

THE SECRET TO SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH

ALISON
BECHDEL

AUTHOR OF FUN HOME





THE
SECRET TO
SUPERHUMAN
STRENGTH

THE
ALSO BY ALISON BECHDEL
SECRET TO

FUN HOME: A FAMILY TRAGICOMIC

THE ESSENTIAL DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR

ARE YOU MY MOTHER?: A COMIC DRAMA

ALISON
BECHDEL

WITH THE EXTREMELY EXTENSIVE COLORING COLLABORATION OF
HOLLY RAE TAYLOR

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT
BOSTON | NEW YORK
2021



*First there is a mountain, then there
is no mountain, then there is.*

—Donovan

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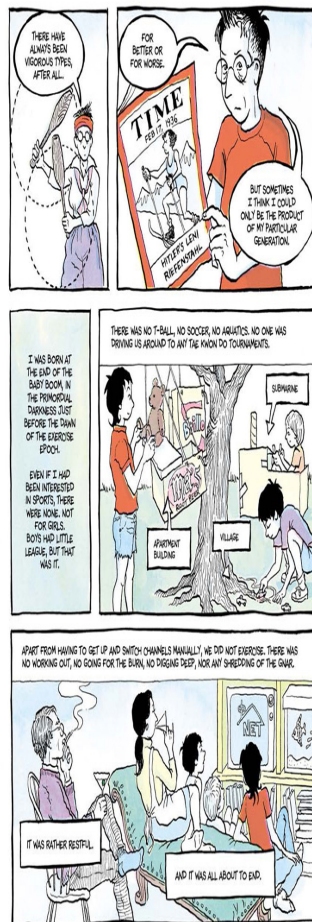
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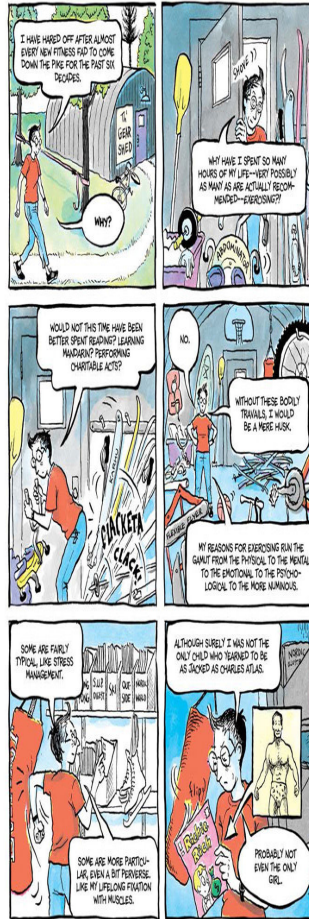
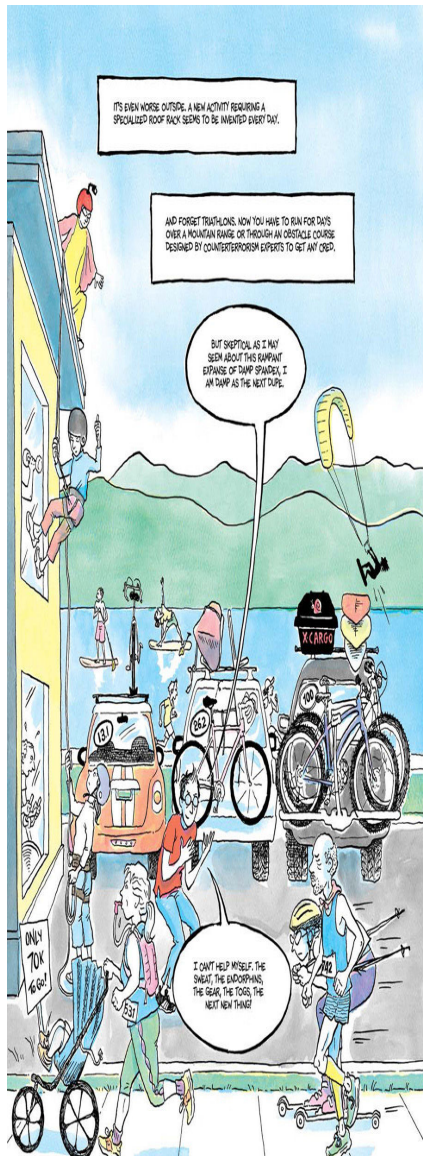
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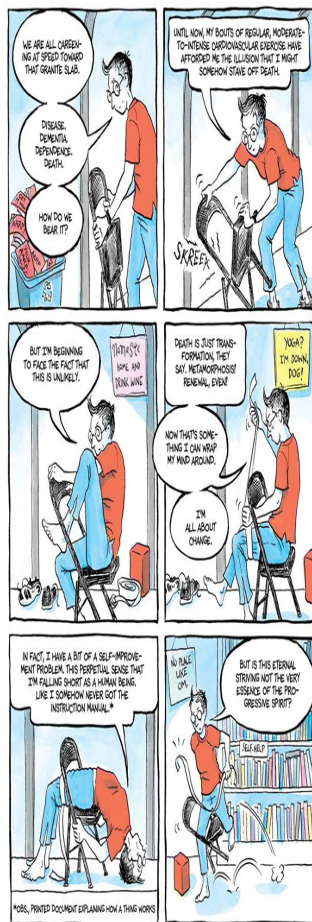
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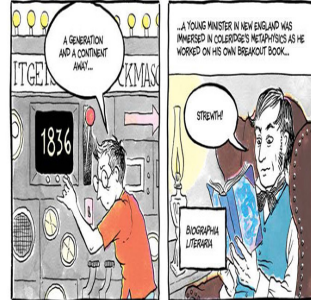
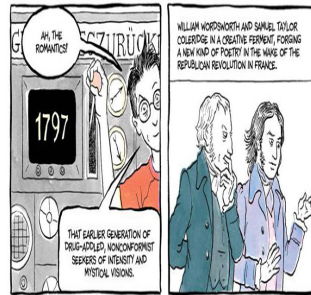
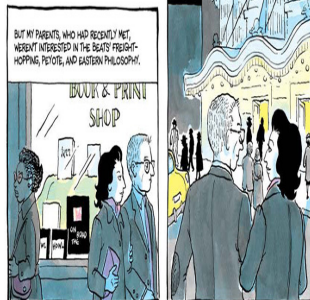
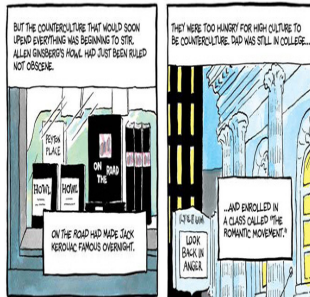
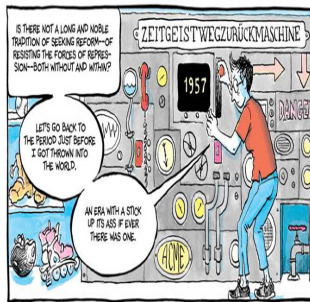
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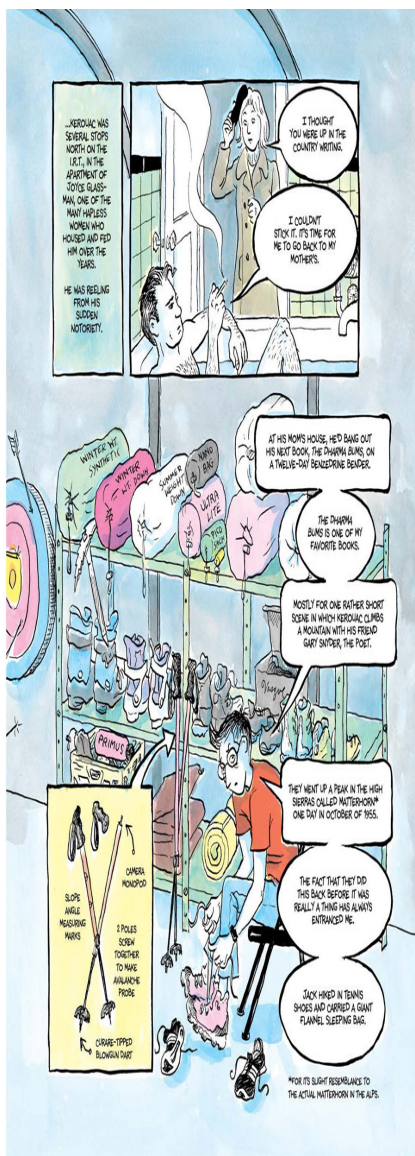


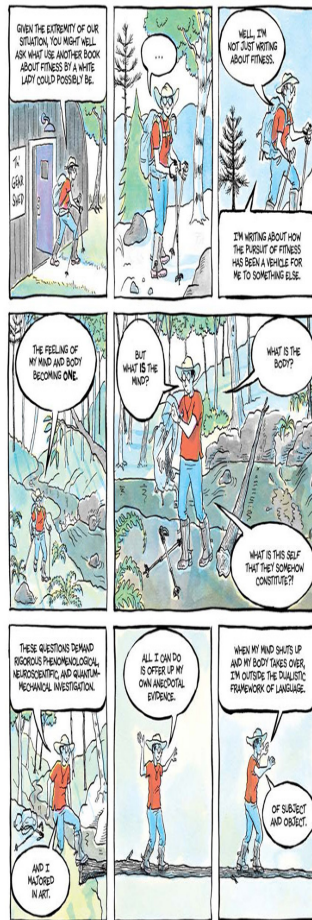
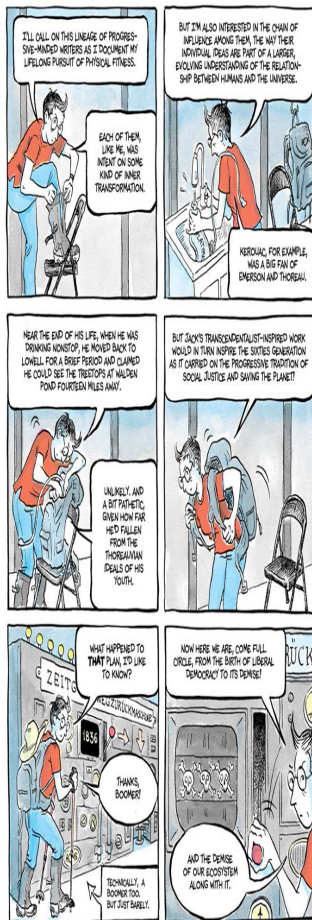


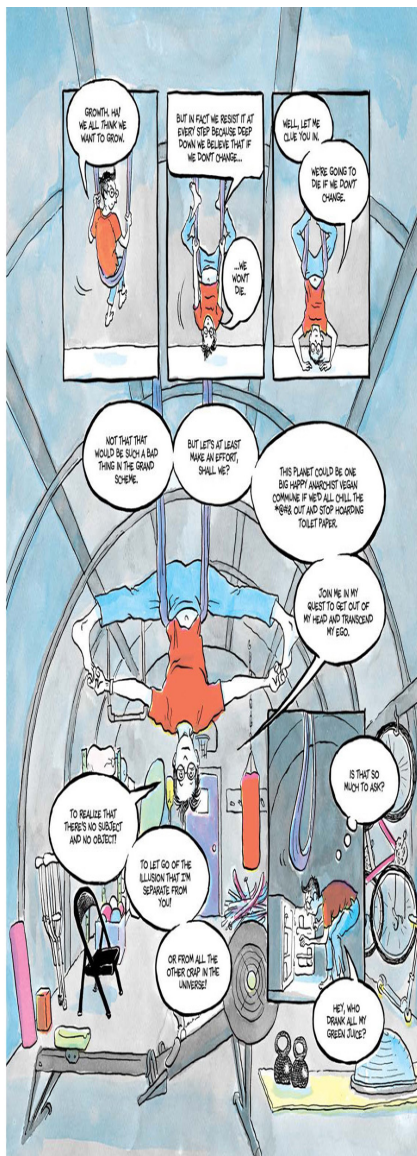
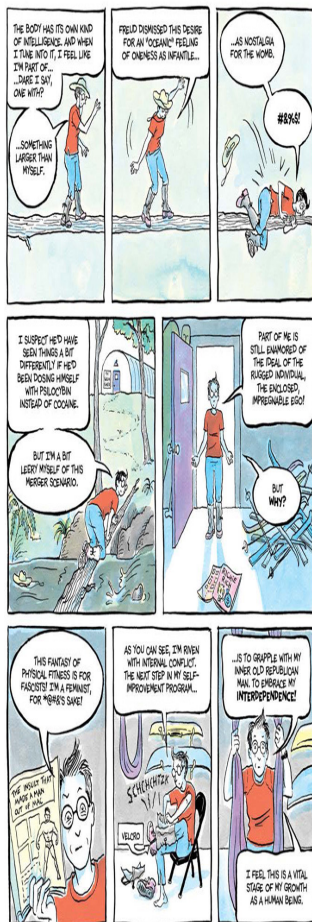




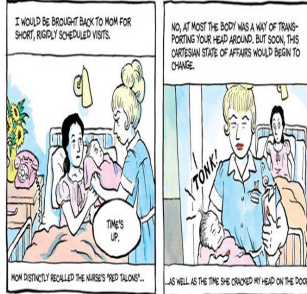
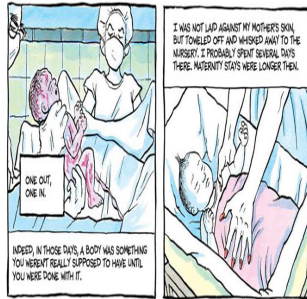












PERHAPS TELEVISION HAD A HAND IN IT. TWO WEEKS AFTER I WAS BORN, THE FIRST TELEvised PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE WAS AIRER. IT HADN'T REALLY MATTERED BEFORE THAT HOW A CANDIDATE LOOKED.

(HE LIVED WITH MY GRANDPARENTS IN THE FAMILY BUSINESS FOR A SHORT TIME.)

FALL 1960

BUT BODIES WERE ASSERTING THEMSELVES IN OTHER WAYS, TOO. FREEDOM RIDERS WERE TAKING BUSES INTO THE SEGREGATED SOUTH.

WOMEN PEACE ACTIVISTS LED A MASSIVE PROTEST AGAINST NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

...A NEGRO INTEGRATION LEADER WAS SHOT FROM A PASSING AUTOMOBILE...

GET YOUR SURVIVE-ALL FALLOUT SHELTER NOW BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

SPRING 1961

FALL 1961

A HARVARD DIVINITY STUDENT CONDUCTED THE MARSH CHAPEL EXPERIMENT, IN WHICH THE PSYCHEDELIC COMPOUND PSILLOCYBIN RELIABLY INDUCED MYSTICAL EXPERIENCES IN SUBJECTS.

SILENT SPRING, RACHEL CARSON'S IMPASSIONED TREATISE ABOUT PESTICIDE USE, LAUNCHED THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT.

EXCERPTED IN HERE

SPRING 1962

SUMMER 1962

BY THE TIME THE FERRANIE MYSTIQUE CAME OUT, MY GROSS MOTOR SKILLS WERE RIGHT ON TARGET.

KIDS, STOP THROWING ROCKS.

NOW, THAT'S REALLY BLEEDING.

SPRING 1963

I DON'T RECALL MUCH FROM THOSE EARLY DAYS, AND NOT BECAUSE OF ALL THE HEAD TRAUMA—I WAS JUST TOO YOUNG.

BUT I DO THINK I REMEMBER THE ASSASSINATION OF JFK, WHICH HAPPENED WHEN I WAS THREE.

IT'S A NEBULOUS IMAGE, STATUOY AS THE PICTURE ON A BADLY TUNED BLACK-AND-WHITE TELEVISION SET.

AND TO BE HONEST, IT'S NOT SO MUCH THE EVENT THAT I RECALL AS THE TV ITSELF, WHICH MY FATHER NEXT OUT AND BOUGHT THAT DAY.

FALL 1963

IF JFK'S DEATH WAS THE DEFINING MOMENT OF THE BABY BOOM GENERATION, THE BOOMER-GEN X CROP THAT I OCCUPY WAS SHAPED BY THE EXPERIENCE OF MONSTROUS TELEVISION WATCHING.

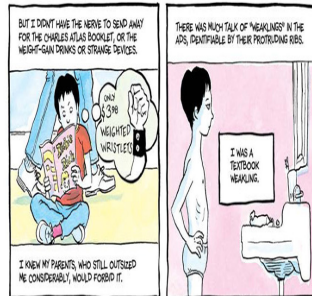
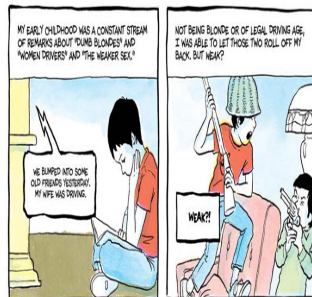
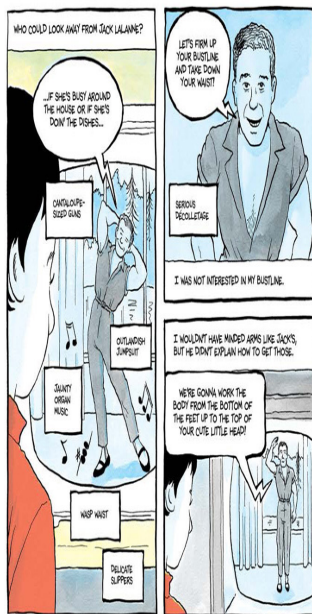
MR. GREEN ISLAND, HAVE YOU SEEN BUNNY RABBIT?

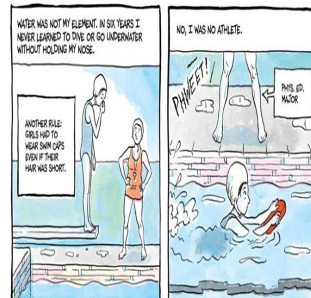
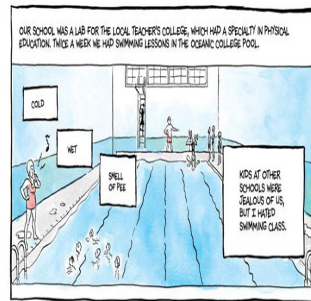
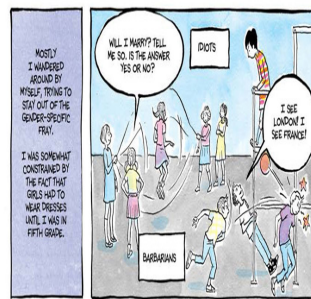
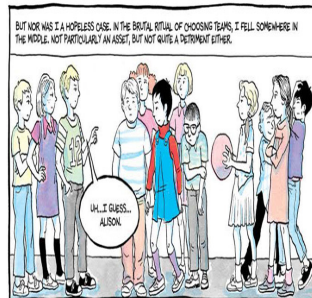
MY EARLIEST MEMORIES ARE ALL MIXED UP WITH THAT GLOWING SCREEN. I THINK I RECALL MY MOTHER STRETCHING IN A BLACK LEOTARD AND MY FATHER DOING PUSH-UPS, FOR EXAMPLE...

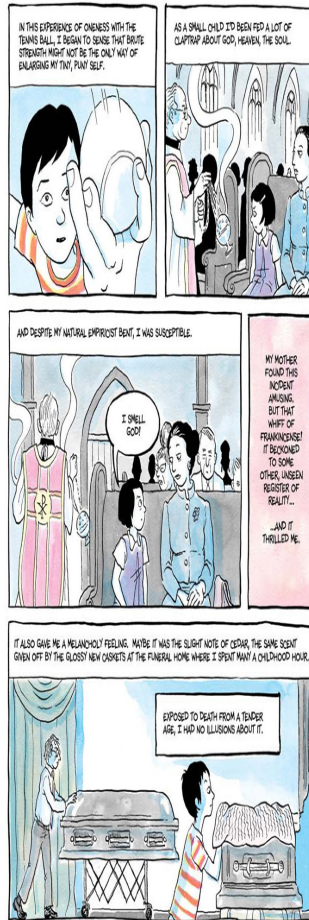
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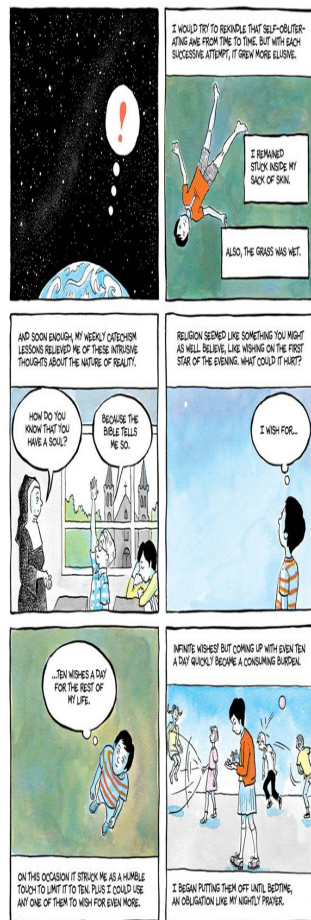
SUMMER 1964

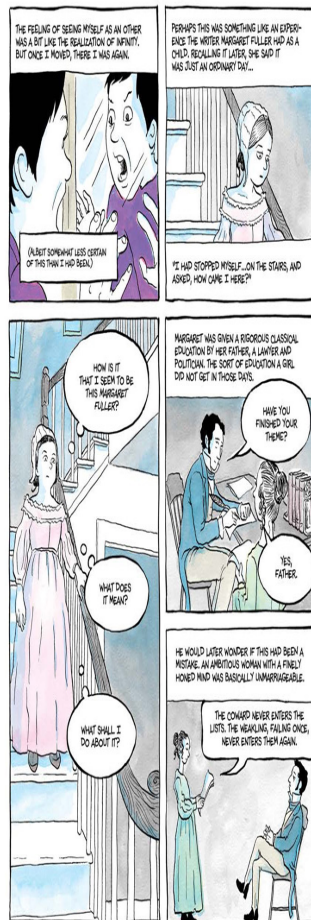
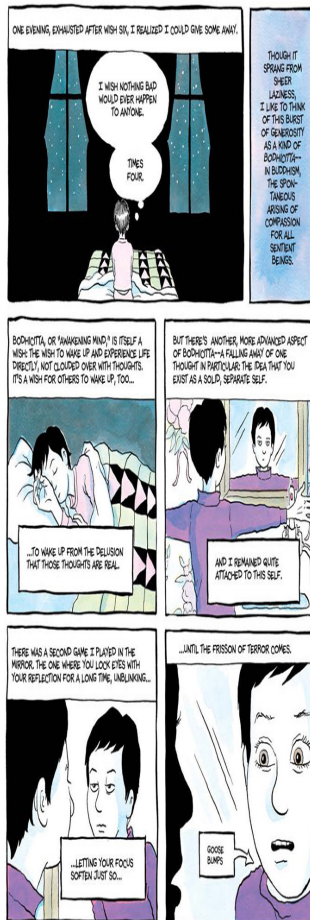


