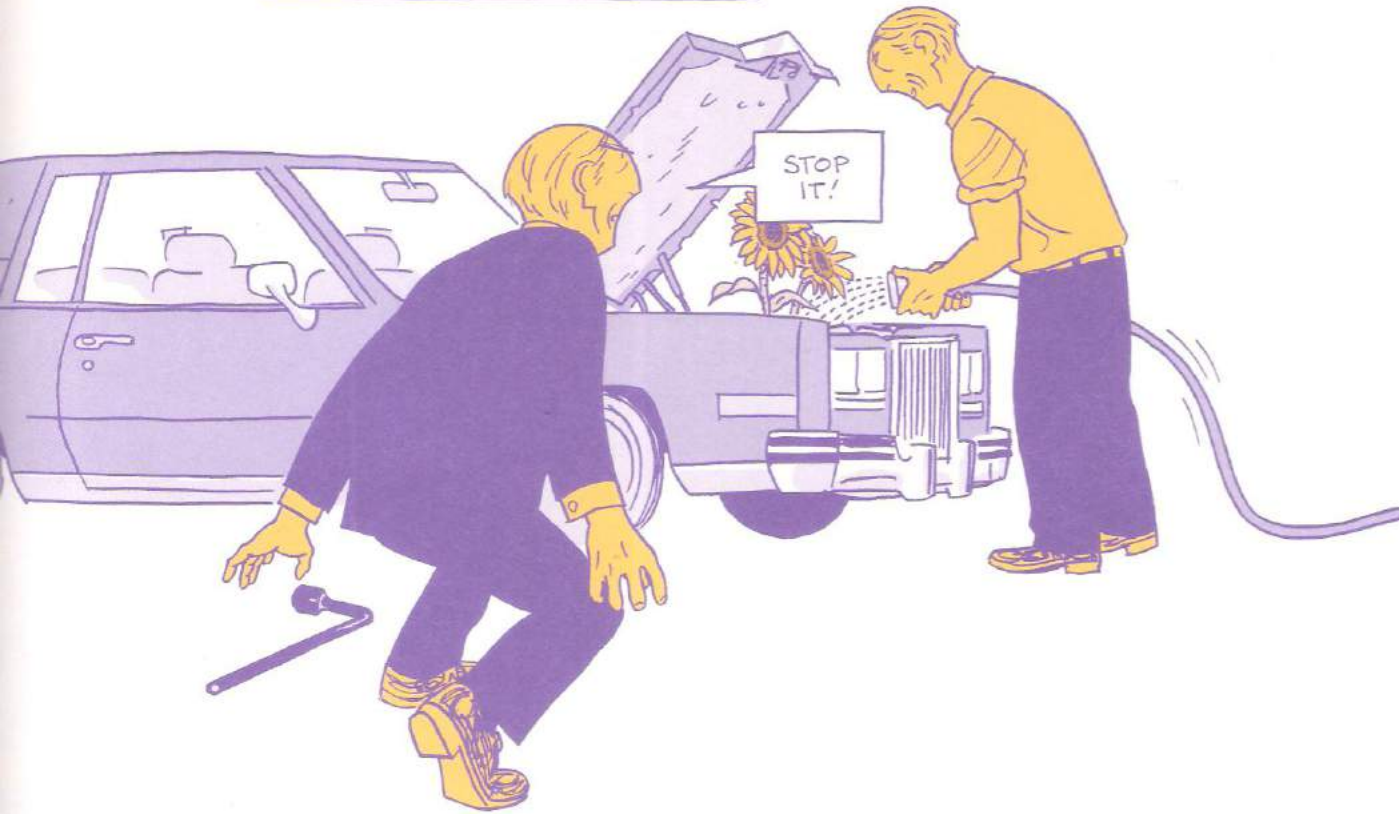
...THERE I WAS, ON MY FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY, FEELING SORRY FOR MYSELF...

STOP IT.





...WHEN A LIGHTNING BOLT  
HIT THE SIDE OF MY BUILDING,  
INCINERATING MY APARTMENT...



