



The collected

unsolicited
advice
for living in the
END TIMES
with
Michael Seidenberg

VOL. I

Michael Seidenberg is the proprietor of New York City's most famous secret bookstore, Brazenhead Books-- home of the New Inquiry's staff meetings, salon, and various debaucheries (not to be divulged here) for almost two years now. I first met Michael when I was working as a food re-containerizer for a Mexican food cart service in Red Hook, Brooklyn. On my long walks to and from work, I would wander into local establishments to proposition business owners or anyone promising I would meet to host TNI's salon on a regular basis. After one and a half years, 10,000 nos and one timely referral, I found our home. Michael had a secret bookstore he wanted to fill with people, and I had a rag-tag collective of people looking to fill a secret bookstore.

It was a perfect match, but Michael proved to be so much more than we could've hoped for. More than just TNI's salonnière, or Batman to my Robin, Michael is our staff sage, and occupies a rightful place on our masthead as "Reader and Advisor." We hope he can be that for you too. And since the world is about to end one way or another, we figured we shouldn't keep him all to ourselves. There's little time to waste.

So as our gift to you-- the subscribed and yet-to-subscribe alike--on the day of the apocalypse (which, may I remind you all, isn't over yet) is a free, downloadable guidebook, collecting Michael's complete unsolicited advice columns from the first year of The New Inquiry Magazine, for your reference on today's apocalypse and the many more to come. What did you think the End Times were going to look like?

—Rachel Rosenfelt
December 21, 2012


unsolicited advice
for living in the

AMBIGUOUS TIME



with MICHAEL SEIDENBERG

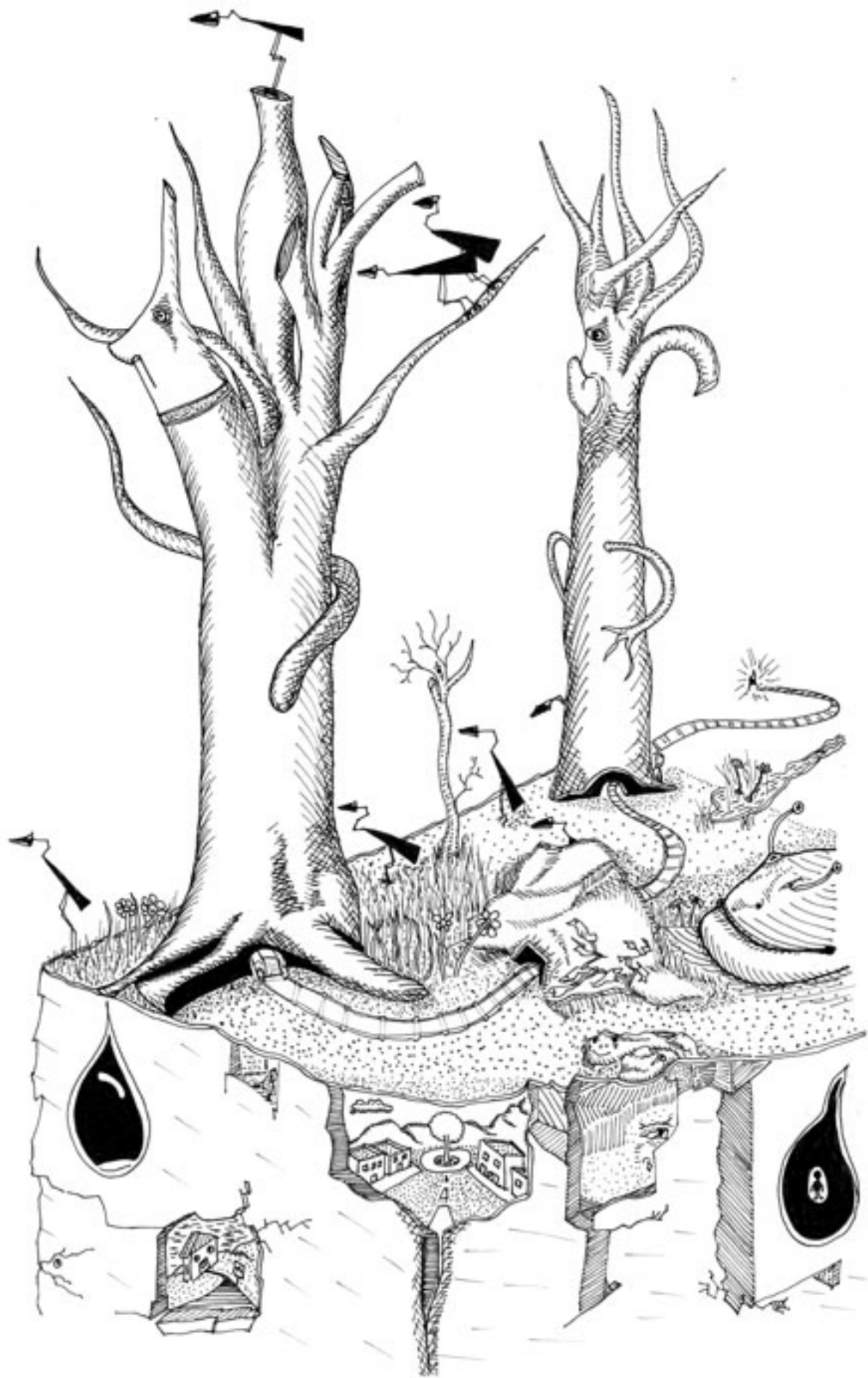
illustrated by Roy Lavitt



THIS WAS MEANT to be an introduction, an explanation of who I am and what I'm doing here. Unfortunately, the time for such pleasantries is long gone and not just because the deadline for this column is past past due. The fact is, we don't have the luxury of simply discussing the end times. It's already happening. As you can see, it's not only a deadline for me. It's a bit time-sensitive for us all.

"Why unsolicited advice?" you might ask. Well, if you're asking then I don't think you get what I'm saying and this isn't going to work. Sorry to be so curt. Okay, maybe there is time for a pliantry or two, but certainly not for a full-blown Q & A. Let's just say it's best if I tell you what you need to know before you know you need it. Trust me.

Yes, there will be trust involved. As you can imagine, deconstructing everything I say will eat up our precious time together and that helps no one. It's not as if you won't get to the end times if you don't follow my advice. No one will be left behind. It's end times for everyman. This will be change you canbelieve in, even if you don't. It's coming, and it's all inclusive. As promised, we will finally be postracial, past caste and beyond gender.



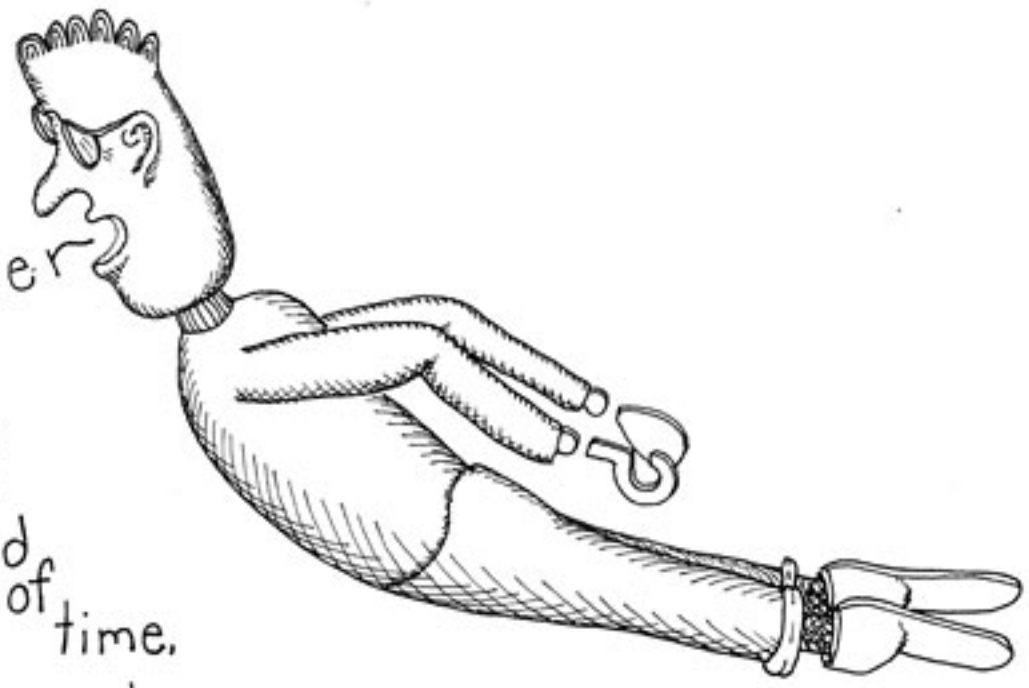


What you won't read here are any tips for surviving the end. There will be no advice on how to build a better bunker or any sartorial solutions for questions like "Should I wear a helmet with this shirt?" or "Does this bulletproof vest make me look fat?" My advice will be about achieving a certain state of mind, making peace with the end. So find a good seat and make yourself comfortable. No one knows how long it will take for this earth omelette to be finished. But we are going to break some eggs before it's over.

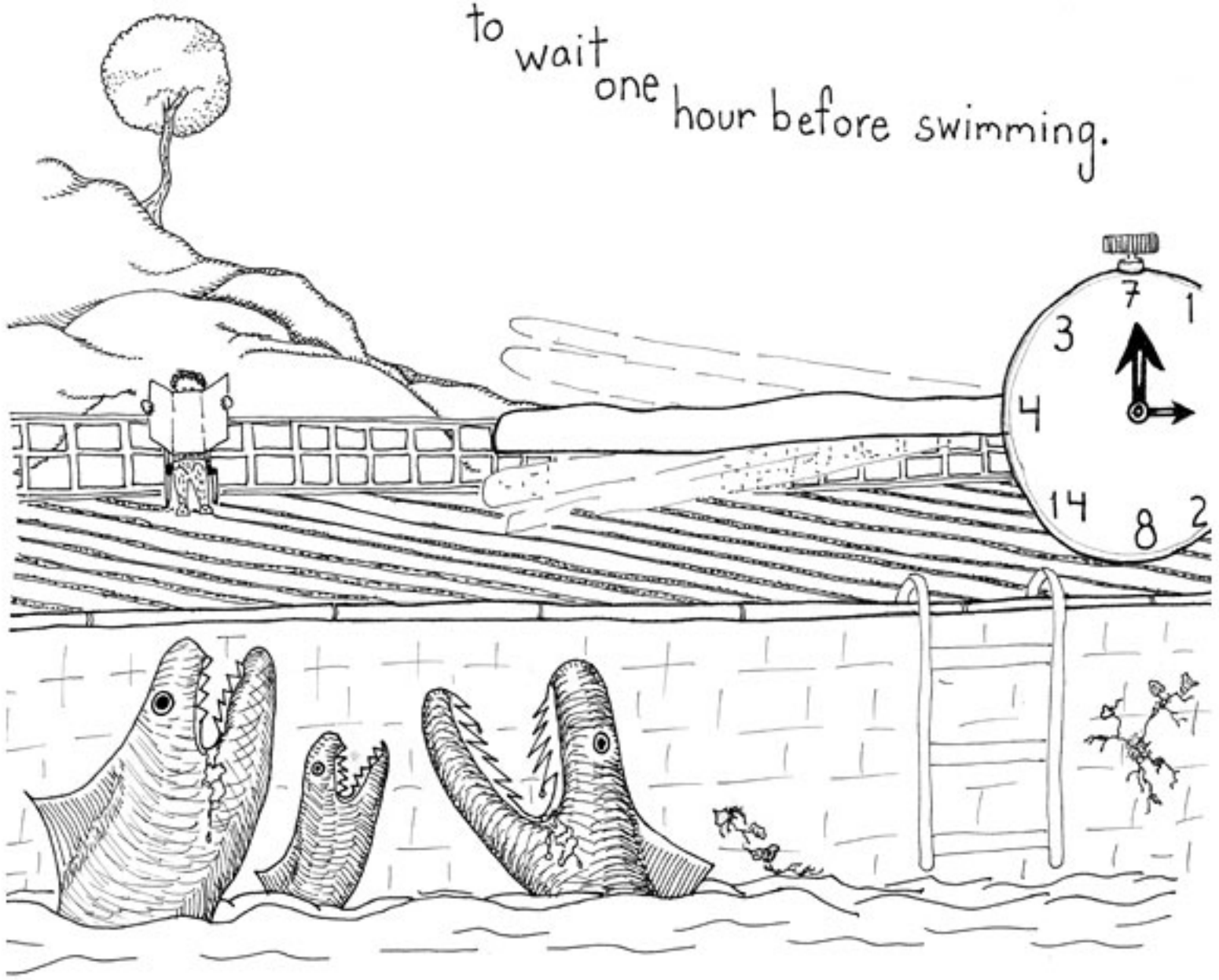
What did you think the end of times were going to look like? ■



remember
after
eating
the
end
of
time.



be
sure
to
wait
one
hour
before
swimming.