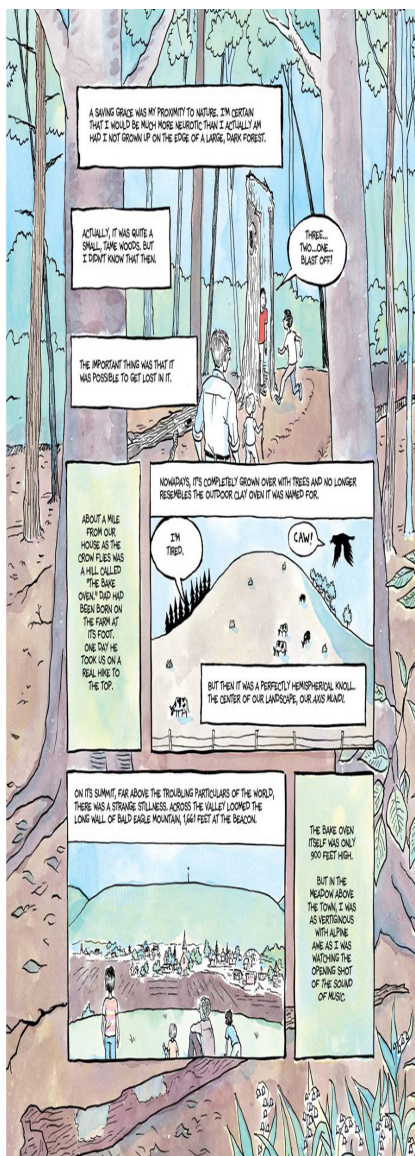
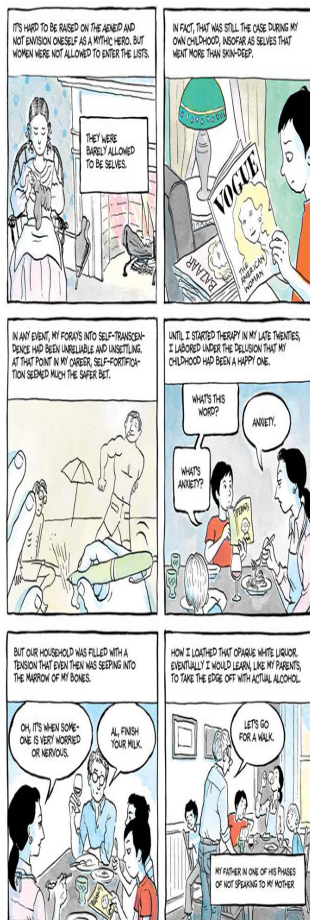


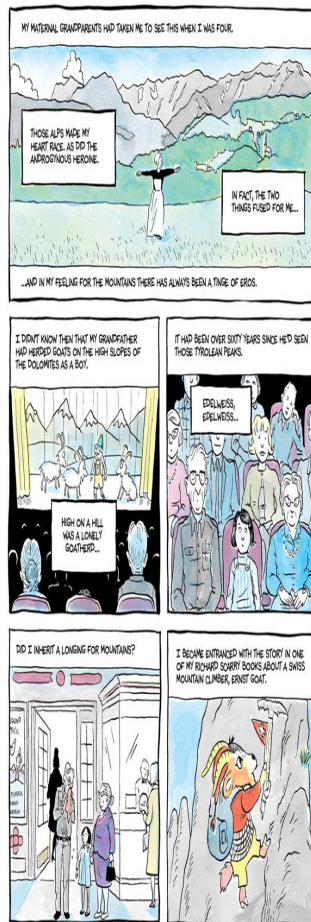




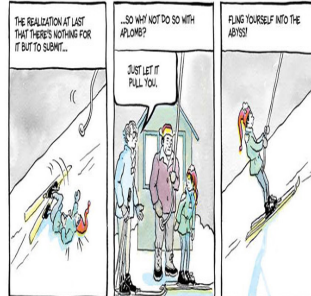
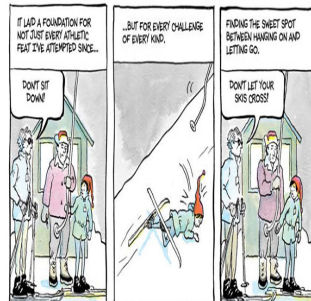
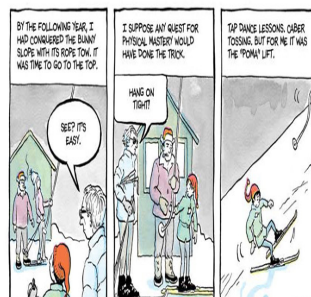
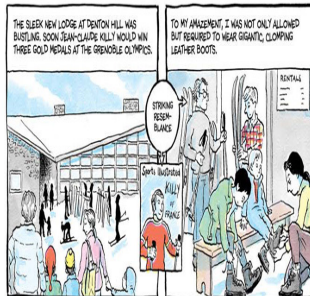
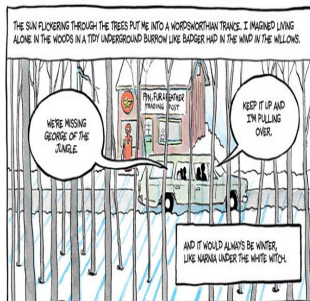
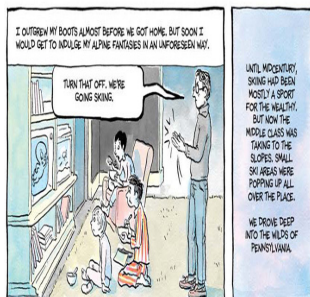


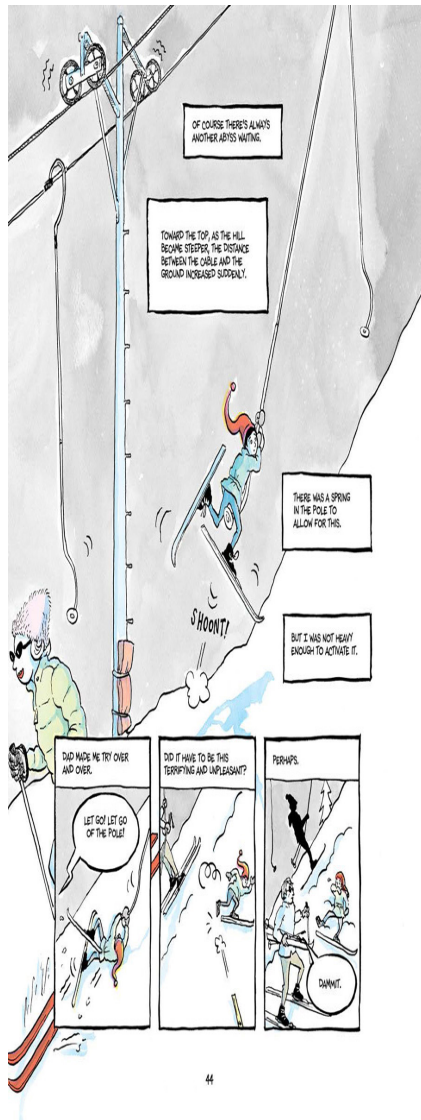


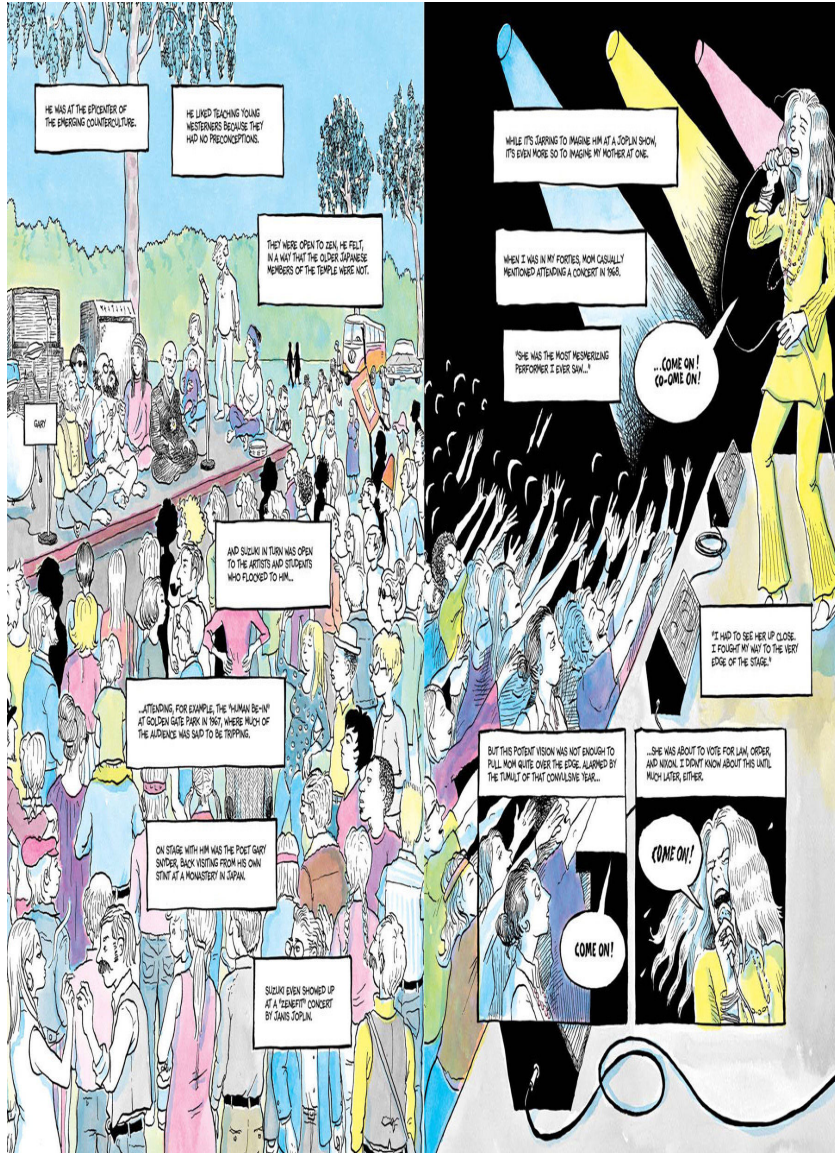


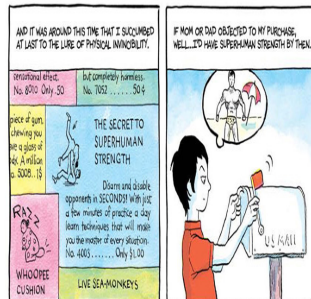
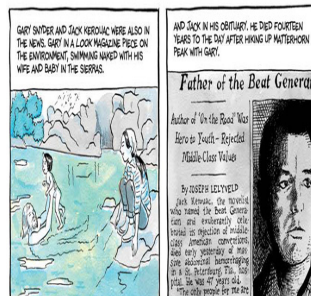


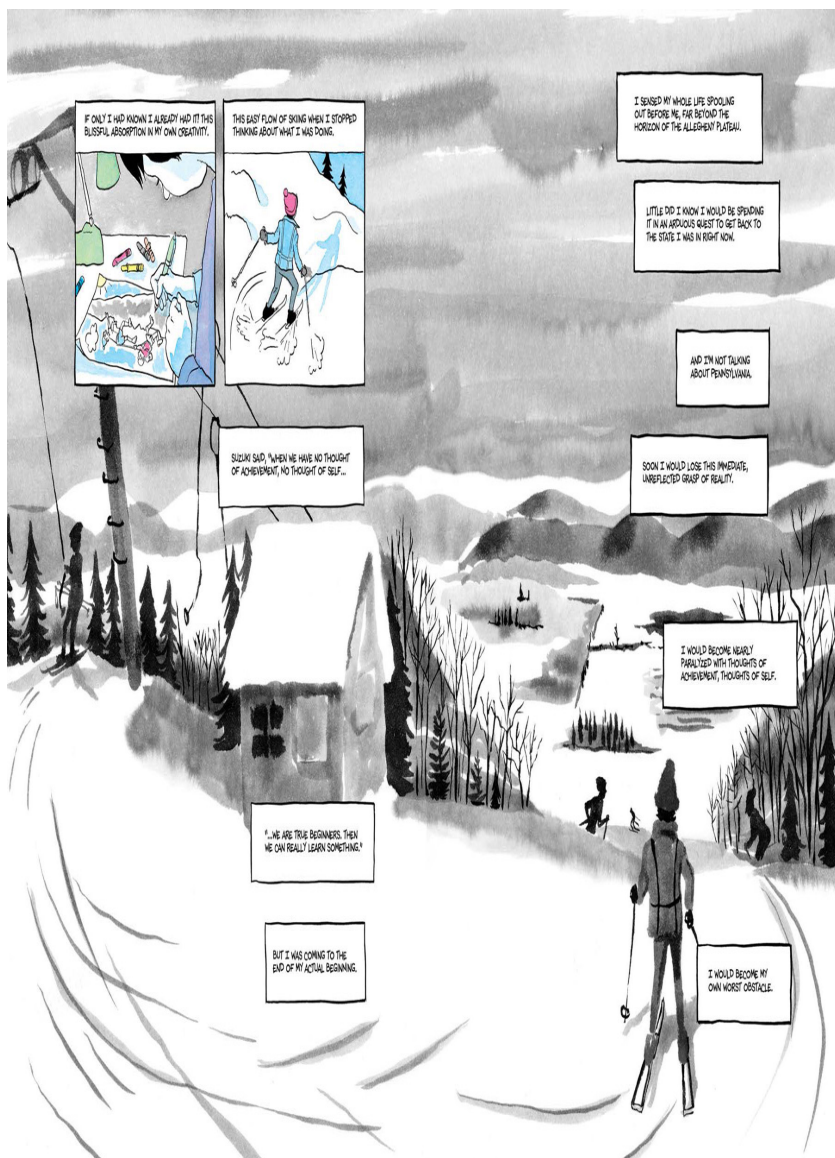












IF ONLY I HAD KNOWN I ALREADY HAD IT! THIS
BLESSFUL ABSORPTION IN MY OWN CREATIVITY.

THIS EASY FLOW OF BEING WHEN I STOPPED
THINKING ABOUT WHAT I WAS DOING.

I SENSED MY WHOLE LIFE UNFOLDING
OUT BEFORE ME, FAR BEYOND THE
HORIZON OF THE ALLEGHENY PLATEAU.

LITTLE DID I KNOW I WOULD BE SPENDING
IT IN AN OBSCURE QUEST TO GET BACK TO
THE STATE I WAS IN RIGHT NOW.

AND I'M NOT TALKING
ABOUT PEANUT BUTTER.

SOON I WOULD LOSE THIS IMMEDIATE,
UNREFLECTED GRASP OF REALITY.

I WOULD BECOME HEAVILY
PARALYZED WITH THOUGHTS OF
ACHIEVEMENT, THOUGHTS OF SELF.

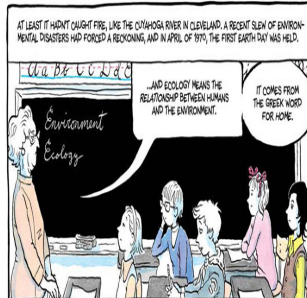
SUZANNE SAID, "WHEN WE HAVE NO THOUGHT
OF ACHIEVEMENT, NO THOUGHT OF SELF...

"...WE ARE TRUE BEGINNERS. THEN
WE CAN REALLY LEARN SOMETHING."

BUT I WAS COMING TO THE
END OF MY ACTUAL BEGINNING.

I WOULD BECOME MY
OWN WORST OBSTACLE.





Oil, spills, smog, garbage, lost wetlands. If things went on like this, I learned, the planet would soon be uninhabitable.

MAN: GOOD THING THEY REALIZED THIS BEFORE THINGS GOT ANY WORSE!

ALTHOUGH THE ROMANTICS HAD EXPRESSED ALARM ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT AS SOON AS THE FIRST FACTORS STARTED SPREADING PARTICULATES, IT TOOK A COUPLE HUNDRED YEARS FOR THAT SENTIMENT TO REACH CON-
TRACTION.

BUT NOW PEOPLE WERE STARTING TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE LIVE IN AN ECOSYSTEM. IN THE SUMMER OF 1971, DOD BROUGHT A CIRQUEUS BOOK HOME.

IF PEOPLE COULD ACTUALLY SEE IMAGES OF THE WHOLE EARTH, HE REASONED, WED UNDERSTAND IT WAS AN UNLIMITED RESOURCE THERE FOR THE POLLING.

A
 \$1.00 prepaid from
 Shakti Man
 P.O. Box
 THE METRO

Chained Equipment for Alpinists

Almost everyone who goes into the mountains
 almost in an effort to reach summits.

THE SURFACE WAS FILLED
 WITH HORSESHOE
 CURLS AND EQUIPMENT.

It's books,
 cameras,
 gear, etc.

It WAS LIKE THE RARE "HIGH BOOK" ON L.S.D.
 "SWEET" BRAND. THE GUY BEHIND IT WAS
 OBSESSED WITH THE SATELLITE PHOTOS WERE
 HAD BEEN TAKING OF THE PLANET.

A MEMORISING
 APPAR OF BACK-
 PACKING AND
 CLIMBING GEAR.

Looking
 free
 from
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BOOKS ABOUT
 TAIN, TEAT,
 TON, TOSSET,
 TON, HOSTELLS,
 TON, HOSTS

"MOST THAT'S A NEW MATERIAL USED TEST BUT
 IF IT'D BEAD CLOSELY GROUND I MIGHT HAVE FOUND
 A RECIPE FOR IT HERE.

BRAND CREATES THE "GEODESIC ARCHITECTURE" AND INVENTOR BUENOSAIRES FILLER FOR INSPIRING THE BOOK'S NEBULAR STRUCTURE WITH HIS IDEAS ABOUT "WHOLE SYSTEMS"

WE ARE ALL PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER, THIS ARRANGEMENT IMPLIES, SOME PULSATING AND INTRICATELY CONNECTED TOTALITY.

Understanding Whole System



Understanding Whole System
 by Buckminster Fuller
 1981
 513 pages
 10 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches
 Paperback
 ISBN 0-02-031002-0
 WHOLE SYSTEMS CO.

Check the following for style and spelling: *Chattahoochee*, *the North Georgia* - *DO NOT* *Walden* - *and it is a 19th century Thoreau*.



knowledge: Fuller

FULLER IS PROBABLY BEST KNOWN NOW FOR THE RISE OF GEODESIC DOMES.

FULLER IN TURN WAS IMPRESSED BY HIS GREAT-NEPHEW, MARGARET FULLER. WHEN IT HEARD THAT MARGARET SAID, "I MUST START WITH THE UNIVERSE AND WORK DOWN TO THE PARTS, I MUST HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF IT THAT BECOMES A GREAT DRIVE FOR ME," HE ONCE SAID.

AS MARGARET SAID DOWN TO EDIT THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE TRANSCENDENTALIST JOURNAL, THE PIVOT, WHAT WAS HER VISION? TRANSCENDENTALISM AS AN INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENT IS NOTORIOUSLY HARD TO DEFINE.

"HEY! BRUCE, WE'RE STOPPING TO SAY GOODBYE."

"OLD STUDENTS OF DADS ABOUT TO DRIVE CROSS-COUNTRY"

BUT ONE COULD DO WORSE THAN POINT TO THE WHOLE EARTH (GODLESS AND SAY "RANDOMLY," THIS")

"...THEIR RACIAL, CLASS AND GENDER POLITICS, THEIR EMBRACE OF EASTERN PHILOSOPHIES AND NONCONFORMITY..."

"OFF TO FIND YOURSELVES!"

"YEAH, MAN, EAST RIVER."

WITH THEIR VEGAN COMMUNES, WITING TRIPS, AND PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS...

...THE TRANSCENDENTALISTS WERE HIPPIES LONG BEFORE THERE WAS SUCH A THING.

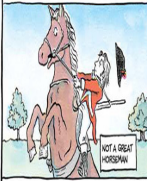
TRACING THINGS BACK A BIT FURTHER, MARGARET FULLER WAS INSPIRED BY THE ENGLISH ROMANTIC POET AND UR-HOPPE, SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.



RABBIT ROYSTER, NATURE BOY! "OH, JOJO, IF I'D KNOWN THEN WHEN I WAS BLOODING THROUGH THE RYE OF THE ANCIENT WHEAT IN COLLEGE, I MIGHT HAVE FELT A TRIFLE MORE ENGAGED."



HE WAS A PICKUP AT CAMBRIDGE AND DID A MUG-UP STUNT IN THE ARMY TO ESCAPE HIS DEBTS.



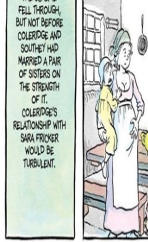
HE WAS BOUNDLESSLY ENERGETIC, AN EARLY ADOPTER OF THE WALKING TOURS THAT WERE ALL THE RAGE AMONG ROMANTICALLY MINDED UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AT THE TIME.



IN THE SAME REPUBLICAN SPIRIT HE CAME TO ESPOUSE THE IDEA OF SHARED, NOT PRIVATE, PROPERTY, AND COINED UP A SCHEME WITH HIS FRIEND ROBERT SOUTHY TO EMIGRATE TO AMERICA AND --GET THIS-- FOUND A UTOPIAN COMMUNE!



THE SCHEME FELT THROUGHOUT BUT NOT BEFORE COLERIDGE AND SOUTHY HAD MARRIED A PAIR OF SISTERS ON THE STRENGTH OF IT. COLERIDGE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SARA FRODER WOULD BE TURBULENT.



HE WAS A BAD HUSBAND EVEN BY THE STANDARDS OF THE DAY, DISAPPEARING FOR LONG STRETCHES AND EVENTUALLY LEAVING SARA ALONE.



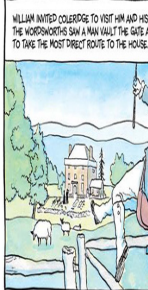
FOR A SHORT TIME, COLERIDGE PUT OUT A RADICAL JOURNAL, CALLED THE WATFALL, THEN CAME A FRETFUL PERIOD OF PREACHING, LECTURING, JOURNALISM, POETRY...



HE BECAME FRIENDS WITH WILLIAM WORDSWORTH, WHOSE POETRY HE ADMIRER.

