

# **AWKWARD SILENCE**



**A comic about mutism and silence  
Created by Steven Fraser**

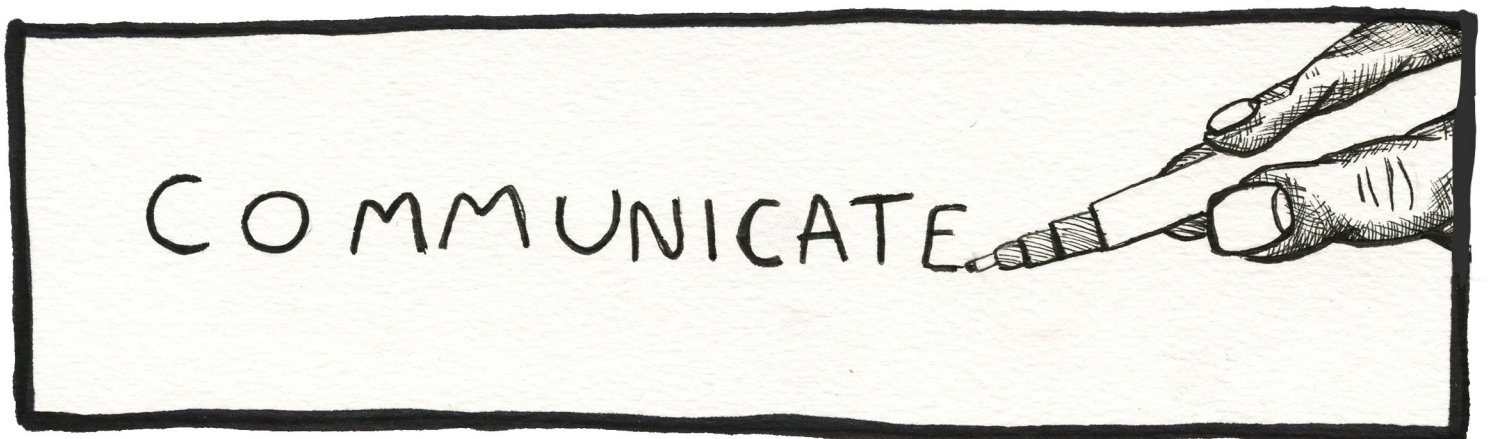


The world is loud a lot of the time. I like loud music. I listen to punk rock and I like going to gigs. I don't like being around noise when I am in unfamiliar places. This is something that has been with me for a long time. It has influenced the way I interact with people, the way I speak and the way I have developed as a person. Throughout this comic I present different ways this affects me, different coping mechanisms I undertake and I offer no solution whatsoever.

There are some random thoughts and feelings that appear and disappear. There are some blank pages. I felt that this way of presenting the comic is a truer reflection of my experience. I hope that you like it.

Thanks and take care,  
Steven









So I write things down and make lists.

This tends to help me communicate.

Things that cause me to be quiet -

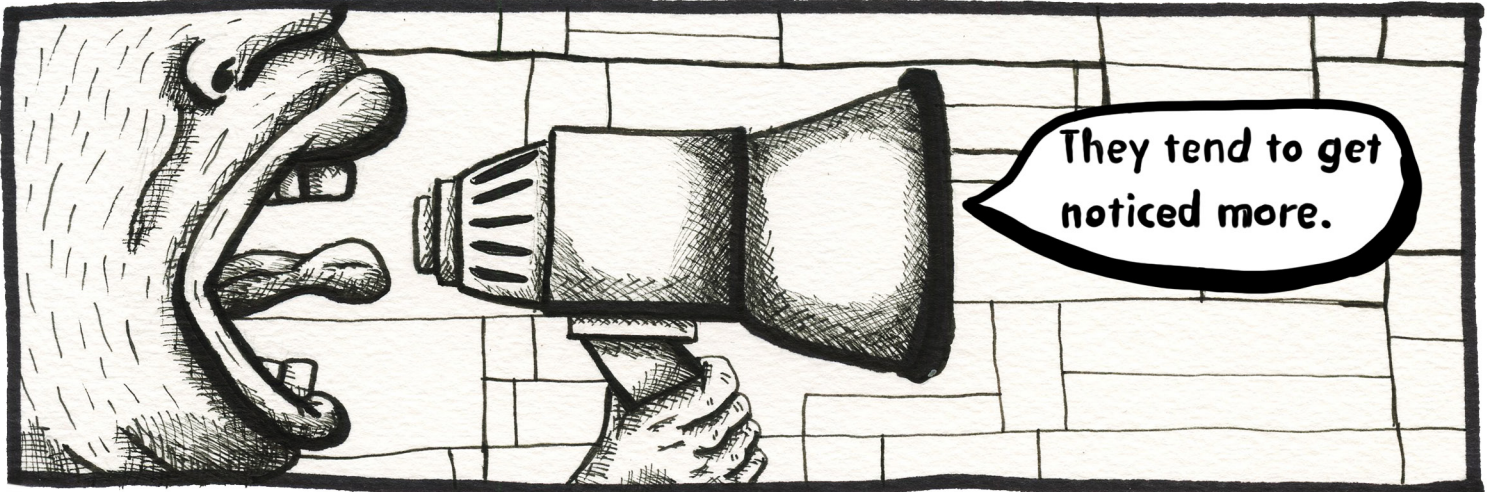
- Tiredness
- Stress
- Too many people
- Too much noise
- A change in my routine
- Loud people
- Feeling exposed
- Unfamiliar places
- Unfamiliar people
- Too much stuff
- Not having enough time



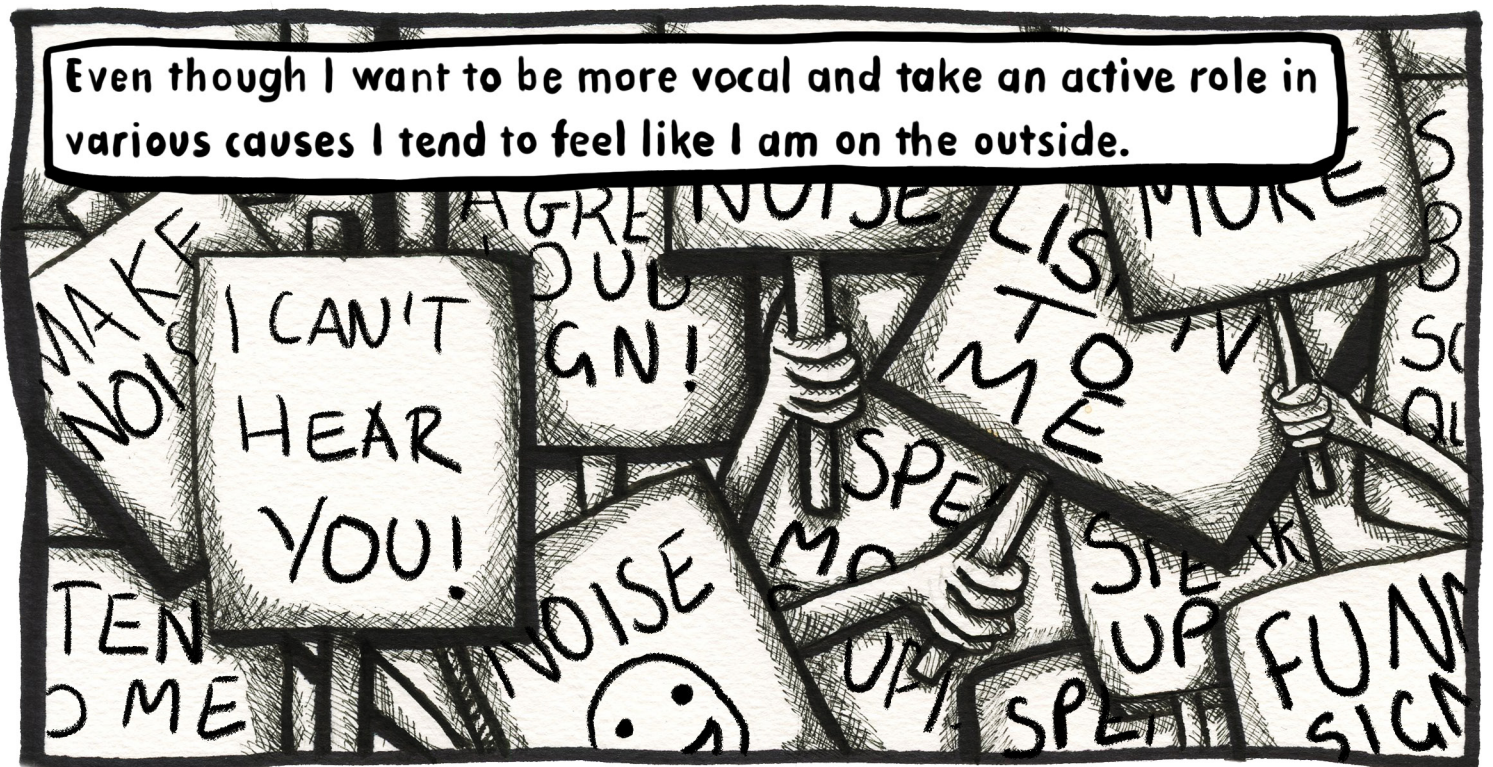
Sometimes I think the world is designed for loud people.



