

# 2020!

# JANUARY

# A YEAR IN THE BOOK FORT

NEW YEAR! NEW YOU! NEW...WAIT...WHAT?

GUEST STARRING JUPITER + SATURN

### WEEK 1

I BORROW THIS BOOK FROM MY BROTHER OVER CHRISTMAS.

I CRIB NOTES FROM THE BOUNTY OF FOOTNOTES +



BUT THERE IS NO NEXT TIME.

REFERENCES - FROM RACIST HOUSING POLICY TO REPARATIONS.

"I'LL BRING IT BACK NEXT TIME I'M DOWN." I PROMISE.

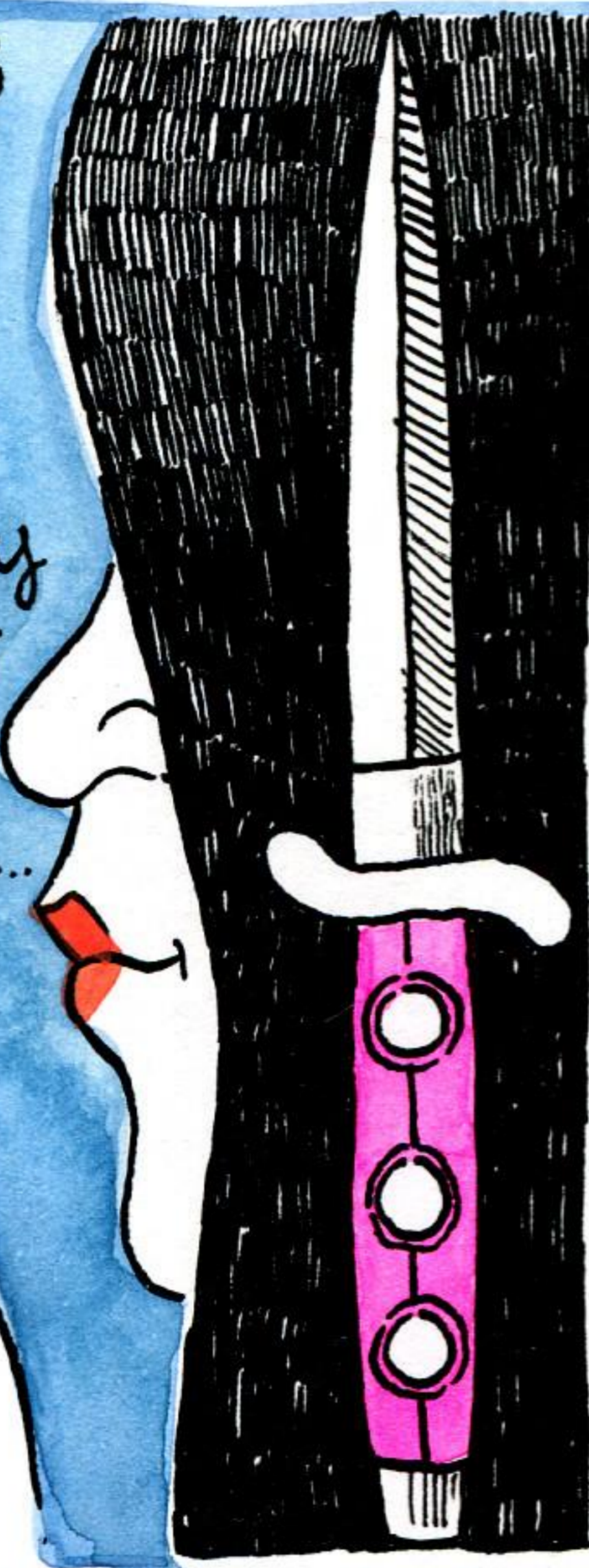
WE WERE 8 YEARS IN POWER - TA-NEHISI COATES

### WEEK 3

BUT WHAT IS THIS PNEUMONIA OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN IN WUHAN, CHINA? MEMES CONDEMNING WET MARKETS. BUT I CAN'T HEAR THE NOISE OVER THE DARK, DIRTY

FEMINIST FAIRY TALES...

...BEING WHISPERED IN MY EAR.



APPLE + KNIFE - INTAN PARAMADITHA

### WEEK 2

JANUARY: THE HOPEFUL UNKNOWN. EMEZI TELLS ME A STORY OF DUALITIES + INTERNAL MULTITUDES, GENDER + MENTAL HEALTH, RICHLY ROOTED IN 1980 COSMOLOGY.



FRESHWATER - AKWAEKI EMEZI

### WEEK 4

AND DON'T FORGET THE WILDFIRES RAVAGING AUSTRALIA. AS YELLOW AS THE WARLIGHT FALLING ON THE MUZZLE OF A SLEEPING, STOLEN GREYHOUND.



WARLIGHT - MICHAEL ONDAATJE

### WEEK 5

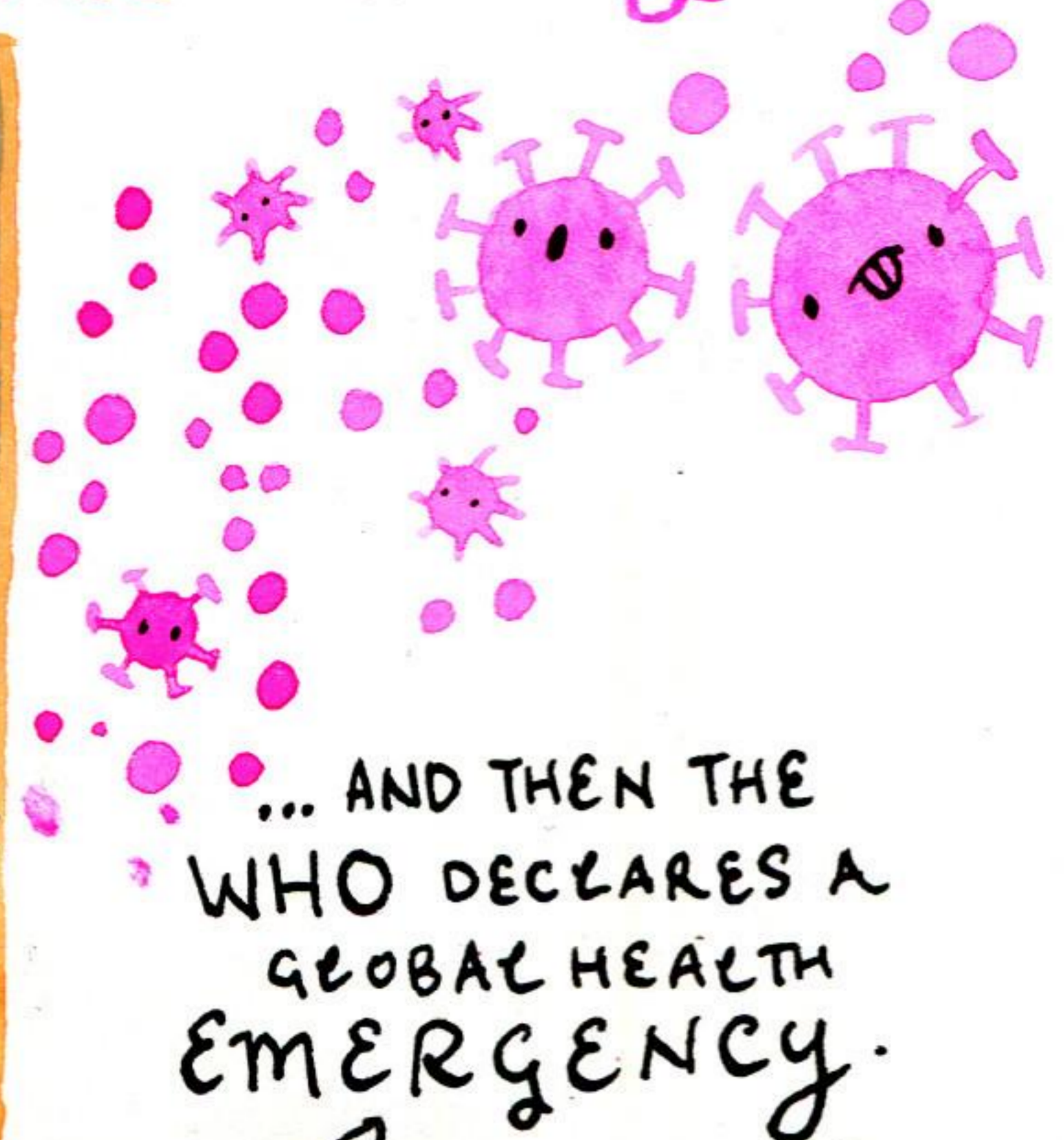
STILL REELING FROM LAST DECEMBER'S TORY MAJORITY, THIS IS A DIFFICULT READ. PATRIARCHAL, WHITE SUPREMACIST, CAPITALIST ENERGIES MANIPULATING US THROUGH DATA HARVESTING, SOCIAL MEDIA CORRAES + WEAPONISED RAGE. WE MUST TAKE BACK THE INTERNET, WYIE INSISTS.



UNDER BORIS JOHNSON'S SMILE, GURNING FACE, WE LEAVE THE E.U.



MIND\*CK - CHRISTOPHER WYIE



... AND THEN THE WHO DECLARES A GLOBAL HEALTH EMERGENCY.





**WEEK 6**

FIRST LOVE + BURGEONING SEXUALITY. A BOOK OF INTIMATE TOUCHES AND ECHOING LOSS IN RUST BELT AMERICA.

THE IMAGE OF VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN BOY, LITTLE DOG, PEUCKING HIS GRANDMOTHER'S WHITE HAIRS STAYS + STAYS + STAYS...

**WEEK 7**

I FOLLOW RUNCIE ALONG SCOTTISH COASTLINES, COLLECTING SEAGLASS THE SEA HERE ALWAYS CALLS TO MIND THE FIRST WOMEN KILLED AS WITCHES UNDER KING JAMES I'S HUNTS.

THE BLACK ROCK SAND LITTERED WITH THEIR SHAMEFUL BONES.

BUT RUNCIE DOESN'T MENTION THEM.

**ON EARTH WE'RE BRIEFLY GORGEOUS - OCEAN VUONG**

**WEEK 8**

WHEN FOCASADE - SADIE - BABY - SAI FINDS HERSELF IN RHYTHMS AT THE END OF THIS BOOK, IT IS THE PERFECT RECONCILIATION OF A SELF SCATTERED BETWEEN CULTURES, COUNTRIES, BLOOD + STORIES.

**SALT ON YOUR TONGUE - CHARLOTTE RUNCIE**

**WEEK 9**

COLE LEADS ME ON A LONG WALK OVER MOUNTAINS... THROUGH ALLEYWAYS + GALLERIES...

'CONSTELLATIONAL THINKING' IS THE KEY, HE TEACHES.

...TRANSCENDING BORDERS... + SMALL ENGLISH CHURCH YARDS.

**GHANA MUST GO - TAIYE SELESI**

AS THINGS BEGIN TO GET BAD, WORK IS SMALL ART SCRAPST I WONDER WHAT I'M GOING TO DO.

**KNOWN + STRANGE THINGS - TEJUL COLE**

I GO TO A FRIEND'S HOUSE. SHE + HER GIRLFRIEND MAKE US DINNER, WE WATCH THE CRAFT, SHARE FOOD, DRINK WINE. WE LAUGH LOUDLY, IN A SMALL ROOM, OUR BODIES CASUALLY TOUCHING, OUR BREATH, NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF.

I WALK HOME DRUNK IN THE FREEZING NIGHT RAIN.

DID WE KNOW THIS WAS THE LAST OF THE CAREFREE TIMES?



