

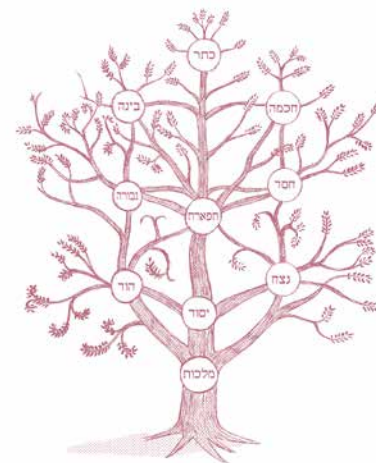


**WORDS
CAN DO
ANYTHING**

A.

SUALZO

**WORDS
CAN DO
ANYTHING**



Colori di Claudia Giuliani



il castoro





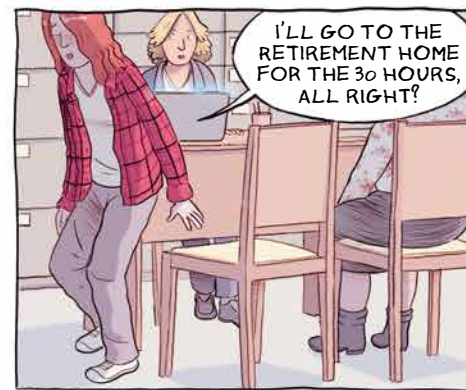


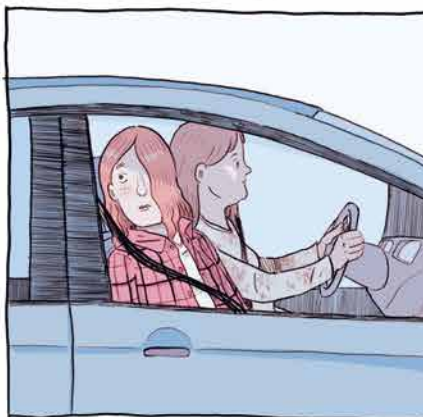
Chapter I



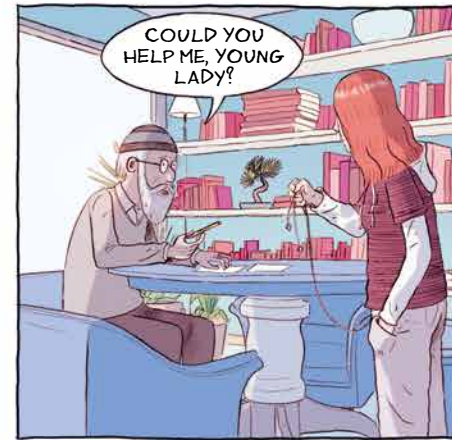
ALEF is the first letter in the Hebrew alphabet. It is also the first letter in the Hebrew word "Adam", man. The letters in this word refer to our unique characteristics as humans: our abilities to talk and to make.





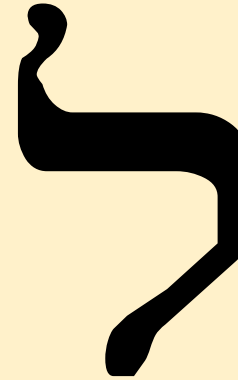




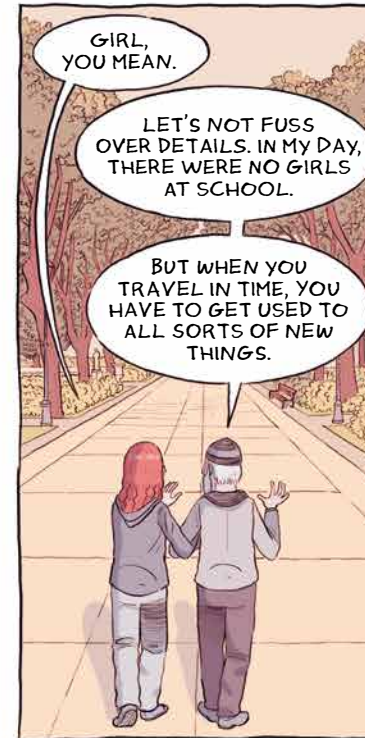




Chapter 2.



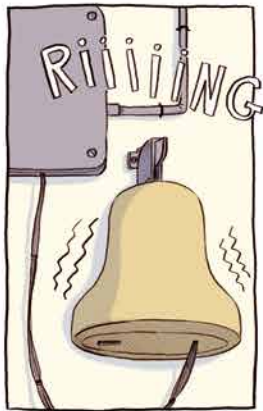
LAMED is the tallest letter, it starts above all the others. It symbolizes the soul's ability to rise, by learning.





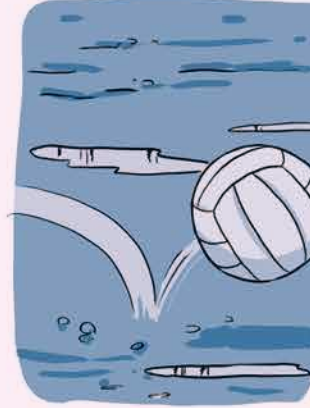
* the Torah is the first part of the Hebrew Bible





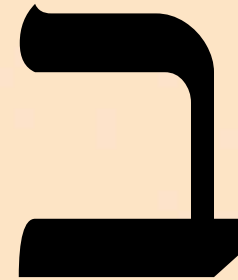


About the fact that
if I hadn't run after
that ball,

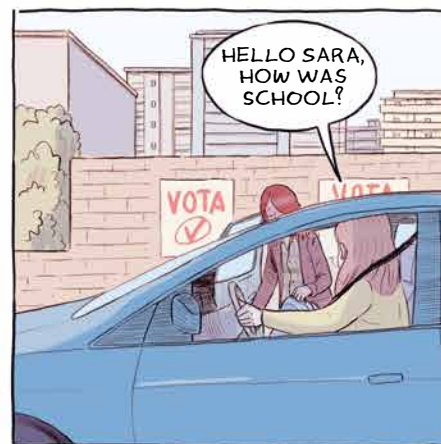
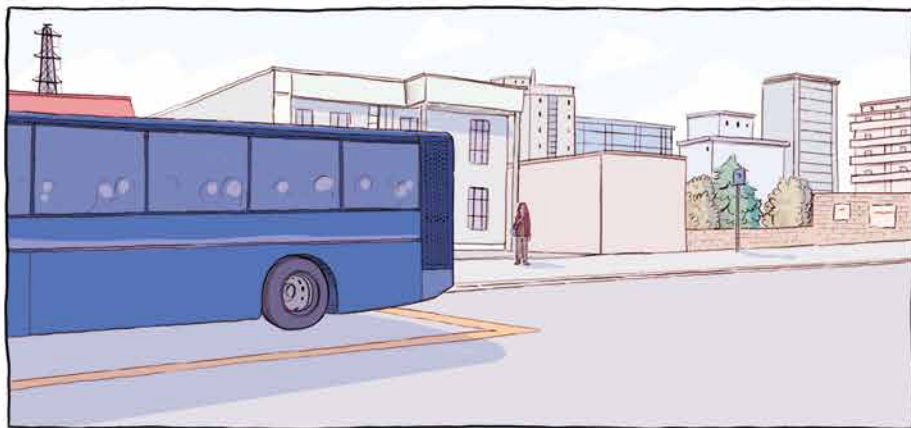




Chapter 3.



The shape of the letter **BET** is a container open on one side, like a house with the door open. **BET** is the creation letter, the house from which the world emerged.





Ever since I was little I've always lived near the woods and the river. School, my friends, the shops – in a word, town – were all across the bridge.



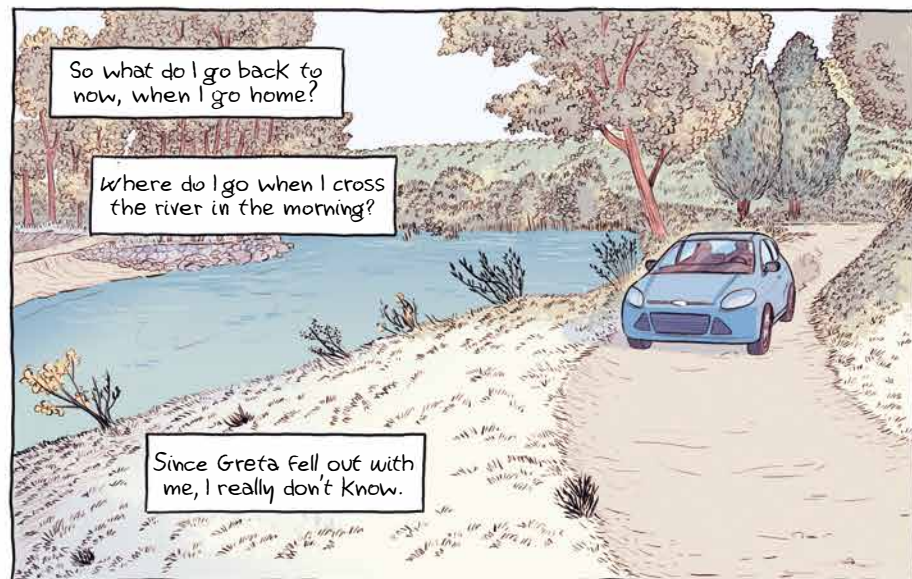
I loved crossing the bridge on my way to and from town.

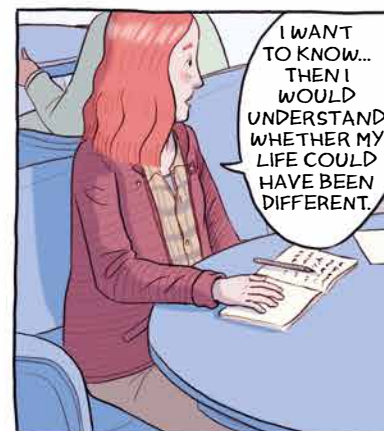
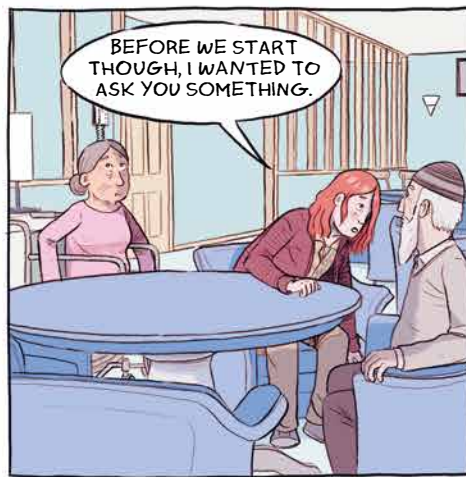


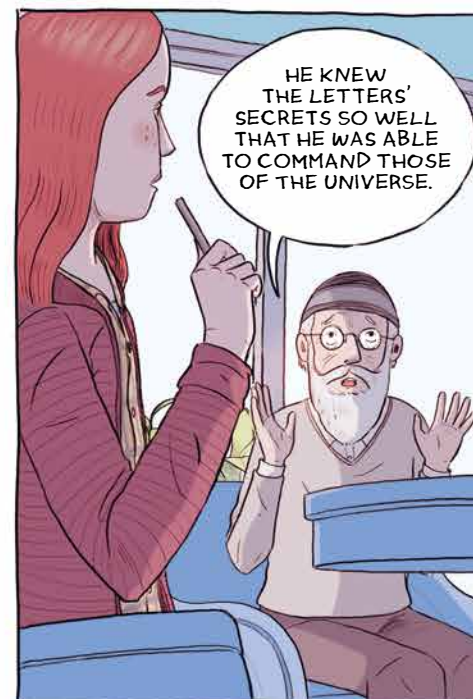
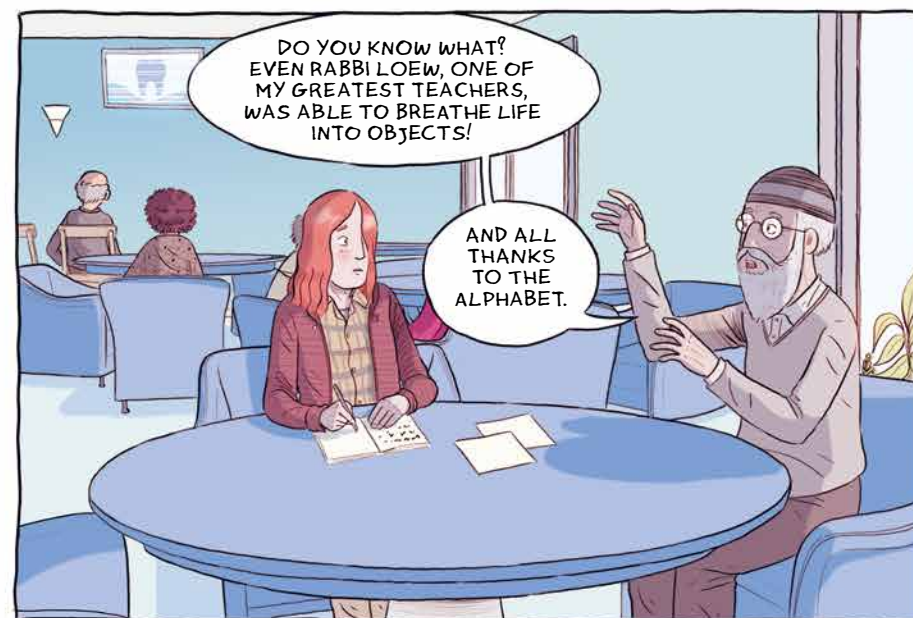
We used to go down to the river sometimes.

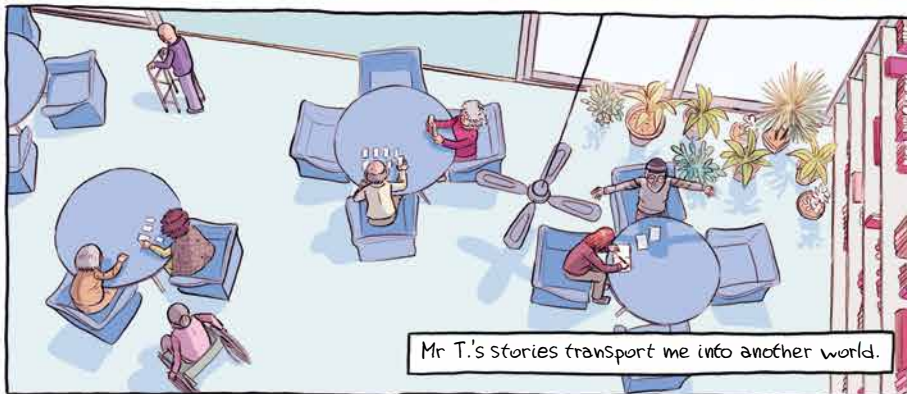
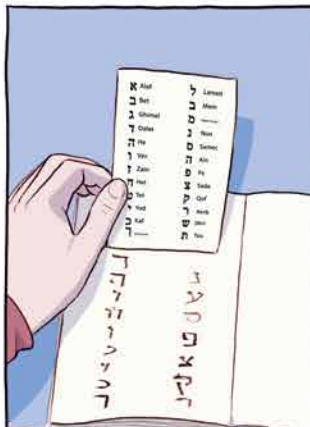
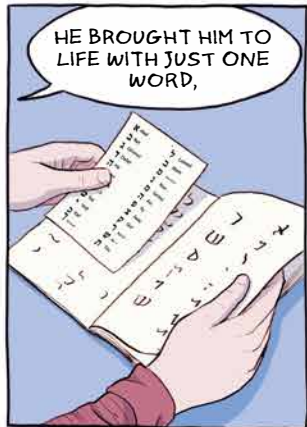






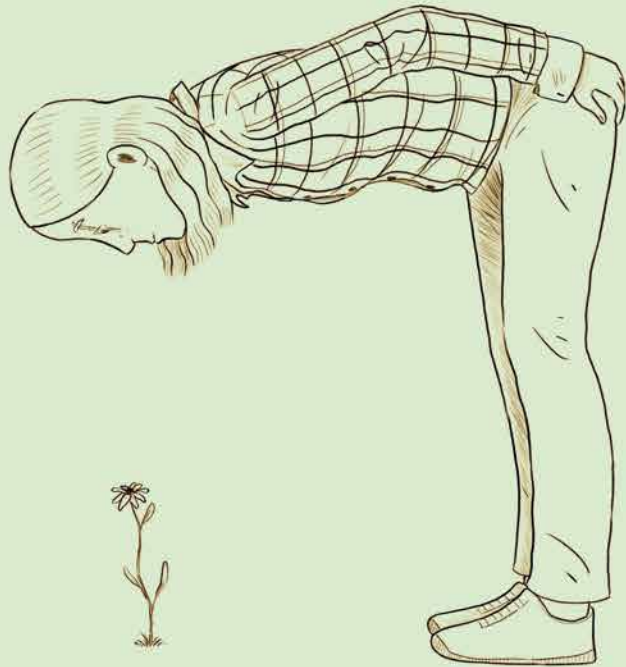






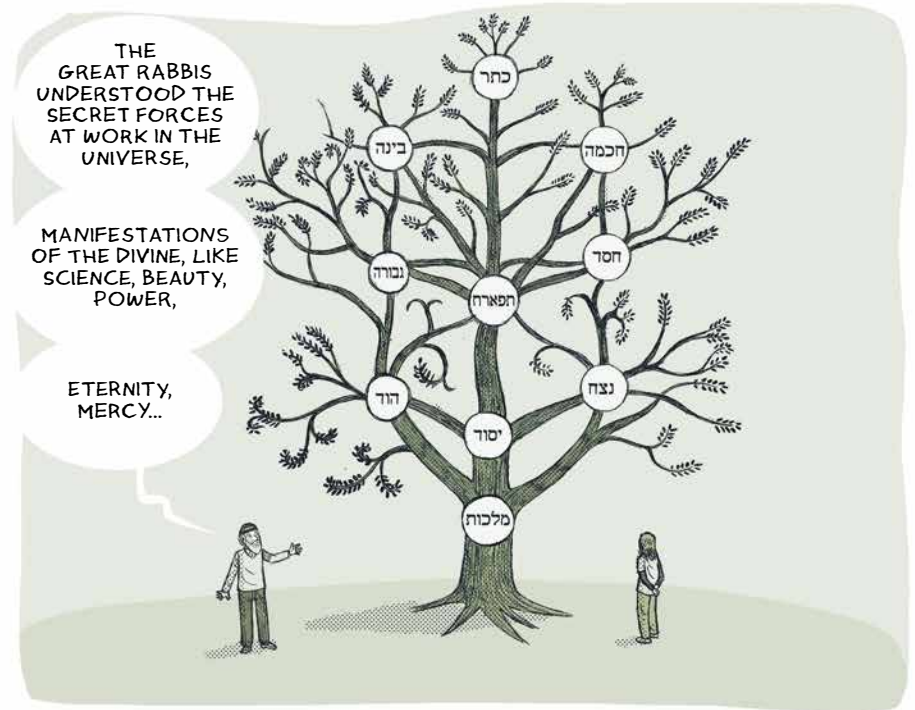


Chapter 4.