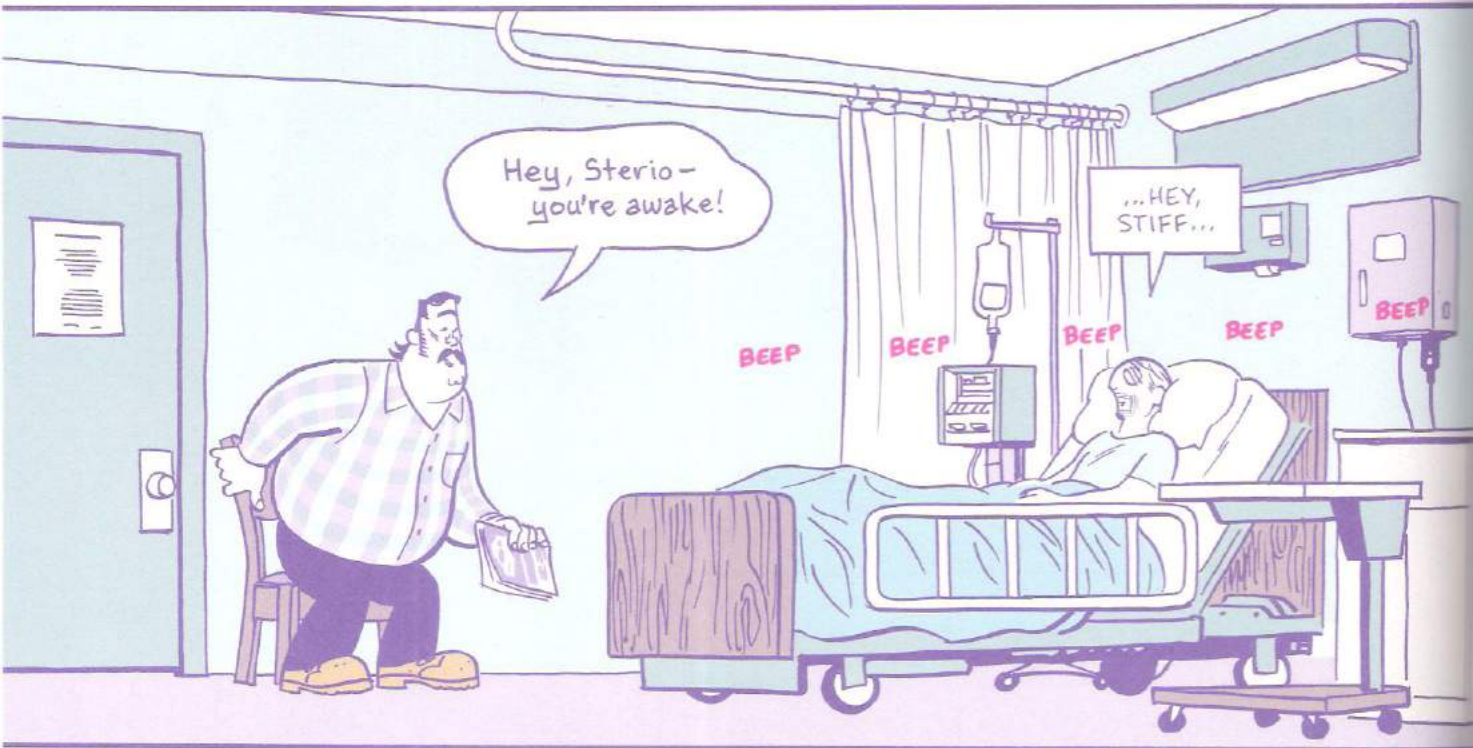
... SO I TOOK ALMOST ALL THE  
MONEY I HAD LEFT AND BOUGHT  
A BUS TICKET -

I SAID -



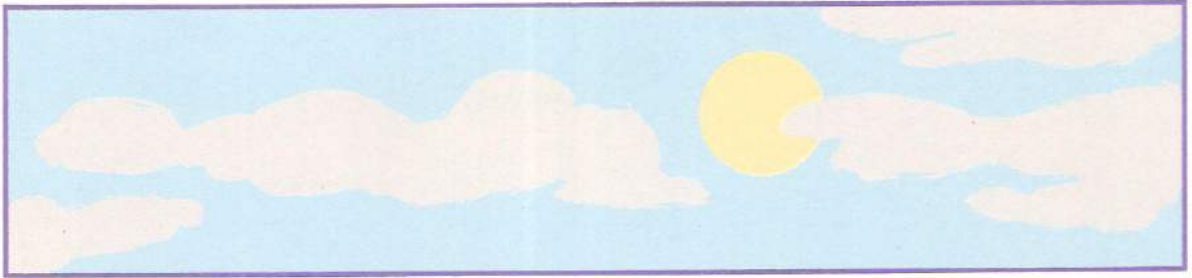
-STOP  
IT!





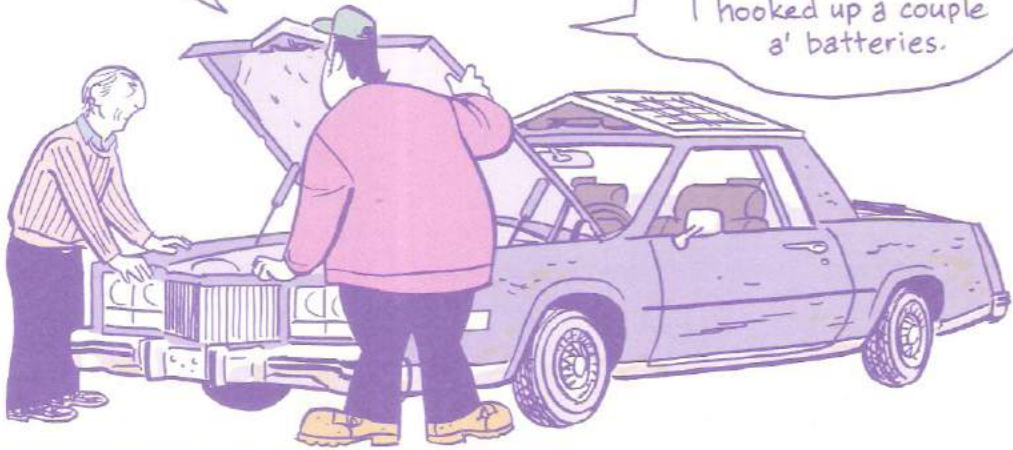






...you can see I took out most of the old engine, and anythin' else that looked extrenuous...

And here's where I hooked up a couple a' batteries.



I think the main problem was storin' enough juice — it's such a big car, it's like movin' a molehill.

WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SOLVE THAT BY LOSING MORE WEIGHT —

— MAYBE TAKING OUT THE REAR SEATS, AND USING THAT SPACE FOR EXTRA STORAGE CELLS.

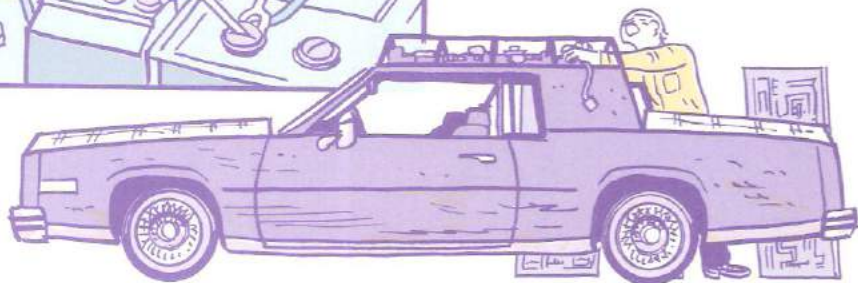
You're still haulin' a lot. It'd probably be easier just to start from scrap.

I DON'T KNOW...

... IT'S A CREATIVE CHALLENGE.

BESIDES, I KIND OF LIKE THIS OLD BOAT.

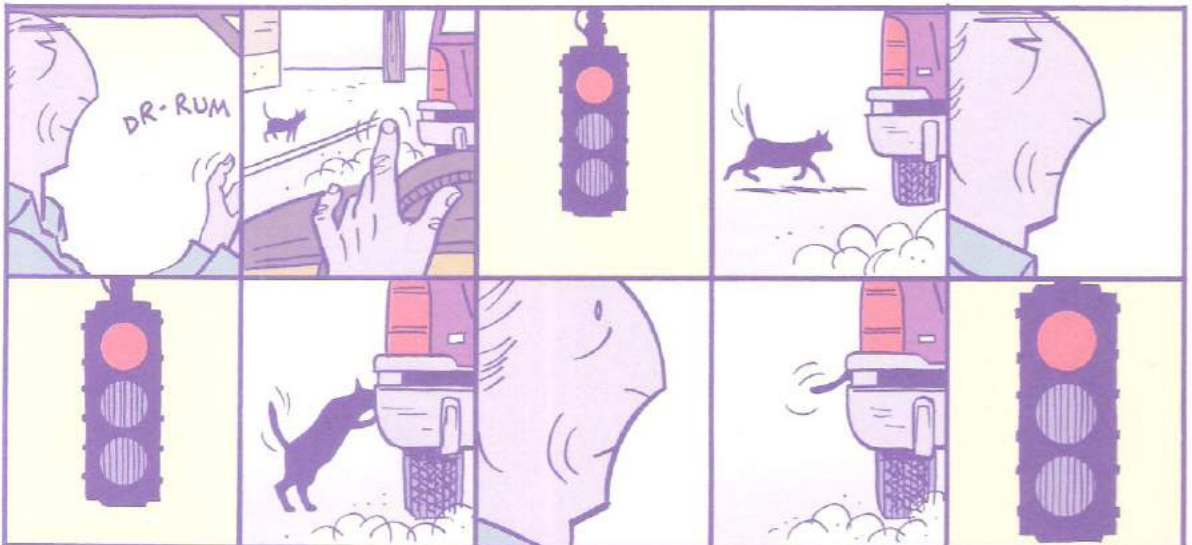
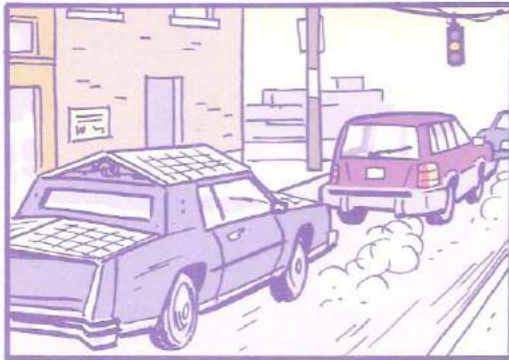




