

ARRS

4.3

TWENTY-NINE



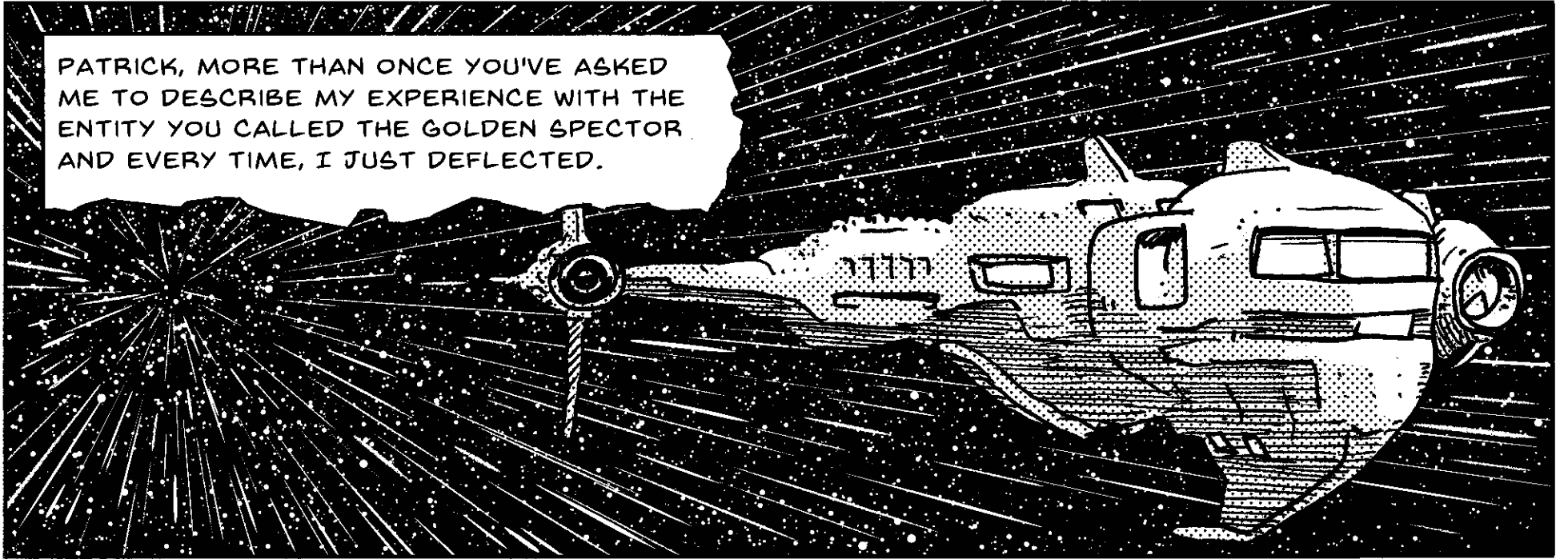
(OMINOUS HUM)



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AN ARC 29 STORY

The life and times of Orlando Sharp volume 9.
"The Entity"



PATRICK, MORE THAN ONCE YOU'VE ASKED ME TO DESCRIBE MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE ENTITY YOU CALLED THE GOLDEN SPECTOR AND EVERY TIME, I JUST DEFLECTED.



TALKING WITH YOU ABOUT IT, YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH THEM WERE MOSTLY HARMLESS, **CONFUSING** BUT HARMLESS.

MINE WERE **SURREAL** AND UNSETTLING, WITH A **SINISTER** UNDERTONE.



THE FIRST ENCOUNTER, I WAS 33 YEARS OLD AND CAPTAIN OF THE **PHANTOM ARTIST**-

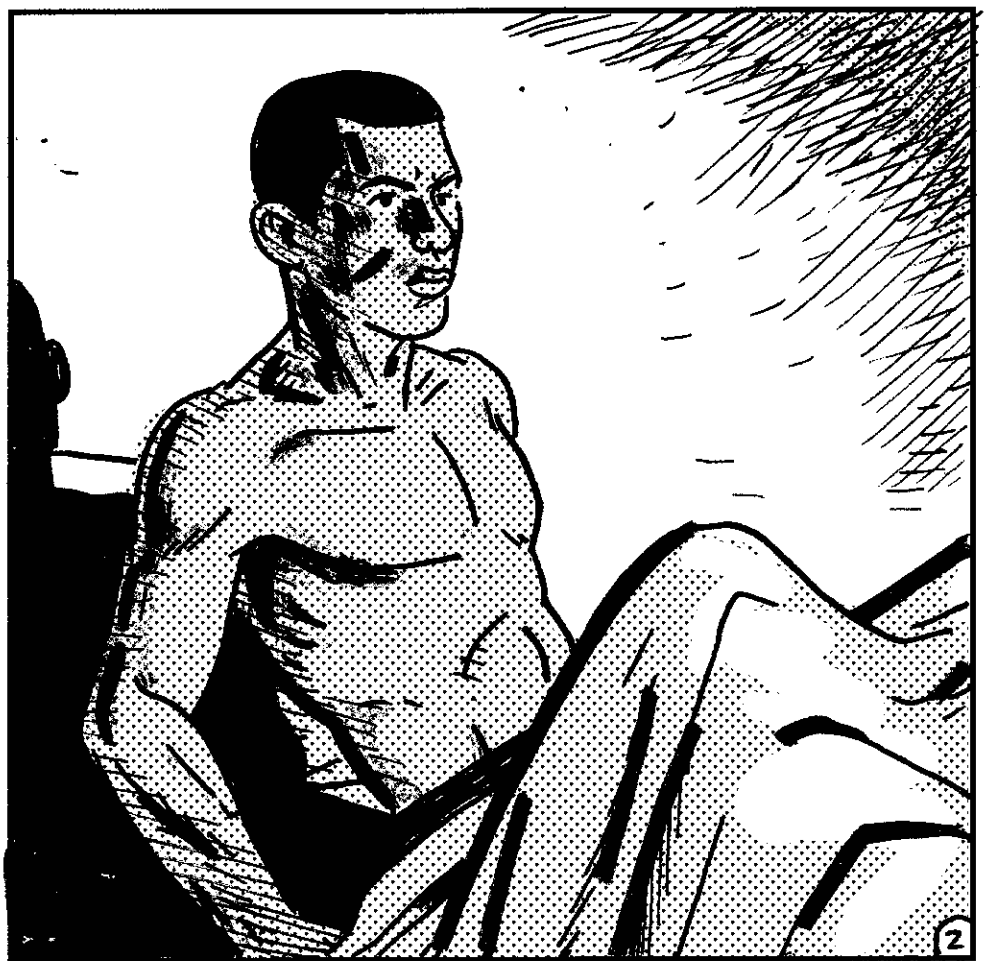
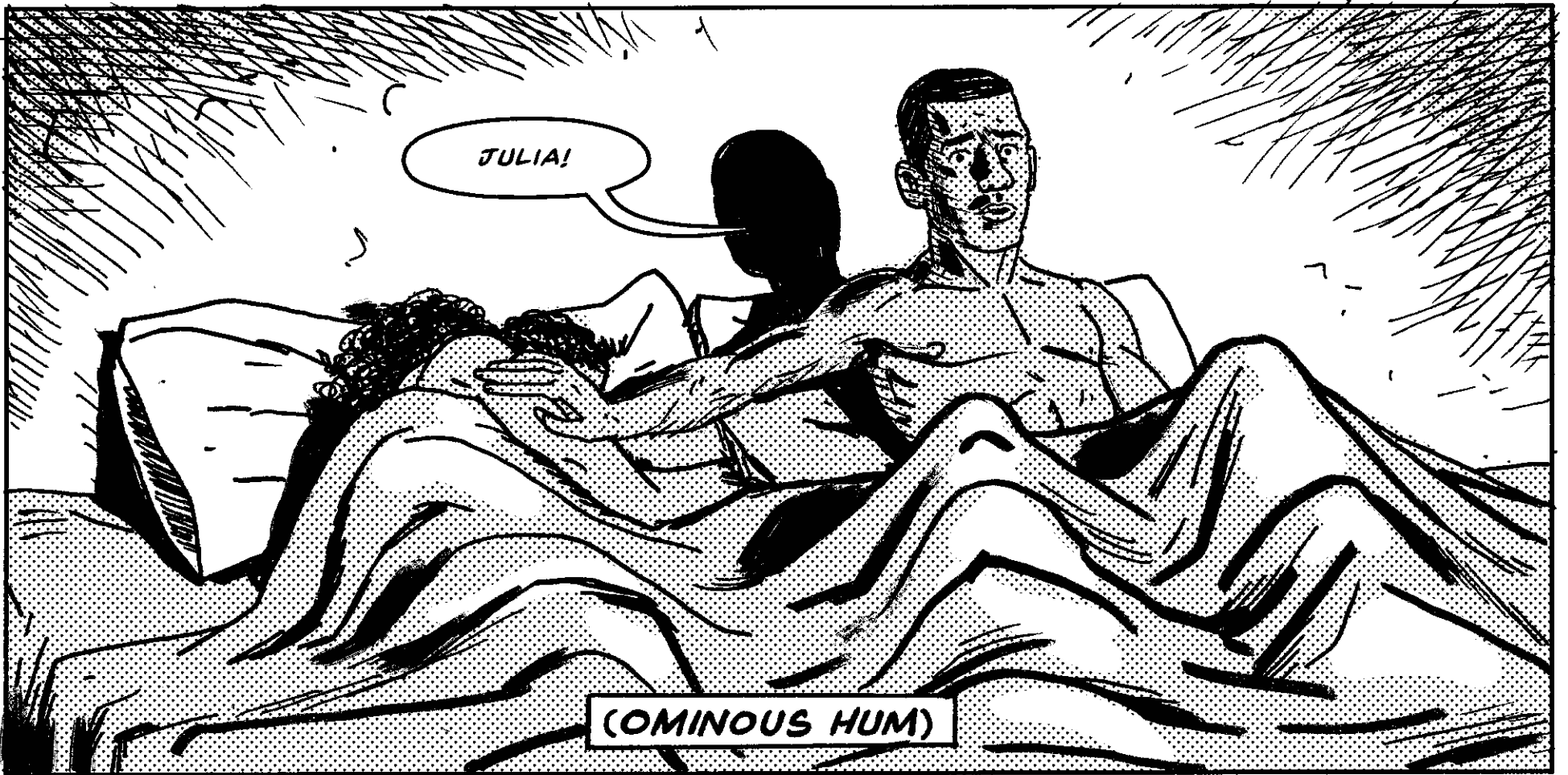
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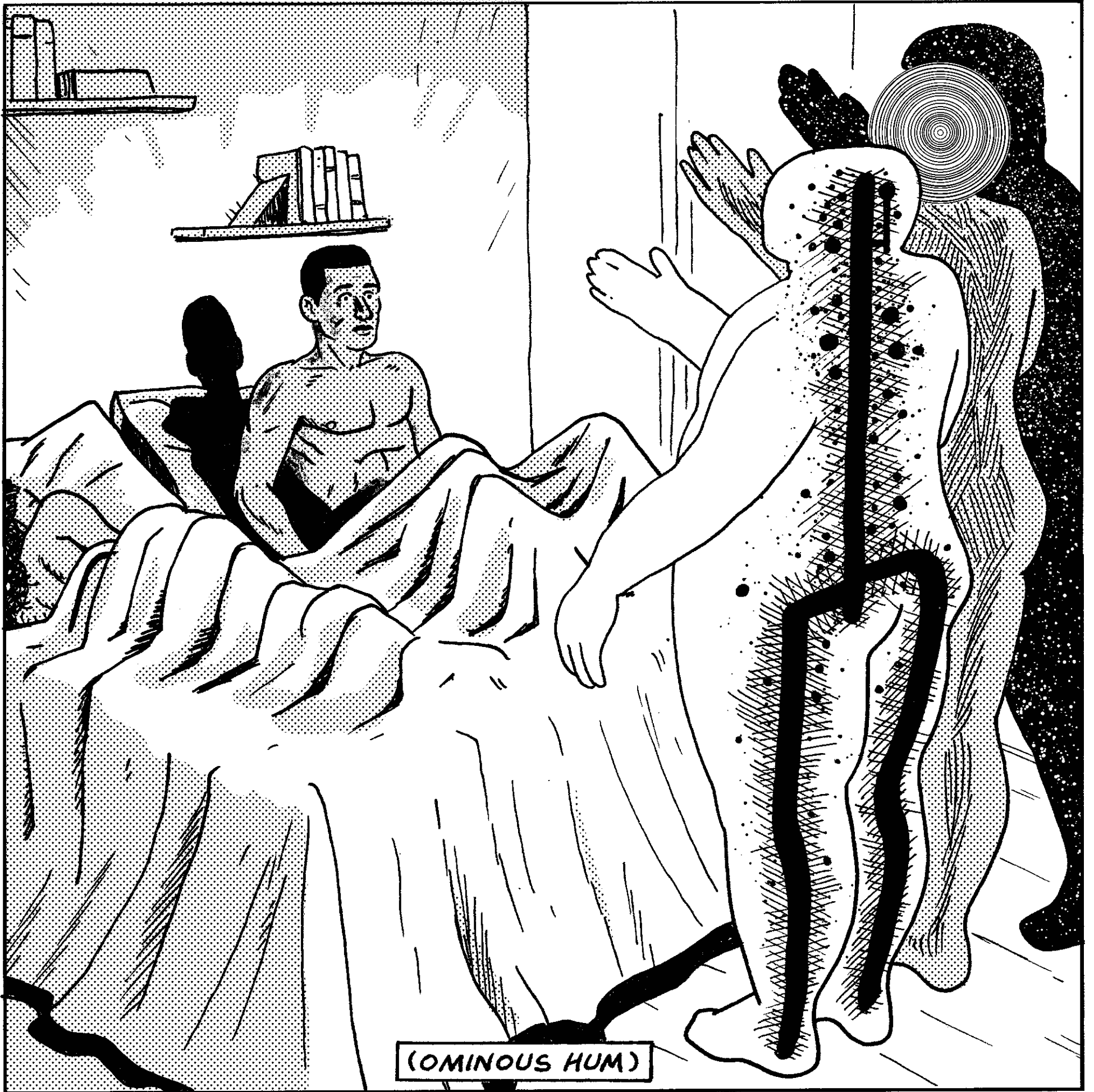


WE WERE ON THE RUN FOR HAVING **KILLED** INTERGALACTIC COPS IN A SHOOTOUT YEARS EARLIER.

BUT THAT'S A STORY FOR ANOTHER TIME.

(OMINOUS HUM)





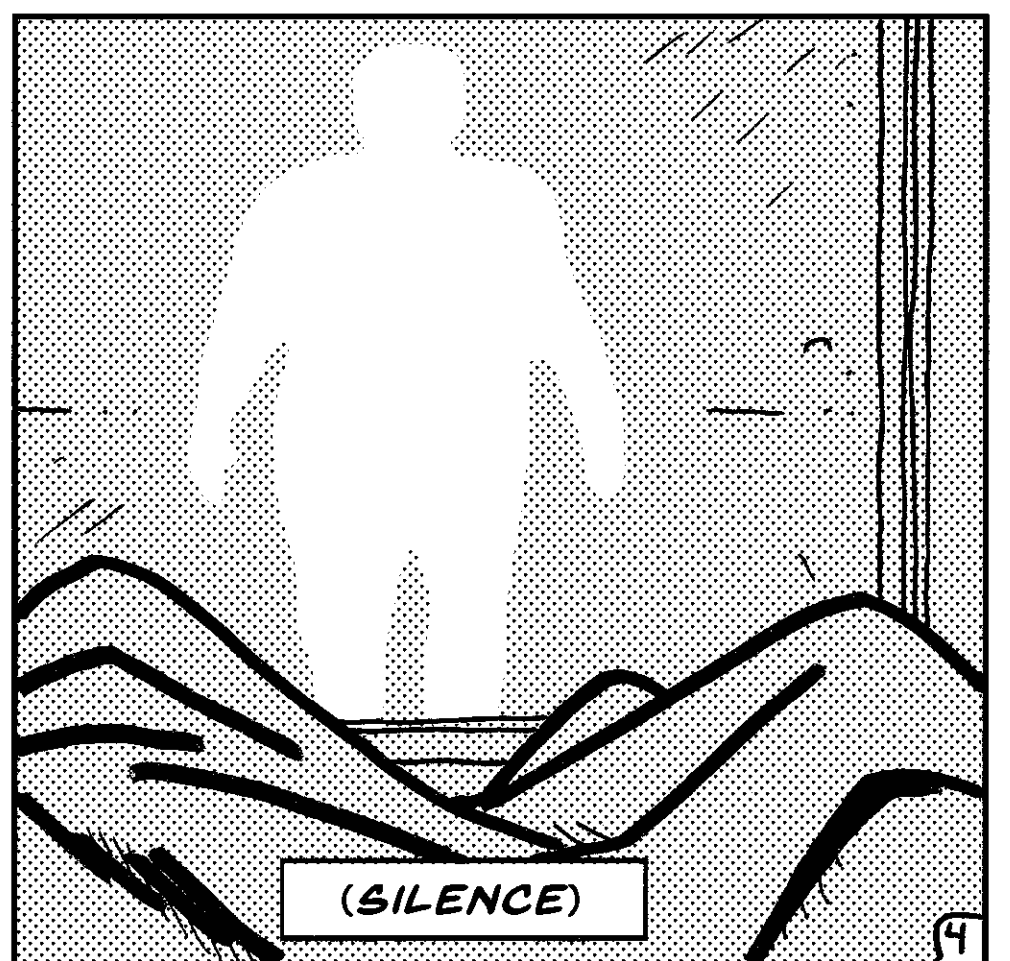
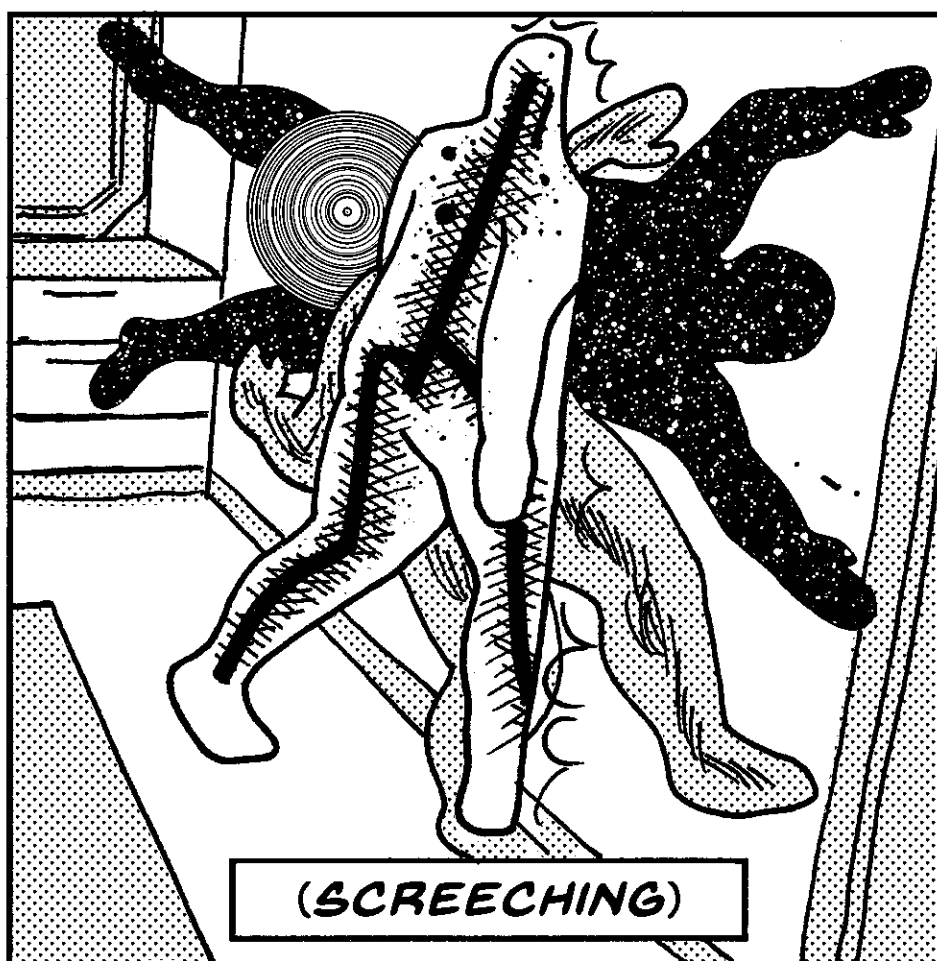
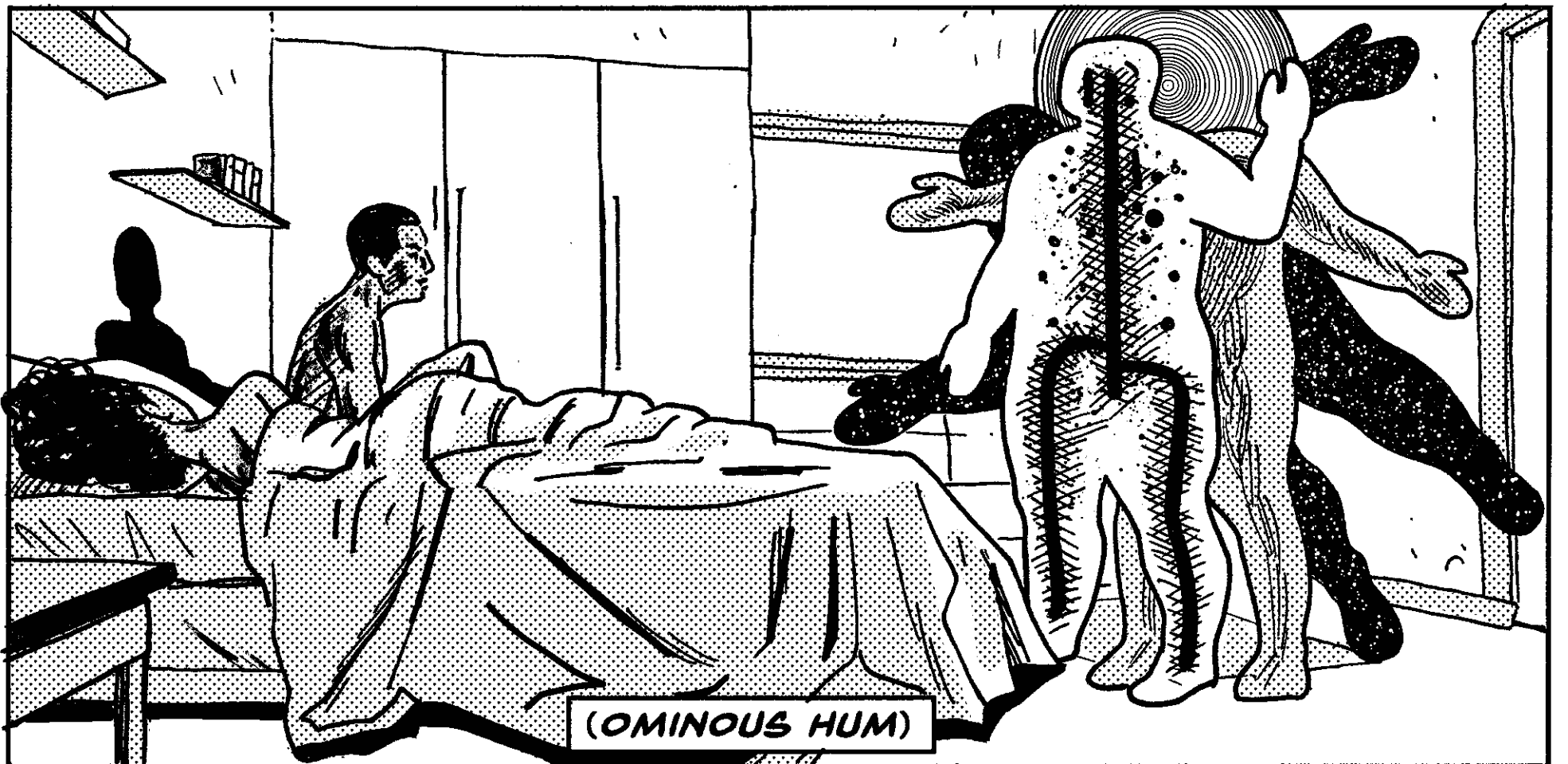
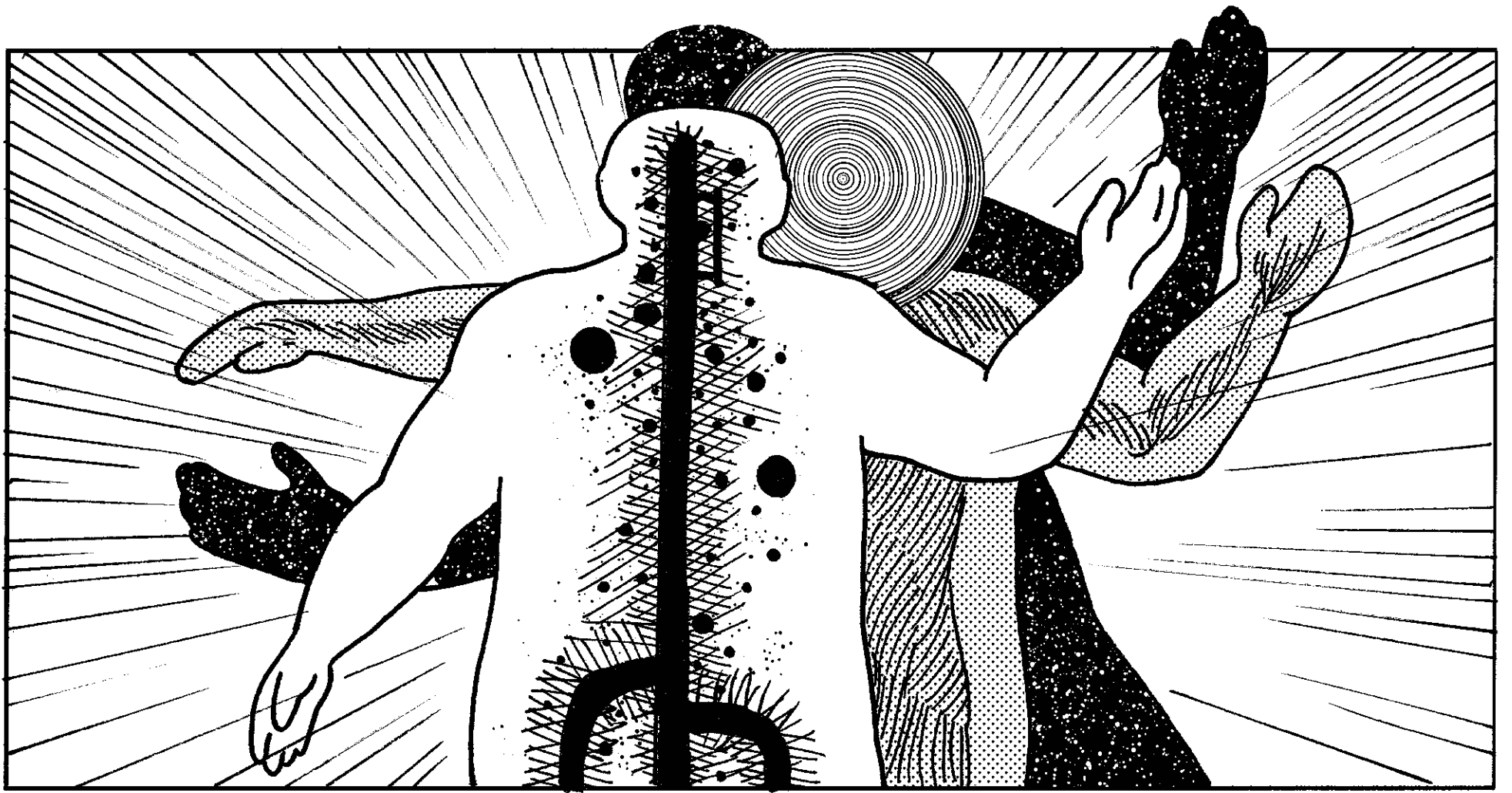
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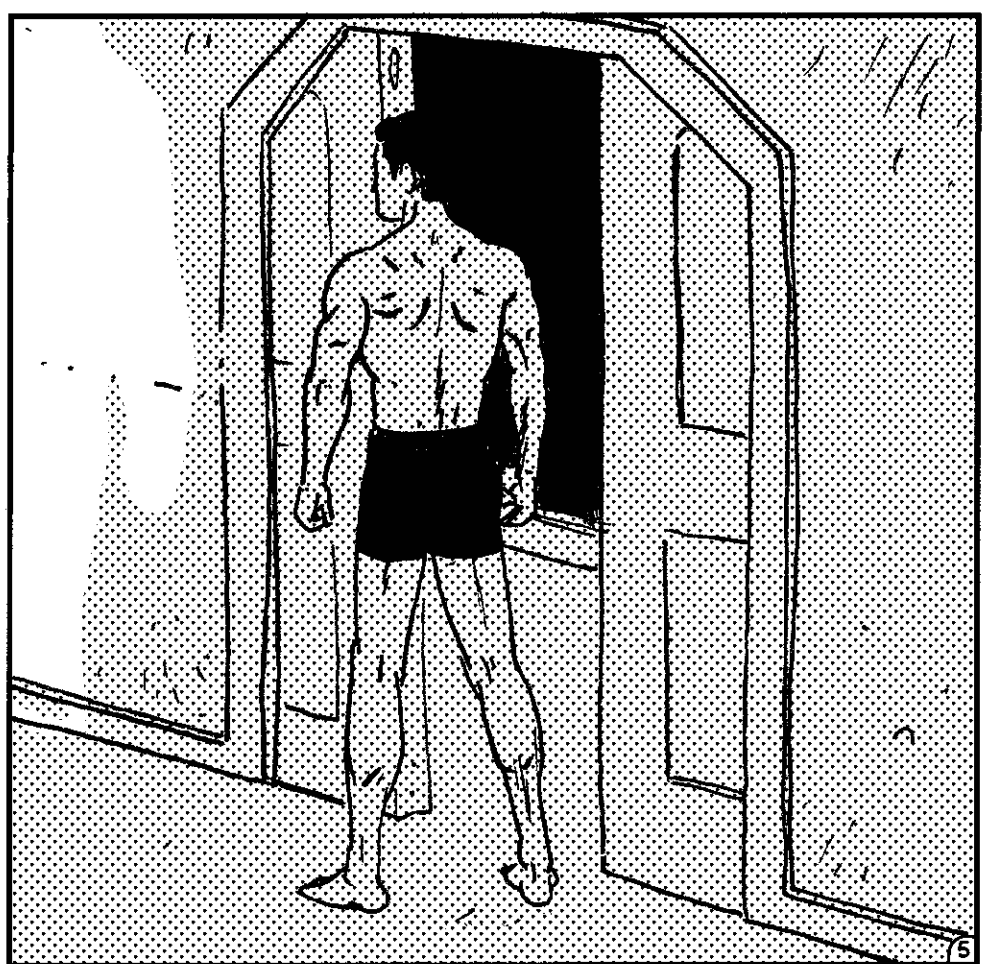
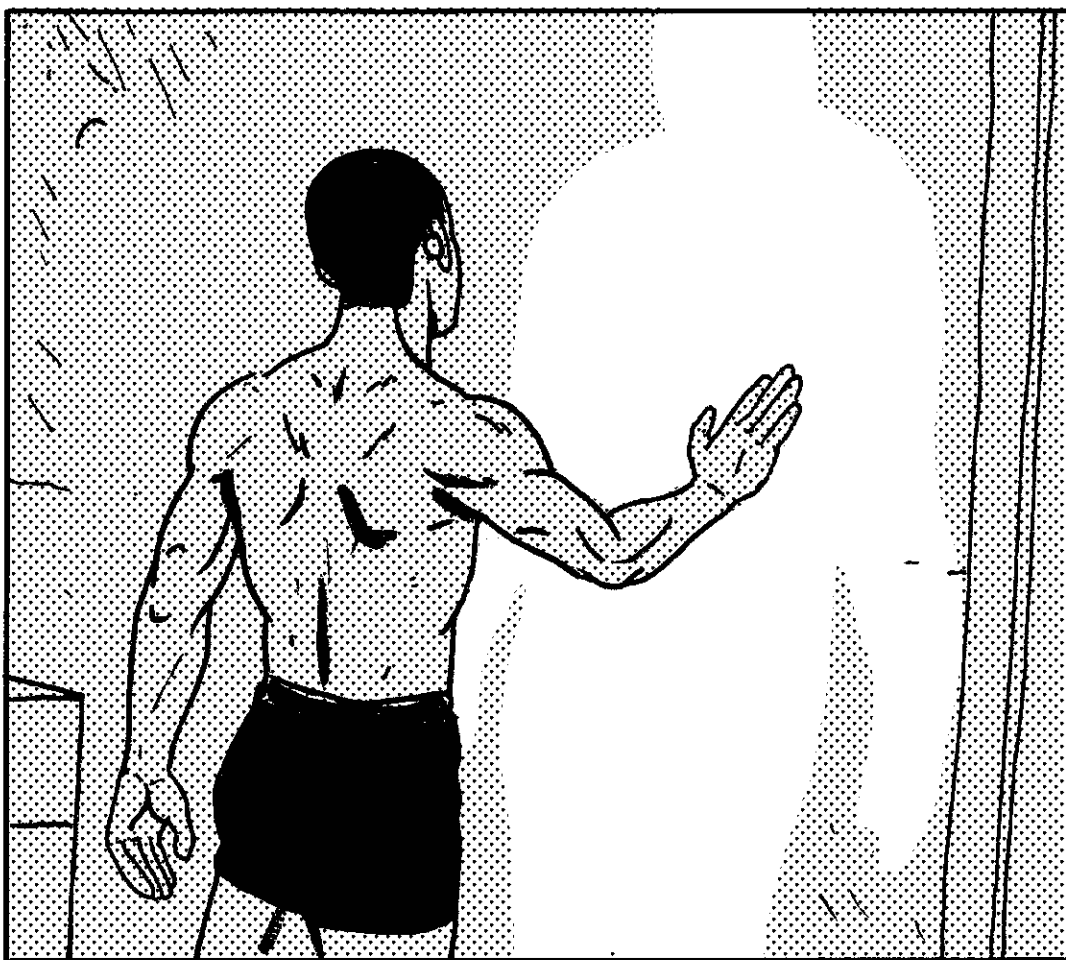


