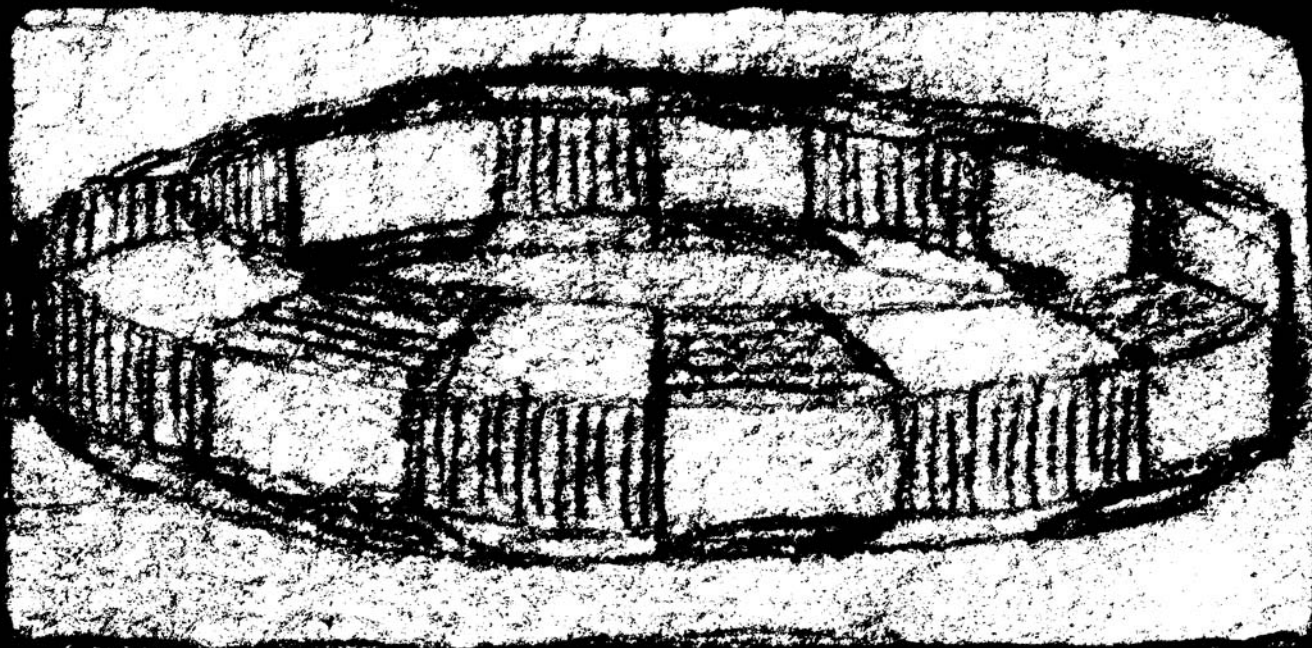


turn over



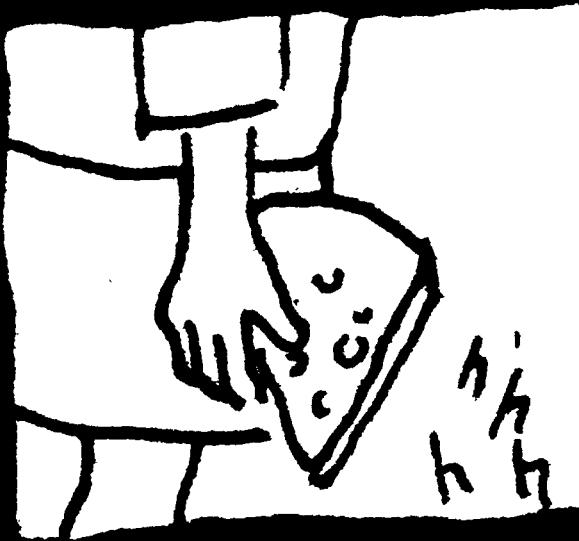
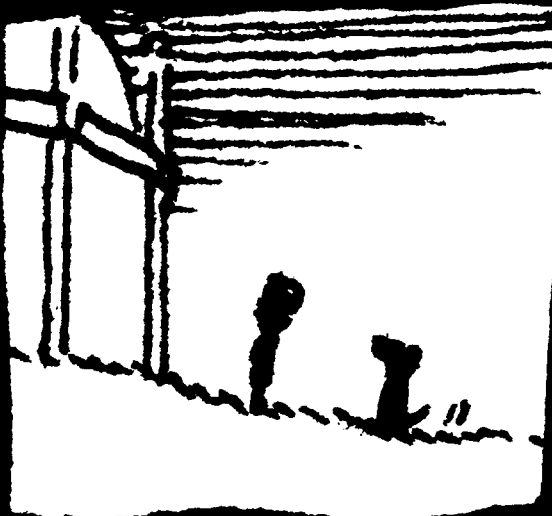
**PAOLO UCCELLO** IMAGINARY LIFE

by Giacomo Nanni

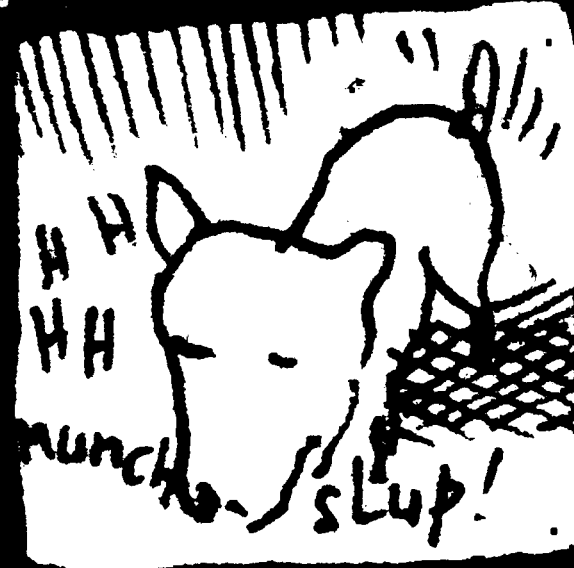


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He worked in a cloister in San Miniato, out of Florence



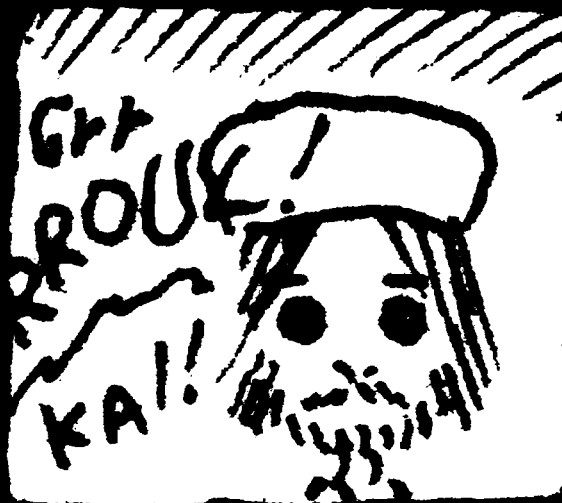
He painted the lives of hermit Saints



His fields were blue, the cities coloured in red,  
the buildings up front were made of coloured stones.

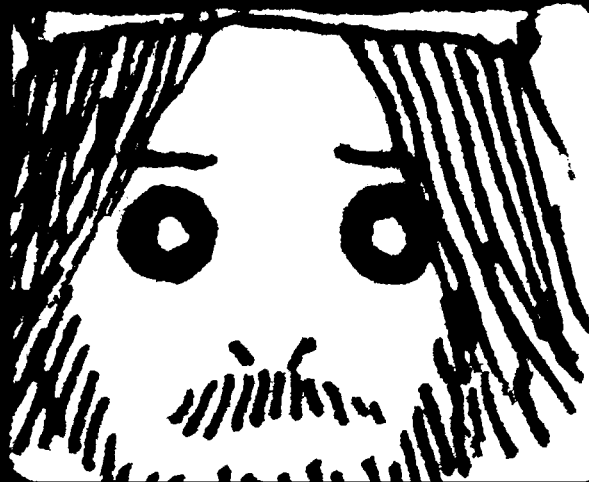
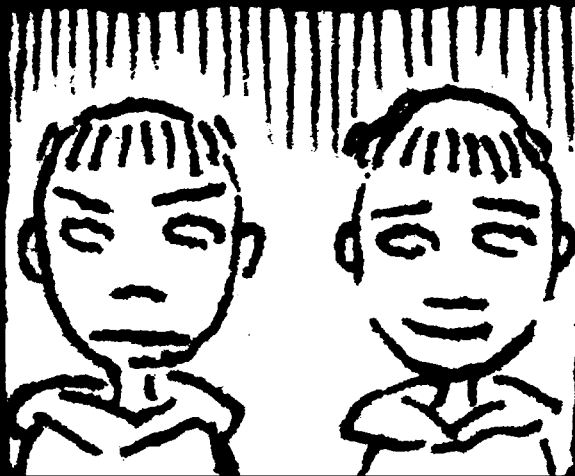


While he was working at these frescos,  
the Abbot would not give him anything to eat other than cheese.

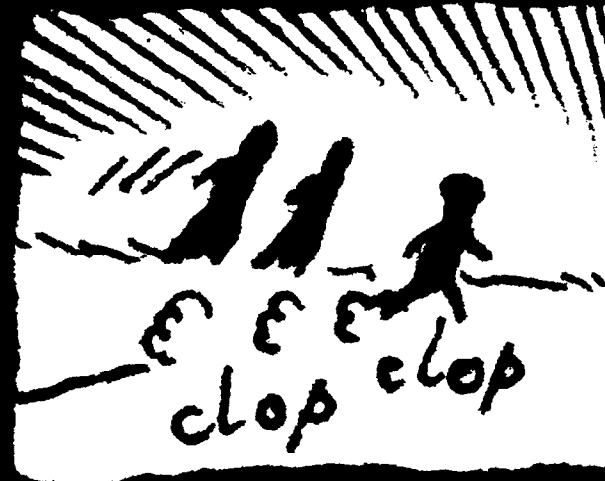


Paolo Uccello was so shy, that rather than telling him he couldn't  
stand eating cheese anymore, he just wouldn't show up anymore.

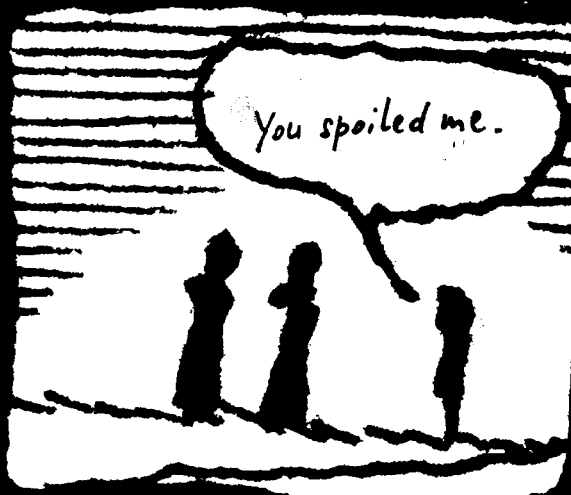
When the friars went after looking for him at home,  
he didn't answer.