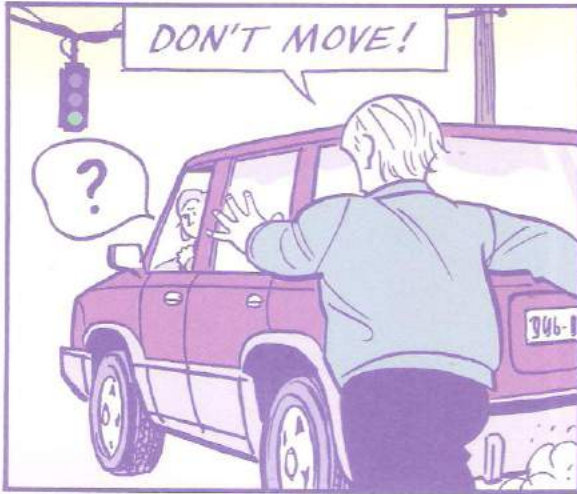




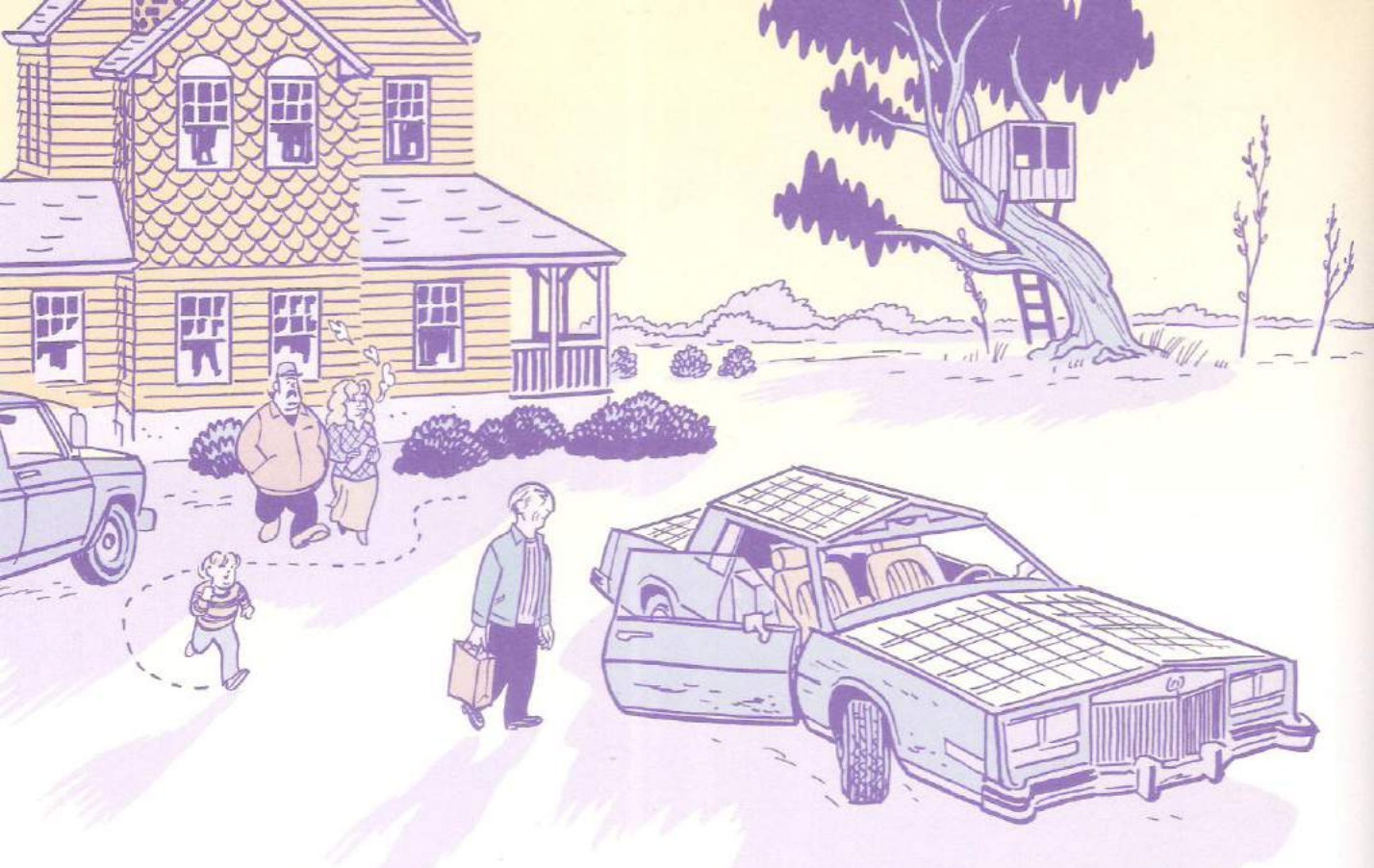










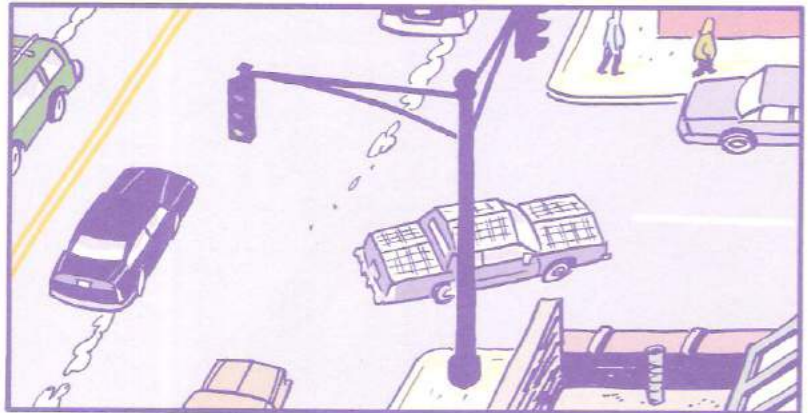
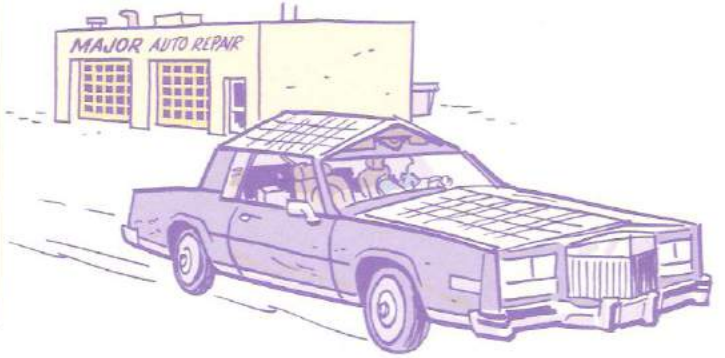
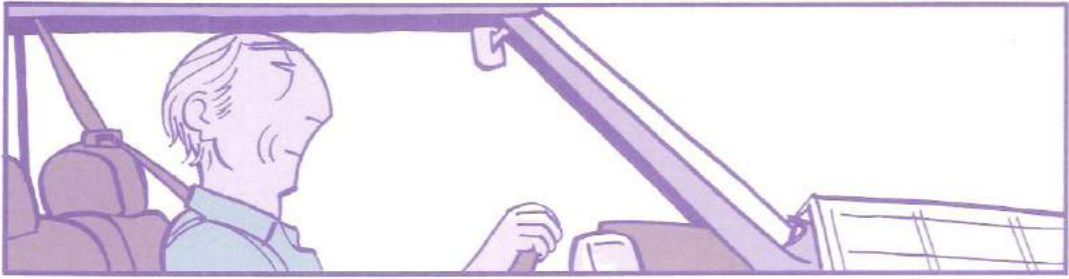