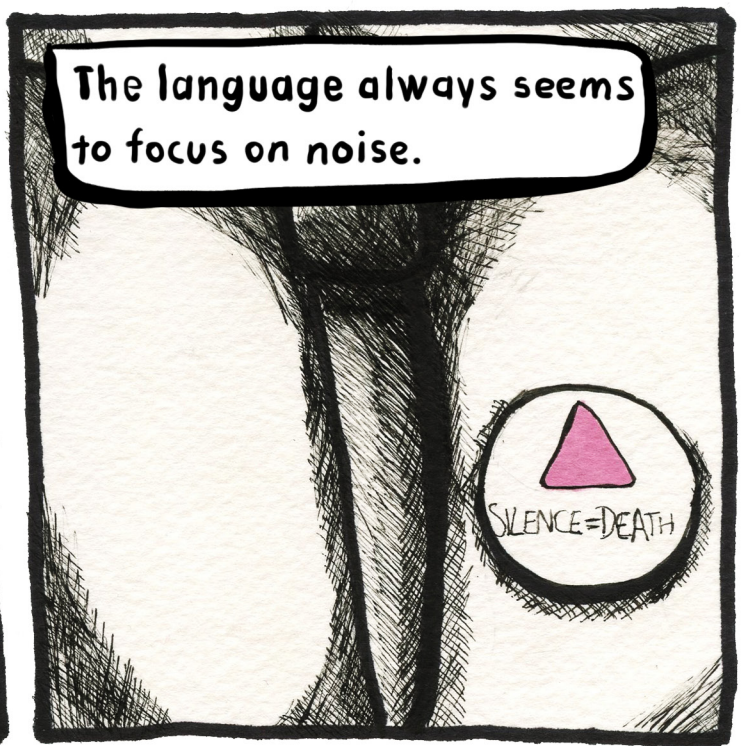
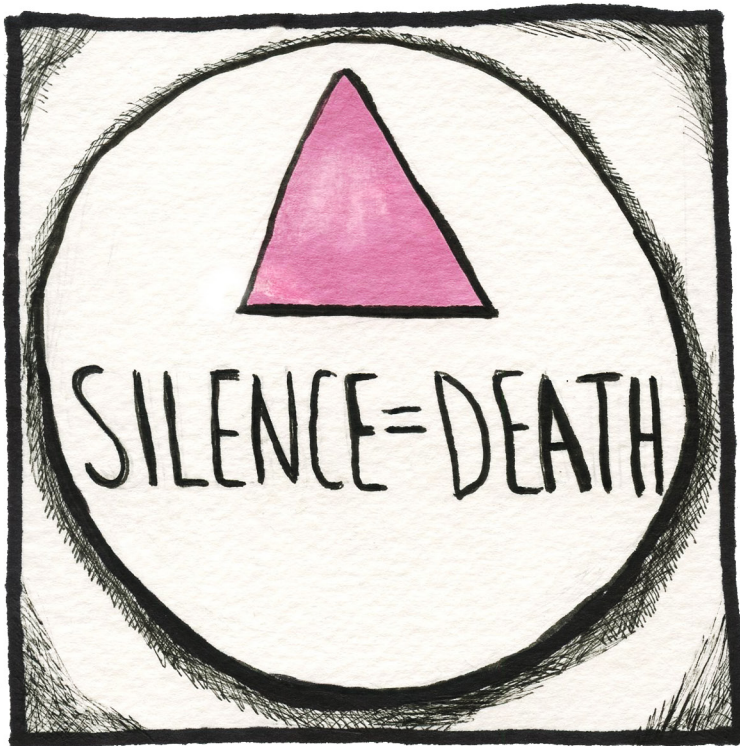
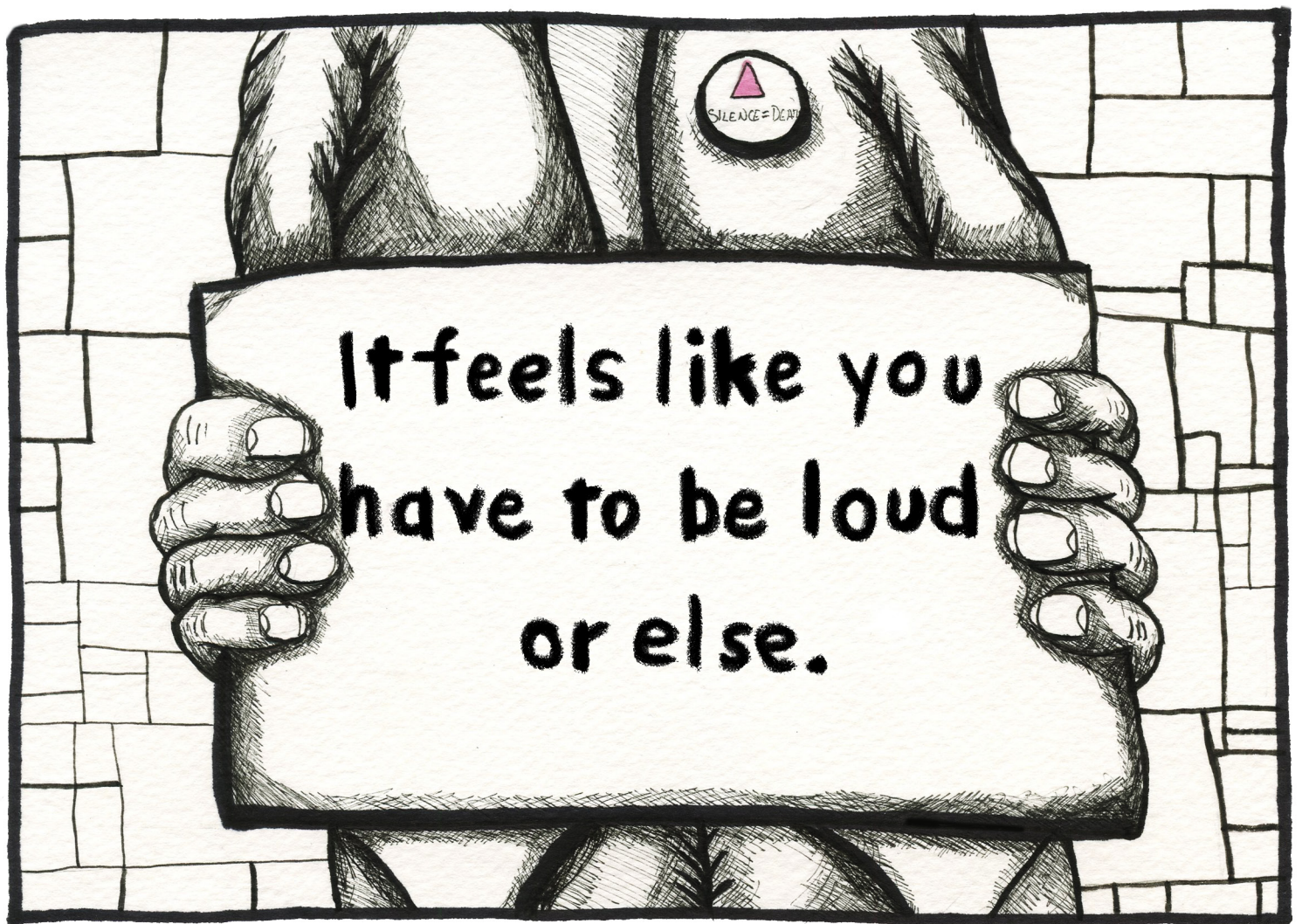
They tend to get noticed more.



Even though I want to be more vocal and take an active role in various causes I tend to feel like I am on the outside.



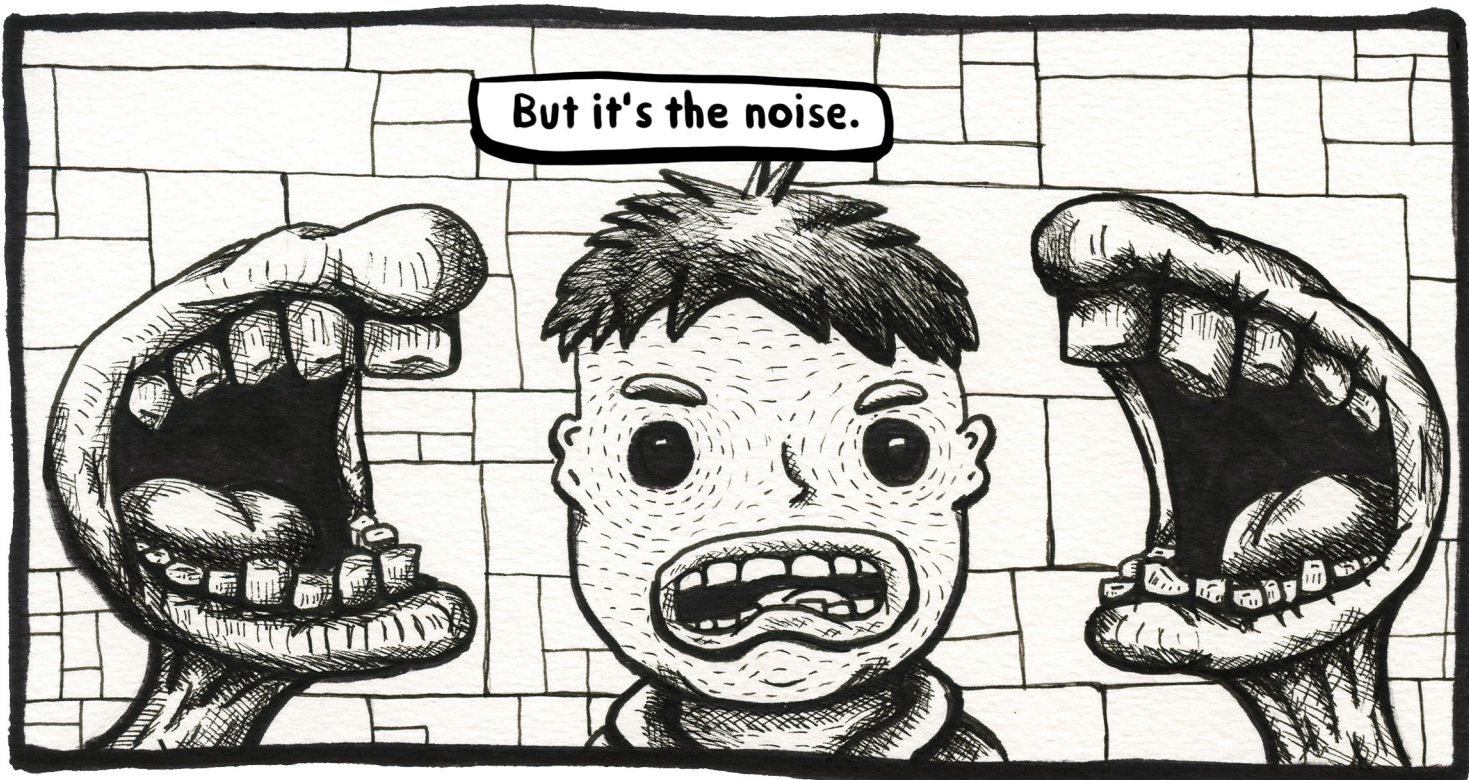




Note that I am totally on board with the message of Act Up.  
But as a person who is sometimes mute, the words hit me hard.



But it's the noise.



The busy places.

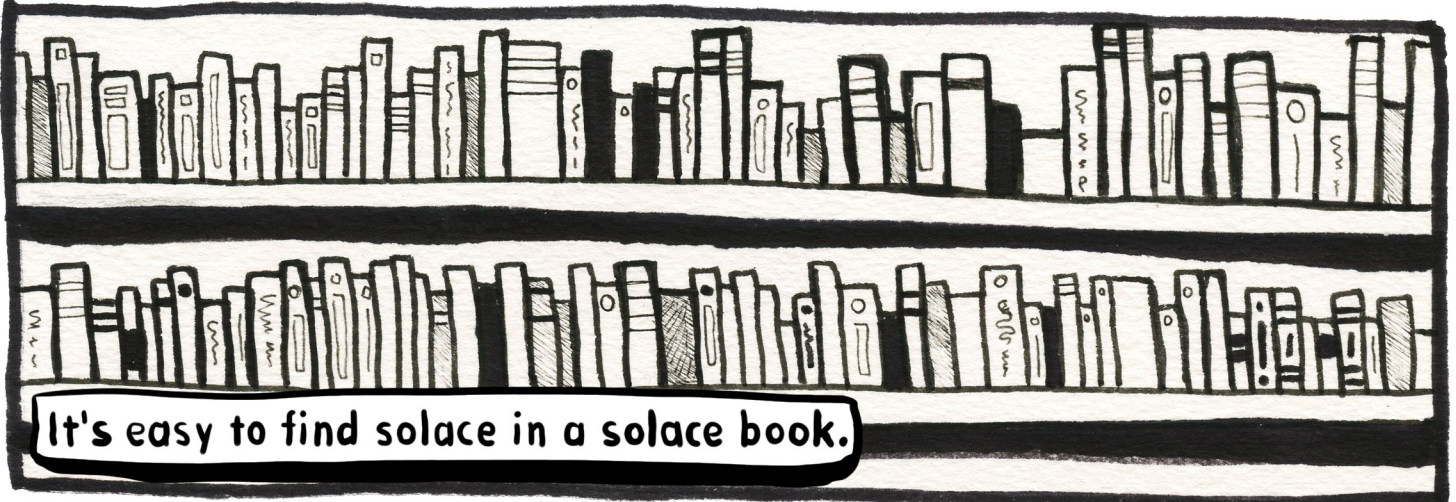
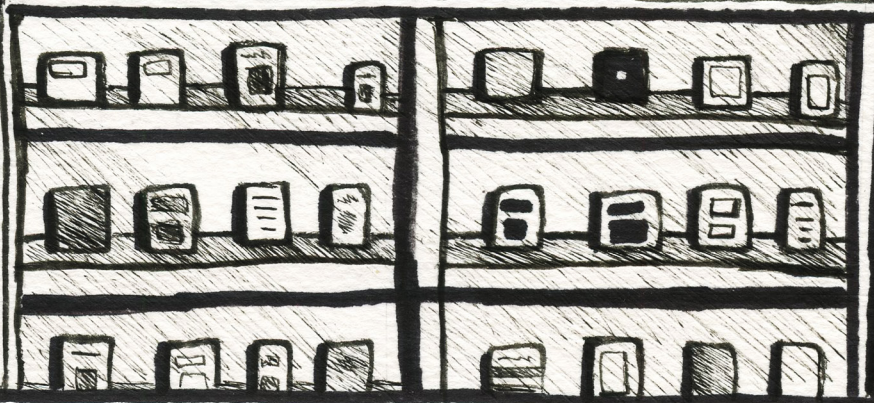


They make me silent.





