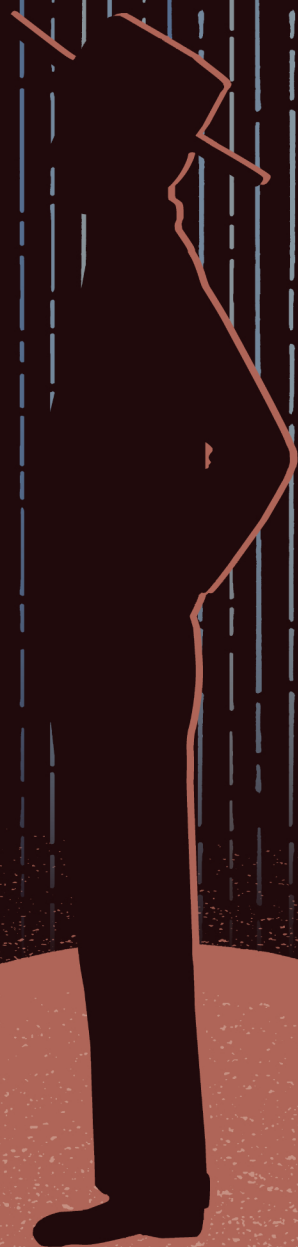


GILBERT HERNANDEZ

JULIO'S DAY



INTRODUCTION BY BRIAN EVENSON

JULIO'S DAY

GILBERT HERNANDEZ

JULIO

by GILBERT
HERNANDEZ

GOD DAY



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INTRODUCTION

by Brian Evenson

“...one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you?”

—Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

Gilbert Hernandez’s *Julio’s Day* might be read as an illustration of the above quotation from Beckett’s play, and of the words that follow it: “They give birth astride a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it’s night once more.” The graphic novel begins with a panel of darkness, nothingness, but by the second panel we’ve pulled back far enough to see that the darkness is the inside of a baby’s mouth. The baby is Julio, and we’ll stay with him and his family for exactly one hundred pages as he grows from zero to the ripe old age of one hundred and then dies. We’ll leave him in the same way as we first met him, but in reverse order: the second to the last panel offers an old man’s ravaged mouth, followed by a final panel of darkness, nothingness.

But where Beckett sees the shortness of a man’s life as cause for despair and dismay, Hernandez is interested in celebrating a life fully, in all its shortcomings and joys, all its ups and downs, all its risks and limitations. Despite the death, illness, abuse, and war that fill these pages, despite many serious familial and personal struggles, there is little bitterness here. Hernandez’s characters have a remarkable ability to persist, to keep on. Even those that struggle to find their place in one generation (including those who never shake free from denial about who they are), help pave the way for the freedoms claimed by those that follow them.

Julio’s Day is a story of one man’s life, but it’s a great deal more than that as well. It’s the story of the life of a century,

also told as if a day. Beginning with Julio's birth in 1900 and ending with his death in 2000, the graphic novel touches on most of the major events that shaped the 20th century. We see wars, ruinous weather, changing fashion, changing attitudes, but Hernandez very wisely doesn't give us these things in historical terms. In fact, outside of the images and the characters' speech (there are no panel captions), he does nothing to let us know where we are in the century on a given page, and often we don't know quite what year we're in. The characters don't feed us information: Hernandez's guiding principle is to let them only say what's natural, and only say it when it's natural. Hernandez operates quite deftly, by inference and suggestion. We don't know, for instance, why Julio's father takes the trip that nearly kills him (and which ends up sealing Julio's brother's fate years later as well) until he arrives at his destination, and then we're only given it with several well-placed images and two speech bubbles.

That's one of the great strengths of *Julio's Day* and one of the great qualities of Hernandez's style in general. He touches a great many serious topics, but does so with

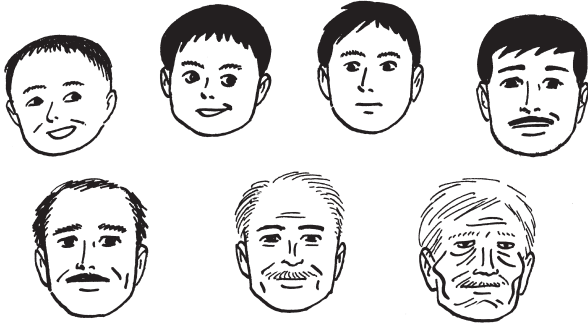
remarkable lightness. He gives whatever is at hand an attention that at once seems fleeting and full, and he can switch quickly from one scene to another without losing our interest or attention. Characters can flit by, be present and amazingly rendered for a few panels, and then suddenly disappear for good. But they can just as easily reappear after an eighty-year absence. Even the more central characters can age dramatically from one page to the next as the years pass and yet still be recognizable.

The amazing speed with which things change from page to page and even from panel to panel is one of the real charms of *Julio's Day*. Hernandez doesn't over-direct us: he lets us figure things out for ourselves, just as we do in life. He doesn't insist on the echoes that occur across generations or between characters, but leaves the threads there for us to pick up. He lets us make our own tenuous connections, which makes them all the more powerful, and all the more valuable. This is a stunning graphic novel, by someone who is one of the major voices in the field, and is sure to hold surprises even for those aficionados of Hernandez's other work.



Brian Evenson is the author of *Windeye*, *Last Days*, *Fugue State*, *The Open Curtain*, *Immobility*, and *Altmann's Tongue*, among others. He is the recipient of numerous awards including an NEA fellowship, three O. Henry Prizes, and the American Library Association's award for Best Horror Novel. He lives and works in Providence, Rhode Island, where he directs Brown University's Literary Arts Program, translates literature from French into English, and of course, writes.

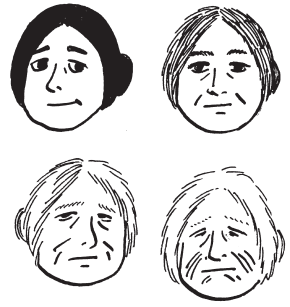
JULIO



JULIO'S FATHER



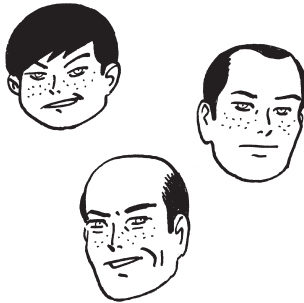
JULIO'S MOTHER



JULIO'S SISTER SOFIA



JULIO'S BROTHER BENJAMIN



JULIO'S UNCLE JUAN / JULIO'S MOTHER'S BROTHER



UNCLE JUAN'S WIFE



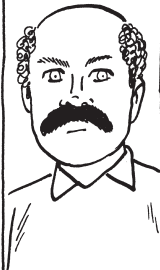
JULIO'S PAL TOMMY



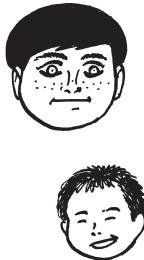
JULIO'S FRIEND ARACELI



SOFIA'S HUSBAND CHATO



SOFIA'S SONS RUBEN AND JULIO JOSE



SOFIA'S DAUGHTER RENATA



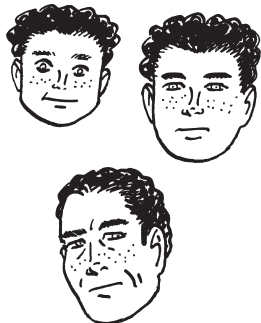
RENATA'S HUSBAND



BENJAMIN'S WIFE TAMIKO

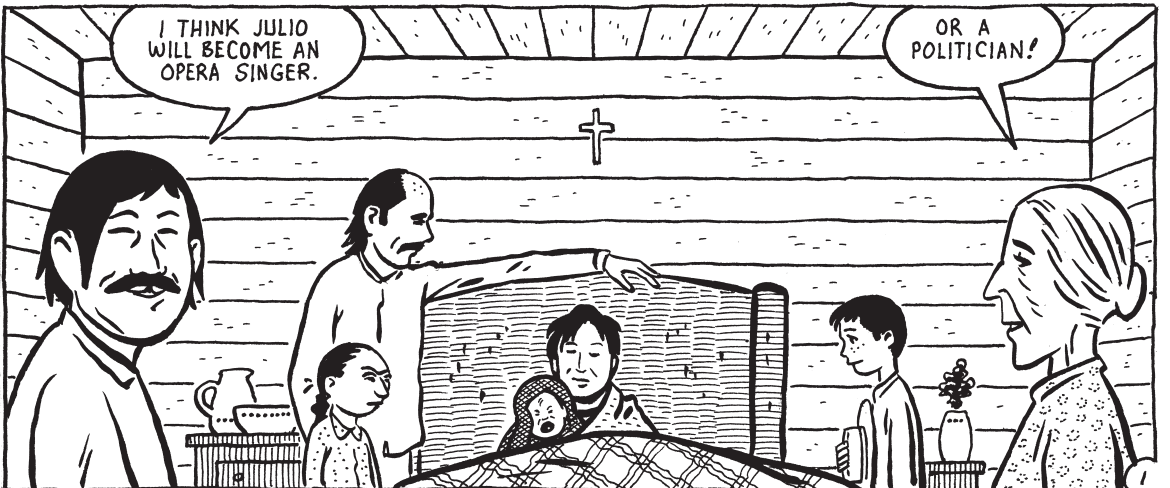
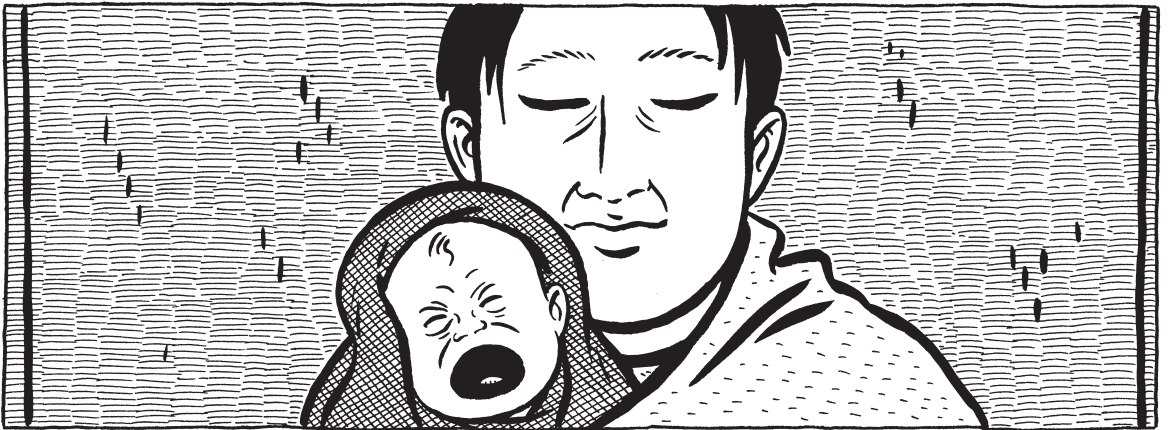
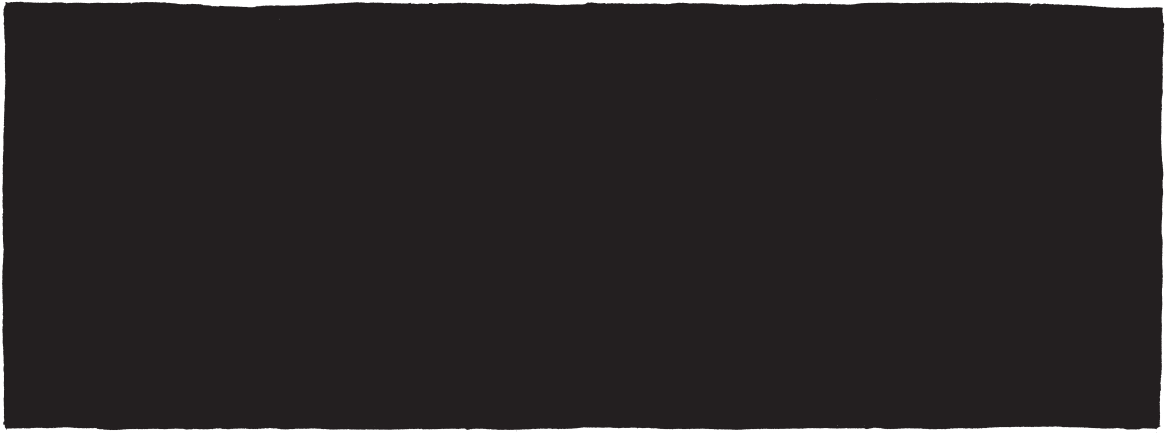


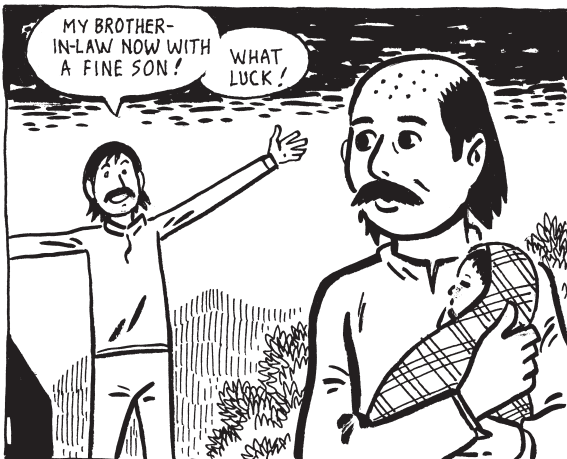
RENATA'S SON JULIO TOMAS

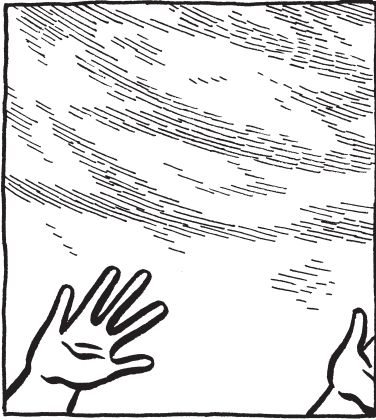


RENATA'S GRANDSON JULIO JUAN

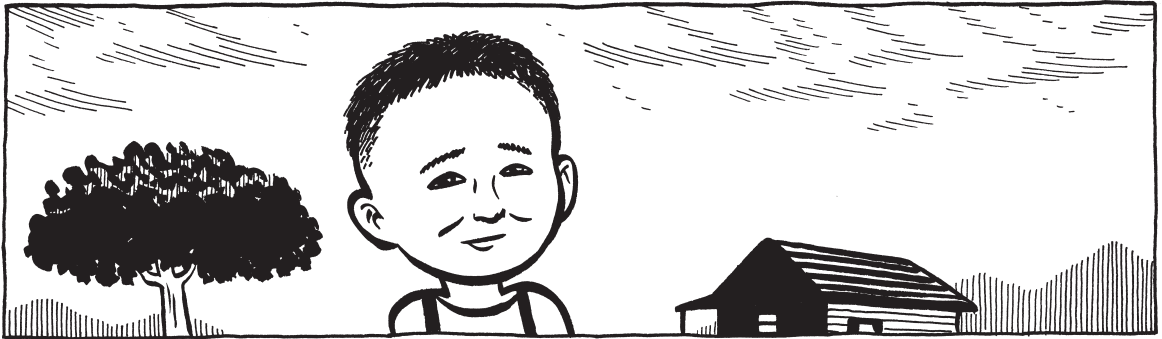


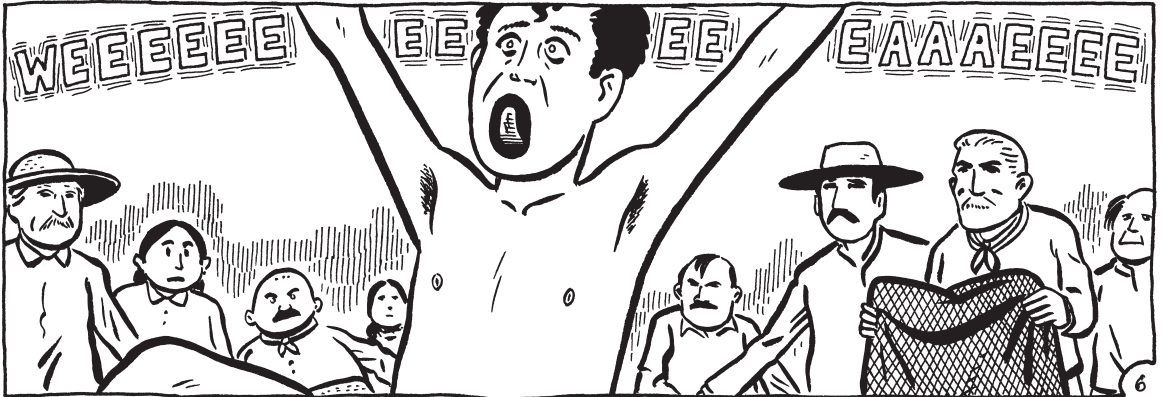
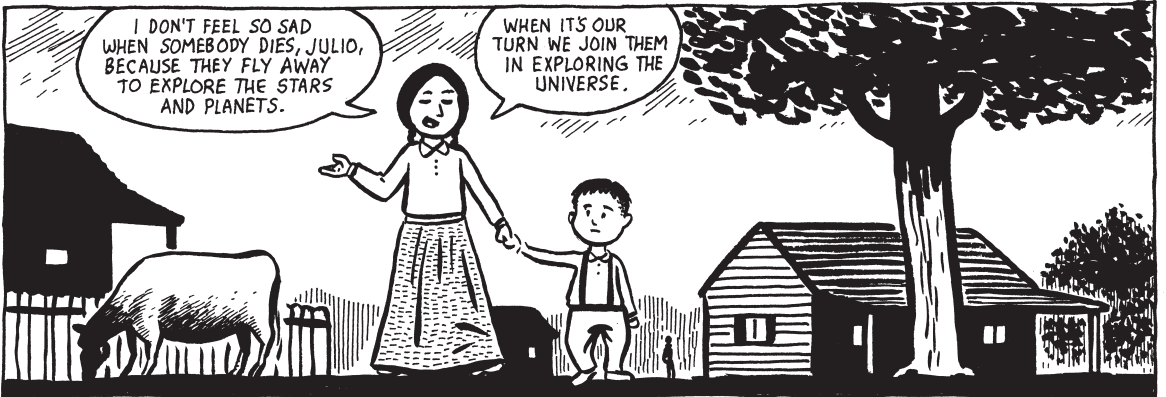
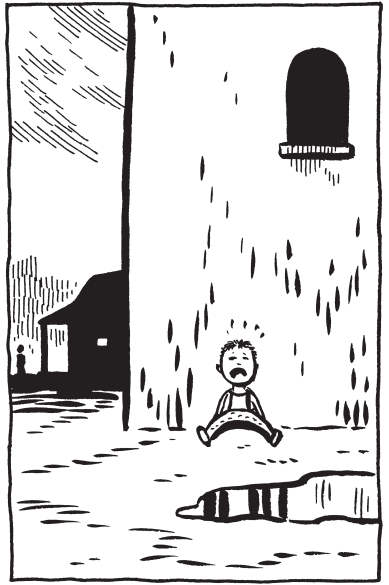
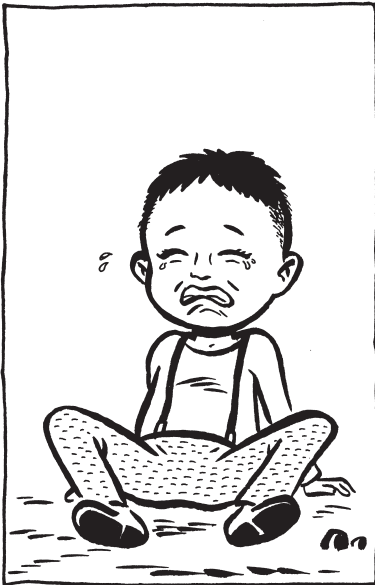


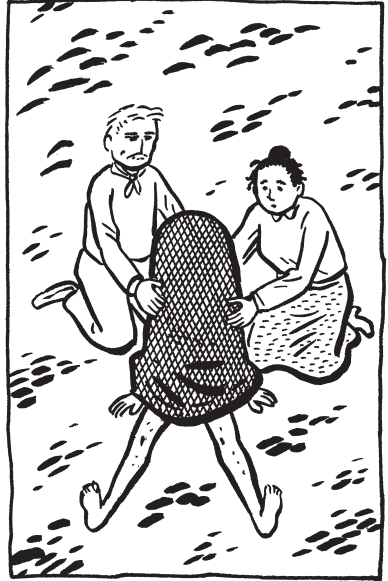


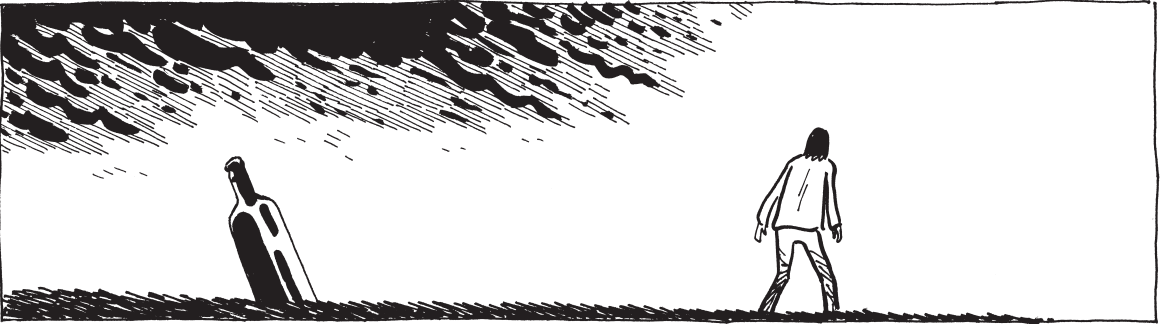
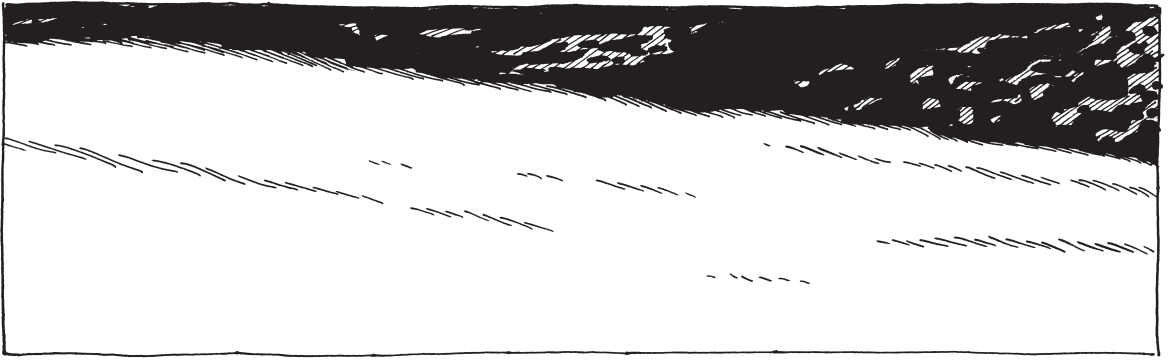














YOU SURE ARE
HAPPY FOR YOUR FIRST
DAY OF SCHOOL,
JULIO.

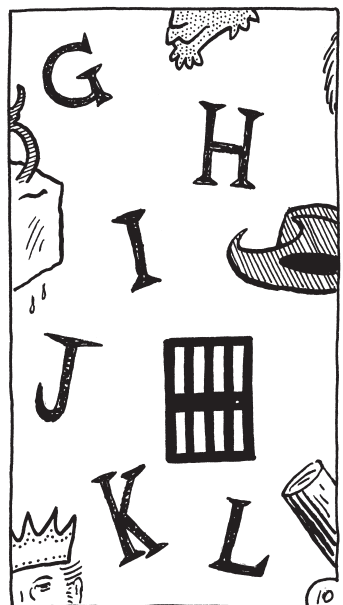
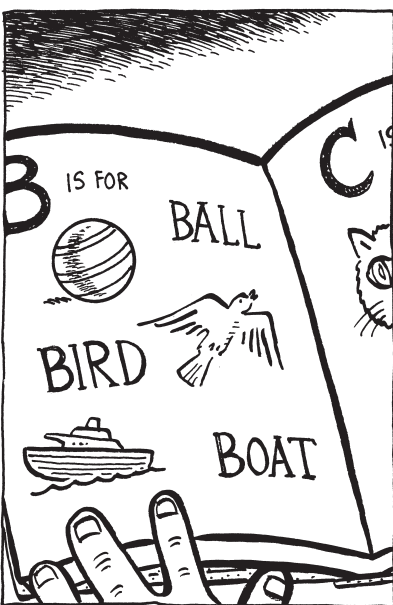
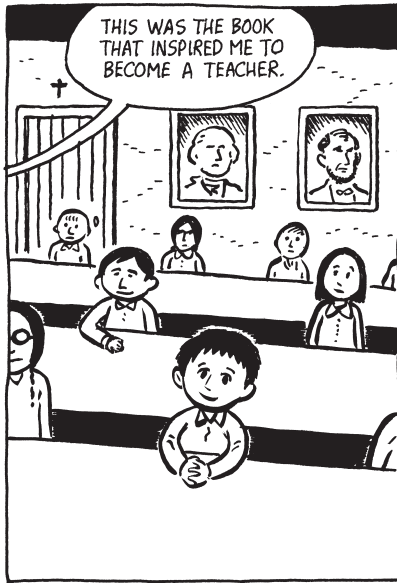


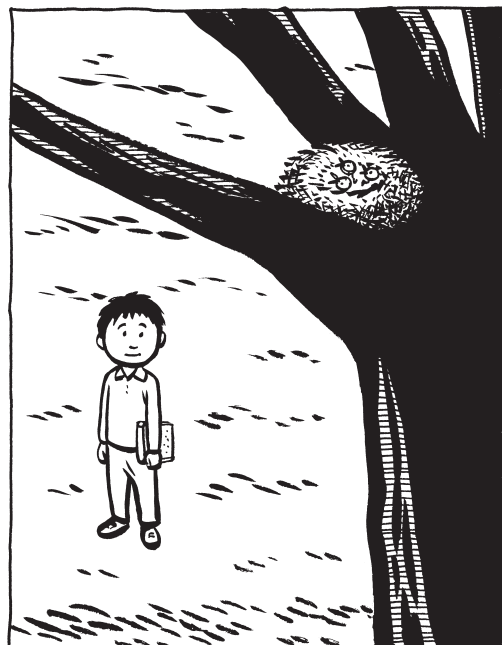
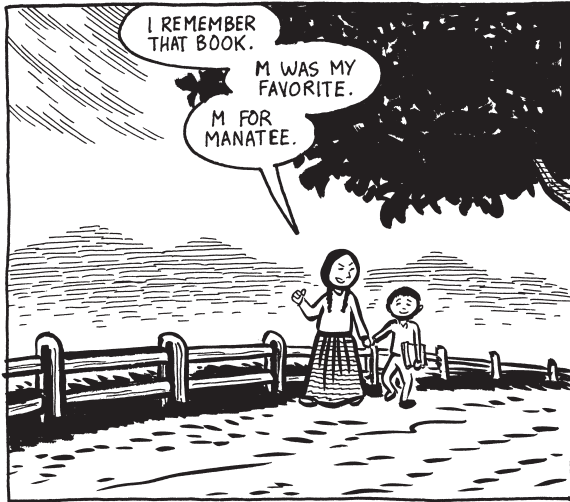
HERE'S YOUR
SCHOOL. I USED TO
GO TO IT.

