

ZOMBIE

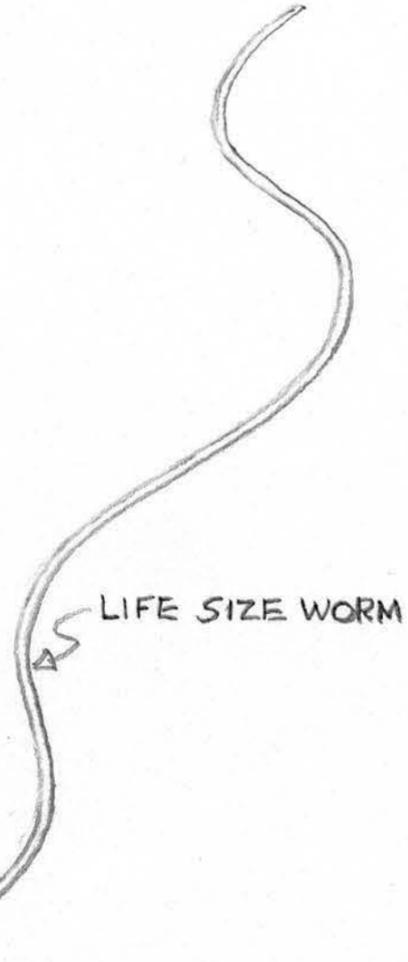
Crickets

Possessed
By
LoveWorms

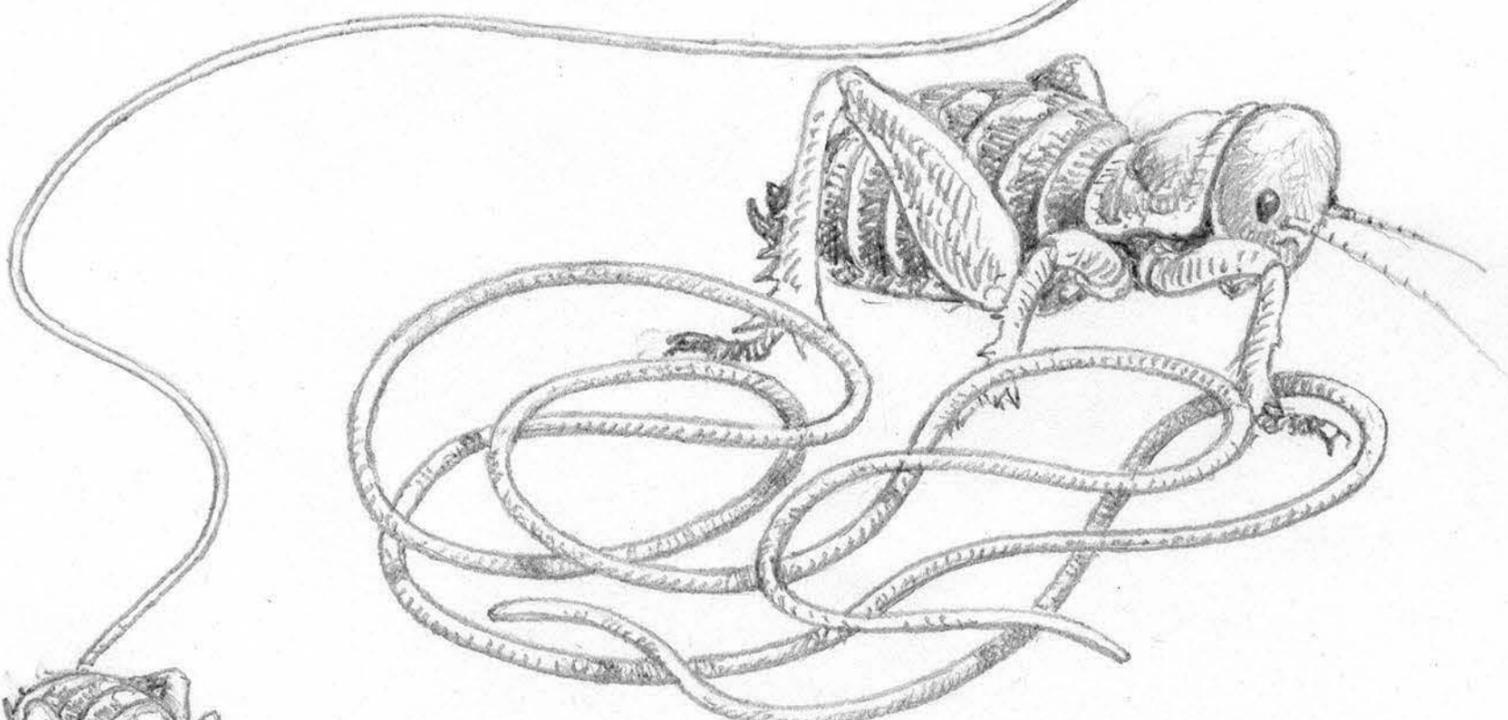
WHAT IS IT?



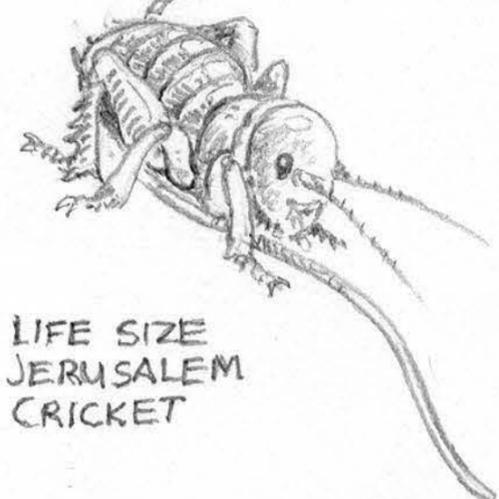
SOMEONE BROUGHT THIS TO
THE MUSEUM FOR IDENTIFICATION



LIFE SIZE WORM



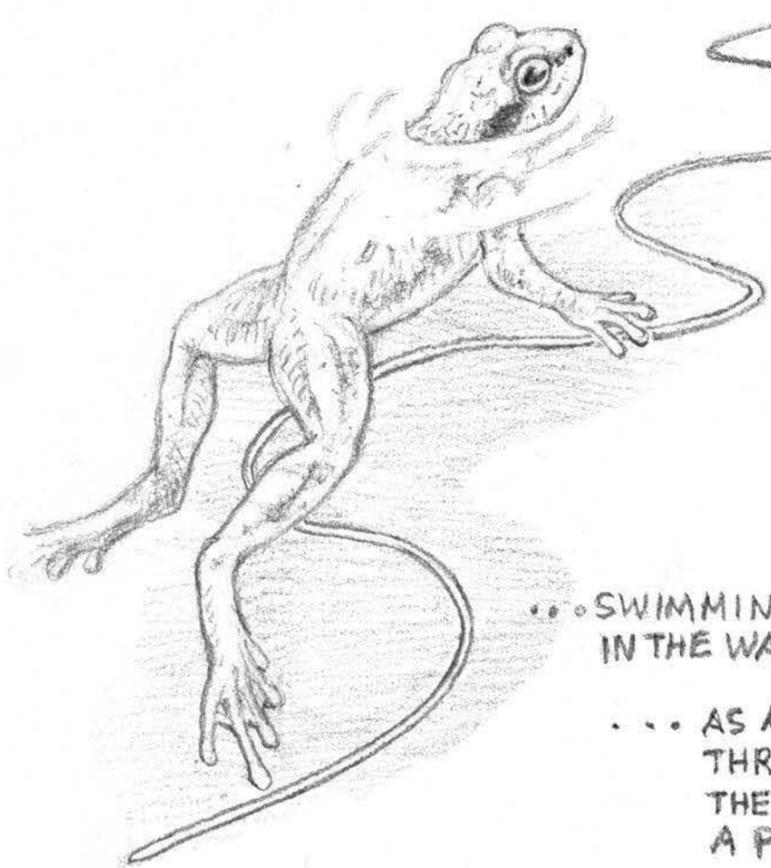
IT'S A HORSEHAIR WORM
AND ITS ZOMBIE JERUSALEM
CRICKET HOST.



