REPUBLIC OF ENOCH

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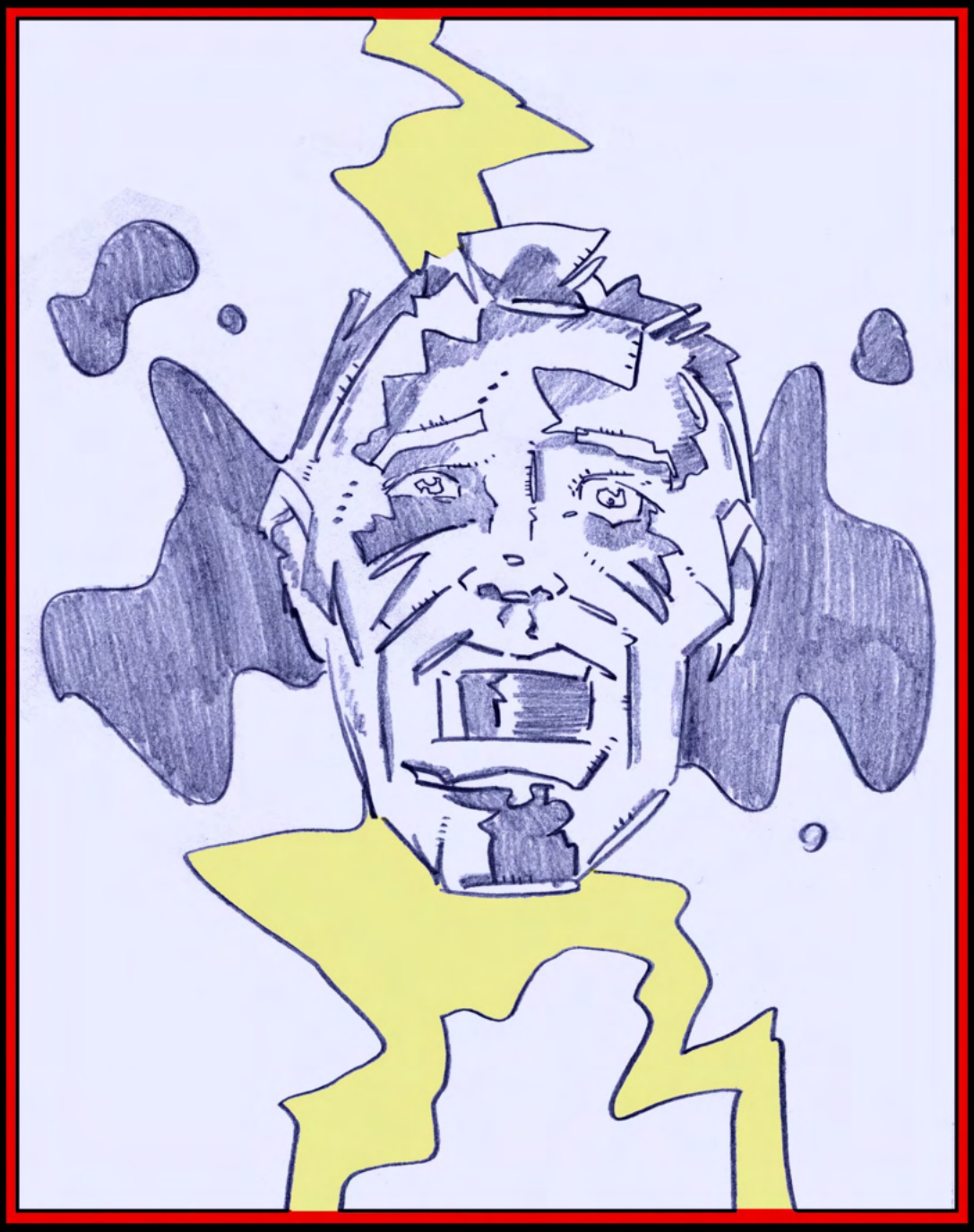
DARK VALLEY

a spiritual journey

HOW LONG WILL YOU FORGET ME, O LORD?

...FOREVER?

FOREWORD



THOUGH NEVER ACTUALLY PUBLISHED, THIS BOOK WAS CREATED TEN YEARS AGO AS I ENTERED ONE OF THE DARKEST VALLEYS OF MY LIFE. NOW, A DECADE LATER, I CONTINUE STILL IN THAT VALLEY AND ALTHOUGH GOD HAS NOT DELIVERED ME OUT OF IT, HE HAS, DAY BY DAY, WALKED WITH ME THROUGH IT...

...AND I CAN HONESTLY SAY THAT THESE HAVE BEEN BOTH THE HARDEST AND THE BEST YEARS OF MY LIFE.

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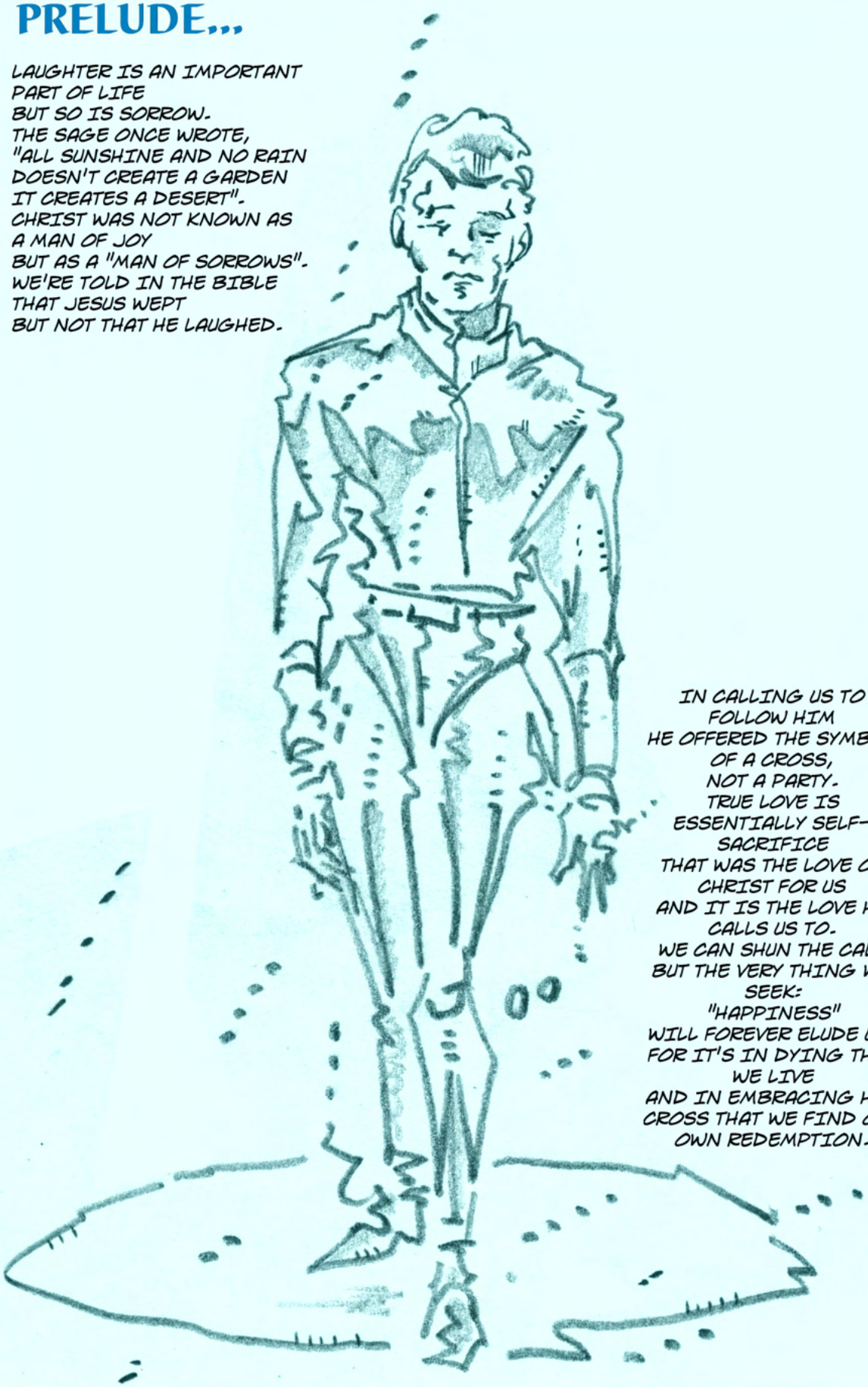
PRELUDE...