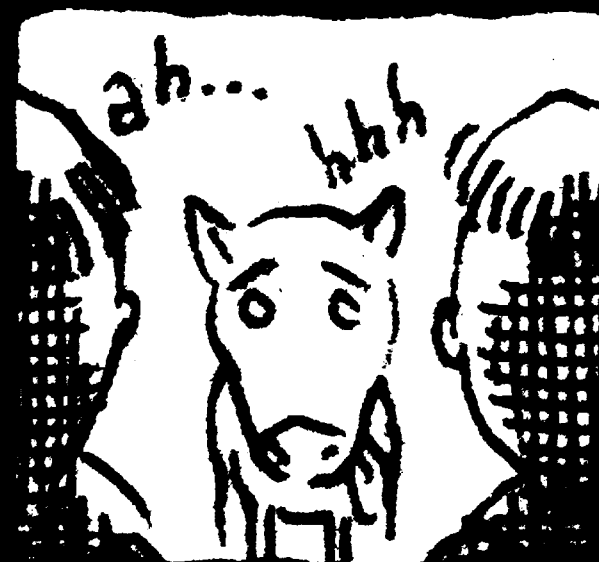
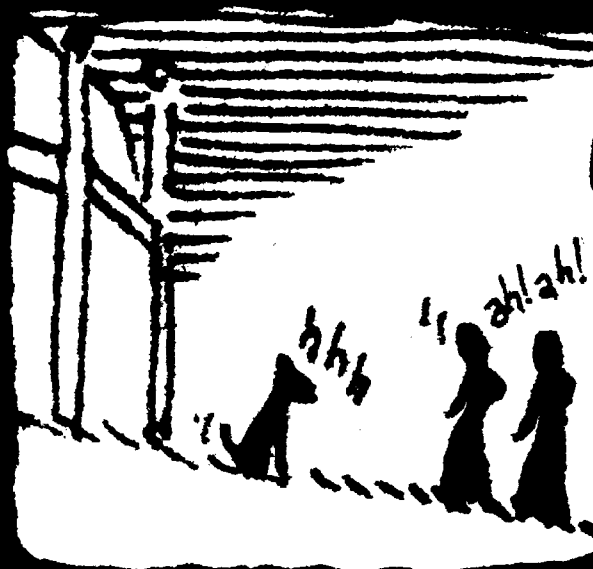


And if he happened to meet on the way any friar of that order,  
he would start running and get away.



One day, two friars, younger than him, managed to reach him and asked him the reason why he had never come back to the cloister and he kept running away from the friars when he met them.



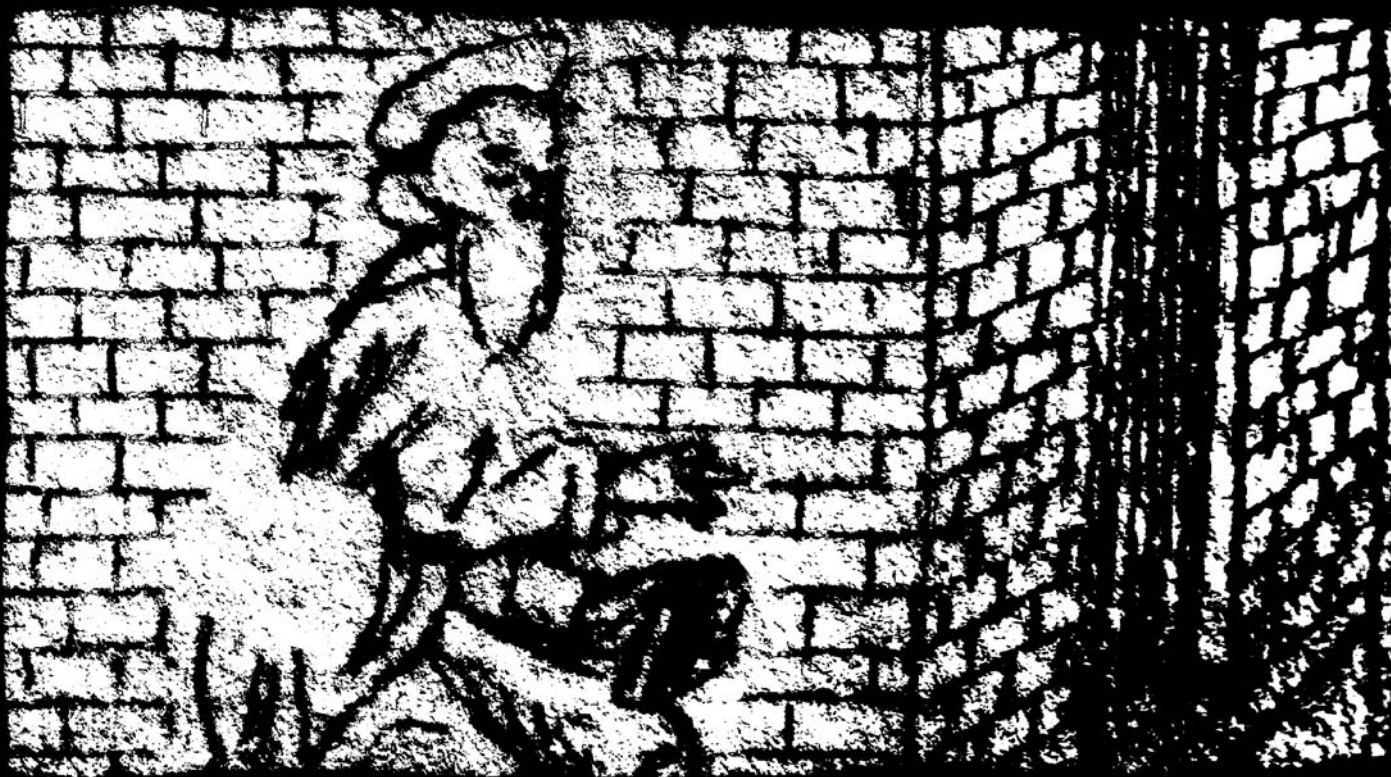


The friars went away laughing and told everything to the Abbot, who begged Paolo to come back and work, promising in exchange something more nourishing to eat.



Later on, someone  
wrote about those  
frescos: "These are  
things not so valuable."





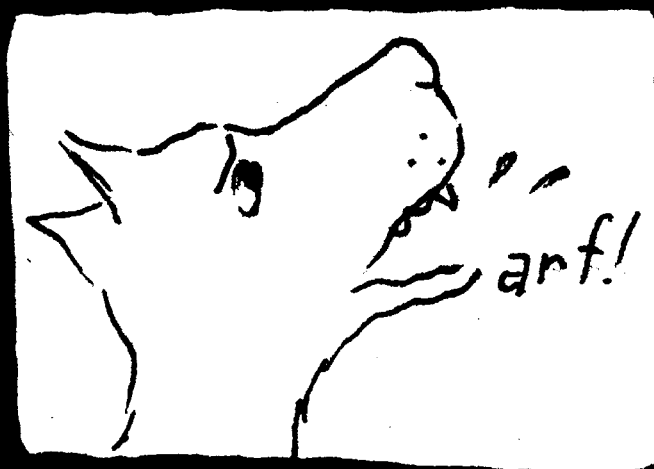
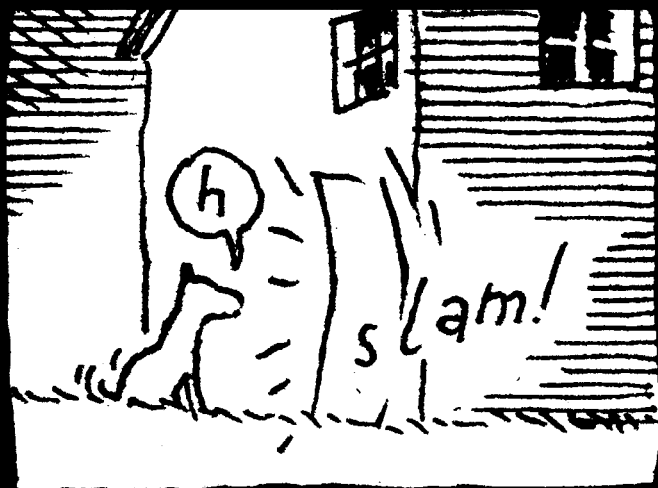
*And a year after Paolo died, new paintings were made,  
on the same wall, overlapped.*

To tell the truth his name was Paolo di Dono, but people from Florence called him Uccelli<sup>(2)</sup>, or Paolo Uccelli, because lot of birds filled his house.

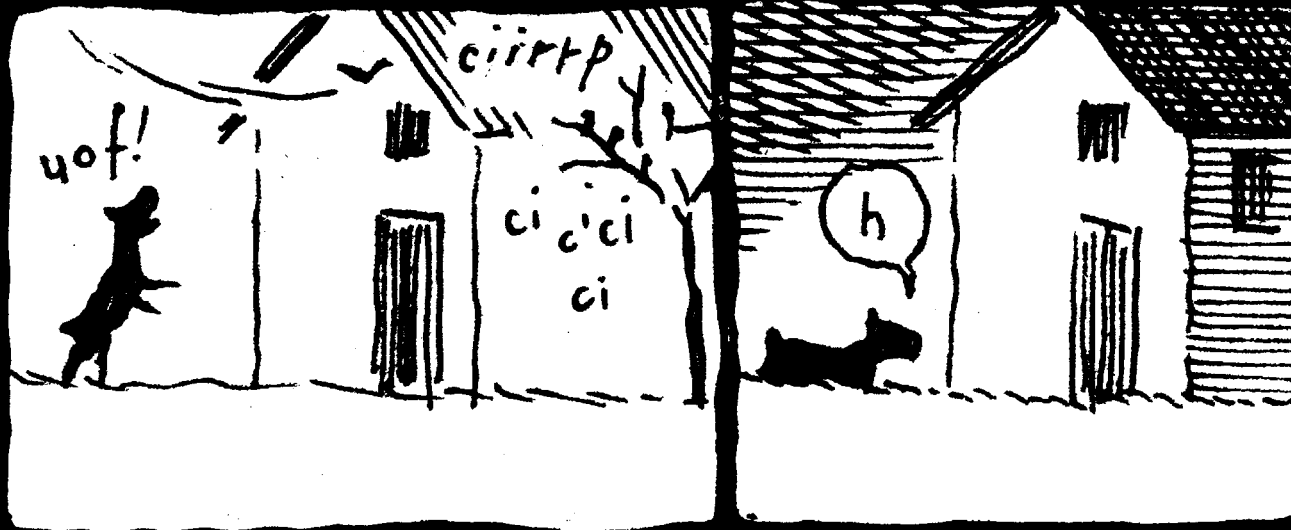




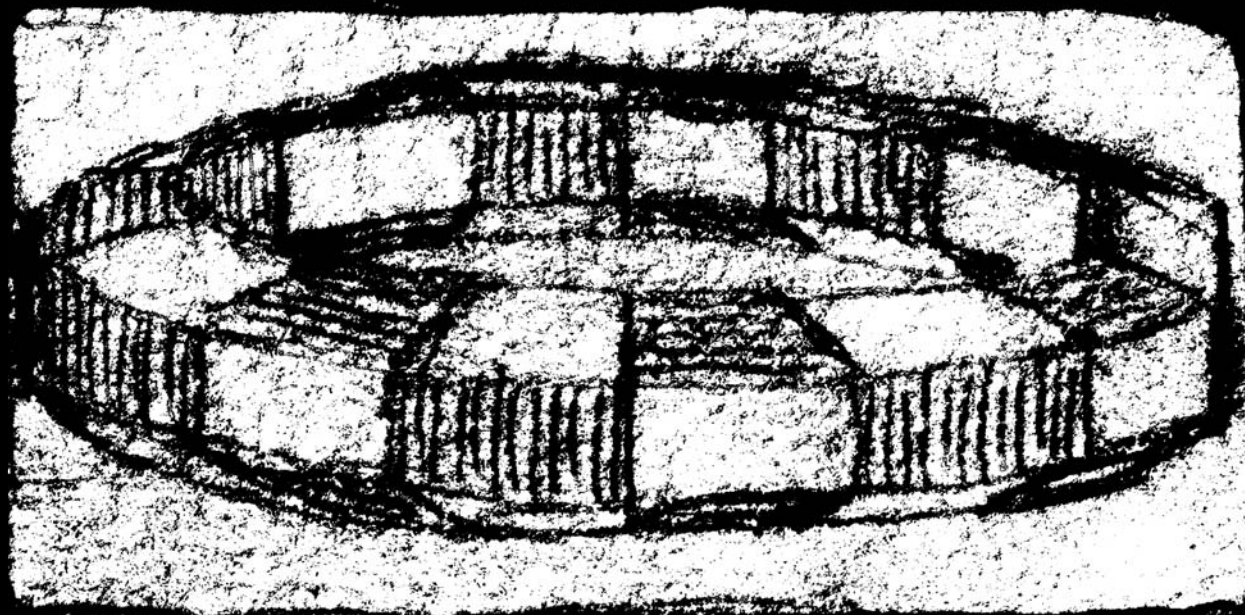
It seemed to him that getting tired constantly and staying at the desk to draw, was the only good thing to do.



