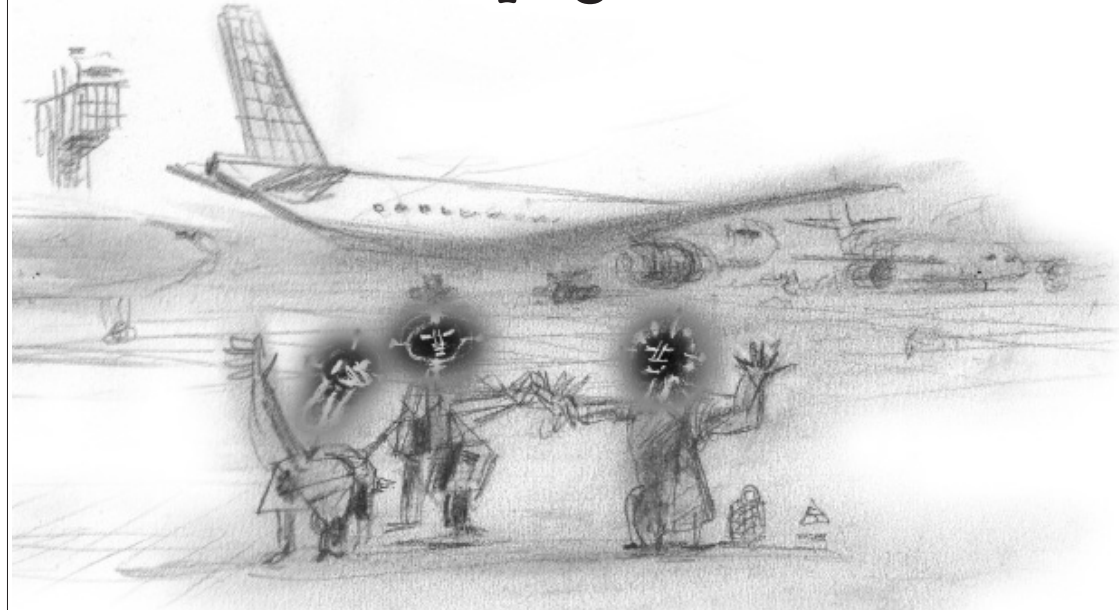


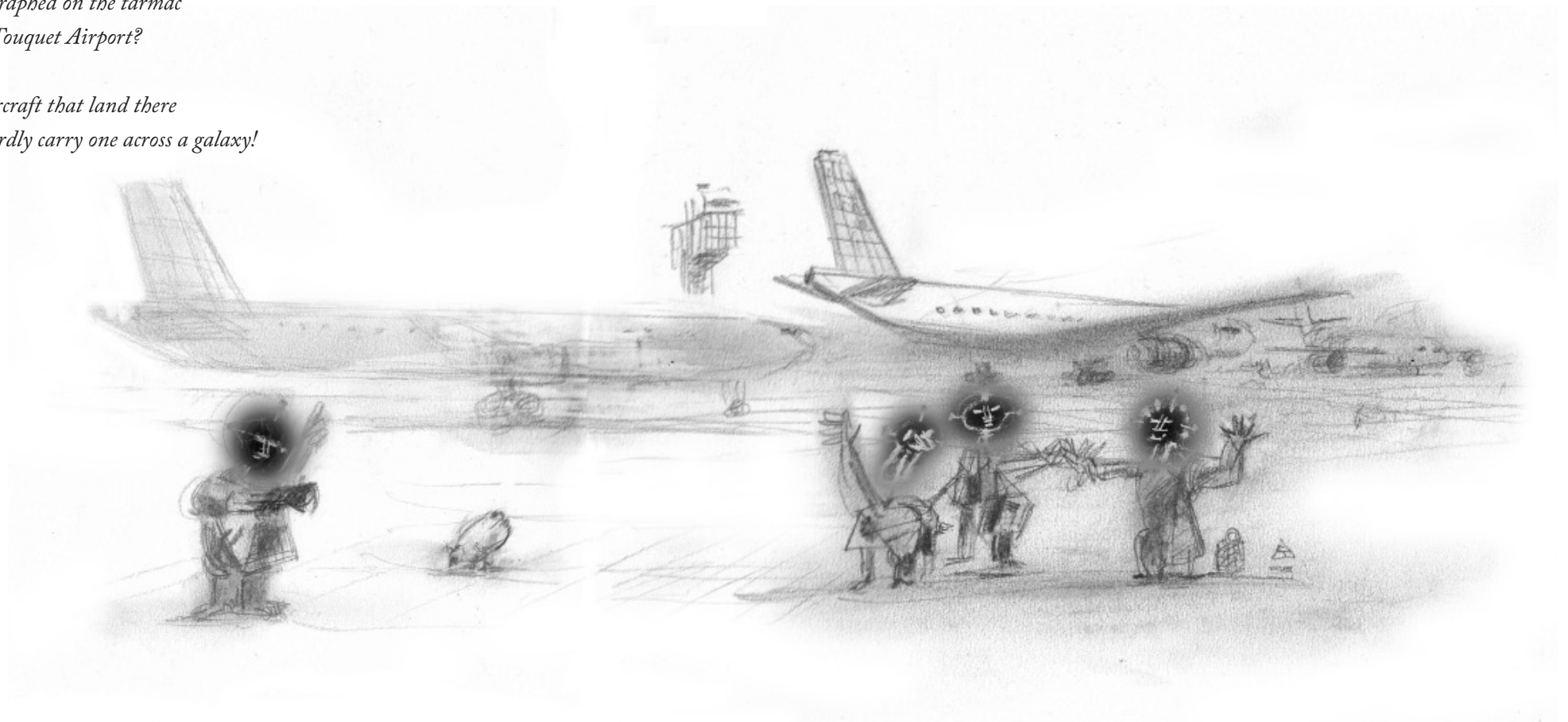
By what fancy
did the Apogeeans ?...



YES — BY WHAT FANCY

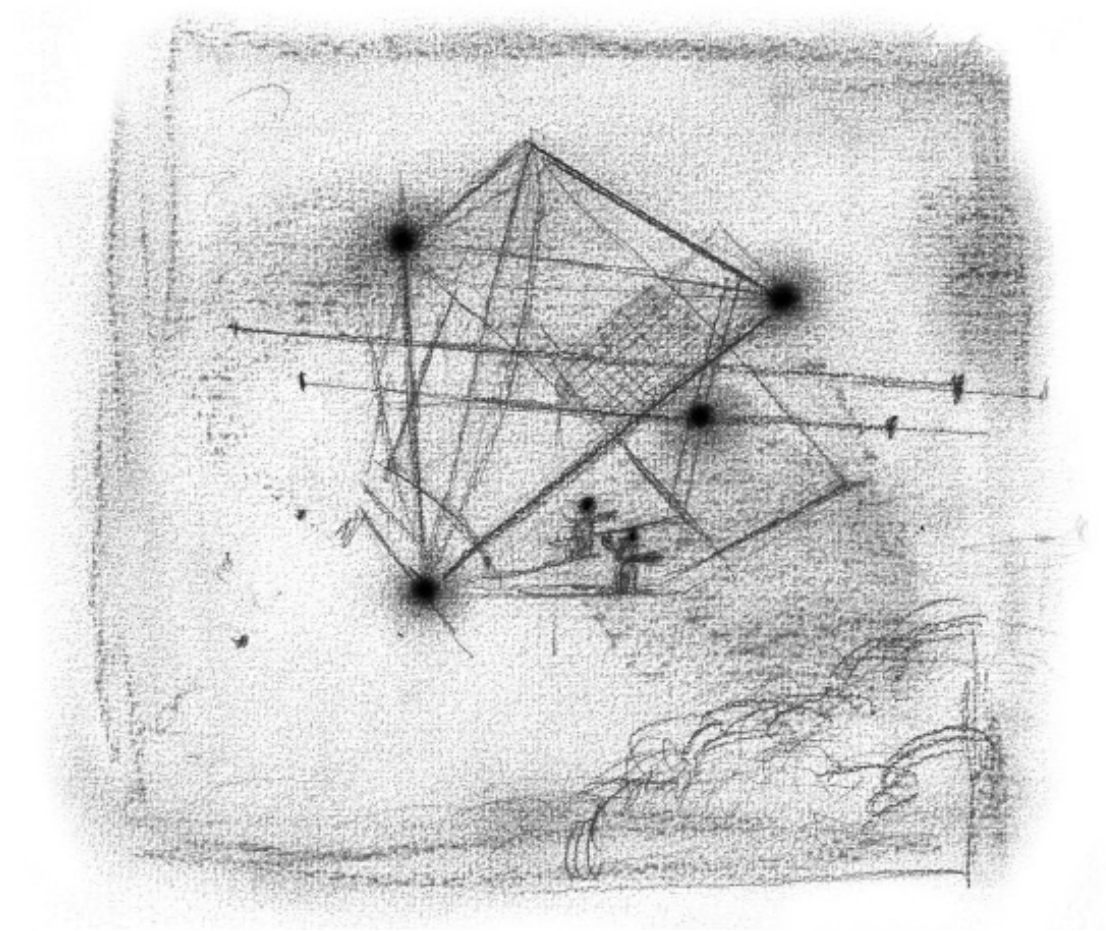
*did the Apogeeans have themselves
photographed on the tarmac
of Le Touquet Airport?*

