

In The Dead of Night

by Gambhiro Bikkhu
(English Version Only)



E-mail: bdea@buddhanet.net
Web site: www.buddhanet.net

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In the dead of night

(Gambhiro Bhikkhu)

Joel Israel 1999

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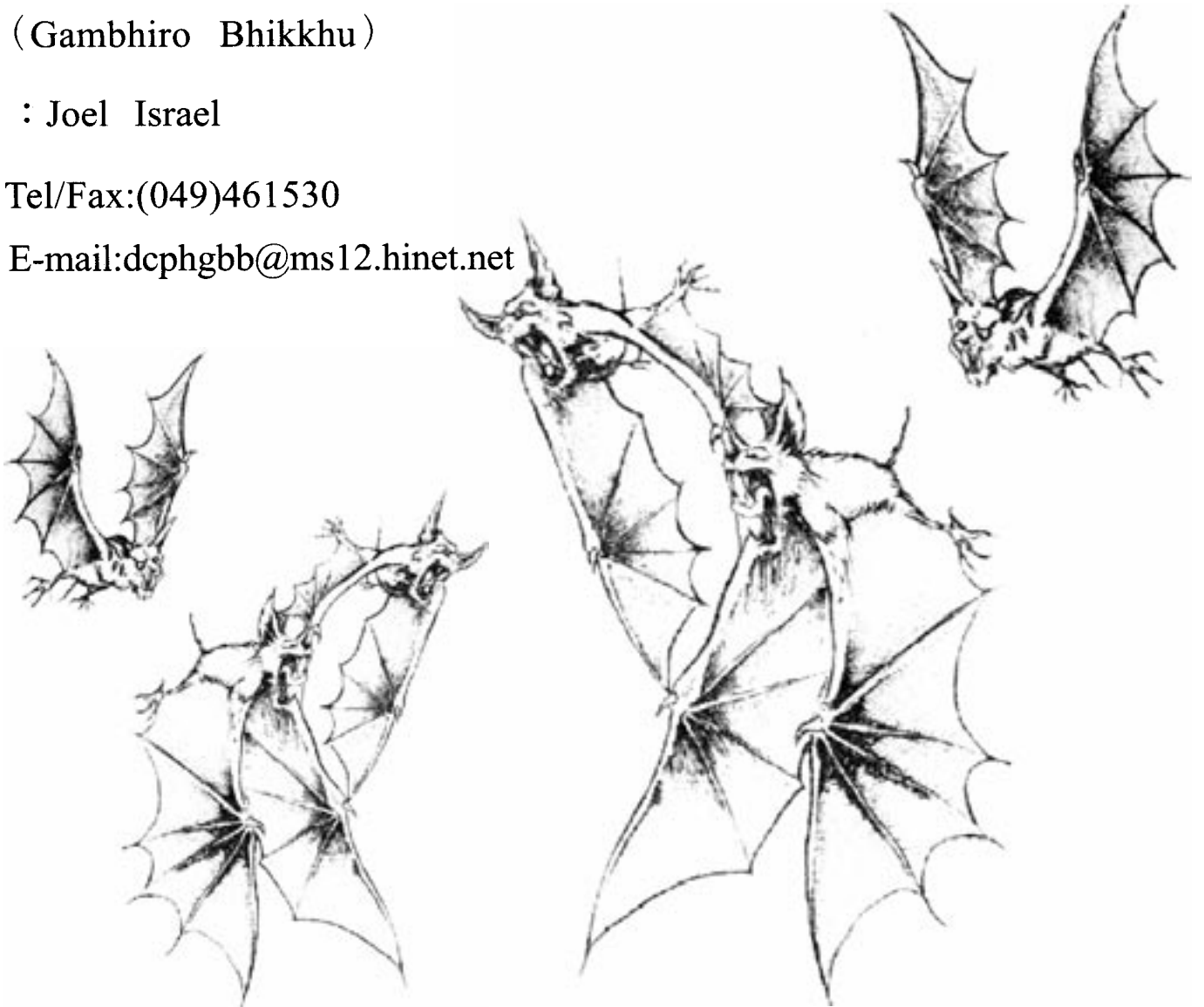
In the dead of NIGHT

(Gambhiro Bhikkhu)

: Joel Israel

Tel/Fax:(049)461530

E-mail:dcphgbb@ms12.hinet.net



清水集 II ②

In the dead of NIGHT

死寂的深夜裡

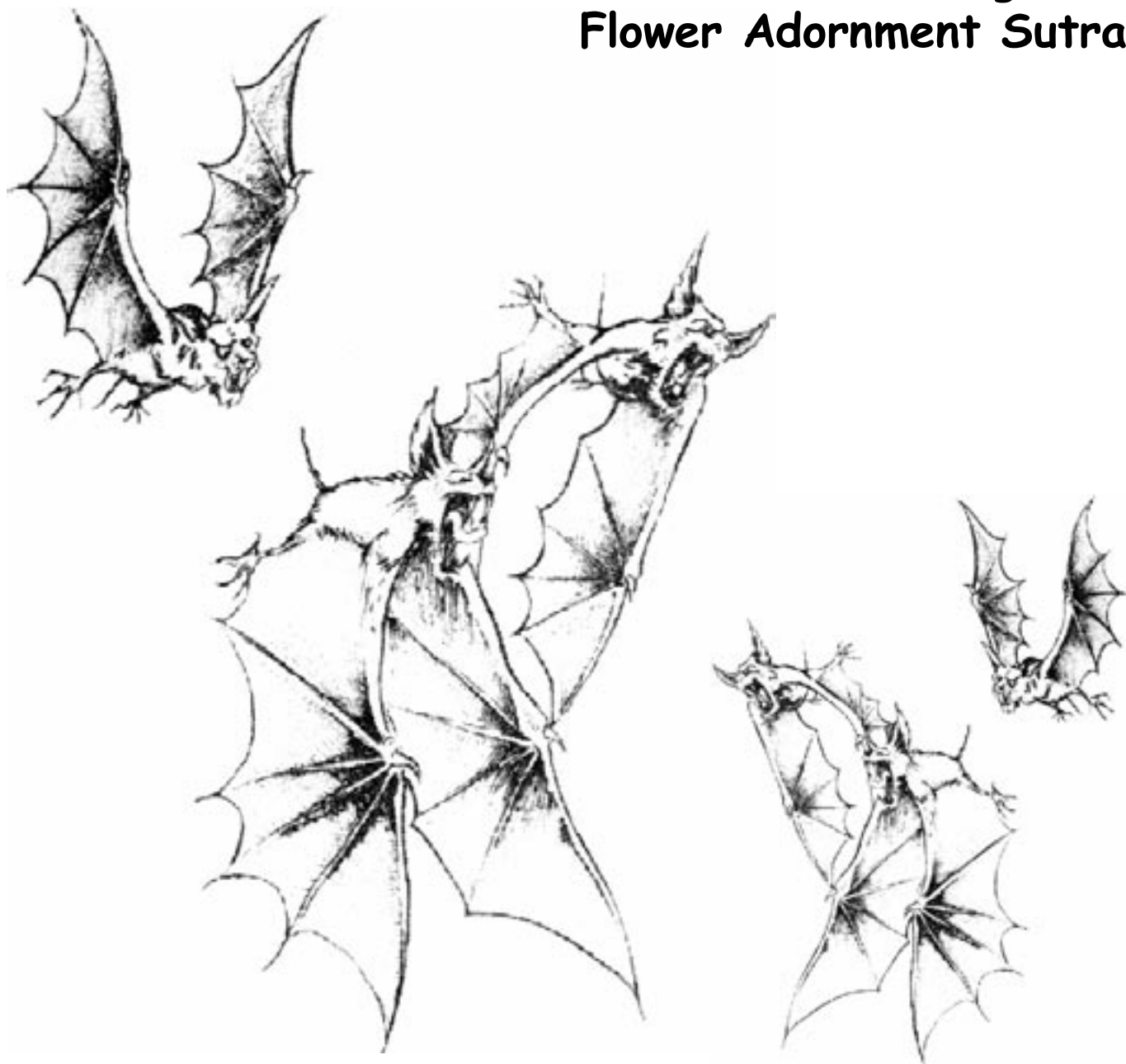
作者 甘比羅
(Gambhiro Bhikkhu)
譯者 許特維



The moment the seven emotions of joy, anger, sadness, fear, love, hate or desire arise, wisdom is cut off.

Emotion turns wisdom into false thinking.

Flower Adornment Sutra



When emotion arises,
wisdom is cut off.

