

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Groman', written in a cursive style.

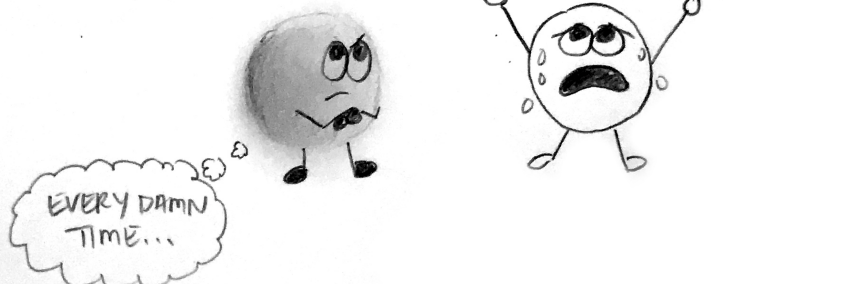
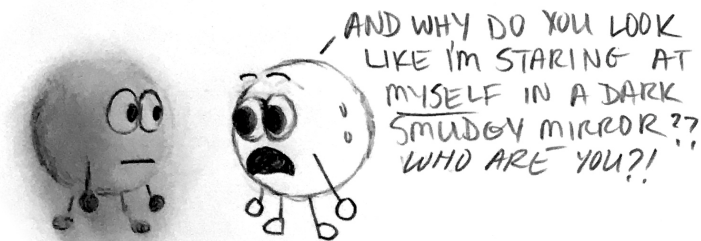
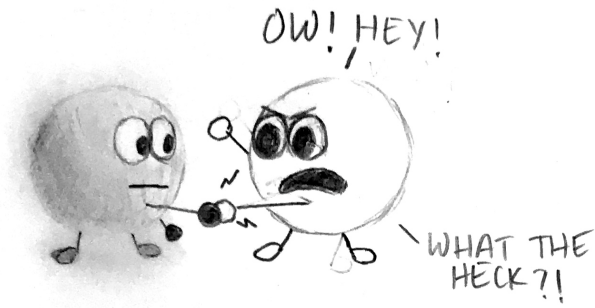
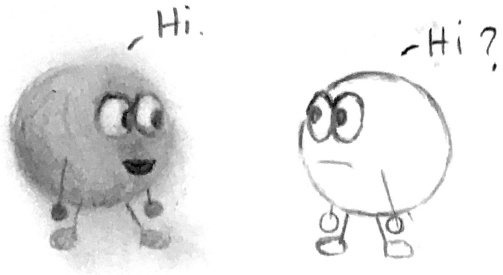
Striations presents  
Pain Understood

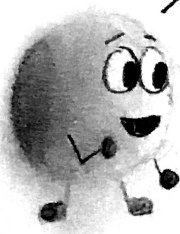
Sarah Groman

Pain Understood  
~Part 1~

A million thanks to Dr. Daniel Samples for infinite inspiration.  
I miss you once for each star that has made you a home.



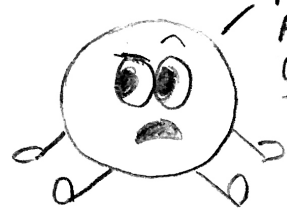
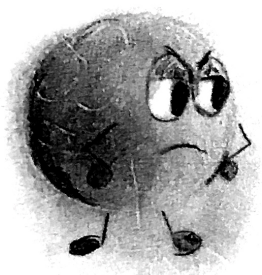
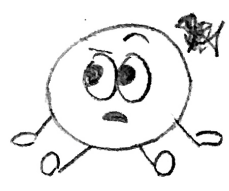
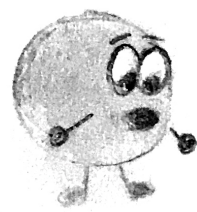




