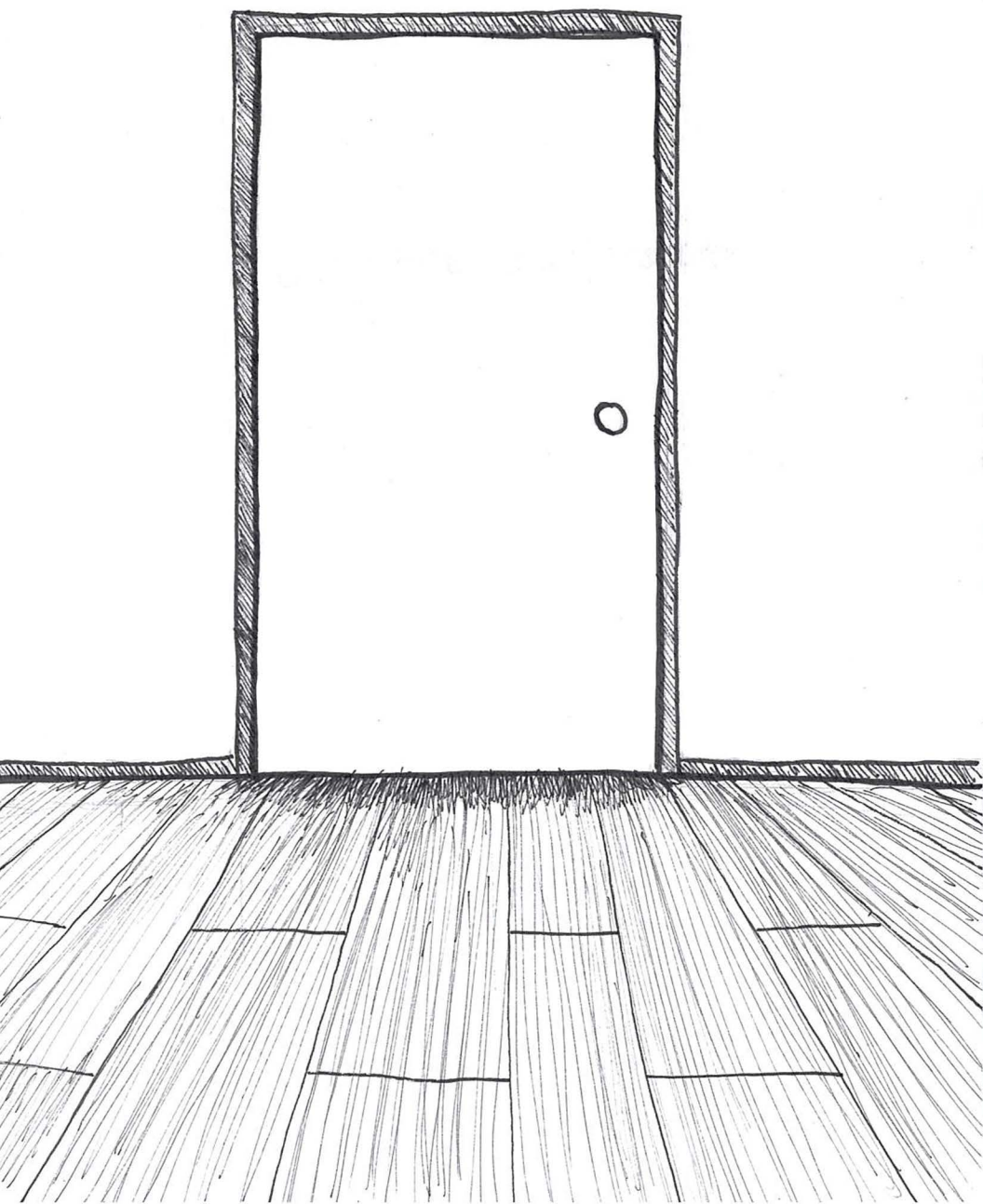
