



ZOMBIE

Crickets

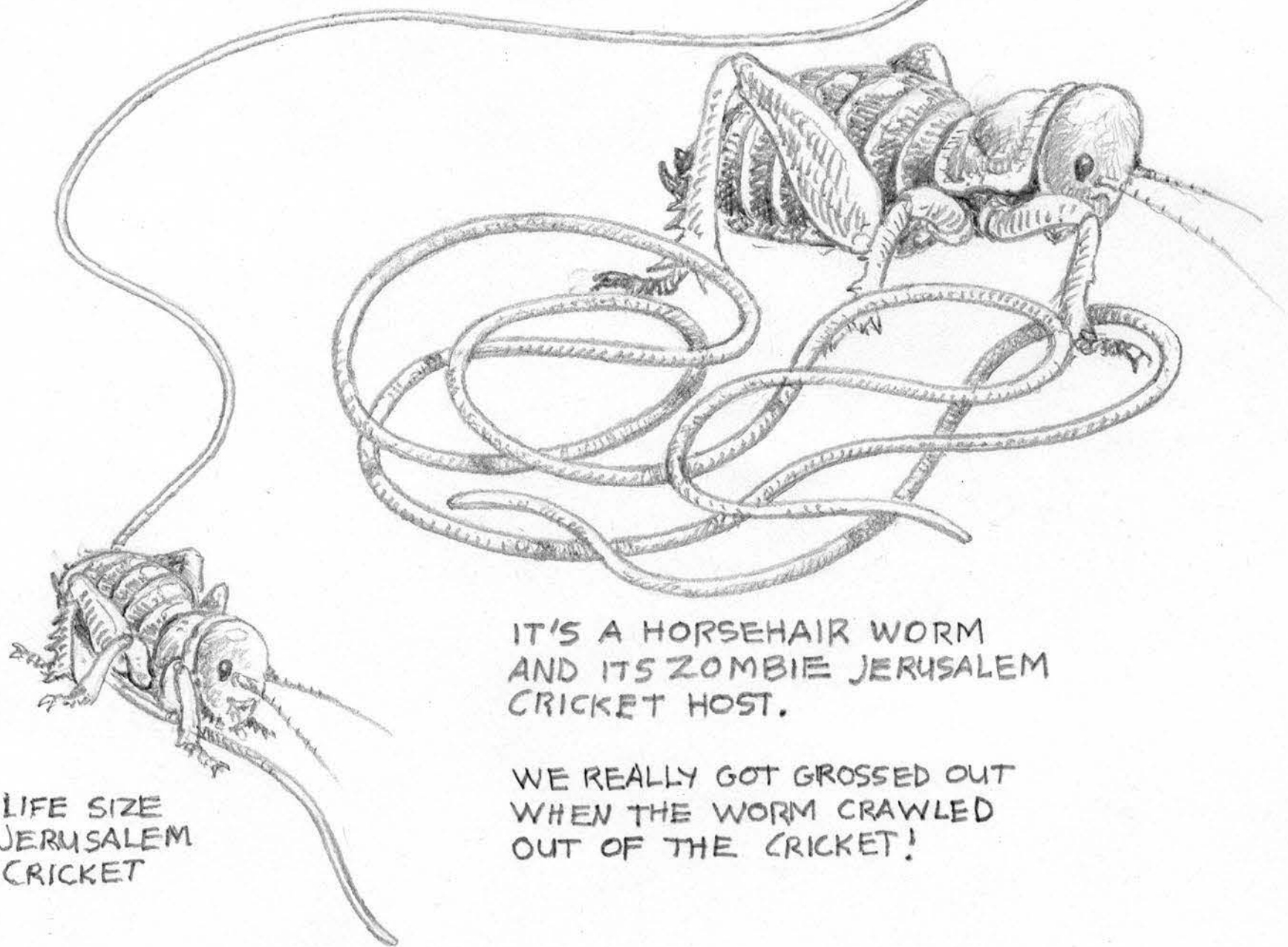
Possessed
By
LoveWorms

WHAT IS IT?



LIFE SIZE WORM

SOMEONE BROUGHT THIS TO
THE MUSEUM FOR IDENTIFICATION

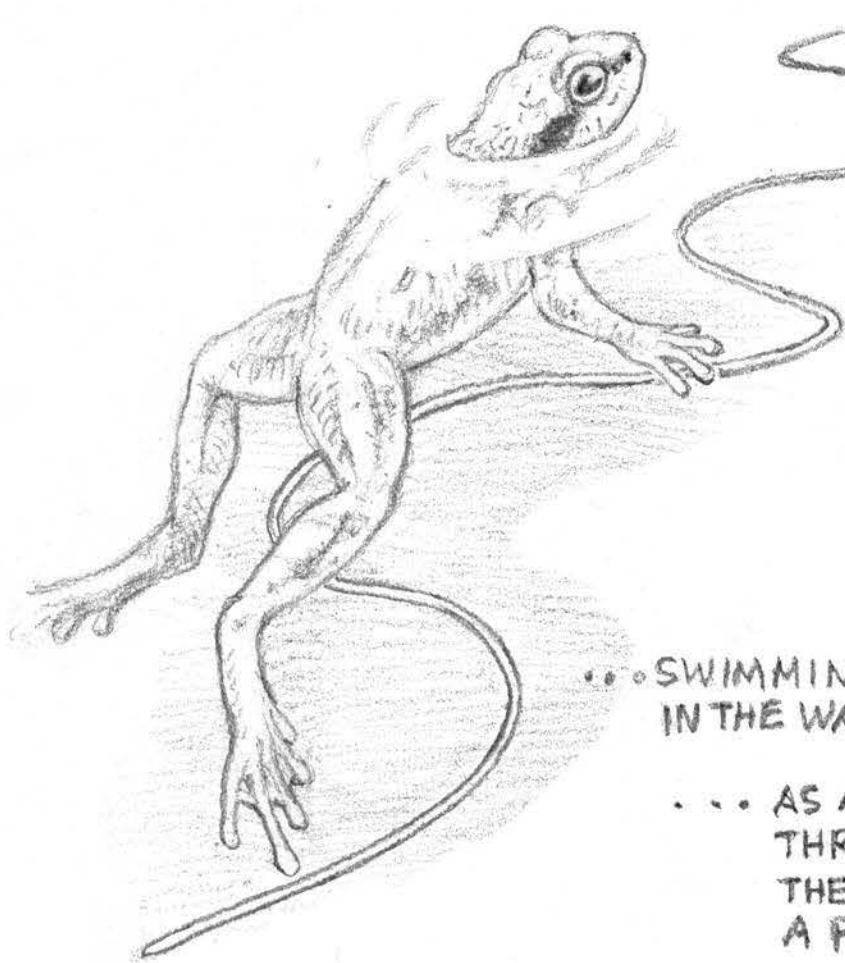


IT'S A HORSEHAIR WORM
AND ITS ZOMBIE JERUSALEM
CRICKET HOST.