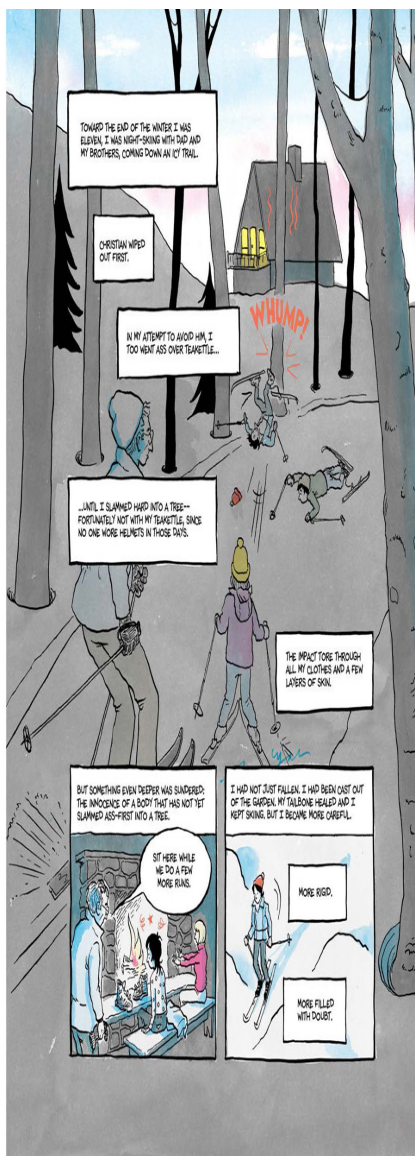
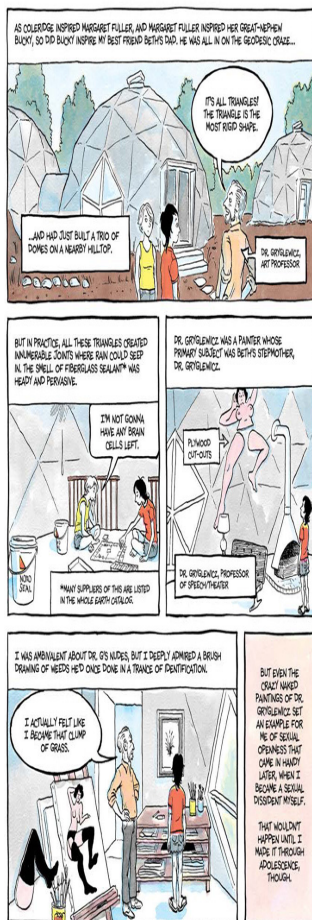


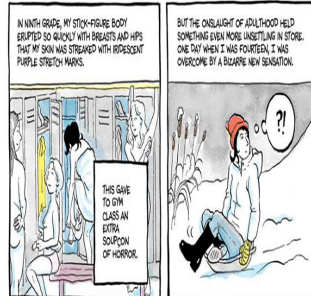
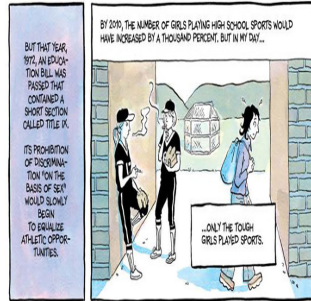
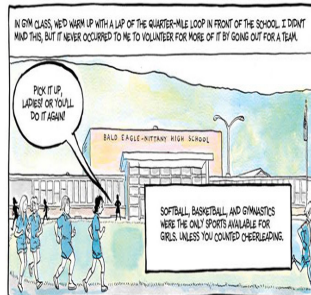
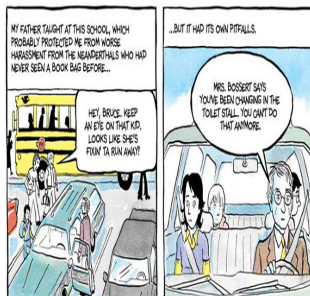
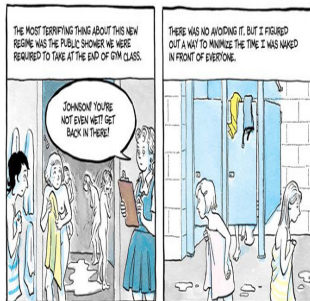
WILLIAM INVITED COLERIDGE TO VISIT HIM AND HIS SISTER, DOROTHY. ONE DAY THE WORDSWORTHS SAW A MAN VAULT THE GATE AND BOUND THROUGH A FIELD TO TAKE THE MOST DIRECT ROUTE TO THE HOUSE.

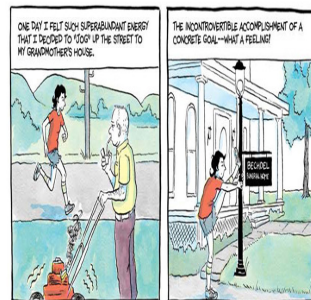
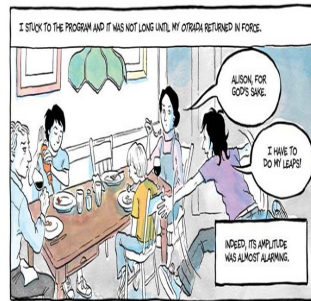
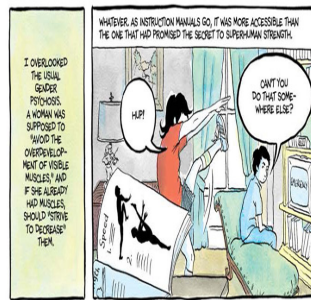
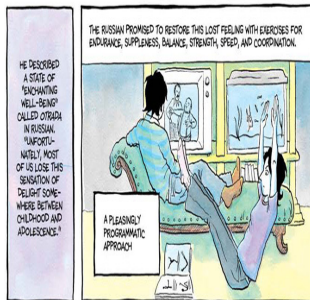


COLERIDGE'S LITERAL LEAP INTO THEIR LIVES IMPRESSED THEM BOTH INDEEDLY.

FORTY YEARS LATER, SOME TIME AFTER HIS DEATH, THEY WERE STILL TALKING ABOUT IT.







SOON I WAS JOGGING THE THREE-QUARTERS OF A MILE TO GRAMMYS AND BACK WITHOUT STOPPING WHENEVER I FELT THE NEED TO BLOW OFF STEAM, WHICH WAS MORE AND MORE OFTEN THE MORE I RAN. IT SEEMED...

...THE MORE I NEEDED TO RUN.

ONE DAY SOON AFTER TEACH GRADE BEGAN, I DECIDED TO TEST MYSELF FURTHER. I WOULD TRY TO MAKE IT ALL THE WAY AROUND THE BAKE OVEN LOOP, A LITTLE OVER THREE MILES.

NORMALLY I DIDN'T CHANGE MY CLOTHES TO SOIL, BUT FOR THIS EFFORT I DONNED MY SOLE ITEM OF ATHLETIC APPAREL.*

I ALSO BROUGHT SOME RAISINS AND PEANUTS—A LONG WALK WAS MY ONLY FORM OF REFUELING FOR THE FEAT I WAS ABOUT TO UNDERTAKE.

*NOT COUNTING THE VARIOUS GARMENT I HAD TO WEAR FOR GYM CLASS—THOUGH NOW I APPRECIATE THAT IT'S A TESTAMENT OF 19TH-CENTURY ATHLETIC TECHNOLOGY, INSPIRED BY BURNING FINGERBELL PEPPERS.

I DIDN'T TELL ANYONE WHAT I WAS DOING.

MY PLAN WAS TO STOP AND WALK IF I GOT TIRED, BUT I DIDN'T GET TIRED. I KEPT GOING, ACROSS THE HIGHWAY...

...PAST THE BAKE OVEN, PAST THE FARM WHERE DAD WAS BORN.

I MADE IT ALL THE WAY HOME WITHOUT EVEN DIPPING INTO THE DOOR.

YOU WHAAAT?!

WITHOUT STOPPING!

IT FELT SO GOOD, I KEPT DOING IT, BUT PEOPLE WEREN'T USED TO RUNNERS IN THOSE DAYS, AND I'M NOT QUITE SURE HOW I EVEN THOUGHT OF IT.

HE WENT THWART!

IT WAS JUST IN THE AIR, IT SEEMS, LIKE TRANSFORMATION DARKENING A GRAY SWEATSHIRT *DOGGY* WAS SLEEPING INTO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

I WAS A DEMOGRAPHIC WAITING TO HAPPEN. EXOTIC NEW BRANDS OF SNEAKERS HAD ENTERED THE MARKET AND I ALREADY HAD A PAIR OF ADIDAS GAZELLES. BUT SOON A PREPOSTEROUS NEW STORE OPENED.

ONLY SNEAKERS??

athletic fabric

LET'S FACE IT, YOU DON'T NEED SPECIAL EQUIPMENT TO RUN, BUT IT WAS EASY TO EXPLOIT AND COMMODIFY RUNNING PRECISELY BECAUSE SOMETHING AUTHENTIC HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE DO IT.

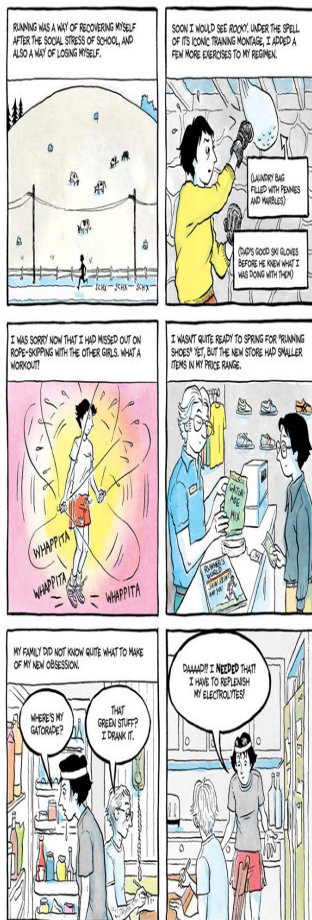
PERHAPS EVEN THE RUSSIAN GUY'S *MYSTEROUS SOMETHING ELSE.*

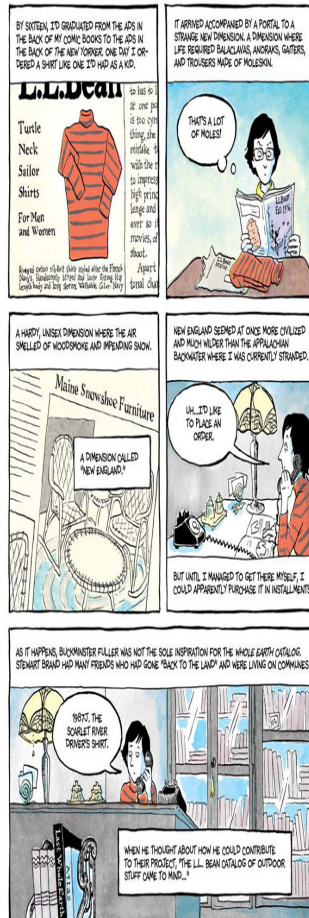
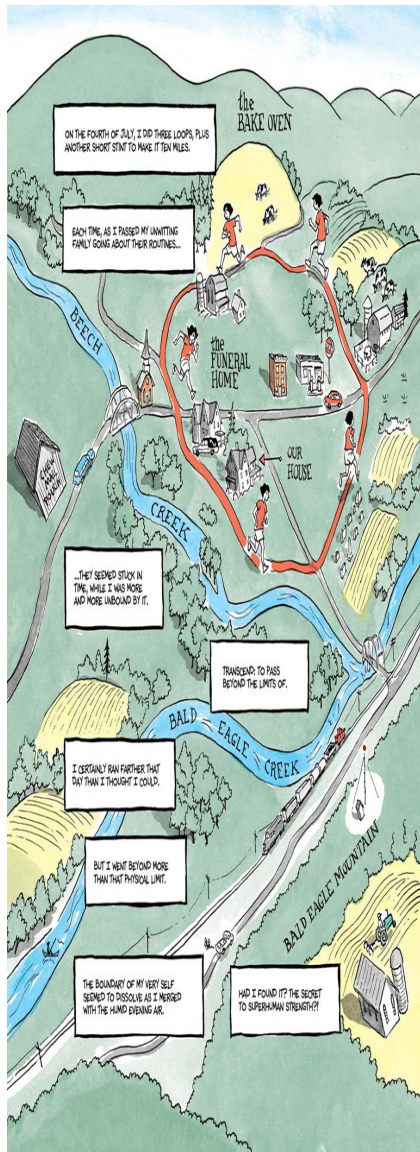
IT SMELLS LIKE A LOCKER ROOM IN HERE.

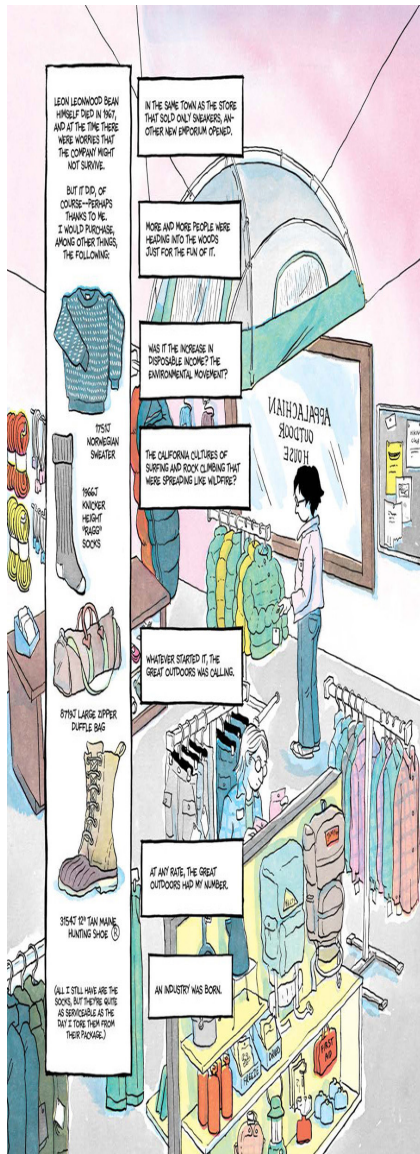
ACTUALLY, THERE WAS ONE PIECE OF SPECIAL EQUIPMENT I COULD HAVE USED, BUT IT WOULD BE A FEW MORE YEARS UNTIL SOME WOMEN IN VERMONT MADE THE FIRST *GOSPEL* OUT OF TWO SOCK STRIPS.

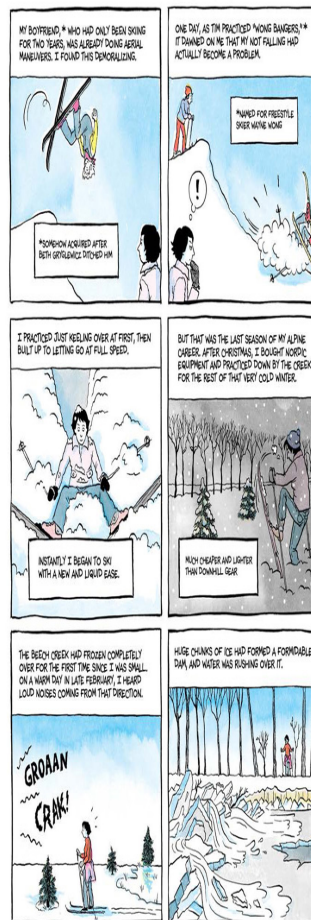
I COULD NOT CONTROL THE HEINOUS METAMORPHOSIS OF ADULSCIENCE. BUT I COULD CONTROL HOW FAR I RAN, AND RUNNING PROMISED ITS OWN TRANSFORMATION.

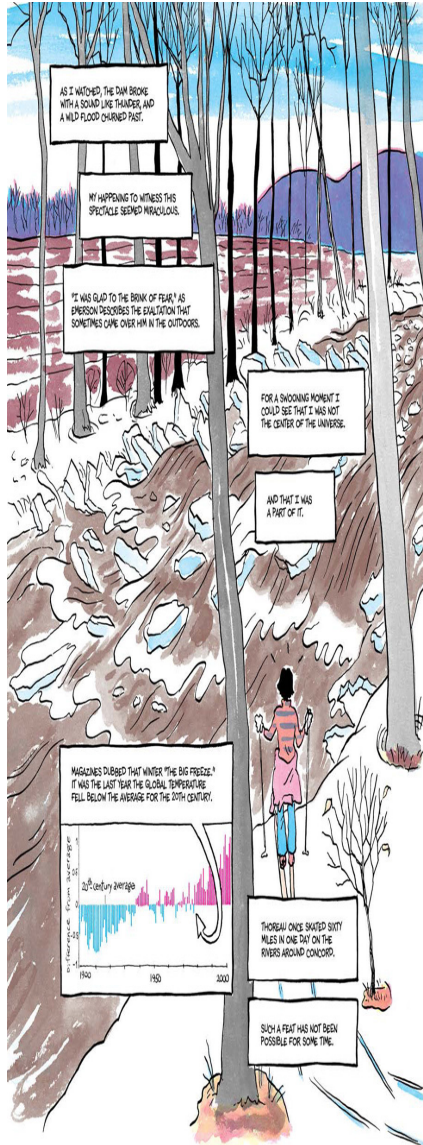
I WAS BECOMING FOCUSED, DISCIPLINED!

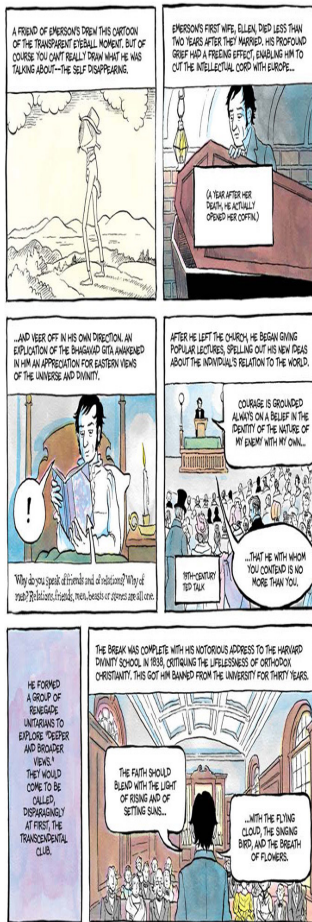












NOW, SIX YEARS LATER, RICH WAS WORKING ON WHAT WOULD BECOME HER ANTI-POETRY COLLECTION, THE DREAM OF A COMMON LANGUAGE. IT WOULD BE HER FIRST BOOK SINCE COMING OUT AS A LESBIAN.

THE POEMS ARE IN A WAY ABOUT THAT SELF-TRANSFORMATION.

THE FINAL TITLE POEM BEGINS IN THE ROMANTIC TRADITION OF A NATURE STUDY.

TRANSCENDENTAL ETUDE
(FOR MICHELLE CLIFT)

This August evening I've been driving
over backroads fringed with queen anne's lace
my car startling young deer in meadows—one

WE MIGHT EXPECT THIS PASTORAL IMAGE TO LEAD TO WHAT WORDSWORTH CALLED AN "IMPRESSION OF IMMORTALITY."

IN COLLEGE, RICH STUDIED WITH THE SCHOLAR F. O. MATTHESSSEN, BEST KNOWN FOR HIS BOOK AMERICAN RENAISSANCE: ART AND EXPRESSION IN THE AGE OF EMERSON AND WHITMAN. MATTHESSSEN ADMIRERED HER POLITICALLY. HE WAS A SEMI-CLOSETED GAY MAN AND A SCOPOLIST.

THE POEM ALSO POINTS TO EMERSON'S TRANSCENDENTALISM.

(HER TITLE ALLUDES MORE DIRECTLY TO LISTS OF FAMOUSLY VIRTUOUS PIANO STUDIES.)

IN HER SOPHOMORE YEAR, HE LEAPT OUT A TWELFTH-FLOOR WINDOW TO HIS DEATH, BUT HE'D GIVEN HER A KIND OF LIFELINE.

A WAY OF SEEING HERSELF IN RELATION TO OTHERS: THE MORE SHE CAME TO UNDERSTAND POWER AND PRIVILEGE, THE MORE SHE WOULD KEEP REMINDING HERSELF THROUGHOUT HER LIFE, LIKE A MANUSCRIPT.

HOW MANY FUTURE LOVERS WOULD SHARE THESE POEMS WITH HER?

EVEN THOUGH HE HAD ONLY THE VAGUEST IDEA WHAT SHE WAS TALKING ABOUT.

No one ever told us we had to study our lives,
make of our lives a study, as if learning natural history
or music, that we should begin
with the simple exercises first
the hard ones, practicing till strength
and accuracy became one with the starting
to leap into transcendence.

LATER IN THE POEM, RICH CONSIDERS "TWO WOMEN EYE TO EYE / RESEMBLING EACH OTHERS' SPIRIT / UNLESS DESIRE, / A WHOLE NEW POETRY BEGINNING-HERE."

NOT THE TWO WOMEN PART, BUT THE EMOTIONAL INTIMACY, THE MUTUALITY. LESBIAN FEMINISM WASN'T JUST SHAPING WOMEN FOR MEN. IT WAS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT MODEL, MUTUAL SUBJECTIVITY.

SHALL I STOP TRYING TO TALK WITH YOU THEN AND JUST COME TO YOUR LECTURES?

EYE TO EYE, IT'S THE END OF CONNECTION. MARGARET FULLER WAS ALWAYS TRYING TO HAVE WITH EMERSON.

WILDO tried, but at his core he preferred his autonomous solitude. Believe me, I know how he felt.

IT'S TRUE, THE BEST OF ME IS THERE.

BUT OF COURSE ALL THAT WAS STILL AHEAD OF ME. FOR NOW, I WAS OFF TO COLLEGE IN THE BERKSHIRES.

SHOULDN'T YOU PACK A SKIRT?



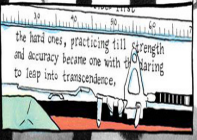


BUT THAT WOULDN'T BE FOR A FEW MORE MONTHS. I WENT HOME FOR CHRISTMAS HAVING UNDERGONE A POWERFUL TRANSFORMATION THAT WAS APPARENTLY INVISIBLE ON THE SURFACE.



ONE DAY AT THE VERY END OF DECEMBER, DAD, JOHN, AND I WENT BUSKINAWAY DOWN BY THE CREEK.

THERE'D BEEN A LOT OF RAIN, AND WE KEPT HAVING TO DEVISE WAYS OF CROSSING THE MANY LITTLE STREAMS FLOODING OUR PATH.