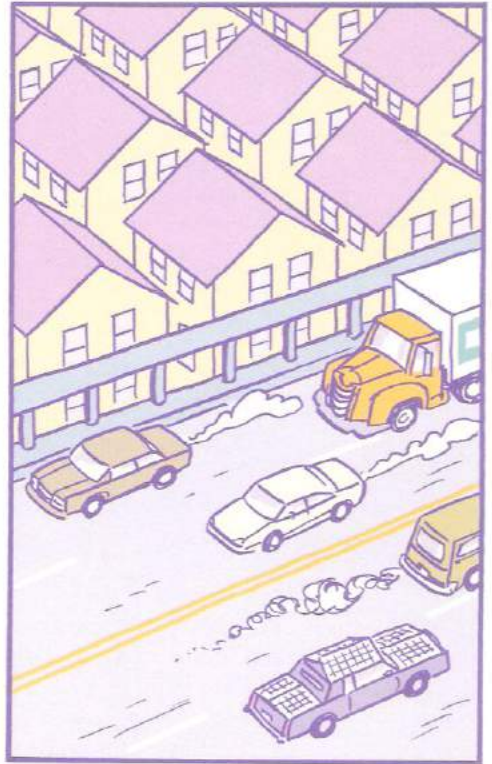


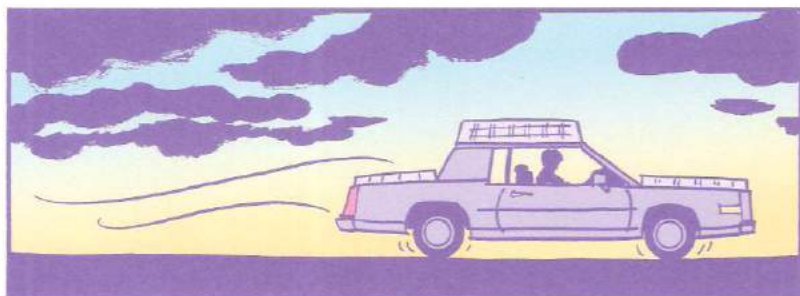
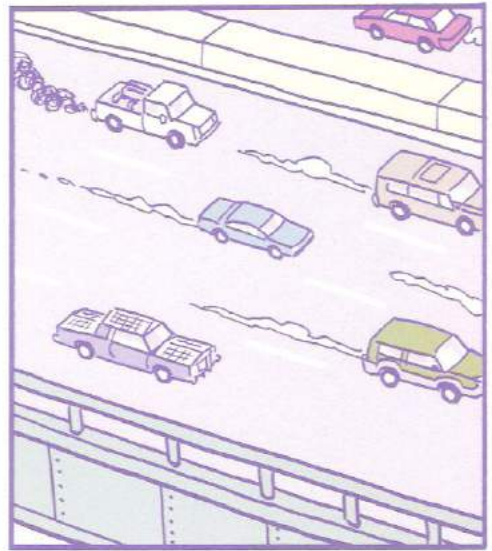
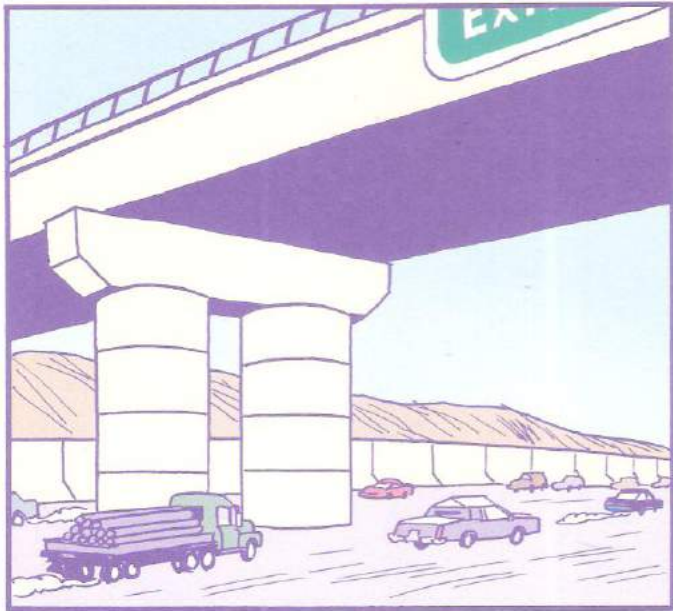
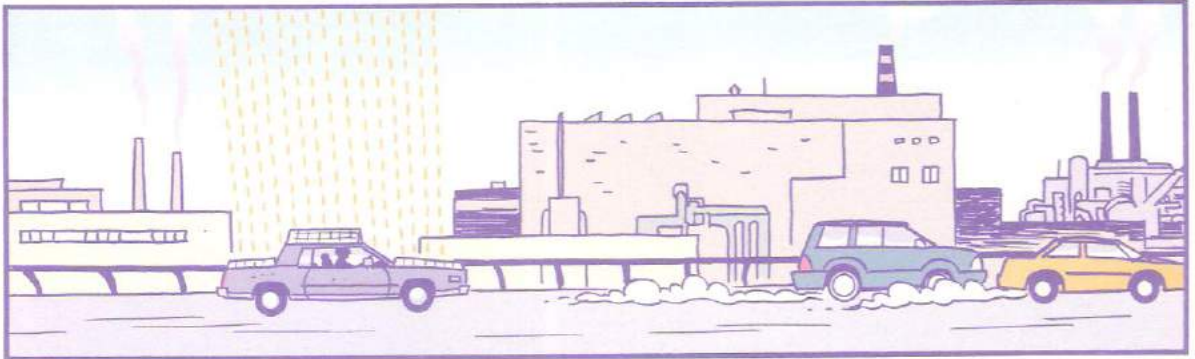
Hey, don't be a stranger!