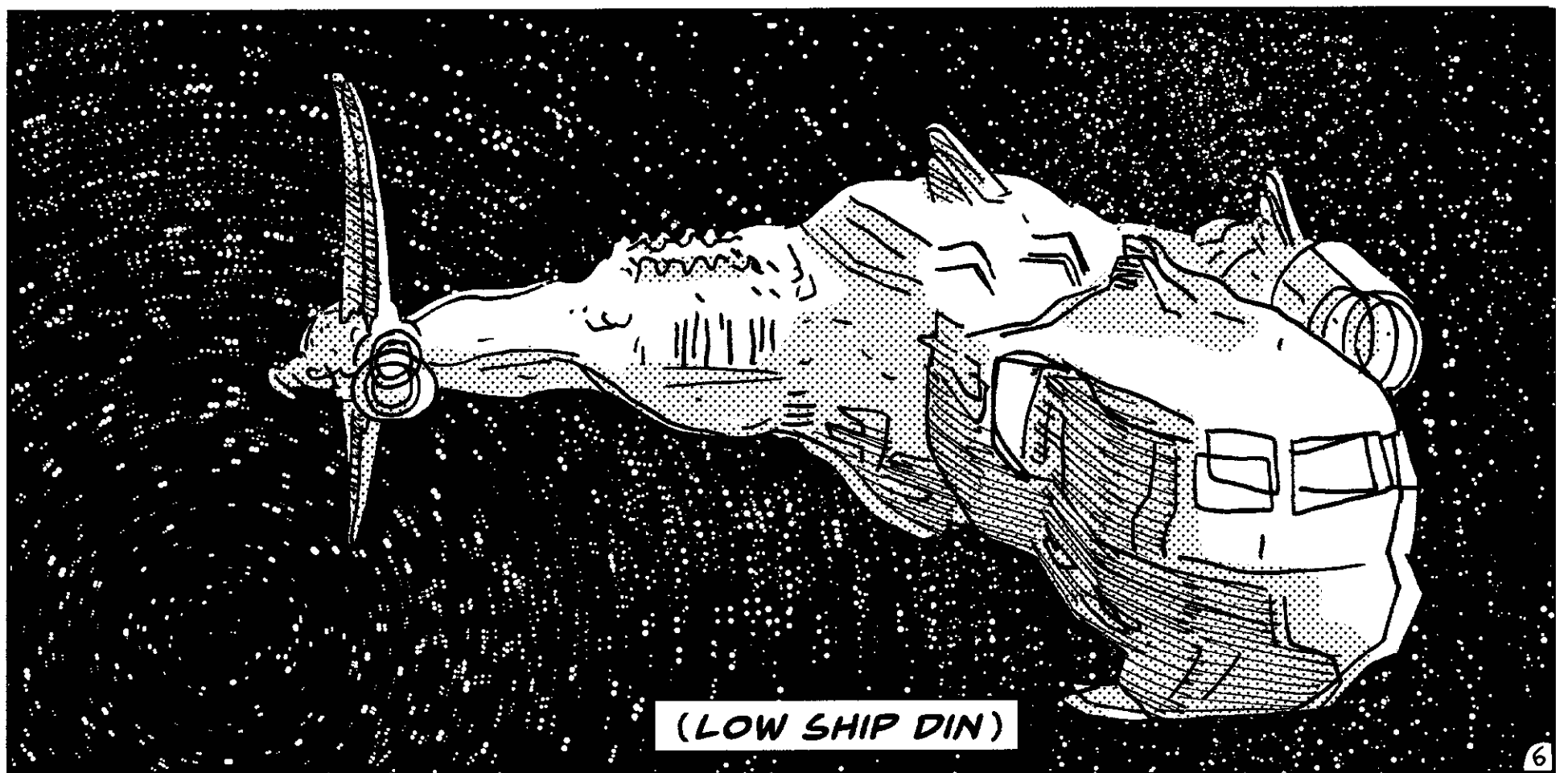
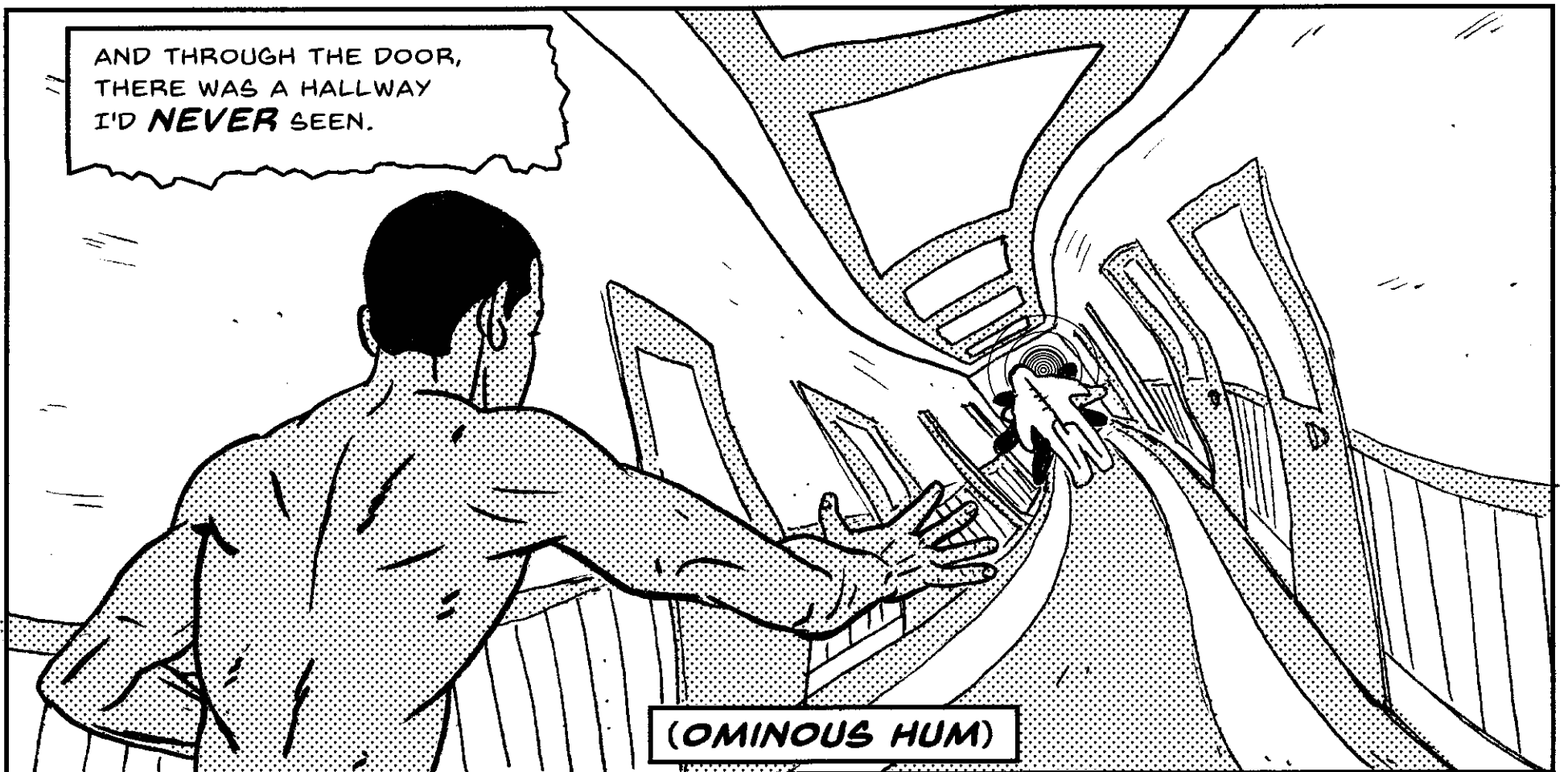
SHIT.

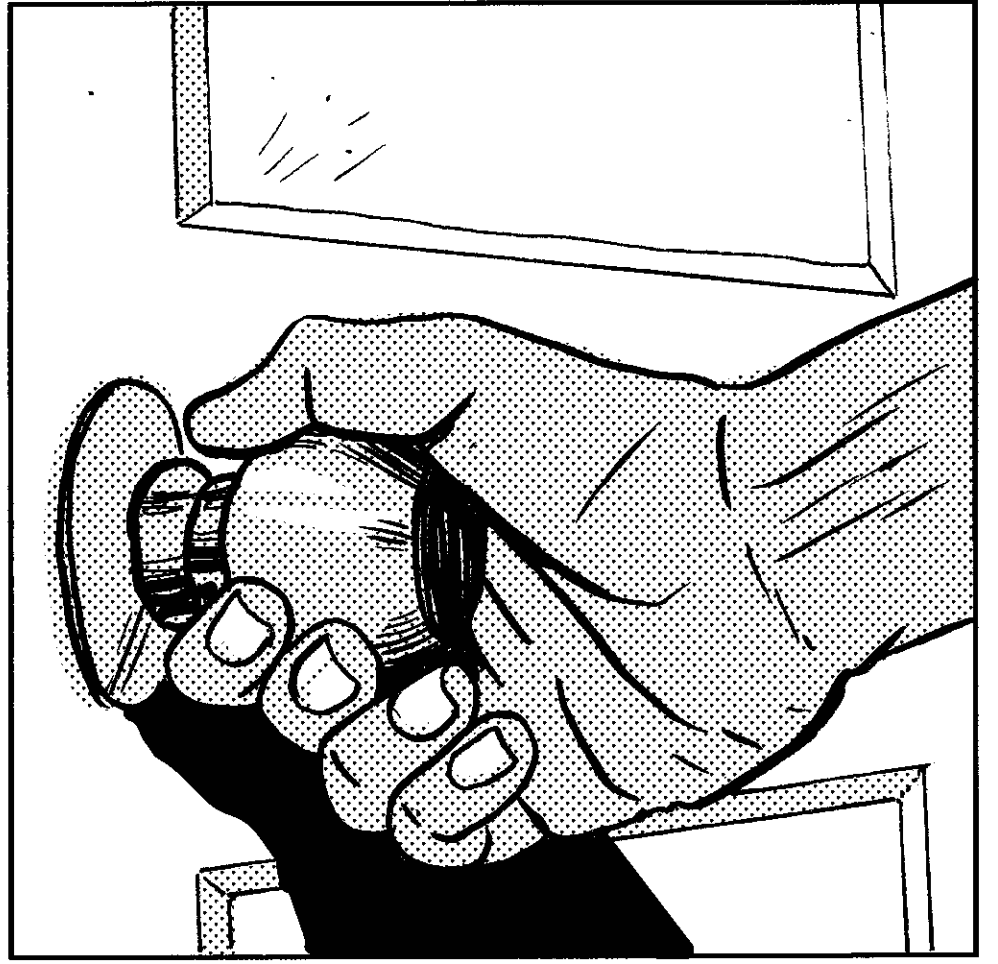
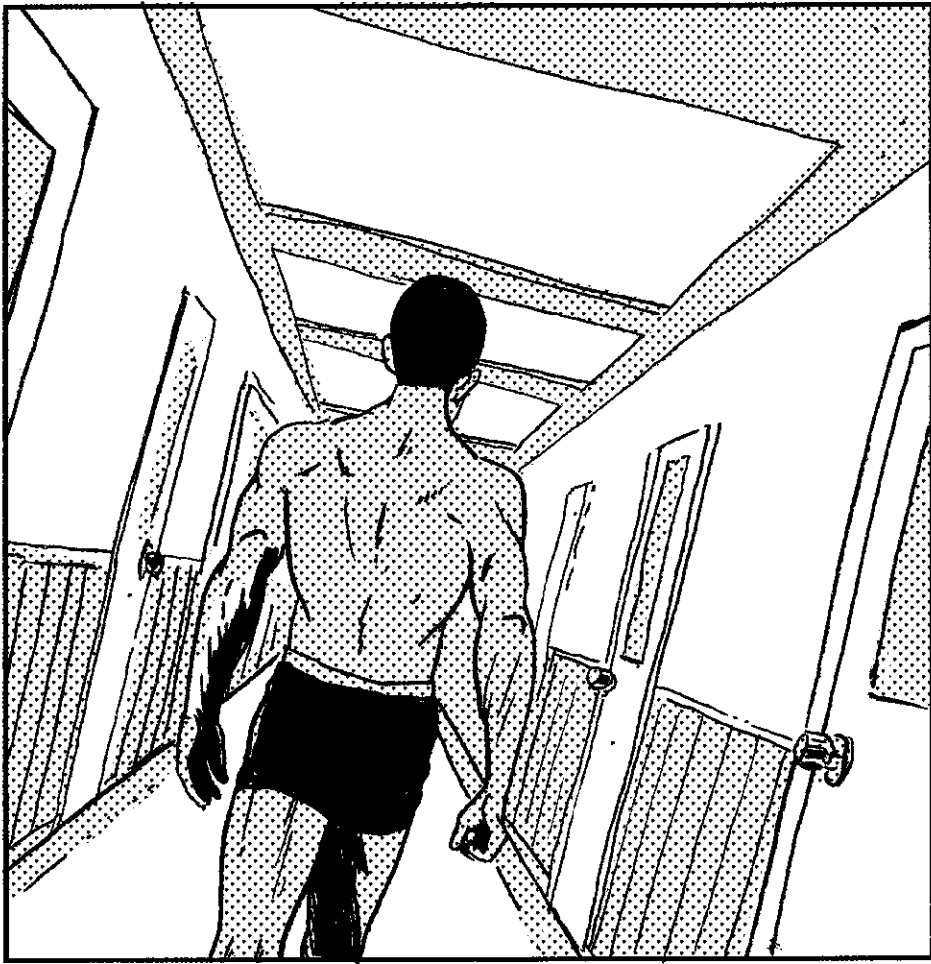


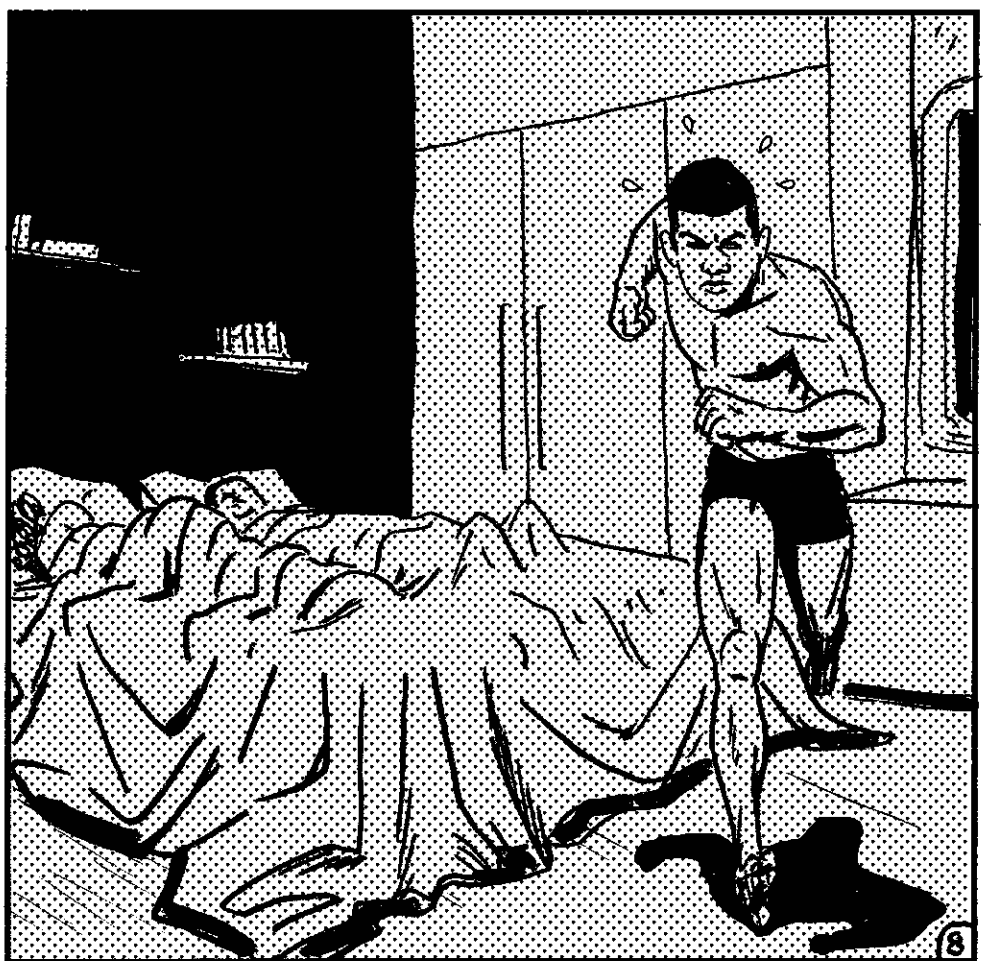
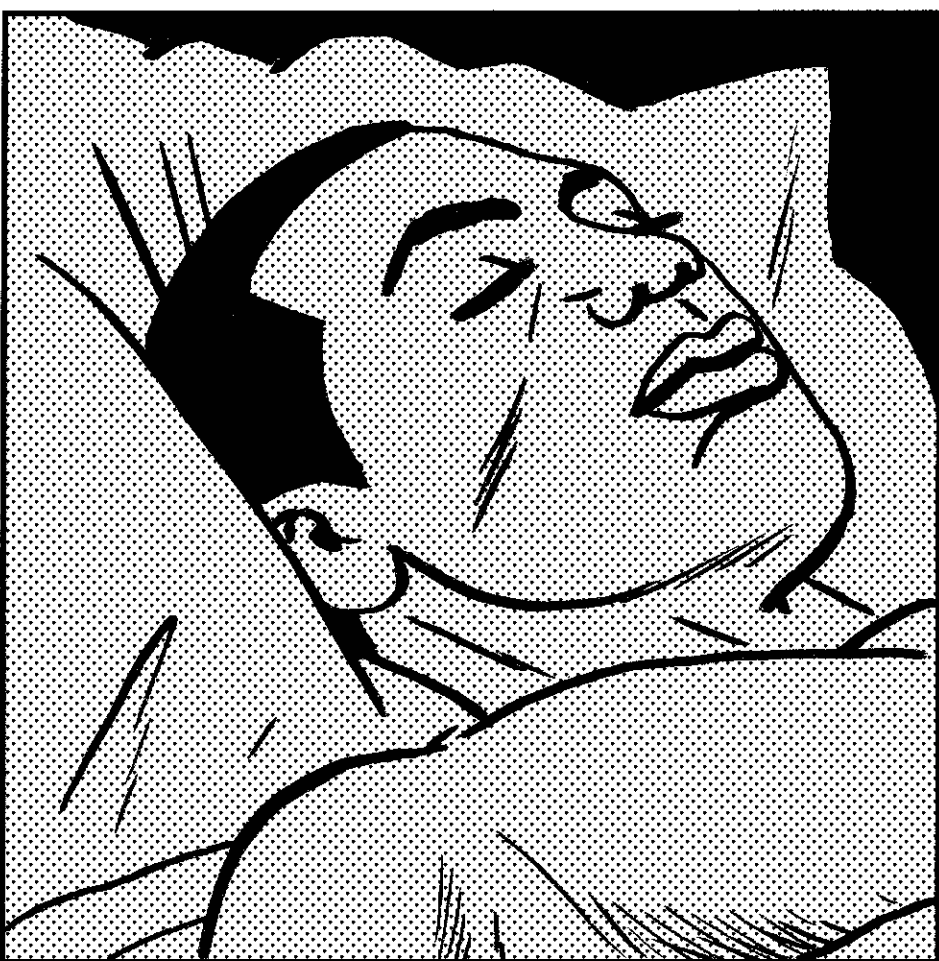
WHAT THE HELL?

