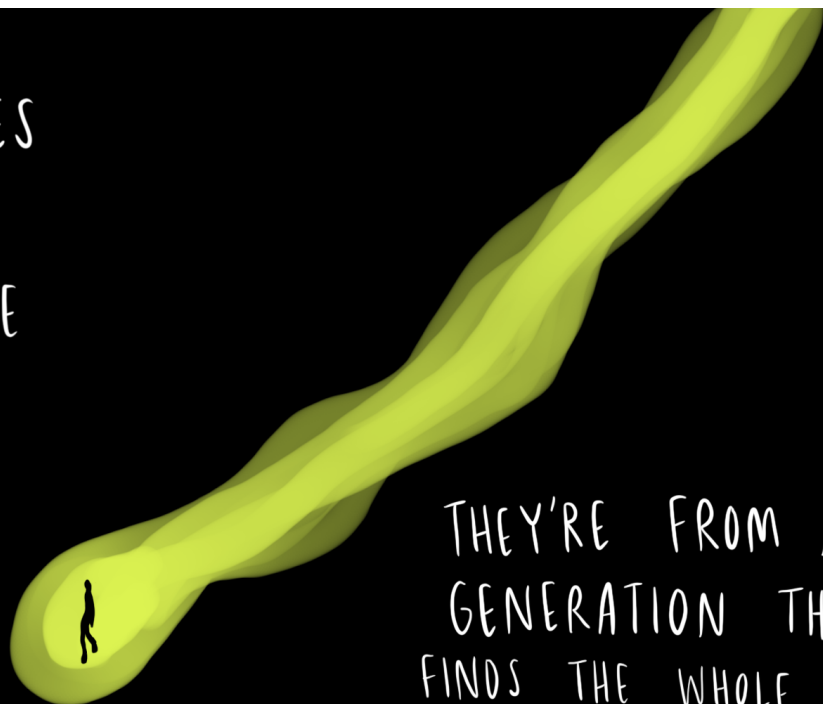




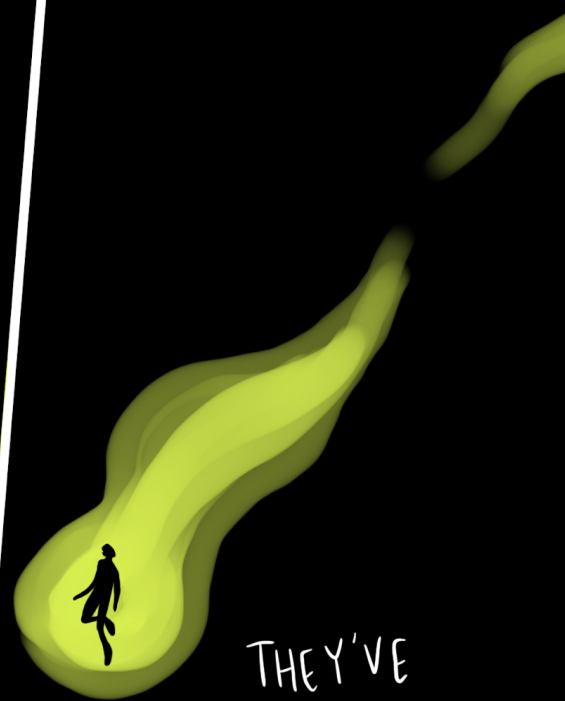
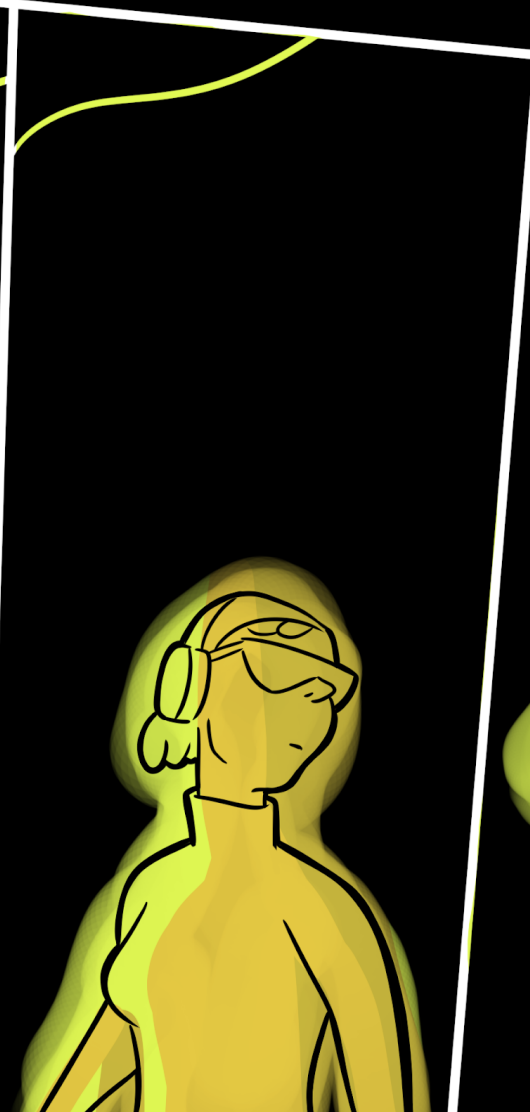
YOU CAN TRY AGAIN

