



MURDER ON CAMPUS

BY: JENNY SANDS

I COULD SMELL THE MIST AS IF IT WERE STEAM COMING FROM A MUG OF HOT CHOCOLATE. THE BROOK SANG ME A SILENT LULLABY IN THE DARKNESS AS I SAT THERE THINKING ABOUT THE EVENTS OF MY LIFE.



PREVIOUSLY...FUMBLING DOWN GRAVEL HILLS, BLINDED BECAUSE I COULDN'T SEE A THING, I HAD FINALLY FOUND THE SPOT.



I WASN'T ABLE TO MAKE OUT THE OUTLINES OF TREES AND TREE TRUNKS, THE LEAVES ON THE TREES, THE ROAD TO MY FAR RIGHT WITH CARS RUSHING BY, AND THE STREAM THAT WAS RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME BUT I COULD IMAGINE EVERYTHING BEING THERE.

I HELD A CRUMPLED LEAF IN MY HAND...DEAD



MY FLUFFY JACKET WAS NOT KEEPING ME AS WARM AS I WOULD HAVE LIKED, YET I WASN'T PLANNING ON MOVING TO A WARMER AREA.

REACHING FOR THE BUZZING PHONE PLOPPED NEXT TO MY SIDE IN A PILE OF DEAD LEAVES. I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO PICK IT UP TO KNOW WHO IT WAS.



AND HEADED TOWARDS THE TENT-LIKE STRUCTURE TO WHERE **THEY** WERE WAITING.