# MARCH

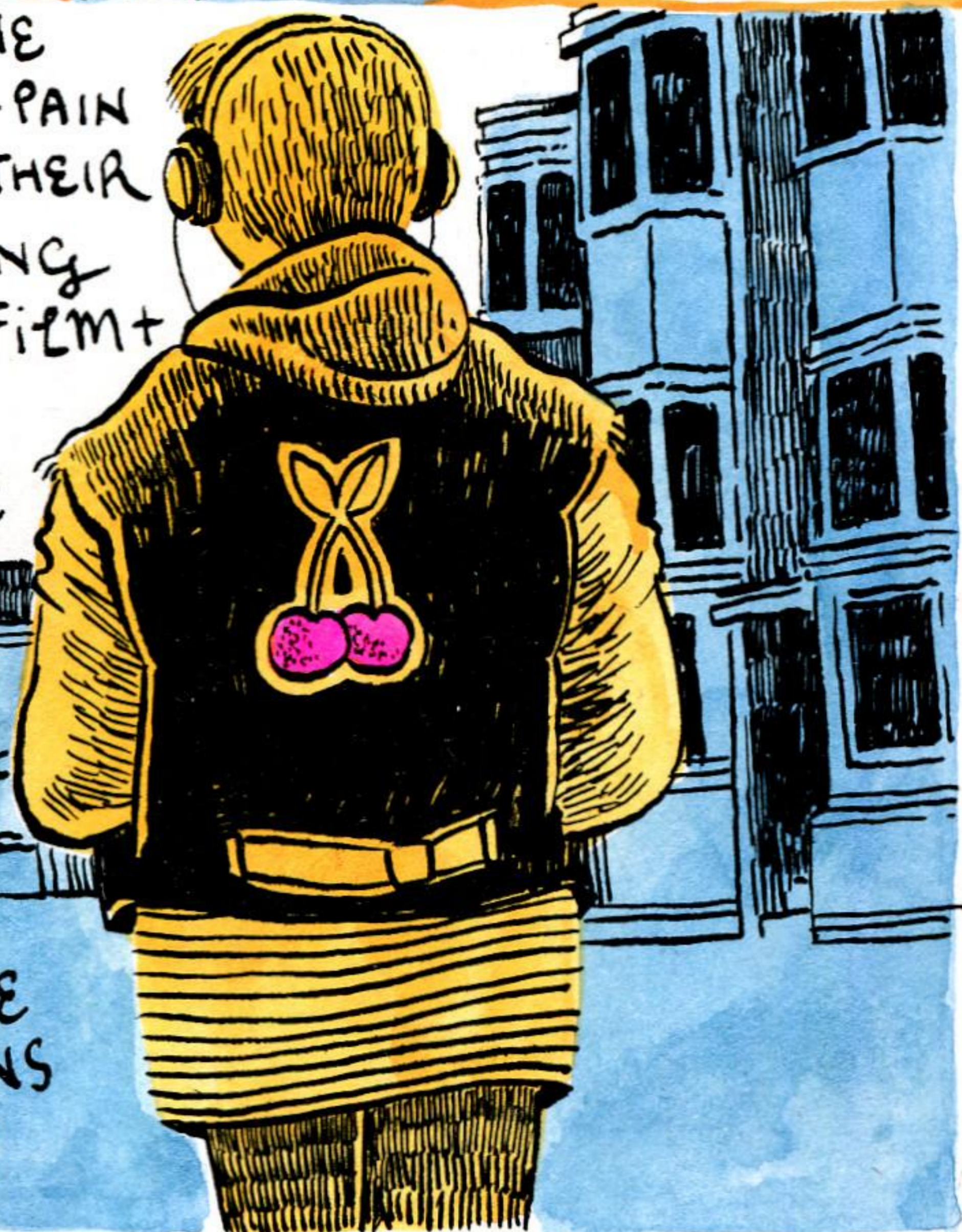
THE GREAT, LATE CLOSING

GOOD NIGHT

GOOD LUCK

## WEEK 10

THE JOYFUL POWER + PAIN OF PAUL IN ALL THEIR FORMS - BOUNCING THROUGH LOVE + FILM + QUEER UNDERGROUNDS IN THE XEROX-ZINE-MIX-TAPE '90s.

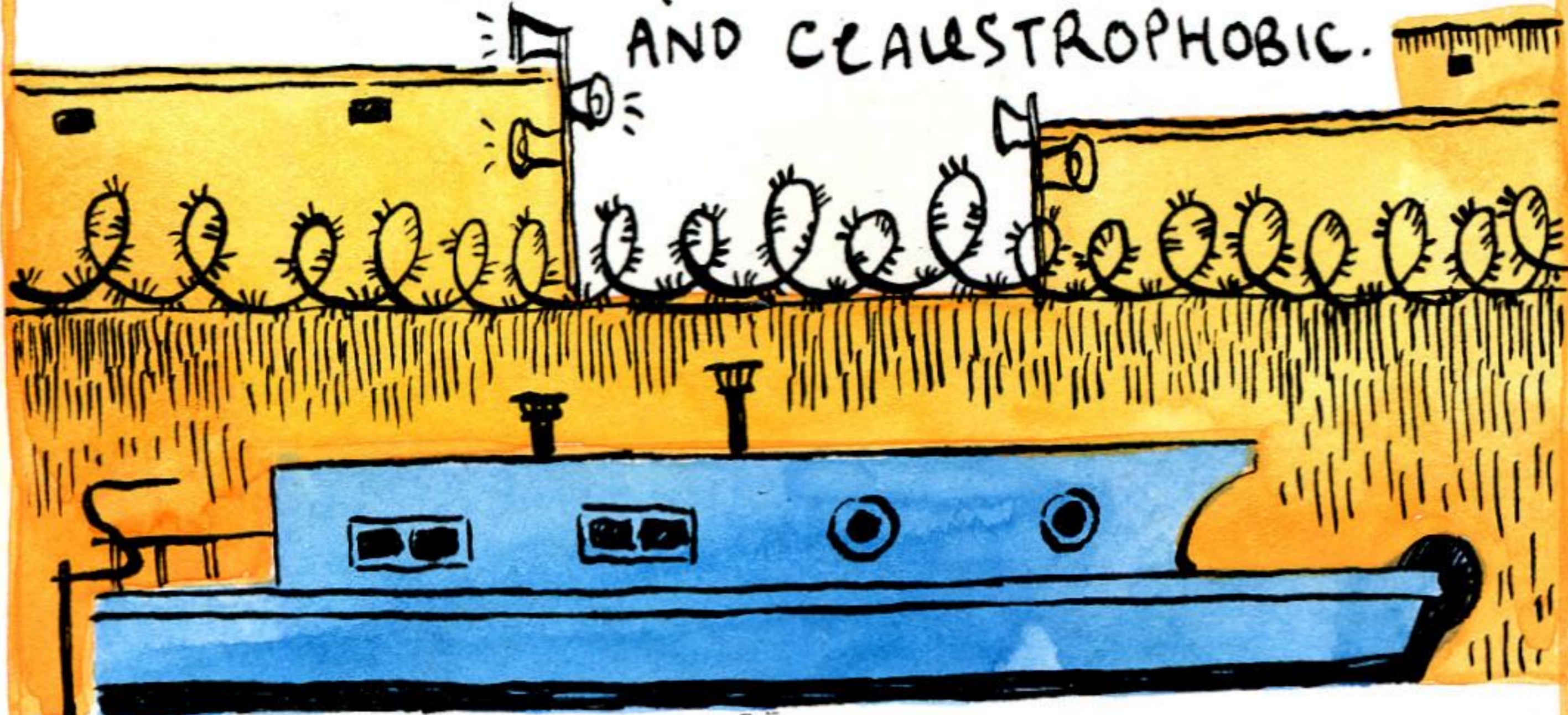


(OUTSIDE THE WORLD BEGINS TO STOP.)

PAUL TAKES THE FORM OF A MORTAL GIRL - ANDREA LAWLOR

## WEEK 12

I CAN RELATE TO NORTH'S WHITE-PUDDING PROTAGONIST, RUNNING TO SCOTLAND FROM AN ENGLISH DYSTOPIA, CONVOLUTED AND CLAUSTROPHOBIC.



(BORIS DECIDES HERD IMMUNITY IS BEST...)

84K - CLAIRE NORTH

THE BRITISH DEATH TOLL IS PROJECTED TO BE IN THE HUNDRED THOUSANDS. BORIS ISSUES A STAY AT HOME ORDER BUT WITHOUT AN OFFICIAL LOCKDOWN MY SMALL BUSINESS PAYS FLOUNDER.



I DROP INTO THE CAFE I USED TO CALL HOME. IT'S UNNATURALLY EMPTY.

## WEEK 14

SMITH TAKES ME BACK TO THE MILLENNIUM, PULLING THE RACE + CLASS PLASTERS OFF OF THE 20th BRITISH WOUNDS THEY TRIED TO TELL US WERE HEALED OR DIDN'T EXIST.



ZADIE SMITH - WHITE TEETH

## WEEK 11

AS IF SHE KNOWS OF THE COMING APOCALYPSE, IMOGEN BINNIE STRANDS ME IN THE NEVADA DESERT.



I BEG HER TO TAKE ME WITH HER, TO KEEP TELLING ME THE STORY. BUT SHE WON'T. SHE'S DONE EXPLAINING + SHE NEVER PROMISED ME ANYTHING.

(BORIS SINGS HAPPY BIRTHDAY)

NEVADA - IMOGEN BINNIE

## WEEK 13

POSTCARDS FROM ITALY. EERIE DESERTED STREETS. A LOST GENERATION. I RETREAT INTO WOMEN ONLY SPACE-WARS WHERE BIRTH IS A MULTI-FUNCTIONAL RESOURCE + FRESHY MERCURY SHIP WORLDS DECAY AMONG THE STARS.



THE STARS ARE LEGION - CAMERON HURLEY



THEN FINALLY...

OFFICIAL LOCKDOWN! SHUTTERS CLOSE!

SOME FOR THE LAST TIME



**WEEK 15** THE LIBRARY CLOSES. I'VE ALREADY READ HALF THE BOOKS I WAS QUARANTINED WITH. ROY'S EPIC NOVEL IS A WHISPER TO A ROAR HISTORY OF POST-PARTITION INDIA TOLD THROUGH THE LIVES OF A COLOURFUL COHORT OF EXILES + OUTCASTS WITH HIJRA, ANJUM + HER DELHI GRAVEYARD SANCTUARY AT ITS HEART.




ROY'S ESSAY 'THE PANDEMIC AS A PORTAL' IS THE FIRST OF THE THINGS TO HIGHLIGHT THIS MOMENT'S TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL.

**THE MINISTRY OF UTMOST HAPPINESS - ARUNDHATI ROY**

**WEEK 17** AS THE COUNTRY STAYS HOME, IT BECOMES GLARINGLY APPARENT THAT THE MOST INDESPENSIBLE LABOUR, FROM CARERS TO SUPERMARKET STAFF, FROM TEACHERS + NURSES TO DELIVERY FOLX, IS THE LEAST WELL PAID, MOST UNSTABLE AND DANGEROUS.

MEANWHILE, ONE DAY IN HARLEM, A YOUNG BLACK TEEN-AGER, JOHN, STRUGGLES TO FIND HIS ... OWN POWER, CAUGHT BETWEEN FAMILY, THE CHURCH + DEEP INTERNAL CONFLICTS.