LAUGHTER IS AN IMPORTANT
PART OF LIFE
BUT SO IS SORROW.
THE SAGE ONCE WROTE,
"ALL SUNSHINE AND NO RAIN
DOESN'T CREATE A GARDEN
IT CREATES A DESERT".
CHRIST WAS NOT KNOWN AS
A MAN OF JOY
BUT AS A "MAN OF SORROWS".
WE'RE TOLD IN THE BIBLE
THAT JESUS WEPT
BUT NOT THAT HE LAUGHED.



IN CALLING US TO
FOLLOW HIM
HE OFFERED THE SYMBOL
OF A CROSS,
NOT A PARTY.
TRUE LOVE IS
ESSENTIALLY SELF-
SACRIFICE
THAT WAS THE LOVE OF
CHRIST FOR US
AND IT IS THE LOVE HE
CALLS US TO.
WE CAN SHUN THE CALL
BUT THE VERY THING WE
SEEK:
"HAPPINESS"
WILL FOREVER ELUDE US.
FOR IT'S IN DYING THAT
WE LIVE
AND IN EMBRACING HIS
CROSS THAT WE FIND OUR
OWN REDEMPTION.

BEATIFIC VISION...

IN JANUARY OF 2010 I HAD A DREAM IN WHICH I SAW THE BRILLIANT "GLORY OF GOD" AND IT SO OVERWHELMED ME WITH JOY THAT I FELT MY HEART WOULD BURST. I REALIZED THEN THAT THERE CAN NO LONGER EXIST IN SUCH A PRESENCE ANY SORROW OR REMEMBRANCE OF OUR SUFFERINGS HERE...

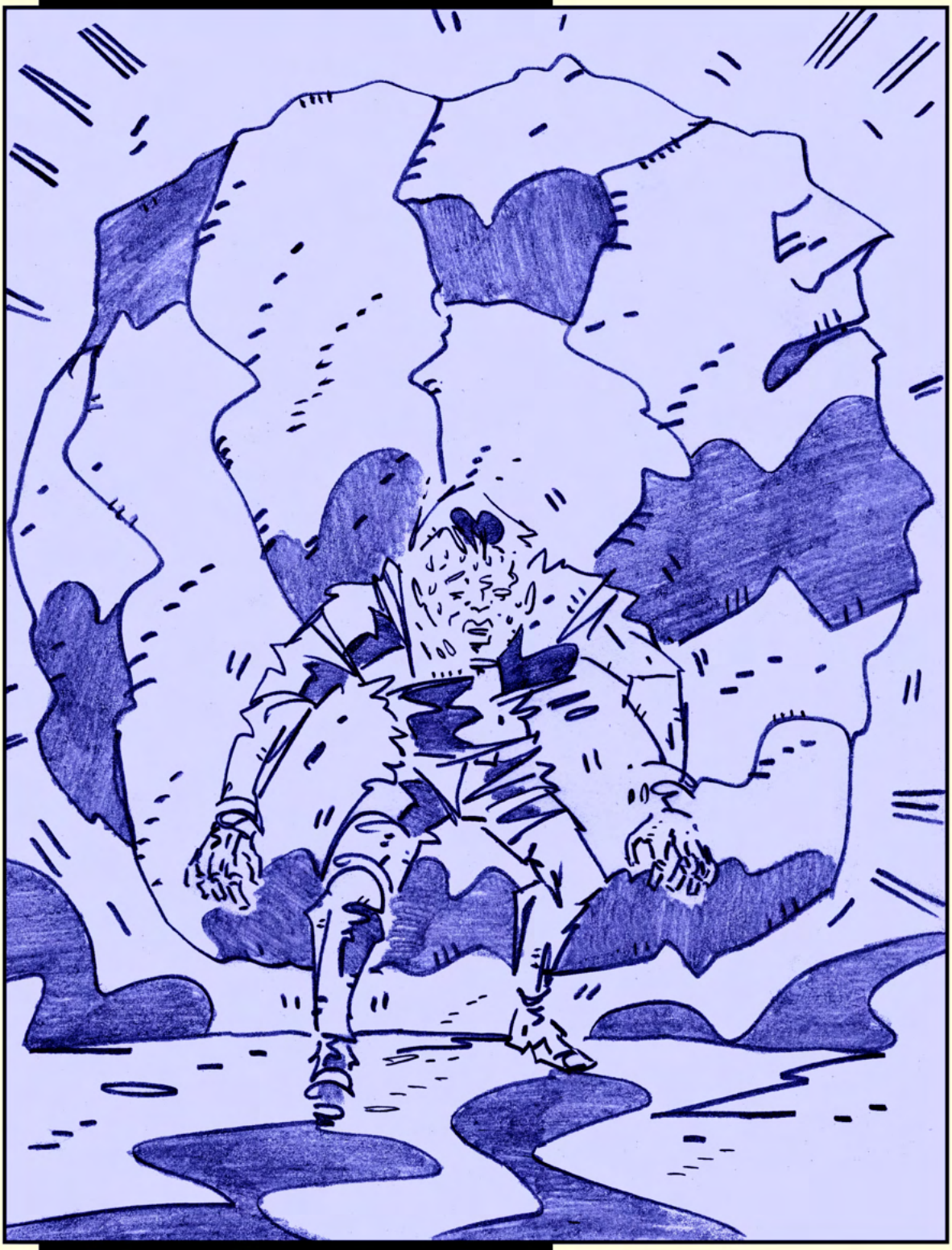
AT THE END OF A LONG AND EXHAUSTING JOURNEY
---A NEW MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB!
OH FATHER---I DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO DO THIS---
WE CLIMB EACH MOUNTAIN---ONE STEP AT A TIME---