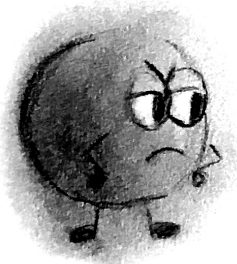
WELL, FIRST, I'M SORRY I HURT YOU. UNFORTUNATELY THAT SEEMS TO BE THE NATURE OF THINGS. THE REASON MY TOUCH HURT IS BECAUSE I AM PAIN. FURTHER, I AM YOUR PAIN, WHICH IS WHY I APPEAR AS THOUGH YOU ARE STARING INTO A MIRROR. I'M TOTALLY INDIVIDUAL, A UNIQUE AND DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE TO EVERYONE. I AM WHOEVER I VISIT. I AM DARK BECAUSE



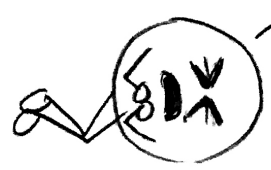
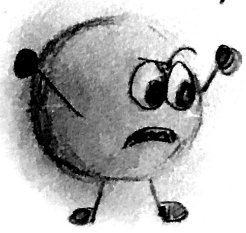
YOU SEE ME AS BAD, SOMETHING DANGEROUS THAT IS TO BE AVOIDED. AND I GET THAT, BUT IT'S HARD TO GIVE OFF ANY OTHER IMPRESSION WHEN I'VE BEEN LABELED AS SUCH BY EVERYONE. I'M "SMUDGED" BECAUSE YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ME... GRANTED, I AM SOMETHING OF A COMPLEX NATURE...



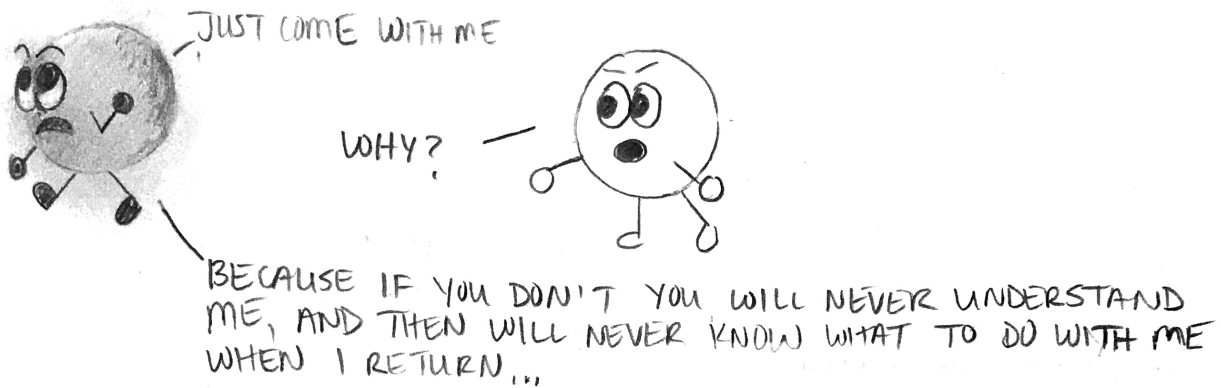
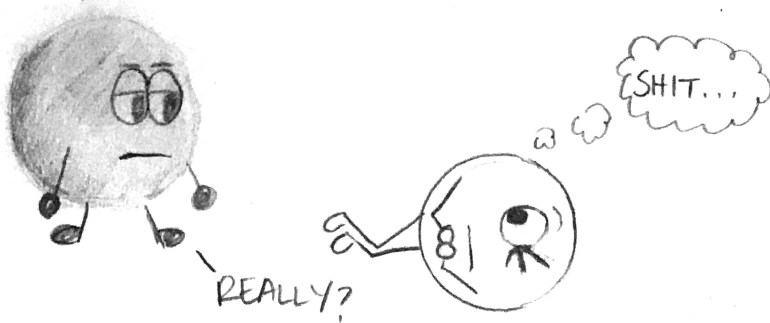
AND I MUST BE SOMETHING OF A CRAZY NATURE. I'M HAVING A CONVERSATION WITH A SENSATION THAT SOMEHOW MANAGED TO ANTHROPOMORPHIZE ITSELF...



