



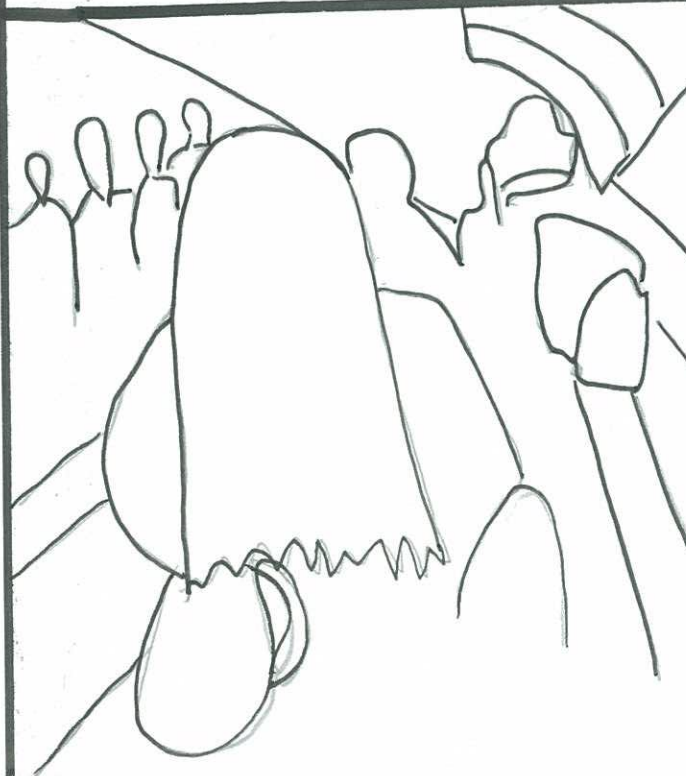
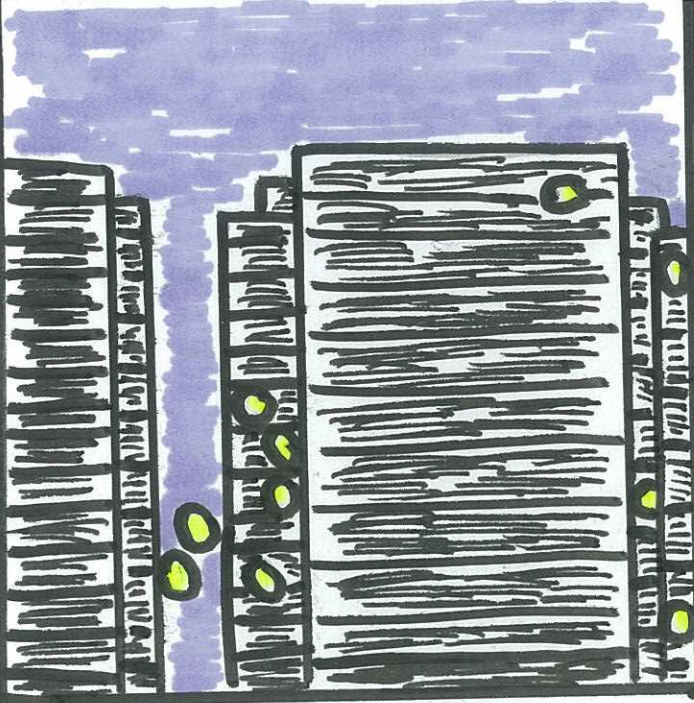
2: CARE

WALK ON ANY STREET, IN ANY PARK,
IN ANY CITY AROUND THE GLOBE, AND
ONE IS STRUCK BY THE CONTINUING
RACIALIZATION OF LABOR, MOST
NOTABLY THE LABOR OF CAREGIVING.




IMMIGRANT LABORERS DO A LOT
MORE THAN CLEAN. THEY ARE ALSO
OUR NANNIES, NURSES AND CAREGIVERS.


IN THE SHORT FILM "LOIN DU 16^{ème}" (FAR FROM THE 16th DISTRICT") IN THE ANTHOLOGY FILM "PARIS JE T'AIME" (2006), A LATIN AMERICAN NANNY WAKES UP IN A DISTANT SUBURB VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING, SINGS A LULLABY IN SPANISH TO HER BABY AS SHE DROPS THEM OFF AT THE DAY CARE CENTER, COMMUTES VIA PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO HER NANNYING JOB IN THAT BOURGEOIS DISTRICT OF PARIS MENTIONED IN THE TITLE, ONLY TO SING THE VERY SAME LULLABY TO THE BABY SHE IS PAID TO CARE FOR.



I shudder to think what happens during transit strikes. The entire domestic labor market (except for the "live-in") must come to a halt as those living in the lower-rent districts depend on public transportation to get them to the higher rent districts where their employers live. Meanwhile, parents, the weak, the sick, the disabled and the elderly must figure out a plan B.



THE LONG JOURNEY FOR CAREGIVERS
FROM POOR DISTRICTS TO RICH
NEIGHBORHOODS IS NOTHING NEW.



IN THE SEGREGATED SOUTH BLACK
WOMEN TOOK LONG BUS RIDES FROM
THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD
OF THEIR WHITE EMPLOYER. THE
CHILDREN OF MIDDLE-CLASS HOUSE-
HOLDS WERE OFTEN RAISED AND
CARED FOR BY BLACK WOMEN WHO
LEFT THEIR OWN FAMILY IN THE
CARE OF OTHERS.

IN 2011, ACTRESSES VIOLA DAVIS AND OCTAVIA SPENCER WERE BOTH NOMINATED FOR ACADEMY AWARDS FOR THEIR PERFORMANCES IN THE MOVIE "THE HELP." PLAYING THE ROLE OF MAIDS IN THE DEEP SOUTH DURING THE 1960s, BOTH DAVIS AND SPENCER ATTRACTED A GREAT DEAL OF ATTENTION AND CRITICISM FOR...

...Playing in a movie that focuses on the white characters.
It wasn't the voices of the maids that were heard.



THIS DESPITE THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA AND THE IMPORTANCE OF RACE AS A THEME IN THE BOOK AND THE MOVIE.