# LOCAL INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORE



It's easy to find solace in a solace book.

Silent, quiet, solitary books.



YOUR  
SILENCE  
WILL NOT  
PROTECT  
YOU

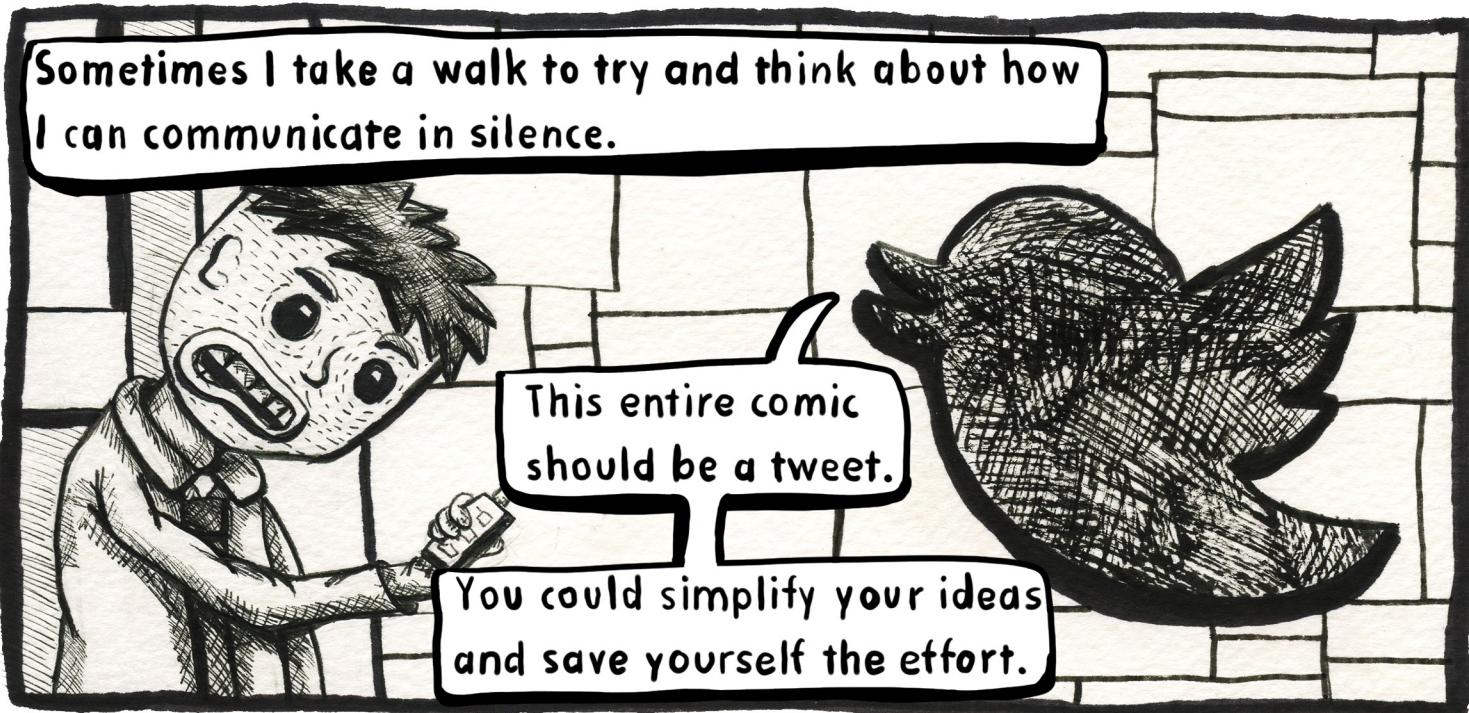


Note that I love Audre Lorde and that book.



It just feels like the world wants me to be loud.

Sometimes I take a walk to try and think about how I can communicate in silence.



This entire comic should be a tweet.

You could simplify your ideas and save yourself the effort.

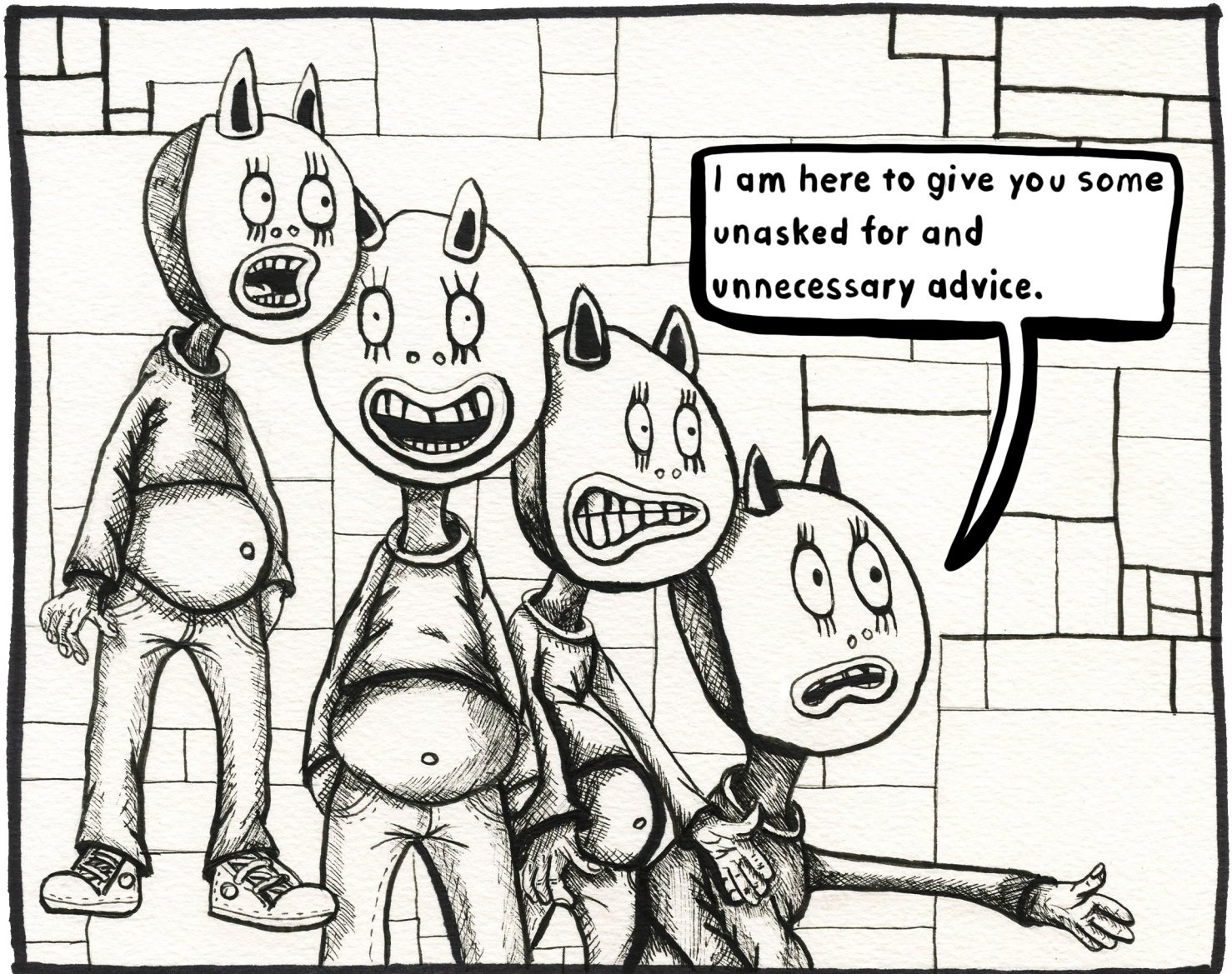
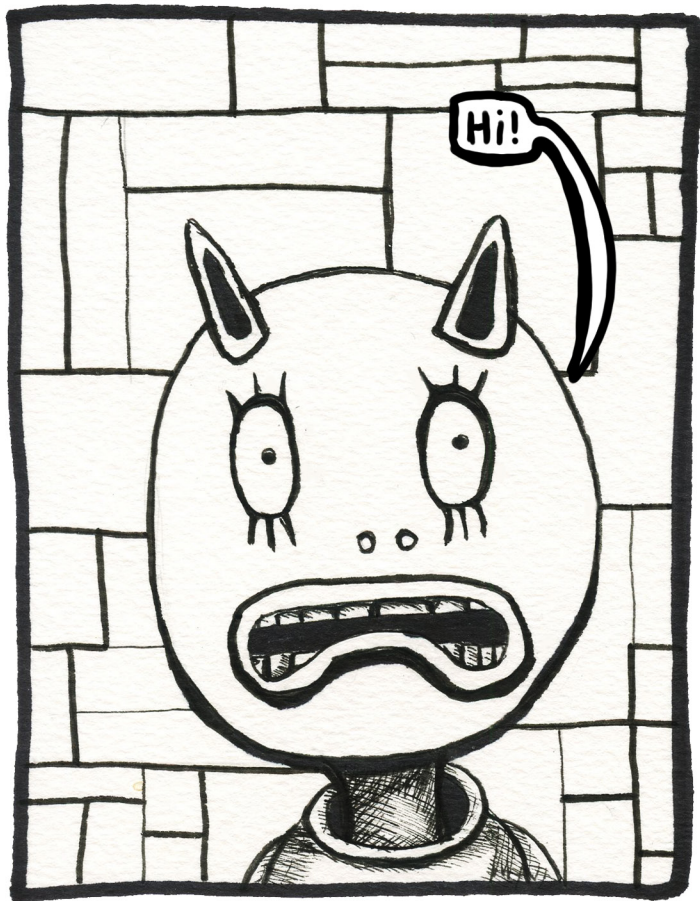
But even quiet forms of communication can be loud.

Such as social media.

I should ask for help.  
But, but how do I ask?

