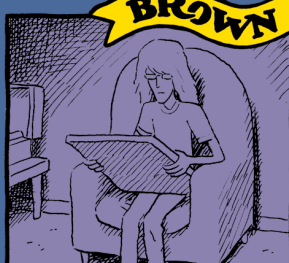
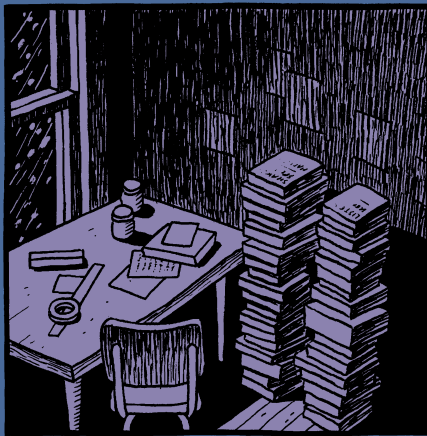
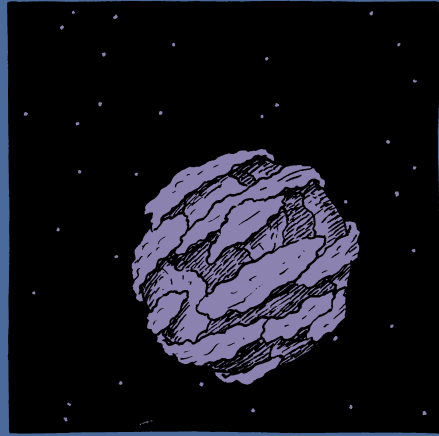
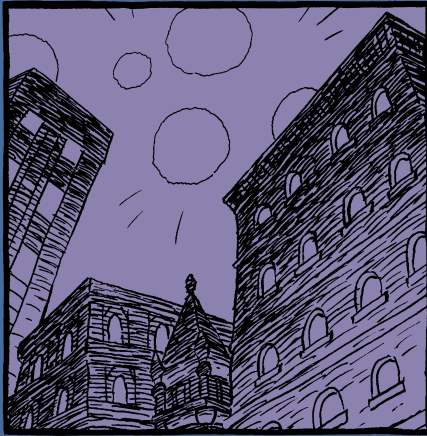


THE LITTLE MAN
Short strips, 1980 - 1995



**CHESTER
BROWN**





**THE
LITTLE
MAN**

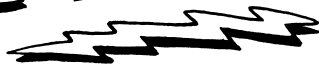


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First printed edition: April 1998

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THE LITTLE MAN



SHORT
STRIPS
1980 - 1995

CHESTER
BROWN

DRAWN & QUARTERLY
MONTREAL

This book is dedicated to my mother, (née) Marion Sinclair New (1923-1976), who bought me my first comic book when I was five, and to my father, Roland William Brown (1923-1997), who convinced the editor of the local paper to print one of my strips when I was twelve.

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PREFACE

This is a virtually complete collection of my previously published short strips. I don't have a precise definition of what a short strip is, but the strips in this book are those that weren't serialized when originally published or weren't utilized as part of a serialized story. (Some of my early short strips, which were at first intended to stand complete at a few pages, were later incorporated into the long serial "Ed the Happy Clown".)

There are two other restrictions on which strips I've included in here:

① I've only included strips that I've done as an adult. Through my teen years I had strips published in church bulletins, school year-books, and fanzines. I have no desire to re-foist that juvenilia on the public, so this book begins with the first strip I completed after moving out of my father's home at 19. I'm not sure that I really was an adult at that point in time (or that "The Toilet Paper Revolt" shouldn't be considered juvenilia) but at least that's when I became responsible for my own welfare.

② I've only included strips that are "mine". I'm leaving out all the strips I've done with collaborators and all the strips that feel to me now like they were collaborations, even if technically they weren't. For instance, at a certain point

I began to incorporate "found" imagery and text into my strips. (See the note at the end of the book for "Mars".) I did several strips in which all of the text for the strip was "found" and none of those strips are in this book.

I had intended to put together a "best of" book. Deciding to make it "complete" made my job easier -- I didn't have to decide if a strip was good or bad. (I really love some of the work in here, and I really hate some of it, but most of it I'm somewhat indifferent to.) The strips are printed in chronological order (or at least as close to that order as memory will allow me -- thank god I put the year at the end of each strip).

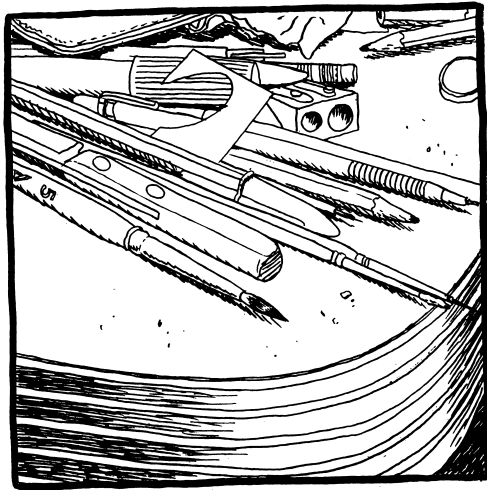
Since most of the comic books that originally published these strips had pages that were larger than the pages of this book are, many of the strips have been reformatted. There are notes at the end of the book which explain where each strip first appeared, along with other relevant and irrelevant information.

Thanks to the following wonderful people for their assistance and for being in my life: Sook-Yin Lee, Gordon Brown, Joe Matt, Seth, Akemi Nakamura, Chris Oliveros, and Marina Lesenko.

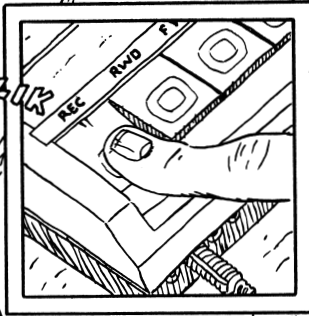
Chester
Brown

Toronto
February 1998

THE LITTLE MAN



SHORT
STRIPS
1980 - 1995

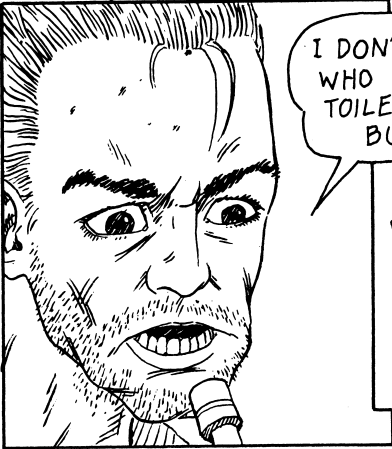


THE TOILET PAPER REVOLT

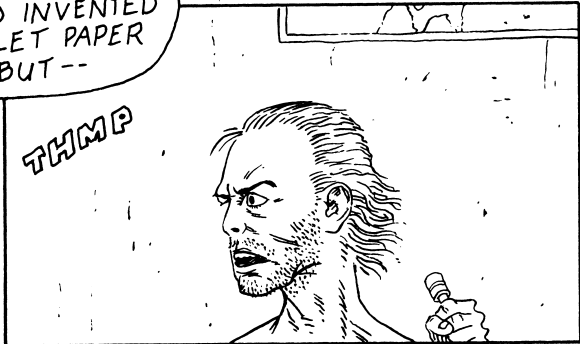


I'M TAPING THIS MESSAGE IN THE HOPE THAT SOME FUTURE CIVILIZATION MAY FIND IT AND LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKE.

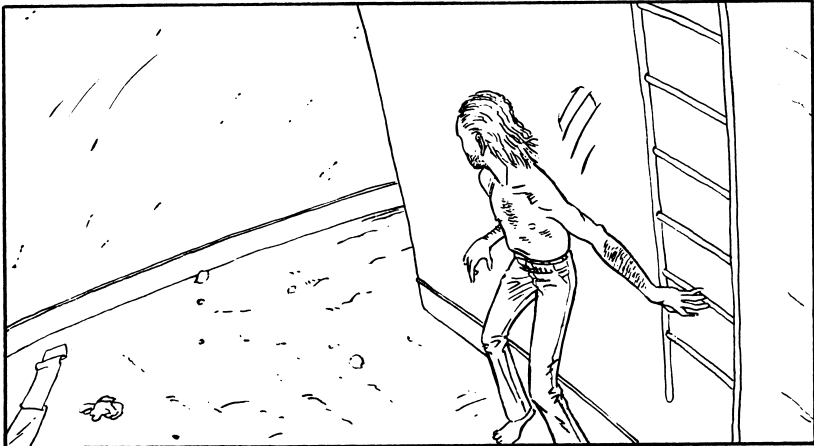




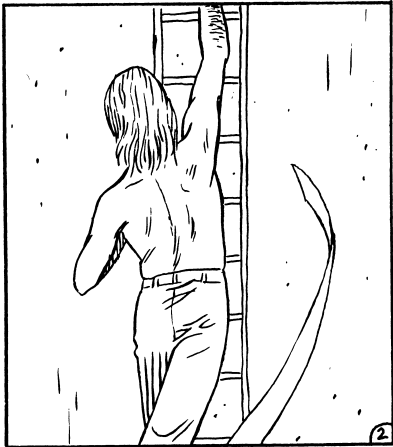
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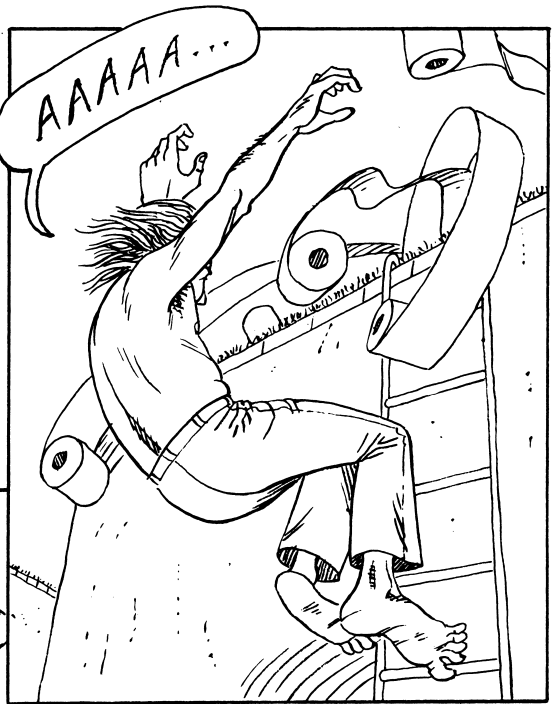


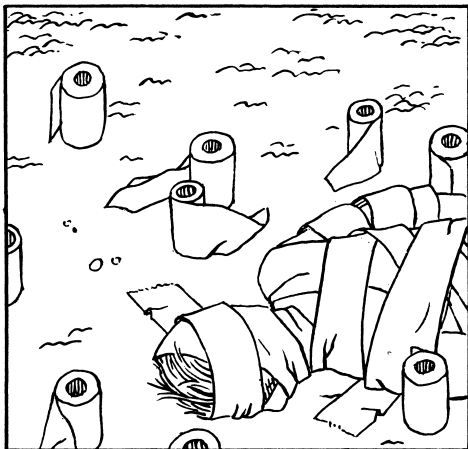
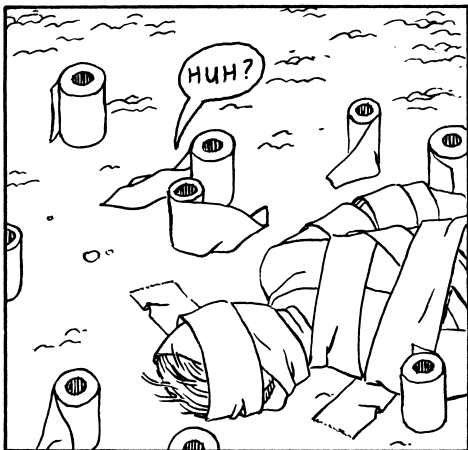
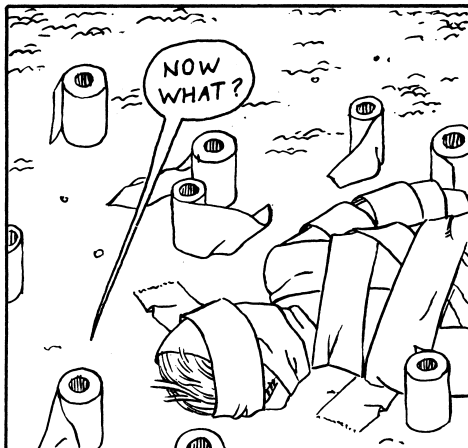
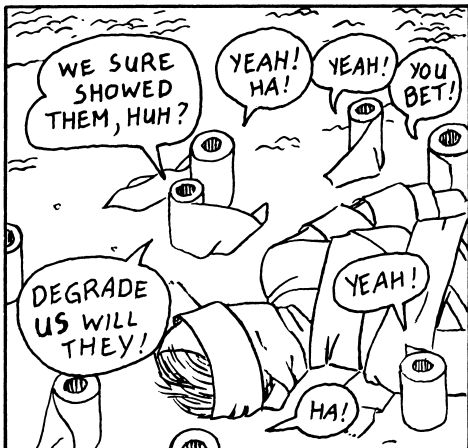
THMP

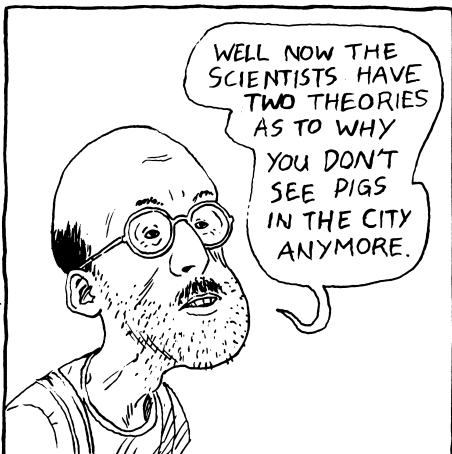


BOO!



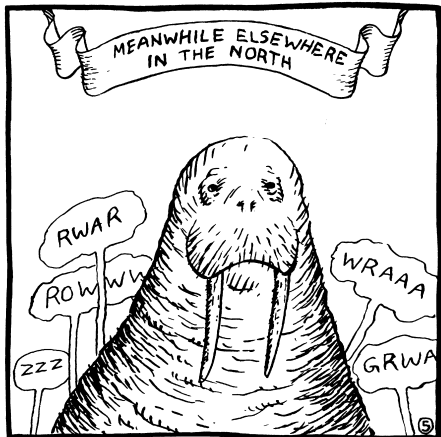
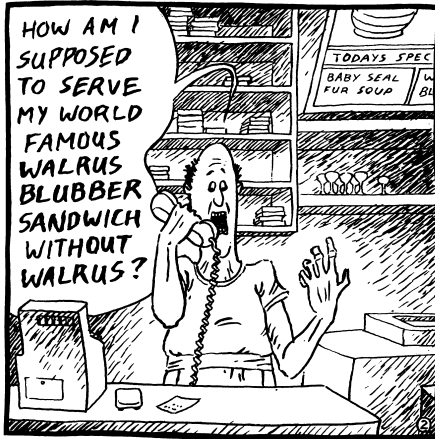
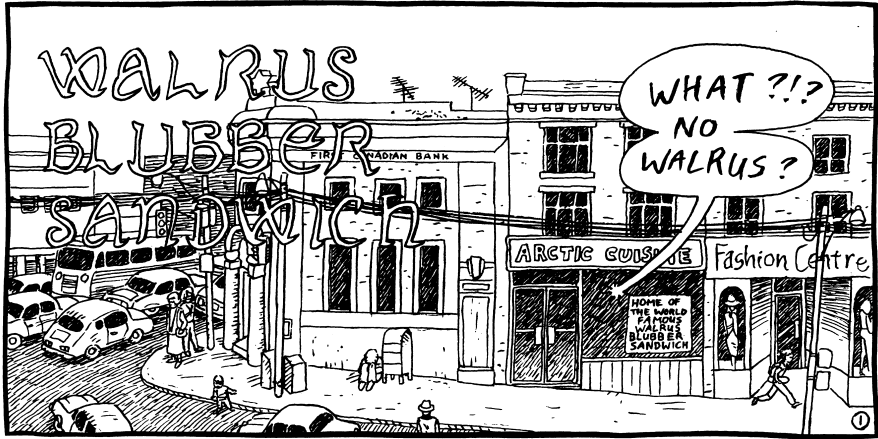


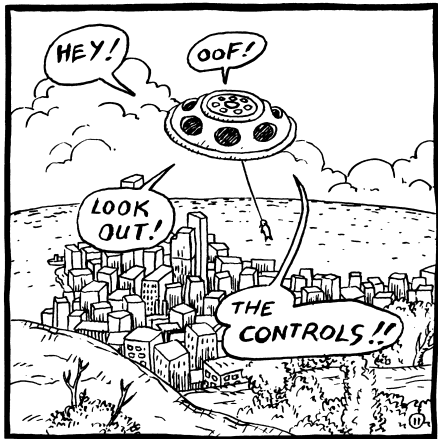
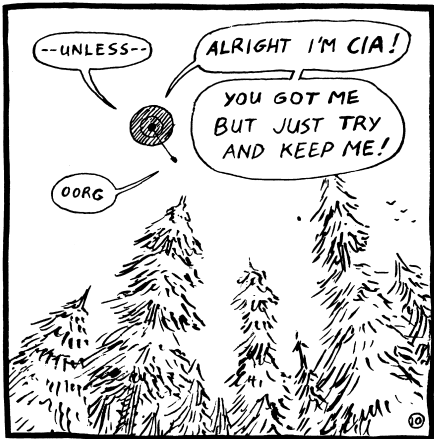
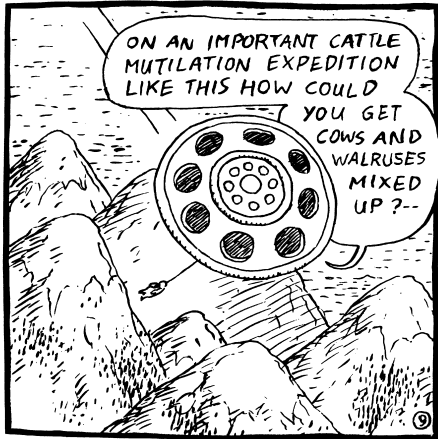


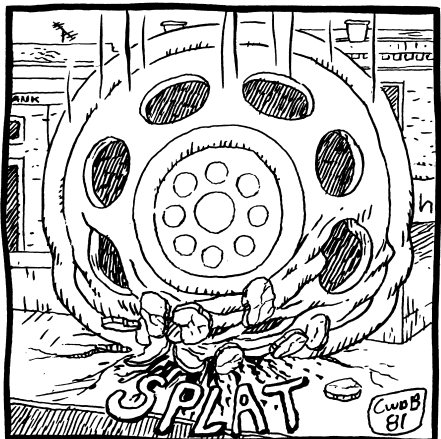
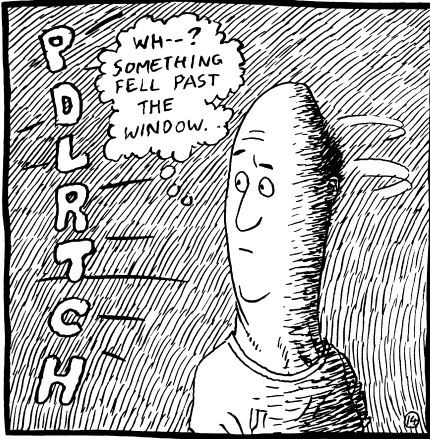
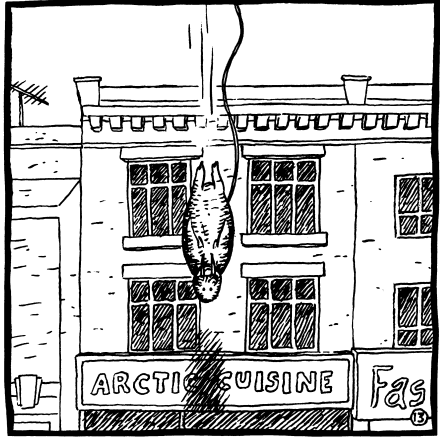
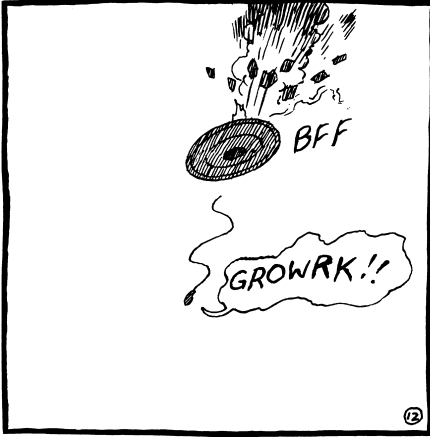


"THE FIRST THEORY IS THAT MEAN ALIENS FROM OUTER SPACE USED STRANGE RAYS TO CHANGE THE PIGS INTO HUGE HUMAN-LIKE KILLERS."

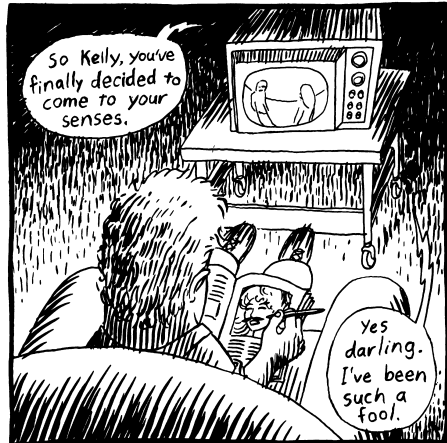
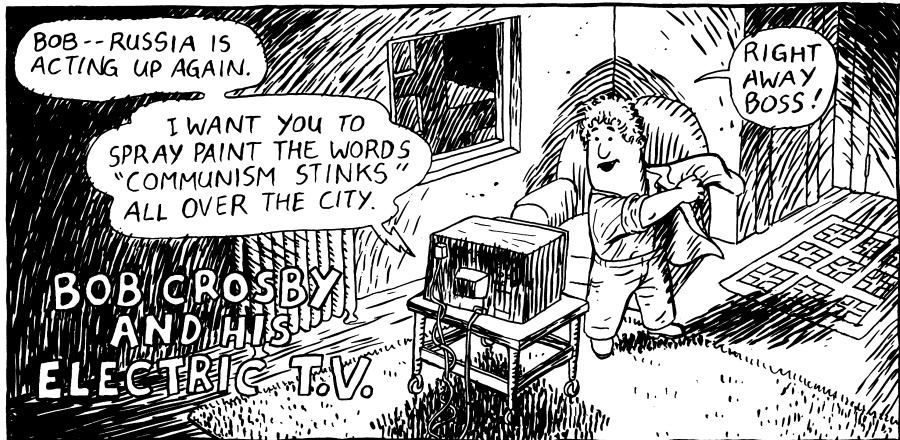


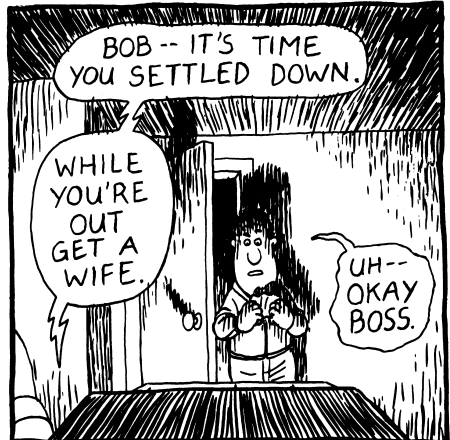


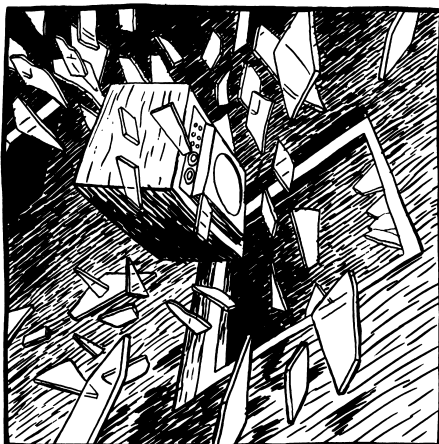
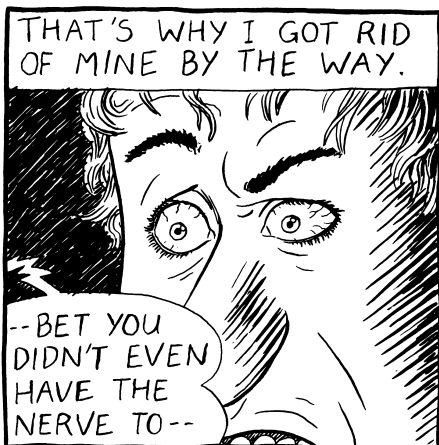
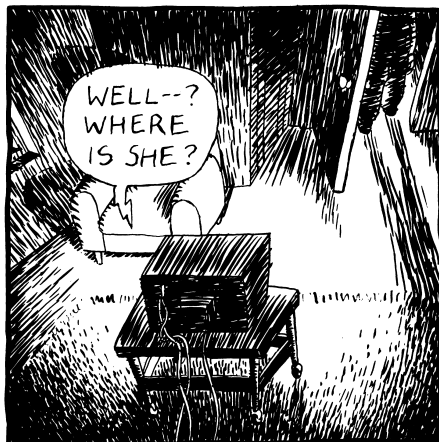
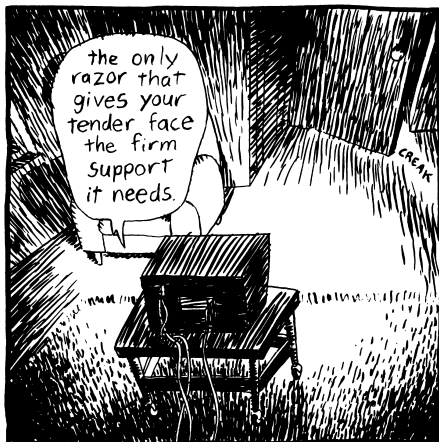


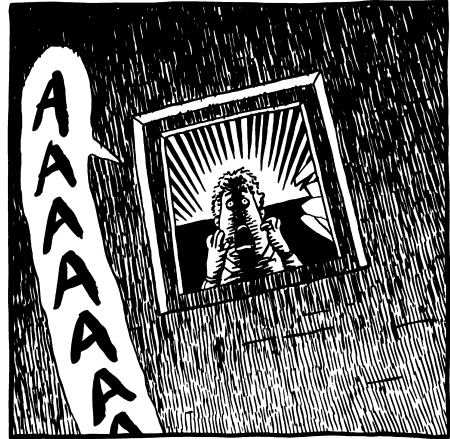
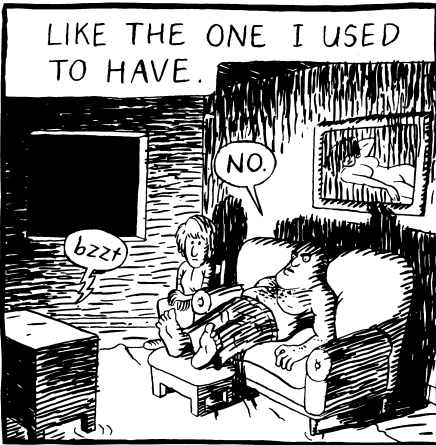
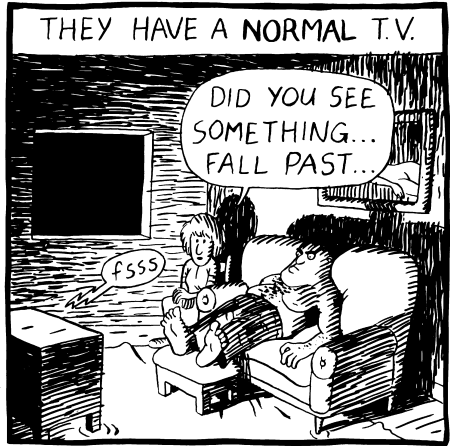


