

ELFRIEDE

e-book published by www.electrocomics.com



exit from full screen mode

turn over the pages



ELFRIEDE

a dystopia


Åsa Grennvall

GOOD DAY, MY NAME IS ELFRIEDE ANDERSON. THIS IS MY OFFICE. I HAVE WORKED MYSELF UP TO ONE OF THE LARGEST AND NICEST OFFICES IN THE COMPANY.



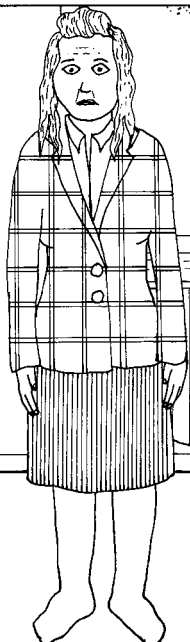
THE HIGHER UP IN THE BUILDING YOU
GET, THE NICER THE OFFICE.



A black and white illustration of a three-story apartment building. The building is white with black window openings. There are two chimneys on the roof. On the left side, there is a large, dense, scribbled black mass. In the foreground, there are small tufts of grass. A speech bubble in the upper right corner contains the text: "I LIVE ON THE TOP FLOOR IN A TWO BEDROOM APARTMENT IN A THREE STORY BUILDING."

I LIVE ON THE TOP FLOOR
IN A TWO BEDROOM APARTMENT
IN A THREE STORY BUILDING.

I LIVE HERE ALONE. I AM DIVORCED SINCE SOME TIME BACK.



PEOPLE SAY THAT I SHOULD GET A CAT, BUT WHAT WOULD BE THE USE OF THAT?

MY THREE TEENAGE CHILDREN VISIT ME ONE WEEKEND A MONTH.

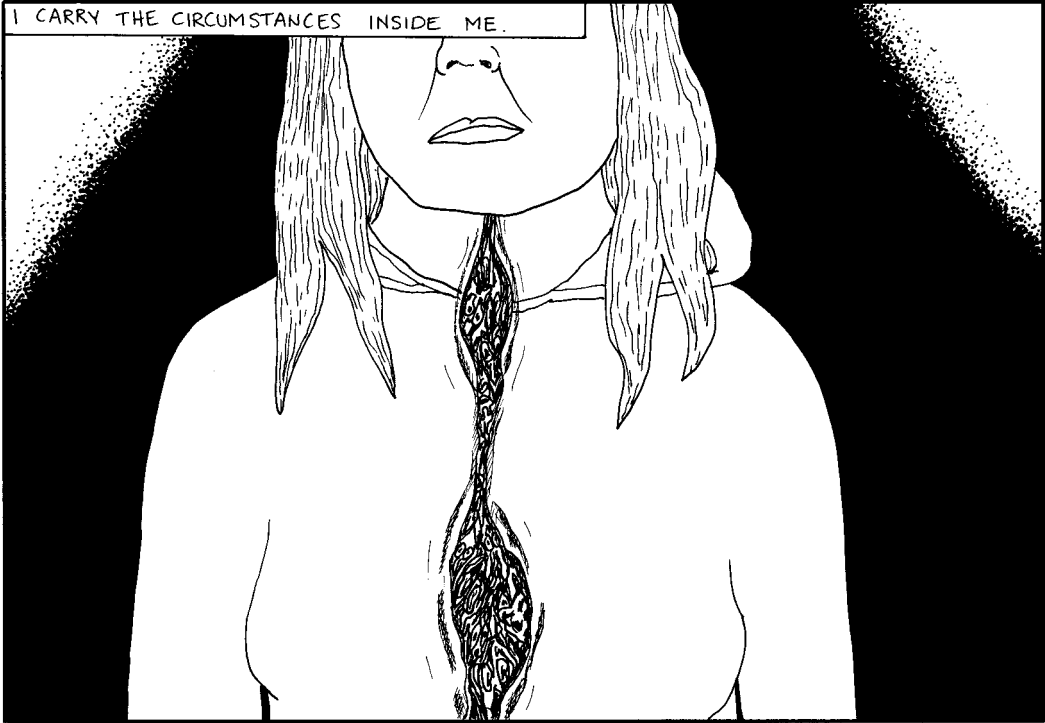


WE HAVE NO CONTACT. IT WAS ME WHO LEFT THEM, CONVINCED THAT THEY WOULD HAVE A BETTER LIFE WITH THEIR DAD AND A POSSIBLE NEW WIFE THAT HE COULD FIND INSTEAD OF ME.

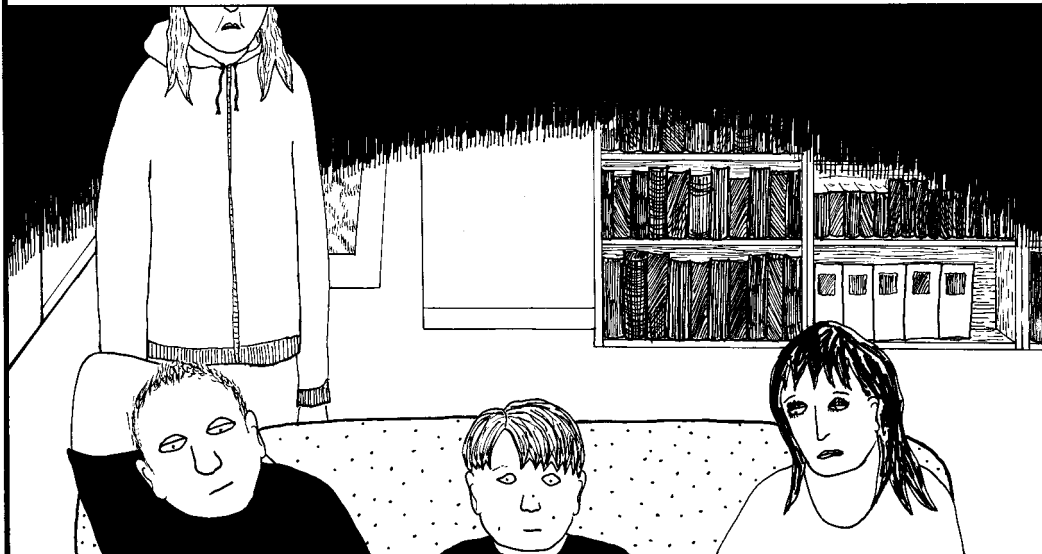


IT WAS THE BEST OPTION UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

I CARRY THE CIRCUMSTANCES INSIDE ME.



I KNOW THAT THEY NEVER REALLY LIKED ME AND THEY NEVER WILL EITHER.
I TOTALLY UNDERSTAND THAT. I CAN ONLY HOPE THAT THEY DO NOT HATE ME
AS MUCH AS I HATE MY PARENTS.

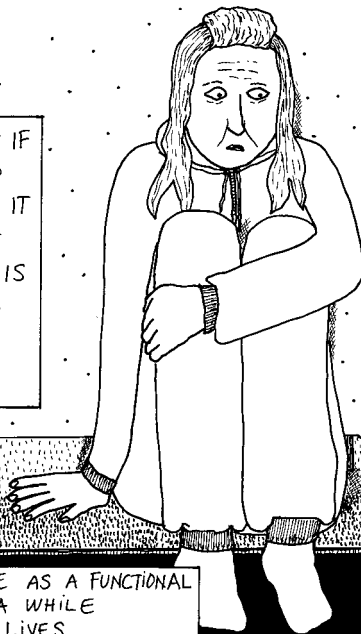


BUT THAT CAN NOT BE POSSIBLE. THAT MUCH HATE CAN NOT EXIST IN THESE
THREE PEOPLE EVEN IF YOU ADD IT ALL UP.

FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER
I CAN NOT RECALL EVER CARING
WHETHER MY PARENTS LIVE OR IF THEY
DIE. IT SEEMED TO BE A MUTUAL FEELING.

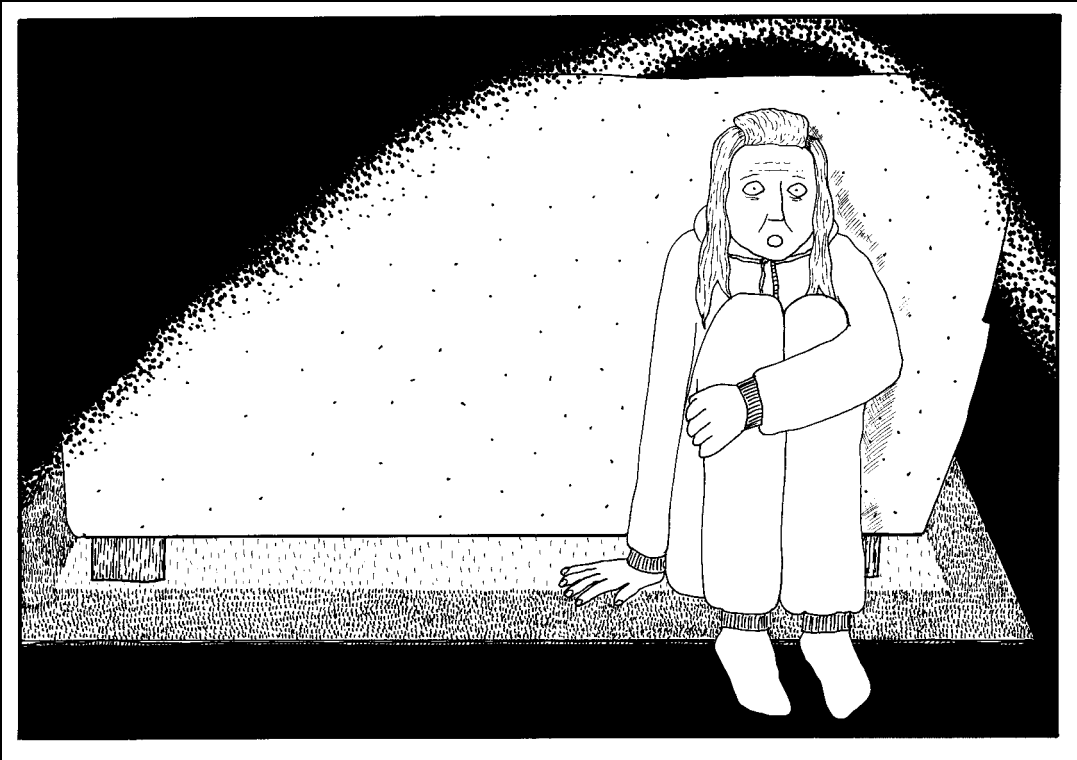
YOU MIGHT NOT BELIEVE THIS, BUT IF
ANY OF MY CHILDREN DIED I WOULD
SUCCUMB. I BEAR SOME HOPE THAT IT
WOULD AT LEAST BOTHER THEM A
BIT IF I PASSED AWAY. BUT THAT IS
MORE THAN I CAN ASK OF THEM.
I KNOW I AM NOT MUCH OF A
MOTHER.

BUT PERHAPS THEY CAN AT LEAST SEE ME AS A FUNCTIONAL
NUTRITIOUS MAMMAL THEY LIVED IN FOR A WHILE
BEFORE THEY COULD MOVE ON WITH THEIR LIVES.

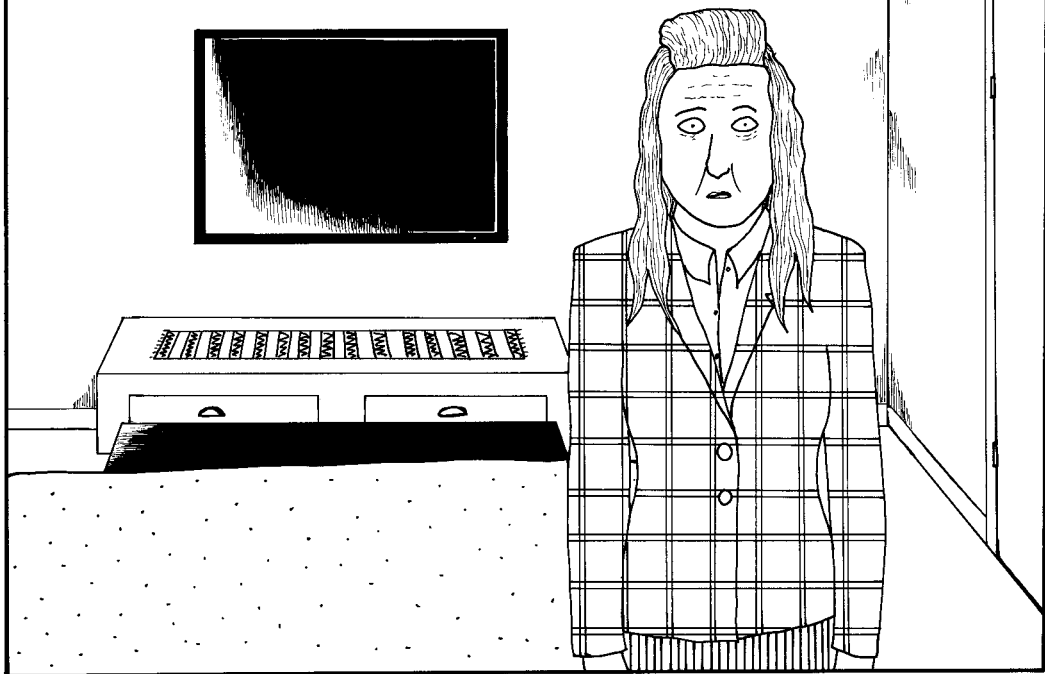


EVERY TIME THEY LEAVE TO GO BACK HOME IT HITS ME AND I THINK:
"WHAT KIND OF PERSON AM I THAT HAVE BROUGHT THESE THREE POOR
CREATURES TO THIS WORLD AND WITH THAT ALL THE SUFFERING THEY
WILL MEET HERE.

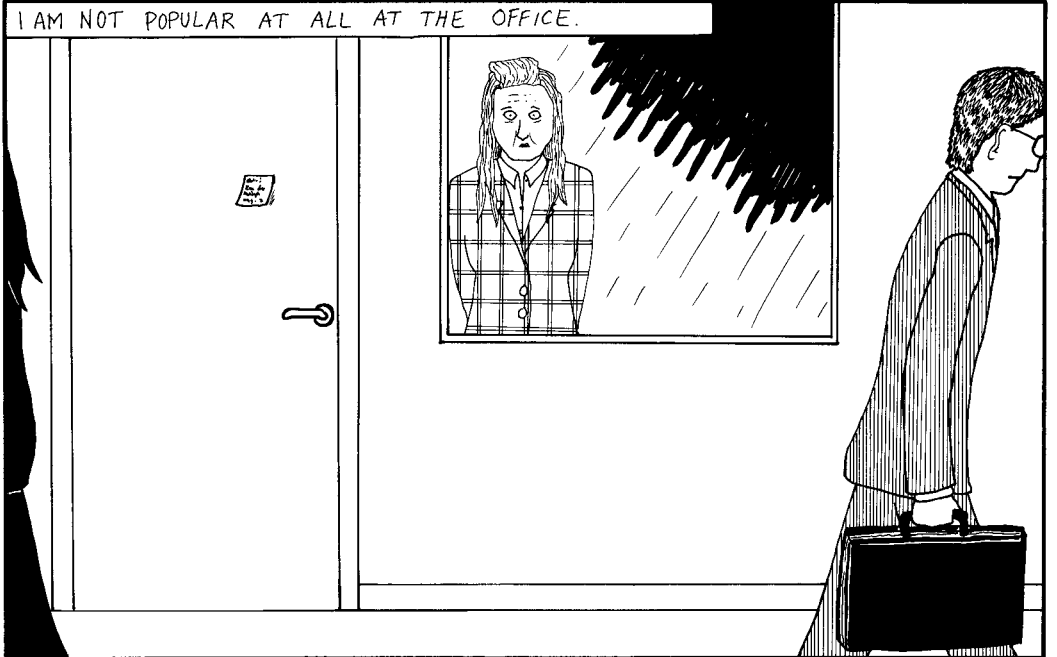




AND THEN IT IS MONDAY AGAIN.



I AM NOT POPULAR AT ALL AT THE OFFICE.



NOT ONLY HERE FOR THAT MATTER, THAT GOES FOR EVERYWHERE IN THIS SOCIETY. BUT IT IS AT THE OFFICE I SPEND MOST OF MY TIME, SO IT IS MORE OBVIOUS HERE.

THAT MEN DO NOT LIKE ME IS FULLY UNDERSTANDABLE. I AM UNATTRACTIVE, SARCASTIC AND UNPLEASANT (BOTH TO LOOK AT AND TO BE AROUND).



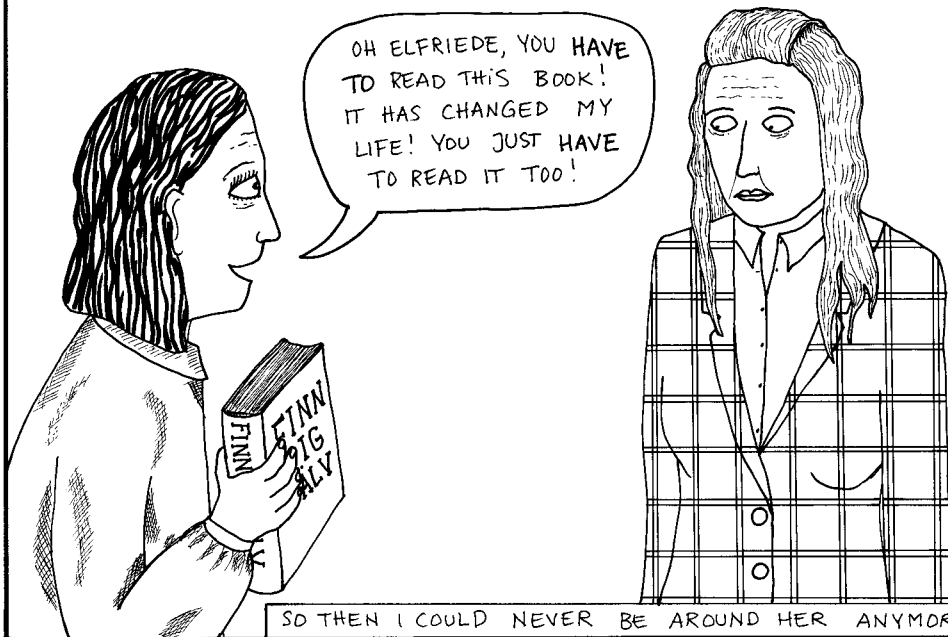
I AM TOO EXPERIENCED TO FALL FOR THEIR TRICKS OR TO BE IMPRESSED. I ALSO HAVE A BIGGER SALARY THAN MOST OF THEM. THE WOMEN DESPISE ME AS WELL.

