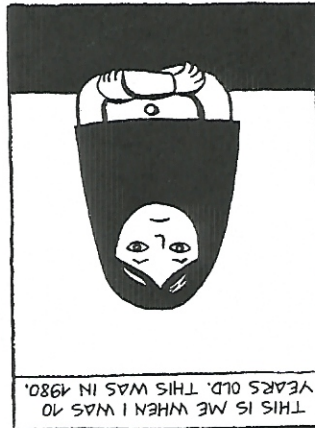
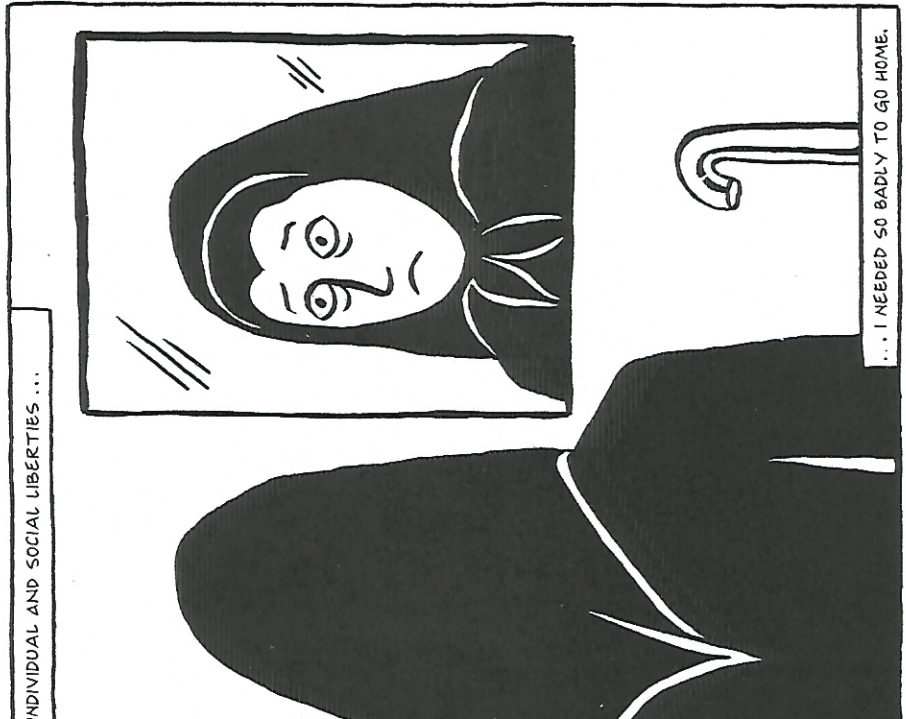


2

THE VEIL

1.

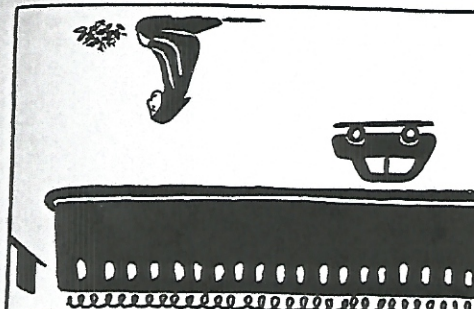




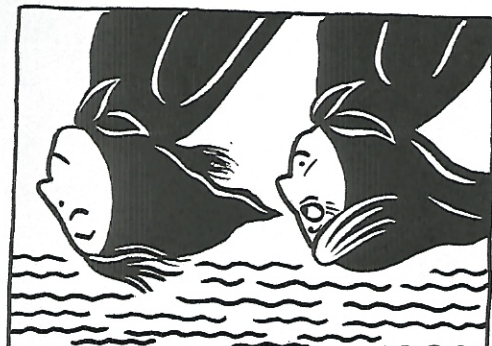
3.



UNTIL SEPTEMBER 9, 1994, WHEN, ALONG WITH MY GRANDMA, THEY ACCOMPANIED ME TO MEHRABAD AIRPORT.



I ALSO WENT BEHIND THE EVINE PRISON WHERE THE BODY OF MY UNCLE ANOOSH LAY IN AN UNMARKED GRAVE, NEXT TO THOUSANDS OF OTHER CADAVERS. I GAVE HIM MY WORD TO TRY TO REMAIN AS HONEST AS POSSIBLE.



