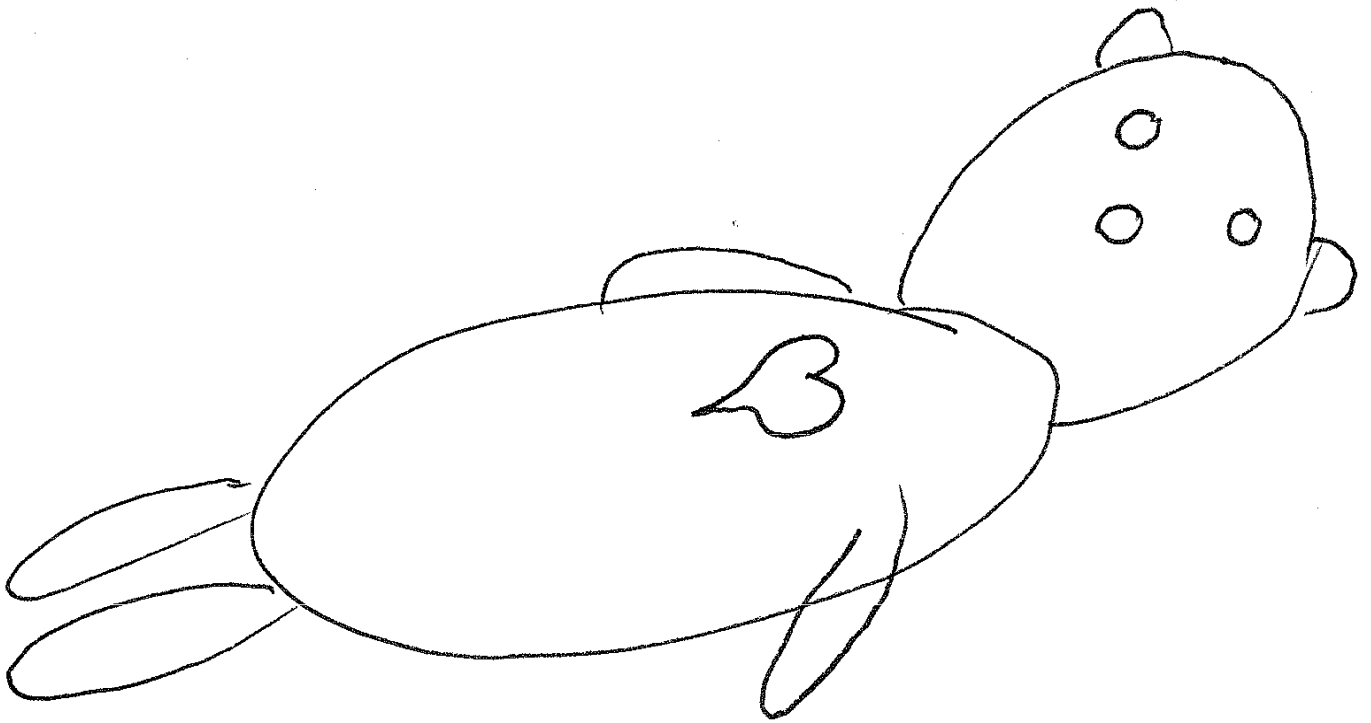
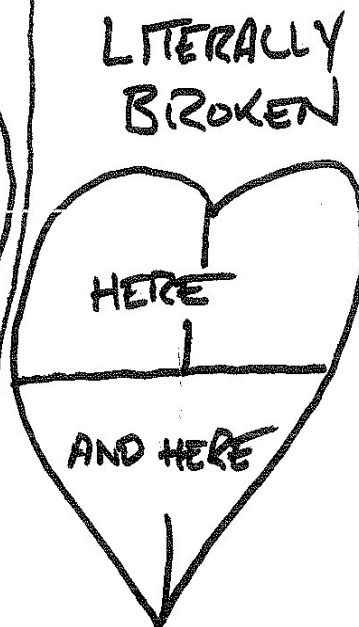
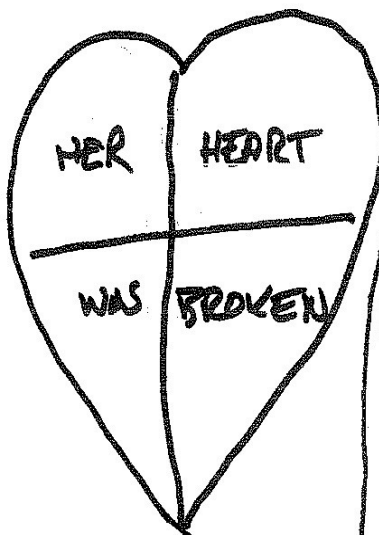
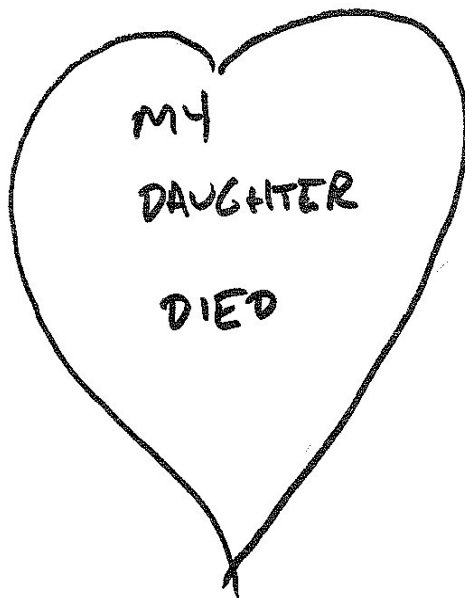


