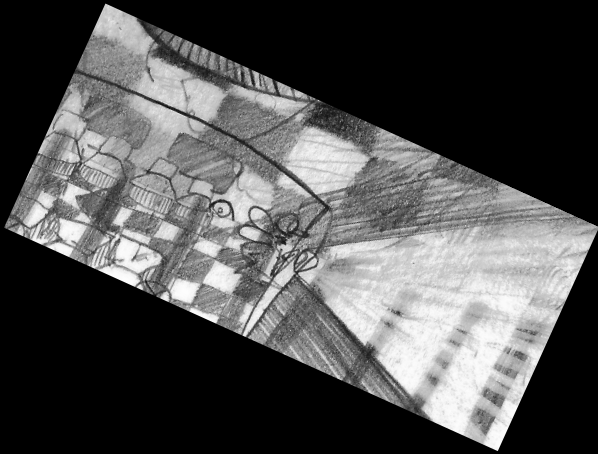


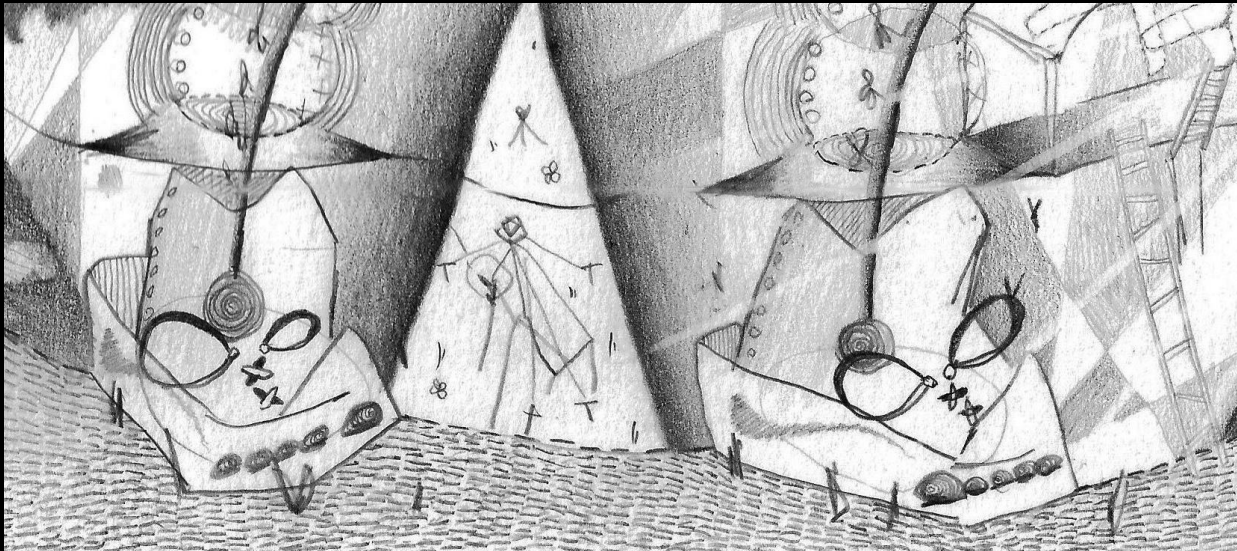
Beneath your busy feet, I am seated within my home-bound carriage. Every day I am ferried through this underground canopy of deluge where there is nothing but colony collapse of the soul.



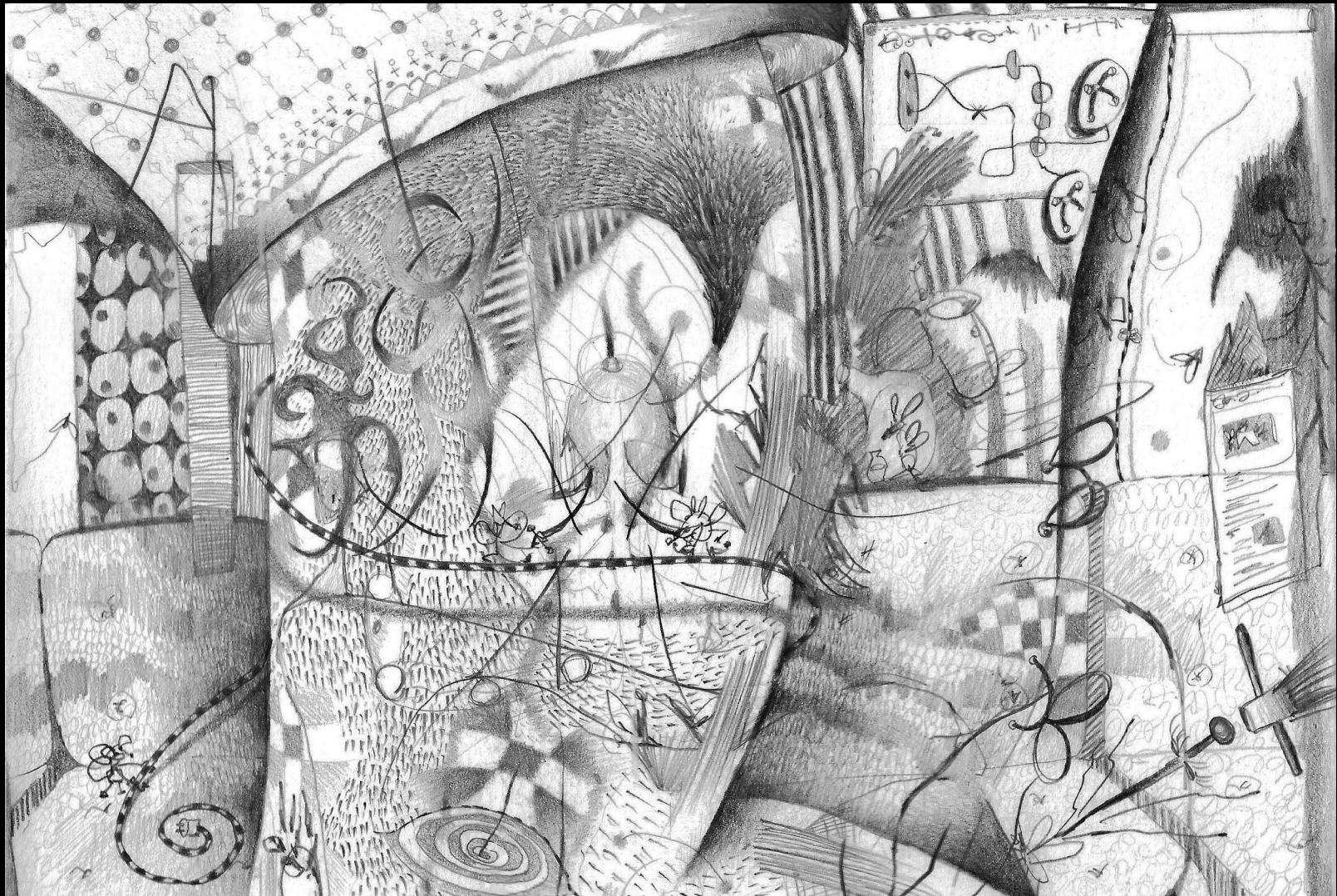
Regular goers of all sorts sit along the pew to face one another. An operational choir emerges as attendees speak to one another over the hum of the engine while the minister conducts from his private cabin upfront, rarely ever to be seen. This is but a church of basic functions.