I WENT ON A TRIP WITH MY GRANDMA TO THE SHORE OF THE CASPIAN SEA, WHERE I FILLED MY LUNGS WITH THAT VERY SPECIAL AIR. THAT AIR THAT DOESN'T EXIST ANYWHERE ELSE.



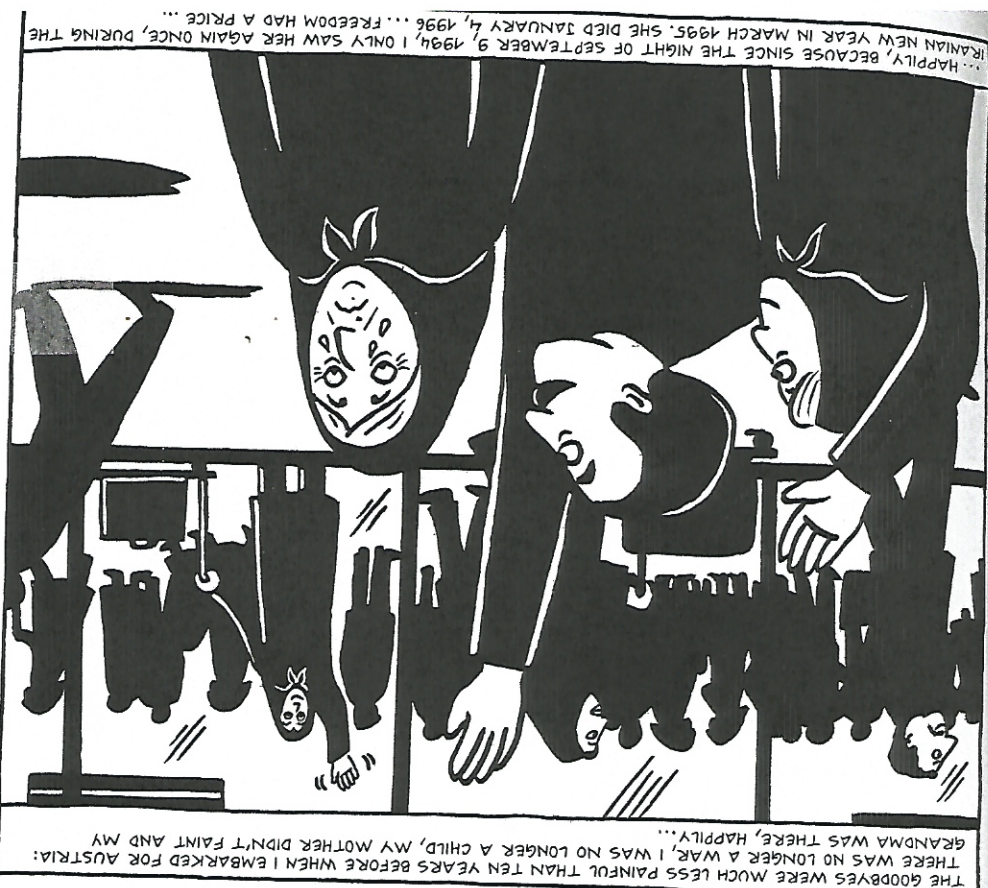
I HAD CHOSEN THIS DEPARTURE BUT DESPITE EVERYTHING, I FELT VERY SAD.



