



# NIGHT CRAWLER RETRO



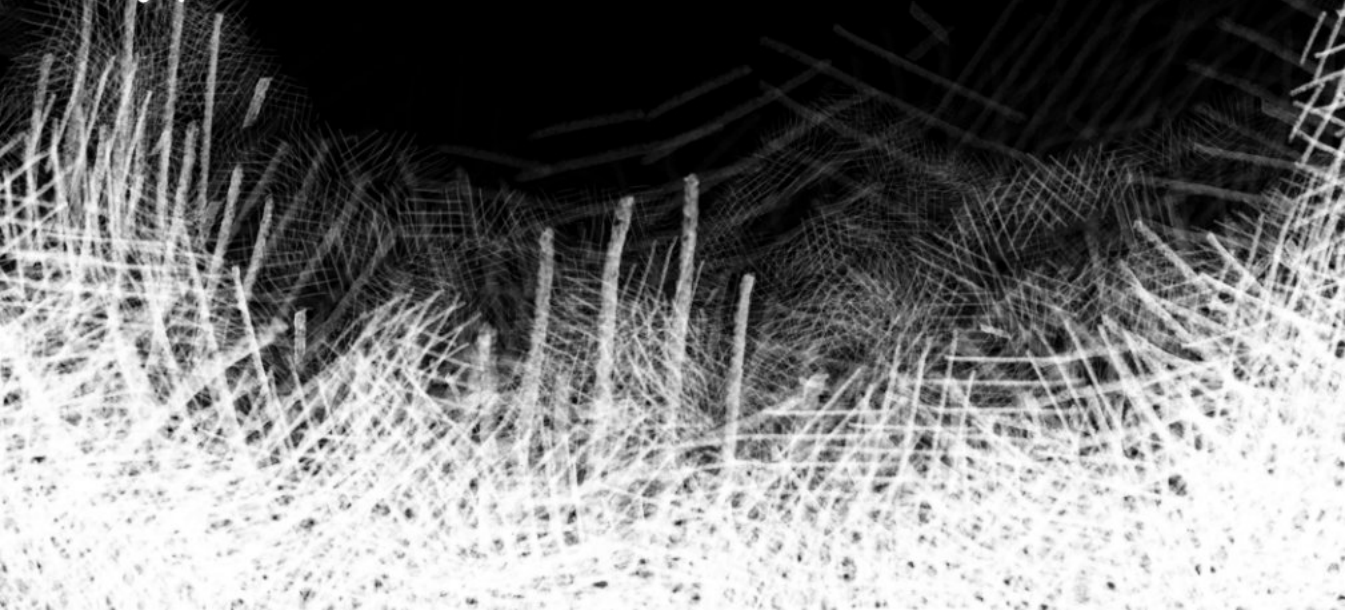
YOU CAN'T  
GO HOME

Welcome to what is actually the second installment of Ancient Comics With New Covers. I'm renaming the series, since the stories I've chosen to include show the early roots of what would become Night Craft.

This one was drawn in the Summer of 2000. I took the pages of a mostly finished version to HeroesCon in Charlotte that summer and got some good advice at a portfolio review. Some changes were made following that advice. I had intended to include it in an issue of a small-press series called The Wanderer's Tale that I was publishing at the time. That didn't happen, but it did see print five years later in an issue of Tales From Beyond, in a slightly altered version featuring some bad digital zip-a-tone. It is presented here for the first time as it was originally drawn.

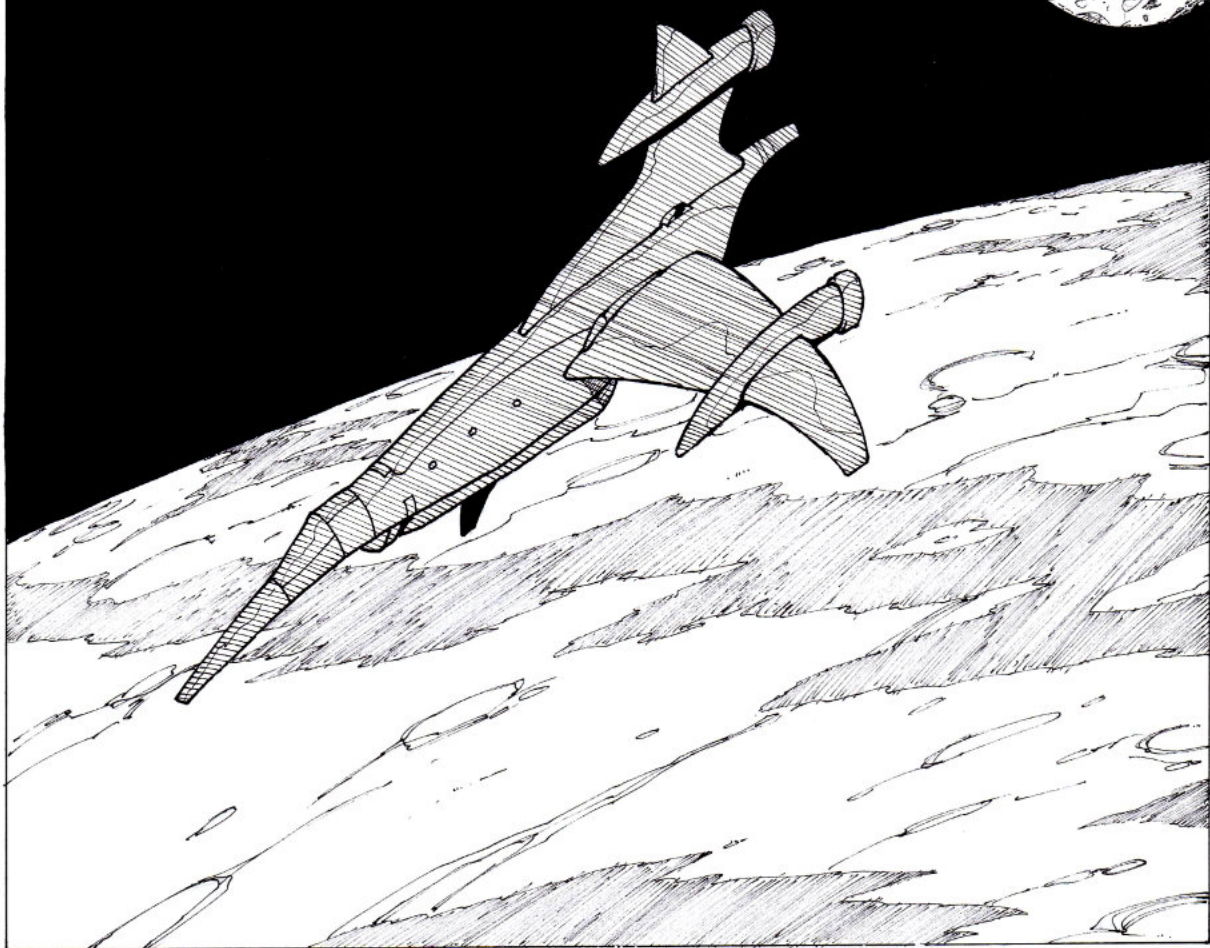
This is not a perfect story. At all. Some of the choices are, well, questionable. Did I need a barfing scene? A shower scene? Why do I have a spaceship falling up as it crash lands on a planet? And the ending, not quite as original as I had hoped. Turns out there is a very famous science-fiction movie from the late 60s that ends in a very similar manner. And yes, I had seen that film, but forgot the ending.

All that said, I think this one is still enjoyable. Sure, some of the page layouts interfere with the pacing of the story. But once you look past that, and other flaws, it should be a decent way to spend a few minutes. Hope you enjoy!