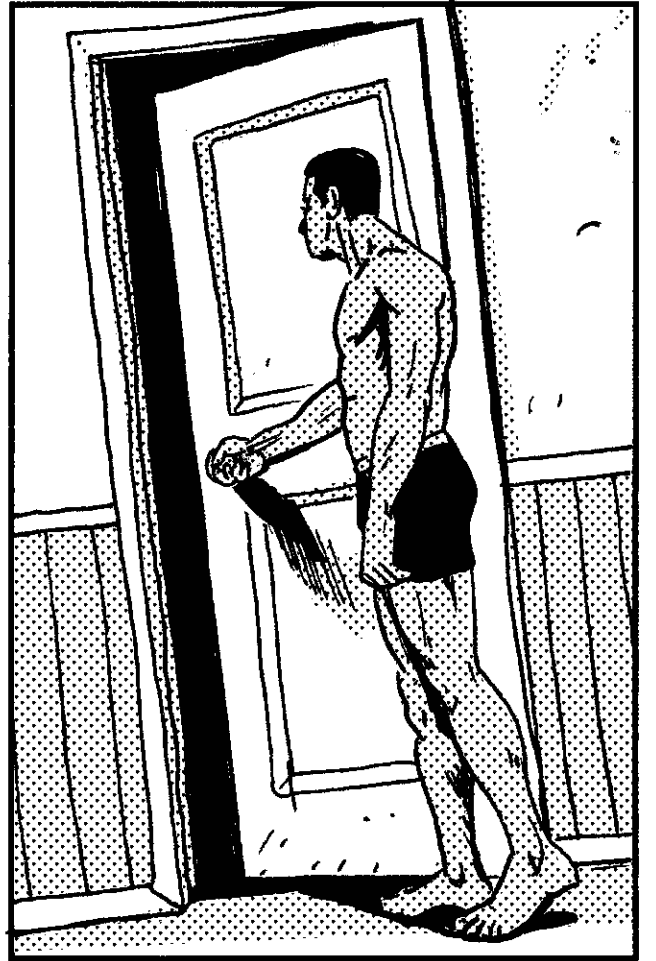
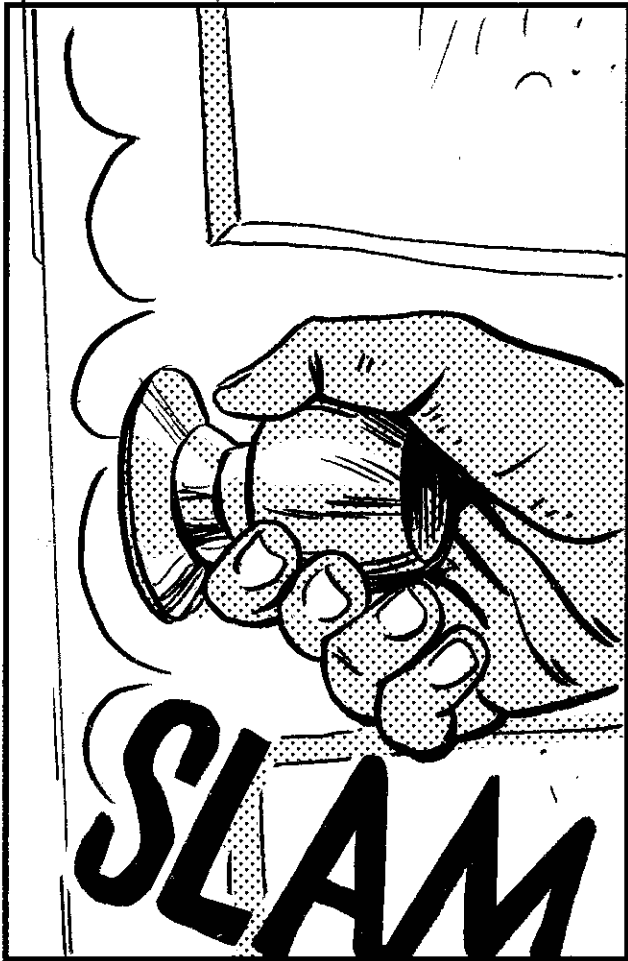


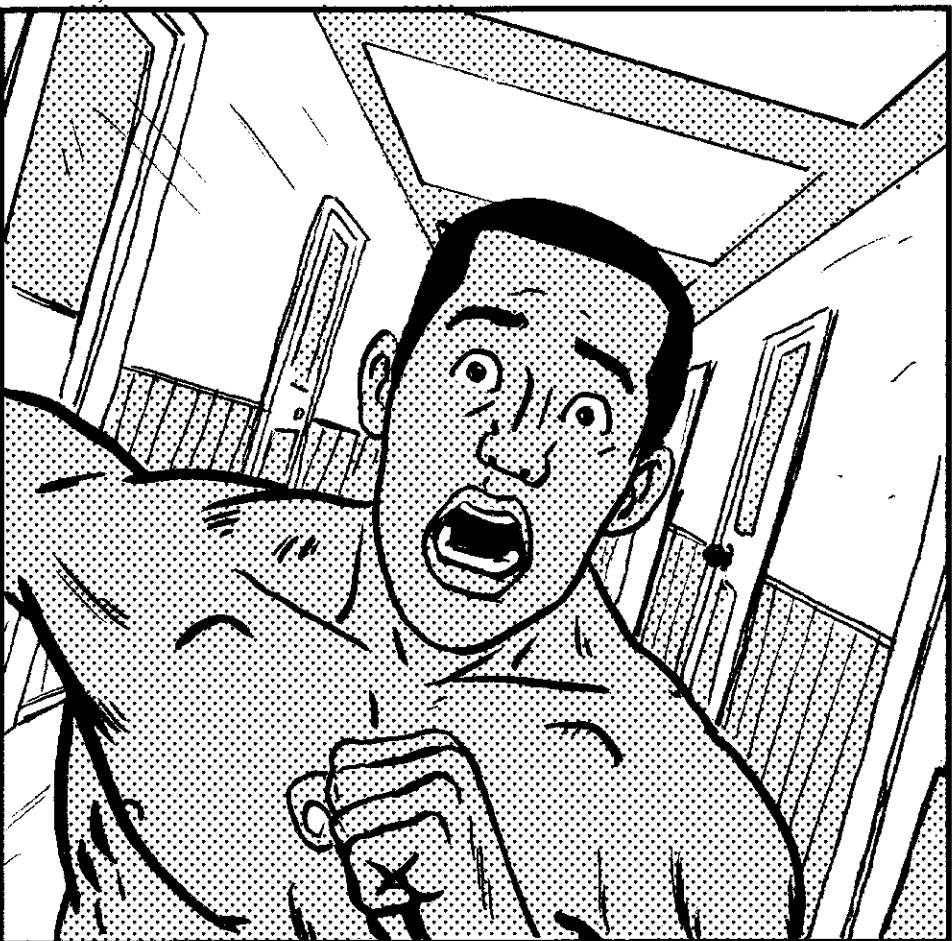
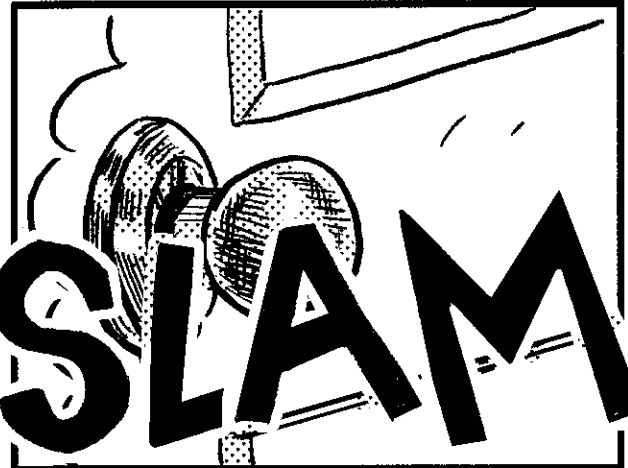
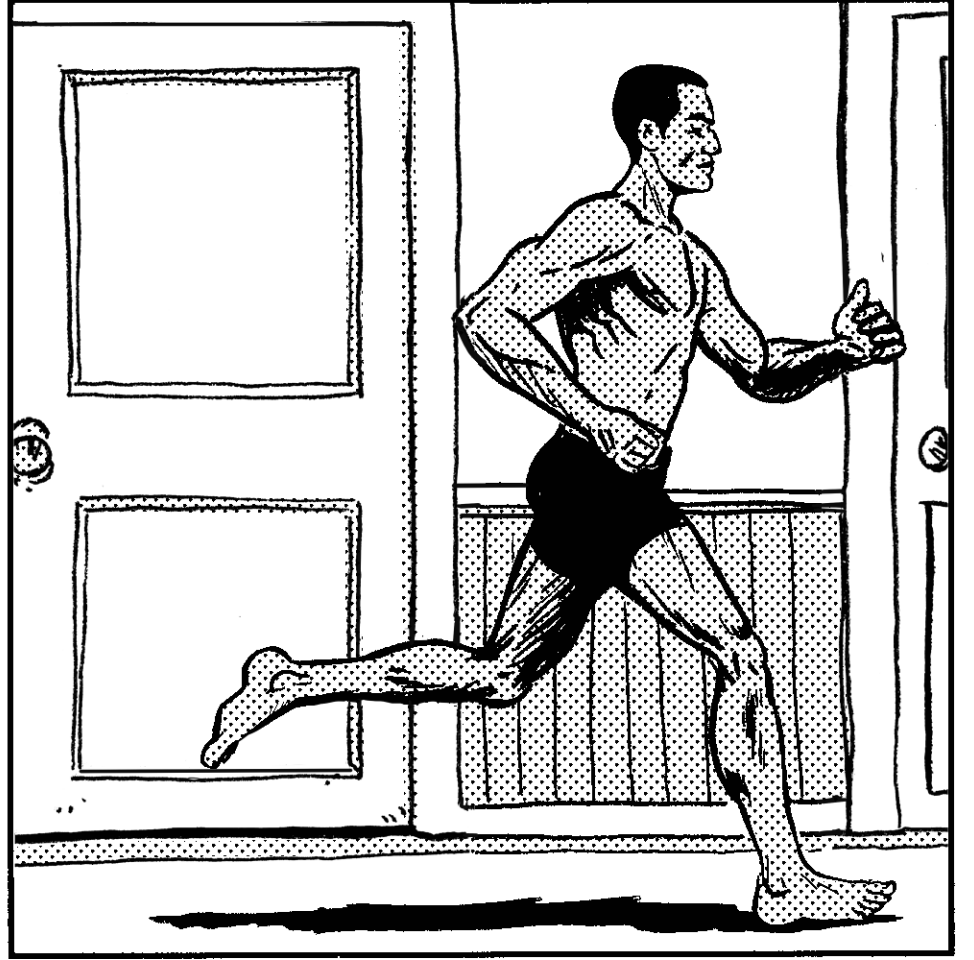
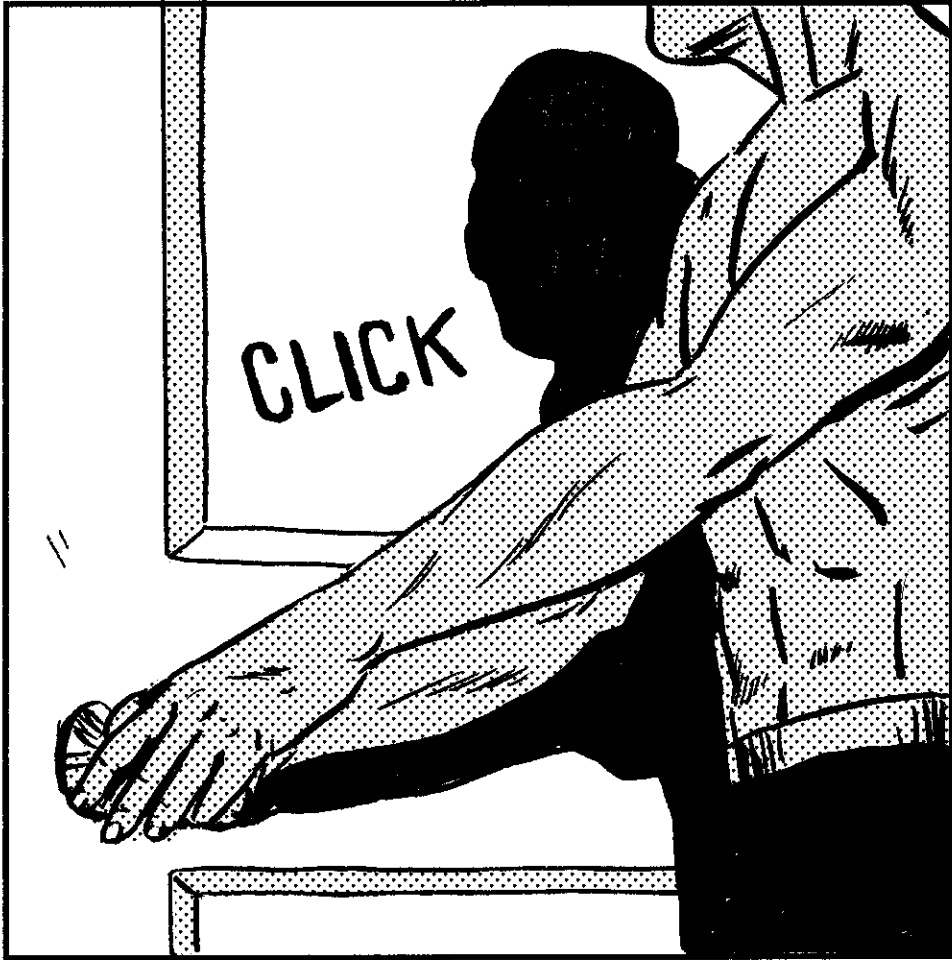


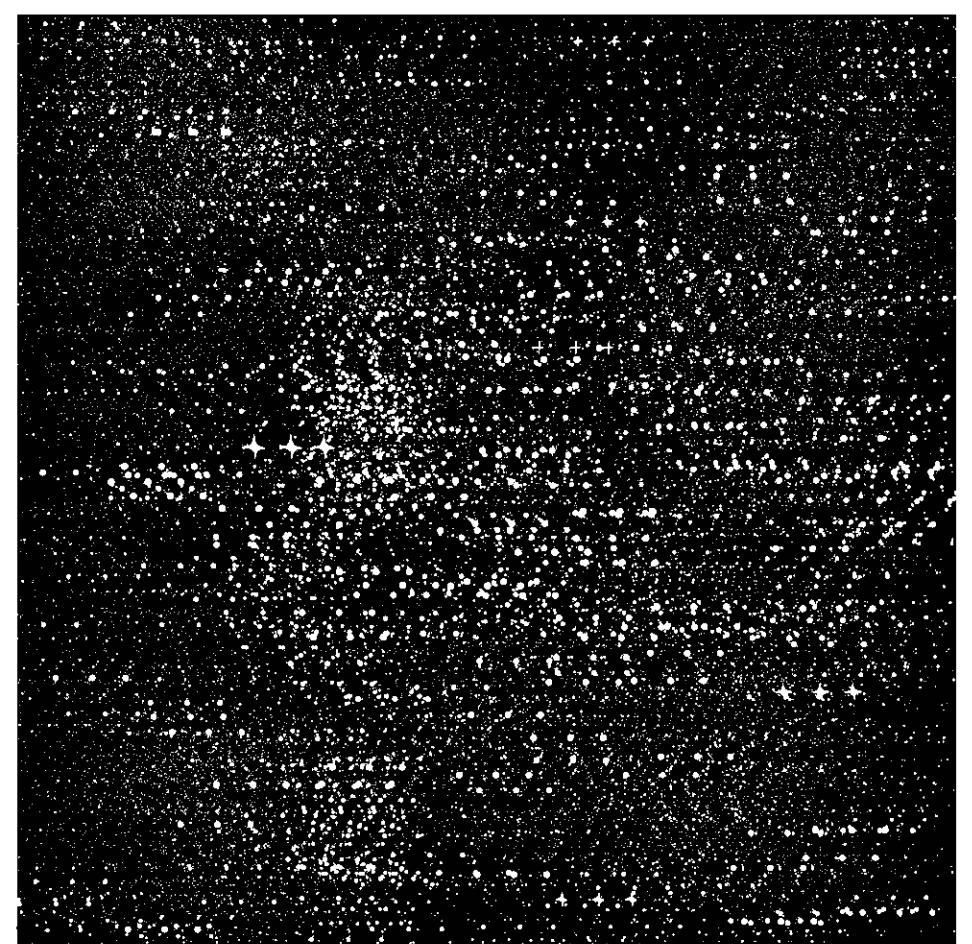
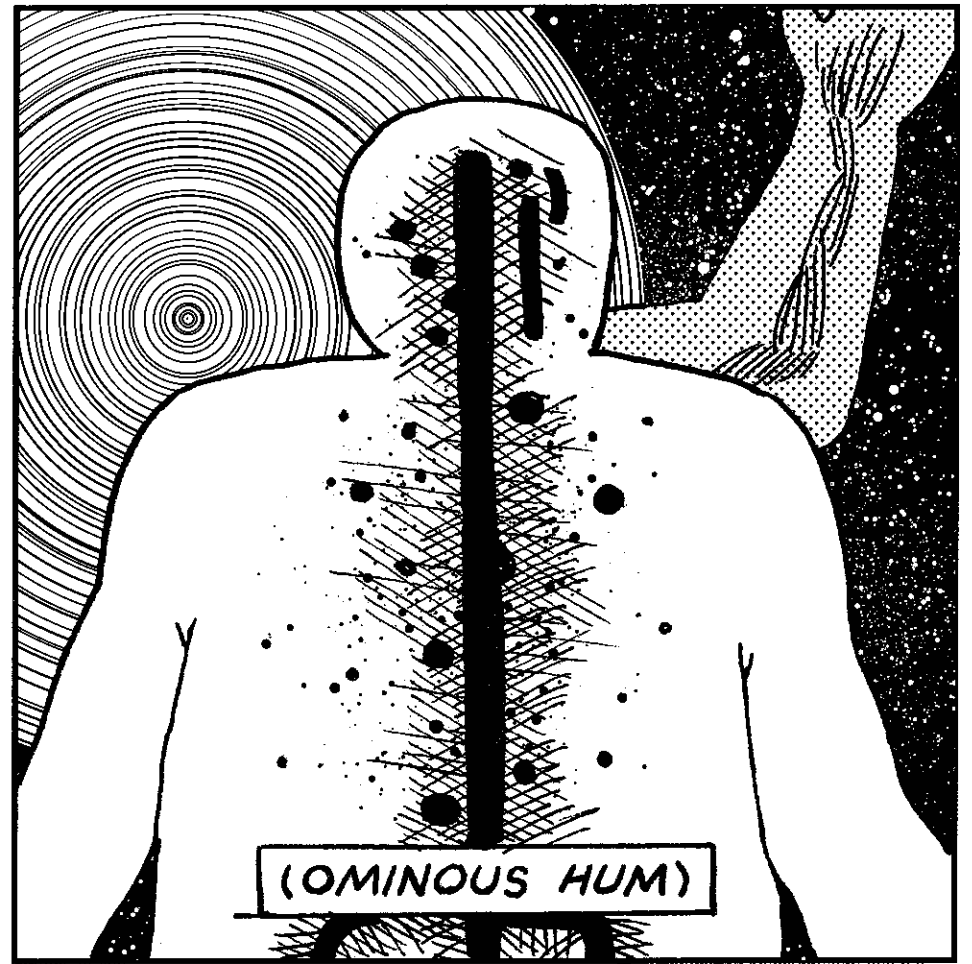


