

EXVIDA

SANTIAGO COHEN

BOOK 2



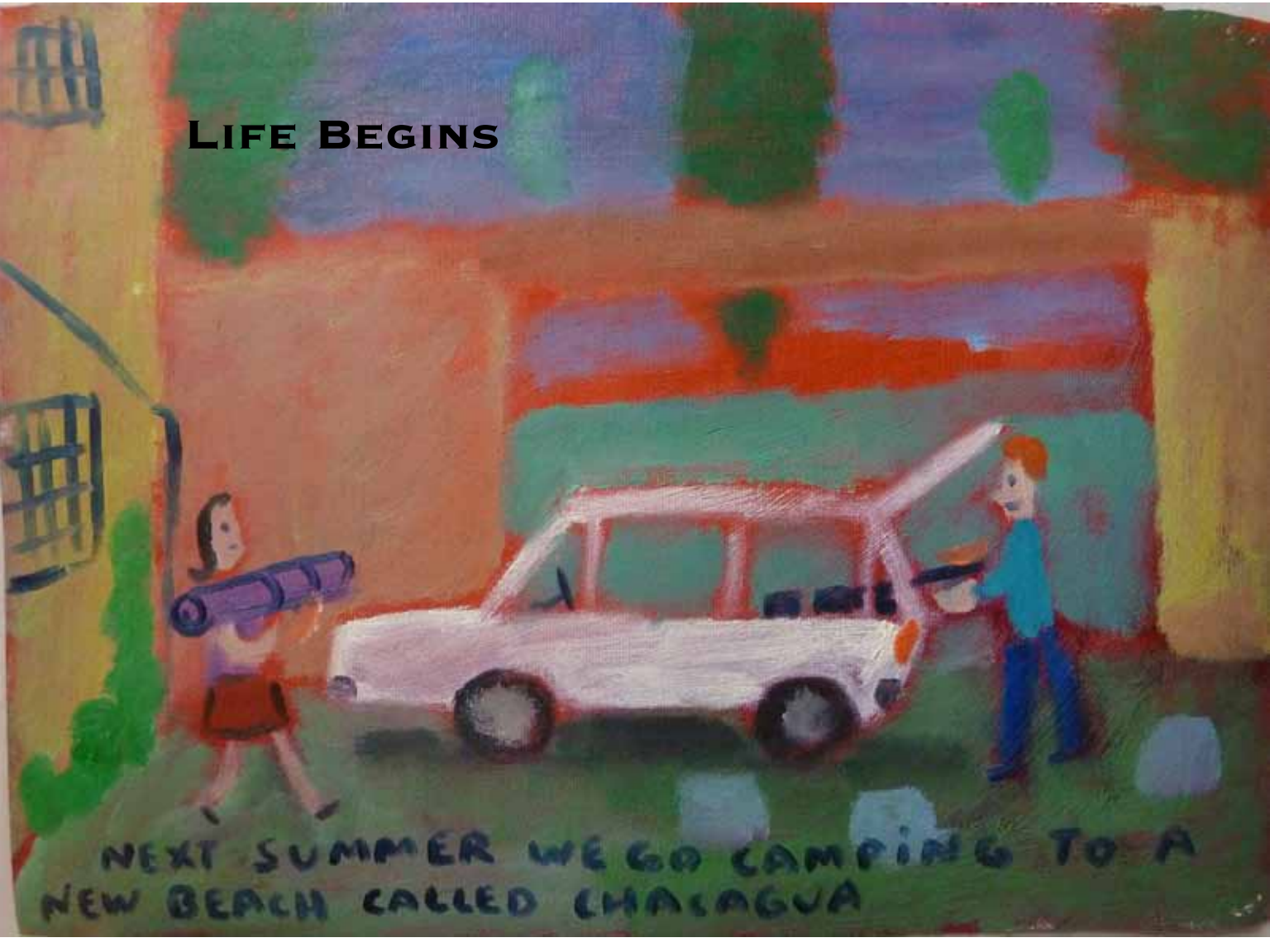
PART TWO: LITTLE POND

For the last six and a half years Santiago has been painting an ex-voto style project . He's already done more than 1150 oil paintings from different stories of his life.

Here is part two



LIFE BEGINS



**NEXT SUMMER WE GO CAMPING TO A
NEW BEACH CALLED CHALAGUA**

FOR A 10 HOUR DRIVE, WE START A
LITTLE LATE...



IT SUPPOSE TO BE ONE OF THE MOST



THE ROAD IS MUDDY AND OUR
CAR DOESN'T HAVE DOUBLE TRACTION
(WE GET STUCK SEVERAL TIME(S))





ETHEL AND I THINK THAT
IT WILL BE FINE TO CAMP
THERE.



WE PREFER TO CAMP
ON THE BEACH THAN
ON A MUDDY DIRT
ROAD.















WHEN WE'RE FINALLY ALONE
ETHEL WANTS TO GO TO SLEEP AGAIN



BUT MY SURVIVING INSTINCTS KICK IN
THINKING THAT WE WON'T BE LUCKY TWICE

IT'S BETTER TO LEAVE
BEFORE THEY COME
BACK TO RAPE ETHEL



A painting depicting two children, a boy with red hair and a girl with dark hair, sitting on a dark, shadowed ground in a dense forest. The boy is wearing a red shirt and blue pants, while the girl is wearing a red shirt and blue pants. They are both looking towards the viewer with neutral expressions. The background is a dense forest with tall, dark green trees and thick foliage. The overall tone is somber and accusatory, as indicated by the text.

WE THINK THAT
THE MEN
FOUND US

TO RAPE
ETHEL.



TONIGHT DEATH HAS
BEEN KIND TO
US.
WE ARE
SAFE FOR
NOW





WHEN PEOPLE WAKE UP
WE TELL THEM WHAT
HAPPENED...



THEY TAKE IT
PERSONALLY AND
ASSURE US THAT NOBODY
IN TOWN WOULD DO ANYTHING
NICE THAT



EVERYBODY IS INCREDIBLY NICE



THEY FEED US EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE NO MONEY.

WHEN WE GO BACK TO THE TENT WE FIND
EVERYTHING EXCEPT OUR CAR KEYS AND
MONEY.



WE PACK EVERYTHING TO CROSS THE RIVER BACK TO SEE IF THE CAR IS STILL THERE.



WE TELL WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SAME MAN WHO CROSSED US THE PREVIOUS NIGHT.



FORTUNATELY THE CAR IS STILL THERE BUT NOBODY KNOWS HOW TO UNLOCK IT.



WE FIND A BIOLOGIST WHO IS STUDYING ALLIGATORS TO HELP US OPEN AND BREAK THE WHEEL'S LOCK AND START THE CAR.



THE MAN WHO HELPED US TO CROSS THE RIVER
LEND US 100 PESOS, IT IS ALL THE MONEY IN
THE WORLD TO HIM.



THAT WILL HELP US FOR
GAS AND TOLL FEES



BEFORE WE LEAVE
HE ASKS HIS SON
TO GO AND TISH US
LUNCH.

