

# Tails



Here's an assemblage. The components are eyes, nose, muzzle, whiskers, ears, head. The image is the output of the text machine and vice-versa, etc. etc. Each is a coin flip in which I've drawn heads and written tails. The heart of the matter is necessarily somewhere in between. SB



Sebastian Black

onestar press

# Tails



Sebastian Black

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Tails

Tails

mouth)

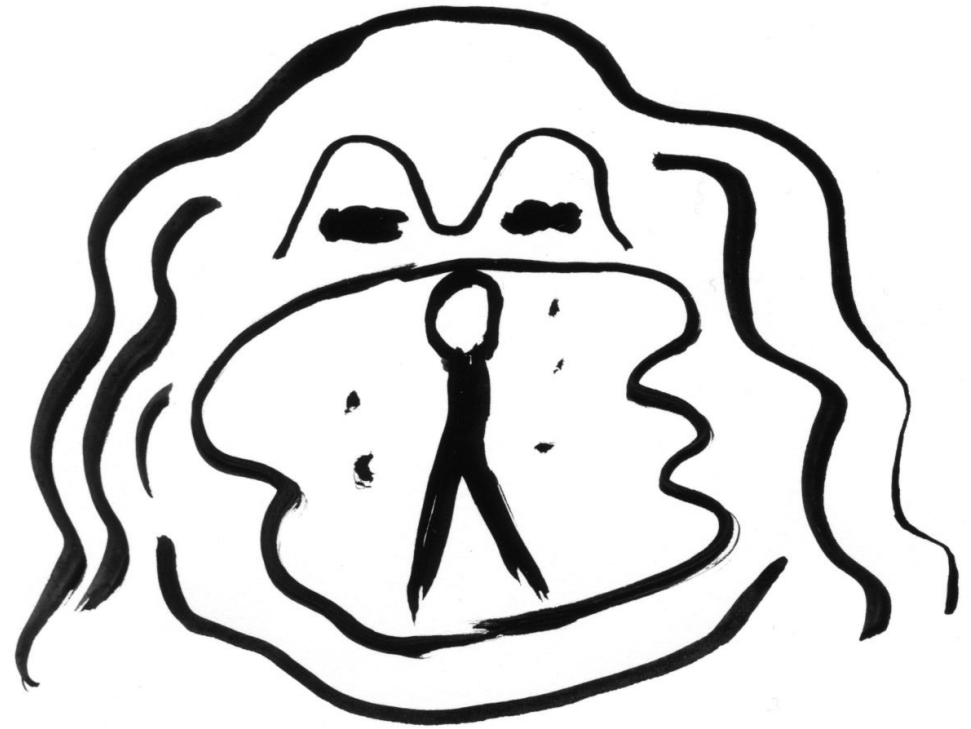
(whiskers)

(nose,

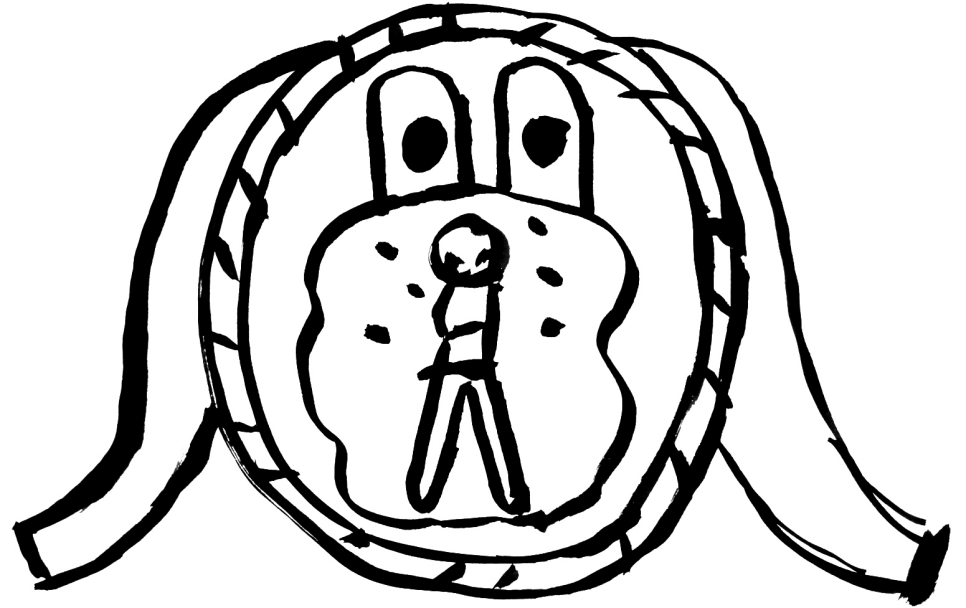
(muzzle)