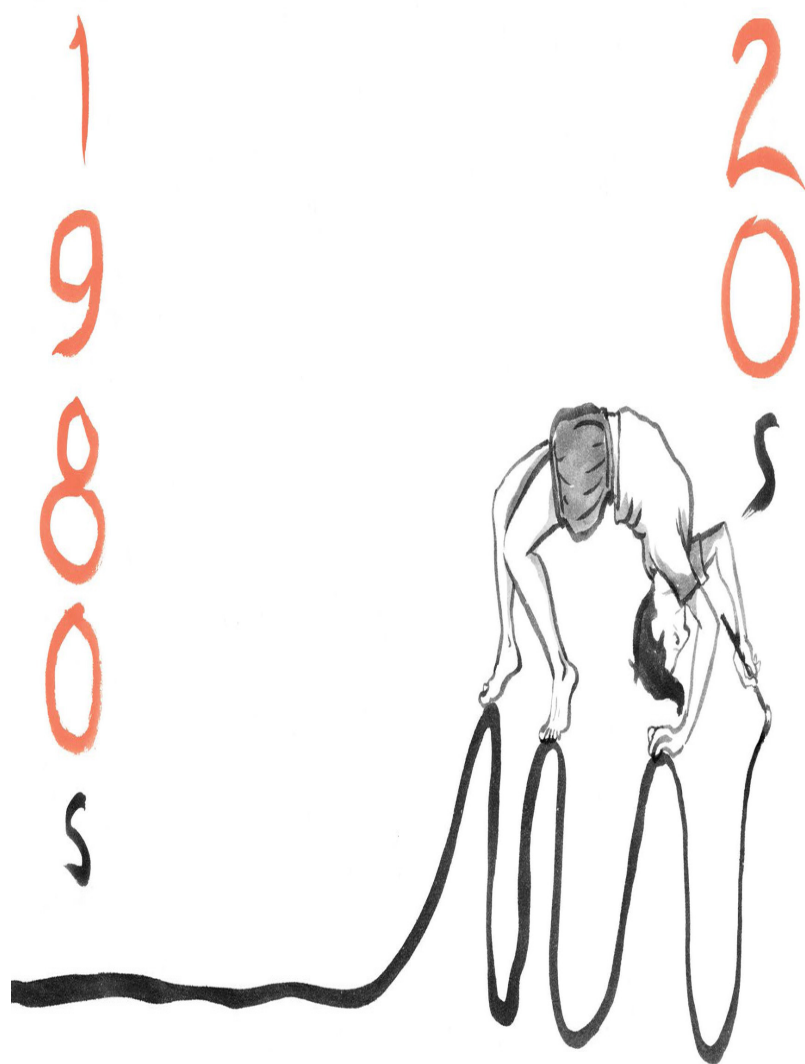
MY TRANSFORMATION THINGS IN THAT TO APPEARING EASY, WAS EASIER THAN THEY HAD BEEN.

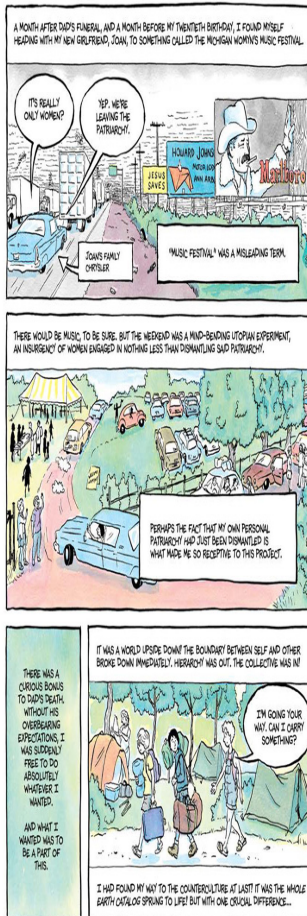
AND EASIER THAN MY FATHER'S WOULD HAVE BEEN IF HE'D BEEN ABLE TO TAKE IT.

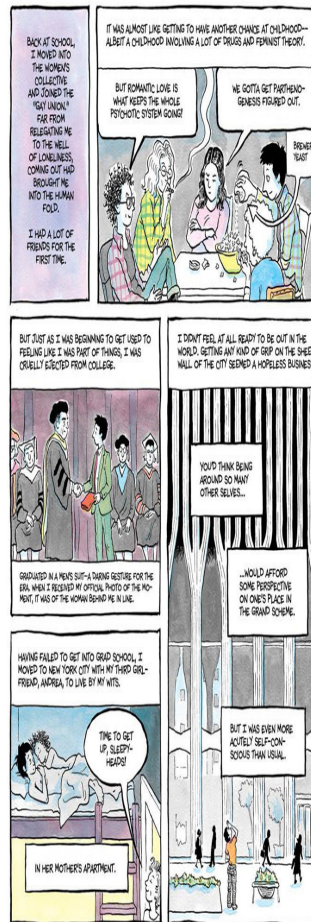
BUT DAD, TOO, HAD TAUGHT ME TO TRUST MYSELF ENOUGH TO TAKE SUCH A LEAP.

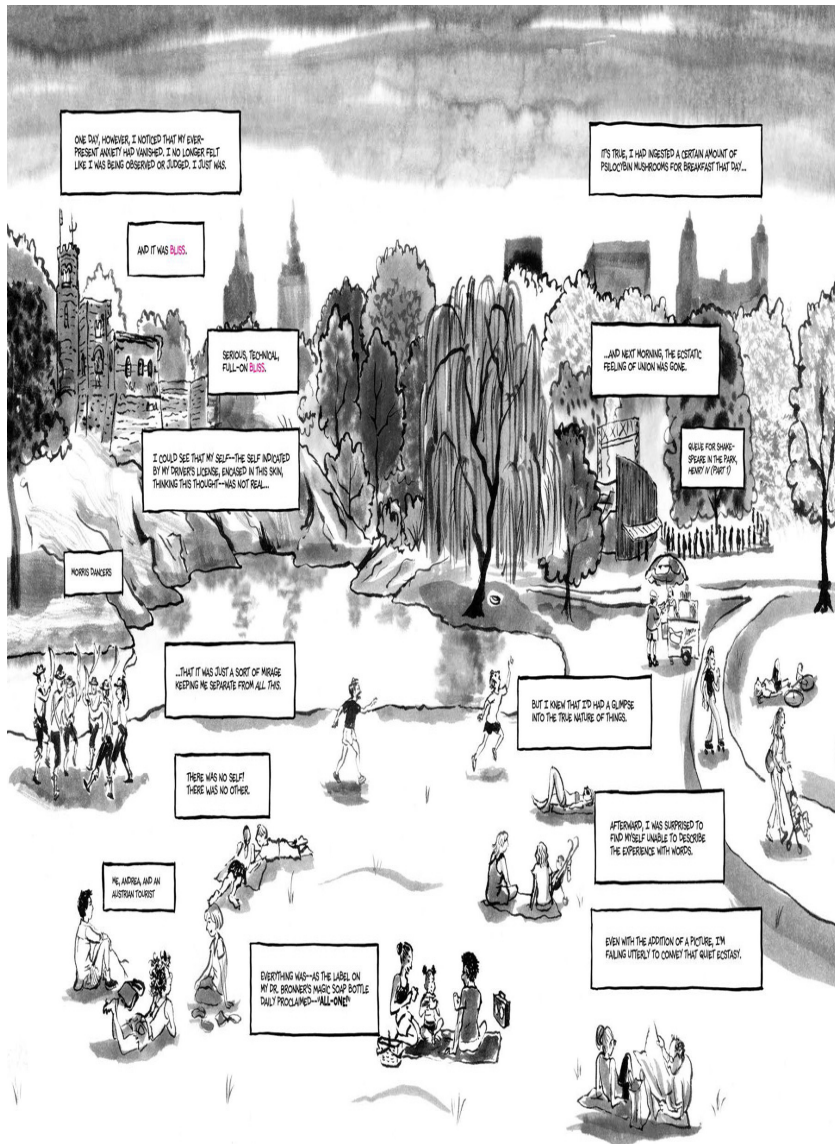
SOON HE WOULD LEAP INTO THE PATH OF A TRUCK, AND I WOULD GO ON TO LEAP A VERY DIFFERENT KIND OF LEAP.



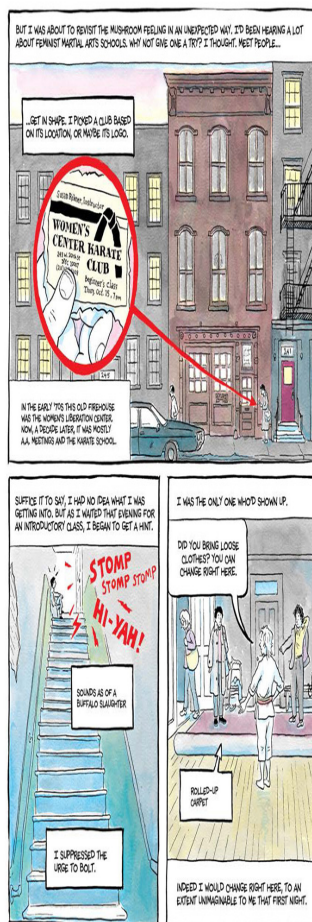
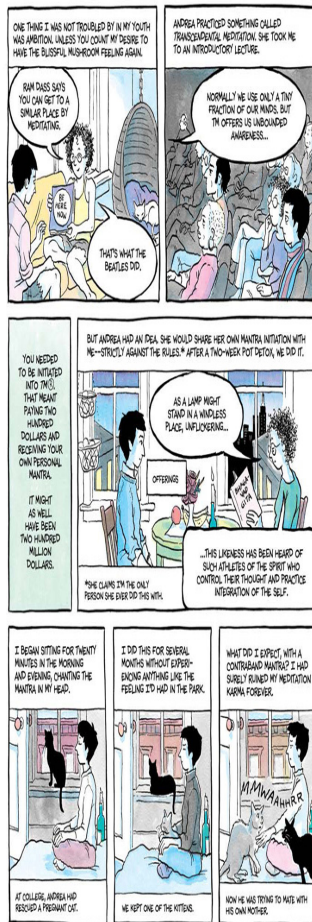


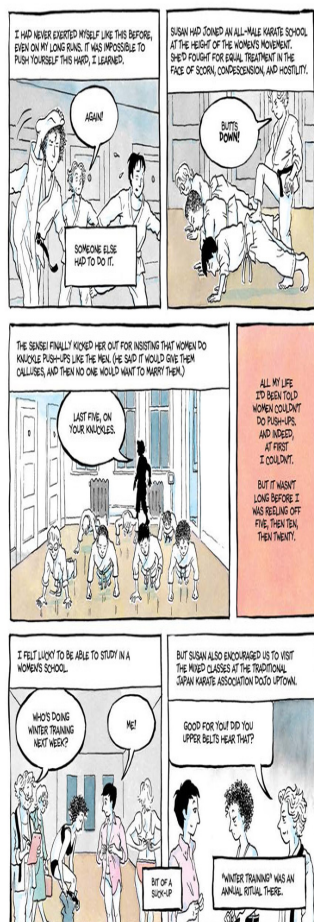
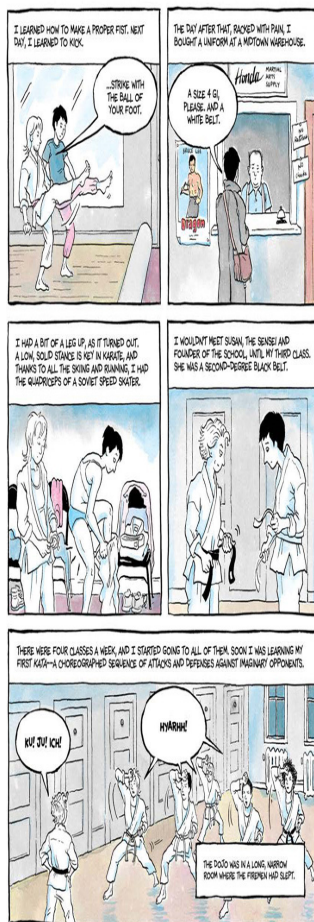


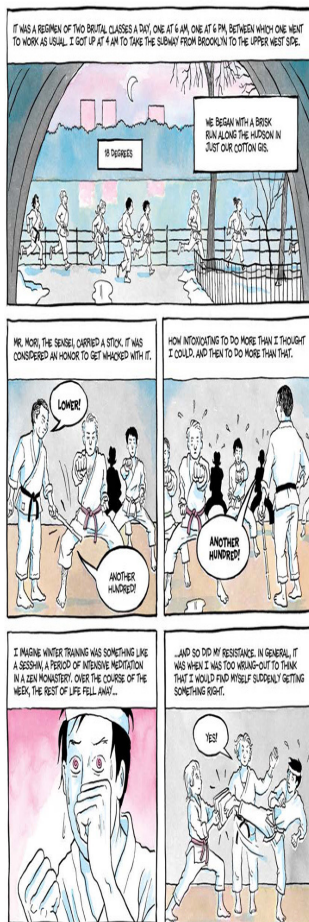


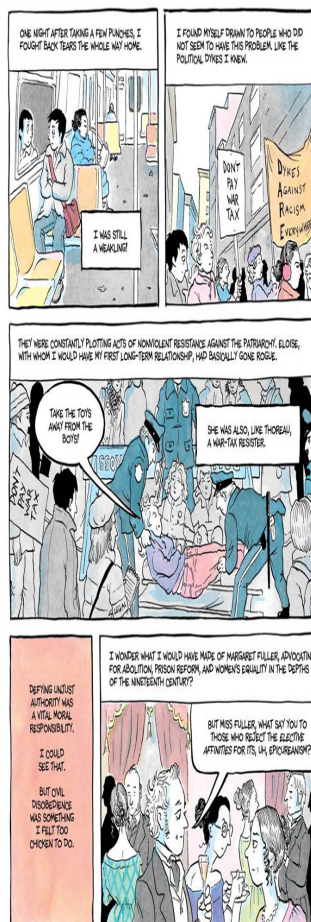
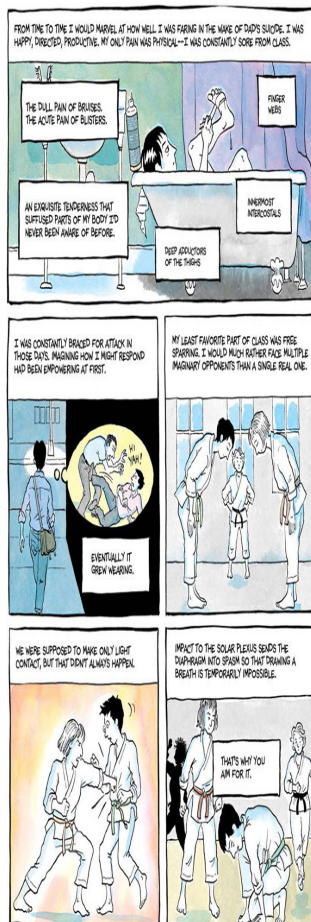












I SUSPECT I WOULD HAVE BEEN AS INTIMIDATED AS THE YOUNG MEN IN HER CIRCLE. ONE, A Distant Cousin AT HARVARD, DARED TO MATCH WITS WITH HER.

SHE WAS DELEGATED WHEN HE GHOSTED HER. UNBETTERED ATTRACTONS BECAME A PATTERN. SHE TELL FOR SOME WOMEN, TOO, BUT THAT WAS AN EVEN LESS VIABLE OPTION THAN BECOMING THE HELPFEST OF SOME MUTTONCHOPPED MINISTER.

I SAY IT IS A MORAL WORK A WOMAN RELIGIOUS EVEN TO PREY?

PPPP! ANY DISCUSSION OF THE VALIDITY OF THE MARRIAGE VOWS, AND SOCIETY TREMBLES TO ITS FOUNDATION!

SHE WAS ON HER OWN A FEW YEARS INTO HER EXILE ON THE FARM. HER DAD DIED. HER GREATEST CHAMPION AND HER GREATEST OBSTRUCTION, GONE.

MARGARET WAS NOW THE BREADWINNER. SHE'D MANAGED TO PUBLISH A FEW ESSAYS WHILE TUTORING HER SIBLINGS, BUT SHE COULDN'T RELY ON EARNING MONEY FROM HER NOTING-HOT TEST.

PLUS, HE LEFT THE FAMILY BROKE.

THE WESTERN MESSIAH

FOR NOW, SHE'D HAVE TO HIRE OUT AS A TEACHER. SHE SET ASIDE HER HOPES OF TRAVELING TO EUROPE, MOVED BACK TO THE CITY, AND ENTERED THE SCHOOLROOM.

SHE'D GET UP AT 4:30 AM TO PUT IN A COUPLE OF HOURS ON HER OWN PROJECTS FIRST. SHE HAD AN AMBITIOUS PLAN TO UNDERTAKE A BIOGRAPHY OF GOETHE.

EARLY P.D.

MY TWENTIETH-CENTURY LIFE SEEMS ALMOST ABSOLUTELY SELF-CENTERED COMPARED WITH MARGARET'S FOCUS ON WORK AND FAMILY.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU WARE IT.

BIG NIGHT OUT?

YOU EITHER!

THE CUBBY-HOLE.

(GATHERING A.K. CLUES)

BUT I, TOO, WAS BEGINNING TO FEEL A CLARIFYING SENSE OF PURPOSE...

...A CONVICTION THAT BOTH MY CHITCHOONS AND MY KARATE PRACTICES WERE PART OF SOME LARGER PROJECT.

THE STRANGE NEW WORD "COMPHARTY" ENTERED MY VOCABULARY.

PERHAPS THAT WAS THE REAL APPEAL OF KARATE. THE EXPERIENCES OF ANONAS HE MOVED AND BREAKERS IN SYNC IN A COLLECTIVE TRANCE.

HAIEH!

THIS WAS PROBABLY TRUE, TOO, OF THE AEROBICS CLASSES GOING ON ALL AROUND ME AT THAT TIME, AS IT WOULD BE OF SKI-CIRCLE BARRIS AND CROSSFIT IN THE FUTURE.

AGOSTINO

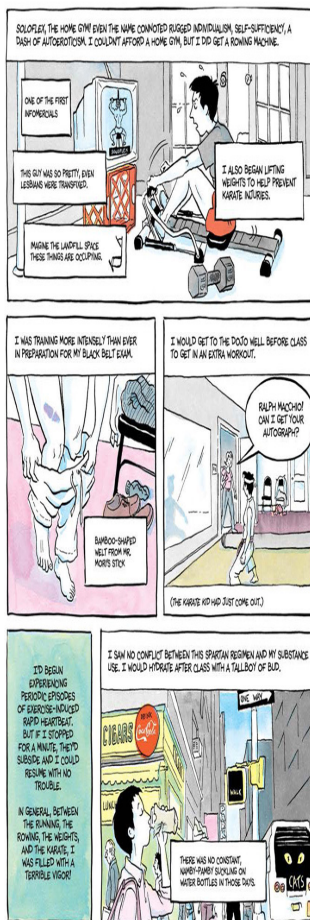
A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT KIND OF RELIGION WAS ALSO EMERGING IN THE '80S. EVEN MY FIRM-RESISTANT MOTHER HAD BECOME A DEVOTEE.

I'LL LET YOU GO. I HAVE TO DO MY JUNE POWER.

OHAY. I GOTTA GO ANHON. THE SOLOFLEX GUY IS ON.

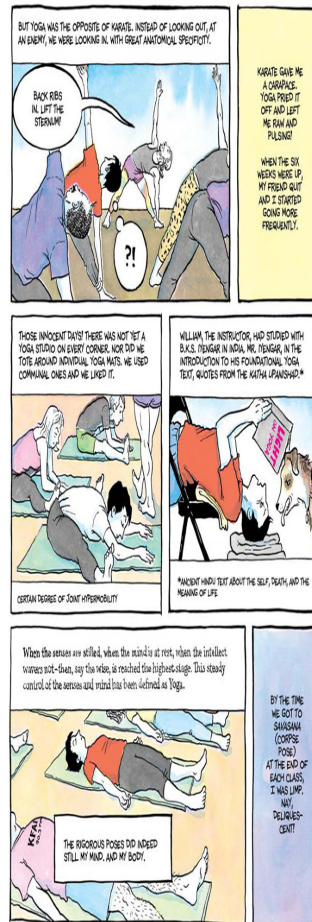
JUNE POWER WORKOUT BOOK HAD BEEN NUMBER ONE ON THE NONFICTION BESTSELLER LIST FOR MONTHS NOW.

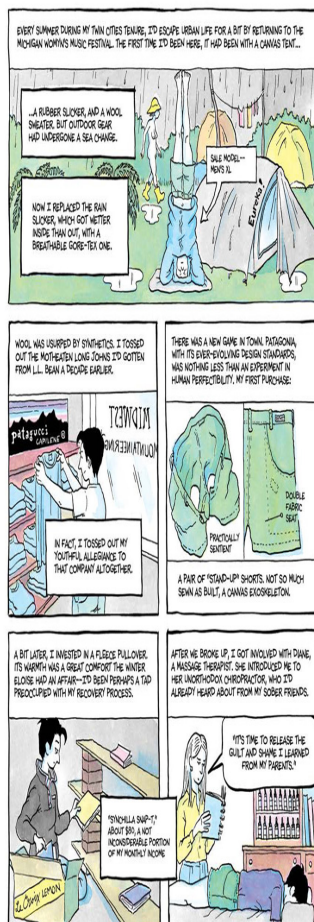
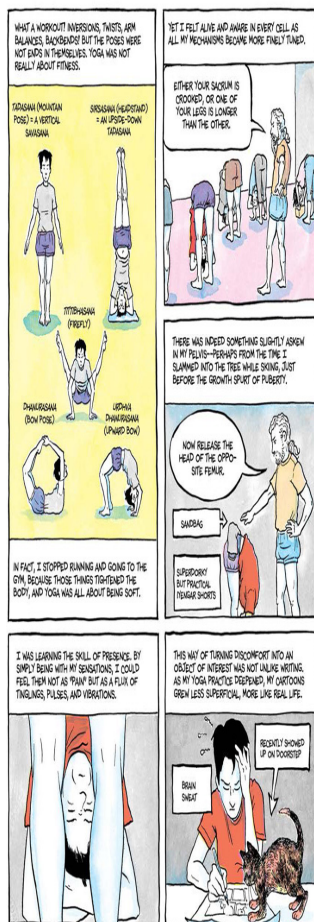
THE BOOM OF WORKOUT VIDEOS AND HOME EXERCISE EQUIPMENT OFFERED A COMPELLING MIX OF PRIVITY AND COMMUNAL EXPERIENCE THAT WOULD REACH ITS APOTHEOSIS TWO YEARS LATER WITH PLELOTON: THE STATIONARY BIKING THAT UNSTREAMS CLASSES.

