

What's up?

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It's getting so close and ever darker.

There are flashes of lightning  
but no thunder.

# CASCADING COMETCO



And now hailstones are coursing down,



large hailstones and small hail stones.

They are

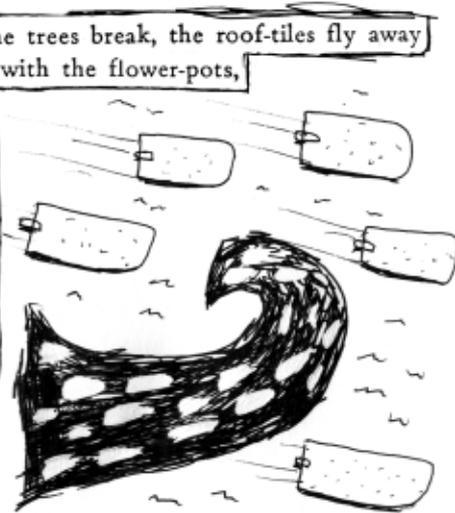
pointed with edges, like badly hewn sugar.



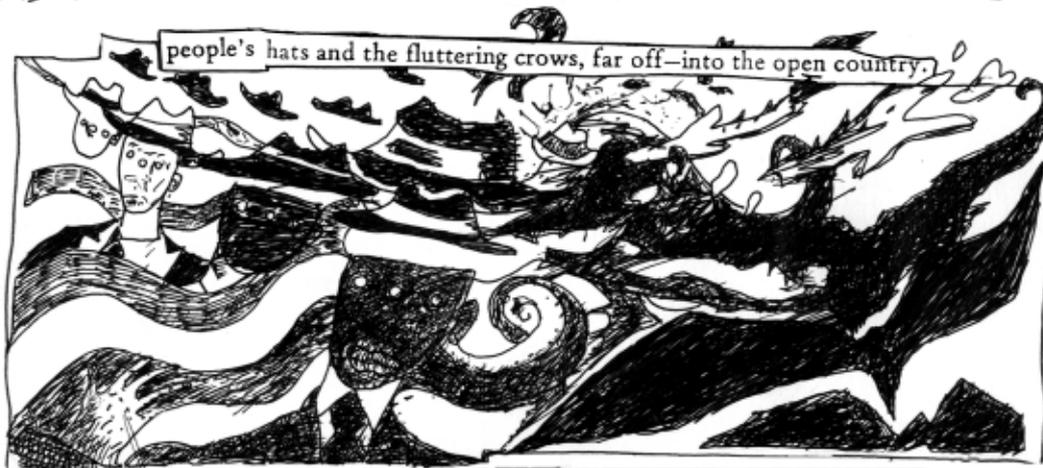
But it is not sugar—it tastes cool and pleasant.



there is a roar from above the clouds.  
A storm is whirling through the land.



The trees break, the roof-tiles fly away  
with the flower-pots,



people's hats and the fluttering crows, far off—into the open country.



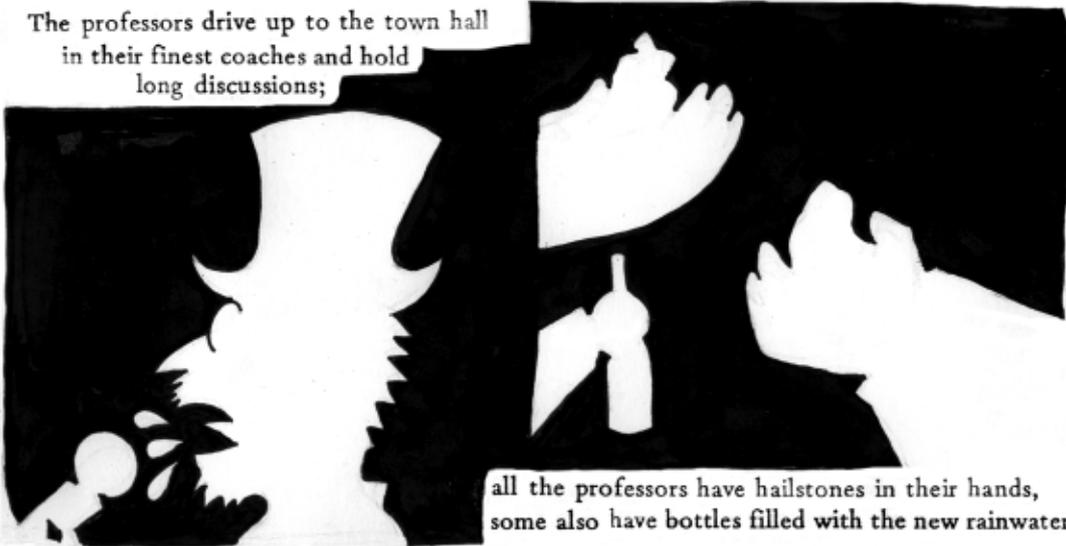
And it is hailing and raining  
The rain tastes as cool and pleasant as the hailstones.