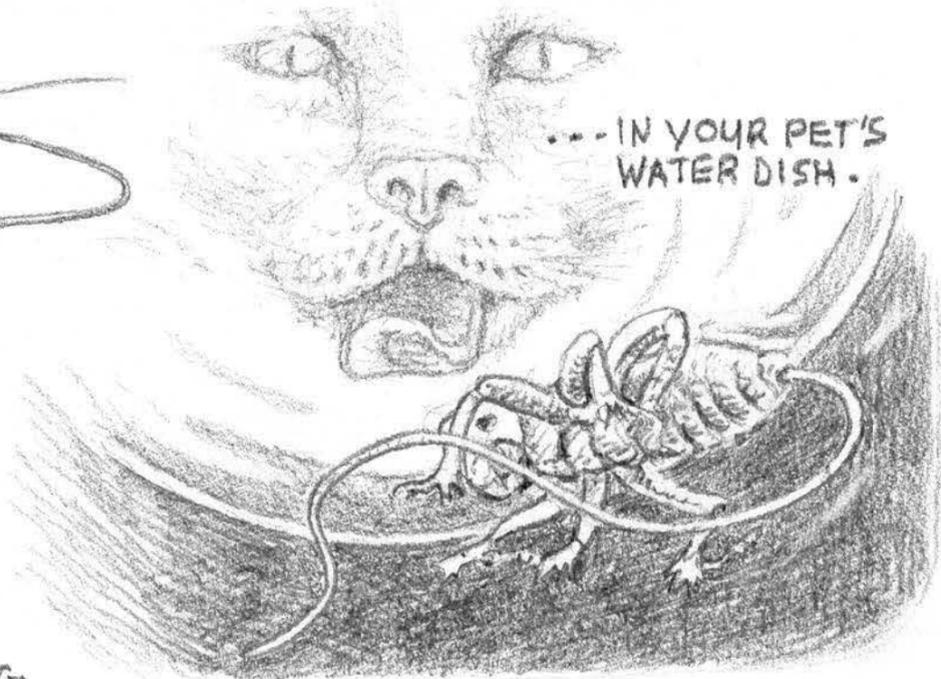
LIFE SIZE
JERUSALEM
CRICKET

WE REALLY GOT GROSSED OUT
WHEN THE WORM CRAWLED
OUT OF THE CRICKET!

HAVE YOU SEEN A HORSEHAIR WORM?

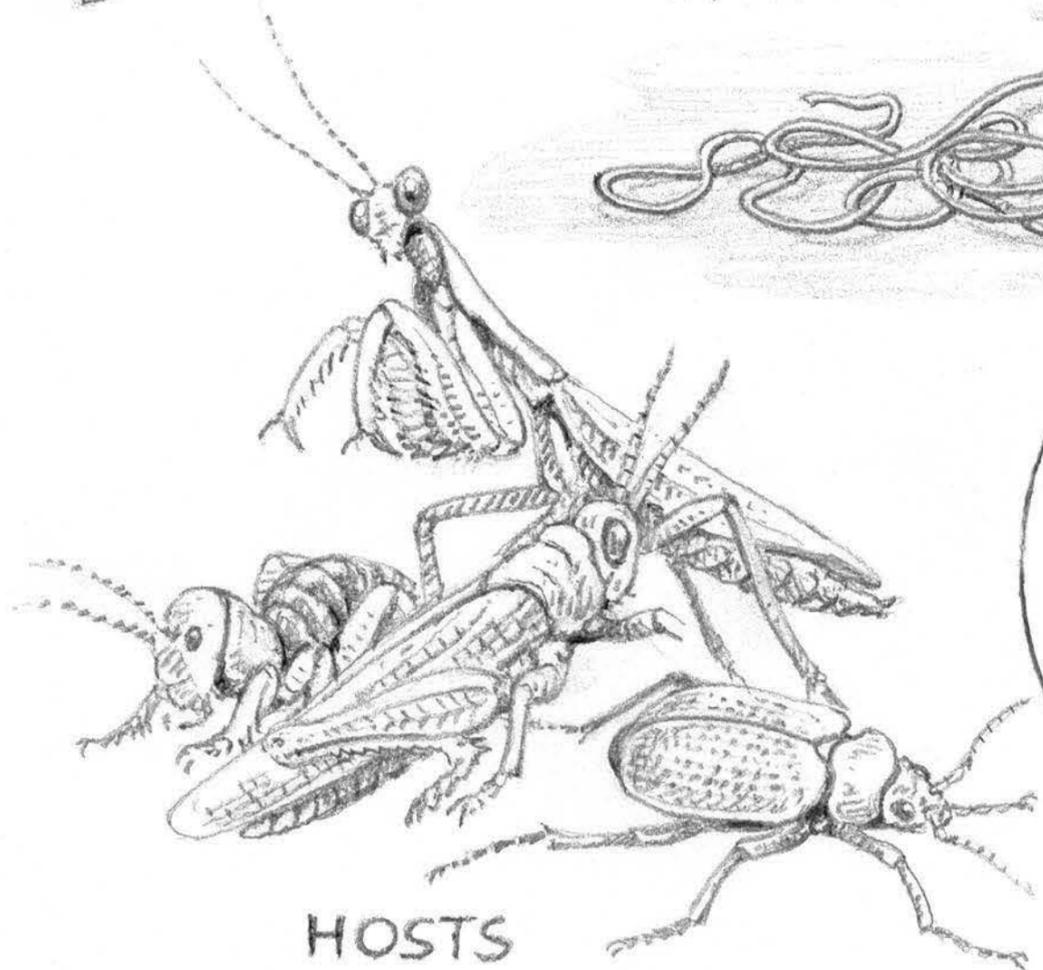
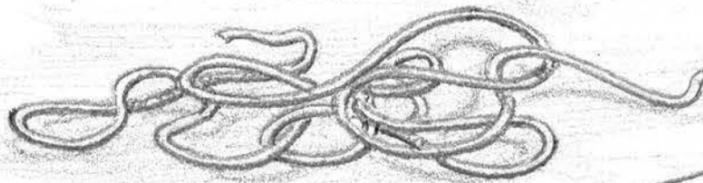
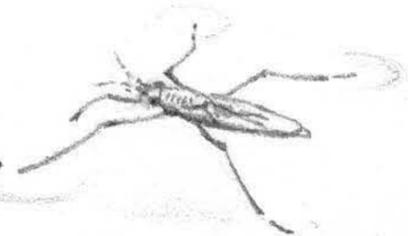


... SWIMMING IN THE WATER.



... IN YOUR PET'S WATER DISH.