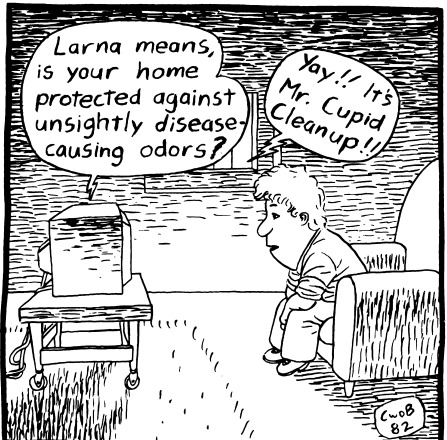
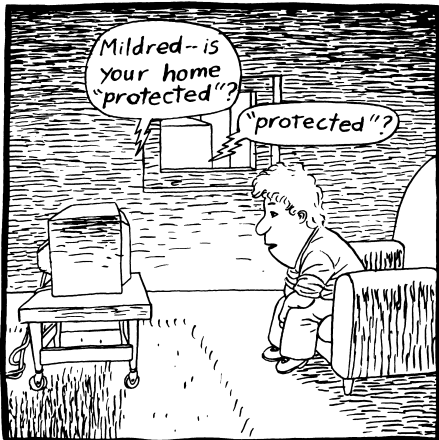
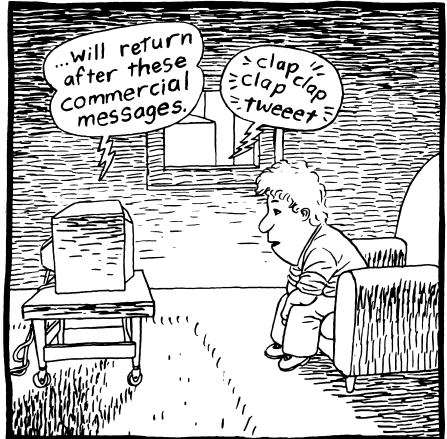






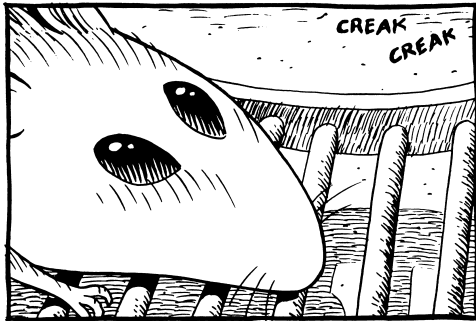
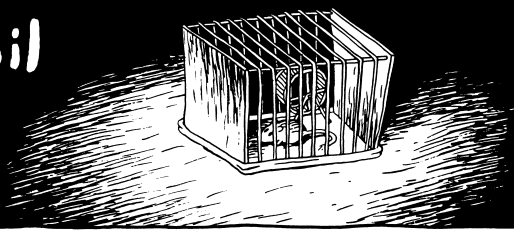


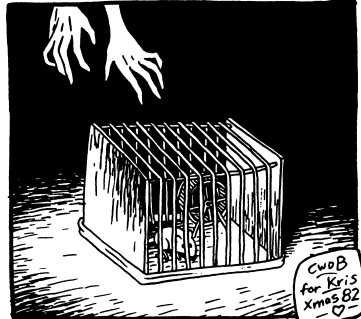
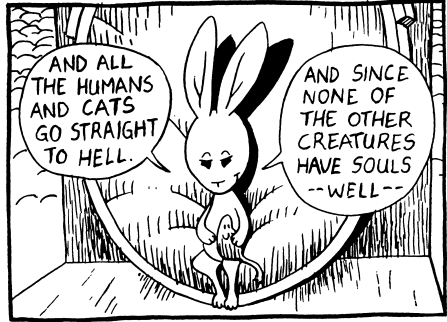
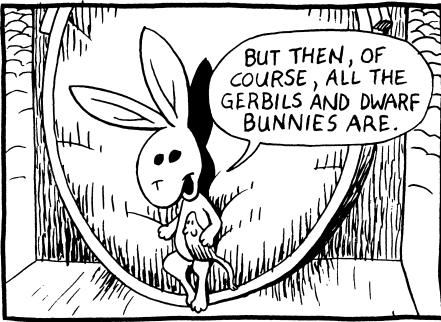
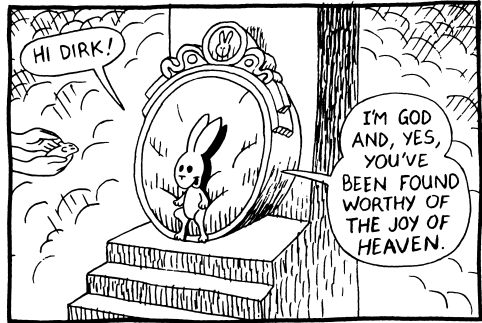
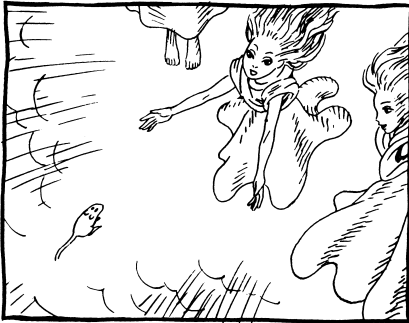


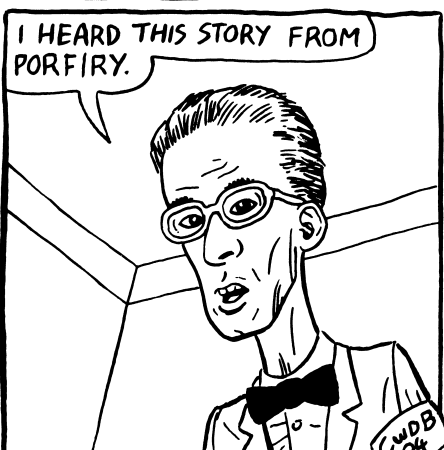
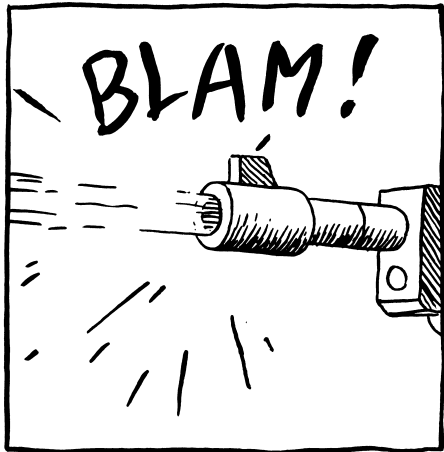


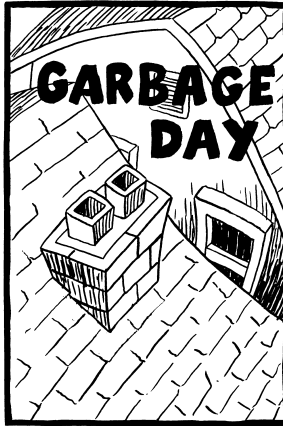
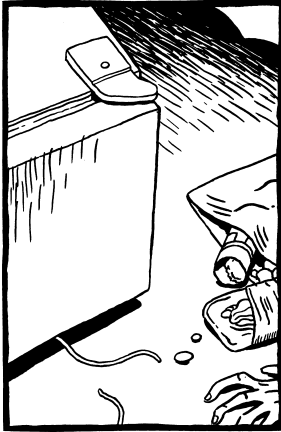
Dirk The Gerbil

part one:
life is fun











MY OLD NEIGHBORHOOD

I WONDER WHO LIVES HERE?



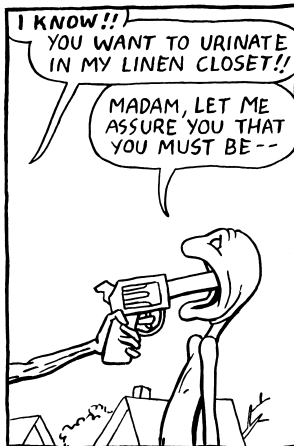
HELLO, I'M YOUR NEW NEIGHBOR. THE ONE WHO THREW UP ON MY CAT?

WHAT--

NO-- I--

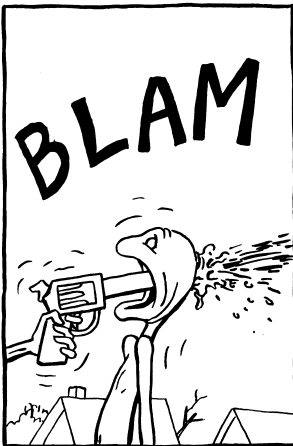


AND WHY ARE YOU NAKED? I-- I-- I CAN'T REMEMBER...

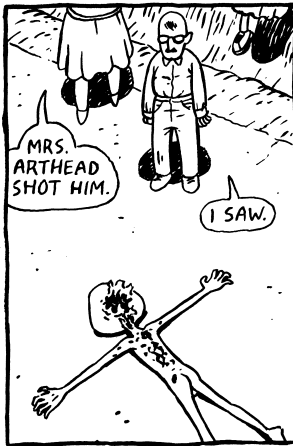
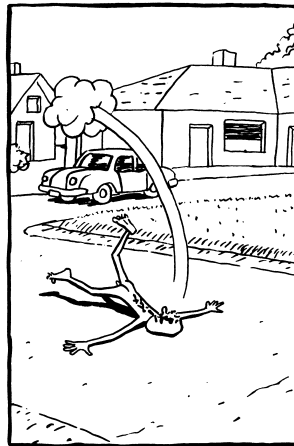


I KNOW!! YOU WANT TO URINATE IN MY LINEN CLOSET!!

MADAM, LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT YOU MUST BE--



BLAM



MRS. ARTHEAD SHOT HIM.

I SAW.

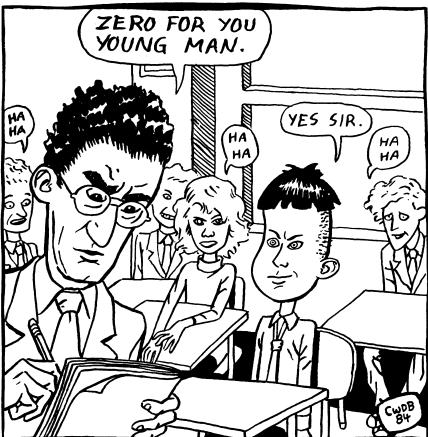


WHAT'LL WE DO WITH IT?

LET'S HIDE HIM IN THE GURNSEY'S GARAGE.

YEAH, THEY'RE ON VACATION THIS WEEK.

CWD B



**I LIVE
IN THE
BOTTOMLESS
PIT**



CLUMP

AOWW...

IS IT TIME YET?



WHO ARE YOU?

THE ANTI-CHRIST. IS IT TIME FOR ME TO COME OUT YET?

WHAT?



WHEN GOD CREATED THE WORLD HE PUT ME IN THIS PIT AND TOLD ME WHEN I WAS SUPPOSED TO COME OUT AND EVERYTHING I WAS SUPPOSED TO DO.



BUT IT'S BEEN SO LONG I'VE FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING HE TOLD ME.



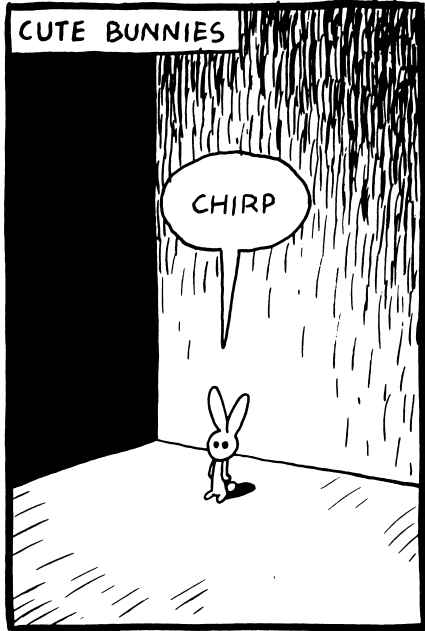
OKAY-- LET'S SAY IT'S TIME. HOW DO WE GET OUT OF HERE?

UH-- I'VE FORGOTTEN THAT TOO. YOU'LL BE DEAD PRETTY SOON.



CwDB
84

THINGS TO AVOID STEPPING ON



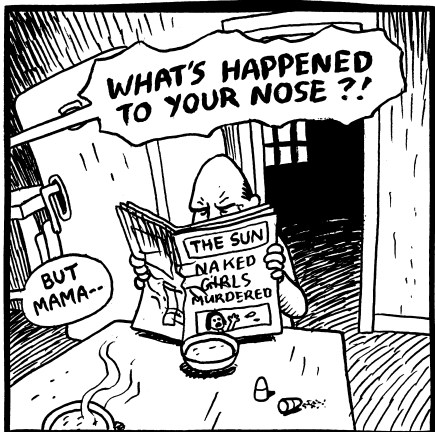


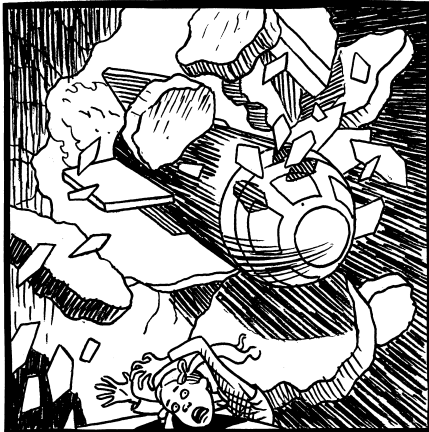
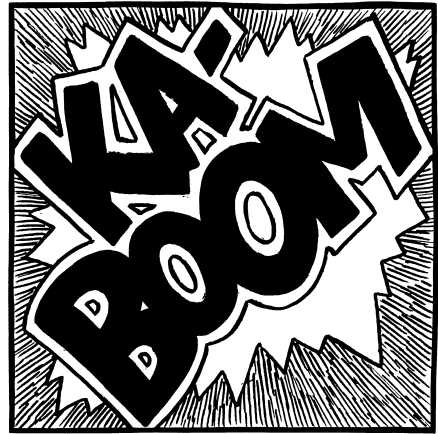
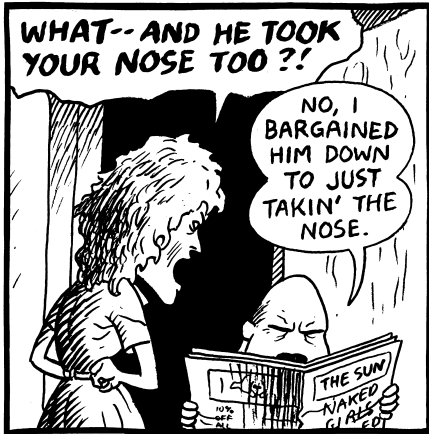
THE
GOURMETS
FROM
PLANET

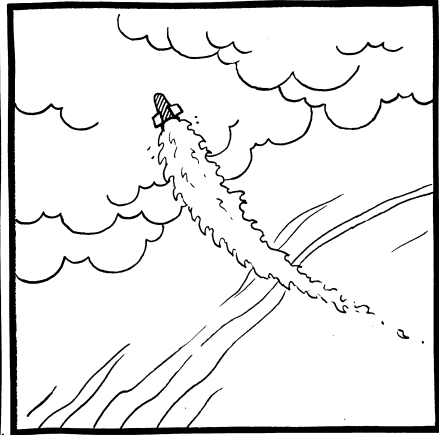
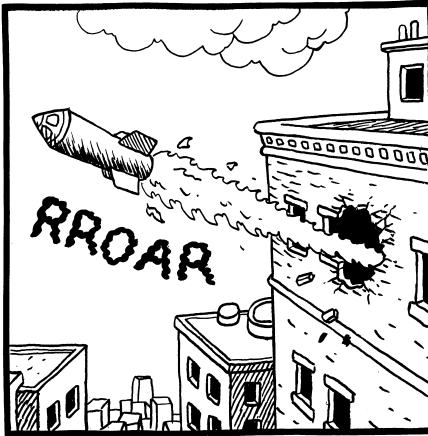
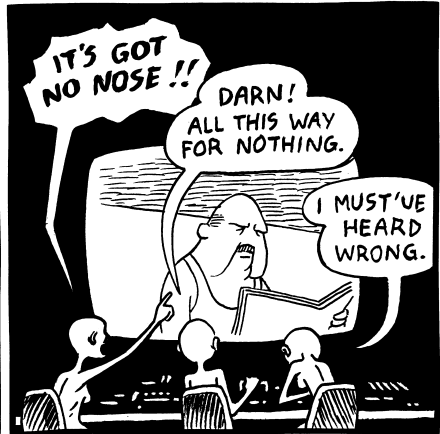
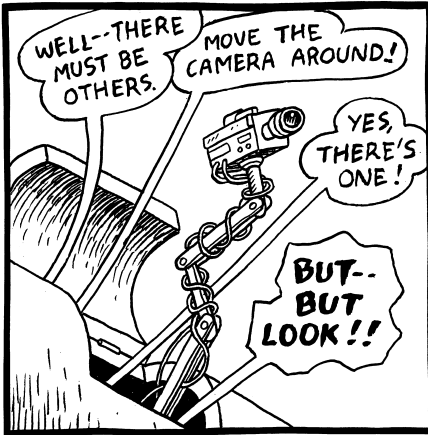
X



PLANET X

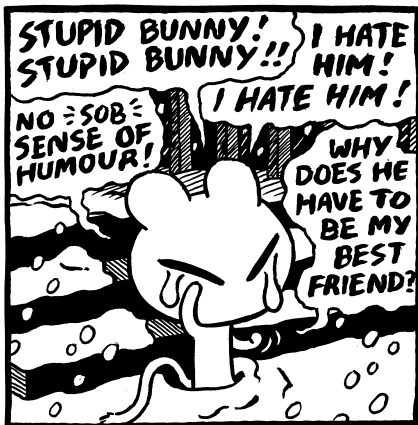
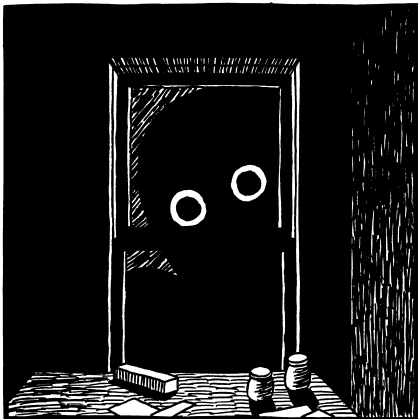




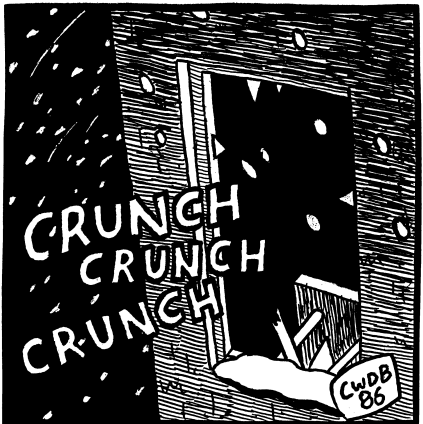
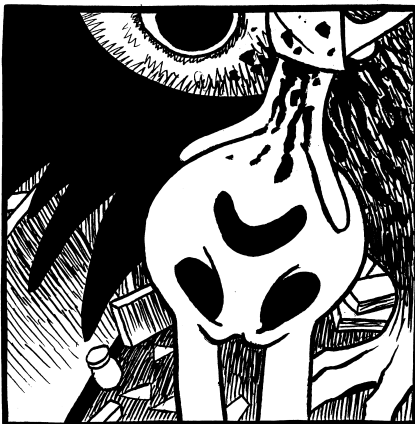
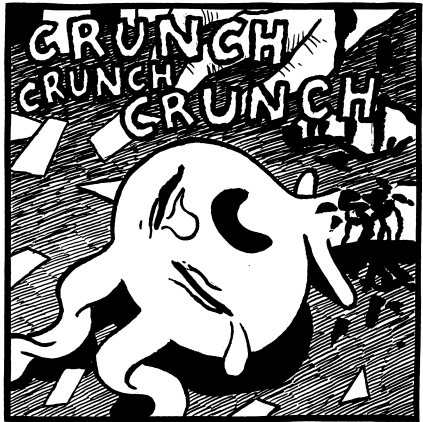


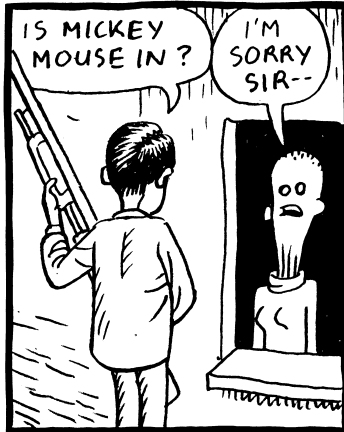
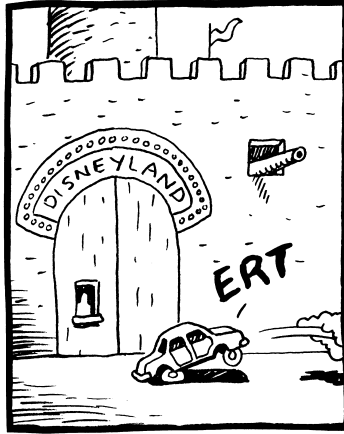
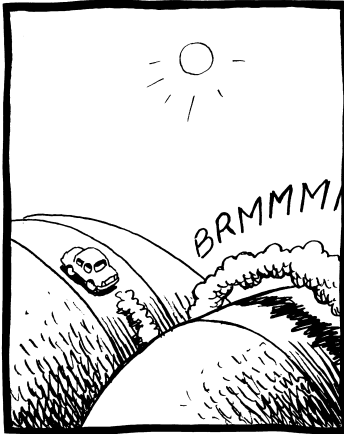
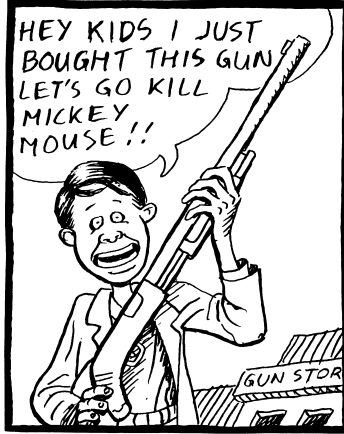


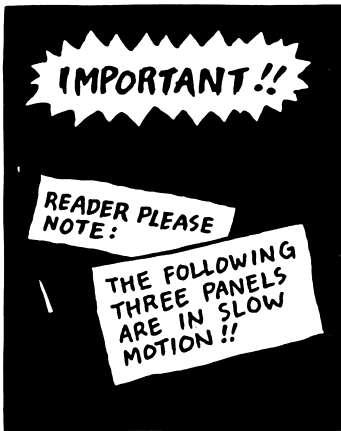
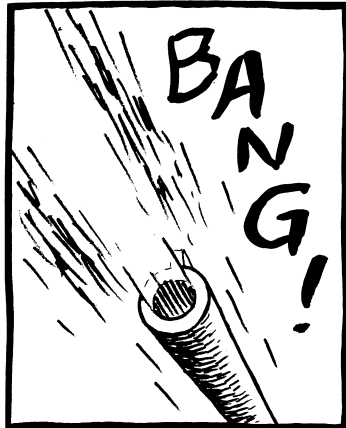




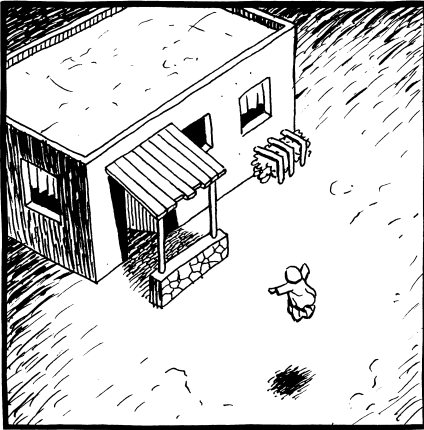
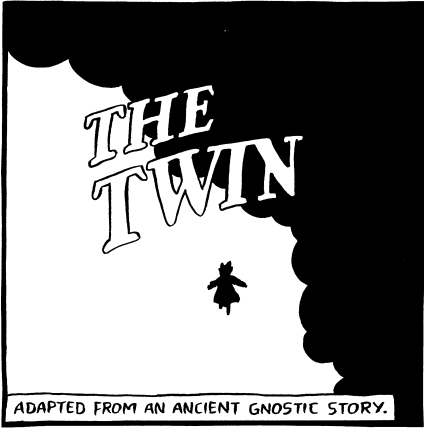




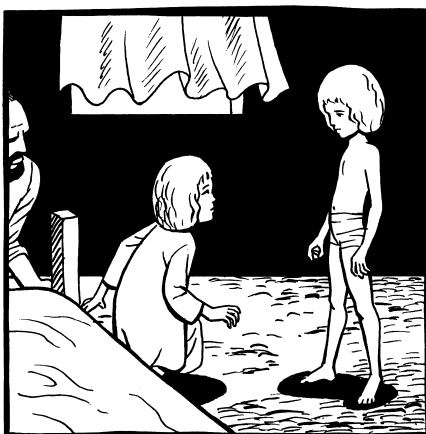
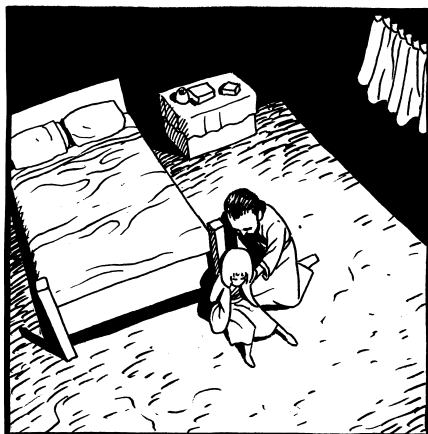
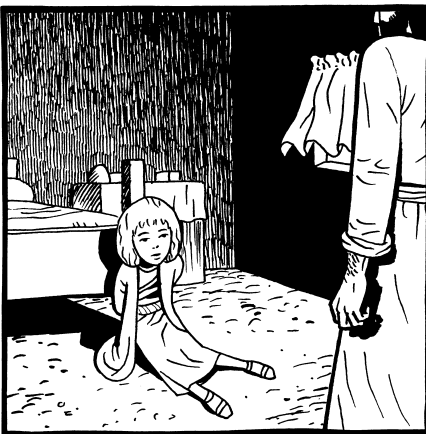
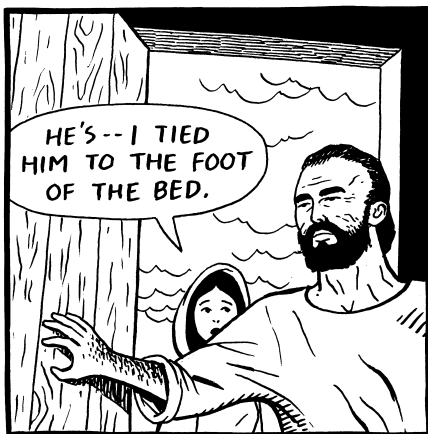
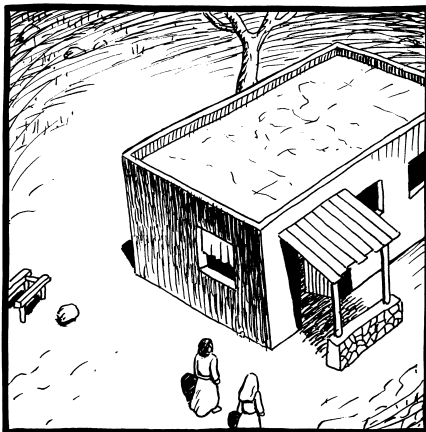


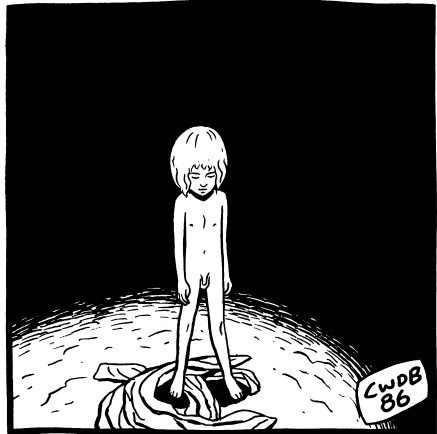






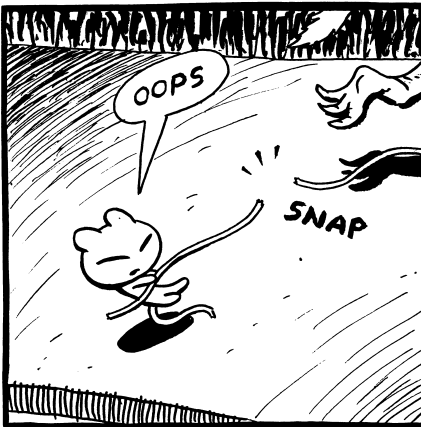
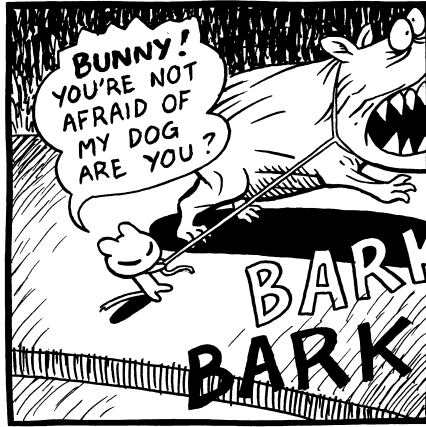






BACK TO
OBEDIENCE
SCHOOL





ANTI-CENSORSHIP PROPAGANDA

"'EROTICA' MEANS ANY VISUAL MATTER A DOMINANT CHARACTERISTIC OF WHICH IS THE DEPICTION, IN A SEXUAL CONTEXT OR FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE SEXUAL STIMULATION OF THE VIEWER, OF A HUMAN SEXUAL ORGAN A FEMALE BREAST OR THE HUMAN ANAL REGION."

from BILL C-54

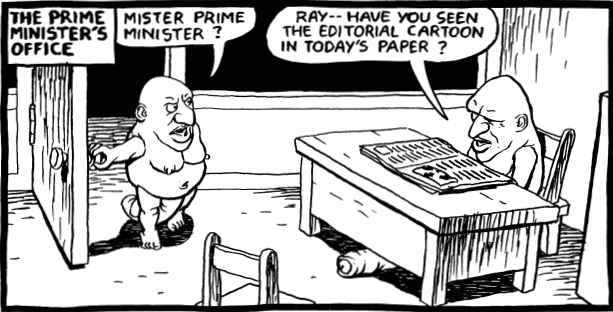
I WOULD LIKE TO STATE UP FRONT THAT IT IS NOT MY INTENTION THAT ANYONE BE SEXUALLY STIMULATED BY THE FOLLOWING COMIC STRIP AND IF ANYONE IS IT'S NOT MY FAULT.