MY FATHER CRIED AS USUAL,

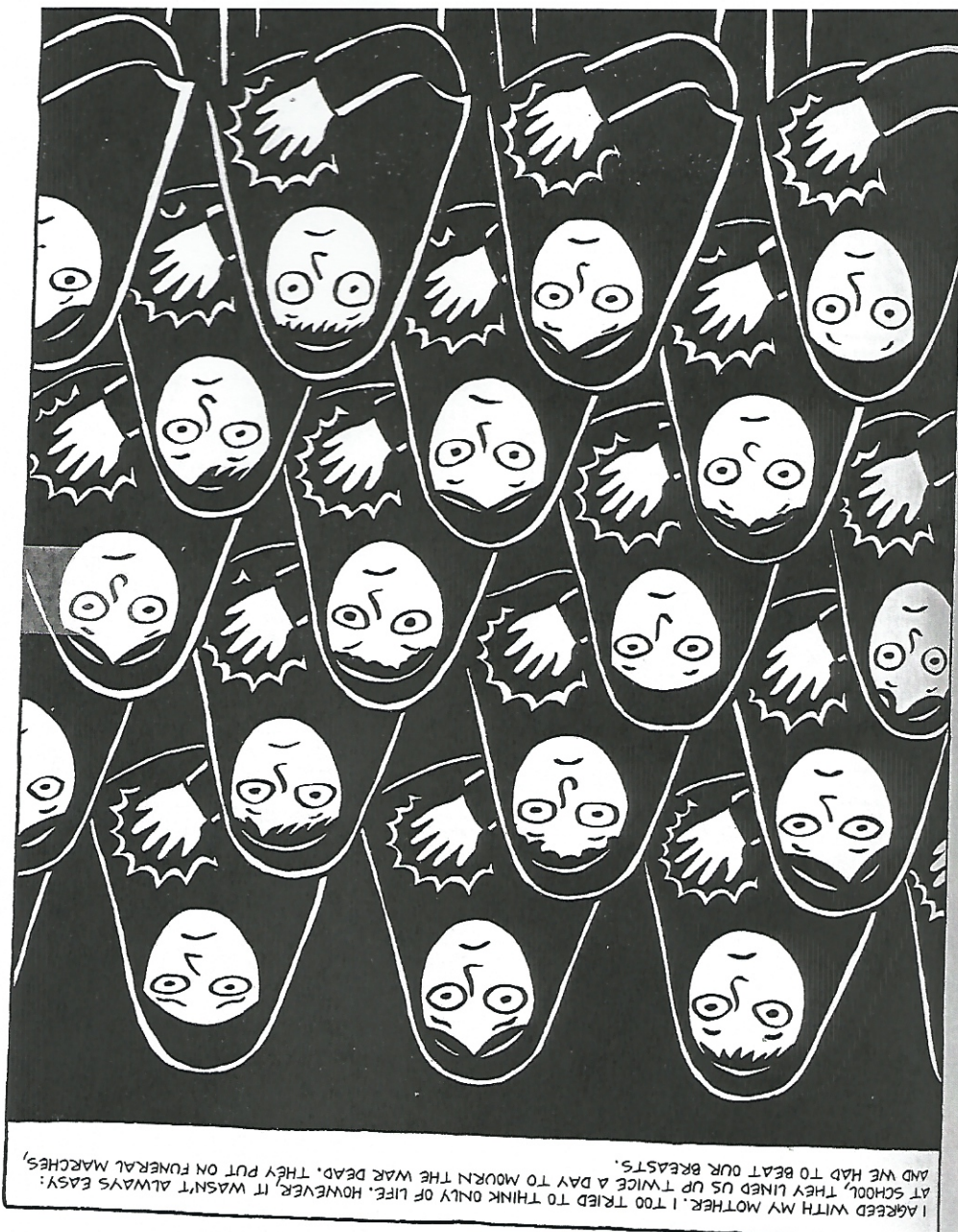


AND MY MOTHER KEPT HER HEAD. THIS TIME, YOU'RE LEAVING FOR GOOD. YOU ARE A FREE WOMAN. THE IRAN OF TODAY IS NOT FOR YOU. I FORBID YOU TO COME BACK! YES, MOM.



THE GOODBYES WERE MUCH LESS PAINFUL THAN TEN YEARS BEFORE WHEN I EMBARKED FOR AUSTRIA: THERE WAS NO LONGER A WAR, I WAS NO LONGER A CHILD, MY MOTHER DIDN'T FAINT AND MY GRANDMA WAS THERE, HAPPILY...
...HAPPILY, BECAUSE SINCE THE NIGHT OF SEPTEMBER 9, 1994, I ONLY SAW HER AGAIN ONCE, DURING THE IRANIAN NEW YEAR IN MARCH 1995. SHE DIED JANUARY 4, 1996... FREEDOM HAD A PRICE ...

5.



I AGREED WITH MY MOTHER. I TOO TRIED TO THINK ONLY OF LIFE. HOWEVER, IT WASN'T ALWAYS EASY: AT SCHOOL, THEY LINED US UP TWICE A DAY TO MOURN THE WAR DEAD. THEY PUT ON FUNERAL MARCHES, AND WE HAD TO BEAT OUR BREASTS.

