

'This unputdownable graphic novel, like all great literature, makes you feel slightly less alone. Ian Williams gently points out what's under our noses but what we might not yet have managed to articulate. It shows us – through good observation and by being funny – how the ordinary is extraordinary.'

—Philippa Perry

'Gentle, thoughtful, humorous, and with a real light touch: I enjoyed the different stories, the well-realised world it created and, like any good fiction, the view of another internal life.'

—Bryan Talbot

'Skilfully told, relentlessly honest, often funny and painfully true... this is courageous work. It should be read by every student and practising professional out there, and in the larger world as well. Ian Williams is my hero and I wish he were my doctor, too!'

—David Small

'Amazing... crafted with a consistent wit in which the cartoon narrator spares himself no less than his patients. This profoundly honest doctor pursues his humanitarian mission while exorcising personal demons. Williams gives us a dose of insight and laughter that is germane not only to the comics medium, but also to medicine itself.'

—Justin Green

'A helpful, insightful adventure into the dynamic of the doctor/patient relationship. *The Bad Doctor's* elegant renderings illuminate the mind and explore the relationships that don't always have a happy ending. A very original and honest view of a highly personal examination of the human psyche.'

—Ron Turner, Last Gasp Comics

The BAD DOCTOR

IAN WILLIAMS



∞
m
myriad

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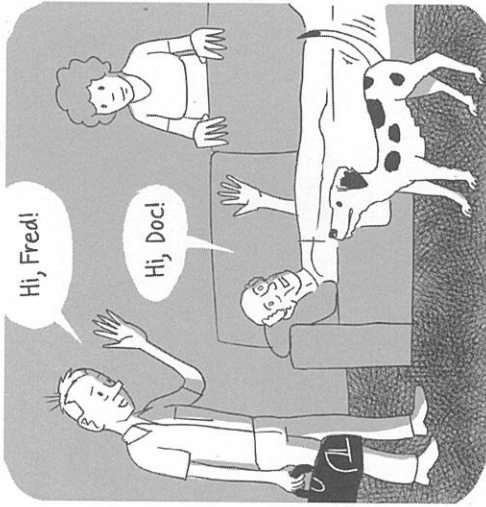
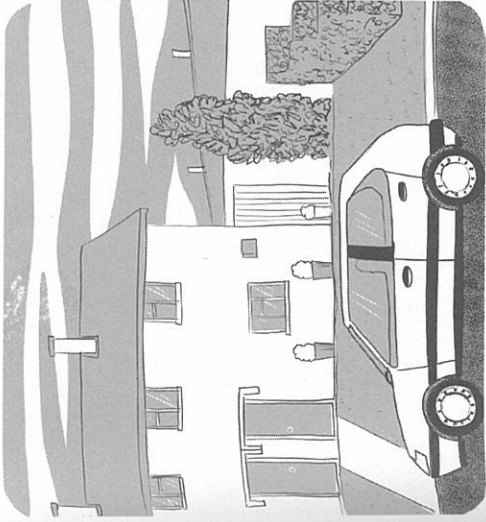
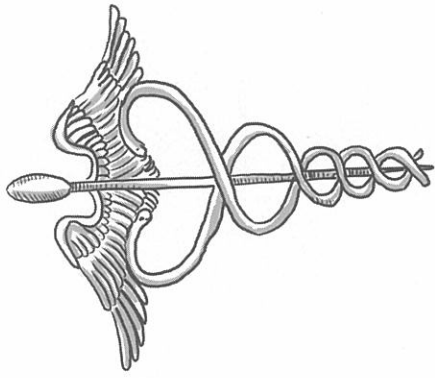
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Hi, Fred!

Hi, Doct!



I hear you had the ambulance here last night.

Oh, bloody hell, yes!



I had more pain. I phoned the out-of-hours service. I wanted a doctor but as soon as I mentioned pain in my chest they insisted on sending an ambulance.



I told 'em... I'm dying of bloody lung cancer, THATS why I've got chest pain! They wouldn't have it, though.



Then what happened?

The ambulance men said they couldn't give me pain relief unless they took me to hospital!



I told 'em I wasn't going to go into hospital and they said, 'Oh... so you're refusing treatment, are you?'



Waste of bloody time!

They made me sign something to stay at home.

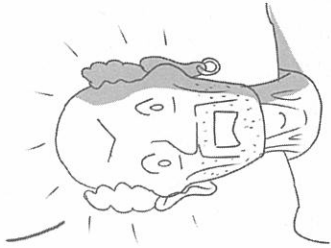
The note they sent through to the surgery suggested you were...



'angry and aggressive.'

WHAT?

THE BLOODY CHEEK!



He was a bit angry, Doctor, but he wasn't rude to them.



I think I'd have been a bit angry too!



Does that mean they'll put me on some sort of 'black list'?

It doesn't sound like they were very helpful.



I'll ring ambulance control and raise it with them.

The out-of-hours service too...

They should come and see people like you at home.



Basket cases like me that are about to snuff it, you mean!



What did you do about the pain?

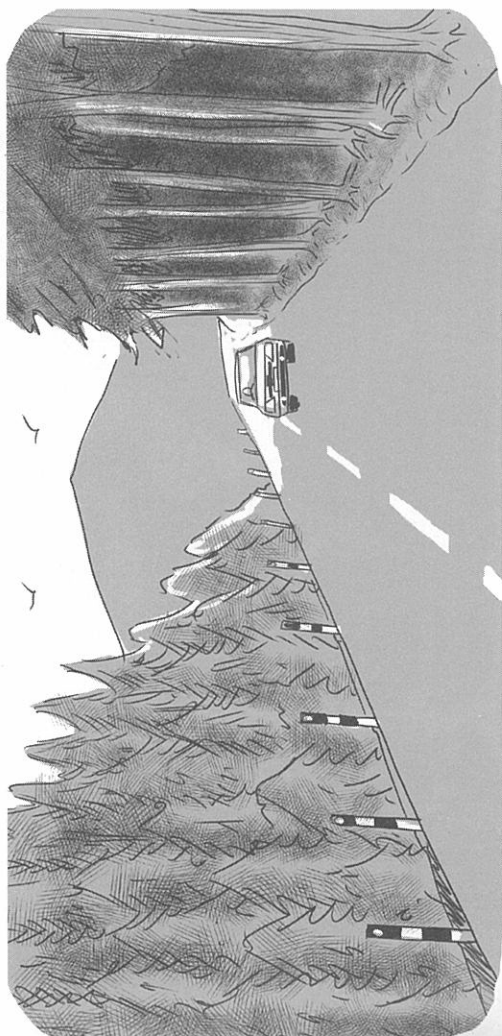
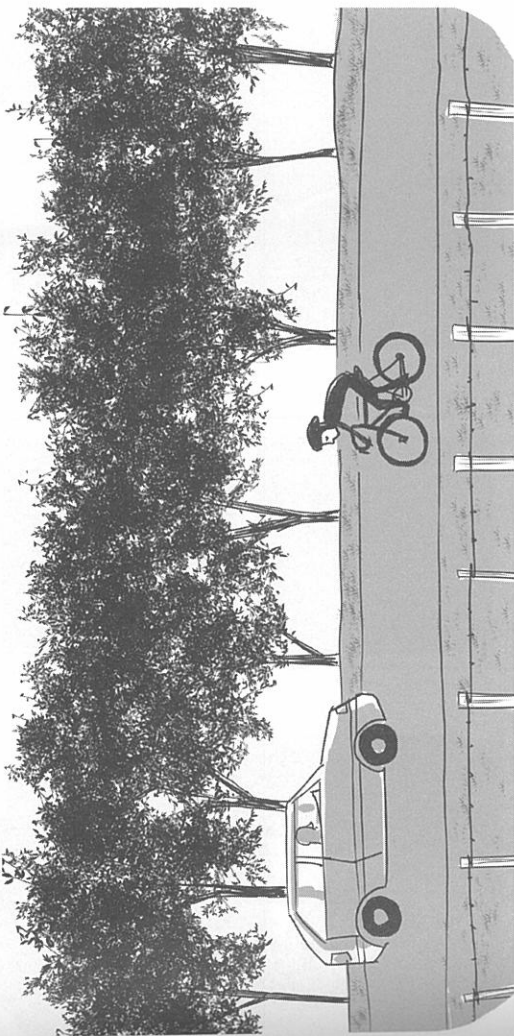
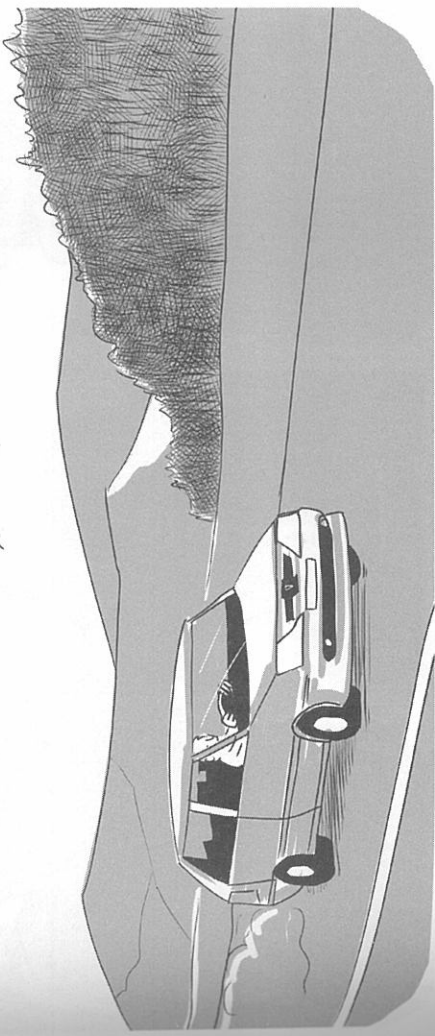
Cocodamol and whisky.



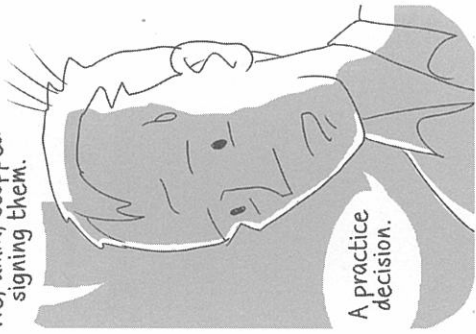
Is that OK, Doctor... the pills with whisky?



So long as you don't overdo it, yes.



We, umm, stopped signing them.



A practice decision.

We just decided this week.



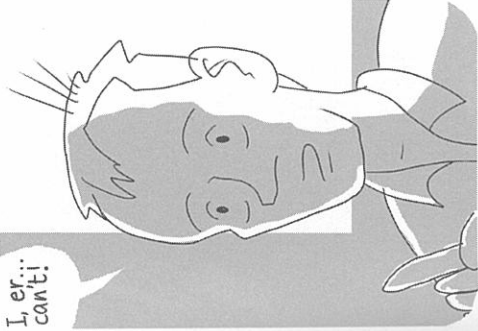
We haven't told the receptionists yet.

It's just a big responsibility to say someone is safe to have a shotgun.



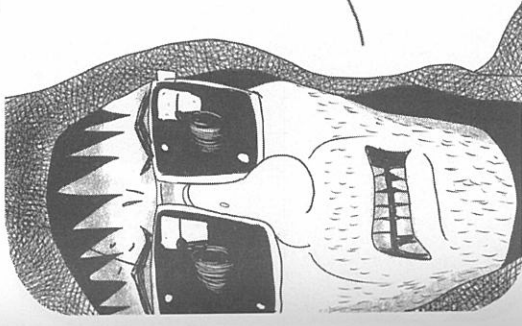
That's all.

I, er... can't!



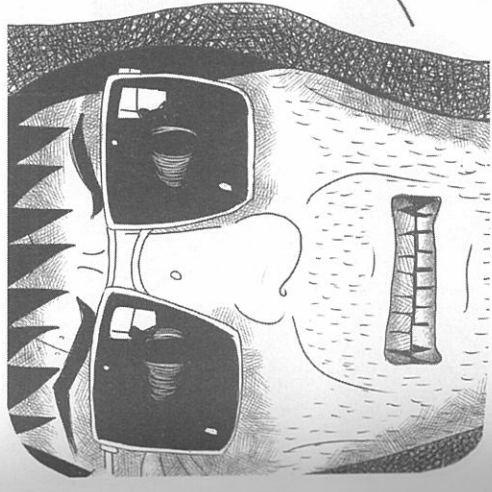
When I booked the appointment the receptionist assured me that you would do it...

and that you would charge me FORTY POUNDS for the privilege.

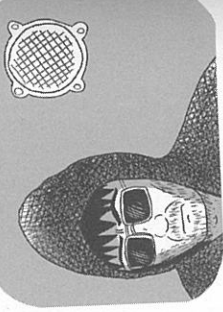
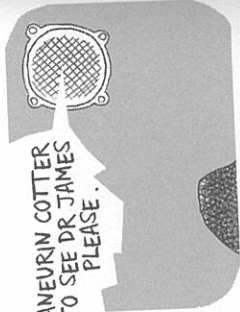


What prompted this 'DECISION'?

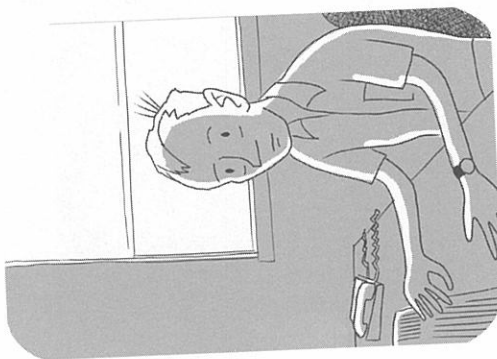
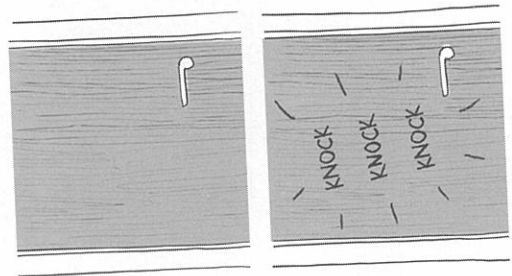
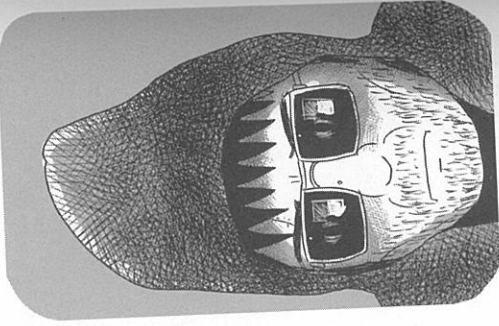
Have you lost trust in your patients... or your judgement on whether they are fit to own a gun?