... AS A TANGLED THREAD ON THE BOTTOM OF A POND OR STREAM,



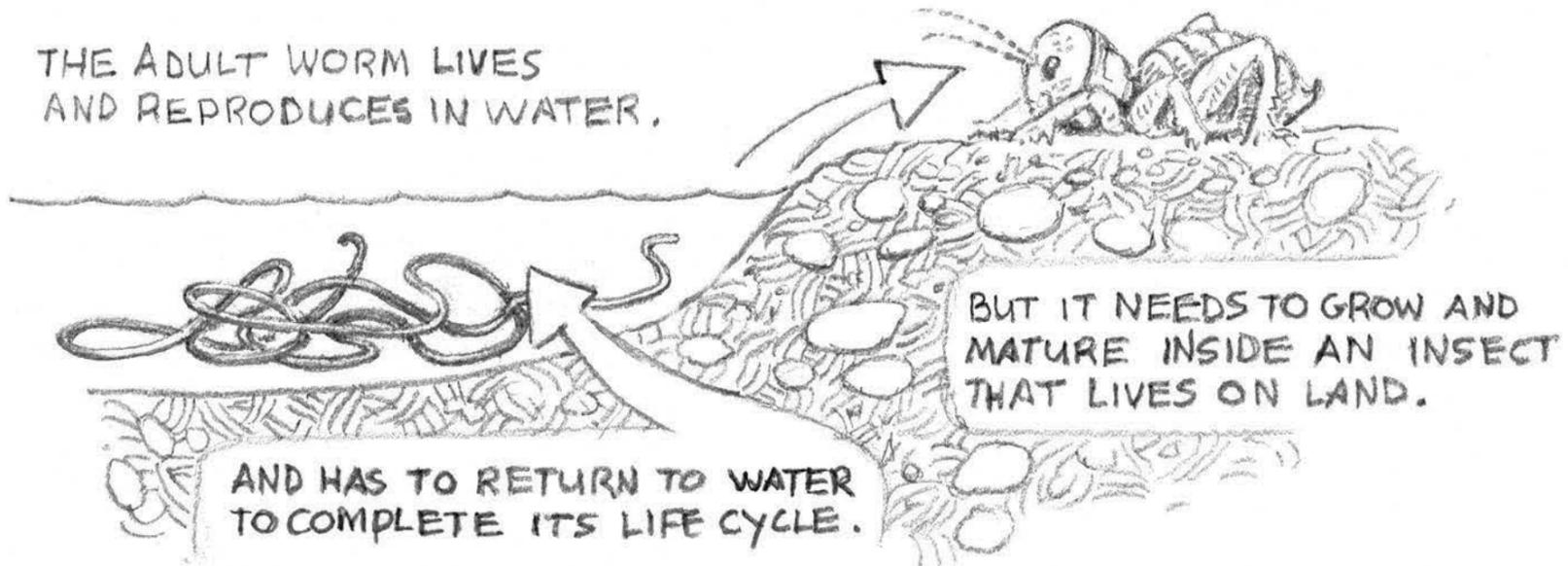
HOSTS
IT IS A PARASITE OF INSECTS ONLY.



IT IS CREEPY LOOKING BUT CAN'T HURT US OR OUR PETS.

THE HORSEHAIR WORM LIVES TWO LIVES

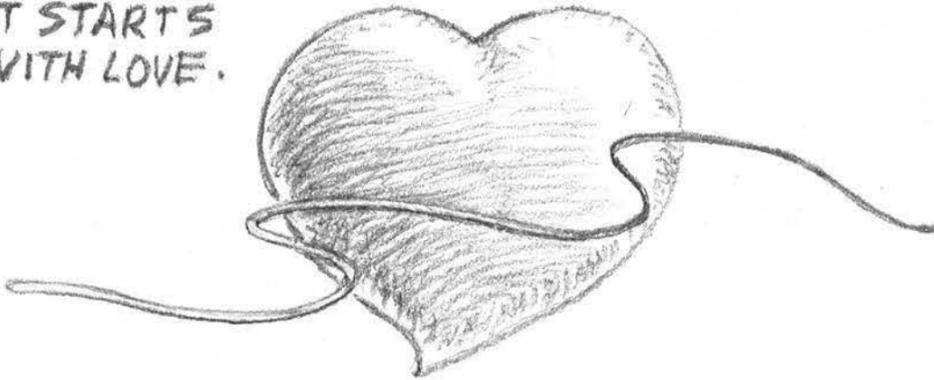
THE ADULT WORM LIVES AND REPRODUCES IN WATER.



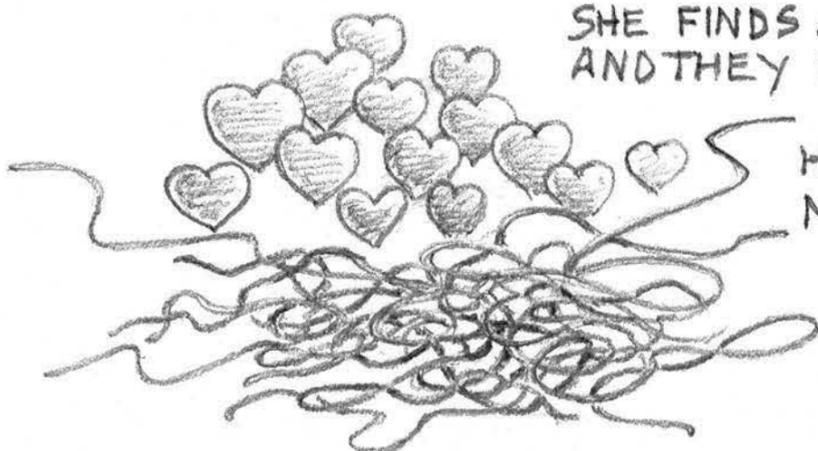
HOW DID THE WORM GET FROM WATER TO LAND, GET INSIDE THE CRICKET AND RETURN TO THE WATER?

HERE IS THE STORY...

IT STARTS WITH LOVE.

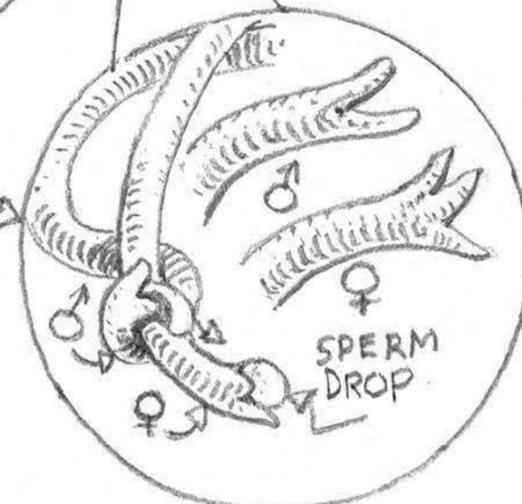
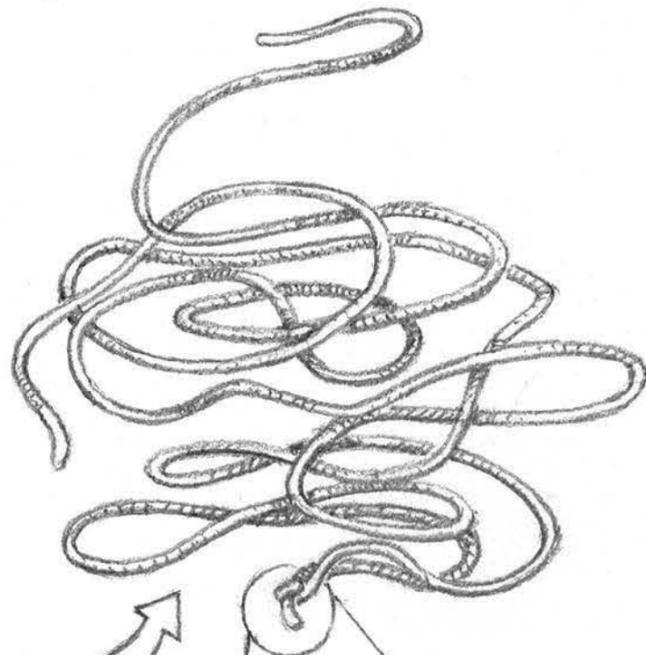


A FEMALE WORM SWIMS IN THE WATER, LOOKING FOR LOVE.



SHE FINDS A MALE AND THEY MATE.

HOW THEY MATE

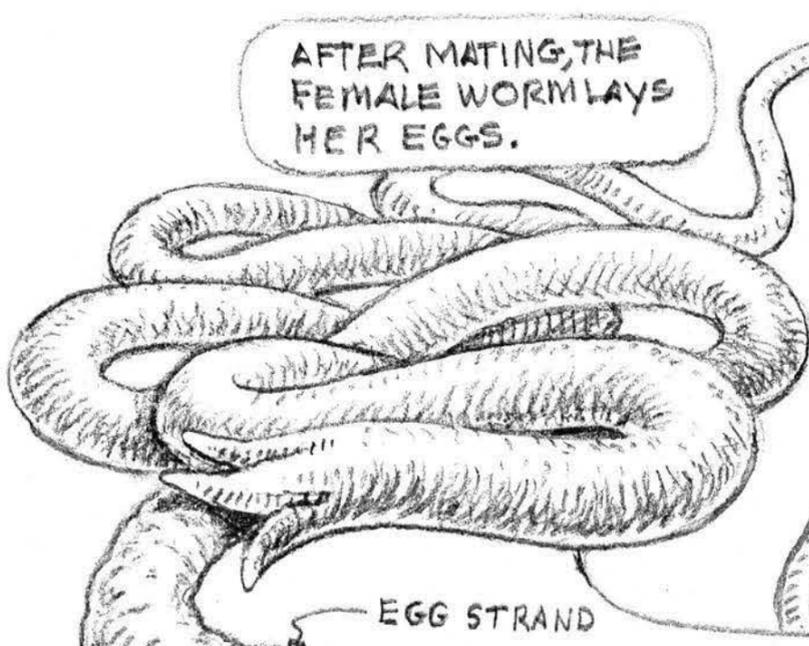


SOMETIMES OTHER WORMS JOIN IN, FORMING A TANGLED LOVE MASS.

