





## Table of Contents

Alex Hilsee .....	1-2
Liz Valasco .....	3-4
Sean Powers.....	5-12
Taylor Snowberger.....	13-26

This comic book is a collaboration between the artists herein and HCAOG (Humboldt County Association of Governments), completed with the aide of the REAP grant (Regional Early Action Planning). To respond to the State's housing crisis, Governor Newsom, in the 2019-20 Budget Act, created grant programs to help accelerate housing production. The REAP program provides grants to councils of governments (COGs) to collaborate on planning projects that have a broader regional impact on housing. HCAOG offered the grant to local artists to create works which might provide insights into the experiences of folks who have lived the local endemic issues surrounding us all. I hope this comic book represents to you, reader, some experiences of local artists and their voice is appreciated for its candor. This comic book is not meant to represent the full breadth of systemic issues which human beings face in trying to meet their basic needs experience in terms of roadblocks, but instead, it is meant to serve as a survey of the idiosyncrasies that form a coherent story that we can reflect on as a community. Being able to create works of art which illustrate the issues created by the beurocracy of government and its collision with the realities of humanities inherent and eternal struggles is due penance, but is also a beautiful gesture. I would like to thank HCAOG and Governor Gavin Newsom for this opportunity and for using your power to create opportunities for underprivileged people to share their experience and perhaps influence decision making in future endeavors to provide Californians with housing.