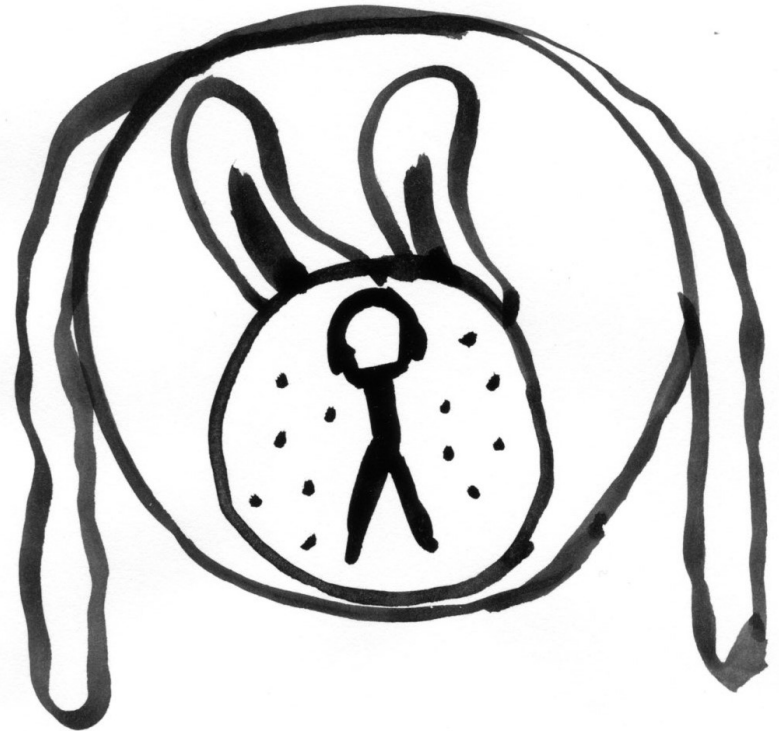
"Arms is overrated!" says the armless man (**nose**, **mouth**) to the flies (**whiskers**) hanging by the burial mounds (**eyes**) of his shrivelled kids (**pupils**). He spends an hour face down upon the raised earth every day until little rivulets (**ears**) of salty water dampen his shirt. In time he cries a bog's worth (**muzzle**). He keeps it up and the bog becomes a lake (**head**). The man floats. The flies fly.



A guy is standing in the parking lot of Microcenter.  
It's cold so his arms are tucked into his shortsleeve shirt  
**(nose, mouth)**. He's in a cloud of his own breath **(muzzle)**.  
His thoughts hang around his head like gnats **(whiskers)**.  
Someday he'll be dead and me too. We'll be two graves  
**(eyes)** which people step over. We'll be two holes **(eyes)**  
which - hoola hoop like - people step through with only a  
little trouble. Oh I'd rather be a water park! Cool and warm  
at once like glorious twin speed slides **(ears)**!



A veteran without arms (**nose, mouth**) rests in a kiddy pool (**muzzle**). The water is carbonated (**whiskers**). It's an experimental therapy. Twice she's dodged death and its cartoon specters (**eyes**). Twice she's stared into its pitch (**pupils**). She thinks the whole world ought to inflate and deflate, round and full (**head**), or limp and flaccid (**ears**).



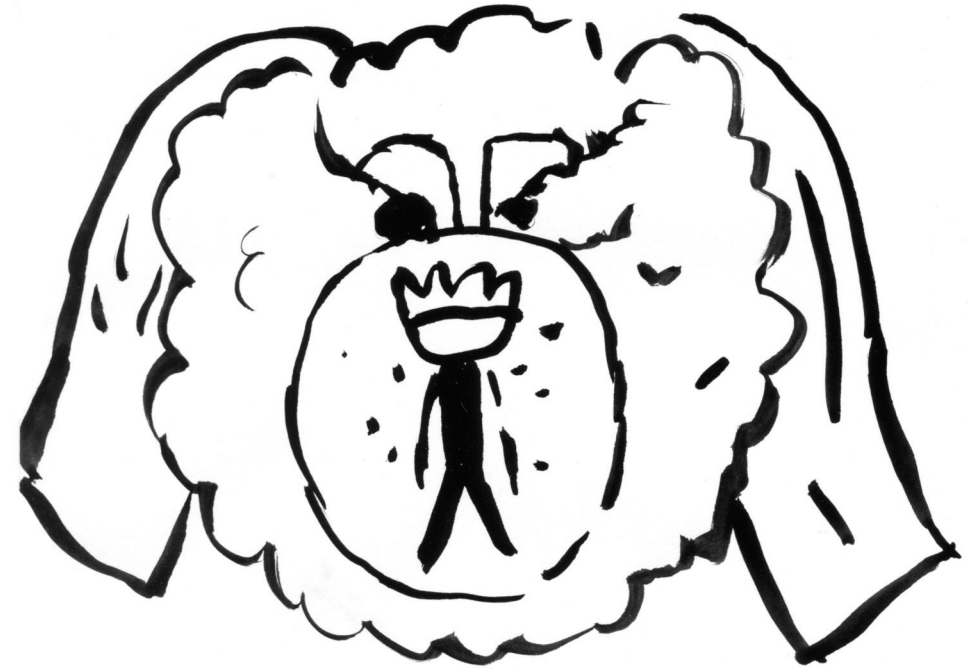
(nose, mouth)



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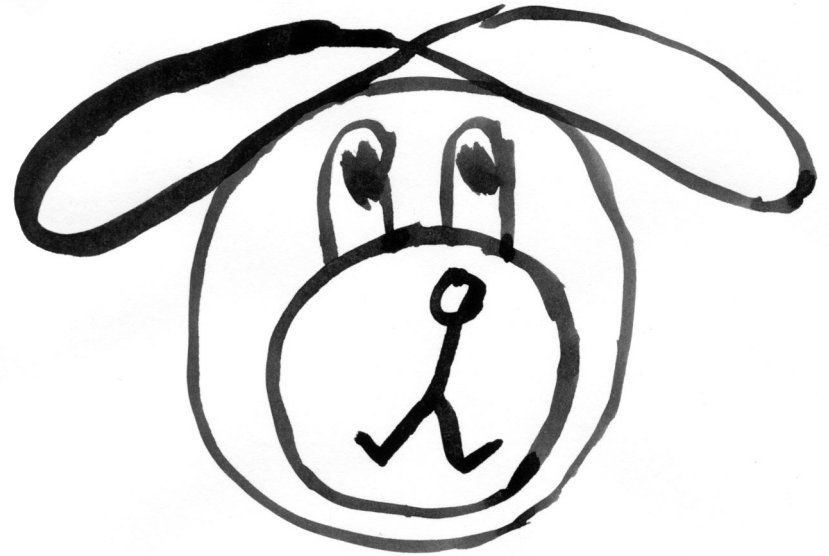
The fireplace burned off the arms of the French king (**nose, mouth**). Decorum prevented him from complaining as the embers gathered and singed his frock (**whiskers**). The heat encircled him (**muzzle**). It curdled the air and he saw his surroundings doubled, two hearths billowing black clouds until the room was full (**eyes, pupils, head**). The unicorn hunt an inferno in the dripping tapestries (**ears**).



