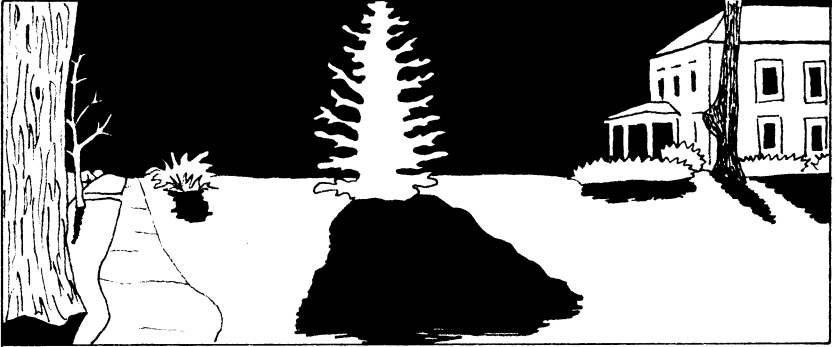


TONIGHT

when I walked home, everything around me seemed to pulse with life.



The headlights of cars going by zoned in on me like searchlights.



When I rounded the corner, it was snowing.



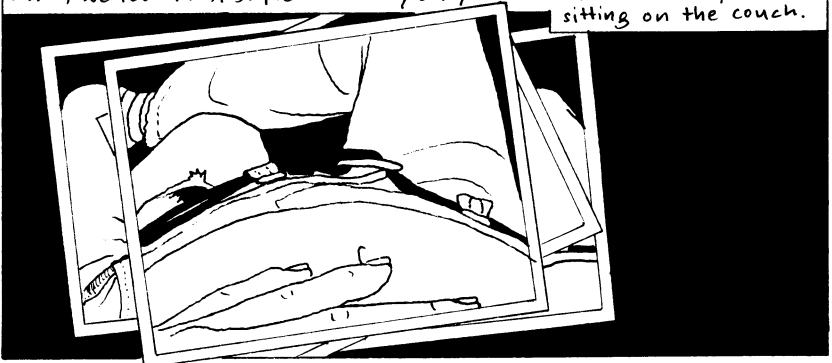
Just a little, not enough to stick.

A car idled in front of one house. I could see the snow swirling, like tiny gnats.

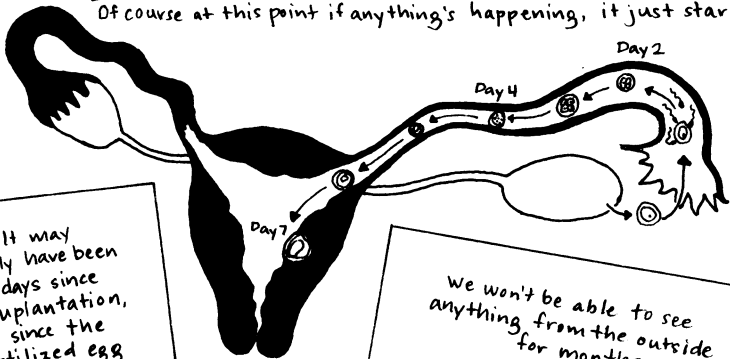


I felt a sudden surge of sadness for the snowflakes, flying around in their last moments before melting.

Later, we took the first pictures of my belly. I took most of them myself, sitting on the couch.



Of course at this point if anything's happening, it just started.



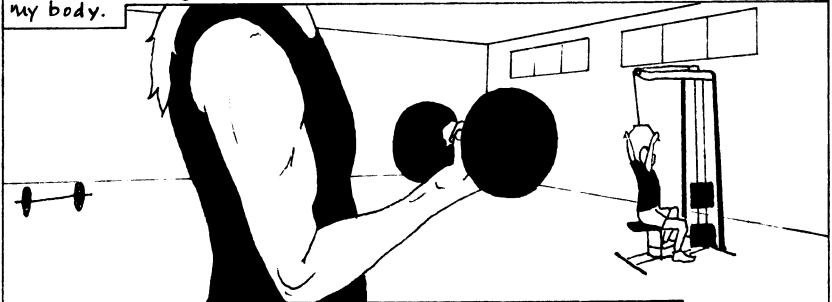
It may only have been days since implantation, since the fertilized egg settled into the soft uterine wall.

We won't be able to see anything from the outside for months.

But I like to think that even if it's invisible to our eyes there has been some microscopic change in the shape of my body.

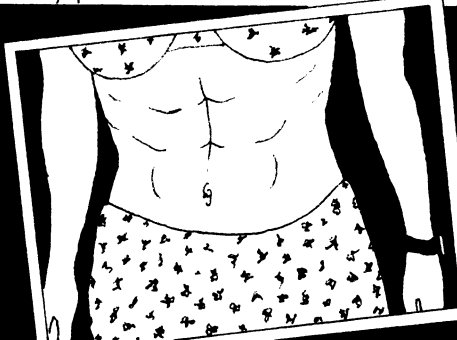


When I was in high school, I was more concerned with the visible aspects of my body.



I loved the bulge of my biceps, the clean lines of my triceps and deltoids, the commanding force of my quadriceps and calves.

But my pièce de résistance was my abs.



You could've bounced a lawn dart off them.

When I was 17, I'd wanted to get my navel pierced but needed my mom's permission.

(This was back in the day, before every other girl had a belly ring.)

I know now that her response (she really said this!) was influenced by her work, as a nurse, with low-income women.



As soon as I turned 18, I did it. I kept it a secret from her for over a year.

Years later, when I got a tattoo, she was much more open-minded.



(I was 23 by then and it was, after all, the world's smallest tattoo.)

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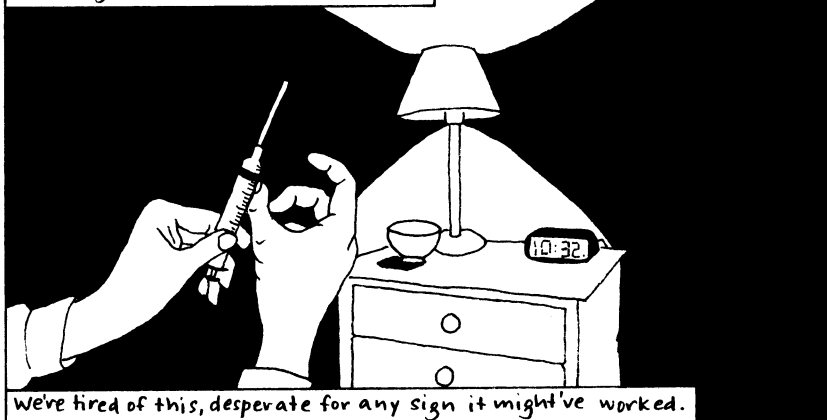
These days it's my stomach that's uncooperative.



I STILL HAVE THE RING (BUT NOT THE SIX-PACK).

Or rather, my womb.

We've been trying for six months now — half a year of sucking donor semen into a children's medicine syringe and tapping out the bubbles, three nights in a row, once a month.



We're tired of this, desperate for any sign it might've worked.

And we think it may have, this time.



H. has been having baby dreams, her first since we started. She feels like I'm pregnant.

Though how accurate her feelings are, I don't know.

As for me, I'm not sure what I feel.

I felt pregnant the first time we tried.



I reveled in thoughts of what was happening inside me.