Flower Adornment Sutra

In the dead *of* NIGHT



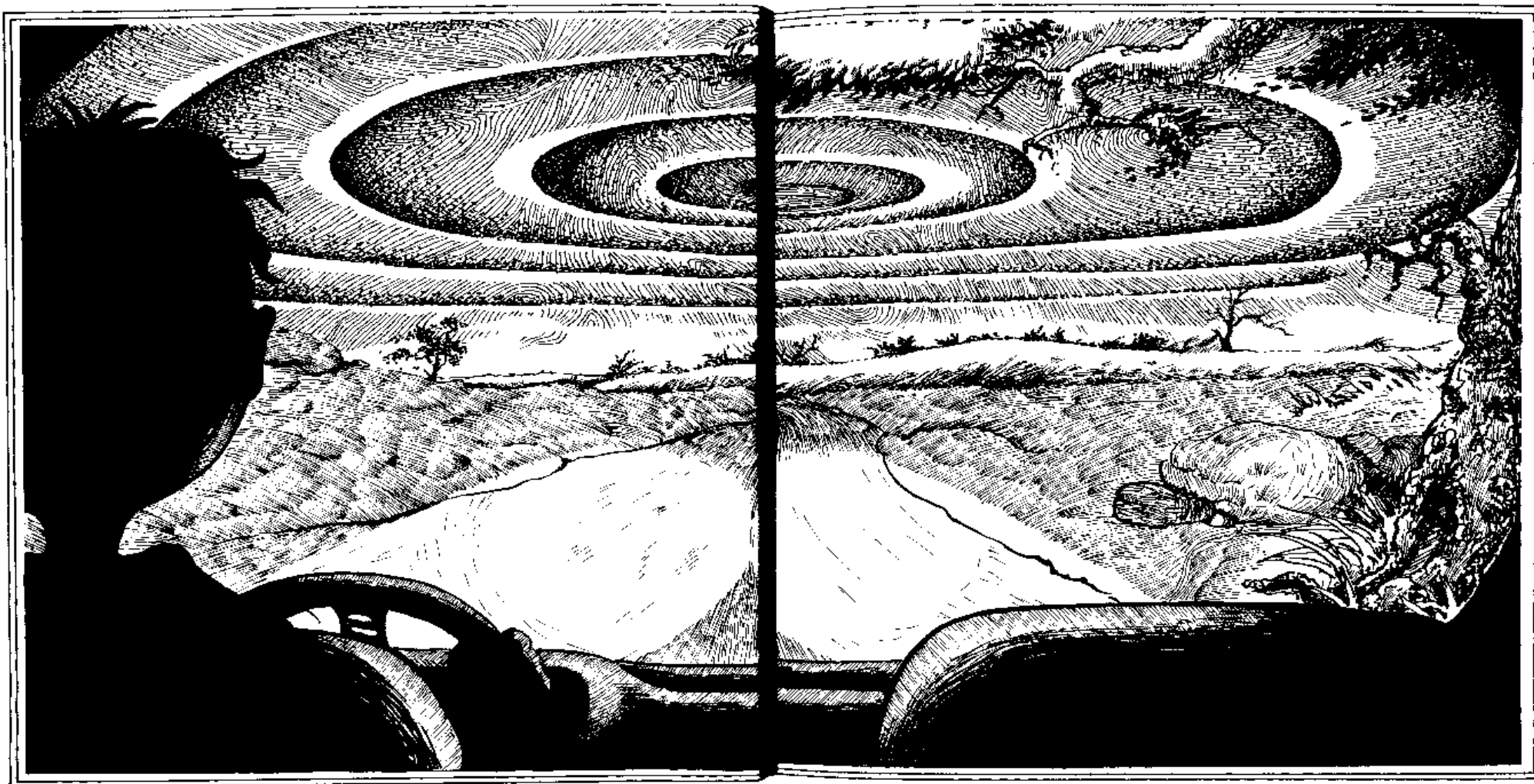
Gambhiro Bhikkhu

Joel Israel



I had been driving all day on a long, lonely, dusty road.





Night had already fallen when I decided to stop and rest. I still had a long way to go and I felt very tired.

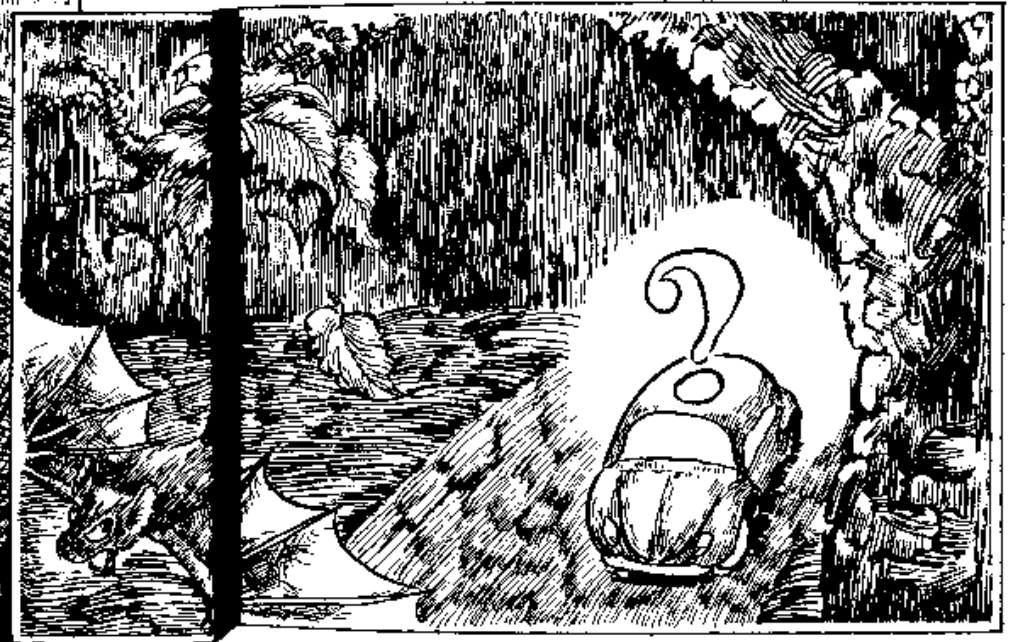


I turned off the road and parked in what seemed to be a large open field. I was so tired I could hardly keep my eyes open.



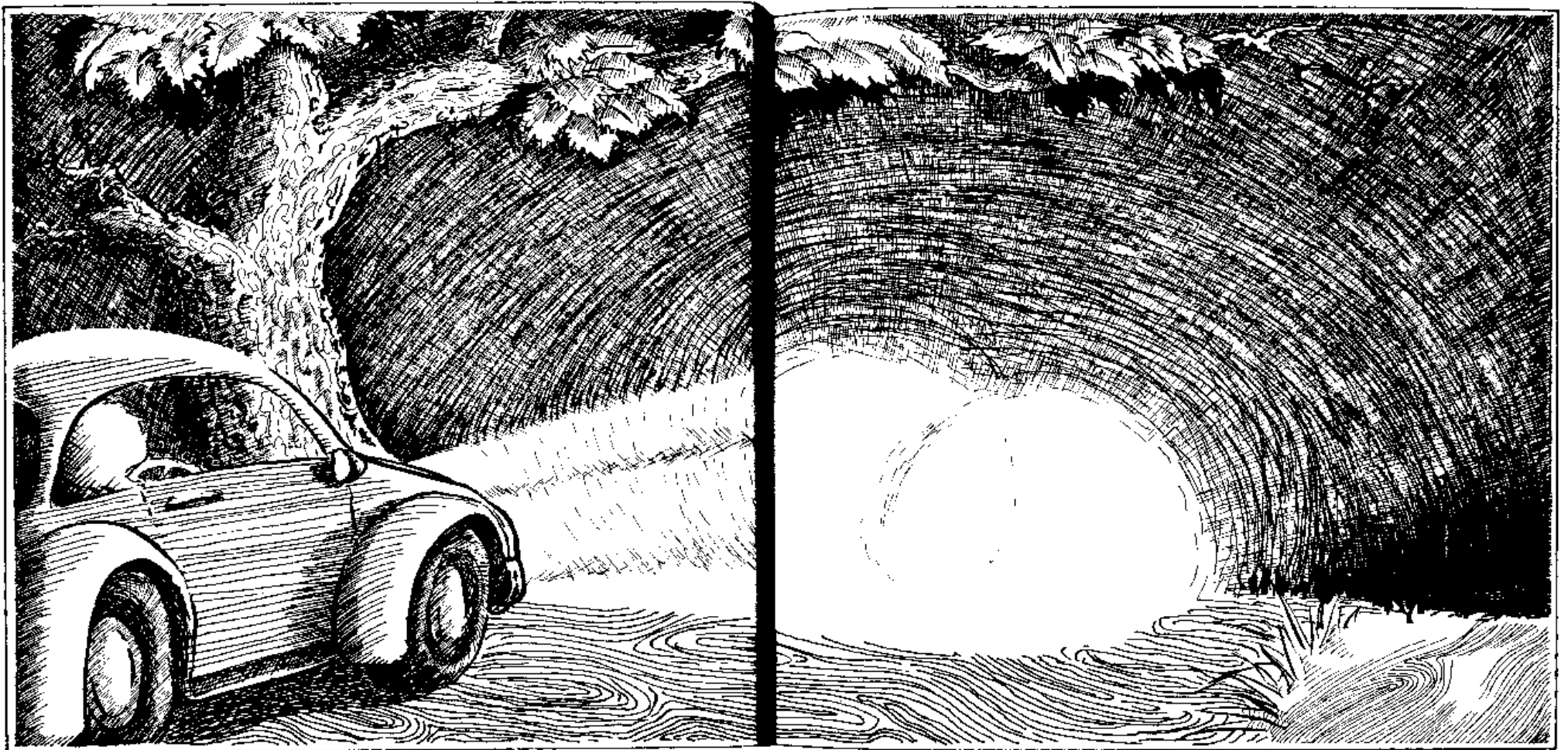
I leaned back in my seat and listened to the sounds of the night. How soothing they were, like a lullaby. Soon I was fast asleep.

But not for long. It must have been about midnight when I was awakened by the sound of heavy footsteps coming toward the car, toward **ME!** "What could it be?!" I wondered.