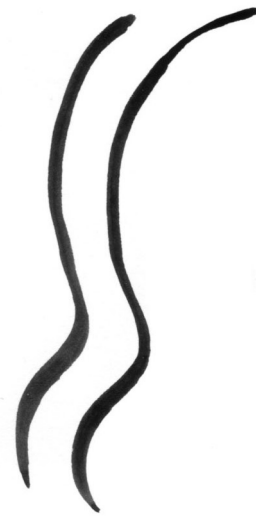
I saw two thatched huts on the far shore of a small lake (**muzzle, eyes**). Through their open doors I could make out their dim cool interiors. A man stood with his back to me. He pressed his hands together like he was praying then extended his arms and dove into the water (**nose, mouth**). A few ambitious droplets leapt into the air (**whiskers**) and caught the sun. I saw this moment through the thick plexiglass porthole of a low flying propellor plane (**head**). Seated next to me was a catholic missionary. He reached across me with both hands (**ears**) and lowered the plastic shutter (**hair**).



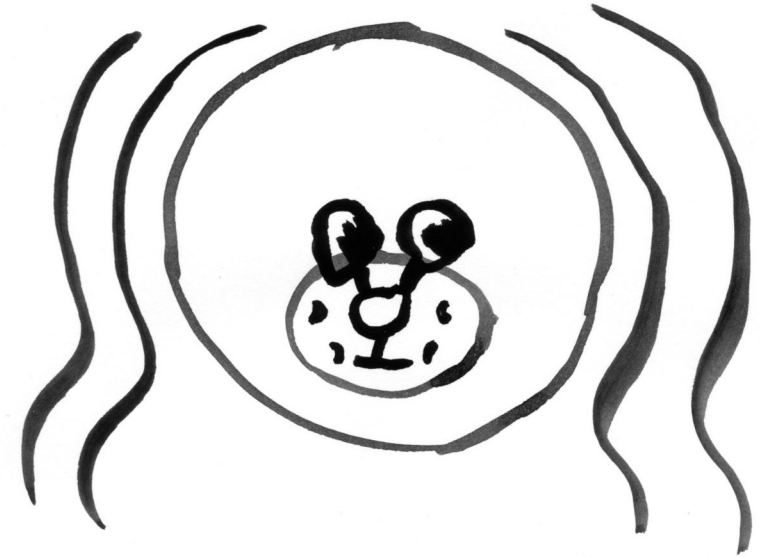
Without warning a lady with no arms and big feet jumped into the main attraction of Bottomless Pit Park (**nose, mouth, muzzle**). Her two sons stood at the edge (**eyes**) and stared into the abyss. It didn't stare back but it was drafty. Their expressions darkened simultaneously (**pupils**). "Let's go" said one son. So they walked in circles (**head**) through the park until they found the parking lot. "Look," said the other son, and he pointed to the sky. A huge black buzzard traced aimless figure eights (**ears**). "Let's go," the first son reiterated.



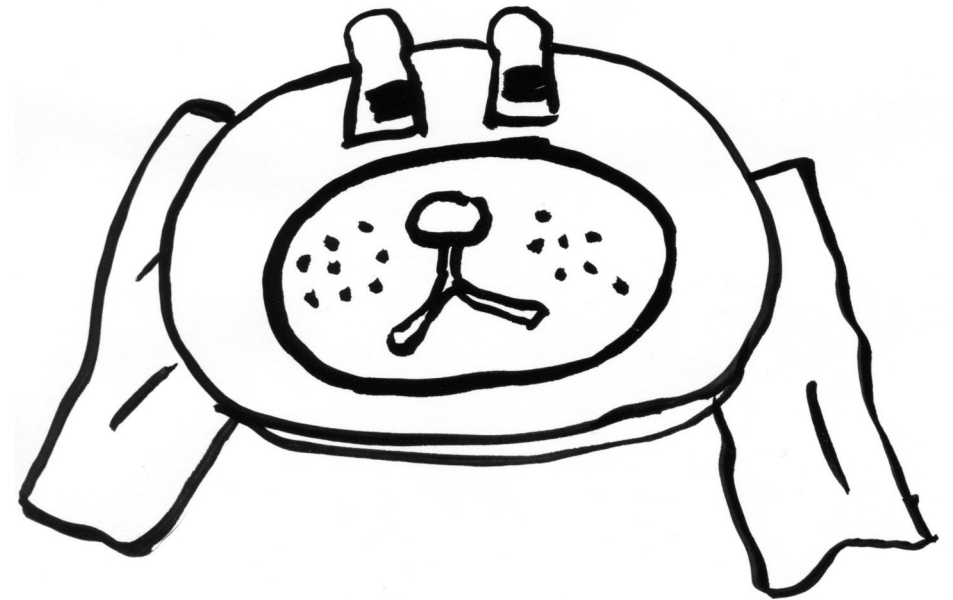
(ears)



The gist in descending scale: the sun (**head**) then mars (**muzzle**) and then little mother earth (**nose**). Mars is covered in craters (**whiskers**) The earth is covered in antennae (**mouth**) and satellite dishes (**eyes**) which are in turn covered in the soot (**pupils**) of the cities they been sitting on. The sun isn't covered in anything, it's just heat and glory: a crooked lense bending life to wiggles (**ears**).