SEXY SEXY WORMS

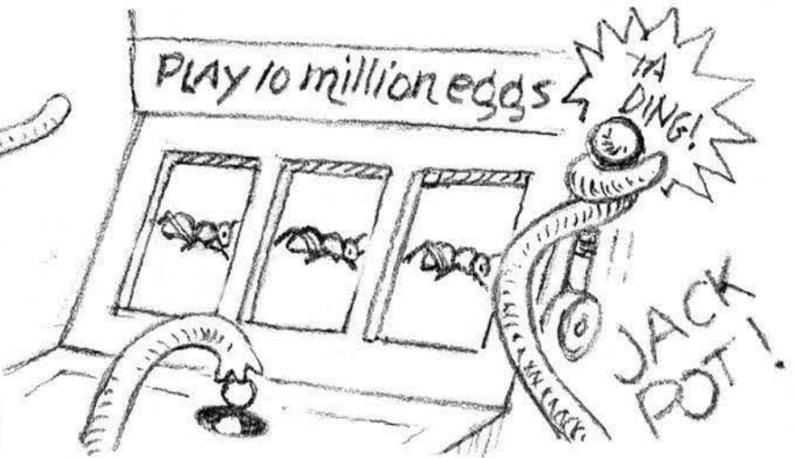
LUCK OF THE DRAW

AFTER MATING, THE FEMALE WORM LAYS HER EGGS.



EGG STRAND

PLAY 10 million eggs



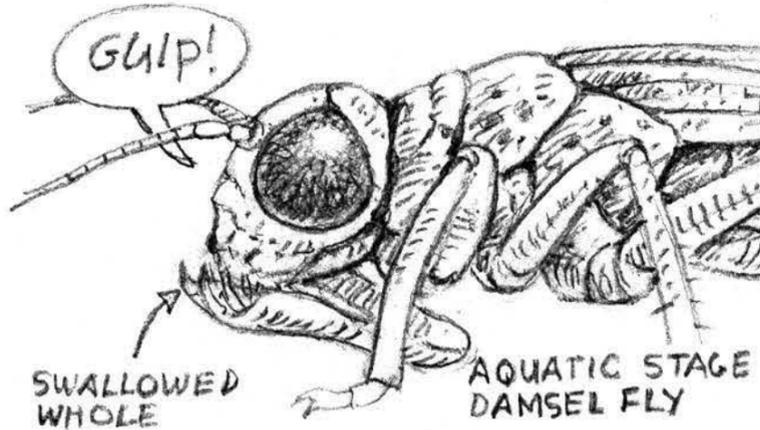
THE CHANCES OF ANY OF THE WORM'S OFFSPRING FINDING A HOST ON LAND AND RETURNING TO WATER TO BREED ARE REALLY SLIM. TO INCREASE HER ODDS, SHE CAN LAY AS MANY AS 10 MILLION EGGS.

LONG STRANDS OF EGGS POUR FROM THE WORM.

EGG WITH DEVELOPING LARVA

EGGS HATCH INTO TINY LARVAE

AREN'T THEY CUTE!



AQUATIC STAGE DAMSEL FLY

THE CYST GETS A FREE RIDE!