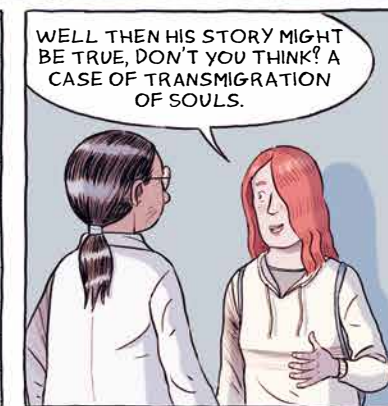
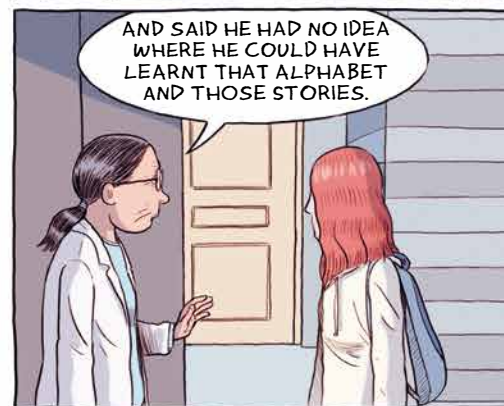


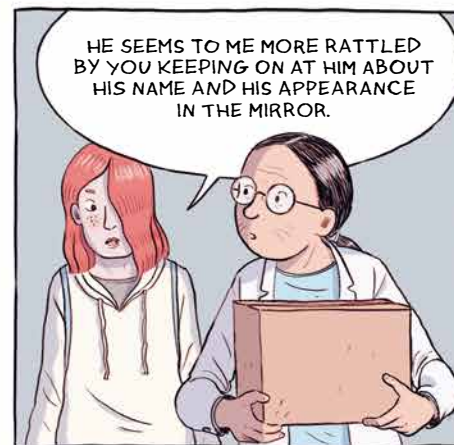
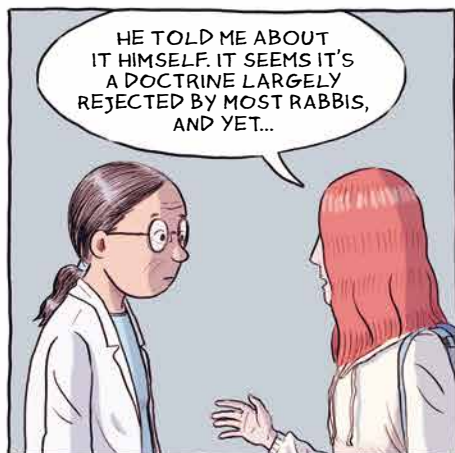
The letter **VAV** represents completeness.
It is a conjunction, like "and": it links words and phrases, bringing multiple concepts together. It is shaped like a hook and represents the connection between heaven and earth. It implies relationships between different events and continuity across generations.











SO, AS YOU KNOW, I HAD WISE TEACHERS. SOME OF THEM SAID THAT NO LAWS AND ORDERS WOULD GET US TO HEAVEN, AND THAT INSTEAD WE NEEDED TO BRING HEAVEN TO EARTH WITH SONG AND DANCE! JOY WAS THE WAY.



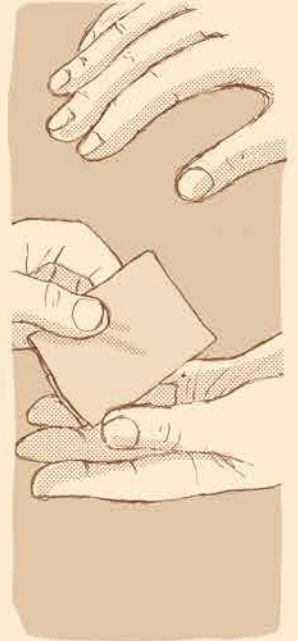
THE WISEST RABBIS WERE BELEAGUERED WITH REQUESTS. PEOPLE WERE ALWAYS KNOCKING AT THEIR DOORS.



I WAS JUST A BOY THEN AND I USED TO SIT ON A STOOL AND WRITE DOWN WHAT THEY WANTED.

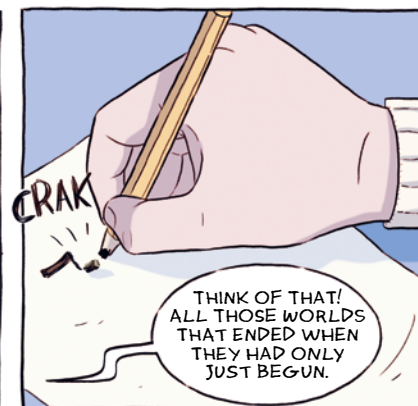
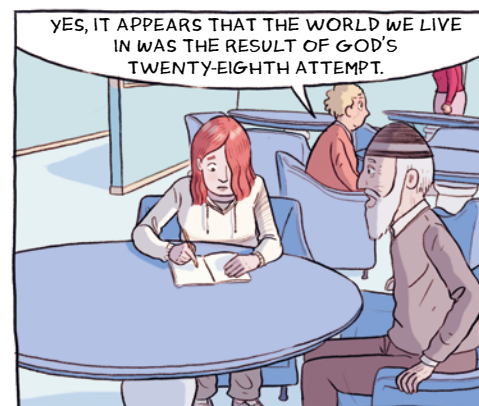
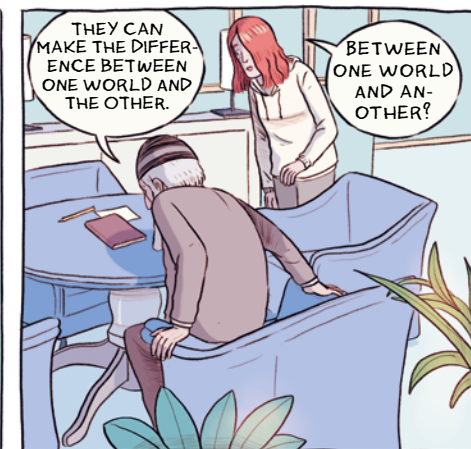
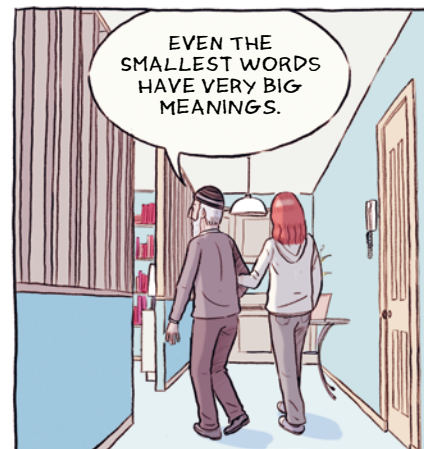
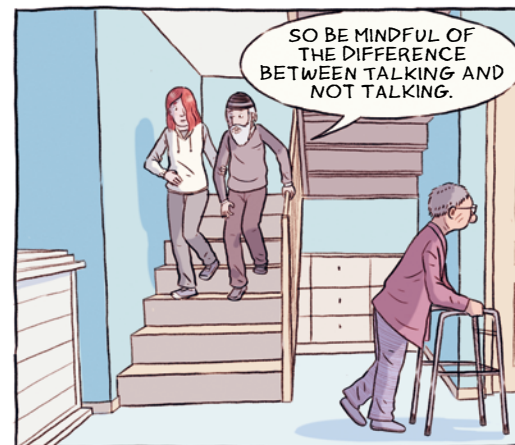
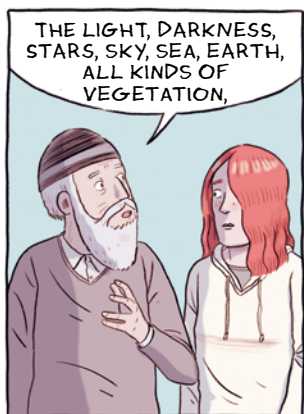
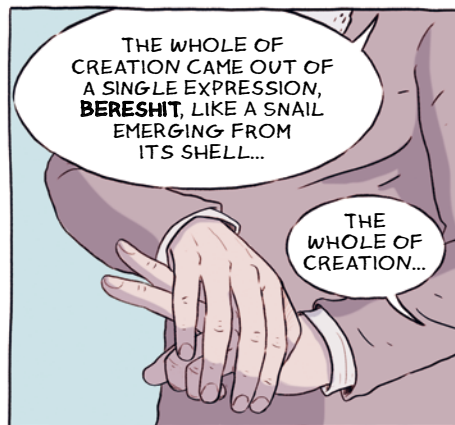
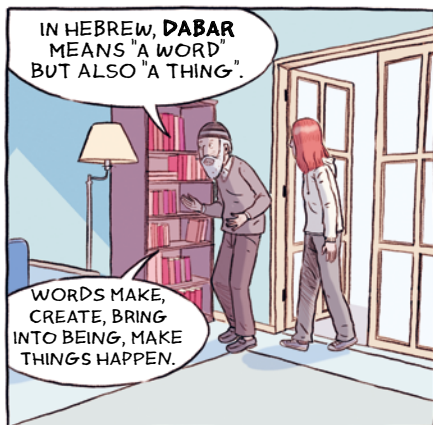
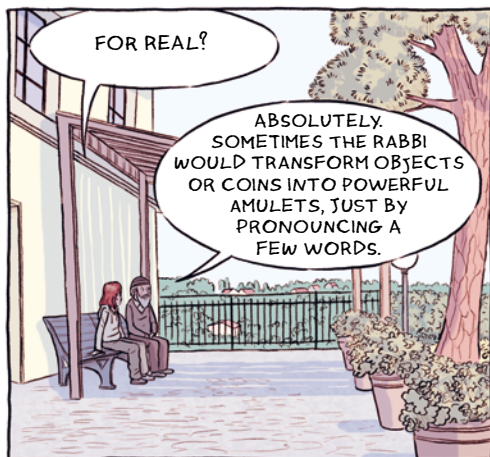


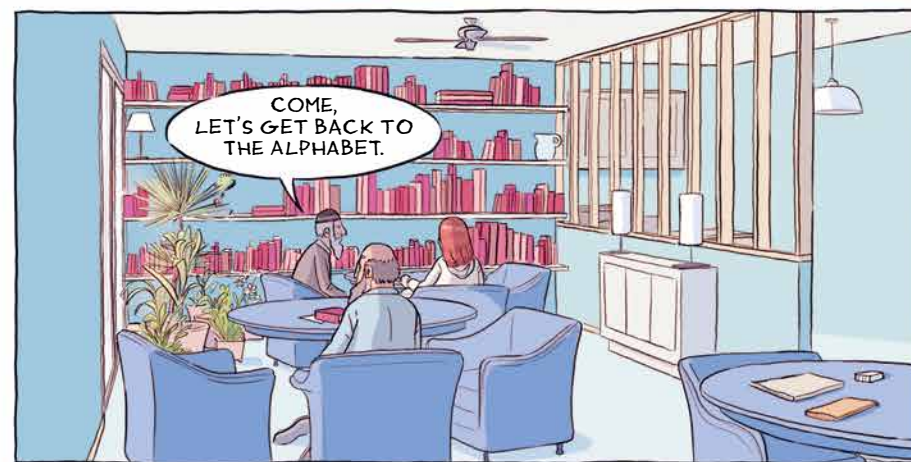
EACH PERSON WOULD WHISPER THEIR PERSONAL PRAYERS INTO MY EAR, AND I WOULD WRITE THEM DOWN. THEIR PLEAS COULDN'T BE SPOKEN ALOUD, YOU SEE, THEY HAD TO REACH THE RABBI ON A PIECE OF PAPER.



IN THE RABBI'S HANDS, THOSE WRITTEN WORDS COULD COME TRUE.









I'm not making so much as an inch of progress in our sessions.



In all these weeks, apart from telling me stories about rabbis, clay people, and the tree of life,



he's only taught me the alphabet.



Right here.



From the beginning, every time.



I've asked when we'll move on, when I'll translate a sentence, when he'll teach me something else.

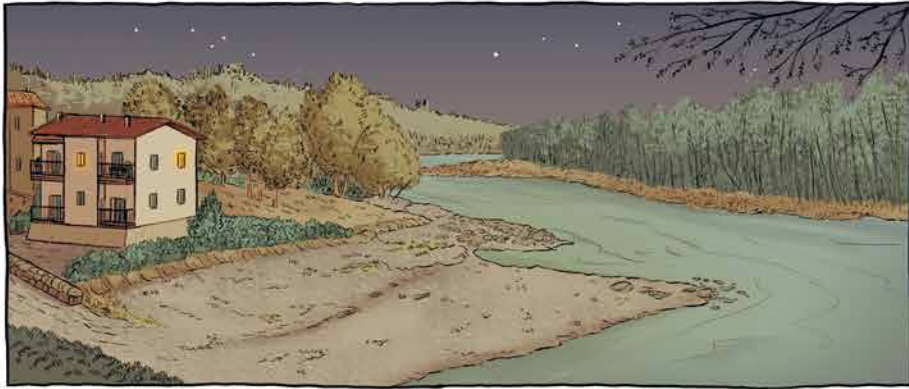
He says we will, we will, but there's no rush.



Maybe nurse Hilda is right.



Mr T. is just a confused old man.



Chapter 5.



ק

The letter **QOF** is the only letter that extends below the line. It represents the discovery that even evil has its place in creation.



Dad's moving to another town.
I'm looking forward to talking
to Mr T. about it.



I want to know
what kind of
mike that is!

Why does one
person's fate have to
affect other people
so much?



Ha, and what if everything
is decided by chance,
like my accident?

