

Me and My  
**SHADOW**



Social Distancing 2020

Jan Andreas

# Me and My Shadow Social Distancing 2020

By Jan Andreas



[johnmiedema.art](http://johnmiedema.art)

# Introduction

In March 2020 the Coronavirus pandemic hit Canada. My employer told me to work from home. A quarantine was called. Strict social distancing practices were advised. This condition was not so hard for me, an introvert living on a river acre. My family baked bread and planted gardens. I walked my dog. I drew comic art. For others, social distancing was hard. Many had to adapt to working from home while looking after children. People lost their jobs. Some families were packed in urban apartments. Perhaps the quarantine was most difficult for people living alone, with only their shadow for company.

Just then I was reading a book, *Becoming Animal*, by David Abram. He observed our common misperception that shadows are flat. Yes really, our shadows are *not* flat; they have depth. If a bee flies into my shadow the bee goes dark. I imagined that a person living alone in isolation might use the time to reflect on their shadow, and to correct misperceptions, both physical and psychological. Early in the pandemic it was a point of confusion whether or not people should go outdoors at all. In this comic, Jay, the main character, is led outdoors by his shadow. He encounters a bee and people at a distance. Ultimately he has a showdown with his shadow and his fears.

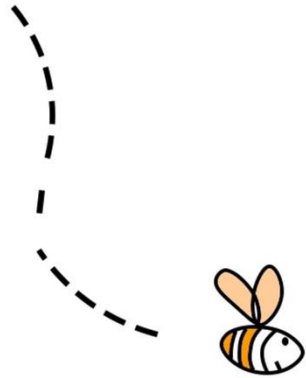
Like many events during the pandemic, I failed to anticipate *Black Lives Matter*, the uprising in response to the police killing of George Floyd. While the protest is not the focus of this work, I did not miss the connection with the black and white imagery in my shadow comic. Skin colour is rarely black or white. From a broad perspective, we are one race, the human race. Still, there is an accurate use of those two labels -- to identify the oppressed and the oppressor, a step toward social justice.

The mental health issues related to the pandemic and quarantine continue to be hard. People are suffering. Please reach out for help if you need it.

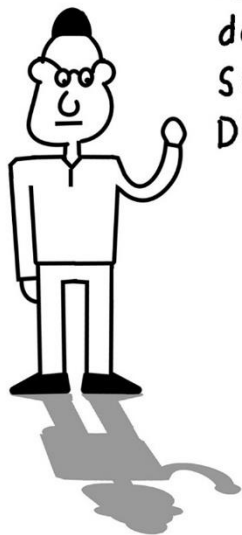
24hr **National Suicide Hotline** in Canada

1-833-456-4566

or text 45645



Hi, Jay here.  
How are you  
doing with  
SOCIAL  
DISTANCING?



I'm okay.  
At home, indoors.  
Alone.  
Just me,  
me and my  
SHADOW.



♪  
"Shades of night  
are falling and  
I'm LONELY ♪ ♪

♪  
Standing on the  
corner feeling  
blue ..."



(Actually, I am  
home, SOCIAL  
DISTANCING)

♪ "And when it's  
twelve o'clock

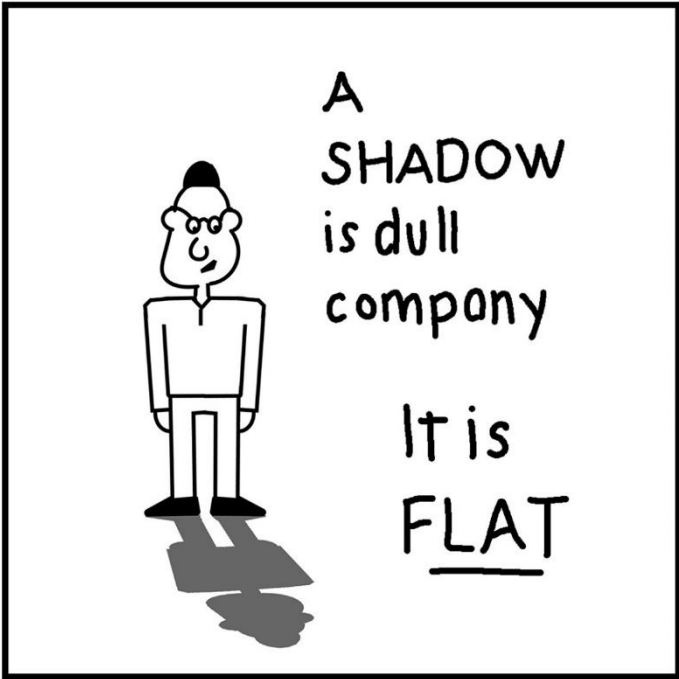
♪ stair  
the  
♪ climb  
We



♪ We never  
Knock

For nobody's  
there ...

