

LEGEND

Dimitri Karamasov

Traduction américaine : Sian Bouyou

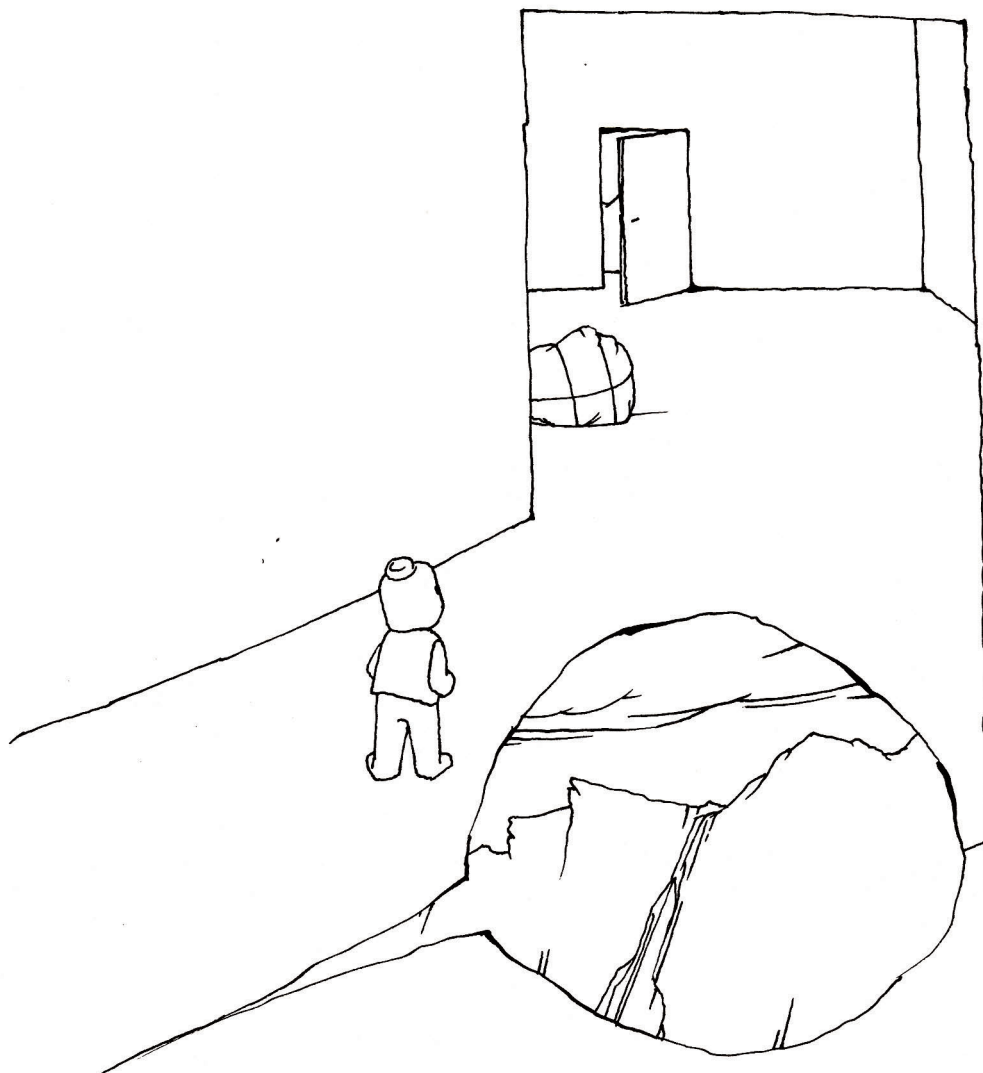
I am not able to give a real signature

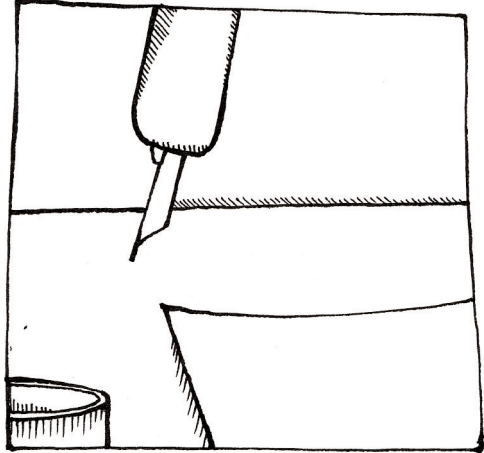
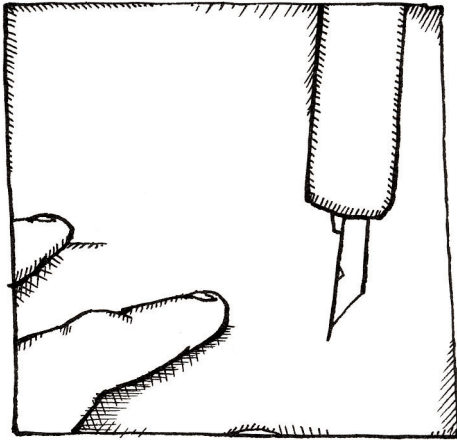
Something is going on between

my proper name and what I draw.

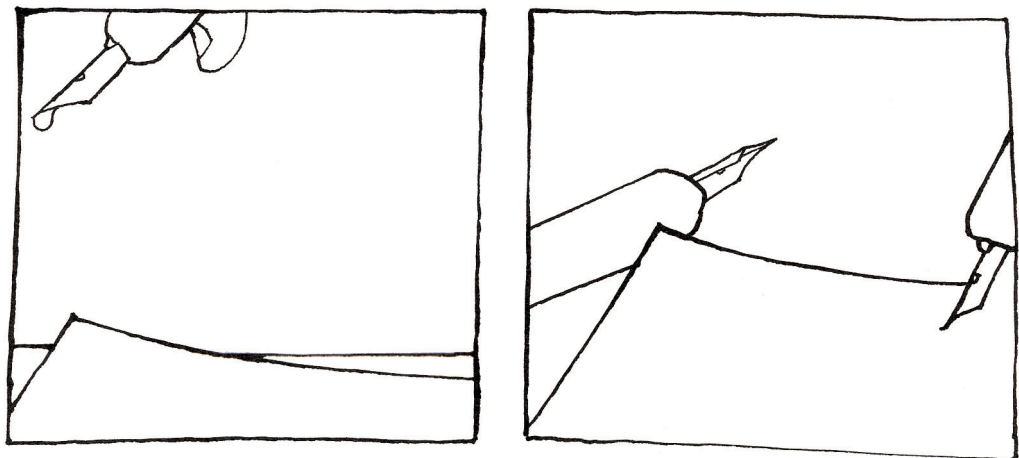
I do not know what, from either one or from the other,

is holding me back the most...



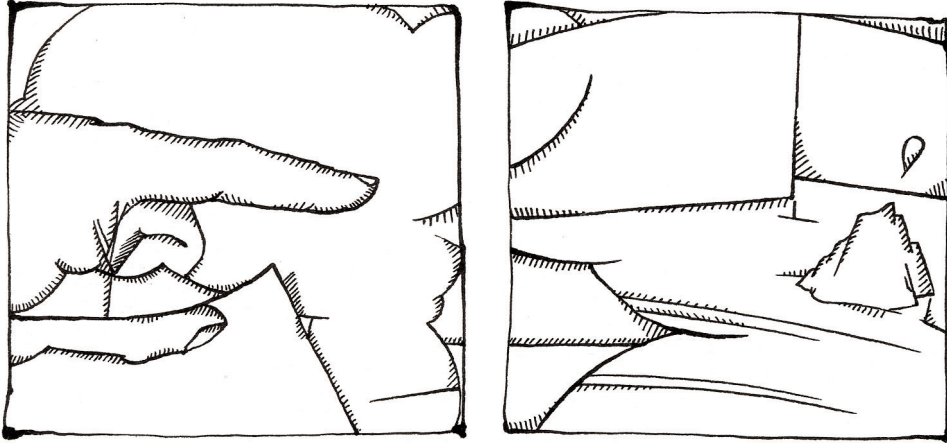


"I had no vision"



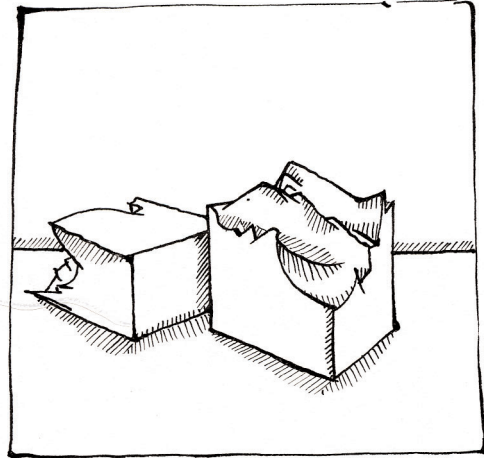
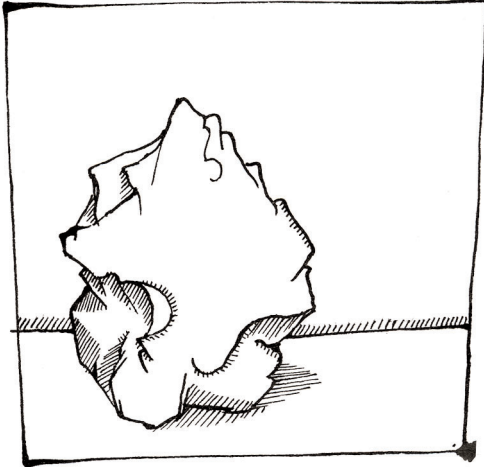
My father is the one who says that.

