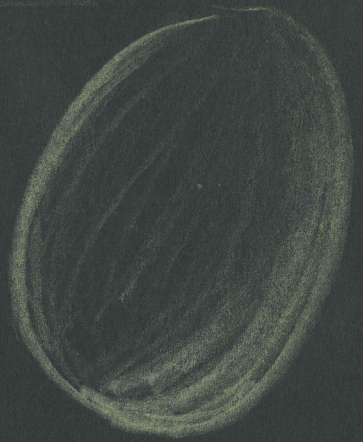
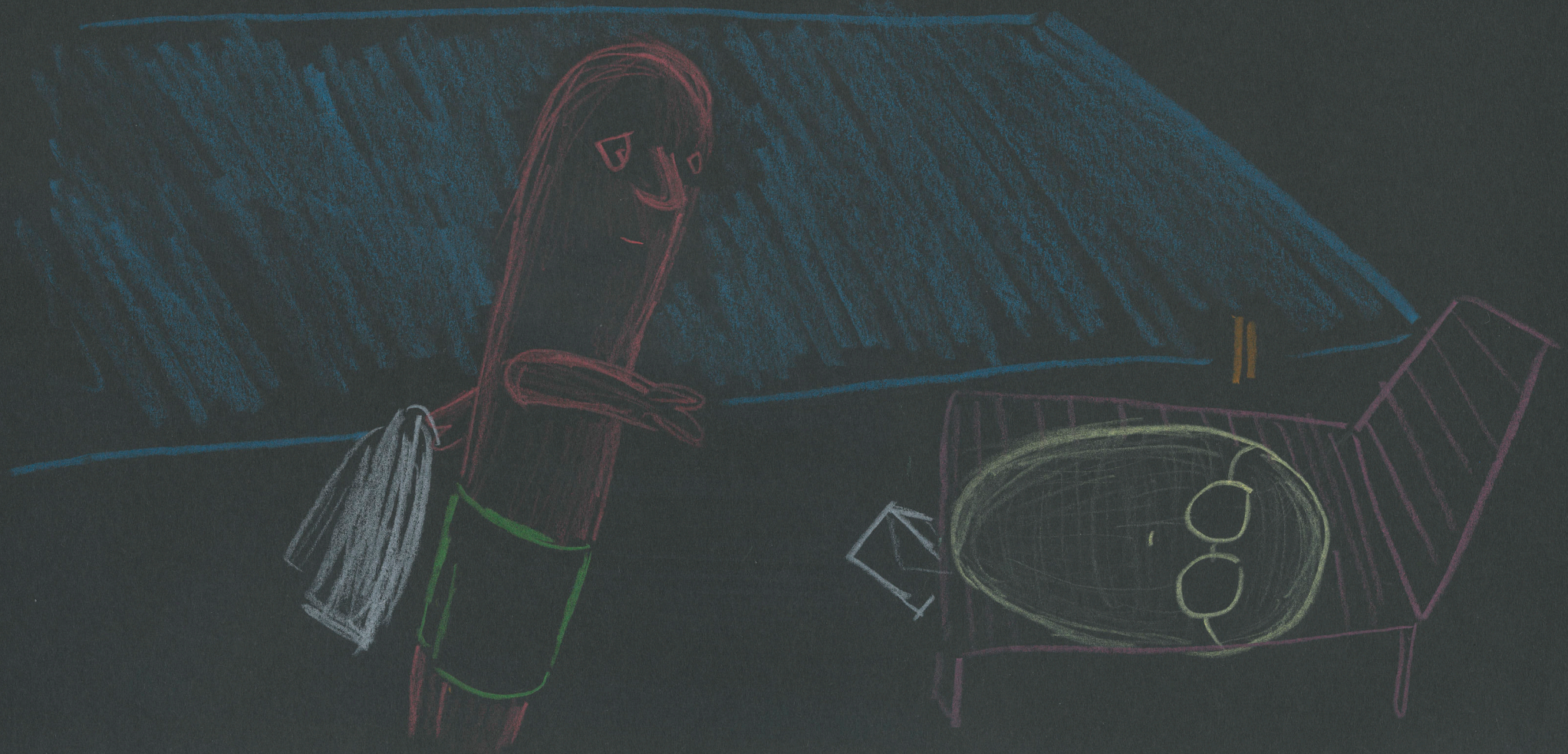


Fushanoonoo and the Golden Egg



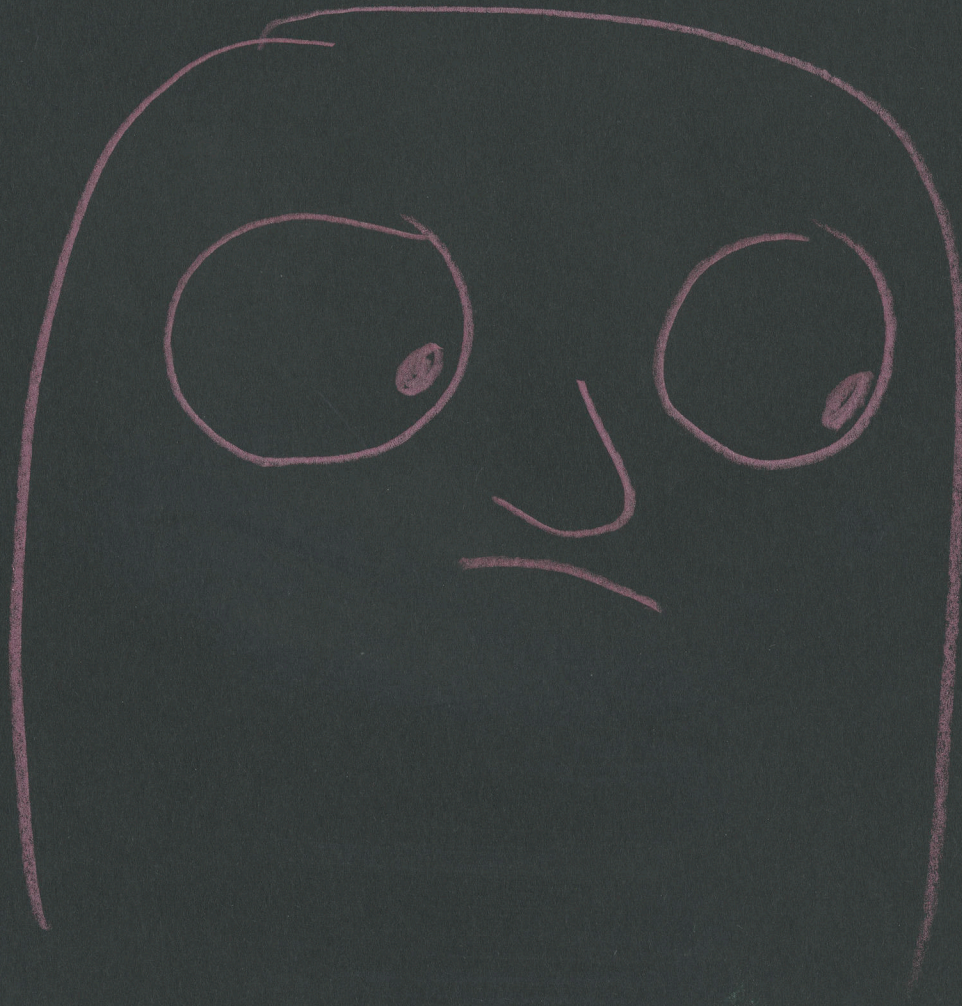
A hot dog named Fushanoonoo was wandering around a hotel pool when he saw a golden egg. The golden egg was tanning. Fushanoonoo walked over to introduce himself because he was a sociable hot dog. The golden egg, who, by chance (and conveniently for Fushanoonoo, whose memory was not what it used to be), went by the name of the Golden Egg (the 'the' was optional), asked Fushanoonoo to lick an envelope for a post-bound letter.



"I wrote this letter but lackaday I have no tongue, I am an egg.
So it would be an honor to have the one and only Fushanoono spit
on my letter. This letter is for a close family friend, who deserves
envelope-saliva of the finest pedigree."