A wishbone (**mouth**) rests on a plate (**muzzle**).  
It's been used to lance an olive or maybe a roasted apricot (**nose**). Plus there's some leftover quinoa (**whiskers**).  
The plate shares a round table (**head**) with a salt and pepper shaker (**eyes**) each bearing a greasy fingerprint (**pupils**).  
On the floor beside the table lie two cloth napkins (**ears**).

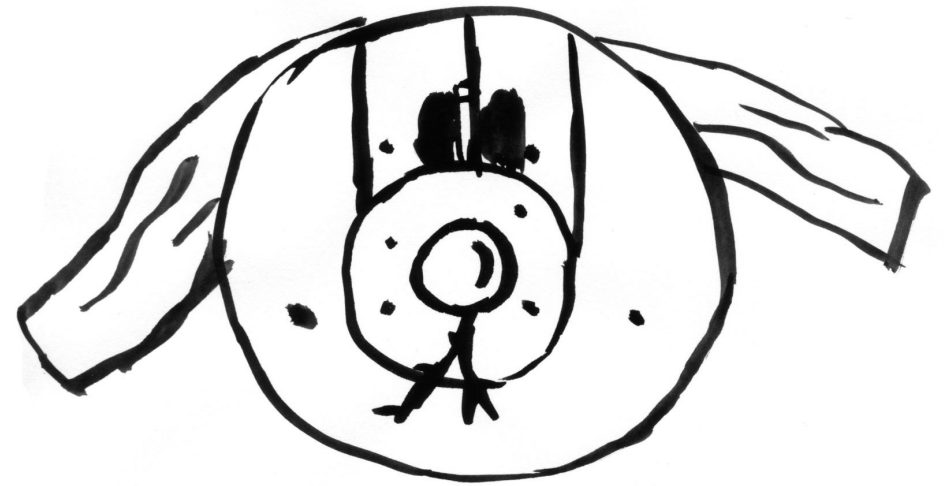


A buzzard looks down and sees a man with a divining rod (**nose, mouth**). There is only sand (**whiskers**) for miles and miles. The buzzard's wide circumference (**head**) tightens (**muzzle**). The man comes upon a pair of shrivelled succulents (**eyes**). He pulls them up to find that they are hollow (**pupils**) and dry. He closes his eyes and imagines the Tigris and Euphrates (**ears**) overflowing their banks, washing away civilization, preempting his thirst.



A deep orange yolk (**nose**) ensconced in white (**muzzle**) upon a black skillet (**head**). Butter, the consummate juvenile, sizzles and pops (**whiskers**). What else? A sprig of rosemary! (**mouth**).

Some teenagers play a game. They press their forearms (**eyes**) together and drop a lit cigarette into the crevice between them. Obviously both arms get burnt (**pupils**). Leaping bacon (**ears**) fat used to be my explanation.



There is a viral youtube video called the double rainbow **(eyes)**. From a high peak a hiker-cum-vagabond **(nose, mouth)** marvels at the video's eponymous phenomena. Around him swarm invisible gnats **(whiskers)**.

In Greece I saw twin pearlescent oil slicks **(pupils)** on the ground just outside the entrance to the Parthenon. At the temple my mother grabbed a nice doric chunk of column **(muzzle)** and dropped it into her fanny pack. How much earth **(head)** has evaporated thus? To whom do I address these floppy promissory notes **(ears)**?



It was 580 B.C.E. The aqueduct was completed and everybody celebrated with a big cup of water. The aqueduct stretched across the ravine on three legs, separated by two wide arches (**eyes, head**). The outer legs disappeared seamlessly into the hills (**ears**). The local prefect was lauded. His confidence and ambition grew in direct proportion and so did his mania for institutional efficiency. This habit was upset when someone began to fill the arches with piles of large black rocks (**pupils**) from the nearby volcano. The somebody worked at night with many accomplices. The prefect drew a perimeter around the arch (**muzzle**) and enlisted the entire town as sentries. He stationed them at odd intervals throughout the ravine (**whiskers**). He himself stood in the center as still as a rock (**nose, mouth**) and then they waited.

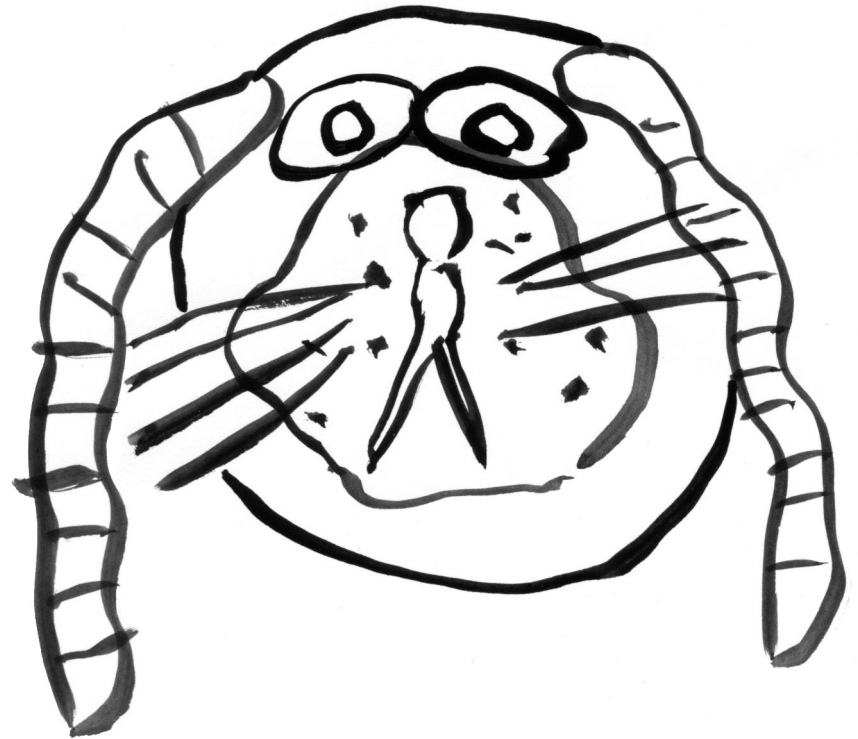


I was watching joggers (**nose, mouth**) one day with my telescope (**muzzle**). I saw one who was glowing (**whiskers**). I ran down from my terrace but she was gone. On the sidewalk where she had been were some tremendous gobs of blackened chewing gum. Probably from the bad old days.