unsolicited
advice
for the
End of Times

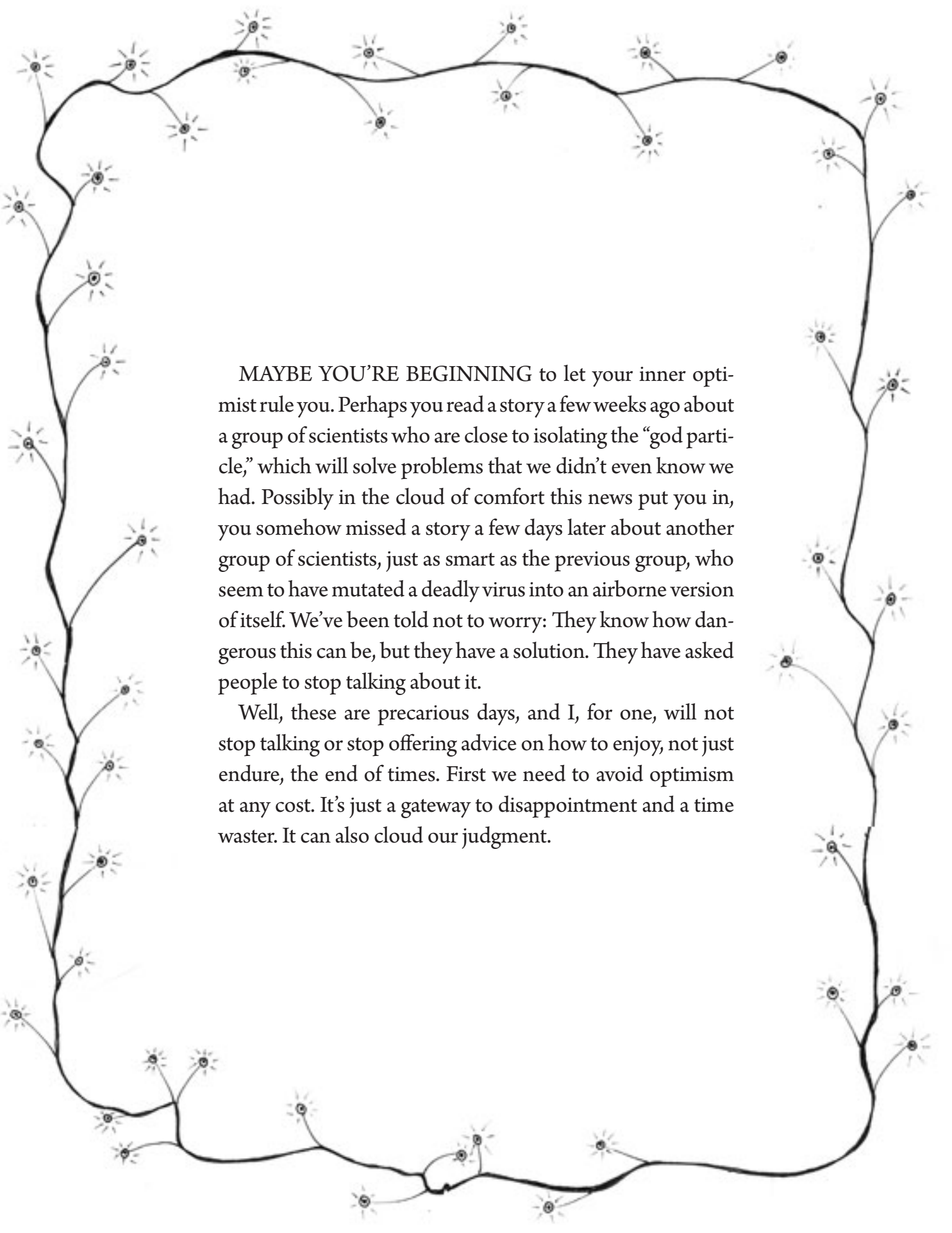


With



your reader and adviser

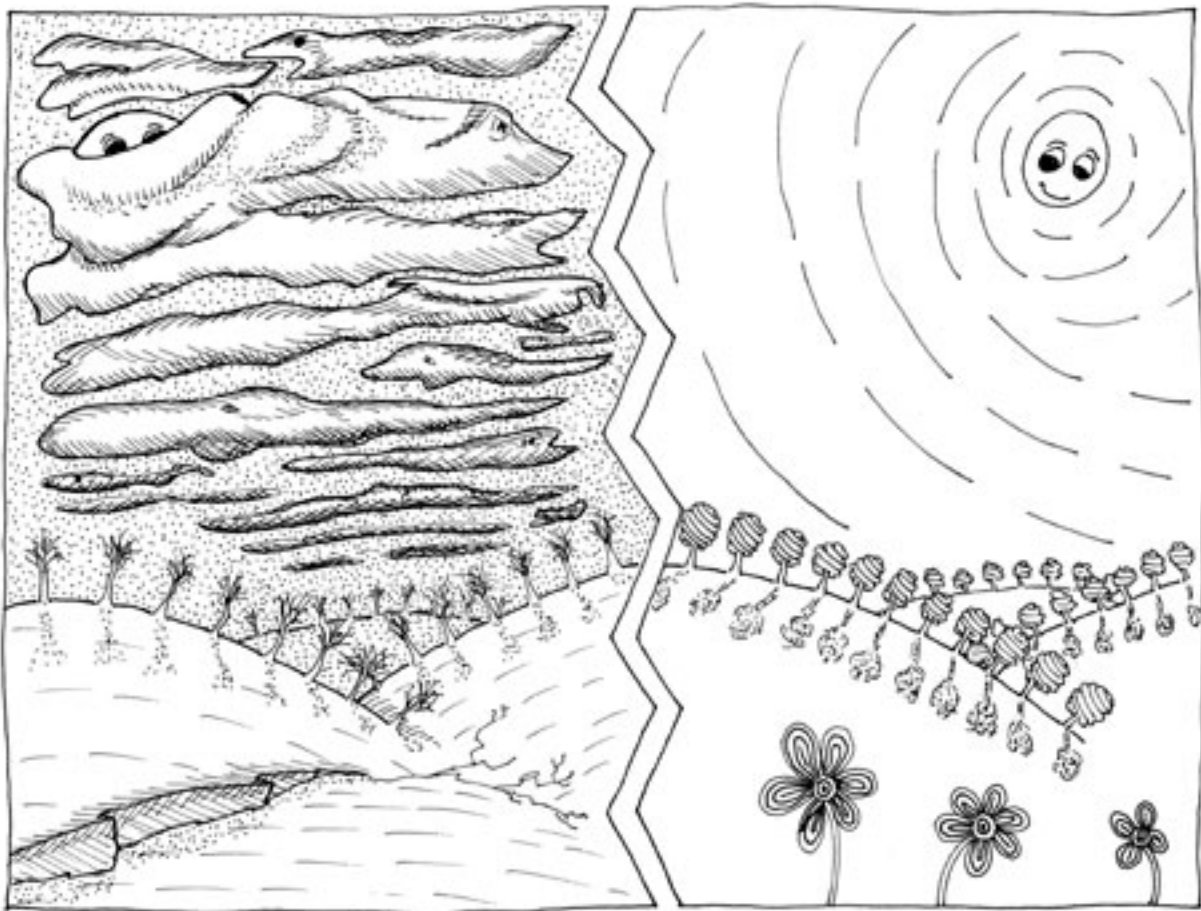
MICHAEL SEIDENBERG



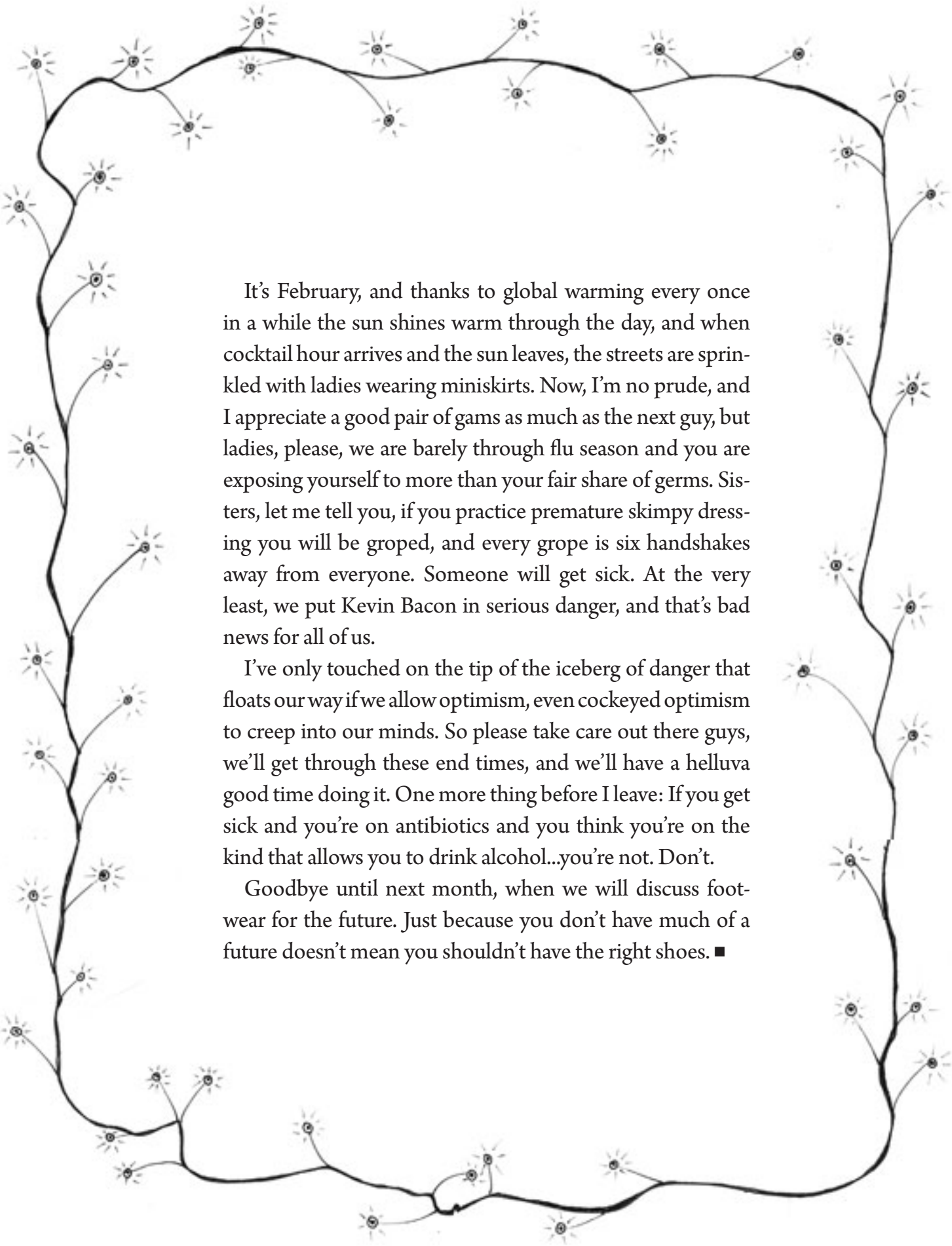
MAYBE YOU'RE BEGINNING to let your inner optimist rule you. Perhaps you read a story a few weeks ago about a group of scientists who are close to isolating the "god particle," which will solve problems that we didn't even know we had. Possibly in the cloud of comfort this news put you in, you somehow missed a story a few days later about another group of scientists, just as smart as the previous group, who seem to have mutated a deadly virus into an airborne version of itself. We've been told not to worry: They know how dangerous this can be, but they have a solution. They have asked people to stop talking about it.

Well, these are precarious days, and I, for one, will not stop talking or stop offering advice on how to enjoy, not just endure, the end of times. First we need to avoid optimism at any cost. It's just a gateway to disappointment and a time waster. It can also cloud our judgment.

The end of one time
is the beginning of another



perhaps in the new time spelling won't count.



It's February, and thanks to global warming every once in a while the sun shines warm through the day, and when cocktail hour arrives and the sun leaves, the streets are sprinkled with ladies wearing miniskirts. Now, I'm no prude, and I appreciate a good pair of gams as much as the next guy, but ladies, please, we are barely through flu season and you are exposing yourself to more than your fair share of germs. Sisters, let me tell you, if you practice premature skimpy dressing you will be groped, and every grope is six handshakes away from everyone. Someone will get sick. At the very least, we put Kevin Bacon in serious danger, and that's bad news for all of us.

I've only touched on the tip of the iceberg of danger that floats our way if we allow optimism, even cockeyed optimism to creep into our minds. So please take care out there guys, we'll get through these end times, and we'll have a helluva good time doing it. One more thing before I leave: If you get sick and you're on antibiotics and you think you're on the kind that allows you to drink alcohol...you're not. Don't.

Goodbye until next month, when we will discuss footwear for the future. Just because you don't have much of a future doesn't mean you shouldn't have the right shoes. ■

NO ONE WILL
ESCAPE FROM
the
EXIT TIME



except clowns





unsolicited advice for
living in the

END TIME

with Michael Seidenberg

illustrated by
bobby bababoa

FRIENDS, THIS MIGHT be the time that you start to doubt me about the impending cessation of things as we know them. Let me remind you of a headline in a recent New York Times: “Neutrinos Not Faster than Light in Re-test, Proving Einstein Right.” I’m not delusional; I know I’m not Albert Einstein. (My editors have also informed me I’m not James Joyce just because my sentences are abstruse.) I get it. The important thing is that 15 minutes sitting on your girlfriend’s lap is still a lot different than 15 minutes sitting on a hot radiator — it’s all relative. Just as Einstein was right about relativity, I’m right about the end of times. It’s coming.

So let’s get shod and start moving along. We’re talking shoes and what we do once we have them on. Come, walk with me.

I’m not saying we aren’t getting anywhere. We are, but we won’t get everywhere, so let’s think about how we get to where we are going, even if we don’t get there. If i may quote the great Stephen Sondheim: “Gomango/But not like a yo-yo school boy / just play it cool, boy.”