And I thought: "he does not have any imagery".



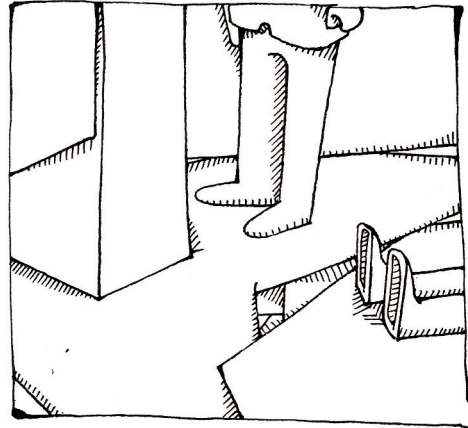
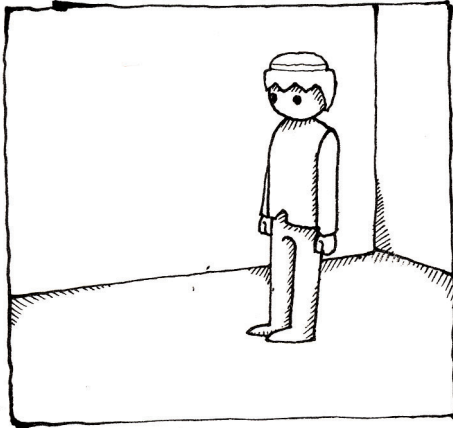
He does have a few photographs. But they are spoiled.

Artist's centering, blurs, reflections, mingled colours,
forms without a theme.



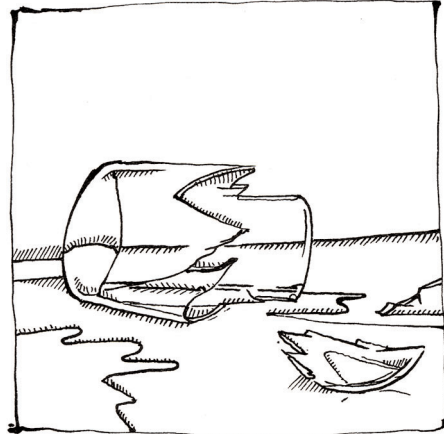
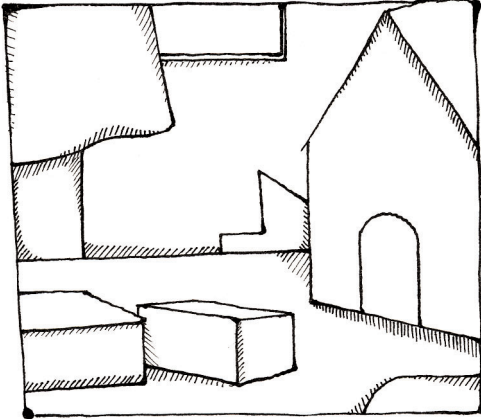
My father likes to collect what he calls “false fossils”.

He plays with these stones whose shapes, like those of a cloud or a crack, have the power to come to life.



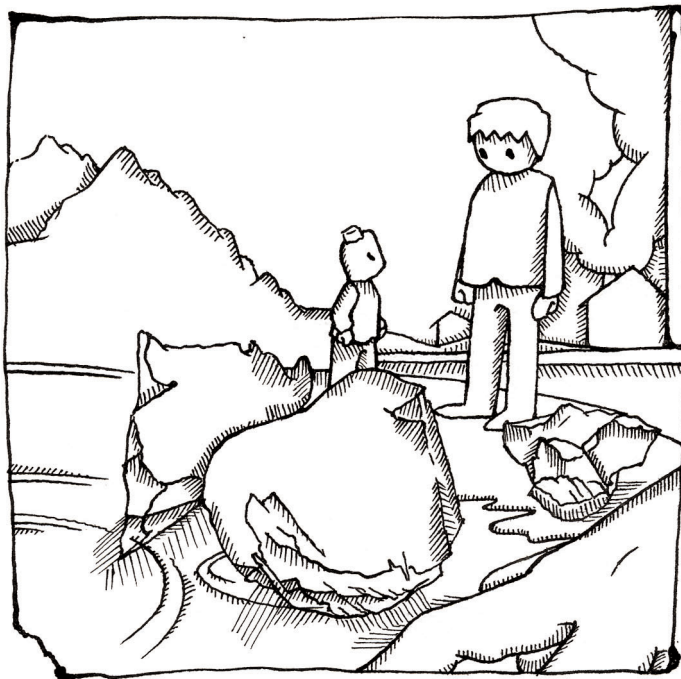
When we were children he used to give us toys in kits.

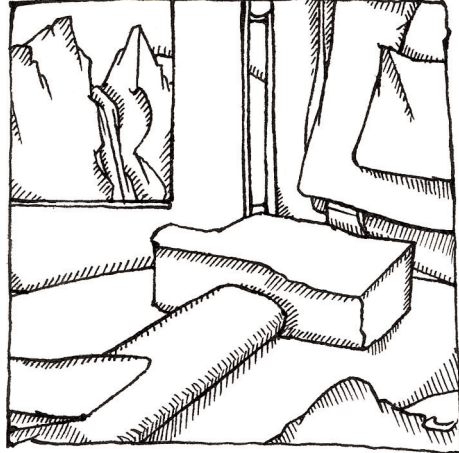
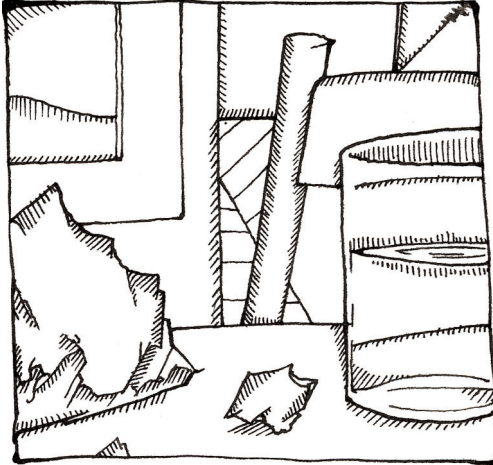
Small figures that fit in spaces to build.



This industrial plastic was not our only world.
My father also roped us in to out-door games
(living wildly in an out-of-the-way place), or word-games
(making up definitions, enigmas, anagrams).

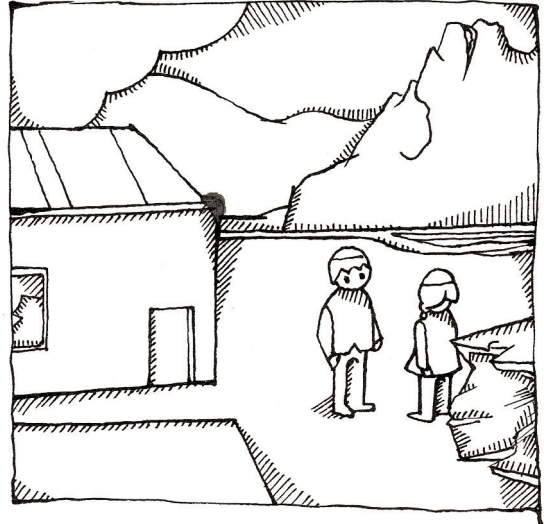
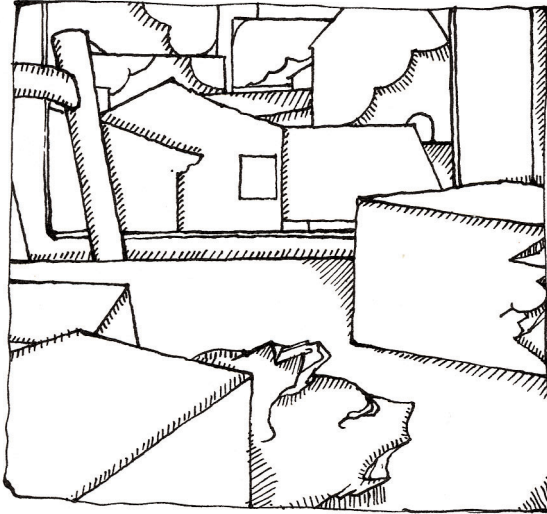
“kitchen: thicken”, “states: tastes”, “bed-room: boredom”, “nameless: salesman”.





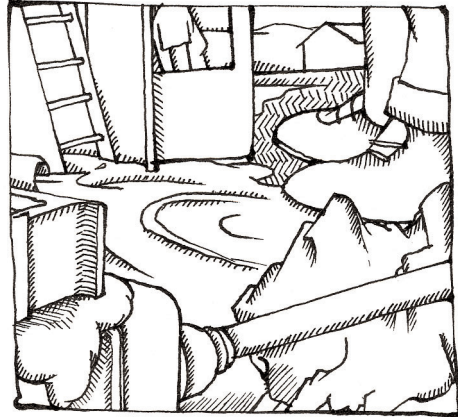
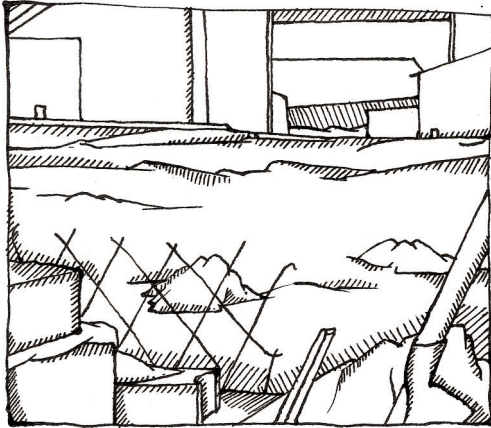
P has a taste for malleable things, that can be taken to pieces, permanently temporary...