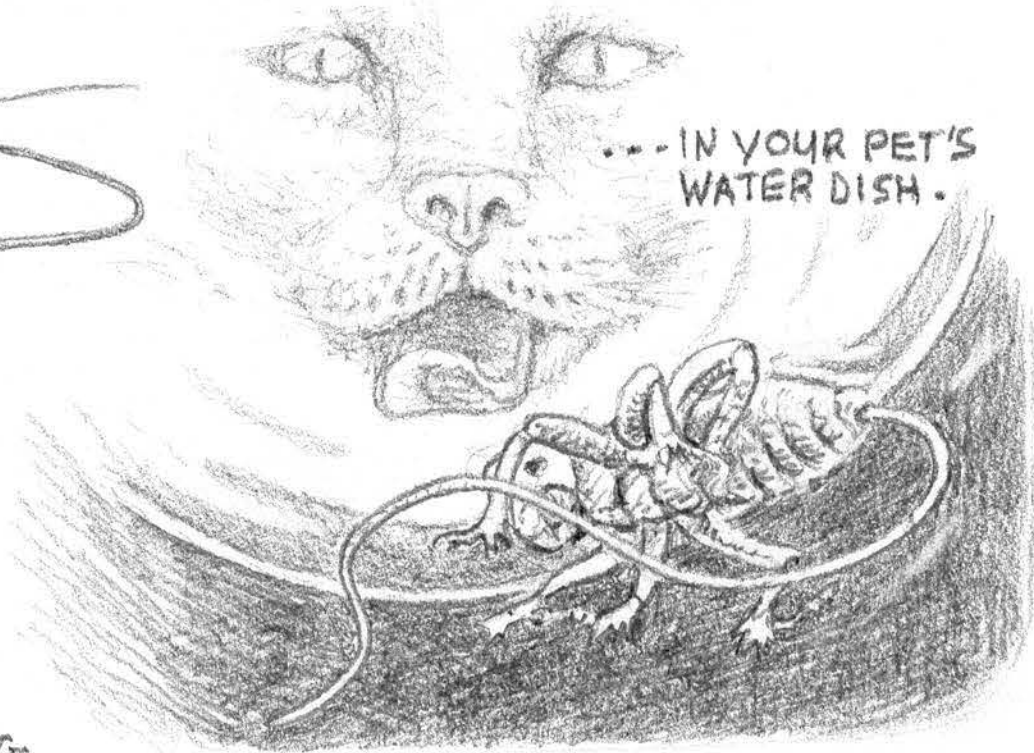
WE REALLY GOT GROSSED OUT
WHEN THE WORM CRAWLED
OUT OF THE CRICKET!

LIFE SIZE
JERUSALEM
CRICKET

HAVE YOU SEEN A HORSEHAIR WORM?

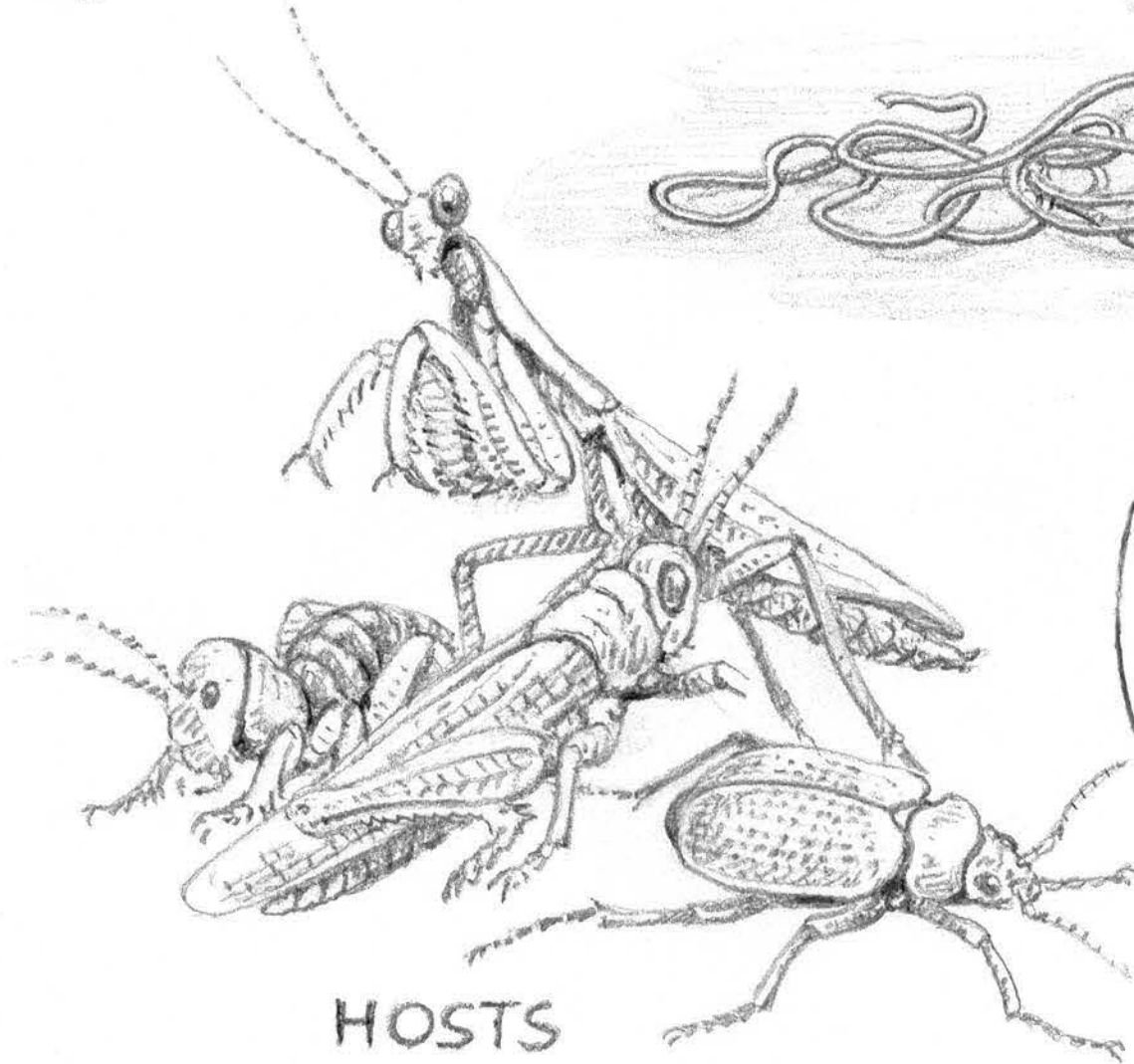
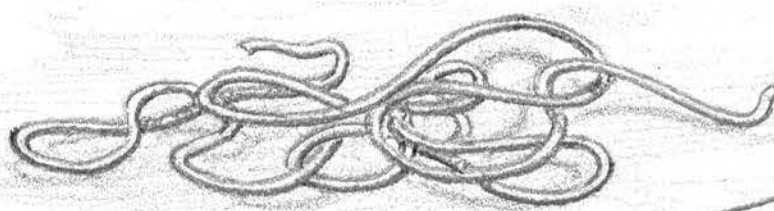


...SWIMMING
IN THE WATER.



...IN YOUR PET'S
WATER DISH.

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



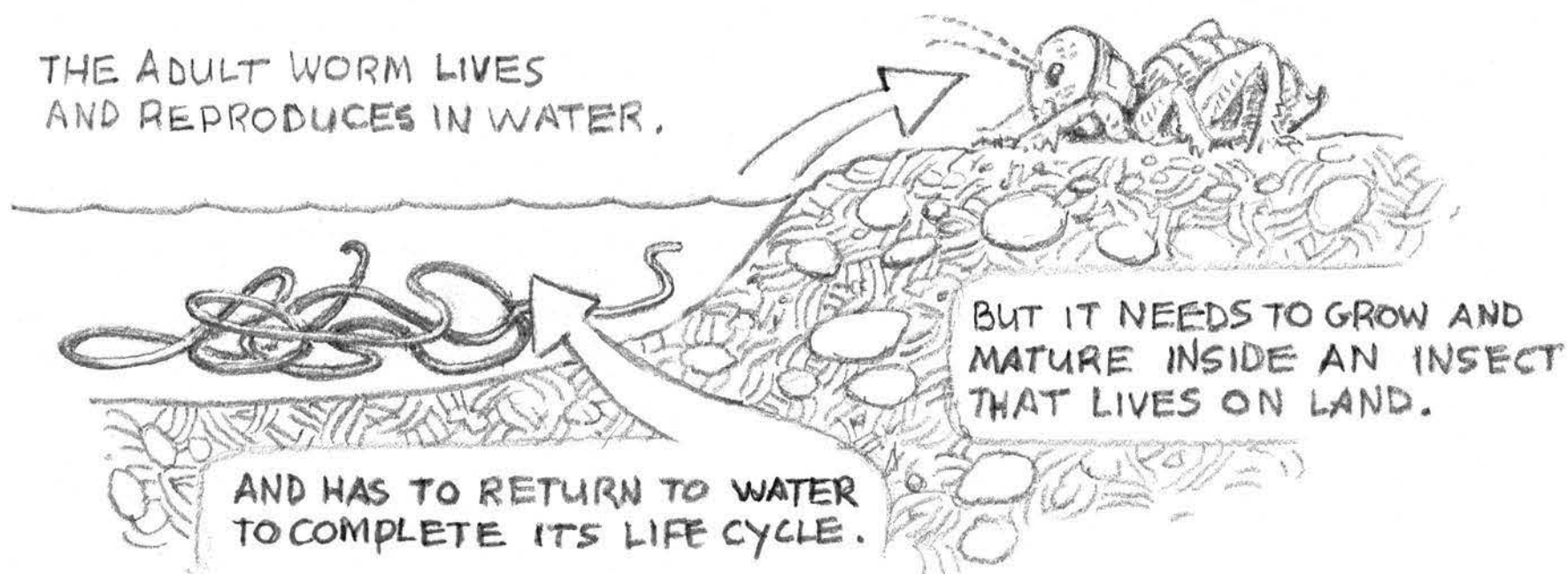
HOSTS
IT IS A PARASITE
OF INSECTS ONLY.



