

WOMEN DOLL

- An Illustrated Story by Matt Coyle



2 / **RECOUNTING THE EVENTS**

You're a worrier. Your mother's a worrier, you're a worrier, and you'll always be a worrier.

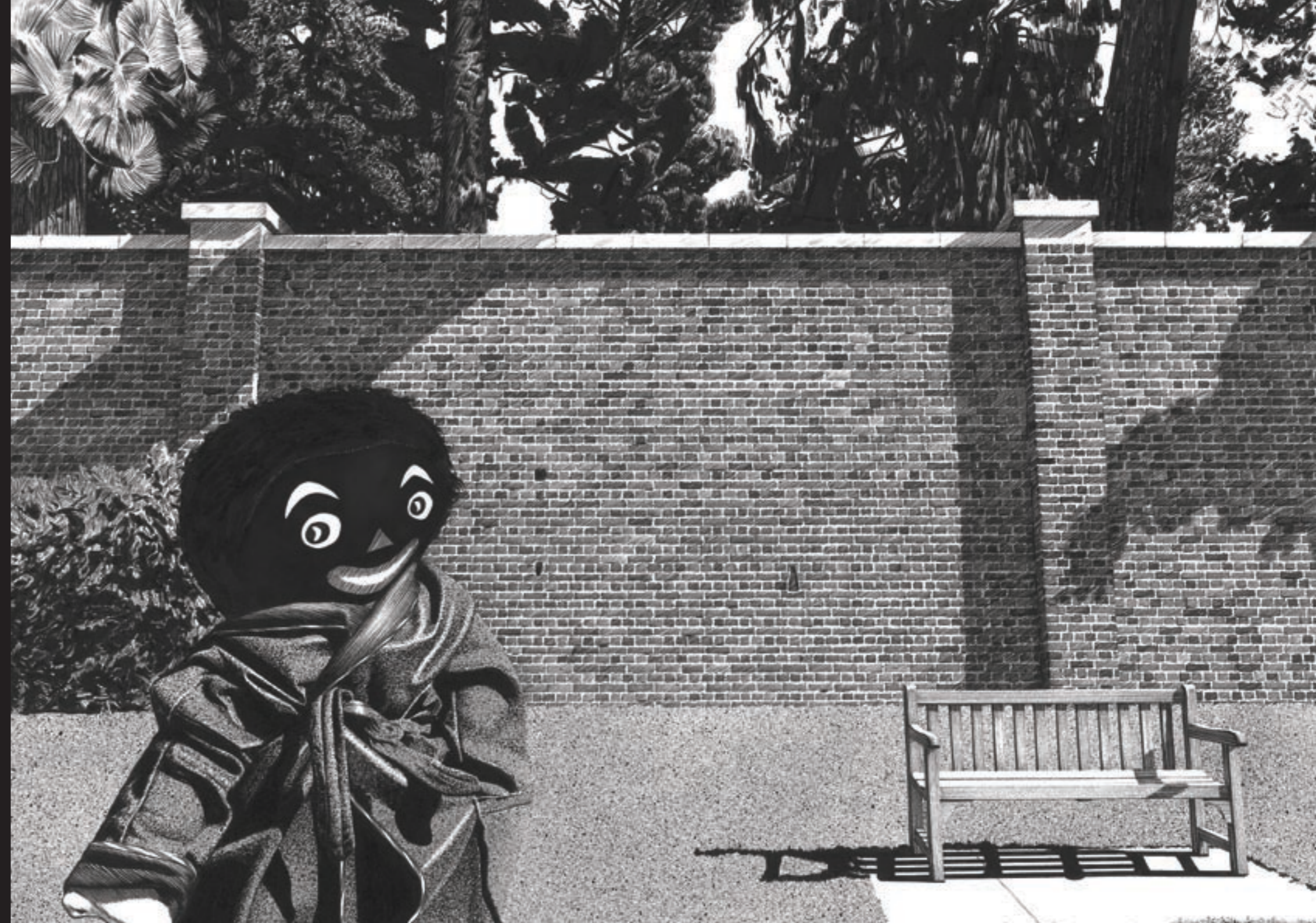
An uncle of mine told me that years ago on a beach during a family holiday. What did you say to that? he asks. Can't really remember. Probably just smiled back stupidly.