DURING THE DAYS THAT PASSED WHEN I DIDN'T VISIT **THE SPOT...**



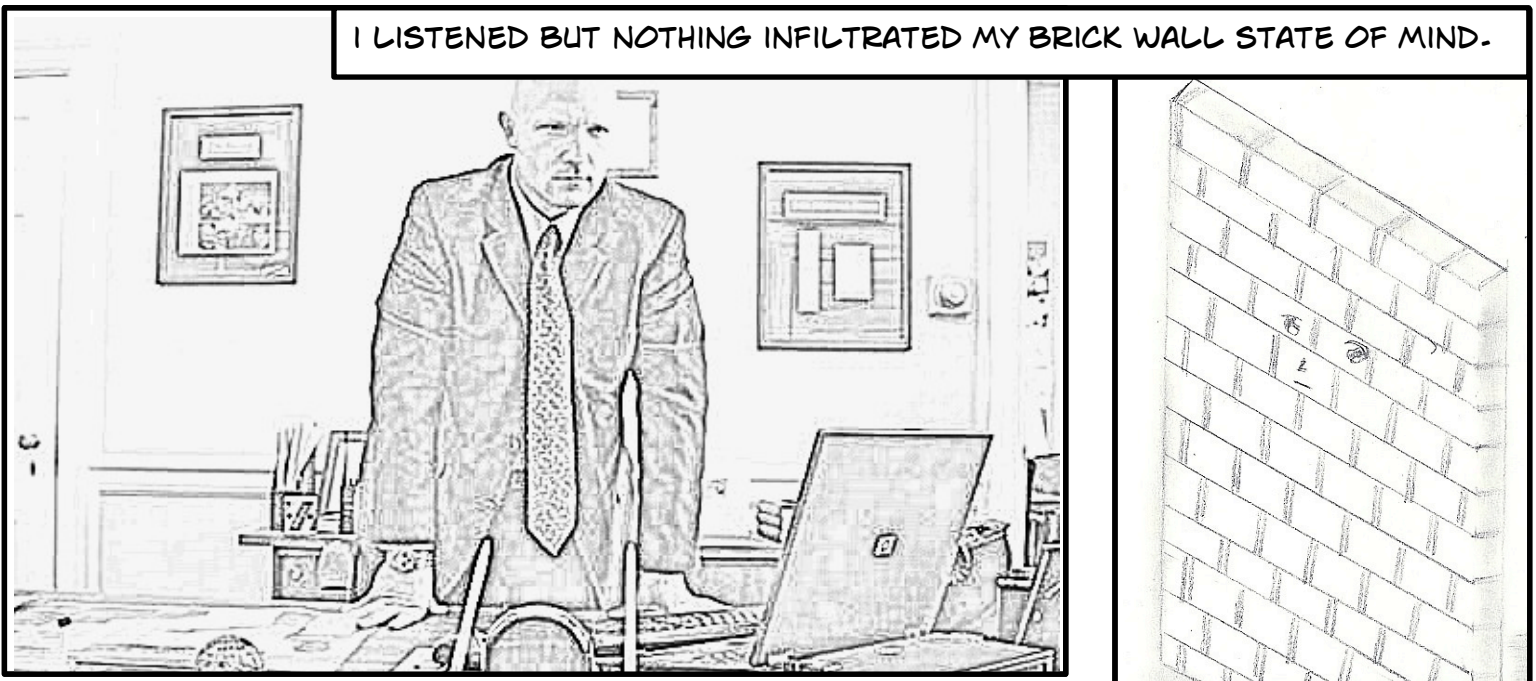
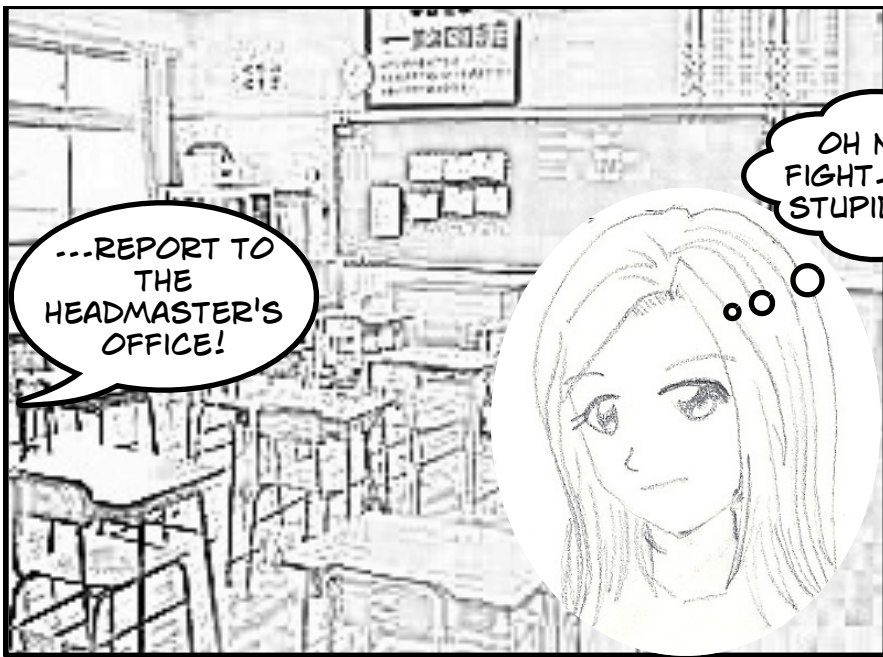
AGAIN, THERE WAS **THAT** UNFAMILIAR AIR. I COULD NOT EXPLAIN IT NOR DID I RECOGNIZE IT.



CLASSES WERE DIFFICULT PER USUAL.....

FRIENDS WERE BEING THEIR WEIRD SELVES.....

I DID NOT FEEL LIKE GETTING INVOLVED.....



**"TWO WRONGS DON'T
MAKE A RIGHT!!!!"**

I SHRUGGED IT OFF...

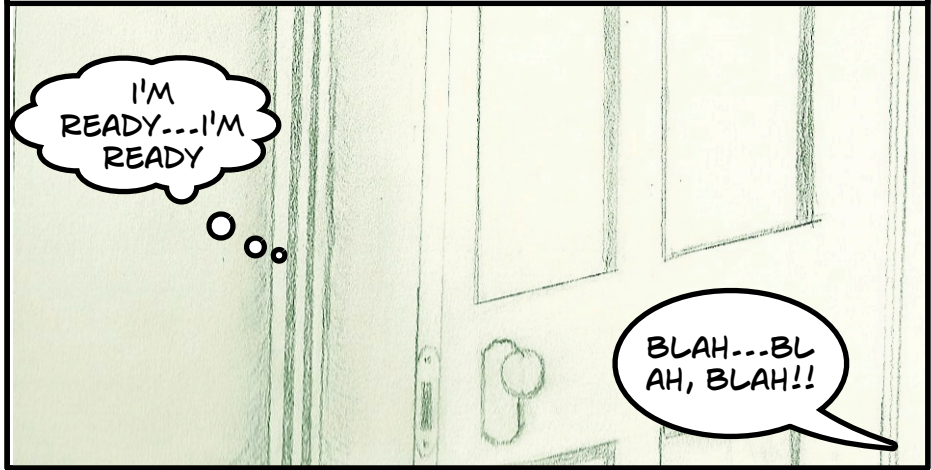
FINE...WHAT
EVER!