♪ "JUST ME AND MY SHADOW"  
Jolson, Rose & Dreyer 1927

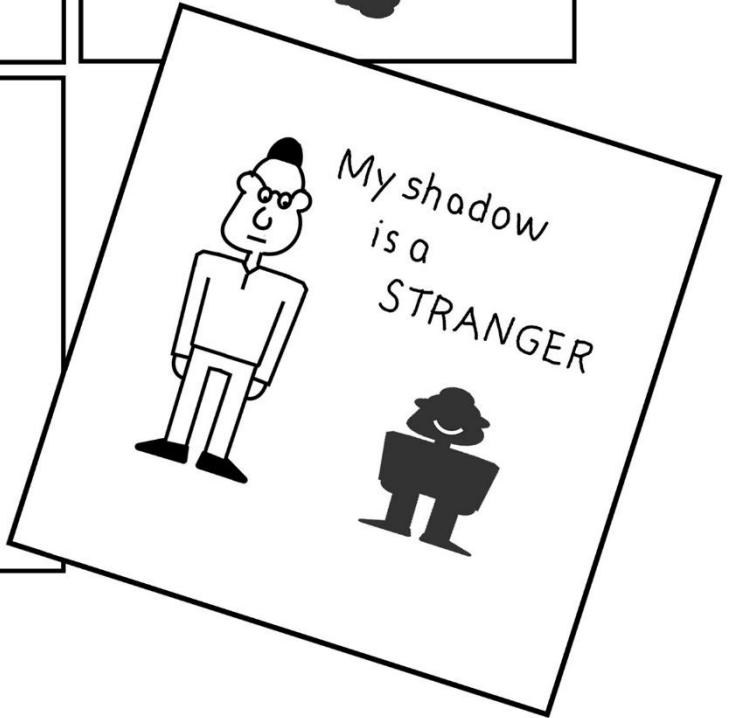
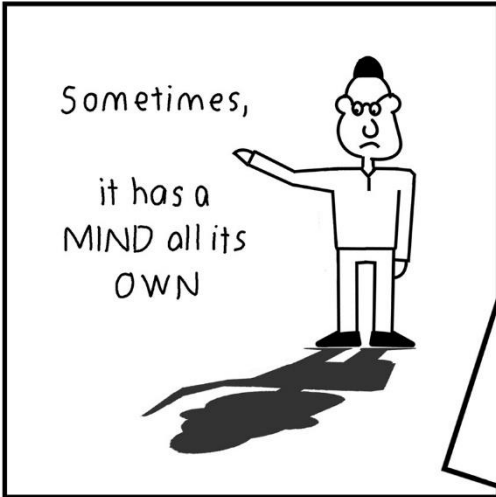
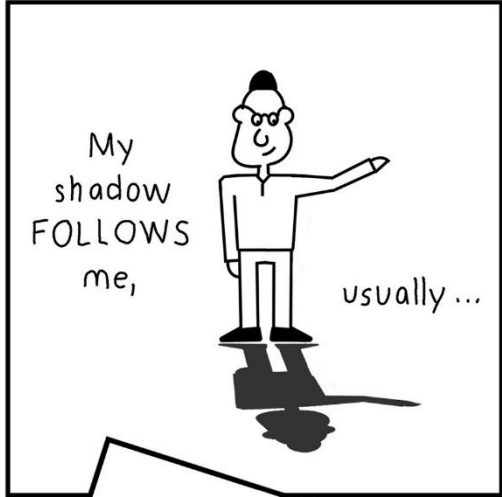
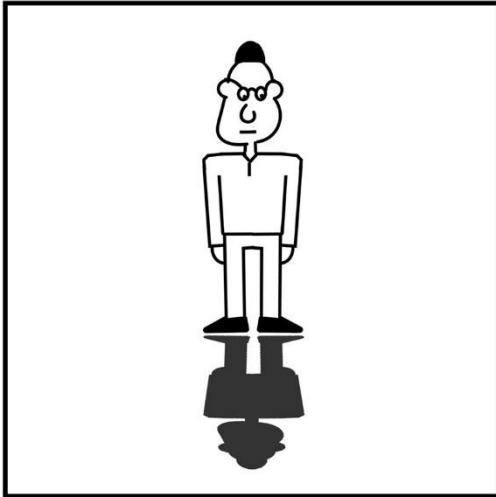