# C R A M P

STORY by NIKE OLAS  
IMAGES by ALEX HILSEE

I FOUND IT BY  
FOLLOWING A DEER TRAIL

A CIRCLE

OF MOSS-LADEN BOULDERS  
IN THE MANZANITA

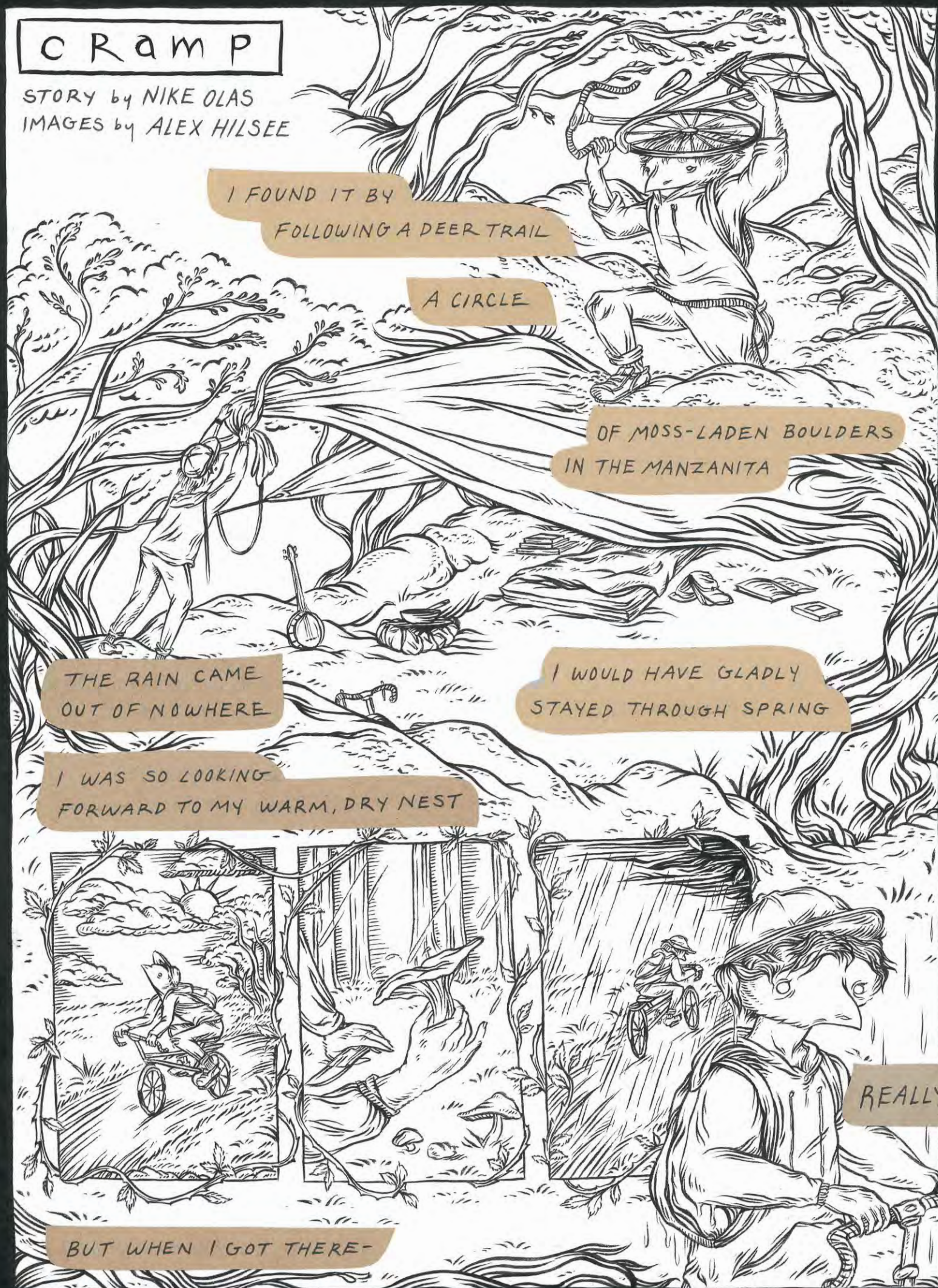
THE RAIN CAME  
OUT OF NOWHERE

I WOULD HAVE GLADLY  
STAYED THROUGH SPRING

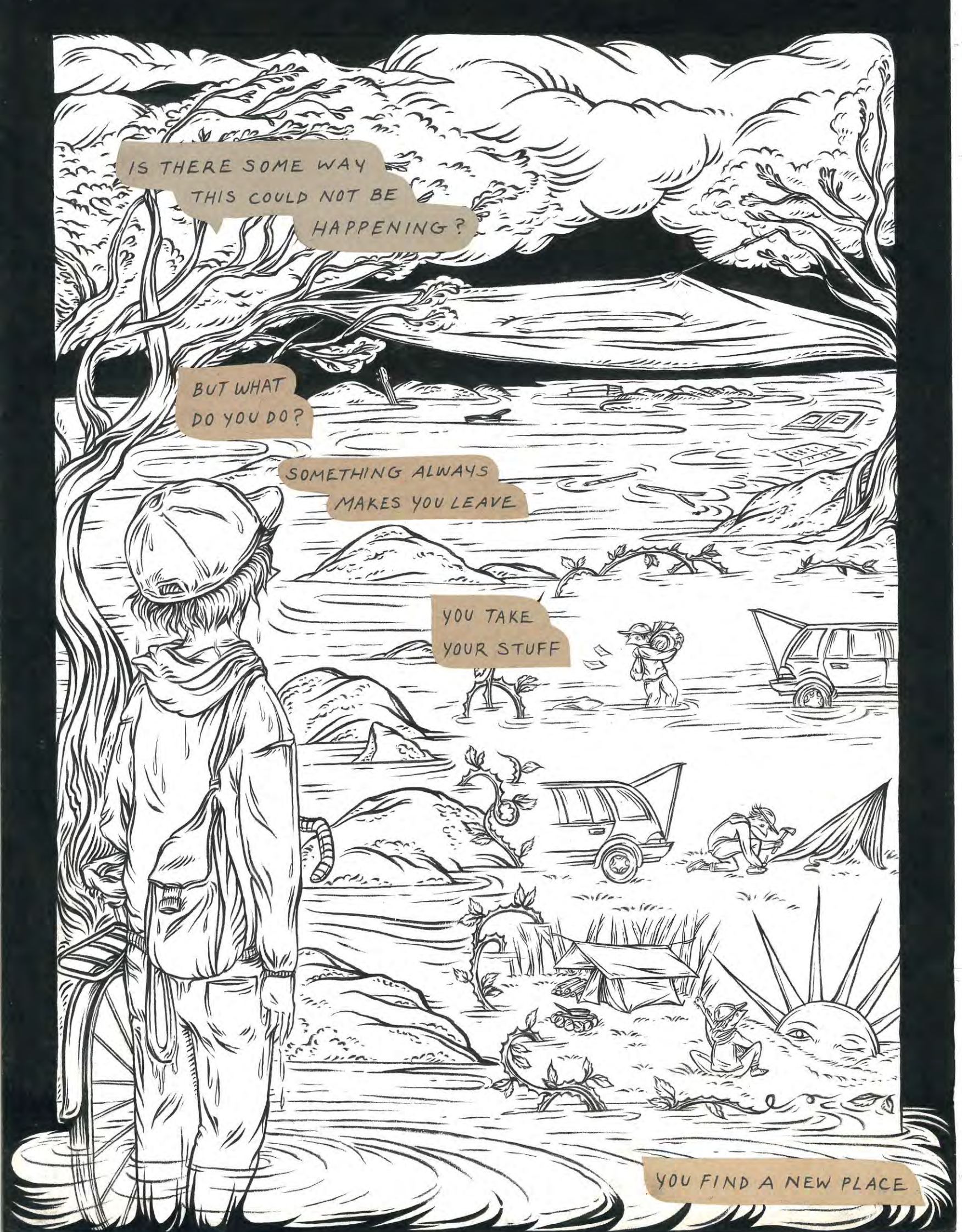
I WAS SO LOOKING  
FORWARD TO MY WARM, DRY NEST

REALLY?

BUT WHEN I GOT THERE-







IS THERE SOME WAY  
THIS COULD NOT BE  
HAPPENING?

BUT WHAT  
DO YOU DO?

SOMETHING ALWAYS  
MAKES YOU LEAVE

YOU TAKE  
YOUR STUFF

YOU FIND A NEW PLACE



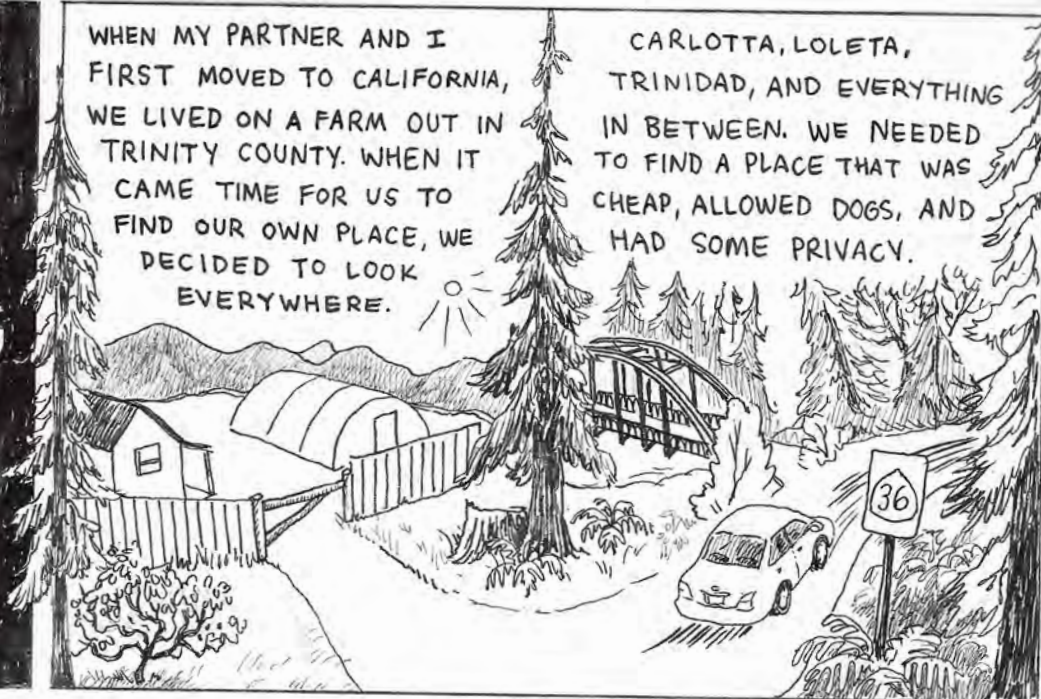
# TENUOUS TALES OF THE HOUSING CRISIS

TRUE STORIES  
FROM RESIDENTS  
OF HUMBOLDT

LIZ VALASCO

WHEN MY PARTNER AND I  
FIRST MOVED TO CALIFORNIA,  
WE LIVED ON A FARM OUT IN  
TRINITY COUNTY. WHEN IT  
CAME TIME FOR US TO  
FIND OUR OWN PLACE, WE  
DECIDED TO LOOK  
EVERYWHERE.

CARLOTTA, LOLETA,  
TRINIDAD, AND EVERYTHING  
IN BETWEEN. WE NEEDED  
TO FIND A PLACE THAT WAS  
CHEAP, ALLOWED DOGS, AND  
HAD SOME PRIVACY.

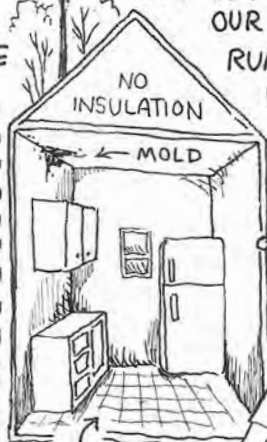


I WAS SHOCKED AND  
DISMAYED BY HOW MANY  
PLACES REFUSED DOGS,  
OR CHARGED A SIZEABLE  
MONTHLY FEE PER PET.



THEN THERE WERE THE  
PLACES THEMSELVES—  
WHAT WAS AFFORDABLE  
WAS RUNDOWN AND SHABBY.

EACH HOUSE HAD ITS  
OWN SET OF PROBLEMS.  
OUR TIME WAS  
RUNNING OUT—  
WE NEEDED  
TO FIND  
SOMETHING.