In the dark valley
oft times shades can pass
for "friends"...even "brethren"...
JUST HAVE FAITH... GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU!
BE WARMED AND BE FILLED, BROTHER!
H...HELP ME...
DON'T WORRY...I'LL SAY A PRAYER FOR YOU!

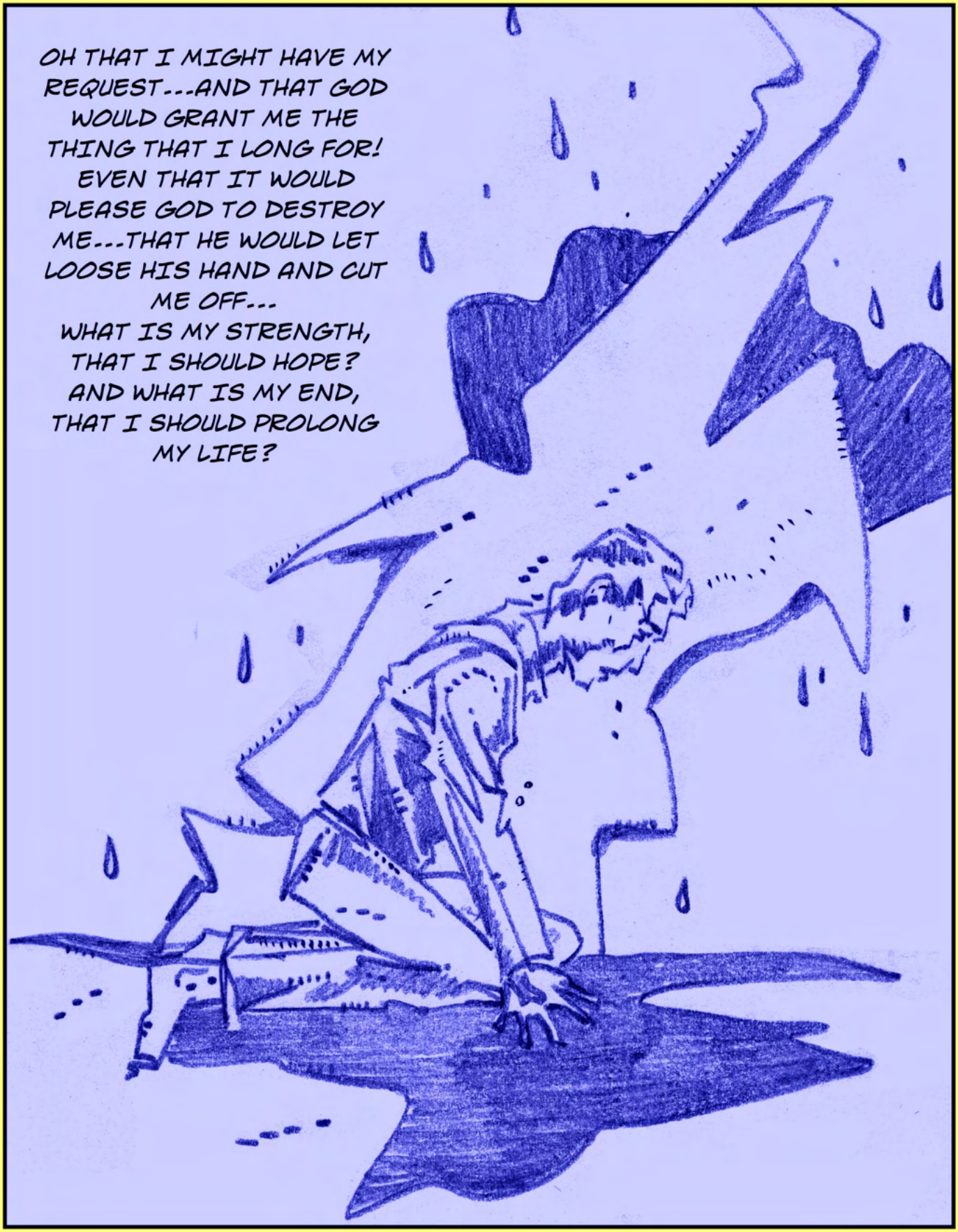
THIS POOR MAN CRIED, AND THE LORD HEARD HIM, AND SAVED HIM OUT OF ALL HIS TROUBLES.

MANY ARE THE AFFLICTIONS OF THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT THE LORD DELIVERS HIM OUT OF THEM ALL.