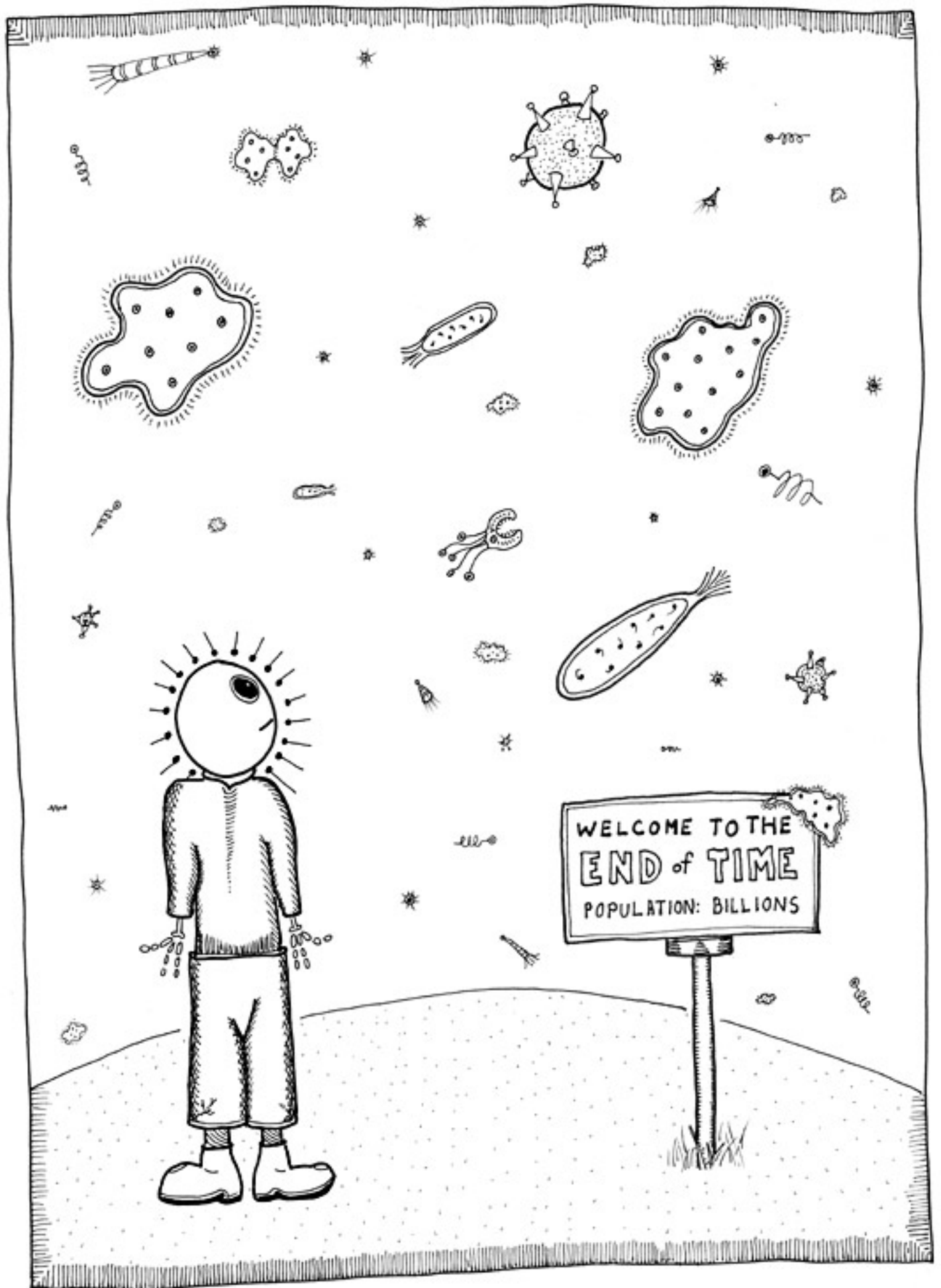
welcome to
the
End Times

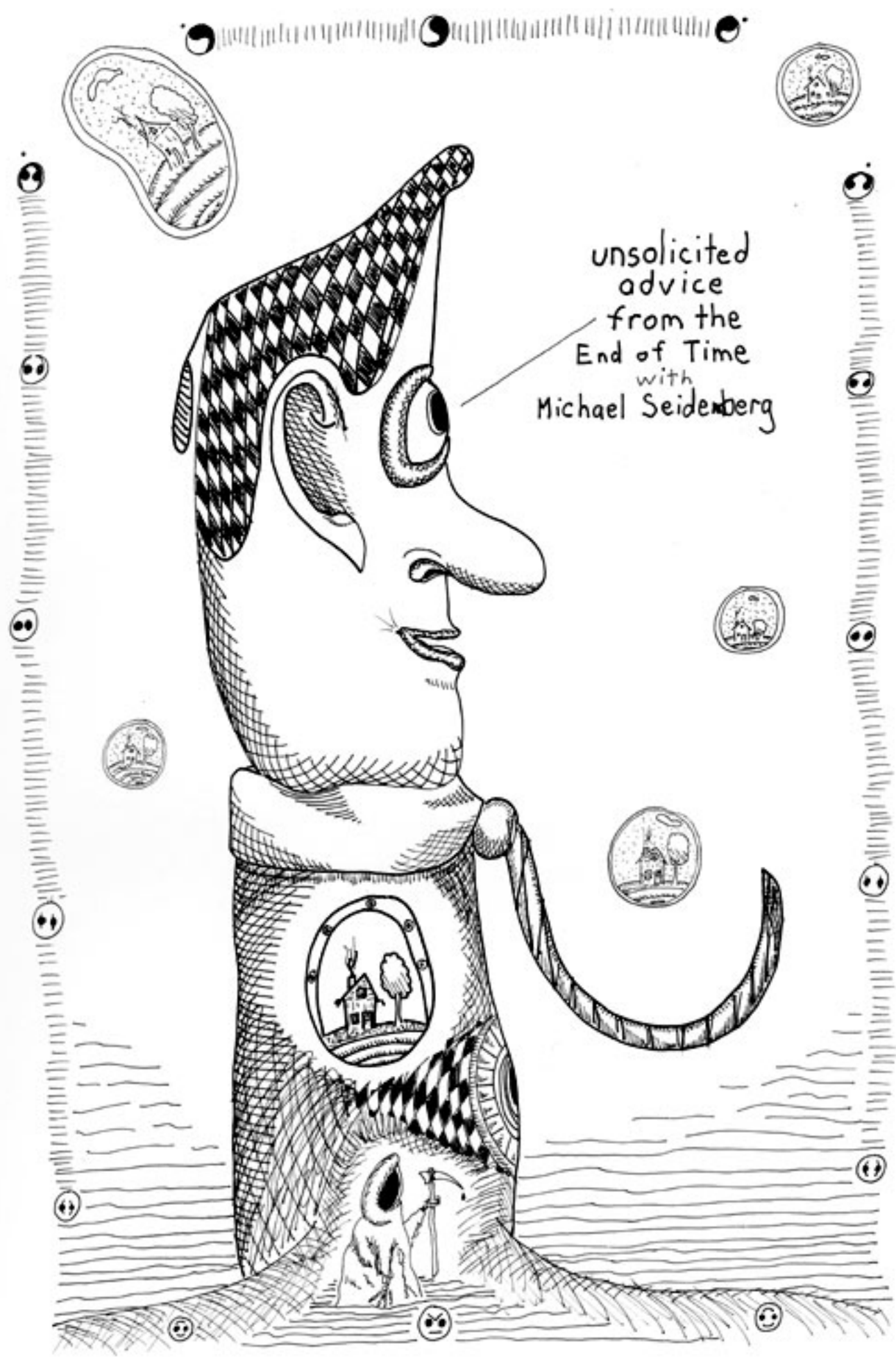


We have to be cool, we have to stop walking in a vacuum. Mind the gap and the people around the gap. I can't tell you how to be cool or teach you how to walk, but I can say be aware of others. For example, let's say you have your baby out in the stroller for a nice walk around town. You can't just stop anywhere, anytime, even if you realize that the mittens don't match the booties. Keep going and push that pram. Everyone is out for a nice walk around town. Single people can be just as guilty. If the street is crowded and you're on a date, you can let go of your companion's hand and walk single-file. It will not affect the length of your relationship, and anyway, isn't the end of times a bit more important than your dating future? Double daters are twice as bad: No need to occupy the front of a restaurant with your foursome awkwardness. We're walking here! Be cool.

It's not about moving fast or moving slow but being in touch as you walk. Let's glide as we gambol, not plod as we promenade, and what better way than to be wearing the right shoes? You are all smart enough to pick out a comfortable pair of shoes, and I'm definitely not going to be the one to tell the ladies to stop wearing pelvic-thrusting heels. Thrust away, sisters. I have only one piece of footwear advice for you: slip-ons. Shoelaces, like merkins, are primarily a thing of the past. You are as free to spend countless wasted minutes lacing up your shoes as you are to eat all your meals with chopsticks, but I remind you, the clock is ticking.

Walk with me and you'll never walk alone. ■





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from the
End of Time
with
Michael Seidenberg

I guess even fewer people read this column than I thought. Last month I explained the need for all of us to improve our walking habits, to straighten up and walk right. I've been out there among the masses, and it's still a sorry mess. We can do better, people. And when I say "we," I mean you. Even the screaming Tourette's guy in my neighborhood has a better sense of the need to walk with empathy; he wears a T-shirt that warns people to give wide berth.

This might be a case of nature versus nurture, but as I've noted in the past, the meter is running and we don't have time to sort out the cause of the problem, but rather we need to find a solution to it. It's not important to blame nature or nurture but to find the perfect cocktail of the two and drink away.

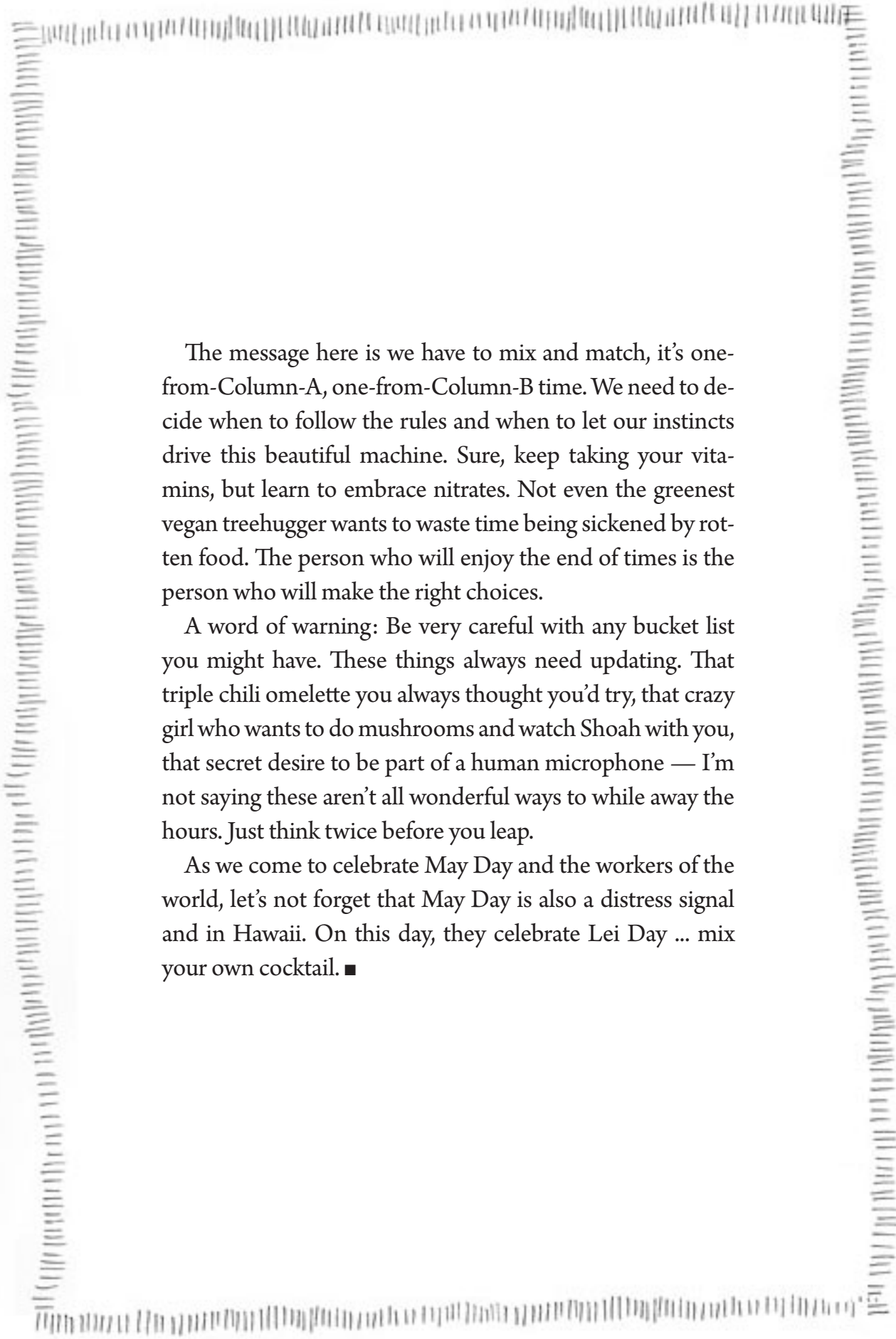
Even nature knows to give in to nurture and change its ways. When Japanese bees realized that their stingers could not penetrate the hard shell of their ancient enemy the hornet, they made some changes. They now form into a bee-ball, encapsulate their foe, and turn up the heat for 20 minutes to melt the sucker, Fukushima style.