In his interior lay-out, the stylish clashes with the kitsch, plastic is grafted to the natural, artificial to genuine. The whole thing makes up a variety of more or less necessary objects.



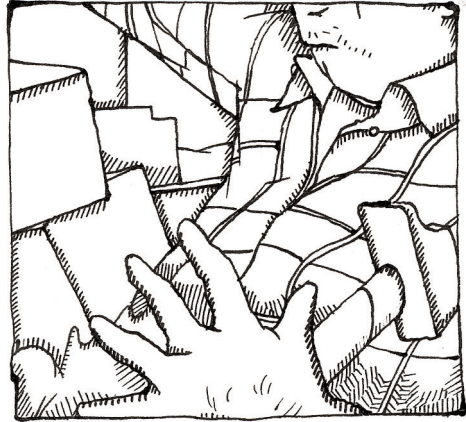
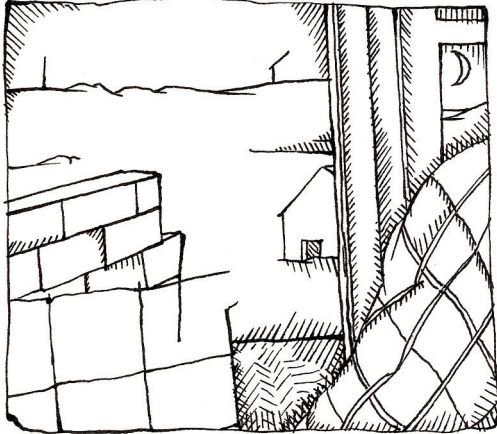
Potok is from a working-class milieu. This is his moral resource.

But he willingly gives up any comfort, he reserves plenty of room for fanciful imagination.



When he speaks of his childhood, it is not very clear.
The suburbs, waste grounds...

When he was small, he lived with his three sisters in a rickety house, near
the sand quarries on the canal, at the place where
construction companies are still established.

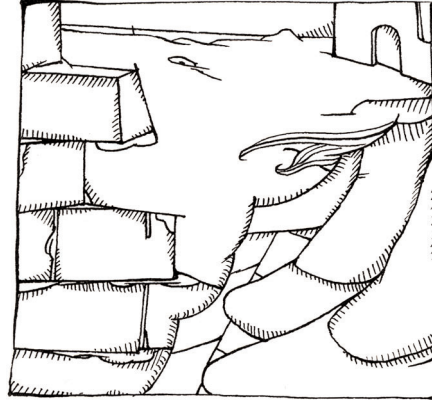
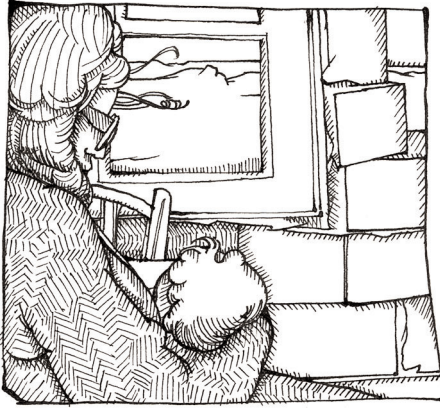


His father did stonework.

He was brutal.

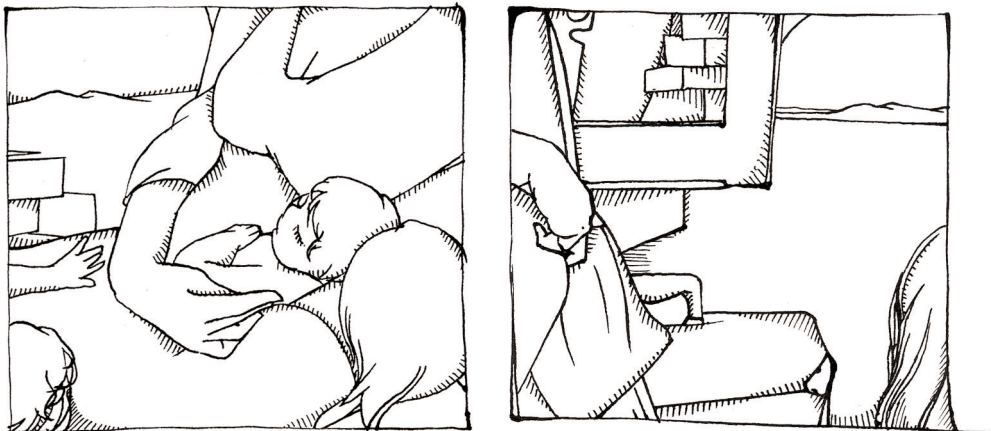
Potok's parade was his witticism.

The two of them do not seem to come from the same world.



Potok reflects more deeply upon his mother.

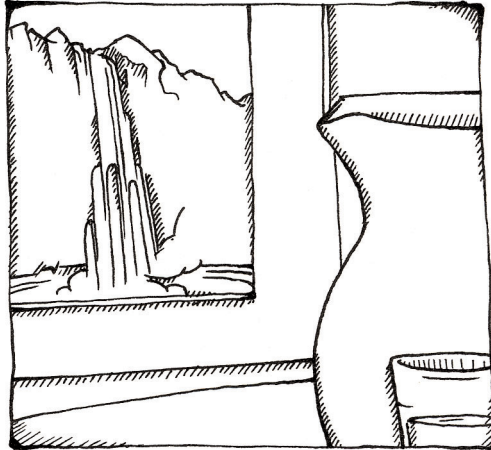
To his eyes she embodies dignity, common intelligence.
Even though she had been sightless, her gaze remains most intimate to him.



Potok's mother was a wet-nurse. She shared her breast with several children.

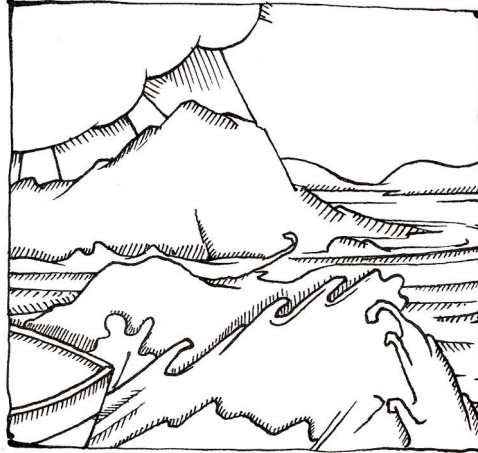
She was called Jeanne Rivolta, a pretty name.

A strange note on the birth certificate made her a girl born of an unknown mother.

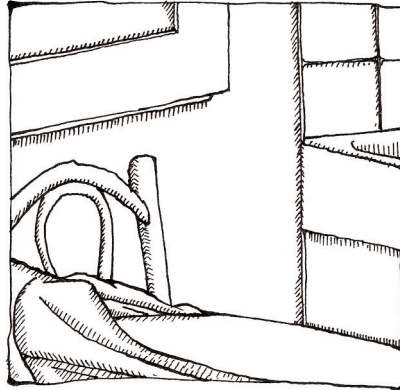
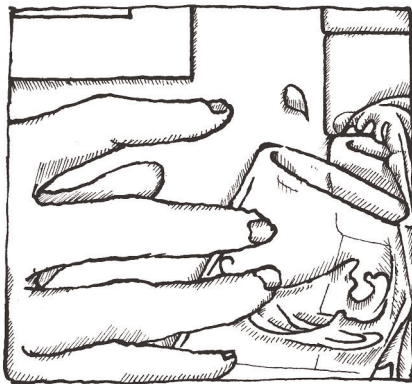


But maybe all that is just a legend (...)

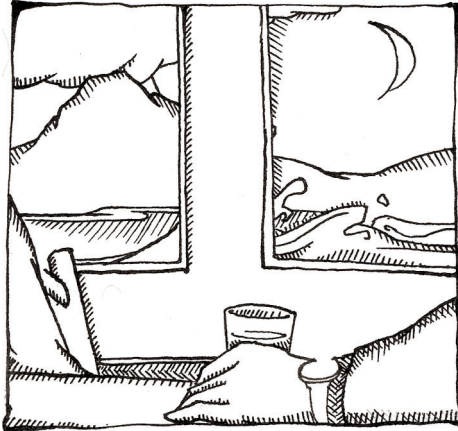




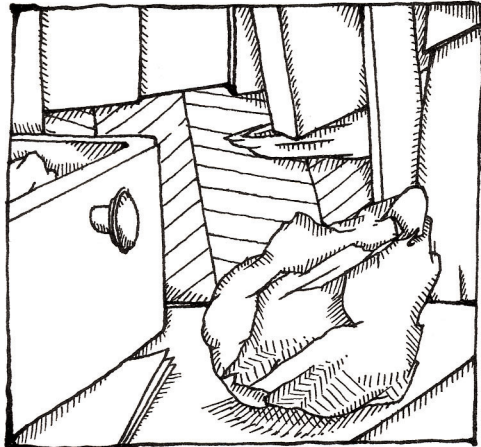
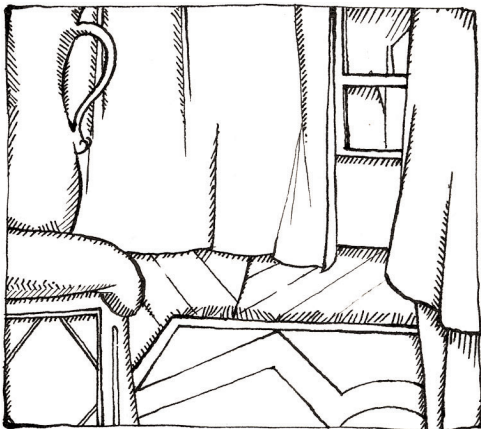
The sixties provided Potok with beautiful horizons.



