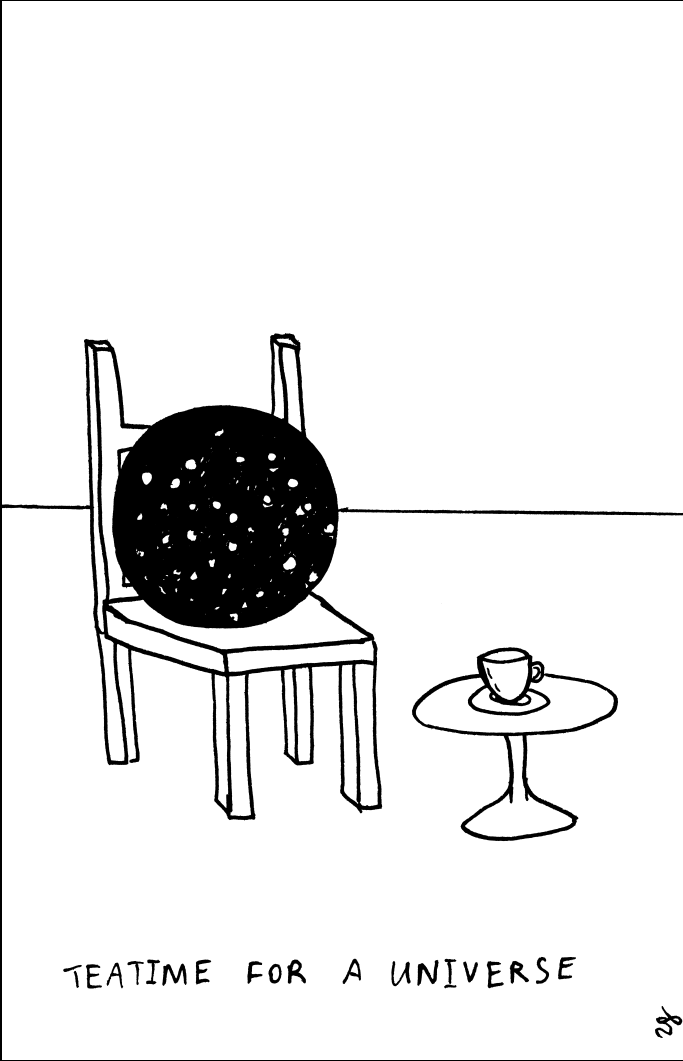


LAWRENCE GRIMM



Teatime for a Universe – 14x9 cm – ink on paper

Teatime for a Universe

A Graphic Panopticon of 'Weltschmerz'

"It's all about hopes – fantasy, the breeze of love – slopes – they yearning for meaning, the lost-in-space syndrome – and a Universe having a cup of tea." **Lawrence Grimm**

A quick look at the Facebook Profile of Lawrence Grimm shows that 'Lawrence (Larry) Grimm' worked at the Filmpodium (film theatre) of the City of Zurich from 2000 to 2011 and from 2003 he was active as a cartoonist for his project **Teatime for a Universe**. So films and cartoons are the

worlds that attract and affect the artist, who was born in Zurich in 1978. What both have in common is their involvement with reality by reduction. Whereas a film has to condense a story into two hours by eliminating tedious everyday activities or irrelevant dialogues, a cartoon as a 'satirical drawing' leads up to the punch-line with a few pen strokes or a short caption.

Teatime for a Universe now comprises nearly 150 notebooks, with thousands of notes and 'scribbles', as Lawrence Grimm calls them. Individual cartoons crystallize

from some of these 'scribbles'. Done in black ink, they are deliberately linear. In most cases a caption in English is placed at the bottom and, together with the picture, forms the actual message of the cartoon. Image and text always make up the entire message. The artist describes his series of cartoons in the following way: "**It's all about life, love, loops and loners.**" In spite of the fact that some cartoons with images of creatures stumbling through the infinite universe make us smile, the underlying tone is one of melancholy – this 'Weltschmerz', a feeling

of worldweariness, affecting all of us at some time, pervades all the drawings. In this sense, the title cartoon 'Teatime for a Universe' (pictured on page 2) has to be understood as part of a programme. Even the universe, depicted as a sphere with its galaxies sparkling, sitting on a wooden chair, needs a tea break to find new strength. On the tea table, however, there is only one cup, not two; there is nobody to share tea with.

Lawrence Grimm's cartoon world is not only populated by humans, animals and

trees but also by quirky creatures of fantasy. Since November 2010 he has been working in the Strapazin Atelier in Zurich. In the racks and on the shelves, among books about 'Prehistoric Animals' and 'Oceans', you will find little rubber animals, ranging from a winged unicorn in kitschy colors to the three-horned Triceratops (Alliance of the Horns). These animals are all lined up with great precision. Ultimately, they are the team summoned by Grimm to capture our unfulfilled deepest desires and life's dreams in an almost surrealistic manner.