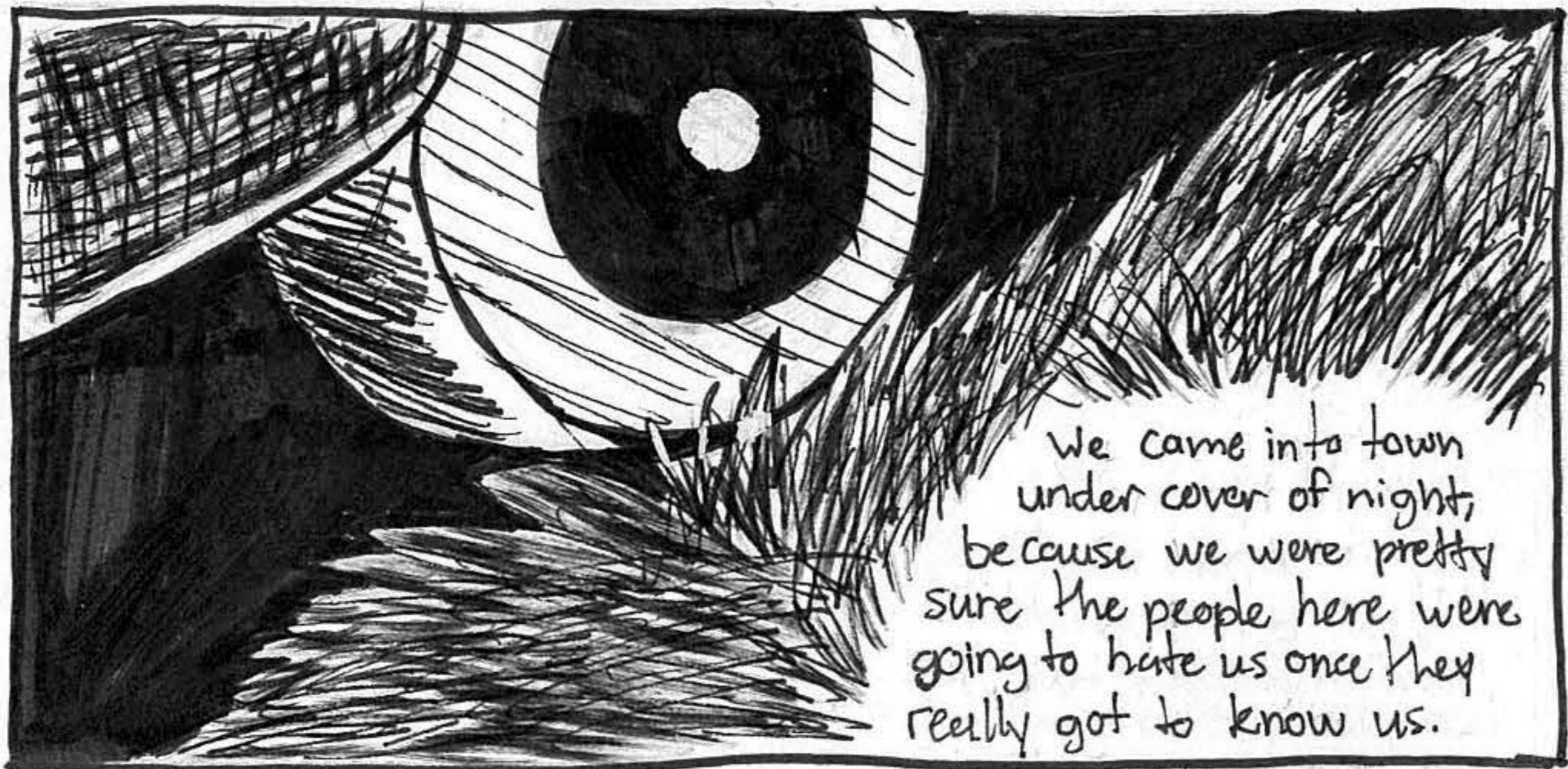