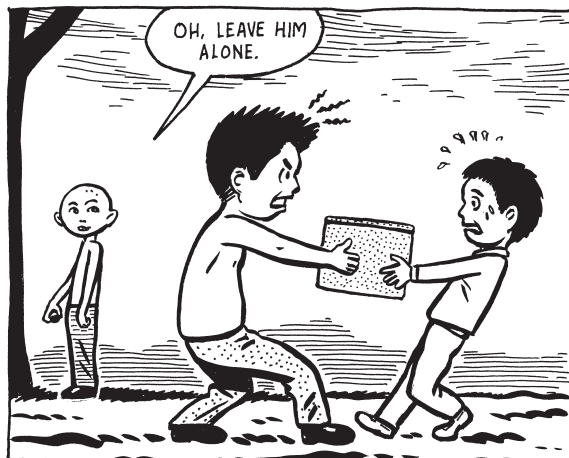
CHECK UNDER YOUR
CHAIR FOR OLD LUMPS OF GUM
PILED TOGETHER. THAT'S
WHERE I SAT.

CAREFUL
OF OLD, DRY
BOOGERS,
THOUGH.



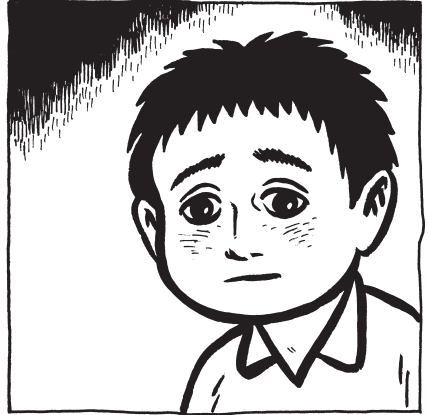
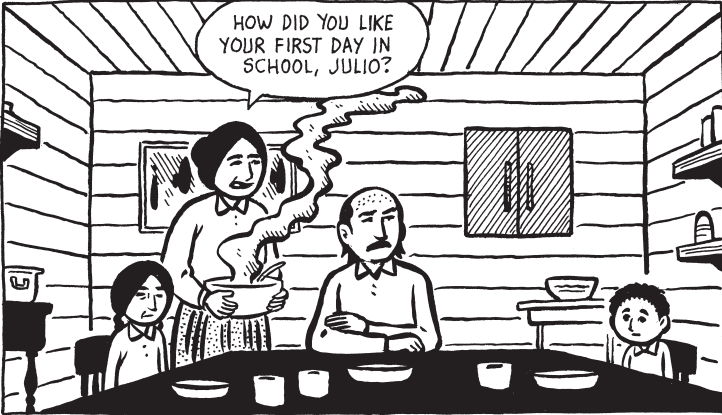
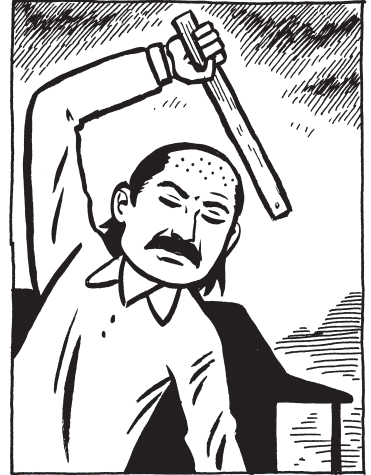
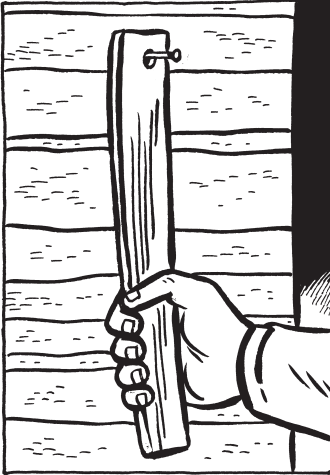
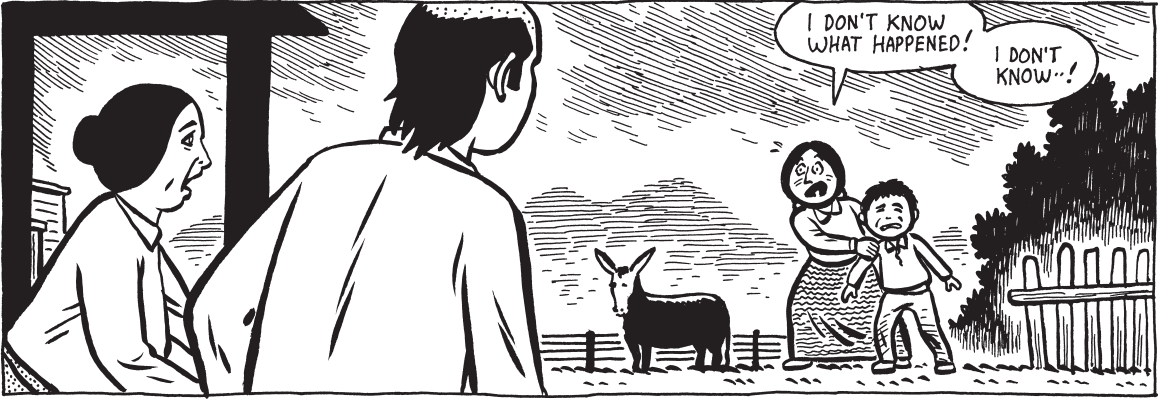


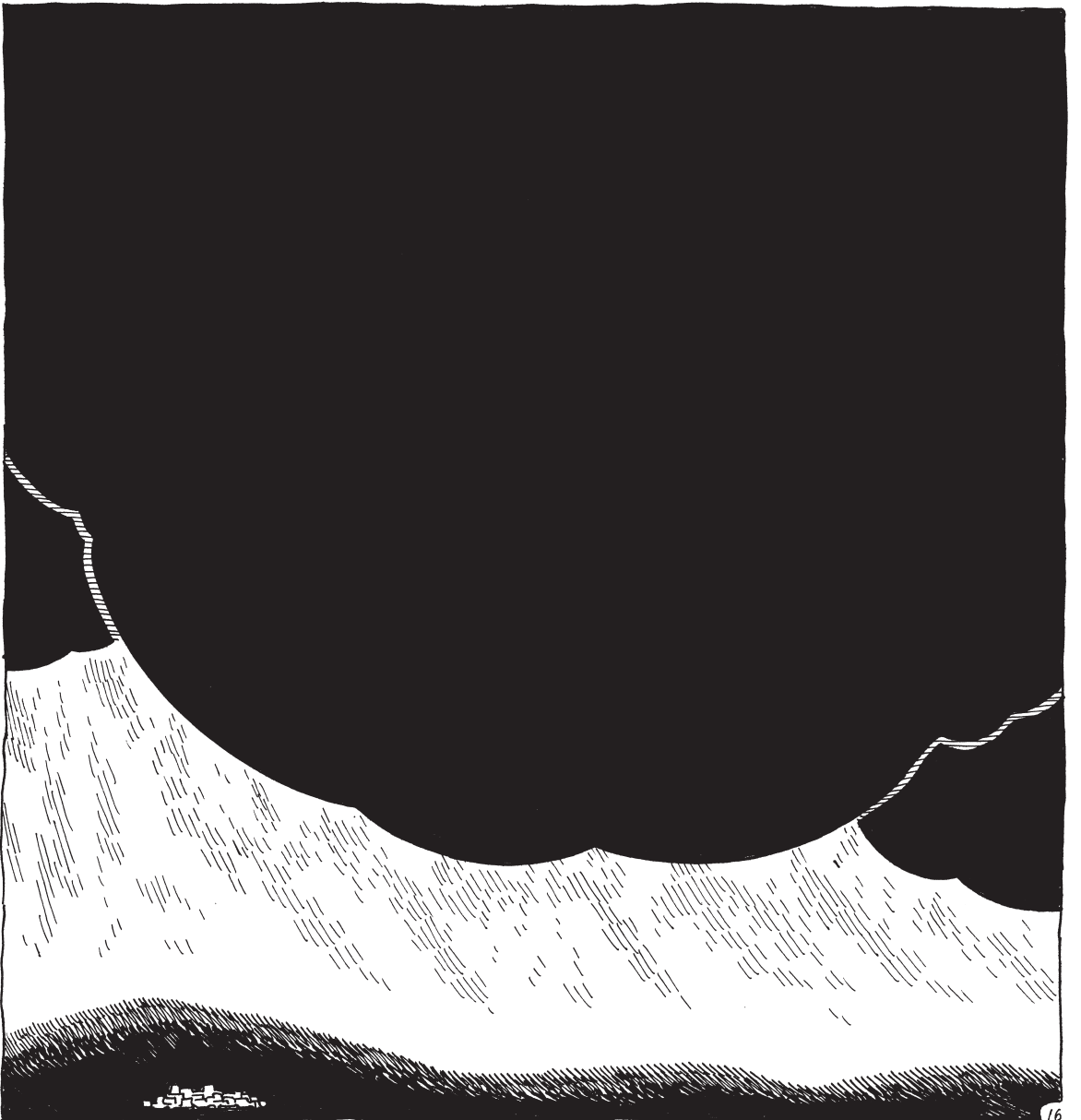
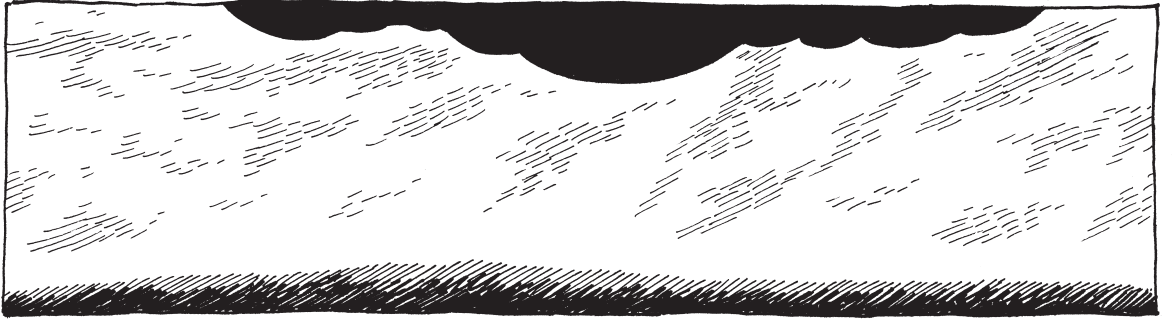


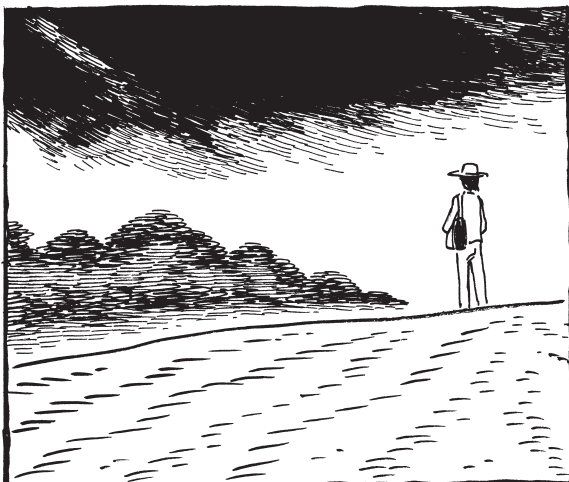
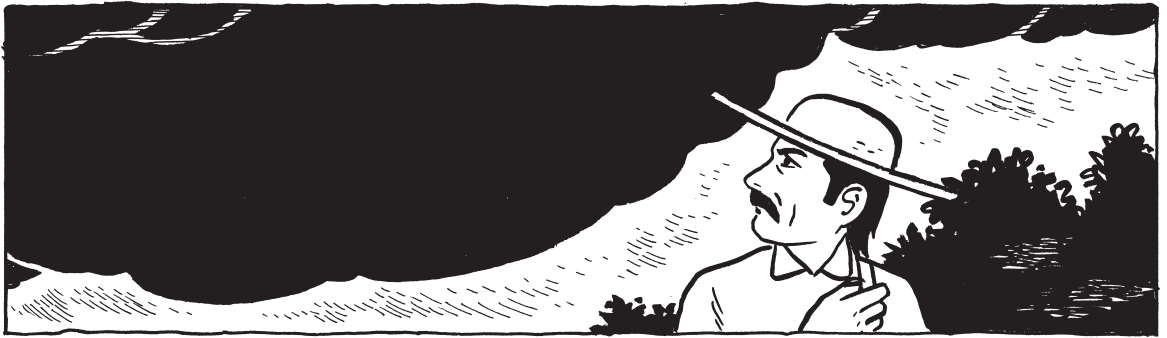
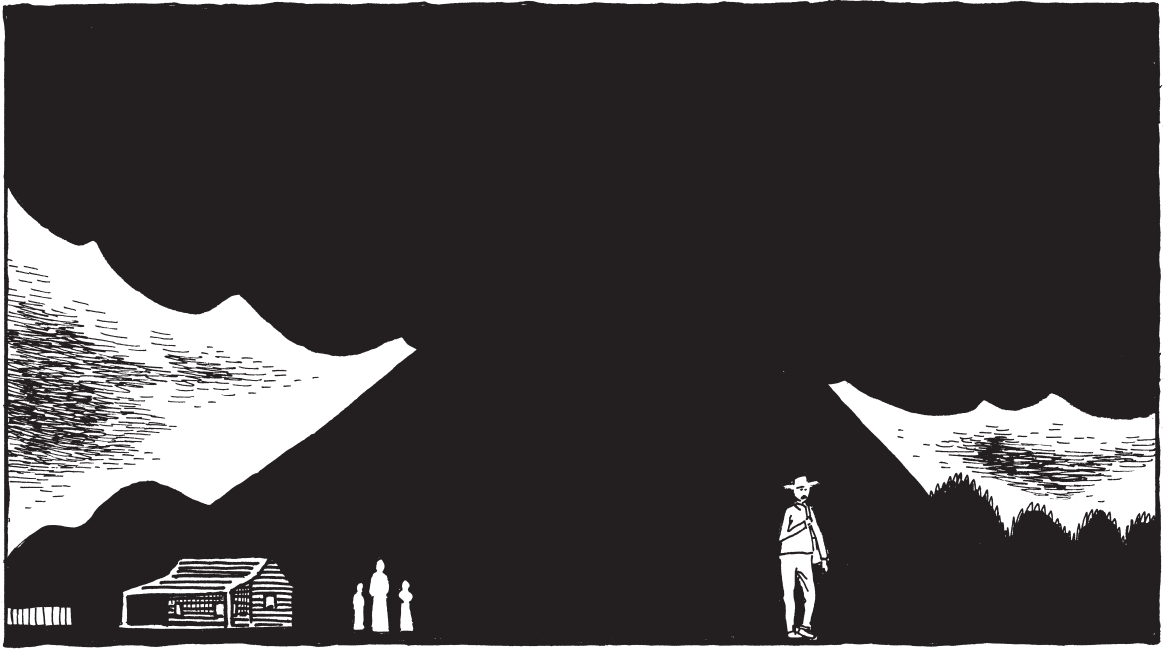


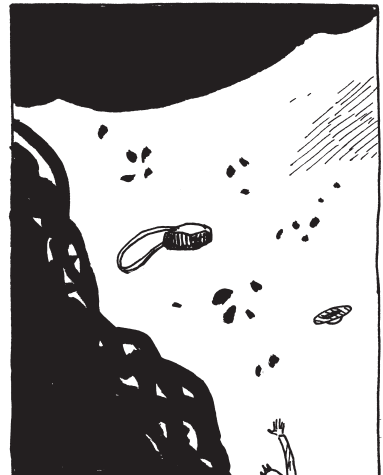
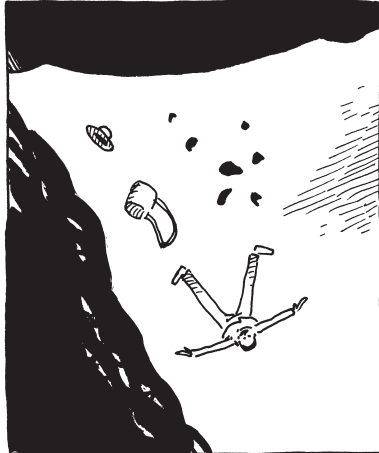


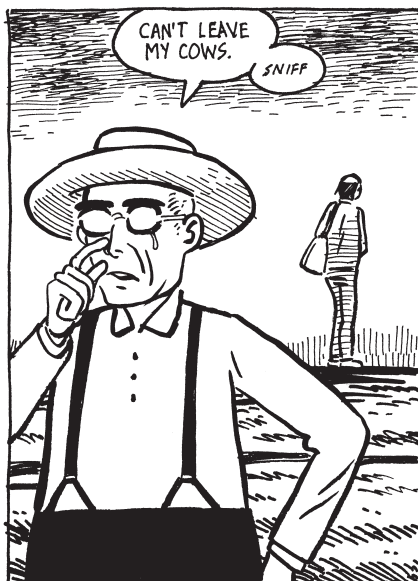


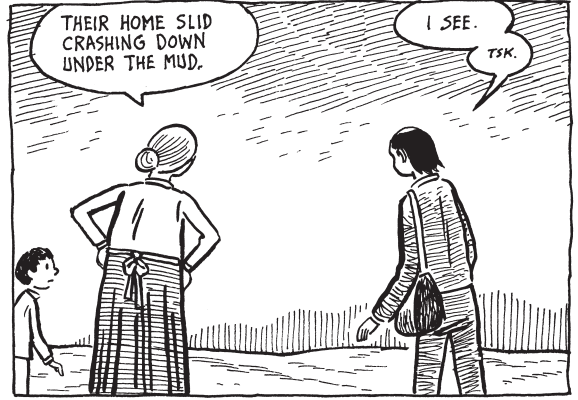




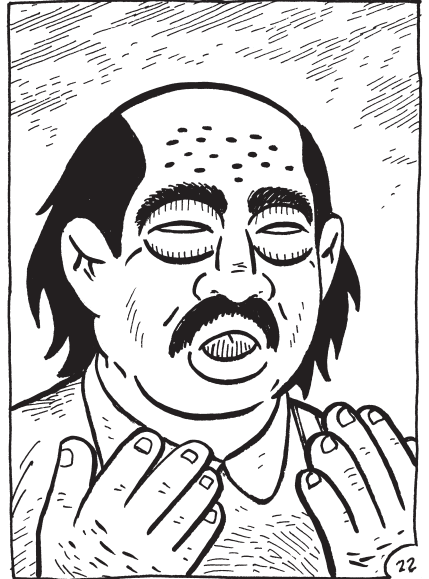
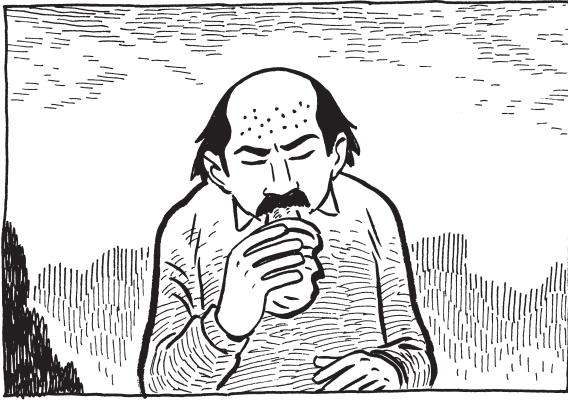


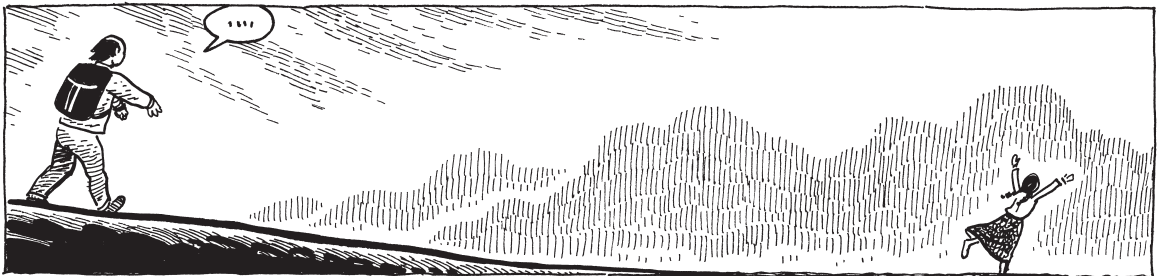
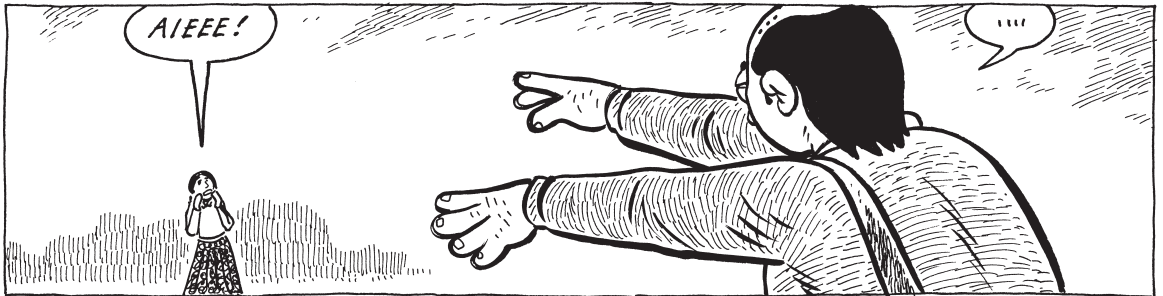
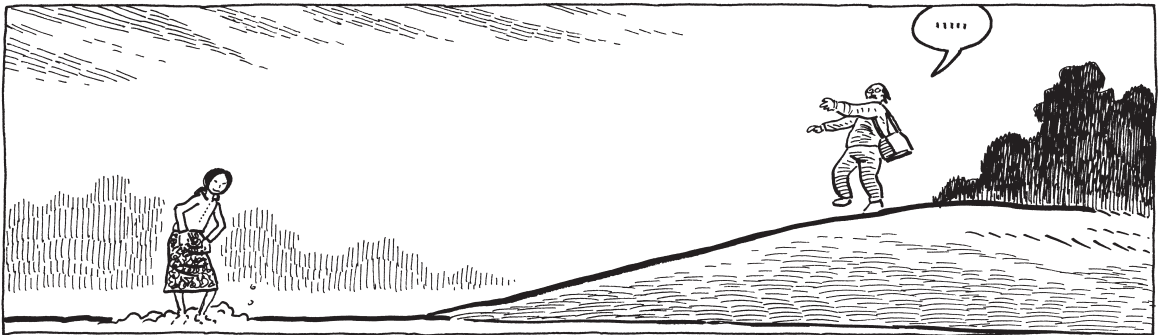


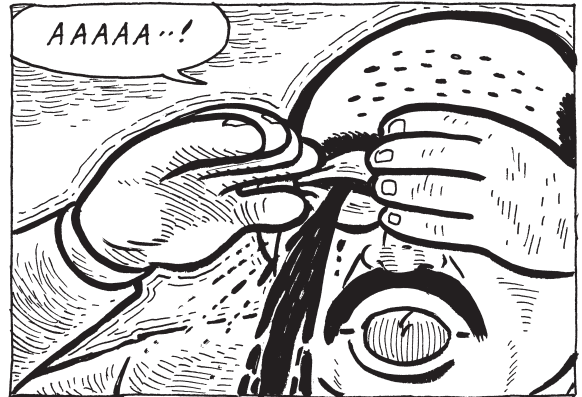


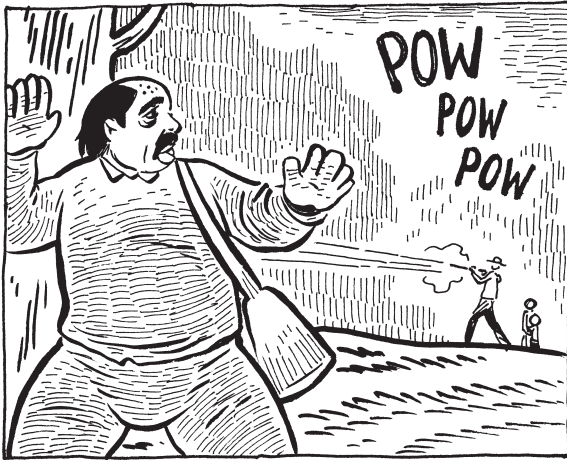


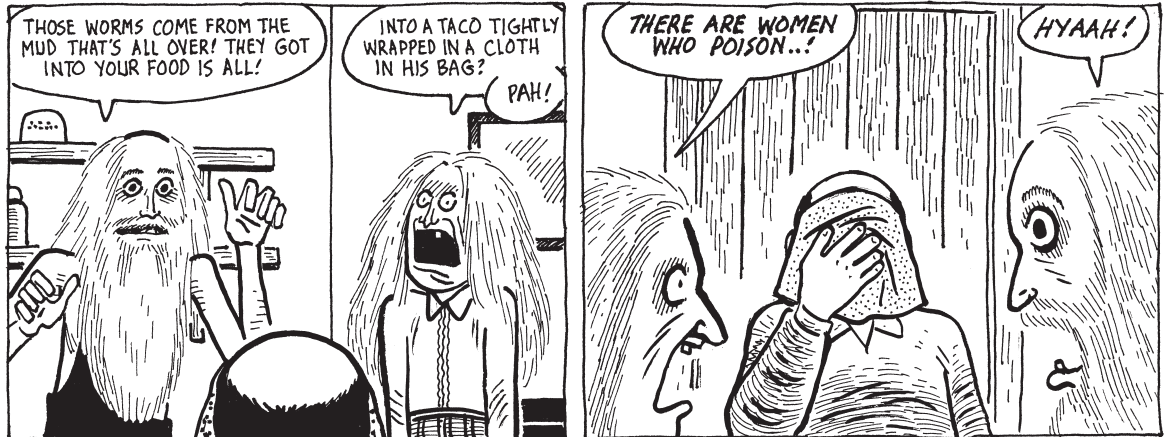
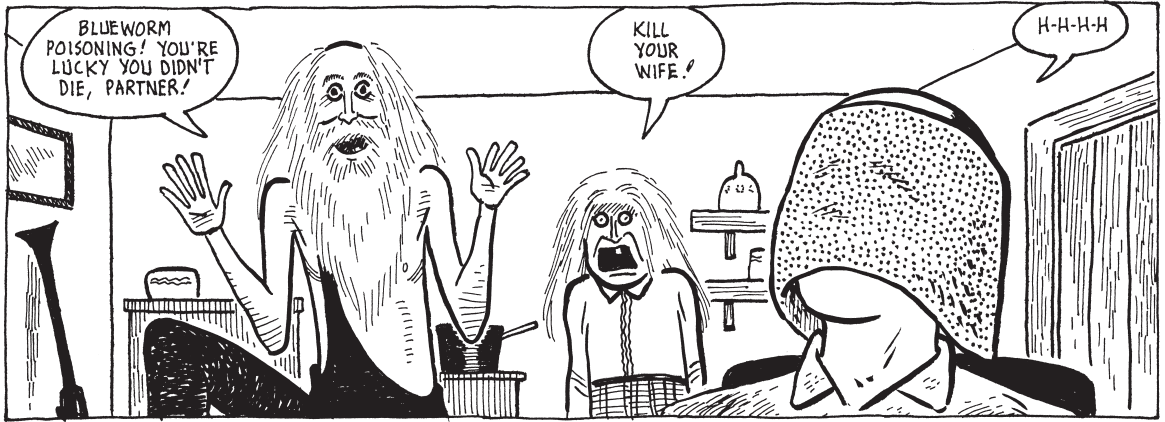


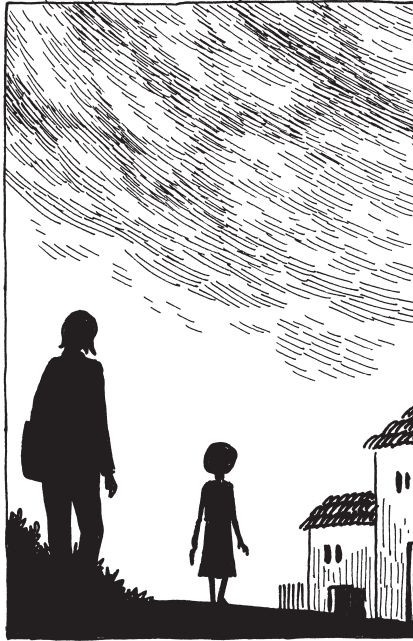
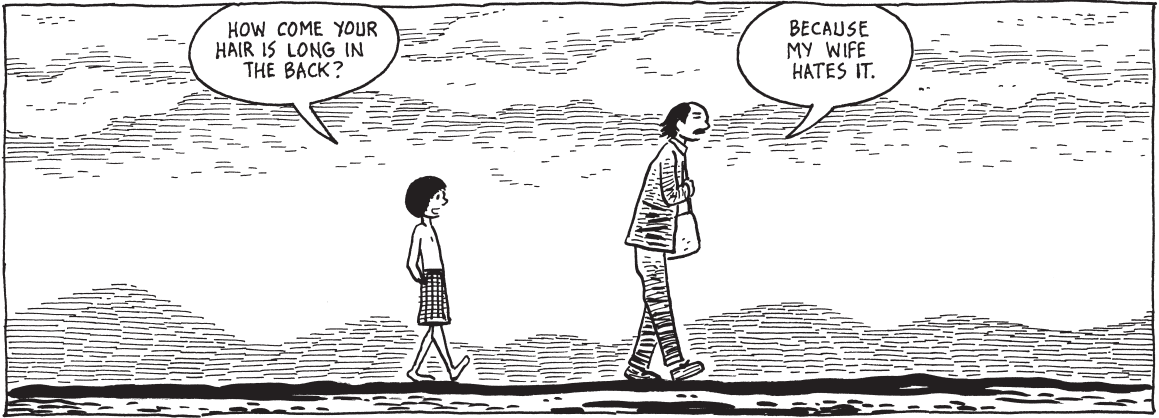








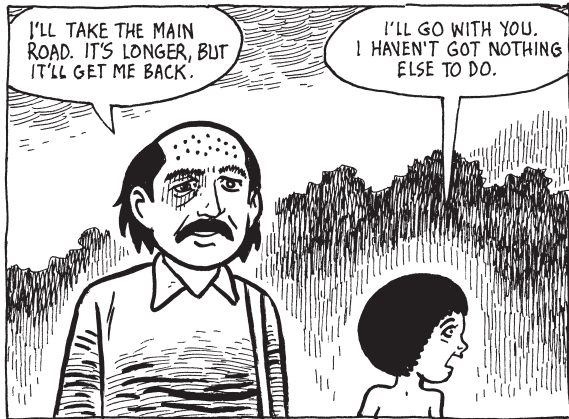






WHY DID YOU WAIT FOR ME?

YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT BACK HOME WITHOUT ME.



I'LL TAKE THE MAIN ROAD. IT'S LONGER, BUT IT'LL GET ME BACK.

I'LL GO WITH YOU. I HAVEN'T GOT NOTHING ELSE TO DO.



YOU SHOULD GET HOME NOW. YOUR MAMA AND PAPA WILL WORRY!

OH, I'M NOT GOING BACK HOME NEVER AGAIN.



I'M TIRED OF IT THERE. I THINK I'LL JUST FOLLOW THE ROAD.

PAST MY HOUSE, PAST YOURS, TO WHEREVER IT GOES.



I'M GOING TO TAKE YOU BACK HOME AND YOU'LL STAY THERE!

NO, I'M GOING.

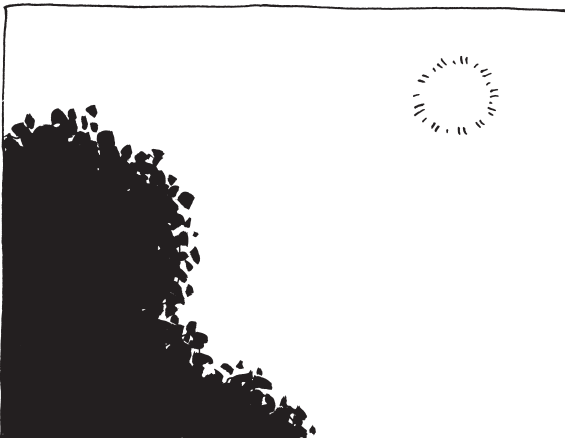
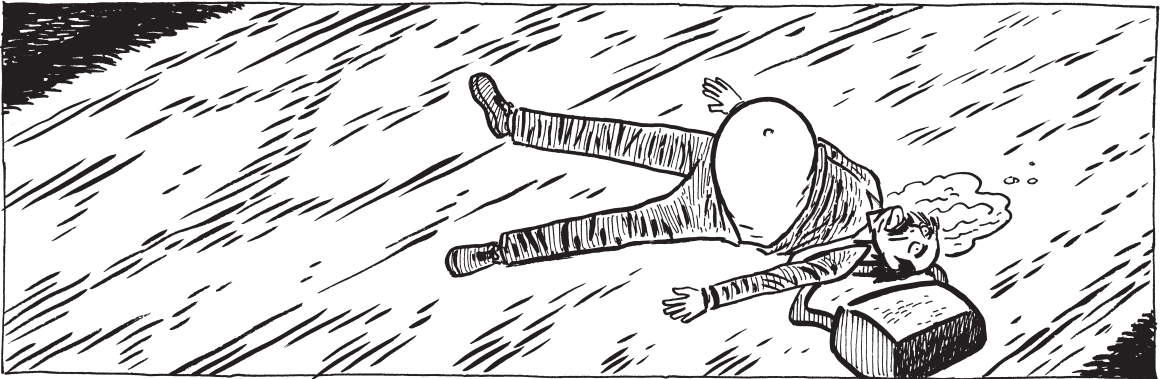
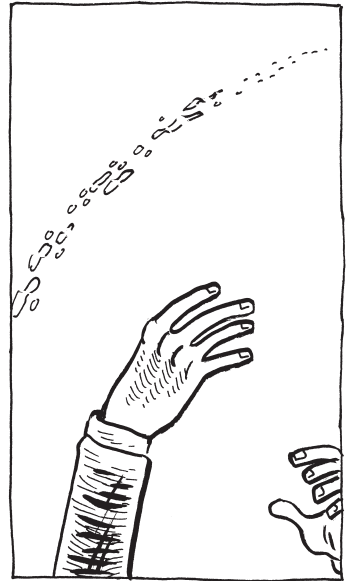
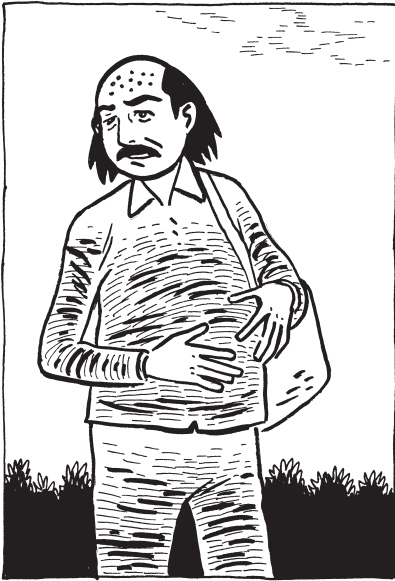
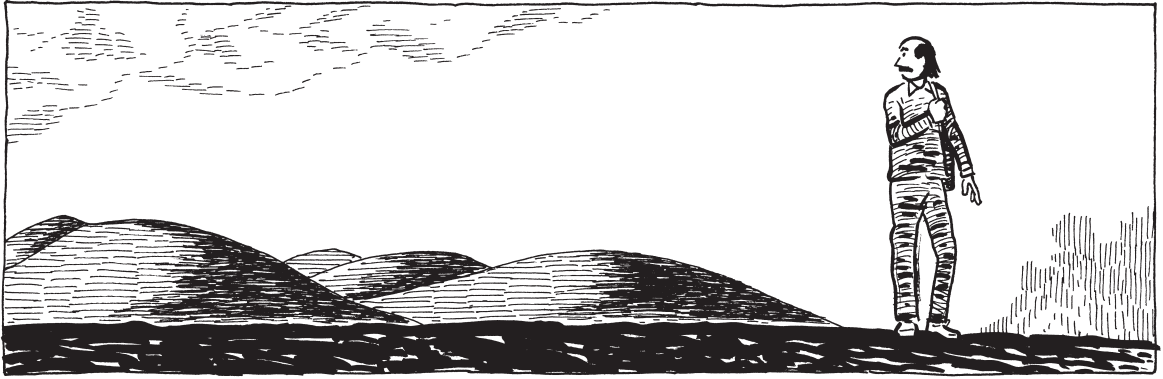


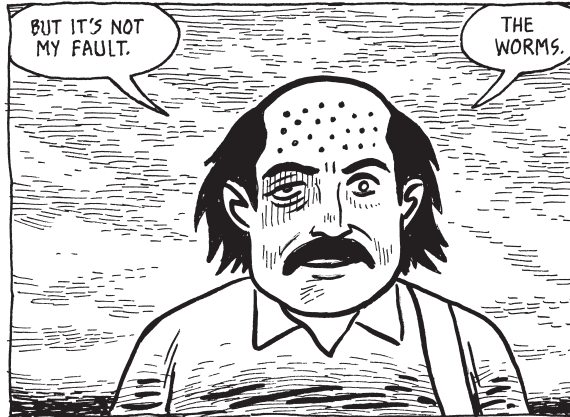
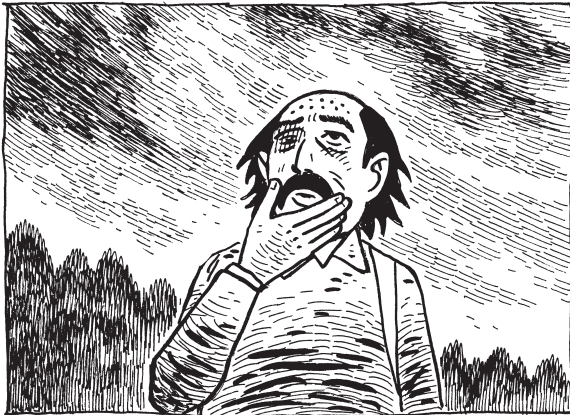
WHAT ABOUT YOUR MAMA AND PAPA?

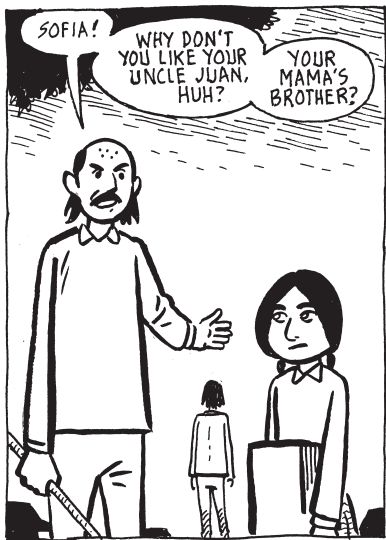
THEY'LL BE FINE WITHOUT ME.

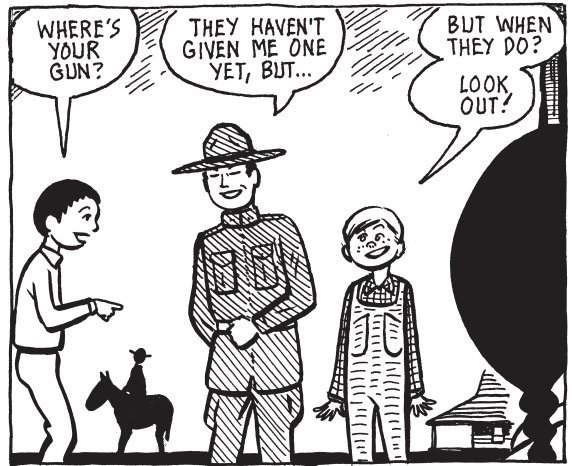


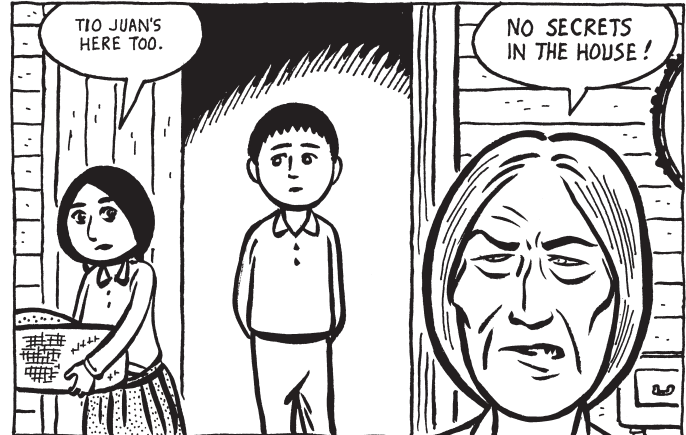
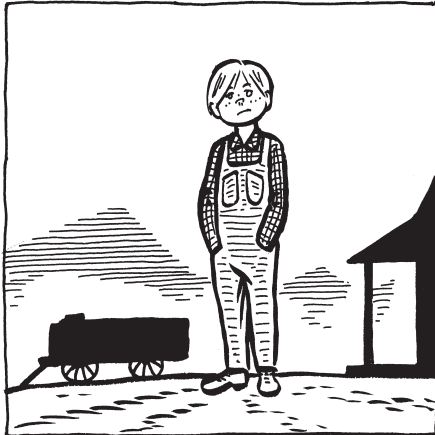
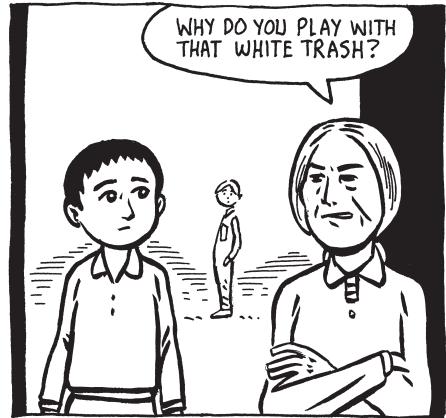
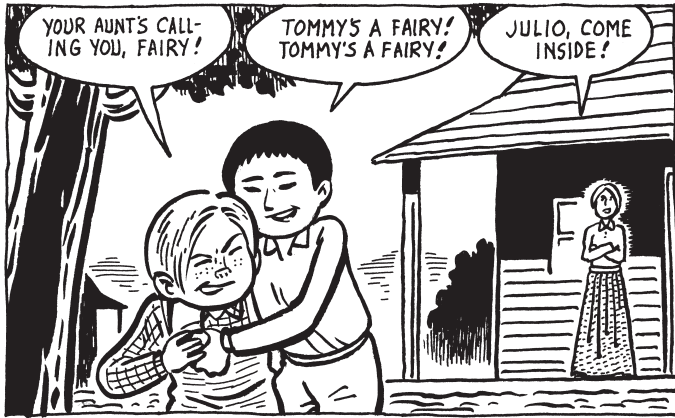
HOW CAN I SEE THE WORLD IF I STAY HOME ALL THE TIME?

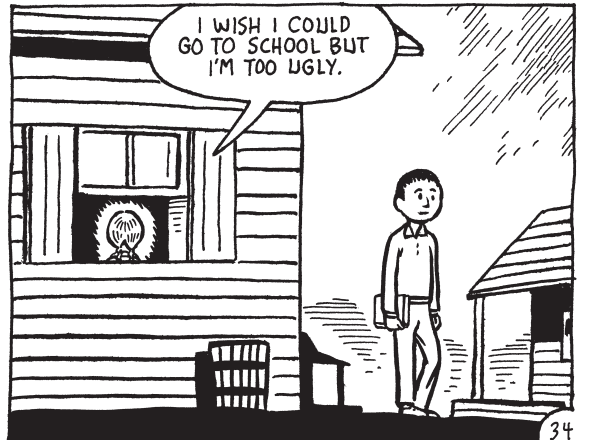
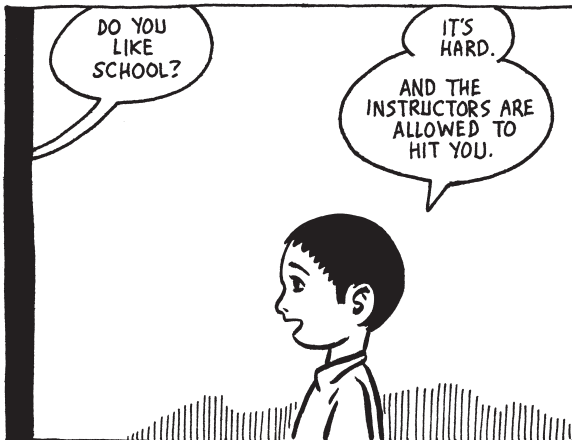
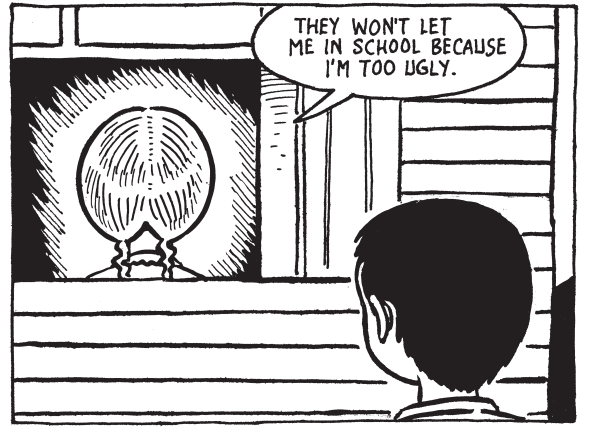
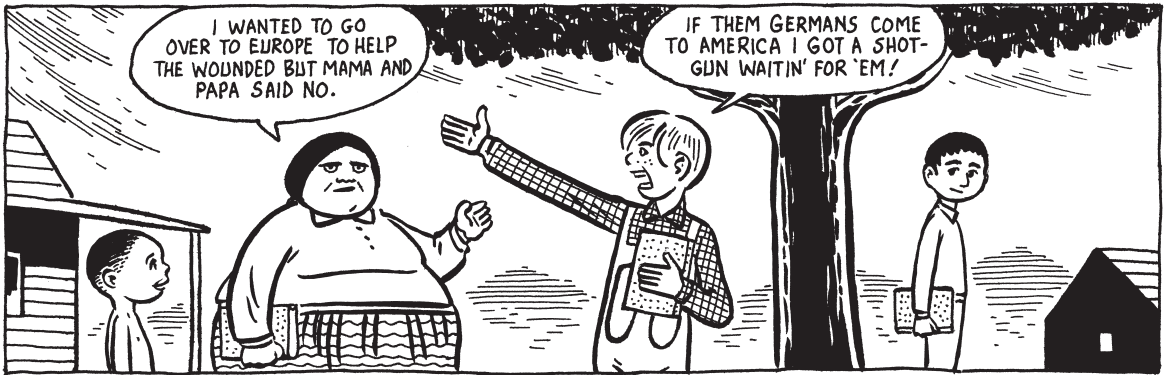


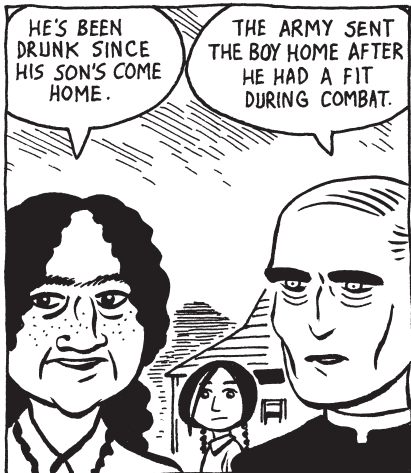


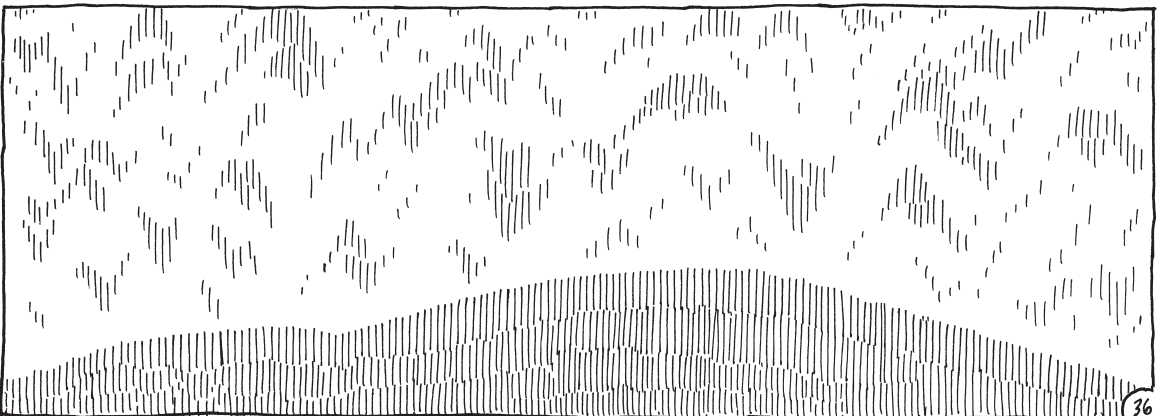
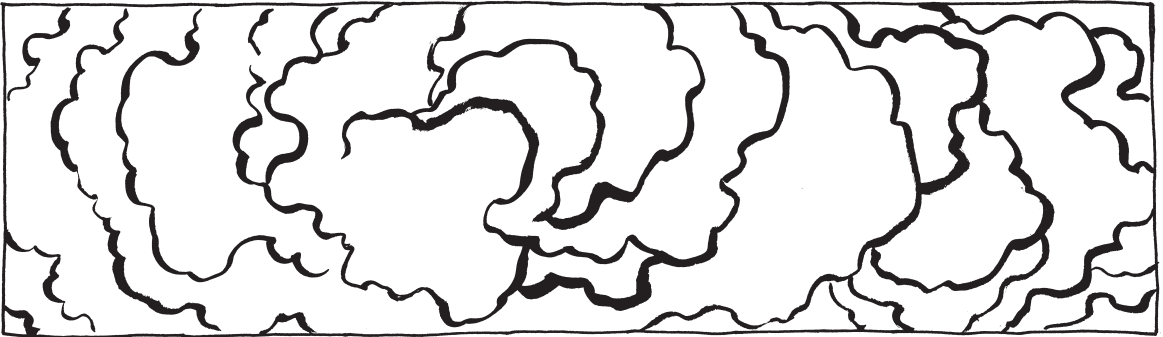


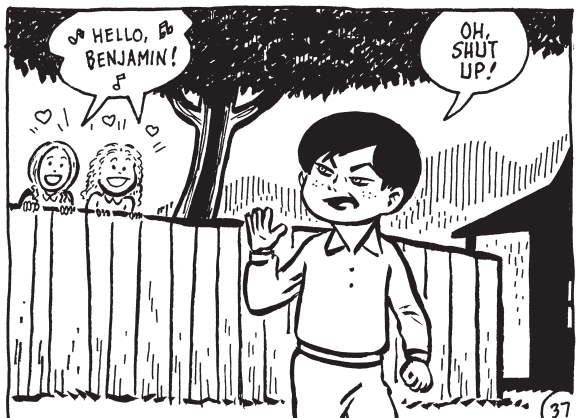
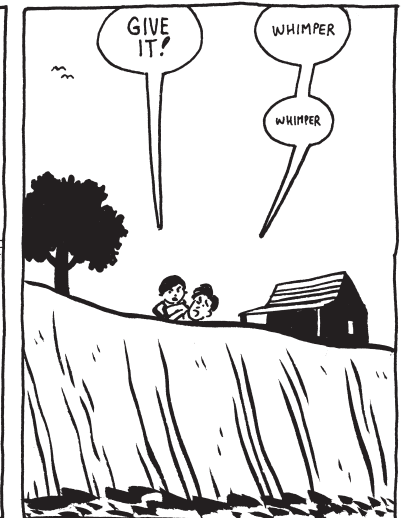
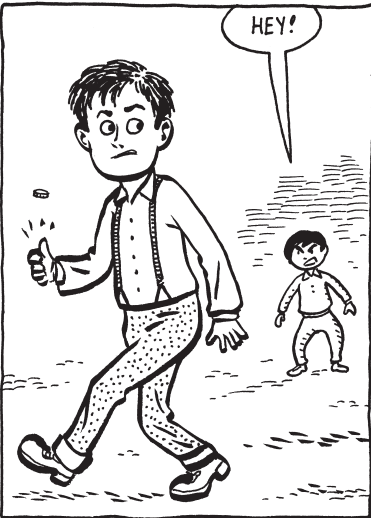
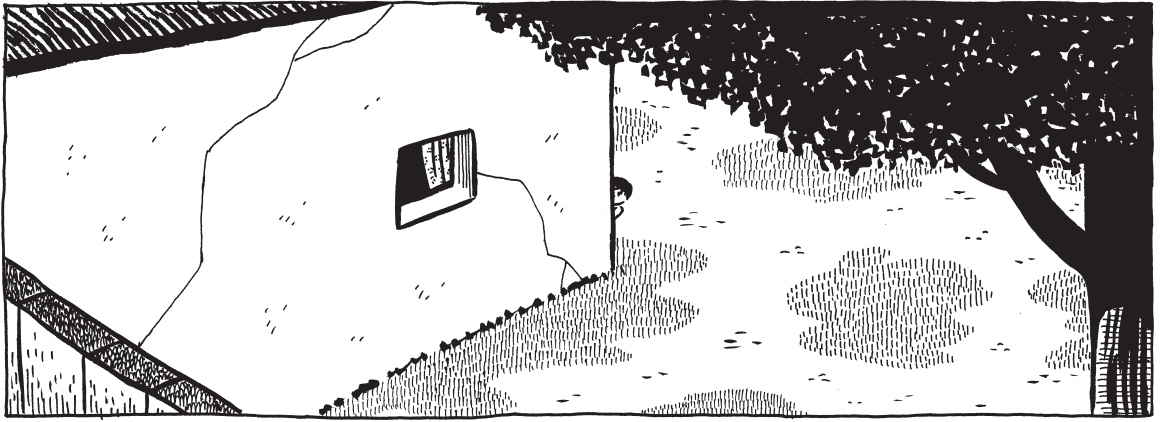