WE DON'T HAVE ADEQUATE PPE FOR FRONTLINE NHS STAFF OR CARERS. PEOPLE SEW SCRUBS + MASKS + 3D PRINT FACE GUARDS AT HOME

**GO TELL IT TO THE MOUNTAIN - JAMES BALDWIN**


WITH LOCKDOWN + BREXIT, THERE IS A BRIEF LABOUR DRIVE BY BRITISH FARMS. WITH MY ART WORK PAUSED OR CANCELLED + MY HOSPITALITY SAFETY NET GONE, I ASK MYSELF:

AS AN ARTIST, I KNOW I'M QUALIFIED AS A BARISTA + BUT COULD I PICK BERRIES?



\* I WASN'T EVEN A VERY GOOD ONE.

**WEEK 19** CLAUSTROPHOBIA, ISOLATION. THE DESTRUCTION OF BEAUTY BY SHAME + THE CORRUPTION OF DESIRE BY OPPRESSION.



GIOVANNI SMASHES AT A WALL IN THE HALF-LIGHT OF OPAQUE WINDOWS. MY EARS FILL WITH PLASTER DUST, MY NOSTRILS WITH THE SWEET SCENT OF DECAY.

**GIOVANNI'S ROOM - JAMES BALDWIN**

**WEEK 16** I BEGIN TO BORROW DIGITALLY. AT THIS TIME BUTLER'S WORK IS FEELING ESPECIALLY PRESCIENT + VITAL. IN THIS BOOK, DANA, A BLACK WRITER IN 1970S L.A, FINDS HERSELF BEING INVOLUNTARILY PULLED BACK IN TIME TO PRE-EMANCIPATION MARYLAND. SHE REALIZES THAT HERE SHE MUST BECOME A KIND OF GUARDIAN TO THE WHITE MALE HEIR OF A PLANTATION TO ENSURE THE SURVIVAL OF SOME OF HER ANCESTORS.



FOR A COUNTRY SUPPOSEDLY 2ND IN THE WORLD FOR PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS, THE U.K GOVERNMENT IS A SHAMBLES.

**KINDRED - OCTAVIA BUTLER**

**WEEK 18** PRISONS BECOME PARTICULARLY HIGH RISK FOR BOTH OUTBREAKS + MENTAL HEALTH CRISES DUE TO ISOLATION. AS 'FOR PROFIT' PRISONS + DETENTION FACILITIES HAVE PROLIFERATED, ALEXANDER SHOWS HOW THIS PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX HAS EFFECTIVELY CREATED A NEW CASTE SYSTEM, SINKING BLACK + BROWN COMMUNITIES INTO CYCLES OF POVERTY + VIOLENCE, MAKING A CLEAR CASE FOR ABOLITION.



AS THIS YEAR PROGRESSES I WILL BE THANKFUL TIME AND AGAIN FOR NICOLA STURGEON AS CHAOS REIGNS IN ENGLAND.

**THE NEW TIM CROW - MICHELLE ALEXANDER**

THEN BORIS GOES FROM SHAKING EVERYBODY'S HAND... TO THE I.C.U.





# MAY

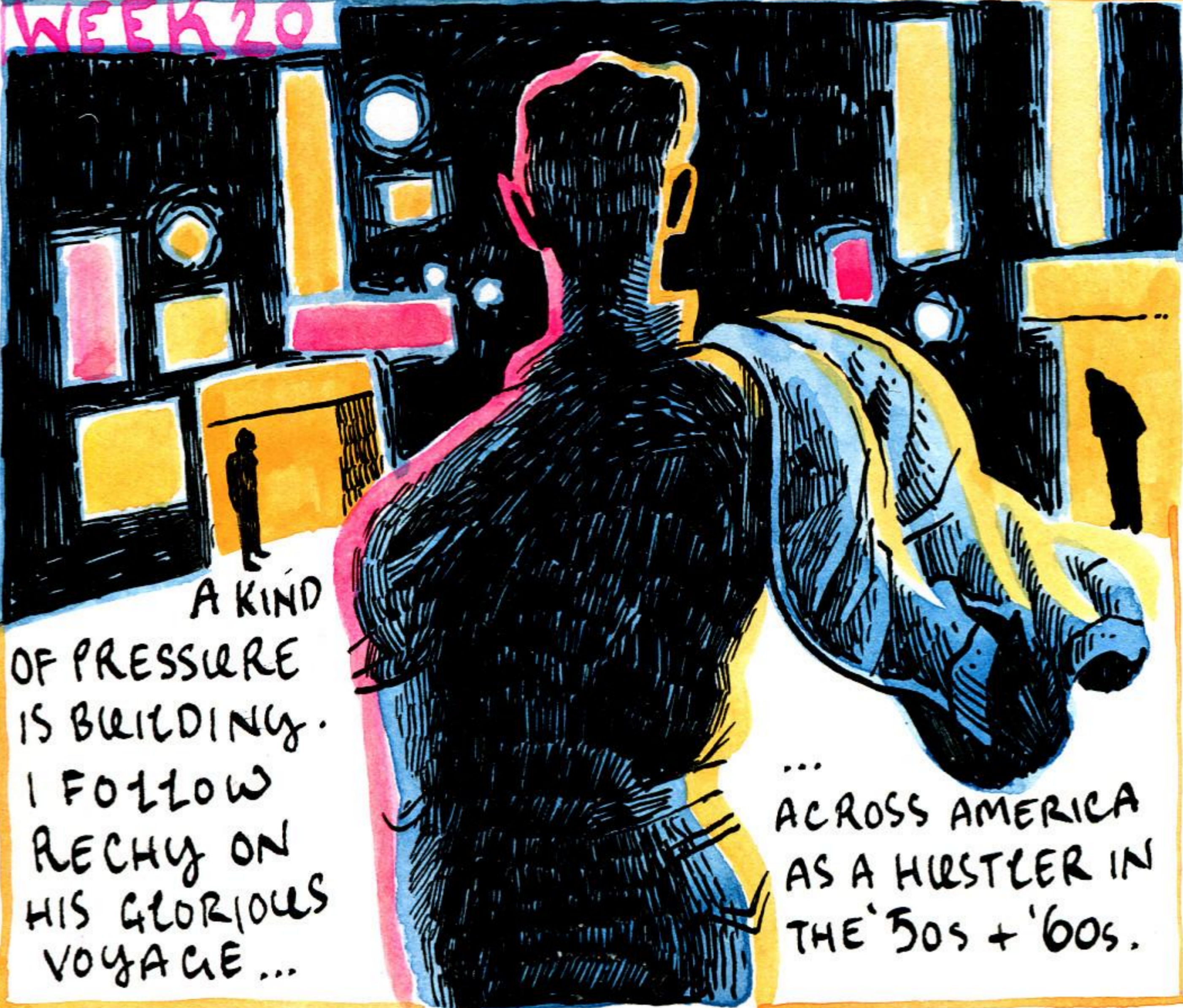
SITTING TIGHT

THE HILLS NEAR MY HOUSE

ARE ALL EMPTY ROADS

AND BIRD SONG.

WEEK 20



A KIND OF PRESSURE IS BUILDING. I FOLLOW RECHY ON HIS GLORIOUS VOYAGE...

... ACROSS AMERICA AS A HUSTLER IN THE '50S + '60S.

## CITY OF NIGHT - JOHN RECHY

WEEK 21

A LITTLE BIT OF WORK COMES IN.



I REVEL IN MORRISON'S PROSE, SO RICH IN SIGNS + WONDERS + FINELY DRAWN CHARACTERS SHE MAKES AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY FEEL LIKE CLASSICAL MYTHS, VIOLENT + LYRICAL + OLDER THAN TIME.

## SONG OF SOLOMON - TONI MORRISON

WEEK 22

A HORROR-FOLK FABLE WHICH MERGES INDIGENOUS WISDOM WITH AN ECOLOGICAL NIGHTMARE.

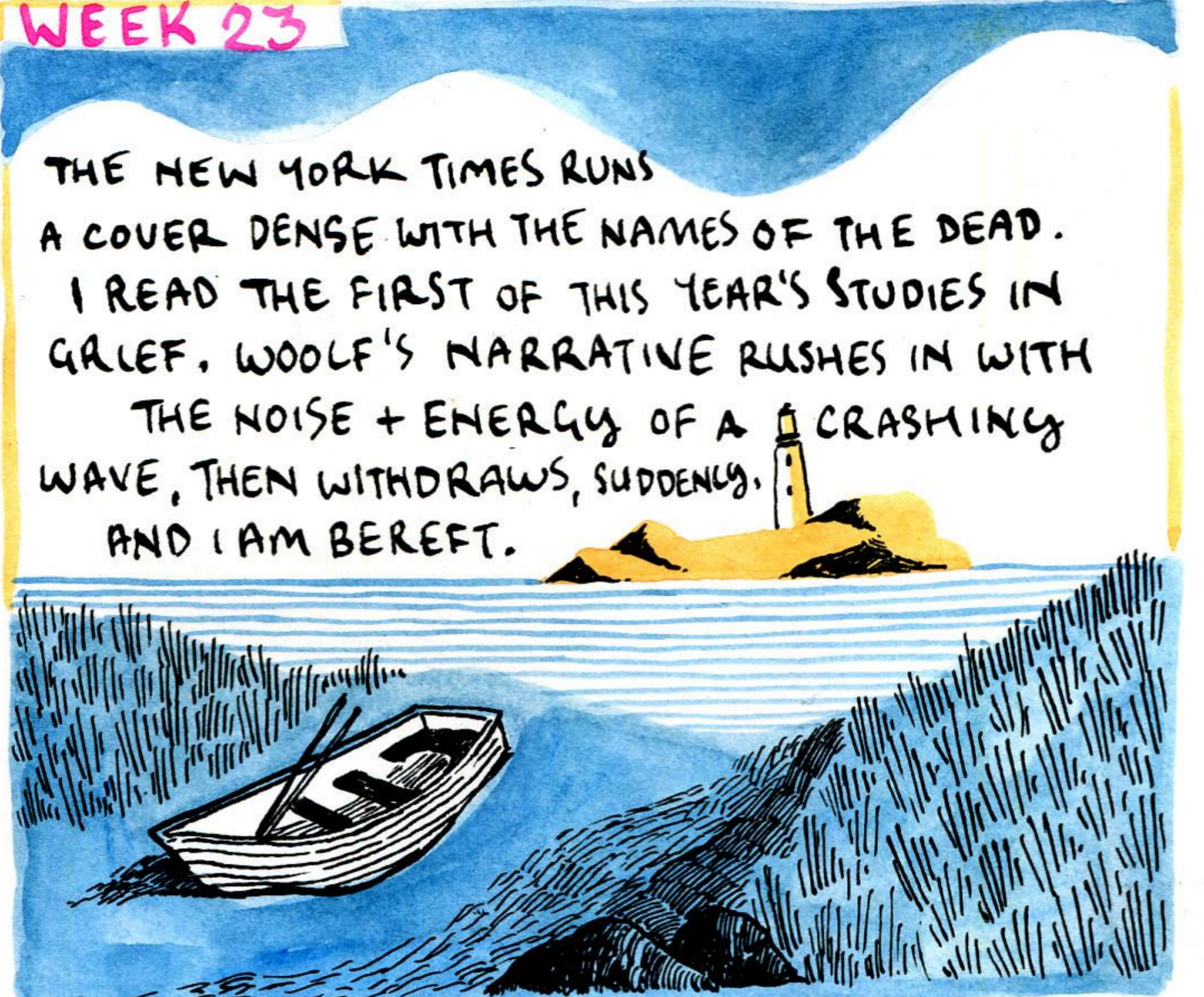


MEANWHILE THE SKY OVER THE CITY IS THE CLEARST I'VE EVER SEEN IT.

