

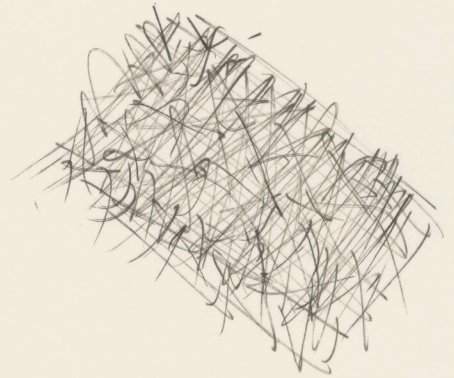
# GOOD-LOOKING GUY AND THE WELL-KEPT FIG





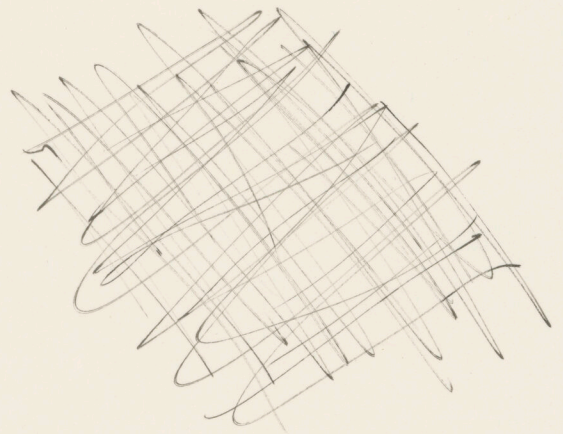


There was a farmer who was so handsome his crops refused to grow. They said, "Why should we will ourselves above ground? We could only disappoint; what shame would befall us if we were to sprout with at best a tiny fraction of the handsomeness of the farmer who planted us?"



The farmer tried everything he could to persuade the crops to deliver on their latent potential, but to no avail. Embarrassing for him, yes, and doubly so because the farmer earned half of his living as a motivational speaker.





"You know I begin a lecture tour soon! How can I have credibility with my ticketed patrons when I tell them about achieving their goals if my own crops can't be bothered to show themselves to the air?"





Not just this: the farmer had designs beyond motivational speaking: he wanted to be a fashion model. A handsome farmer is in quite a predicament: reach ultimate beauteousness and become a model, or, ideally, a supermodel (the latter of which leaves no time for one's original avocation), or work so hard on the farm that his hypothetical beauteousness can only be inferred ~~by~~ ~~at~~ through dusty winks.



This outrageously good-looking farmer had an idea: what if he reserved his mental concentration solely for the farm and made his lecture engagements with the bare minimum of thought? The words were prepared; he need only recite them to uphold his side of the contracts. What if he could somehow separate his brain from his body?



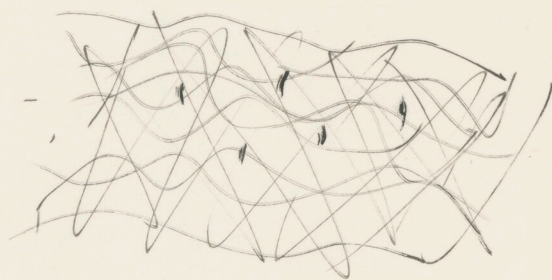


The O.G.L.F. (outrageously good-looking farmer) did just that!  
He detached his head, left it in a large fishbowl  
in the field and drew facial features on his chest.



The motivational speaking tour was a smashing success! Each audience member told a friend, who told a friend, who told a friend, ad infinitum! Admittedly, no one gave much attention to the content of these lectures; that wasn't the point of motivational speaking anyway; it was more the speaker's tone, cadence and gestures that mattered. Beans and seedlings back home had better listening skills...