He managed his affairs alone, according to the swirl of the times
Sometimes he recalls his wanderings, mainly as a night owl.



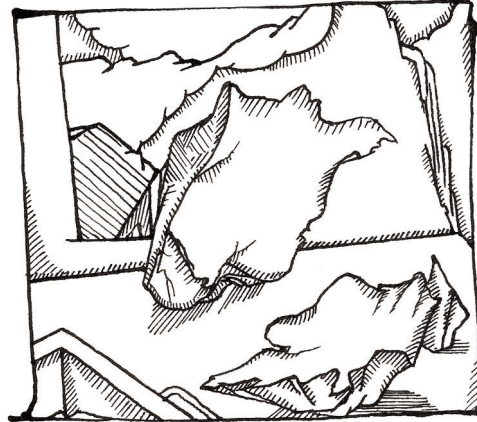
He wanted to be an ephemeral lover.
The fluctuation of his love affairs brought him poetic pleasure.



That is how one of the women he loved got pregnant.

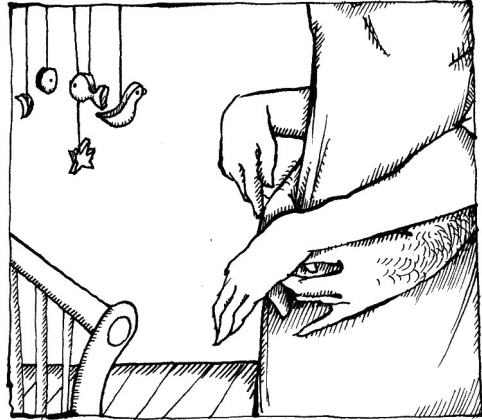
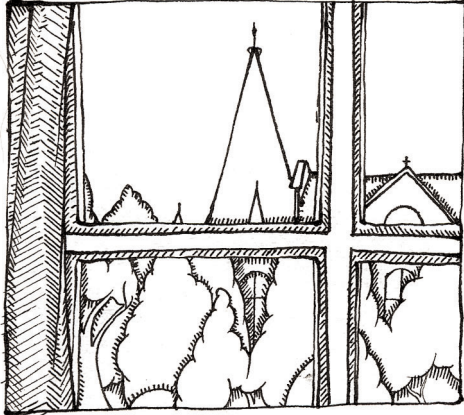
Like in a dream, when a foreign body
comes to change the course of things.





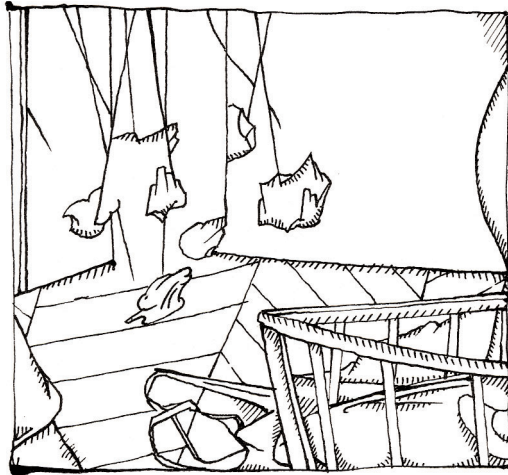
Potok got married.

It is probable he did so “to see “,
like in poker.



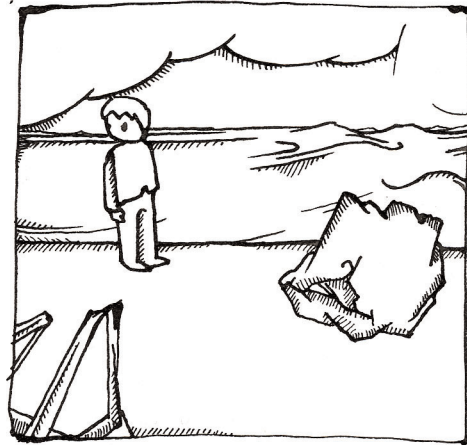
He and his wife called their first son Ivan.

Were the two of them already thinking of the *Brothers Karamasov* ?



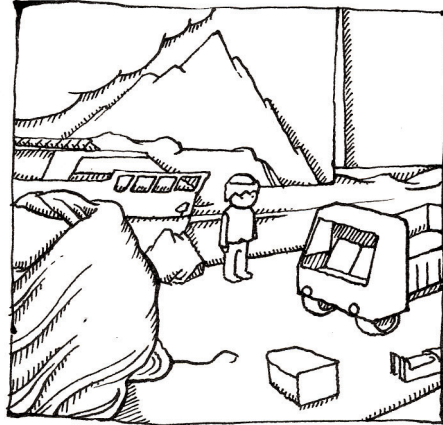
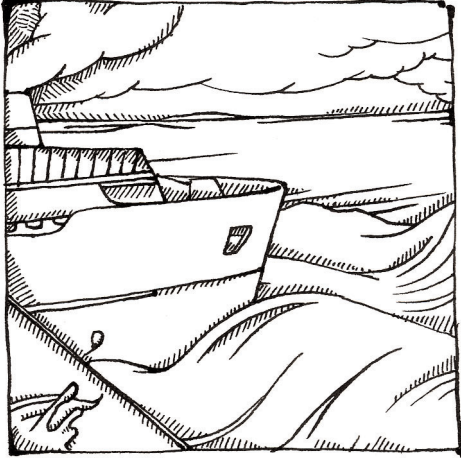
Alexis and S., my two other brothers, were to be born a year later.

But before then, Potok had to leave for eighteen months to do his military service, overseas...



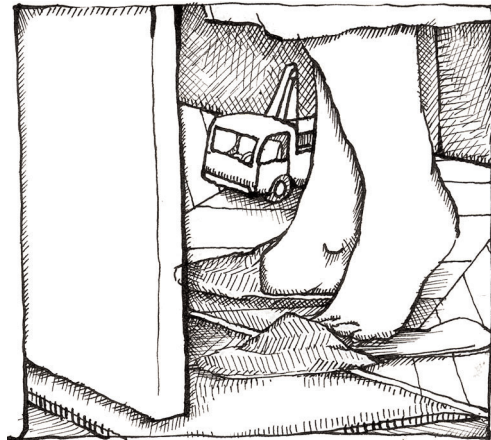
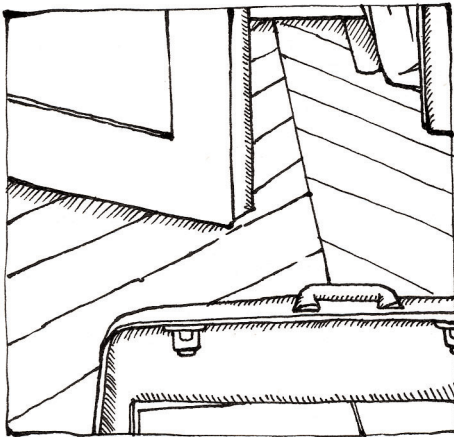
He did not dislike “travelling”

What held him back, was the idea of leaving his wife, his child.



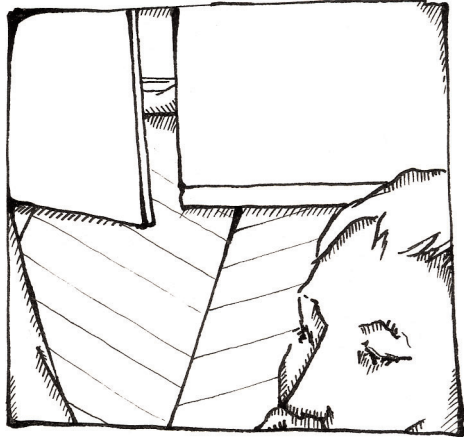
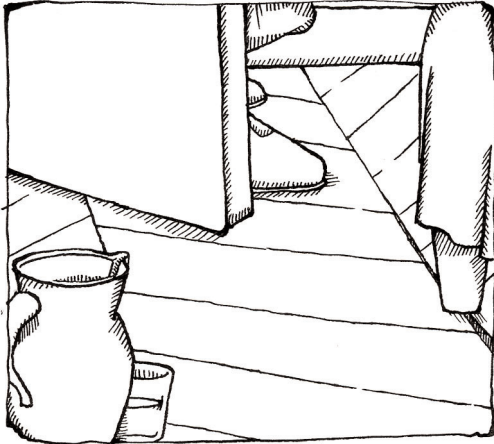
That is why he took Ivan with him.

