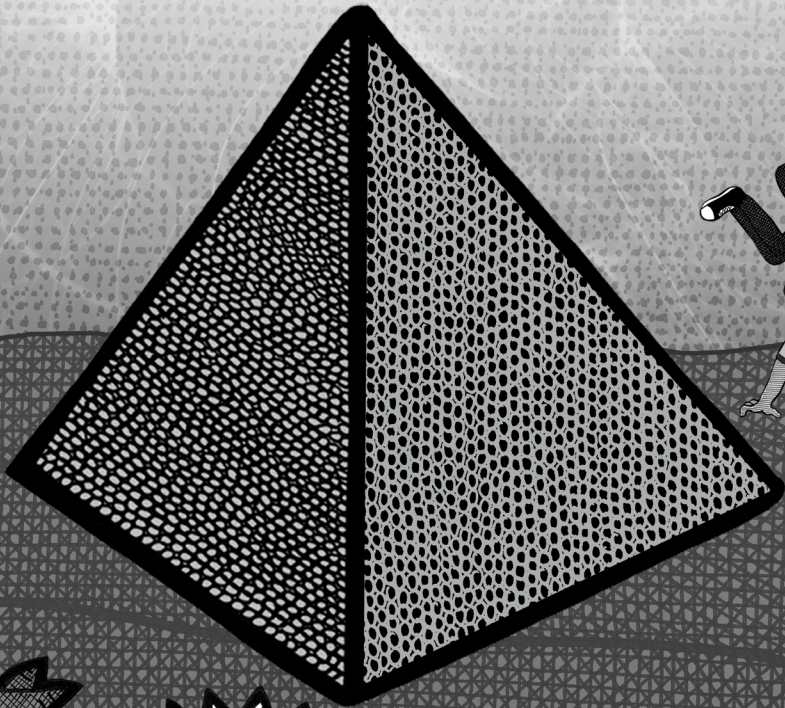
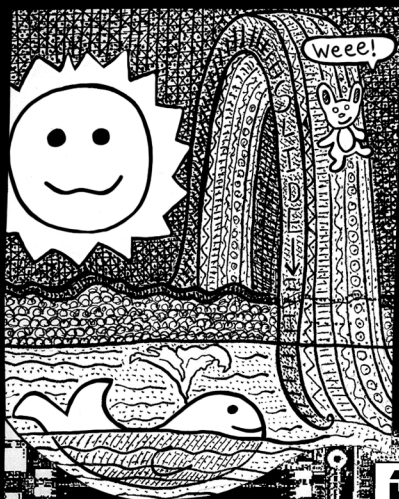


REJECTED

A HODGEPODGE
GRAPHIC NOVELLA



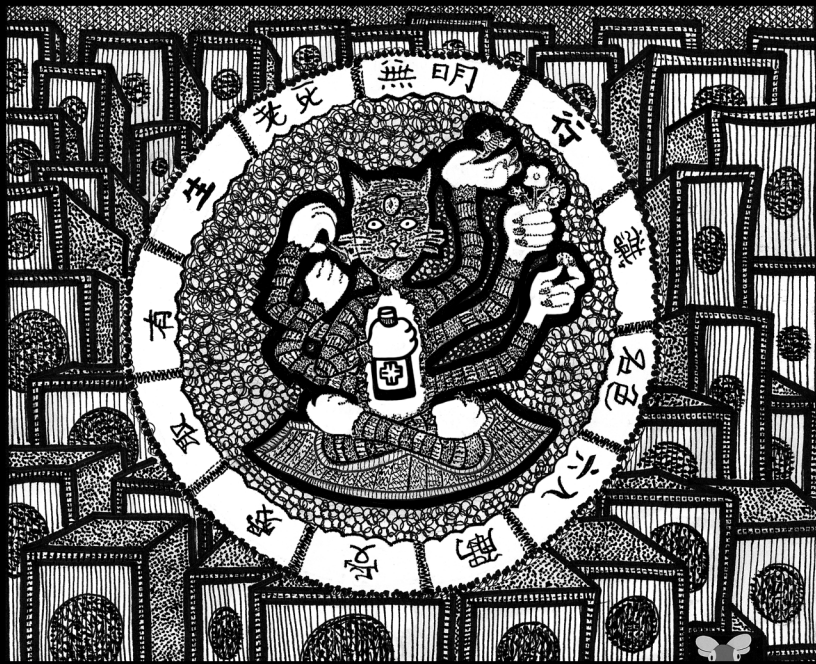
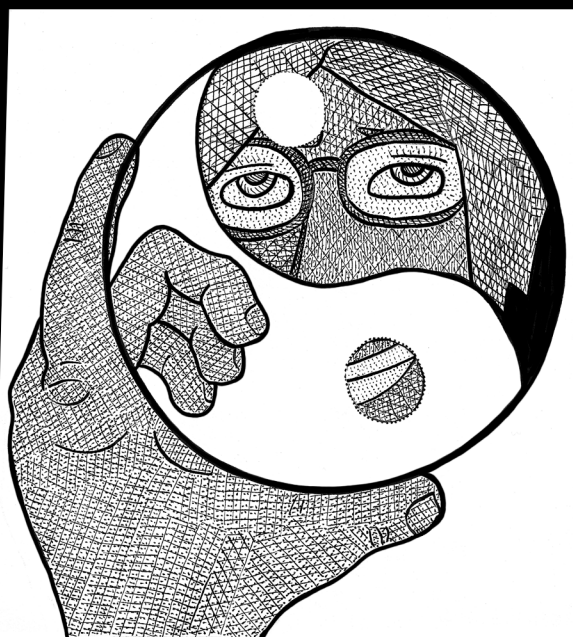
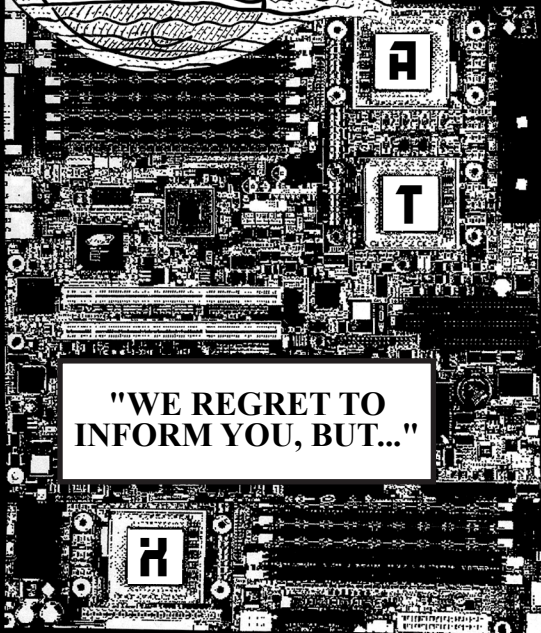
BY BOBBY CAMPBELL



REJECTED

A HODGEPODGE
GRAPHIC NOVELLA

BY BOBBY CAMPBELL



KO HSUAN ASKS THE YOUNG BEAST...

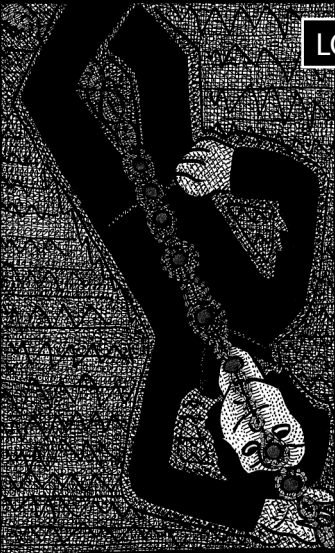
IF A TREE FALLS IN THE WOODS AND NOBODY HEARS IT, DOES IT MAKE A SOUND?

NOW BY THE WORD "SOUND" DO YOU MEAN THE EXCITATION OF SOUND WAVES OR THE BRAIN'S INTERPRETATION OF THOSE SOUND WAVES? PLEASE MASTER, DEFINE YOUR TERMS BEFORE I EVEN DARE SPECULATE.



THUS ENDED THE INCESSANT, UNCONSCIOUS, BIFURCATION OF QUESTION & ANSWER. A QUIETED MIND REMEMBERS:

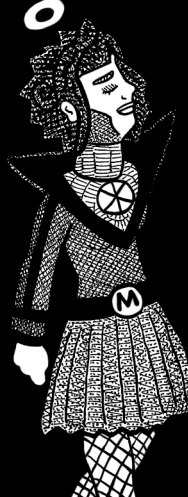
LOVE.



SO EMERGES THIS TRIP INTO THE MONOMYTHIC BLIP, AS REALITY RIPS, IN THE CLEAR WHITE GRIP OF COSMIC COURTSHIP. (DRIP! DRIP!)

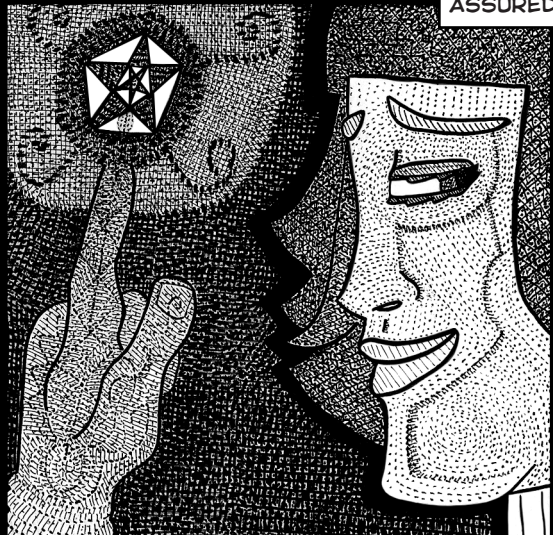
AND HERE IT STARTS, THE WHOLE RECALLING ITS PARTS, AS THE GAP DEPARTS BETWEEN LIFE AND ITS ARTS, MENDED BY THE SMARTS OF THY ADAMANTIUM HEARTS.

YEAH YEAH YEARS - "MAPS"



SO INTO THE STORY WE GALLOP (PACKING QUITE A WALLOP!) RHYMES FLOWING LIKE A DOLLOP OF PETRIFIED SYRUP INTO AN ENCHANTED TEA CUP.

ASSUREDLY;



IT'S ALMOST TIME TO WAKE UP!



AND SO WE RETURN AND BEGIN AGAIN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE END, AND/OR THE END OF THE BEGINNING, OF THE WORLD'S TALLEST TALE, WHICH I SUPPOSE MUST BE AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE!

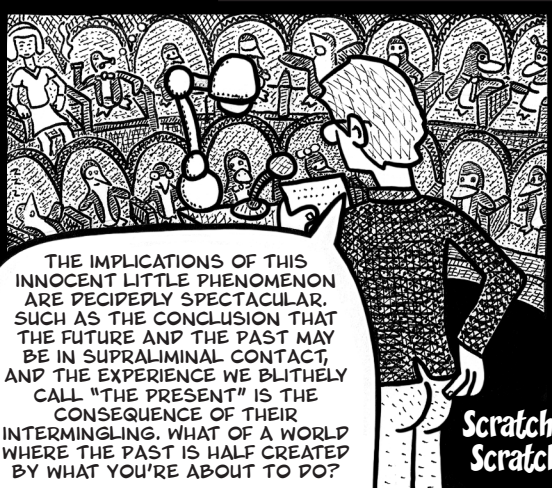


BELL'S THEOREM HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT ANY 2 SUBATOMIC PARTICLES, ONCE IN CONTACT, WILL CONTINUE TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION WITH EACH OTHER INSTANTANEOUSLY, COMMUNICATING AT SPEEDS FASTER THAN LIGHT, WHICH SPECIAL RELATIVITY HAD PREVIOUSLY FORBIDDEN, BUT MUST NOW READJUST TO INCLUDE.