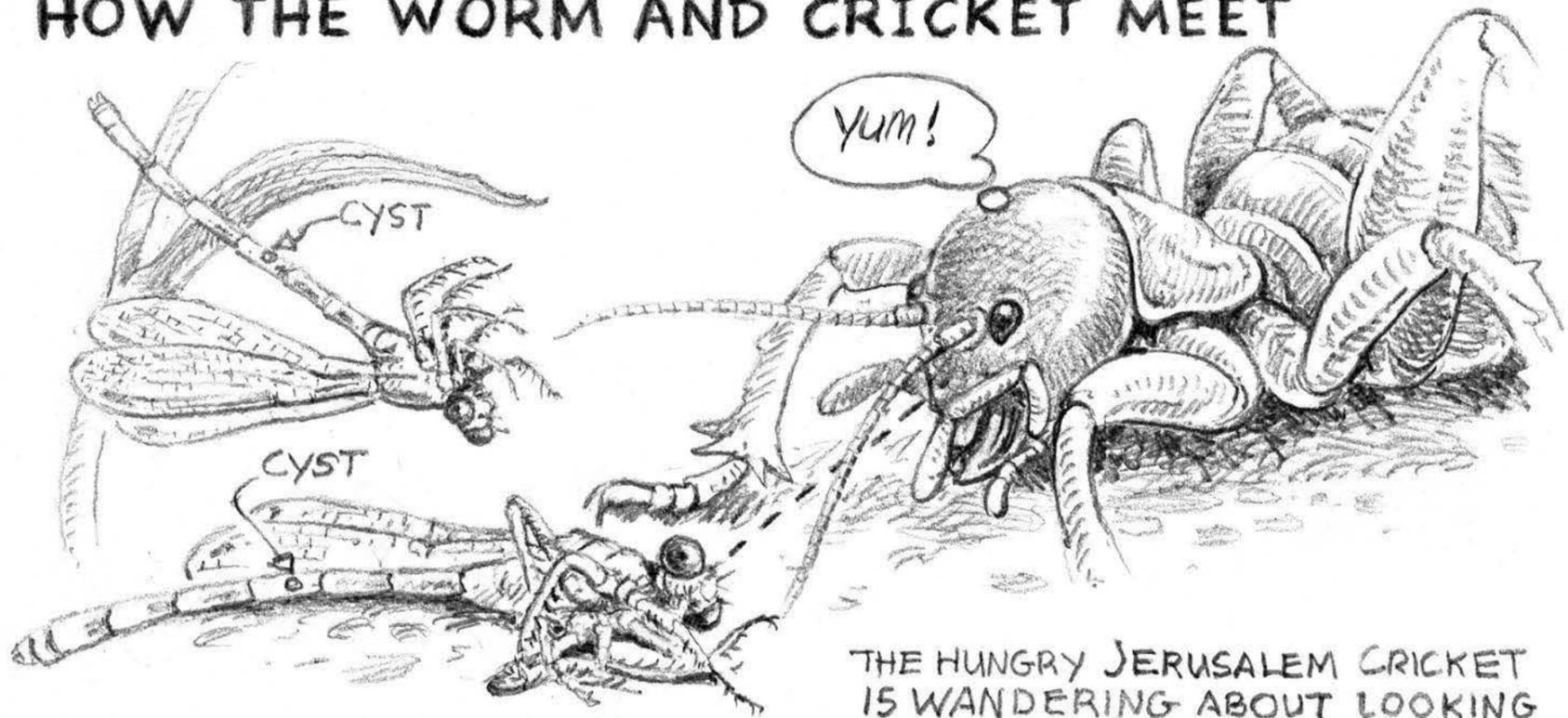
ADULT DAMSEL FLY

WORM LARVA

CYST
INSECT TISSUE

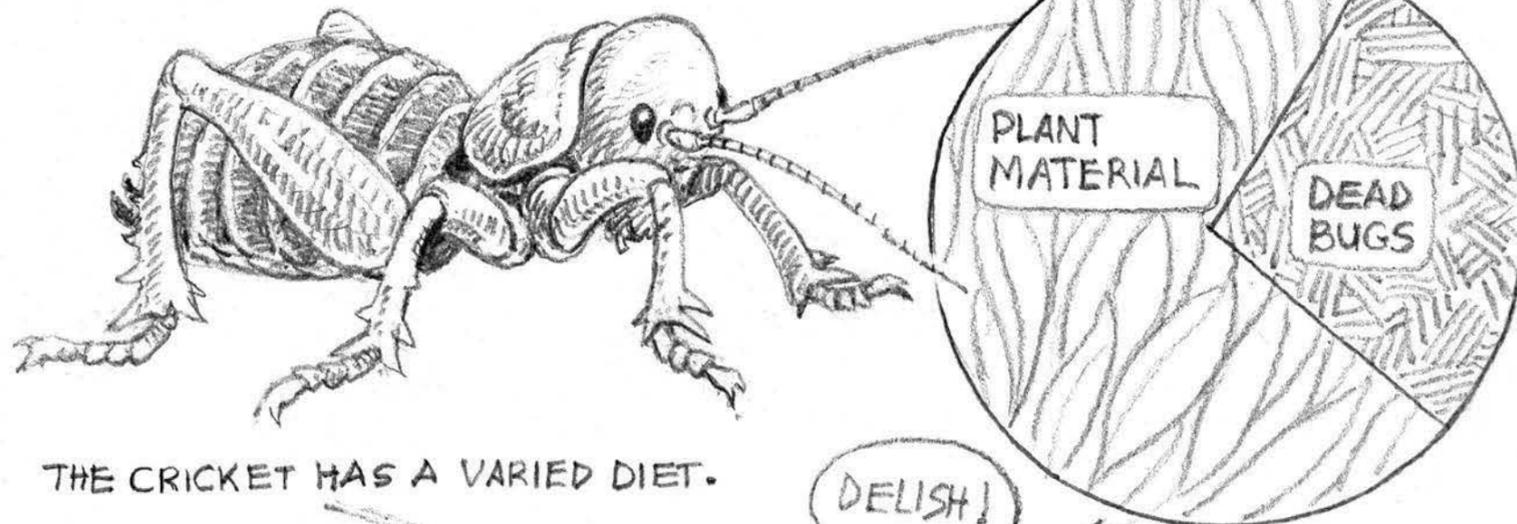
ONCE IT HAS BEEN EATEN, THE WORM LARVA MOVES INTO THE INSECT'S TISSUE AND FORMS A PROTECTIVE CAPSULE CALLED A CYST. IT DOES NOT HARM THE HOST.

HOW THE WORM AND CRICKET MEET

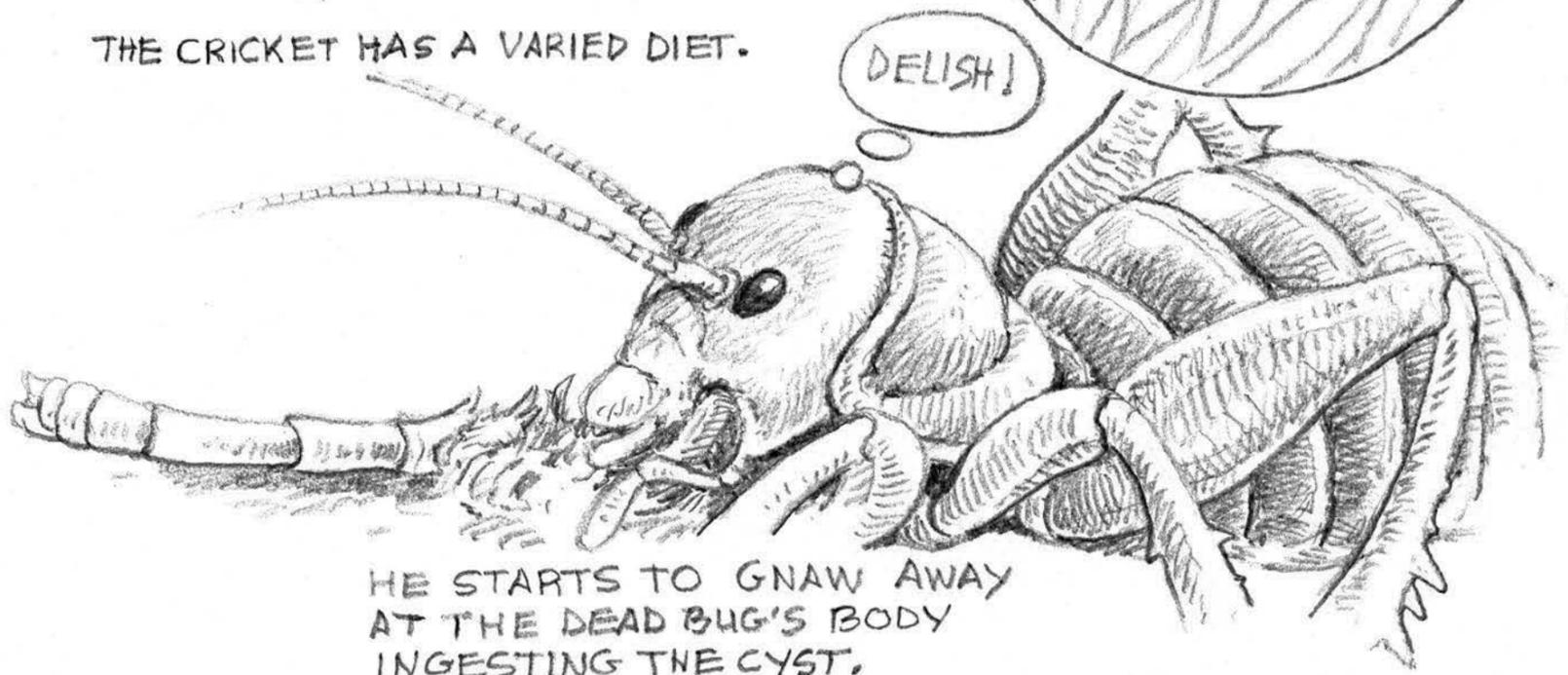


LIKE ALL LIVING THINGS, THE DAMSEL FLY HAS A FINITE LIFESPAN. ONE NIGHT IT DIES IN ITS SLEEP AND FALLS TO THE GROUND.

THE HUNGRY JERUSALEM CRICKET IS WANDERING ABOUT LOOKING FOR FOOD. HE DISCOVERS THE DEAD BUG.