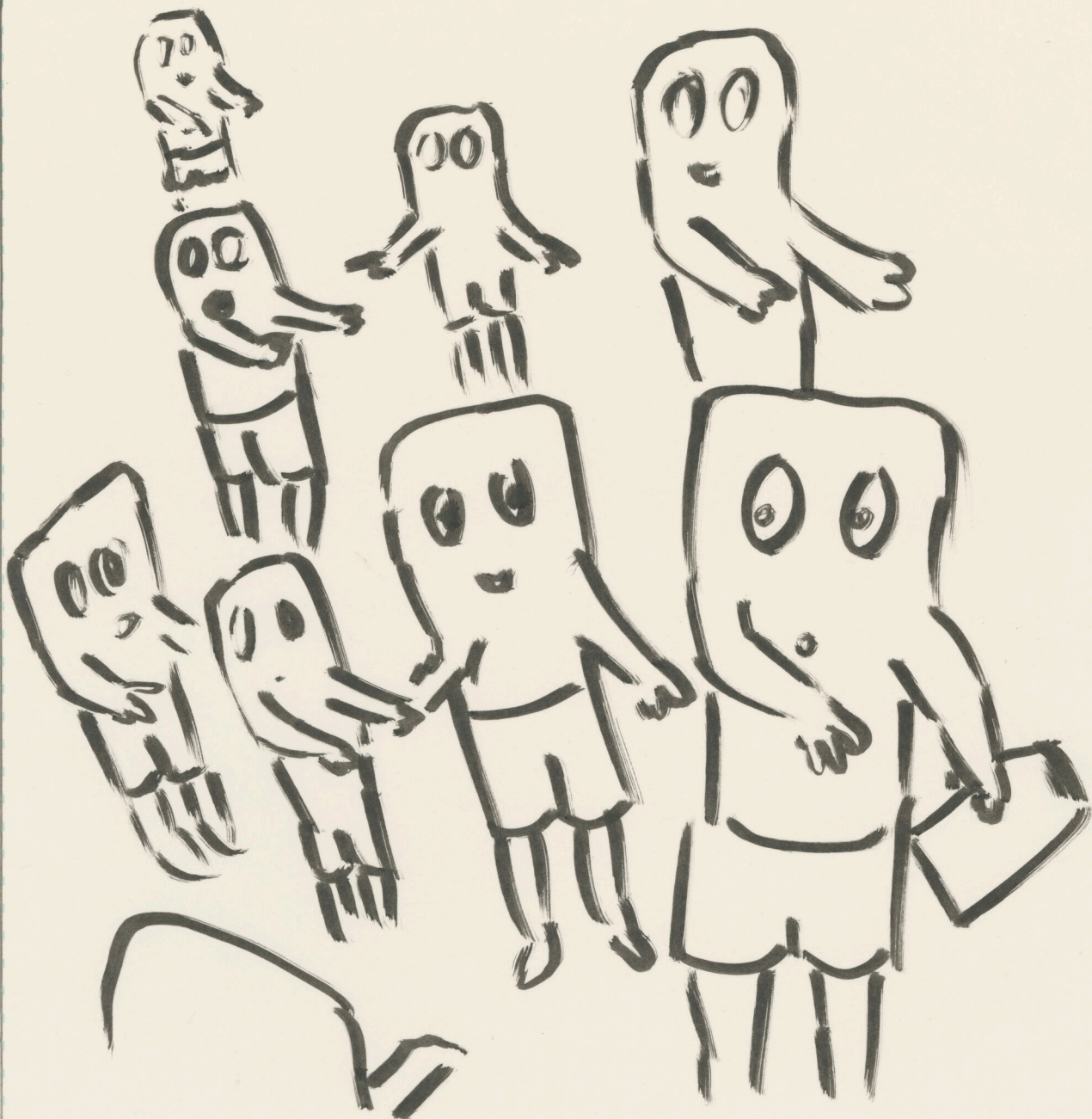


With gentle coaching from his fishbowl head the crops peeked above the topsoil. Tentatively they strove to be as green, moist (but not too moist!) and robust as could be expected for their species of crop in this climate such as it is.



Meanwhile, the motivational speaking was winning crowds over and was lucrative enough, at first. Alas, there was a limit to his success. Audience members typically attended only once, thrice at most, and they would tell two others, who would also attend, once each on average, and then those word-of-mouth attendees would tell zero friends or occasionally three. The true obstacle was geography. The farmer was afraid of large bodies of water so his tour was effectively landlocked.