WHERE WE FIND DR. HENRY JEKYLL DELIVERING A LECTURE IN ACCOMPANIMENT WITH THE PUBLICATION OF HIS NEW BOOK: "NEW AGE BULLSHIT FOR DUMMIES."

OR SO HE THINKS ANYWAYS!



THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS INNOCENT LITTLE PHENOMENON ARE DECIDEDLY SPECTACULAR, SUCH AS THE CONCLUSION THAT THE FUTURE AND THE PAST MAY BE IN SUPRALIMINAL CONTACT, AND THE EXPERIENCE WE BLITHELY CALL "THE PRESENT" IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF THEIR INTERMINGLING. WHAT OF A WORLD WHERE THE PAST IS HALF CREATED BY WHAT YOU'RE ABOUT TO DO?

Scratch Scratch



WHAT YOU HAVE JUST TOLD US IS ABSOLUTE RUBBISH, DR. JEKYLL.

THE UNIVERSE IS REALLY A COSMIC SERPENT, WHICH SITS ON THE BACK OF A COLOSSAL TORTOISE. THE SNAKE IS EATING ITSELF, AND ONCE IT'S DONE WE SHALL ALL RETURN TO NIHT. CERTAINLY SIR, YOU MUST ADMIT THE OBVIOUS.



AH YES MADAM, BUT I DO WONDER, WHAT IT IS THAT THE TORTOISE ITSELF RESTS UPON?



YOU'RE VERY SHARP YOUNG MAN, VERY SHARR I APPRECIATE THE LOGICAL TRAP, BUT OF COURSE WE BOTH KNOW IT'S TURTLES ON TURTLES ALL THE WAY DOWN!



YIPE!

AWFULLY EXPOSED AREN'T WE, HENRY?



THINK FAST!

OH MY, YOU ARE A STRANGE CASE INDEED!



MADAM, I AM SURE I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE BLATHERING ABOUT, BUT ALL THIS FOOLISHNESS IS BEGINNING TO MAKE ME MAD..



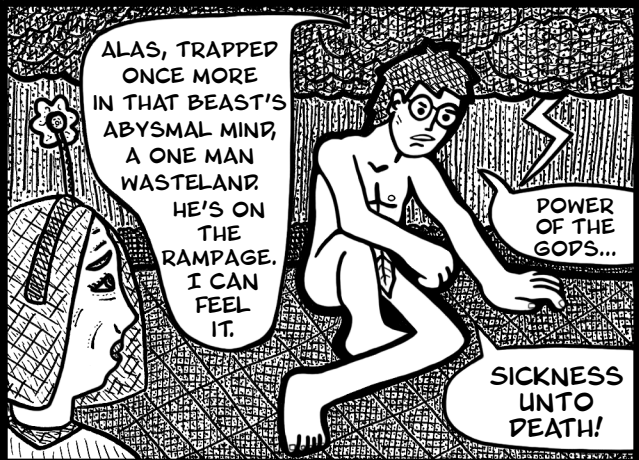
YOU WOULDN'T LIKE ME WHEN... WHEN... OH NO...



OH YES! LET YOUR MAGNIFICENT RAGE REFRESH YOUR MEMORY.



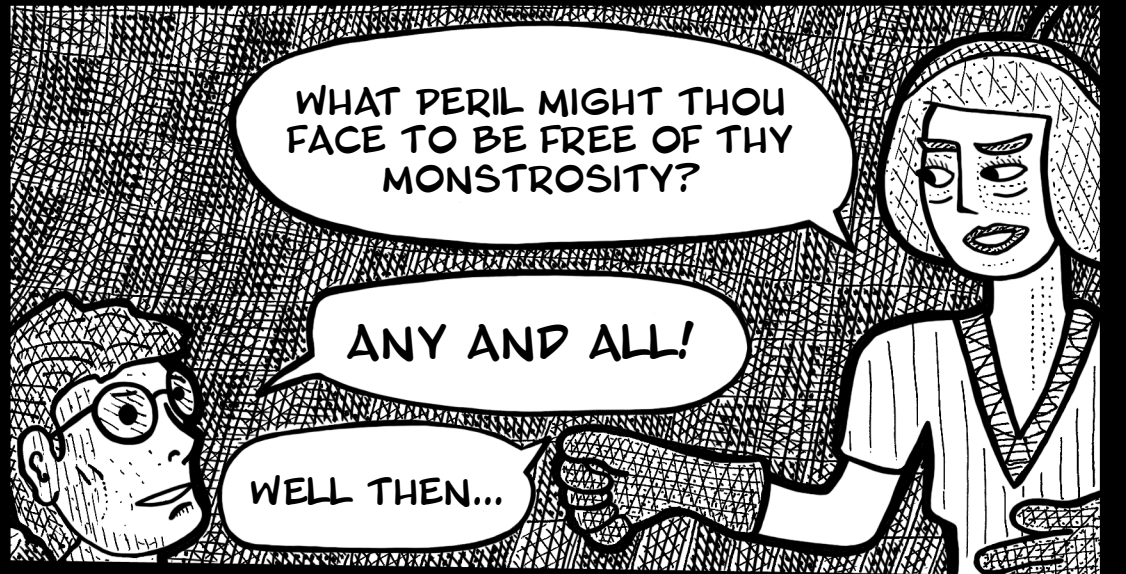
I'M MR. HYDE.



ALAS, TRAPPED
ONCE MORE
IN THAT BEAST'S
ABYSMAL MIND,
A ONE MAN
WASTELAND.
HE'S ON
THE
RAMPAGE.
I CAN
FEEL
IT.

POWER
OF THE
GODS...

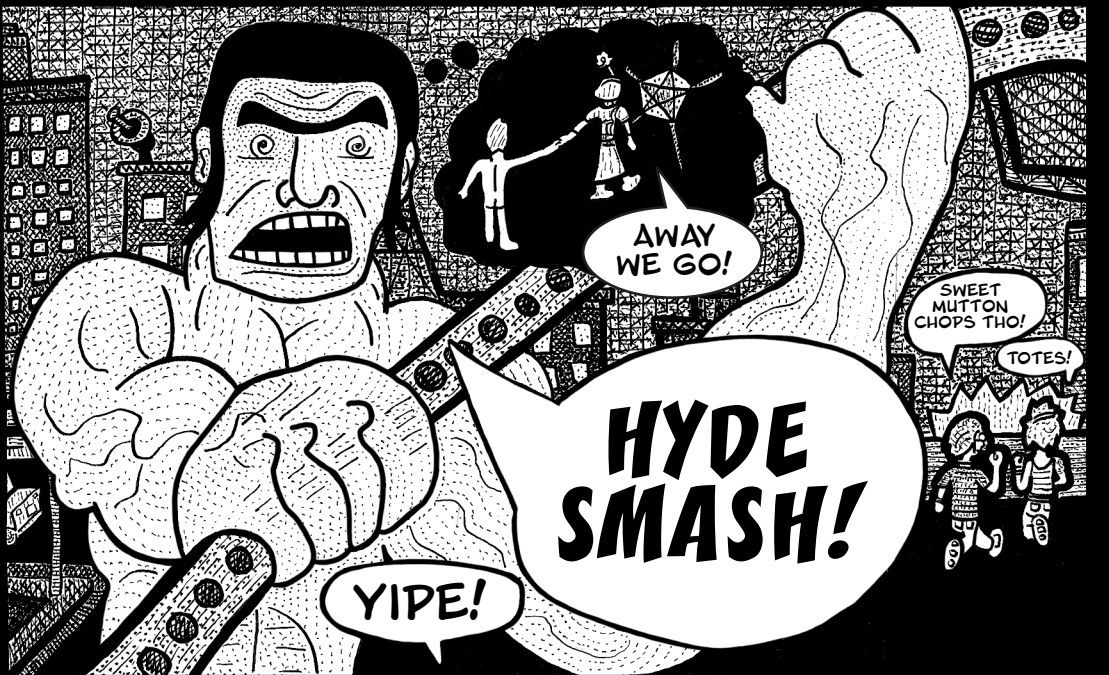
SICKNESS
UNTO
DEATH!



WHAT PERIL MIGHT THOU
FACE TO BE FREE OF THY
MONSTROSITY?

ANY AND ALL!

WELL THEN...



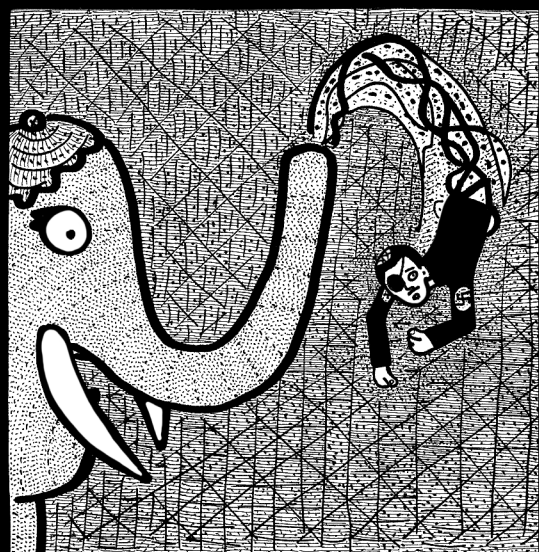
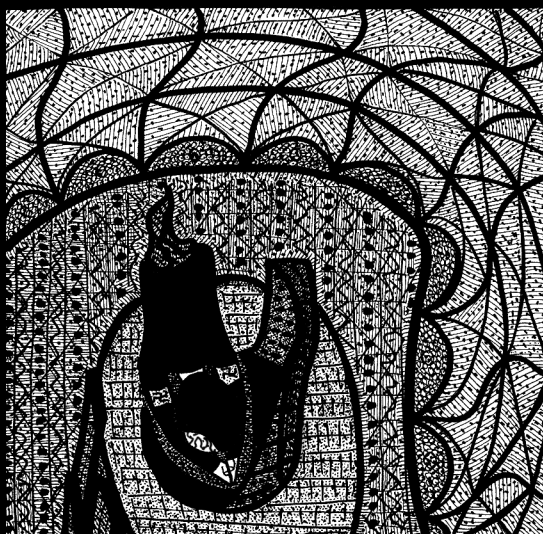
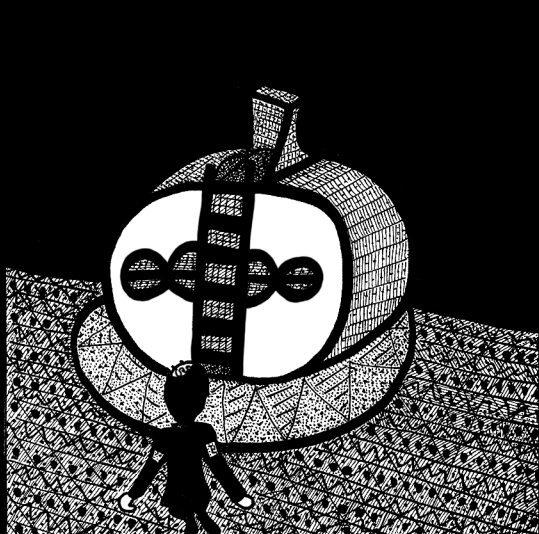
AWAY
WE GO!