A  
SHADOW  
is dull  
compony

It is  
FLAT



and it  
DISAPPEARS  
at  
NIGHT

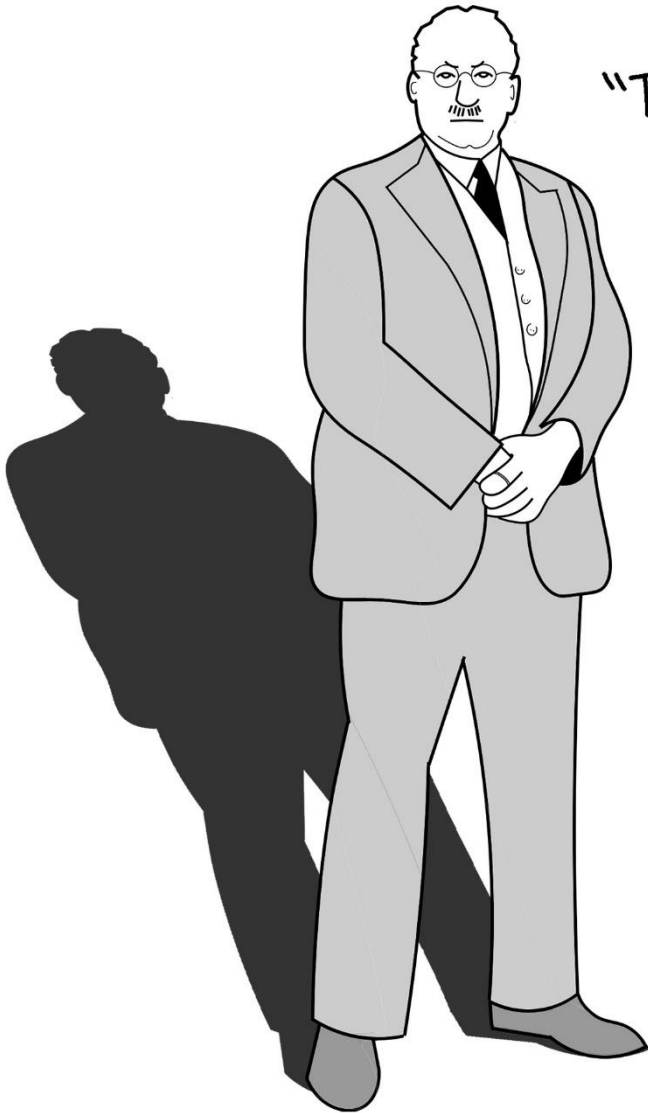






"Men start out in  
the realm of  
words - where  
SHADOWS are  
thrown upon the  
wall"

- Plato,  
The Republic



"To confront a  
person with his  
SHADOW is to  
show him his  
own light"

- Carl Jung,  
Good and Evil in  
Analytical  
Psychology

"In a spiral galaxy, the ratio of dark-to-light matter is about a factor of ten"



- Vera Rubin, astronomer and discoverer of **DARK MATTER**

"As he leapt at  
the window  
Nana had closed  
it quickly, too  
late to catch  
him



but his SHADOW had  
not had time to get out;  
slam went the window  
and snapped it off"



-Peter Pan, J.M. Barrie

Everything

has a

SHADOW

except



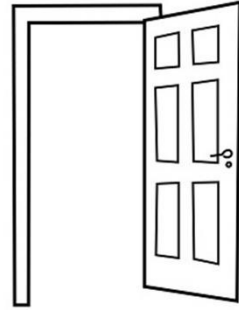
a  
window

and  
the wind

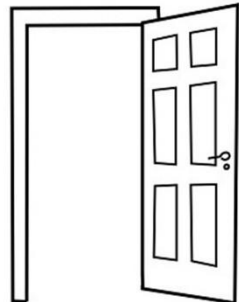




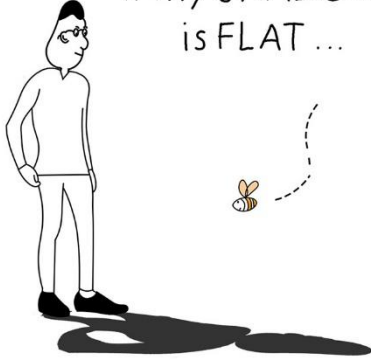
I am  
social  
distancing



I should  
stay  
indoors



If my SHADOW  
is FLAT ...