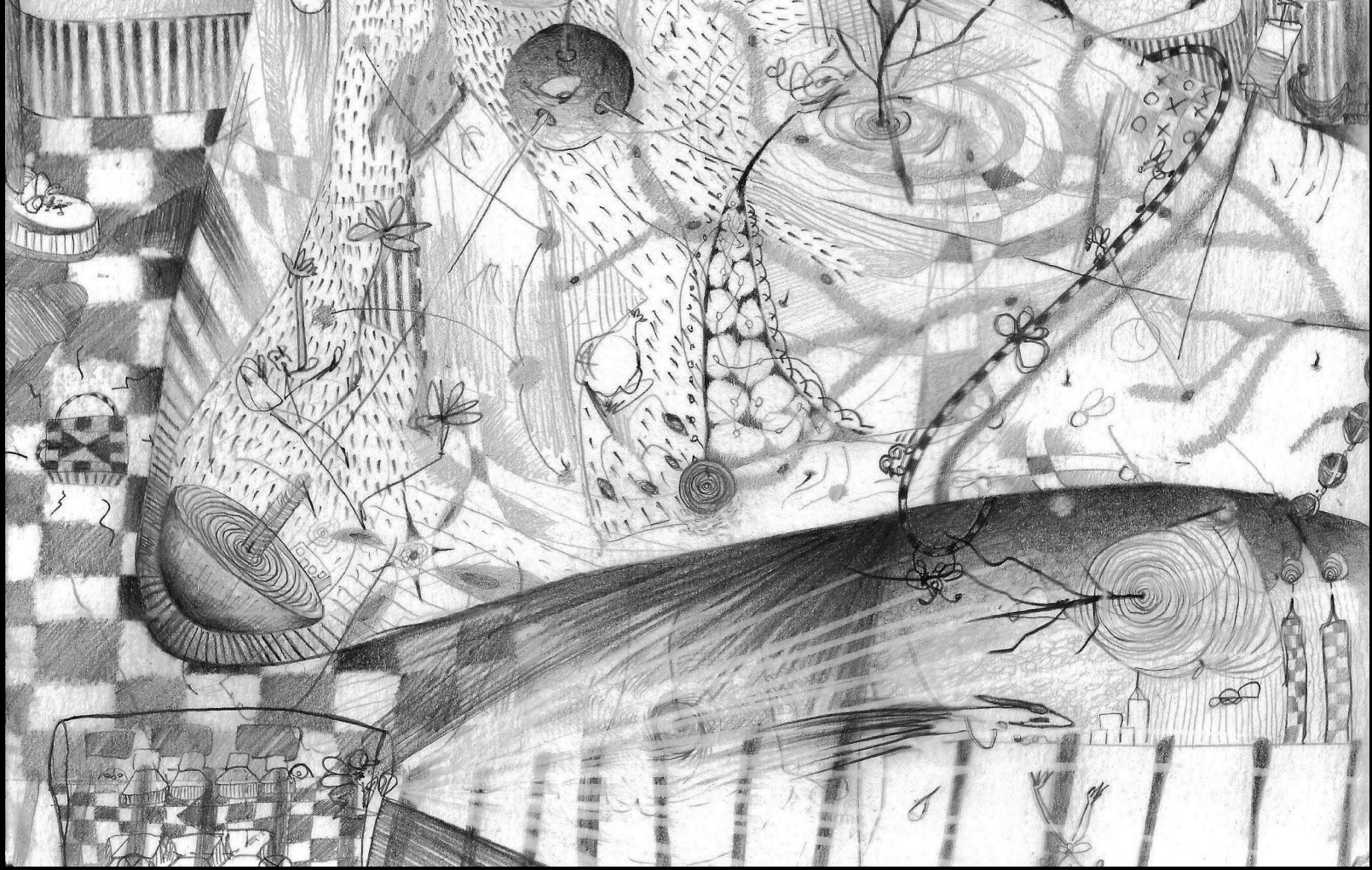


In service today we witnessed an aberration of god itself, standing in the center of the space, casually leaning against a metal pole. Full of echoes and false projections and set loose upon the pages of the daily journals of all those who encounter him. The spite in our eyes is with righteous reason, void of moronic whim or pitiful vengeance, for if given the chance, he is the type of man to ghost.



