





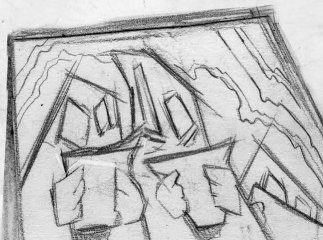
THEY SAY, AT MIT, WHEN THE  
FIRST BIG TEST ROLLS AROUND,  
YOU ALWAYS SEE NEW FACES IN  
THE LECTURE HALL.

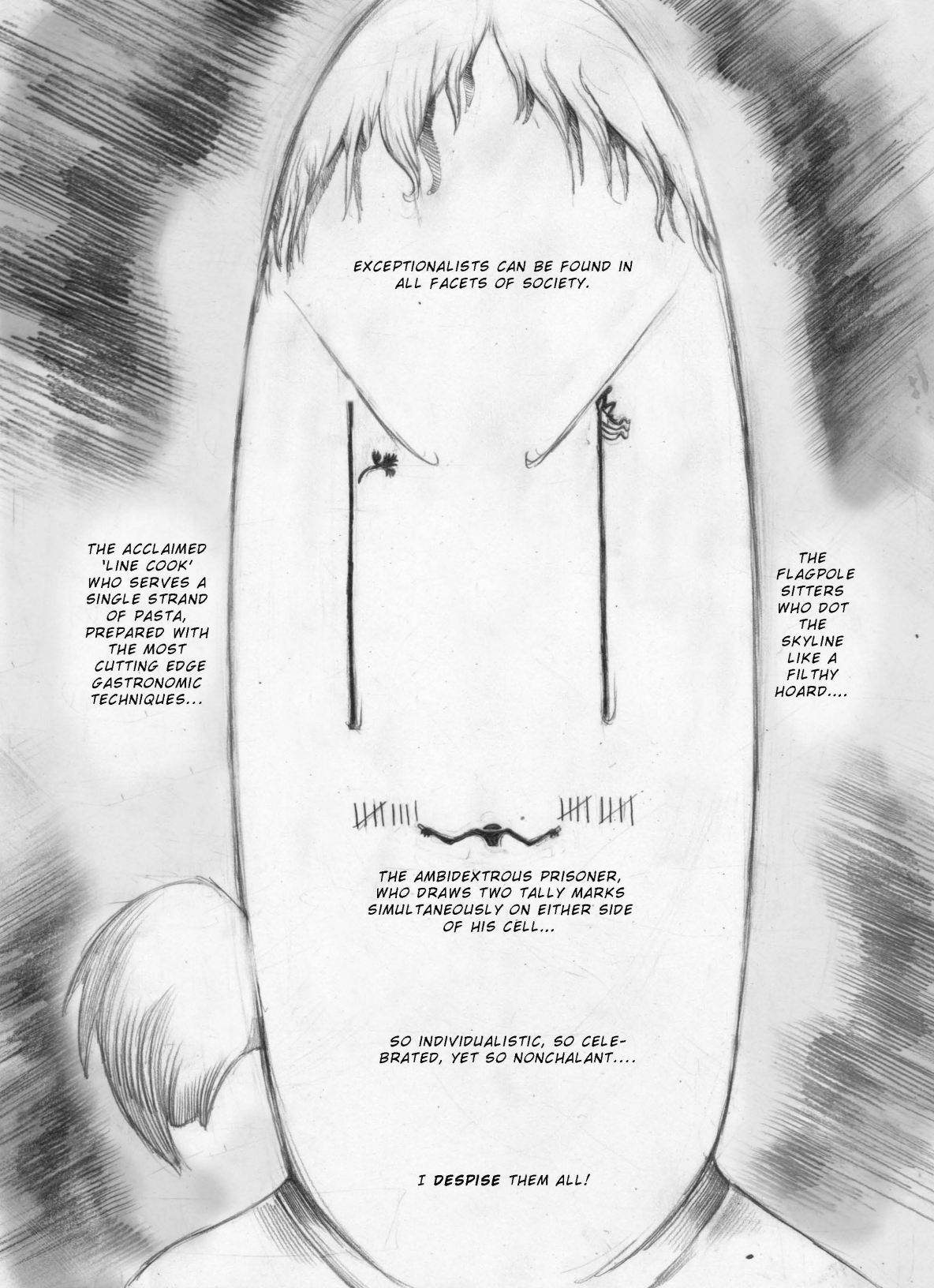
THESE ARE THE 'CASUAL GENIUSES',  
WHOSE PENCILS HAVE, HISTORICALLY,  
EKKED OUT TRAILS OF LEAD THAT JUST  
SO HAPPENED TO LOOP INTO ALL THE  
CORRECT ANSWERS...