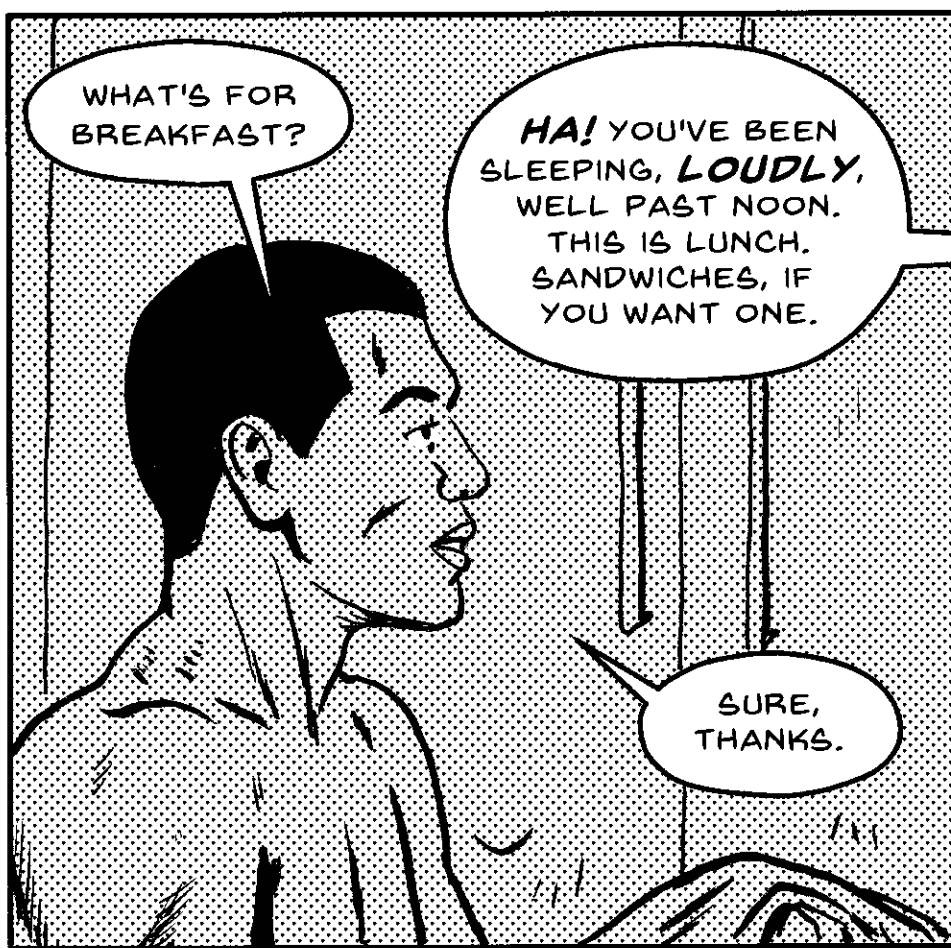


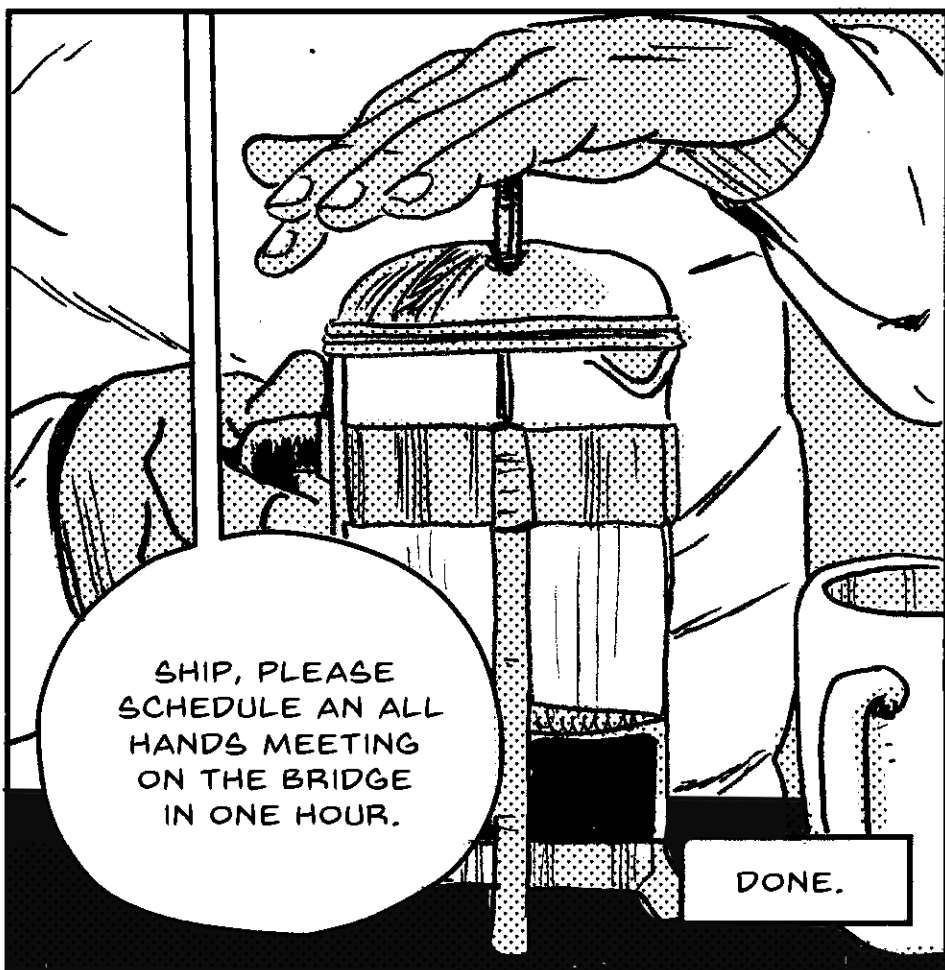
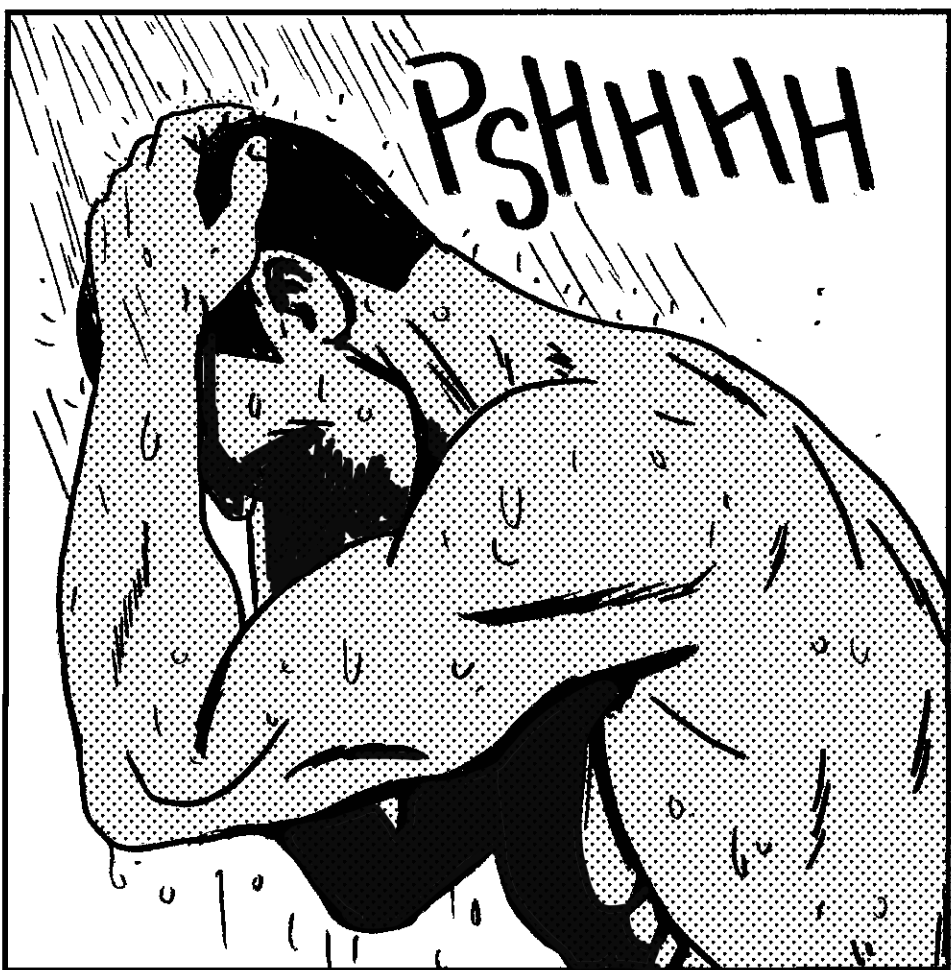
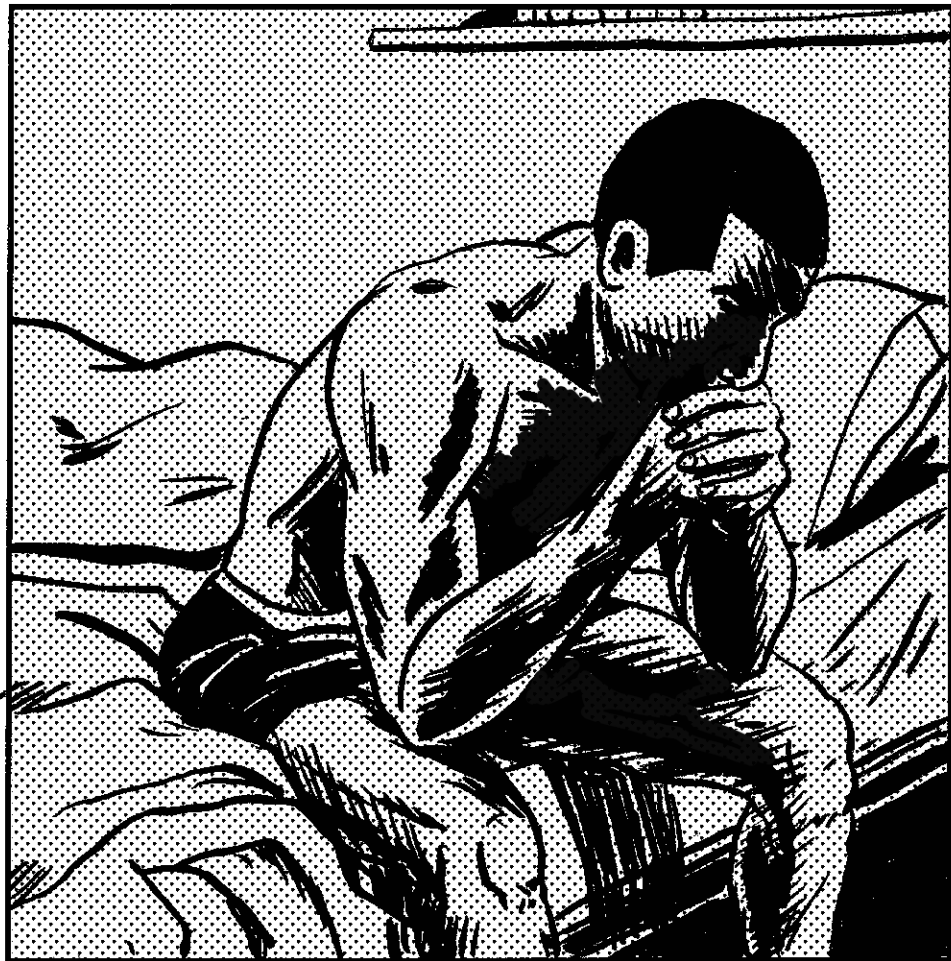


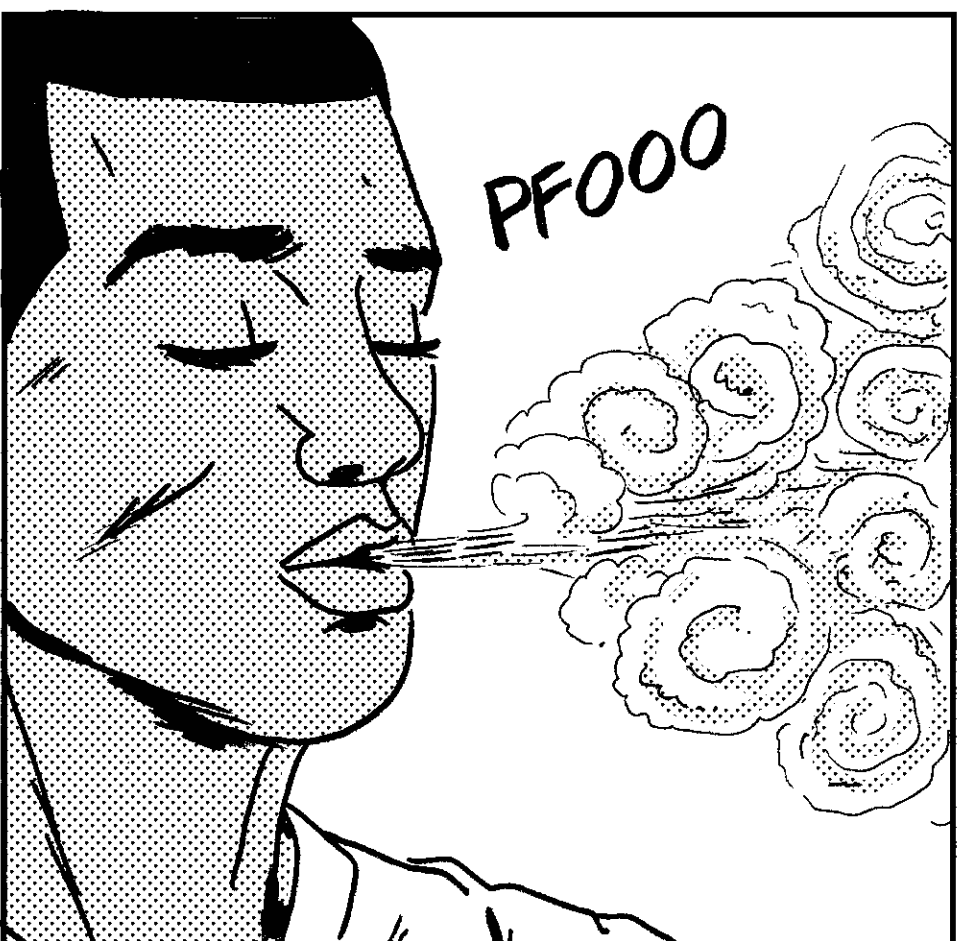
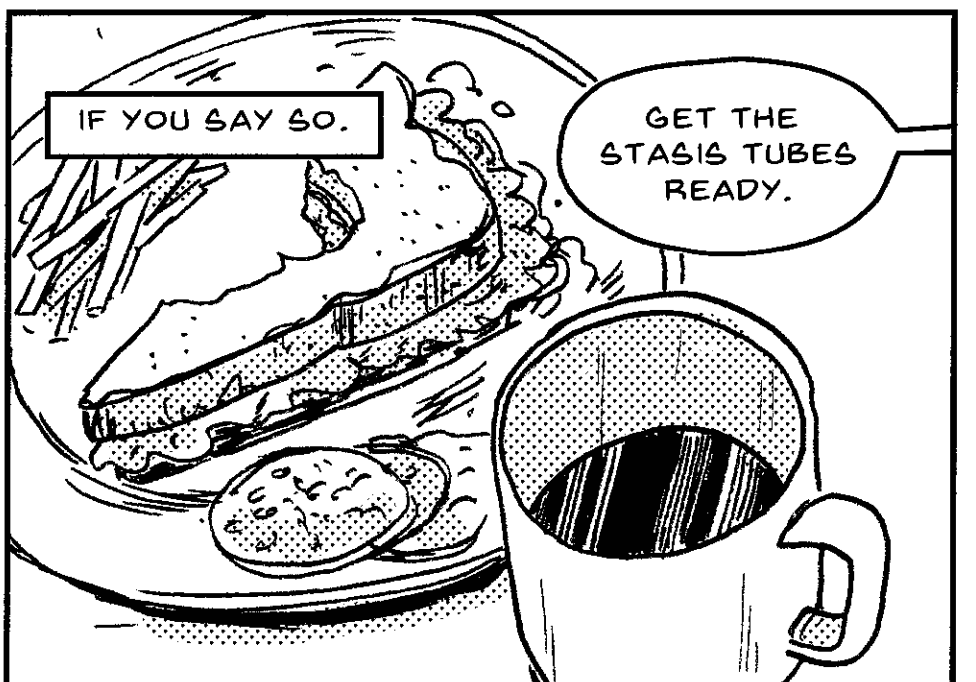
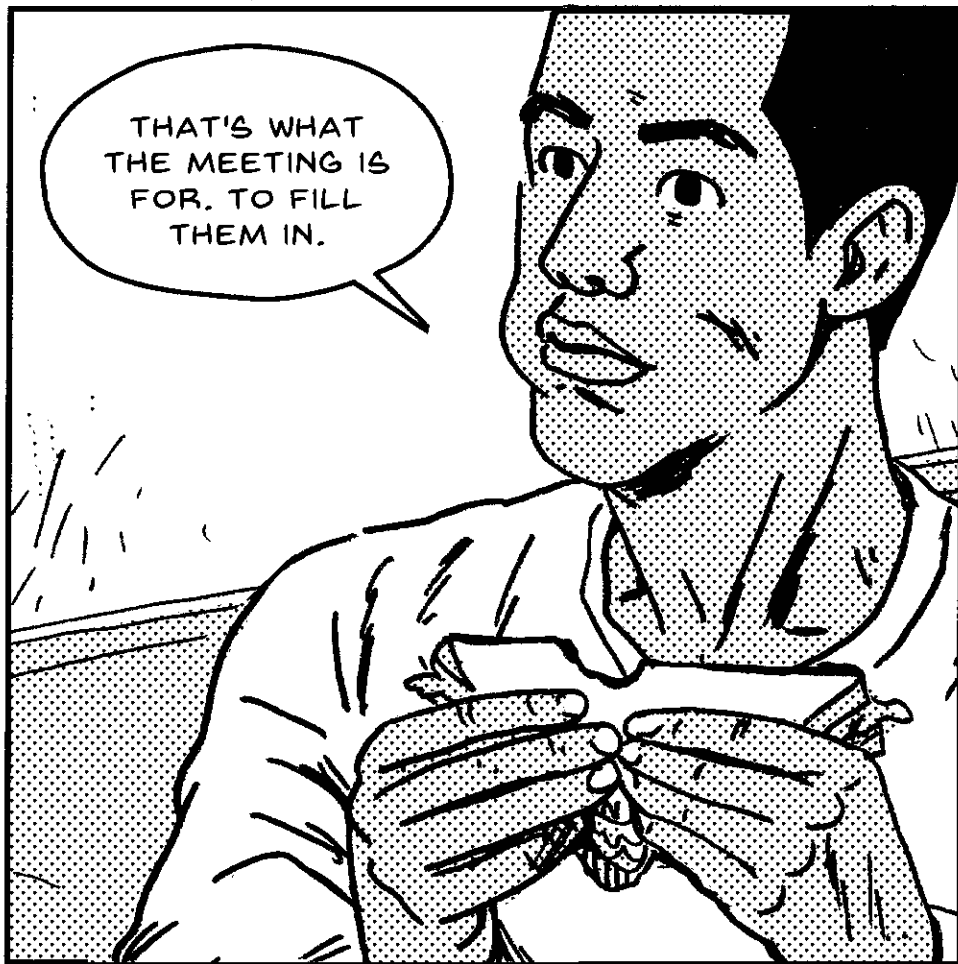








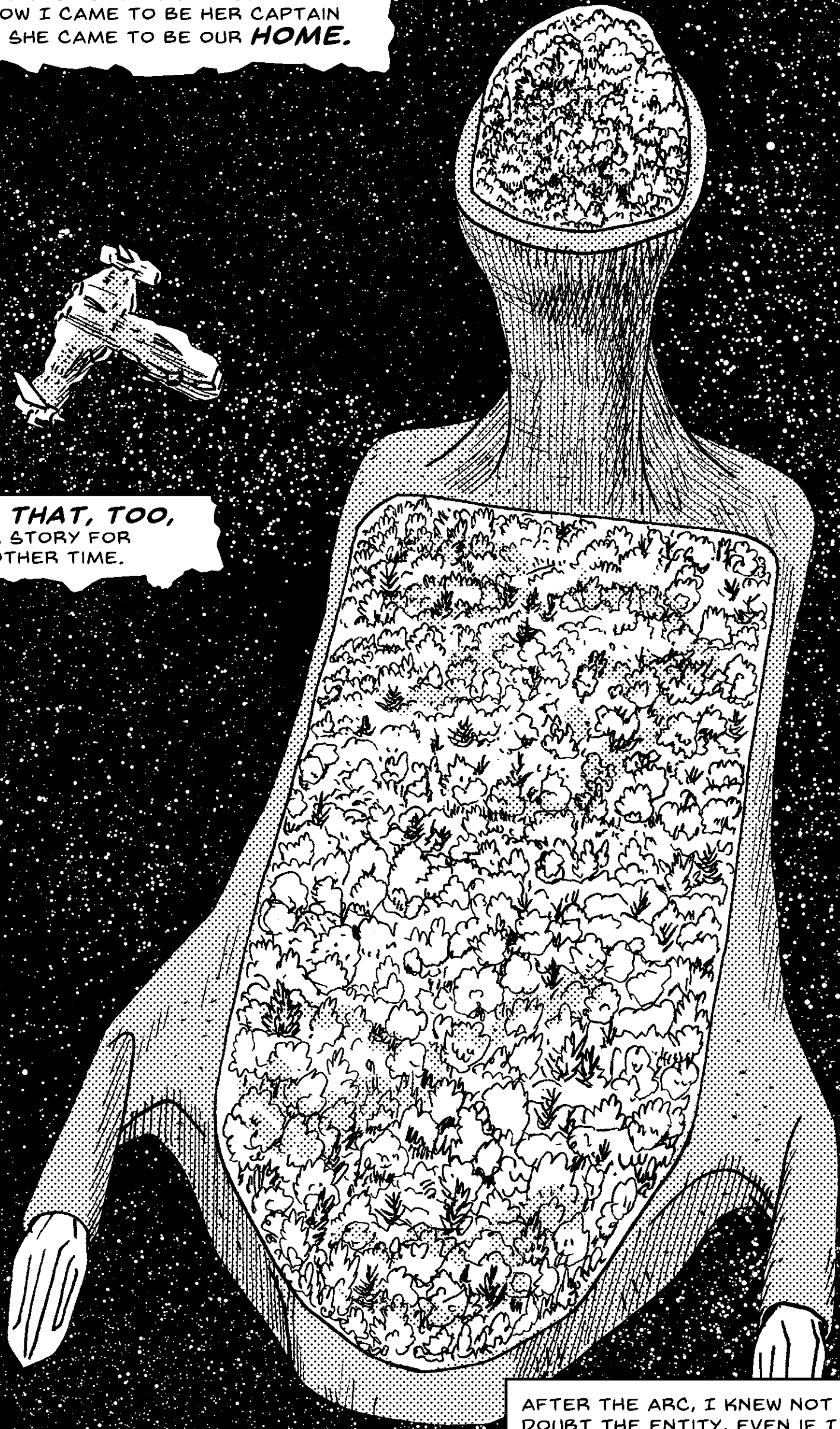




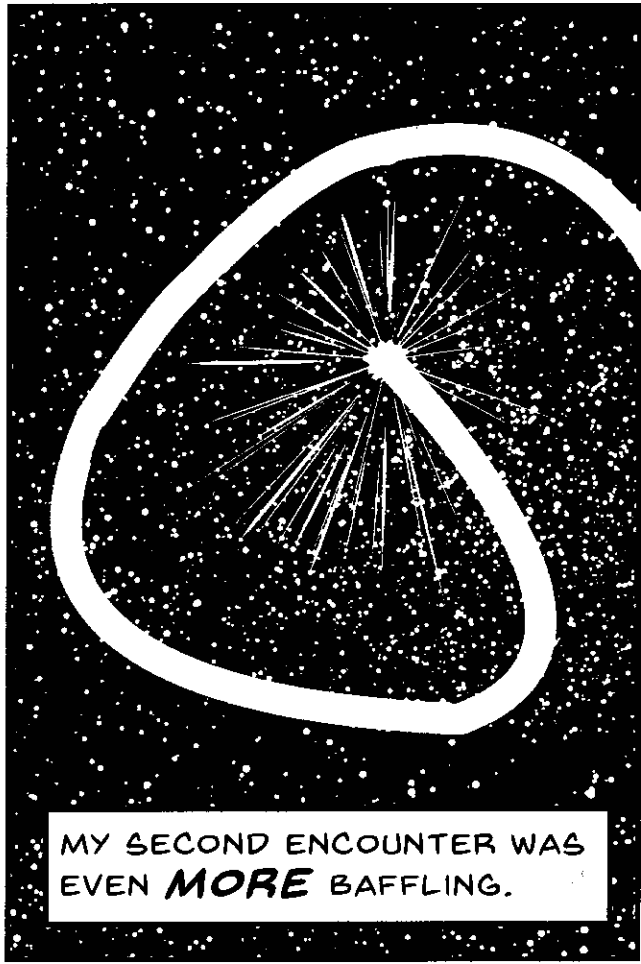
-WAITING AT THOSE COORDINATES WAS **ARC29, ABANDONED**. WHICH IS HOW I CAME TO BE HER CAPTAIN AND SHE CAME TO BE OUR **HOME**.