IT IS SAID THAT YOU GAIN MORE AND MORE FRIENDS THE OLDER YOU GET. FOR ME IT IS THE OPPOSITE. I HAVE FEWER AND FEWER FRIENDS LEFT EVERY YEAR THAT PASSES BY. I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER IT IS ME THAT GETS RID OF THEM OR IF THEY GET RID OF ME. POSSIBLY A COMBINATION OF BOTH.



I ACTUALLY HAD A FRIEND UNTIL LAST WINTER.

THEN SHE GOT ONE OF THOSE "FIND YOUR OWN TINKER BELL - A JOURNEY TOWARD YOUR OWN BEAUTIFUL SOUL"-BOOKS FROM HER SISTER-IN-LAW FOR CHRISTMAS.

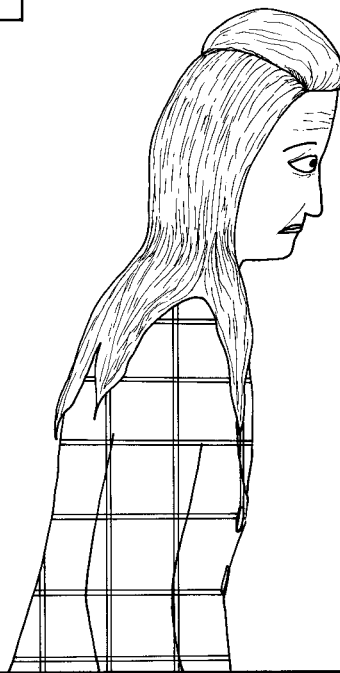
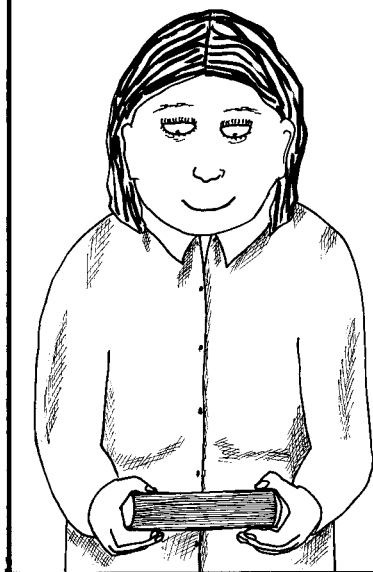


SO THEN I COULD NEVER BE AROUND HER ANYMORE.

I WISH I COULD BUY 30 ML CONCENTRATED CYNICISM OVER THE COUNTER AND INJECT IT STRAIGHT IN HER BLOOD STREAM.



BUT UNFORTUNATELY MEDICAL SCIENCE HAS NOT REACHED THAT FAR YET, SO THE ONLY THING TO DO IS TO END THE FRIENDSHIP.



I KEEP MY RELATIONSHIPS ON AN AS SUPERFICIAL LEVEL AS POSSIBLE. THE MORE I GET TO KNOW PEOPLE THE LESS I CAN STAND THEM. THE MORE I SHOW OF MYSELF THE MORE MY SURROUNDINGS DISTANCE THEMSELVES.



THE MORE I INTERACT WITH OTHERS THE LONELIER I BECOME.

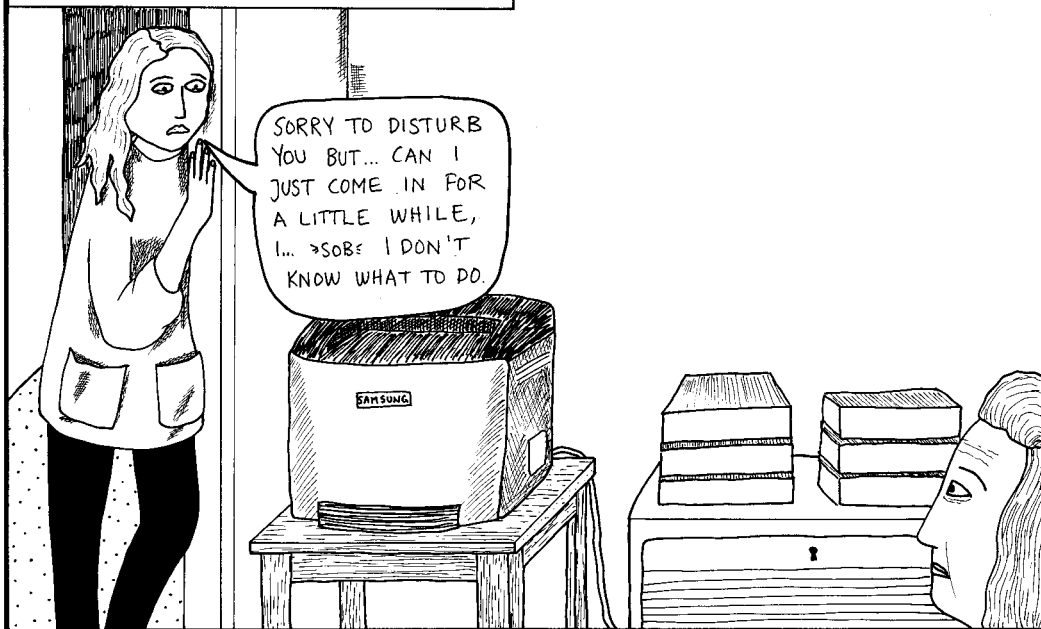
OVER THE YEARS I HAVE BUILT UP A PROTECTION, A SUIT OF ARMOR TO WITHSTAND.

IT IS PROTECTIVE,
BUT MAKES ME
VERY CLUMSY.
I DO NOT KNOW IF
IT IS A HELP
OR A HINDRANCE.

I GUESS I OUGHT TO PROTECT
MYSELF BY GLIDING AROUND IN
A CONDOM INSTEAD, BUT I AM
TOO OLD FASHIONED FOR THAT.



FOR SOME UNDECIPHERABLE REASON PEOPLE AT THE OFFICE SEEM TO CONFIDE IN ME. MAYBE BECAUSE THEY KNOW THAT I HAVE NO ONE TO FORWARD THEIR EMBARRASSING EMOTIONAL OUTBURSTS TO.



IT IS SAID THAT TEARS ARE THE ONLY BODY FLUID MANKIND IS NOT DISGUSTED BY. I PERSONALLY BELONG TO THE MINORITY OF HUMANITY THAT DO NOT AGREE WITH THAT STATEMENT.

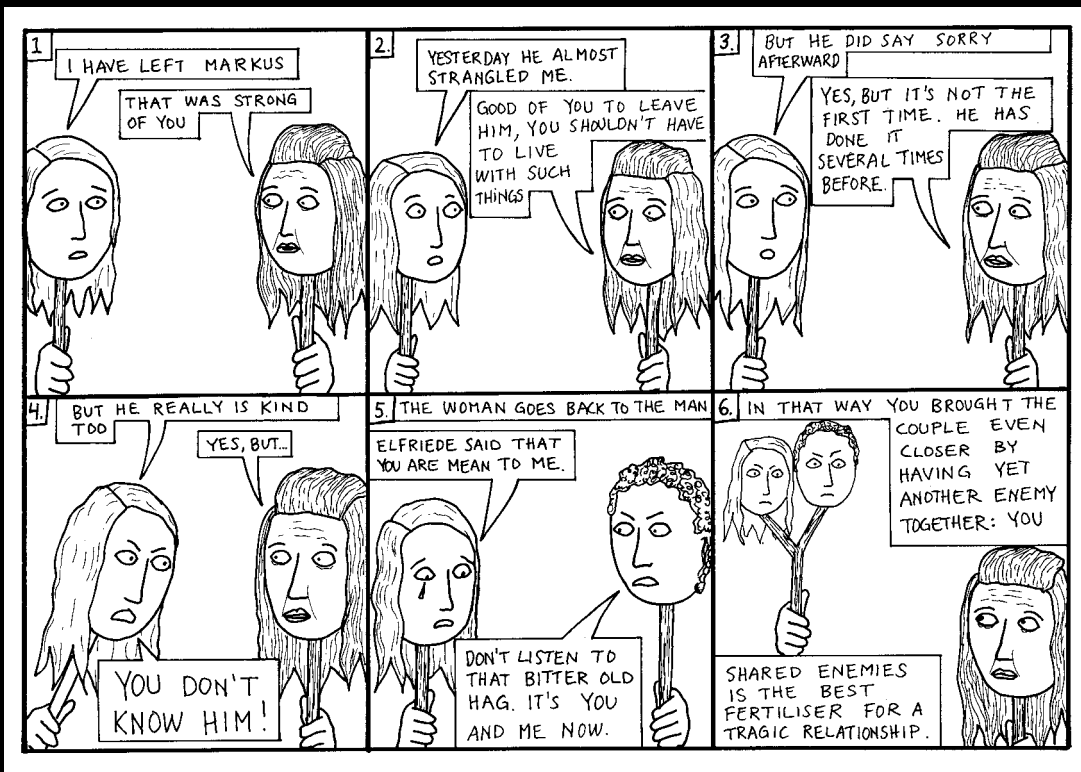


IT IS EXPECTED THAT YOU SHOULD HUG SOMEONE WHO IS CRYING. FOR ME, THE IDEA IS AS REPULSIVE AS TO DRINK SOMEONE ELSE'S URINE.

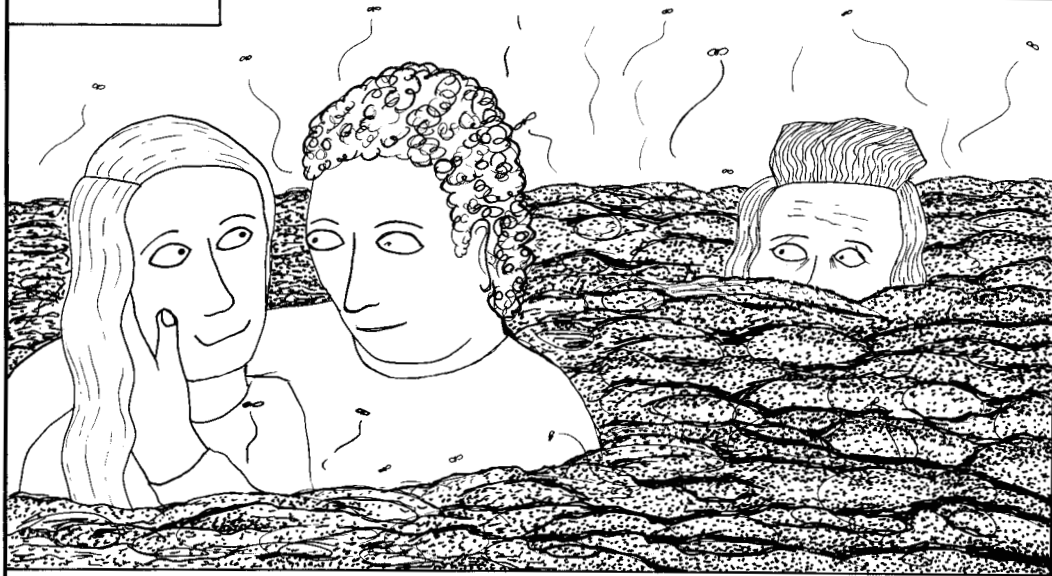
USUALLY IT IS OF COURSE WOMEN, GIRLS, WHO COME IN AND CRY. AND OF COURSE IT IS A MAN, BOY, THEY ARE WEeping OVER. IF THERE IS ONE THING I HAVE LEARNED OVER THE YEARS IT IS THAT THE WORST THING YOU CAN DO WHEN A FEMALE ACQUAINTANCE IS MISTREATED BY A MAN IS TO SUPPORT HER IF SHE HAPPENS TO LEAVE HIM.



IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE WOMAN WILL GO BACK TO HER MAN. THERE ARE A FEW EXCEPTIONS WHERE THE WOMAN ACTUALLY LEAVES THE MAN FOR GOOD BUT THE CHANCES ARE VERY SMALL SO IT IS NOT WORTH THE RISK. IF YOU MAKE THE MISSTAKE OF SUPPORTING THE WOMAN AS SHE LEFT THE MAN, THE FOLLOWING SITUATION ALWAYS OCCURS:

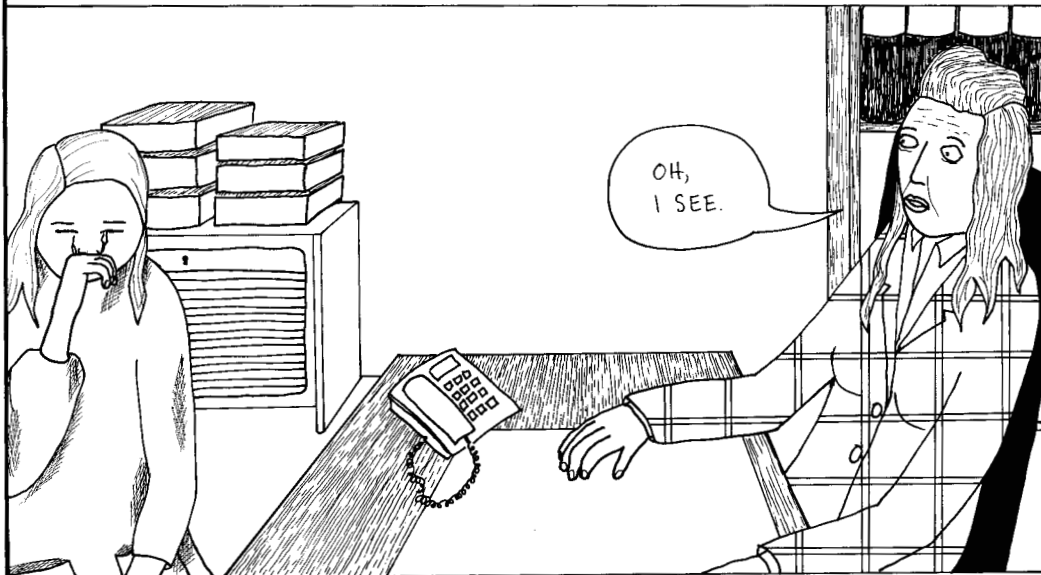


NO MATTER HOW EQUAL AND AWARE PEOPLE TODAY TRY TO BE...



WE ALL CARRY A WAY TOO HEAVY SLAG OF HUMANITY'S HISTORY TO EVER BE ABLE TO CLEAR IT, NO MATTER HOW HARD WE TRY.


SO WHEN SHE SITS THERE SOBBING AND COMPLAINING YOU HAVE TO MAKE SURE TO KEEP A LEVEL HEAD AND NOT SAY ANYTHING, PERHAPS A:



THE WOMAN WILL OF COURSE GO BACK TO THE MAN, BUT AT LEAST NOW YOU HAVE NOT CONTRIBUTED WITH ANYTHING FERTILISING.



BRIDGET IS MY BIGGEST RIVAL HERE AT THE OFFICE.



OH DEAR GIRL,
WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

OR WELL, YOU COULD ALSO SAY THAT SHE IS MY BIGGEST OBJECT OF HATE.

SHE IS SO LIMITLESS. THERE IS NOTHING I FIND AS DISGUSTING AS PEOPLE WITH NO CLEAR BOUNDARIES.



SHE HAS ALSO SURVIVED CANCER, WHICH HAS MADE HER COMPLETELY UNBEARABLE.

I FOR ONE KNOW HOW TOUGH LIFE CAN BE, BUT ONE MUST SEE THE POSSIBILITIES! ENJOY EVERY MINUTE LIFE HAS TO OFFER! IT IS A GIFT WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN!

COME ON, LET'S GO FOR A COFFEE

THIS CANCER-THING MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR ME. I CAN NOT DISLIKE BRIDGET. ONE CAN NOT DISLIKE ANYONE WHO HAS HAD CANCER!!

AREN'T YOU GOING TO JOIN US ,ELFRIEDE?

NO, YOU ARE FAT ENOUGH ALREADY

PAR DON ?

UHM, NO THANKS I HAD SOME EARLIER, I HAVE TO GET ON HERE BUT THANK YOU FOR ASKING.

OK! SEE YOU LATER THEN!



WHAT I DISLIKE THE MOST ABOUT HER IS HER SAPIENCE.
SHE SAYS THINGS LIKE:

I HAVE NEVER HAD WHAT
IS CALLED ANXIETY IN
MY ENTIRE LIFE NOT
EVEN WHEN I HAD CANCER.
I HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN,
DEEP DOWN, THAT
EVERYTHING IS GOING
TO TURN OUT OK.

ALL CHILDREN JUST LOVE
ME STRAIGHT AWAY, AS SOON
AS THEY SEE ME!

I HAVE NEVER
BEEN ON A DIET IN
MY ENTIRE LIFE. I HAVE
ALWAYS BEEN COMPLETELY
SATISFIED WITH MY
BODY.

I HAVE NEVER HAD A
NEGATIVE SEXUAL
EXPERIENCE WITH A MAN!

I HAVE NEVER FELT INFERIOR TO A MAN. I HAVE ALWAYS
FELT COMPLETELY EQUAL WITH EVERYONE I MEET.

AND SHE IS INCREDIBLY GOOD AT BRINGING ME BACK DOWN TO EARTH.

DEAR LORD WOMAN! ARE YOU
REALLY TELLING ME THAT
YOU WERE ALL ALONE ON
CHRISTMAS DAY?!




OR RATHER, SHE MANAGES TO PRESS MY FACE DEEP DOWN INTO EARTH.

CHRISTMAS DAY!!



AT THE SAME TIME SHE IS CONSTANTLY DRAWN TO ME TRYING TO BE CONFIDENTIAL AND TO SHOW ME HER DEPTH.



AAAH, ELFRIEDE, IT IS SO NICE HAVING YOU AROUND HERE!

