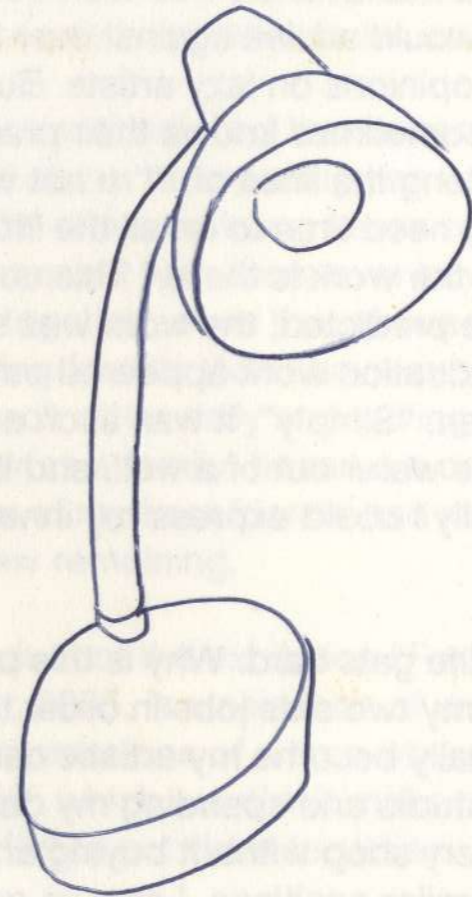


FOR SOMETHI=
NG TO HAPPEN



The days of our graduation were so intense, I can hardly remember everything that happened. Hours after the exhibition opened, I was still running around printing business cards, putting up "At times another lonesome stranger" (a 50 m long poetry banner that I took down every evening and put back in place every morning to prevent vandalism), and setting up a collateral exhibition at art bookshop Wolf Books. I was coming from a month or two of long days in the school's workshops assembling books, sawing wood, and soldering metal poles, and when it was all done, graduation behind me, I finally stopped twirling... and got seriously disoriented. In September, I came back to Arnhem having organized the third edition of Some Days Some Arts with the Barattolo project, and I told my boss at the vegetable market that I wanted to quit: I was tired.

It's hard to express the excitement I felt working towards graduation. Every little piece of my artistic practice fell into place. During a talk that I had with my tutor, Hester Oerlemans, in March 2024, I told her that I had not been making anything for at least a month and I was worried I might be procrastinating. To anyone else, I would advise against ever telling something like this to Hester; she has strong opinions on lazy artists. But she also knows each of her students deeply, and sometimes knows their practice better than them: to me she said something along the lines of: "I'm not worried about you. This is the way you work. You need time to let all the little things happen, and then at the end, in a few days the work is there." This conversation stayed with me until in July, as she predicted, the work was simply there. I say "simply" not because my graduation work appeared out of thin air - I worked very hard to make it happen. "Simply", it was such a joy to make it; ideas were flowing out of me like water out of a well, and it felt like they would never stop. I loved how easily I could express my inner world and feel understood.

But as they say, after graduation, life gets hard. Why is this piece of gossip so true? I stopped working at one of my two side jobs in order to rest, and give more space to what had to eventually become my artistic career, but quickly enough I was terrified of my own studio and spending my days pacing the city center back and forth, entering every shop without buying anything. Looking around, all of my friends were in similar positions. I saw us get lonely, some moving away to other countries or back home. Meanwhile, a strange sense of competition started taking over me: every opportunity that goes to someone else is an opportunity I'm missing out on. Am I doing enough? Am I on track? Is it working out? At night, in bed, Milan tried to convince me that it was not the end of the world and I would soon start making again.

This was September to last February. In those months, I also learned that what for my whole life I had called "existential crises" were actually internal panic attacks. This is interesting because my "existential crises" have always been my most prolific moments: the bundle of experiences and emotions they prompted had me write and draw to unravel them until I was feeling better. But this time, as for many these days, scrolling on my phone and window shopping were an easier, more direct relief for my panic, although they left me feeling a worse kind of empty.

Funny enough, the pressure I was putting myself under was mostly related to winning a prize, and showing (who? I don't know) that I was making good use of it. So I was not exactly experiencing the so-called "black hole", as it mostly refers to a lack of opportunities and means. But I was somehow creating it for myself out of too high expectations. Around me, a bit of everything was happening in my peers' lives: circumstances here and there made it so that even though each of us was going through unique experiences, my friends and I were all feeling the same sense of being stuck, lost, and unsatisfied; of not knowing exactly what the next step should be. We all retreated to our own spaces and, without school as an excuse, saw each other way less if at all.

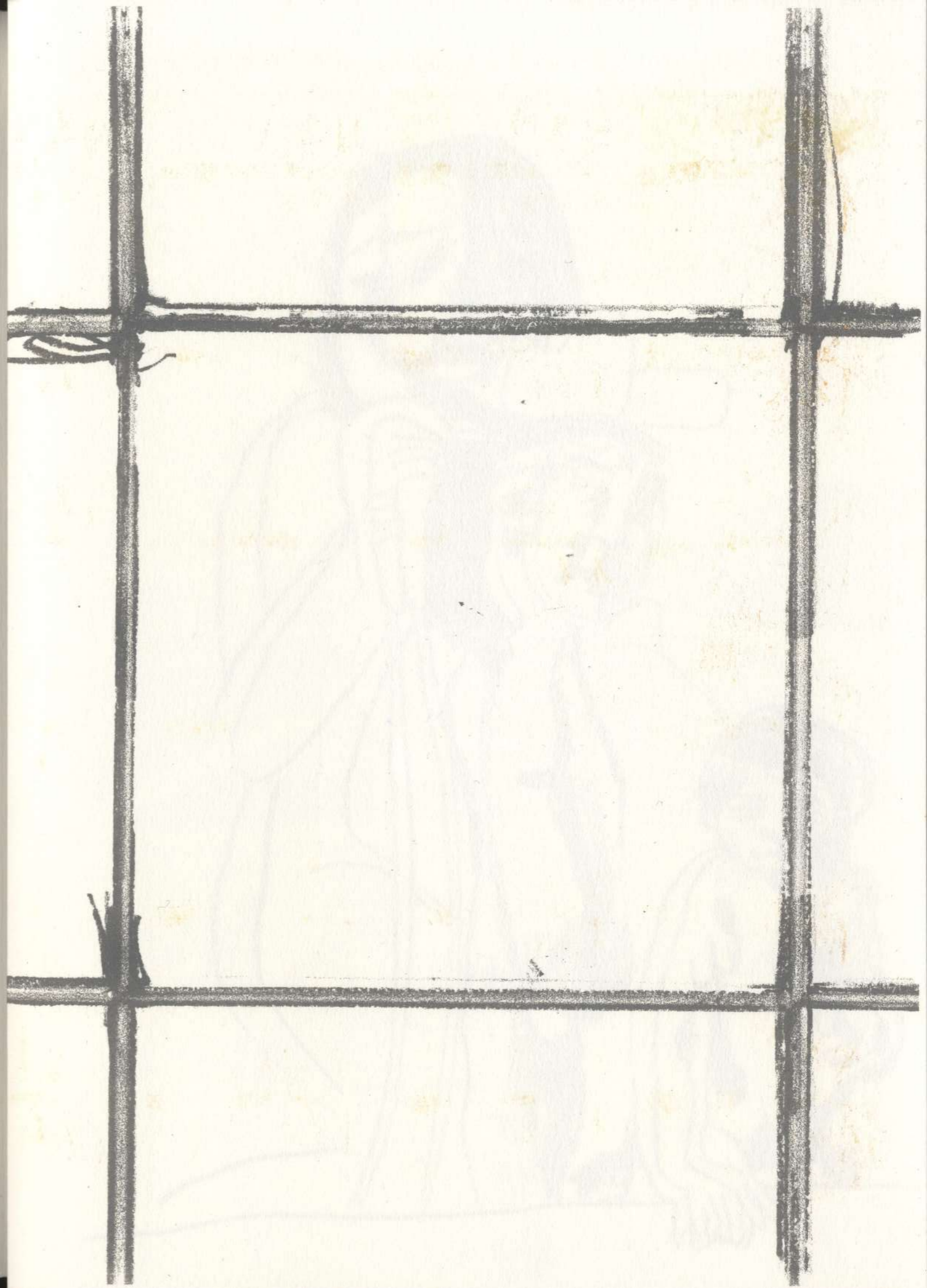
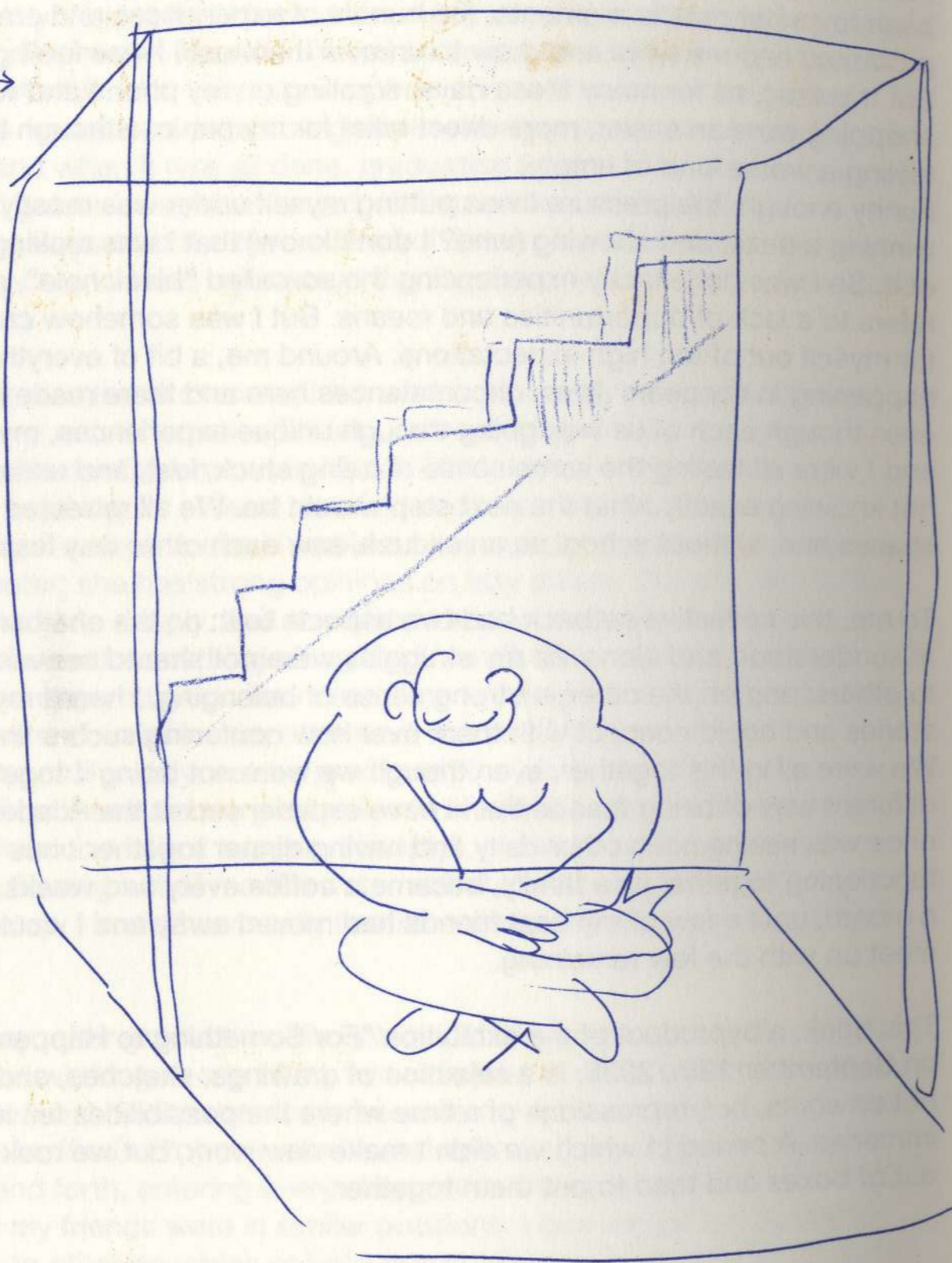
To me, this collective setback had two aspects to it: on the one hand, feeling misunderstood and alone, as my struggles were not shared or even known to others; and on the other, a strong sense of belonging. I heard my friends' stories and could connect with them over how confusing such a time was. We were all in this together, even though we were not *doing* it together. It's a different way of being friends than I have experienced at the Academy: what once was seeing each other daily and having dinner together once a week, functioning together as a family, became a coffee every two weeks, and then a month, until a few of my best friends had moved away and I would barely meet up with the few remaining.