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

THE HORSEHAIR WORM LIVES TWO LIVES

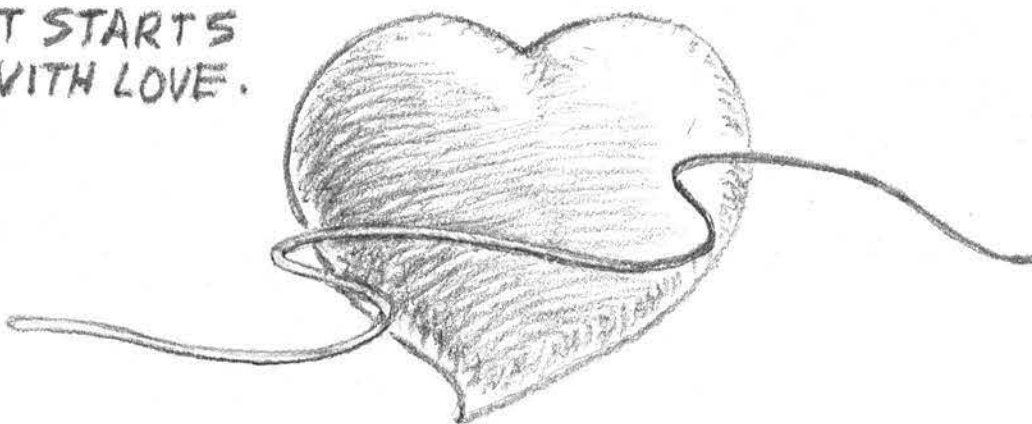
THE ADULT WORM LIVES
AND REPRODUCES IN WATER.



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

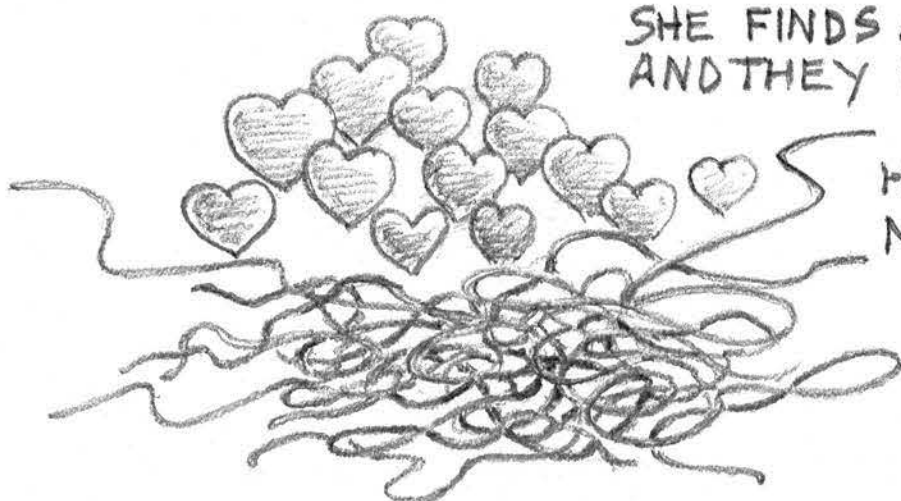
HERE IS THE STORY...

IT STARTS
WITH LOVE.

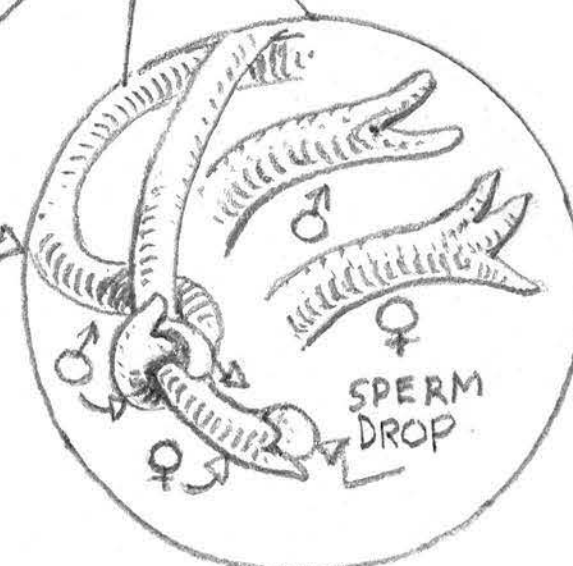
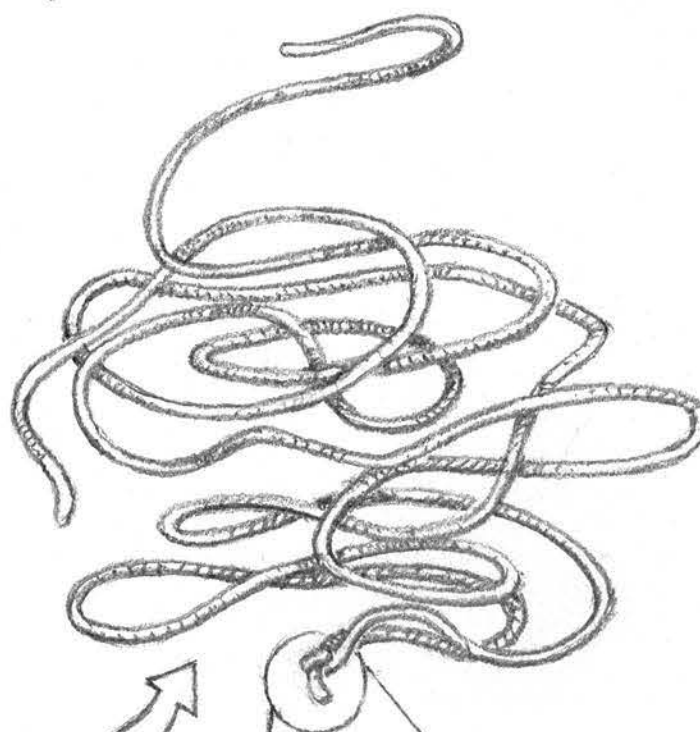


A FEMALE WORM SWIMS IN THE
WATER, LOOKING FOR LOVE.

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.

PLAY 10 million eggs

TAD DING!
JACK POT!

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.

EGG STRAND

LONG STRANDS OF EGGS POUR FROM THE WORM.

EGG WITH DEVELOPING LARVA

EGGS HATCH INTO TINY LARVAE

AREN'T THEY CUTE!

THE CYST GETS A FREE RIDE!

