

BIRMINGHAM, 1947.

STAND HERE?
LIKE THIS?

WHAT FLOWERS
ARE THESE?
THEY SMELL
STRANGE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN
I'M "STANDING LIKE
THE TIN WOODMAN"?



LOOK LIKE YOU
WANT TO BE HERE.

RIGHT.





SON, I READ A SAD ARTICLE THE OTHER DAY. IT SAID...



WELL IT'S MY SPECIAL MEDICINE. IT'S A DRINK THAT WARMS YOU UP. SOME DRINK IT LIKE A SNAPPER.

NOT FOR KIDS.

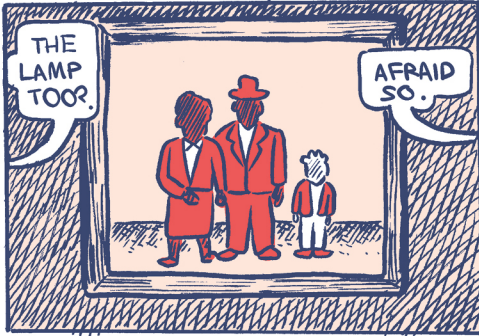


I USED TO ENJOY A NICE WHISKEY SITTING ON THE BEACH BACK HOME. DO A BIT OF FISHING...

WOW.

DAD WENT ON TO TALK ABOUT HIS BEST CATCH OF FISH. THE RED SNAPPER. MOM WAS SHOCKED AT THE LACK OF PHOTOGRAPHS. SHE MARCHED US BACK IN OUR SUNDAY BEST.

SOON ENOUGH IT WOULD BE ALL WE HAD LEFT OF THE MAN. HIS HEART GAVE IN ONE DAY AND HE LEFT US ON THIS ISLAND. HE LEFT MOM AND ME WITH THE VULTURES WHILST HE CAUGHT SNAPPERS IN HEAVEN.



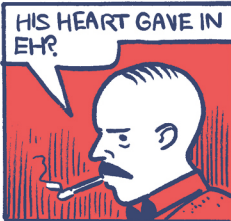
THE LAMP TOO?

AFRAID SO.



THEN TAKE IT!

LOOK, IN THIS COUNTRY YOU HAVE TO PAY TO HAVE NICE THINGS.



HIS HEART GAVE IN EH?

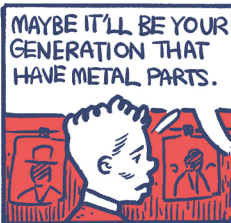
ANYWAY, YOU CAN KEEP THE PHOTOS, BUT YOUR FATHER TOOK OUT A LINE OF CREDIT WITH ME TO PAY FOR IT. THAT'S A THING I DON'T USUALLY DO FOR WEST INDIANS. TELL YOUR MOTHER SHE CAN PAY BACK WHEN'S BEST FOR HER, BUT REMIND HER THAT PHOTOS ARE AN EXPENSIVE ART.



YES.

SIR.

SIR.



MAYBE IT'LL BE YOUR GENERATION THAT HAVE METAL PARTS.



SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS.

HIS BREATH SMELLED OF SMOKE. AND OF DADDY'S DRINK... WHISKEY.



HM.



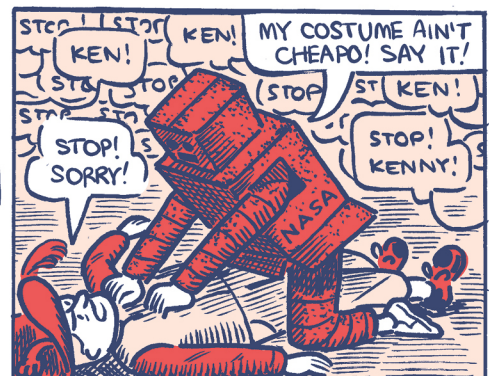
PFFT.

SHE COULD KEEP A STOIC FACE IN FRONT OF THE "COMMUNITY". A VIRTUE I DIDN'T POSSESS.

MOM CHOSE TO SPEND ON FOOD AND ON KEEPING A ROOF OVER OUR HEADS. THE LOCALS CHOSE TO STARE.