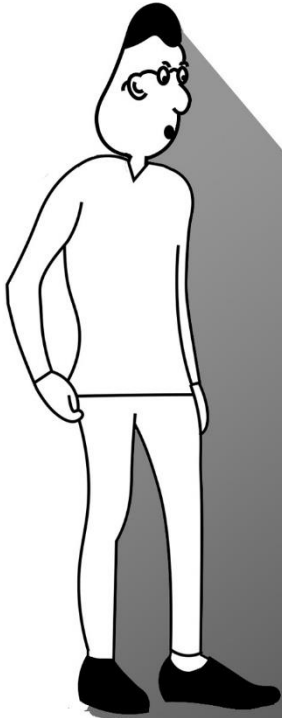
... the bee  
will fly  
through  
in colour



The  
bee is  
darkened!



The  
bee is  
darkened!

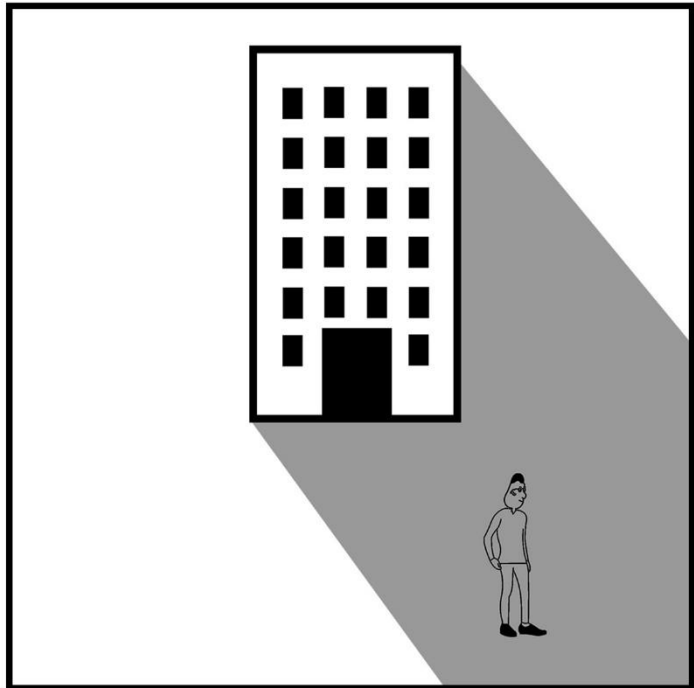
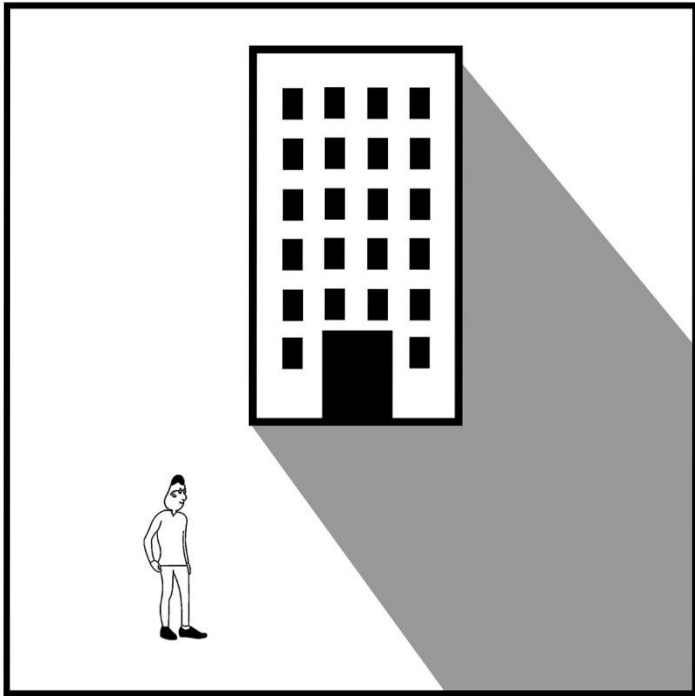


My SHADOW  
is not flat.