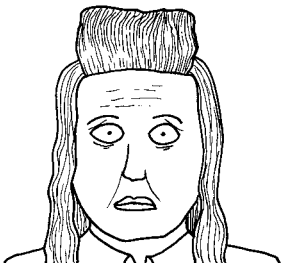
IT IS COMFORTING HAVING ANOTHER, SLIGHTLY OLDER AND WISER WOMAN TO LEAN BACK ON. YOU REALLY MEAN A LOT TO ME.

WHEN YOU SEE THE YOUNG, CONFUSED AND SAD PEOPLE... ONE JUST WANTS TO HUG AND COMFORT THEM AND TELL THEM TO HOLD ON FOR A WHILE AND THAT LIFE WILL GET BETTER AS TIME GOES ON. WE CAN ALL RECALL HOW WE FELT AT THAT TIME, CAN WE NOT?

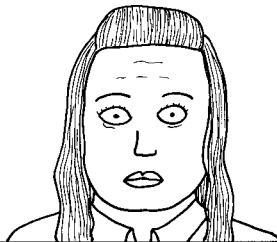


PARDON MY FRENCH, BUT WHAT THE HELL IS SHE GOING ON ABOUT? SINCE WHEN DO THINGS GET BETTER?

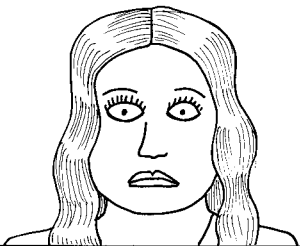
I HAVE THE SAME ANXIETY TODAY WHEN
I AM 49 YEARS OLD...



AS I HAD WHEN I WAS 37



AND 26



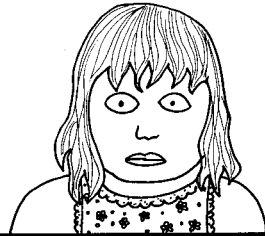
OR 18



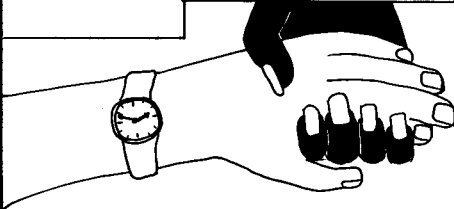
OR 10



OR 5

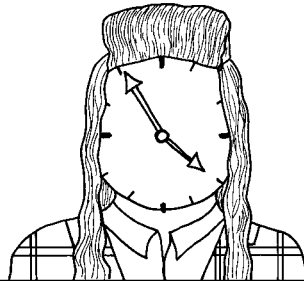


I AM CONVINCED THAT IT WILL BE
THE SAME WHEN I AM 67, 79, 88, 96...




ANXIETY IS A CONSTANT THAT FOLLOWS
YOU HAND IN HAND YOUR WHOLE LIFE.

TIME IS A WOUND THAT WILL NEVER HEAL.



THEY TALK ABOUT THAT YOU ARE NEVER ALONE HAVING ANXIETY, THAT SO MANY OTHERS SUFFER FROM IT AS WELL. BUT WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THAT MAKE? NO MATTER HOW YOU TWIST AND TURN IT, YOU WILL ALWAYS BE ALONE IN IT.



I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE OBSESSION WITH YOUTH IN THIS SOCIETY. I WOULD NEVER WANT TO BE YOUNGER!

NEITHER DO I. I WANT TO GROW REALLY OLD FAST SO IT'S ALL OVER SOON.

HA HA, YOU'RE FUNNY. WHY DO YOU HAVE TO SEE EVERYTHING SO DARK ALL THE TIME?

I DO NOT KNOW. ONE ALWAYS HAS TO LOOK FOR THE LIGHT, FINDING A SOURCE FOR IT. THE DARKNESS IS ALWAYS THERE.

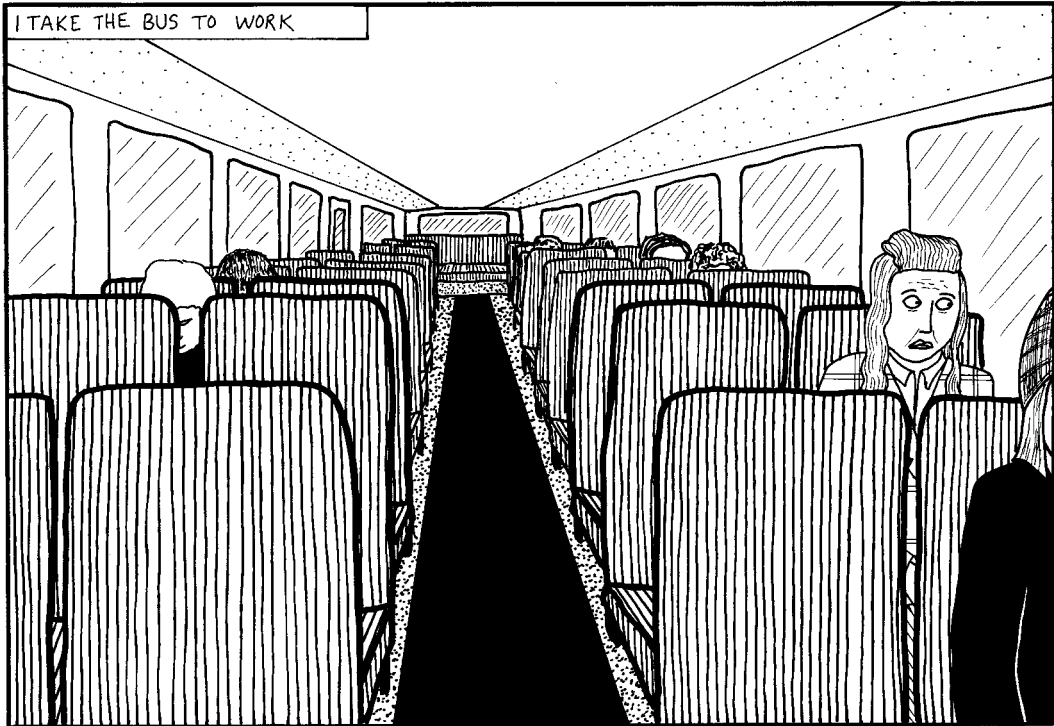
I HAVE DUG DEEP IN THE DARKNESS TO FIND THE LIGHT. I HAVE BEEN DIGGING AND DIGGING MY ENTIRE LIFE BUT I HAVE NOT YET FOUND A LIGHT, JUST MORE SHADES OF BLACK.



THIS ENORMOUS MOUNTAIN OF FLESH BORN IN THE 40's; WHEN WILL THEY EVER DIE OUT? NOT EVEN CANCER GETS TO THEM SO THEY WILL PROBABLY OUTLIVE US ALL LIKE SOME KIND OF MUTANT PREHISTORIC ANIMAL.



I TAKE THE BUS TO WORK



I ONCE READ A BOOK, PERHAPS IT WAS FOR MY CHILDREN, ABOUT A MAGIC BUS STOP. IF YOU GOT OFF THERE YOU DISAPPEARED. COMPLETELY. YOU CEASED TO EXIST.

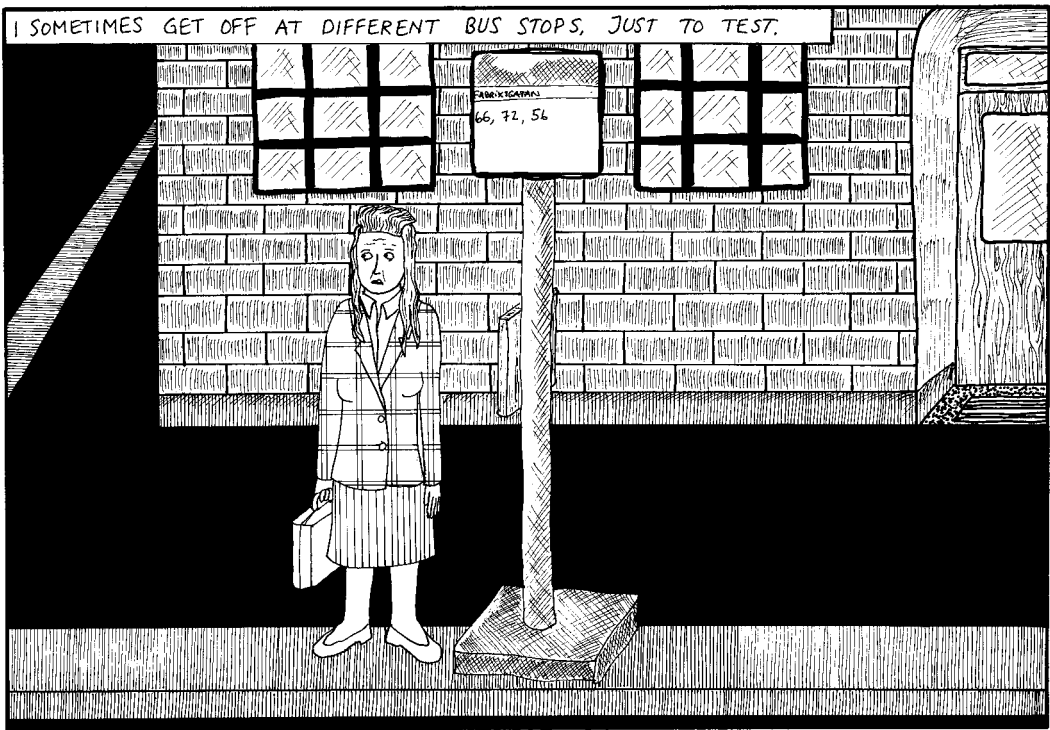


YOUR ENTIRE EXISTENCE JUST LIKE THAT, POOF, GONE.

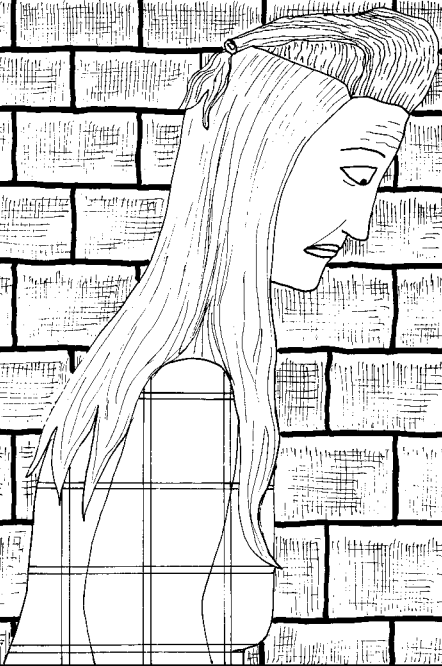
I GUESS IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE INTERPRETED AS SOMETHING SCARY, BUT I BELIEVE IT TO BE THE BIGGEST HAPPINESS I COULD EVER EXPERIENCE.



I SOMETIMES GET OFF AT DIFFERENT BUS STOPS, JUST TO TEST.



SO FAR WITHOUT POSITIVE RESULTS.



THE EXISTENCE GOES ON.

I HAVE A PLACE WHERE I GO. A PLACE THAT I DISCOVERED BY CHANCE A COUPLE OF YEARS A GO. I THINK IT WAS WHEN I HAD GOTTEN OFF AT YET ANOTHER BUS STOP AND WAS ON MY WAY TO WORK.



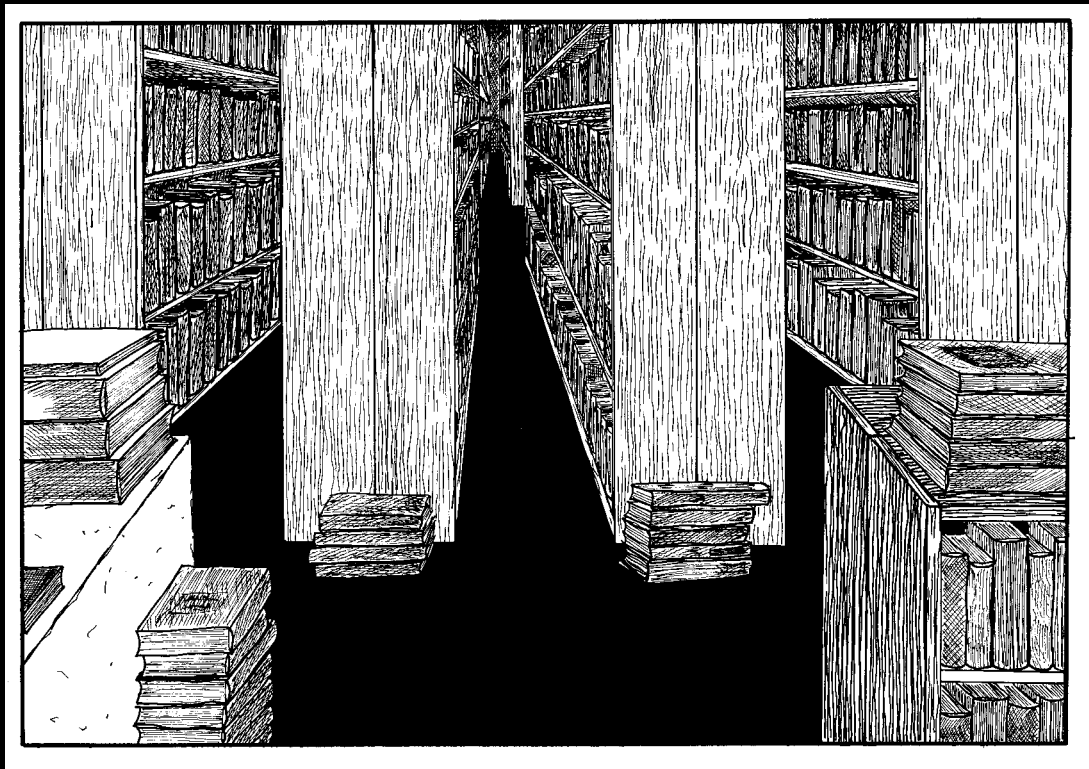
I WAS WALKING DOWN A LONESOME BACK STREET AND WOULD PROBABLY HAVE MISSED IT COMPLETELY IF IT WAS NOT FOR THAT THERE, IN THE OTHERWISE EMPTY SHOP WINDOW, WAS A STRATEGICALLY PLACED COPY OF ONE OF MY FAVOURITE BOOKS.



DESPITE THE CARELESSLY WRITTEN MISSPELLED SIGN IN THE WINDOW OF THE DOOR,
SOMETHING DREW ME IN, I JUST HAD TO ENTER THIS DOOR.



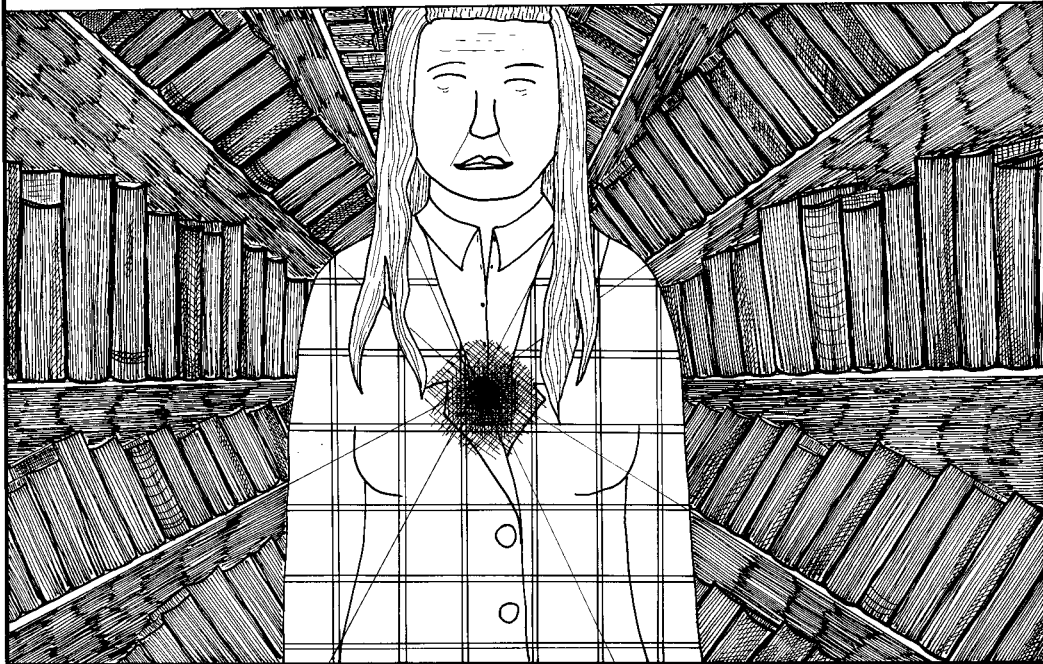
WHO KNOWS, MAYBE I WAS WRONG ABOUT THE BUS STOP? WAS IT INSTEAD A
CERTAIN DOOR YOU HAD TO PASS?



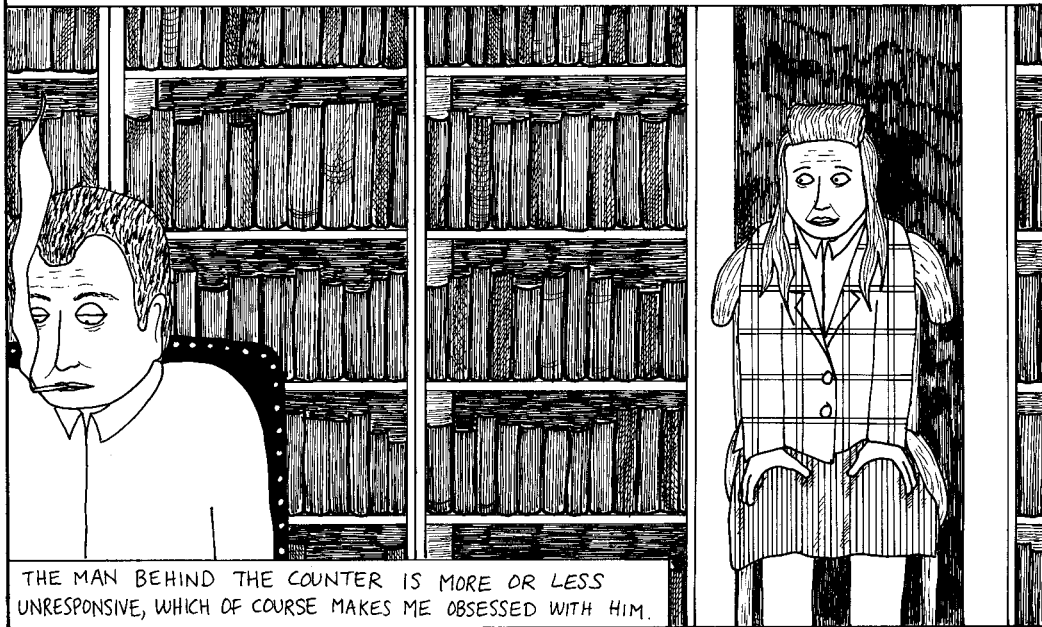
TO THE LEFT THERE WAS A COUNTER. BEHIND IT A CHAIN SMOKING MAN SAT
READING. HE BARELY TOOK ANY NOTICE OF ME WHICH I FOUND SYMPATHETIC.