BY OLIVIA WALCH

I LOST SIX BODIES
LOOKING FOR THE
LEMON SID BEFORE
MY PARENTS TOLD
ME I HAD TO STOP
DEEP-DIVING

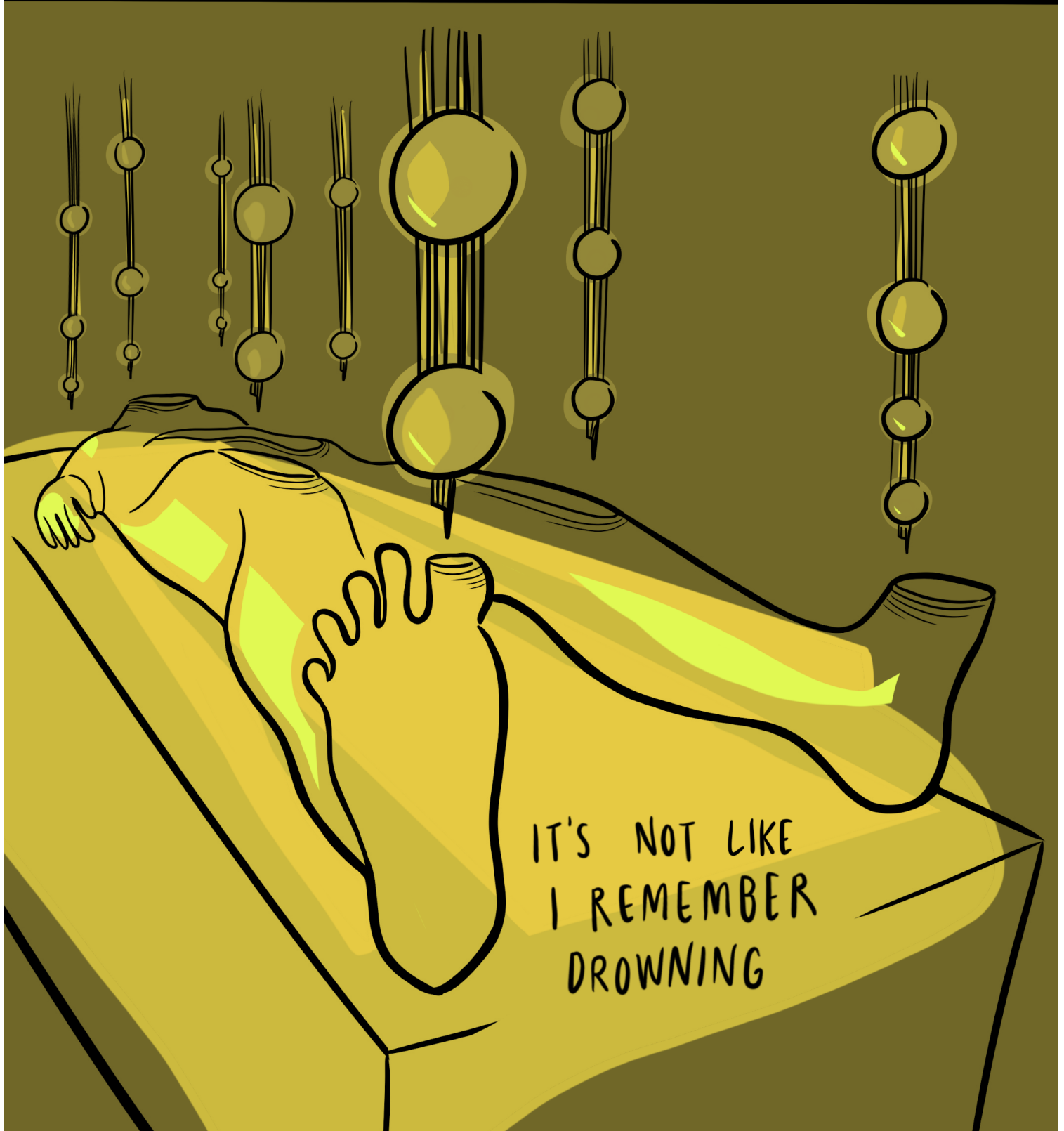


THEY'RE FROM A
GENERATION THAT
FINDS THE WHOLE
BUSINESS PRETTY CREEPY



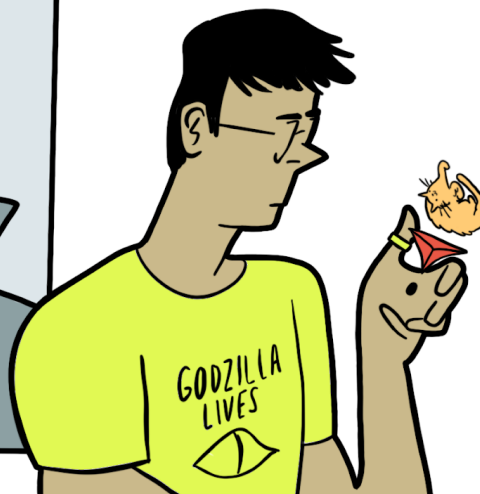
THEY'VE
STILL GOTTEN
BACKED UP,
OF COURSE

I DON'T REALLY GET THE HANDWRINGING



IT'S NOT LIKE
I REMEMBER
DROWNING

I JUST BLINK AND SUDDENLY ROCKO IS
WEARING A DIFFERENT SHIRT



SOME BELUGAS
STARTED PLAYING
WITH THE LINK
AND IT BROKE

THOSE
TWERPS

NICE SHIRT, BY
THE WAY.

WE BOUGHT IT
FOR HIM.

AAH...!!

...HI.