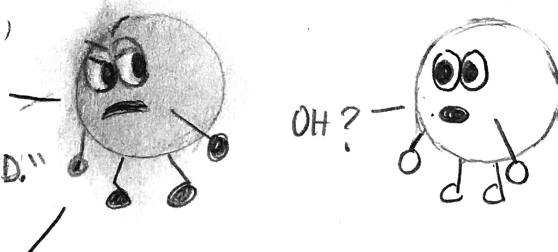
WHAT IN GOODNESS NAME ARE YOU DOING?



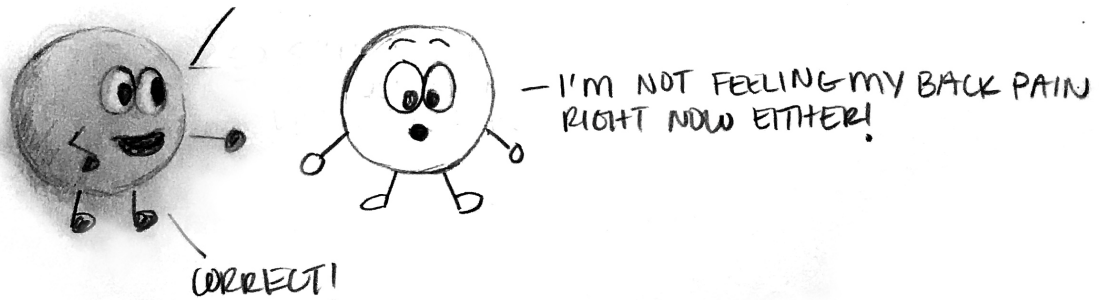
IN 5 SECONDS I'M GOING TO WAKE UP AND THIS DREAM WILL BE OVER... 5...4...3...2...1...



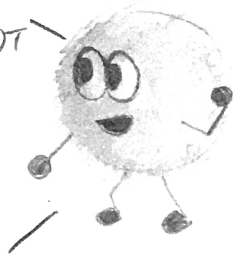
AND BY THE WAY, UNLESS I COME IN CONTACT WITH YOU, LIKE EARLIER, I CANNOT ACTUALLY BRING YOU ANY PHYSICAL SENSATION OF PAIN WHILE I'M "ANTHROPOMORPHIZED."



NO. I COME FROM THE BRAIN, WHICH IS WHERE I PROCESS SIGNALS FROM THE BODY WHEN THERE IS DANGER, AND SEND A RESPONSE THAT IS "PAINFUL." IF NO ONE IS THERE TO PROCESS THE SIGNALS; THEN NO RESPONSE CAN BE SENT, AND SO THERE'S NO PAIN TO SENSE, SO STUB AS MANY TOES AS YOU WANT WHILE I'M HERE- IT WON'T HURT.



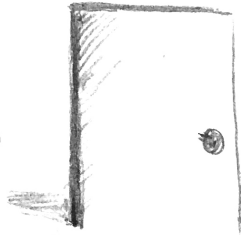
NOW COME WITH ME! I HAVE A LOT TO TEACH YOU - RATHER, YOU HAVE A LOT TO TEACH YOU...



DON'T WORRY, I'M CONFUSED STILL TOO

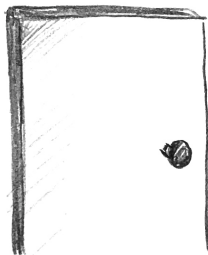
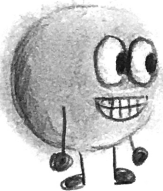
... AND I KNOW THE PERFECT PERSON WE CAN USE!

OH, LOOK! OUR PORTAL IS READY!



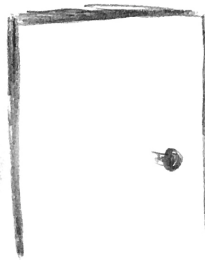
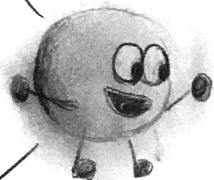
WAIT, WHERE DID THAT DOOR COME FROM?!

