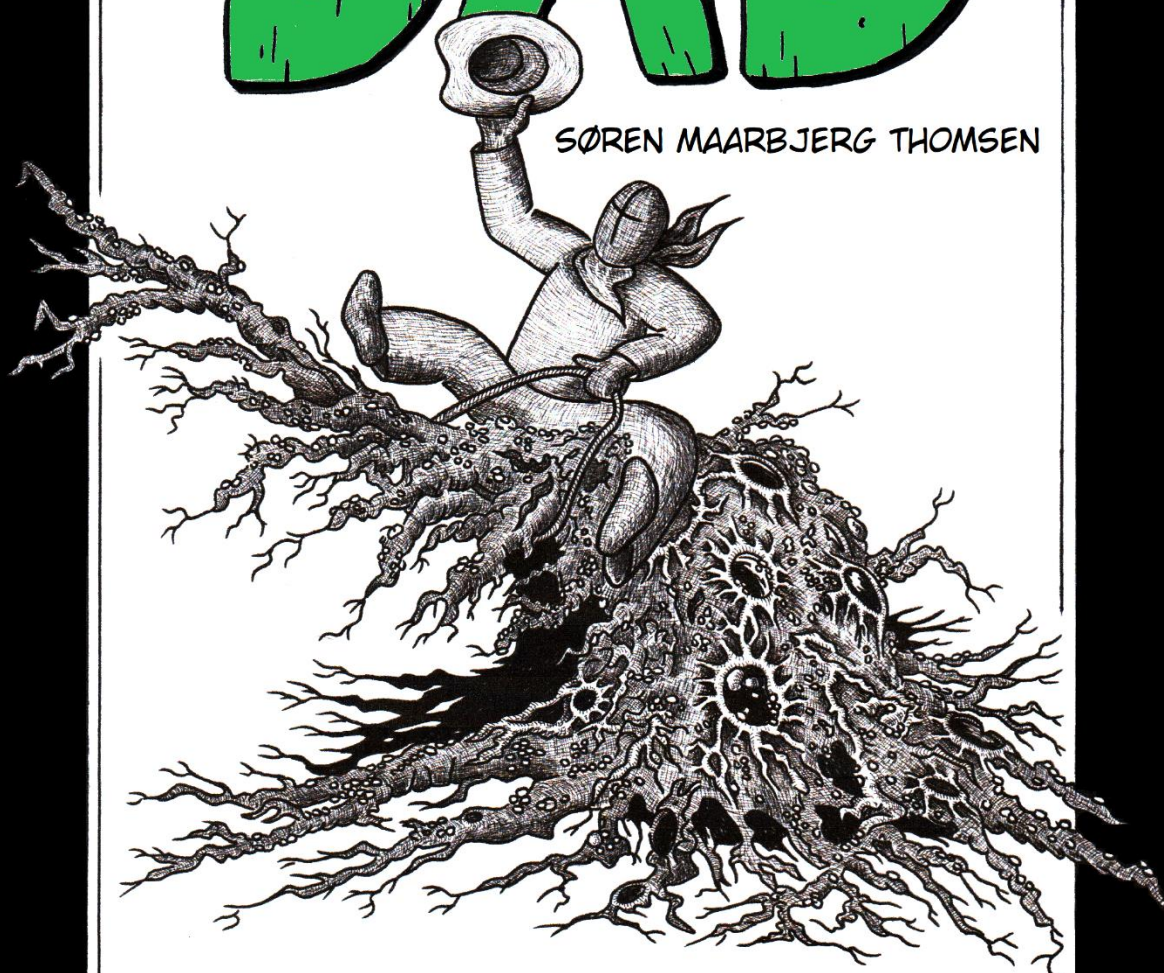


# DAD

SØREN MAARBJERG THOMSEN



" IN THE YEAR 2016, IN DENMARK, THERE WERE 15.800 DEATHS  
DUE TO CANCER."

THIS IS HOW SOREN M. THOMSEN STARTS HIS VERY PERSONAL  
TALE ON ILLNESS, DEATH, AND LOSS.

WHEN WE'RE TALKING OF THIS MANY DEATHS TO CANCER, IT'S KIND  
OF A BANAL STARTING POINT FOR A STORY.

HOWEVER, FOR THE RELATIVES OF THE DECEASED THERE'S NOTHING  
BANAL IN THE ILLNESS, THE DEATHS, NOR IN THE LOSS THE RELATIVES  
FEEL WHEN THEIR LOVED ONES PASS AWAY.

I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING SOREN'S WORK WITH THIS STORY FOR QUITE A  
WHILE, AND I'M NOT ASHAMED TO ADMIT THAT THE "TRIAL PAGES" OFTEN  
DID BRING TEARS TO MY EYES. AFTER ALL IT WAS ALSO MY DAD'S FINAL  
YEAR THAT IS IN THESE PAGES.

OF CAUSE MY EXPERIENCE IS DIFFERENT FROM MY BROTHER'S. HE  
WAS, IN EVERY WAY, CLOSER TO OUR PARENTS, SO MOST OF THE  
HELP THEY NEEDED, AND MUM STILL NEEDS, RESTS ON THE  
SHOULDERS OF SOREN AND HIS WIFE.