WHOSE MINDS TOGGLE BETWEEN  
LEVELS OF ABSTRACTION SO CRISPPLY,  
WITH SUCH CELERITY, THAT EVERY  
COMPLEX SYSTEM THEY ENCOUNTER  
HIDES IN PLAIN SIGHT, AN INGENIOUS  
STRATEGY FOR OPTIMIZATION...

THEY'VE NEVER ATTENDED  
CLASS BEFORE. BUT A  
WEEK LATER, YOU'LL SEE  
THEM AGAIN AS THEY FILE  
IN TO COLLECT THEIR  
PAPERS...

....ALL F'S..





EXCEPTIONALISTS CAN BE FOUND IN  
ALL FACETS OF SOCIETY.

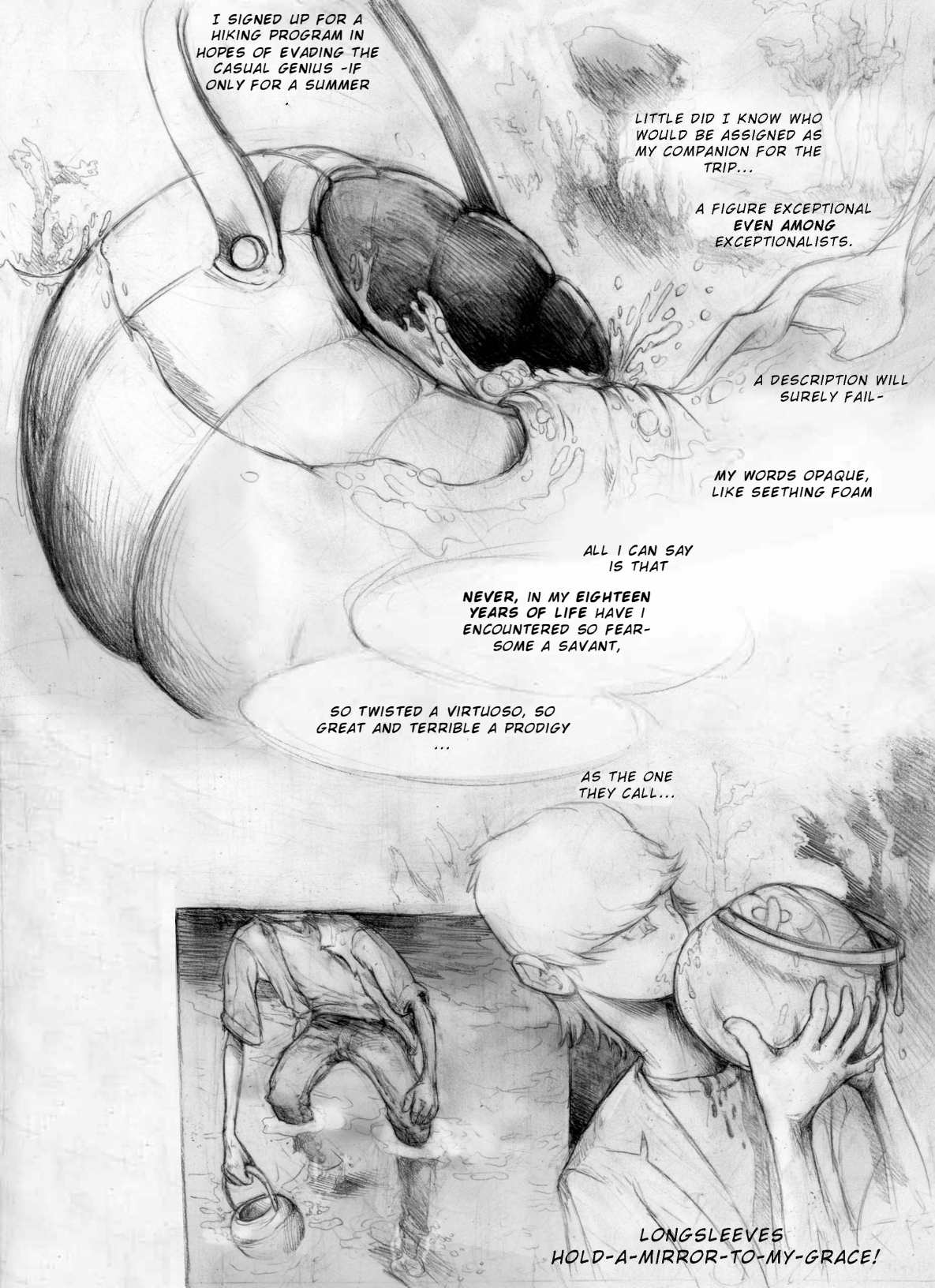
THE ACCLAIMED  
'LINE COOK'  
WHO SERVES A  
SINGLE STRAND  
OF PASTA,  
PREPARED WITH  
THE MOST  
CUTTING EDGE  
GASTRONOMIC  
TECHNIQUES...