CWPB

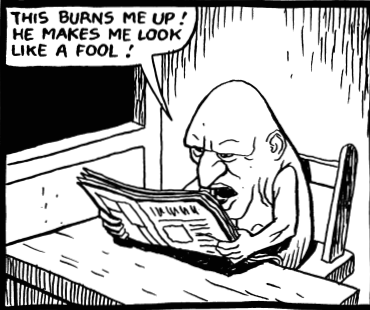
THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

MISTER PRIME MINISTER ?

RAY-- HAVE YOU SEEN THE EDITORIAL CARTOON IN TODAY'S PAPER ?



THIS BURNS ME UP ! HE MAKES ME LOOK LIKE A FOOL !

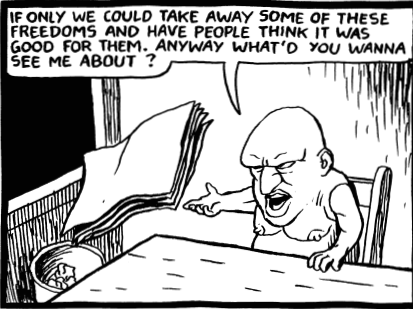


MAYBE YOU COULD COME UP WITH SOME LEGISLATION THAT WOULD MAKE IT ILLEGAL TO PUBLISH ANYTHING WE DON'T LIKE.

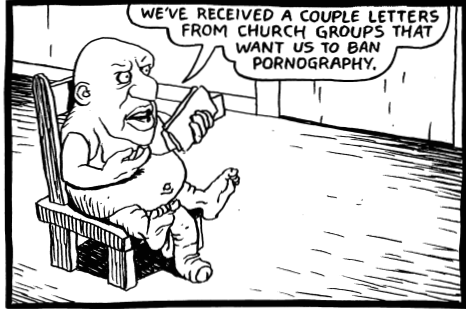
IT'D BE TRICKY -- "FREEDOM OF THE PRESS"



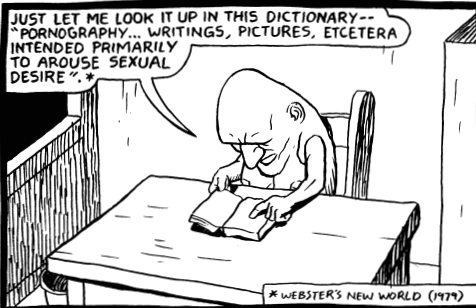
IF ONLY WE COULD TAKE AWAY SOME OF THESE FREEDOMS AND HAVE PEOPLE THINK IT WAS GOOD FOR THEM. ANYWAY WHAT'D YOU WANNA SEE ME ABOUT ?



WE'VE RECEIVED A COUPLE LETTERS FROM CHURCH GROUPS THAT WANT US TO BAN PORNOGRAPHY.

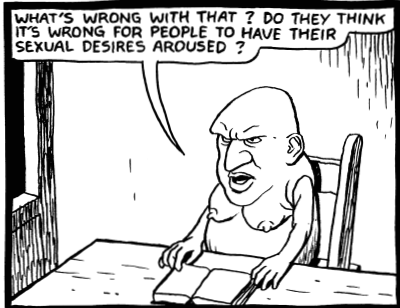


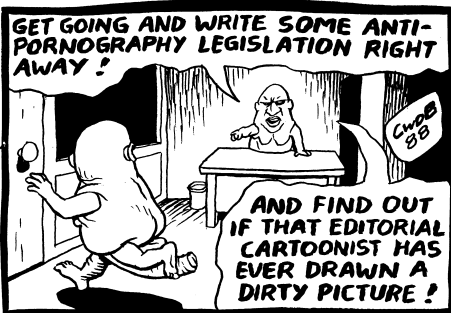
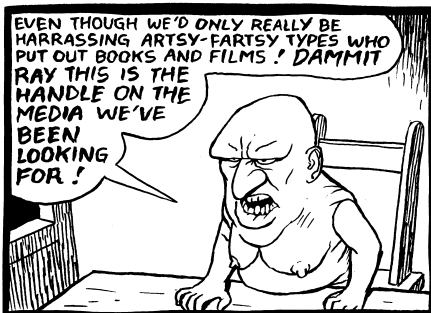
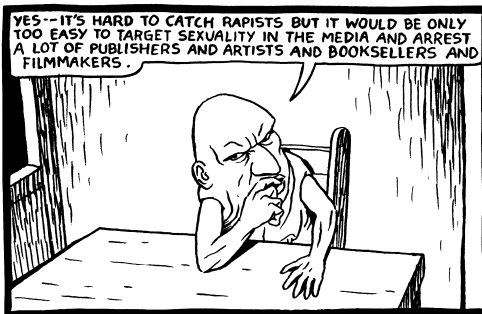
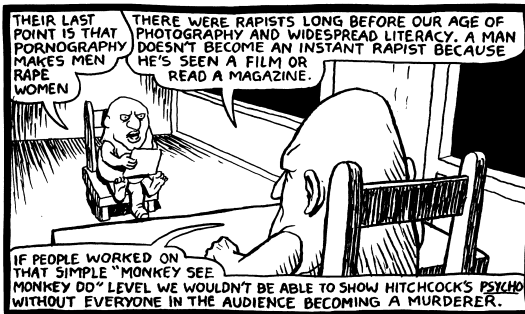
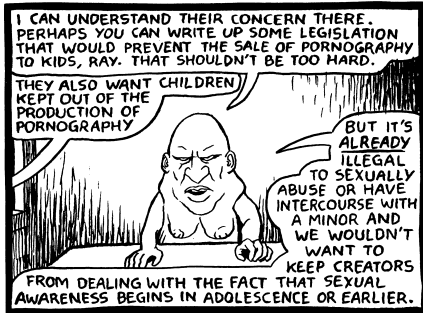
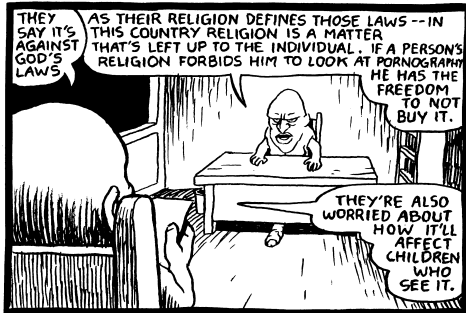
JUST LET ME LOOK IT UP IN THIS DICTIONARY-- "PORNOGRAPHY... WRITINGS, PICTURES, ETCETERA INTENDED PRIMARILY TO AROUSE SEXUAL DESIRE".*

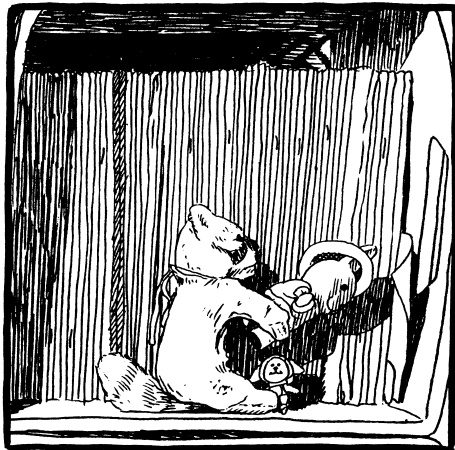
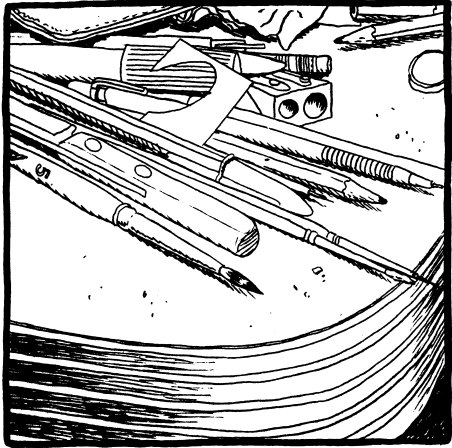
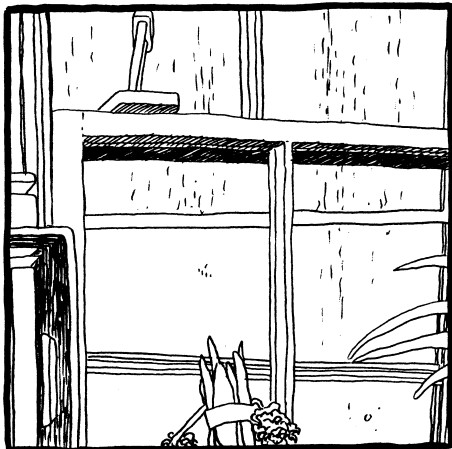


* WEBSTER'S NEW WORLD (1979)

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT ? DO THEY THINK IT'S WRONG FOR PEOPLE TO HAVE THEIR SEXUAL DESIRES AROUSED ?

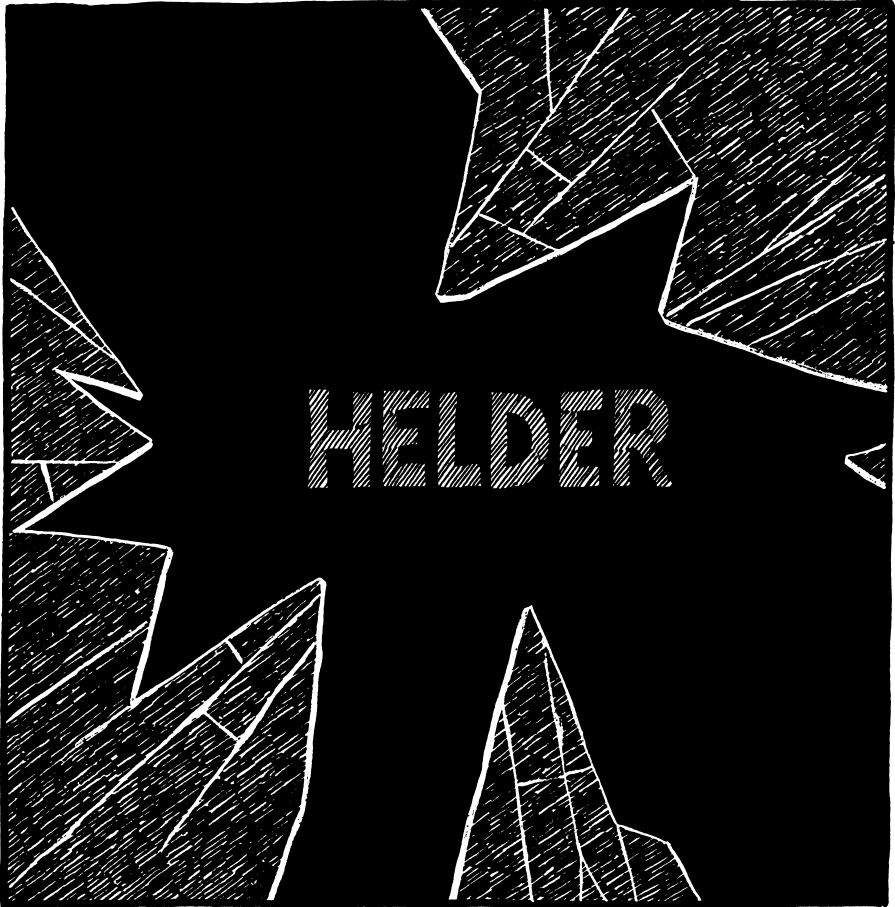






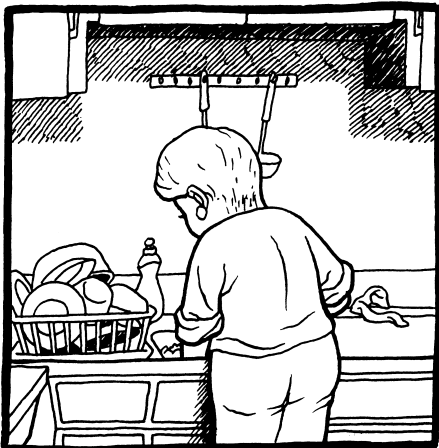
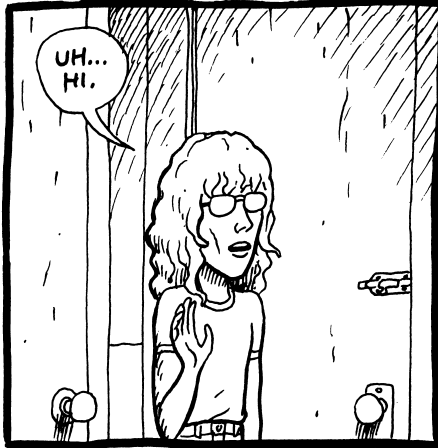
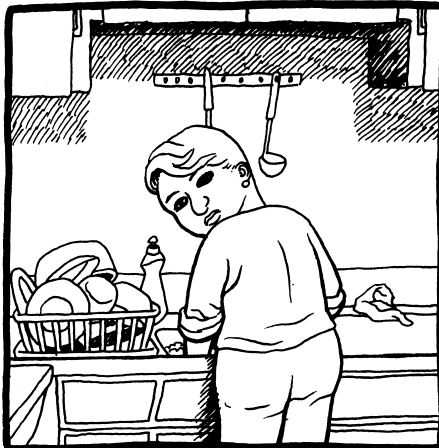
The afternoon of
March the 3rd
1988

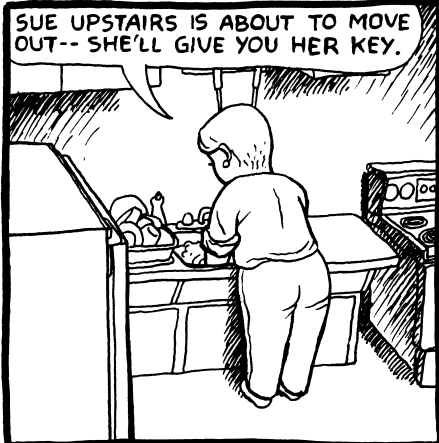
CWOB

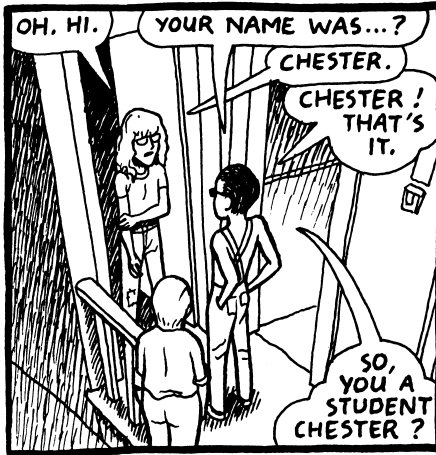


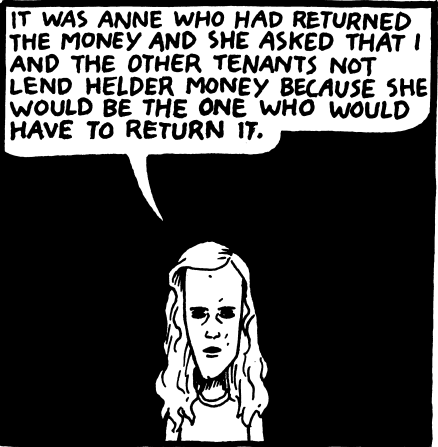
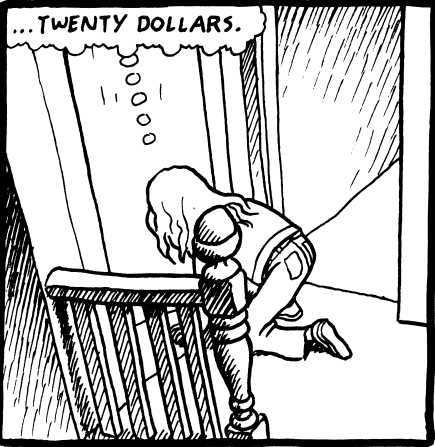
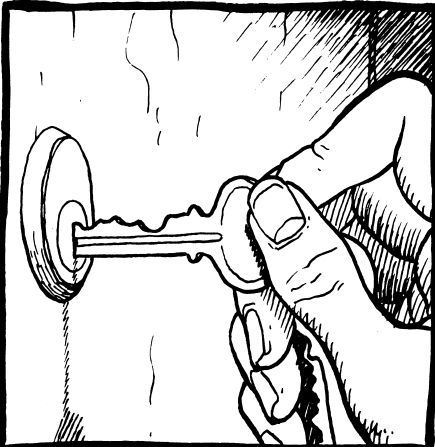
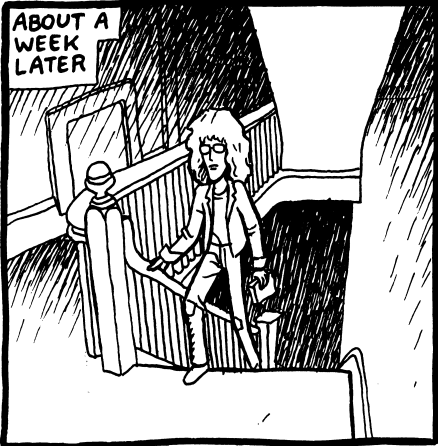
IN THE SPRING OF 1984 I MOVED TO 32 ALBANY. IT'S A ROOMING HOUSE SO I HAVE TO SHARE THE KITCHEN AND TWO WASHROOMS WITH NINE OR TEN OTHER PEOPLE. HELDER WAS ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHEN I FIRST MOVED IN.

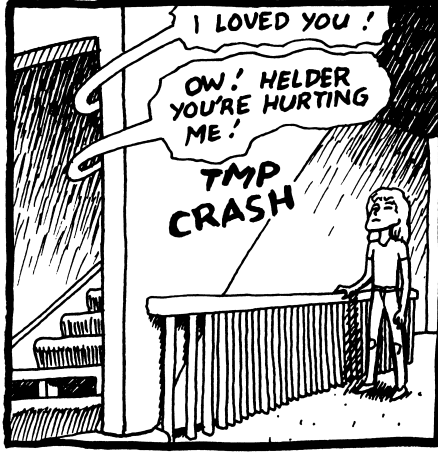
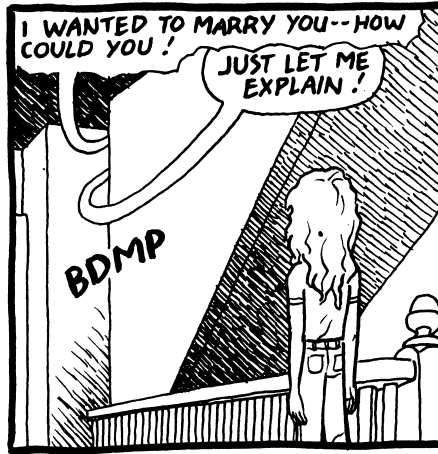






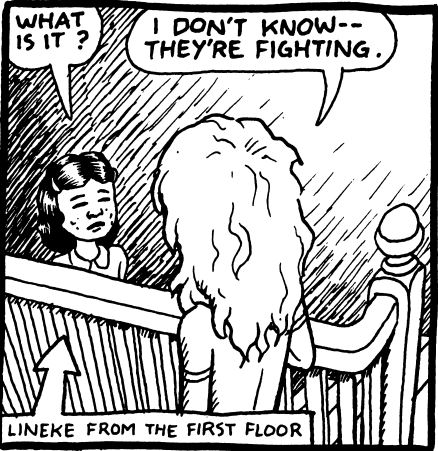








OW! LET GO OF ME! STOP!



WHAT IS IT?

I DON'T KNOW-- THEY'RE FIGHTING.

LINEKE FROM THE FIRST FLOOR



SHOULD-- SHOULD WE DO SOMETHING?

I DON'T KNOW. SHE'S NOT CALLING OUT FOR HELP.

HELDER PLEASE-- YOU'RE HURTING ME!



WHAT'S GOING ON?

HELDER AND ANNE ARE FIGHTING.

DAVE-- THIRD FLOOR

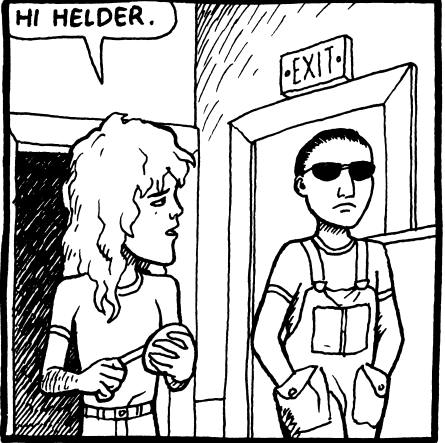
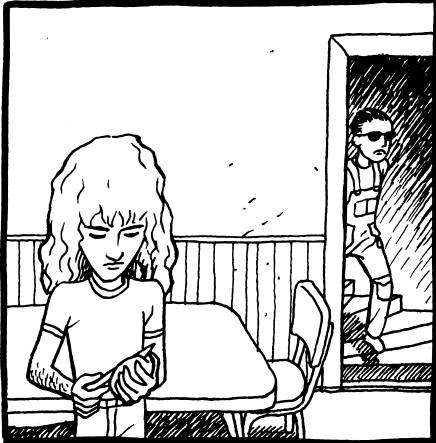
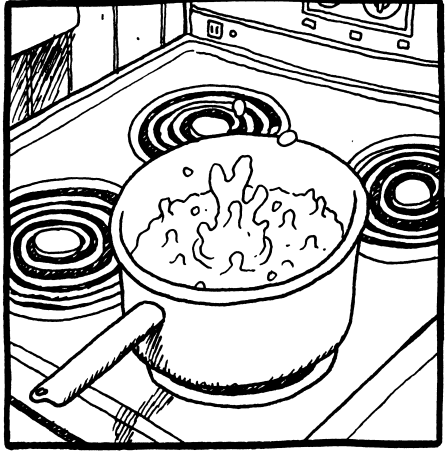
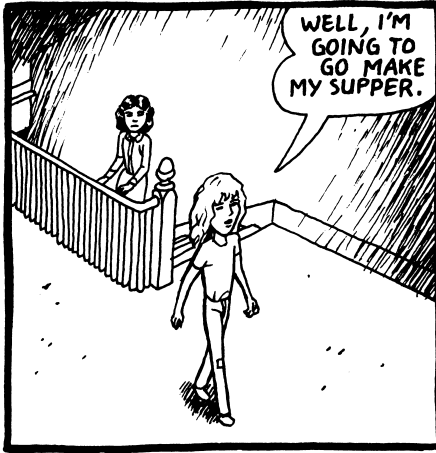


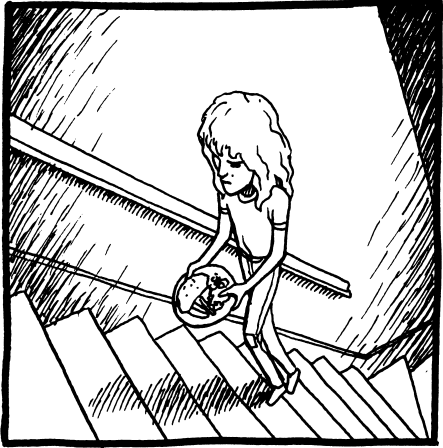
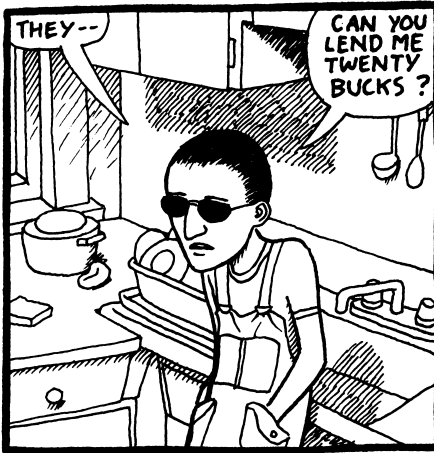
I'M LEAVING-- I DON'T WANTA BE AROUND WHEN HELDER'S MAD.

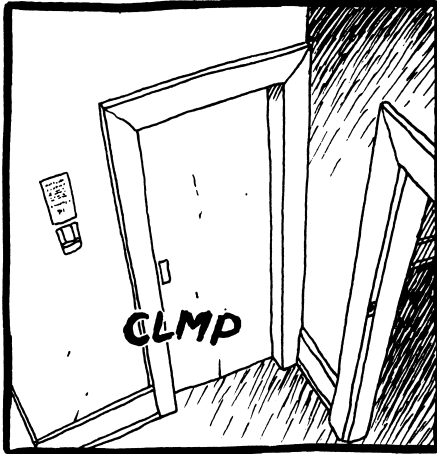


I DON'T HEAR ANYTHING.