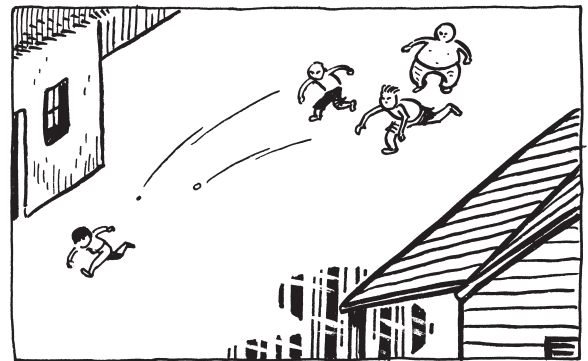


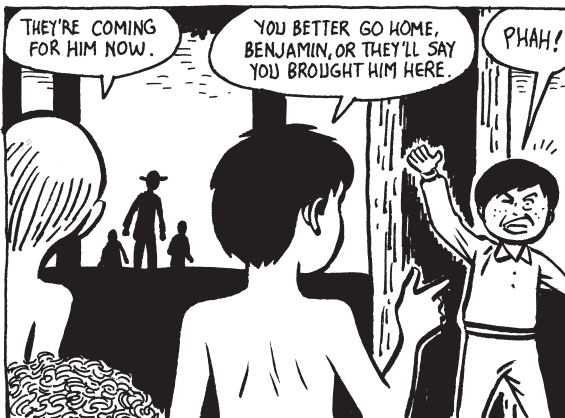
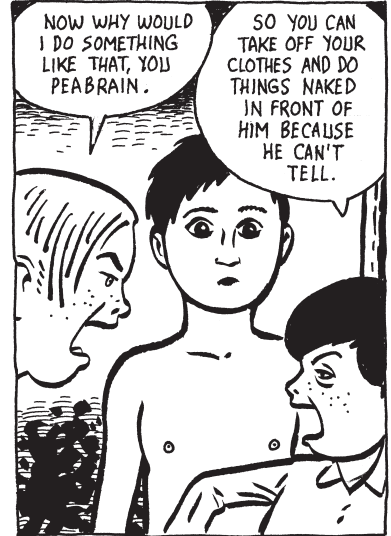
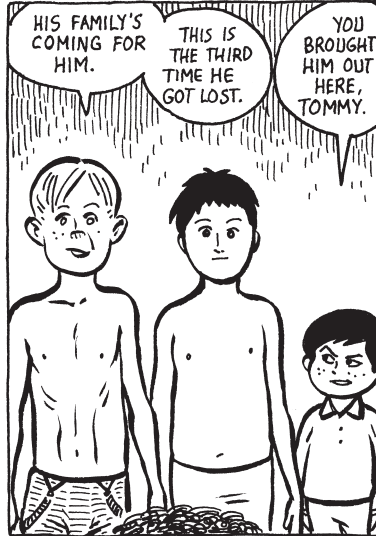


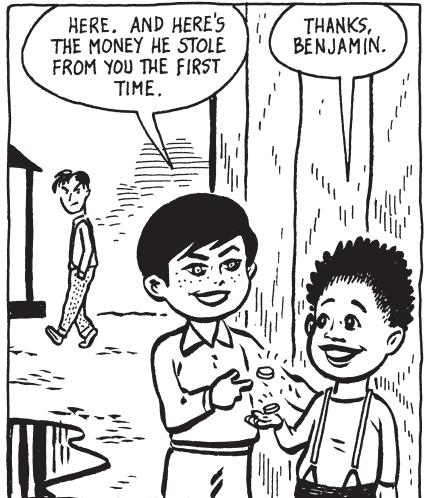
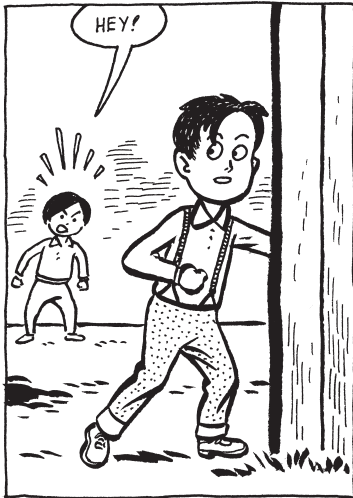


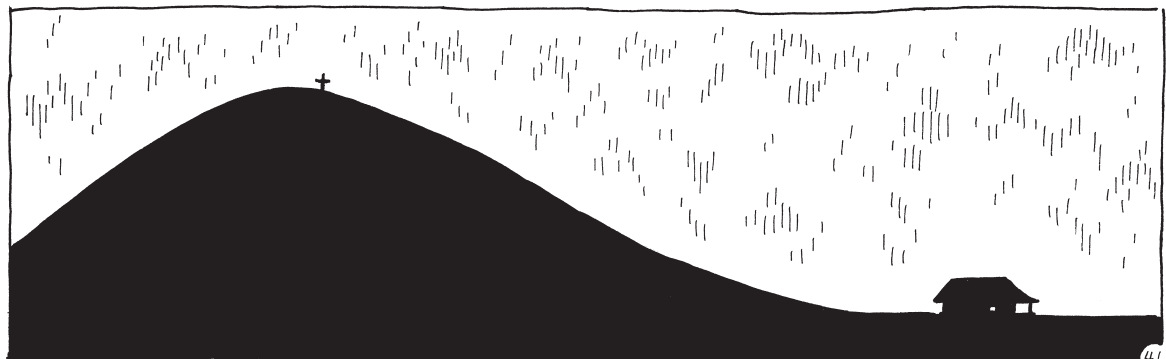
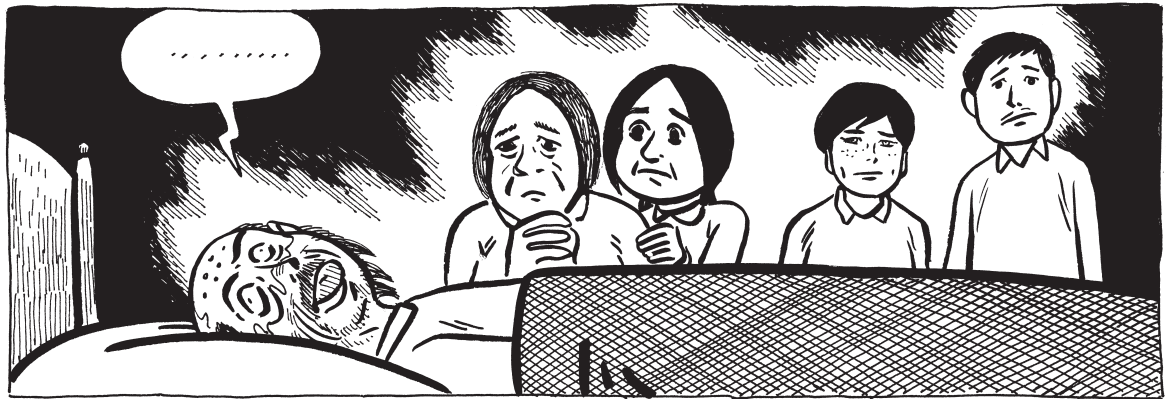
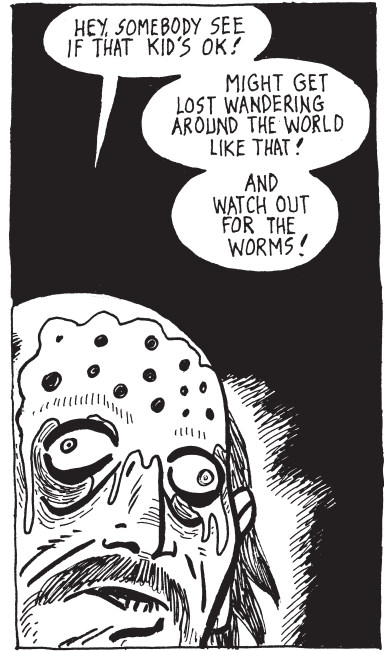
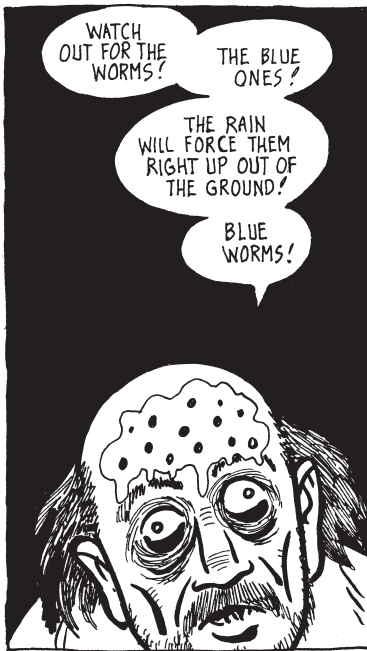
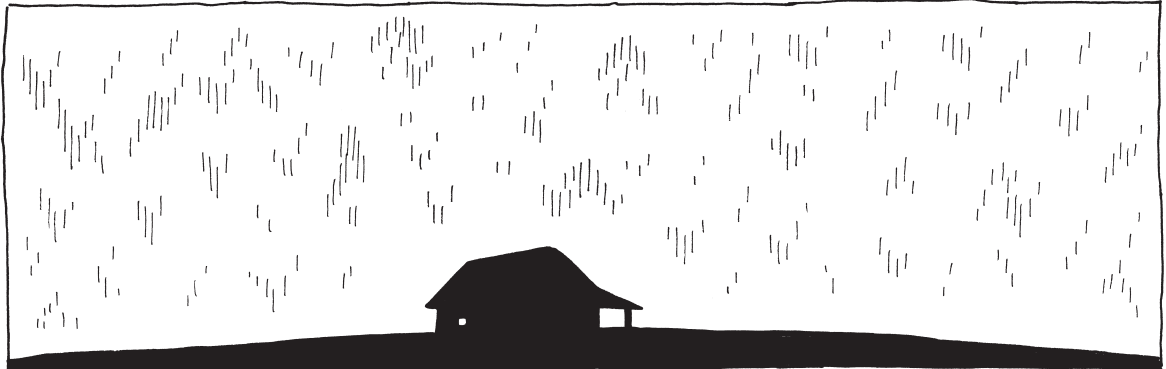


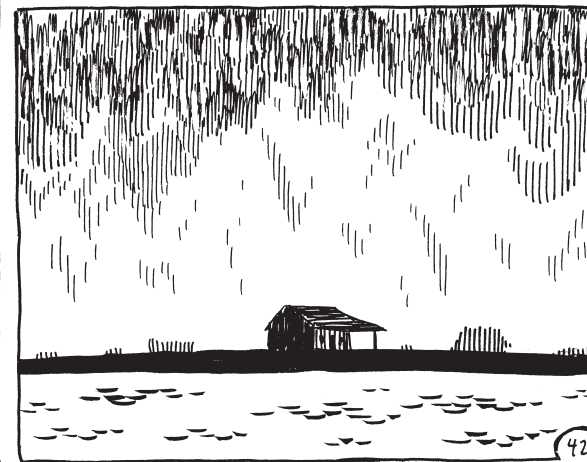
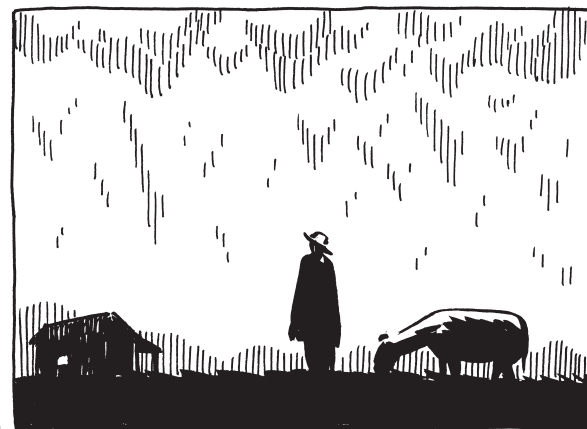
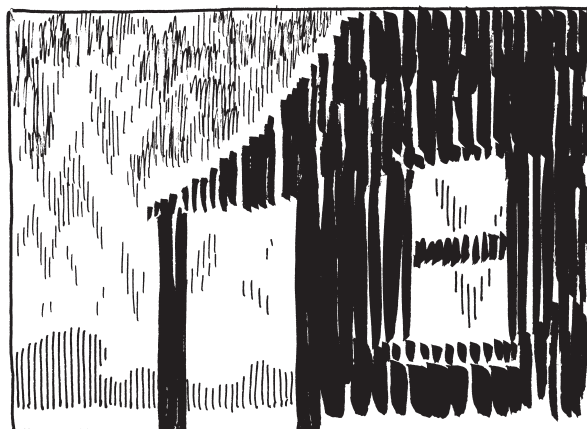
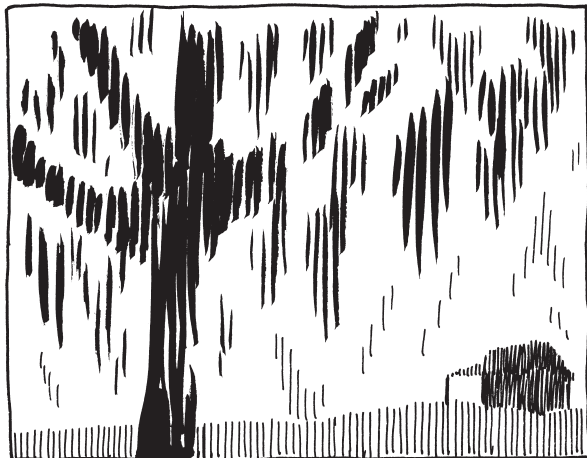
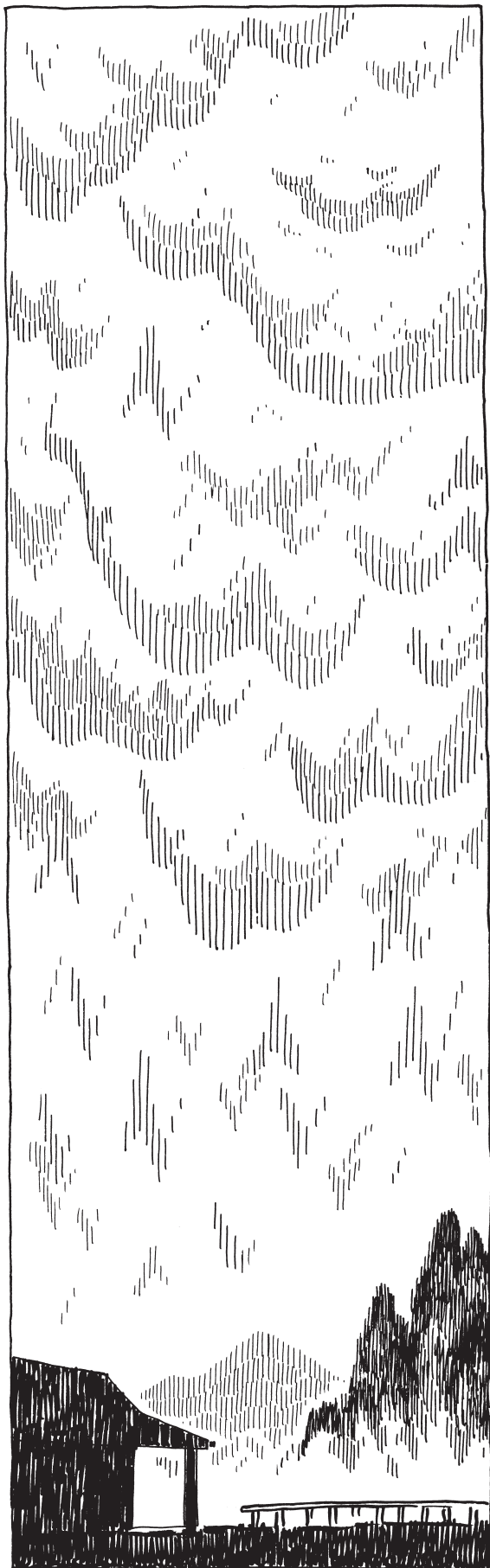


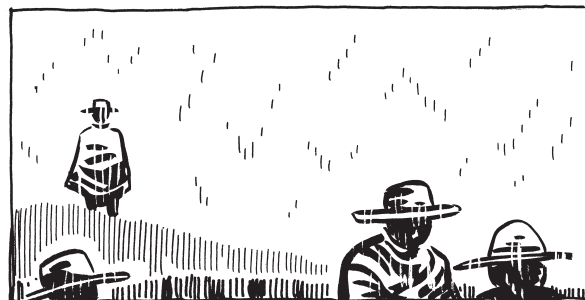
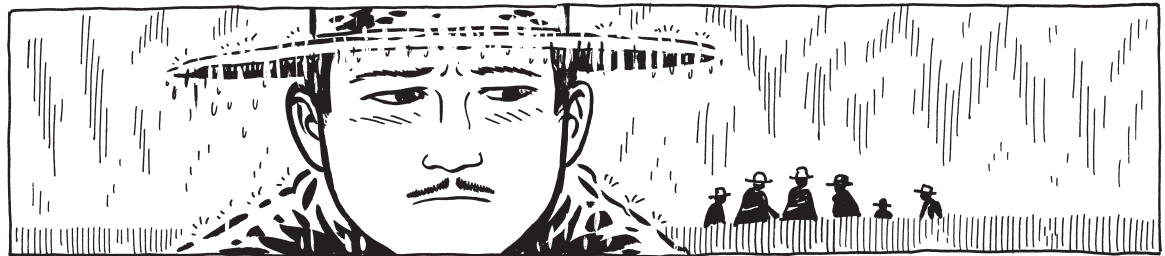
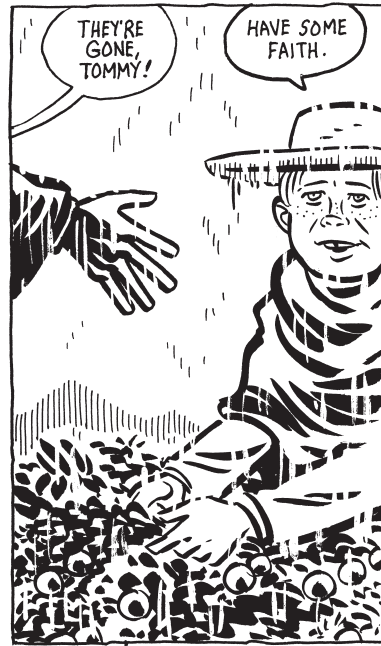
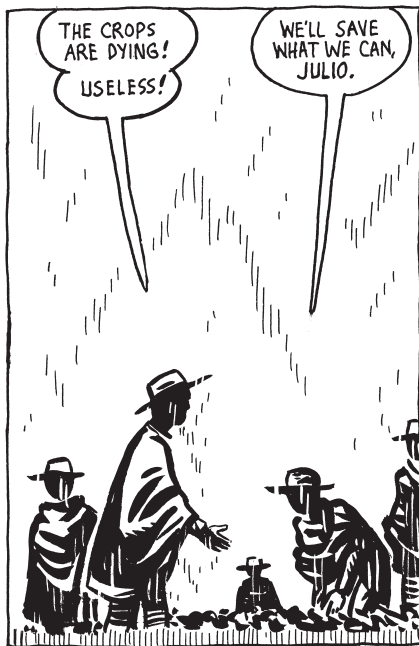
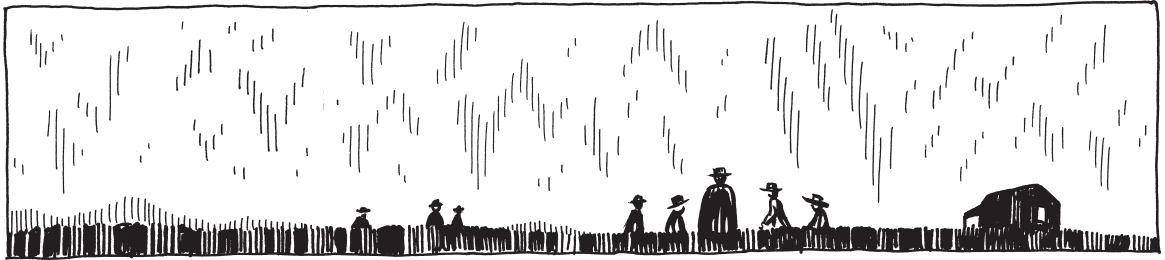










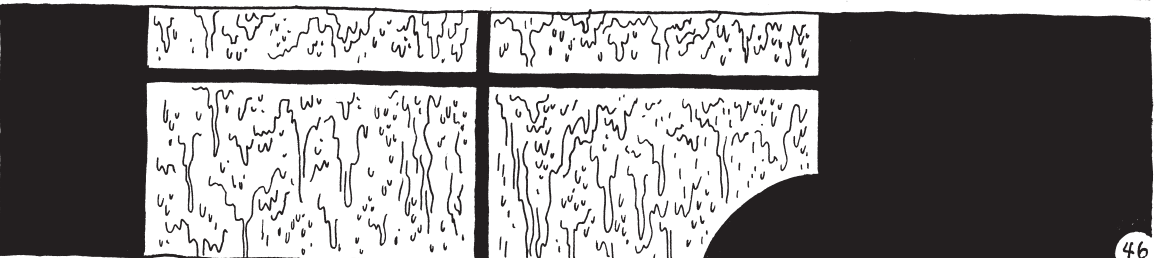
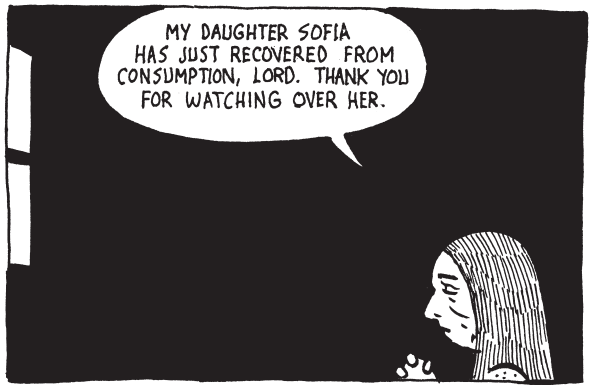
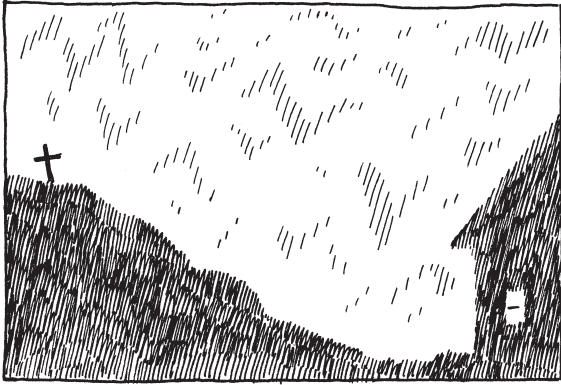




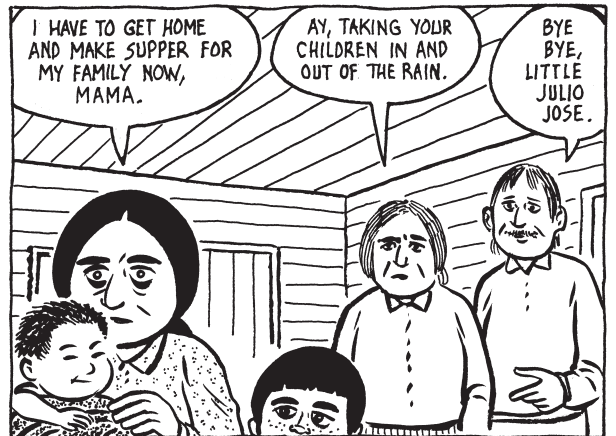
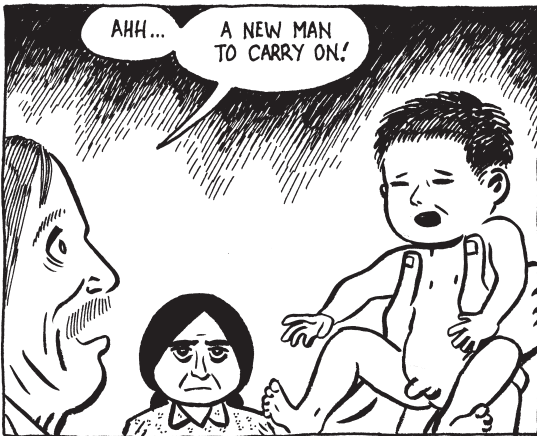
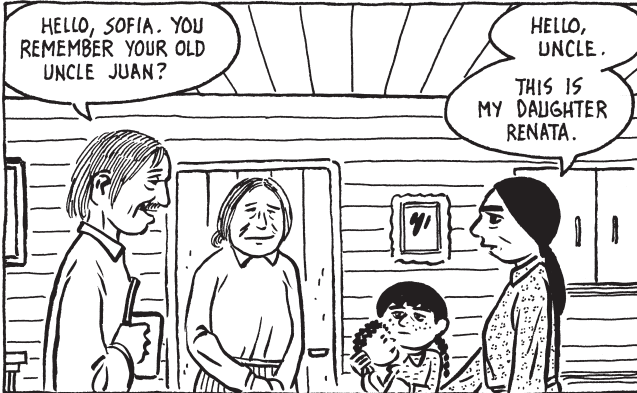
WATCH OUT FOR THE COLOREDS IN THE CITY, BOYS.

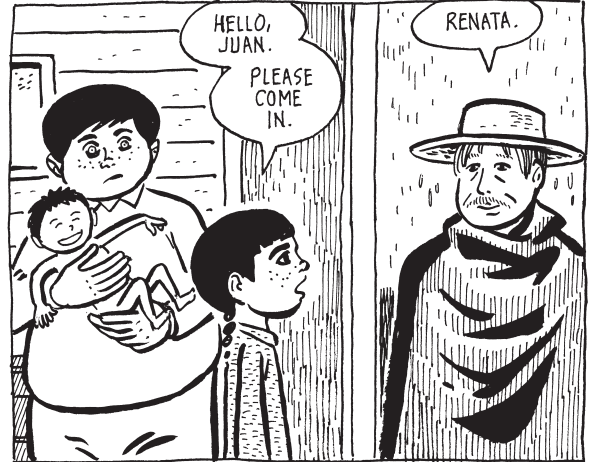
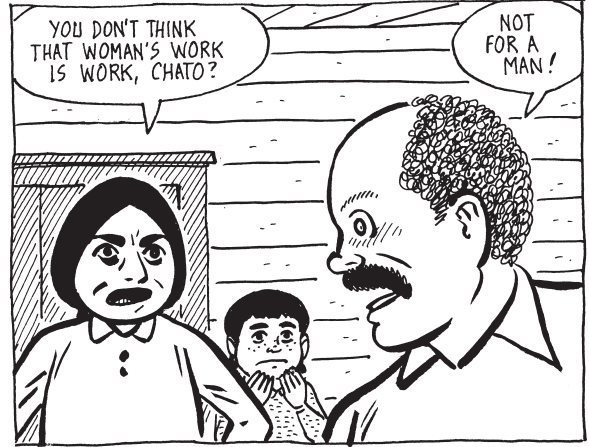
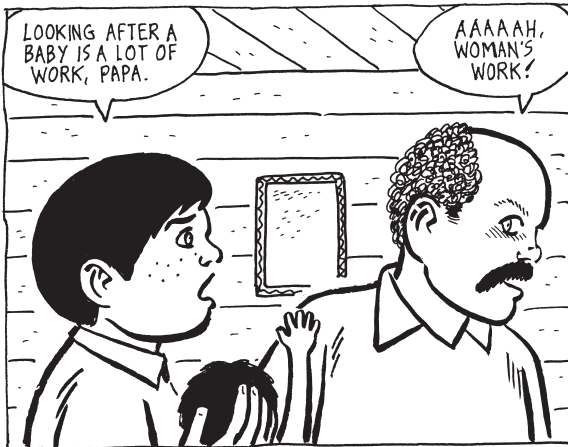
YOU'RE TWO OF THE GOOD MEXICANS.