There is something strange about this hail and rain.

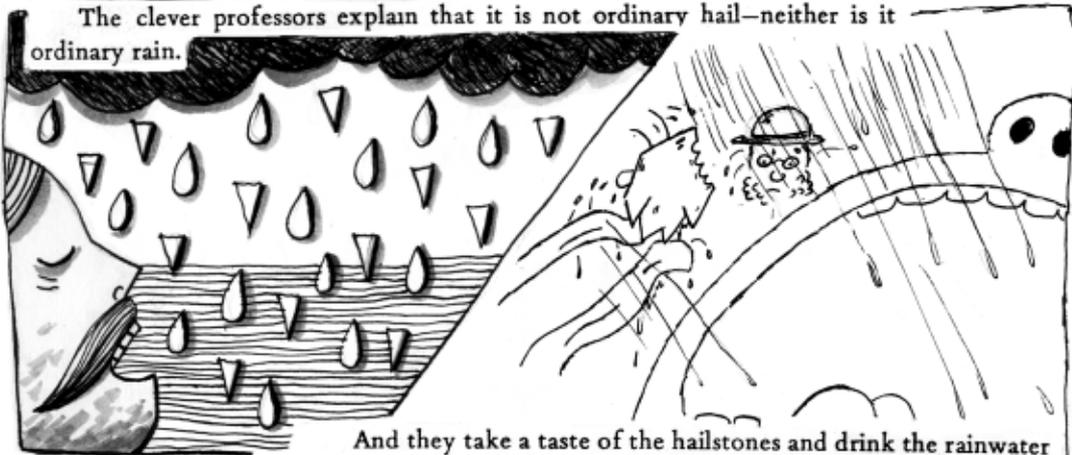
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The professors drive up to the town hall  
in their finest coaches and hold  
long discussions;



all the professors have hailstones in their hands,  
some also have bottles filled with the new rainwater.

The clever professors explain that it is not ordinary hail—neither is it  
ordinary rain.

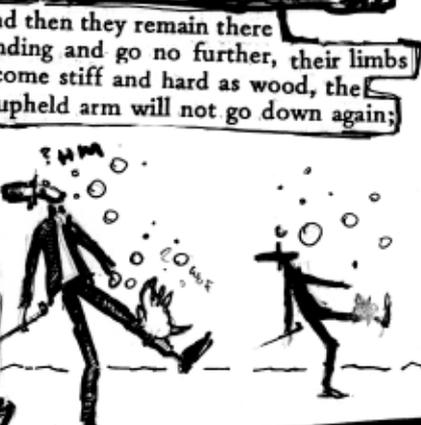
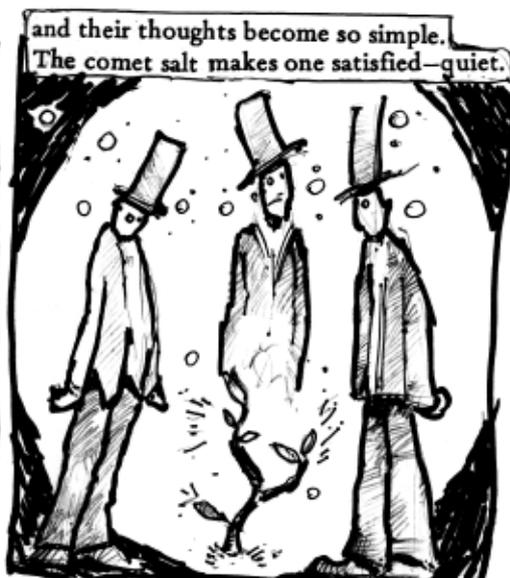