I GUESS THEY'VE STOPPED.



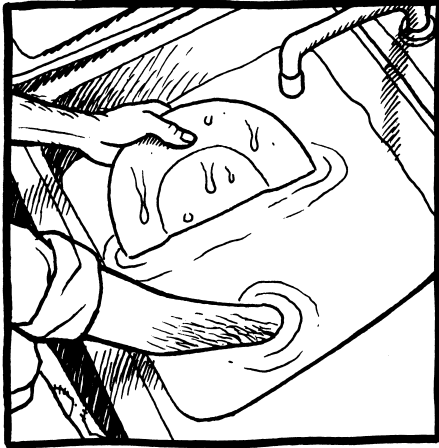




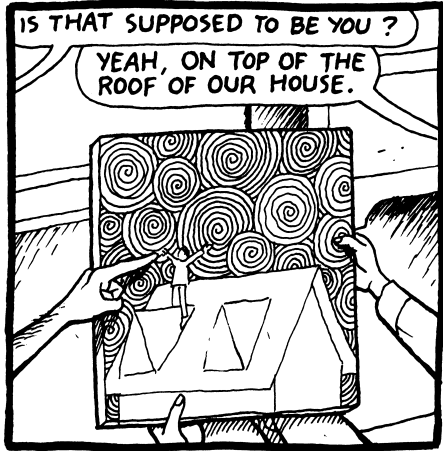
THAT MONEY WAS, OF COURSE, NEVER PAID BACK. ANNE LEFT THE HOUSE AND DIDN'T RETURN FOR SEVERAL DAYS. WHEN SHE DID IT WAS TO MOVE OUT. THE LEASE WAS IN HER NAME WHICH MEANT HELDER WAS OUT OF THE HOUSE. HE CLAIMED TO HAVE FOUND A NEW APARTMENT.



HE CAME BACK REGULARLY TO BORROW MONEY FROM DAVE. ACCORDING TO DAVE, HELDER WAS LYING ABOUT THE APARTMENT AND ABOUT HAVING A JOB AND WAS LIVING ON THE STREET.



HI.









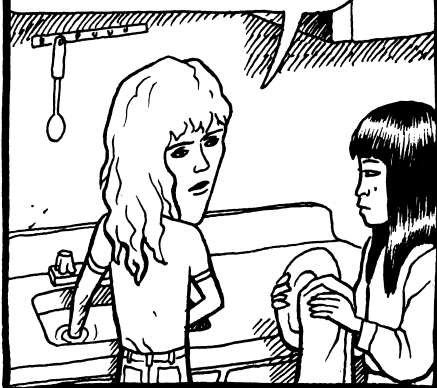
HELDER, I CAN'T ANSWER YOUR QUESTION UNLESS I KNOW W-WHAT IT IS. AND RIGHT NOW I DON'T.



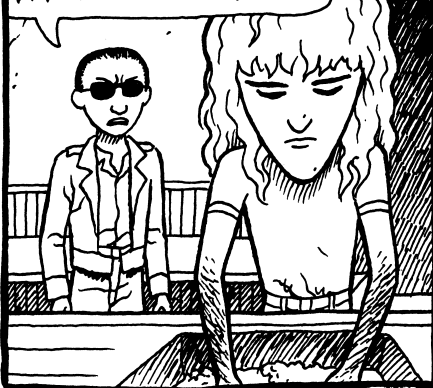
ARE YOU TWO GOING TO BE USING THE SINK MUCH LONGER ?



WE'RE ALMOST DONE -- ONE DISH AND ONE POT TO GO.



HEY ! DON'T TURN AROUND ! I'M TALKING TO YOU !

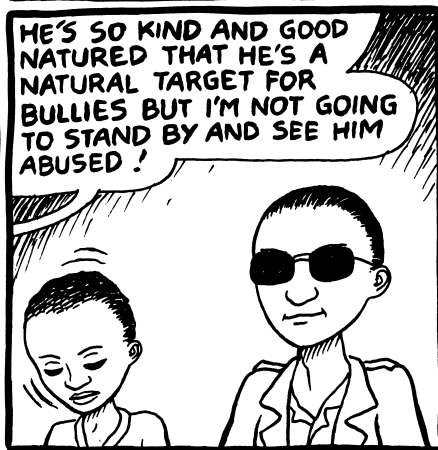


I'M SORRY, I THOUGHT YOU ONLY HAD THE ONE QUESTION.

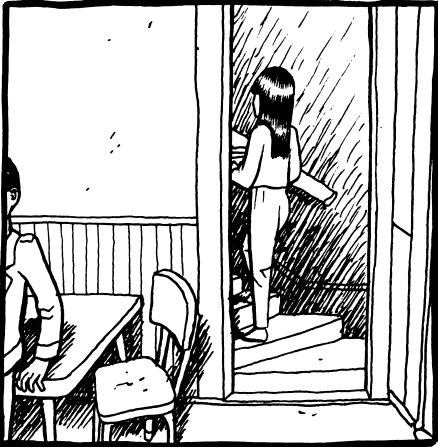


I SEEM TO BE GETTING SOME BAD VIBES FROM YOU -- IS THERE SOMETHING ABOUT ME YOU DON'T LIKE ?

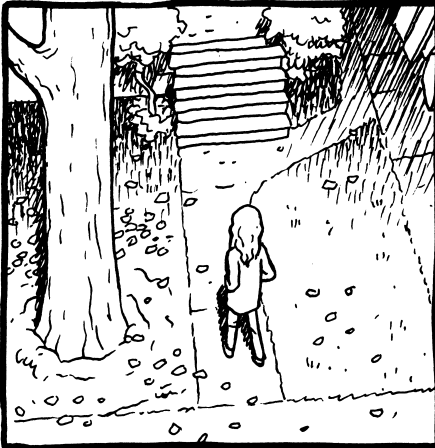
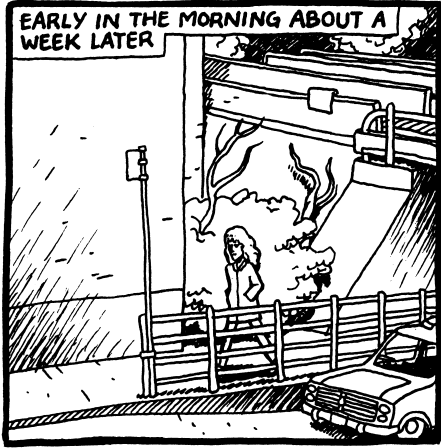
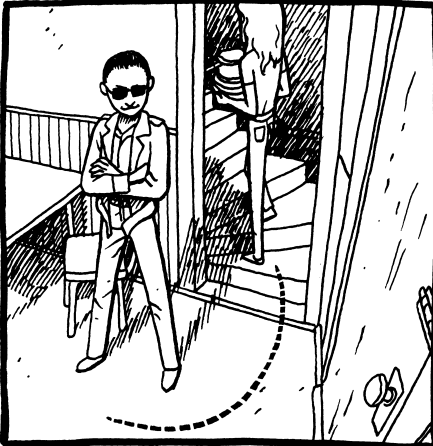


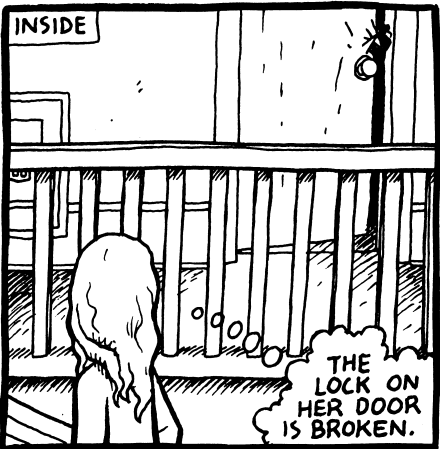


HEY HEY, NO NEED TO GET ALL DEFENSIVE. THIS IS JUST A FRIENDLY CONVERSATION.



SOME GUYS NEED A GIRL TO PROTECT THEM I GUESS. ANYTIME YOU WANT TO STEP OUTSIDE I'M READY BUT WE KNOW WHO'S AFRAID OF WHO.





HE WAS BASHING ON THAT GIRL'S DOOR AND YELLING FOR HER TO OPEN UP AND FINALLY HE BROKE IN. THERE WAS NO WAY I WAS GOING TO GO DOWN AND TRY AND STOP IT.



SO THEN WHAT HAPPENED ?

I DON'T KNOW. I STAYED IN MY ROOM.



THE NEXT DAY AN OLD MAN AND TWO YOUNG MEN (I TOOK THEM TO BE DONNA'S FATHER AND BROTHERS) CAME AND TOOK AWAY HER STUFF. I WANTED TO ASK WHAT HAD HAPPENED -- IF SHE WAS OKAY--



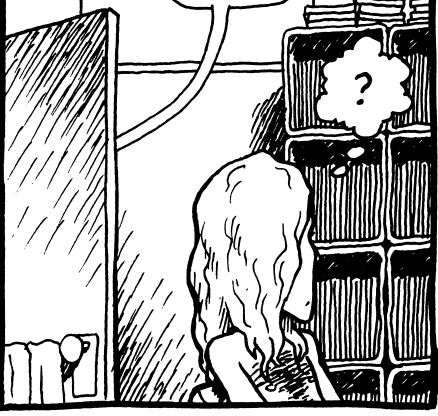
--BUT IT DIDN'T SEEM LIKE THE RIGHT THING TO DO. I THOUGHT THEY'D FEEL I WAS SOMEHOW RESPONSIBLE FOR WHATEVER HAD HAPPENED. HELDER CONTINUED TO DROP BY AND BORROW MONEY FROM DAVE.

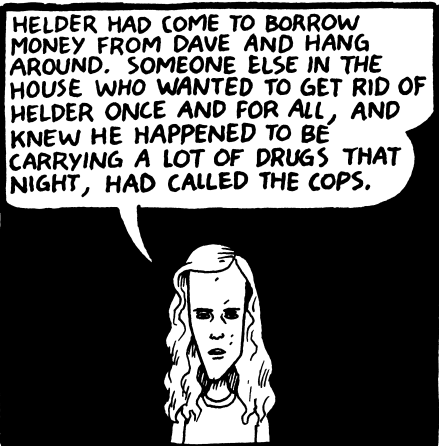


ABOUT A MONTH LATER



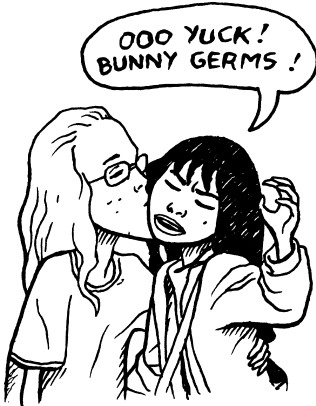
HELLO ?





SHOWING “HELDER”

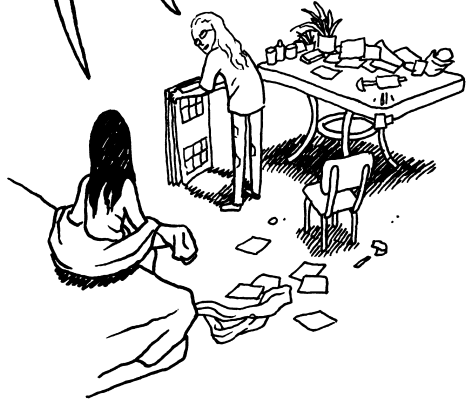




HEY!
WHAT? I HAVE
SOMETHING
TO SHOW YOU.



WHAT?
WHAT?
PANELS WITH YOU IN 'EM FROM
THE STORY I'M WORKING ON.



OH BOY!





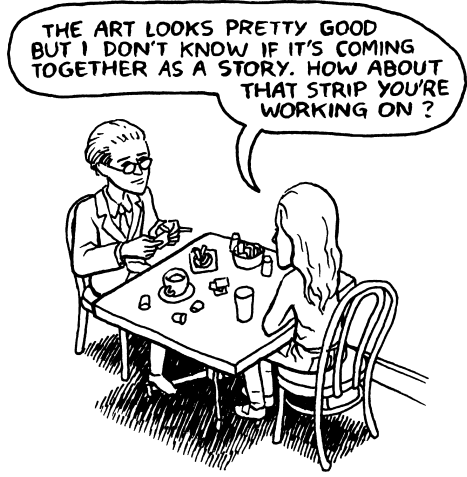
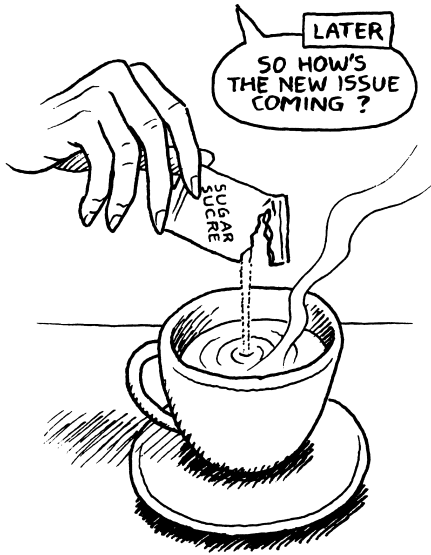
YOU CAN'T SHOW ME LIKE THIS !
WHAT'S THIS SQUARE THING
AROUND MY NECK
SUPPOSED
TO BE ?



I DON'T KNOW-- DON'T
WORRY-- I'LL, UH, REDRAW
THEM, GERBIL.

YOU
BETTER.





YEAH, I'M NOT SURE
HOW MINE'S GOING EITHER
--I THINK IT MIGHT BE A
BIT TOO SENTIMENTAL.



I'LL HAVE TO SHOW
IT TO YOU WHEN
IT'S FINISHED.

YEAH--AND
I HAVE TO
WAIT 'TILL
MY PIECE
SEES PRINT
TO HEAR
WHAT YOU
THINK OF
IT. YOUR
OPINION
DOES ME
A LOT OF
GOOD
THEN.





WELL ...



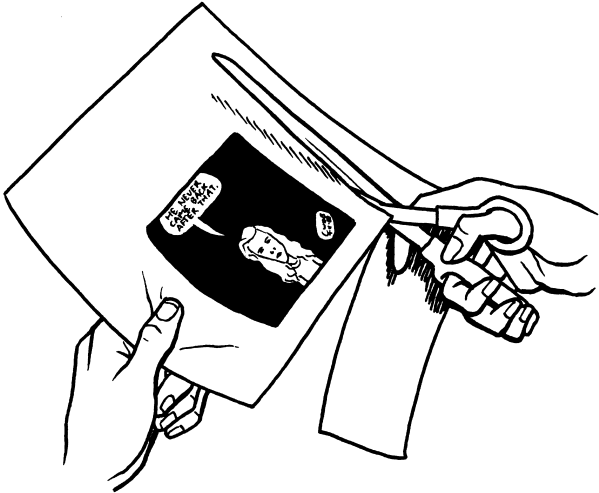
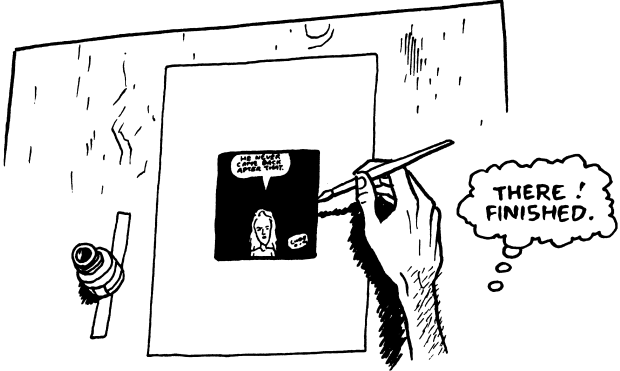
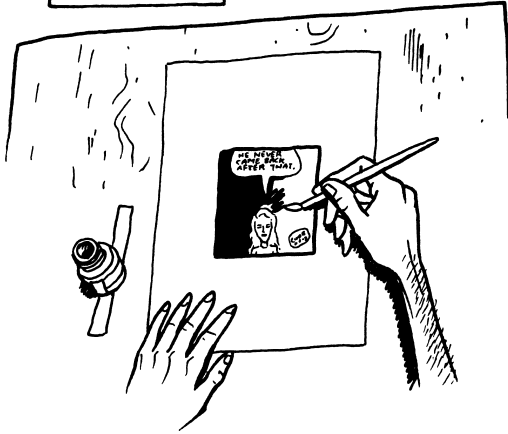
... JUST THIS ONE TIME--
IF YOU NEED ME TO-- I'LL
TAKE A LOOK AT IT
BEFORE IT'S PRINTED.

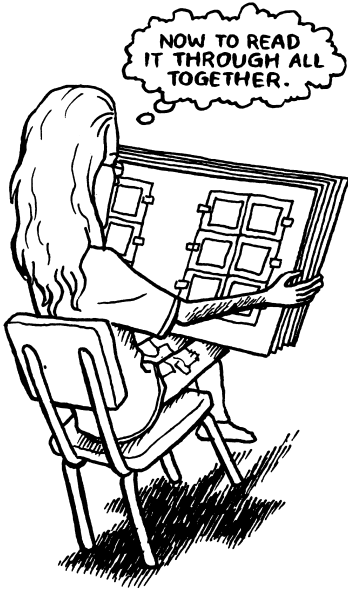
A WEEK OR TWO LATER, ON NOVEMBER
THE SIXTH

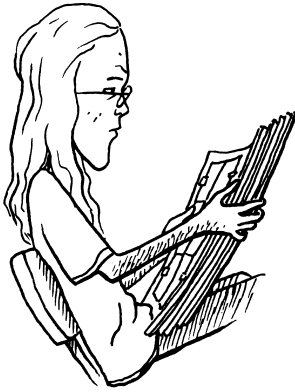


WHAT WAS I
WORRIED ABOUT ?
THIS IS GOING TO
BE THE BEST
ISSUE YET.

THE NEXT DAY







OH NO! WHAT CAN I DO?
MAYBE I SHOULD JUST SCRAP
IT AND START A NEW STORY--
MAYBE EVEN
AN "ED"
STORY!



PANIC



RING

SETH. HI SETH, IT'S CHESTER.
HI CHET. WHAT'S UP?



WELL, I'VE FINISHED THE NEW YUMMY FUR.



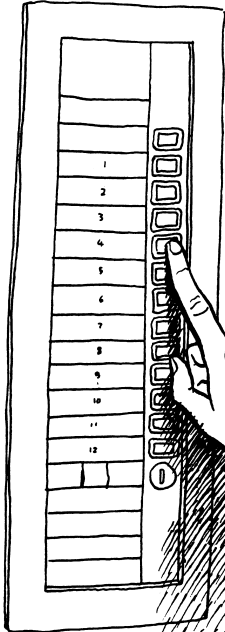
GREAT!
SO,
Y'GONNA
LOOK AT IT
LIKE YOU
SAID YOU
WOULD ?

YEAH, SURE. HOW ABOUT IF YOU
DROP BY HERE TOMORROW AFTERNOON
ABOUT... FOUR. IS THAT OKAY ?

SURE.

AND IT'S APARTMENT
FOUR NOW.

OH-- THAT'S RIGHT--
YOU'VE MOVED. OKAY
SETH, SEE YOU
TOMORROW.



THE NEXT
AFTERNOON
AROUND
FOUR
O' CLOCK

CLICK





SO THIS IS THE NEW PLACE -- AS YOU CAN SEE IT'S STILL A MESS. I HAVEN'T GOT EVERYTHING UP OFF THE FLOOR YET.



I HAD TO JUNK SOME OF MY BOOKCASES SO I HAVE TO GET SOME NEW ONES. YEAH, YOU TOLD ME.

DO YOU WANT A TOWEL ?

NO, MY SCARF IS FINE THANKS.



DID I SHOW YOU THE PIECE I HAD IN NEW YORK MAGAZINE ?

NO.



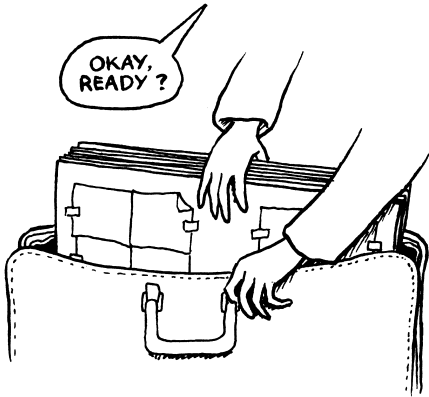
WOW-- IT'S GORGEOUS. HOW DID YOU GET THIS EFFECT ?

WATERCOLOURS-- YOU BLEND THEM WHILE THEY'RE STILL WET.



WOW-- IT'S A REALLY NICE PIECE.

YEAH-- I WAS PLEASSED WITH IT.



ARE YOU OKAY ? IF YOU WANT SOMETHING TO READ WHILE I LOOK THROUGH THIS YOU CAN GET SOMETHING FROM THE OTHER ROOM.

YEAH, I THINK I'LL DO THAT.





HAHA



WELL CHET--



--YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT-- IT'S GREAT.



REALLY ?
THE STORY MAKES SENSE ?
IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE THERE ARE ANY HOLES IN IT OR ANYTHING ?

IT'S FINE. IT'S THE KIND OF STORY THAT MAKES ME WANT TO GET TO WORK.
HOW ABOUT THOSE PARTS WHERE I'M TALKING TO THE READER WHILE I'M DOING THINGS ?



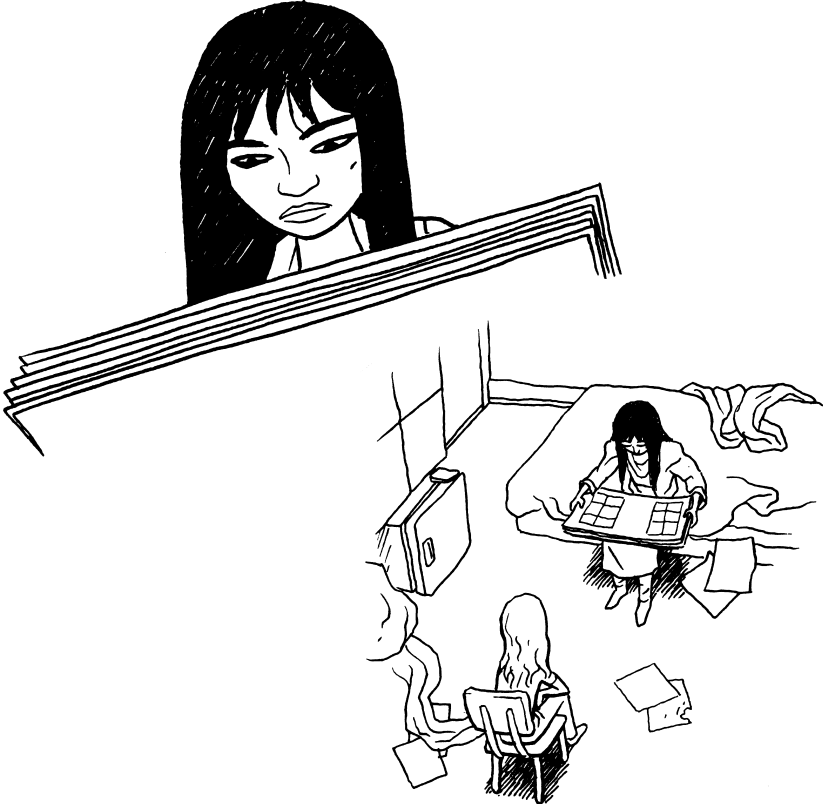
IT WORKS--DON'T WORRY.
IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE -- I DON'T KNOW-- A BITTER PIECE DOES IT ? LIKE, HE GOT THE GIRL SO I'LL WRITE A NASTY STORY ABOUT HIM.



NO, NO. I DIDN'T GET THAT FEELING AT ALL.



LATER BACK AT MY PLACE







I WOULDN'T SAY, "EXCUSE ME, HELDER" -- CHANGE THAT TO JUST "LISTEN -- CHESTER DOESN'T PLAY GAMES". AND I WOULD SAY "HEAD GAMES" NOT "GAMES".



YEAH, I KNOW, BUT YOU'RE REPLYING TO HELDER AND HE DIDN'T SAY "HEADGAMES".

YOU CAN'T REMEMBER EXACTLY WHAT HE SAID.



I'M DOING THE BEST I CAN. HE DIDN'T SAY "HEAD GAMES".



I DON'T THINK I SHOULD ALLOW YOU TO USE ME IN YOUR COMICS.



YOU'VE BEEN BEGGING ME FOR YEARS TO PUT YOU IN "YUMMY FUR".



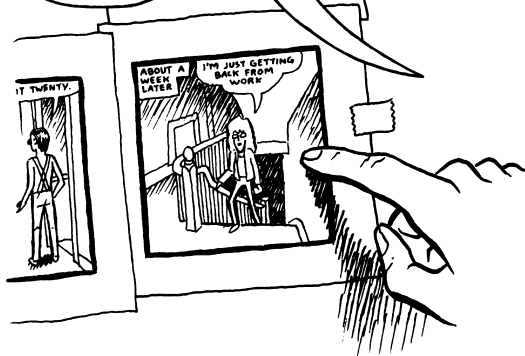
YES, BUT I SHOULD HAVE SOME SAY IN THE WAY I'M SHOWN.

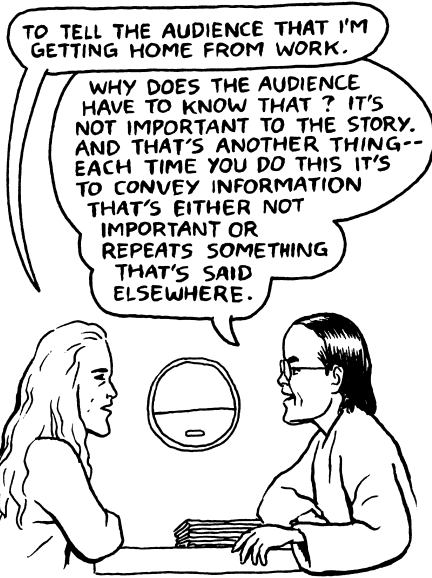
THURSDAY

WRONG, WRONG, WRONG. THE STORY IS FINE, THE ART IS GREAT, BUT THESE SCENES WHERE YOU TURN TO THE READERS AND START TALKING TO US-- IT JUST DOESN'T WORK.



ON THIS DAY WHEN YOU FOUND THE TWENTY DOLLARS YOU DIDN'T REALLY LOOK UP AND SAY, "I'M JUST GETTING HOME FROM WORK", RIGHT ?





UNH-
HUH.



I KNOW THAT "UNH-
HUH". IT MEANS "I'M
LISTENING BUT I'M NOT
GOING TO FOLLOW
YOUR ADVICE".



THE NEXT DAY

SO HE SAID, "YOU WOULDN'T
DO IT IN REAL LIFE SO WHY
HAVE YOURSELF DO IT HERE?"

OH BROTHER,
THAT DOESN'T
MAKE SENSE.



YEAH, I KNOW, BUT HE DID
HAVE A GOOD POINT THAT
EVERY TIME I DO IT IT'S TO SAY
THINGS THAT EITHER AREN'T
IMPORTANT TO THE STORY
OR REPEAT INFORMATION
GIVEN ELSEWHERE.



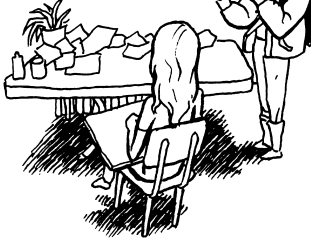




IT WORKS PRETTY GOOD DOESN'T IT ?

IT'S SURPRISING -- FOR
A KID'S TOY IT DOES A
PRETTY GOOD JOB.

SO YOU'VE BEEN
SPYING ON PEOPLE
ALL DAY ?



JUST A BIT--
ONE GUY SAW ME
AND WAS STARING
BACK AT ME.