*The aircraft that land there
can hardly carry one across a galaxy!*



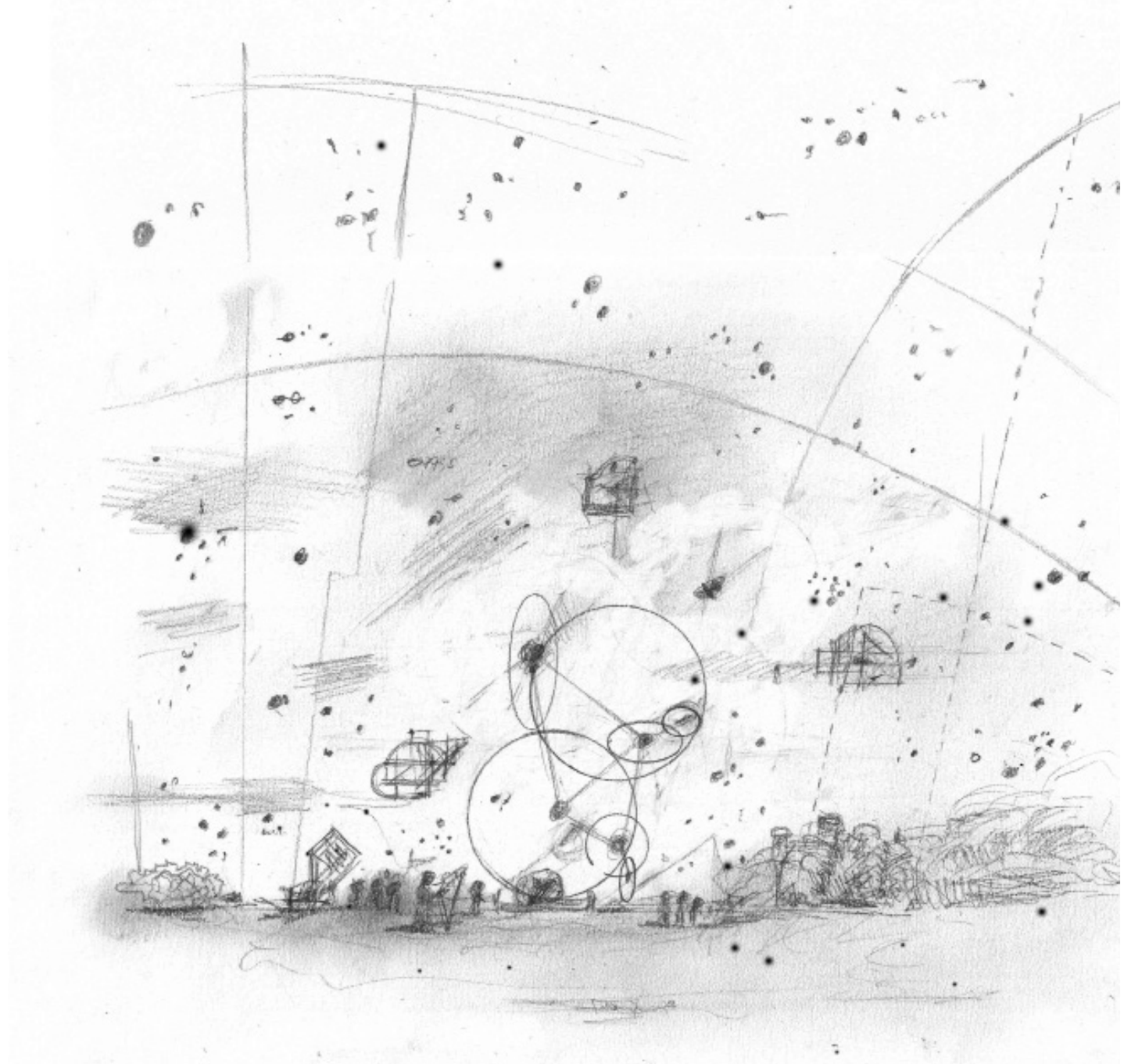
FOR THE APOGEEANS
have indeed crossed a galaxy.
No small accomplishment!
(It's worth noting — they stopped at that!)

THE APOGEEANS,
needless to say, possess starships.
But their craft are as far removed
from the planes of Le Touquet
as from the space vessels conjured
by Savinien de Cyrano de Bergerac.¹



THE APOGEEAN STARSHIPS

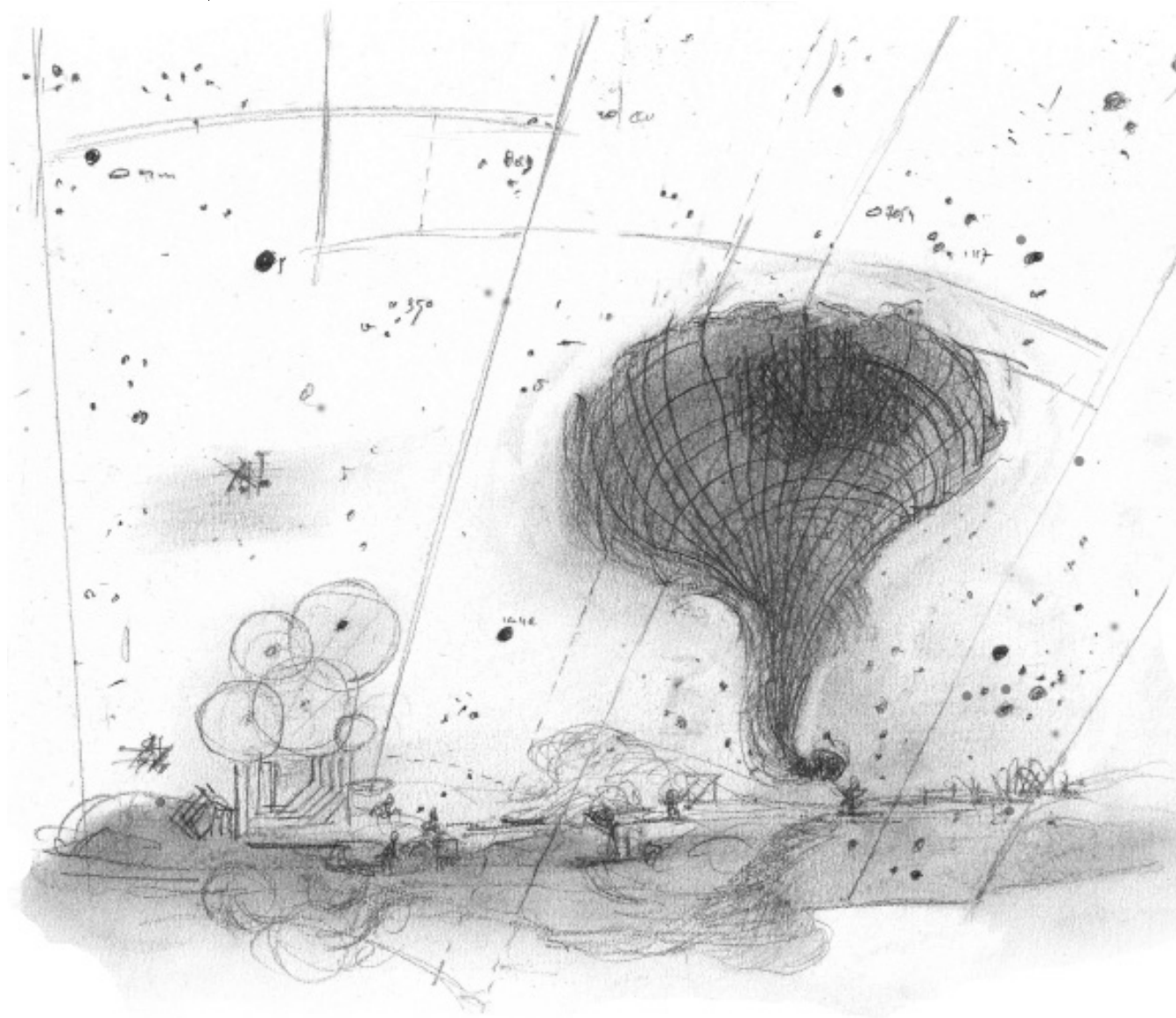
*are powered by the energy
of quantum micro-black holes.
They unfurl solar sails;
antigravity pulleys
adjust their flight through the void.*



THERE EXISTS NO
*reliable image of the workshops
where they are made —
their locations are kept secret.*

*What you see here is suggestive at best.
The quantum micro-black holes
are mined from concave shadows
and form the beating heart of the craft.*

*Their likeness is hard to capture —
but this image comes
as close as one dares.*



AFTER A DAY

*spent on delicate quantum assemblies,
the engineers relax by discussing
the assemblies of wines.*

*The Apogeeans are great
enthusiasts of Meursault,
and speak with animated passion
about EfAf — our own planet, as it happens.*

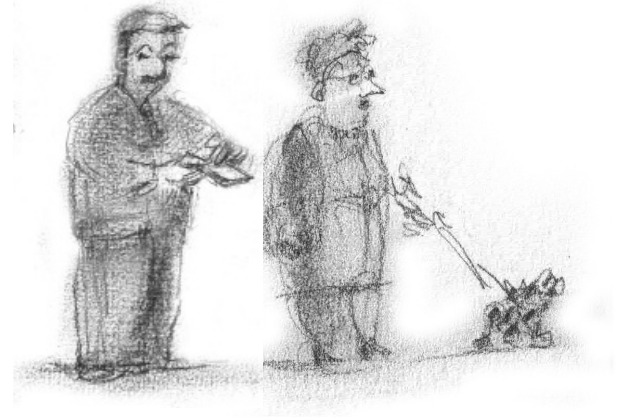


FOR THEIR STAYS

*on EfAf, the Apogeeans prefer
to move about in the form
of native citizens.*

HOW DOES AN APOGEEAN

*go about becoming invisible —
and transforming into an EfAfrthling?*



TO UNDERSTAND THIS,
the Reader must perform an unusual gesture.

*Rather than turning
the next page in the usual way,
one must interrupt the motion —
and hold the page for a moment
perpendicular to the book.*

*At that precise angle,
only pages 16 and 19 remain visible.*

XfXf has vanished.

*Then, by completing
the interrupted gesture,
the Reader will see
XfXf transformed
into one Monsieur Eugène Granduit.*



XfXf



Monsieur Eugène Ganduit

IF THE READER

*has followed the protocol correctly,
they will have witnessed
the disappearance of XfXf
and his reappearance
as Eugène Granduit.*

*(To turn the page —
that familiar expression
for something vanishing
to make way for something else —
indeed asks for a moment's attention.)*

WITH THIS TECHNIQUE

— *effective, and based on the notion of point of view²* —
the Apogeeans can change their appearance at will.