Without allowing himself a break, Paolo always followed the hardest things in art. Without realizing that giving birth with pain to sterile and vain things, he tired his own will, that full of love, would have expressed the divine things in the world.



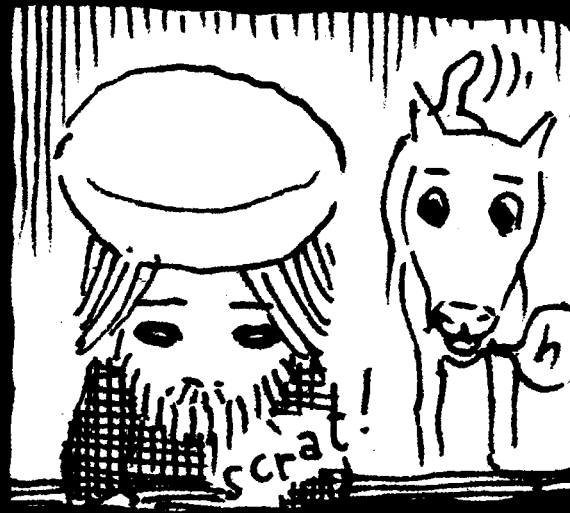
This is the reason why he eventually stayed by himself, almost in a wilderness state, weeks and months at home without anyone ever hearing anything from him.



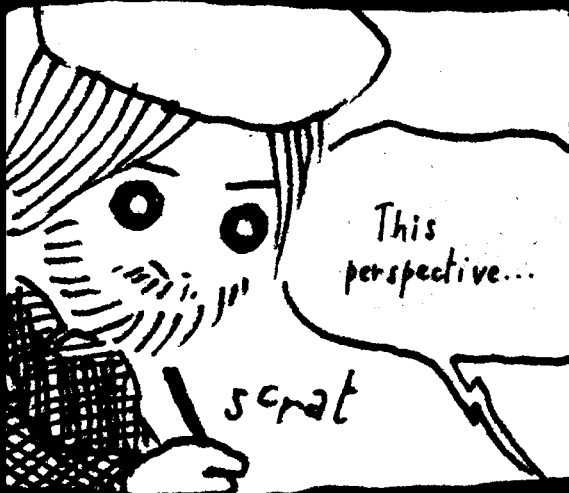
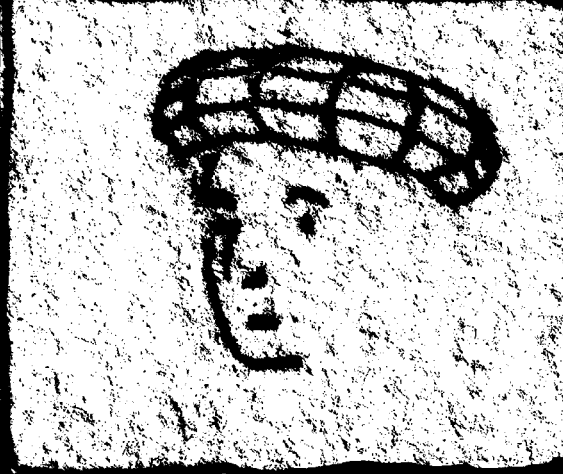


*He had developed a passion for the study of perspective.*

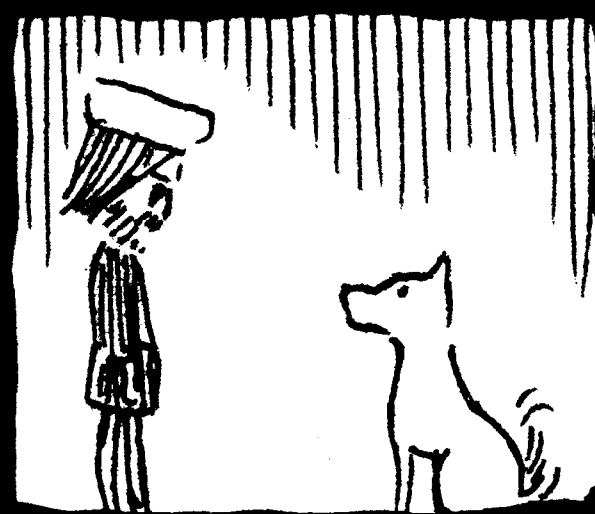
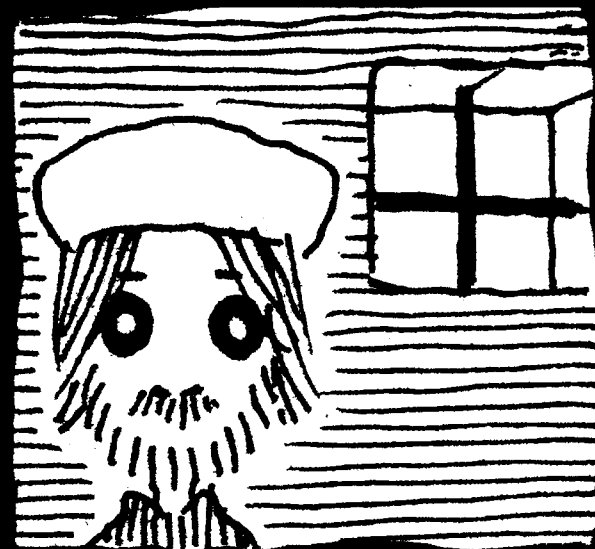
One day Paolo showed me the drawings of  
some perfectly cut mazzocchi.

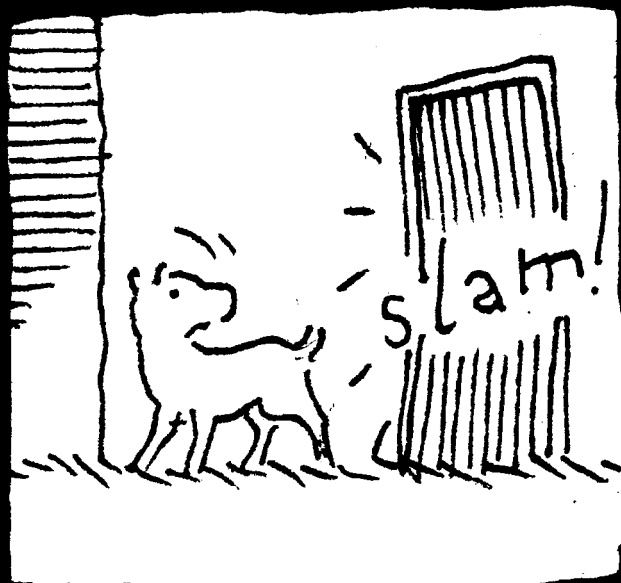


"Mazzocchi" were wooden circles covered by a cloth that had to stay on the head, so that the cloth thrown back could surround the face.



I said to him.

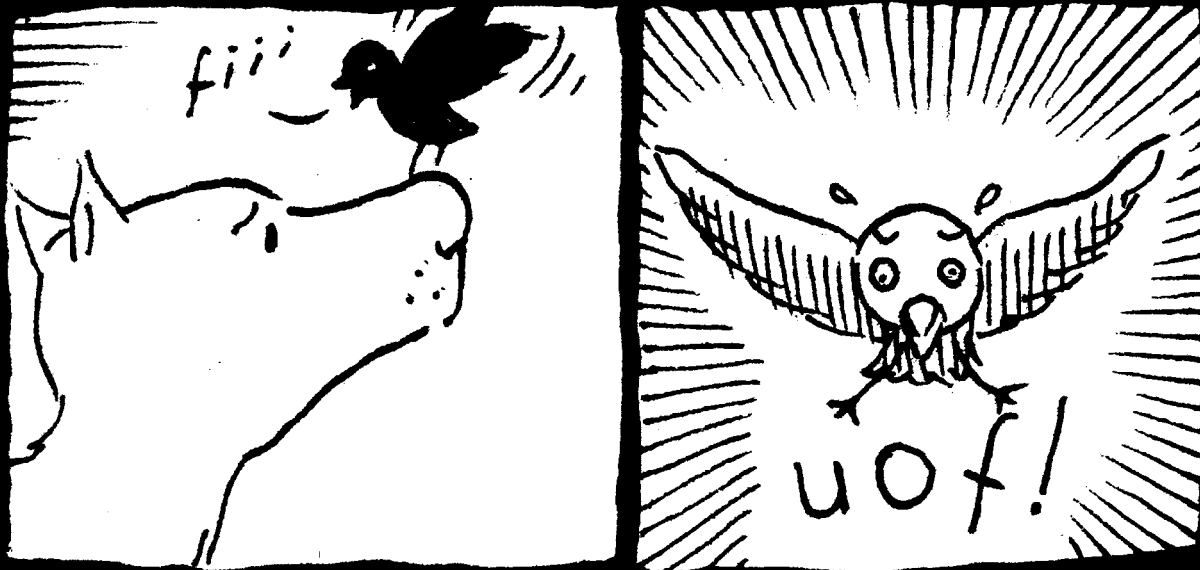




But Paolo went on with his patient work, and picked up circles dividing angles, examining creatures in all their aspects.

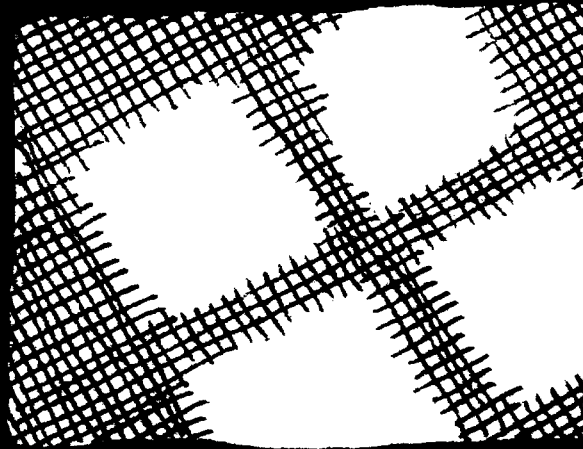
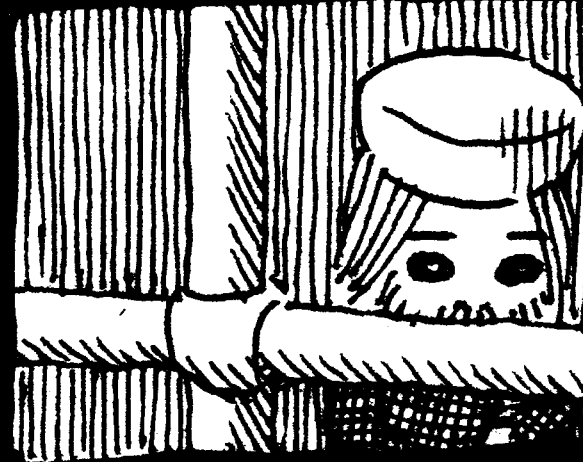
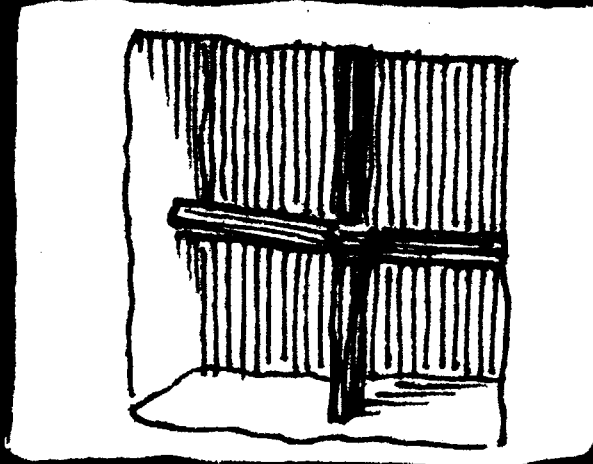
He observed directions, intersections, from the basement to the labels, and he watched the way the vaults turned around their centres, and caught a glimpse of the ceilings' beams, that seemed to connect at the end of the huge rooms.