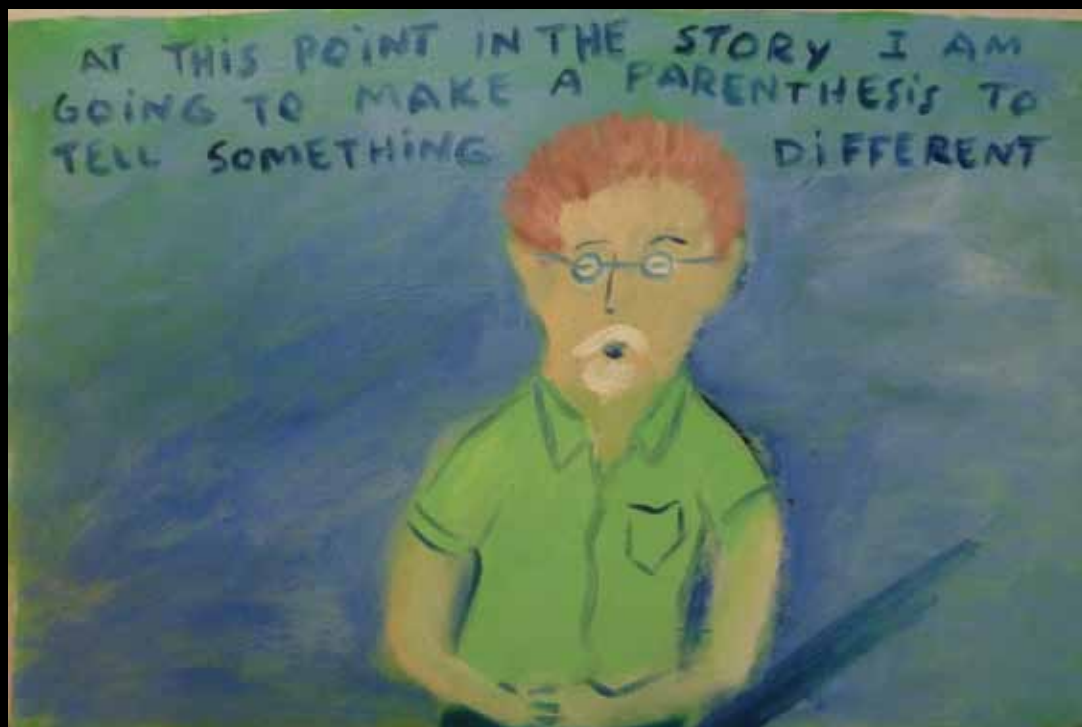


I HAVE BEEN A VEGETARIAN FOR
EIGHT YEARS ALREADY AND I DON'T KNOW
HOW TO DECLINE SUCH GENEROUS OFFER.





LIFE ENDS





WE JUST CAME BACK FROM A TRIP TO MEXICO WHERE WE WE THOUGHT THAT WE WERE GOING TO BURY ALEJANDRO



THE FIRST THERE IN HE WAS CRYING ALL THE TIME



SOME TIME LATER BERNI SHOWS US A GUN AND BULLETS THAT ALEX KEPT IN HIS DRAWER...



SCARING THE SHIT OUT OF US.

THEY JUST MOVED TO A NEW APARTMENT AND ARE STILL UNPACKING. WE MAKE BERNI PROMISE THAT THEY WON'T USE IT.



SHE ASSURES US THAT SHE HAS NO INTENTIONS OF

A COUPLE DAYS LATER LOUISA GABRIELA
BRINGS A PAIN SPECIALIST WHO DRUGS THE
HELL OUT OF ALEJANDRO



HE STOPPED DRUGS

WE'RE NOW BACK HOME
ALEJANDRO IS STILL ALIVE
AND I AM THINKING OF
THE FRIENDS LEFT BEHIND..



FROM THAT MOMENT ONWARD HE IS
IN A CHEERFUL MOOD, EVEN THOUGH
THE PROGNOSIS REMAINS THE
SAME.



ETHEL MET ALEJANDRO AND BERNI
ONE SUMMER WHEN SHE WAS STILL
IN HIGH SCHOOL WHEN SHE WORKED
IN HER DAD'S
OFFICE...



DOCTORS CESARMAN'S OFFICE WAS MADE
BY THE THREE BROTHERS:

FERNANDO
TEDDORO
EDUARDO



ONE
PSYCHOANALYST AND TWO CARDIOLOGISTS

ALEJANDRO WAS A MEDICAL STUDENT



BERNI WAS TEDDORO'S RIGHT HAND ASSISTANT

DOCTORS CESARMAN'S OFFICE IN THE 70S
WAS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT
IN MEXICO.



WHEN I MET ETHEL THE THREE OF
THEM WERE VERY CLOSE...





WE RODE THE TRAIN FROM MEXICO
CITY TO GUERNAVACA WITH THE
HOBOS SNIFFING GLUE



WE WERE BURIED IN
SAND NEAR THE PYRAMIDS OF
TULUM



WE WATCHED OUR FIRST VIDEO
TOGETHER



BEAU GESTE (MARTY FELOMAN)

IN 1990 WE
DISCOVERED
NEW YORK
TOGETHER





ALEJANDRO PASSES AWAY IN SPITE OF MAJOR EFFORTS
BY A LARGE GROUP OF DOCTORS. ON JUNE 2009
A MONTH SHORT TO HIS 57TH BIRTHDAY...



LIFE BEGINS -CONTINUED



ON THE WAY BACK TO MEXICO CITY WE DECIDE
TO BUY ALL THE TOLL TICKETS IN ADVANCE



IT IS SO HOT THAT WE DECIDE TO
OPEN THE WINDOWS, BECAUSE ETHEL'S
CAR DOESN'T HAVE A.C.



WE OPEN THE WINDOWS, THE TOLL
TICKETS FLY INTO A RAVINE AND
WE LOSE THEM



WE END UP ADDING 3 HOURS TO
OUR TRIP IN RURAL ROADS



TEACHER



FOR 3 YEARS I TEACH ANIMATION TO
300 STUDENTS. WE PRODUCE A LOT OF
FILMS



IN 1980 I WRITE A LETTER TO MY HERO!
NORMAN MCLAREN IN CANADA



I GET REALLY SURPRISED WHEN I
RECEIVE A REPLY. SEVERAL MONTHS
LATER.



THE DEAN OF MY SCHOOL GETS ALL EXCITED
ABOUT IT AND MANAGES TO GET FUNDING
TO GO TO CANADA.



SEVERAL MONTHS LATER WE GO TO
MONTREAL WHERE I SPEND A WEEK TALKING
TO MCLAREN AND SOME OTHER
ANIMATORS.



WHEN HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO
WITH ME HE PUTS ME TO WATCH MOVIES



FERNANDO, ETHEL'S DAD, INTRODUCES ME TO
THE DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
SHORT FILMS AT CHURCHILL'S STUDIOS.



HE GETS A GREAT REACTION ABOUT
MY STORYBOARD WHEN HE READS IT



HE ASKS ME TO PRESENT HIM WITH
A BUDGET TO PROVE
THE ANIMATION...



A MONTH LATER, JUST AFTER I FINISH
THE BUDGET I FIND OUT THAT...



FERNANDO'S FRIEND WAS FIRED
FROM CHURUBUSCO'S STUDIOS
BY THE SISTER OF THE
PRESIDENT OF MEXICO *



*WHO IS ALSO THE MINISTER OF CULTURE.

I SPEND A MONTH CALLING HER OFFICE
CONSTANTLY TO REQUEST FOR AN AUDIENCE
TO SHOW MY CASE TO MAKE THE FILM.



THE ONLY OPTION I
HAVE IS TO TALK TO HER
TO GET THE PROJECT
ROLLING AGAIN.



FINALLY I GET AN APPOINTMENT, BUT SHE
MAKES ME WAIT ALL DAY JUST TO FIND
OUT THAT THE PROJECT DOESN'T EXIST...



EVEN WITH ALL MY LOVE FOR MEXICO
I REALIZE THAT I DON'T LIKE THE WAY
THINGS WORK HERE

I WILL NEVER GROW AS BIG AS I WANT TO...