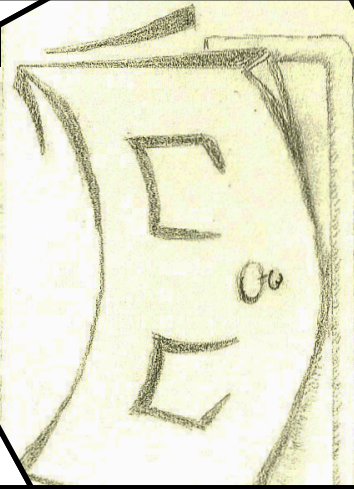
TURNED TO OPEN THE DOOR WHILE HE CONTINUED TO
TALK...

I'M
READY...I'M
READY

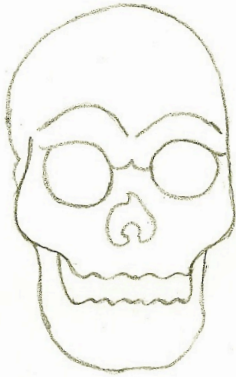
BLAH...BL
AH, BLAH!!



I CLOSED THE DOOR AS HE PICKED UP
THE PACE, BABBLING ON AND ON...



TEACHERS TRIED TO GET
THROUGH MY THICK SKULL...

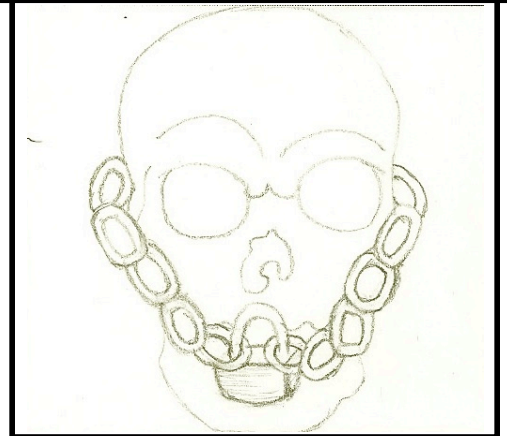


HIS SPEECH WASN'T WORTH LISTENING
TO...

TO SEE WHAT WAS GOING ON...



BUT I RARELY LET PEOPLE IN.



ON THAT SAME DAY, I DECIDED IT WAS TIME TO VISIT THE SPOT TO SORT SOME STUFF OUT WITH THE MULTIPLE SIDES OF MYSELF.



I HEARD THE
PULSATING
SOUND OF
THE
WATERFALL

....AS I SAT DOWN IN A PILE OF LEAVES. I TRIED NOT TO DISTURB THE ANIMAL LIFE SURROUNDING ME, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING TO SEE OR HEAR INDICATING THAT THEY EVEN EXISTED.



IT HAD RAINED THE OTHER DAY SO SOME OF THE LEAVES WERE STILL DAMP AND I COULD SMELL THAT IT HAD RAINED EVEN IF YOU HAD BLIND FOLDED ME.



WHEN I ENTERED THE SPOT THROUGH CURTAINS OF TREE BRANCHES, STEPPED OVER FALLEN TREE LIMBS, AND AVOIDED THE PRICKER BUSHES TO MY RIGHT AND LEFT.

THE BROOK WAS VERY FULL. I WANTED TO ATTEMPT TO CROSS TO THE OTHER SIDE BUT I MIGHT HAVE BEEN SWEEPED AWAY BY THE HEFTY SUB-FREEZING WATER CURRENT.



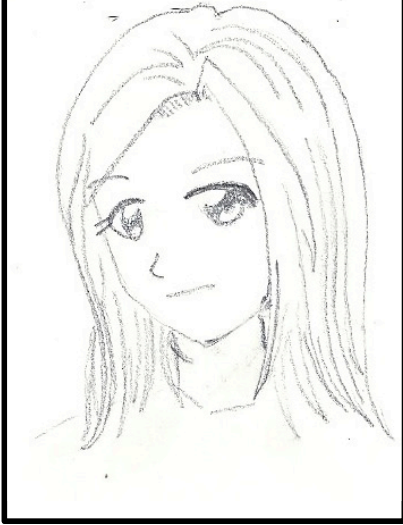
I KNEW THAT TODAY WAS GOING TO BE DIFFERENT.