I am reminded of the character Neo, played by Keanu Reeves, from the science fiction film "The Matrix",





but here, he is ever so slightly malnourished and the wardrobe designer has accidentally picked out a trenchcoat a couple sizes too large.





His feet are planted shoulders width apart for balance, him the appearance of a desiccated house plant, uprooted and placed upon display under neon lights. A one man circus where the body horror show lays hidden under a leather bound carnival tent, only to conceal a bony hourglass with a brittle sway. His legs are out of sight, but one could imagine fishnet stockings, the pattern of chain link fence

which gives



sprawled out across a field of goosebumps.

His left hand permits to be seen, boldly jointed knuckles, gently webbed, peeking out from within the trench-coat, steadily clutching his stomach as if in preparation to rip out the liver– a self imposed punishment perhaps?

I can see the faint outline of his bent arm. It seems as though his elbow swoops down slightly past his left hip, but I convince myself it's

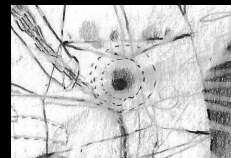


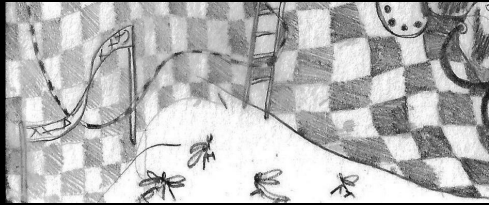
probably just the folds and creases of his clothes.



This vampiric altar, chill and cool, with frosted extremities, the tip of his nose and razoric contours of the jaw, a shade lighter than the rest of his deathly pale.

A fungal colony can be seen nestled in the corner of his lips, two raw suns, tucked away within chapped folds, the surface pink and purple, aflame, like backs of burning witches or a roasted sweet potato.



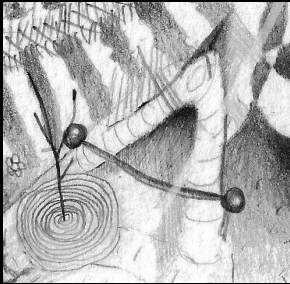


His nose glides, down between two cheeks, a valley rift formed long before my time, it is bridge bent and slopes down before curling up at the tip like a ski jump constructed for head lice:



Personal companions that reside atop his head where dark wet hair strands end in chestnut rivulets. I consider the unlikely possibility that the barber must have had an option that resembled the style of a laid back Hitler youth.

A series of fine wrinkles branch outwards from the edges of both eyes, a rhizomatic root structure laid on their side.

