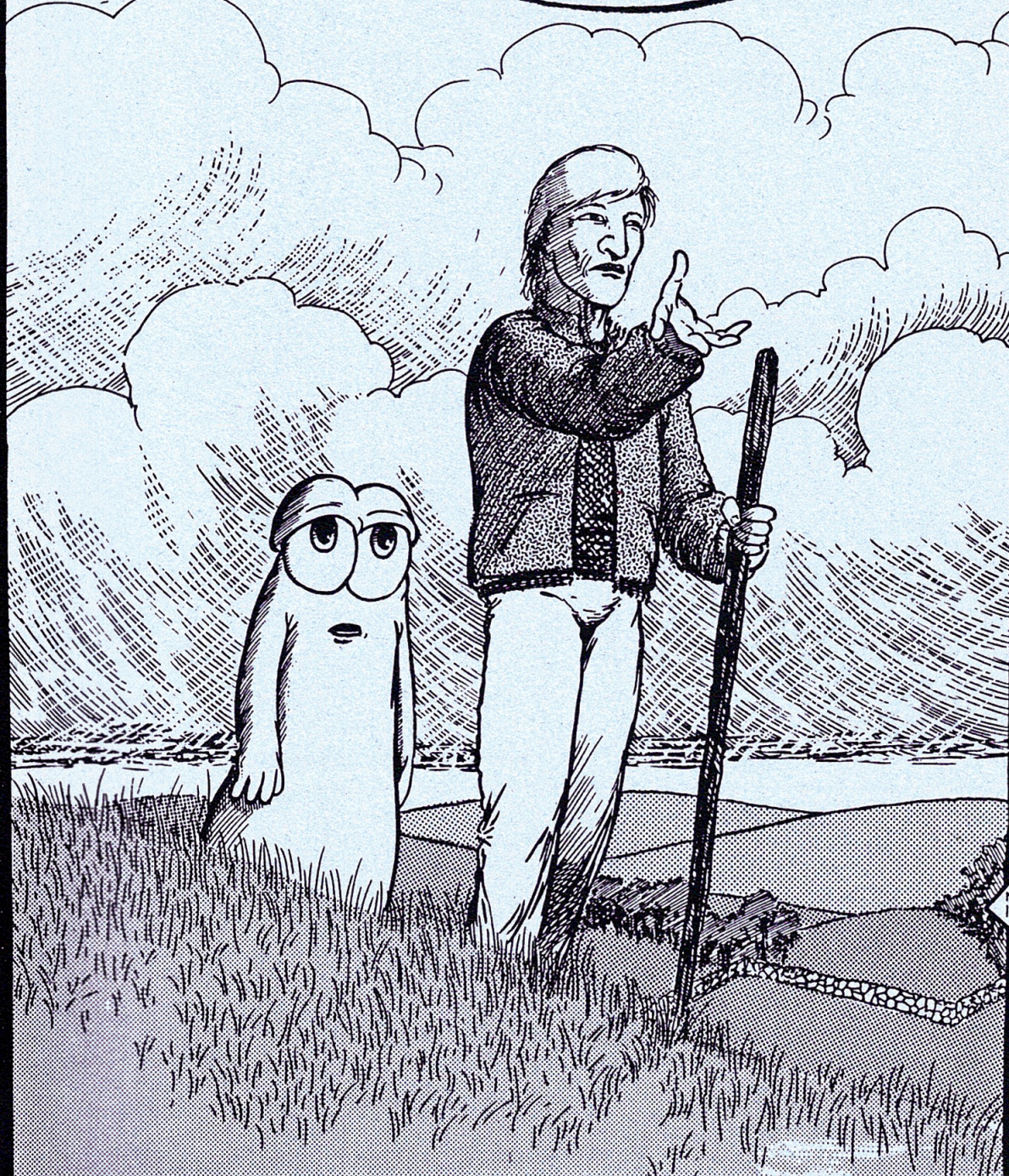


22  
MAY

# Amulet

ADVENTURES™



MAX 3  
INK 96

THE DARK AGES • 3 OF 8

PROTOPLASM PRESS • \$2.00 U.S. \$2.50 CAN • MAY 1996



## AMOEBA ADVENTURES #22

# THE DARK AGES

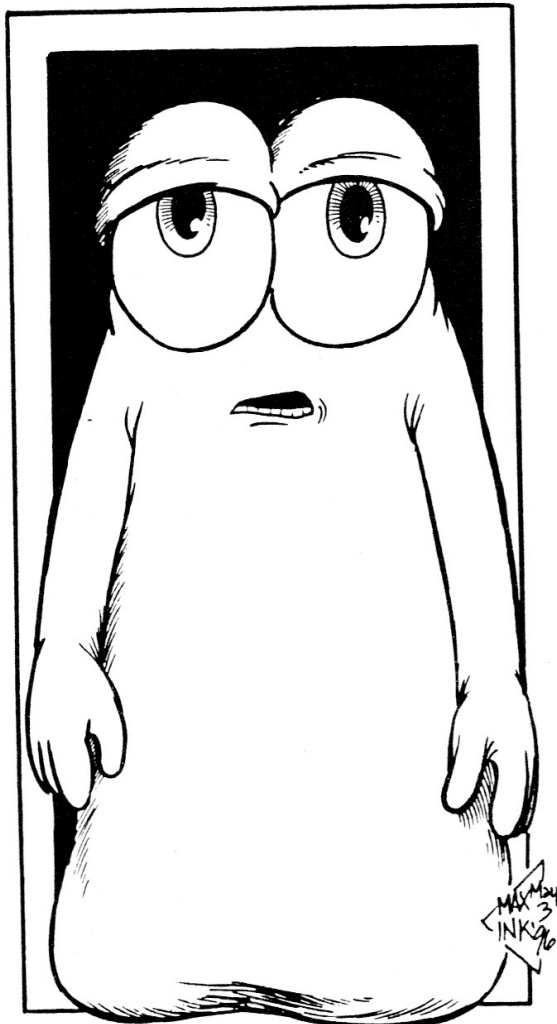
PART THREE:

# Truth.

Written and created by Nik Dirga

Pencils, inks and letters by Max Ink

*Cacography Consultant: Ann Bostic*



"He had been sent back so far before the beginning that it was worse than any end he could imagine."

—Paul Auster, *New York Trilogy*

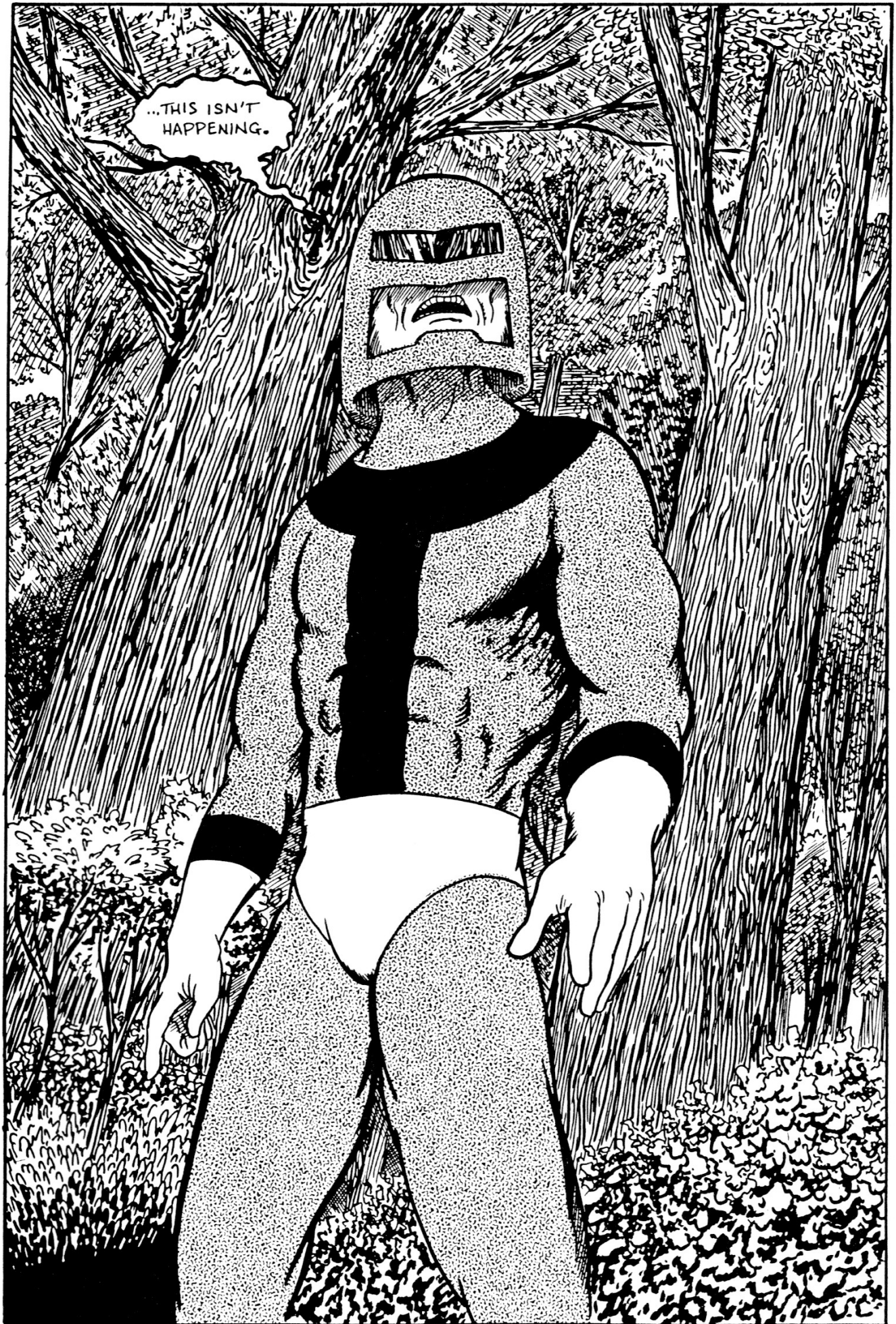
**Previously:** Prometheus has disappeared, spontaneously transforming into a helmeted superhuman before fading away in front of his girlfriend Dawn's eyes. The rest of the All-Spongy Squadron — Spif, Karate Kactus, Ninja Ant and Dawn — have embarked on a search for him, but their quest has been interrupted by assaults on them from the enigmatic Dark One, an incredibly powerful figure whose only goal seems to be the complete destruction of Prometheus and his friends. At the close of last issue, The Dark One's attack on Dawn left her near death. Meanwhile, Prometheus awakened to find himself confronted by a most familiar old foe...

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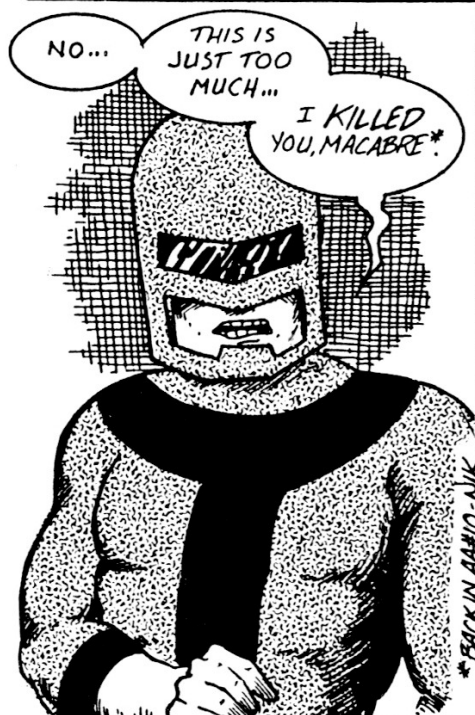


**Amoeba Adventures #22, May 1996.** Published every three months or so by Protoplasm Press, P.O. Box 2230, University MS 38677-2230. *Amoeba Adventures* and all characters herein are created by and ©1996 Nik Dirga; Artwork ©1996 Max Ink. All rights reserved; reproduction allowed for purposes of review only. Additional copies available for \$2.00 postpaid; \$2.50 for Canadian or foreign orders. Subscriptions to *Amoeba Adventures* are \$8 for four issues/\$10 in Canada. Please make *all* checks payable to Nik Dirga, not Protoplasm Press. Attention retailers: address all inquiries to Protoplasm Press c/o Max Ink, 276 Mainsail Drive, Westerville OH 43081-2741. Ohio address meant for retail and bulk orders only. Soundtrack for writing this issue: *Dog Days*, Blue Mountain; *Peel and See*, The Velvet Underground; *Trace*, Son Volt; *Pacer*, The Amps...

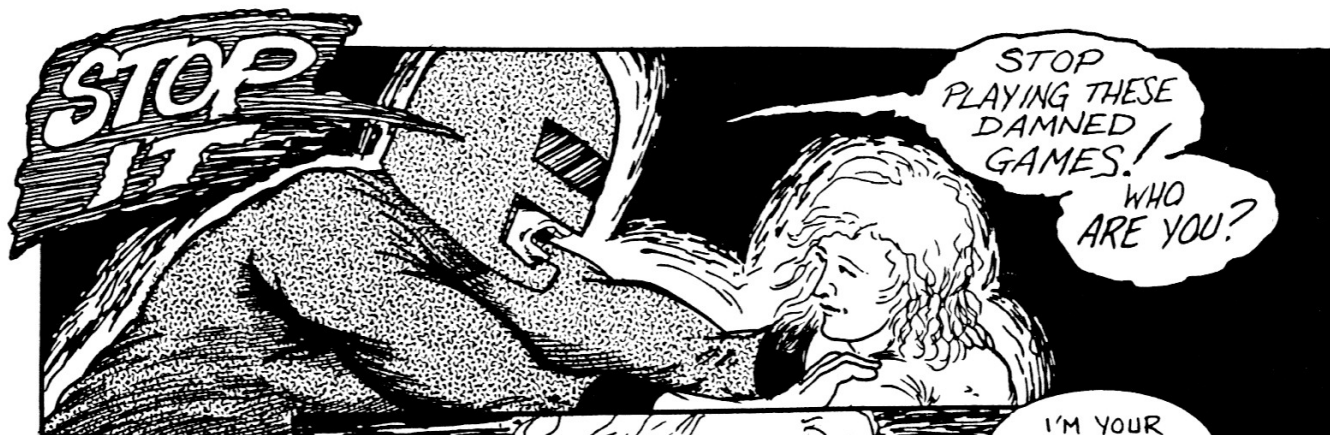












STOP  
IT

STOP  
PLAYING THESE  
DAMNED  
GAMES!

