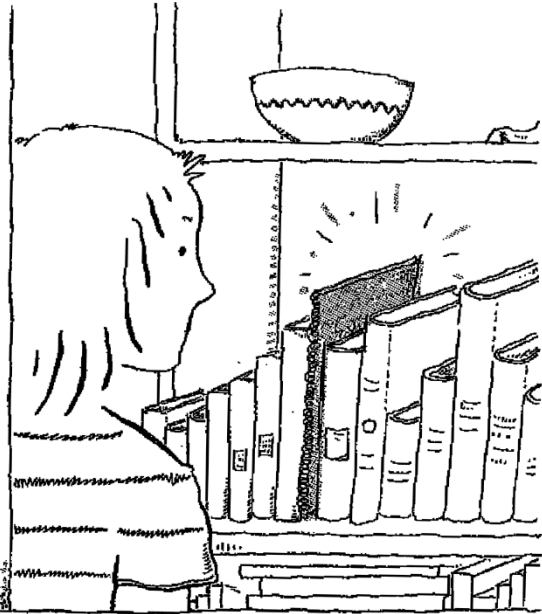


This

Story began for me on a visit  
to my grandparents' apartment  
when I was a kid.



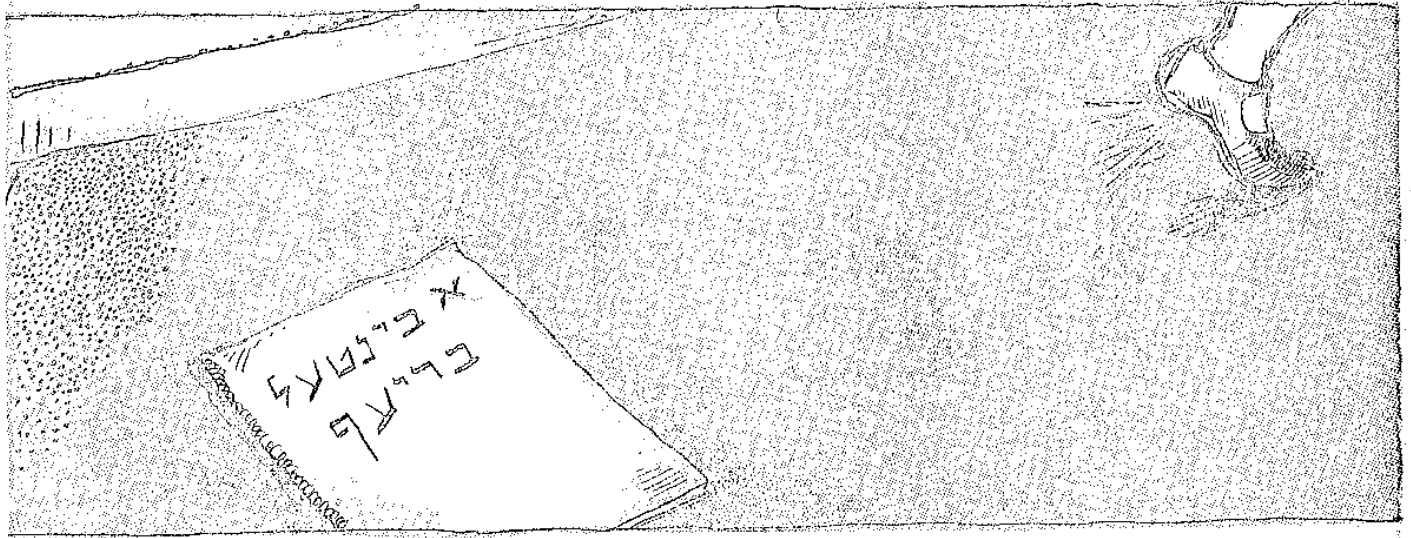
My grandparents kept their home very neat. The only worn-out thing they owned was an old, yellow notebook I found on a shelf that day.



I had time to notice that it was pasted full of newspaper clippings in a foreign language—before something very unusual happened.