If you worry so much why are you always smiling? he asks.

I don't know. It's like, sometimes it's fixed and no matter what I do I just can't wipe the grin off my face.

Anyway, my obsession with my own worry started that day.

That's how I want to start this thing.



4 / **MY FRIENDS ARE A
COUPLE OF CLASSICS**

He says, I think you should start this thing at the house, don't you? Now, that house had a good feeling about it. Yeah, actually being inside that house made me smile for all the right reasons. It was a place where I could feel at home.

*What? Why are you looking at me like that?
Like what? he says.*



6 / **THE LIVING ROOM**

Do you think I've got a problem? I mean, I know I'm a little introverted but it's not like its anything major. Sometimes though - and you'll be pleased to know that this isn't one of those times - I get a real urge to lash out and punch the person I'm talking to. It's like they're talking to me and all I can think about is *what's holding me back?* Everyone gets a bit like that though, don't you think?

I think you've got a problem, he says.



8 / **“OH! GOSH!
WHATEVER WILL WE DO?”**

I actually think that worrying about things gives you a pretty good memory. How's that then? he asks. It's like nothing goes unnoticed.

*Oh God! He looked at me.
Bullshit he did.
I promise. He really did.*



10 / **THE BIG WIDE WORLD**

Like with that house - before I ever set foot inside it I used to look up at it and its row of terraces every day while I waited for the bus. To this day I have a clear memory of all the people who lived there, who came and went. I guess you could say that I had a fixation with the place.



12 / **WORKING THROUGH IT**

In fact I became so fixated on it that I wanted to live there myself, along with my closest friends, and I was determined to make that dream come true. It was my dream house.



14 / **SETTING OUT**

Who was it that said you lived in a dream world? he asks. Where did you hear that? Who have you been talking to?