## FEVER DREAM - SAMANTA SCHWEBLIN

WEEK 23

THE NEW YORK TIMES RUNS A COVER DENSE WITH THE NAMES OF THE DEAD. I READ THE FIRST OF THIS YEAR'S STUDIES IN GALEF. WOOLF'S NARRATIVE RUSHES IN WITH THE NOISE + ENERGY OF A CRASHING WAVE, THEN WITHDRAWS, SUDDENLY, AND I AM BEREFT.



## TO THE LIGHTHOUSE - VIRGINIA WOOLF

DOMINIC CUMMINGS REMINDS US THAT WHITENESS, POWER + PRIVILEGE WILL ENSURE THAT THE ALLES DO NOT APPLY TO YOU.

THE PRESSURE OF LOCKDOWN, OUR EVEN MORE INTENSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE 24 HOUR NEWS CYCLE + SOCIAL MEDIA...



... IT FEELS LIKE SOMETHING IS ABOUT TO GIVE.

ON THE 25th OF MAY, OFFICER DEREK CHAUVIN KNEELS ON GEORGE FLOYD'S NECK FOR 8 MINUTES + 46 SECONDS. "I CAN'T BREATHE." HE WHEEZES.



WE LEARN THEIR NAMES.

PEOPLE RECORD THE ACT OF BRUTALITY WHILE BEGGING THE OFFICER TO GET OFF HIM. GEORGE FLOYD DIES. GEORGE FLOYD IS MURDERED. A POWDERKEG IGNITES.

BREONNA TAYLOR (KILLED 13/03/2020)

AHMAUD ARBERY (KILLED 23/02/2020)

ELIJAH MCCLAIN (KILLED 24/08/2019)





IF SPRING WAS ABOUT SITTING STILL...

ACAB BLM THE U.K IS NOT INNOCENT ENOUGH

# JUNE

NO JUSTICE. NO PEACE

...SUMMER IS ALL ABOUT MOVEMENTS.

TIME TO LISTEN TIME TO ACT BLACK LIVES MATTER SHEKIR BAYOH END POLICE BRUTALITY FTP

## WEEK 24

JONNY, A YOUNG TWO-SPIRIT PERSON, WHOSE PELOUSI FIRST NATION COMMUNITY DEMANDS STRAIGHTNESS AND WHOSE QUEER CITY COMMUNITY DEMANDS WHITENESS.



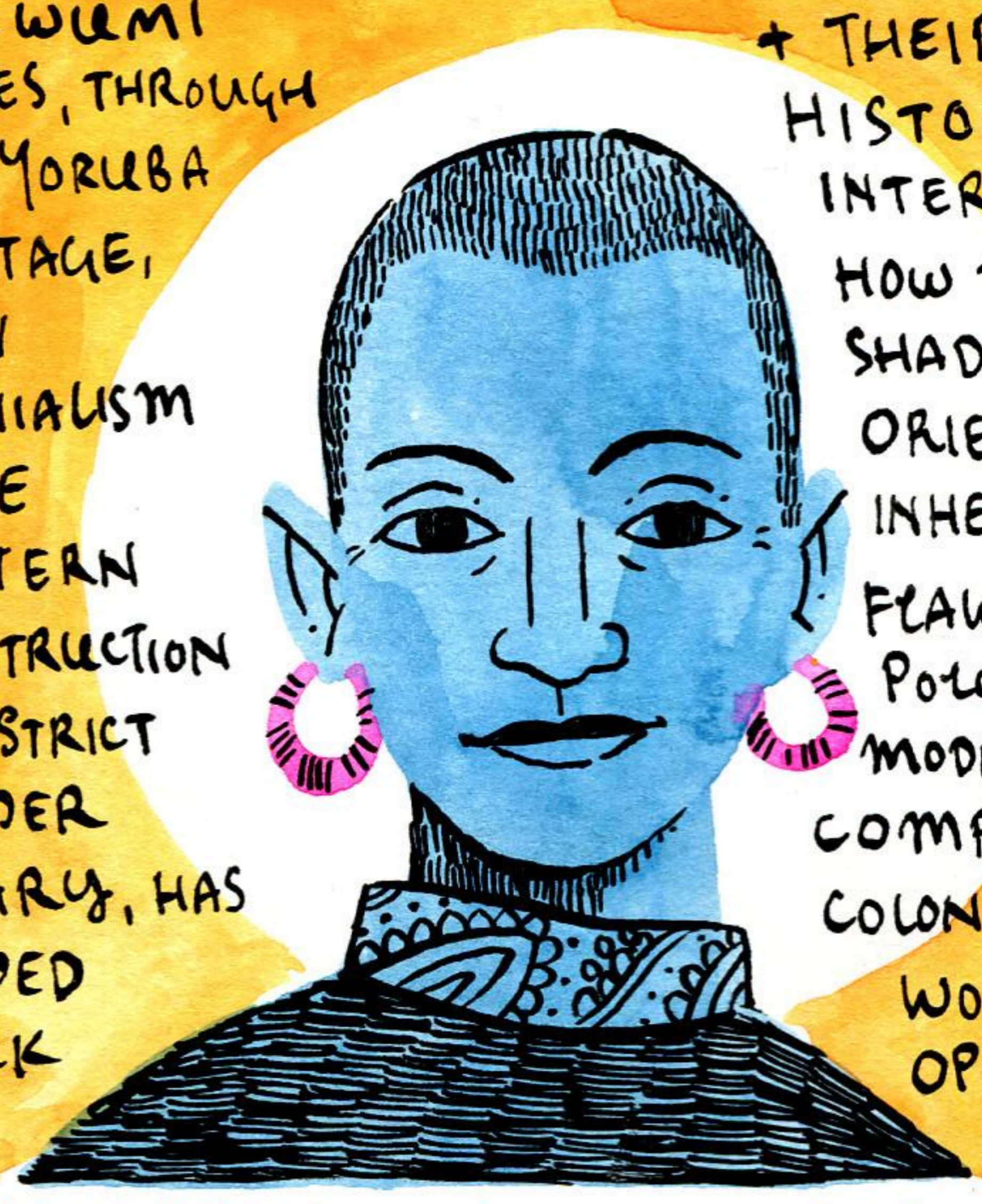
JONNY SEARCHES FOR EMPOWERMENT TO EMBRACE THE UNFETTERED

... EXPRESSION OF HIS TRUE SELF IN BETWEEN WORLDS.

JONNY APPLESEED - JOSHUA WHITEHEAD

## WEEK 25

OYEWUMI TRACES, THROUGH HER YORUBA HERITAGE, HOW COLONIALISM + THE WESTERN CONSTRUCTION OF A STRICT GENDER BINARY, HAS ERODED BLACK



WOMEN'S POWER + THEIR OWN HISTORIES. INTERROGATING HOW THE LONG SHADOW OF ORIENTALISM + INHERENTLY FLAWED ANTHROPOLOGICAL MODELS OF STUDY COMPOUND COLONISED WOMEN'S OPPRESSION.

THE INVENTION OF WOMEN - OYERONKE OYEWUMI

## WEEK 26

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO CONFORM + WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO REJECT CONFORMITY IN A WORLD THAT'S SET UP TO PUNISH YOU EITHER WAY?



COME MARCH IN THE NATIONAL SUICIDE DAY PARADE + LET SULZA SHOW YOU.

SULZA - TONI MORRISON

## WEEK 27

WHEN I SEE THE NAME TEA CAKE AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS BOOK, AND SEE VISIONS OF A STORM FOLLOW AFTER, I KNOW I'VE READ IT BEFORE.



15 ISH YEARS LATER + JANIE CRAWFORD IS REDISCOVERED AS ONE OF MY FAVOURITE WOMEN.

AND THEIR EYES WERE WATCHING GOD - ZORA NEALE HURSTON

WHEN I READ COATES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR, I FELT ASHAMED THAT I WAS LEARNING SO MUCH FOR THE FIRST TIME...

WHITE SILENCE IS VIOLENCE DEFUND. DISBAND. ABOLISH. THE U.K IS NOT INNOCENT STILL IRISE NO JUSTICE NO PEACE



IF YOU CATCH YOURSELF ABOUT TO CRITICISE OR CONDEMN THE PROTESTS, THEN LISTEN TO KIMBERLY JONES'S POTTED BLACK HISTORY IN AMERICA.

"THEY ARE LUCKY. BLACK PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR EQUALITY AND NOT REVENGE." SHE FINISHES AND SHE IS NOT WRONG.

... THAT THIS WRITER WAS EXPLAINING THINGS TO ME SO PATIENTLY THAT WERE ROOTED IN SUCH UNFORGIVABLE VIOLENCE. THIS MOMENT OF RESISTANCE + MASS EDUCATION HAS BEEN A LONG TIME COMING.

TEACH OUR BRUTAL COLONIAL HISTORY RESPECT OUR EXISTENCE OR EXPECT RESISTANCE BLACK AM I LIVES NEXT? MATTER



# JULY

PURGATORY SUMMER...

SUMMER?

**WEEK 28** THE CURVE HAS BEEN FLATTENED BECAUSE WE ALL STAYED INSIDE. THE RESTRICTIONS BEGIN TO EASE.

IN THIS YEAR OF GRIEF THIS NEXT STUDY IS A DEEP BLACK CAVERN OF DESPAIR.



MADE WORSE BY KNOWING BEFORE SHE DOES THAT DIDION'S NEXT BOOK WILL BE 'BLUE NIGHTS'.

THE YEAR OF MAGICAL THINKING - JOAN DIDION

**WEEK 29** BUT IT'S HARD TO STAY MIRED IN SADNESS THOUGH, WITH

BROWN LEADING YOU ENTHUSIASTICALLY FROM THE STICKS TO THE CITY CELEBRATING ART! SEX! BEING ALIVE!



RUBY FRUIT JUNGLE - RITA MAE BROWN

**WEEK 30**

I KEEP RE-WRITING THIS PANEL BECAUSE EVERY TIME I TRY TO EXPRESS HOW MUCH THESE ESSAYS MEANT TO ME, IT SOUNDS TIRED + TRITE.



LORDE WAS A GREAT TEACHER, A GREAT POET AND A GREAT THINKER. SHE WAS ANGRY, YES, BUT HER WORK IS ROOTED IN LOVE AND FEELS MORE ALIVE NOW THAN A LOT OF CONTEMPORARY WRITING.

SISTER OUTSIDER - ALDRE LORDE

**WEEK 31**

THIS IS ANOTHER PANEL I'VE TRIPPED OVER SEVERAL TIMES, AGAIN BECAUSE IT FEELS OBVIOUS TO SAY BALDWIN'S ESSAYS ARE POWERFUL + ELOQUENT. TEMPERED BY THE

RAGE OF BEING IN THE MOST OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, IT IS NOT ONLY A CALL TO ARMS BUT ALSO A WARNING ABOUT THE FAULTLINES ALONG WHICH THEY MIGHT BE DIVIDED.



THE FIRE NEXT TIME - JAMES BALDWIN

AMIDST THE EXCITEMENT OF SOCIAL UNREST + THE ANXIETY OF THE ONGOING PANDEMIC, I MANAGE TO STEAL SOME HUMAN MOMENTS.



**WEEK 32**

DAVIS CITES PRISONS AS PLACES OF STATE SANCTIONED VIOLENCE + TRAUMA WHICH PREDOMINANTLY TARGETS THOSE OPPRESSED BY RACISM CAPITALISM + ABLEISM.

IF THE PANDEMIC IS A PORTAL THROUGH WHICH WE MIGHT MANIFEST SOCIAL CHANGE, ALTERNATIVES TO THE P.I.C\* IS A GREAT PLACE TO START.



ARE PRISONS OBSOLETE? - ANGELA Y. DAVIS  
\*PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX



BUT THERE'S DEFINITELY THE FEELING THAT WE'RE ALL ENJOYING THESE SMALL FREEDOMS ON BORROWED TIME.