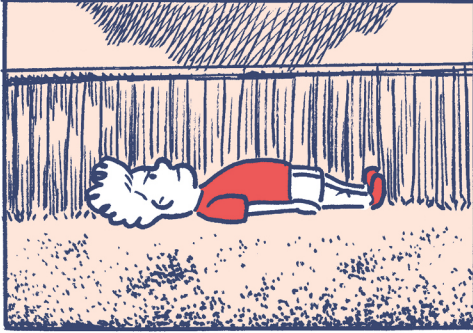


HM!

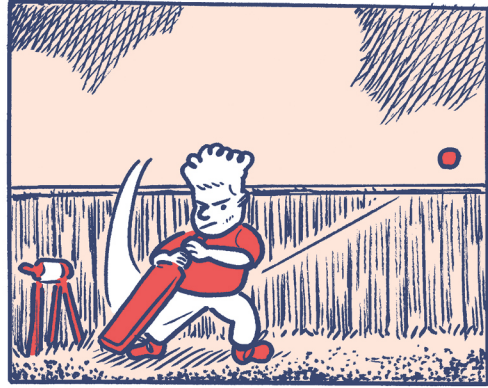


STOP! STOP! KEN! MY COSTUME AIN'T CHEAPO! SAY IT! (STOP) ST KEN! STOP! SORRY! STOP! KENNY!

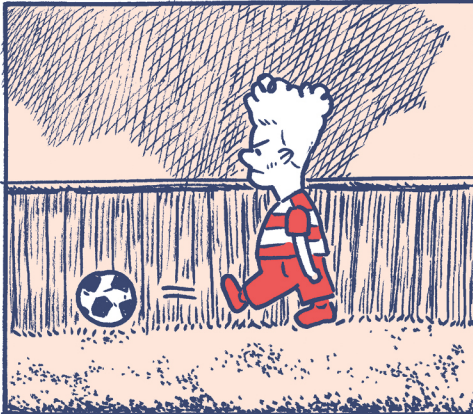
I HAD A SOLITARY UPRISING AS YOU COULD IMAGINE. PEOPLE IN THE MIDLANDS HAD RARELY BEEN TO THE COAST OF ENGLAND, NEVER MIND THE WEST INDIES.



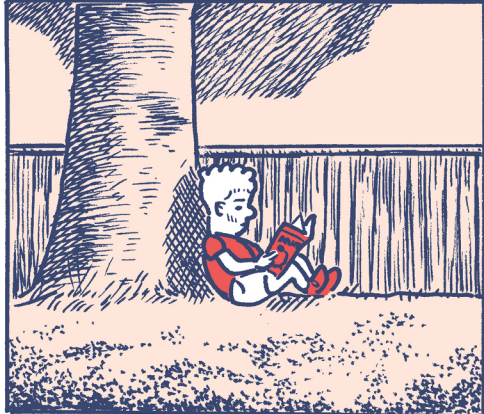
SPORTS BECAME THE IDEAL FOCUS OF MY FRUSTRATION. ALTHOUGH I QUIT EVERY CLUB.



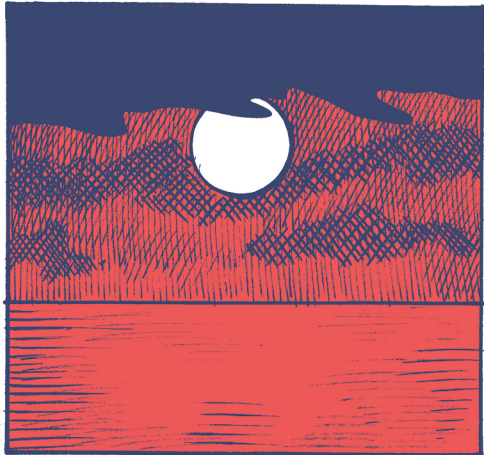
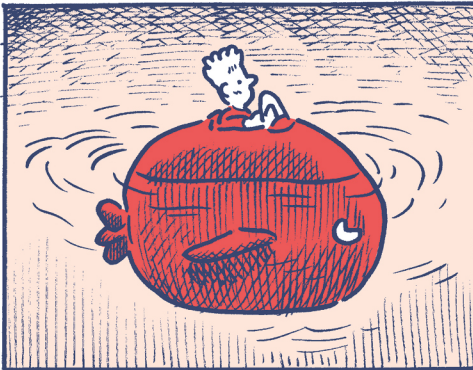
I DO NOT BLAME MY MOTHER. SHE WORKED.