FOUR WEEKS AGO,
WHEN AMBER DIED.

A GRAPHIC NOVEL

BY TIMOTHY FERGUSON





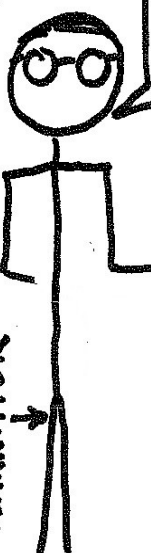
HER HEART
WAS TINY



SHE DIED AT 23
WEEKS GESTATION

MAYBE YOU
ARE READING
THIS BECAUSE
YOUR BABY
IS GOING
TO DIE

NARRATOR
→



THERE ARE SOME
THINGS YOU NEED
TO KNOW

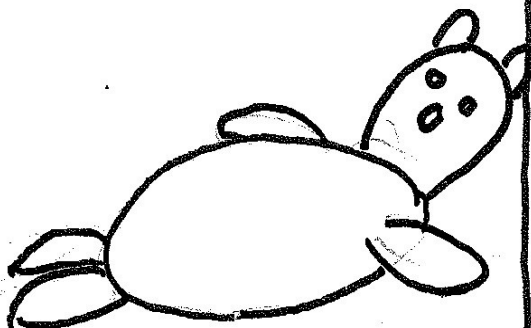
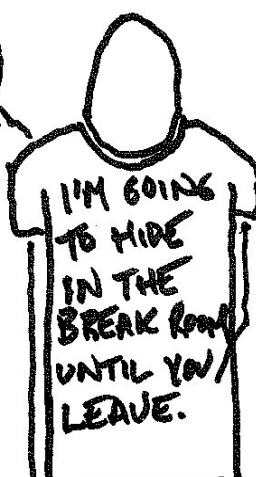
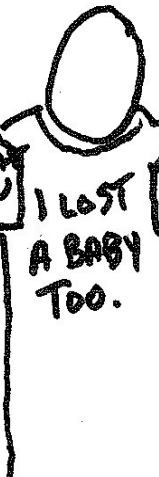
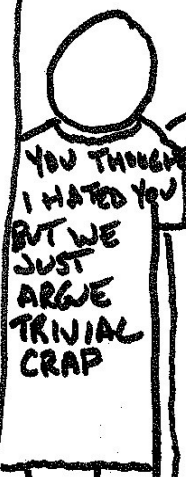
IT'S THE THINGS
THAT MAKE HER
REAL THAT ARE THE
SADDEST