He drew the animals and their movements, and simple lines to represent human gestures.



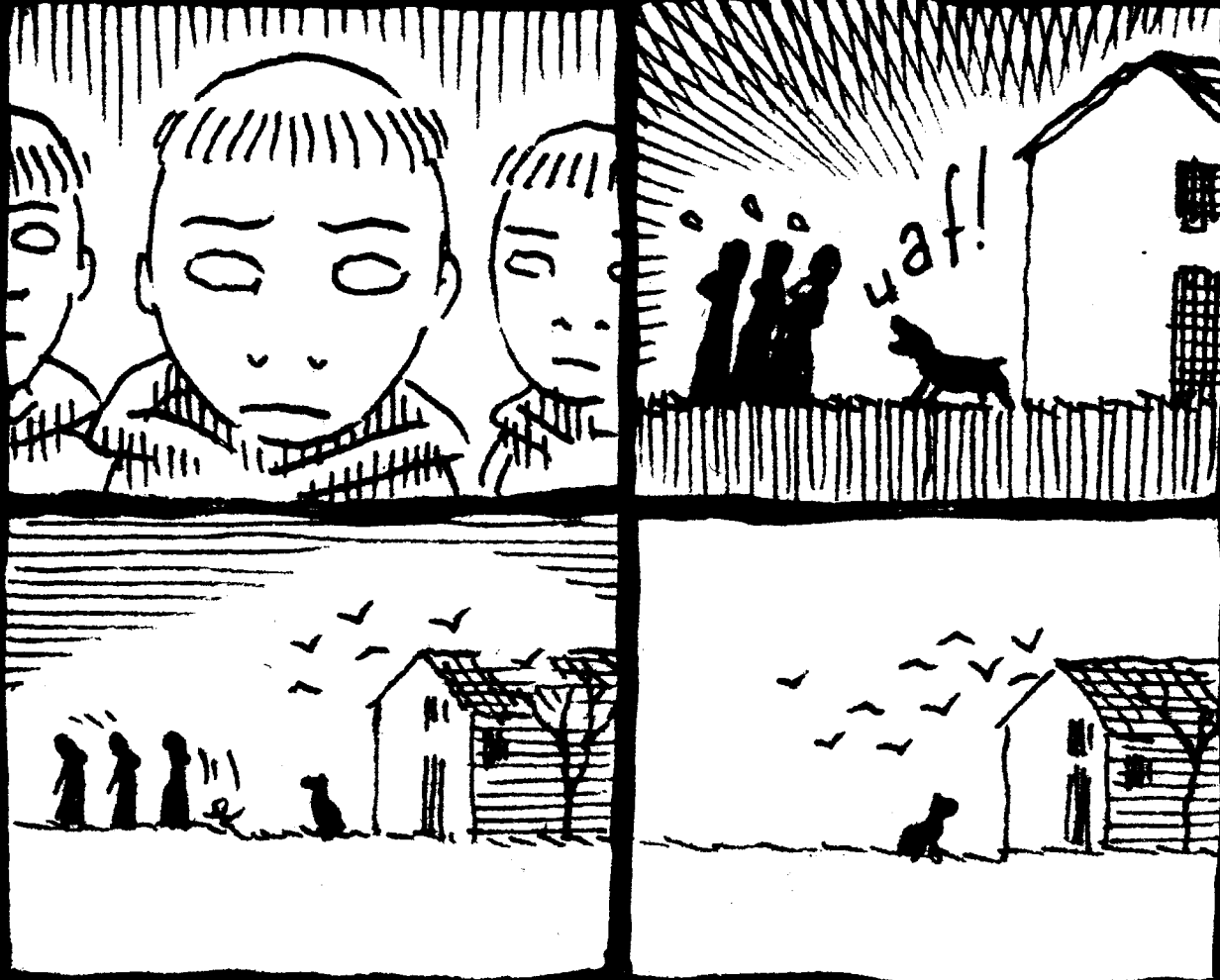
He thought he could have changed all the lines in one ideal aspect, making all the figures spring from a unique centre at the end of the sky.

I lived close to him, and I was sorry for his house, full of spiders,  
and for his madness in researching this perspective. But this just  
made him fell proud of himself.

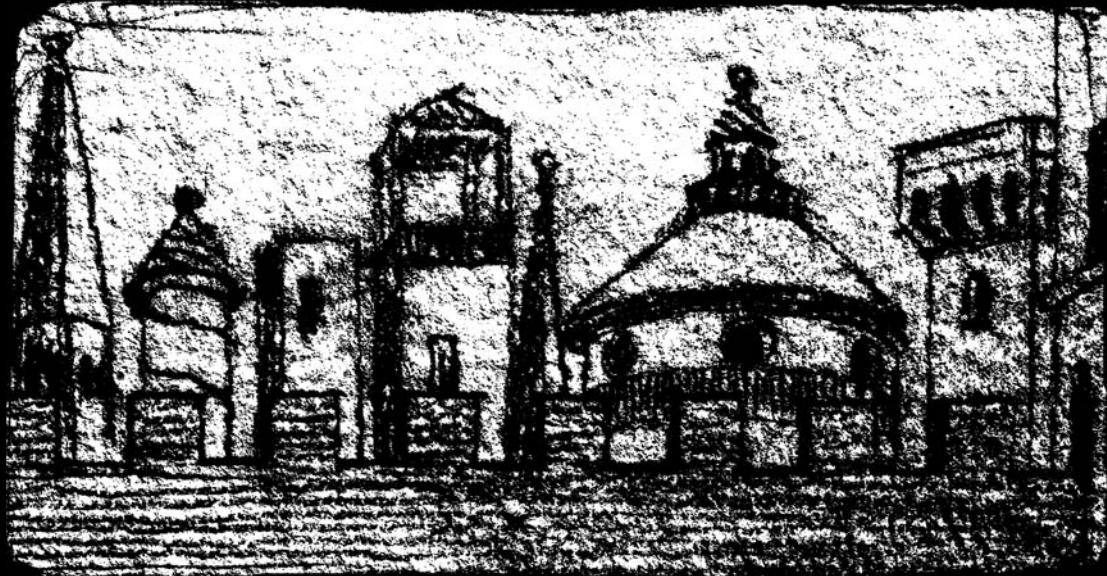
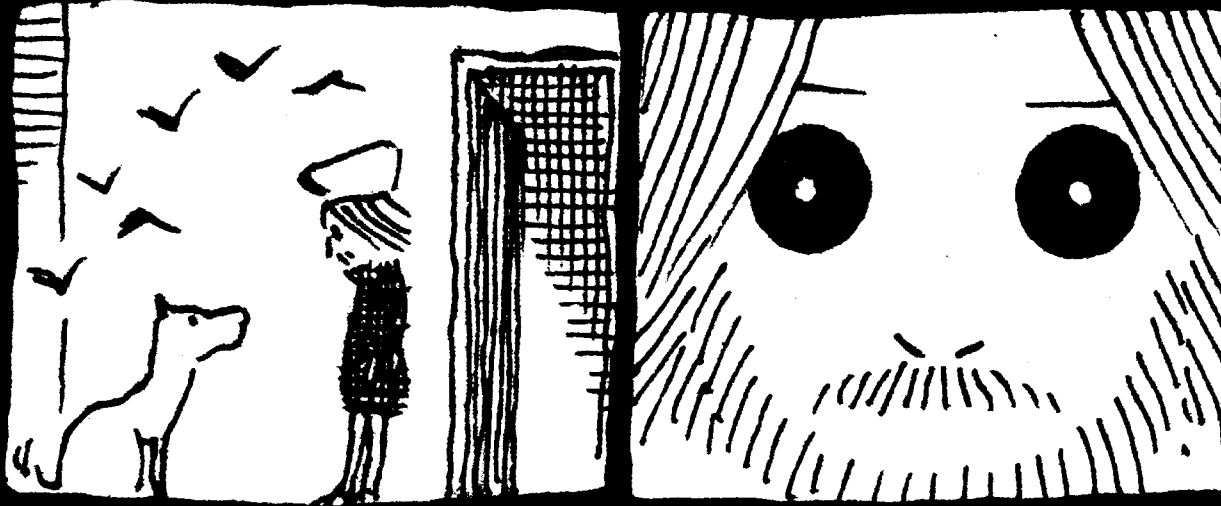


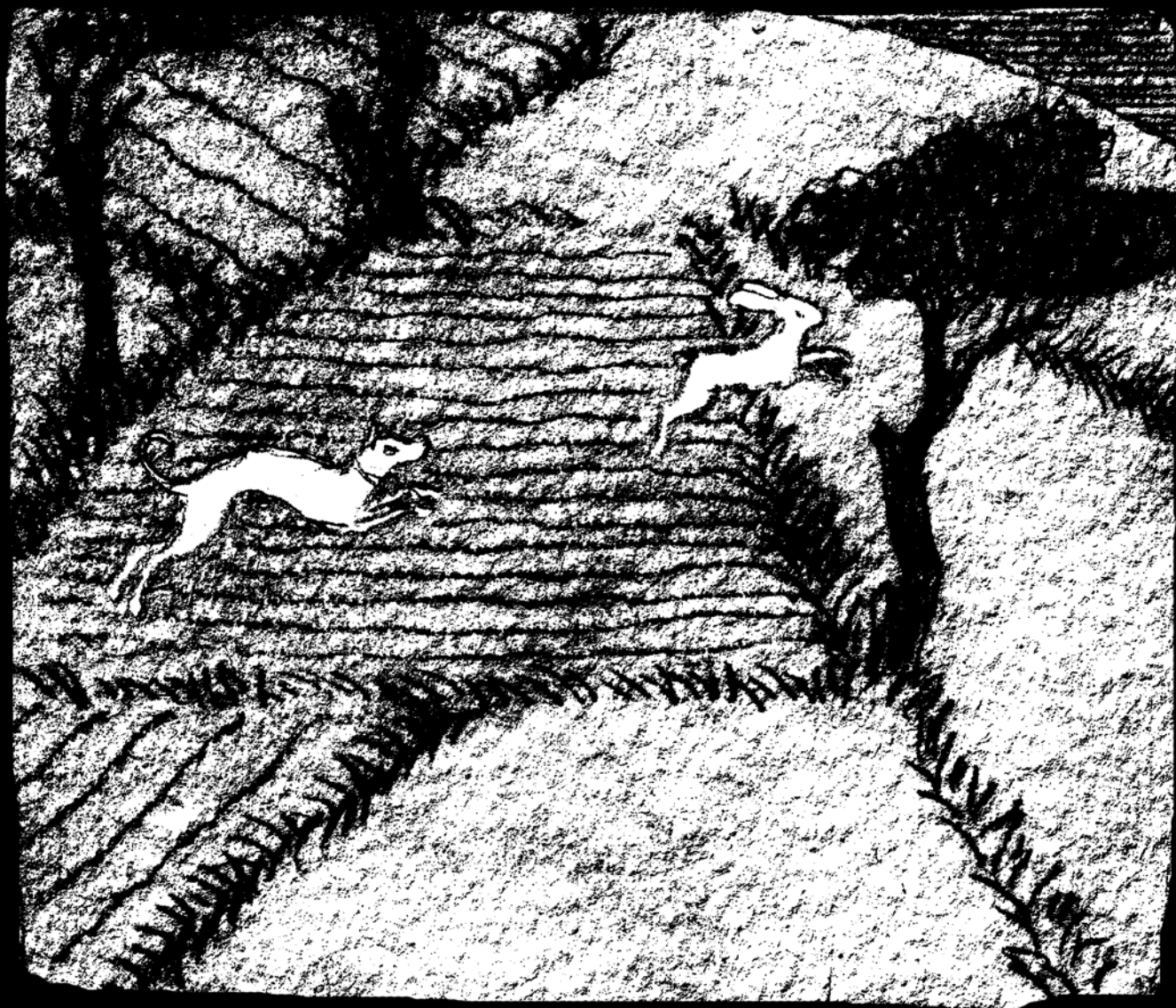
Every wave of lines, he was sure he had discovered the secret  
of creation.