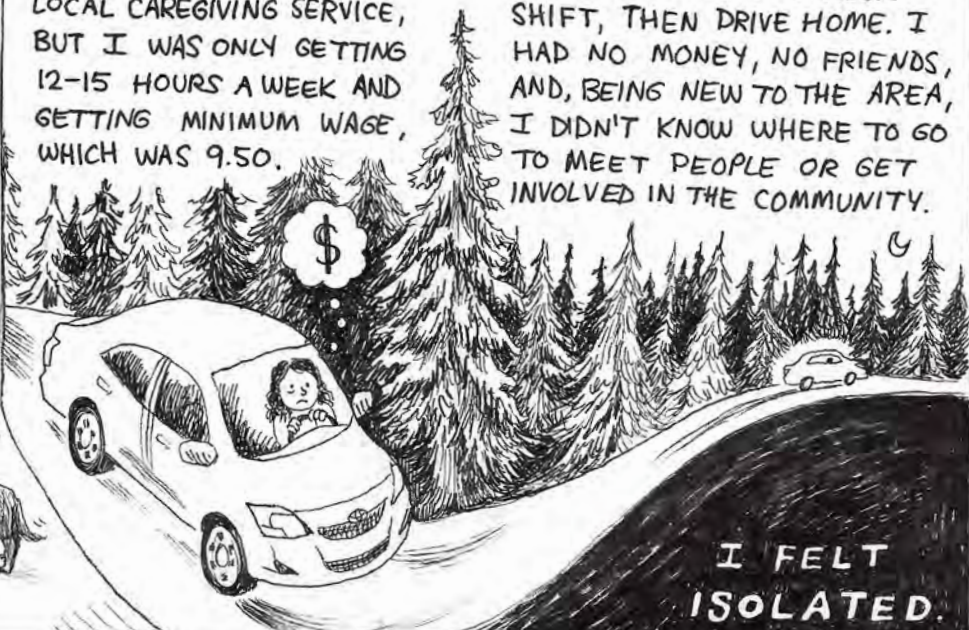
AMAZINGLY, WE WERE ABLE  
TO FIND A PLACE — A  
MOBILE HOME OUT IN  
SWAIN'S FLAT. IT WAS A BIT  
FAR AWAY, BUT IT CHECKED  
ALL OUR BOXES.



SO, WE GAVE OUR NEW  
LANDLORD TWO MONTHS  
RENT AND THE SECURITY  
DEPOSIT—ABOUT \$3,000—  
WHICH WAS ALL WE HAD.



LUCKILY I HAD JUST BEEN  
HIRED AS A SUB FOR A  
LOCAL CAREGIVING SERVICE,  
BUT I WAS ONLY GETTING  
12-15 HOURS A WEEK AND  
GETTING MINIMUM WAGE,  
WHICH WAS 9.50.

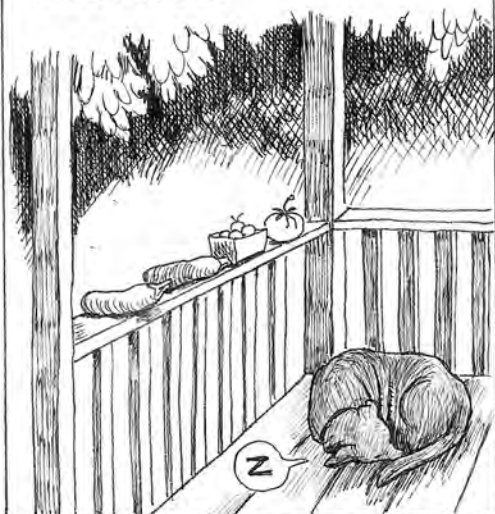


I WOULD DRIVE NEARLY 40 MILES  
ONE WAY TO DO A 3 HOUR  
SHIFT, THEN DRIVE HOME. I  
HAD NO MONEY, NO FRIENDS,  
AND, BEING NEW TO THE AREA,  
I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO GO  
TO MEET PEOPLE OR GET  
INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY.

I FELT  
ISOLATED.



FOR MONTHS WE BARELY MADE IT. SOMETIMES WE ONLY ATE BECAUSE OUR NEIGHBOR BROUGHT US THINGS FROM HIS GARDEN.



SOMEHOW WE MADE IT WORK. EVEN WHEN MY PARTNER WAS INJURED IN A CAR ACCIDENT AND COULDN'T WORK FOR WEEKS, WE SCRAPED UP ENOUGH TO MAKE RENT, ALBEIT LATE A FEW TIMES.



EVERY NOW AND THEN WE WOULD LOOK AT PLACES FOR RENT IN TOWN, BUT WE GAVE UP AND SETTLED IN, GRATEFUL FOR WHAT WE HAD.

YEARS PASSED. I MADE FRIENDS AND HUMBOLDT STARTED TO FEEL LIKE HOME, THOUGH IT SEEMED AS IF EVERYONE I MET HAD A STORY ABOUT HOUSING...



I'M AFRAID OF TELLING MY LANDLORD ABOUT MUCH NEEDED REPAIRS—HE THREATENS TO RAISE THE RENT EVERY TIME HE FIXES SOMETHING.

OUR LANDLORD SAID HE'S TIRED OF FIXING THE SAME THING TOO OFTEN. HE SAID WE NEED TO PAY FOR IT FROM NOW ON—OR WE SHOULD LOOK FOR A NEW PLACE.



CPH PUSHED ME AND OTHER STUDENTS OFF CAMPUS WHEN COVID STARTED AND I HAD TO MOVE INTO A HOUSE WITH MY ABUSIVE PARTNER. \*



MANY HUMBOLDT RESIDENTS HAVE EXPERIENCES LIKE THESE—WHERE IT FEELS AS IF WE'RE DANGLING AT THE EDGE OF A PRECIPICE AND ONE MISSTEP COULD SEND US OVER THE SIDE. LUCK AND A GOOD SUPPORT NETWORK HELP—BUT WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO DON'T HAVE THAT?

MY DAD GOT EVICTED SO HE MOVED IN WITH ME, MY WIFE AND TWO KIDS. WE LIVE IN A TINY TWO BEDROOM DUPLEX. THERE ISN'T ENOUGH ROOM FOR ALL OF US. IT'S BEEN A YEAR AND HE HASN'T FOUND AN AFFORDABLE PLACE YET.



HOUSING INSECURITY CAN AFFECT ANYONE AT ANY TIME. BE COMPASSIONATE.