TALLAHASSEE

words by john darnielle





We came into town under cover of night, because we were pretty sure the people here were going to hate us once they really got to know us.



It was summer. It's always summer with us.



In our lives together, which are sweet in the way of rotting things, it is somehow permanently summer.

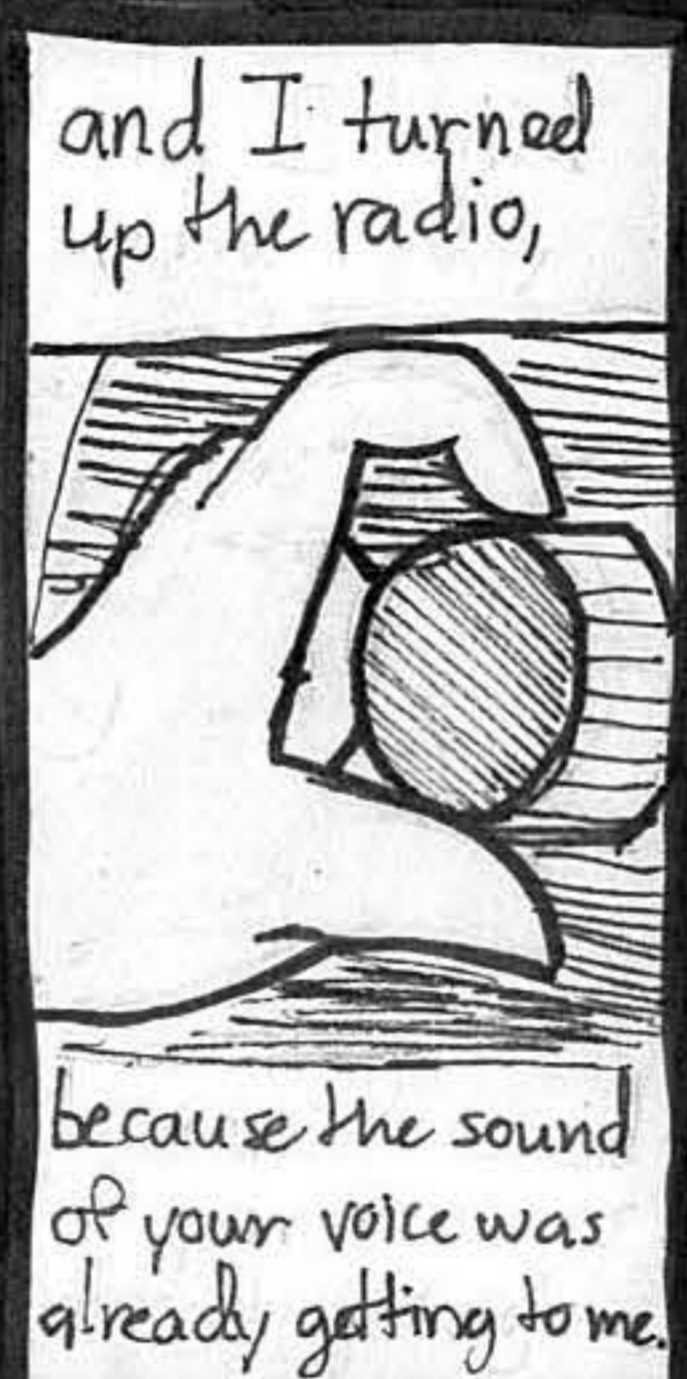


The moon rose above the trees, older than time, greener than money.



You hung your head out the window of our dusty lemon-yellow El Camino

and howled



and I turned up the radio,

because the sound of your voice was already getting to me.



The speakers crackled & the music came through. Franki Valli & The Four Seasons.