This book, a byproduct of the exhibition "For Something to Happen", opening on September 12th, 2025, is a selection of drawings, sketches, and plans - not artworks, but impressions of a time where the possibilities felt infinite and immense. A period in which we didn't make new work, but we took old pieces out of boxes and tried to put them together.

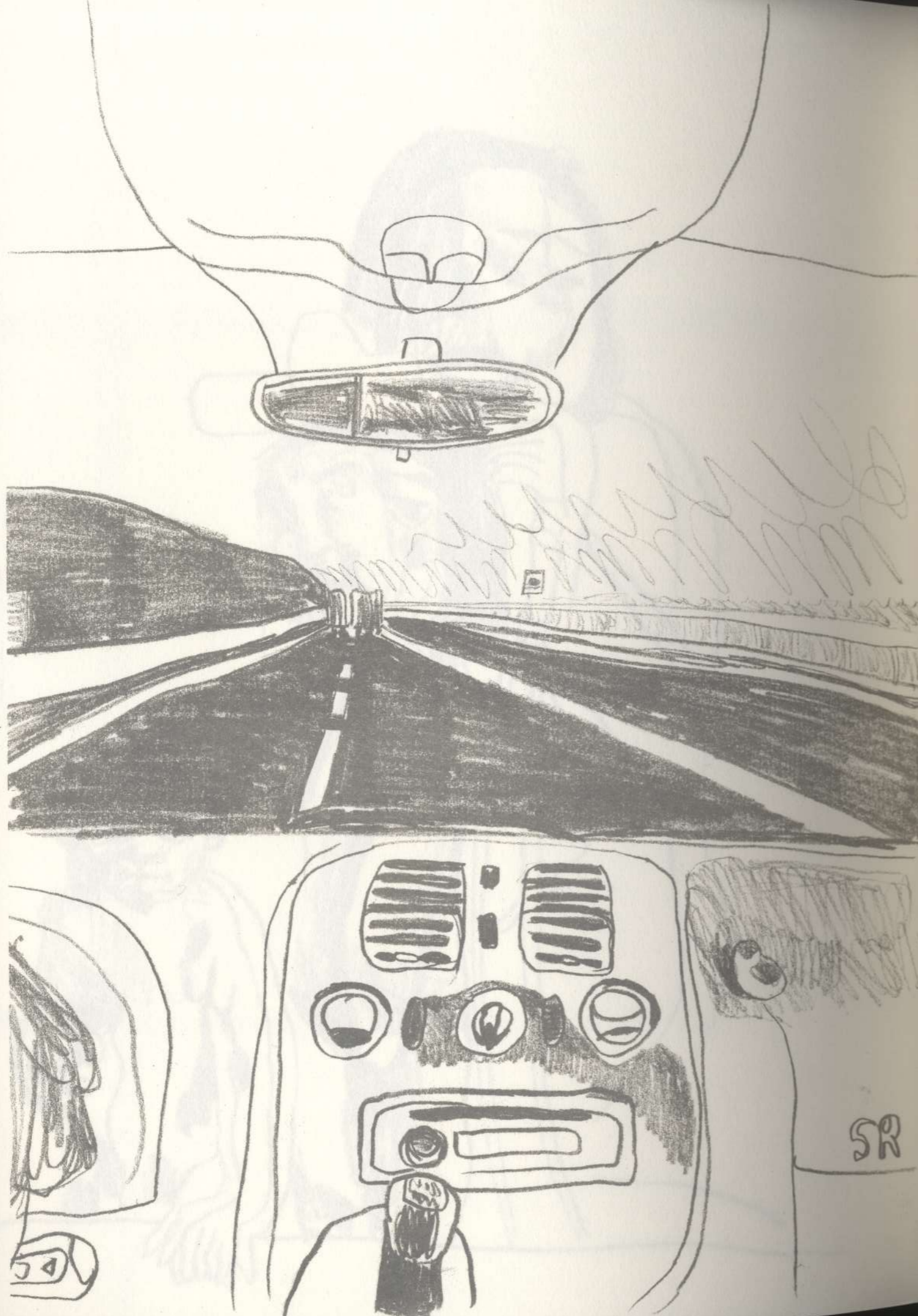
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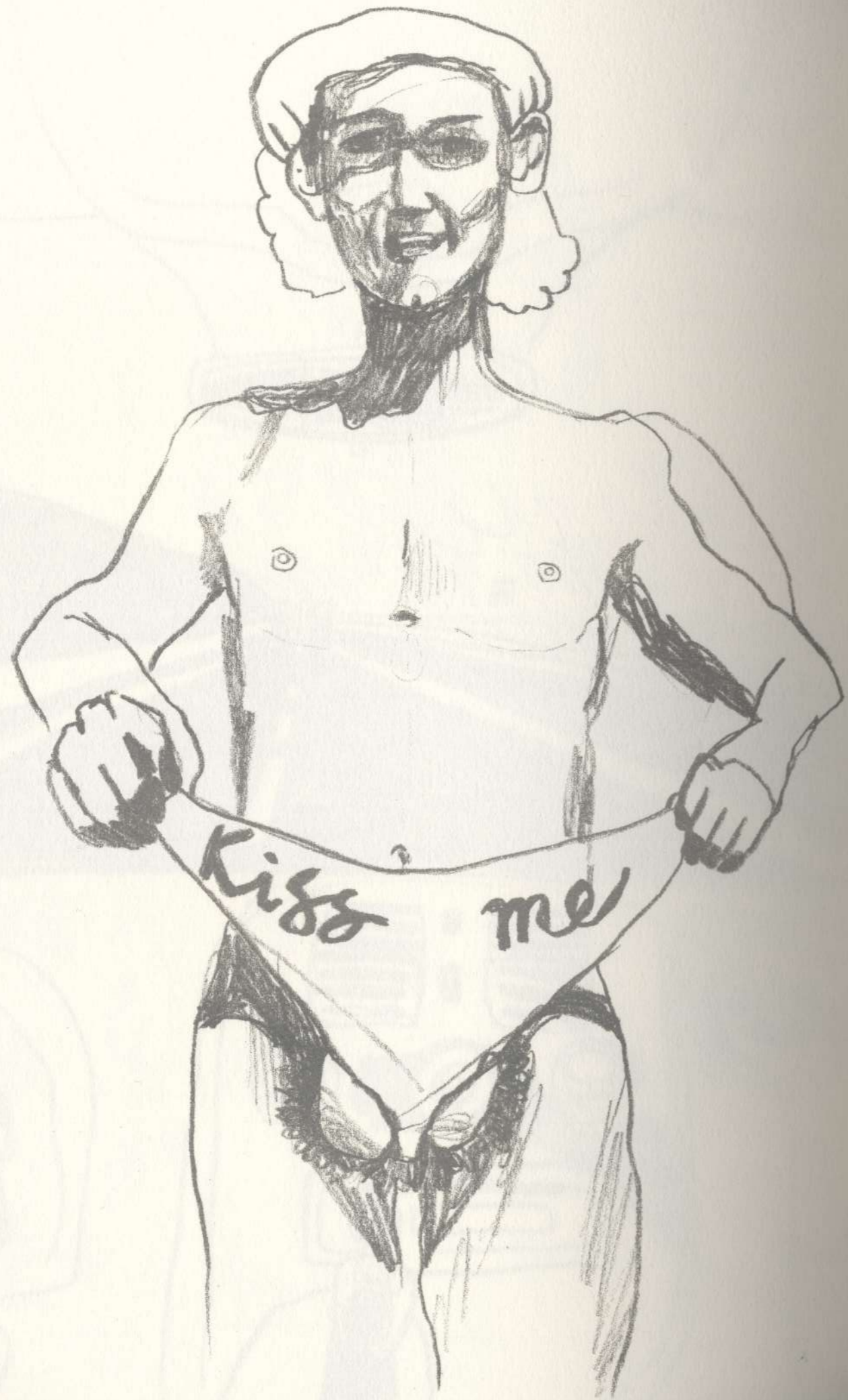
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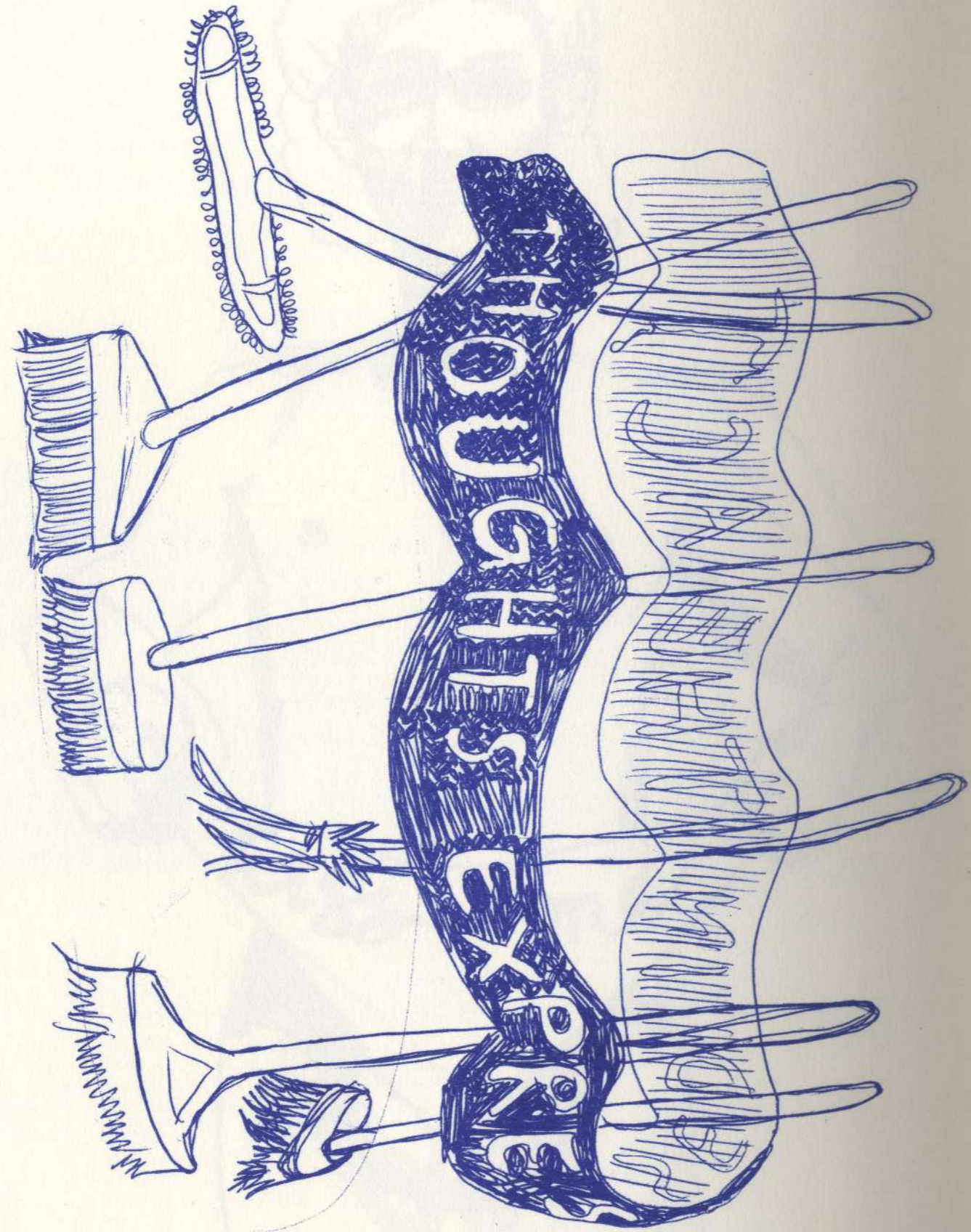