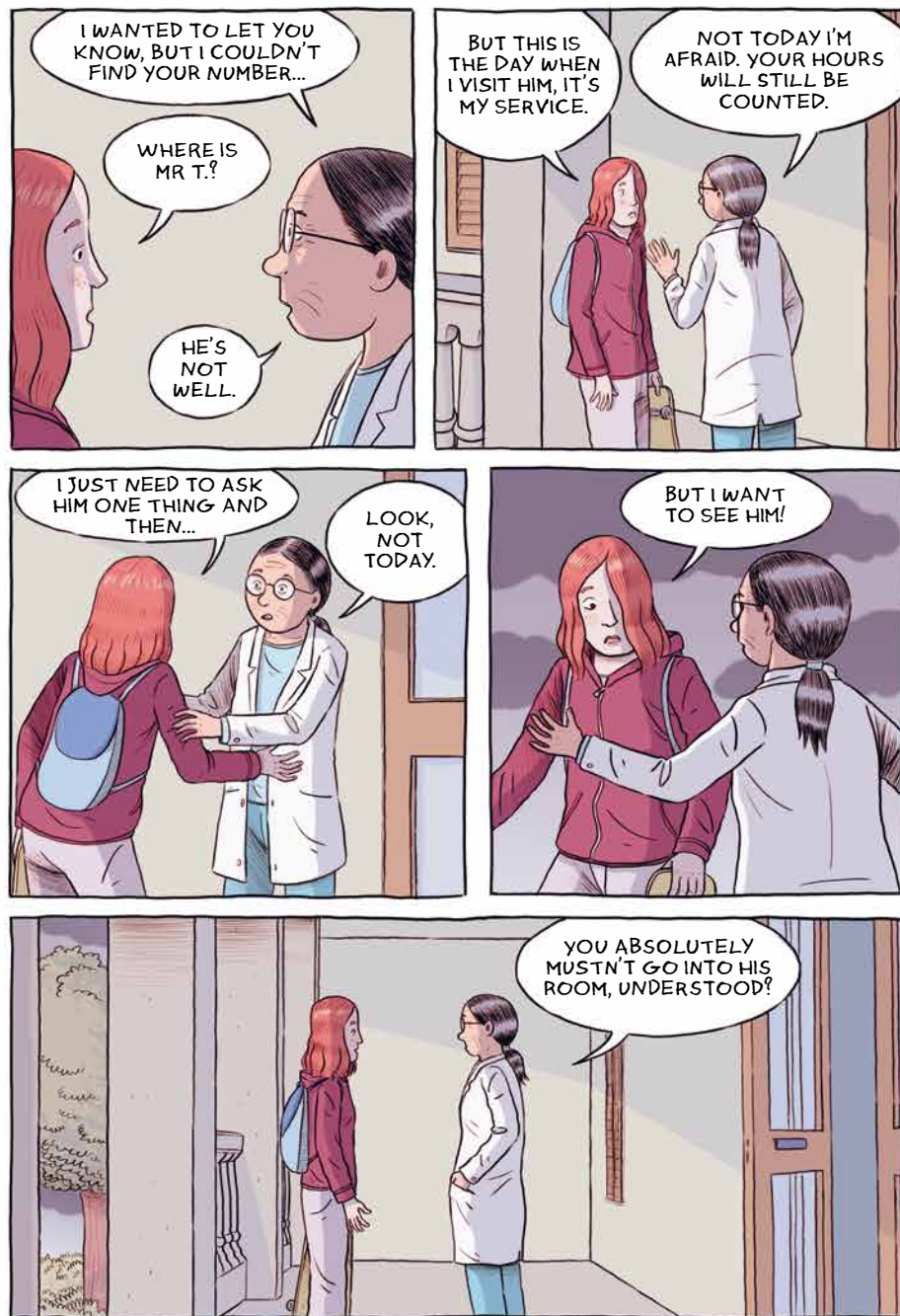


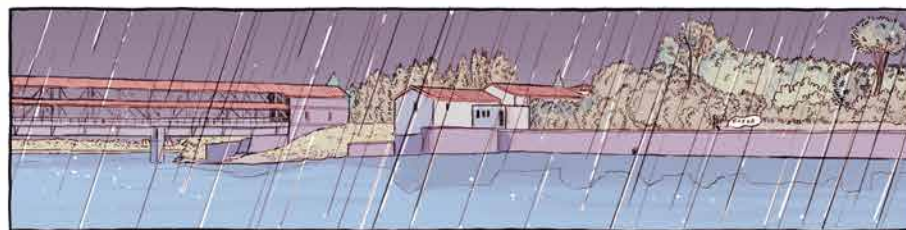
How can anyone believe that
words can do anything, if all
it takes is a random accident
and everything falls apart?

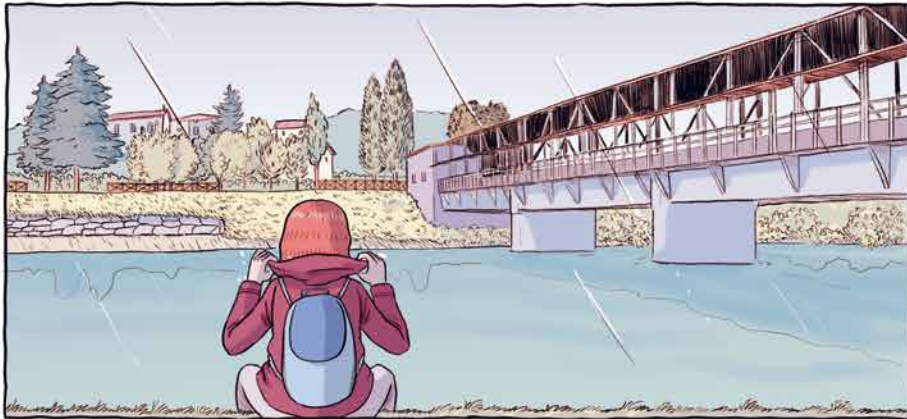


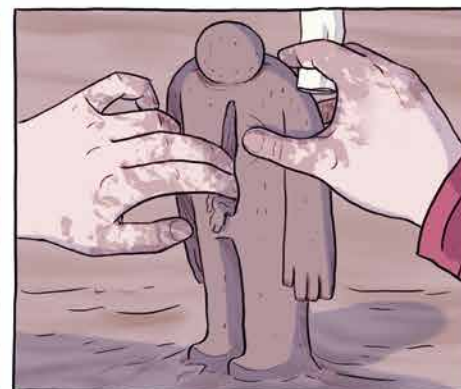
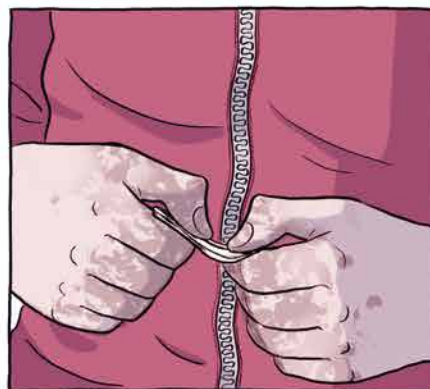
HELLO,
SARA.

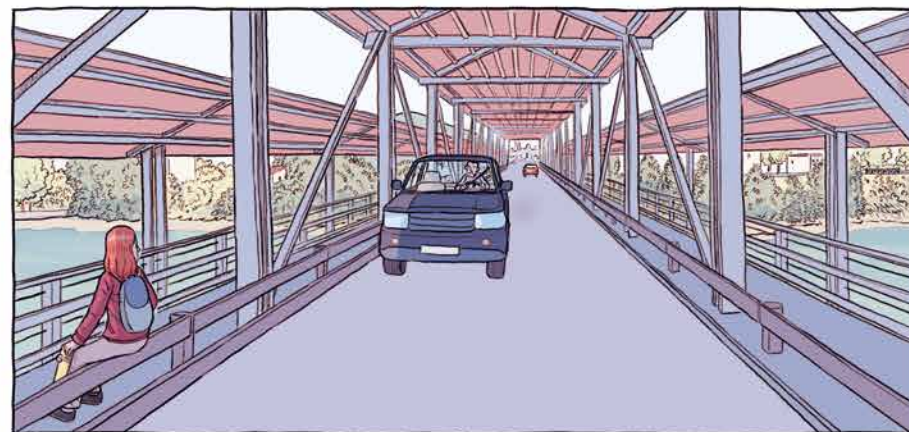
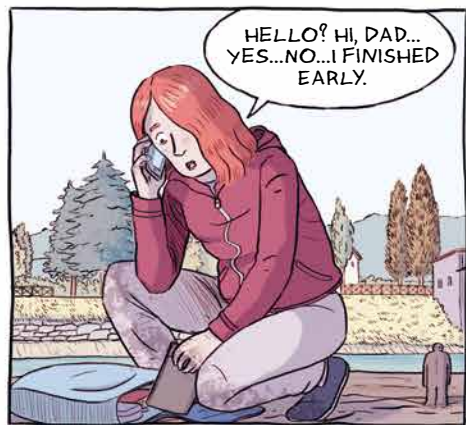
IT'S BEST
IF YOU DON'T
COME IN
TODAY.

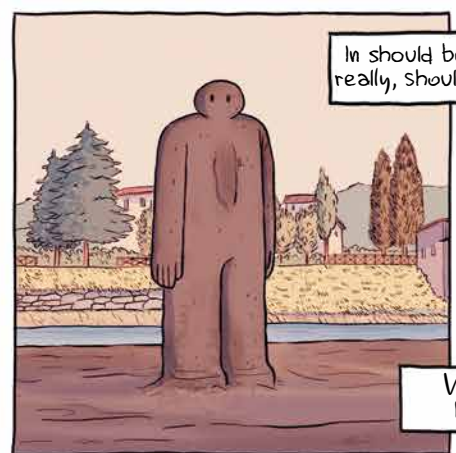
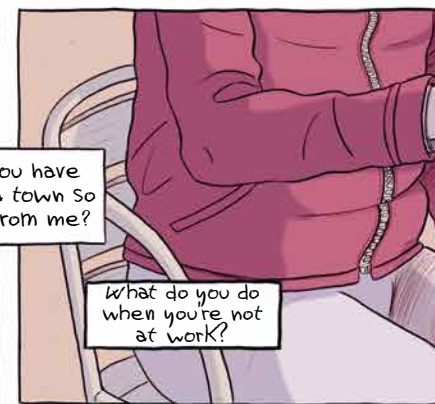


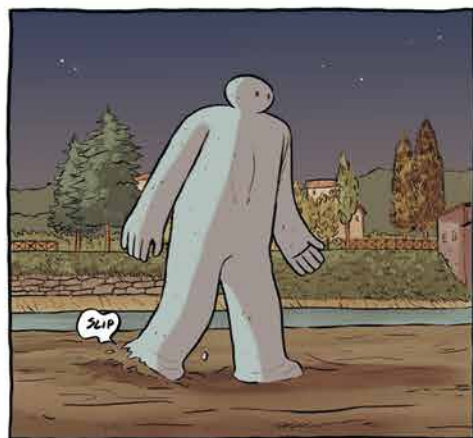










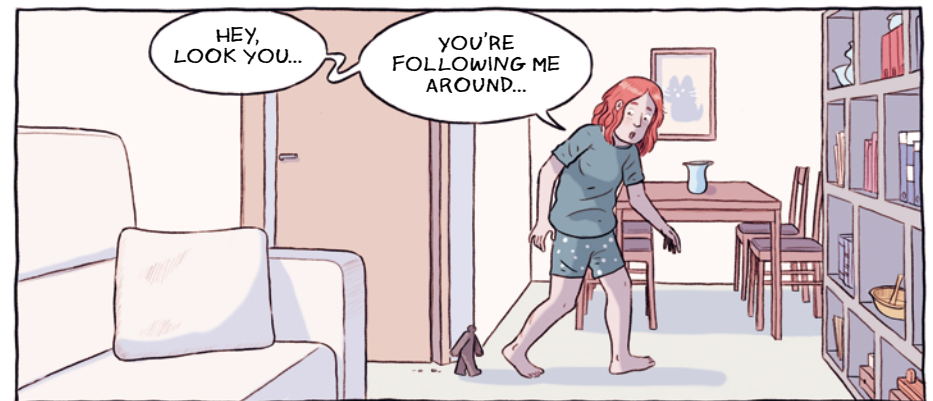
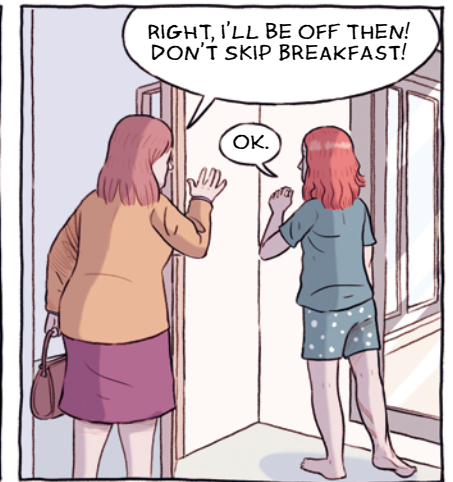
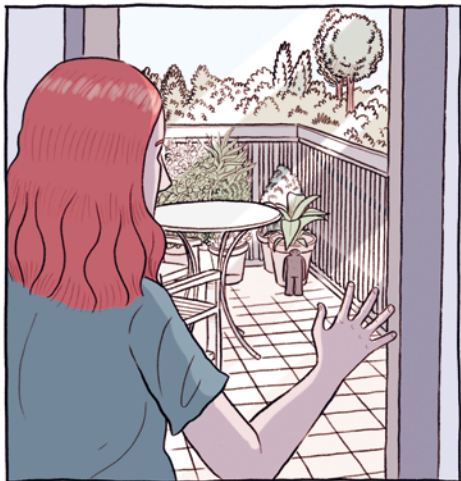
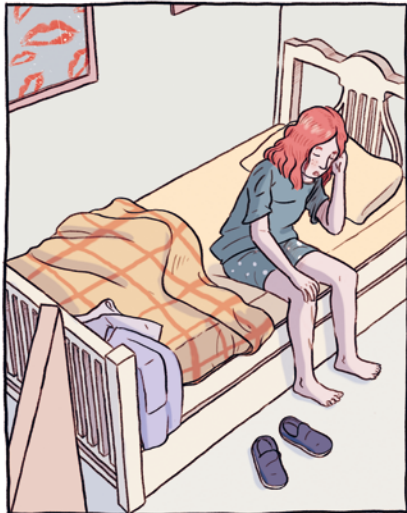
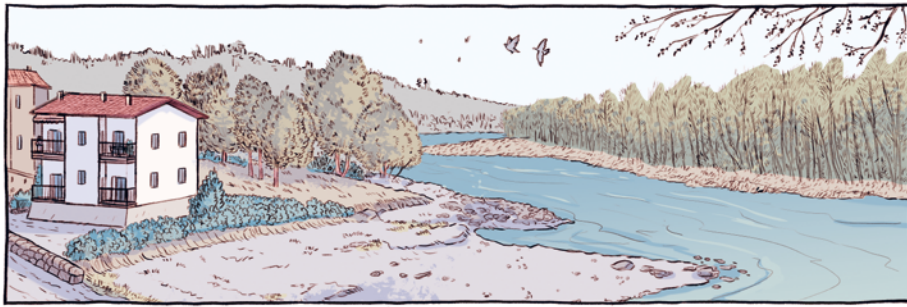


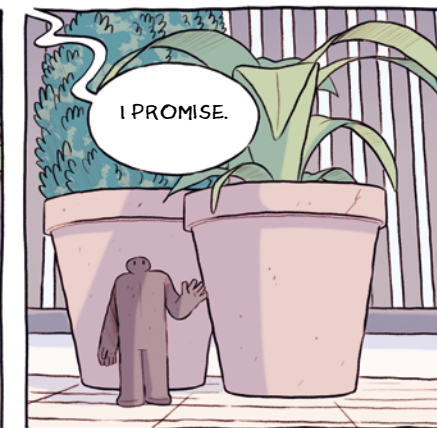
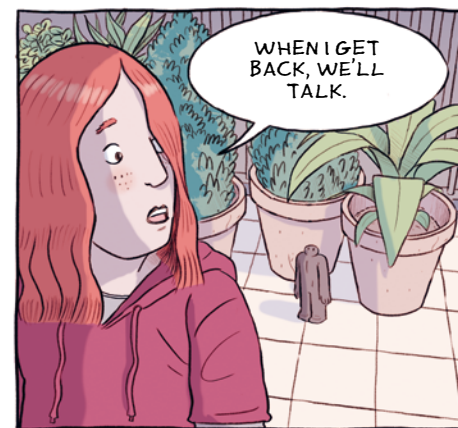
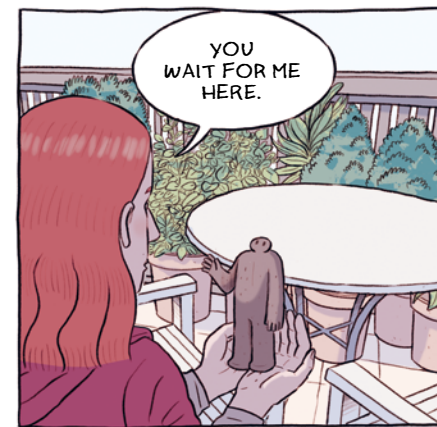


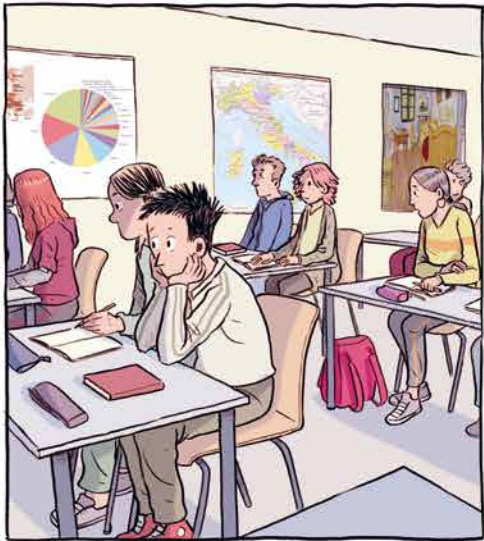


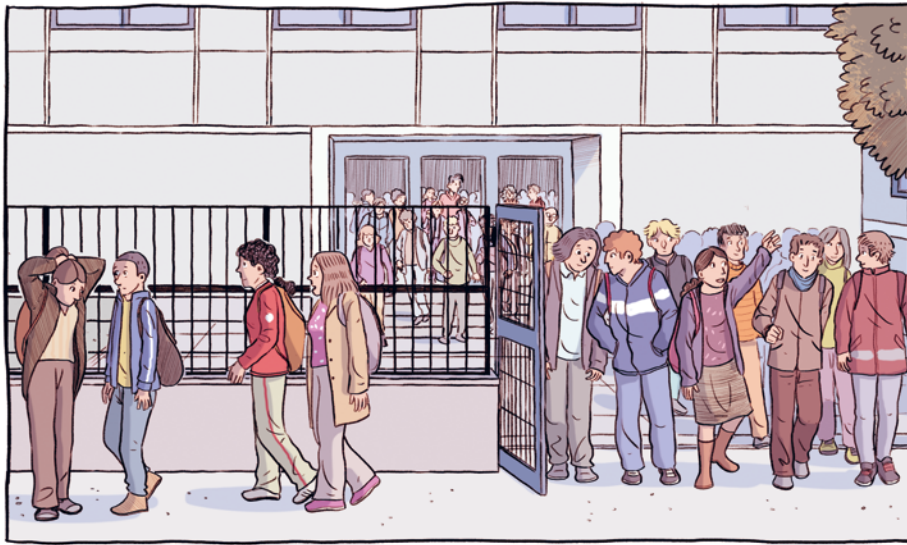
נ

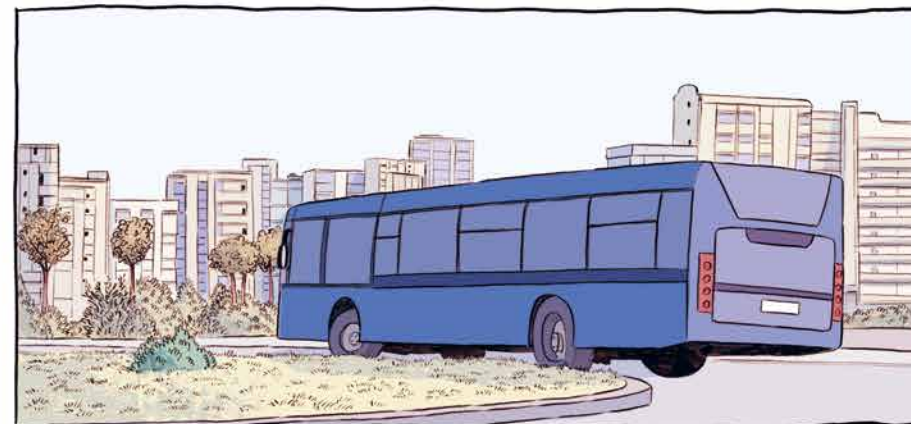
The shape of the letter **NUN** is like bending or falling over.
It points to our ability to find meaning even in the
most difficult moments of our lives.