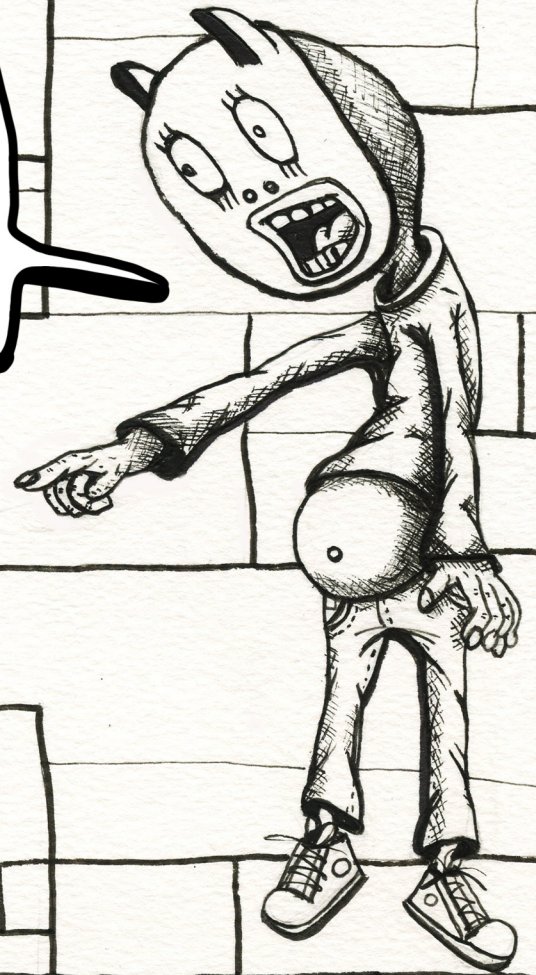








Remember you can make a rubbish comic and the world won't end.  
It's ok to make a comic that not many people will read.  
Your work is honest and important.



Thanks Comics God.



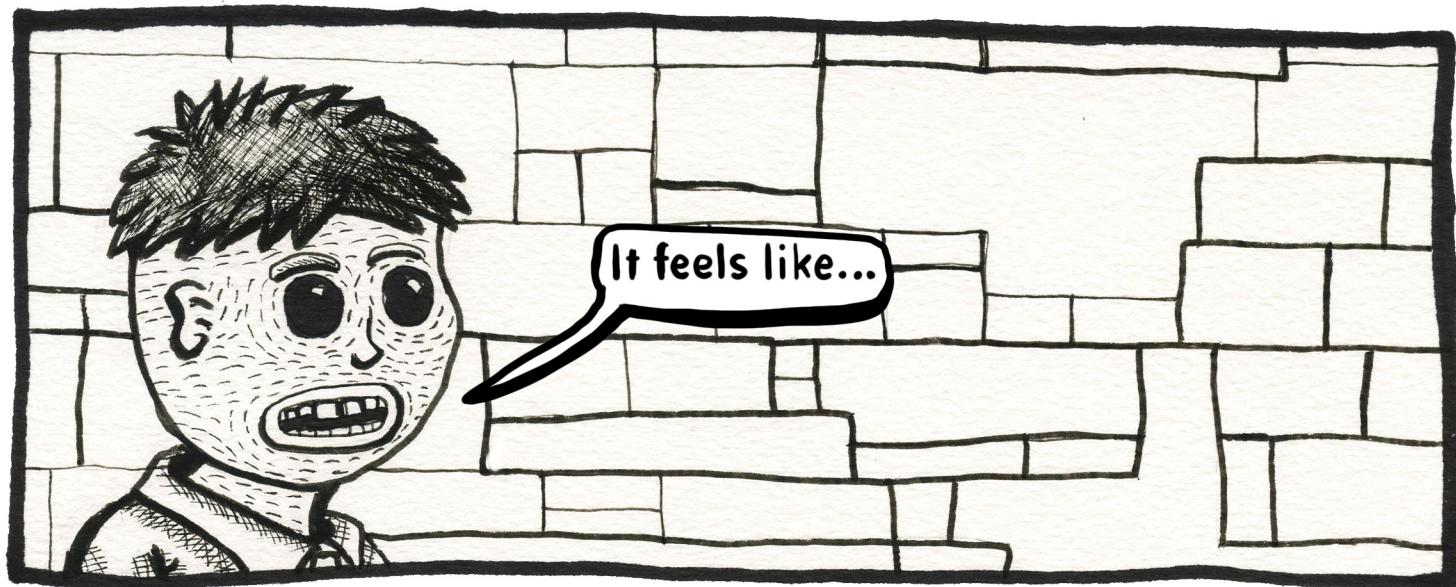
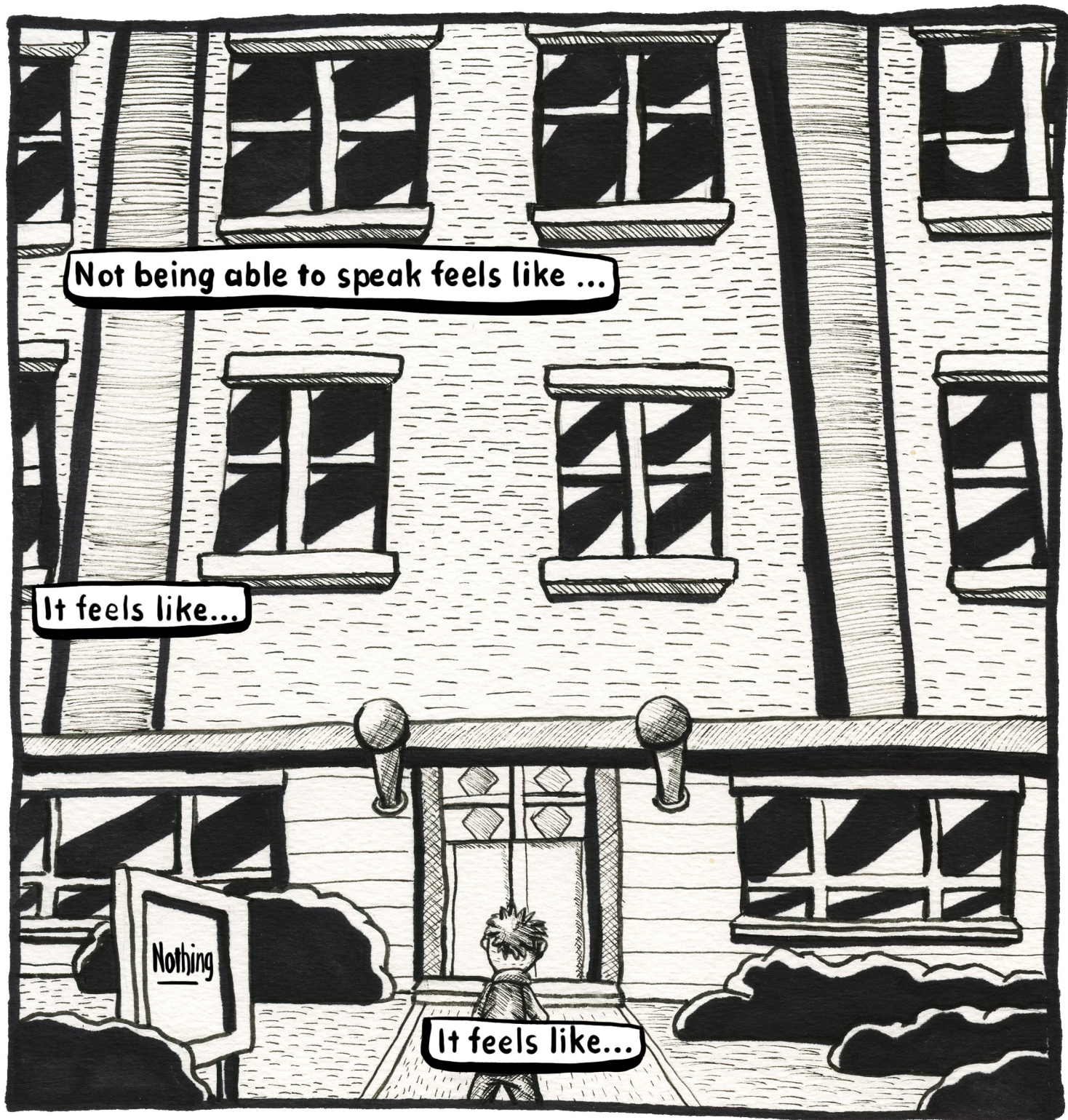
You are welcome.



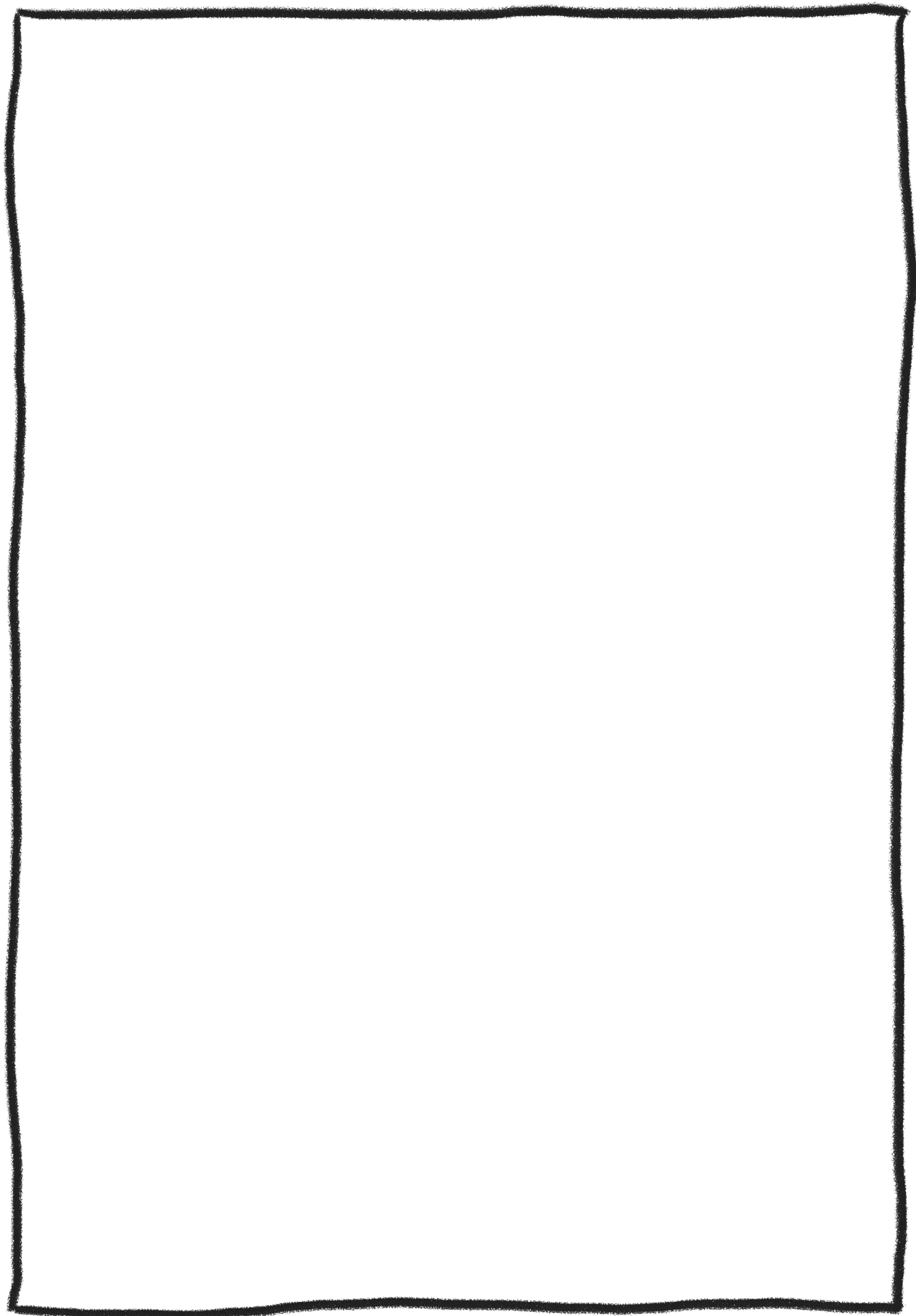
I like how the Comics God looks nothing like Stan Lee.



