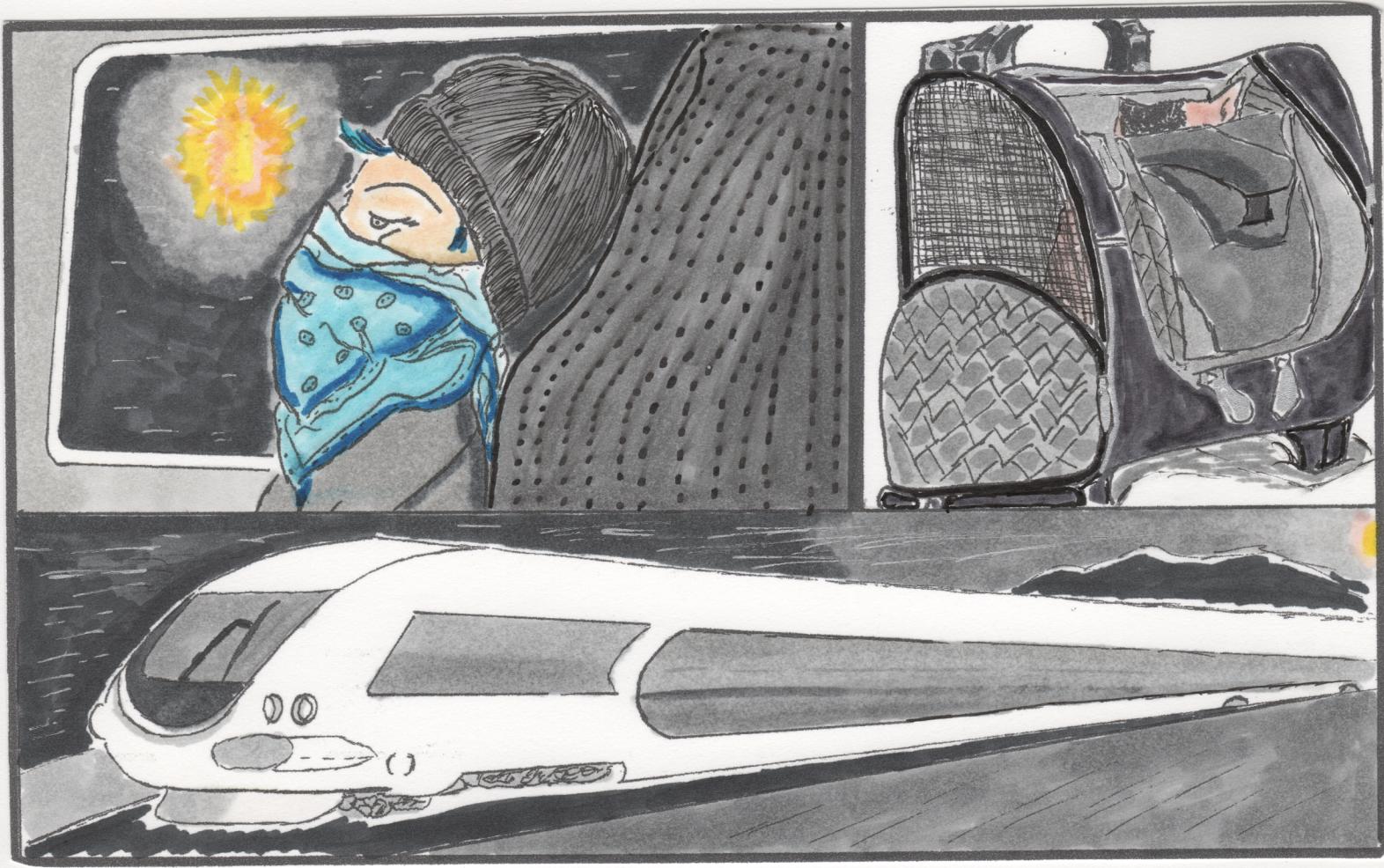


Issue 1

ANIMAL HEARTS

By: Tina V. Cabrera





Jan. 29, 2040

Dear M,

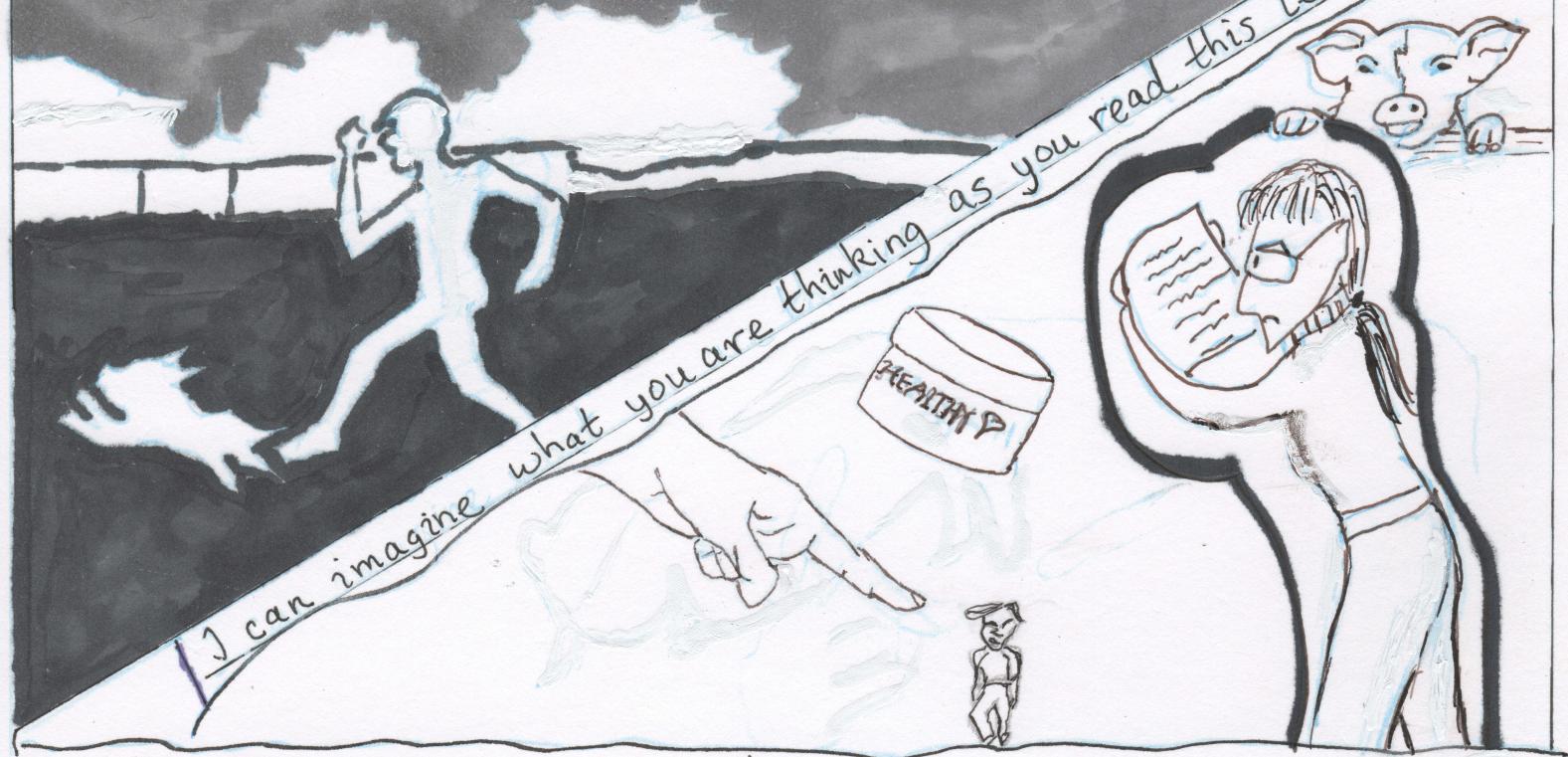
2



By the time you find this letter, it will be too late to say "I'M SORRY." You've broken our hearts one too many times.

3

Deep down you know I am justified in running.
That I can look after us both.



4

Don't worry.

See—already you do what you do
best—MANIPULATE !

BUT I'M
YOUR MOTHER.
IT'S MY JOB TO
WORRY ! AND
YOU'VE GIVEN
ME REASON

TO WORRY
SICK

How can
you do
this to
me

YOU'RE
ALL I'VE
GOT

Cast yourself in the best light.
Me in the worst.

5



You've made all my decisions for me. First, you insisted I needed a heart transplant. You never said, "By the way baby, you're getting one of an animal kind." You said that in the face of my **TRANSFORMATION**, homeschooling was best.

"LOOK IN THE MIRROR, WHAT DO YOU SEE?"

6



7



If you really wanted to avoid the ridicule you were certain I would face, then why did you make me wear that **RIDICULOUS** handsewn pink dress for 6th-grade graduation?

By the way, not once did any of my classmates call me **PIGGY-PIGGY** as you were so sure they would.