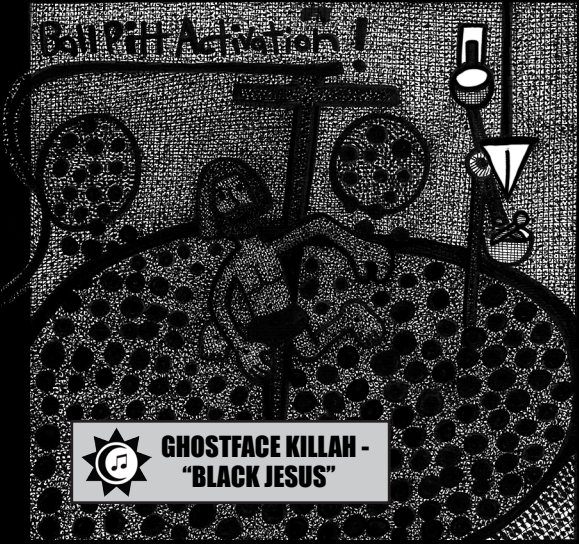
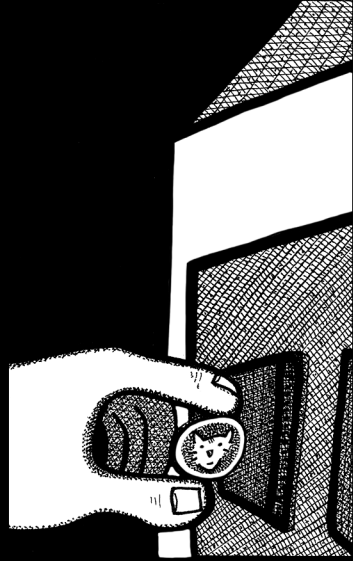
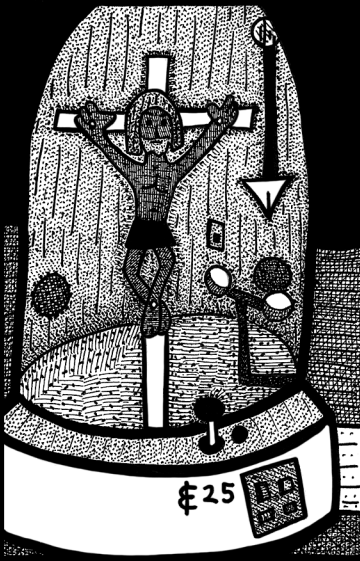
SWEET
MUTTON
CHOPS THO!

TOTES!

**HYDE
SMASH!**

YIPE!



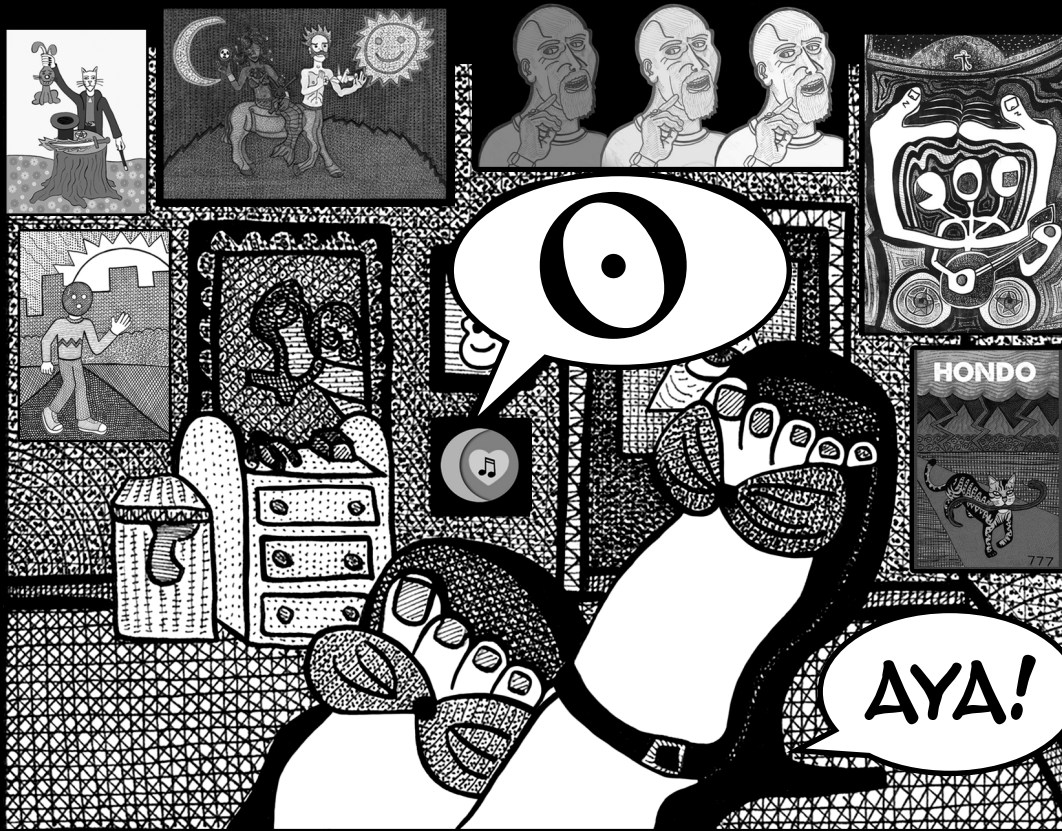
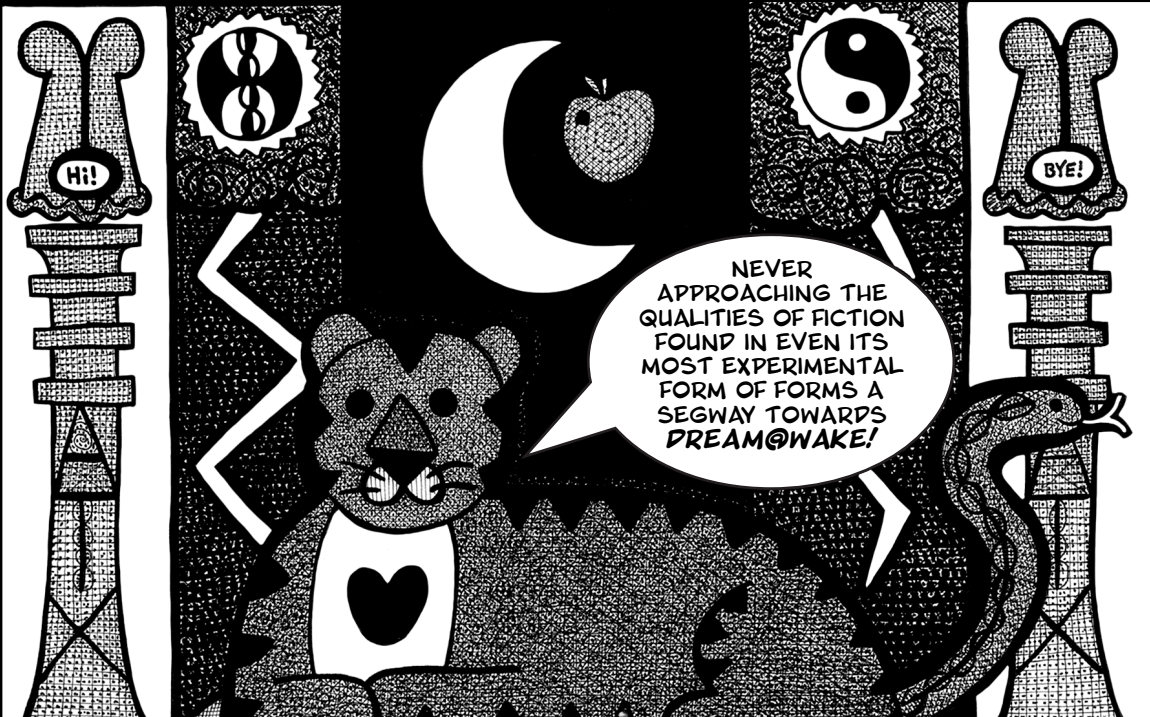


 **GHOSTFACE KILLAH - "BLACK JESUS"**



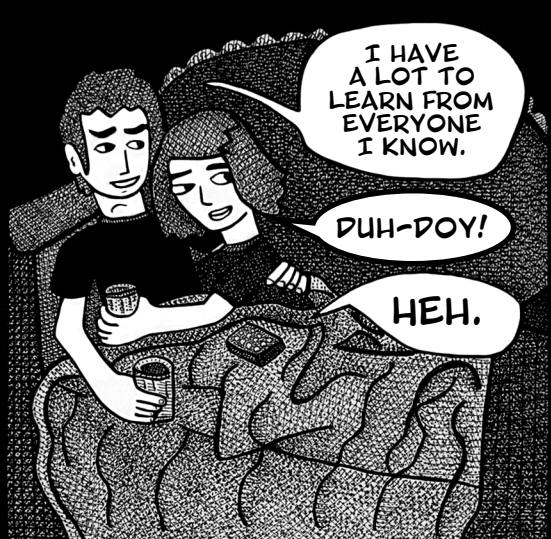
THANKS.