BRINGING HOME
HER ASHES WILL
DIVIDE ALL OF
TIME INTO TWO
PARTS



BUT AT LEAST
YOU LIVE IN
THE SECOND
HALF

PEOPLE YOU KNOW WILL
BE COMPLETELY CHANGED



IT'S THE PARTS THAT MAKE HER REAL THAT HURT THE MOST

IT IS GOING TO BE A
CONVENTIONAL BIRTH
WITH LABOUR

LEGALLY SHE HAS TO
HAVE A NAME...

AND A REGISTERED
BIRTH...

AND A FUNERAL.

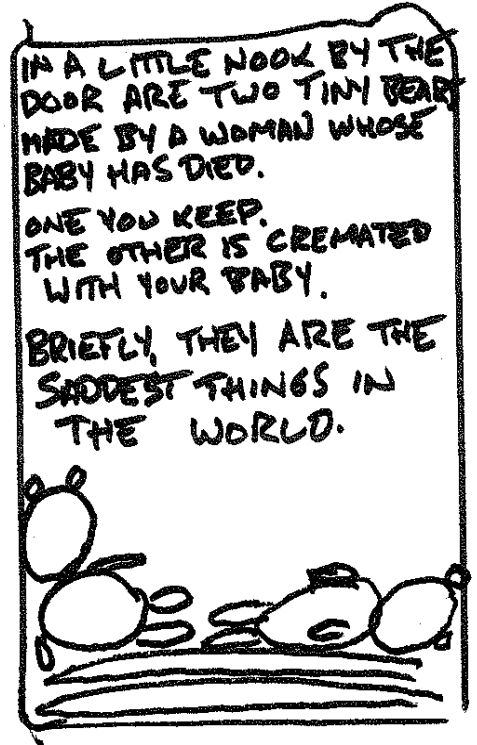
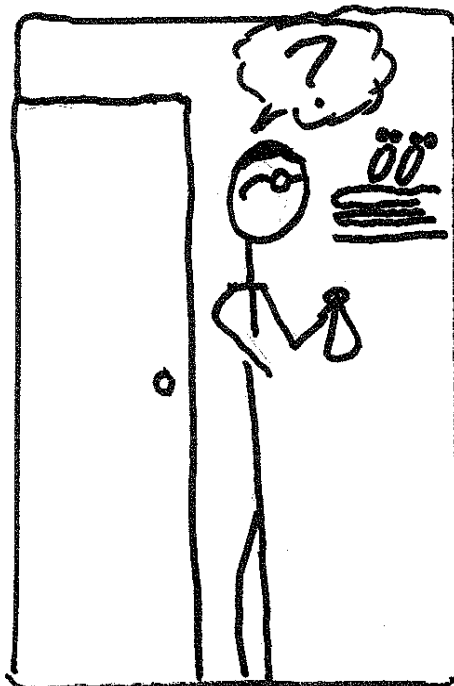
JUST TO WARN YOU
SHE'LL BE BRIGHT
RED WHEN
SHE'S BORN

DO YOU WANT
TO HOLD
HER?

DOCTOR

SOCIAL WORKER

MIDWIFE



FUNERAL DIRECTORS ARE BIZARRELY ENTHUSIASTIC PEOPLE.
INTERUPT THEM.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

HAVE YOU PICKED
OUT AN URN?

WE'D LIKE
THE LITTLE HEART
IF THAT WOULD
BE LARGE
ENOUGH

USUALLY YES

BABIES DON'T USUALLY
PRODUCE MORE THAN
A TABLESPOON OF
ASH.

INTERUPT
HERE!

LAST
CHANCE!

SKIP THE
NEXT PANEL
IF CREMATION
DETAILS WILL
UPSET YOU.