COULD THE READER

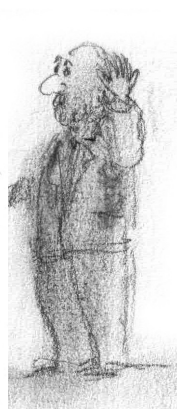
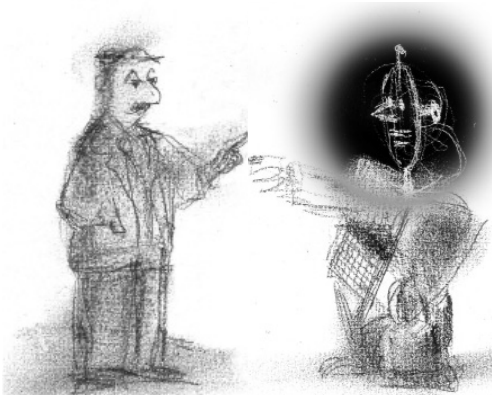
recognize ZfZf here,
beneath the features of Monsieur Lecas?





THE READER

*knows it well: ignorance leads to generalization,
and generalization renders all things uniform.
Thus do the Apogeeans seem to us identical —
while under their terrestrial guises, diversity leaps to the eye:
Eugène Granduit (XfXf) ; Laura Dumont (YfYf) ;
Monsieur Lecas (ZfZf) ; Juliette Grison (AfAf) ;
Esther Mame (BfBf) ; John Feurm(CfCf)...*



THIS DEVICE

*of transformation by angle of view
proves quite satisfactory,
but demands of the Apogeean
a state of constant concentration
on their appearance.*

AT THE SLIGHTEST

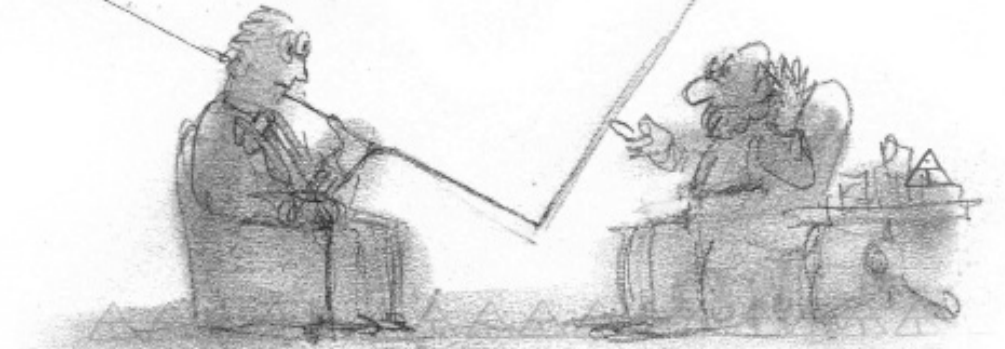
*lapse of attention, the faintest letting go,
the Apogeean reverts
to their original form.
This inconvenience is regarded
as a heavy constraint.*

SO XfXf IS DELEGATED

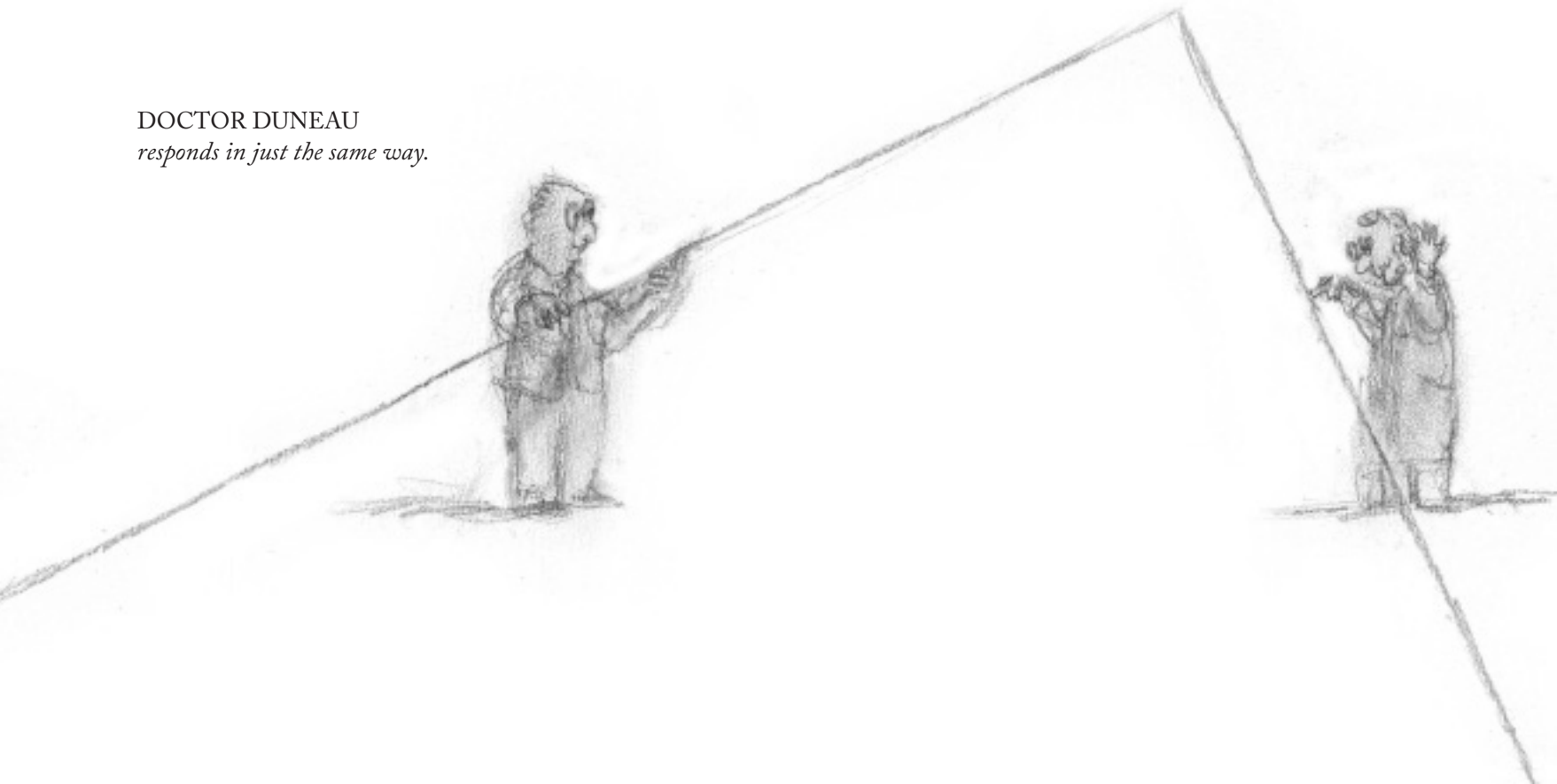
*to study the peculiarities
of earthly perspectives.
Disguised as Monsieur Eugène Granduit,
he sets off to consult renowned scholars.*

PROFESSOR PACKARD

*first — an expert in points of view.
But, in the most disappointing fashion,
the moment a certain angle is brought up,
the professor plays deaf...*



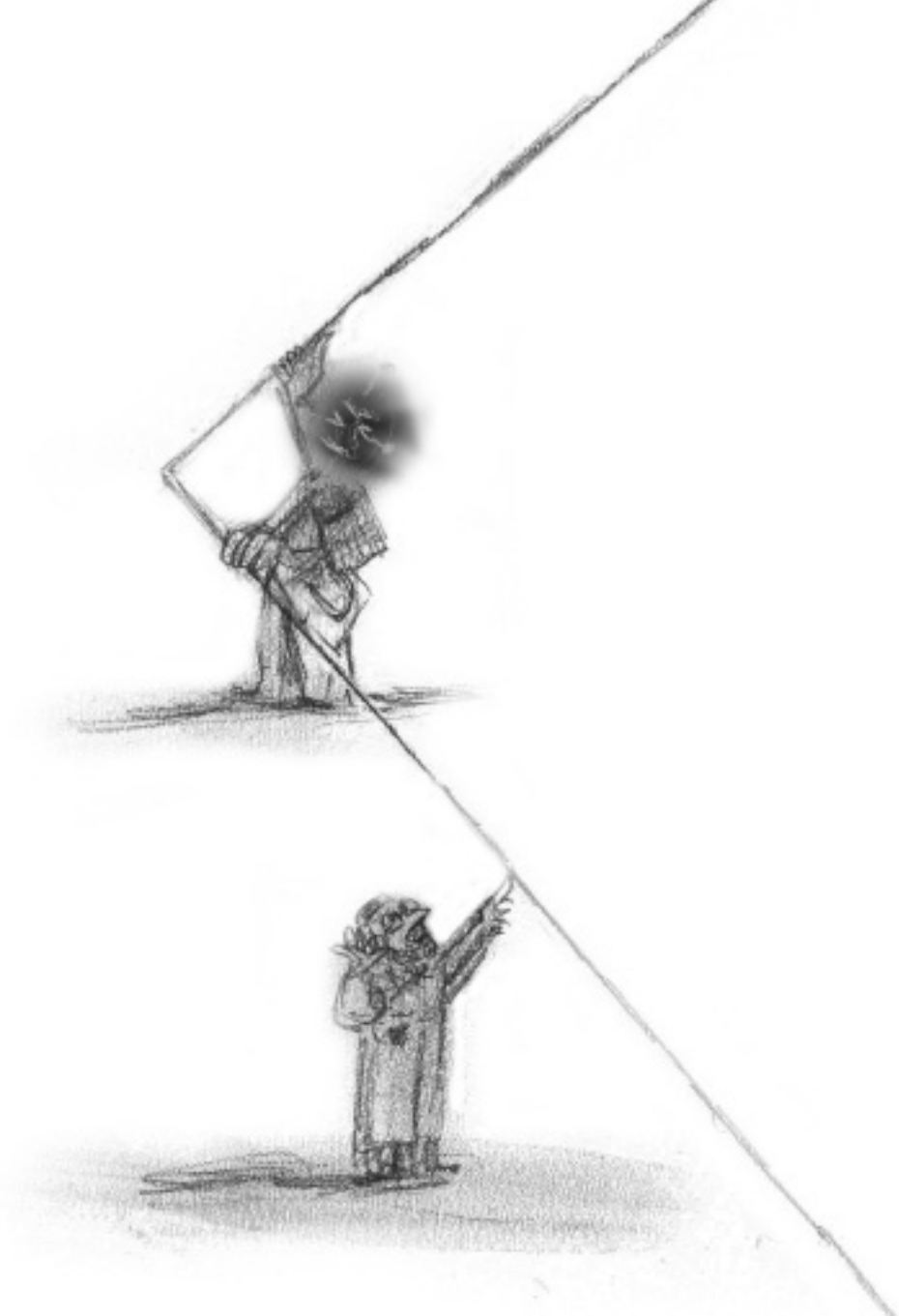
DOCTOR DUNEAU
responds in just the same way.