ANEVRIN COTTER TO SEE DR JAMES PLEASE.

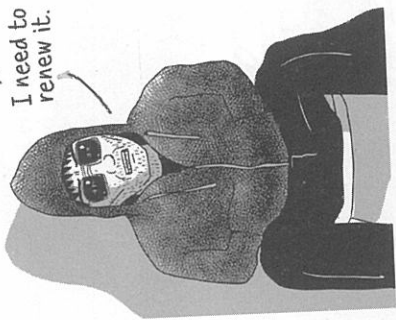


Oh, buggeration.



I want you to sign my shotgun licence.

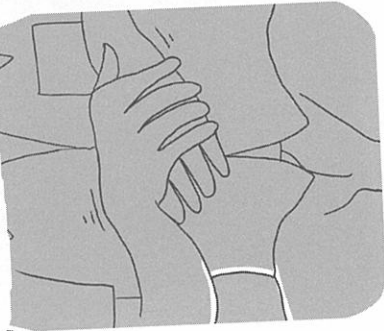
I need to renew it.



What can I do for you?



We just don't know some patients very well and it can be difficult to say no...



Isn't that precisely why doctors are paid such a huge salary?

To take responsibility?

Well, yes, but it's difficult with guns...



Robert! Lois!

I've just made an executive decision!

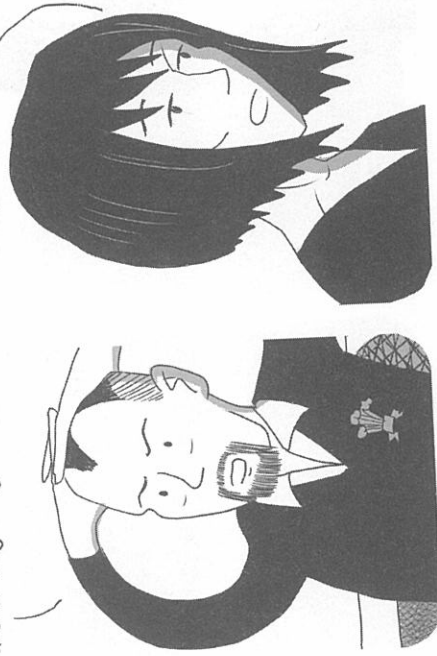


Aneurin Cotter wanted me to sign his shotgun licence and I told him we'd stopped doing them.



Great! Why did you do that?

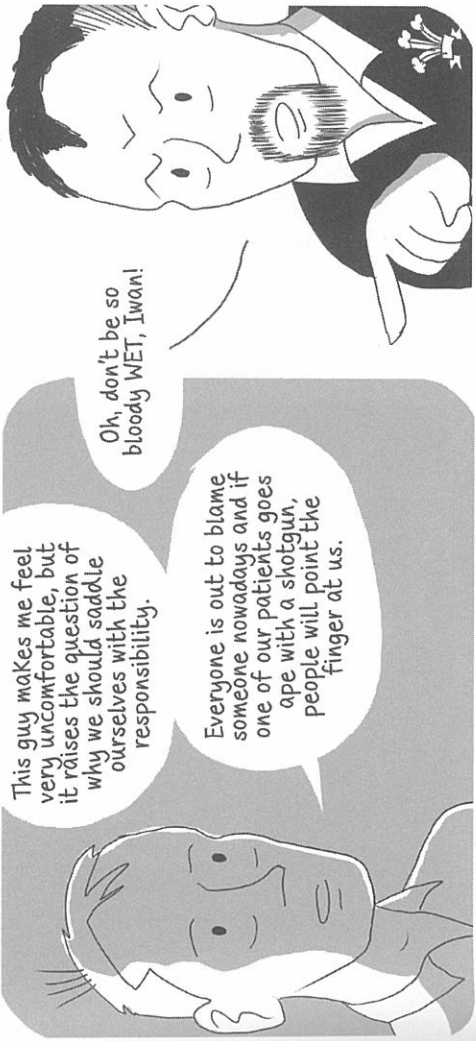
Well, I'd be happy to stop signing them.



This guy makes me feel very uncomfortable, but it raises the question of why we should saddle ourselves with the responsibility.

Everyone is out to blame someone nowadays and if one of our patients goes ape with a shotgun, people will point the finger at us.

Oh, don't be so bloody WET, Iwan!



Just because you can't say 'no' to one weirdo creep, you want to change practice policy?

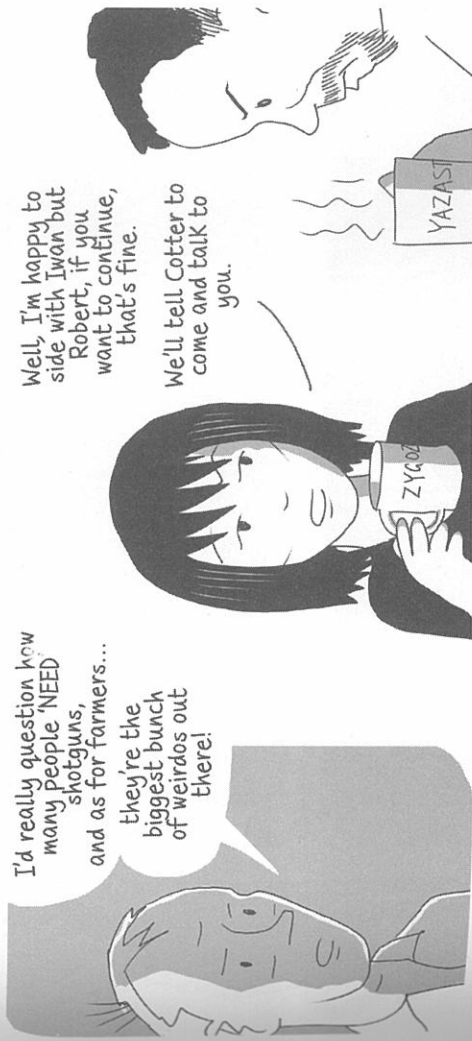


What about people who NEED shotguns... farmers, for example? We provide a service for them.



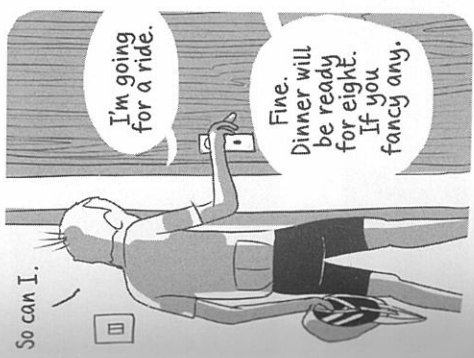
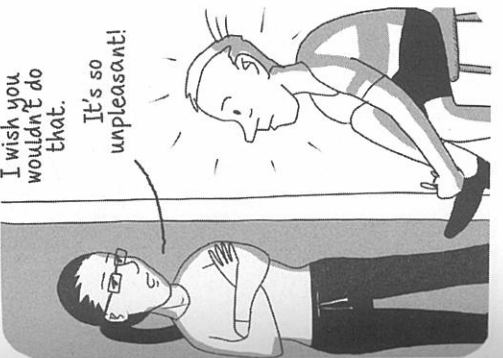
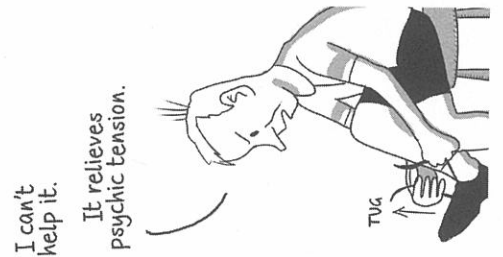
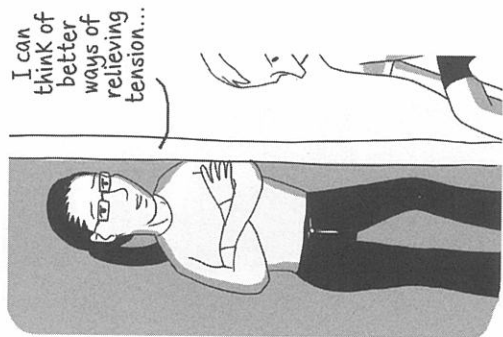
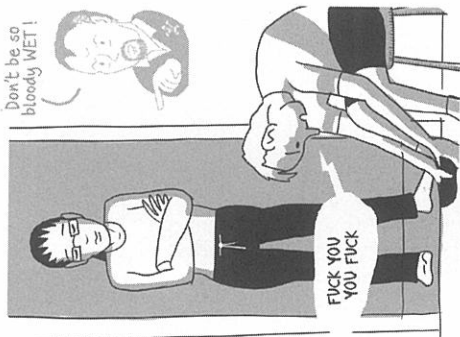
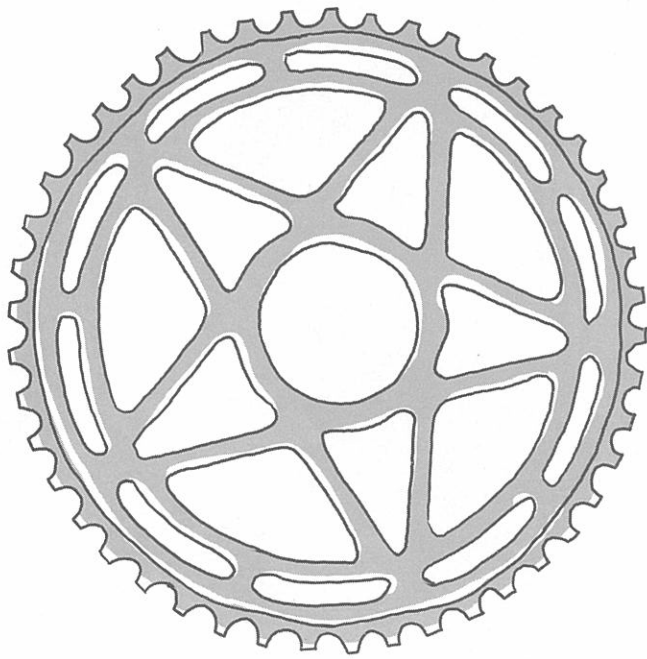
I'd really question how many people 'NEED' shotguns, and as for farmers...

they're the biggest bunch of weirdos out there!

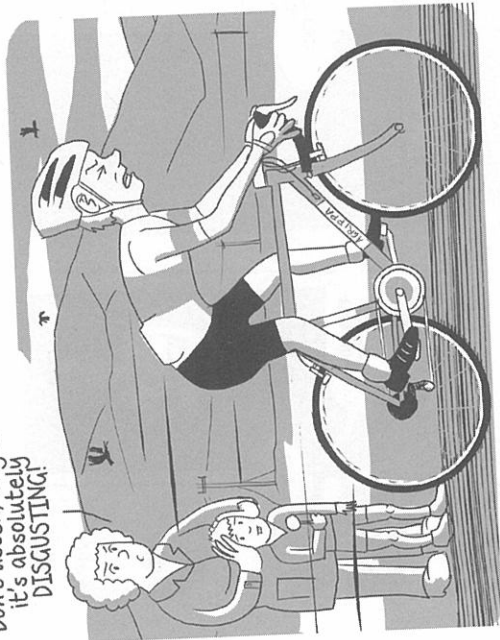


Well, I'm happy to side with Iwan but Robert, if you want to continue, that's fine.

We'll tell Cotter to come and talk to you.



Don't listen, Roy...
it's absolutely
DISGUSTING!



FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK
FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK

So what's with the
chanted obscenities?
I could hear you coming
up the hill!



What's up,
Doc?

paint

over a skipper

BOLLOCKS

People will think
you're nuts!!



I'm sorry.

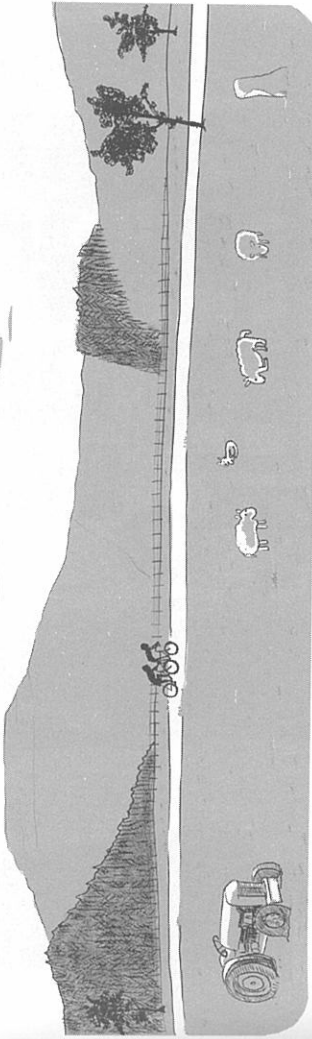
It's either that
or Killing Robert.



So how is
your senior
partner?

The same.
Bellicose.
obsessed with
money...

and uses any
excuse to avoid
actually seeing
patients.
Lois...



Does he still talk
to the dead?

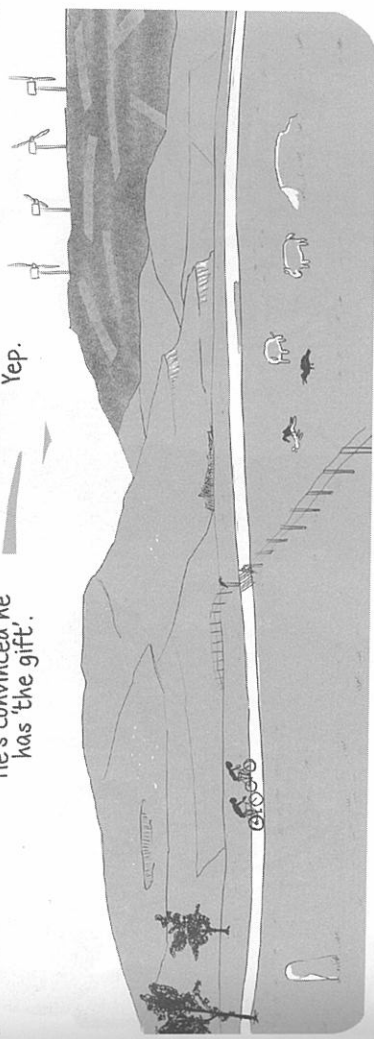
Oh, yes.

He's convinced he
has the gift.

That's insane.

Yep.