IN THE AMERICAN SOUTH WHERE BLACK WOMEN CARED FOR THE CHILDREN OF WHITE FAMILIES, DID CLOSENESS AND INTIMACY CROSS THE RACIAL DIVIDE? A RARE EXCEPTION TO THE PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL SEPARATION OF RACES IMPOSED BY SEGREGATION LAWS, BLACK DOMESTICS WORKING IN A WHITE FAMILY'S HOME HAD TO OBEY VERY STRICT CODES OF CONDUCT.

HENCE THE CLOSENESS THAT WE SEE BETWEEN MAMMIE AND SCARLETT IN THE 1939 MOVIE "GONE WITH THE WIND" IS MORE MYTH THAN REALITY.



AND NOW FOR A SECTION ON MAMMIES

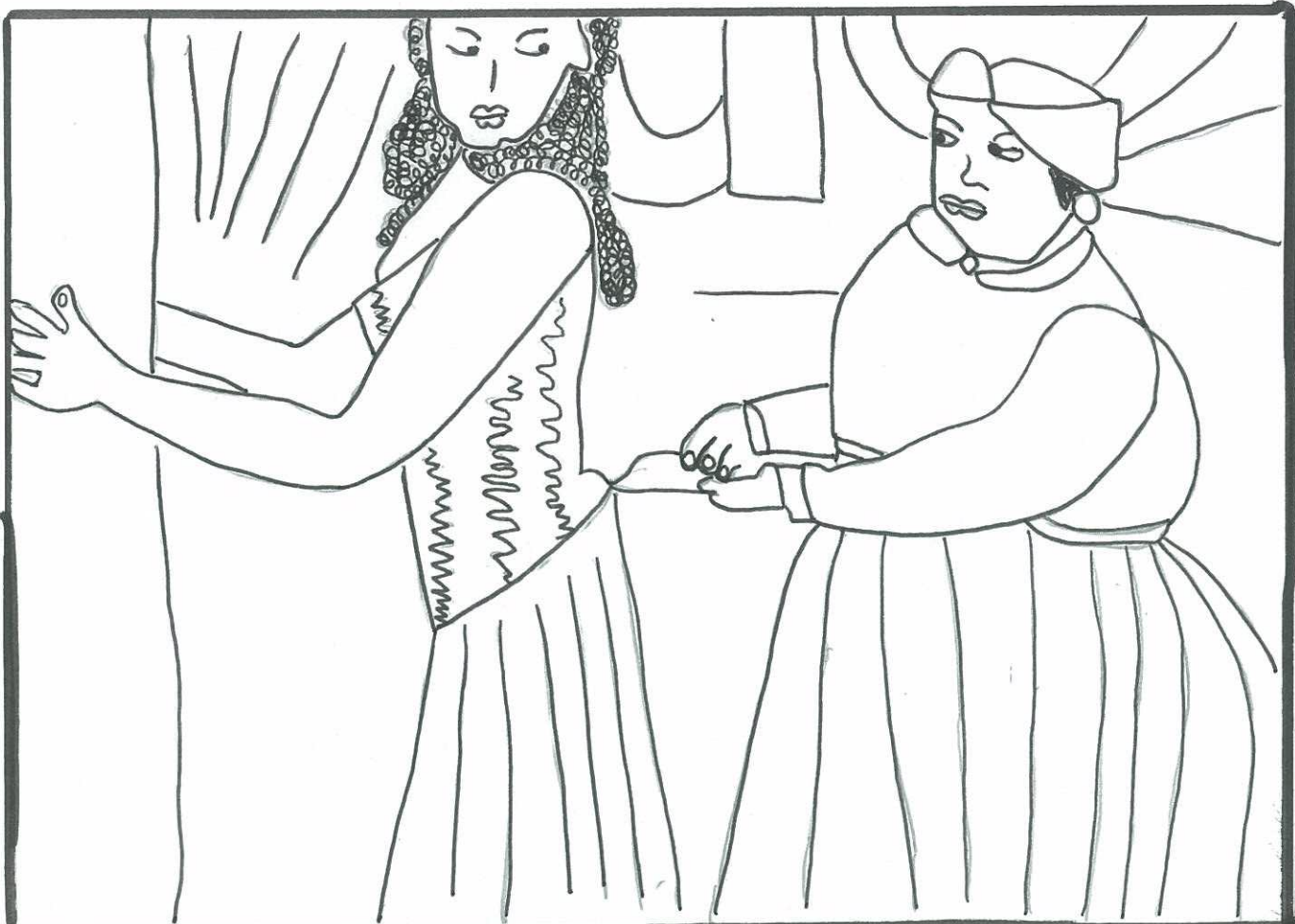
mam·my (ˈmame̩ |

noun (plural mammies)

*informal/ one's mother (especially as a child's word):
he was screaming for his mammy.*

- *offensive (formerly in the southern US) a black nursemaid or nanny in charge of white children.*





THE IMAGINED "MAMMY" NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH THE REAL BLACK DOMESTIC SERVANT, BECAME A CONVENTION OR STEREOTYPE IN RECONSTRUCTION POPULAR CULTURE.

ART HISTORIAN ELIZABETH O'LEARY WRITES THAT...



..Mammy became the most pervasive of the stereotypes of African-American servants.

A mainstay of antebellum and reconstruction novels, her characteristics remained constant: she was fat and sexless, though with large breasts, and she was always covered with a kerchief.

She was fiercely independent but ultimately kind and loyal.

ACTRESS HATTIE MCDANIEL'S OSCAR MADE HISTORY WHEN SHE WAS THE FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN TO WIN THE AWARD, FOR HER ROLE AS MAMMY IN THE MOVIE "GONE WITH THE WIND." SEGREGATION PREVENTED THE ACTRESS FROM ATTENDING THE ATLANTA PREMIERE, AN IRONIC REMINDER THAT EVEN ACTORS WHO PLAYED AN INVISIBLE SOCIAL CLASS WERE ALSO RENDERED INVISIBLE.

AT THE OSCAR CELEBRATION...

"Mc Daniel [...] was escorted, not to the "Gone with the Wind" table - where [director] Selznick sat with [actress] De Havilland and his two Oscar-nominated leads, Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable - but to a small table set against a far wall, where she took a seat with her escort, F. P. Yober, and her white agent, William Meiklejohn. With the hotel's strict no-blacks policy, Selznick had to call in a special favor just to have McDaniel allowed into the building (it was officially integrated by 1959, when the Civil Rights Act outlawed racial discrimination in California)."