WHO  
ARE YOU?

I'M YOUR  
BEST FRIEND,  
PROMETHEUS.

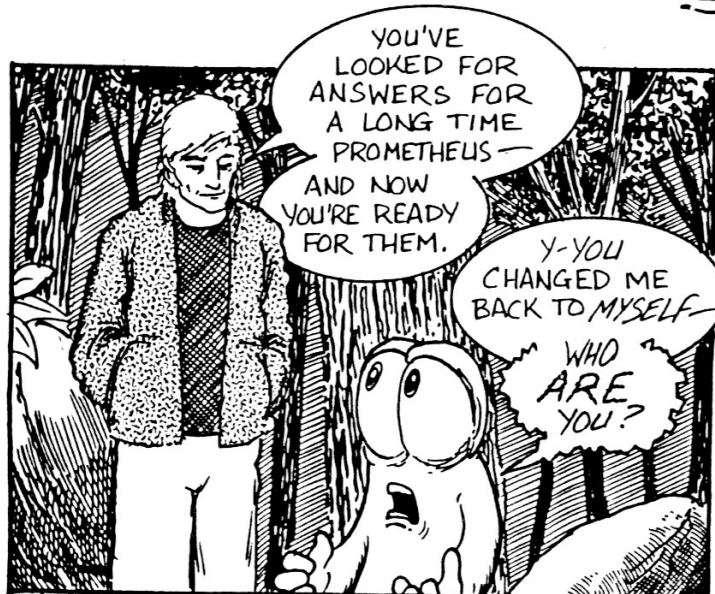


ALL  
RIGHT, THEN

LET'S  
DROP ALL THE  
MASKS AND  
SUBTERFUGE,

SHALL  
WE?

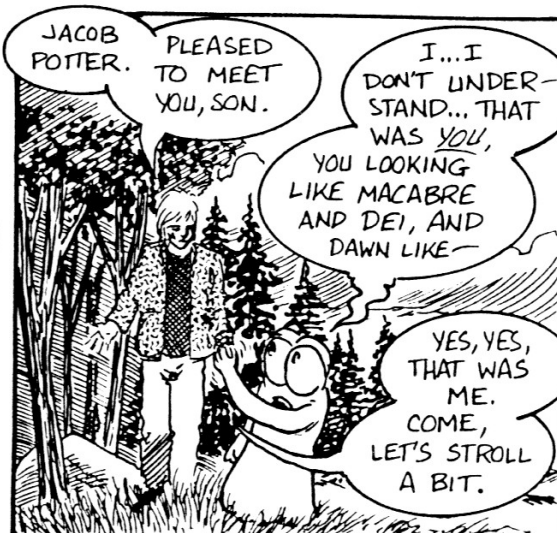
WHAT THE--



YOU'VE  
LOOKED FOR  
ANSWERS FOR  
A LONG TIME  
PROMETHEUS—  
AND NOW  
YOU'RE READY  
FOR THEM.

Y-YOU  
CHANGED ME  
BACK TO MYSELF—

WHO  
ARE  
YOU?



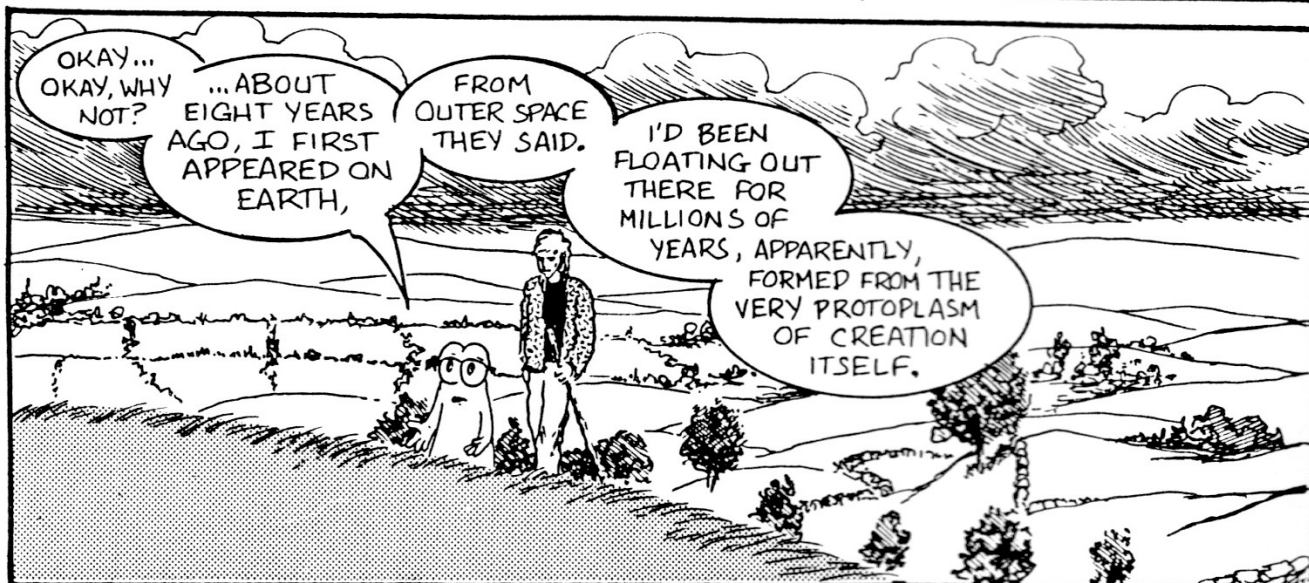
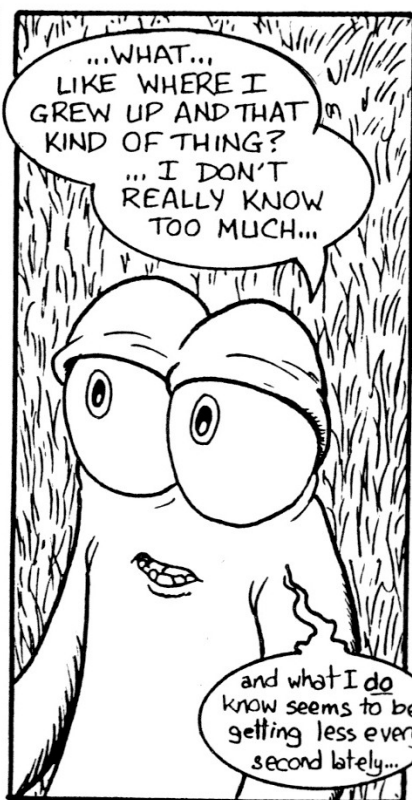
JACOB  
POTTER.

PLEASSED  
TO MEET  
YOU, SON.

I...I  
DON'T UNDER-  
STAND... THAT  
WAS YOU,  
YOU LOOKING  
LIKE MACABRE  
AND DEI, AND  
DAWN LIKE—

YES, YES,  
THAT WAS  
ME.  
COME,  
LET'S STROLL  
A BIT.









BUT  
I WASN'T  
ALONE...

THERE WAS  
THIS *OTHER*  
PROTOPLASM, A  
GIANT NAMED  
KRONOS—

TOTALLY  
EVIL, TOTALLY  
OPPOSITE  
OF ME.

FIGHTING  
KRONOS IS WHAT LED  
ME TO HOOK UP WITH  
RAMBUNNY AND  
SPIF AND THE  
REST...

GUYS  
LIKE KRONOS  
AND THE ASBESTOS  
MUSHROOM KEPT US  
PRETTY BUSY PLAYING  
SUPERHEROES.

BUT THEN  
EVERYTHING  
FELL APART  
...

I TURNED  
INTO THIS  
SUPERHUMAN, THE  
PROMETHEAN  
I CALLED MYSELF,  
AND THEN MET  
UP WITH THE INNER  
GODS. THEY SAID  
THEY CREATED ME,  
AND KRONOS TOO...  
SAID I WAS TO BE SOME GREAT CHAMPION  
IN SOME FUTURE WAR, SAID I WAS THEIR  
ONLY HOPE—THEY GAVE ME A THOUSAND  
QUESTIONS AND NO ANSWERS,  
AND THEN LEFT ME.

...AND I GUESS  
SINCE THEN, I'VE  
JUST BEEN MARKING  
TIME... KEPT ON  
BEING A SUPER-  
HERO, MET  
A WONDERFUL  
WOMAN, AND  
THE USUAL  
ADVENTURES  
...

BUT THERE'S  
ALWAYS BEEN THIS  
NAGGING QUESTION  
IN MY MIND.



AND  
THAT WOULD  
BE?

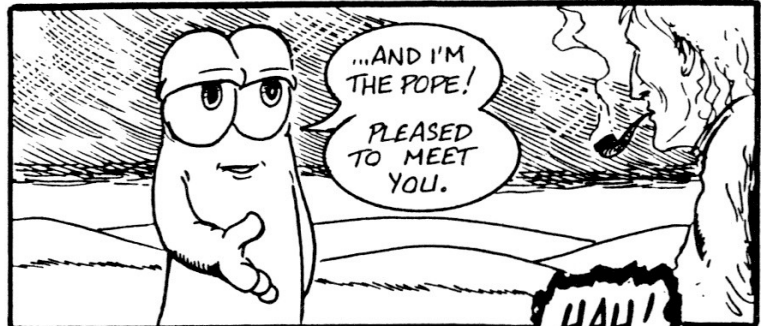
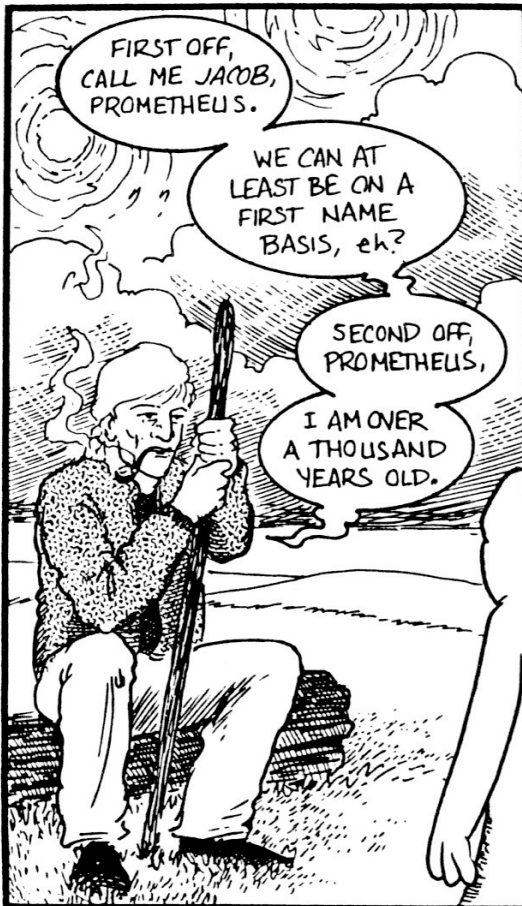
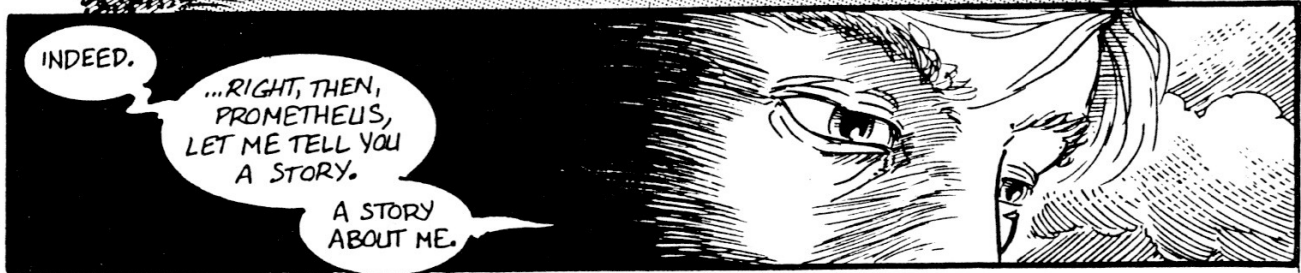
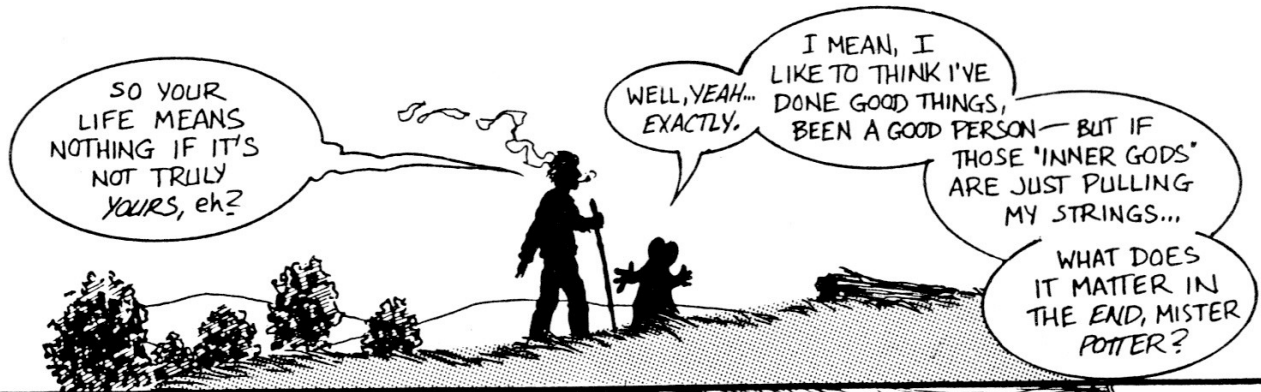
IT'S LIKE...  
IF WHAT THE  
INNER GODS TOLD  
ME IS *TRUE*,

THAT I'M  
JUST THEIR PAWN  
AND "CHAMPION",  
THEN  
DO I HAVE  
ANY CONTROL  
OVER MY FATE  
AT ALL?