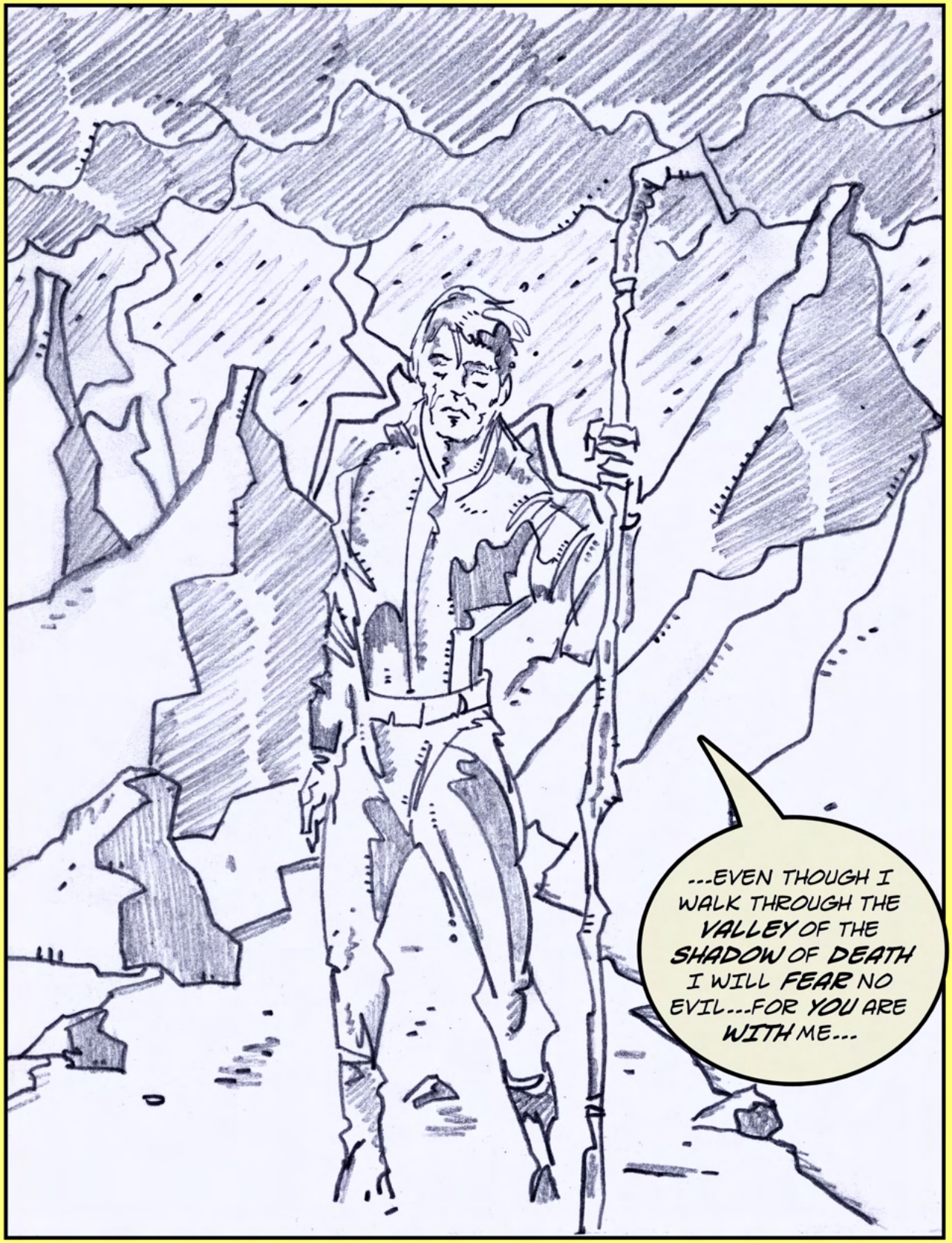
DEAR LORD...HOW MUCH OF A BURDEN...
...CAN A MAN BEAR?



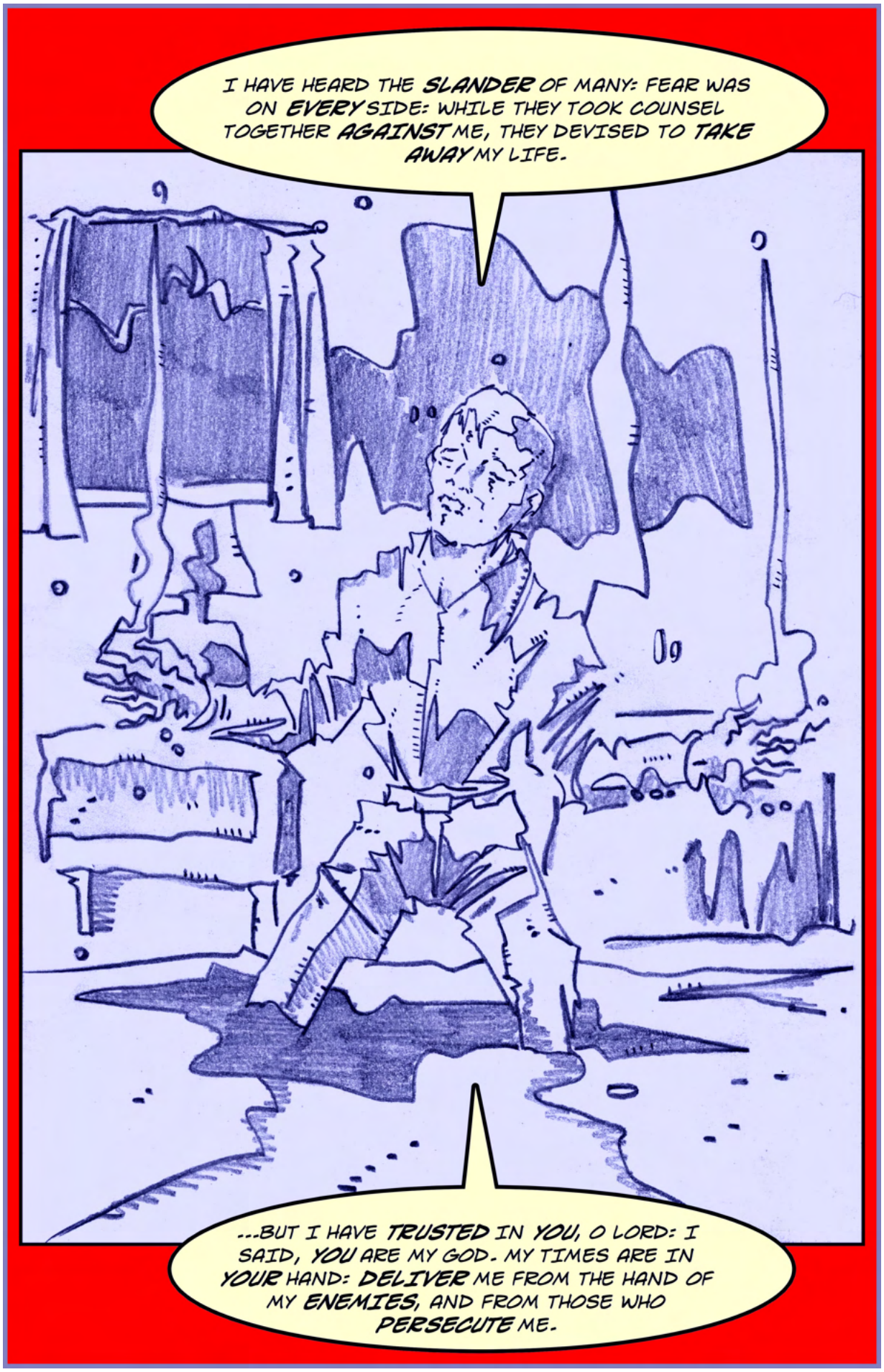
CAST ALL YOUR CARE UPON HIM;
FOR HE CARES FOR YOU.