THAT INFORMATION IS ENTIRELY IRRELEVANT TO EVERYTHING ELSE YOU ARE ABOUT TO SEE AND LEARN. BUT I WILL SAY, WHEN YOU LIVE AN ANTHROPOMORPHIZED LIFE, THERE ARE NO RULES.



CONFUSED AND MAYBE GOING A LITTLE INSANE? WHATEVER... HERE GOES NOTHING...

HOLD ON!



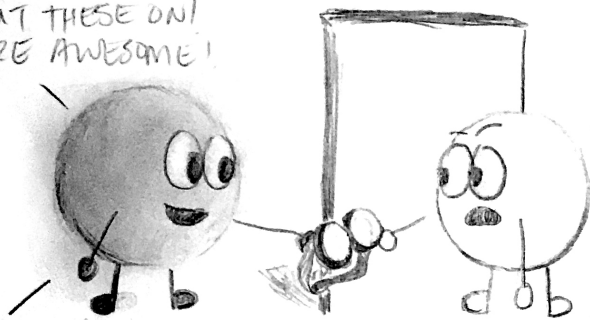
WHY?

MY WHA-?

YOU NEED YOUR SPEED ALTERING GLASSES, A.K.A, YOUR **SAGS!**

THEY WILL HELP YOU PERCEIVE WHAT YOU WILL SEE AT A MUCH SLOWER PACE SO THAT IT WILL APPEAR "NORMAL SPEED"; PAIN TRANSMISSION HAPPENS AT A VERY FAST SPEED IN REAL LIFE, AND IT WOULD OTHERWISE MAKE IT TOO DIFFICULT TO COMPARE TO THE VISUAL LEARNER, WHICH I KNOW YOU ARE BECAUSE I'M YOU.

HERE! PUT THESE ON!  
THEY ARE AWESOME!

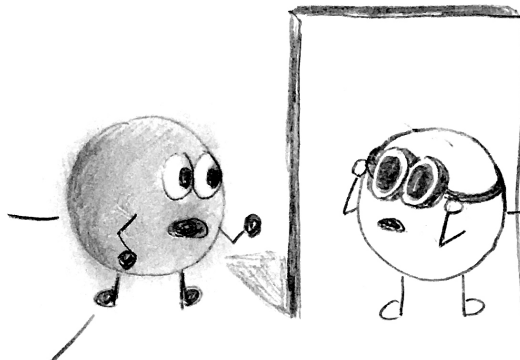


AND I THOUGHT I WAS DONE  
WITH THE DAYS OF LOOKING  
LIKE A DORK... OKAY LET'S  
DO THIS

GREAT! SO ONCE WE ARE  
ON THE OTHER SIDE OF  
THE DOOR ALL WE HAVE  
TO DO IS WAIT FOR THE  
RIGHT STIMULUS, BUT THIS  
GIRL IS PRETTY CLUMSY, SO  
WE SHOULDN'T BE WAITING  
TOO LONG.