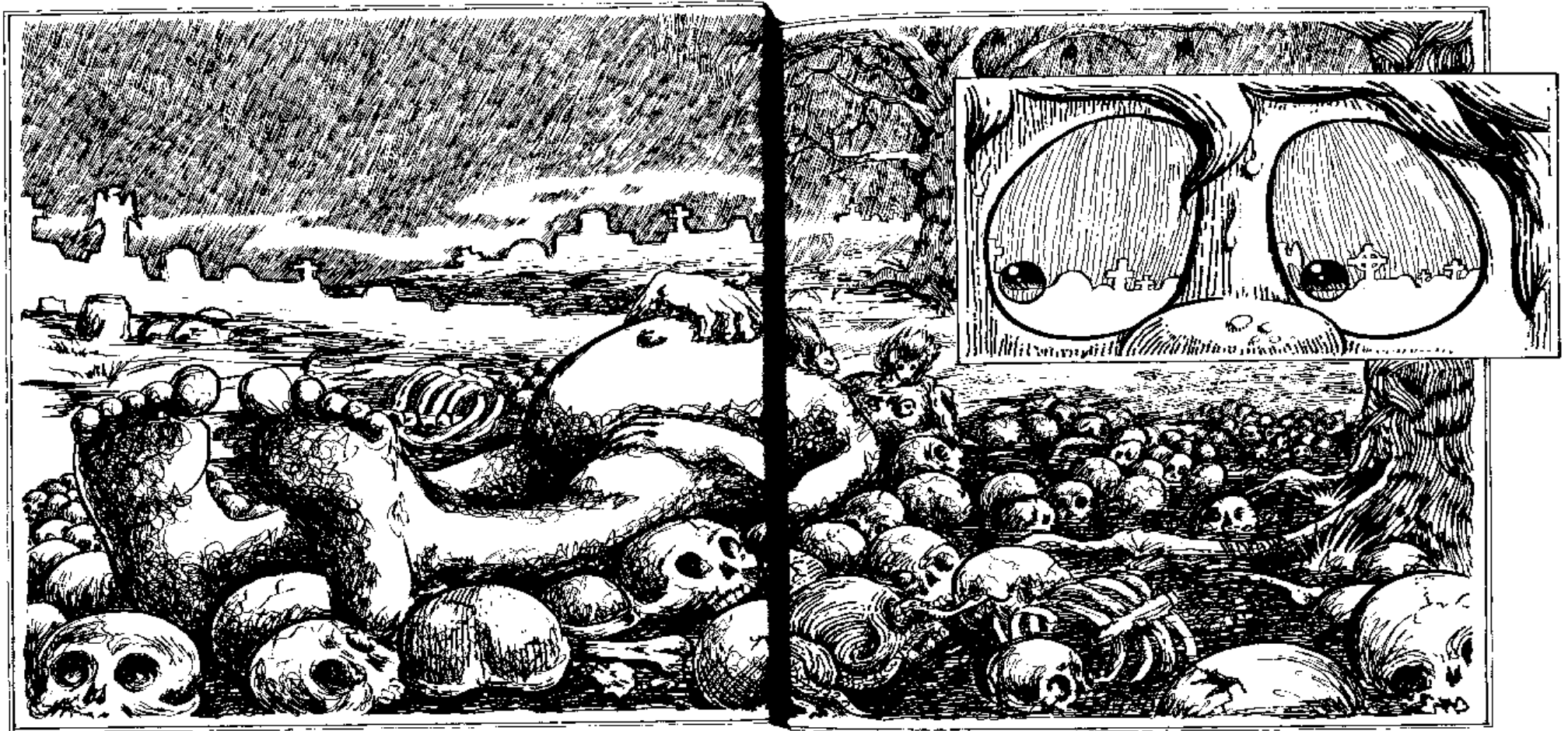




It sounded like a large, heavy man walking, and from the sound of the footsteps, he must have been VERY big. I looked around. I could see nothing. Where could he have come from? I hadn't seen a house for miles around and no cars had passed me. Whoever it was seemed to have fallen from the sky... or sprung right out of the ground.



I turned the car lights on. I could see nothing. I began to get scared.



Then, on the right side of me through the corner of my eye, I could see silhouettes of what looked like some crosses and tombstones... and a pile of skulls! "Oh, no!" I thought. "I must have parked right in the middle of an old graveyard!"



The hair on the back of my neck stood up as straight as arrows! The sound was coming from behind

me and so I couldn't

see what it was. But it was DEFINITELY heading toward me. I could hardly keep my heart under my shirt, it was beating so hard.



I tried to start up the car but the cold, damp night air only let the engine cough and splutter. It wouldn't run. Then I thought I saw a long arm reach out at me from behind a tree.



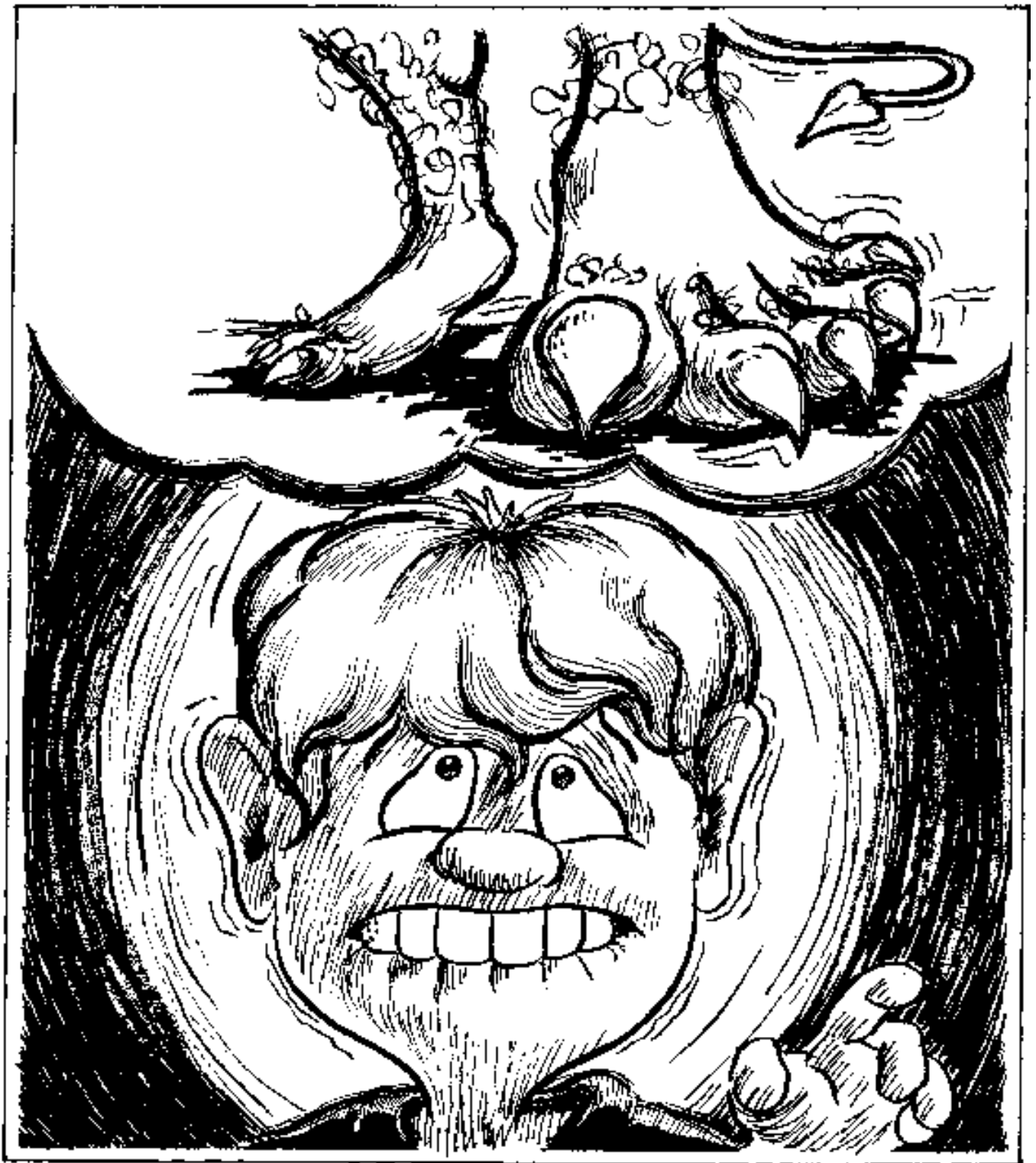
I held my breath. I listened. I strained my ears. Still nothing. "I must have been dreaming," I thought.



Suddenly, an owl screeched. I almost jumped out of my skin. I was breathless. Then... only deep silence.