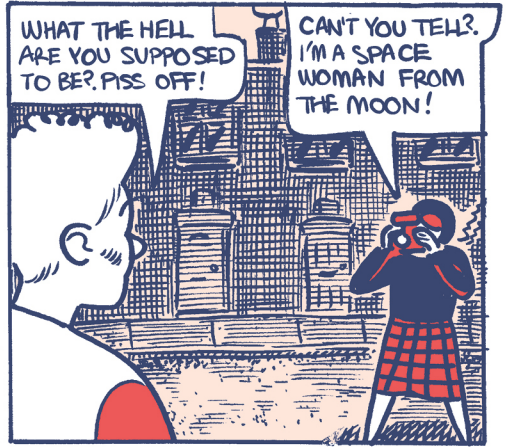
SO I READ COMICS ABOUT FOOTBALL TEAMS.



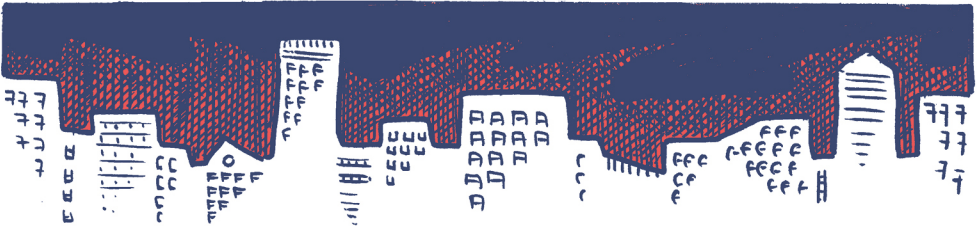
FOOTBALL COMICS BECAME SCIENCE FICTION COMICS. I BEGAN TO IMAGINE A PATH TO MY FATHER ON THE BACK OF A RED SNAPPER.

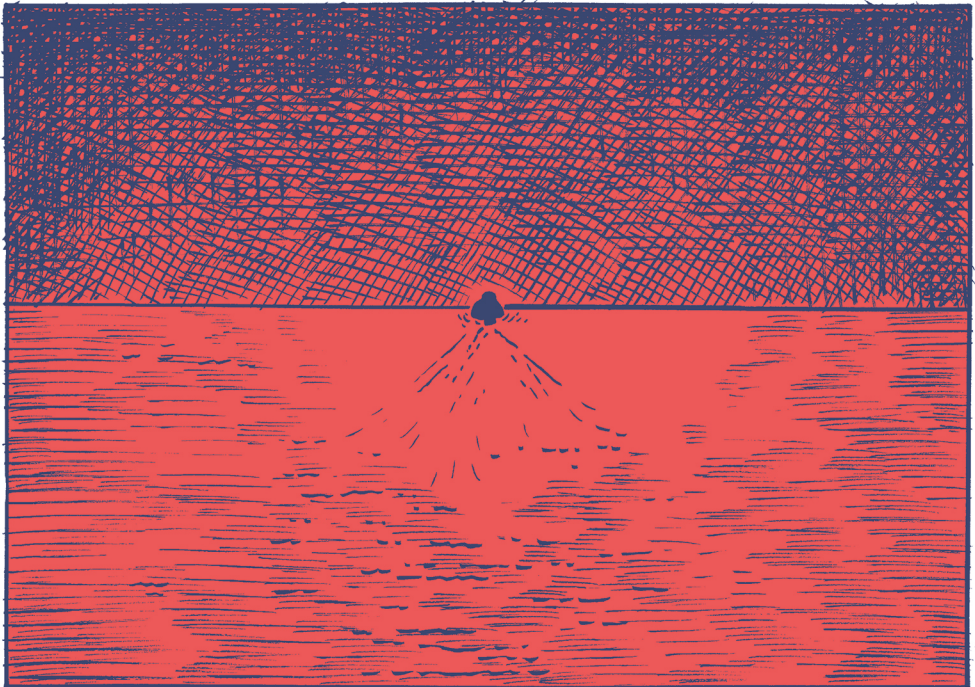
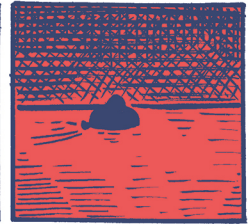
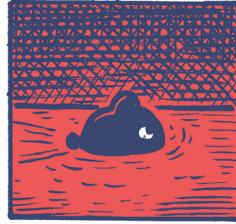
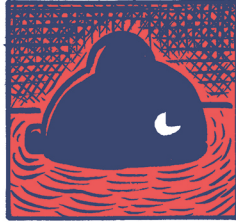
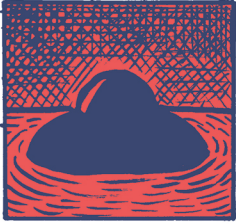
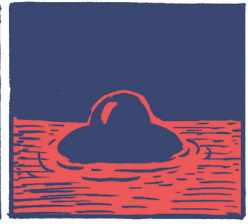
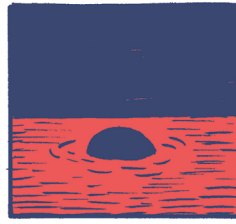
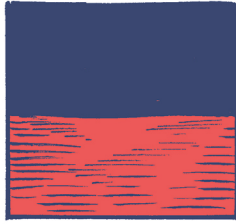
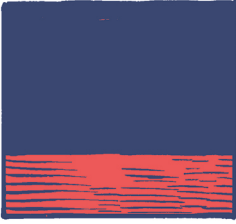
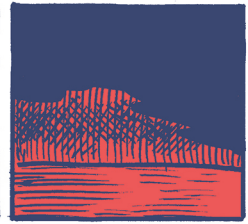
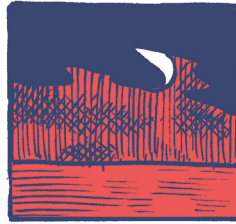
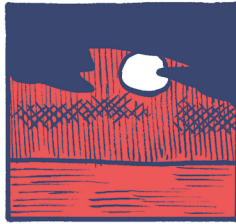
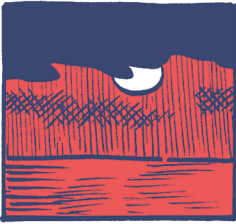