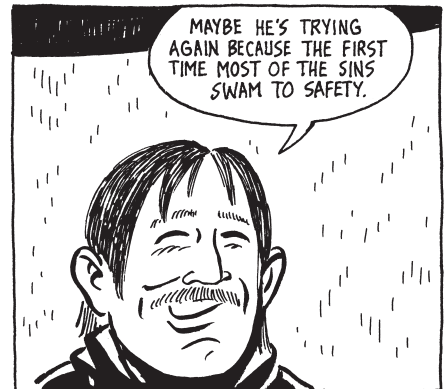
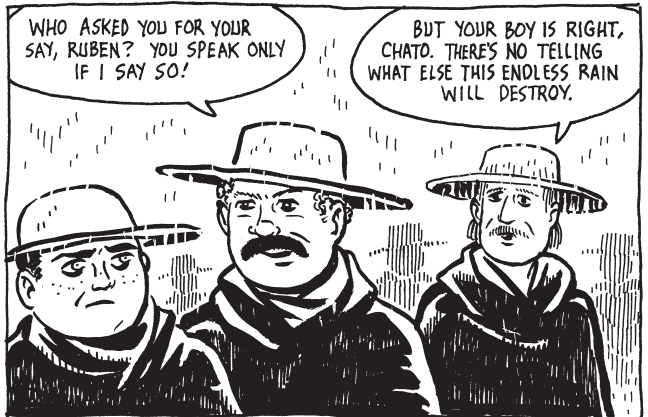
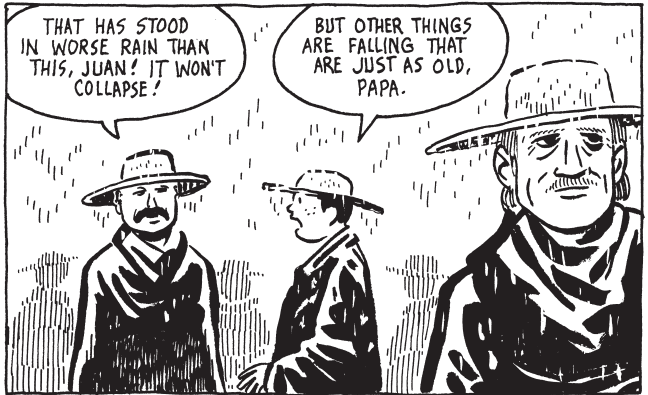


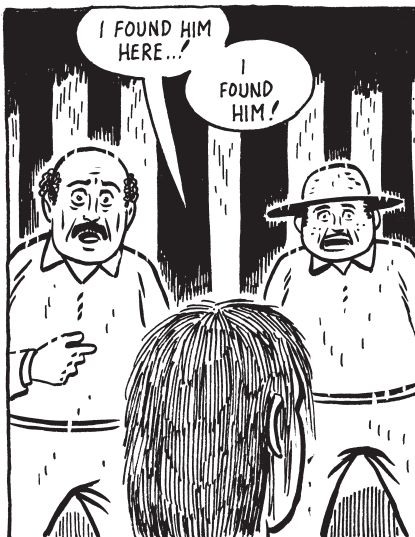
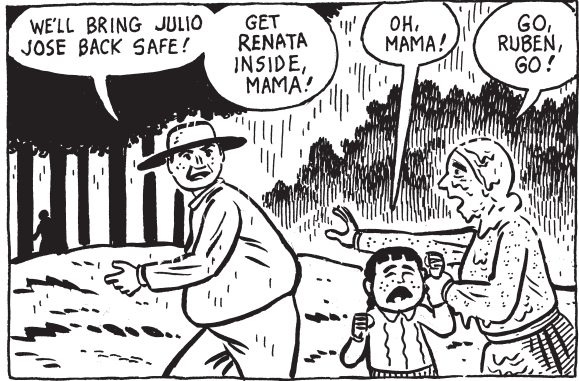


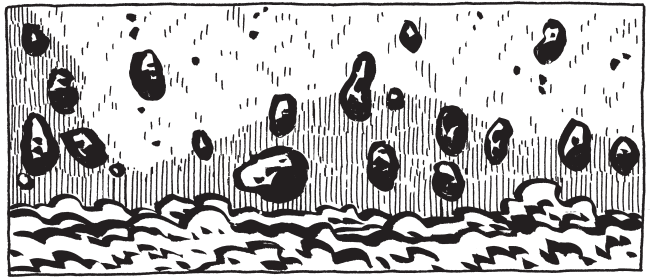
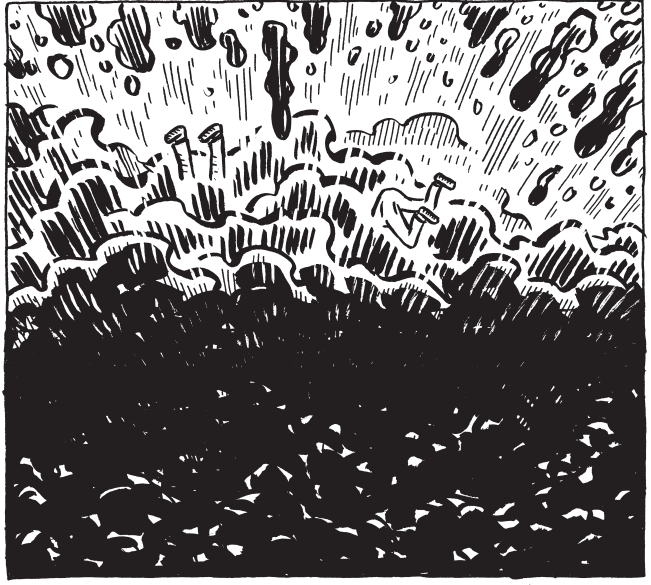
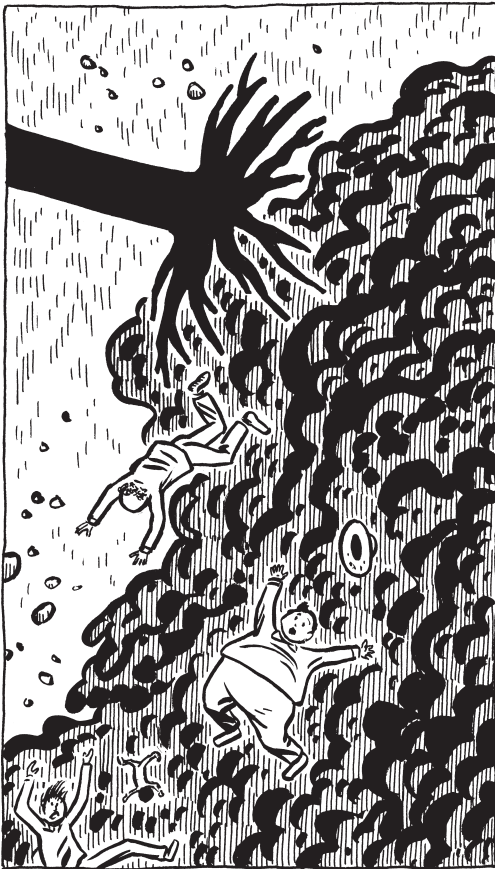


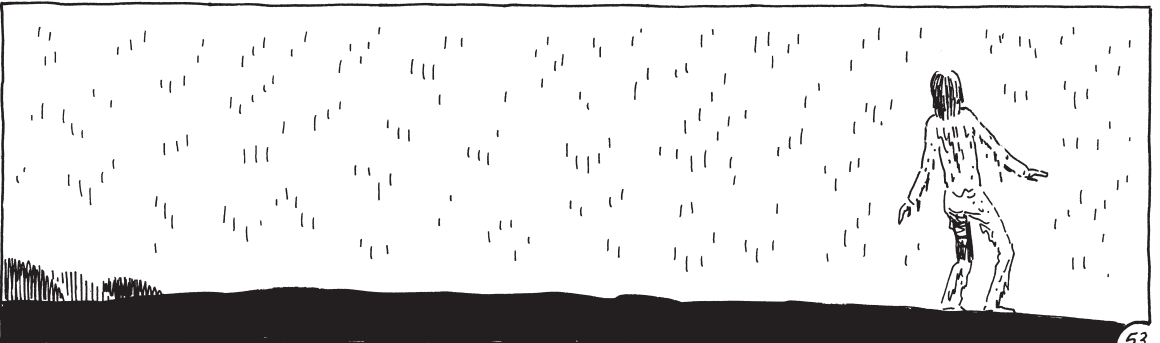
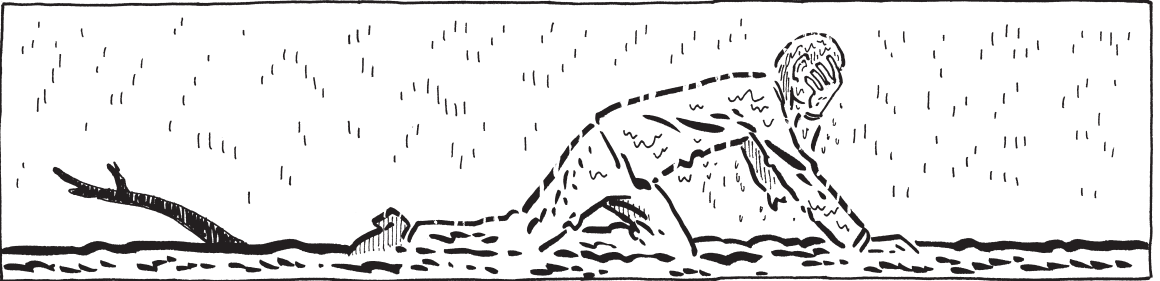
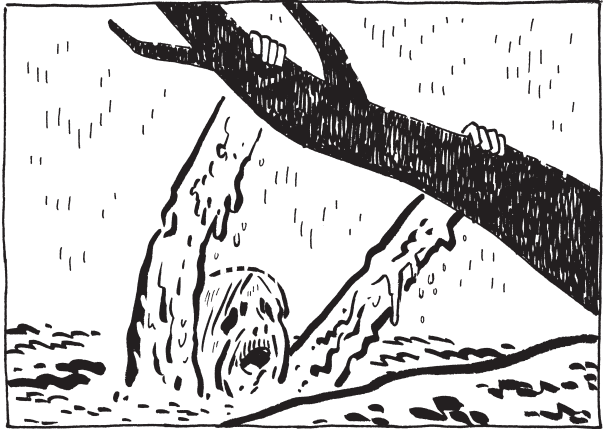
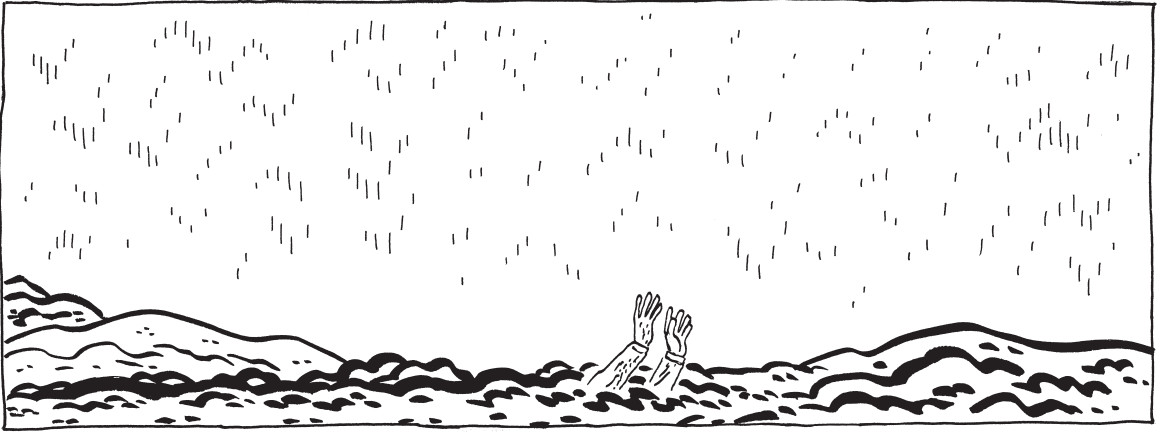


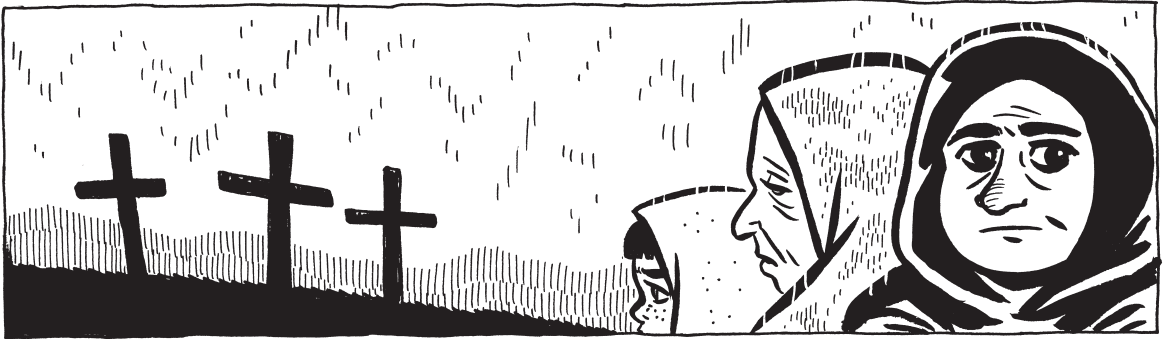


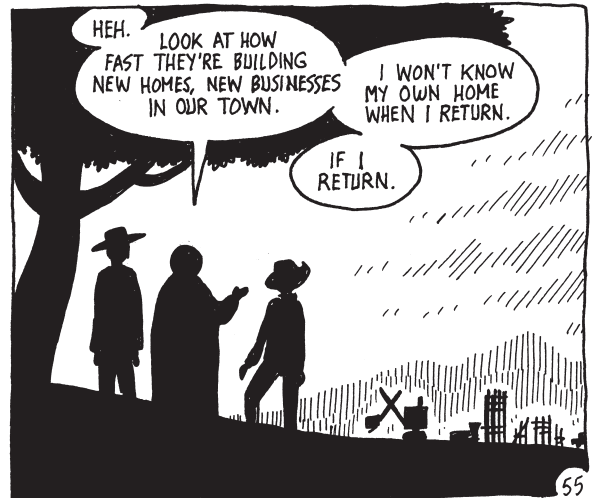
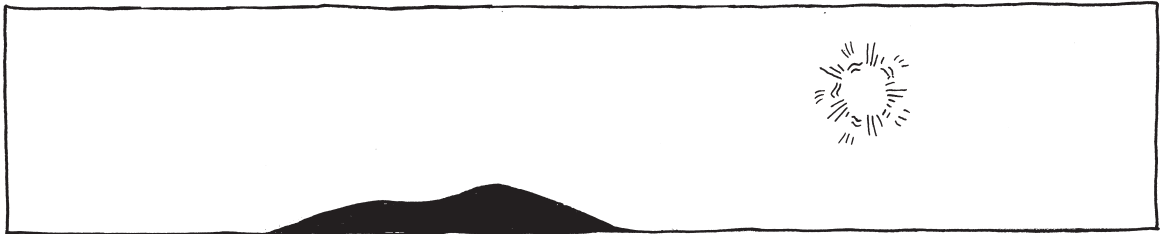
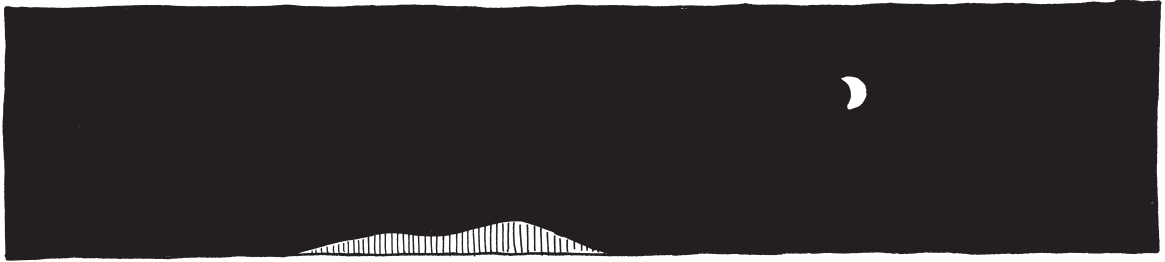


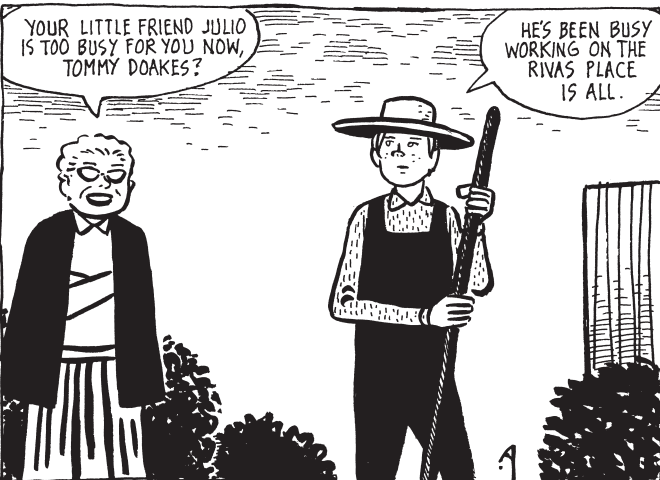
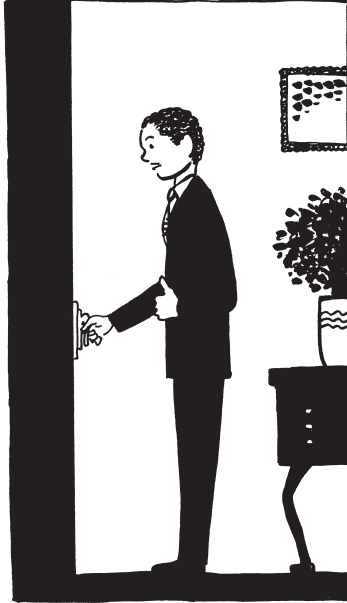


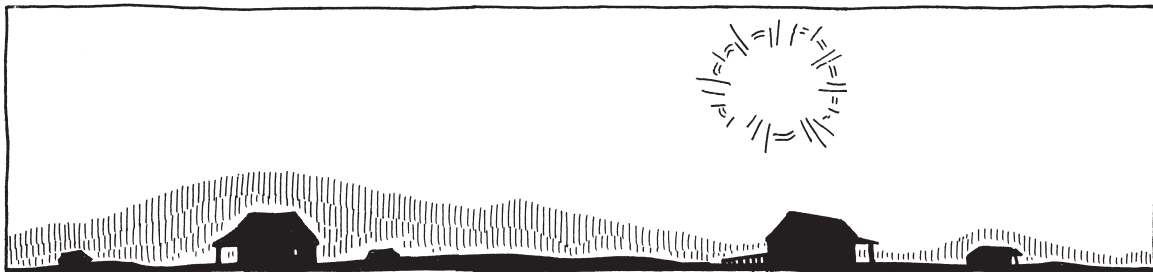


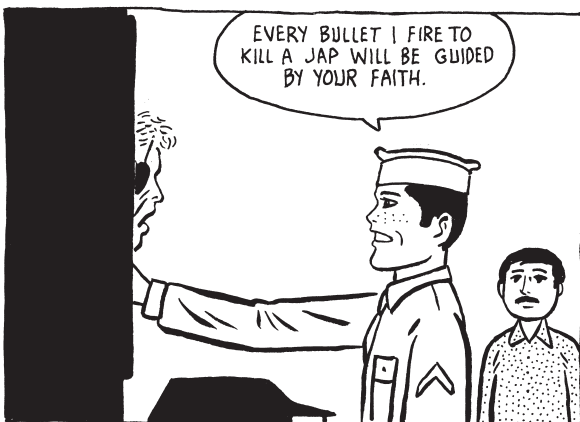
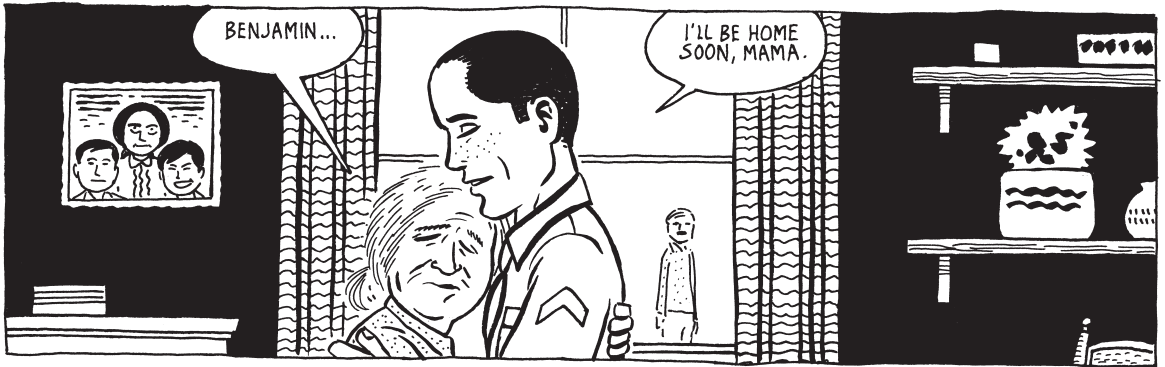


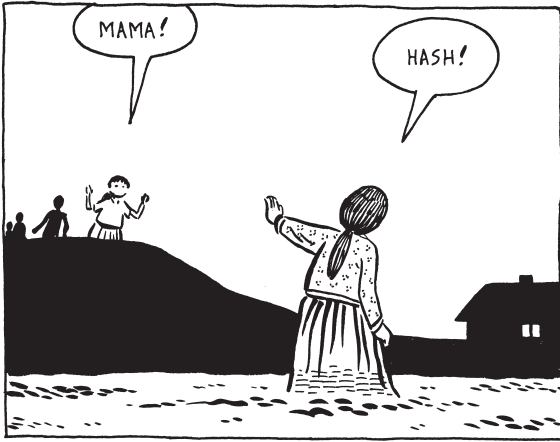












MAMA!

HASH!



SHE'S LOOKING FOR MY PAPA AND BROTHERS AGAIN, GRANDMA!

SOFIA!



THEY'RE HERE, MAMA! THEY CALL ME AND I DON'T COME IN TIME!

SOFIA, YOUR HUSBAND AND TWO SONS WERE KILLED IN A MUDSLIDE. THEY'RE DEAD.



THEY ARE? SINCE WHEN?

SINCE SEVERAL YEARS AGO.



WELL, OF COURSE THEY ARE.

AND HERE I AM KNEE DEEP IN MUDDY WATER.



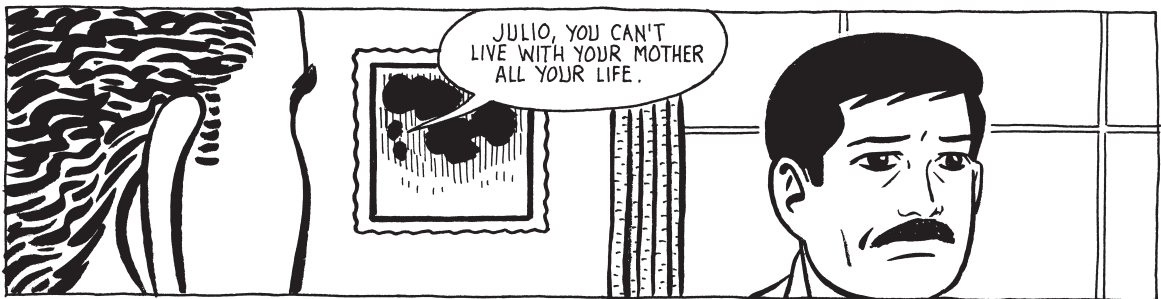
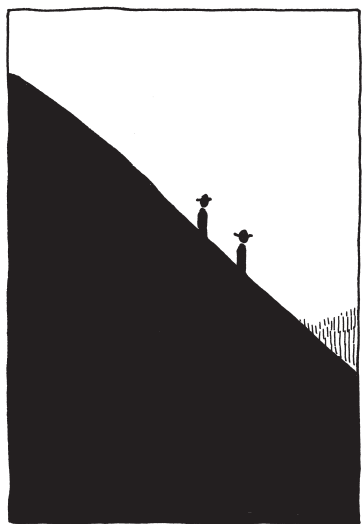
HEH, SOMEBODY'S BEEN FOOLING ME.

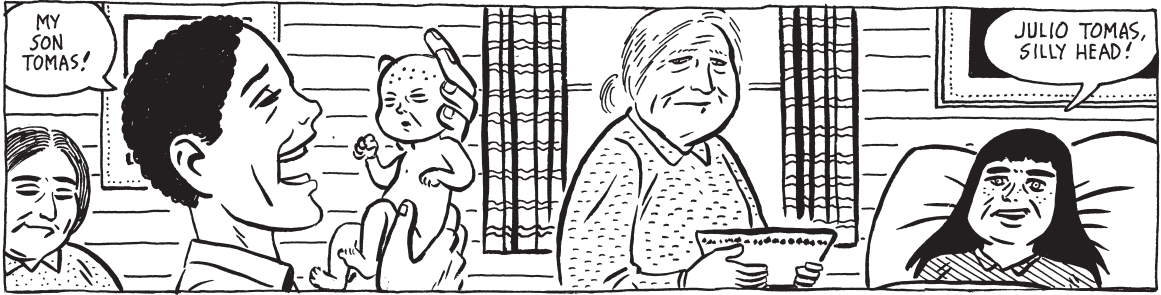


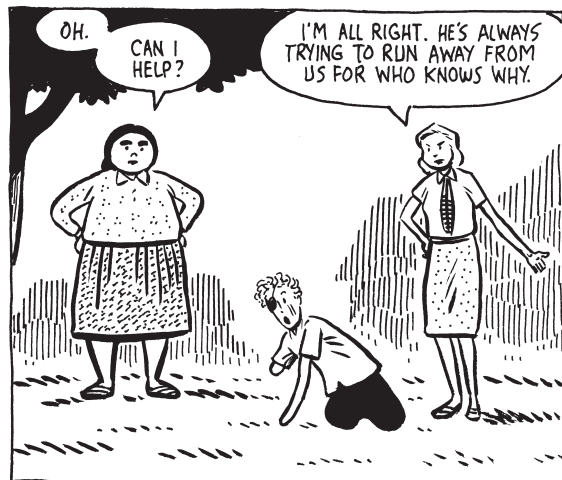
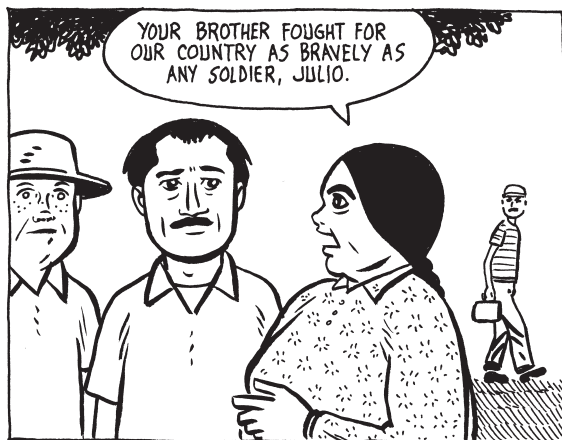
WELL! NOW WHAT?