-- Seth Abramovitch for Variety

HISTORIAN PATRICIA TURNER WRITES
THAT FICTIONAL MAMMIES WERE
DIFFERENT FROM THEIR SKINNIER,
LIGHTER SKINNED REAL-LIFE COUNTER-
PARTS IN ORDER TO DESEXUALIZE THEM...



... The implicit assumption was this: No reasonable white man would choose a fat, elderly black woman instead of the idealized white woman. The black mammy was portrayed as lacking all sexual and sensual qualities.

The de-eroticization of mammy meant that the white wife — and by extension, the white family — was safe.



"The Liberation of Aunt Jemima," 1972, Betye Saar
Berkeley Art Museum



BACK TO CARE...

ASEXUAL VS. SEXUAL

CARETAKING

✓

✓

✓

READ ON

✓

✓

✓

READ

"COPULATE"
CHAPTER



SO MANY WOMEN CARETAKERS APPEAR IN FICTION, IN PART BECAUSE THIS IS A REFLECTION OF REALITY (HENCE THE TERM "REALIST FICTION"), BECAUSE THEY HELP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PATHOS, AND BECAUSE THEY MAKE FOR PERFECT FOILS TO THEIR IMPERFECT MASTERS.

THE TROPE OF THE "PEARL," THE FEMALE SERVANT WHOSE DEVOTION IS IRREPROACHABLE, IS CIRCULATED AND RECIRCULATED TO THE POINT WHERE SUCH BEHAVIOR BECOMES THE EXPECTED NORM IN REAL HOUSEHOLDS.

(The line between fact and fiction is fast becoming blurred.)

LITERARY CRITIC SUSAN YATES WRITING
ABOUT THE MAID AS "PEARL" OR "PERLE"
EXPLAINS THAT THE...



... expectation of such devotion and dedication on the part of the female servants is grounded historically in the preponderance of women in the servant trade, and the perception that these women were naturally inclined toward service. * Thus the "pearl" caregiver has become an "institution," always expected to behave in exactly the same devoted manner.

* Remember Proudhon in the Introduction?

Classiques Larousse

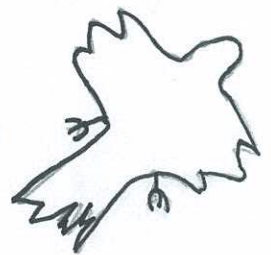
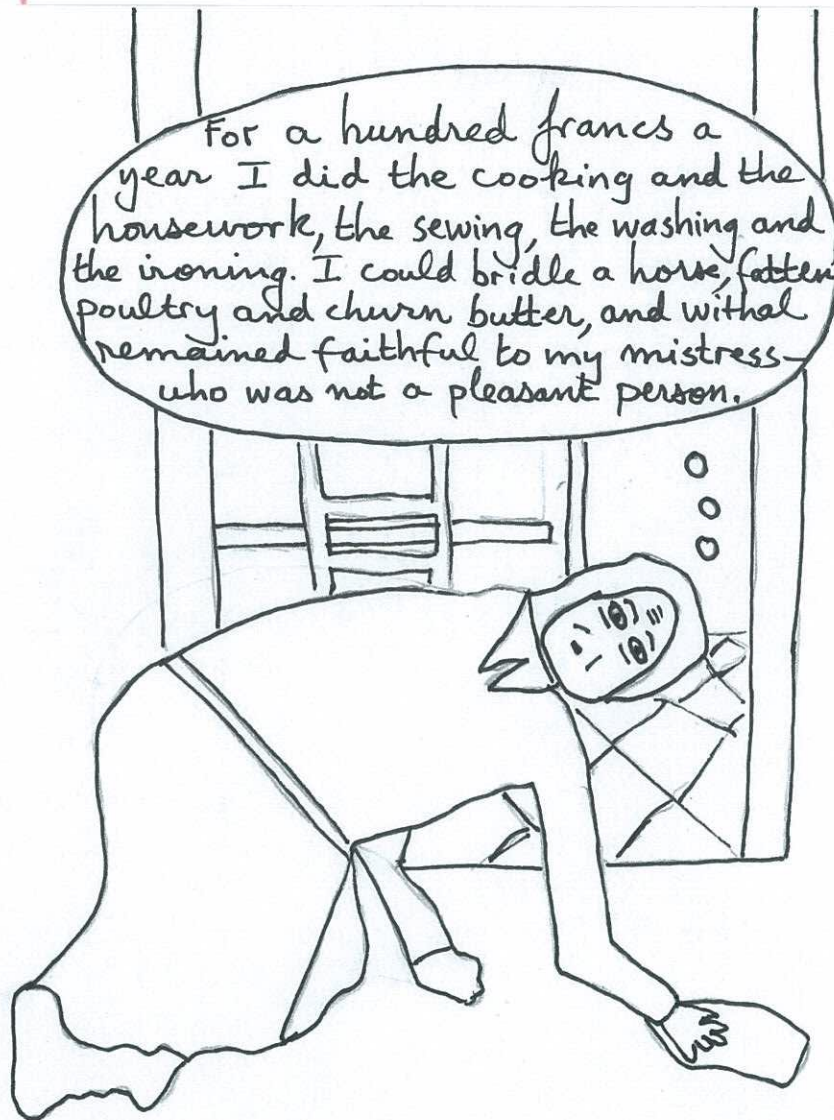
TEXTE INTÉGRAL