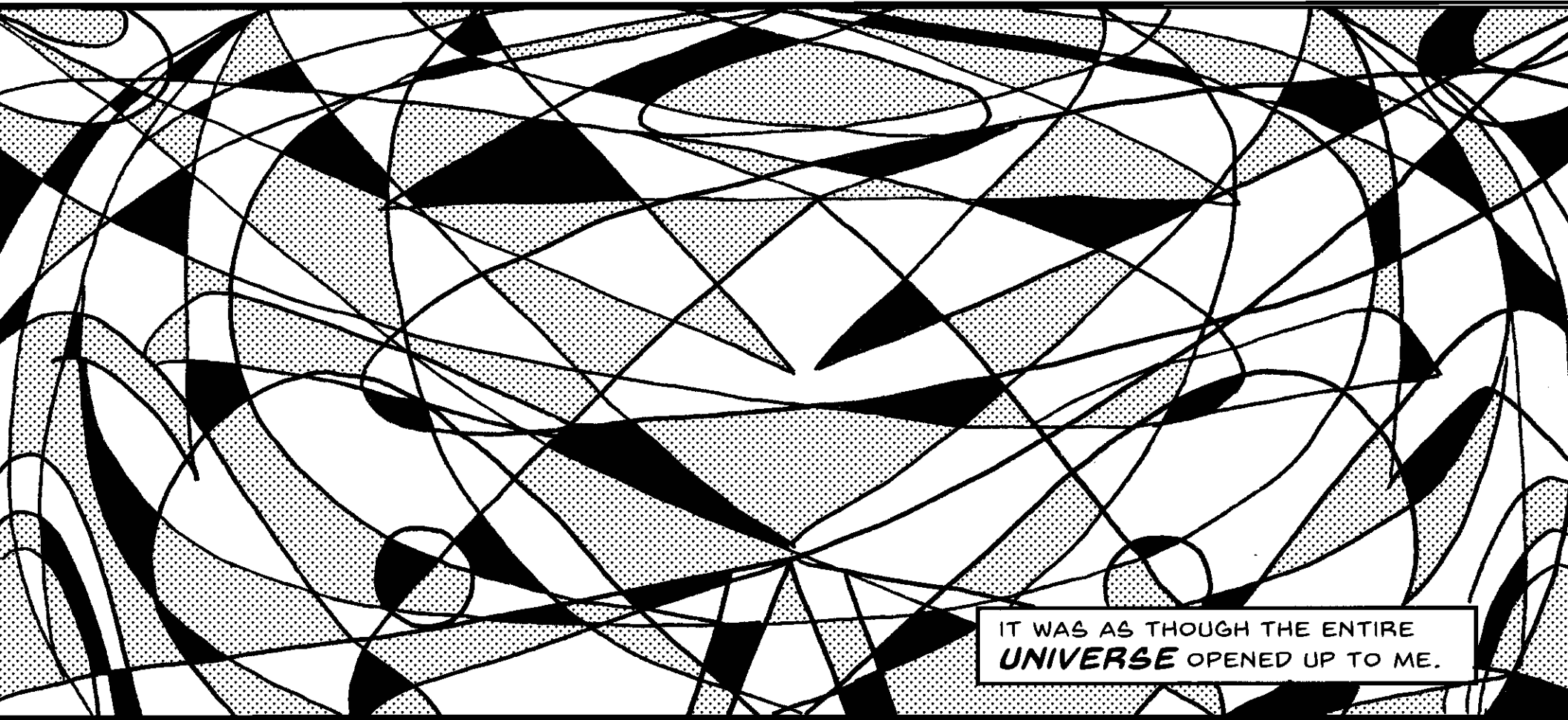
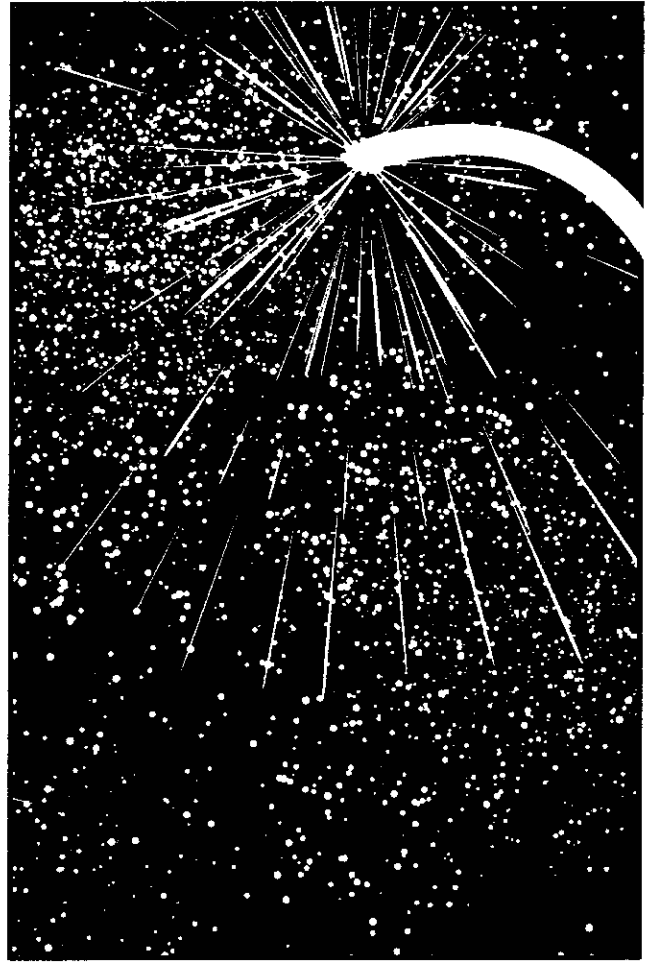
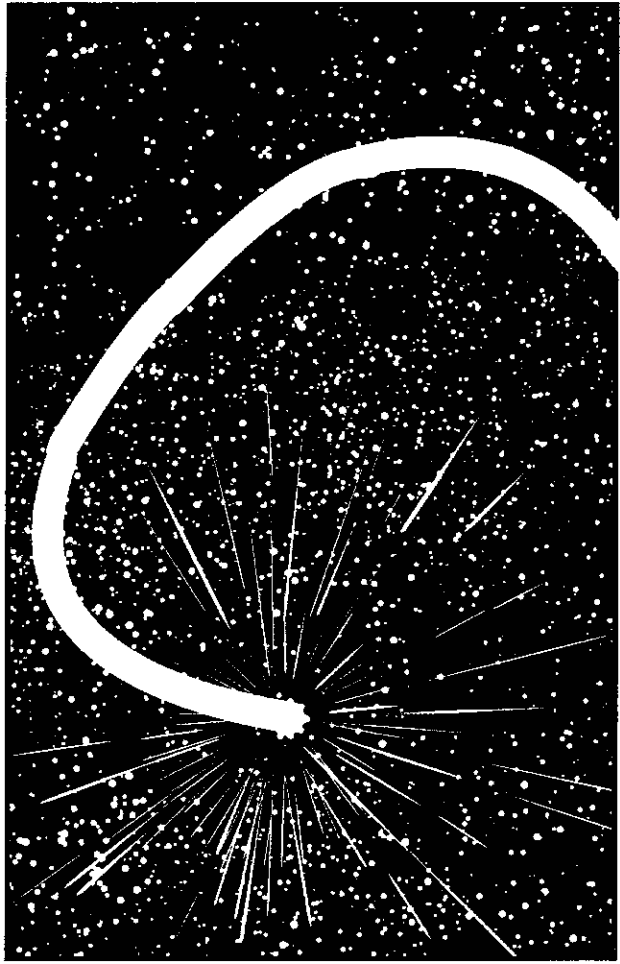
BUT **THAT, TOO**, IS A STORY FOR ANOTHER TIME.



AFTER THE ARC, I KNEW NOT TO DOUBT THE ENTITY, EVEN IF I ALSO KNEW, **DEEP DOWN**, THERE WOULD BE **REPERCUSSIONS** LATER.



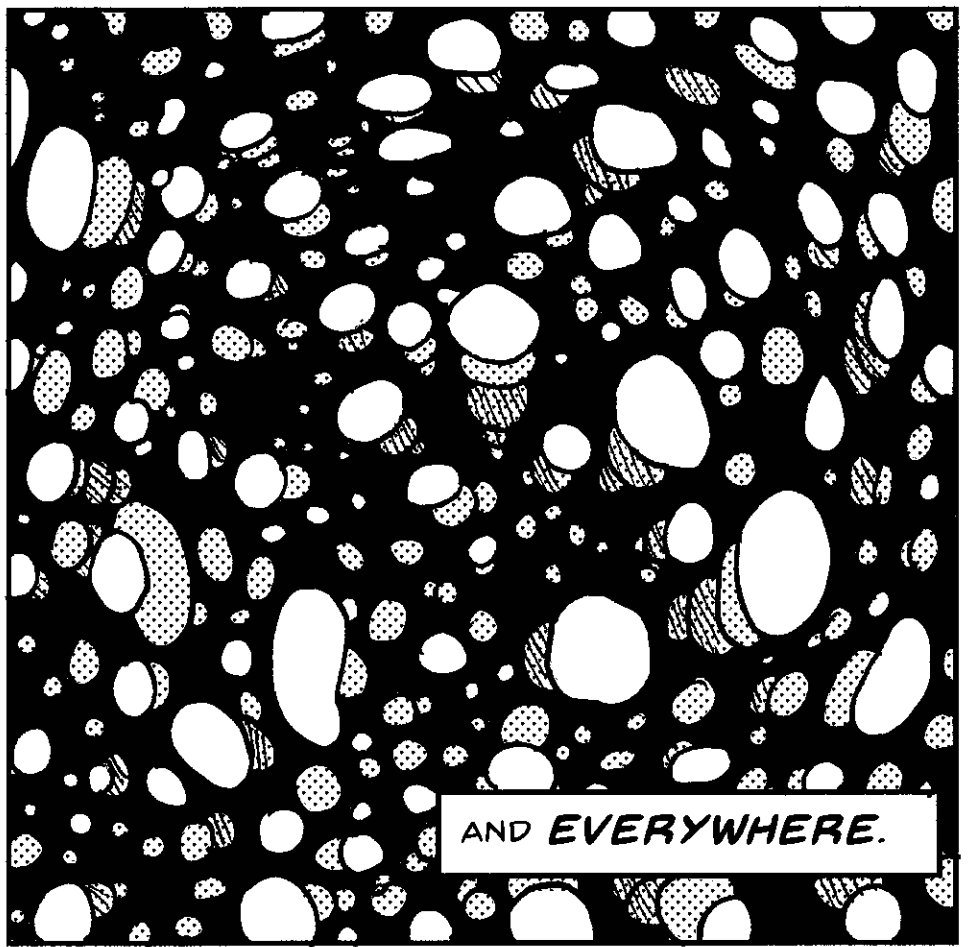
MY SECOND ENCOUNTER WAS
EVEN **MORE** BAFFLING.



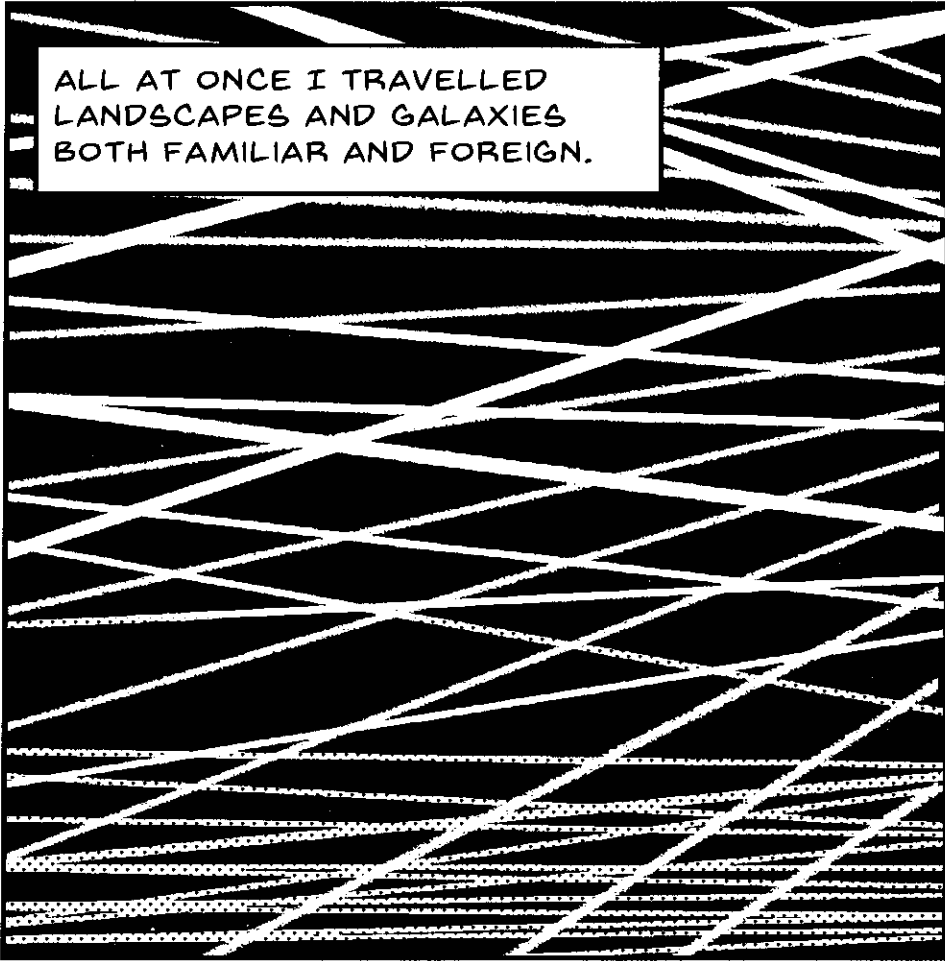
IT WAS AS THOUGH THE ENTIRE
UNIVERSE OPENED UP TO ME.



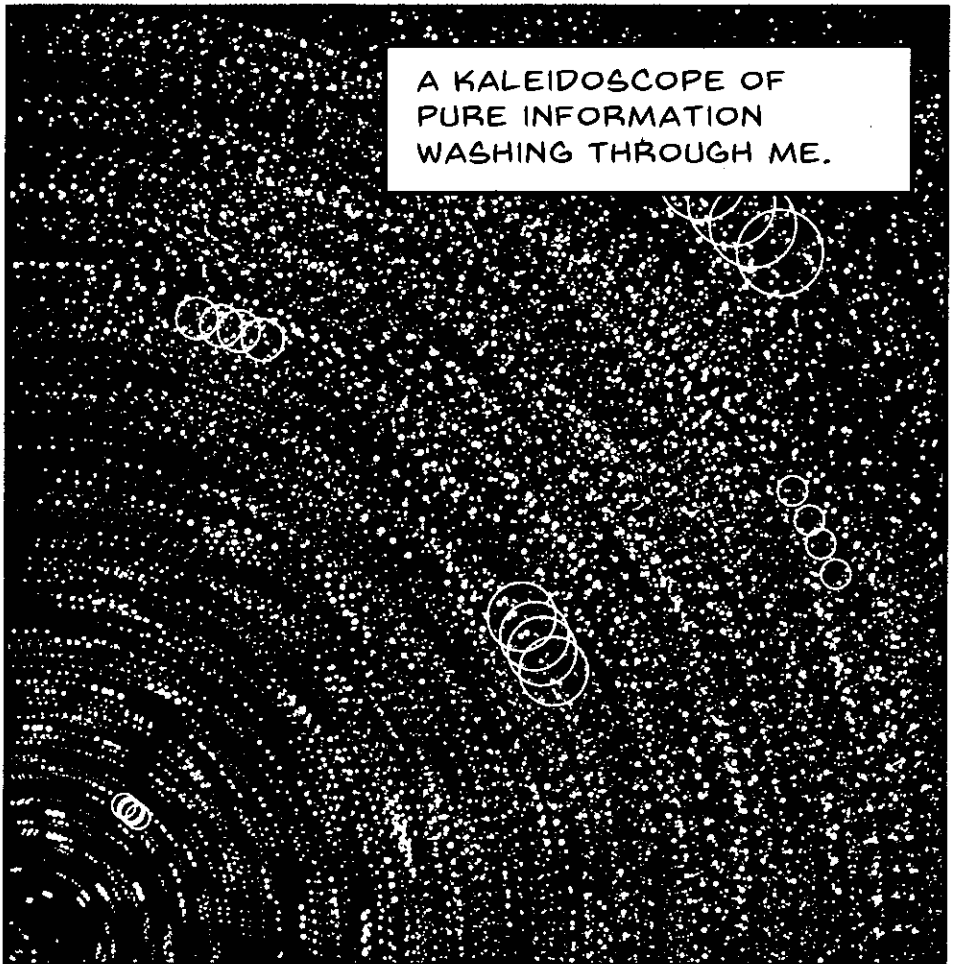
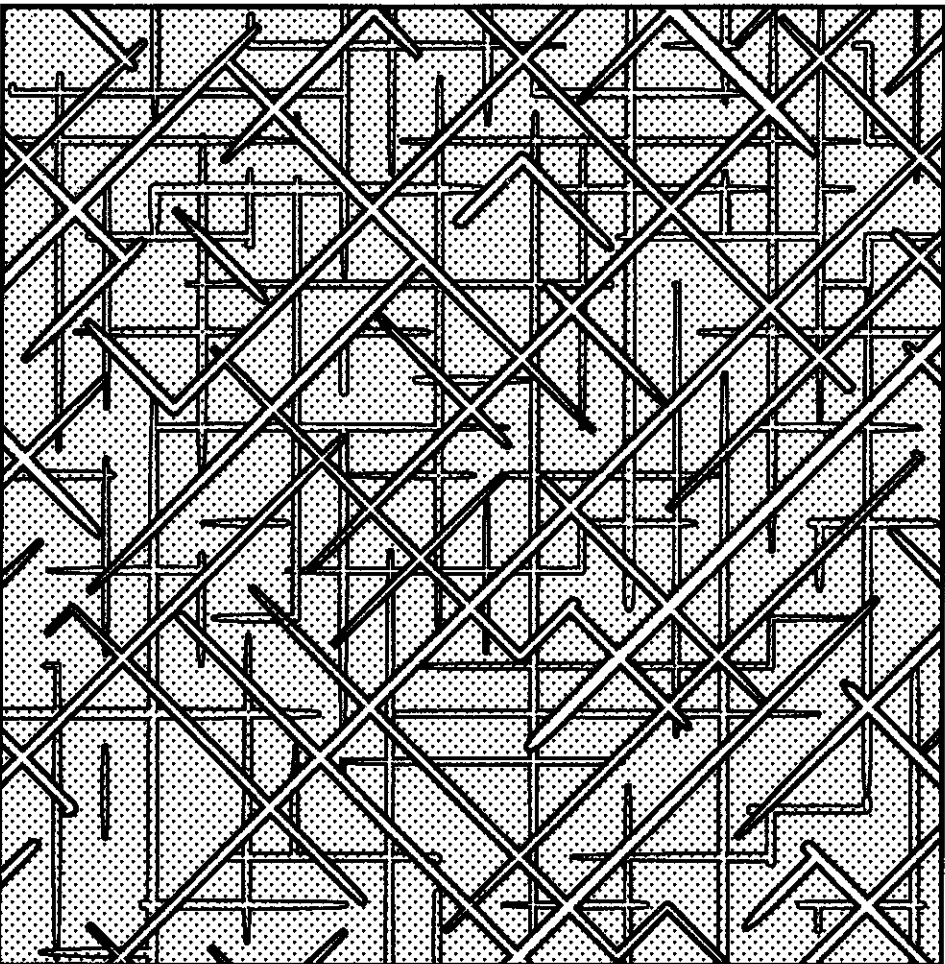
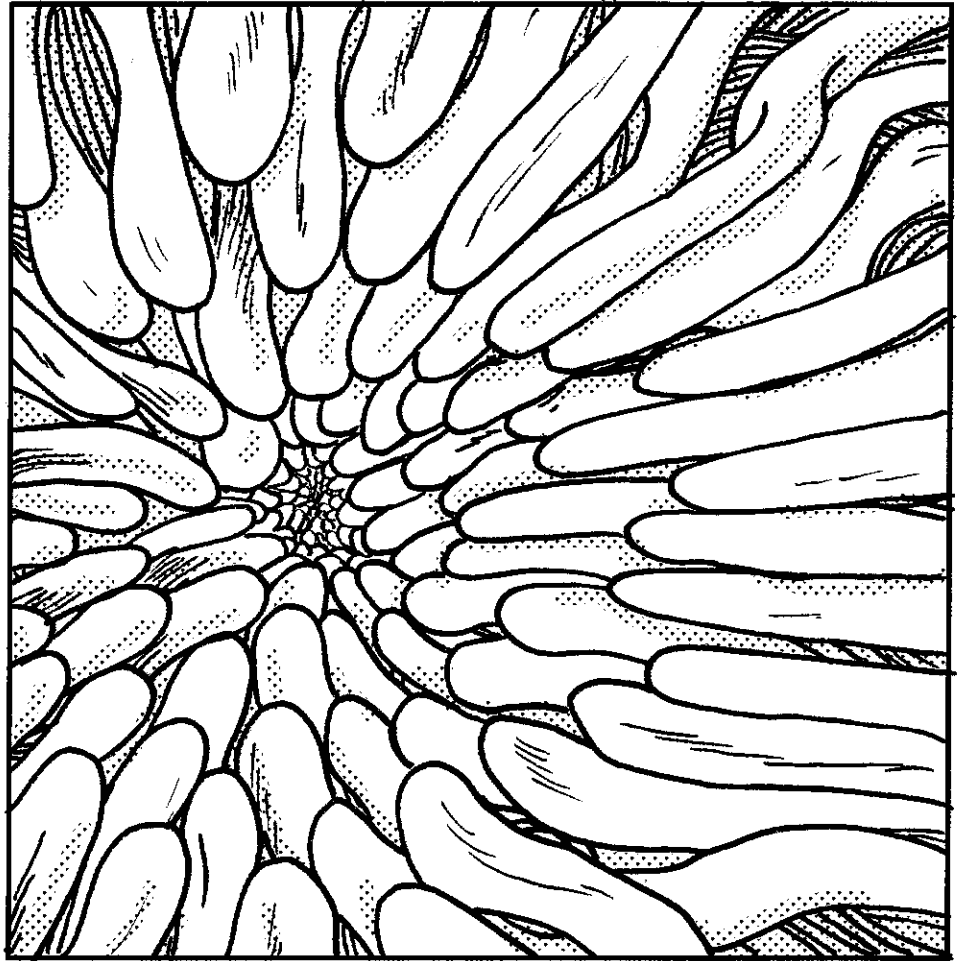
I SAW EVERYTHING FOR WHAT IT WAS
AND I WAS NOWHERE AND NOTHING.



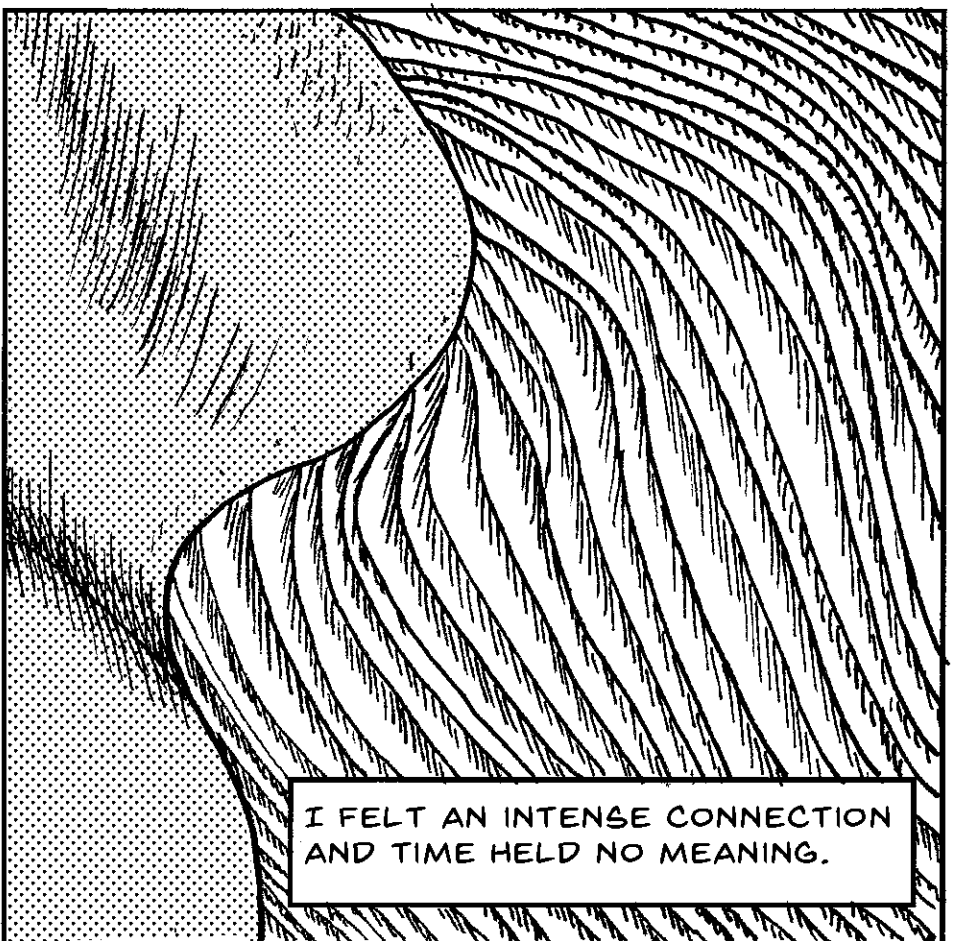
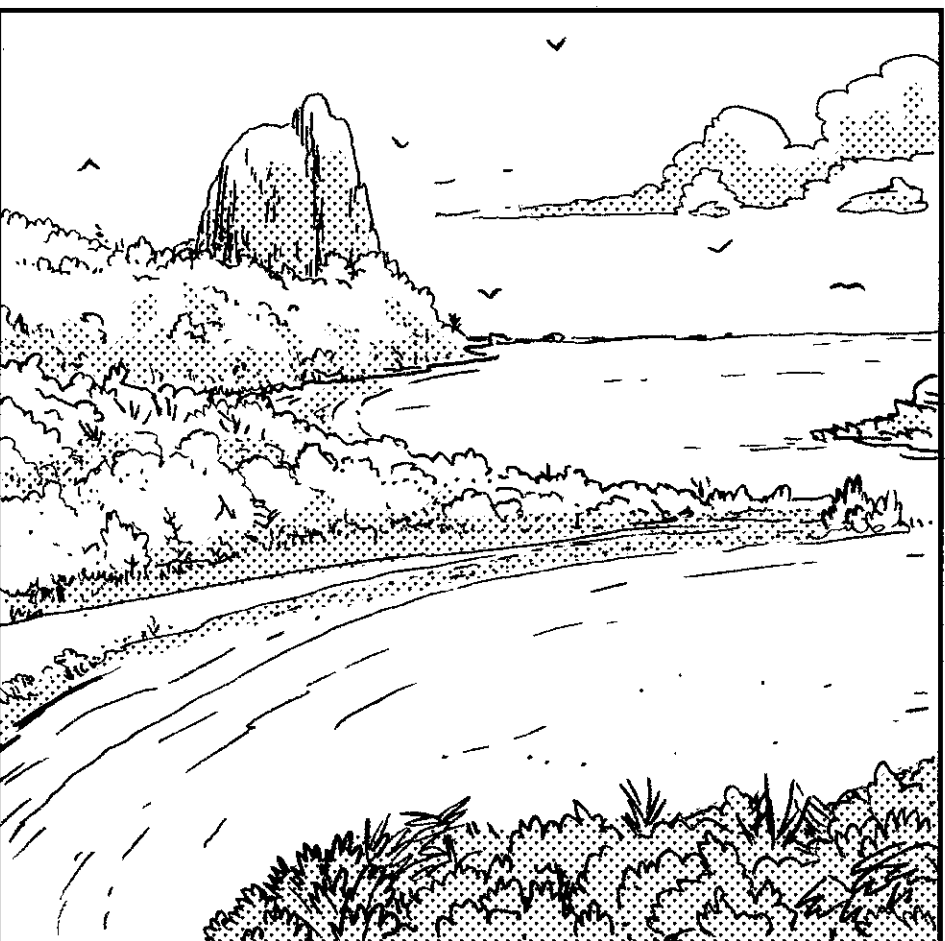
AND **EVERYWHERE.**



ALL AT ONCE I TRAVELLED
LANDSCAPES AND GALAXIES
BOTH FAMILIAR AND FOREIGN.