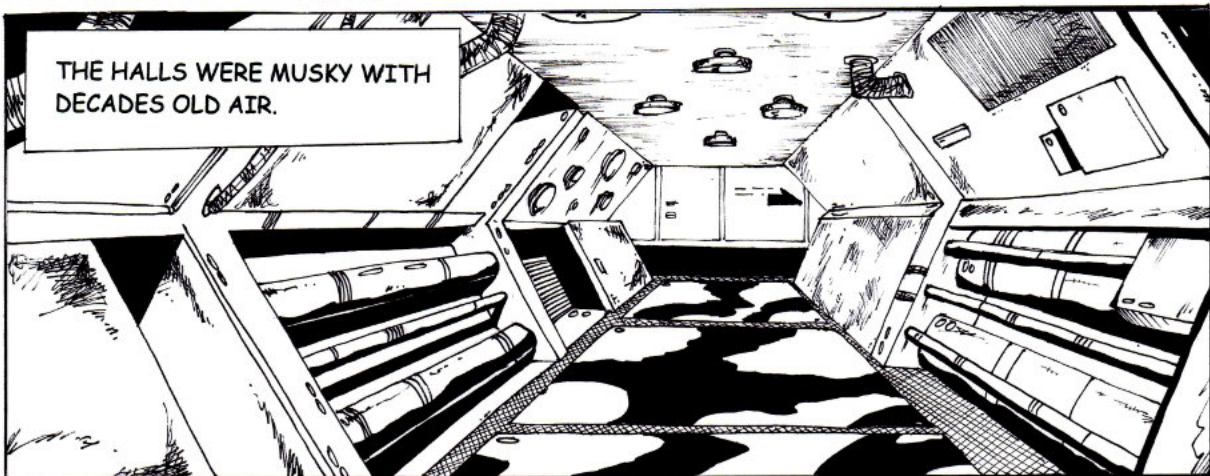


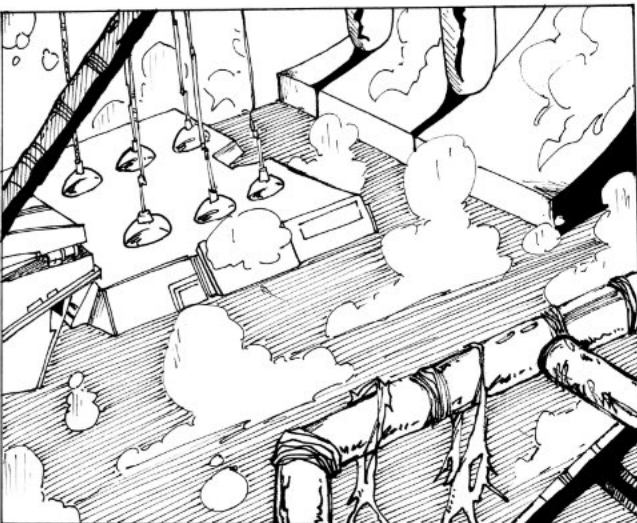
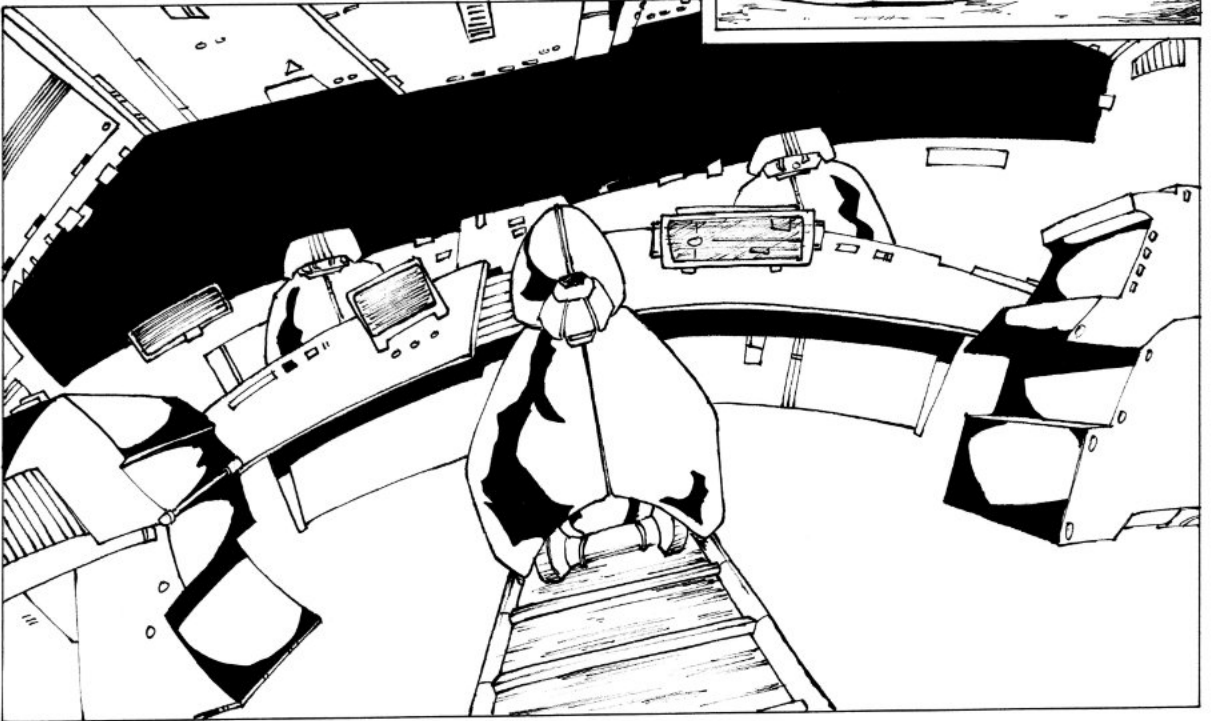
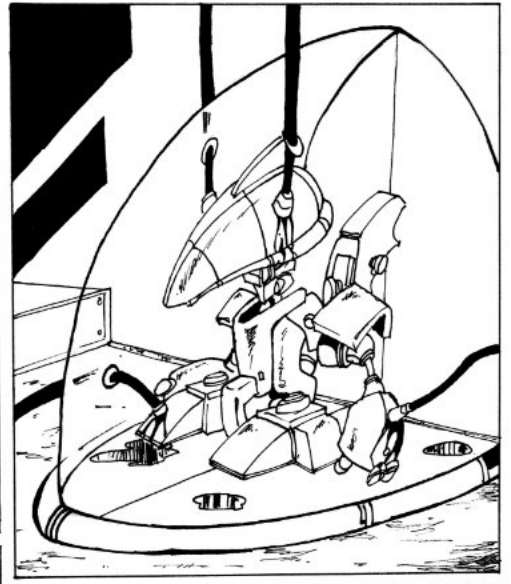
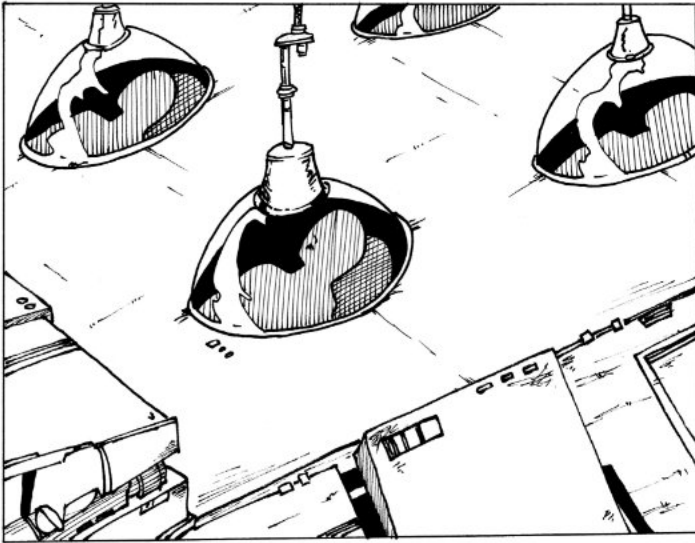


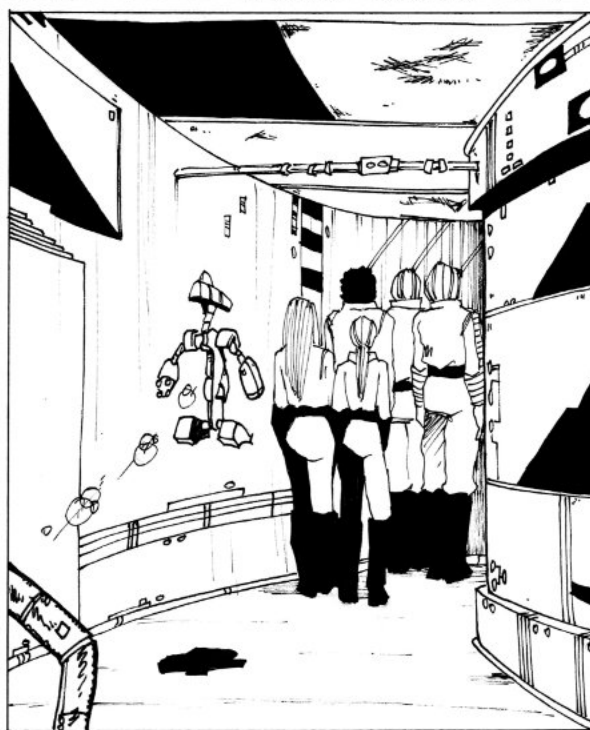
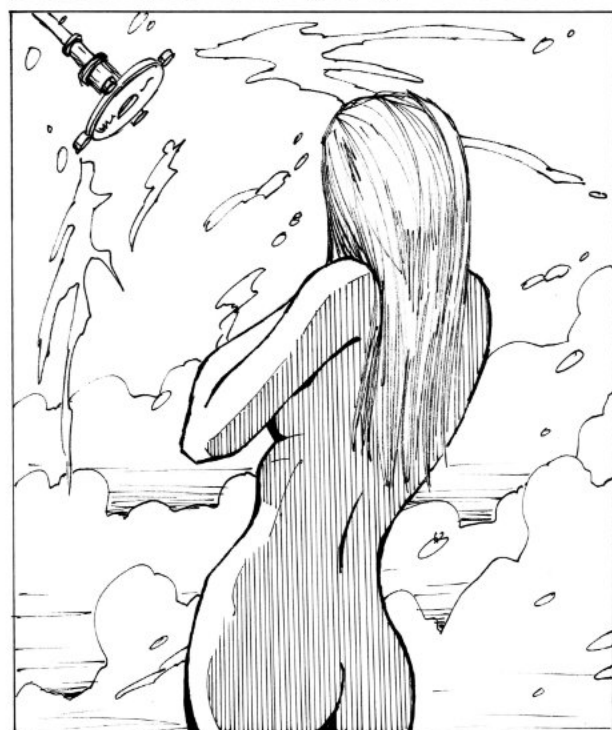
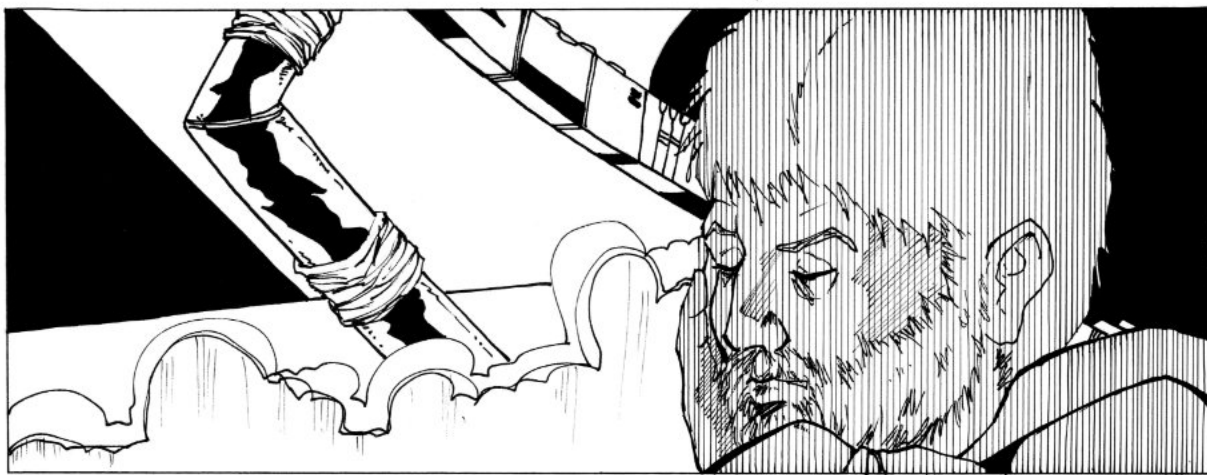
THE ROCKET SHIP WAS SUSPENDED IN ORBIT ABOVE  
THE BARREN PLANET AND ITS DEAD MOON.



