

THE SECRET TO SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH

ALISON
BECHDEL

AUTHOR OF FUN HOME





THE
SECRET TO
SUPERHUMAN
STRENGTH

THE
ALSO BY ALISON BECHDEL
SECRET TO

FUN HOME: A FAMILY TRAGICOMIC
SUPERHUMAN

THE ESSENTIAL DYNES TO WATCH OUT FOR
STRENGTH

ARE YOU MY MOTHER?: A COMIC DRAMA

ALISON
BECHDEL

WITH THE EXTREMELY EXTENSIVE COLORING COLLABORATION OF
HOLLY RAE TAYLOR

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT
BOSTON | NEW YORK
2021



*First there is a mountain, then there
is no mountain, then there is.*

-Dorwan

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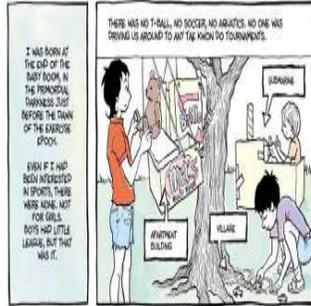
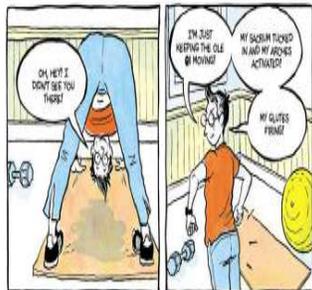
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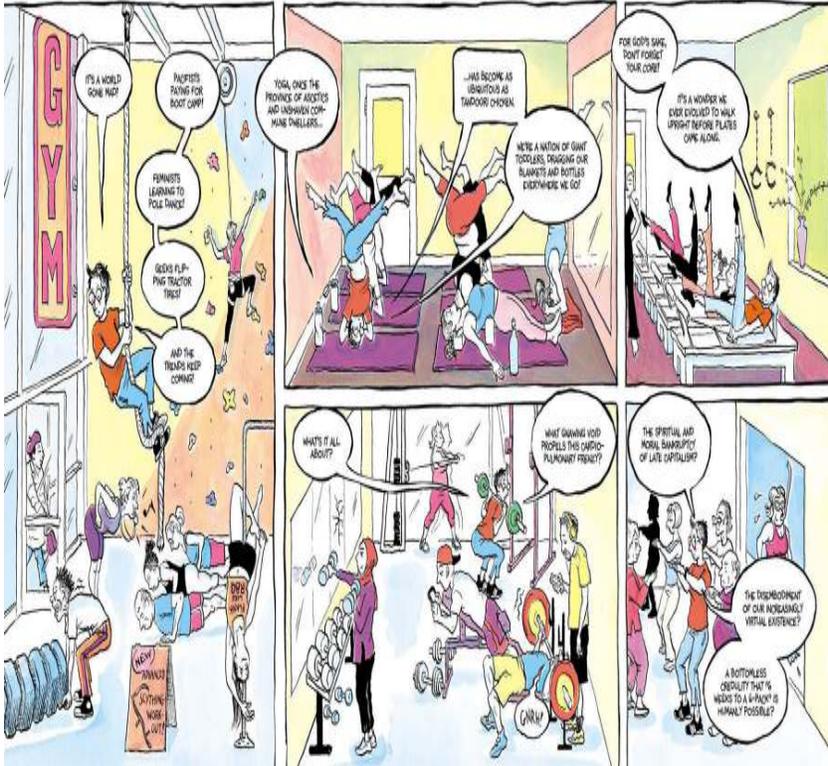
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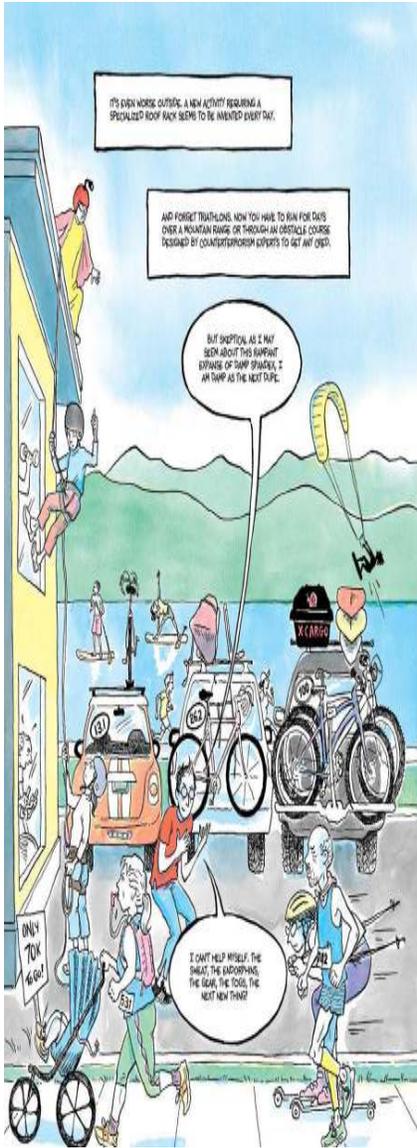
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IS THERE NOT A LONG AND NOBLE TRADITION OF SEEKING REFORM—OF RESISTING THE FORCES OF REPRESSION—BOTH WITHOUT AND WITHIN?

LET'S GO BACK TO THE PERIOD JUST BEFORE I GOT THROWN INTO THE WORLD.

AN ERA WITH A STYX UP ITS ASS IF EVER THERE WAS ONE.

BUT THE COUNTERCULTURE THAT WOULD SOON UPEND EVERYTHING WAS BEGINNING TO STEEL. ALLEN GINSBERG'S HOWL HAD JUST BEEN REILED. NOT OFFLINE.



THEY WERE TOO HUNGRY FOR HIGH CULTURE TO BE COUNTERCULTURE. THEY WERE STILL IN COLLAR.



BUT MY FRIENDS, WHO HAD RECENTLY MET, WEREN'T INTERESTED IN THE LATEST FREIGHT-HOPPING, PISTOL, AND EASTERN PHILOSOPHY.



WILLIAM WORDSWORTH AND SAMUEL JOHNSON COLLABORED IN A CREATIVE PARTNERSHIP, FORGING A NEW KIND OF POETRY IN THE WAKE OF THE REPUBLICAN REVOLUTION IN FRANCE.



POUNTS ABOUT COMMON PEOPLE IN EVERYDAY LANGUAGE. INSTEAD OF SHYPERST? LEON-GO-SHERST? WITH WILLIAMS' SISTER, PORCOTHY, THEY'D WALK THE HILLS, ALL THREE IN A POETIC TRANCE.



...A YOUNG MINISTER IN NEW ENGLAND WAS IMMERSING IN COLERIDGE'S METAPHYSICS AS HE WORKED ON HIS OWN BREAKOUT BOOK...



...WHILE NUMBER 1 'YOUNG JOURNALIST' WORKED ON AN ESSAY ENTITLED 'COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUALISM AS THE PULP-HEADS OF THE AGE.'

SOON THE POST-PHILOSOPHER PAULY WOULD BRING AN AND 'MAGNET' PULLER WOULD FOUND THE TRANSCENDENTALIST JOURNAL, THE DIAL.

...THE VOICES OF NATURE AND GOD.

THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS WERE DISTURBED BY THE WAYS IN WHICH THEIR 'YOUNG DEMOCRACY' WAS BETRAYING ITS OWN IDEAL OF LIBERTY.

SLAVERY, THE 'INDIAN REMOVAL ACT' GRABBING LAND FROM MEXICO, THE SUBJECTION OF WOMEN, BRUTAL CONDITIONS IN THE NEW FACTORIES.

EVEN AS THEY MET IN CROCODILE PARADES, A GIANT TEXTILE MILL COMPLEX WAS BEING BUILT* A LOT FARTHER NORTH IN LOWELL, WHERE THE CONCORD RIVER FLOWS INTO THE MERRIMACK.

*TO USE IN ALL THE COTTON ENGLAND, PEOPLE WERE NEEDED AS IN THE SOUTH.

THE USUAL.

BY THE TIME JACK HERCULE WAS BORN IN LOWELL, IN 1802, THE MILLS WERE IN DECLINE. THE POSTINDUSTRIAL AGE HAD BEGUN.

AND SOME TIME LATER, AS MY FUTURE PARENTS PROLIFERED IN NEW YORK CITY...

THE FISH WERE LONG FISH. PRODUCE PROTEGE HEART DAVID MOREAU NOTED THE ABSENCE OF SALMON IN 1991.

...PERSONAL AND SEVERAL STOPS NORTH ON THE I-87, IN THE APARTMENT OF TOPIC GLASS. WAS ONE OF THE MANY HOMELESS WOMEN WHO HUNGED AND FED HIM OVER THE YEARS.

HE WAS REELING FROM HIS SUDDEN MOTORIST.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE UP IN THE COUNTRY MOUNTING.

I COULDN'T STOP IT. IT'S TIME FOR ME TO GO BACK TO MY MOTHERS.

AT HIS HOME HOUSE, HE'D BANG OUT HIS NEXT BOOK, THE CHAIRMAN BURNS ON A THINGS-OUT SOLIDESTION BOARD.

THE CHAIRMAN BURNS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE BOOKS.

MOSTLY FOR ONE BROTHER SHORT BOOKS IN WHICH PERSONAL CLIMBS A MOUNTAIN WITH HIS FRIEND GARY GARTER, THE POST.

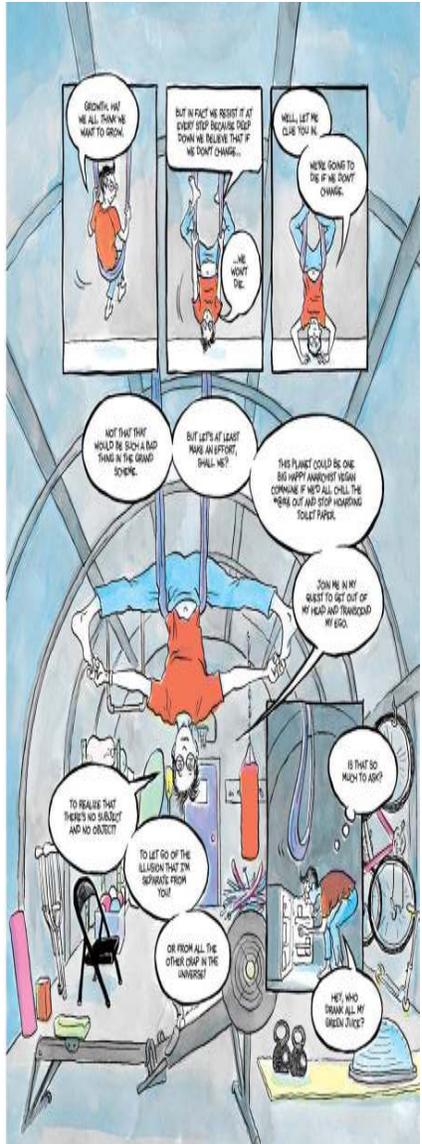
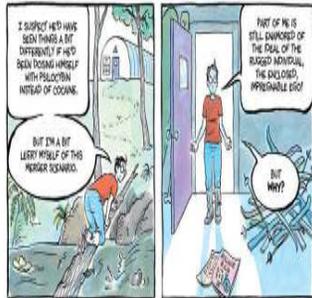
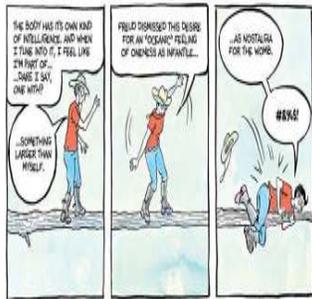
THEY MET UP A PEAK IN THE HIGH SKIRMAS CALLED 'WATERCORN' ONE DAY IN OCTOBER OF 1955.

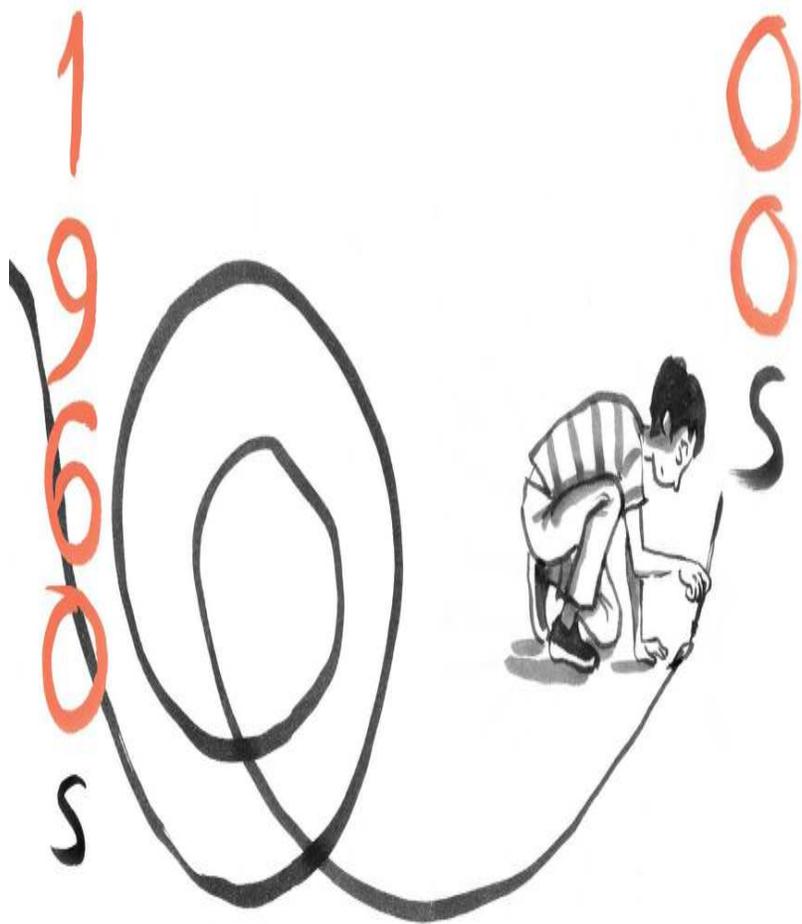
THE FACT THAT THEY DID THIS BACK BEFORE IT WAS REALLY A THING WAS ALWAYS BATHING UP ME.

JACK HUNG IN TEAMS SHOES AND CARRIED A GIANT PLANNEL SLEEPING BAG.

*FROM ITS SLIGHT RESEMBLANCE TO THE ACTUAL MOUNTAIN IN THE ALPS.









MOM DISTINCTLY RECALLED THE NURSE'S RED PALMOT.

AS WELL AS THE TIME SHE CRACKED MY HEAD ON THE DOOR.

PERHAPS TELEVISION HAD A HAND IN IT. TWO WEEKS AFTER I WAS BORN, THE FIRST TELEVIEWED PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE WAS Aired. IT HADN'T REALLY MATTERED BEFORE THAT HOW A CANDIDATE LOOKED.

(SHE LIVED WITH MY GRANDPARENTS IN THE FAMILY BUSINESS FOR A SHORT TIME.)

FALL 1960

BUT BOBIES WERE ASSERTING THEMSELVES IN OTHER WAYS, TOO. FREEDOM RIDERS WERE TURNING BUSSES INTO THE SEGREGATED SOUTH.

WOMEN PEACE ACTIVISTS LED A MASSIVE PROTEST AGAINST NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

...A NEGRO INTEGRATION LEADER WAS SHOT FROM A PASSING AUTOMOBILE...

GET YOUR BURNING OIL FALL OUT SHELDON NOW BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

SPRING 1961

FALL 1961

A HARVARD DIVINITY STUDENT CONDUCTED THE MURKIN CHAIRL EXPERIMENT, IN WHICH THE PSYCHOLOGICALLY COMPOUND PREDICTOR RECALLY ANKAGED MYSTICAL EXPERIENCES IN SUBJECTS.

SEANT SPRING PAVEL CHERSON'S IMPASSIONED TREATISE ABOUT MEDICINE USE, LAUNCHED THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT.

DISCIPLED IN ME

SPRING 1962

SUMMER 1962

BY THE TIME THE FERRING MYSTIQUE CAME OUT, MY GROSS MOTOR SKILLS WERE RIGHT ON TARGET.

KID, STOP BURNING ROCKS!

NOW, THAT'S REALLY BLEEDING.

SPRING 1963

I DON'T RECALL MUCH FROM THOSE EARLY DAYS, AND NOT BECAUSE OF ALL THE HEAD TRAUMA—I WAS JUST TOO YOUNG.

BUT I DO THINK I REMEMBER THE ASSASSINATION OF THE WHICH HAPPENED WHEN I WAS THREE.

IT'S A MEMORABLE IMAGE, STAYING AS THE PICTURE ON A BABY-FRAMED BLACK-AND-WHITE TELEVISION SET.

AND TO BE HONEST, IT'S NOT SO MUCH THE EVENT THAT I RECALL AS THE TV ITSELF, WHICH MY FATHER NEXT AID BOUGHT THAT DAY.

IF JOEY'S DEATH WAS THE DEFINING MOMENT OF THE BABY BOOM GENERATION, THE BOOMERGEN X CRIP THAT I OCCUPIED WAS SHAPED BY THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN OF TELEVISION WATCHING.

MY EARLIEST MEMORIES ARE ALL MIXED UP WITH THAT GLOWING SCREEN. I THINK I RECALL MY MOTHER STRETCHING IN A BLACK LEGGARD AND MY FATHER DOING PUSH-UPS, FOR EXAMPLE...

MR. GREEN BEANS, HAVE YOU BEEN BEANY BUBBY?

...BUT IT'S VERY POSSIBLE I'M MIXING THEM UP WITH ROO AND LAURA PETERS, WHO DID THOSE THINGS ON THE FOX VAN PINK SHOW.

I THINK OF CAPTAIN KANGAROO WAS MARRIED TO MR. GREEN BEANS. I BELIEVED MISS PATTY COULD REALLY LOOK OUT OF THE TV SET.

OH ROM!

AND THERE'S BOBBIT AND SUZIE AND OH, THEODORE AND MAURET

MY ONTOLOGICAL CONFUSION WAS HEIGHTENED BY THE COMMERCIALS. SHAGGY WAS A CARTOON CHARACTER, BUT THE SHAGGERS HE WAS SELLING VERY MUCH EXISTED.

AND I WANTED A PAIR OF THOSE HIGH-TOPS AS DESPERATELY AS I HAVE EVER WANTED ANYTHING.

I DON'T LIKE THE WAY CLAMP HOP IN THE SHOT. I JUST WANT BE BEAT IN MY PE FLIPFLOP!

BUT THEY WERE FORMFOLD.

OR HOW LIMITED THE CONSUMER CHOICE WAS.

THESE ARE FOR BOYS.

IT'S HARD TO COME IN THESE LAX AND TIGHTEN. THIS IS JUST HOW ROBBY PULLED THIS SORT OF THING USED TO BE.

LITTLE KIDS ALL WORE THE SAME PLAIN KETS, BUT ONCE YOU STARTED SHOPPING, THE SORTING BEGAN.

GIRLS POINT TOE, AND LOW, PEBBLED SOLES

BOYS LAUNCH TOE UP, TIGHT TREAD THAT LEFT CHAIRS OF WIND ALL OVER THE HOUSE

...BUT SOON THIS FILTHY JERRY IN THE BACK OF THE STORE WOULD BE A QUANT FELIX. ONES, I MANAGED TO BREAK MY MOTHER DOWN.

THE SHAGGERS OF THE ERA PROMISED TO MAKE ME RUN FASTER, LEAP FARTHER, AND STOP WALKING. LITTLE DID I KNOW, THE SHAGGERS OF THE FUTURE WOULD ACTUALLY DO THESE THINGS.

THE JERRO SUGGESTION WAS STILL YEARS AWAY, AND MIKE'S "MOON SHOE" WAS NOT YET A GLANT IN BILL BOMBERMAN'S WHIFFLE WINK...

OH, ALL RIGHT!

...THE TACKY SHOE.

...THE TACKY SHOE.

ALLMIND I AMBING PULLS LINE

OPTEIN PHEANTHED THIS BUT NEVER DO IT

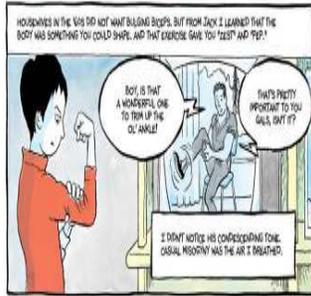
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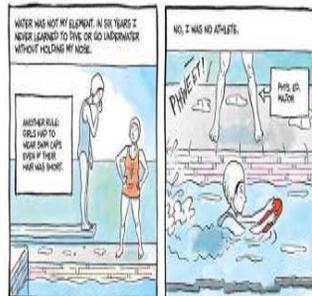
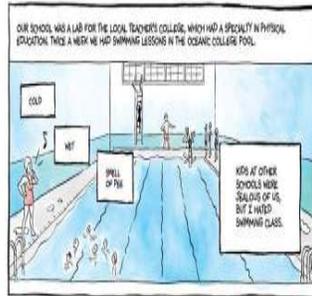
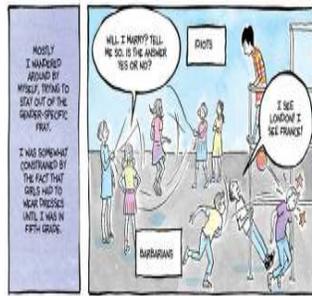
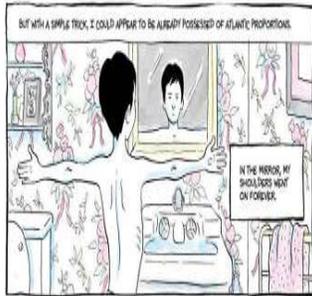
AT ANY RATE, DURING TACKY SHOES ON AND OFF WAS ABOUT ALL THE EXERCISE ANYONE WAS GETTING IN THOSE DAYS, EXCEPT FOR ONE GUY.

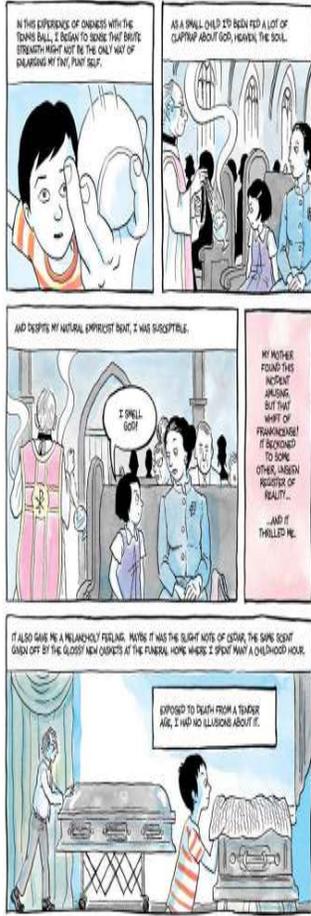
OF ALL THE CHARACTERS ON THAT LUNARBUS SEVERAL, ONE SHONE MORE BRIGHTLY AND BOUNCELTY THAN THE OTHERS.

OH, BOYS AND GIRLS!

IT'S YOUR JOB TO GET MOTHER WHOMEVER SHE IS...







ONE DAY, I WOULD DIE TOO. BUT I WAS LESS CLEAR ABOUT THE FACT THAT I HAD A SOUL, WHICH WOULD KEEP ON SOMEBODY, EXACTLY HOW DID THAT WORK?

WHERE WAS THIS SOUL? FLOATING IN MY BRAIN LIKE THE BUBBLE IN A CARPENTER'S LEVEL?

SPREAD EVENLY THROUGHOUT EACH CELL OF MY BODY?

I WAS TOLD AT CHURCH SCHOOL THAT OUR OUT-DOES NOT HAVE ONE. I FORTUNED THIS, HE WAS DEFINITELY CONSCIOUS.

BUT PERHAPS NOT CONSCIOUS OF HIMSELF AS A SELF, LIKE I WAS.

I BELIEVED THAT THE SOUL MUST THEREFORE CONSIST IN THIS SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS. HOW I HATED THE CAT. GOD KNEW NO ONE WAS MORE SELF-CONSCIOUS THAN I WAS.

THERE WERE TIMES I WAS FREE OF MY BURDENSOME SELF, THOUGH LIKE WHEN I WAS PLAYING SOLO CATCH OR DRAWING OR, MORE MYSTERICALLY, WHEN I THOUGHT ABOUT INFINITY.

ACTUALLY, THIS ONLY HAPPENED THE FIRST TIME I THOUGHT ABOUT INFINITY.

DOES THE UNIVERSE HAVE AN EDGE?

AN EDGE WOULD MEAN THERE'S SOMETHING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF IT...

...SO THAT WOULD BE PART OF THE UNIVERSE, TOO...

I WOULD TRY TO RECALL THE FIRST SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS ARE FROM TIME TO TIME, BUT WITH EACH SUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT, IT GREW MORE ELUSIVE.

I REMAINED STUCK INSIDE MY SACK OF SKIN.

ALSO, THE GHOST WAS NOT.

AND SOON ENOUGH, MY MERELY CATECHISM LESSONS BELIEVED ME OF THESE WILDISH THOUGHTS ABOUT THE NATURE OF REALITY.

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU HAVE A SOUL?

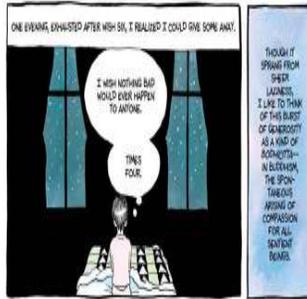
BECAUSE THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO.

I WISH FOR...

...TEN WISHES A DAY FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

ON THIS OCCASION IT STRUCK ME AS A HUMBLED TOUCH TO LIMIT IT TO TEN, PLUS I COULD USE ANY ONE OF THEM TO WISH FOR EVEN MORE.

I BEGAN PUTTING THEM OFF UNTIL BEDTIME, AN OBLIGATION LIKE MY NIGHTLY PRAYER.



ONE EVENING, EXHAUSTED AFTER HIGH SCHOOL, I REALIZED I COULD BE SOME ANY.

I WISH NOTHING BUT WOULD EVER HAPPEN TO ANYONE.

THREE FOUR.

THOUGH IT SPRANG FROM OTHER LINGUISTICS, I LIKE TO THINK OF THIS BURST OF GENDERLESSNESS AS A KIND OF BOCHOTTA—IN BLOOMSBURY, THE SPONTANEOUS JURING OF COMPASSION FOR ALL SEVENTEENTH DENIERS.

BOCHOTTA, OR "AWAKENING MIND" IS ITSELF A MISH: THE MISH TO MAKE UP AND EXPERIENCE LIFE EXACTLY, NOT CLOTTED OVER WITH THOUGHTS. IT'S A MISH FOR OTHERS TO MAKE UP, TOO...



...TO MAKE UP FROM THE DELUSION THAT THOSE THOUGHTS ARE REAL.

BUT THERE'S ANOTHER, MORE ADVANCED ASPECT OF BOCHOTTA—A FALLING AWAY OF ONE THOUGHT IN PARTICULAR, THE IDEA THAT YOU EXIST AS A SOUL, SEPARATE SELF.



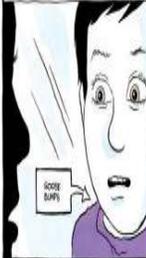
AND I REMAINED QUITE ATTACHED TO THIS SELF.

THERE WAS A SECOND GAME I PLAYED IN THE MIRROR, THE ONE WHERE YOU LOOK EYES WITH YOUR REFLECTION FOR A LONG TIME, UNBLINKING...



...LETTING YOUR FOCUS SOFTEN JUST SO...

...UNTIL THE PRISON OF TERROR COMES.



GOOSE BANGS!



THE FEELING OF BEING MYSELF AS AN OTHER WAS A BIT LIKE THE REALIZATION OF INFINITY, BUT ONCE I MOVED, THERE I WAS AGAIN.

(ABOUT SOMEWHAT LESS CERTAIN OF THIS THAN I HAD BEEN.)



PERHAPS THIS WAS SOMETHING LIKE AN EXPERIENCE THE WRITER MARGARET FULLER HAD AS A CHILD. RECALLING IT LATER, SHE SAID IT WAS JUST AN ORDINARY DAY...

"I HAD STOPPED MYSELF... ON THE SEARS, AND ASKED, HOW COME I HERE?"



HOW IS IT THAT I SEEM TO BE THIS MARGARET FULLER?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?



HAVE YOU FINISHED YOUR THEM?

YES, FINISHED.