OUR COUNTRY HAS ALWAYS KNOWN WAR AND MARTYRS. SO, LIKE MY FATHER SAID: "WHEN A BIG WAVE COMES, LOWER YOUR HEAD AND LET IT PASS!"

OF COURSE THEY MEAN SOMETHING TO ME! BUT WE ARE STILL LIVING!

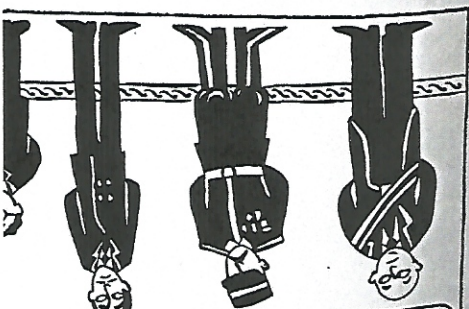
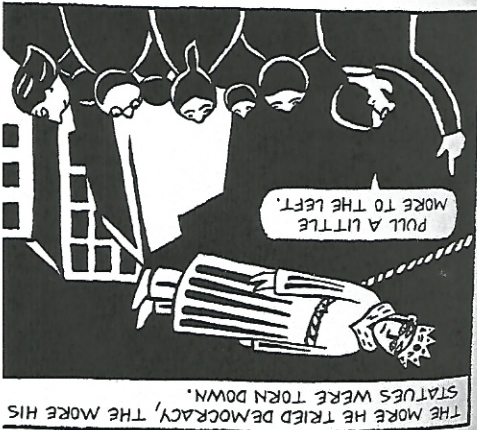
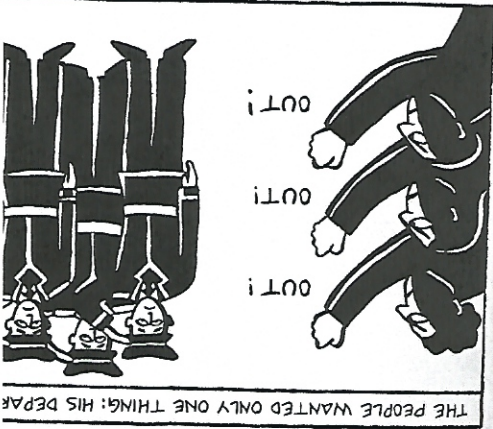
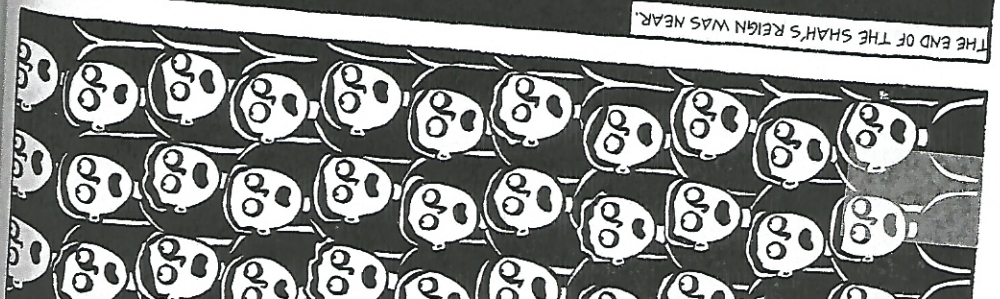
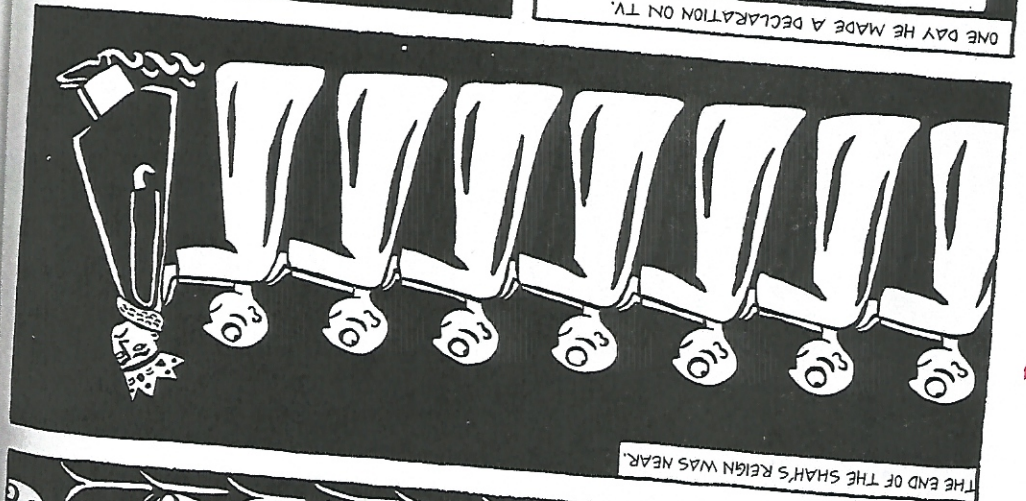
MOM, DON'T ALL THESE DEAD MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU?