THE HALLS WERE MUSKY WITH  
DECADES OLD AIR.









THE CONFERENCE ROOM.

THIS IS THE END OF OUR JOURNEY AND  
THE BEGINNING OF OUR MISSION.

WE'VE COME TO A PLANET THAT IS LIKELY  
TO BE SUITABLE AS A SECOND HOME TO THE  
HUMAN RACE.

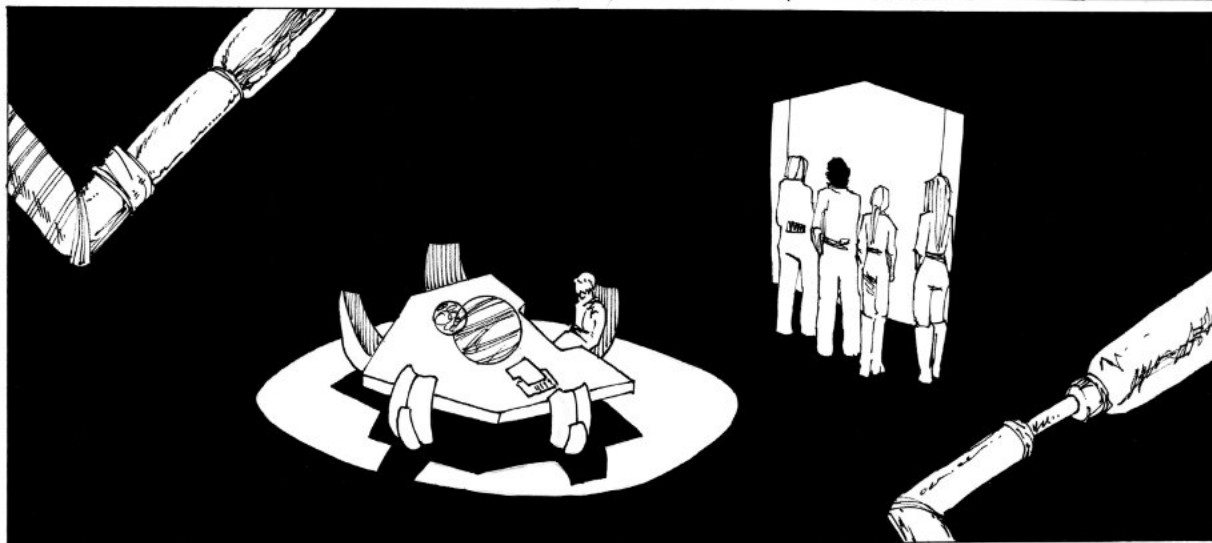
AS YOU KNOW, THE FUTURE OF LIFE ON  
EARTH IS PRECARIOUSLY BALANCED.  
NUCLEAR WAR COULD OCCUR BETWEEN THE  
CAPITOLISTS AND THE SOCIALISTS  
AT ANY MOMENT.

WHAT MAKES US SO SURE THERE STILL IS AN EARTH. IT'LL  
BE DAYS BEFORE WE RECEIVE A TRANSMISSION FROM  
HOME—FOR ALL WE KNOW, EARTH COULD'VE BEEN BLOWN  
UP YEARS AGO.

WE HAVEN'T RECEIVED ANY MESSAGES FROM  
EARTH SAYING THAT THE GLOBAL CEASE FIRE  
HAS FAILED.

SO WHEN DO WE GO DOWN ?

WE WILL BEGIN OUR DESCENT  
IN FORTY-FIVE MINUTES.

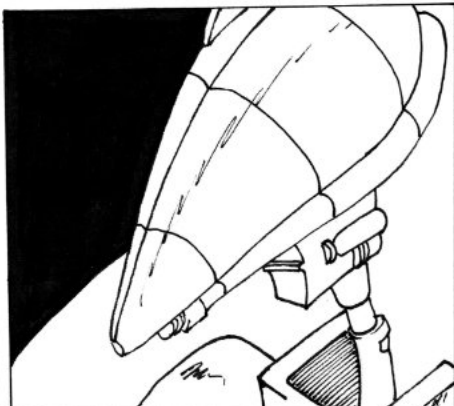
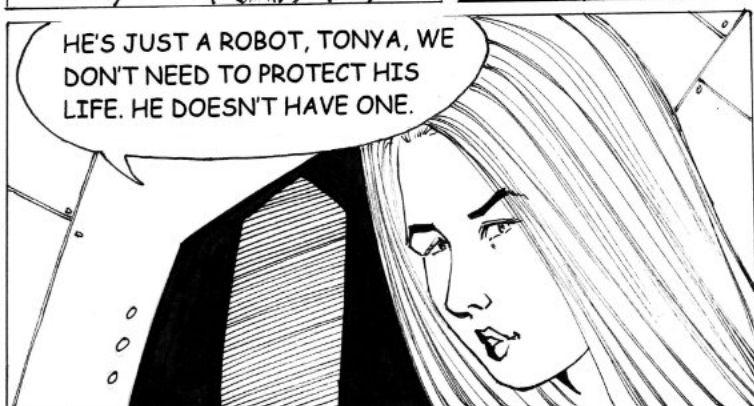
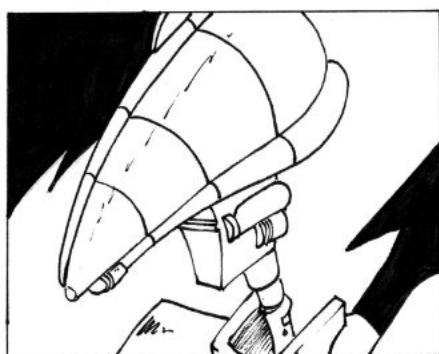
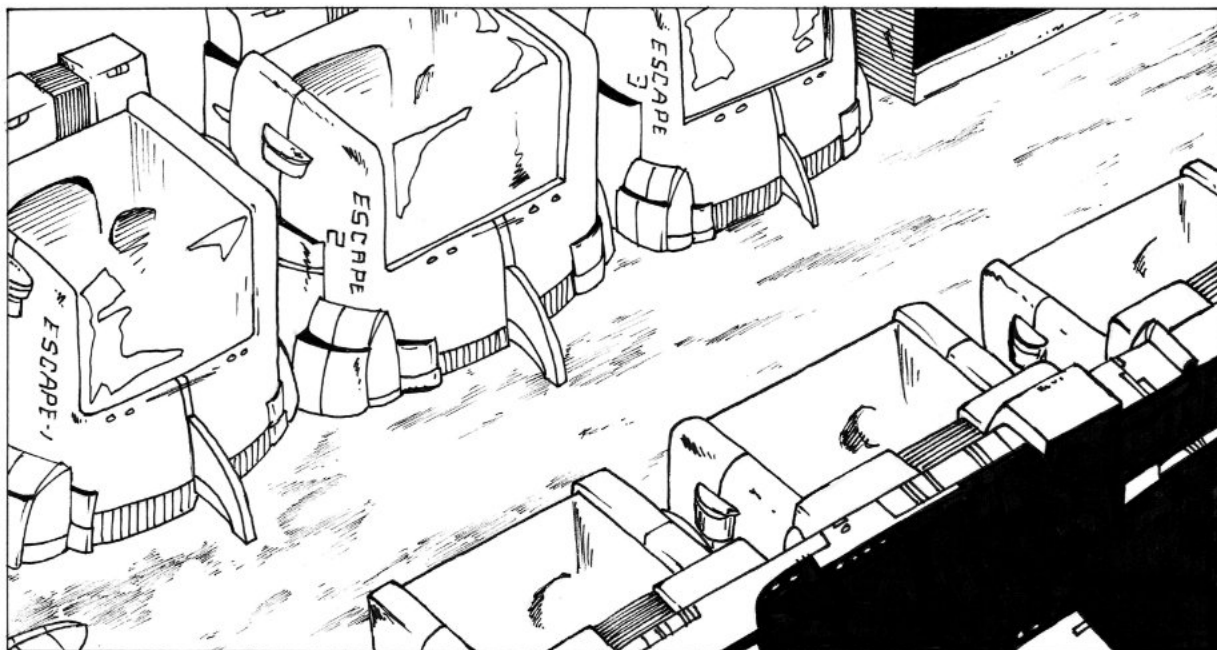