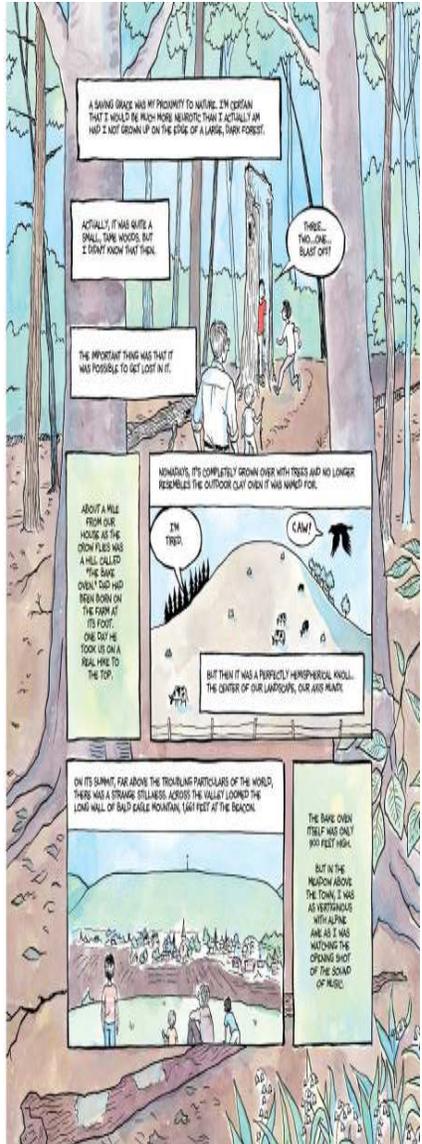


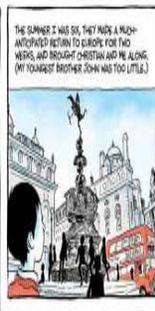
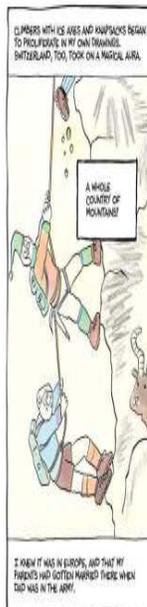
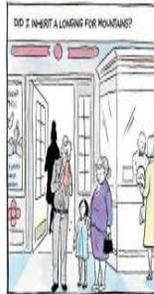
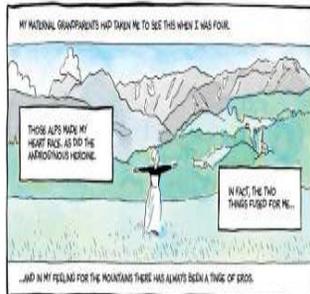
WHAT SHALL I DO ABOUT IT?

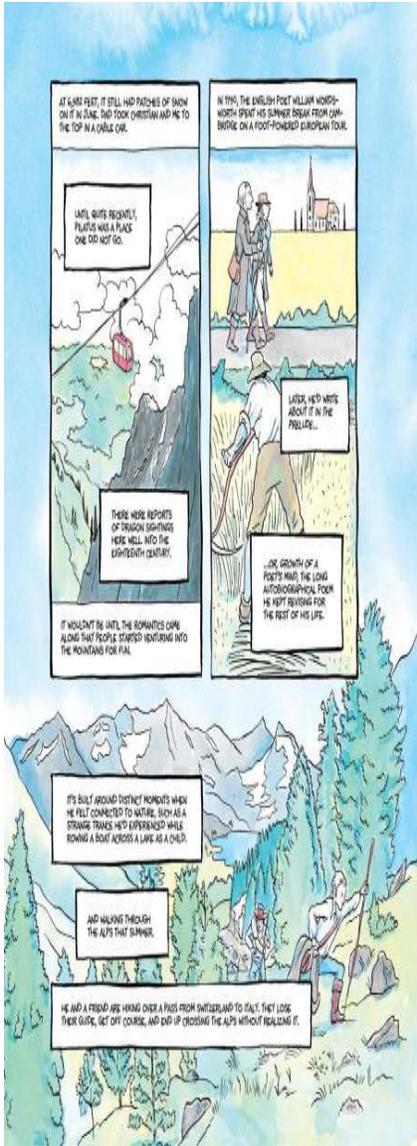


HE WOULD LATER WONDER IF THIS HAD BEEN A MISTAKE. AN AMBITIOUS WOMAN WITH A FINELY HONED MIND WAS BASICALLY UNMARRIAGEABLE.

THE COMMOD NEVER ENTERS THE LISTS, THE WEARING FALLING ONCE, NEVER ENTERS THEM AGAIN.



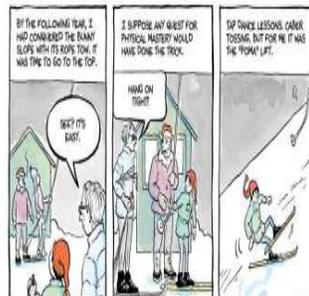




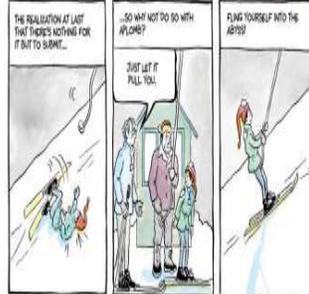
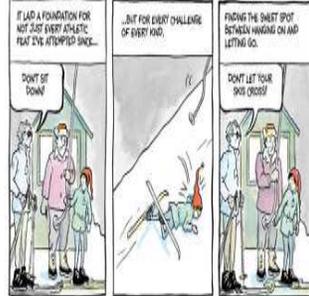


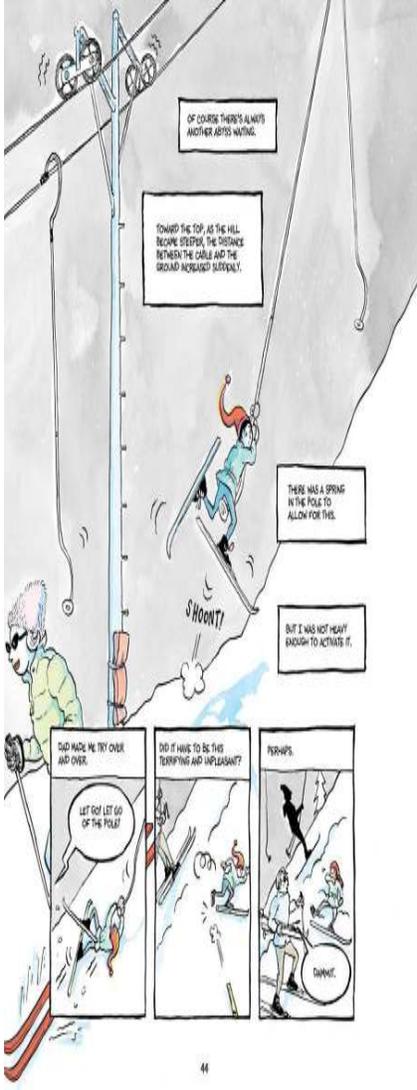
WELL, INCENTIVE, SKIING-HOT SKIING WAS A SPORT FOR THE HEALTHY, BUT NOW THE MIDDLE CLASS WAS DRIVING TO THE SKI RESORTS. SMALL SKI AREAS WERE POPPING UP ALL OVER THE PLACE.

WE DROVE DEEP INTO THE WILDS OF PENNSYLVANIA.



I SUPPOSE ANY QUEST FOR PHYSICAL MASTERY WOULD HAVE DONE THE TRICK.





OF COURSE THERE'S ALWAYS ANOTHER AFTER WAITING.

TOWARD THE TOP, AS THE HILL BECAME STEEPER, THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE CABLE AND THE GROUND INCREASED RAPIDLY.

THERE WAS A SPRING IN THE POLE TO ALLOW FOR THIS.

BUT I WAS NOT HEAVY ENOUGH TO ACTIVATE IT.

DID I MAKE ME TRY OVER AND OVER.

LET GO! LET GO OF THE POLE!

DID IT HAVE TO BE THIS TERRIFYING AND UNPLEASANT?

PERHAPS.

SHAME.



BEING EVALUATED IS ONE WAY TO STOP THINKING, AND AS I ALREADY KNEW, NOT THINKING WAS A PERFORMANCE ENHANCER.

ONCE I GOT IT, THERE WAS NO GOING BACK.

IN THE BEGINNER'S MIND THERE ARE MANY POSSIBILITIES, IN THE EXPERT'S MIND THERE ARE FEW. THAT'S AN OBTUSE PARADOX FROM JOHN WARD, SCIENTIST AND, BY SHANTU SUDAK.

HE'S A JAPANESE MONK WHO MOVED TO SAN FRANCISCO IN 1959 TO RUN THE SIX TRIPLE TEMPLE.

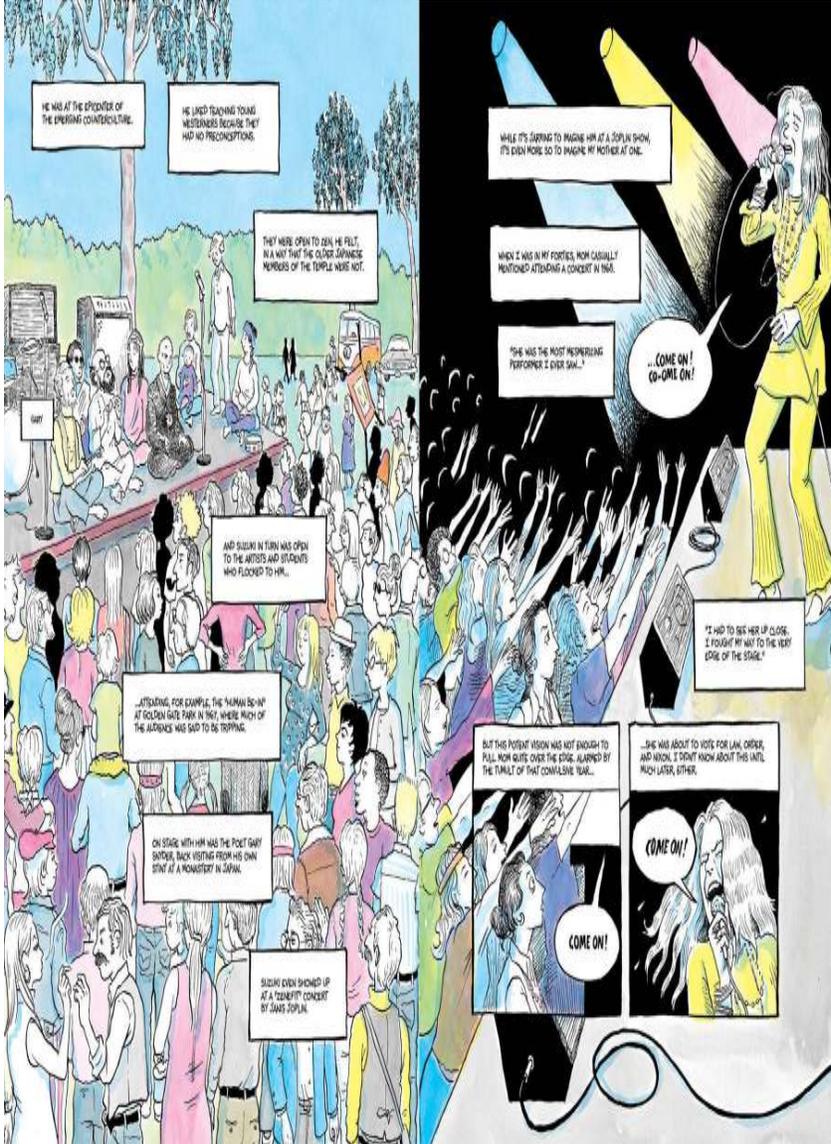
HIS BOOK WAS COMPILED FROM TALKS HE GAVE IN THE MID-90s, RIGHT AROUND THE TIME I WAS LEARNING TO SKI.

YOU SHOULD NOT SAY "I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING" OR "I HAVE ATTAINED ENLIGHTENMENT!"

THIS IS ALSO THE REAL SECRET OF THE ARTS: ALWAYS BE A BEGINNER.

SUDAK HAD SPENT PRETTY MUCH HIS WHOLE LIFE IN MONASTRIES BEFORE ARRIVING AT AGE FIFTY-FIVE, IN THE BAY AREA.

LITTLE DID HE KNOW A LOT OF OTHER PEOPLE WERE JOINING THERE, TOO.



WHILE MOM WAS TURNING INTO A MEMBER OF THE MUSCLE FACTORY, DAD WAS BEING AN APPEAR WITH THE YOUNG MAN WHO HELPED WITH THE WORK.

HOT OFF THE PRESS? I MADE FIVE COPIES SO HE CAN EACH HAVE ONE.

JOHN LAMON BLASÉ

THEY WERE HAVING THEIR OWN PERSONAL GENERATION GAP. SOON BOTH MOM'S PARENTS DIED, AND THE DOCTOR BEGAN FEELING HER THUNDERLESS AND ANTI-DEPRESSANTS.

PERHAPS HE GAVE HER GLASS, WHICH JOHN DODD WAS TAKING AT THE TIME FOR STRESS-RELATED HURTLES AND NAUSEA.

AS SHE PAROXYLY NOTED IN THE WHITE ALBUM, THE ATTACK OF HURTLES AND NAUSEA DOES NOT NOW SEEM TO BE AN INAPPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO THE SUMMER OF TRAIL?

THIS WAS FAIRLY HEADSPANNING, TOO. THE MOON LANDING, WOODSTOCK, THE MASON MURKERS, A MASSIVE ANTIWAR PROTEST IN WASHINGTON.

TIME TO MAKE SHIRTS! DAY 2!

THOUGH AS FAR AS I KNOW AT AGE NINE, THIS WAS ALL JUST BUSINESS AS USUAL.

GARY DENTICE AND JACK KEROUAC WERE ALSO IN THE NEWS. GARY IN A LOOK MAGAZINE PRIZE ON THE ENVIRONMENT, SHAMING NAMED WITH HIS WIFE AND BABY IN THE SERIALS.

AND JACK IN HIS OBITUARY. HE DIED FORTY-SEVEN YEARS TO THE DAY AFTER HEARING UP MATTHEW HORN PEAK WITH GARY.

Father of the Beat Generation

Author of 'On the Road' Was Heroic, Faithful, Respected, Middle-Class Yipster

By BRUCE LEEVYER

Jack Kerouac, the spiritual father of the Beat Generation, died on Wednesday. He was 70 years old. He was a poet, a novelist, a screenwriter, and a man who lived on the edge. He was a man who lived on the edge. He was a man who lived on the edge.

IF THE SIXTIES CONSTITUTED A MARE OF JUBILEATION, MY PARENTS WERE TOO LATE TO CATCH IT. AND I WAS TOO EARLY. BUT THIS DID NOT PREVENT US FROM FLOODING TOGETHER IN ITS SURF.

ALTHOUGH I DON'T KNOW ABOUT MOM'S DEPRESSION OR DAD'S RIGHT AFTER, I BEGAN TO WORRY ABOUT MY PARENTS' DING.

AND IT WAS AROUND THIS TIME THAT I SCALMED AT LAST TO THE LANE OF PHYSICAL MANICULITY.

IF MOM OR DAD OBJECTED TO MY PURCHASE, WELL...IT WAS SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH BY THEN.

PERSONAL TRICK: No. 8710 Only 50¢

AND COMPLETELY HARMLESS: No. 7652 ... 70¢

SECRET OF GAIN: Drawing the line is a matter of life & death. No. 3000 ... 15¢

WHOOPEE! CUSHION

THE SECRET TO SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH

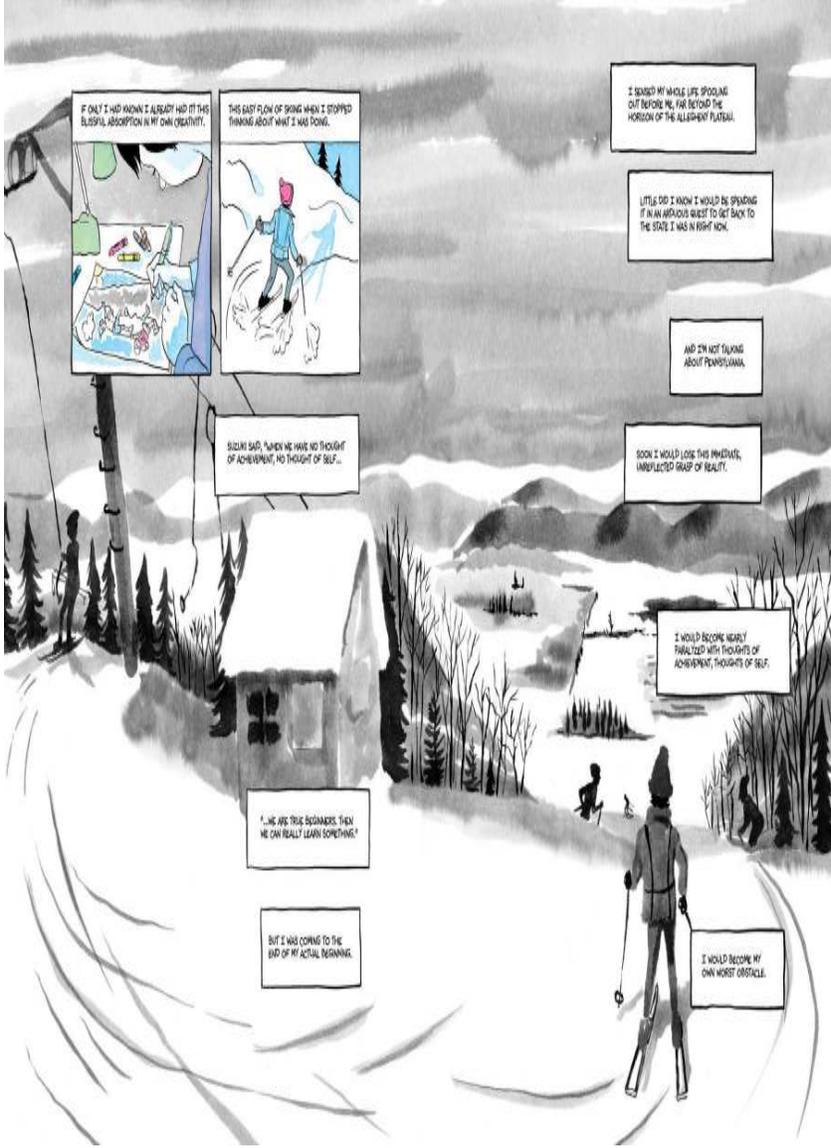
Drawn and drawn, opponents in seconds will just as the months of practice it may learn techniques that will make you the master of every situation. No. 4003 ... 1.00

LIVE BEA-MONKEYS

THERE'S SIX WEEKS LATER, A BARELY REPRINTED MARTIAL ARTS INSTRUCTION BOOKLET, LAUGHABLY BEYOND THE COMPREHENSION OF A CHILD, ARRIVED IN THE MAIL. WHAT HAD I BEEN THINKING?

YOU CAN'T GET SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH FROM A MAIL-ORDER NOVELTY COMPANY!

BUT THEN, WHERE DO YOU GET IT?



IF ONLY I HAD KNOWN I ALREADY HAD IT THE
BLESSFUL ABSORPTION IN MY OWN CREATIVITY.

THIS EASY FLOW OF BEING WHEN I STOPPED
THINKING ABOUT WHAT I WAS DOING.

BUZZARD SAID "WHEN WE HAVE NO THOUGHT
OF ACHIEVEMENT, NO THOUGHT OF SELF...

"...ING ARE TRUE BEGINNERS, THEN
WE CAN REALLY LEARN SOMETHING."

BUT I WAS COMING TO THE
END OF MY ACTUAL BEGINNING.

I SPUN MY WHOLE LIFE UNROLLING
OUT BEFORE ME, FAR BEYOND THE
HORIZON OF THE ALLERBERRY PLATEAU.

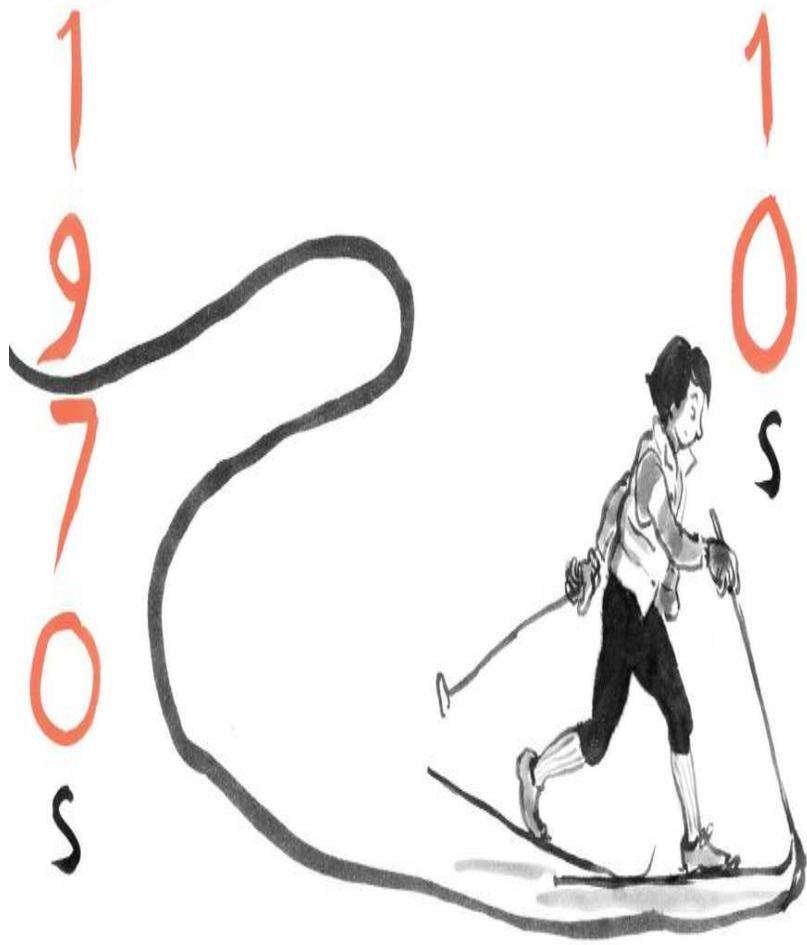
LITTLE DID I KNOW I WOULD BE SPENDING
IT IN AN ANNOYOUS QUEST TO GET BACK TO
THE STATE I WAS IN RIGHT NOW.

AND I'M NOT TALKING
ABOUT TRANSFORMING.

SOON I WOULD LOSE THIS IMMEDIATE,
UNREFLECTED GRASP OF REALITY.

I WOULD BECOME HEAVILY
FRAZZLED WITH THOUGHTS OF
ACHIEVEMENT, THOUGHTS OF SELF.

I WOULD BECOME MY
OWN WORST OBSTACLE.



THE ONLY THING I LEARNED ABOUT THE NATIVE PEOPLE WHO HAD LIVED IN THE PLACE WHERE I GREW UP WAS THAT THE CONFLUENCE OF BEECH AND BALD EAGLE CREEKS HAD BEEN SOME SORT OF SACRED SITE.



AT LEAST IF YOU'VE TAUGHT FISH, LIKE THE CATHAWAS RIVER IN CLEVELAND. A RECENT BLEND OF ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTERS HAD FORCED A RECKONING, AND IN APRIL OF 1975, THE FIRST EARTH DAY WAS HELD.



OK. SPILLS, UNSE, GARBAGE, LOST WEAPONS. IF THINGS WENT ON LIKE THIS, I'LL LEARNED, THE PLANET WOULD SOON BE UNINHABITABLE.

WANT GOOD THING THEY REALIZED THIS BEFORE THINGS GET ANY WORSE?

ALTHOUGH THE ROMANETS HAD EXPRESSED ALARM ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT AS SOON AS THE FIRST FACTORIES STARTED SPewing PARTICULATES, IT HAD TAKEN A COUPLE HUNDRED YEARS FOR THAT SENTIMENT TO REALLY GAIN TRACTION.

BUT NOW PEOPLE WERE STARTING TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE LIVE IN AN ECOSYSTEM IN THE SENSE OF THE TWO BROTHERS A COINCIDENT BOOK WORE.

IF PEOPLE COULD ACTUALLY SEE IMAGES OF THE WHOLE SYSTEM, HE REASONED, THEY'D UNDERSTAND IT WAS NOT AN UNLIMITED RESOURCE THERE FOR THE PILLAGING.

Secondary space... \$1000 per hour... \$12 per the meter

Chinward Equipment for Alpinists

Almost everyone who goes into the mountains... \$1000 per hour... \$12 per the meter

THE CATALOG WAS FILLED WITH HOME-MADE SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT.

IT WAS LIKE THE HEAVENLY "MATH BOOK" ON LEO STURMANT BOARD, THE GUY BEHIND IT WAS OBSERVED WITH THE SATELLITE PHOTOS WERE HAD BEEN TAKING OF THE PLANET.

THE LAST Whole Earth Catalog

NOT THAT I HAD ANYTHING ABOUT US, BUT IF I'D READ CLOSELY ENOUGH I WOULD HAVE FOUND A BOOK FOR IT IN THERE.

BOOKS ABOUT YOGA, YOGURT, YOUTH HOSTELS, AND TURKS.

BRAND CREDITED THE ECLECTIC ARCHITECT AND INNOVATOR BILLYMORRIS FILLER FOR INSPIRING THE BOOK'S HEADLINE STRUCTURE WITH HIS IDEAS ABOUT "WHOLE SYSTEMS."

WE ARE ALL PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER. THIS ARRANGEMENT PLUS, SOME PULSATING AND INTROSCOPICLY CONNECTED TOTALITY.

Understanding Whole System

FILLER WAS PROBABLY BEST KNOWN NOW FOR THE FAT OF GEODESIC DOMES.

FILLER IN TURN WAS INSPIRED BY HIS GREAT-GRANDFATHER, MARGARET FILLER. WHEN I ASKED THAT AUNT MARGARET SAID "I MUST START WITH THE GARDENS AND WORK DOWN TO THE FACTS, I MUST HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF IT" THAT BECAME A GREAT DRIVE FOR ME, HE ONCE SAID.

AS MARGARET SAID DOWN TO EARTH THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE TRANSCENDENTALIST JOURNAL, THE REAL WHAT WAS HER VISION? TRANSCENDENTALISM AS AN INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENT IS NOTORIOUSLY HARD TO DEFINE.

HEY BRUCE, WE JUST STOPPED IN TO SAY GOODBYE.

old sketches of hers about to-been-ghost-castles

BUT ONE COULD DO WORSE THAN POINT TO THE WHOLE EARTH CATALOG AND SAY, "RADIALLY, THIS!"

...THEIR RADICAL RACE AND GENDER POLITICS, THEIR EMBRACE OF EASTERN PHILOSOPHIES AND NONCONFORMITY...

OFF TO FIND YOURSELVES!

OH, MAN, LAST YEAR!

WITH THEIR USGAM COMPANIES, NATURE TRIPS, AND PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS...

...THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS WERE HAPPIER LONG BEFORE THERE WAS SUCH A THING.

TRACKING THEM BACK A BIT FURTHER, MARGARET FULLER WAS INSPIRED BY THE ENGLISH ROMANTIC POET AND WRITERS, SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.



RABBIT ROSSER, WEIRD DOT, DUMB JOKES. IF IT WERE THAT WEIRD I WOULD LOOKING THROUGH THE EYE OF THE ANCIENT MARINE IN COLLEGE. I MIGHT HAVE FELT A TRIPLE MORE ENGAGED.



HE WAS A FICKER AT CAMBRIDGE AND DID A MID-CAP STUNT IN THE ARMY TO ESCAPE HIS DEBTS.



HE WAS BOUNDLESSLY ENERGETIC, AN EARLY ADAPTOR OF THE WALKING TOURS THAT WERE ALL THE MODE AMONG THEORETICALLY PIOUS UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AT THE TIME.



HE WAS KNOWN FOR HIS "MORNING WALKS" WITH HIS FRIENDS. HE WAS KNOWN FOR HIS "MORNING WALKS" WITH HIS FRIENDS.

THIS BROUGHT HIM TO GET HIM DISMISSED AS "MORNING WALKS" WITH HIS FRIENDS WOULD LATER BE DISCHARGED FROM THE ARMY FOR "INDISCREET" CHARACTER.

IN THE SAME REPUBLICAN SPIRIT, HE CAME TO EXPLORE THE IDEA OF SHARED PROPERTY, AND COMED UP A SCHEME WITH HIS FRIEND ROBERT SOUTHBY TO ENROUTE TO AMERICA AND GET THEM FOUND A UTOPIAN COMMUNITY.

AS COLERIDGE WOULD REVEAL IT LATER, IT WAS IN PLAN AS HAPPINESS AS IT WAS STRAIGHTAWAY, OF TRYING THE EXPERIMENT OF HUMAN PERFECTIBILITY ON THE BANKS OF THE SUSQUEHANNAH (SIC).



THE SUSQUEHANNAH THE RIVER INTO WHICH MY OWN BROTHER OWEN FLOATED.

HE WAS A BAD HUSBAND EVEN BY THE STANDARDS OF THE DAY, DISAPPEARING FOR LONG STRETCHES AND EVENTUALLY LEAVING SARA ALTOGETHER.



THE SCHEME FELL THROUGH, BUT NOT BEFORE COLERIDGE AND SOUTHBY HAD MARRIED A PAIR OF SISTERS ON THE STRENGTH OF COLERIDGE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SARA FEVERER WOULD BE THRILLANT.