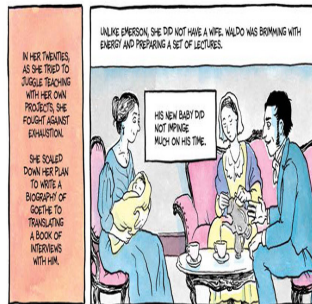




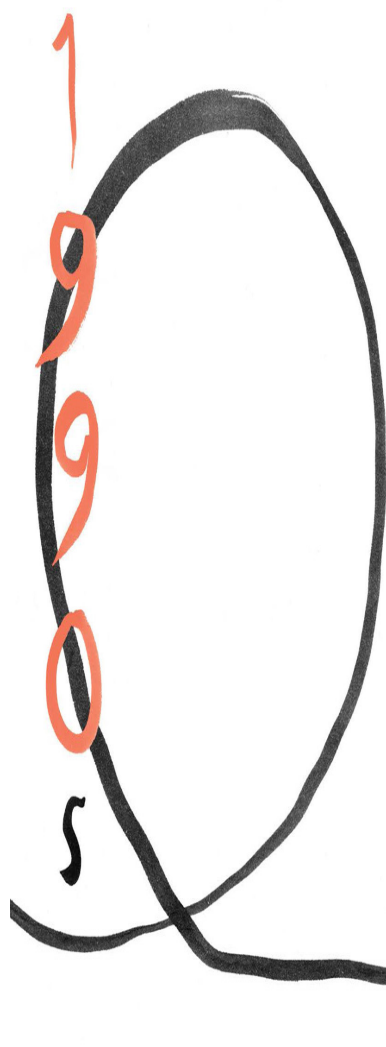




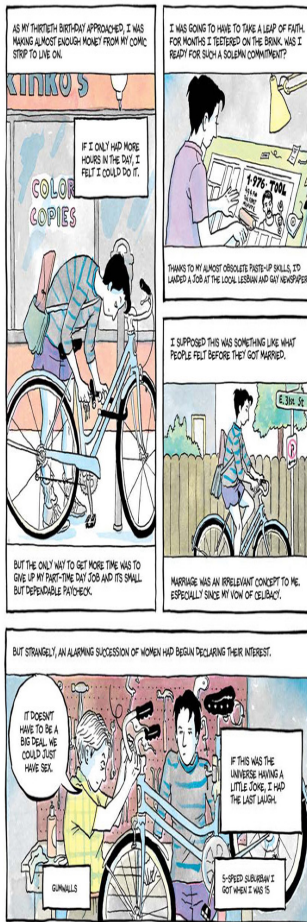








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AS MY THIRTIETH BIRTHDAY APPROACHED, I WAS MAKING ALMOST ENOUGH MONEY FROM MY COMIC STOP TO LIVE ON.



IF I ONLY HAD MORE HOURS IN THE DAY, I FELT I COULD DO IT.

I WAS GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE A LEAP OF FAITH. FOR MONTHS I BEGGED ON THE BRINK. WAS I READY FOR SUCH A SOLENN COMMITMENT?



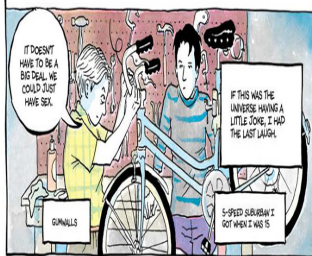
THANKS TO MY ALMOST OBSCURE PHOTO-UP SKILLS, I'D LANDED A JOB AT THE LOCAL LESSON AND GUY NEWSPAPER.

I SUPPOSED THIS WAS SOMETHING LIKE WHAT PEOPLE FELT BEFORE THEY GOT MARRIED.



MARRIAGE WAS AN IRRELEVANT CONCEPT TO ME, ESPECIALLY SINCE MY VISION OF CELIBACY.

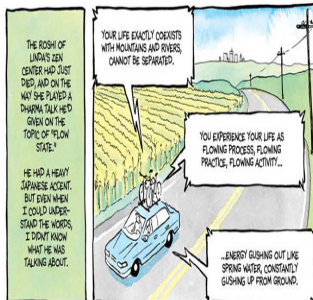
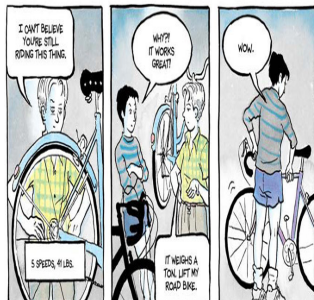
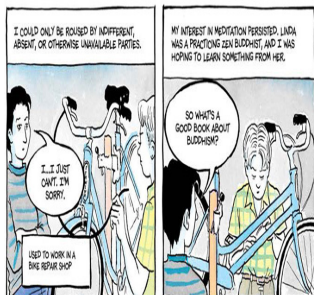
BUT STRANGELY, AN ALARMING SUCCESSION OF WOMEN HAD BEGUN DECLARING THEIR INTEREST.

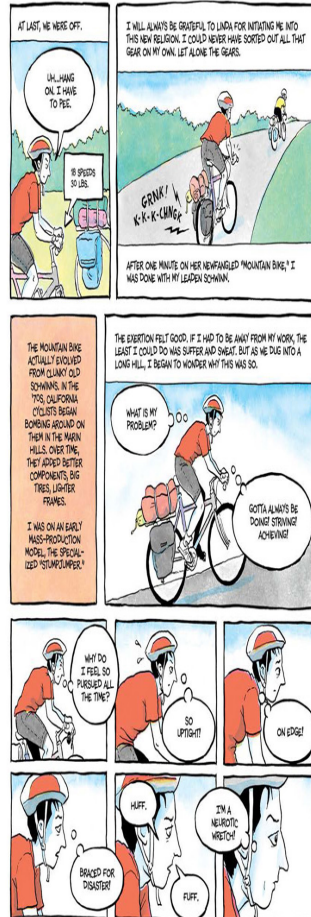
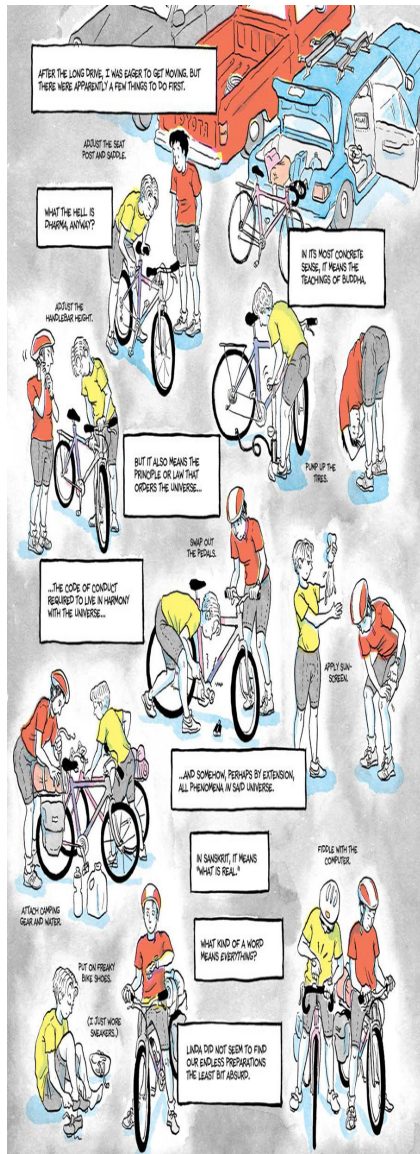


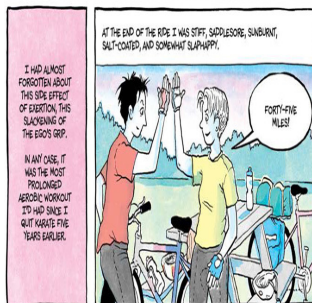
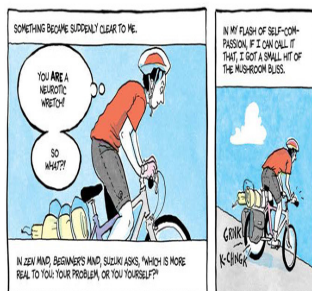
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A BIG DEAL. WE COULD JUST HAVE SEX.

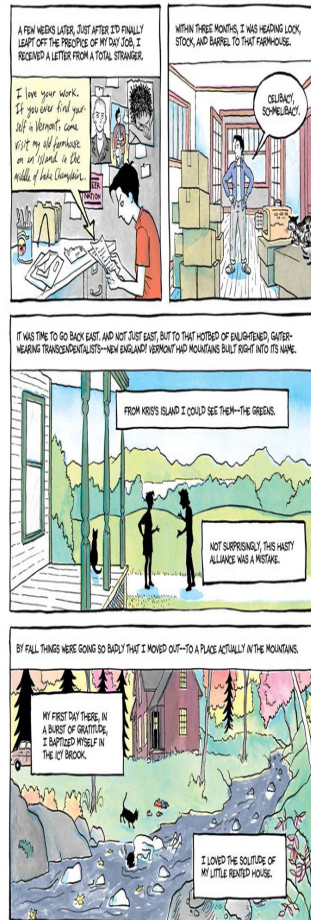
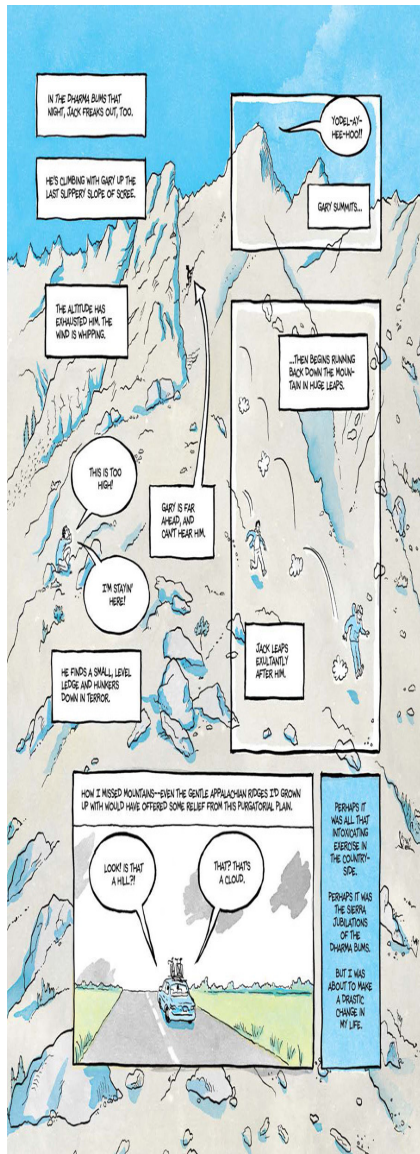
IF THIS WAS THE UNIVERSE HAVING A LITTLE SOME, I HAD THE LAST LAUGH.

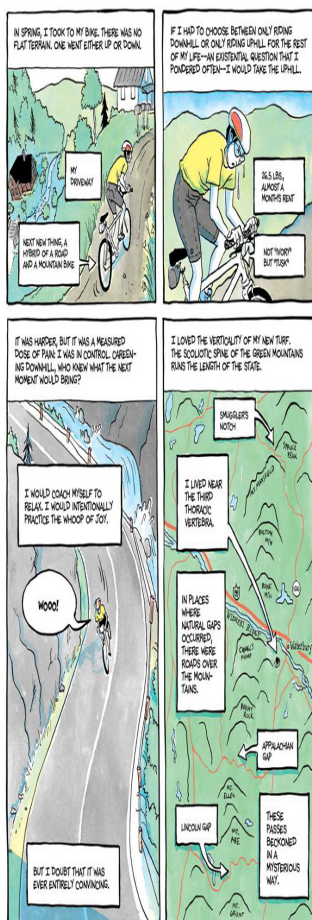
S-POVED SUBURBAN I'VE NOT WHEN I WAS 15

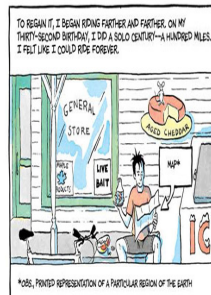
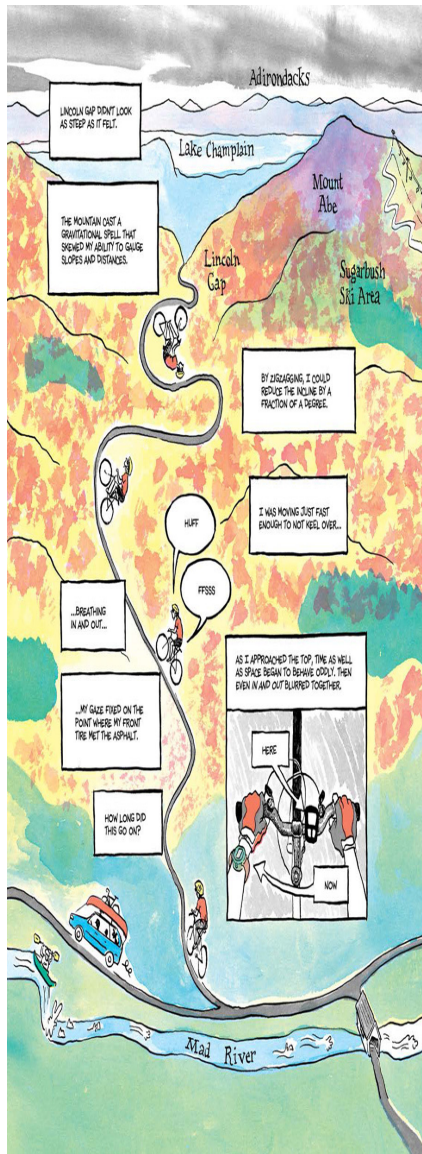


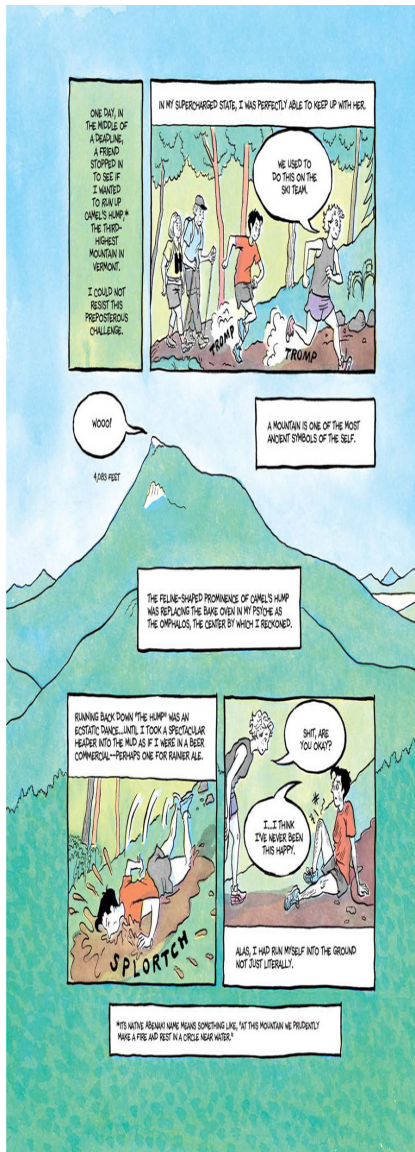
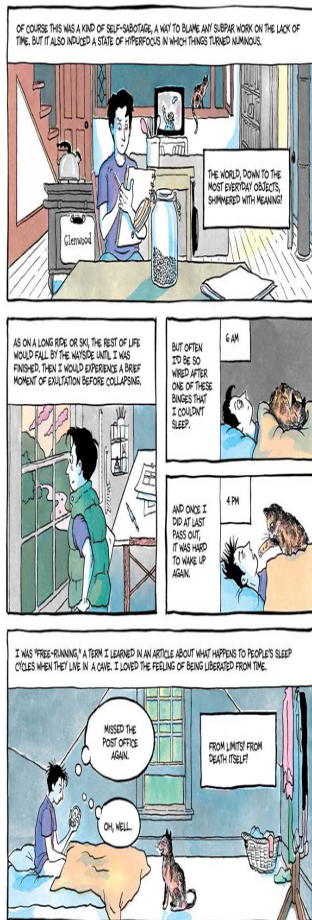


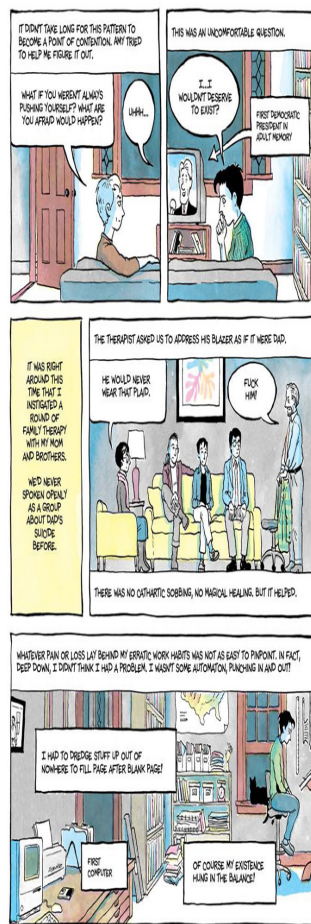
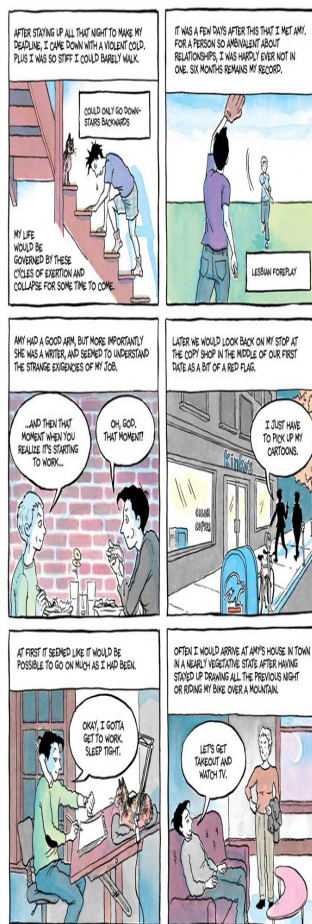


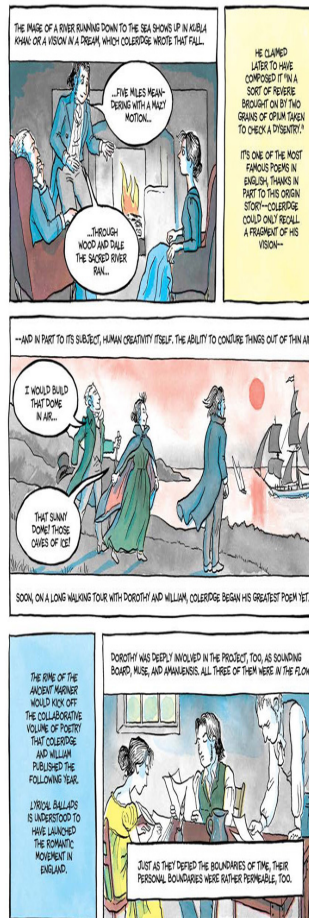
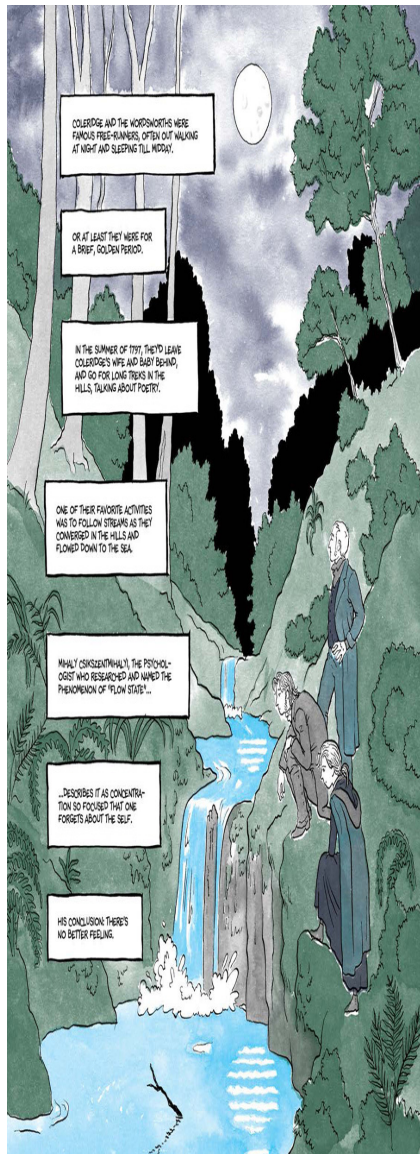












COLLEIDGE WAS ENVOIOUS OF THEIR BOND, BUT HE WAS ALSO A PART OF IT. AS DOROTHY'S BIOGRAPHER FRANCES WILSON PUTS IT...

THESE A COUPLE AND FROM THE BEGINNING DOROTHY AND WILLIAM PREFERRED TO BE WITH ONE ANOTHER IN A TRIANGLE!

THERE WAS DEFINITELY MORE THAN THE CLOSENESS OF SIBLINGS GOING ON BETWEEN WILLIAM AND DOROTHY, WHO HAD BEEN SEPARATED FOR MUCH OF THEIR CHILDHOODS—THOUGH MOST SCHOLARS SEEM TO CONCLUDE THAT THEIR INTIMACY NEVER BECAME PHYSICAL.

IN 1910, COMPLETING THE SECOND EDITION OF LYRICAL BALLADS, WILLIAM REJECTED COLLEIDGE'S NEW POEM "CHRISTABEL." COLLEIDGE'S LAUDNUM USE BEGAN TO CREEP UP.

HE DROPPED AWAY FROM POETRY AND TOWARD METAPHYSICS.

I'm getting the process of Life and Consciousness!

KEVIN BLANK TRIED NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH KEVIN MINT COPS, A FORERUNNER OF THE POWERSHARE CHAINED ON GALT'S BARRETT EXPRESSIONS!

THE LITELY NATURE JOURNAL DOROTHY HAD KEPT WOULD COME TO AN END WHEN WILLIAM'S NEW WIFE MOVED IN WITH THE TWO OF THEM IN 1910.

WILLIAM'S WORK IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO HAVE PEAKED WITH HIS MARRIAGE, AFTER WHICH IT BEGAN A LONG SLIDE INTO MEDIOCRITY.

IN MY SHABBY, SHALLOW, MODERN WAY, I, TOO, SUFFERED FROM THE VICISSITUDES OF CREATIVE FLOW. WHENEVER I FINISHED A PROJECT, THE ABYSS YAWNED.

MY BRAIN FEELS DESICCATED.