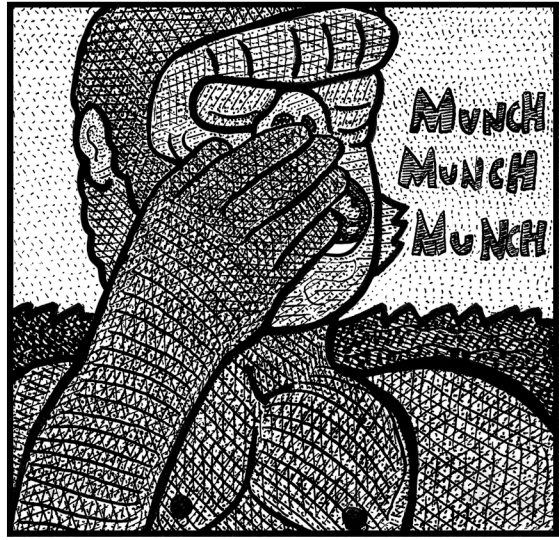
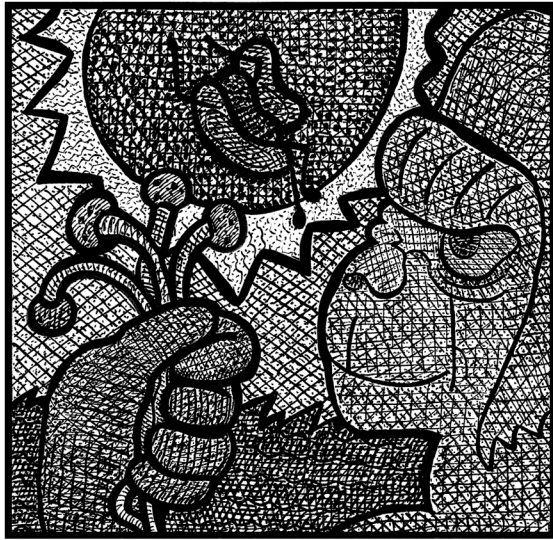
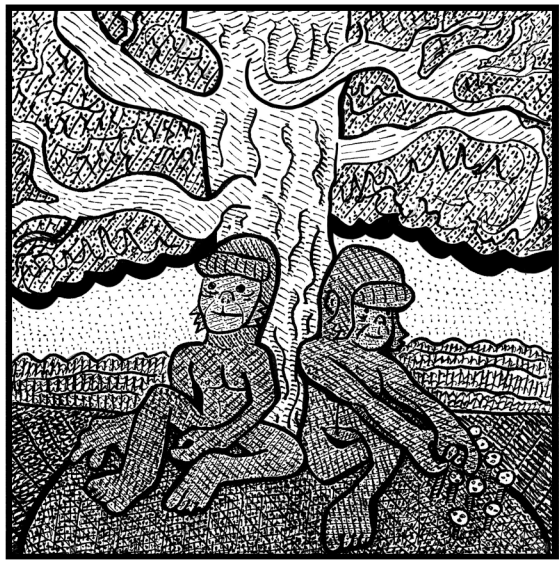
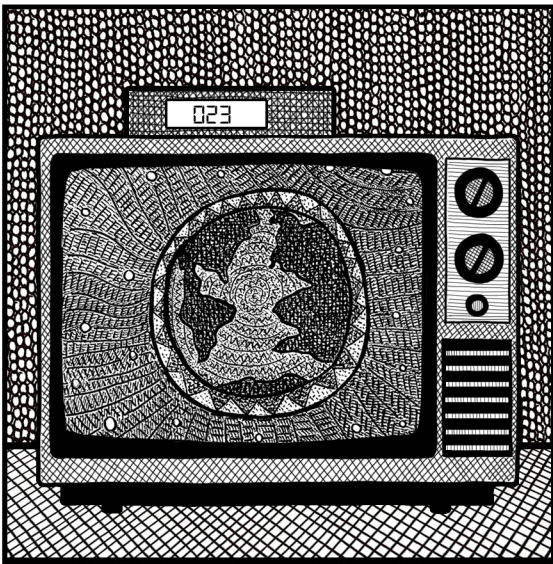
SORRY.

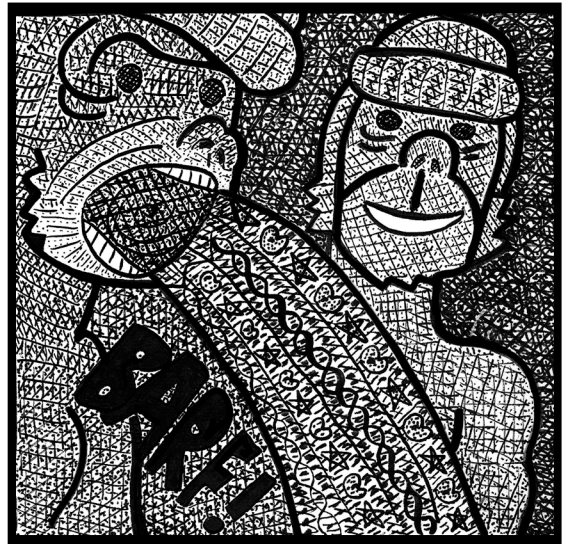
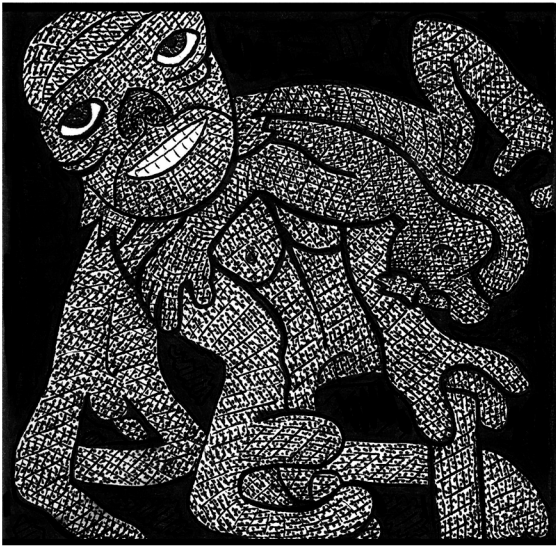
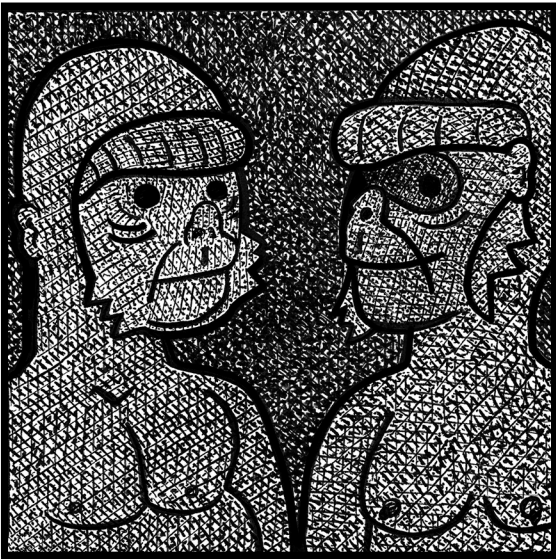


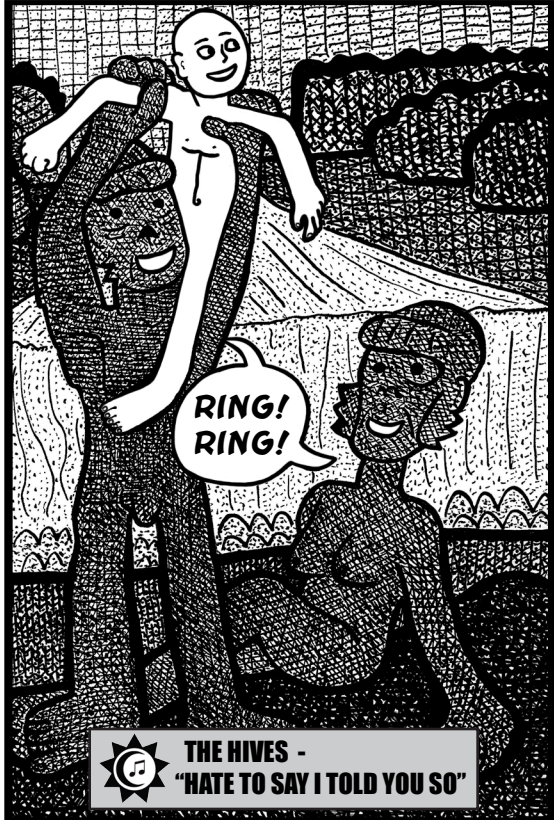
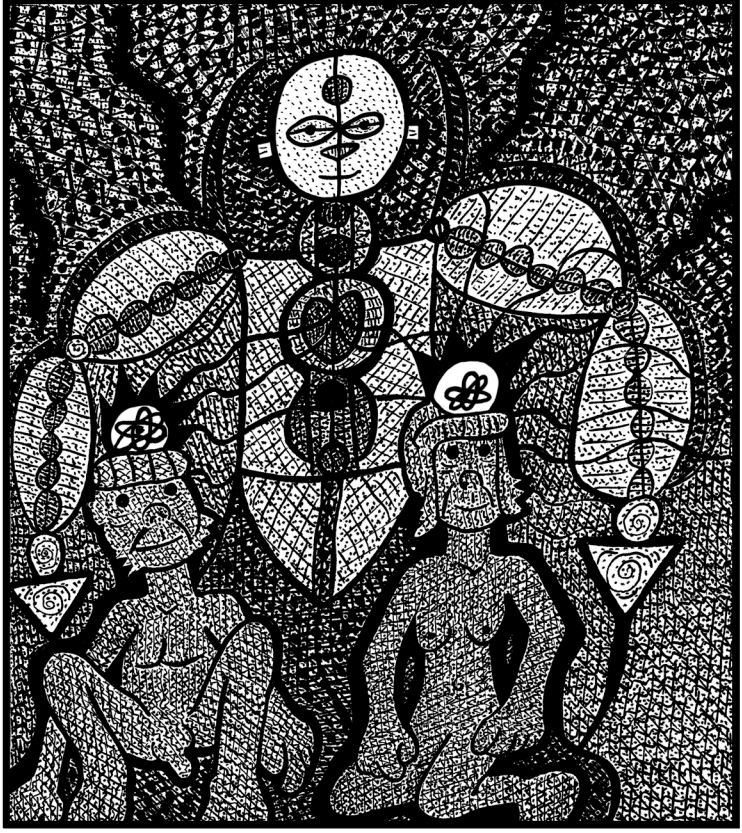


SOMETHING LOST IN THE GIVE AND TAKE, OR MAYBE THERE WAS NEVER EVEN ANYTHING AT ALL?







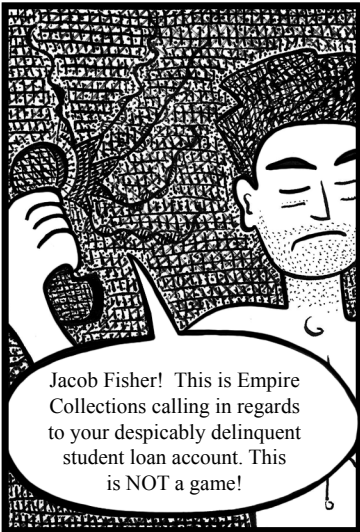


 **THE HIVES -**
"HATE TO SAY I TOLD YOU SO"

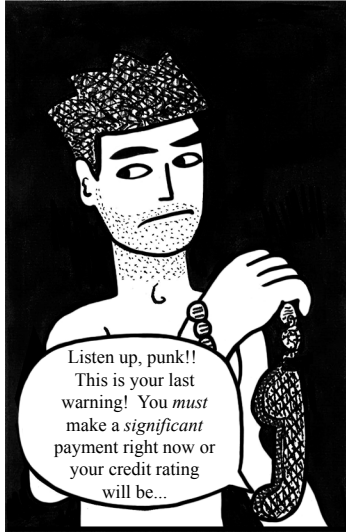
RASA FRASA, LOUSY FARGIN'...



WHO DIS?