The farmer's head in the field told the rest of him out on the lecture circuit that he should hire others to impersonate him. This would guarantee a larger reach, simultaneous speeches and more money. A key element of the plan was that he needed to inflate the size of the crowds. He knew that humans believe things more if they see their peers seeming to believe what they themselves are being told, so he paid audience plants. Many of them, prior to their hiring, had expressed their admiration by detaching their own heads and drawing facial features on their chests. Some of these audience plants were his lecturing doppelgangers on their off night. There was a chest people party after each lecture. The bouncer (the bounciest, chestiest chest person) had to follow two rules: no heads allowed, and any audience plants got to cut the line.



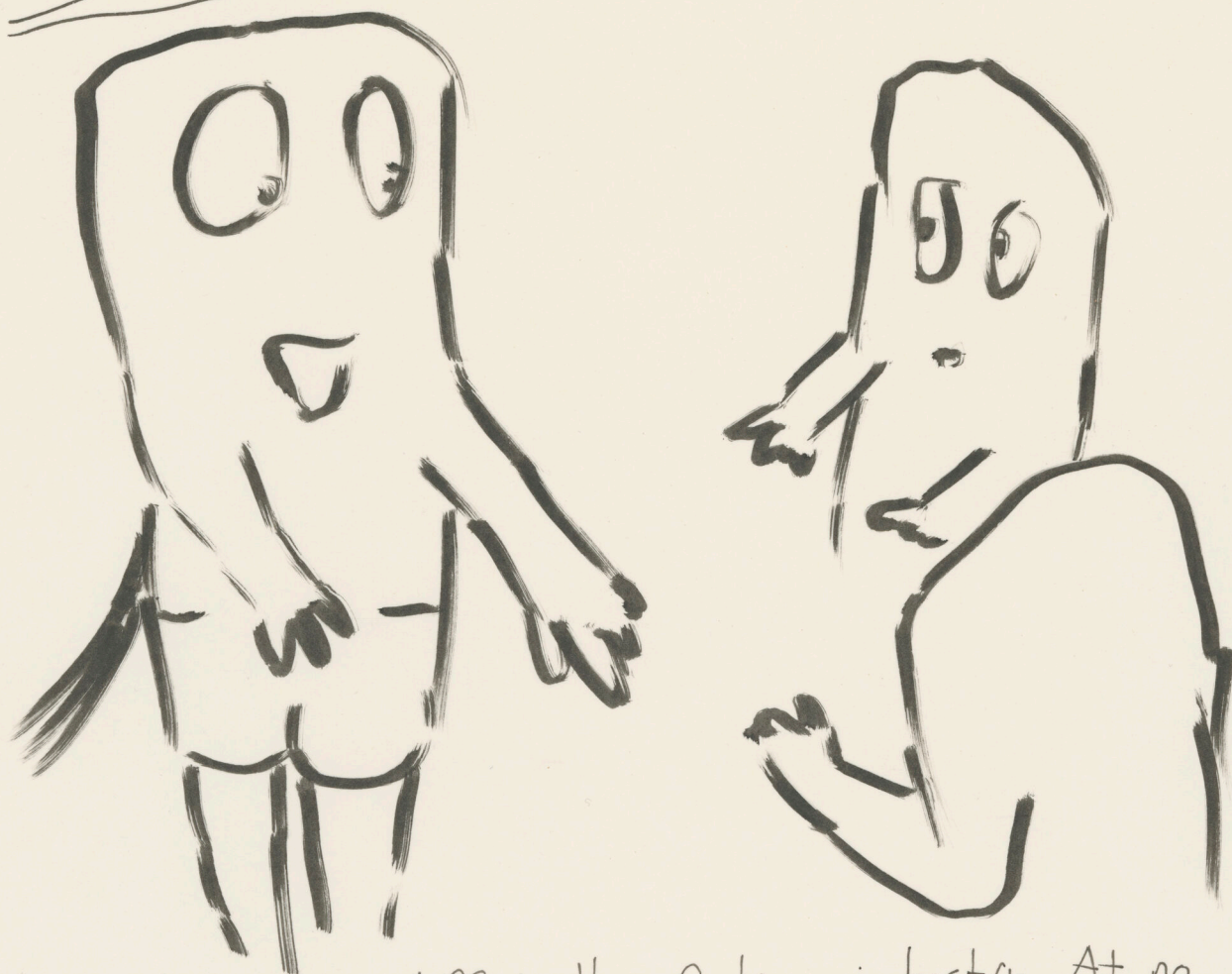


These human plants had much more to celebrate than their inanimate, croppy counterparts on the farm. Invasive ivy grew, vines, all manner of exotic flora exponentiated, a pair of beanstalks of questionable provenance danced a futile dance then withered, but all that grew with any purpose was a little fig. A fine fig, a well-kept fig, yes, but the farmer desired some yield beyond a solitary piece of fruit.