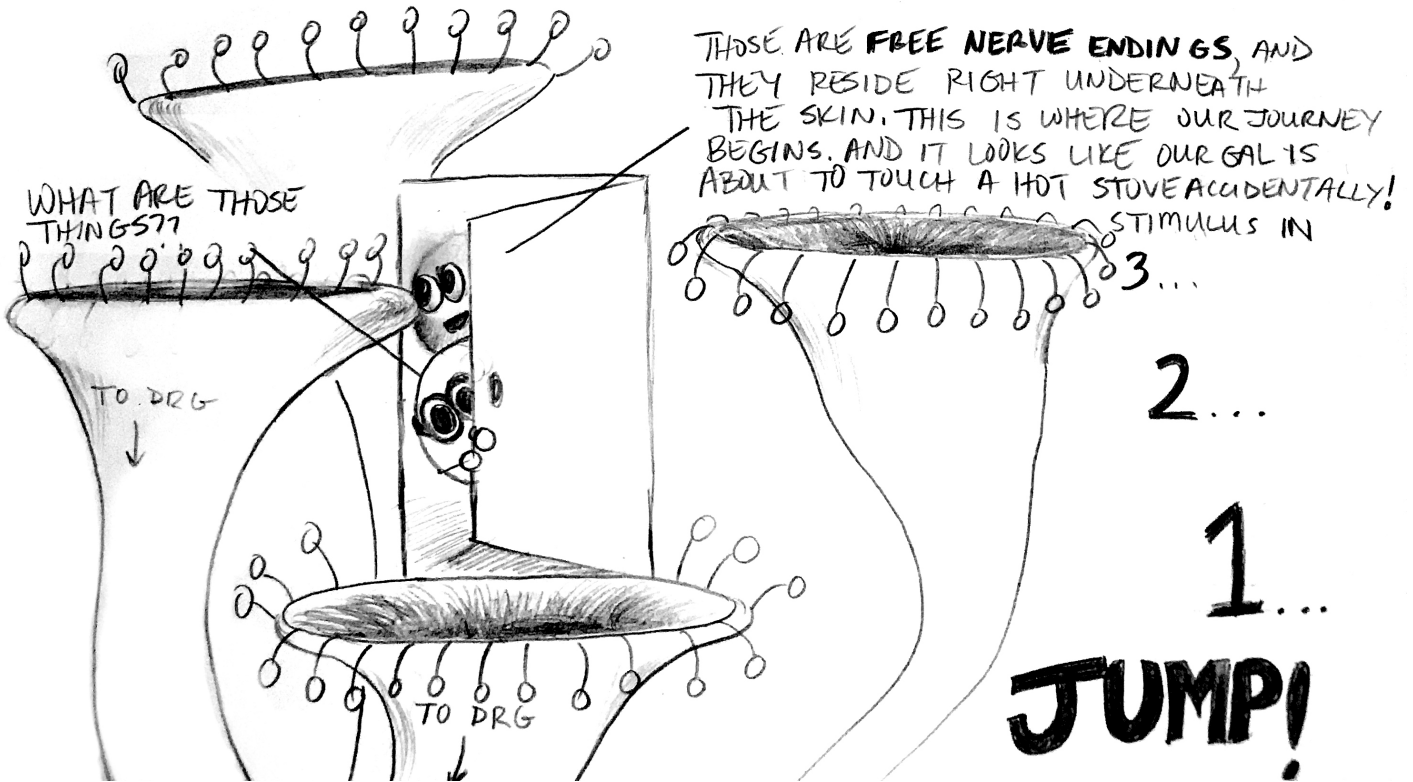
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "STIMULUS"?

IN A HEALTHY NERVOUS  
SYSTEM, FOR A PAIN SIGNAL  
TO BE PROCESSED, IT NEEDS  
A STIMULUS, SOMETHING THAT  
TELLS THE BRAIN "DANGER!"



A "HEALTHY"  
NERVOUS SYSTEM?  
WHAT DOES THAT  
EVEN MEAN?

ANOTHER LESSON FOR ANOTHER TIME.  
SAGS ALL SECURE? ALRIGHT, OPEN  
THE DOOR NOW.



THOSE ARE **FREE NERVE ENDINGS**, AND  
THEY RESIDE RIGHT UNDERNEATH  
THE SKIN. THIS IS WHERE OUR JOURNEY  
BEGINS. AND IT LOOKS LIKE OUR GAL IS  
ABOUT TO TOUCH A HOT STOVE ACCIDENTALLY!