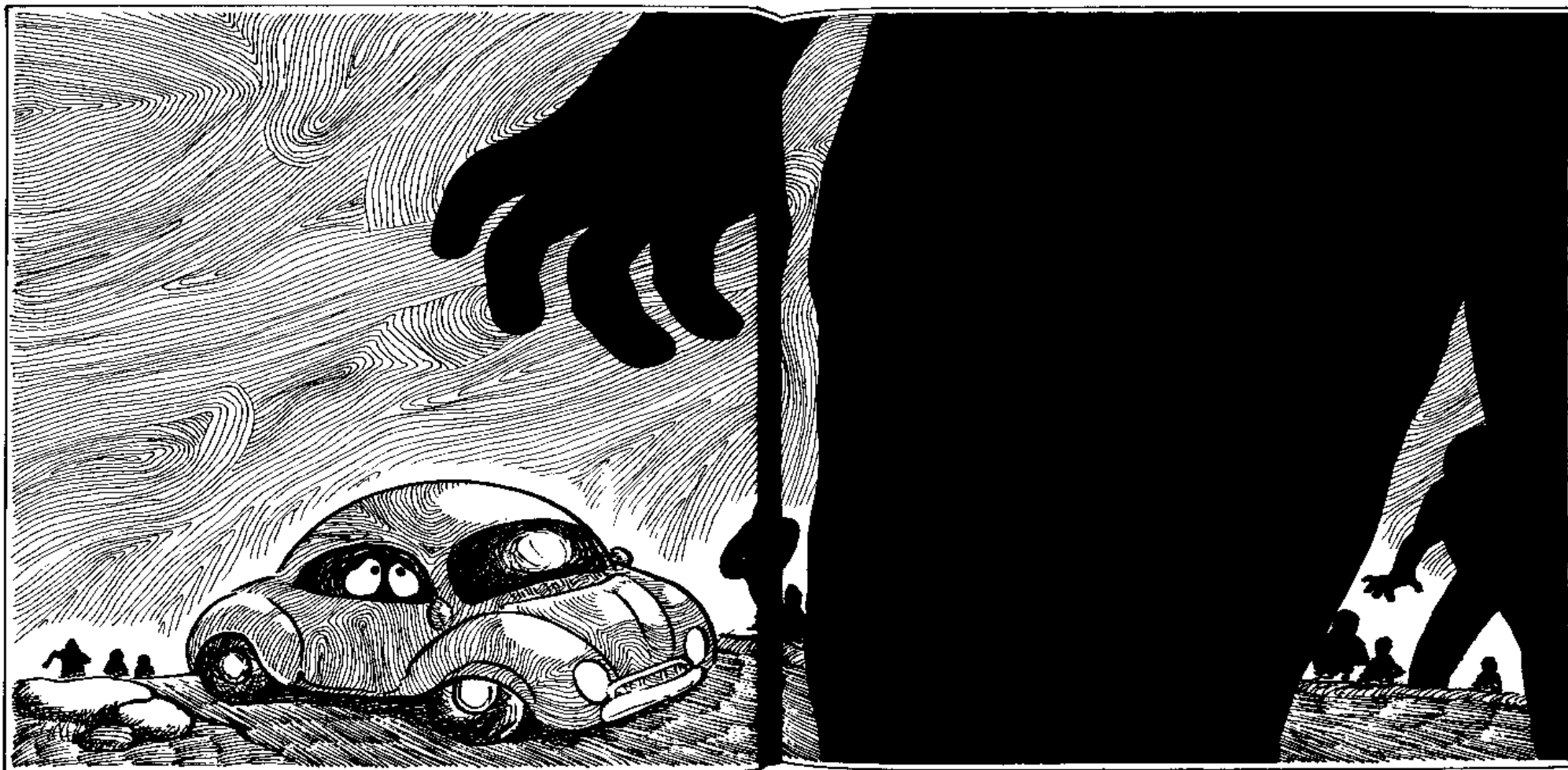
"Crazy old me!" I thought. "Pull yourself together! You're acting like a child! You know there are no such things as gho...!!"



Before I could finish my sentence, the footsteps started to fall again. This time they were closer and I could hear some heavy breathing. My mind went wild trying to figure out what was coming toward me.



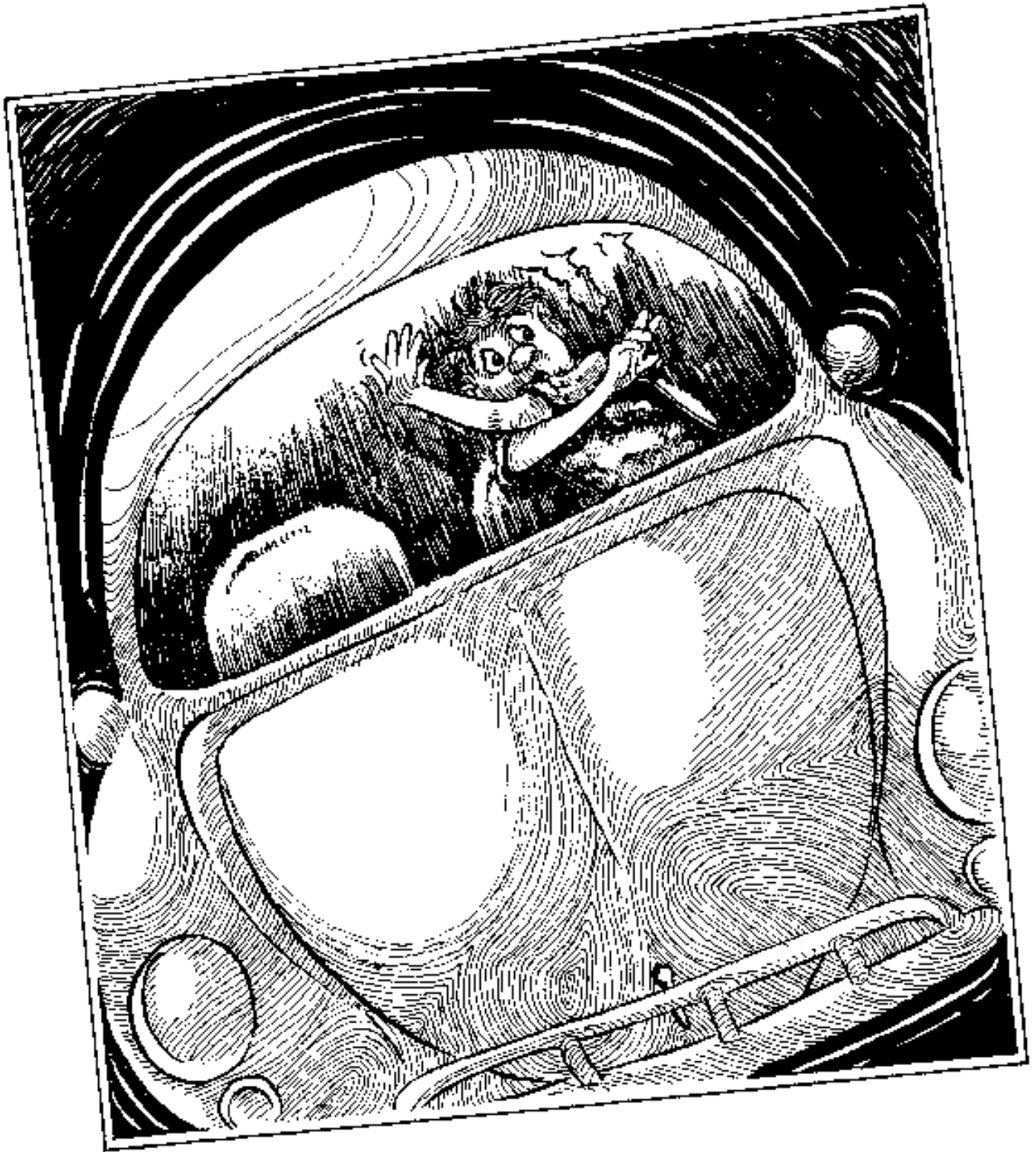
Was it something like this?



Oh, no! And from the sound of it, there seemed to be others approaching as well. I was done for!