The idea amused him. And his exile was a good time.



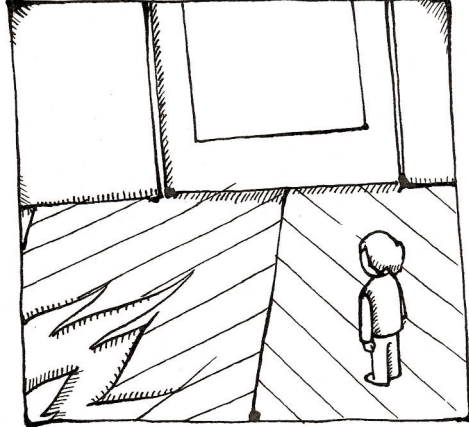
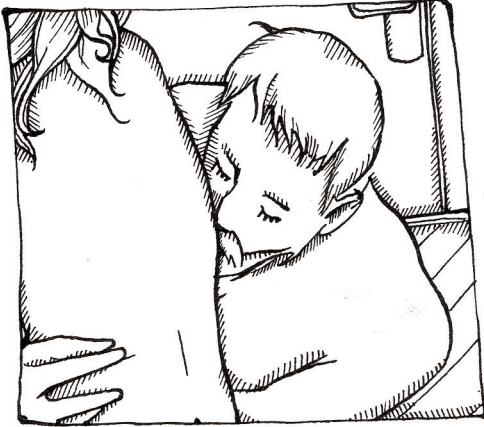
His wife gave birth to twins.

At first Potok saw them in the intervals, on leave,
then he went home for good.



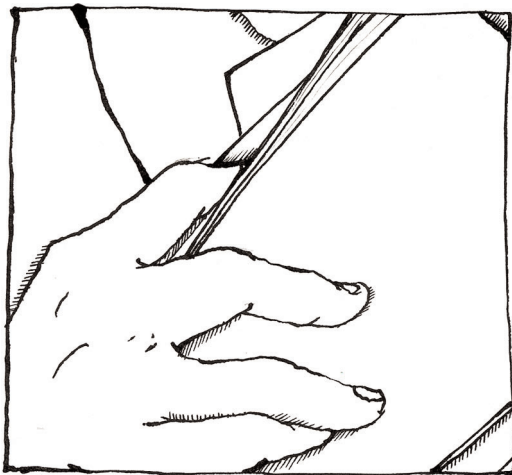
In the photos taken during that time, the shadow of a “friend” appears.

Afterwards Potok found out that his wife made up for his absence in his arms.



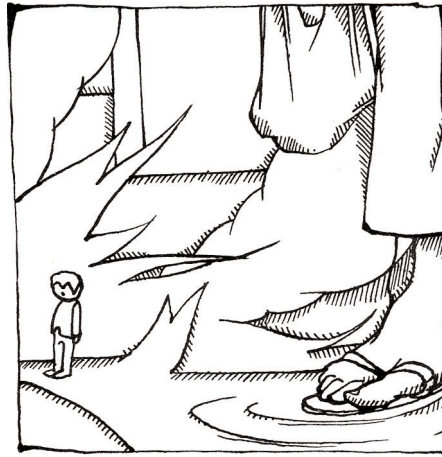
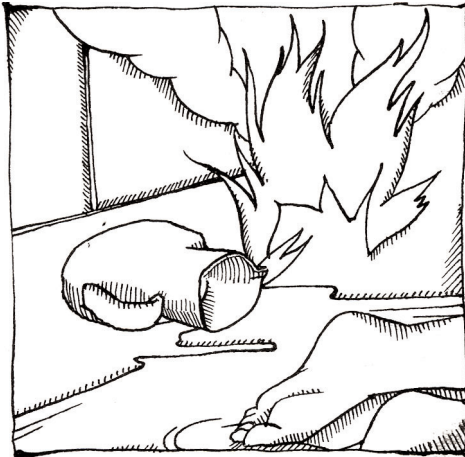
How did she expect him to react?

He kept out of the way for some time.



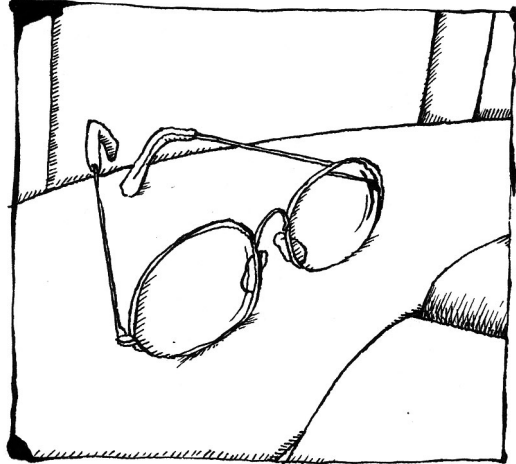
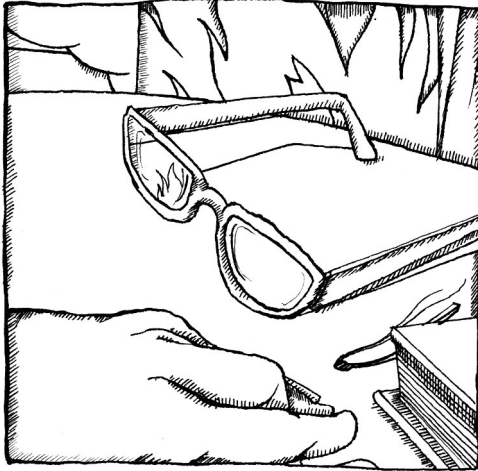
He did not know how to tell me what, in this story, hurt him.

Anyway, he refrains from being jealous.



There is a term Potok will never use...

Adutery, deceit, unfaithfulness, jealousy, betrayal, humiliation, offense..



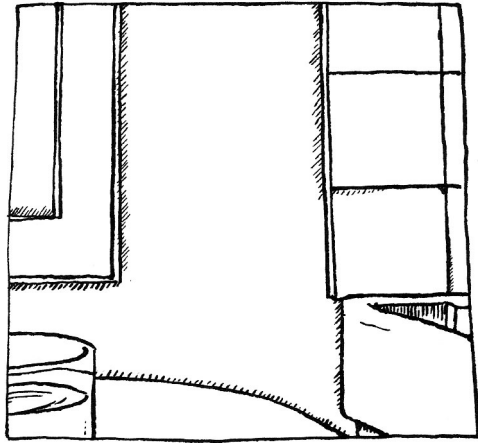
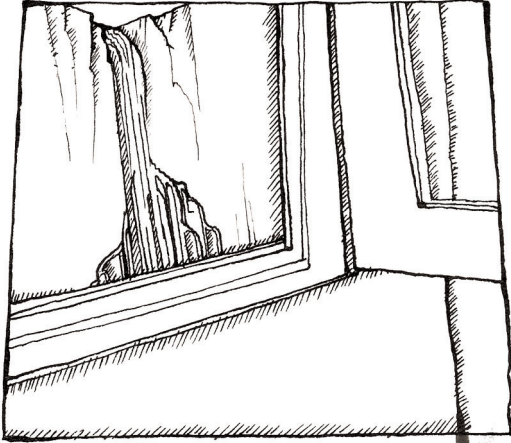
He would rather say ...“manipulation”, “lies” or “misunderstanding”.

He ended up turning the page.

ça m'a pas eu lieu comme ça ?

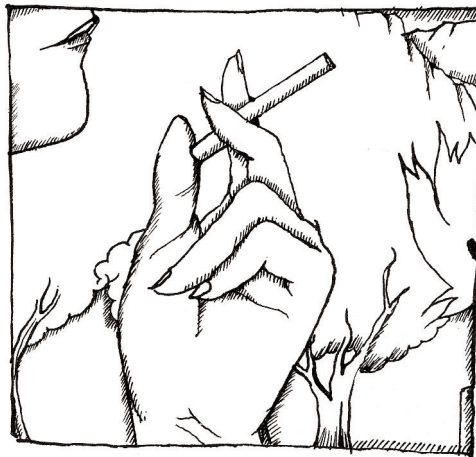


(it did not take place like this ?)



He moved house with his wife and children.

The only real photo I know of P. with his family dates back to that time.
I do not have a picture of the place where they were living.



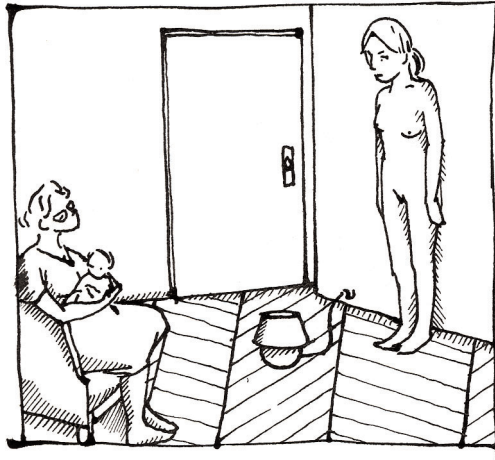
P. always felt free to seduce other women.

The one he meets then, shuns his marriage.