When Lawrence Grimm's cartoon 'Half Way up the Infinite Tree' (pictured on page 16) shows a disenchanted man trying to climb an infinitely tall tree, this futile act is carried to extremes in a most ingenious way: the leafless, knotty trunk with its short branches spreads from the bottom to the top of the sheet. In the very center we can spot the lonely, helpless man. The caption informs us in an almost cynical way that he has only completed half the climb to the top of the infinite tree. But that remains a somewhat impossible task because infinity cannot be divided up. The

superb handling of English undoubtedly goes back to the cartoonist's Australian roots. On the other hand, the visual realisation draws on his cinematic experience. Just as nothing is left to chance during the shooting of a film, every line has to be precise. Subtle shifts are not accidental or coincidental but a deliberate artistic decision. Grimm uses whiteout tape to make improvements and corrections during the creative process, an almost old-fashioned method. In the course of time the traces it leaves behind manifest themselves as 'life-traces' as the surrounding paper

turns yellowish. There is always a copier close to his desk, which allows Grimm to balance variations of the composition and make minor adjustments.

Grimm calls his work a kaleidoscope, encompassing different topics that can be explored by the viewer: **Art of Life, Emotion, Science, Animal, Creature, Timeline**. The website of the cartoon series will link the different themes by tags so as to emphasise even more the ramification and coherence of his work, which has already acquired the character of a **magnum opus**.

The philosophical acerbity and depth of **Teatime for a Universe** inspire us to reflect extensively and to ruminate on our existence: life as a 'mysterion'. The cartoonist shows us unmistakably that in all of us there is a yearning for meaning and love, perhaps ultimately for paradise. Access, however, in the here and now is denied us, so that our longing is unfulfilled. Nevertheless, Lawrence Grimm keeps the famous 'loophole' open – depending on the point of view, access to paradise stays open through this tiny gap: it follows that – from the vantage point of the man

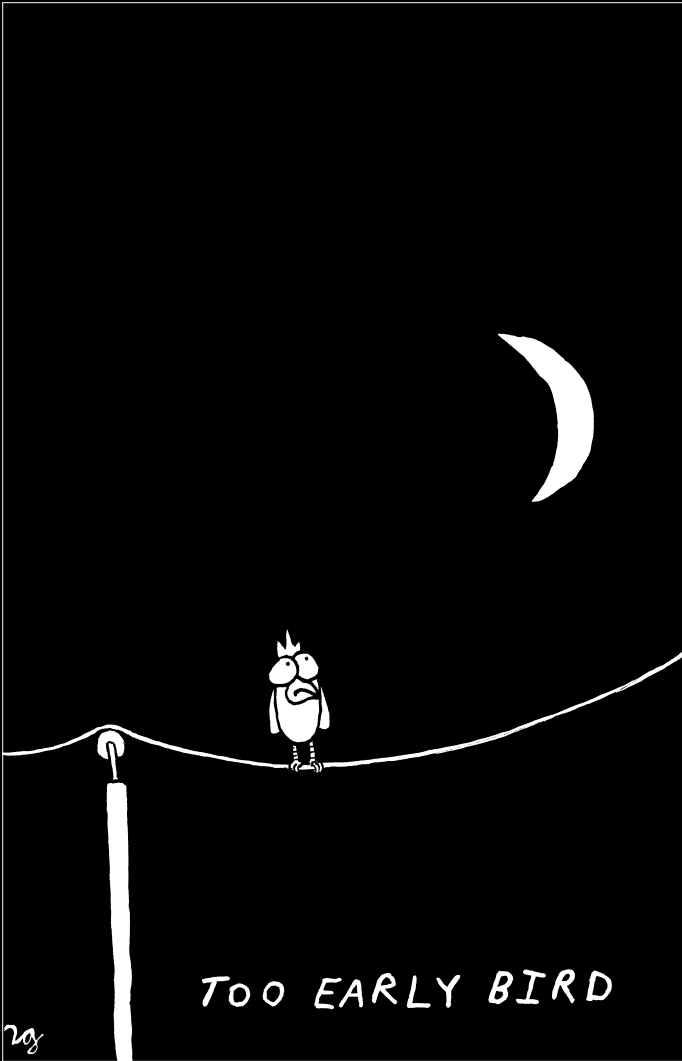
climbing the tree – there may also be a faint hope that the second half of the infinite tree can be climbed because he has already mastered the first half in spite of the laws of physics.