OFF ON AN ONE-DAY OLD FELL-WALKING TOUR.

FOR A SHORT TIME, COLERIDGE PUT OUT A PERIODIC JOURNAL CALLED THE WATFORDIAN. THEN COME A FRENCH TOUR OF TRAVELING, LECTURING, JOURNALISM, POETRY.



HE BECAME FRIENDS WITH WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, WHOSE POETRY HE ADMIRER.

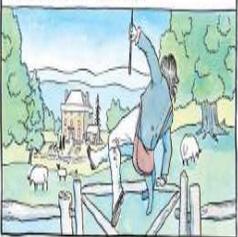


YOUR DESCRIPTION...

IS OCCASIONALLY HIGH AND YOUR POETRY CREATIVE, BUT WHAT REALLY ADMIRER? WHAT WERE COLERIDGE?

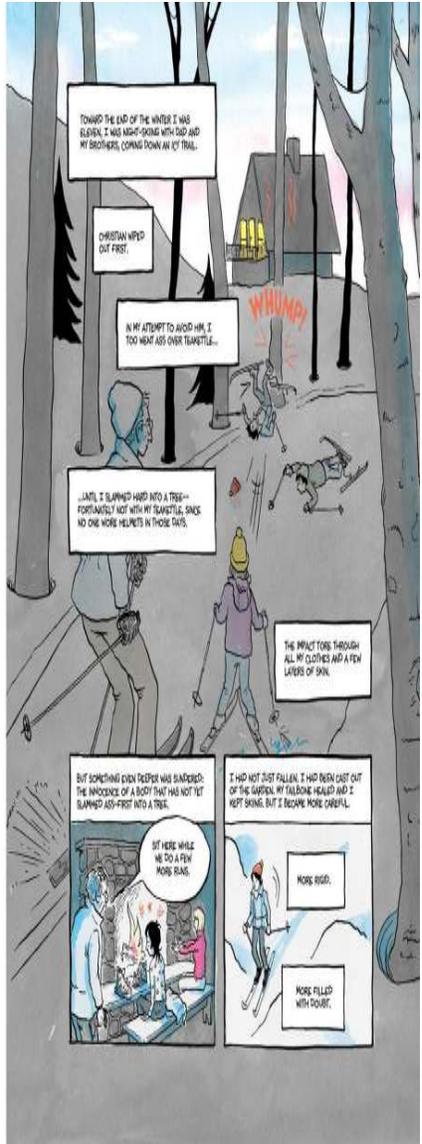
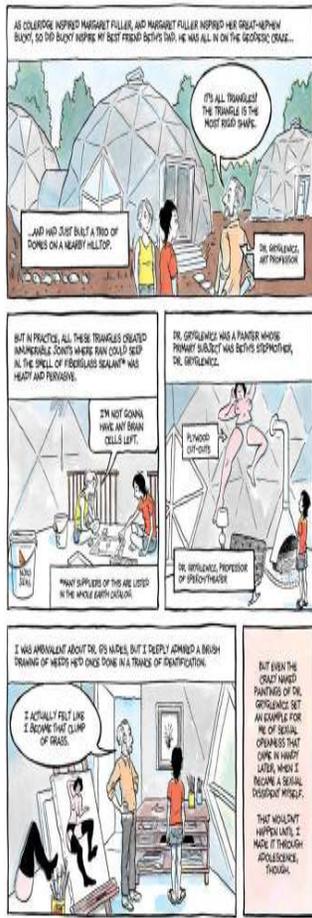
...INTERFERED WITH VARIOUS INJURIES AND ALLEGMENTS WHICH HE TREATED WITH LAZARUS.

WILLIAM WANTED COLERIDGE TO VISIT HIM AND HIS SISTER, DOROTHY, ONE DAY THE WORDSWORTHS SAW A MAN VAULT THE GATE AND ROUND THROUGH A FIELD TO TAKE THE MOST DIRECT ROUTES TO THE HOUSE.



COLERIDGE'S LITERAL LEAP INTO THEIR LIVES IMPRESSED THEM BOTH INDUBITLY.

FORTY YEARS LATER, SOME TIME AFTER HIS DEATH, THEY WERE STILL TALKING ABOUT IT.



AFTER MY PROGRESSIVE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SEVENTH GRADE WAS A BLOD AWAKENING. A CRASHING CRYSTALBOMB WAS DISPERSED IN THE SMALLEST THINGS, SUCH AS HOW YOU CARRIED YOUR BOOKS.



THE MOST TERRIFYING THING ABOUT THIS NEW REGIME WAS THE PUBLIC SHOWS WE WERE REQUIRED TO TAKE AT THE END OF GYM CLASS.



THERE WAS NO AVOIDING IT, BUT I FIGURED OUT A WAY TO MINIMIZE THE TIME I WAS NAKED IN FRONT OF EVERYONE.



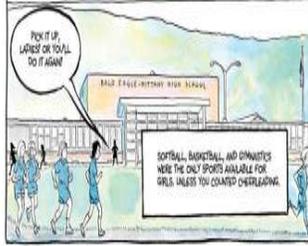
MY FATHER TAUGHT AT THIS SCHOOL, WHICH PROBABLY PROTECTED ME FROM WORSE HARASSMENT FROM THE HEADMISTRESS WHO HAD NEVER SEEN A BOOB BAG BEFORE...



...BUT IT HAD ITS OWN PITFALLS.



IN GYM CLASS, WE'D WARM UP WITH A LAP OF THE QUARTER-MILE LOOP IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL. I DON'T MIND THIS, BUT IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME TO VOLUNTEER FOR MORE OF IT BY GOING OUT FOR A TEAM.



BUT THAT YEAR, 87% AN EDUCATION BILL WAS PASSED THAT CONTAINED A SHORT SECTION CALLED TITLE IX.



BY 2011, THE NUMBER OF GIRLS PLAYING HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS WOULD HAVE INCREASED BY A THOUSAND PERCENT. BUT IN MY...



IN NINTH GRADE, MY STICK-FIGURE BODY SLIPPED SO QUICKLY WITH BREASTS AND HIPS THAT MY SKIN WAS STRETCHED WITH ROBESSENT PURPLE STRETCH MARKS.



BUT THE ONSET OF ADULTHOOD HELD SOMETHING EVEN MORE UNSETTLING IN STORE. ONE DAY WHEN I WAS FOURTEEN, I WAS OVERTAKEN BY A BULIMIC NEW REGULATION.





RETIRE.

AS A CHILD, I USED TO RUN BACK UP THIS HILL OVER AND OVER AGAIN, TIRELESSLY.

WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO ME?

NOW HAD AN EXERCISE BOOK LYING AROUND IT WAS BY A RUSSIAN GUY WHO SEEMED TO BE SOME KIND OF SOCIETY GYM TEACHER.



I WAS SOLD BEFORE FINISHING THE INTRODUCTION. HE WAS ALL IN SEARCH OF A PROFOUND SOMETHING ELSE, HE WHISTLED.



HE DESCRIBED A SENSE OF "DOWNING WELL-BEING" CALLED OTHER WORDS: "IMPORTUNATELY, MOST OF US LOSE THIS SENSATION OF DELIGHT SOMEWHERE BETWEEN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE."

THE RUSSIAN PROMISED TO RESTORE THIS LOST FEELING WITH EXERCISES FOR ENDURANCE, SUPPLIANCE, BALANCE, STRENGTH, SPEED, AND COORDINATION.



A PLEASANTLY PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH



I OVERLOOKED THE USUAL GYMNASIUM PROTOCOLS. A WOMAN WAS SUPPOSED TO "TIGHTEN" THE OVERDEVELOPMENT OF VISIBLE MUSCLES AND IF SHE ALREADY HAD MUSCLES, SHOULD "RETIRE" TO "DECREASE" THEM.

WHATEVER, AS INSTRUCTION MANUALS GO, IT WAS MORE ACCESSIBLE THAN THE ONE THAT HAD PROMISED THE SECRET TO SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH.

HUP!

OH! YOU DO THAT SOMEWHERE ELSE?

I STUCK TO THE PROGRAM AND IT WAS NOT LONG UNTIL MY GYMNASTICS RETURNED IN FORCE.



ALSO, FOR GODS SAKE.

I WANT TO DO MY LEAPS!

NEVERTHELESS, ITS AMPLITUDE WAS ALMOST ALARMING.

ONE DAY I FELT SUCH SUPERABUNDANT ENERGY THAT I DECIDED TO "TOOT" UP THE STREET TO MY GRANDMOTHERS HOUSE.



THE INCONTROLLABLE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF A CONCRETE GOAL—WHAT A FEELING!



SOON I WAS JOGGING THE THREE-QUARTERS OF A MILE TO GRAMMYS AND BACK WITHOUT STOPPING WHENEVER I FELT THE NEED TO BLOW OFF STEAM WHICH WAS MORE AND MORE OFTEN THE MORE I RAN, IT SEEMED...

ONE DAY SOON AFTER TEACHING GRAMMYS I DECIDED TO TEST MYSELF FURTHER. I WOULD TRY TO MAKE IT ALL THE WAY AROUND THE BAKE OVEN LOOP A LITTLE OVER THREE MILES.

...THE MORE I NEEDED TO RAN.

GENERALLY I DON'T CHANGE MY CLOTHES TO SUE, BUT FOR THIS EFFORT I FOUND MY SOLE SET OF ATHLETIC APPAREL.*

I ALSO BROUGHT SOME BUNDS AND POINTY-ALONG HOES WAS MY ONLY PIECE OF REFERENCE FOR THE PLAT I WAS ABOUT TO UNDERTAKE.

*NOT COUNTING THE VARIOUS SWIMMERS I HAD TO ASK FOR FOR ERM CLASS—HOW MANY I APPROVE THAT IT'S A QUALIFIER OF THE QUALITY ATHLETIC BLENDED, IMPROVED BY SPRING POWER APPELLA FLORIDE.

I DON'T TELL ANYONE WHAT I WAS DOING.

MY PLAN WAS TO STOP AND WALK IF I GOT TIRED, BUT I DIDN'T GET TIRED, I KEPT GOING ACROSS THE HIGHWAY...

...JUST THE BAKE OVEN, PAST THE FARM WHERE DAD WAS BORN.

I MADE IT ALL THE WAY HOME WITHOUT EVEN STOPPING INTO THE SHOP.

YOU WHAT?!

WITHOUT STOPPING!

IT FELT SO GOOD, I KEPT DOING IT, BUT PEOPLE WEREN'T USED TO RUNNING IN THESE TIES, AND I'M NOT QUITE SURE HOW I EVEN THOUGHT OF IT.

HE NEXT THING!

IT WAS JUST IN THE AIR, IT SEEMS, LIKE TRANSFORMATION BARKING A GREAT ONE-TWO-TWO "ROGATORY" WAS BEING INTO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

I WAS A DEMOGRAPHIC WAITING TO HAPPEN, EXOTIC NEW BRANDS OF SHIMMERS HAD ENTERED THE MARKET AND I ALREADY HAD A PAIR OF ADIDAS SABLELIES, BUT SOON A PROPRIETARY NEW STORE OPENED.

ONLY SHIMMERS?!

athletic fabric

LET'S FACE IT, YOU DON'T NEED SPECIAL EQUIPMENT TO RAN, BUT IT WAS EASY TO EXPLOIT AND CONSPIRACY RUNNING PROBABLY BECAUSE SOMETHING AUTHENTIC HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE DO IT.

PERHAPS EVEN THE RUSSIAN GUY'S "MYSTERIOUS SOMETHING ELSE?!"

IT SMELLS LIKE A LOCKER ROOM IN HERE.

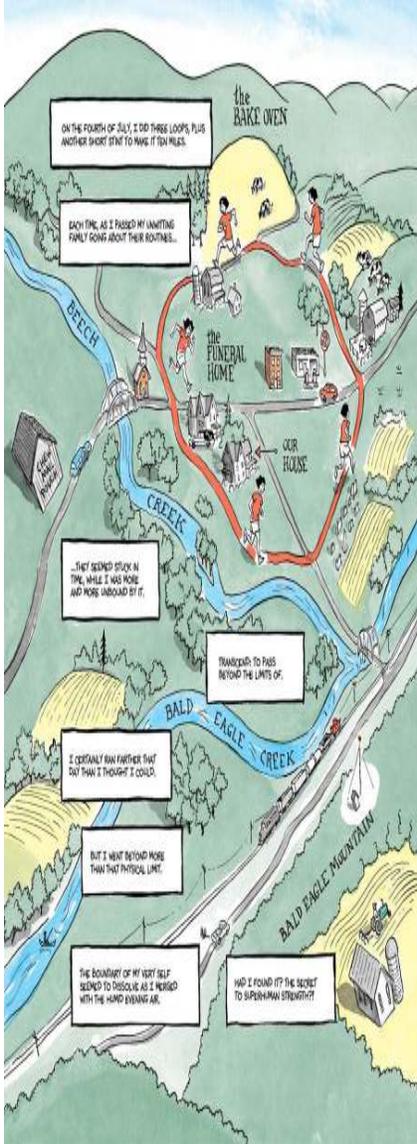
YOU WHAT?!

I COULD NOT CONTROL THE VARIOUS PSYCHOPHOBES OF ANGER, BUT I COULD CONTROL HOW FAR I RAN, AND RUNNING PROMPTED ITS OWN TRANSFORMATION.

I WAS BECOMING FOCUSED. DROPPING!

ACTUALLY, THERE WAS ONE PIECE OF SPECIAL EQUIPMENT I COULD HAVE USED, BUT IT WOULD BE A FEW MORE YEARS AND SOME WOMEN IN VERNON MADE THE BEST "SHIMMERS" OUT OF TWO SOCK STRIPS.





BY SURELY, I'D OBSERVED FROM THE ADS IN THE BACK OF MY COMIC BOOKS TO THE ADS IN THE BACK OF THE NEW YORKER. ONE DAY I ORDERED A SHIRT LIKE ONE I'D HAD AS A KID.

LL.L.Dean

Turtleneck
Sleeveless
Shirts
For Men
and Women

is fun to see you in the city, the way you are, with the high price tags and even in the streets, all right?

IT ARRIVED ACCOMPANIED BY A PORTAL TO A STRANGE NEW DIMENSION, A DIMENSION WHERE LIFE REQUIRED BALACLAVAS, ANKLETS, GAITERS, AND THICKERS PAIRS OF PULLERS.

THAT'S A LOT OF MULES!

A HURTY, UNSEXY DIMENSION WHERE THE AIR SMELLED OF WOODWORKING AND IMPENDING BURN.

NEW ENGLAND DEMAND AT ONCE MORE CALLED AND MUCH HIGHER THAN THE APPLICATION BANNER WHERE I WAS CURRENTLY STRAGGLING.

UN... I'D LIKE TO PLACE AN ORDER.

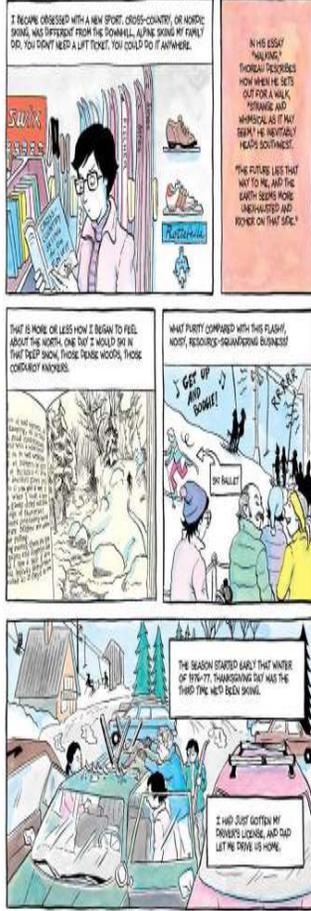
A DIMENSION CALLED "NEW ENGLAND?"

BUT UNTIL I MANAGED TO GET THERE MYSELF, I COULD APPARENTLY PURCHASE IT IN INSTALLMENTS.

AS IT HAPPENS, DIMENSIONAL FILLER WAS NOT THE SOLE INSPIRATION FOR THE WHOLE GUY'S CATALOG. STEWART BRAD AND MANY FRIENDS WHO HAD GONE "BACK TO THE LAMP" AND WERE LIVING ON COMPANES.

HERE'S THE BURGLET THREE DRIVER'S SHIRT.

WHEN HE THOUGHT ABOUT HOW HE COULD CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR PRODUCT, "THE LL.L. BEAN CATALOG OF OUTDOOR STUFF GIVE TO MAKE..."



HE WENT GONE FOR WHEN I LOST CONTROL ON A DOWNHILL DRIVE.

WHICHLIQUELY, I DID NOT MEET ANOTHER ONE...

AFTER WE CAME TO A STOP, FOLKING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION, HE ONE SAID A WORD, THO AND I EXCHANGED PLACES.

TEN MILES LATER, HE PULLED OVER, STILL WITHOUT SPEAKING. I SOMEHOW KNEW WHAT HE TO BE DONE.

...FOR PLACING WITH MY ENTIRE FAMILY DOWN THE STEEP BANK.

WHILE IT'S TRUE THAT I SUFFER FROM UNHEALTHY SPINDS OF SELF-POURTY AND SELF-CRITICISM, I SIMULTANEOUSLY POSSESS A SELF-COMFIDENCE AS SOLID AS A SCIENTIST'S STATION WAGON.

IT CERTAINLY ALLOWED ME TO DO WHAT SOME MIGHT. IT WAS MY TENTH SEASON OF SHING AND WALKS I ROUTINELY PILED THE EXPERT SLOPES WITHOUT FALLING...

...I FELT I HAD PLAYBAID.

...THE IN LARGER PART TO THIS PHYSICAL LESSON.

MY BESTFRIEND,* WHO HAD ONLY BEEN SHING FOR TWO YEARS, WAS ALREADY SOME AERIAL MEMBERS. I FOUND THIS DEMORALIZING.

ONE DAY, AS TIM PRACTICED* MICKS BANDERS,* IT DOWNED ON ME THAT MY NOT FALLING HAD ACTUALLY BECOME A PROBLEM.

PAID FOR PRIDEFUL BROTHER WITH WIDE

PERSONEN ANSWERED AFTER NEW DIFFERENCE PROVIDED HIM

I PRACTICED JUST WELLS OVER AT FIRST, THEN BUILT UP TO LITTHY GO AT FULL SPEED.

BUT THAT WAS THE LAST SEASON OF MY ALPINE CAREER. AFTER CHRISTMAS, I BOUGHT AERobic EQUIPMENT AND PRACTICED DOWN BY THE CREEK FOR THE BEST OF THAT NEXT COLD WINTER.

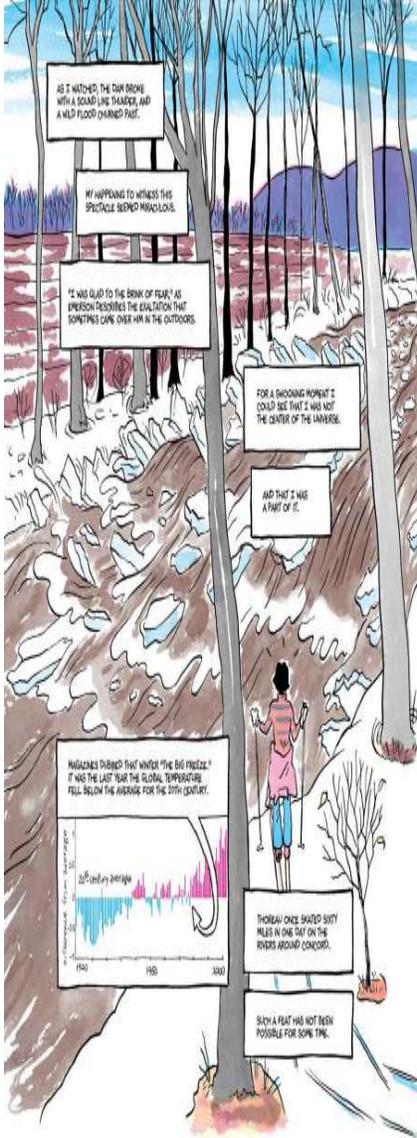
INSTANTLY I BEGAN TO DRINK WITH A NEW AND LIQUID CASE.

WUD CHAPER AND JUMPER THROUGHOUT THE

THE BEECH GREEN HAD FROZEN COMPLETELY OVER FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE I WAS SMALL ON A WARM DAY IN LATE FEBRUARY. I HEARD LOUD NOISES COMING FROM THAT DIRECTION.

HUGE CHAINS OF ICE HAD FORMED A FORTIFIABLE TANK, AND WATER WAS RUSHING OVER IT.

GROAN
CRANK!



A FRIEND OF EMERSON'S FROM THE CATHOON OF THE TRANSCENDENTAL CLUB. HE SAID OF COURSE YOU CAN'T REALLY KNOW WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT—THE SELF DISAPPEARING.

EMERSON'S FIRST WIFE, ELLEN, DIED LESS THAN TWO YEARS AFTER THEY MARRIED. HIS PROFOUND GRIEF HAD A FREING EFFECT, ENABLING HIM TO CUT THE INTELLECTUAL CORD WITH EUROPE...

(A YEAR AFTER HER DEATH HE ACTUALLY OPENED HER COFFIN)

...AND HEAR OFF IN HIS OWN DIRECTION. AN APPLICATION OF THE ENLIGHTENED IDEA AWAKENED IN HIM AN APPRECIATION FOR EASTERN VIEWS OF THE UNIVERSE AND DIVINITY.

! Why do you speak all this and all this? Why all that? (The man in the suit, then, he is not a man at all.)

AFTER HE LEFT THE CHURCH, HE BEGAN GIVING POPULAR LECTURES, SPEAKING OUT HIS VIEW ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL'S RELATION TO THE WORLD.

COURAGE IS GROUNDLESS ALWAYS ON A BELIEF IN THE QUANTITY OF THE HISTORY OF MY DEEDS WITH MY OWN.

...JUST HE WITH WHICH YOU COME IS NO MORE THAN YOU.

THEY WENT TO TALK

HE FORMED A GROUP OF RENEGADE INTELLECTUALS TO EXPLORE "OTHER AND BOLDER VIEWS" THEY WOULD COME TO BE CALLED, DISPARAGNINGLY AT FIRST, THE TRANSCENDENTAL CLUB.

THE PRANK WAS COMPLETE WITH HIS NOTORIOUS ADDRESS TO THE HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL, IN 1838, CRITICIZING THE LIFELESSNESS OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. THIS GOT HIM BANNED FROM THE UNIVERSITY FOR THIRTY YEARS.

THE FAITH SHOULD BLEND WITH THE LIGHT OF REASON AND OF BETTING SHAL...

...WITH THE PLEASURES OF THE SENSUAL AND THE BEAUTY OF FLOWERS.

A PLAN SURELY EMERGED FOR ME TO SKIP MY LAST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL AND HEAD STRAIGHT TO COLLEGE, IN MASSACHUSETTS. I BROKE UP WITH TM IN A ROBOTIC WAY. I WAS OUT OF HERE.

WE JUST DON'T HAVE ANYTHING IN COMMON.

IT'D HAD FLOODES OF ANXIETY THAT I MIGHT LIKE GIRLS MORE THAN BOYS, BUT I COULD BARELY NAVIGATE THE SOCIAL FRAY AS IF WHO—I COULDN'T FIGURE ALSO BEING A HOMOSEXUAL.

AND HEADED FOR NEW ENGLAND!

THE WORLD WAS CHANGING, THOUGH IN FACT, THAT VERY AFTERNOON IN NEW ENGLAND, ONE PERSON IN PARTICULAR WAS MAKING IT CHANGE. THE FIRST JORDANS FROM WAS UP AT HER COUNTRY HOUSE IN VERMONT.

WEST BARNET GENERAL STORE

SHE AND HER HUSBAND HAD BOUGHT THE PLACE WHEN THEIR KIDS WERE SMALL.

THEN THEY BOTH GOT DRIFT UP IN THE RURAL POLITICS OF THE LATE 50S, AND THE MARRIAGE FELL APART.

SOON AFTER THAT, HER HUSBAND CAME TO THE HOUSE ALONE AND KILLED HIMSELF.

NOW, SIX YEARS LATER, RICH WAS WORKING ON WHAT WOULD BECOME HER MOST FAMOUS COLLECTION, THE TREATY OF A COMMON LANGUAGE. IT WOULD BE HER FIRST BOOK SINCE COMING OUT AS A LESBIAN.

TRANSCENDENTAL ETUDE

(FOR MICHELLE CLERY)

This August evening I've been driving
over backroads fringed with queen anne's lace
my car starting young deer in meadows—one

THE POEM ARE IN A WAY ABOUT
THAT SELF-TRANSFORMATION.

THE FINAL TITLE POEM BEGINS
IN THE ROMANTIC TRADITION
OF A NATURE STORY.

WE MIGHT EXPECT THIS PASTORAL IMAGE TO LEAD TO WHAT WORDSWORTH
CALLED AN "IMPRESSION OF IMMORTALITY?"



THE POEM ALSO
POINTS TO EMERSON'S
TRANSCENDENTALISM.

(HER TITLE ALLUDES MORE DIRECTLY TO LUTELY FURNISHED (THIRD STORIES))

IN COLLEGE, RICH STUDIED WITH THE
SCHOLAR F. O. MATHESSON, BEST
KNOWN FOR HIS BOOK AMERICAN
RENAISSANCE: ART
AND EXPRESSION IN
THE AGE OF EMERSON
AND WHITMAN.
MATHESSON
AWARDED HER
POLITICALLY, HE WAS
A SEMI-OUTCAST
GAY MAN AND A
SOCIALIST.

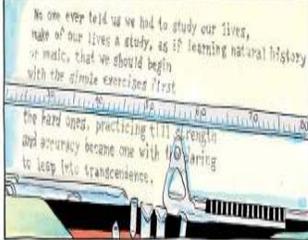
IN HER SOPHOMORE
YEAR, HE LEAPT OFF A
THIRTY-FLOOR WINDOW
TO HIS DEATH, BUT HE'D
GIVEN HER A KIND OF
LIFELINE.

A WAY OF BEING
HERSELF IN RELATION TO
OTHERS. THE MORE SHE
CAME TO UNDERSTAND
POWER AND PRIVILEGE,
THE MORE SHE WOULD
KEEP REINVENTING HERSELF
THROUGHOUT HER LIFE,
LIKE A MANUSCRIPT.

HOW MANY FUTURE LOVERS WOULD SHARE THESE POEMS WITH HER?



EVEN THOUGH HE HAD ONLY THE VAGUEST IDEA WHAT SHE WAS TALKING ABOUT.



NOT THE TWO WOMEN PART, BUT THE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY, THE
MUTUALITY. LESBIAN FEMINISM WASN'T JUST SHAPING WOMEN FOR MEN.
IT WAS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT MODEL, MUTUAL, SUBJECTIVITY!

LATER IN THE POEM,
RICH CONSIDERS
"TWO WOMEN, ETC."
TO BE / REUSING
EACH OTHER'S
SPINE, EACH
OTHER'S / LITTLE
TEARS, / A WHOLE
NEW POETRY
BEGINNING-HERE."

ETC TO ETC, IT'S
THE KIND OF
CONNECTION
MARGARET FULLER
WAS ALWAYS TRYING
TO HAVE WITH
EMERSON.



WILDO TED, BUT AT HIS CORE HE PREPARED
HIS AUTONOMOUS SOLUTION, BELIEVE ME, I
KNOW HOW HE FELT.



BUT OF COURSE ALL THAT WAS STILL HEARD OF
ME. FOR NOW, I WAS OFF TO COLLEGE IN THE
BOONSHIRES.



ONE OF THE OBEDIENCE ACTIVITIES HE DID ON MY FIRST DAY THERE WAS SOMETHING CALLED A "POOPER COURSE," A SERIES OF OBSTACLES IN THE WOODS THAT HE NEGOTIATED IN SMALL GROUPS.

...THEN HULDED THE REST OF US OVER LINE SO MANY WAYS OF POSSESSIONS.

AT ONE POINT WE CAME UP AGAINST A THIRTY-FOOT WALL.

I FELT LIKE I COULD BE MYSELF AT THIS NEW SCHOOL. I WATCHED THE CLASS STOPPED WEARING MAKEUP AND SHOWING MY LEGS. I WAS SOON KIPPED OUT IN UNBLY EXPECTATION HEAR.

TWO OF THE BOYS IN MY GROUP WERE ROCK CLIMBERS THAT SQUISHED UP THE GRONDS...

SEVEN YEARS EARLY MOUNTAIN TRAIL, DURABLE BUCKLES TO BARK IN A TEMPORARY SHELTER.

I DID NOT DRINK OR DO DRUGS OR HAVE SEX WITH MY GOOD GRADERS AND THE GRAD-DISCIPLINED RUNNING I KEPT UP, IT WAS A PRISON OF MORALITY. I EVEN WENT TO CHURCH ON SUNDAY.