THE NOISES IN THE BACKGROUND WERE NOT HELPFUL.

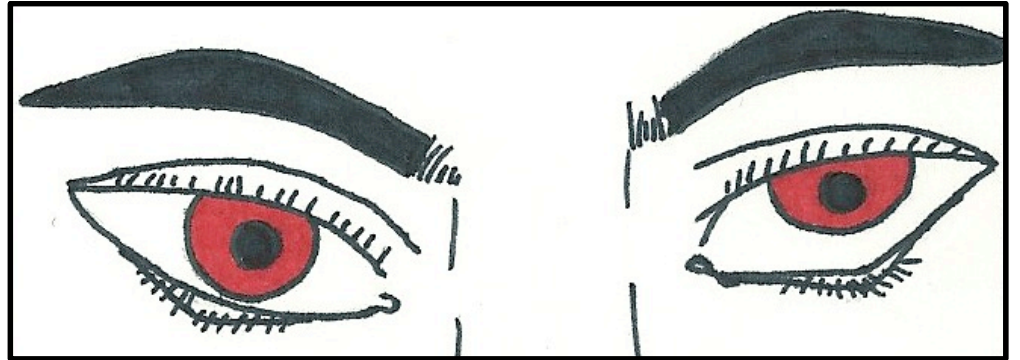
MY MOOD WAS OFF...

HMMMM.....

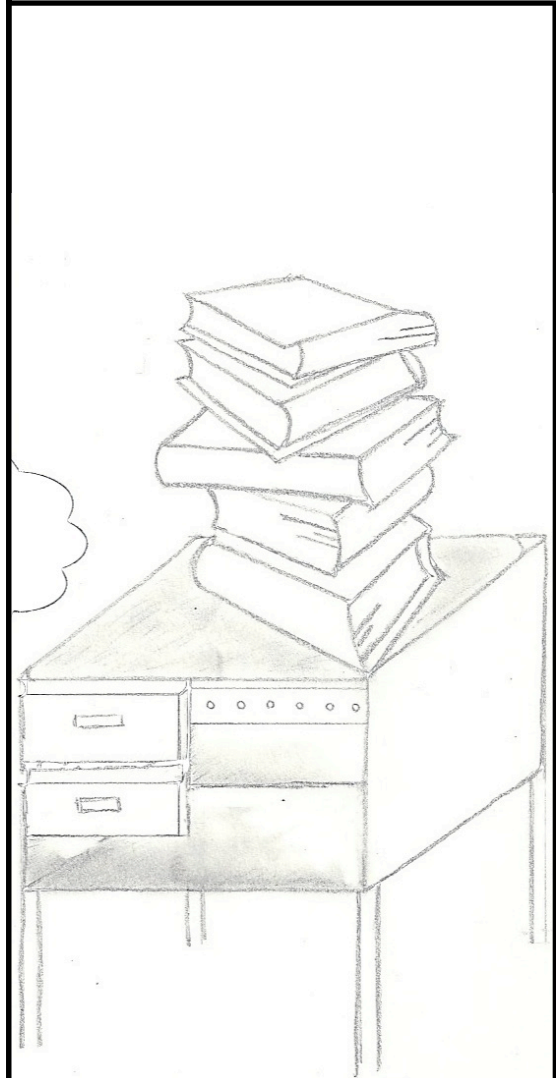


THINK. THINK
think...think...think

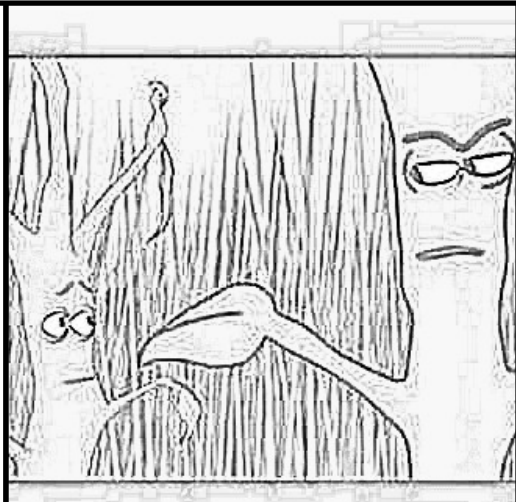
I HAD SO MANY DIFFICULT DECISIONS TO MAKE.