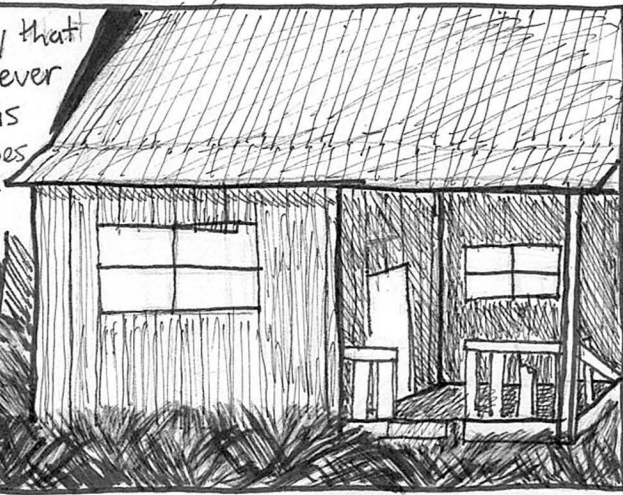


"Pretty as a midsummer's morn, they call her Dawn."

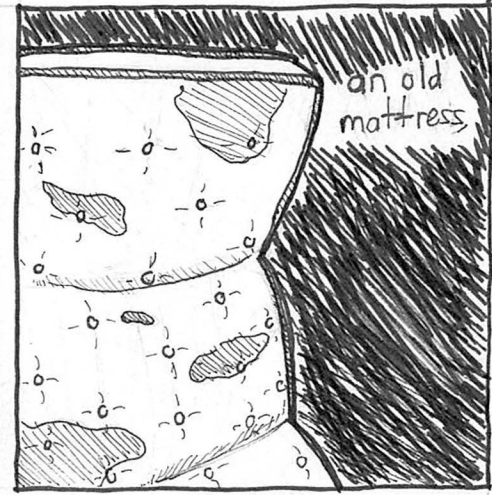
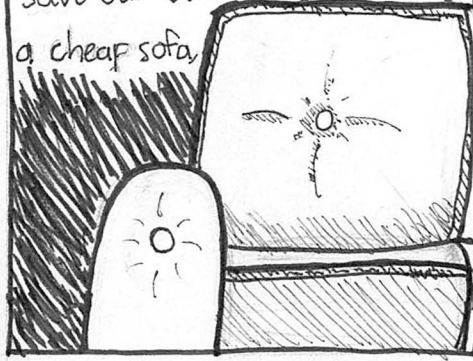


Let the love of God come & get us if it wants us so bad. We know where we are going when this is done.

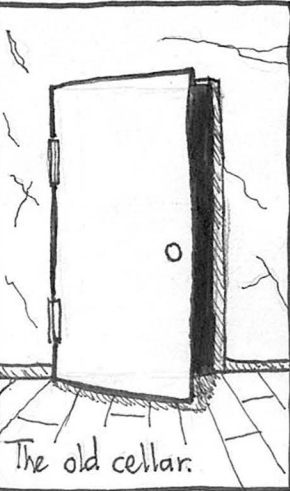
Some people might say that buying a house you've never actually seen up-close is a bad idea, but what does anybody know about our needs, anyhow? For us, it was perfect.



Everywhere entirely unfurnished, & largely doomed to remain so, save our own meager offerings: a cheap sofa,



The peeling paint.



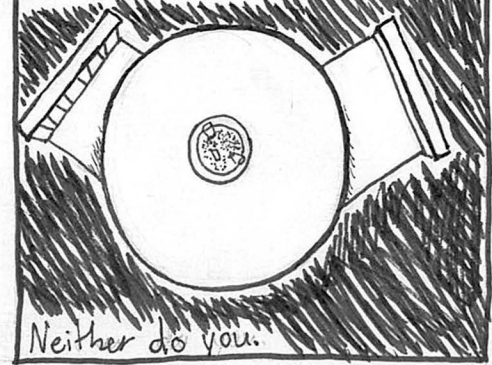
The garden in the back.



a couple of chairs & some ash trays.



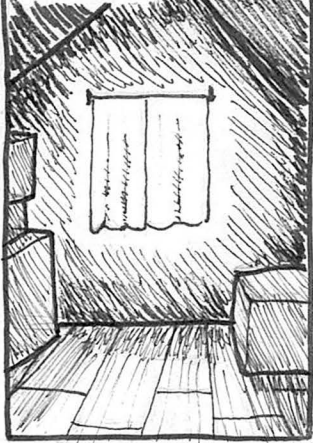
Maybe a table salvaged from some diner gone into bankruptcy. I don't remember.