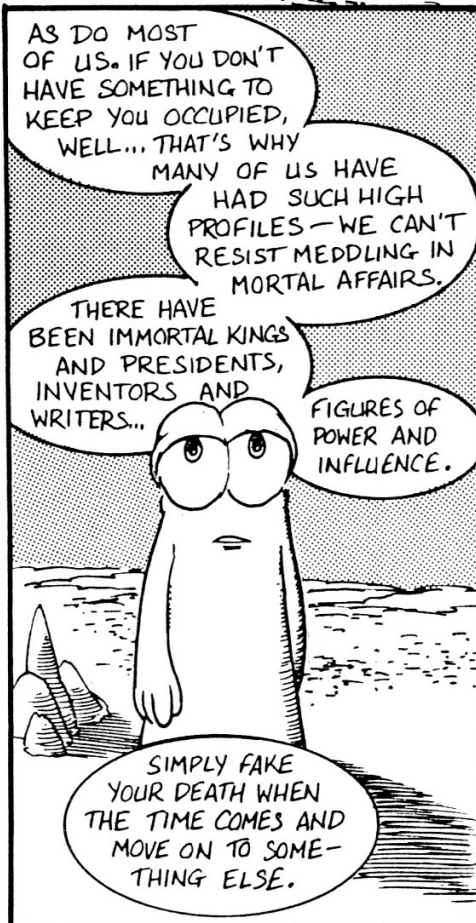
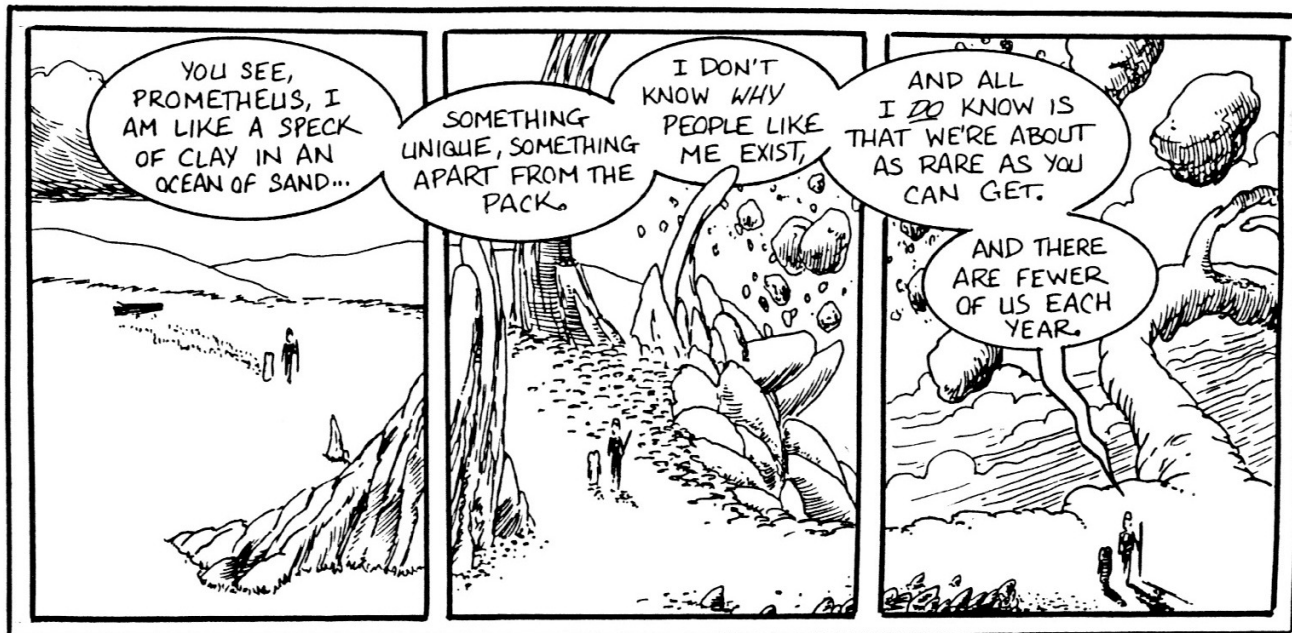
DO MY  
DECISIONS  
MEAN  
ANYTHING?

DOES MY  
LIFE MEAN  
ANYTHING?

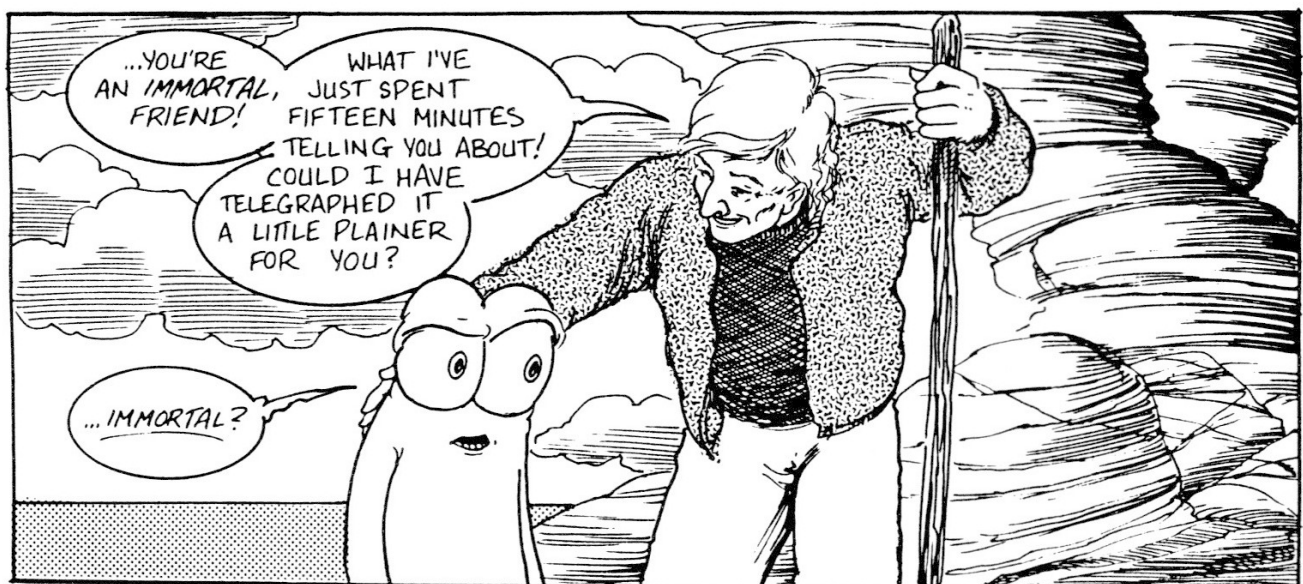
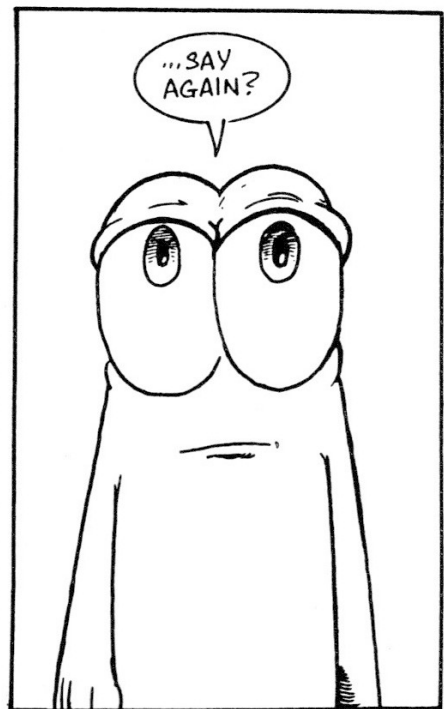
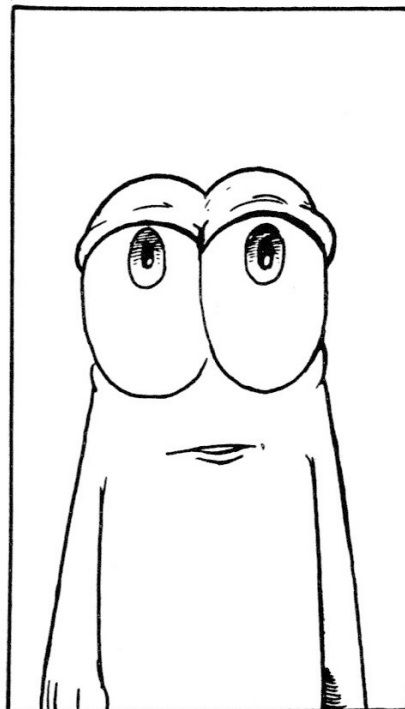
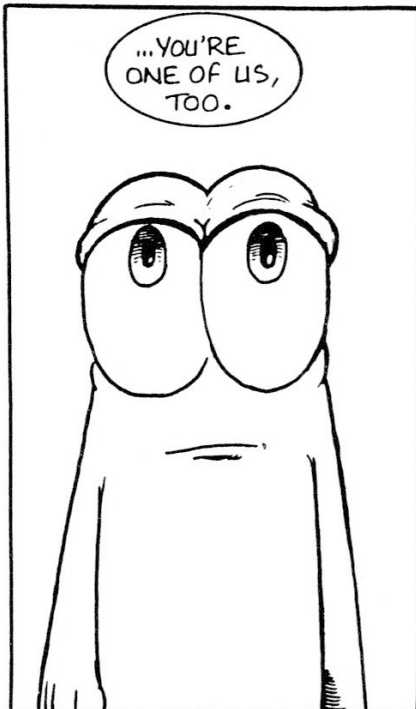
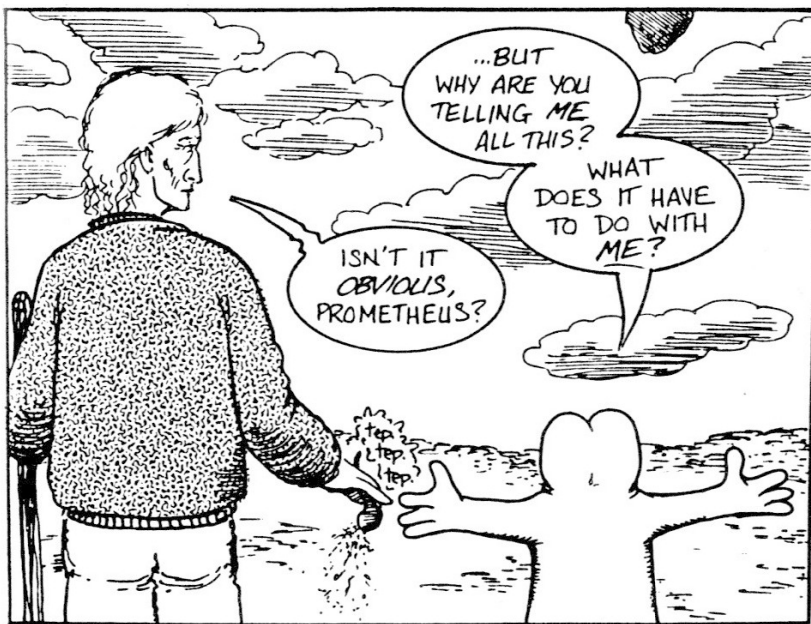