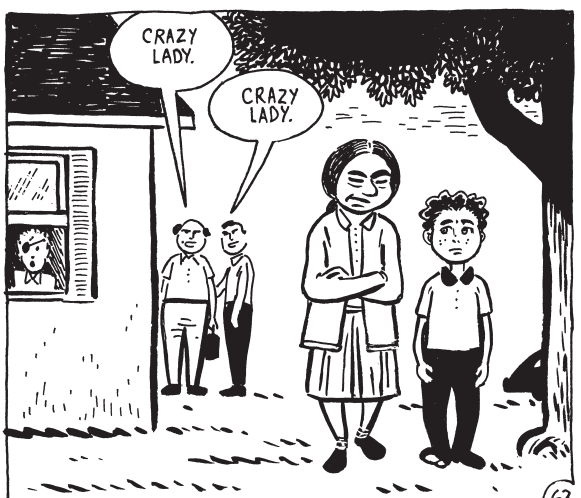
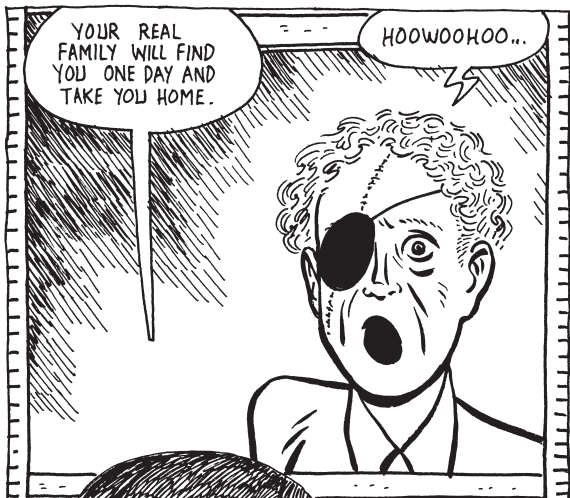
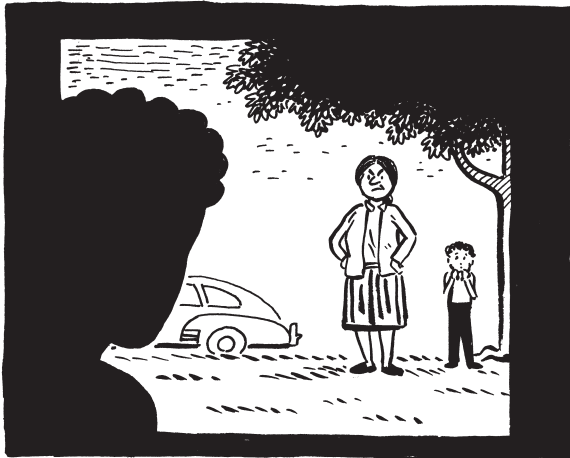
WE HAVE TO GO HOME NOW.

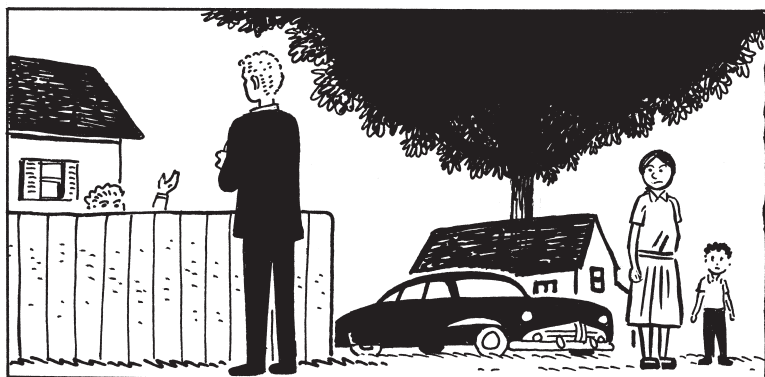


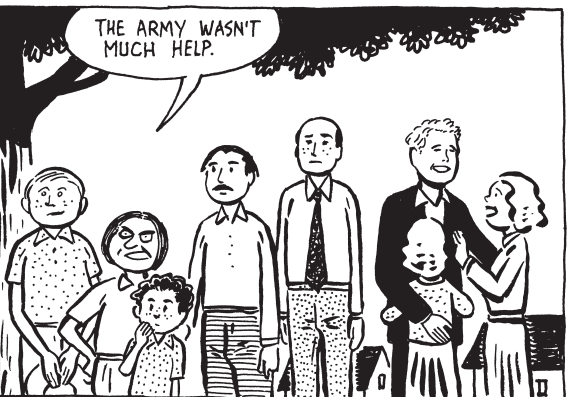
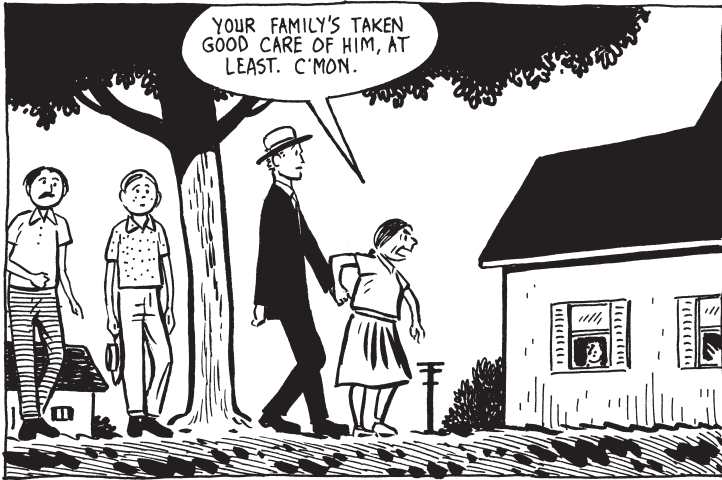


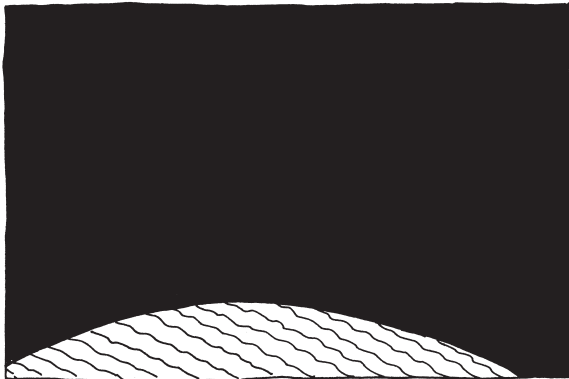


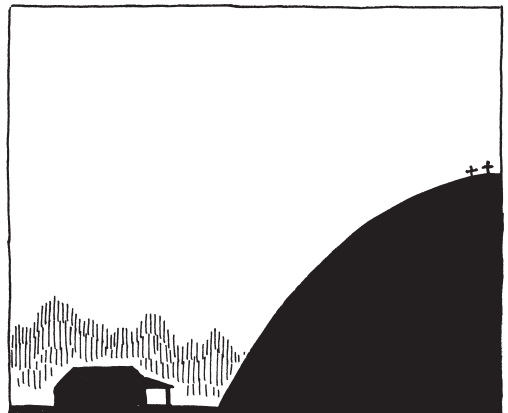
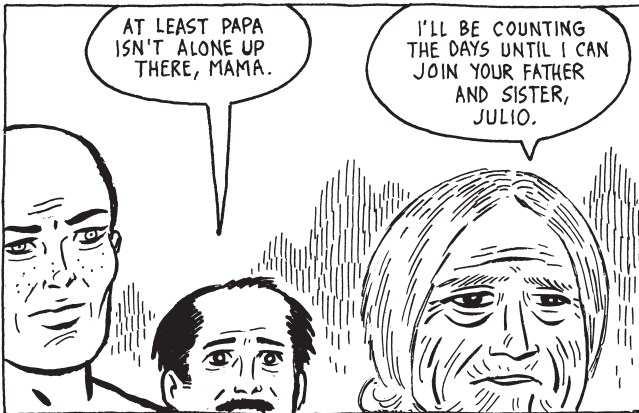
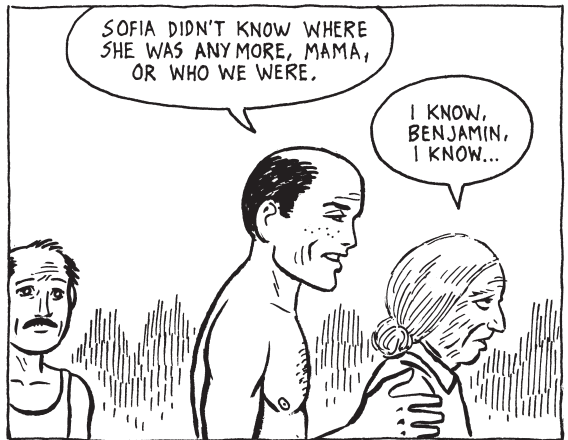
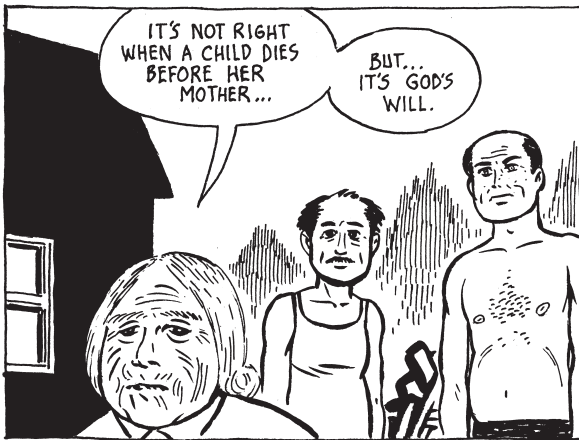


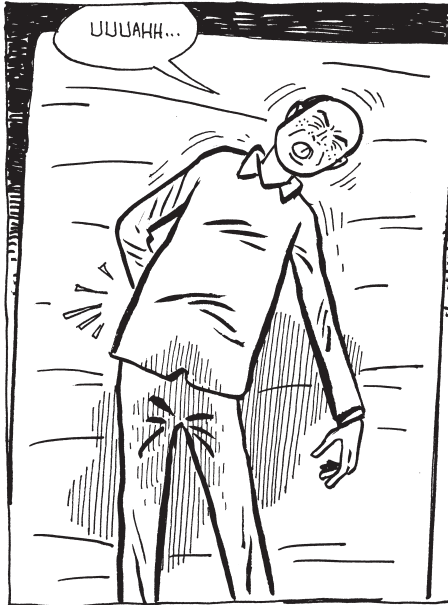
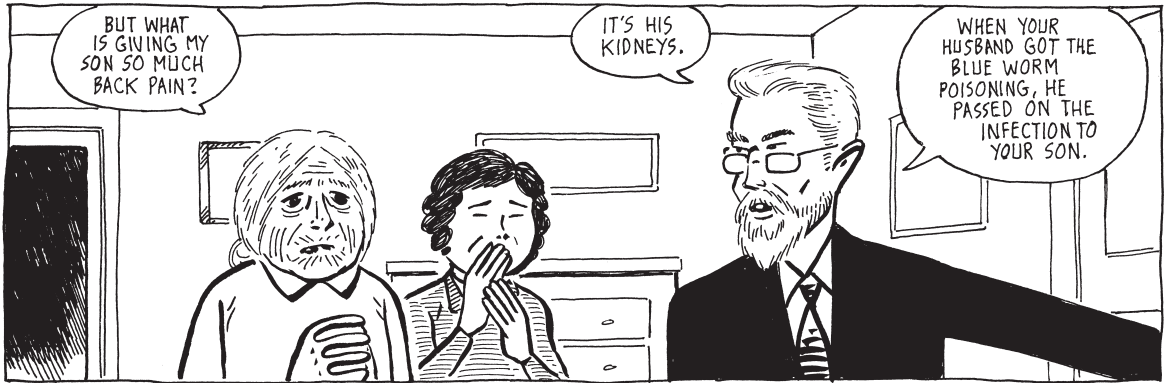


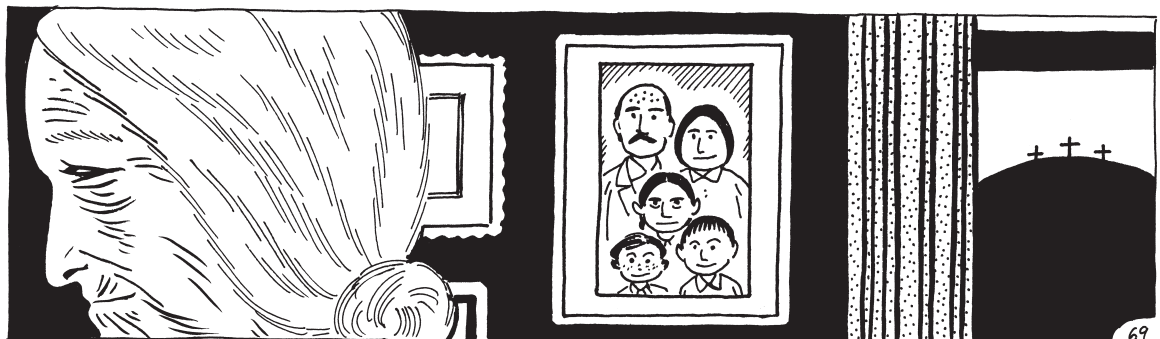
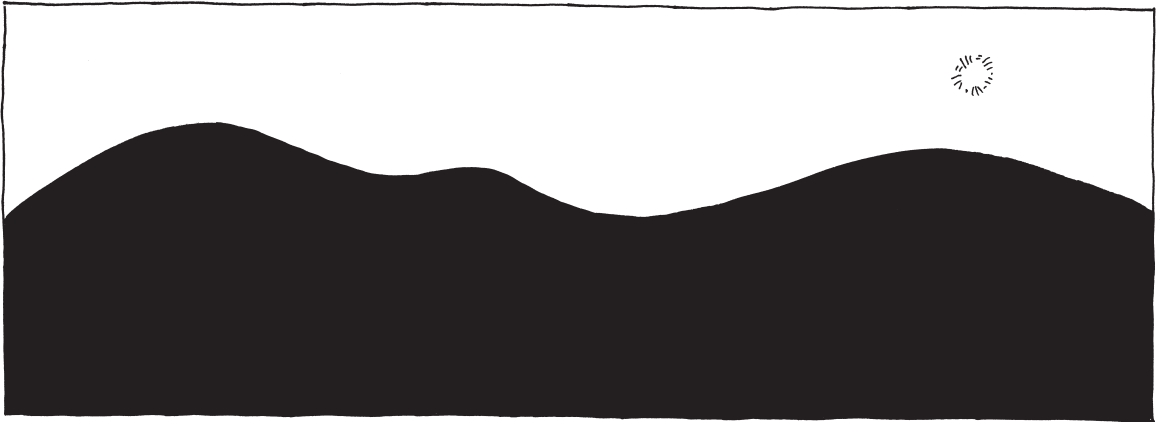


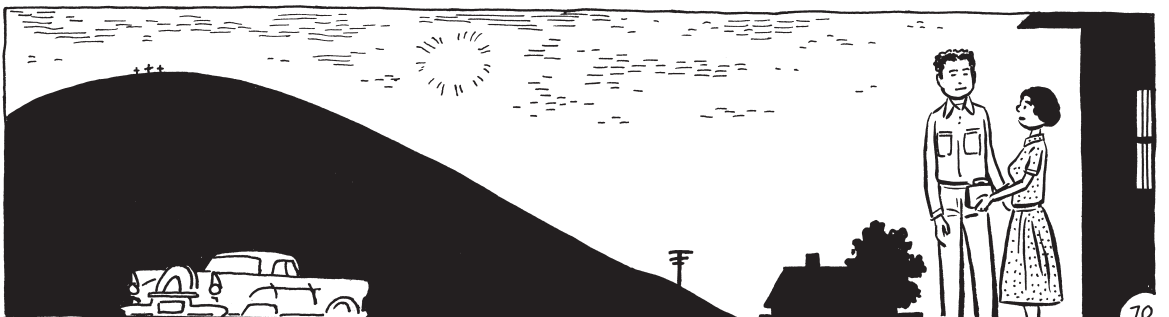


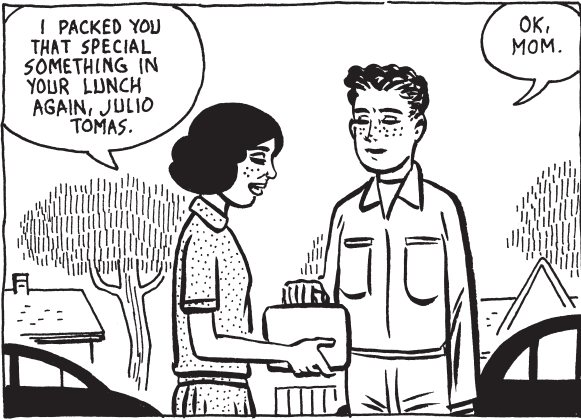


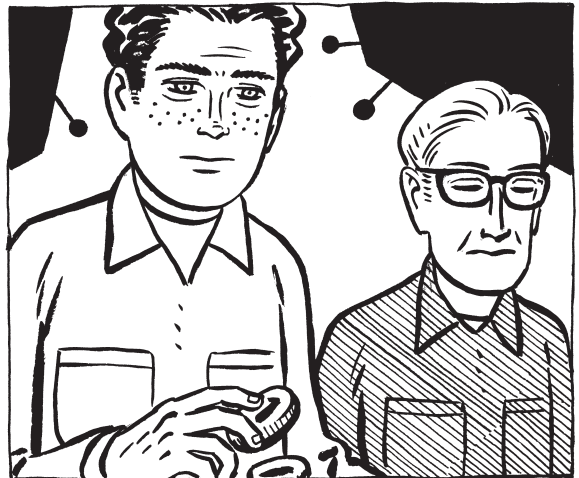
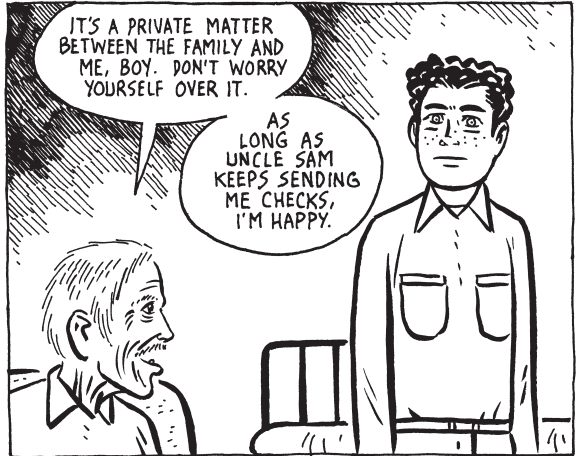
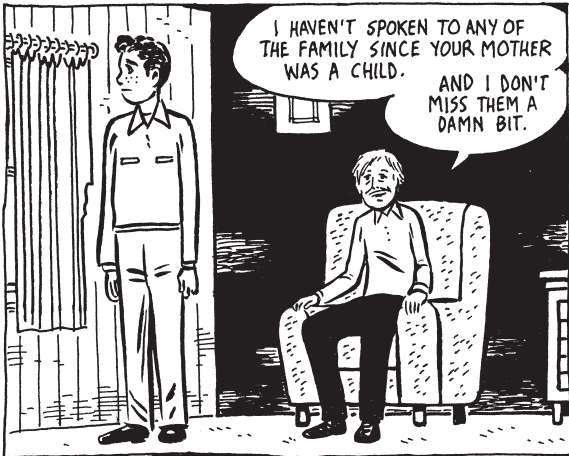
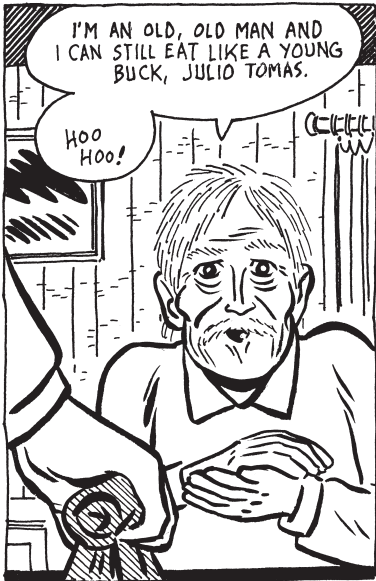


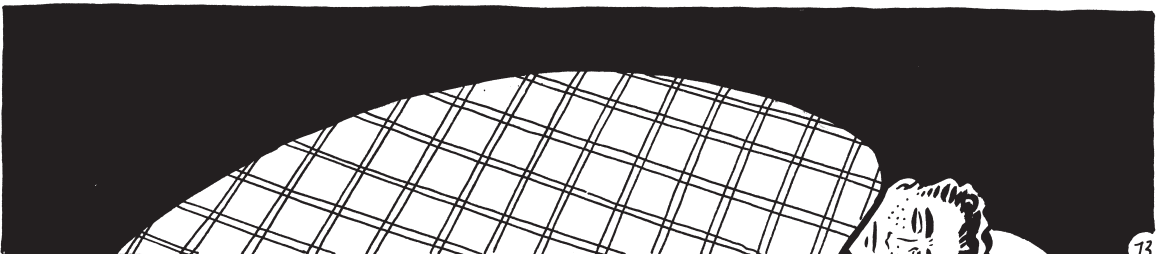
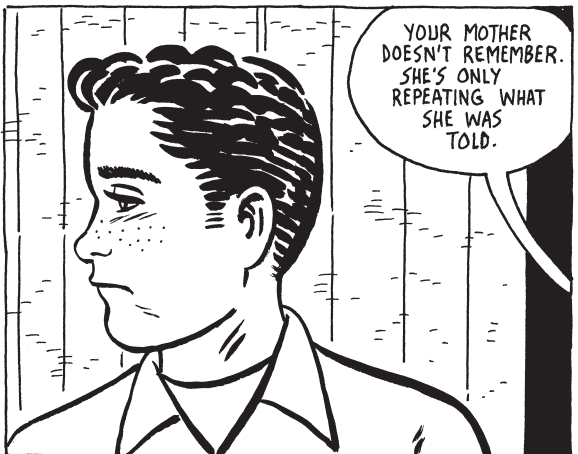
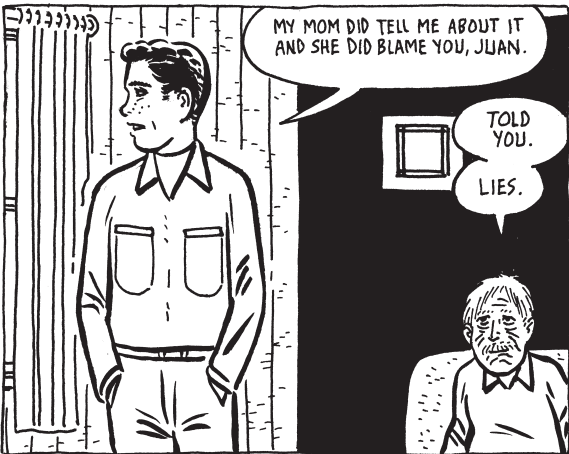
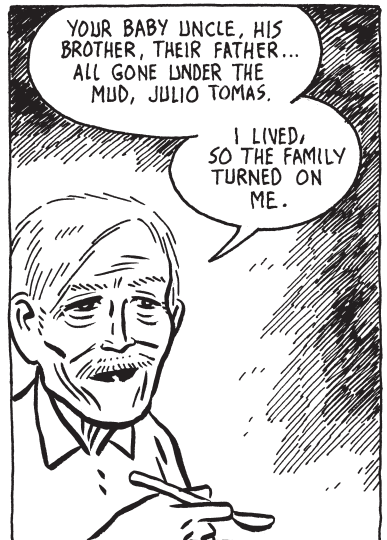


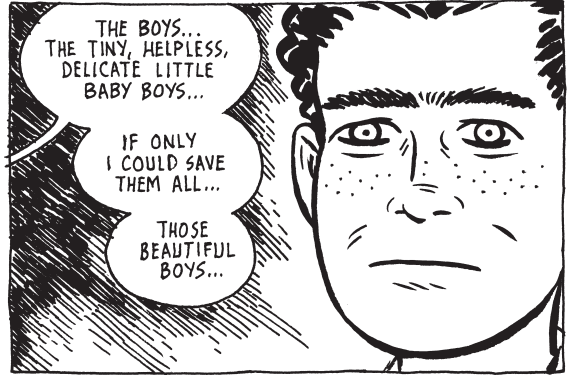


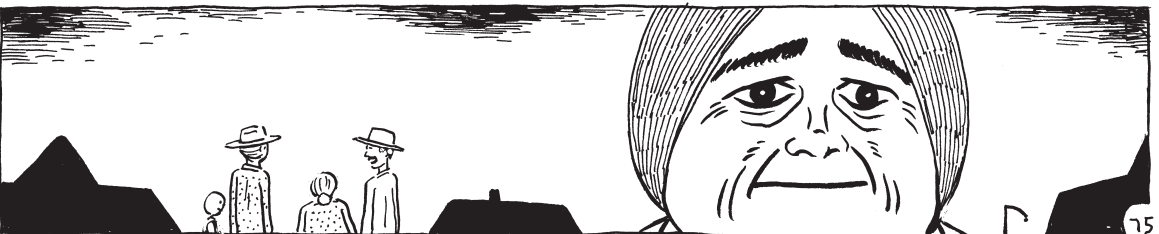


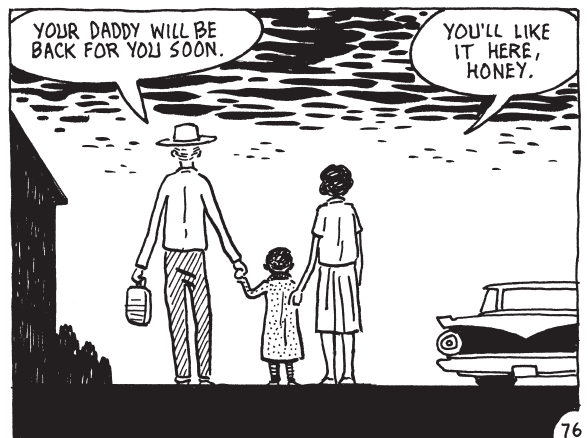
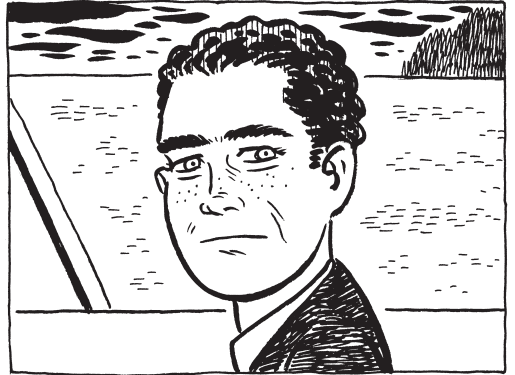
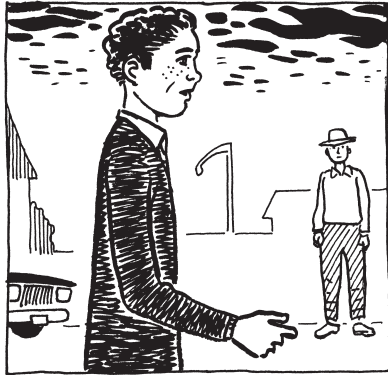
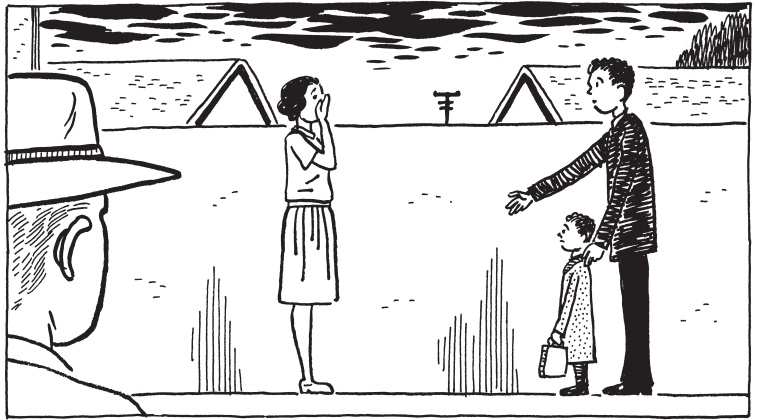