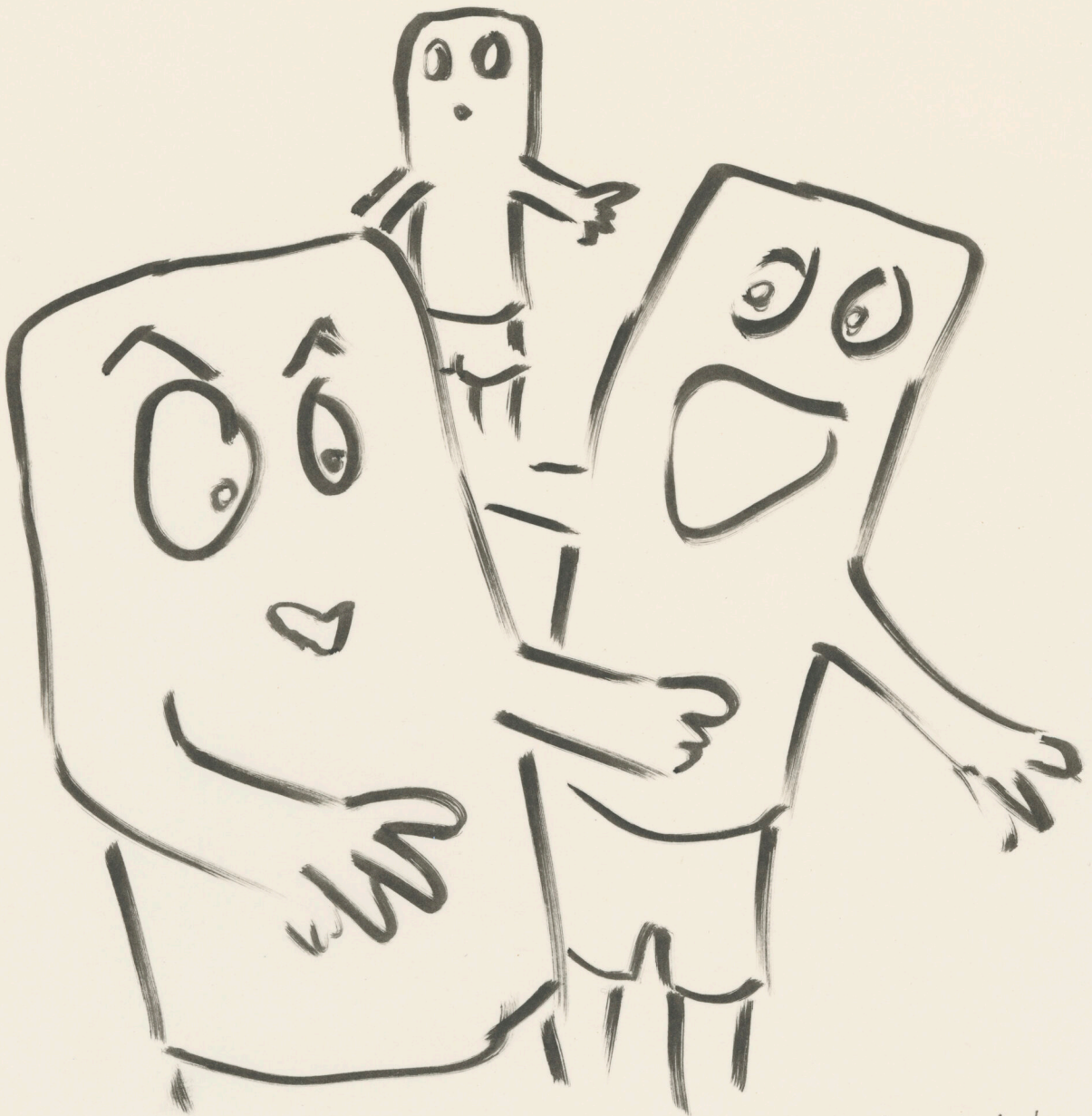


A business impresario who introduced herself after a lecture helped the O.G.L.F.'s dream come true! He became a fashion model! He strutted across catwalks near and far, wherever did not require swimming or boating to get there.