THE CAPTAIN SAT IN THE DARKNESS,  
ALONE WITH HIS DARKEST FEARS.

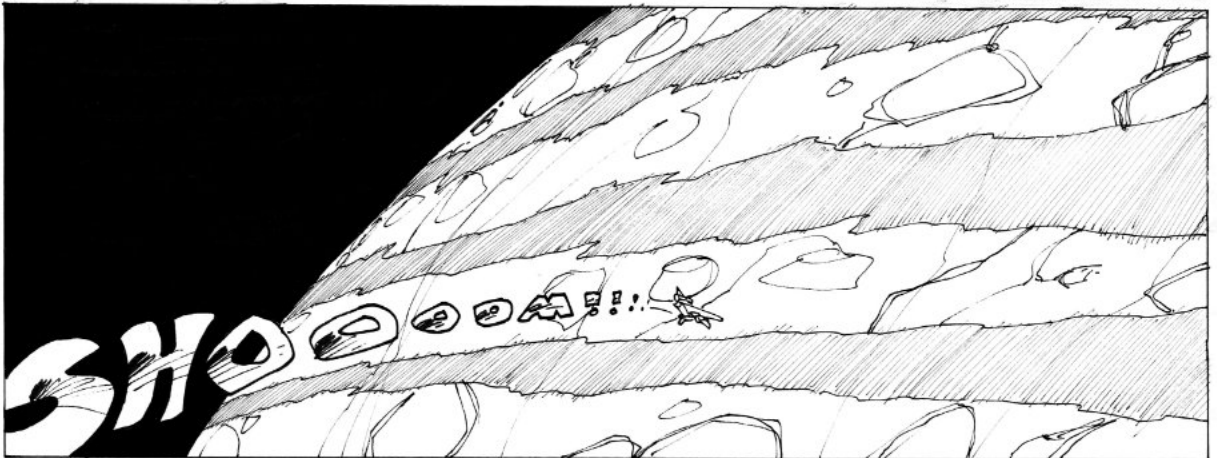


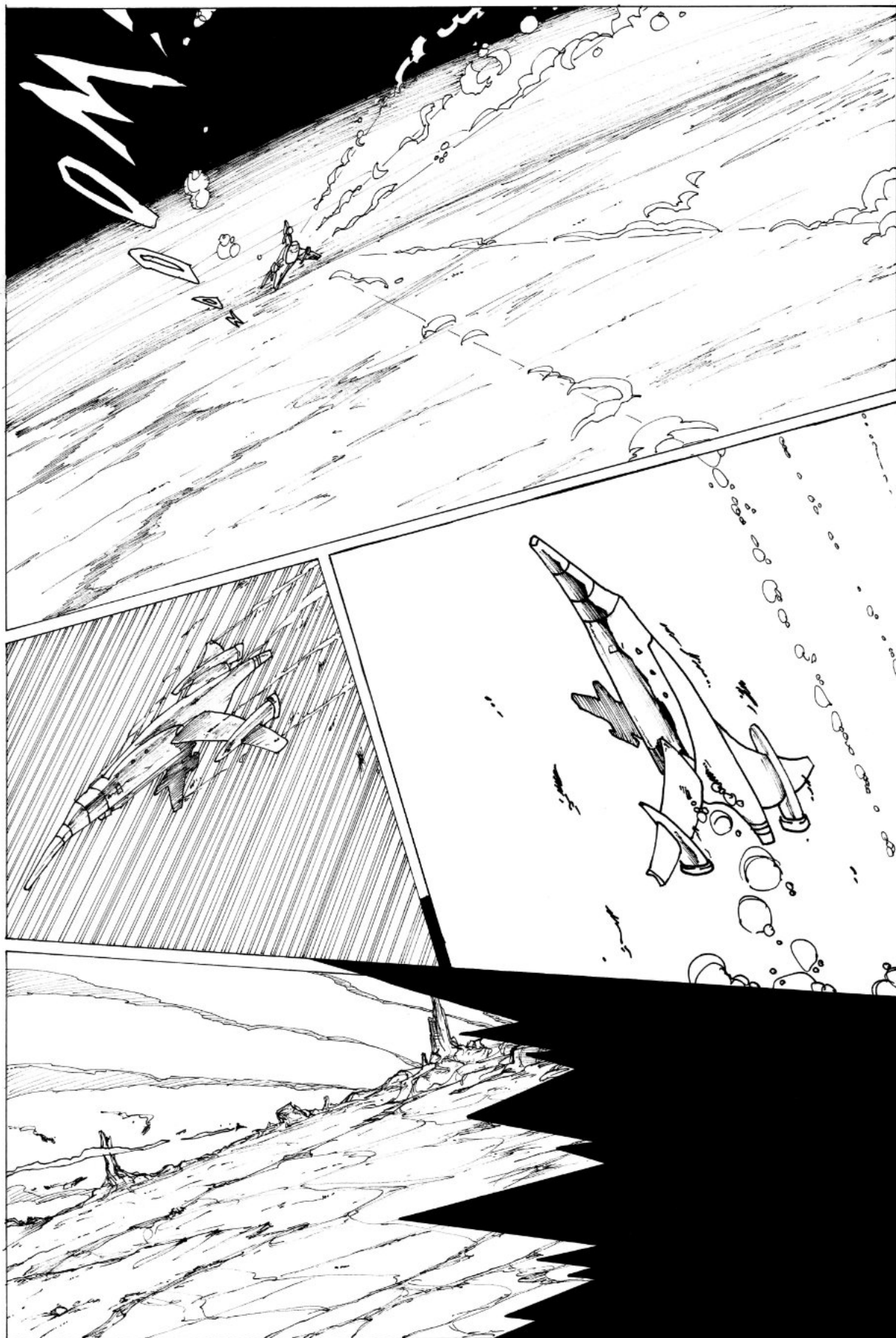
I PRAY THIS DOES NOT TURN OUT TO BE  
THE PLANET I THINK IT IS.