STIMULUS IN

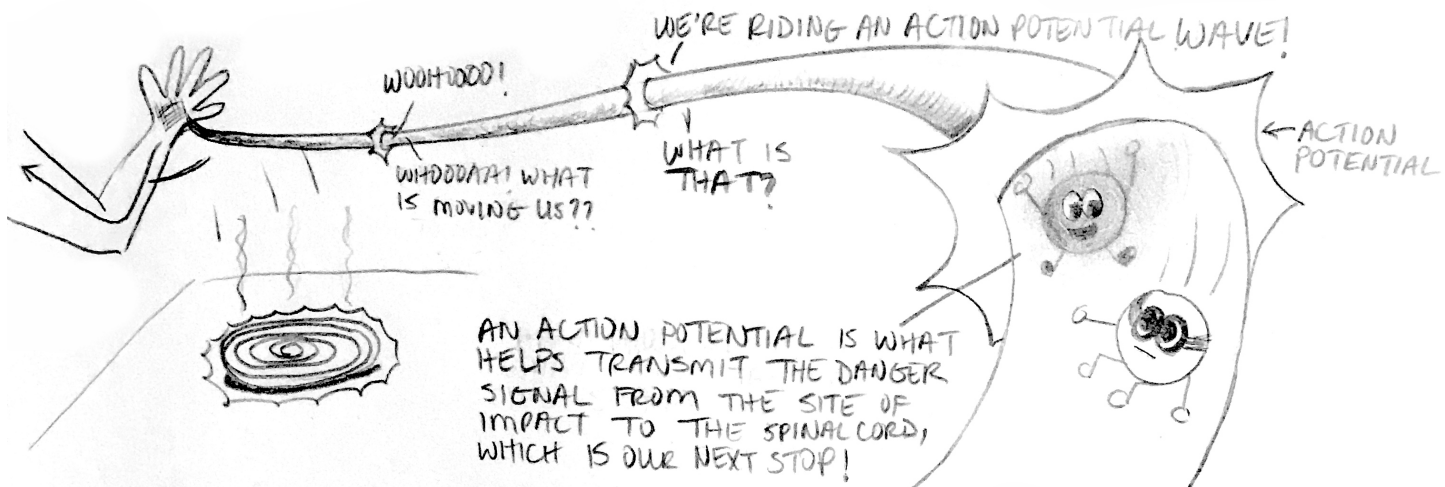
3...

2...

1...

**JUMP!**





AN ACTION POTENTIAL IS WHAT HELPS TRANSMIT THE DANGER SIGNAL FROM THE SITE OF IMPACT TO THE SPINAL CORD, WHICH IS OUR NEXT STOP!

BUT THE EXPERIENCE IS SO BAD! I HAVE A HARD TIME NOT PRETENDING THAT I WOULDN'T ENJOY NOT FEELING THE STING OF A PAPER CUT...

IF ANY PART OF THIS PATHWAY WAS DAMAGED, THIS SIGNAL WOULD NOT REACH THE BRAIN. PAIN, THOUGH AN UNPLEASANT SENSATION, IS A BUILT-IN PROTECTIVE MECHANISM FOR HUMANS AND ANIMALS.