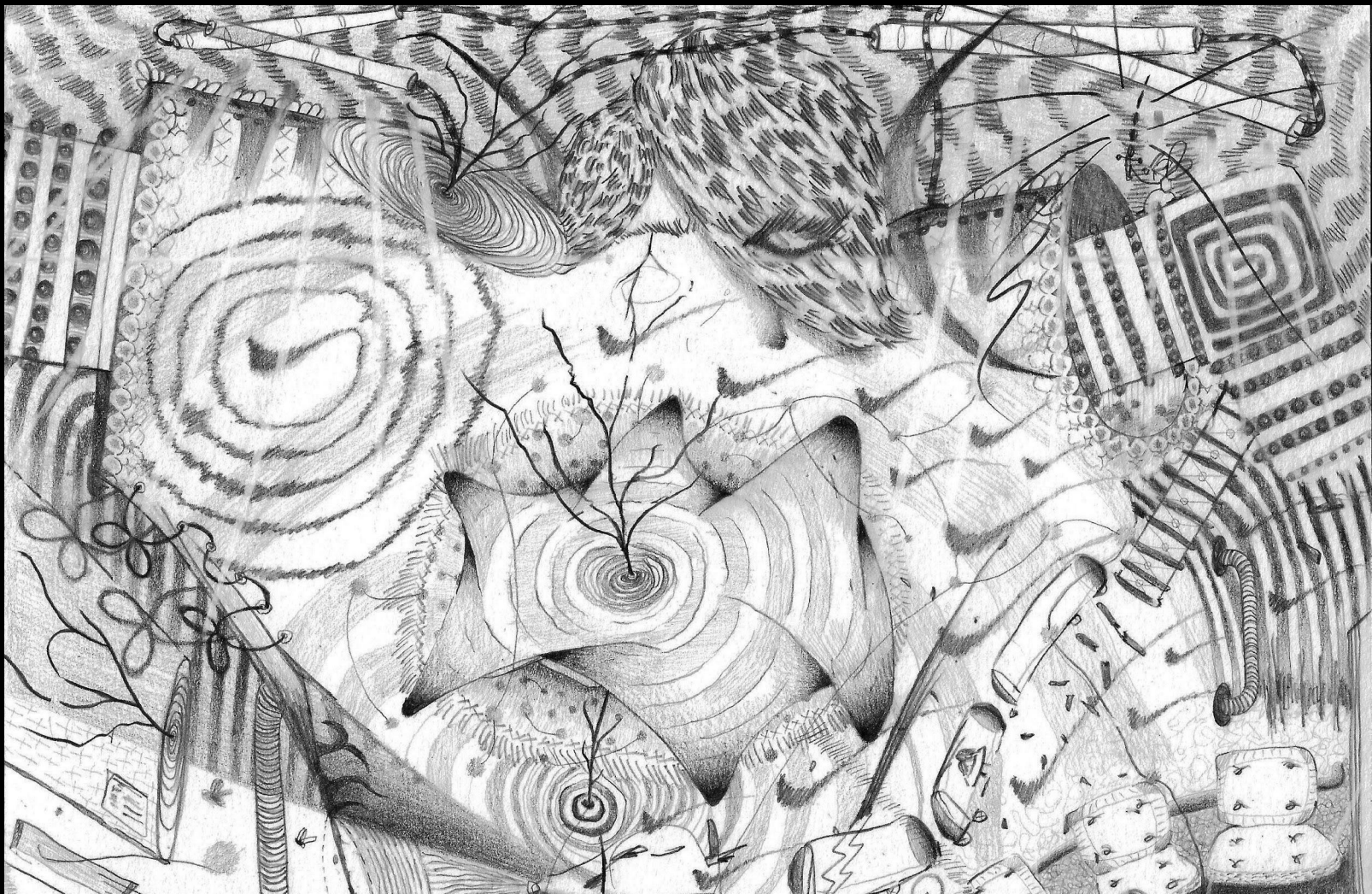


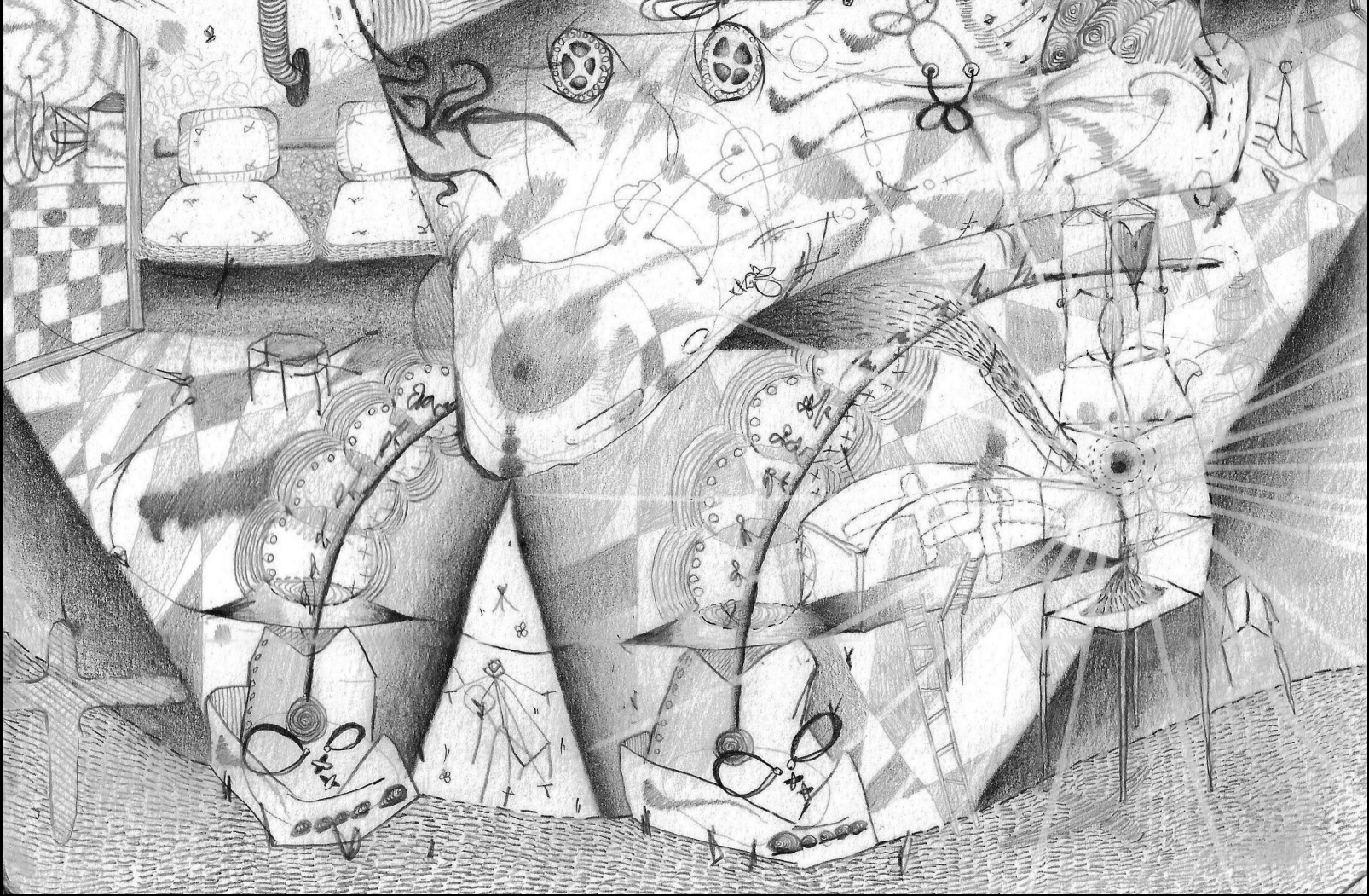
Further out, the ridge of his ear forms an archway to a scant opening just large enough for a lone cricket to enter and to burrow inwards towards the center to devour the foundation from within. One would assume that the neighbors would order a fumigation of the mind, eventually resulting in a vacancy.