And they take a taste of the hailstones and drink the rainwater

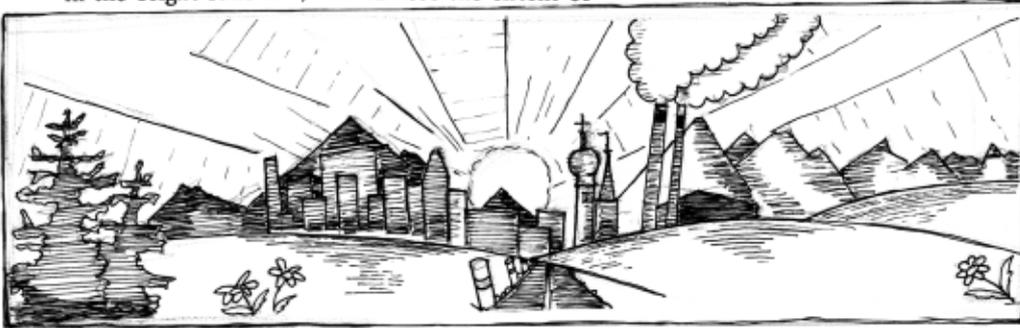
And they say, there is a new substance contained in them—a comet must  
have exploded in the sky—it definitely must have been a comet.



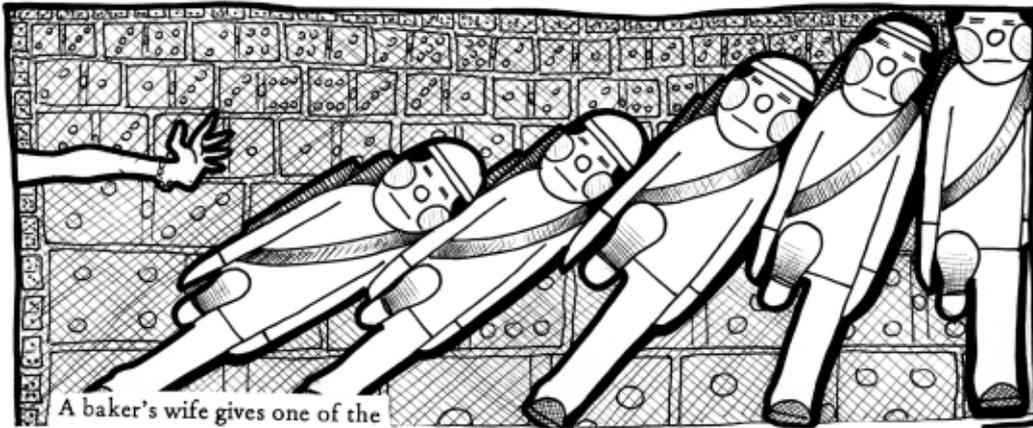
The new substance is Comet Salt.



But in the bright sunshine, one can see the extent of the matter.



Ten wet soldiers are standing bolt upright on one leg on the parade ground, the raised legs will not go back down.



A baker's wife gives one of the soldiers a shove in the side and all ten of them fall like wooden soldiers from a toy-box.



The air is quiet once more.