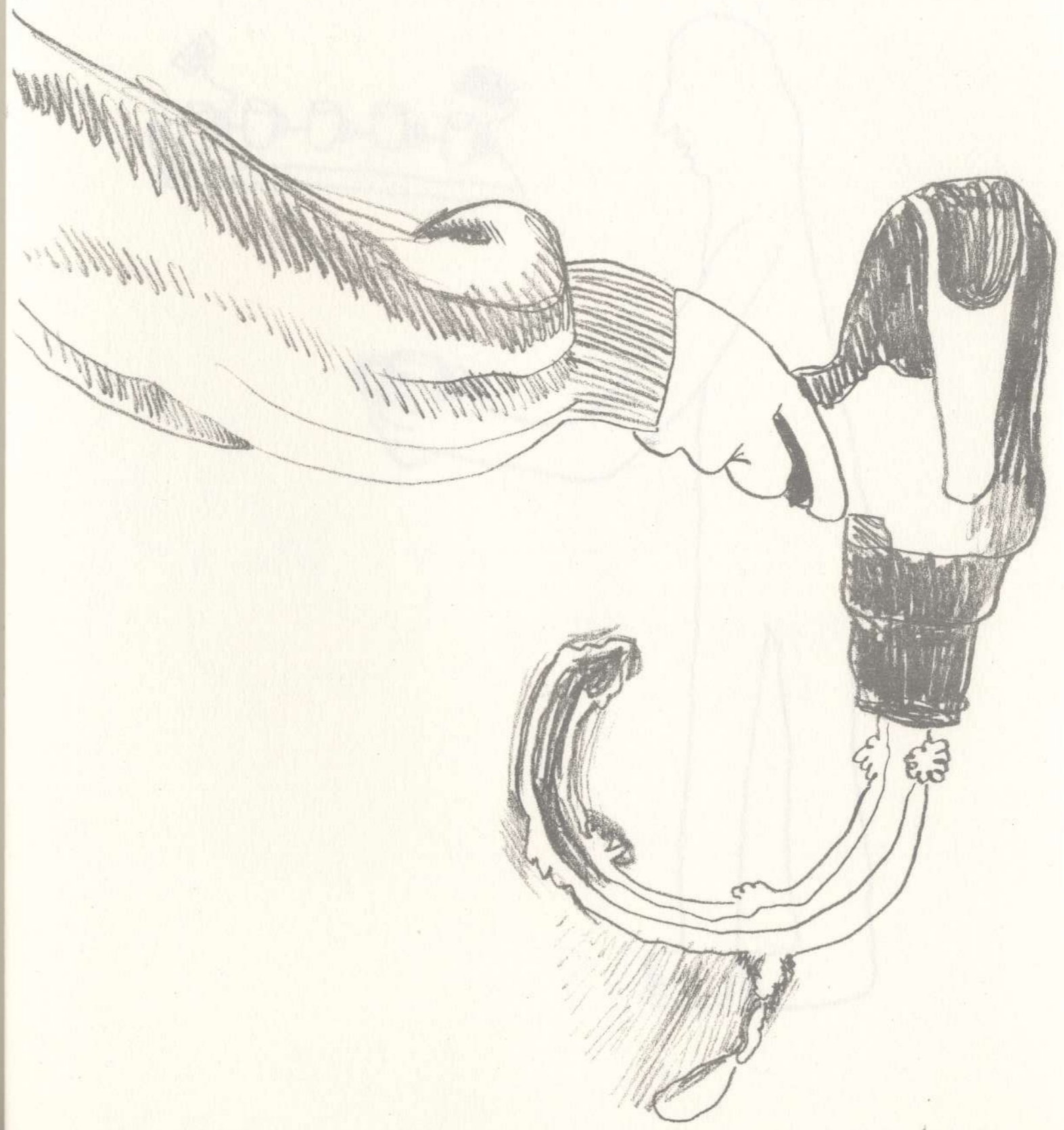


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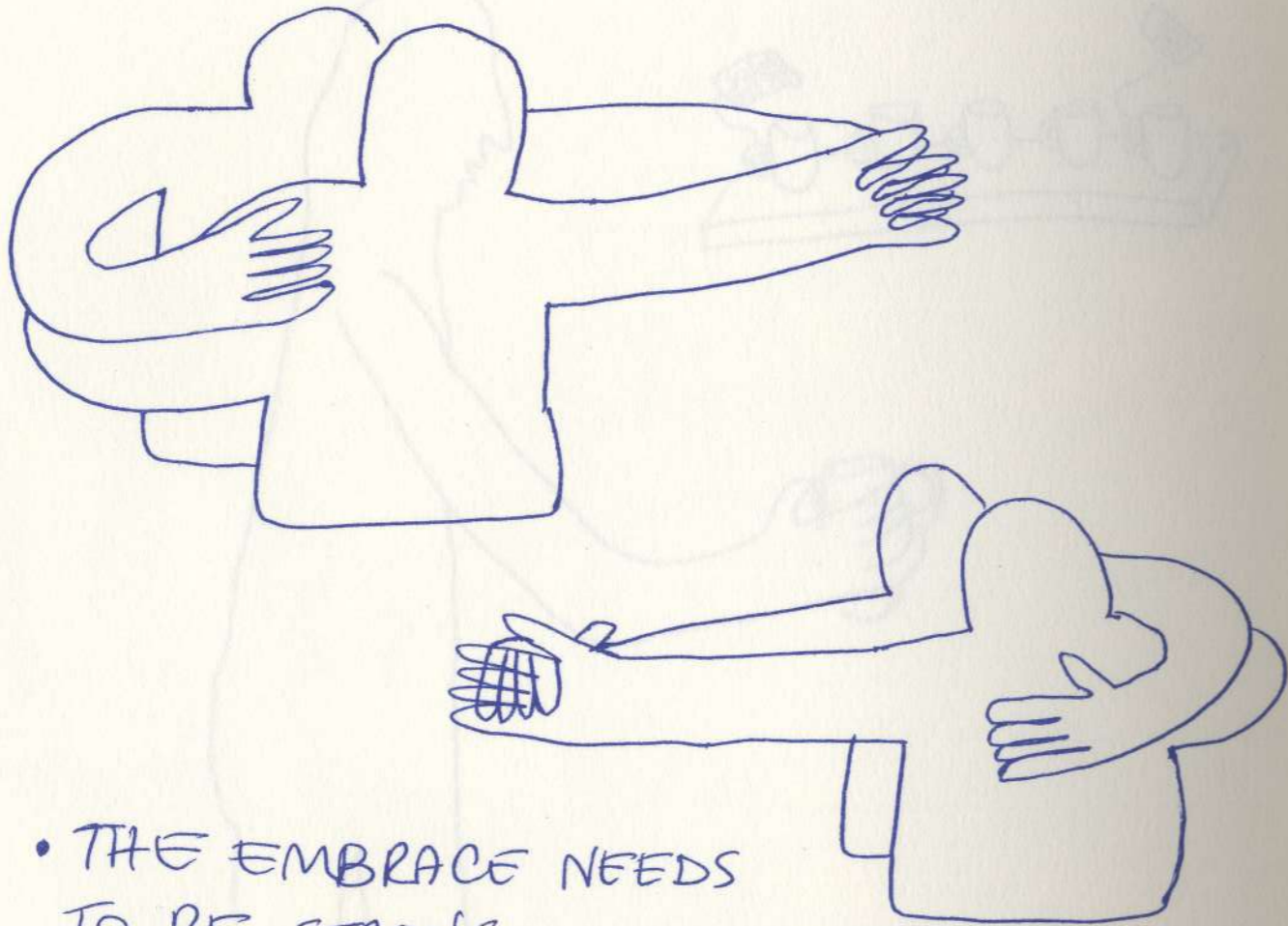