**WEEK 33** WASHINGTON BLACK; POLYMATH. DRAFTSMAN. SCIENTIST. ESCAPED SLAVE. MARINE BIOLOGIST. ARTIST. THIS YEAR, I FEEL VERY CLOSE TO BOOKS RICH IN ADVENTURE.



(WE RIDE BIKES FROM INVERNESS TO EDINBURGH.)

WASHINGTON BLACK-EDI EDUGYAN

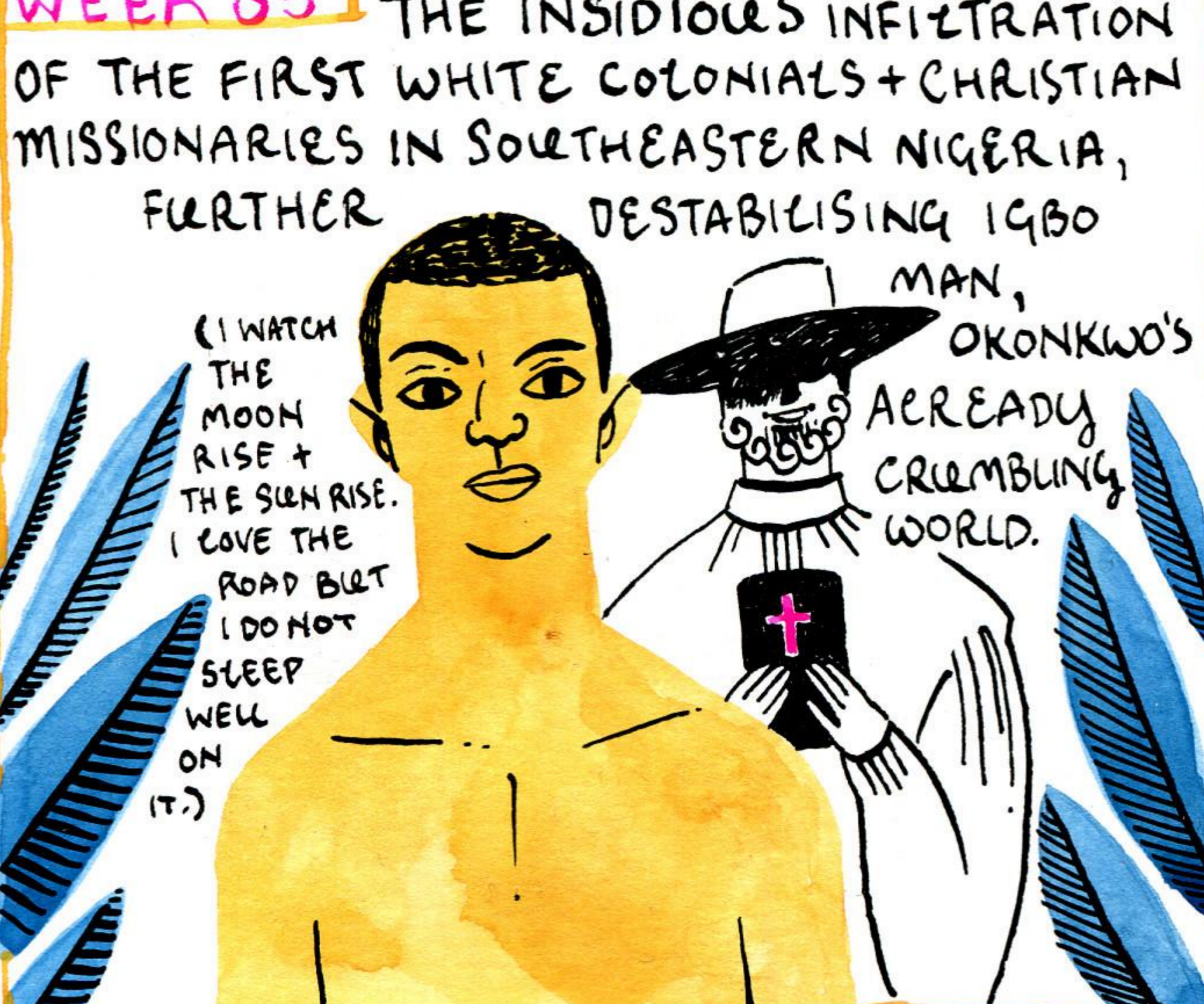
**WEEK 34** IF YOU COULD INHABIT A LITTLE ROBOT + WATCH SOMEONE ELSE'S LIFE OR HAVE A LITTLE ROBOT WHO, INHABITED BY A MUTE HUMAN HOMUNCULUS, OBSERVES YOU, WHICH WOULD YOU CHOOSE? THIS EXPLORATION OF OUR RELATIONSHIP TO TECH IN THE AGE OF SURVEILLANCE CAPITALISM IS MOVING, NASTY DARK + SWEET.



(WE FOLLOW THE COAST, SLEEP IN UNKNOWN PLACES + LEARN THE LIMITS OF OUR LITTLE LEGS.)

LITTLE EYES-SAMANTA SCHWEBLIN

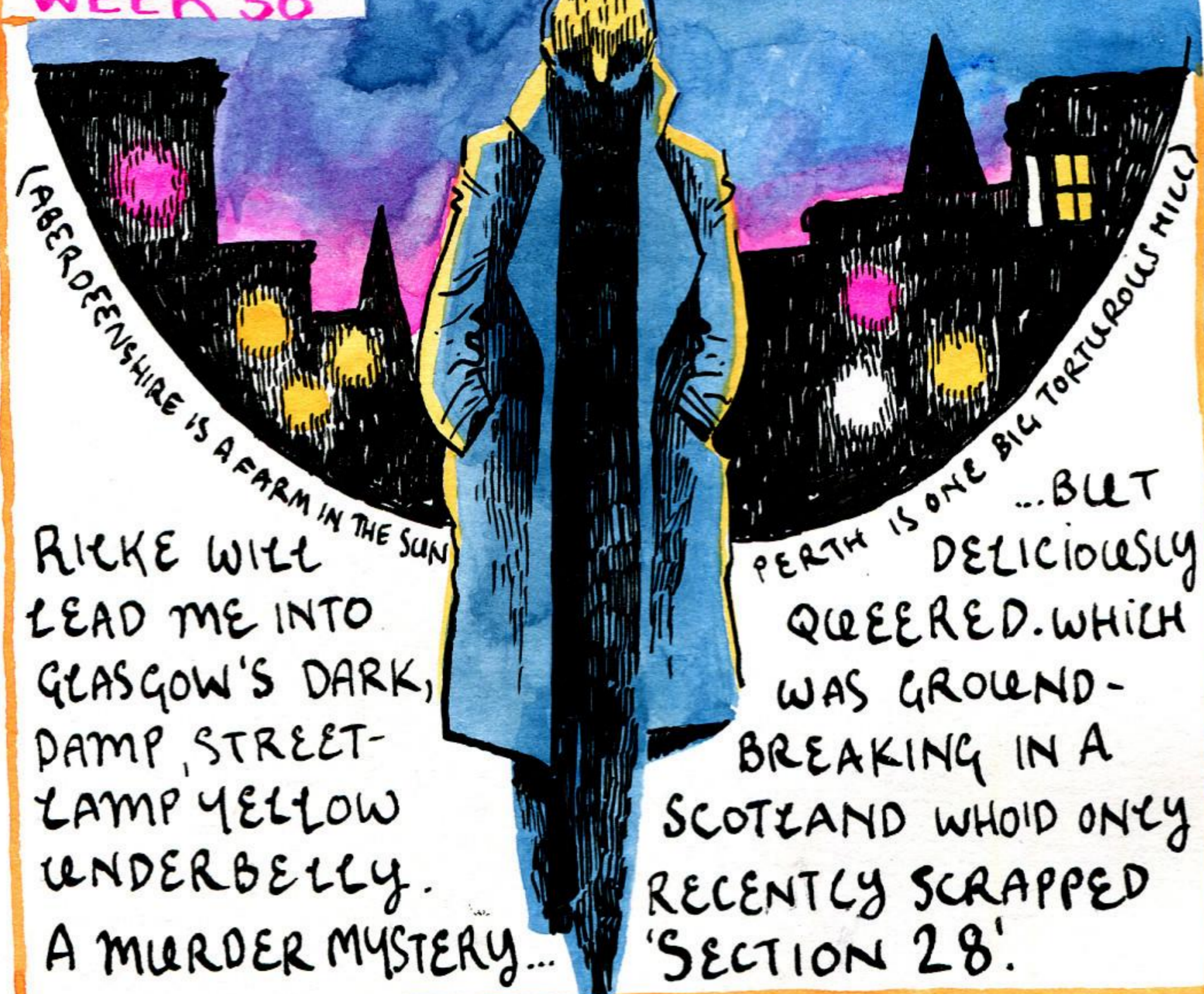
**WEEK 35** THE INSIDIOUS INFILTRATION OF THE FIRST WHITE COLONIALS + CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA, FURTHER DESTABILISING 1930 MAN, OKONKWO'S ALREADY CRUMBLING WORLD.



(I WATCH THE MOON RISE + THE SUN RISE. I LOVE THE ROAD BUT I DO NOT SLEEP WELL ON IT.)

THINGS FALL APART-CHINUA ACHEBE

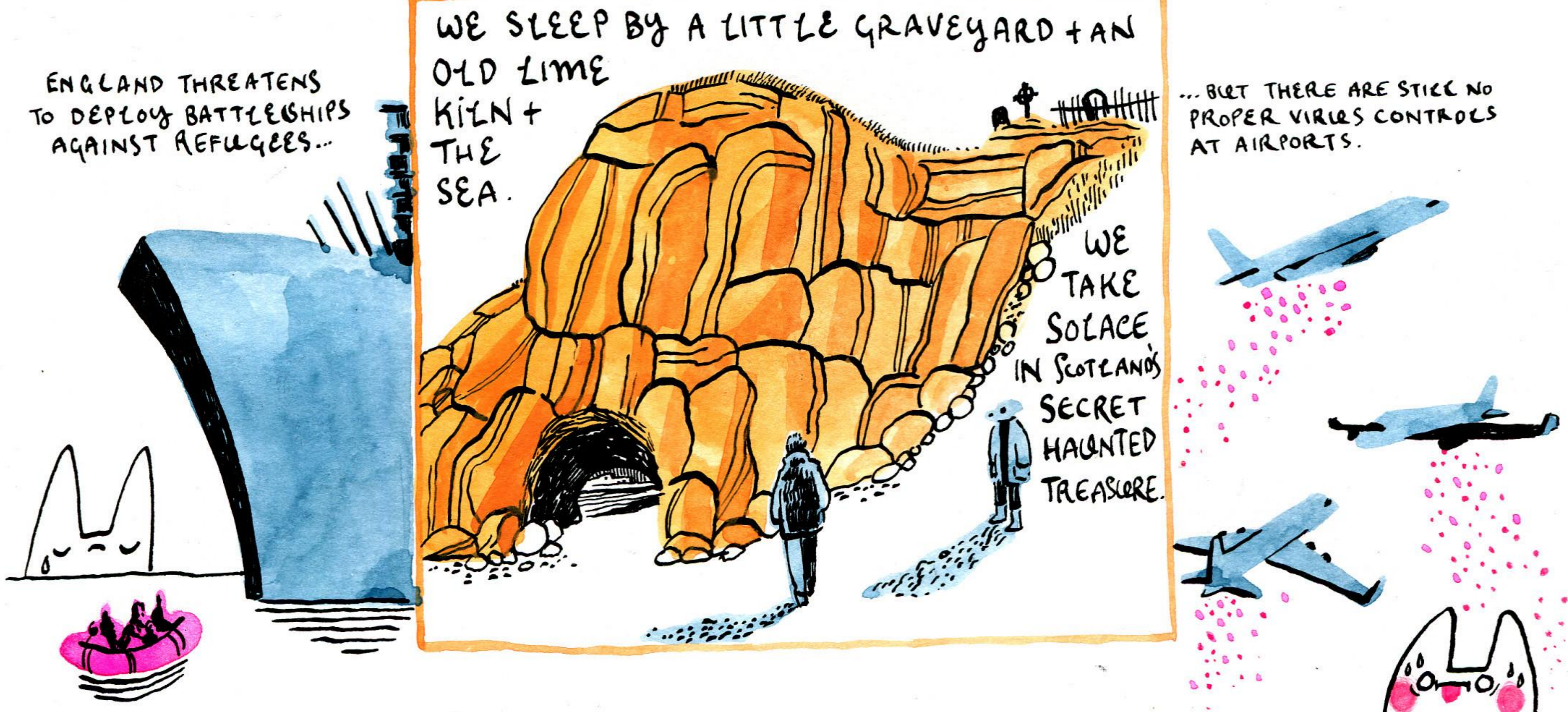
**WEEK 36** RIEKE WILL LEAD ME INTO GLASGOW'S DARK, DAMP, STREET-LAMP YELLOW UNDERBELLY. A MURDER MYSTERY... PERTH IS ONE BIG TORTUROUS NICE... BUT DELICIOUSLY QUEERED. WHICH WAS GROUND-BREAKING IN A SCOTLAND WHO'D ONLY RECENTLY SCRAPPED 'SECTION 28'.