1968. YET IT WAS IN BRITAIN WHERE MY MOST POWERFUL ANTAGONIST STILL LIVED. THE INVASIVE POWER OF THE PHOTOGRAPH...

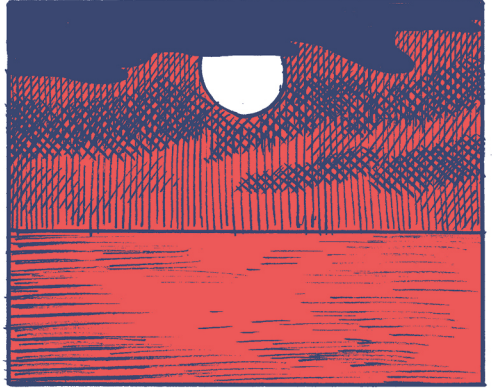
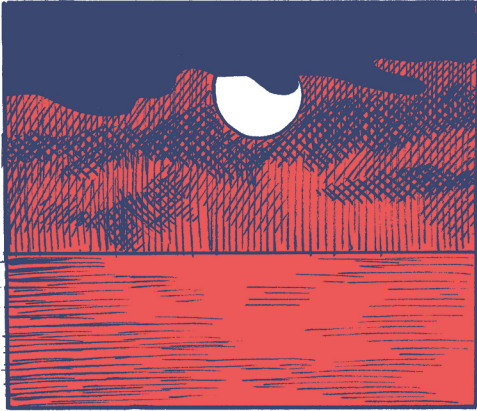


BEING PHOTOGRAPHED WAS AGONY AS A CHILD. BECAUSE OF MY OUTWARD FORM, THE STUDIO THAT RUINED OUR LIVES. THE LAST MEMORIES OF MY FATHER. I COULDN'T BREATHE. I HAD TO SWALLOW THE COSMIC HOWLS.