OH THAT I MIGHT HAVE MY REQUEST...AND THAT GOD WOULD GRANT ME THE THING THAT I LONG FOR! EVEN THAT IT WOULD PLEASE GOD TO DESTROY ME...THAT HE WOULD LET LOOSE HIS HAND AND CUT ME OFF...
WHAT IS MY STRENGTH, THAT I SHOULD HOPE? AND WHAT IS MY END, THAT I SHOULD PROLONG MY LIFE?

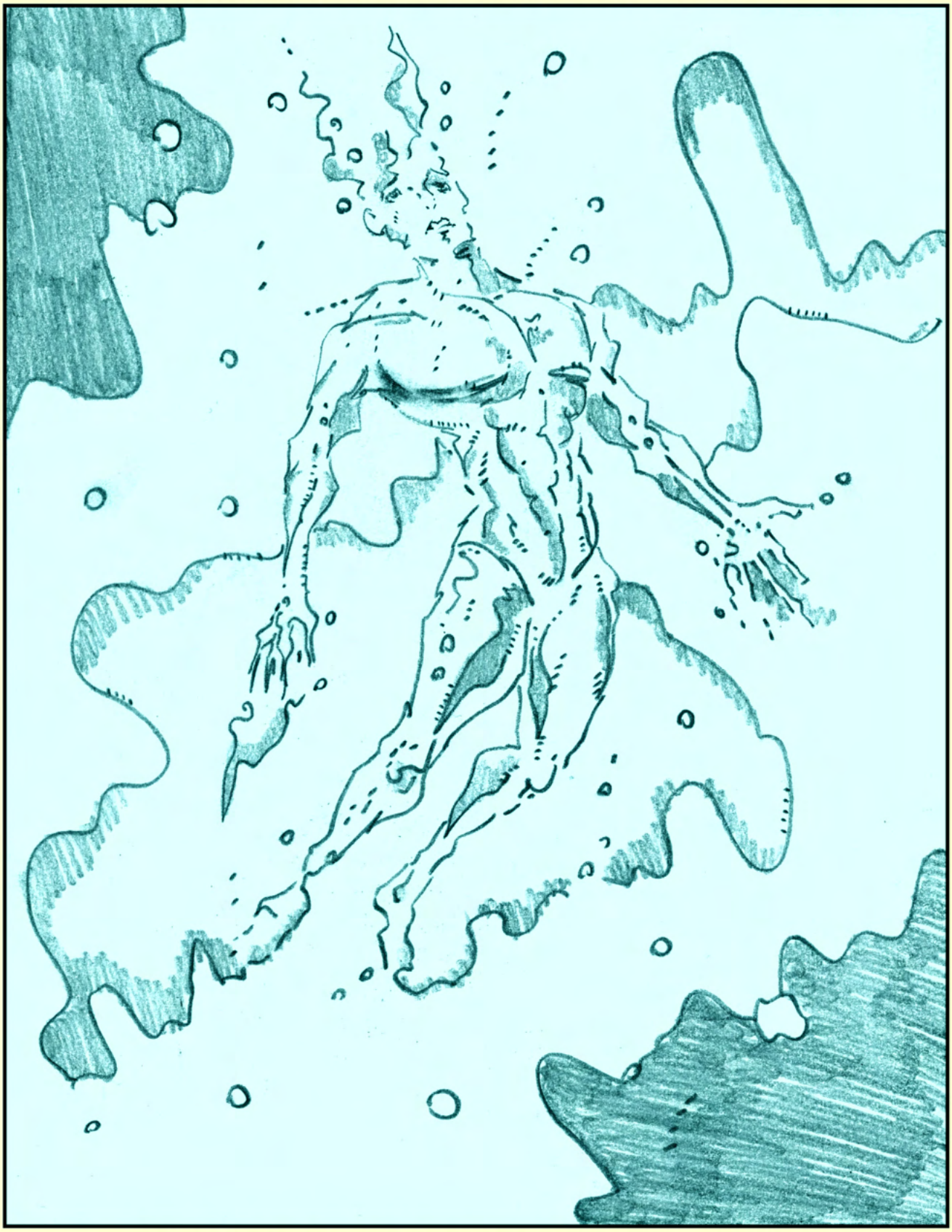
SOMETIMES THE ROAD AHEAD SEEMS LONG...AND HARD...AND WEARY...



ULTIMATELY, EACH MAN IS ALONE WITHIN HIS OWN SOUL...
ONLY GOD CAN ENTER THEREIN...


I HAVE HEARD THE SLANDER OF MANY: FEAR WAS ON EVERY SIDE: WHILE THEY TOOK COUNSEL TOGETHER AGAINST ME, THEY DEVISED TO TAKE AWAY MY LIFE.
...BUT I HAVE TRUSTED IN YOU, O LORD: I SAID, YOU ARE MY GOD. MY TIMES ARE IN YOUR HAND: DELIVER ME FROM THE HAND OF MY ENEMIES, AND FROM THOSE WHO PERSECUTE ME.

OH THAT I HAD WINGS LIKE A DOVE! THEN I WOULD FLY AWAY...AND BE AT REST. I WOULD WANDER FAR OFF AND REMAIN IN THE WILDERNESS!