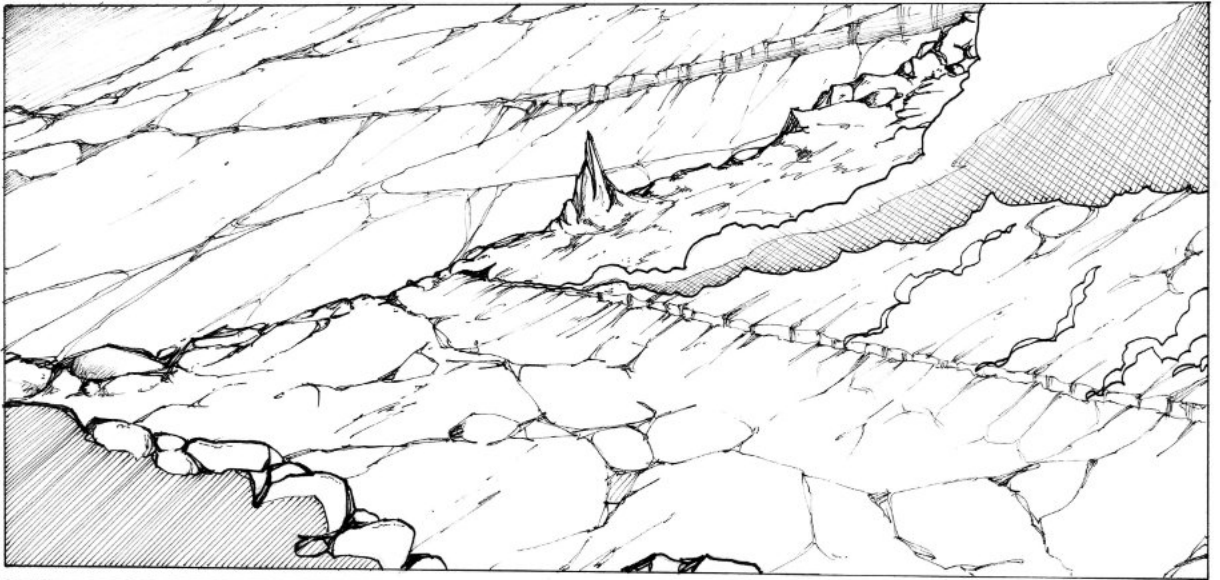
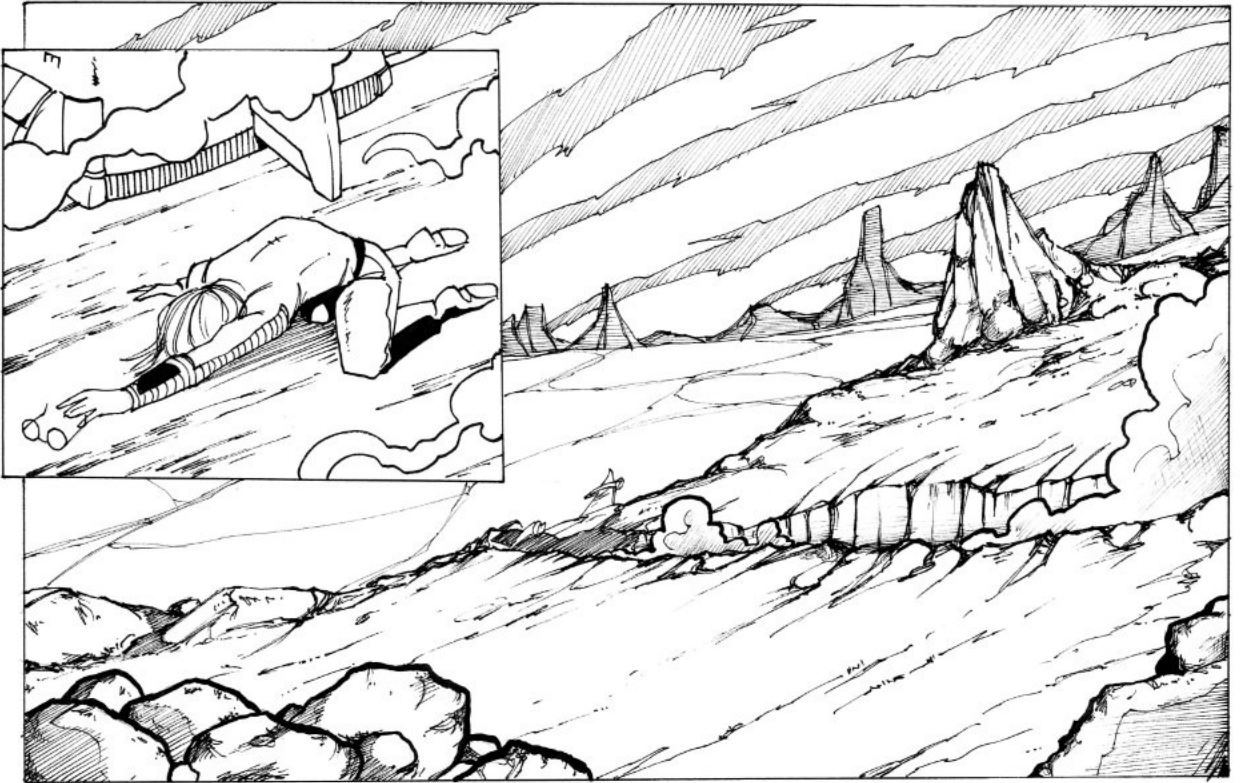




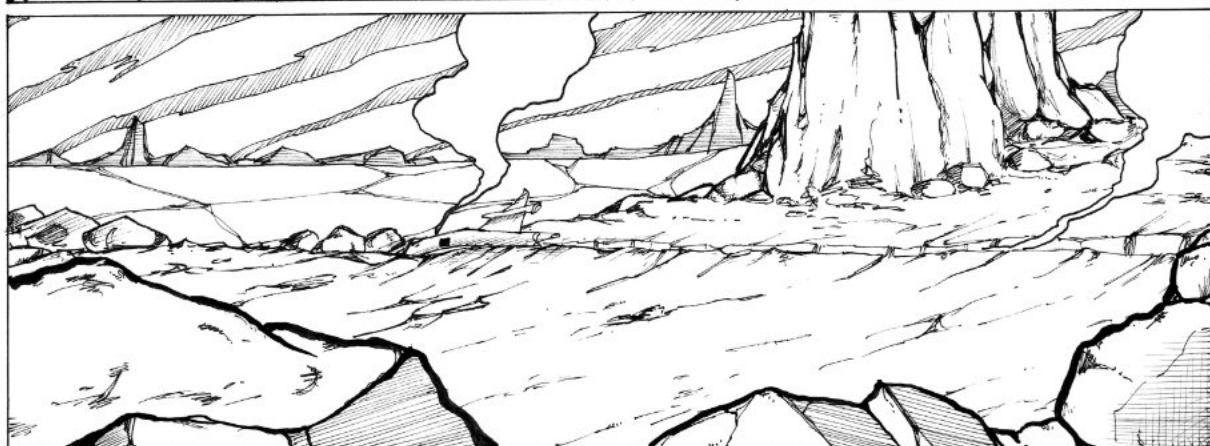
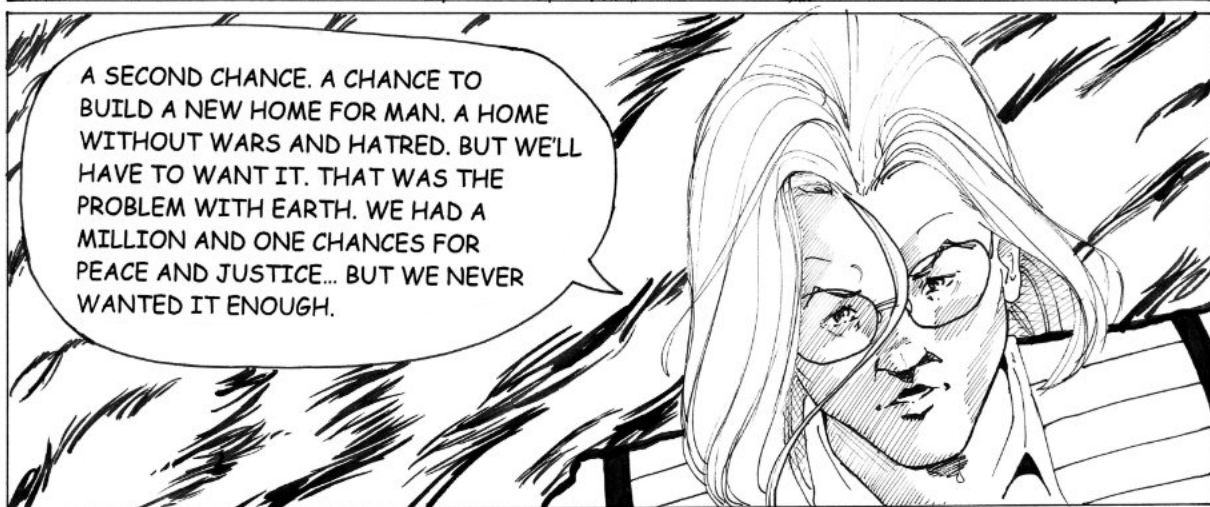
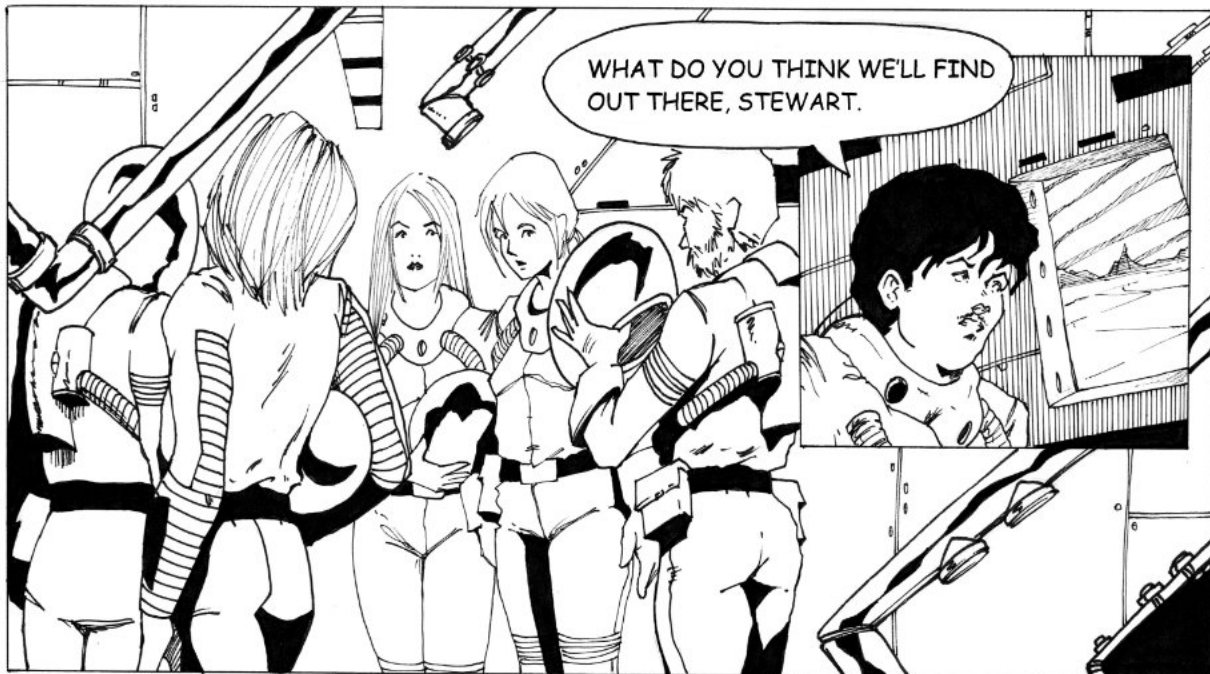