LIKE MANY GAY PEOPLE OF MY GENERATION, I WOULD NOT BEHAVE LIKE A TEENAGER UNTIL I WAS IN MY TWENTIES. IT WAS ONLY LATER THAT I REALIZED THE TWO BOYS WHO WENT TO CHURCH WITH ME WERE ALSO GAY AS GAY.

POPPY HARRISON-ALLANCE

I BECAME FRIENDS WITH ONE OF THE ROCK CLIMBERS, BUT I DID NOT, AS EVERYONE ASSUMED, HAVE A CRUSH ON HIM.

SUCH SOCIAL CONFUSIONS WERE LESS OF A PROBLEM BY MY SOPHOMORE YEAR, WHEN I DISCOVERED A METHOD OF MANAGING MY ANXIETY.

ONE DAY, SEEMING SOULFUL, I FELT LIKE AMERSON WISHED HE COULD TO THE SECRETEST HOLLOW SHORES IN THE WOODS. SINCE I STUMBLED ACROSS THE THIRTY-FOOT WALL.

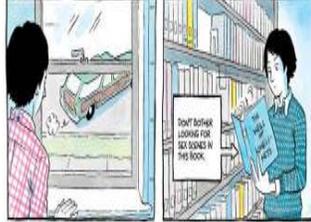
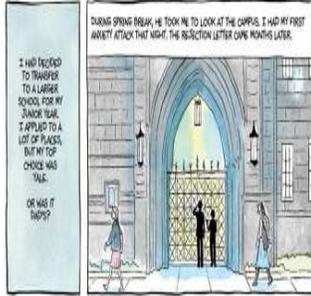
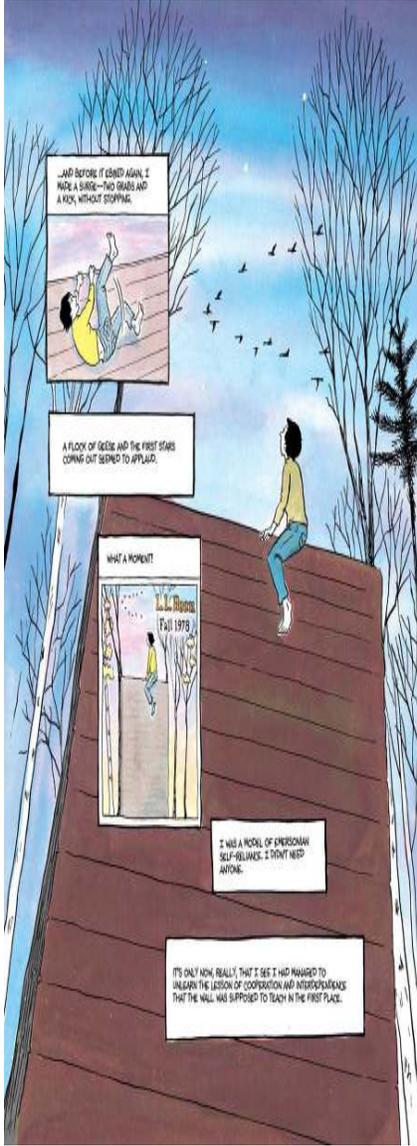
USING THE EDGE AS THE CLIMBERS HAD DONE, I DISABLED FRONTALITY FOR A LONG TIME UNTIL I GRABBED THE TOP. SPENT MY ARMS WERE SHAKING AND I FELT A LITTLE WARRIOR.

THE ANXIETY OF BEING HOSTED OVER IT STILL HANGS.

I SUDDENLY FELT THAT MY NEXT LIFE DEPENDS ON GETTING UP THIS THING ON MY OWN STEAM.

I LOMBED MYSELF A FEW INCHES UNTIL I FOUND A SLIM GASTRICAL TONGUE. I COULDN'T CONTINUE, NOR COULD I GIVE UP.

THEN I FELT SOME ENERGY RETURN...





BUT THAT WOULDN'T BE FOR A FEW MORE MONTHS. I WENT HOME FOR CHRISTMAS HAVING UNDERGONE A POWERFUL TRANSFORMATION THAT WAS APPARENTLY INVISIBLE ON THE SURFACE.



ONE DAY AT THE VERY END OF DECEMBER, DAD, MOM, AND I WENT BUSKING DOWN BY THE BRIDGE.

THERE'D BEEN A LOT OF RAIN, AND WE HAD TO BE CAREFUL OF CROSSING THE MANY LITTLE STREAMS FLOODING OUR PATH.



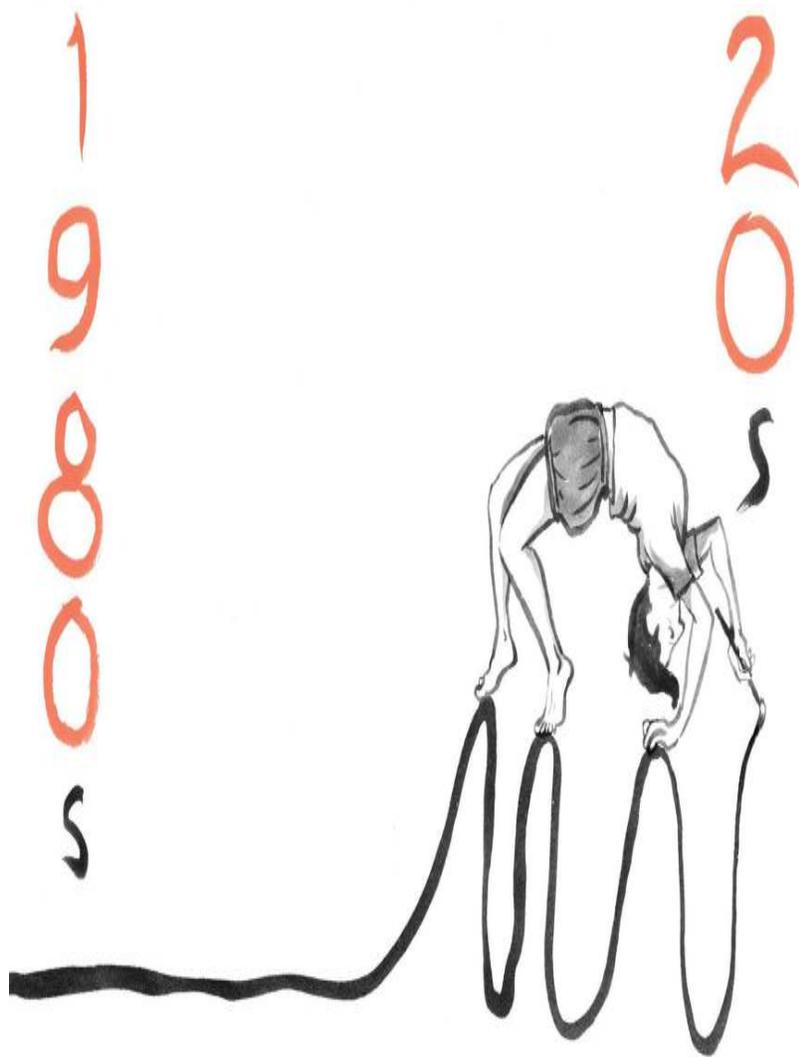
the hard ones, practicing still strength and accuracy became one with the bearing to leap into transcendence.

MY TRANSFORMATION, THINGS IN FACT TO JOURNAL, WERE HARDER THAN MINE WERE.

AND HARDER THAN MY FATHERS WOULD HAVE BEEN IF THEY'VE BEEN ABLE TO FACE IT.

BUT DAD, TOO, HAD TAUGHT ME TO TRUST MYSELF ENOUGH TO TAKE SUCH A LEAP.

SOON HE WOULD LEAP INTO THE PATH OF A TRUCK, AND I WOULD GO ON TO LEAD A VERY DIFFERENT KIND OF LIFE.



A MONTH AFTER DAD'S FUNERAL, AND A MONTH BEFORE MY THIRTIETH BIRTHDAY, I FOUND MYSELF HEADING WITH MY NEW GIRLFRIEND, JOAN, TO SOMETHING CALLED THE MICHIGAN WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL.

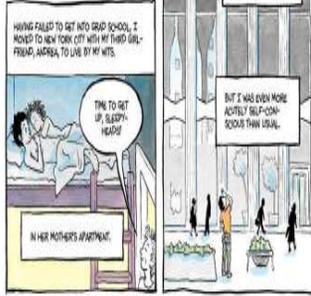
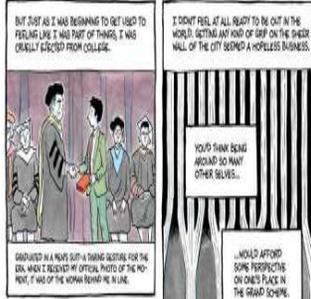


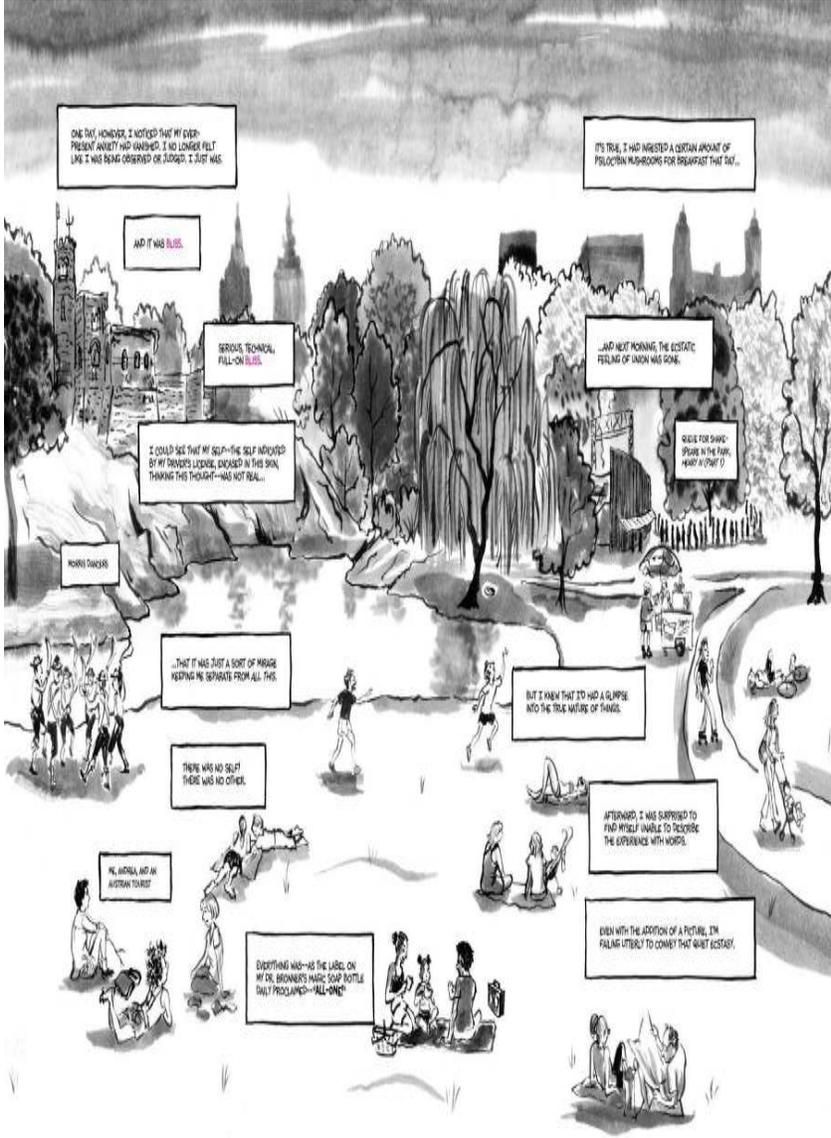
THERE WOULD BE MUSIC, TO BE SURE, BUT THE MESSAGE WAS A PAND-SCENDING UTOPIAN EXPERIMENT, AN INSURGENCE OF WOMEN ENGAGED IN NOTHING LESS THAN TOPKATUNG SAID PATRIARCHY.



THERE WAS A CURIOUS BOND TO SUSPECTED WITHOUT HIS OVERBEARING EXPECTATIONS, I WAS SURPRISALY FREE TO DO ABSOLUTELY WHATEVER I WANTED. AND WHAT I WANTED WAS TO BE A PART OF THIS.







ONE DAY, HOWEVER, I NOTICED THAT MY EVER-
PRESENT ANXIETY HAD VANISHED. I NO LONGER FELT
LIKE I WAS BEING OBSERVED OR JUDGED. I JUST WAS.

IT'S TRUE, I HAD INGESTED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF
POLYESTER WASH-ROOMS FOR BREAKFAST THAT DAY...

AND IT WAS BLISS.

SERIOUS, TECHNICAL,
FULL-ON BLISS.

I COULD SEE THAT MY SELF—THE SELF IMPOSED
BY MY BRAIN'S LOGIC, LOCKED IN THIS SKIN,
THINKING THIS THOUGHT—WAS NOT REAL...

...AND NEXT MORNING, THE ECSTATIC
FEELING OF UNION WAS GONE.

QUEIE FOR DANCE,
PLEASE IN THE PARK,
HEART A PUMP !!

MOORE DANCERS

...THAT IT WAS JUST A SORT OF MIRAGE
KEEPING ME SEPARATE FROM ALL THIS.

BUT I KNEW THAT I'D HAD A GLIMPSE
INTO THE TRUE NATURE OF THINGS.

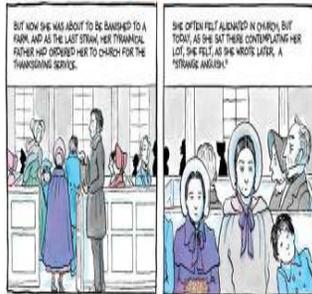
THERE WAS NO SELF
THERE WAS NO OTHER.

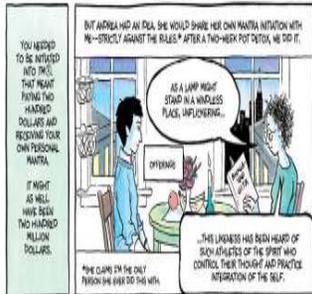
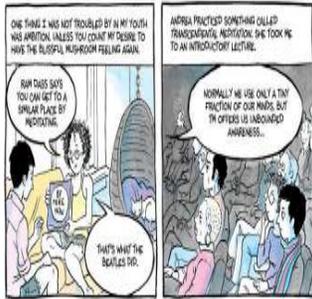
AFTERWARD, I WAS SURPRISED TO
FIND MYSELF UNABLE TO DESCRIBE
THE EXPERIENCE WITH WORDS.

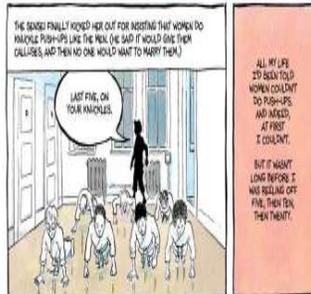
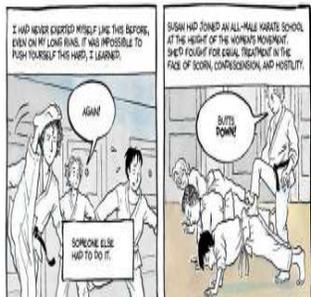
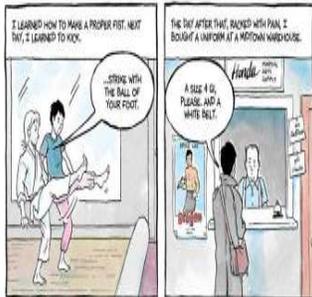
HE, MOORE, AND AN
AUSTRALIAN TOURIST

EVERYTHING WAS—AS THE LABEL ON
MY OIL BROWNER'S MAGIC SOAP BOTTLE
DAILY PROCLAIMS—ALL-ONE!

EVEN WITH THE ADDITION OF A PICTURE, I'M
FALLING UTTERLY TO COMEY THAT WHAT ECSTASY.







ALL MY LIFE I'D BEEN TOLD WOMEN COULDN'T DO PUSH-UPS AND KNEES, AT FIRST I COULDN'T. BUT IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE I WAS KNEELING OFF FIVE, THEN TEN, THEN TWENTY.



IT WAS A SCHEDULE OF TWO BRISOL CLASSES A DAY, ONE AT 6 AM, ONE AT 6 PM, BETWEEN WHICH ONE HAD TO WORK AS USUAL. I GOT UP AT 4 AM TO TAKE THE SUBWAY FROM BROOKLYN TO THE UPPER WEST SIDE.



WE BEGAN WITH A BRIEF RUN ALONG THE HALLWAY IN JUST OUR COTTON GIs.

MR. MORE, THE SENIOR, CARRIED A STICK. IT WAS CONSIDERED AN HONOR TO GET WHIPPED WITH IT.



HOW INDICATING TO DO MORE THAN I THOUGHT I COULD, AND THEN TO DO MORE THAN THAT.



I IMAGINE WINTER TRAINING WAS SOMETHING LIKE A BERSERK PERIOD OF INTENSIVE MOTION IN A DEN MONASTERY, OVER THE COURSE OF THE WEEK, THE REST OF LIFE FELL AWAY...



JUST SO TO MY RESISTANCE, IN GENERAL, IT WAS WHEN I WAS TOO WING-OUT TO THINK THAT I WOULD FIND MYSELF SUDDENLY GETTING SOMETHING RIGHT.



SINCE BLACK BELT WAS SO HARD IT WAS TURNING WHITE, AS IF TO SUGGEST THAT THE LONGER YOU TRAINED, THE MORE YOU CAME FULL CIRCLE TO A KIND OF EMPHATIC TO BEGINNERS MAD.



I FELT LIKE I WAS PEKING UP WHERE I'D LEFT OFF AT AGE NINE.



A BOUNDLESS ENERGY FLOODED BACK, WITH MY NEWFOUND UPPER BODY STRENGTH, OBSTACLES BECAME SPRINGBOARDS.



THE CITY WAS MY PLAYGROUND.

IN AN EPOCH OF MY YOUTHFUL, DAILY SINGLE STUNT, I JOINED THE COLLECTIVE OF A FEMINIST NEWSPAPER.

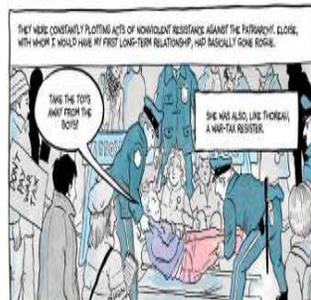


HUH, IF AIDS IS 'GOD PUNISHING GODS' LESBIANS MUST BE GODS' CHOSEN PEOPLE.



WHO HAS THE POLICE BRUTALITY HEADLINE?

I BEGAN CONTRIBUTING REGULAR CARTOONS TO IT—ANOTHER CHILDHOOD DREAM REALIZED.



I SUSPECT I WOULD HAVE BEEN AS INTIMIDATED AS THE YOUNG MEN IN HER CIRCLE. ONE, A PRESENT COUSIN AT HARVARD, DARED TO MATCH WITS WITH HER.

SHE WAS TREASURED WHEN HE UNCOVERED HER UNREVEALED ATTRACTONS BECOMING A PATRON. SHE FELL FOR SOME NORMAL, TOO, BUT THAT WAS AN EVEN LESS VISIBLE OPTION THAN BECOMING THE HELPLESS OF SOME MULTICOLORED MISTAKE.

I SAID IT IS A MORAL WORK A MORAL RELIGIOUS DEEN TO FIGHT

PPH! AN DISCUSSION OF THE VALIDITY OF THE MARRIAGE VOWS, AND SOCIETY? TRUMBLES TO ITS FOUNDATION?

SHE WAS ON HER OWN A FEW YEARS INTO HER EXILE ON THE FARM, HER TWO DAUGHTERS HER SMALLEST CHILDREN AND HER GREATEST DISAPPOINTMENT, NONE.

MAHIGRET WAS NOW THE BREAKDOWNER. SHE'D MANAGED TO PUBLISH A FEW ESSAYS WHILE TUTORING HER STUDENTS, BUT SHE COULDN'T RELY ON EARNING MONEY FROM HER WRITING—NOT YET.

PLUS, HE LEFT THE FAMILY BROKE.

FOR NOW, SHE'D HAVE TO MAKE OUT AS A TEACHER. SHE SET ASIDE HER HOPES OF TRAVELING TO EUROPE, MOVED BACK TO THE CITY, AND ENTERED THE SCHOOLROOM.

SHE'D GET UP AT 4:30 AM TO PUT IN A COUPLE OF HOURS ON HER OWN PROJECTS FIRST. SHE HAD AN AMBITIOUS PLAN TO UNDERTAKE A BIOGRAPHY OF GOETHE.

DAILY PAY

MY TWENTIETH-CENTURY LIFE SEEMS ALMOST ABSOLUTELY SELF-CENTERED COMPARED WITH MARGARET'S FOCUS ON WORK AND FAMILY.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU WERE IN IT.

BIG NIGHT DUFF?

YOU EITHER?

THE OBBYH HOLE.

GAUMGAFAR CLASH

BIT I, TOO, WAS BEGINNING TO FEEL A CLIPPING SENSE OF PURPOSE...

A CONNECTION THAT SOME MY CARTOONS AND MY KARATE PRACTICE WERE PART OF SOME LARGER PROJECT.

THE STRANGE NEW WORDS CONVINCELY ENTERED MY VOCABULARY.

PERHAPS THAT WAS THE REAL APPEAL OF KARATE. THE EXPERIENCE OF MOVING AS HE MOVED AND BELONGING IN ONE, IN A COLLECTIVE TRANCE.

THIS WAS PROBABLY TRUE, TOO, OF THE AEROBICS CLASSES SOME ON ALL AROUND ME AT THAT TIME, AS IT WOULD BE OF SOLICITABLE BATHS, AND JOGGING IN THE FUTURE.

HAIEH!

AGOSTINO

A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT KIND OF RELIGION WAS ALSO EMERGING IN THE 1970S, EVEN MY FIRM-RESISTANT MOTHER HAD BECOME A DEVOTE.

I'LL LET YOU GO. I WANT TO DO MY TANK POKER.

OHAY. I GOTTA GO ANTHONY, THE SOLOPLEX GET IS ON.

THE PROJECT ALMOST BACK-WOULD BEEN HARBOR ONE ON THE ADORPTION DISTILLER LIFE FOR MONTHS NOW.

THE ROOM OF WORKOUT VIDEOS AND HOME EXERCISE EQUIPMENT OFFERED A COMPELLING MIX OF PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL EXPERIENCES THAT WOULD REACH ITS APOTHEOSIS IN THE LATER WITH PELICAN. THE STATIONARY BIKES THAT LINGERED IN CLASSES.



PERHAPS THIS WAS JUST AS WELL, OR HIS OWN PAIN MIGHT HAVE DONE MORE DAMAGE.

IT WAS NOT A ZEN SLAP, WHICH TECHNICALLY MUST BE FOLLOWED WITH COMPASSION, BUT NEVERTHELESS...

...AS HIS ANKLES CONNECTED WITH THE SIDES OF SOME SURROUNDING NY EYE SOCKET...

...I EXPERIENCED A KIND OF ENLIGHTENMENT.

IT WAS IMMEDIATELY CLEAR TO ME THAT THE ONLY WAY TO LEARN HOW TO FIGHT IS TO FIGHT...

...AS THIS YOUNG MAN HAD CLEARLY BEEN DOING ALL HIS LIFE.

AND I DID NOT WANT TO FIGHT.

I DID CRY ON THE SUBWAY THAT NIGHT, FROM SHOCK, SHAME, PAIN, DEFLATION.

BUT ALSO FROM A KIND OF RELIEF. WITH MY ARMOR IN DISARRAY, I WAS UNDERSTOOD, OPEN.

FREE.

I KEPT TRAINING FOR ANOTHER YEAR, BUT THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE END FOR ME. I BEGAN FOCUSING MORE ON MY CARTOONS, BUT MY MAIN OFFICE JOB.



I GOT A PART-TIME GIG DOING PARTS-UP AT A GAY NEWSPAPER.

THERE ARE MANY PROFOUND WAYS THAT AIDS TRANSFORMED OUR CULTURE, AND SOME SHALLOWER ONES, LIKE A NEW AESTHETIC FOR MALE BODIES.



HAPLESSNESS IN THE CITY, COULD NOT HEAL SINGS OF DEBASE, SO CAME TO IDENTITY HEALTH, AS AN ADDED PUSH, IT ACCELERATED THE MUSCLES—AN IMAGE OF STRENGTH TO COVER THE SUBSTITUTION ONE OF MEN WASTING IN THEIR PIONE.



IN THE 1980S, THE RESULTANT RISES OF TENDRONS WOULD UP THE ANTE FOR STRAIGHT MEN. GYM CULTURE WOULD KEEP FURTHER INTO THE MAINSTREAM.

IN 1985, I WAS TERRIFIED THAT ONE OF THE MEN I KNEW WOULD GET SICK. HOW WOULD I HANDLE THAT? HOW WAS ANYONE HANDLING IT?



BUT I MOVED AWAY FROM THE CITY BEFORE THINGS GOT REALLY BAD, AND BEFORE THE TUMULTUOUS PERIOD OF ACTUATION BEGAN.



I WOULD READ ABOUT THE SPECTACULAR ACTS OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE FROM AFAR.

I FOLLOWED GLOUSE TO WESTON POUCH-CHESTS FOR A YEAR, THEN WE BOTH MOVED TO MINNESOTA. IN THE REAR OF OUR HOUSE LIVED A WOMAN WHO WAS IN SOME SORT OF HALFWAY PROGRAM FOR RECOVERING DRUG ADDICTS.

THIS WAS MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE GRAND LAD OF THE TAN CITIES.

...THE RECOVERY MOUNTAIN, ALCOHOLS AND ABUSES OF SUBSTANCES OF ALL KINDS FLOODED HERE TO BE REHABILITATED AT THE WAZZEDEN CLINIC.

OH, ONE MORE TONEL.

TRYING TO KEEP HIS CONCRETE SHOE OUT

THE NEW FRIENDS I WAS MAKING WERE ALL "ROCKER." AT PARTIES THERE WAS NO LINGERING BEER OR WINE. JUST ENDLESS BOTTLES OF SOMETHING CALLED "LACROIX WATER" WHICH HAD THE OPPOSITE EFFECT...

FORGIVING MY PARENTS WAS A WALK IN THE PARK NEXT TO FORGIVING MY INNER CHILD.

I'LL DRINK TO THAT.

I WAS GLAD I HAD NOTHING TO RECOVER FROM. I WAS HAPPY WITH GLOUSE. MY FIRST BOOK OF MEDICINES HAD JUST BEEN PUBLISHED.

BUT THEN, NOT LONG AFTER THAT SIGNAL EVENT...

...A HARSH, EFFERESCENT CLARITY THAT STRIPPED SOULS BARE.

...I STARTED HAVING RECURRENCE PROBLEMS MY COMIC STRIP EVERY TWO WEEKS OUT OF THEM AIR. HOOKED, THEIR AIR WAS WHAT I SUDDENLY REALIZED I WAS SUSPENDED IN.

THE TRICK IN THAT CASE, OF COURSE, IS NOT TO LOOK DOWN, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE. YOU CAN'T UNDER THE APRIS.

I WAZZLED THROUGH THE FIRST ANXIETY ATTACK.

BUT SOON I HAD ANOTHER, MUCH WORSE ATTACK. ONE NIGHT AFTER BRONCHIA AND TONIC AND WATCHING THE SOUND OF MUSIC, I WAS GRIPPED WITH A COLD, GREAT DRILL.

PERHAPS THAT FORMATIVE MOVIE, IN VISITING SOME DEEP ANKER CYCLO, HAD DEVELOPED A CORREL OR BRONX IN MY DEFENSES JUST ENOUGH TO BRING THE WHOLE EFFICE CRASHING DOWN.

TALK... YOU... FIND... YOUR... DREAMMM!

I WALKED AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD UNTIL I WORE MYSELF OUT.

WHEN I WORE NEXT DAY, THE WORLD HAD GONE FLAT. NOTHING HELD MY INTEREST, MY APPETITE WAS GONE.

THIS NEXT ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, AND THE DAY AFTER THAT.

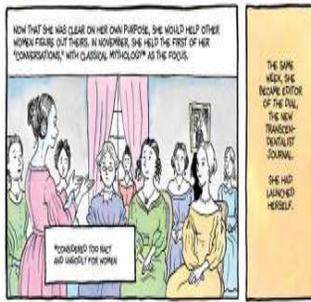
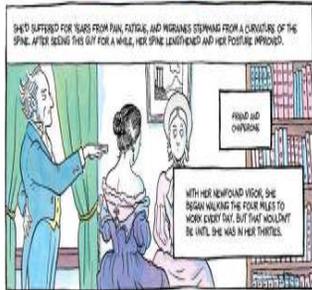
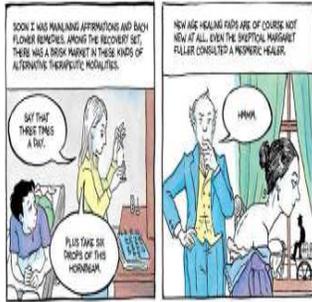
SOMETIMES THE OBLIVIOUS FEELING WOULD BEGIN TO LIFT, ONLY TO SETTLE BACK LIKE A FOX AS EVENING CAME ON.