FORTUNATELY, OUTDOOR EXERCISE SEEMED TO HAVE THE EFFECT OF REINTEGRATING MY CEREBRAL LOCUST. MY FOURTH WINTER IN VERMONT, I EXPLORED A NEARBY SKI AREA.

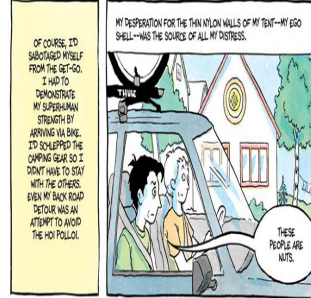
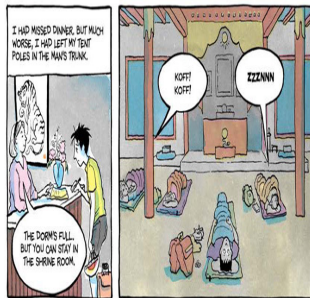
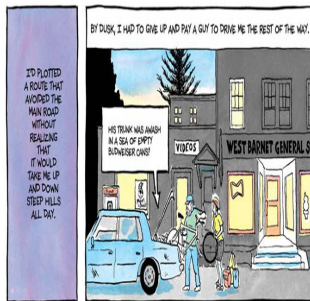
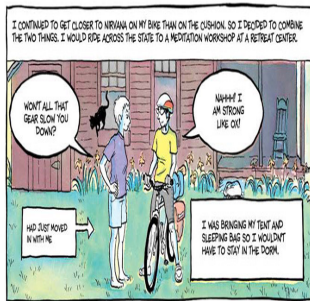
"TRAPP" AS IN VON TRAPP, AS IN THE SOUND OF MUSIC, AFTER FLEEING THE NAZIS AND TONING FOR A WHILE AS SINGERS, THE FAMILY HAD TAKEN UP INNEEPPING HERE...

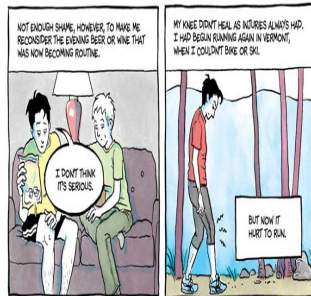
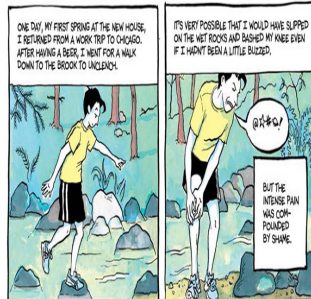
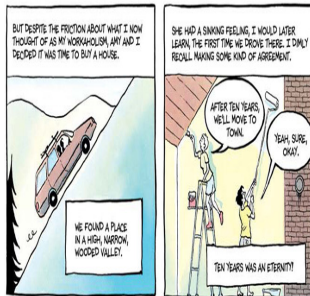
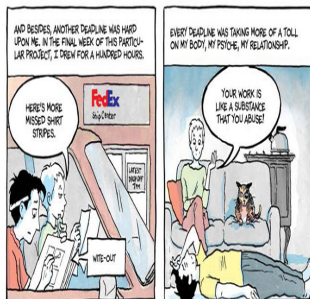
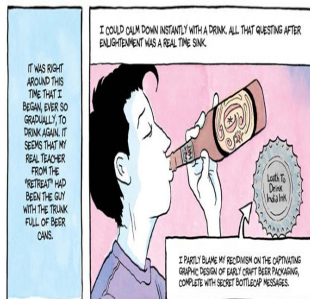
...WHERE THE LANDSCAPE REMINDED THEM OF AUSTRALIA, I HAD SOMEHOW STUMBLED INTO ANOTHER CHILDHOOD FANTASY. THE SONG JULIE ANDREWS SINGS IN THE OPENING SHOT OF THE MOVIE...

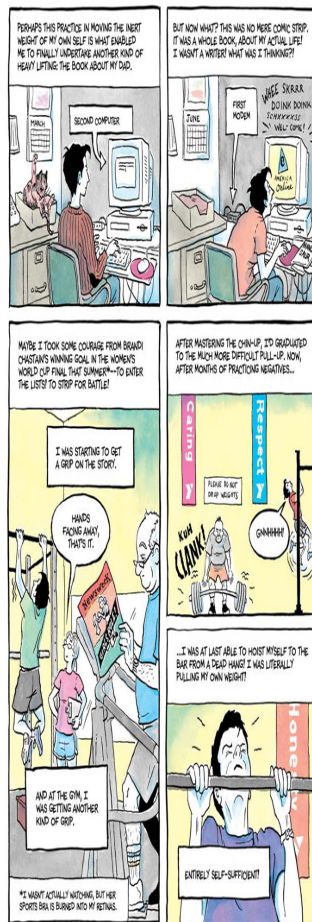
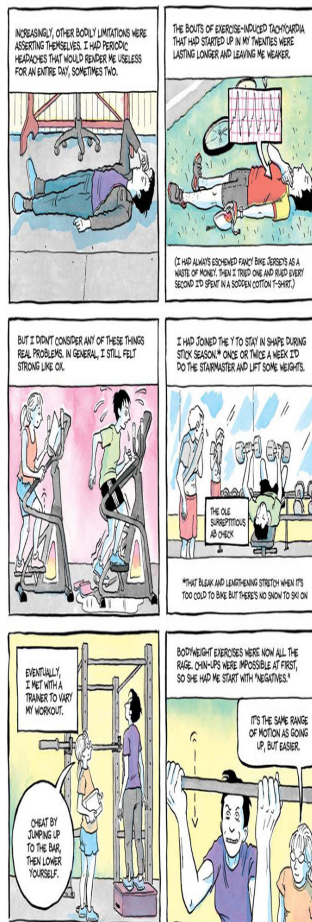
...THE HILLS ARE ALIVE! IS BASED ON THE REAL-LIFE MAMA'S LONG OF THE OUTDOORS.

SHE HAD DIED SOME YEARS EARLIER, BUT THERE WAS A TRAIL NAMED FOR HER.

AND IN THE WOODS, AN EXHAUSTED-FEELING CHAPLAIN, A KID TO THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE SHE HAD LEFT FOR A MORE ACTIVE ONE.

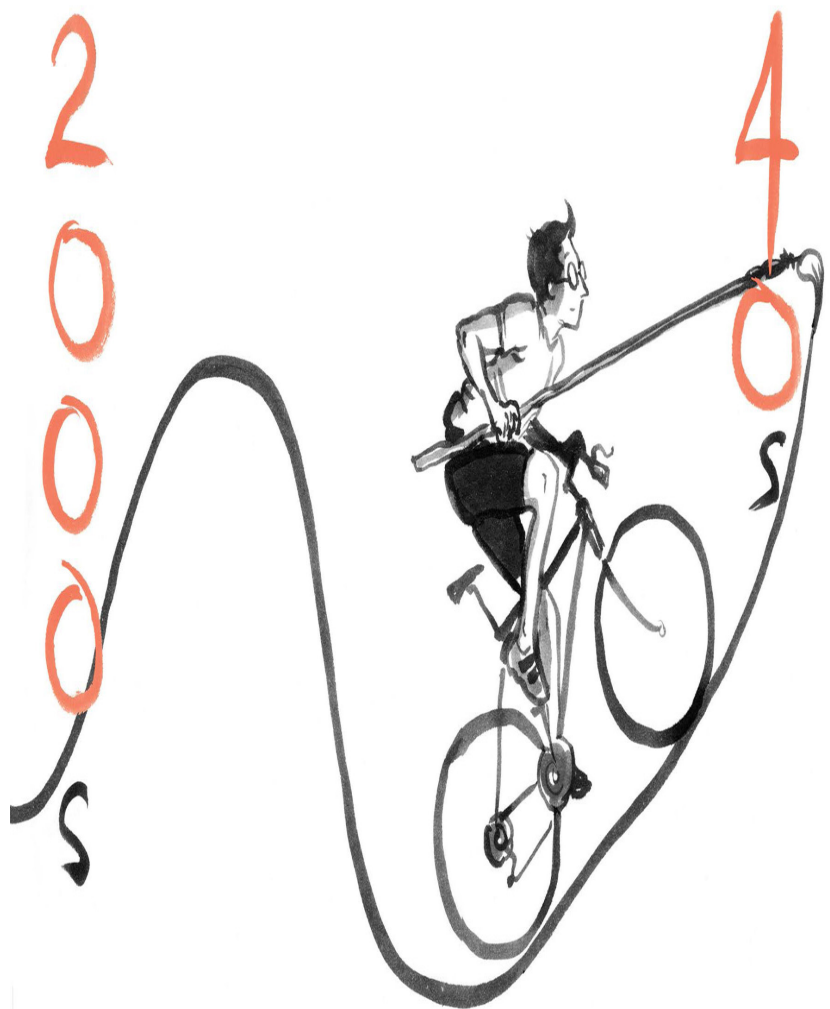








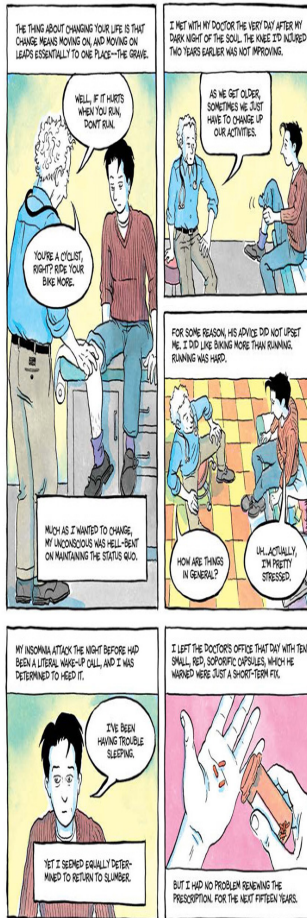


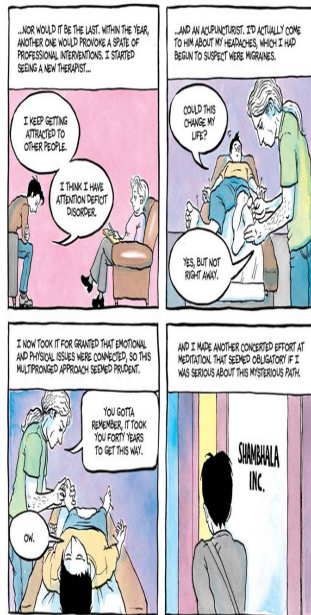
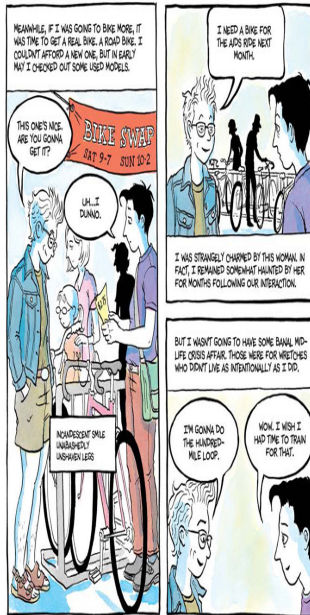
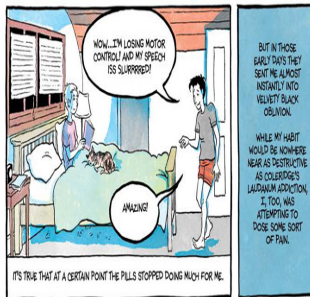


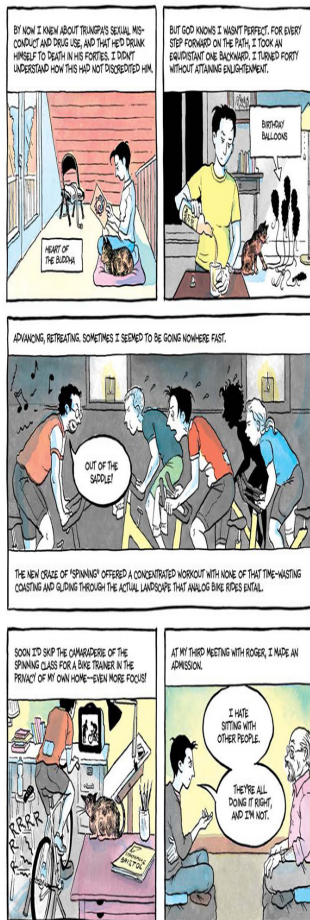
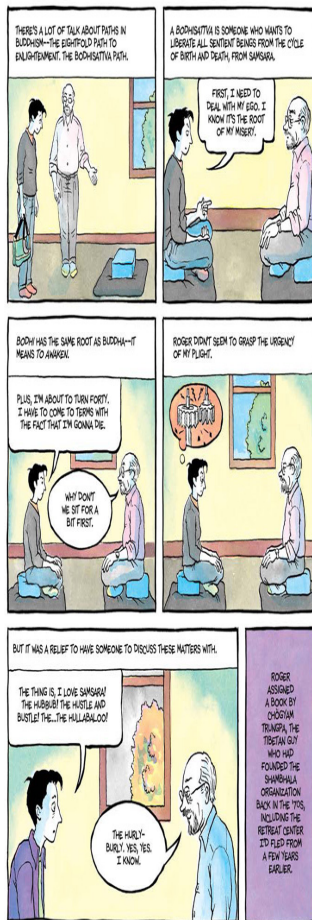
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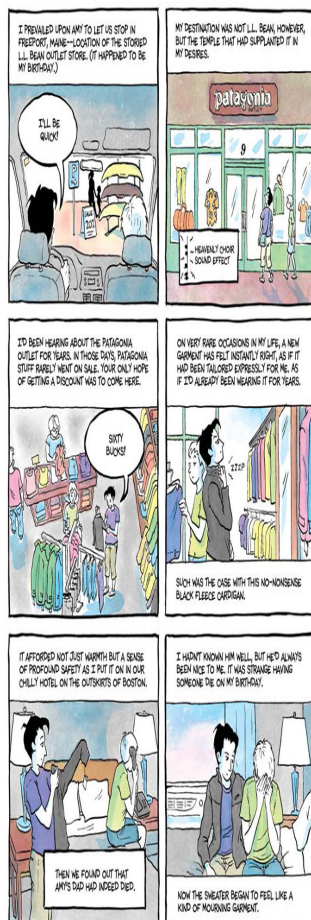
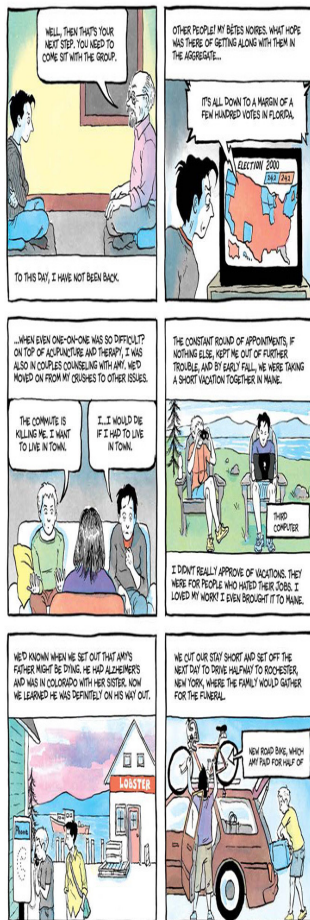
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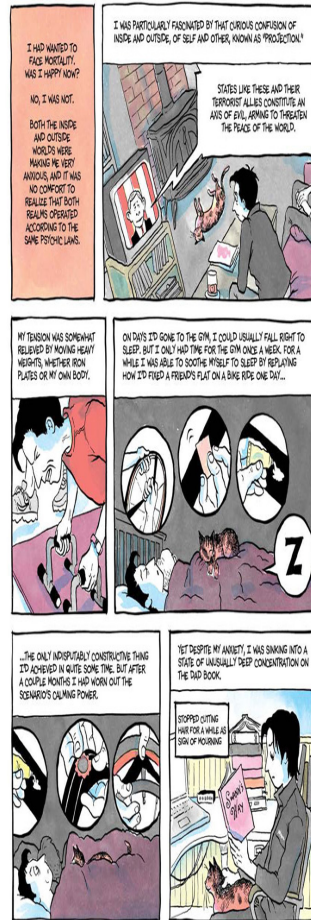
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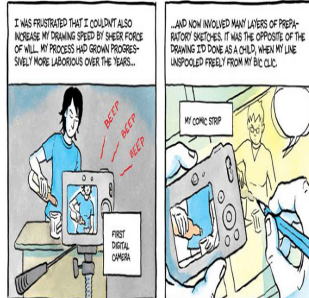
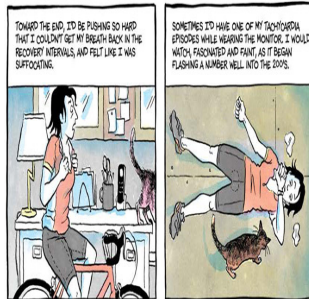
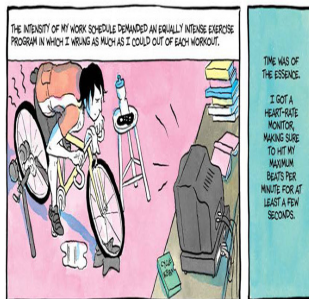


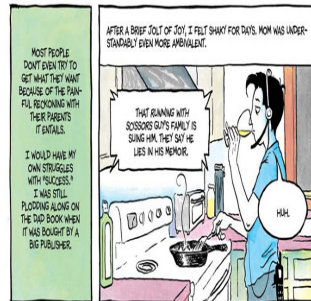
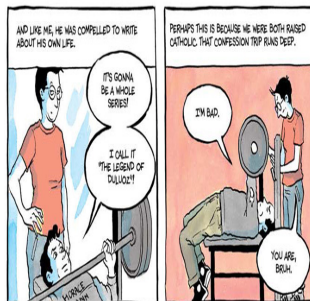
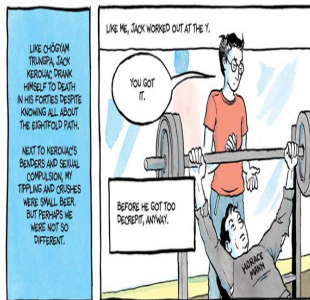


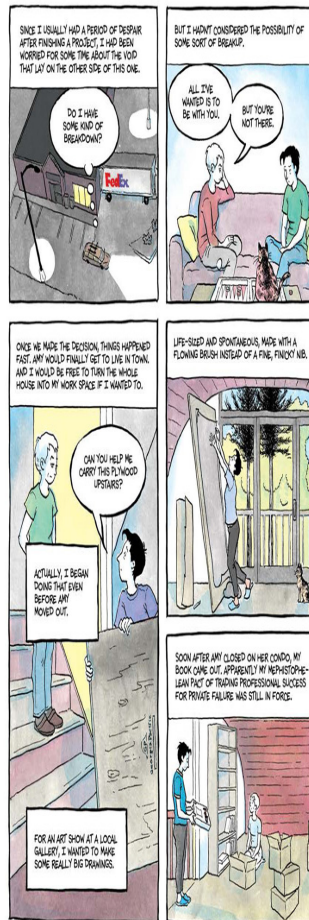
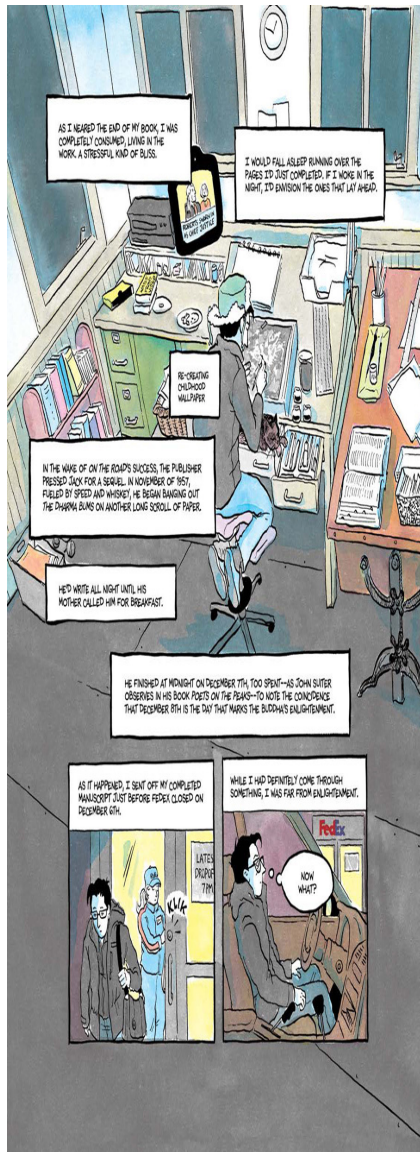


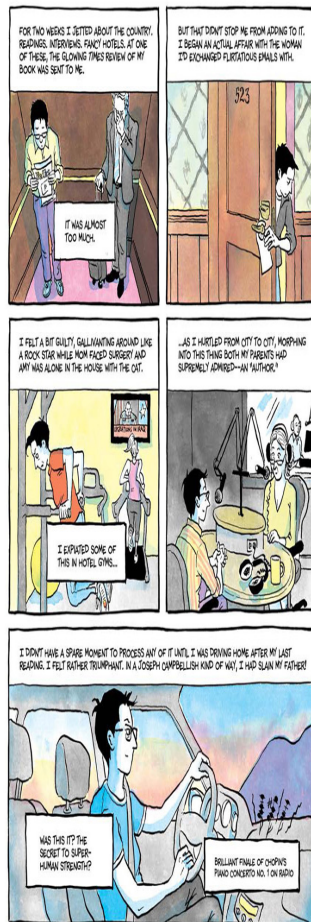


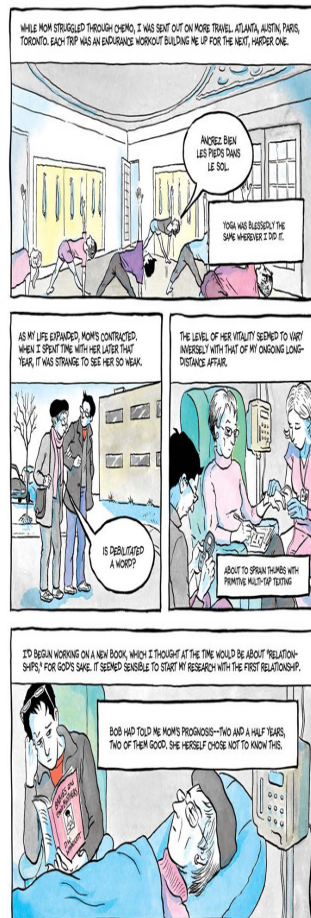


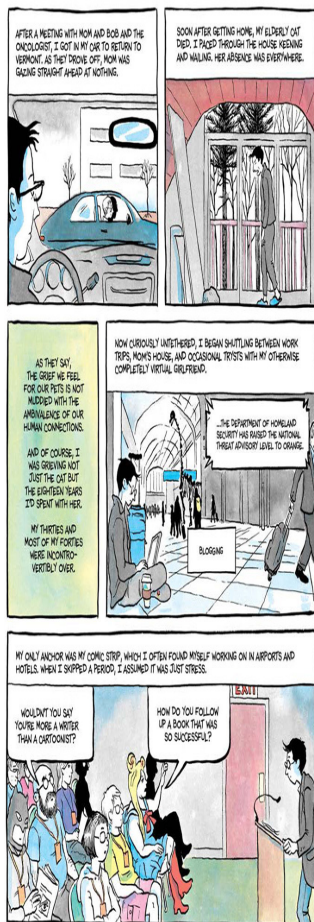


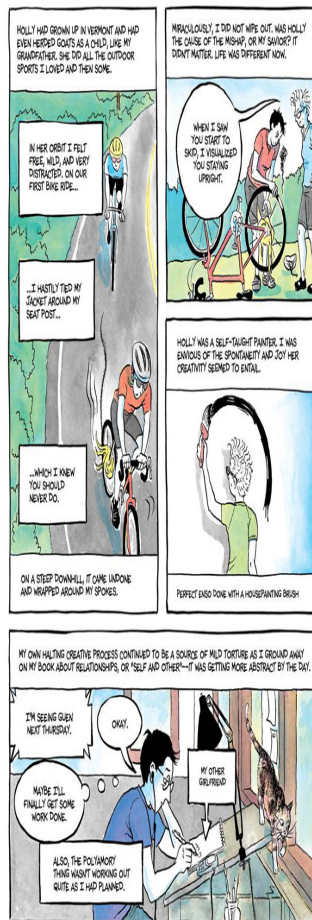
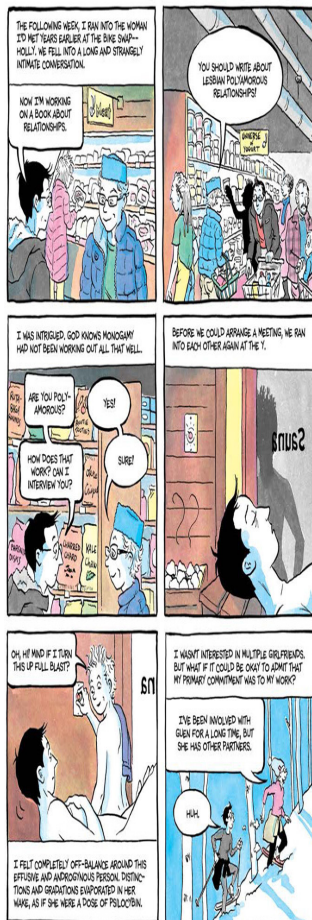














WHEN THE REVOLUTION FAILED, MARGARET SAILED WITH HER PARTNER AND BABY TO AMERICA, JUST MISSING A LETTER FROM WALDO ADVISING HER NOT TO COME.