Flaubert

Un cœur simple



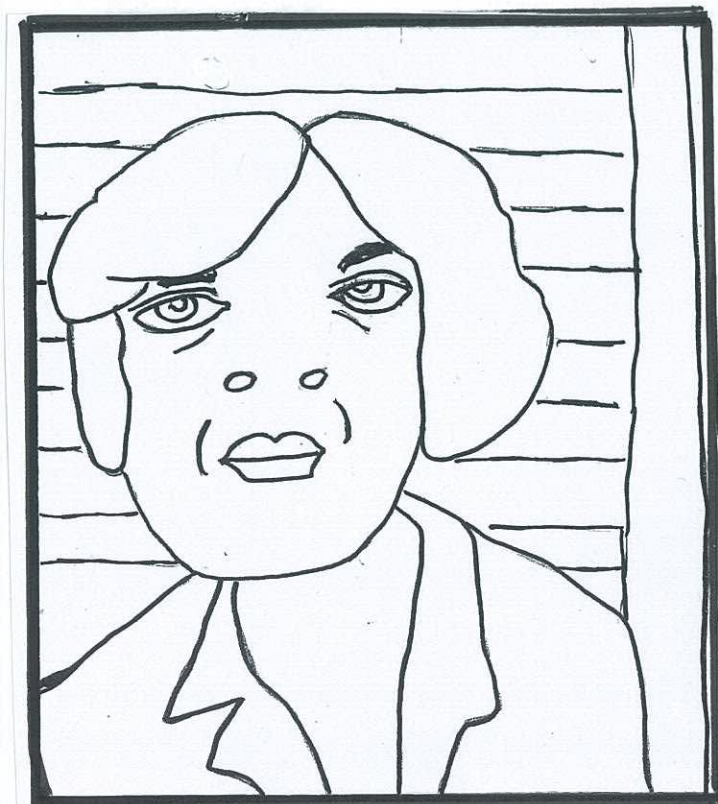
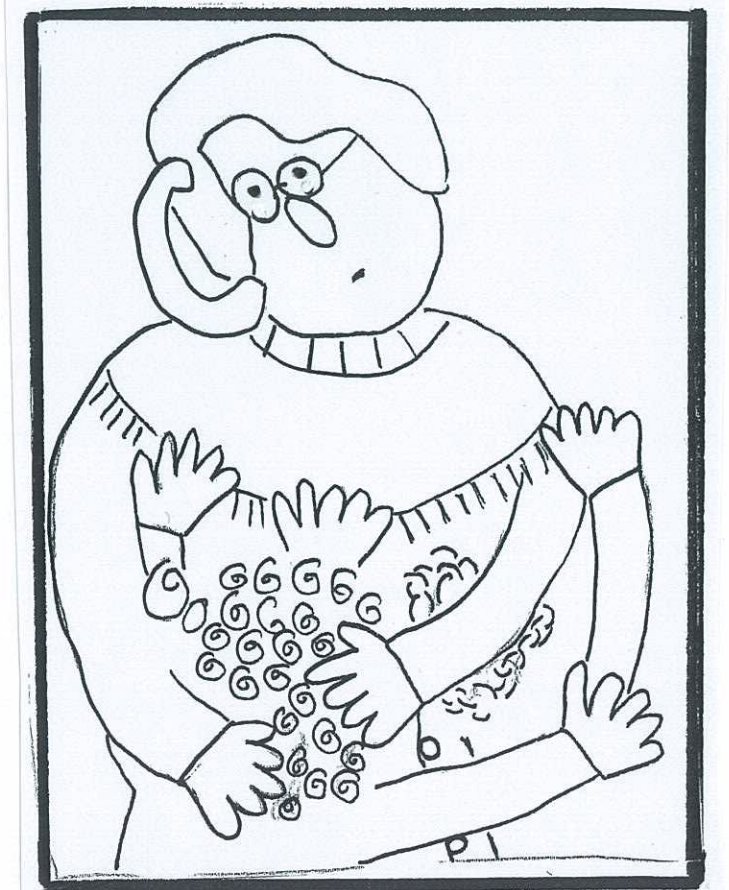
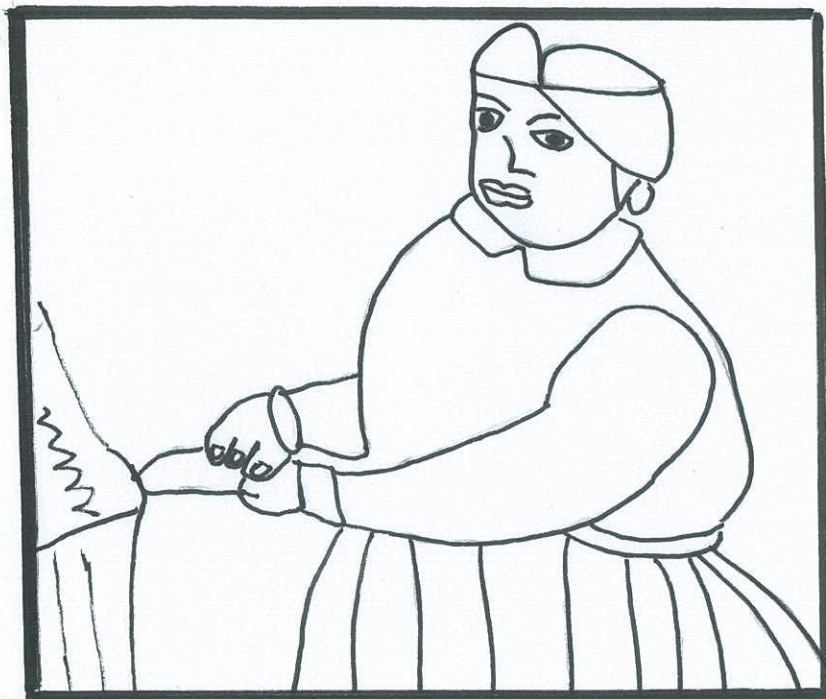
IN "UN CŒUR SIMPLE" ("A SIMPLE HEART"), ONE OF THE SADDEST SHORT STORIES EVER WRITTEN, GUSTAVE FLAUBERT IMAGINES A WOMAN WHO CARES FOR THE SAME FAMILY ALL HER ADULT LIFE, ONLY TO OUTLIVE THEM ALL AND FIND HERSELF LIVING ALONE WITH A STUFFED PARROT.