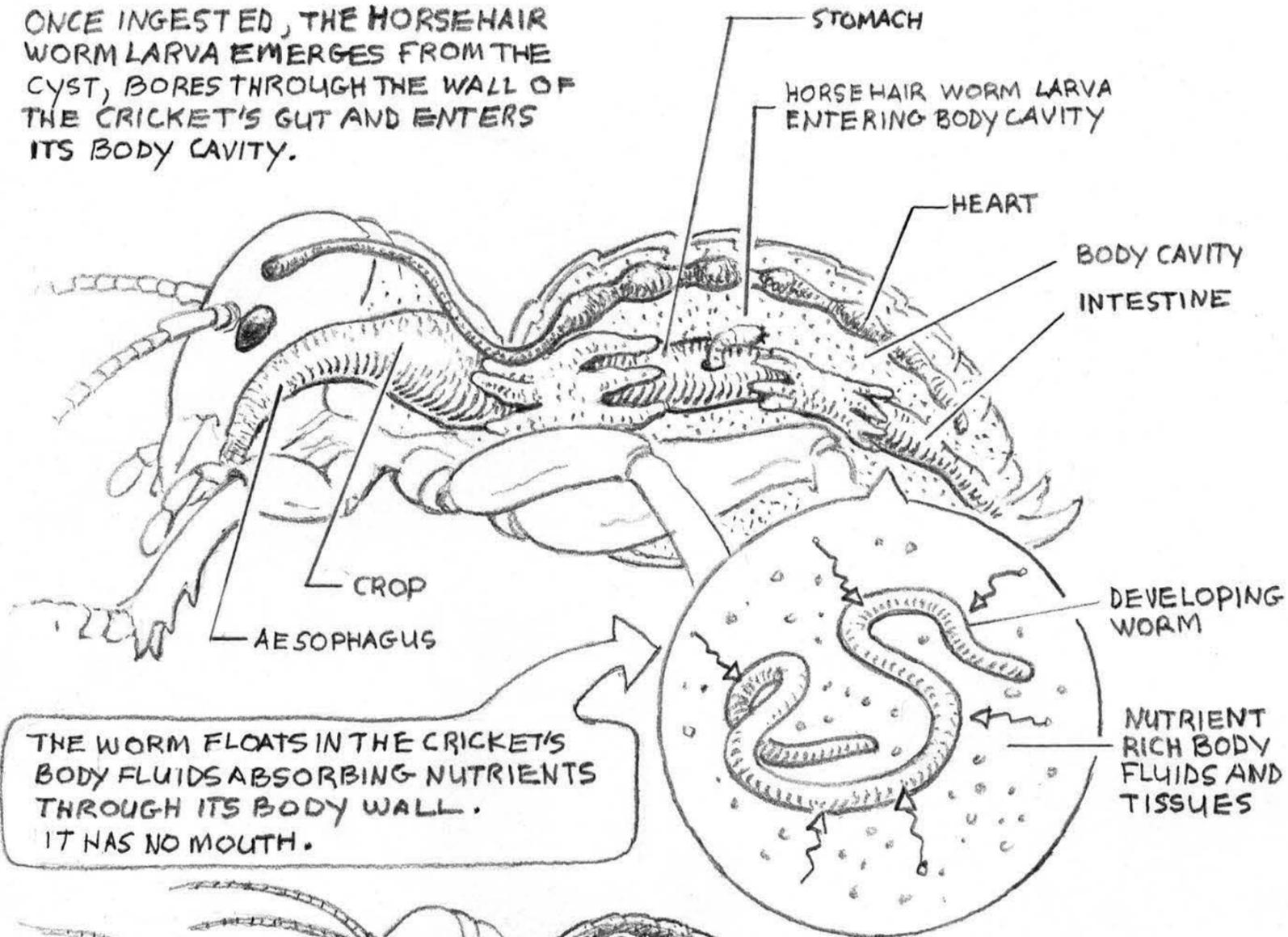
THE CRICKET HAS A VARIED DIET.



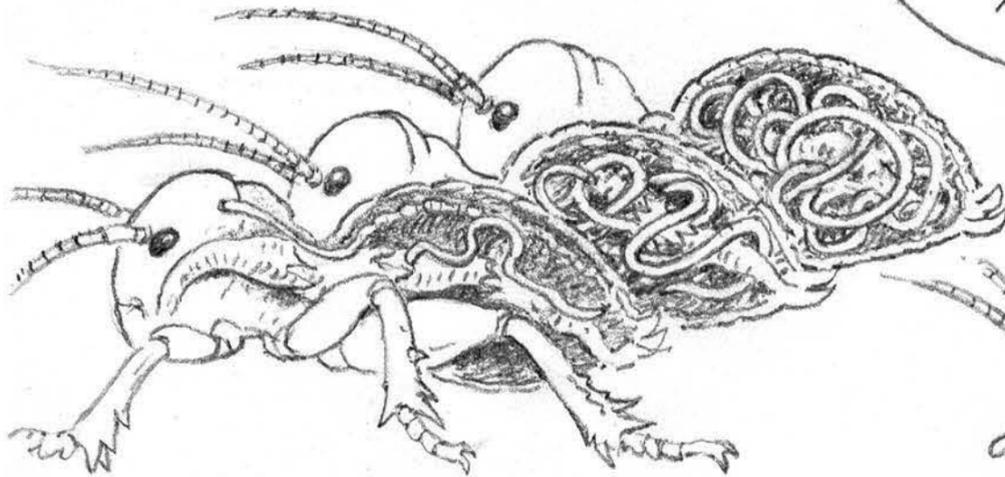
HE STARTS TO GNAW AWAY AT THE DEAD BUG'S BODY INGESTING THE CYST.

ONCE INSIDE...

ONCE INGESTED, THE HORSEHAIR WORM LARVA EMERGES FROM THE CYST, BORES THROUGH THE WALL OF THE CRICKET'S GUT AND ENTERS ITS BODY CAVITY.

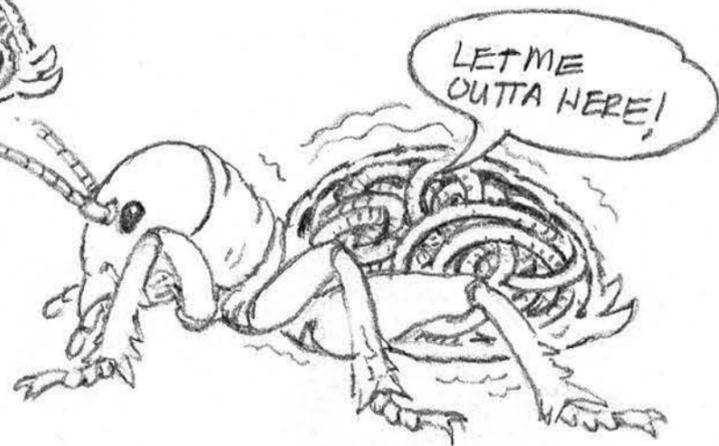


THE WORM FLOATS IN THE CRICKET'S BODY FLUIDS ABSORBING NUTRIENTS THROUGH ITS BODY WALL. IT HAS NO MOUTH.



AT FIRST, THE WORM IS NOT TOO GREEDY AS IT FEEDS SO AS NOT TO WEAKEN OR KILL ITS HOST.

BUT, AS IT GROWS, IT NEEDS MORE AND MORE FOOD AND SPACE.



IT SOON FILLS THE JERUSALEM CRICKET'S BODY CAVITY. THE WORM IS GROWING RESTLESS AND NEEDS TO RETURN TO WATER.

THE ZOMBIE CRICKET

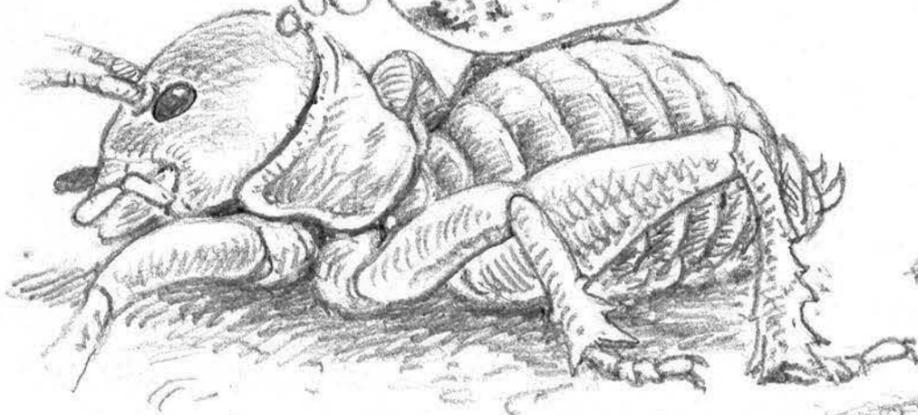
NOW COMES THE ZOMBIE PART. THE WORM CAUSES A CHANGE IN THE CRICKET, TRANSFORMING HIM INTO A ZOMBIE WITH A KILLER THIRST.



HE MUST FIND WATER!



... AND THERE IS NO STOPPING HIM.