LIKE OTHER FRIENDS, HE WORRIED SHE'D BE GIVEN A HARD TIME BACK AMONG THE PARTISANS.

SCAVENERS

MARGARET'S SHIP RUN AROUND IN A STORM THREE HUNDRED YARDS OFF FIRE ISLAND. SHE DROWNED WITH HER SMALL FAMILY AT AGE FORTY.

IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT SHE'D GONE AS FAR AS IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR A WOMAN IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY TO GO.

AFTER HOLLY MOVED IN WITH ME, GLEN STARTED COMING OVER TO HANG OUT. IT WAS HARD NOT TO LIKE HER.

SHE WAS FUNNY, ENDOURING, AND WHIP-SMART. SHE'D PASSED THE BAR WITHOUT GOING TO LAW SCHOOL. NOW SHE WAS AN ATTORNEY FOR LEGAL SERVICES.

HOLLY WOULD EVENTUALLY FORSAKE POLYAMORY, BUT GLEN WOULD REMAIN AN ARDENT PRACTITIONER. IN THE RADICAL TRUTH POLYAMORY ENTIALED, SHE FOUND AN EXISTENTIAL FREEDOM.

IT'S BASICALLY FLYING.

HER.

IN FACT, SHE WAS ALSO A PROFESSIONAL PARAGLIDER AND LOVED LAUNCHING HER MIND OFF HILLTOPS TO GLIDE ON THERMAL UPRAFTS.

ISN'T IT DANGEROUS?

YOU ALWAYS WEAR A RESERVE CHUTE.

WHILE I WAS COMING TO ENJOY HIS ENTHUSIASM AND BELIEVED WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN THE NECESSITY OF TAKING LEAPS, AN ACTUAL LEAP HELD ABSOLUTELY NO APPEAL FOR ME AT ALL.

POLYAMORY CONTINUED TO BE HARD WORK, BUT IN A WAY, THAT'S WHAT I LIKED ABOUT IT. IT WAS AN EMOTIONAL EXERCISE REGIMEN.

I SAID YOU COULD CALL ME.

I WANTED YOU TO CALL ME!

WHAT DO YOU REALLY NEED?

...

ONCE, DURING A FIGHT ABOUT GLEN, HOLLY AND I WENT FOR A WALK. IN THE SUMMER NIGHT, SOMETHING SHIFTER, MY REALIST PROPPED AWAY.

BUT IT WAS HARD TO SUSTAIN THIS PERSPECTIVE BACK IN EVERYDAY LIFE. FOR ONE THING, AN INTRACTABLE LIMIT WAS HUNG UPON ME.

THERE WAS ONLY SO MUCH TIME.

I COULD JUST BE FREE!

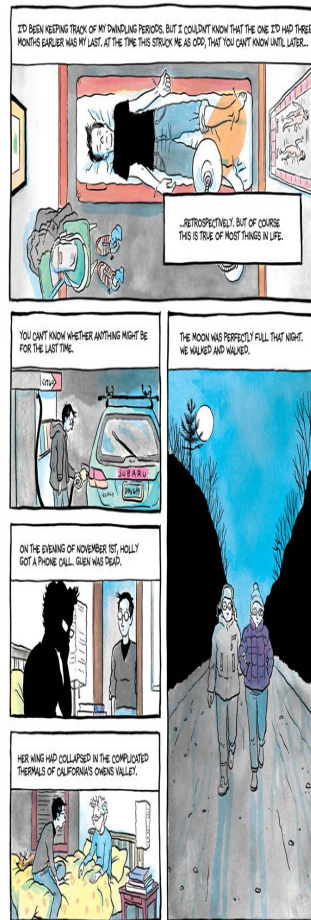
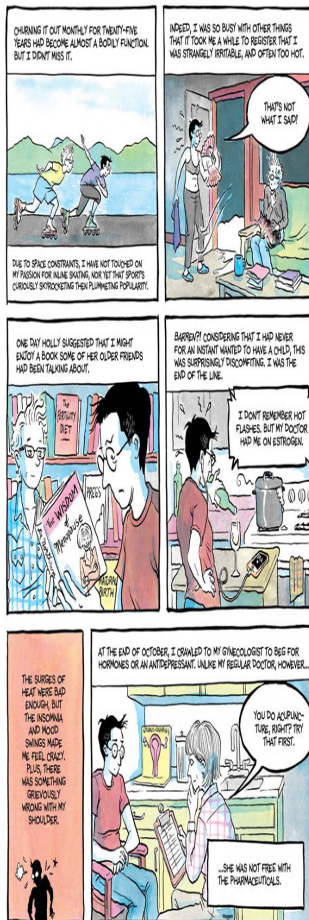
I KNOW!

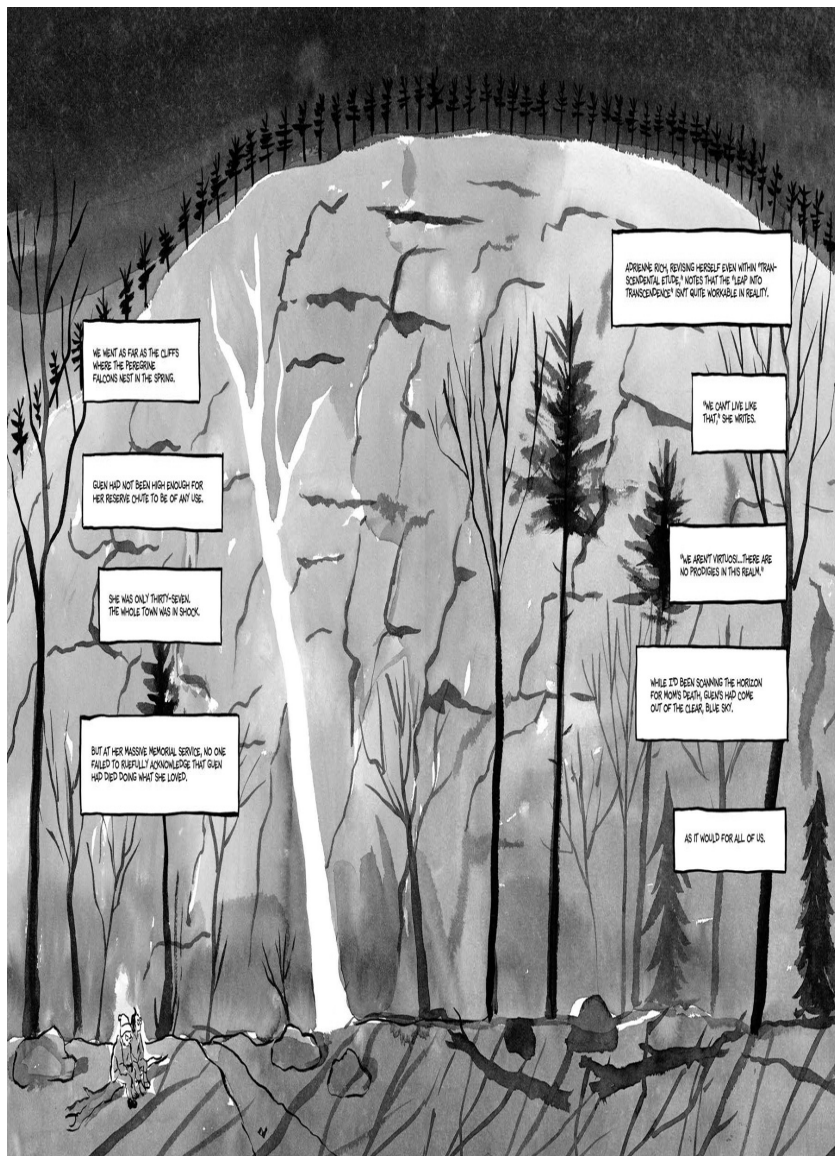
FOR THAT INSTANT, IT WAS ALL ONE!

THE SHIMMERING BLISS OF NONDUALITY!

I COULDN'T KEEP UP WITH MY COMIC STRIP, AND WRITE A BOOK, AND ALSO DO THE NEW THINGS I WAS GETTING NAMED TO DO.

AS THE POLITICAL TIDE TURNED, IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD TIME TO QUIT THE STRIP.





WE WENT AS FAR AS THE CLIFFS
WHERE THE PETERBORO
FALCONS NEST IN THE SPRING.

GLEN HAD NOT BEEN HIGH ENOUGH FOR
HER RESERVE CHAIR TO BE OF ANY USE.

SHE WAS ONLY THIRTY-SEVEN.
THE WHOLE TOWN WAS IN SHOCK.

BUT AT HER MASSIVE MEMORIAL SERVICES, NO ONE
FAILED TO BRUTALLY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT GLEN
HAD DONE WHAT SHE LOVED.

ADRIANNE RICH, REVISING HERSELF EVEN WITHIN "TRAN-
SGRESSORIAL LETTERS," NOTES THAT THE "LEAP INTO
TRANSPARENCY" ISN'T QUITE HORRIBLE IN REALITY.

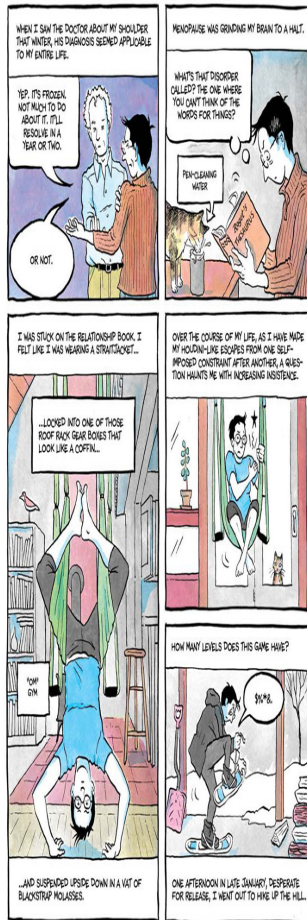
"WE CAN'T LIVE LIKE
THAT," SHE WRITES.

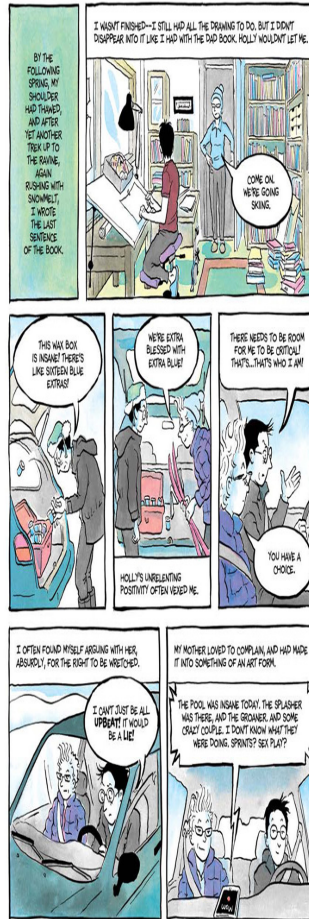
"WE AREN'T VOTUOS...THERE ARE
NO PRODIGES IN THIS REALM."

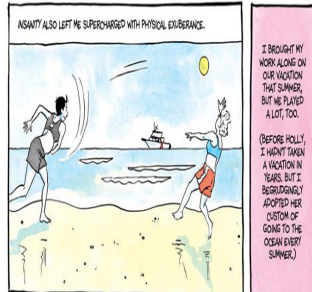
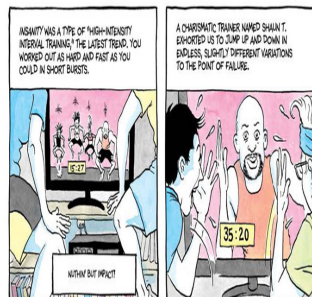
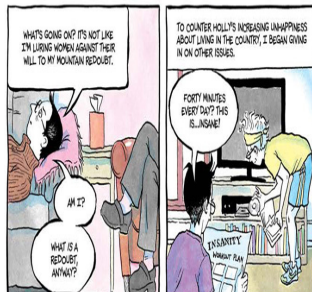
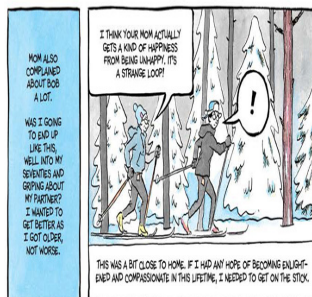
WHILE I'D BEEN SCANNING THE HORIZON
FOR MORE BEAUTY, GLENS HAD COME
OUT OF THE CLEAR, BLUE SKY.

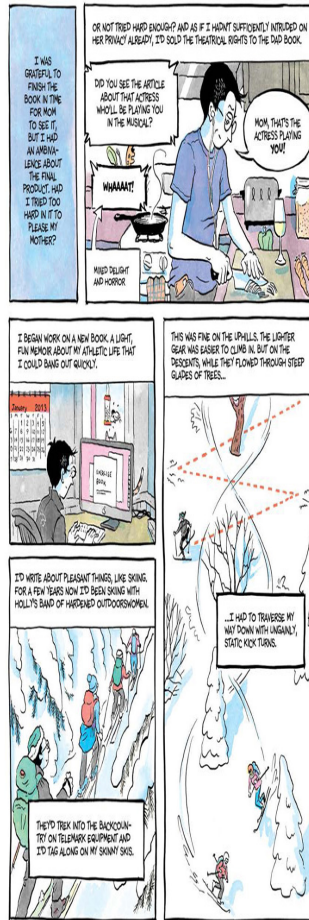
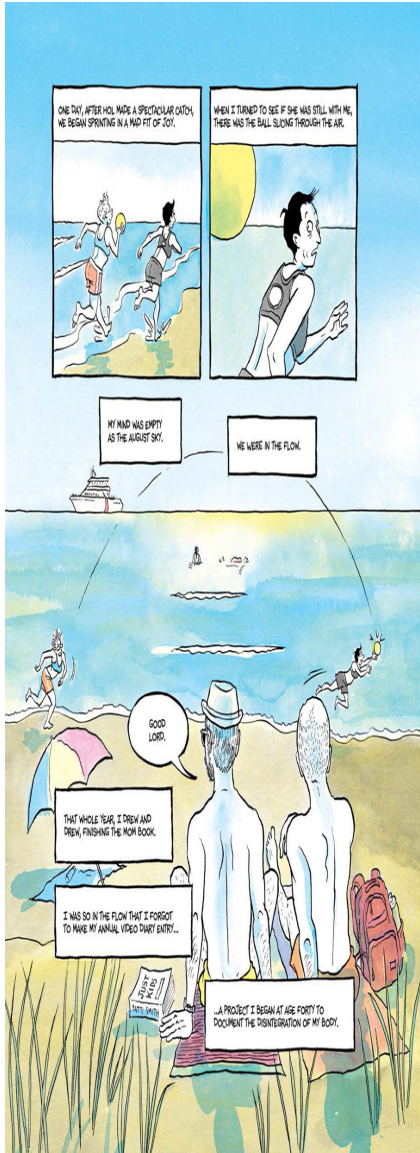
AS IT WOULD FOR ALL OF US.

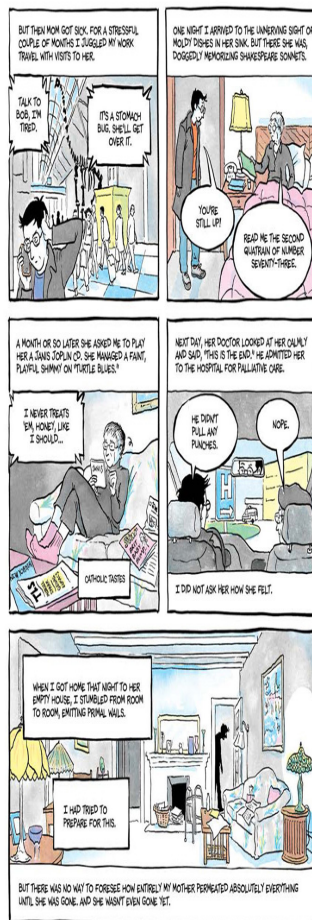


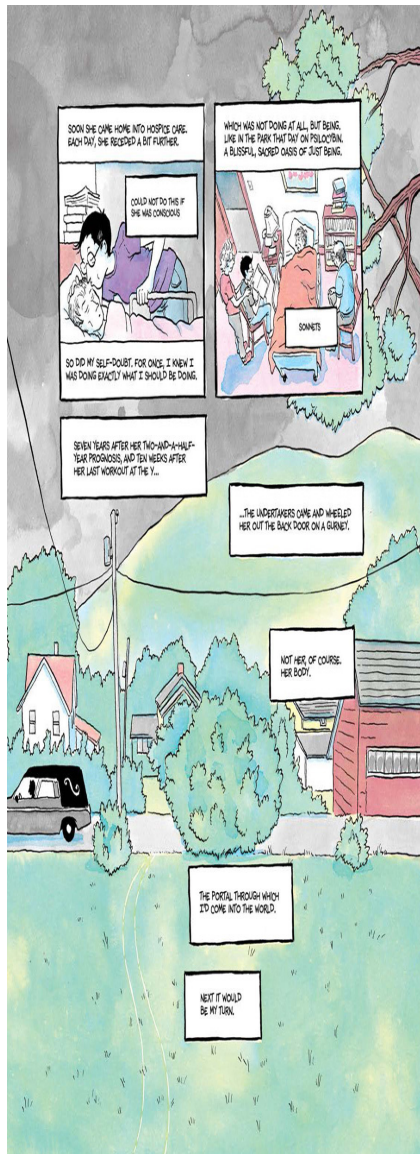










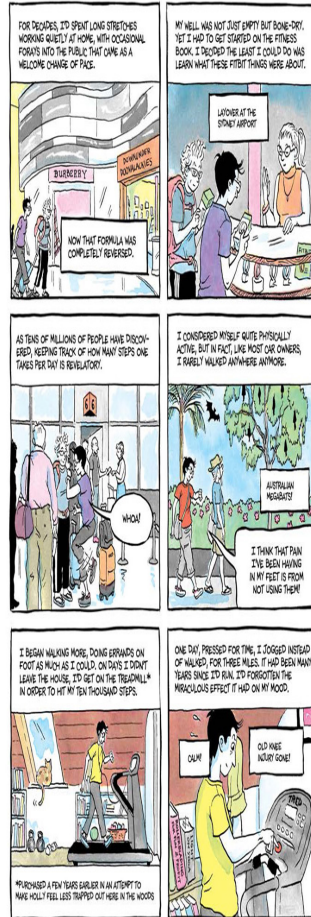


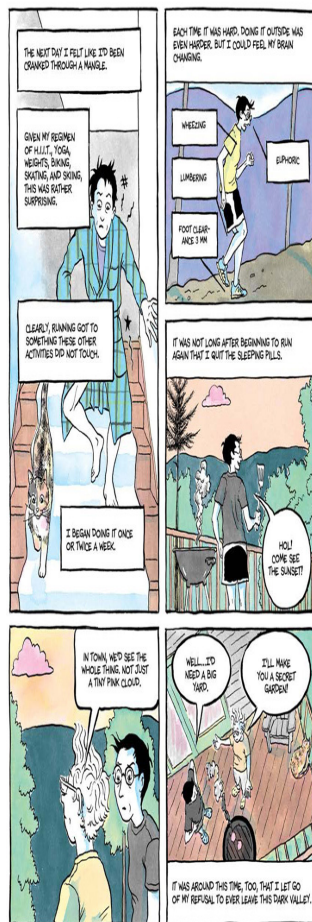
THE SEMI-SADISTIC 7-MINUTE WORKOUT

12 exercises, and you're done for.