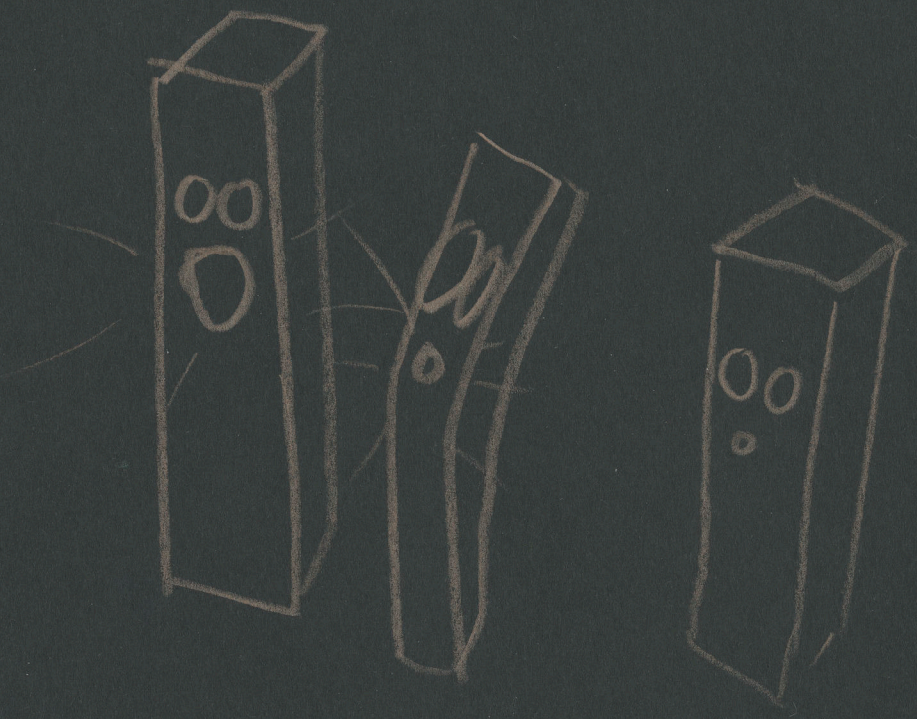
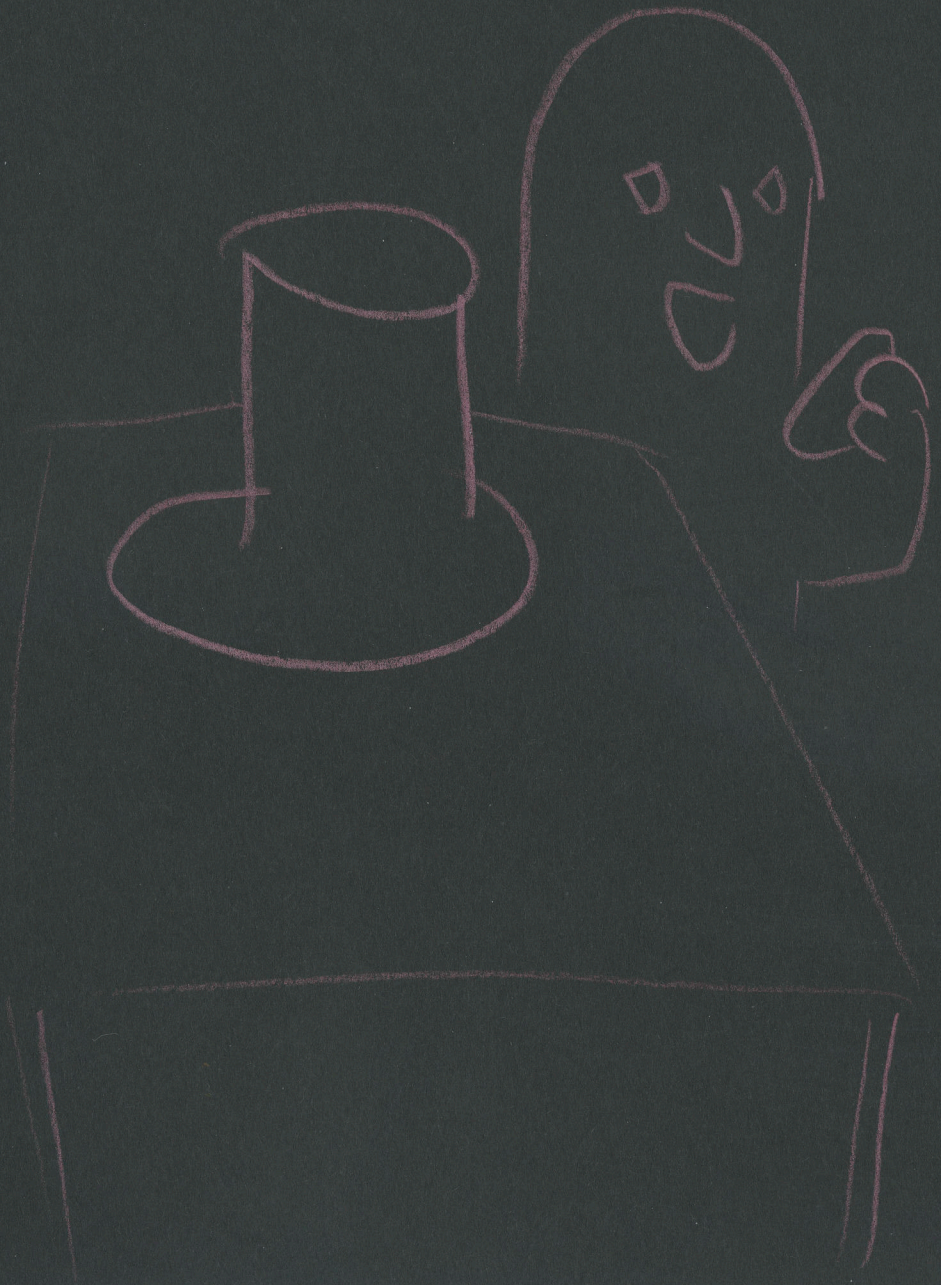
"Say what?" Fushanoono thought. "No one knows I am former show business phenom Fushanoono the Dancing Hot Dog. Why does a golden egg all of a sudden recognize me?"



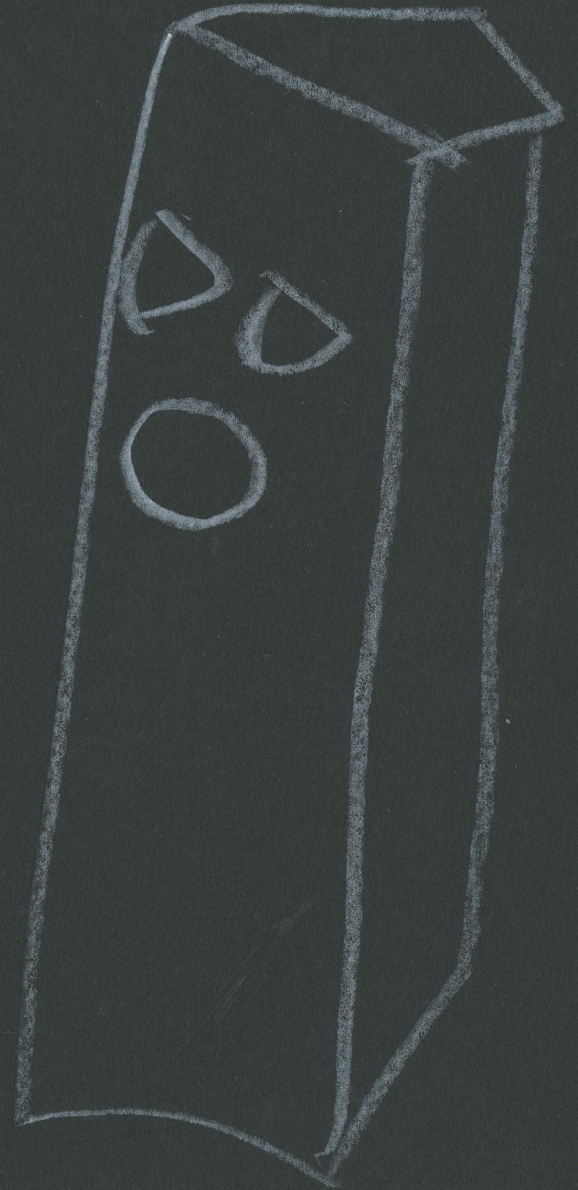
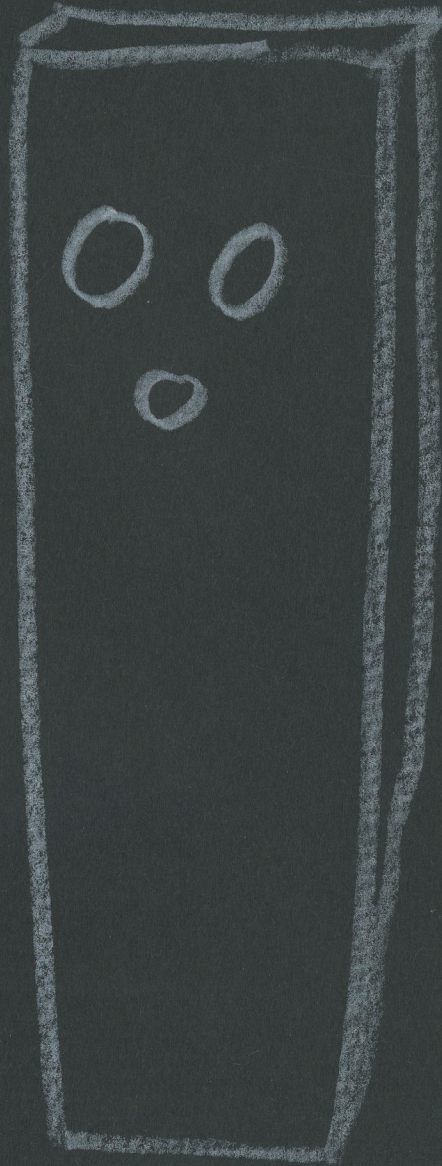
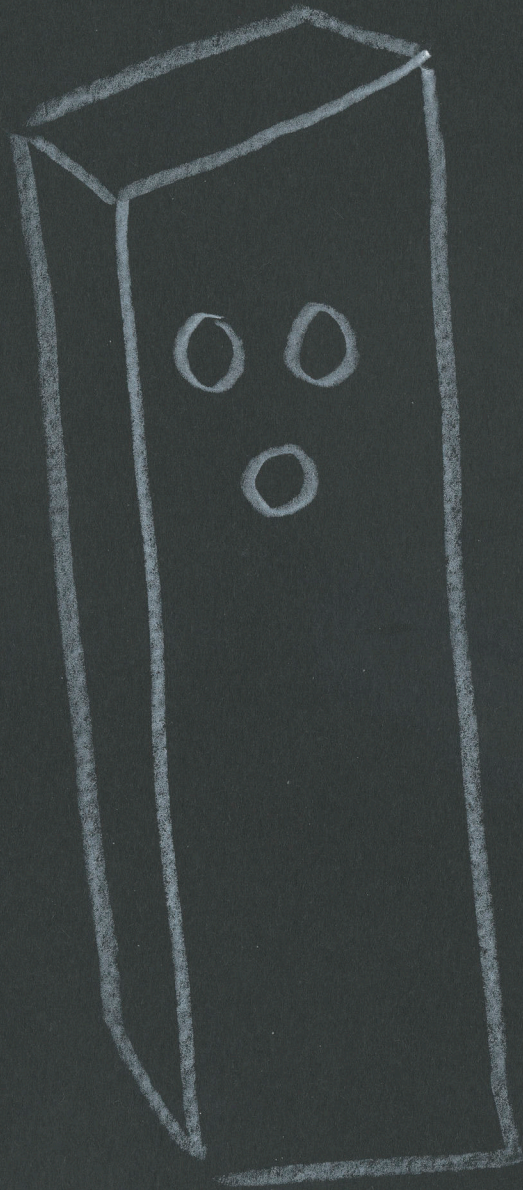
Much to Fushanoonoo's surprise and chagrin, his tongue lick was, in fact, a contract. Fushanoonoo had just entered a binding agreement to perform five times a night, at 7:15, 8:30, 9:45, 11:00 and 12:30, at the Hyenaland Resort and Casina. If he hadn't been basking in the glow of his own celebrity (however fading it might be), he would have seen that the Golden Egg's envelope was actually stationery that said "HYENALAND RESORT & CASINO". He would also have seen that the multi-lined return address contained the details of his indefinite employment.