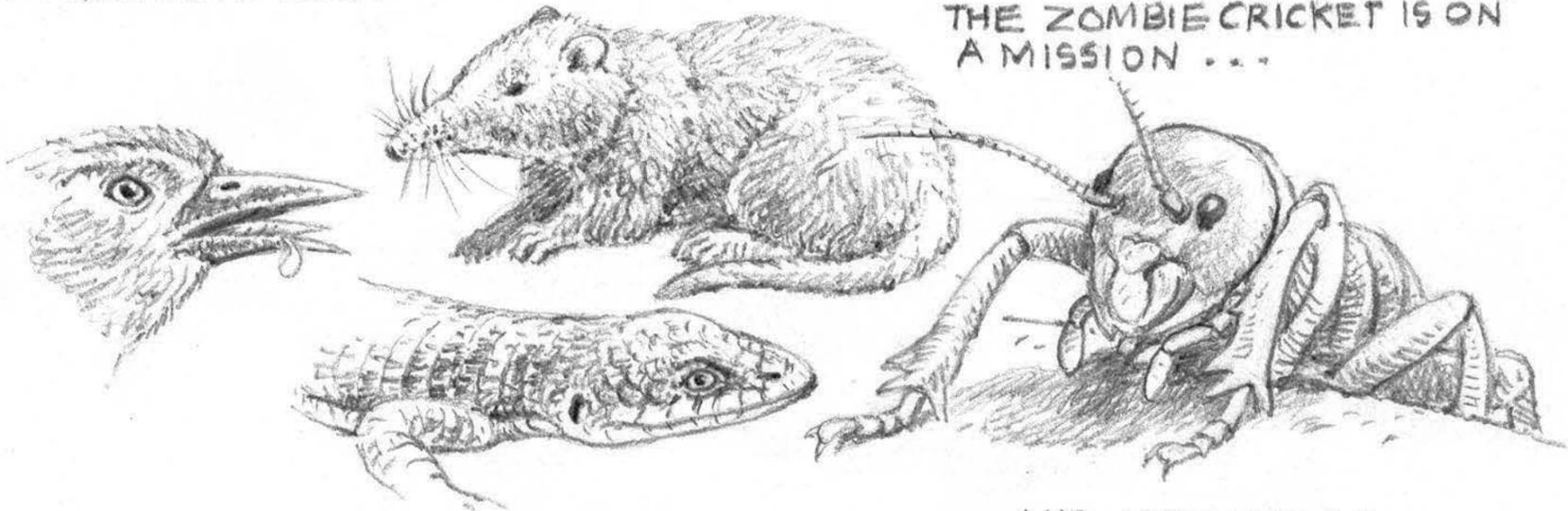


OFF THE ZOMBIE CRICKET GOES, WORM STILL INSIDE. HE MUST CLIMB OVER ROCKS...

NAVIGATE CANYONS.

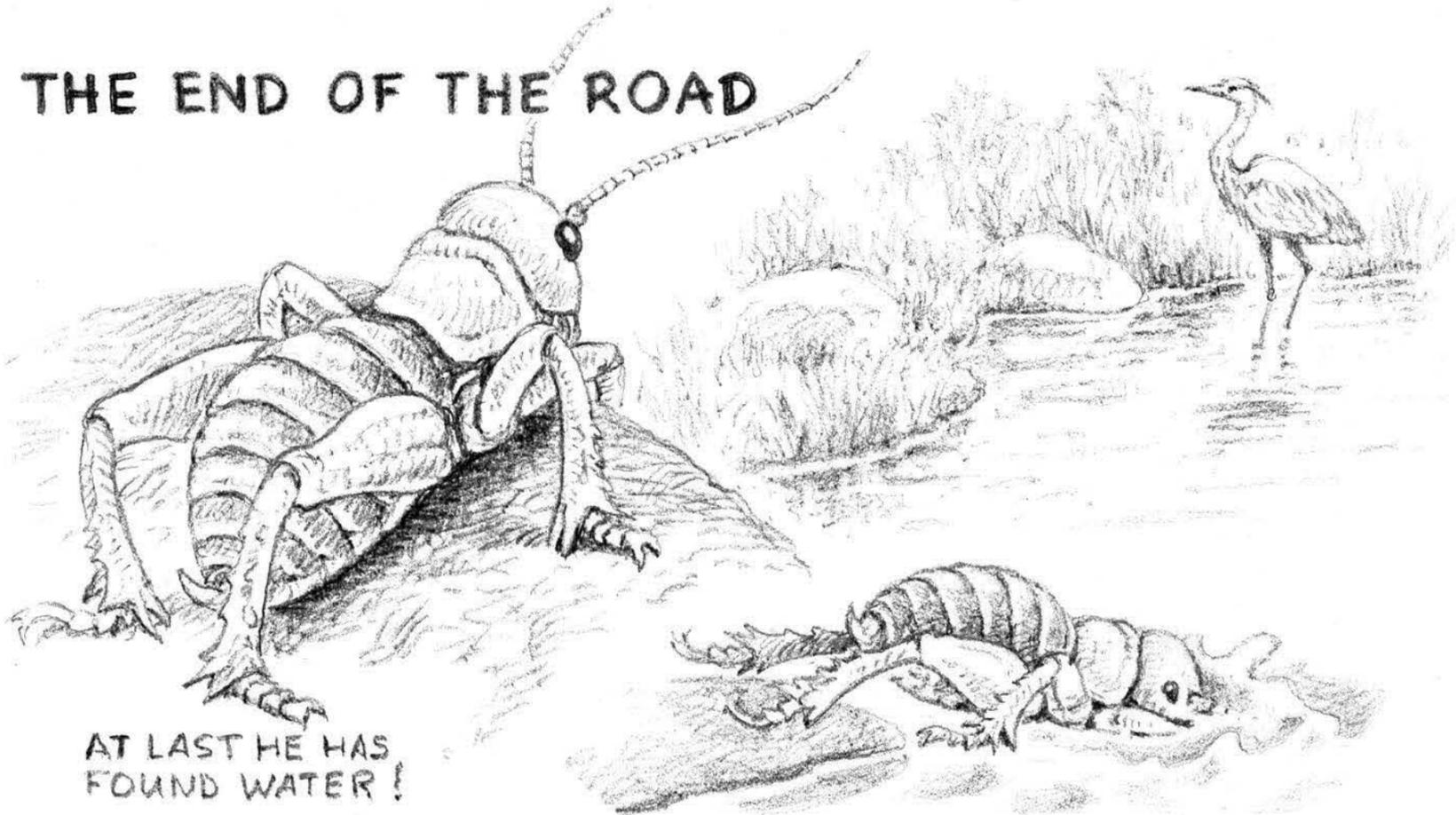
PREDATORS LURK.

OBLIVIOUS TO THE DANGER, THE ZOMBIE CRICKET IS ON A MISSION ...



... AND MARCHES ON.

THE END OF THE ROAD

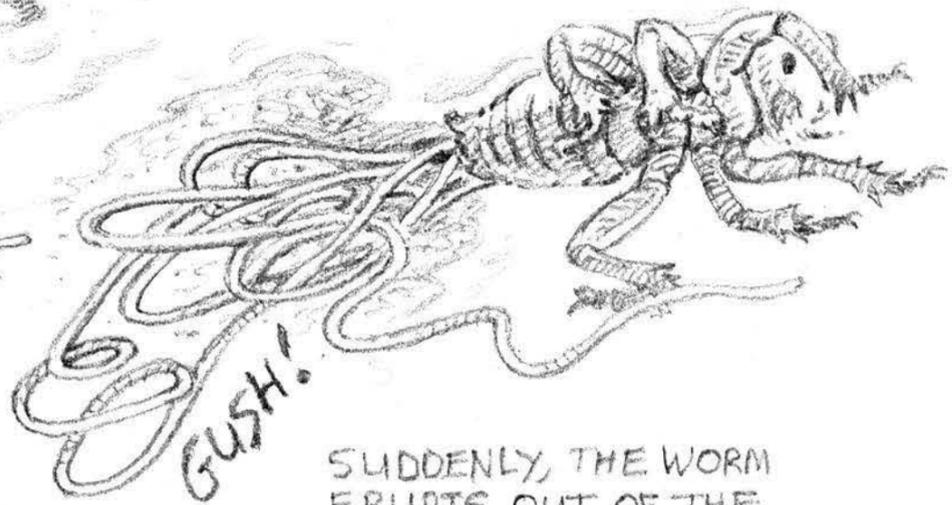


AT LAST HE HAS FOUND WATER!