I CAN NOT EXPLAIN WHY, BUT THIS PLACE FILLED ME WITH A SENSE OF CALM.
A CALMNESS THAT TREMBLED DEEP INTO THE DARKEST PART OF MY SOUL.



I KEPT GOING THERE, DURING LUNCH, OR AFTER WORK. I NEVER BOUGHT ANYTHING, I DID NOT EVEN LOOK THROUGH ANY OF THE BOOKS. I JUST SAT THERE ON A CHAIR WHICH I PRESUMED WAS MEANT JUST FOR ME.



THE MAN BEHIND THE COUNTER IS MORE OR LESS UNRESPONSIVE, WHICH OF COURSE MAKES ME OBSESSED WITH HIM.

I HAVE MANAGED TO FIGURE OUT THAT HIS NAME IS IAN AND THAT HE CAME TO SWEDEN FROM ENGLAND IN THE BEGINNING OF THE 80'S. I WOULD ESTIMATE HIM TO BE IN HIS 50S, LIKE ME, PERHAPS SLIGHTLY OLDER.



ON THE COUNTER THERE IS A PICTURE OF WHAT I MOST LIKELY THINK IS HIMSELF AS VERY YOUNG, WITH A BABY IN HIS ARMS.

THERE IS SOMETHING STRANGELY FAMILIAR ABOUT HIM, SOMEHOW I KNOW HIM SO WELL, BUT I CAN NOT FOR MY LIFE PLACE HIM.



WHEN I GET TO WORK I MOST OFTEN DECIDE TO TAKE THE STAIRS TO AVOID THE DISCOMFORT IT MEANS TO STAYING IN THE LIFT TOGETHER WITH OTHER PEOPLE.



I FURTIVELY GLANCE INTO THE ROOMS ON THE LOWER FLOORS. THE GROUND FLOOR CONSISTS OF THE NEWLY EMPLOYED PEOPLE. THEY ARE YOUNG, VULGAR.



SOME ARE HAPPY

SOME ARE UNHAPPY

SOME SEEM TO HAVE SOME KIND OF MENTAL DISABILITY

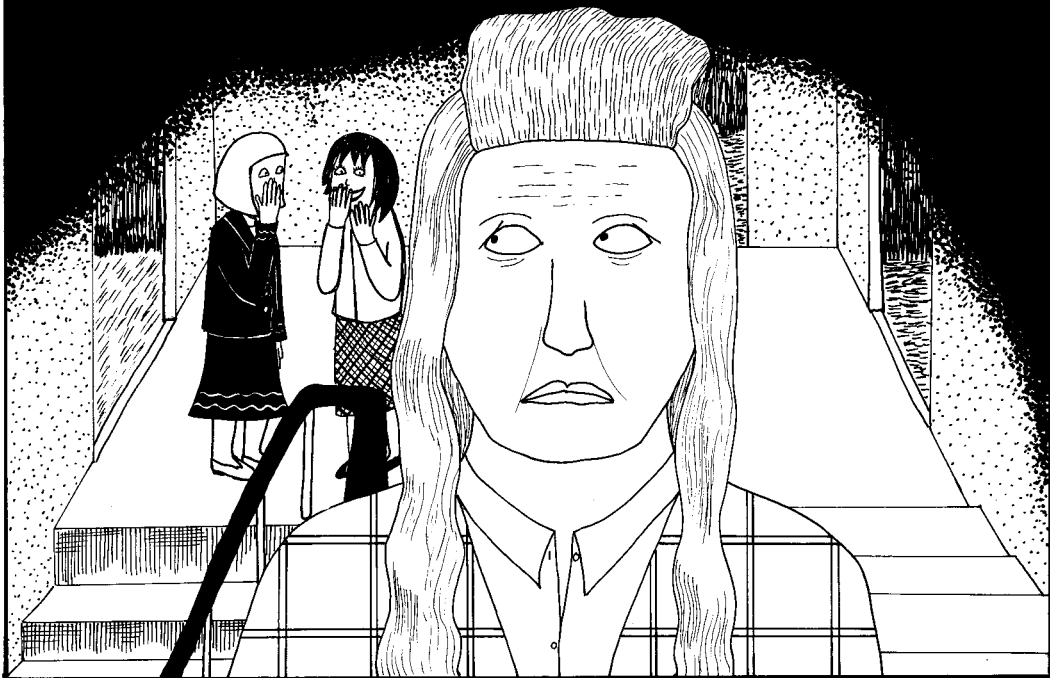
THEY ALL HAVE IN COMMON THAT THEY ARE RATHER FILTHY. I WOULD LIKE TO THROW ALL OF THEM INTO A COLD SHOWER

HOWEVER, THE EMPLOYEES ON THE MIDDLE FLOORS ARE THE WORST ONES. THEY MEET ME AT THE STAIRS, ALL AMBITIONS, GROVELING, FAWNING.

OH HEY, EH WELL COULD I COME BY AND SHOW YOU SOMETHING I HAVE WORKED ON? SOME DAY WHEN YOU HAVE GOT TIME, IF YOU HAVE ANY, EH.



STILL, I HAVE A STRONG FEELING THAT THEY ARE LAUGHING BEHIND MY BACK.

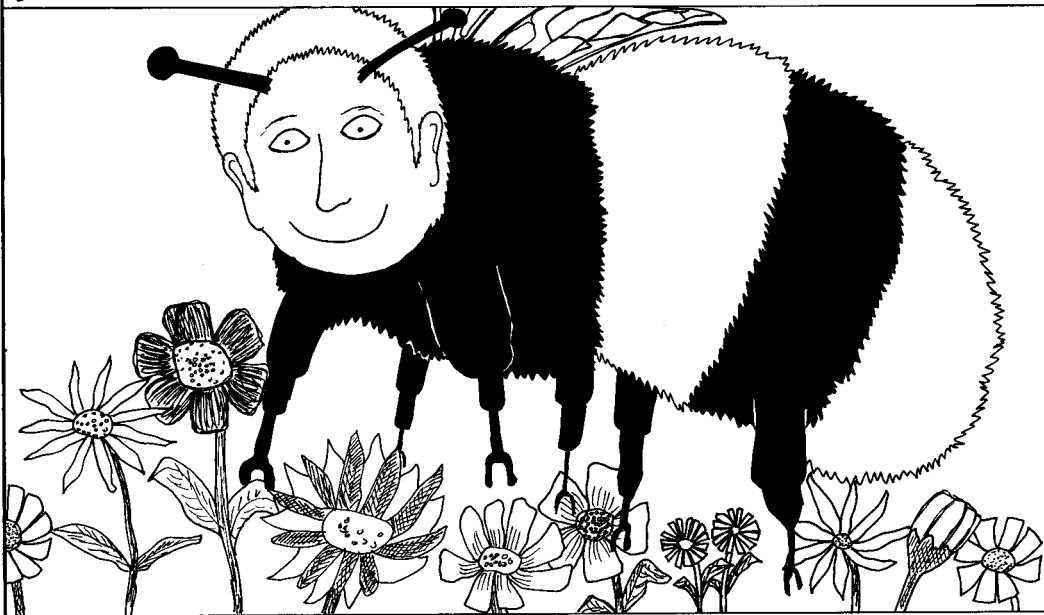


MY BOSS RUNS IN TO ME BY THE STAIRS ON MY FLOOR.

DO YOU SMOKE, ELFRIEDE?!?

THE SMELL FROM IAN'S CIGARETTE
SMOKE REMAINS ON MY CLOTHES.

MY BOSS. IN MY MIND I PICTURE HIM AS A BUMBLE BEE. TOO CLUMSY AND UNGAINLY TO MANAGE THE JOB HE HAS BEEN SET TO DO, BUT HE DOES IT EVEN THOUGH IT SHOULD BE PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE.




HE BUZZES AROUND FROM FLOWER TO FLOWER HERE AT THE OFFICE.

I HAVE BEEN WORKING HERE FAR LONGER THAN THE BUMBLE BEE. FOR SOME TIME I SAW HIM ON THE GROUND FLOOR AND THOUGHT THAT HE WOULD NEVER LAST FOR LONG IN THIS BUILDING. HE JUST SEEMED TO BUZZ AROUND AND CHAT.



BUT THEN ONE DAY OUT OF THE BLUE HE WAS MY BOSS. I HAVE NO IDEA HOW IT HAPPENED.



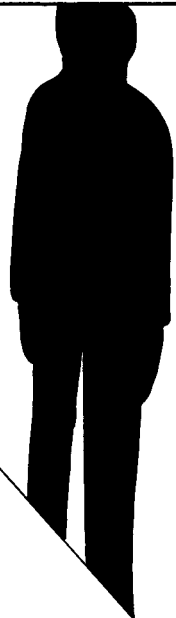
HELLO THERE

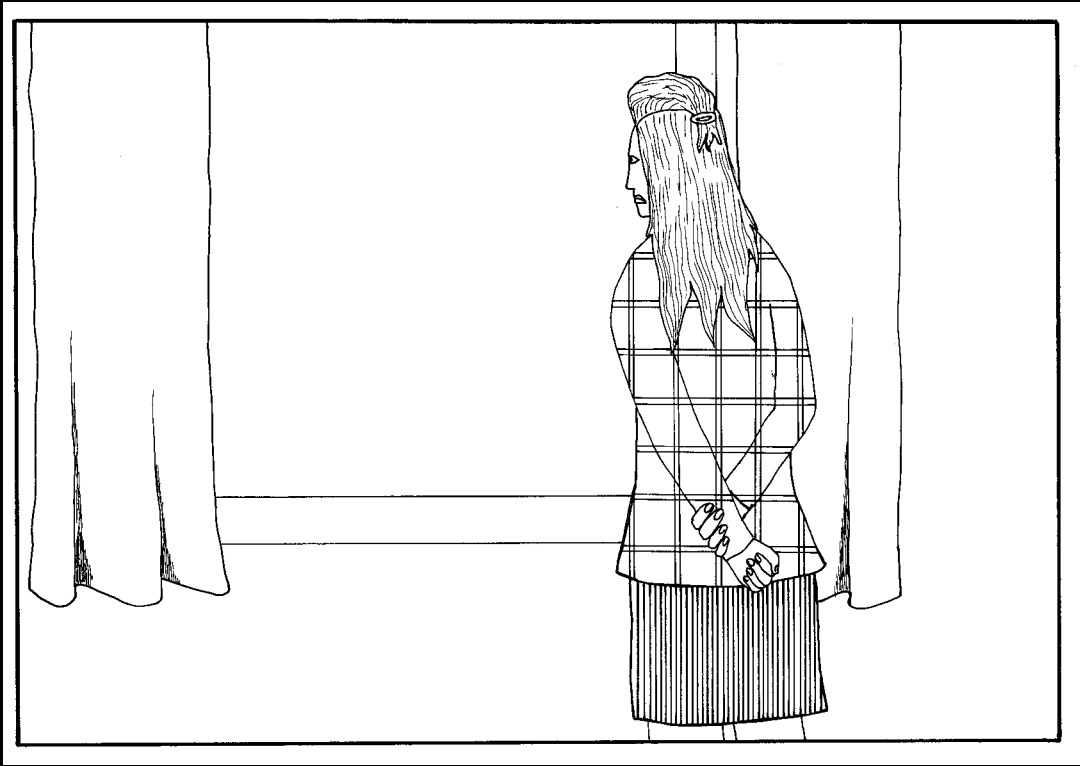
THE BUMBLE BEE HAS NEVER TRIED TO SLEEP WITH ME OF COURSE. I AM WAY TOO OLD. I SLEPT WITH THE OLD BOSS. I DO NOT KNOW WHY. I THOUGHT ONE HAD TO.

IT TURNED OUT THAT YOU DID NOT HAVE TO AT ALL. RATHER THE CONTRARY.



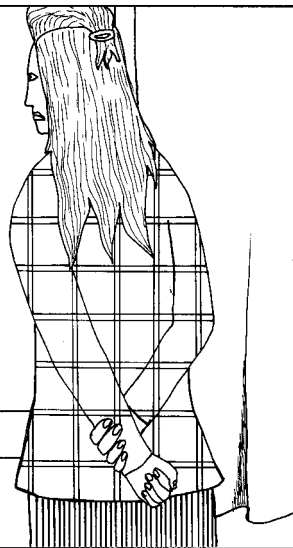
I DO NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OLD BOSS.
I NEVER SEE HIM ANYMORE.





EVERYONE MUST BUILD THEIR OWN HAPPINESS. MISFORTUNES WILL BE DRAWN TO YOU WHETHER YOU WANT TO OR NOT, THEY ARE OUT OF YOUR CONTROL.

HAPPINESS HAS TO BE CREATED,
MISFORTUNE COME TO YOU EVEN
IF YOU DO NOTHING. IT JUST
TARGETS YOU.

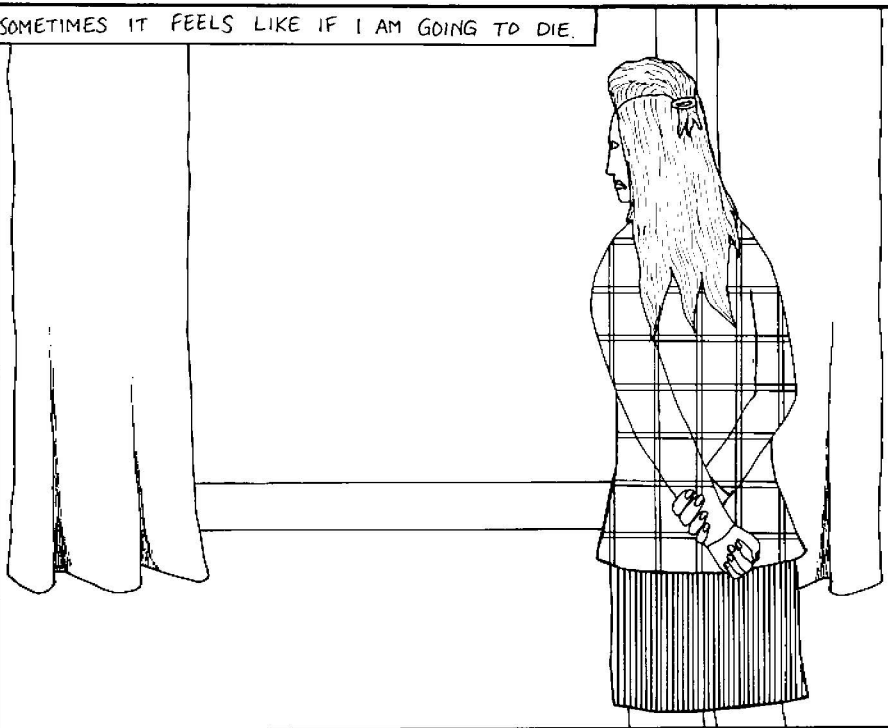


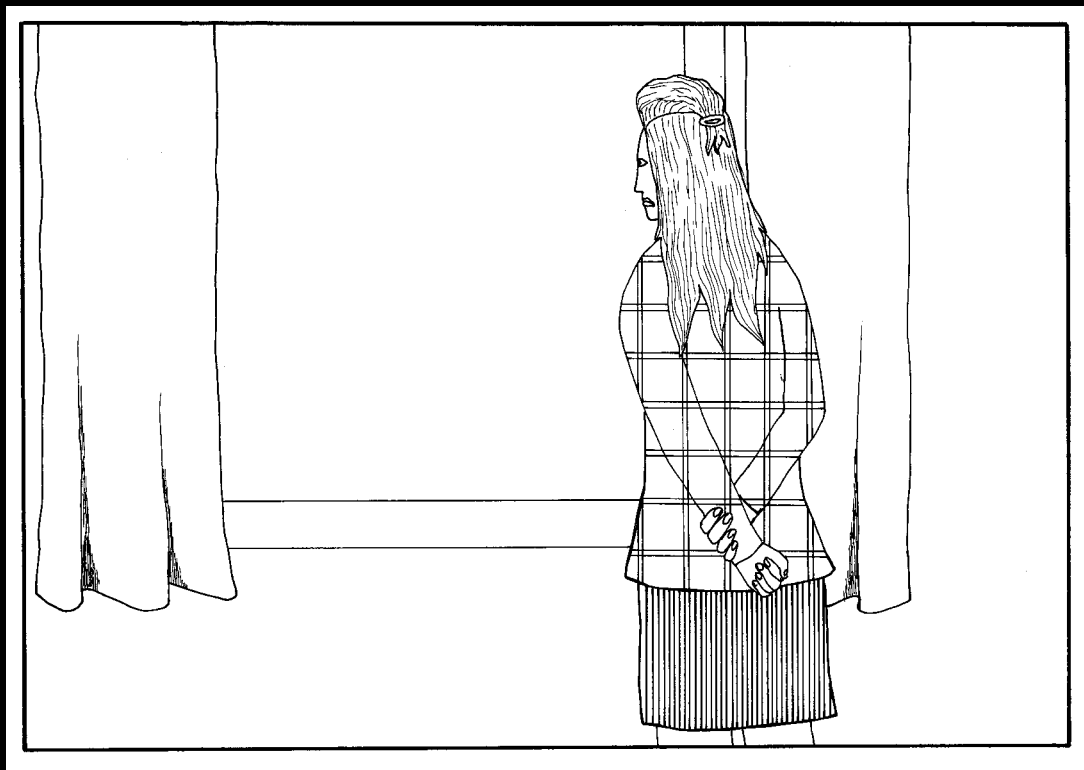
WHY DO YOU NOT JUST GET TARGETED BY HAPPINESS? WHY DO YOU HAVE TO CREATE IT? WHO MANAGES THAT WHEN ONES HANDS ARE FULL TRYING TO STAND UP AGAINST ALL THE MISFORTUNE POURING OVER ONESELF.