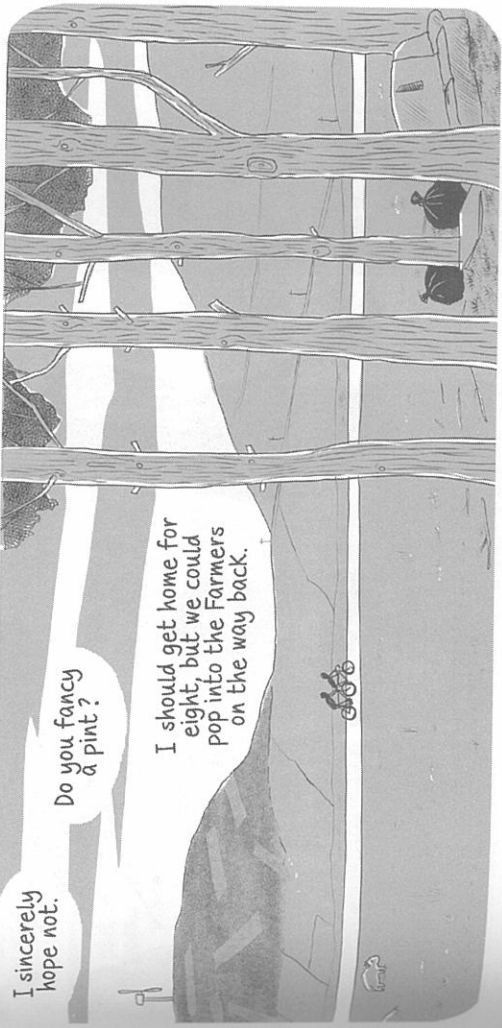
Does he ever use
his gift with
the patients?



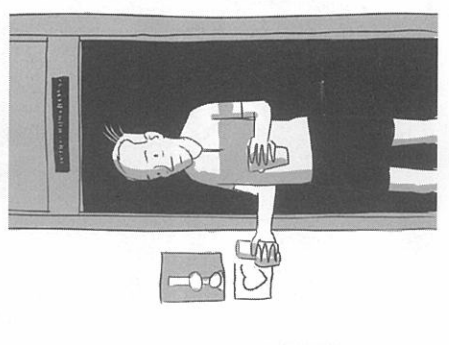
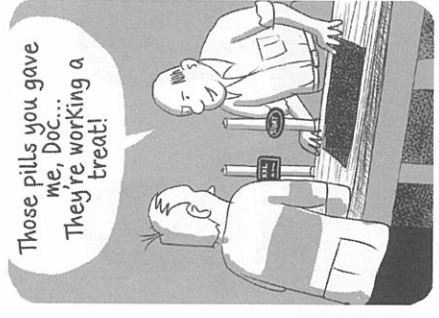
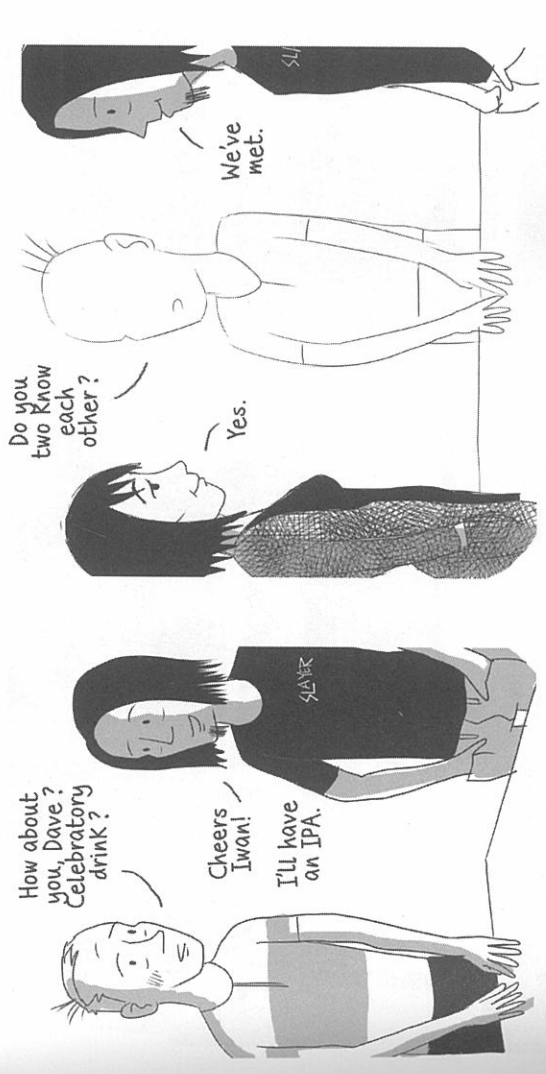
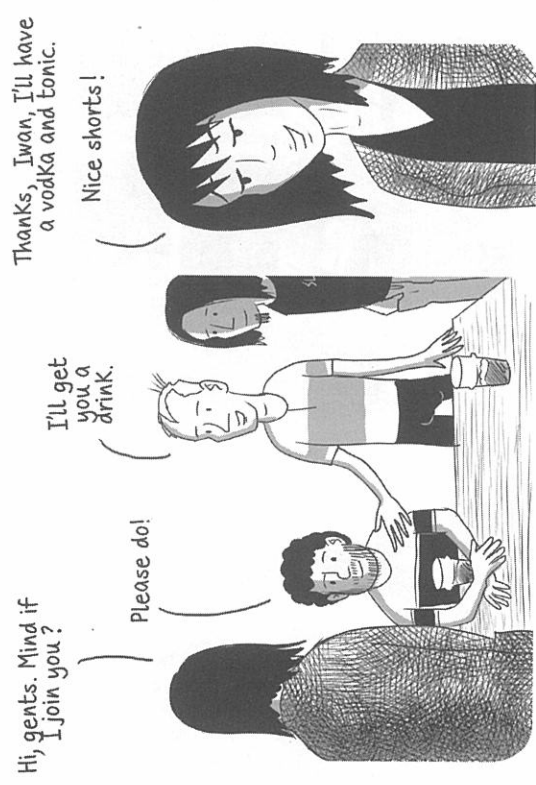
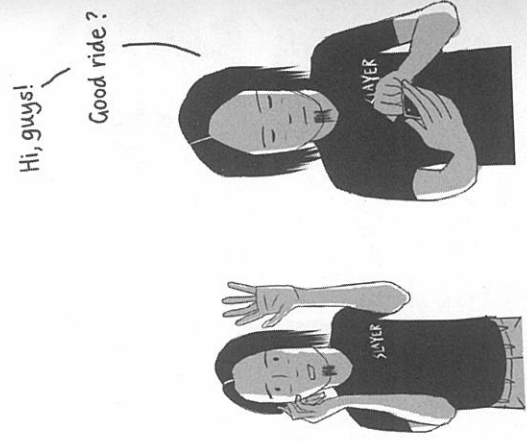
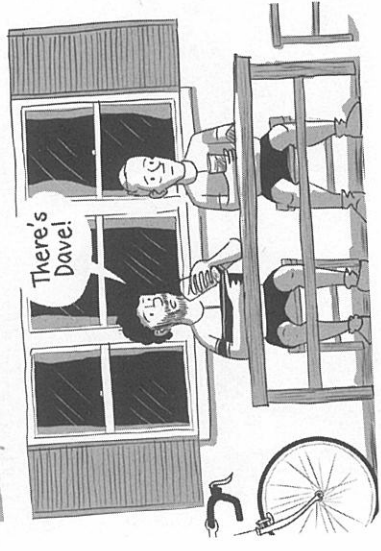
I sincerely
hope not.

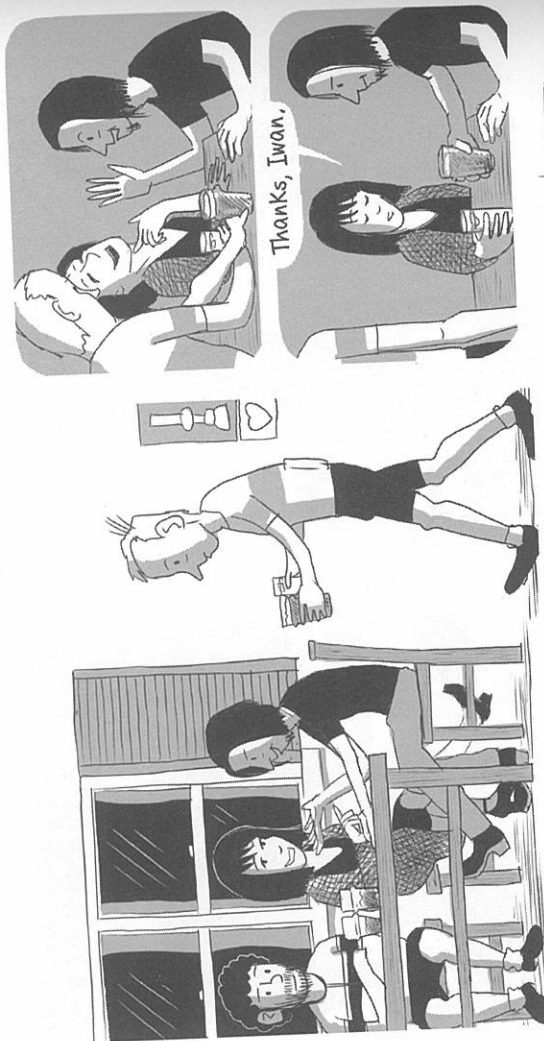
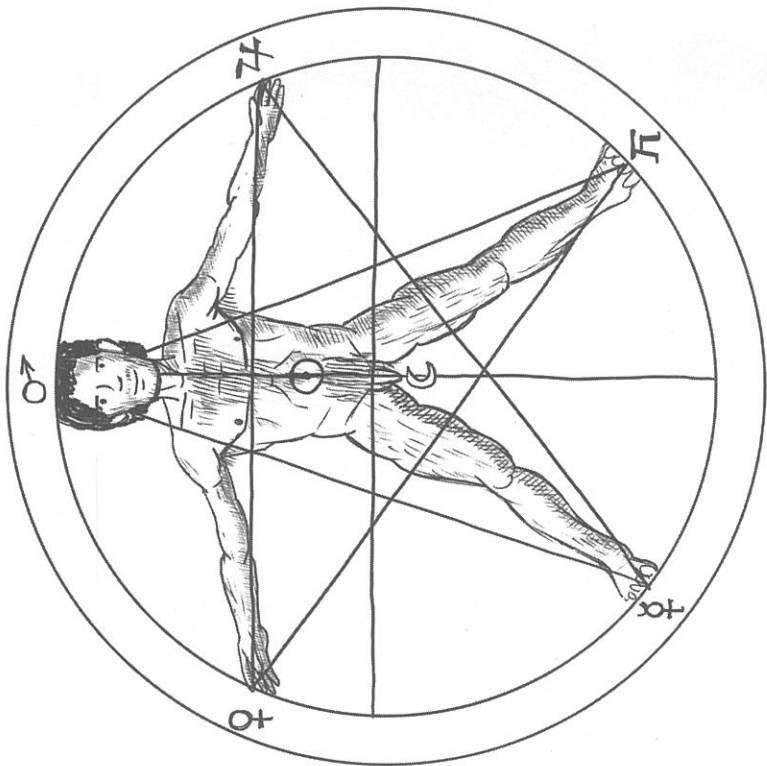
Do you fancy
a pint?

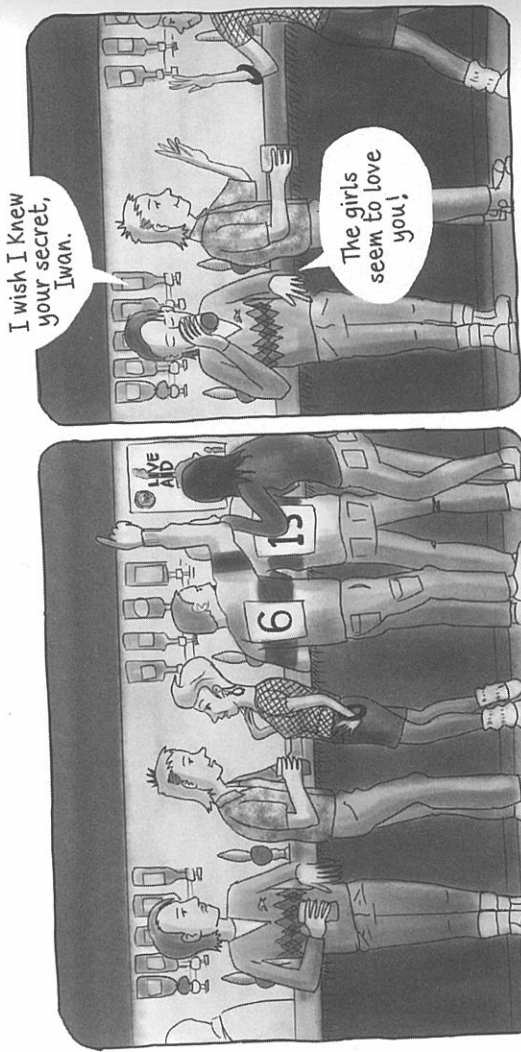
I should get home for
eight, but we could
pop into the Farmers
on the way back.



FARMERS ARMS

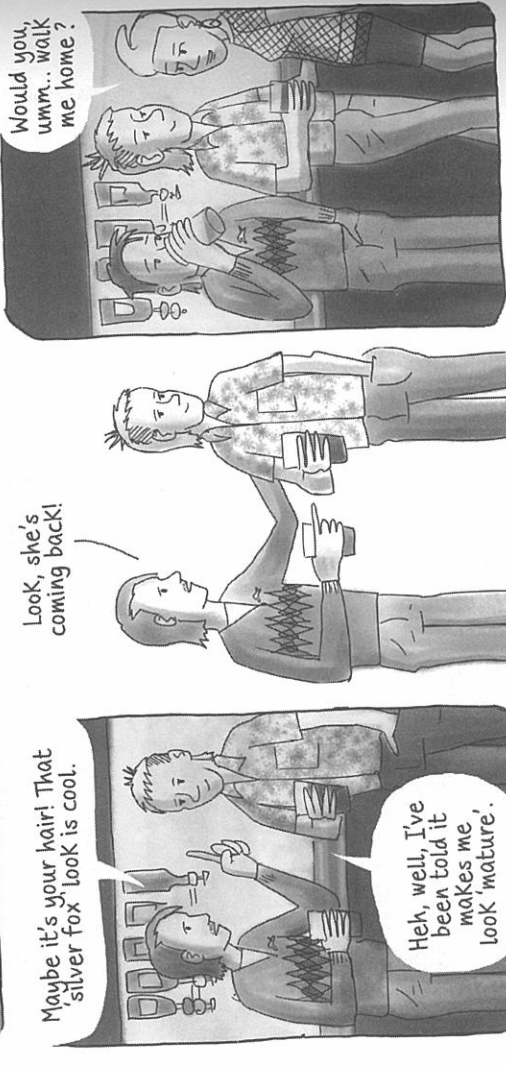






I wish I knew your secret, Iwan.