AS MY LIFE ITSELF BECAME A KIND OF HIGH-INTENSITY INTERVAL TRAINING, THIS WORKOUT WOULD BE MY SALVATION. I WOULD DO IT ON THREE CONTINENTS, AND MORE OFTEN THAN I CAN COUNT, FIRST THING IN THE MORNING BEFORE I COULD THINK BETTER OF IT. IT RESTORED ELASTICITY TO MY BODY, CLARITY TO MY MIND, AND BRUTALITY TO MY SOUL—THOUGH I WAS STILL UNSURE WHAT A SOUL WAS.

1. Rent a dumpster and, in a grief-stricken daze, fill it with the contents of your dead mother's house.
2. Rush to your dead mother's partner's deathbed when he, also grief-stricken, decides to stop treatment for his multiple illnesses.
3. Rush off again in order to attend Off Broadway musical based on your family misdeeds.
4. Round up wayward family members in logically and emotionally complex operation for episode of game.
5. On grueling tour of speaking engagements, realize you are performing some kind of version of yourself. Wonder if this is what it's like to be a sex worker.
6. Fly to comics festival in France, give talk in English about your lesbian comic strip and gay alien to bewildered immigrant high school students.
7. Travel to interqu岸 for a month of public appearances. Note incremental but honorable edg of life-force with each one.
8. While struggling to feel that you deserve to be an artist's residency in Italy, learn that you have won a MacArthur "genius" grant, and that the musical is moving to Broadway.
9. Become mixed with a sense of profound fraudulence, made worse by knowledge that this is actually quite narcissistic and self-indulgent.
10. Participate in vast publicity machine to promote Broadway musical. Marvel at fact that you have finally become sick of talking about yourself.
11. Accept a string of awards and honors that it would be charitable to turn down, each one leaving you feeling more depleted and foolish than the last.
12. Wonder if your life might be all downhill from here.





MARGARET FULLER CLIMBED THE FIRST BOX LOMOND NOT LONG AFTER LEAVING NEW ENGLAND FOR EUROPE WHEN SHE WAS THIRTY-SIX.

ON THE DESCENT, SHE GOT SEPARATED FROM HER HIKING COMPANION, AND SPENT THE COLD SEPTEMBER NIGHT ALONE AND LOST ON THE MOUNTAIN.

SHE ENDED UP NUT AND SCORCHED ON A LOGS SURROUNDED BY HOWLING STREAMS, BUT SHE KEPT HER HEAD, MOVING TO STAY WARM.

SHE'D LATER DESCRIBE HER EXPERIENCES AS "SUBLIME."

SOON AFTER THIS ADVENTURE IN SELF-RELIANCE, SHE REMAINED THAT JAMES WATSON (THE CUP) RETURN HER LETTERS. SHE WAS DONE WITH HIM.

WHEN IN 1838 EMERSON'S CHURCH SAID HE'D BE FIRED IF HE REFUSED TO GIVE COMMUNION, HE RETREATED TO THE MOUNTAINS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE TO THINK IT OVER.

THAT'S WHEN HE LEFT THE MINISTRY.

COLERIDGE, TOO, HAD A TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE ON A MOUNTAIN. ON HIS SOLO FELL-WALKING TRIP IN THE SUMMER OF 1801, HE CLIMBED SCAFFELL IN THE LAKE DISTRICT, ON THE PRECIPITOUS DESCENT...

HOW COULD I NOW BE BLESSED AM I NOW!

...HE FOUND HIMSELF STUCK IN A SPOT FROM WHICH IT WAS TOO STEEP TO EITHER ADVANCE OR RETREAT. HE LAY BACK AND WATCHED THE RACING CLOUDS.

POSSIBLY THE FIRST PERSON TO DO THIS MERELY FOR RECREATION. PAKY + SQUARE OF OULSON FOLDED IN A STRING BAG.

HE'D MADE THE TREK, IN PART, TO STAVE OFF HIS CROWNING OULM HAST.

BUT IN THE MOUNTAINS, HE DIDN'T NEED ITS PAIN RELIEF OR EXALTING EFFECT.

AFTER ROUNDING HIMSELF FROM HIS "STATE OF ALMOST PROPHETIC" FRANCES A DELIGHT, HE FOUND A WHITTON CHIMNEY TO CLIMB DOWN.

IN 1838, DOROTHY WOULD CLIMB NEIGHBORING SCAFFELL PINE, THE HIGHEST PEAK IN ENGLAND, WITH A SMALL PARTY. SHE WAS FORTY-SIX.

HER FRIEND, HER MIND, A SHERMANS, AND A PORTER

SHE MET WITH NO MISGIVINGS, UNLESS YOU COUNT THE FACT THAT WILLIAM INCLUDED HER ACCOUNT OF THE CLIMB IN THE SECOND EDITION OF HIS GUIDE TO THE LAKES* WITHOUT ATTRIBUTION.

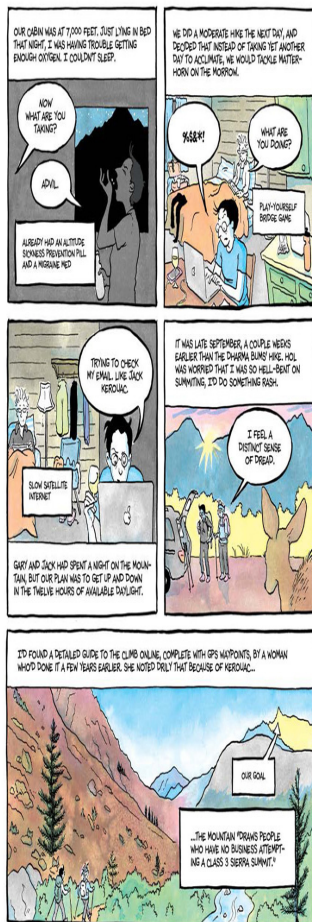
BUT THE TIME, HE WAS ALMOST BETTER KNOWN FOR HIS GUIDANCE THAN FOR HIS POETRY.

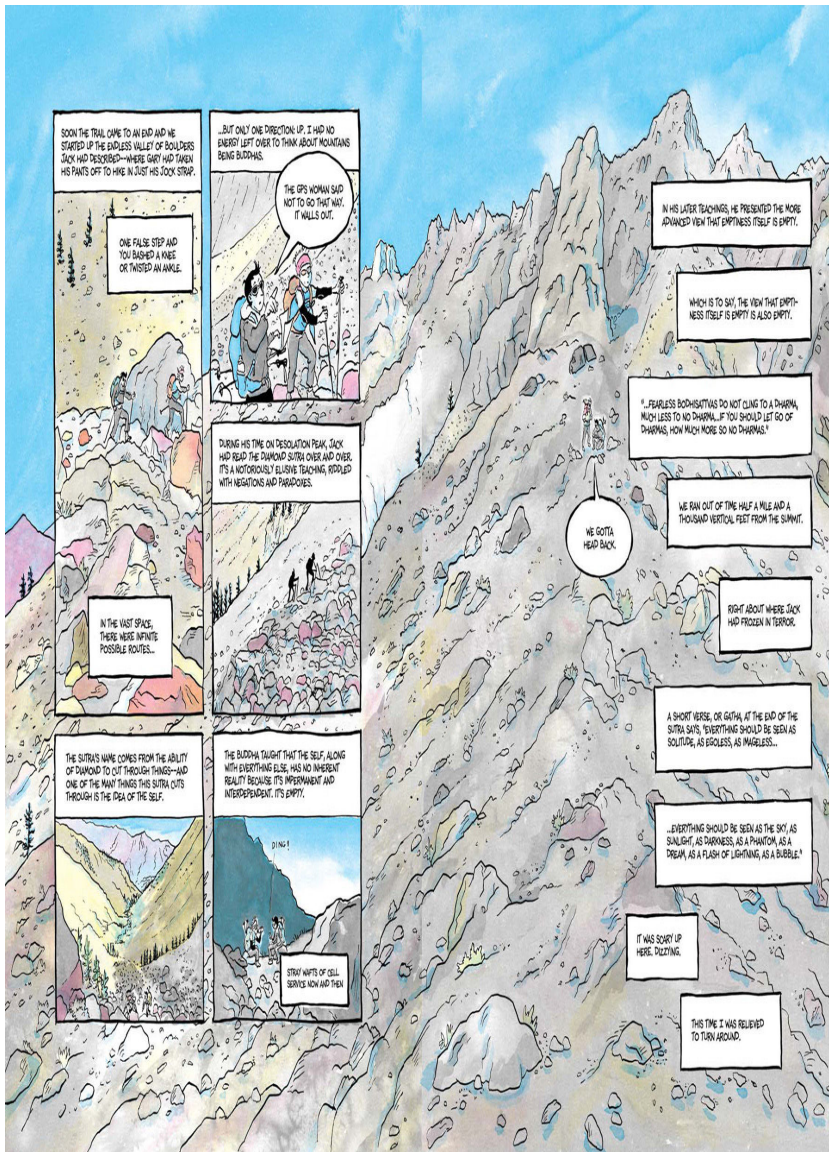
AT AGE FIFTY-SEVEN DOROTHY WENT INTO A PRECISE UNDERSTOOD AT THE TIME AS "PREMATURE PORTAGE."

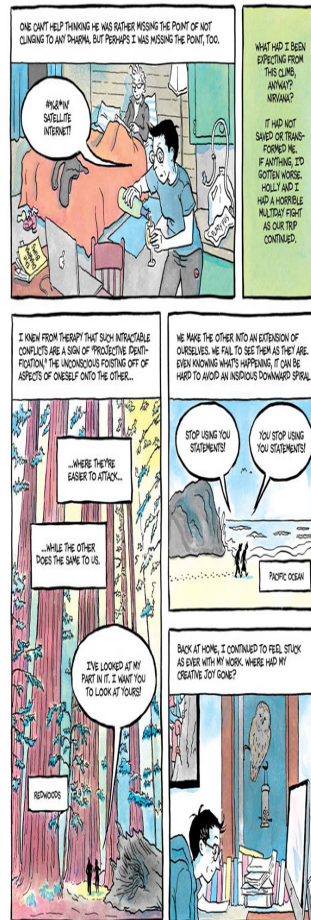
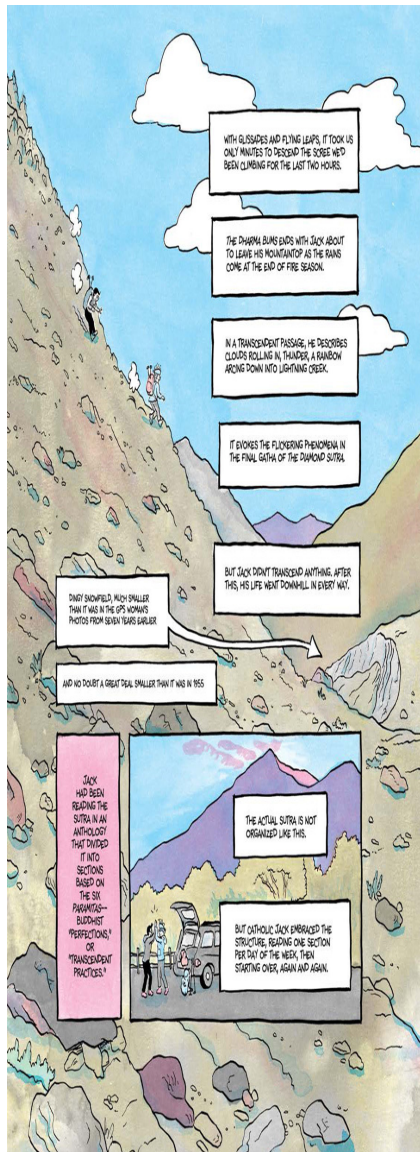
BUT SOMETIMES SHE'D SNIP OUT OF IT AND SEEM FINE, AND SHE WOULD TO BE EIGHTY-THREE.

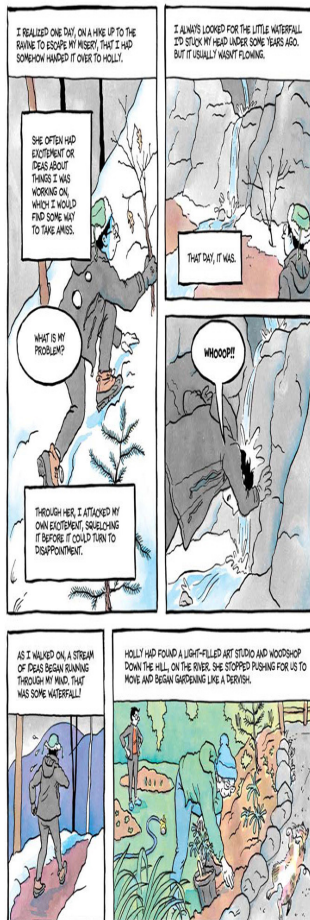
HER BIOGRAPHER FRANKLIN WILSON THUNDERED HER WITH "EXPRESSIVE PRELUDE-SENTIMENTAL" A PROFOUND DEPRESSION THAT MAKES SENTIMENTAL...

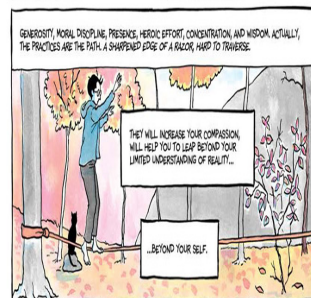
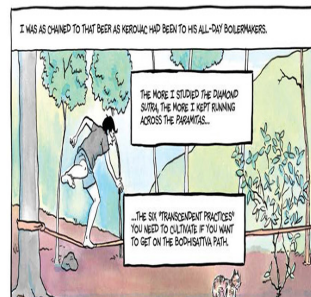
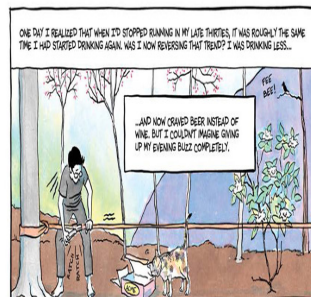
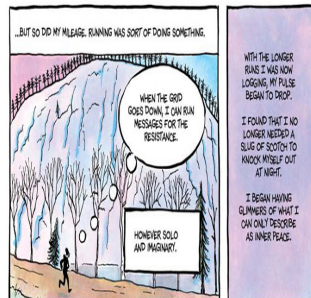
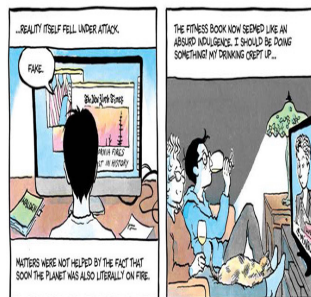
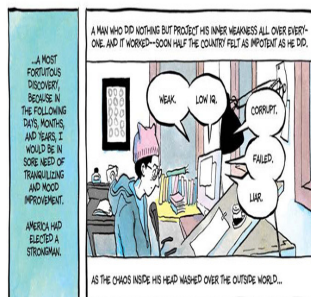
...SUGGESTING THAT PERHAPS IT WAS THE RESULT OF DOROTHY'S LONG-SUPPRESSED CREATIVE ENERGIES.

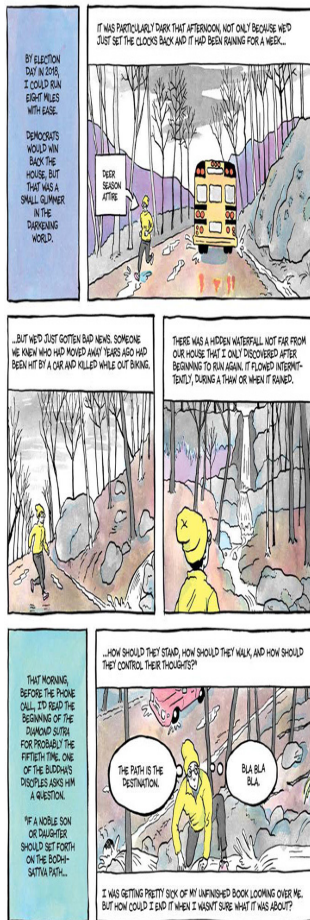


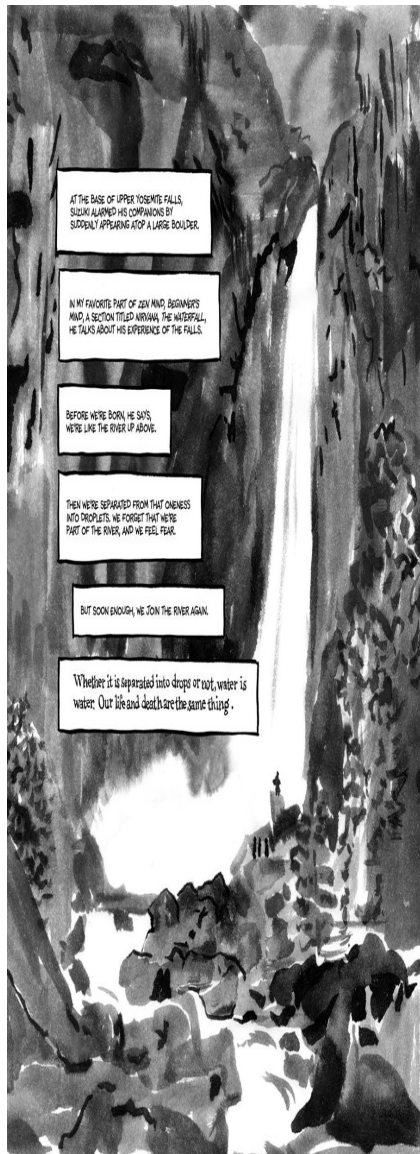


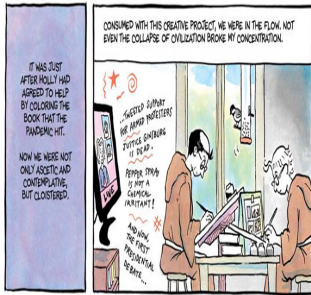












CONSIGNED WITH THIS CREATIVE PROJECT, WE WERE IN THE FLOW, NOT EVEN THE COLLAPSE OF CIVILIZATION BROKE MY CONCENTRATION.



THE WHOLESALE DISRUPTION OF BUSINESS AS USUAL HAS BEEN A CHALLENGE TO STAY BEING THINGS AS THEY ARE. BUT CAN WE DO IT?



WE TOOK BREAKS FROM THE SCORPIONUM TO MAKE A NEW PATH IN THE WOODS.

TRAINED THE CHOICES TO EAT FROM OUR HANDS.

FOR BETTER ACCESS TO THE BROOK, HOL BUILT A BRIDGE OVER THE SWAMP.

NOW HE WALK THERE EVERY DAY, A KIND OF MEDITATION.

OR WILL WE CONTINUE TO DENY OUR MORTALITY, WHICH AMOUNTS TO A PENALTY OF OUR DEPENDENCE ON EACH OTHER'S WELL-BEING?

I WON'T WEAR A MASK, COVID IS A TERROPHAT HUMAN.

WHAT THE REKA IS THE MATTER WITH THESE @#%ING MURDER??

NOTE TO SELF: CULTIVATE COMPASSION FOR CONSPIRACY THEORIES

AND WHAT MORE DO WE HAVE OF CHANGING THE WORLD IF WE CAN'T CHANGE OUR SORRY-ASS BELIEFS?

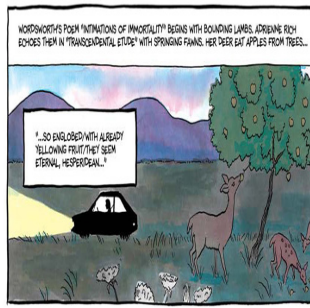
AS WISDOM TEARS TO DO, THE POEM REVEALS SOMETHING VERY SIMPLE THAT'S BEEN HERE ALL ALONG: WE ARE NOT THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING.

ABOUT THE LINK BETWEEN THE TWO PANELS: REPORTED THAT WITHOUT A PAN-DEMIC, SHIT IN HOW WE HAVE THOUGHT, WE'RE STUPID.

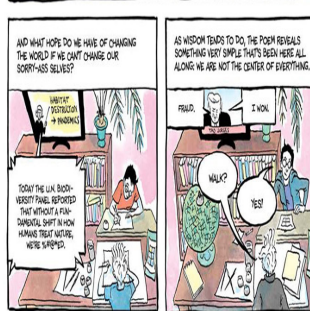
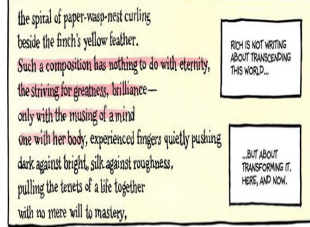
FRAG. I WON.

WALK?

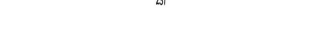
YES.



WISDOMSHEDS FROM "MUTATIONS OF IMMORTALITY" BEGINS WITH BOUNDING LAMBS, JOSEPHINE RICH REMODES THEM IN "TRANSFORMENTAL STOPS" WITH SPRINKLING FRANKS, HER DEER EAT APPLES FROM TREES...



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AND WHAT MORE DO WE HAVE OF CHANGING THE WORLD IF WE CAN'T CHANGE OUR SORRY-ASS BELIEFS?

AS WISDOM TEARS TO DO, THE POEM REVEALS SOMETHING VERY SIMPLE THAT'S BEEN HERE ALL ALONG: WE ARE NOT THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING.

ABOUT THE LINK BETWEEN THE TWO PANELS: REPORTED THAT WITHOUT A PAN-DEMIC, SHIT IN HOW WE HAVE THOUGHT, WE'RE STUPID.

FRAG. I WON.

WALK?

YES.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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PRAISE FOR

ALISON BECHDEL

FUN HOME

"FUN HOME MUST BE THE MOST INGENUOUSLY COMPACT,
HYPER-VERBOSE EXAMPLE OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY TO HAVE
BEEN PRODUCED . . . PIONEERING."

ARE YOU MY MOTHER?

-NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

"MAGNIFICENT . . . BECHDEL'S TRIUMPH IS NOT JUST THAT
SHE'S EMERGED FROM HER TUNNEL, WITH WEARY BUT CLEAR
EYES, BUT THAT SHE'S BROUGHT HER MOTHER WITH HER."

THE ESSENTIAL DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR

-ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

"A BOOK THAT STILL FEELS AT THE CUSP OF SOMETHING NEW:
A WAY OF FOLDING THE WORLD INTO FICTION, OF EXAMINING
HOW THE PERSONAL AND THE POLITICAL INTERSECT IN
INTIMATE LIFE . . . THESE CHARACTERS ARE LOVED – AND YOU
FALL RIGHT IN LOVE WITH THEM TOO."

-NEW YORK TIMES

THE SECRET TO SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH

ALISON
BECHDEL

AUTHOR OF FUN HOME