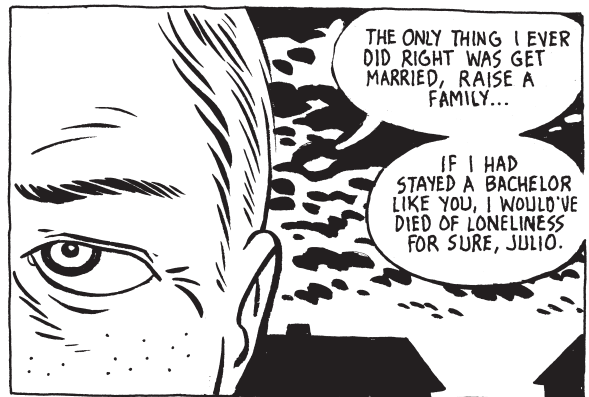
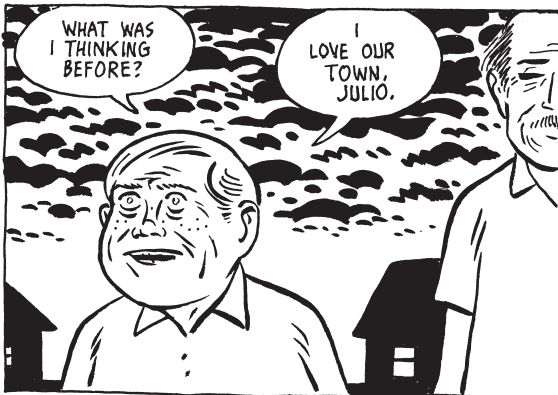
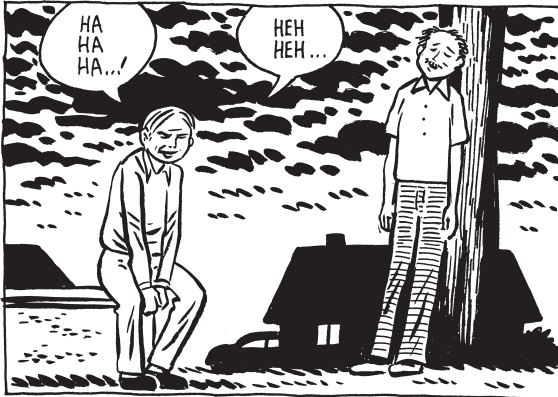


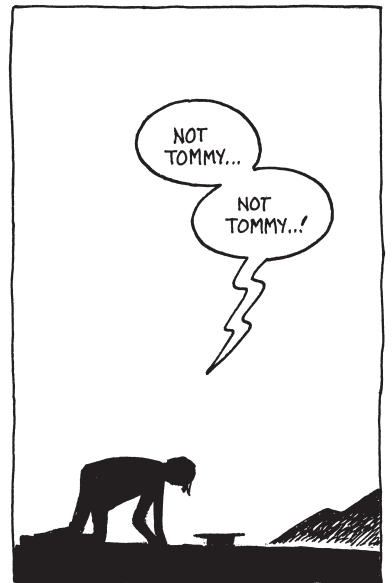
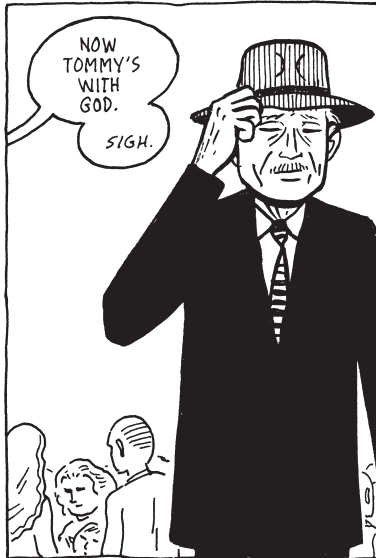
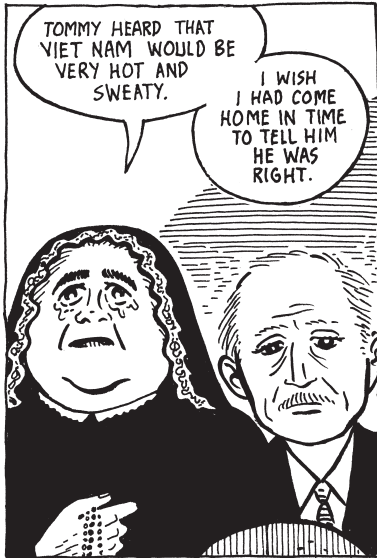


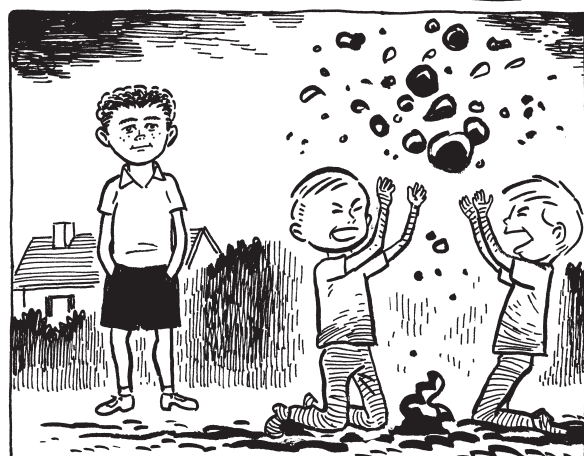




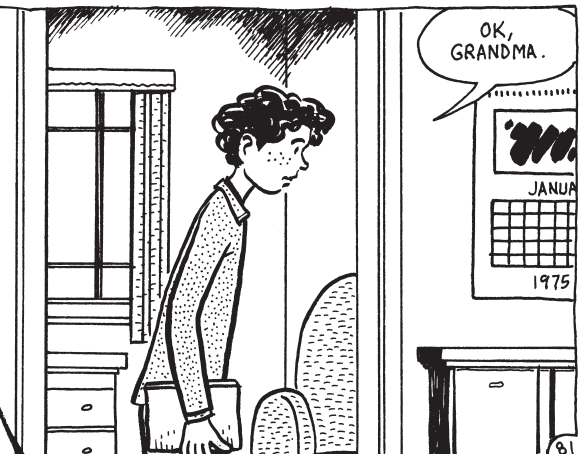
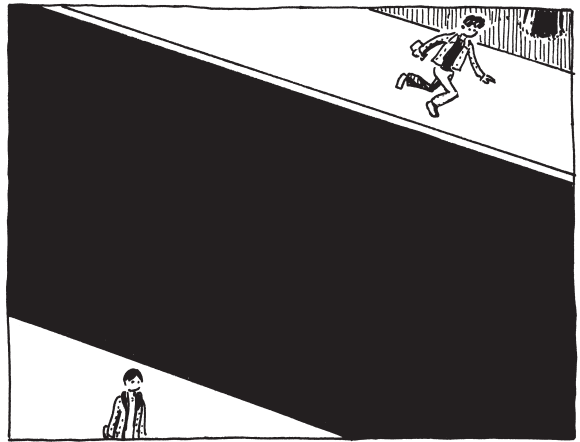


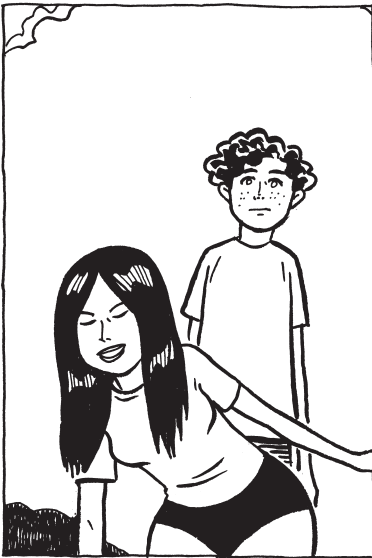
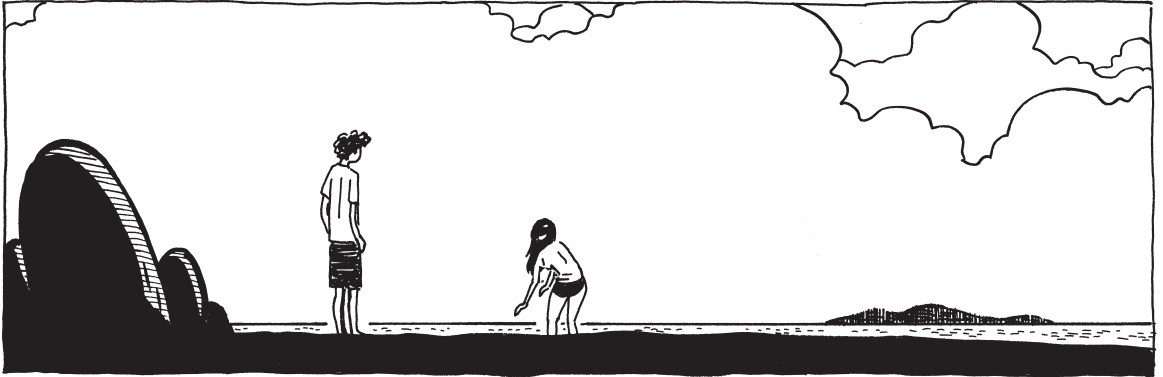






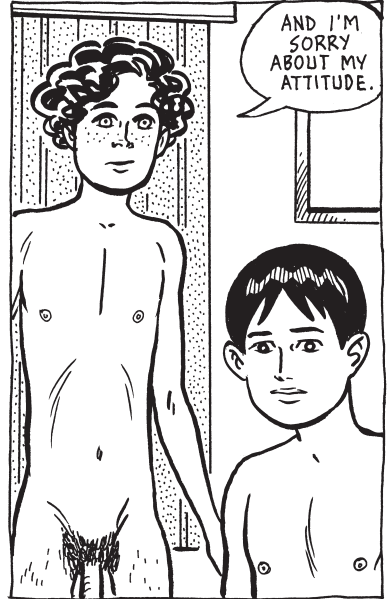




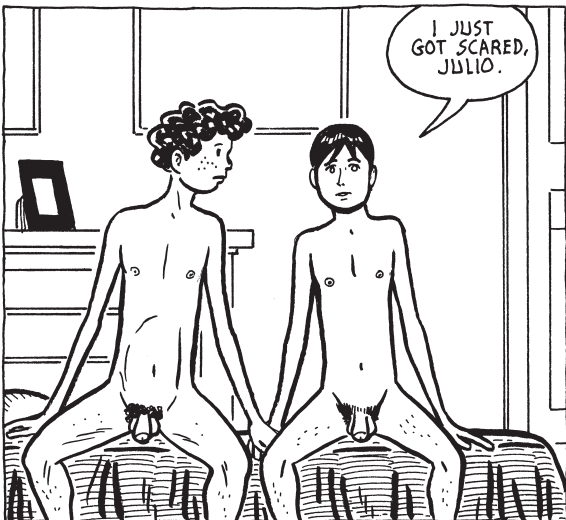




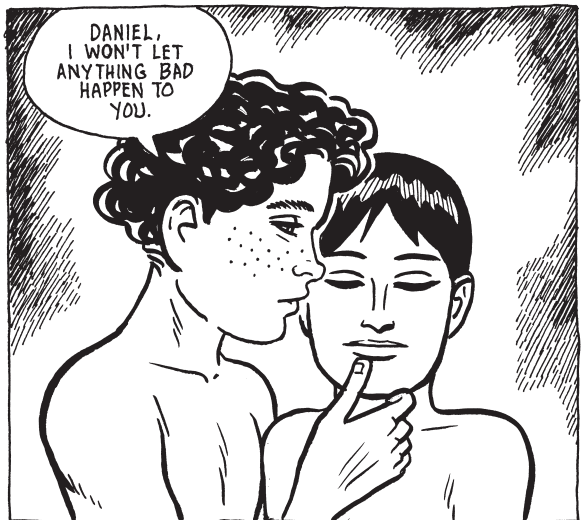
I'M GLAD YOU'RE TALKING TO ME STILL.



AND I'M SORRY ABOUT MY ATTITUDE.



I JUST GOT SCARED, JULIO.

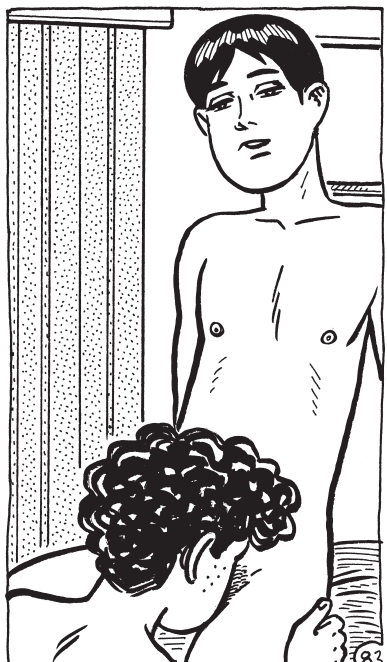


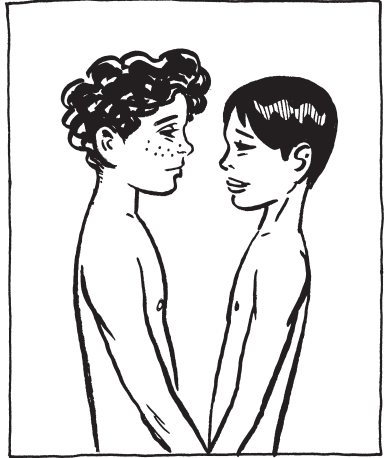
DANIEL, I WON'T LET ANYTHING BAD HAPPEN TO YOU.

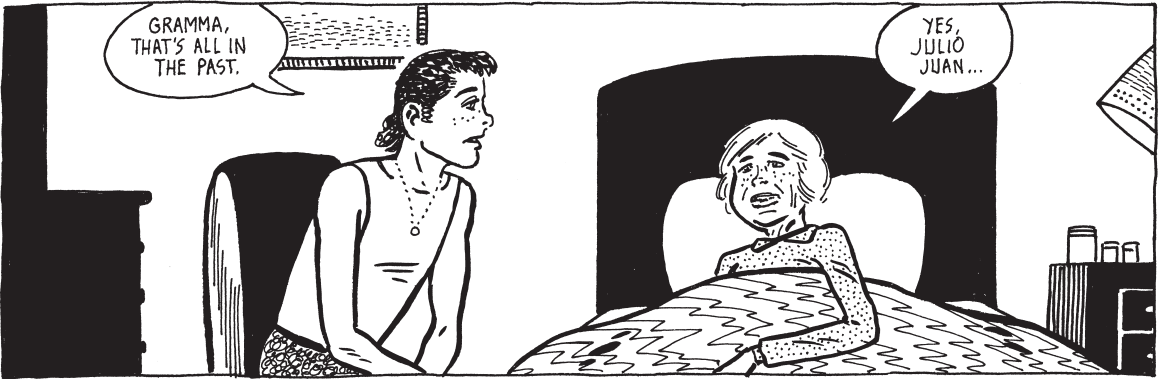


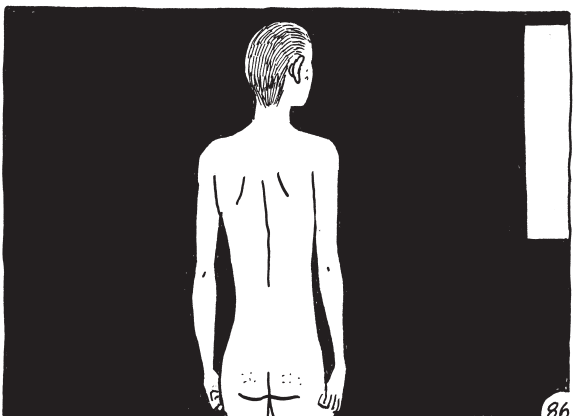
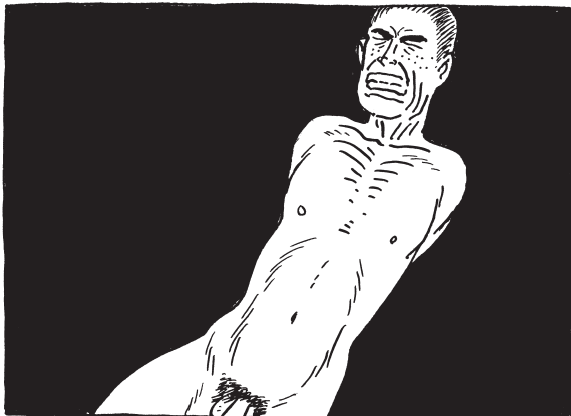
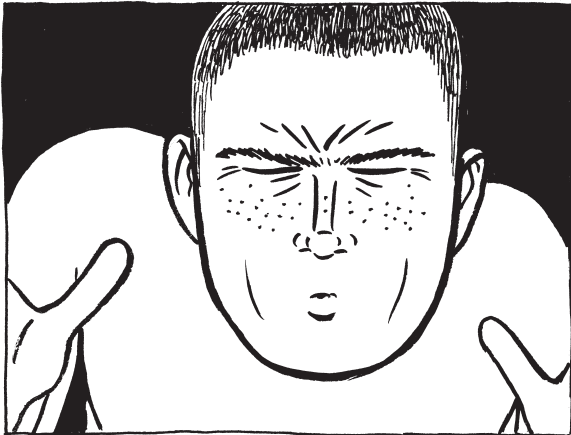
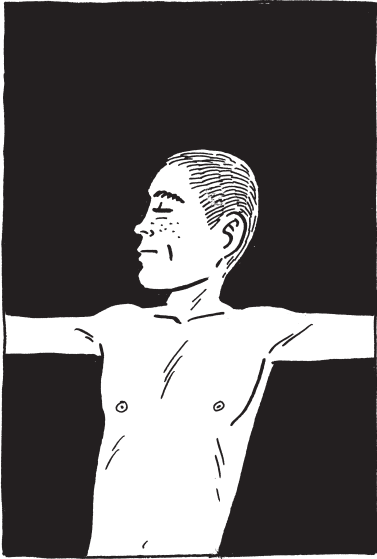
I MEANT I GOT SCARED FOR YOU, JULIO.

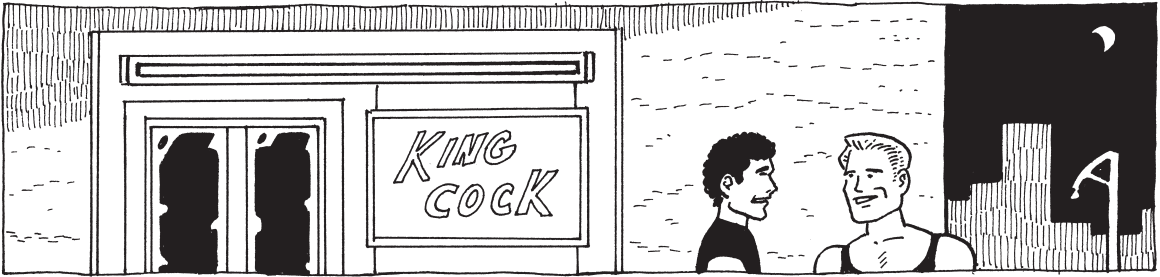
NOTHING BAD WILL HAPPEN TO ME.

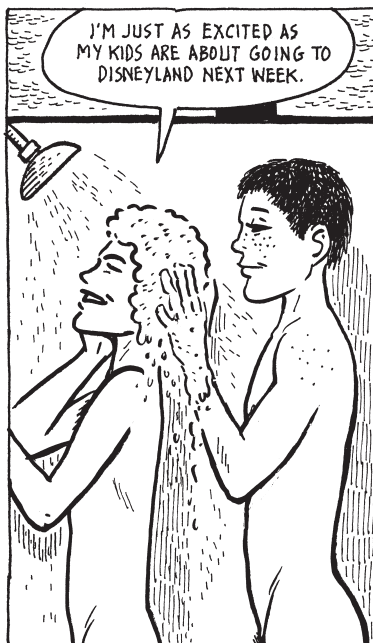
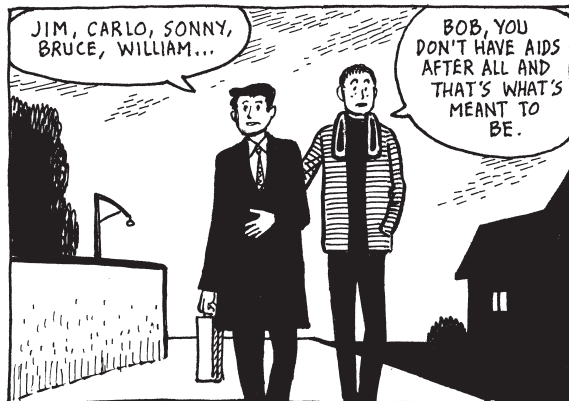
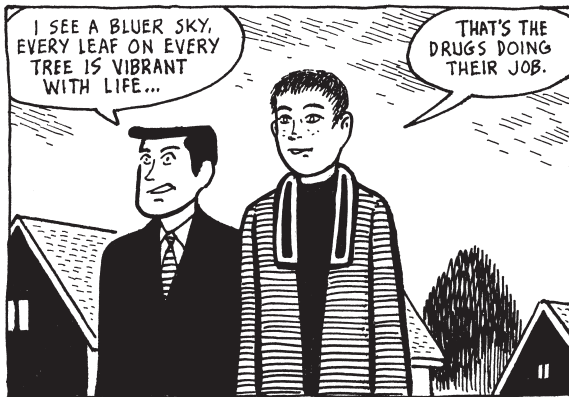


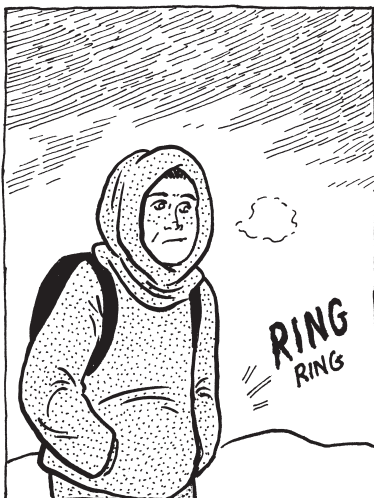


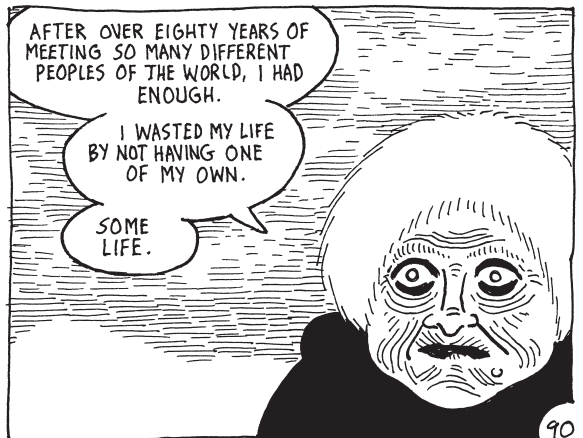
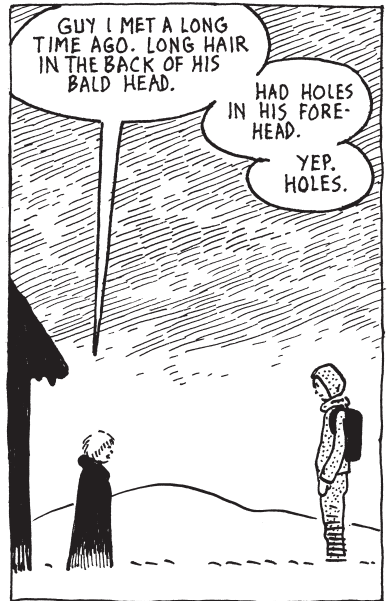
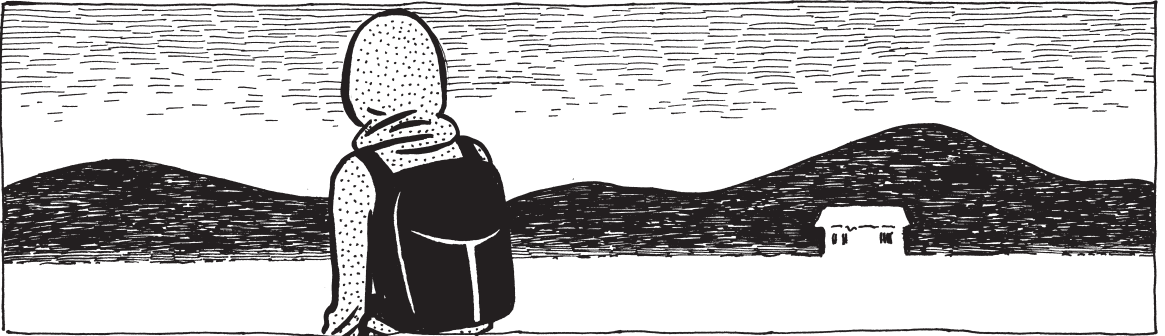
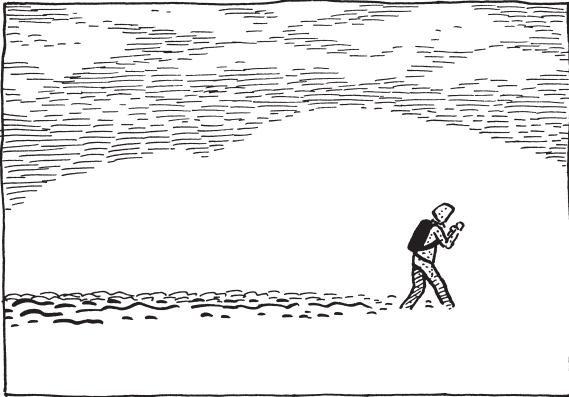


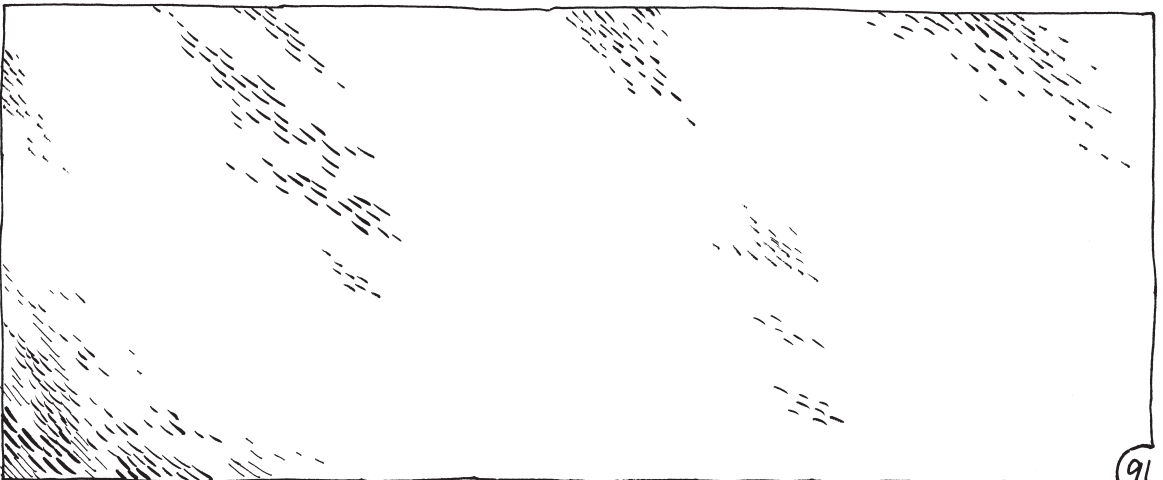
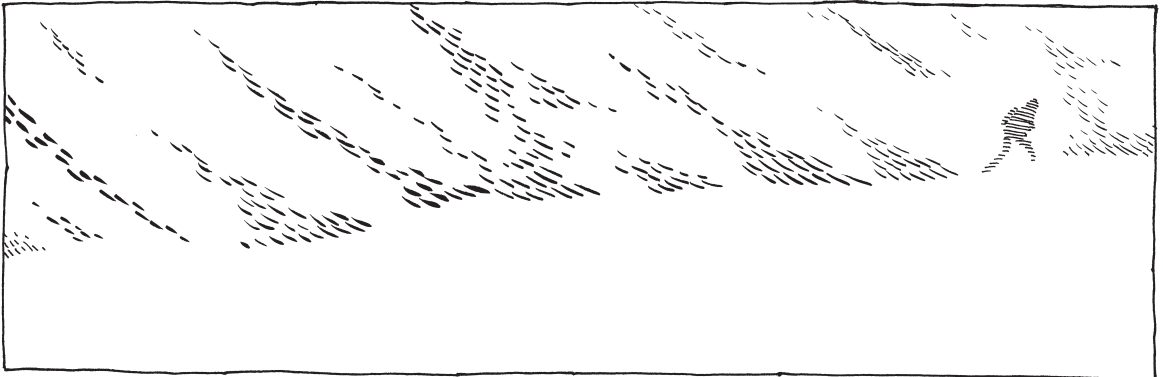
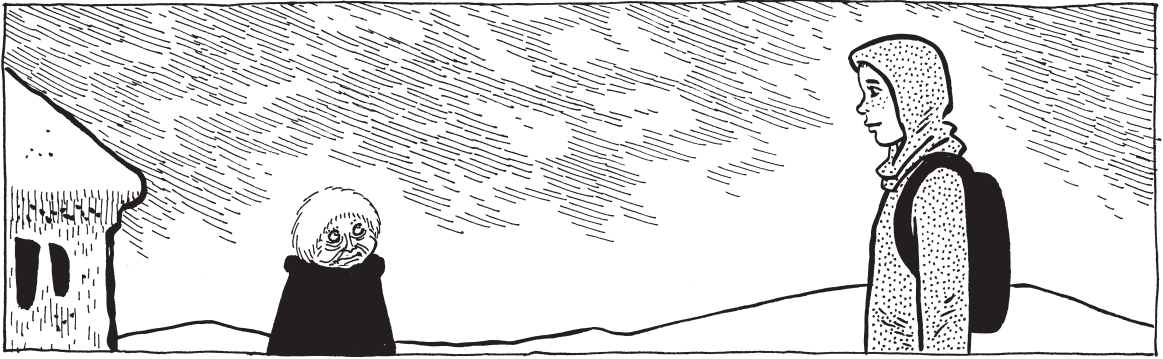