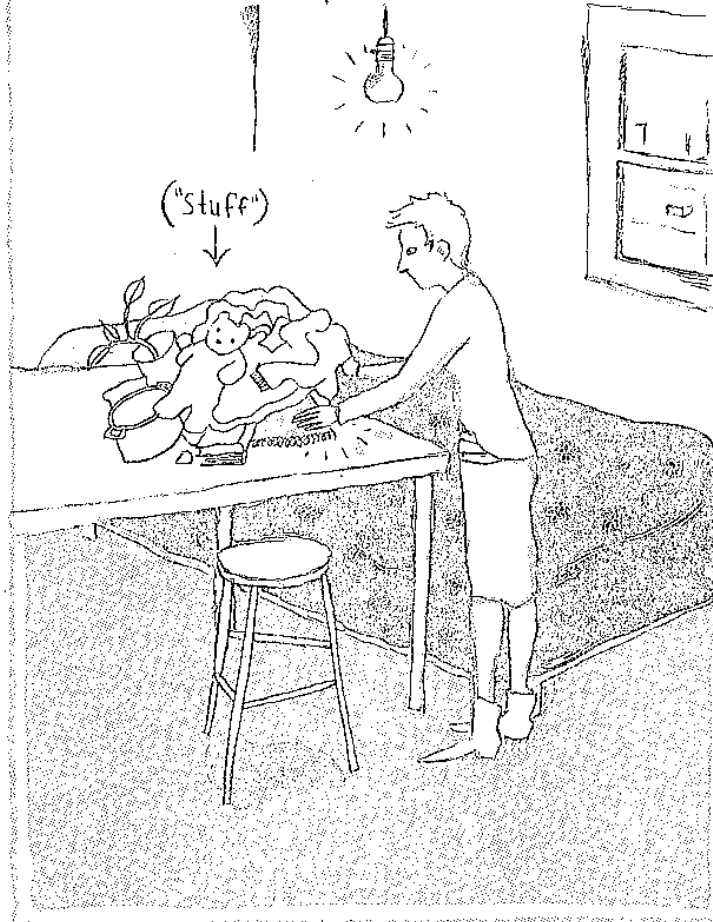


And that was the last I saw of the Bintel Brief for a long time.



Many years later, I was living in New York. One day, I received a mysterious package in the mail. It was from my grandmother. When I opened it, there was the notebook!