Rudolf Velhagen

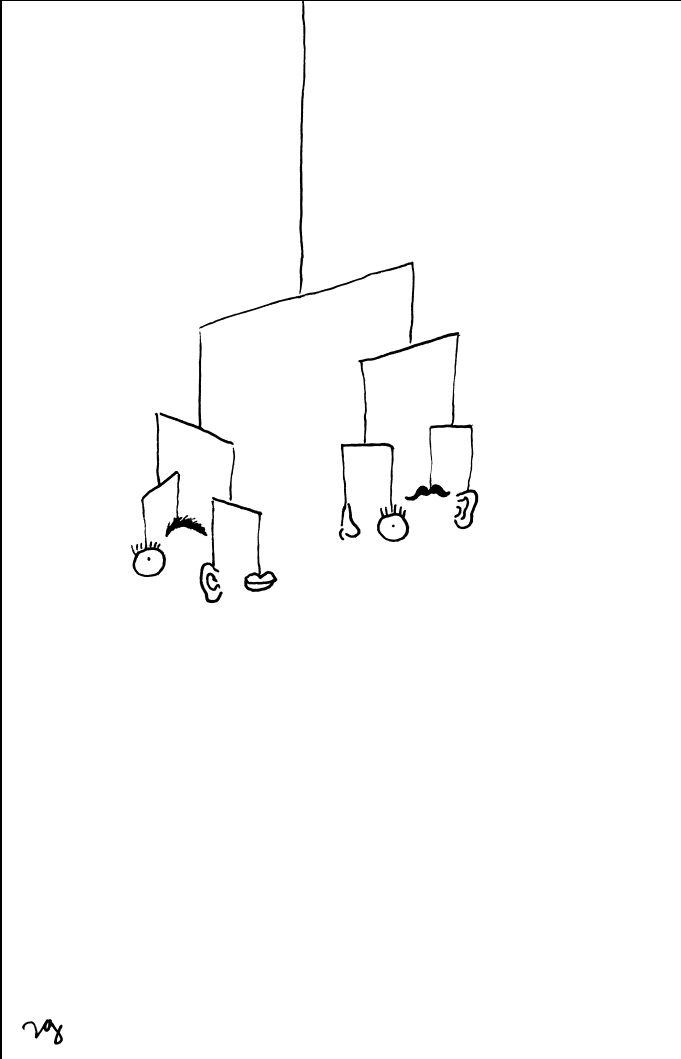
Dr. phil. Rudolf Velhagen, art historian, born 1962. PhD in early art history at the University of Basel. 1990–1995 scientific assistant Kunstmuseum Basel (department of copper engraving), from 1995–2000 in Paris (scientific assistant, Centre Georges Pompidou and lecturing

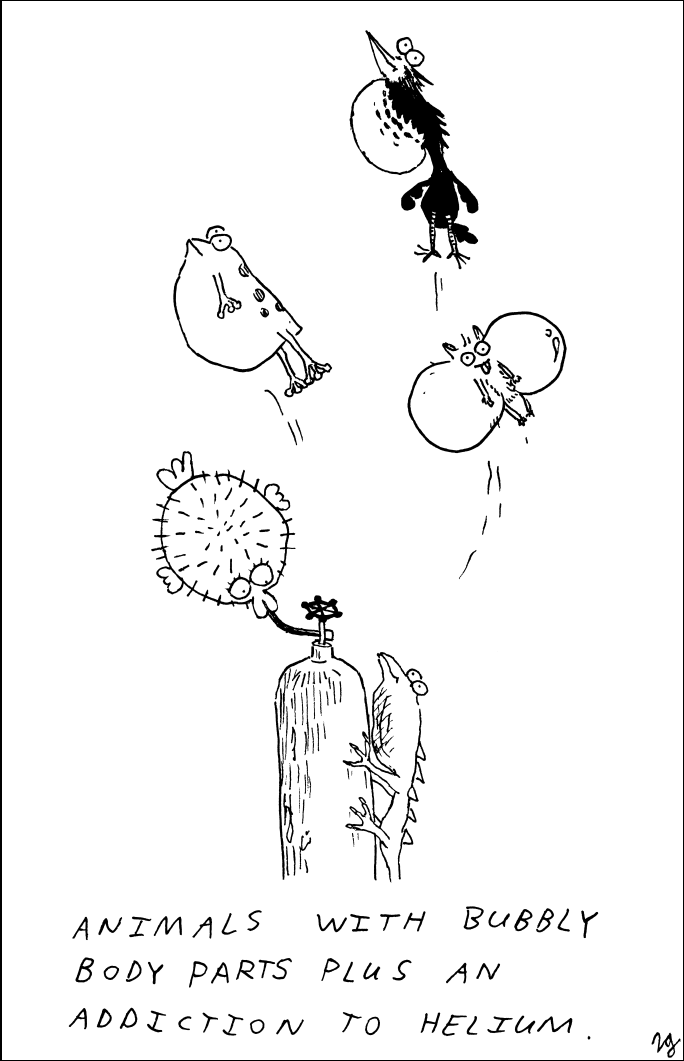
at the Ecole du Louvre), from 2000–2005 head of department Visual Arts, Swiss Cultural Foundation Pro Helvetia, Zurich, from 2005–2012 Director Museum Langmatt, Foundation Langmatt Sidney and Jenny Brown, Baden, since autumn 2012 head of Historical Collection, canton of Aargau (Castle of Lenzburg). Also, since 2009 curator museum Eduard Spörri, Wettingen, and since 2013 director Galerie im Gluri Suter Huus, Wettingen.

Lawrence Grimm, born 1978 in Zurich, is of Australian-German-Swiss nationality. During his school days he was very active in a youth theatre. He studied film at the Zurich University of the Arts, won several short film awards and was finalist of the Student Academy Awards with his diploma film. He transferred his experience in visual narration to the world of cartoons and illustrations. With black ink he scribbles moments of life, love, loneliness and recurrence. His cartoons have been shown at exhibitions and they are online. www.teatimeforauniverse.com