ADULT DAMSEL FLY

WORM LARVA

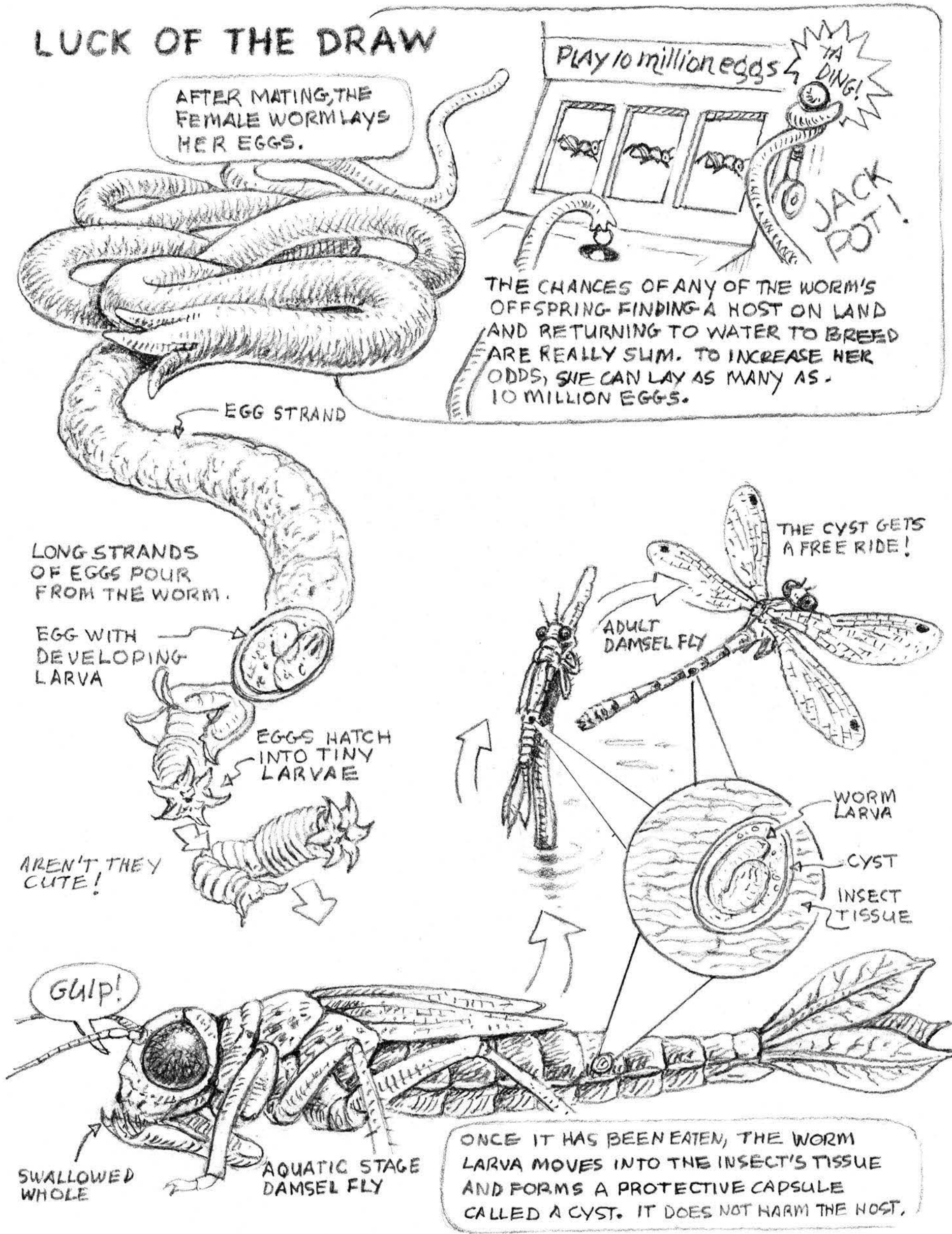
CYST
INSECT TISSUE

GUIP!

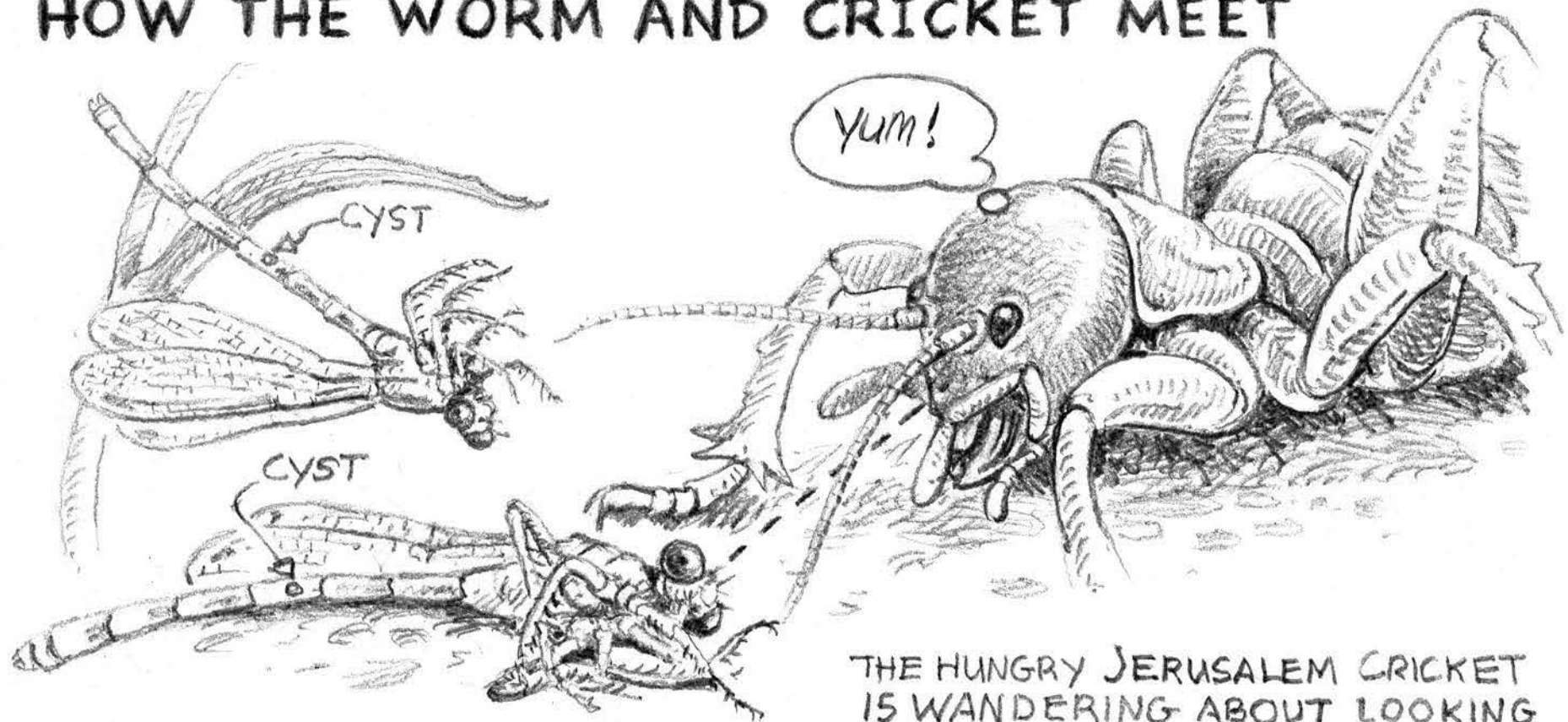
SWALLOWED WHOLE

AQUATIC STAGE
DAMSEL FLY

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.