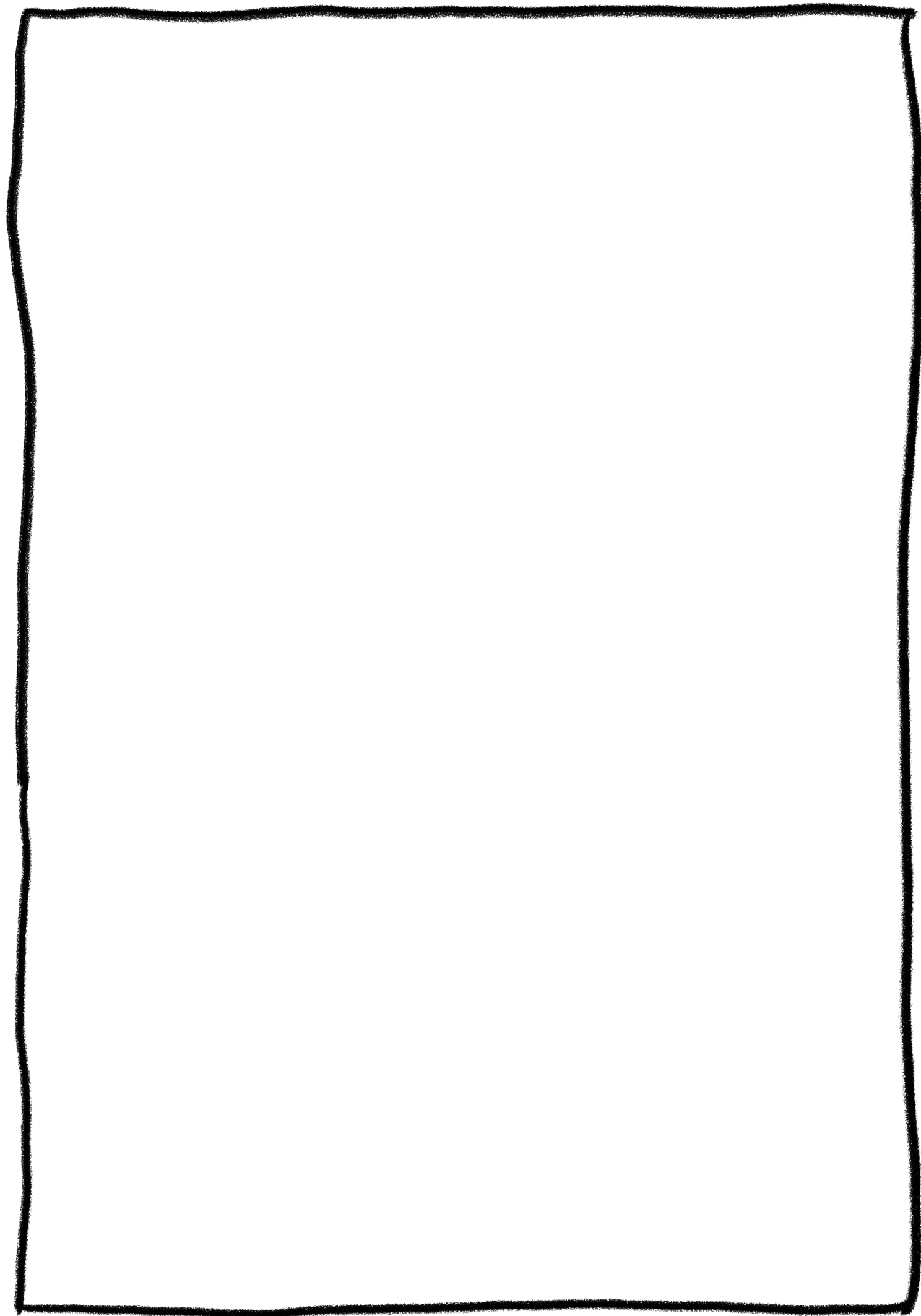














NOTHING









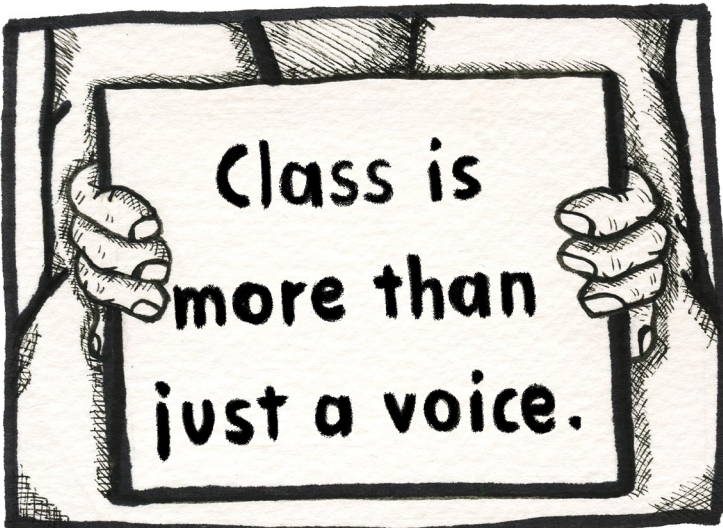
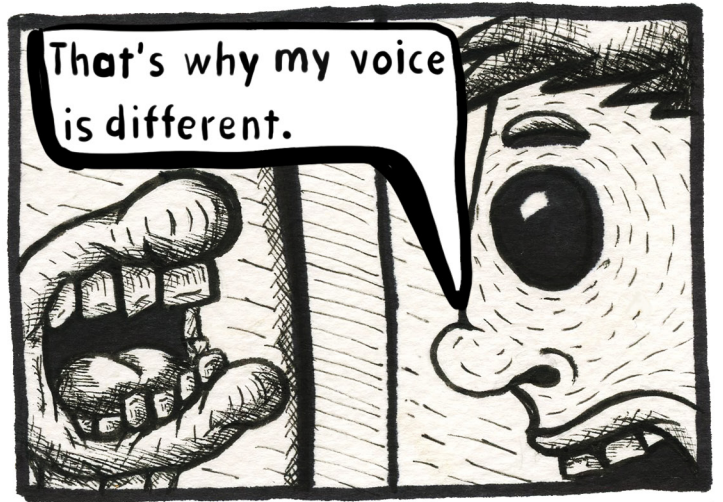
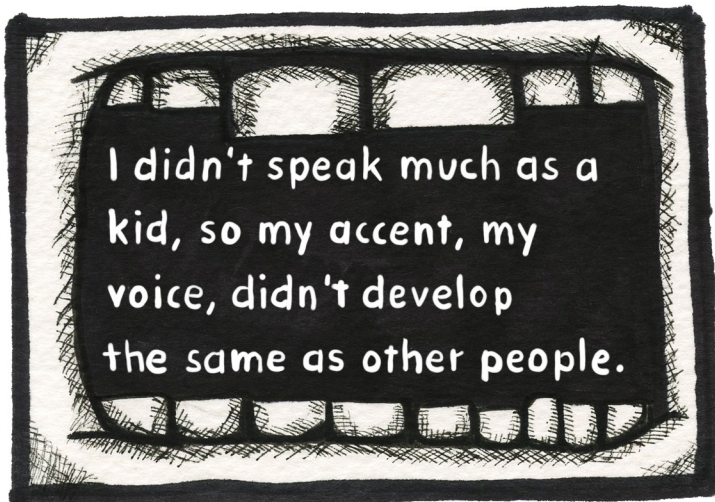
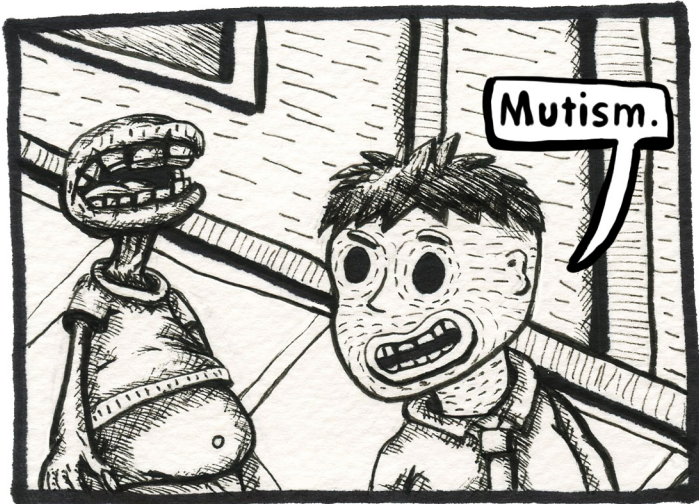
Even though you are feeling fine...

There is always something going on in your brain...

To make you feel very awkward...

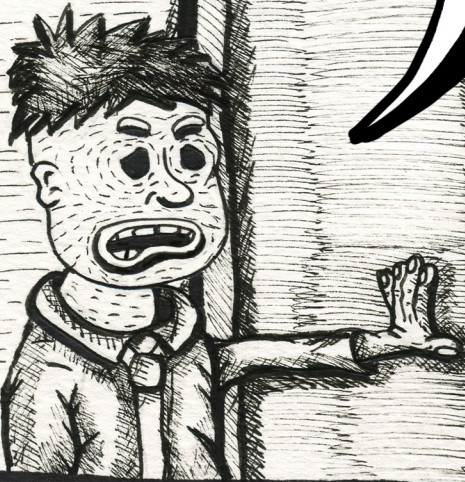
About being silent.







I like parties, dancing,  
meeting people.



Pause.



But the unknown can be difficult.



Because noise can make me quiet.



I need to stay quiet so I can cope.



I have to decide if it's worth it.



Do I go out, take a chance and have fun?



Do I stay at home?



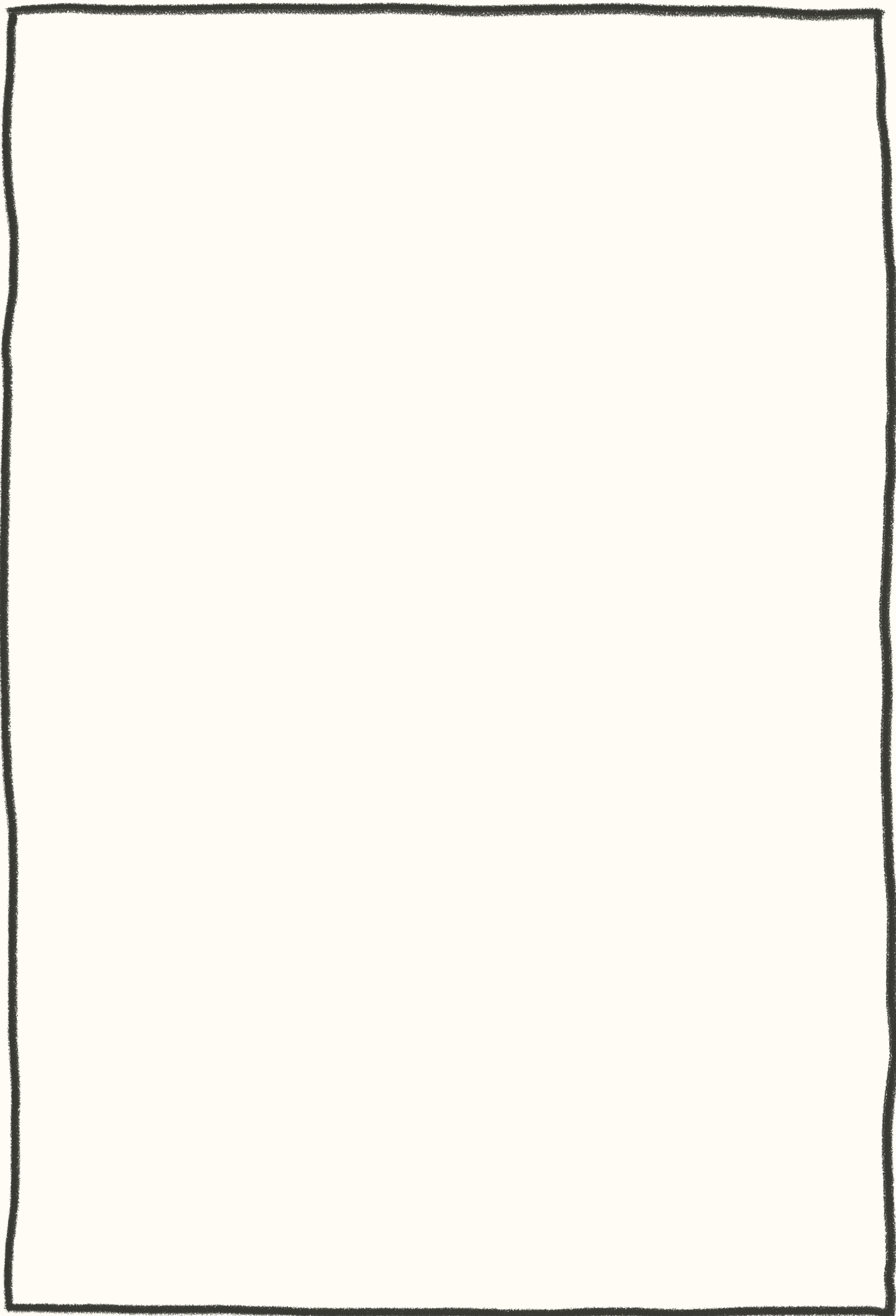
Do I hide in the corner?