NERVE →

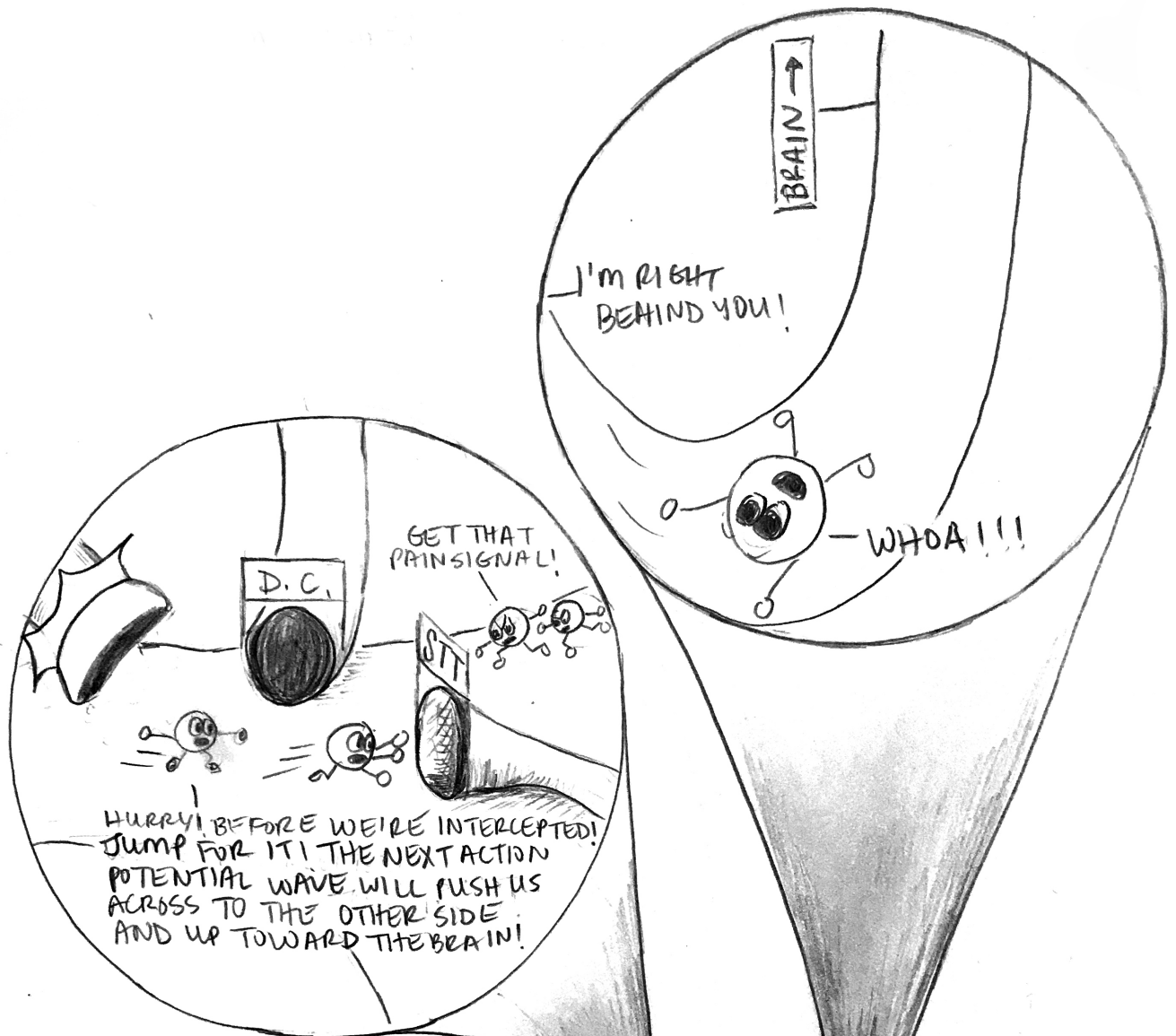
IT IS UNPLEASANT INDEED, BUT SAY FOR INSTANCE YOU HAD NERVE DAMAGE IN YOUR FOOT, AND YOU WERE WALKING BAREFOOT AND STEPPED ON A SMALL PIECE OF GLASS OR A GROSS RUSTY NAIL, AND COULDN'T FEEL IT, THAT PIECE OF GLASS OR NAIL STAYS IN THERE WITHOUT ATTENTION PROVIDING A NICE HANGOUT FOR ALL SORTS OF BACTERIA TO CONGREGATE AND CAUSE AN INFECTION... AMPUTATION IN EXTREME CASES...

... ACK!

... SO DON'T DAMAGE YOUR NERVES, K?

NERVE ↑

ALSO, THOSE GLASSES ARE ENTIRELY UNNECESSARY. YOU DON'T ACTUALLY NEED THEM... YOU CALLED ME BAD TO MY FACE.