BUT MOM MADE
SUCH A THING OUT
OF IT LAST TIME
I AGREED TO STAY
ON LAND FOR
A WHILE

SINCE I'M NOT A CAMERA ANYMORE,
LIESEL GOT ME A JOB HELPING THE
AI LEARN HOW PEOPLE LEARN.

IT'S LIKE SCHOOL
BUT THEY TEACH
US A NEW SUBJECT
EVERY WEEK.

LAST WEEK WAS METALLURGY.
THIS WEEK IS CRYPTOGRAPHY.
NEXT WEEK IS LISTENING.

IT ONLY
WORKS IF
EVERYTHING
IS PRIME

IS THIS
RELATED TO
THE LITTLE
NUMBER?

THERE WAS
NEVER A
LITTLE
NUMBER

THE PRIMES SHOULD
BE HUGE

YES

MM

THINK
ABOUT
DIVISION

HOW MUCH
MODULAR
ARITHMETIC
DO YOU
REMEMBER

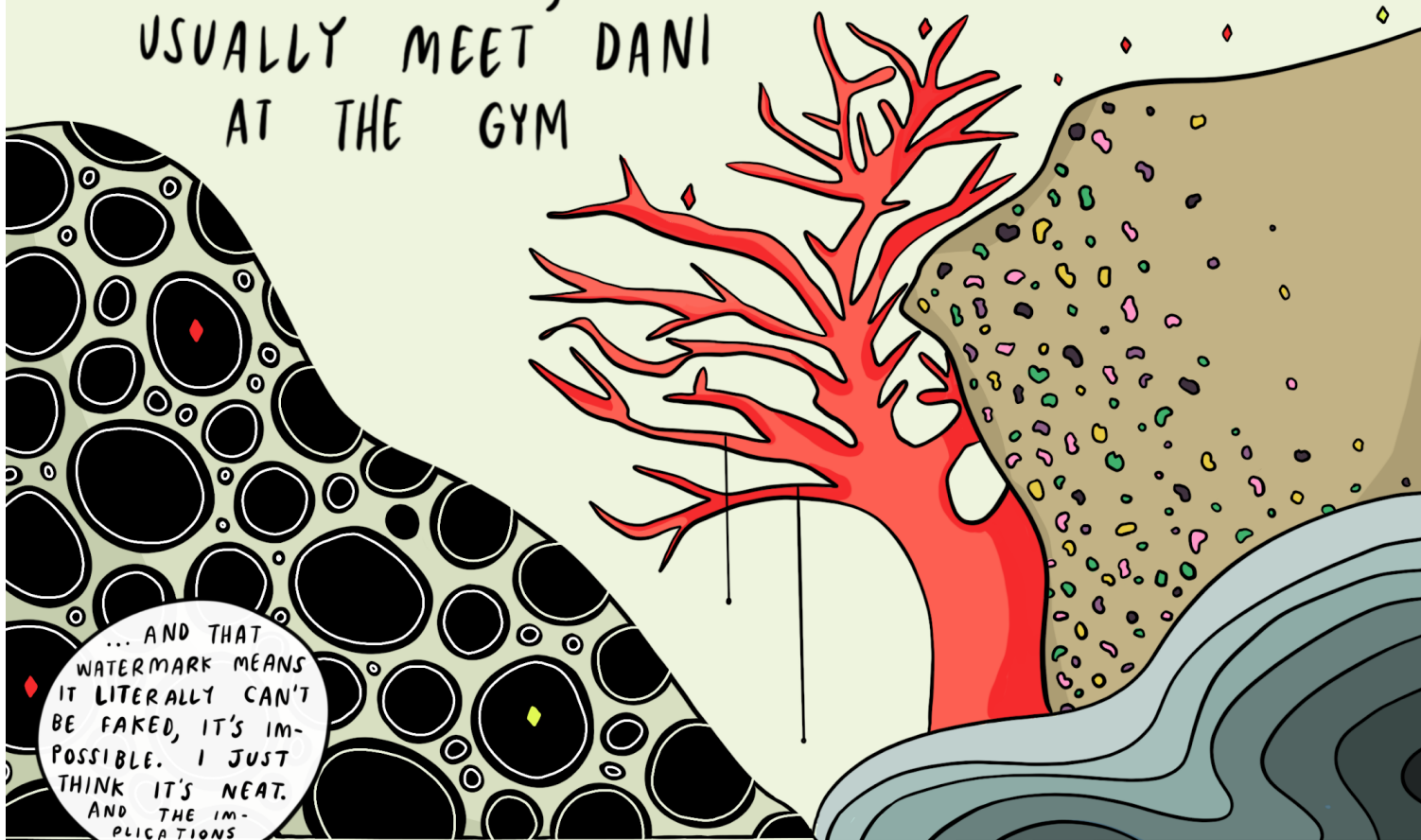
YE

YOU KNOW,
WE CAN
TRY
ANOTHER
WAY

NO, I THINK I'VE
ALMOST GOT IT!

...