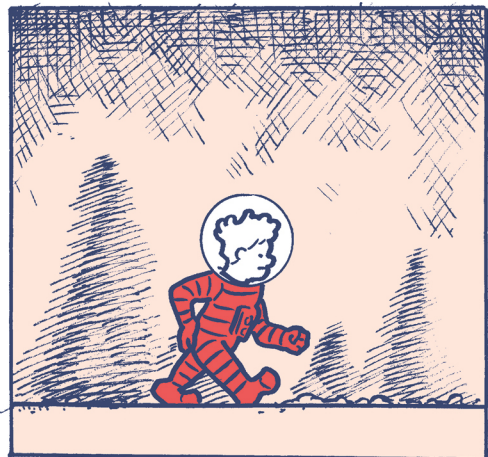
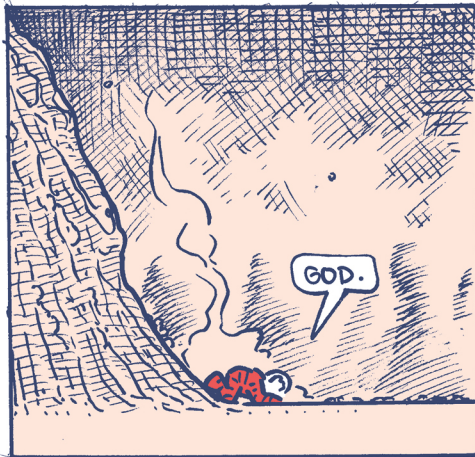
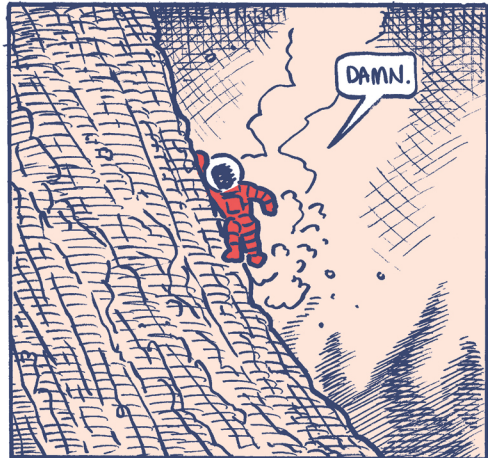
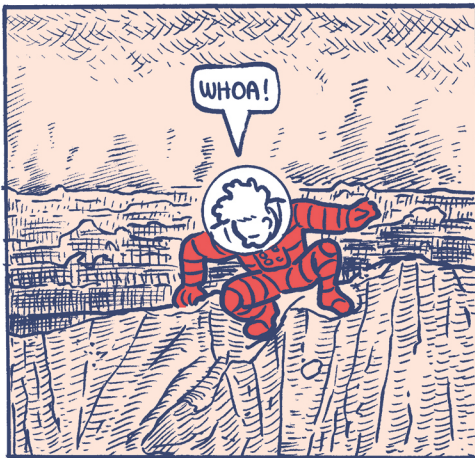




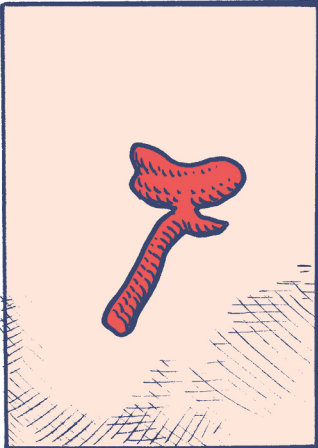
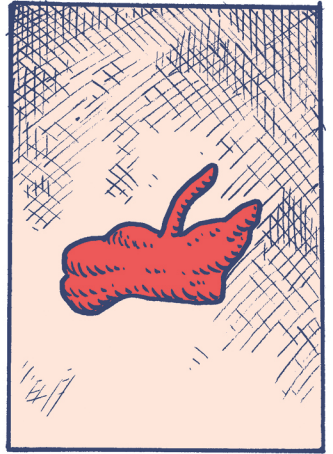
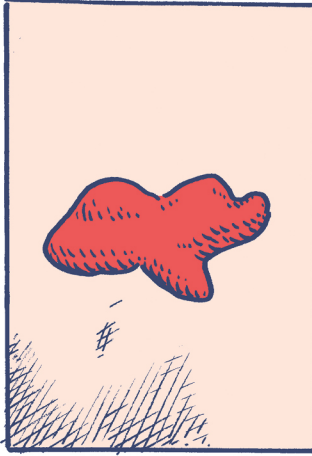
MOM AND I WENT TO THE BEACH ONLY ONCE. IT WAS A DARK DAY THAT BECAME NIGHT TOO QUICKLY TO EVER REMEMBER FONDLY.