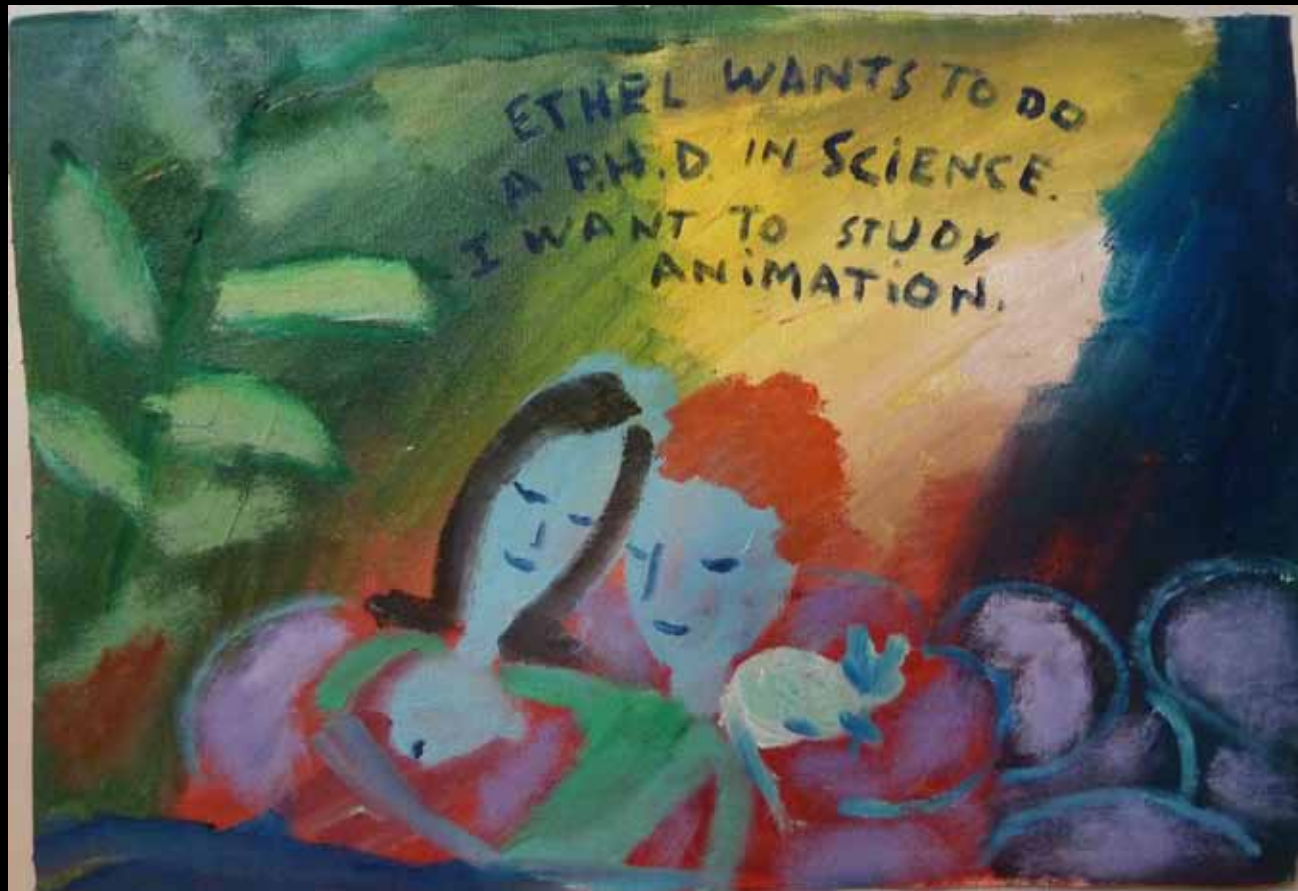
NUEVA YORK 1980







ETHEL WANTS TO DO
A PH.D IN SCIENCE.
I WANT TO STUDY
ANIMATION.



HALINA'S TROUBLES



A MONTH LATER, ONCE HER BRUISES
HAVE HEALED, SHE LOOKS LIKE AN
"IMPROVED VERSION OF HERSELF."



A COUPLE MONTHS LATER HALINA IS DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER OF THE MOUTH AND SHE WILL GO TO NEW YORK TO HAVE IT REMOVED...



ETHEL'S GRANDPARENTS PAY FOR A TICKET FOR ME AS A COMPANION TO ETHEL WHILE HALINA GOES THROUGH THE ORDEAL IN NEW YORK.



I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE GOING BACK TO NEW YORK SO SOON. EXCEPT THIS TIME IT IS SAD...



THE NIGHT BEFORE THE OPERATION WE HAVE DINNER IN AN INDIAN RESTAURANT CALLED NIKK...



THIS WILL BE THE LAST TIME
SHE BITS WITH HER OWN TEETH



NEXT MORNING SHE WILL FACE A
VERY AGGRESSIVE SURGERY WITH
HEAVY RADIATION TO FINISH.



IN THE TWO WEEKS I SPEND IN NEW
YORK I AM BASICALLY ALONE WAITING
FOR THE TIME I AM ALLOWED TO
VISIT MALINA



ETHEL IS ALL THE TIME WITH
MALINA AND IT IS DIFFICULT
FOR ME TO HELP.



WHEN IT IS TIME FOR ME TO GO
BACK, HALINA IS STILL AT THE
HOSPITAL, SHE NEEDS A PROTHESIS.



I'M SAD TO LEAVE THEM, BUT ROSANA
IS COMING TO REPLACE ME.



WHEN I COME BACK TO MEXICO
I HAVE PUT IN HALINA'S HOUSE
WITH BELINDA, ETHEL'S
SISTER.



BELINDA AND ME BOND BY BEING
SAD FOR HALINA.



IN TWO WEEKS SHE'LL GO TO NEW YORK
TO REPLACE ETHEL



I THINK THAT HALINA BROUGHT ALL
THIS BY CHALLENGING HER GOOD
LUCK. HER "LOOKS", NOW, ARE
UNIMPORTANT.



WITH HER PROTHESES

(I HOPE SHE CAN EAT

PART THREE: MIGRATION



WE LOVE THE PAPER
BECAUSE IT IS CRITICAL
OF THE U.S. INFLUENCE
IN THE WORLD.



FISGÓN AND ME BECOME GOOD
FRIENDS. I ASK HIM IF I CAN
PRESENT IDEAS FOR THE SUPPLEMENT
AND HIS BOSS: MAGG, WHO IS THE
ART DIRECTOR.



I'VE BEEN A PHOTOGRAPHER
ALL MY LIFE BUT I HAVE ALSO DONE
DRAWINGS PAINTINGS AND
ANIMATIONS



A COUSIN OF MINE BEGS ME TO BE
HER WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHER.
I DON'T WANT TO DO IT, BUT I CAN
USE THE MONEY.



I ARRIVE TO THE WEDDING
UNPREPARED.
(MY HEART IS NOT IN IT)



I FORGET TO SYNC THE FLASH

WHEN I DEVELOP THE PICTURES
I REALIZE THAT I ONLY HAVE
HALF OF THE FRAME OF
EVERY PHOTO



WHICH MEANS THAT I HAVE PHOTOS
OF EITHER BRIDE OR GROOM
BUT



WHEN I TELL HER ABOUT IT
MY COUSIN GOES CRAZY AND
CURSES ME SOBING



I TELL HER THAT I CAN STILL DO THE
PHOTO ALBUM WITH ANY IMAGES I CAN
RESCUE (FREE)



AFTER A FEW WEEKS I GIVE HER
THE FINISHED ALBUM FOR FREE



I THINK IT LOOKS
PRETTY GOOD...