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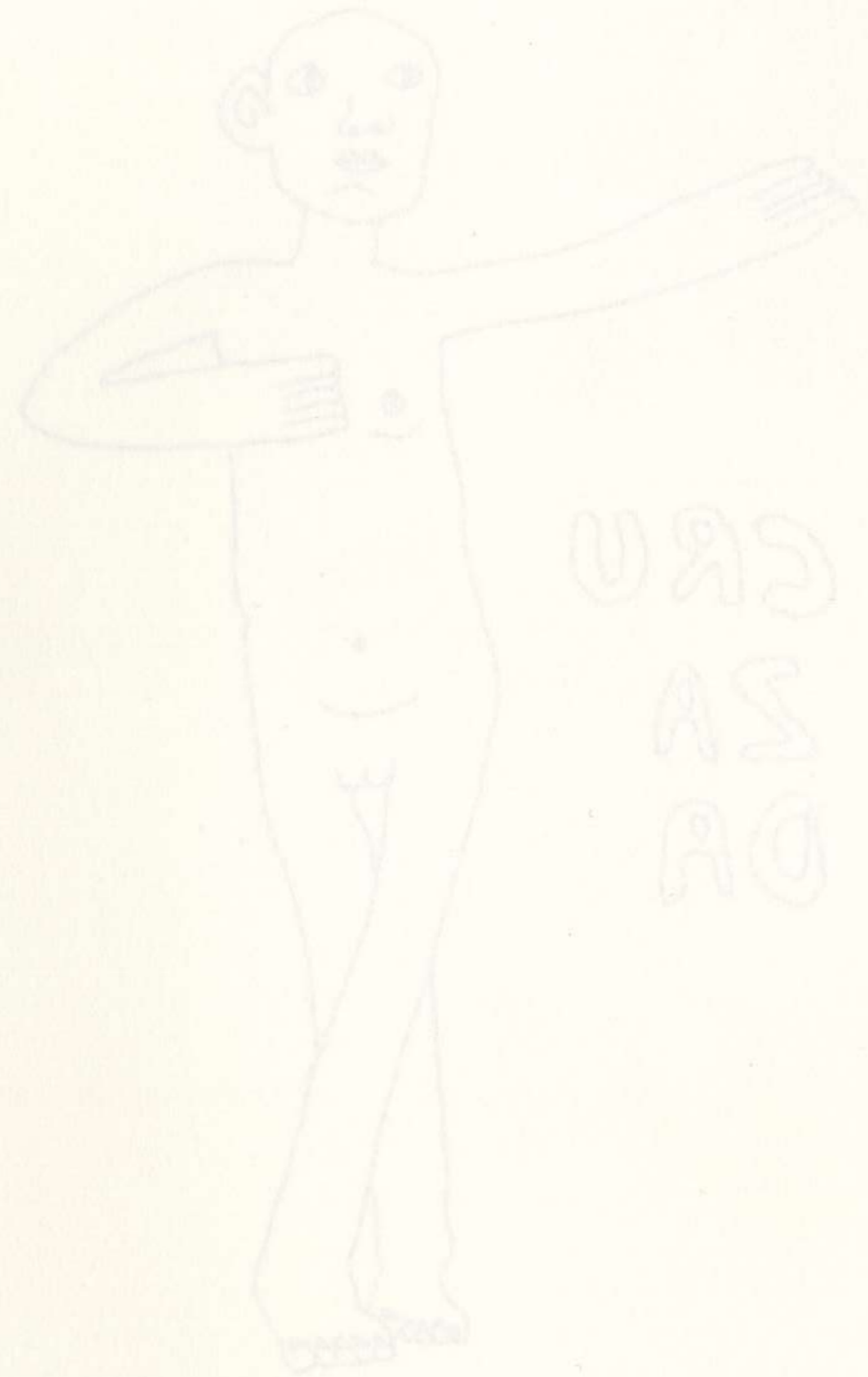


PRESSURE

- IN ORDER TO COMMUNICATE WELL, THE LEADER AND THE FOLLOWER NEED TO CREATE A CONNECTION THROUGH THE EMBRACE.



- THE EMBRACE NEEDS TO BE STRONG.