(ABERDEENSHIRE IS A FARM IN THE SUN)

THE CUTTING ROOM-LOUISE WELSH

ENGLAND THREATENS TO DEPLOY BATTLESHIPS AGAINST REFUGEES... WE SLEEP BY A LITTLE GRAVEYARD + AN OLD LIME KILN + THE SEA. WE TAKE SOLACE IN SCOTLAND'S SECRET HAUNTED TREASURE. ... BUT THERE ARE STILL NO PROPER VIRUS CONTROLS AT AIRPORTS.







# SEPTEMBER

THE SURGE



## WEEK 37

THIS BOOK MADE ME FEEL LIKE TRAUMA CAN NEVER BE HEALED IN A CAPITALIST, INDIVIDUALIST, PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY, ONLY FETTERED.



I USUALLY LOVE THE SLOW, SOFT DROP INTO AUTISM. IT THERE'S SOMETHING FOR BOOING ABOUT IT THIS YEAR AND YANAGIHARA ISN'T HELPING.

## WEEK 38

THE SYSTEMIC RACIAL + GENDER VIOLENCE QUEENIE HAS TO NEGOTIATE IN HER EVERYDAY LIFE IS BOTH EXHAUSTING AND ALL TOO REAL. A FUNNY + MOVING DEPICTION OF FAMILY, FRIENDSHIP + MENTAL HEALTH THAT DEFTLY HIGHLIGHTS WHAT IT TAKES TO SURVIVE + THRIVE AS A YOUNG, BLACK WOMAN...



... AGAINST THE EVER SHIFTING BACKDROP OF MODERN LONDON.

A LITTLE LIFE - HANYA YANAGIHARA

QUEENIE - CANDICE CARTY-WILLIAMS

## WEEK 39

ACHEBE TAKES ME BACK TO NIGERIA BUT FORWARD IN TIME, TO MEET OKONKWO'S GRAND SON, OBI, WHO FINDS HIMSELF INCREASINGLY MIRED IN THE BUREAUCRACY + DOUBLE STANDARDS



OF POST-COLONIAL ZAGOS. SEPTEMBER IS BEGINNING TO FEEL LIKE IT'S FILLED WITH HIDDEN THREATS

## WEEK 40

THE OFTEN UNHEARD STORIES AND SPECIFIC WAYS THAT POLICE BRUTALITY AFFECTS WOMEN OF COLOUR, BLACK + INDIGENOUS WOMEN, LESBIANS, TRANS-WOMEN, GNC FEMMES, PREGNANT, DISABLED, HIJABBED WOMEN - AN UNFLINCHING LOOK AT GENDERED STATE VIOLENCE



NO LONGER AT EASE - CHINUA ACHEBE

INVISIBLE NO MORE - ANDREA RICHIE

A LESSENING OF THE RESTRICTIONS WITHOUT ANY OTHER CHECKS + BALANCES (TRACK + TRACE ALONE COLLAPSED SHORTLY AFTER ITS LAUNCH) + THE GIDDY POST LOCKDOWN SUMMER HAS LED TO A NEW SURGE IN CASES.

IT IS MY BIRTHDAY + WE GET ONE LAST ADVENTURE IN THE WOODS BEFORE LEVEL 3 IS REINSTATED.



DURING A MOMENT WHICH WILL REWARD DISASTER CAPITALIST EXPLOITATION; WHICH HAS SHOWN THE TRUE WORTH OF THE LOWEST PAID + UNPAID LABOUR; WHICH PROMPTED TALK OF NEW ECONOMIC MODELS + THE NECESSITY OF HEALTHCARE FOR ALL...





# OCTOBER

HALLOWEEN IS CANCELLED

## WEEK 41

MY COMPUTER DECIDED PRETTY EARLY ON IN THE PANDEMIC TIMES THAT IT WAS NO LONGER GOING TO STREAM ANYTHING OR ZOOM ANYONE.



IN AN ATTEMPT TO KEEP UP WITH THE ZEITGEIST GRANDMA-STYLE, I PICK UP 'LOVECRAFT COUNTRY', RECENTLY ADAPTED FOR T.V BY JORDAN PEELE, ON ONE OF MY LAST LIBRARY TRIPS.



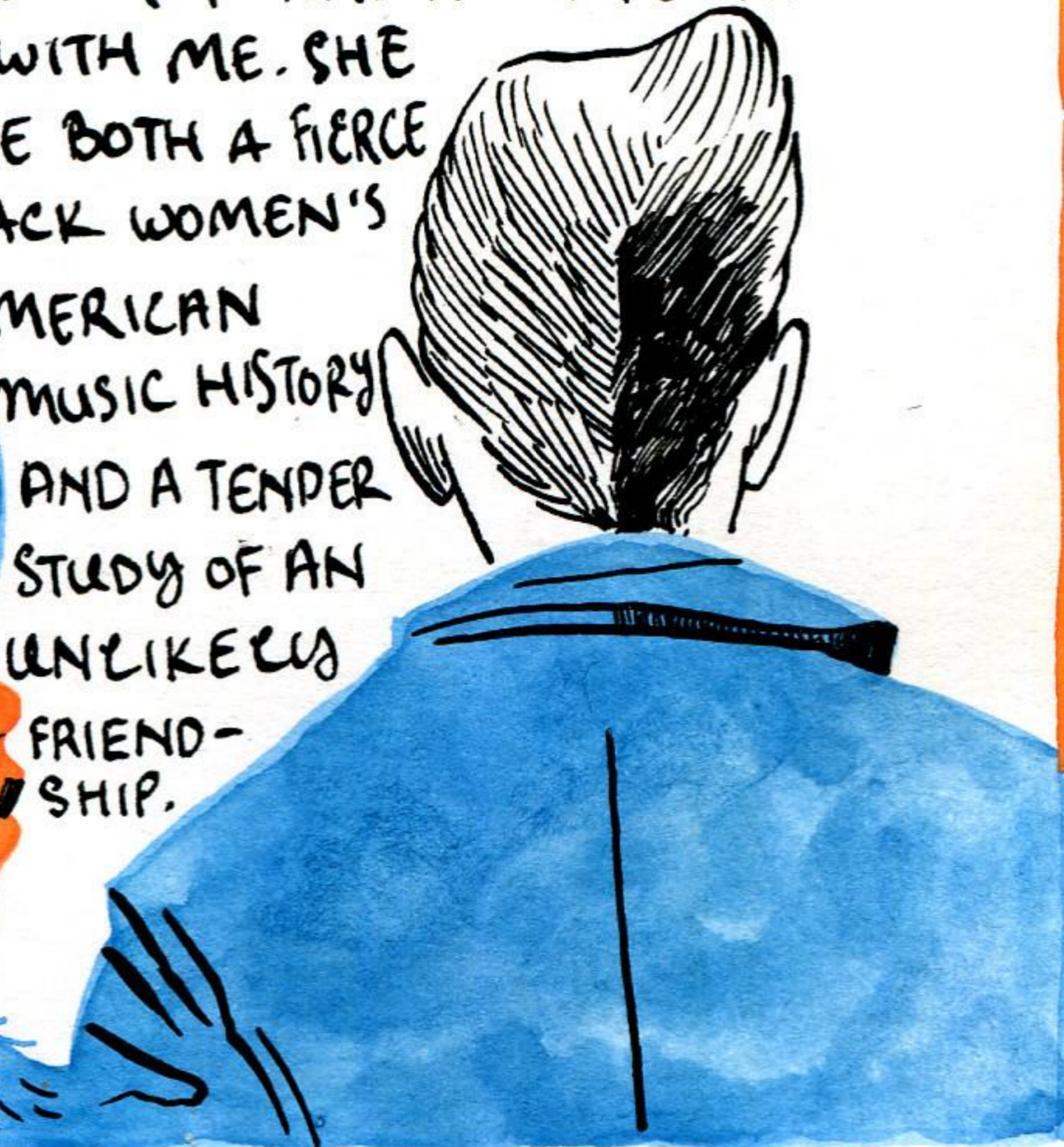
## LOVECRAFT COUNTRY - MATT RUFF

## WEEK 43

WHILE THIS WHOLE COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES IS BRILLIANT, THIS ONE ABOUT A BLACK FEMALE SINGER AND AN INFERRED ELVIS PRESLEY STAYED WITH ME. SHE MANAGES TO WRITE BOTH A FIERCE INDICTMENT OF BLACK WOMEN'S ERASURE FROM AMERICAN



MUSIC HISTORY AND A TENDER STUDY OF AN UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP.



## YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD WOMAN DOWN - AZICE WALKER

WE JEALOUSLY GIVE THE COUNTRIES WHO DID A BETTER JOB THAN US THE OL' STINK EYE.



I MAKE ONE LAST EXCURSION TO MY GEORGE IV BRIDGE SANCTUM BEFORE IT CLOSES AGAIN. DIGITAL BORROWING HAS SAVED MY LIFE THIS YEAR BUT THERE IS NOTHING LIKE THE SMELL, SERENDIPITY + DUST NOTES OF AN ACTUAL LIBRARY. AND I'M A LITTLE AFRAID SOME OF THEM WON'T RE-OPEN.



## WEEK 42

AN "ETERNAL SUNSHINE..." PREMISE, A LITTLE WITCHING + CRAFTING. A WORLD IN WHICH YOUR MEMORIES CAN BE BOUND, INTO BOOKS TO BE LOCKED AWAY, LOST STOLEN OR SOLD.



THE ERASING + REPURPOSING OF MEMORY MIGHT BE WHAT 2020 IS DOING TO MY BRAIN.

## THE BINDING - BRIDGET COZZINS

## WEEK 44

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN. AS DEEPLY ENTRENCHED + IMMOVEABLE AS THAT PULLED TOOTH OF A ROCK, BROODING OFF THE COAST OF NORTH BERWICK. THIS BOOK PALPITATES WITH STRANGE + SUDDEN SURGES OF ANIMALISTIC MALE VIOLENCE. BALANCED PRECARIOUSLY WITH THE POWER OF AWKWARD, IMPERFECT UNBREAKABLE FEMALE ALLYSHIP.