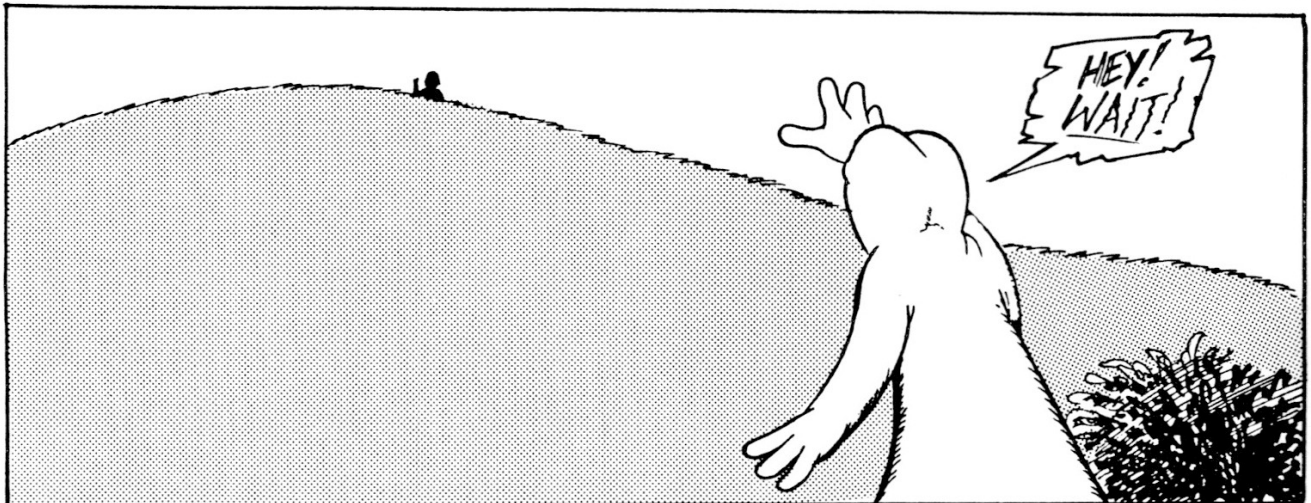
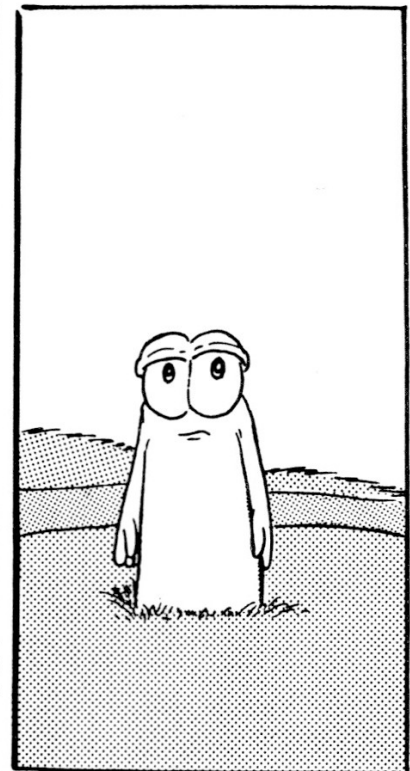
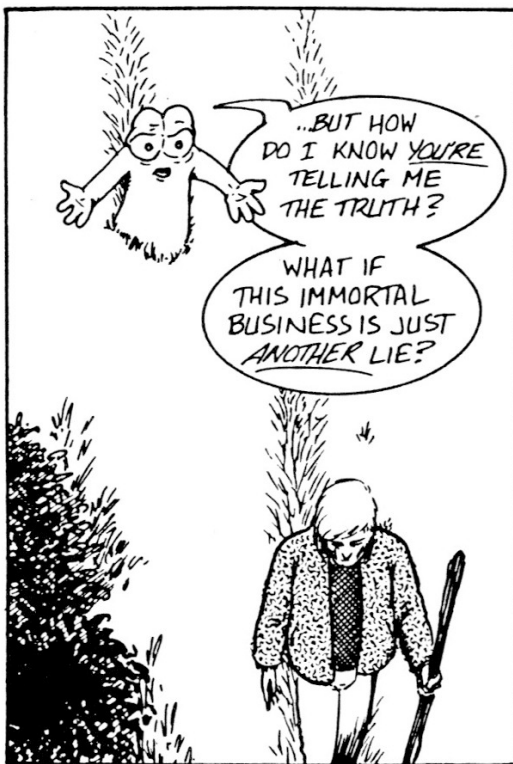
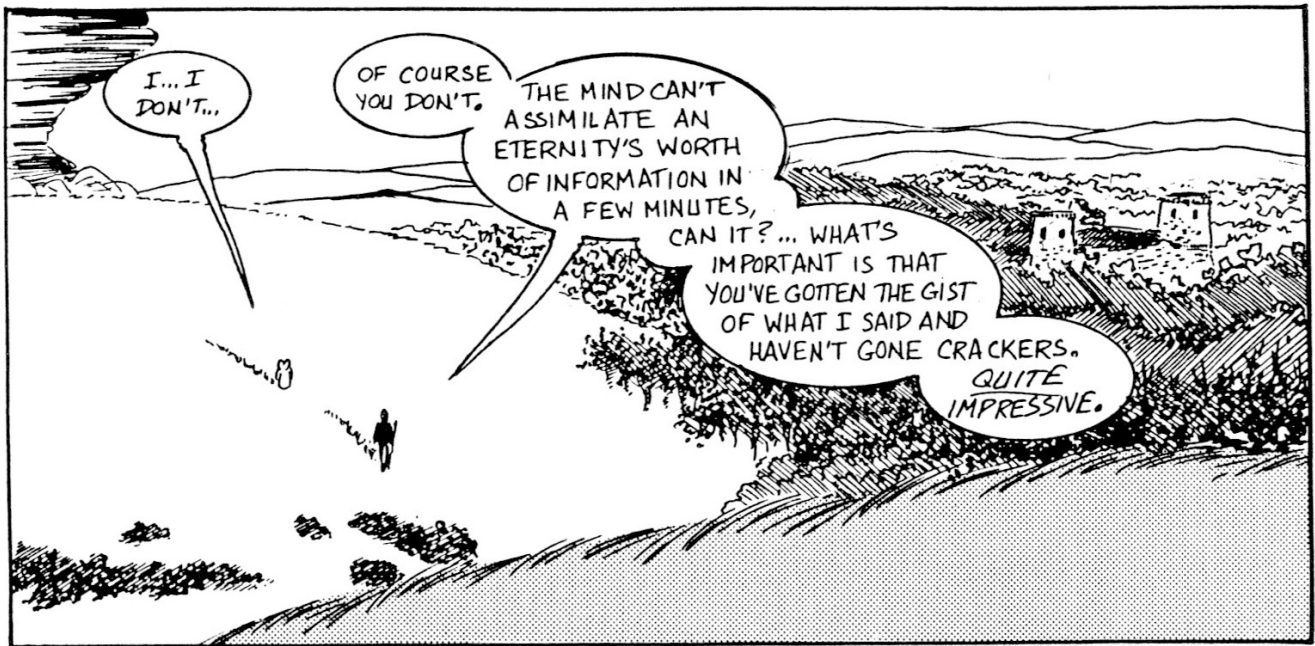




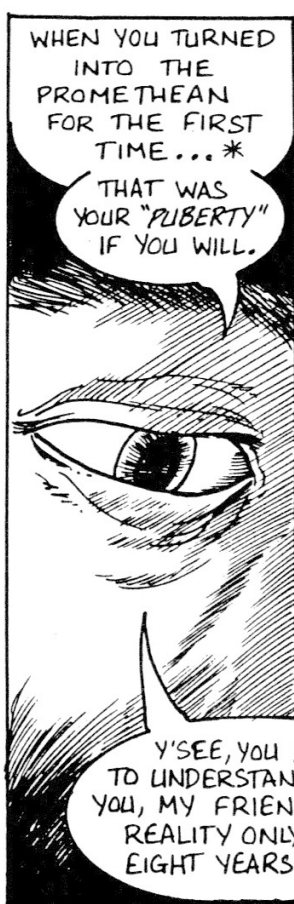
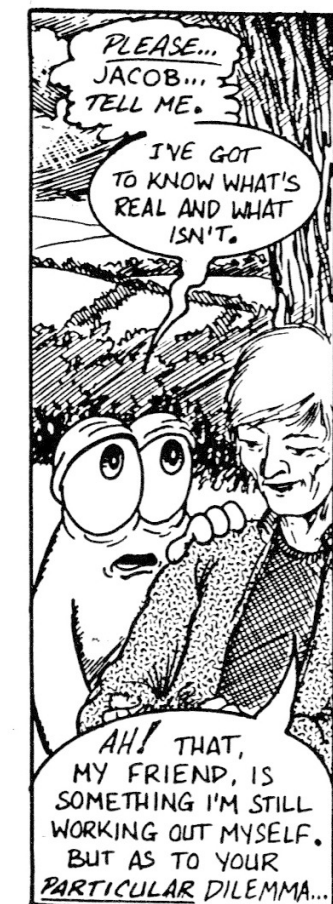














YES... ALL THAT INNER GODS BUSINESS WAS A RATHER ELABORATE CHARADE ON MY PART.



SO I MANIFESTED MYSELF TO YOU.

BUT... WHY? WHY THE LIES? WHY NOT JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME NOW?



...PARTLY MY UNFORTUNATE TENDENCY FOR THE THEATRIC,

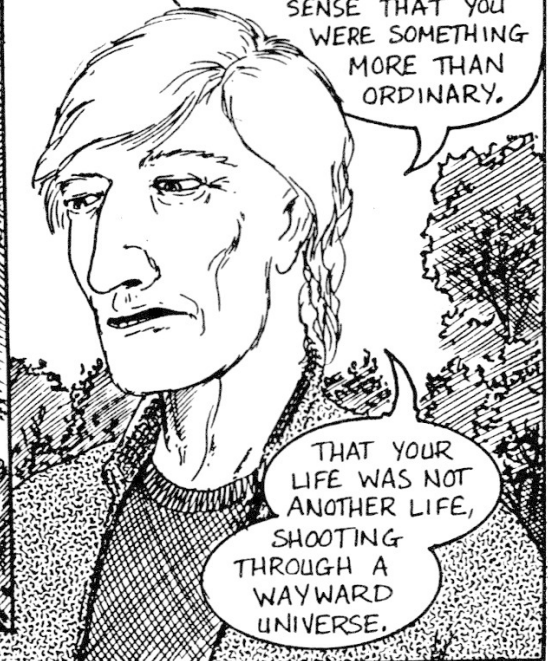
...BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T HAVE HANDLED IT.



AND PLEASE DON'T TAKE OFFENSE AT THIS, FRIEND..

PARTLY BECAUSE,

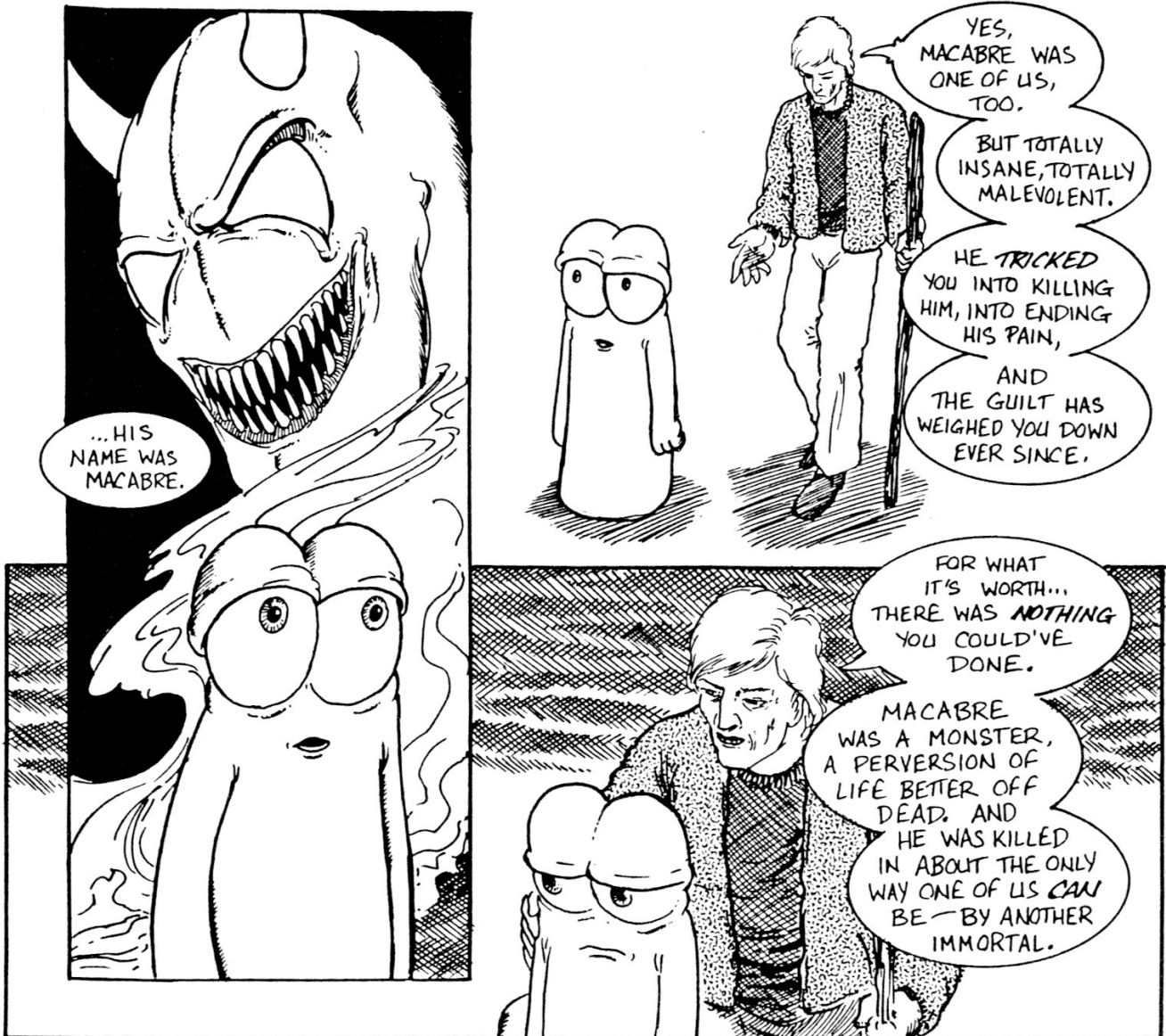
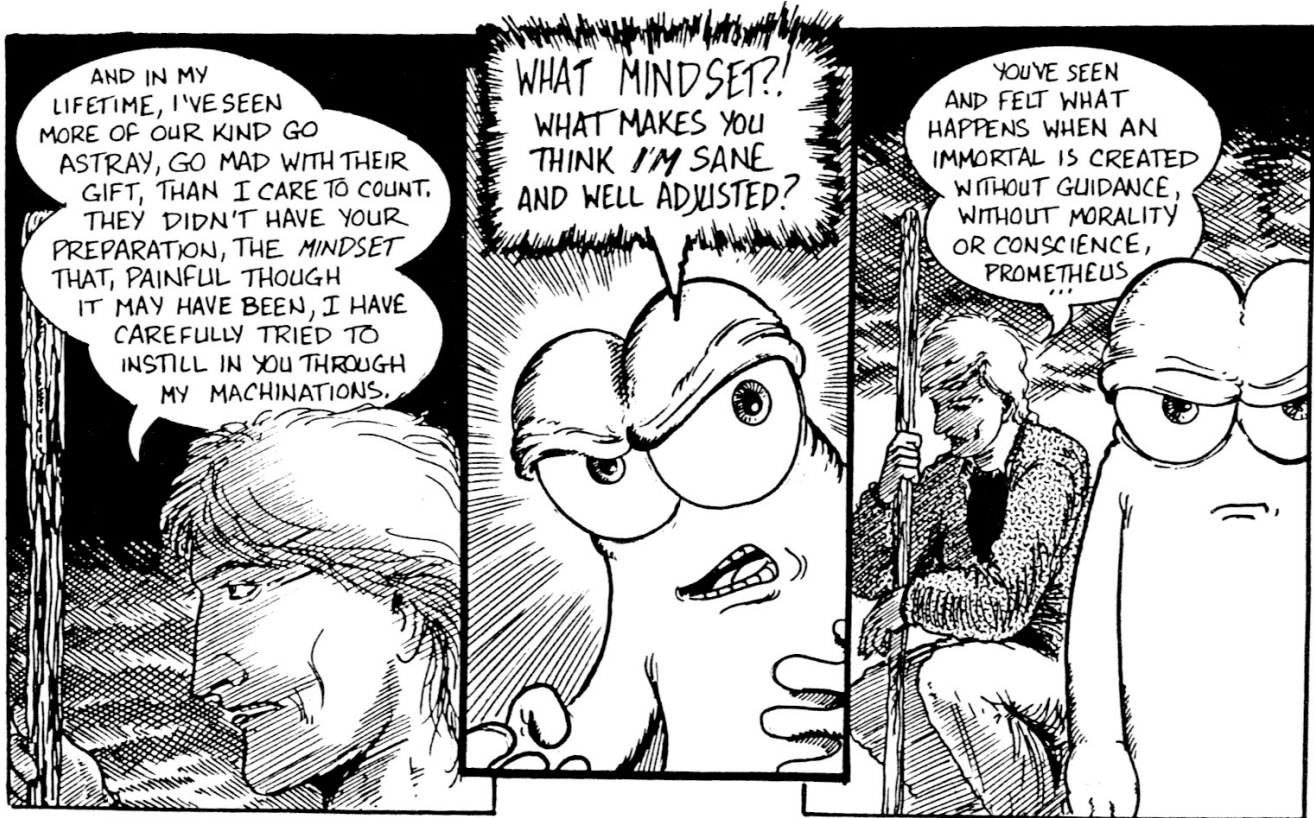
THE WHOLE "INNER GODS" BUSINESS WAS MY ATTEMPT TO INSTILL WITHIN YOU A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY, A SENSE THAT YOU WERE SOMETHING MORE THAN ORDINARY.