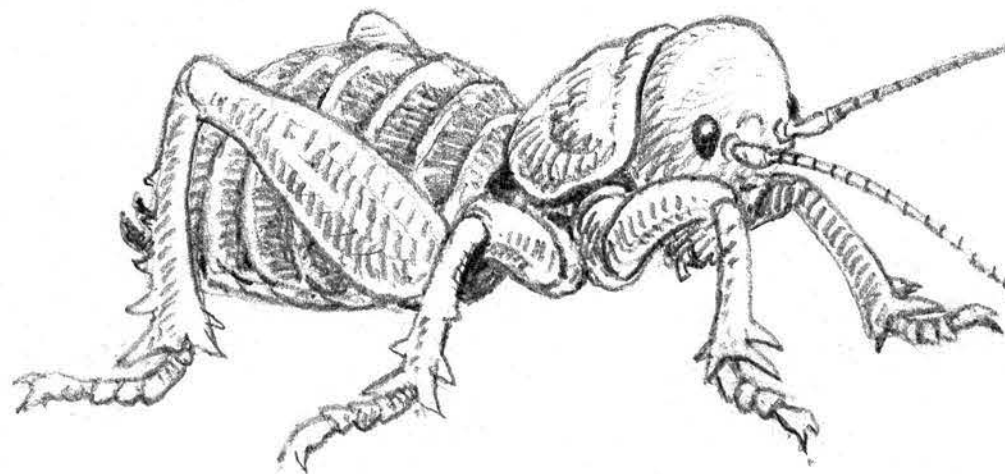


HOW THE WORM AND CRICKET MEET

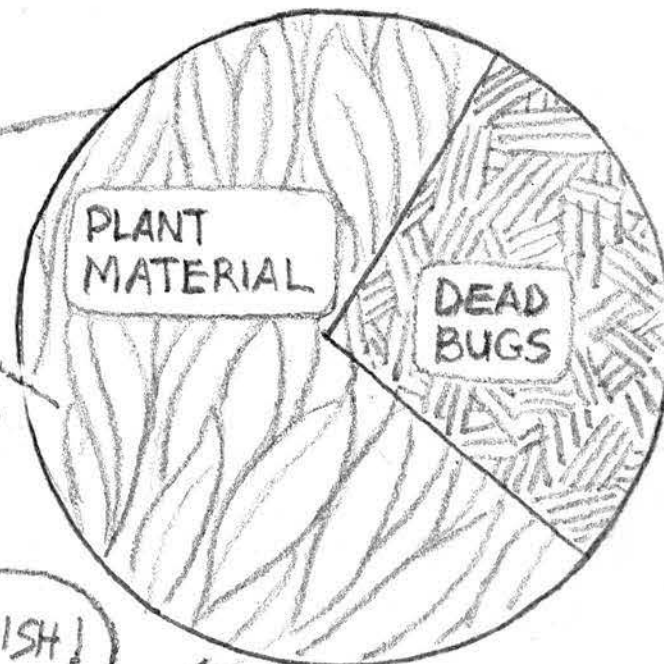


LIKE ALL LIVING THINGS, THE DAMSEL FLY HAS A FINITE LIFESPAN. ONE NIGHT IT DIES IN ITS SLEEP AND FALLS TO THE GROUND.

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



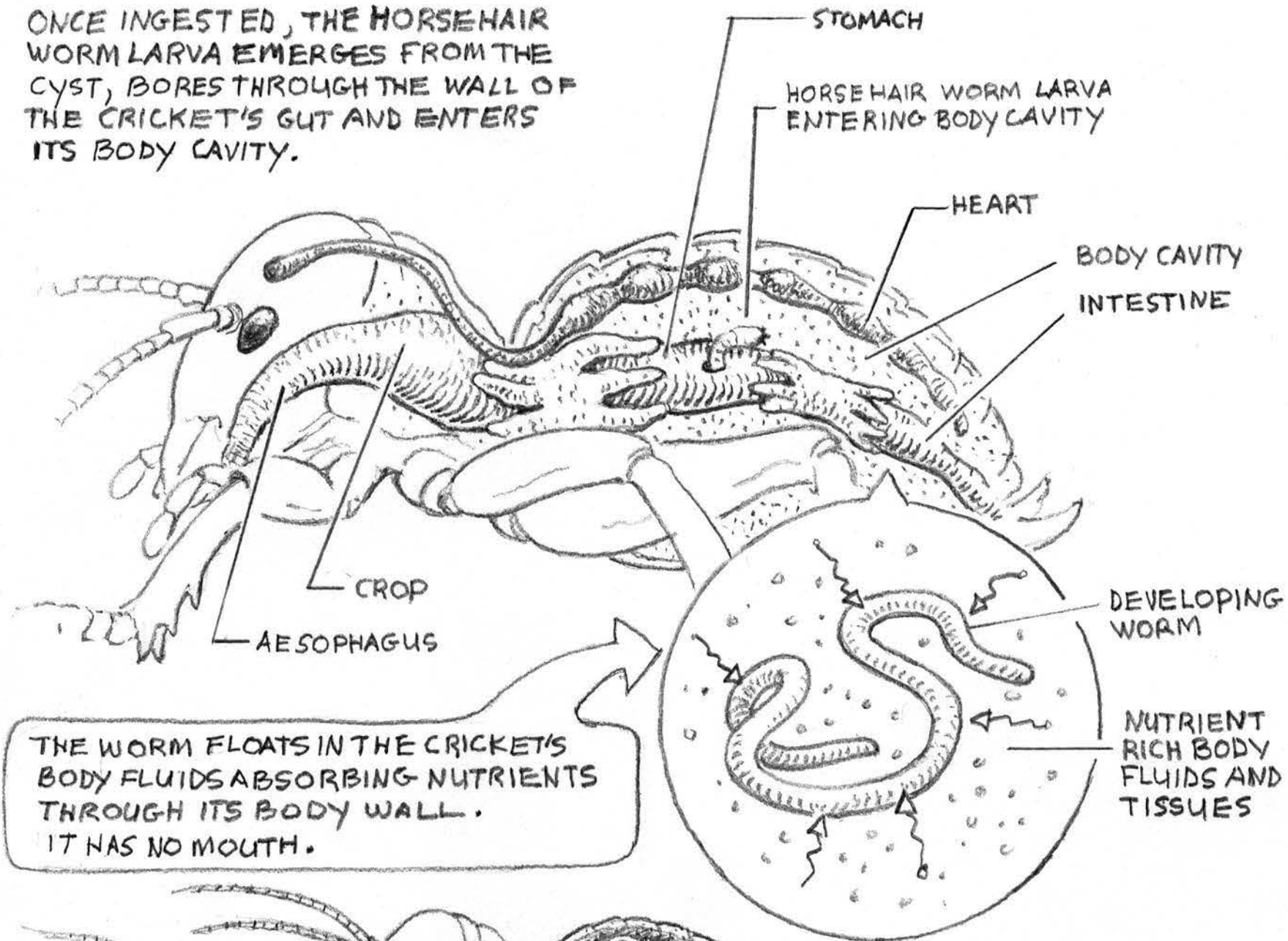
THE CRICKET HAS A VARIED DIET.



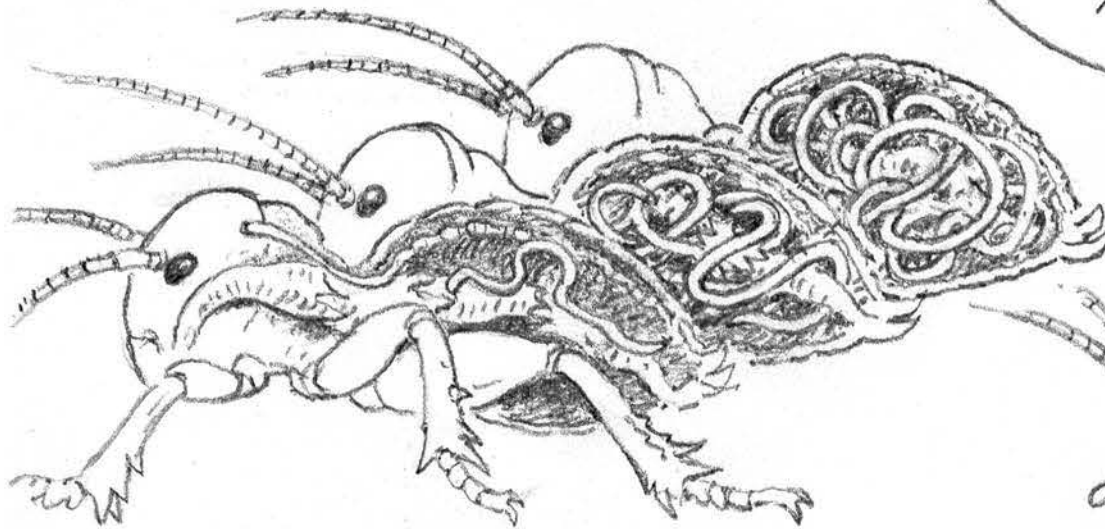
HE STARTS TO GNAW AWAY AT THE DEAD BUG'S BODY INGESTING THE CYST.

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.

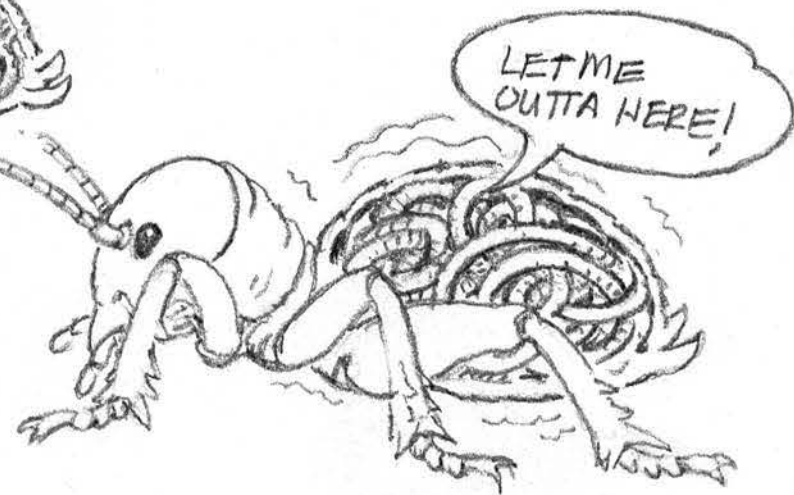


THE WORM FLOATS IN THE CRICKET'S BODY FLUIDS ABSORBING NUTRIENTS THROUGH ITS BODY WALL. IT HAS NO MOUTH.