I CAN TELL THAT SHE LIKES IT!
BUT DOESN'T TRY TO PAY
FOR MY WORK



I DON'T LIKE PHOTOGRAPHY
ANYMORE. I HAVE TO DO
SOMETHING ELSE FOR A LIVING...



MAYBE I CAN BE A CARTONIST...

BECOMING AN ARTIST

THE NEXT MONTH I WORK ON IDEAS
FOR A COMIC STRIP



I GO TO THE CARTOONISTS MEETINGS
TO TALK ABOUT MY IDEAS...



I SHOW MAGU Z IDEAS: ONE
WITH WORMS, THE
OTHER ABOUT A
CHARACTER WHO
EVERYBODY CONFUSES







TIME TO GO



WE JUST
WANT TO
GO TO
NEW
YORK
TO STUDY



TIE THE KNOT



IN 1982 WE'VE BEEN LIVING
TOGETHER FOR ALMOST THREE
YEARS. OUR COMMITMENT TO
EACH OTHER IS SEALED.



MARRIAGE IS JUST A LEGAL
FORMALITY. WE ARE SURE WE
DON'T WANT TO GET MARRIED IN
A SYNAGOGUE.



WHEN WE TELL MY PARENTS ABOUT OUR
MARRIAGE PLANS, THEY CONVINCE US
TO GET MARRIED AT HOME WHERE FATHER
WILL FUNCTION AS A RABBI.



FATHER WILL GO TO HIS RABBI AND
WILL ASK HIM ABOUT THE JEWISH
CORE AND RITUALS.



FATHER GETS EXCITED ABOUT THAT.
MOTHER IS NOT SO SURE, BUT SHE'S
HAPPY THAT WE'LL GET MARRIED.



ETHEL AND ME COULD HAVE BEEN FINE
WITH JUST A CIVIL CEREMONY BUT IT
DOESN'T HURT TO MAKE MY PARENTS
HAPPY.



A FEW YEARS BACK MY
PARENTS SUGGESTED THAT
IDEA, WHEN WE ELOPED,
I DIDN'T KNOW WHY IT
MAKES SENSE NOW.



EVERYBODY SINGS THE WEDDING MARCH
FATHER GETS READY TO BE A RABBI.







THE TITANIC IS SINKING

ETHEL RENTS A SUBLET APARTMENT IN
NEW YORK FOR AUGUST



THIS GIVES US A WHOLE MONTH TO GET
AN APARTMENT AND BUY OUR FURNITURE
BEFORE CLASSES.

ETHEL GETS HER STUDENT VISA FIRST
AND IS READY TO GO, ON THE OTHER
HAND PRATT DOESN'T SEND MINE.
THE U.S. EMBASSY TELLS ME THAT
I CAN'T GO...



WITH ETHEL'S VISA, AS A SPOUSE,
I'M ALLOWED TO WORK, I DON'T
NEED MY STUPID STUDENT VISA...





PART 4

THIS LITTLE TOWN BLUES



WE BARELY FIT IN IT. WE HAVE
TO LOOK FAST FOR OUR "REAL"
APARTMENT.



VERY SOON WE DISCOVER THAT
OUR \$400 RENT BUDGET IS ALMOST
IMPOSSIBLE TO MEET.



I FAVOR LOW RENT APARTMENTS
ETHEL PREFERS AREAS WHERE
HER MOM CAN STAY



FINALLY, WITH OUR TIME RUNNING OUT,
WE FIND A CUTE STUDIO APARTMENT
ON 22ND ST AND LEXINGTON.



THE BUILDING IS VERY CLOSE TO NYU
WHERE ETHEL WILL STUDY.

(WE AGREE TO
PAY \$700)



THE RENT IS GOING TO TAKE ALMOST
ALL OUR MONEY FROM ETHEL'S SCHOLARSHIP

226

(... IT IS \$800)



WE MOVE
IN THE
FIRST WEEK
OF SEPTEMBER
WITH OUR
NEW
FURNITURE



THE NEXT MORNING
WE WAKE UP LATE
REALIZING TO OUR
SHOCK THAT THE LOFT
HAS NO NATURAL LIGHT



IT IS DARK AS A CAVE ON A
SUNNY DAY. WE ARE ON
A SECOND FLOOR, AND THE
HUGE BUILDING IN FRONT
BLOCKS ANY LIGHT FROM
OUR WINDOW.



THIS IS TERRIBLE, COMING FROM MEXICO.
THERE ISN'T A PLANT IN THE WORLD
THAT CAN SURVIVE HERE.



I WONDER IF
WE CAN TOO?

WE SCREWED UP
LOOKING AT THE
THE MORNING.

BIG TIME BY NOT
APARTMENT IN



WE NOW HAVE A TWO YEAR
LEASE, AND WE ARE FUCKED





I AM SCARED TO LOOK FOR A JOB
BECAUSE MY ENGLISH IS NOT THAT GOOD



THE APARTMENT HAS ONLY AN
ELECTRIC HEATER AND OUR BILL IS
SO HIGH, THAT WE DON'T HAVE ANY
MONEY LEFT.



I AGREE TO SEE HER, EVEN THOUGH
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT
ILLUSTRATOR (OR REP) IS.



WHEN I MEET MICHELLE
THE NEXT DAY, I NOTICE
THAT SHE HAS A FRENCH
ACCENT BECAUSE SHE IS
FROM MAROCCO.



WE LIKE EACH OTHER RIGHT AWAY...
SHE LIKES MY WORK AND WANTS TO
REP ME...



SHE THINKS THAT I SHOULD
MAKE AN "ILLUSTRATION"
PORTFOLIO WITH SELECTED
FRAMES OF MY CARTOONS



SHE ALSO ASKS ME TO MAKE DESIGNS
FOR A CHRISTMAS CARD TO SEE IF
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART WOULD
BUY IT



I WORK A
LOT OF IDEAS
BUT HAVE NO
"CLUE" OF WHAT
I'M DOING



MICHELLE SHOWS MY IDEAS



AND THE MOMA
BUYS ONE OF THEM
FOR NEXT YEAR'S
CHRISTMAS

JUST A FEW
MONTHS IN THE
"BIG APPLE"
AND I ALREADY
"MADE IT"



I WILL SURVIVE!









THE WINTER OF MY DISCONTENT



MY CLOTHES ARE NOT WARM
ENOUGH TO GO THROUGH ALL
WINTER, BUT I WON'T FIND THAT
OUT UNTIL DECEMBER



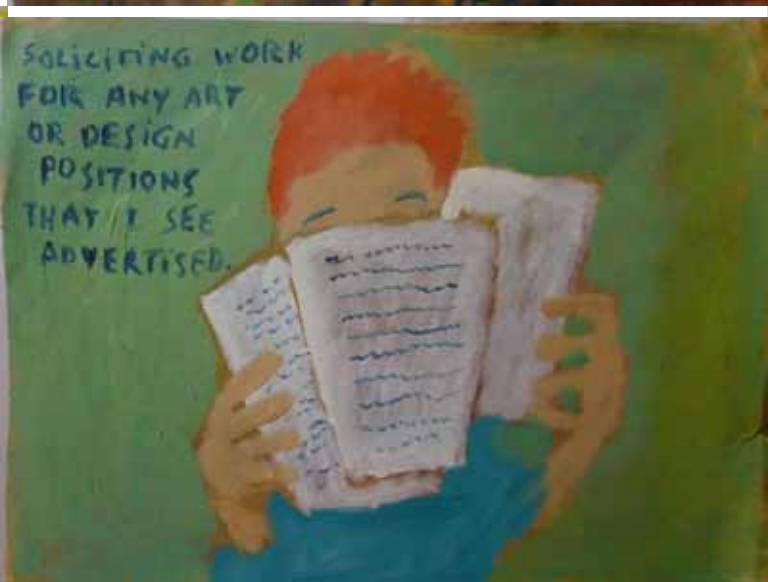
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL IF WINTER
ENDS MARCH 21ST?