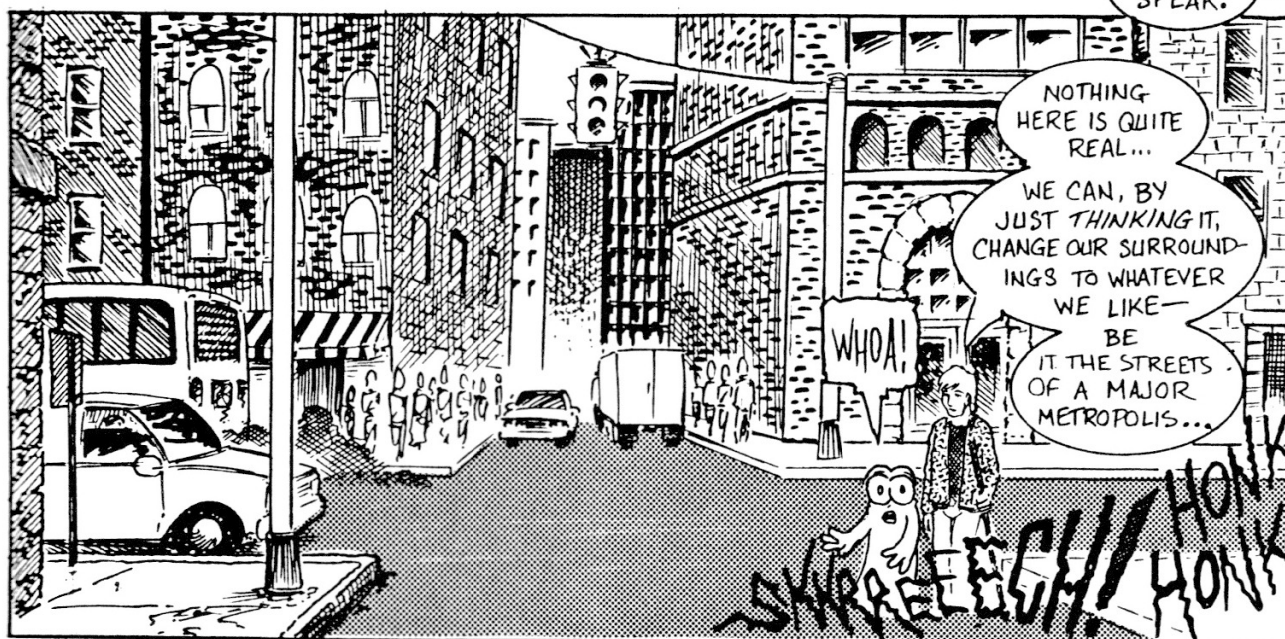
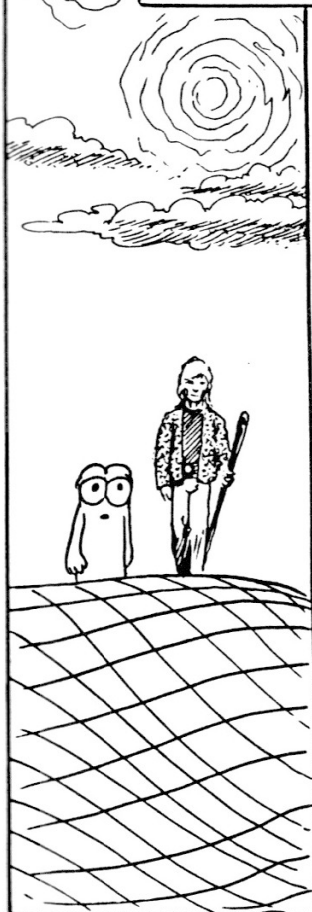
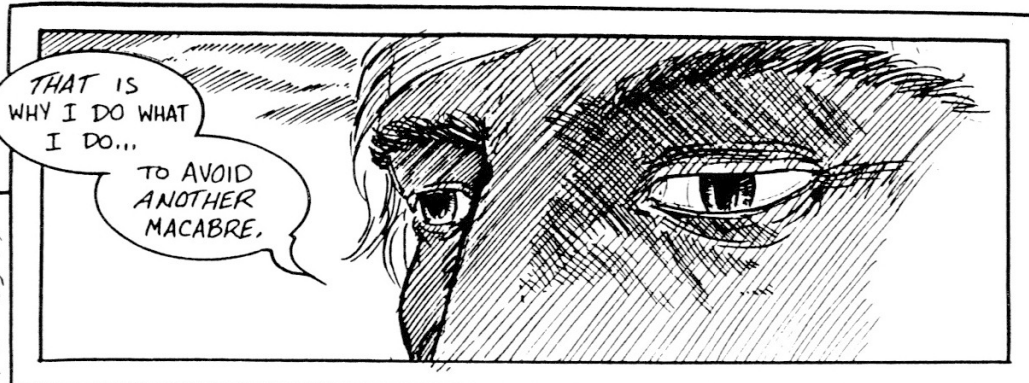
THAT YOUR LIFE WAS NOT ANOTHER LIFE, SHOOTING THROUGH A WAYWARD UNIVERSE.

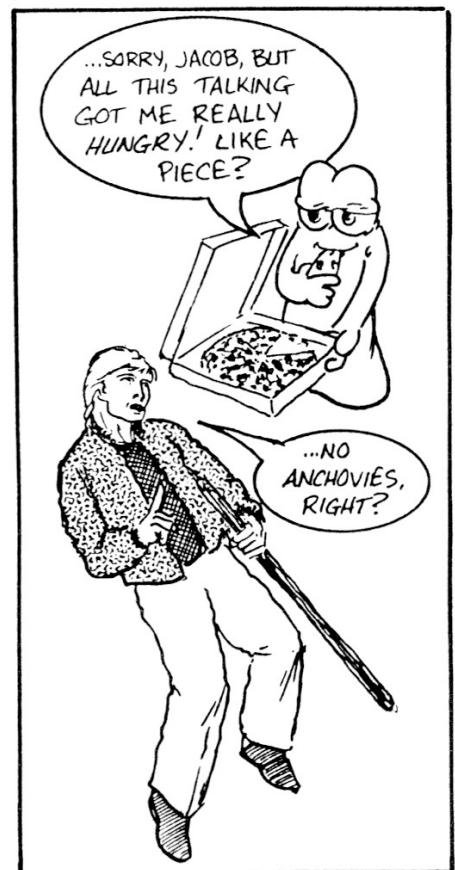
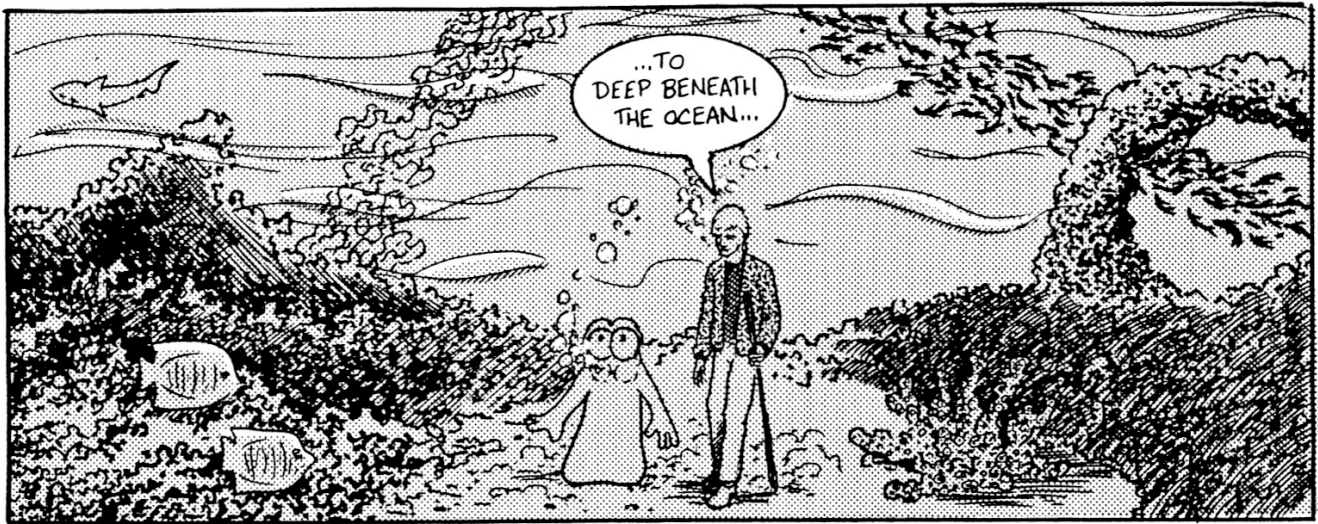