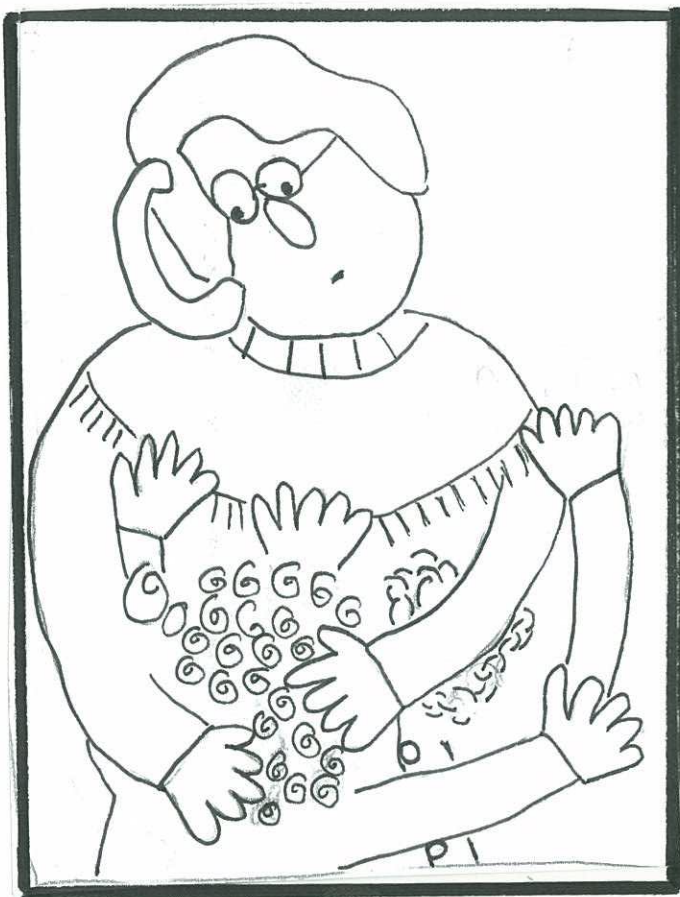


CAREGIVING IS IMAGINED TO BE A LIFE-LONG VOCATION. NO OUTSIDE LIFE, NO FAMILY OF THEIR OWN OR OTHER DESIRES OR AMBITIONS ARE ALLOWED IN THE IMAGINARY LIFE OF THE PEARL.



WHAT HAPPENS TO THE CAREGIVER
WHEN SHE GROWS OLD? WHO WILL
TAKE CARE OF HER?



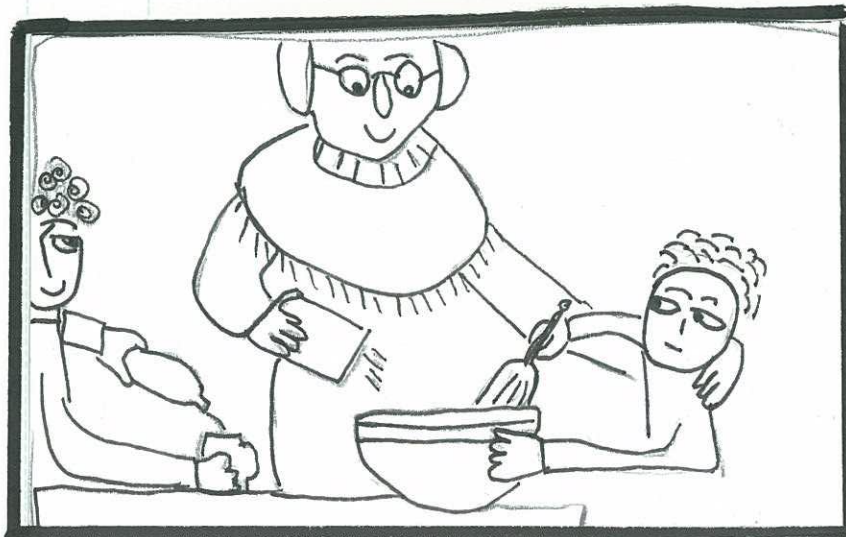


Anhalz, an elderly woman, has worked for the same family for generations, beginning when she was a child and Lebanon was still part of the Ottoman Empire.



The caregiver Anhalz's individual story connects the most directly with the "collective" history of twentieth-century Lebanon.

Because of her old age and her social class, she embodies stasis, by contrast with the diasporic movements of other characters in the memoir.