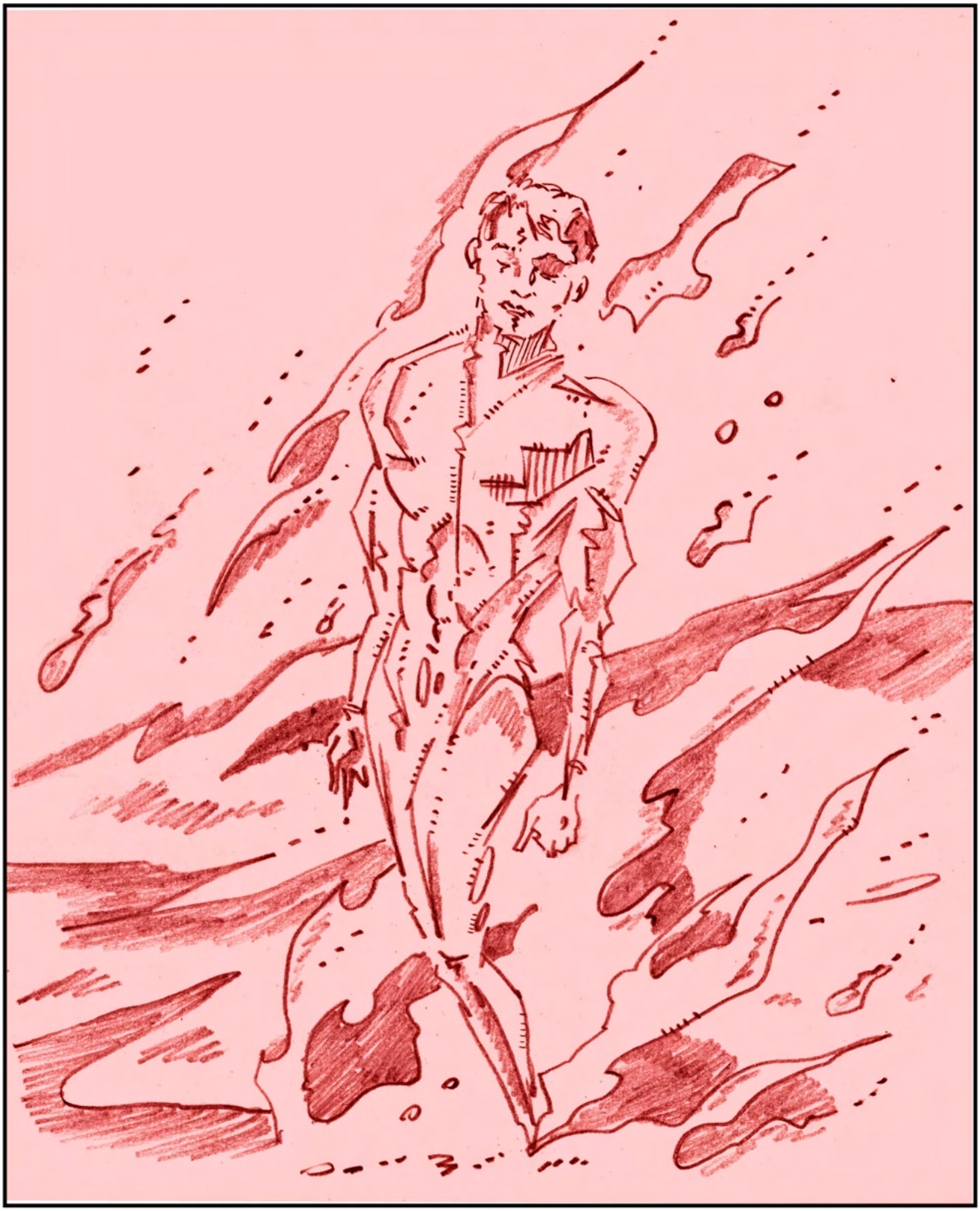


CAST YOUR BURDEN UPON THE LORD...AND HE SHALL SUSTAIN YOU...

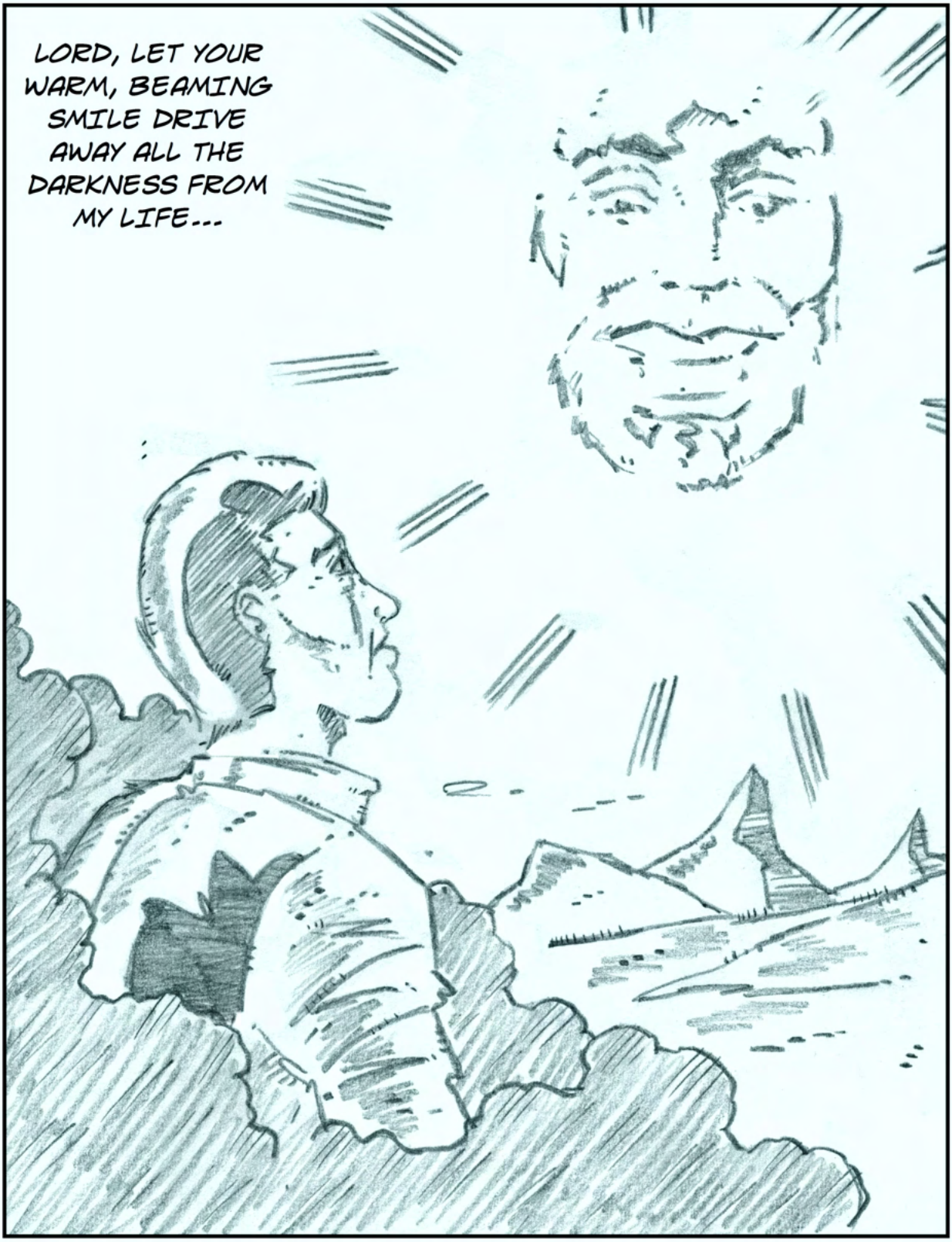
Jesus too walked through the dark valley.
When it seemed he was most defeated
he was actually gaining his greatest victory.

...And it may be that way for us as well.