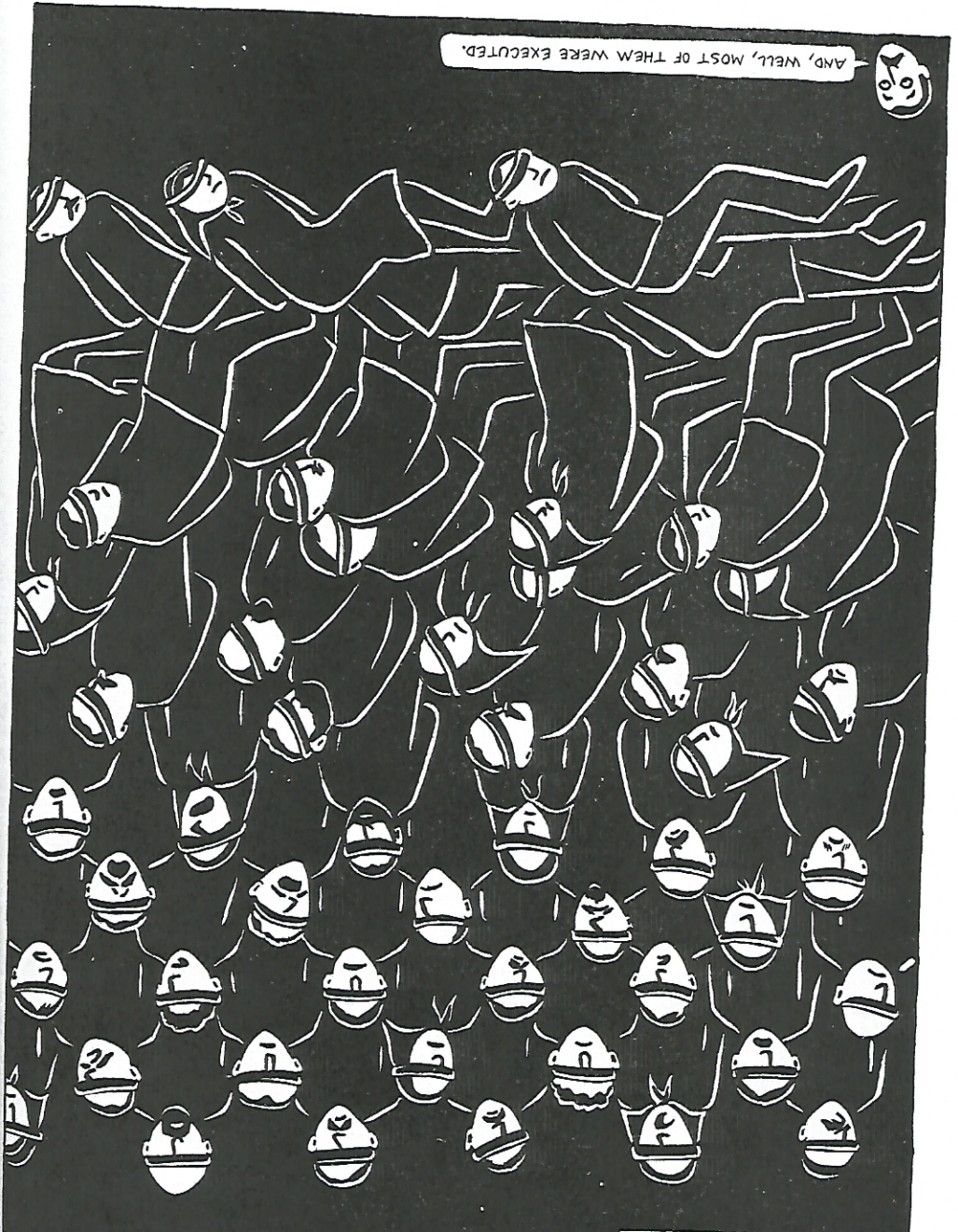
ACCORDING TO SHITTE TRADITION, WHEN AN UNMARRIED MAN DIES, A NUPTIAL CHAMBER IS BUILT FOR HIM. THAT WAY, THE DEAD MAN CAN SYMBOLICALLY ATTAIN CARNAL KNOWLEDGE.