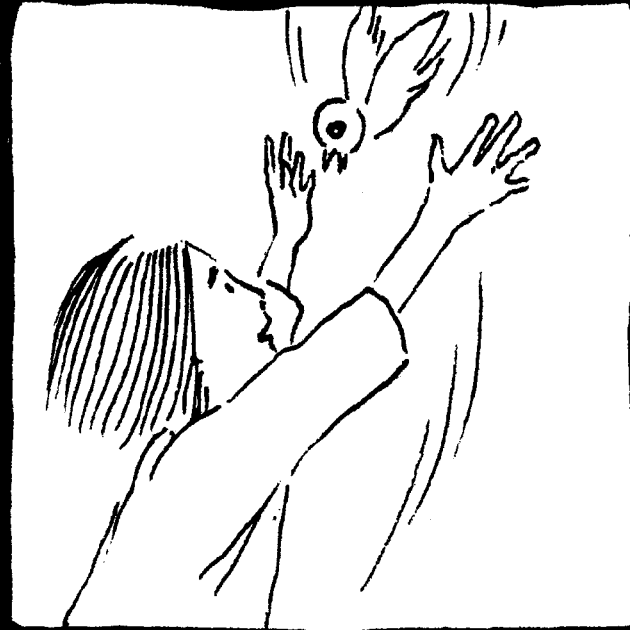
He didn't imitate anyone, and the strange drawings of the pleated  
cows seemed to him more revealing than any other work he had  
been commissioned until up to that point.



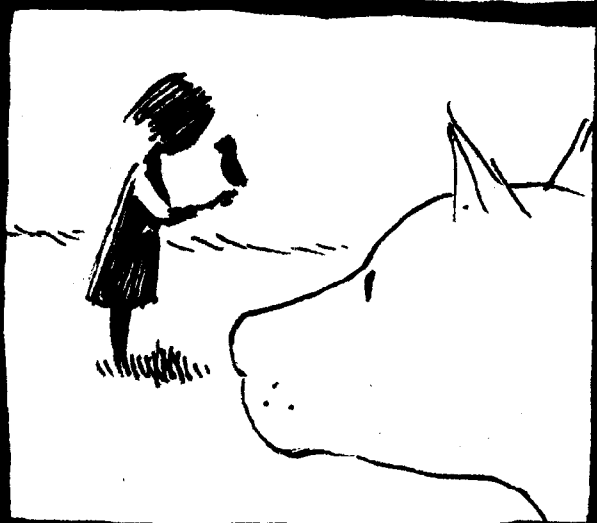
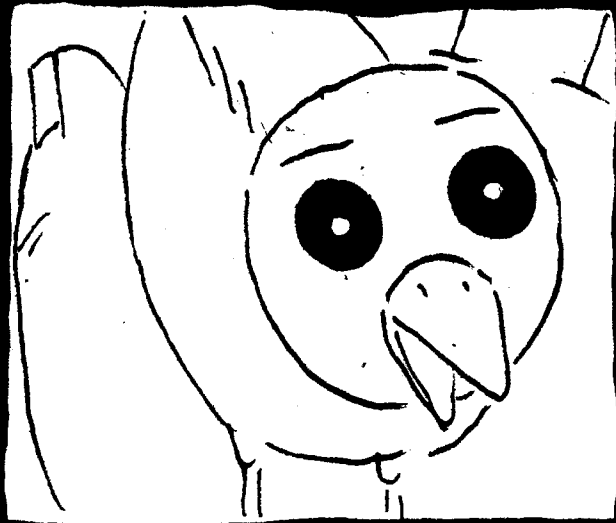
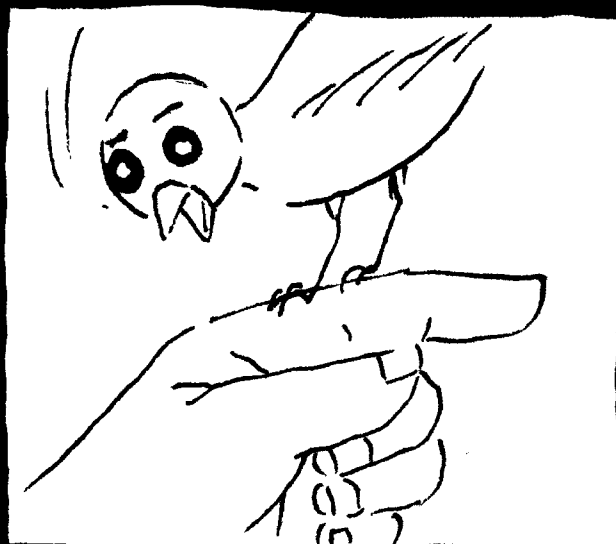
He used to live like this, without caring of what he could eat or drink, exactly as if he was a hermit.





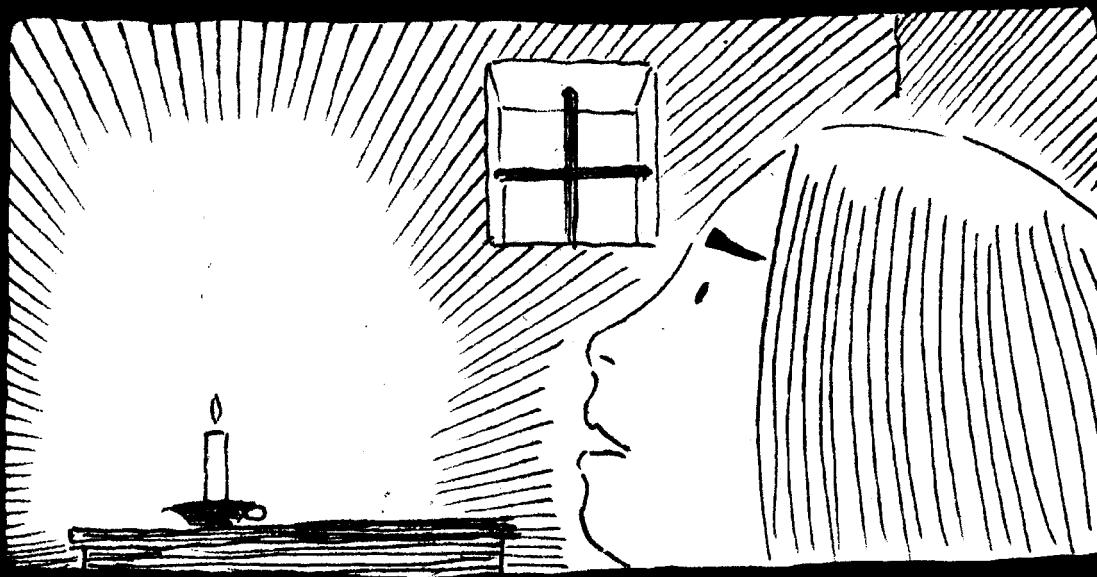
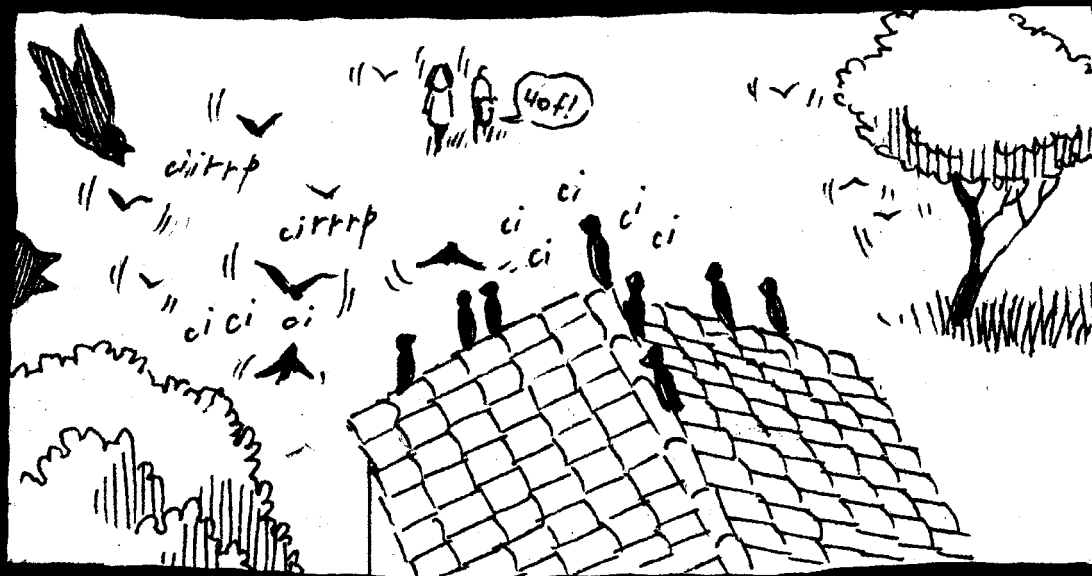


*Until one day, in a field, he noticed a girl that was laughing.*

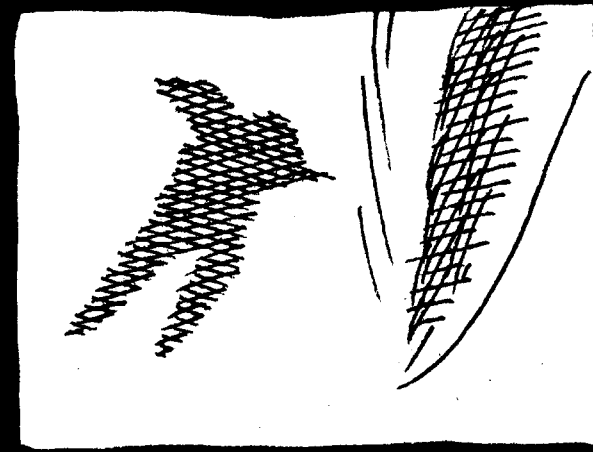
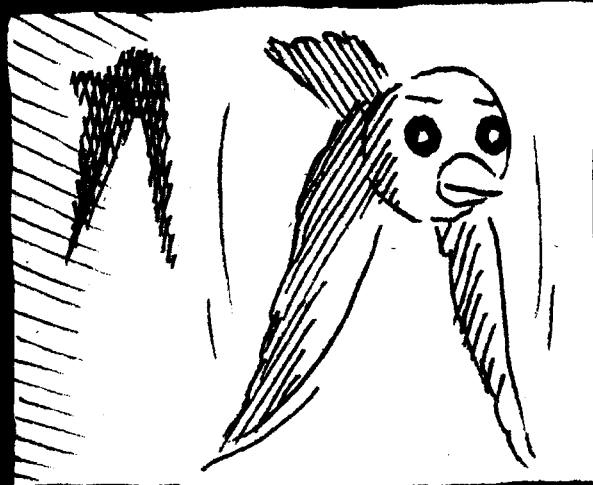
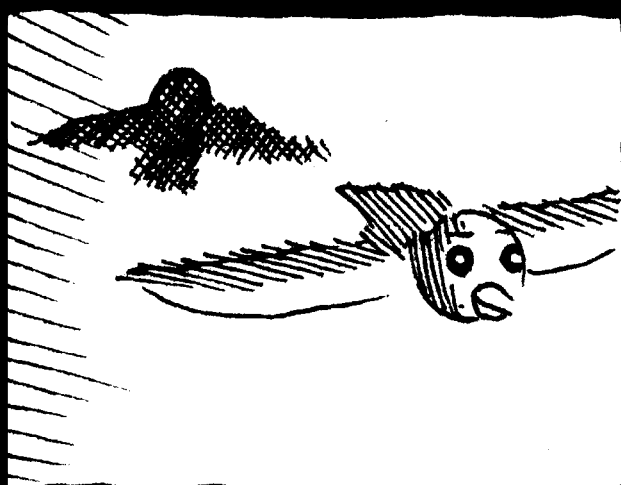