THE  
FLAGPOLE  
SITTERS  
WHO DOT  
THE  
SKYLINE  
LIKE A  
FILTHY  
HOARD....

THE AMBIDEXTROUS PRISONER,  
WHO DRAWS TWO TALLY MARKS  
SIMULTANEOUSLY ON EITHER SIDE  
OF HIS CELL...

SO INDIVIDUALISTIC, SO CELE-  
BRATED, YET SO NONCHALANT....

I DESPISE THEM ALL!



I SIGNED UP FOR A  
HIKING PROGRAM IN  
HOPES OF EVADING THE  
CASUAL GENIUS -IF  
ONLY FOR A SUMMER

LITTLE DID I KNOW WHO  
WOULD BE ASSIGNED AS  
MY COMPANION FOR THE  
TRIP...

A FIGURE EXCEPTIONAL  
EVEN AMONG  
EXCEPTIONALISTS.

A DESCRIPTION WILL  
SURELY FAIL-

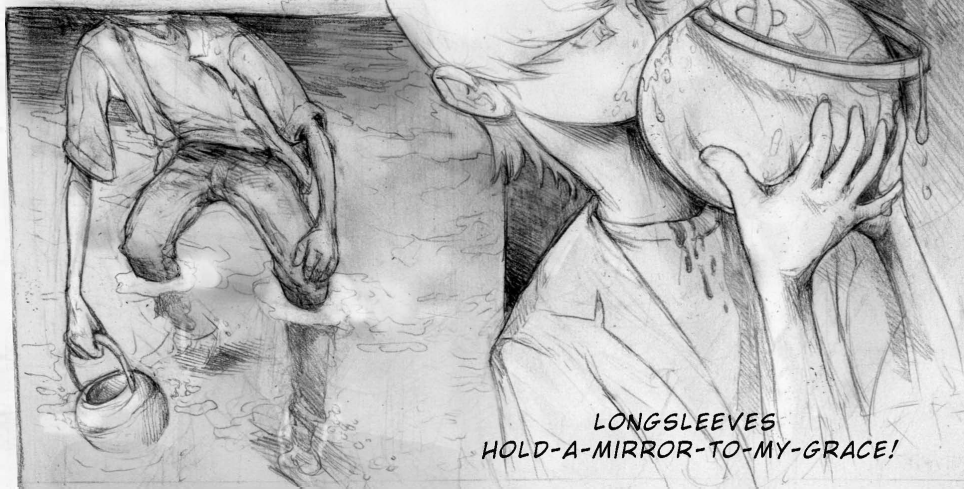
MY WORDS OPAQUE,  
LIKE SEETHING FOAM

ALL I CAN SAY  
IS THAT

NEVER, IN MY EIGHTEEN  
YEARS OF LIFE HAVE I  
ENCOUNTERED SO FEAR-  
SOME A SAVANT,

SO TWISTED A VIRTUOSO, SO  
GREAT AND TERRIBLE A PRODIGY  
...

AS THE ONE  
THEY CALL...



LONGSLEEVES  
HOLD-A-MIRROR-TO-MY-GRACE!



JINGLE

JANGLE

JANGLE

WHAT'S THAT JANGLING  
SOUND?? IT'S DRIVING  
ME NUTS!!!

I DUNNO,  
RROOMTHINGS.

JINGLE

JINGLE

JANGLE

JINGLE....



JANGLE

EH?!/?