THE MORE I DIG THE DARKER IT GETS. I SHOULD HAVE PUT MY SHOVEL AWAY
A LONG TIME A GO.

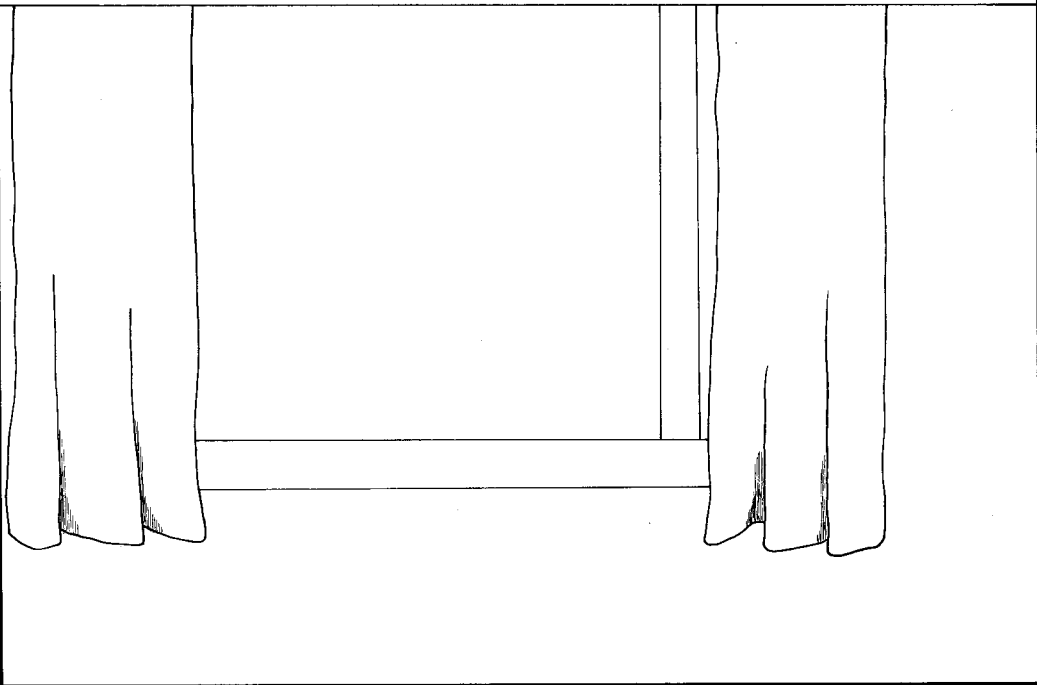


SOMETIMES IT FEELS LIKE IF I AM GOING TO DIE.

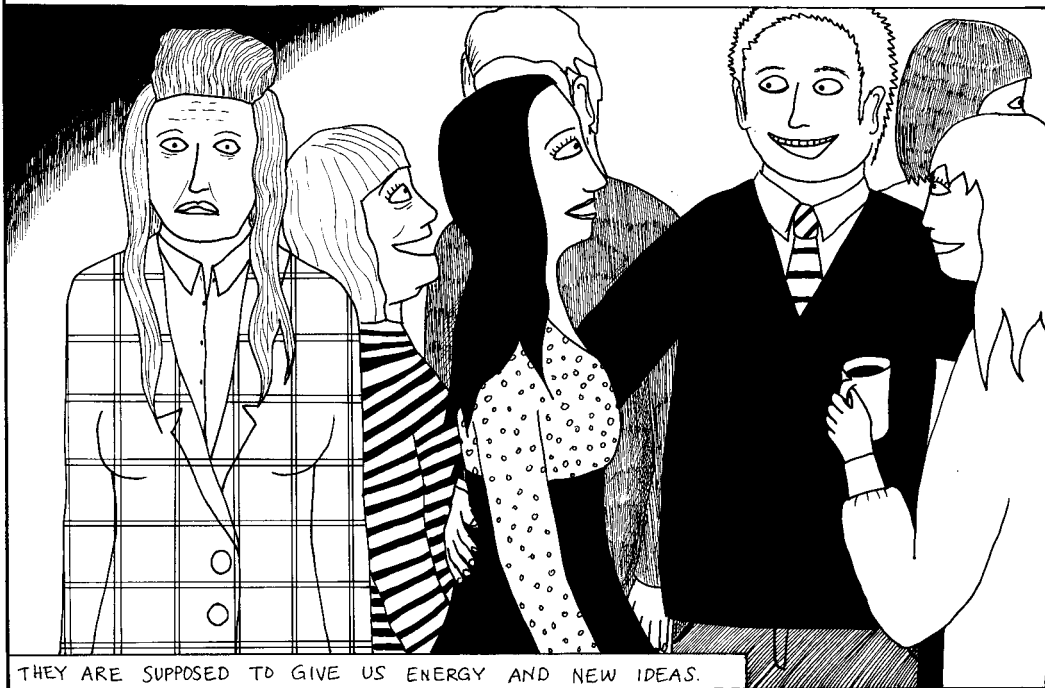




AND I WILL. AT SOME POINT, THANK LORD.



WITH WAY TOO SHORT INTERVALS THE BUMBLE BEE ORGANIZES SO CALLED 'MOTIVATION DAYS'.

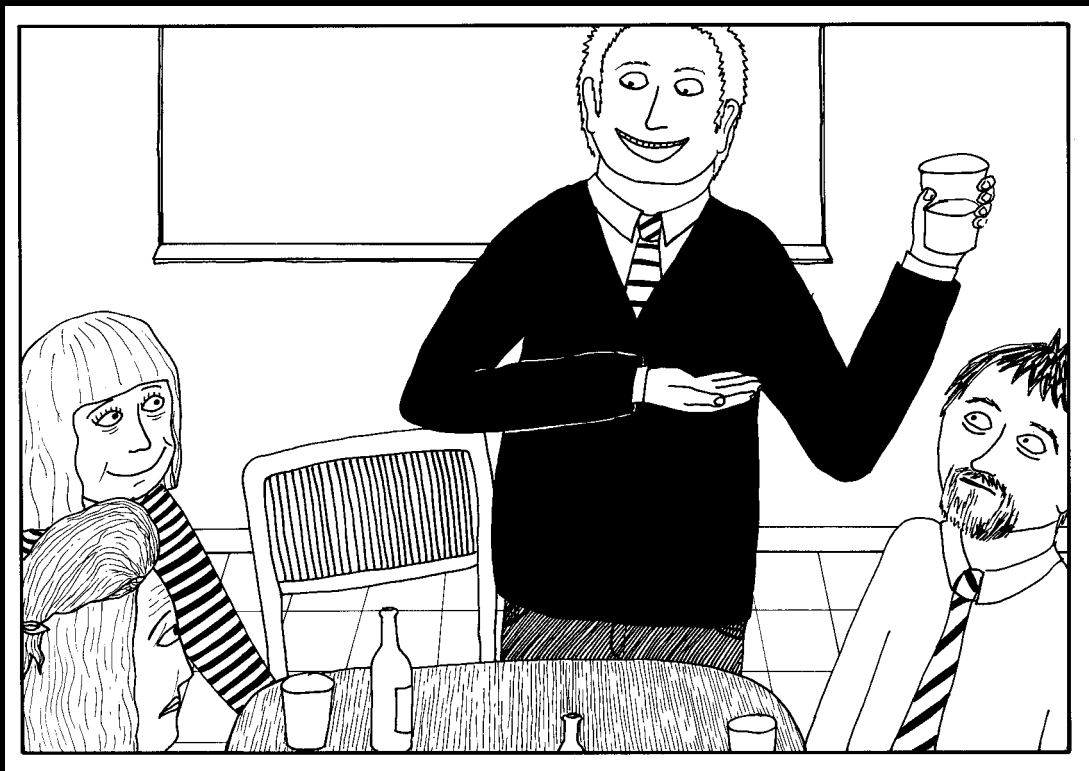


THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO GIVE US ENERGY AND NEW IDEAS.

TO ACHIEVE THIS WE FOR SOME REASON
HAVE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION:

IS THIS GLASS OF
WATER HALF FULL
OR HALF EMPTY?
HUH?! WHAT DO
YOU THINK?

DO YOU BELIEVE
THIS GLASS IS
HALF EMPTY?



FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, IT IS ONLY THE AMOUNT THAT IT IS!!! JUST ABOUT 2 DECILITERS
I GUESS. WHAT DOES IT MATTER WHAT YOU CALL IT!!



WHY IS THAT SO HARD TO UNDERSTAND!? IT DRIVES ME CRAZY!!!

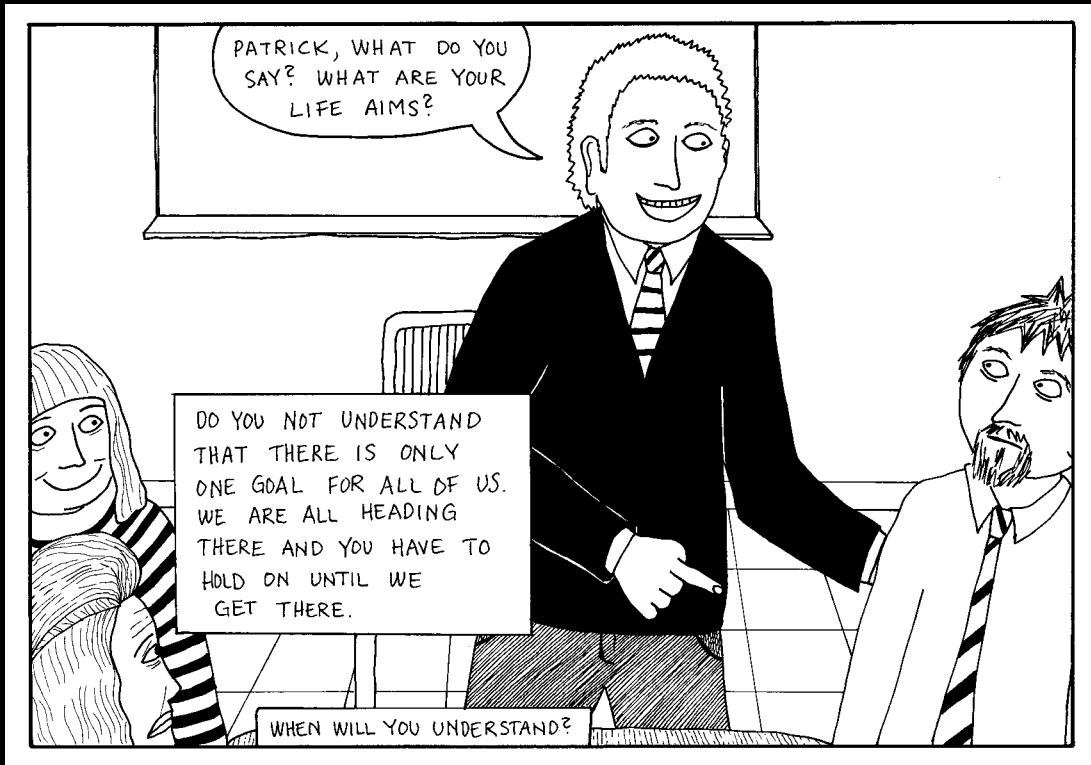
ANOTHER ISSUE WE HAVE TO RESPOND TO IS:

I WOULD LIKE
TO KNOW ABOUT
YOUR AIMS
IN LIFE.

ELFRIEDE, WHAT
ARE YOUR GOALS?







PATRICK, WHAT DO YOU SAY? WHAT ARE YOUR LIFE AIMS?

DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE GOAL FOR ALL OF US. WE ARE ALL HEADING THERE AND YOU HAVE TO HOLD ON UNTIL WE GET THERE.

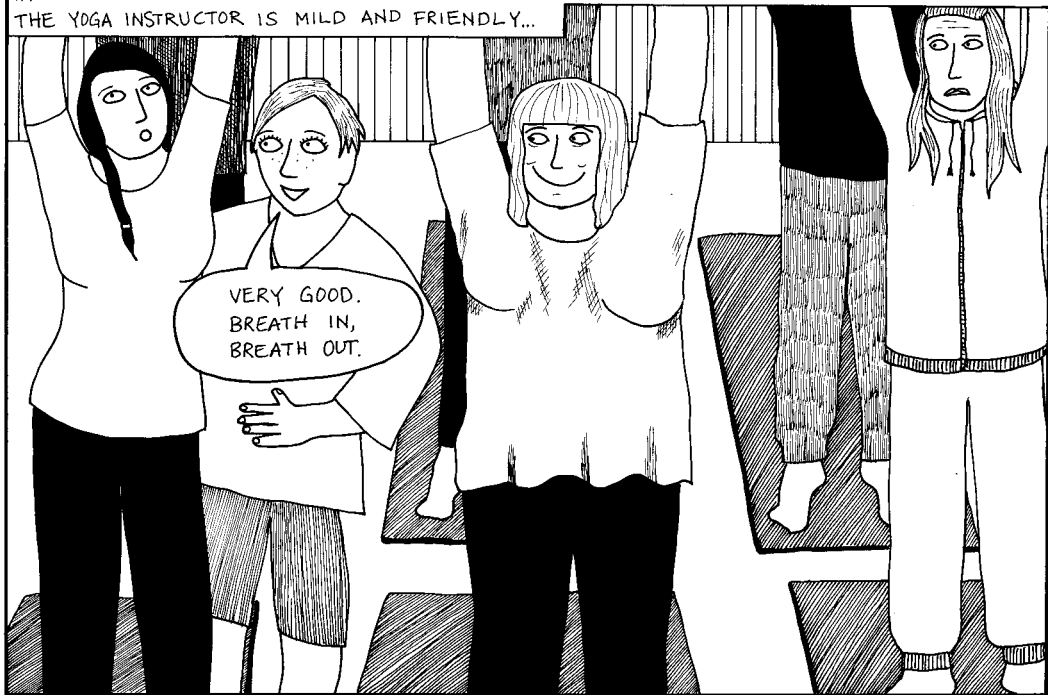
WHEN WILL YOU UNDERSTAND?

ONE OF THE MOST ANNOYING TRAIT OF MANKIND IS THE BELIEF THAT WE ARE UNIQUE AND SPECIAL. IT WILL LEAD TO THE ULTIMATE DOWNFALL OF HUMANITY.

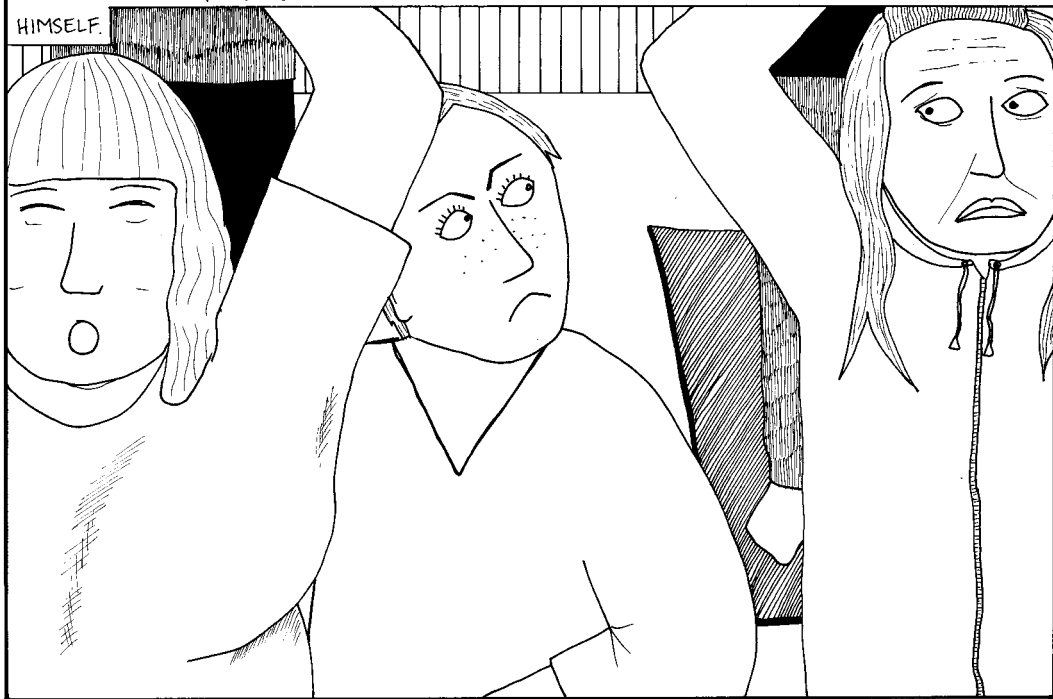


NO ONE IS UNIQUE! NO ONE IS SPECIAL! NO ONE IS VALUABLE! WE ARE JUST LIKE EACH OTHER! WHEN WILL YOU EVER UNDERSTAND?!