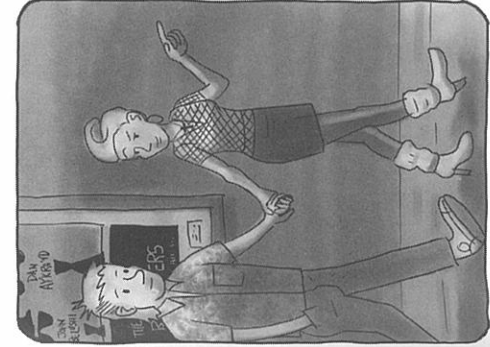
The girls seem to love you!



Maybe it's your hair! That silver fox look is cool.

Heh, well, I've been told it makes me look 'mature'.

Would you, umm... walk me home?



My flatmates will be home soon, let's go and listen to records in my room.



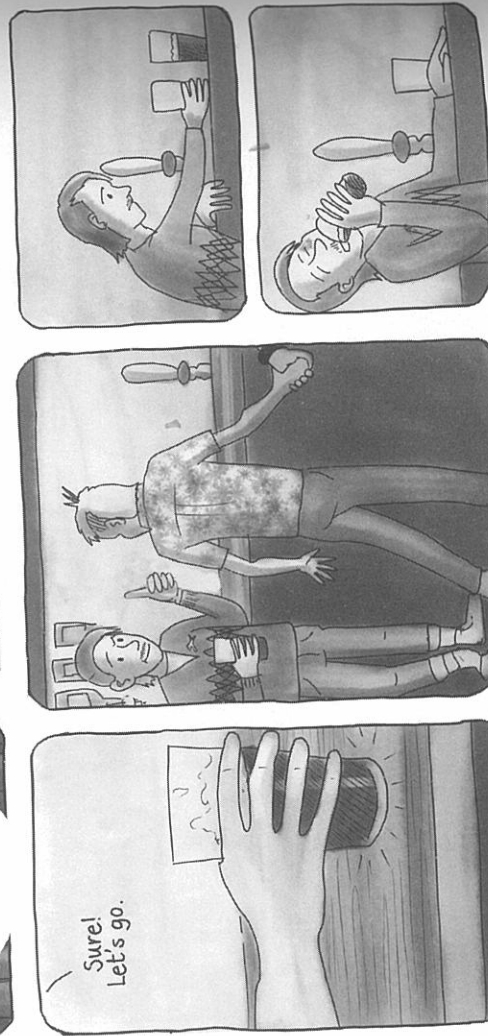
Do you bleach your hair?

No. It turned silver in my teens.

It looks amazing!



OK, let's see what you've got here...



Sure! Let's go.

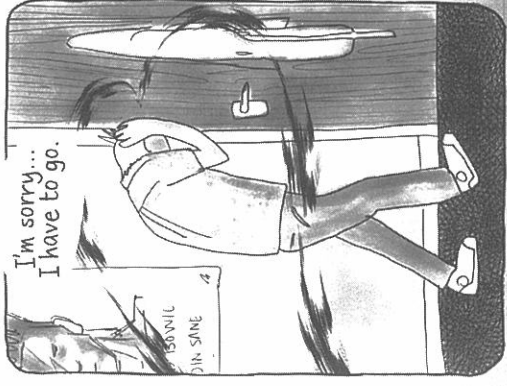


THE HUMAN LEAGUE DARE

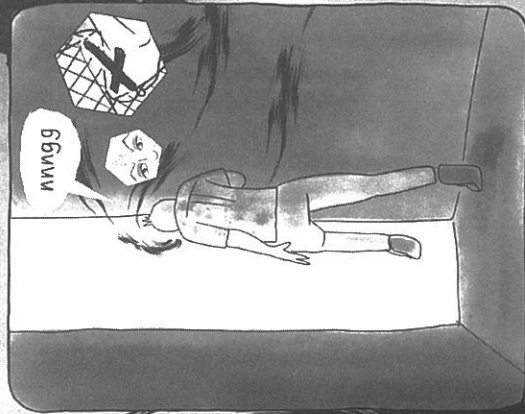
THE HUMAN LEAGUE DARE



I WAN?!!



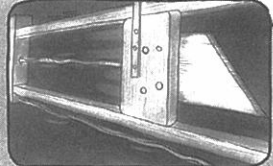
I'm sorry... I have to go.



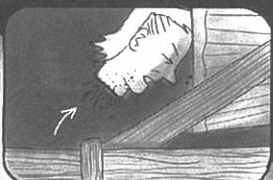
Wwggg



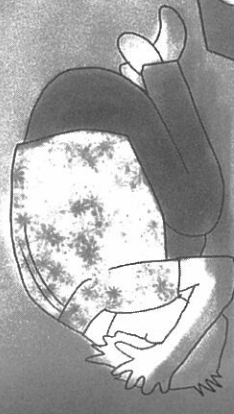
CUT MY HEAD OFF



TO STOP IT



OH GOD. PLEASE STOP IT. BLESS US WITH YOUR GOODNESS AND LIGHT



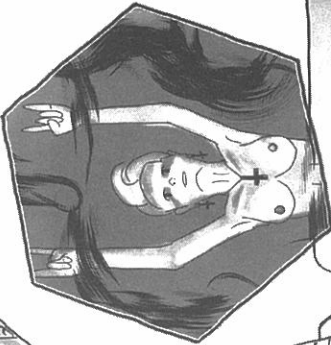
I love Sabbath! I saw them at Cathedral Gardens. I got a hug from Ronnie James Dio!

DADDY!!

You're into Sabbath?
I wouldn't have put you down as a metal fan!



Come over here.



AND GOD KILLED SAMMY



I don't feel very well.

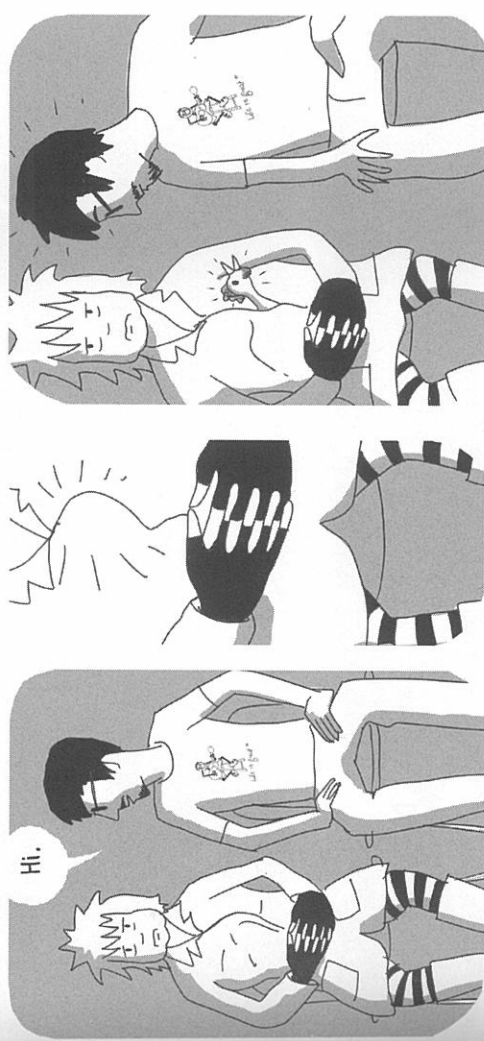
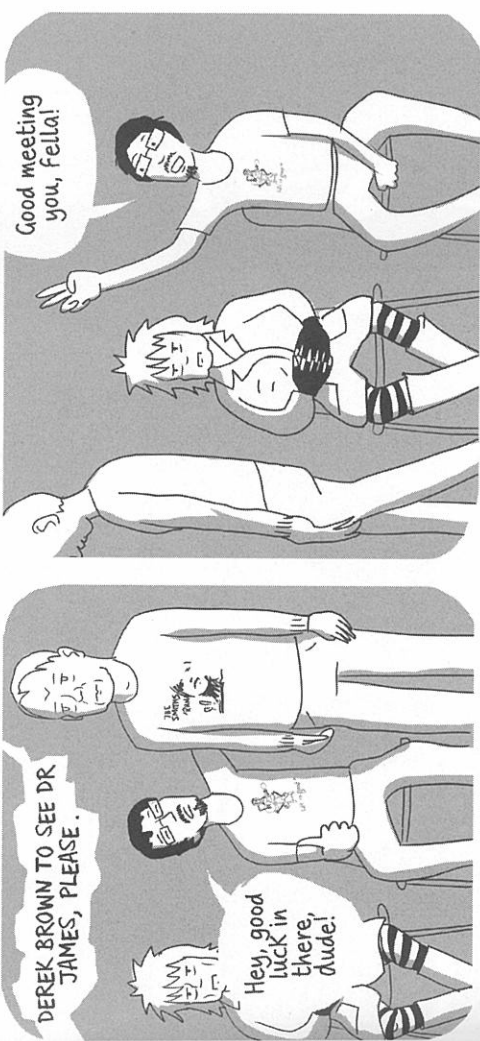
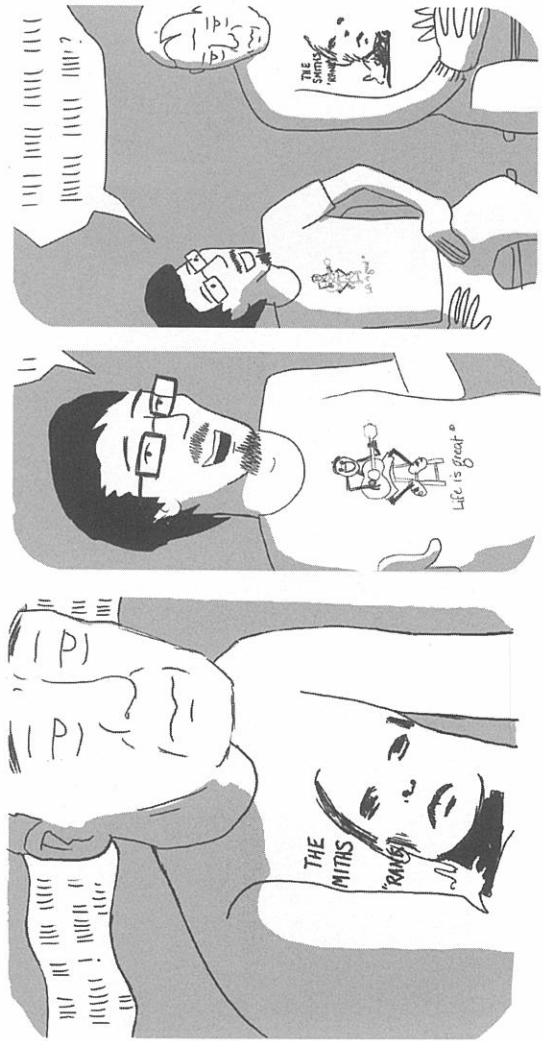
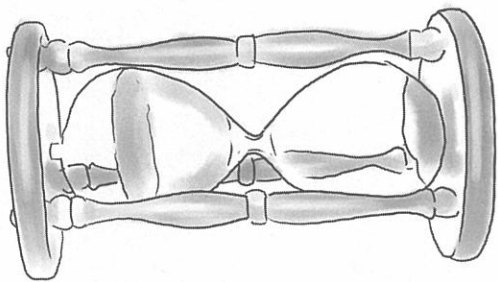


I'm sorry.

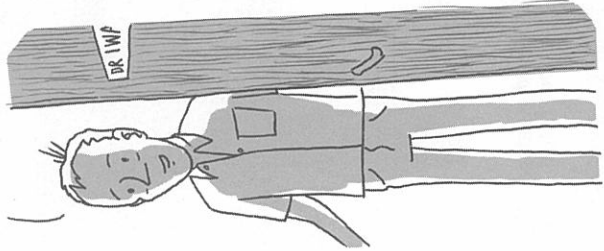


Umm...

I LISTENED TO BLASPHEMOUS MUSIC



Come in,
Mr Brown.



So how's it
going?



CRAP.



The
end...

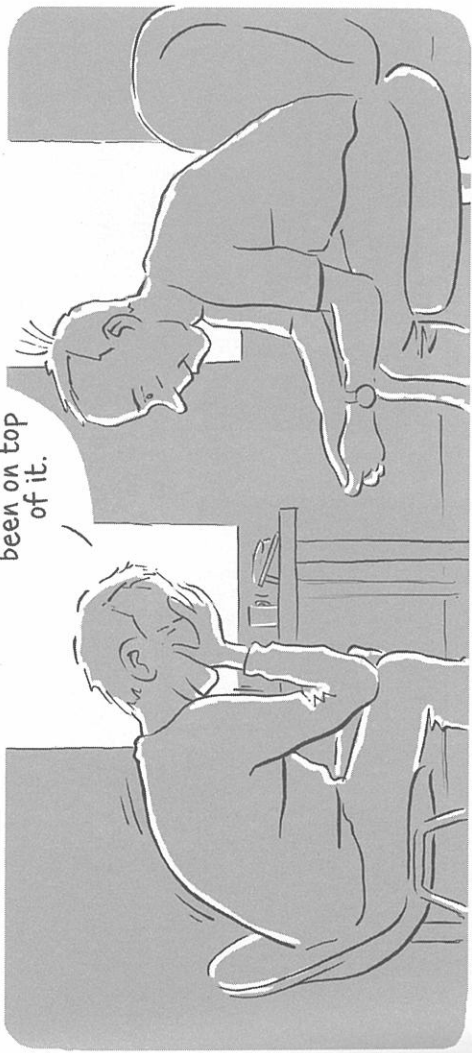


it shouldn't
have been like
that.

Sometimes
things get
beyond our
control.

Despite
everything.

I should've
been on top
of it.



I don't want to
remember her like
that... it was like some
terrible nightmare. I
can't get her face out
of my mind.

She was only
semi-conscious
at the time...

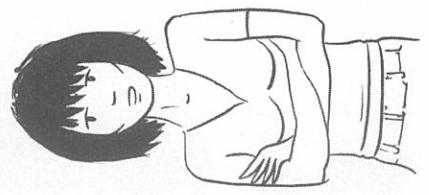
she's not
suffering now.



It feels like this
pain is never
going to get
better.

It will, but
it'll take
time.

It's early
days.