HOLD  
UP...

JANGLE

IT'S A  
CROPPED  
TRENCH  
COAT...

JANGLE

OH WOW!  
SORRY,  
BROOMTHINGS!  
THIS MUST'VE  
BELONGED TO  
ONE OF THOSE  
BACK-ALLEY  
HUCKSTERS  
BEFORE I GOT IT  
AT THE THRIFT  
STORE...

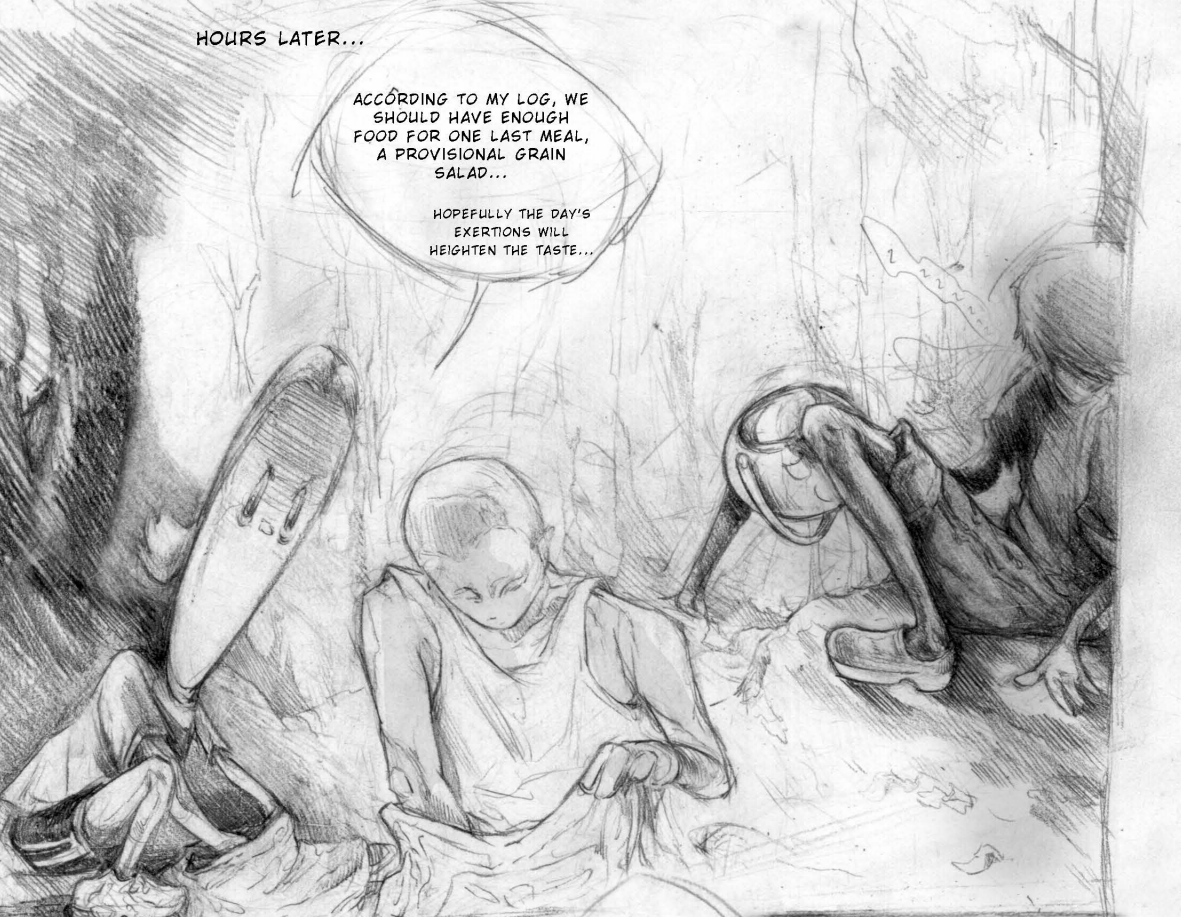
AND I  
WEIGHED MY  
TUPPERWARE  
DOWN TO THE  
OUNCE...