It has

DEPTH!



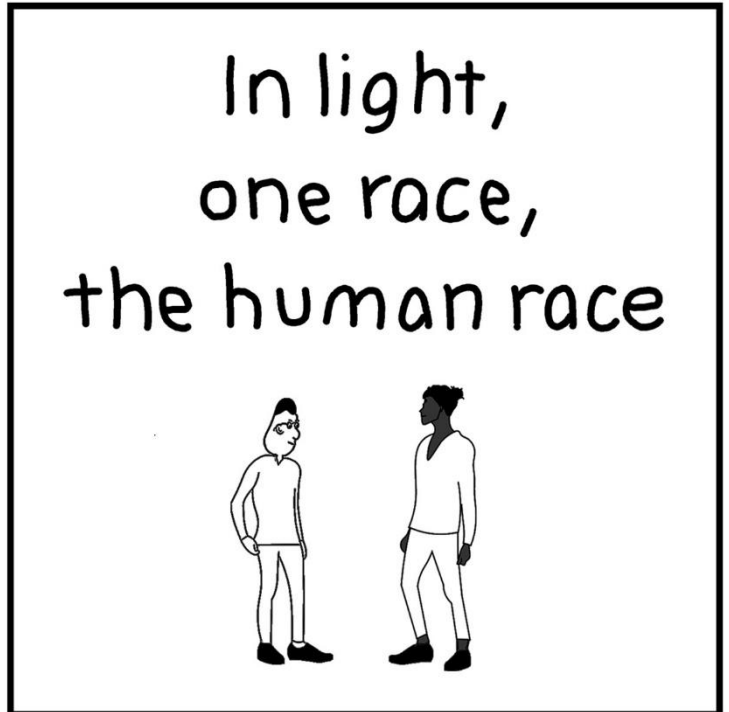
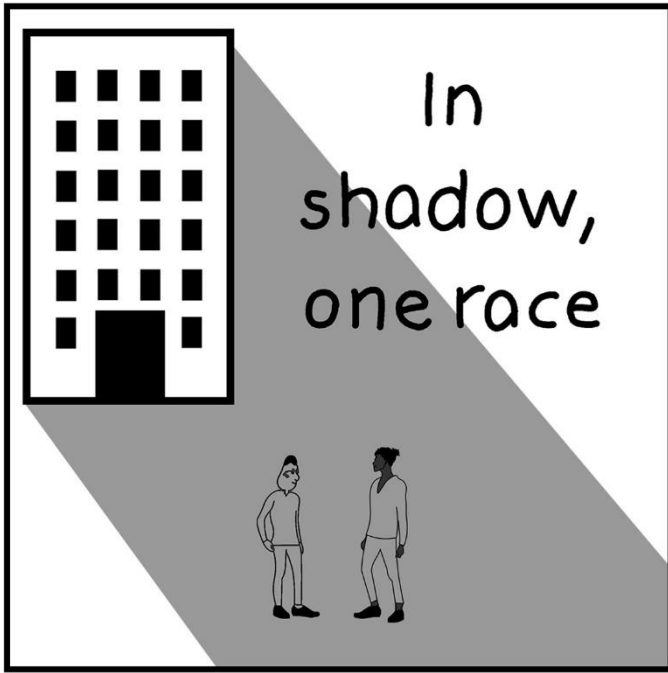


“Now, more than ever, the illusions of division threaten our very existence. We all know the truth: more connects us than separates us. But in times of crisis the wise build bridges, while the foolish build barriers. We must find a way to look after one another, as if we were one single tribe.”

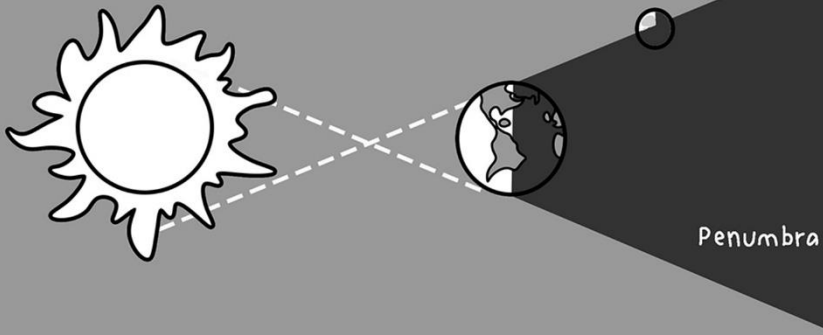
T'Challa in Black Panther

Played by Chadwick Boseman (1976 - 2020)