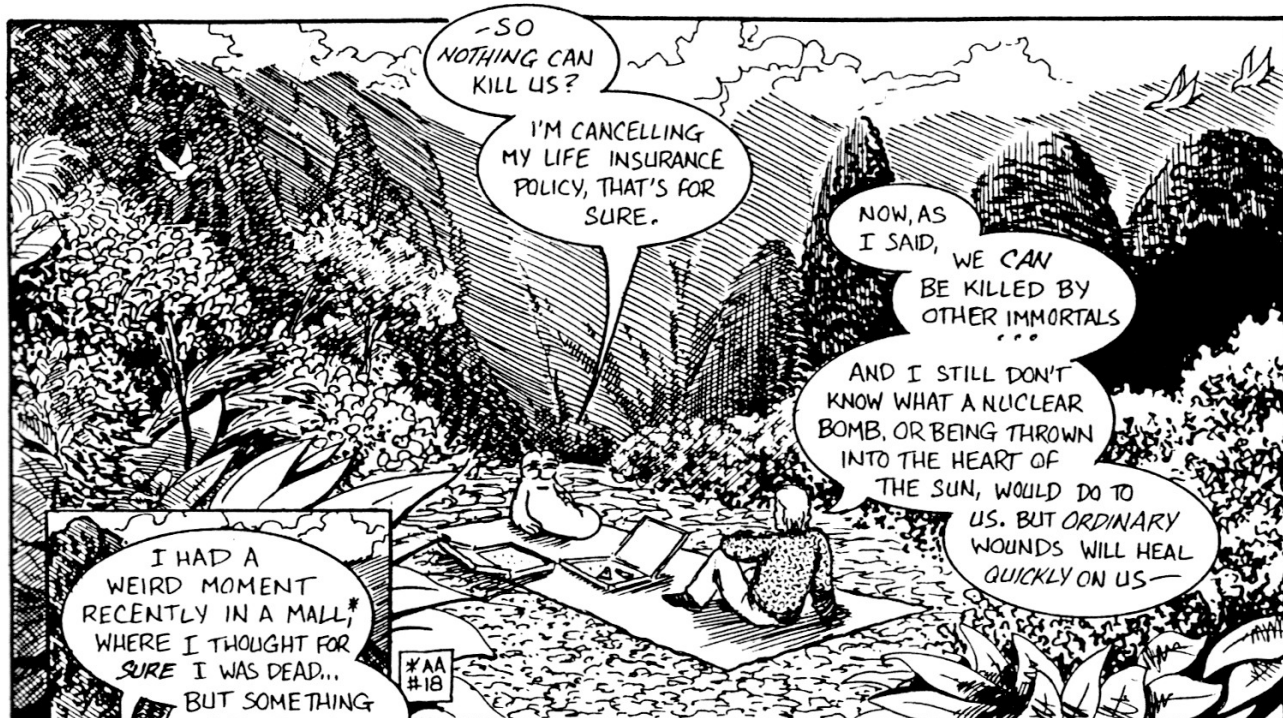












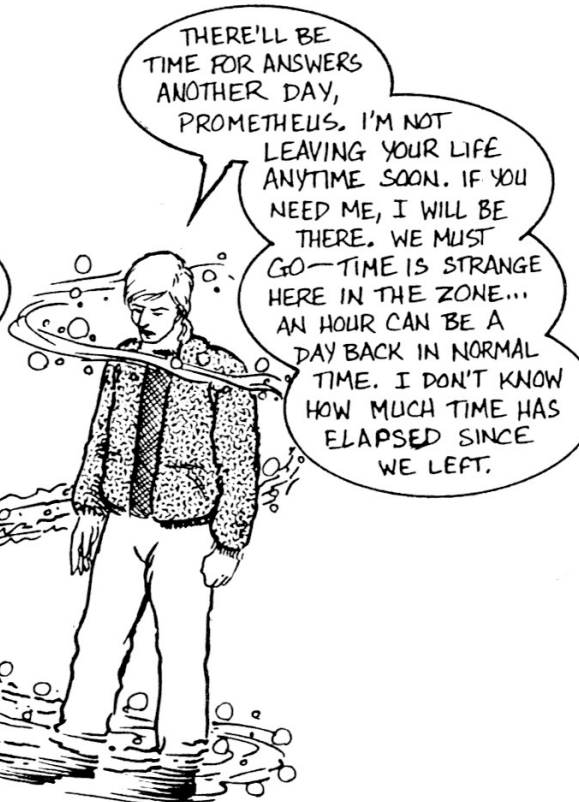
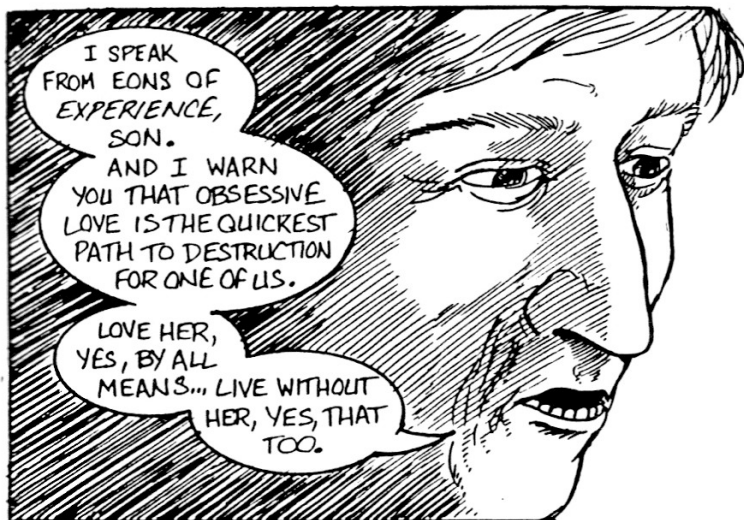
I DON'T KNOW WHAT, THOUGH...

MMPH... THAT SOUNDS LIKE YOU SUFFERED A MORTAL WOUND, AND WERE REGENERATED... HAPPENED TO ME MANY A TIME. HURTS LIKE THE DEVIL, OF COURSE, BUT LEFT ME NONE THE WORSE FOR THE WEAR.











WE'LL MEET  
AGAIN SOON,  
PROMETHEUS.

UNTIL  
THEN, BE  
CAREFUL.

BE  
COURAGEOUS.



BE  
STRONG.



GAH



...I'M NEVER  
GONNA GET USED  
TO THAT...

WHO'S  
THAT?



PROMETHEUS?!

-SPIF!

OH MAN, I CAN'T  
BELIEVE IT! I'VE  
GOT SO MUCH TO  
TELL YOU,  
IT'S AMAZING...

WHAT  
IS IT?



IT'S ALL  
OVER, PRO.

IT'S ALL  
OVER.



**NEXT: MALICE**



## the slimeball speaks

This one comes to you a little sooner than our last did — no gigantic crowd scenes written by a tyrannical writer for a struggling artist to draw. It's rather a change of pace from our normal densely-layered, hundred-things-going-on-at-once type stories... I hope you enjoyed it! "Truth" in many ways marks the culmination of a direction I've been heading with Prometheus's character since 1986 or so — ten years now! Good lord, I need a life...

• • •

Our back cover artist this time out is the famed Stan Sakai, creator of *Usagi Yojimbo*! Stan is renowned for his detailed, meticulous art and great storytelling — it's a real honor and pleasure to have him on our back cover this issue. Check out *Usagi Yojimbo* if you haven't: it's currently published by Mirage Comics.

• • •

Thanks to my cohorts in the United Fanzine Organization, who voted *Amoeba Adventures* as Best Overall Publication for the second year in a row in the 1996 UFO Awards. We also won Best Artist (Max

Ink, of course), Best Editor, and everyone's favorite rampaging rabbit Rambunny tied with Denny Stephens's soon-to-be-infamous F-Man for Best Male Character. Max and I thank everyone who voted for us and congratulations to all the other winners!

• • •

Finally, an update on the Eric Hampton murder case. For those who don't know, Eric was a talented small press creator of comics including *Kari & The Pirate* who was mugged and killed in his hometown of Minneapolis last February (I wrote about it here in AA #17). Rick Howe's excellent small press commentary 'zine *Topical Studies* has done a report on what's happened since: unfortunately, the MPD has arrested no one, though Public Information Officer Penny Parrish reports that "the detectives have not given up the case." A candlelight vigil was also held by Eric's fiancée Kammy and friends on the one year anniversary of his death. Rick promises further updates on the case as they become available. *Topical Studies*, always some of the best reading in the alternative press, is available for \$2 or so from Rick at 1302 22nd St., Apt. A, Columbus, GA 31901.

- @, N, K, J, R, G, A.!

# Amoebamail!

PO Box 2230  
University MS 38677



Larry Blake  
69306 St. Rt. 124  
Reedsville, Ohio 45772

Thanks for sending the copy of *Amoeba Adventures* #21! I really liked the individual characters' reactions to the disappearing Prometheus! Clearly defined personalities. The crowd scenes at the party were great. Max is amazing. I spent minutes looking for Nightstar — but sadly only found Waldo. \*Sob!\*

I can't yet imagine what this whole storyline is leading up to — but it sure is fun getting there. Geez — did Apu survive the destruction of the Quik-E-Mart? Bet no one will be drinking any Flaming Moes in that neighborhood for a while.

Bill Messner-Loebs's back cover was a

kick. I was a big *Journey* fan — but hadn't a clue what he's up to these days. Glad to see he's still around.

(Bill Loebs is winning some big accolades on his writing for *Thor* these days, for one o' them big comic companies somewheres...)

Avril Siddell  
Auckland, New Zealand

Thanks for the comics you sent me. *The Fifth Anniversary Special* filled in a lot of gaps for me; the little biographies were a big help. #20 and #21 are great as usual. Mitsu even got the Cantina Band to play at the party! I'm impressed!

**Peter Hopkins**  
418 S. 20th St., Apt. #6  
Louisville, Kentucky 40203-1500

When I read Mitsu was going to have a party I thought he was being ludicrous with Prometheus missing. I'm wondering, Nik, when is the Squadron (or what's left) going to come together? The Dark One is just picking them off — he or she has got their act together because it looks like he will get all of them before they get serious about this...

So Rambunny survived? Boy, he's tougher than that pink one with the drums...

I think the Dark One might just be a pawn itself, perhaps of Macabre (hey, isn't he dead?) or the Inner Gods... then again I'll just read on and see what else you and Max have up your sleeve.

(Thanks for your highly long and cool letter, Pete, sorry I couldn't run it all... but one question: who the *hell* is "the pink one with the drums"?)

**Michael Neno**  
P.O. Box 151303  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

I just read *Amoeba Adventures* #20 and #21; a most enjoyable read, and I'm impressed. These issues had *more*; more suspense, more intrigue, even more better art by the ever-prolific Mr. Ink (all right, so it's not grammatical). I especially appreciated #20 being all one continuous sequence; cinematic and very effective. Can't wait to see #22. Oh, the silent panels in #21 were also very effective. One sign of a good writer is: he knows when not to "write" anything (Roy Thomas, are you listening?).

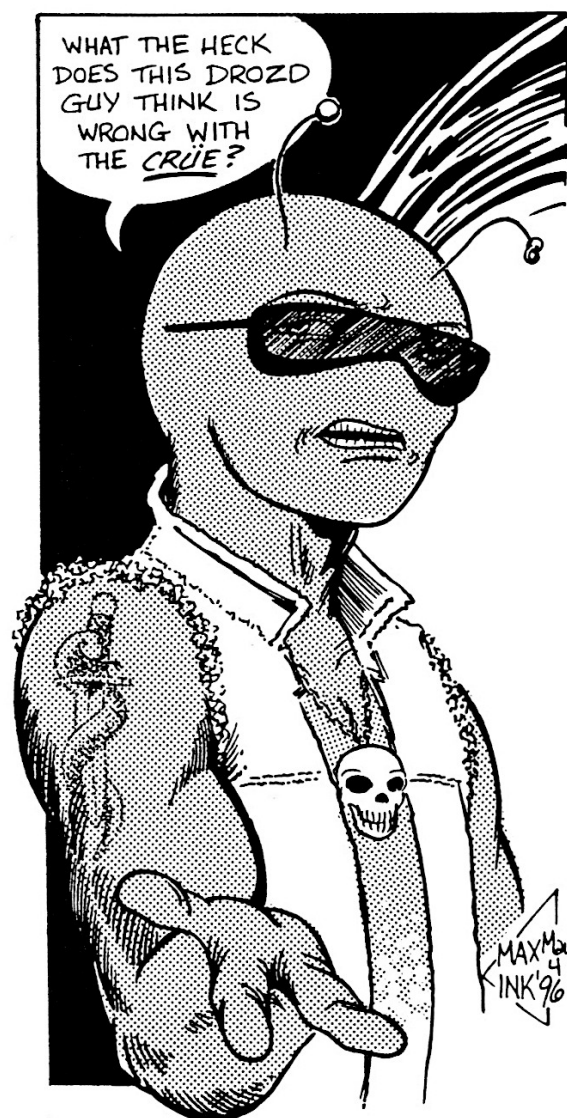
**Jerzy Drozd**  
P.O. Box 221  
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48804

*Amoeba Adventures* #21 was very good. A good writer always surprises his/her readers, and this was the case. The *last* thing I expected after Rambunny's "death" and Pro's disappearance was a *party*! But, as in every good story, when Mitsu suggests it, it only makes sense (from Mitsu's point of view, anyway).

The next surprise was The Dark One's appearance at the convenience store (although the beer falling to the ground and smashing was a bit much, don't you think?). Again, fluid scripting, keeping The Dark One's words cryptic and short. I'm so tired of fight scenes that have conversations! (The worst of all I think was the fight scene where Northstar [of *Alpha Flight*] reveals he's a homosexual — yeah, the first thing I wanna do in a fight is discuss my sexuality!)

The dialogue was excellent. The Dark One spouted a speech in #20 very much like the kinds I tried to plan for every jock who snapped me with a towel in junior high.

Ninja Ant is reminding more and more of the kind of guy who thinks having an earring is real cool, having a tattoo of a knife with a snake wrapped around it is tough, and Motley Crüe are the best band next to Anthrax. Take that as you will.





**Troy Hickman**  
3200 S. 9th St. Apt. A  
Lafayette, Indiana 47905

Hiya! Hey, thanks mightily for AA #21. It was a swell issue, perfectly merging the change of pace that the party presented with the continuing build up of "The Dark Ages." Lots of great stuff to dig in this issue: Spif's dedication to finding Pro, Max's incredible crowd scenes (thanks for including my motley crew, by the way), that very familiar-looking doctor, the big fight scene (Max draws great explosions), the lovingly rendered forest scene, and on and on. As with every issue of this title, I thoroughly enjoyed myself from cover to cover, and that's really what we should ask of every comic book.