WHILE HANDLING

*a point of view a bit clumsily,
and presenting it to Professor Lerail,
XfXf is momentarily distracted —
and reveals his native form.*

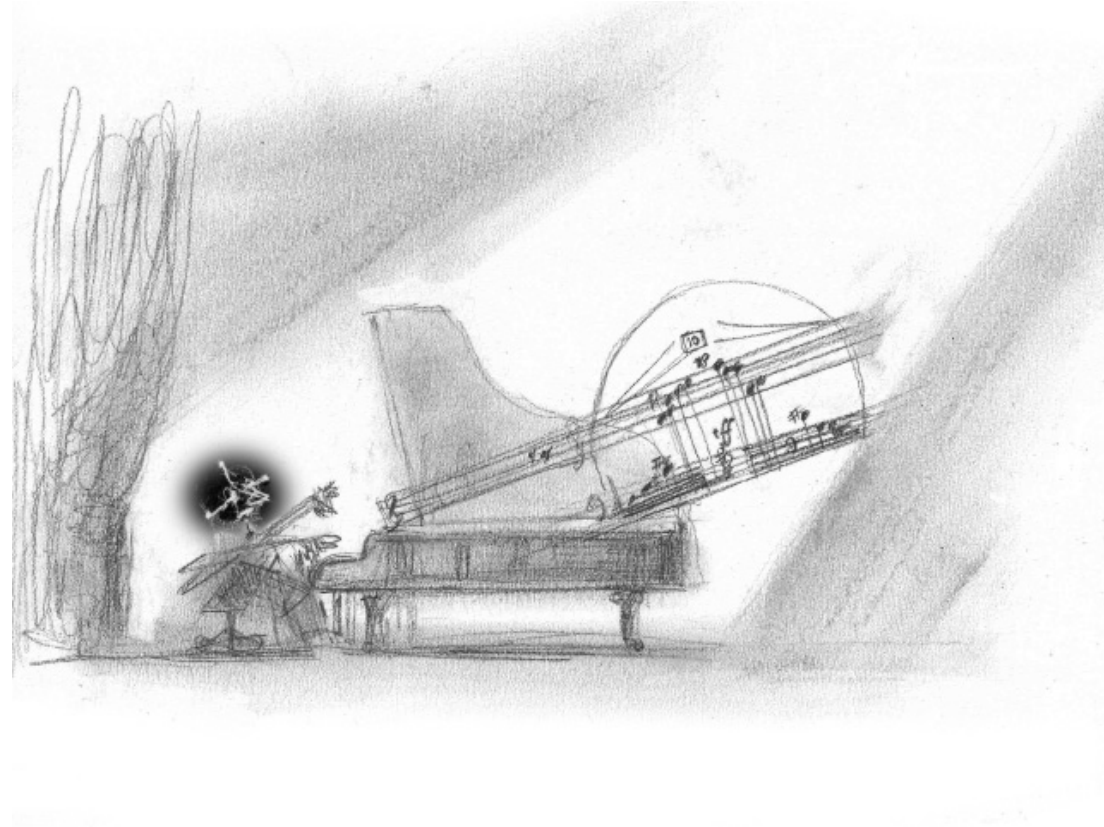
*Yet the professor, like his peers,
maintains a sustained posture
of feigned deafness. He sees nothing.*



SUCH SUDDEN

*appearances of Apogeeans
in their native form are fairly common.*

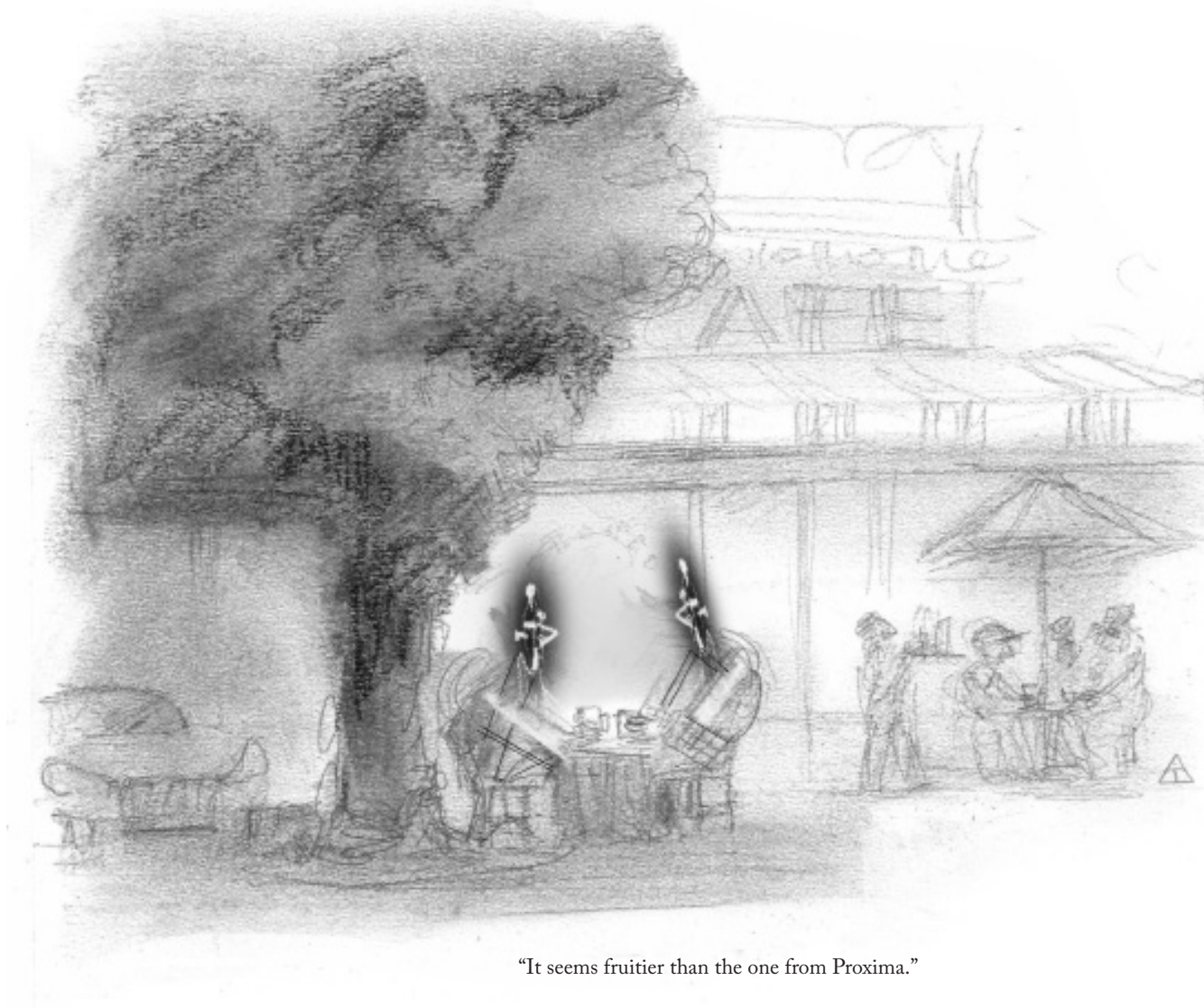
*Thus, during a concert,
Laura Dumont — swept away
by the passion of her performance —
briefly reveals the morphology of YfYf.³*



AND AGAIN

*ZfZf and GfGf,
while comparing the Meursault
of Antoine Lifeau
with that of HfHf
from Proxima Centauri b.*

*(The other patrons
could have taken this opportunity
to observe the Apogeeans' astonishing appearance —
had they not been just as absorbed
in the tasting of an exceptional vintage.)*