AFTER WORK, WE
USUALLY MEET DANI
AT THE GYM



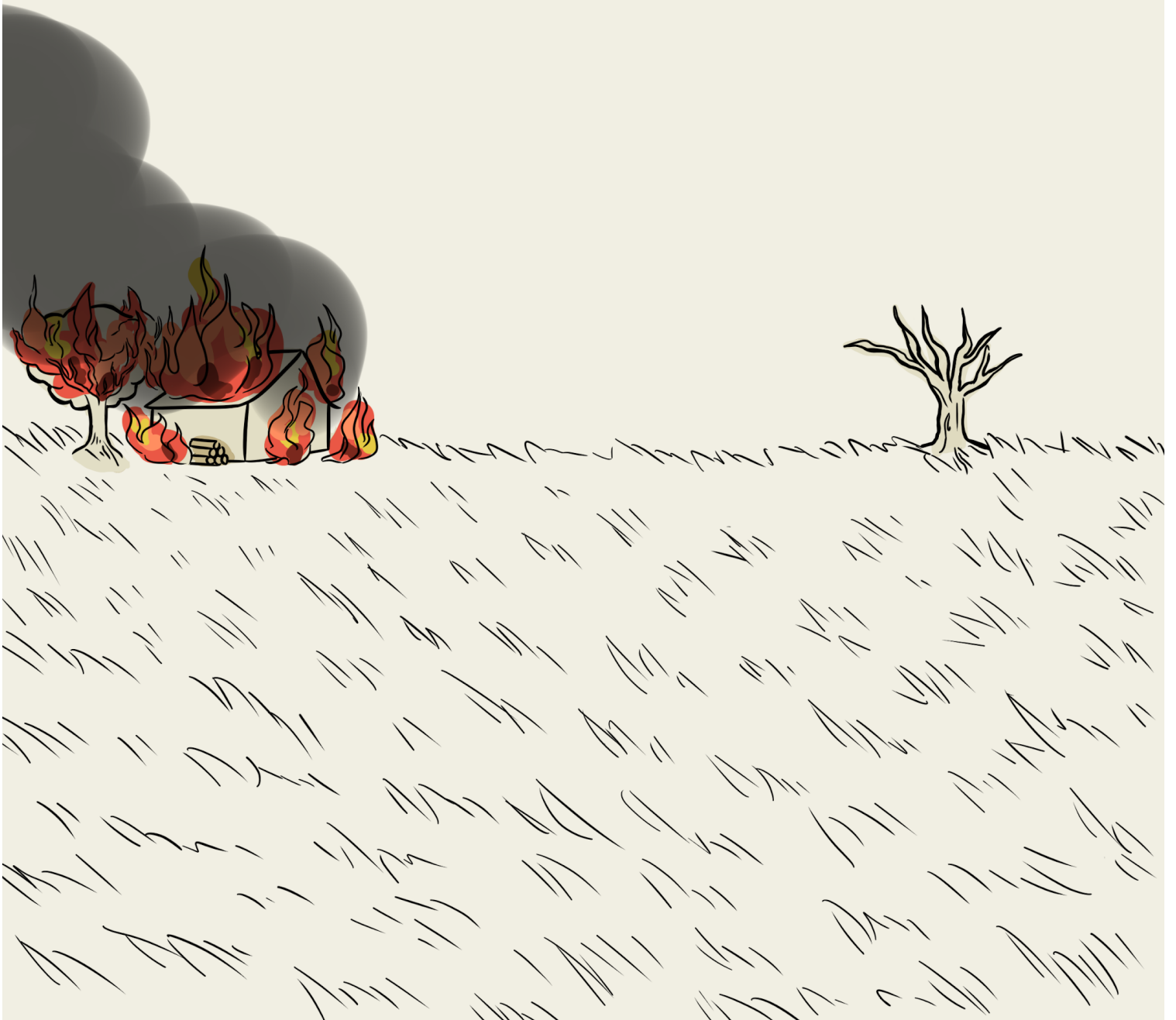
... AND THAT
WATERMARK MEANS
IT LITERALLY CAN'T
BE FAKED, IT'S IM-
POSSIBLE. I JUST
THINK IT'S NEAT.
AND THE IM-
PLICATIONS
ARE...



DISTRACTION...??
NOT HELPING...??

HOW ARE...?
YOU LIKE THIS...?

THEY DRAG ME TO THE MOVIES
ABOUT ONCE A WEEK







I JUST...
THINK
THAT...
WAS

BEAUTIFUL...??

MY GRANDMOTHER'S
HOUSE... I CAN STILL
TASTE THE ASH...

THE SMELL OF THE
OLD WOOD... THE GUILT...

I'LL ADMIT IT
WAS A MASTERFULLY
CRAFTED EXPERIENCE
ON THE WHOLE


YOU DON'T
THINK IT WAS
A LITTLE
HEAVY-HANDED?

ROCKO SAYS
THE BEST
MOVIES USE
REAL HUMAN
MEMORIES,
MIXED BY AI

WHAT

COME ON.

LIKE ME,
ROCKO IS
BIASED
BUT
CORRECT.




A FAN
RECOGNIZED
ME FROM MY
MOVIES THE
OTHER DAY
AND THAT
WAS A TRIP

THAT TIME
IN THE CORAL
REEF WHEN YOU
SAW THE TAIL.
I'LL NEVER FORGET
HOW IT FELT. IT
WAS LIKE MY
INTESTINES WERE
GLITTERING.



I DON'T
NORMALLY
GO FOR
DOCUMENTARIES
BUT WOW

AND IT WAS
YOUR FEAR THEY
USED IN THE
GODZILLA
REBOOT,
RIGHT?



I KNEW I
RECOGNIZED THAT
SHIVER. JUST
SUPER.

THE THING IS,
SHE'S NOT REALLY
SUPPOSED TO KNOW
ME. SHE MUST HAVE
PICKED IT UP
FROM MEMORIES OF
MYSELF THAT THEY
COULDN'T SCRUB OUT
DURING MIXING.
THAT CAN HAPPEN.