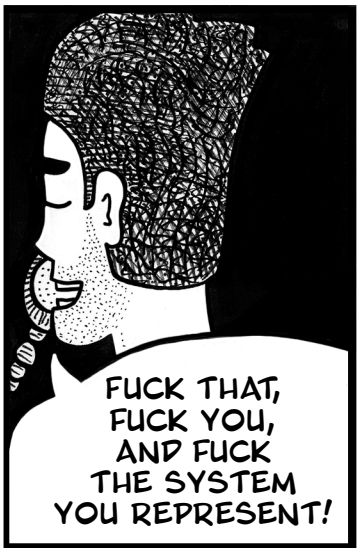
Jacob Fisher! This is Empire Collections calling in regards to your despicably delinquent student loan account. This is NOT a game!



Listen up, punk!! This is your last warning! You *must* make a *significant* payment right now or your credit rating will be...



AO! WAIT UP! WERE YOU JUST ABOUT TO THREATEN MY CREDIT RATING!?



FUCK THAT, FUCK YOU, AND FUCK THE SYSTEM YOU REPRESENT!

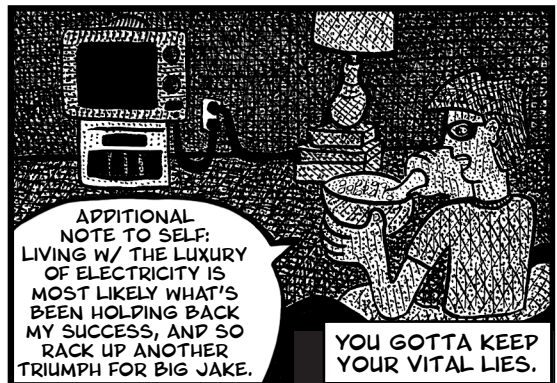
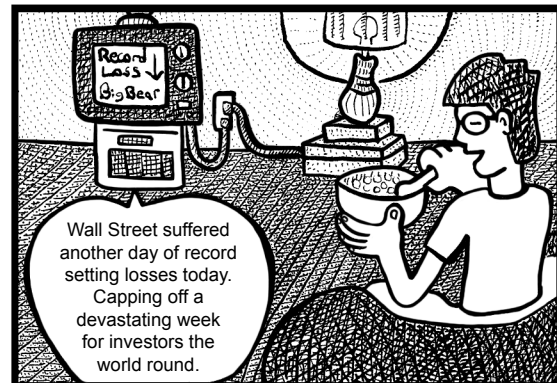
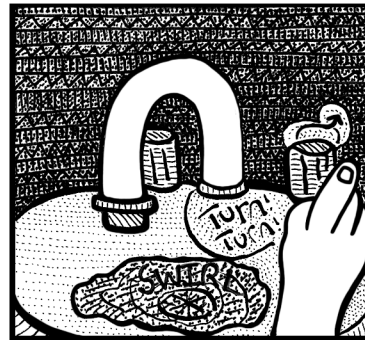
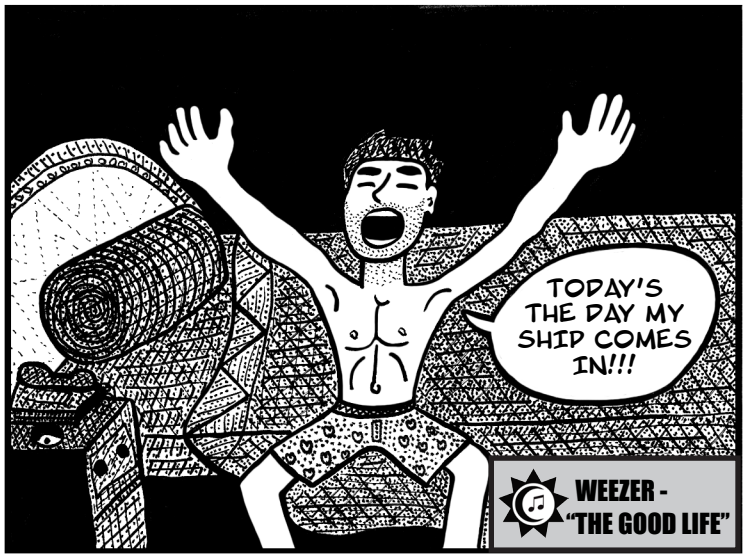
NO, SERIOUSLY, LISTEN TO ME. I DON'T CARE! WHATEVER IT IS THAT CAN BE DONE TO A CREDIT RATING, PLEASE DO TO MINE EVERYDAY FOR THE REST OF YOUR GLORIOUS LIFE!!



'CAUSE UNLESS Y'ALL ARE WILLING TO COME UP TO MY APARTMENT AND FIGHT ME FOR MONEY THAT I DON'T HAVE, THEN THERE REALLY ISN'T ANY NEED FOR YOU TO KEEP SWEATIN' DEEZ NUTS!



BUT ENOUGH ABOUT YOU... LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT THIS CRAZY ASS DREAM I WAS HAVING...



TELL SOMEONE YOU'RE A PROFESSIONAL CONTEST WINNER AND THEY'LL TYPICALLY ASK ABOUT LOTTO NUMBERS, HOT PONIES, POKER TIPS, OR WHATEVER ELSE.

SO JUST TO CLARIFY, I DON'T GAMBLE, I SUBMIT ENTRIES.

I WASN'T ALWAYS THE BROKE ASS FOOL THAT NARRATES BEFORE YOU. I USED TO HAVE THE GAME ON SMASH. I HAD A WHOLE OCEAN'S ELEVEN SYSTEM WORKED OUT. AN AUTOMATED NETWORK OF INTERNET TECHNOLOGY ENPLESSLY COMPILING ENTRIES.

AND I WON, I WON OFTEN, AND I WON BIG.

ON

AND THEN I DIDN'T, AND THEN I DIDN'T SOME MORE, AND AFTER 10 MONTHS OF ABSOLUTELY NOTHING, ALL THAT'S LEFT IS THIS BEAT UP RADIO, LUCKILY POWERED BY D BATTERIES I FOUND IN THE FREEZER, AND 2 CREATIVELY ACQUIRED CELL PHONES, WHICH MAY LAST THROUGH THE PAY.

THE PROCESS IS SIMPLE NOW. BOUNCE UP AND DOWN THE FM RADIO DIAL UNTIL YOU HEAR CONTEST CHATTER. YOU CAN TRY THE AM STATIONS, BUT THE ONLY THING YOU'RE LIKELY TO FIND IS JESUS OR IMUS, AND NETHER ARE PARTICULARLY GENEROUS IN THE CONTEST DEPARTMENT.

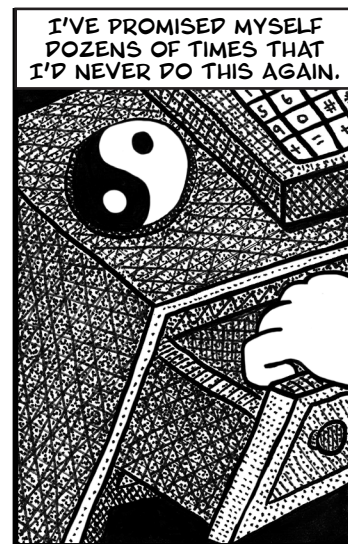
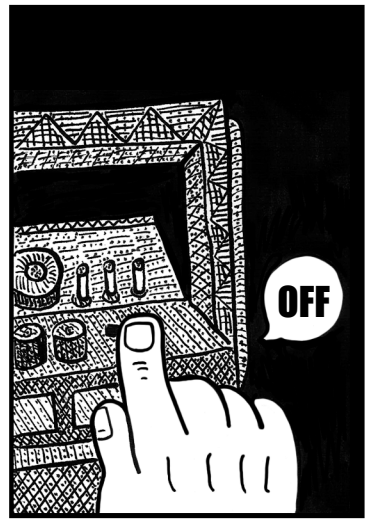
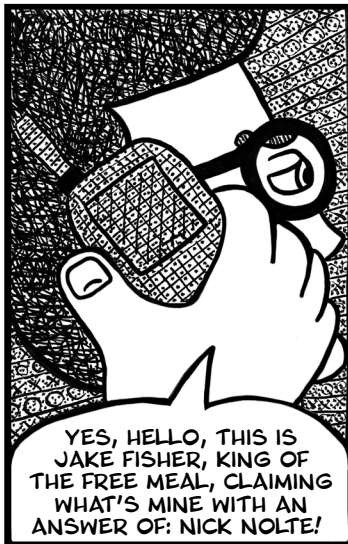
1450 700 149 - Band 1
FM 88 92 96 100 104 108 109 115 120 128 MHz
AM 53 60 70 80 100 120 140 171 220 310 390 420 KHz

Who out there can tell me who played the mentor of the "Rookie of the Year" in the classic Chi-Town movie of the same name???

BINGO!

You're tuned in to the KBBL Morning Zoo! Boink! Zoink! Caller # 7 will get the chance to play Windy City Trivia! Today's prize is dinner for 2 at Stinkies' Sausage Factory!

WELL, YA GOTTA START SOMEWHERE, AND I GUESS I HAVEN'T EATEN ANYTHING BUT CEREAL AND RAMEN THIS WEEK. SO PLEASE, OH PLEASE...





**GREEN DAY -
"2000 LIGHT
YEARS AWAY"**

10 MONTHS AGO, THERE
WAS THIS ONE NIGHT STAND
{3 TOLEPO HOLIPAY {3

SHE WAS A TRANSCENDENTAL BABE. ONE OF
THEM MANIC PIXIE DREAM ANGELS COME TRUE,
EXCEPT BUT ALSO LIKE TOTALLY... I DON'T
EVEN KNOW, MAN... SALT OF THE EARTHISH.

Snnhhif

SHE TOTALLY, UTTERLY, AND
COMPLETELY TURNED ME OUT.

I FELT ALIVE IN A WAY THAT I NEVER EVEN KNEW
WAS POSSIBLE. IT WAS FUCKING CRAZY! MY TEENY
TINY LITTLE WORLD GOT CRACKED OPEN TO THIS
NEW BIG PICTURE, AND IT WAS FUCKING BEAUTIFUL.

IN THE MORNING SHE WAS GONE,
AND NOTHING'S BEEN GOOD SINCE.

ALL I HAVE LEFT IS THIS BRA, WHICH CONTAINS
THE SCENT, A MAP TO HEAVEN WRITTEN
IN VANILLA PERFUME. WHICH CAN LEAD ME
BACK, IF ONLY FOR A SECOND, TO HAPPINESS...

SOARING
UP!

ONLY TO PLUMMET DOWN.

GRAVITY
HATES ME.

Ring!
Ring!

I'M LEARNING TO
LIVE WITH IT.

HELLO, JAKE'S
HOUSE OF ENTROPY.
JAKE SPEAKING.

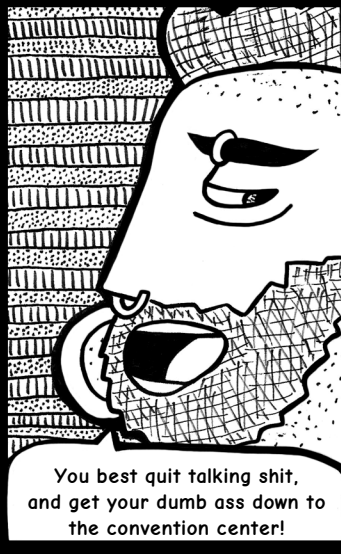
Yo Jakey, it's Cyril,
you won't believe it man!