Too Early Bird





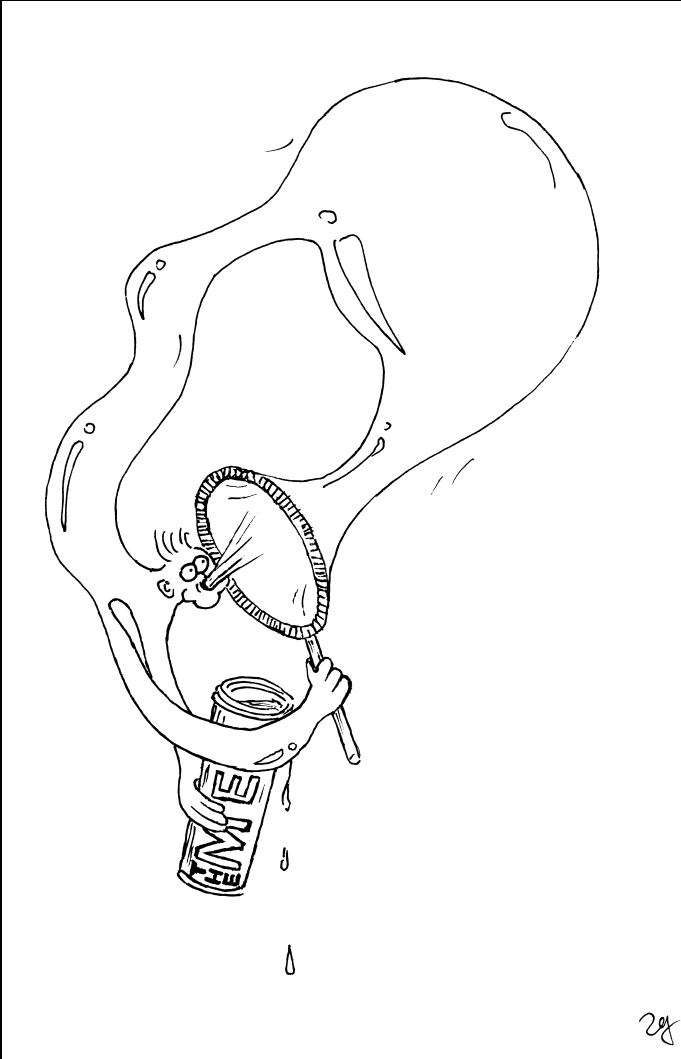
IS MY
HEART BIG
ENOUGH TO
CREATE AN
INNER GLOW?

o

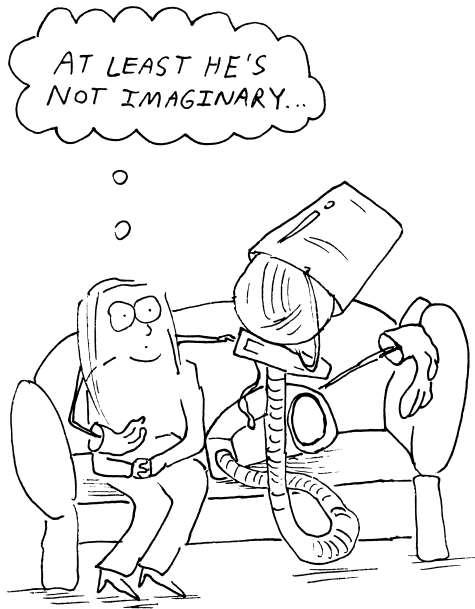
o



28



Blow



24

LINDA'S FRIEND



THEY WERE BENT FOR
EACH OTHER.

28

HELP ME!

I KNOW IT'S HARD
TO BELIEVE, BUT
I'M A PEN AND
I WROTE THIS.