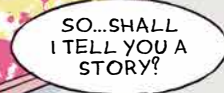






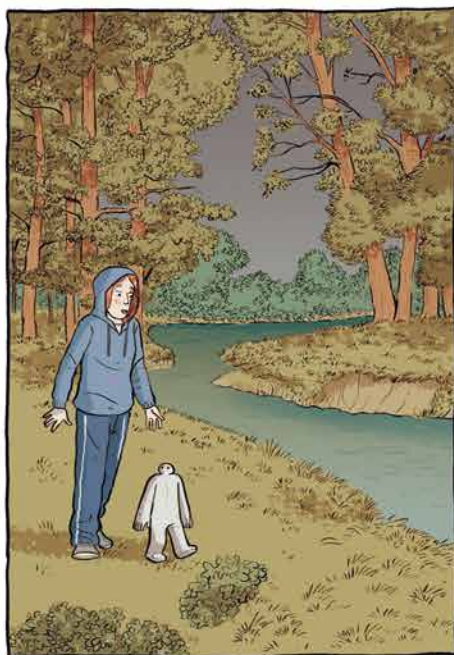


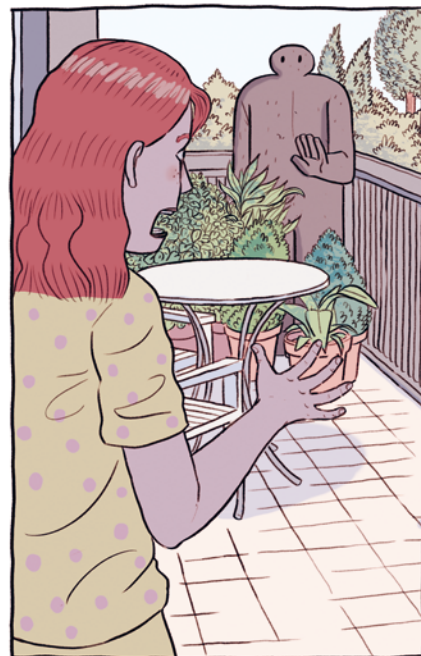
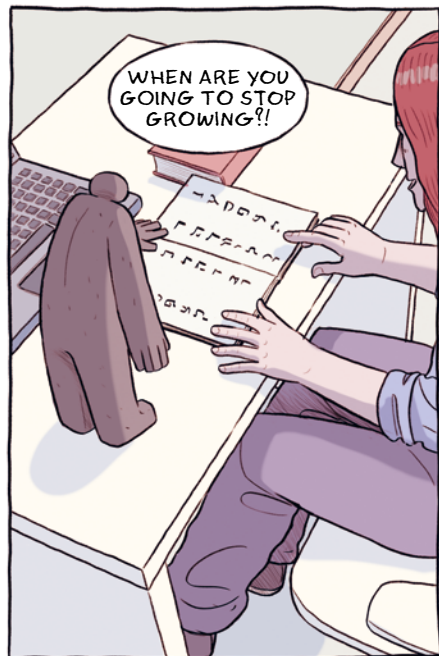
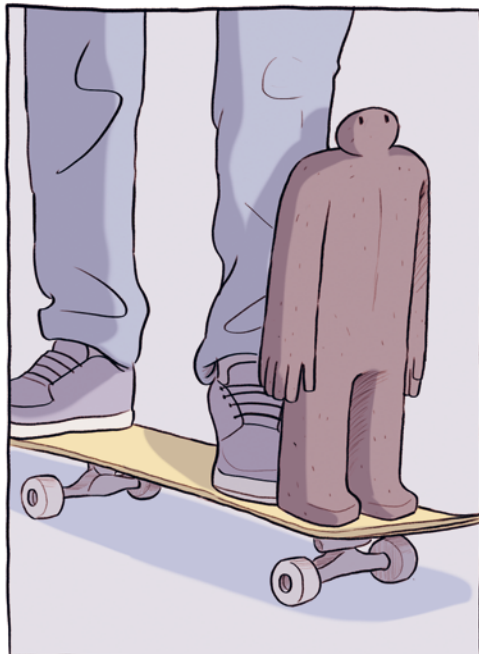
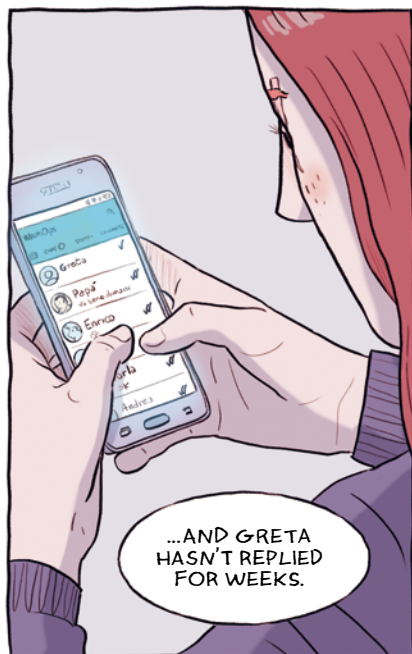


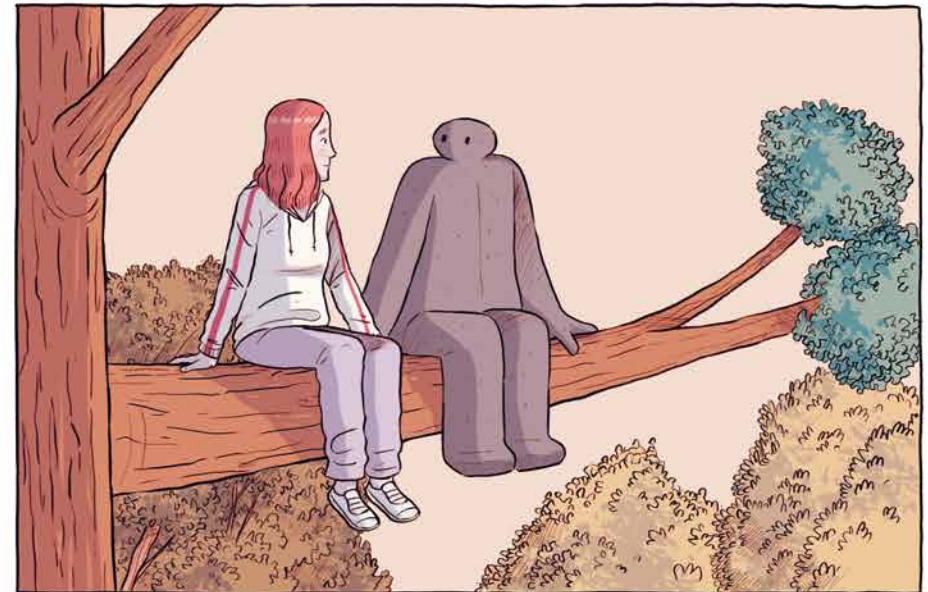
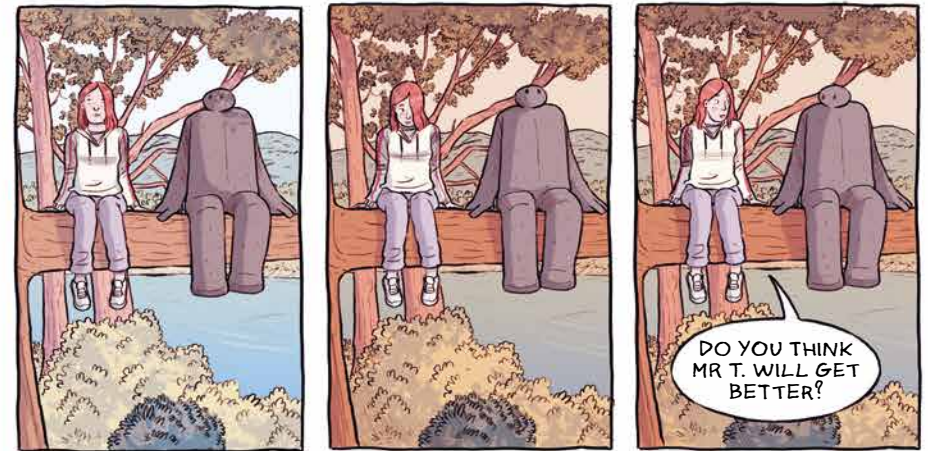
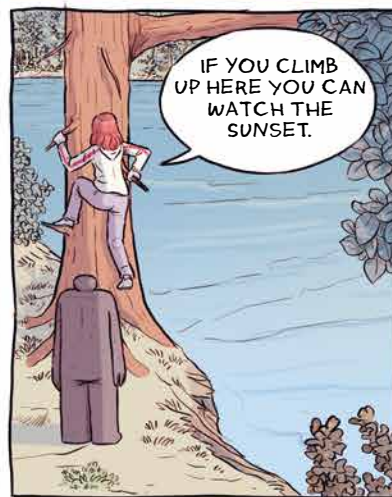




The letter **SHIN** means change. Change is an essential aspect of reality but it should tend towards repairing things and making them better, otherwise the end result would be total chaos.

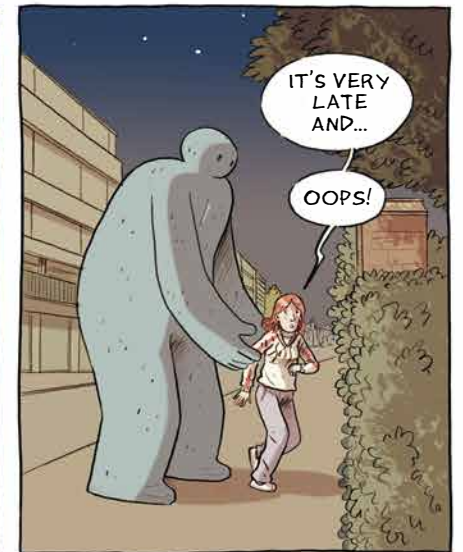




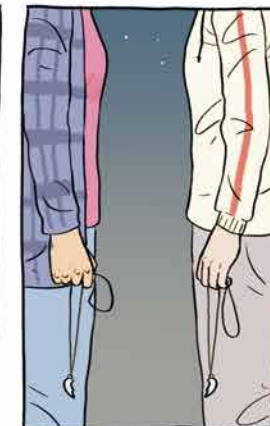


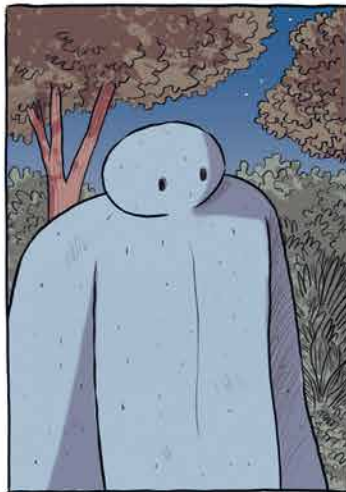
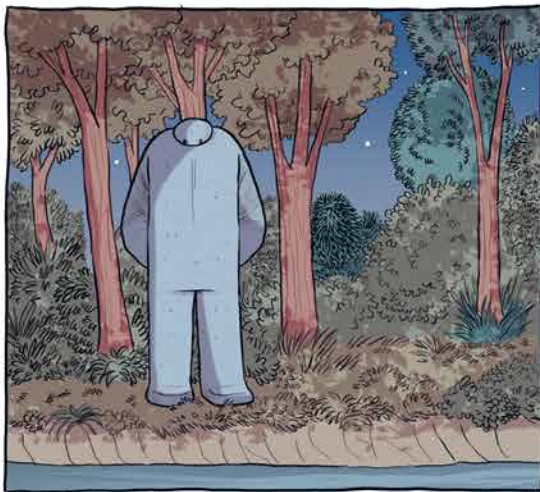
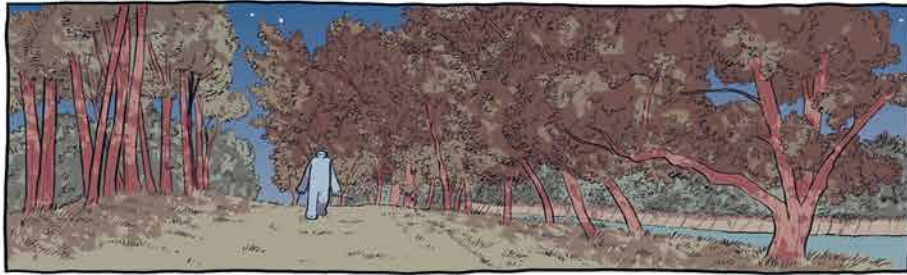