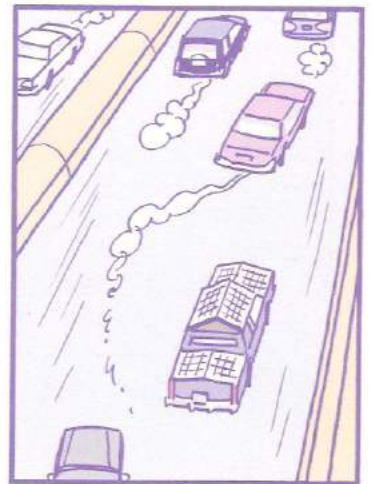
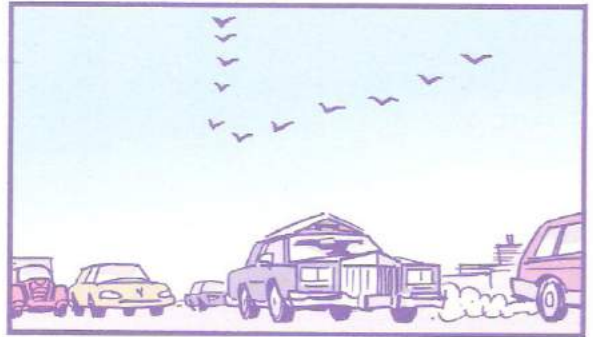
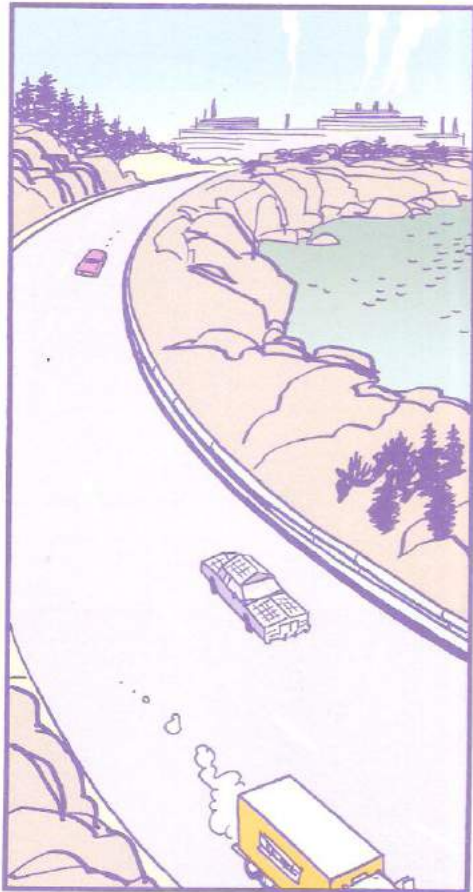


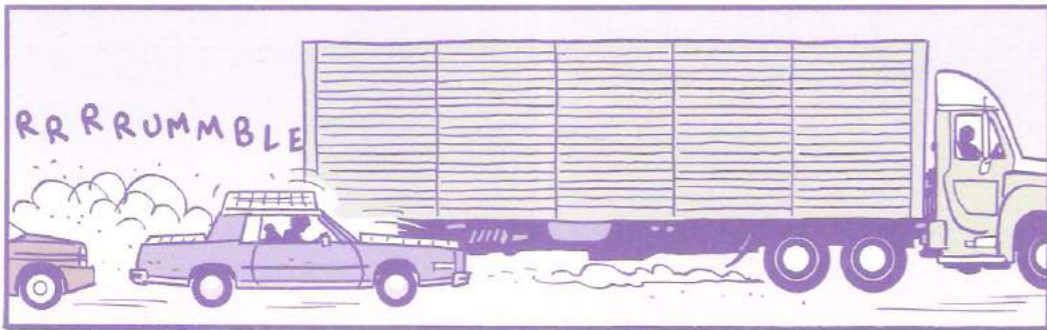
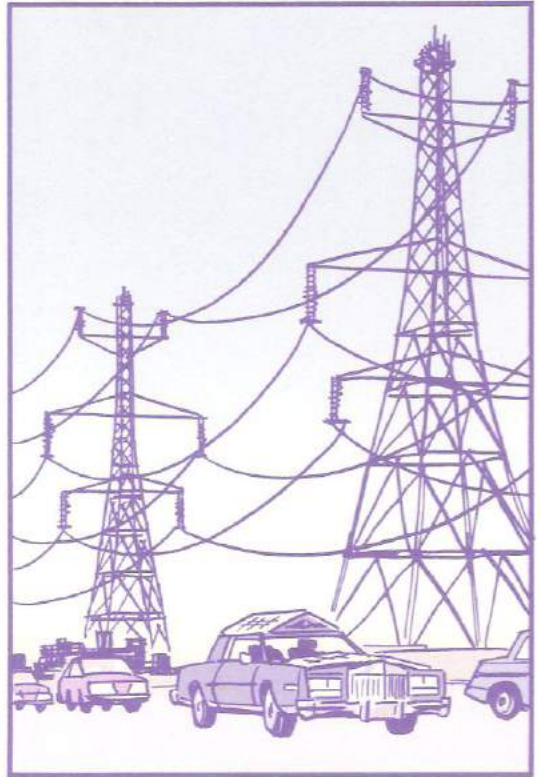




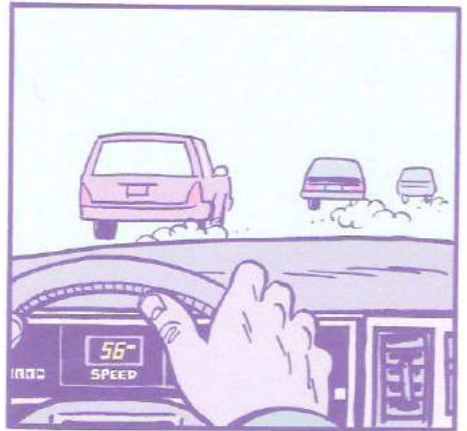
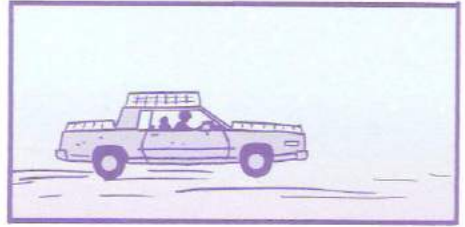
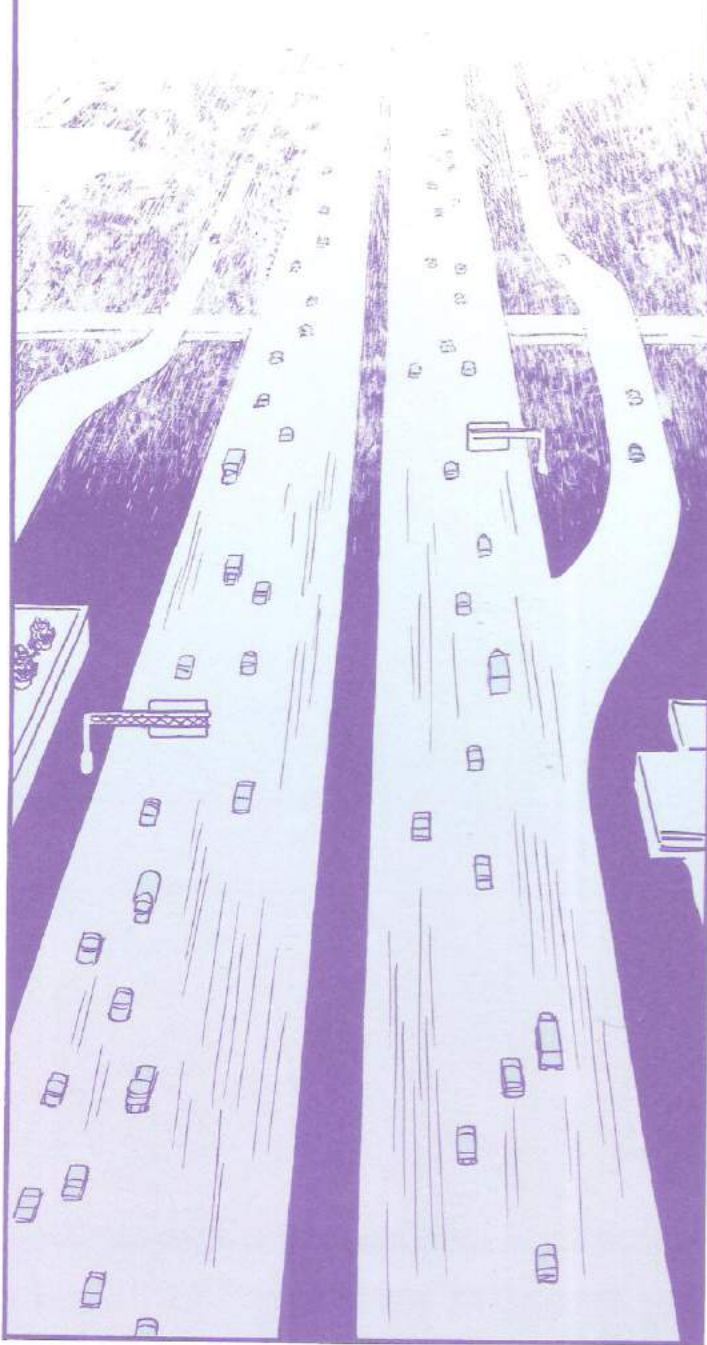