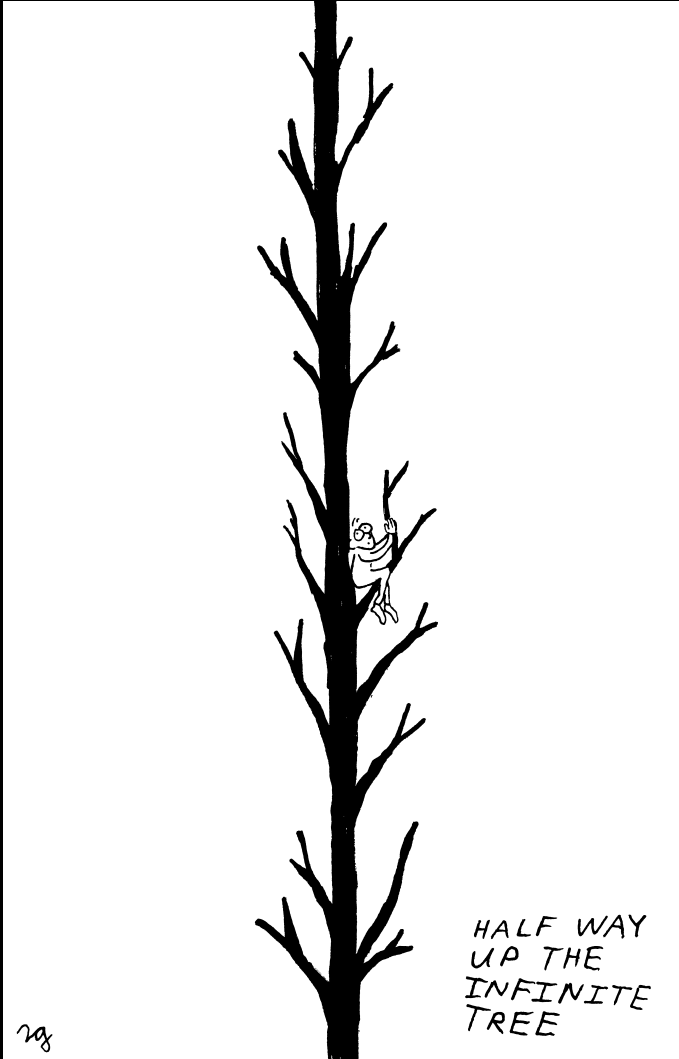
IF THIS MESSAGE
EVER COMES TO

YOU, THIS IS

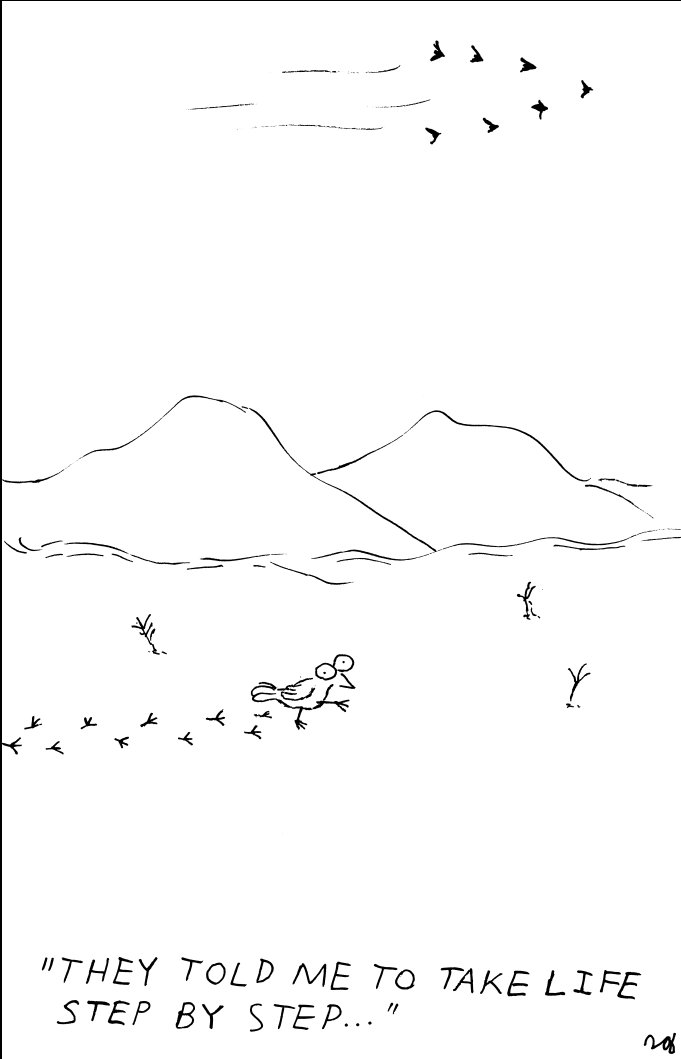
WHERE I AM!
OH MY GOD!