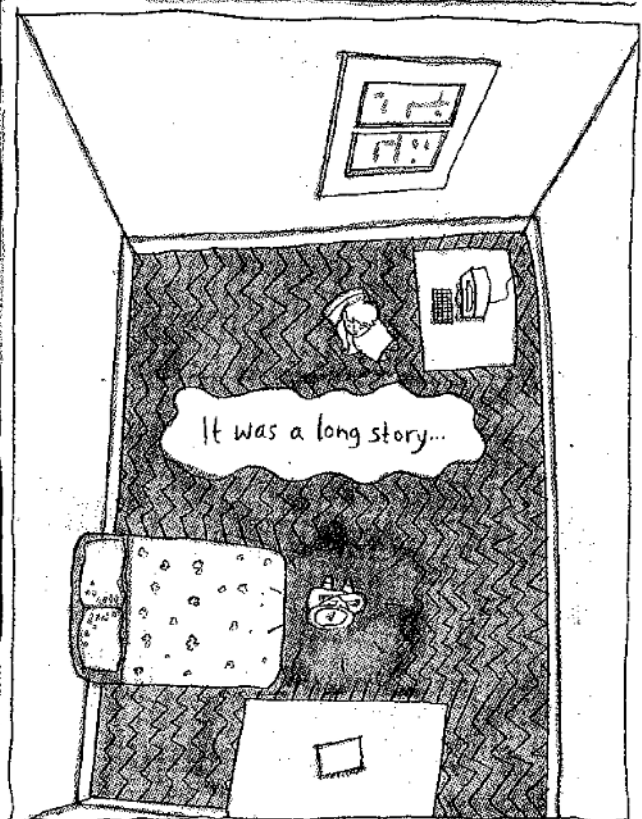
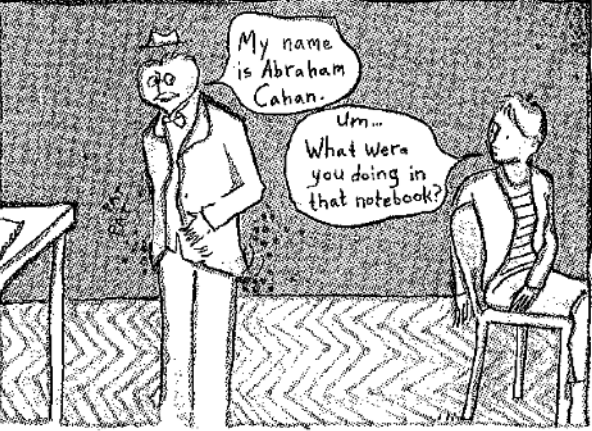
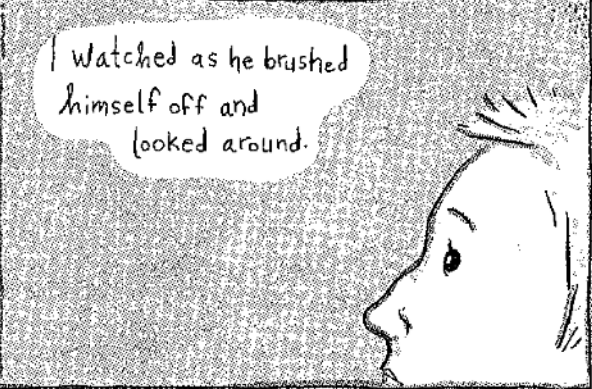
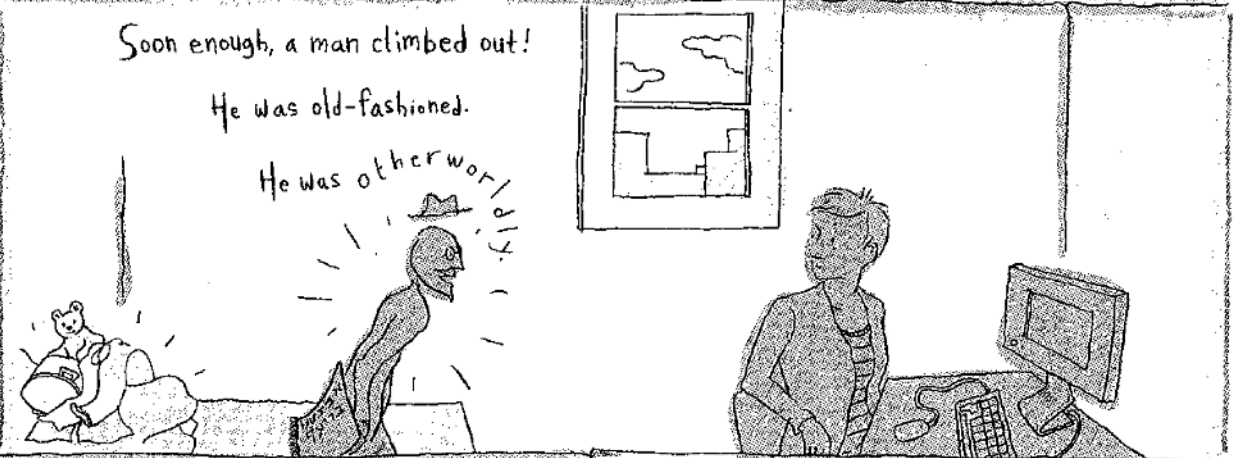
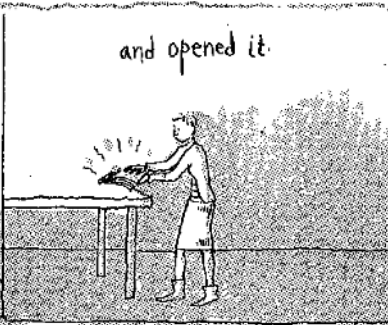
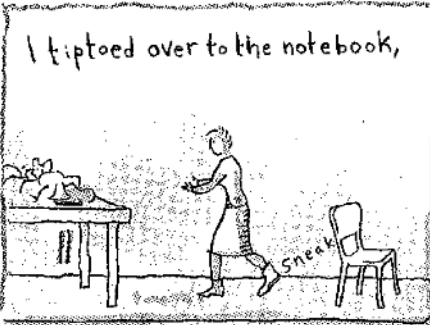
I hid it under a pile of stuff.