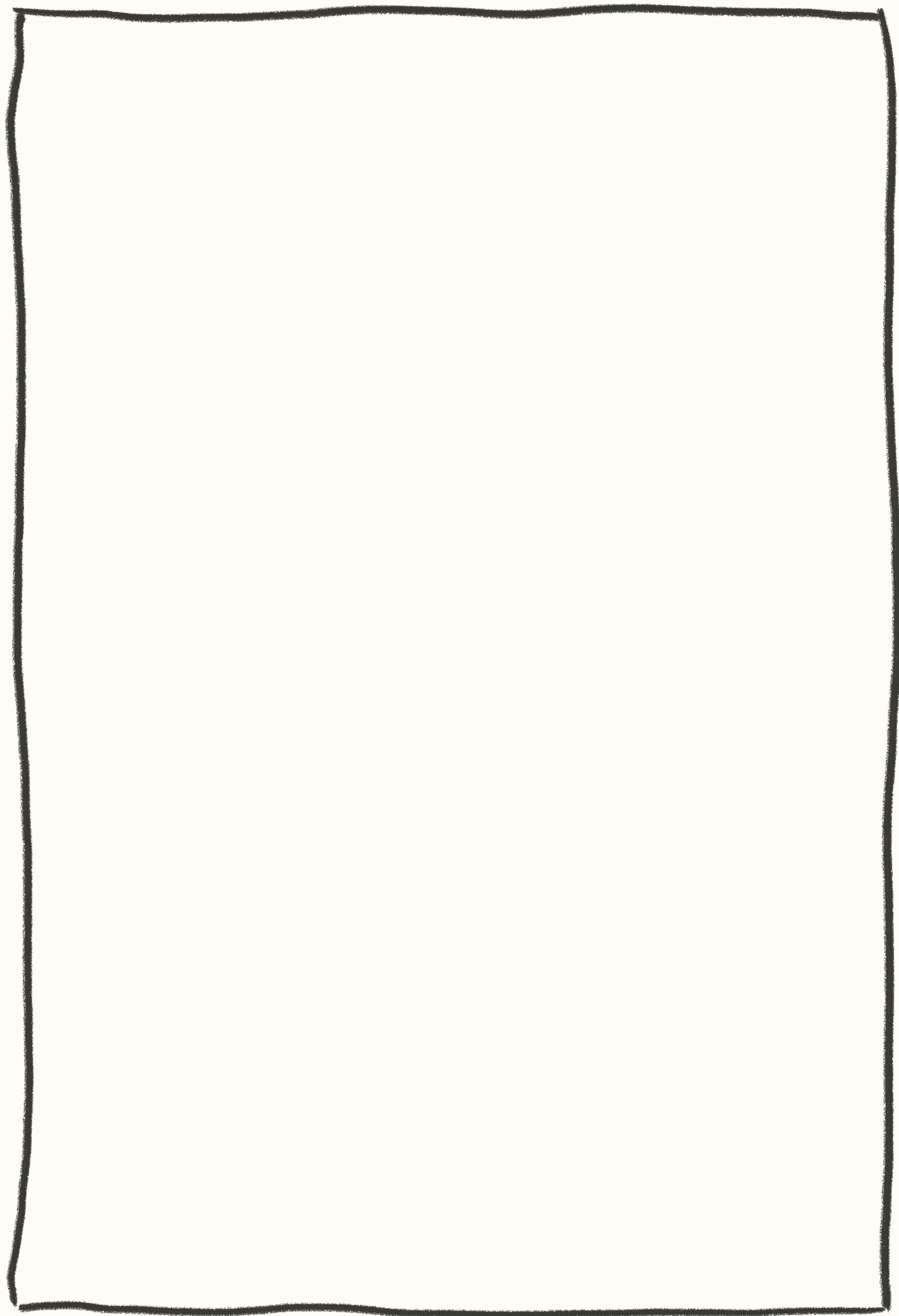










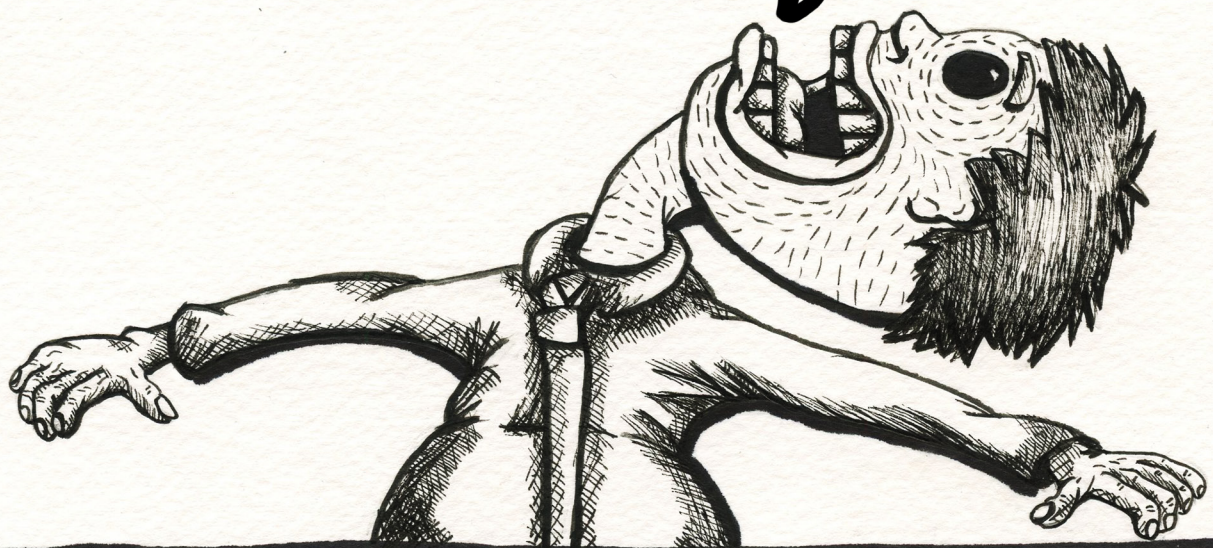




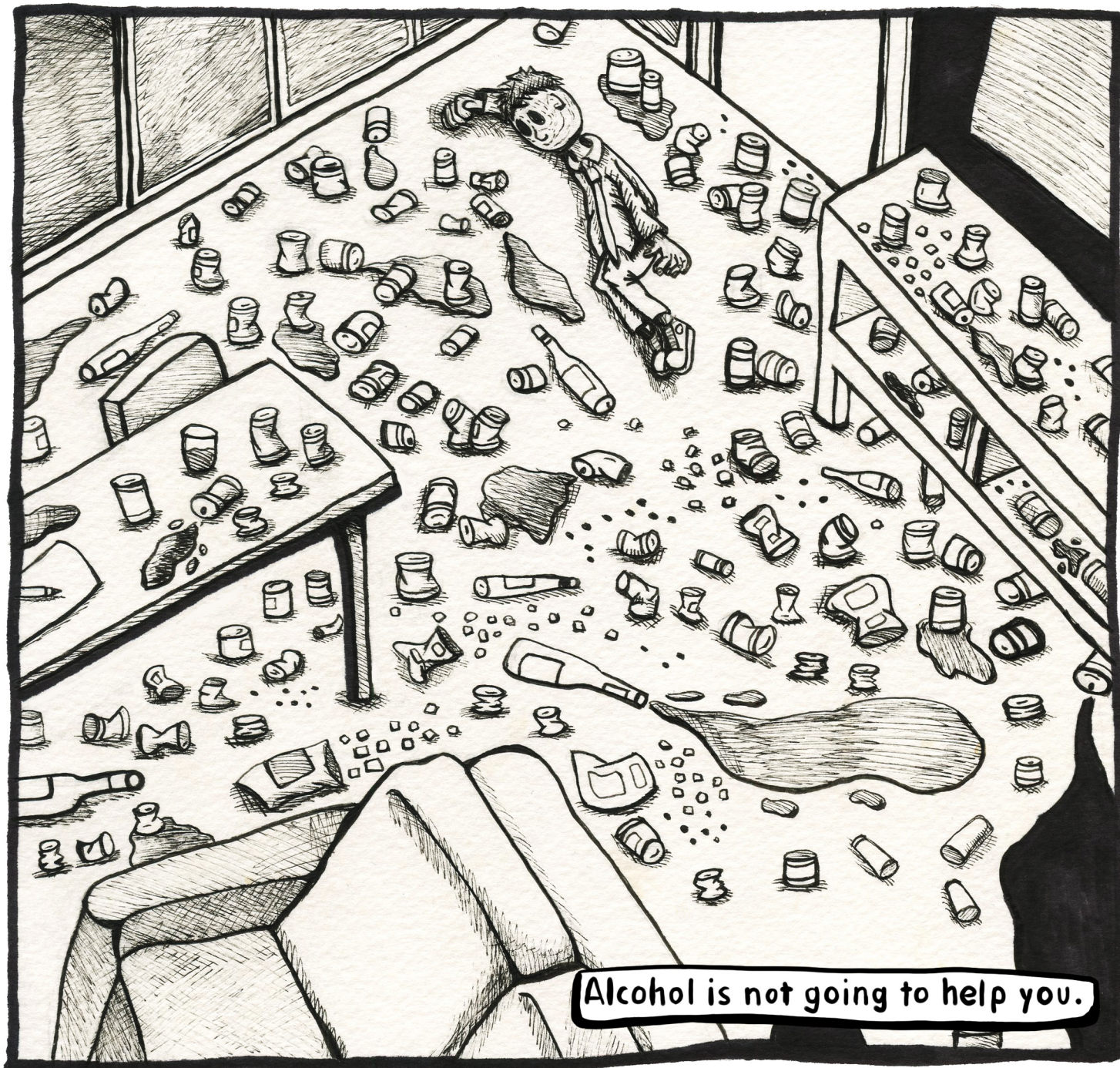
Is being mute in adulthood caused by a childhood trauma that you can't quite understand? Or are you just generally the kind of person who doesn't want to talk a lot?