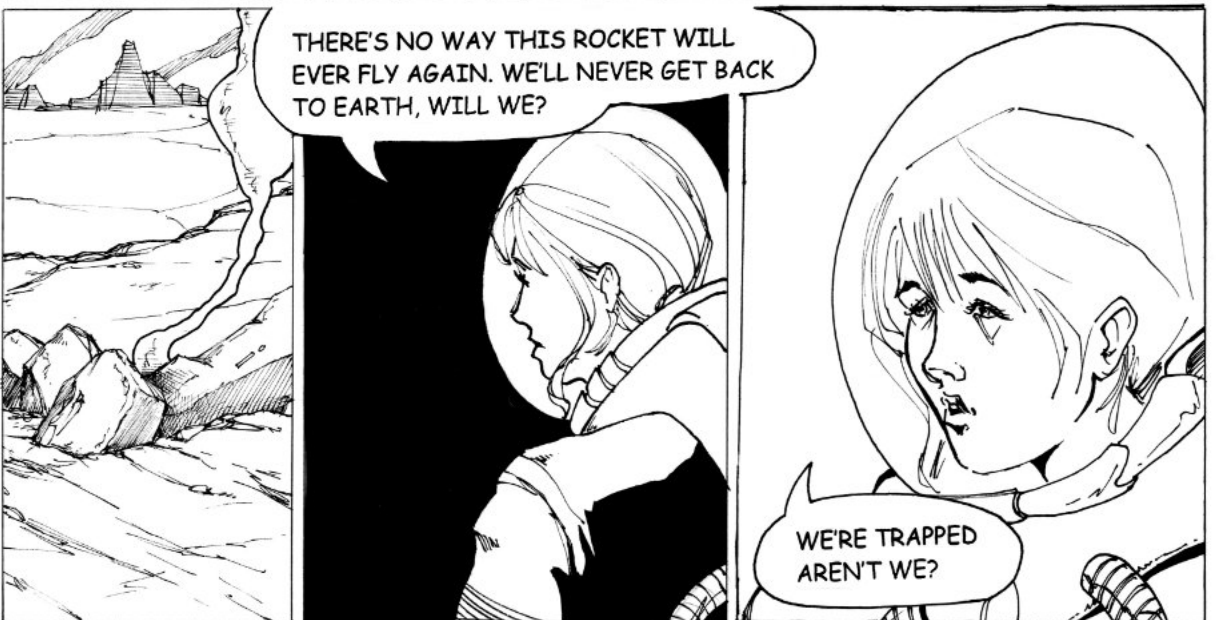
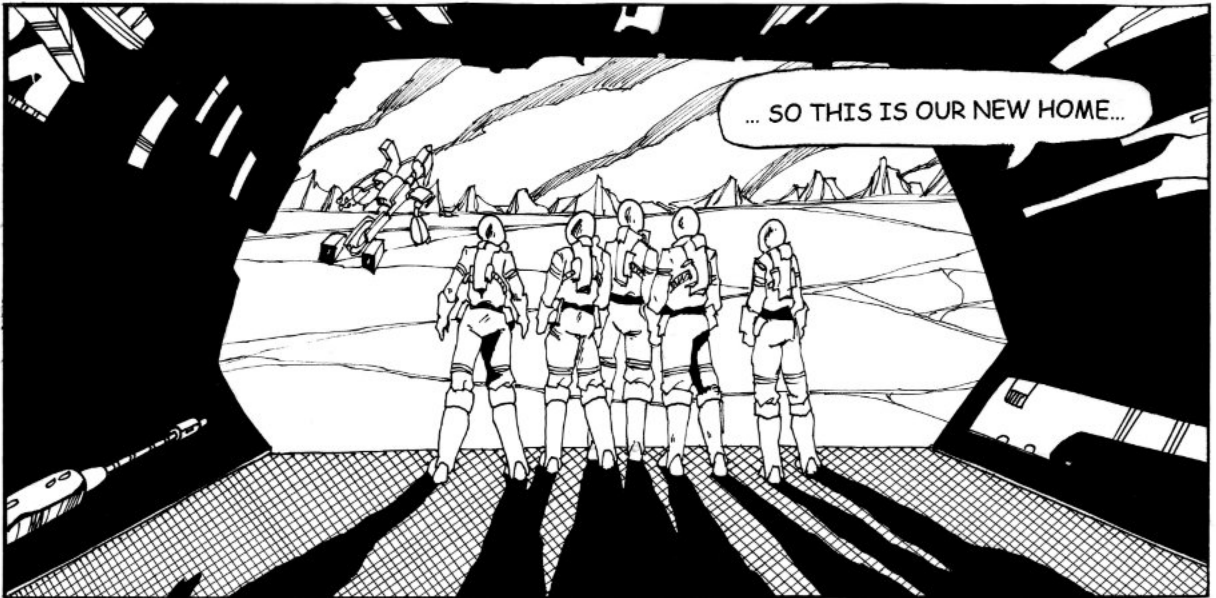


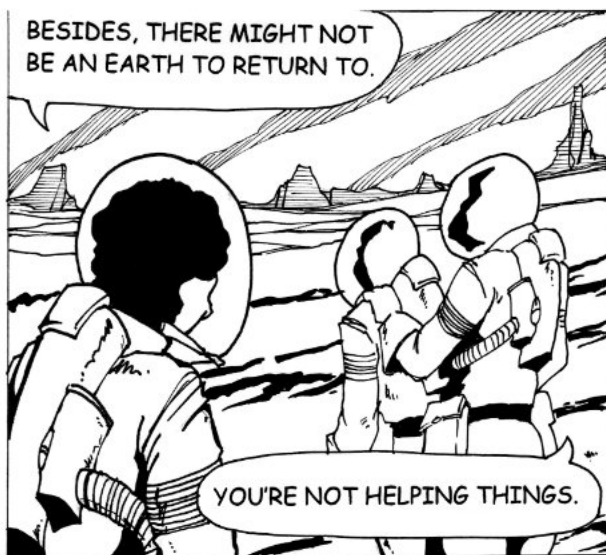














AN HOUR LATER...

THIS PLACE IS SO LONELY.  
YOU CAN JUST SEE THIS EMPTINESS  
FOR MILES AND MILES.

IF IT WAS EVER INHABITED, IT WAS  
A MILLION YEARS AGO. THERE'S NO SIGN  
THAT ANYTHING HAS EVER LIVED HERE.

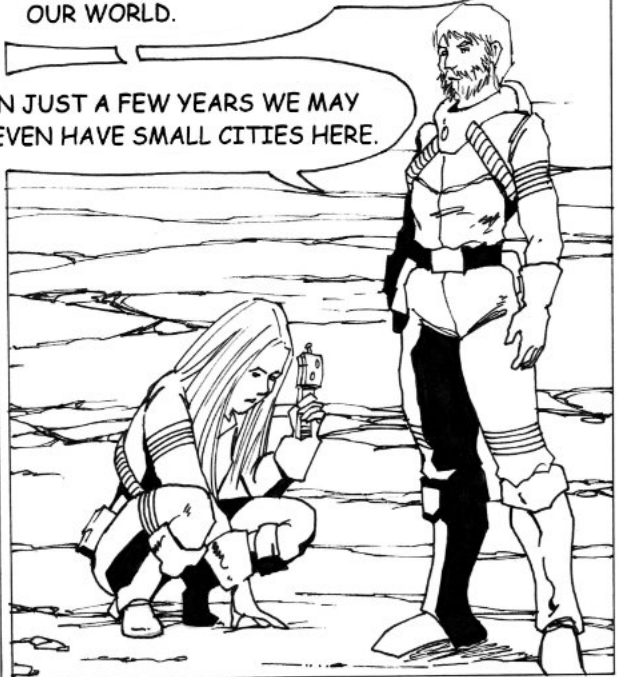
MIKE BEGAN SETTING UP  
A RADIO TOWER. IT WAS  
PROGRAMED TO SEND A  
MESSAGE BACK TO EARTH.