Rest in Power

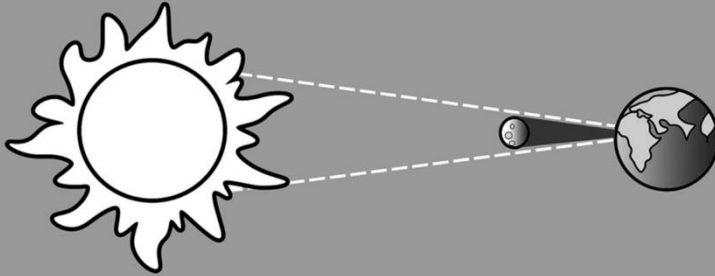


A penumbral lunar eclipse  
occurs on Friday June 5 2020



Bid farewell to dark feelings

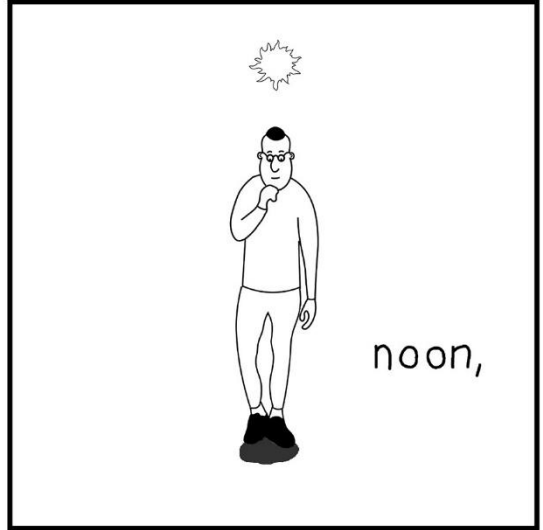
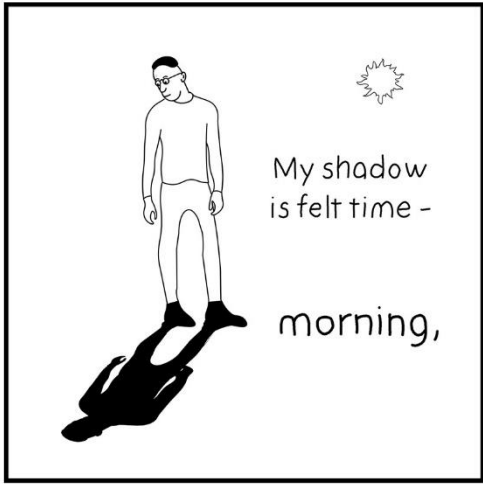
An annular solar eclipse  
occurs on June 21 2020

