



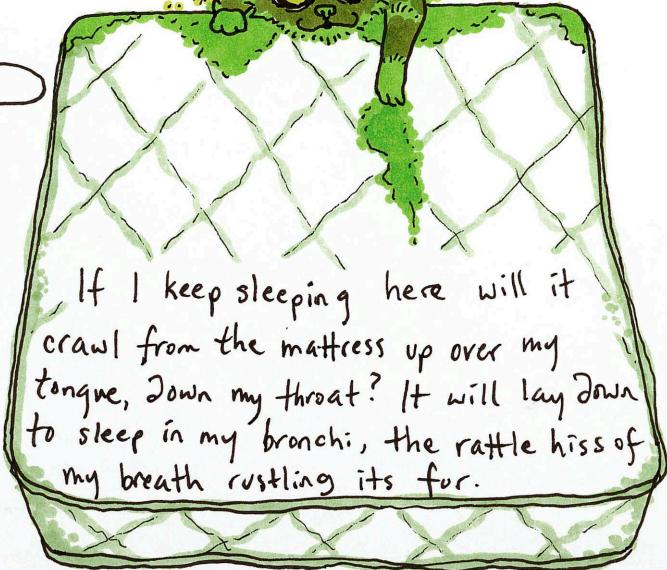
uring a bad year, I live in a moldy little apartment between the vegan bakery and the stupid fancy university I attend.

I can taste mold spores on the air.

This place gets into my lungs like nowhere I've ever lived before.

Mold crushes my chest like a punishment.

I wake up and the corner of my mattress is speckled green black with mold. A furred creature has been inching towards my face in the night.



If I keep sleeping here will it crawl from the mattress up over my tongue, down my throat? It will lay down to sleep in my bronchi, the rattle hiss of my breath rustling its fur.



Eventually I throw the mattress away and live out the lease huddled on the couch.



When I move out, we pick up
the couch and everyone's hands sink
into the wet fabric. We all scream.

How did I not notice?

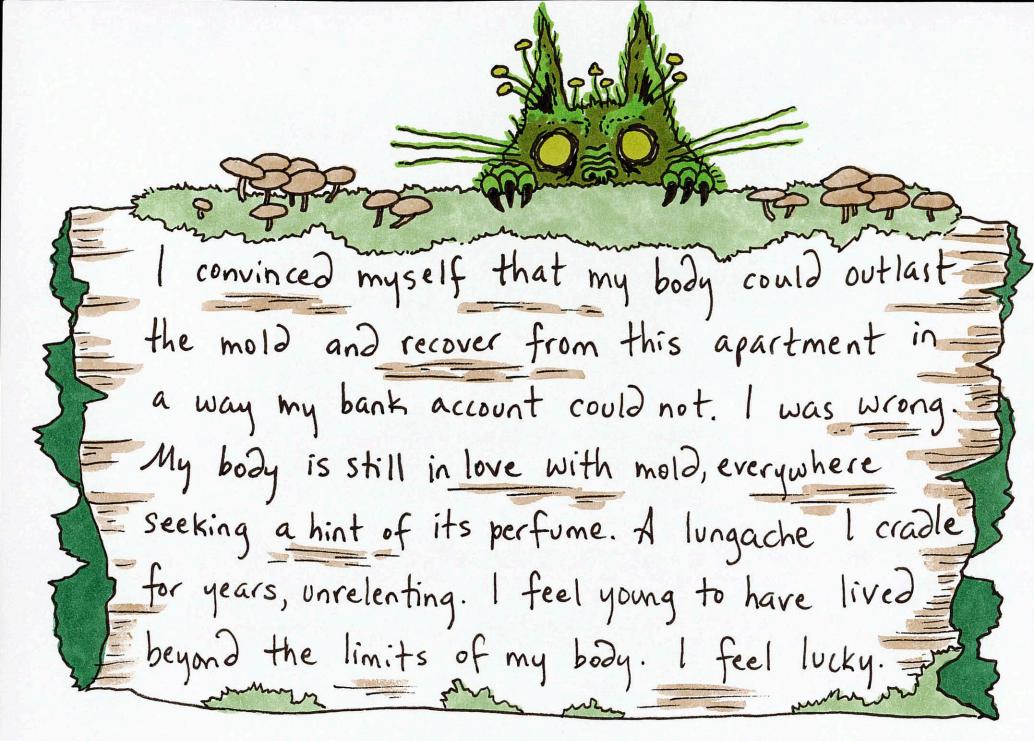
My cognition is drowning.

I should have broken the lease, moved out right away.
The dread of finding a new place, asking my friends to
help me move again...