Before the first show, Fushanoonoo was sitting in the green room eating hummus on pita bread. The three singing french fries were warming up by singing arpeggios.



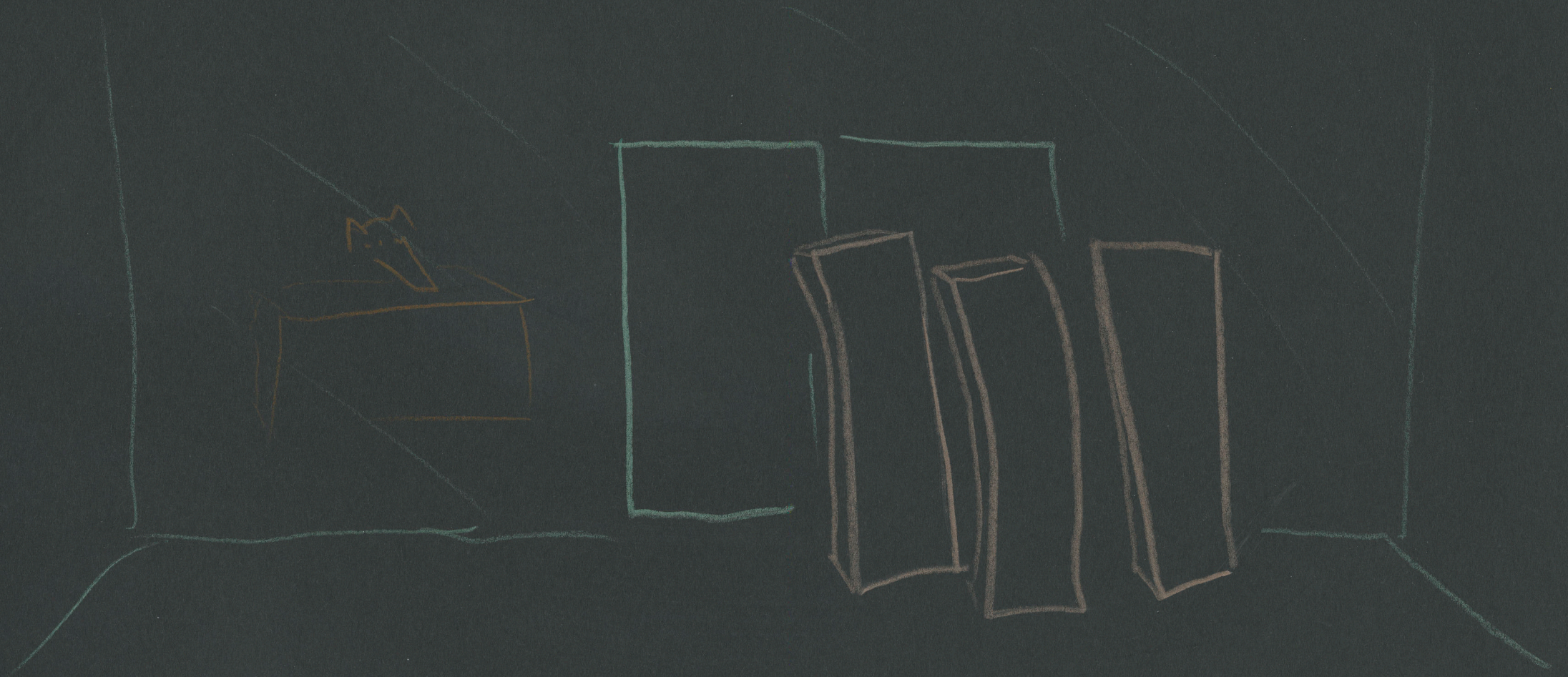
The french fries were named Bash, which was short for Sebastian (Bass), Barry (Baritone) and Tenny, which was short for Tennyson (Tenor).



"Barry! Good arpeggiating," said Bash with a wink. Barry usually warmed up by bellowing a single note for as long as he could hold his breath, then, ostensibly to save his delicate voice, did pushups until curtain.



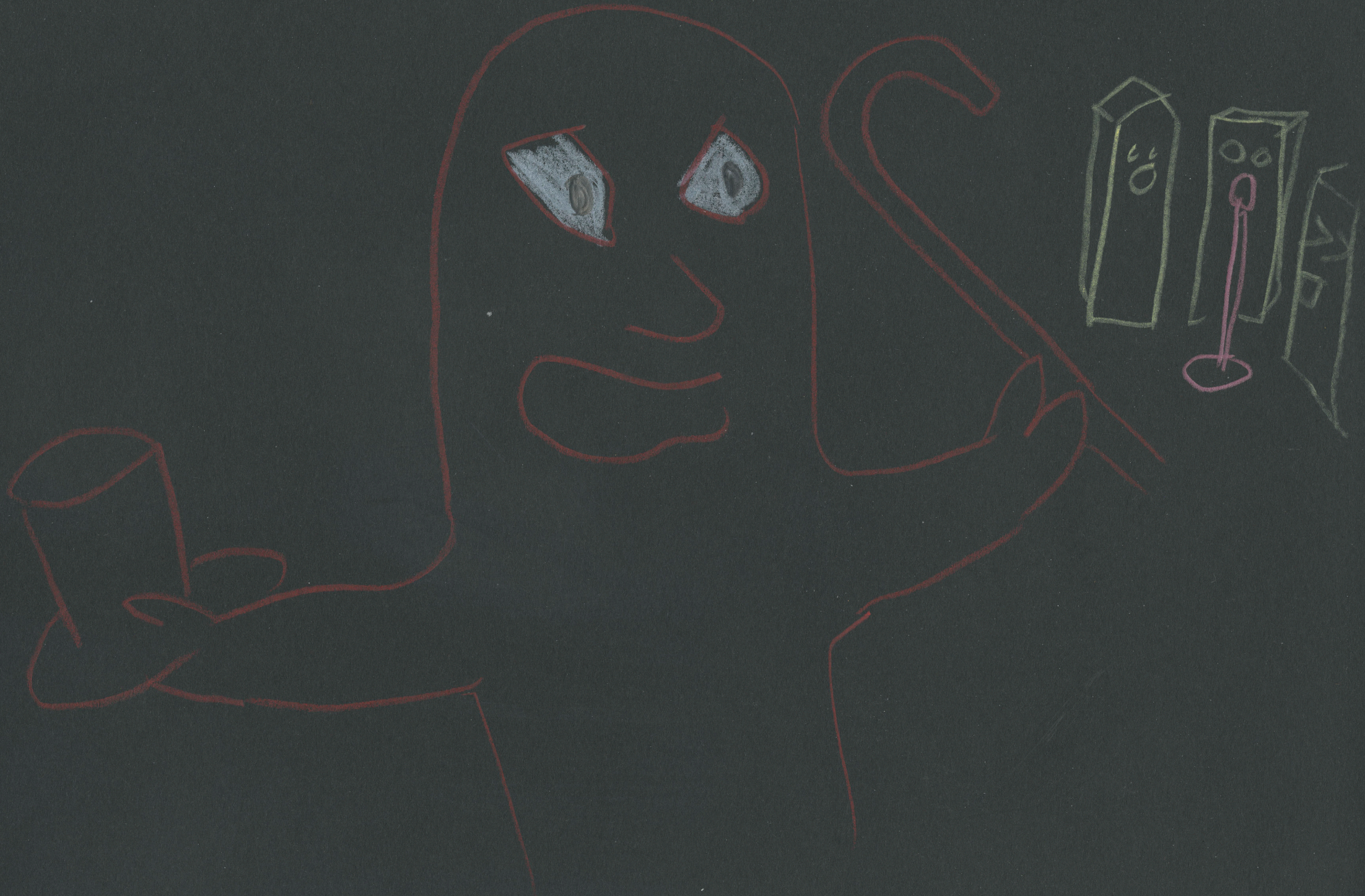
After two weeks passed, it was time for Fushanoonoo's first paycheck. He hadn't read the fine print (or any print, for that matter). He was entitled to no compensation, just snacks backstage. The singing french fries got wind of this and went over to the office that belonged to the owner of the casino. If the star performer earned no money, it stood to reason that neither could the singing french fries.



"Tell you what," said Mr. Hyena, cracking his hyena knuckles. "Tell that hotshot Fushanoo that we will give him a golden egg. Not 'give' but lease. Or borrow, to be more accurate. Share, let's say."



The singing french fries were not employed directly by the casino, but by Fush-
anoonoo, which was a stretch because he was essentially an unwilling volunteer.



Lickety split Fushanoo finished a show and came backstage. There in the green room was the Golden Egg, who didn't seem to recognize the entertainer he himself had brought on board.



The G.E. said, "You must be Fushanoono." (Yes, but you should have known that.) "You can call me the G.E." (Go easy on the tans, fella. We met already.)



Fushanoonoo was baffled, "To what do I owe the pleasure of this visit?"