The Japanese seem to get this end of times thing — they have just deregulated the cooking of poisonous blowfish. Maybe they wanted to bring down the price of this deadly delicacy or possibly they just wanted more parking spaces in downtown Tokyo. Either way, they know how to change and move with the times or, in this case, lack of time.

Let there be
NO Laces



after the End of Time





The message here is we have to mix and match, it's one-from-Column-A, one-from-Column-B time. We need to decide when to follow the rules and when to let our instincts drive this beautiful machine. Sure, keep taking your vitamins, but learn to embrace nitrates. Not even the greenest vegan treehugger wants to waste time being sickened by rotten food. The person who will enjoy the end of times is the person who will make the right choices.

A word of warning: Be very careful with any bucket list you might have. These things always need updating. That triple chili omelette you always thought you'd try, that crazy girl who wants to do mushrooms and watch Shoah with you, that secret desire to be part of a human microphone — I'm not saying these aren't all wonderful ways to while away the hours. Just think twice before you leap.

As we come to celebrate May Day and the workers of the world, let's not forget that May Day is also a distress signal and in Hawaii. On this day, they celebrate Lei Day ... mix your own cocktail. ■







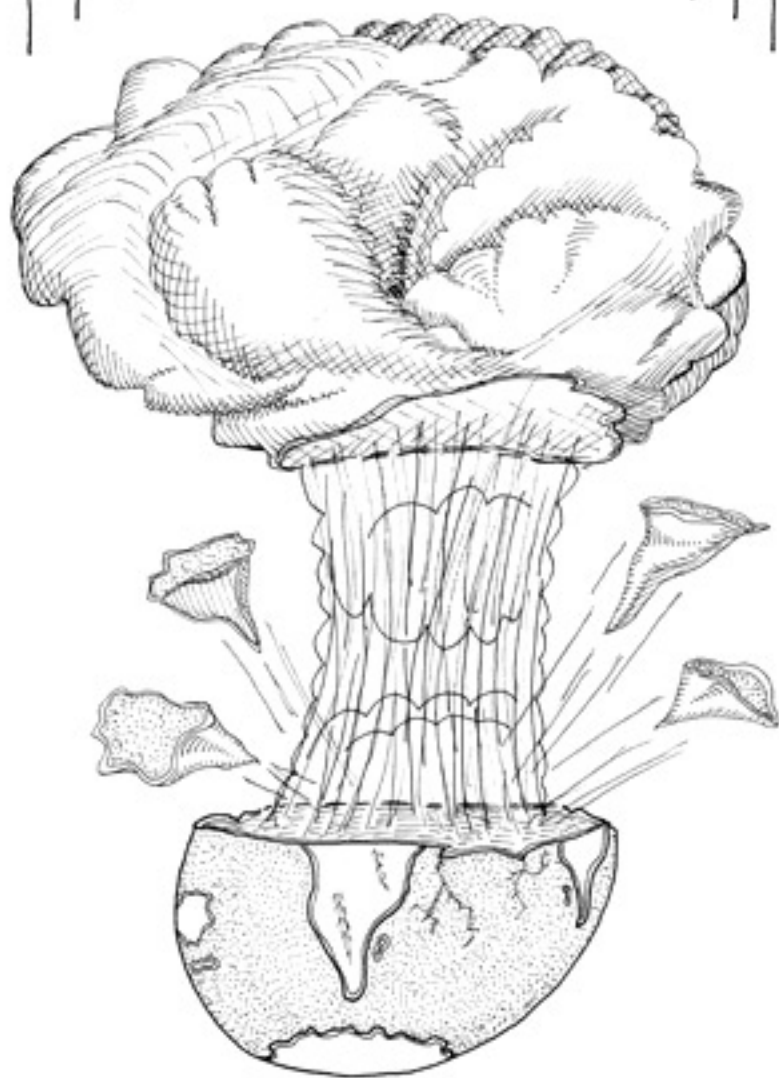
IT'S BEEN A few months since I first brought up the need to prepare for the end. I'm not talking your personal end -- that's somebody else's problem. I'm talking the end of times. But I'm not talking about the end of times as we know them. Those times are already gone. This is the real end, the big finish. The last bite of the whole enchilada at the end of the day, that's what he said. I guess I'm a bit worried that people might take this news as a signal to run amuck, and amuck is the last way you want to run. Especially when time itself is running out.

Sure we need to go wild a bit, but we also need to get rest. Just as we attempt to manage our fatigue, we need to get a handle on our craziness -- get a grip as society loses it own.



A system is needed. A set of rules sounds a bit stern -- a basic skeleton or general outline might be more suitable. It could be just what the doom-and-gloom doctor ordered. The thing is these new social structures, these new moralities have to be custom-designed. I can't help you with that. You've got to create it by your lonesome, but you don't need to be alone once you begin to live out your new philosophy. (Full disclosure: I could help you with that, but there are so many of you and that would put a crimp in my own outline, which tells me to make more time for myself.)



The End of Time





it's da bomb!!



There will be an urge to turn toward organized religion. I would have to advise against that. It would be like investing in Facebook: It's already given you whatever it can give you; it's just timelines and privacy issues from here on in. I'm not saying new religion but no religion. As time begins to wane, we will feel the need to believe and belong. Resist it. The last thing we want is some kind of Nepalese tongue-piercing festival going on. I know they've been doing it for centuries, but there's got to be a more time-efficient way to bring good luck to your village than walking through it in a cloud of vermillion powder with a 13-inch metal skewer through your tongue.

So get your system set up. Get yourself a catchphrase or a mantra if you need one. The '60s were great for these. "Do your own thing," "Keep on truckin." Even the Army had a great one: "Be all that you can be." Pick one out, use it, you can even abuse it -- that's one of the perks of the end times.

Heads up for next month: As time gets shorter and the world gets wider, there is no time left for people to have three names. You know who you are. Be prepared to lose a name. Lose a moniker or get lost! Samuel Taylor Coleridge will of course be grandfathered in. ■





After
the
End of Time,

valentines day
will be on
june 5th
of each
year



happy anti-valentine's days, y'all!!



MY OLD FRIEND and spirit guide, Roy Lavitt, who has the thankless job of illustrating this advice column, asks for nothing and gets it. Now, as the end of times gets nearer, he has finally asked for something — a mere trifle really. He would like me to write a column with birds or water drops, as he is really good at drawing birds and water drops. Sorry, Roy. No time; no can do. Sure, I could say something like

“A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,” or “Water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink,” but I’m not going to. These two platitudes might do for some other advice columns, but I have other fish to fry. (Maybe he can draw a flying fish.)



One thing I don't want this column to do is to make anyone nervous or edgy about the upcoming cessation of activity. In fact, the end of things as we know them could mean that we can enjoy life in an all new way, as we have never known it. It's starting to sound interesting now, isn't it? Well, the fun is just beginning.

I was at a reading last night that featured Laszlo Krasznahorkai, the Hungarian writer who is sort of a poster child for apocalyptic literature. When asked if he was worried about the impending doom at the door, he said no and that he hoped people were not fearful wondering about the end and when it would come, because we are in the end times. Don't fear, it's already here.

At least that's what I think he said, because he spoke low — very, very low. This brings to mind a simple self-improvement that we can all achieve very easily but would make life so much more focused as we travel through this final road trip: Speak up. Speak a bit louder and a bit clearer. In these timid times, too many people talk under their breath. It's a coward's way to communicate, and it has to stop. Don't worry, I'm not saying you can't talk through your hat. But if you must, do it with clarity. Clarity matters. Mumbling in general will be frowned upon. Whether it's due to a lack of spine or a weak lip, it will only cause problems, problems we do not have the time for. So speak your mind, just speak it distinctly.



MEMO

From: The illustrator
To: The writer

the End of Time
is for the birds



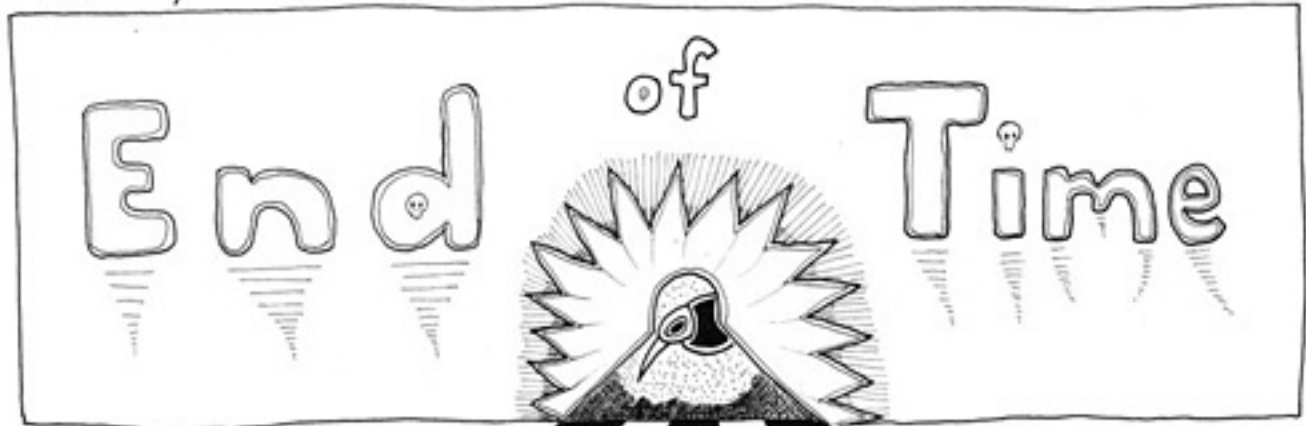
and for
droplets
too



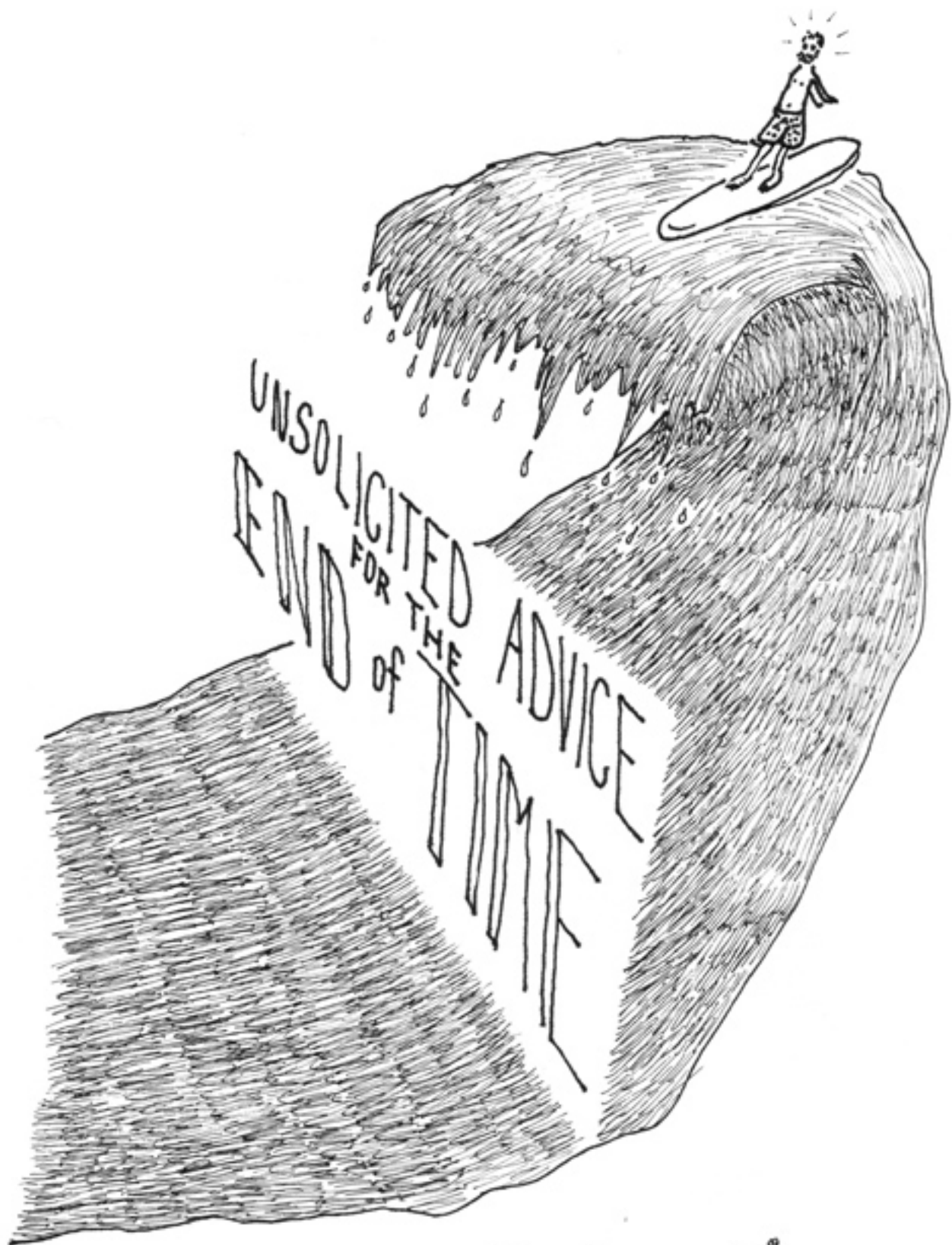
Mumble though he might, Krasznahorkai has the right idea: Don't fear the end but engage with it. Unless he really said, "Don't rear-end the car in the garage with Ed." I'm going with my first hearing on this one. Make your end work for you; don't worry about the end of times but take care the times of your end and have the elegant exit you deserve. It's time to turn your to-do list into a to-don't list. Sometimes what not to do is just as important as what to do. If

you had infinite time, you could read Infinite Jest every summer, but you don't. You need to need to know when to put a book down, not just when to pick one up. Be moved or move on. If you have your desert-island-disc list, then start listening now, but remember: Change your list whenever you want. Do not get stuck. You're not going to see me lounging at the eternal seashore, water drops hitting me in the face, listening over and over again to Nelly Furtado sing, "I'm Like a Bird." ■