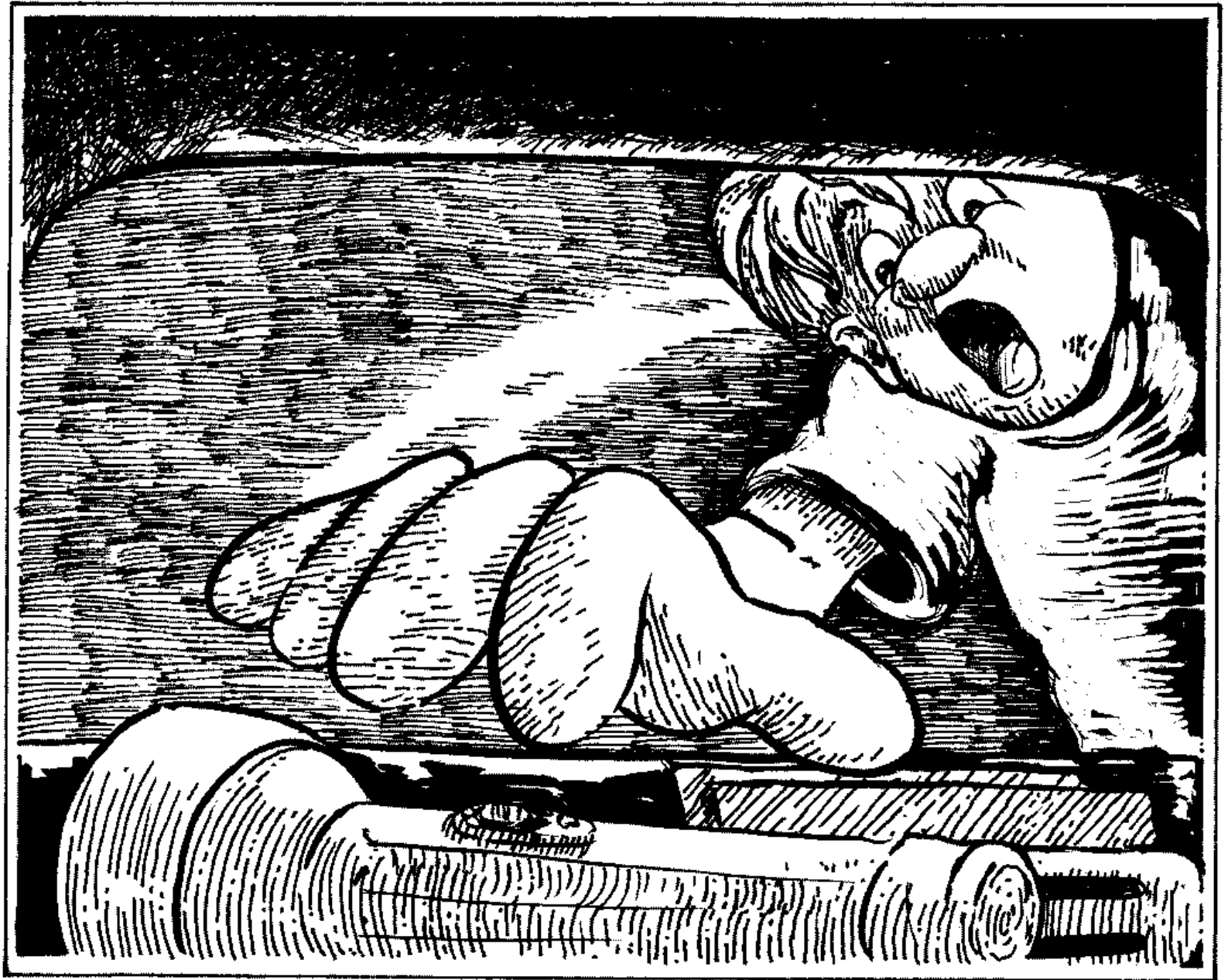


A chill ran up my spine! Some of them were moaning now! Some sounded like they were licking their lips! "Blood-thirsty ghosts!" I thought. "They want my blood!"



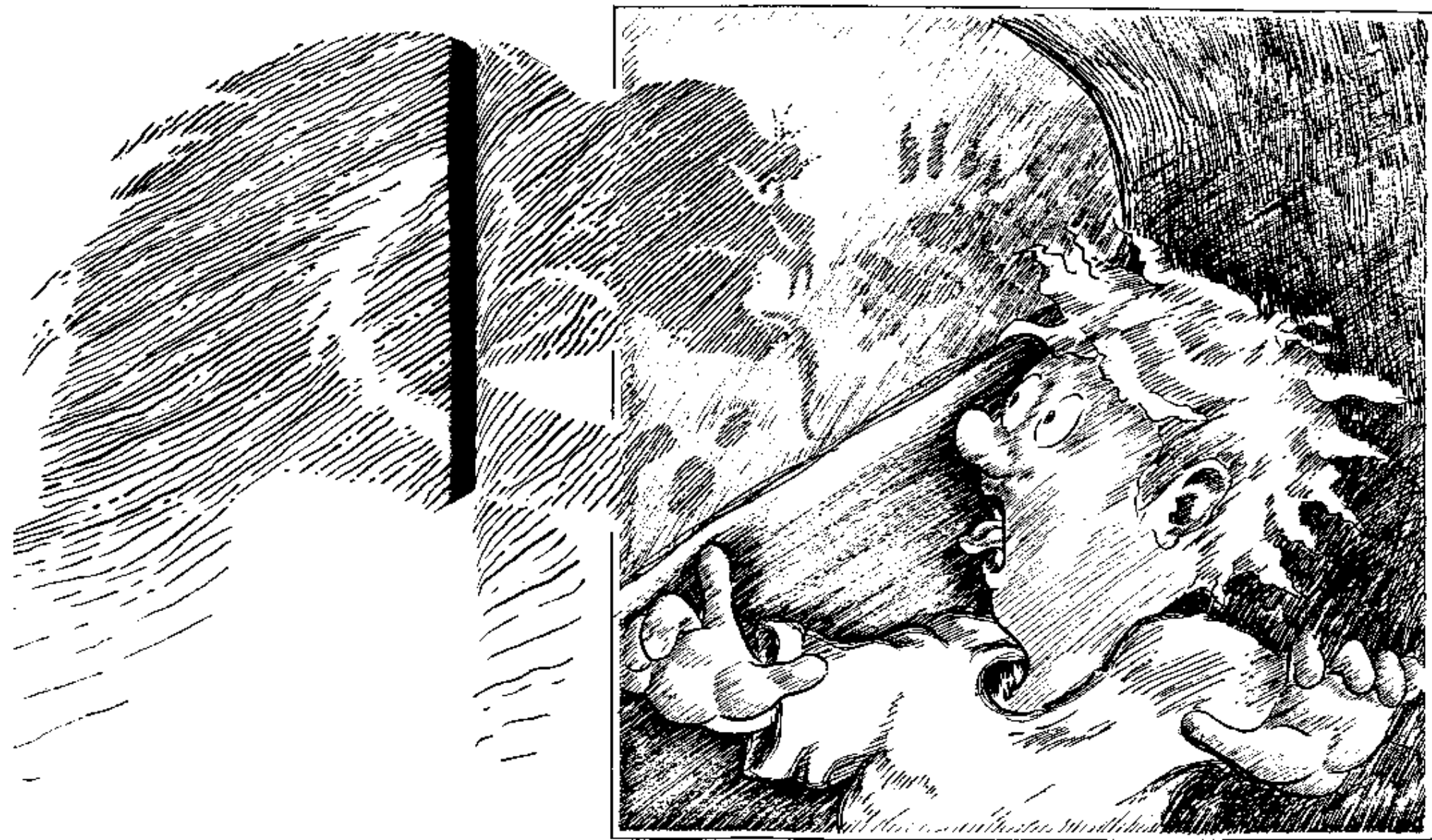
Then the car started shaking violently. Who could be so strong? It was superhuman strength! I was beside myself with fear.

I grabbed for the flashlight in the glove compartment. I was about to flick it on when the side of the car was hit hard and the flashlight flew out of my hand. I groped in the dark but couldn't find it.





"Ahh!" I screamed. One of them seemed to be trying to get through the window. Its breathing grew more and more urgent. I started to moan again.