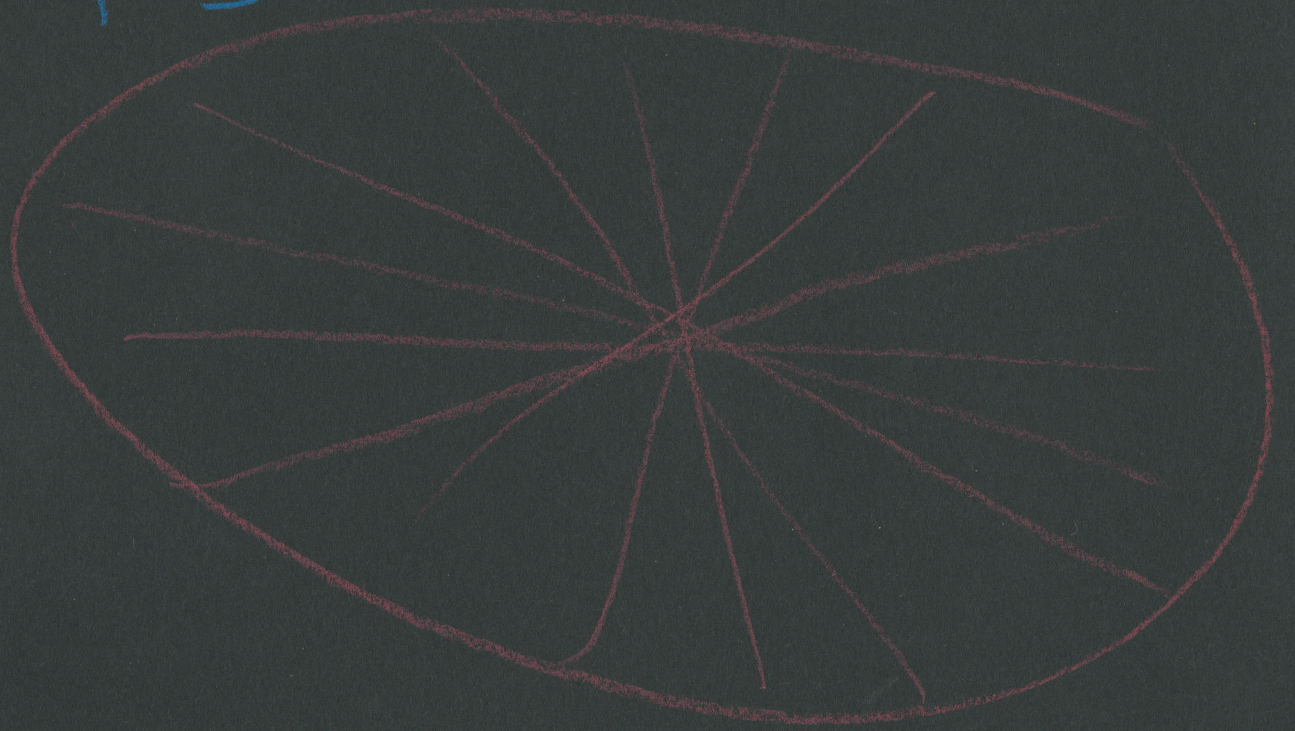
"In lieu of compensation, I am going to help you find material rewards in other ways."



The Golden Egg led Fushanooonoo to the roulette table. "Put half on red."



The crouper crouped. Fushy won!



"Everything on red."



Fushy won!



"Everything on black."



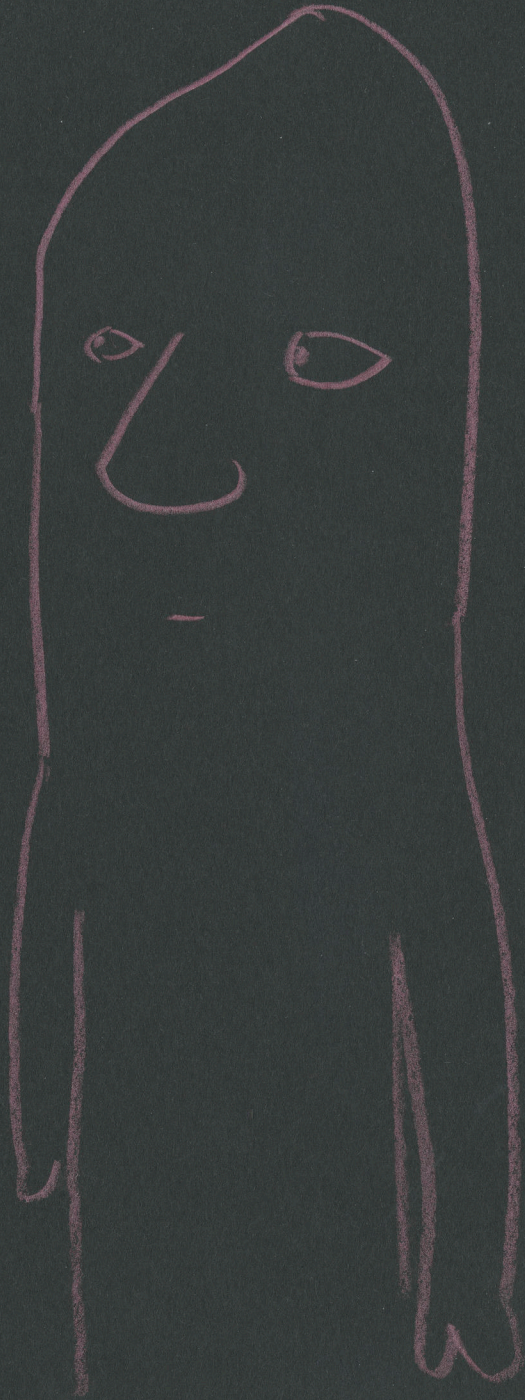
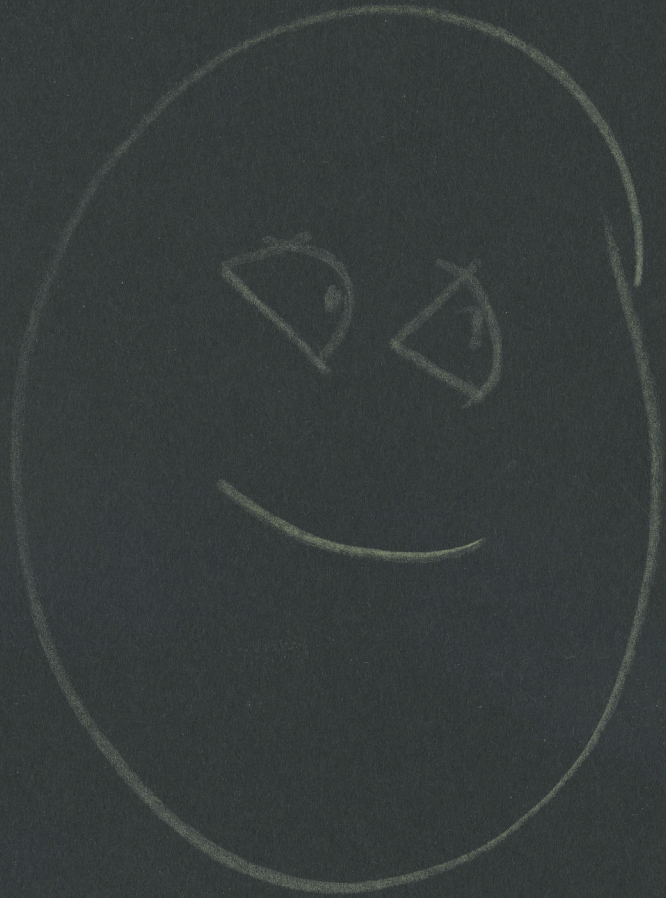
Fushy did a backflip. The G.E. said, "Let's quit while we're ahead, guy. Come on. I want to show you something."



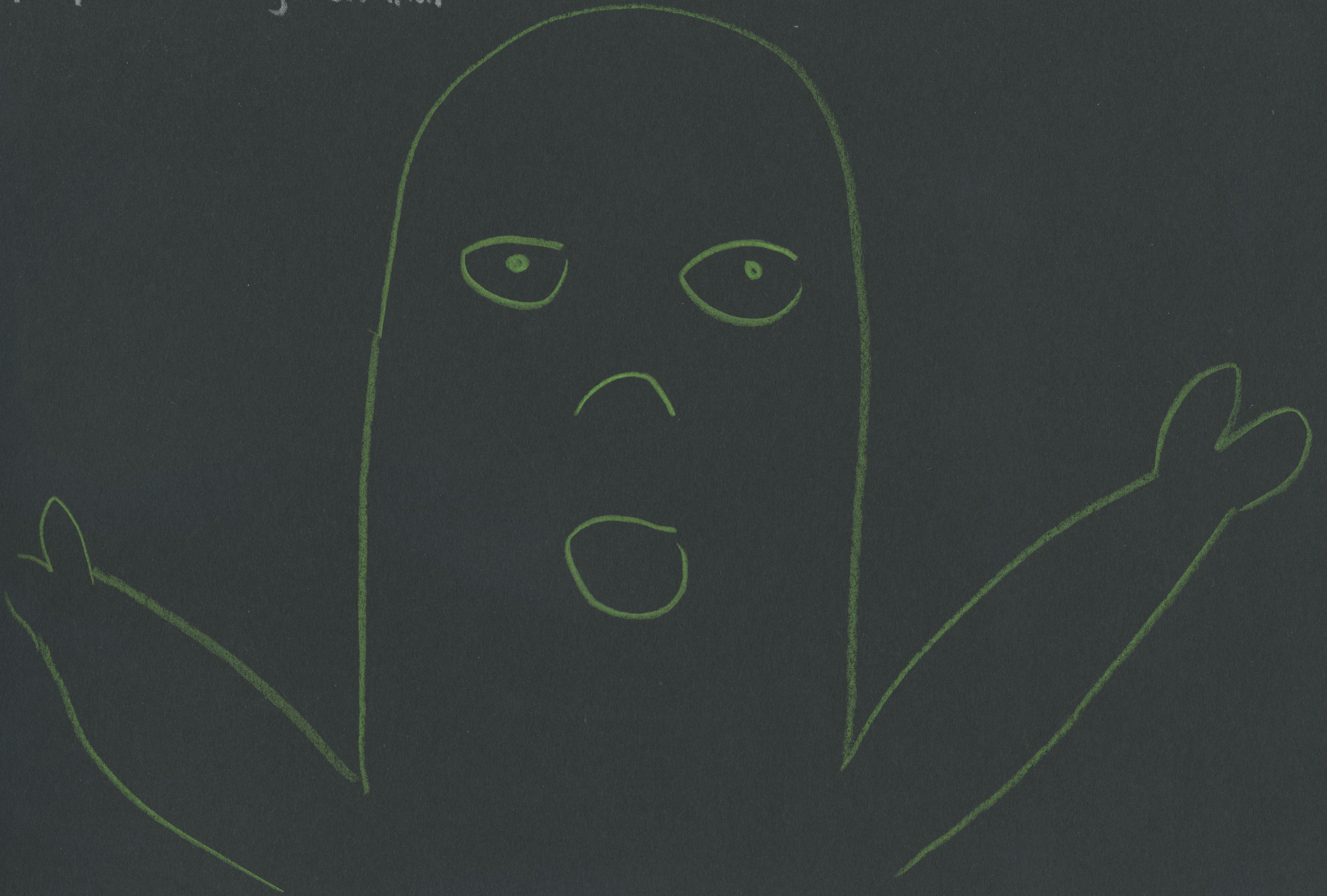
They went to the slot machines. Guess whose toothy grin graced a whole row of machines. It was the works: top hat, cane, the singers. What would be the harm in taking one of his own slots for a test drive?