SEE? THEY'RE AN TO SHOW WE HAVE DIED. ARE PACKED CHAMBERS.

MSHAHR. THEIR ARMS WERE MODERN, BUT WHERE IRAQ, IRAN HAD A HUGE RESERVOIR OF POTENTIAL THAT DIFFERENCE.

KEY





AND, WELL, MOST OF THEM WERE EXECUTED.



BUT ALL THAT IS
BEHIND US. WE
MUST GO FORWARD
NOW. WE MUST
REBUILD
EVERYTHING!

DESPITE MY FATHER'S SOUNDING
MOTIVATED, I DIDN'T FEEL ANY
REAL CONVICTION IN HIS VOICE.
HE SEEMED TO ME AS BLASE AS
MY MOTHER.



NOT COUNTING THOSE
DISABLED BY THE WAR, THE
POPULATIONS RAVAGED BY
CHEMICAL WEAPONS..



NO ONE KNOWS EXACTLY. MANY THOUSANDS, OR RATHER, MANY TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE.

HOW MANY DID THEY KILL?

LET'S
I HAVE
DO YOU
NO, NO

THE
THE
..

OF GRAND REVOLUTIONARY IDEAS AND DEMONSTRATIONS BETWEEN 1980 AND 1983, THE GOVERNMENT HAD EXECUTED SO MANY HIGH-SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS WE NO LONGER DARED TO TALK POLITICS.



LITTLE READERS, KING COULD BE REVERSION.

SHOWING YOUR WRIST.



AN.

THING WAS REST US.

MYSELF:

WHERE IS MY FREEDOM OF SPEECH?

WHAT'S

I EVEN REMEMBER SPENDING AN ENTIRE DAY AT THE COMMITTEE BECAUSE OF A PAIR OF RED SOCKS.



IT'S ONLY NATURAL! WHEN WE'RE AFRAID, WE LOSE ALL SENSE OF ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION. OUR FEAR PARALYZES US. BESIDES, FEAR HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND ALL DICTATORS' REPRESSION.

SHOWING YOUR HAIR OR PUTTING ON MAKEUP LOGICALLY BECAME ACTS OF REBELLION.



UNFORTUNATELY, MANY OF US WERE REBELS ONLY IN APPEARANCE. ONE DAY, IN CLASS...

MARTANE! YOUR PENCIL CASE!



THANKS DORNA, THANKS!

YOU'RE WELCOME.



YOU TAKE THE PILL?

YES.

ME TOO, I'M IRREGULAR. ARE YOU IRREGULAR, TOO?

NO, NOT AT ALL. I TAKE IT BECAUSE I SLEEP WITH MY BOYFRIEND!



OOOOH!!!!

A LITTLE DECENCY, PLEASE!

CAN YOU EXPLAIN TO ME WHAT'S INDECENT ABOUT MAKING LOVE WITH YOUR BOYFRIEND?

SHUT UP!

SHUT UP YOURSELF! MY BODY IS MY OWN! I GIVE IT TO WHOMEVER I WANT! IT'S NOBODY ELSE'S BUSINESS!

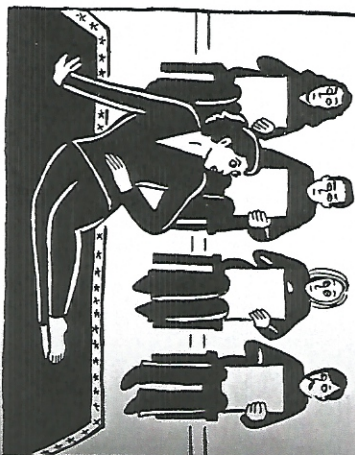


8.