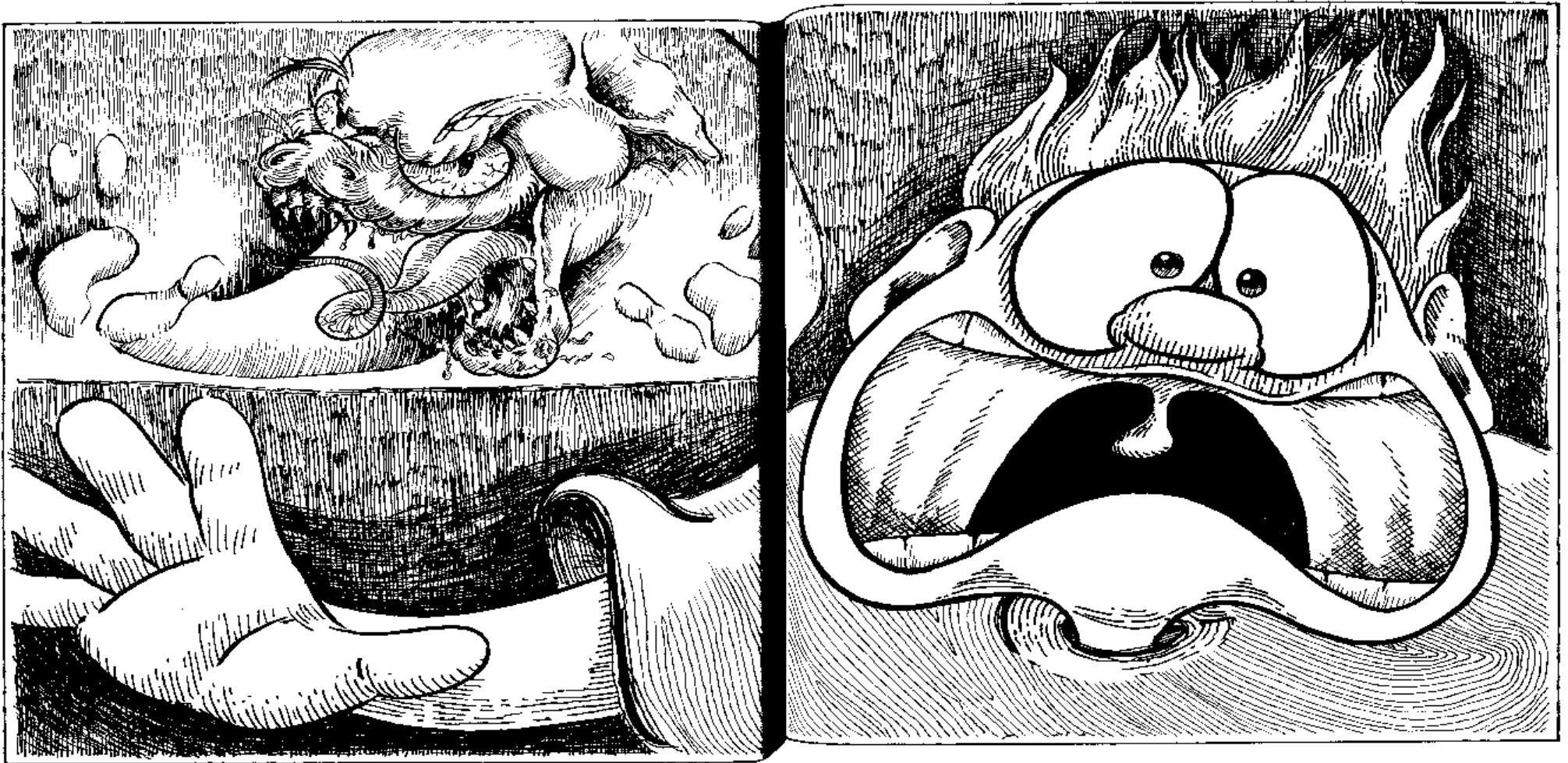




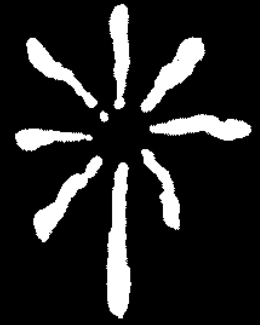
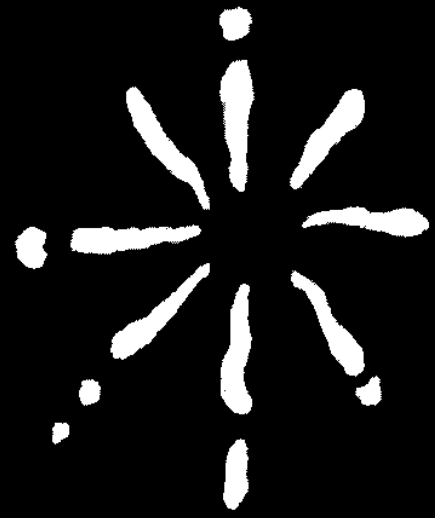
All of a sudden, I remembered the little flashlight on my key ring. I grabbed for it and flicked it on.

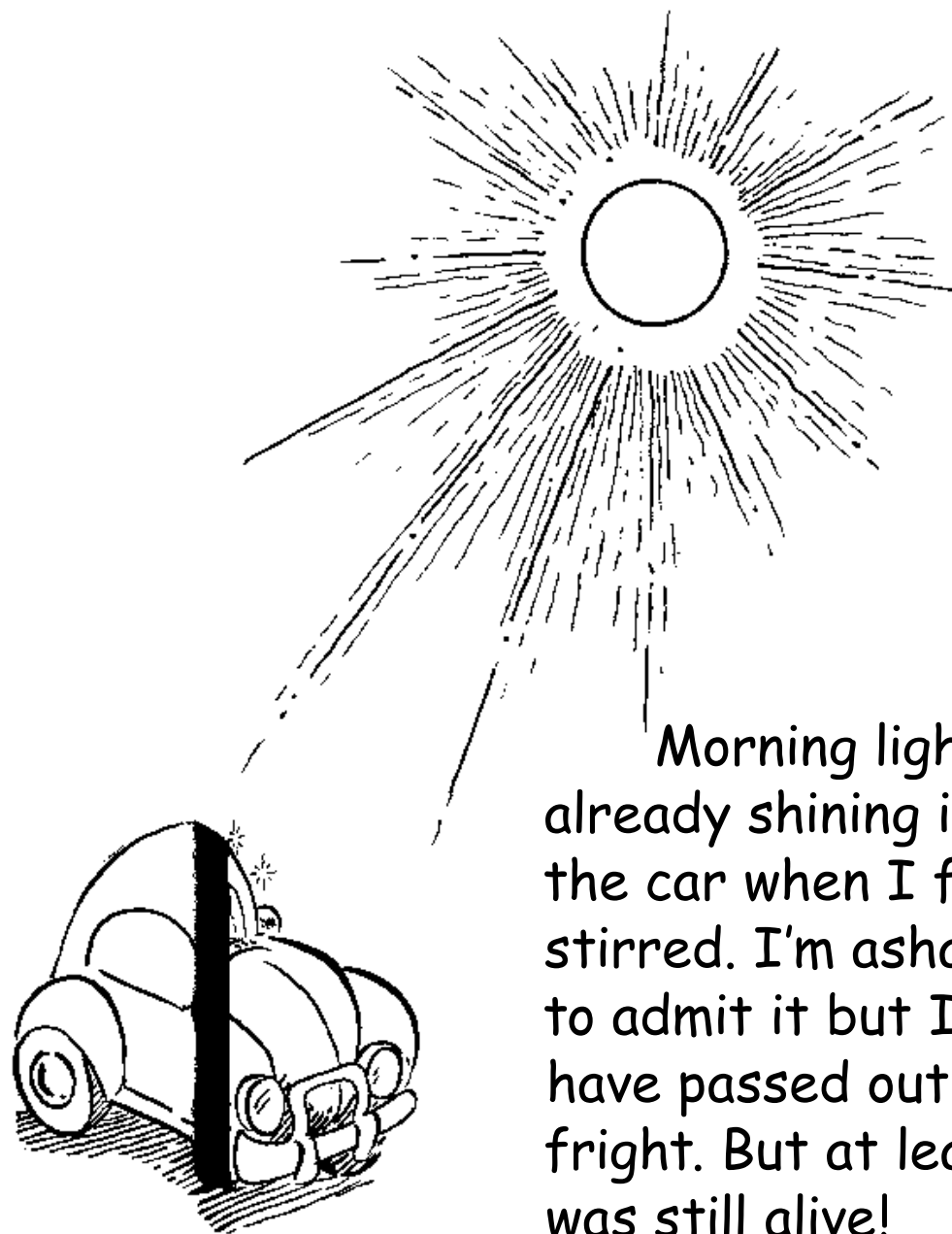
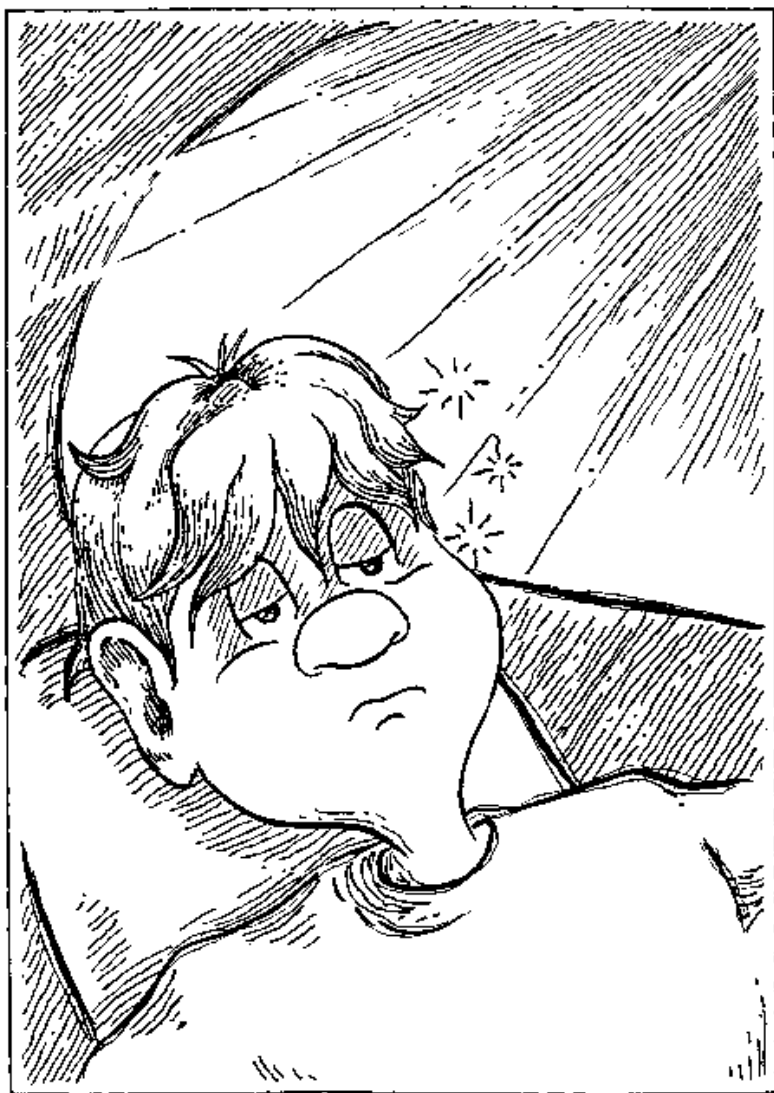


The light was dim but it was enough for me to direct it through the back window. And there it was! What I saw paralyzed me with fear.