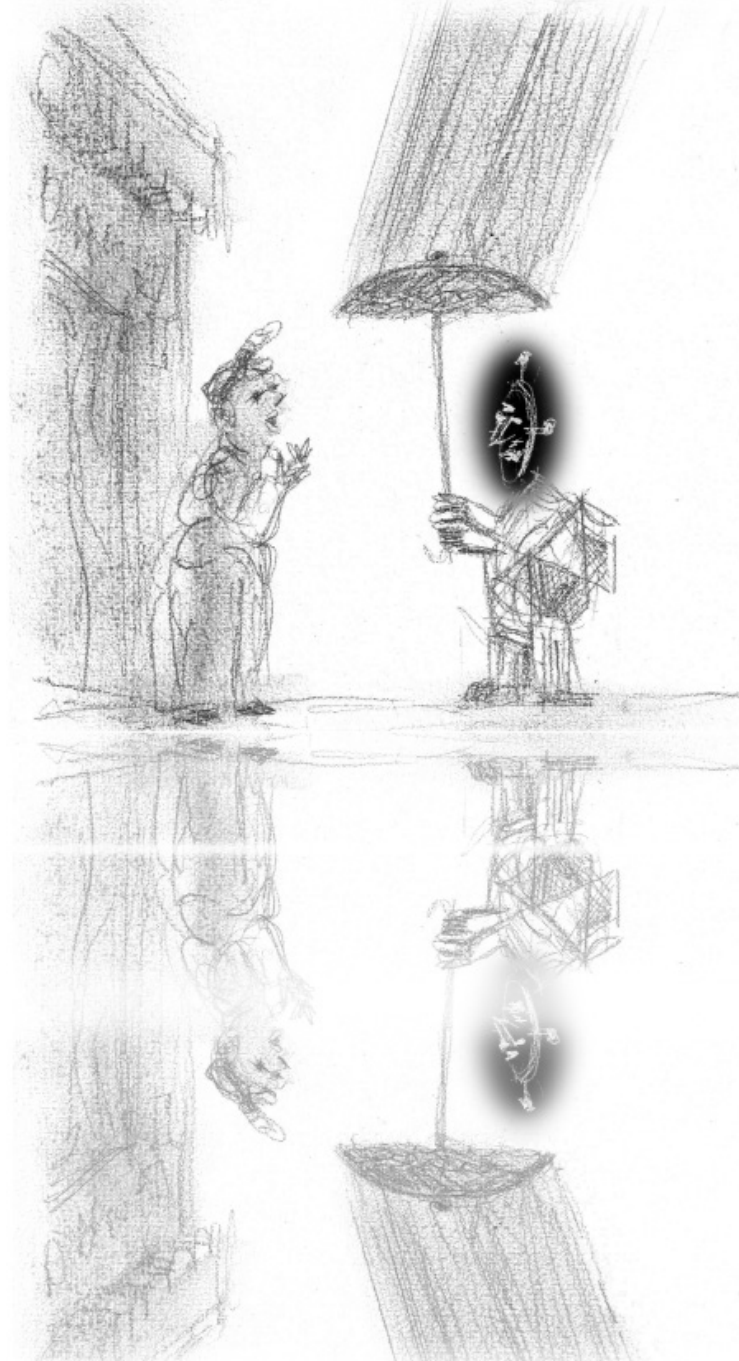


"It seems fruitier than the one from Proxima."

THE USE OF THE UMBRELLA
is not yet mastered by GfGf.

*Several attempts will be needed
before he manages the gallantry
of sheltering Madame Lamarque.*



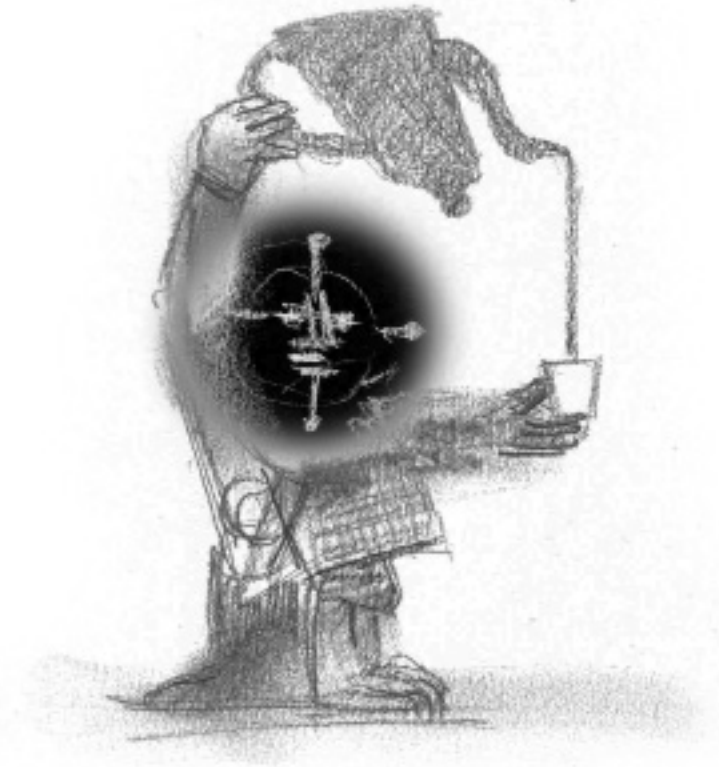


THE APOGEEANS
*move effortlessly
between two and
three dimensions.*
Here, QfQf is walking
his dog, Toodee.



THIS ABILITY

*to shift between dimensions
allows them to play with shadows
as they please.*



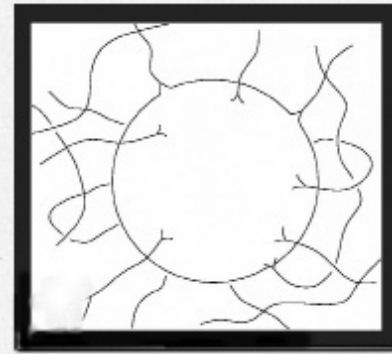


BUT, APART FROM

*these few scattered moments of distraction,
the Apogeeans devote themselves
to sharing knowledge.*

UNDER THE NAME

*John Feurm, DfDf exhibits a painting
in a fashionable gallery
(and to a certain indifference),
a remarkable canvas nonetheless —
inspired by the intersection
of quantum information channels
on the shape and dimension
of nearby space.
(Nothing less than the schema
of the network that forms the universe.)⁴*

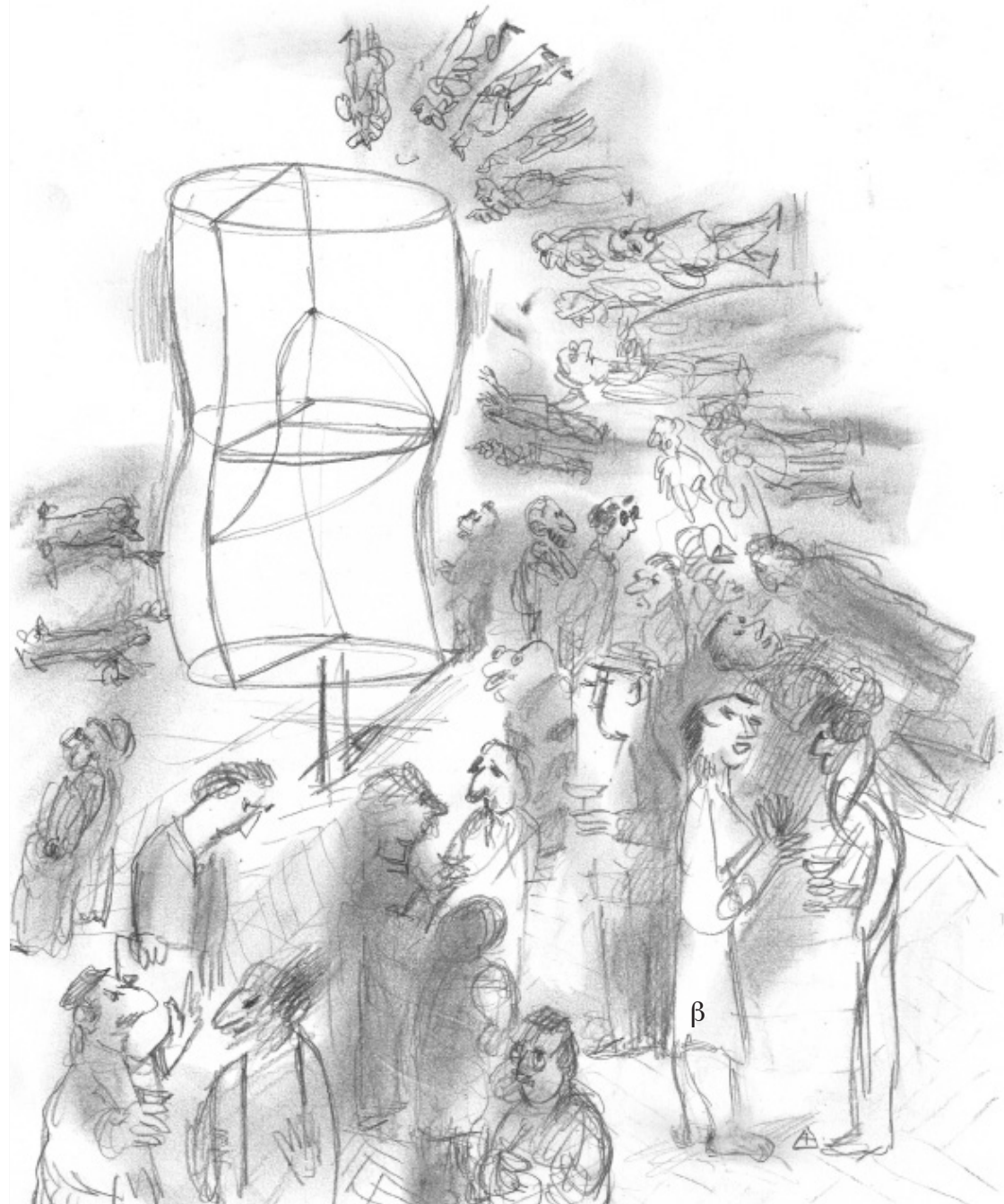


A DAZZLING EXHIBITION

by Juliette Grison
presents a model of the
spatio-temporal evolution
of the elemental action
of Hamiltonian constraint.⁵