FROM SPACE WE COULD SEE WHAT LOOKED LIKE OCEANS. BUT DOWN HERE IT SEEMS LIKE THIS DESERT GOES ON FOREVER.

WHEN THE REFUGEES ARRIVE WITH SUPPLIES WE CAN BEGIN REBUILDING OUR WORLD.

IN JUST A FEW YEARS WE MAY EVEN HAVE SMALL CITIES HERE.



THESE TENTATIVE SOIL READINGS ARE VERY PROMISING.

IT WILL ONLY TAKE SOME MINOR GENETIC MODIFICATION TO GET EARTH PLANTS TO GROW HERE.



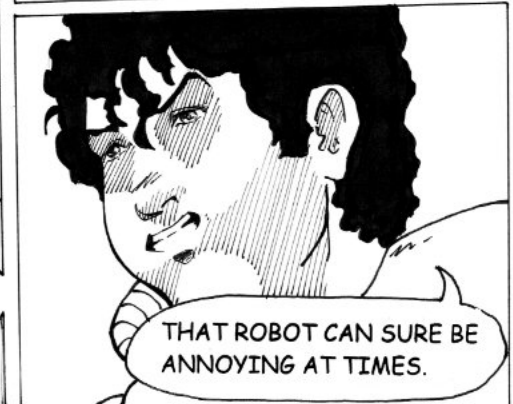
ASSUMING HUMANS HAVEN'T DESTROYED THE EARTH.

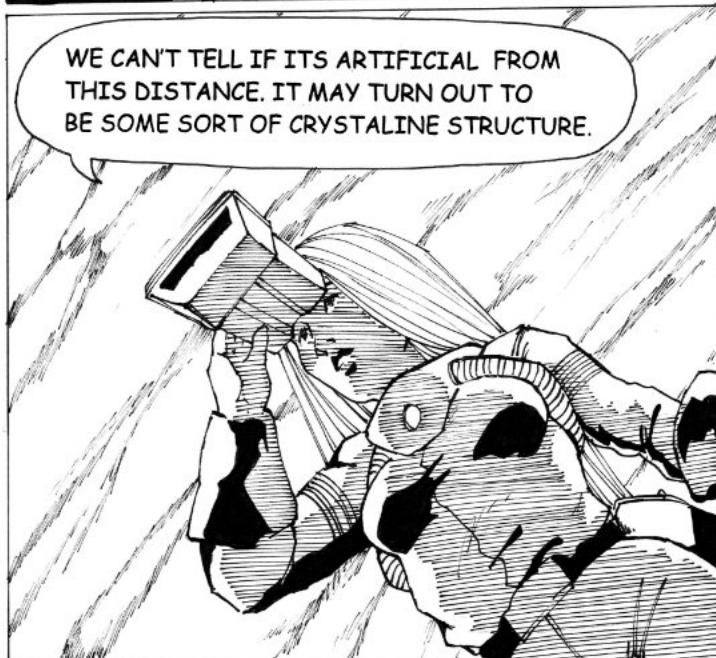
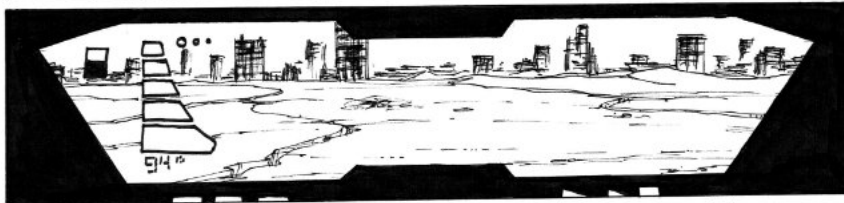
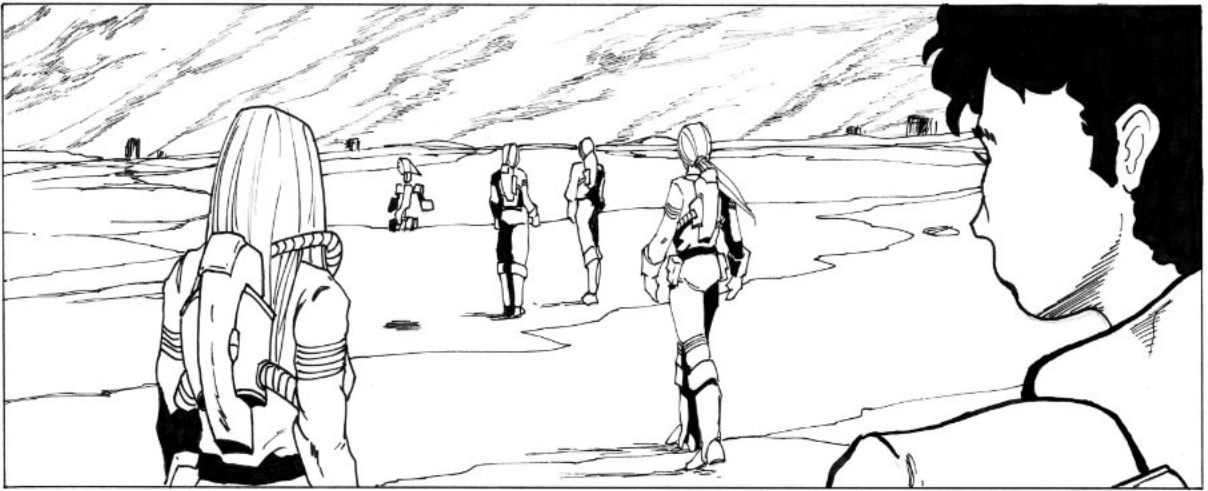


DON'T TALK LIKE THAT.

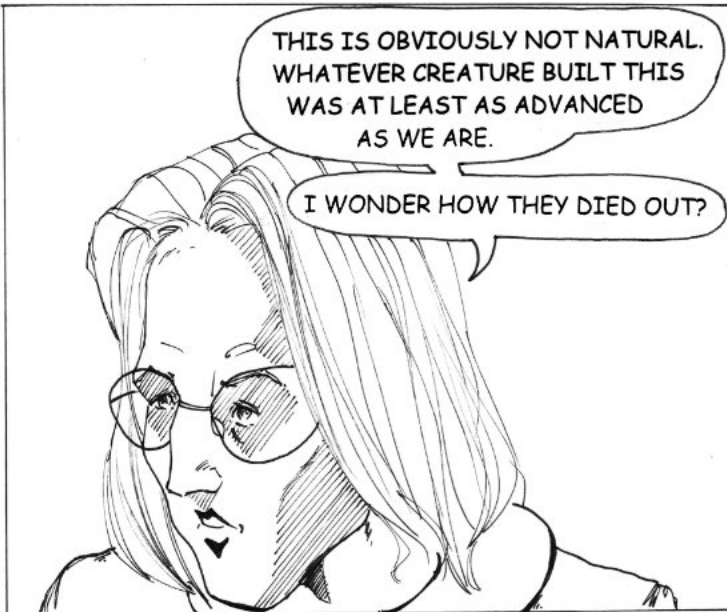


THAT ROBOT CAN SURE BE ANNOYING AT TIMES.







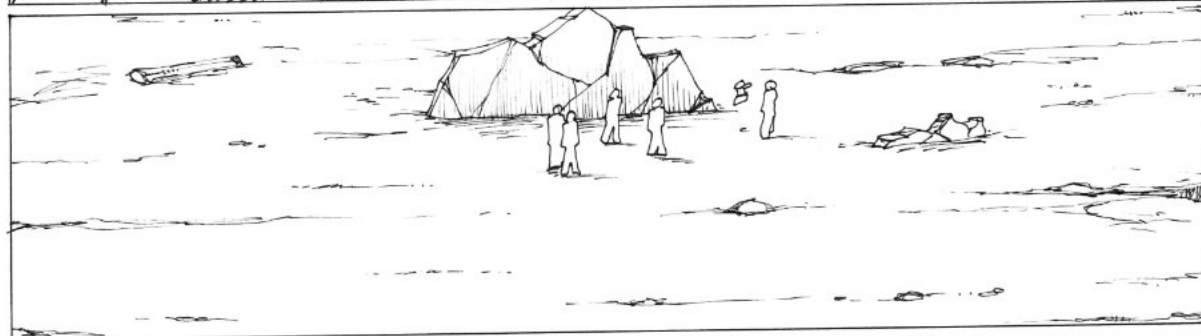


THIS IS OBVIOUSLY NOT NATURAL.  
WHATEVER CREATURE BUILT THIS  
WAS AT LEAST AS ADVANCED  
AS WE ARE.

I WONDER HOW THEY DIED OUT?