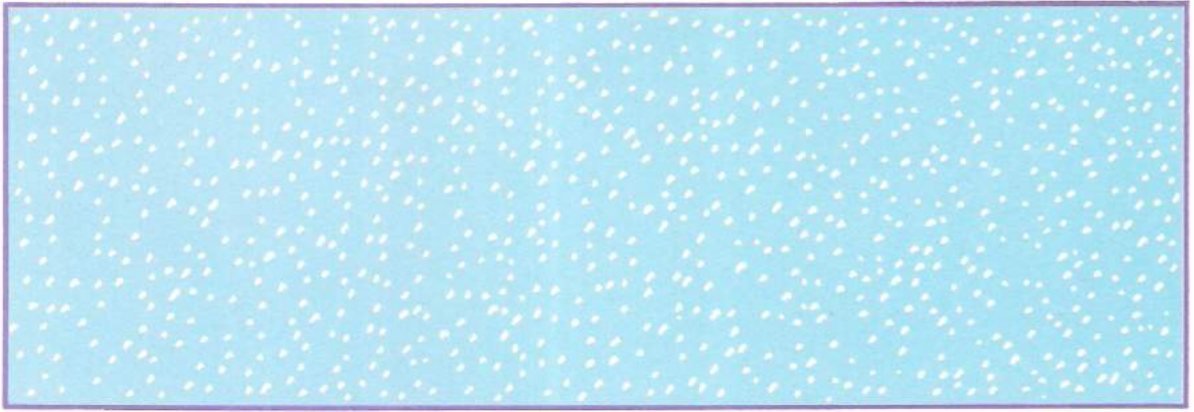


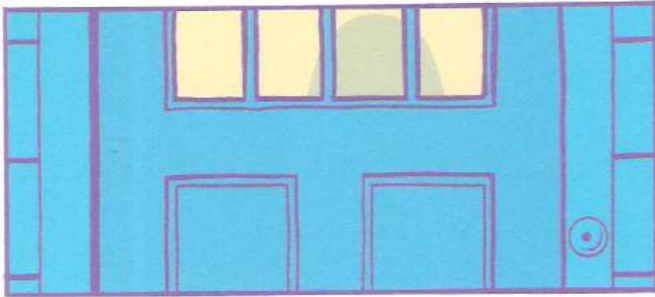
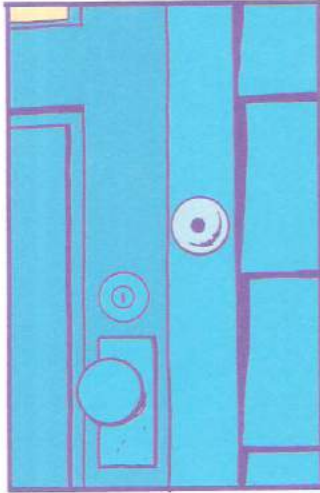




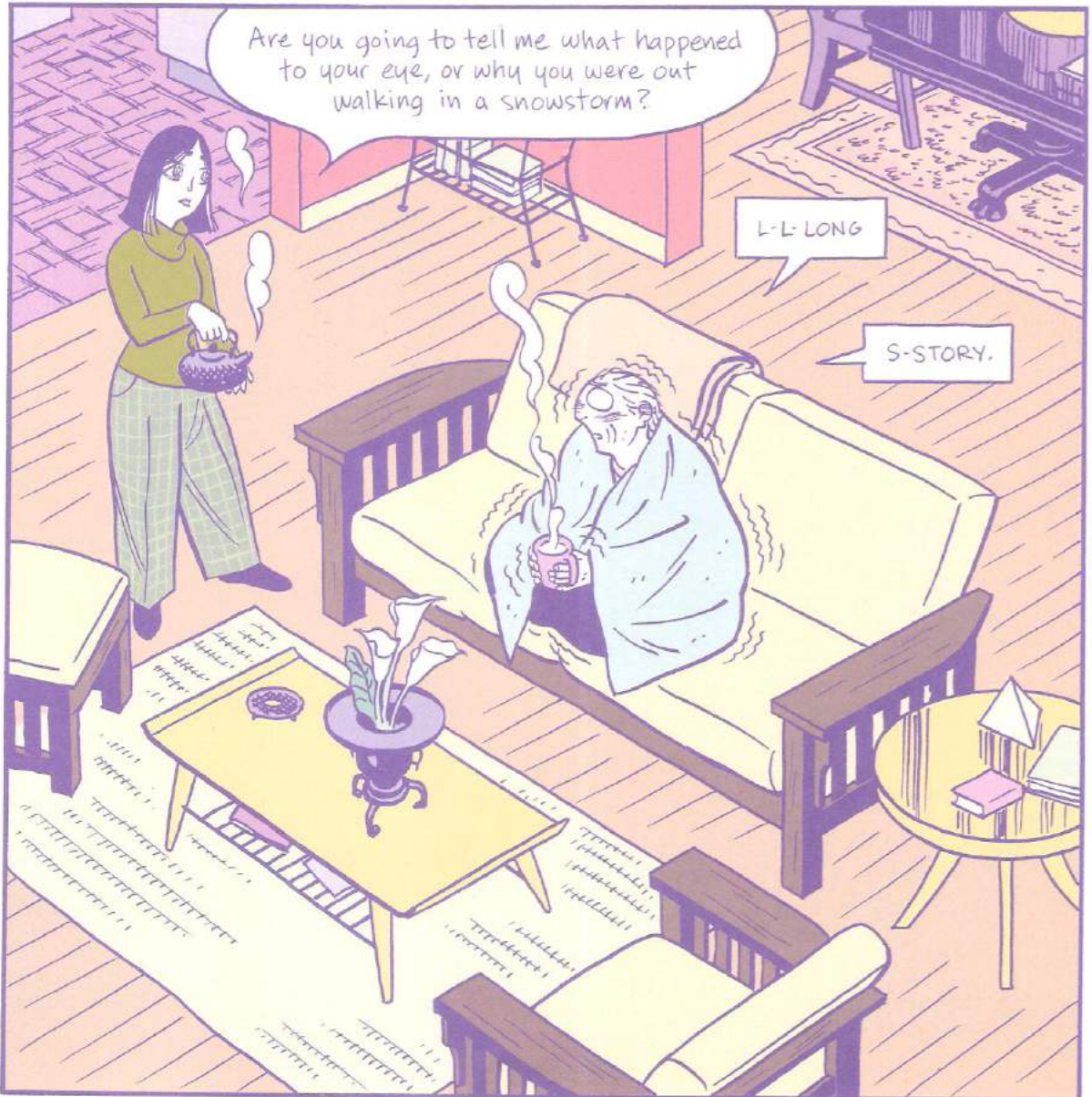
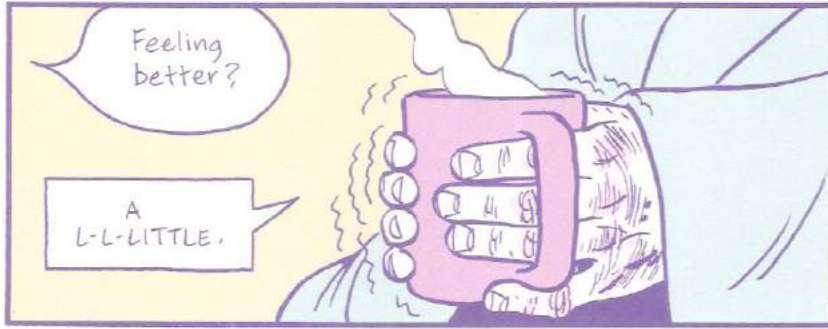