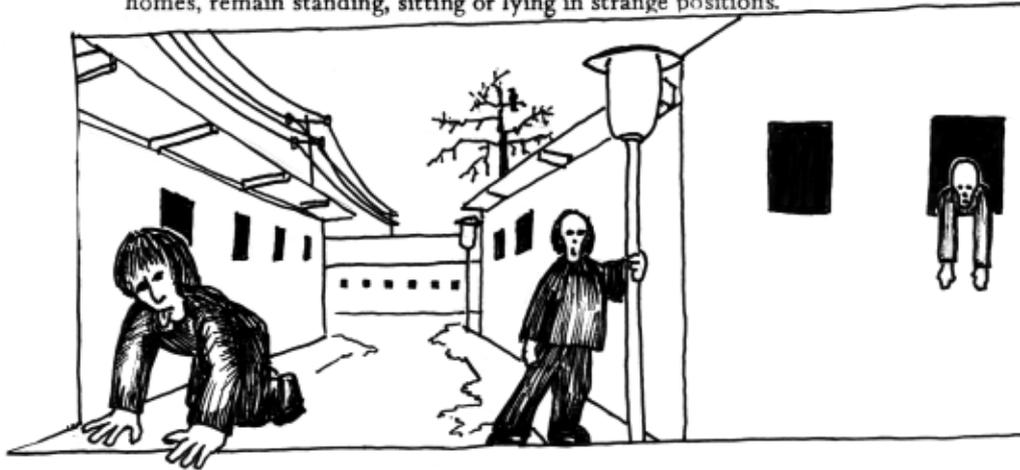


And the people lick the comet salt which covers the ground in heaps.

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animals lick the comet salt as well.

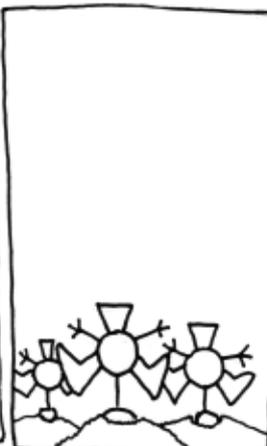
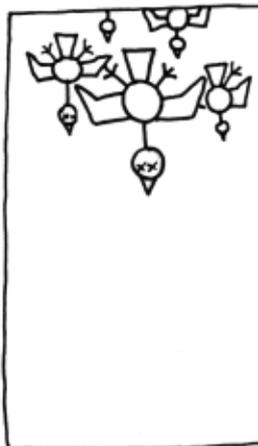
And one by one all the people and animals, in the streets and in their homes, remain standing, sitting or lying in strange positions.



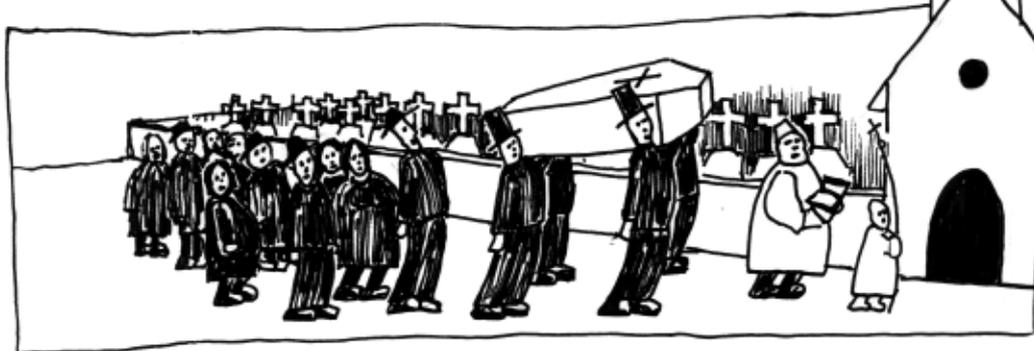
The dogs' mouths stay open.



The birds fall with stiffened wings onto the piles of salt, and move no more.



A funeral procession stands in front of the church and can go no further.