Even so, it was hard to concentrate knowing that the strange, portentous object was nearby.

Finally, I couldn't take the tension anymore.





"I was," he said, "the editor of a small socialist Yiddish newspaper called Der Forverts.\*

\*The Forward

The year was 1906.

Within the next few years, the paper was to become very big, but at that time we still ran it from a dingy office on Duane Street, and I had to use all my wits to keep it out of the hands of pedants.

We still needed something for the back page...

How about a  
palindrome in  
High German?

Or a dry exposé of  
how the factory  
workers are mis-  
treated?

Or a rambling  
Marxian rant?

Well...

Our readers do not speak High German. And they already know how hard life is in the factories — because they are factory workers. As for Marxism: this is a newspaper, not a Snoozepaper!

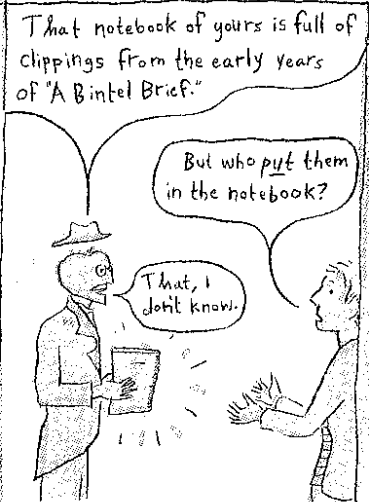
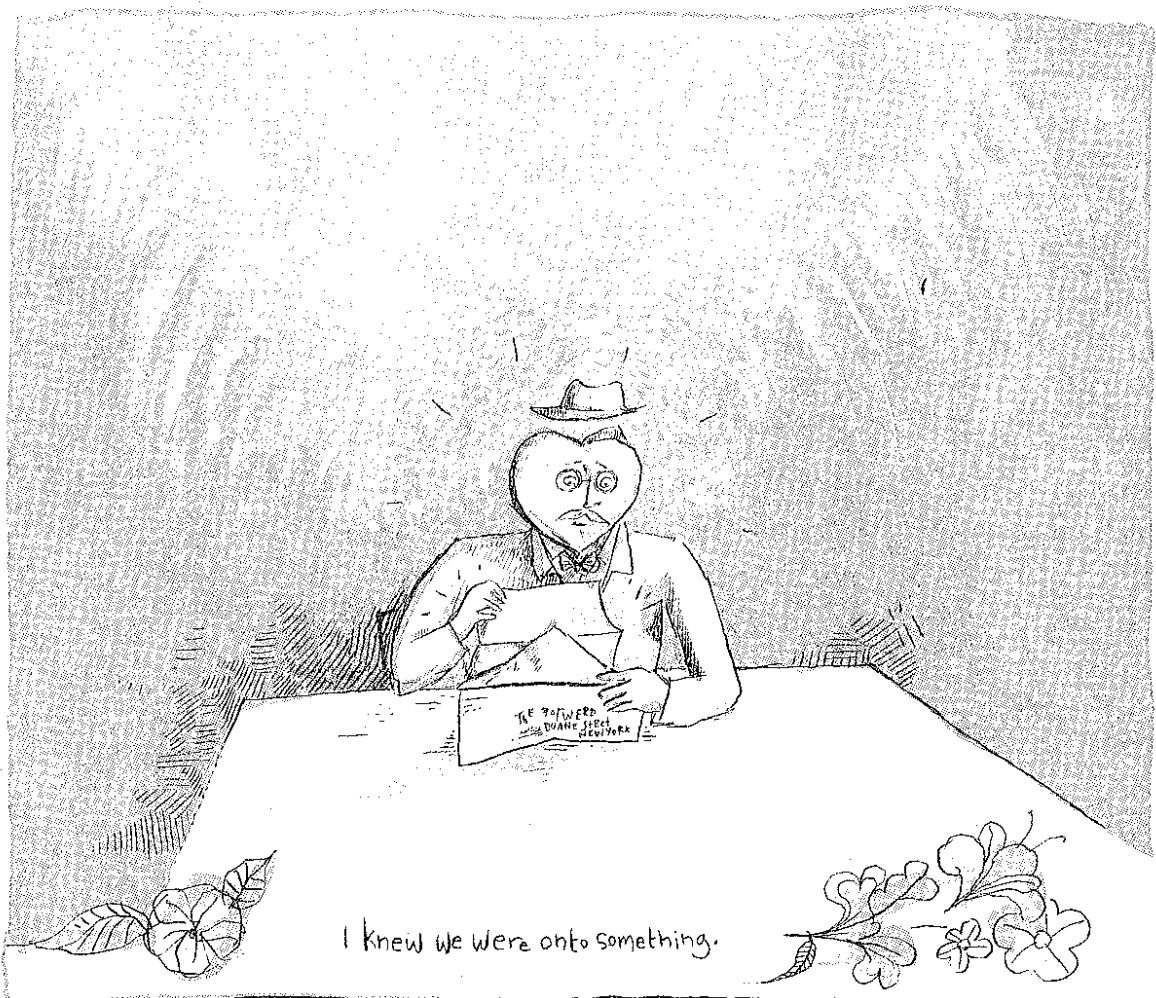
JEEZ!