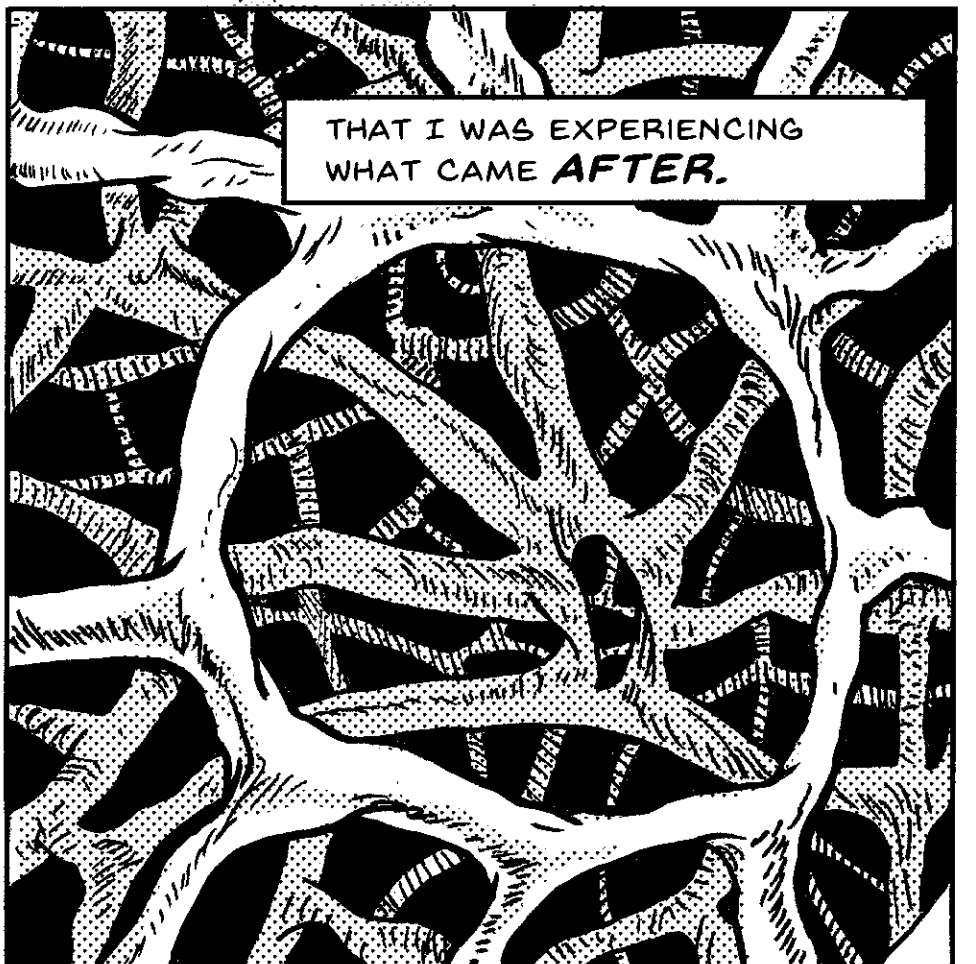
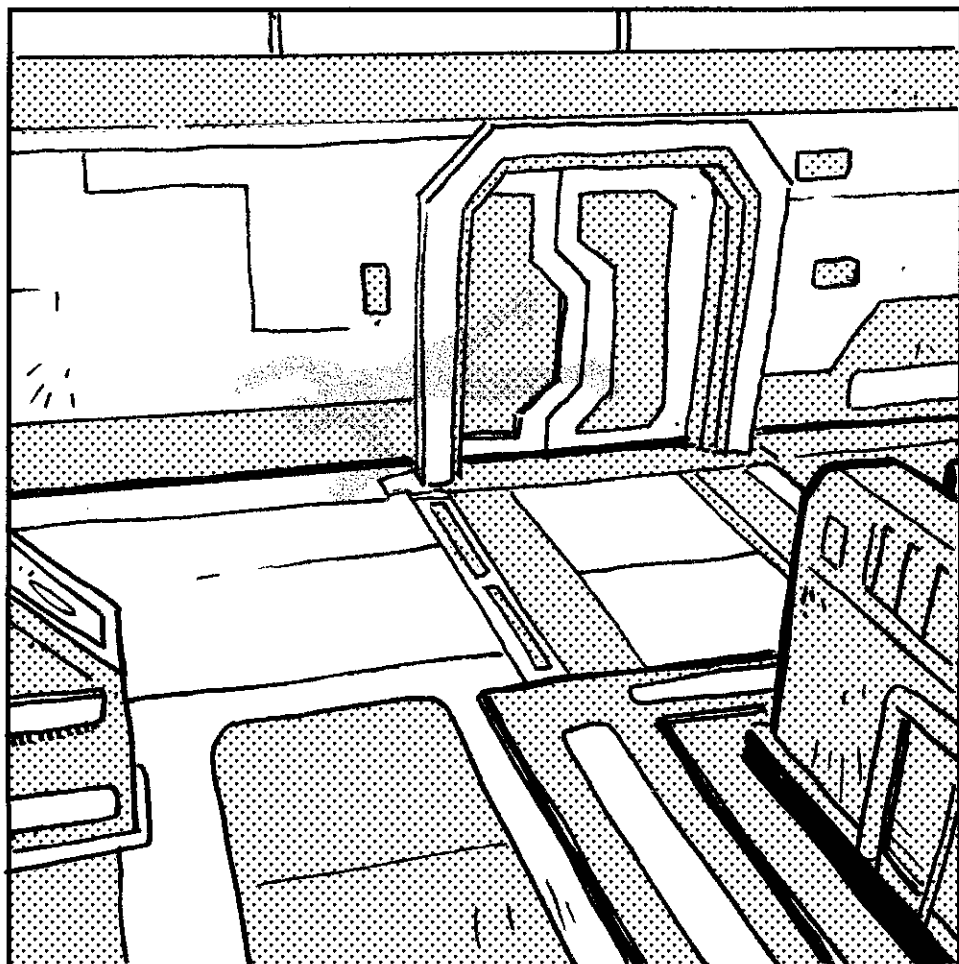
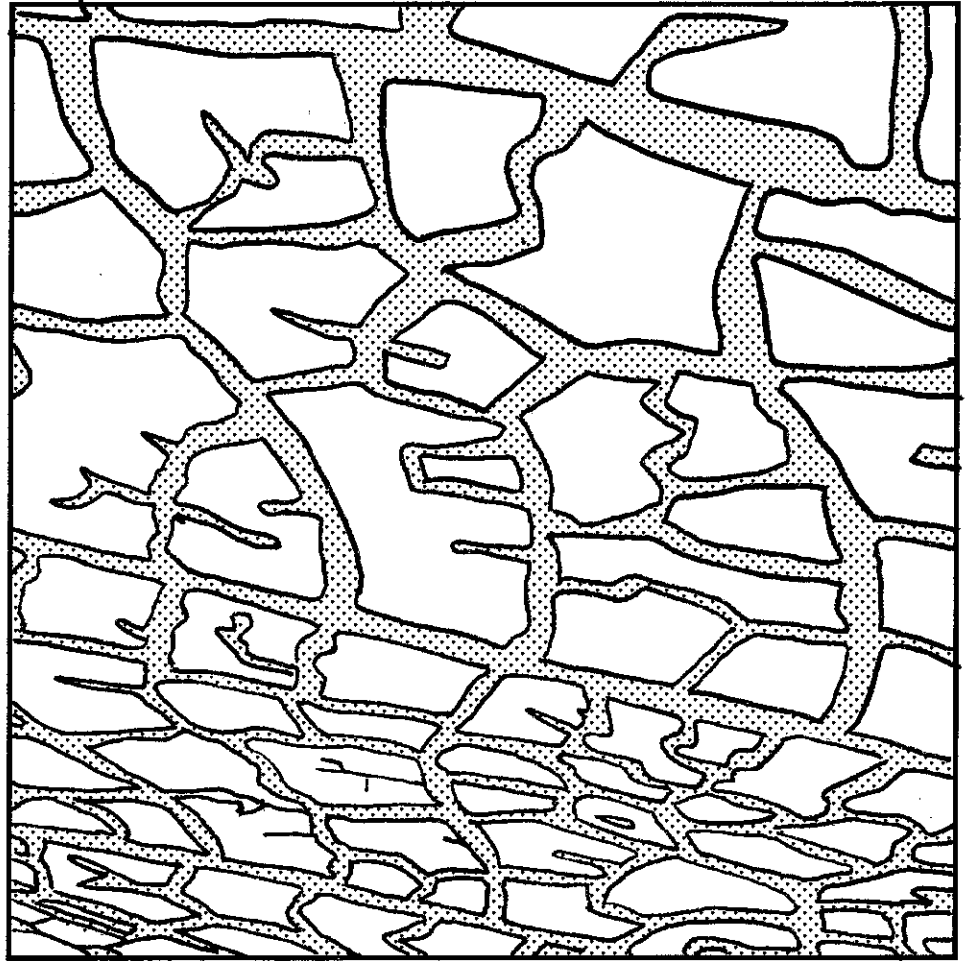
A KALEIDOSCOPE OF
PURE INFORMATION
WASHING THROUGH ME.



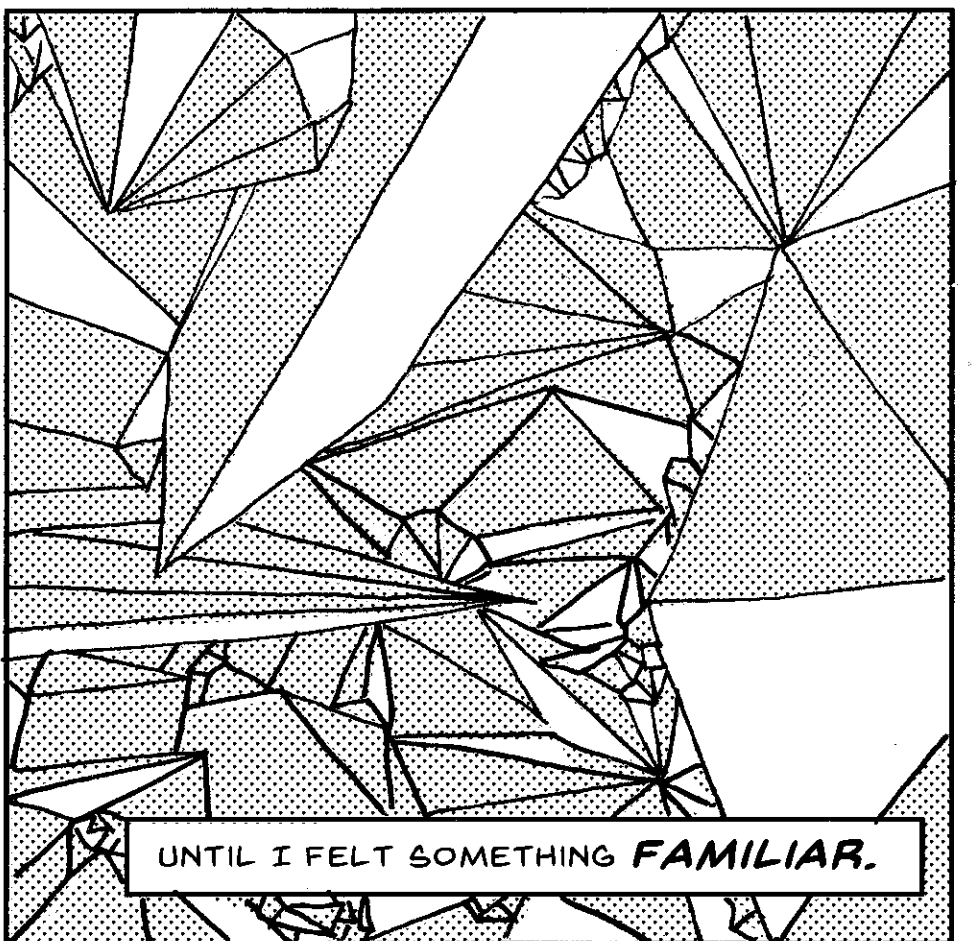
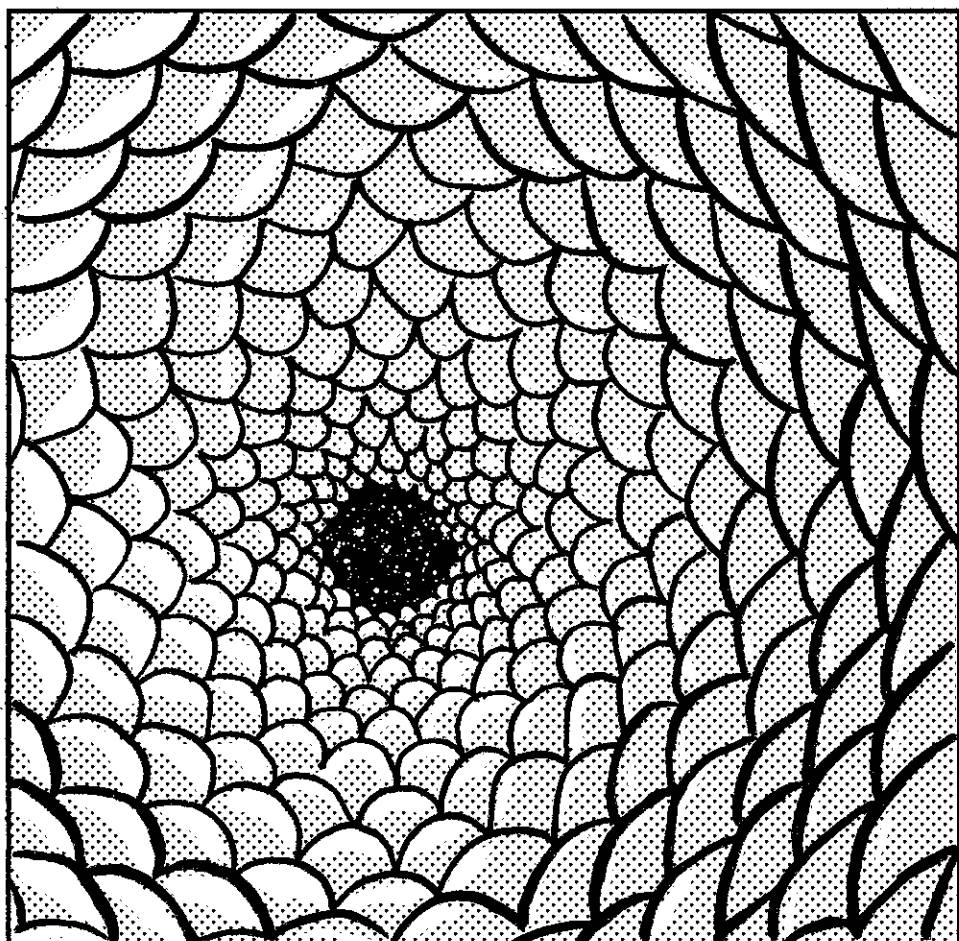
I FELT AN INTENSE CONNECTION
AND TIME HELD NO MEANING.



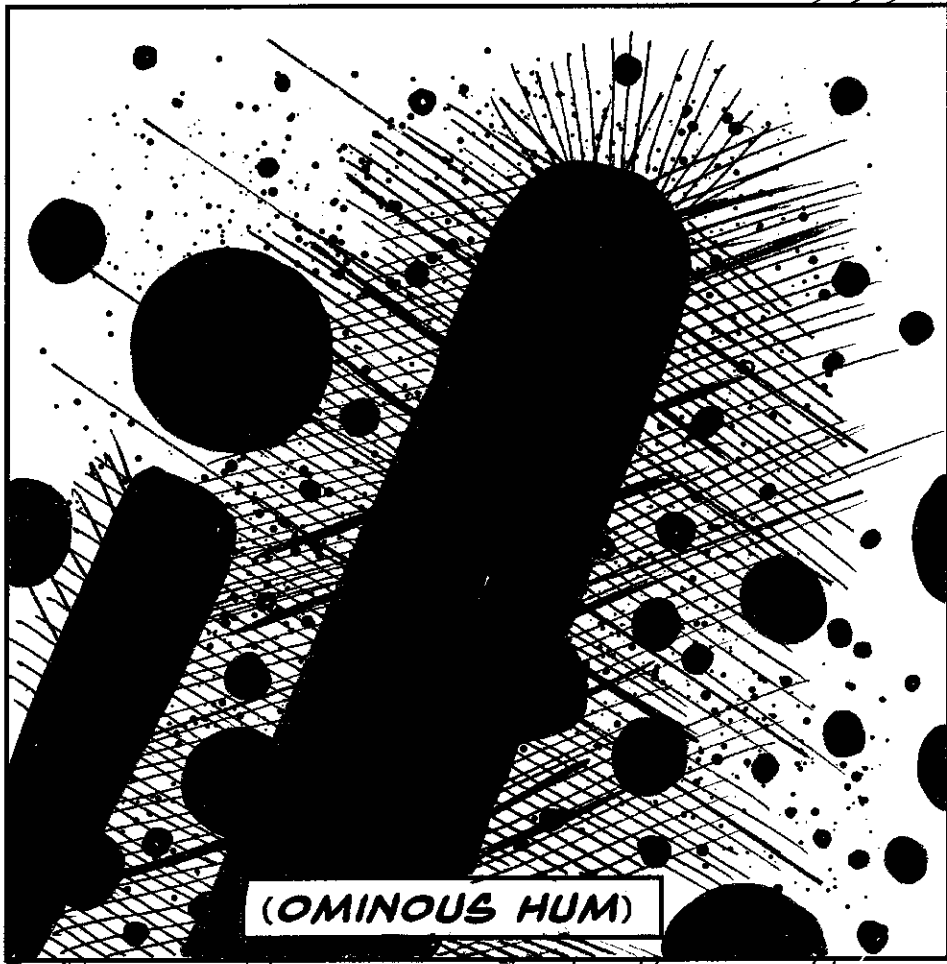
THE THOUGHT OCCURRED TO ME THAT I MIGHT BE DEAD.



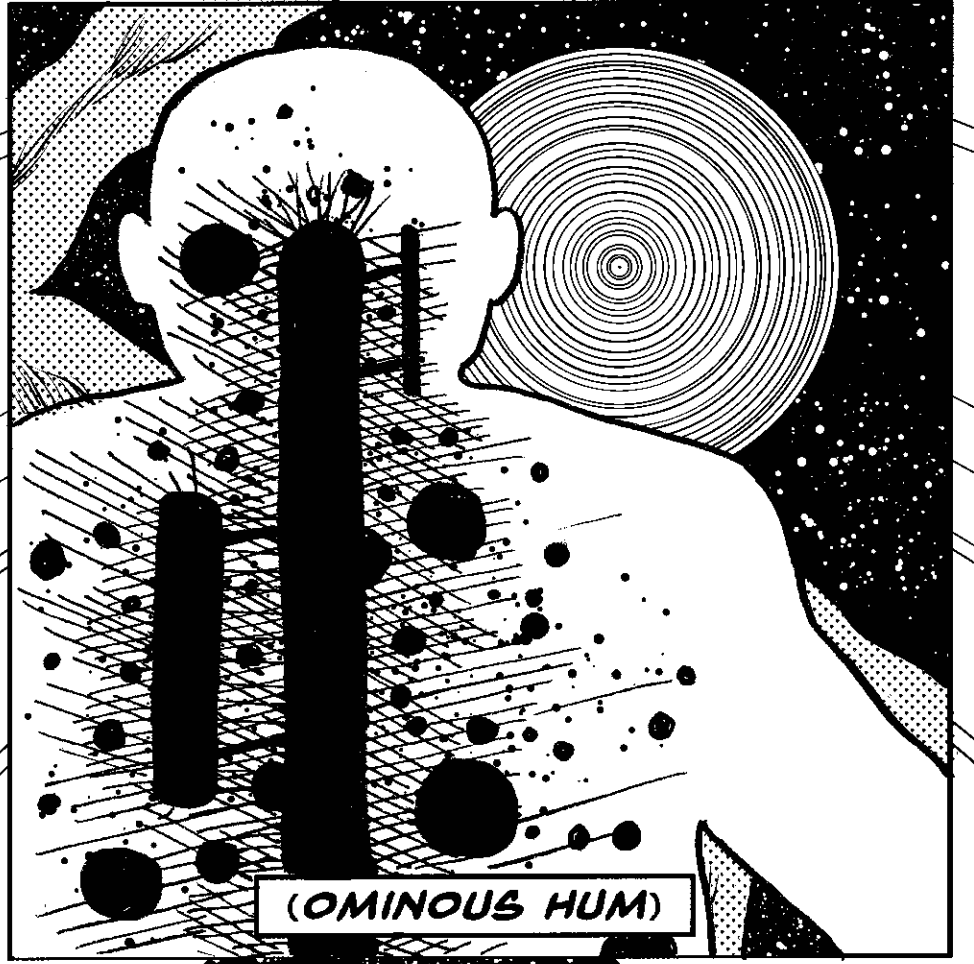
THAT I WAS EXPERIENCING WHAT CAME **AFTER**.



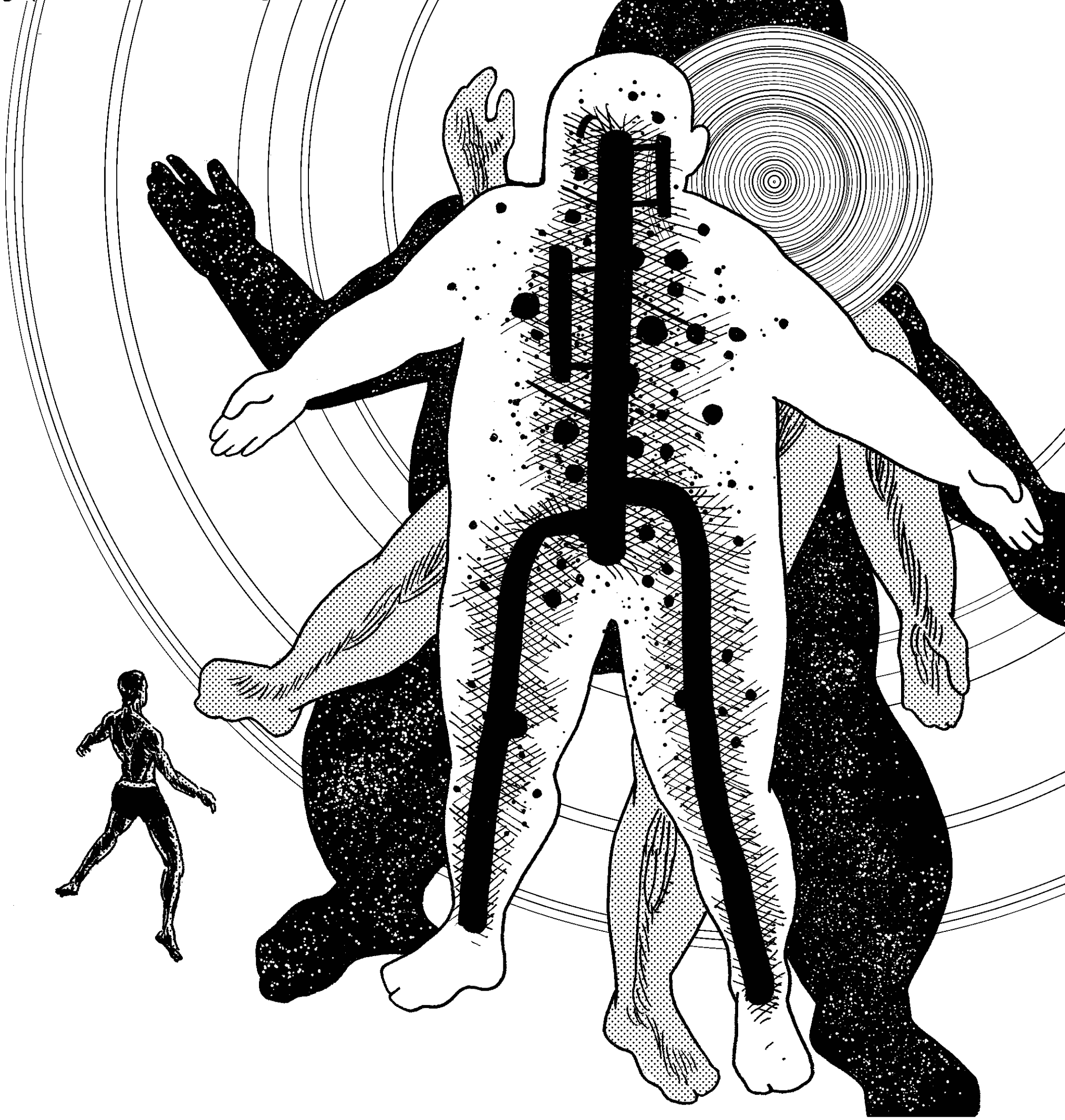
UNTIL I FELT SOMETHING **FAMILIAR**.