Landlords rent wrench overseers officers shire reeves sherriffss Land manager rent





I ALWAYS wondered about being houseless... and its true Reality. why would someone be houseless... I see people hanging out in Town all day sleeping on the cold streets or cardboard at night on a tent pitched near the noisy freeway, they have their reasons. I personally would be in the forest sleeping but then I wonder maybe they are scared of the beasts that may be in the forest. Sometimes are the predators animals in the dark, but even living in a house you have predators. They sometimes are called Landlords, house owners, or Legal Lingo, the RENTEE who collects the Rents and preys upon the weak

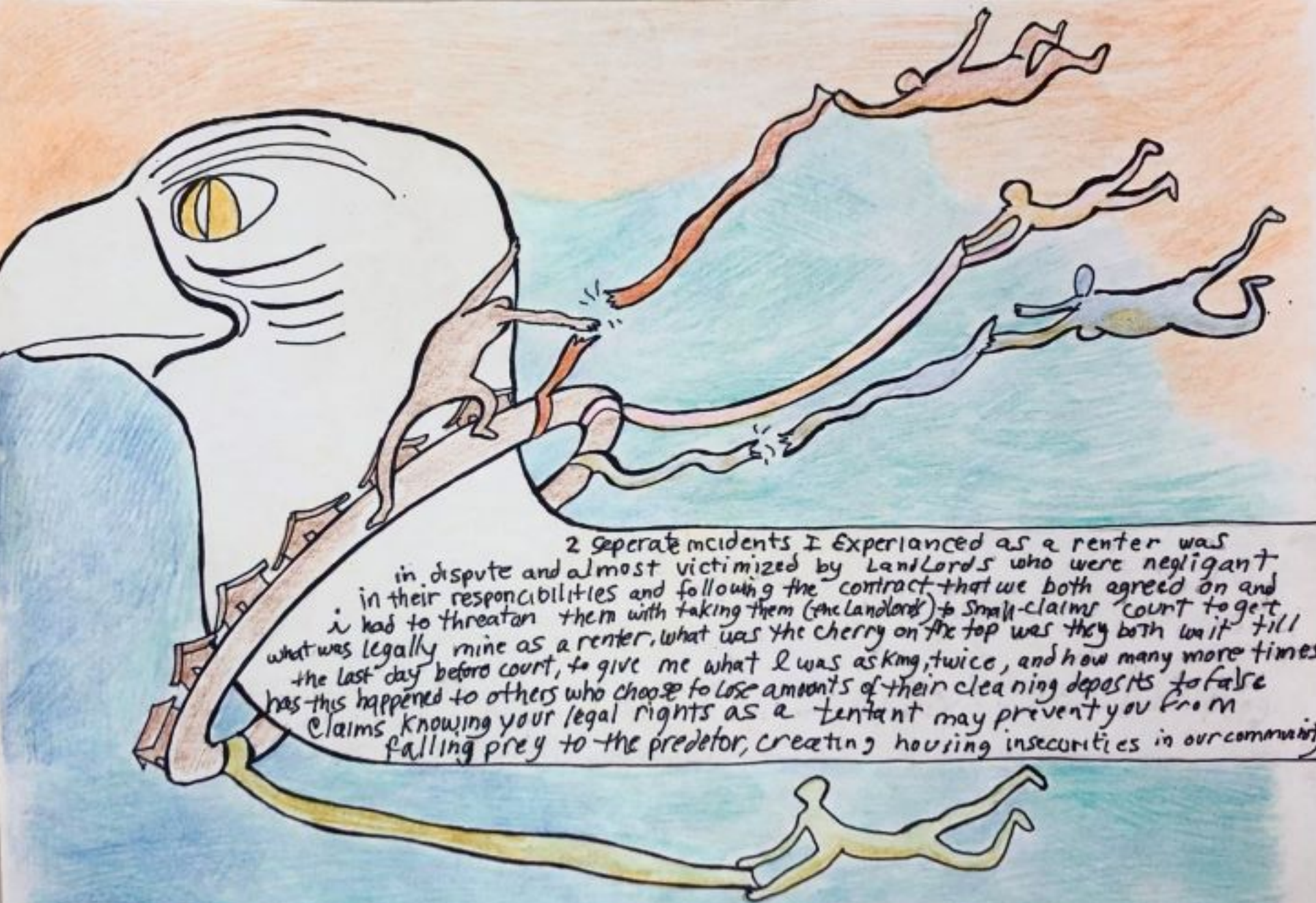
Finding Housing has become a major deal in this town between choosing a rundown house that a thousand people have lived in before over priced rents and the need to have first and last and cleaning deposit, possibly failing a credit check, or not a co-signer or possibly discrimination its a challenge, But the worst is the Land Lords ways of operating and getting the most out of their property the predator of the unprepared

Dont GET ME wrong, there are some decent LandLords but then theres the bad ones

LAND LORD

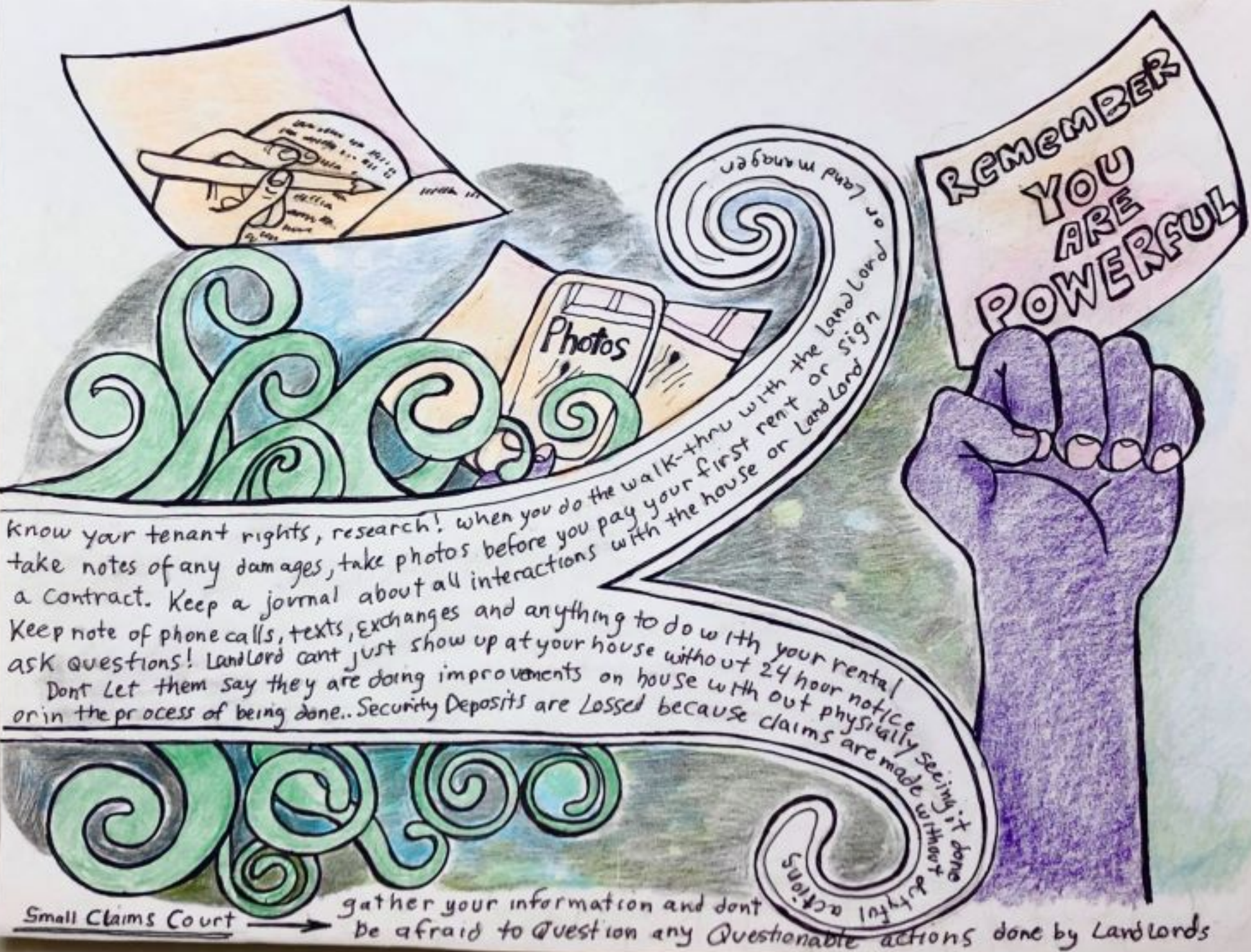
that take advantage of your situation. how? from my experiences they can





2 separate incidents I experienced as a renter was in dispute and almost victimized by Landlords who were negligent in their responsibilities and following the contract that we both agreed on and I had to threaten them with taking them (the landlords) to small-claims court to get what was legally mine as a renter. What was the cherry on the top was they both wait till the last day before court, to give me what I was asking, twice, and how many more times has this happened to others who choose to lose amounts of their cleaning deposits to false claims. Knowing your legal rights as a tenant may prevent you from falling prey to the predator, creating housing insecurities in our community.