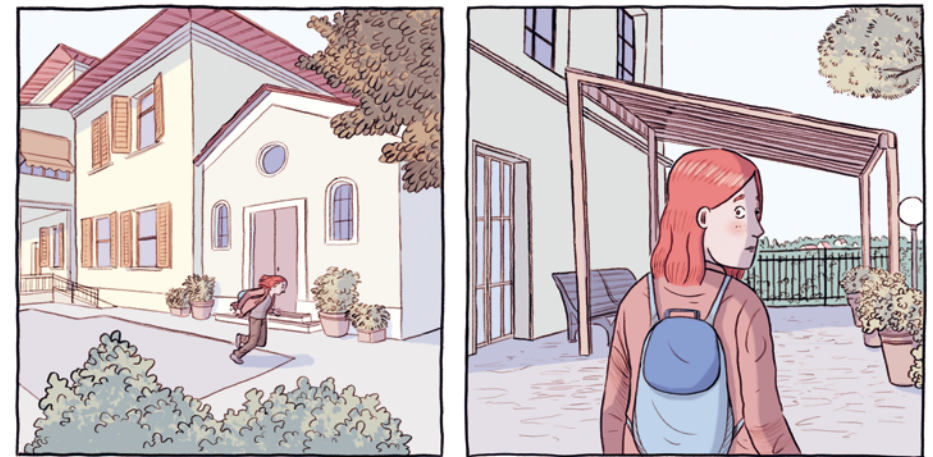
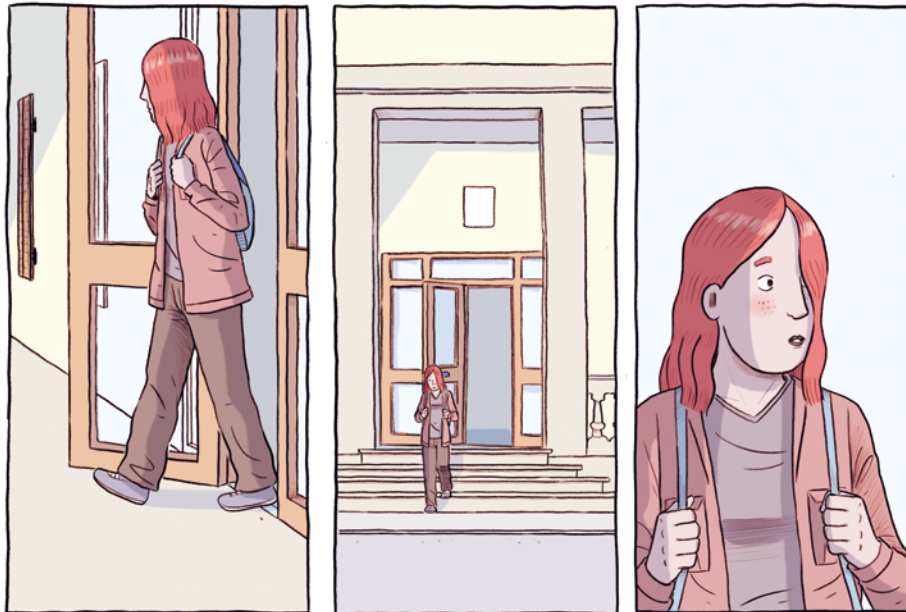
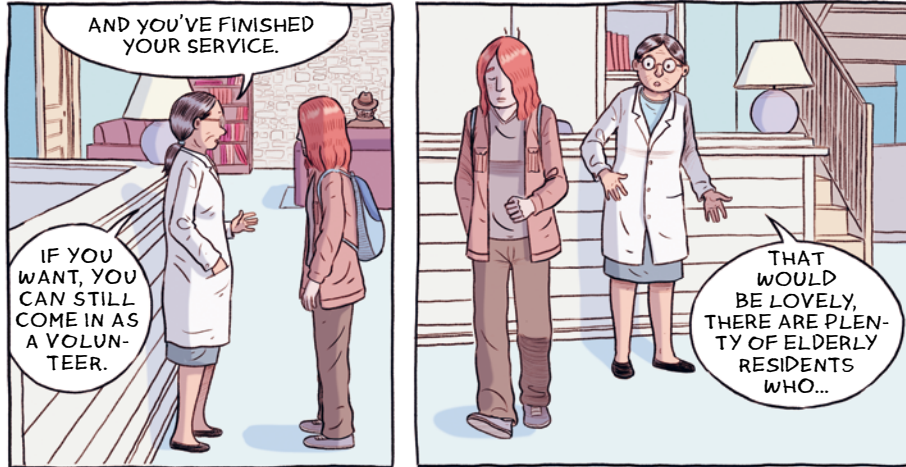


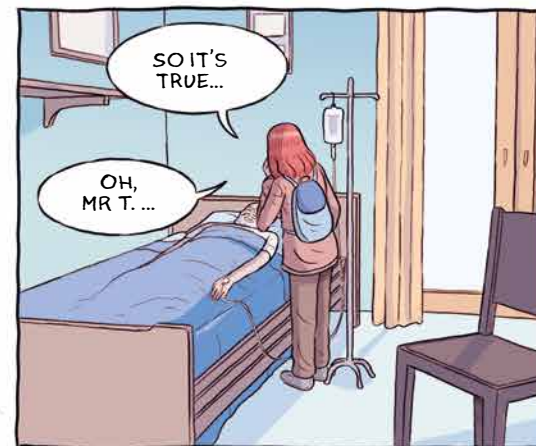






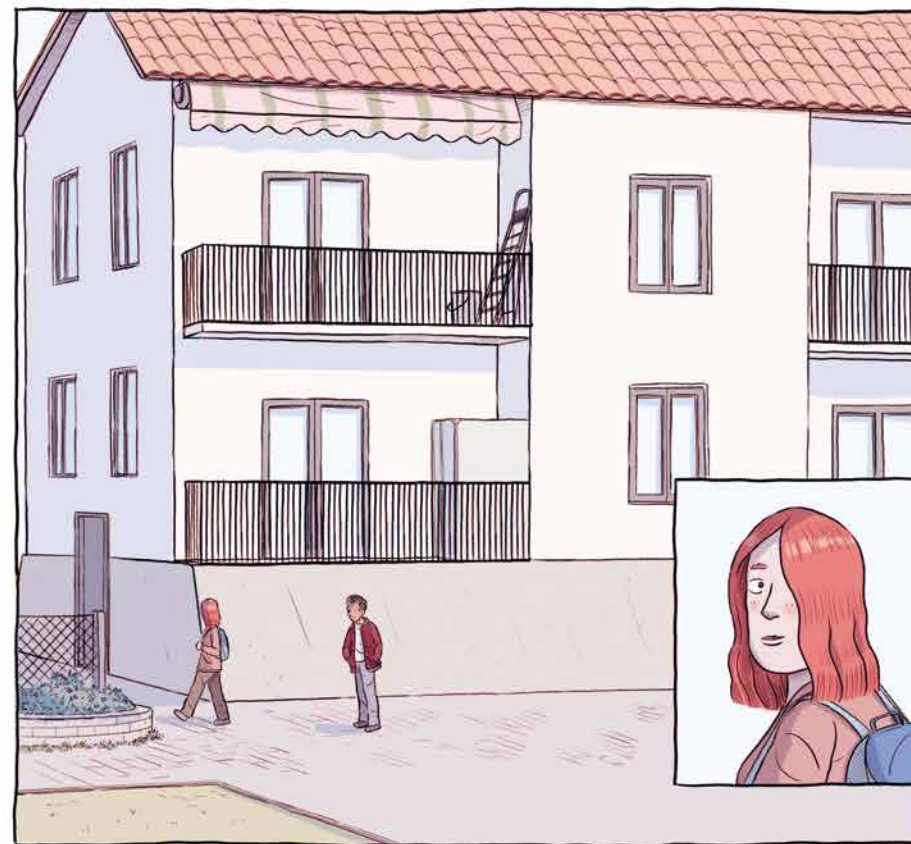














ג

The letter **GIMEL**, whose shape is like someone running, represents our potential to progress. Its numeric value is three, referring to the fact that even opposite forces can come together to form something cohesive and long-lasting.



IT'S A STORY ABOUT RABBI YEHUDAH BEN BEZALEL, CALLED RABBI LOEW. HE WAS A GREAT RABBI WHO LIVED IN PRAGUE. HE DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO PHILOSOPHY AND JEWISH MYSTICISM...



BUT HE WAS MOST FAMOUS FOR THE NIGHT IN WHICH, THANKS TO HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE HEBREW ALPHABET, HE CREATED A GOLEM. THAT NIGHT HE CAME ACROSS A STRIP OF CLAY ON THE BANK OF THE VLTAVA RIVER.



ON ONE SIDE OF IT THE RIVER FLOWED CALMLY BY. ON THE OTHER SIDE, TOWARDS THE OLD TOWN, ROSE AN EARTHY CLIFF-FACE FULL OF LITTLE RAVINES AND CAVES.



RABBI LOEW WENT INTO ONE OF THE CAVES AND DREW A LONG, NARROW OVAL IN THE GROUND. HE CALLED FOR FIRE AND A BLUE FLAME APPEARED IN THE OVAL, GLOWING BUT NOT BURNING UP.



RABBI LOEW BENT DOWN, TOOK SOME OF THE HEAVY CLAY THAT WAS STEEPED IN RIVER WATER IN HIS HANDS, AND BEGAN TO MOULD THE SHAPE OF A MAN. STURDY LEGS, BODY, CHEST, ARMS, HEAD. LIKE ADAM, THE MAN GOD SHAPED IN HIS HANDS WHEN THE WORLD BEGAN.



HIS CREATION WOULD HAVE REMAINED JUST A CLAY DUMMY, IF IT WEREN'T FOR A WORD THAT HE CARVED ON ITS FOREHEAD. EVERY LETTER IS LIKE A DOORWAY, AND RABBI LOEW, WISELY, COMBINED THE LETTERS, OPEN, CLOSE, AND OPEN, ENABLING LIFE TO ENTER INTO THE GOLEM. AND THE GOLEM STOOD UP.



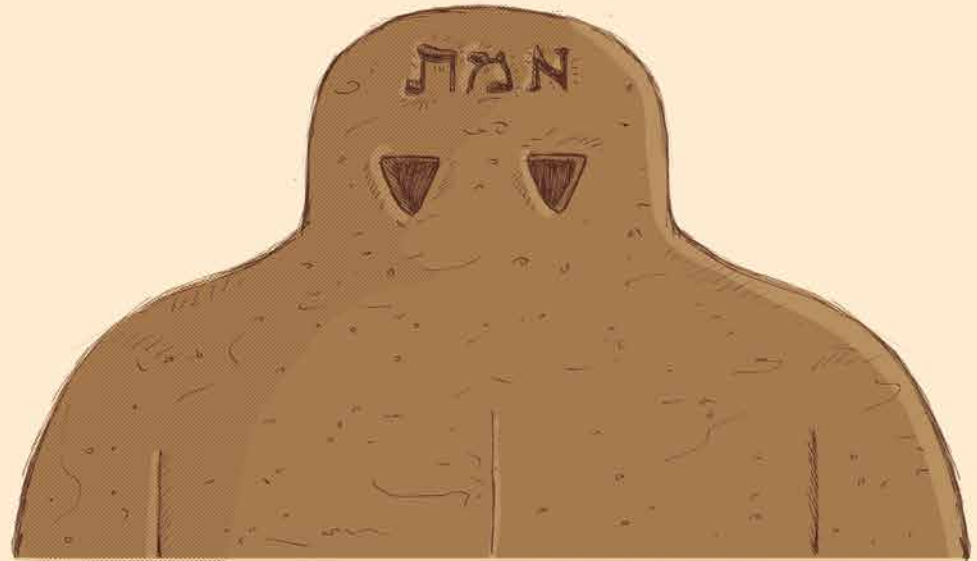
HE WAS AN INCREDIBLY POWERFUL BEING, BUT HAD NO INTELLECT OR WILL. NO WORDS. RABBI LOEW PERFORMED A GREAT SPIRITUAL EXERCISE WHEN HE CREATED HIM, AND THAT IS WHAT IT SHOULD HAVE REMAINED.



INSTEAD, HE BECAME A SERVANT WHO COULD BE ORDERED AROUND AND SOON HE BEGAN TO GROW. HE BECAME BIGGER AND BIGGER AND IN THE END RABBI LOEW LOST CONTROL OF HIM. THE GOLEM WAS SO POWERFUL HE COULD HAVE DESTROYED ANYTHING AND ANYONE.



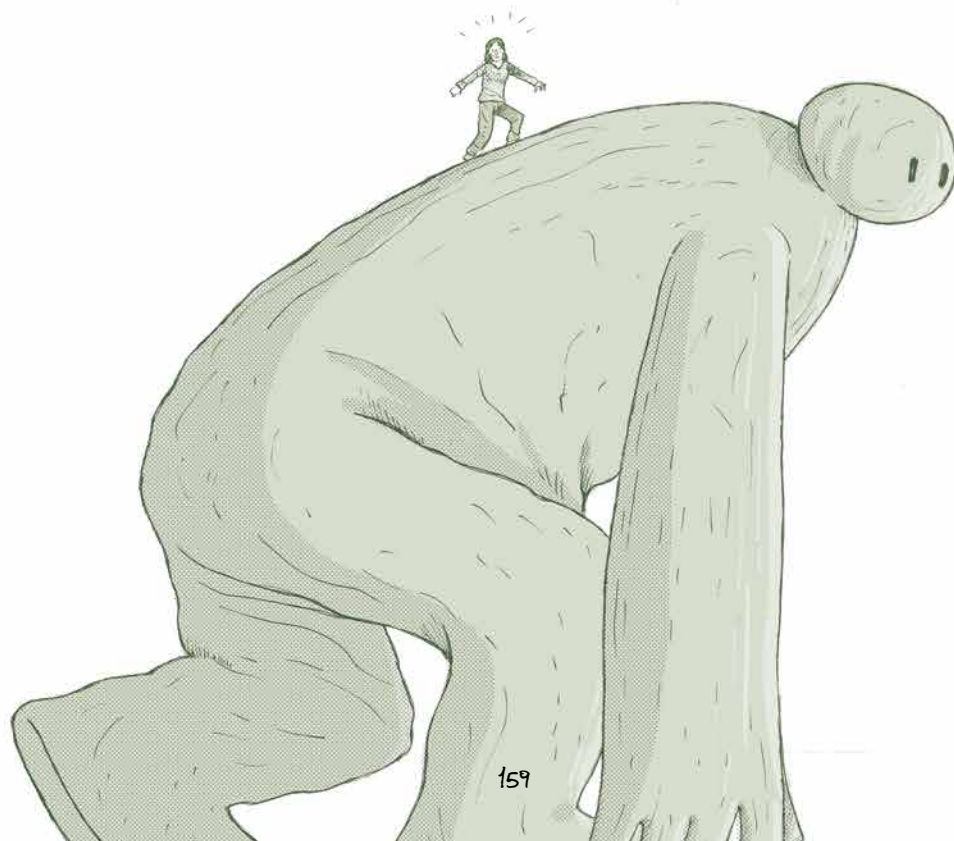
ONLY RABBI LOEW, WHO KNEW HIS SECRET, WAS ABLE TO STOP HIM. ALL HE HAD TO DO WAS TO REMOVE ONE LETTER AND THE GOLEM WOULD GO BACK TO BEING CLAY. YOU SEE, A SINGLE LETTER CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ONE WORLD AND ANOTHER.

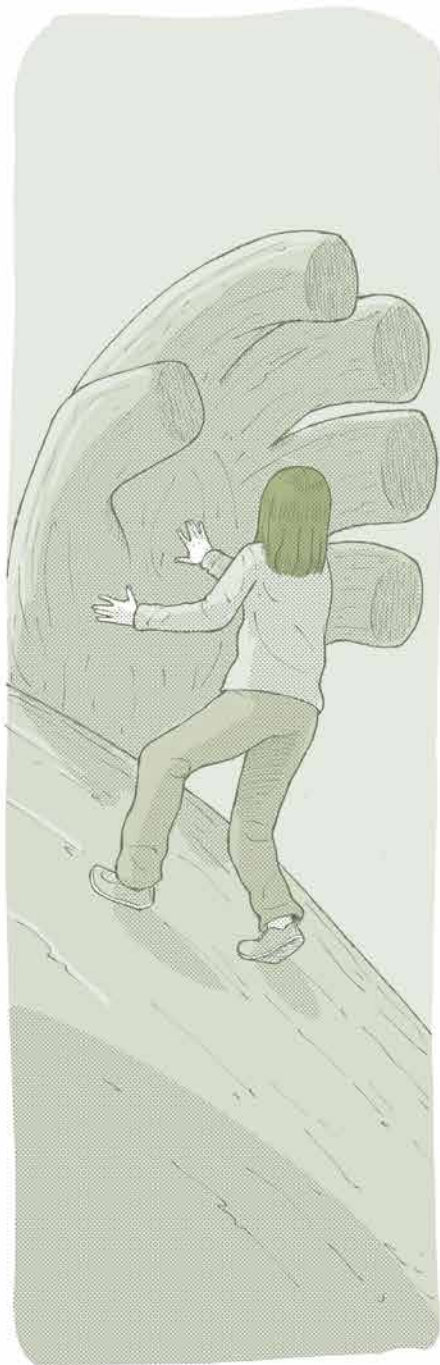
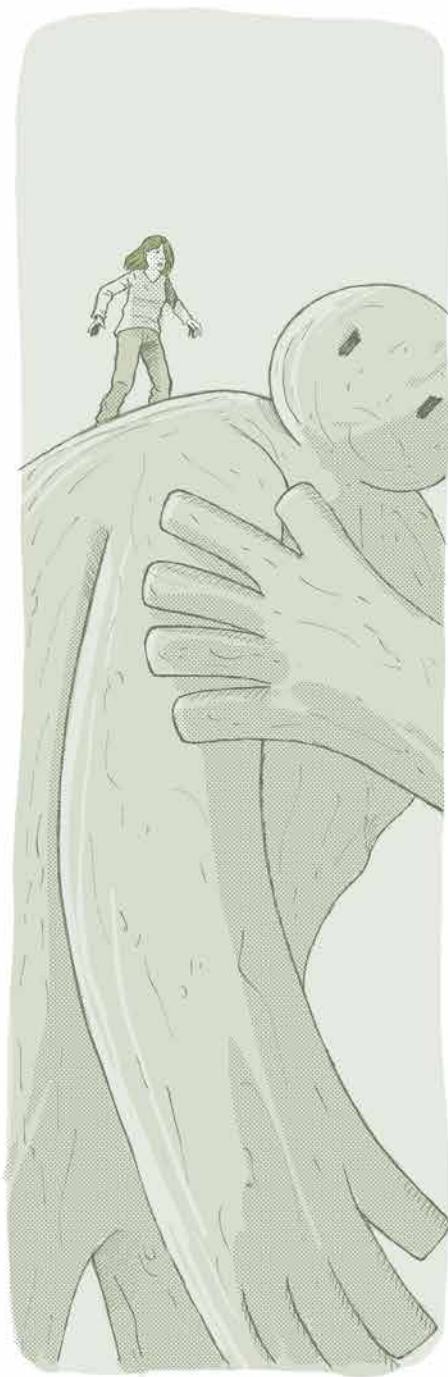