I'm going nuts, though, as I can't figure out for sure what's going on! Being the control freak that I am, I have to second-guess everything, but I can't get a definite line of this storyline, and it's making me bonkers. Is the Dark One some manifestation of Hank? I assume he can't actually be Hank, since I think he's the mystery man in the padded room. Is he actually somehow Prometheus, maybe one of the multitude of Pros that came into being when the original split in #9? Or might it be that he is, in fact, Larry Towsley, so bent on revenge for your defamation of his character that he's decided to destroy *your* character? (Naw, it couldn't be him; even if that was his intent, he probably wouldn't get around to doing it for decades!). I know this storyline is going to go on for six more installments, but could you hurry it up? I'm dying out here.

By the way, my compliments to Max for his continued brilliance. I wonder sometimes if he truly appreciates how much he's contributed to the success of *Amoeba Adventures*, and I just want him to know that I certainly recognize that (now let my family go, Max!).

(I know the first two issues of TDA have been chock full o' disparate plot threads...but don't freak, Troy, things are going to start coming together in a big way next issue! Troy, of course, puts out the fine up-and-coming new superhero book *Holey Crullers!*, #2 of

which is now available. Drop him a few pesos and get it!)

**Nickalli Braaten**  
Spokane, Washington

Got the latest issue of AA —cool! The Dark One reminds me of Lando's mask in *Return of the Jedi* when they went to get Han back from Jabba the Hutt. I'm holding my breath to see what happens next!

**John Yeo, Jr.**  
2005 W. Callender  
West Peoria, Illinois 61604

Well, the fun part of *Amoeba* #21 was obviously the huge party. But why'd they invite the Jawas? Those guys really smell up a place, y'know. I suppose better than Tusken Raiders, right? The Flaming Carrot... Bone... The Tatooine cantina band... Charlie Brown... quite a spread!

On the serious side, The Dark One strikes again. But at least this issue confirmed that all our heroes are still alive... albeit barely in some cases. What I'm *not* looking forward to is the inevitable assault upon Ninja Ant. If this villain manages to wipe the smile off of his face, it's going to break some hearts. This book is holding my complete attention.

(Y'know, I think someone ought to write a thesis on "Star Wars imagery in the pages of *Amoeba Adventures*." Heck, I'd award a Ph.D. to anyone who pulled that off! Thanks to everyone for writing in — I thank you, Max thanks you, our P.O. Box thanks you! - Nik)

**NEXT ISSUE:** Things go from bad to worse for the gang, as we hit the halfway point of "The Dark Ages." What happens? Let's just say that the search for Hank Jensen begins, the secret of the Dark One's identity is revealed — sort of — and a very familiar character leaves our pages forever. And that's just for starters. Be here in August for "Malice."



# THE UFO CHECKLIST



Here's a list of the latest releases in Spring 1996 by the members of the United Fanzine Organization, a co-op of self-publishers interested in creating good comics. For information about joining the UFO, contact current Chairman Nik Dirga at P.O. Box 650, Hernando, Mississippi 38632-0650.

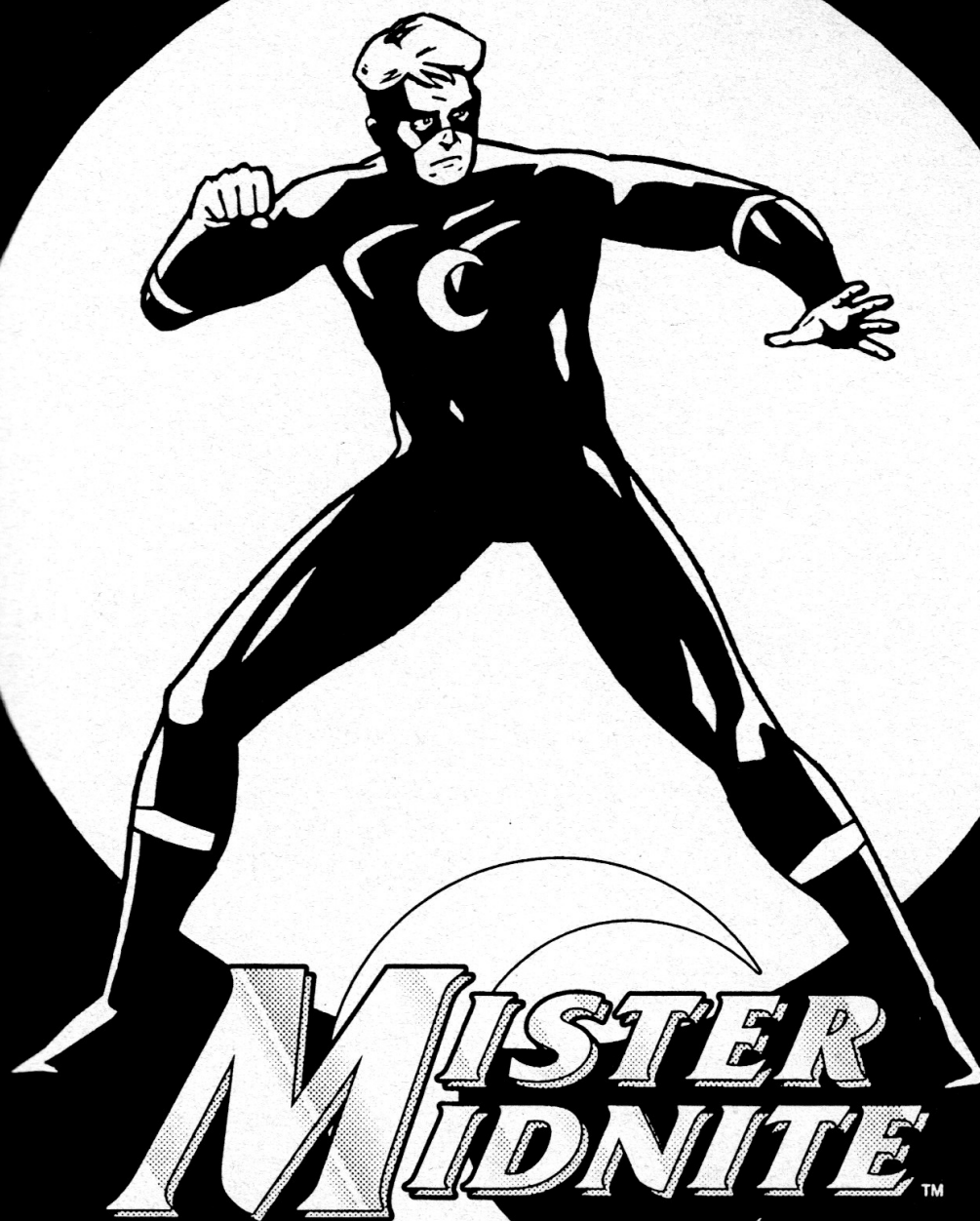
## LOOKING FOR MORE GREAT SMALL PRESS COMICS? CHECK OUT THE LATEST FROM THE UFO!

- ☒ **AG Graphix Presents #4:** Anthony Gray's Dinosaur Man and Fusion team up in a riveting tale featuring a young girl in mortal danger. A unique combination of text and pin-up art by artists ranging from Perry Lake to Michael Desing highlights this experimental story, one of the more unique comics around! 56 page magazine, \$2.00 from Anthony Gray, 1103 West St., Utica NY 13501.
- ☒ **Dinosaur Man #1:** Reprinting the acclaimed origin of Dinosaur Man by Anthony Gray and David Tryzenski from 1989! Paleontology student Greg Grey discovers his family's astounding history — and their monstrous curse! 20 page magazine, \$1.50 from Anthony Gray, address above.
- ☒ **Fantasy Theater #5:** The finest anthology comic in small press is back, now digest-sized! This issue is jam-packed with material, including a new installment of "Glorianna: The Iron Oasis," "The Reaper," "Phantos" and the debut of the small press super-team The Ultra Squad, in part one of what's sure to be creator J. Kevin Carrier's magnum opus, "Demon War." 44 page digest, \$2.00 from J. Kevin Carrier, 8913 Eldora Drive, Cincinnati OH 45236.
- ☒ **F-Man #11:** Denny Stephens's first UFO book is a real winner, highlighted by a stunning color cover. This issue reprints three months' worth of *F-Man* comic strips from the pages of the *Ortonville Citizen*, featuring the hilarious adventures of F-Man and his sidekick Rhino Boy fighting the forces of evil! 36 page digest, \$2.00 from Denny Stephens, P.O. Box 716, Ortonville MI 48462.
- ☒ **Holey Crullers! #2:** Troy Hickman and Jerry Smith's highly acclaimed series continues, this issue featuring two complete stories: the wryly funny "Head Games" and the psychological drama of "Roles." Don't miss the comic that'll change the way you look at superheroes! 28 page digest, \$1.50 from Troy Hickman, 3200 5. 9th St. Apt. A, Lafayette IN 47905.
- ☒ **Pizzazz and Frog-Boy #8:** It's a new issue of Scott McClung's classic superhero action-comedy: has Frog-Boy gone bad? Is Pizzazz really an evil clone? Will Lord Rot take over the world? Read it and find out! 16 page digest, \$1.00 from Scott McClung, 537 S. University #6, Norman OK 73069.
- ☒ **Systems of Desire #5:** Michael Hegg avant-garde anthology returns, with a variety of thought-provoking fiction, sketchbook material, surrealistic comics by Brett Bogart and movie reviews, all in this immaculately produced issue. 40 page digest, \$2.00 from Michael Hegg, 58 Touchstone, Lake Oswego, OR 97035.
- ☒ **Topical Studies #14:** This special "update" issue of Rick Howe's famed 'zine includes an update on the Eric Hampton murder case, as well as a bountiful letters section and a review of Troy Hickman's *Cosmic Waves* story "One Small Step." 12 page digest, \$1.00 from Rick Howe, 1302 22nd St. Apt. A, Columbus GA 31901.
- ☒ **Tetragrammaton Fragments #149:** The UFO's official newsletter, full of news and reviews! Sample copy \$2 from Nik Dirga, address above.



# ***The Protector of Poltar City is back!***

**Follow the continuing saga of Mister Midnite in issue #12!**  
16 thrilling black & white digest-sized pages with a full color cover for just  
\$1.50 from ALLIED COMICS, 1805 Girard St., Utica NY 13501.

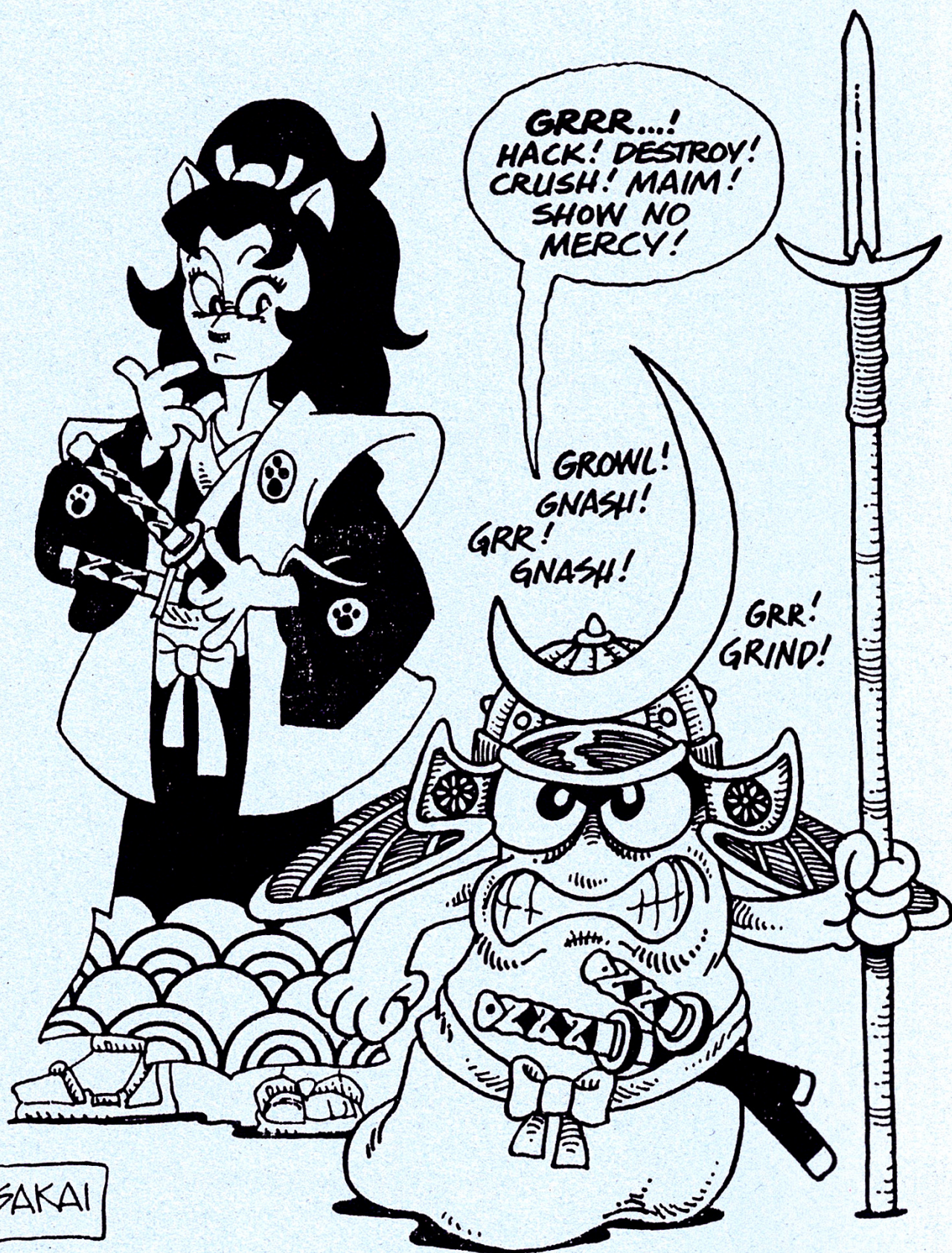


**STORY AND ART BY  
BOB ELINSKAS &  
TIM FISCHER**

**AN  
ALLIED COMICS  
PRODUCTION**

MISTER MIDNITE © & TM BOB ELINSKAS 1996.