Excuse me,  
if I might  
interrupt.

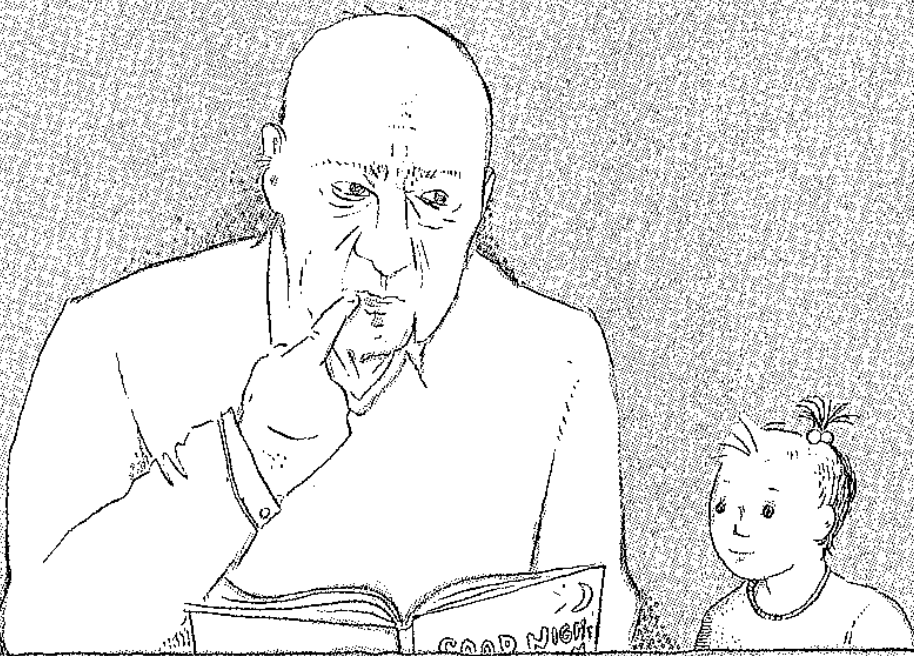
A letter from one of your readers.  
I don't know what we can use  
it for. Maybe I should throw  
it out?

When I opened  
the letter...

No-let  
me see  
it.