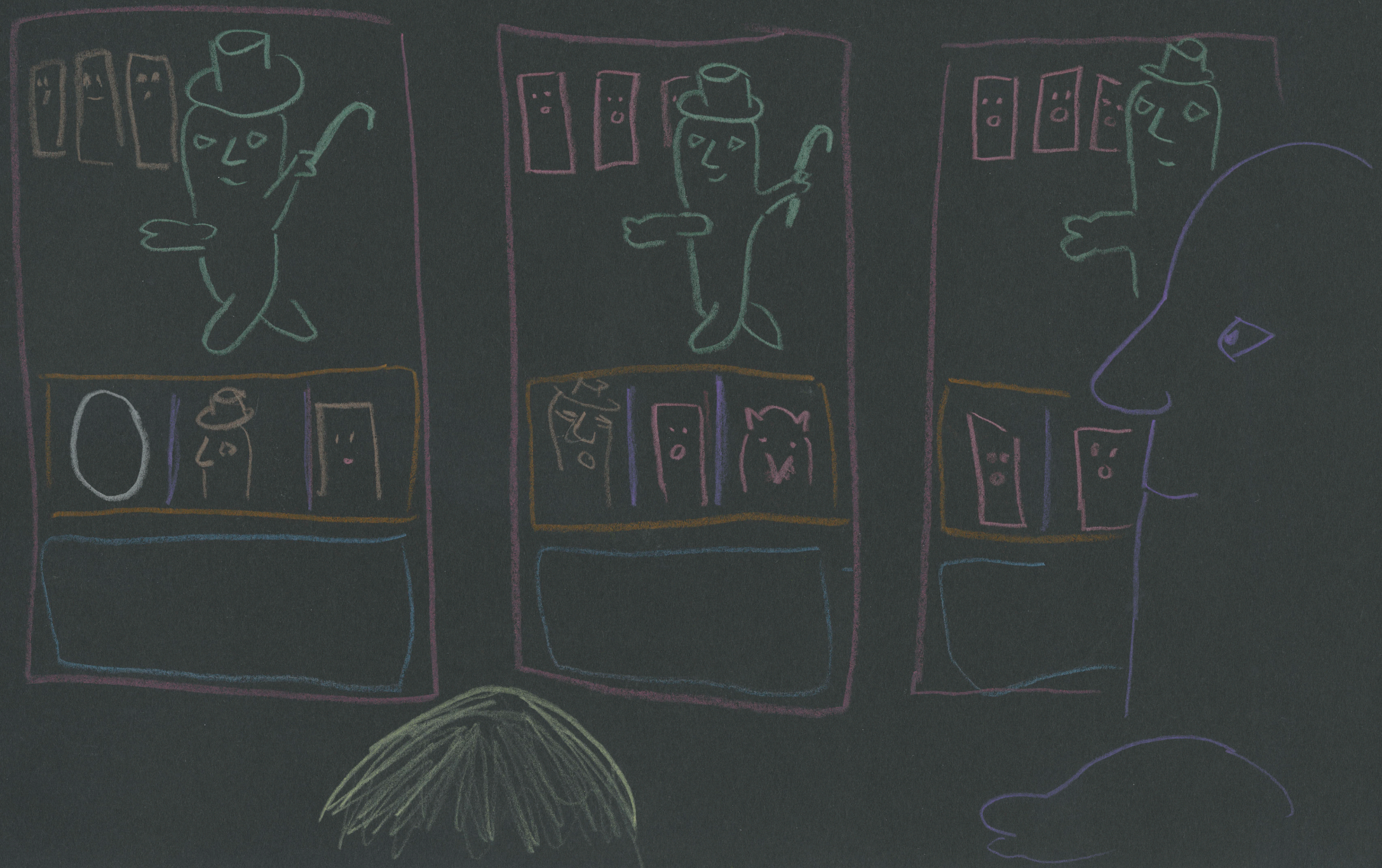
It would have to be later. "Listen. I'm not your minder," the Golden Egg said. "You'll do what you want to do. But curtain for the 9:45 show was two minutes ago."



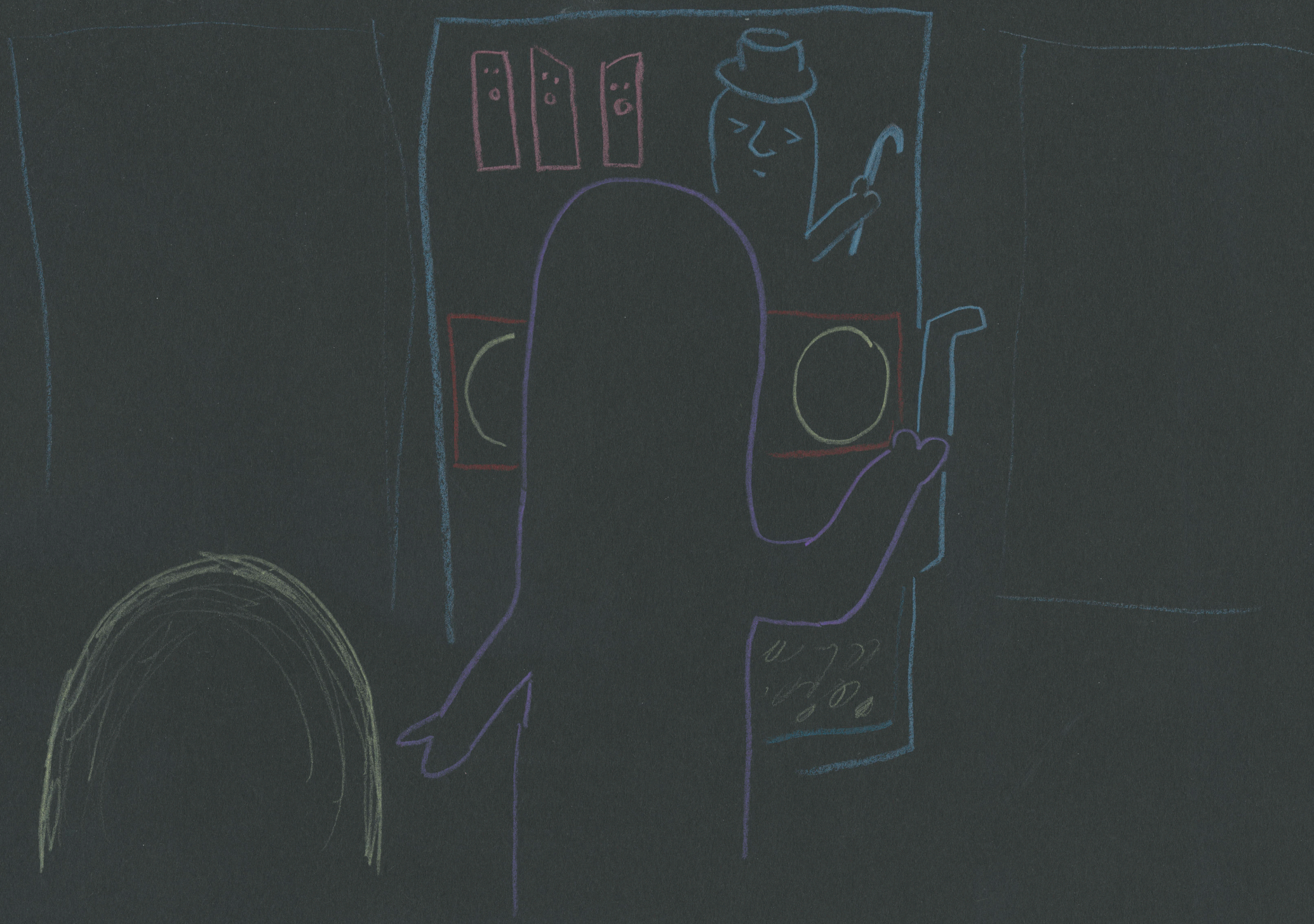
Fushanoonoo had lost track of time because of all the oxygen they pumped into Hyenaland.