YOU'LL BE AT
THE MOVIES,
DEEP IN THE
STORY, WHEN
SUDDENLY YOU'LL
GET A FLASH
OF A FACE,
OF SOMETHING
NOT SUPPOSED
TO BE
THERE



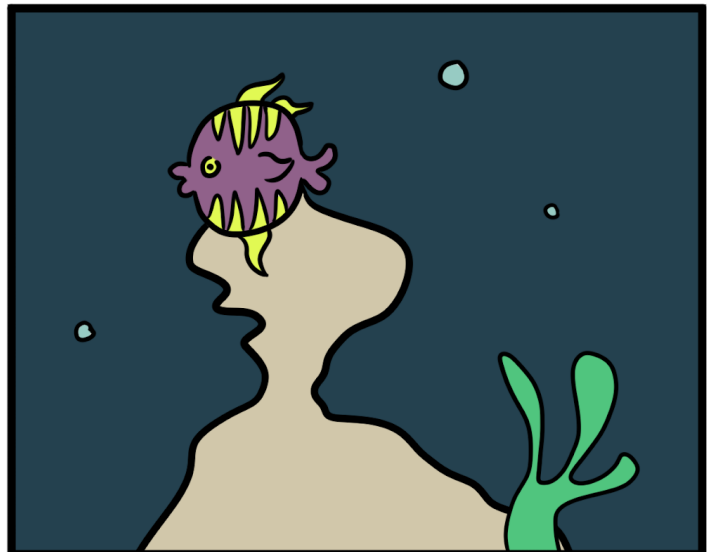
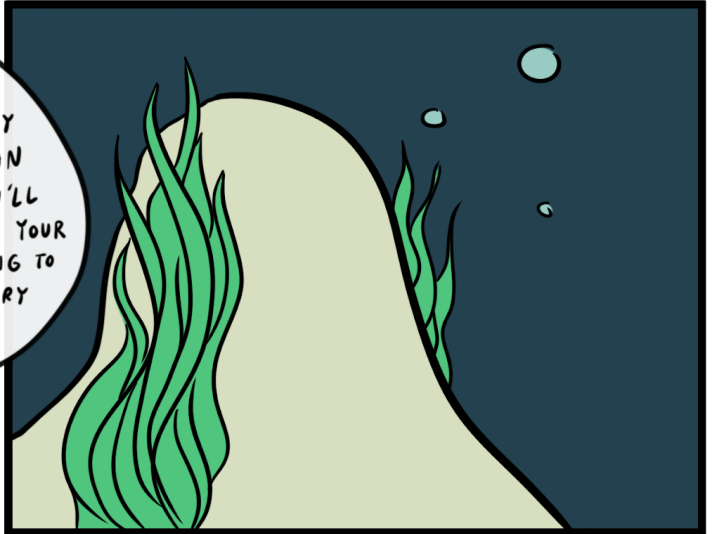
THEY'RE JUST A
LEFTOVER FROM
WHOEVER
DONATED THEIR
FEELINGS TO
THE SCENE



MY OLD MOVIES WERE FULL OF LEAKS.



I BLAME THE FACT THAT I ALWAYS GET REMINDED
OF PEOPLE I KNOW BY WEIRD UNDERWATER ROCKS





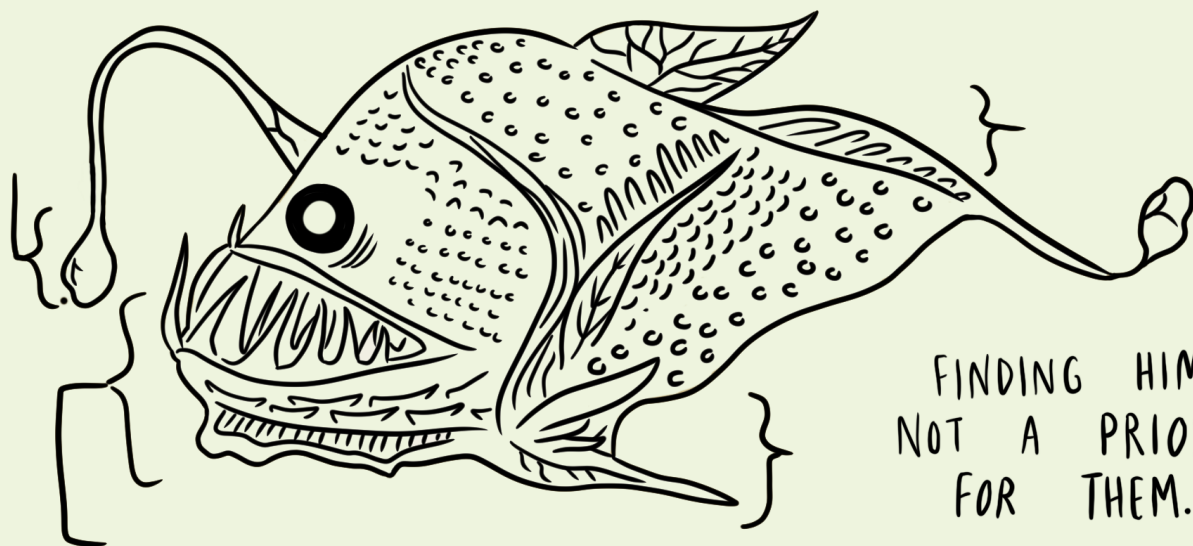
I HADN'T REALIZED HOW MUCH WE'D
DRIFTED APART BUT I THINK SHE DID.