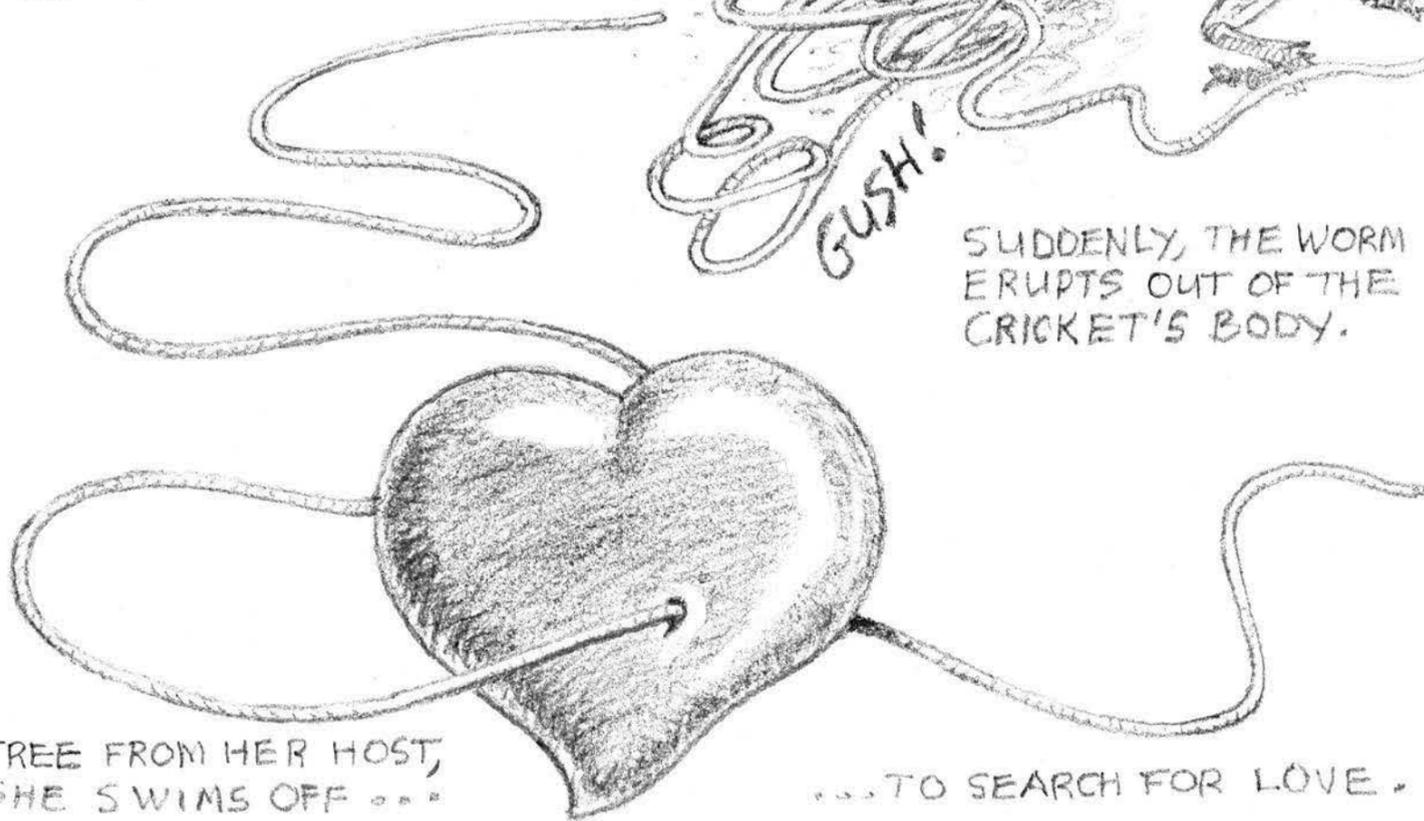
HE IS SO THIRSTY THAT HE DIVES RIGHT IN.



WRIGGLING AND KICKING, HE TRIES TO SWIM.

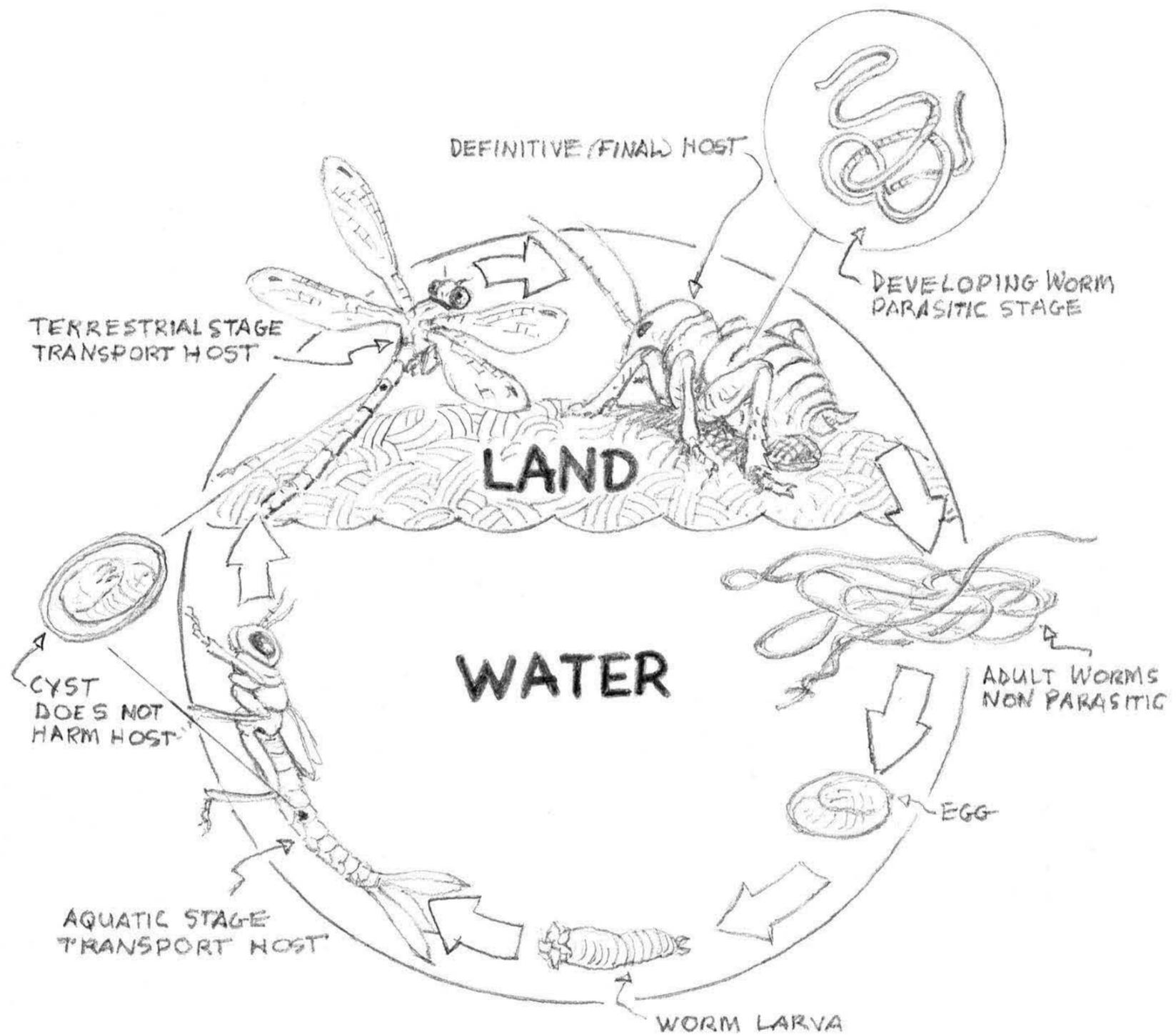


SUDDENLY, THE WORM ERUPTS OUT OF THE CRICKET'S BODY.



FREE FROM HER HOST, SHE SWIMS OFF...

...TO SEARCH FOR LOVE.



HORSEHAIR WORM LIFE CYCLE