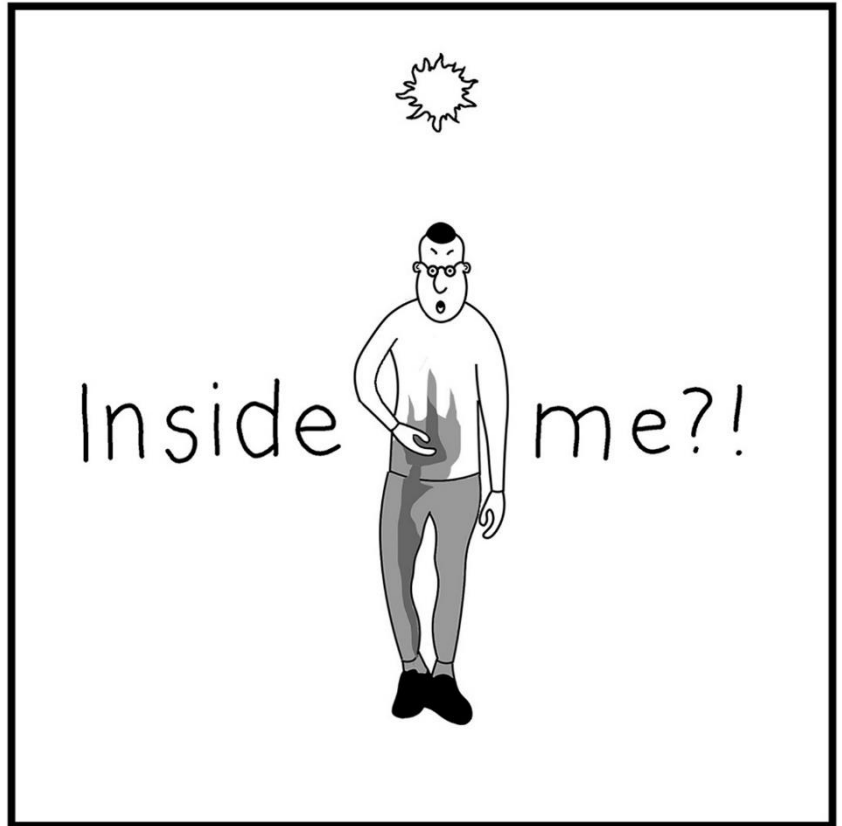
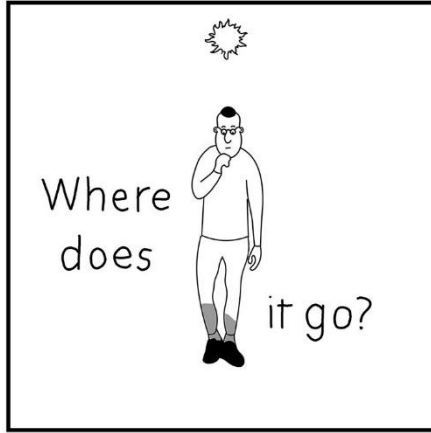
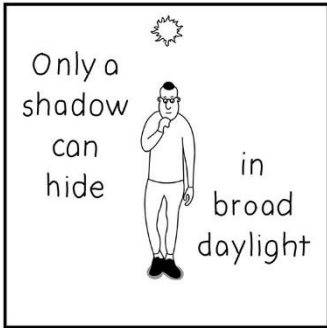


Bid greetings to a time  
of rapid change

"For the  
hideous  
sees he not,  
as his holy eye  
has not yet  
alighted on shadow"  
- Faust, Goethe





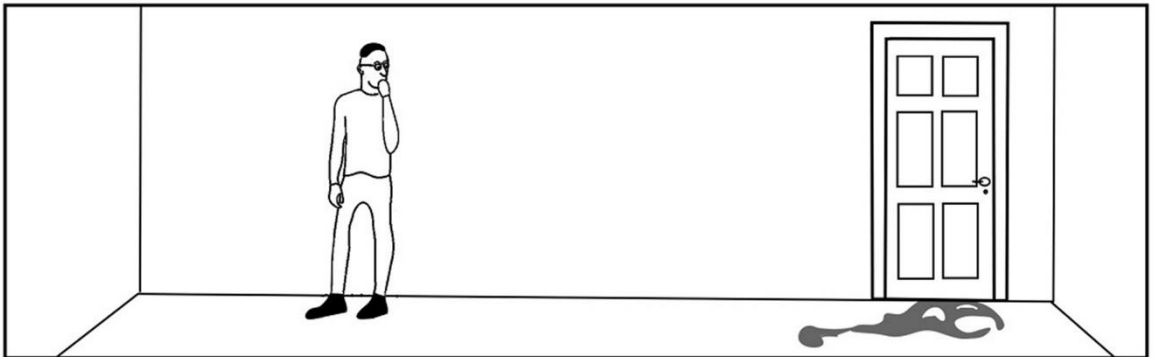
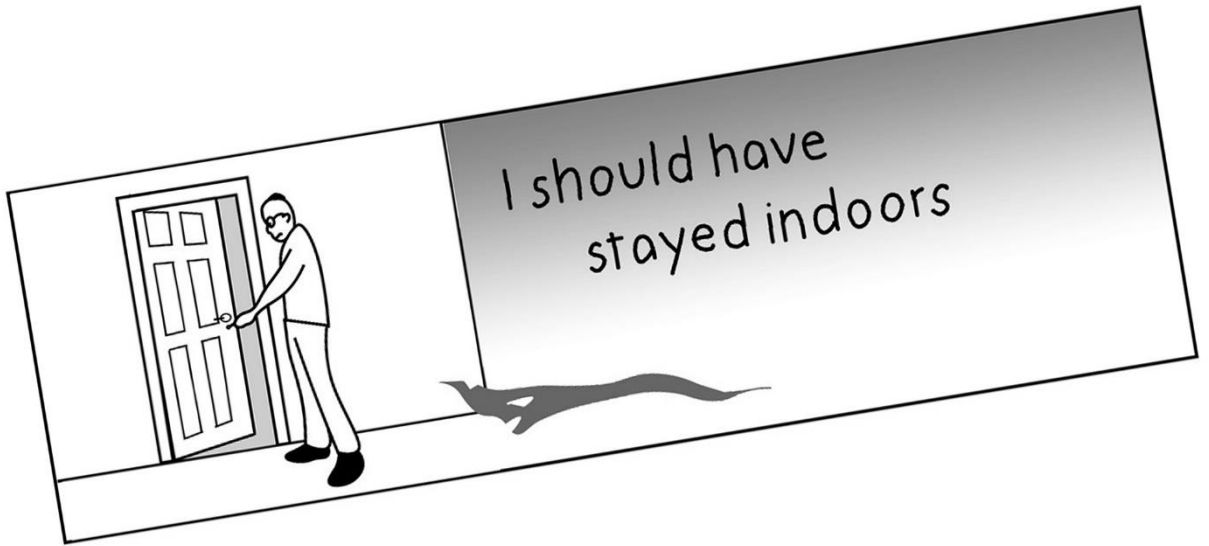
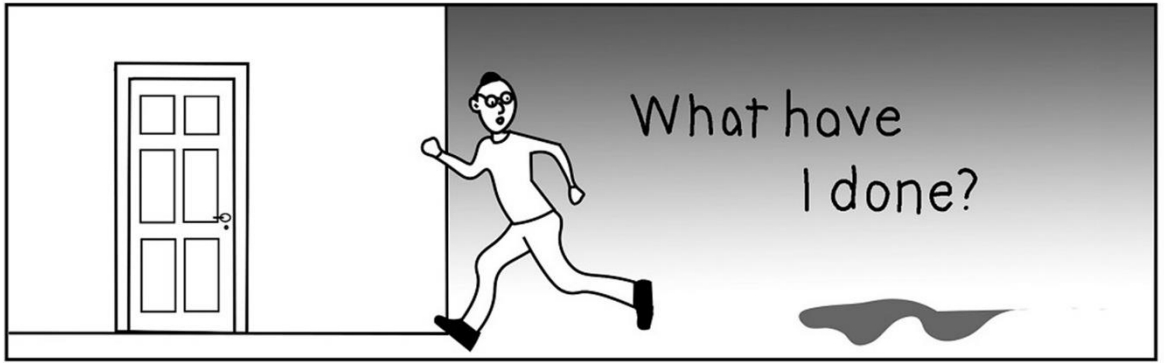