I went to the Met for a palette cleanser. Up on the roof was a Dan Graham shape that I didn't understand. It was a couple curvy glass things (**eyes**). The explanation on the plaque was distant and abstract. There was nice sunlight reflecting off them which reminded me of the jogger (**eyelashes**). I lay down on my back in the turf that they had installed. I saw two of those wispy summer clouds (**ears**) and the big summer sun (**head**) bearing down on me like a soviet missile or a text message.



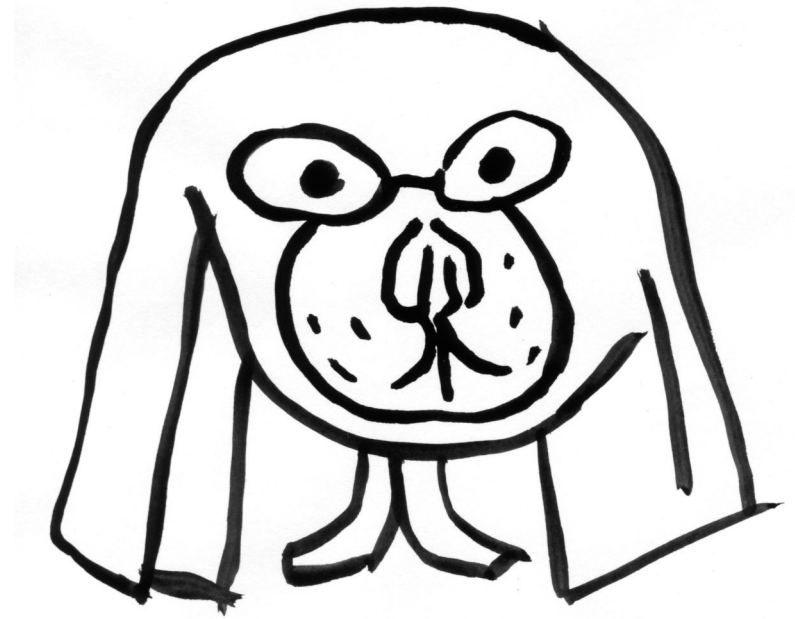
Someone broke Hermes' arms off (**nose, mouth**). Nobody knew where they went, or what he was doing in the grotto (**muzzle**). Nobody even knew why there was a grotto beneath the hay (**whiskers**) and the dirt and the worms (**ears**). In the sky there is a planet with a ring around it (**eye, pupil**) named after Saturn. Hermes wears a hat on his head too (**eye, pupil**) but with arguably more panache. He's a famous equivocator, and maybe that's why his likenesses are always getting knocked around. It's hard to keep him inscribed (**head**).



My favorite part of the demonstration: When the samurai stepped out of the shadows with his sword unsheathed and split the cherry stem lengthwise (**nose, mouth**) leaving the rest of the goblet and the chocolate chip gelato untouched (**muzzle, whiskers**). My least favorite part of the demonstration: when the two anthills (**eyes**) were filled with scalding black oil (pupils) and the screams (**lashes**) of their colonies were recorded and played back through the antique clock radio (**head**). My "myeh" part of the demonstration: the torso of the Hawaiian beauty (**ears**) which perfectly mimicked those screams by performing the hula in front of the theremin.

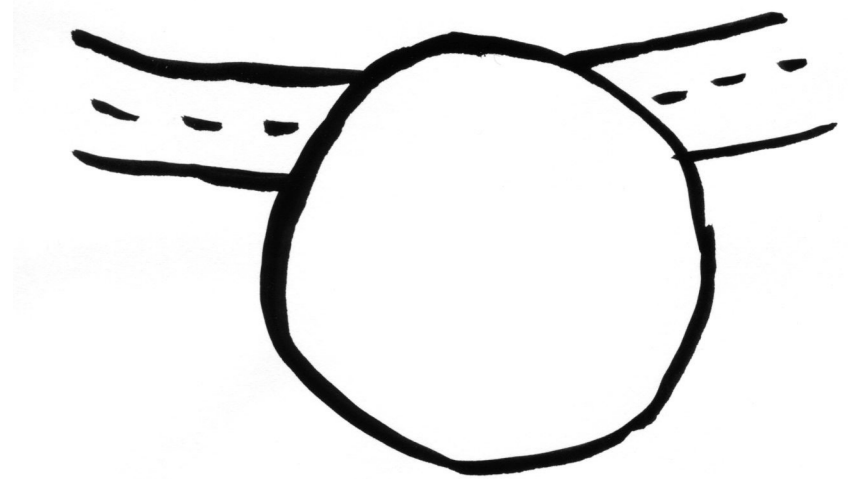


The adjunct described the slide to a dark lecture hall. A garlic bulb had one little green sprout (**nose, mouth**). Each oyster had been shucked to reveal a shining black pearl (**eyes, pupils, eyelashes**). Behind the garlic there was a grapefruit with the splotchy skin of a teenager (**muzzle, whiskers**). The artist had tilted the tabletop forward so that it ran parallel to the glowing picture plane (**head**), the table cloth floating yet folded into space on either side (**ears**). This was a BIC decision!