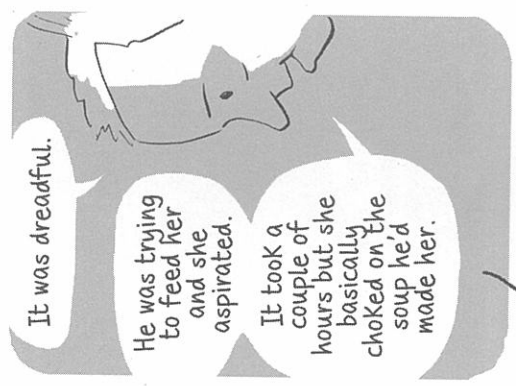


The nurses complained that he wouldn't let them do their job.



It was chaos there... she was in blue agony, the district nurses were trying to take charge and he was telling them to get off her.

He always wanted to control everything.



It was dreadful.

He was trying to feed her and she aspirated.

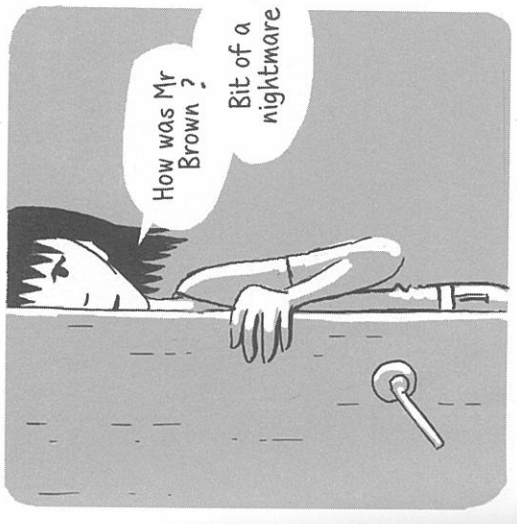
It took a couple of hours but she basically choked on the soup he'd made her.



How long is it now since his wife died?

Coming up to a year.

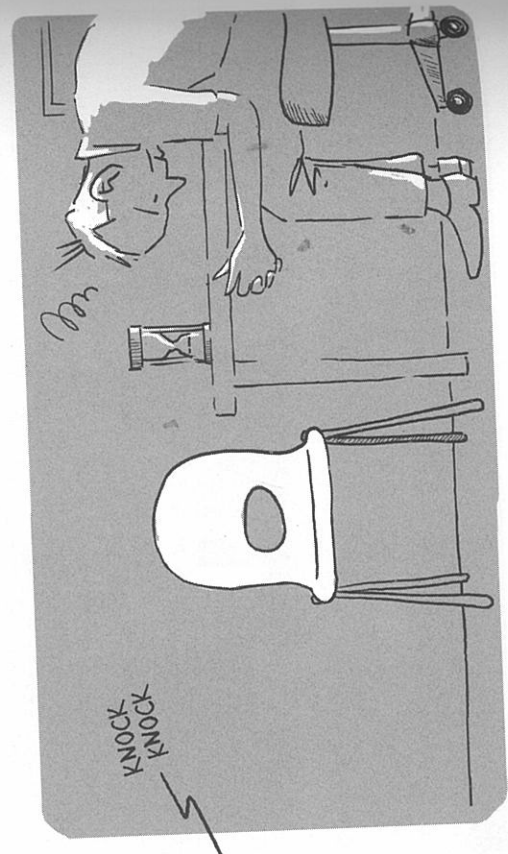
It was all pretty horrible, by the sound of it.



How was Mr Brown?

Bit of a nightmare?

pfff... yeah! I dread seeing him, the poor bastard.



KNOCK KNOCK



That's normal at this stage.

You're trying to process it all.



I don't know who to BLAME for this...

I BLAME EVERYONE!

They had a DEBRIEF about it!

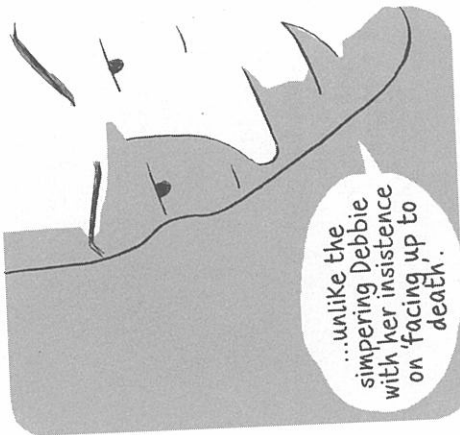


They said they'd been TRAUMATISED by his behaviour!

For God's sake!

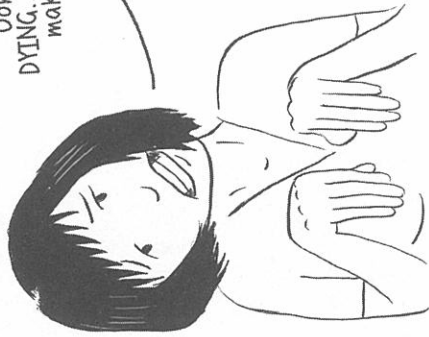
His wife was dying of motor neurone disease!

Mind you... at least he let them through the door...



...unlike the simpering Debbie with her insistence on facing up to death.

Ooohh... you're DYING... how does that make you FEEL?



Most of our terminally ill patients have hated her...

hahaha

(cough)

I'm quite worried about him, though. He's so brittle.



He tells me that he's looked up ways of committing suicide, although I don't think he's actually planning it.



He told me that the only thing that relieves the pain is masturbation...

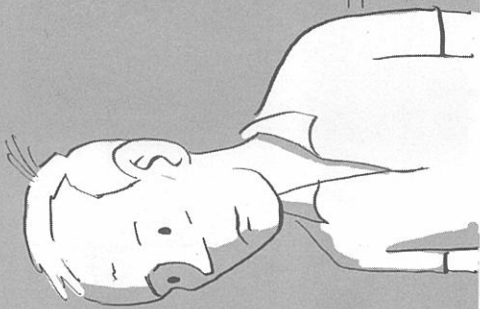
but afterwards his self-loathing gets worse, especially when he sees his wife's photograph on the sideboard.



He's worried he's becoming addicted to porn!

God.

Poor bugger!





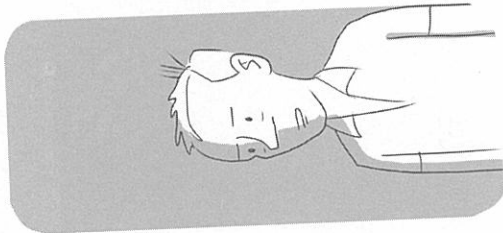
Did you...



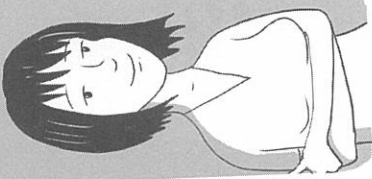
Have a good time with Dave the other night, after we left?



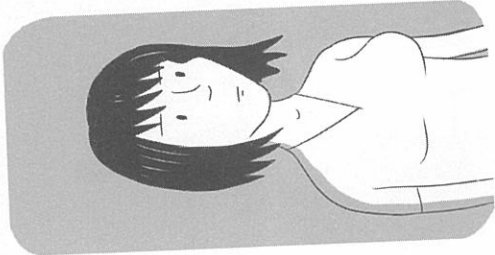
God yes! He's hilarious!



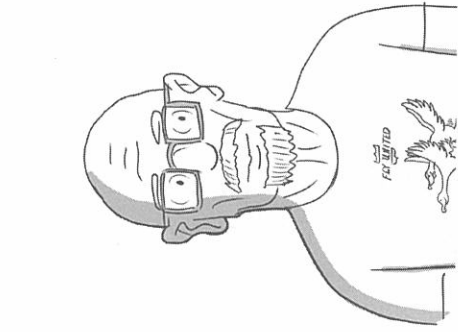
He's such a lot of fun.



Do you think you'll be... seeing him again?



I'd better get back to my surgery.

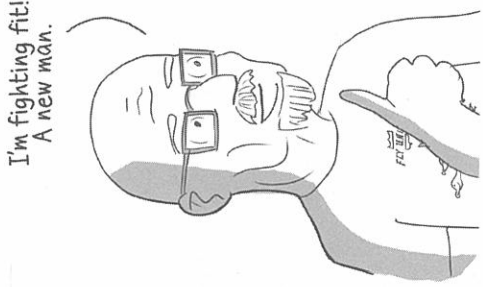


Hiya, Doc. How are you doing?

You're looking a bit stressed these days!



Oh, I'm OK. How are YOU is the question?

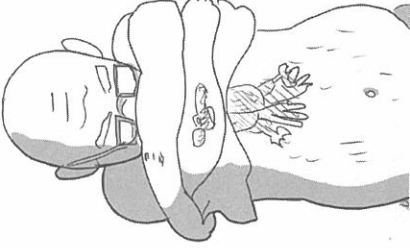
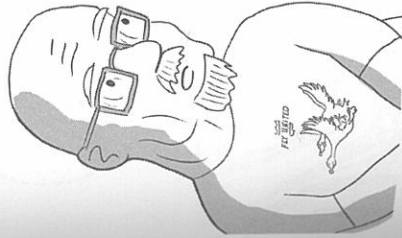


I'm fighting fit! A new man.

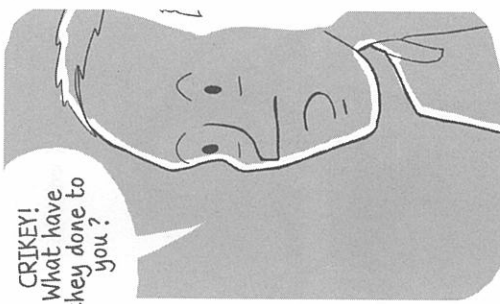


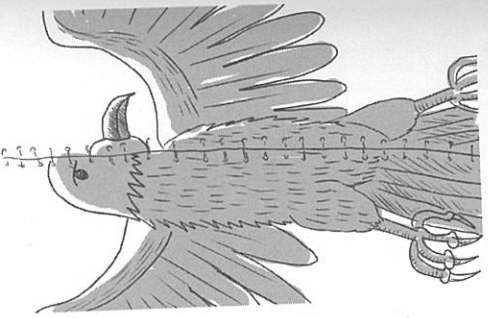
How's the scar healing?

Oh, champion! Do you want a look?

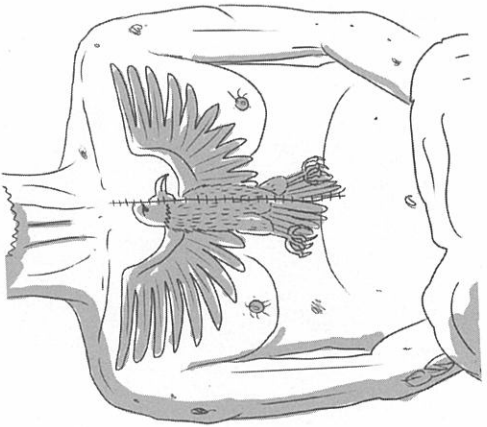


CRIKEY! What have they done to you?



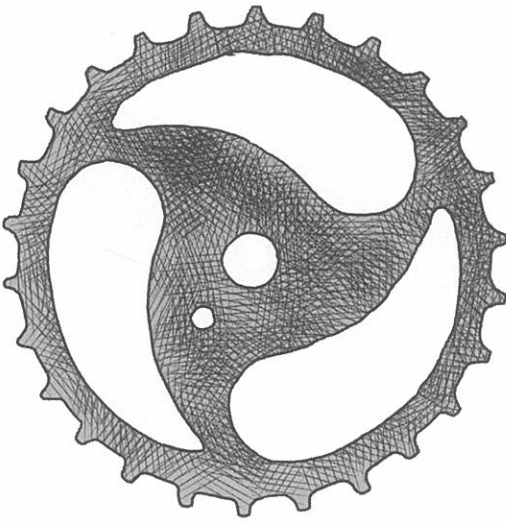


Look at your tattoo!

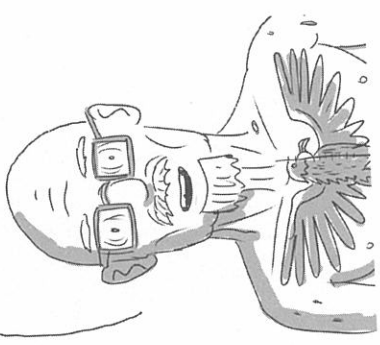


That's bonkers!
The scar is the only bit of the operation that you can see!

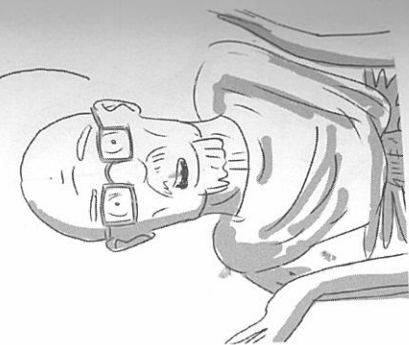
You could sue them for that!



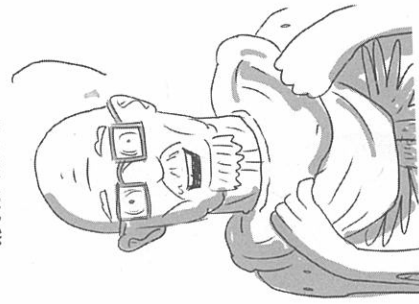
Heh heh. Looks like they got the medical student to sew me up!



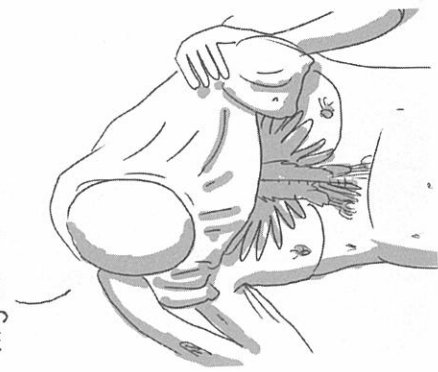
It didn't cost me anything and I've got a new lease of life!