REMEMBER  
YOU  
ARE  
POWERFUL

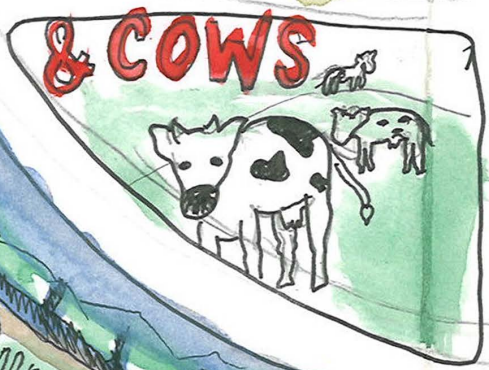
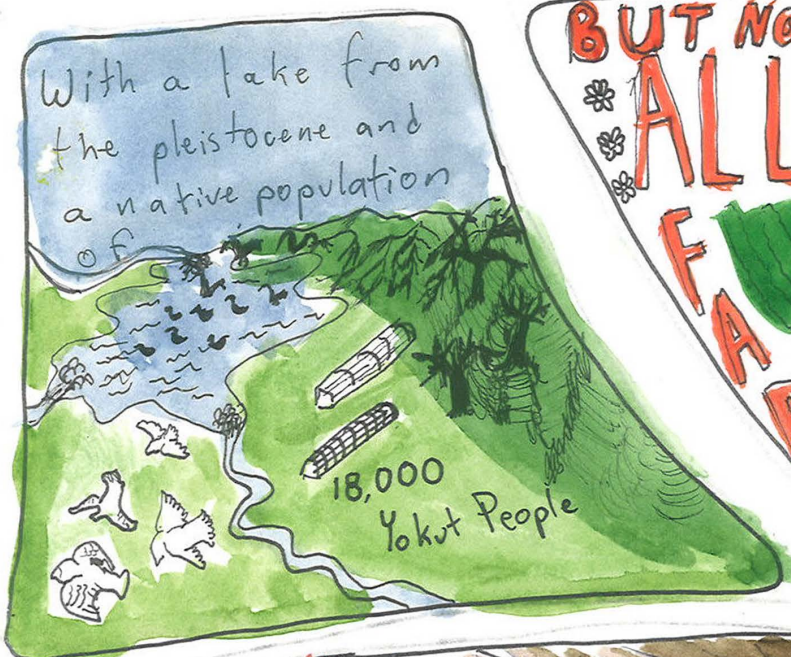
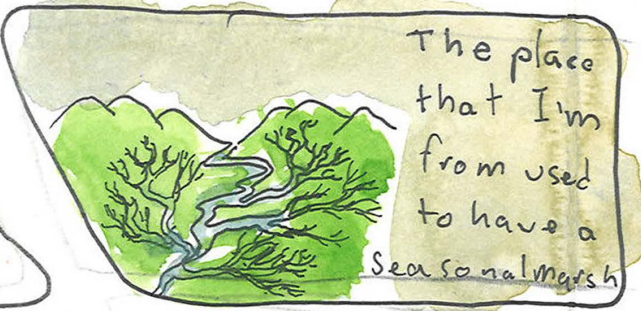
know your tenant rights, research! when you do the walk-thru with the Landlord or sign  
take notes of any damages, take photos before you pay your first rent or sign  
a contract. Keep a journal about all interactions with the house or Landlord  
Keep note of phone calls, texts, exchanges and anything to do with your rental  
ask questions! Landlord cant just show up at your house without 24 hour notice  
Don't let them say they are doing improvements on house without physically seeing it done  
or in the process of being done.. Security Deposits are Lost because claims are made without  
gather your information and don't be afraid to question any questionable actions done by Landlords

Small Claims Court



Wow

Where  
TO  
BEGIN



KINDA

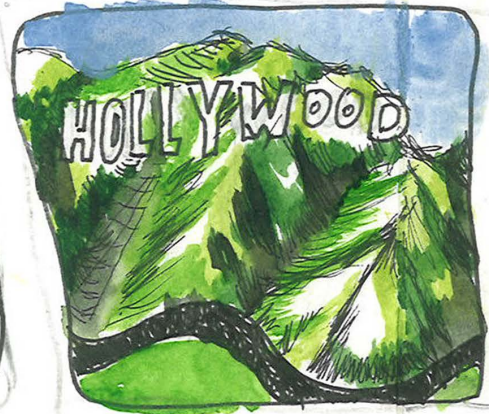
It was over very conservative, upright place and it made me feel