Was it a good idea to bring up Act Up and Audre Lorde in this zine? Audre Lorde is clearly referring to a political silence and not a personal one and you have just interpreted the message to try and make a weak point about the loudness of language. The same can be said to your reference to Act Up. The slogan 'Silence = Death' is not being directed at you, but people in power who refuse to stand up for people in need. You are just a quiet person, who makes zines. Your trauma is in the past.

Move on and do new things. You will be ok. You don't need to find an explanation for all of this. Just be yourself and you will be fine. People will like you, even if you find it hard to communicate with them. Or you could take to drugs and alcohol to cover up your feelings.







Alcohol is not going to help you.



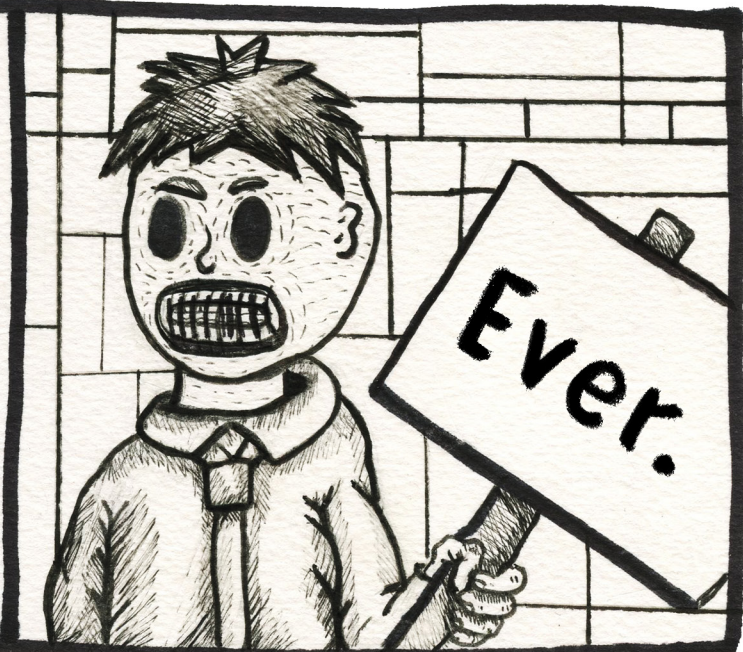
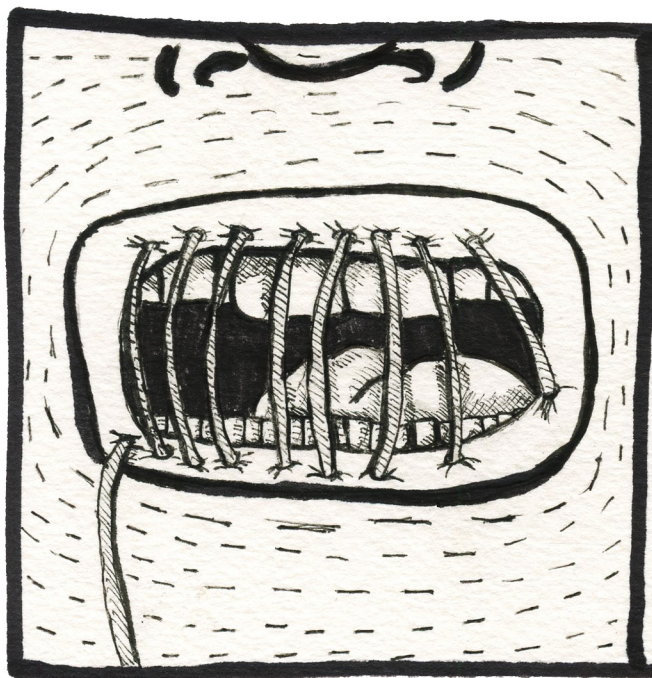
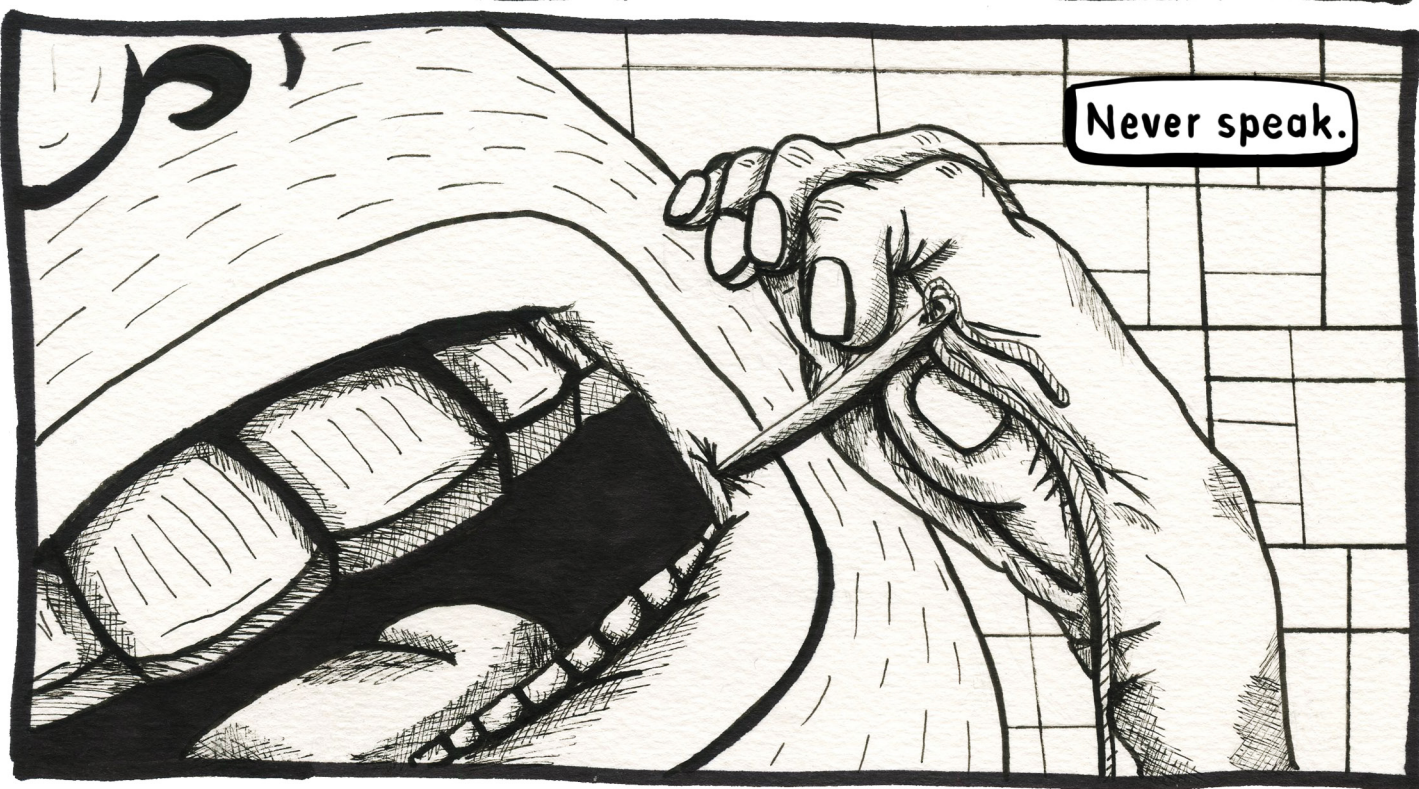
So maybe I should shut up...



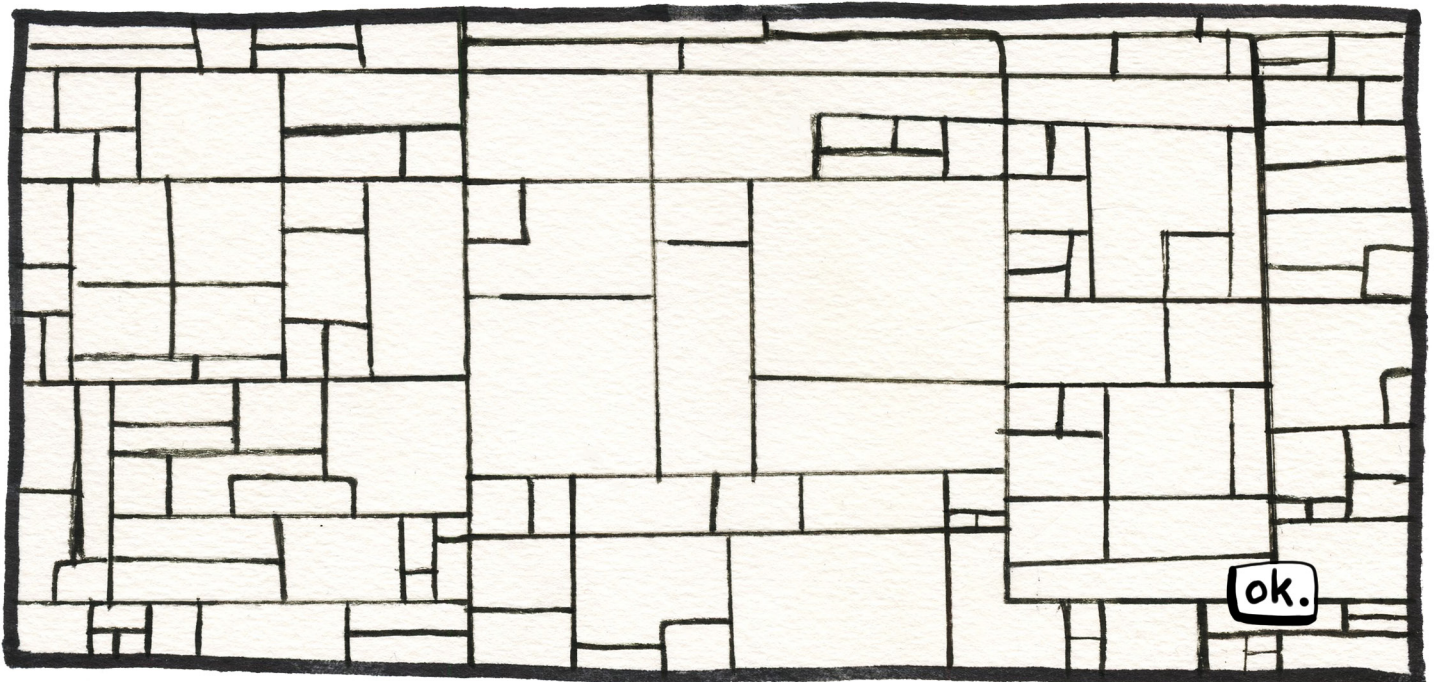
Completely.



Never speak.