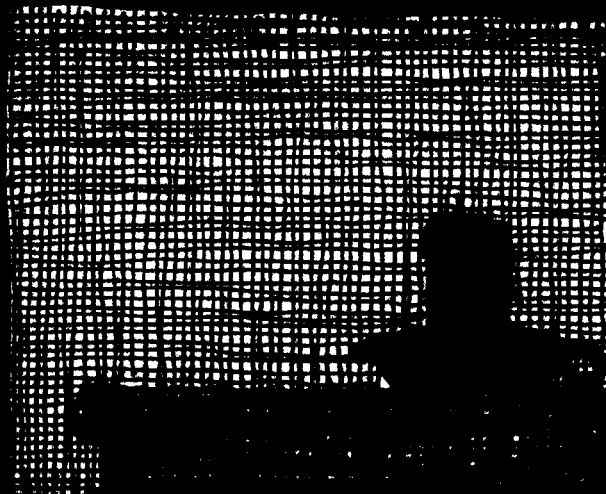
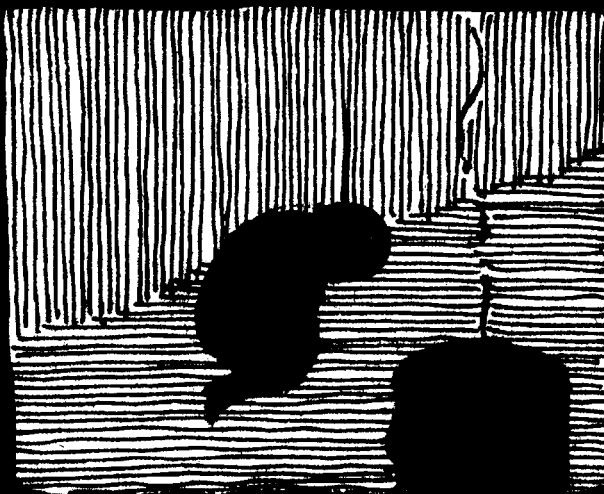
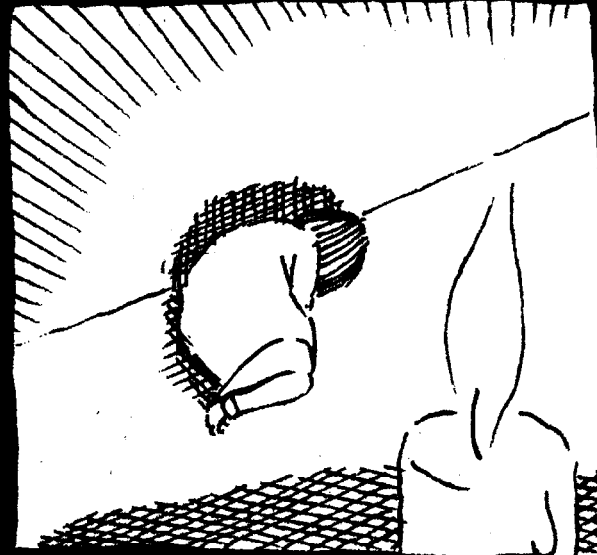
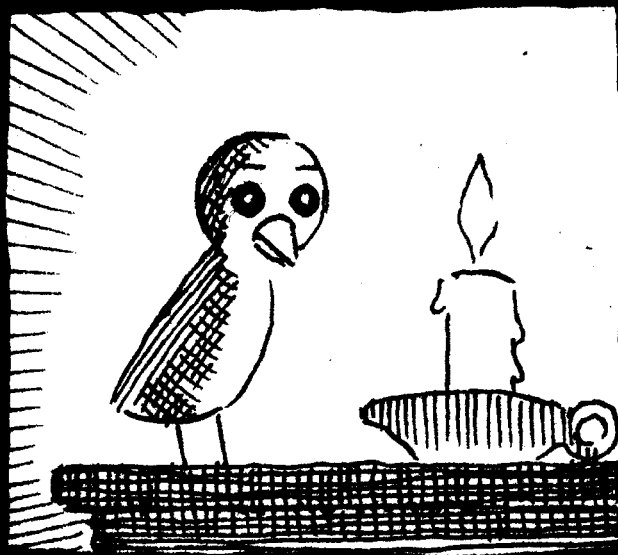
Her name was Selvaggia.



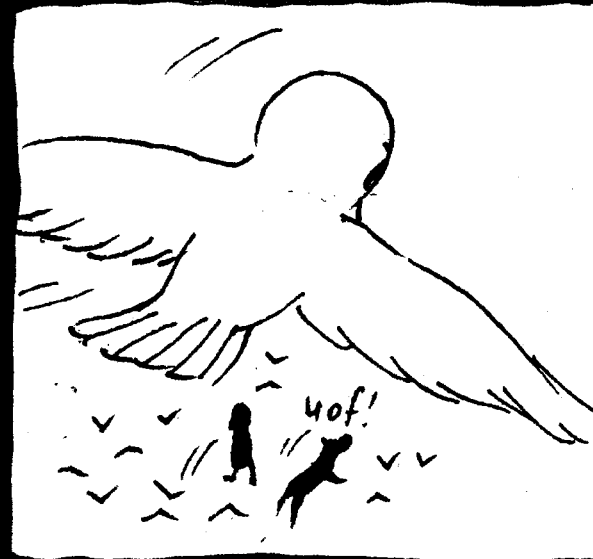
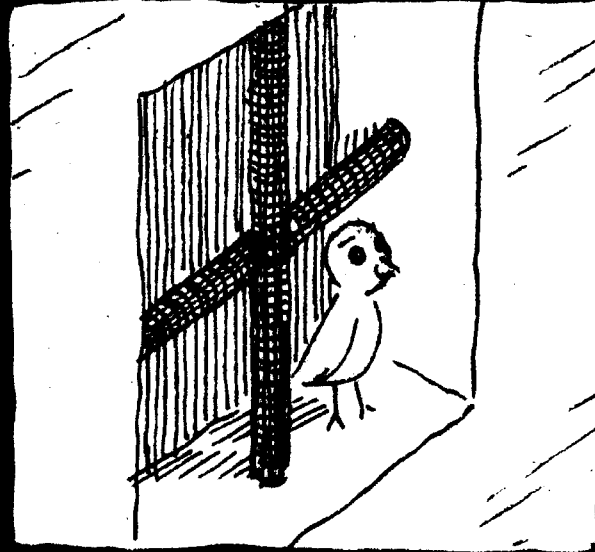
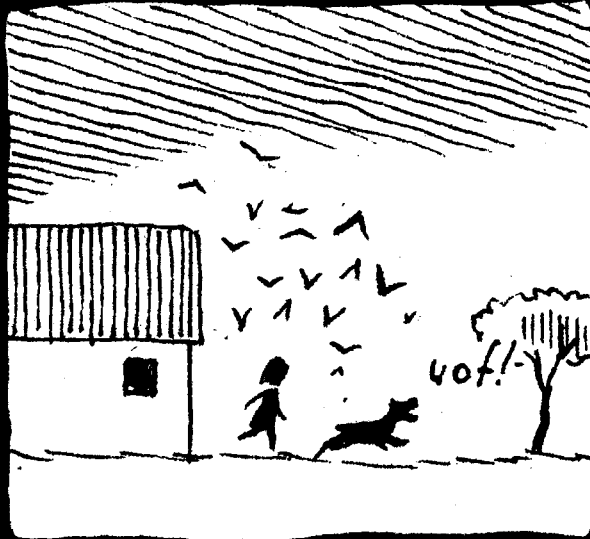
Selvaggia sat kneeling all day in front of the wall Paolo worked on.



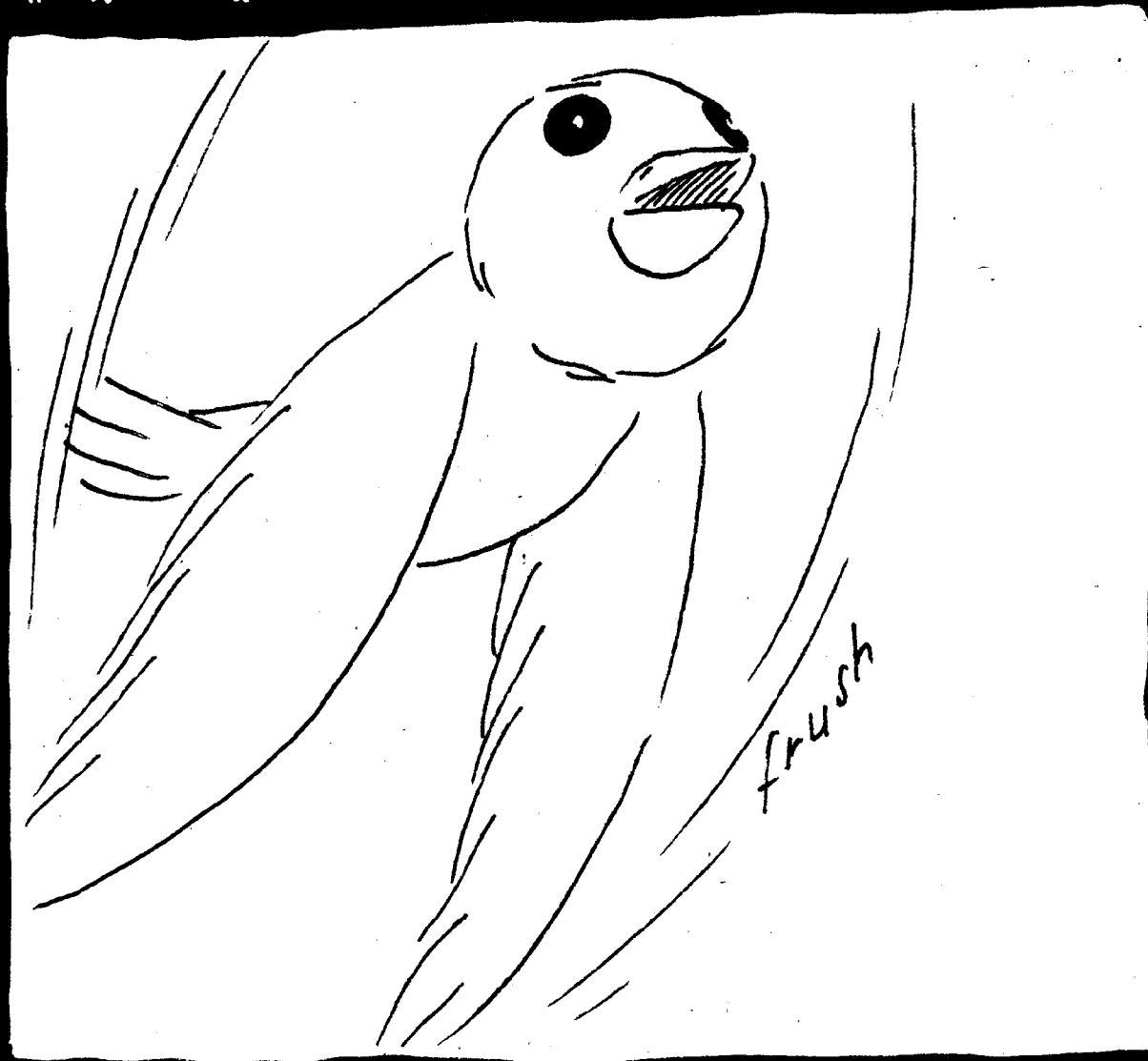
At night she would fall asleep, at the feet of the circle of the shadow that was getting larger under the candle.