**CAN YOU GIVE ME
JOB?**

MY JOB
HUNTING
IS EXHAUSTING!







BACK TO SCHOOL





MICHELLE, MY REP, HATES IT.
SHE THINKS THAT I AM
GETTING BAD HABITS,
I SHOULD NOT CHANGE
STYLES...



WHEN MR. MINHAESCO REALIZES THAT THE
STUDENTS
ARE
COPYING
HIM,
HE
REVER-
SES HIS
ADVISE



IT DAWNS ON HIM THAT HE IS CREATING
POOR CLONES OF HIMSELF. CLONES OF
CLONES. HE IS MAKING STEINBERG-CLONES
-WITH HIS
STYLE



HE DECIDES THEN, TO INFLUENCE US
IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION. HE
STARTS LIKING THE STUDENTS WITH
RADICALLY DIFFERENT STYLES



I START NOTICING KIDS THAT WERE
IGNORED BEFORE...



I DISCOVER THE POWER OF:
-DIFFERENT!



I DECIDE TO FIND A RADICAL
STYLE, ONE THAT NOBODY HAS
SEEN BEFORE...





**EVERYBODY
LOOVES NEW
YORK**



WHEN WE OFFERED THEM TO STAY WITH
US WE DIDN'T KNOW WHERE WE WERE
GOING TO LIVE..



WE'VE ONLY BEEN LIVING IN
NEW YORK A FEW MONTHS
AND WE ALREADY HAD 4 OR 5
GROUPS OF PEOPLE STAYING
WITH US.



IT TURNS OUT TO BE OVERWHELMING,
BECAUSE WE DON'T HAVE ANY PRIVACY...



ONE FRIEND STAYS WITH US
PROMISSING TO TAKE US
TO "FANCY" RESTAURANTS
HE ENDS UP BUYING
ONE SLICE OF PIZZA



- FOR TWO WEEKS OF STAY...

ANOTHER FRIEND HAS NO PLANS OF
LEAVING UNTIL HE FINDS A JOB AND
CAN AFFORD TO PAY HIS RENT...



HE IS NICE BUT WE DON'T KNOW HIM
VERY WELL, AND
MAKES ETHEL
UNCOMFORTABLE
(WE HAVE TO GET RID OF HIM)



WE ASK OUR FRIEND JENNY TO CALL US
PRETENDING TO BE MY COUSIN FROM
CALIFORNIA, WHO WOULD COME THE
NEXT DAY...



OUR MEXICAN FRIEND "FALLS" FOR OUR
PLOT AND MOVES OUT. WE MAKE JENNY
OUR OFFICIAL COUSIN...



I FEEL GUILTY ABOUT LYING, BUT WE ARE
THRILLED TO HAVE OUR HOME BACK



THEN, WE GO THROUGH SEVERAL MONTHS
WITH NO BREAK FROM VISITS...



NOBODY COMES DURING WINTER, AND
DURING A BLIZZARD WE ARE DELIGHTED TO
STILL BE IN NEW YORK...

BUT WINTER LINGERS FOREVER AND
I FEEL DEPRESSED, BETWEEN THE
DARKNESS OF THE APARTMENT, MY
UNEMPLOYMENT AND ALL
OUR EXPENSES.







PETS IN NEW YORK

ETHEL AND I WANT TO ADOPT A CAT FROM A PET SHELTER...



IN THE SHELTER THEY REJECT US BECAUSE WE ARE STUDENTS, AND WE DON'T HAVE A JOB



WE TELL THEM THAT WE ARE GRADUATE STUDENTS WITH SCHOLARSHIPS, AND WE CAN AFFORD TO HAVE A CAT...





AND ADOPT A STREET CAT FROM AN AD
IN THE SUPERMARKET THAT WE CALL
"PANCHO"



IN THE SUMMER OF 1983 WE GO TO MEXICO
FOR A TWO WEEK VISIT



**ONE YEAR
LATER**

BUT WITH ONE YEAR IN NEW YORK I DON'T
HAVE THE SAME BELIEF IN MYSELF AS
WHEN I LEFT.



I FEEL BAD THAT I HAVEN'T FOUND A
JOB YET, IT IS HARD TO EXPLAIN WHY.



OUR SAVINGS ARE GETTING LOWER AND
LOWER, BUT I PRETEND THAT WE ARE OK.



HAPPY TO LIVE HERE, HAPPY TO
BE HERE. HAPPY...



ONE OF MY AUNTS TELLS ME THAT I AM 'FAT'
(SHE HADN'T SEEN ME SINCE I WAS 18)



ANOTHER AUNT TELLS ME THAT I AM
'SPOILED'... AND THAT I SHOULD TAKE
A JOB DRIVING A TAXI...



I HATE THIS IDEA
SILENTS, NOT U.S.
BECAUSE WE ARE
IMMIGRANTS
(WE WANT TO
COME
BACK
TO MEXICO)



THE RUPTURE



I GET ANGRY WITH FATHER
BECAUSE I DON'T AGREE
THAT ISRAEL HAS A
"DEFENSE" ARMY ONLY
UNLIKE ANY OTHER ARMY.



I AM REALLY ANGRY BECAUSE IT
DOESN'T JUSTIFY, TO ME, ALL
THE CIVILIAN DEATHS AND THE
INVASION TO THAT COUNTRY.



THE ARGUMENT HEATS UP REALLY
MY MOTHER BREAKS IT BEFORE
WE REACH AN AGREEMENT.



I FEEL THAT I WILL NEVER AGREE WITH
HIM REGARDING ISRAEL ANYMORE..



SAD GOODBYE

THE TWO WEEKS GO BY REALLY FAST
AND MY PARENTS TAKE US TO THE
AIRPORT TO GO BACK TO NEW
YORK.



WE ARE BRINGING MORE
OF OUR LEFT BEHIND
THINGS TO N.Y. AND
AGAIN WE CARRY TOO
MUCH STUFF.



FATHER LENT ME A "ROLLER"
TO BRING OUR BAGS TO THE
AIRPORT, BUT IT IS TIME TO
BOARD THE PLANE
AND I GIVE IT
BACK.





HE TELLS ME THAT I SHOULDN'T BE
SO PESSIMISTIC, THAT I SHOULD BE
COURAGEOUS IN "NEW YORK BECAUSE
"LIFE IS NOT CASUAL"



AND THINGS
HAPPEN FOR
A REASON.

I DON'T LIKE THE LETTER BECAUSE I
DON'T FEEL THAT THERE IS A "PLAN" FOR
ME IN THE UNIVERSE...



BUT MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL, NEW YORK
IS A VERY TOUGH CITY TO BREAK IN



I THINK THAT MY PESSIMISM IS CAUSED BY
"REAL" REASONS...

I JUST HAVE TO TRY HARDER...



A WEEK LATER, ON MY MOTHER'S
BIRTHDAY, MY SISTER SILVIA
CALLS ME AROUND
5PM...



SHE TELLS ME
THAT FATHER
JUST DIED ON
A CAR CRASH...





...DEAD AT 69...



...DECADES BEFORE HIS TIME...



THAT NIGHT I FLY BACK TO MEXICO
TO BE IN MY FATHER'S BURIAL, THE
NEXT DAY.



I THINK OF MEMORIES WITH MY
FATHER, AND I KEEP THINKING
OF THE AIRPORT INCIDENT



I SHOULDN'T HAVE IGNORED HIM WHEN



HE CALLED ME TO GO BACK...