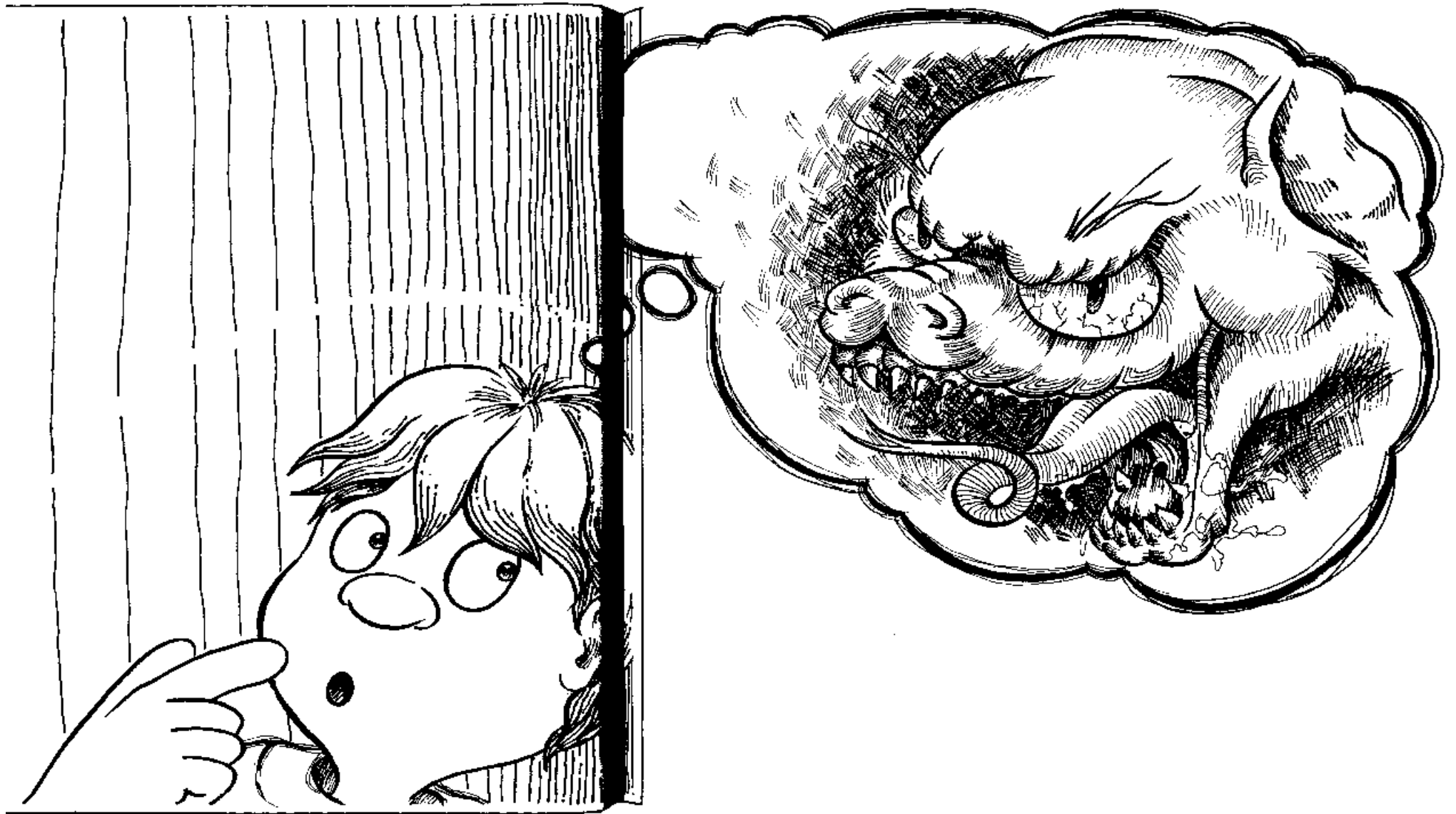


Pressed against the glass was the most monstrous face I had ever seen. Its eyes were glowing red with fire and it was frothing at the mouth. It looked like the devil himself. "Aghhh! It is the devil!" Then everything went black.





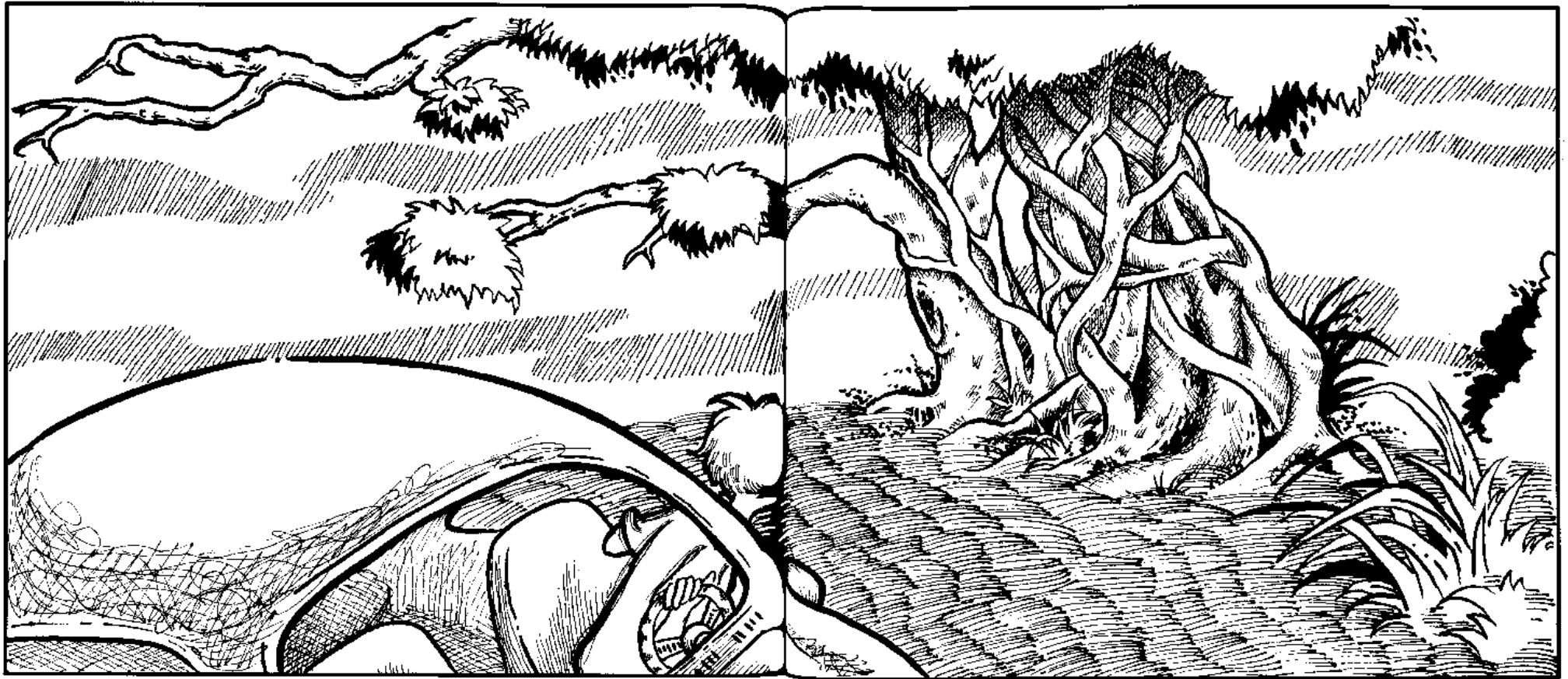
Morning light was already shining into the car when I finally stirred. I'm ashamed to admit it but I must have passed out from fright. But at least I was still alive!



How could that be though? Wasn't that monster I saw last night clawing through the window to get at me?



I looked around. I wasn't in a graveyard after all! What I thought were crosses and tombstones were merely parts of a broken fence and small mounds of earth.



As for the long arm which I thought was reaching out at me in the dark, by day it was nothing but a long branch growing out of an old, gnarled tree trunk.

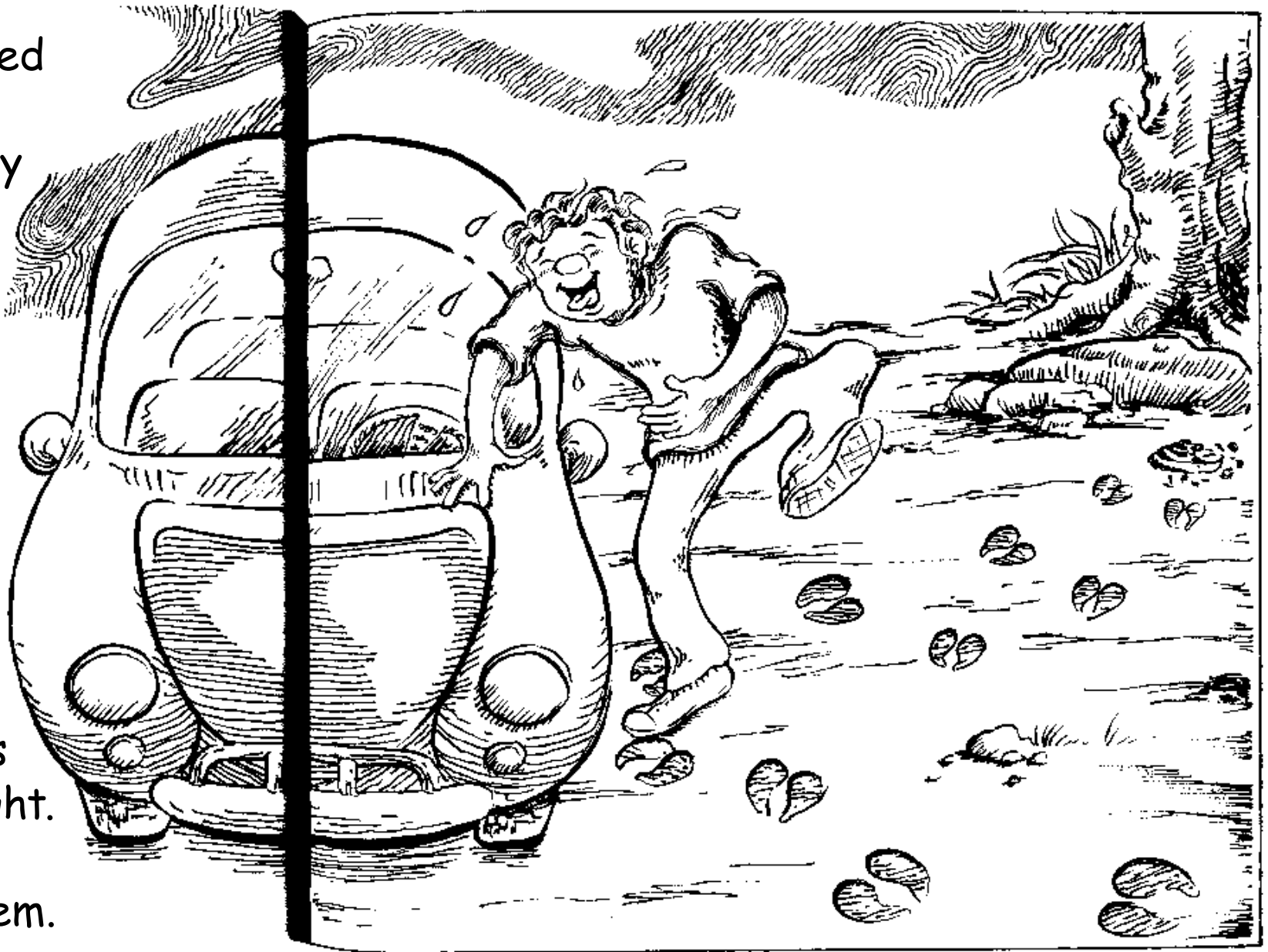
But what could have shaken up my car so violently? I stepped out of the car (daylight makes me brave), and noticed some large hoofprints in the soft mud.