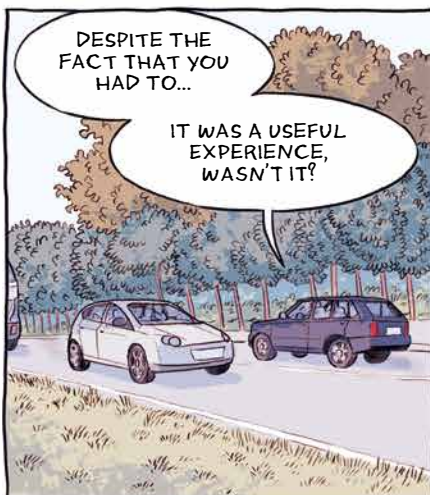


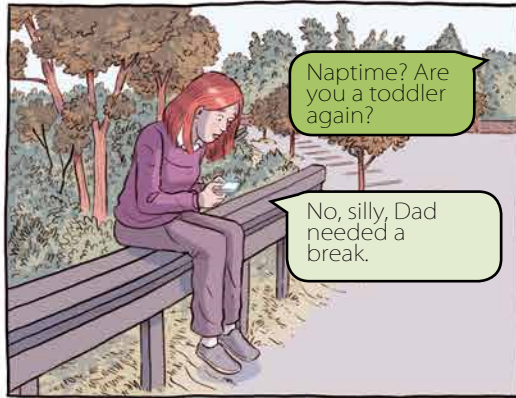


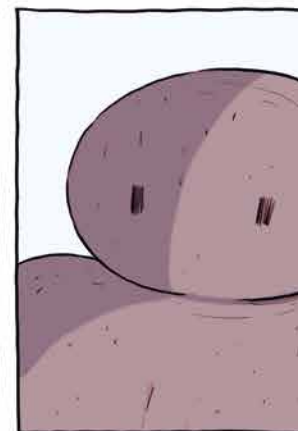
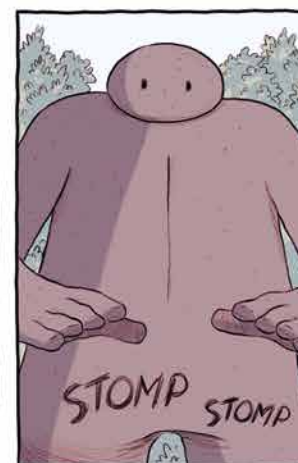


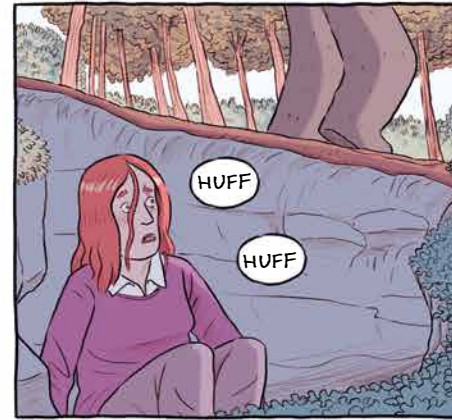


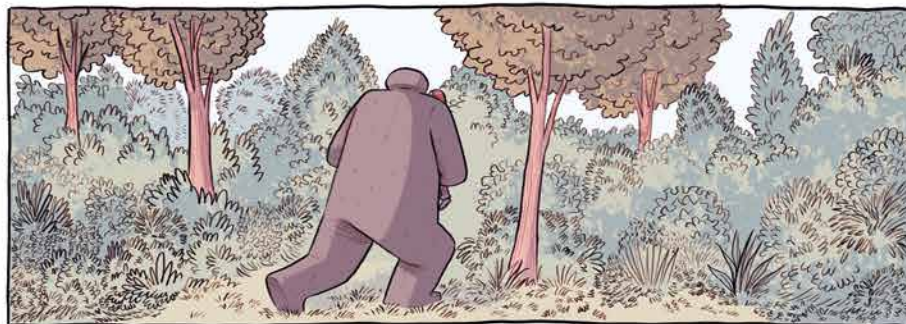
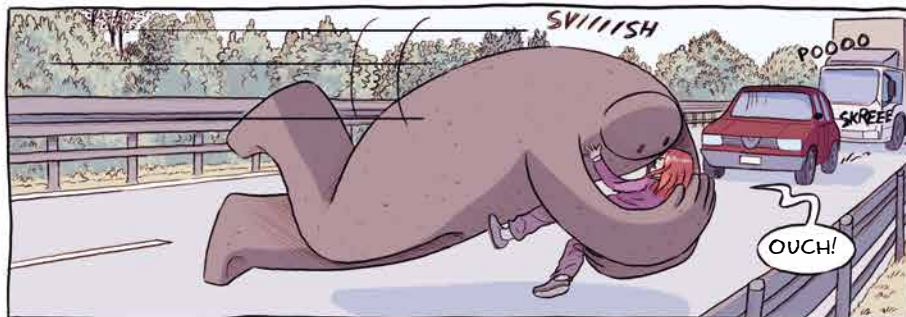
The Letter **AYIN** is known as the "eye" and it is the symbol of wisdom. Its shape is like a root that runs deep into the earth. It refers to our ability to enter deep into reality.











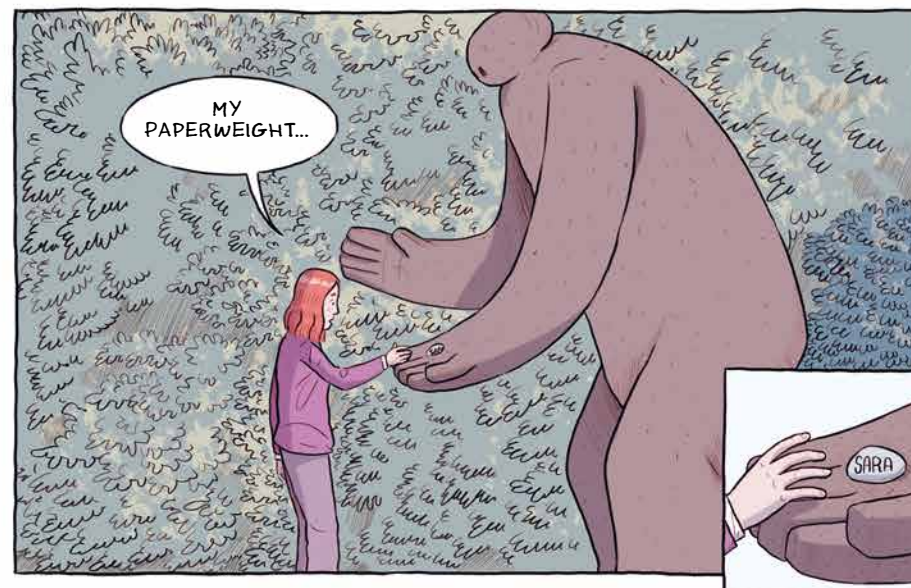
THANKS...
SO YOU WEREN'T
CROSS WITH ME.

I THOUGHT YOU
WERE ANGRY
BECAUSE I HADN'T
COME...

WHY DID YOU
GO INTO MY
HOUSE LAST
NIGHT? IT
FRIGHTENED
ME...

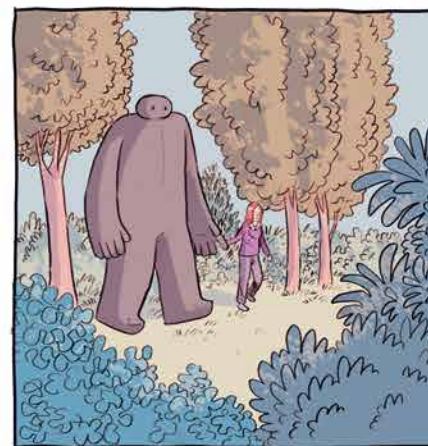
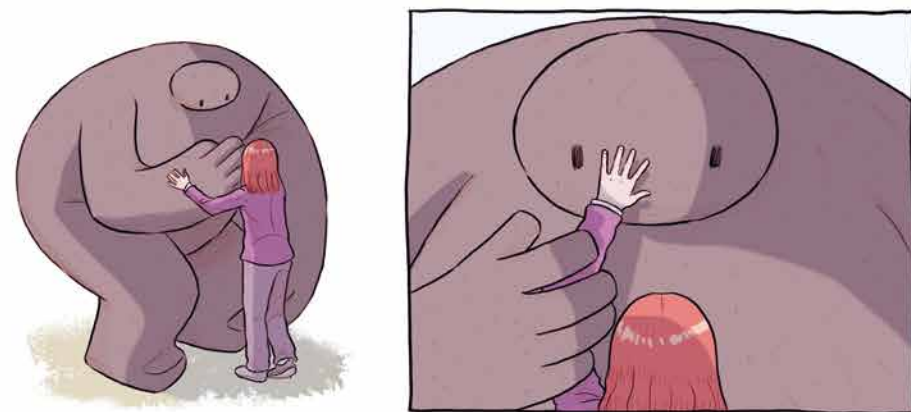


AND JUST
NOW TOO...I WAS
SCARED OF YOU.

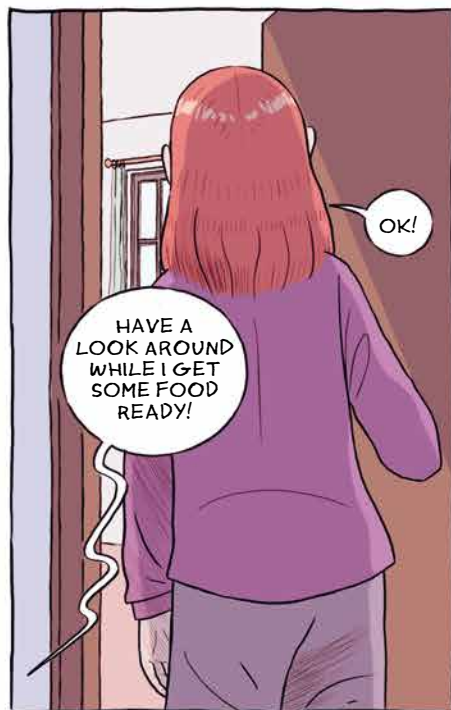


MY
PAPERWEIGHT...



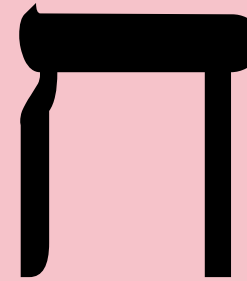
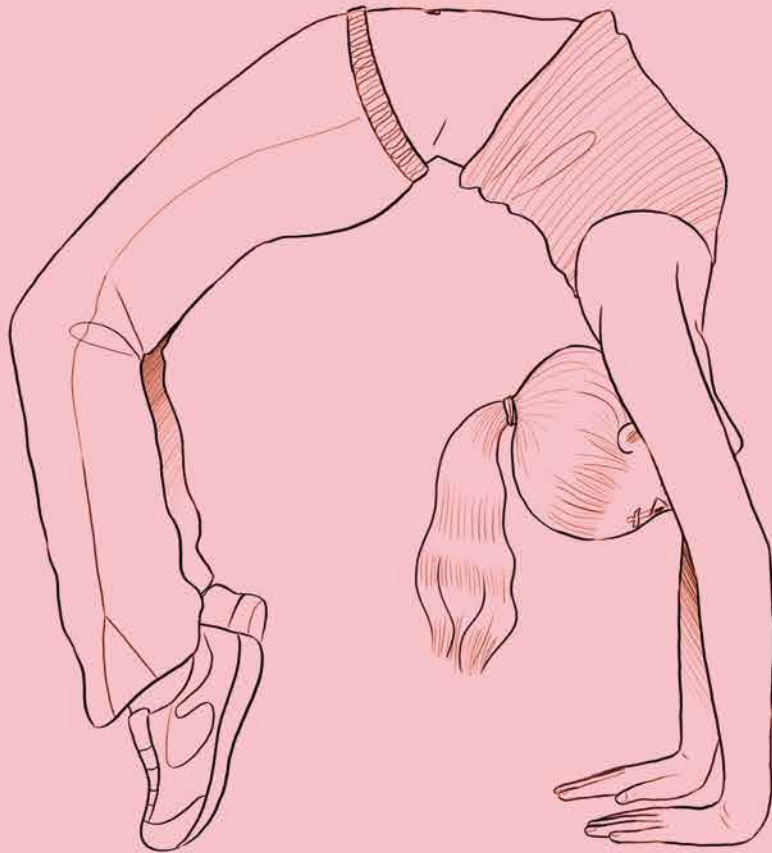






I'LL THRASH YOU!





The letter **HET** is called "life" and it is shaped like a doorway.
It refers to the union between man and woman,
and their love that reaches into infinity.



PHEW... THAT WAS GOOD!

HUFF HUFF, YES... HUFF VERY!



HUFF

HUFF

HUFF



HEY, IS SOMETHING UP?

NO, NOT AT ALL.

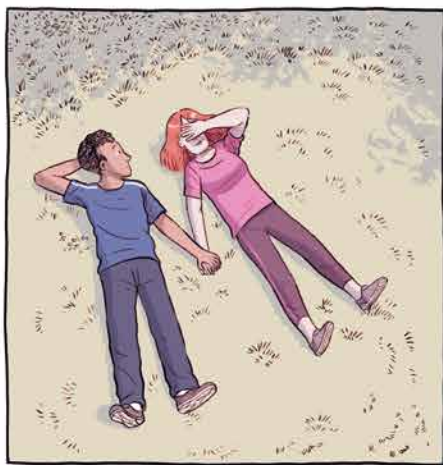
WHAT'S THAT FACE FOR THEN?



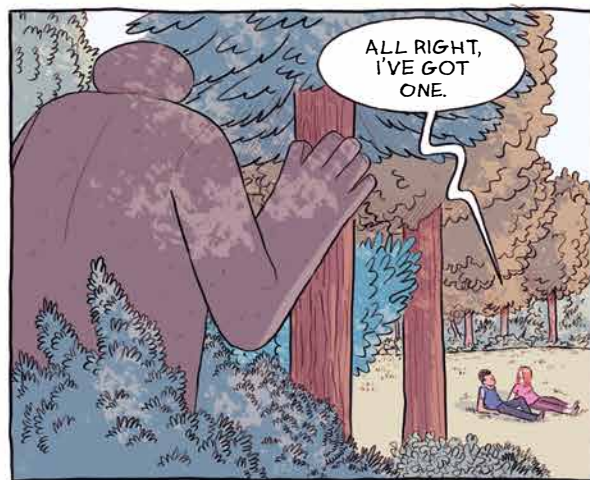
IT'S JUST THAT I'M NOT SURE IF I CAN BE THIS HAPPY...



I MEAN,
RIGHT NOW...I REALLY
MISS MR T. I DON'T KNOW
IF I'LL EVER SEE HIM
AGAIN.



OK...WELL,
YOU CAME RUNNING
WITH ME SO NOW I WANT
TO HEAR ONE OF YOUR
STORIES FROM MR T.
IN ROOM 26...



ALL RIGHT,
I'VE GOT
ONE.



ACTUALLY
IT'S NOT REALLY A
STORY, MORE A
COMMENTARY.



IN ONE OF THE CREATION
STORIES IN THE TORAH, IT SAYS
"GOD CREATED PEOPLE, MALE
AND FEMALE HE CREATED
THEM."

THE FIRST
HUMAN WAS
SIMULTANE-
OUSLY MAN
AND WOMAN.



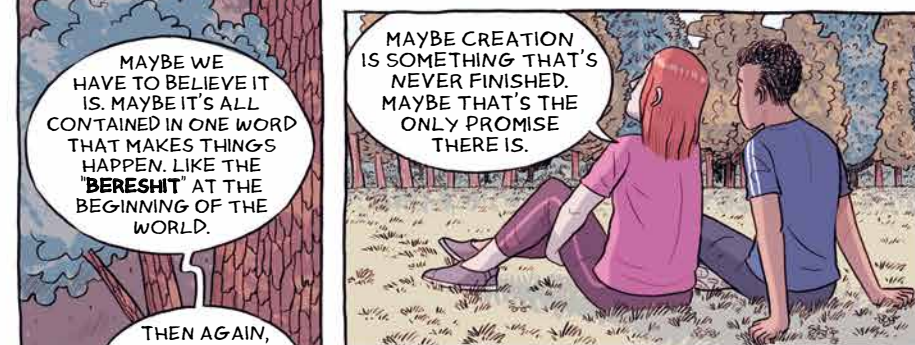
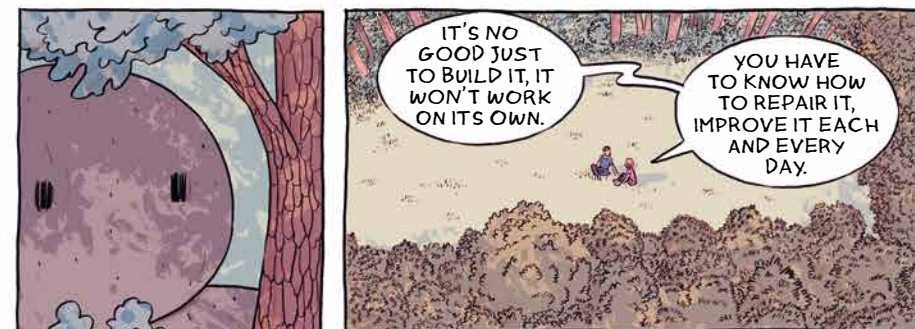
AT SOME POINT, GOD
SEPARATED THE FEMALE PART
FROM THE MALE PART.