HA HA HA

AT THAT DISTANCE
THOUGH I DON'T
THINK HE COULD TELL
I HAD A
TELESCOPE.



SURE HE COULD.

YOU THINK
SO ? -- NAH.

WHAT WERE
YOU TALKING
WITH SETH
ABOUT ?



MARK DOESN'T THINK
THE PANELS WHERE I'M
TALKING TO THE READER
WHILE I'M DOING THINGS,
LIKE WALKING DOWN
THE STREET, WORK.



NO, I DIDN'T
THINK SO EITHER.



YOU
DIDN'T ?



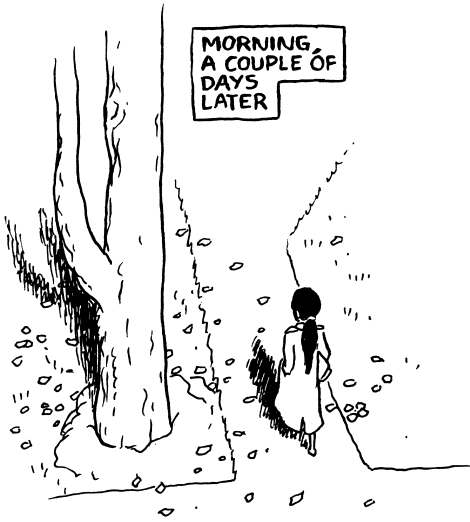
NO.



WHY DIDN'T YOU
SAY SOMETHING ?

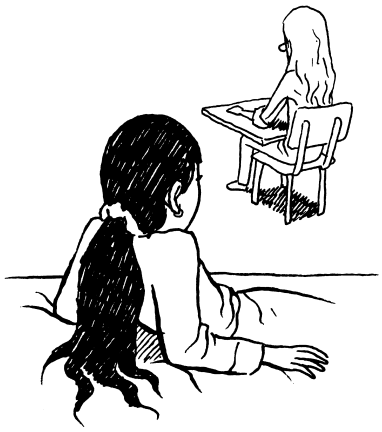
'CAUSE YOU
NEVER LISTEN
TO MY ADVICE.







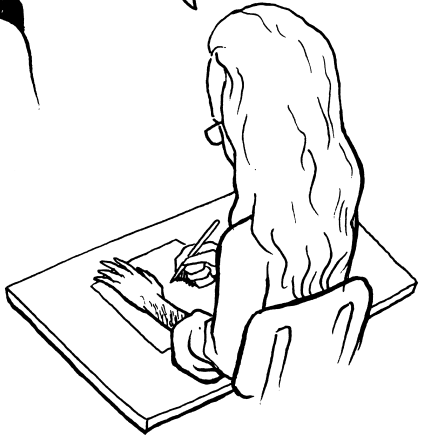
A COUPLE OF HOURS LATER



WHAT'RE YOU WORKING ON ?



THOSE CHANGES YOU AND MARK SAID I SHOULD MAKE.



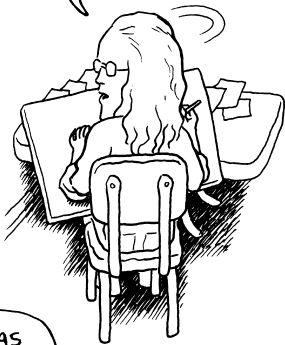
OH...



YOU KNOW, BUNNY,
I DIDN'T REALLY AGREE
WITH MARK.



WHAT ?!



THE STORY WAS
FINE WITH THOSE
PANELS IN.



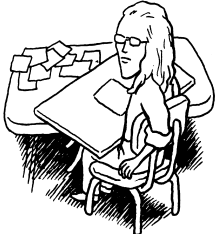
THEN WHY DID
YOU SAY YOU AGREED
WITH MARK ?



JUST TO MAKE
A POINT ABOUT
HOW YOU NEVER
LISTEN TO ME.



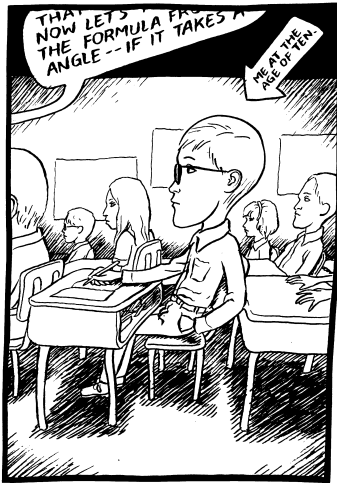
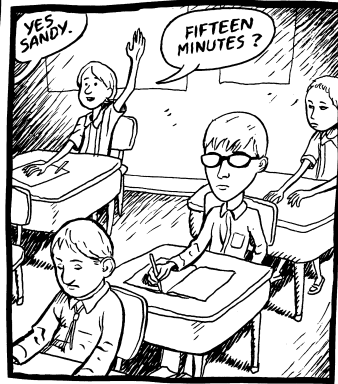
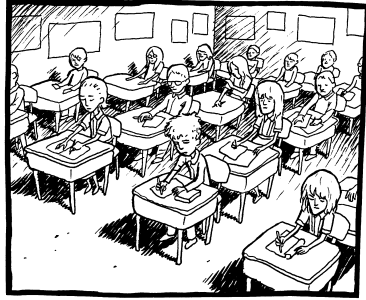
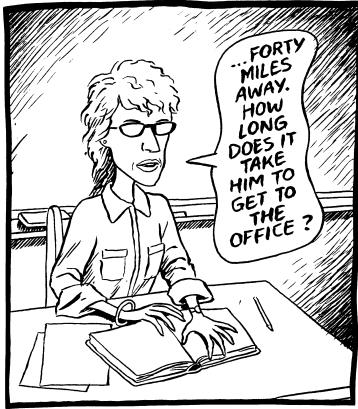
IT'S STILL
A VALID
POINT.

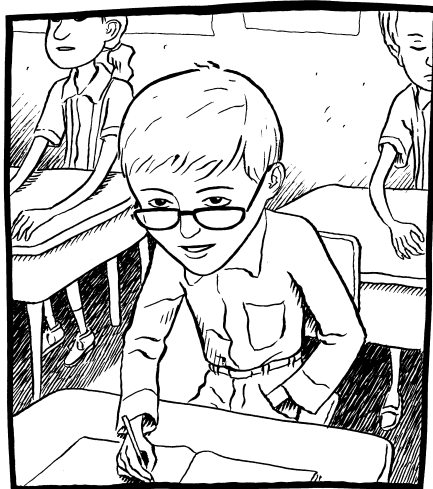
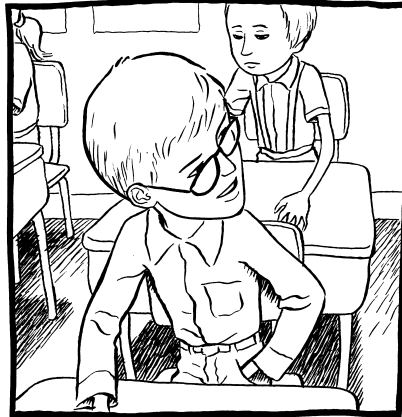
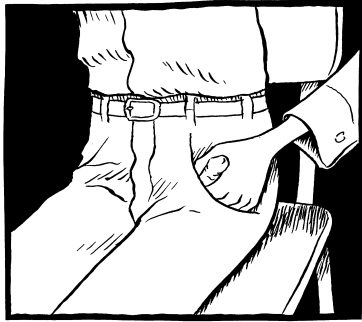
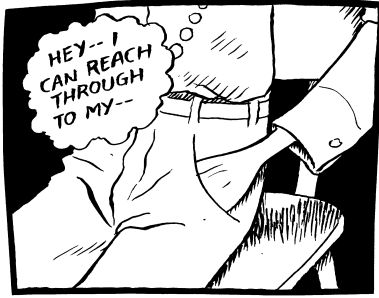


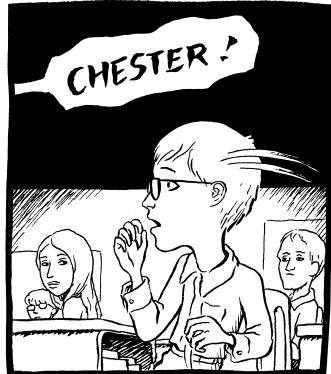
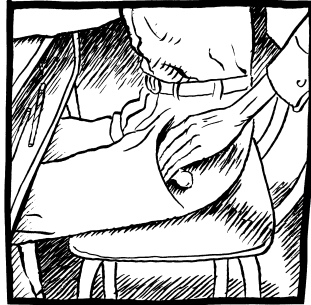
CWDB
1-90

THE LITTLE MAN

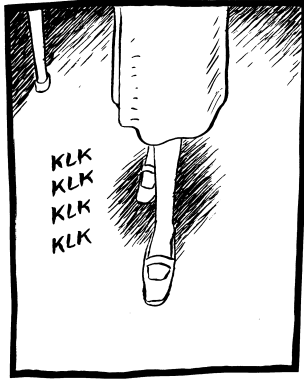


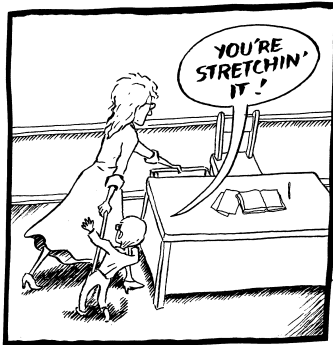
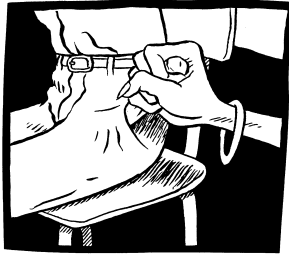


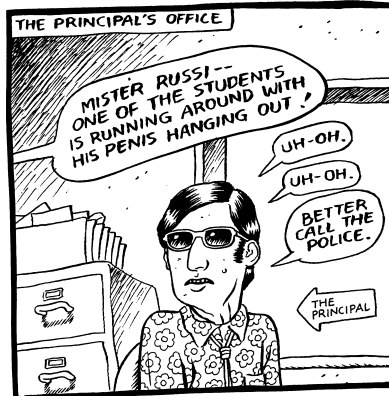
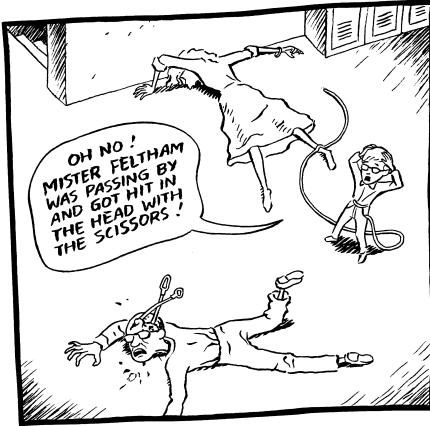
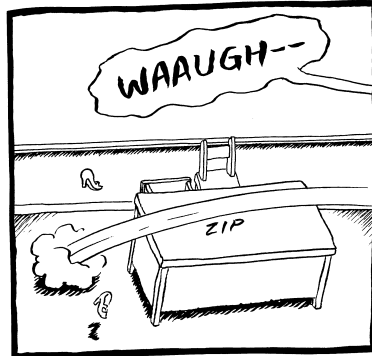


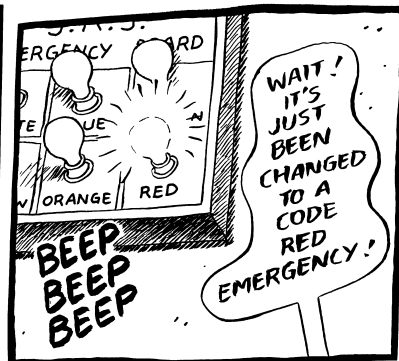
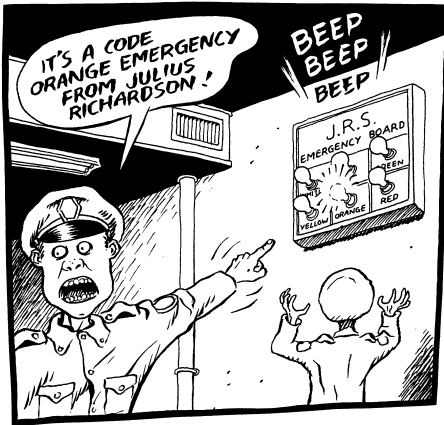


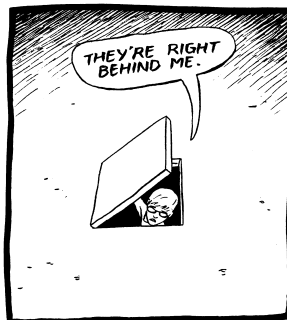
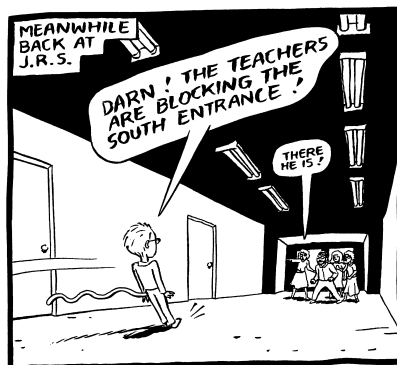
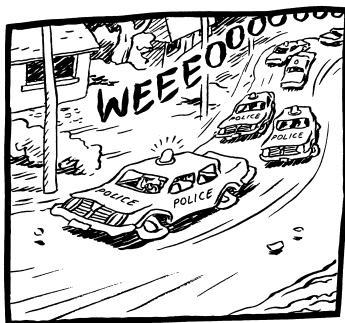


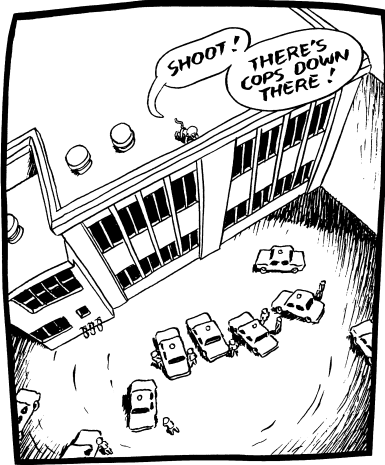
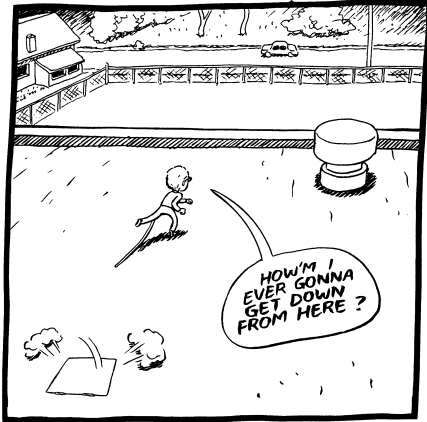


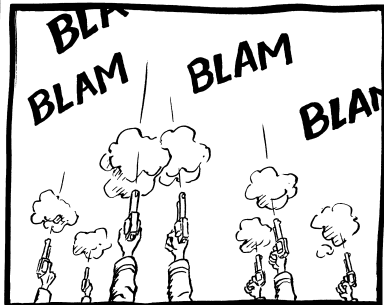
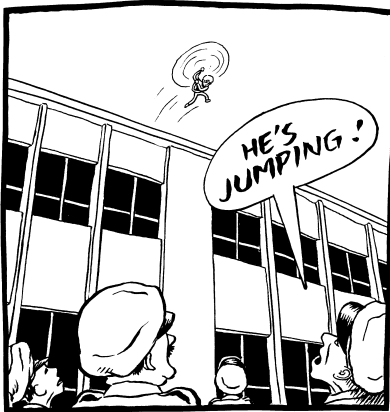


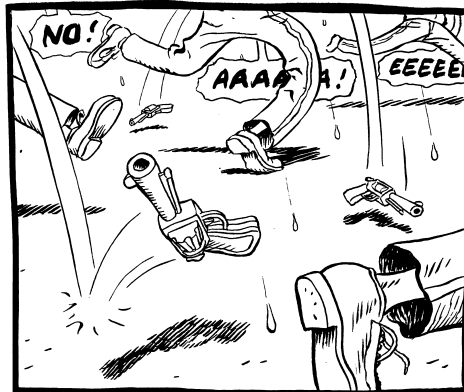
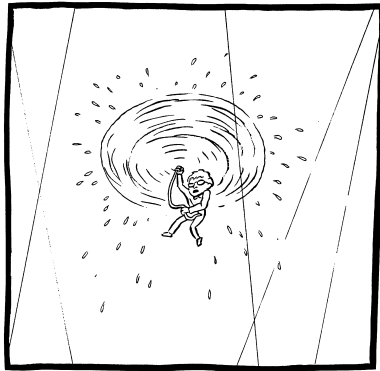
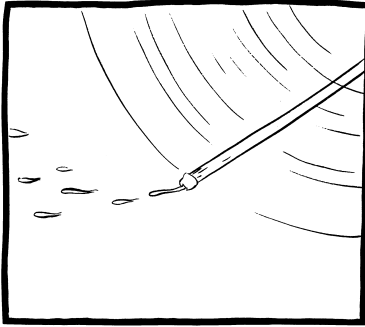


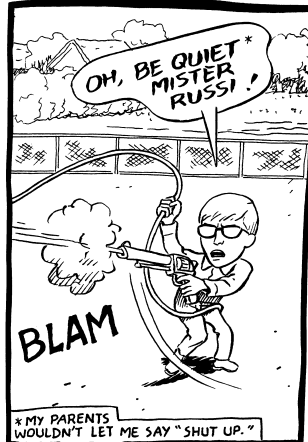


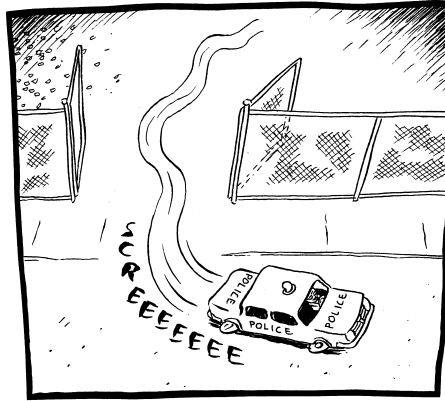


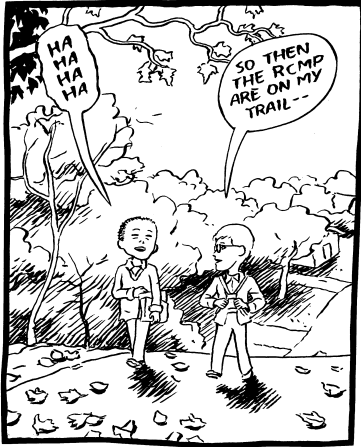


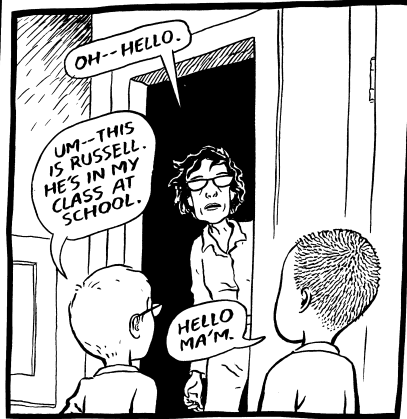




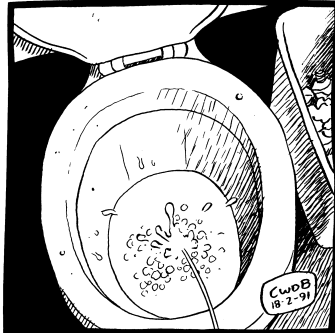
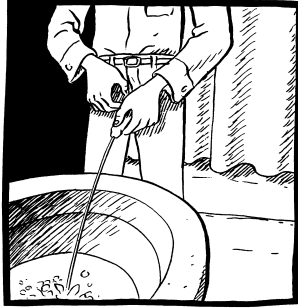
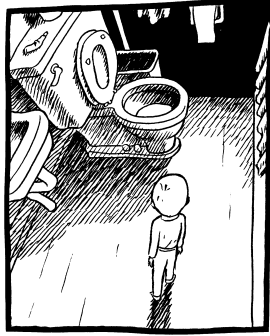








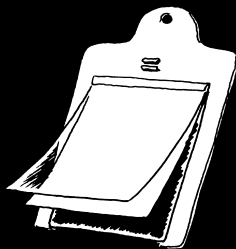




THE WEIRD CANADIAN ARTIST

PART ONE : CIRCA 1973

DO YOU REMEMBER THOSE DRAWING TABLETS MADE UP OF A GUMMY BLACK SURFACE COVERED WITH A THIN GREY OPAQUE FILM AND A SHEET OF ACETATE ? THEY STILL MAKE 'EM I GUESS.



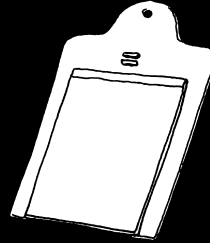
YOU DRAW ON THEM USING ANYTHING WITH A BLUNT POINT -- EVEN A FINGER-NAIL -- AND THE OPAQUE FILM STICKS TO THE BLACK GUMMY STUFF UNDERNEATH TO MAKE THE LINES OF THE DRAWING.



AND BY LIFTING
THE FILM--



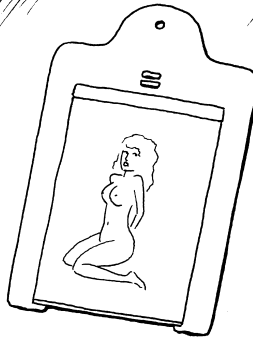
--YOU INSTANTLY ERASE
THE PICTURE.

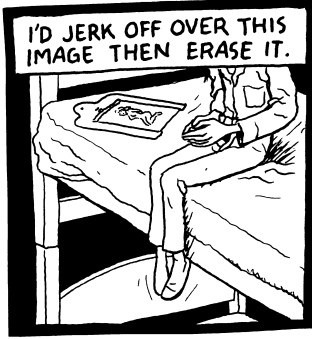


WHEN I WAS AROUND 13 OR
14 I'D TAKE A COMIC BOOK
FEATURING A SEXY SUPER-
HEROINE AND TRACE HER
PICTURE ONTO THE
TABLET.



I'D NEGLECT, HOWEVER, TO
TRACE HER COSTUME AND
WOULD, IN FACT, ADD
DETAILS THAT WOULD
HAVE BEEN HIDDEN BY
THE COSTUME.

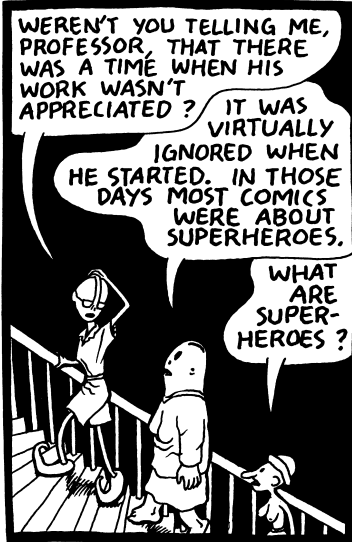




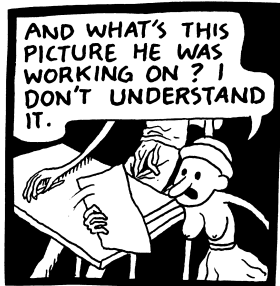
THE WEIRD CANADIAN ARTIST

PART TWO : CIRCA 2050



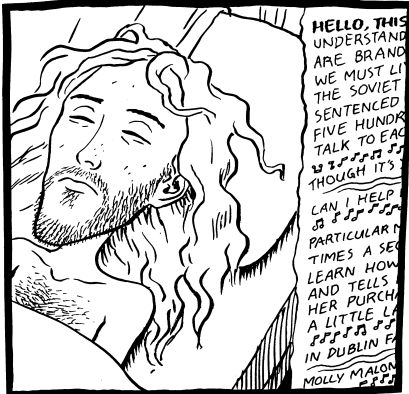


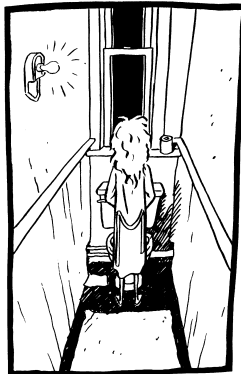


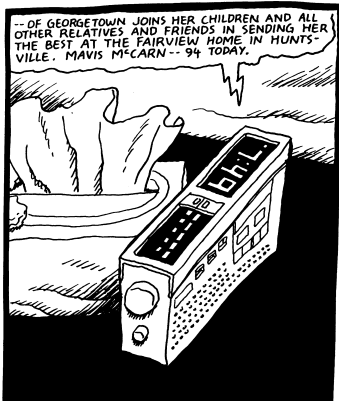
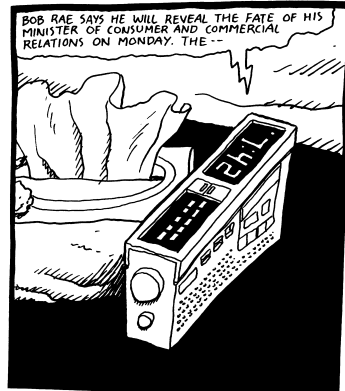


DANNY'S STORY









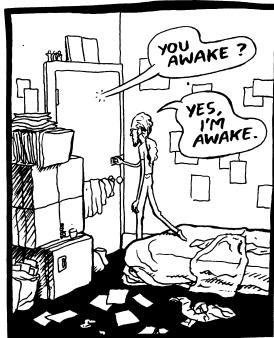
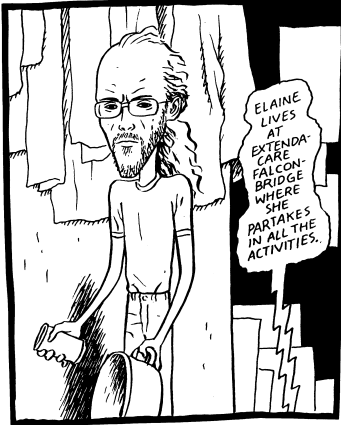
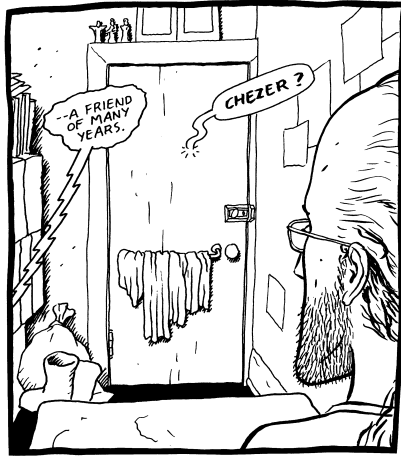
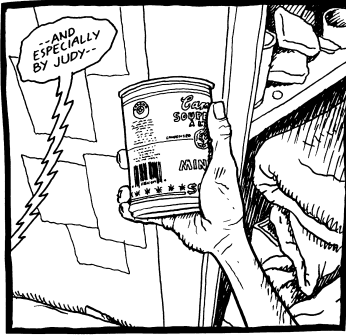


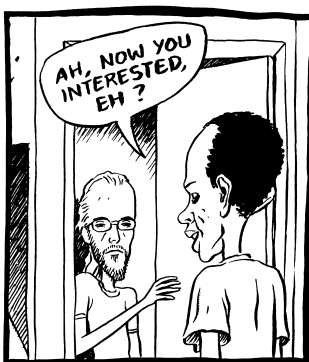
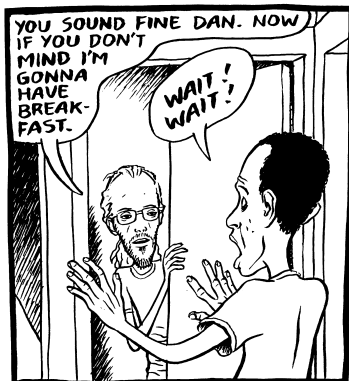
--WAS ALSO A ONE TIME PRESIDENT OF THE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY AND THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF BIRKS FALLS.