I LEFT TO DISTRACT MYSELF WITH MY



THE PLANTS AROUND ME KNEW THAT
SOMETHING WAS BOTHERING ME

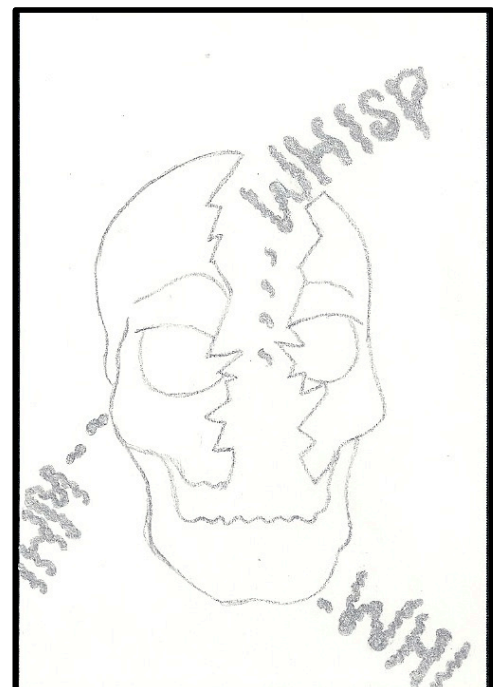
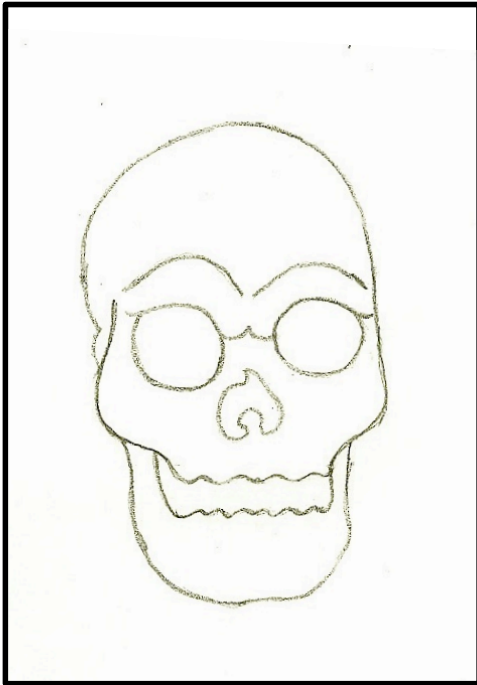


I FELT THEM USHERING ME AWAY,
TO GO CONSPIRE ELSEWHERE.

STUDIES; AN UNUSUAL OCCURENCE.