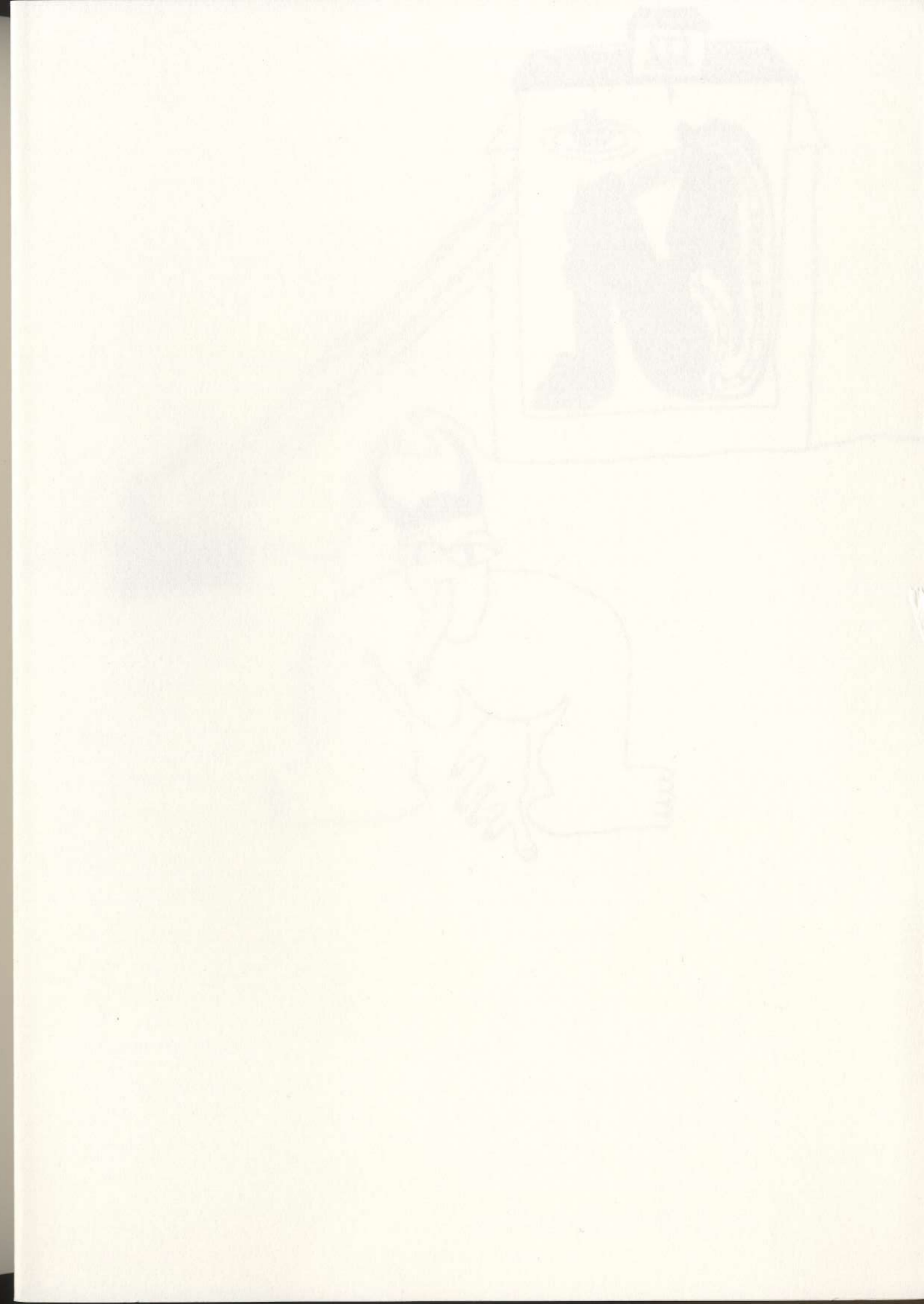
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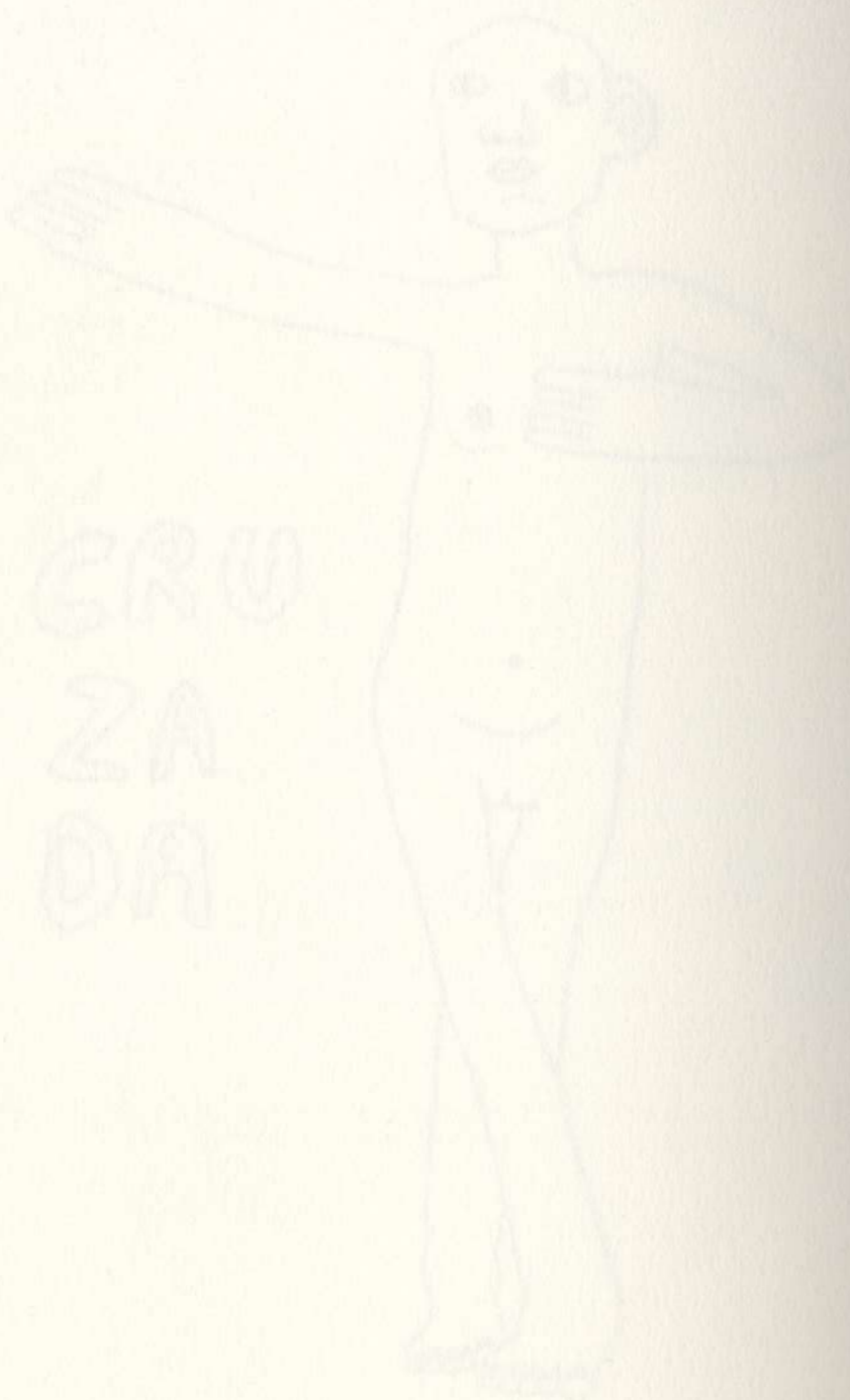
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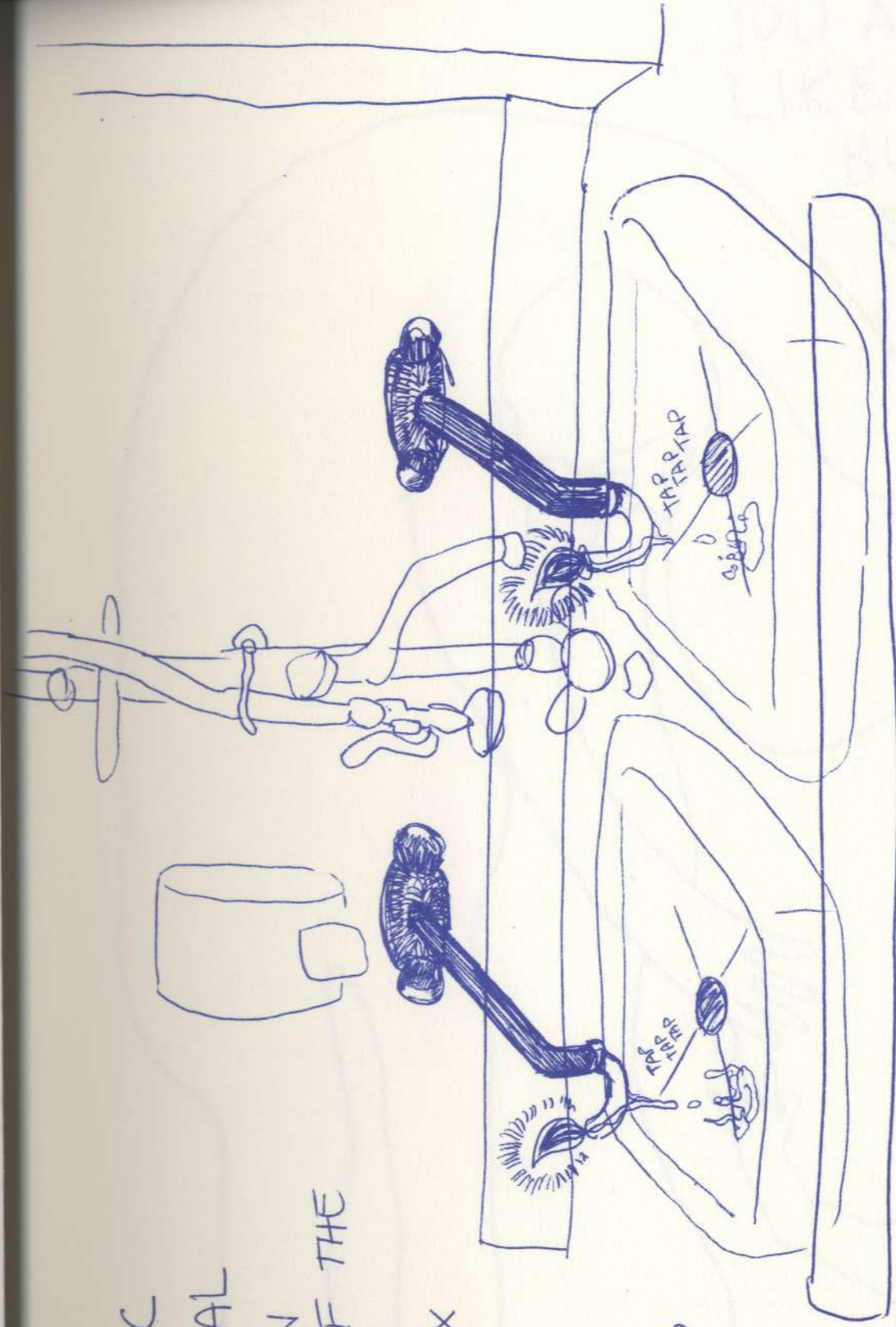
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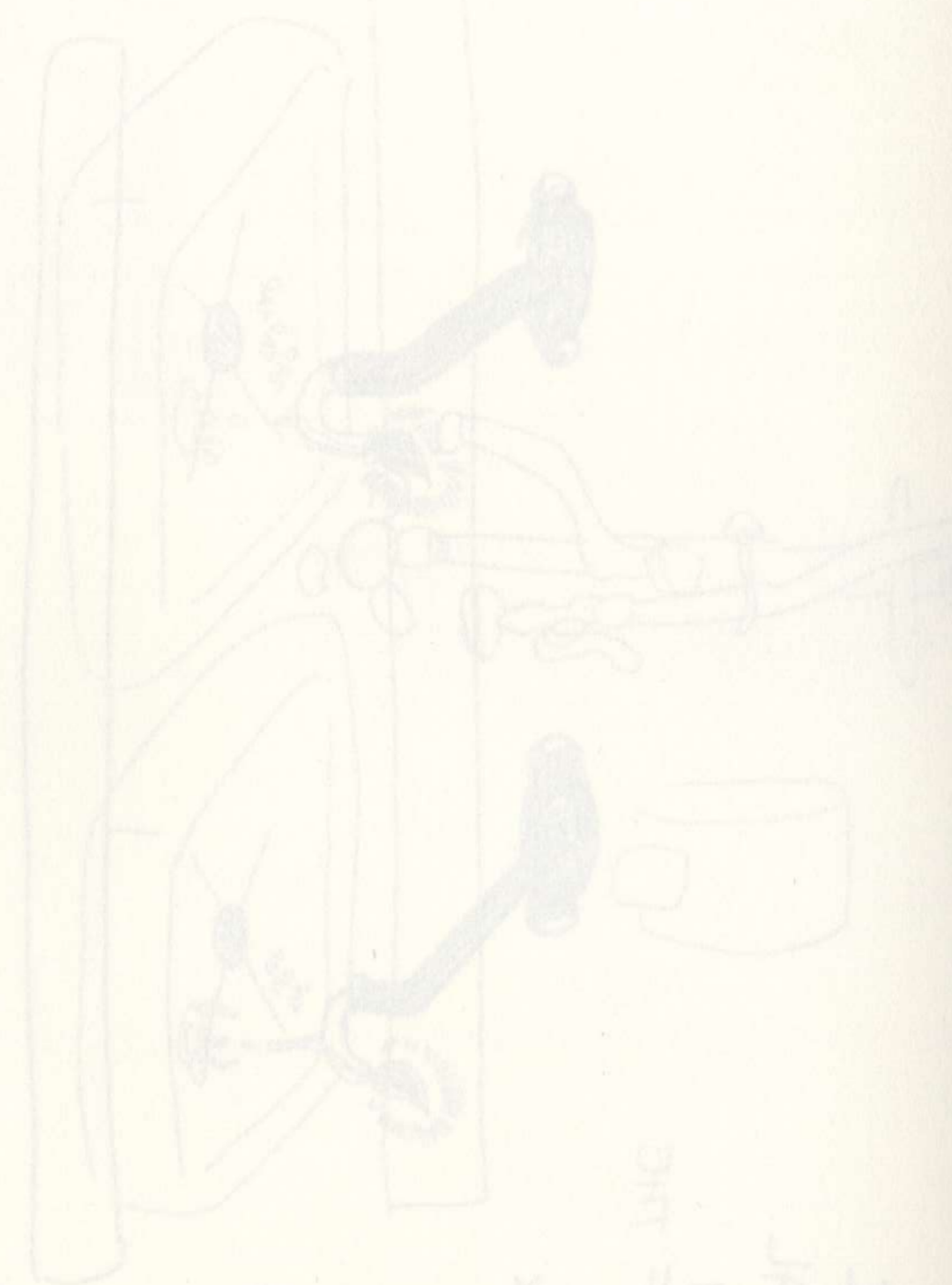
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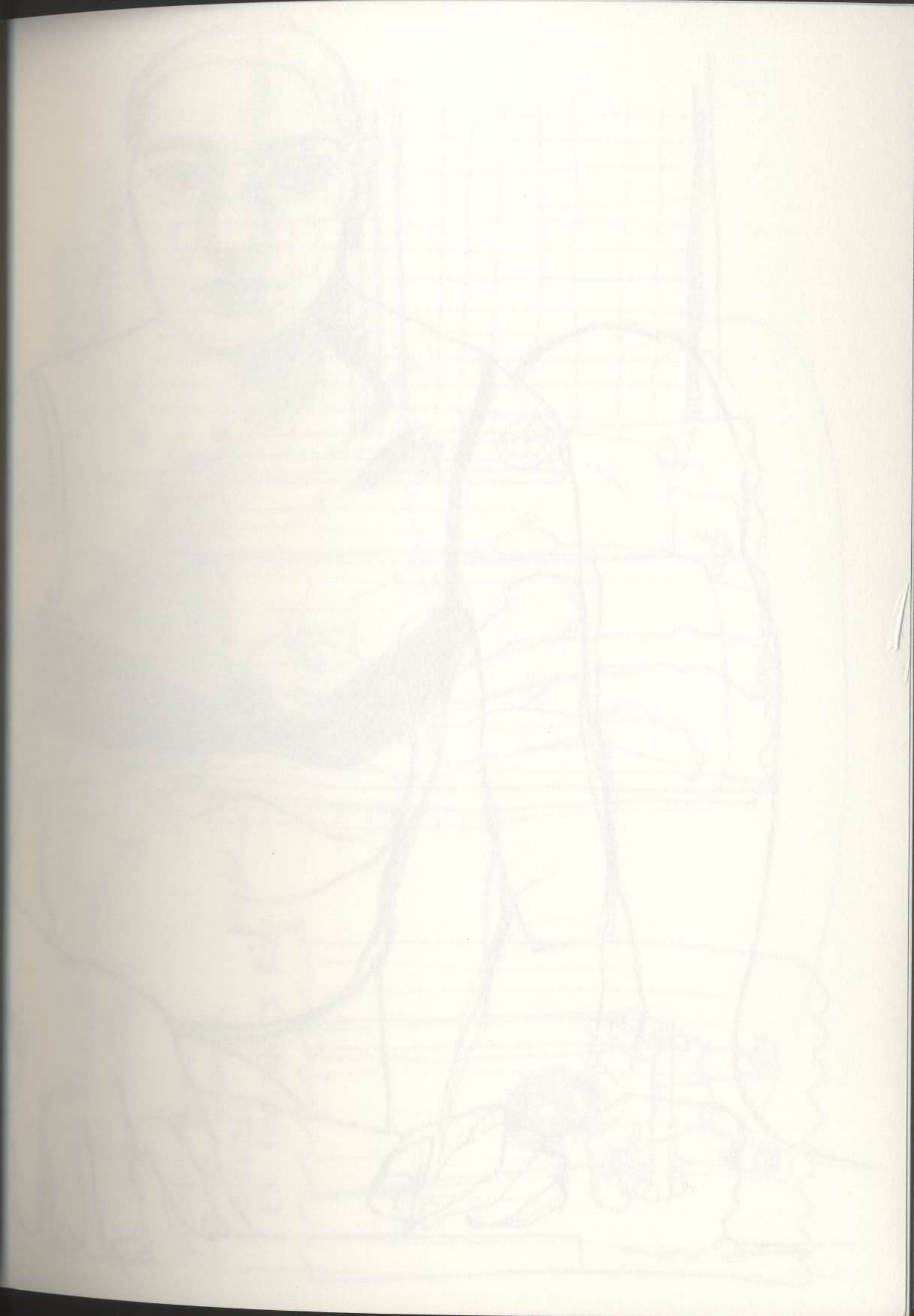
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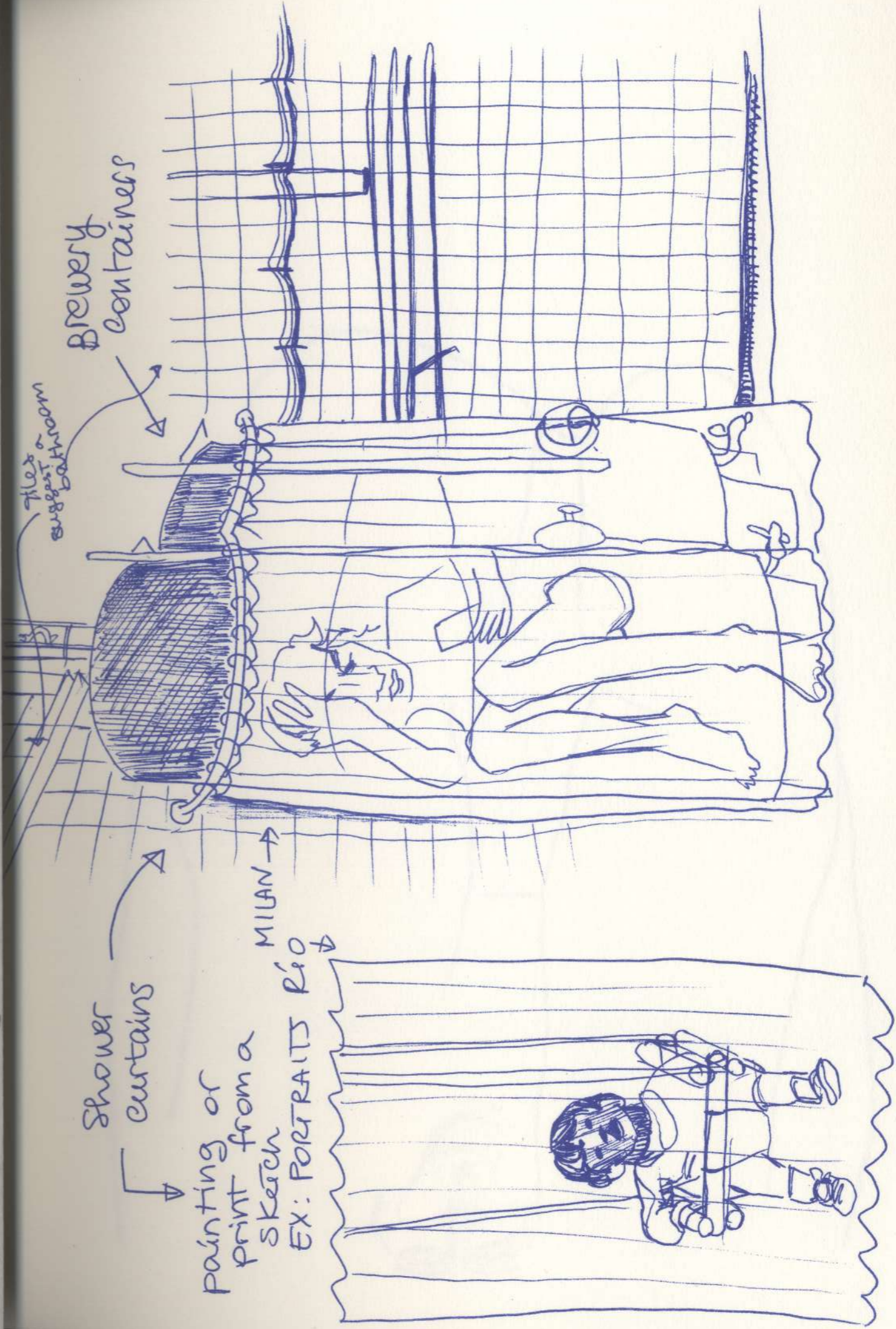
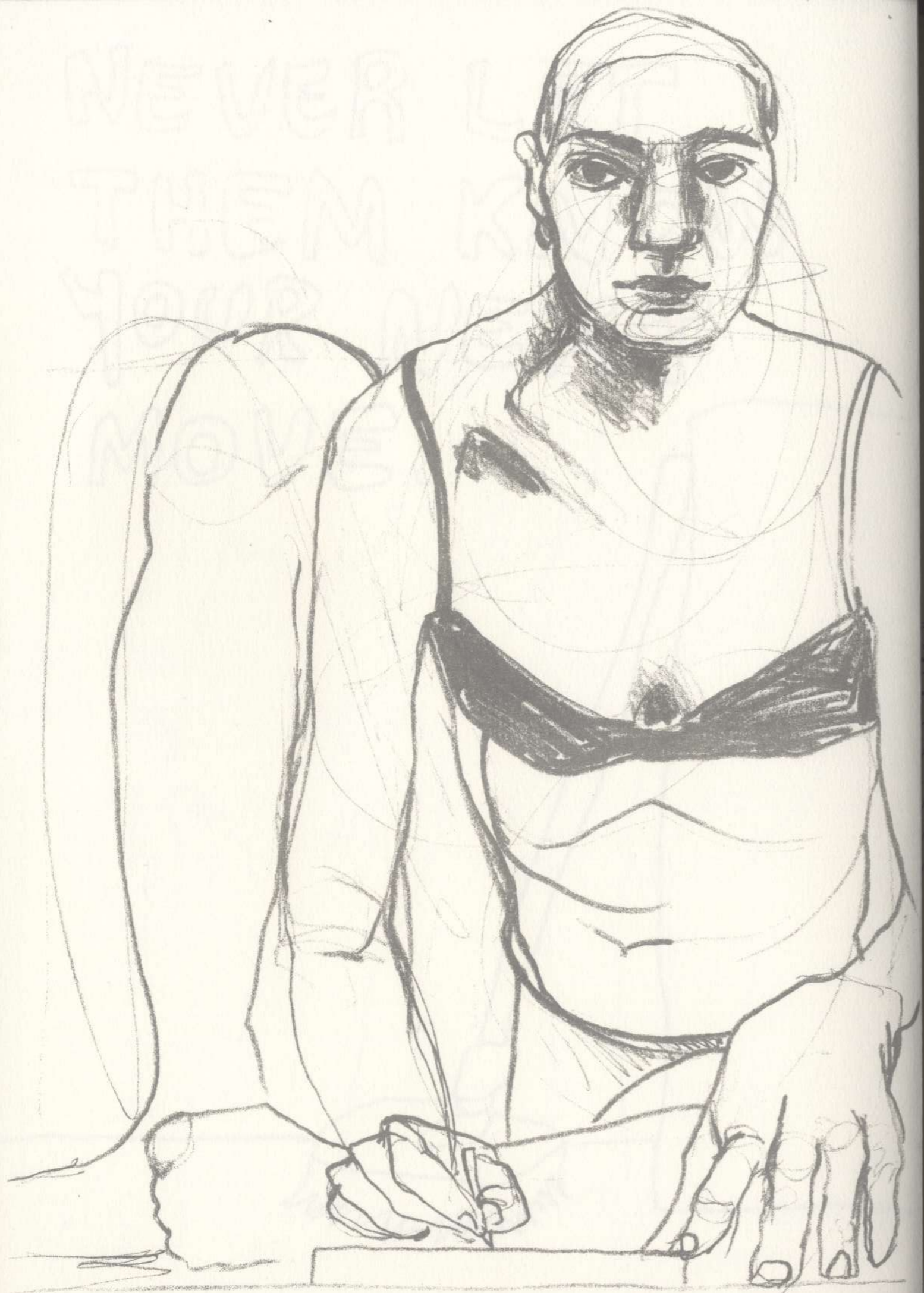