DREAMING BACK IT WORSE, SO I STOPPED DRINKING AND GETTING HIGH. I ENJOINED EVERY DAY.

BUT THIS TIME I COULDN'T MURDER MY WAY OUT OF THE SENSE OF EMPYNESS AND FUTILITY. THERE WAS SOMETHING REALLY WRONG WITH ME.

(I HAD THOUGHT I WAS RUNNING AROUND THIS LIFE WITH WITHOUT STOPPING SET UP AT INTERVALS—A MASS ANXIETY FROM THE LATE '80S CALLED A "YIN COURSE.")







HOWEVER, MARGARET WAS STILL HER YOUNG PREST, PUPIL, PARENT, CHILD, HUSBAND, AND WIFE.

I TOOK A VOW OF CELIBACY AFTER TAKING BRICKS UP WITH ME.

MY THIRD BOOK HAD JUST COME OUT, MY SECOND ONE HAD COME OUT ON THE DAY I'D LEARNED ABOUT ELOISE'S BETRAYAL.

HAD I UNWITTINGLY SOWN SOME MACHIVELLIAN PACT THAT GUARANTEED PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS AT THE EXPENSE OF PRIVATE FAILURE?

IN YESHA, I WAS GETTING INTO SOME PRETTY DEEP SHOULDERS AND HIP OPINIONS. BY LATE JANUARY, I WAS ABLE TO GO FULL-BLIPTA KARPASGAN—SLEEPING TORTOISE.



MY INNER QUART WAS AS PREPARED AS THAT OF ANY FLESHY WINDSORG IN THE MID.

SOMETIMES THE ICE ON THE NEIGHBORHOOD LAKE WAS SO SMOOTH...

...YOU COULD SEE NIGHT SWAMP FISH FROM THERE, AND I REMAIN ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLE.



I SEE NOW THAT MY TRAINING FOR SELF-TRANSCENDENCE IS IN SOME WAYS AN ATTEMPT TO AVOID THE STRAIN OF RELATING TO OTHER PEOPLE.

IF YOU CAN MANAGE TO SEE PAST SUFFERING REALITY, WHERE SUBJECT AND OBJECT MEET...?

...TO THE VIEW WHERE IT'S ALL ONE THING, UNIFIED AND ABSOLUTE, THERE'S NOTHING TO RELATE TO.

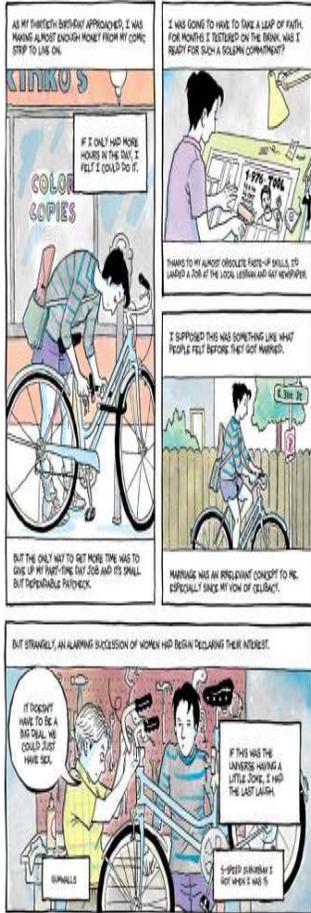
"HELP" AND "OTHER" MIGHT VERY WELL BE ILLUSIONS.

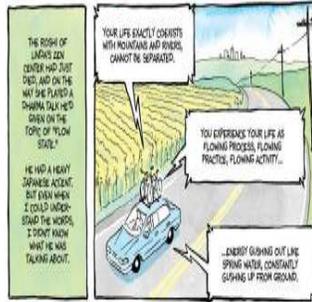
BUT IT WAS STILL GOING TO HURT TO GRAPPLE WITH THEM.

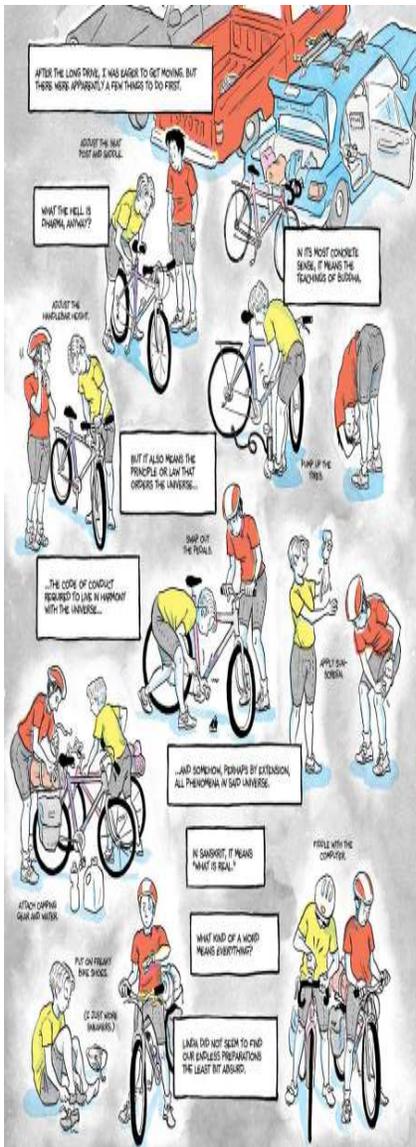


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SOMETHING BECAME SUDDENLY CLEAR TO ME.

YOU ARE A NEAROTIC WRETCH?

SO WHAT??

IN JEN AND SQUAWBY'S MIND, SUEZKI ASKS, "WHICH IS MORE REAL TO YOUR PROBLEM, OR YOU YOURSELF?"

IN MY FLASH OF SELF-COMPASSION, IF I CAN CALL IT THAT, I GOT A SMALL HIT OF THE AFTERNOON BLISS.

I HAD ALMOST FORGOTTEN ABOUT THIS SIDE EFFECT OF EXERCISE, THIS SLACKENING OF THE EYE'S GRIP.

IN ANY CASE, IT WAS THE MOST PROCLAIMED AEROBIC WORKOUT TO HIS PRINCE I HAD KNOWN FIVE YEARS EARLIER.

AT THE END OF THE RIDE I WAS STIFF, SWEATY, SHINING, SALT-CRUSTED, AND SOMEWHAT SLUMPY.

FORTY-FIVE MILES!

I BEGAN READING THE PAPERS BEING THAT NIGHT, KEROZAKI RECOGNIZES MEETING THE POET GUY SWIFTER IN MONTREAL.

HEY, COME IN.

HE HAD FINALLY DISCOVERED THE DOWNFALL. GUY SWIFTER IS JOHN KEROZAKI. HE'S NOT SWIFTER, THAT READER THE POET ALLEN DRIVERS IS ALVIN KEROZAKI.

IT'S BEEZ. THEY HAD GOTTEN INTO BLENDER A YEAR EARLIER. HE'D WRITTEN ON THE ROAD, BUT HADN'T FOUND A PUBLISHER YET.

INTRODUCES A GROUP STUDENT. HE'S BEEN STUDYING AND PRACTICING JEN FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS, AND IS NOW IN THE MIDDLE OF TRANSLATING THE WORK OF THE TANG POET HAN SHAN.

HOW SHAN YOU SEE WAS A CHINESE SCHOLAR WHO GOT SICK OF THE BIG CITY AND THE WORLD AND TOOK OFF TO HIDE IN THE MOUNTAINS.

SAY THAT SOUNDS LIKE YOU.

GUY IS AN EXPERIENCED AND OUTRAGED ENTHUSIAST GROWING UP. HE'D WORKED SUMMERS IN THE FORESTS OF THE CASCADES. AS I READ, IT BECAME OBVIOUS THAT KEROZAKI WAS KIND OF IN LOVE WITH HIM.

...YOU SITTING HERE SO VERY QUIETLY AT THIS HOUR? HET HOUR STAYING ALL ALONE WITH YOUR GLASSES...

NOT WHAT A GREAT THING THIS IS...

MAKING COMPOST WHIPPED IN BARRIEN.

WHAT YOU GOT TO DO IS GO CLIMB A MOUNTAIN WITH ME SOON.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO CLIMB MOUNTAIN?

GREAT! WHERE'S THAT?

UP IN THE HIGH SIERRAS.

THE HIGH SIERRAS THE WORDS PHILLED AND TRANVAILED ME AT ONCE.

THE NEXT DAY, I FELT MUCH STRONGER. HE RODE LIKE THE WIND. UNTIL HE TURNED AROUND.

HE HAD BEEN RIDING WITH THE WIND, NOW HE WERE HEADING INTO A STIFF BREEZE.

WARRR!

A TAIL WIND IS LIKE PRIVILEGE! YOU THINK IT'S ALL YOURS!

WHAT?

NOTE ON MANIPULABLE TIPS: BUT THE LIFE LESSONS I WOULD LEARN FROM CYCLING.

IN THE DUSKIN BLUES THAT HUNG, JACK AND GARY TOOK TO THE HIGH BERMS AND BEGAN THEIR CLIMB.

THEY WAKE UP HANGING AS THEY GO ALONG, DRINK THEIR HOPS IN A "DRAINAGE" STREAM, AND DRINK FROM IT.

THIS IS LIKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR FRANKIE ALLE!

THEY CLIMB ALL DAY UP A LONG VALLEY OF BOLDERS.

AT DUSK, THEY'RE STILL TWO MILES FROM THE SUMMIT. THEY PATCH CAMP AND MEDITATE.

YEAH, MAN, YOU KNOW TO ME A MOUNTAIN IS A BUDDHA.

JACK HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED WHEN GARY SAID THEY COULDN'T BRING WINE ALONG. NOW HE'S SURPRISED TO FIND HE DOESN'T WANT IT.

THIS AIR ITSELF IS ENOUGH TO GET YOUR DRINK AND DRINK!

LIKE ME, JACK HAS RECENTLY TAKEN A VOW OF SOBRIETY.

"PRETTY GIRLS MAKE DRINKS!" HE SAYS, SINCE IN BLOOD-ON, LUST LEADS TO BIRTH, WHICH LEADS TO SUFFERING AND TEETH.

PERHAPS TO DISPERSE THE INTIMACY, JACK TELLS A STORY IN WHICH HE MENTIONS HITCHING A RISE WITH "SOME LITTLE FRAGGOT." LATER, HE WATCHES GARY SLEEP.

SELF-ABSORBED MISOGYNIST PREY!

BUT MY OWN VOW WAS EQUALLY SELF-ABSORBED. I SEE NOW, FOR ME, SET LEFT TO CONFINEMENT, ALONE, I COULD REMAIN INTACT.

OUR LAST DAY OF RIDING WAS HARD. WHEN WE FINALLY GOT BACK TO THE CAR, I "BONDED!"

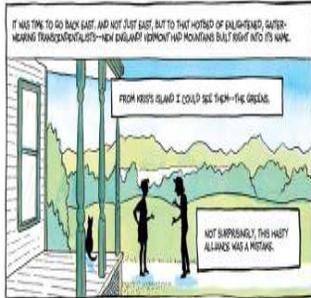
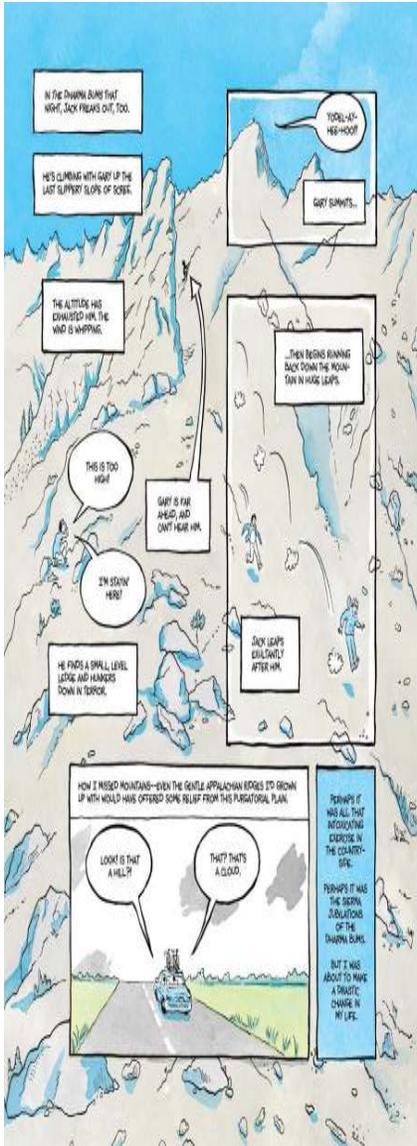
THAT'S EXHIBITIVE SPORTS LINGO FOR THE PROFOUND EXHAUSTION THAT OCCURS WHEN YOU USE UP ALL YOUR STONES & TOGGAH.

ARE YOU OKAY?

I DON'T KNOW.

I FEEL HEAVY.

IT WAS A BIT LIKE THE FLAT FEELING OF BEING IMPRESSED, WHICH PREPARED ME, GUY.



SCULPTURE AND AN UNENDING SNOW. MORE THAN I'D EVER SEEN. I HAD CONTAINED UP MY CHILDHOOD FANTASY OF BARBARIC BURNING AND ENDLESS WINTER.

IN MY ABRUPT RELOCATION TO RURAL VERMONT, I HAD LEFT BEHIND FRIENDS, MY YOGA TEACHER, THE DIVERSE CULTURAL LIFE OF A BIG CITY...

AND ALSO, JUST AS WE WERE STARTING TO PROBE DEEPER, MY THERAPIST.

HAD I ARRIVED AT THE BRINK OF SOME VITAL NEW SELF-CHALLENGE, ONLY TO SLAM AWAY IN FEAR OF THE FUN IF I WOULD SUCCEED?

BY NOW I HAD PUT ASIDE MY CHILDHOOD FASCINATIONS AND INQUIRED TO THE DEEPER, ADULT MYSTERIES OF WHY.

OR HAD I GOTTEN MISLEAD TO THE MOUNTAINS BECAUSE I SPENT THESE HOURS WOULD HELP ME TO BETTER UNDERSTAND MY OWN DEPTHS? NOW I WAS PLAYING MISLEAD AT THESE HILLS!

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING IS TROUSERS THAN IT LOOKS. TO EVEN SHUFFLING ALONG FOR SIXTEEN WINTERS NOW, HALF MY LIFE.

OMG

I'M FLYING!

BUT THAT FIRST WINTER IN VERMONT, I BEGAN TO GET THE HAIR OF THIS TRANSPARENT FORM OF LOCOMOTION—THE KEYS AND SLIPS.

IN SPRING, I TOOK TO MY BIKE. THERE WAS NO FLAT TERRAIN, ONE WENT EITHER UP OR DOWN.

MY FRIEND

NEXT YEAR THERE, I HUNG UP A ROAD AND A MOUNTAIN BIKE

IF I HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ONLY BEING DOWNHILL OR ONLY BEING UPHILL FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE—AN EXISTENTIAL QUESTION THAT I POWERED OFF—I WOULD TAKE THE UPHILL.

SEE LIME, ALMOST A MOUNTAIN BIKE

NOT "HIS?" BUT "HER?"

IT WAS HAPPER, BUT IT WAS A MEASURED PULSE OF PAIN. I WAS IN CONTROL, CAREENING DOWNHILL, WHO KNEW WHAT THE NEXT MOMENT WOULD BRING?

I LOVED THE VERTICALITY OF MY NEW BIKE, THE RESOLUTE SPRING OF THE GREEN MOUNTAINS, ROAD THE LENGTH OF THE SEAS.

I WOULD COACH MYSELF TO RELAX. I WOULD INTENTIONALLY PRACTICE THE WHOOP OF JOY!

WHOOP!

SPRAGGLES NOTION

I LIVED NEAR THE THIRD THORACIC VERTEBRAE

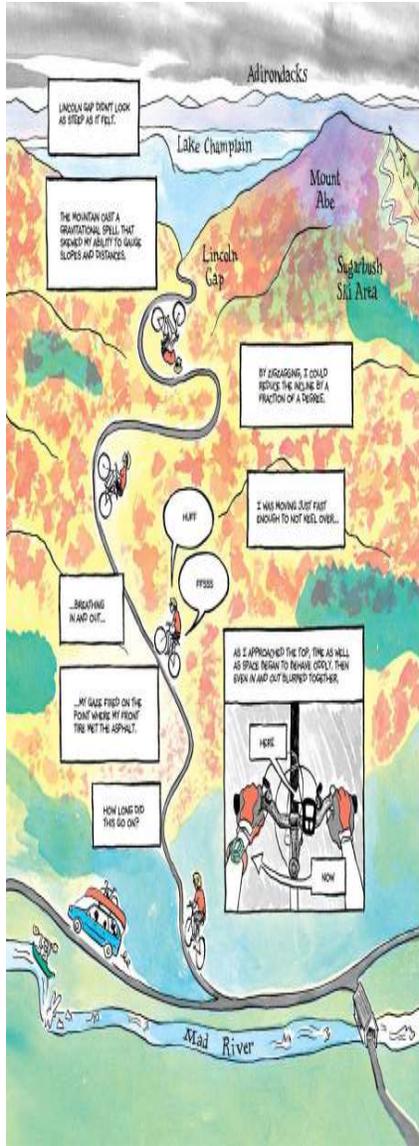
IN PLACES WHERE NATURAL GAPS OCCURRED, THERE WERE ROADS OVER THE MOUNTAINS.

APPALACHIAN GAP

LINCOLN GAP

THESE PASSES RECORDED IN A MYSTERIOUS WAY.

BUT I DOUBT THAT IT WAS EVER ENTIRELY COMING.



To begin it, I began being further and further, on my thirty-second birthday, I did a solo century—a hundred miles. I felt like I could ride forever.

Had I discovered it at last? The secret to Superman strength?



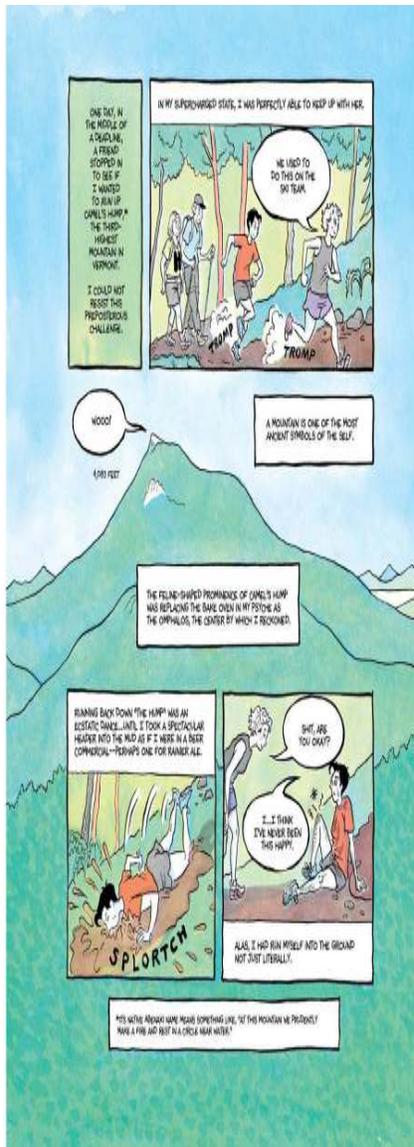
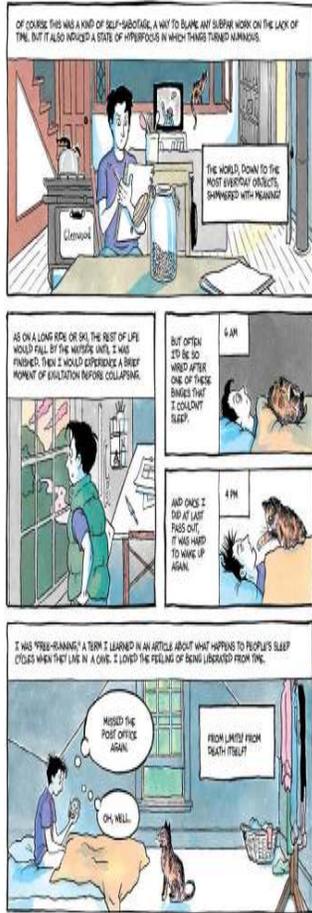
My increased endurance carried over into my work life. I was always procrastinating, putting off beginning my comic strip until I'd reached the panic stage...

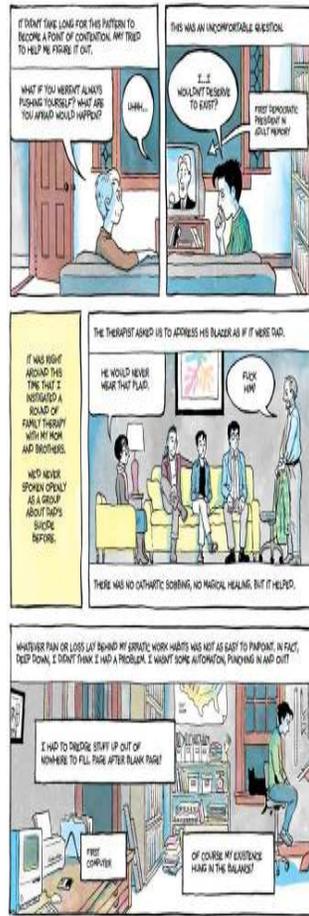
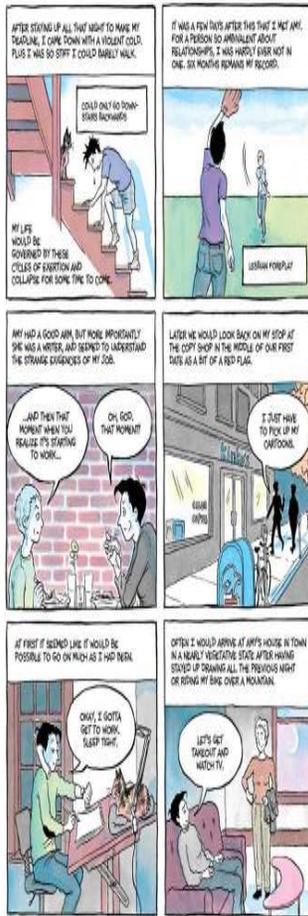
...but then I'd write and draw in long, intense bouts, often staying up all night.



Yikes, parody of democracy

Yikes, government by the people, directly or through representatives







COLERIDGE AND THE WORDSWORTHS WERE FAMOUS FREE-RANGERS, OFTEN OUT WALKING AT NIGHT AND SLEEPING TILL MORNING.

OR AT LEAST THEY WERE FOR A BRIEF, GOLDEN PERIOD.

IN THE SUMMER OF 1797, THEY'D LEAVE COLERIDGE'S WIFE AND BABY BEHIND, AND GO FOR LONG TRIPS IN THE HILLS, TALKING ABOUT POETRY.

ONE OF THEIR FAVORITE ACTIVITIES WAS TO FOLLOW STREAMS AS THEY COURSED IN THE HILLS AND FLOWED TOWN TO THE SEA.

WHY? (CONSIDER WALT WHITMAN'S "LEAF MANEUVERING" AND WALTER CRUICKSHANK'S "THE POETRY OF THE FLOWERS.")

...DESCRIBES IT AS CONCENTRATION SO FOCUSED THAT ONE FORGETS ABOUT THE SELF.

HIS CONCLUSION THERE'S NO BETTER FEELING.

THE IMAGE OF A RIVER RANING DOWN TO THE SEA SHOWS UP IN MILTON KHAHN OR A VISION IN A DREAM WHICH COLERIDGE WROTE THAT FALL.



"THE HILLS HEAD-REARING WITH A MAZEY MOTION..."

"...THROUGH WOOD AND DALE THE SACRED RIVER RAN..."

HE CLAIMED LATER TO HAVE COMPOSED IT "IN A SORT OF DREAM BROUGHT ON BY TWO GRAINS OF OPIUM TAKEN TO CHECK A DREAM!"

IT'S ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS POEMS IN ENGLISH, THANKS IN PART TO HIS ORIGIN STORY—COLERIDGE COULD ONLY RECALL A FRAGMENT OF HIS VISION—

--AND IN PART TO ITS SUBJECT, HUMAN CREATIVITY ITSELF, THE ABILITY TO CONDUCE THINGS OUT OF THIN AIR.



"I WOULD BUILD THAT DOME IN AIR..."

"THAT SHANT DOME'S THOSE CAVES OF ICE!"

SOON, ON A LONG WALKING TOUR WITH DOROTHY AND WILLIAM, COLERIDGE BEGAN HIS GREATEST POEM YET.

THE EPIC OF THE ANCIENT MARINER WOULD KICK OFF THE COLLABORATIVE VOLUME OF POETRY THAT COLERIDGE AND WILLIAM PUBLISHED THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

LYRICAL BALLADS IS UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE LAUNCHED THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND.

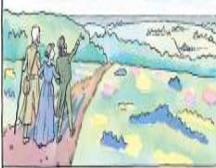


DOROTHY WAS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT, TOO, AS BOANCING BOARD, MUSE, AND AMMUNITION. ALL THREE OF THEM WERE IN THE FLOW.

JUST AS THEY EXPANDED THE BOUNDARIES OF TIME, THEIR PERSONAL BOUNDARIES WERE RATHER PENETRABLE, TOO.

THESE WAS DEFINITELY MORE THAN THE CLOSENESS OF BLOOD GOING ON BETWEEN WILLIAM AND DOROTHY, WHO HAD BEEN SEPARATED FOR MUCH OF THEIR CHILDHOODS—THOUGH MOST SCHOLARS SEEM TO CONCLUDE THAT THEIR INTIMACY NEVER BECAME PHYSICAL.

COLLEGE WAS DANGEROUS OF THEIR BOND, BUT HE WAS ALSO A PART OF IT, AS DOROTHY'S BIOGRAPHER FRANCES WILSON PUTS IT...



"THERE'S A COUPLE, AND FROM THE BEGINNING DOROTHY AND WILLIAM PREFERRED TO BE WITH ONE ANOTHER IN TRAVEL."

IN 1900, COMPLETING THE SECOND EDITION OF LYRICAL BALLADS, WILLIAM SELECTED COLLEGE'S NEW POEM "CHRISTMAS," COLLEGE'S LAURELUM USE BEGAN TO CRISP UP.

HE TURNED AWAY FROM POETRY AND TOWARD METAPHYSICS.

I'm getting the process of Life and Consciousness!

ROBERT ALICE TRIPP HAD TO BE CONFUSED WITH ROBERT MITCHELL, A FORERUNNER OF THE POWERBAR GAINED ON EARLY STREET EXPERIENCES.



THE LATELY NATURE JOURNAL DOROTHY HAD KEPT WOULD COME TO AN END WHEN WILLIAMS NEW WIFE MOVED IN WITH THE TWO OF THEM IN 1902.

IN MY SHIRT, SHALLOO MORRIS WAS, TOO, SUFFERED FROM THE VICISSITUDES OF CREATIVE FLOW. WHENEVER I FINISHED A PRODUCT, THE ARTIST TRAINED.

MY BRAIN FEELS DESICCATED.



WILLIAMS' WORK IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO HAVE PEAKED WITH HIS MARRIAGE, AFTER WHICH IT BEGAN A LONG SLIDE INTO MERRITRY.

PORTLAND'S OUTDOOR EXERCISE SEEMED TO HAVE THE EFFECT OF IDENTIFYING MY GENERAL CONTROL. MY FOURTH WINTER IN VERMONT, I EXPLORED A NEARBY SKI AREA.

"TRIPP" AS IN VON TRIPP, AS IN THE SOUND OF MUSIC, AFTER FLEETING THE MUSIC AND TOWING FOR A WHILE AS SINGER, THE FAMILY HAD TAKEN UP WINTERING HERE.




WHERE THE LANDSCAPE REMINDS THEM OF AUSTRALIA, I HAD SOMEBODY STUMBLED INTO ANOTHER CHILDHOOD PASTIME. THE SONG JULIE ANDREWS SINGS IN THE OPENING SHOT OF THE MOVIE...