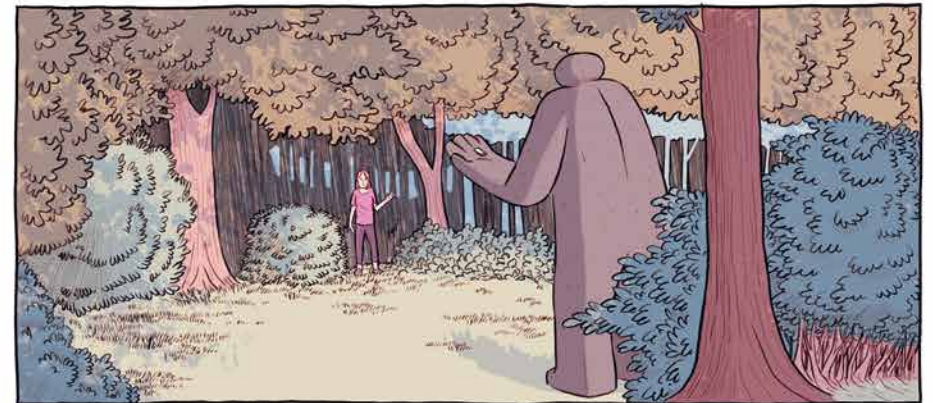


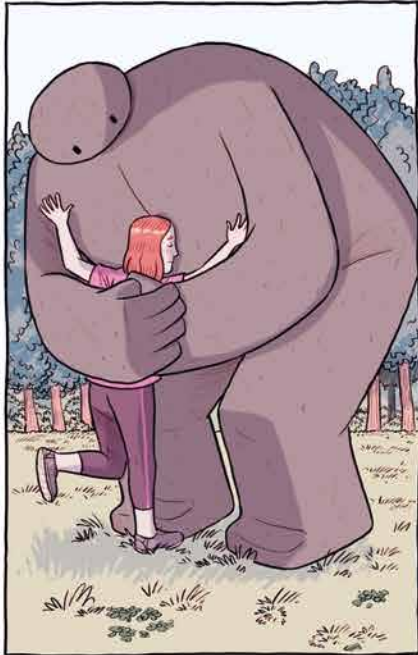
THAT
SEPARATION
TRIGGERED A SAD
FEELING OF INCOM-
PLETENESS IN EACH OF
THE TWO PARTS. THAT'S
WHY WE ALL SEARCH
UNTIL WE FIND OUR
OTHER HALF.

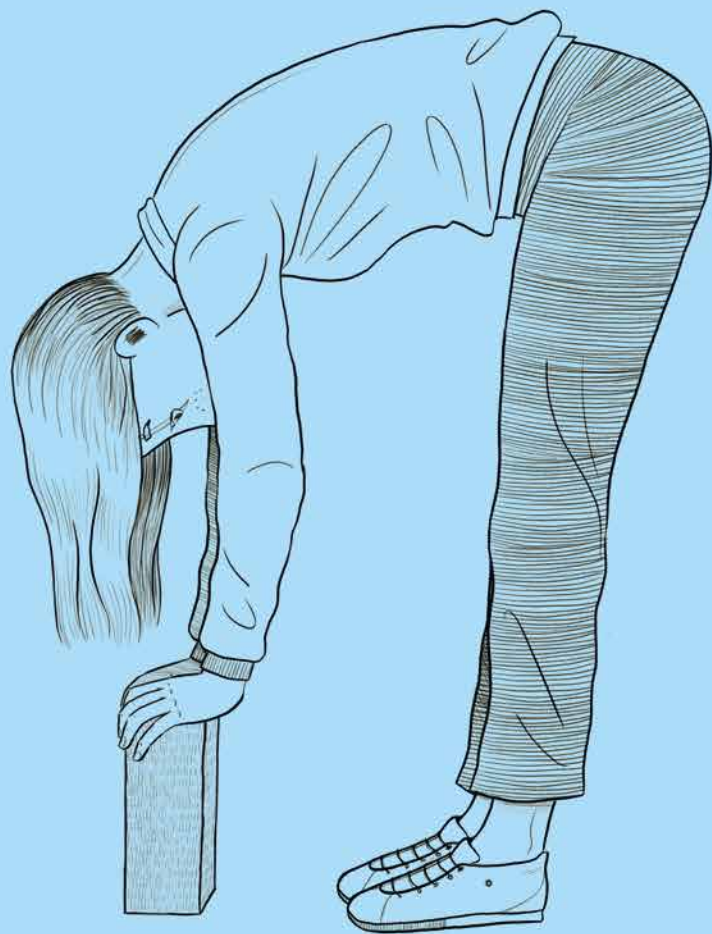


UM...
OUR SOULMATE,
BASICALLY.



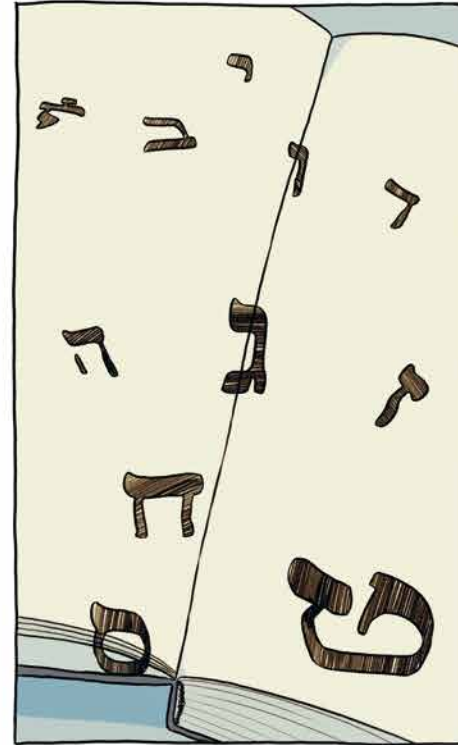


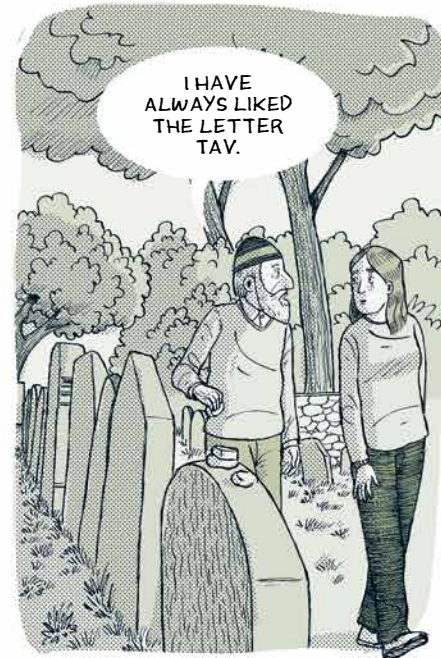




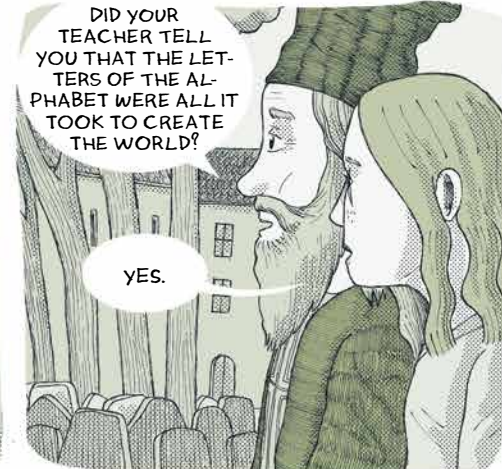
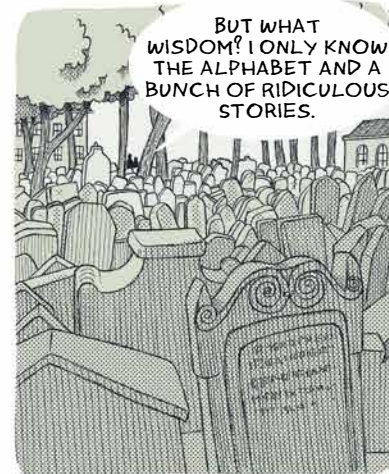
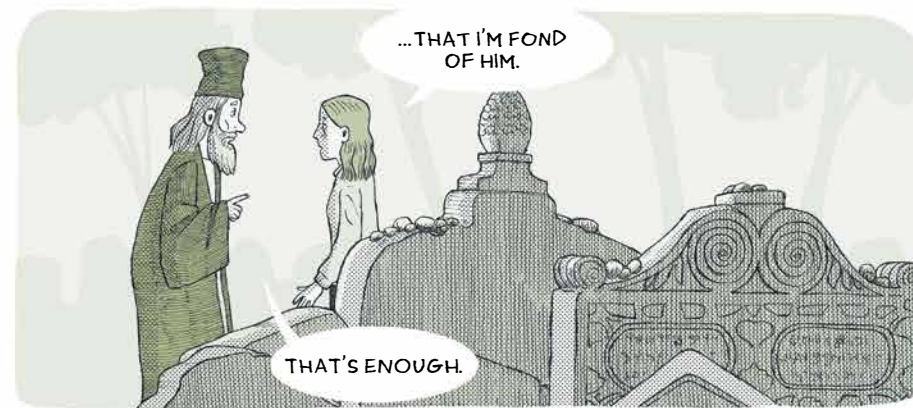
ת

TAV is the last letter in the alphabet and the last letter in the word "emet" (truth).





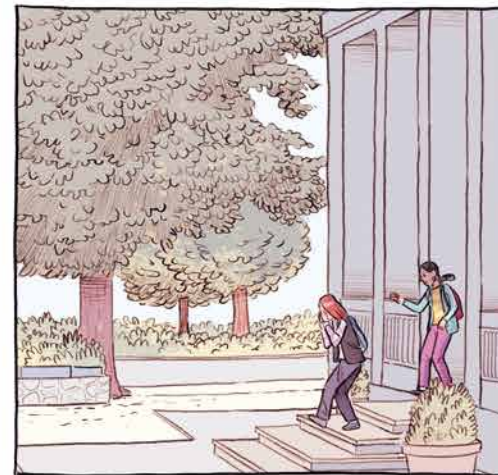
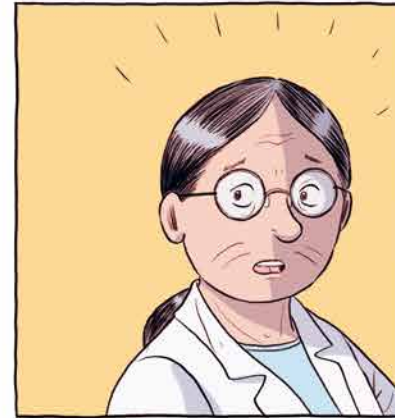


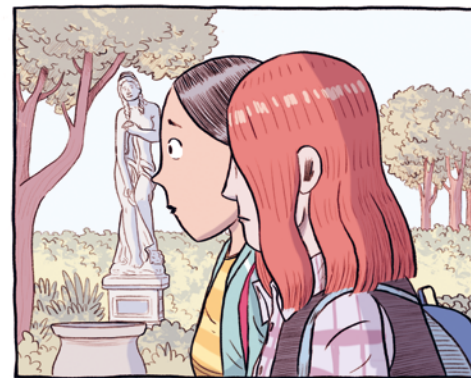
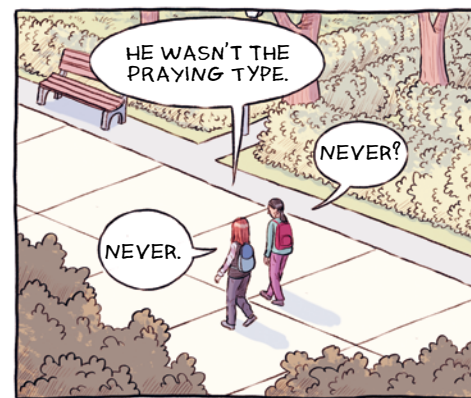
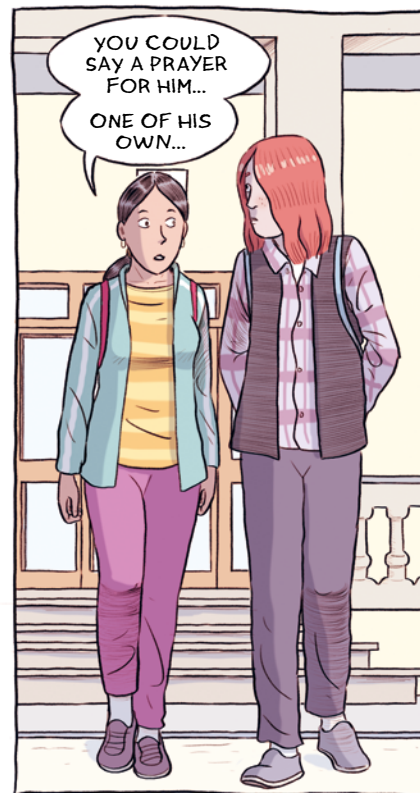
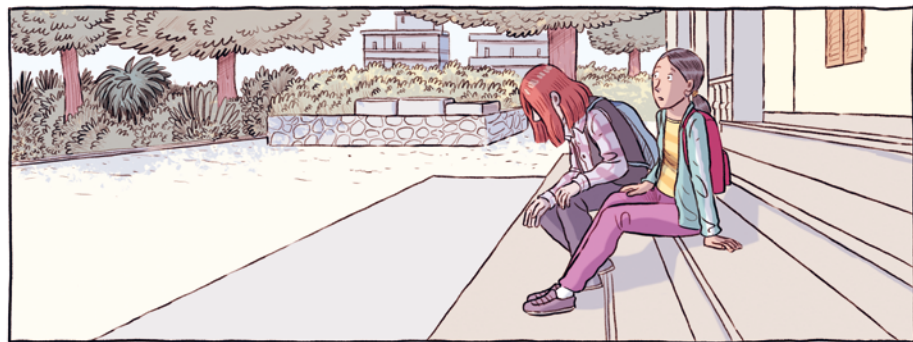
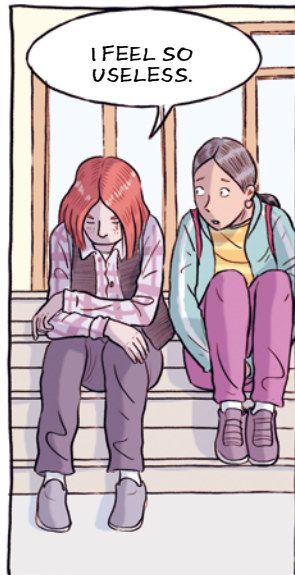
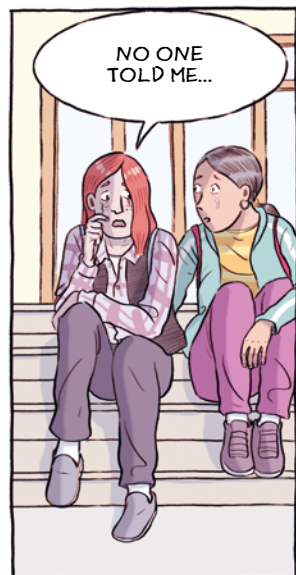
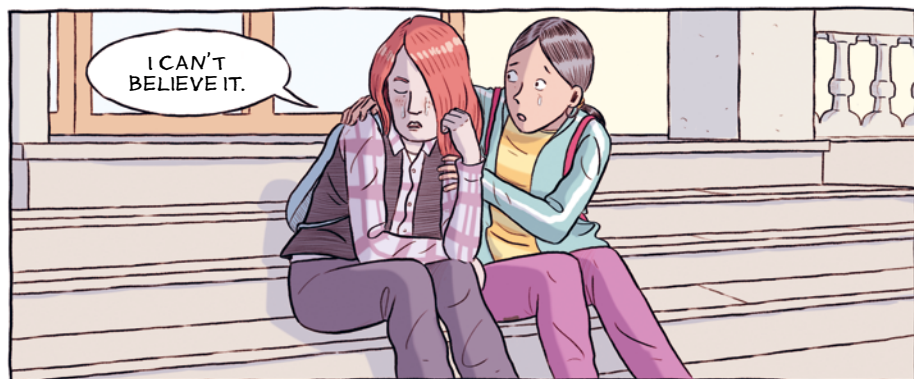