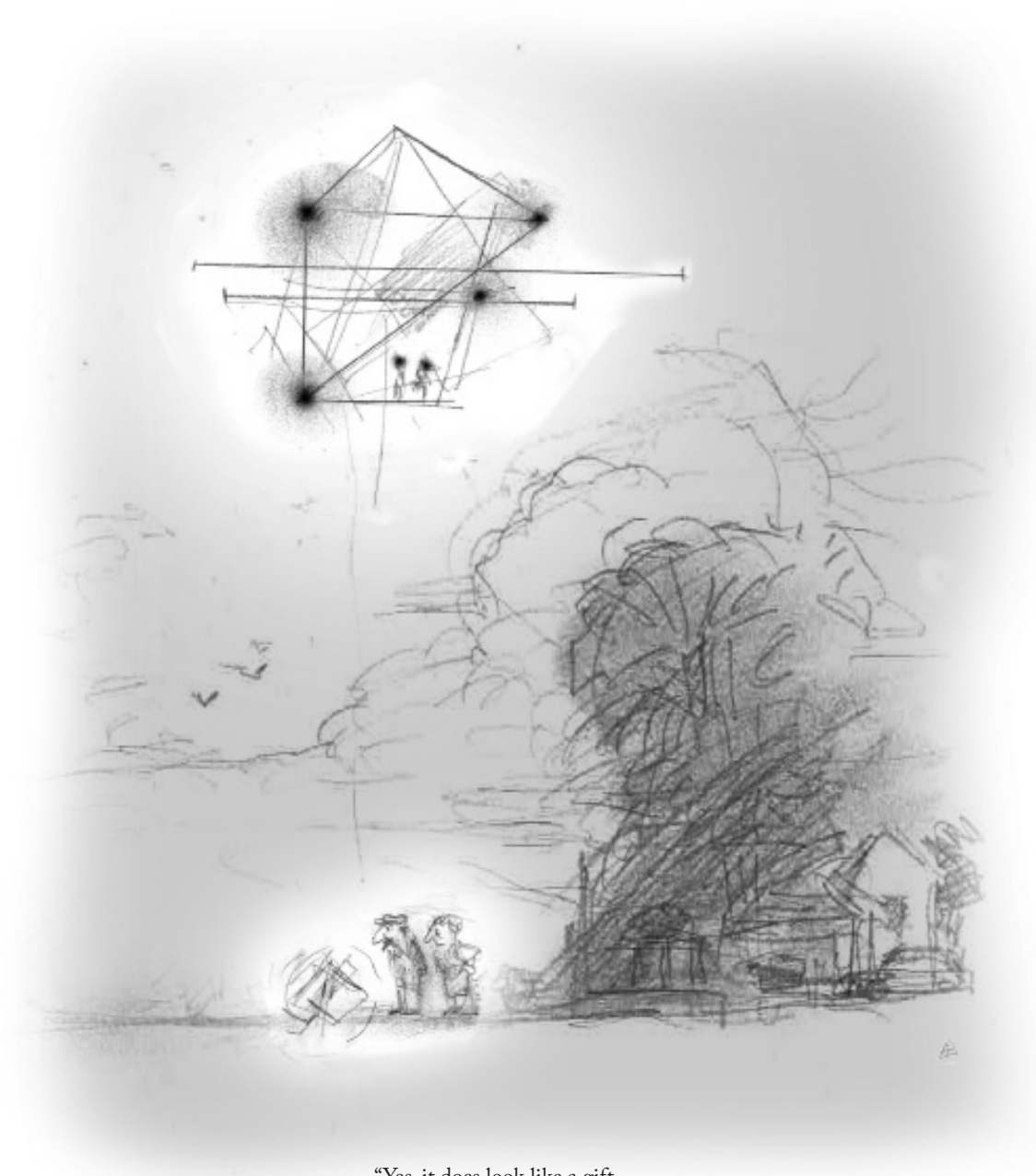


β



β

WITHOUT REST,
the Apogeeans experiment...



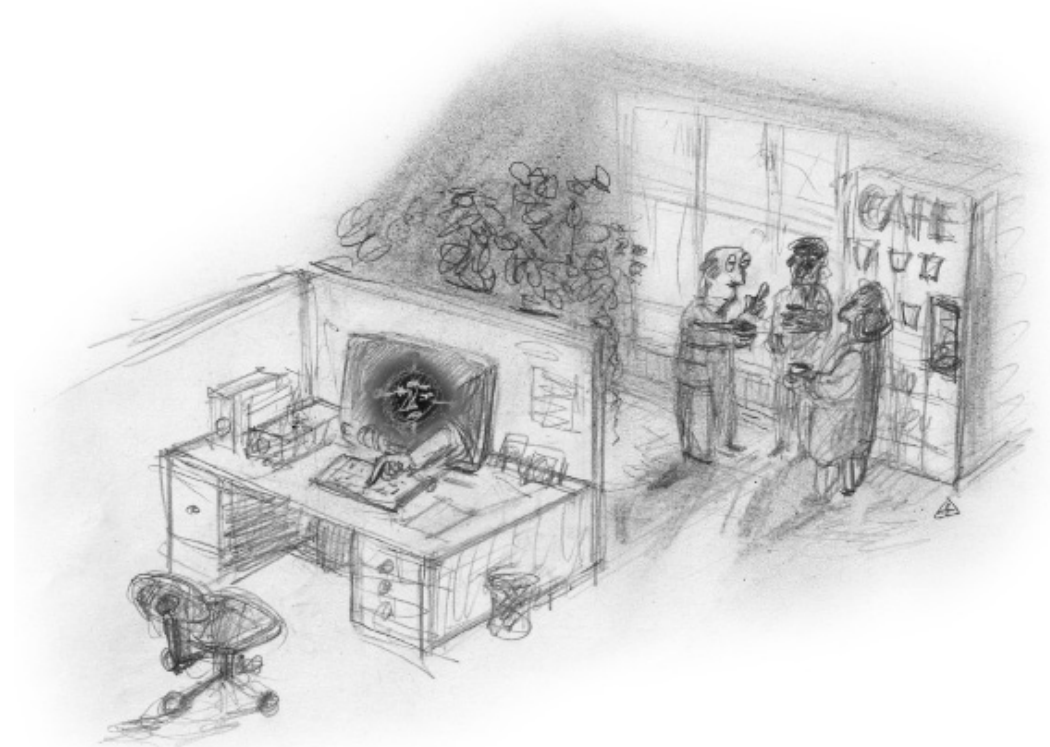
“Yes, it does look like a gift...
But what if it's a trap for the gullible?”

...and keep themselves informed.



*"I feel like a reality update
is being downloaded into us."*

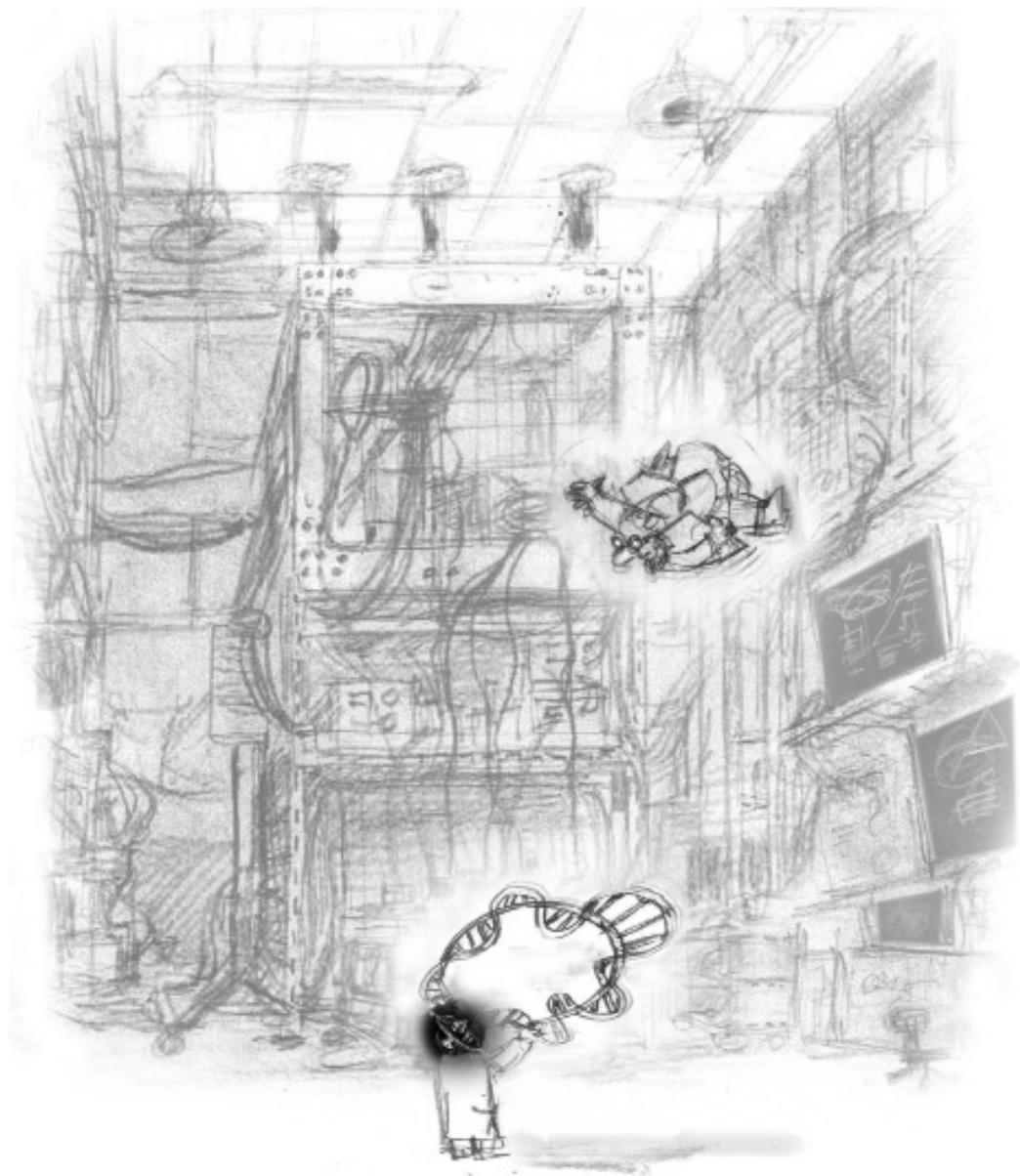
PEOPLE DON'T HESITATE
*to blame them for the slightest
unexpected occurrence.*



*"I'm getting hundreds of replies
to emails I never sent!"*

BUT THEIR GOODWILL
is well known.

HERE, $VfVf$ COMES TO THE AID
with a quantum ladder —
of Professor R., who succeeded
a bit too well in an experiment involving
loop quantum gravity.



