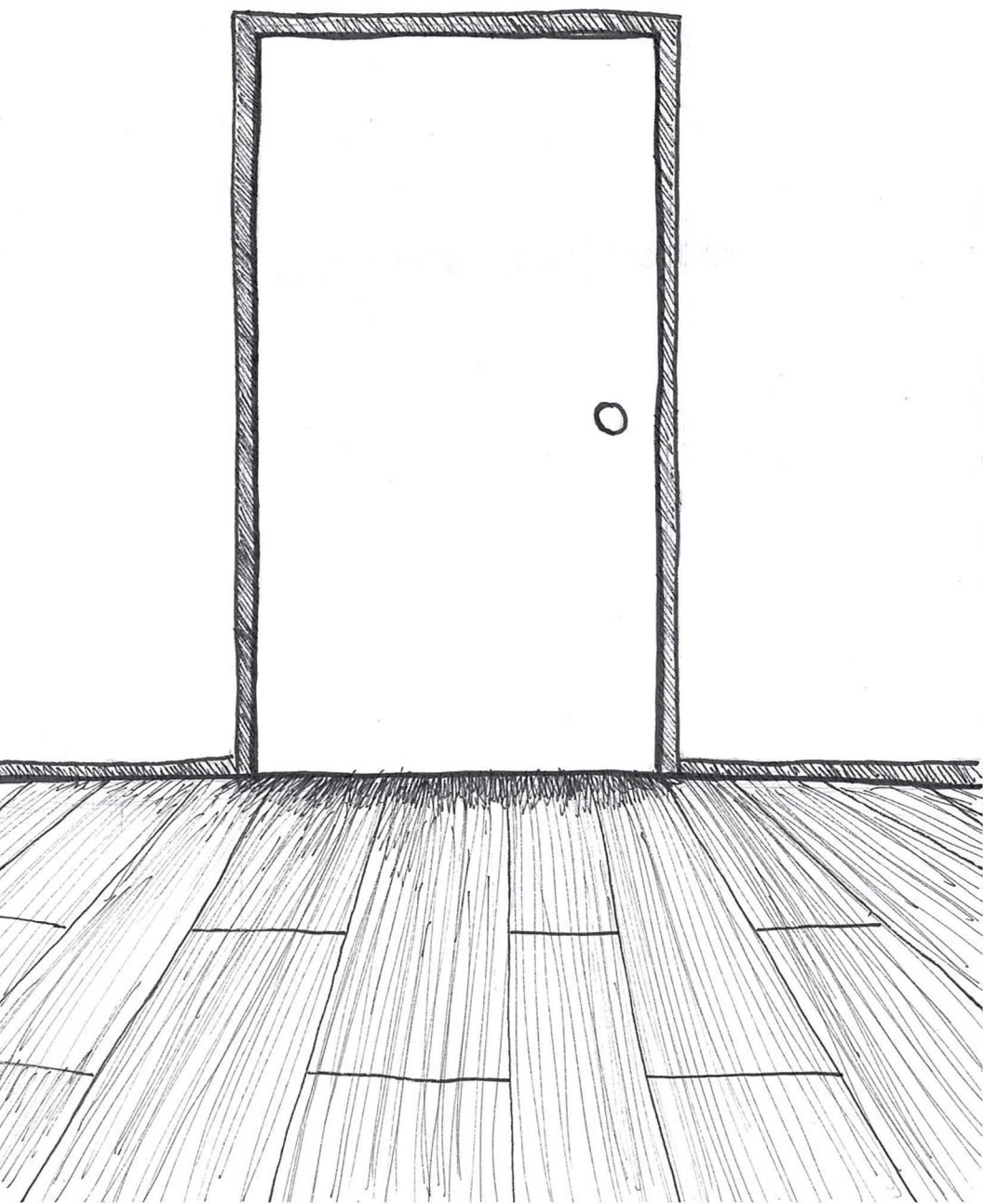
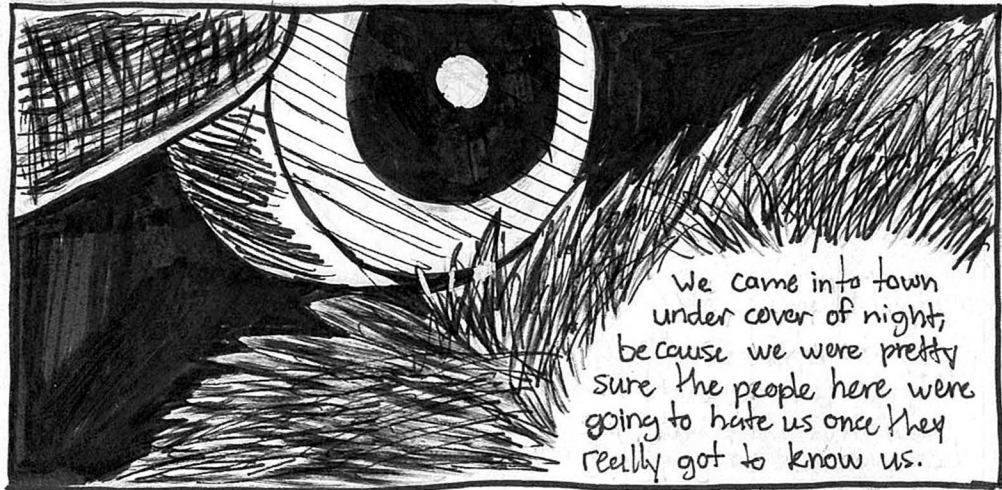