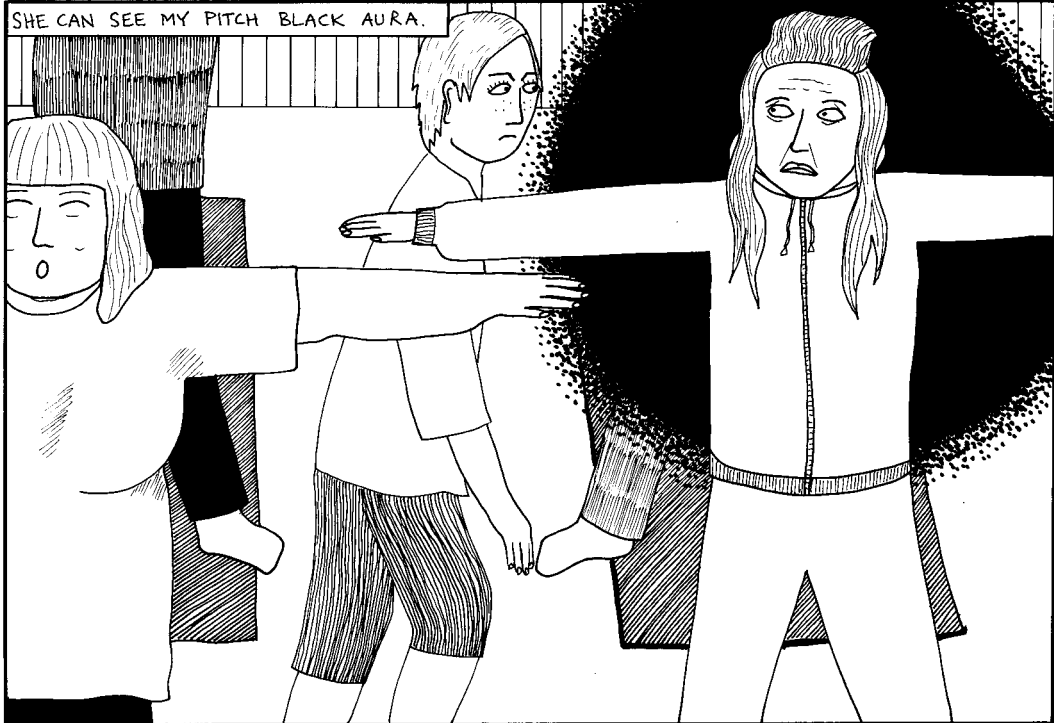
IN THE AFTERNOON THERE IS OFTEN SOME KIND OF PHYSICAL EXERCISE. YOGA IS POPULAR.
THE YOGA INSTRUCTOR IS MILD AND FRIENDLY...



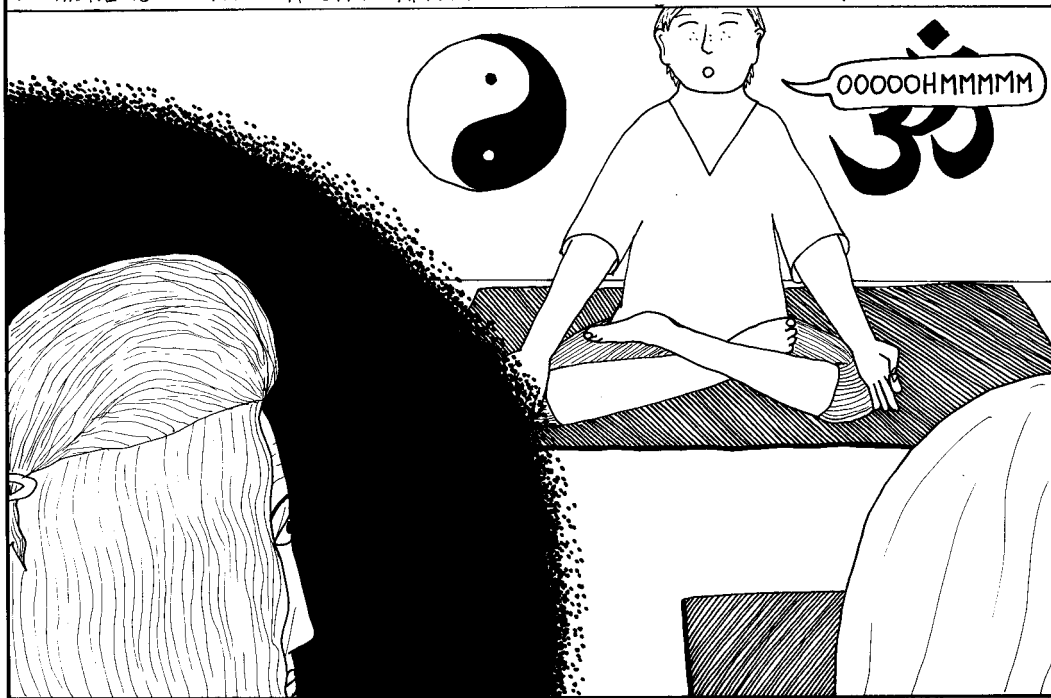
...TOWARDS EVERYONE BUT ME. SHE KEEPS GLARING AT ME AS IF I WAS THE DEVIL
HIMSELF.



SHE CAN SEE MY PITCH BLACK AURA.



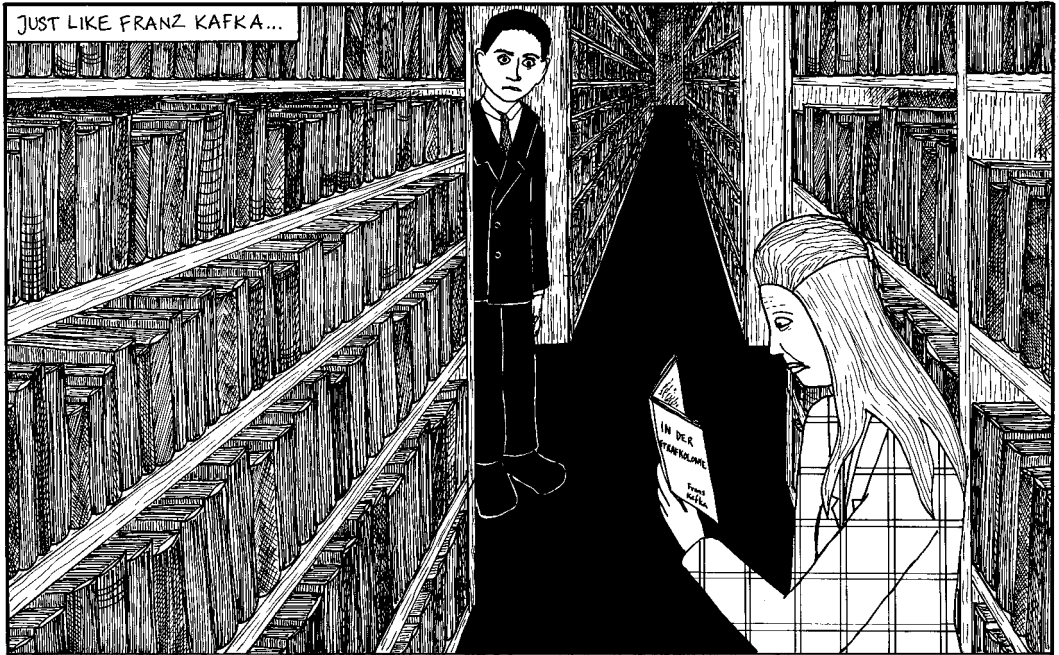
IF THERE IS IN FACT A LIFE AFTER THIS I WILL BE EXTREMELY DISAPPOINTED.



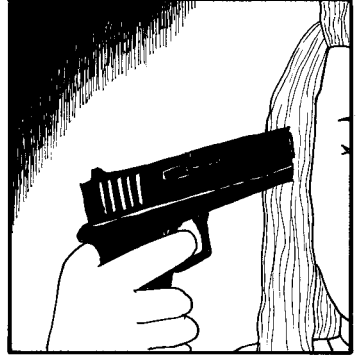
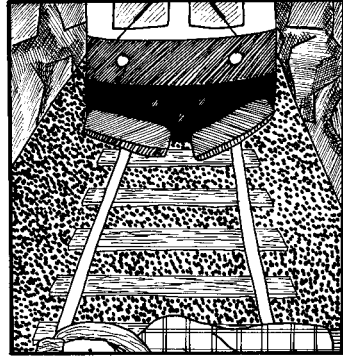
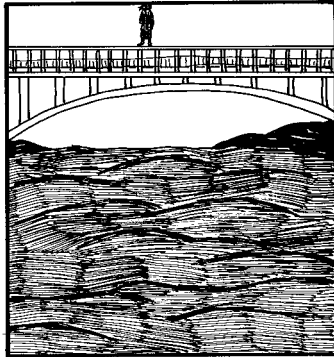
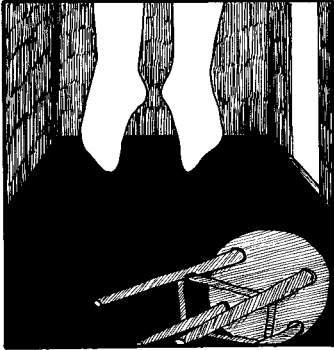
I JUST WANT IT TO BE OVER. OVER. OVER.



JUST LIKE FRANZ KAFKA...



... MOST OF MY DAYS CONSIST OF FANTASIZE ABOUT DIFFERENT WAYS TO DIE.



SOMETIMES I JUST FANTASIZE ABOUT FRANZ KAFKA.



ONE DAY A STRANGE THING HAPPENED.
MY MOBILE PHONE RANG. I COULD SEE
THAT IT WAS MY OLDEST SON CALLING.



BUT IT TURNED OUT TO BE SOMEONE, ONE
OF THOSE HONEST ONES, THAT HAD
FOUND THE PHONE IN A CHANGING ROOM,
AND THAT HAD CALLED THE NUMBER LISTED
UNDER 'MUM' IN THE PHONE BOOK IN
ORDER TO GET HOLD OF THE OWNER.

AFTER I DECIDED A TIME AND PLACE WITH THE HONEST PERSON SO I COULD
GET THE PHONE BACK WE HUNG UP.
THEN IT WAS AS IF A BLACK HOLE GRABBED ME.



WHEN I HAD RETRIEVED THE PHONE I COULD NOT FOR MY LIFE BRING MYSELF
TO RETURN IT TO MY SON.



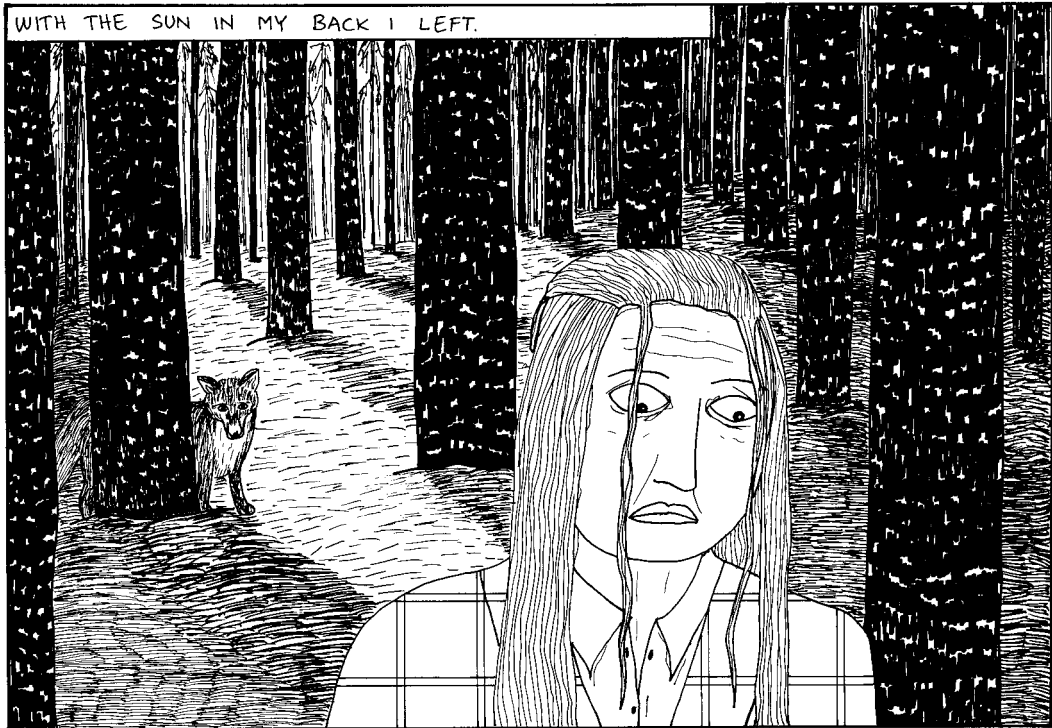
SO I RAN. I RAN STRAIGHT INTO THE WOODS. I RAN. I RAN MYSELF ASTRAY.



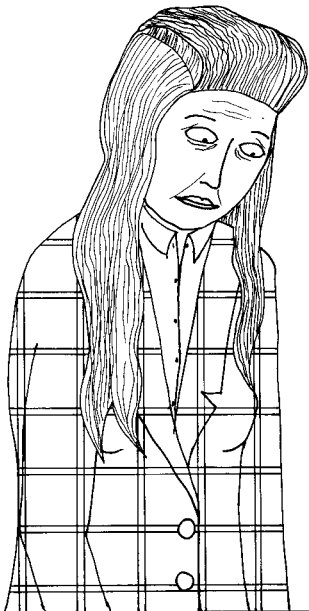
WHEN I WAS ABSOLUTELY SURE THAT I HAD NO IDEA WHERE I WAS, I SAT
DOWN AND BURIED THE PHONE IN THE DARK MOSS.



WITH THE SUN IN MY BACK I LEFT.



I BOUGHT MY SON A NEW PHONE.



THANKS!
DAMN THAT'S
NICE OF YOU!
I REALLY HAVE
NO IDEA WHERE
I LEFT MY
OLD ONE.




A BRAND NEW, FRESH, UNUSED, UNDEFILED, PACKED, IN A BOX, WRAPPED IN PLASTIC.



A LATE NIGHT WHEN I WAS ON MY WAY HOME FROM WORK...

ELFRIEDE!
WAIT FOR ME!

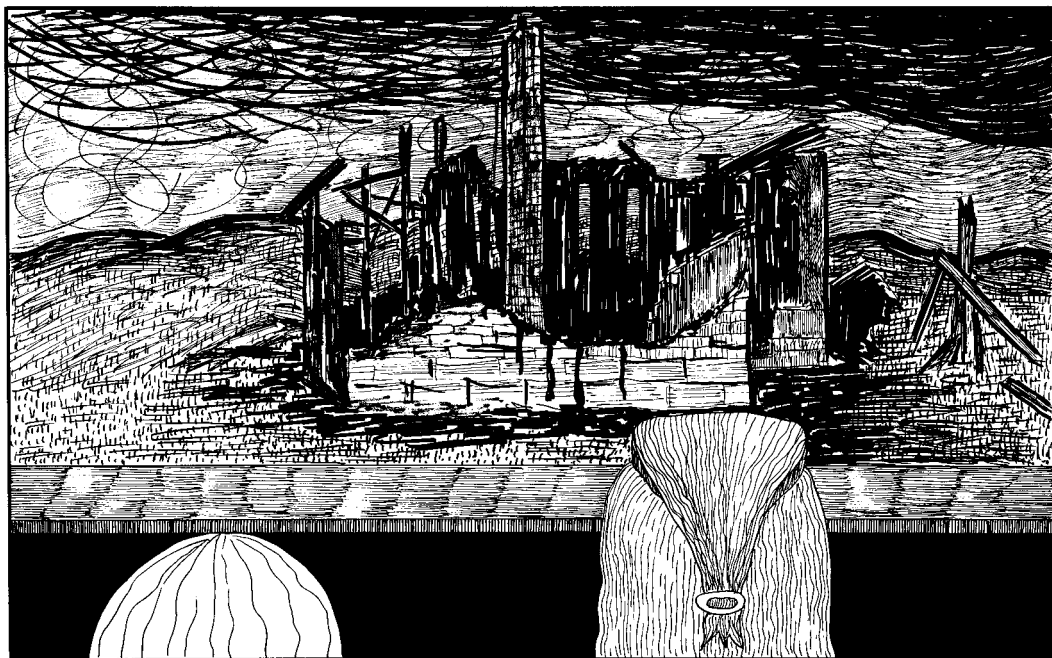




OH, HOW GREAT, LET'S
WALK TOGETHER, US,
THE OLD ONES.

THESE SPRING
EVENINGS ARE
JUST WONDERFUL,
AREN'T THEY?
THE LIGHT
RETURNING,
AND WITH THAT-
THE ZEST
FOR LIFE!



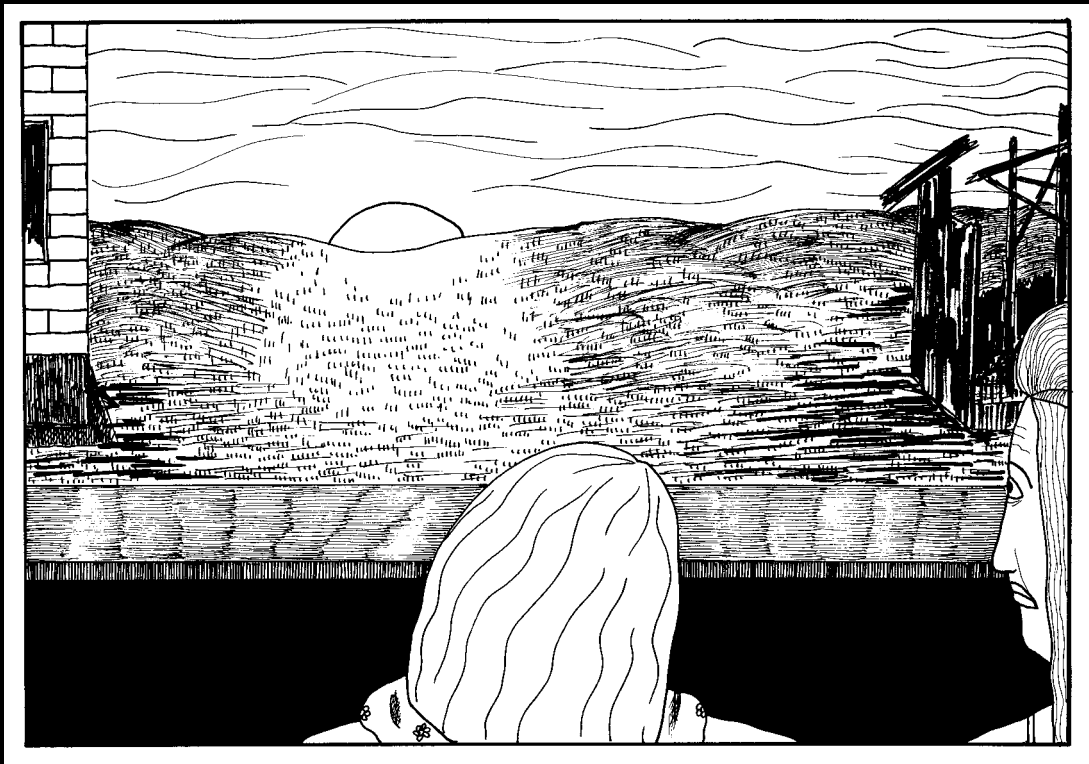


FOR ONES, SHE WAS RIGHT. THE OLD BURNED DOWN HOUSE WAS MAGNIFICENTLY BEAUTIFUL, ESPECIALLY IN DUSK LIKE THIS.