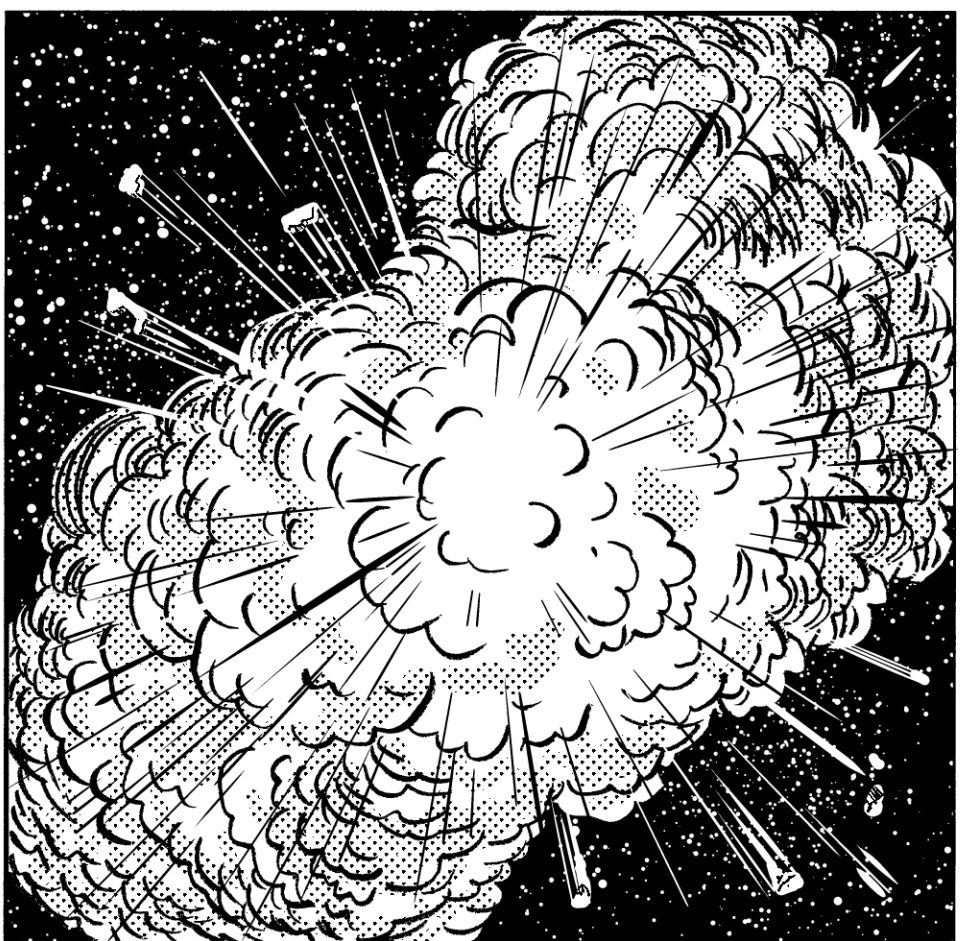
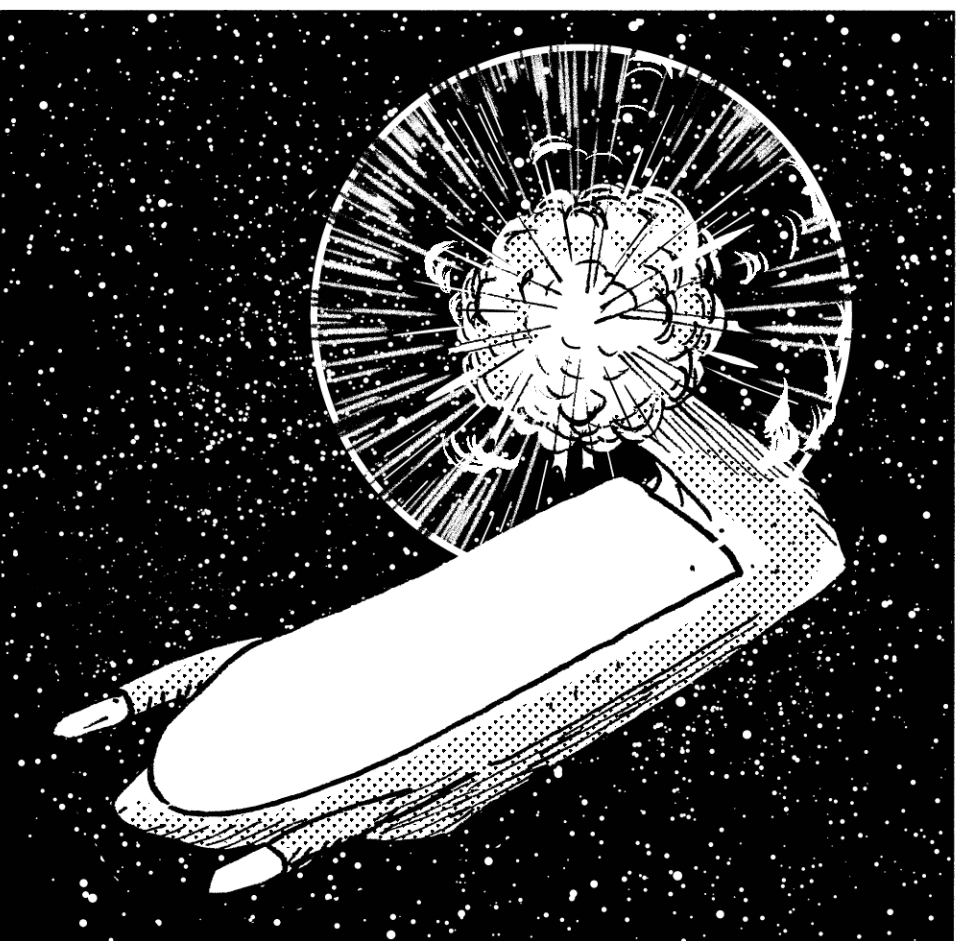
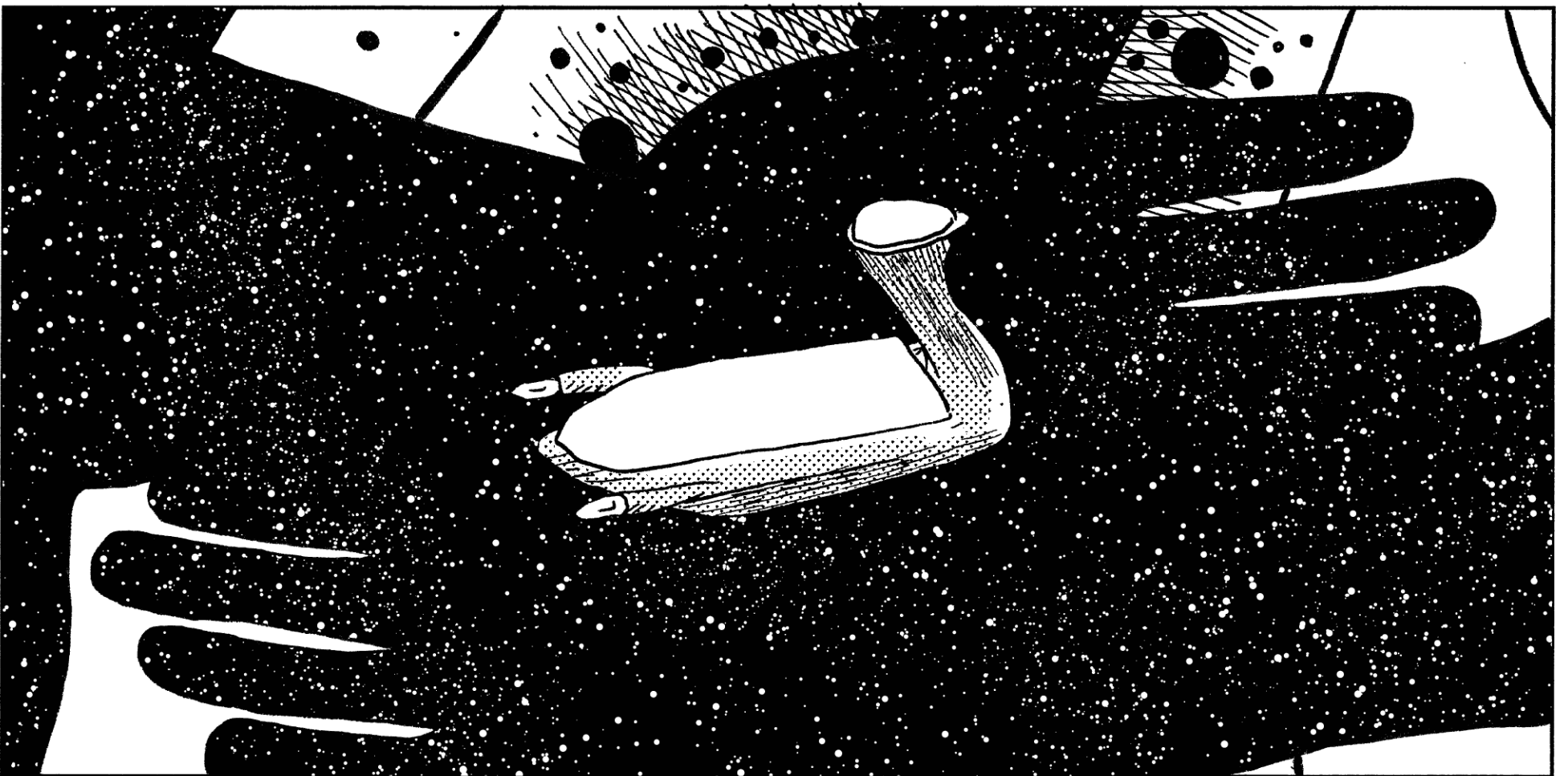


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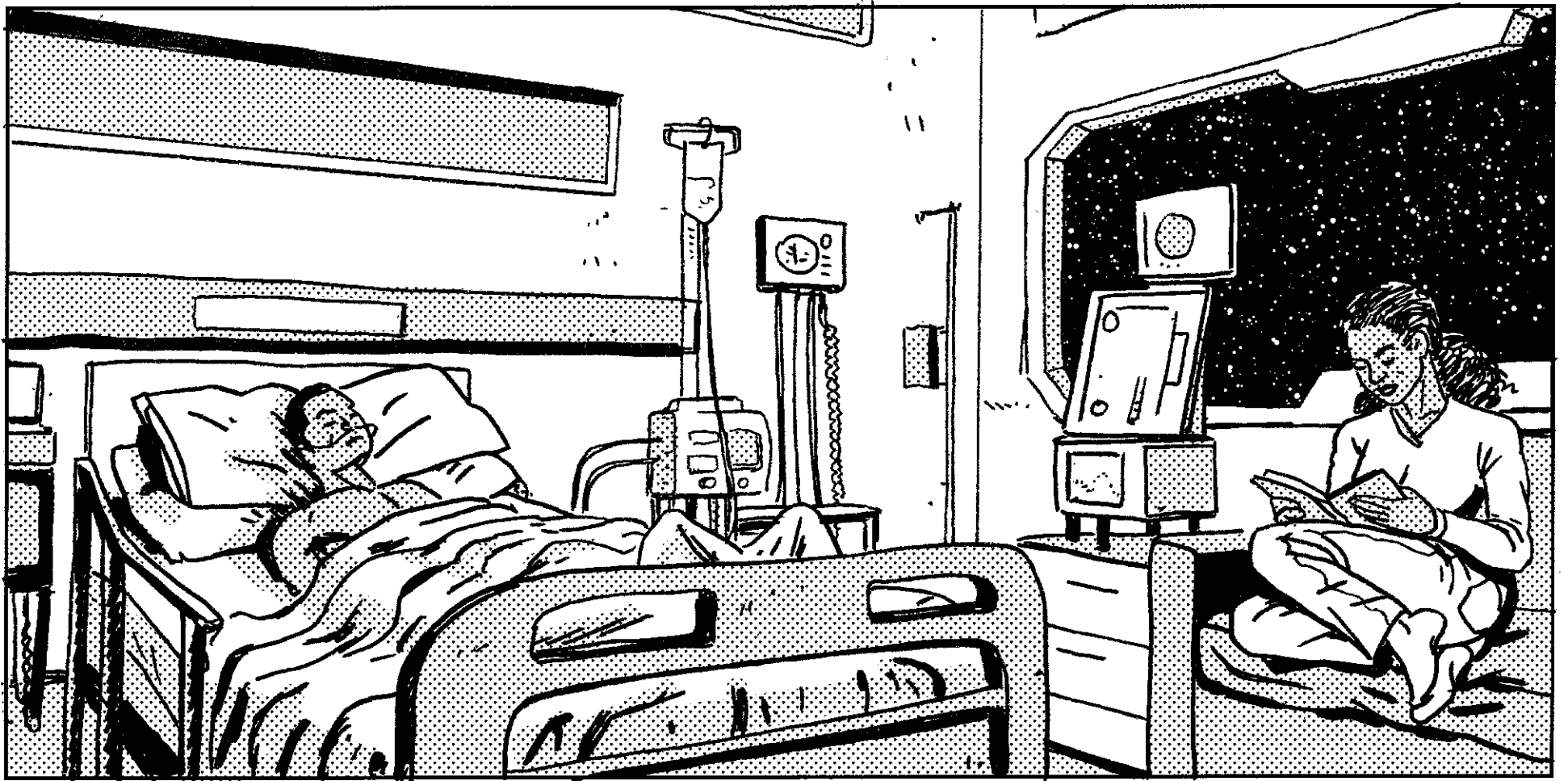


(OMINOUS HUM)





THEN, FOR A WHILE, NOTHING.





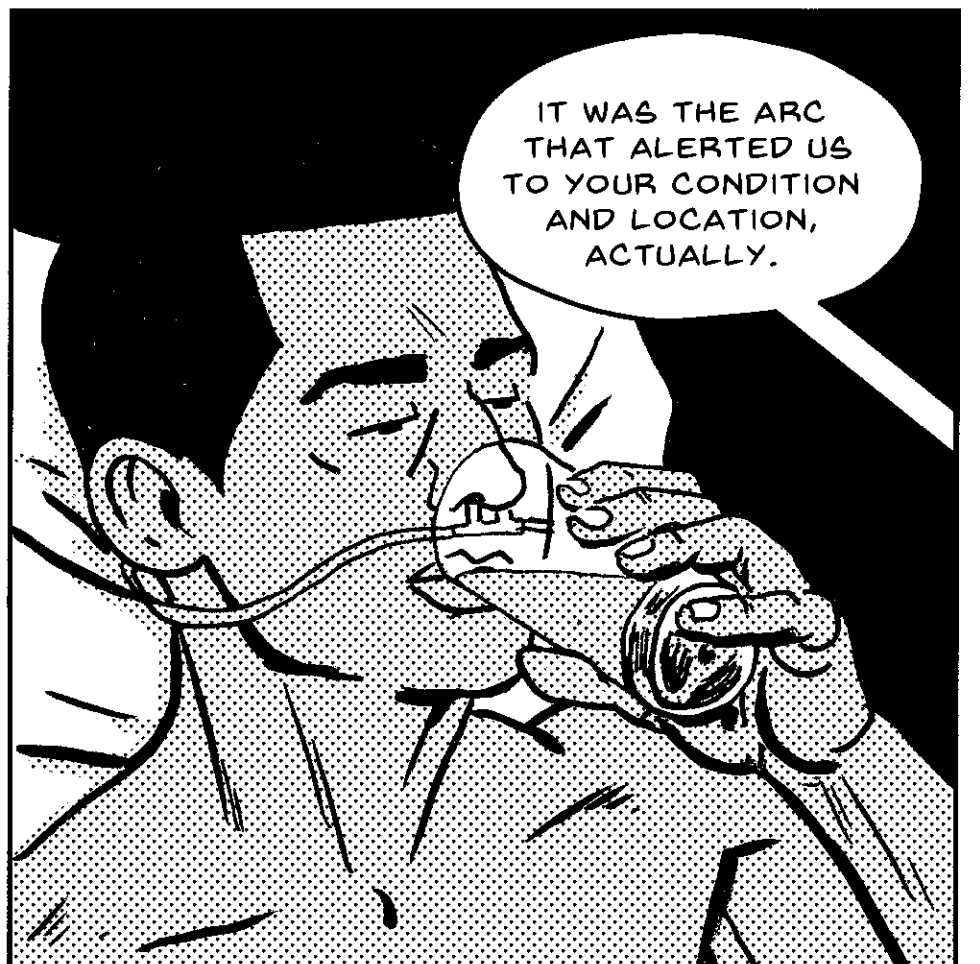
END OF A NORMAL DAY, GOING TO BED WITH YOU?

WHAT HAPPENED TO ME?

I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW, ORLANDO.



WE FOUND YOU DEEP IN THE GUTS OF THE SHIP, UNCONSCIOUS.



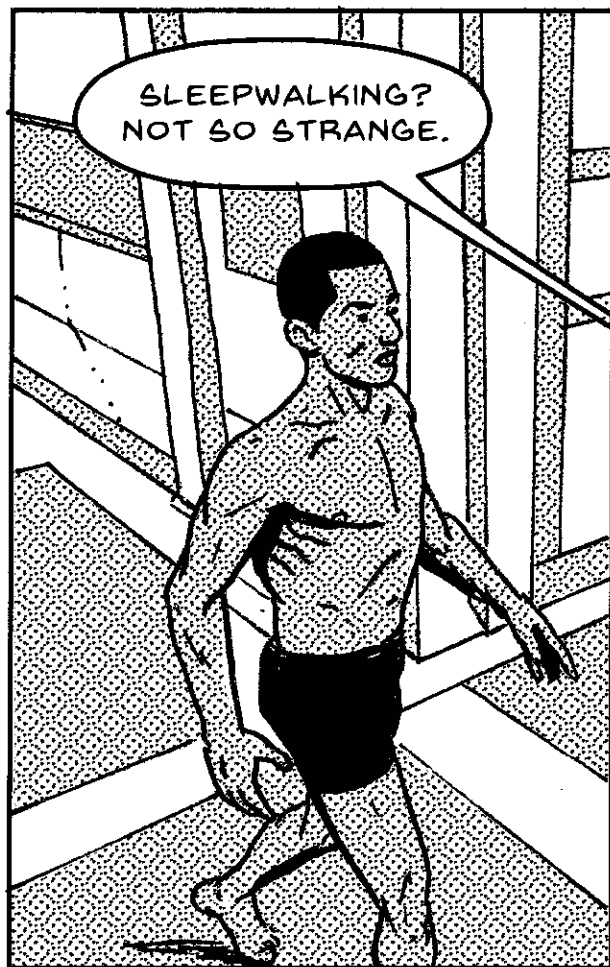
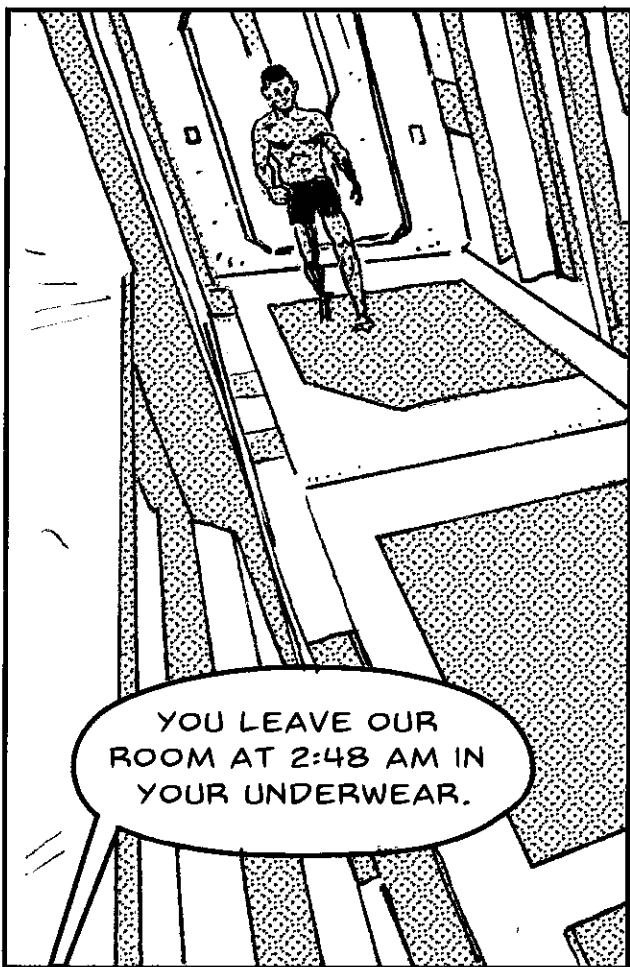
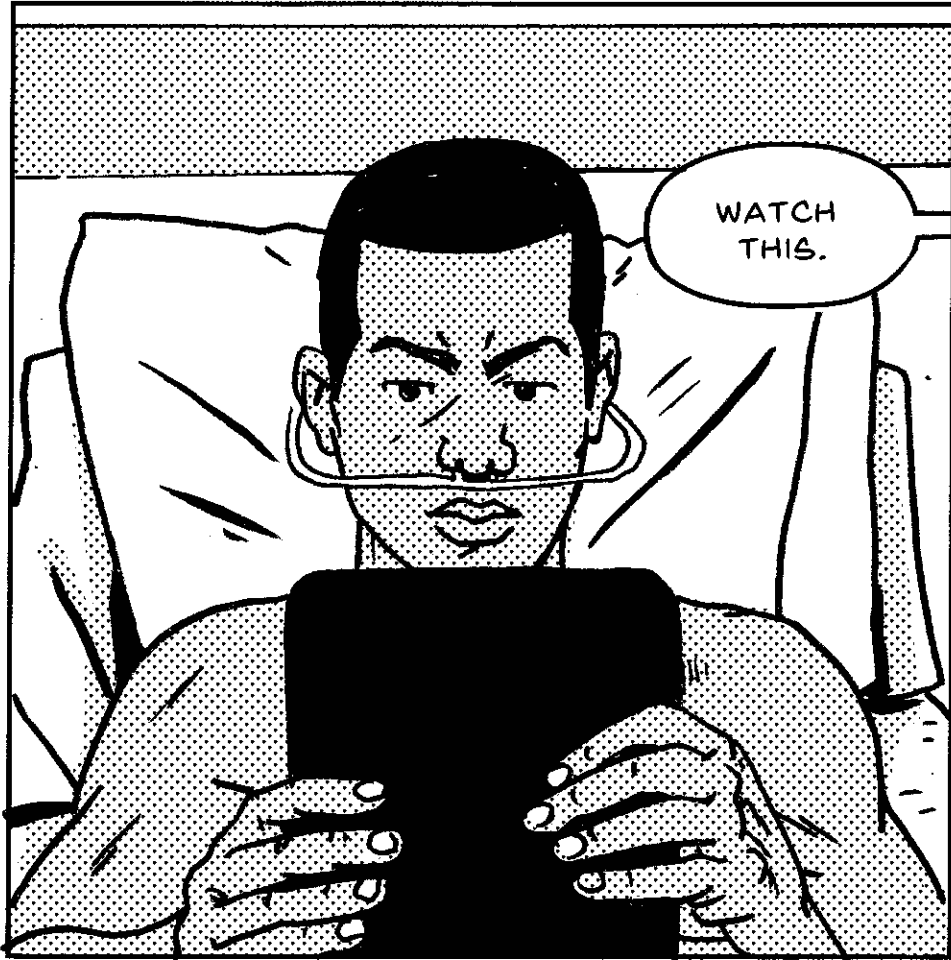
IT WAS THE ARC THAT ALERTED US TO YOUR CONDITION AND LOCATION, ACTUALLY.