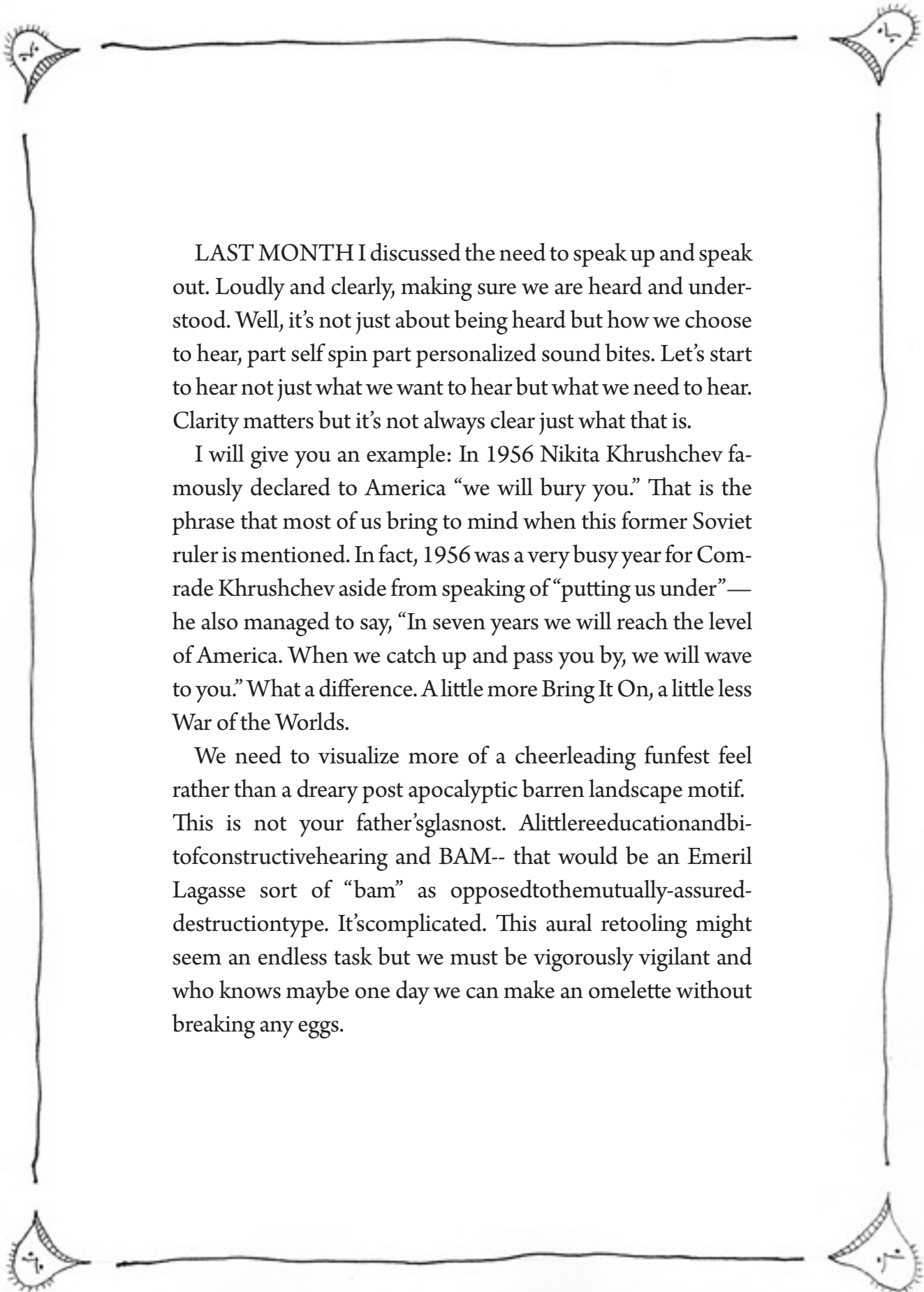
leave your checkered past behind you and come on down to the



a bad time will be had by all ®



With your surfer on the tsunami
Michael Seidenberg



LAST MONTH I discussed the need to speak up and speak out. Loudly and clearly, making sure we are heard and understood. Well, it's not just about being heard but how we choose to hear, part self spin part personalized sound bites. Let's start to hear not just what we want to hear but what we need to hear. Clarity matters but it's not always clear just what that is.

I will give you an example: In 1956 Nikita Khrushchev famously declared to America "we will bury you." That is the phrase that most of us bring to mind when this former Soviet ruler is mentioned. In fact, 1956 was a very busy year for Comrade Khrushchev aside from speaking of "putting us under"—he also managed to say, "In seven years we will reach the level of America. When we catch up and pass you by, we will wave to you." What a difference. A little more Bring It On, a little less War of the Worlds.

We need to visualize more of a cheerleading funfest feel rather than a dreary post apocalyptic barren landscape motif. This is not your father's glasnost. A little reeducation and bit of constructive hearing and BAM-- that would be an Emeril Lagasse sort of "bam" as opposed to the mutually-assured-destruction type. It's complicated. This aural retooling might seem an endless task but we must be vigorously vigilant and who knows maybe one day we can make an omelette without breaking any eggs.

YOU CAN RUN
BUT YOU CAN'T
HIDE
FROM THE
END of TIME



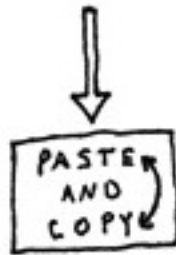
Why is it easier for us to see an angry man banging his shoe on a podium than a cheery competitor waving as he passes by? It makes no sense; we've got to turn that Etch-a-Sketch over.

In fact, this might be the best time to get in touch with the flip-flop part of our personalities. Drop some of the old ideas that have clogged the arteries of our brains and slowed our progress down to a crawl. Retrieve a bit of our naiveté and reignite our thinking process. Changing your mind can be a tonic for thought. A society that takes Adderall to study and Viagra to stay sturdy might be surprised that this rebirth can be achieved so easily. We just need to take some time with ourselves and our thoughts with no goal in mind. Purpose-free thinking is its own engine, thinking just for the sake of thoughts. As the philosopher/band En Vogue so clearly sang, "free your mind and the rest will follow."

As the end gets closer we will want to get closer with ourselves. It could be time to let your freak flag fly or unchain your inner control freak. Let's open the doors and the windows of perception. We can see what comes out in the wash, it might surprise us what's dirty and what's clean.

Be sentient and you'll be sensitive, speak clear but as if no one can hear. Most importantly: if you see something, think something. ■

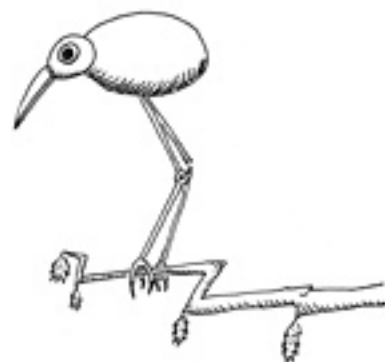
Face THE REALITY.



End of Time



unsolicited advice



for

the

END *f* **TIME**

with your reader and adviser

MICHAEL
SEIDENBERG



IT HAS OCCURRED to me that as each month goes by we are getting that much closer to the end of time. I'm not trying to be a date-ist or in any way Nostradamian, in fact I'll have you know that I am not entirely tethered to a traditional definition of what time actually is. So do not fret, I'm not going Mayan on you. I'm just concerned about wasting your time. *Tempus fugit*. That said, I would like to mention here and now that there will be no discussion of pandas— not this month. Not any month (a special request from our veteran illustrator). So that is my way of saying to anyone who might be waiting for some panda advice, it's not coming. Set yourself free and use your time more efficiently.

Time does in fact flee and we should all be using our time more efficiently and helping others to do the same. Being more efficient doesn't mean more of everything it often means less. I know "less is more" is not a revolutionary credo but I would go even further. Maybe "much less is more" or "less is more, now more than ever." No matter, we need a lot less of everything. (And we need it yesterday.)

What needs to go and what needs to stay? It's all relative as Einstein taught us, and I love to repeat. "A minute sitting on your girlfriends lap passes a lot faster than a minute sitting on a hot radiator." But where do we go for the guidance? Do we seek the advice of the urban philosopher Michael Bloomberg, "if it's hot don't sit on it" or to the more abstruse yet affable Swiss writer Hansjorg Schertenleib, "an old man sitting down sees a lot more than a young man standing up." It works for me now you have to find out what works for you. Find some truth and be true to it.

END
of
TIME

END
of
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After the End of TIME
Panda bears will walk around
holding signs



END
of
TIME

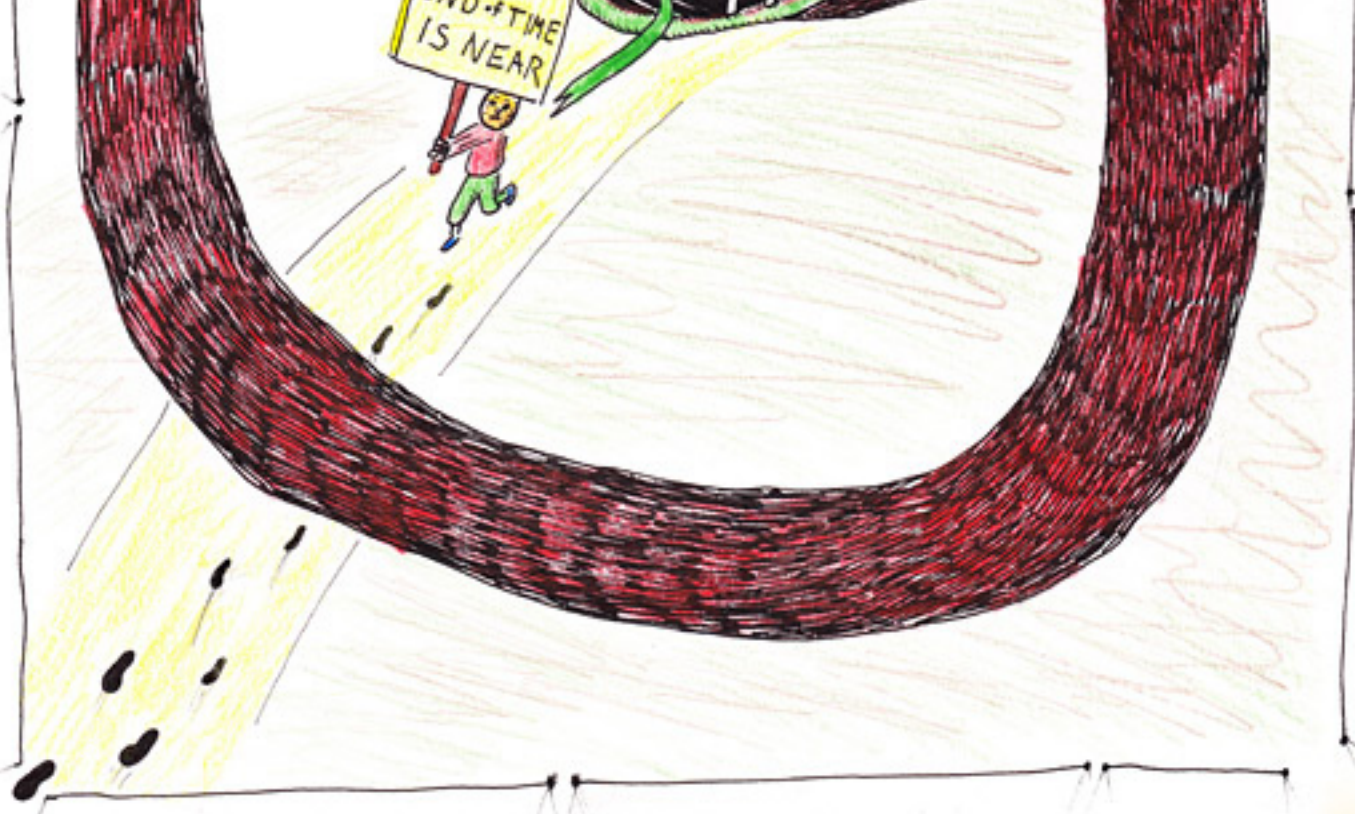
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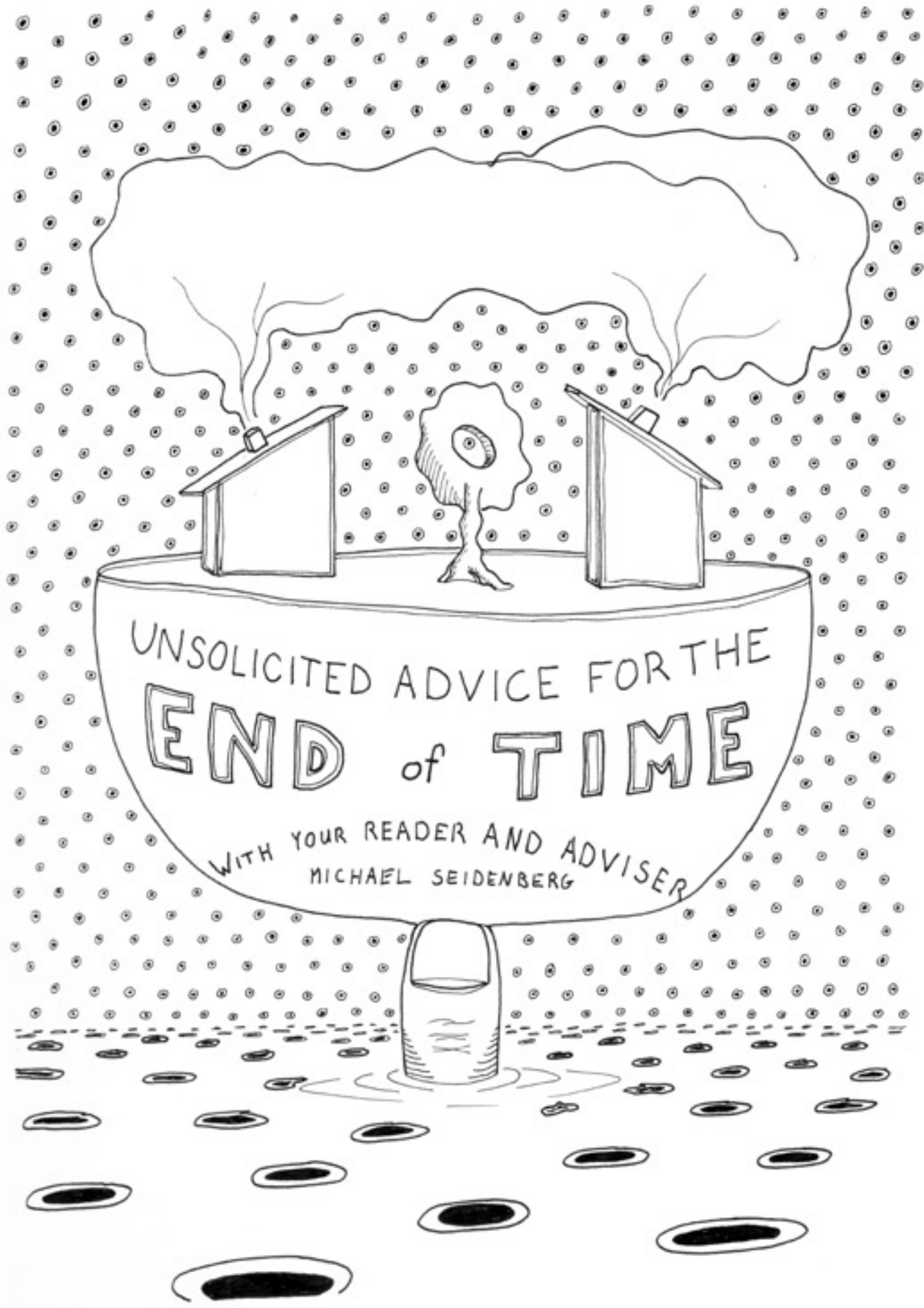
We need to stop the practice of enciphering our language and bring back the enlightening metaphors we all need so much these days. (Insert timely and thoughtful metaphor here.) We could certainly use less sniping in life in fact I predict a return of the old fashioned good deed, you might want to get a head of the curve on that one. I know I'm trying my best to be a better person, in fact I'm trying very hard right now to not insult almost everyone I know by saying I think that Twitter is a serious waste of time not just for the people that participate in it but for our culture itself. A waste that seems especially frivolous considering our time is limited. So I will not impugn them or the twaddle they tweet but instead I speak now of the other Twitter. I refer of course to the novel I am currently working on. I call it, "Twitter: A Novel." All I know about it so far is that it has 140 characters.