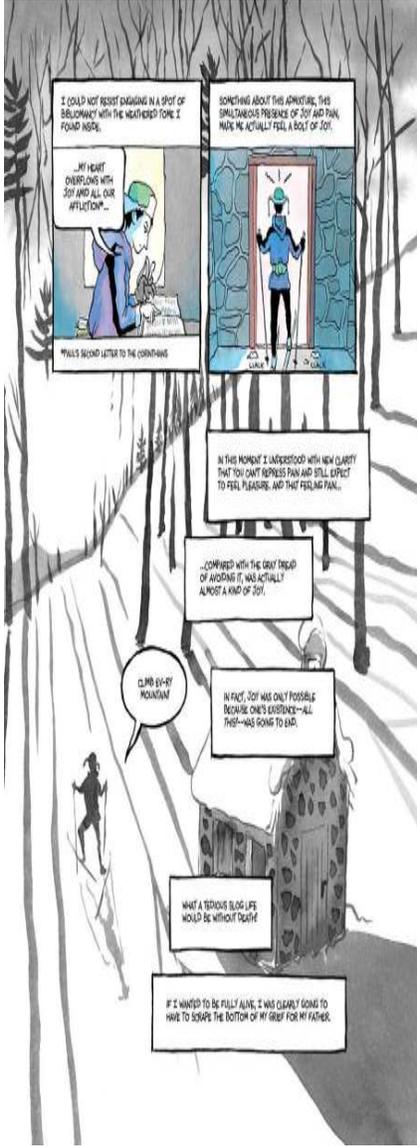


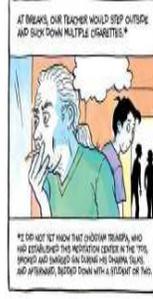
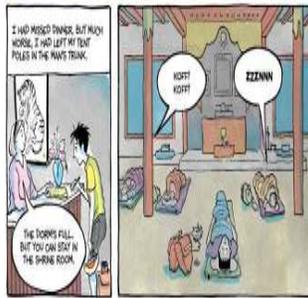
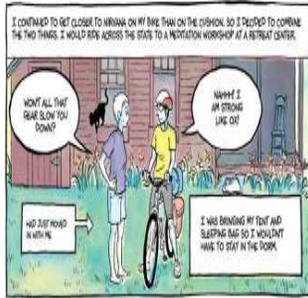
"THE HILLS ARE ALIVE!" IS BASED ON THE REAL-LIFE PASTOR'S LOVE OF THE OUTDOORS.

SHE HAD TWO OTHER TEARS CAROLER, BUT THERE WAS A TRAIL HAND FOR HER.

AND IN THE WOODS, AN ENCHANTED-FOREST-LIKE CHIMEL, A KNOT TO THE COUNTERPART LIFE SHE HAD LEFT FOR A MORE ACTIVE ONE.





IT WAS RIGHT AROUND THIS TIME THAT I BEGAN EVER SO GRADUALLY TO DRINK AGAIN. IT SEEMS THAT MY REAL TEACHER FROM THE "TREAT" HAD BEEN THE GUY WITH THE TRUCK FULL OF BEER CANS.

I PRACTICALLY BLAME MY REVERSION ON THE COPPER-TASTING SWEET-DRINKS OF EARLY 1980S PACKAGING, COMPLETE WITH AGENT PORTULAC PACKAGES.

AND BESIDES, ANOTHER DEADLINE WAS HUNG UPON ME. IN THE FINAL WEEK OF THIS PARTICULAR PROJECT, I DREW FOR A HAIRED MONK.

EVERY DEADLINE WAS TAKING MORE OF A TOLL ON MY BODY, MY PSYCHE, MY RELATIONSHIP.

HERE'S MORE HAIRED SHIRT STRIPES.

YOUR WORK IS LIKE A SUBSTANCE THAT YOU ABUSE!

BUT DESPITE THE PRESSION ABOUT WHAT I NOW THOUGHT OF AS MY NONHABITUAL, ANY AND I DECIDED IT WAS TIME TO BUY A HOUSE.

SHE HAD A SIMMING FEELING, IT WOULD LAST! LATER LEARN, THE FIRST TIME WE MADE TRUCE. I ONLY RECALL HAVING SOME KIND OF ARGUMENT.

AFTER TEN YEARS WE'LL MOVE TO TOWN!

YEAH, SURE, OKAY.

TEN YEARS WAS AN ETERNITY!

HE FOUND A PLACE IN A HIGH, WARRIOR, WOODS VALLEY.

AMY HAD NEVER SHARED MY INTEREST IN THE OUTDOORS, BUT I WAS SURE SHE WOULD GROW TO LOVE OUR WILD SURROUNDINGS.

I LOVED HANGING AROUND IN THE WOODS. THERE WERE BOWLERS, LEGS, AND BEAVER DAMS. A NEW BROOK TO EXPLORE. FROM A CLIFF ABOVE THE HOUSE I COULD SEE CAMEL'S HUMP.

WHAT TO GO FOR A WALK?

NO.

ONE DAY, MY FIRST SPRING AT THE NEW HOUSE, I RETURNED FROM A WORK TRIP TO CHICAGO. AFTER HUNTING A BEAR, I HUNG FOR A WALK DOWN TO THE BROOK TO UNCLENCH.

IT'S VERY POSSIBLE THAT I WOULD HAVE SLIPPED ON THE WET ROCKS AND BROKEN MY KNEE EVEN IF I HADN'T BEEN A LITTLE SHAKY.

BOOBY!

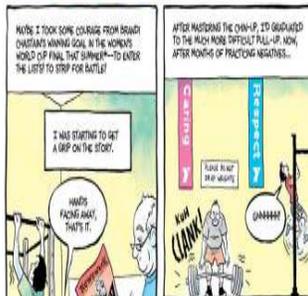
BUT THE INTENSE PAIN WAS COMPOUNDED BY SHAME.

NOT ENOUGH SHAME, HOWEVER, TO MAKE ME RECONSIDER THE EVENING BEER OR WINE THAT WAS NOW RECURRENT ROUTINE.

MY KNEE DIDN'T HEAL, AS NURSIES ALWAYS HAD. I HAD BEGUN RUNNING AGAIN IN VERMONT, WHEN I COULDN'T BINE OR SKI.

I DON'T THINK IT'S SERIOUS.

BUT NOW IT HURT TO BINE.



BUT BEFORE I COULD REALLY MAKE PLOW ON THE DUB BOOK, I HAD
 ANOTHER OF MY PERIODIC COMIC STRIP COLLECTIONS TO CHALK OUT.



THIS DEADLINE
 WAS BY FAR
 MY WORST ONE
 YET.

NEAR THE END,
 AFTER WORKING
 FOR FORTY-EIGHT
 HOURS STRAIGHT,
 I FOUND MYSELF
 UNABLE TO FILL
 ABLERT. IT WAS
 LIKE TO BROKEN
 MY SHUT-OFF
 SWITCH.

THAT WOULD TAKE ME SEVERAL MONTHS OF
 FOCUSED WORK. THE MILLIONAIRE TURNED
 WITHOUT NOTICE, WHILE CREEPT INTO SPRING.

IN THE PRECEDING MONTH, I'D BEEN TOO BUSY TO EXERCISE. PLUS I SEEMED TO HAVE GONE THROUGH
 AN ENTIRE BOTTLE OF BRANDY. WHY DID I KEEP DOING THIS TO MYSELF? WHAT WAS THE POINT?



THERE
 THERE IS NO
 POINT.

TO
 ANYTHING!

MY LAST BOTTLE HAD
 LASTED FOUR YEARS.

IN TRUTH, IT WAS BEGINNING TO FEEL THE PRESSURE
 OF THAT OTHER, MORE ABSOLUTE DEADLINE. THIS
 WAS THE YEAR I'D TURN FORTY.

EDLEBRIDGE ONCE WROTE TO A FRIEND, "MY MIND
 FEELS AS IF IT HAD TO BEHOLD A KNOW SOMETHING
 GREAT—SOMETHING ONE IS INDIVISIBLE."



NOW SCOTCH
 PLAYS PLANNED
 FOR ME.

THAT'S WHAT I
 FELT LIKE NOW.



JIM'S DOWN (DARNING)
 GUY, ALSO, WAS IN
 HERD.

IT'S JUST HAPPENED, HOWEVER,
 TO SEE JOSEPH CAMPBELL
 ON A PBS FUND DRIVE.

HEAR, THIS
 IS THAT GUY.

SOMEONE HAD GIVEN THIS TO
 ME TWENTY YEARS EARLIER
 AND I'D NEVER OPENED IT.

I WAS A TRIFLE LATE TO THE
 PARTY.

CAMPBELL'S WORK OF COMPARATIVE
 MYTHOLOGY HAD LONG SINCE BEEN PLAGIATED
 BY BLISS-FOLLOWING SCREENWRITERS AND
 NEW-AGE PROSPERITY GURUS.

BUT I WAS IN A WEARISOME
 CONDITION. I JUMPED IN
 WITH BOTH FEET.

IN FACT, NEAR THE BEGINNING,
 THERE'S AN ACCOUNT OF A DREAM
 VERY LIKE ONE I'D JUST HAD
 ABOUT JUMPING INTO A STREAM.

A WOMAN COMES TO A CLEAR RIVER FLOWING OVER
 GRASS, WITH NO WAY TO CROSS. BUT WITH LUCK
 AND IMAGINATION, SHE FORGES HER OWN PATH.

IN REAL LIFE, SHE'S AN ARTIST, AND THEREFORE
 KNOWS A THING OR TWO ABOUT THIS PROJECT.

"SHE HAD KNOWN THE DARK NIGHT OF THE
 SOUL, DREAMS' DARK WOOD, NEARLY IN THE
 JOINTS OF OUR LIFE..." CAMPBELL SAYS.

THEN HE QUOTES THE KATHA UPAKASHAD.

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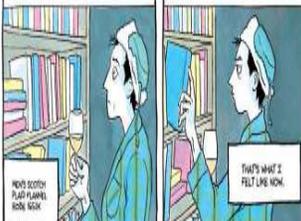
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NOW SCOTT
 PLAYS PIANOS
 EVERY WEEK.

THAT'S WHAT I
 FELT LIKE NOW.



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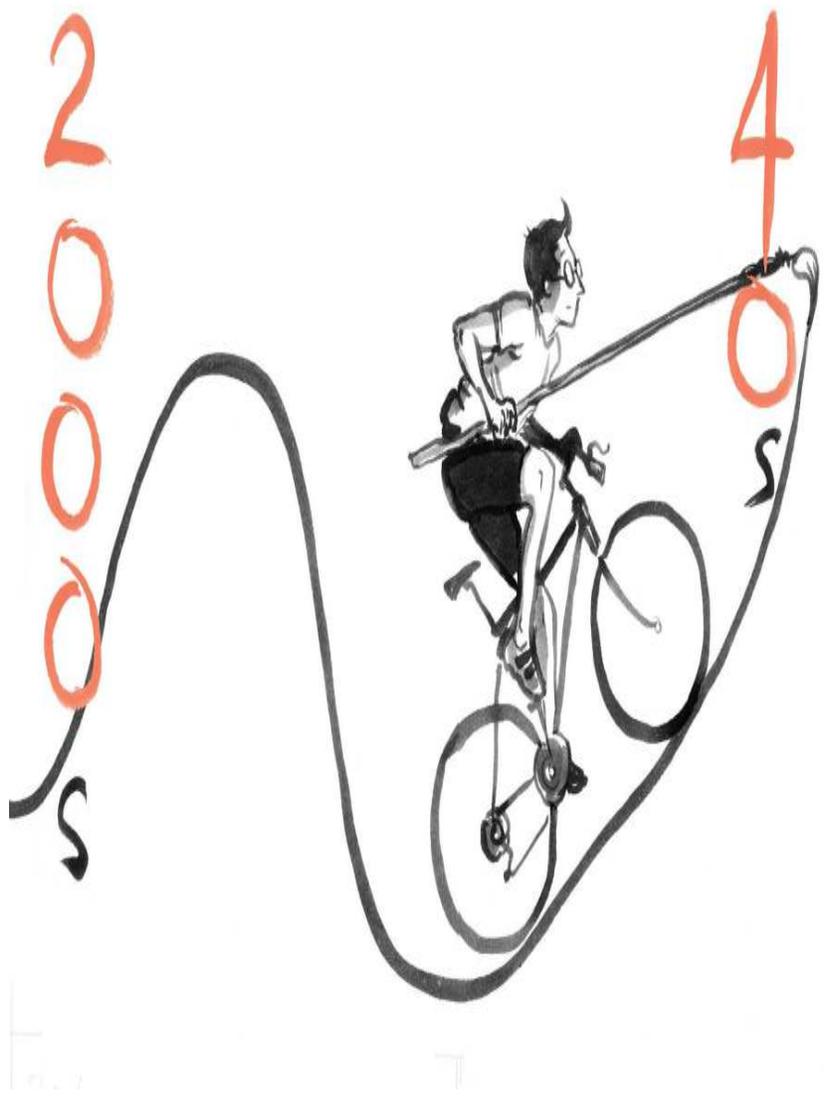
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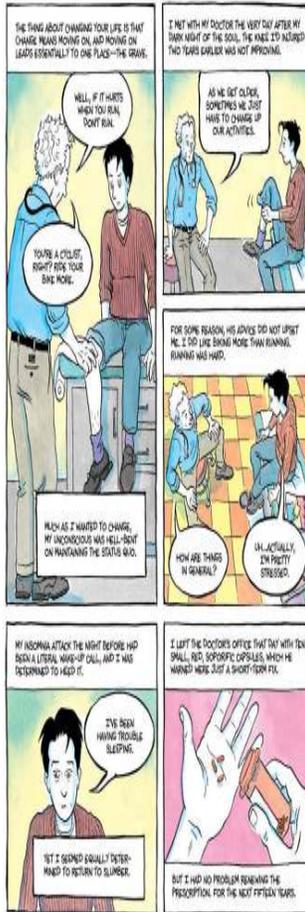
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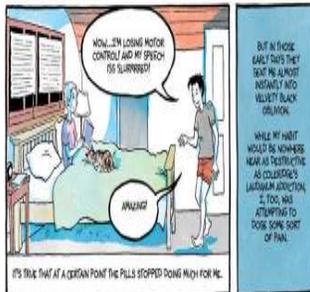
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 JOINTS OF OUR LIFE..." CAMPBELL SAYS.

THEN HE QUOTES THE KATHA URBANAS.







BUT IN THOSE EARLY DAYS THEY SAID HE ALMOST INSTANTLY AND VILELY BLACK OUT. MONK.

WHILE MY MIND WOULD BE NOWHERE NEAR AS DESTRUCTIVE AS COLLIERIE'S LANGUAGE ABJECTION, I TOO, WAS ATTEMPTING TO DOSE SOME SORT OF PAIN.

IT'S TRUE THAT AT A CERTAIN POINT THE PILLS STOPPED DOING MEH FOR ME.

MEANWHILE, IF I WAS GOING TO BINE MORE, IT WAS TIME TO GET A REAL BINE. A ROAD BINE. I COULDN'T AFFORD A NEW ONE, BUT IN EARLY MAY I CHECKED OUT SOME USED MODELS.

I NEED A BINE FOR THE APRILS NEXT MONTH.



I WAS STRANGELY OVERPHEED BY THIS WOMAN. IN FACT, I REMAINED SOMEWHAT HEATED BY HER FOR MONTHS FOLLOWING OUR INTERACTION.

THIS ONE'S NICE. ARE YOU GOING TO GET IT?

I'M A DUMB.



BUT I WDN'T GOING TO HAVE SOME BAWL MID-LIFE CRISIS AFFAIR. THOSE WERE FOR WHISTONES WHO DONT LIVE AS INTENTIONALLY AS I DO.

I'M GOING TO THE HANDS-ON WHEEL LOOP.

HOW I WISH I HAD TIME TO TRAIN FOR THAT.



...AND AN ACUPUNCTURIST. IT'D ACTUALLY COME TO HIM ABOUT MY BEINGNESS, WHICH I HAD BEGUN TO SUSPECT WERE PROBLEMS.

...AND AN ACUPUNCTURIST. IT'D ACTUALLY COME TO HIM ABOUT MY BEINGNESS, WHICH I HAD BEGUN TO SUSPECT WERE PROBLEMS.

I KEEP GETTING ATTRACTED TO OTHER PEOPLE.

I THINK I HAVE ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER.

COULD THIS CHANGE MY LIFE?

YES, BUT NOT RIGHT AWAY.

I NOW TOOK IT FOR GRANTED THAT EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL ISSUES WERE CONNECTED, SO THIS MULTIPROPOSED APPROACH SEEMED PRESENT.

AND I HAD ANOTHER CONCEPTED EFFORT AT MEDITATION. THAT SEEMED OBLIVIOUS IF I WAS SERIOUS ABOUT THIS MYSTERIOUS PATH.



THESE A LOT OF TALK ABOUT PATHS IN BUDDHISM—THE EIGHTFOLD PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT, THE BOONHATTVA PATH.

A BOONHATTVA IS SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO LIBERATE ALL SENTIENT BEINGS FROM THE CYCLE OF BIRTH AND DEATH, FROM SAMSARA.

FIRST, I NEED TO DEAL WITH MY ISS. I KNOW IT'S THE ROOT OF MY MISERY.

BOTHY WAS THE SAME ROOT AS BUDDHA—IT MEANS TO ANNIHILATE.

RODGE DIDN'T SEEM TO GRASP THE URGENCY OF MY PLEA.

PLUS, I'M ABOUT TO TURN FORTY. I WANT TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE FACT THAT I'M GONNA DIE.

WHY DON'T WE SIT FOR A BIT FIRST.

BUT IT WAS A RELIEF TO HAVE SOMEONE TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WITH.

THE THING IS, I LOVE SAMARU. THE HUSBY OF THE HEISTLE AND BUWLEET THE... THE HULLABLOO!

THE HULL- BUWLEET, YES, YES. I KNOW.

RODGE ASSIGNED A BOOK BY CHANDRA TEJAPPA, THE TECTON GUY WHO HAD FOUNDED THE SHAMBHAVA ORGANIZATION BACK IN THE 70S, INCLUDING THE RETREAT CENTER I'D JOINED FROM A FEW YEARS EARLIER.

BY NOW I KNEW ABOUT TRUMP'S SEXUAL MIS- CONDUCT AND YOUNG TRUMP, AND THAT HE'D DRINK HIMSELF TO DEATH IN HIS FORTIES. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND HOW THIS HAD NOT REGISTERED HIM.

BUT GOD KNOWS I WOULDN'T PERFECTLY FOR EVERY STEP FORWARD ON THE PATH, I TOOK AN EQUIVOCANT ONE BACKWARD. I TURNED FORTY WITHOUT ATTAINING ENLIGHTENMENT.

ADVANCING, RETREATING, SOMETIMES I SEEMED TO BE GOING NOWHERE FAST.

OUT OF THE SCHEDULE!

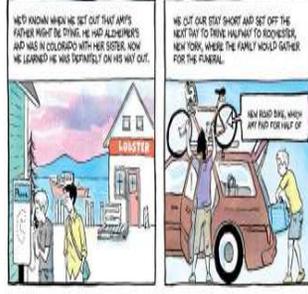
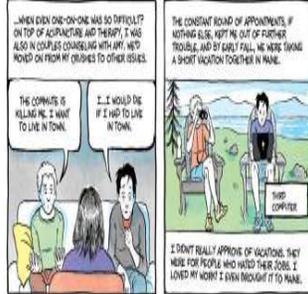
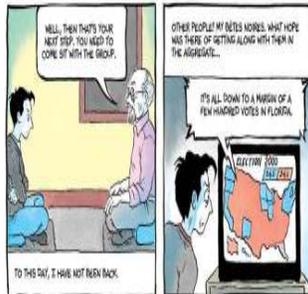
THE NEW CHAIR OF "PHANAP" OFFERED A CONCENTRATED WORKSHOP WITH NONE OF THAT TIME-WASTING COASTING AND GLIDING THROUGH THE ACTUAL LANDSCAPE THAT ANULON BARE HURDLED OFFERED.

SOON I'D SWAP THE COMPARATIVE OF THE SPINNING CLASS FOR A BARE TRAINER IN THE PRIVACY OF MY OWN HOME—EVEN MORE FOCUSED!

AT MY THIRD MEETING WITH RODGE, I MADE AN ADMISSION.

I HATE SITTING WITH OTHER PEOPLE.

THEY'RE ALL DOING IT RIGHT, AND I'M NOT.







THE INTENSITY OF MY WORK SOON BECAME DOMINANT AN EQUALLY INTENSE EXERCISE PROGRAM IN WHICH I WROTE AS MUCH AS I COULD OUT OF EACH WORKOUT.

THE WAY OF THE BUDDHA.
I GOT A HEART-RATE MONITOR, MAKING SURE TO HIT MY MAXIMUM BEATS PER MINUTE FOR AT LEAST A FEW SECONDS.



TOWARD THE END, IT'D BE PUSHING SO HARD THAT I COULDN'T GET MY TOE IN IN THE RECYCLING BIN, AND FELT LIKE I WAS SUFFOCATING.



SOMETIMES IT'D HAVE ONE OF MY TACHYCARDIA EPISODES WHILE VIEWING THE MONITOR. I WOULD WATCH PARADOXES AND FANTASIES AS IT BEGAN FLASHING A NUMBER WELL INTO THE 200S.



I WAS FRUSTRATED THAT I COULDN'T ALSO INCREASE MY TRAINING SPEED BY SNEAK FORCE OF WILL. MY PROGRESS HAD BECOME PROGRESSIVELY MORE LABORIOUS OVER THE YEARS...



...AND NOW INVOLVED MANY LAYERS OF PREPARATORY PRACTICES. IT WAS THE OPPOSITE OF THE TRAINING IT'D DONE AS A CHILD, WHEN MY LINE UNSPUNLED FREELY FROM MY CLIC.



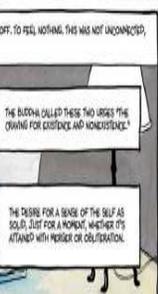
I WAS APPREHENSIVE IN THOSE DAYS, BUT THE IDEA OF "RELEASING" MADE ME WANT TO JUMP OUT OF MY SKIN.



IT'D WORK AS LONG AS I COULD, THEN HAVE A MIRROR AS A WAY OF SLIPPING ON THE BRAVES.



I DIDN'T WANT TO WIND DOWN. I WANTED TO SHUT OFF. TO FEEL NOTHING. THIS WAS NOT UNCOMMON. I SEE NOW, TO MY WATERS AFFECTIONS.



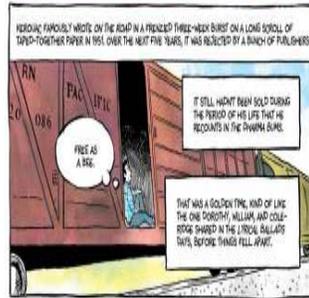
THE DESIRE FOR A SENSE OF THE SELF AS SOLID. JUST FOR A MOMENT, WHETHER IT'S ATTAINED WITH MEDITATION OR COLLABORATION.



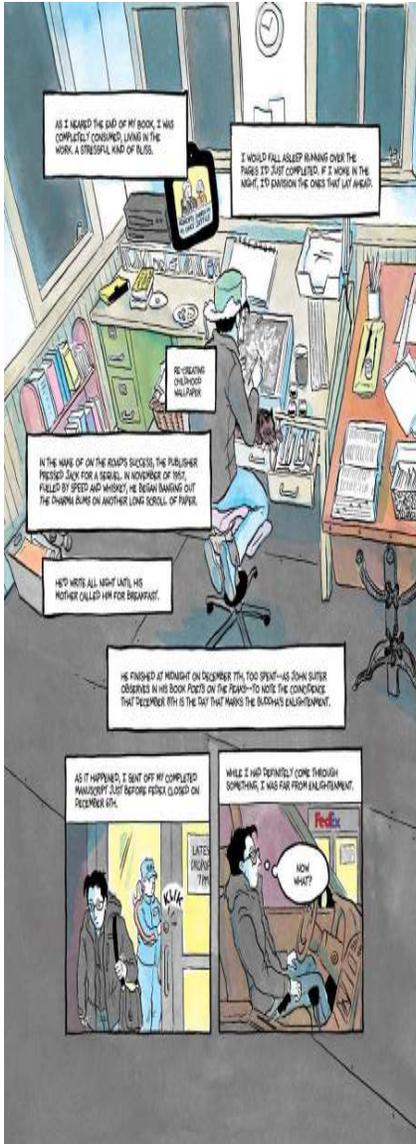
THAT'S WHY YOU NEED TO GET ON THE RIGHT-FOLD PATH--THAT DIFFICULT PATH...



...LIKE A SHARPENED EDGE OF A BLADE--WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY REVEAL TO YOU THAT THE SELF IS EMPTY.













AFTER A MEETING WITH MOM AND BOB AND THE ONCE-UPON-A-TIME, I GOT IN MY CAR TO RETURN TO WORK. AS I TOOK OFF, MOM WAS GOING STRAIGHT AHEAD AT NOTHING.

SOON AFTER GETTING HOME, MY ELDERLY CAT TRIPPED I TRIPPED THROUGH THE HOUSE, YELLING AND WAILING. HER ABSENCE WAS EVERYWHERE.

AS THEY SAY, THE STREP WE FEEL FOR OUR PETS IS NOT MILDLY WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR HUMAN CONNECTIONS. AND OF COURSE, I WAS GOING NOT TO GET THE CAT BUT THE BOTTLE TO GET WITH HER. MY THIRTS AND MOST OF MY FORTIES WERE RECENTLY VIRTUALLY OVER.



NOW CURIOUSLY UNTHINKED, I BEGAN SHUTTLE BETWEEN WORK TRIPS, MOM'S HOUSE, AND OCCASIONAL TRIPS WITH MY OTHERS COMPLETELY VIRTUAL FRIENDS.

THE DEPARTMENT OF HOME AND SECURITY HAS BANNED THE NATIONAL TRAVEL AGENCY FROM GOING.



MY ONLY ANCHOR WAS MY COMIC STRIP, WHICH I OFTEN FOUND MYSELF WORKING ON IN AIRPORTS AND HOTELS. WHEN I STOPPED A PLANE, I ASSUMED IT WAS JUST STRESS.

WOULDN'T YOU SAY YOU'RE MORE A WRITER THAN A CARTOONIST?

HOW DO YOU FOLLOW UP A BOOK THAT WAS SO SUCCESSFUL?



A YEAR AFTER STARTING CHINA, MOM HAD BRINGS BACK. SHE FELT SO GOOD, SHE BOUGHT A TRICICLE. TWO WEEKS LATER, SHE WAS IN THE HOSPITAL, WITH A CONCLUSION AND A WHOLE PRACTICE OF THE PELLE.

I COULDN'T FIGURE OUT THE TRICK!

THE NEUROLOGIST SAID MY BRAIN LOOKS GREAT!

MOM YOU'RE NOT AN ARTIST, YOU KNOW!

I COULD TELL SHE WAS PLEASED WITH HERSELF. DESPITE MY LECTURE, I KIND OF WAS, TOO.



MY TRAVEL BEGAN TO FEEL DOWN AT THE SAME TIME MY LONG-DISTANCE AFFAIR ENDED. I WAS LEFT ALONE WITH MY BOOK ON RELATIONSHIPS.



I FELT A DEEP SLEEP. I STARTED GOING TO THERAPY TWICE A WEEK, AND SINCE I WAS GOING TO TOWN ANYWAY, I DOUBLED MY GYM WORKOUT, TOO. I GOT PHYSICALLY STRONGER...

BUT I THINK I COULD ALSO FEEL MY GYM STRENGTH INCREASING.



I MEAN ALSO IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL, NOT THE BUSINESS SENSE. ALTHOUGH, GOOD, I ALSO STRENGTH CORRESPONDS TO WHAT MIGHT BE DISCUSSED IN BUSINESS AS A NEGATION OF THE GOOD DEED, A LESS RISK, LESS DEFENSIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD.

LEAVE GET THIS STRAIGHT, PERFECTION AND WORTHLESSNESS AREN'T THE ONLY OPTIONS?



AT THE DARKEST TIME OF YEAR, JUST BEFORE THE WINTER SOLSTICE, I STARTED FEELING BETTER.

YES IT IS.



WHEN HOLLY SAW GUY, I DID NOT FEEL FLEET-UP, BUT REALITY WAS DISTRACTED.

I MEAN TO REMIND THE CONSIDERABLE THE EMOTIONAL PROCESSING TOOL.

IT'S SOME COMMENT THAT ALL OF THE WRITERS WHOSE LIVES STEADY TRACKING HERE WERE EVEN WORSE AT INTACT THAN I AM. PERSON WAS NOT IN LOVE WITH HIS SECOND WIFE THE WAY HE HAD BEEN WITH HIS FIRST.

THE SOUL KNOWS NOTHING OF MARRIAGE

...THE SOUL IS MARRIED TO EACH NEW THOUGHT AS IT ENTERS INTO IT

WALDO AND MARGARET

LEWIS HAD TO PUT UP WITH HIS FULL-RESPONSIBILITY AS WELL AS HIS ATTRACTIVE TO WOMEN YOUNGER AND SMARTER THAN SHE WAS.

TAKE HIM FOR WHAT HE IS.

BETTER YOU THAN ME, SISTER.

MARGARET AND LEWIS

(LEWIS WROTE A SATIRICAL "FRONTIER-THEORY" BLOG - ONE OF WHOSE COMMANDMENTS WAS "EXPLORE THE INTELLECTUAL AND MAKE THEM FEEL THAT YOU DO BY NOT NOTICING THEIR ROMANCE")

WORDSWORTH HAD A LOUD OUT OF BEDROOM WITH A WOMAN HE MET IN PARIS DURING THE HEAVY DAYS OF THE REVOLUTION.

THE REIGN OF TERROR GOT HIM OFF THE HOOK - MEN TOO DANGEROUS TO GO BACK AND MARRY HER.