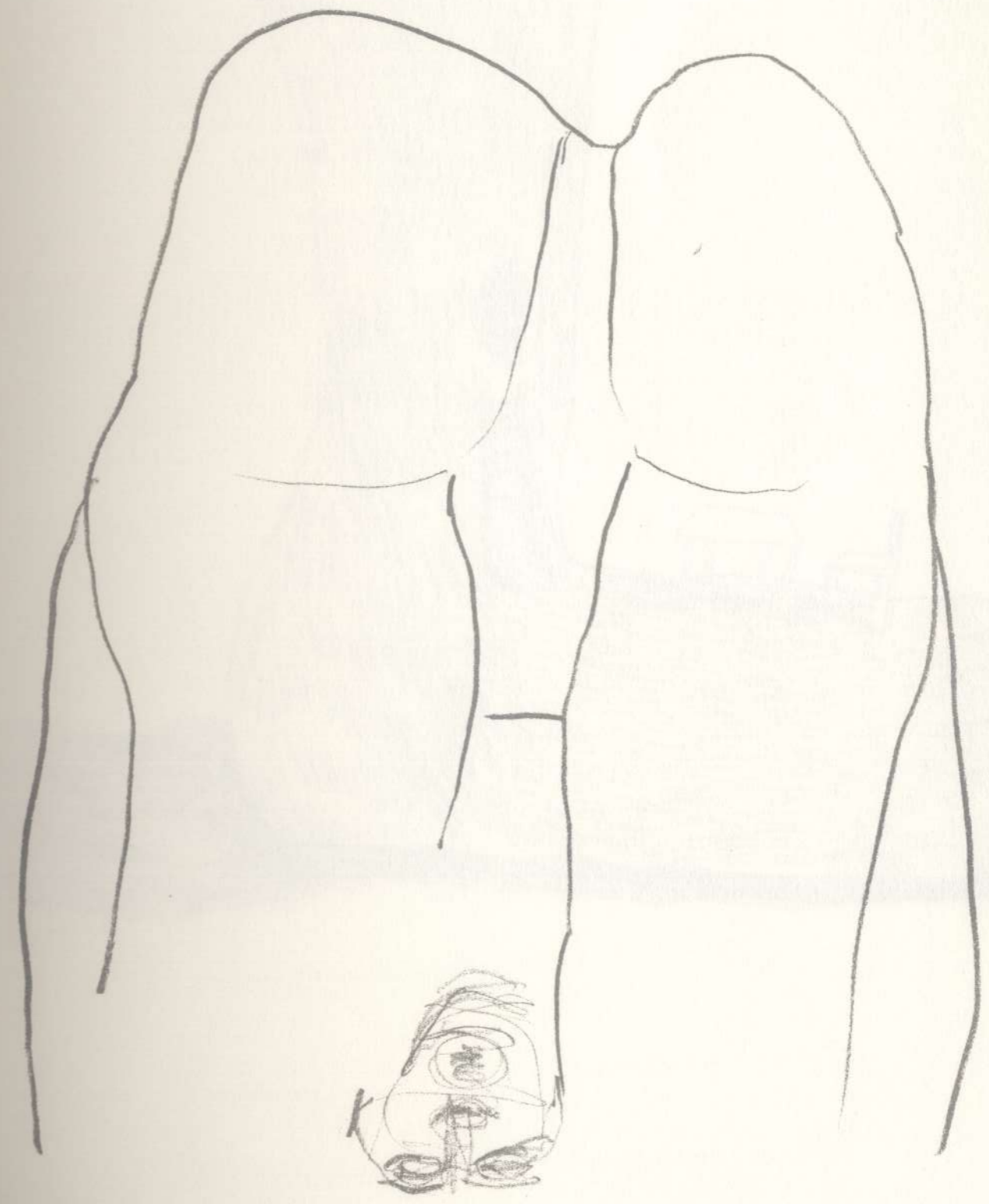
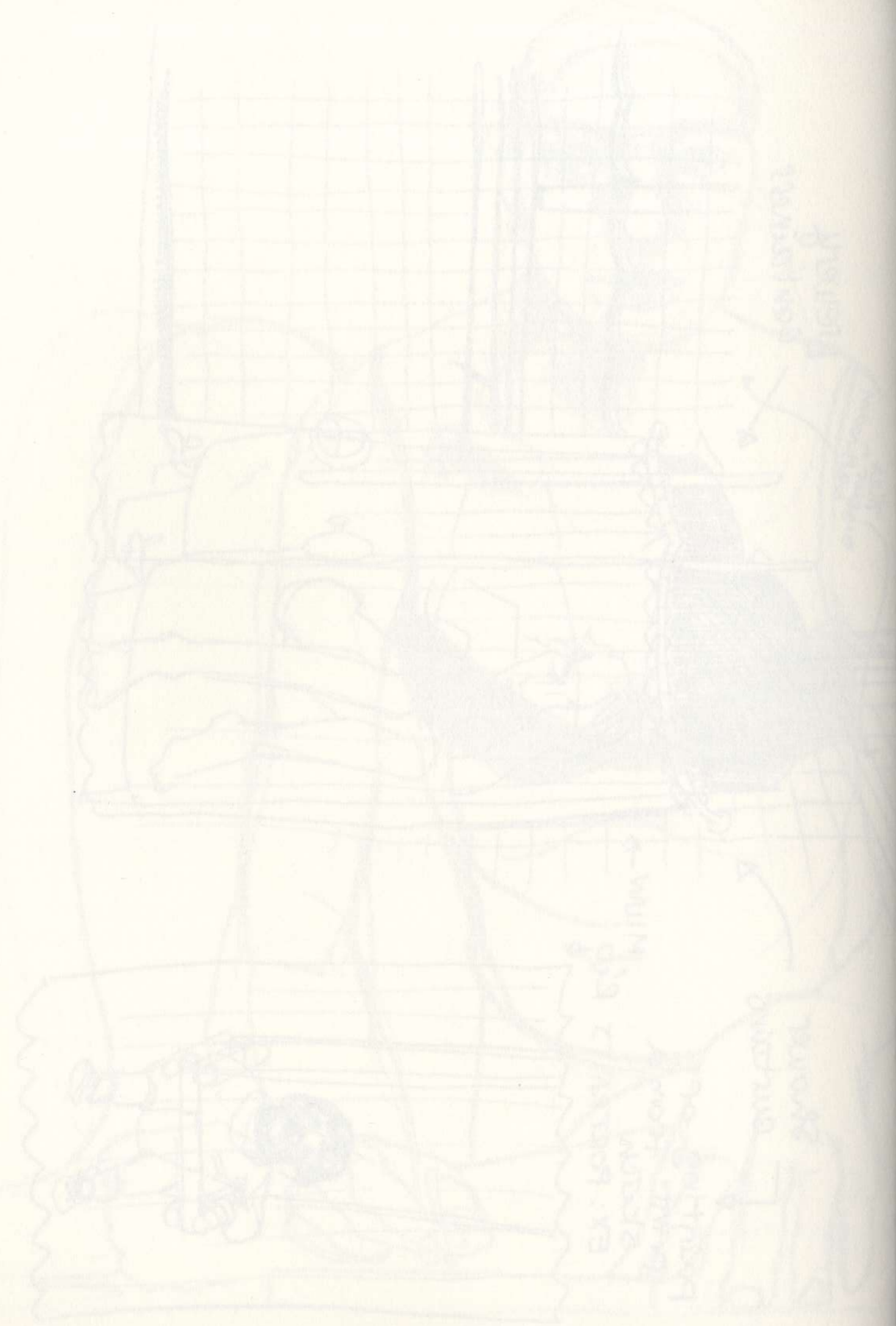
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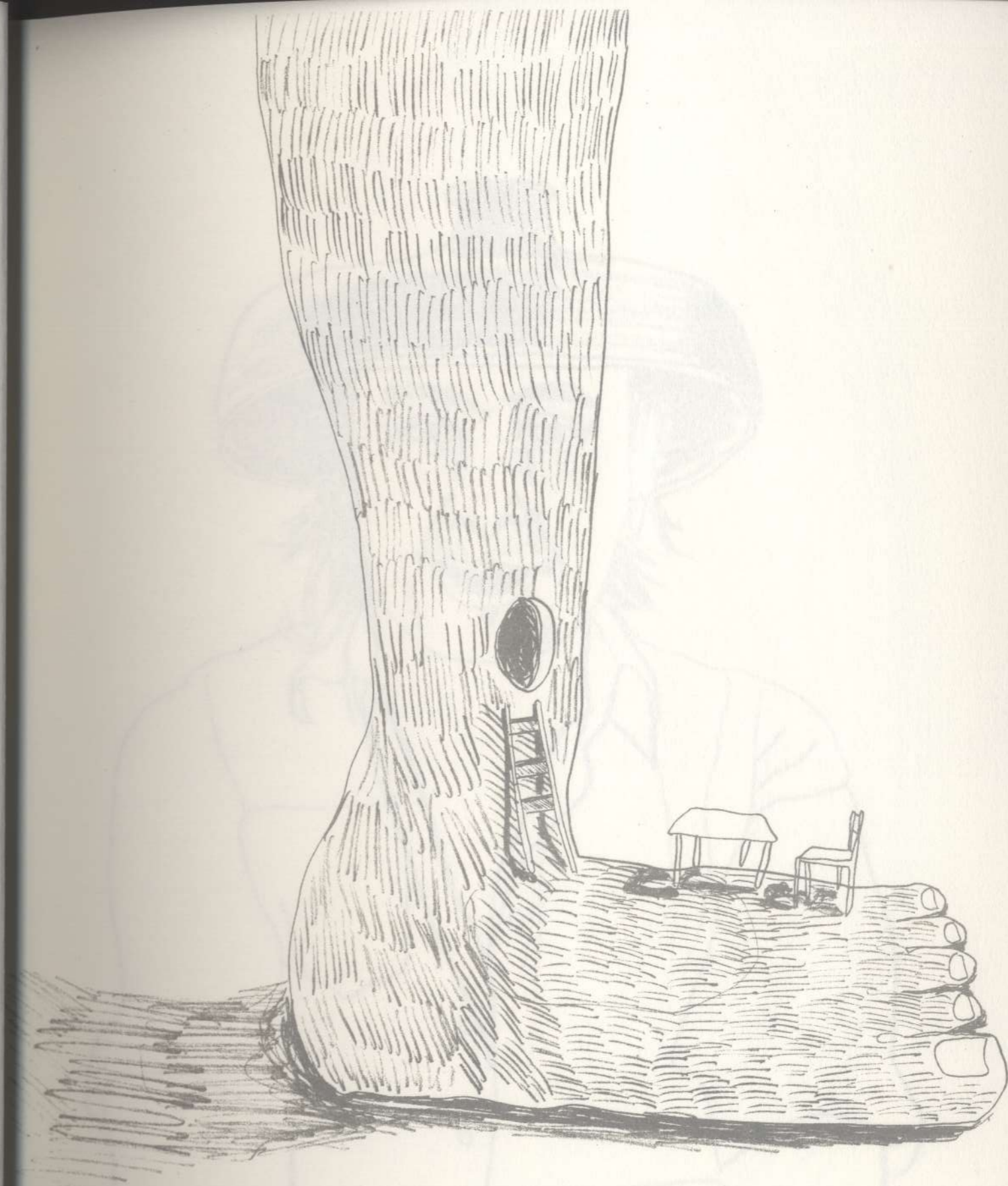