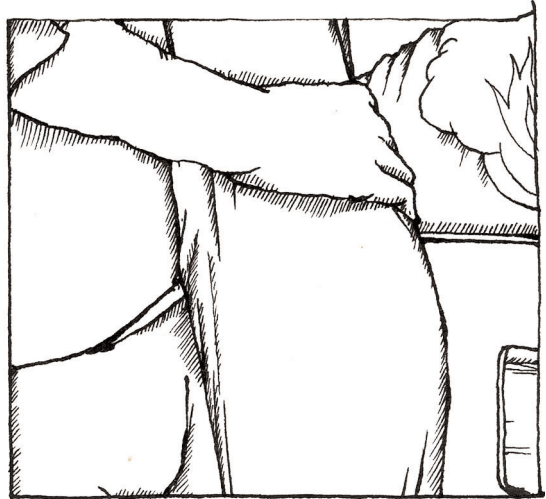
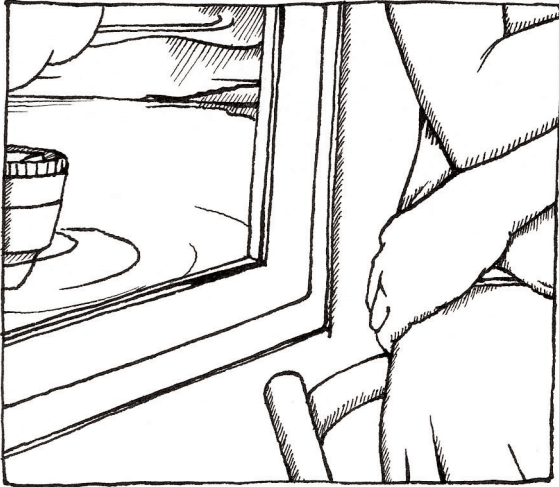
Potok gets attached to her.

To the point of wanting to share his life with her.



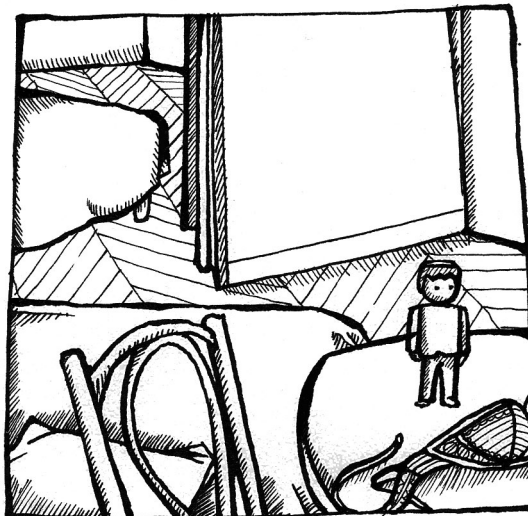
She came and settled in his home.

With them.



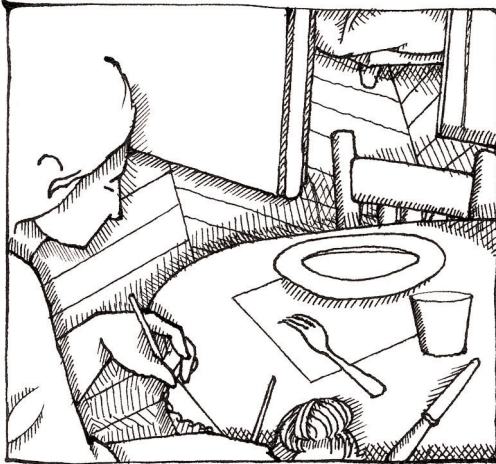
Potok knew how to navigate amongst several women.

The idea of bringing his mistress and his wife together was new to him:
she took the children into account.
He wanted to stay close to them.



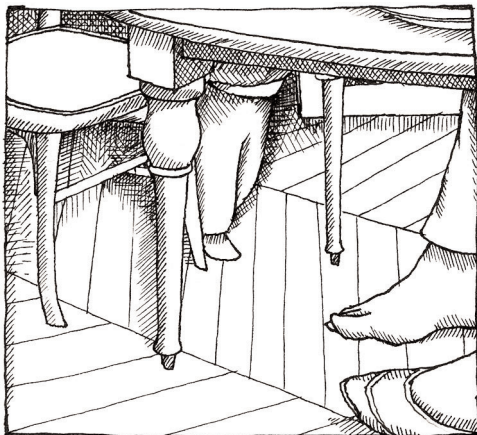
The situation did not seem to raise any questions.

A few intrigues here and there, in the corners...



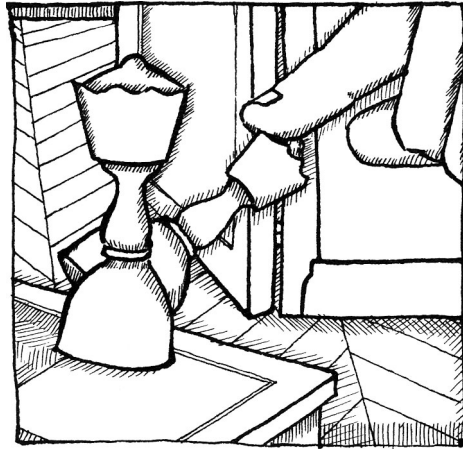
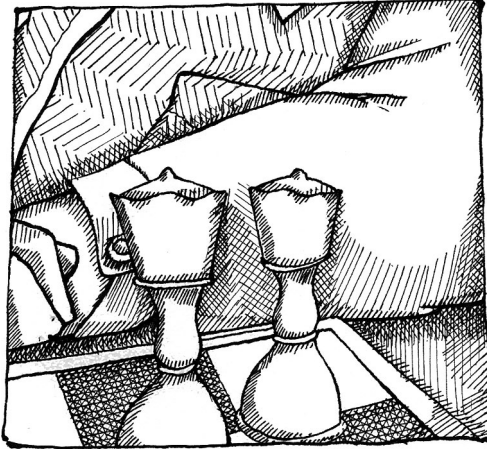
I do not know anything precise about their daily life.

Was the atmosphere magnetic, subdued, loud, colourful?



All I know is, one day the mistress wanted to become a mother.

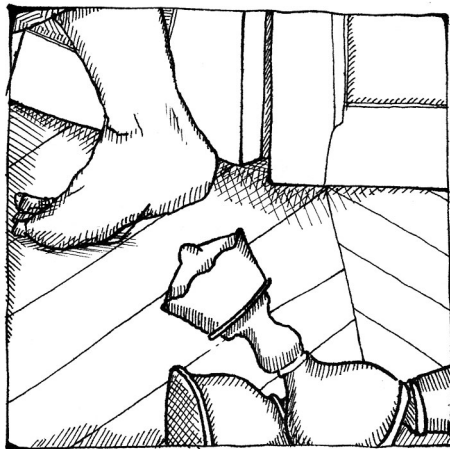
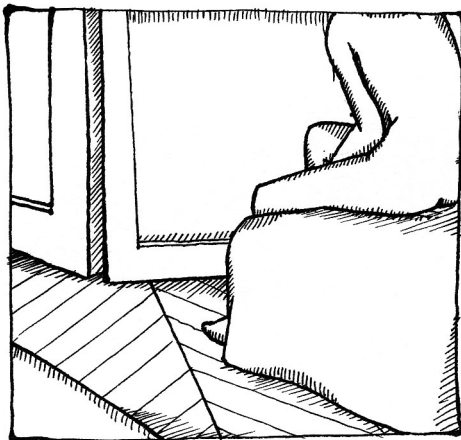
“To make up the weight”.
These are Potok’s words.
She became pregnant.



Potok was enthusiastic. He knew that the game was promising no rules.

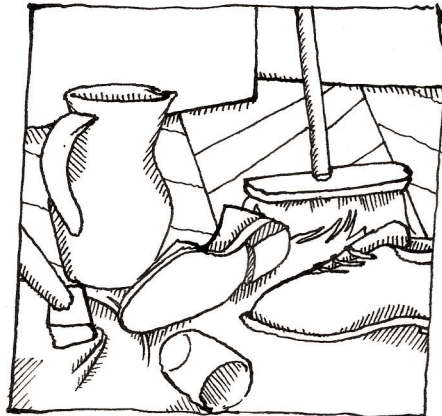
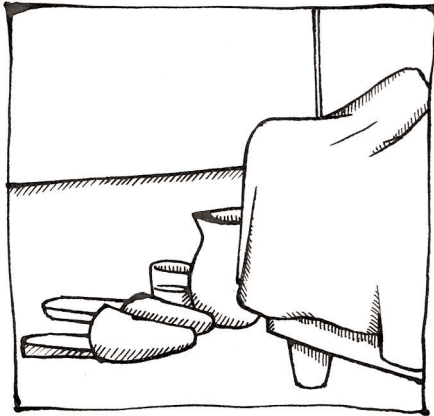
His vision opened out...