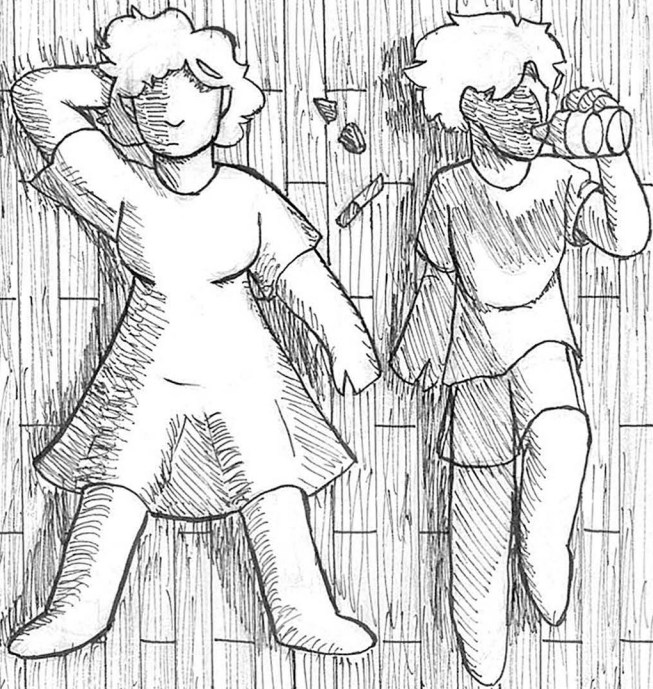
The porch out front.



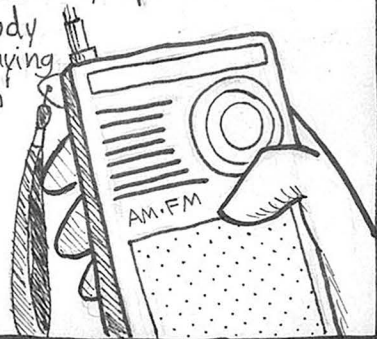
The attic.



An aerial view of us might have suggested we'd been knocked down, but what we were doing was staking our claim. Establishing our territories. Making good. Not on the vows we made, but the ones we'd really meant.

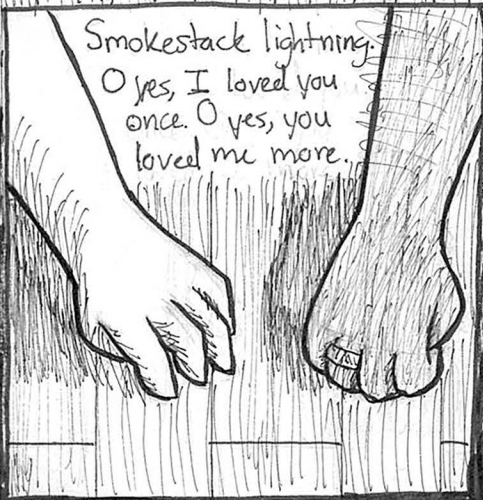


You produced a wallet-sized transistor radio out of nowhere & found a sympathetic station: somebody was playing Howlin' Wolf.



Smokestack lightning.

O yes, I loved you once. O yes, you loved me more.



We entered the house like a virus enters its host.



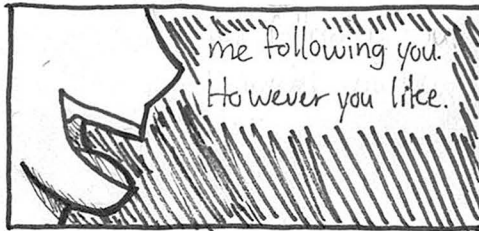
The windows were high & the walls were thick & sturdy.



It was hot as blazes. The guts of summer.