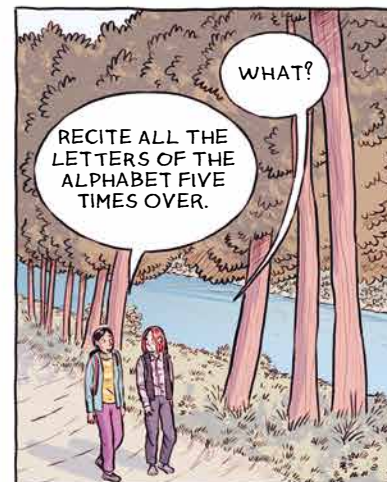


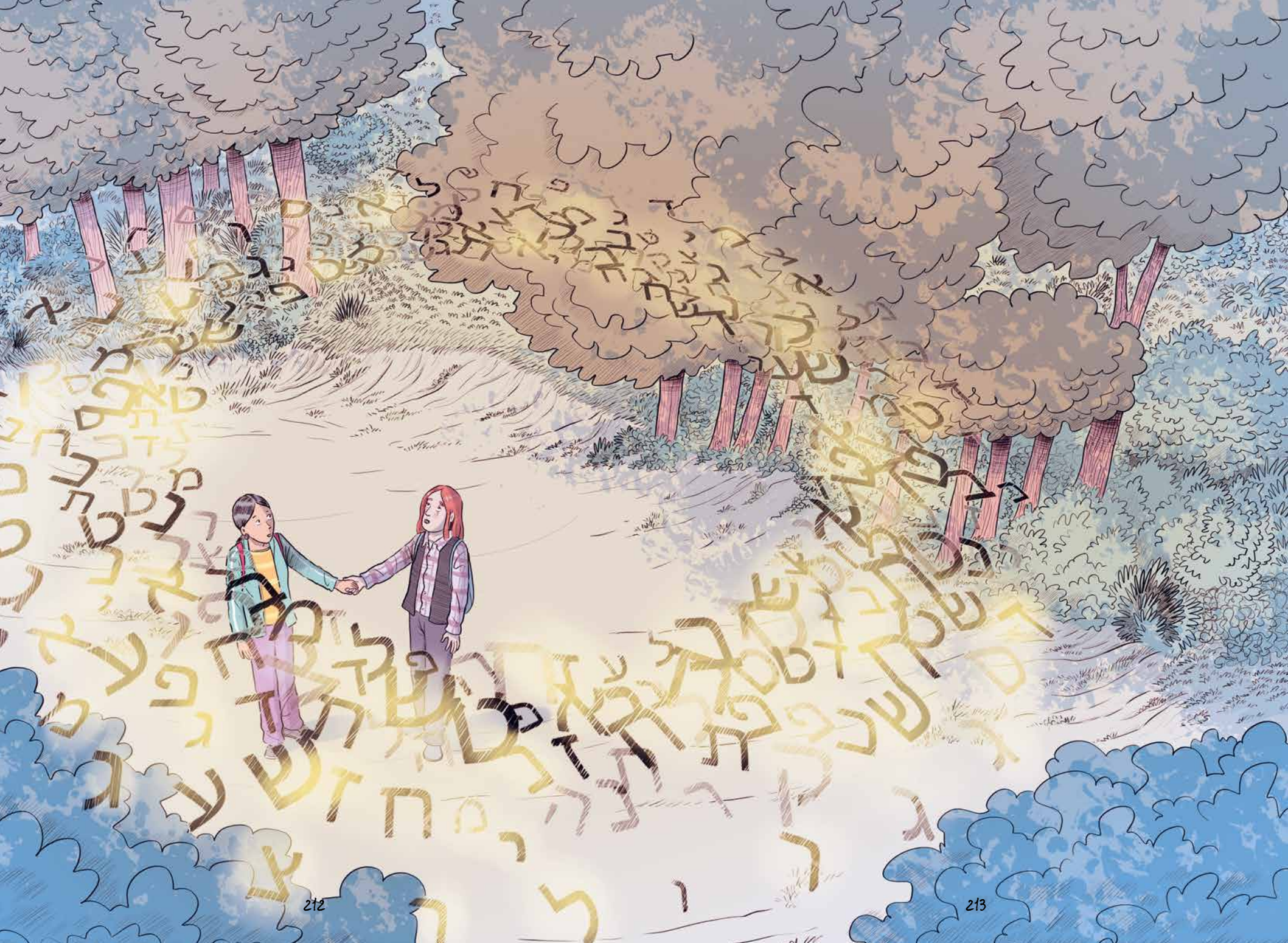


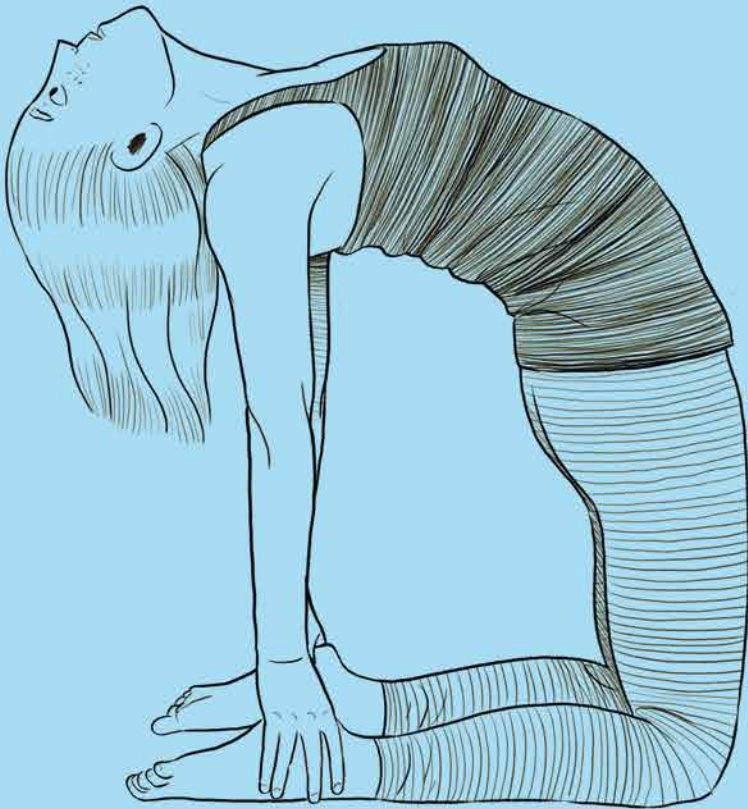
The letter **YOD** is the simplest character in the whole alphabet. Its name is like the word "hand" and it refers to the ability to grasp concepts, i.e. intelligence. It's also like "friend": the ability to hold someone's hand.



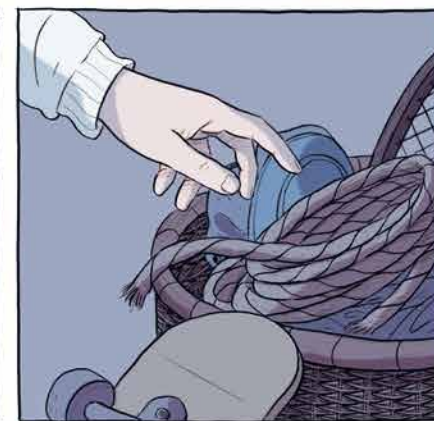






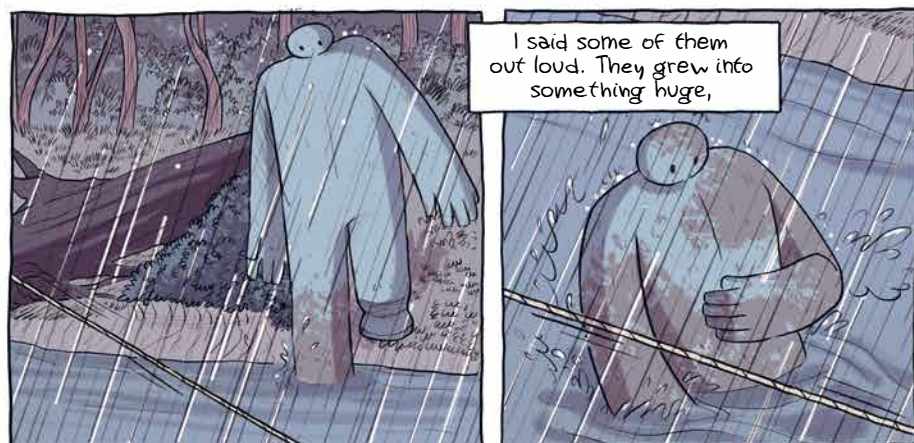


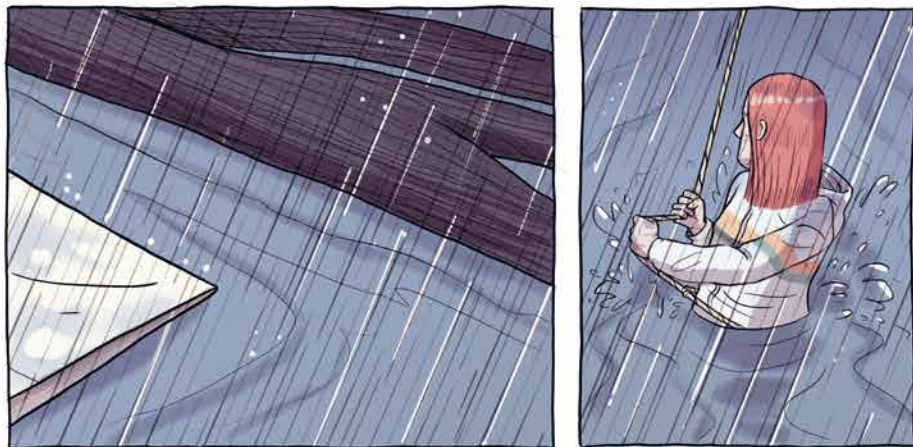
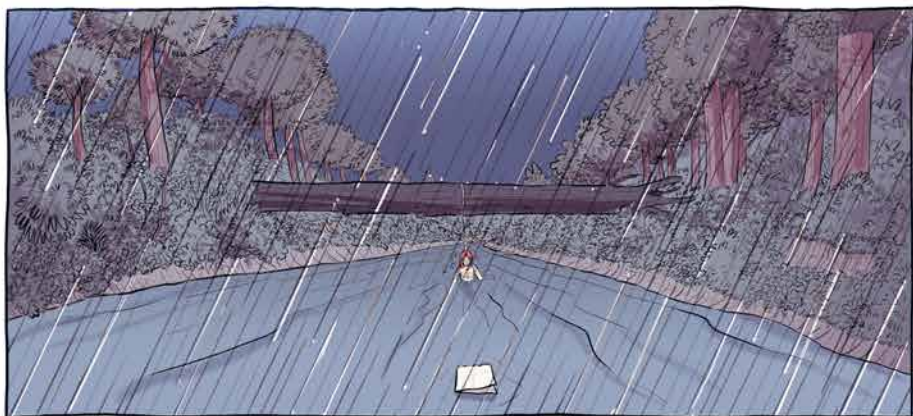
The letter **MEM** is reminiscent of the word "water" (mayim), which is a symbol of love. This letter represents simplicity and refers to our ability to be ourselves, through and through.





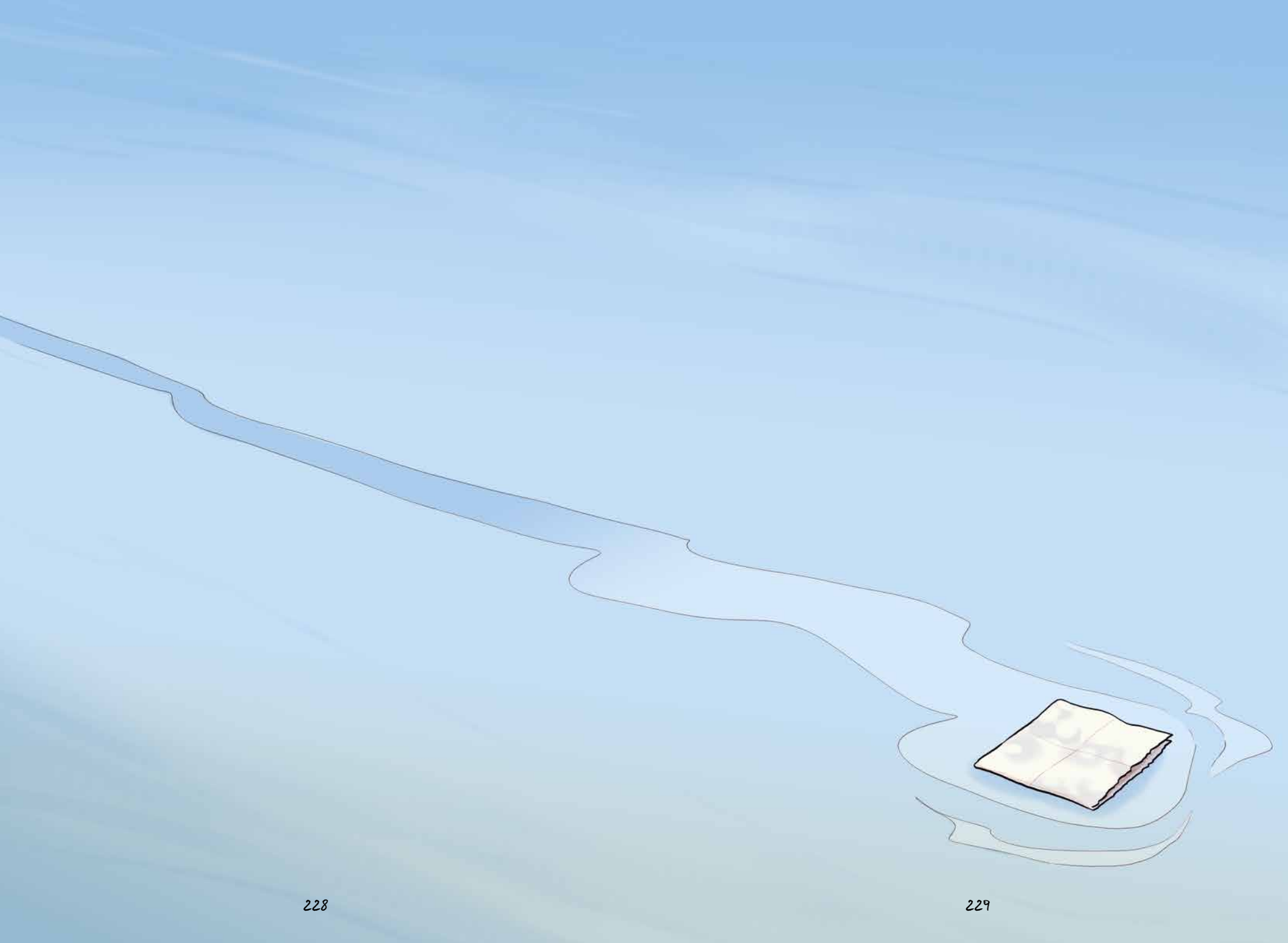






The words I'm letting go
of are my Bereshit.

CRAAK





For much of my life, the Hebrew alphabet was my fantasy world.

I say alphabet, because I certainly wouldn't say that I ever mastered Hebrew.

My studies came to an end soon after my first attempts at translating texts from the Scriptures, from biblical Hebrew. But over those few years I had various teachers, and the way those letters kept me company was most extraordinary.

Most people I knew were learning English, French or Spanish. My friends and classmates travelled abroad to try out the languages they had learnt in the classroom, while I just travelled back in time. To cuneiform characters, Akkadian, Ugaritic... but it was Hebrew that really stole my heart.

What was so captivating about it?

What did I want to learn from it?

There's a whole universe to explore within this language. Each letter houses a world of its own, created by its shape, its sound, and its numerical value. Every word can be put together on various levels, picked apart, examined, reconceived in other texts. What is more, in the Scriptures it's a word that creates. Out of nothing, a word is spoken, and creation begins.

Words make things happen.

So this, then, is what I was after. At a time when everything around me was changing, because I was growing up, I tried to bring my own words to life, attempted to grasp the secret that would enable my words to speak and do. It was during those years when I was studying Hebrew that I began to write poems.*

Poem, from the Greek verb "poiéo", I make. And that's just it: poetry makes. It creates, reveals, moves, touches, illuminates, makes you fall in love, leave, start afresh...

The Hebrew alphabet transported me into another world where words mattered. It accompanied me through a time when I didn't feel able to talk and when real life seemed full of broken promises. That world looked after me, because it enabled my words to gain courage, as it does Sara's. Or at least it made them more than just an illusion, a mute presence in my shadow, like a golem.

Who knows, perhaps there are some words waiting to be brought to life in you, too.

Silvia Vecchini

**from a poem by
Vera Lúcia De Oliveria.*



vorrei trovare
il mio
posto

vorrei
saper
fare una
900

vorrei
essere
meno
timida

vorrei
vivere
sempre
vicino
al fiume

vorrei
un'amicizia
forte
e vera

vorrei
riuscire
a stare
bene con
mio padre

vorrei
essere
me
stessa

vorrei
piacermi

vorrei
non avere
paura

vorrei
capire
il senso

vorrei
innamorarmi
anche io

vorrei
essere
felice

vorrei
crescere

vorrei
capire
chi sono

vorrei che
le cose
belle
non finissero

vorrei sapere
andare avanti
quando
finiscono

vorrei
andare e
tornare dal
altrove

vorrei
parlare
ancora
con lui

vorrei
credere
di nuovo
nelle
promesse

vorrei