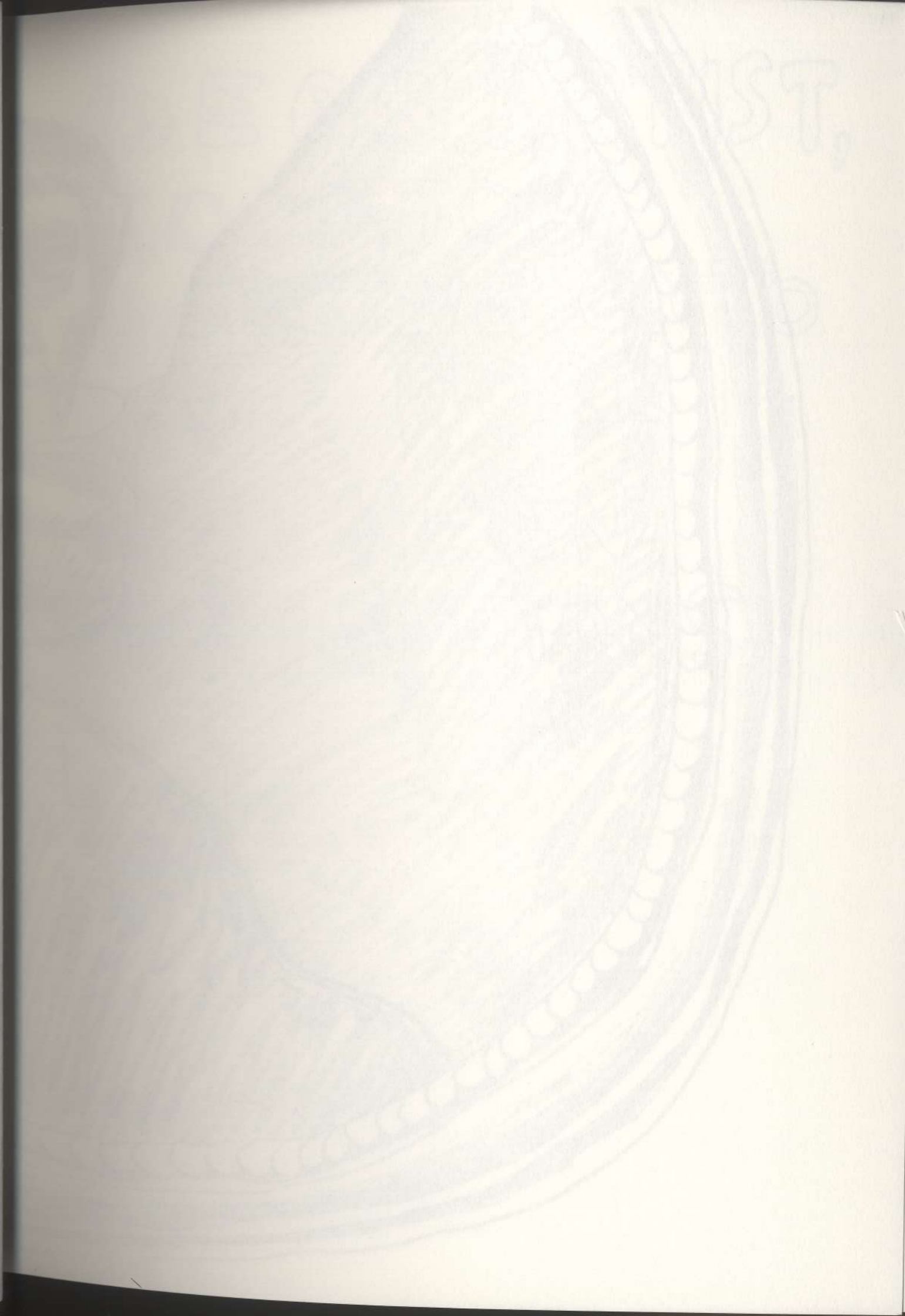
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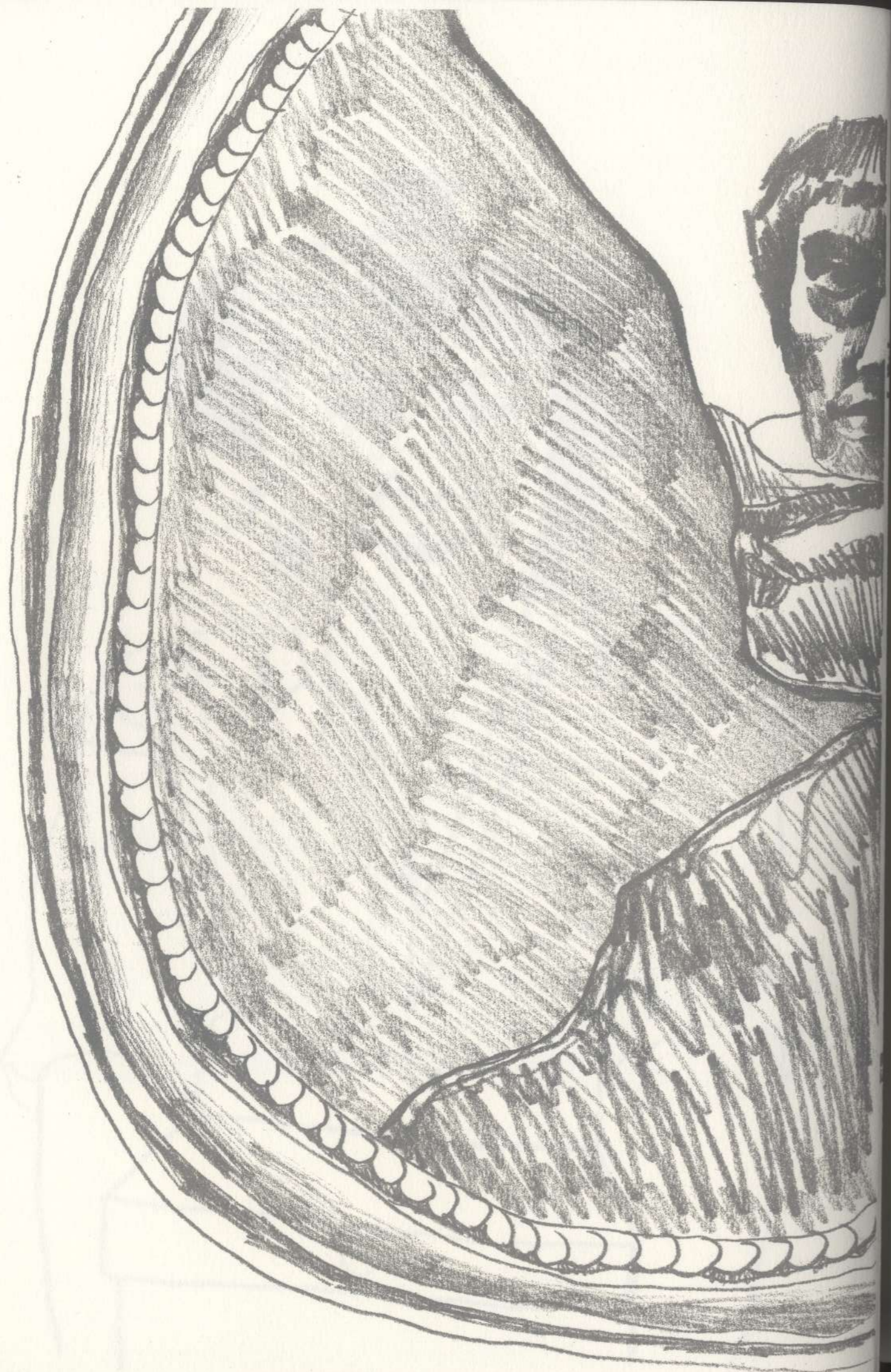