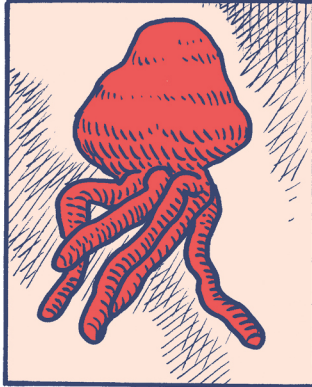
STANDING THERE, MY MIND WHINED. ALL I COULD SEE WERE PREMONITIONS OF OUR EVENTUAL DEMISE ON THIS PLANET. MOM'S DEATH. MY OWN DEATH. INEVITABLE IMAGES.



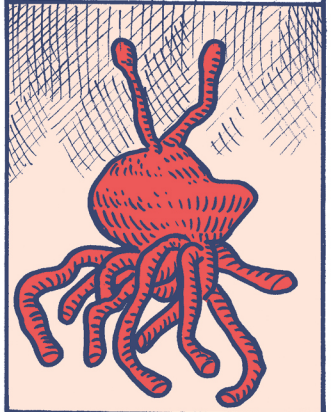
THE SEA HAD HEARD ME.



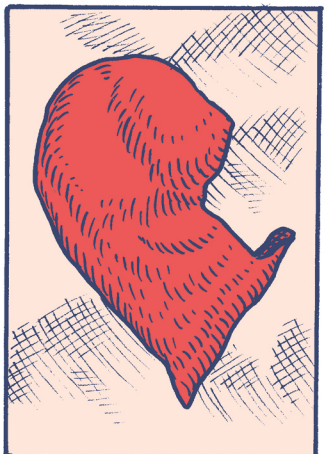
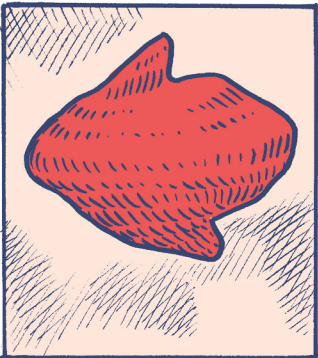
SOME WERE LIKE OCTOPUS,
LONG TENTACLES AND SUCH.