THEY FOUND ME

28

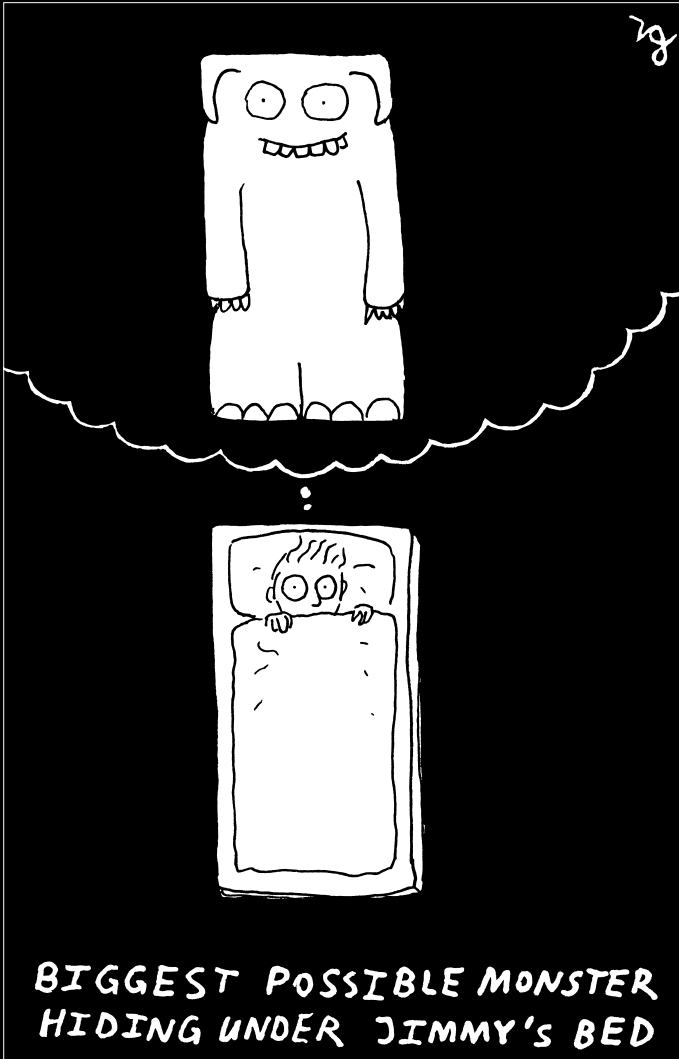


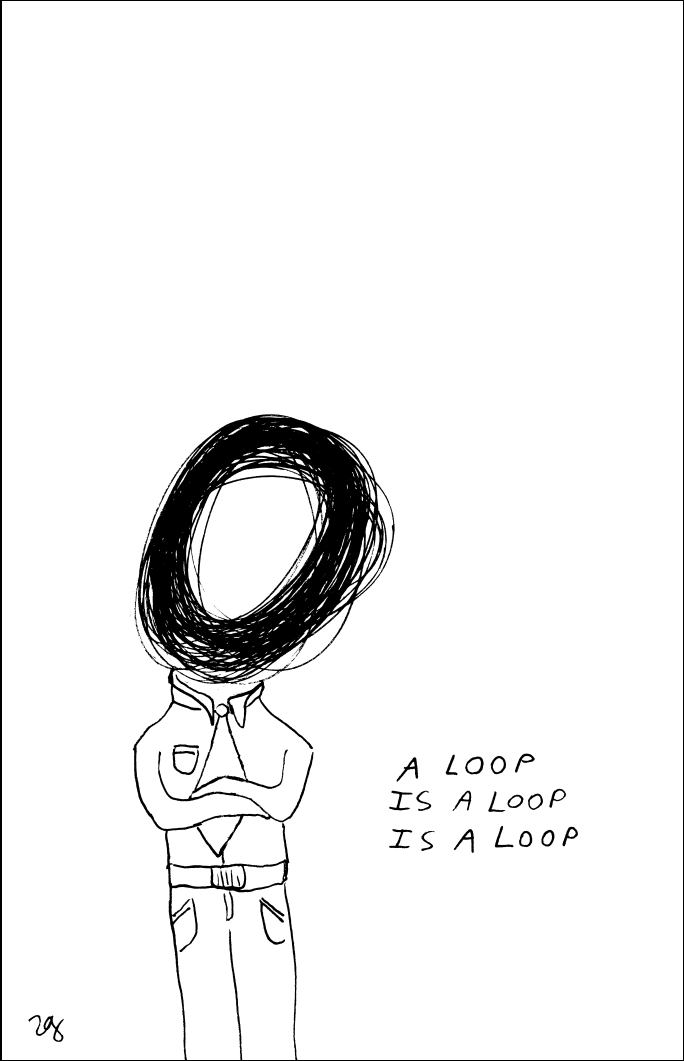
Half Way



"THEY TOLD ME TO TAKE LIFE
STEP BY STEP..."