I FEEL LIKE I'M BEING PUNISHED
FOR QUESTIONING MY DAD, AND
NOT PARTING IN GOOD TERMS



..BUT
THIS
IS
NOT
ABOUT
ME...

I ALSO MISSED THE LAST YEAR OF HIS LIFE.



I SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT MEXICO AND SPENT MORE TIME WITH HIM.





NEXT MORNING IT IS POURING RAIN IN MEXICO CITY



THE GRAVEYARD IS WHERE MY GRANDPARENTS ARE BURIED...





DURING THE SHIVAH WE HAVE TO PRAY
WITH PEOPLE WE BARELY KNOW, AND
I HATE THE RITUAL.



WHO CARES ABOUT PRAYING
WHEN THERE IS NO ONE ON
THE OTHER SIDE...



I FEEL LIKE GOD IS NOWHERE IN
HERE, HE HAS ABANDONED ME...



MY BROTHER VICTOR TELLS ME IN A
SOLEMN WAY THAT IN NEW YORK
I HAVE TO PRAY EVERY DAY
FOR A YEAR SO MY
FATHER'S SOUL
REACHES
HEAVEN.





HE ALSO SUGGESTS
THAT I SHOULDN'T DO
ANYTHING I DON'T
BELIEVE IN...



AFTER TALKING TO MY COUSIN I DON'T
FEEL GUILTY ANYMORE ABOUT NOT
GOING TO A SYNAGOGUE IN NEW YORK



I BELIEVE THAT I CAN
"PRAY" FOR MY FATHER
IN THE SILENCE OF
MY HOME, WITH
MY OWN WORDS
AND THOUGHTS



PART 5
-WORK





I DECIDE THAT IN ORDER TO
REGAIN MY SANITY, I SHOULD DO
ONE COMIC
STRIP PER
WEEK LIKE
I USED TO
IN MEXICO.



I SEND MY CARTOONS TO JULES FEIFFER,
WHO I ASSUME IS THE MAIN CARTOON
EDITOR FOR THE VILLAGE VOICE.



MY CARTOONS ARE ABOUT COCKROACHES,
NOT ONLY BECAUSE OUR APARTMENT
IS INFESTED WITH THEM...



BUT ALSO BECAUSE I FEEL LIKE ONE
AS A MEXICAN ARTIST TRYING TO
SURVIVE IN THE "BIG APPLE"



MY STORIES ARE ABOUT HOW HUMANS
MAY TRY TO GET RID OF ROACHES BUT
THE BUGS ALWAYS WIN.



AFTER TEN WEEKS OF SENDING THEM, I GET
ANGRY BECAUSE MR. FEIFFER DOESN'T
ACKNOWLEDGE MY EFFORTS.



I IMPULSIVELY
WRITE HIM A NASTY
LETTER TELLING HIM
THAT HE IS ARROGANT
FOR IGNORING A
STRUGGLING
CARTOONIST.



I HAVE DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR IMAGINING
MY ROACH CARTOONS
IN THE VILLAGE
UNDERSTAND THE
MR. FEIFFER'S
SILENCE.





AFTER A FEW MONTHS, I RECEIVE
AN ENVELOPE FROM JULES
FEIFFER RETURNING MY COMIC
STRIPS.



HE APOLOGIZES FOR NOT RECEIVING
MY COMIC STRIPS ON TIME.



"THE VILLAGE
VOICE TAKES
FOREVER TO
FORWARD
MY MAIL."





JIMBO ERECTUS



ART SPIEGELMAN DRAWS
A SMALL INSERT IN
THE MAGAZINE ABOUT
HIS PARENTS'
EXPERIENCE DURING
THE HOLOCAUST



WHICH
DEPICTS
THE JEWS
AS MICE
AND THE
NAZIS AS
CATS

- ITS BRILLIANT



I AM HIRED



HE ASKS ME IF I WANT
TO BE AN ART DIRECTOR
AT THE ENGLISH
VERSION OF A
GREEK NEWSPAPER
CALLED PROINI.



I TELL HIM ALIE THAT
HAVE EXPERIENCE
DESIGNING
NEWSPAPERS
IN MEXICO,
AND I'D LOVE
TO DO IT.



MY INTERVIEW WITH THE EDITOR GOES VERY
WELL AND SHE HIRES ME RIGHT AWAY. NOT A
GREAT PAY, BUT IT IS A REAL "JOB."



I AM TO DESIGN A NEW SUPPLEMENT
OF THE NEWSPAPER IN ENGLISH
AT MY OWN DESK, PROINI
AND THEY GIVE ME
A TON OF WORK
TO START
RIGHT
AWAY.



IMMEDIATELY, A GREEK MAN
STARTS GIVING ME ORDERS...

BRING ME COFFEE!



THINKING THAT HE IS MY BOSS, I DO
EVERYTHING HE ASKS ME TO DO...



I THINK HE KNOWINGLY TOOK ADVANTAGE
OF THE FACT THAT I AM THE ONLY
NON-GREEK PERSON IN THE
NEWSPAPER. G#*X#



AFTER A FEW WEEKS, MY LACK OF
EXPERIENCE DESIGNING NEWSPAPERS
BECOMES CLEAR TO ME AND MY
COWORKERS, AND I CAN'T HANDLE THE
WORKLOAD.





HIGH TIMES

IN THE SPRING OF 1989 I GET A CALL
BACK REGARDING ONE OF MY APPLICATIONS
TO ONE OF THE ADS OF THE NEW YORK TIMES.

YES, THIS
IS HE...



I GET AN APPOINTMENT TO SEE MR. ARXZHN?
(THAT IS WHAT I HEAR) FOR A JOB IN
HIGH TIMES MAGAZINE.

- 9 AM MONDAY



I TRY TO WRITE HIS NAME AFTER
THEY SPELL IT FOR ME 3 TIMES, BUT
I FAIL...



OH WELL.



NEXT WE GO BUY A SUIT AND TIE,



THE THIRD PAIR I'VE EVER HAD.

ON MONDAY I GO TO THE INTERVIEW

"I HAVE AN
APPOINTMENT
WITH MR.
AREZN..."

HIGH TIMES



(I SAY IT THE SAME WAY
I HEARD IT)

HIGH TIMES



TO MY SURPRISE THE RECEPTIONIST
KNOWS EXACTLY WHO I'M GOING
TO SEE...

- IF I HAD TRIED TO
PRONOUNCE THE REAL
NAME WITH MY MEXICAN
ACCENT, THEY WOULD
PROBABLY WOULD NOT
HAVE KNOWN WHO
I WANTED TO SEE...





BEFORE I GET FIRED I BEG HIM
TO GIVE ME A CHANCE BECAUSE I
DESPERATELY NEED THE JOB...



RIGHT AWAY, CHRIS GOES
AND TELLS THE MANAGER
THAT I'M OK AS AN
ASSISTANT BUT NOT GOOD
AS AN ART DIRECTOR.



FOR THE FIRST MONTHS AT
THE JOB, CHRIS TREATS ME
LIKE AN IDIOT...



(THAT'S ALL
WRONG
-STUPID)

I FEEL SO DEPRESSED
THAT I WANT TO QUIT.
ETHEL CONVINCES ME TO
WAIT AND ENDURE MY
FRUSTRATIONS
FOR THE PAY.



LITTLE BY LITTLE, CHRIS STARTS
TO LIKE ME BECAUSE I
LEARN QUICKLY.



A WHILE LATER THEY HIRE DAN ZEDEK
AS ART DIRECTOR AND WE LIKE
EACH OTHER RIGHT AWAY.