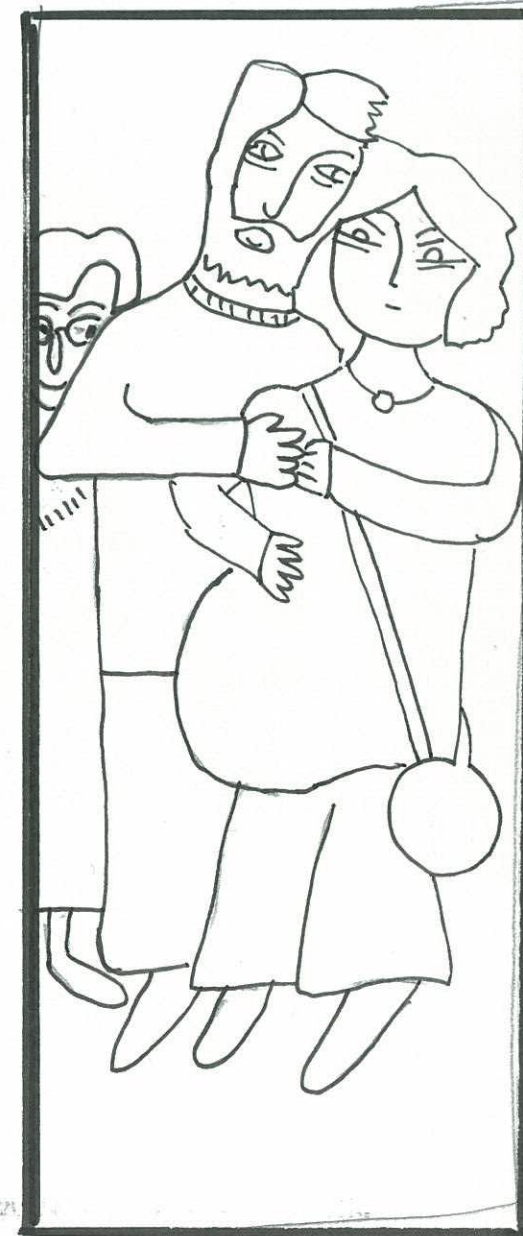


From Zeina Abirached's
A GAME FOR SWALLOWS

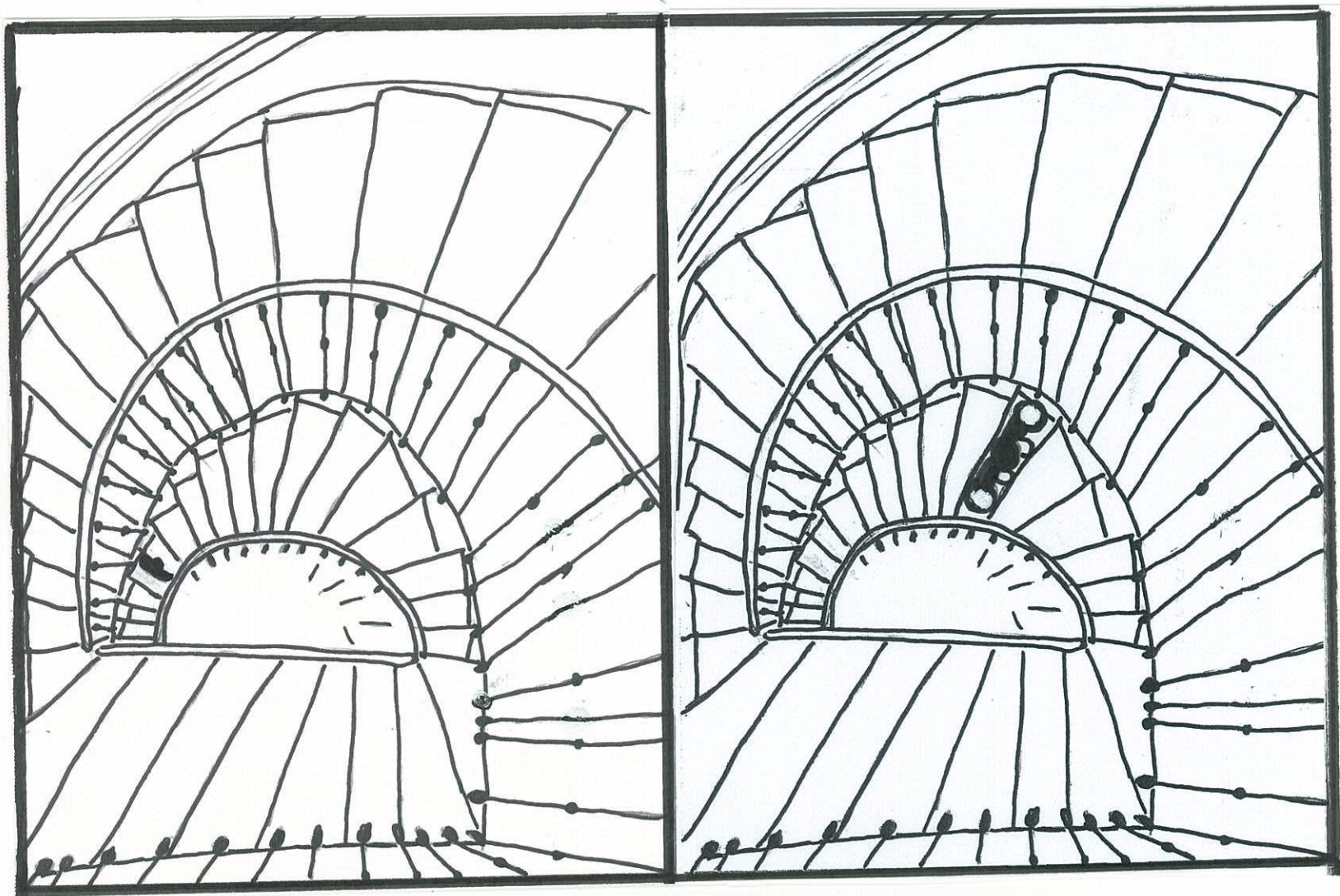


Meanwhile Farah, the last child raised by Anhalz who has remained with her into adulthood, and Farah's husband together contemplate a future...

...that includes movement, with plans to move to Canada where their unborn child (Farah is pregnant) can grow up in a safer place.