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And the air is so still

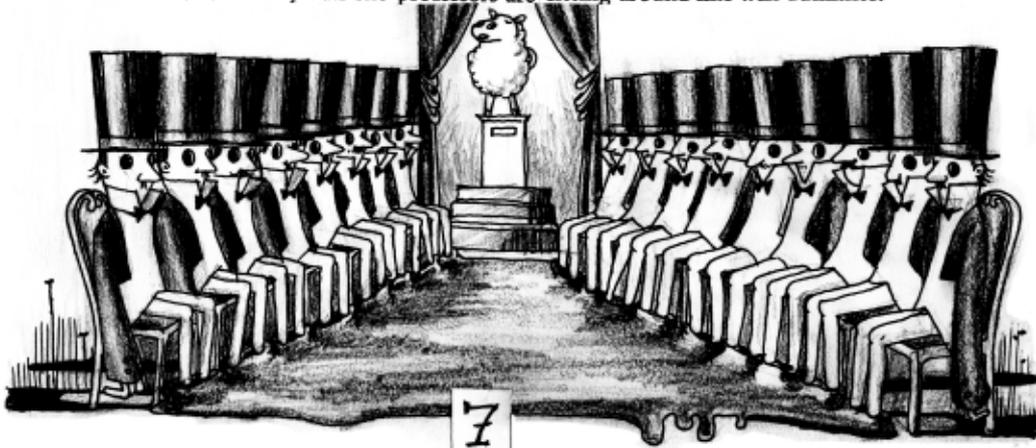
A policeman sits unmoving on a bench beside a tramp—looking unceasingly at one another.



A regiment of decorated nightwatchmen stand in front of the city hall in a continuous ready-to-be-inspected.



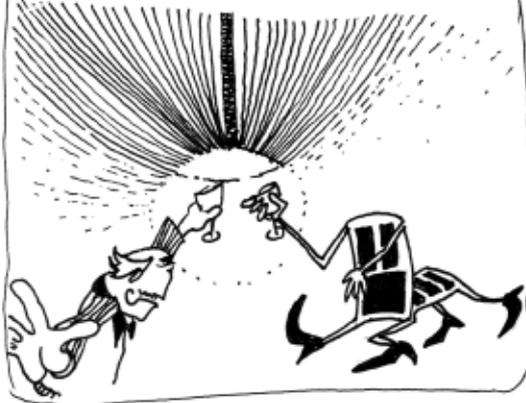
And in the city hall the professors are sitting around like wax dummies.



The Mayor, who had not touched the salt,  
drags himself wearily home,



drinks a glass of water  
in an easy chair by his writing desk



and sees his wife by the oven—



she is as motionless as a departed spirit.

The mayor seizes himself by the head and  
gives a sudden cry of anguish.



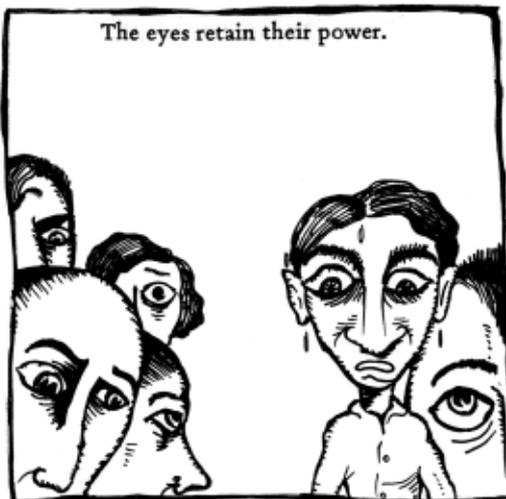
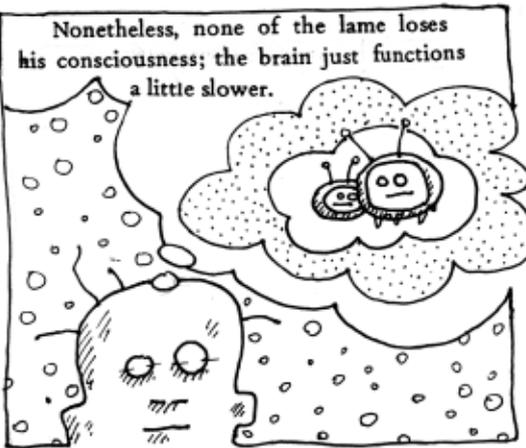
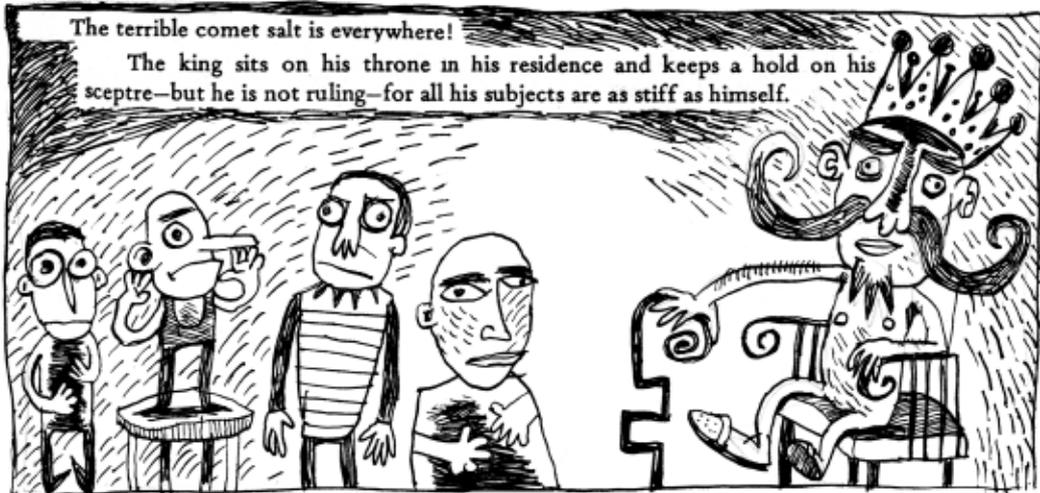
But he can no longer close his mouth—