(head)

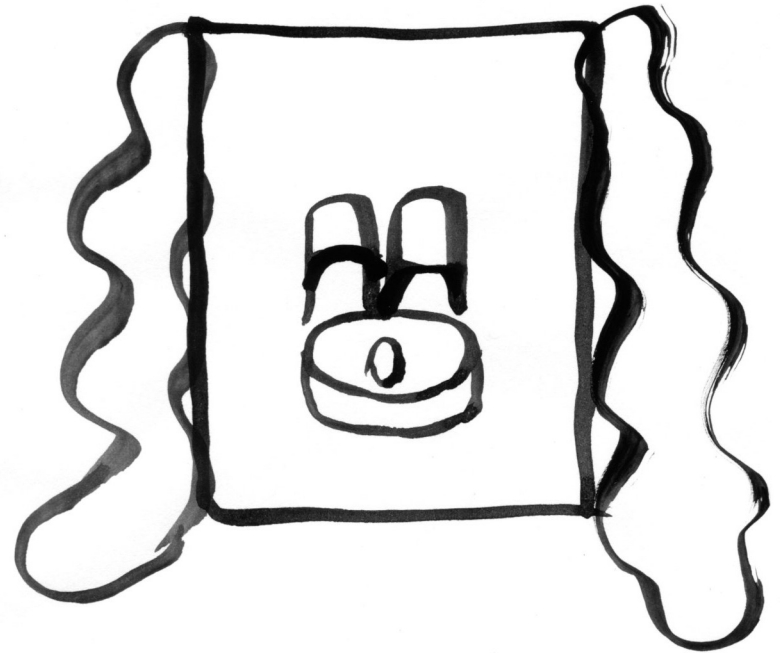
(ears)



Once I woke up in a huge round convention center (**head**) linked to the world by two glittering service roads (**ears**). It was totally empty. I wandered around in it until I came upon a rotating podium (muzzle). On it were two self driving cars (**eyes**). The floor was covered in confetti (**whiskers**). Information rich foam core displays were keeled over willy nilly. I grabbed a bucket of grey green latex paint from a utilities closet and poured it on the hoods of the cars (**pupils**). I found a cardboard box packed tightly with uninflated promotional beach balls. I blew one up (**nose**). It had some bold pink letters printed on it but it was upside down so I flipped it around. It said, "Y (**mouth**) discriminate?"



If I had x-ray vision I'd look into medicine cabinets  
**(head)**. There I'd find some male and female deodorant  
sticks coupling away **(eyes)**. And what's this? An index  
finger sized scoop **(nose)** gone missing from the turquoise  
jar of multipurpose antioxidant face cream **(muzzle, mouth)**?  
'A thing is a hole in a thing it is not,' said Carl Andre about  
something else entirely. But then context, like fog, tends to  
part **(ears)** for even the least grand of amblers .



Minoru Yamasaki's original design for the world trade center in lower Manhattan proposed two cylindrical towers with domed roofs (**eyes**). These structures were deemed too phallic for the general public by the pruders and an emergency aesthetic advisory committee was convened. The hacks hacked and consensus found its form - as it so often does - in the rectangles we all knew and loved. Minoru Yamasaki threw a fit when he saw the revised proposal. "You have circumcised my design!" he yelled. "I am an artist!" he yelled. "You have amputated my arms!" he yelled some more. Spittle flew (**nose, mouth, whiskers**). After that Minoru Yamasaki went around for a while as if he were in a hamster wheel (**muzzle**). He encountered reality as a series of obstacles and indirect inconveniences. In 1973 he dragged himself to one of several ribbon cutting ceremonies and he shuddered as the single ribbon became two (**ears**). In 1976 he watched the demolition of the final cubic volume of his Pruitt Igoe housing projects. "Another square bites the dust," he thought. He dug up his original rejected sketches from nineteen fifty something and had them set in ovoid frames (**head**).

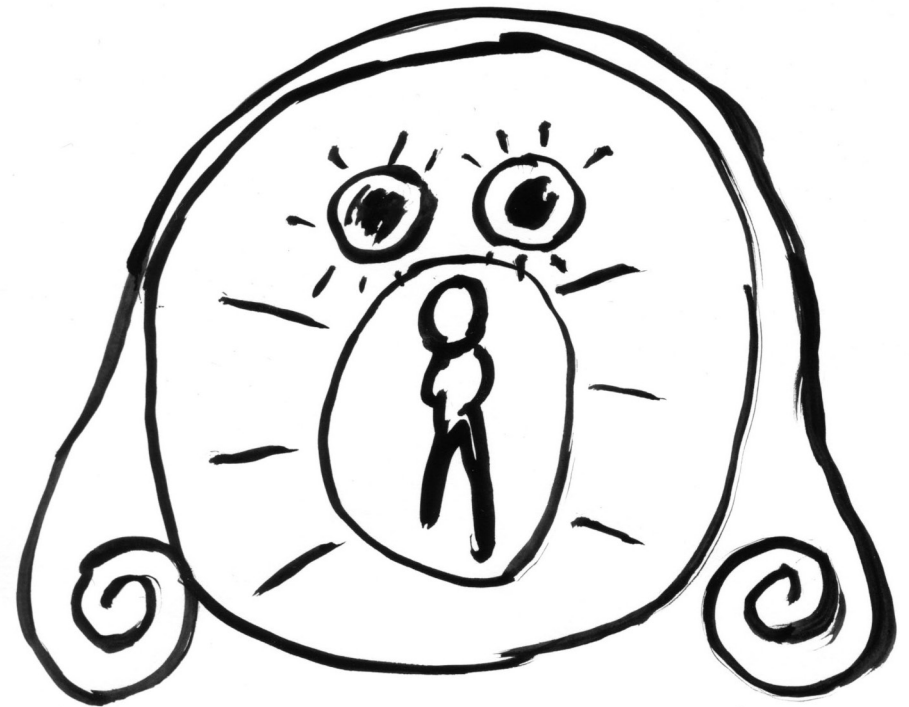


Pretzels come in all sorts of shapes. I saw a pretzel with a round top (**nose**) and two splayed legs which failed to reconnect (**mouth**). Fuck that deviant pretzel I thought then I popped it in my open mouth (**muzzle**) with a little extra salt (**whiskers**) from the cupboard. Regular pretzels have three loops that makes them seem very mathematical abstract and pure. Fuck them too! I like to bite off one loop just to hobble their universal pretensions. Then they look like two bubbles stuck together (**eyes**).