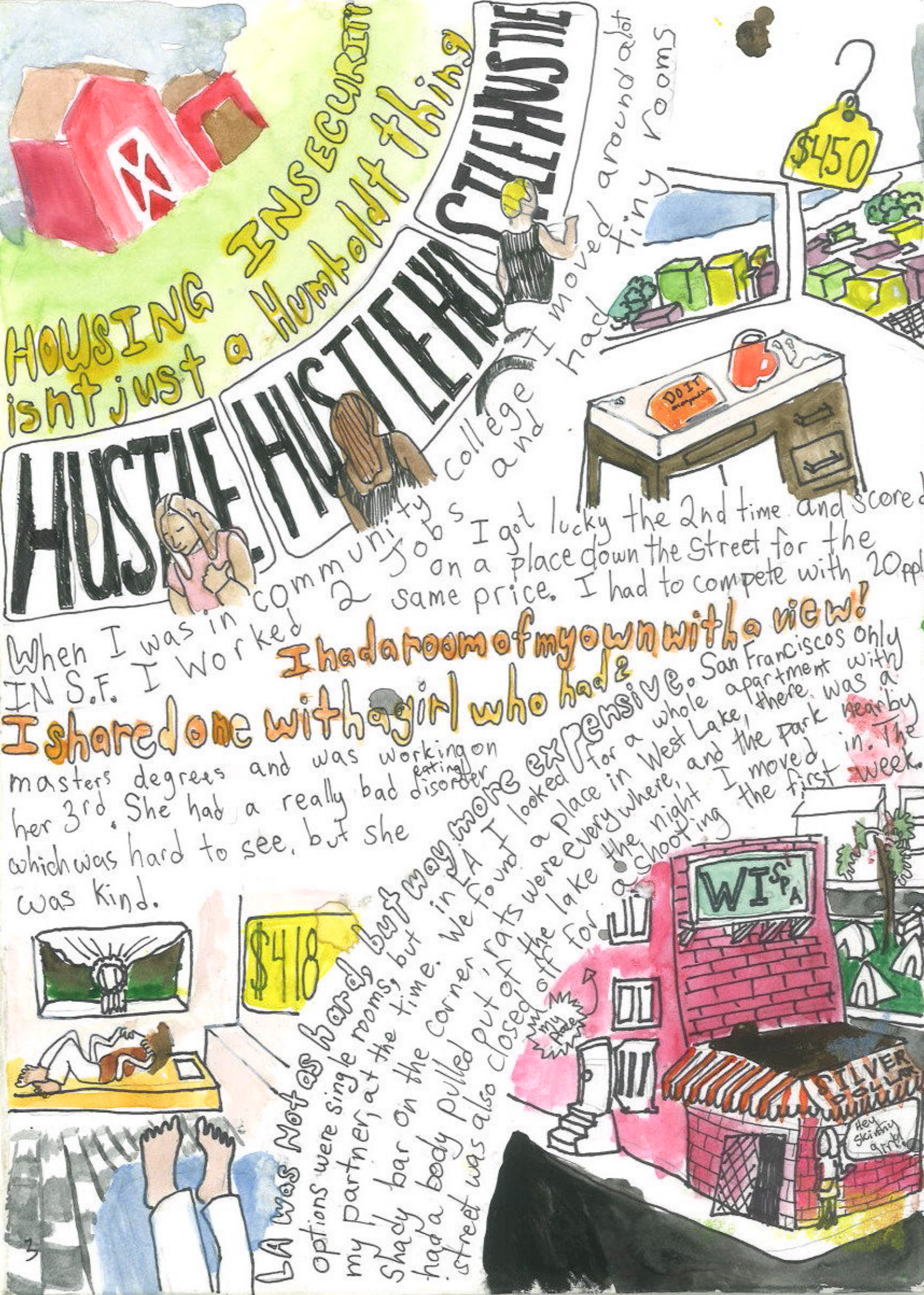
SHE TRIED  
MOVING



AGAIN &  
AGAIN







HOUSING  
isn't just a

INSECURE  
a Humboldt thing

HUSTLE

HUSTLE

HUSTLE

When I was in community college and I got lucky the 2nd time and scored on a place down the Street for the same price. I had to compete with 20 ppl

I shared one with a girl who had 2 I had a room of my own with a view!

masters degrees and was working on her 3rd. She had a really bad disorder which was hard to see, but she was kind.

LA was not as bad as I thought. We found a place in West Lake, San Francisco only for a whole apartment with a view of the lake and the park nearby. I moved in the first week.

\$418

LA was not as bad as I thought. We found a place in West Lake, San Francisco only for a whole apartment with a view of the lake and the park nearby. I moved in the first week.

LA was not as bad as I thought. We found a place in West Lake, San Francisco only for a whole apartment with a view of the lake and the park nearby. I moved in the first week.



# ILLINOIS WAS A HAVEN

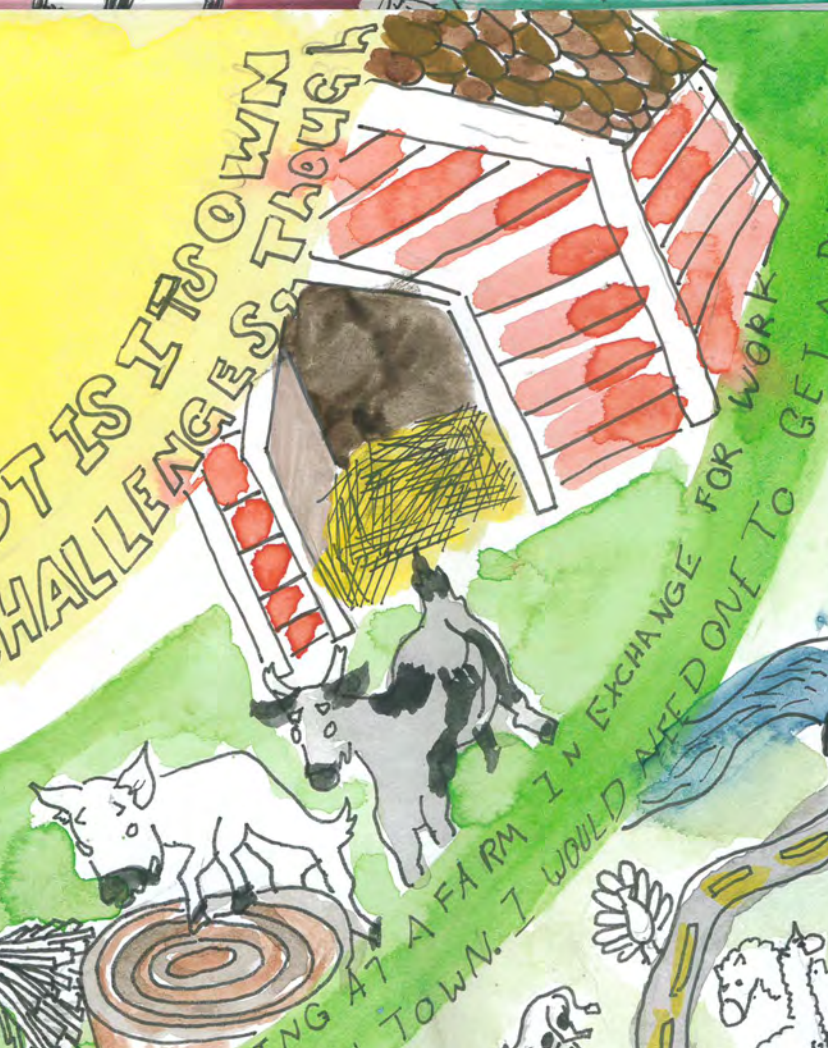


After the grind of  
scraping by in cities for  
a while, finishing community college,  
commuting on trains and busses to work

Of Nature, and vegetarian food  
and Parks and beaches  
and health food stores  
and hippies and  
animals and  
community



# HUMBOLDT IS TOWN SET OF CHALLENGES, though



I STARTED OUT STAYING AT A FARM IN EXCHANGE FOR WORK SO THAT I COULD GET A JOB IN TOWN. I WOULD NEED TO GET A PLACE.

I WAS MOVING FROM LA AND DIDNT HAVE A CAR, AND INEEDED A PLACE BY THE TIME SCHOOL STARTED, IN SEPTEMBER.

I FOUND A PLACE, AFTER 5 MONTHS OF APPLYING. I GOT A 1 BEDROOM DUPLEX IN MANILA. THAT ALLOWED CATS.