BLISS WAS IT IN THAT SWAN TO BE ALIVE...

THEN HE WENT ON TO LIVE WITH HIS WIFE AND HIS SISTER, WHOM COLLEGE DESCRIBED AS DOING "ALMOST HIS VERY EATING AND DENYING FOR HIM."

DOES ANY WORDSWORTH OF COURSE, WHEN HAD AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP. UNLESS YOU COUNT HER BROTHER.

ON THE TABLET HERE IS ONE OF HIS BITTEN APPLES!

THAT DATE, THIRTY-THREE, 1811

BOTH HERONIA AND COLLEGE WOULD ENGAGE IN TRANSITIVE INTERACT WITH THEIR MALE PEERS THROUGH CONTACT WITH THOSE FREEDOM GIRL - FREEDOM, WIVES, SISTERS AND WHIST SISTERS.

F A W B, AND B W C, TALK A W C

SUCH AFTER WITH ALL CHILDREN WITH (HEIN) WAS MOTIVATED BY REAL

SHALL WRITE LONG POEMS TO WILLIAMS SISTER - I CAN SAY, CLEARLY TOWARD HER AS FIGHT

AT THIRTY-FOUR, JUST AS MARGARET'S FEMINIST BLOODY-SISTER WOMAN IN THE ANTI-SEVENTH CENTURY CAME OUT, SHE MOVED TO NEW YORK CITY TO BECOME A COLUMNIST FOR MORRIS BRESLEY'S NEW-YORK TRIBUNE.

THERE SHE TELL FOR A OLD NAMED JAMES WORTH. THIS MAKES ME WANT TO REACH BACK IN TIME AND SHAKE HER.

WHO IS SHE, THEN?

SHE IS AN INTERESTING WOMAN WHO I AM HOPEING TO REFORM.

PROBATIONARY TAKES MY INTEREST AND I'M GOING TO EUROPE WITH HER WHILE YOU TAKE CARE OF MY NEPHEW/DAUGHTER!

FINALLY, MARGARET MANAGED IT TO EUROPE HERSELF AS A JOURNALIST. WHILE CONSIDERING THE REPUBLICAN REVOLUTION COMING ON IN EUROPE, SHE HOOKED UP WITH A GUY TEN YEARS YOUNGER THAN SHE IS...

SUBJECT IN THE ONE IMAGE

...AND HIS THE BABY SHE'S LONGED FOR, IT ACTED UPON A STRONG APPLAUSE, I COULD NOT ANALYZE WHAT HAPPENED IN MY MIND! SHE WOULD WRITE LATER.

SHE DON'T MARRY HER LOWER AT FIRST, GIVEN HER BELIEF THAT MARRIAGE IS A CORRUPT SOCIAL CONTRACT!

BUT THEY POSSIBLY HAD SECRETLY DURING HER PREGNANCY, FOR PRACTICAL REASONS.

WHEN THE REVOLUTION FAILED, MARGARET SKIPPED WITH HER PARTNER AND DAUGHTER TO AMERICA, JUST RECEIVING A LETTER FROM WALLY ADVISING HER NOT TO COME.

IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT SHE'D GONE AS FAR AS IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR A WOMAN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY TO GO.

LIKE OTHER FRIENDS, HE WORRIED SHE'D BE GIVEN A HARD TIME BACK AMONG THE PURITANS.

SEABARDS

MARGARET'S SHIP RAN AROUND IN A STORM THREE HUNDRED SAVERS OFF FIRE ISLAND. SHE TOUCHED WITH HER SMALL FAMILY AT AGE FORTY.

AFTER HOLLY MOVED IN WITH ME, GUY STARTED COMING OVER TO HANG OUT. IT WAS HARD NOT TO LIKE HER.

SHE WAS FRANK, DISORDERLY AND WHIP-SMART. SHE'D PASSED THE BAR WITHOUT GOING TO LAW SCHOOL. NOW SHE WAS AN ATTORNEY FOR LEGAL SERVICES.

HOLLY WOULD EVENTUALLY FORSWORE POLYNORNY, BUT GUY WOULD REMAIN AN ARDENT PRACTITIONER. IN THE RADICAL YOUTH POLYNORNY ENTAILED, SHE FOUND AN EXISTENTIAL FREEDOM.

IT'S BASICALLY FLYING.

HAR.

IN FACT, SHE WAS ALSO A PRISONER PARALYSED AND LOVED LAUNCHING HER MIND OFF HILLTOPS TO FLY ON THUNDER UPSTAIRS.

ISN'T IT DANGEROUS?

YOU ALWAYS WEAR A RESERVE CHUTE.

WHILE I WAS COMING TO UNDERSTAND EXPEDITIONARISTS AND BELIEVED WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN THE NECESSITY OF TAKING LEAPS, AN ACTUAL LEAP HELD ABSOLUTELY NO APPEAL FOR ME AT ALL.

POLYNORNY CONTINUED TO BE HARD WORK, BUT IN A WAY, THAT'S WHAT I LIVED ABOUT IT. IT WAS AN EMOTIONAL EXPRESS REGIMENT.

I SAID YOU COULD CALL ME.

I WAITED YOU TO CALL ME?

WHAT DO YOU REALLY NEED?

...

ONCE, DURING A FIGHT ABOUT GUY, HOLLY AND I WENT FOR A WALK. IN THE SUMMER NIGHT, SOMETHING SHIPPED, MY BALANCE? PROPPED AWAY.

BUT IT WAS HARD TO SUSTAIN THIS PERSPECTIVE BACK IN EVERYDAY LIFE. FOR ONE THING, AN ATTRACTABLE LIMIT WAS HARD UPON ME.

I COULD JUST BE FREE!

I KNOW!

THERE WAS ONLY SO MUCH TIME.

I COULDN'T KEEP UP WITH MY COMIC STRIP, AND WRITE A BOOK, AND ALSO DO THE NEW THINGS I WAS GETTING ANTIPO TO DO.

FOR THAT INSTANT, IT WAS ALL ONE!

THE SHIMMERING BLUES OF INDIVIDUALITY!

PLUMAGE

AS THE POLITICAL TIDE TURNED, IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD TIME TO QUIT THE STRIP.

THINKING IT OUT MONTHLY FOR THREE-YEAR TEARS HAD BECOME ALMOST A BODILY FUNCTION, BUT I DIDN'T MISS IT.

THIS IS BRICK CONCRETE, I HAVEN'T TOUCHED ON MY PADDLE FOR YEARS SKATING, AND YET THAT SPORTS, I COULDN'T STOPPING THEM TO PUNCTURE THE PAST.

INSTEAD, I WAS SO BUSY WITH OTHER THINGS THAT IT TOOK ME A WHILE TO REGISTER THAT I WAS STRANGELY IRRITABLE, AND OFTEN TOO HOT.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I SAID!

ONE DAY HOLLY SUGGESTED THAT I MIGHT ENJOY A BOOK SOME OF HER OLDER FRIENDS HAD BEEN TALKING ABOUT.

BARNEY? CONSIDERING THAT I HAD NEVER FOR AN INSTANT WANTED TO HAVE A CHILD, THIS WAS SURPRISINGLY DISCOMFORTING. I WAS THE END OF THE LINE.

I DON'T REMEMBER HAVING FLASHES, BUT MY DOCTOR HAD ME ON ESTROGEN.

AT THE END OF OCTOBER, I STARTED TO MY GYN/OBSTETRIC TO RUN FOR HORMONES OR AN ANTIDEPRESSANT. UNLIKE MY REGULAR DOCTOR, HOWEVER...

THE SURGES OF HEAT WERE BAD ENOUGH, BUT THE HORMONAL AND MOOD SWINGS MADE ME FEEL CRAZY. PLUS, THERE WAS SOMETHING SERIOUSLY WRONG WITH MY SHOULDER.

YOU DO ACUPUNCTURE, RIGHT? TRY THAT FIRST.

...SHE WAS NOT FRIED WITH THE PHARMACEUTICALS.

IT'D BEEN KEEPING TRACK OF MY DREAMING PASTORS, BUT I COULDN'T KNOW THAT THE ONE I'D HAD THREE MONTHS EARLIER WAS MY LAST. AT THE TIME THIS STRUCK ME AS GIBBERISH, THAT YOU CAN'T KNOW AHEAD, LATER...

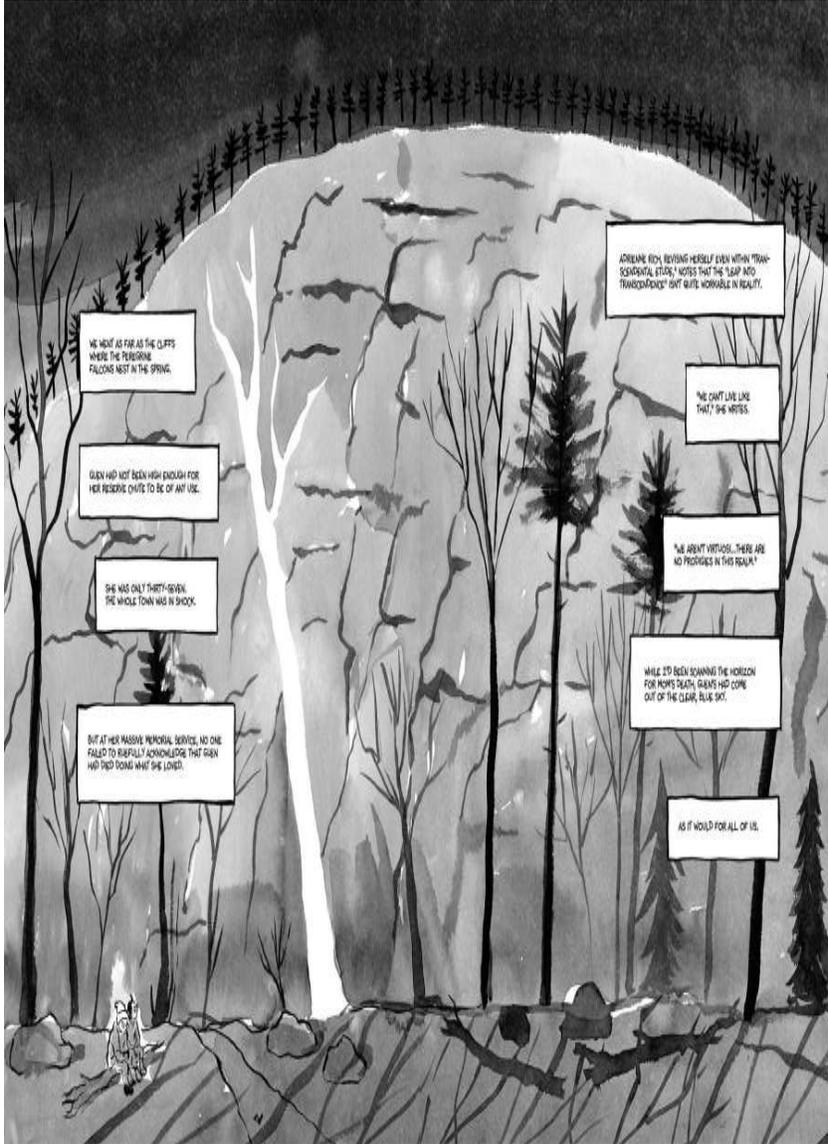
...RETROSPECTIVELY, BUT OF COURSE THIS IS TRUE OF MOST THINGS IN LIFE.

YOU CAN'T KNOW WHETHER ANYTHING MIGHT BE FOR THE LAST TIME.

THE MOON WAS PERFECTLY FULL THAT NIGHT. HE WALKED AND WALKED.

ON THE EVENING OF NOVEMBER 1ST, HOLLY GOT A PHONE CALL. RAIN WAS DEAD.

HER MIND HAD COLLAPSED IN THE COMPLICATED THERAPY OF CALIFORNIA'S OCHRE VALLEY.



WE WENT AS FAR AS THE CLIFFS WHERE THE PERBORNE FALCONS NEST IN THE SPRING.

ELLEN HAD NOT BEEN HIGH ENOUGH FOR HER RESERVE CHAIR TO BE OF ANY USE.

SHE WAS ONLY THIRTY-SEVEN THE WHOLE TOWN WAS IN SHOCK.

BUT AT HER MASSIVE MEMORIAL SERVICE, NO ONE FAILED TO BRAVELY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT GLEN HAD DONE WHAT SHE LOVED.

ADRIANNE RICH REVISITS HERSELF EVEN WITHIN "TRANSCENDENTAL STORIES," NOTES THAT THE "LEAP INTO TRANSCENDENTALISM" WASN'T ALWAYS HORRIBLE IN REALITY.

"WE CAN'T LIVE LIKE THAT," SHE WRITES.

"AS A REENT VOTER... THERE ARE NO PRODIGES IN THIS TOWN."

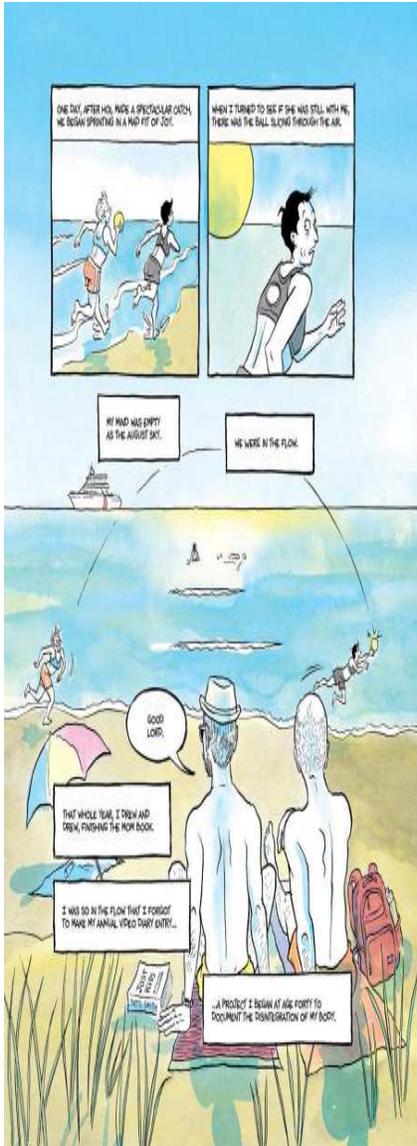
WHILE IT'S BEEN SKANNING THE HORIZON FOR MORE SILENT GRIEFS HAS COME OUT OF THE CLEAR, BLUE SKY.

AS IF WOULD FOR ALL OF US.











MY CHOICE WAS LAMB NUMBER NINETEEN BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT YOUR HELLS ARE NOT ATTACHED TO THE SKI



IT'D BEEN INTENDING TO LEARN THE SKIING FOREVER. BUT THIS YEAR, WHEN I WENT TO LOOK AT EQUIPMENT, THERE WAS A NEW GAME IN TOWN.



I KNOW THE SKI AND BIKE INDUSTRIES HAVE TO KEEP INTRODUCING NEW GADGETS TO SELL US. BUT THEY'RE OFTEN QUITE WASTEFUL.



IT WAS A WAY OF COMING FULL CIRCLE, BACK TO CHILDHOOD...



TECHNICAL CLOTHING ALSO CONTINUED TO EVOLVE, IN BOTH ENGINEERING AND COMFORT, BY NOW I'VE GOT MORE OF IT FULL-TIME.



...MAYBE EVEN BACK TO THE BEGINNER'S SHOP THAT HAD SO MANY MEASUREMENTS.



A MONTH OR SO LATER SHE ASKED ME TO PLAY HER A SONG. SO I PLAYED A FANTASY, PLAYFUL SONG ON PEARLE BLUES.



BUT THEN NOW GOT BACK FOR A STRESSFUL COUPLE OF MONTHS. I SUGGEST MY WORK TRAVEL WITH VISITS TO HER.

ONE NIGHT I ARRIVED TO THE LAMBERTING LIGHT OF HOLY CHURCH IN HER SKI. BUT THERE SHE WAS DOGGEDLY REMEMBERING SHAWNEERS SHAWNETS.

IT'S A STOMACH BUG, SHE'LL GET OVER IT.

HE DONT PULL ANY FRANCHES. NOPE. I DID NOT ASK HER HOW SHE FELT.



WHEN I GOT HOME THAT NIGHT TO MY EMPTY HOUSE, I STUMBLER FROM ROOM TO ROOM, BRITING PIPAL WALLS.

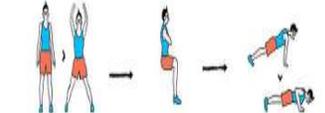
BUT THERE WAS NO WAY TO FORESEE HOW ENTIRELY MY MOTHER PERMUTATED ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING UNTIL SHE WAS GONE, AND SHE WASNT EVEN GONE YET.



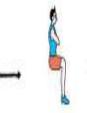
THE SEMI-SADISTIC 7-MINUTE WORKOUT

12 exercises, and you're done for.

AS MY LIFE ITSELF BECAME A KIND OF HIGH-INTENSITY INTERVAL TRAINING, THIS WORKOUT WOULD BE MY SALVATION. I WOULD DO IT ON THREE CONTINENTS AND MORE OFTEN THAN I CAN COUNT, FIRST THING IN THE MORNING BEFORE I COULD THINK BETTER OF IT. IT FEELT GOOD—LASTING TO MY BODY, CLARITY TO MY MIND, AND ENCOURAGE TO MY SOUL—THOUGH I WAS STILL, INSIDE, WANTING WHAT A SOUL WAS.



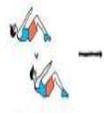
1. Rent a dumpster and, in a great outdoor dance, fill it with the contents of your dead mother's house.



2. Rush to your dear mother's partner's apartment when he, also great dancer, decides to stop treatment for his multiple sclerosis.



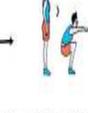
3. Push off again in order to attend OR Broadway musical based on your family memoir.



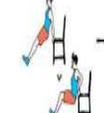
4. Round up wayward family members in logically and vectorially complex operation for evasive of game.



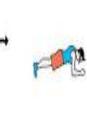
5. On grand tour of speaking engagements, make sure you are performing some kind of version of yourself. Wonder if this is what it's like to be a sex worker.



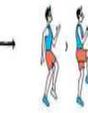
6. Fly to tennis festival in France, give talk in English about your lesbian comic strip and pay sleep to overlooked immigrant high school teachers.



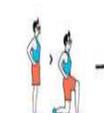
7. Travel to outpost for a month of public appearances, take incremental but favorable step of fitness with each one.



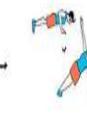
8. While struggling to feel that you deserve to be in an artist's residency in Italy, learn that you have won a MacArthur 'genius' grant, and that the musical is moving to Broadway.



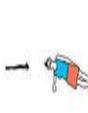
9. Become seized with a sense of profound frustration, make worse by knowledge that this is actually quite narcissistic and self-indulgent.



10. Participate in said publicity machine to promote Broadway musical. Marvel at fact that you have finally become sick of talking about yourself.



11. Accept a string of awards and honors that it would be charitable to turn down, each one making you feel more depleted and fustian than the last.



12. Wonder if your life might be all downhill from here.

FOR REASONS I'D SPENT LONG STRUCTURES WORKING QUIETLY AT HOME, WITH OCCASIONAL FORAYS INTO THE PUBLIC THAT CAME AS A WELCOME CHANGE OF PACE.



AS TENS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE HAVE DISCOVERED, KEEPING TRACK OF HOW MANY STEPS ONE TAKES PER DAY IS REVEALATORY.



I BEGAN WALKING MORE, DOING STRETCHES ON FOOT AS MUCH AS I COULD. ON DAYS I WOULDN'T LEAVE THE HOUSE, I'D GET ON THE TREADMILL IN ORDER TO HIT TEN THOUSAND STEPS.



I PRACTICED A FEW YEARS EARLIER IN AN ATTEMPT TO MAKE MYSELF FEEL LESS TRAPPED OUT HERE IN THE WOODS.

MY WELL-WAS NOT JUST CHIPPY BUT BOUND-DEET, YET I HAD TO GET STARTED ON THE FITNESS BOOK. I DECIDED THE LEAST I COULD DO WAS LEARN WHAT THESE FITTEST THINGS WERE ABOUT.



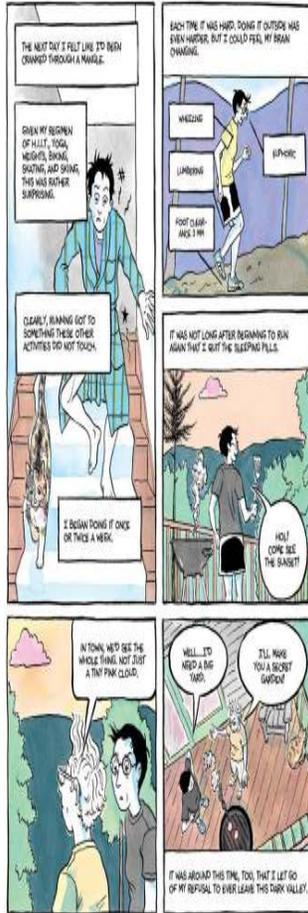
I CONSIDERED MYSELF QUITE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE, BUT IN FACT, LIKE MOST OF OUR OWNERS, I WALKED ANOTHER ANOTHER.



ONE DAY, PREPARED FOR THIS, I JOGGED INSTEAD OF WALKED FOR THREE MILES. IT HAD BEEN MANY YEARS SINCE I'D BEEN I'D FORGOTTEN THE MARVELOUS EFFECT IT HAD ON MY MOOD.



I PRACTICED A FEW YEARS EARLIER IN AN ATTEMPT TO MAKE MYSELF FEEL LESS TRAPPED OUT HERE IN THE WOODS.



MARGARET FULLER CLIMBED THE FIRST BIG CLIMBING NOT LONG AFTER LEAVING NEW ENGLAND FOR EUROPE WHEN SHE WAS THIRTY-SIX.

ON THE OCCASION, SHE GOT SEPARATED FROM HER HUSBAND, COMPANION, AND SPENT THE COLD WINTER MONTHS ALONE AND LOST ON THE MOUNTAIN.

SHE ENDED UP GET AWAY BOUNDED ON A LEASE SURROUNDED BY ROARING STREAMS, BUT SHE KEPT HER HEAD, MOVING TO STAY WARM.



SHE LATER DESCRIBE HER EXPERIENCE AS "SUBLIME!"

SOON AFTER THIS ADVENTURE IN SELF-RELIANCE, SHE REMEMBERED THAT SHE HAD WRITTEN (THE ONE) BETWEEN HER LETTERS. SHE WAS DONE WITH HER.

WHEN IN 1835 EMERSON'S CHURCH SAID HE'D BE FIRED IF HE REFUSED TO GIVE COMPASSION, HE RETIRED TO THE MOUNTAINS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE TO THINK IT OVER.

THAT'S WHEN HE LEFT THE MINISTRY.




COLLEAGUE, TOO, HAD A TRANSFORMING EXPERIENCE ON A MOUNTAIN. ON HIS SOLO FELL-WALKING TRIP IN THE SUMMER OF 1842, HE CLIMBED SCAFFOLD, IN THE LAKE DISTRICT, ON THE PRECIPITOUS PEAKS...

HOW CAN I NOW BLESSED AM I NOW.

...HE FOUND HIMSELF STUCK IN A SPOT FROM WHICH IT WAS TOO DANGEROUS TO EITHER ADVANCE OR RETREAT. HE LAY BACK AND WATCHED THE RAGING CLOUDS.

PROBABLY THE FIRST PERSON TO DO THE TRICK FOR REGENERATION THAT'S QUOTE OF CALVIN FOLDED IN A STRING BAG.



HE'D MADE THE TRICK, IN PART, TO STAVE OFF HIS GROWING OPEN HABIT.

IN 1858, DOROTHY WOULD CLIMB NEIGHBORHOOD SCAFFOLD PEAK, THE HIGHEST PEAK IN ENGLAND, WITH A SMALL PARTY. SHE WAS FORTY-SIX.

BUT IN THE MOUNTAINS, HE DIDN'T NEED HIS PAIN RELIEF OR EXACTING EFFECT.

HER FRIEND, HER MAN, A SHEPHERD, AND A POET.

SHE MET WITH NO PROBLEMS, UNLESS YOU COUNT THE FACT THAT WILLIAM INCLUDED HER ACCOUNT OF THE CLIMB IN THE SECOND EDITION OF HIS GUIDE TO THE LAKE DISTRICT WITHOUT ATTRIBUTION.

AFTER BOULDERING HIMSELF FROM HIS "STATE OF ALMOST PROPHETIC, FRANKIE A TELLING," HE FOUND A NARROW CHIMNEY TO CLIMB DOWN.

AT THE TIME, HE WAS ALMOST FIFTY SEVEN FROM HIS FIRST HUSBAND FOR HIS POETRY.

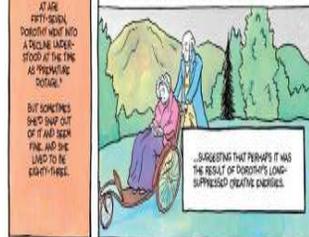



AT AGE FIFTY-SEVEN, DOROTHY WENT INTO A DECLINE UNEXPECTED AT THE TIME AS "PREMATURE OLDAGE."

BUT SOMETIMES SHE'D SHIP OUT OF IT AND BEEN FINE AND SHE LIVED TO BE EIGHTY-NINE.

HER BOSSWOMAN FRANCES WILSON TALKED HER WITH "DEPRESSIVE PHLEBO-SOMNOLIA," A PROFOUND DEPRESSION THAT FRANKIE TALKED...

...SUGGESTING THAT PERHAPS IT WAS THE RESULT OF DOROTHY'S LONG-SUPPRESSED CREATIVE ENERGIES.



I WAS NOW FIFTY-FIVE, NOT QUITE IN MY PRIME, I HOPED, BUT SOMETHING WAS ALIVE IN ME. HEROICAC, TOO, HAD HOPED CLIMBING MATTERHORN MIGHT TRANSFORM HIM.

NIGHT GET HIM "AWAY FROM DRINKING."

HOLLY AND I HEARD FROM THE BAY AREA TO THE SEERIES THIS WAS SORT OF A HOMEPOON* BUT IT WAS ALSO A WORK TRIP FOR ME, SO OUR SCHEDULE WAS ABSOLUTELY TIGHT.

"THREES!"

*IN THE NAME OF THE SUPREME COURT CALLING ON SUPERHERO PORNAGE, WE'VE JUST GOTTEN MICHIGAN.

WE HAD ONE DAY TO SPEND AT TORONTO, WE WERE STRONGLY TRANQUILIZED BY THE NATURE OF SO MUCH BEAUTY IN SUCH A SMALL SPAN OF TIME.

I FOUND A COUPLE FEELER SWITCHES.

BUT MY DRIVING WAS UNIMPACTED AS MY HEATING.

WE TOOK OURSELVES AWAY AND MADE IT TO THE TOWN NEAREST OUR DESTINATION BY TRUCK. JACK HAD DRAGGED OUR INTO A BAR WHERE THE MOUNTAINS HAD GOTTEN DOWN THE MOUNTAIN.

I FEEL A DISTINCT SENSE OF DRUGS.

HORTON-LIKE SPINES OF ROCKY BLUETTED OUT THE SKYSETT THE SHANTOOTH EDGE.

ONE OF THOSE IS MATTERHORN

I FEEL DRUGS.

OUR CABIN WAS AT 7,000 FEET, JUST LINES IN BED THAT NIGHT, I WAS HAVING TROUBLE GETTING ENOUGH OXYGEN, I COULDN'T SLEEP.

NOW WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

AVIL.

AVILITY HAD AN ILLUSIVE SENSES PRODUCTION FILL AND A MURKIN PED.

HE TOOK A MURKINERS INTO THE NEXT DAY AND ENJOYED THAT INSTANT OF THINKING YET ANOTHER DAY TO ACQUAINT, HE WOULD TACKLE MATTERHORN ON THE MORNON.

YAGGEE!

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

PLAY-YOURSELF BEING SAME

TRYING TO CHECK MY EMAIL LIKE JACK HEROICAC.

HOW SHELLER WEENET?

IT WAS LATE SEPTEMBER, A COUPLE NEEDS EARLIER THAN THE CHAMPION BLAME HIRE. HOE WAS WORRIED THAT I WAS SO HELL-BENT ON SOMETHING, I'D DO SOMETHING RIGHT.

I FEEL A DISTINCT SENSE OF DRUGS.

THEY AND JACK HAD SPENT A NIGHT ON THE MOUNTAIN, BUT OUR PLAN WAS TO GET UP AND DOWN IN THE FUTURE HOURS OF AMPLIFIABLE TWILIGHT.

I'D FOUND A DETAILED GUIDE TO THE CLIMB ONLINE, COMPLETE WITH UPS AND DOWNS, BY A WOMAN WHO'D DONE IT A FEW YEARS EARLIER. SHE WISPO TOLD THAT BECAUSE OF HEROICAC.

OUR GOAL

...THE MOUNTAIN "POND" PEOPLE WHO HAD NO BUSINESS ATTEMPTING A CLIMB 3 SEVERAL SEVENTY?