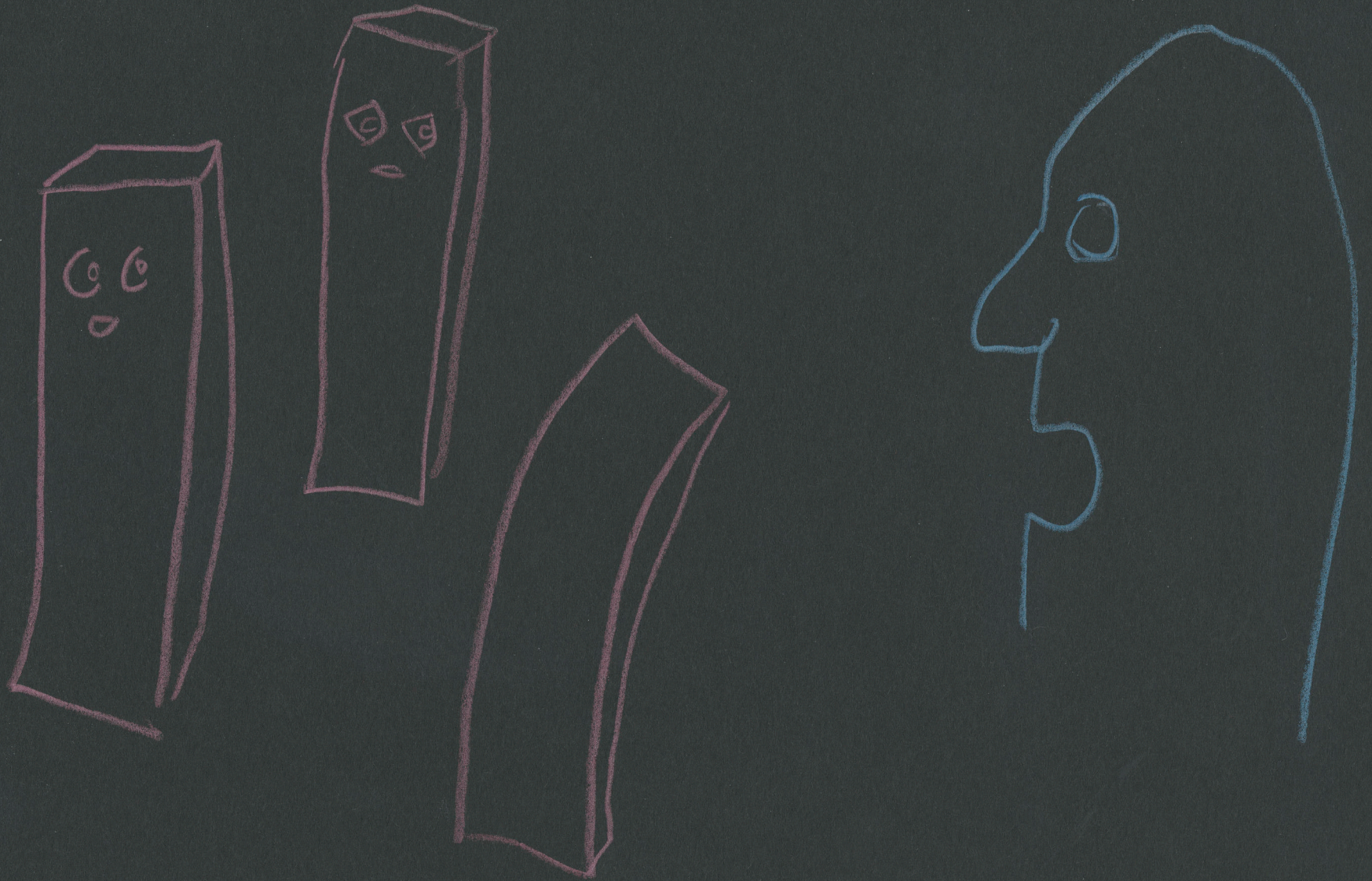
After an uncertain encore (these were prohibited by Hyenaland management), Fushanoonoo ran back over to the slot machines with the G.E.



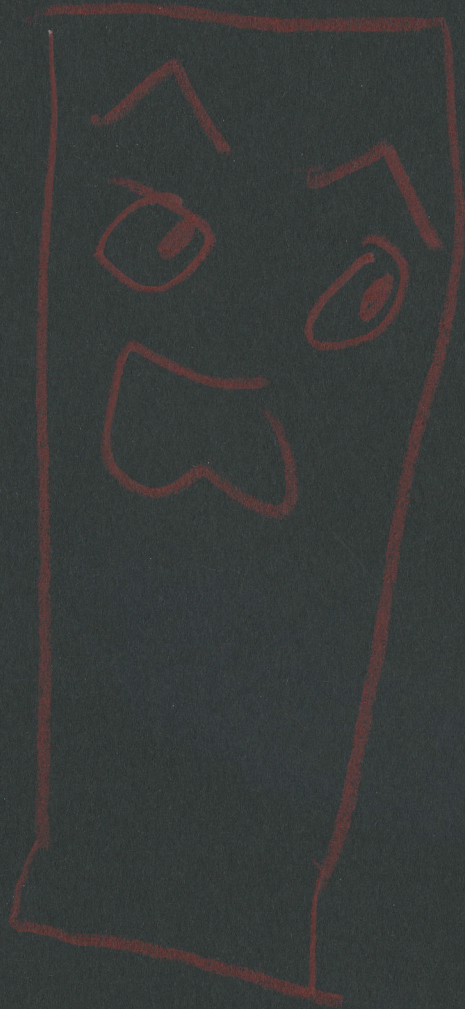
The Golden Egg gave him instructions on how to make lots of money. Pull the lever. Pull the lever. Pull the lever.



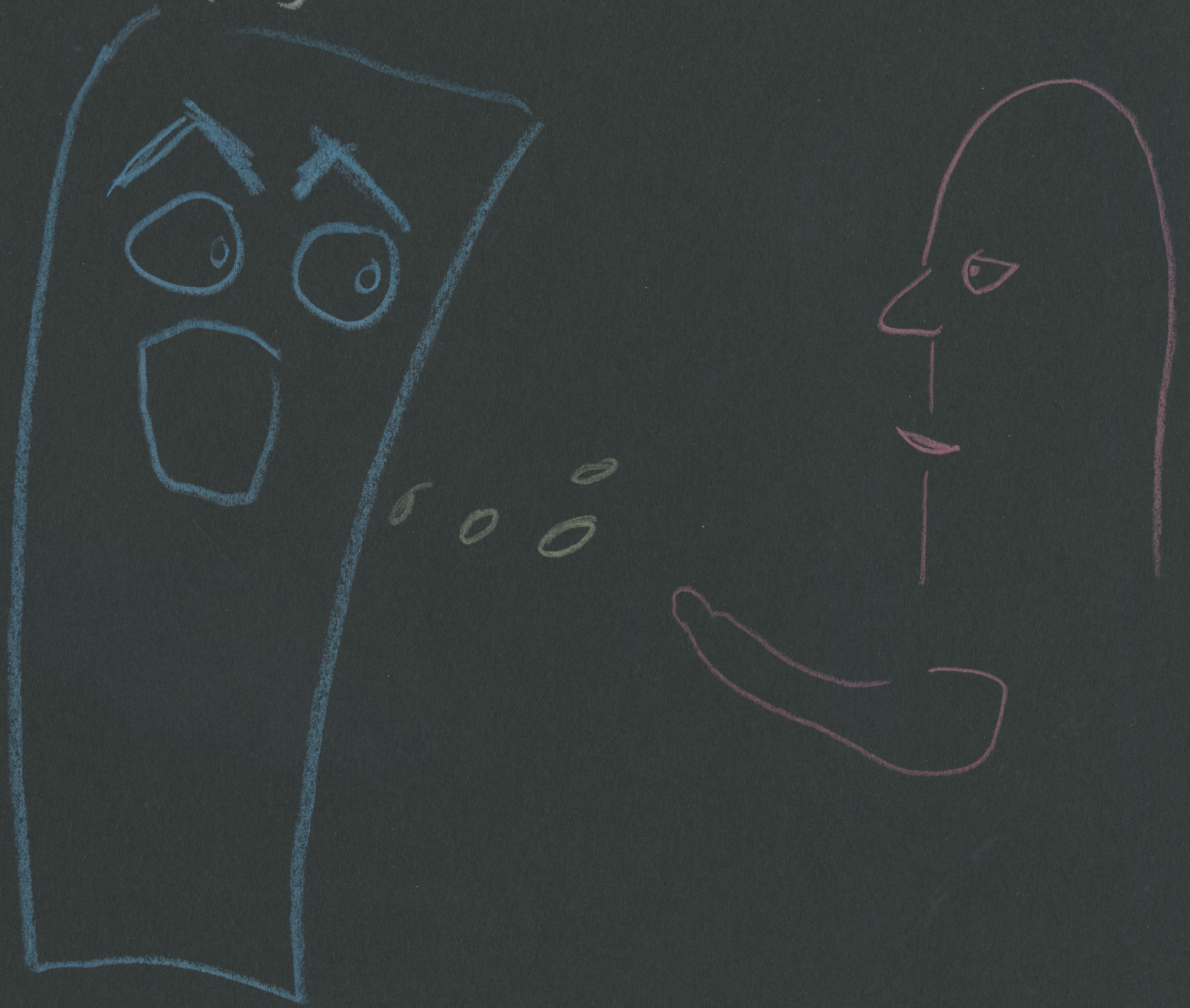
Soon Fushanoono had more money (chips) than everyone else in the building, even Mr. Hyena. The singing french fries had been eating grapes from the casino grapevine and they came to see their boss.



