

# SOLID GROUND

I don't know if it's relevant,  
but that day, there was a solar eclipse.  
People had taken care to put shaded  
glasses or filters between their eyes  
and the sun to safely observe  
the phenomenon.



The last eclipse of the millennium!



I wasn't prepared, and  
since I had to go out,  
I kept my eyes fixed  
on the ground or,  
at the most, on  
the horizon.

I don't want to  
end up blind.



I'm still not sure if it was because of the eclipse,  
but the atmosphere was truly unusual.



All those frozen people...

The first of the three astonishing events I witnessed that day occurred while I was walking.



I was watching the people. It was like being at a 3D screening.

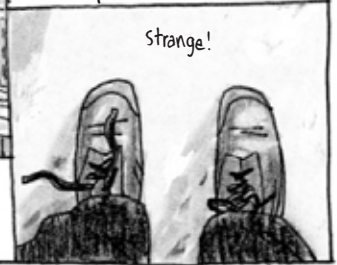


Suddenly I felt my right foot slide a little too much in its shoe.



My laces had come undone, so I bent over to tie them.

That's when I noticed that the left shoe had come undone, not the right one as I had so clearly felt.



Strange!

stunned, I wiggled my toes. Everything seemed normal.



Incredible.



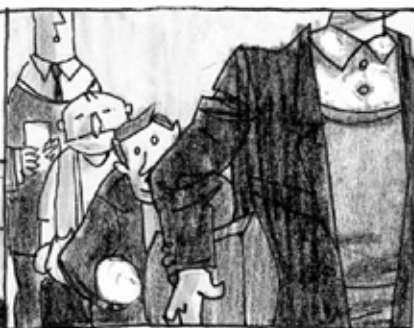
Afterwards it seemed ridiculous...and yet there was more to come...



In the line-up at the hardware store, a customer wanted his purchase—a hammer—wrapped in bubble wrap...



Why the hell would a guy need his hammer wrapped, I wondered. Was he afraid he might damage the thing?



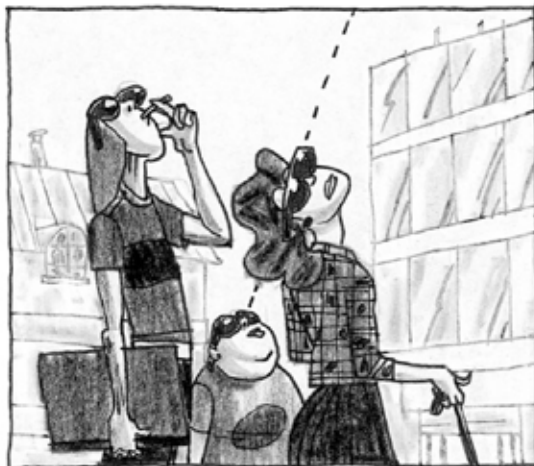
Or maybe it was meant as a gift...a hammer, really?  
Ha ha ha!

I looked around for amused smiles...Nothing. No amazement...



As if wrapping hammers was a normal thing!  
Well, I'd never seen anything like it...





It wasn't until after I went to the barber that I noticed how many curious incidents had happened in just one day.



After a few mundane remarks about eclipses and astronomical phenomena, he proceeded to tell me about the peculiarities of his profession.



He's a heavy-set man, and he told me that his belly often rubs against the chair...(why do people always confide in me, I wondered).



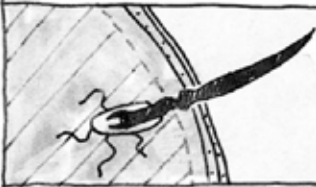
The rubbing causes little hair cuttings to pass through the fibres of his clothes. Not often, but it happens...



Once they work their way through the fabric, some of them implant themselves into his flesh.



They stay stuck there and, after a while, they take root and become like the rest of the hair on his body. He said:



And that's why my belly hair is all the colours of a rainbow!

Who knows? There's probably one of yours, too!

I think I've seen this shade of brown...



Outside, the sun was shining again. People had got their heads out of the clouds and come back down to solid ground.