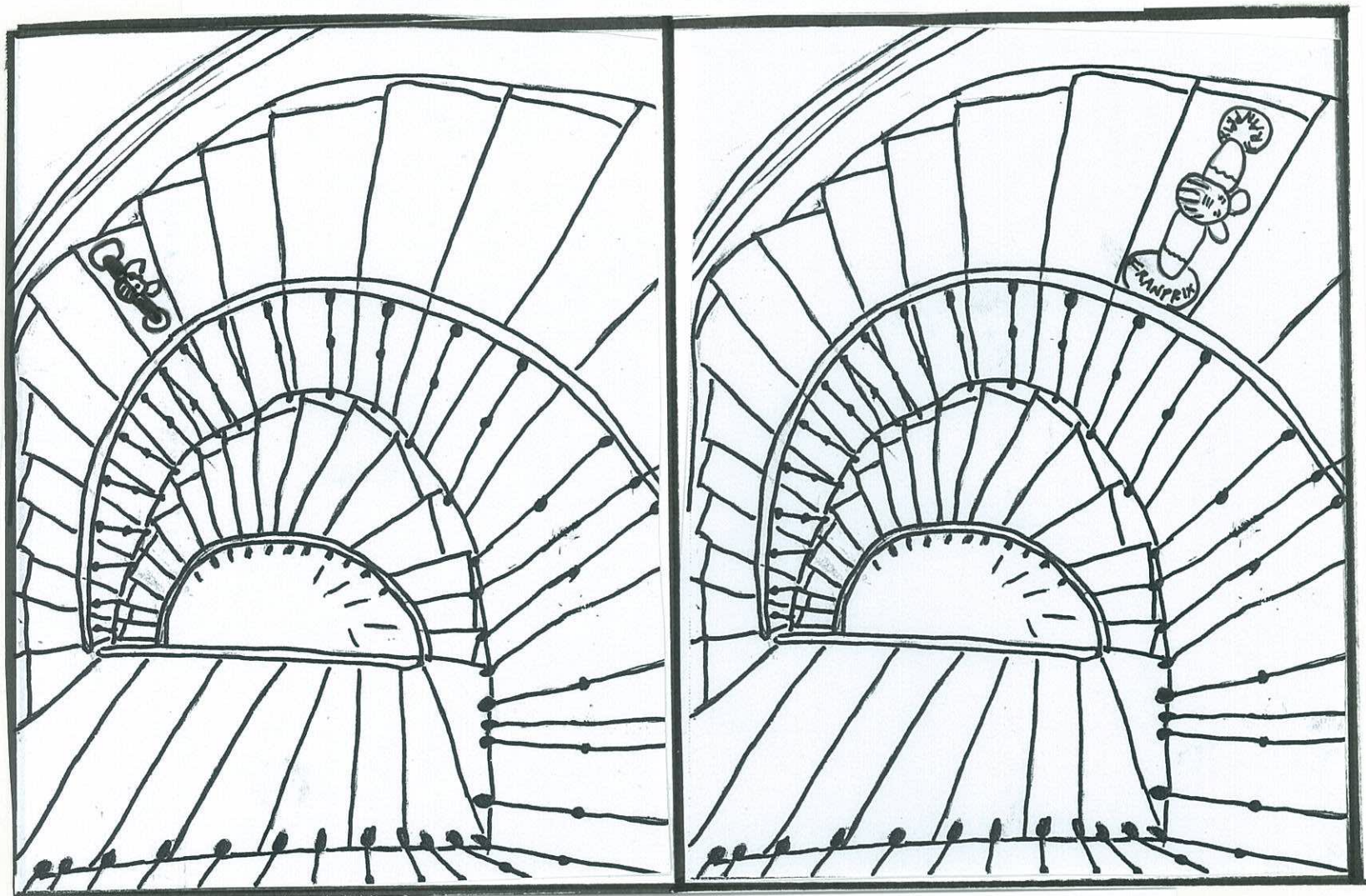


SOME FAMILIES DO ATTEMPT TO
TAKE CARE OF THEIR CAREGIVER
IN HER FINAL YEARS.



In Toulouse, France, I once
Lived on the top floor of a
private townhouse. Across the
landing from my fourth-floor
walk-up there was an open
doorway closed off by a simple
curtain. Behind the curtain
there lived the retired ninety-
year old maid of the family
that owned the townhouse.

She had worked for the same family since the Spanish Civil War when many Spaniards crossed the border into France to escape Franco's Fascist Regime.



It was extraordinary to watch her climb four flights of stairs to reach her simple room.

SOCIETY HAS ITS VALUES COMPLETELY BACKWARDS. WHAT WOULD WE DO WITHOUT OUR CARE WORKERS?

CAREGIVERS SHOULD BE AT THE TOP OF THE PAY SCALE GIVEN THE EXTRAORDINARY SERVICES THAT THEY PERFORM.

SOCIOLOGIST HELMA LUTZ POINTS OUT THAT...



... caregiving or "care work" is not just a form of labor, but also an emotion. To be a good caregiver one has to also care about.

LUTZ POINTS TO THE DIFFICULTY IN CALCULATING THE MONETARY VALUE TO BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE PATIENCE, FLEXIBILITY, ENDURANCE, EMPATHY NOT TO MENTION THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL STRENGTH AND DISCOMFORT ASSOCIATED WITH TAKING CARE OF A PERSON WHO IS PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY NEEDY.



Nyc 2019



AND NOW FOR A ^{very} BRIEF
ASIDE INTO
THE WORLD OF
MALE SERVITUDE
IN INDIA
AND WHAT IT MEANS
FOR
MODERNITY





My name is Umesh.
I work for Ray's
family in the tv series
"Eternally Confused
and Eager for Love."
It's not real life.
But it kind of is.

Unlike the aforemen-
tioned maid servants
with generic names,
my name isn't even
mentioned until
episode #4.

I am first introduced
as an arm that serves
food in an early scene.