He is tall,

my view from down below,

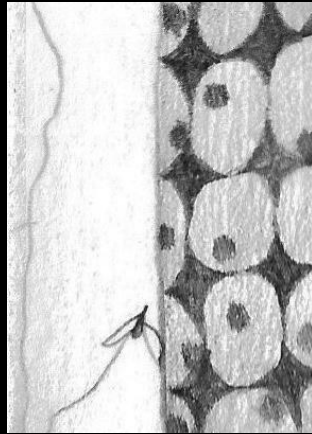




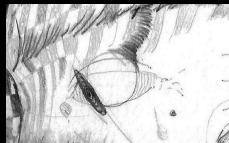
a silhouette of a crown shy canopy.

Such generosity to give me shade from the neon stars above.

A little further up above, a house fly far from home orbits above his



head, a temporary placeholder for a rightful crown. He seems grounded, his eyes are downturned. An avoidance of the neon flicker overhead or possibly an introvert? Is he looking at me



out of the corner of his eyes? Can he see my spider cross? Low hung nectar, made of crystal fractals, that stretch from knee to knee and falters ever more with each sudden jolt of this subway carriage.



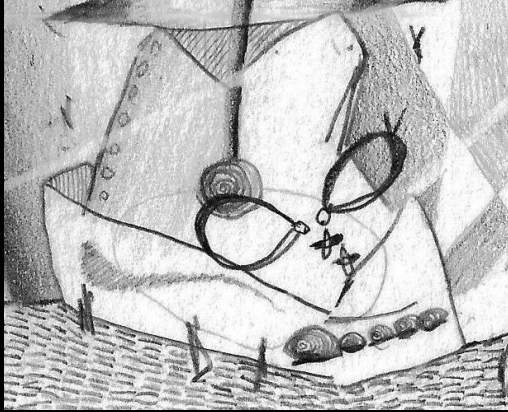


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Down along the floor, a faded nike swoosh can be seen along the side of his sneakers; A commercial comet here in communion.  
A hundred thousand of them criss-crossing across this dizzy city.



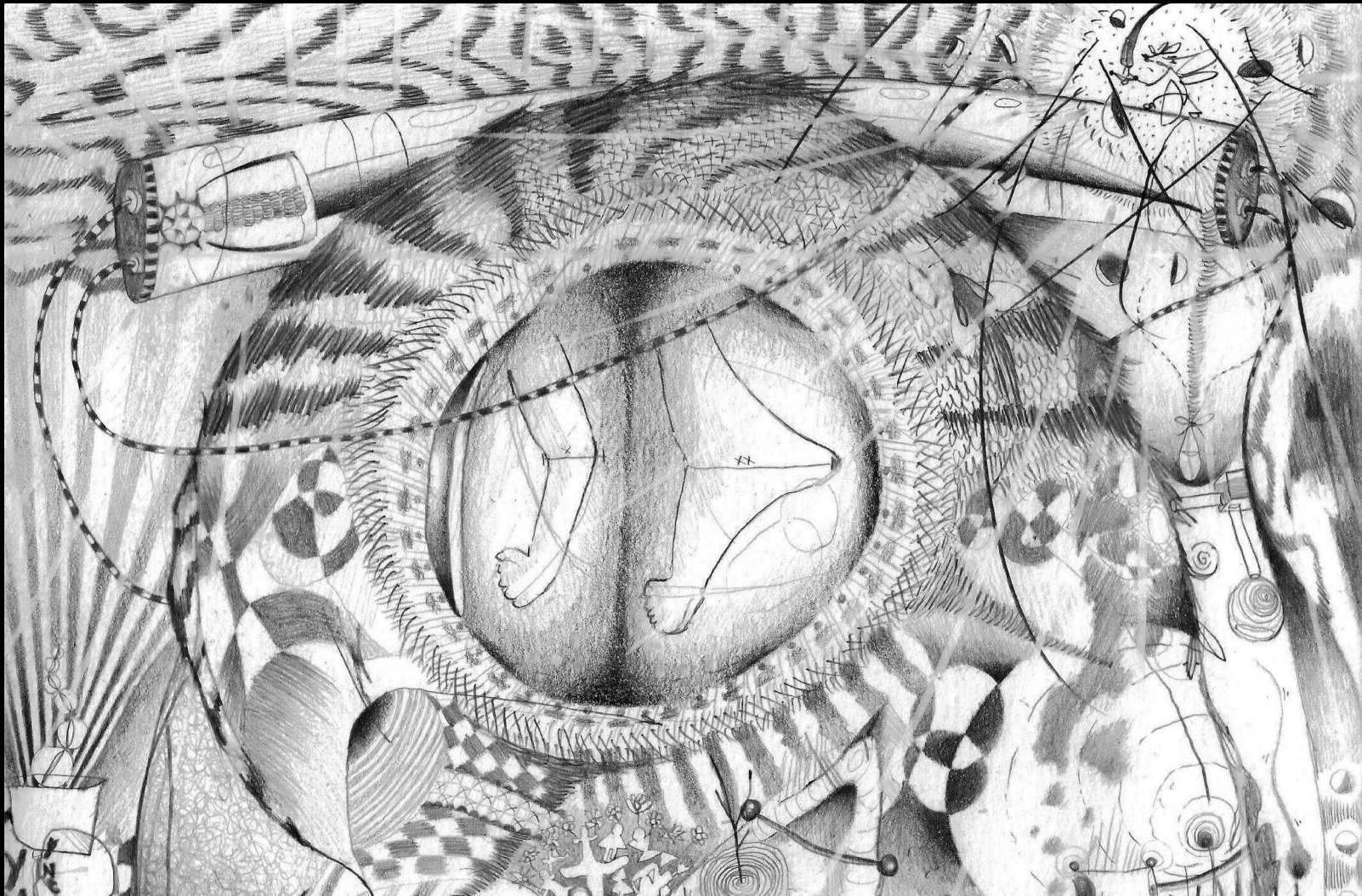
His slender ankles ape-necked, the feet slightly swollen, a constellation of veins, a webbed veil descending down towards clenched toes, as if they were gripping the soles of his boots for better balance and he, by sheer weight of foot, seems anchored to the floor of this runaway carriage. I hope for him to fall, so that my eager arm can jut outstretched, fingers grip his slender waist to keep this figurine