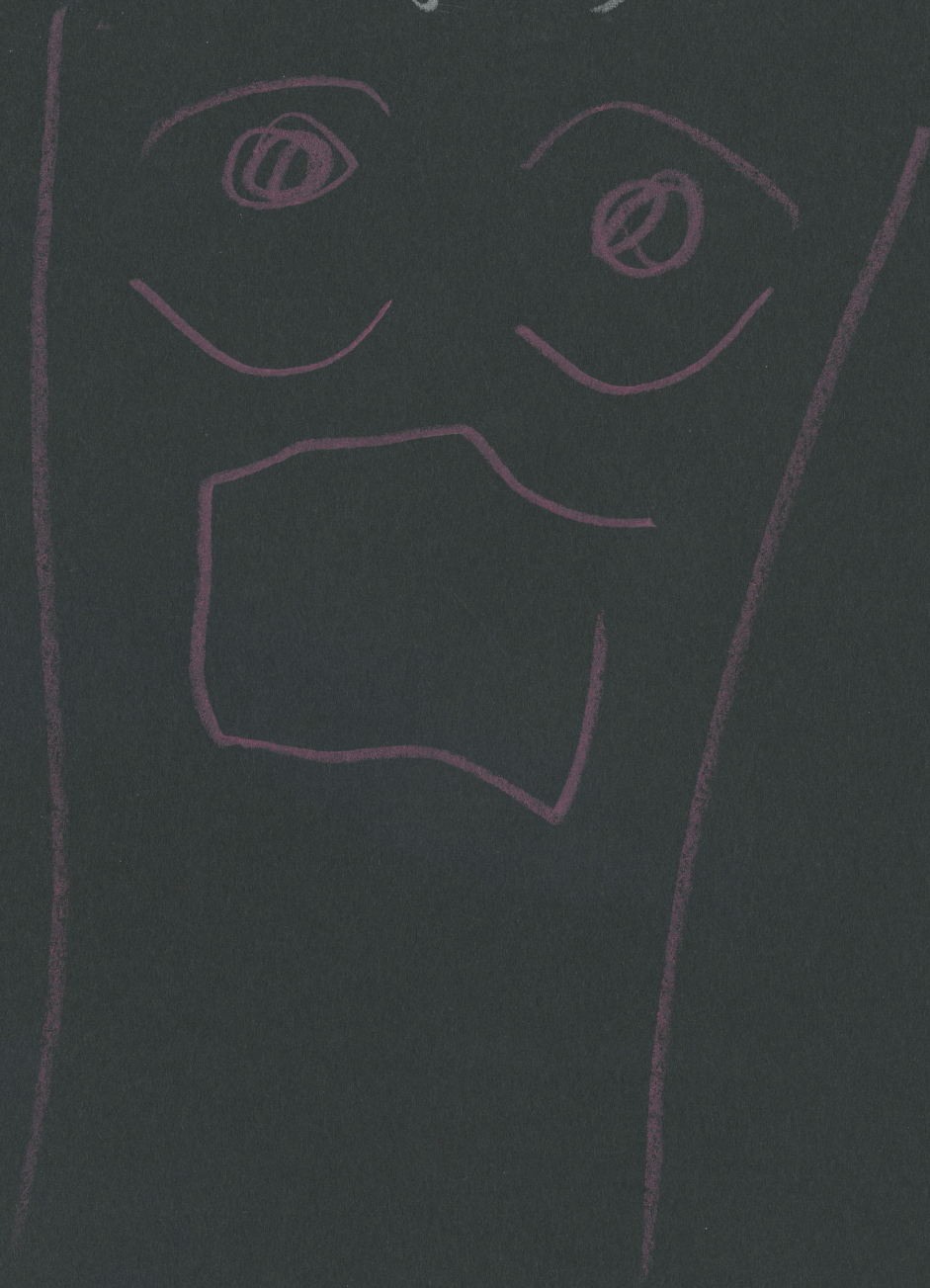
Barry shouted with angry eyebrows. "I want some chips!" Fusha-noonoo flipped a bunch of chips over.



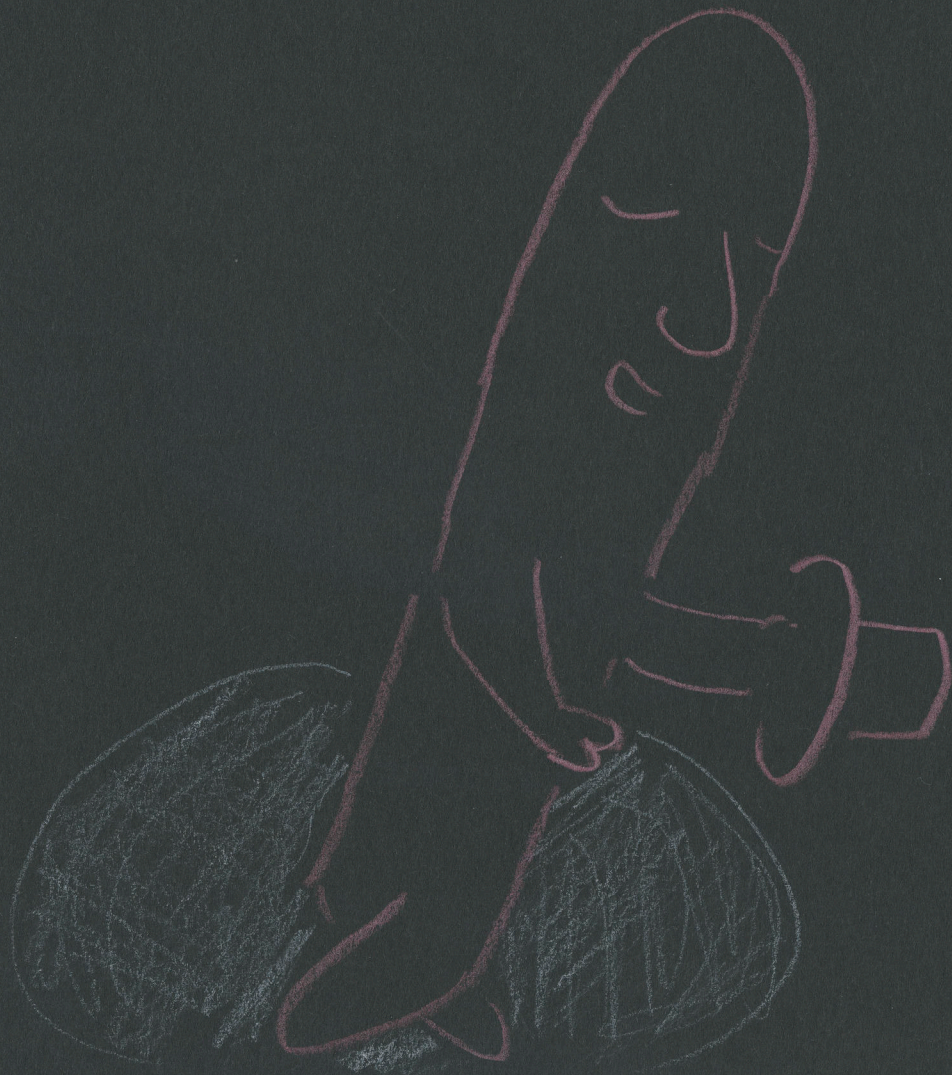
Tenny shouted with angrier eyebrows, "I want some chips too!"
Fushanoonoo tossed a helping over.



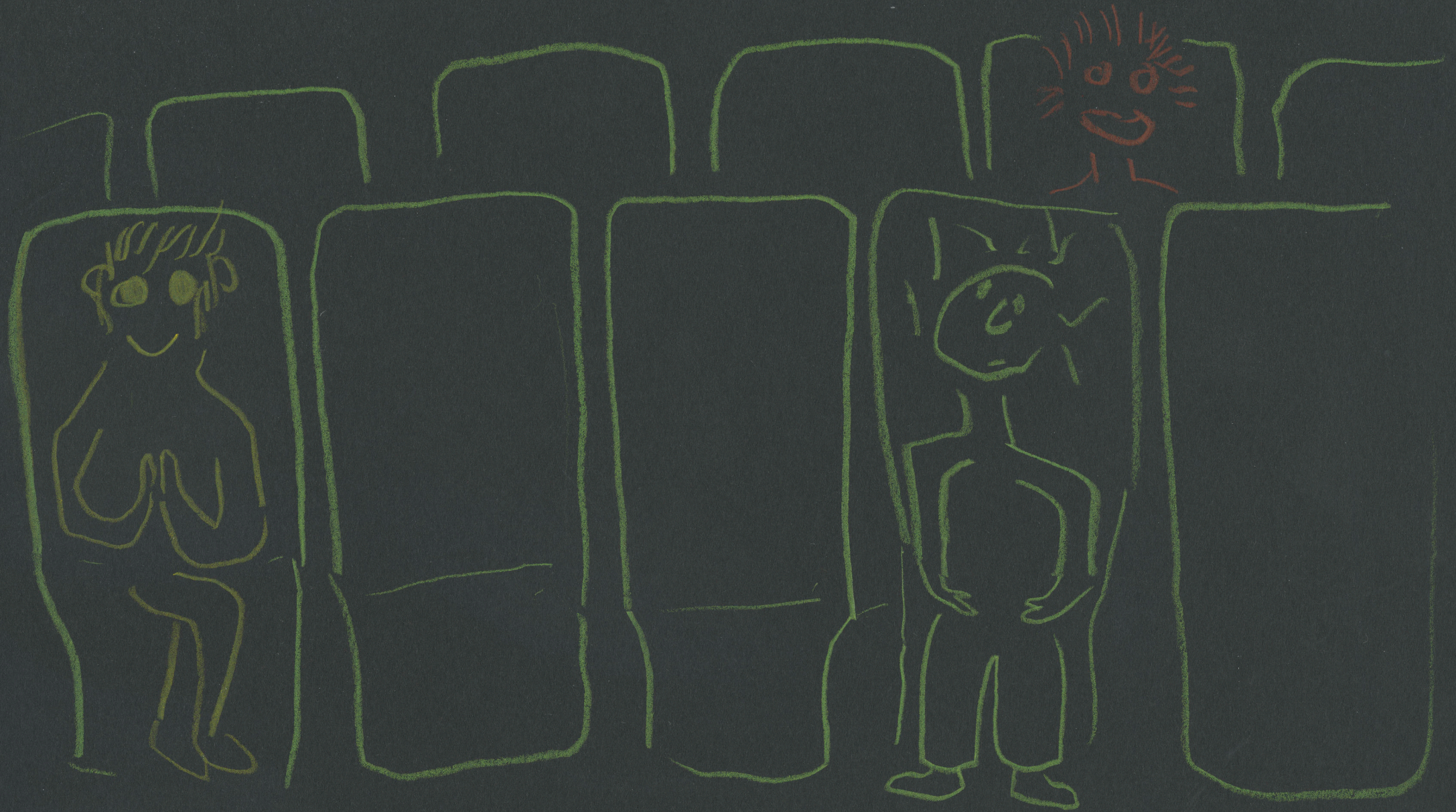
Bash screamed like a bee farmer, "Give me your chips!" Fushan-
oondoo ran away from the slot machine, leaving Bash to take what may
or may not have been rightfully his.