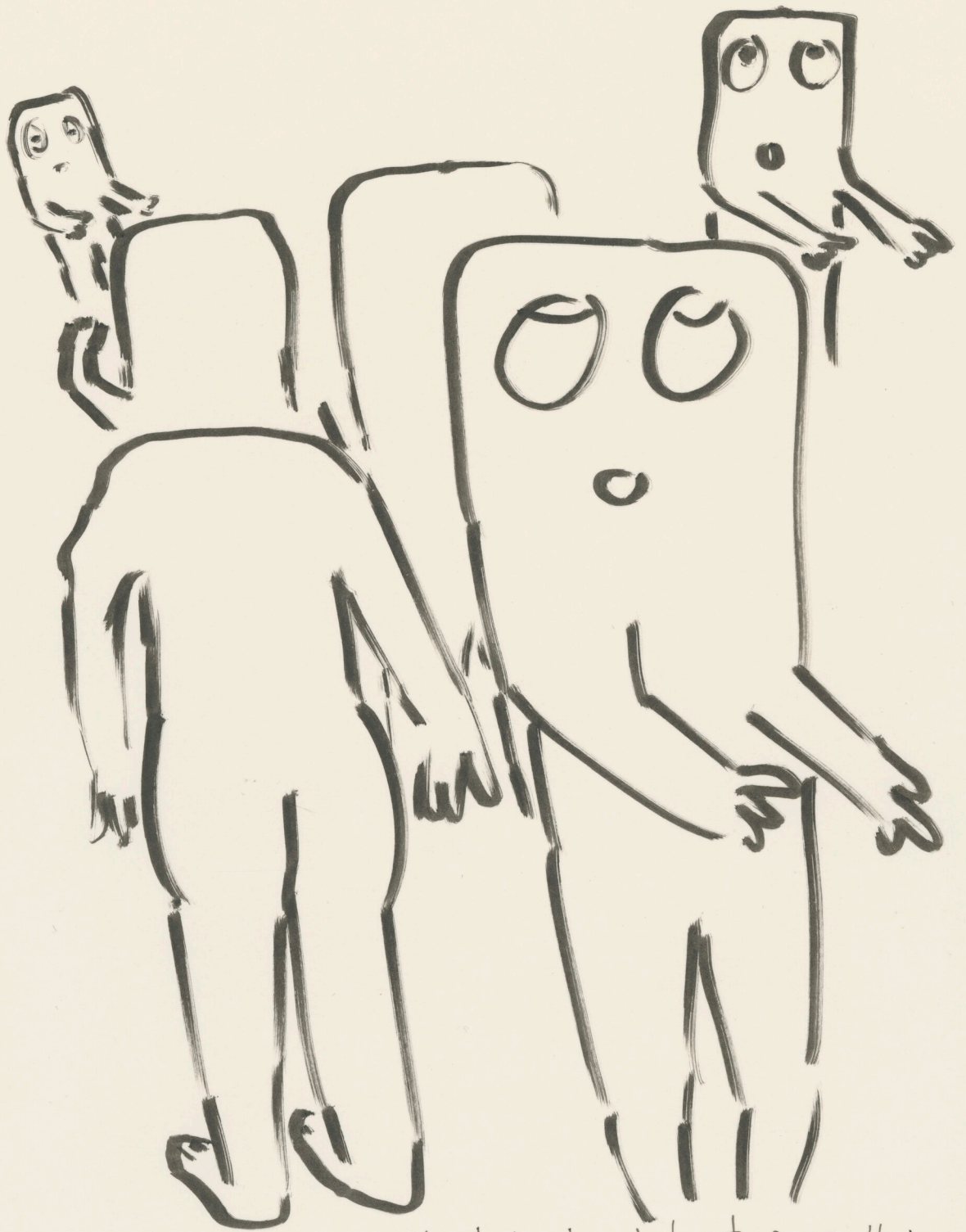
Competition was stiff in the fashion industry. At no small expense he convinced his doppelgangers to become fashion models too, sharing the load of his conflicting and prohibitive schedule. Who would know the difference?