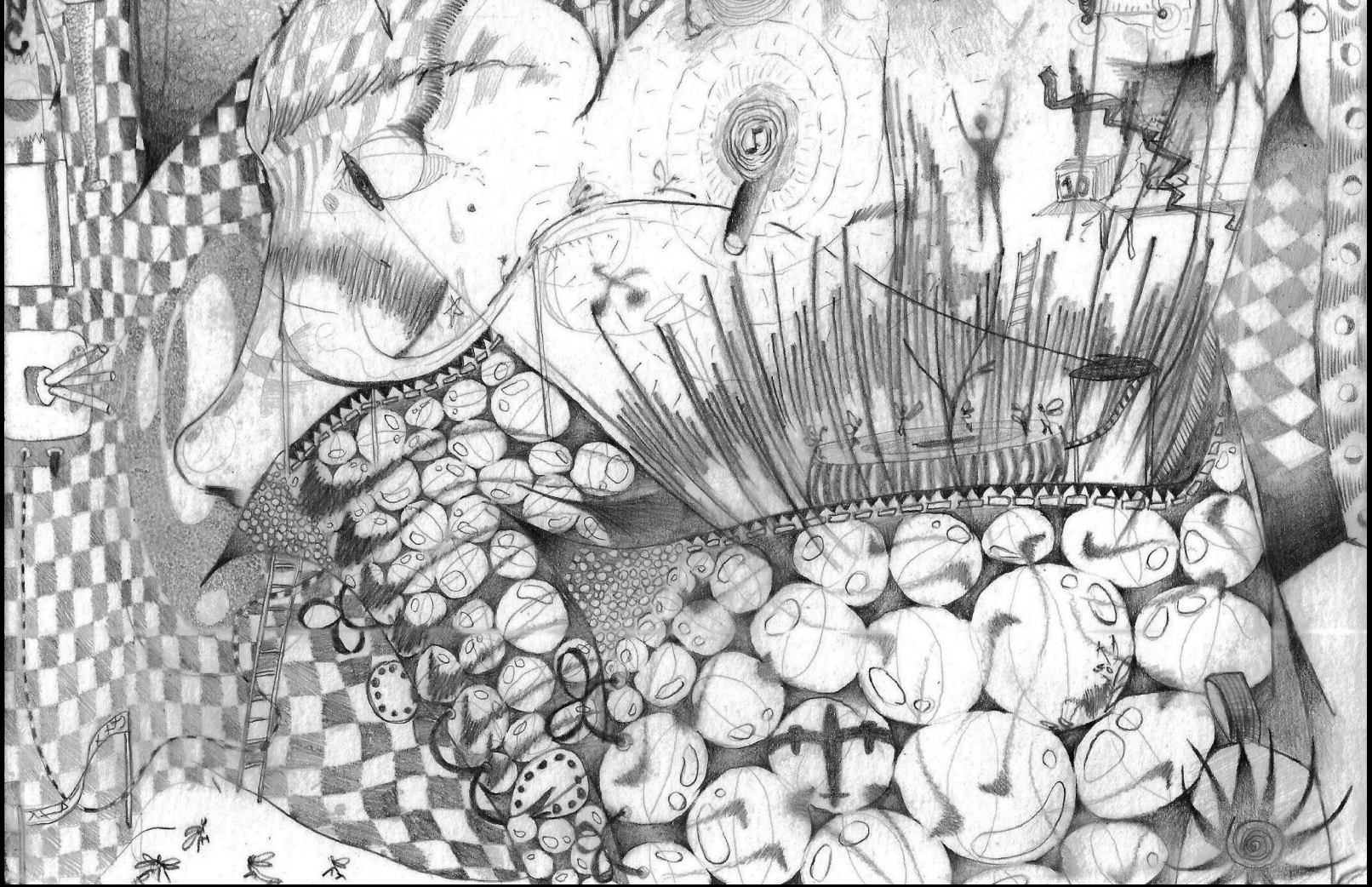


(imbued with my assumptions) from certain shatter.

I would hold him in my arms and run my fingertips along the melody of his back,  
sunken and curved,  
a final resting spot for a weary traveler.

If only I were a cat, I would curl up within this crevice,  
call it home and belong.

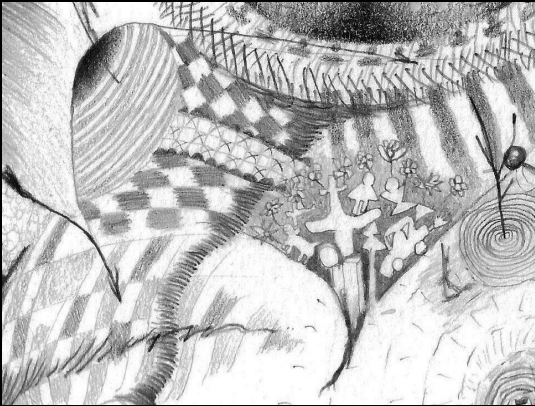




He would beckon me to come down with curled whistles that end in breathless crescendos because he is slightly unfit.

Mocking laughter would follow suit on my part and then giggles all around. We would be merry and despite our unified ghastly appearances we would live longer than our peers would have ever predicted.