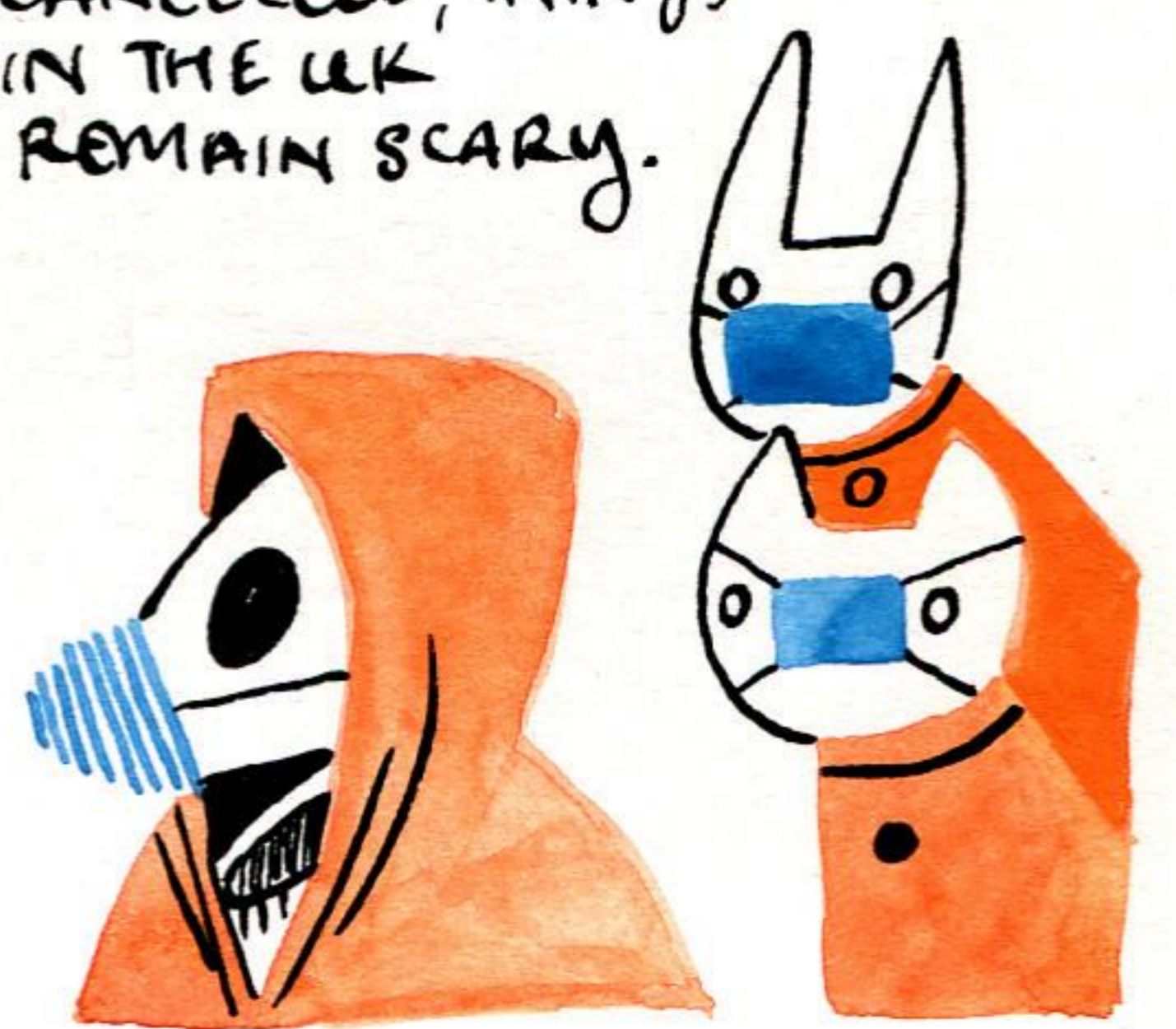


(IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE HOW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, ALREADY EPIDEMIC, HAS INCREASED DURING THE PANDEMIC)

## THE BASS ROCK - EVIE WYLD

SOME HAD LEARNED FROM SARS. AN AUSTRALIAN FRIEND THINKS THEIR FAILURE TO HANDLE THE WILDFIRES LED TO THEM DOUBLING DOWN ON THEIR PANDEMIC RESPONSE. SOME OF THOSE COUNTRIES PERHAPS, HAD GROW UPS IN CHARGE.

WHATEVER THEY DID, WE DIDN'T DO. SO EVEN WITH HALLOWEEN CANCELLED, THINGS IN THE UK REMAIN SCARY.





THE WOMEN'S STRIKE IN POŁAND...

STRAJK  
Kobiet



STRAJK  
Kobiet

# NOVEMBER

LOCK.DOWN.RISE.UP



THE  
FARMER'S  
STRIKE  
IN  
INDIA...



**WEEK 45** I START NOVEMBER WITH MIA VIOLET'S JOURNEY AS A TRANS WOMAN. THE YEARS SHE SPENT ONLY BEING ABLE TO EXPRESS HER FEMININITY IN ISOLATION IS A POIGNANT REMINDER OF ALL THE PEOPLE FOR WHOM QUARANTINE IS A WAY OF LIFE, NOT LIMITED TO THE PANDEMIC.



YES, YOU ARE TRANS ENOUGH - MIA VIOLET

**WEEK 46** SALIH'S SUDANESE 'NARRATOR' IS ALMOST LNDONE BY THE TURMOIL IN HIS HOMELAND, CROSS-CULTURAL IDENTITY, THE ORIENTALISM OF THE WEST, WHICH HE EXPERIENCES STUDYING IN ENGLAND + THE TRADITIONALISM OF THE VILLAGE HE RETURNS TO.

AS I TURN ON THE LAMP TO READ IN THE MORNING...



...I CAN SCARCELY BELIEVE WE'RE NEARLY BACK IN WINTER.

THE SEASON OF MIGRATION TO THE NORTH - TAYEB SALIH

**WEEK 47** A BIZARRELY BENIGN AND PLAINTIVE GHOST STORY, LEFT TO ME BY A FRIEND WHEN SHE MOVED FROM YORK BACK TO AUSTRALIA LAST YEAR. OVER TWELVE MONTHS AGO NOW I MISSED HER WEDDING IN NEW MEXICO.



THESE ARE THE THINGS THAT FEEL AT ONCE VERY CLOSE + IMPOSSIBLY DISTANT.

STRANGERS - TAICHI YAMADA

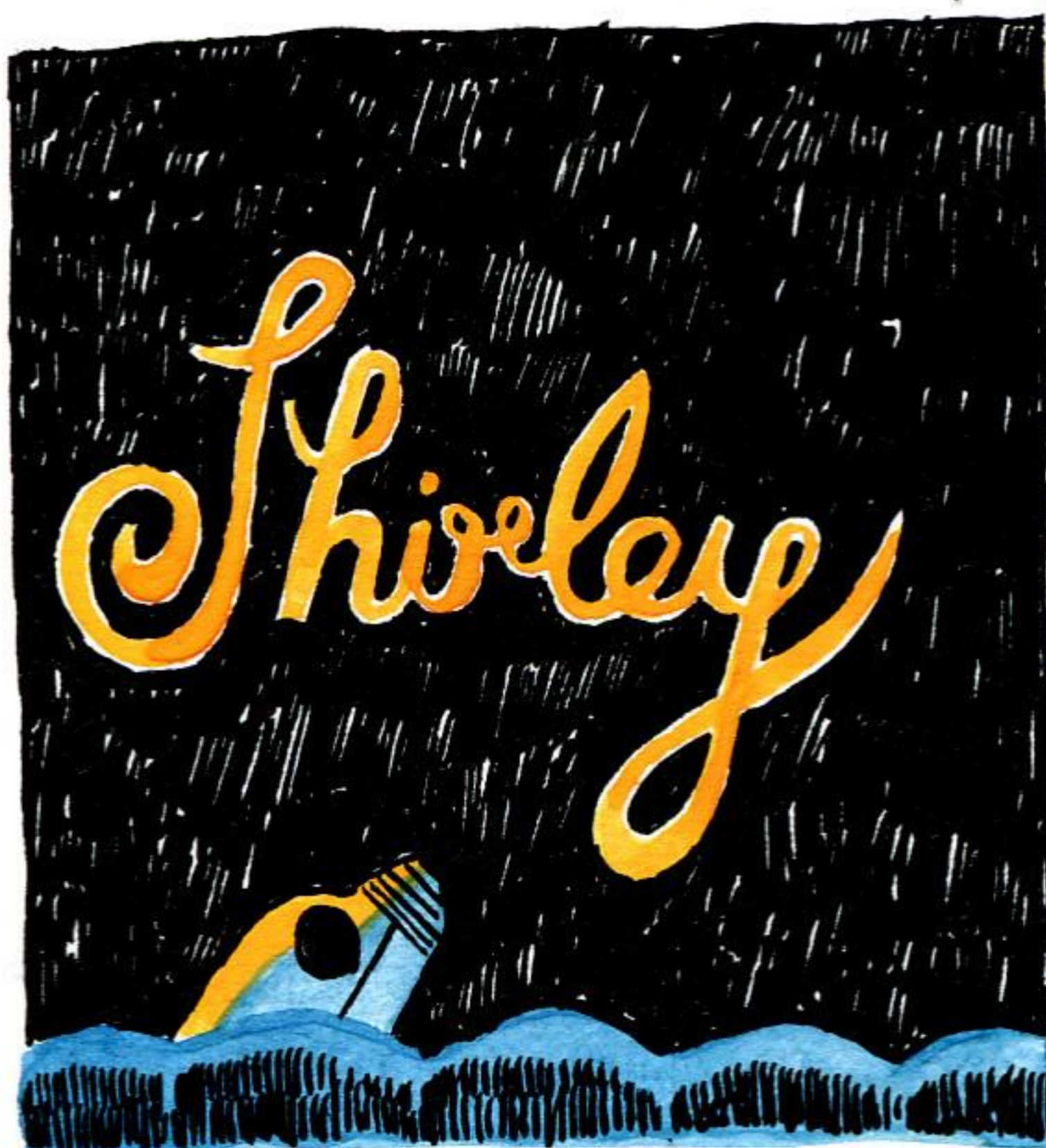
**WEEK 48** ... HE FINDS THE SUB-CULTURES, ENCLAVES, COMMUNITIES AND HISTORIANS, THE COMMON THREADS + DIVIDING LINES RUNNING THROUGH THE VAST, RICH + COMPLEX AFRICAN DIASPORA IN EUROPE.

SPTS GOES 'LOOKING FOR THE 'AFROPEANS'. FROM BRITANIST SOVIET UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS TO THE NEGLECTED MONOLITHS OF UTOPIAN URBAN IDEATION ...



AFROPEAN - JOHNNY PITTS

I GO TO THE CINEMA FOR ANOTHER LAST TIME. THE COUPLE IN FRONT OF ME FIGHT BECAUSE ONE FORGOT TO BOOK A PLACE AT THE BAR. I'VE MISSED SMALL PEOPLE DRAMAS + THE FILMHOUSE'S SOUND SYSTEM.