I'm downtown covering this fancy schmancy fashion show, and I think it's being run by that girl you're obsessed with!



ACTUALLY, I'M "ENCHANTED" WITH HER, NOT OBSESSER ALTHOUGH, IF YOU'RE MESSING WITH ME, I'MA GO UPSIDE YA HEAD!



You best quit talking shit, and get your dumb ass down to the convention center!



THANKS, CYRIL!

S'all good, bro!

I HOPE SHE LIKES "BEAT UP GEEK CHIC!"

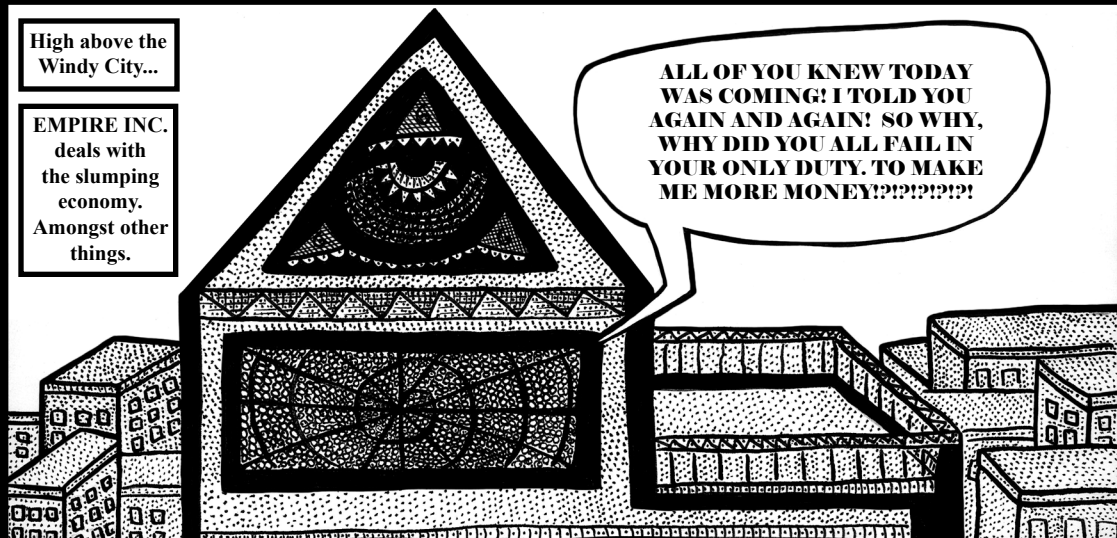


TODAY'S THE DAY...



... MY SHIP COMES IN.

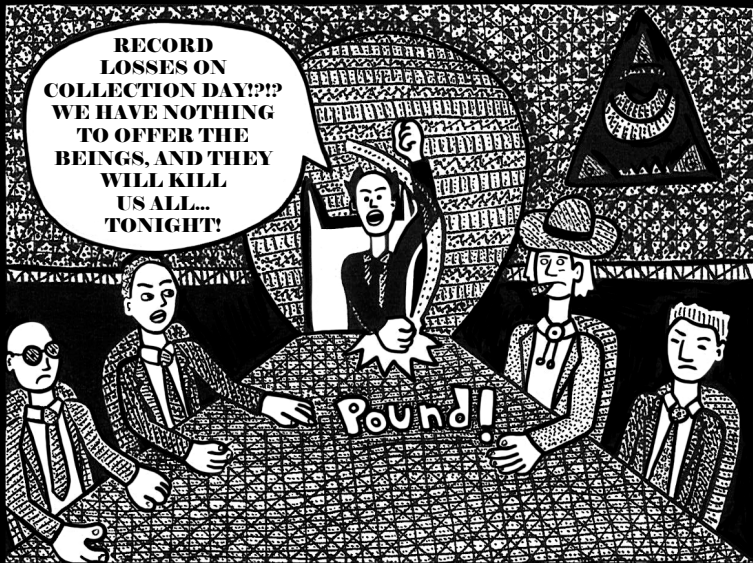
THE MR. T EXPERIENCE - "I FELL FOR YOU"

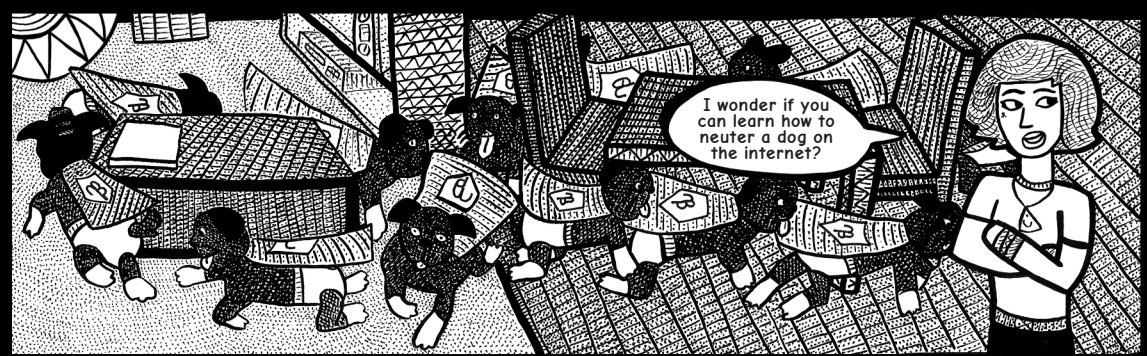
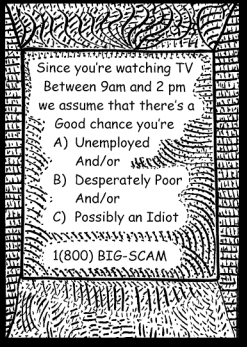
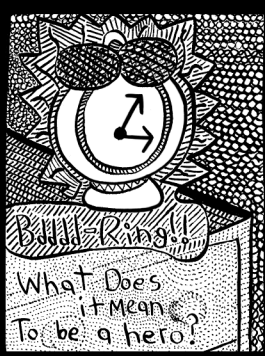


High above the Windy City...

EMPIRE INC. deals with the slumping economy. Amongst other things.

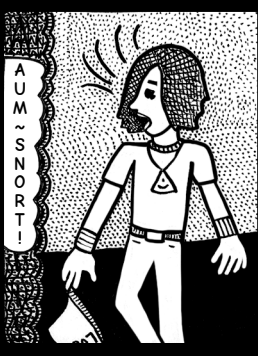
ALL OF YOU KNEW TODAY WAS COMING! I TOLD YOU AGAIN AND AGAIN! SO WHY, WHY DID YOU ALL FAIL IN YOUR ONLY DUTY. TO MAKE ME MORE MONEY!?!?!?!?!?



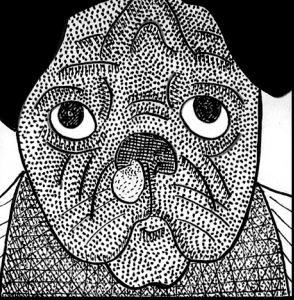




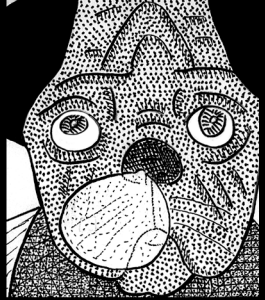
Disclaimer: No pugs were perplexed during the production of this comic. (however a mouse was dressed in a cloak)



Stay Monster Puppy!



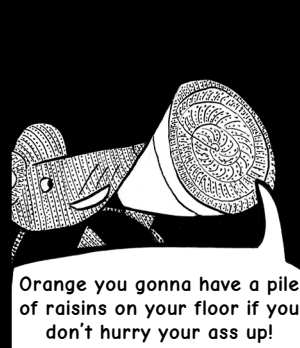
Good Boy! Just a sec...

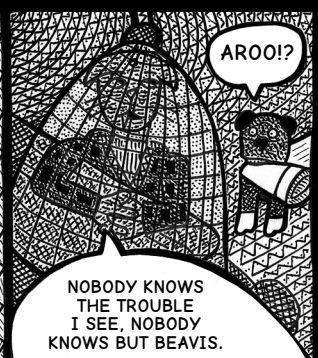
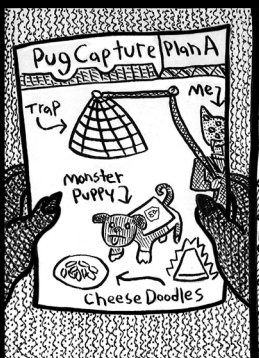
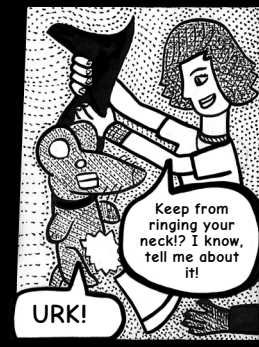


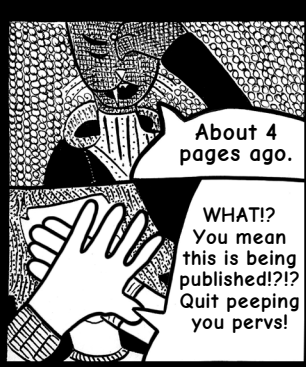
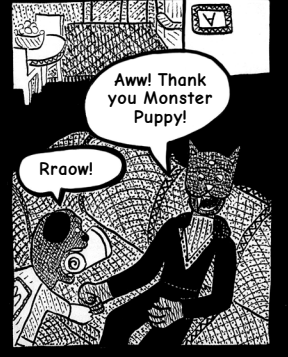
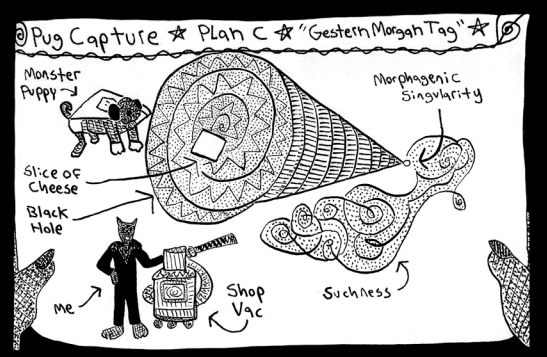
Got it! Wanna treat?