THE BUS ONLY CAME 2X A DAY  
 D-D-D  
 AND DO  
 EMAIL  
 RENT  
 WRITE SK  
 HECK FINAID  
 IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL



- 6:00 WAKEUP
- 6:30 PACK+EAT
- 7:00 HEAD OUT
- 8:00 PAINTING
- 12:00 ART ED
- 3:00 PERFORMANCE
- 6:00 BUS

1 MILE BIKE RIDE 2 TOWN

BUT IT WAS HARDER TO DEAL WITH DURING

And I couldn't afford it alone, but I needed to get away from my ex, whose mental health was rapidly deteriorating





Wells once my  
housing situation  
started to  
feel unsafe

I figured it was  
about time I  
started to try  
to find a  
safer place.  
Or at least, away  
from abuse.



HOUSING



So my first thought was to contact the  
university housing office. I thought  
that they would have some  
kind of emergency contiguous  
housing plan for this, but...

\$500 emergency loan,  
\$1200 a month

All they had to offer was a  
dorm that didn't allow cats for

The guy in the office handed me  
a slip of paper with "craigslist"  
written on it, and wished  
me the best of luck,  
unironically.





Wow thats so great! When does the room open up?

I thought, when I found what

broken up couple

Wish came through

My actual room

The owner & his friend

2 OLDER GUYS 30 couple

It was a sweet little house

The more selfless

WE NEGOTIATED THAT I







I thought was a

nice,

Small

room

at a

pretty

decent

Price.

and then, um, 2 more...

My alleged room

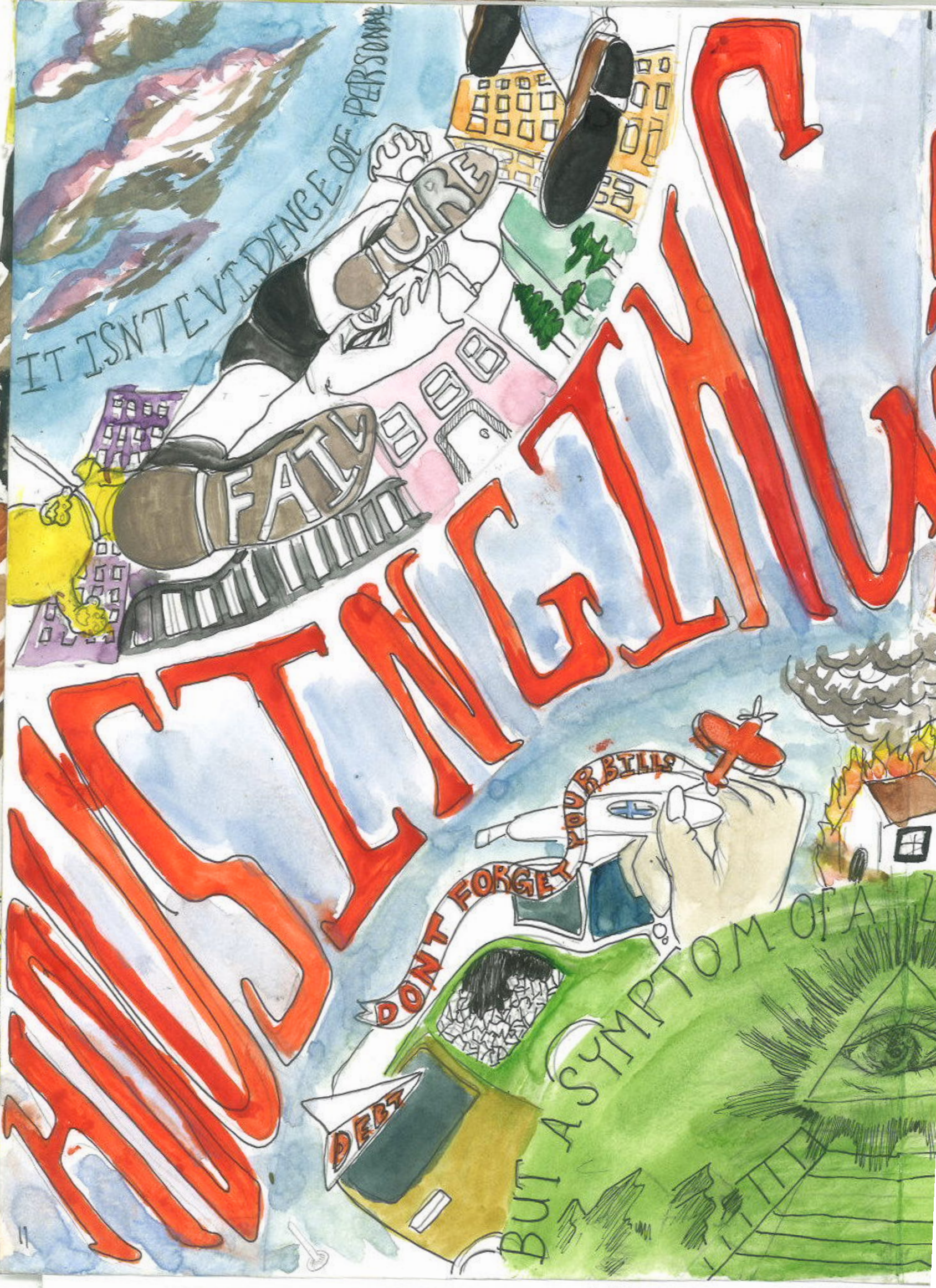
one ex hells angel  
& a sailor from  
Ireland with  
Alzheimers  
guys?