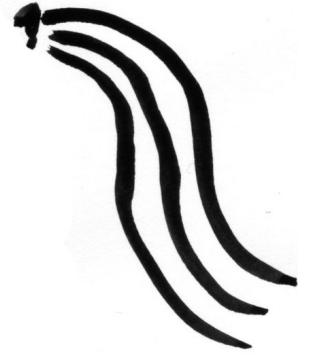
Last night I saw a water bug and his swarthy cousin living large in my kitchen (**pupils**). "Now we are talking fellas," I said while twisting up a New York Review of Books. I smeared them both across on the tile (**ears**). India came into the kitchen. "Oh to be a gesture!" she said longingly.



I walk on the earth (**head**) with my arms clasped behind my back (**nose mouth**) because I think it looks fin de siecle-y. I'm in a force field which glows (**muzzle, whiskers**) like novels used to glow. Like silver tipped bulbs growing from tin ceilings (**eyes, pupils**) glow, bright but with a dark center which is the past, or an idea about it rather. Across town the rabbis are paying forty thousand bucks to restore a torah (**ears**). It had the standard wear and tear.

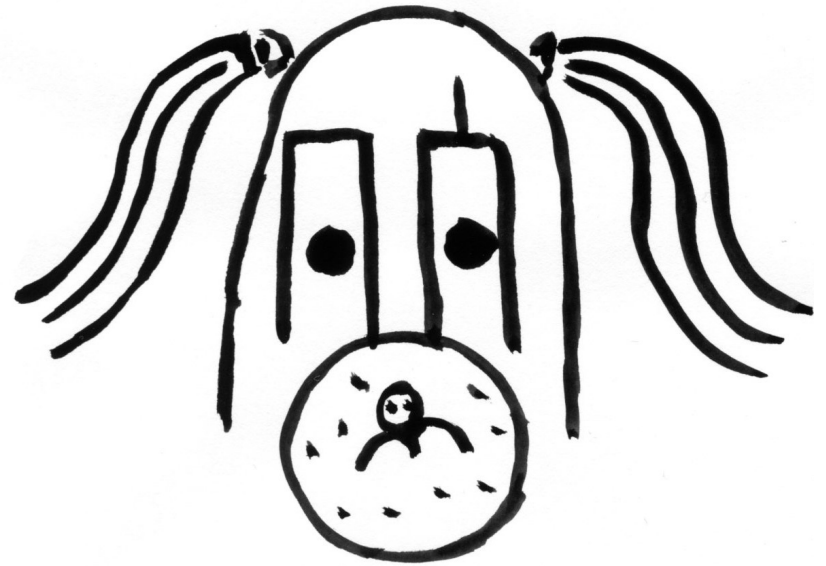


(ears)

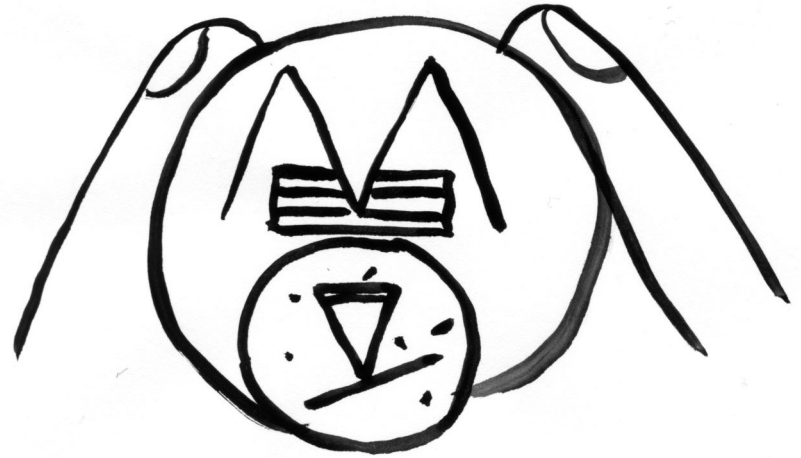


My wife always ran behind some twins on her high school women's cross country team. They were a speedy duo. Their matching blonde ponytails (**ears**) were more in sync than a pair of pendulums at a clock shop. Their mom took them to RISD to learn about art but her return flight hit one of the twin towers (**eyes**). What a disaster.

Yves Klein (**nose**) said he hated birds (mouth) because they tried to bore holes (**pupils**) in his great masterpiece, the sky. Though he was clearly a jerk he knew a thing or two about a vault (**head**). I don't know the rest of the story of the twins because my wife didn't keep following them to art school. I know other things though. For example I can see that it's people, not birds, who wanna treat the world like a radish (**muzzle**) and they're the pepper (**whiskers**). They rarely stop to think, "what happens when I make god sneeze?"