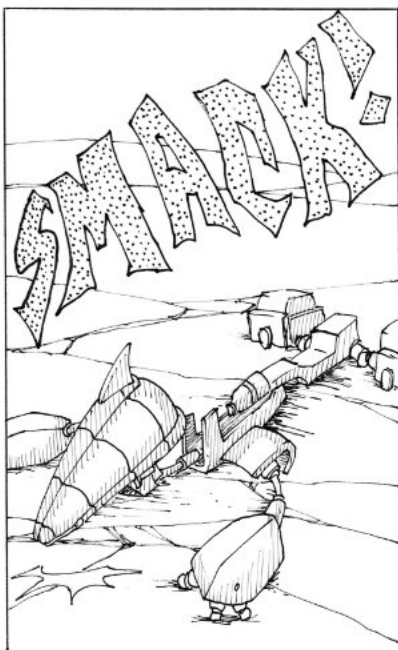
MAYBE THEY DIDN'T DIE OUT.  
MAYBE THEY LEFT THEIR HOME  
JUST LIKE WE DID.



LET'S GO ON FURTHER, MIKE.

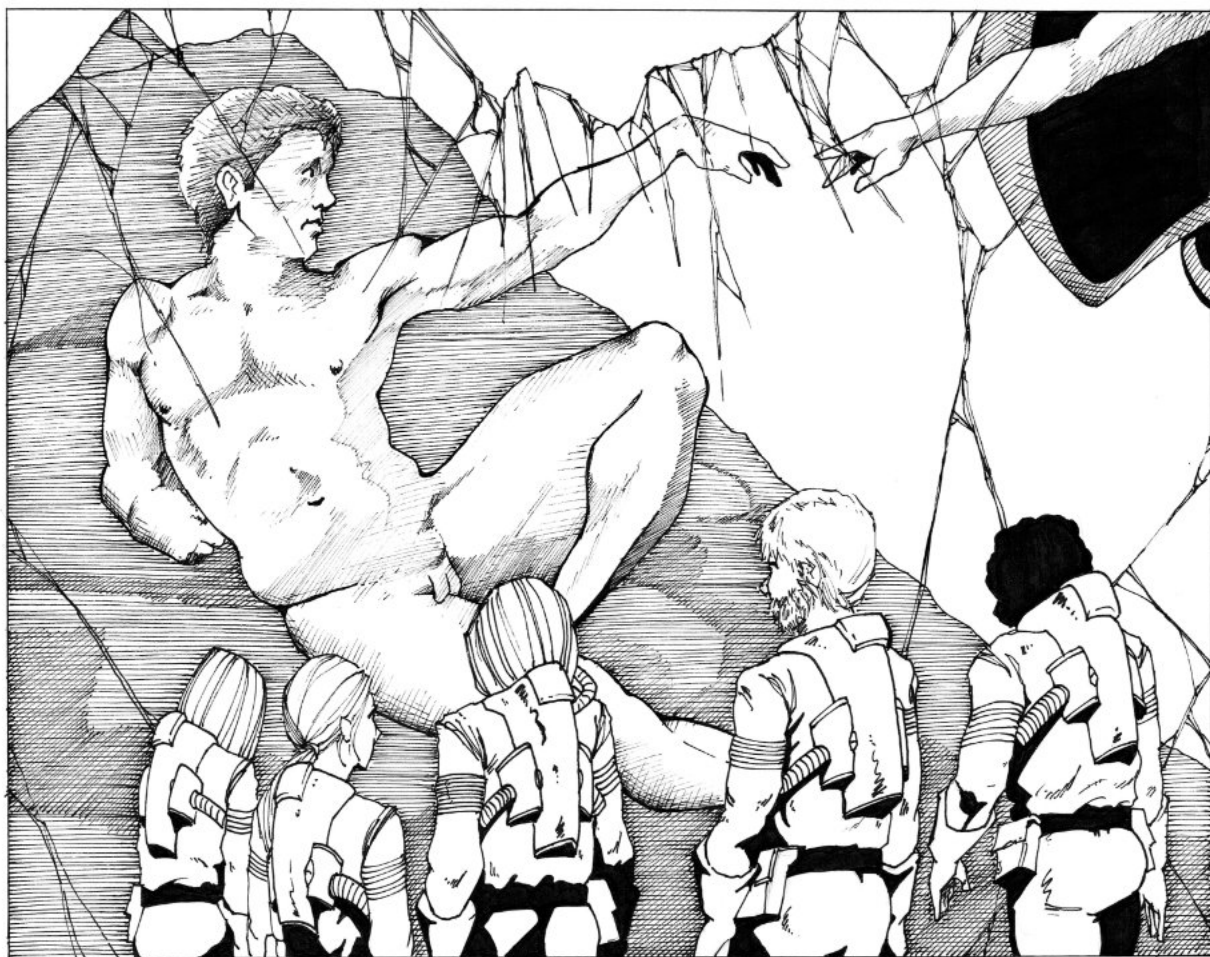
MIKE?

MIKE DO YOU HEAR ME?



HOW COULD IT HAPPEN?





IN THE EVENT OF AN OUTBREAK OF THERMO-NUCLEAR WAR OUR ROCKET WAS PROGRAMED TO RETURN US TO EARTH. THE GOVERNMENTS BELIEVED THAT SCIENTISTS WOULD BE OF MORE USE HELPING SURVIVORS THAN EXPLORING DEAD PLANETS.

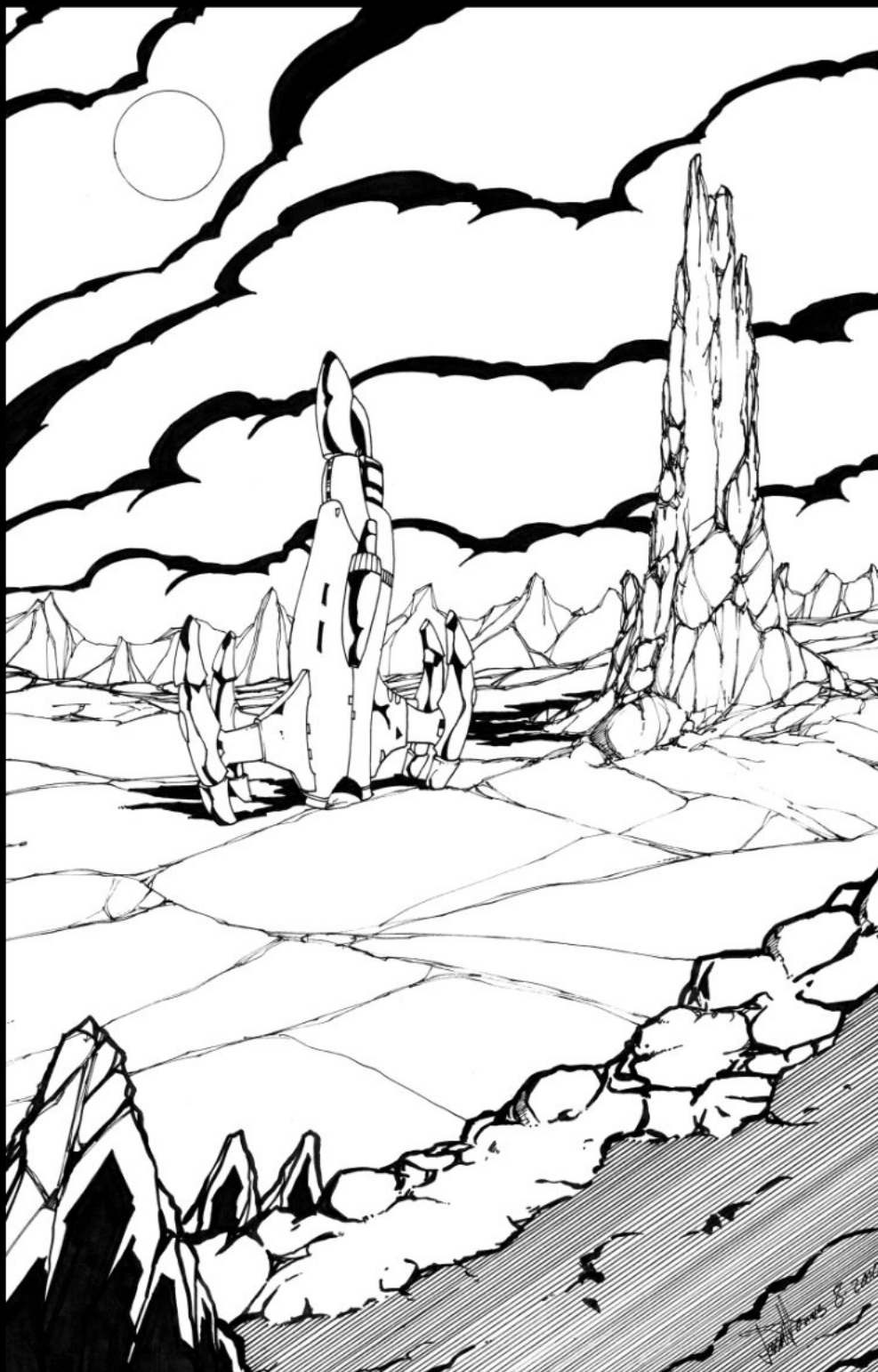


I DOUBT THERE COULD BE ANY SURVIVORS. WE'VE SIMPLY BEEN RETURNED TO THE END OF THE WORLD.



STORY AND ART BY  
JESSE THOMAS ©2000

# ORIGINAL COVER FROM 2000



# SECOND COVER FROM 2005