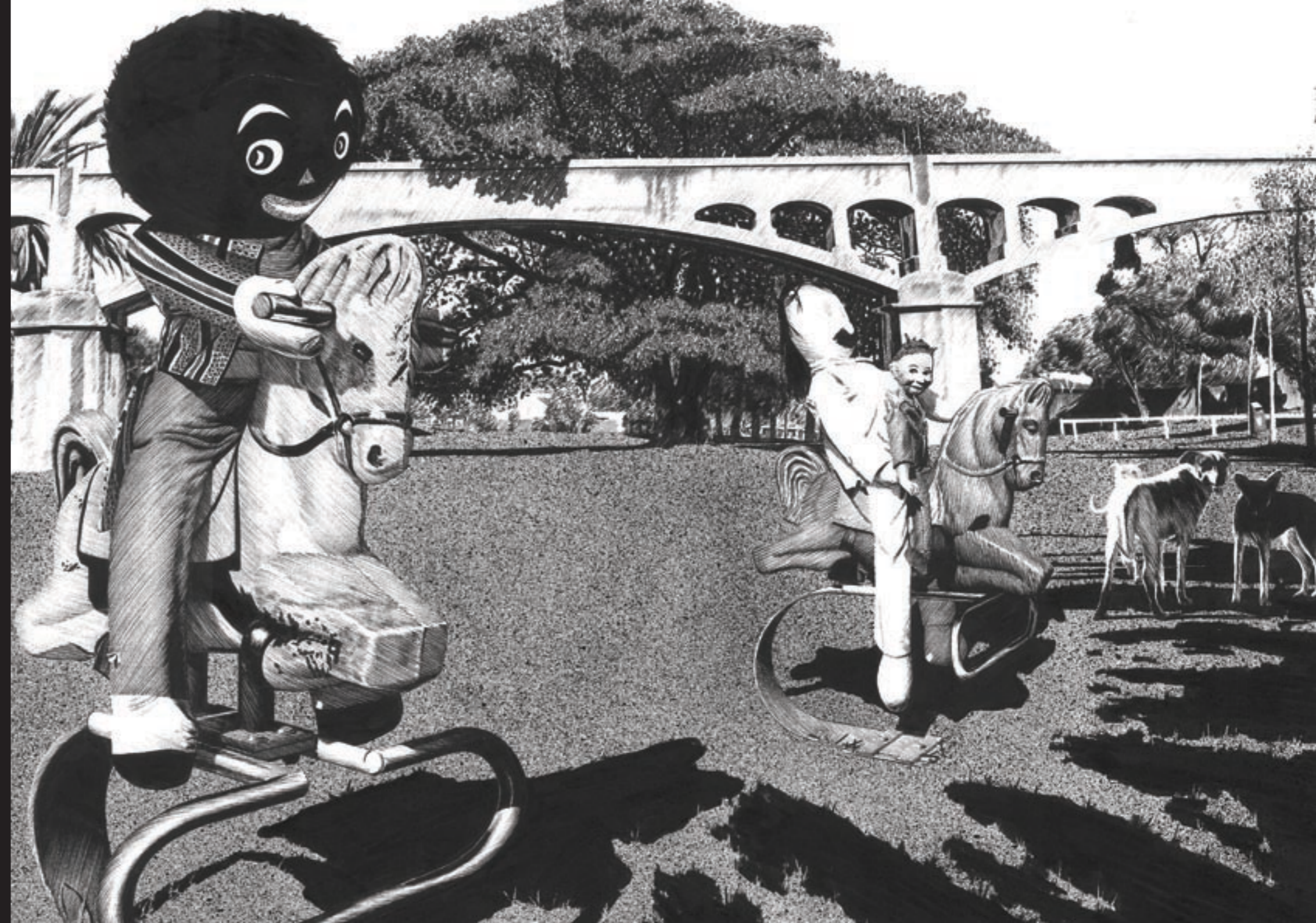
"DOES ANYTHING GO ON IN THAT HEAD OF YOURS?"



16 / **FUN IN THE PARK**

Sometimes when I close my eyes, the images in my head shrink at an alarming rate – like I’m forced to imagine infinity and if I concentrate too hard on it, it really scares the crap out of me. Always has. Has that ever happened to you? Do you know what I mean?

Then I tighten right up. Next thing I know my finger’s pressed to my throat and I’m taking my pulse.