HAPPILY, THERE WAS STILL THE OTHER HALF.
LITTLE BY LITTLE, I GOT TO KNOW THE
STUDENTS WHO THOUGHT LIKE ME.



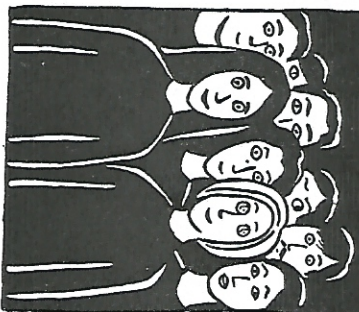
WE WOULD GO TO ONE ANOTHER'S HOUSES,
WHERE WE POSED FOR EACH OTHER ... WE HAD
AT LAST FOUND A PLACE OF FREEDOM.



AT FIRST THERE WERE ONLY
FIVE OF US.



THEN ...



AND FINALLY ...



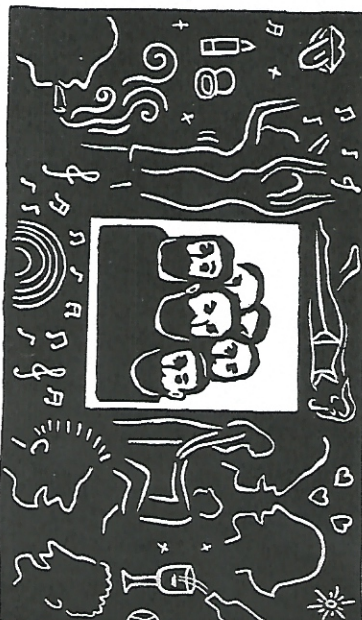
WE WERE MUCH MORE NUMEROUS
THAN I WOULD HAVE BELIEVED.

OUR PROFESSOR WAS SO HAPPY TO
SEE THE SKETCHES WE DID AT HOME.

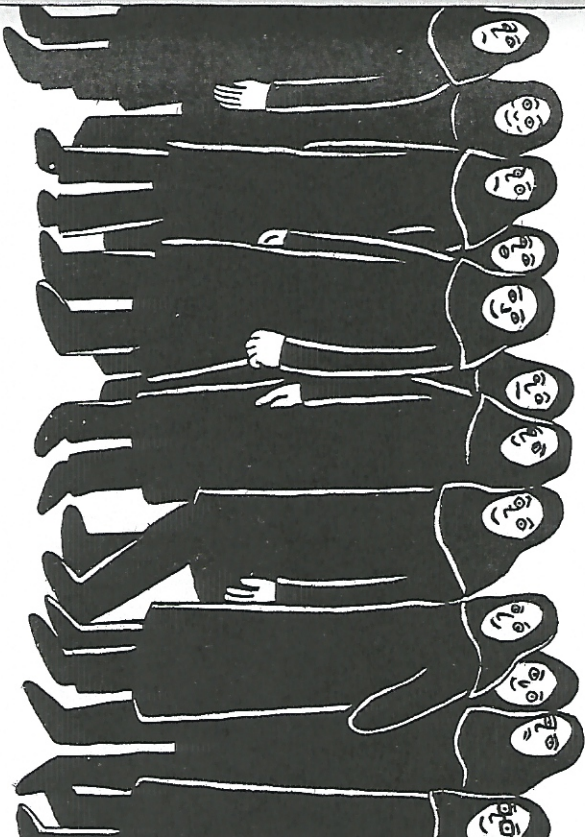
BRAVO! AN ARTIST SHOULD DEIFY
THE LAW! I CON-
GRATULATE YOU!



THE MORE TIME PASSED, THE MORE I BECAME CONSCIOUS OF THE CONTRAST
BETWEEN THE OFFICIAL REPRESENTATION OF MY COUNTRY AND THE
REAL LIFE OF THE PEOPLE, THE ONE THAT WENT ON BEHIND THE WALLS.



OUR BEHAVIOR IN PUBLIC AND OUR BEHAVIOR IN PRIVATE WERE POLAR OPPOSITES.



... THIS DISPARITY MADE US SCHIZOPHRENIC.