This is a big topic and we can continue next month, maybe a few simple practical ideas like nametags to cut down on unnecessary social awkwardness or some deep breathing exercises to help people unlearn multi-tasking. We could possibly discuss a plan that a colleague and I came up with to limit everyone to one written piece a month on the internet, try and bring down the waistline of the world wide web. I will not give the name of my associate as there is no need to share out the wrath this idea will inspire which doesn't mean it isn't a caring plan meant to give everyone a bit more quiet, thoughtful time. I'm not sure exactly what we'll talk about but the important thing to remember is it's our end times and I say let's have some fun with it. Don't shoot the guy pointing to the light at the end of the tunnel; in any case I do believe I have alienated enough people for one 30-day period. Until next time. ■



THE
END OF TIME
IS NEAR





UNSOLICITED ADVICE FOR THE
END of **TIME**

WITH YOUR READER AND ADVISER
MICHAEL SEIDENBERG

WHEN LAST WE spoke, and when I say “we” I mean me—this is, as we know, a one-way discussion due to the obvious time constraints of the end times —I had touched upon the topic of “less is more,” but now I think we should concentrate on the corresponding concept of “more is less.” I can hear the naysayers now: “obvious and obviouser.” Well, let us not forget the fate of Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis, or we might suffer from the very reflex named for him. Dr. S had the obvious idea that doctors should wash their hands before giving gynecological examinations as so many pregnant women were dying from infected vaginas. He was ridiculed and then fired from his clinic; the other doctors felt that they weren’t the type of people who needed to wash their fiddling fingers before sticking them into people, but most important to them was the fact that they had never previously washed before an operation, so why should they start now? They couldn’t think outside the box or apparently in the box either.

We must avoid the Semmelweis reflex at all costs or leave ourselves open to a similar fate to that of poor Ignaz, who finally went quite insane and was committed to an asylum where he died of puerperal sepsis, “childbed fever”—the very condition that he was trying to save the young mothers from. Hey irony, not cool at all. Now that I think of it, I’m not sure there is much need for any irony at all as our days dwindle.



a message from the

End of Time

like it or not
we are all
connected

I don't want to focus too much on the negative. I think it is incumbent on anyone who wants to have an enriched and enjoyable descent into apocalypse to look on the bright side of life. Search for the joy, in your own life and in the culture at large. Look around and see the best in mankind. I'll get you started: Earlier this month there was an auction of some of Elvis Presley's private belongings. It was a great success, not only for the auctioneers but for humanity itself. Elvis's bible went for almost \$100,000 more than twice what was expected, yet the unwashed and soiled underpants that Elvis wore under that white suit he wore in Vegas never even reached it's reserve bid of \$12,000. We are better than that. Sure, we have wars waging all over the world, and Arab Spring has lost some of its charm coming into chilling autumn, but there is progress towards peace happening every day. Just this week the Afghan authority released a pamphlet trying to cut down on "green on blue" violence, the attacks on NATO forces by the local army they are training. This pamphlet explains that neither a hearty pat on the back nor being asked how your wife is by an American are excuses to kill someone. Baby steps.

As we try and seek this joy around us the "more is less" philosophy can help. For example, when reading the newspaper, don't try to take in every twist and turn of every story. Find some tidbit that shines a light. For instance when I read this headline "German Student Attacks Hells Angels with Puppy" I didn't question what this world has come to that someone would use a young dog as a weapon. But rather, I'm glad that the young can look at an old problem in a new way. I'm sure everyone will be happy to know that this young man managed to make his escape on a bulldozer after his canine-throwing defense failed, but most important to this story and to our very well-being, the puppy is now in safe hands. Okay, here's a headline from Norway to work on yourself: "Driver Swerves to Avoid Moose, Hits Bear Instead" See what you can do, but most important, have fun with it. See you when I see you.

It's time to stop searching for the right answers and try and figure out the right questions ... next time. ■

THE

END

of

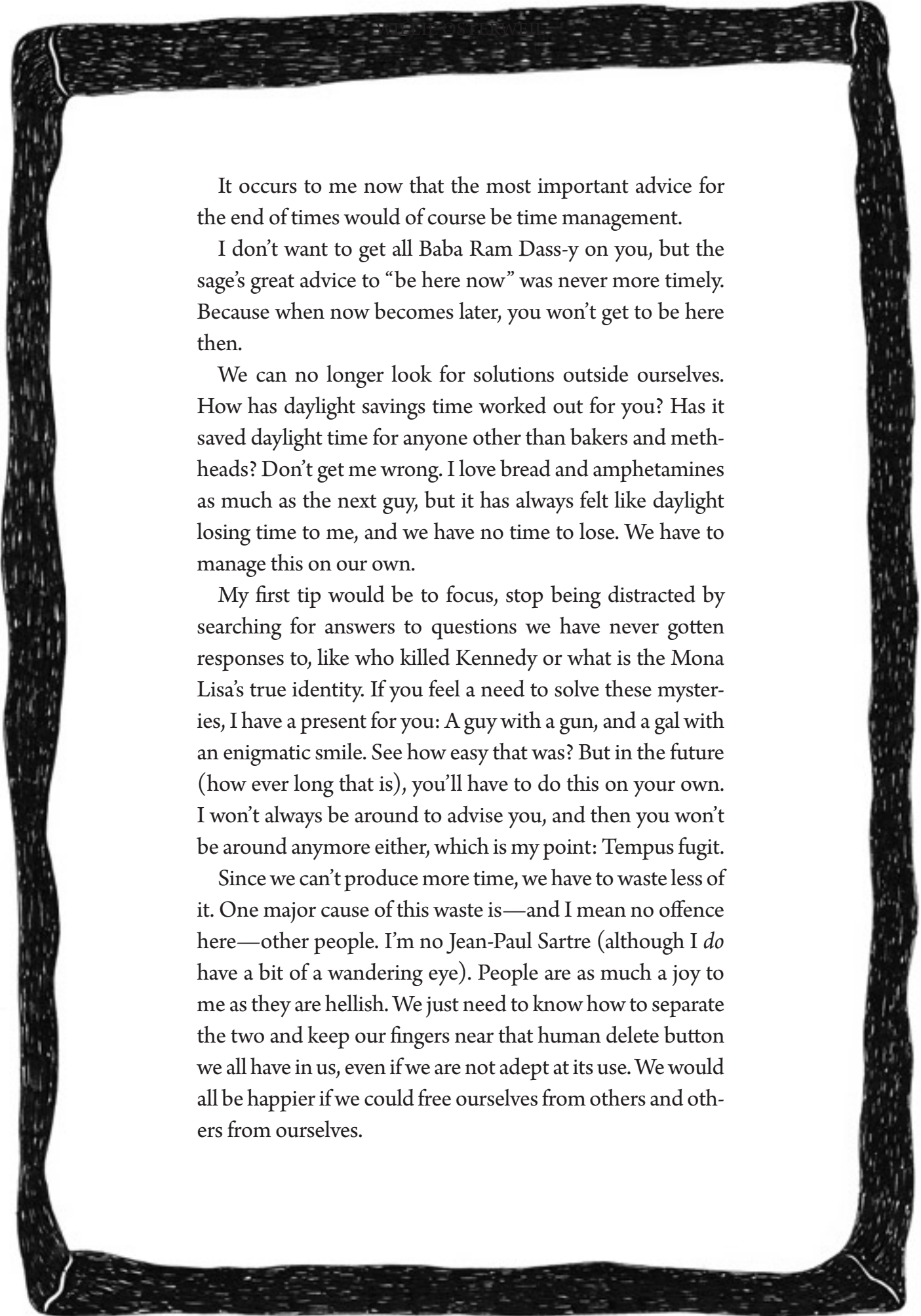
TIME.



it's not so bad



UNSOLICITED
ADVICE FROM THE
END OF **TIME**
WITH YOUR OPTIMISTIC PESSIMIST
MICHAEL
SEIDENBERG



It occurs to me now that the most important advice for the end of times would of course be time management.