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.



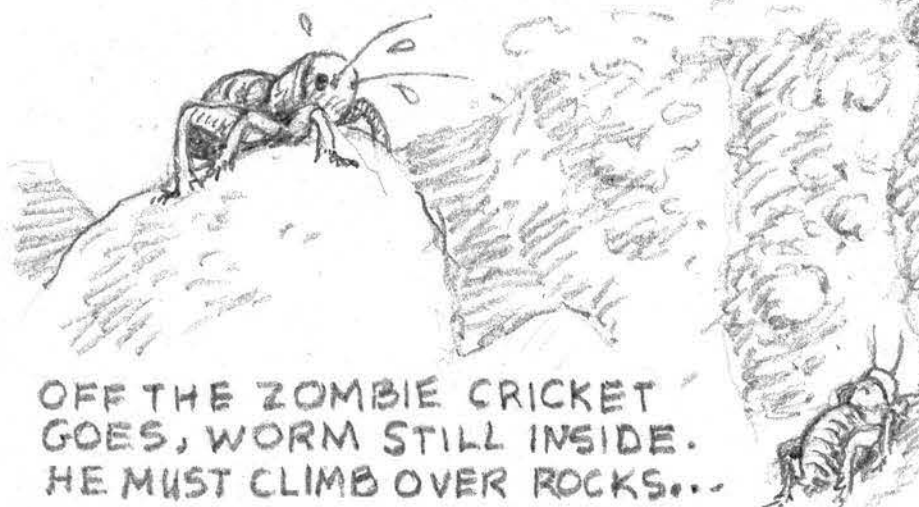
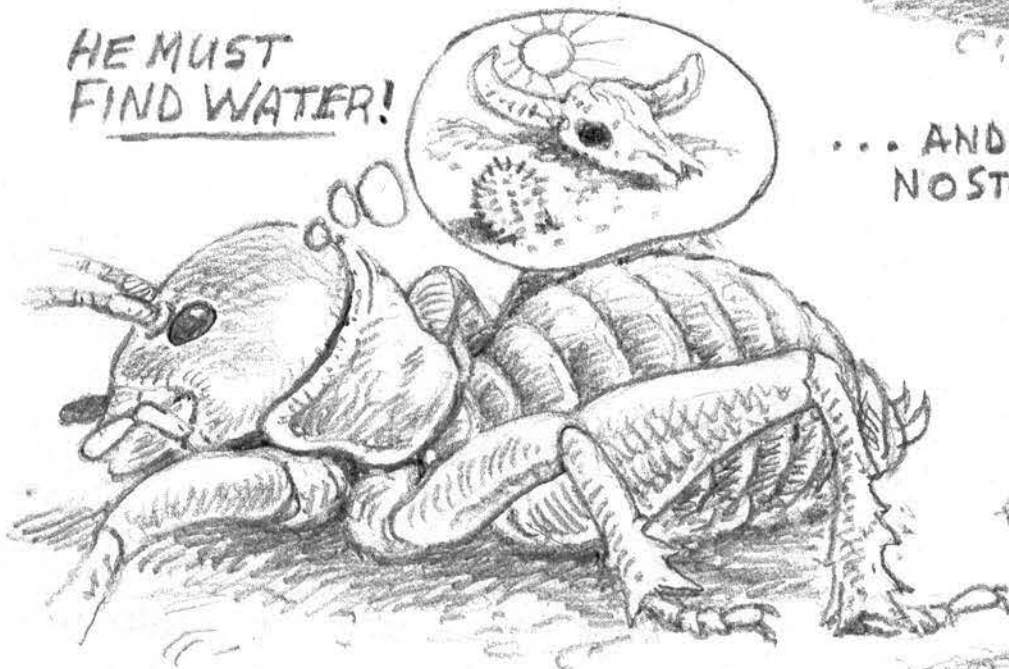
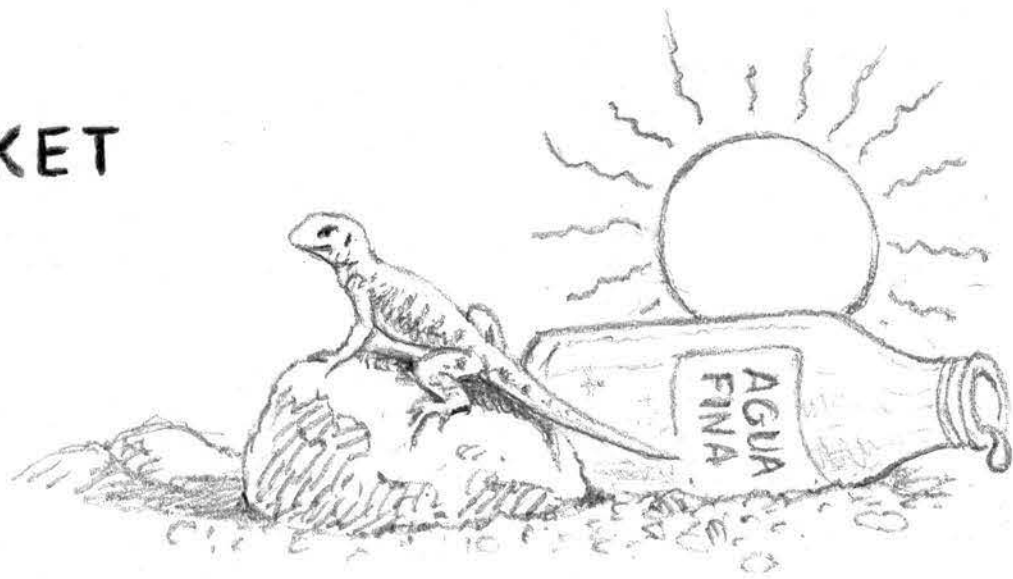
IT SOON FILLS THE JERUSALEM CRICKET'S BODY CAVITY. THE WORM IS GROWING RESTLESS AND NEEDS TO RETURN TO WATER.

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...



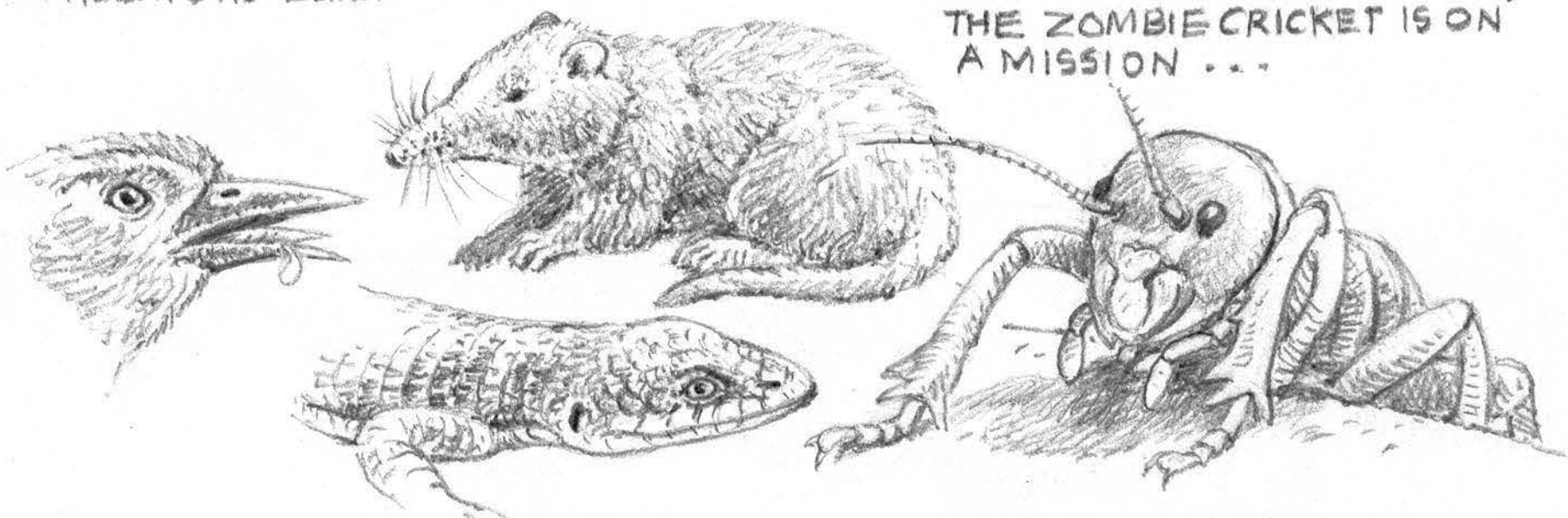
STRUGGLE THROUGH
FORESTS OF GRASS.