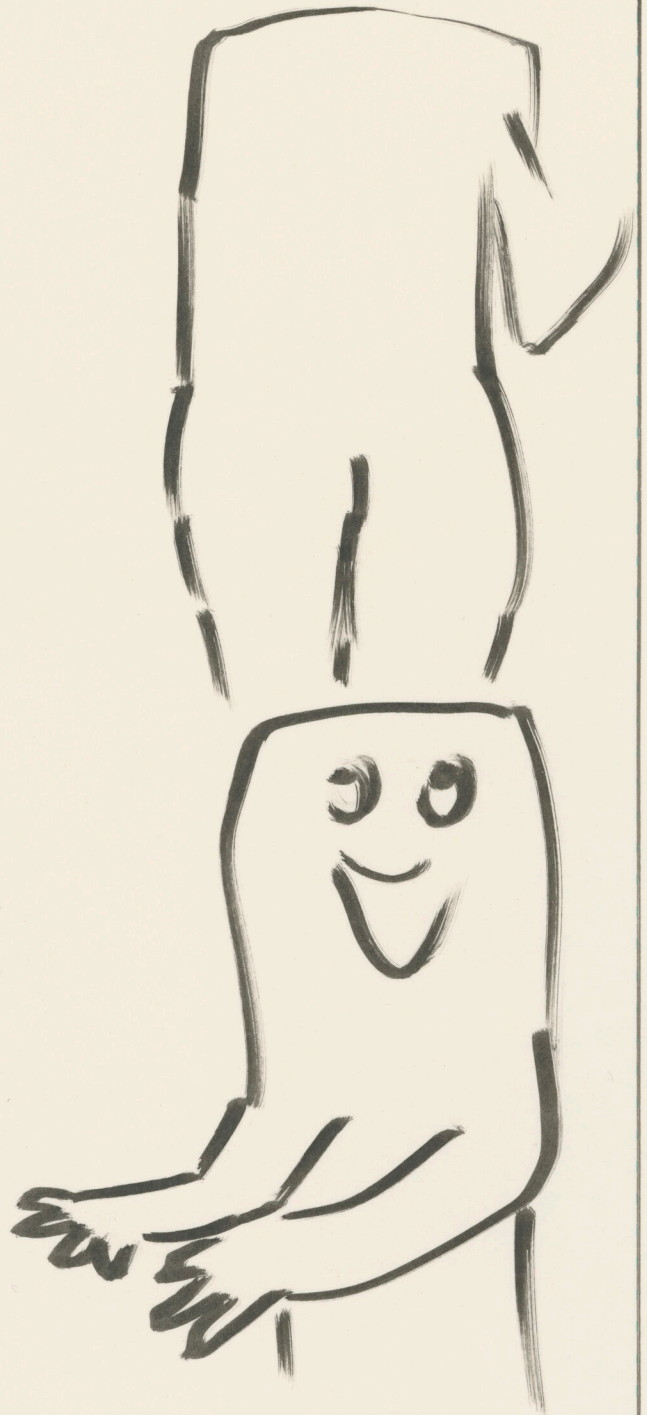
The fashion shows were run by chest people, the models were chest people, the audience were chest people, and that included the same plants as were at the lectures. The audience plants were superfluous; city folk and country folk descended on the fashion arenas feverishly, biting with their painted-on teeth and screaming from their painted on mouths, their painted-on brows furrowing. The more reasoned among them kept the peace and would have rubbed their own chins but there were no chins, only eyes and mouths and eyebrows.





Eventually, because no one had heads, at least near their bodies, the fashion models stopped wearing clothing and were just bodies strutting to and fro. What value is shame to an unthinking machine?





The attendees of the fashion shows stopped wearing clothes too. They were a bit late in joining this trend, but that is common for the unwashed masses in their adoption of the fashion trends of yesteryear.