It is clear from his expression that he is tired by mortal afflictions, of wanting to kiss the friends that keep him company, with long, drawn out, presses of his slender lips against jubilant, coarse cheeks.



In those moments, I imagine that he would feel the edges of the earth itself close in to

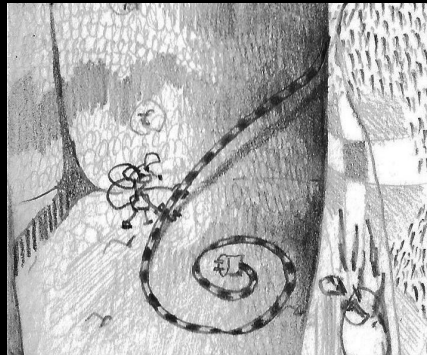


engulf the valley of such desires, to bury, then to honor, that which will never come to fruition.

The henhouse is bursting forth with roosters from here within the cavity of his granular chest, feelings abound.



Then and there, a thunderous roar from the heavens above, the train comes to a sudden halt and just as it was given to us on the



first day, we lose the light, the power is gone.

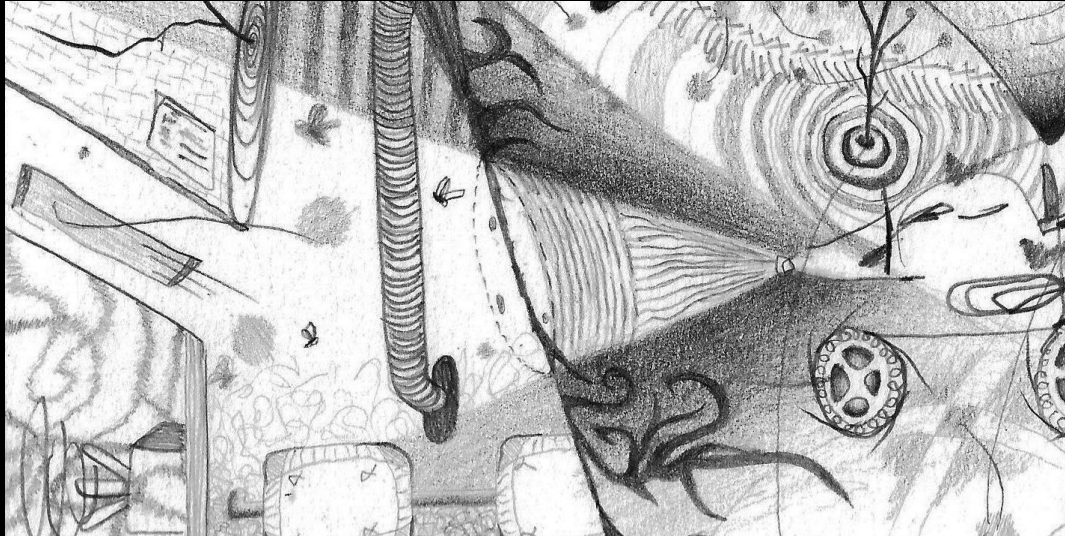
me whole, and I were residing within the belly of this beast for perpetuity, a feeling akin to being left on read.

It is as if the focus of my desire had swallowed

Here in the darkness, I looked directly towards the center of the carriage, and behold, it was void and without form. When the lights came back on, he was nowhere to be seen.





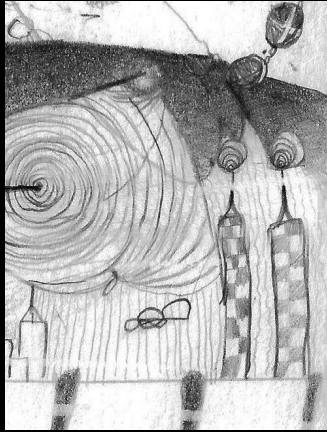


There was no sign of him. Moments later, the ground above us trembles and once more we are cast into total darkness.



Soon, when I awake, it will be in shame and everlasting contempt for having never asked  
name.

him for his



Afterword:

These past few years, I have been fascinated with the medical phenomena *Olecranon Bursitis*, inflammation of the

subcutaneous synovial-lined sac at the tip of the elbow.



It reminds me of Pterodactyls,



and how the

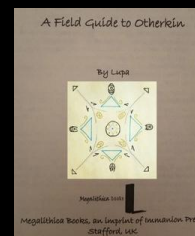
human body is pliable. A personal modality I find useful navigating my thoughts regarding body modification and *Otherkin*



[the subculture of people who identify as not entirely human] as it relates to the transgender community.

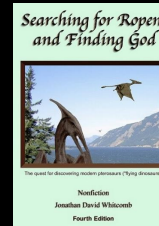
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“The Otherkin community is a small but growing subculture of people who identify in some way - spiritually, metaphorically - as something Other than human. Some resonate with *dragons* while others believe they were elves in another life and still others resonate with wolves, great cats and other earthly animals.” Lupa (author of *A Field Guide to Otherkin*)



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In 2020, I was approached by Ben over at Final Hot Desert to do a show. During the research phase, we discovered that



Utah was home to the Mormon nonfiction writer *Jonathan David Whitcomb*, the author of “*Searching for Ropens and Finding God*”. As described in the book, the term *Ropen*, is used by those native to New Guinea Island and means “demon flyer”.

It reminds me of the playful drawing by Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins, where Saint George is engaged in a ferocious



battle with a pterodactyl, instead of the dragon



that he is typically depicted taming and slaying.

Although not Hawkin’s intentions, it illustrates a view held by many creationists, that humans and dinosaurs coexisted in the past.