NAVIGATE CANYONS.

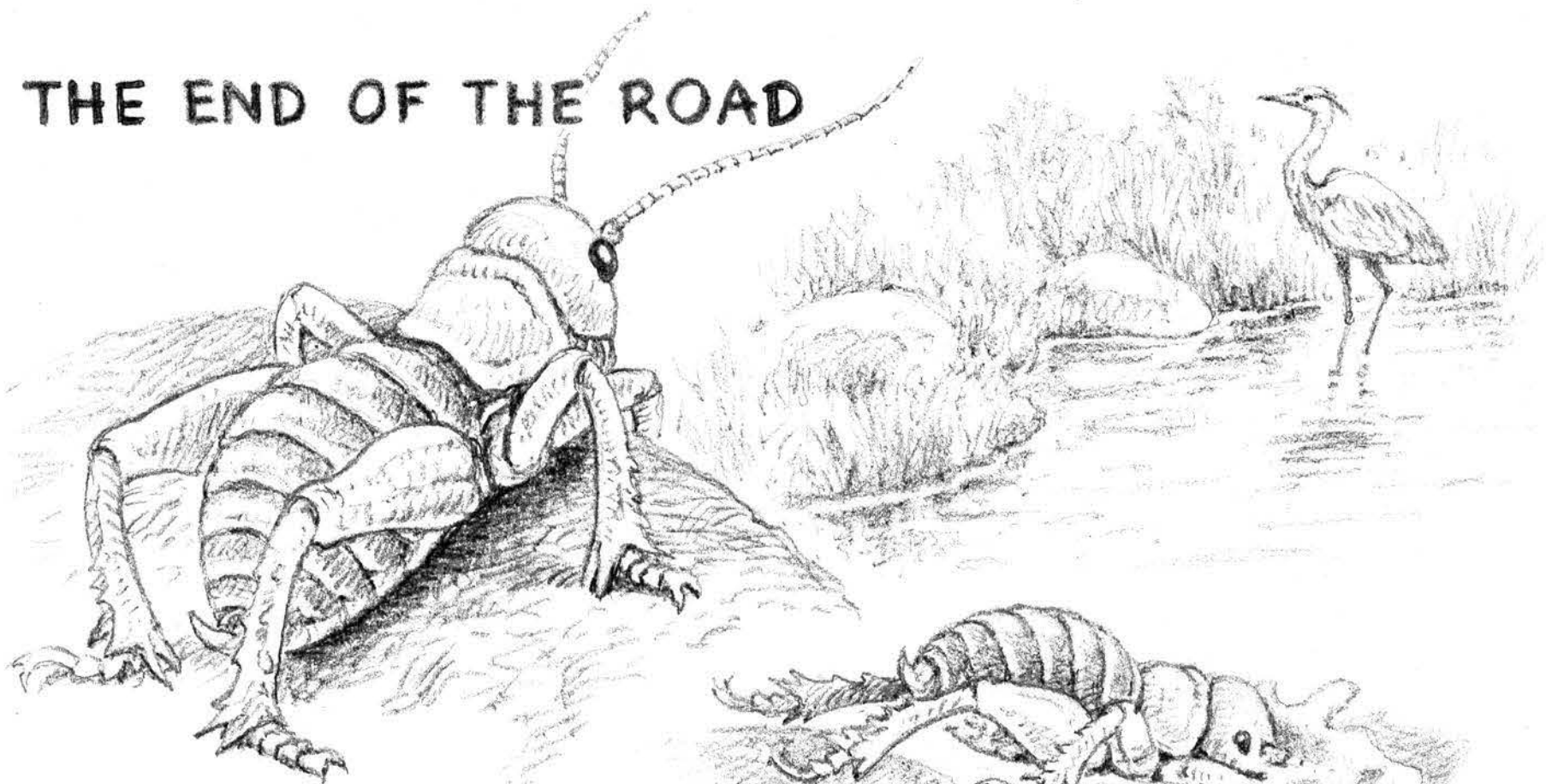
PREDATORS LURK.

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

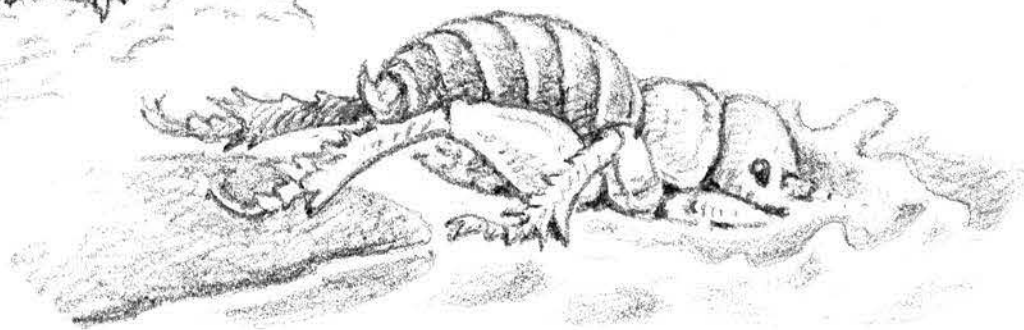


... AND MARCHES ON.

THE END OF THE ROAD



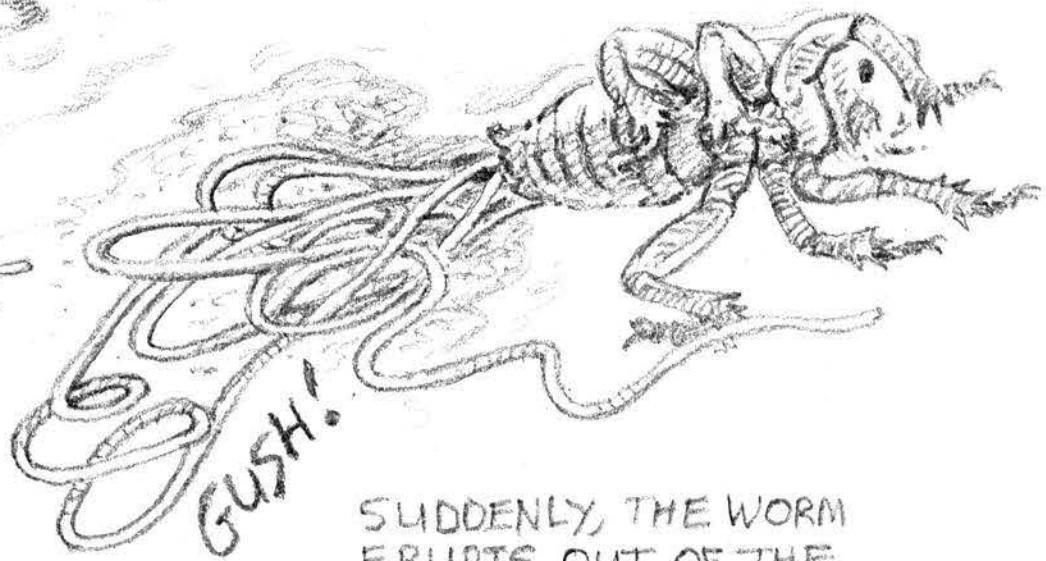
AT LAST HE HAS
FOUND WATER!