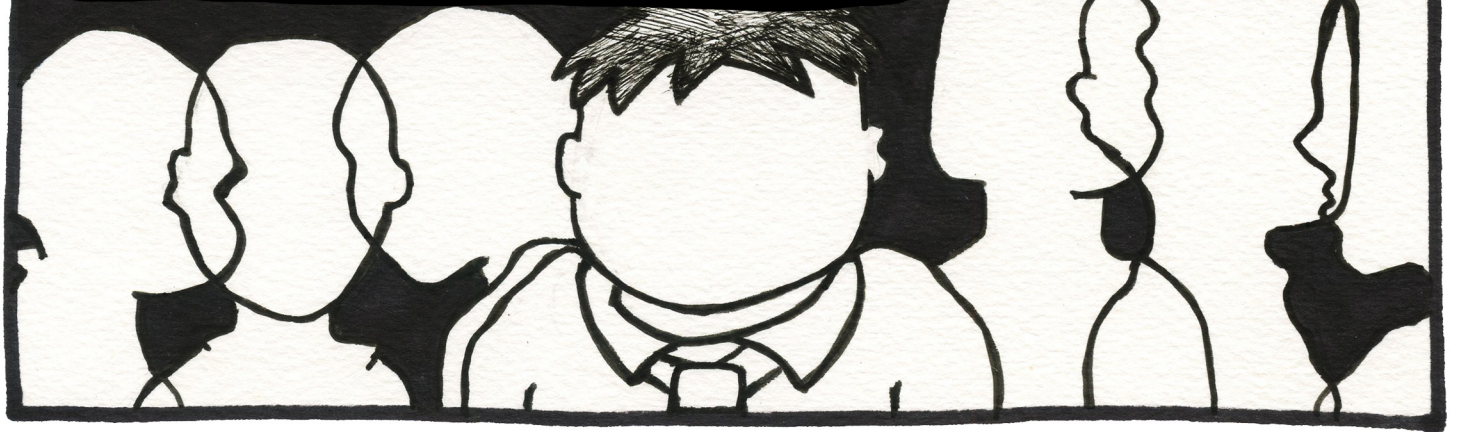








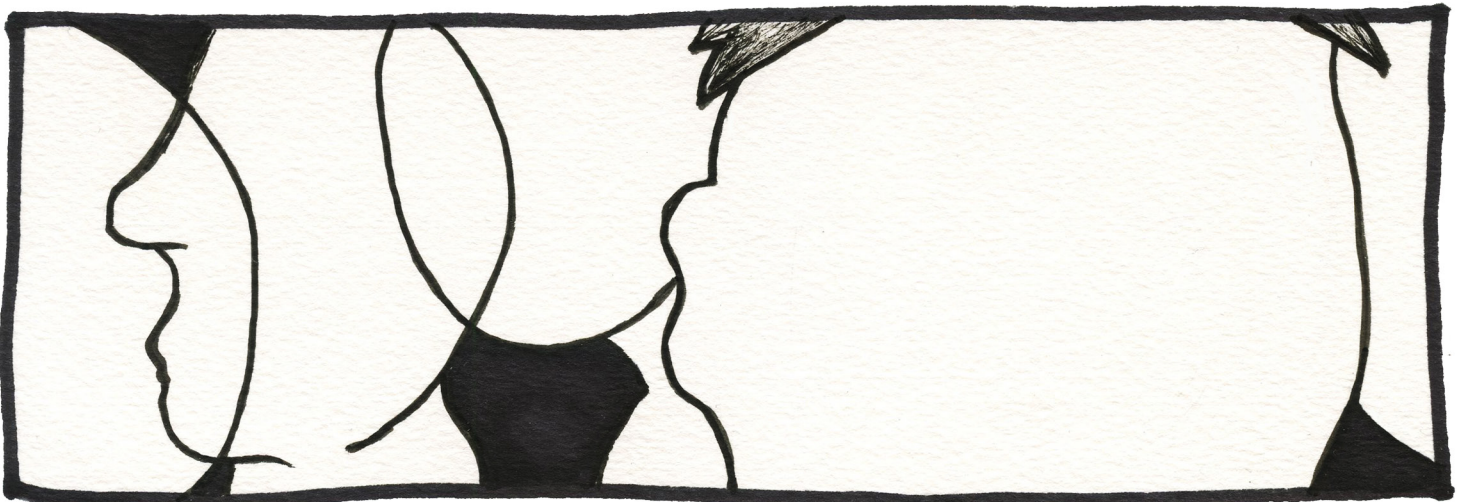
The situation I am in makes a difference.



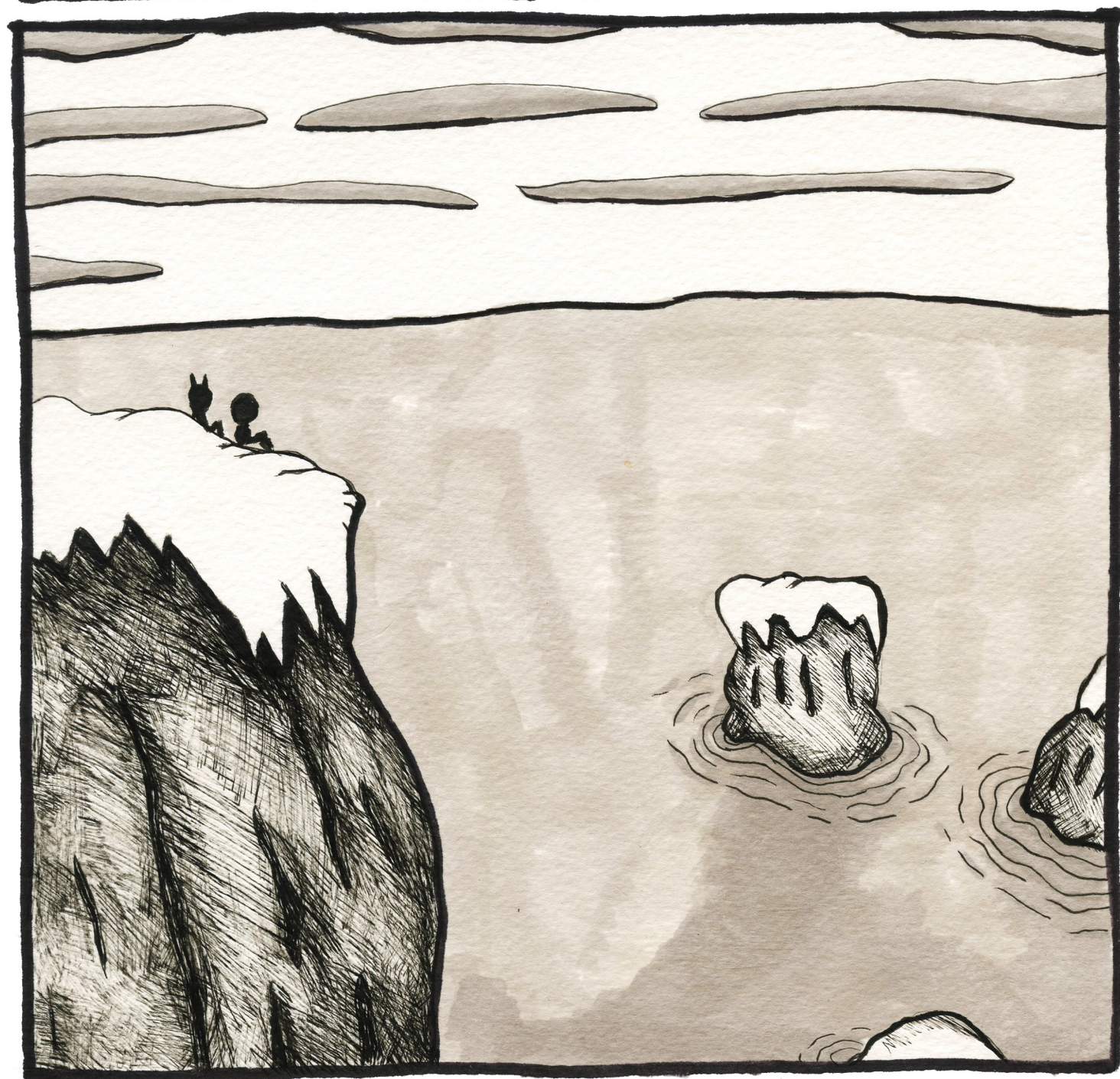
If I'm in a safe place with nice people, then I can talk.



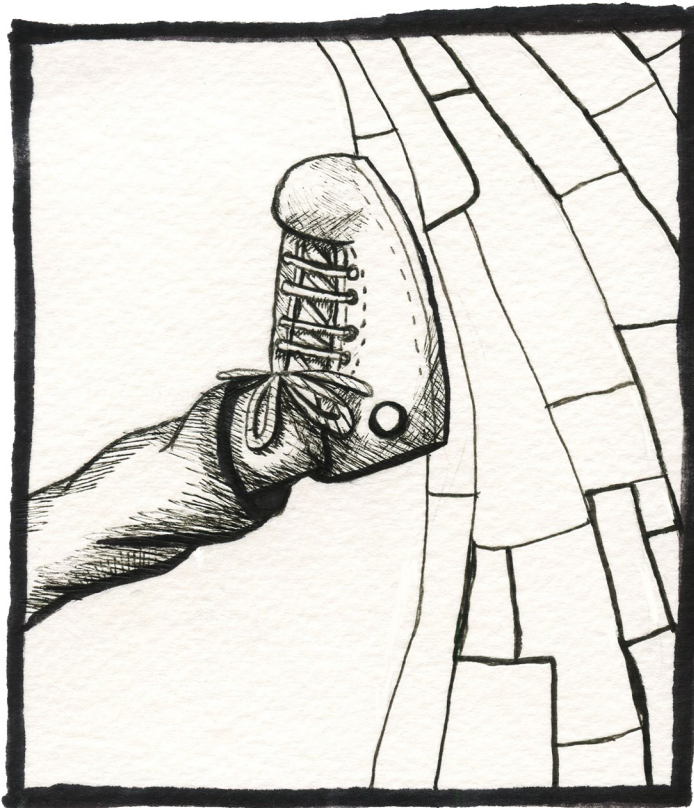
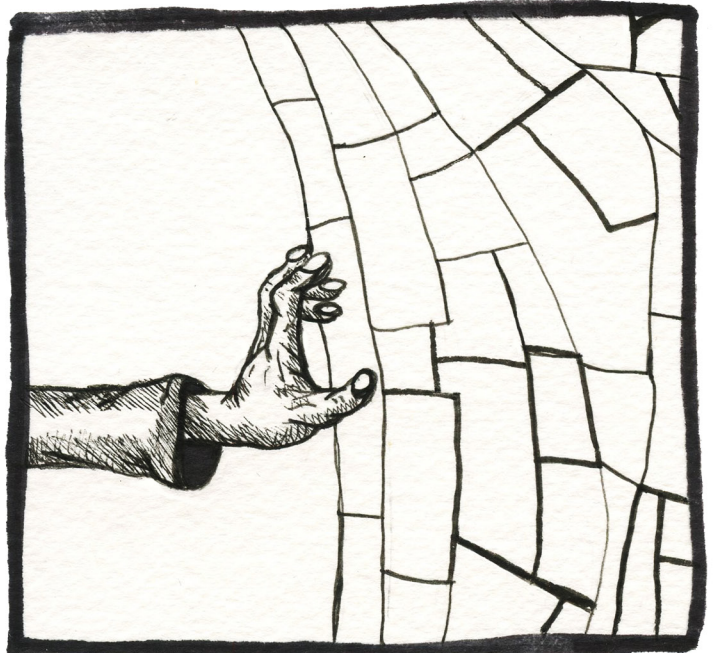
Get yourself in a comfortable position and try to talk to a stranger.













# ABOUT THE CREATOR

Steven Fraser is a writer, artist and animator who creates short animated films, installations, zines and comic books. His work looks at mental health, autism and queer identities. Some of his films have won awards and screened at international film and arts festivals.

Under the name Do It Theatre, he also creates experimental performances for adults who live with neurodiverse behaviours. These performances have been staged at various arts festivals throughout the UK and Australia.

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[www.doittheatre.com](http://www.doittheatre.com)



# AWKWARD SILENCE

A comic about mutism and silence  
Created by Steven Fraser

Awkard Silence should be read quietly. Preferably on your own in order to cut down on excess noise. Awkard Silence is a comic that looks at themes of quietness, loudness, confusion and solitude.

It is an honest account of being silent in a loud world.

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