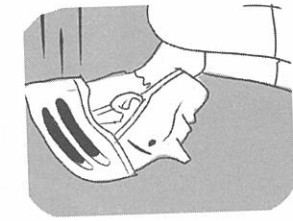
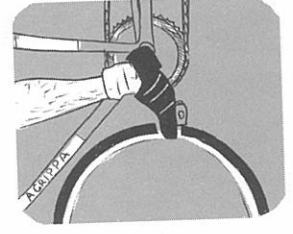
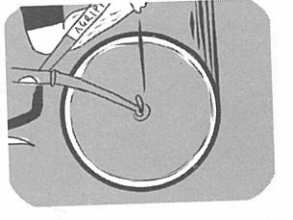
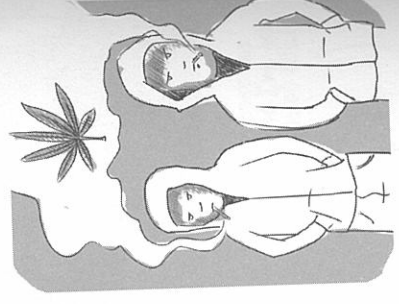
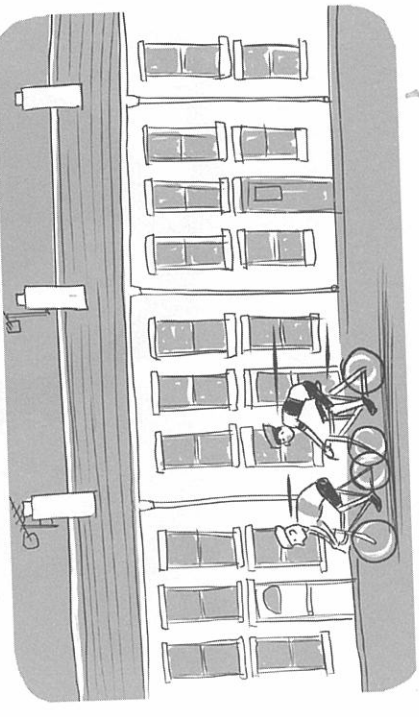
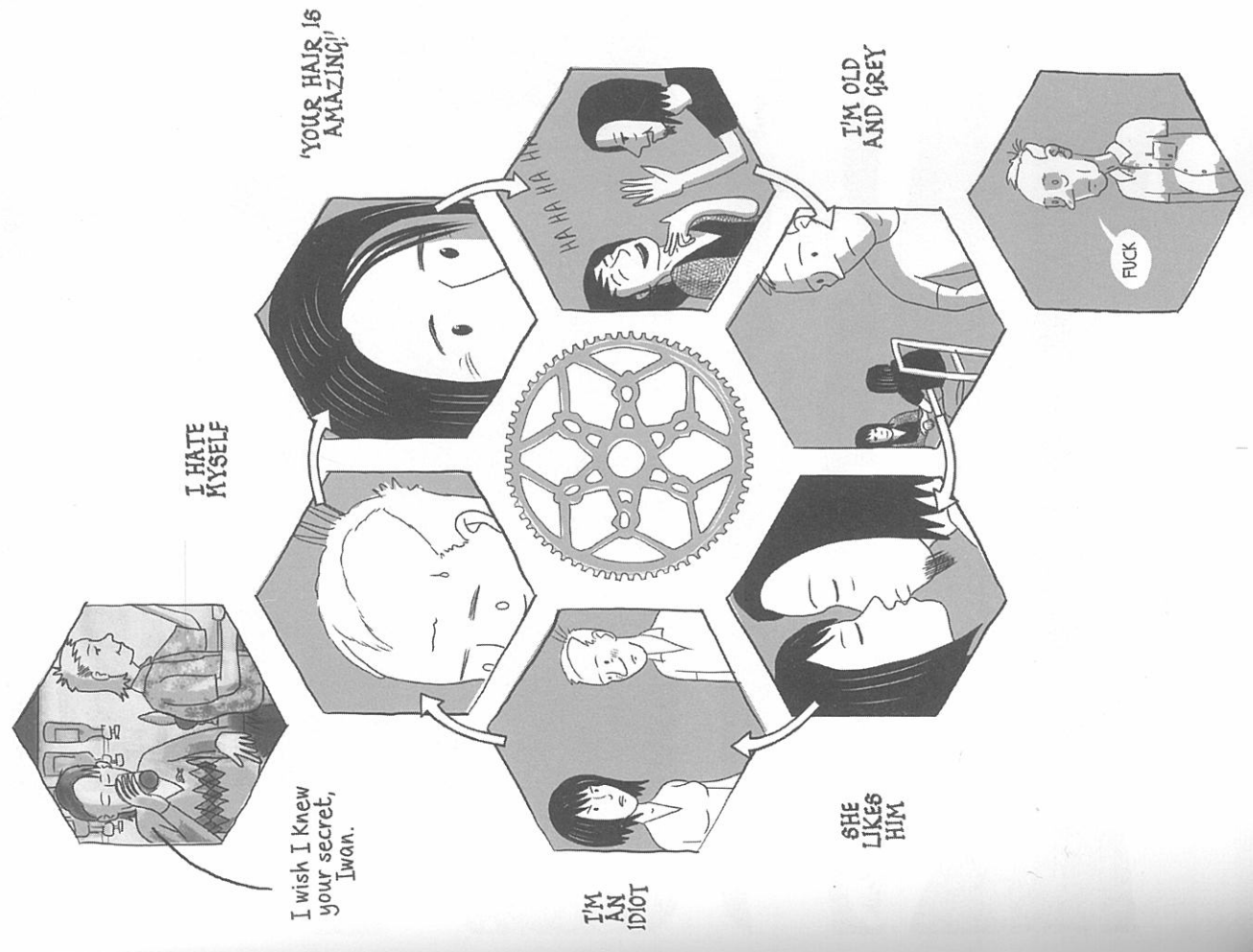
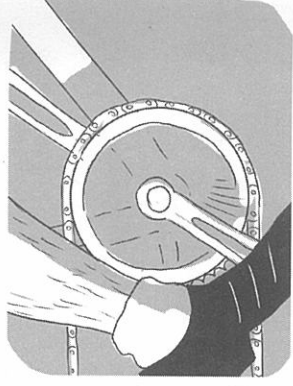


I'm seventy-five, I don't give a damn about how I look.



Why would I want to do that?





You're very quiet, mate.

Everything OK?



Oh...

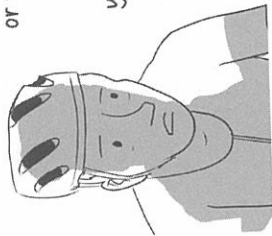
you know when...

when you think you finally know what you want...

or what you want to do...

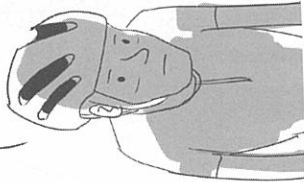
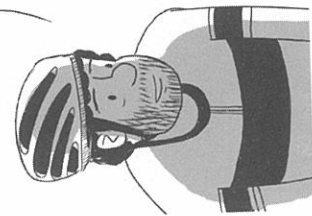
but your life means you can't have it, or do anything about it...

without looking ridiculous?



Bit of a midlife crisis creeping in?

Well...



with me it's been more like one long whole-life crisis.



Want to grab a coffee?

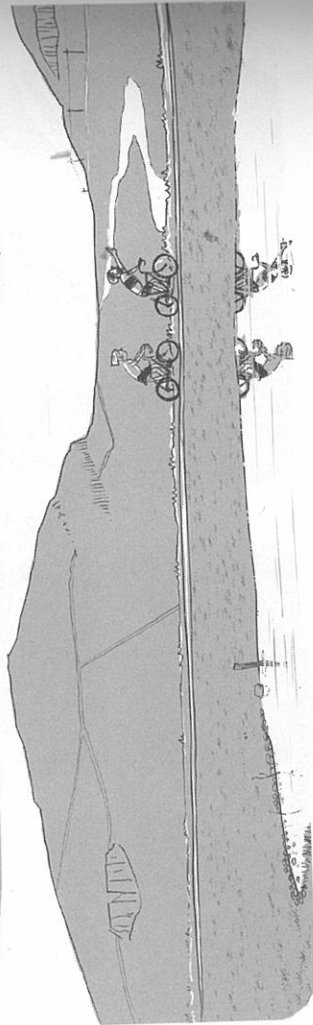
Fancy a pint?

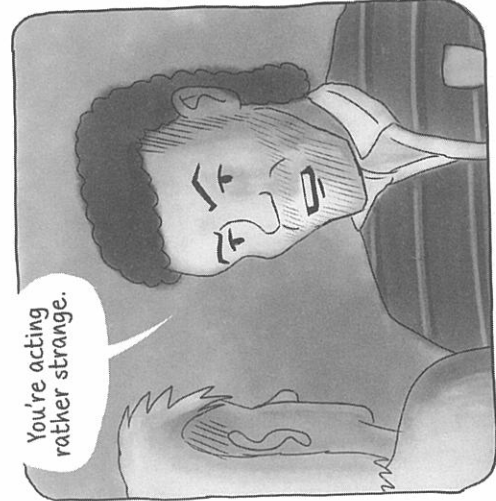
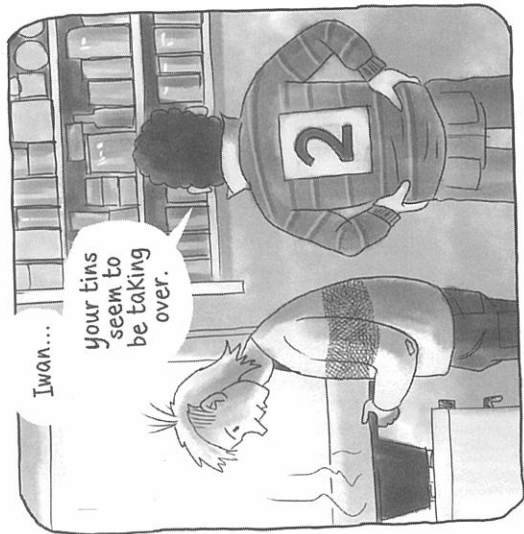
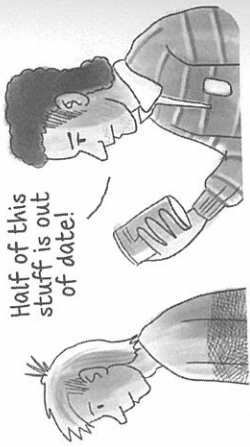
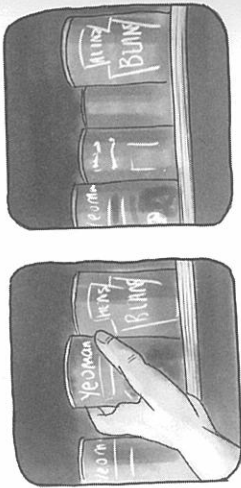
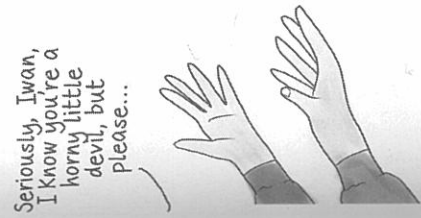
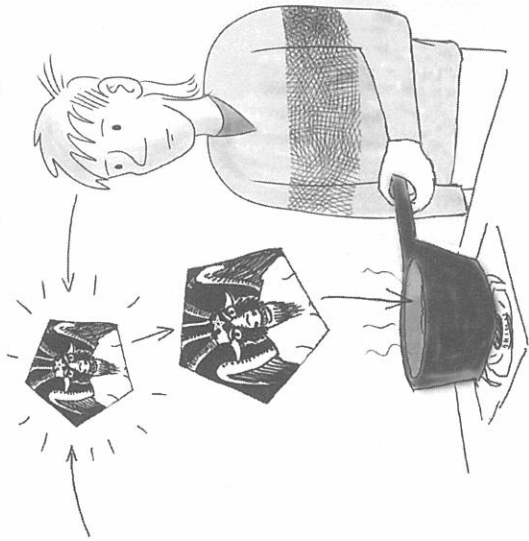
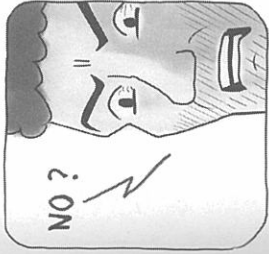
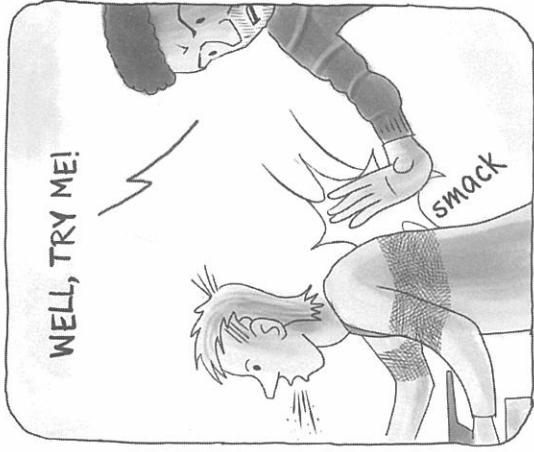
No, it's OK, thanks.