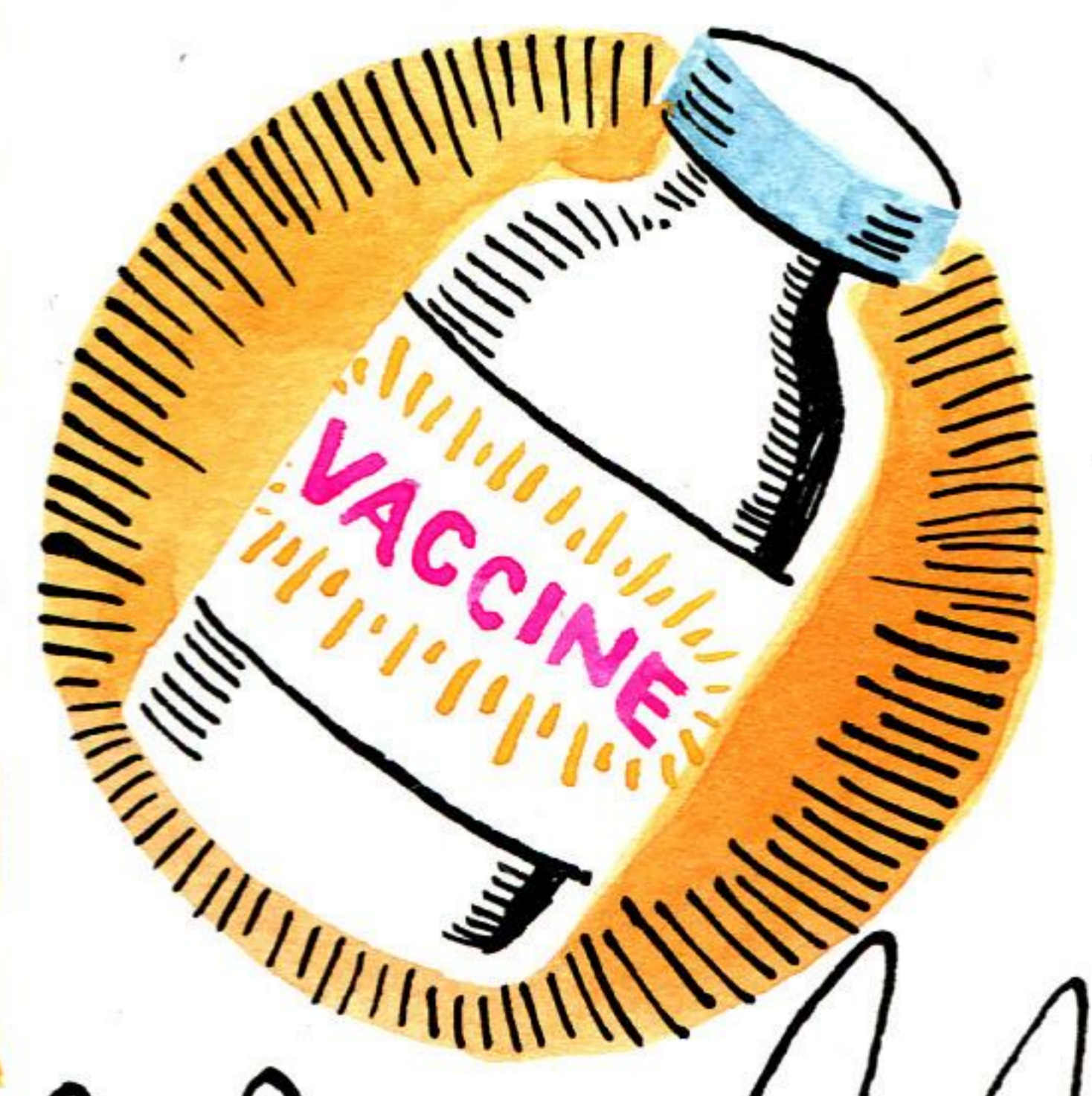
DUE TO THE WORK BY PEOPLE LIKE STACEY ABRAMS, FIGHTING VOTER SUPPRESSION AND THE SUMMER OF BLACK LIVES MATTER PROTESTS, TRUMP'S FRIGHTENING + BAFFLING PRESIDENCY COMES TO AN END. THERE IS A MOMENT OF PALPABLE RELIEF.



LATER, THE WHITE SUPREMACISTS WILL STORM THE WHITE HOUSE + THE POLICE WILL LET THEM, ALL OF IT INCITED BY TRUMP. BUT FOR NOW, WE CELEBRATE.

DEVELOPING A VACCINE THIS QUICKLY IS INCREDIBLE BUT I CAN ONLY SEE HOW IT'LL BE USED POLITICALLY. WE KNEW THIS WAS COMING + HANDLED IT SO BADLY.

OBAMA'S 2015 SPEECH ABOUT DEVELOPING A GLOBAL STRATEGY TO HANDLE THE NEXT PANDEMIC. A NEW YORKER ARTICLE FROM 2012 ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION + ZOONOSES. BORIS DISBANDING THE PANDEMIC COMMITTEE AS SOON AS HE TOOK POWER...





A VACCINE?

A LOCKDOWN!

# DECEMBER

THE END

A CHEEKY PLANETARY CONJUNCTION!

CONJUNCTION!

## WEEK 49

FIVE WOMEN FINALLY GET THEIR STORIES TOLD BEYOND THE MAN WHO KILLED THEM. IT REALLY IS A STUDY OF HOW TERRIBLE IT WAS TO BE A POOR WOMAN IN 19th LONDON.



THE SLOW SOURCE DECAY OF AGEING, POVERTY, PERHAPS STRUGGLING WITH ADDICTION IN THE LATE 1800s. HERE IN THE PRESENT THE U.K DEATH TOLL SURPASSES 75,000. ...HOW?

THE FIVE - HAICKE RUBENHOLD

## WEEK 50

A LIFETIME ON THE TROUBLED EDGES OF ACTIVISM + INDUSTRY + ART IN PRE + POST-MILLENNIUM BRITAIN. THE SLOW SOURCE DECAY OF AGEING, POVERTY + STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH.

90 YEAR OLD MARGARET KEENAN IS THE FIRST PERSON IN THE WORLD TO BE VACCINATED.



SCABBY QUEEN - KIRSTIN INNES

## WEEK 51

BEGINNING AT THE PLACE WHERE YOUR SLEEP LEAVES YOU + ENDING IN THE VAST WATERS OF A WORLD SUNK UNDER THE OCEAN, BIRTHING + FIGHTING MUTANT SEA CREATURES, IT IS EASY TO JOIN THESE STORIES IN THE APOCALYPSE LIFE BOAT AS THE WORLD CONTINUES TO CONTRACT.



SALT SLOW - JULIE ARMFIELD

## WEEK 52

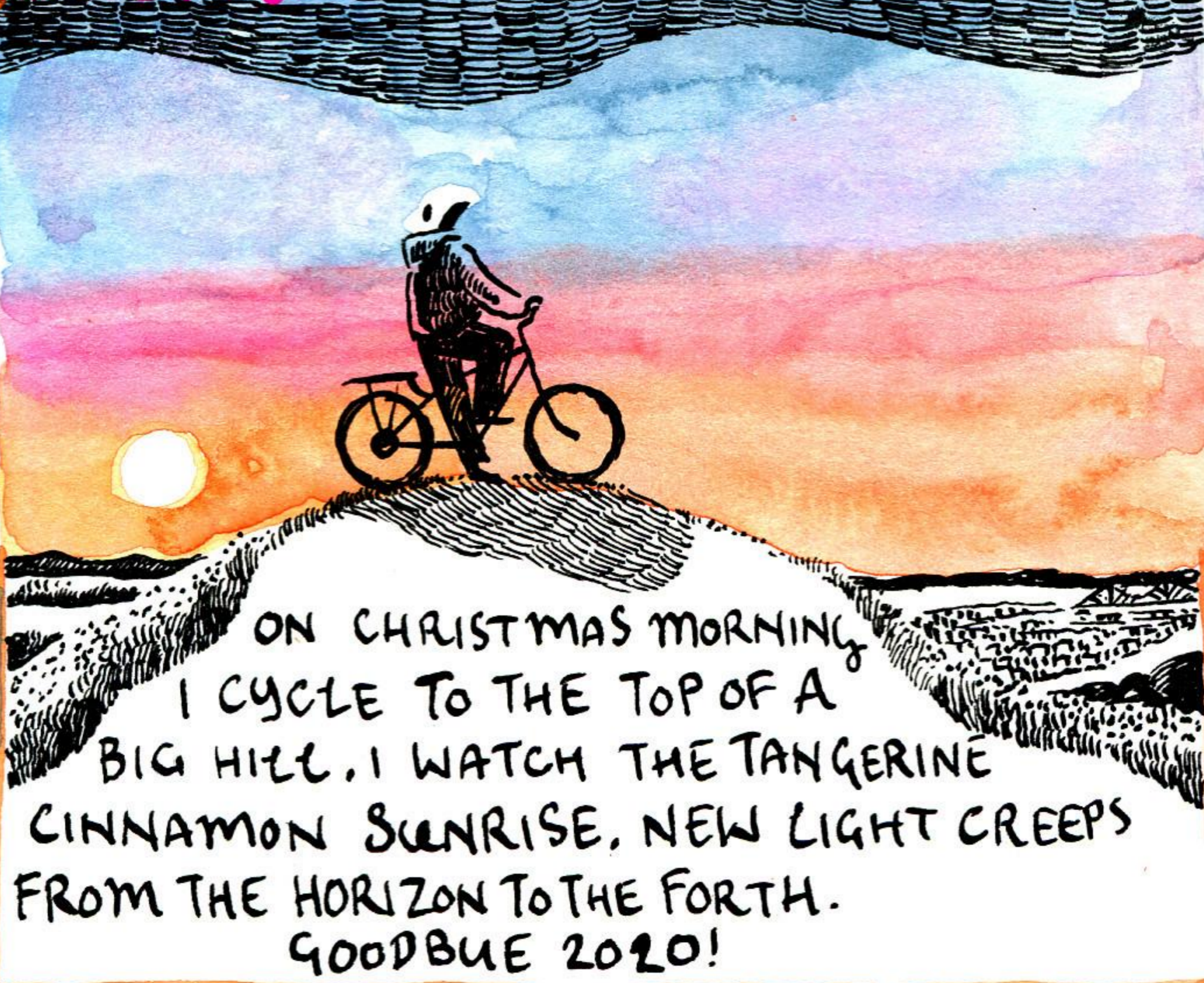
A NARRATIVE LED BY NEURODIVERGENT GENDER NON-CONFORMING PEOPLE OF COLOUR WARNS ME HOW THESE VIOLENT PATRIARCHAL HIERARCHIES WILL DESTROY US ALL REPEATEDLY WHILE THE WORLD HEALS WITHOUT US.



AN UNKINDNESS OF GHOSTS - RIVERS SOLOMON

THIS YEAR I WEPT OVER SHAMBOLIC, REACTIONARY GOVERNMENTS WHO WILL GASLIGHT US INTO 2021, AND 100,000 UNNECESSARY DEATHS.

## WEEK 53



ON CHRISTMAS MORNING I CYCLE TO THE TOP OF A BIG HILL. I WATCH THE TANGERINE CINNAMON SUNRISE. NEW LIGHT CREEPS FROM THE HORIZON TO THE FORTH. GOODBYE 2020!

THIS YEAR I LOVED GRASSROOTS PROTEST, THE CREATIVE WORK WHICH SOMEHOW FOUND ME, THE MOMENTS WE IMAGINED NEW WORLDS + OF COURSE THE BOOKS! THE BOOKS! THE BOOKS!

INVISIBLE NO MORE

ON BR 60

WE WERE 8 YEARS IN POWER

THE BASS ROCK

FRESHWATER

MUST GO

(I HOPE WE LEARNED ALL THE THINGS YOU TRIED TO TEACH US!)

ADA

WE TAKES THE FORM OF A MORTAL GORE

KNOW STRANG THINGS

WHI TEE

THE NEW JIM CROW

KINDRED

FEVERDREAM