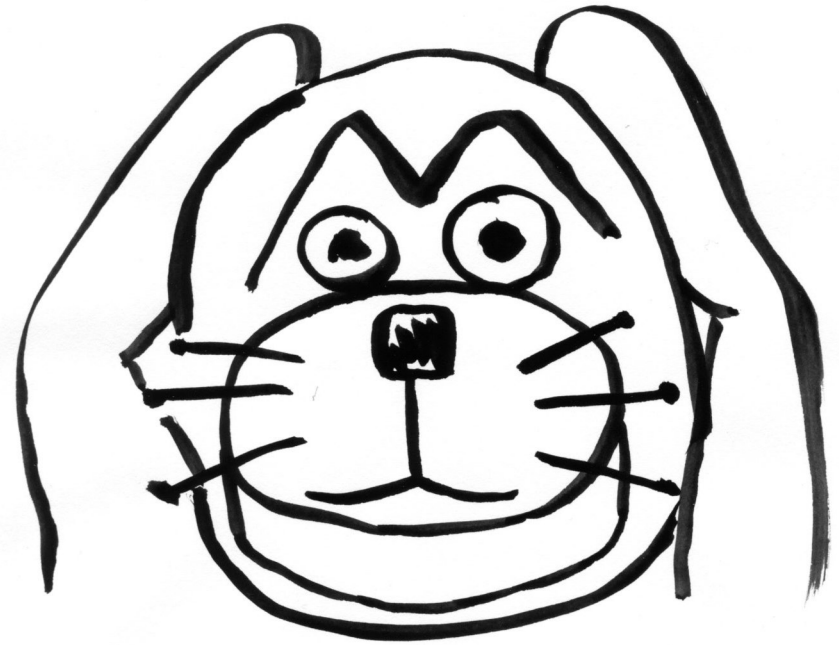


Stamford Connecticut. What an "m" (**eyes**). What a shade of brown on that car park (pupils) beyond the spotty Amtrak porthole (**muzzle, whiskers**). How are the local schools I wonder. How are the interrelations between the local socio-economic spheres? I want to pinch a grape (**ears, head**) until it dies or becomes other but they're telling me the cafe car just closed. Meanwhile In New York City the quality and price of a pizza slice (**nose**) reflects broader patterns of wealth distribution (**mouth**).

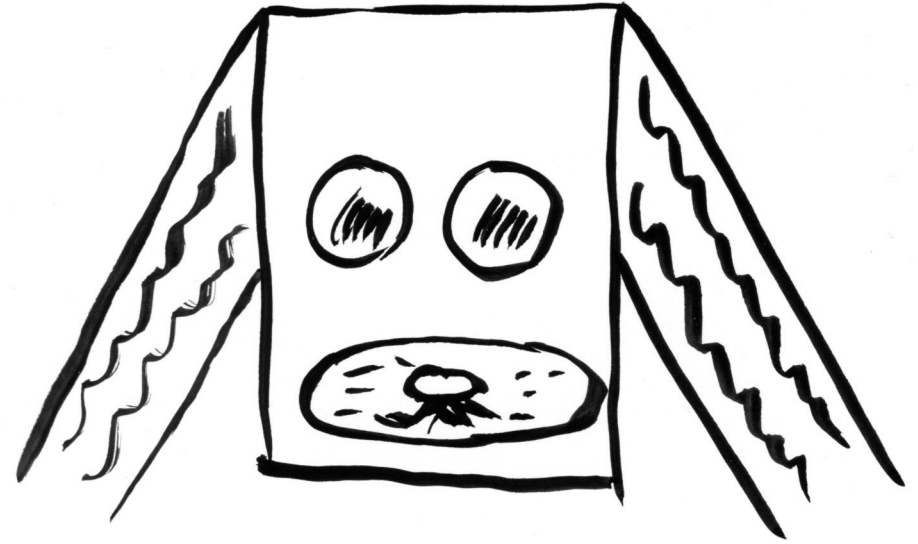


Poor little cursor (**philtrum**) flickering weekly on the tundra. Tap tap tap. Are you cold in there? You need a big Russian hat (**nose**). Can you do that dance I wonder? The one with the kicks and the splits (**mouth**)? Got any letters for me? Am I not a worthy stage (**muzzle**)?

All I need in this life is a pin cushion, (**whiskers**) or a dart target (**iris/ pupils**) to absorb my anger. All I want is the respect of a distant mountain range (**eyes**). I want to be held like a fig (**head**) in the fingers (**ears**) of an emperor. Is that so much to ask?



I looked at my penis in the gray bathroom mirror  
**(head)**. It didn't look back at me thank god. The vanity  
bulbs **(eyes)** were switched off and my pubic hair was  
reflecting on their surface **(pupils)** like something or other.  
In the sink **(muzzle)** the stopper **(nose)** was stopping stuff  
**(mouth)**. Could have been my whiskers **(whiskers)**, beast  
that I am. I keep thinking about the river of beer **(ear)** I  
must have drunk up 'til now in my life, and the river of  
blood **(ear)** the jaguars drink. They say to them blood is  
beer and I believe it.



I believe that when civilization comes to an end and mother earth **(head)** finally shaves us off it's rats who are gonna pick up the sticks **(whiskers)** and begin again. I believe it. I seen their language smudged ankle height on loading docks and pharmacy windows, at the feet of triumphal arches **(eyes, pupils)** etc. "What the hell are these shapes"? I always think, stooping down to rat-read them with my nose. But I tend to lose my balance! That's when I feel the absence of my tail **(ear)**, echoing **(ear)** off the arch's august Tuckahoe Marble. It comes back around to strike me while I'm sat down here writing, trying to ignore a fried egg **(muzzle, nose)**. It has a hair on it anyway **(mouth)**.



# Sebastian Black Tails

Edition limited to 250 numbered copies

In addition to this book a limited edition multiple  
by the artist is available from onestar press

Design by Jiyoni Kim

Printed and bound in France

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