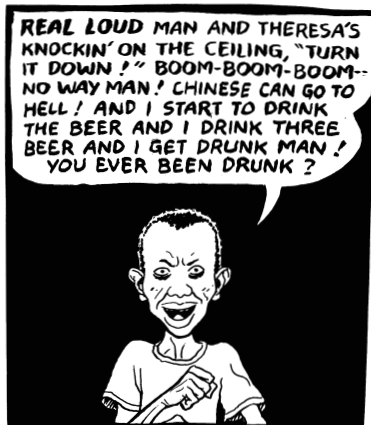
BUSY GUY.
MM-HMM.

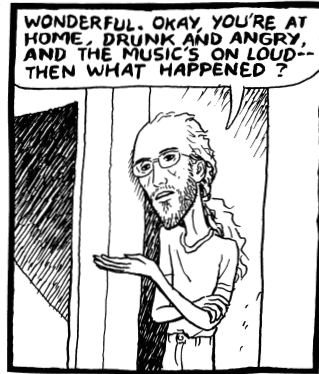


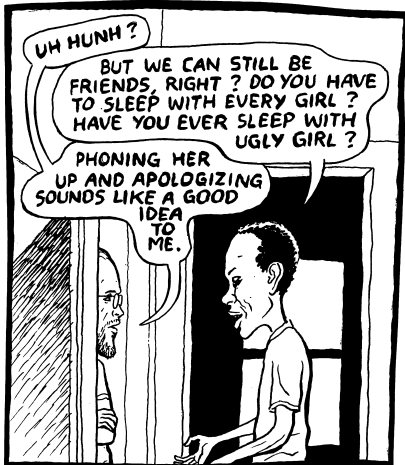


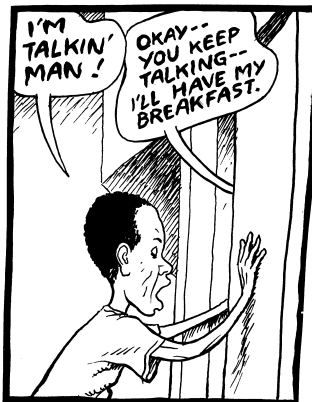


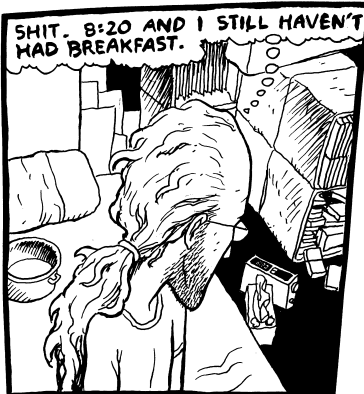
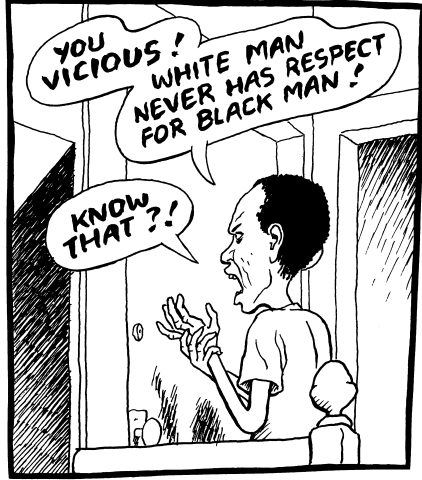


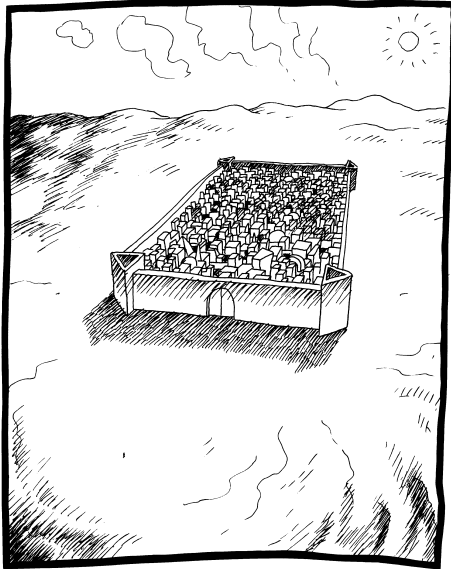


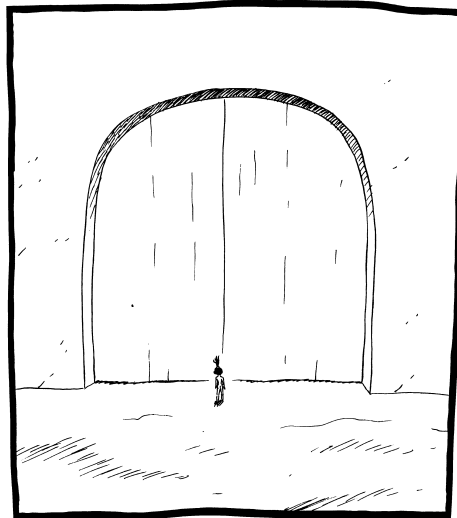
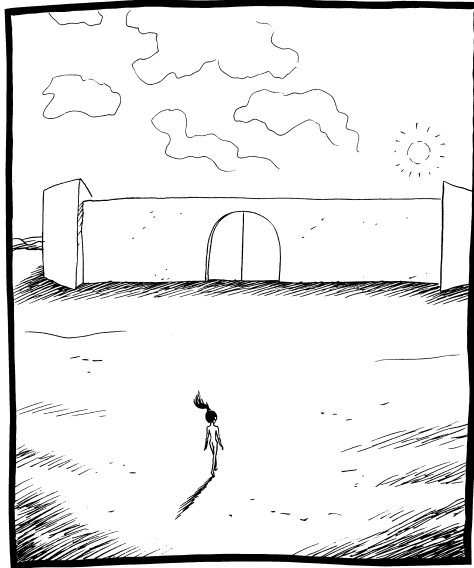


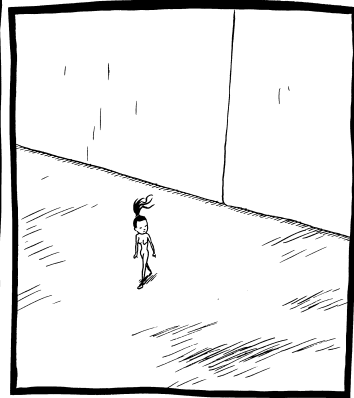
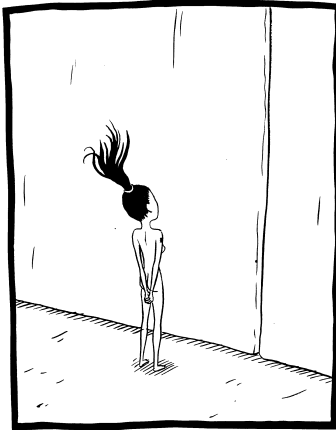
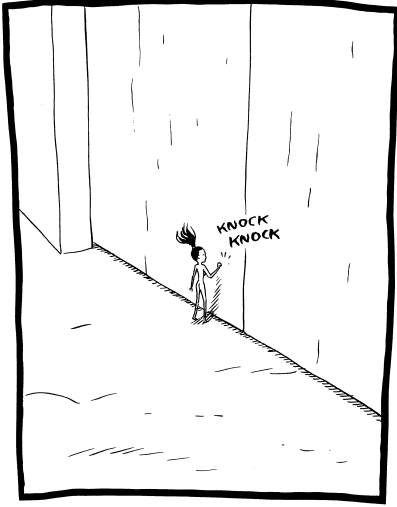


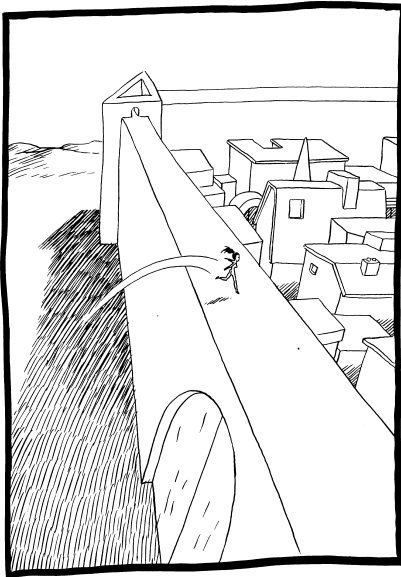
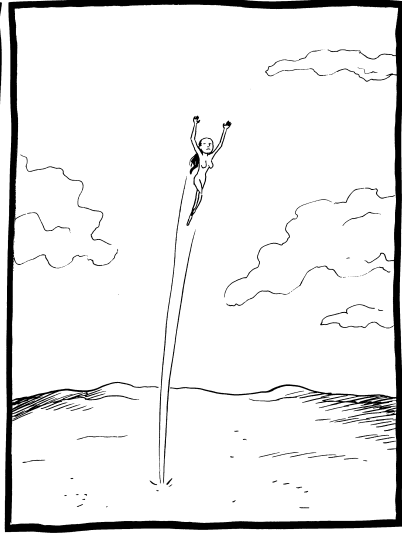
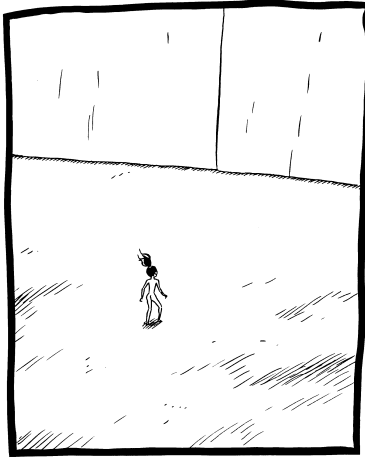


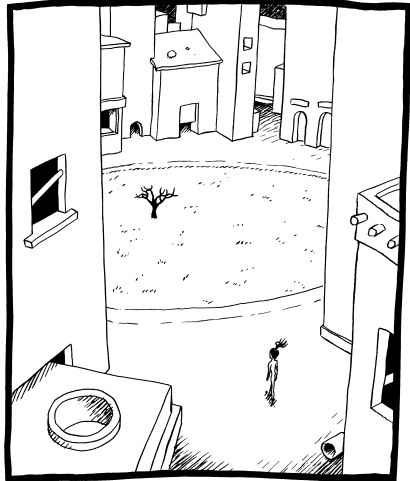
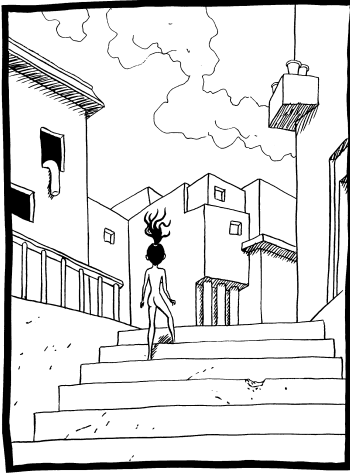


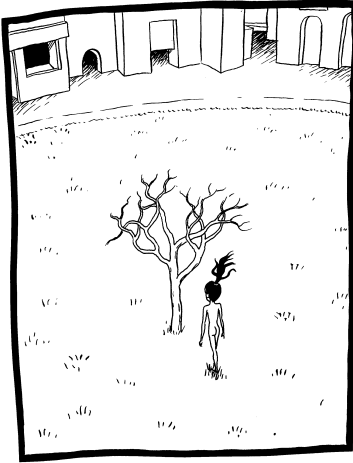




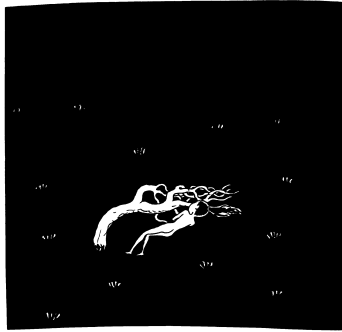


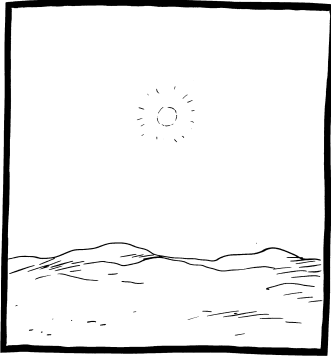


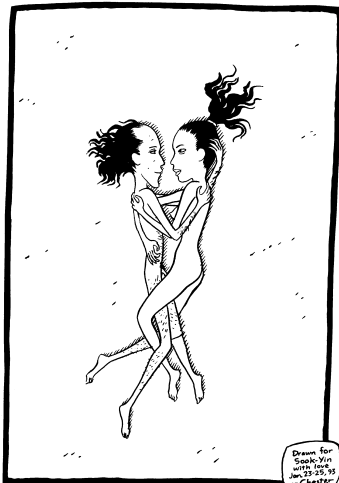






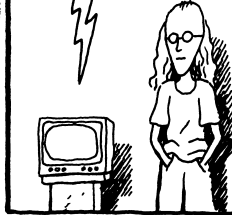




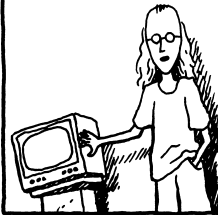


MY
MOM WAS A
SCHIZOPHRENIC

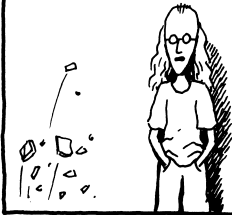
SCHIZOPHRENIA IS AN
ORGANIC DISEASE
OF THE BRAIN.



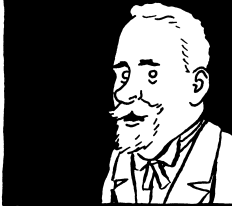
THIS IS WHAT MOST
PEOPLE IN OUR
SOCIETY BELIEVE --
THAT SCHIZOPHRENIA
IS A MENTAL ILLNESS.



WE CAN TRACE THIS
BELIEF BACK TO EMIL
KRAEPELIN AND
EUGEN BLEULER.



I'M EMIL KRAEPELIN. IN
1898 I DISCOVERED A
NEW DISEASE -- I CALLED
IT DEMENTIA PRAECOX.



I'M EUGEN BLEULER. IN
1911 I HORNED IN ON
KRAEPELIN'S ACT BY
GIVING DEMENTIA
PRAECOX A NEW
NAME -- I CALLED IT
SCHIZOPHRENIA.



I BELIEVE THAT
SCHIZOPHRENIA IS THE
OUTCOME OF A
PATHOLOGICAL,
ANATOMICAL, OR
CHEMICAL DISTURBANCE
OF THE BRAIN.



WHY SHOULD WE CARE
ABOUT WHAT
KRAEPELIN AND
BLEULER
BELIEVED ?

THOMAS
SZASZ



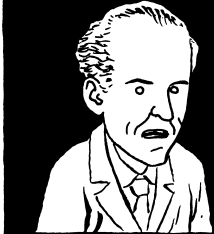
WHY... DO PSYCHIATRISTS
CONTINUE TO RECORD
KRAEPELIN'S AND
BLEULER'S BELIEFS
REGARDING THE
NATURE OF
SCHIZOPHRENIA ?



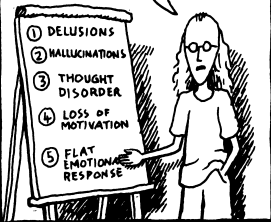
WHY DO THEY NOT EMPHASIZE INSTEAD KRAEPELIN'S AND BLEULER'S UTTER INABILITY TO SUPPORT THEIR BELIEFS WITH A SHRED OF RELEVANT EVIDENCE ?



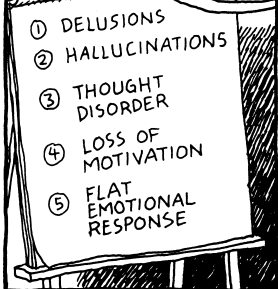
KRAEPELIN AND BLEULER DID NOT DISCOVER THE DISEASES FOR WHICH THEY ARE FAMOUS-- THEY INVENTED THEM.



ACCORDING TO THE PAMPHLET UNDERSTANDING SCHIZOPHRENIA (RECENTLY PUBLISHED BY THE ONTARIO MINISTRY OF HEALTH) THESE ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF SCHIZOPHRENIA.



YOU'LL NOTICE THAT THESE "SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS" RELATE TO A PERSON'S BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOUR.



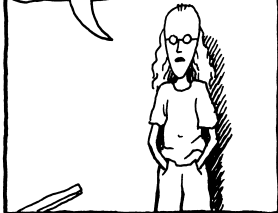
THIS IS SOMETHING DIFFERENT THAN FINDING A LUMP IN YOUR BREAST OR COUGHING UP BLOOD.



DESPITE THEORIES ABOUT CHEMICAL IMBALANCES, BRAIN SHRINKAGE AND GENETIC DEFECTS --



-- SCHIZOPHRENIA DOESN'T SHOW UP IN BLOOD OR URINE TESTS, C.A.T. SCANS, D.N.A. ANALYSIS, OR IN ANY OTHER TEST SCIENCE HAS THOUGHT UP -- NOT EVEN IN POST-MORTEM EXAMINATIONS OF BRAIN TISSUE.



THERE ARE, OF COURSE, DISEASES, SUCH AS SYPHILIS, WHICH CAN AFFECT THE BRAIN-- BUT THERE ARE DIAGNOSTIC TESTS FOR THESE DISEASES.



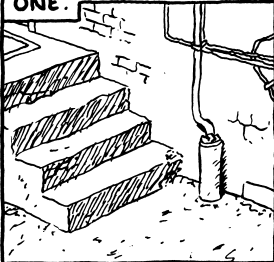
PSYCHIATRISTS TODAY DIAGNOSE SCHIZOPHRENIA THE SAME WAY KRAEPELIN AND BLEULER DID--



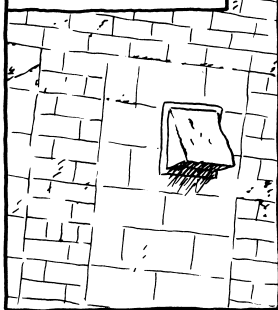
-- NOT BY LOOKING FOR SIGNS OF DISEASE BUT BY LOOKING FOR SOCIALLY UNACCEPTABLE BELIEFS AND BEHAVIOUR.



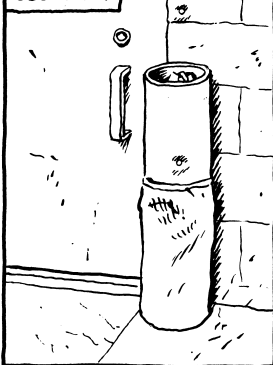
BEFORE 1973 HOMOSEXUALITY WAS CONSIDERED A MENTAL ILLNESS-- IN THAT YEAR THE AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION TOOK A VOTE WHICH DECIDED THAT IT WAS NO LONGER ONE.



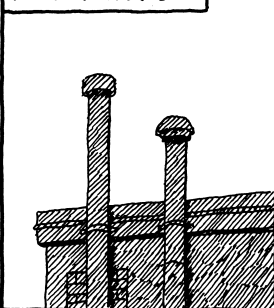
TODAY WE CAN SEE THAT GAY PEOPLE BEFORE THE '60'S WERE MISERABLE NOT BECAUSE THEY SUFFERED FROM A MENTAL ILLNESS--



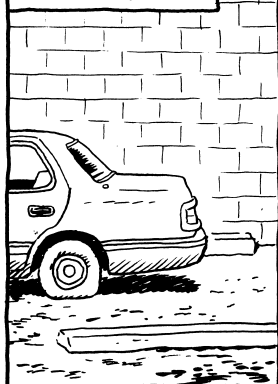
-- BUT BECAUSE THEY LIVED IN A HOMOPHOBIC CULTURE.



MANY, POSSIBLY MOST, GAY PEOPLE IN THAT HOMOPHOBIC CULTURE COULDN'T SEE BEYOND THEIR CULTURE'S ASSUMPTIONS--



-- THEY BELIEVED THAT THEY WERE SICK.



THE SCHIZOPHRENIC IS LIKE A MAN PERMANENTLY UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MescalIN.

ALDOUS HUXLEY



THE L.S.D. PHENOMENON... IS AN INTENTIONALLY ACHIEVED SCHIZOPHRENIA.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL



BECAUSE OF ACCIDENTS OF BOTANY AND HISTORY, EUROPEAN CULTURE HAS BEEN AWAY FROM THE PSYCHEDELIC DIMENSIONS AWHILE...

TERENCE MCKENNA



... WE CALL THEM "SCHIZOPHRENIA" AND SLAM THE DOOR.



THE SHAMAN IS A PERSON... WHO IN EARLY ADOLESCENCE UNDERWENT A SEVERE PSYCHOLOGICAL CRISIS, SUCH AS TODAY WOULD BE CALLED A PSYCHOSIS.



YESTERDAY'S SHAMAN IS TODAY'S CHRONIC SCHIZOPHRENIC !

SETH
FARBER



NOT ALL SHAMANS USE INTOXICATION WITH PLANTS TO OBTAIN ECSTASY, BUT ALL SHAMANIC PRACTICE AIMS TO GIVE RISE TO ECSTASY.



NONORDINARY STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS... ARE IN SOME INSTANCES INDUCED BY THE USE OF SACRED PSYCHEDELIC PLANTS... AND IN OTHERS BY POWERFUL NONDRUG TECHNIQUES--

STANISLAV
GROF



-- THAT COMBINE IN VARIOUS WAYS RESPIRATORY MANEUVERS, CHANTING, DRUMMING, MONOTONOUS DANCING, SENSORY OVERLOAD, SOCIAL AND SENSORY ISOLATION, FASTING, AND SLEEP DEPRIVATION...



... THE SPECTRUM OF EXPERIENCES INDUCED BY PSYCHEDELIC COMPOUNDS IS PRACTICALLY INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THOSE RESULTING FROM VARIOUS NONDRUG TECHNIQUES.



IF IT'S POSSIBLE TO INTENTIONALLY REACH THE PSYCHEDELIC STATE WITHOUT DRUGS, THEN ISN'T IT ALSO POSSIBLE THAT ONE COULD ACCIDENTALLY ENTER THE PSYCHEDELIC STATE WITHOUT DRUGS--



-- AND THAT THIS IS WHAT WE OFTEN CALL SCHIZOPHRENIA ?



LOOK AT GROF'S LIST AND THINK ABOUT INSOMNIA, HUNGER, THE STERILE BARRENNESS OF MODERN CITIES --



-- HOW WE'RE BOMBARDED BY THE MEDIA, THE MONOTONOUS RHYTHMS AND REPETITIVE TASKS OF SO MANY WORK-PLACES --



-- AND THE ISOLATION AND LONELINESS THAT ARE EVERYWHERE IN OUR SOCIETY.



PEOPLE OFTEN HAVE TERRIBLE EXPERIENCES ON PSYCHEDELIC DRUGS -- BAD TRIPS.

SCHIZOPHRENICS, IN OUR SOCIETY, ALWAYS HAVE BAD TRIPS.



PSYCHEDELICS CAN ALSO GIVE THE USER TRANSCENDENTALLY ECSTATIC EXPERIENCES.

SCHIZOPHRENICS OCCASIONALLY HAVE SIMILARLY POSITIVE REVELATIONS DURING THEIR PSYCHOTIC EPISODES.



WHY DON'T SCHIZOPHRENICS HAVE MORE GOOD TRIPS? COULD IT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH OUR FEAR OF, AND CULTURAL ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT, SCHIZOPHRENIA?



ADVOCATES OF PSYCHEDELICS BELIEVE THAT THE TYPE OF TRIP YOU HAVE DEPENDS ON WHAT TIMOTHY LEARY CALLED THE "SET AND SETTING".




ESSENTIALLY, IF YOU HAVE A POSITIVE MIND-SET AND ARE IN A POSITIVE, COMFORTING SETTING YOU'LL HAVE A GOOD TRIP -- A NEGATIVE SET AND SETTING EQUAL A BAD TRIP.



ALMOST ALL OF US HAVE A NEGATIVE MIND-SET IN REGARDS TO SCHIZOPHRENIA AND WE LIVE IN A CULTURE WHICH IS VERY FEARFUL OF THE EXPERIENCE.



INDEED, WE'VE MADE IT VIRTUALLY ILLEGAL.



I'M NOT DENYING THAT MOST SCHIZOPHRENICS SUFFER -- I'M QUESTIONING WHY THEY SUFFER.



IS IT BECAUSE THEY HAVE AN ILLNESS, OR IS IT BECAUSE OF THE SET AND SETTING THAT THIS SOCIETY GIVES THEM ?



THE ORDINARY PERSON IS A SHRIVELLED, DESICCATED FRAGMENT OF WHAT A PERSON CAN BE...

R. D. LAING



... WHAT WE CALL "NORMAL" IS A PRODUCT OF REPRESSION, DENIAL, SPLITTING, PROJECTION, INTROJECTION AND OTHER DESTRUCTIVE ACTION ON EXPERIENCE...




... THE "NORMALLY" ALIENATED PERSON, BY REASON OF THE FACT THAT HE ACTS MORE OR LESS LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, IS TAKEN TO BE SANE.



OTHER FORMS OF ALIENATION ARE THOSE THAT ARE LABELED BY THE "NORMAL" MAJORITY AS BAD OR MAD...



... CAN WE NOT SEE THAT THIS VOYAGE [SCHIZOPHRENIA] IS NOT WHAT WE NEED TO BE CURED OF--



-- BUT THAT IT IS ITSELF A NATURAL WAY OF HEALING OUR OWN APPALLING STATE OF ALIENATION CALLED NORMALITY ?



NOTES

As I wrote on the back-cover, I'm revising and expanding this notes-section a bit for this new 2006 edition of THE LITTLE MAN.

The dedication

My father died in 1997 as I was preparing the first edition of this book, so I dedicated it to my parents when it was published in 1998. Later that year, my brother and I were sorting through our dad's possessions, and we found a copy of the strip that I referred to in the dedication -- my first published work. I hadn't known that any copies of it still existed (the original art had long since disappeared) and I regretted that we hadn't found it earlier so that it could have been printed in the first edition of THE LITTLE MAN along with the dedication.

When I was twelve I became intensely interested in creating comic-strips. I'm not sure why, but my parents decided to encourage this enthusiasm. It was at around this time that they bought me an expensive drafting-table and fancy drawing tools.

And one day in early 1973, my father told me to gather up a bunch of my comic-strips. We drove to the office of the local free weekly newspaper, THE ST. LAWRENCE SUN. I quietly watched as he talked the editor into publishing a five-panel comic-strip by me. It appeared in the February 14th 1973 edition of the paper, and I got paid \$ 7.50. Looking at the strip (which can be seen on the next page) I can only surmise that the SUN editor was being kind in choosing to print it. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that it was the one and only strip by Chester Brown that THE ST. LAWRENCE SUN ever published. My dad made several more trips to the SUN office, but to no avail.

I don't know why he did all this -- he'd have preferred it if I'd been attracted to a career that had a better chance of being financially rewarding. Years later, when my brother (who is younger than I) wanted to enter a university arts program, our father forbade it, saying, "I'm not losing two sons to the arts."

As for the strip, this was one of a series I drew in '72 and '73 that were based on my family. The two boys are my brother and me. Other strips in the series featured our parents. My model for this series was the "pantomime" comic-strip DOUG WRIGHT'S FAMILY (a.k.a. NIPPER) by the cartoonist Doug Wright, which ran from the 1950s until the '70s. It appeared in a magazine that came with the Saturday edition of many Canadian newspapers. It's not surprising that I attempted (very unsuccessfully) to imitate Wright's work. DOUG WRIGHT'S FAMILY beautifully captured the Canadian suburban environment -- its world was recognizably the one I lived in. (I grew up in Chateaugay, a suburb of Montreal.) On top of that, the strip's family set-up matched my own: two brothers and a pair of parents. (Incidentally, the publisher of THE LITTLE MAN, Drawn & Quarterly, will be publishing the best of Wright's work in three volumes at some point in the near future.)