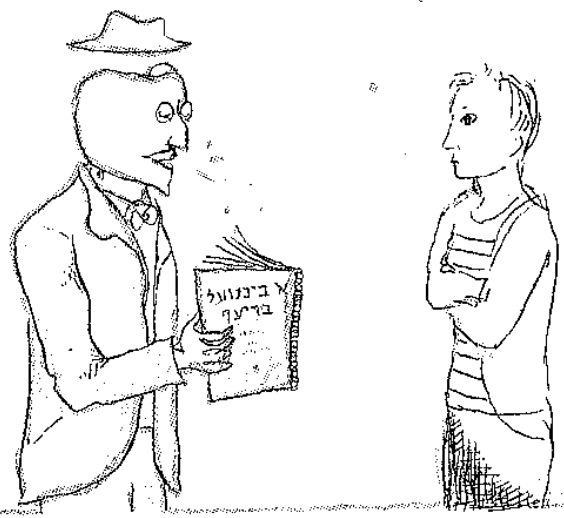
of my grandpa.



flipped through the notebook,



and started to read.



6

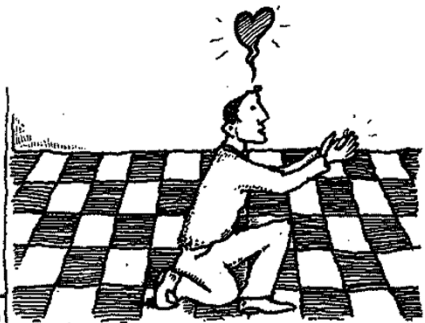
THE BRIDEGROOM



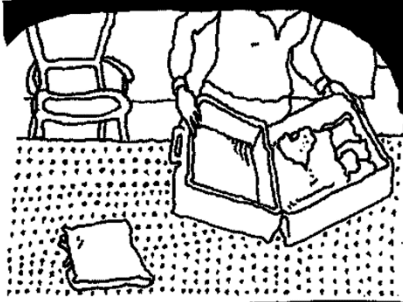
I WAS BORN IN AMERICA AND MY PARENTS GAVE ME A GOOD EDUCATION.



I STUDIED YIDDISH AND HEBREW AND GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL WITH HONORS. AFTER THAT, I TOOK A COURSE IN BOOKKEEPING AND GOT A GOOD JOB.



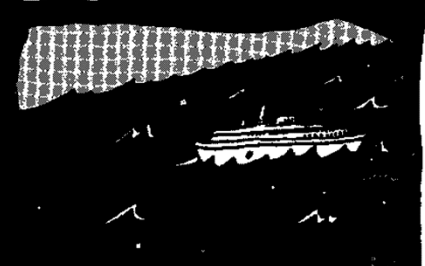
I HAD MANY FRIENDS, AND SEVERAL BOYS PROPOSED TO ME. BUT I WASN'T READY.



INSTEAD, I WENT TO VISIT MY PARENTS' HOMETOWN IN RUSSIAN POLAND.



MY MOTHER'S YOUNGER SISTER WAS GETTING MARRIED. MY PARENTS COULDN'T GO TO THE WEDDING, SO THEY SENT ME INSTEAD.



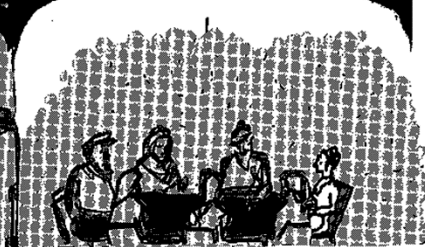
I SAILED ON A FIRST-CLASS TICKET.



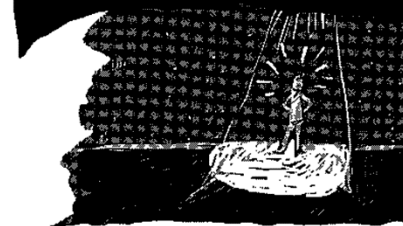
MY AUNT, MY UNCLE AND MY GRANDMOTHER WELCOMED ME WITH TEARS OF JOY. I STAYED WITH THEM SIX MONTHS AND LACKED FOR NOTHING.



IT WAS LIVELY IN THE TOWN.