Children, mothers, women, wives, without prioritized placings



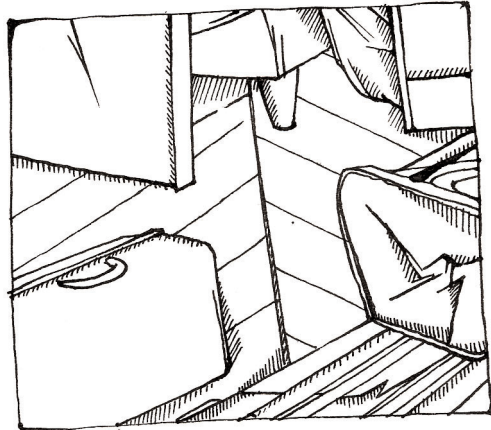
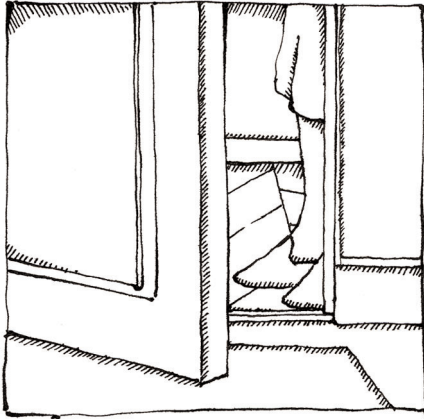
Three rooms: three bed-rooms. Two women, plus some children.

The mistress and the wife were not particularly happy with the strange mixture.



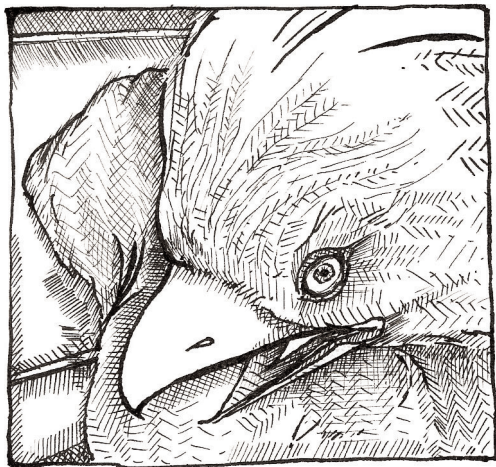
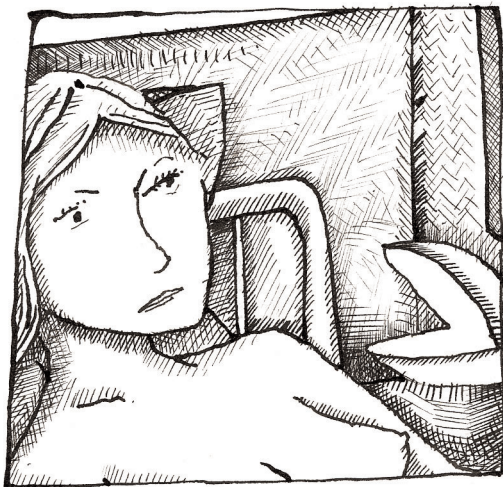
Moreover, they did not contest it.

Potok had his bearings, without really knowing where he was going.

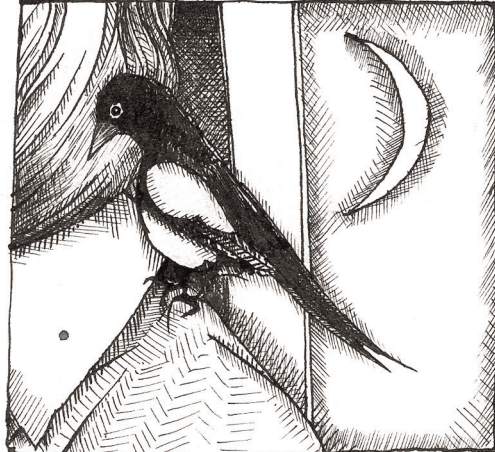
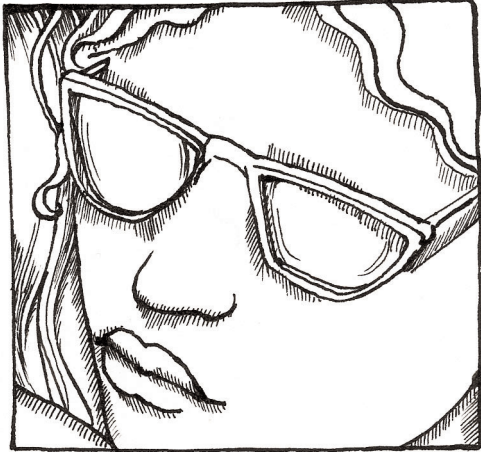


What name could he give to their union?
What fiction were they falling into in order to tolerate it?

To tell you the truth, the next nine months gradually
disintegrated Potok's enthusiasm.

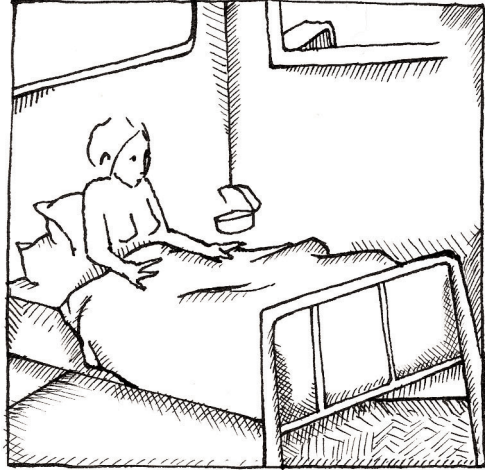
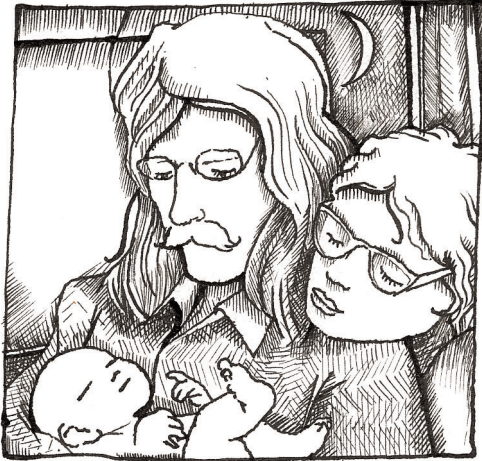


The mistress gives birth one Summer.



On that day, Potok drops by the maternity hospital.

He comes with his wife.

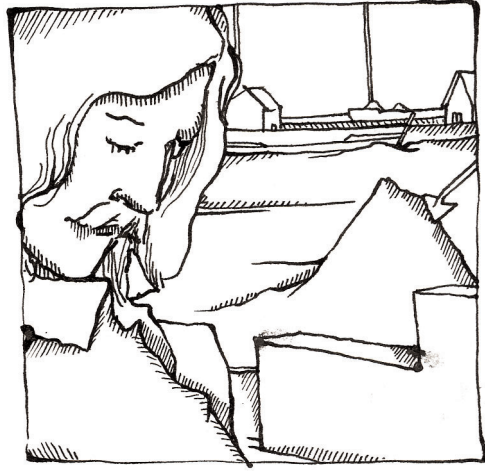
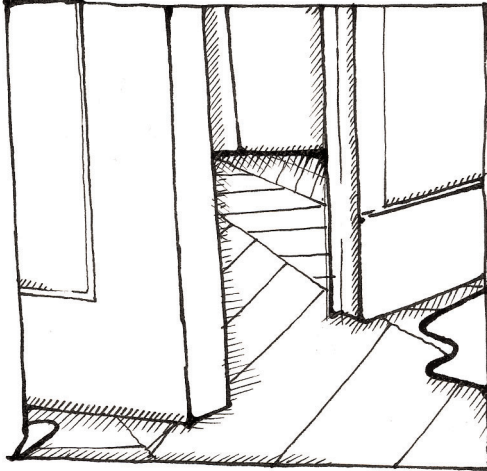


Petrified, the mistress can see that Potok's fourth son, even though she has just brought him into the world, is no longer hers...



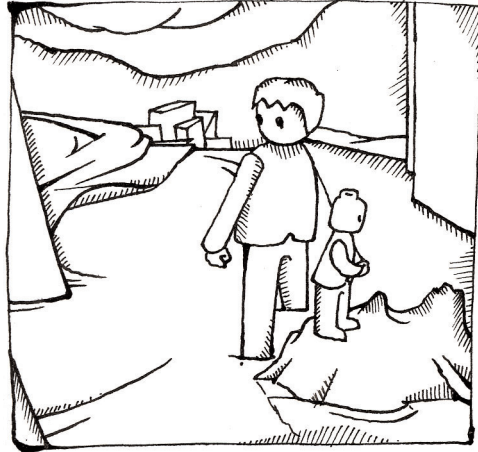
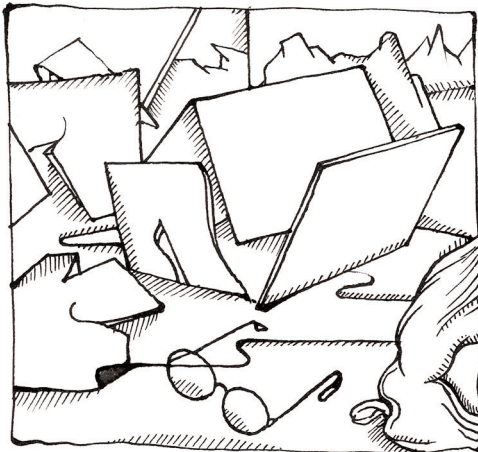






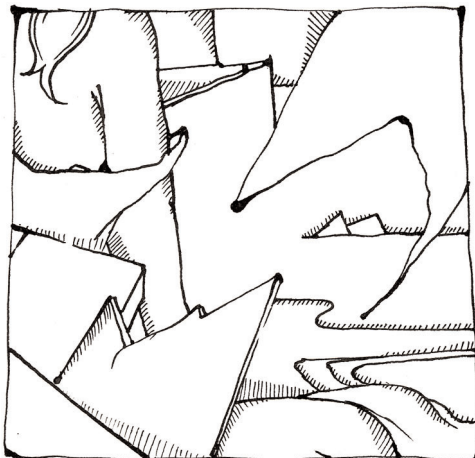
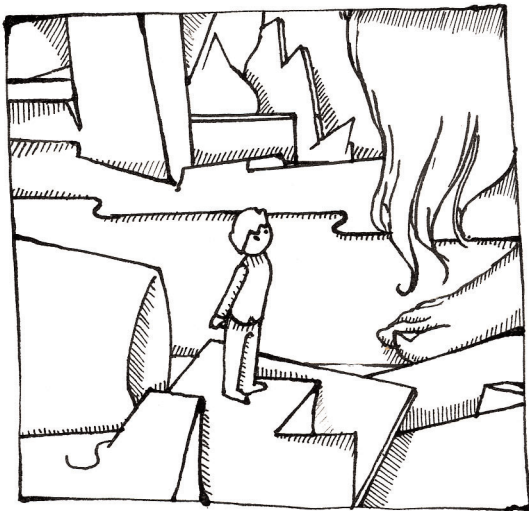
This is where my story should have started.