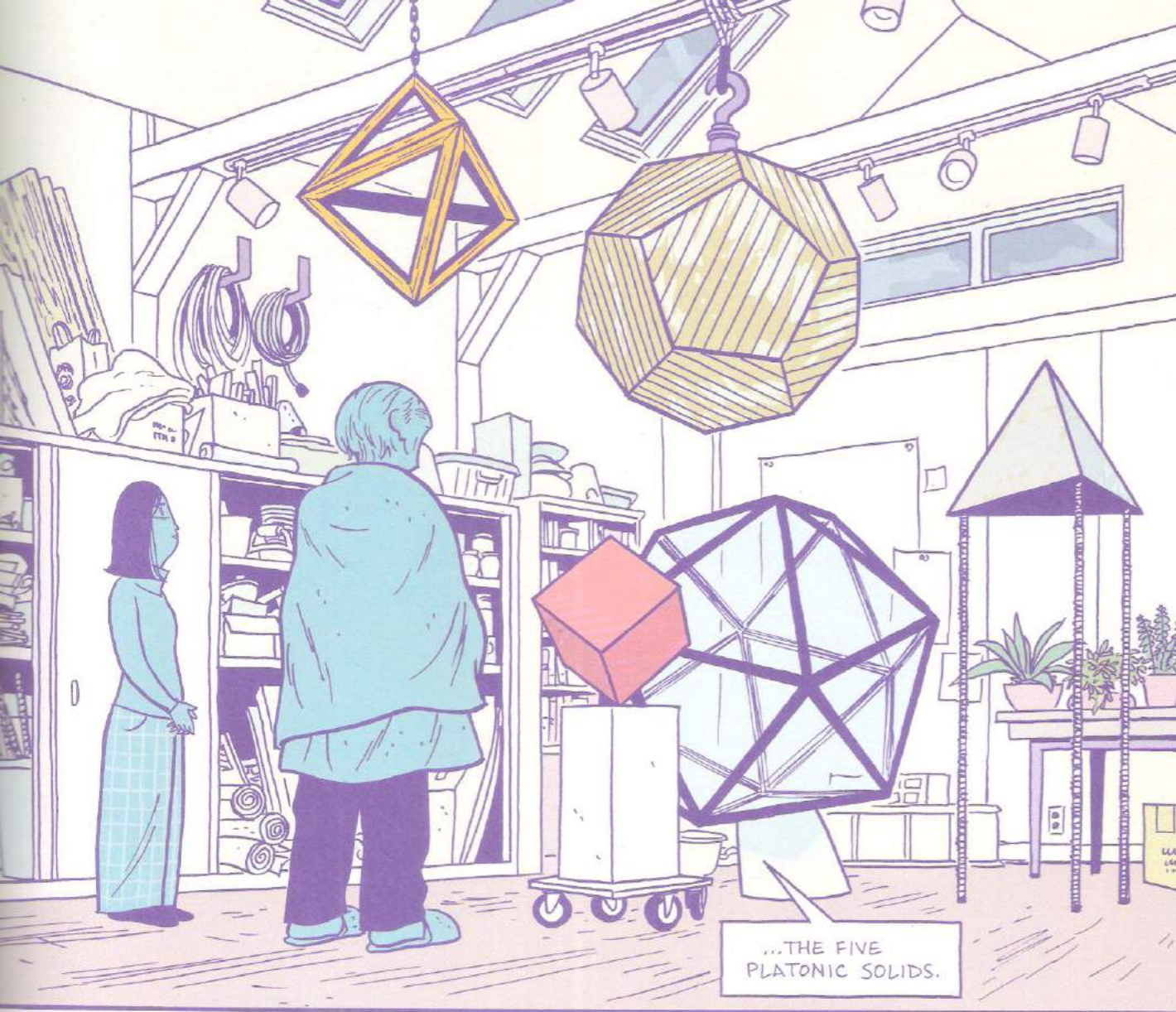




















...I think he had a good life.

BECAUSE OF YOU.



You know, he didn't care what I looked like, or what I said, or did, or what kind of state I was in -

- and there were some nights I was in pretty bad shape...



...he always found me, and curled up next to me to sleep.



And even at the end, when his kidneys were failing, and his lungs...

...and I didn't have the heart - or the strength - to put him down...

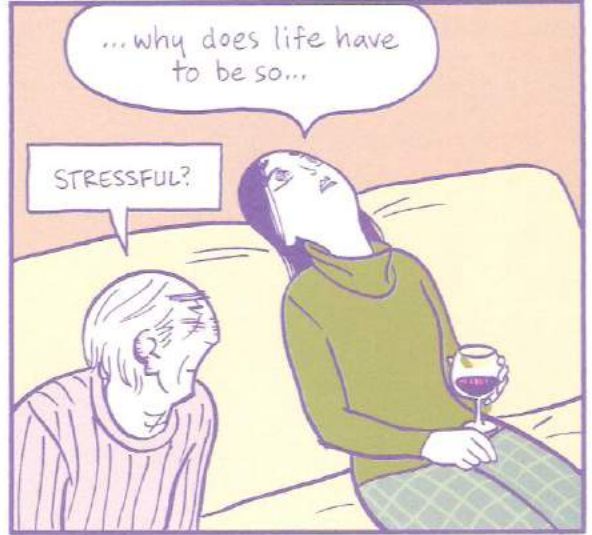
...he'd still come, like he was trying to comfort me...