TALLAHASSEE

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

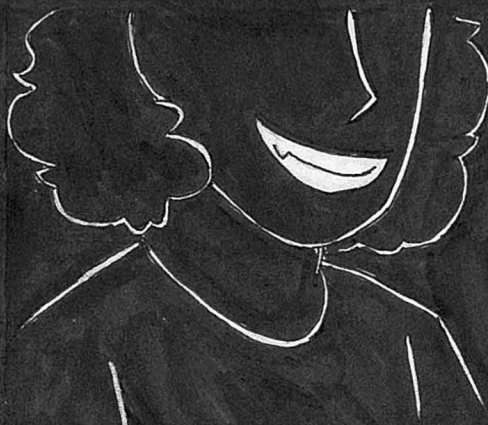
and howled,

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."

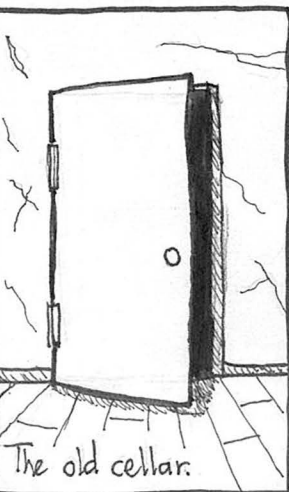


Let the love of God come & get us if it wants us so bad.
We know where we are going when this is done.

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.



The peeling paint.

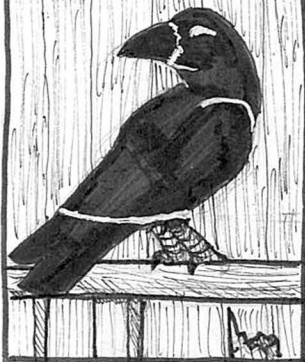


The old cellar.

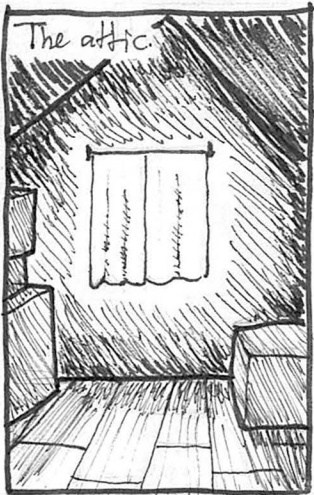


The garden in the back.

The porch out front.

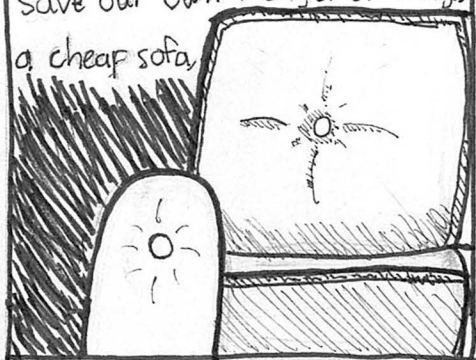


The still air of the living room.



The attic.