(SHE KEEPS A
BACKUP OF ME
AT AGE 6) →



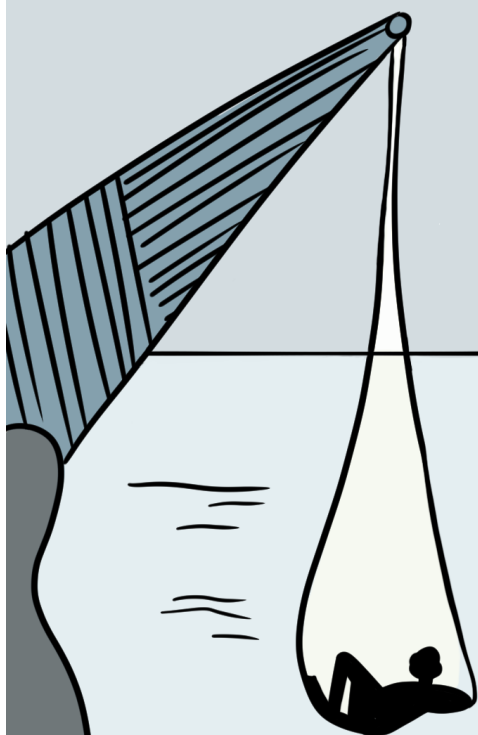
SO-O-O,
HOW'S
ROCKO?

PEOPLE STILL ASK ABOUT THE LEMON SID AND I SAY
I MIGHT TRY AGAIN IF THE AI CAN GET A BETTER BEACON ON HIM

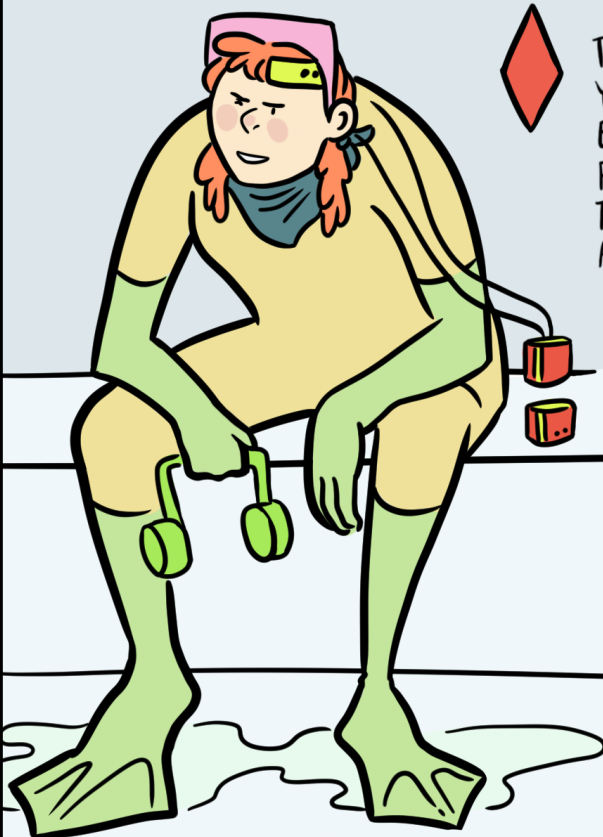


FINDING HIM IS
NOT A PRIORITY
FOR THEM.

HIS VALUE IS
ENTERTAINMENT



THE FEELINGS
YOU'D GET FROM
BRINGING A
PERSON DOWN
TO SEE HIM
AND SURVIVE IT,
AND THE
MOVIES YOU
COULD MAKE
FROM THEM.



I DON'T BUY THAT
WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF
NEW BIG FEELINGS,
BUT I'D STILL LIKE
TO SEE HIM WITH
MY OWN EYES



PART OF WHAT MADE ME A GOOD CAMERA IS THAT
I TEND TO FEEL THINGS PRETTY INTENSELY



THE OTHER PART IS THAT I LIKE IT, FEELING THOSE FEELINGS,
AND LIKING IT WAS WHAT MADE ME SPECIAL.