JANGLE

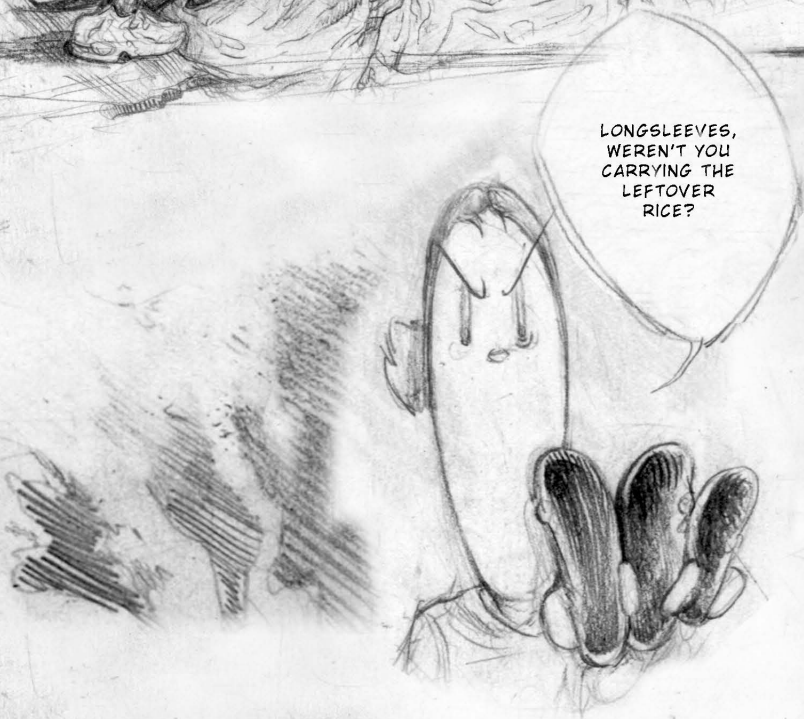
HOURS LATER...

ACCORDING TO MY LOG, WE  
SHOULD HAVE ENOUGH  
FOOD FOR ONE LAST MEAL,  
A PROVISIONAL GRAIN  
SALAD...

HOPEFULLY THE DAY'S  
EXERTIONS WILL  
HEIGHTEN THE TASTE...



LONGSLEEVES,  
WEREN'T YOU  
CARRYING THE  
LEFTOVER  
RICE?



WHUUH..







HHHHH...

HERE  
YA GO!



AHHA!

PAT PAT  
PAT





UHHHHM...WHAT'S WITH ALL THE  
DIFFERENT-SIZED  
PIECES?

OH WHOOPS! I  
ALMOST FORGOT!

I'VE JUST BEEN KEEPING THE  
RICE, MY ANTIDEPRESSANTS, AND  
THE FIRE ANT EGG SPECIMENS I'VE  
BEEN COLLECTING

ALL IN THE SAME  
BAG...

DON'T WORRY, DON'T WORRY. WE DON'T  
HAVE TO SORT IT BY HAND. ALL YOU  
GOTTA DO IS SHAKE THE BAG, AND ALL  
THE RICE GOES TO THE BOTTOM

I NEED TO KEEP JUST A LITTLE  
BIT AS A DESICCANT

CUZ I DROPPED LIKE 4 CELL-  
PHONE BATTERIES IN THE  
RIVER, LOL

LONGSLEEVES...LONGSLEEVES...THEY DON'T UNDER-  
STAND DON'T UNDERSTAND...COULD NEVER UNDER-

THEY COULD NEVER UNDERSTAND  
THE HATRED OVERTAKING ME IN  
THIS MOMENT... HATRED COUGHED  
IN MOST INVOLUTED AND  
ALL-CONSUMING DREAD...

HOW ALL MY LIFE I'VE STRUGGLED  
WITH THE FEAR OF GENIUSES,  
EXCEPTIONALISTS, THE INNATELY  
GIFTED ELITE...



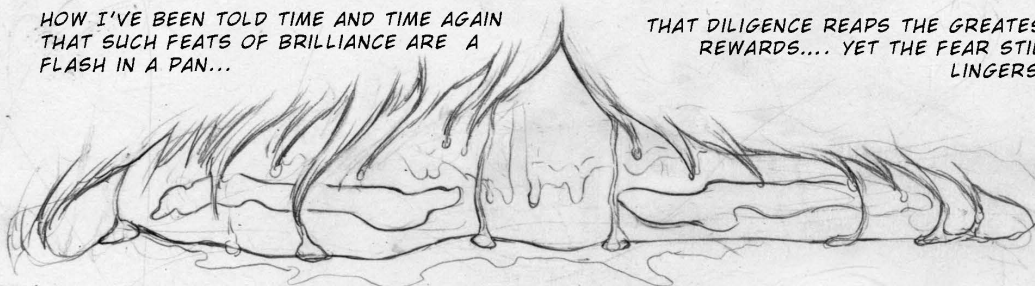
HOW I'VE SPENT COUNTLESS HOURS  
COLOR-CODING MY BINDERS, TERRIFIED  
THAT AT ANY MOMENT