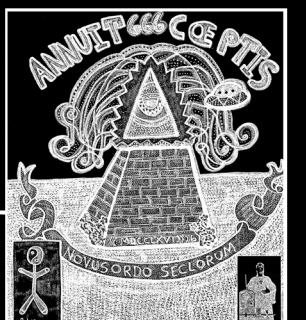
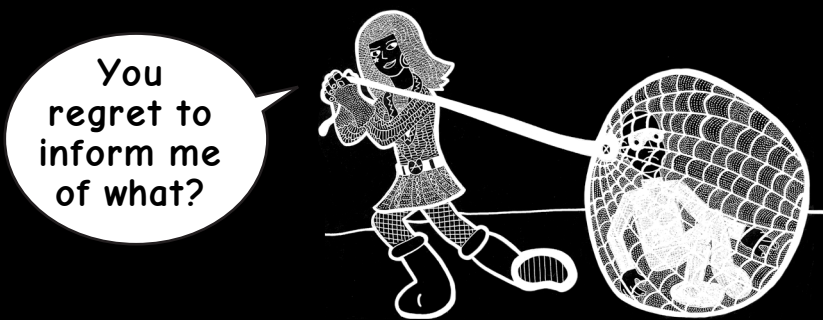
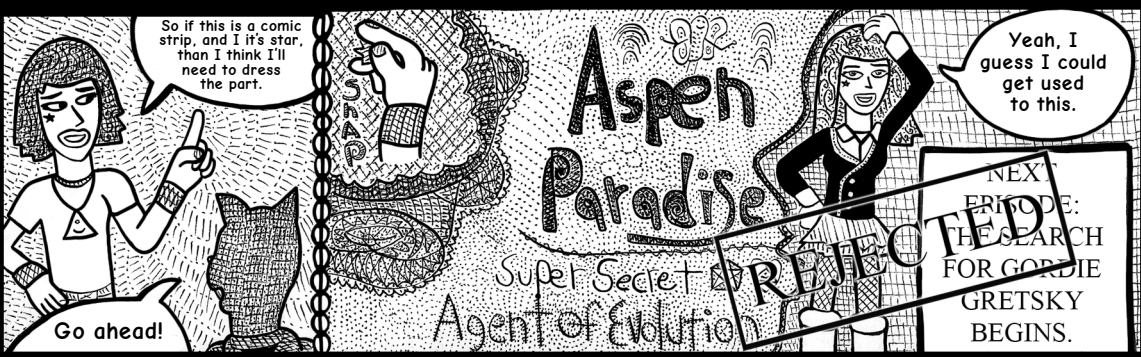
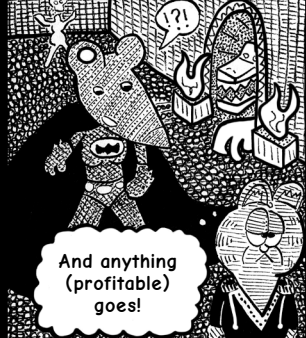
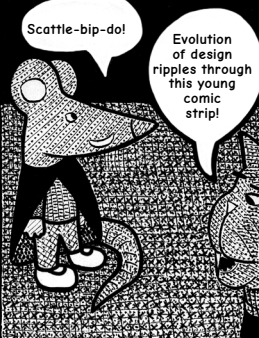
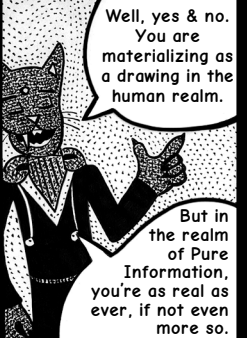


Don't look so surprised! If it wasn't for pug snort, Joan Collins'd be a pile of dust instead of a bag of bones!









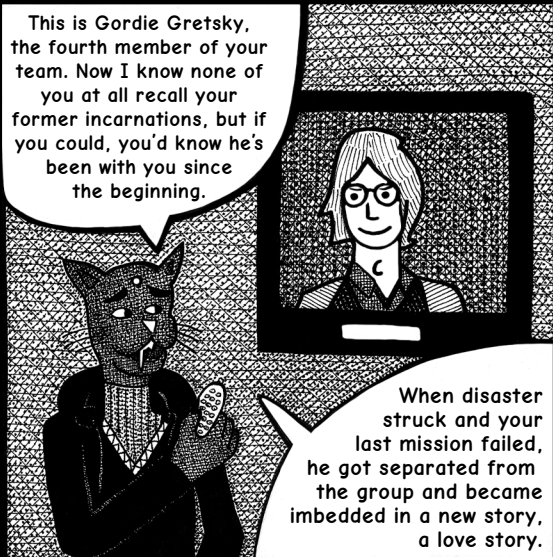


I dare say something's gone askew!

Snort!

Another format change. Welcome to the big time, kid.

Big time!? Bobby ain't even use a ruler! It takes a gallon of Eezus Jeezus just to see straight!



This is Gordie Gretsky, the fourth member of your team. Now I know none of you at all recall your former incarnations, but if you could, you'd know he's been with you since the beginning.



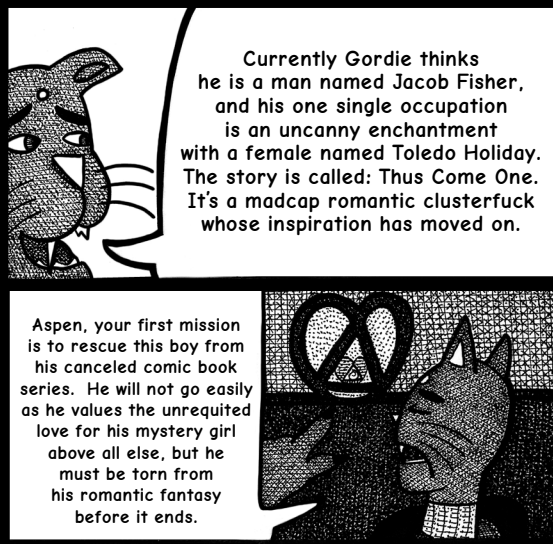
When disaster struck and your last mission failed, he got separated from the group and became imbedded in a new story, a love story.



See, the thing about fictional entities such as ourselves is that we are quite vulnerable to non-existence. We live within the flux of opportunity and potential. What the humans call: Inspiration. Without inspiration, stories end.



Quick, bust a fart, before we lose our inspiration!



Currently Gordie thinks he is a man named Jacob Fisher, and his one single occupation is an uncanny enchantment with a female named Toledo Holiday. The story is called: Thus Come One. It's a madcap romantic clusterfuck whose inspiration has moved on.

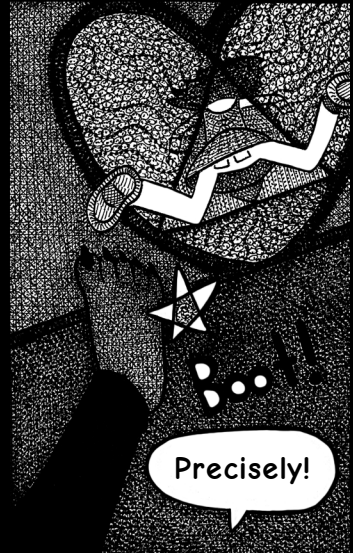
Aspen, your first mission is to rescue this boy from his canceled comic book series. He will not go easily as he values the unrequited love for his mystery girl above all else, but he must be torn from his romantic fantasy before it ends.



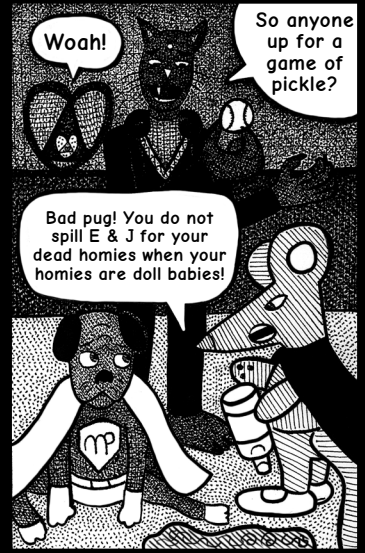
Well then... Let's do the dew! Any advice as to how to bring him back

Just be yourself.

But I don't know who I am!



Precisely!

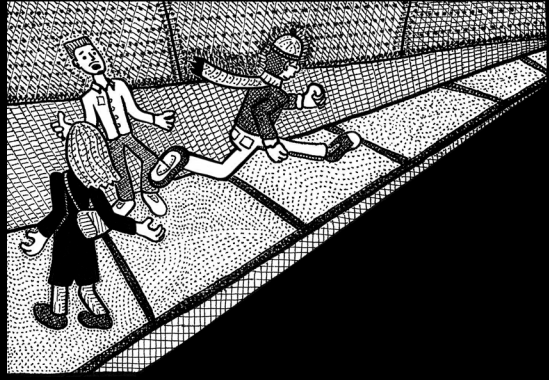


Woah!

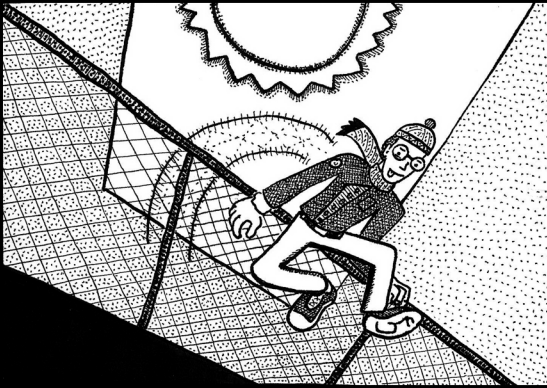
So anyone up for a game of pickle?

Bad pug! You do not spill E & J for your dead homies when your homies are doll babies!

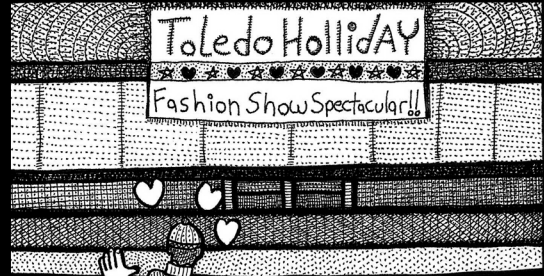
THUS
CAME
ONE
THAT
WAS
TWO
AND
TWO
THAT
WERE
ONE.



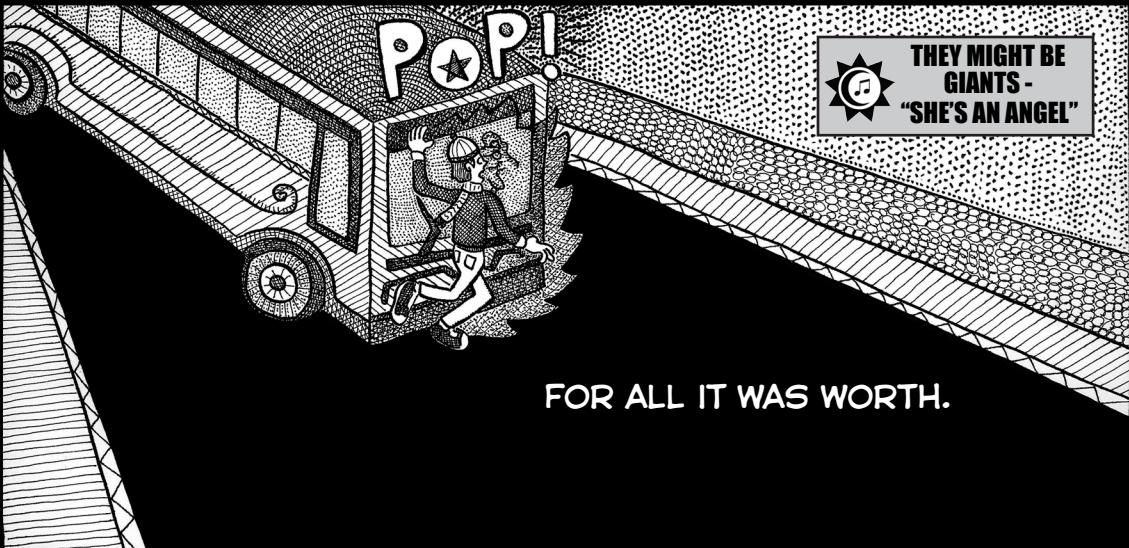
BUT IT WAS ALL IN HIS HEAD,
THIS SICKNESS THE DOCTORS
CANNOT HEAL, TRUE LOVE
- UNCONDITIONAL.