HE UNDERSTANDS A LOT
ABOUT DESIGN, ART AND
CARTOONS. WE TALK A LOT
ABOUT THEM.



HE ALSO HAS A BAND AND PLAYS IN CLUBS



DAN AND I TALK ABOUT
DOING A COMIC STRIP
SECTION IN THE MAGAZINE,
RATSO LOVES THE IDEA.



IN JANUARY 1985 THE FUNNIES
SECTION BEGINS
WITH MY
ROACHES
CARTOON
IN IT.



IT GETS BETTER



I LOVE THE ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE SUNDAY
N.Y.T. BOOK REVIEW. THE ART DIRECTOR IS
STEVE HELLER.



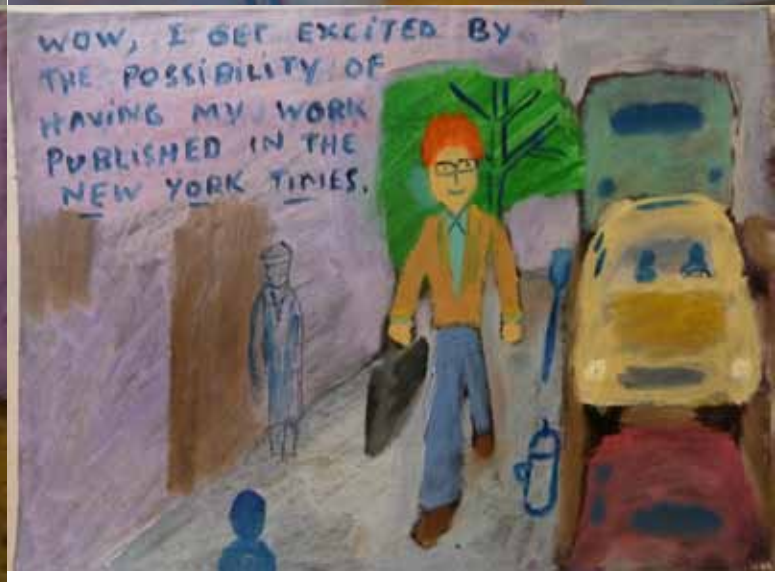
FINALLY AFTER WAITING SEVERAL MONTHS
FOR AN APPOINTMENT, MR. HELLER
LOOKS AT MY PORTFOLIO.



I THINK HE LIKES IT BECAUSE HE
ASKS ME TO CALL HIM
EVERY THURSDAY
AT 8 AM, NOT
8:05... 8 AM
TO SEE IF I CAN
ILLUSTRATE A STORY



WOW, I GET EXCITED BY
THE POSSIBILITY OF
HAVING MY WORK
PUBLISHED IN THE
NEW YORK TIMES.



FROM THAT DAY ON I CALL
HIM EVERY THURSDAY.

NOT THIS WEEK
CALL NEXT WEEK



ALL OF A SUDDEN I REALIZE THAT
IT IS THURSDAY AT 8AM...





RAW





THE G.O.L CLUB AND THE “TURKEYS”



IN 1985 I AM THE ONLY ONE WITH A VCR AND IT IS A NOVELTY TO SEE FILMS AT HOME.



WE RENT MOVIES FROM "TOWER RECORDS" ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE. THE ONLY RULE IS THAT THE FILMS HAVE TO BE "TURKEYS" OR BAD.



WE GET PRIZES FOR EACH MISTAKE WE FIND.



"AND OTHER HILARIOUS B MOVIES"

WE SEE "ATTACK OF THE KILLER

THE G.O.L. CLUB GOES ON FOR SEVERAL MONTHS UNTIL WE ALL GET JOBS...

*GENTLEMEN OF LEISURE



MAUS TRAP







I QUIT RAW
MAGAZINE AFTER
A FEW MONTHS
AND START A
SERIES OF
DESIGN JOBS
THAT KEEP
ME ON MY
TOES.

CALL ME BOB



BY NOW I HAVE A GOOD PORTFOLIO
AND I AM SURE I CAN GET A GOOD JOB...
BUT I WANT TO DO ANIMATION...



I KNOW THAT WHEN WE SEE "THE SOLDIER
TALE" ON PBS BY R.O.
BLECHMAN AFTER
STRAVINSKY'S MUSIC.



BLECHMAN LIKES MY ILLUSTRATION A
DESIGN PORTFOLIOS AND OFFERS ME
JOB FOR THE 'INK TANK' ANIMATION
STUDIO...



THE 'INK TANK' IS
LOCATED IN THE
'DIAMOND DISTRICT'
EVERYBODY ELSE
DEALS WITH JEWELRY



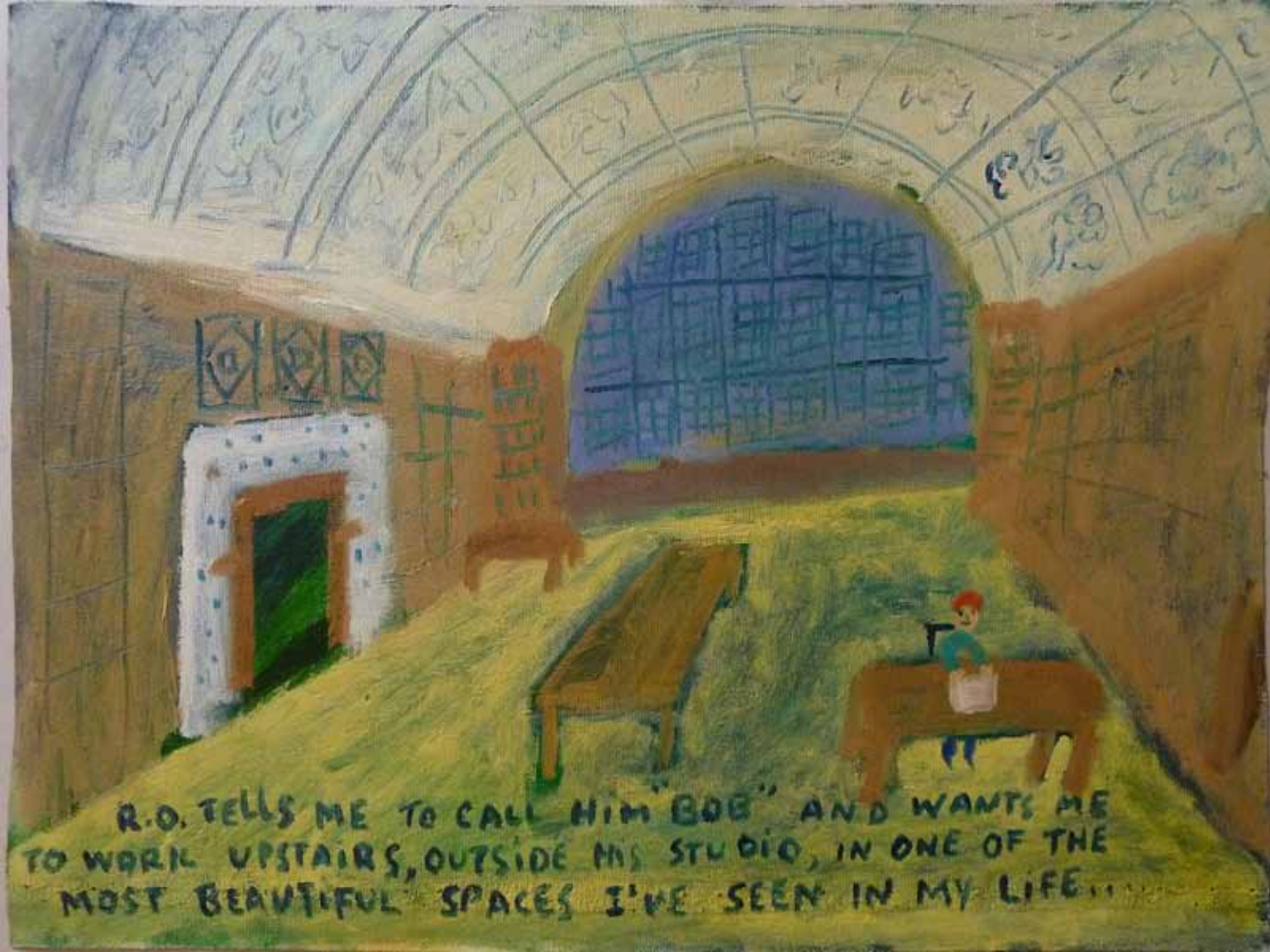
BUT R.O. IS THE ONLY
JEWEL

THE 'INK TANK' IS
DIVIDED IN TWO
FLOORS: 13TH AND
14TH (THERE IS NO
13TH FLOOR, DUE TO
SUPERSTITION)