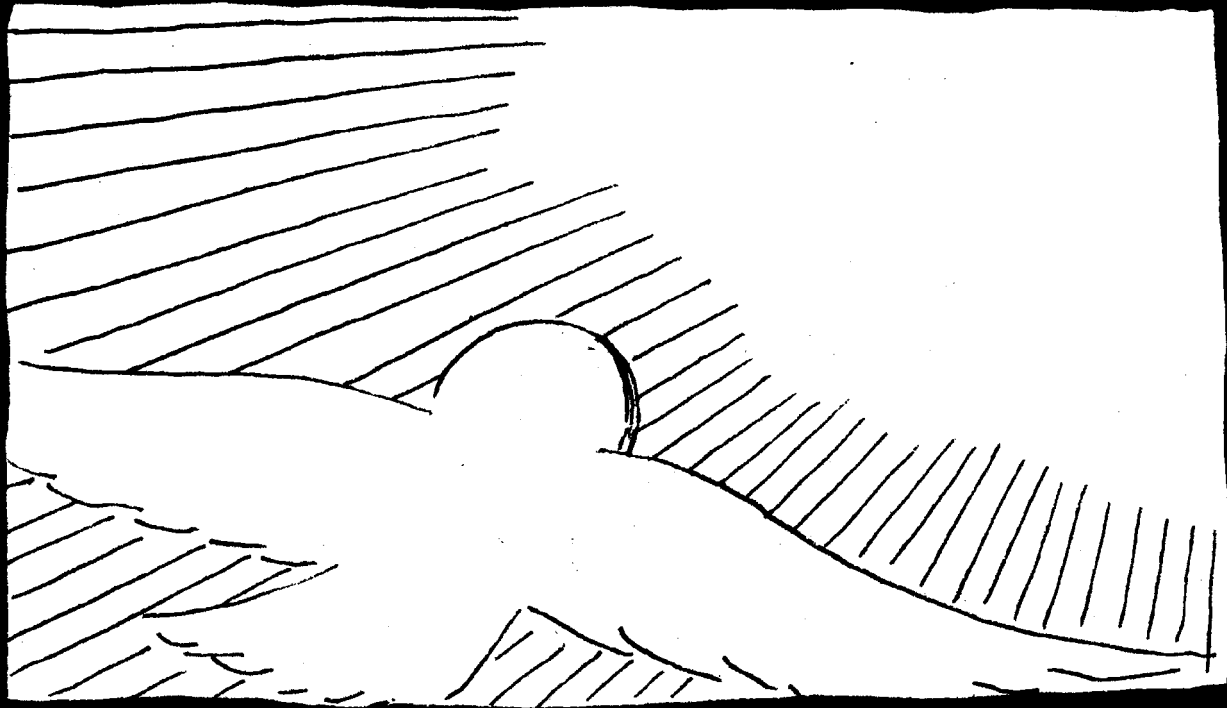


In the morning she woke up before him, surrounded by painted  
animals and birds.



Pado drew her lips, her eyes, her hair, her hands,  
he observed all her behaviours.

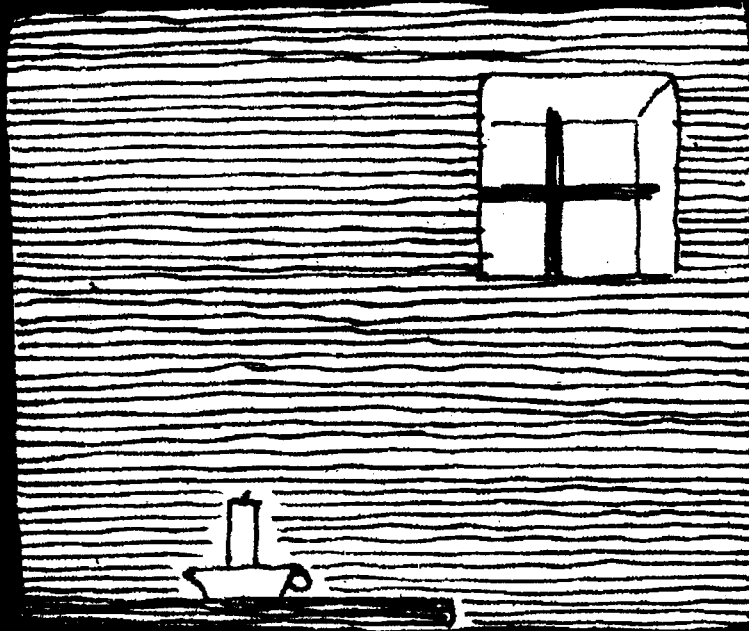




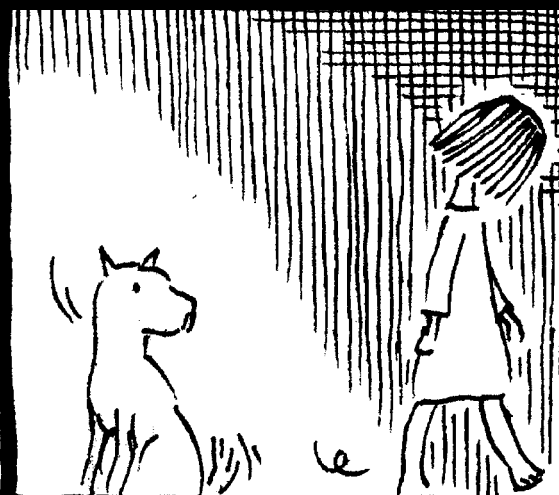
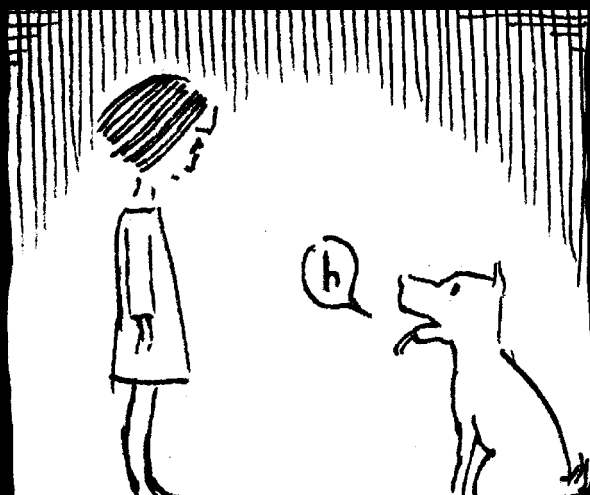
Because the bird never stayed in one place but wanted to glide,  
in his flight, over everyone.



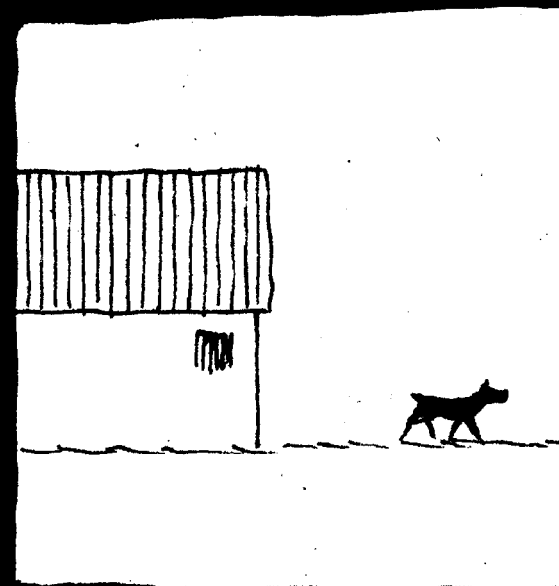
And he threw Selvaggia's ways in the melting pot of all shapes,  
together with the beast's gesture, with the features of the plants,  
of the stones, of the sun light, the land vapours and the sea's waves.

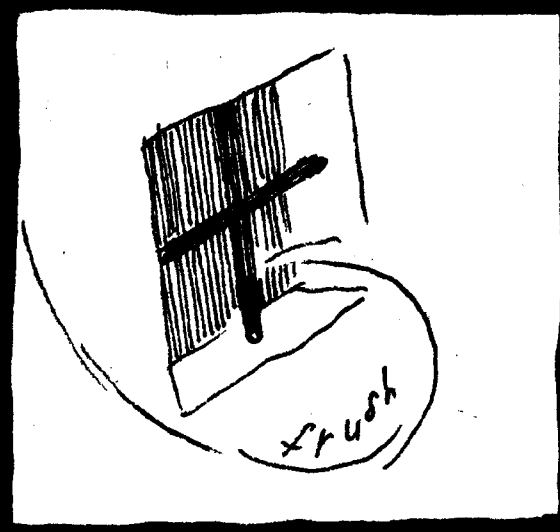
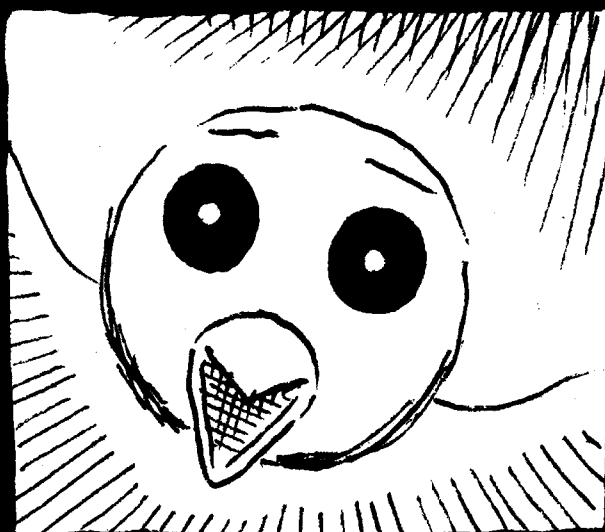
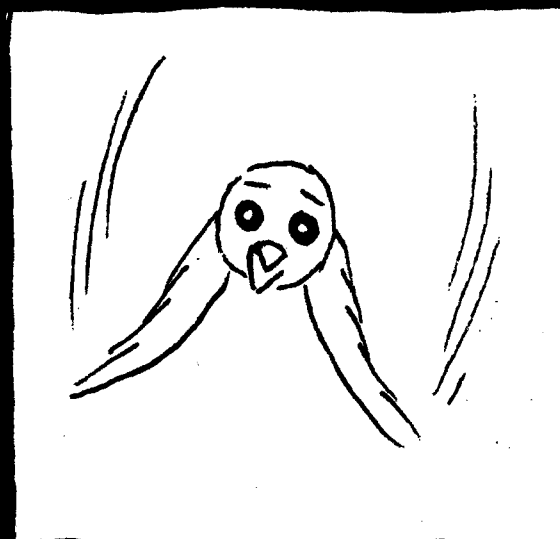
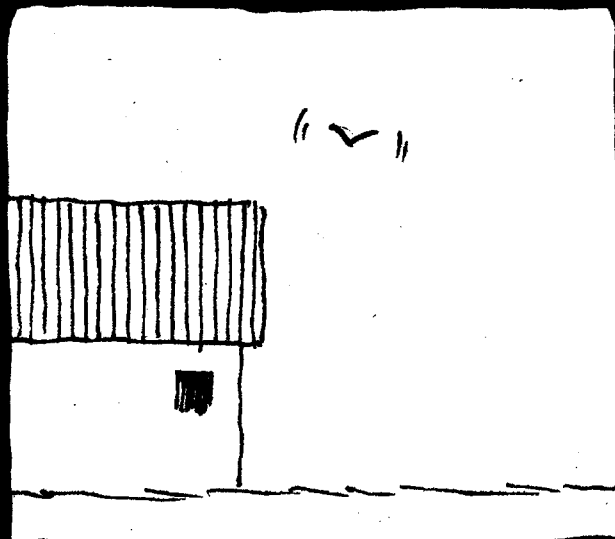