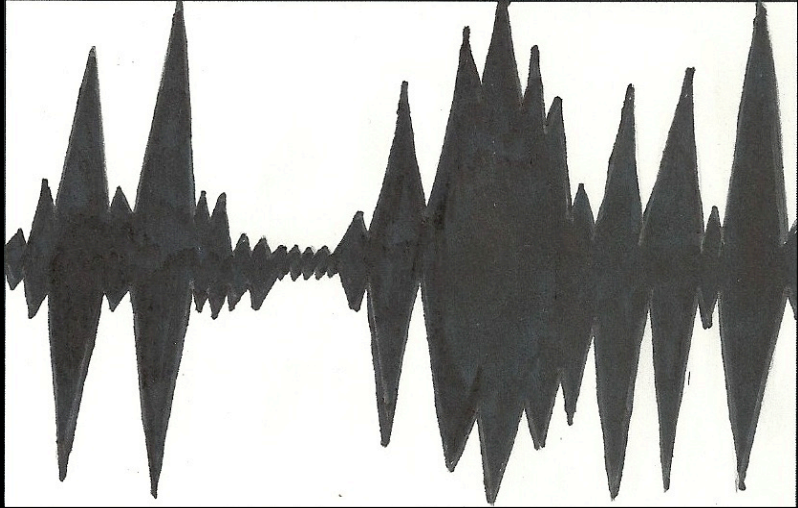
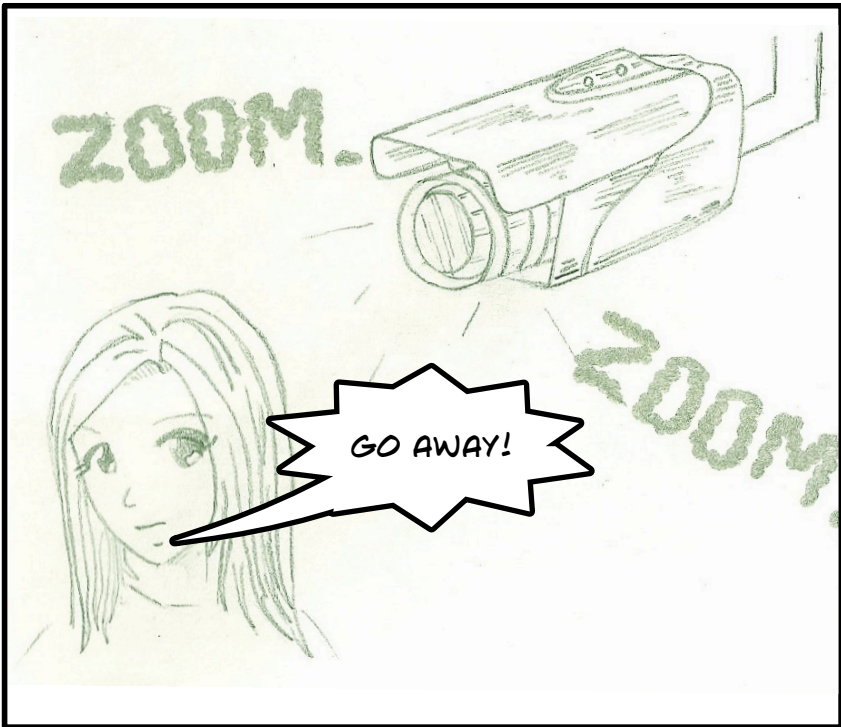
I woke with an ENCRYPTING headache the next morning.

IT WAS LIKE SOMEONE JUST KEPT POUNDING ON MY HEAD WITH A CHISEL AND HAMMER WAITING FOR MY SKULL TO CRACK OPEN AND REVEAL ALL OF MY PRECIOUS SECRETS.



I WENT TO SCHOOL LIKE ANY OTHER DAY BUT WITH A NEW DISASTROUS CONSCIOUS. CLASSES PASSED BY SLOWLY AND IRRITATINGLY.

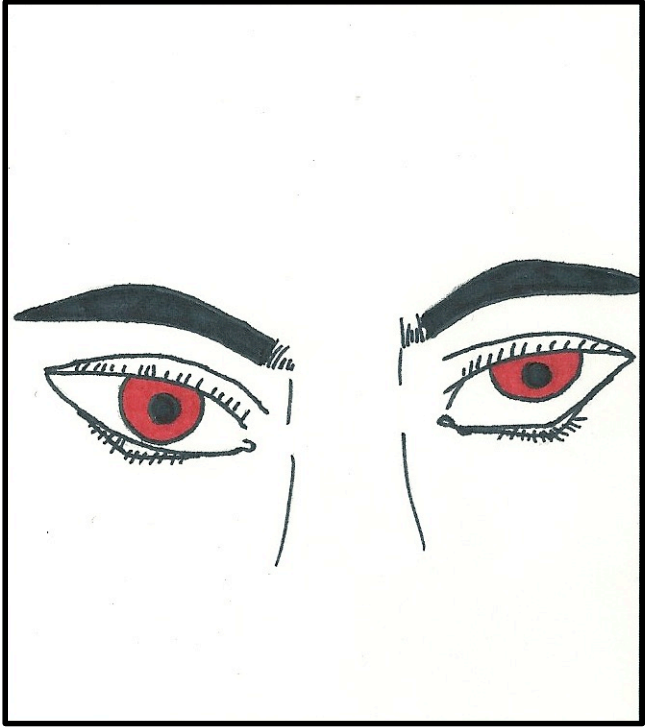
I HAD SOLVED NOTHING. MY EMOTIONS WERE OFF THE RICHTER SCALE.

A hand-drawn waveform with several sharp, high-amplitude peaks and troughs, resembling a seismic or audio signal, set against a white background.A hand-drawn scene featuring a camera in the upper right, a girl's face in the lower left, and a speech bubble. The word 'ZOOM' is written in green, stylized letters in the background.