IT WAS
IN THE
1800s THE
SHOWCASE
STUDIO OF A

CHURCH
ARCHITECT
NAMED
BERTRAN
GOODHUE...



R.O. TELLS ME TO CALL HIM "BOB" AND WANTS ME
TO WORK UPSTAIRS, OUTSIDE HIS STUDIO, IN ONE OF THE
MOST BEAUTIFUL SPACES I'VE SEEN IN MY LIFE...





IN NEW YORK...

THE INK TANK IS AN IDEAL PLACE TO WORK NOT ONLY BECAUSE BOB IS A GREAT ARTIST AND ATTRACTS THE BEST PEOPLE



BUT THEY ALSO PRODUCE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL ANIMATIONS (IN AN INTENSE BUT GENTLE ATMOSPHERE)

(I WANT TO STAY AS LONG AS POSSIBLE)



PART 6

ONE FAMILY

CHRISTMAS PACT

AFTER CELEBRATING THE NEW YEAR ON THE FIRST DAY OF 1987, ETHEL AND HER TWO SISTERS ROSANA AND BELINDA DECIDE TO MAKE A PACT...



ALL THREE SISTERS ARE MORE THAN READY TO HAVE KIDS AND IT IS TIME TO GET BUSY.



(IT FEELS

LIKE A COMPETITION)

ETHEL AND I ENJOY LIVING IN NEW YORK VERY MUCH AND ARE NOT IN A RUSH TO HAVE KIDS, BUT ETHEL STOPS TAKING CONTRACEPTIVES.



BY APRIL, BELINDA
IS PREGNANT,

AND A FEW MONTHS
LATER, ROSANA
IS TOO.



(WE FEEL LEFT BEHIND).

BY DECEMBER WE DECIDE TO RELAX
AND JUST ENJOY THE PROCESS...



IN JANUARY ETHEL TELLS ME THAT
SHE THINKS THAT SHE IS
PREGNANT.



-SHE IS.









SINCE ETHEL IS STARTING HER PATHOLOGY
RESIDENCY. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR
HER TO CONTINUE HER MEDICAL
STUDIES.



IF SHE STOPS NOW IT WOULD
BE VERY HARD TO START
HER CAREER LATER



THE ONLY
DOWNSIDE
IS THAT SHE
DOES
AUTOPSIES
WHILE
PREGNANT.



EXIT PARADISE

IN MAY
OF 1988
WE LEAVE
NEW YORK
FOR GOOD
TO START
OUR FAMILY
LIFE IN
HOBOKEN.



AS SOON AS WE MOVE INTO THE NEW
APARTMENT OUR "NESTING INSTINCTS"
KICK IN. MAKING US WANT TO FINISH
EVERYTHING.

IT FEELS LIKE WE WANT TO HURRY
THE BABY TO COME FASTER...





WITH NERVOUSNESS AND EXCITEMENT
ETHEL BEGINS HER LAMAZE
BREATHING. SHE IS SCARED
AFTER DELIVERING BABIES
AS A DOCTOR.



HALINA WILL COME TOMORROW AND THAT
MEANS THAT WE ARE ON OUR OWN.



AFTER SEVERAL HOURS OF
REGULARLY INCREASING
PAIN, ETHEL ASKS ME



TO TAKE HER TO THE
HOSPITAL
(NYU WHERE SHE USED TO WORK)

SINCE IT IS "LABOR DAY" WEEKEND, ETHEL'S
DOCTOR IS OUT OF TOWN, AND SHE HAS TO TAKE
ANY DOCTOR WHO IS ON CALL



THE NURSES AT THE HOSPITAL
ASK ETHEL TO "WAIT" UNTIL SHE
IS FULLY DILATED,
BUT ETHEL CAN'T
TAKE THE PAIN
ANY MORE.



THEY ARE OVERWORKED WITH HOARDS OF
EXPECTING MOTHERS ON THEIR LABOR DAY.



A COUPLE HOURS LATER ETHEL
IS NOT PROGRESSING...
EXCEPT FOR HER
EVER INTENSE
PAIN.



THAT PROVES TO BE A BAD DECISION,
BECAUSE ETHEL FALLS
ASLEEP IN BETWEEN
CONTRACTIONS, WAKING
UP WITH EXCRUCIATING
PAIN.




THE NURSES GIVE HER DEMEROL TO "CUT THE PAIN'S
EDGE".



DEFINITELY BY FAR
THE HAPPIEST
DAY OF OUR LIVES.






A painting depicting a family in a hospital setting. A woman with dark hair and glasses is sitting up in a bed with a pink blanket, holding a baby. A man with red hair and glasses is sitting on the edge of the bed, looking at the woman. The background shows a window with blue frames and white clouds.

WE STOP BEING A COUPLE
AND BECOME A
FAMILY...



A painting showing a man in a black suit and white shirt standing in a doorway, gesturing towards a hospital bed. A woman with dark hair and glasses is sitting on the bed, and a man with red hair and glasses is sitting on the edge of the bed. The background is a simple room with a yellow wall.

BEFORE DIEGO
LEARNED HOW
TO FEED HIMSELF
WE GET A VISIT BY
A RABBI WHO REMIND US TO
GIVE HIM A "BRIS"...



A painting of a woman with dark hair and glasses holding a baby. She is looking at a man with red hair and glasses who is standing next to her. The background is a simple room with a pink wall.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IT OCCUR TO US
TO DO A CIRCUMCISION TO OUR BABY...



A painting showing a group of people in a hospital room. A man in a blue shirt and red hair is standing and gesturing towards a woman with dark hair and glasses who is sitting on a bed. A woman in a purple dress and a man in a brown suit are standing next to her. A woman in a white dress is also standing. The background is a simple room with a yellow wall.

LIKE MAGIC ETHEL'S
GRANDPARENTS SHOW UP
BEFORE WE DECIDE AGAINST
IT...

THEY TELL US THAT IT IS LESS PAINFUL
FOR THE BABY TO DO IT WITH A JEWISH
"MOEL" BECAUSE THEY ARE MORE
EXPERIENCED.



SO WE JUST RELAX AND MAKE A
"CIRCUMCISION PARTY" WITH ALL
OUR JEWISH AND NON
JEWISH FRIENDS.



(MORE NON!)

AFTER HE "DOES IT" THE MOEL
YELLS: "MAZAL TOV" - GOOD LUCK!
BUT OUR FRIENDS
DON'T KNOW
YOU SUPPOSE
TO BE HAPPY.



WE ARE
HAPPY
BUT FEEL
TERRIBLE

TO HURT
OUR BABY.