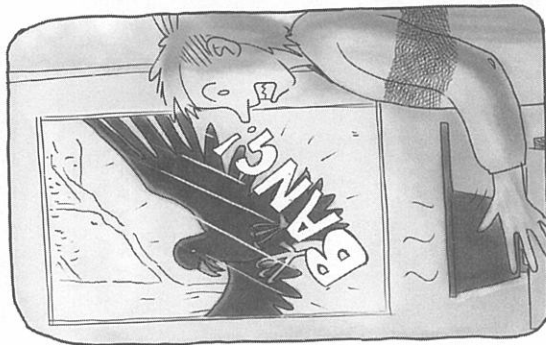
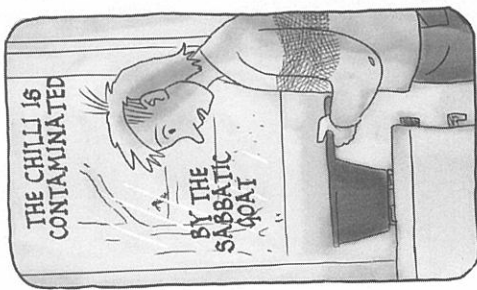
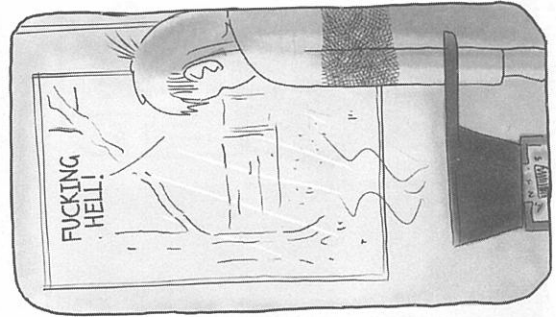
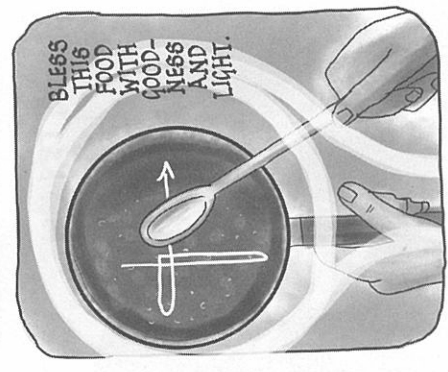
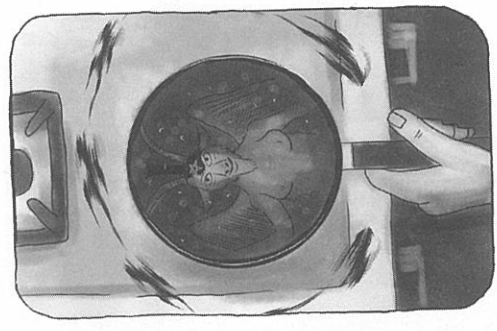
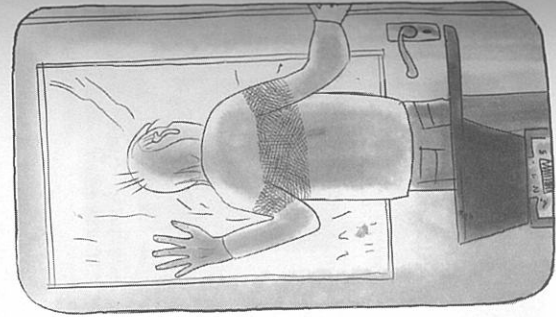
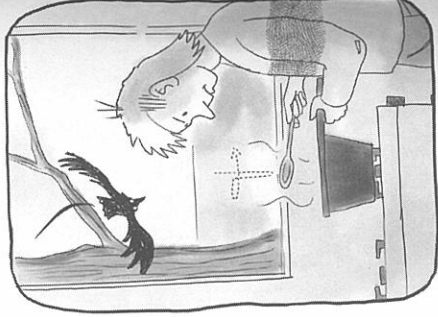
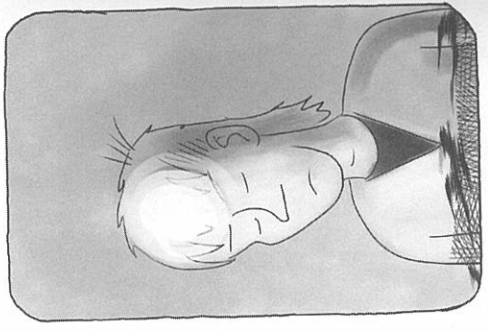
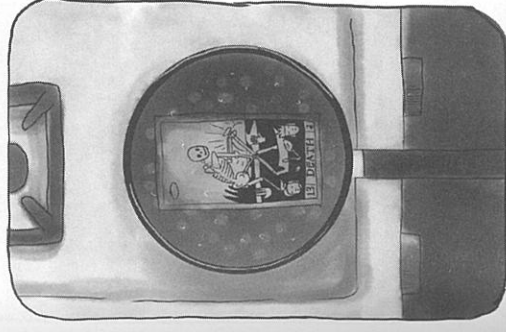
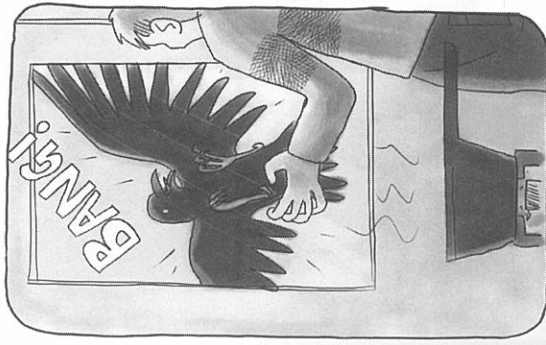
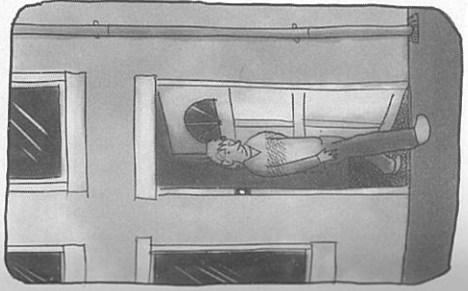
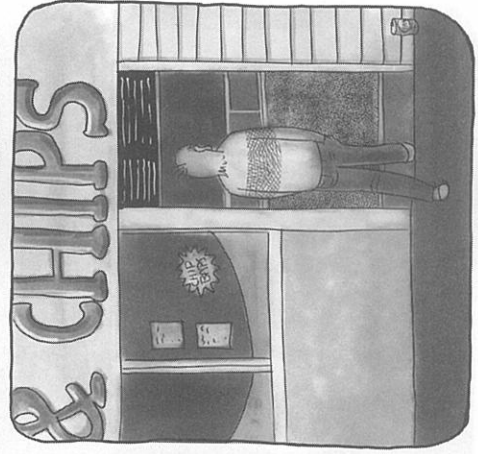
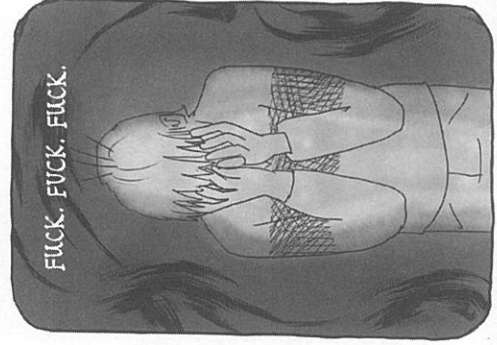
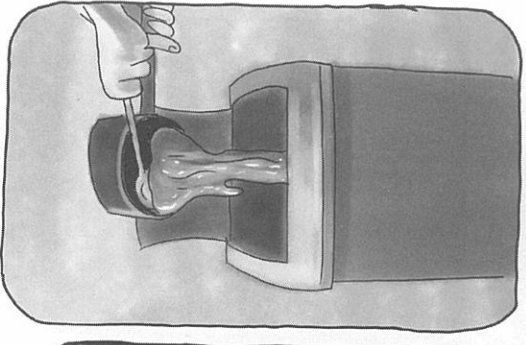
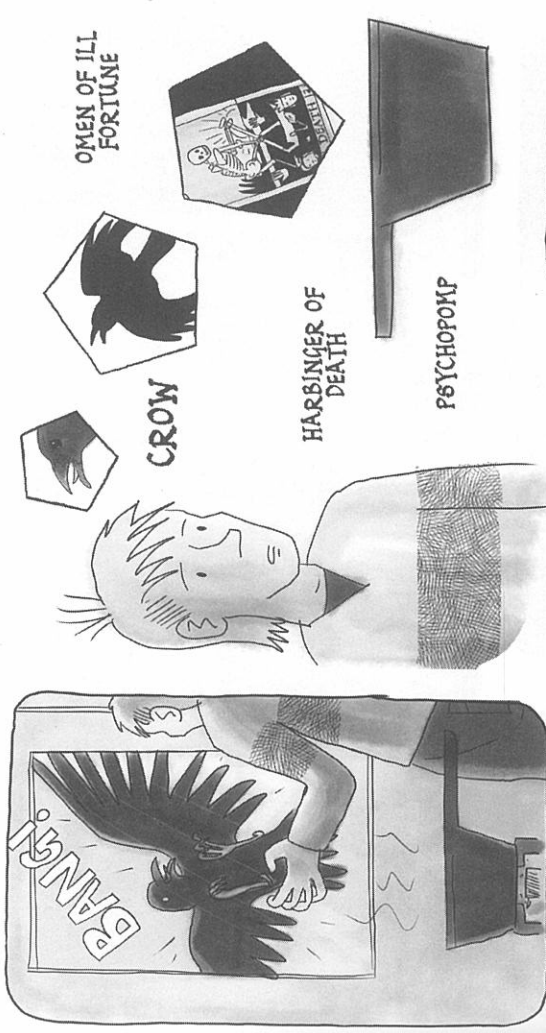
Hey! Look at that!

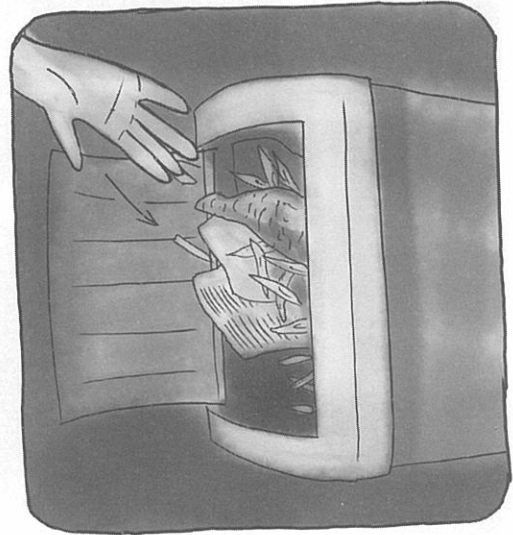
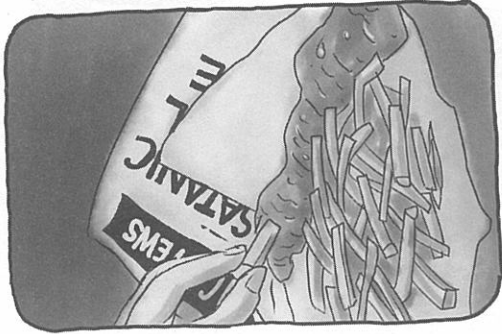
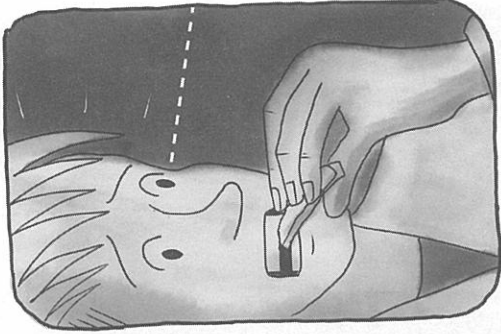
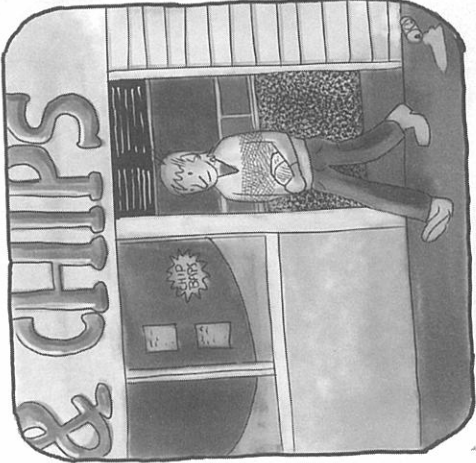
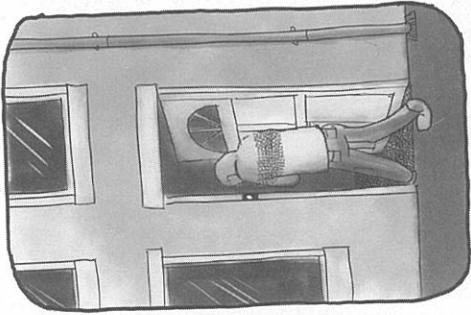
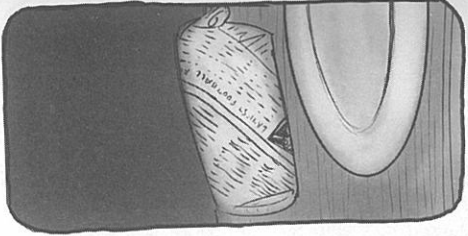
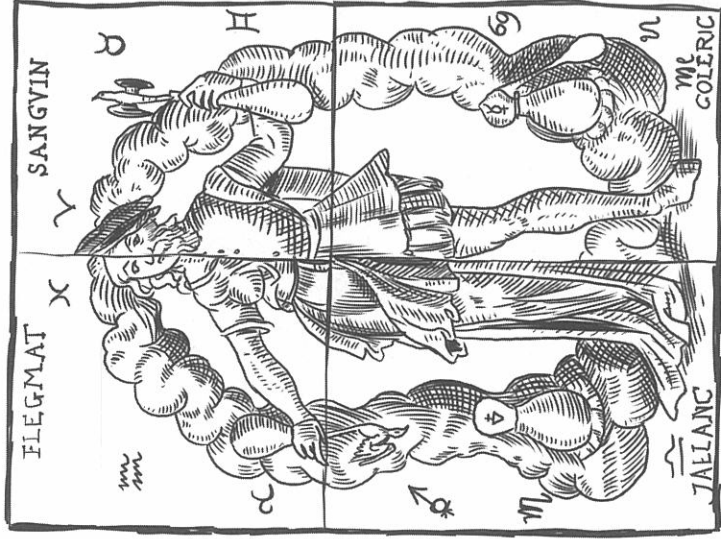
Yeah.