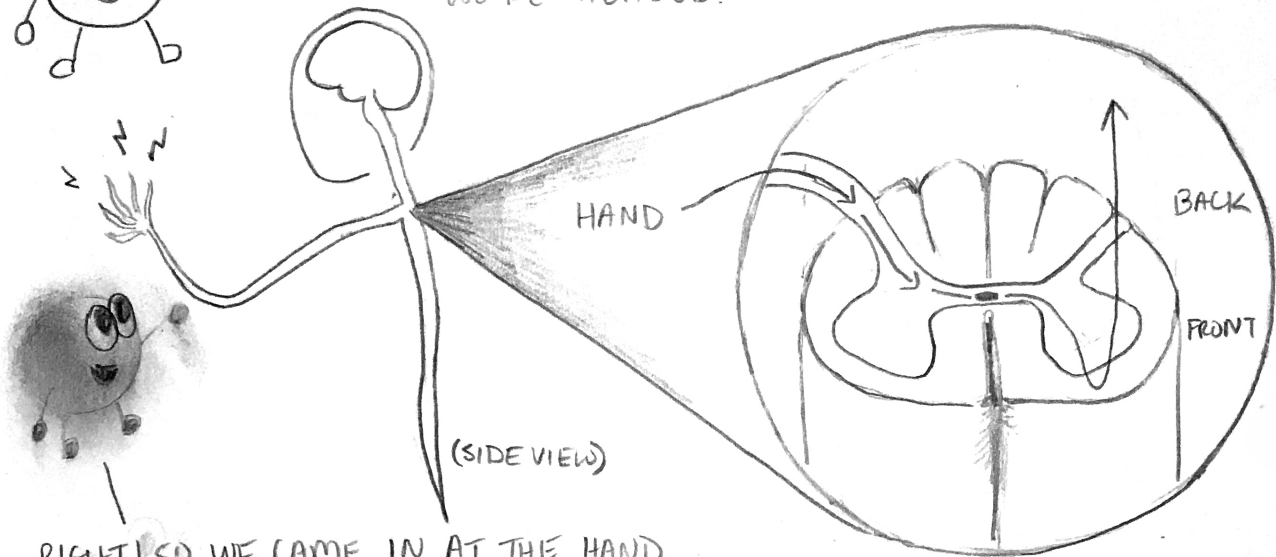
OTHER CHEMICALS ARE SENT FROM THE BRAIN ITSELF TO TRY AND DECREASE THE AMOUNT OF PAIN THAT IS REGISTERED. THE SECOND WE ARE RELEASED, MAKE A FAST BREAK FOR THE OPENING THAT SAYS "STT" OVER IT!

SO WE ARE ABOUT TO ENTER THE BACK SIDE OF THE SPINAL CORD AT A PLACE CALLED THE DORSAL HORN, ONCE THERE, OUR MAIN GOAL IS TO GET PAST THE SYNAPSE, WHICH IS A SPACE WHERE CHEMICALS, CALLED NEUROTRANSMITTERS, ARE RELEASED...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "GET PAST"?

...IT'S A BIT OF A BATTLE SCENE - GO LEFT BY THE WAY

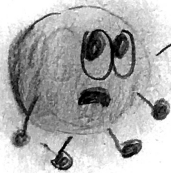
- OKAY, LET'S PAUSE NOW AND GIVE THE AUDIENCE A QUICK RECAP OF WHERE WE ARE AND A BRIEF PREVIEW OF WHERE WE'RE HEADED.



RIGHT! SO WE CAME IN AT THE HAND, JUST AS OUR PERSON PUT IT DOWN ON THE HOT STOVE, WHICH WAS OUR STIMULUS. THAT STIMULUS SENT AN ACTION POTENTIAL UP A NERVE PATH IN THE ARM TOWARD THE SPINAL CORD.

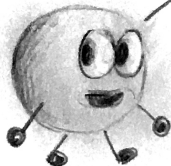
WE ENTERED THE BACK OF THE SPINAL CORD, THEN RODE A SECOND ACTION POTENTIAL ACROSS TO THE OTHER SIDE AND HAVE NOW BEGUN OUR ASCENT TOWARD THE BRAIN!

AND FOR OUR AUDIENCE WHO ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH THE RIGHT IMAGE, WE CALL THAT A **CROSS SECTION** - IMAGINE SLICING THE SPINAL CORD FLAT ACROSS FRONT TO BACK...



I TAUGHT HIM THAT, JUST SO Y'ALL KNOW...

THUNDER CRUSHER



HEARD THAT, C'ME ON, LET'S GET BACK TO THE FUN!