nd





A LOOP
IS A LOOP
IS A LOOP

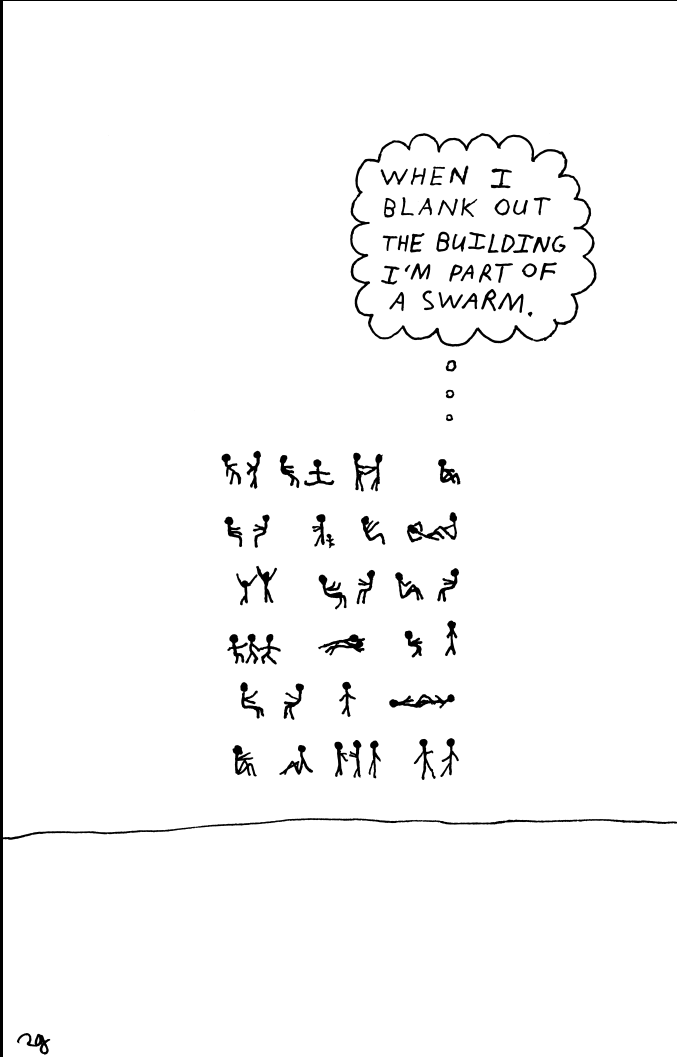
208

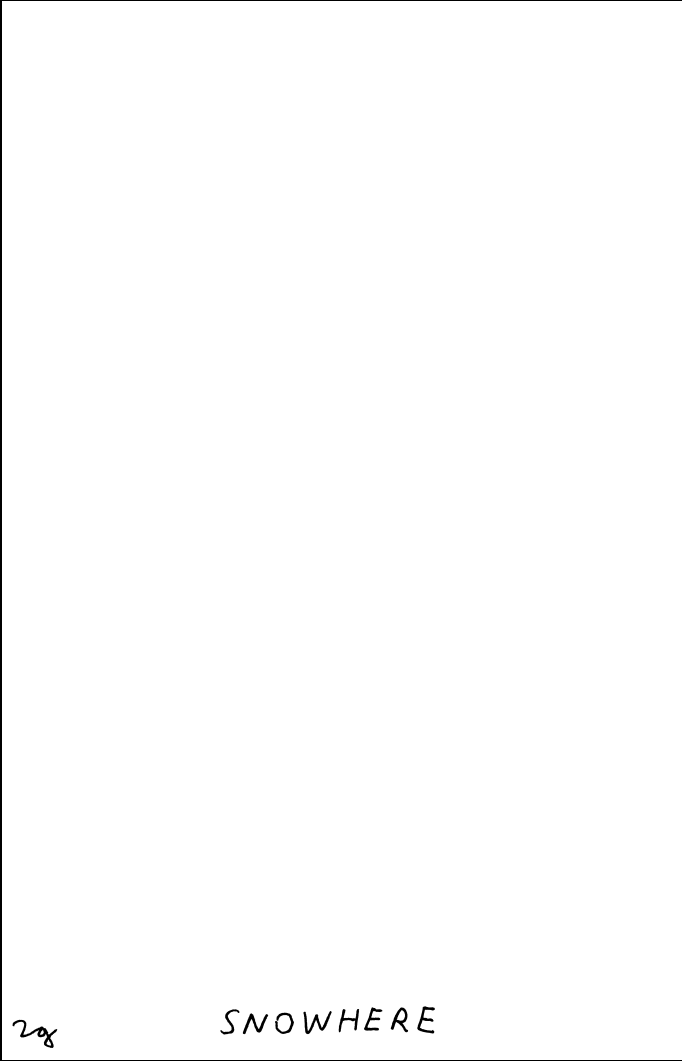


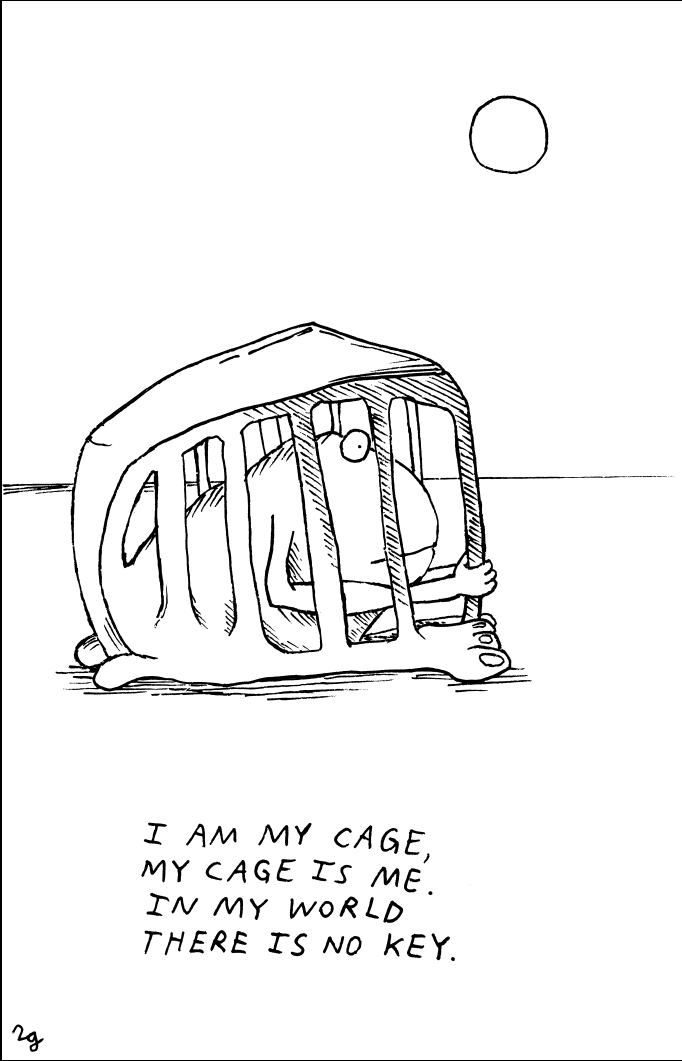
ELIZABETH'S FANTASY
COMBINED WITH
ELIZABETH'S NIHILISM