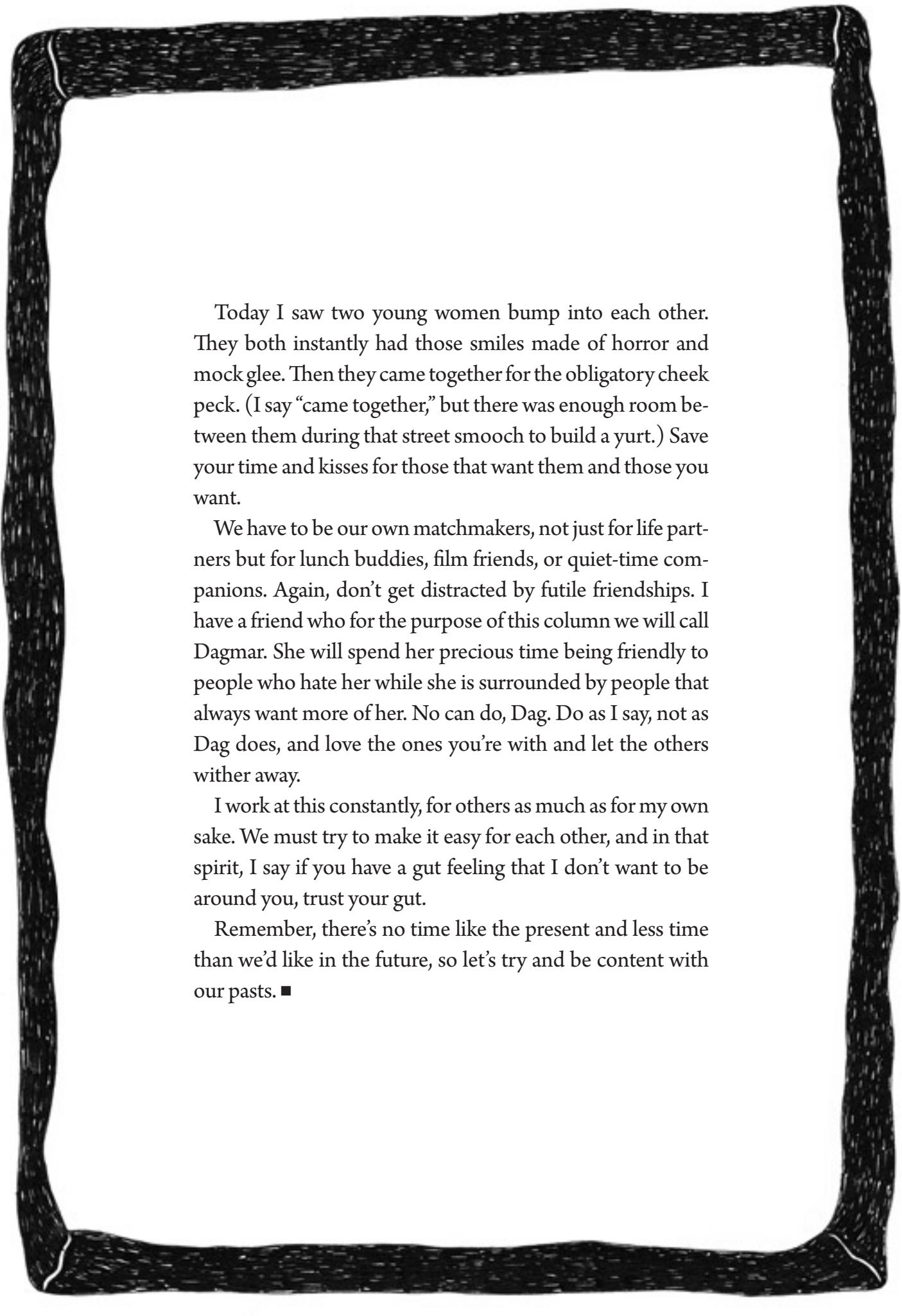
I don't want to get all Baba Ram Dass-y on you, but the sage's great advice to "be here now" was never more timely. Because when now becomes later, you won't get to be here then.

We can no longer look for solutions outside ourselves. How has daylight savings time worked out for you? Has it saved daylight time for anyone other than bakers and meth-heads? Don't get me wrong. I love bread and amphetamines as much as the next guy, but it has always felt like daylight losing time to me, and we have no time to lose. We have to manage this on our own.

My first tip would be to focus, stop being distracted by searching for answers to questions we have never gotten responses to, like who killed Kennedy or what is the Mona Lisa's true identity. If you feel a need to solve these mysteries, I have a present for you: A guy with a gun, and a gal with an enigmatic smile. See how easy that was? But in the future (how ever long that is), you'll have to do this on your own. I won't always be around to advise you, and then you won't be around anymore either, which is my point: *Tempus fugit*.

Since we can't produce more time, we have to waste less of it. One major cause of this waste is—and I mean no offence here—other people. I'm no Jean-Paul Sartre (although I *do* have a bit of a wandering eye). People are as much a joy to me as they are hellish. We just need to know how to separate the two and keep our fingers near that human delete button we all have in us, even if we are not adept at its use. We would all be happier if we could free ourselves from others and others from ourselves.





Today I saw two young women bump into each other. They both instantly had those smiles made of horror and mock glee. Then they came together for the obligatory cheek peck. (I say “came together,” but there was enough room between them during that street smooch to build a yurt.) Save your time and kisses for those that want them and those you want.

We have to be our own matchmakers, not just for life partners but for lunch buddies, film friends, or quiet-time companions. Again, don’t get distracted by futile friendships. I have a friend who for the purpose of this column we will call Dagmar. She will spend her precious time being friendly to people who hate her while she is surrounded by people that always want more of her. No can do, Dag. Do as I say, not as Dag does, and love the ones you’re with and let the others wither away.

I work at this constantly, for others as much as for my own sake. We must try to make it easy for each other, and in that spirit, I say if you have a gut feeling that I don’t want to be around you, trust your gut.

Remember, there’s no time like the present and less time than we’d like in the future, so let’s try and be content with our pasts. ■

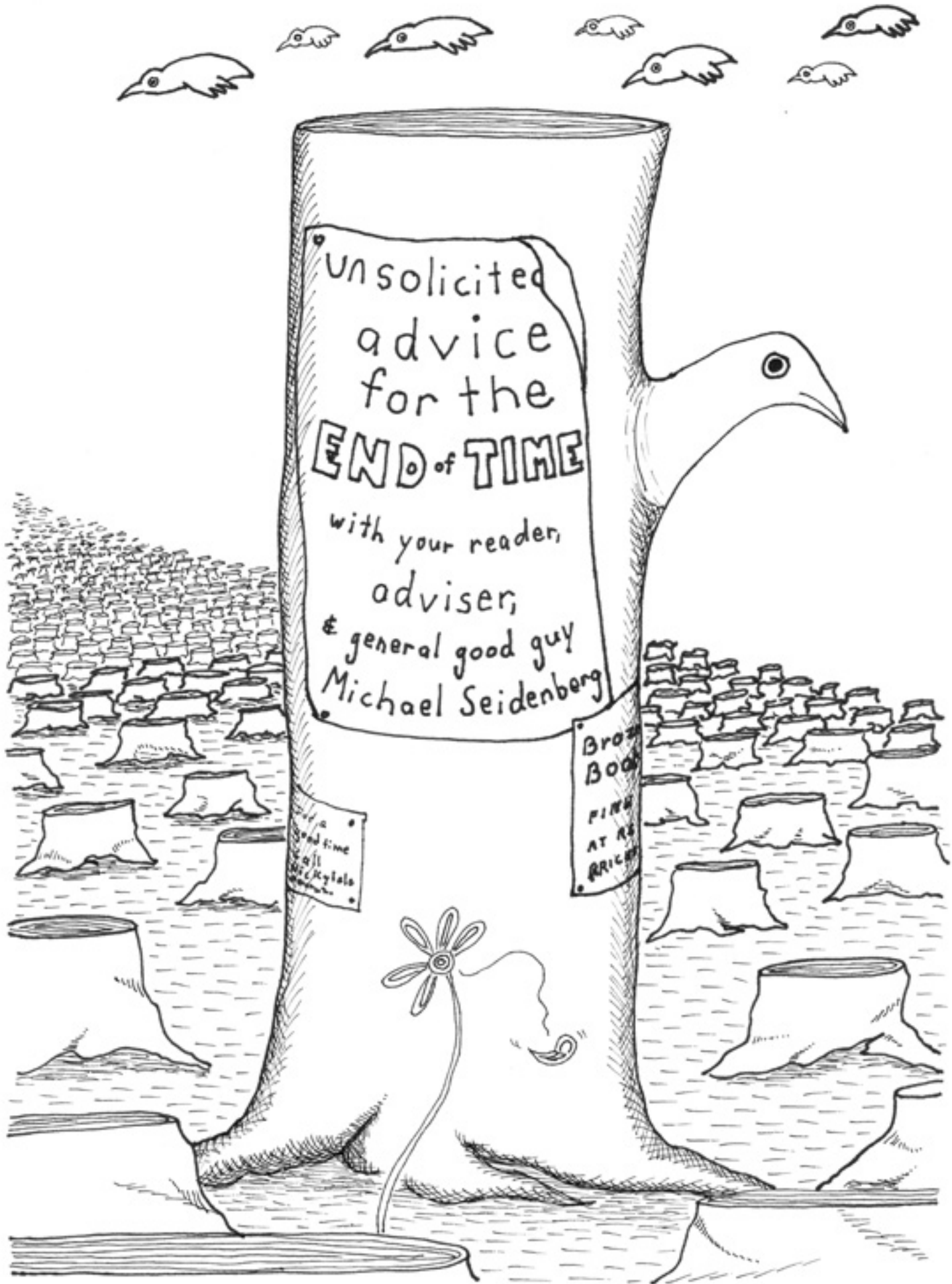
Feel the Burn!

the

Land of Lime

is here

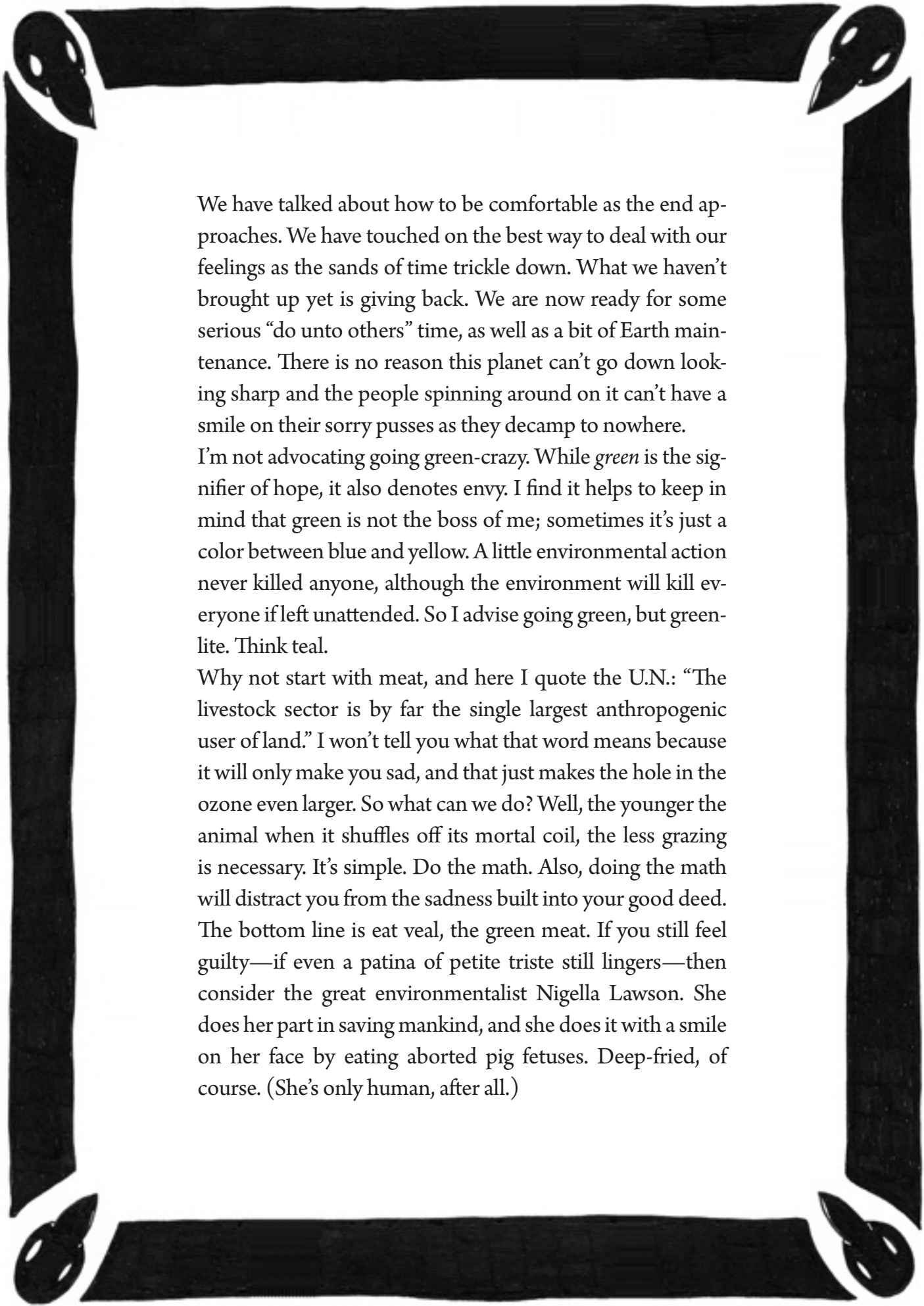




unsolicited
advice
for the
END of TIME
with your reader,
adviser,
& general good guy
Michael Seidenberg