ZOOM.

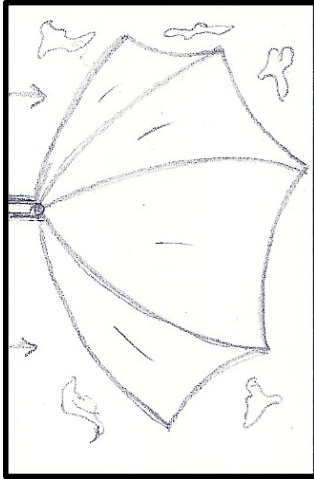
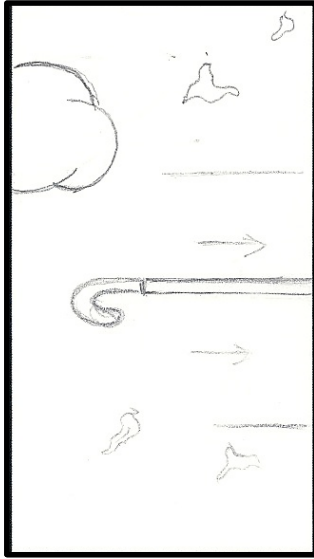
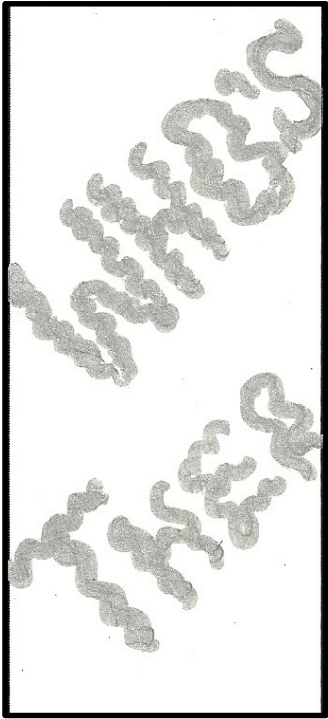
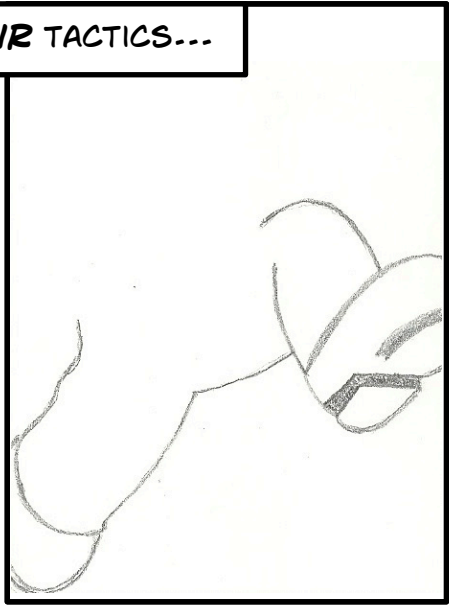
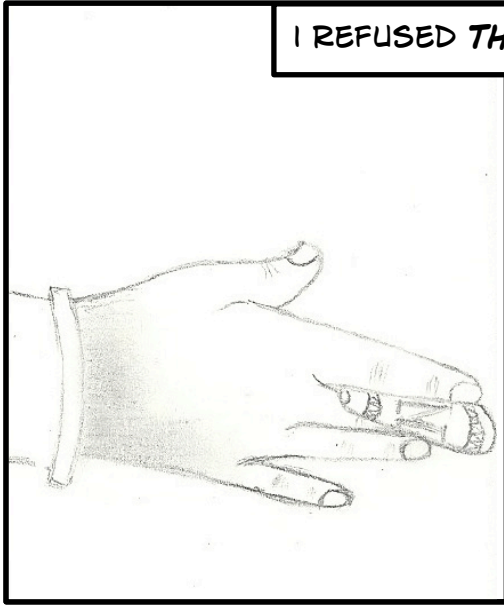
GO AWAY!

ZOOM





I REFUSED THEIR TACTICS...



THERE WERE NO LEAFY CURTAINS IN MY WAY.



THE BROOK WAS A RAGING RAPID WITH MOUNTAINS OF LEAVES.