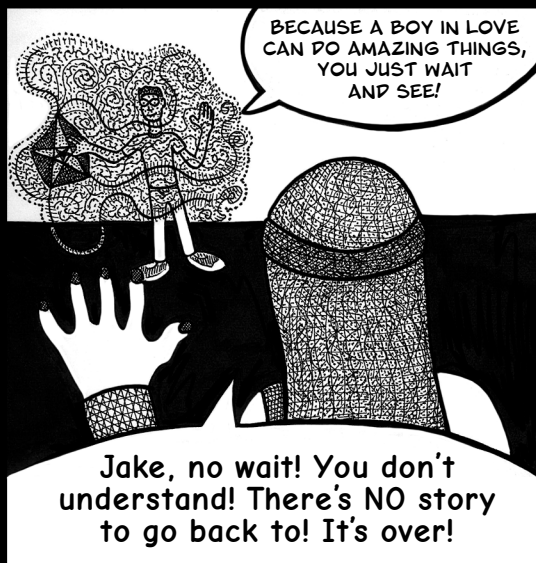
EVEN JUST TO TO FEEL
THAT FIRE THOUGH,
TO FOLLOW YOUR BLISS,
THAT IS NOT NOTHING.



AND SO THE FOOL
DID PERSIST IN
HIS FOLLY...



FOR ALL IT WAS WORTH.





IT'S OKAY, ASPEN. I REMEMBER NOW, I'M BACK ON THE BALL. TRJEGUL TRICKED YOU. THIS WASN'T ABOUT BRINGING ME BACK, IT WAS ABOUT COMPLETING OUR STORY. SEE WE BOTH LOST OUR INSPIRATION, BUT WE AT LEAST COMPLETED OUR MAIN OBJECTIVE, WE FOUND EACH OTHER.

But...but... what's happening here?

AN IMPROVISED STORYBOOK ENDING AT THE WRITER'S CONVENIENCE.

Yes, and?



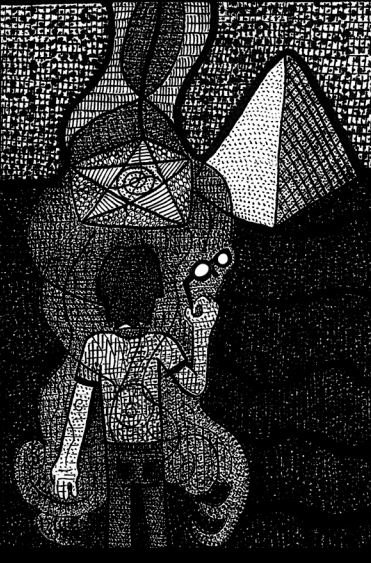
WELL IT'S MOSTLY JUST A HACKNEYED FLIGHT OF FANCY. A KAYFABE RETCON OF A SCI-FI/ROM-COM BASED ON THE FADING MEMORY OF A PUPPY LOVE THAT WEREN'T TO BE.




A RUSHED FINISH, SEALED WITH A KISS.



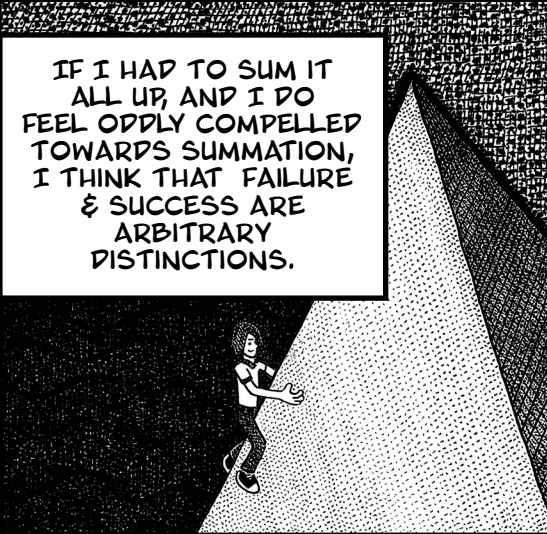
PEACE OUT, HOMESLICE.




THIS IS ALL KINDA
SILLY, AND
EMBARRASSING,
AND WEIRD, BUT
THAT'S JUST THE WAY
IT GOES SOMETIMES!



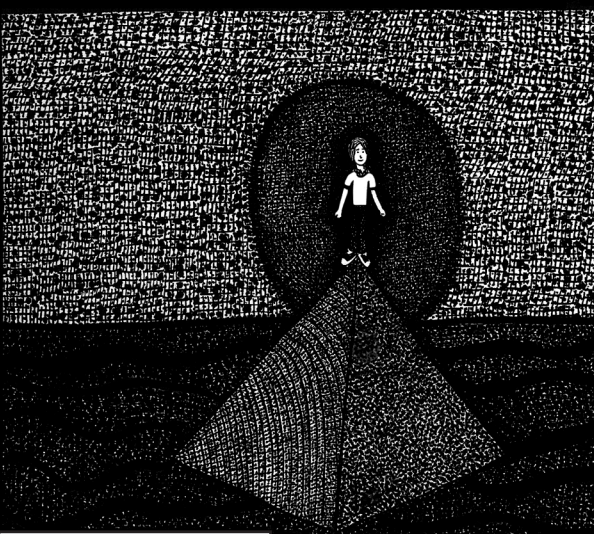
WHAT HAD HAPPENED
WAS ALL MY COMIX
WERE REJECTED AND
THEN I GOT DUMPED.
SHIT HAPPENED,
I MADE MANURE.



IF I HAD TO SUM IT
ALL UP, AND I DO
FEEL ODDLY COMPELLED
TOWARDS SUMMATION,
I THINK THAT FAILURE
& SUCCESS ARE
ARBITRARY
DISTINCTIONS.



EVERYTHING
TURNED OUT FOR
THE BEST IN
WAYS THAT I
COULDN'T HAVE
POSSIBLY
IMAGINED, WHICH
IN TURN LED
TO NEW
HEARTBREAKS &
DISAPPOINTMENTS,
ONLY FOR THOSE
TO THEN BRING
UNPRECEDENTED
HAPPINESS AND
CONTENTMENT.

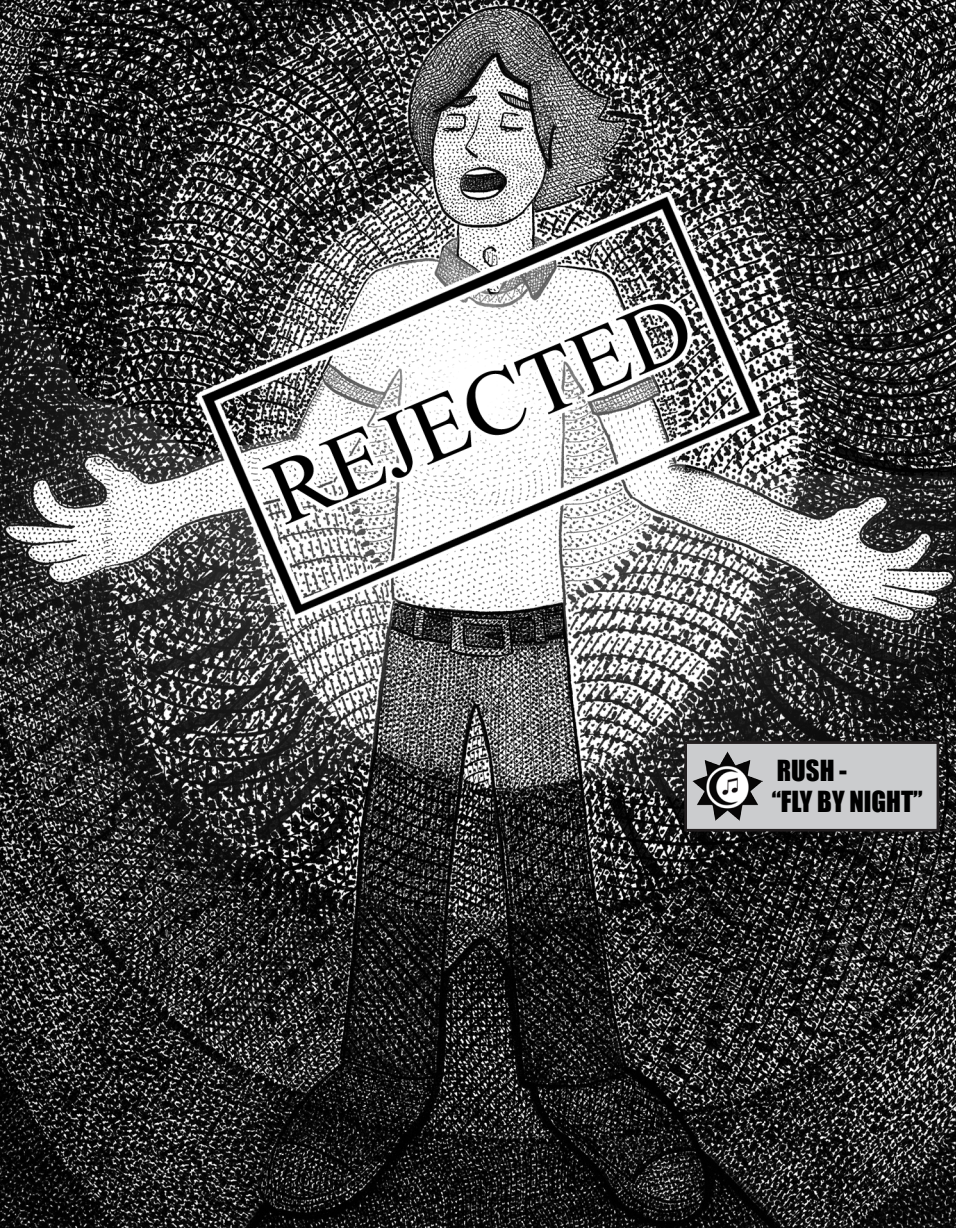


AND SO ON, AND SO ON,
AND SO ON, THE PROCESS
GOES, ALL MOVING
TOWARDS I KNOW
NOT WHERE OR WHY,
BUT I HAVE MY
SUSPICIONS.

THE TOTALLY BIZARRE
PHENOMENA OF LIFE SEEMS
TO ME LIKE A CONTINUOUSLY
TRANSFORMATIVE ADVENTURE
THROUGH THE ULTIMATE SECRET
MYSTERY, AND NOTHING IS
EVER AS IT SEEMS.



OTIS REDDING -
"MR. PITIFUL"



**RUSH -
"FLY BY NIGHT"**

THUS I EMBRACED MY EMBARRASSMENT..

AND WENT FORTH BY DAY.