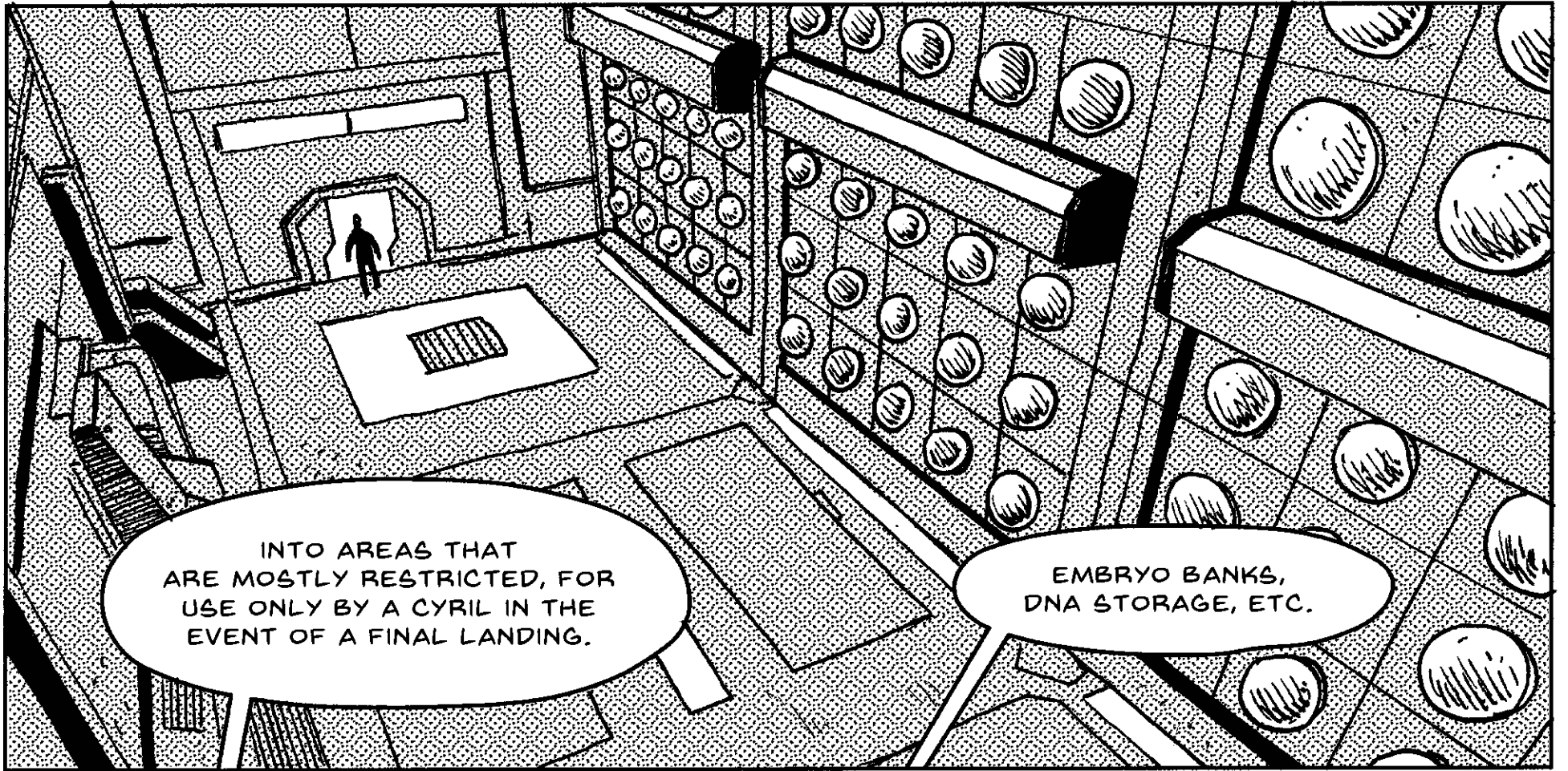


WHAT THE HELL WAS I DOING THERE?



IT'S PROBABLY BEST IF I JUST SHOW YOU.





INTO AREAS THAT ARE MOSTLY RESTRICTED, FOR USE ONLY BY A CYRIL IN THE EVENT OF A FINAL LANDING.

EMBRYO BANKS, DNA STORAGE, ETC.



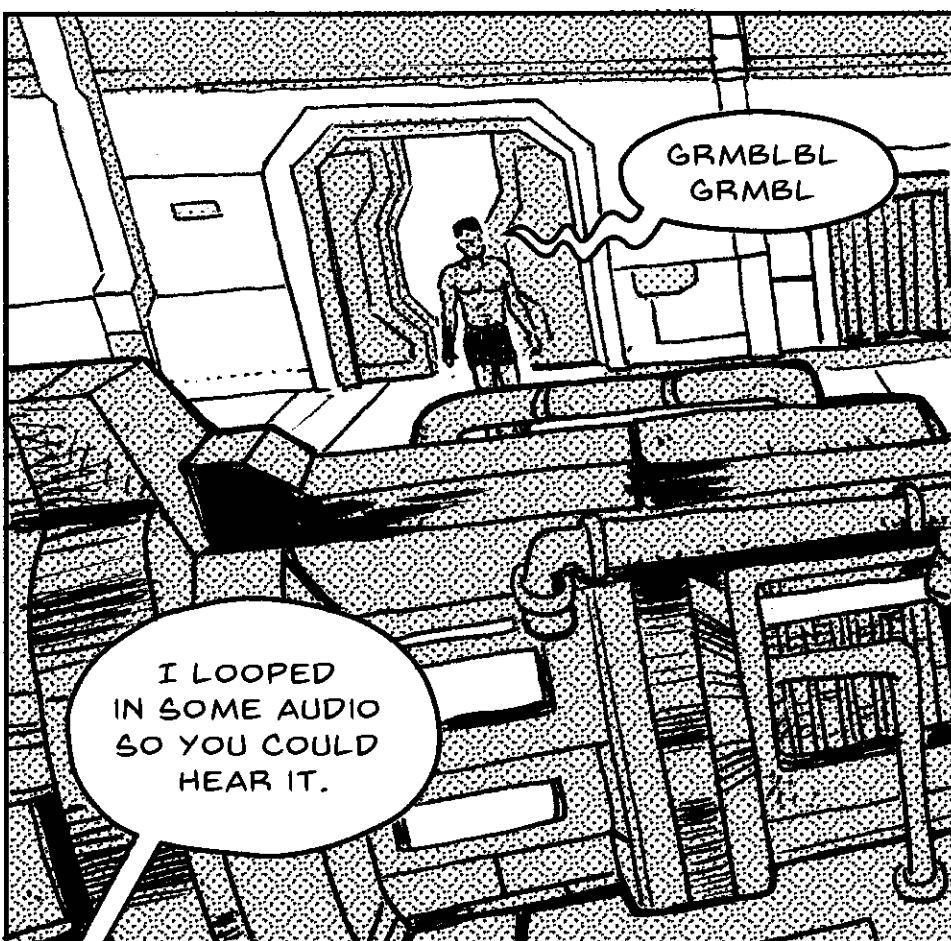
BY NOW, IT'S 3:13 AM.

THE WHOLE TIME YOU'RE MUMBLING TO YOURSELF.



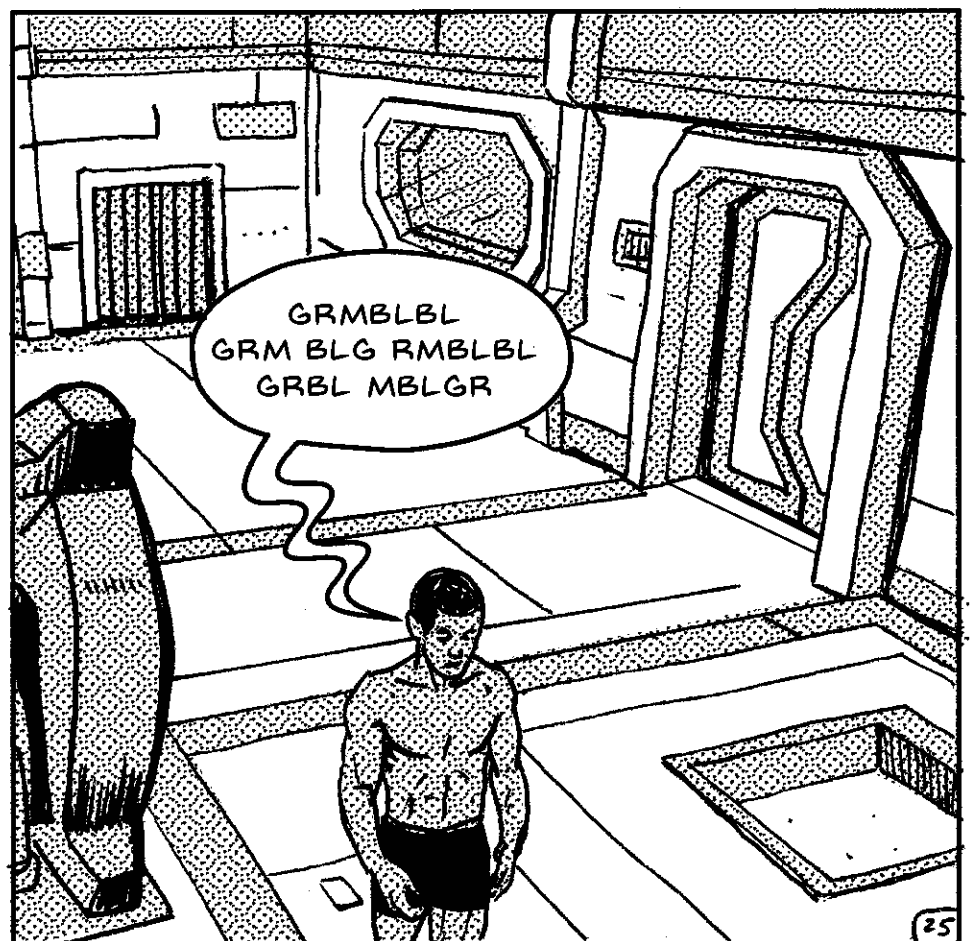
NOTHING WE COULD MAKE OUT, THOUGH.

THE ARC'S A.I. WAS UNABLE TO DECIPHER IT EITHER.

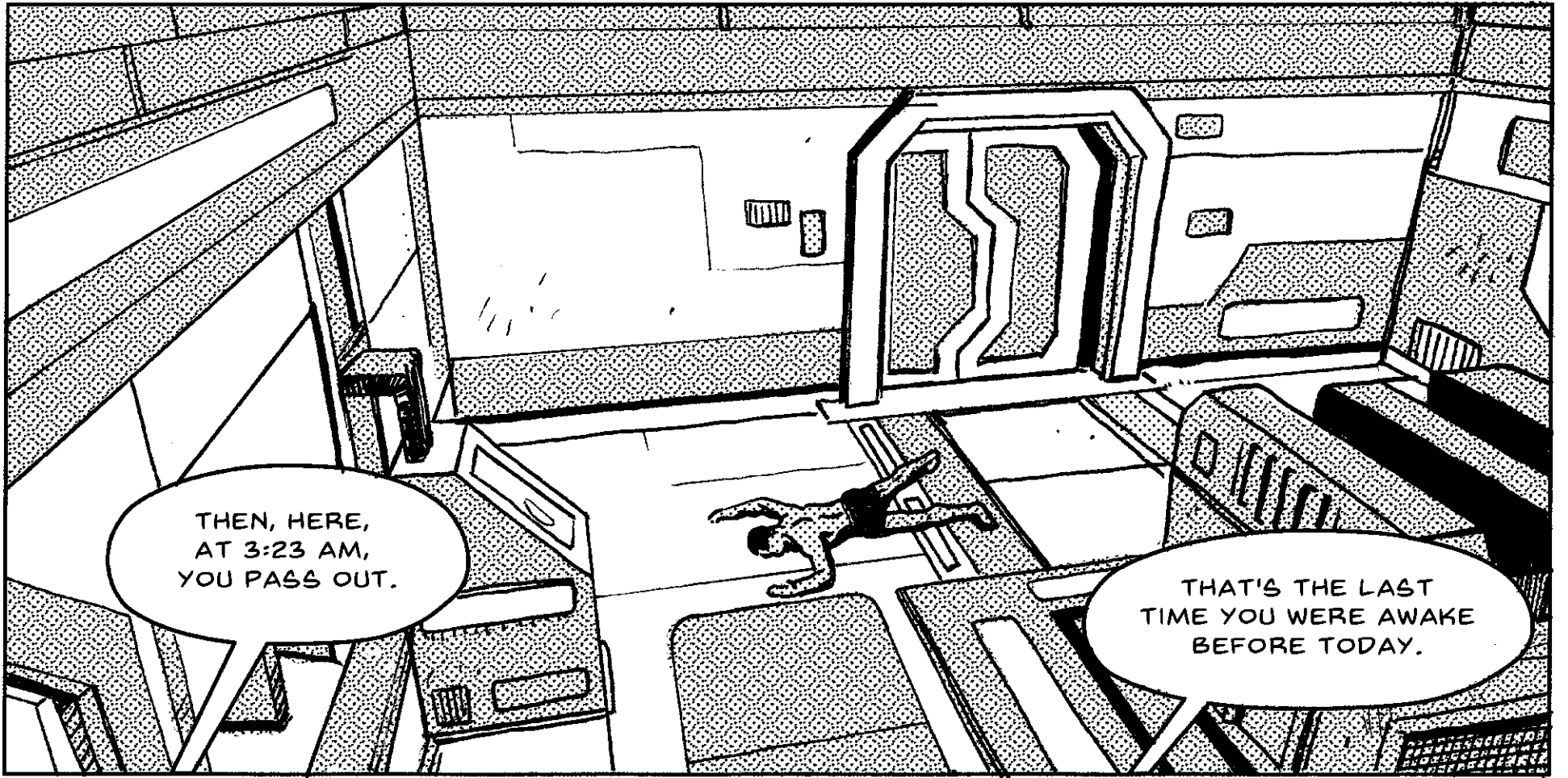


GRMBLBL
GRMBL

I LOOPED IN SOME AUDIO SO YOU COULD HEAR IT.



GRMBLBL
GRM BLG RMBLBL
GRBL MBLGR



THEN, HERE,
AT 3:23 AM,
YOU PASS OUT.

THAT'S THE LAST
TIME YOU WERE AWAKE
BEFORE TODAY.



OKAY, THIS IS
WHERE IT GETS
REALLY FUCKING
ODD, ORLANDO.



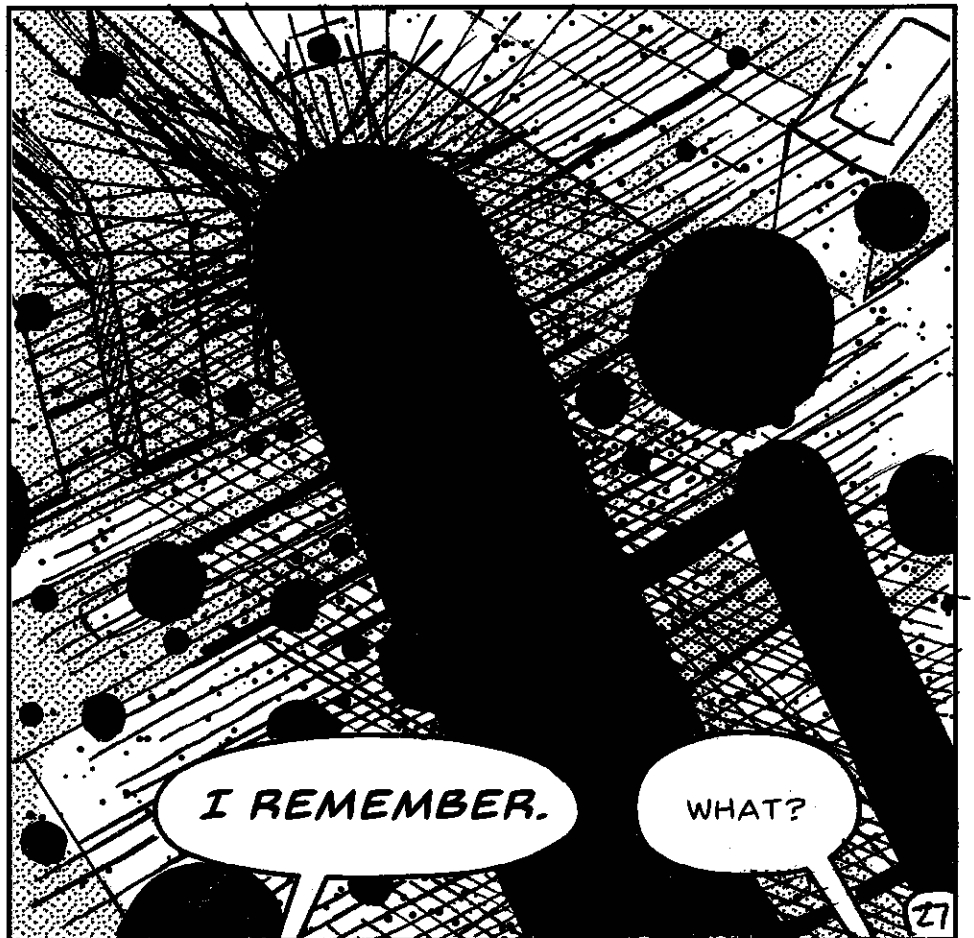
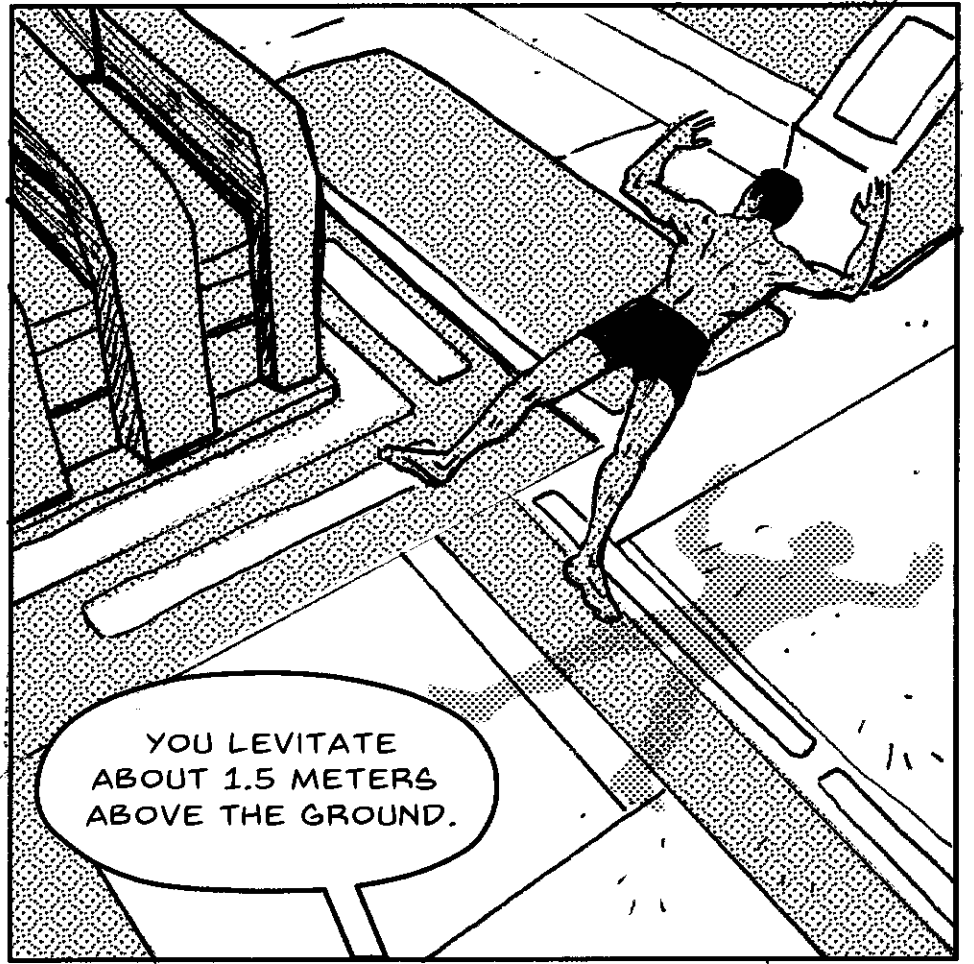
I'VE SLOWED IT
DOWN AND COMBINED
TWO SHOTS SO YOU
CAN SEE BETTER.



SEE
WHAT?

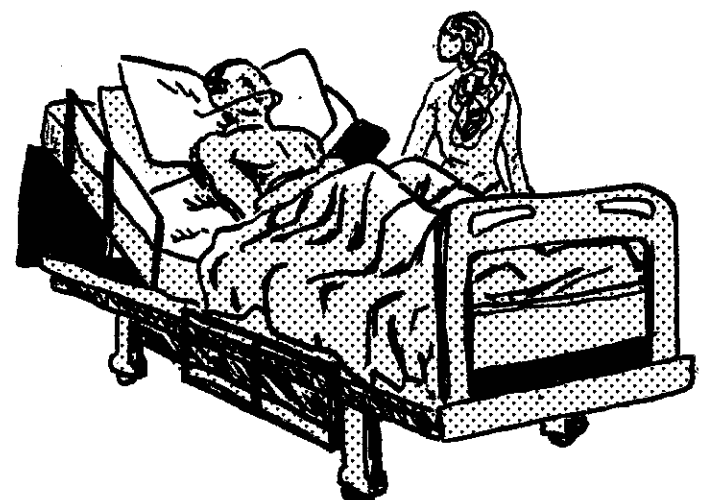


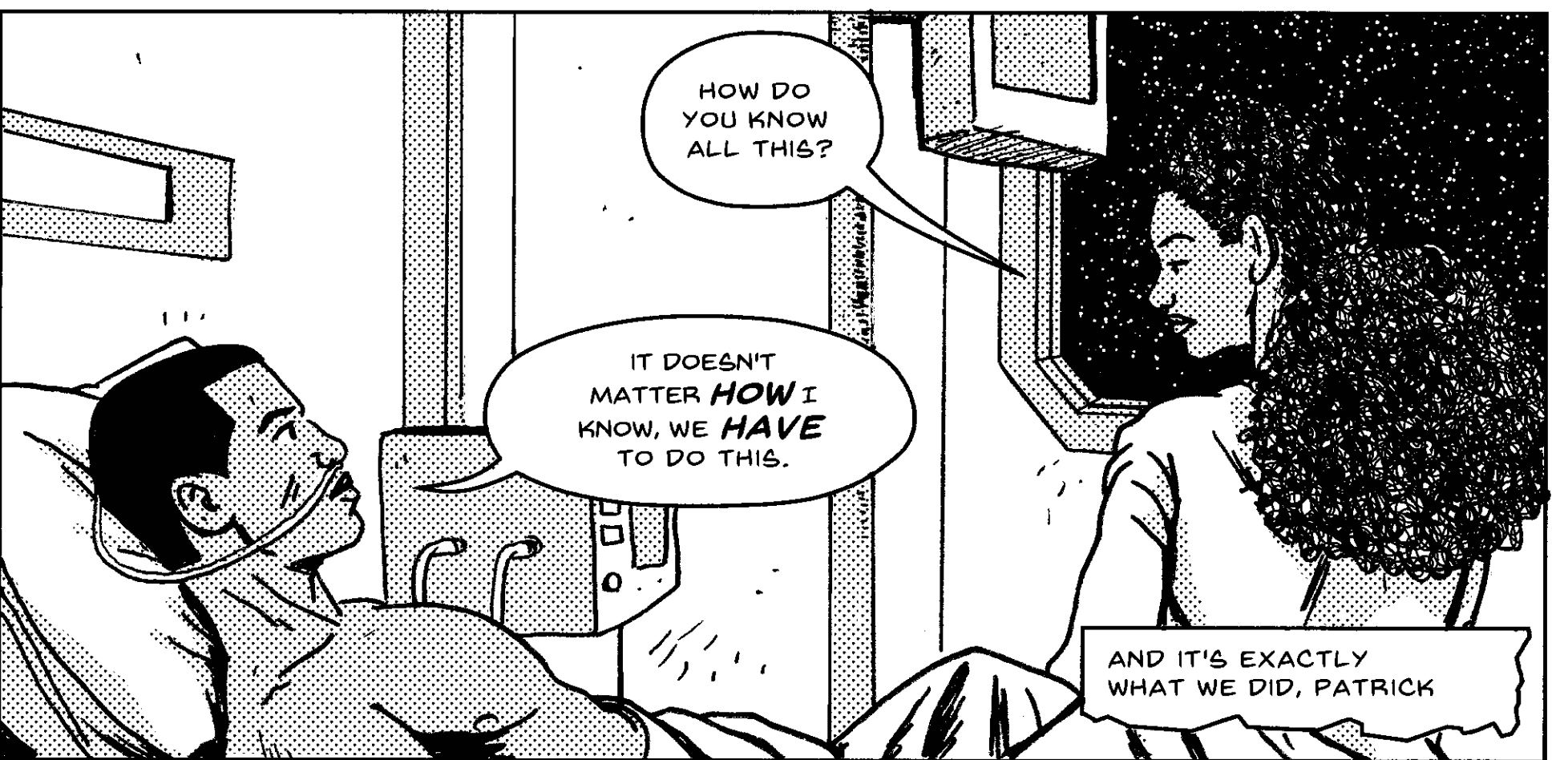
WHAT
HAPPENED
TO YOU.





WE CAN HELP THEM.

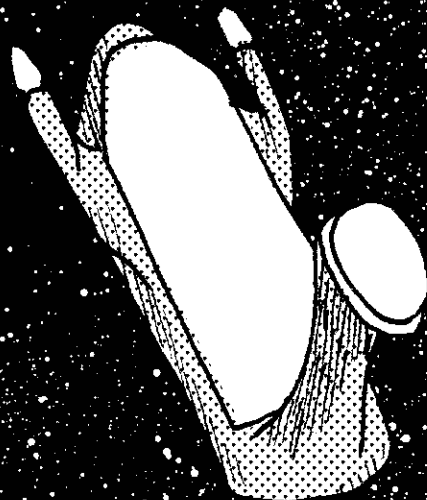




██████████ WAS THE LAST
STOP BEFORE GOING ON TO
DEMETER, TO GET YOU.

IT'S WHERE I LEFT MY CREWMATES
BEHIND, WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE OR
PERMISSION. BUT THAT, ONCE AGAIN, IS
A STORY FOR ANOTHER VOLUME.

I'M SURE THEY'RE FURIOUS WITH ME,
BUT I EXCHANGED MY LIFE AGAINST
THEIRS AND THEY'LL NEVER KNOW.



THIS IS WHERE I ABANDONED
EVERYTHING I LOVED.

2021







IT SPOKE DIRECTLY
INTO MY MIND.