While I can see Wright's influence in the set-up and subject-matter of my strip, I don't see any trace of him in my twelve-year-old drawing-style. Wright was a brilliant draftsman and I was a crude beginner. What I do see in the drawings in these five panels is a touch of G.B. Trudeau. It's obvious to me that I had begun to read Trudeau's DOONESBURY

shers. I was again told to come back in a year.

For a few months I tried to find work in Montreal, without success. I moved to Toronto in September 1979 and within two weeks got a non-art-related day-job (printing photographs). Since I wanted to become a cartoonist, I thought it might be a good idea to live in the city that is the centre of the English-Canadian publishing world.

It was shortly after this that at night and on weekends I began to create the work that can be found at the beginning of this book. (As mentioned in the preface, quite a bit of comic-strip material by me was published in the period between the appearance of my ST-LAWRENCE-SUN-strip and my move to Toronto -- all of it on an amateur basis, most of it in fanzines. As also mentioned in the preface, I'm not reprinting that juvenilia.)

In 1979 I was 19 and, as I neared the end of my adolescence, my interest in superheroes was fading. I was starting to read different kinds of comics -- particularly the "underground" comics of the 1960s and 1970s. When I sat down with a pencil, I found myself creating strips that were closer in spirit to those comics and which didn't feature superheroes at all.

While the early strips in this book may be close in spirit to the underground comics, there are still definite differences. Most of the underground comic-books focused on three subjects: sex, drugs, and politics. In my early work I had good reasons for avoiding those topics:

- I was still a virgin (and was to remain one until early '83) and was sure that if I touched upon the subject of sex in my work, my shameful state of innocence would be obvious to everyone.
- Not only had I never tried out any of the illegal "recreational" drugs but I had almost never sampled the legal ones either. (I'd never smoked a cigarette or tasted alcohol. But I had drunk a tiny bit of coffee on one occasion.)
- And I had no interest in politics.

What can I say? I was virtually an infant.

"The Toilet Paper Revolt"

Page one

The new strip I drew for the front cover of this 2006 edition of THE LITTLE MAN tells the story behind the creation of "The Toilet Paper Revolt", but that cover-strip contains a few deliberate inaccuracies which I should point out. It was probably in late 1979 that the inspiration for this strip came to me, not 1980. And in the seventh panel I wrote that I was originally planning a "Toilet Paper Revolt" graphic-novel. What I was actually planning was an open-ended series of comic-books. (Both are long works, the difference is that the creator of a graphic-novel intends to end it.)

Below is the panel I mention drawing in the eighth panel of the front-cover-strip. I can't say for sure, but I think I drew it in late 1979.



"City Swine"

Page 5

Around this time I read two book collections of Harold Gray's classic newspaper strip LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE. (The two books were LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION and the repetitively titled LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE AND LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE IN COSMIC CITY. Both were

published by Dover.) Before this I'd thought one had to vary the panel size on most pages to keep a strip visually interesting and to engage the reader's attention, but I'd found LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE tremendously involving even though Gray never varied the size of his panels (at least he hadn't in the material reprinted in those two books). As a result, most of the panels in "City Swine" are the same size.

I submitted "City Swine" to various publications and got back rejection letters from all of them. The one that gave me the most hope came from Art Spiegelman and Francois Mouly's very prestigious comic-strip anthology magazine, RAW. The unsigned note informed me that they had almost printed it but had decided that I was capable of doing better.

"Walrus Blubber Sandwich"

Page 7

For some reason I thought that asserting my identity as a Canadian cartoonist would be a good idea and, since I saw Eskimos as Canadian symbols, I decided to draw strips featuring them, even though I knew nothing about Inuit culture. I'm embarrassed now, both by my use of the Eskimo stereotype, and by having to admit that I was ever a nationalist.

Still, I can see that I was making progress in learning how to control the brush as a drawing tool.

Now that I was keeping most panels a uniform shape and size, I realized that I didn't have to work on large unwieldy sheets of board or paper -- that I could do each panel separately and assemble them as pages after. I started to do this with "Walrus Blubber Sandwich", and I still work this way today. Later, when I started drawing longer strips, I realized how convenient this technique is for editing a strip. Adding, removing, or rearranging individual panels or whole scenes is easy when pages don't have a fixed arrangement.

"Walrus Blubber Sandwich" was meant to be a longer strip. I'd written a script for a twenty page story, but after drawing two of those pages, I couldn't

imagine sitting at my drawing-board and working on another eighteen. So I just had the flying-saucer crash and kill everyone on page three. Drawing comics takes discipline, and it took me several years to get to the point where I could tackle longer strips.

The first panel shows the intersection of Dufferin Street and St. Clair Avenue. I lived in that neighborhood at the time.

At the end of 1981 I'd been in Toronto for a little over two years and had only completed three short strips which totaled a meager nine pages. There were a couple of reasons for this. I was working a day-job and it was often difficult to get myself motivated to work on my time off. Also, I wanted each strip to be brilliant, so I spent a lot of time writing scripts and discarding them when I realized that they were less than that. But when I looked at the three completed strips, I realized that, even though they were far from brilliant, there was a satisfaction in having finished work in my hands and in seeing my drawing skills develop. So I decided to try to care less about being brilliant and more about just creating.

This seemed to work -- 1982 was a relatively productive year. (In addition to the strips printed in this book, I also drew the first ED THE HAPPY CLOWN and ADVENTURES IN SCIENCE strips in '82 -- these can be found in my book ED THE HAPPY CLOWN.)

"Mars"

Page 10

The method I used to create this strip should demonstrate how I was trying to care less about being brilliant. I stood in front of my comic book collection, closed my eyes, and picked out a comic at random. I flipped it open, placed my finger on a page, and then opened my eyes to see what panel my finger had landed on. I repeated this process five more times. I then tried to write some kind of story (to use the word loosely) around the images from those randomly chosen panels. For some reason I was pleased with the result and frequently used this technique to kick-start myself creatively on other strips.

I'd been a pretty typical TV addict as a kid, watching it several hours a day throughout my teen years. When I moved to Toronto I made a deliberate choice to not buy a television set -- I knew that if I had one I'd spend all my time watching it instead of drawing.

I lived without a television until I moved in with Sook-Yin Lee. (She was one of my girlfriends -- see the note for "Knock Knock".)

During that period I watched TV for about two or three hours a week. When I moved back out on my own, I once again chose to not own a television. In my spare time I really do prefer to read books.

On May 16th 1982 I attended a comic-book convention here in Toronto. I remember the date because it was my birthday. Deni Loubert, who was then publishing the comic-book CEREBUS, was at the con. CEREBUS was an ongoing serialized story written and drawn by Kitchener, Ontario, cartoonist Dave Sim, who happened to be Deni's husband at that time. (Dave has since finished the story, and it's now available as a sixteen-volume graphic-novel. It's actually one of my all-time favourite graphic-novels. Those of you who are aware that Dave and I are now friends, may be tempted to accuse me of bias, but I was a fan of his work way before I got to know him.) Short strips by other cartoonists were also being published in the CEREBUS comic-book, so I showed "Bob Crosby" to Deni. She read it through, then counted the pages. Satisfied that it would fit in CEREBUS, she told me she would publish it. I was thrilled. A few weeks later, Deni wrote to apologize -- she would not be publishing my strip. It was one page too long and wouldn't fit in the available space in CEREBUS.

Looking at this strip now, what strikes me is that it's rather unfocused as a critique of television -- it's as if I knew that TV was bad but didn't quite have a firm grip on why. This surprises me since I'm pretty sure that by this time I'd already read Jerry Mander's FOUR ARGUMENTS FOR THE ELIMINATION OF TELEVISION.

I fell in love with a girl named Kris and drew this strip as a Christmas present for her. We were "involved" for about a year-and-a-half and remained friends after the girlfriend-boyfriend-thing ran its course -- we're still pals to this day.

"Bunny" was her cute nickname for me and "Gerbil" mine for her. Kris seemed to like the strip despite its kinda creepy subtext.

I submitted "Dirk the Gerbil" to Kitchen Sink Press in early 1983 and got back a reply saying that they would be printing it in the upcoming SNARF #10.

While I was waiting, Kris convinced me that I should do something with all of the unpublished strips I had lying around. So I started self-publishing a mini-comic titled YUMMY FUR. (These mini-comics were 8½" by 11" sheets of paper folded in half to make a 5½" by 8½" booklet. Most of the ones I did were only eight pages each.)

Here's what the first three YUMMY FUR mini-comics (all published in '83) contained:

YUMMY FUR #1

- "The Toilet Paper Revolt"
- "Walrus Blubber Sandwich"

YUMMY FUR #2

- "Mars"
- the first ED THE HAPPY CLOWN strip

YUMMY FUR #3

- "City Swine"
- "Bob Crosby and His Electric TV"

Despite being busy running around Toronto to find comic shops and book stores that would be willing to carry YUMMY FUR, I still noticed at the end of 1983 that SNARF #10 hadn't been published. It didn't get published in 1984 either. In 1985 YUMMY FUR was getting enough attention that I started to get requests from publishers for strips. The first of these was from ESCAPE, a British anthology comic-book whose editors asked if I had anything that hadn't been published already. The only piece that I hadn't put in YUMMY FUR was "Dirk the Gerbil". At that point I just kinda assumed that Kitchen Sink had cancelled SNARF, so I sent "Dirk" to ESCAPE's editors for their seventh issue

despite the fact that they weren't paying their contributors. I was just anxious to get my work seen, and ESCAPE was an attractive, professional-looking publication.

"Brad's Enlightenment" Page 18

A guy named Peter Dako had seen copies of my mini-comic around Toronto, liked the format, and decided to put out his own mini. He called it CASUAL CASUAL and drew the first several issues himself. At some point he turned it into an anthology title and I drew this one-pager for his tenth issue.

I think I probably used the "Mars" technique of swiping images from old comic-books to produce this strip. I only recognize one of the stolen images -- the last panel comes from the CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED version of CRIME AND PUNISHMENT drawn by Rudolph Palais. (See page 36, panel 6, of that comic-book.)

"Garbage Day" Page 19

The two women here were visually based on models from a department store catalog. This strip and the following two were first published in the seventh YUMMY FUR mini-comic.

"My Old Neighborhood" Page 20

After I broke up with Kris I started seeing a girl who was an artist. The relationship wasn't going too well when I did this strip, and when she saw it she was convinced that it was some kind of comment on how awful things were between us and that Mrs. Arthead was supposed to be her. It wasn't something I consciously intended, but maybe she was right.

"An Authentic Inuit Folk Song" Page 21

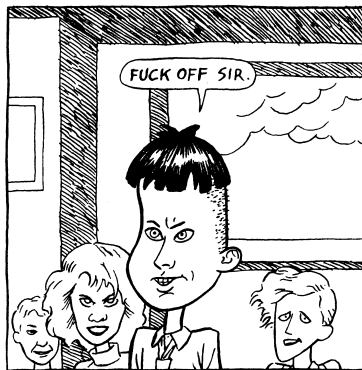
While I take no pride in reprinting this strip, at least I can happily report that there are no more Eskimos in this book.

The lyrics can be sung to the tune of "Puff the Magic Dragon".

"I Live in the Bottomless Pit" Page 22

I drew this at the same time as "An Authentic Inuit Folk Song". I did a bunch of panels that seemed kind of

connected. When I put them together as "I Live in the Bottomless Pit" I had the "Zero for you young man" panel (which was based on a Joe Orlando image from TALES FROM THE CRYPT #37) left over, and it seemed to fit with the "Inuit folk song", so I put it there. And there was a panel that didn't fit in either strip:



"I Live in the Bottomless Pit" was printed in the seventh YUMMY FUR mini-comic, but I'm not sure if that was where it first appeared. It was originally drawn for some zine. I don't remember the zine's title, or the name of the guy who published it, or if the issue I did the strip for was ever printed, or why I would have accepted an invitation to contribute to it, or anything else about that zine.

"Things to Avoid Stepping On" Page 24

Although I'd seen a few mini-comics before I started publishing YUMMY FUR, I hadn't been aware that there were hundreds of other cartoonists across North America who were self-publishing in the same manner. Sometime during 1984, Peter Dako mentioned to me that a guy named Dale Luciano was putting together an article on mini-comics for THE COMICS JOURNAL. I'd been reading and enjoying the JOURNAL for years -- it's a magazine devoted to intelligent criticism and analysis of cartooning -- so I hastily sent copies of YUMMY FUR to Mr. Luciano. In his reply-note he informed me that, not only was he going to be writing about minis for the JOURNAL, but that he also put out a mini-comic himself called DADA GUMBO, and he wondered if I would be interested in contributing to its upcoming seventh issue. Figuring it couldn't hurt

to suck up to this guy who was going to be writing about me in an influential publication, I sent him this strip. I got back a letter which read, in part:

I'm going to ask you to consider the possibility of re-thinking that panel in your drawing which features the close-up of the dog shit. I will run this as is, but you put me in the awkward position of having to admit that I find it offensive... would you at least consider the possibility of substituting something else in that panel...?

This reaction amused me so much that I started drawing an ED THE HAPPY CLOWN sequence for YUMMY FUR that was even more scatological. This was the storyline that featured "The Man Who Couldn't Stop".

"Help Me Dear" Page 25

Rather than draw a substitute panel for Dale, I drew a substitute strip -- this one. As it turned out, Dale decided to publish "Things to Avoid Stepping On", offensive panel and all, in DADA GUMBO #7, so this strip got put in DADA GUMBO #8.

"The Gourmets From Planet X" Page 26

Someone at Fantagraphics (a comic-book publisher that also puts out THE COMICS JOURNAL) decided that the company's line-up needed an anthology comic-book of humorous work. The book was to be called HA, and a guy named Tom Mason was assigned to edit it. He saw my name in Dale Luciano's COMICS JOURNAL article on mini-comics, and he also saw "Dirk the Gerbil" in ESCAPE, so he wrote me to ask if I'd do a strip for HA's first issue. The letter contained an apology because all Fantagraphics was willing to pay was \$30 a page. No apology was necessary -- this would be the first time I was going to get paid for a comic-strip since that ST. LAWRENCE SUN piece in 1973, so I was happy and excited to get any amount of money for one of my strips.

By the time that the first issue was ready to be published, the name of the comic-book had been changed from HA to HONK.

Years later, in 1989, Fantagraphics' Kim Thompson called me up to tell me they were publishing

a two-volume book-set of the best strips of the 1980s and to ask what piece by me they should include. I couldn't be bothered to mail something to them, so I asked if they still had the film from HONK #1 in their office. Kim said they did. So "The Gourmets from Planet X" was reprinted in THE BEST COMICS OF THE DECADE: VOLUME ONE, not because I thought it was the best thing I'd done in the previous ten years, but because of my laziness.

"A Late Night Snack" Page 30

I was a fan of the SWAMP THING comic-book written by Alan Moore and drawn by Steve Bissette and John Totleben. In 1984 I somehow got Steve's mailing address, so I sent him a bunch of the YUMMY FUR mini-comics. He wrote back a nice letter saying that he'd enjoyed them. In late 1985 he wrote me again to say he was gathering material for a series of anthology horror comic-books that he'd be editing. He was hoping this series would redefine the horror genre for comic-strips. He'd seen "Dirk the Gerbil" in ESCAPE and was sending copies of it to other cartoonists as an example of what he was talking about. The publication date for the first issue would be Halloween 1986. Would I do something new for that premiere issue? I think he was offering something like \$100 per page, which seemed like a significant amount of money to me. I happily agreed to contribute to the project.

A few months later, Steve wrote again to say that he now had a title for the series -- TABOO -- and that the amount he'd be paying had been increased to \$200 a page! On top of that, there would be royalties if the book sold well enough!!

Because Steve had cited "Dirk the Gerbil", I figured I'd give him another gerbil strip. In the time since drawing "Dirk" for Kris, I'd created many semi-autobiographical comic-strips for her that featured a bunny and a gerbil. They were drawn in pencil and weren't intended for publication. "A Late Night Snack" is very much in the same vein as those strips, except with finished artwork and a horrific ending.

At some point it occurred to Steve that, since ESCAPE #7 had

been published in England, it hadn't been widely seen in America. He suggested that he print "Dirk" alongside "A Late Night Snack" in TABOO. I said sure and sent him both strips. A cheque arrived promptly, but I had to wait a while to see if I'd get paid any royalties -- the first issue of TABOO wasn't released until 1988's Halloween. It did sell well, so I did get royalties, but I can't remember the amount.

"An American Story" Page 35

I think ESCAPE might have started paying by this time, otherwise I'm not sure why I would have done this strip for them. (It didn't take me long to get used to being paid for my work.) This appeared in their ninth issue.

"The Twin" Page 38

Gary Groth, who was the editor and one of the co-publishers of THE COMICS JOURNAL, wrote and told me that he enjoyed YUMMY FUR, and he wanted to know if I'd contribute something to a new anthology comic-book that he was editing called PRIME CUTS. Considering how much I respected his work on the JOURNAL, there was no way I could turn down his request.

I came across the story that I adapted as "The Twin" in two sources -- M.R. James's THE APOCRYPHAL NEW TESTAMENT (1924) and THE OTHER BIBLE, edited by Willis Barnstone (1984). Both of those sources got it from a third century Christian text called PISTIS SOPHIA. That book is commonly considered to be of Gnostic origin. I was reading a lot about Gnosticism and early Christianity at the time. According to what I read, Gnosticism was a belief-system that sprang up around the same time as Christianity. The exact relationship between Gnosticism and Christianity was vague and depended on which book one read. (Which came first? Which influenced the other? Was Gnosticism actually a separate religion?) Many of the ideas we associate with Gnosticism were deemed heretical after Christianity became the state-religion of the Roman empire in the fourth century.

The church was pretty successful at wiping out those ideas, although some people argue that Gnostic ideas did survive and influenced later religious sects like the Cathars and the Mandaeans. (Catharism was a "heretical" variation of Christianity that developed in what is now southern France and was eliminated by the Albigensian Crusade of the thirteenth century. Small communities of the Mandaeans still exist today in Iraq and Iran.)

Gary was a bit puzzled by the strip and wrote, "can you explain the theological implications, please? I think they went over my head, not being familiar with religion and mysticism." I replied,

[The Gnostics were one of those groups that believed all matter (including our bodies) is evil. The world (according to Gnostic myth) was created by the demiurge Ialdabaoth -- a "false" god (who in the Judeo-Christian version is called Jehovah).

[Different sects gave this demiurge different names -- I guess Ialdabaoth was the name I came across most frequently in the books I read.] Now Ialdabaoth (or Jehovah) trapped light from the real "true" God within Adam and Eve (to bring them to life) and that light is still in you and me today. So in order to find God, one has to look within oneself and find the light hidden inside.

Now, knowing all that, the meaning of the story I adapted from the PISTIS SOPHIA is obvious, right? The Holy Spirit comes down from Heaven and becomes one with Jesus. The Spirit, by appearing as an identical twin of Jesus (instead of as a dove -- as it does in the canonical Gospels), symbolizes the self knowledge Jesus [or anyone] has to gain to become one with God. Simple, eh? There are a couple of other levels of meaning, but we won't worry about them, will we? (Anyway -- they're obvious if you know your New Testament well enough.)

The "other levels of meaning" that seemed obvious to me then, seem pretty speculative to me now and not at all obvious for someone who was unfamiliar with religion and mysticism, as Gary had admitted he was.

Here's what I thought should have been obvious:

Apparently, according to some book I read back then, certain Gnostic sects didn't use baptism as a ritual sacrament. There were at least two reasons for this. One -- water, as a part of the corrupt material world, could not symbolically wash away sin. Two -- baptism is something another person does to you, and supposedly the Gnostics believed that gnosis

(knowledge) should come from within yourself -- that you shouldn't rely on external authority figures for "the truth". So it seemed possible to me that this story was created as an alternate version of how Jesus received the Holy Spirit (or gnosis) -- a version in which baptism played no role. I speculated that, by placing this incident in Jesus's childhood, the story's creator (or creators) were perhaps intending to make it clear that this receiving of gnosis preceded his baptism. In other words, he'd already been enlightened and getting dunked in the Jordan River had been just a formality if it had happened at all. (In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the dove/Holy Spirit alights on Jesus while he is being baptized, but there is no description of Jesus being baptized in John's Gospel, which is the New Testament Gospel that is most tinged with what are considered to be Gnostic ideas.)

Another possible explanation for this story's symbolism is that Jesus is reputed in certain ancient traditions to have actually had a twin brother: the disciple Thomas, who (as John's Gospel notes) was also known by the name Didymus. Thomas means twin in Aramaic and Didymus is Greek for the same thing. (Paul William Roberts interviewed a Mandaeen priest for his 1995 book JOURNEY OF THE MAGI. This priest claimed that Jesus survived the crucifixion because the Romans nailed look-alike Thomas up by mistake. This ties in with certain ancient texts (associated by some with Gnosticism) which assert that someone was crucified in Christ's place. A few people think that Mohammed was hinting at the same thing in his passage on the crucifixion in the Koran.)

In this note I've used the words "Gnostic" and "Gnosticism" with more caution than I have in the past (like, for example, in the 1998 version of these notes or in the above-reprinted explanatory letter that I wrote to Gary Groth). That's because I recently read WHAT IS GNOSTICISM? (2005) by Karen L. King. She contends that

There was and is no such thing as Gnosticism, if we mean by that some kind of ancient religious entity with a single origin and a distinct set of characteristics. Gnosticism is, rather, a term invented in the early modern period to aid in defining the boundaries of normative Christianity. Yet it has mistakenly come to be thought of as a distinctive Christian heresy or even as a religion in its own right [.]

One of Gary's editorial assistants phoned to ask a question. My strip was going to be printed in the upcoming third issue of PRIME CUTS -- could they also print the explanatory letter I'd sent to Gary so that the readers could understand the piece? I wanted the strip to be mysterious or something, so I asked that the explanation not be printed, and it wasn't. I did ask them to note my sources on the contributors page so that anyone who was curious could check out the original story. They did not do that.

"Back to Obedience School"

Page 42

Since Steve Bisette was supposedly about to reprint "Dirk the Gerbil" in TABOO, I decided it'd be a good idea to contact Kitchen Sink and make sure that SNARF was as dead as it seemed. I phoned and got SNARF editor Dave Schreiner on the line. No, Dave told me, SNARF wasn't dead -- they were still working on putting issue ten together, but they'd completely forgotten that they'd accepted "Dirk the Gerbil" for publication. Even though they'd forgotten all about it, Dave was still sorry to hear that it was going to be printed elsewhere and wondered if I'd do a new strip for their tenth issue. I didn't really want to -- I was getting tired of doing these short strips and was anxious to work on something longer. But I felt

guilty, since I probably should have contacted them years before, so I agreed. I think it shows, though, that I didn't put much into this strip. It's almost a frivolous reworking of "A Late Night Snack".

In May of '86, Bill Marks of the Toronto based Vortex Comics Inc. offered to start publishing YUMMY FUR as a full-size "real" comic-book. I accepted the offer. There were delays of one sort or another, but in December of '86 the first full-size 24 page issue of YUMMY FUR was published. I quit my day-job in the same month and began to work full time as a professional cartoonist. I stopped doing work for anthology titles and instead focused on a long serialized Ed the Happy Clown story and a serialized adaptation of the Gospel of Mark.

"Anti-Censorship Propaganda"

Page 44

In September of '87, the cops busted the Comic Legends comic shop in Calgary, Alberta, for carrying comic books that someone found offensive. (My comic book wasn't one of them, although I was trying hard to make YUMMY FUR offensive.) Some people started an organization called The Comic Legends Legal Defense Fund, and they decided they'd put out a benefit comic-book to be called THE TRUE NORTH to raise money to pay for the shop's legal fees.

I was asked to do a short strip for the book. I was enjoying having the room in YUMMY FUR to develop a long story and had no desire to return to short strips, but I don't like it when cops or government officials tell us we're not allowed to read certain books (or comic-books) so I agreed to contribute.

This was my reaction to Bill C-54, which was anti-porn legislation that the Canadian federal government had proposed at around that time. It did not get passed into law.

I'm a bit embarrassed by the strip. My rather forced implication that anti-porn legislation is motivated by a desire to control the media (beyond the ways that such laws obviously control sexual content in the media) is laughably ridiculous. No, the

elected officials who were behind C-54 probably either genuinely believed the usual anti-porn arguments or cynically reasoned that the bill would sound good to the public.

I'm apparently even more anti-censorship now than I was in 1988 -- now I'd be all for letting kids read and see whatever they want to.

"The Afternoon of March the 3rd"

Page 46

In late 1987 and early '88, Dave Sim (the CEREBUS cartoonist who was mentioned in the note about "Bob Crosby and His Electric TV") was squabbling about something-or-other with Diamond Comics (the largest comic-book distributor in North America). As a result, Diamond refused to carry THE PUMA BLUES -- a comic-book written by Stephen Murphy, drawn by Michael Zulli, and published by Sim. (After Dave's divorce from Deni, he took over publishing CEREBUS and also published some other comics for a while.) Murphy, Zulli, and Sim decided to spotlight their dilemma by asking other strip-creators to contribute to the twentieth issue of THE PUMA BLUES. Knowing that I had a bit of a grudge against Diamond (which had refused to carry a few issues of YUMMY FUR because they found my work offensive) the PUMA-boys asked if I'd do something. I did this page for them, more out of respect for Dave than out of any love for Stephen and Michael's book. (I tried hard to like it, without success.)

I didn't have any ideas for a short strip, so I just drew what and who was around me in my room on that particular afternoon. That's Kris in the first panel. She was taking a nap at my place.

If I remember correctly, Diamond was again carrying THE PUMA BLUES by the time the twentieth issue was out.

"Helder"

Page 47

In the late 1980s the cartoonist Seth became one of my closest friends. He was living in Toronto then and, like me, was working for Vortex -- drawing a

comic-book series called MISTER X, which was written by someone else. He hated the book -- what he wanted to do was write and draw autobiographical strips. The more we talked, the more he convinced me that the stories that make up our lives are more interesting than the stories one usually encounters in comic-books.

The desire to create autobiographical work was also generated in me by reading the early "cartoon diary" strips by Philadelphia's Joe Matt. It was in early 1989 (when he was living in Montreal) that his strips began appearing in SNARF. I'd seen autobiographical comics before, but the diary approach, combined with what seemed like an intrepid willingness to reveal everything, gave his work immediacy and impact. Those strips were a step forward for personal expression in cartooning. Even before we met and became friends, Joe was a big influence on me. (He moved to Toronto in 1990 and lived here for many years. He, Seth, and I used to hang out together all the time.)

An equally important influence was the work of Montreal cartoonist Julie Doucet. In early 1989 I saw two pages by her in some other cartoonist's mini-comic. That mini printed Julie's mailing-address and mentioned that she created her own mini-comics. It was obvious from those two pages that this was someone with enormous talent, so I sent her some money. Back came an envelope containing several issues of her self-published title, DIRTY PLOTTE. Everything about those mini-comics was appealing -- the beautiful drawing-style, the inventive sense of fun, the personal feel of the work -- there was an element of whimsical fantasy in DIRTY PLOTTE, but it was grounded in reality, and Julie drew herself as her main character.

It was after getting a package of Julie's work in the mail in the summer of 1989 that I decided I had to do autobio stuff. That night I worked out a rather clumsy ending to ED THE HAPPY CLOWN so that I could start drawing strips about me. "Helder" was the first such effort, and it appeared in YUMMY FUR #19.

"Showing 'Helder'"

Page 68

Here are two of the talking-to-

the "camera" panels that got cut out of "Helder" as mentioned in "Showing 'Helder'".