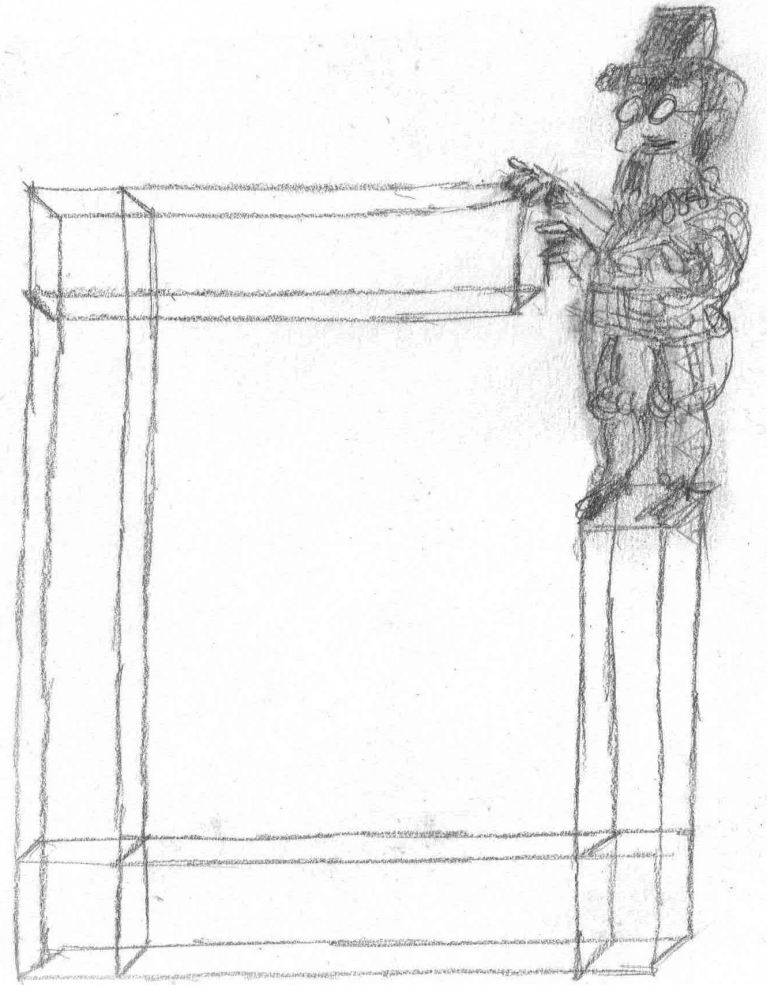
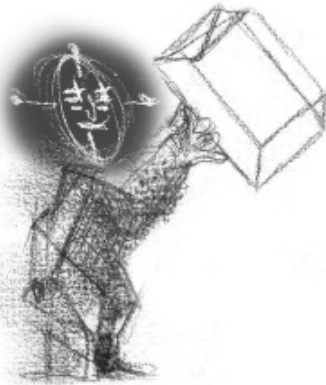
OR ELSE,
*in this museum, HfHf — thanks to
a strategically waxed parquet —
draws visitors' attention
to the painted ceilings above.*



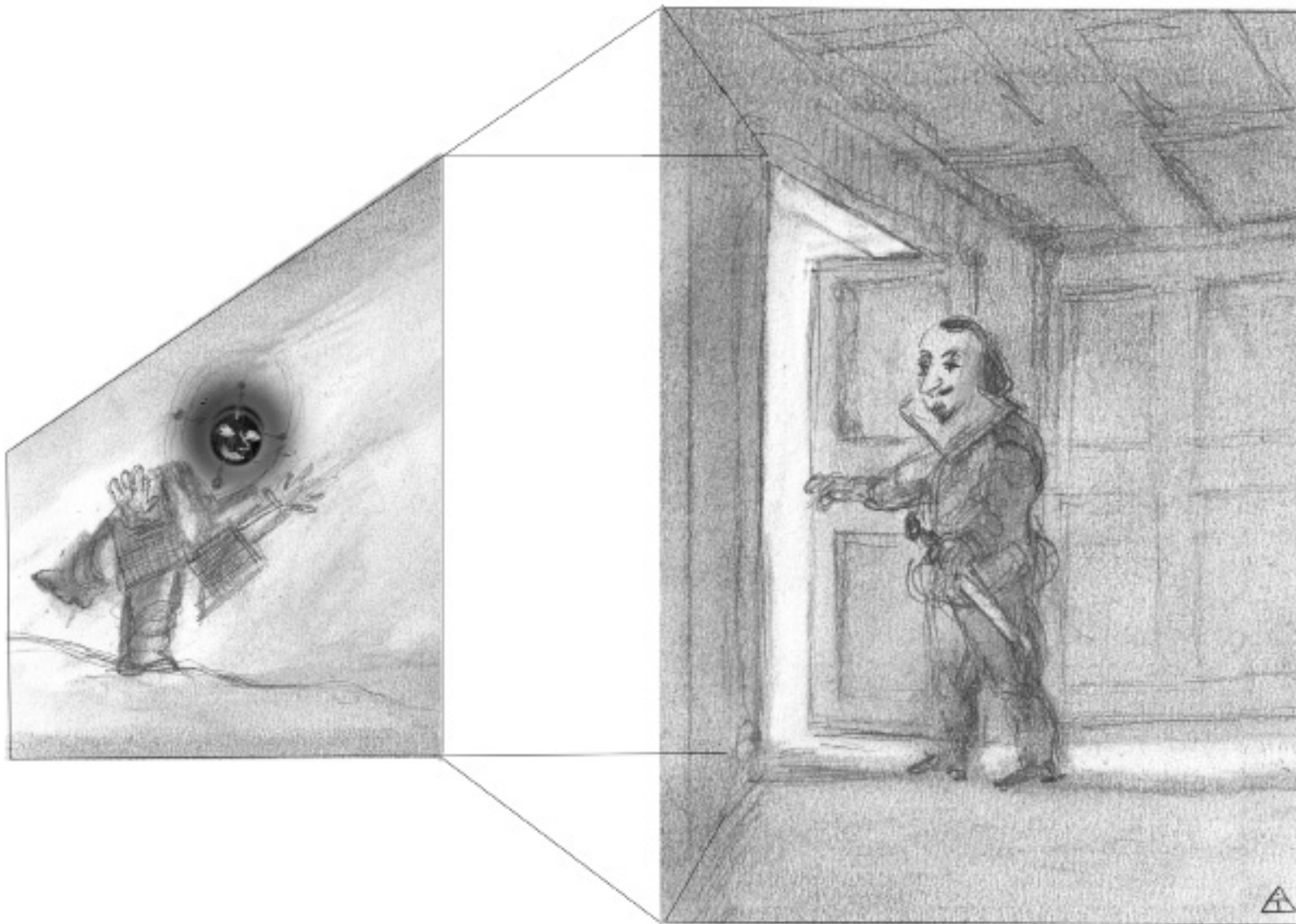
SfSf, MEANWHILE, ENCOURAGED
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres
to reclaim the violin sound holes
borrowed by Man Ray
(a good century ago, no less).



AND AS EARLY AS
the 17th century,
DfDf was suggesting
to Professor Miescher⁶
that he begin modeling
the structure of DNA.



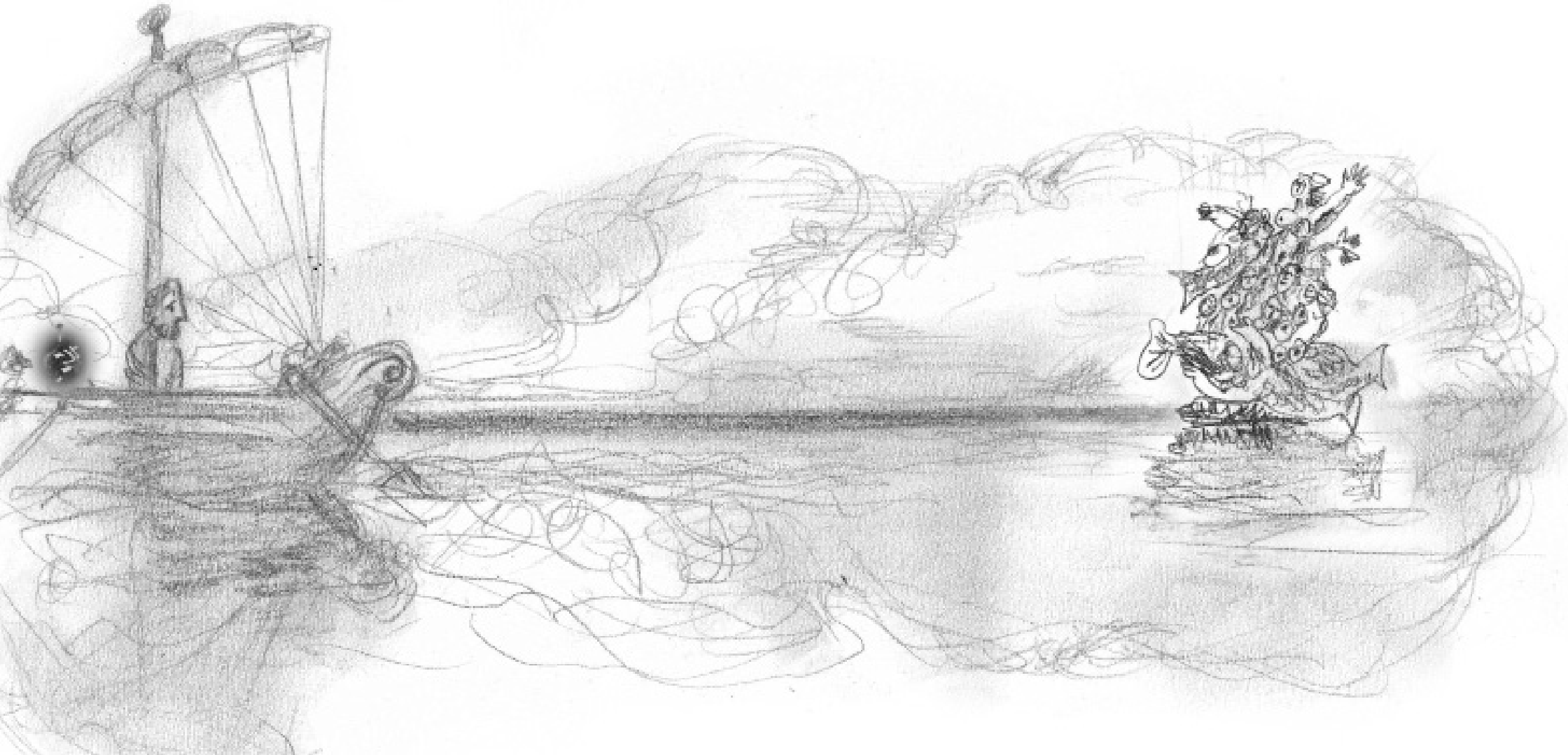
IN A CERTAIN SETTING,
EfEf once offered advice
to young William S.,
who was committing murder
after murder through a
certain Macbeth — that he
should kill off Macbeth
before the opposite came to
pass.⁷