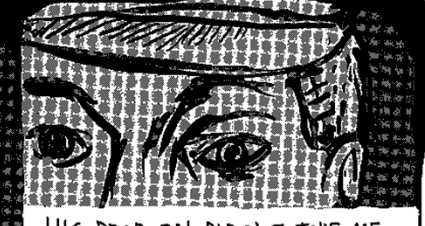
I WAS ACCEPTED WARMLY INTO ALL THE ORGANIZATIONS AND CLUBS. AFTER ALL, I WAS A CITIZEN OF THE "GOLDEN LAND."



AMONG THE SOCIAL LEADERS OF THE COMMUNITY WAS AN INTELLIGENT YOUNG MAN, A FRIEND OF MY UNCLE'S WHO TOOK ME TO VARIOUS GATHERINGS.



ONE DAY, HE DECLARED HIS LOVE FOR ME IN A BEAUTIFUL LETTER.



HIS PROPOSAL DID NOT TAKE ME ENTIRELY BY SURPRISE. STILL, IT WORRIED ME. HE WAS NOT THE MAN I HAD IMAGINED FOR MYSELF.





MY PARENTS HEARD ABOUT IT, AND I COULD TELL THEY WERE DELIGHTED.



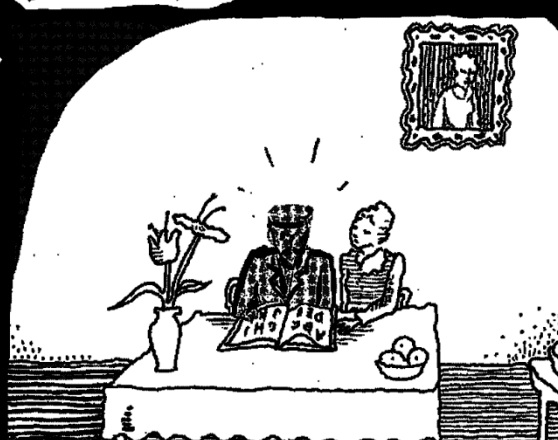
HE WAS HANDSOME, CLEVER, REFINED AND A BRILLIANT TALKER BUT I HESITATED TO GIVE HIM AN ANSWER.



GRADUALLY, THOUGH, OUR DIFFERENCES BEGAN TO SEEM TRIVIAL. I WROTE TO MY PARENTS AND WE BECAME ENGAGED.



A FEW MONTHS LATER, I BROUGHT HIM BACK TO AMERICA WITH ME. MY PARENTS EMBRACED HIM AS THEIR OWN SON.



HE SET ABOUT LEARNING ENGLISH.



THEN, I INTRODUCED HIM TO MY FRIENDS...



"THIS GREENHORN IS YOUR FIANCÉ?"  
THEY ASKED.



I TOLD THEM WHAT A BIG ROLE HE  
PLAYED IN HIS TOWN, HOW EVERY-  
ONE RESPECTED HIM. BUT THEY  
LOOKED AT ME LIKE I WAS CRAZY.



AT FIRST I THOUGHT, LET THEM LAUGH.  
EVENTUALLY THEY'LL CHANGE THEIR  
TUNE. BUT THEY DIDN'T.



IN TIME, I WAS AFFECTED BY  
THEIR TALK. I BEGAN TO THINK, LIKE  
THEM, THAT I WAS BETROTHED TO SOME  
"PRIMITIVE."



IN SHORT, MY LOVE FOR HIM IS  
COOLING OFF GRADUALLY.  
I'M SUFFERING TERRIBLY  
BECAUSE MY FEELINGS  
FOR HIM ARE CHANGING.  
IN EUROPE,  
HE LOOKED  
LIKE PRINCE  
CHARMING.

BUT HERE,

HE'S A BUMPKIN  
FROM THE OLD COUNTRY.