Street  
light  
will  
keep



the  
shadows  
at  
bay



The  
NIGHT  
IS a  
SHADOW



The NIGHT  
EATS all  
SHADOWS



There will be  
NO SHADOW  
in my SLEEP



Only  
the  
DEAD  
see no  
SHADOW



Where there is light



there is shadow

Where there is  
shadow



there is light





# Thank You

Thank you to Tim Miedema, my artist brother. Tim introduced me to comic art when we were kids. Today he is a marvellous painter.

Thank you to Don Dimanlig, my graphic novel illustration teacher at the Ottawa School of Art. I have been working ever since towards the creation of a graphic novel.

Heartfelt gratitude to my friends on social media who inspire me with likes and loves and laughs. Here are the names of just a few kind fans: Britney Amarica, Faith Bigras, Anthony Bulnes, Hennie Crowe, Ann Cognito, Helene Anne Fortin, Brooke Gibson, Juliana Kirsten, Marcel Lecker, Mary McCracken, Louise Oke, Margarita Rab, Sweet Rhubarb, Paul Roberts, Tanya Smith, Robert Snikkar, Linda Vanderlee, Nicole Van De Wolfshaar, Taylor Wentges, and Pamela Wheat. My art lives only in the light of people who enjoy it.

Thank you to my family for their constant support and for the final edits. This work is an independent experimental comic. I recognize with humility my various mistakes, lessons learned for the next work.



Jan Andreas is the pen name of John Miedema. As a boy, his mother called him Jan, pronounced in the Dutch way. Andreas is also Dutch. Both names could be masculine or feminine. During the pandemic, his mother moved into a nursing home where she was socially isolated from her family. It is with great affection that he adopts the name Jan Andreas for his art.

Jan created the profile image in ink and water colour. It is entitled "Jan Andreas, March 199, 2020" for the extended March break.

Jan lives with his family in Wakefield Quebec.



LILABEE  KOMIX