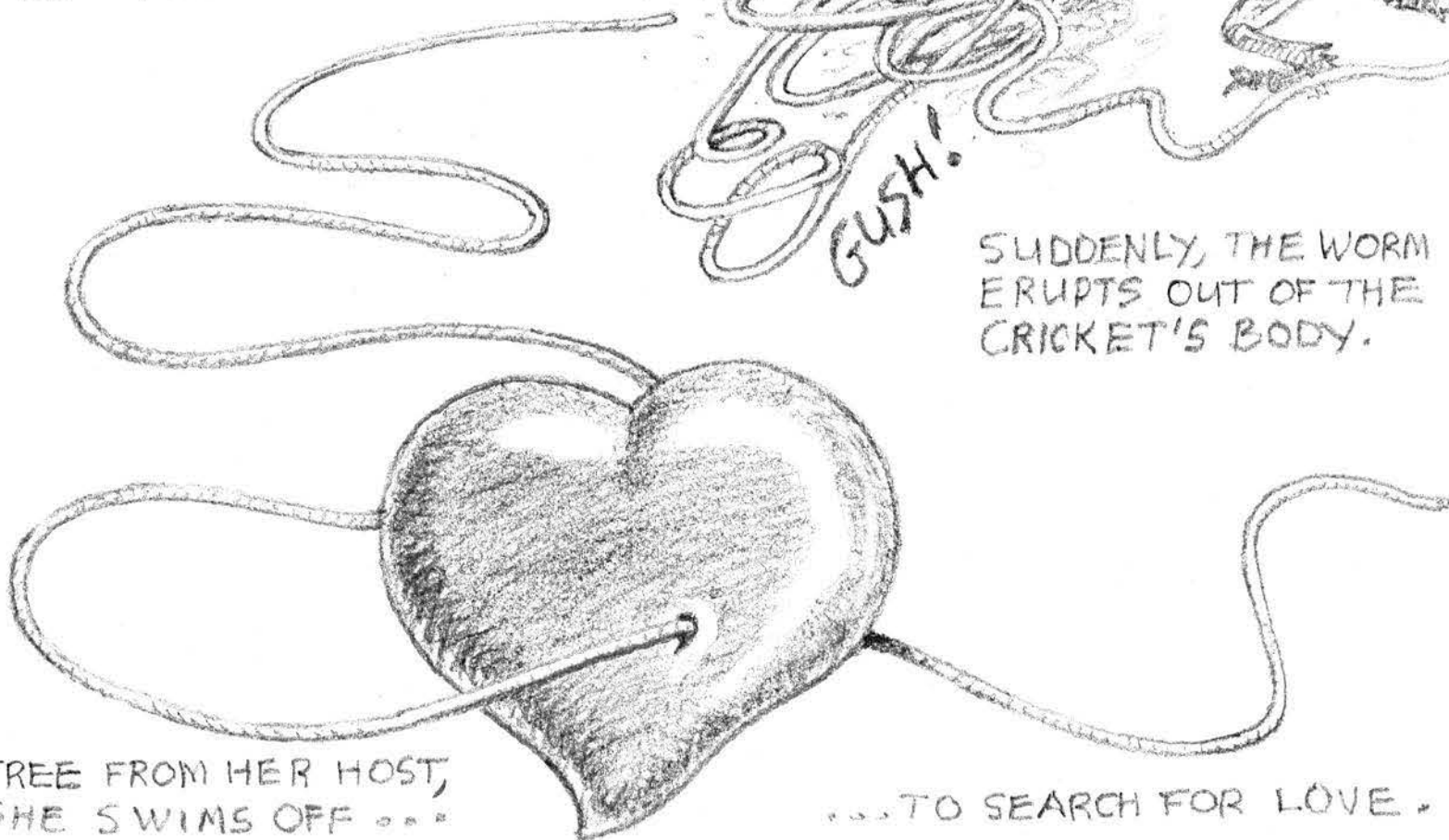
HE IS SO THIRSTY THAT
HE DIVES RIGHT IN.



WRIGGLING AND KICKING,
HE TRIES TO SWIM.

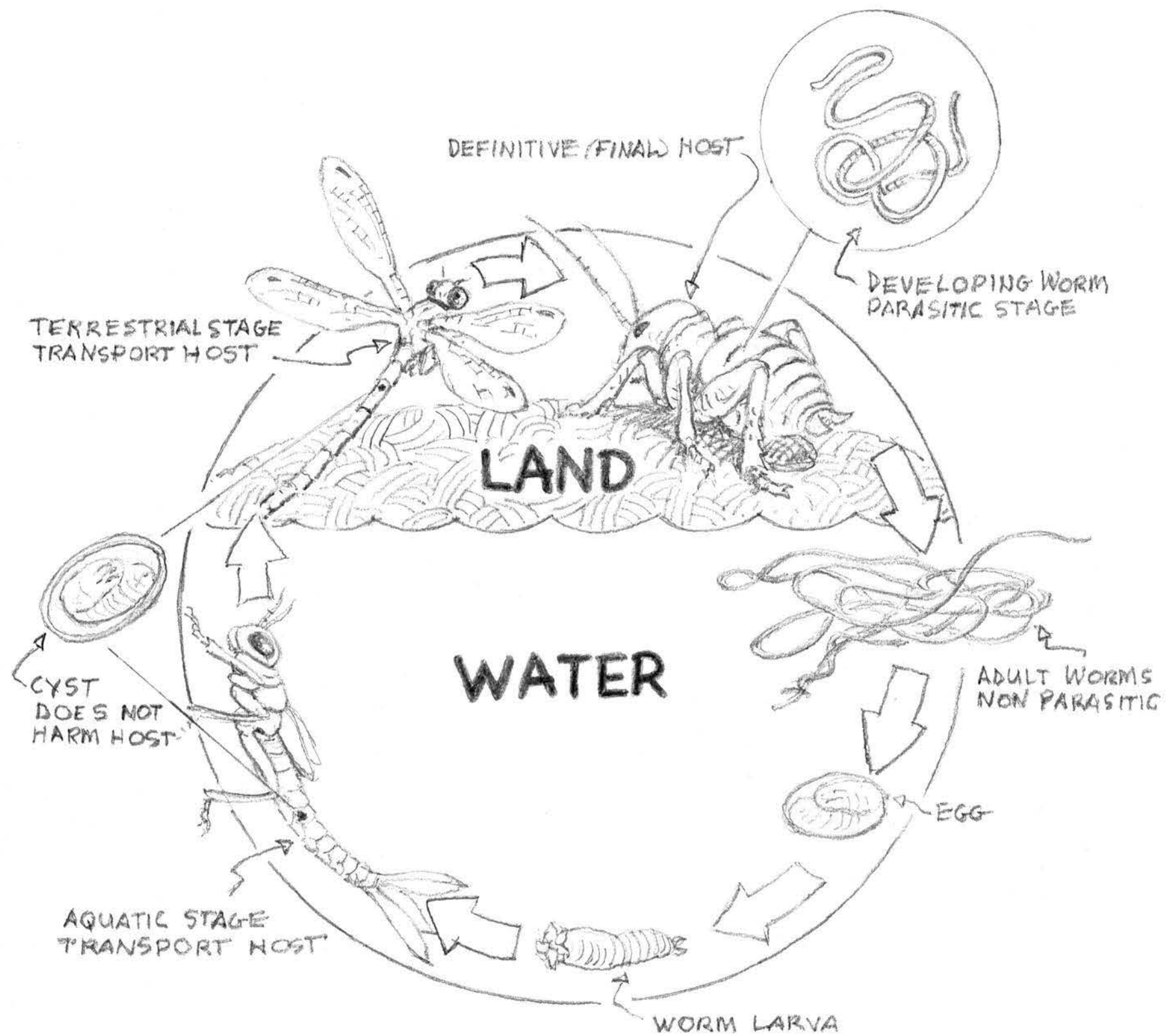


SUDDENLY, THE WORM
ERUPTS OUT OF THE
CRICKET'S BODY.



FREE FROM HER HOST,
SHE SWIMS OFF ...

... TO SEARCH FOR LOVE.



HORSEHAIR WORM LIFE CYCLE