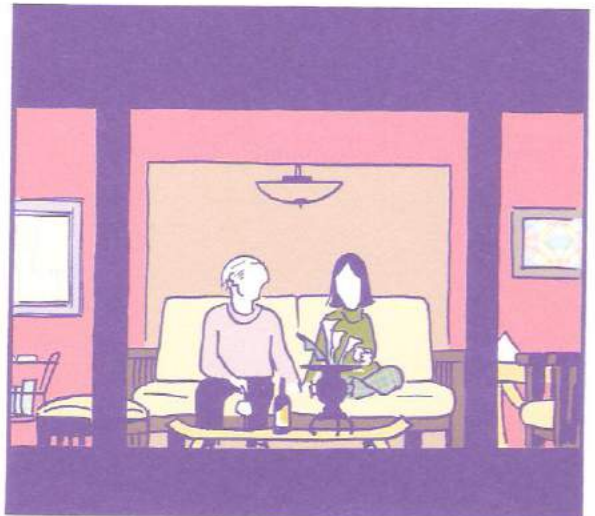












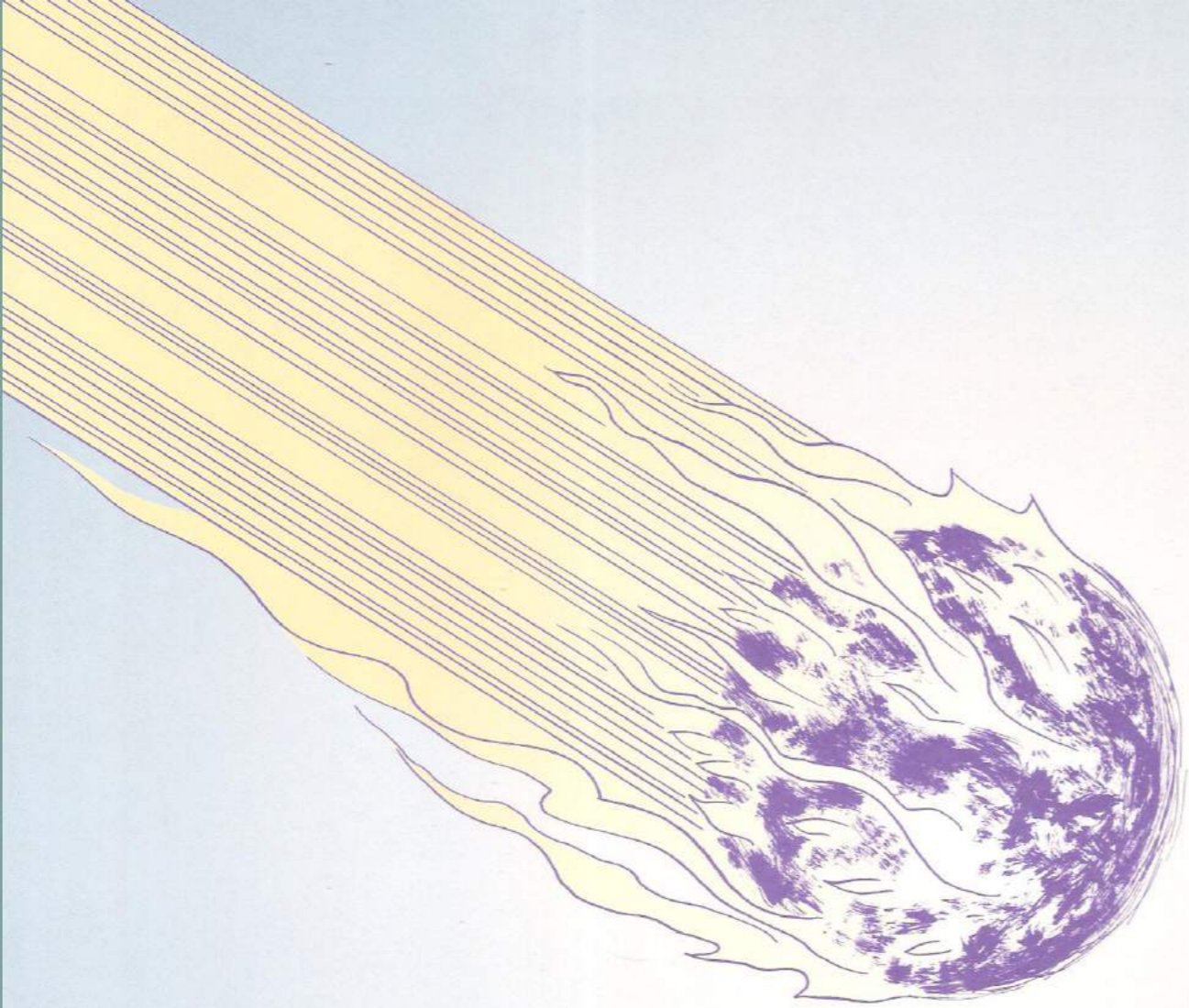




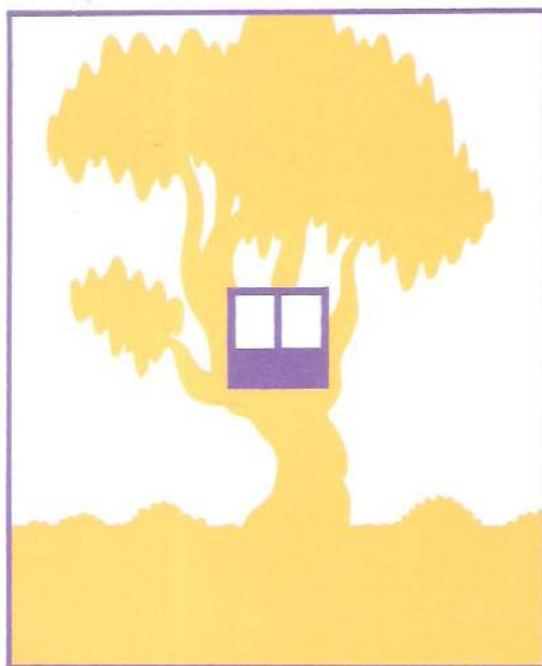


WHAT'S  
THAT  
NOISE?





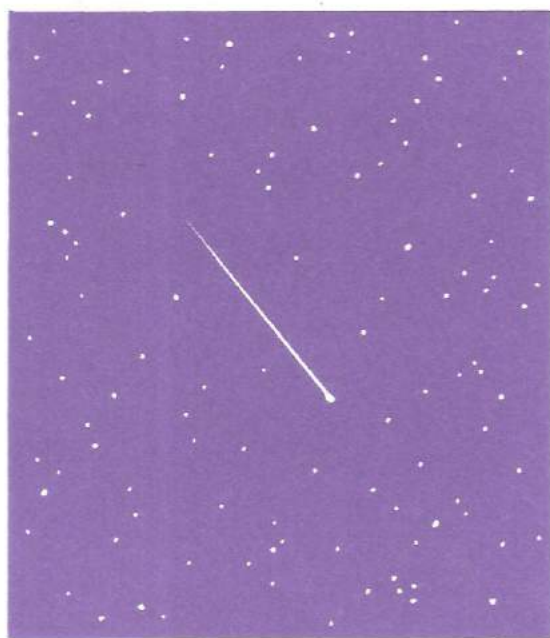
















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This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

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