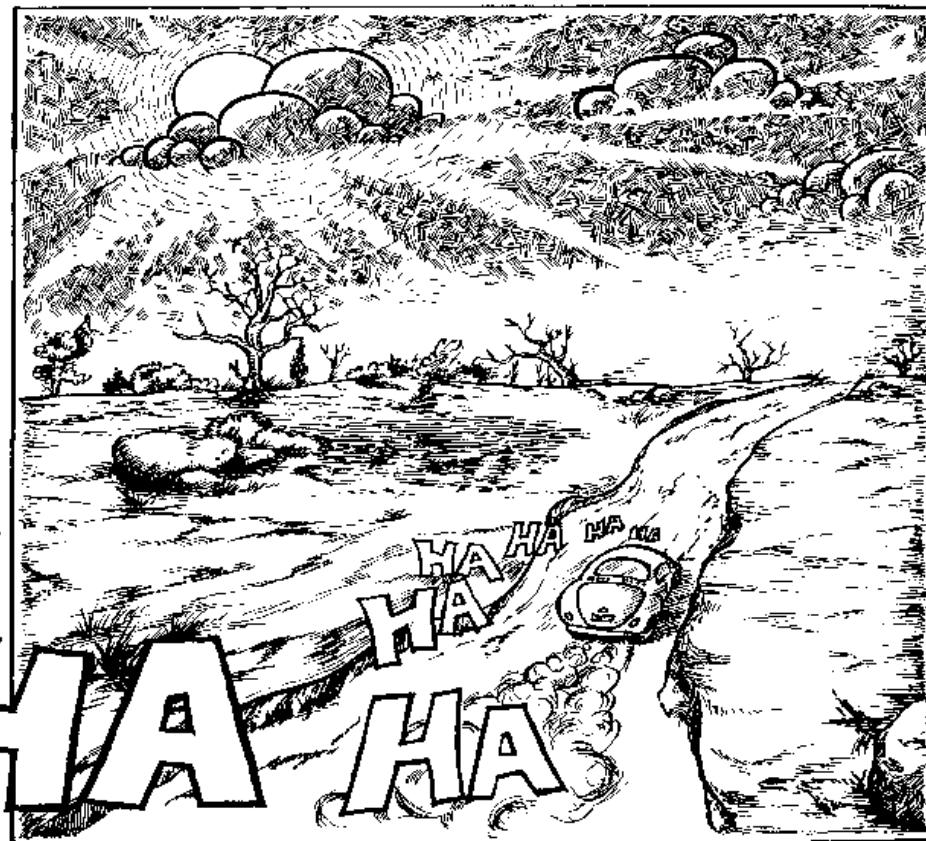


Cows! The monsters were cows! They must have needed a good scratch and found the sides of my car to be a good place as any old tree to rub up against.

I laughed but also realized how stupid I was. I certainly learned a good lesson, too: fear overwhelms wisdom and common sense. "What a good story this will make when I see my friends again," I thought. I couldn't wait to tell it to them.



HA
HA
HA
HA



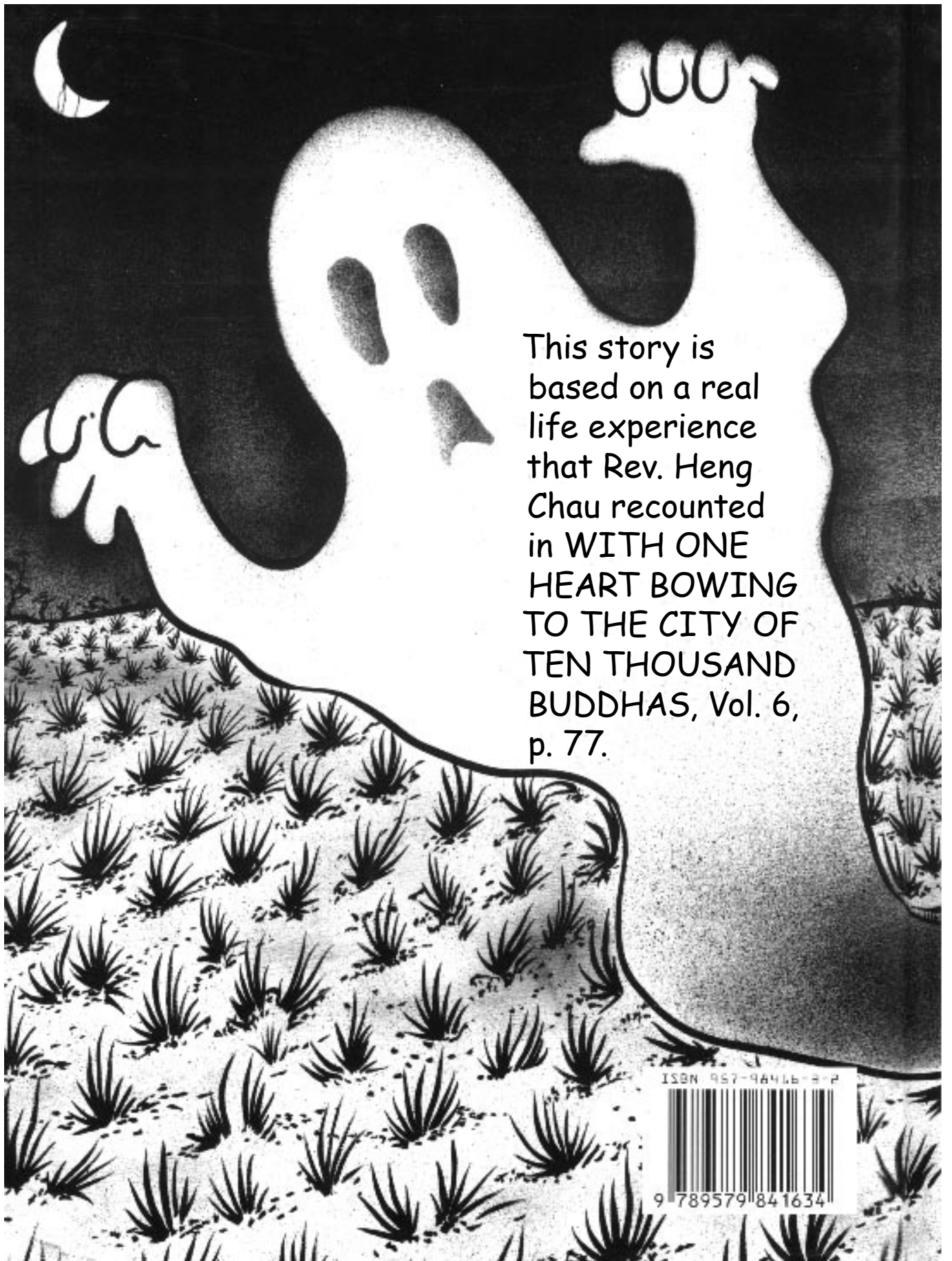
And I drove all the way home, laughing.

"Fear had turned harmless cows into monstrous goblins in my mind. Our emotions are so heavy, they press our wisdom into the ground like the weighty cows pressing their hoofs into the mud. Once we understand what's true, there's nothing at all to be afraid of, is there? It's all made from the mind."

Rev. Heng Chau



After all, who would be afraid of a cute little cow like this, day OR night?



This story is based on a real life experience that Rev. Heng Chau recounted in WITH ONE HEART BOWING TO THE CITY OF TEN THOUSAND BUDDHAS, Vol. 6, p. 77.

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