A CASUAL GENIUS COULD BURST ONTO  
THE SCENE AND UNLEASH A SPECTRUM  
OF BINDER TABS MORE VIVID THAN I  
COULD EVER IMAGINE




HOW I'VE BEEN TOLD TIME AND TIME AGAIN  
THAT SUCH FEATS OF BRILLIANCE ARE A  
FLASH IN A PAN...

THAT DILIGENCE REAPS THE GREATEST  
REWARDS.... YET THE FEAR STILL  
LINGERS..



THAT TRUE INNOVATORS ONLY  
COME FROM THE OUTSIDE,

AND I'M ALREADY IN TOO DEEP....



BUT LONGSLEEVES...

LONGSLEEVES REPRESENTS, TO  
ME, THE MOST FEARSOME  
FIGURE OF THEM ALL...

LONGSLEEVES IS A PRODIGY AT  
SURVIVAL ITSELF....

SURVIVING EFFORTLESSLY,  
OR DESPITE RESOUNDINGLY  
NEGATIVE EFFORTS.

LS IS THE ONE THEY  
SPEAK OF...

\*MUNCH\*

... "THE INFERNAL  
PRODIGY"...

RROOMTHINGS, CAN  
YOU CHILL FOR LIKE  
THREE EIGHTEENTHS  
OF A SECOND  
TODAY...

JESUS  
CHRIST.



LBR...

GUYS.. HEY  
GUY?!  
CAN YOU  
WAKE UP  
FOR A  
SEC?

I THINK  
THERE'S  
SOME-  
THING  
REALLY  
WRONG  
WITH MY  
EYE...

IT HURTS  
LIKE  
CRAZY..

HERE  
WE  
GO...

OKAY I'M  
LOOKING UP-  
'HIKERS EYE  
PROBLEMS'..



OKAY,  
IT SAYS  
HERE...

THAT APPARENTLY,  
BACK IN VICTORIAN  
TIMES...

THERE WAS A TRADITION WHERE,  
WHEN A BEEKEEPER DIED, THEY  
WOULD DYE EACH BEE IN HIS  
COLONY WITH A DROP OF BLACK  
INK AS A SIGN OF MOURNING..

TOO HEAVY AND DOLEFUL TO FLY,  
THE BEES SUNK TO THE EARTH  
AND SUBSPECIATED, ADOPTING A  
PARASITIC EXISTENCE.

THEIR DESCENDANTS NOW BURROW  
INSIDE OF HIKERS' TEARGLANDS,  
TURNING THEIR TEARS INTO REVERSE  
-ALCHEMICAL COAL-GOLD HONEY.



HOLD UP,  
HOLD UP!  
LET ME SEE  
THAT!

YOU'RE  
CREEPING ME  
THE FUCK  
OUT!

THEY MENTION A  
FOLK REMEDY  
FOR THE EYE  
PARASITE IS  
"PROFUSE WEEP-  
ING"...

DO YUU GUYS  
KNOW ANY  
SUPER SAD  
STORIES?

IF YOU'RE  
EQUIPT WITH  
SUITABLE EM-  
PATHIC FACUL-  
TIES, I HAVE A  
STORY SURE TO  
INSPIRE TEARS  
OF FRUSTRATION  
CONCERNING  
HOW I ONCE  
MADE 100,000  
FLASH CARDS IN  
ORDER TO MEMO-  
RIZE THE ENTIRE  
LANGUAGE OF PIG  
LATIN AND ONLY  
AFTER 1000  
HOURS OF PAINS-  
TAKING  
TRANSCRIPTION  
REALIZED THAT I  
COULD HAVE

O, UH, UHM, I  
HAVE SOME-  
THING I CAN  
SHARE...  
ABOUT  
MYSELF...

DID I EVER TELL YOU GUYS THE  
STORY....

OF HOW I GOT



THESE SCARS?