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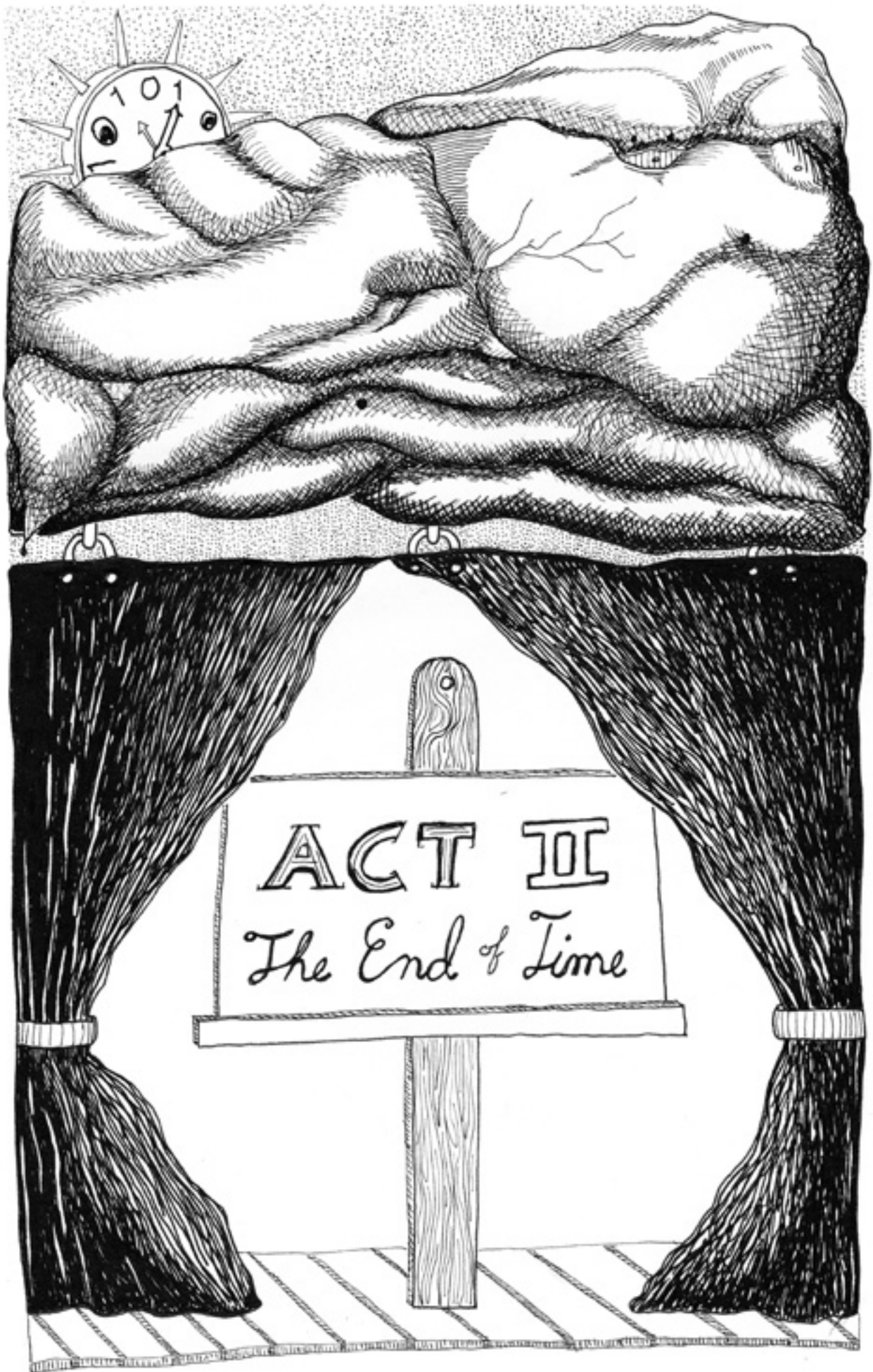
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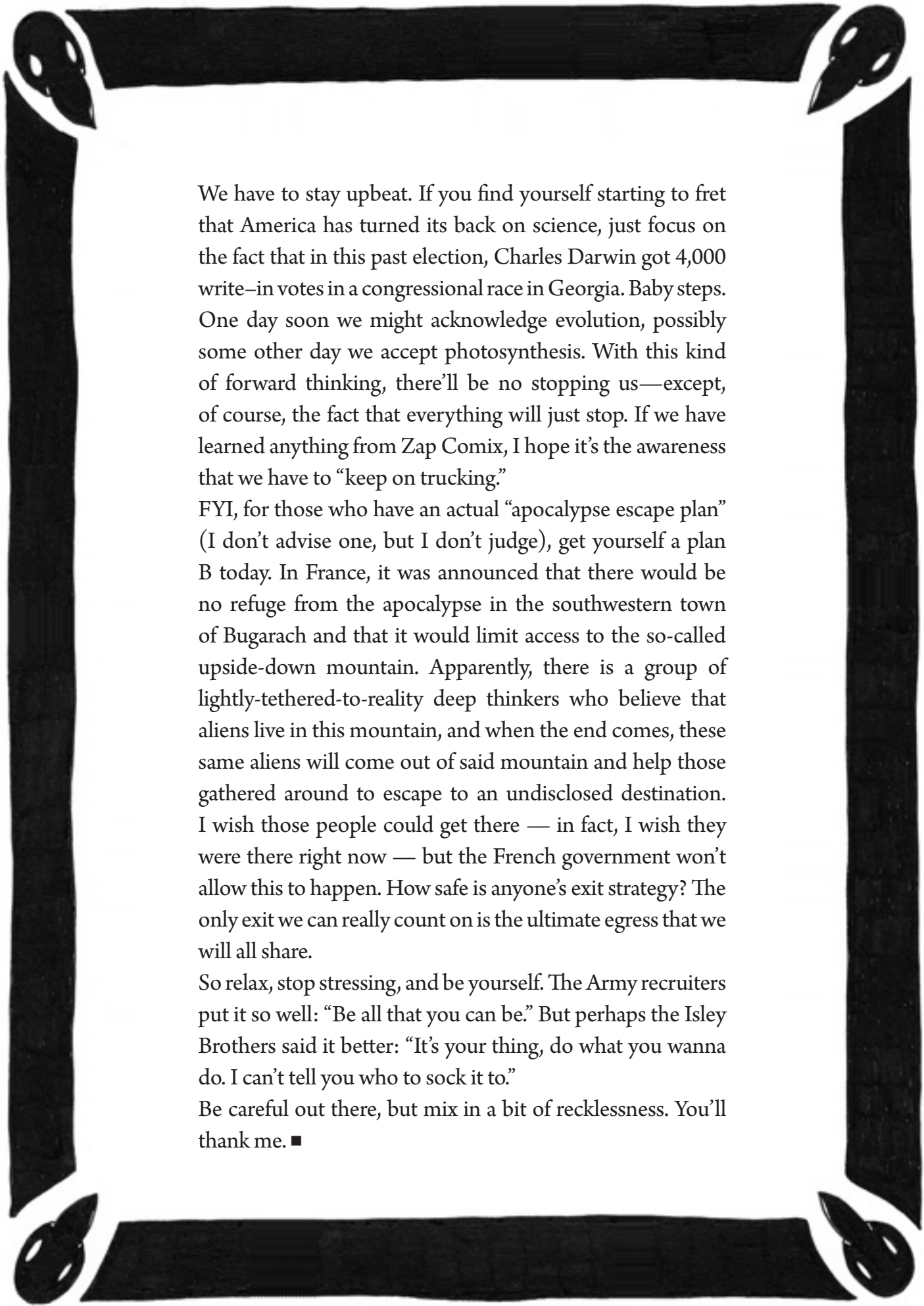
We have talked about how to be comfortable as the end approaches. We have touched on the best way to deal with our feelings as the sands of time trickle down. What we haven't brought up yet is giving back. We are now ready for some serious "do unto others" time, as well as a bit of Earth maintenance. There is no reason this planet can't go down looking sharp and the people spinning around on it can't have a smile on their sorry pusses as they decamp to nowhere.

I'm not advocating going green-crazy. While *green* is the signifier of hope, it also denotes envy. I find it helps to keep in mind that green is not the boss of me; sometimes it's just a color between blue and yellow. A little environmental action never killed anyone, although the environment will kill everyone if left unattended. So I advise going green, but green-lite. Think teal.

Why not start with meat, and here I quote the U.N.: "The livestock sector is by far the single largest anthropogenic user of land." I won't tell you what that word means because it will only make you sad, and that just makes the hole in the ozone even larger. So what can we do? Well, the younger the animal when it shuffles off its mortal coil, the less grazing is necessary. It's simple. Do the math. Also, doing the math will distract you from the sadness built into your good deed. The bottom line is eat veal, the green meat. If you still feel guilty—if even a patina of *petite triste* still lingers—then consider the great environmentalist Nigella Lawson. She does her part in saving mankind, and she does it with a smile on her face by eating aborted pig fetuses. Deep-fried, of course. (She's only human, after all.)



ACT II
The End of Time



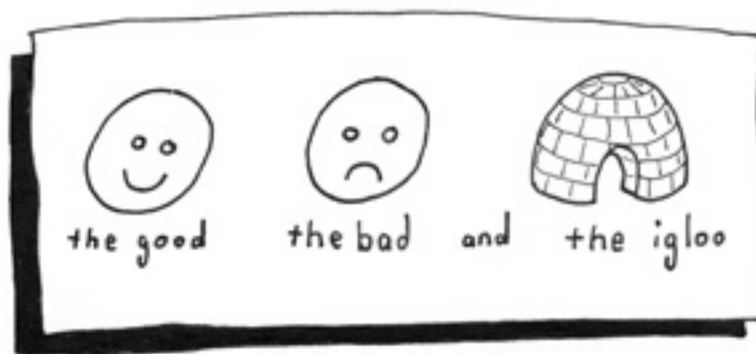
We have to stay upbeat. If you find yourself starting to fret that America has turned its back on science, just focus on the fact that in this past election, Charles Darwin got 4,000 write-in votes in a congressional race in Georgia. Baby steps. One day soon we might acknowledge evolution, possibly some other day we accept photosynthesis. With this kind of forward thinking, there'll be no stopping us—except, of course, the fact that everything will just stop. If we have learned anything from Zap Comix, I hope it's the awareness that we have to “keep on trucking.”

FYI, for those who have an actual “apocalypse escape plan” (I don't advise one, but I don't judge), get yourself a plan B today. In France, it was announced that there would be no refuge from the apocalypse in the southwestern town of Bugarach and that it would limit access to the so-called upside-down mountain. Apparently, there is a group of lightly-tethered-to-reality deep thinkers who believe that aliens live in this mountain, and when the end comes, these same aliens will come out of said mountain and help those gathered around to escape to an undisclosed destination. I wish those people could get there — in fact, I wish they were there right now — but the French government won't allow this to happen. How safe is anyone's exit strategy? The only exit we can really count on is the ultimate egress that we will all share.

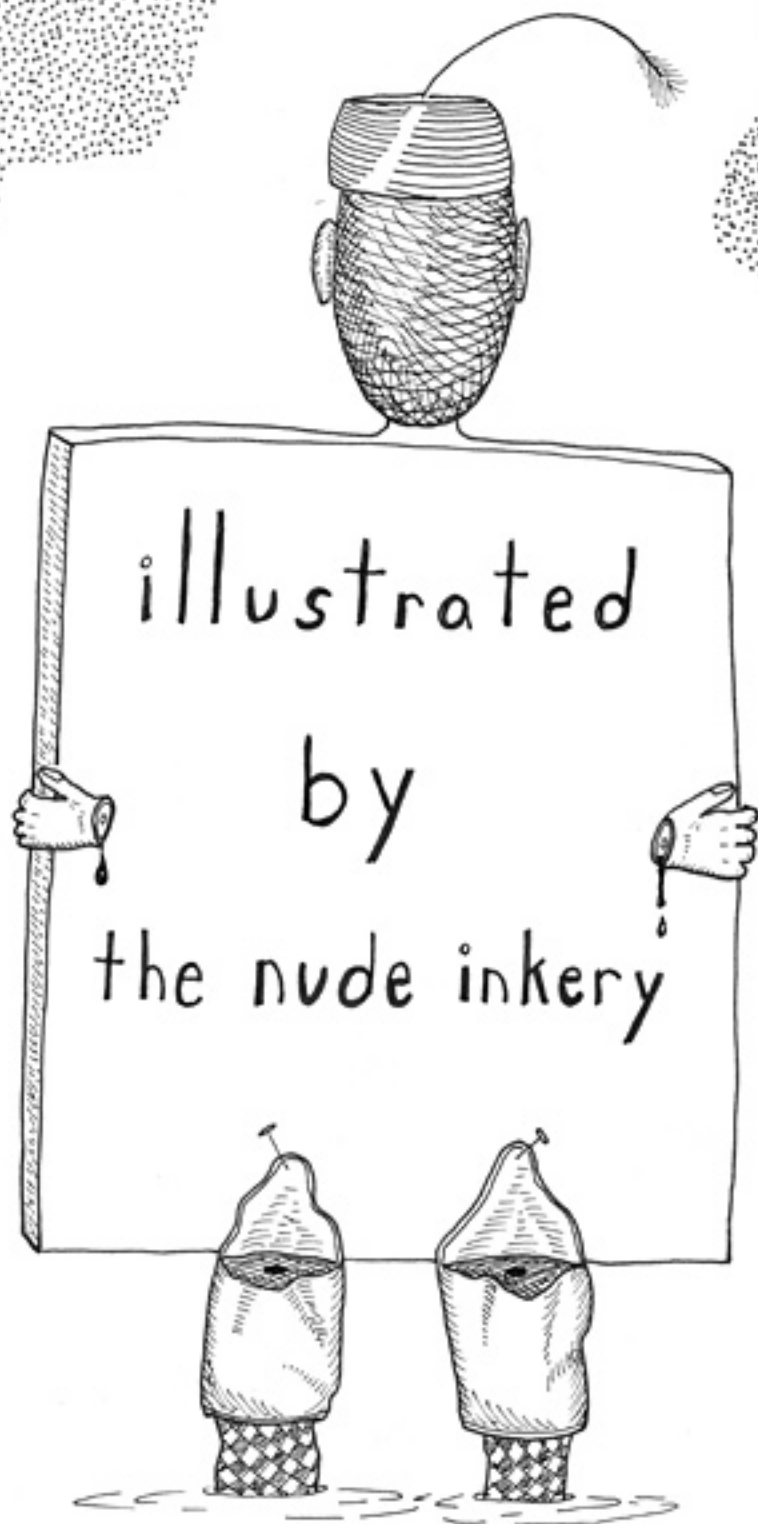
So relax, stop stressing, and be yourself. The Army recruiters put it so well: “Be all that you can be.” But perhaps the Isley Brothers said it better: “It's your thing, do what you wanna do. I can't tell you who to sock it to.”

Be careful out there, but mix in a bit of recklessness. You'll thank me. ■

After
the
End of Time



Cartoons
will suck



illustrated

by

the nude inkery