A and a girl in my room

She just  
didn't ever  
leave

COULD SHARE THE BARN<sup>W/</sup> THE BIKER









IT'S A THREAT THAT HANGS OVER

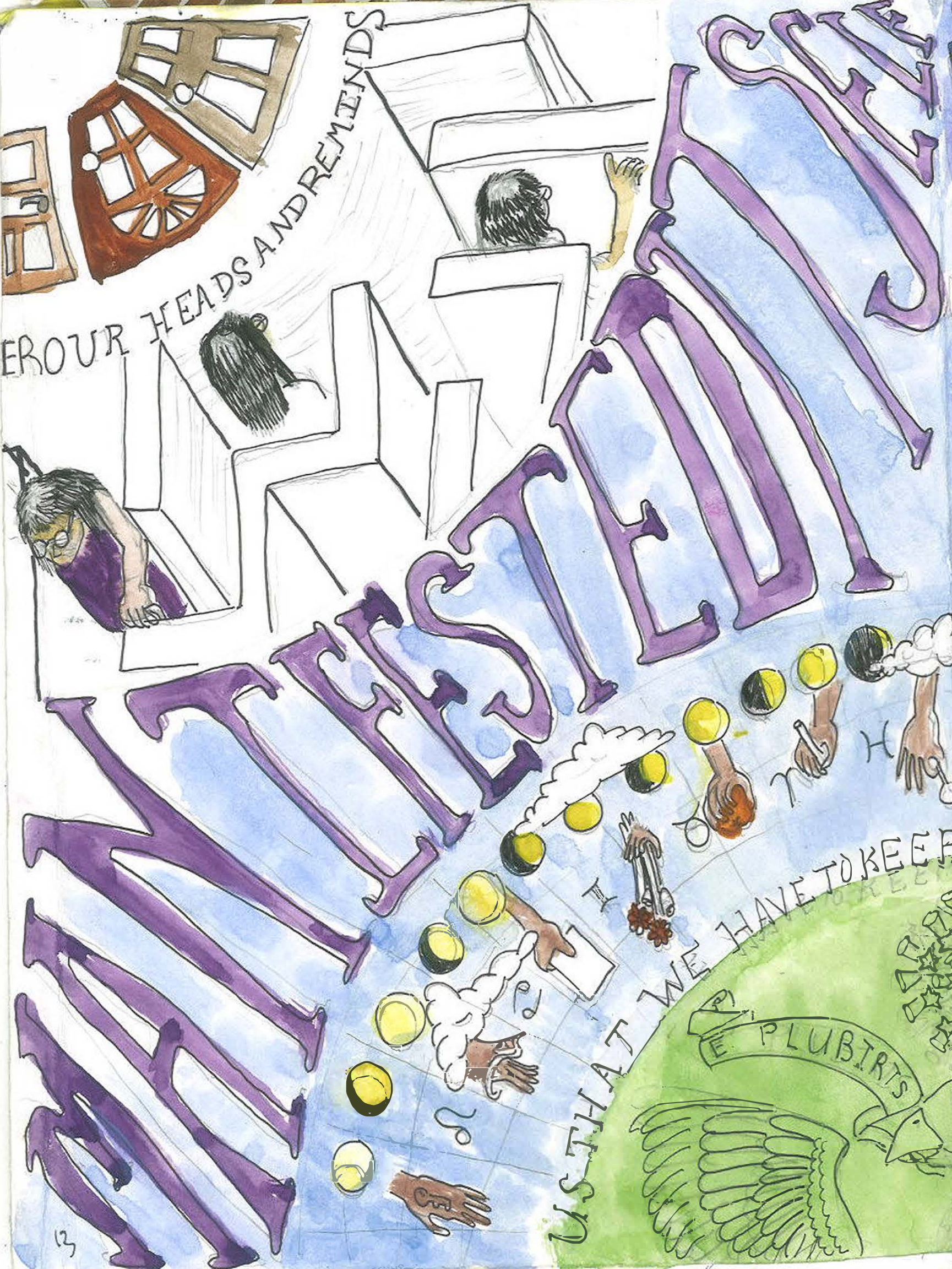
CULTURE

FINAL NOTICE

516387

LACK OF A SAFETY NET





OUR HEADS AND REMENDS

MELTED

US THAT WE HAVE TO KEEP

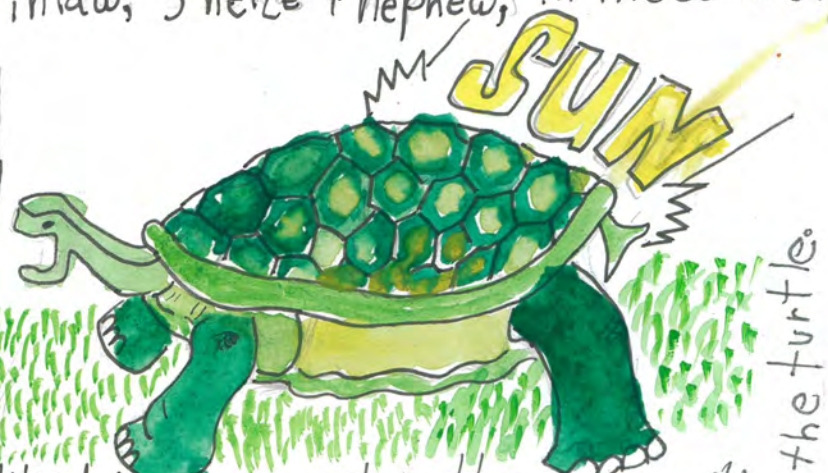
E PLUBIRTS







My misadventures started before I moved to Humboldt, and they followed me after I left. I moved back to L.A. to live with my ex, his brother, sister inlaw, 3 neice + nephew, in the suburbs.



It just wasn't working at all. I liked to hang out in the yard with

Then into a tense room rental w/ someone back in my hometown ~~was~~ so bored



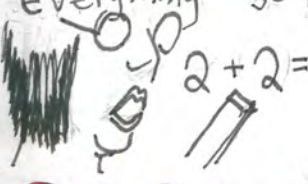
Then back to the barn, but this time in the airstream beside it...



Then I did the whole craigslist roommate thing but covid hit



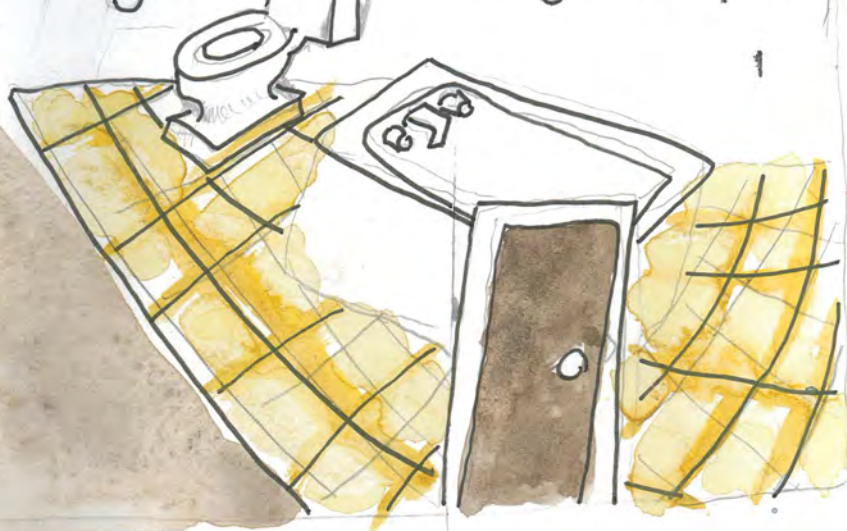
Which complicated everything so much, I decided to go back to school



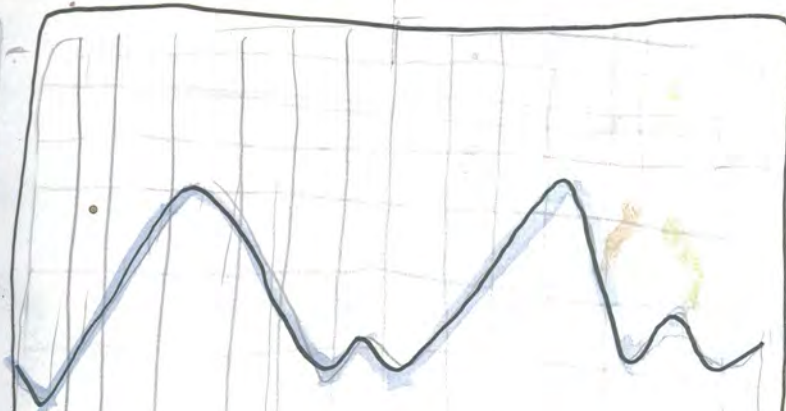
15 2020 2021 2022 2023



So I could make enough to rely on my self, and have my own space!



It kind of feels like real stability isn't something you can buy, so you have to build it systematically.



Other wise we will have to keep riding this economic roller coaster, which feels.

Like a  
The Bottom  
for

as rents continue to climb, and climb, and climb, and...