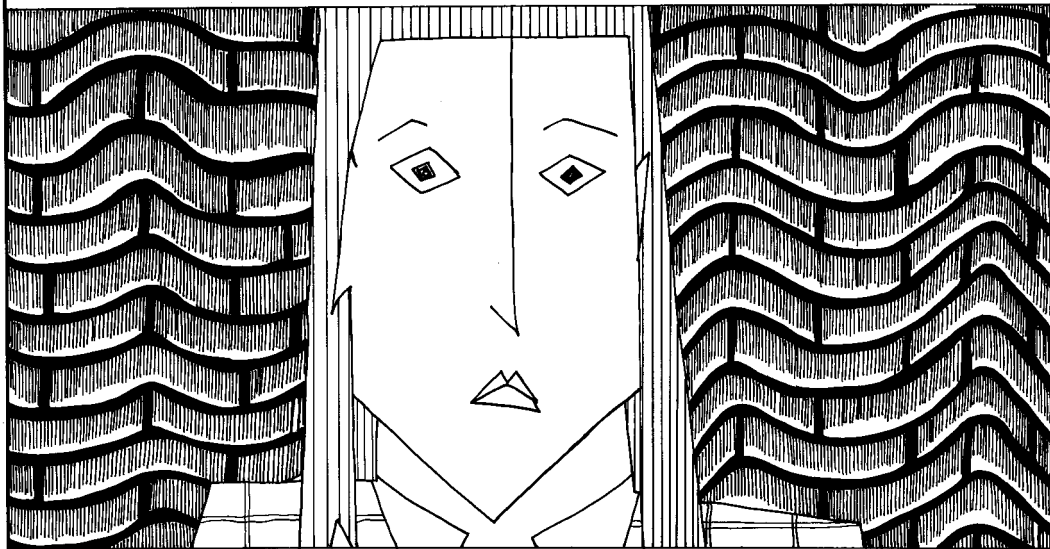


WHAT A FANTASTIC SUNSET!
WE HAVE TO STOP FOR A
MOMENT AND WATCH IT.

SUNSET? SUNSET?



WHAT IS WRONG WITH ME? WHY CANT I EVEN TAKE NOTICE OF A SUNSET
THAT I AM SUPPOSED TO GAIN A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE FROM? WHY
ARE MY EYES DRAWN TO A BURNED DOWN HOUSE INSTEAD?



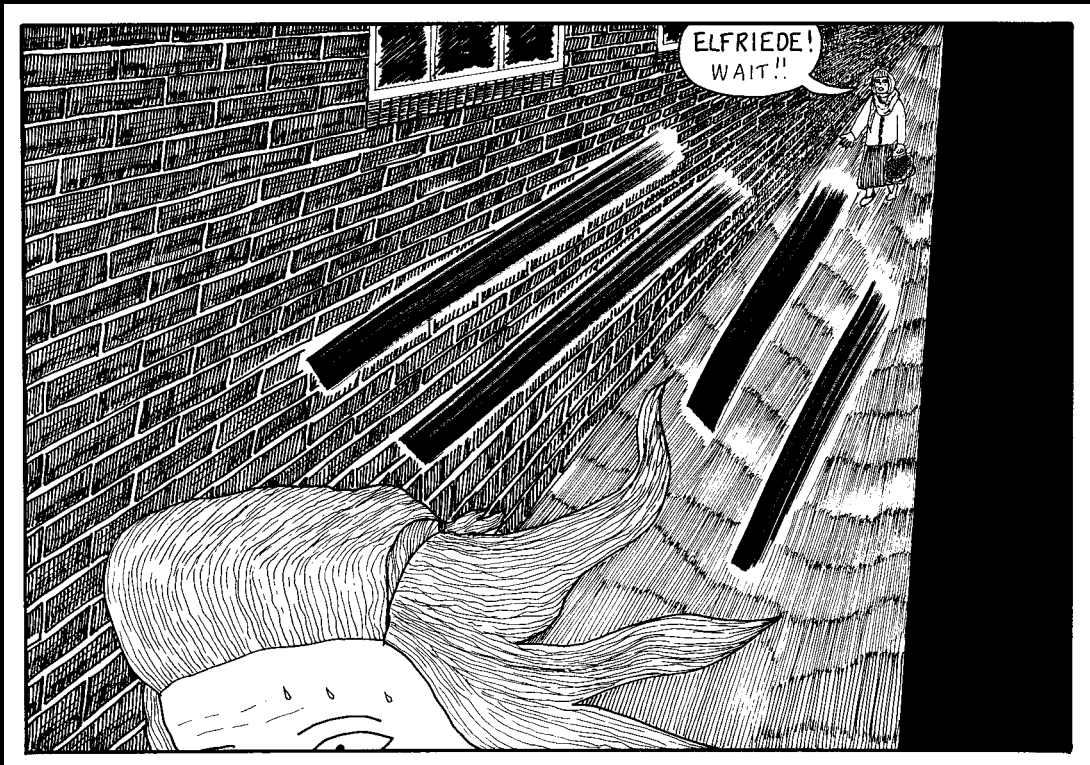
WHAT KIND OF DEFECT DO I HAVE? WAS I BORN THIS WAY? WHEN DID
IT START? AND ABOVE ALL; WHEN WILL IT END?

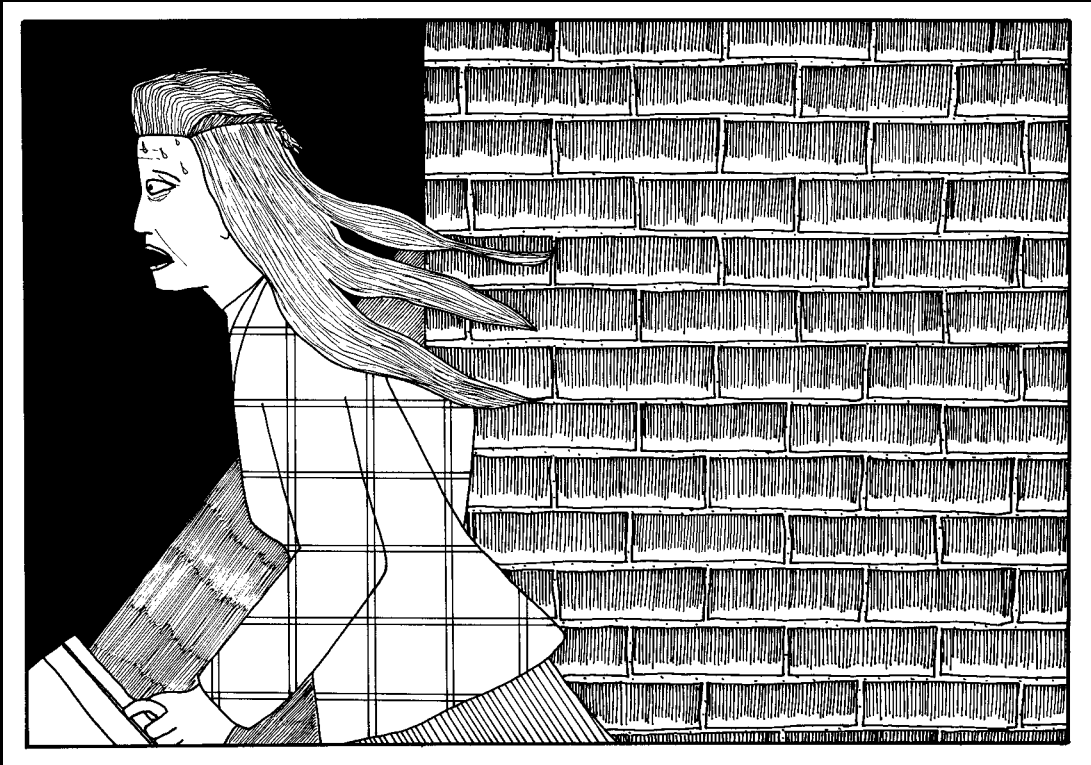


ELFRIEDE, I HAVE TO
ASK YOU SOMETHING.

WHERE DO YOU GO DURING YOUR LUNCH
BREAKS? HAVE YOU FOUND A GOOD LUNCH
RESTAURANT? I'D HAPPILY JOIN YOU SOMETIME!
IT CAN'T BE FUN TO EAT ALONE EVERY DAY.









NIGHT FALLS. THE SLEEPLESSNESS SETS IN.

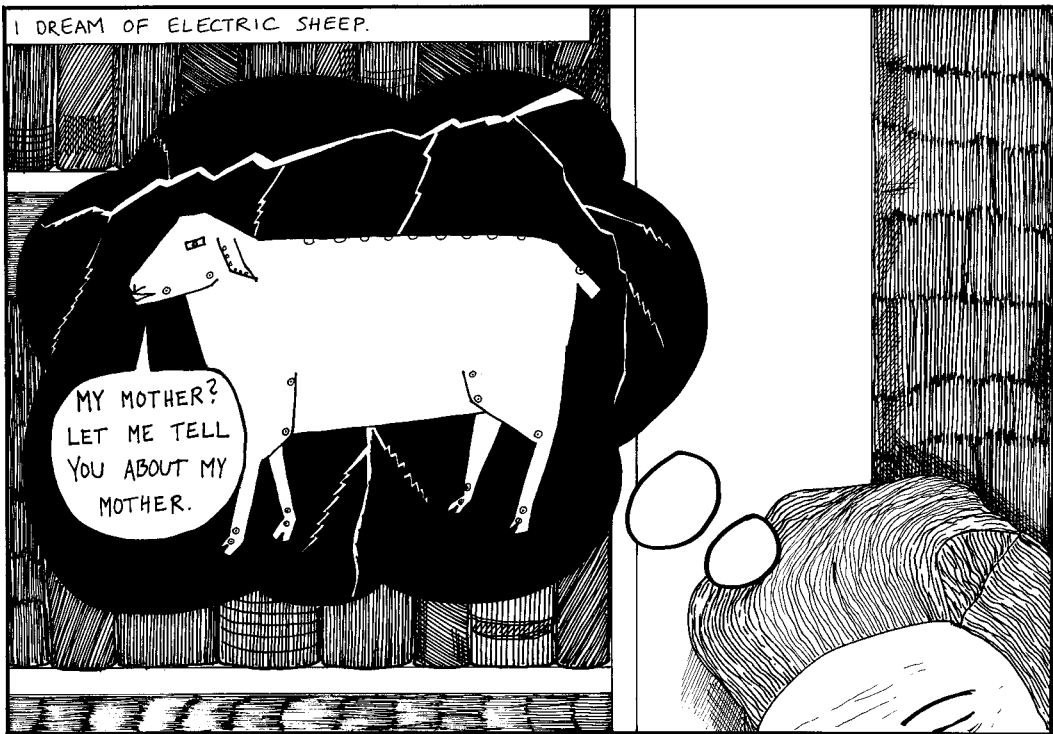


I HAVE NOT SLEPT IN 40 YEARS.

SOMETIMES I DOZE OFF WHILST SITTING AT IAN'S.



I DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP.



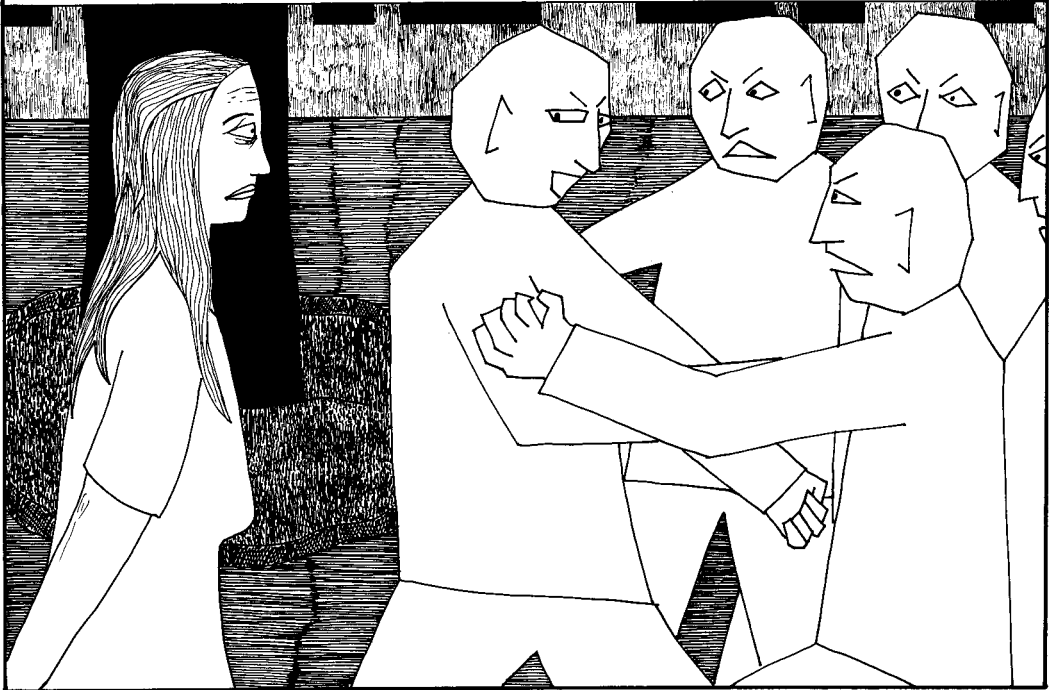
AT HOME I NEVER SLEEP. I DO NOT WANT TO SLEEP. I DO NOT WANT TO HAVE SEX.
I WANT TO BE ANALYSED.



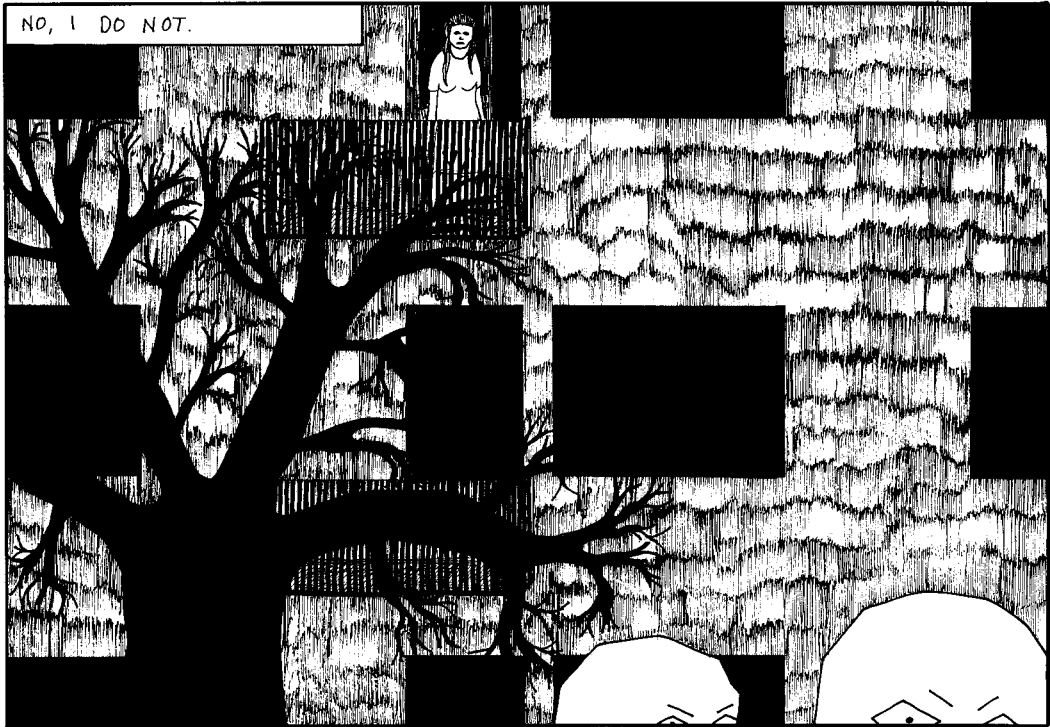
AT NIGHT PEOPLE OFTEN GATHER IN THE YARD ARGUING AND FIGHTING. I THINK THEY ARE MEN. I SEE THEM FROM MY BALCONY.



AT TIMES I GO DOWN AND STAND AS CLOSE TO THEM AS POSSIBLE.



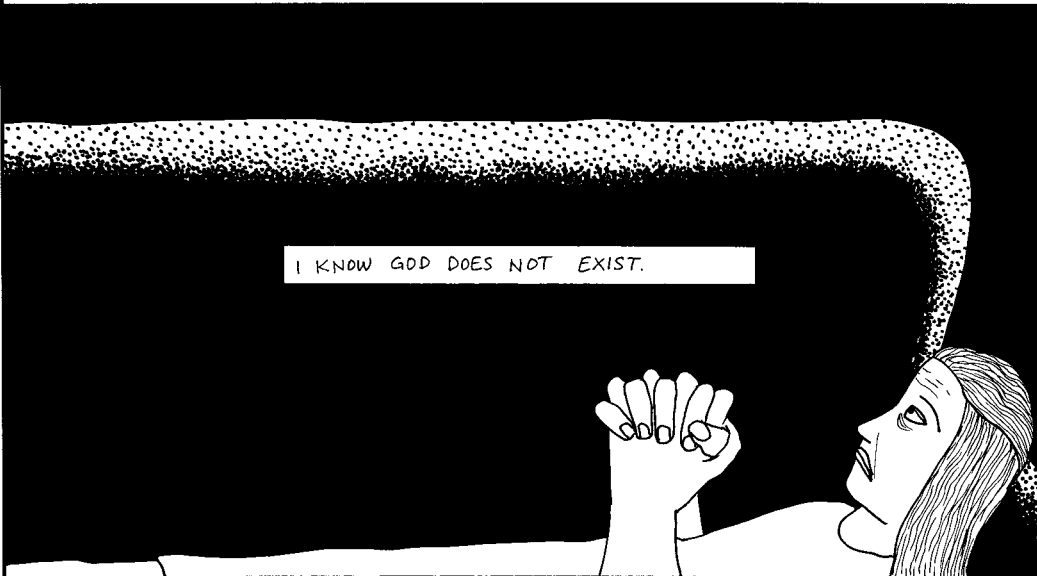
NO, I DO NOT.



BUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I DID? WOULD THEY HIT ME AS WELL? RAPE ME? KILL ME? WOULD I FEEL ANYTHING?



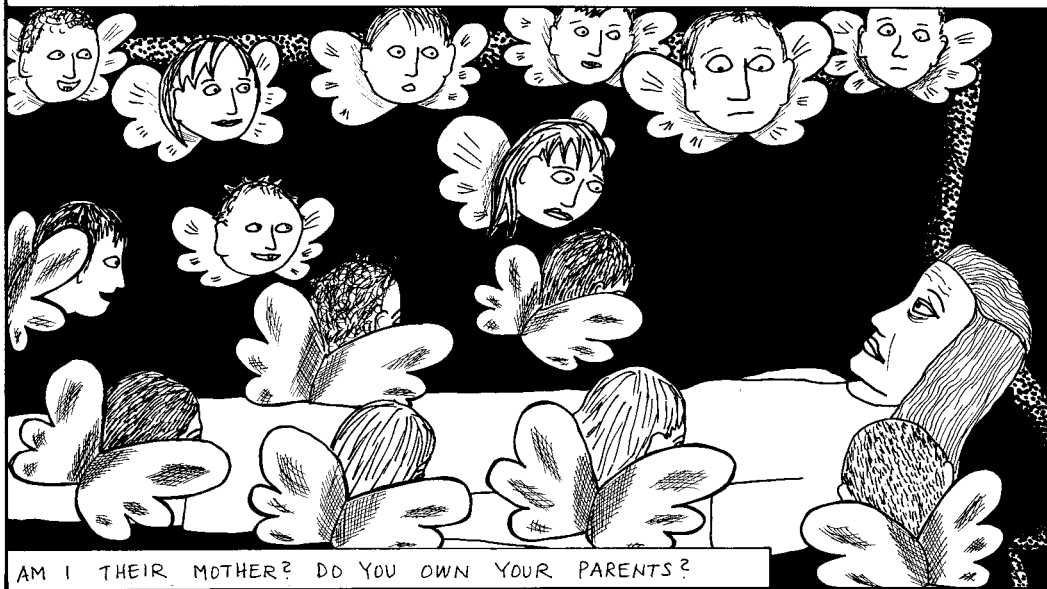
DURING MY SLEEPLESS NIGHTS IT HAPPENS THAT I PRAY TO GOD.



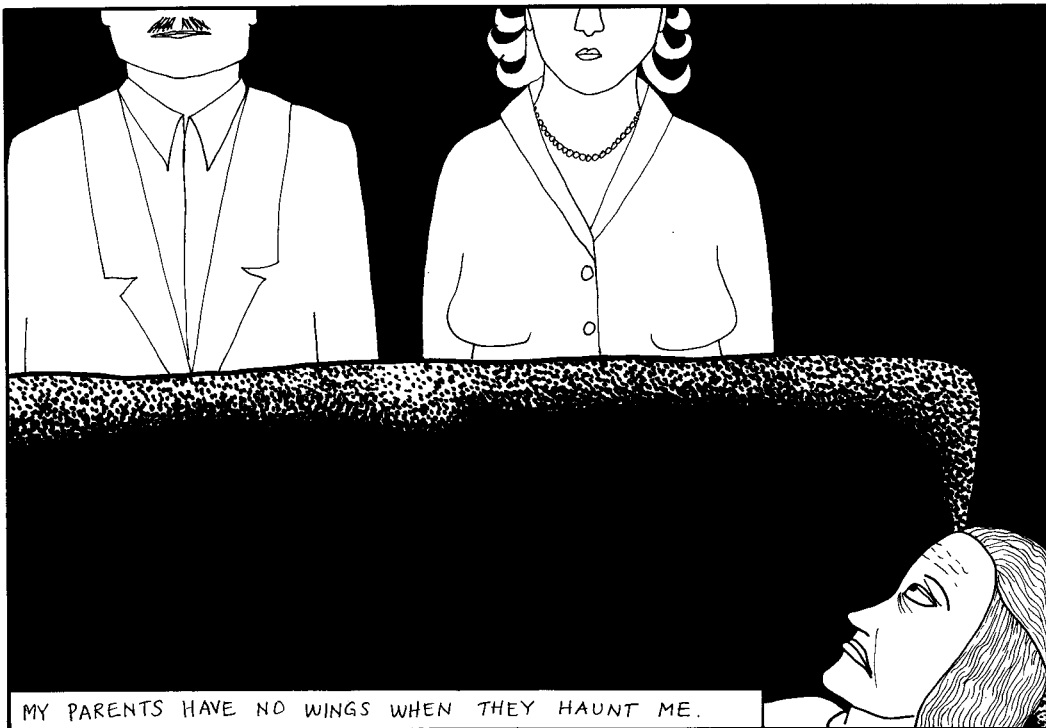
I KNOW GOD DOES NOT EXIST.

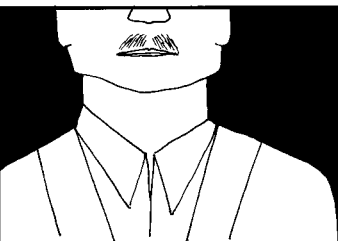
BUT I MADE UP THAT HE EXISTED WHEN I WAS A CHILD AND ALL PATTERNS THAT ARE GENERATED THEN ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO DELETE. SO HE IS THERE, IN ALL HIS NON-EXISTENCE.

EVEN THOUGH I DO NOT SLEEP I DREAM. TECHNICALLY I GUESS IT IS CALLED THAT I AM HALLUCINATING. I SEE MY CHILDREN IN ALL AGES THEY HAVE BEEN, WITHOUT BODIES, FLYING IN FRONT OF ME. THEY ARE 1, 5, 7, 10, 15, 21 YEARS OLD... THEY ARE NOT **MY** CHILDREN. ONE CAN NOT OWN A CHILD.



AM I THEIR MOTHER? DO YOU OWN YOUR PARENTS?





IT IS SAID THAT YOU FORGIVE
YOUR PARENTS MORE AND
MORE FOR EVERY YEAR
THAT PASSES, ESPECIALLY
AFTER THEY HAVE
PASSED AWAY. MY HATRED
AGAINST THEM ON THE
CONTRARY GROWS
STRONGER AND STRONGER
FOR EVERY YEAR OF
MY LIFE.



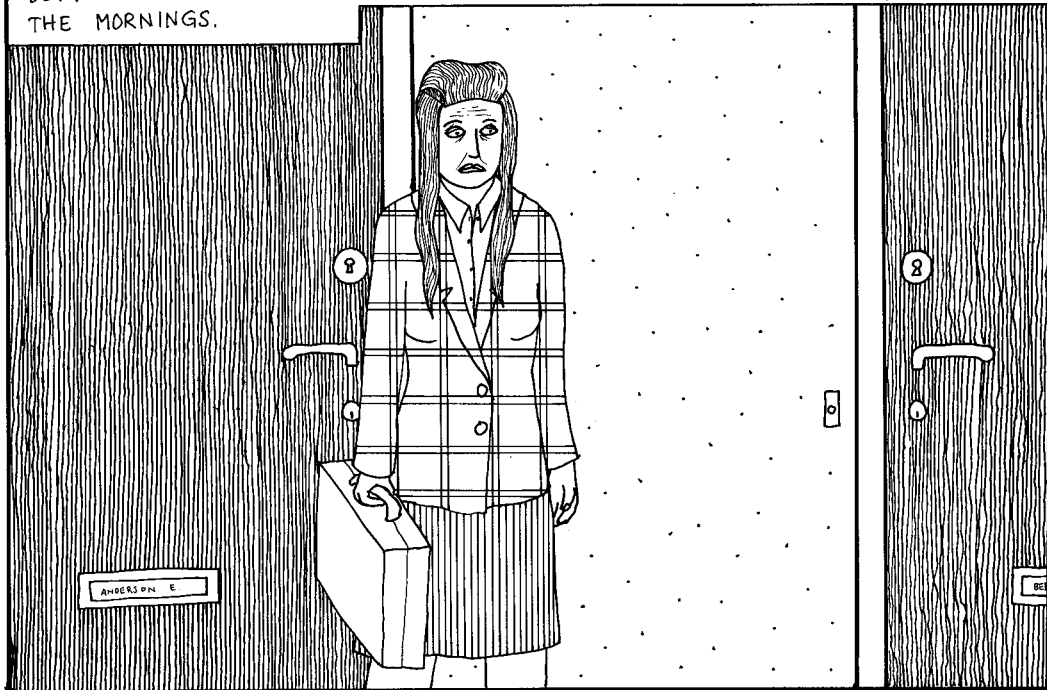
WHY? WHY AM I FILLED
WITH SO MUCH HATE FOR
THEM? I HAVE NOT HAD
A TRAGIC CHILDHOOD. IT
WAS COMPLETELY NORMAL,
JUST LIKE EVERYONE
ELSE'S. STILL I AM REPULSED
BY THEM AS IF THEY
HAD ASSAULTED ME,
EVEN THOUGH IT IS
REALLY THE OPPOSITE.

THEY NEVER EVEN TOUCHED ME.





DUTY. THE ONLY THING THAT GETS ME OUTSIDE MY APARTMENT IN THE MORNINGS.



THE ONLY THING THAT FORCES ME BACK TO WORK AFTER MY LUNCHES
AT IAN'S.

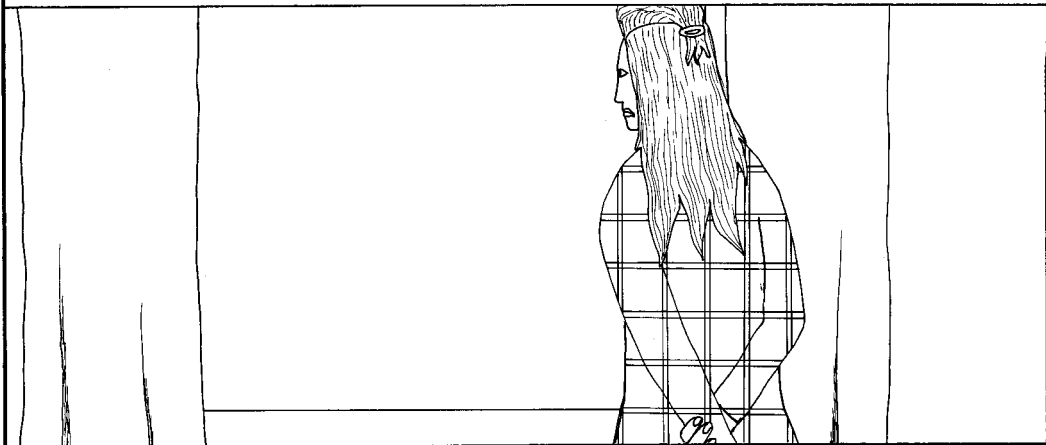


DO YOU SOMETIMES GET THE FEELING THAT SOMETHING VERY HORRIBLE IS GOING TO HAPPEN?
THE DARKNESS GROWS. INSIDE YOU, AND OUTSIDE. SPREADS. DO YOU NOT FEEL THAT WAY?



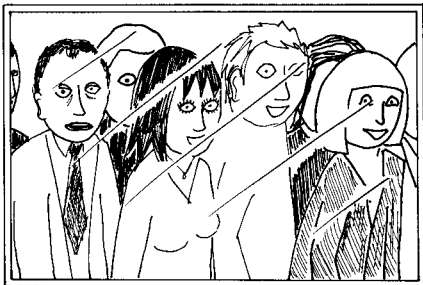
THE WORLD ROARS. NO ONE SEEMS TO HEAR IT BESIDES ME.

TODAY I TURN 50. SOMETIMES I THINK THAT I SHOULD GET A GRIP OF MY LIFE. START SOMETHING NEW, DO SOMETHING MEANINGFUL.

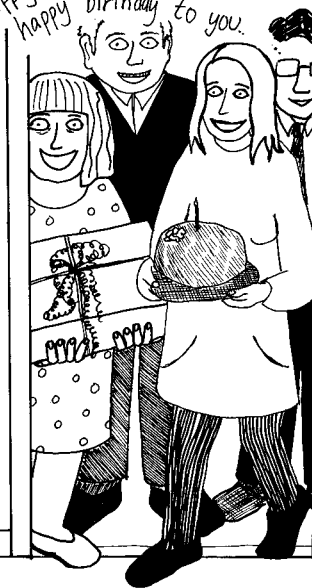


BUT IF I STARTED DOING SOMETHING MEANINGFUL NOW, IT WOULD JUST BE EVEN CLEARER HOW BEHIND I WOULD BE COMPARED TO IF I HAD STARTED WITH THE MEANINGFUL THING 30 YEARS A GO. I WOULD NEVER CATCH UP, WHICH WOULD MAKE ME FEEL LIKE EVERYTHING IS EVEN MORE MEANINGLESS THAN IT ALREADY IS. SO I PUSH THE THOUGHT AWAY AND KEEP FOCUSING ON TRYING TO HOLD OUT.

HERE THEY COME



Happy birthday to you
happy birthday to you.





A CONCRETE PLATE. A PLATE CAST OF CONCRETE.

WOW! HOW COOL!
LIKE A RHUBARB LEAF!
IN CONCRETE!

HAVE YOU MADE THAT, BRIDGET!?

MH-M. I GET
A LOT OF
INSPIRATION
FROM NATURE.

YOU HAVE GREAT
TALENT, BRIDGET.

SHE IS KIDDING. SHE HAS TO BE KIDDING ME.



I STARTED TO CREATE DURING THE PERIOD OF MY LIFE WHEN I HAD CANCER.

OH YEAH,
HOW ARE
YOU NOW?!

A LOT BETTER.
MY CREATIVITY
HAS BEEN
HEALING FOR
BOTH BODY
AND SOUL.

SOME DAYS OF YOUR LIFE ARE DECISIVE. YOU CAN GO TO WORK AND THINK THAT IT IS GOING TO BE JUST LIKE ANY OTHER DAY, BUT THEN SOMETHING CAN HAPPEN THAT CHANGES THE WORLD.

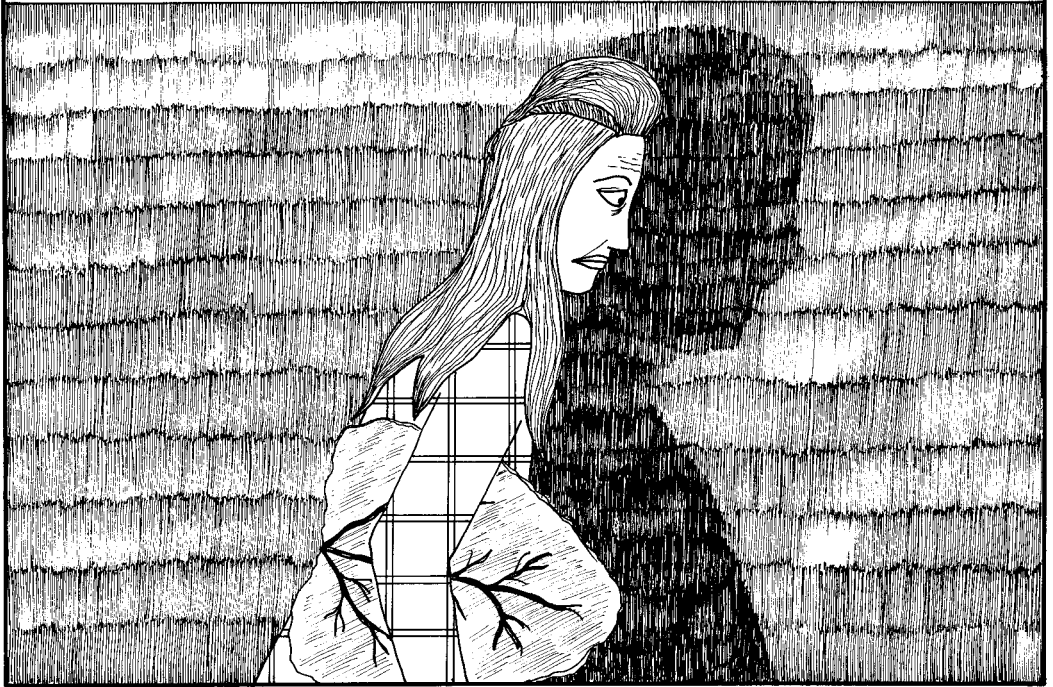
MAYBE THIS IS ONLY MY BIRTHDAY. MAYBE IT IS THE DAY EARTH
GOES UNDER.



NOW I CAN
EVEN SEE
THE CANCER
AS A GIFT.

MAYBE THIS IS THE DAY I NO LONGER STAND BEING A PART OF THIS
PETTY HUMANITY ANY LONGER.

ERIC HARRIS, DYLAN KLEBOLD, JEFFREY WEISE... I AM YOUR UNDERSTANDING MOTHER.



Elfriede

© 2011 Åsa Grennvall

Graphic design: Björn Schagerström

Translation to english: Maya Gunn and Ulrika Biörkeroth

www.grennvall.se

www.optimalpress.com



ÅSA GRENNVALL

Bibliography:

"Elfriede", Optimal Press 2011

"Svinet" ("The Pig") Galago 2010

"Cynisk romantiker" ("Cynical romantic"), Galago 2006

"Ett familjealbum" ("A family album"), Optimal Press 2005

"Det är inte värst sådär i början" ("It's not worst in the beginning"), Optimal Press 2003

"Sjunde våningen" ("Seventh Floor"), Optimal Press 2002

"Mie", Optimal Press 2000

"Det känns som hundra år" ("Feels like a hundred years"), Optimal Press 1999

Website: www.grennvall.se