8

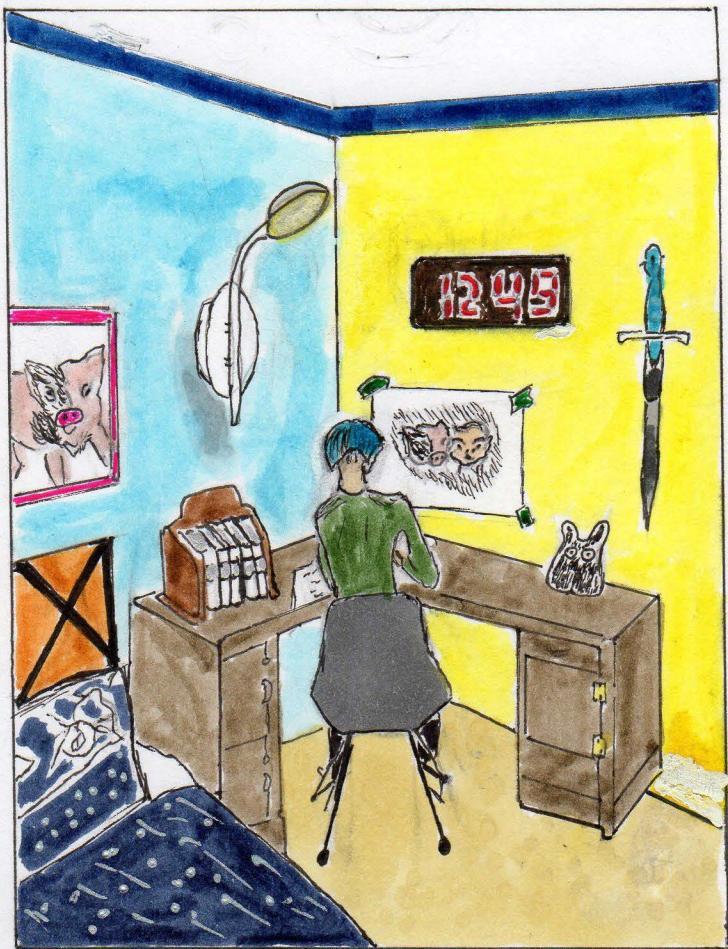


Please don't look at me like that. You know, that face you're making right now.

We had to leave; you forced our hand.

We are so in sync that I know Obie's feelings and he knows mine.

9



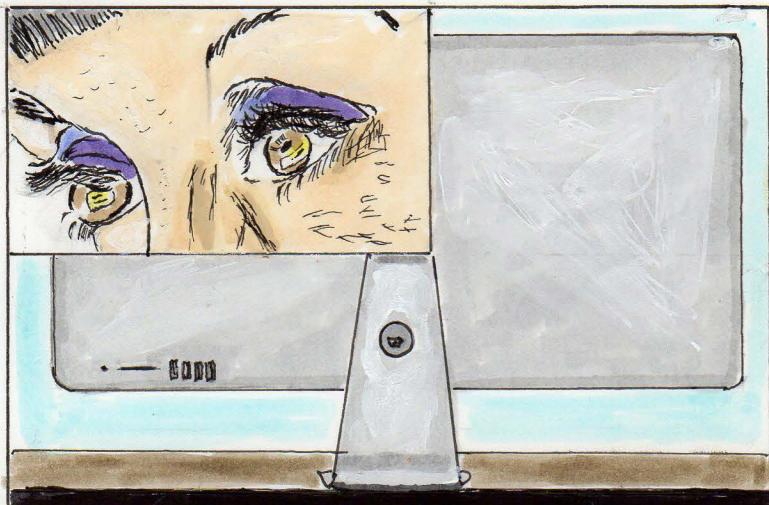
10

"But Ernie, you're over-reacting! You're letting your imagination run wild. All they want Obie for is some testing."

We know what they want. More prodding and probing, more cloning. They want him back. Well too bad. Obie's mine. You take blood \$ for your dream, not mine. You know what Obie means to me. Not a pet. A friend. We won't allow for more exploitation. In this I know for certain—Obie agrees.

I cannot tell you going. What I window into c Search "Animal pure love." I wa what our hear at heart.

X Ernie



ANIMAL HEARTS

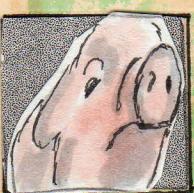
"All animals are equal."

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26 Jan. 2040



They're Back

Ernie

The company wants Obie back. They speak with corporate jargon: "peculiar developments" that "warrant further investigation." They say other patients are showing signs of heart failure, and that if we return and submit to their tests, then perhaps they can figure out the secret to our success and save lives. Well I don't buy it. They want to exploit Obie again. In exchange, they offered M money and she agreed, which makes her the enemy. Those of you who have been following my posts—you know where I stand. I won't let them take him to further their vicious cause of breeding animals for their organs. I've come this far... I must remain strong.