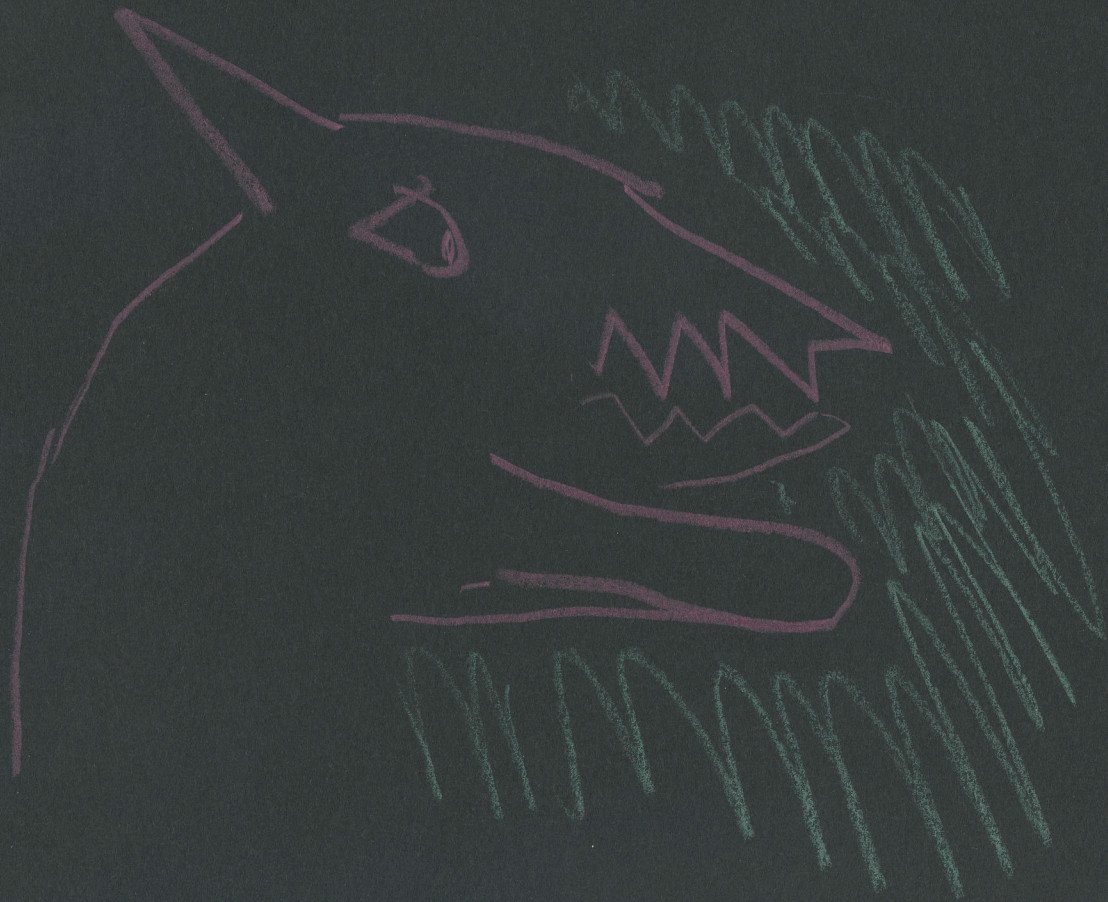
Fushanoonoo did his next show solo. His singers were busy gambling, as were most of the ticketholders, judging by the chorus of C major chords spilling in from the slots area. He announced from the stage that for one show only they were in for a treat: "An Intimate Evening with Fushanoonoo the Dancing Hot Dog."



Intimate meant there were barely more people in the house than on the stage,

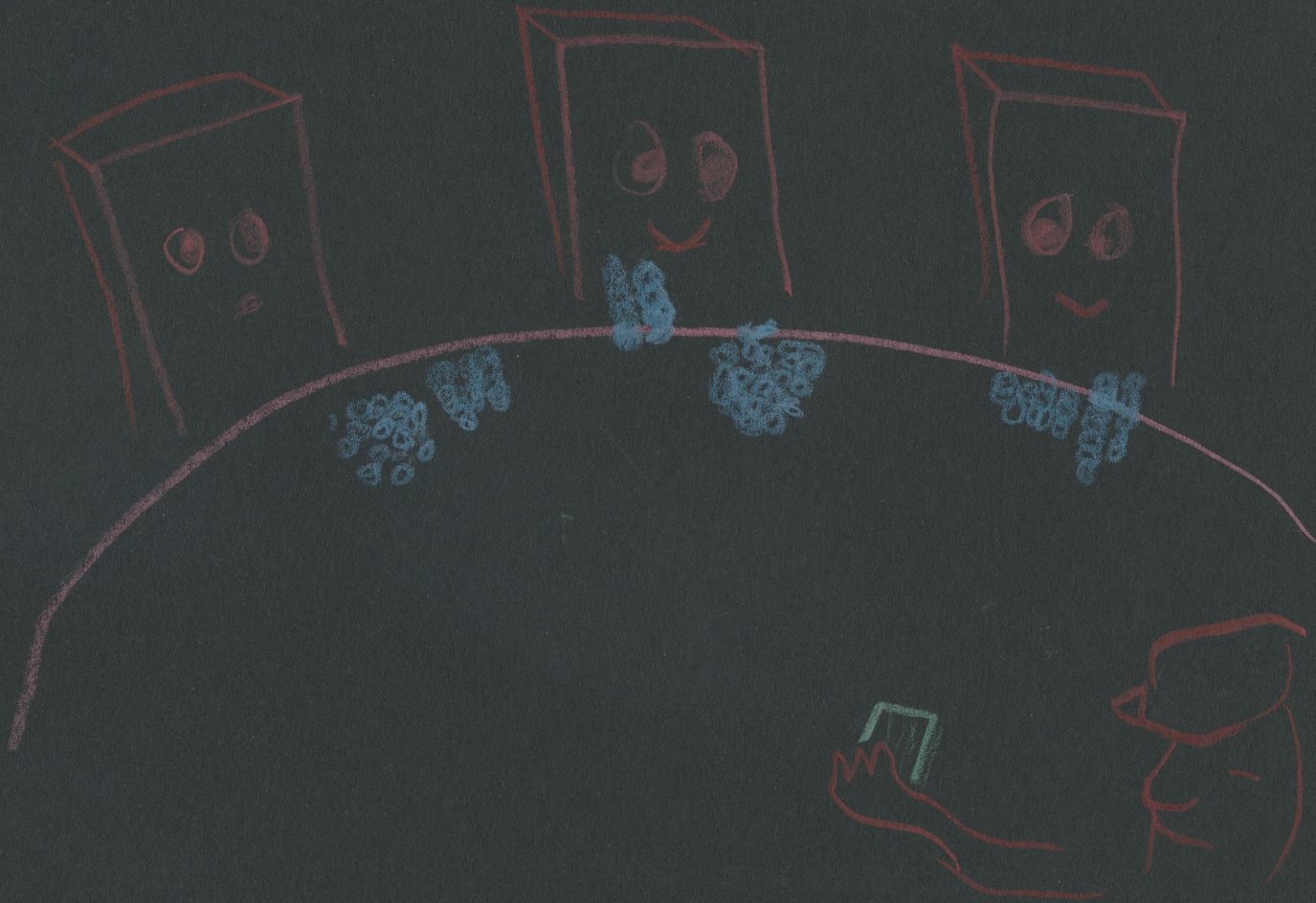


Hyena was watching the surveillance feed in his office when he noticed that 66 of the Fushanoonoo slots were in active use. The theater Fushanoonoo played held 96 seats, 96 tickets had been sold. Money had changed hands, the tickets were paid for, but only 30 people were in the audience. Fushanoonoo had some spell on all 96 of them, more of a concern for the ones not watching his show. He was good luck. A sort of hot dog fairy godmother. It wasn't just a minor disruption to business as usual - those playing the Fushanoonoo slot machines were winning hand over fist. As long as Fushanoonoo's fans were on the premises it was imperative that they stay off the floors.



U	U	0	P 0
U	V	U	0
D	A	V	!

Hyena had some choice ideas for Fushanoono merchandise: tennis rackets, surfboards, Halloween costumes, marshmallow holders, drumsets, coffee mugs, car bras, beach towels, beach balls, pinball machines. It was time to diversify. Hold on. What's happening over by the Caribbean Stud table? What's NOT happening over in the theater? Those three scrubs who perform with that danged hot dog weren't onstage. Worse, they were taking the dealer for a ride.



There was just one way to fix this. The Golden Egg was like a cooler but the opposite and all that good energy had transferred to Fushanoonoo and through him to his fans and onstage cohorts,



He paged security and told them to capture the Golden Egg. On the casino floor there was mayhem. People in the midst of gambling (dressed with a surprising degree of casualness to be handling so much money) panicked because burly men ran out with oversized butterfly nets. Hyena made a mental note to give the burly son of a guns a day off.



In the theater special ops men in wetsuits rushed out from the orchestra pit; SWAT units descended from the rigging system, landed onstage and chloroformed Fushanoono (to the horror of 30 half-asleep fans/witnesses, who themselves were about to get their own helping of Vitamin C).



In a chemical wooze, Fushanoono began to reminisce. He was transported, rather, to where? Chicago, where else? Bad memories washed over him, threatening to make jelly of his already precarious state. In Chicago they'll sell you in a bun with onions and every other vegetable this side of existence, sure, but if you want a piece of the action don't bother. You're just meat to them, a commodity like soap or electricity. And if you like to play games of chance in that hellhole, well, just forget it. They won't even let you watch a dice game. Someday...



His heart was beating at triple speed, or not beating at all; he looked down at his fingers. If this was the end, let the record show that he mattered once. In another life his digits were worn down to hot-doggy nubs from all the autographs. Were the autographs for their sake or his? Maybe autographs were just a way of notarizing the autographee's whereabouts (or was an autograph an alibi?): inky shorthand for "I was in X town on Y date." They weren't for making one's acquaintance, it seemed — they were a means of cataloguing an encounter, an administrative nicety, a receipt for a social transaction.



Hyena had his lackeys throw the G.E., F. and the S-ing F.F.s into the casino jail. Then he put them into a pinball game forevermore.