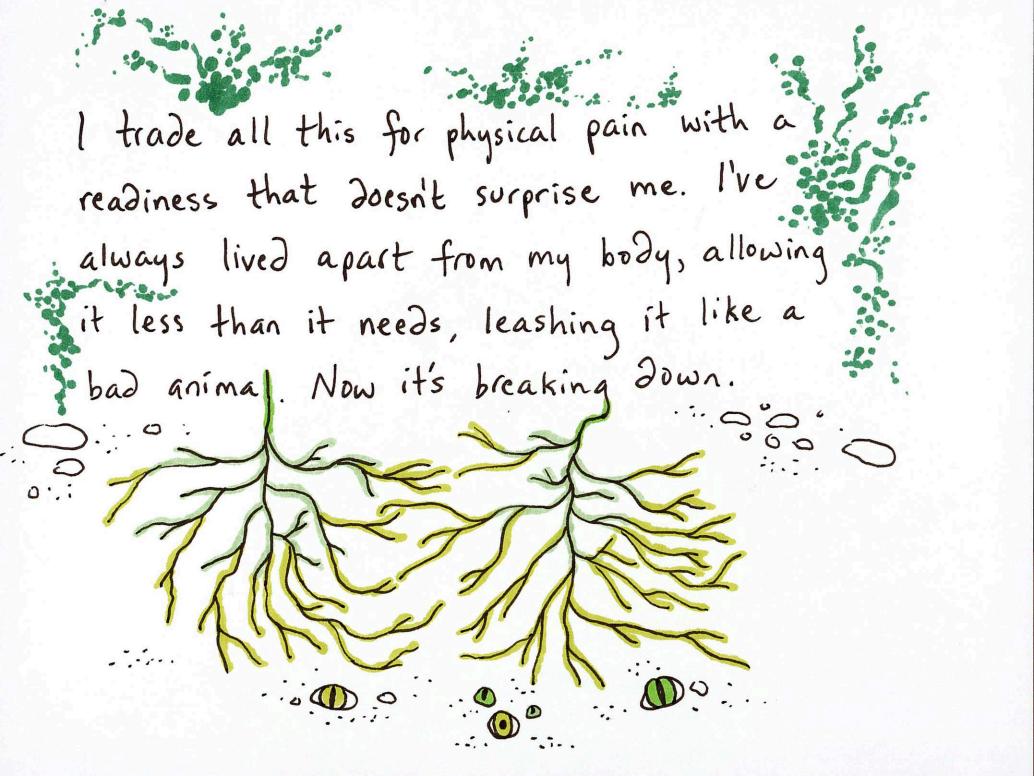


EUGH!!

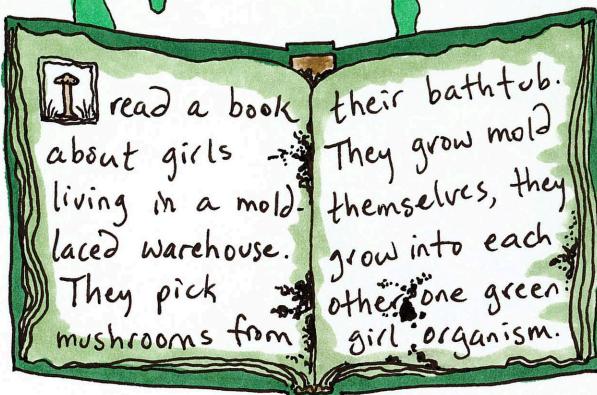




I convinced myself that my body could outlast
the mold and recover from this apartment in
a way my bank account could not. I was wrong.
My body is still in love with mold, everywhere
seeking a hint of its perfume. A lungache I cradle
for years, unrelenting. I feel young to have lived
beyond the limits of my body. I feel lucky.



I trade all this for physical pain with a
readiness that doesn't surprise me. I've
always lived apart from my body, allowing
it less than it needs, leashing it like a
bad animal. Now it's breaking down.



I find myself writing stories about the dream-life of fungi, their insidious rise into predation. Mycelium networks replace the internet, slowly reprogram the code of the world. A green film creeps over me.



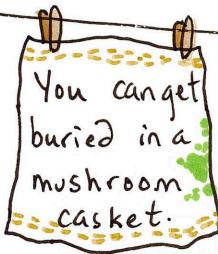




Months later, I still find mold in my clothes.
I never see it. My lungs feel it first, and then I scour
every inch of fabric looking for the proof, never so
desperate to kill something as this. Mold stiffens
the fibers of my mind, making it bloom with rot.
I throw away everything.