There were other such panels, but they were left in the final version of the strip, with their artwork slightly altered and my word balloons whited out.

For some reason, Kris was even less pleased with how she came across in "Showing 'Helder'" (which appeared in YUMMY FUR #20) than she was with her portrayal in "Helder" and was talking of forbidding me to draw her anymore. One of the problems with autobiographical writing was becoming clear to me -- my life-story intersects with other people's life-stories, and sometimes those people are going to think I'm not telling their stories right. If those people are friends, I've got a problem. So I next did a three issue serialized-strip set largely in adolescence (THE PLAYBOY) which, for the most part, avoided the problem. (Aside from family, I'd lost touch with everyone I knew in

my teenage years.)

When I drew "Showing 'Helder'" in pencil, I'd originally put in the same kind of square panel borders and background detail that you see in "Helder". But when it came time to ink the strip, I decided to not ink the borders and to draw only the "essential" elements of each panel. I'd been becoming dissatisfied with my drawing style for a while and wanted it to be freer -- more spontaneous.

I tampered extensively with this story for its 1998 reprinting in *THE LITTLE MAN*. I did three things with "Showing 'Helder'" that I didn't do with any other strip in this book: I eliminated a scene, I extended a scene, and I redrew panels (but only a few).

"The Little Man" Page 102

This strip was inspired by Peter Bagge's drawing in *WEIRDO* # 10 of the "Dickie Bird", which was a perfect simulation of the kind of juvenile drawings that many of us did while trapped in dull classrooms.

When inking "Showing 'Helder'" I had in many instances drawn beyond the confines of the panel borders that I'd originally given each panel. I liked being able to make the drawings any size or dimension they "needed" to be without worrying about how they were going to connect to the other panels around them, so I kept working this way. Rather than making a square panel-border first and fitting the drawing into it, I did the drawing first and then the border. The result may not look as neat and tidy as the conventional method of arranging comic-strip panels, but it made doing the drawings more fun -- at least until the novelty wore off.

"The Little Man" appeared in *YUMMY FUR* #24, which was the last issue of YF that Vortex published. In early 1991, Chris Oliveros of Drawn & Quarterly phoned to tell me that he wanted to publish *YUMMY FUR* and that he was willing to pay me a significantly higher royalty than Vortex was paying me. Vortex was unable to match Chris's offer, so YF moved over to Drawn & Quarterly.

"The Weird Canadian Artist" Page 121

A bunch of Toronto comic shops and a comic-book warehouse got

raided by the cops, so the Comic Legends Legal Defence Fund sprang back into action and organized a second issue of *THE TRUE NORTH* to raise money to pay legal fees. This was my contribution to it.

Part of the gag in the second part of this strip was that, of course, cartoonists who wrote and drew comic-books would never even be considered for any of the awards and honours listed. Then Art Spiegelman had to go and prove me wrong by winning a Pulitzer for *MAUS*.

As noted in the preface, many of these strips had to be reformatted to fit the small page-size of this book. That's what I was working on in September 1997. On September 22nd I got a call from my brother Gord -- it seemed that our father might have had a heart-attack. He'd been taken to a hospital in Hawkesbury. (This is a small town near where my father lived -- about an hour's drive from Montreal.) I asked if I should catch a flight out. Gord wasn't sure. Later in the day he called back to say that the situation didn't seem that serious -- our father was expected to recover and would be released from the hospital in a few days. So, instead of flying to Montreal, I got back to work reformatting pages for *THE LITTLE MAN*. On the 24th I was working on "The Weird Canadian Artist". The last page I laid-out on that day was page 126, and I left it taped to my work-table when I finished work for the day.

At around 6 AM on the 25th I was awakened by a phone-call from Gord. Our dad's situation had taken a turn for the worse. I hastily packed and caught a taxi to the airport. I was able to spend quite a bit of time by his bedside (he was tired but lucid) before he died in the early morning hours of the 28th.

In the rush of events, I'd forgotten where exactly I was in my reformatting task, so it was a bit of a surprise when I got back home after the funeral and found that taped to my drawing-board was page 126, which has a panel that reads, "Waaah -- he's dead!"

"Danny's Story" Page 128

For some period of time after this strip was published in *YUMMY FUR* #25, the two most frequently asked questions I received from readers were, "Did you really bite him?" and "Do you really eat your snot?" The answer is yes to both. (You can see me tenta-

tively bringing up snaf-eating in two earlier strips -- "The Gourmets From Planet X" and "Things to Avoid Stepping On".)

Danny (not his real name) had wanted me to put him in a story, but for some reason I never showed him this strip. Despite that, he apparently did see it. An acquaintance told me that he saw Danny flip through YUMMY FUR #25. Danny never mentioned the piece to me, and I suspect that he may not have recognized himself.

I inked most of "Danny's Story" on a trip to a comic-book convention in Baltimore. A lot of that inking was actually done on the train-ride there and back.

After finishing this story, I returned to my adolescence for a five-issue serialized strip that was later reprinted as the graphic-novel I NEVER LIKED YOU.

"Knock Knock" Page 142

Vancouver musician and filmmaker Sook-Yin Lee had been reading YUMMY FUR and enjoying it. She was in a band, and on one of their tours across Canada she made the effort to get in touch with me. We corresponded for a few years, and the relationship turned into a boyfriend-girlfriend-type-of-thing in late '92.

This strip was done as a Valentine's Day present. I wasn't sure at the time whether or not to publish it -- I thought it might be too embarrassingly sappy or something -- so I showed it to Joe, Seth, and Seth's girlfriend, Maggie. They all agreed that I should publish it. YUMMY FUR #31 is where it first appeared.

Sook-Yin and I lived together from 1993 to 2001, although the sexual aspect of our relationship ended in 1996. We continue to be very close friends.

Autobiography was beginning to feel a bit confining, and I had some ideas I wanted to explore in a fictional form, so I began planning what became UNDERWATER. I originally thought this story would appear as a series in YUMMY FUR, but for a couple of years my publishers, Chris, had been trying to get me to give up the title YUMMY FUR and give my comic-book another name. Although it was selling pretty well, he wanted even higher sales, and for some reason he figured that if it had a different name it would sell better. I think his idea was that regular

YUMMY FUR readers would continue to buy the book and we'd also pick up new readers with the "new" first issue. For various reasons (like that the new series was going to start off in an unintelligible language) I had no confidence in this plan, but Chris begged me for so long that I finally gave in. We stopped calling my comic-book YUMMY FUR and started calling it by the name of the new strip that I started to serialize in it: UNDERWATER. The title ran for eleven issues, at which point we canceled it because of creative difficulties I was having with the story.

"My Mom Was a Schizophrenic" Page 152

My mother died in an institution in 1976. (See I NEVER LIKED YOU for more on this, though not much more.) I became curious about what mental illness is -- about what had happened to her. I read books on the subject, but their answers seemed vague and unsatisfying. It wasn't until I came across

Thomas Szasz's SCHIZOPHRENIA: THE SACRED SYMBOL OF PSYCHIATRY (1976) in 1990 that I felt that my questions were beginning to be answered. I read more books by Szasz and then books by other "anti-psychiatry" authors.

I realized that their ideas aren't widely known, so in 1995 I decided to try and create a short introduction-to-anti-psychiatry type of strip. (Both Szasz and R.D. Laing rejected the "anti-psychiatry" label when it first came into use in the 1960s, but I personally see nothing wrong with the term.

Psychiatry is a branch of medicine, and if one believes that so-called "mental illnesses" should not be treated as medical problems -- as Dr. Szasz does and the late Dr. Laing did -- then it seems sensible to me to accept that one is against psychiatry: anti-psychiatry. Szasz, though, is himself a psychiatrist, as was Laing. Perhaps they wanted to continue to use that title for professional reasons.)

I've always liked finding those evangelical Christian mini-comics (particularly the ones drawn by Jack Chick) that true-believers leave for free in telephone-booths and bus-shelters. I started to think about self-publishing the anti-psychiatry-strip-I-wanted-to-do as an eight-page mini-comic that I would distribute in the

same way. In order to fit the format, I made the strip six pages long. But then I realized that, if I wanted as many people as possible to read it, I should print it in UNDERWATER. (I could only distribute a mini in Toronto, whereas U-W got into comic-shops across America and Canada.) After "My Mom Was a Schizophrenic" was published in UNDERWATER #4, I did also publish it as a mini-comic. I bicycled around Toronto, putting the little booklets in telephone-booths and bus-shelters. I felt a bit silly doing that, particularly since I only had the energy to distribute a couple-hundred of the mini-comics, while UNDERWATER #4 had already reached thousands of people. But one of those mini-comics ended up in the hands of someone who worked for the Mental Patients Association of Vancouver, and that organization asked if they could print the strip in their newsletter IN A NUTSHELL. I agreed, of course.

PAGE 152 : PANEL 2

I'm quoting Dr. Rob Buckman, who at that time hosted a show for T-V-Ontario called VITAL SIGNS.

152:5 - 152:7

I'm not directly quoting Kraepelin and Bleuler here -- I'm paraphrasing material from Szasz's SCHIZOPHRENIA: THE SACRED SYMBOL OF PSYCHIATRY. In his later years, Bleuler did an about-face and admitted that psychiatric definitions "are forensic and not medical."

152:8 - 153:2

From Szasz's SCHIZOPHRENIA: THE SACRED SYMBOL OF PSYCHIATRY. Emphasis added.

153:3

UNDERSTANDING SCHIZOPHRENIA had been "recently published" (in 1994) at the time that the strip was created.

153:4

I thought it was obvious how these "signs and symptoms" relate to beliefs and behaviour, but one person argued the point with me, so I'll explain my reasoning.

① & ② X talks to a person no one else can see or hear. This is odd behaviour but it is behaviour nonetheless. If X actually believes that X is talking to someone, you or I may think that X is deluded (or incorrect -- to use a less "loaded" word which means the same thing) but that doesn't make it any less a belief of

X's.

③ This one might not seem to be connected to a person's beliefs or behaviour (thoughts are not behaviour and aren't necessarily beliefs) but then you have to remember that psychiatrists aren't mind-readers. They're actually judging how a person speaks and what they say, and speech is a form of behaviour.

④ It may seem like odd behaviour if a person who's been a go-getter all their life suddenly only wants to lie on their bed and look at the ceiling but (again) it is behaviour.

⑤ How a person expresses emotion is clearly a form of behaviour.

This isn't to say that behaviour can't be an indication of disease. In 1994, the cat that Sook-Yin and I were living with seemed to have a "loss of motivation" -- all she wanted to do was lie around on the sofa. Since this contrasted with her previously active behaviour, we were concerned and took her to the vet. It turned out that she had an infected gall bladder and needed surgery. The vet established this, however, not just by looking at the cat's behaviour, but by conducting various diagnostic tests. Had those tests not found anything wrong, we wouldn't have concluded that our cat was schizophrenic -- there are plenty of healthy cats who do little but lie around on sofas. But while it's fine for cats to lie around all day doing nothing, it's socially unacceptable for humans.

Szasz argues that psychiatry has become our society's method of policing disapproved human behaviour that is beyond the reach of the criminal justice system.

153:6 - 153:7

After "My Mom Was a Schizophrenic" was published, a number of readers wrote me letters to point out that schizophrenia has been "proven" to have a genetic cause or "has been proven" to be caused by a "chemical imbalance" in the brain. If you've fallen for either of these psychiatrically promulgated beliefs, then please refer to Chapter Five of TOXIC PSYCHIATRY (1991) by psychiatrist Peter Breggin to be disabused of them.

153:7

I recently read a message-board critique of "My Mom Was a Schizophrenic" in which it was claimed that schizophrenia does show up in CAT scans. I'm aware that psychiatrists make this claim

but, if they believed it was true, then the CAT scan would become the diagnostic test for schizophrenia. The fact that CAT scans are not used in this way, shows what psychiatrists really believe about the ability of this technology to detect the presence of schizophrenia.

Psychiatry is a pseudo-science -- it does not have scientific, objective, diagnostic tests for the "illnesses" it claims to treat.

154:2 In her book THEY SAY YOU'RE CRAZY (1995), psychologist Paula J. Caplan reports that the vote was 5854 to 3810.

154:7 From Huxley's THE DOORS OF PERCEPTION (1954).

154:8 From Campbell's MYTHS TO LIVE BY (1972).

154:9 - 155:1 From McKenna's THE ARCHAIC REVIVAL (1991). In these panels, I cut and switched around McKenna's words, so I'm going to give them to you here the way he wrote them:

Modern epistemological methods are just not prepared for dealing with chattering, elf infested spaces. We have a word for those spaces -- we call them "schizophrenia" and slam the door. But these dimensions have been with us ten thousand times longer than Freud. Other societies have come to terms with them. Because of accidents of botany and history, European culture has been away from the psychedelic dimensions awhile.

154:7 - 155:1 Martin Lee and Bruce Shlain's book ACID DREAMS (1985) details the scientific debate that took place in the 1950s and 1960s over whether LSD and similar drugs were psychedelic (mind manifesting) or psychotomimetic (madness mimicking). The psychedelic faction believed that these drugs could be beneficial to people, while those who used the word psychotomimetic believed that they made people crazy. Apparently it occurred to no one that maybe both sides of the debate were right.

155:2 From MYTHS TO LIVE BY.

155:3 From psychologist Farber's MADNESS, HERESY, AND THE RUMOR OF ANGELS (1993).

155:4 From McKenna's FOOD OF THE GODS (1992).

155:2 - 155:4 Some people seem to misunderstand this point. They think, because I'm saying that shamans and psychotics are both having psychedelic-like experiences, that therefore I'm saying that schizophrenics are ready to take on a shamanic role in our society. That is not what I'm saying. There's a good deal more to being a shaman than experiencing altered mental states. Given his or her cultural background and training, the shaman has a context for making sense of unusual mental states. The schizophrenic, having a very different cultural background, is likely to just become lost in the experience. Psychiatrists, having no understanding of these mental states, usually lead the schizophrenics in their care into deeper darkness and confusion.

Likewise, I'm not saying that using psychedelics will make one into some sort of spiritual leader.

155:5 - 155:7 From psychiatrist Grof's THE ADVENTURE OF SELF-DISCOVERY (1988).

155:9 No doubt some people who are diagnosed as being schizophrenic are not in a psychedelic-like state. One can have "flat emotional responses", "loss of motivation", and "thought disorders" for reasons other than being in an altered mental state. At the heart of the experience I'm talking about is psychosis (hallucinations and delusions).

156:1 - 156:3 I don't think Grof's list exhausts all of the possible non-drug ways by which people can enter this state. Many of the things Grof lists seem to be attempts to induce stress, and I suspect that other stress-inducing experiences -- such as extreme negative emotion -- could produce the same results.

156:5 For examples, see MADNESS, HERESY, AND THE RUMOR OF ANGELS for the stories of Barbara and Angela. Each had psychotic experiences that they described in positive terms. Barbara "felt safe and secure and very happy." Angela felt "wonderful." It was as if I'd gotten the code to the universe. When committed to psychiatric institutions, both women quickly started to feel like schizophrenics are supposed to: terrible.

Also see Michael Schumacher's DHARMA LION (1992) for his account of

Allen Ginsberg's 1948 non-drug-induced "mystical" experiences in which he heard "the voice of [William] Blake, speaking to him through eternity," and saw "that the people around him now had the faces of wild animals."

Because we're not used to thinking of psychosis as being potentially good, most people who have such experiences are more likely to call them mystical.

156:7-156:8 | I first encountered Leary's ideas in Robert Anton Wilson's COSMIC TRIGGER (1977).

157:4-157:9 | From Laing's THE POLITICS OF EXPERIENCE (1967). Laing's suggestion that schizophrenia might be a healing experience in the right context will seem so far-fetched to those who haven't encountered it before (and to many of those who have) that I suppose it'd be a good idea to give an example. (In THE POLITICS OF EXPERIENCE, Laing gives a detailed case history which illustrates his point. Rather than condense it, I'll give a different -- and more famous -- example.)

In the posthumously published journal IN PURSUIT OF VALIS (1991), science fiction author Philip K. Dick gives an autobiographical account of an experience that began in March 1974 and continued for about a year.

It appeared -- in vivid fire, with shining colors and balanced patterns... It seized me entirely, lifting me from the limitations of the space-time matrix.

Dick explains in another entry that during this period he believed that he "was someone else... From another time period... Dead centuries ago and reborn." He frequently asserts throughout IN PURSUIT OF VALIS that this experience healed him.

When it left me, it left me as a free person, a physically and mentally healed person who had seen reality suddenly, in a flash, at the moment of greatest peril and pain and despair; it had loaned me its power and it had set right what had by degrees become wrong over God knows how long.

Although Dick seems to have generally believed that his experience was mystical, he didn't become dogmatically attached to any single explanation, and several times in IN PURSUIT OF VALIS he seriously considers the possibility that he was psychotic. He couldn't, however, get past the popular view that psychosis is always experienced negatively. In one of the later entries of the book, from 1981 (Dick died in early '82), he wrote:

In 2-3-74 came comprehension and recogni-

tion; there also came the end of -- the healing of -- the gulf that separated me from the world. This is 180 degrees away from psychosis. Viewed psychologically, this is, in fact, a healing; it is repair.

Well, I guess Dick never read THE POLITICS OF EXPERIENCE.

157:9 | After "My Mom Was a Schizophrenic" was published in UNDERWATER #4, it occurred to me that Laing's use of the word "healing" seemed a bit awkward, since the strip rejected the medical model of mental "illness". Laing also rejected the medical model, so it's clear that he was using the word in a metaphorical sense (and, of course, I also intended it metaphorically in the previous note) but it still made me uneasy. I'd now rephrase the Laing panels thusly: "Most people (probably all people) are far (probably very far) from achieving their full potential. A person who's having a schizophrenic experience might, by going through that experience, get a bit closer to achieving their potential." My rephrasing sounds less impressive, but these days I'm more comfortable with the idea when it's expressed like that.

One reader wrote me a letter to point out what looked to him like a contradiction: A psychedelic-like mental state would likely be caused by "chemicals endogenous to the brain" -- shouldn't this be described as a chemical imbalance in the brain? My problem with that term isn't with the word "chemical" but with the word "imbalance", which implies that the brain is functioning incorrectly when someone enters psychosis. I think it's the opposite -- that the brain is as much in balance when a person is psychotic as when a person is "normal" and that if a "chemical endogenous to the brain" is responsible for psychosis, it's because the brain is supposed to release that chemical from time to time when circumstances seem to warrant it.

Why would the brain do this? Why would it deliberately go into a psychedelic-like state as a response to stress and extreme emotion? I don't know, but that's not going to stop me from speculating:

In the right circumstances (like in pastoral "natural" settings) psychedelics can be very pleasant. Perhaps the brain evolved (in those natural settings) so that whenever things got too intense it could flood itself with a psychedelic-like chemical in order to feel good again

--get high-- get in touch with life at a deeper "mystical" level. The brain just didn't know when it was evolving this "coping mechanism" thousands of years ago that, at some point in the future, human society would become antithetical to the psychedelic experience. As a result, now, when the "coping mechanism" goes into effect, it's usually a bad experience, instead of a good one.

A second possible explanation depends on whether Timothy Leary's belief that psychedelics could be used to "reprogram" the brain is correct. Leary's experiment with prisoners at Concord State Prison in Massachusetts seemed to confirm this belief. He told prison officials that by giving consenting inmates psilocybin he could cut the recidivism rate, and he did.

Leary had defined success or failure in terms of where the bodies were in space-time two years after release from prison. At that time, he noted gladly, over 80% of them were still outside prison, whereas the majority of released convicts are back inside prison within two years. Dr. Walter Huston Clark, in 1976, noted that the bodies of most of Leary's convicts known to him were still outside prison in space-time after 15 years. [From Robert Anton Wilson's COSMIC TRIGGER.]

If Dr. Leary was right that psychedelics can be used to reprogram the brain, and if I'm right that psychosis is a psychedelic-like mental state, then psychosis might have evolved as a built-in-psychedelic-reprogramming-system that the brain uses in extreme circumstances (like Philip K. Dick's "moment of greatest peril and pain and despair").

But if this is a coping mechanism or the brain's way of reprogramming itself, why does the brain stay in this state for months and years? Laing theorized that psychiatric interventions prolonged this mental state -- prevented the person from "naturally" coming out of it. Irit Shmirat's experience -- as recorded in her book CALL ME CRAZY (1997) -- would seem to confirm this.

[T]he first and second times I went mad, I got professional help -- hospitalization and drugs -- and stayed crazy for months, and the third time I got help from a friend who wasn't scared because she'd been there herself -- and it was over in a few hours.

A friend who read this piece

asked me what my solution to the problem was.

Was the solution to the "mental illness" of homosexuality a new form of psychotherapy or a new drug? No, it was the gradual decreasing in our society of homophobia. If we could similarly get rid of our fear of schizophrenia, I believe our problems with it would decrease and possibly disappear. People who see this as unrealistic are ignoring the fact that in some cultures if you "hear voices" or see things that other people can't see, you aren't a person with a problem, you're a person with a gift.

A gay acquaintance of mine came out of the closet. Most of his friends and family responded positively. They were supportive of what they saw as a new adventurous phase of his life. During my first acid trip I became convinced that I wasn't going to recover my sanity -- that the drug had driven me permanently crazy. I knew that my family and friends weren't going to have a Laingian perspective on this. I figured I had institutionalization, mind numbing neuroleptic drugs, and possibly electro-shock to look forward to. I decided that rather than face this bleak future I'd commit suicide. Fortunately, I came out of the trip before I could throw myself off a bridge. But the experience clearly illustrated for me why schizophrenics can be suicidal and how the attitudes of society affect psychosis and make it negative. If I could have looked forward to an attitude of support for a new adventurous phase of my life, I think it's likely that I would have had a better trip.

Another friend told me of a news-story he'd heard -- a schizophrenic had stopped taking his "medication" and had then slashed the face of a child. This friend believed that all schizophrenics should be forced to take anti-psychotic drugs to keep them non-violent. The notion that psychotics are violent is a myth. Sure, some are -- but so are plenty of non-psychotic ("normal") people. If we're going to drug all schizophrenics because a few are potentially violent, then logically we should also be drugging all non-psychotic people to keep the violent ones in check. But drugging schizophrenics has nothing to do with logic and everything to do with fear of people who "aren't like us."

Some people believe that they have been genuinely helped by

psychiatrists and that this validates psychiatric theories. I don't doubt that there are people who have been helped by psychiatrists. I'm sure that there are a few psychiatrists who are sensitive, and caring, and have a talent for assisting people who are in emotional distress. But that doesn't prove psychiatric beliefs. Some people in emotional distress will visit a psychic or a tarot-card-reader. Many psychics and tarot-card-readers are sensitive, and caring, and have a talent for assisting people who are in emotional distress, but that doesn't make tarot-card-reading a valid scientific discipline.

And while I acknowledge that some have been helped by psychiatry, it's my opinion that this profession does far more harm than good.

I've mentioned a number of books in relation to this strip, but I'd like to particularly recommend two of them for their scope and readability: MADNESS, HERESY, AND THE RUMOR OF ANGELS by Seth Farber, and TOXIC PSYCHIATRY by Peter Breggin.

I wish I'd had room in the strip to bring up Breggin's contention that psychiatric drugs are used, not to heal people, but to control them. Actually, the anti-psychotic drugs do the opposite of healing. Even the Ontario Ministry of Health's UNDERSTANDING SCHIZOPHRENIA admits that these drugs can cause tardive dyskinesia, which "is damage to the central nervous system, sometimes permanent damage... TD can be so severe that it is disabling." UNDERSTANDING SCHIZOPHRENIA doesn't give the risk rates, but according to Breggin, "all long-term patients are likely to succumb to tardive dyskinesia."

A book I didn't mention in the notes but which I'd also like to recommend is Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson's AGAINST THERAPY (1988). It's not so much anti-psychiatry as it is anti-every-aspect-of-the-mental-health-system -- a scathing indictment of the philosophical assumptions of a system that Masson knew well, both as a psychoanalyst and as projects director of the Sigmund Freud Archives.

The front cover

Drawn & Quarterly publisher Chris Oliveros called me up in

late 2005 to say that THE LITTLE MAN was almost out-of-print, and he wondered if I'd be willing to draw a new cover for a new edition of the book. At a certain point, creating new covers for old works becomes an annoyance, so I said no, I was not interested in drawing a new cover for that book.

Then I got a freelance illustration gig for Penguin Books -- they were asking cartoonists to do covers for classic literary works, and I got the LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER job. I asked the art director to show me what the other cartoonists had done with their books in the series, so he FedExed some photocopies to me. I was particularly struck by the covers that Chris Ware and Seth had done (for, respectively, CANDIDE and THE PORTABLE DOROTHY PARKER). They had both incorporated short strips into their cover designs. I followed their example with my LADY CHATTERLEY covers and really enjoyed the work. Suddenly I wanted to do more book-covers with comic-strips -- I called up Chris to say, "I do want to draw new covers for THE LITTLE MAN." Putting short strips on the covers of this book seems particularly appropriate, since this is a collection of short strips.

When I came up with the concept for this front cover, I realized that my publisher might not be receptive to it. I phoned Chris again.

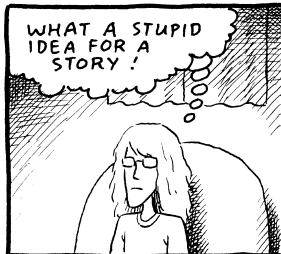
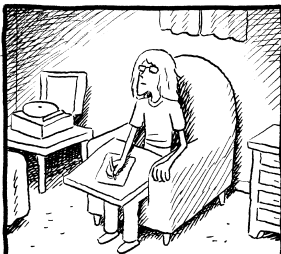
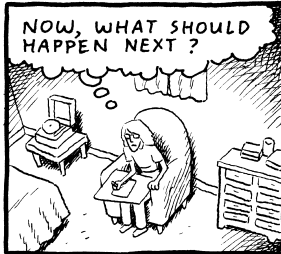
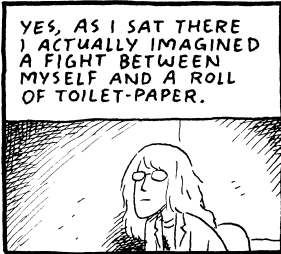
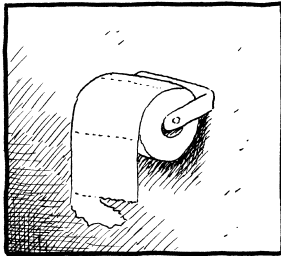
"What if, in a few panels of the front cover strip, I show myself sitting on a toilet-bowl?"

"I don't know..."

He consulted with some retailers and with other people in the Drawn & Quarterly office and then called me back to suggest that I draw something else on the cover. I was disappointed and spent a day or two trying to think up another strip. Then it occurred to me that my original idea might be salvagable. I rang up the D&Q number.

"Chris, what if I don't draw anything below the waist in those panels and don't show the toilet-bowl?"

"Won't it be confusing for



the reader? How will people know you're sitting on a toilet-bowl?"

"I'll write it in a narrative-caption."

Chris had no problem with that so, as you can see, that's what I did.

I haven't had any short strips published since "My Mom Was a Schizophrenic" that would meet the criteria specified in this book's preface, so there won't be a second volume of short strips by me anytime soon.

When I read a book by someone, I appreciate it if they include a photo of themselves somewhere in or on it, so I've always included a shot of myself in all of my books. And it's always a photograph that was taken at around the time of the book's creation. That presented me with a problem in 1997 when I was putting together the first edition of THE LITTLE MAN, which contained material created over a fifteen-year period. I decided that the "voice" of the book was defined by the notes that I was then writing. That meant I should choose a recent picture -- I settled on one that Sook-Yin had taken in 1996. That's the photo that can be seen on the next page.

Chester
Brown

January 2006