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

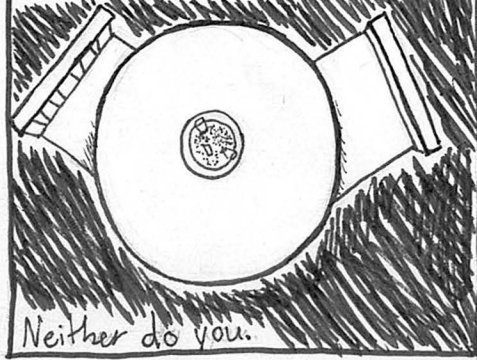


an old
mattress.

a couple of chairs & some ash
trays.



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

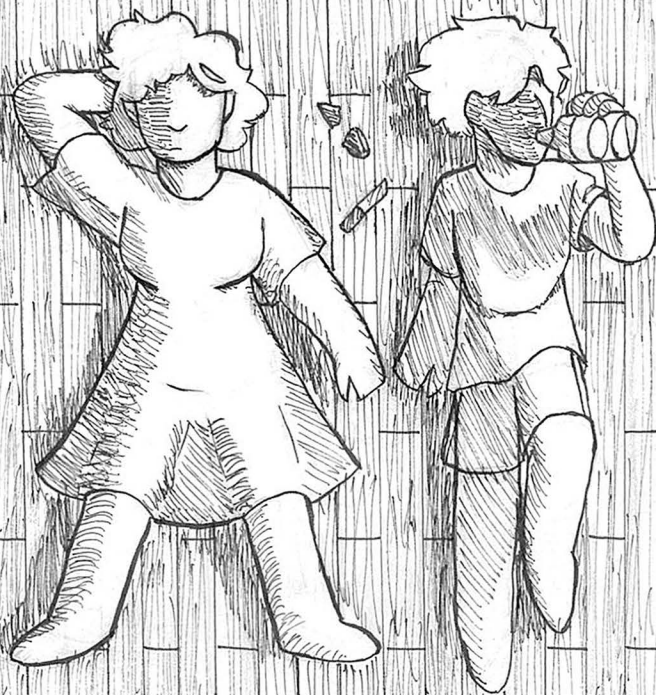


Neither do you.



We drank store-brand gin with fresh
lime juice out of plastic cups or straight
from the bottle & we spread our
selves out face-up on the
wooden floors.

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.

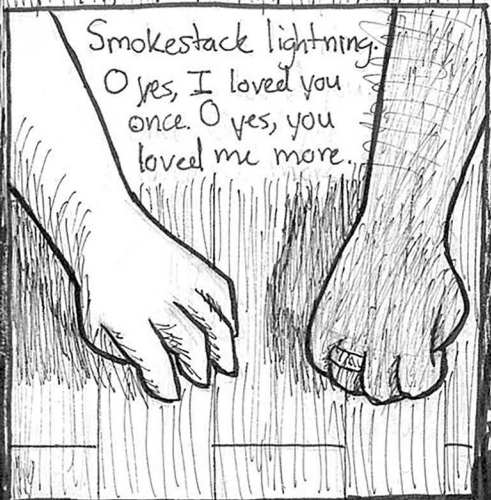


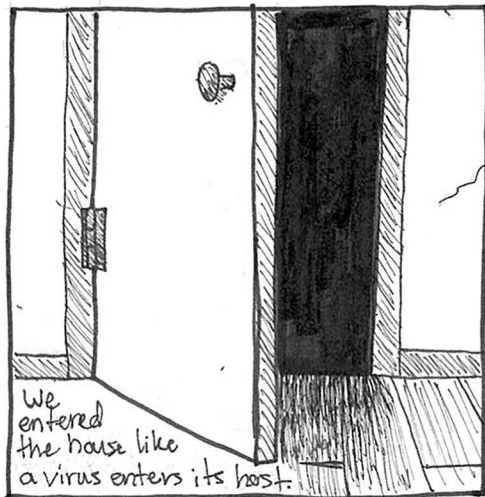
You produced a wallet-sized transistor radio out of nowhere & found a sympathetic station: somebody was playing Howlin' Wolf.



Smokestack lightning.

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

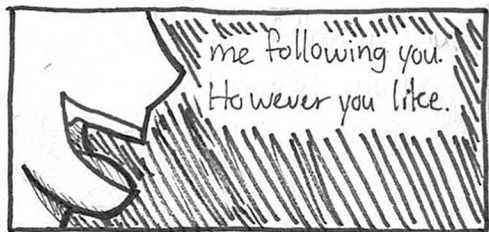




We entered the house like a virus enters its host.



You following me,



me following you.
However you like.




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



It was hot as blazes. The guts of summer.



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 shipmates 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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