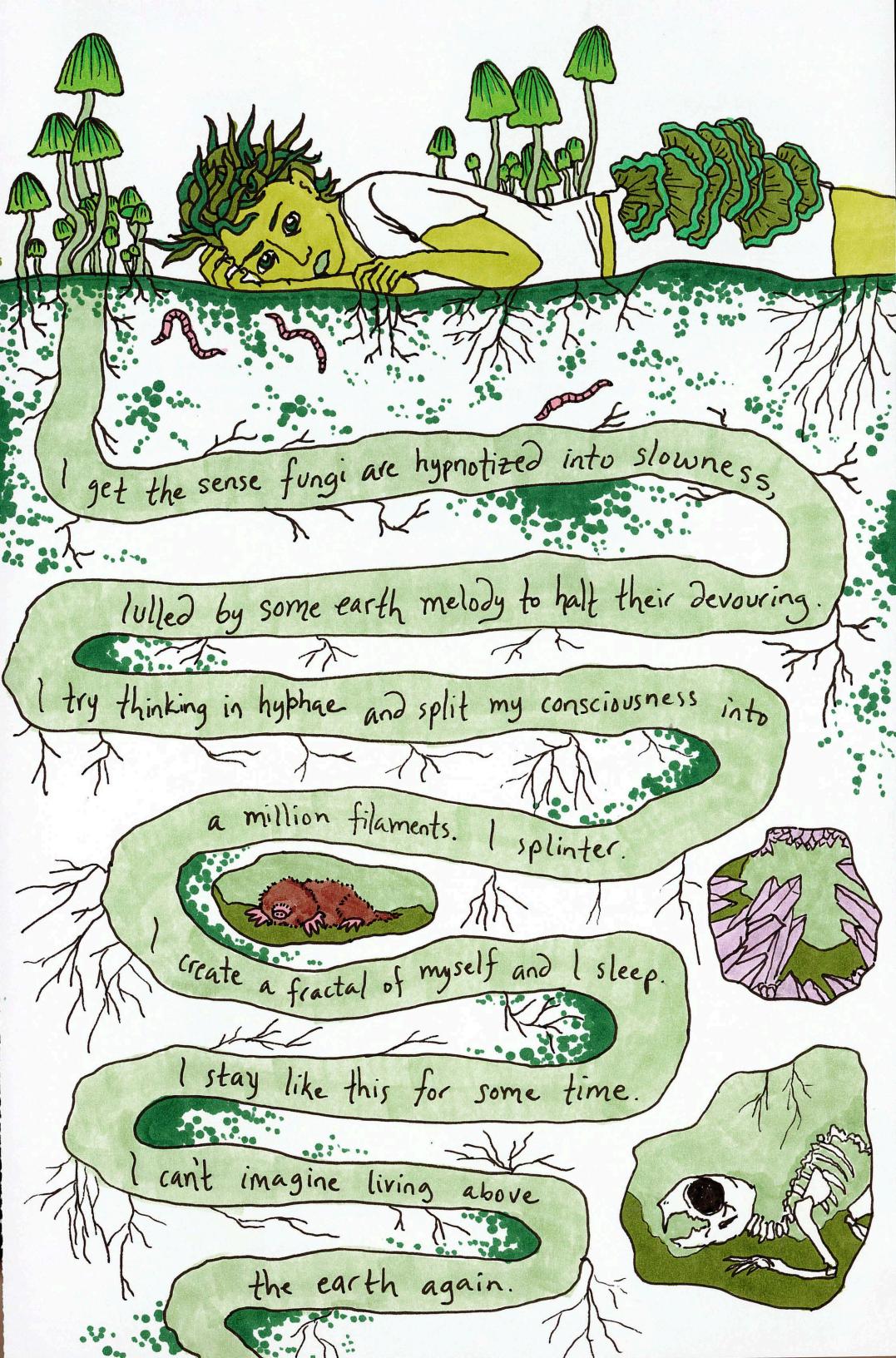
You can get
buried in all
the research
about fungi.

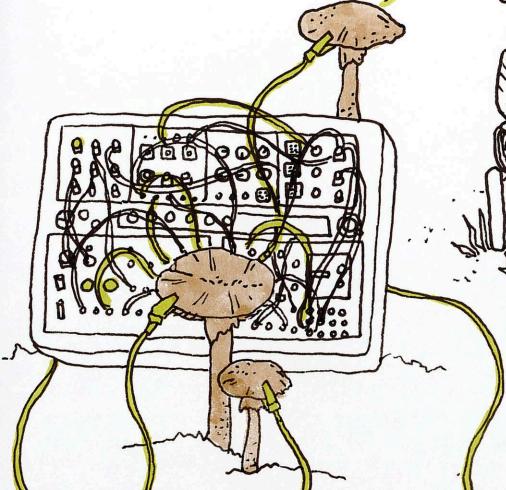


You can get
buried in a
mushroom
casket.



If you want mushrooms to
grow faster, you
can feed them
lightning. Fungi
might save the
world from hunger,
from capitalism, from us.





The thing I now understand about mold is that unlike me, it is not driven by hunger. Mold is as impassive as a glacier. It consumes with no limit, sleepwalking outside of time, enacting the dream of creation. Eternal in chilling contrast to us.

Comforting, in a way.

I'm half-convinced — bodily, like I dreamed this feeling and it lingers — that purpose and time can only be understood from the outside. Someday, when I am not my body, not "I" at all, ~~not~~ my molecules, my hyphae, will finally make sense of the ebb and flow of the earth. And I won't even have to pay rent.