We took the train from Austin. I asked for a private room. The crew assumed he was a common pet like a puppy or cat. They didn't ask to see inside the carrier. He stayed quiet. As long as he is treated right, Obie's just fine. One of a kind.



I remember the night he came into my life. It had just been a week since my surgery and I was still recovering when M came home holding a crate draped with a towel.

12



13

Can you tell the difference?



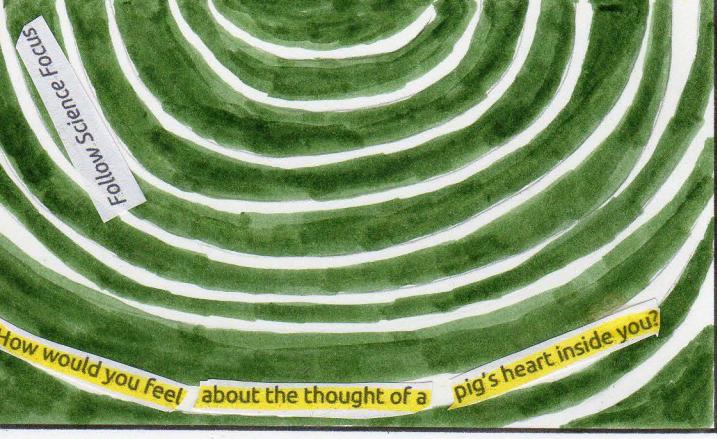
Yet there is increasing acceptance that of some kind. A growing number of

our closest evolutionary relatives biologists and philosophers agree that,

The extent to which animals can suffer is still argued have the necessary brainpower to experience suffering at the very least; the majority of mammals can suffer.



He squealed and ran through the house. My — our — heart raced. It felt both wrong and right at the same time.



14

I MADE A GREAT SACRIFICE, FACING THE SCORN FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

BUT I HAVE FAITH IN SCIENCE, THE BEST OF THE BEST. FOR YOU, ERNIE BABY.

A PIG HEART?
WHAT AN ABDOMINATION!

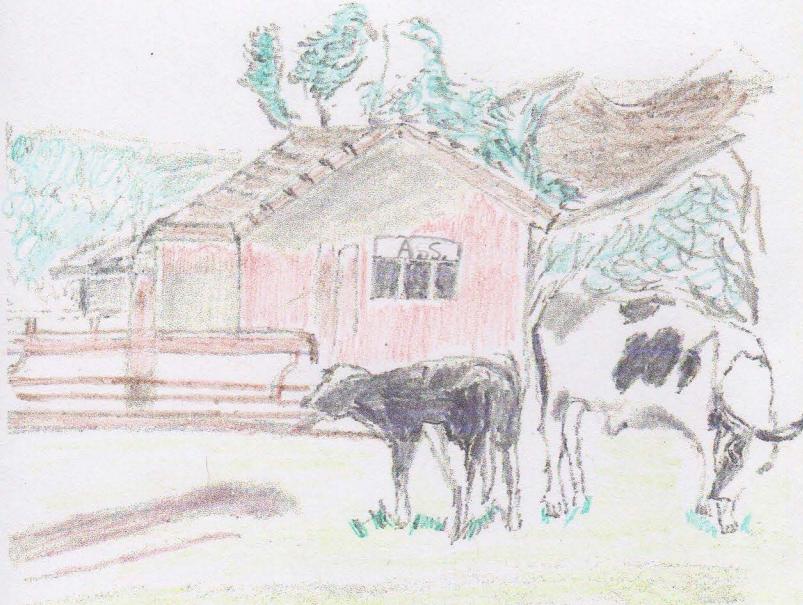
I resented her. What for? First, for not telling the truth beforehand, and then for confessing afterward. Why tell me at all? I could have gone through life no worse off in my ignorance. After all, the surgery was a success. But I can't un-know and I've never been the same ever since.

That night, I couldn't sleep.
So I let him out of the cage.
I had to know for certain.



I held him against my chest,
felt the beating of his
heart against mine.

PERFECT SYNCHRONY



Obie has been with me for every milestone. At every lonely birthday. Helps me eat cake, licks the icing off my face. Every Halloween, I hoard candy under the bed. We gorge

together in secret, in the dark. I rub his belly, scratch his ears, and he can tell when I need a friend.

When I shut the blinds
and lay in bed all day,
he's by my side.
He's never lonely.

He has me—human?
Same heart. Now he
needs me.
Here I am. He came to
number 7, a mere
Hybrid?
in a giant
"Obadiah," a
name
that chose me,
through a
product
name
granted
whisper
of the heart.