YOU HAVE CAUSED MEN TO RIDE OVER MY HEAD...I WENT THROUGH FIRE AND THROUGH WATER...BUT YOU BROUGHT ME OUT INTO A WEALTHY PLACE...



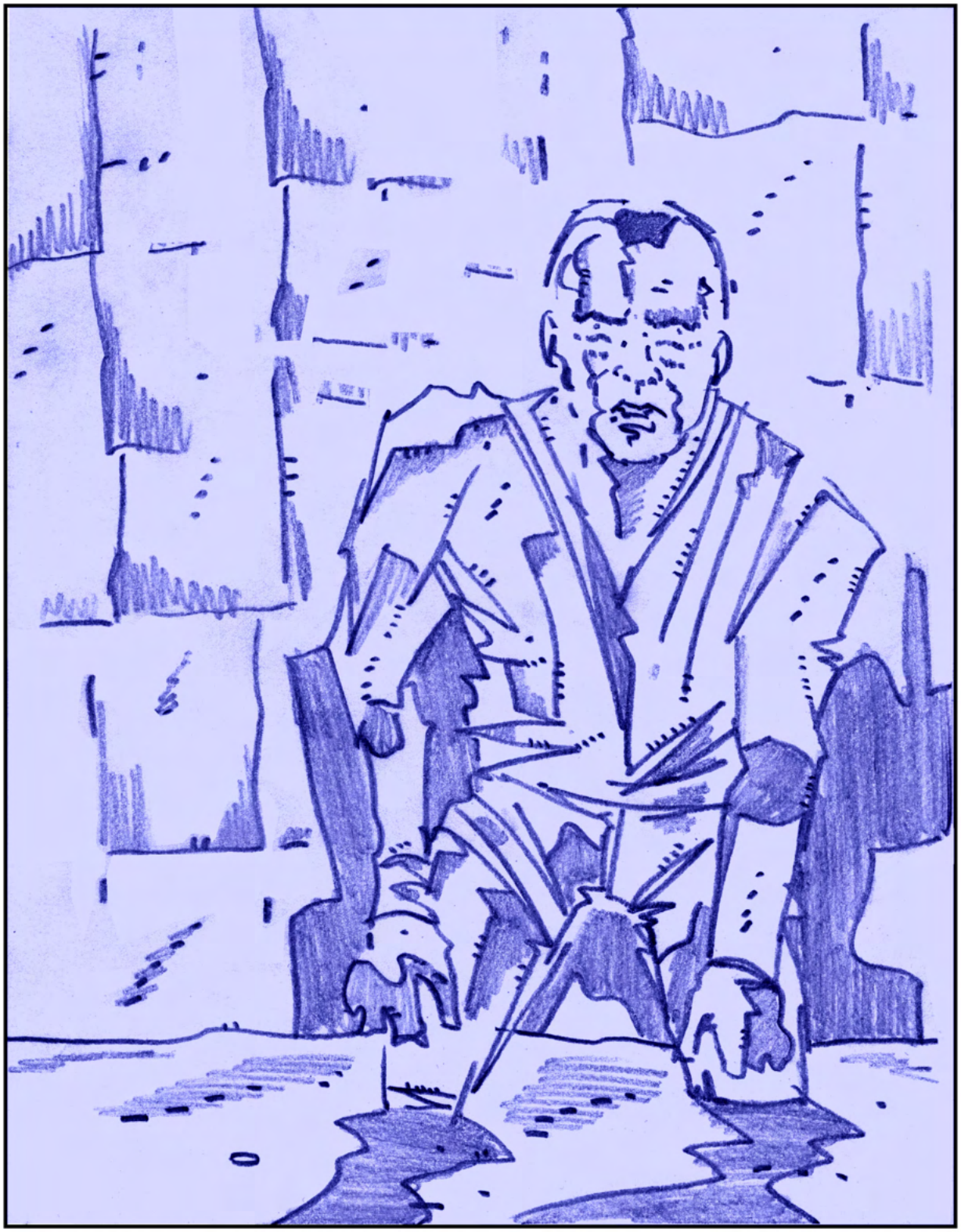
THERE ARE SOME HORRORS IN LIFE FROM WHICH WE ARE NOT MIRACULOUSLY DELIVERED...WE SIMPLY MUST LIVE THROUGH THEM...



ONE EVENING WHILE WE WERE SINGING PRAISE AT OUR BIBLE STUDY A CERTAIN SONG FEATURED IMAGES OF CHRIST ENDURING THE AGONIES OF THE CROSS AND THE PHRASE CAME TO ME: "HE SHALL SEE THE TRAVAIL OF HIS SOUL AND BE SATISFIED"... I REALIZED THAT IN HEAVEN WE WILL ACCEPT THE RIGHTNESS OF ALL OUR SUFFERINGS HERE WHEN WE SEE ALL THOSE WHOSE LIVES GOD HAS TOUCHED THROUGH US... PAIN AND SUFFERING ARE AN INTRICATE PART OF EXISTENCE...NOT ONLY FOR US BUT FOR GOD AS WELL.

FORGIVE ME...FOR THE PEOPLE I'VE HURT IN LIFE...FOR THE PEOPLE I'VE LET DOWN...FORGIVE ME, LORD...

I CRIED UNTO THE LORD WITH MY VOICE...I POURED OUT MY COMPLAINT BEFORE HIM; I SHOWED BEFORE HIM MY TROUBLE. WHEN MY SPIRIT WAS OVERWHELMED WITHIN ME, THEN YOU KNEW MY PATH. IN THE WAY WHEREIN I WALKED THEY HAVE SECRETLY LAID A TRAP FOR ME. I LOOKED ON MY RIGHT HAND AND SAW- BUT THERE WAS NO MAN THAT WOULD KNOW ME- REFUGE FAILED ME; NO MAN CARED FOR MY SOUL.



I CRIED TO YOU, O LORD: I SAID, YOU ARE MY REFUGE. ATTEND TO MY CRY- FOR I AM BROUGHT VERY LOW. DELIVER ME FROM MY PERSECUTORS; FOR THEY ARE STRONGER THAN I.
BRING MY SOUL OUT OF PRISON- THAT I MAY PRAISE YOUR NAME!
THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL SURROUND ME- FOR YOU SHALL DEAL BOUNTIFULLY WITH ME.