the salt had got him too—



it was in the drinking glass.

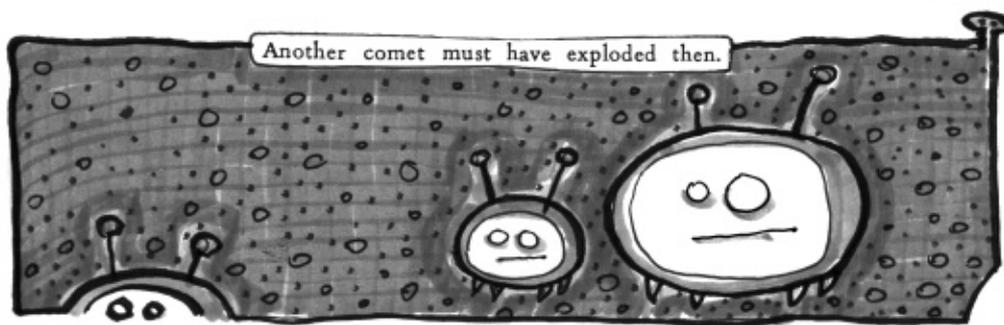
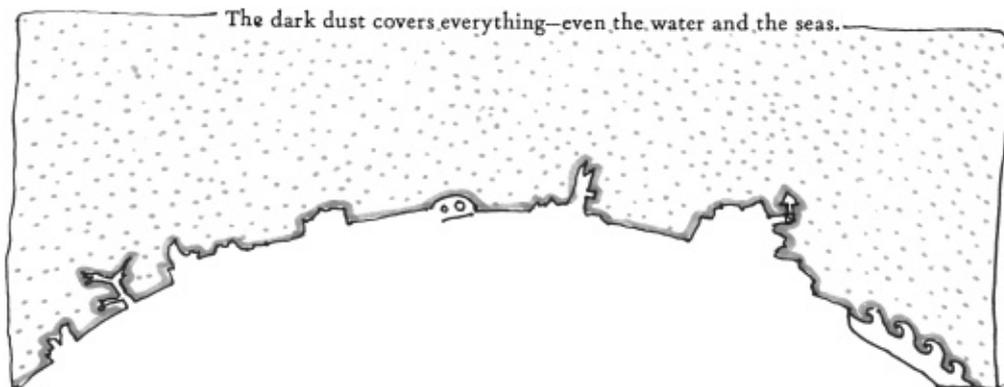


DEVET/ÆBET/HINE/NEUN

and not one moves a finger. The whole surface of the earth has become completely rigid. 9







/ PAUL SCHEERBART (1863-1915)

A neglected forerunner of Dada and the Expressionists, his visionary oeuvre bristles with original ideas taken to extremes. He starved himself to death in protest at the First World War.

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1902