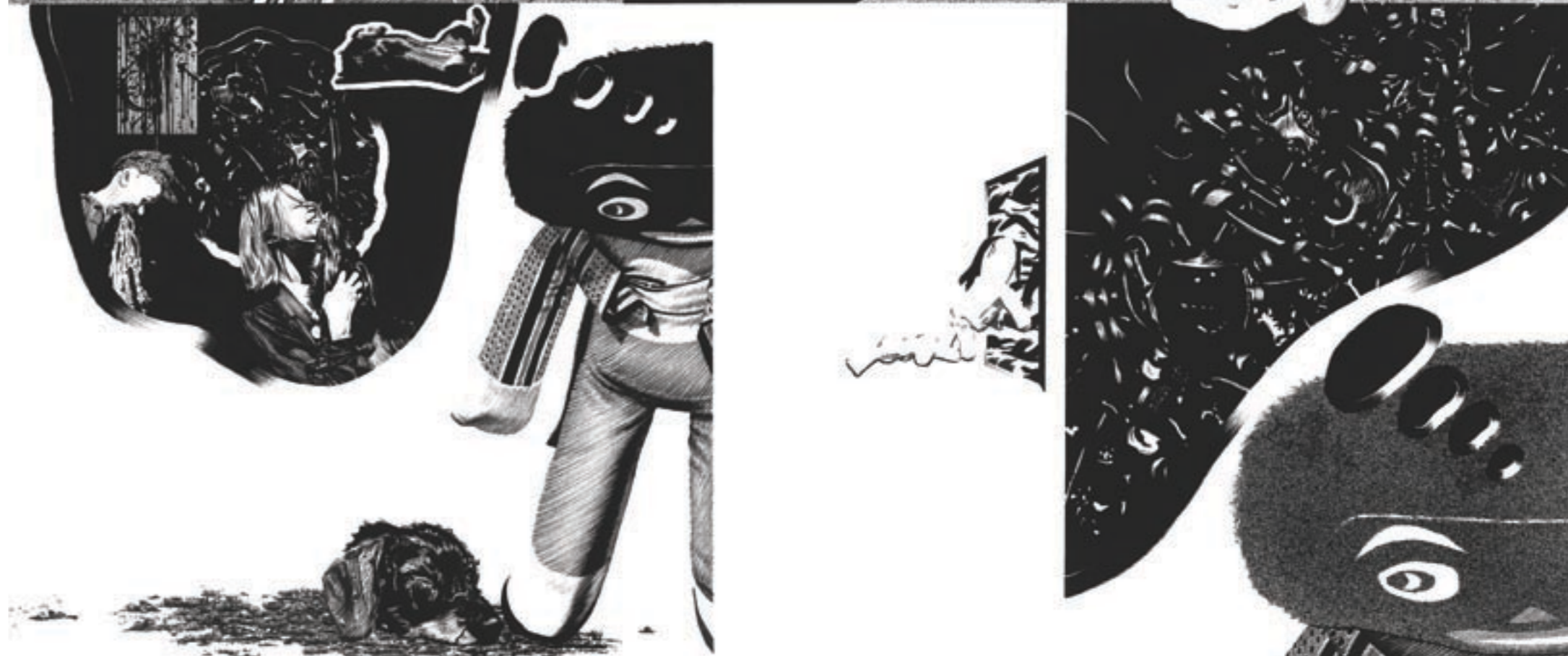
18 / **IN THE GRIP OF SOMETHING**

Is that a sign that things are about to go all pear shaped? he asks.

ENJOY IT! ENJOY IT! ENJOY IT! ENJOY IT!

What about how you used to think that you'd pissed yourself?
No, that wasn't me.
Oh, he says, I thought that was you.





20 / **“I DON’T KNOW WHAT POSSESSED ME.”**

He says, Have you ever done anything to try to sort yourself out?
I did a night course in meditation once – concentrate on the flame, concentrate on the after-image of the flame. Something like that.
Do anything for you? he asks.
Don’t think so.
Truth is, he says, Is that you’re about as far from living in the present as you could possibly be, aren’t you?
Maybe. Do you remember laughing at our stupid fat feet?
No. I don’t.

22 / **“OUR CAR’S ARRIVED!”**

God, just standing there like that -
seemed like the funniest thing I’d ever
seen. I nearly pissed myself.
He says, There’s nothing funny about
locking someone in the trunk of your
car though, is there?
No, but I didn’t know about that.

“DOES ANYTHING GO ON IN THAT HEAD OF YOURS?”