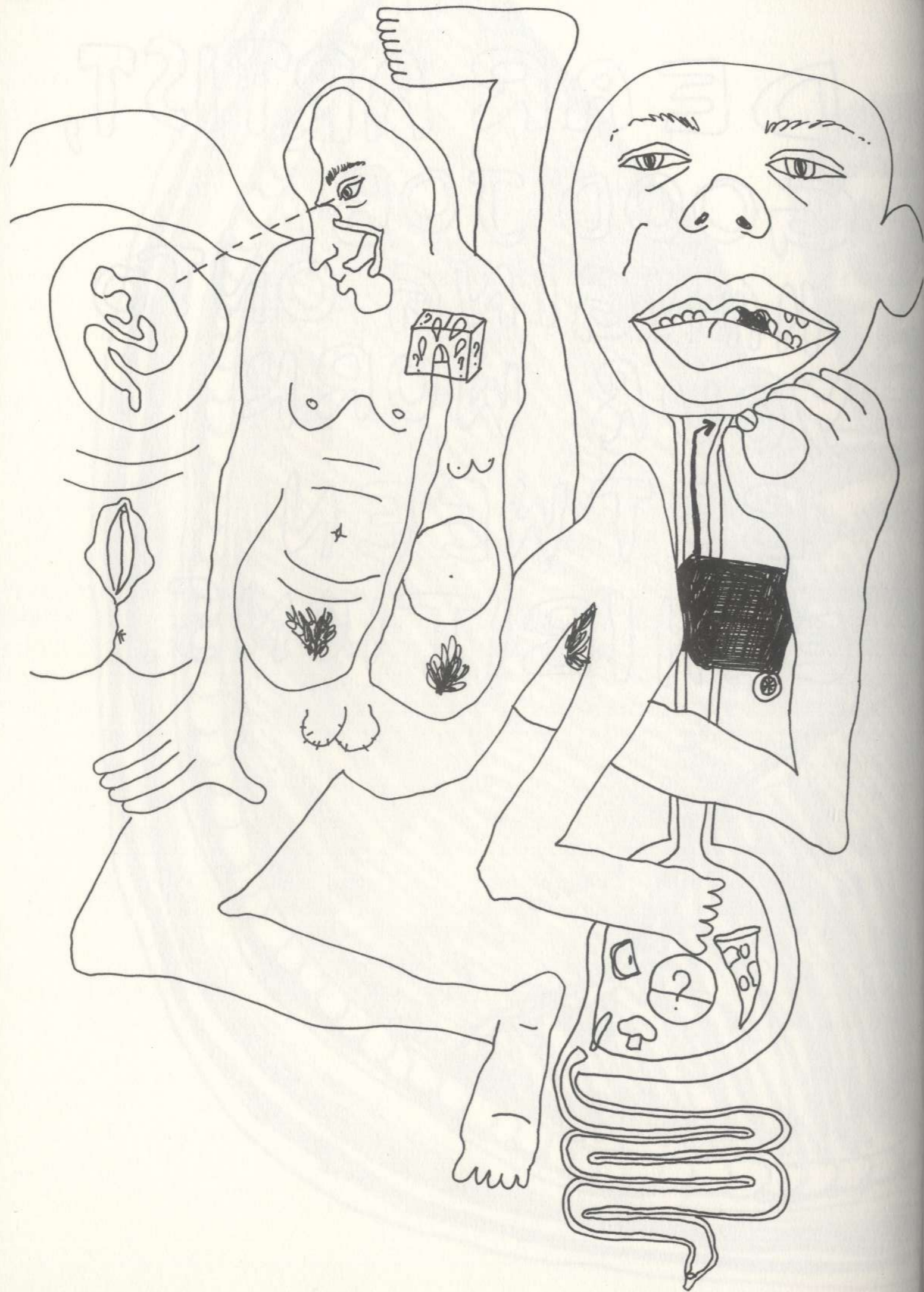








DEAR ARTIST,
GOOD JOB
HANGING ONTO
YOUR WORK
BETWEEN
EXHIBITIONS.



COLOFON

This publication is part of the exhibition:
For Something to Happen by Irene Donatini
From Sept. 12 to Nov. 2, 2025 at RUIS, art space Nijmegen

For Something to Happen is the conclusion of the Act of Presence program, associated with the Blauwe Golven Award. As the first winner of this award in 2024, Irene Donatini received a year-long residency and intensive guidance, with the aim of deepening and presenting her research into stillness and the fertile space after the academy. The award is an annual initiative of the Municipality of Arnhem, Ruis, Omstand and Krachtstroom026.

Curator

Fenne Saedt

Participating artist, imagery, text

Irene Donatini

Graphic design

Studio Corine van der Wal

Printing

riso wiso, Arnhem

For questions or more info, get in touch
info@omstand.nl / info@ruisnijmegen.nl

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omstand

RUIS

KRACHTSTROOM 026

GEMEENTE
Arnhem

This exhibition is part of the exhibition
for something to happen by Irene Donnell
from Sept 12 to Nov 12, 2025 at FUS, an Anne Wilson

For something to happen is the concept of the artist
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practice in the studio and the gallery space and
the gallery. The award is an annual initiative of
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Amsterdam.

Curator
Irene Donnell

Participating artist, image, text
Irene Donnell

Graphic design
Studio China van der Wal

Printing
van der Wal

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