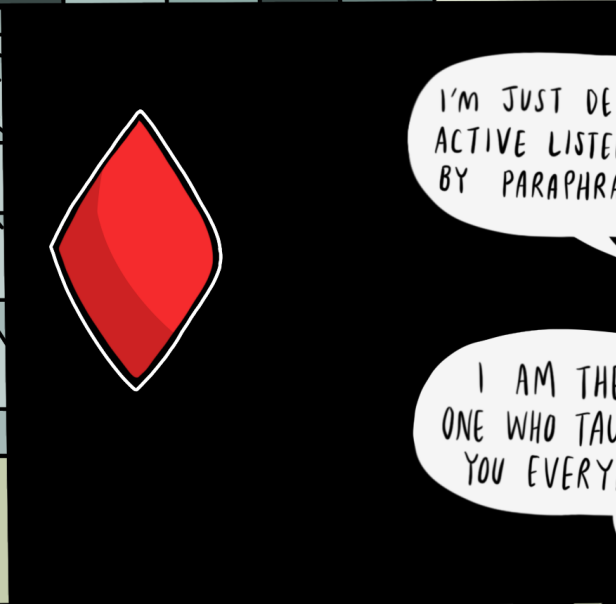
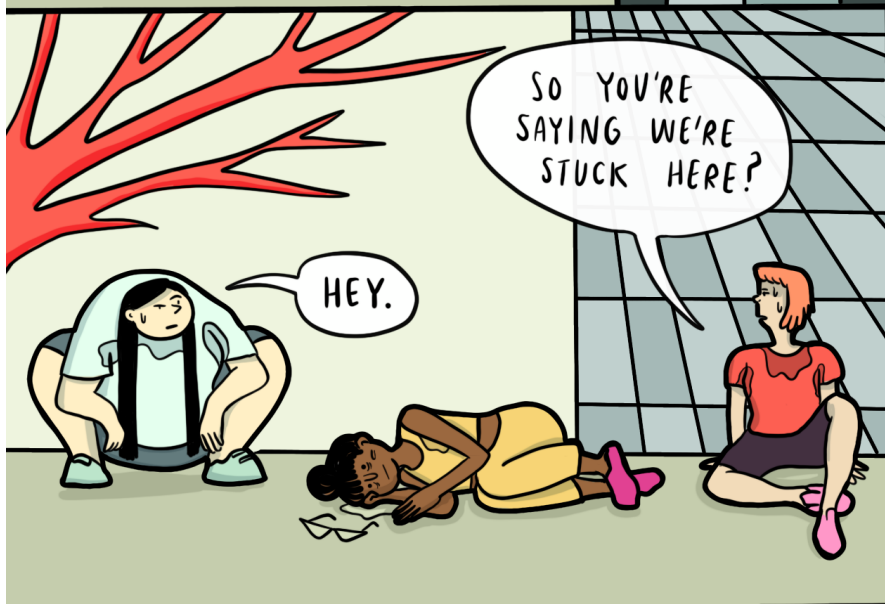
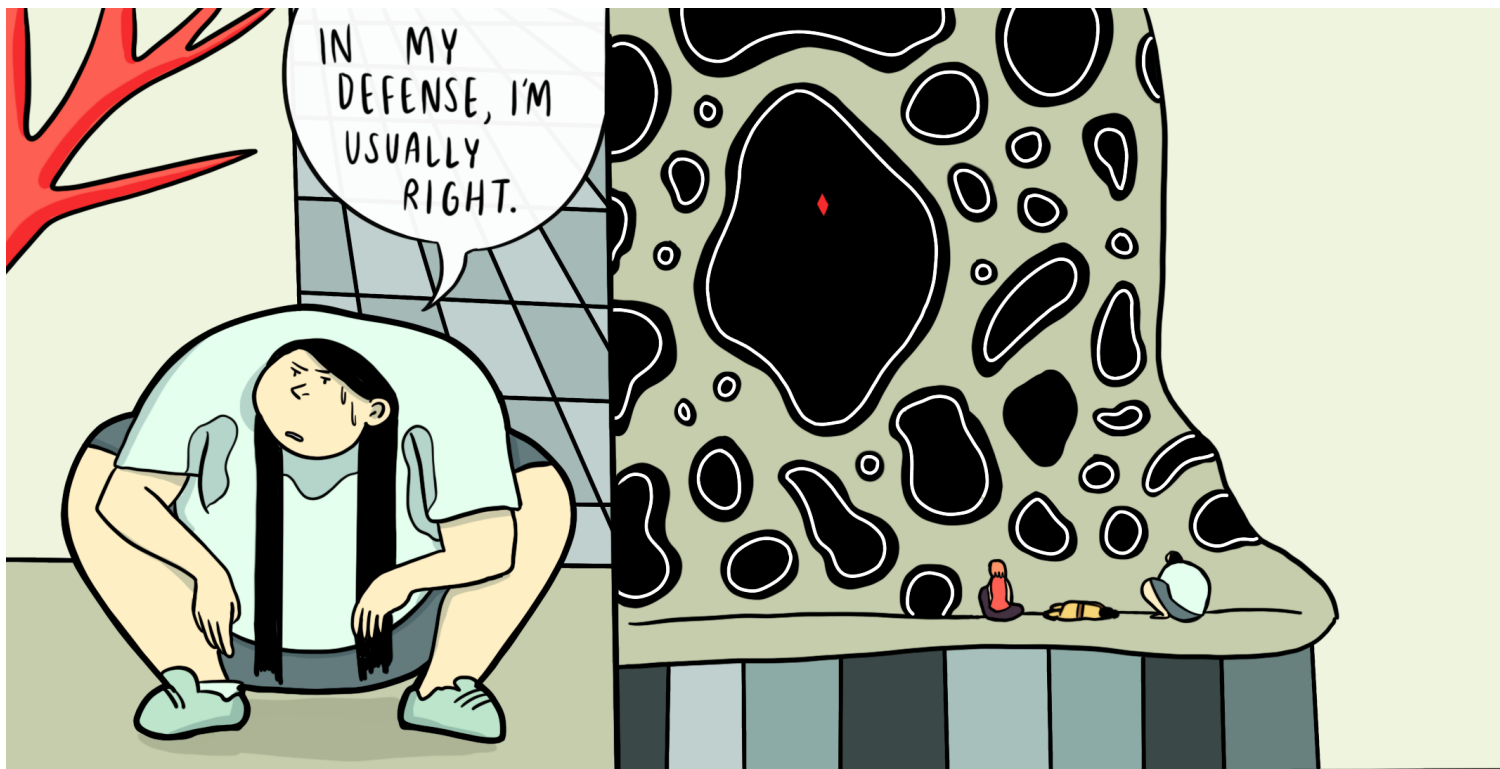




THEY'LL FIND
HIM AGAIN
EVENTUALLY.

THEN MAYBE THEY'LL
TAG HIM BETTER AND
TAKE ME DOWN FOR
A SLAM DUNK

OR MAYBE LIESEL'S RIGHT AND
THEY'LL STOP NEEDING PEOPLE
TO MAKE MEMORIES ALTOGETHER





A REAL
SUGGESTION,
THIS TIME.