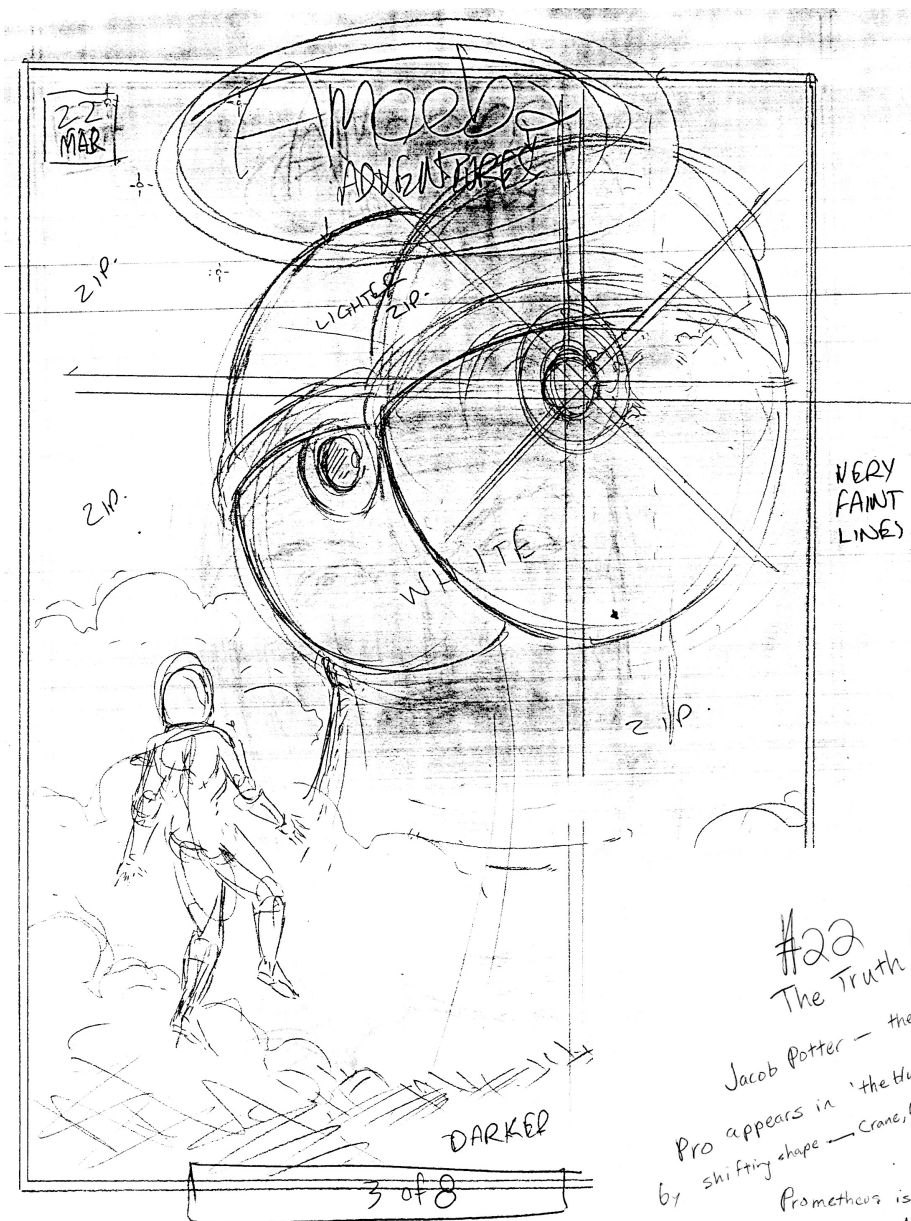




SAKAI



# SPECIAL 2020 BONUS SECTION



Max Ink always did amazing art for Amoeba Adventures, but if you ask me, #22 is his peak. It was a big ask for a script of two people basically walking around talking to be visually interesting, but with his design sense and Roger Dean-inspired surreal style, this turned into one of the most visually beautiful issues we ever did.

At left, a cover design sketch.

My story leaves me with mixed feelings. I was trying to tie together all the crazy Prometheus origins ideas dating back to comics I'd done at 15 years old, as seen in my scribbles at right.

I think it mostly worked (no, I really was NOT homaging "Highlander" - immortality was not a new theme in fiction). If AA had continued, the mystery of Jacob Potter would have been explored. As his appearance in #27 made clear, he wasn't really a very nice guy, despite what he said.

**#22 The Truth!**

Jacob Potter - the immortal.

Pro appears in 'the blue zone' with Potter "playing games" w/ Pro by shifting shape - Crane, Mac, Agnus Dei, In God, Dawn... 3SMACKS

Potter - Binks, wise & witty old-looking man likes comics.

Prometheus is an immortal - "like bits of clay in an ocean of sand," genetic freaks. Less every year.

Some go mad, others find a niche - have been pharaohs, kings, even U.S. Prez. Will never die. - might be killed by a nuke, sun, etc. or not. Heals fastly. You can learn many things over the years - how to get to/mold blue zone. **KRONOS?** Pro worries about Dawn. Jacob tries fervently to instill his message. Fate of immortals (entities, eternal, gods). **NOTHING PRO KNOWS IS TRUE.** Macabre's story... (Is there another amoeba? JP hints - "I haven't seen one like you in many years")

Potter's Tale - alive thousands of years. Mission to mentor other immortals - help them. Pro is something special. Inner Gods all formulated to help Pro realize he's not normal!

Pro turned into Promethean because of latent desire to be a "real" superhero.

Kronos never really was - an object lesson to show evil.

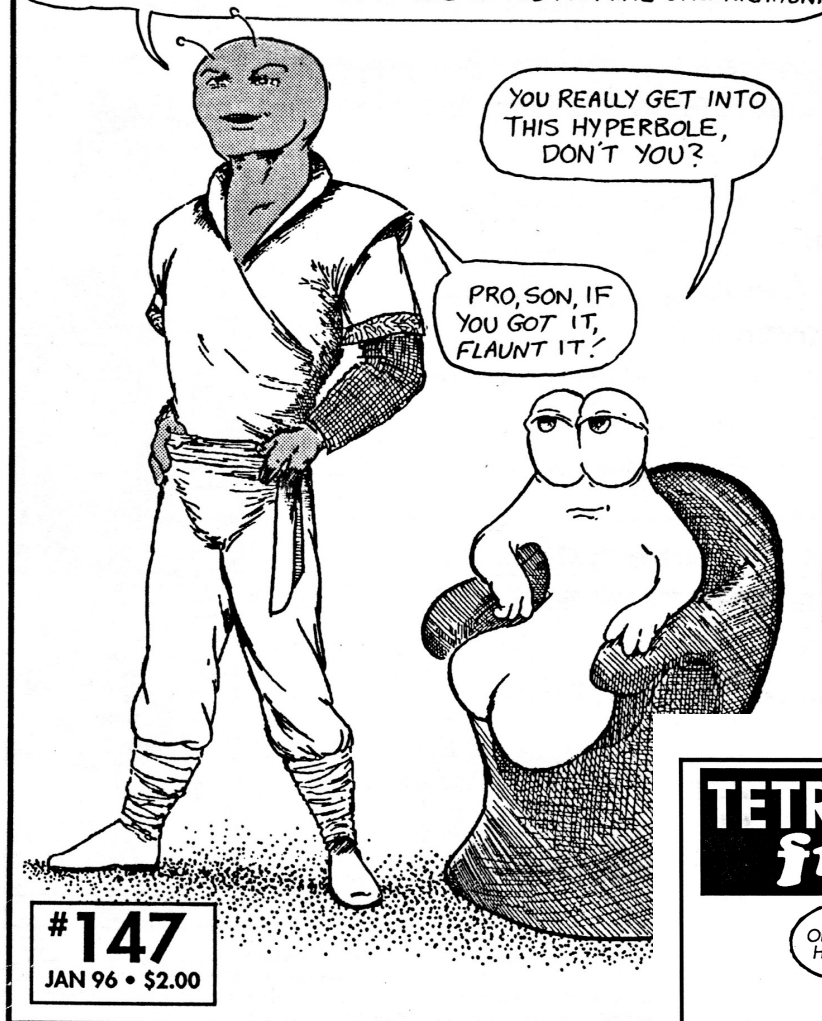
*the importance of doing good*

*need to be better*

FACE FRONT, TRUE BELIEVERS! IT'S THE ALL-NEW, ALL-DIFFERENT

# TETRAGRAMMATON FRAGMENTS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED FANZINE ORGANIZATION!



At right, Karate Kactus and Prometheus join several other famous small press stars in a cover featuring Bob Elinskas' creation Mister Midnite, drawn by Tim Fischer.

I joined the long-running United Fanzine Organization back around #8, and by 1996, I became the Chairman for a year, following terms by Sam Gafford and Jim Pack - both of whom have sadly passed away too young in the last 12 months.

The cover for my first issue of the UFO newsletter Tetragrammaton Fragments as Chairman, left, was adapted from an earlier Max Ink drawing.

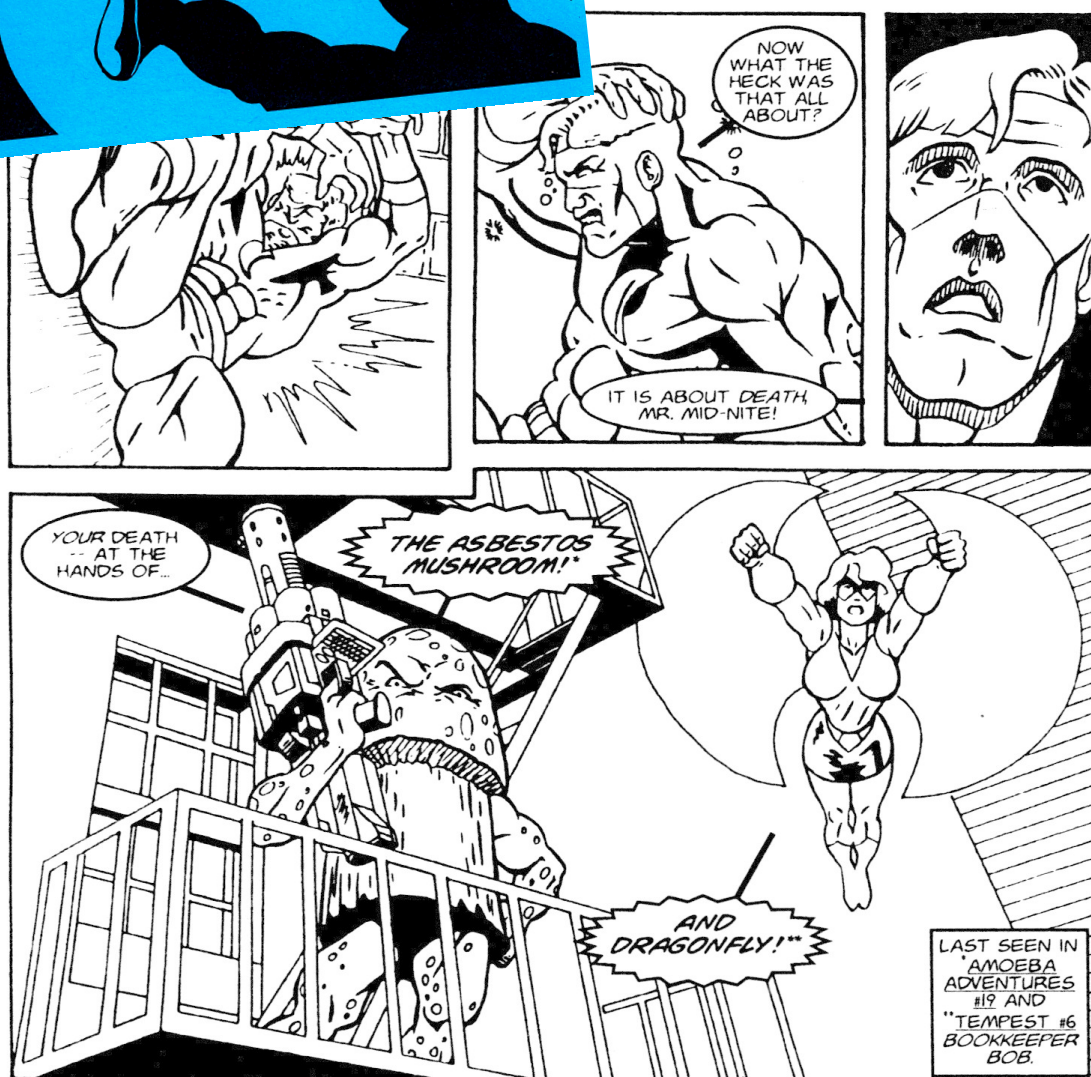






I did not "lend" the Amoeba Adventures characters out often, but J. Kevin Carrier was (and is) a terrific friend, and when he asked to borrow the Asbestos Mushroom for an all-star villain showdown with the hero Mister Midnite, how could I refuse?

Mister Midnite Special #3, 1996, was written by Kevin and drawn by Tim Creel. Mister Midnite was created by Bob Elinskas.





You can't really go wrong with the "gang of bad guys team up" story, and this was a lot of fun to read. I liked the 'roided-out look Creel gave the Mushroom, who fit right in here with this shady crowd.