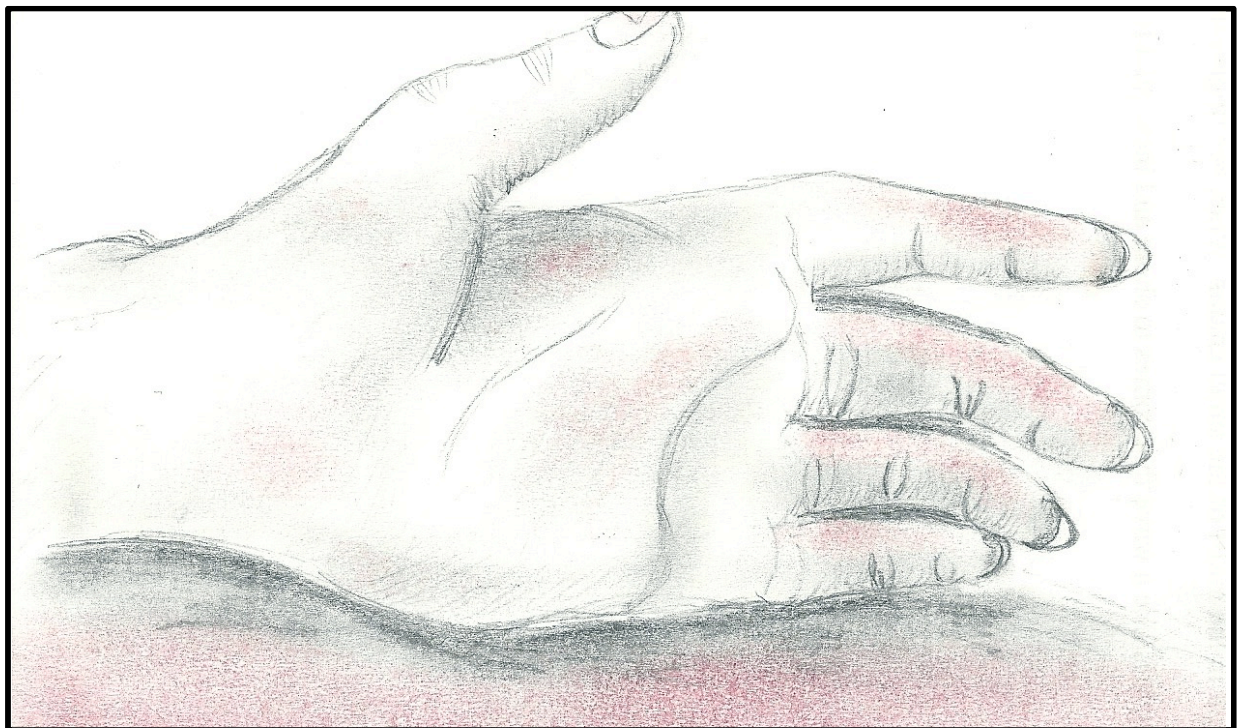


IT'S TIME





DAYS LATER...



I NO LONGER HAD TO WORRY ABOUT MY APPEARANCE

OR ANYTHING FOR THAT MATTER.

NO MORE SPEECHES ABOUT LIFE

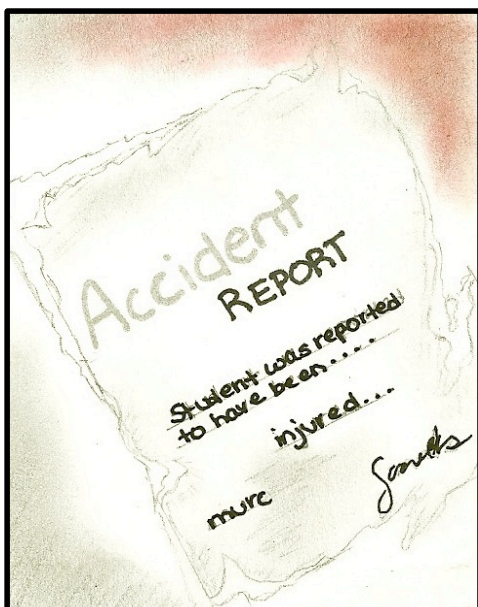
AND HOW PRECIOUS IT IS.

I was FREE...



THEY ASSUMED
NOTHING MORE BUT THAT
THERE HAD BEEN A
MURDER ON CAMPUS.

ANYONE WHO ATTEMPTED TO SOLVE IT..



DISSOLVED WHEN THE WIND CAME