NOT AN
ORDER.





THERE ARE
TIMES WHEN
I THINK I
SHOULD DONATE
MEMORIES OF
ROCKO AND ME
TO THE AI.



LIKE HE'LL COME
HOME FROM A SHOOT
AND FLOP ON THE BED
AND I'LL FEEL THIS
TIGHTNESS UNDER
MY SKIN

THIS
OVERWHELMING
FONDNESS



OR OTHER TIMES,
WHEN HE'S BEEN AWAY
ON LOCATION, AND I
HEAR THE LONG
SNIIP OF THE DOOR
LOCK ANNOUNCING
HE'S BACK

THAT RIDICULOUS
BUBBLE, OF
HAPPINESS
AND RELIEF...

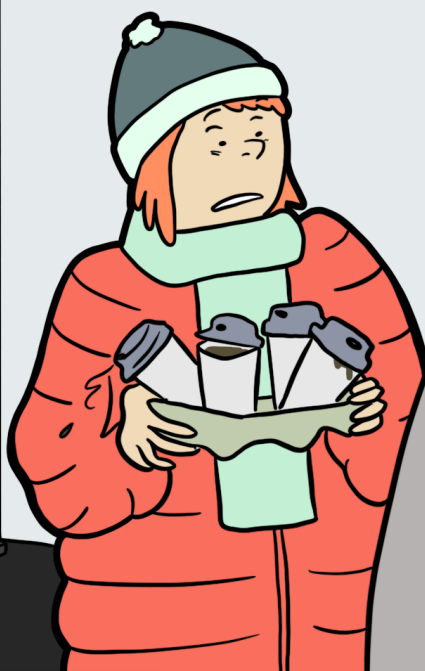
SNIIP

PPPTT

IT WOULD BE SO PERFECT
IN SOME HISTORICAL EPIC,
RIGHT AT THE MOMENT THE
SOLDIER EVERYBODY THOUGHT WAS
DEAD STARTS WALKING UP THE HILL



I'D TAKE A ROMCOM.



I'D TAKE
ANYTHING.



BEING WITH HIM MEANS TUNING OUT
THIS LOW, THUMPING HEARTBEAT OF
DREAD: SAVE THIS, SAVE THIS, SAVE THIS.

ROCKO AND
I TRADED
BACKUPS
WHEN WE
WERE 22

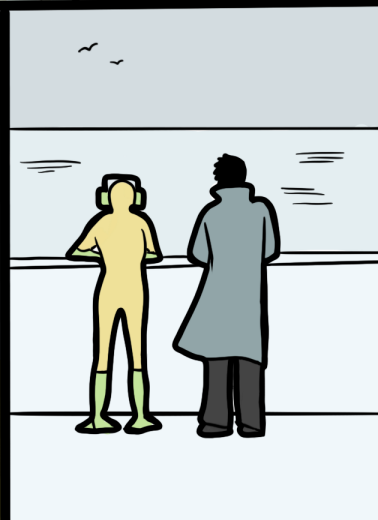
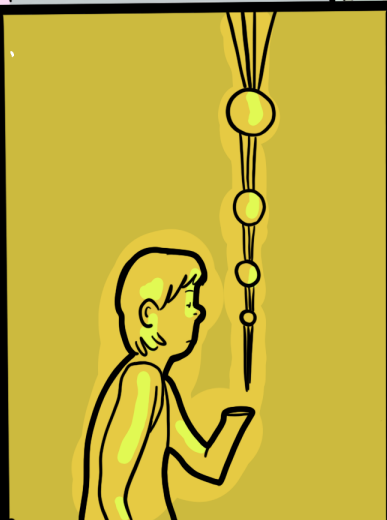




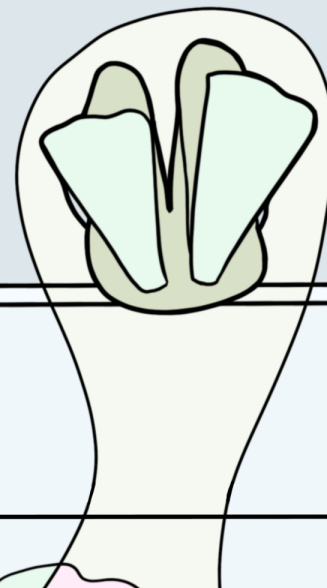
SINCE THEN I'VE BEEN
BACKED UP FIFTY TIMES
AT LEAST, BEFORE AND
AFTER EVERY DIVE.



AS FAR AS
I KNOW,
ROCKO
HASN'T BEEN
BACKED UP
SINCE.



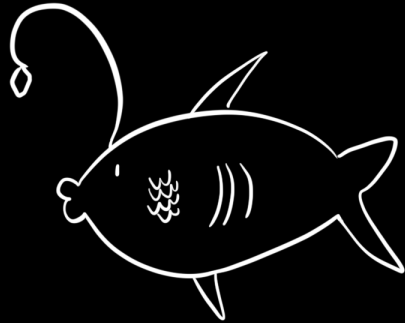
IT DOESN'T
MATTER
TO ME.



I WOULDN'T MIND GOING
THROUGH IT ALL OVER
AGAIN WITH HIM.

I COULD
DO ALL
OF THIS
AGAIN





STORY/ART BY OLIVIA WALCH
INKS/COLOR BY OLIVIA WALCH AND ANNA BROWN
DEDICATED TO AMANA, ANNA AND, OBVIOUSLY, DAVID.