But my father does not want to recall it any more.



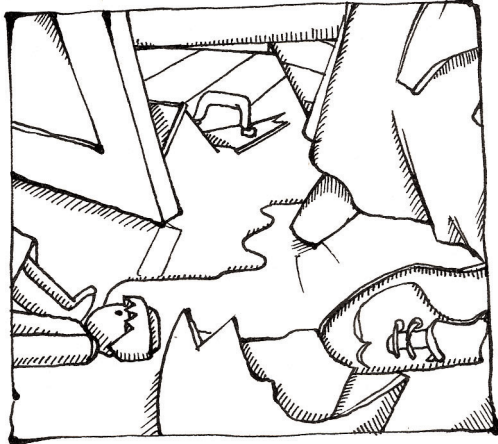
He has not retained anything.

Only the pretence...

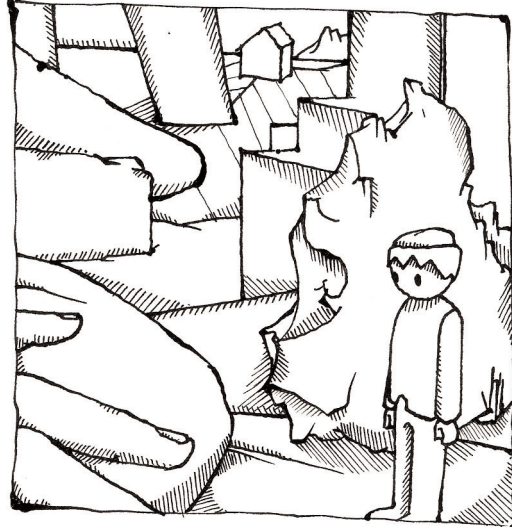
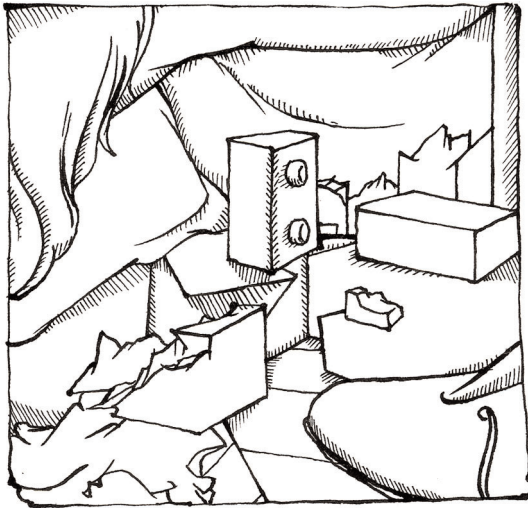


The end of an endless game, like in chess. A few years.

He discarded.



False love affairs, false starts, false families, false dramas
And four false real names, for a false father-hood.

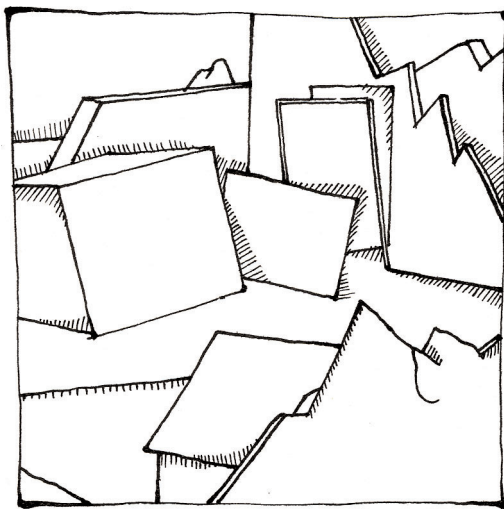
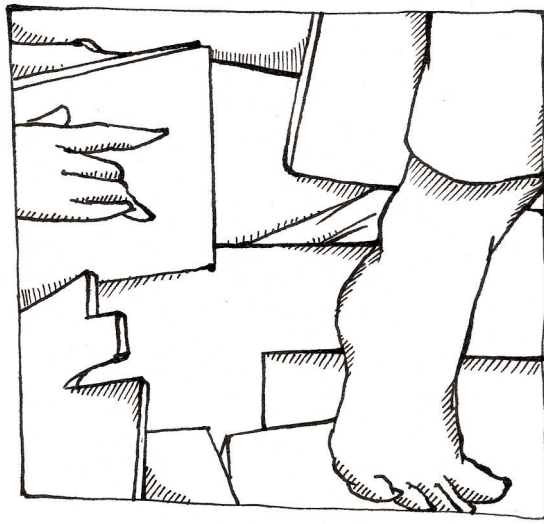


...I can hear the “false fossil” stuttering...

It is only a stone.

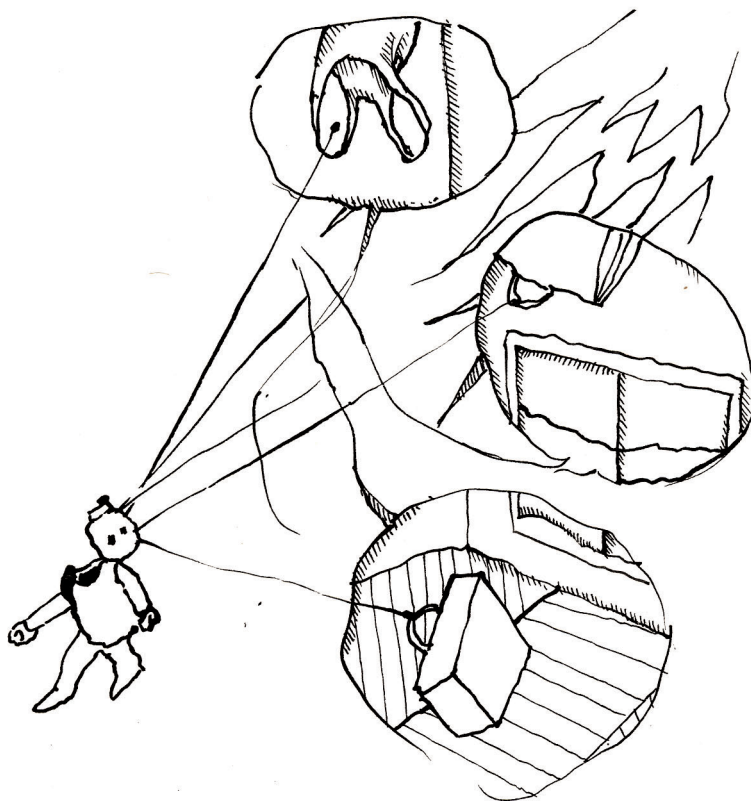
Nothing, behind this thing, naturally hollow, watching us...

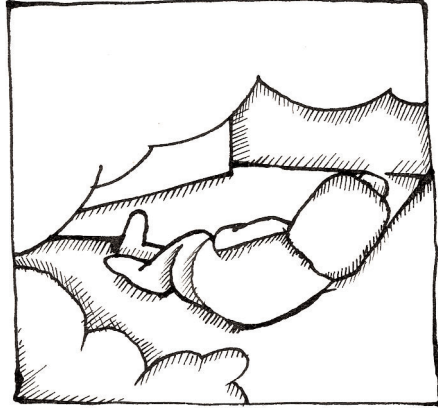
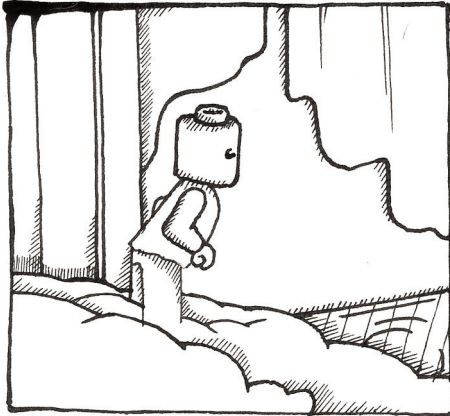
A piece of stone that falls, splits, and buries itself.



His revolt...

Potok fails to say anything.





As for me, I imagine...

or rather I think
of the lifeless hollow
in the false
fossil

...

..

.