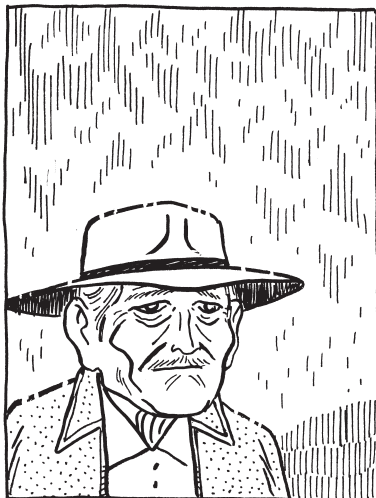


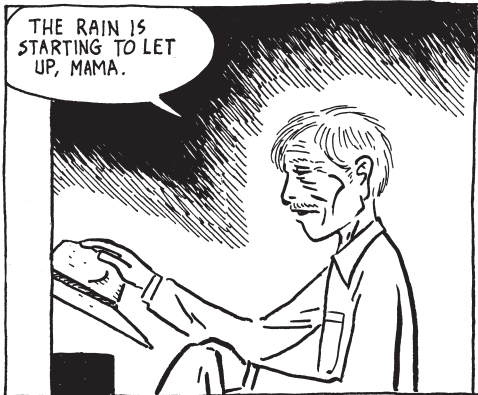




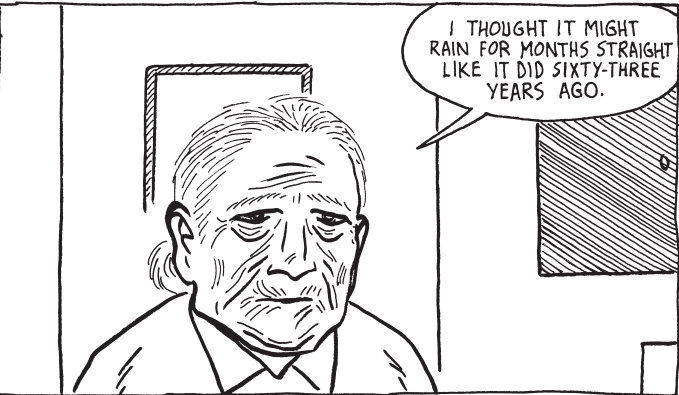








THE RAIN IS STARTING TO LET UP, MAMA.



I THOUGHT IT MIGHT RAIN FOR MONTHS STRAIGHT LIKE IT DID SIXTY-THREE YEARS AGO.



IS THAT WHEN IT WAS...? I THOUGHT IT WAS ONLY FORTY-FIFTY YEARS.

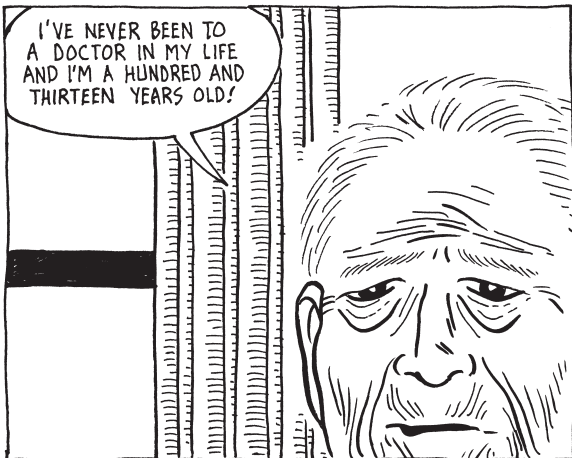
COME SIT DOWN AND EAT.

AY, YOUR MEMORY, JULIO.



THE DOCTOR SAYS EATING AND READING DOES HELP TO KEEP THE MIND FROM FORGETTING, MAMA.

DOCTORS. PAH!

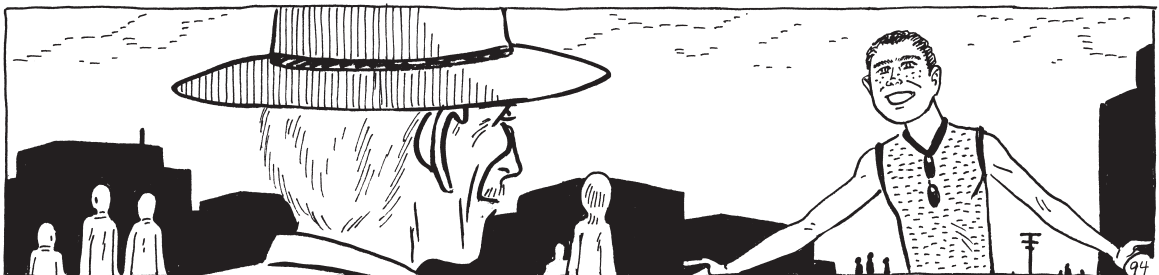
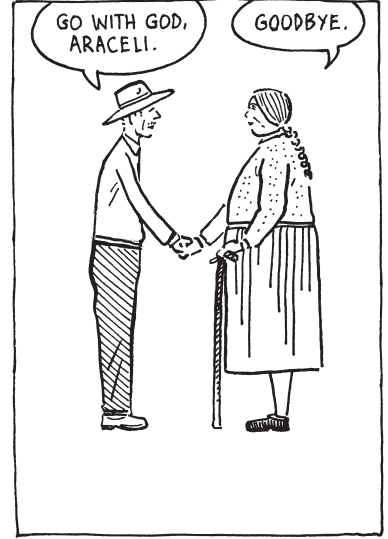
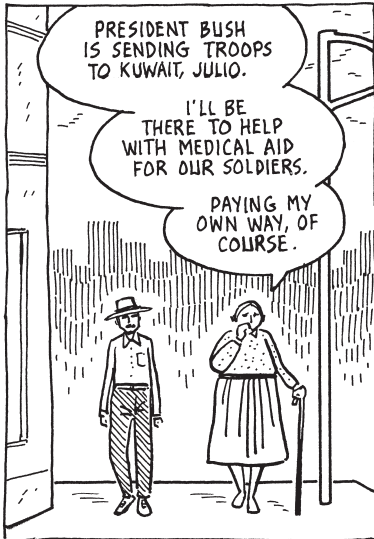


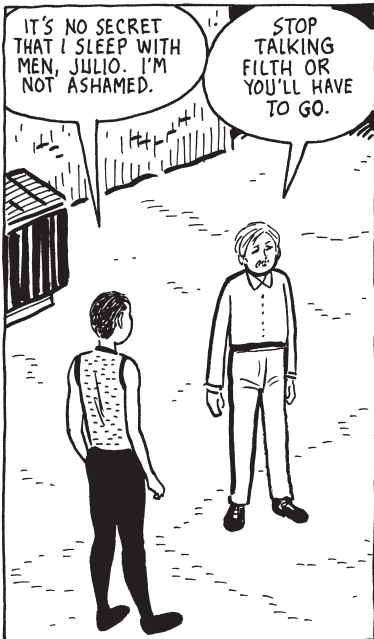
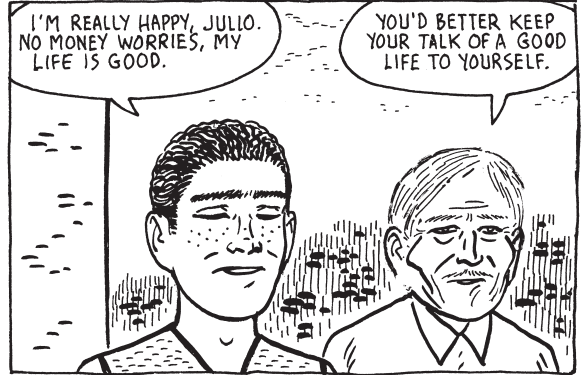
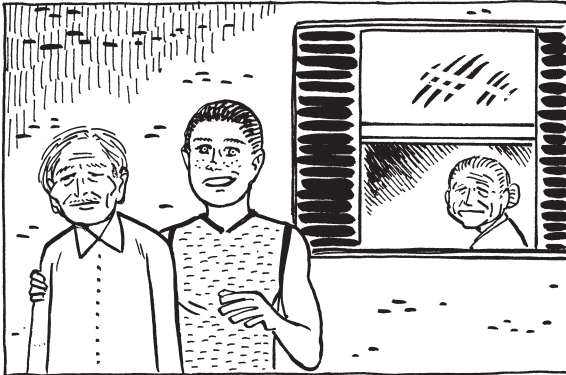
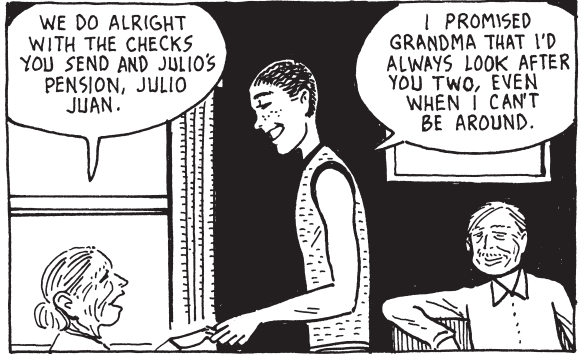
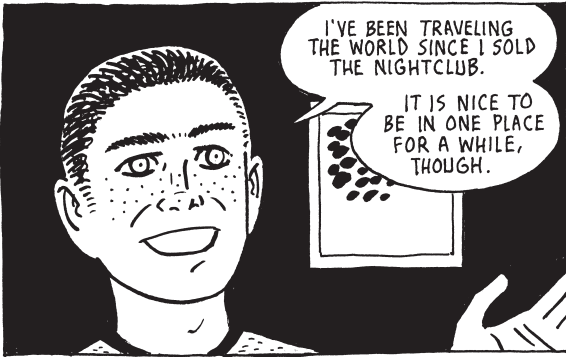
I'VE NEVER BEEN TO A DOCTOR IN MY LIFE AND I'M A HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN YEARS OLD!

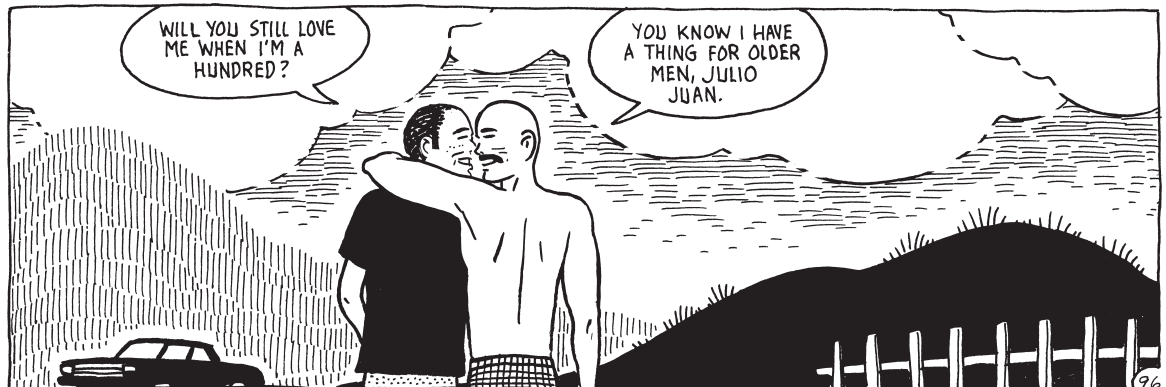
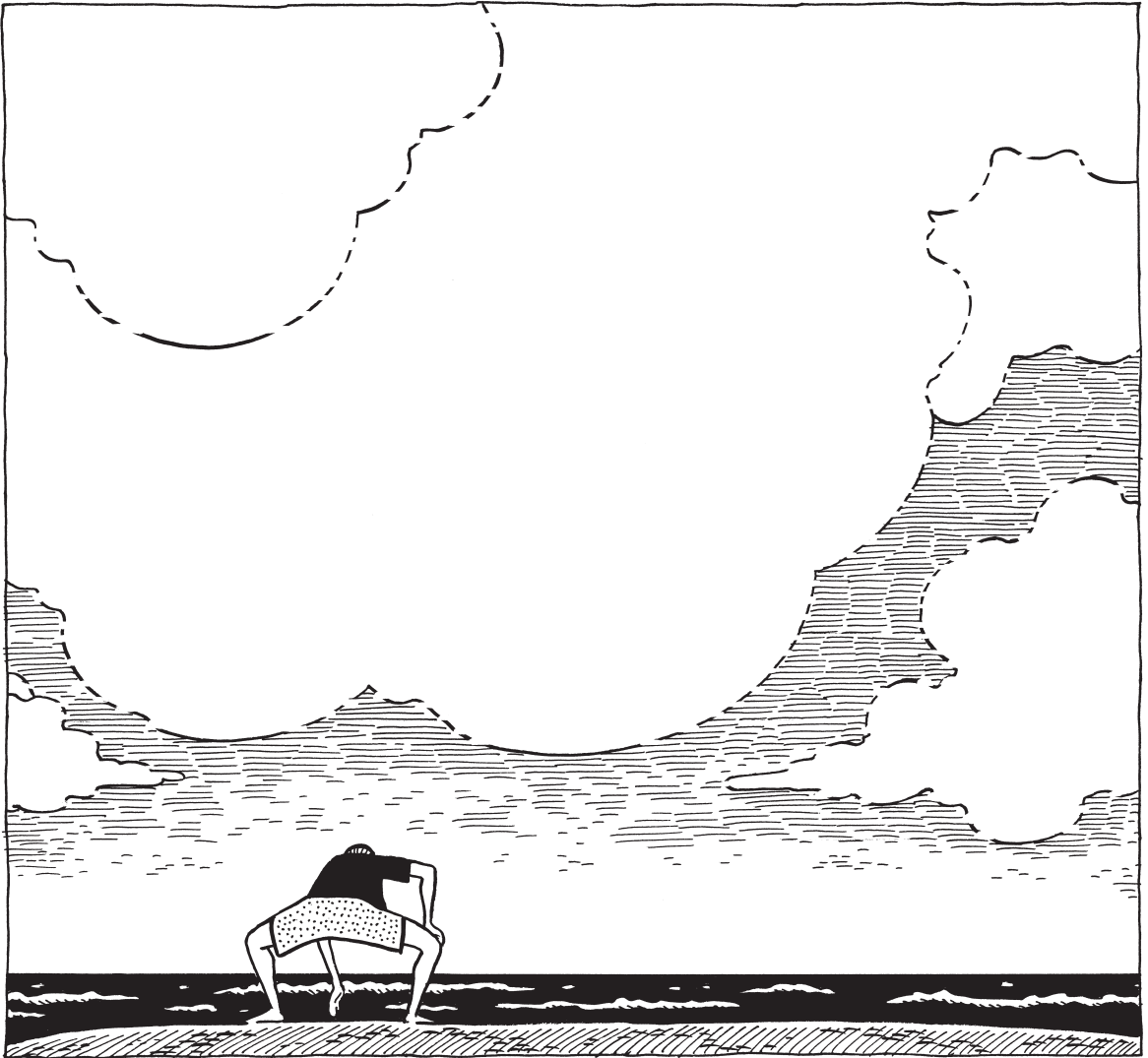


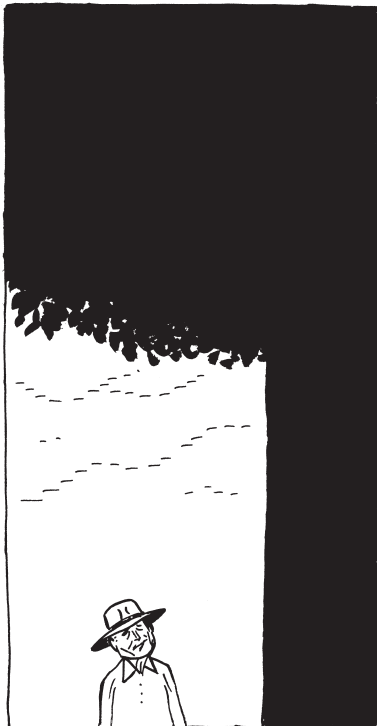
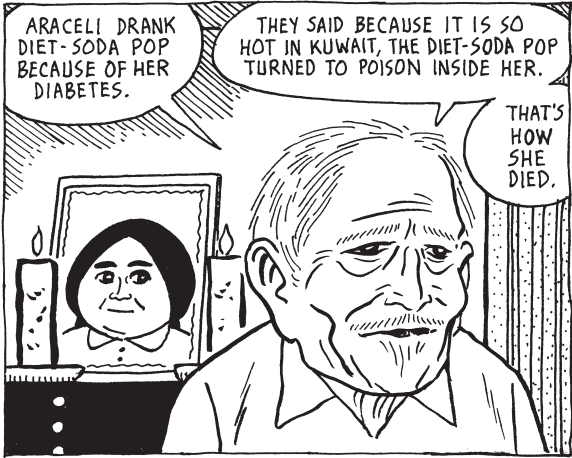
SIGH WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM JULIO JUAN SINCE HIS GRANDMOTHER DIED.

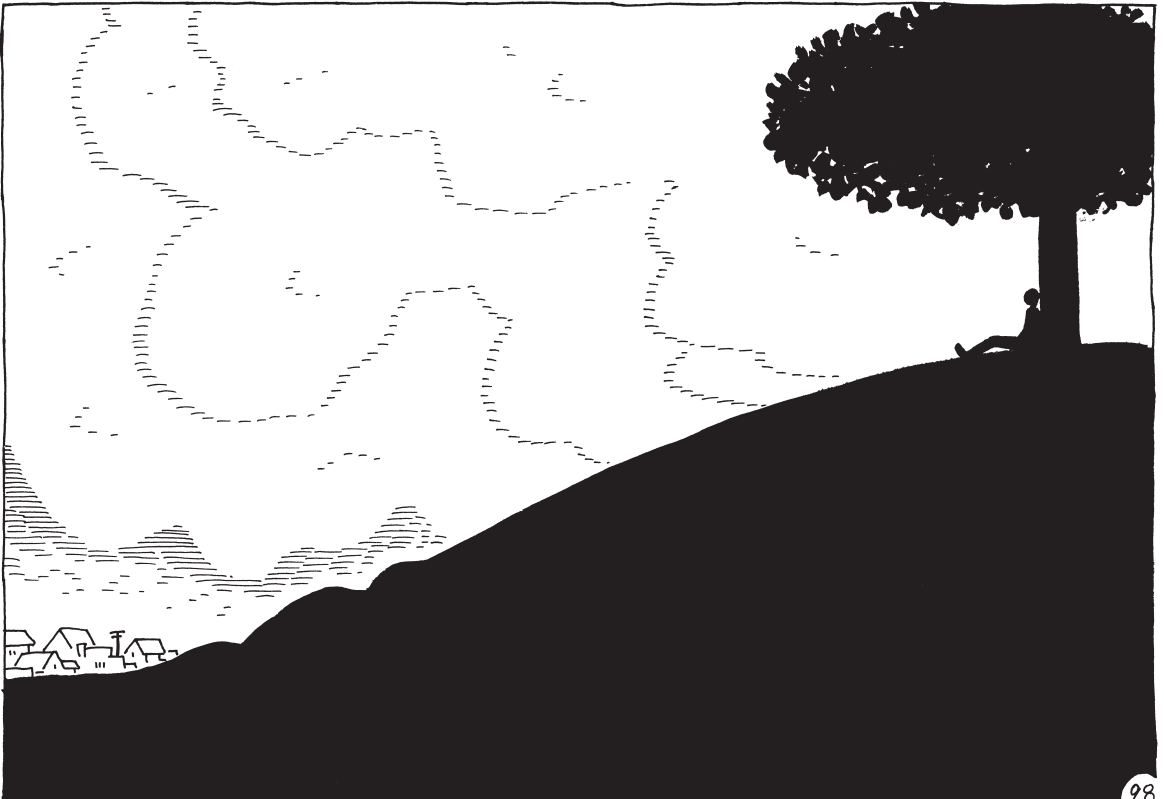


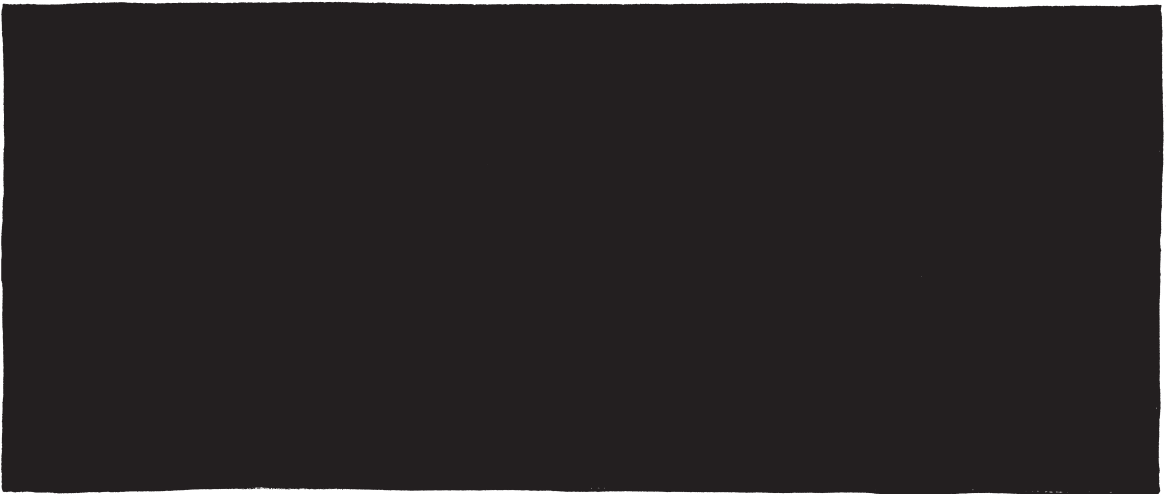
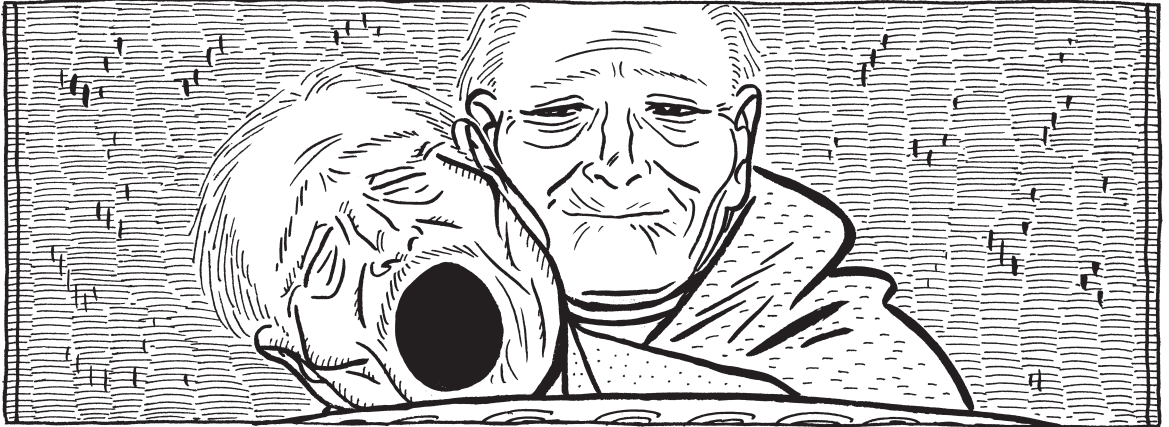
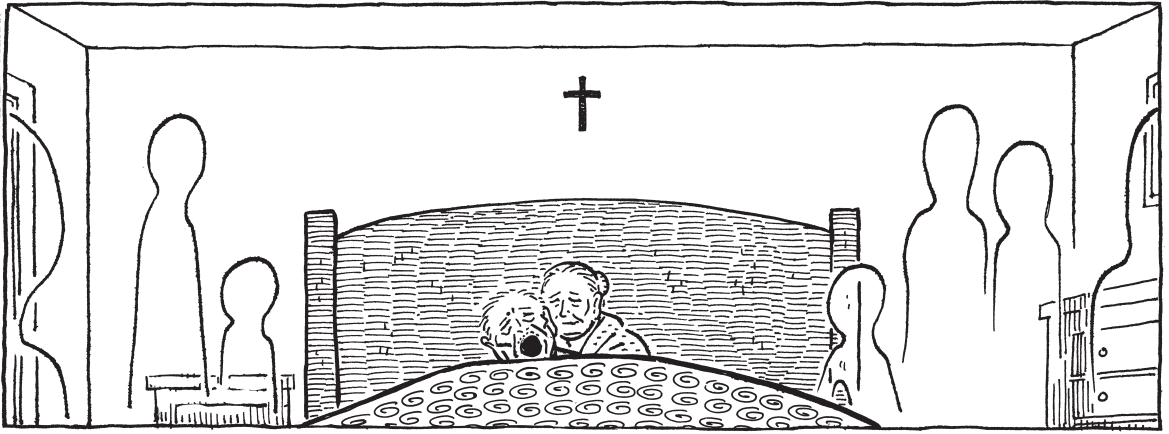












GILBERT HERNANDEZ

Gilbert Hernandez, born in 1957, enjoyed a pleasant childhood in Oxnard, California with four brothers and one sister. In Gilbert's words, they were "born into a world with comic books in the house." His childhood enthusiasm for the medium was equaled only by his appetite for punk rock. Both he and his brother Jaime created eye-catching poster art for local bands like the Angry Samoans, Agent Orange, Black Flag and others through the early '80s.

Initiated by older brother Mario and bankrolled by younger brother Ismael, Gilbert created *Love and Rockets #1* with his brother Jaime in 1981. Over 30 years later, the series is regarded as a modern classic and the Hernandez brothers continue to create some of the most startling, original, and intelligent comic art ever seen.