The figure in the drawing is of Saint George, the patron saint of England, the countryside in which I attended

an all boys school many years ago. A white-washed figure, born to a Turkish

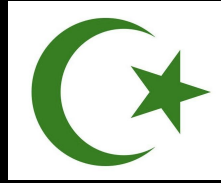


father and a Palestinian

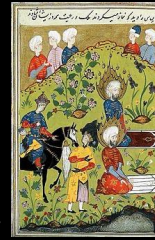


mother.





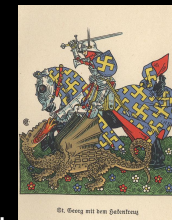
In the Islamic faith, he was known as Al-Khidr (الْخَضِر) otherwise known as the Green One.



He was revered by Muslims in the third century for being a martyr for his faith but went on to become associated with Christian



Crusaders during the Middle Ages to being a favorite image of Nazi propaganda.



There was an Eastern European counterpart to the Crusaders called The Order of the Dragon, a Christian



society of knights. A notable member being Vlad II,



Voivode of Wallachia,

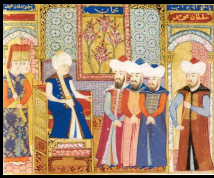


who was the father of

Vlad the Impaler, otherwise known as Dracula.



The aim of the order was to fight the Ottoman



Empire and defend the Catholic Church from heretics and pagans.



It is interesting to note that

in the Romanian language today, dracul means “the devil”—drac is “devil,” ul is “the”—but it is derived from the Latin dracō, “dragon.”.

What about the dragon though? The legends state that it terrorized a town with demanding human sacrifices daily and



was a symbol for the devil

himself. However, how much of a threat could it truly pose when it is always portrayed in the



lower margins of the paintings, no larger than a Great Dane,

cowering at that. I can empathize with it, for I too,

would be sick and tired of subjugation in perpetuity at the hands of this fellow immigrant. I would grow tired of being unable to spread



my wings to soar the blue skies

depicted in the background.



On September 11th, 2001,

the twin towers were struck by two planes, hijacked by Islamic militants

seeking martyrdom. There were similarities to the attack on Pearl Harbor



where soldiers from my motherland



flew planes into enemy targets. The attack was perpetrated by Al-Qaeda,



the latter half

of which is phonetically pronounced the same as my dead name. My classmates ensured that I was acutely aware of these two coincidences.

Below are a list of methods developed by the Japanese military which involved a suicide attack:

Kamikaze (神風, "Divine Wind")



were pilot guided explosive missiles.

Kaiten (回天, "Turn of the Heaven's will")



were crewed torpedoes.

Fukuryu (伏龍, "Crouching Dragon")



were soldiers outfitted with diving gear trained to self detonate.

Kairyu (海龍, "Sea Dragon")



were submarines fitted with explosive charge.



To this day, my grandmother would speak about the roughly 3,800 kamikaze pilots who died during the



war with high regards. She would display military medals awarded to various family members in the prayer room.



These included ones that my grandfather was awarded during his time in Manchuria.

The pilots were young and impressionable, they reminded me of Muslim youth such as Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab,



an attempted suicide bomber. Where the acts were of last resort, as a futile attempt to bend the will of fate ever closer to their desires towards having a sense of purpose, a place of belonging, to be loved. During the trial it was revealed that Umar had written in an online forum, “I do not have a friend, I have no one to speak to, no one to consult, no one to support me, and I feel depressed and lonely. I do not know what to do.”

In reference to a group of prisoners being led to execution, the English evangelical preacher and martyr John Bradford



was said to have remarked, “there but for the grace of God, go I”. An expression of humility, a recognition that others’ misfortune could be one’s own, if it was not for fate. It is a phrase that resonates with me deeply, for had it not been for what feels



akin to divine intervention at crucial times during my adolescence, I too, may have committed a mortal sin.



Less than a year later, the film “Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers” was released. It starred my



classmate’s uncle, Orlando Bloom, as a Sindar Elf of the Woodland Realm by the name of Legolas.

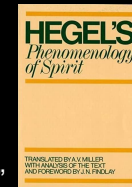


The relevance of which is that during this period in middle school, I developed a theory that my mother’s side of the family was not



Swedish but rather Elven. The size of my tongue resulted in a speech impediment known as a lisp and I was ridiculed by my classmates for this but I rationalized that it was rather that I was born to a higher race, with a dialect incomprehensible to mere mortals.

It does not require leaps and bounds to reach such a conclusion when being transgender meant that I have never felt embodied to begin with, and my mixed heritage had me treated as inhuman by peers. Race and gender aside, it went beyond secular comprehension because the language needed to fully convey these feelings of animism were missing. It was also a means by which to mentally shift the power dynamics in my favor through what I can best describe as joyful escapism.



In an interview regarding the passage on the master-slave dialectic in the book “The Phenomenology of Spirit” by Hegel,



the philosopher Robert Brandom



explained that “...asymmetric cognitive relations are metaphysically defective,

that the norms they institute aren't the right kind to help us think and act with—to make it possible for us to think and act. Asymmetric recognition in this way is authority without responsibility, on the side of the Master, and responsibility without authority, on the side of the Slave. And Hegel's argument is that unless authority and responsibility are commensurate and reciprocal, no actual normative statuses are instituted.”

It is clear how Saint George's identity hinges upon this dragon. I imagine that every time he pierces the dragon through its mouth,



he feels a slight ache in his heart much like Voldemort



probably had felt when he tried to kill his nemesis Harry



Potter,

because a fragment of his soul had been placed in him.

Mother, if you have read this far, thank you for practicing radical acceptance and all the childhood hugs.