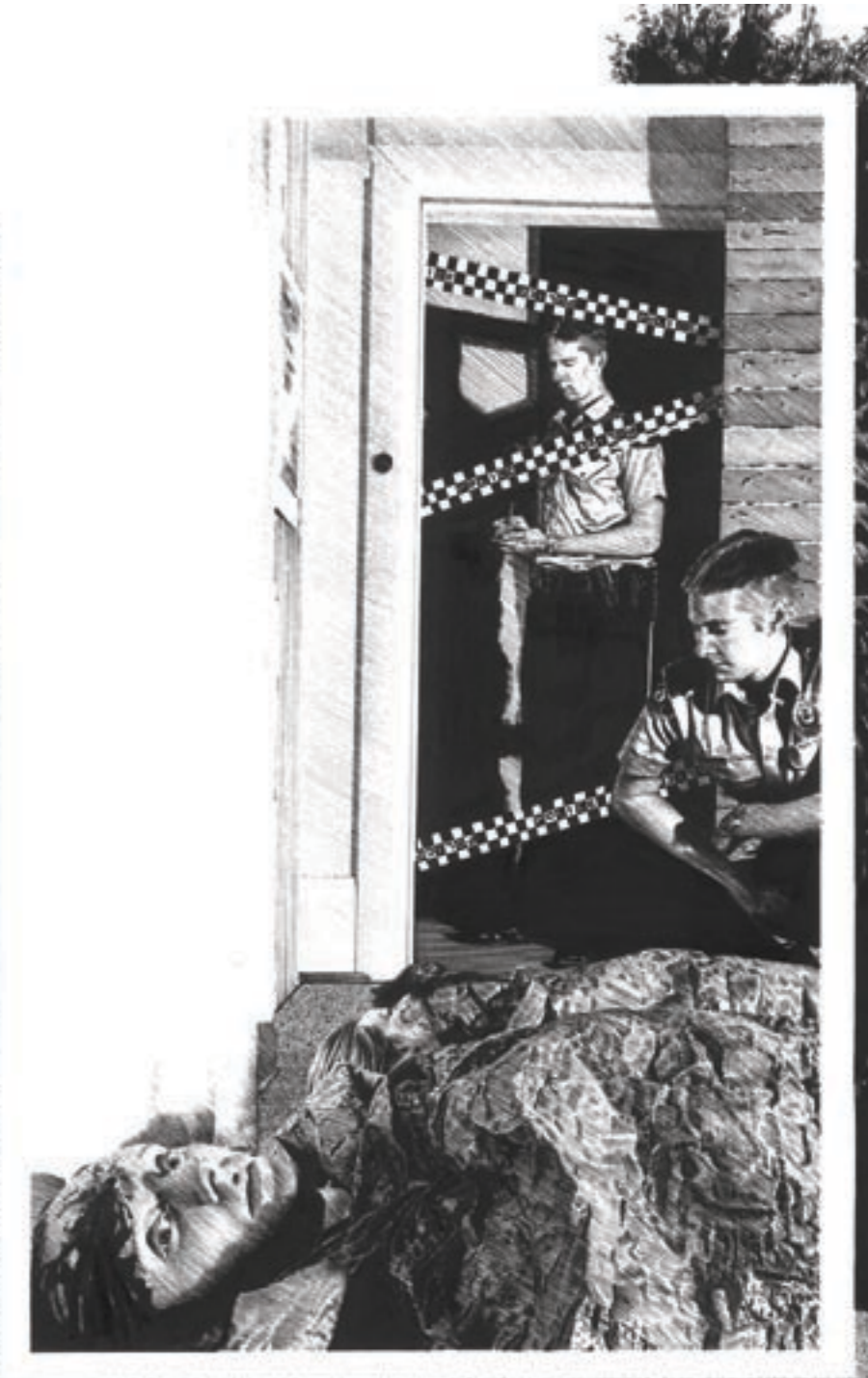
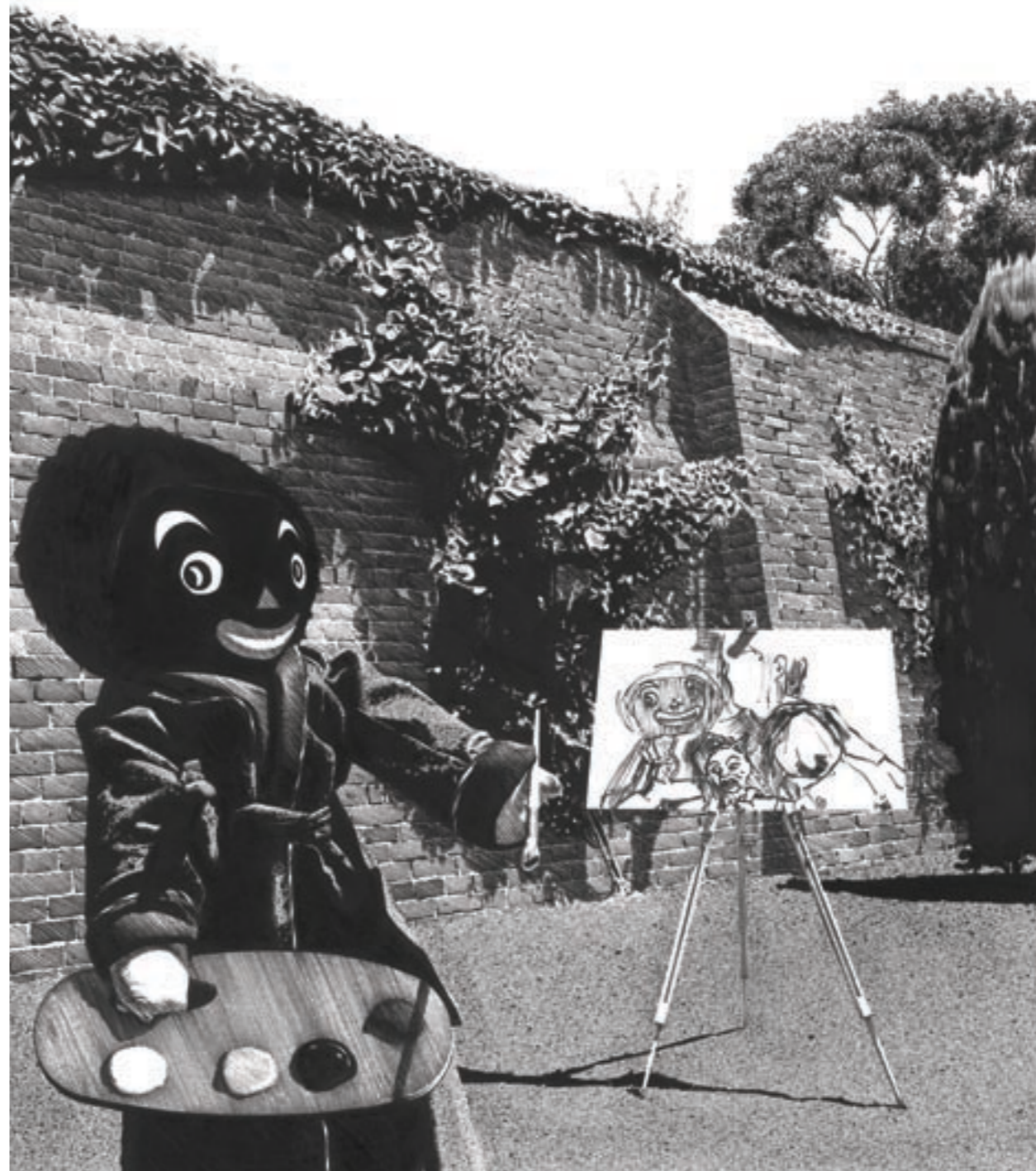
24 / **THE MYSTERIOUS DRIVER**

Anyway, looking at *her* was something altogether different. How's that then? he asks. I don't know – there was definitely something about her. It was like she was in complete control from the moment I met her, no question about it. Normally I would have a real problem with someone like her but I had this strong urge to embrace her as a friend.



26 / **TIME OUT/TAKING STOCK**

Once when I skipped out the door I
overheard my mother ask my brother,
'Do you think he will be alright?'
I slammed the door so hard
the window shattered.
He says, I see nothing's changed.
What do you mean?



28 / **GETTING INTO THE BUSH**

I tend to smash things in private now.
Like the privacy of the great outdoors?
he asks.
You bet. Getting right out of town is just
the ticket.



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30 / **NIGHT VISTA**

Oh yeah, I'd pack my bag and off I'd go, usually late at night, hurtling through the countryside. Just me and my things.
Good for you, he says.

ENJOY IT! ENJOY IT! ENJOY IT! ENJOY IT!