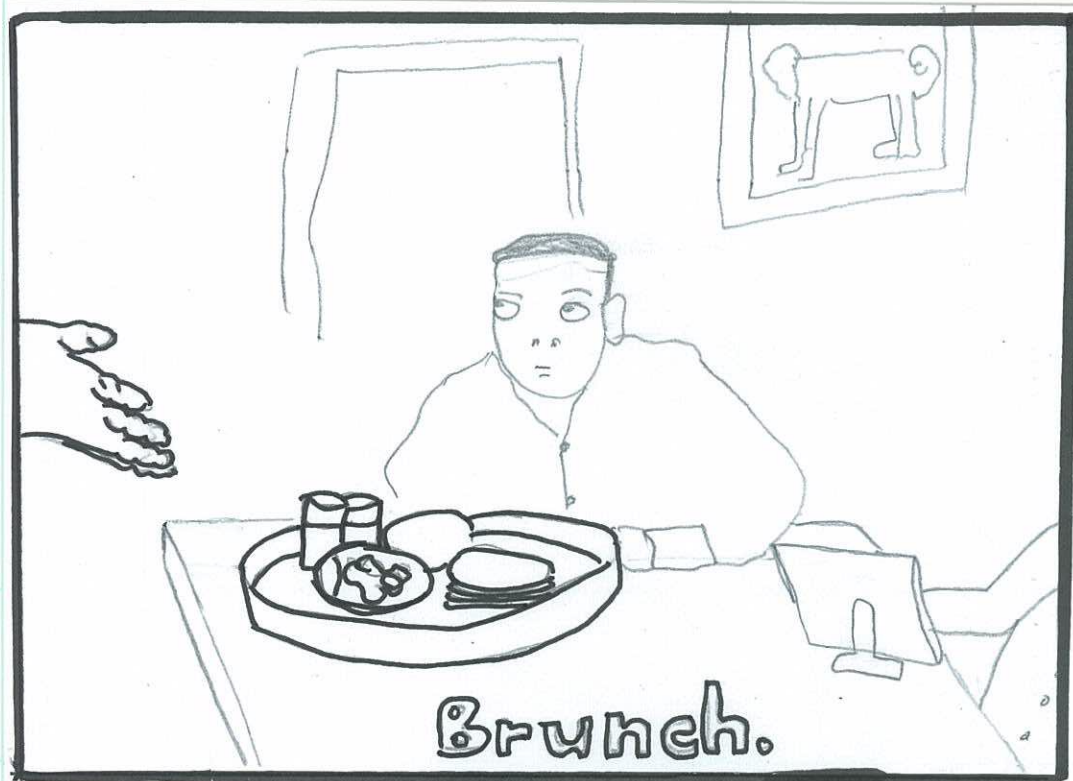
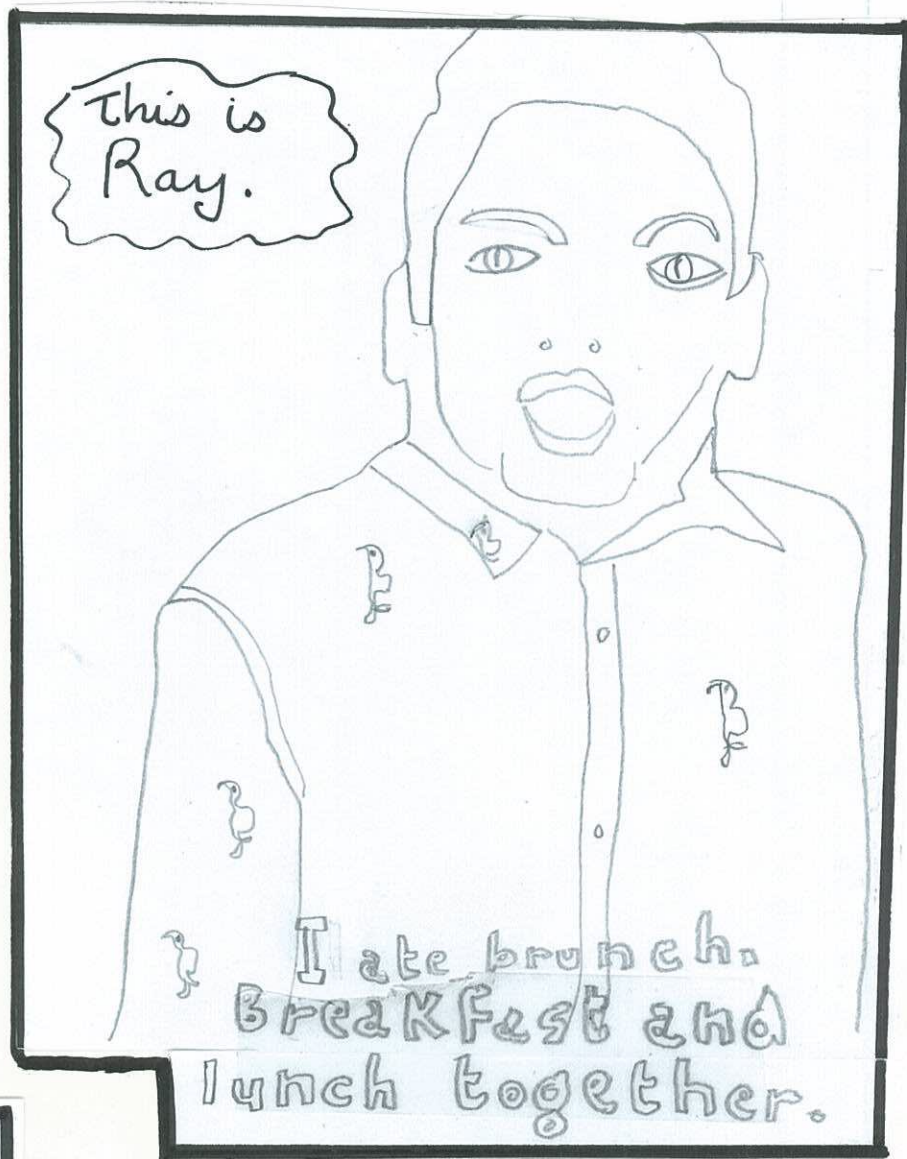


In episode 4, I get to
serve coffee, so at least
you see my face, but the
parents say NOTHING,
not even "thank you."
The master does yell my
name, but it's offensive
because he wants his
coffee which I HAVE
LITERALLY JUST
POURED INTO HIS
MUG AND HE
DIDN'T EVEN
NOTICE.

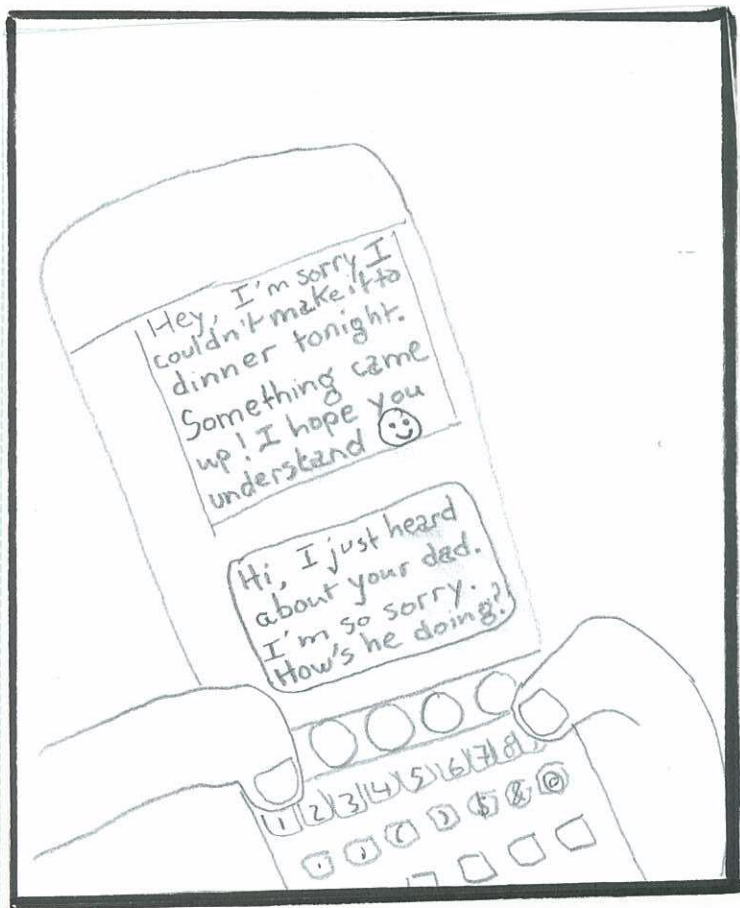


My role as the male servant in a wealthy family in Bombay, India reflects back to the master class their uncritical embrace of Western modernity.

These people eat out a lot so my job ^{which} includes cooking might be in danger, or at least rivaled by the kind of service that is offered in all these restaurants, bars, night clubs, not to mention the kinds of foods and drinks that they consume.



Like brunch.



These people also drink a lot of alcohol, curse and text a lot. And they sleep in enormous beds. Yet they are not happy.



They think about sex a lot. A LOT. It's like a constant mating game. I am risking my job by showing Ray where his dad keeps his condoms.