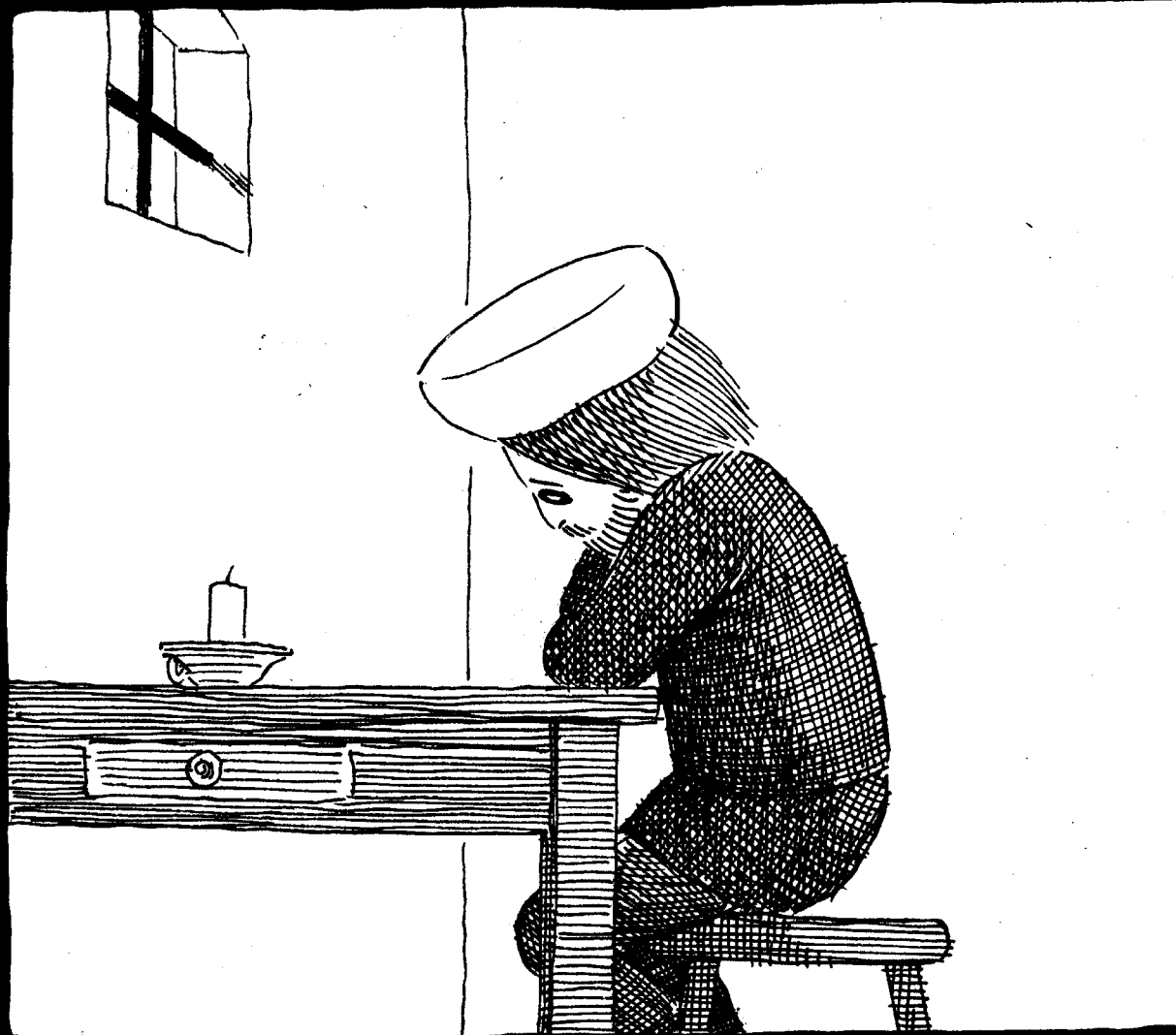
But there was nothing to eat in his home.  
And Selvaggia didn't dare say anything.



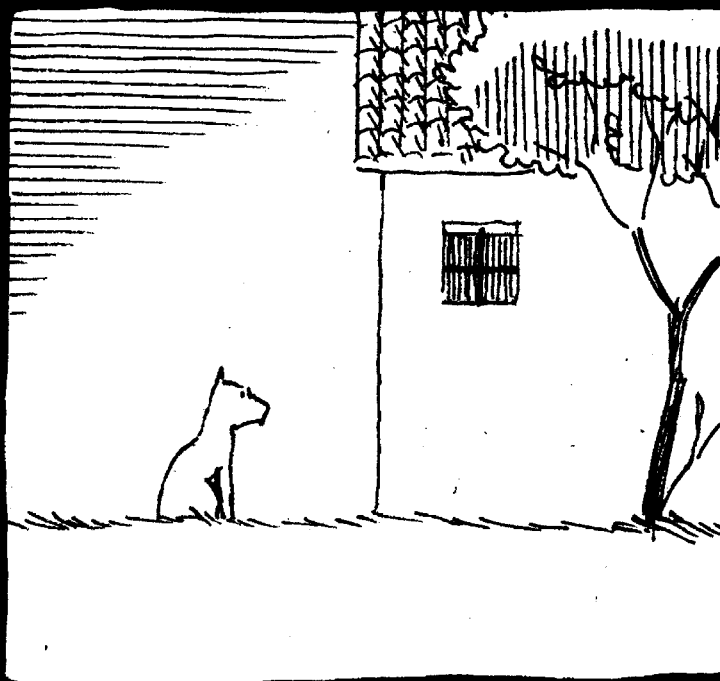
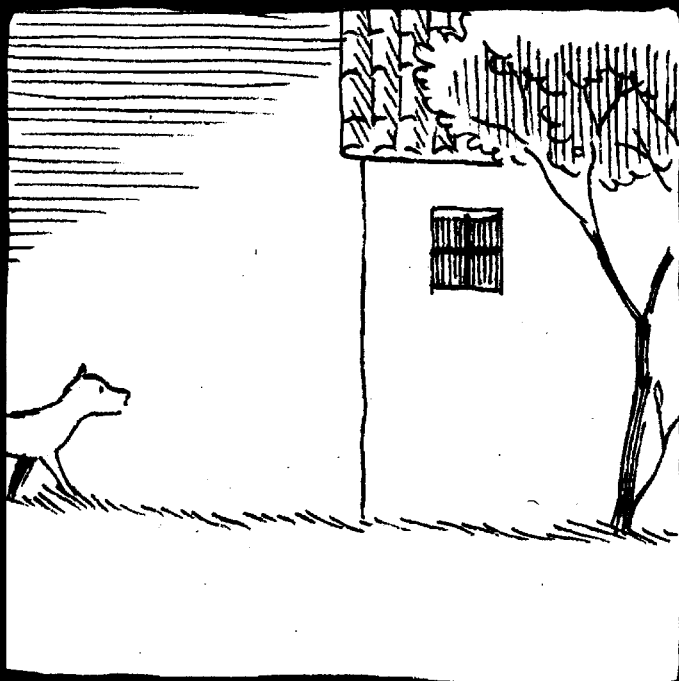
*Simply she stayed silent.*







*And left us alone.*





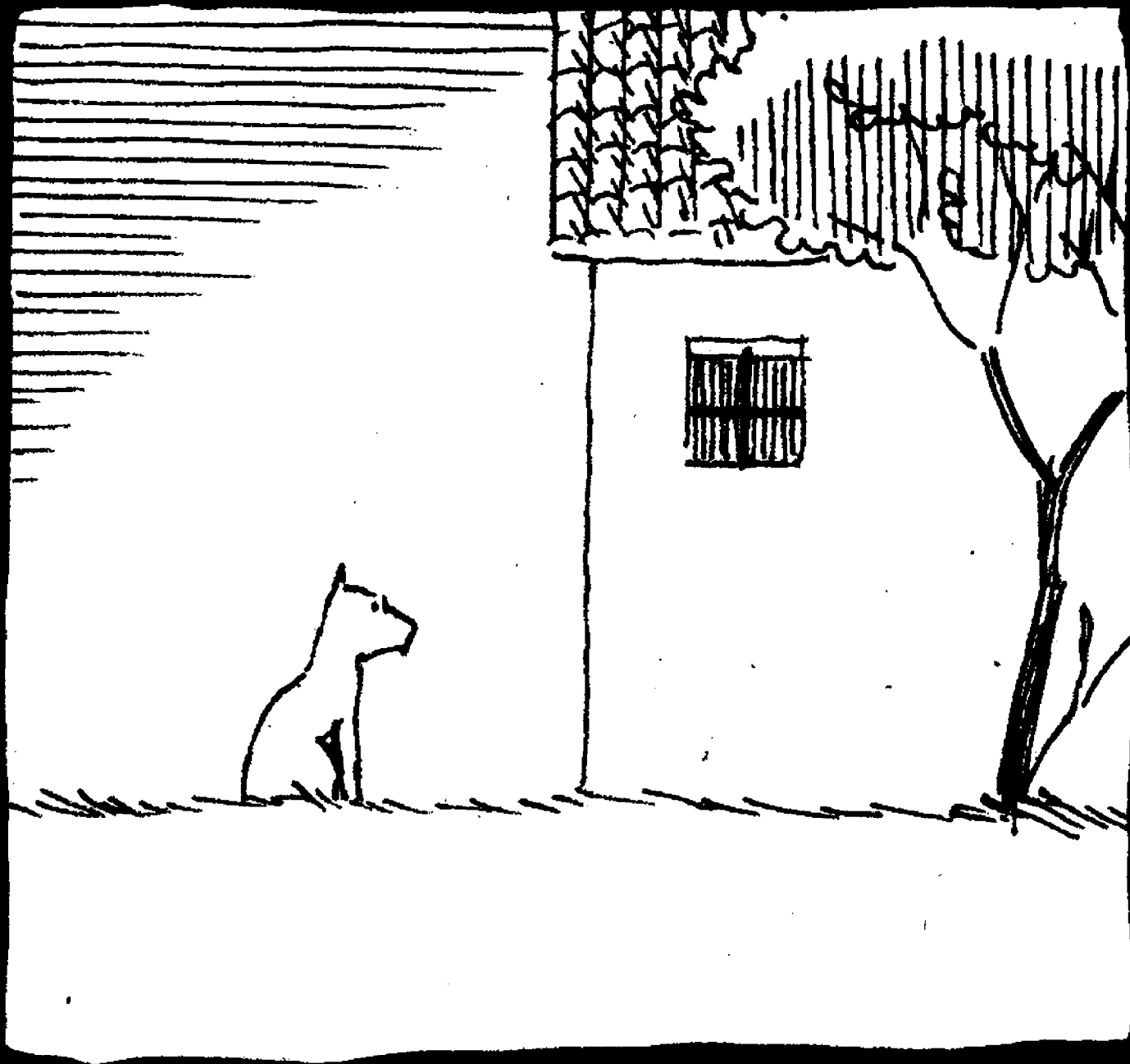




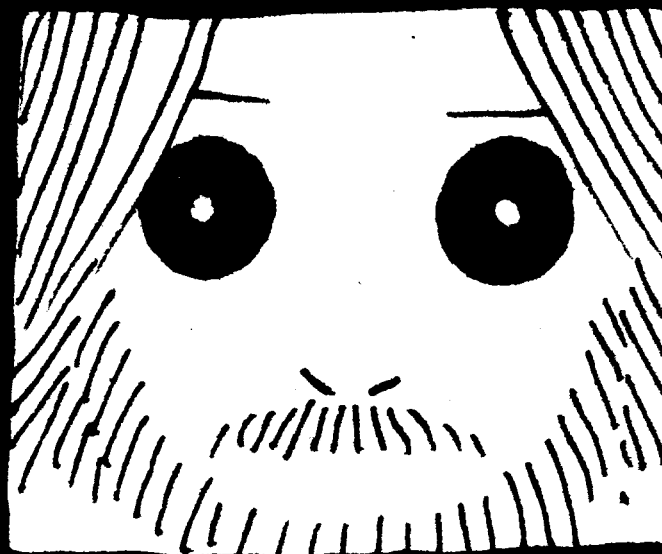
Paolo became old, and still nobody understood his paintings. For many years he had been working on his biggest opera, and he would hide it from everybody's eyes. This final piece would have embraced all his researches, and would have depicted them like he had conceived them.



The painting depicted a doubting Saint Thomas,  
That puts his finger in Christ's sore.



Paolo ended his painting when he was eighty.





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