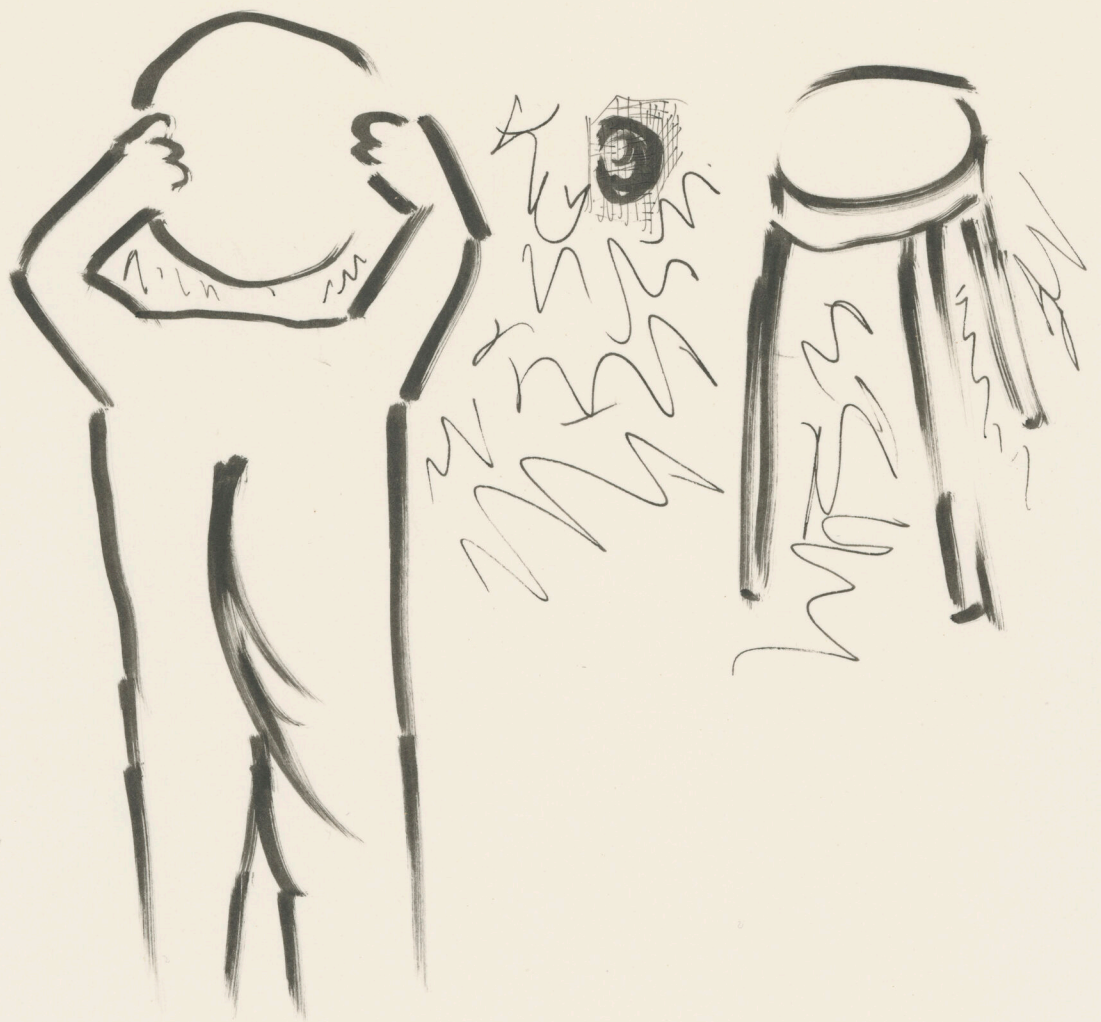
Chest people swarmed around villages, towns, cities, greater metropolitan areas, carrying their briefcases, umbrellas, lunchboxes, canteens of hot soup.





What became of the heads of these earliest chest people, those who were at the fashion shows? Their heads are buried in the dirt, staring at one another and trying to speak! That is where the heads are.





The most important head of all, the head that had instigated this change amongst the entire human race, was removed from the fishbowl by its own body and was put back on said body. The farmer was complete again and he had grown a fig. A glorious, plump, moist, ripe and healthy fig!





He took the fig out of its fig cage, licked it, put it in his mouth and let it dissolve into a delicious mush as he wandered the farm with an oddly unfamiliar sense of accomplishment.