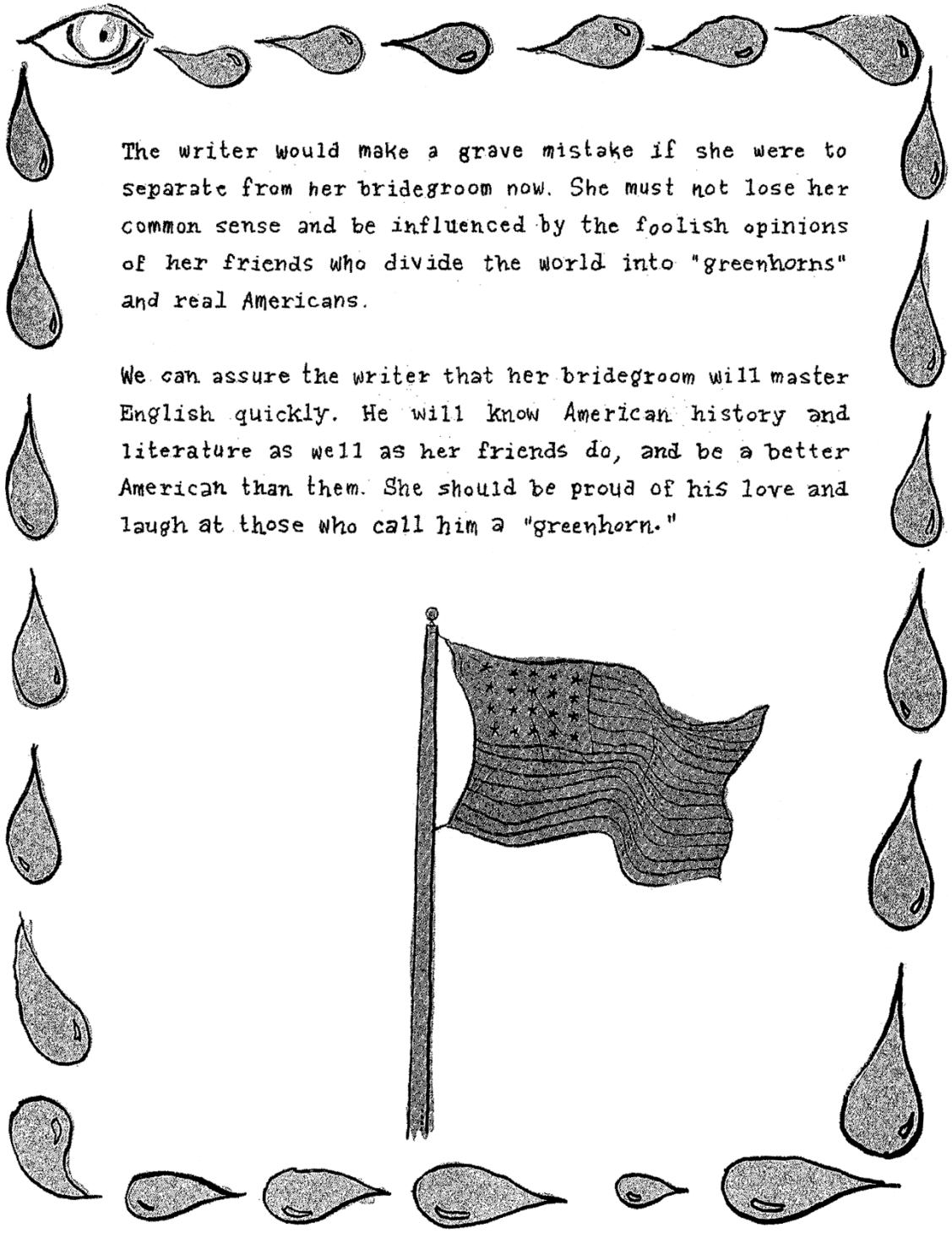
I DON'T HAVE THE COURAGE  
TO BREAK OFF MY ENGAGEMENT.

I CAN'T EVEN TALK TO MY PARENTS ABOUT IT.

HE STILL LOVES ME WITH ALL HIS HEART  
AND I JUST DON'T KNOW  
WHAT TO DO.

RESPECTFULLY, A WORRIED READER





The writer would make a grave mistake if she were to separate from her bridegroom now. She must not lose her common sense and be influenced by the foolish opinions of her friends who divide the world into "greenhorns" and real Americans.

We can assure the writer that her bridegroom will master English quickly. He will know American history and literature as well as her friends do, and be a better American than them. She should be proud of his love and laugh at those who call him a "greenhorn."