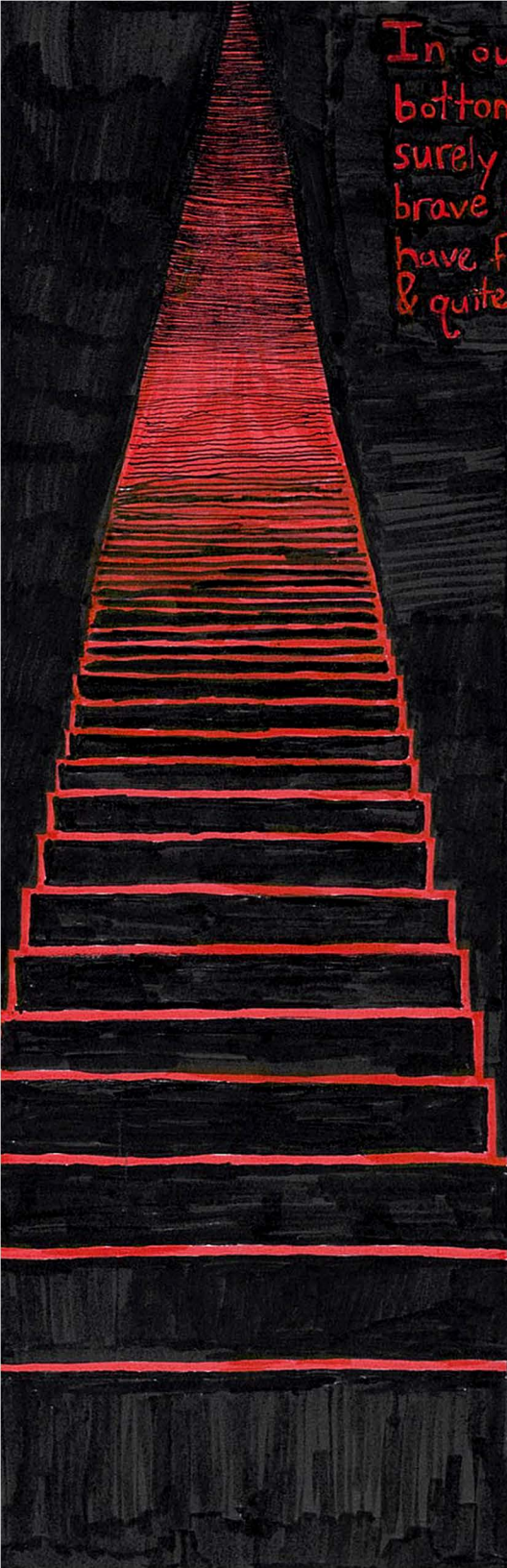
You following me,



me following you. However you like.



Always down in the sugar-deep barrel-bottom belly of summer itself. Always.



In our shared walk down to the
bottom, which bottom we will
surely only find if our hearts are
brave & our love true enough, we
have found that it is somehow invariably
& quite permanently summer.

"With the invention of every
new mode of communication, there
is a flurry of excitement when
someone begins to believe he is
using it to communicate with the
dead."

- Susy Smith, *Voices of the Dead?*

"... Two profoundly respectable
seamen, Captain Tom Dudley
& Mate Edwin Stephens, lately
of the yacht *Mignonette*, were
sentenced to death for murder
of their shipmate, Ordinary
Seaman Richard Parker, after
a bench of judges found that
one must not kill one's ship-
mates in order to eat them,
however hungry one may
be.

- A. W. Brian Simpson,
*Cannibalism & the Common
Law*

"I stroll the yard,
my keen convicted mind
wondering if the fence to
Freedom
will really deliver 30,000
volts."

- Jimmy A. Lerner

"And where am I?
My whole house is burning down
and all I do is stand on the lawn
and gaze at the fire
that beautiful woman leaping
from the window in her bright dress"
- Gregory ORR

adapted from the liner notes of
tallahassee & see america right
by the mountain goats
art + lettering by helvetica hare
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