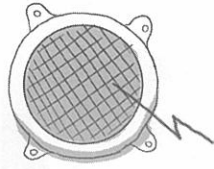
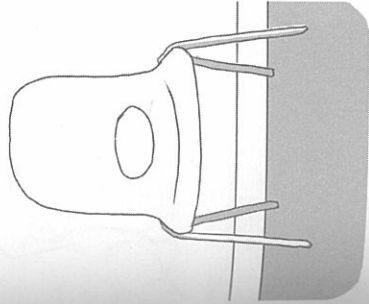
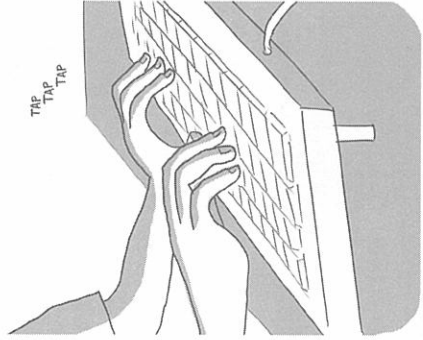
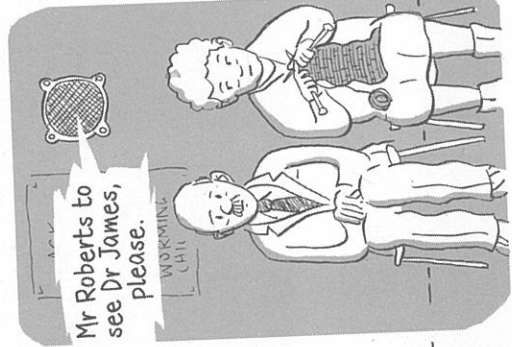
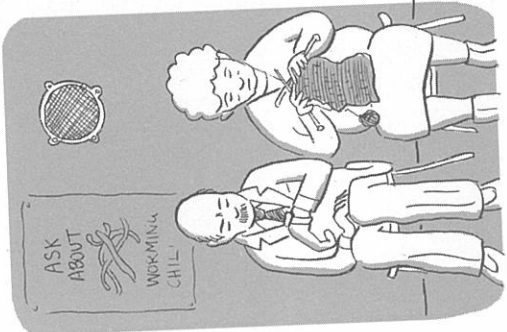
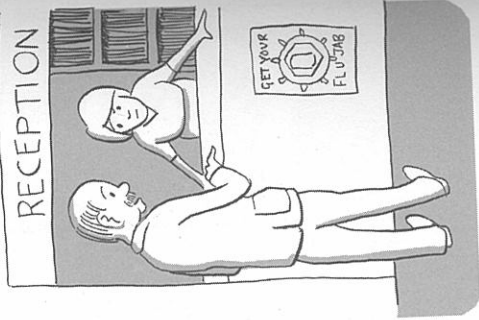
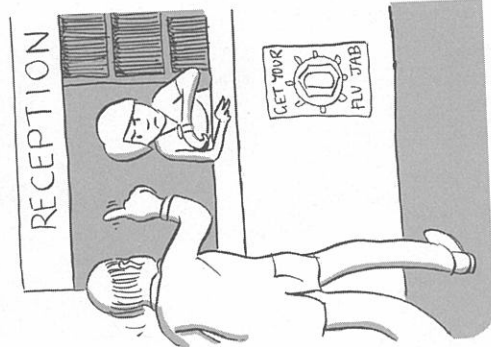
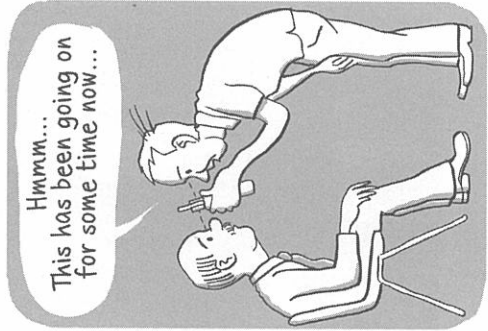
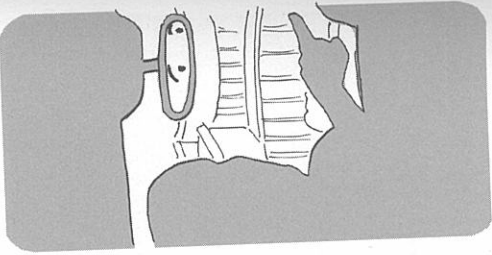
No.



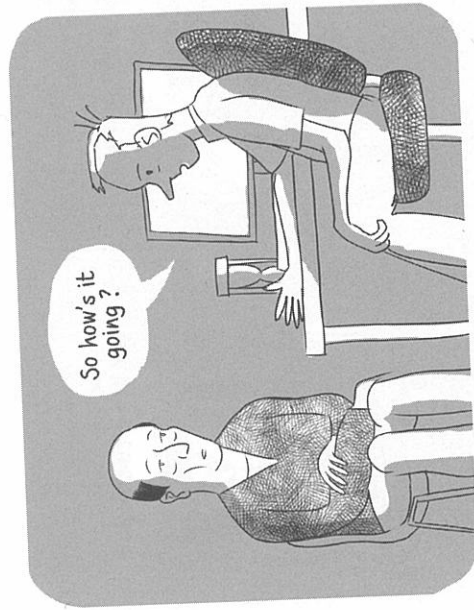








Zack Mills to see Dr James, please.



So how's it going?

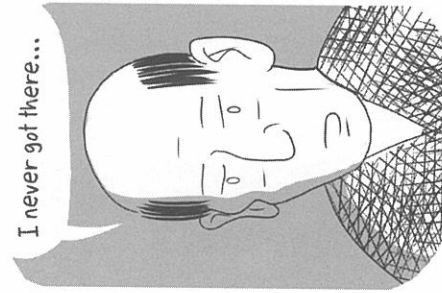


Well, I've taken the tablets for a week...
I certainly don't feel any different, but you warned me about that.



Law.
In Leicester.

Wow.
So what happened?



I never got there...

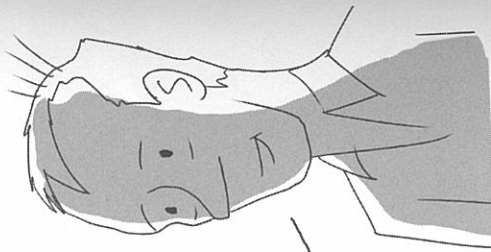


I felt dreadful for a couple of days.

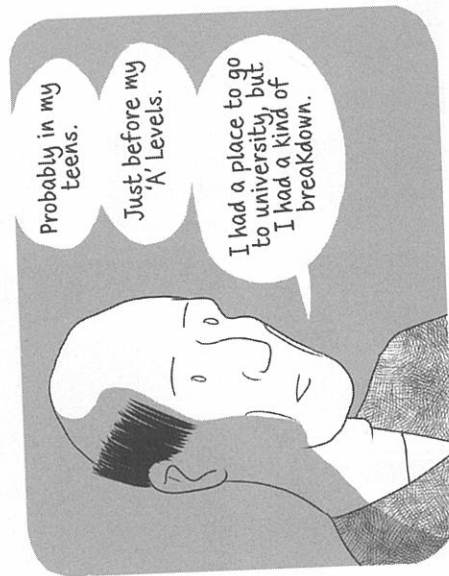
That's normal.

They take a couple of weeks to kick in.

I wanted to ask you about your life.



When did your OCD start?



Probably in my teens.

Just before my 'A' Levels.

I had a place to go to university, but I had a kind of breakdown.



What were you going to study?



I went mad.

I became convinced that I might attack and kill someone.

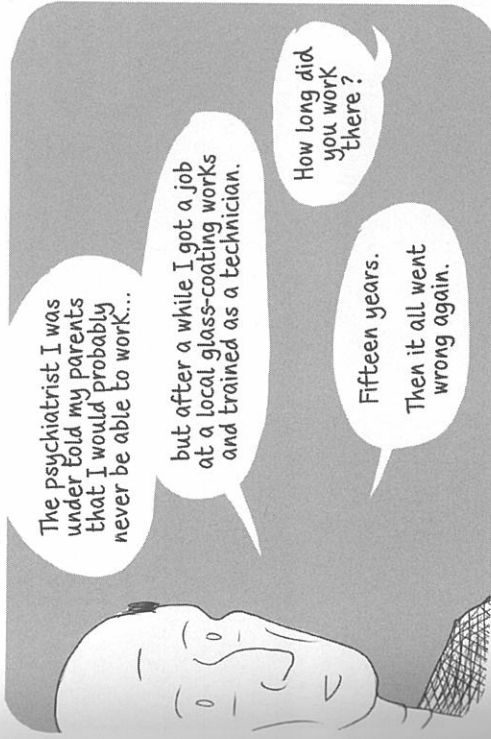
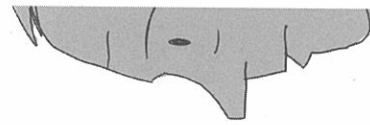
I developed all sorts of habits to try and drive the thoughts from my head.



I couldn't go out. I had to avoid people.

I ended up on a psychiatric ward, hooked on sedatives and wanting to die.

I was a mess for a couple of years. The prospect of university dropped off the agenda.



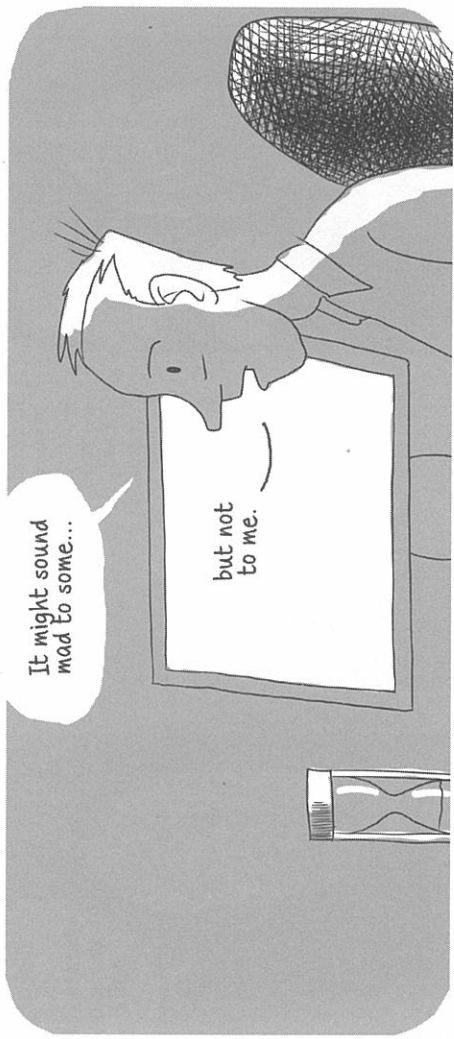
The psychiatrist I was under told my parents that I would probably never be able to work...

but after a while I got a job at a local glass-coating works and trained as a technician.

How long did you work there?

Fifteen years. Then it all went wrong again.





It might sound mad to some...

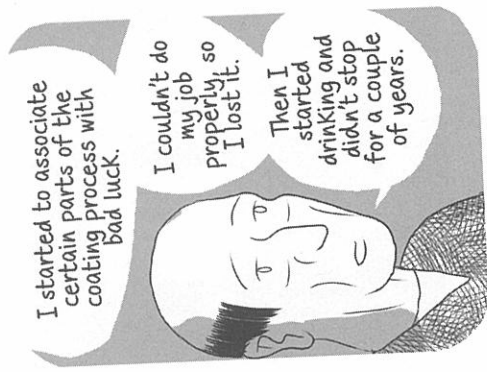
but not to me.



What about relationships?

Well, I've had quite a few, although I've never settled.

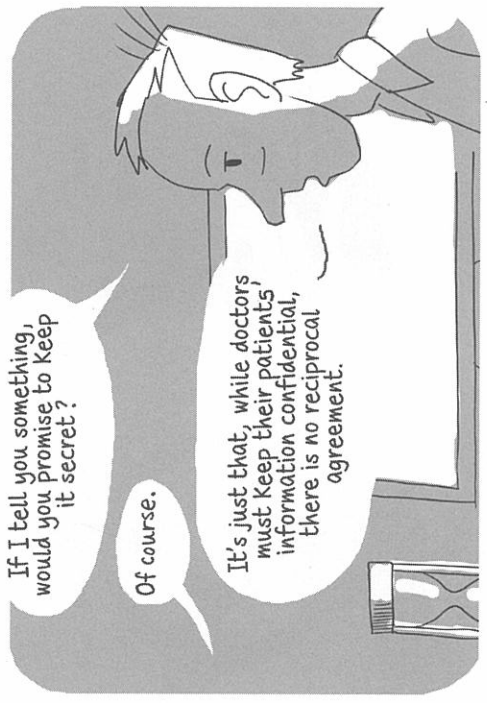
Never got married or had kids.



I started to associate certain parts of the coating process with bad luck.

I couldn't do my job properly, so I lost it.

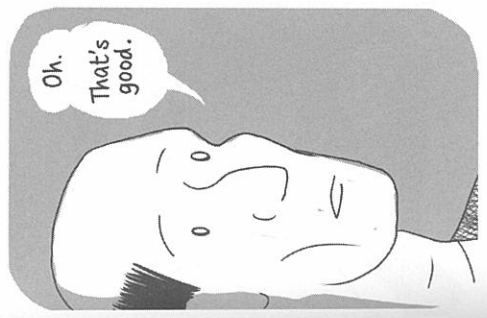
Then I started drinking and didn't stop for a couple of years.



If I tell you something, would you promise to keep it secret?

Of course.

It's just that, while doctors must keep their patients' information confidential, there is no reciprocal agreement.



Oh. That's good.



The more I hated myself, the more complex the obsessions got, and I became convinced that I was responsible for all kinds of calamities.



and end up driving her away.

Either way, I'd screw it up, and the more I screwed up the more I hated myself.



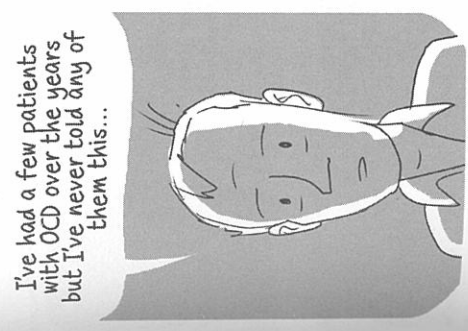
I either finished them because things didn't feel right to me... or I would constantly worry that the girl wanted to finish with me...



but I'm about the same age as you and I had OCD when I was younger.



Nor any of my partners, nor many friends, and I'm not sure why I feel like sharing this with you...

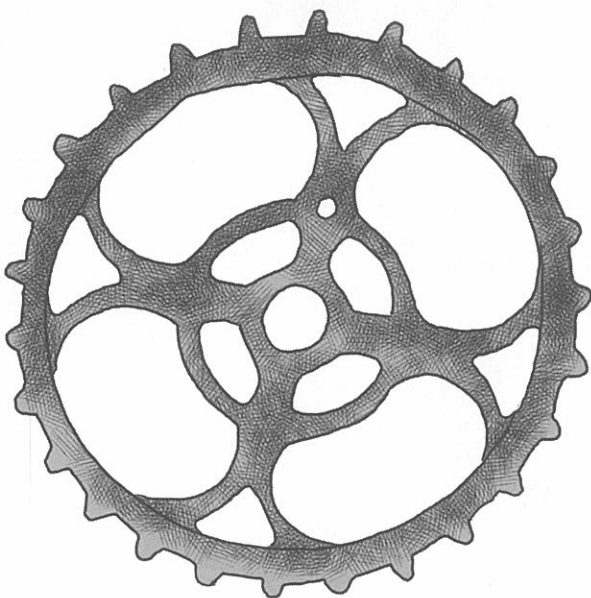


I've had a few patients with OCD over the years, but I've never told any of them this...



I was spending all day in mental rituals trying to avoid some sort of catastrophe.

I must sound completely mad.



What sort of treatment did you get?



It developed in my teens and I had it right through medical school.



Oh... right... that's...



I just tried to act as normally as I could. It wasn't until years later that I sought help.



It was hellish. I thought I was insane.



None. I hid it.



Did you know what was wrong with you?



I was terrified. I thought I was schizophrenic at first.

Then I did some reading in the medical library and it all fitted with OCD.



Oh, and I drank very heavily... but that wasn't unusual at medical school.