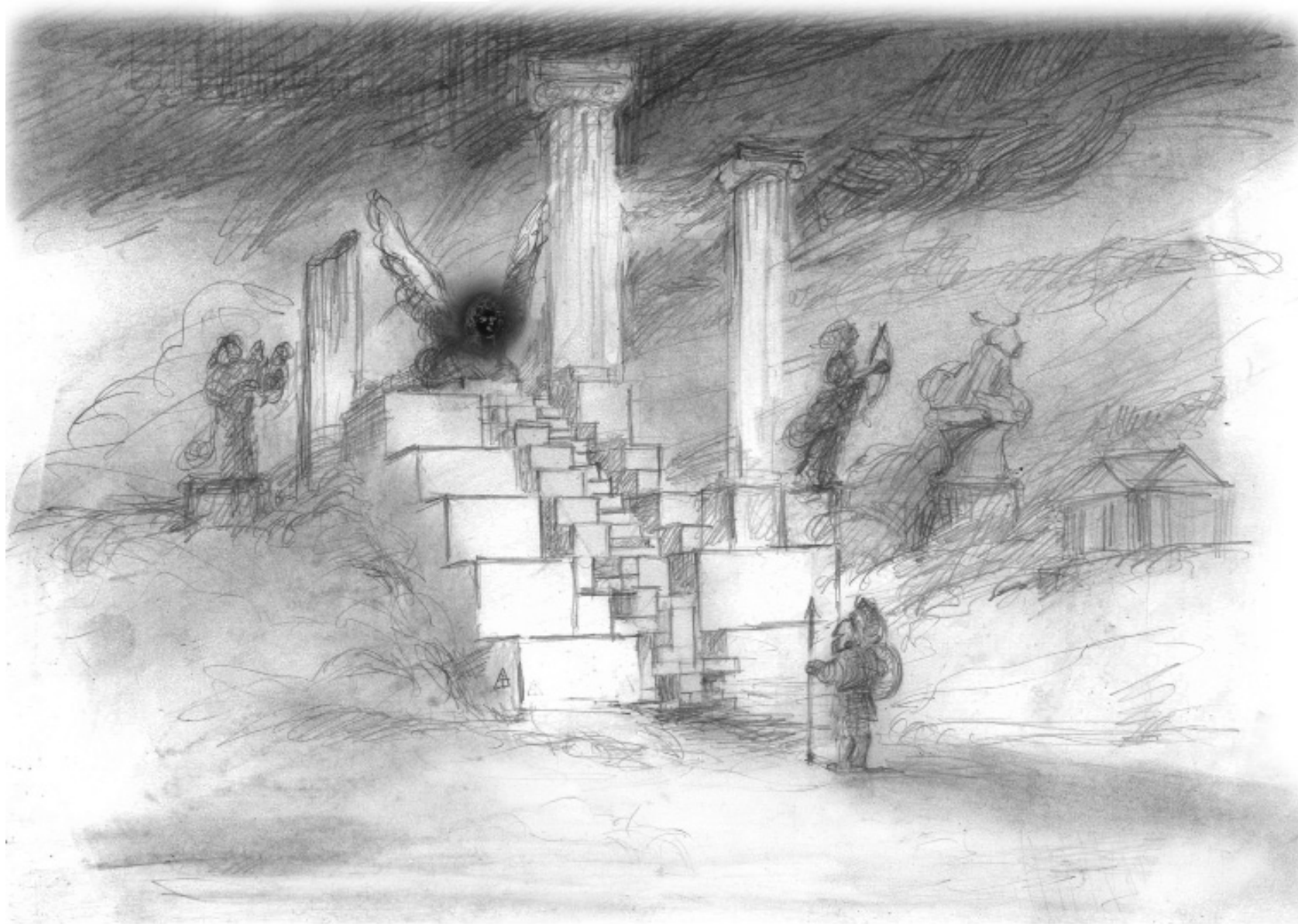
TO ULYSSES,

CfCf advised plugging his own ears — and covering the eyes of his companions.
Thus, the sirens passed from the world of sound into the world of sight.

*“But they, more beautiful than ever, stretched themselves out, twirling in place,
let their terrifying hair float freely in the wind,
and loosened their claws upon the rock.”⁸



INSTEAD OF
*the Sphinx, LfLf rearranged
the stairs in such a way
that Oedipus hesitated
for a long time before daring
to climb them.*





DESPITE THEIR EFFORTS,
*the Apogeeans cannot seem
to halt the advance of Fake News
and its mount, Anonymous —
who are likely aided in secret
by infiltrated Perigeans.*



BEYOND

*all their interventions,
whether routine or historical,
the Apogeeans are fond
of offering small, quiet services.*

*Such as, for instance,
finding a lost hen
belonging to Gérard Archambault.*



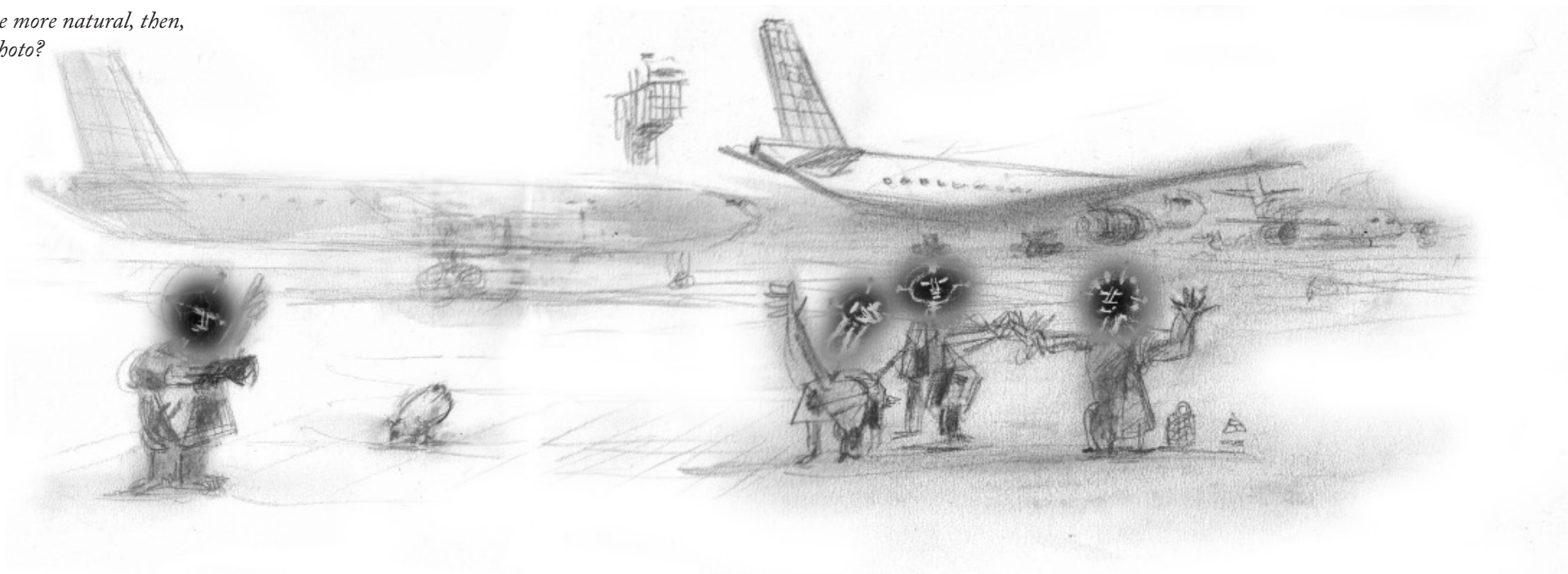
*A hen they locate,
on the tarmac of Le Touquet Airport.*





QfQf and VfVf
*take the opportunity
to pilot an A320.*

*And what could be more natural, then,
than a souvenir photo?*



Notes

- 2 1/ Savinien de Cyrano de Bergerac was a 17th-century French writer whose works and personality would later be largely overshadowed by Edmond Rostand's famous fictional portrayal. His *Comical History of the States and Empires of the Moon and of the Sun* (1657 and 1662) include fantastical flying machines powered by vials of dew, magnets, fireballs...
- 10 2/ J.J. Colomina-Almiñana, *Formal Approach to the Metaphysics of Perspective: Points of View as Access*, Springer, Heidelberg, 2018.
- 15 3/ Measure 10 of Béla Bartók's *Sonata for Two Pianos*.
- 22-23 4/5/ *Loop Quantum Gravity*, Carlo Rovelli, Living Reviews in Relativity, 11 (2008). Representation of quantum geometries of the horizon.
- 30 6/ Presumed ancestor of Swiss biologist Friedrich Miescher, the first to isolate DNA—long before the model proposed by Watson and Crick.
- 31 7/ Jorge Luis Borges, *Other Inquisitions*, Buenos Aires, 1952.
- 32 8/ To be compared with Franz Kafka's *Das Schweigen des Sirenen*, Martin Secker, London, 1931.