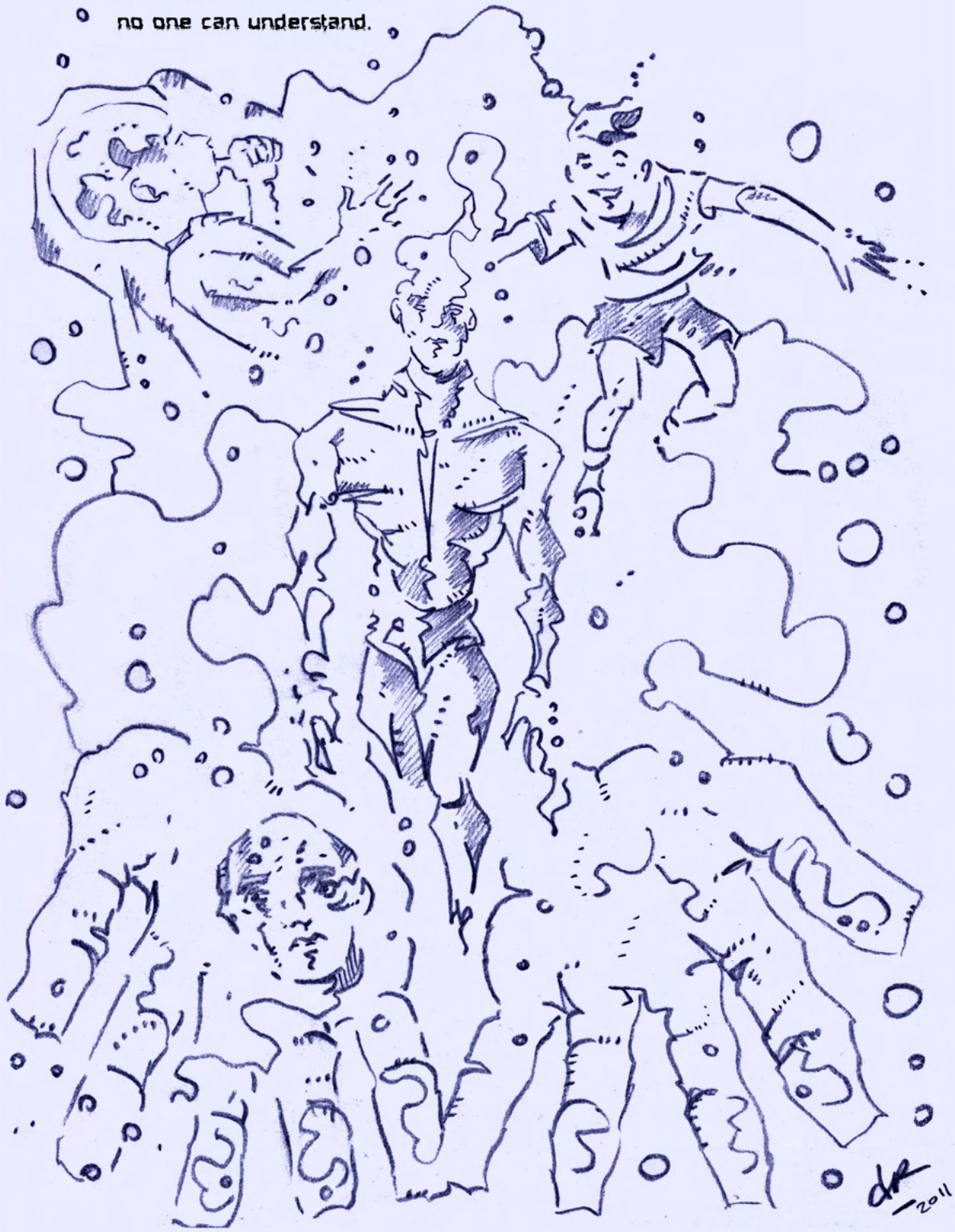
THE LORD IS MY LIGHT AND MY SALVATION- WHOM SHALL I FEAR?
THE LORD IS THE STRENGTH OF MY LIFE- OF WHOM SHALL I BE AFRAID?

PRAYER IS THE BREATH OF THE SOUL...

YOU WILL KEEP HIM IN PERFECT PEACE...
WHOSE MIND IS FIXED ON YOU...
BECAUSE HE TRUSTS IN YOU.

BE MERCIFUL TO ME, O LORD...FOR I CRY TO YOU DAILY. REJOICE THE SOUL OF YOUR SERVANT...FOR TO YOU, O LORD, DO I LIFT UP MY SOUL...
DON'T CAST ME OFF IN THE TIME OF OLD AGE...
DON'T FORSAKE ME WHEN MY STRENGTH FAILS...

the innocent soul journeys forth
from the unseen hand of God
through a long, dark valley
only to return again
from whence it came
and no one can understand...
no one can understand.



FATHER, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT...

WHY WE DO THE RIGHT THING

A LETTER TO MY CHILDREN

Oftentimes in life you'll find that being a good person and doing the right thing doesn't always bring the reward or positive result you may think it should.

In fact, you'll discover that the people who do the wrong thing are often the ones who get ahead, who do well, and who are praised by this world.

In my life I've seen that some of the finest people I've ever known have suffered the worst while people who are not good seem to have an easy life.

All I can say is we do the right thing in life because it's the right thing to do. We do the right thing because life is not a meaningless accident and we didn't evolve from an amoeba in the ocean. We were made in the image of God. There is a Creator who expects us to do the right thing and before whom we will someday stand and give an account of the choices we made here. And we do the right thing because at the end of the day we can look back with self-respect and not guilt, remorse and regret.

We do the right thing because there are things in life that are more important than wealth, popularity, comfort or convenience- like honor, honesty, faithfulness, dignity and a good reputation.

You're going to find that it's not easy to do the right thing. You'll have to be a very strong person. It's easier to give in, to follow the crowd, to think as others want you to think. If you don't, you may not be popular...you may be misunderstood or even condemned for your "old-fashioned" views or values.

But to God, some things never change. He gave us the Ten Commandments, not the ten suggestions. And as far as I know He doesn't constantly revise them to keep up with changing human opinion.

When you stand someday before the One who made you, you'll be glad you did the right thing in your life- that you told the truth, that you didn't knowingly hurt or use others, that you were true to God (even when it wasn't popular), that you honored your responsibilities in life as a son or daughter, as a spouse and as a mother or father. These are the things our Maker will be concerned with- not how rich or popular or "successful" we were.

I hope you will always make the right choice- the choice to do the right thing and remember that if you suffer for it you are in good company. The person we follow always did the right thing yet He was misunderstood, despised and eventually crucified for it. This is not His kingdom here. But rest assured, it is coming. And then everyone will wish they too did the right thing.

-your loving Dad

Tuesday, February 11, 2014

FATHER, WHY HAVE YOU ABANDONED ME?
WHY ARE YOU SO FAR FROM HELPING ME?
AVENGE ME OF MY ADVERSARY...