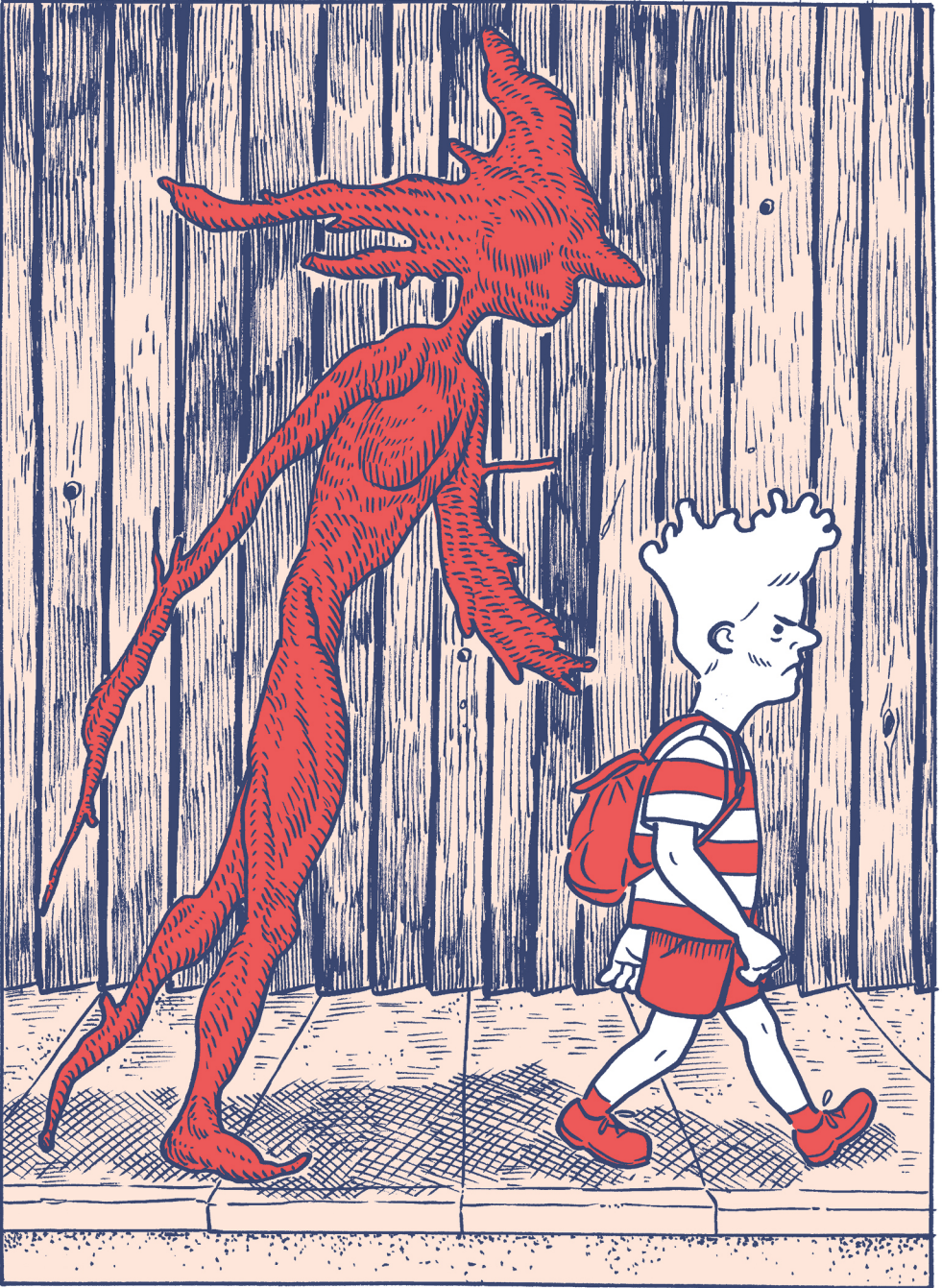
JELLYFISH WOULD BE BETTER.



MOST RESEMBLED FISH, THE
COLOUR OF RED SNAPPERS
THAT I SAW IN BOOKS.



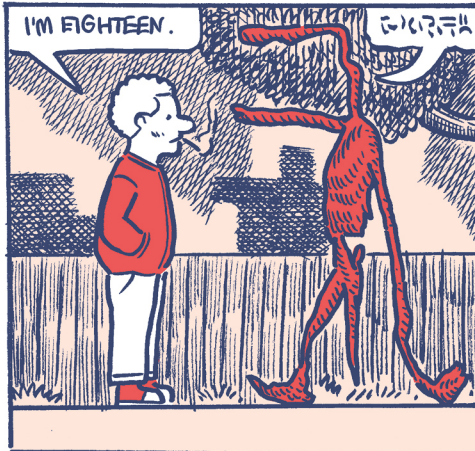
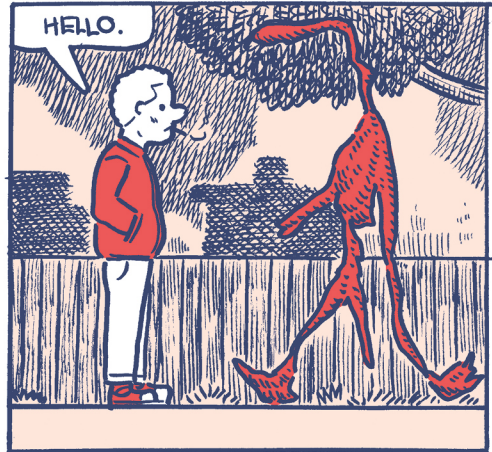
THEY FOLLOWED ME HOME, TO BIRMINGHAM. THEY FOLLOWED ME WHEREVER I WENT. WHY?



WAS THIS AN INVASION? AM I ITS VESSEL?



IF CLOSING MY EYES AND SCREAMING INTO SPACE BROUGHT THE SNAPPERS HERE. THEN I HAD TO STOP THE SCREAMS.



A FATAL INTOLERANCE TO ALCOHOL. ALBEIT HUGE QUANTITIES OF IT. I BECAME A TIN MAN. A ROBOT. FUELLED TO THE BRIM WITH BOOZE.