BUT, YOU SEE THEY PUT
BABIES ON A TRAY AT
THE FRONT OF THE
FIRE SO SOMETIMES
THIER COFFINS PRODUCE
A LOT OF ASH...
..... BONE
GRINDING MACHINE....
SO YOU MIGHT NEED A
BIGGER URN.

OVERSHARE!

TMI!

LATER...

HI- SORRY
AMBER'S ASHES
DON'T FIT IN THE
HEART.

HOW
ABOUT
X?
Y?
Z?

NO, TOO SMALL
NO, TOO SMALL
NO, TOO SMALL

YOU SUSPECT YOUR
DAUGHTER HAS HAD
A VIKING FUNERAL
BY ACCIDENT.

THE MOST SURREAL
MOMENT OF YOUR LIFE

YOU

FUNERAL
DIRECTOR'S
CAR PARK

SHOPPING BAG
(WITH YOUR
DAUGHTER IN IT.)

(I WAS EXPECTING
A DAUGHTER
AND I GET A
SCULPTURE
INSTEAD?)

SECOND MOST SURREAL

OUR OLDER DAUGHTER

WHEN I IMAGINED
YOU PLAYING
WITH YOUR SISTER
THIS IS NOT
WHAT I HAD
IN MIND

PEOPLE WILL OFFER ADVICE. YOU WILL IGNORE IT.

ADVICE I COULD NOT
FOLLOW.

I CRIED OVER SOME TEDDY BEARS AND HEAPS OF OTHER STUFF.
YOU'RE THE MAN, SO YOU NEED TO KEEP IT TOGETHER!
LINDA GETS TO BREAK DOWN NOW. YOUR TURN COMES IN A MONTH OR TWO.
MAN UP!

I CAN'T BE MISERABLE ALL THE TIME.
WHEN HE TELLS JOKES IT MAKES ME REALLY UNCOMFORTABLE.
HE SHOULD BE SOLEMN ALL THE TIME.

KEEP YOUR ROUTINE. EXERCISE, EAT RIGHT, SLEEP.
I ATE SO MUCH CHOCOLATE, I BOUGHT SHOES WITHOUT LACES.

YOU
NO
ACTUALLY THIS IS ME.

TRUST GOD HAS A PLAN AND IS TEACHING YOU SOMETHING.
GOD, IF YOU ARE READING THIS COMIC, SEND ME AN EMAIL NEXT TIME, OK?

HEY! I JUST HEARD THE NEWS! CONGRATULATIONS! DO YOU WANT A BOY OR A GIRL? EITHER SO LONG AS ITS HEALTHY?

STAY STRONG!
I ONLY HAD A FINITE AMOUNT OF "STRONG" AND I DIDN'T USE IT UP IN CONVERSATIONS.

ITS NOT FAIR TO HATE THESE PEOPLE. TEMPTING, BUT UNFAIR.

SOME PEOPLE WON'T GIVE ADVICE. THEY WILL, INSTEAD, WAIT HELPLESSLY UNTIL YOU ASK FOR SOMETHING, AND THEN SHOCK YOU WITH THEIR GENEROSITY.
WATCH FOR THEM.

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE CONVENIENT FOR OTHER PEOPLE. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO FEEL, EXPRESS AND WORK THROUGH YOUR GRIEF.

YOUR LIFE HAS PERMANENTLY CHANGED.

ACCEPTING THAT
SHE WAS REAL
THAT SHE DIED
THAT'S THE WAY THROUGH
WHAT YOU ARE FEELING
RIGHT NOW.

DON'T KEEP THE PAIN
TO YOURSELF

TELL PEOPLE

THE LAST THING I NEED TO
TELL YOU IS, OTHER
PEOPLE WHOSE BABIES
HAVE DIED ARE
HIDDEN
ALL
AROUND
YOU.

YOUR GRIEF
IS INTENSELY
PERSONAL,

BUT
YOU DON'T
HAVE TO BE
ALONE