SOON THE TRAIL CAME TO AN END AND HE STARTED UP THE ENDLESS VALLEY OF FOALDERS JACK HAD DESCRIBED—WHERE SARY HAD TAKEN HIS PANTS OFF TO HIDE IN JUST HIS TUCK STRAP.

ONE FALSE STEP AND YOU BAGED A KNEE OR TWISTED AN ANKLE.

...BUT ONLY ONE PREDICTION UP, I HAD NO ENERGY LEFT OVER TO THINK ABOUT MOUNTAINS BEING BLOODIES.

THE OPS WOMAN SAID NOT TO GO THAT WAY. IT WALKS OUT.

DURING HIS TIME ON RESOLUTION PEAK, JACK HAD READ THE TREATISES OF SUZUKI AND OZAKI. IT'S A NOTORIOUS FOLLOWING TEACHING, BLENDED WITH MEDITATION AND PRAYER.

IN THE WEST SPAN, THERE WERE INFINITE POSSIBLE ROUTES.

THE SUZUKI WAYNE COMES FROM THE ABILITY OF SUZUKI TO CUT THROUGH THINGS—AND ONE OF THE MANY THINGS THIS SUZUKI CUTS THROUGH IS THE IDEA OF THE SELF.

THE BLOODY TAUGHT THAT THE SELF, ALONG WITH EVERYTHING ELSE, HAS NO INHERENT REALITY BECAUSE IT'S IMPERMANENT AND INTERDEPENDENT. IT'S EMPTY.



STAY AWAY OF CELL SERVICE NOW AND THEN.

IN HIS LATER TEACHINGS, HE PRESENTED THE MORE ADVANCED VIEW THAT EMPTYNESS ITSELF IS EMPTY.

WHICH IS TO SAY, THE VIEW THAT EMPTYNESS ITSELF IS EMPTY.

"...FEARLESS BODHIWATIAN TO NOT CLING TO A THING, MUCH LESS TO NO THING. IF YOU SHOULD LET GO OF THINGS, HOW MUCH MORE SO NO THINGS."

WE RAN OUT OF TIME HALF A MILE AND A THOUSAND-FOOTICAL FEET FROM THE SUMMIT.

WE GOTTA HEAD BACK.

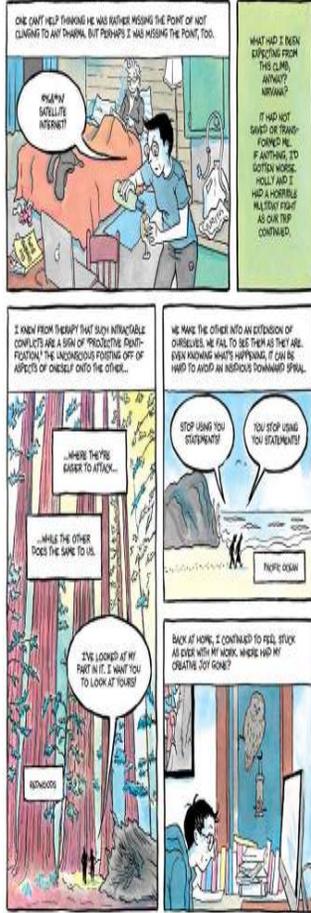
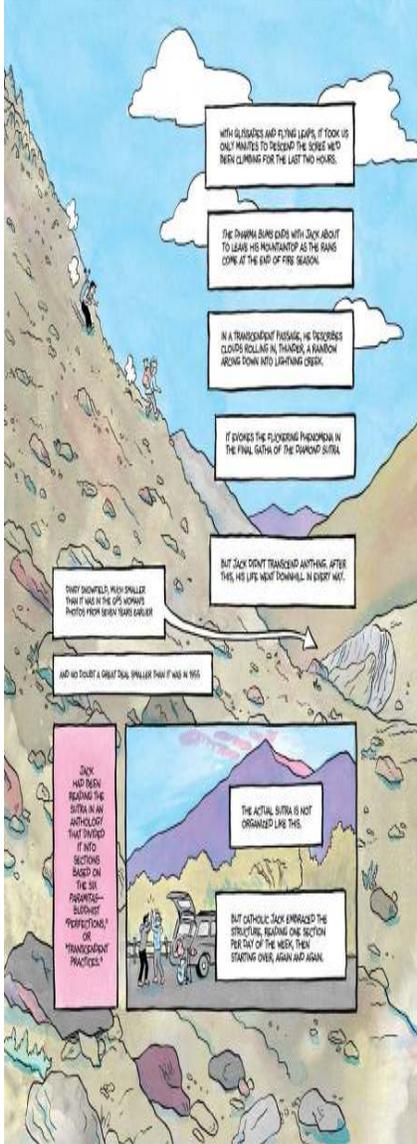
RIGHT ABOUT WHERE JACK HAD FROZEN IN TERROR.

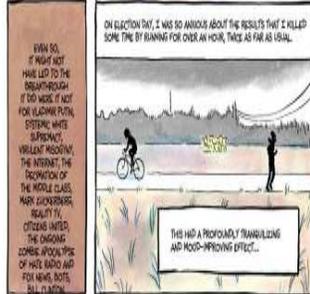
A SHORT BERGE, OR GYTH, AT THE END OF THE SUZUKI SAYS, "EVERYTHING SHOULD BE SEEN AS SCULPTURE, AS ENDLESS AS PAIRLESS."

"...EVERYTHING SHOULD BE SEEN AS THE SKY, AS BRIGHT, AS DARKNESS, AS A PHANTOM, AS A DREAM, AS A FLASH OF LIGHTNING, AS A BUBBLE."

IT WAS SCARY UP HERE, TRIPPING.

THIS TIME I WAS RELIEVED TO TURN AROUND.





...A MOST FORTUITOUS DISCOVERY, BECAUSE IN THE FOLLOWING DAYS, MONTHS, AND YEARS, I WOULD BE IN SOME NEED OF TRANQUILIZERS AND MOOD IMPROVEMENT.

AMERICA HAD SELECTED A STRONGMAN.

AS THE CHAOS INSIDE HIS HEAD WASHED OVER THE OUTSIDE WORLD...

...REALITY ITSELF FELL UNDER ATTACK.

THE FITNESS BOOK NOW SEEMED LIKE AN ABSURD NON-SENSE. I SHOULD BE FINDING SOMETHING MY DRINKING CRUISED UP...

WATERS WERE NOT HELPED BY THE FACT THAT SOON THE PLANET WAS ALSO LITERALLY ON FIRE.

...BUT SO DID MY MILEAGE. RUNNING WAS SORT OF DOING SOMETHING.

WHEN THE GRID GOES DOWN, I CAN RUN MEASURED FOR THE RESISTANCE.

HOWEVER SOLO AND ANGRY.

WITH THE LONGER RAINS I WAS NOW LOGGING MY PULSE BEGAN TO DROP.

I FOUND THAT I NO LONGER NEEDED A SLUR OF SWEETEN TO NOODY MYSELF OUT AT NIGHT.

I BEGAN HEARD GLIMPSES OF WHAT I CAN ONLY DESCRIBE AS INNER PEAKS.

ONE DAY I REALIZED THAT WHEN I STOPPED RUNNING IN MY LATE STARTERS, IT WAS BECAUSE THE SAME TIME I HAD STOPPED DRINKING AGAIN, WAS I NOW REVERSING THAT TREND? I WAS DRINKING LESS...

I WAS AS CHAINED TO THAT BEER AS HEROIC HAD BEEN TO HIS ALL-TIME BULLDOZERS.

THE MORE I STUDIED THE DUNNOID SURF, THE MORE I KEPT RUNNING ACROSS THE PARCHMENT.

...THE SIX TRANSCENDENT PRACTICES? YOU NEED TO CULTIVATE IF YOU WANT TO GET ON THE BOHSAWATTA PATH.

GRANDIOSITY, MORAL DISCIPLINE, PRESENCE, HEROIC EFFORT, CONCENTRATION, AND WISDOM, ACTUALLY, THE PRACTICES ARE THE PATH. A SHARPENED EDGE OF A RAZOR, HARD TO TRANSCEND.

THEY WILL INCREASE YOUR COMPASSION, WILL HELP YOU TO LEAP BEYOND YOUR LIMITED UNDERSTANDING OF REALITY...

...BEYOND YOUR SELF.

BY ELECTION DAY IN 2016, I COULD READ EIGHT PAGES WITH EASE.

DEMOCRATS WOULD WIN SAID THE VOICES, BUT THAT WAS A SMALL GLIMMER IN THE DARKENING WORLD.

IT WAS PARTICULARLY DARK THAT AFTERNOON, NOT ONLY BECAUSE WE'D JUST SET THE CLOCK BACK AND IT HAD BEEN RAINING FOR A WEEK.

THEY WERE AT THE

...BUT WE'D JUST GOTTEN BAD NEWS SOMEONE WE KNEW WHO HAD MOVED AWAY YEARS AGO HAD BEEN HIT BY A CAR AND KILLED WHILE OUT WALKING.

THERE WAS A WOODEN WATERFALL NOT FAR FROM OUR HOUSE THAT I ONLY DISCOVERED AFTER BEGINNING TO RUN AWAY. IT LINED WOODEN TRAILS, DURING A THIN OR WHEN IT RAINED.

THAT MORNING, BEFORE THE PHONE CALL, I'D READ THE BEGINNING OF THE SHAKED SISTA FOR PROBABLY THE FIFTIETH TIME. ONE OF THE SUBWAYS DISAPPEARED AND HIM A QUESTION.

"IF A NOBLE SON OR DAUGHTER SHOULD SET FORTH ON THE BODHI-SATVA PATH...

...HOW SHOULD THEY BEHAVE, HOW SHOULD THEY WALK, AND HOW SHOULD THEY CONTROL THEIR THOUGHTS?"

THE PATH IS THE RESTRICTION.

BLA BLA BLA.

I WAS GETTING PRETTY GOOD AT MY UNFINISHED BOOK LOOMING OVER ME, BUT HOW COULD I DO IT WHEN I WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS ABOUT?

AN UNCHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT OF CONFIDENCE GRIPPED ME. IT WAS MY BOOK, THEREFORE I KNEW WHAT IT WAS ABOUT.

I COULD SEE THAT IT'D BEEN TAKING A KIND OF HAPPINESS FROM THE UNHAPPINESS OF STRUGGLING TO FINISH THE BOOK.

AND I COULD DO IT BECAUSE I WANTED TO.

BECAUSE I DON'T WANT IT TO END.

JUST LIKE I DON'T WANT MY LIFE TO END.

NOOOO!

I COULD DO IT WITH THIS MOMENT.

BUT MY LIFE WAS GOING TO PASS.

WHAT IF THE POINT WAS NOT TO FINISH, BUT TO STOP STRUGGLING?

IN THE '60s, SOME OF SHANTNU SIKHAR'S STUDENTS TOOK HIM TO YOGESHI.



AT THE BASE OF UPPER TOSSEN'S FALLS, SIZEN ALARMED HIS COMPANIONS BY SUDDENLY APPEARING ATOP A LARGE BOULDER.

IN MY FAVORITE PART OF ZEN MIND, BEGINNERS MIND, A SECTION TITLED AROUND THE WATERFALL, HE TALKS ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE OF THE FALLS.

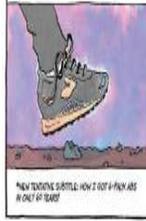
BEFORE WE'RE BOON, HE SAYS, WE'RE LIKE THE RIVER UP ABOVE.

THEN WE'RE SEPARATED FROM THAT ONENESS AND THROUGH THIS, HE FORGETS THAT WE'RE PART OF THE RIVER, AND WE FEEL PAIN.

BUT SOON ENOUGH, WE JOIN THE RIVER AGAIN.

Whether it is separated into drops or not, water is water. Our life and death are the same thing.

I WISH TO TELL YOU THIS, BUT BY THE FOLLOWING ELECTION DAY, I WAS STILL NOT FINISHED WITH MY BOOK.* THERE ARE APPARENTLY NO SHORTCUTS ON THE PATH.



WHEN TOSSEN'S SUBTLE HOW I GOT A PAIN WAS IN ONE OF SEVEN.

ON MY RUN THAT AFTERNOON, I SPREAD MY ANKLE EARLY. I HIT THE GROUND SO HARD MY EYES REMAINED CLOSED FOR SOME TIME.



IT WAS A FOREBODING OF THE BOTTLE BLOW I WOULD RECEIVE THE NEXT DAY, WHEN OUR BELLOD GOT THEEDED SUDDENLY. IN THE UNKINNABLE VOICE, HOLLY AND I BEGAN GETTING UP JUST BEFORE DAWN TO MOVE OUT.



NOT LONG AFTER THAT, HOLLY DECIDED TO TAKE A BREAK FROM DRAWING AND LISTENING THAT I OBVIOUSLY AGREED TO JOIN HER.

I DIDN'T REALLY THINK I COULD STOP MY DAILY DRINKING, BUT I DID. THE DRIP WAS BROKEN. I HAD AWAKENED FROM MY ENCHANTMENT.



NEEDS
SOURCES OF SELF-LEARNING
SUPPORT
SOMEWHERE NOW 10 YEARS OLD

I WAS AT LAST ENGAGED WITH THE PROCESS OF DRAWING THE FITNESS BOOK, WHOSE DEADLINE WAS PRESSING WITH ALARMING RAPIDITY.



THERE WAS NO WAY I COULD GET IT ALL DRAWN AND COLORED IN TIME.
OH, WELL

IT WAS JUST AFTER HOLLY HAD AGREED TO HELP BY COLLECTING THE BOOK THAT THE PARKING LOT...

NOW HE HATES NOT ONLY AESTHETIC AND CONSERVATIVE, BUT CLOUSTERS.

CONSIDERED WITH THIS CREATIVE PROJECTS HE WERE IN THE FLOW, NOT DIDN'T THE COLLAPSE OF CIVILIZATION BROKE MY CONCENTRATION.

I HAVE FELT HORROR AND DREAD THROUGHOUT THIS YEAR OF DAILY, MILDLY INCOMPETENT, AND STALE, BUT SOMEHOW MY INNER EQUILIBRIUM HAS REMAINED INTACT.

WE TOOK INSPIRE FROM THE SCRIPTORIAN TO HAVE A NEW FAIRY IN THE WOODS.

THANKS TO THE DISCOVERIES TO GET FROM OUR HANDS.

FOR BETTER ACCESS TO THE BROOK, HOL BUILT A BRIDGE OVER THE SWAMP.

NOW HE WALKS THERE EVERY DAY, A KIND OF MOTIVATIONAL.

THE WHOLESALE DISRUPTION OF BUSINESS AS USUAL, HAS BEEN A CHANCE TO START SOMETHING THAT WE, BUT CAN WE DO IT?



OR WILL WE CONTRIVE TO DEIFY OUR MORTALITY, WHICH AMOUNTS TO A DENIAL OF OUR DEPENDENCE ON EACH OTHER'S WELL-BEING?

I WON'T WEAR A MASK, CONVEY IS A TEMPORARY HOPE.

WHAT THE HECK IS THE MATTER WITH THESE BRIBING PLUMBERS??

NOTE TO SELF: CULTIVATE COMPASSION FOR COMPACT OPTIMISM.

WORTHWHILE FROM 'MORTALITY' BEGINS WITH BOARDING LINES, UPGRADE ROY FORCES THEM IN 'TRANSFORMATIONAL, ACTIVE' WITH SPENDING FANS, HER FEEL GET APPLIES FROM THESE...

...SO ENLIGHTENED WITH ALREADY FOLLOWING FREEDOM SEEM INTERNAL, 'RESPONSEFUL.'

...BUT ULTIMATELY ROY VEERS AWAY FROM STERILITY, FROM IMMORTALITY. IN THE FINAL, STANDA, A WOMAN SITS AT A KITCHEN TABLE ARRANGING SCRAPS OF FABRIC AND NATURAL OBJECTS LIKE PLUMBED POPS.

the spiral of paper-wasp-nest curling beside the fresh's yellow feather. Such a compassion has nothing to do with eternity, the striving for greatness, brilliance—only with the missing of a minimal one with her body, experienced fingers quietly peeling dark against bright, silk against roughness, pulling the threads of a life together with no more will to mastery,

ROY IS NOT WRITING ABOUT TRANSCENDING THIS WORLD.

...JUST ABOUT TRANSFORMING IT. HERE, AND NOW.

AND WHAT WERE DO WE HAVE OF CHANGING THE WORLD IF WE CAN'T CHANGE OUR SORRY-ASS SELVES?

WANTED: RANGER FOR JAMES MONTAGUE. FUTURE WARRIOR TO BE HAD.

Bring this to get a Garfield. Guaranteed!

Wanted: The First 'SPOONFUL' EVER...

AS WISDOM TENDS TO DO, THE POEM REVEALS SOMETHING VERY SIMPLE THAT'S BEEN HERE ALL ALONG: WE ARE NOT THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING.

WANTED: RANGER FOR JAMES MONTAGUE. FUTURE WARRIOR TO BE HAD.

Bring this to get a Garfield. Guaranteed!

Wanted: The First 'SPOONFUL' EVER...



BUT HE IS A PART OF EVERYTHING.

ALSO THIS IS IT.

THE ONLY THING TO WORRY ABOUT IS THE IDEA THAT THERE'S SOMETHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

NOBODY IS SAYING I FINALLY GOT THE MESSAGE.

ONWARD TO THE GRAVE!

THOUGH I SUSPECT THERE WILL BE A FEW MORE LEVELS TO UNLOCK FIRST.

I GOTTA STAY IN SHAPES.

JUST IN CASE THINGS GO FURTHER SOUTH AND I HAVE TO RUN MESSAGES FOR THE RESISTANCE.

NOBODY WILL SUSPECT A LITTLE OLD LADY.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



I'M GRATEFUL TO VAL ROHY FOR READING THIS BOOK AS IT EVOLVED, AND FOR HER RESEARCH ASSISTANCE--WITHOUT HER I WOULD NEVER HAVE DISCOVERED THE EDIFYING BOOK *TRANSATLANTIC TRANSCENDENTALISM: COLLIERIDGE, EMERSON, AND NATURE* BY SAMANTHA C. HARVEY. VAL WAS A GREAT HELP WITH COSTUME DESIGN, TOO, ALONG WITH HER COLLEAGUE ANNAMARIA FORMICHELLA.

THANK YOU TO JANE SHARP FOR TURNING ME ON TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH'S JOURNALS, NOT TO MENTION THE LAKE DISTRICT ITSELF. I'M ALSO GRATEFUL TO DIANE GAYER FOR PRESSING ON ME HER COPY OF *POETS ON THE PEAKS* BY JOHN SUITER.

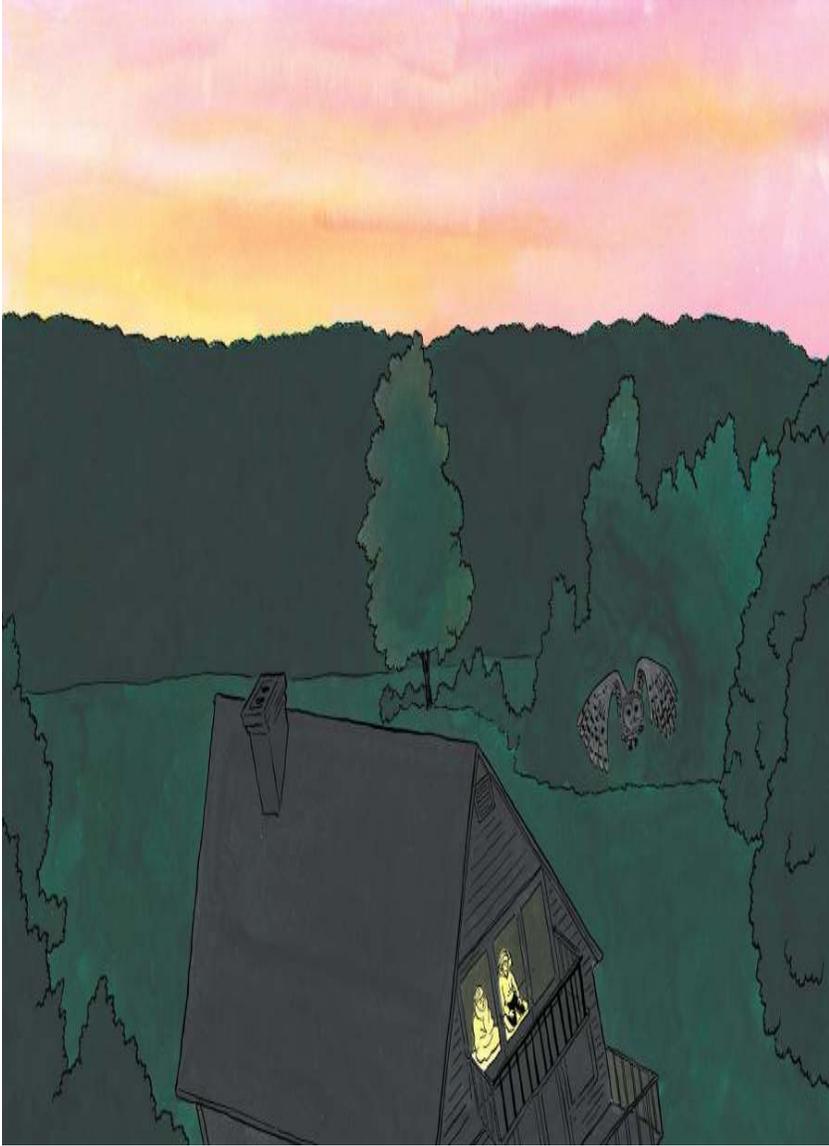
MEGAN MARSHALL'S REMARKABLE BIOGRAPHY, *MARGARET FULLER, A NEW AMERICAN LIFE*, SERVED AS A NAVIGATIONAL GUIDE FOR ME, A SORT OF ROPE BRIDGE OVER THE SWAMP OF ALL THE MATERIAL I TRIED TO FIT INTO THIS BOOK. I'M GRATEFUL TO MEGAN AS WELL FOR GIVING ME A ACTUAL GUIDED TOUR OF CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS.

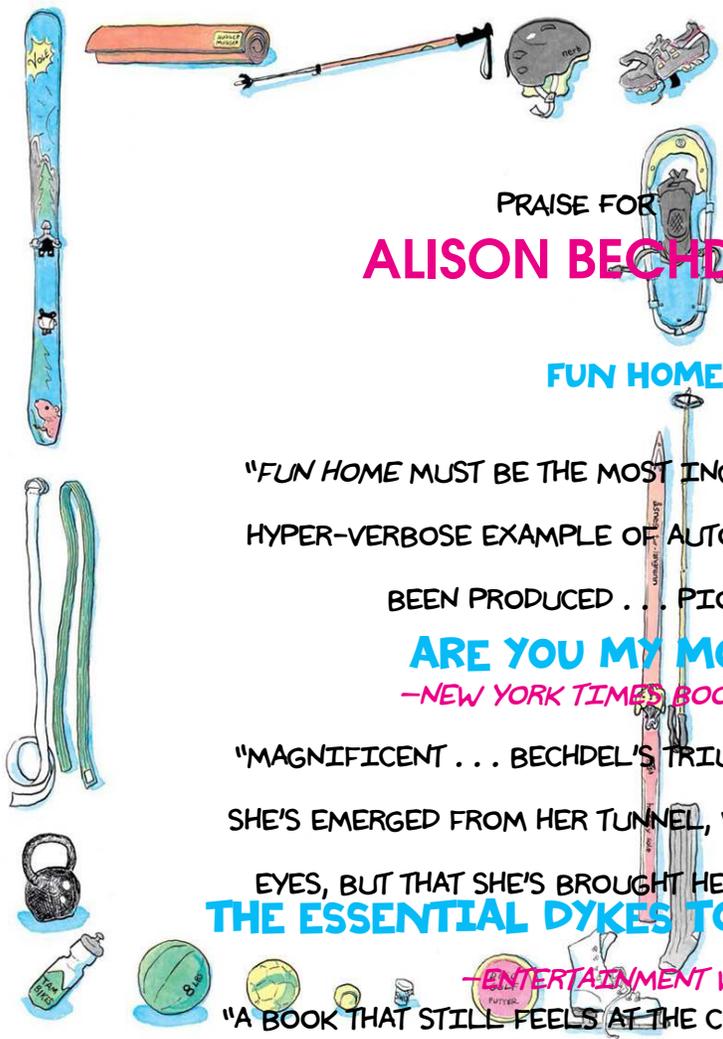
MY GRATITUDE TO SOPHIE YANOW FOR HER STAGGERINGLY COMPETENT PRODUCTION ASSISTANCE IN PUTTING THIS BOOK TOGETHER IS REALLY BEYOND MY ABILITY TO EXPRESS IN WORDS. HER PRODIGIOUS CALM IN THE FACE OF MY VARIOUS PANICS WAS ALSO QUITE AWE-INSPIRING. JAN STURM AND MICHELLE OLLIE OF THE CENTER FOR CARTOON STUDIES EACH VERY GENEROUSLY SHARED IDEAS AND ADVICE EARLY IN MY PROCESS ABOUT HOW TO COLOR THIS THING. I'M PROFOUNDLY GRATEFUL TO BETH BURLEIGH FULLER AND DAN JANECK FOR THEIR PEERLESS, MAY-BREATHAKING COPY EDITING. I WOULD BE HOPELESSLY LOST IN THE FOG WITHOUT MY SUPERHUMANLY PATIENT AND INSIGHTFUL EDITOR, DEANNE URMY. I'M DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR HER STEADY COMPANIONSHIP ON MY CREATIVE THANKS TO THE TEACHERS WHO HAVE DEMONSTRATED FOR ME THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE FRAMER, MY AGENT AND REAPPROPRIATIONS, MY KARATE SENSEI IN THE MID '80S; WILLIAM PROTTENGE! MY YOGA INSTRUCTOR IN THE LATE '80S; AND MY SAGACIOUS, AS WELL AS VERY POSSIBLY ACTUALLY ENLIGHTENED ACUPUNCTURIST AND QI GONG INSTRUCTOR, ARTHUR MAKARIS.

THANKS TO THE MACARTHUR FOUNDATION, WHOSE SUPPORT MEANT I COULD ALLOW THIS BOOK TO TAKE AS LONG AS IT NEEDED TO. AND TO THE GUGGENHEIM FOUNDATION--MY PROJECT TURNED OUT RATHER DIFFERENTLY THAN THE ONE I DESCRIBED TO THEM. I'M GRATEFUL TO THE CIVITELLA RANIERI FOUNDATION FOR AN IMMENSELY RESTORATIVE RESIDENCY. I FELT GUILTY ALL THE TIME I SPENT RUNNING AND BIKING IN THE UMBRIAN HILLS, BUT IN THE END I THINK CAN COUNT IT AS WORK. THANK YOU ALSO TO HEDGEBROOK FOR A BRIEF STAY DURING WHICH I ACCOMPLISHED LITTLE MORE THAN STARING DAZEDLY AT MOUNT RAINIER IN THE DISTANCE. THAT TOO NOW STRIKES ME AS A CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF MY TIME.

THANKS TO SALLY FELLOWS, CATHY HUNTER, AND ALL THE TOWANDANS FOR THE BACKCOUNTRY ADVENTURING. YOU ARE MY INSPIRATION.

EVEN THOUGH I DEDICATED THE WHOLE BOOK TO HOLLY RAE TAYLOR, I MUST THANK HER EXPLICITLY FOR THE HUNDREDS OF HOURS SHE SPENT WORKING ON IT, AND FOR EVERYTHING ELSE SHE DID TO KEEP OUR LIVES AFLOAT WHILE I WAS COMPLETELY ABSORBED. BUT I'M PERHAPS MOST GRATEFUL TO HER FOR THE DRAWING EXERCISES SHE CLEVERLY DEVISED TO JUMP-START MY SLUGGISH CREATIVE ENERGIES. HOL, I LOVE COLLABORATING WITH YOU.





PRAISE FOR
ALISON BECHDEL

FUN HOME

"FUN HOME MUST BE THE MOST INGENUOUSLY COMPACT, HYPER-VERBOSE EXAMPLE OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY TO HAVE BEEN PRODUCED . . . PIONEERING."

ARE YOU MY MOTHER?
-NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

"MAGNIFICENT . . . BECHDEL'S TRIUMPH IS NOT JUST THAT SHE'S EMERGED FROM HER TUNNEL, WITH WEARY BUT CLEAR EYES, BUT THAT SHE'S BROUGHT HER MOTHER WITH HER."

THE ESSENTIAL DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR
-ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

"A BOOK THAT STILL FEELS AT THE CUSP OF SOMETHING NEW: A WAY OF FOLDING THE WORLD INTO FICTION, OF EXAMINING HOW THE PERSONAL AND THE POLITICAL INTERSECT IN INTIMATE LIFE . . . THESE CHARACTERS ARE LOVED – AND YOU FALL RIGHT IN LOVE WITH THEM TOO."

-NEW YORK TIMES