208

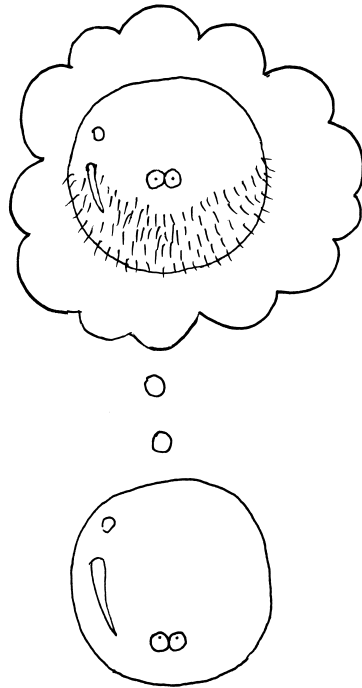






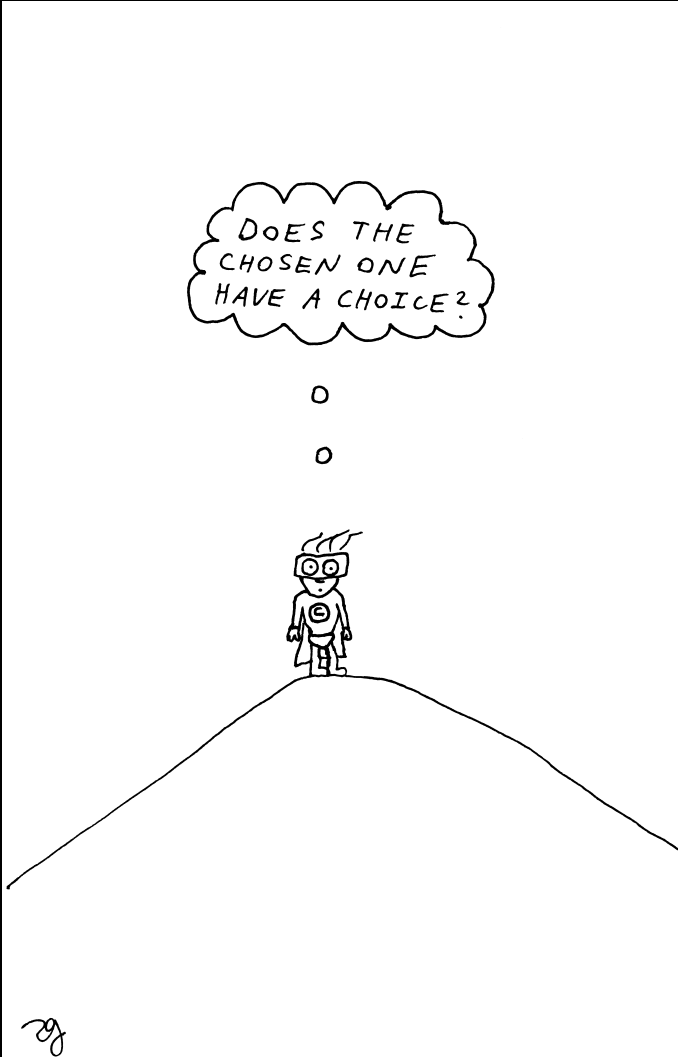
I AM MY CAGE,
MY CAGE IS ME.
IN MY WORLD
THERE IS NO KEY.

24

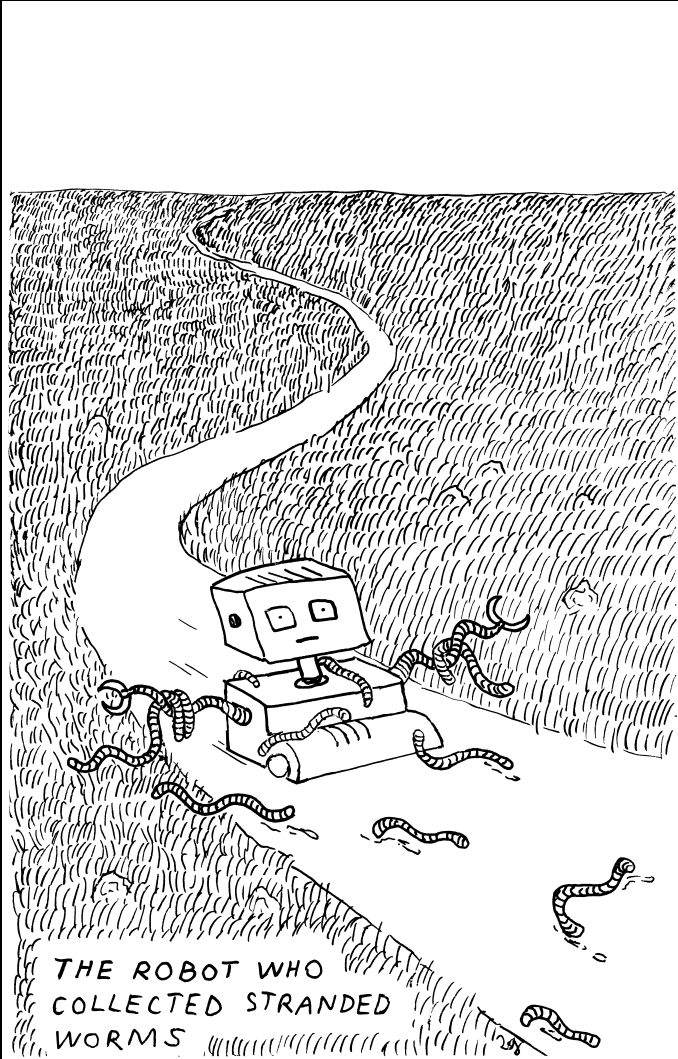


THIS IS SAM THE
SOAP BUBBLE, WISHING
HE HAD ENOUGH TIME IN
LIFE TO GROW A BEARD

20



The Chosen One



THE ROBOT WHO
COLLECTED STRANDED
WORMS

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