AT HIS DEATH DAD LEFT A VOID, ESPECIALLY WITH MY MUM, BUT ALSO  
WITH US THREE CHILDREN AND OUR SPOUSES AND WITH THE  
GRANDCHILDREN. DAD WAS ACTIVE, LOVED LIFE AND HE WAS A  
PROVOCATEUR. IN POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS HE WOULD OFTEN TAKE THE  
OPPOSING VIEWPOINT. AS HE SAID: "IT'S HARD TO GET A GOOD  
DISCUSSION, IF YOU'RE IN AGREEMENT". HE LOVED PLAYING GOLF,  
READING, HUNTING, AND WATCHING FOOTBALL. HE AND I WERE, OF  
CAUSE, SUPPORTERS OF DIFFERENT TEAMS, AND WHEN OUR TEAMS  
HAD PLAYED A MATCH AGAINST EACH OTHER, THE ARGUMENTS BETWEEN  
US WERE HEATED. THE THING I MISS THE MOST, MIGHT BE THE  
MANDATORY, AND TEASING PHONE CALL I WOULD RECEIVE EVERY  
TIME HIS TEAM BEATS MY TEAM.

THIS STORY IS PERSONAL, BUT WITH MORE THAN 15.000 CANCER  
RELATED DEATHS IN DENMARK EVERY YEAR, THERE'S BOUND TO BE A  
LOT WHO CAN RELATE TO IT.

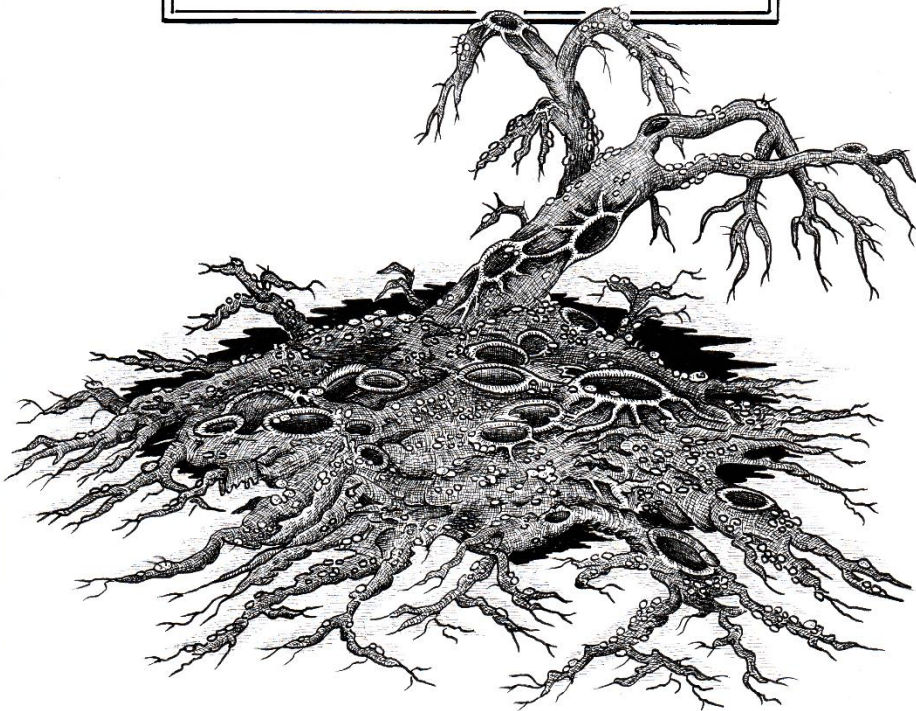
EVEN THOUGH, THIS IS SOMETHING SO MANY MUST GO THROUGH,  
VERY FEW STORIES HAVE BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT IT, AND ALMOST  
NO GRAPHIC NOVELS OUT THERE IS DEALING WITH ILLNESS, DEATH  
AND LOSS. I HOPE AND BELIEVE THAT THIS STORY CAN SHOW  
THE READER THAT YOU'RE NOT ALONE WHEN ILLNESS AND DEATH HIT  
THE FAMILY, AND IT'S TIME TO DEAL WITH YOUR LOSS.

KARL-ERIK THOMSEN. HORSSENS 2021



IN THE YEAR 2016, IN DENMARK, THERE WERE  
15.800 DEATHS DUE TO CANCER. MORE THAN 200  
VARIOUS TYPES OF CANCER ARE KNOWN TO EXIST.

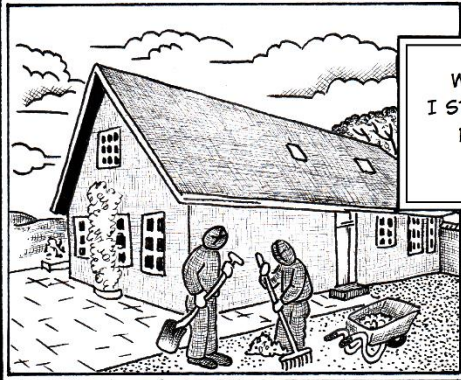
THIS IS THE STORY OF MY DAD'S LAST YEAR  
STRUGGLING WITH THIS DISEASE.



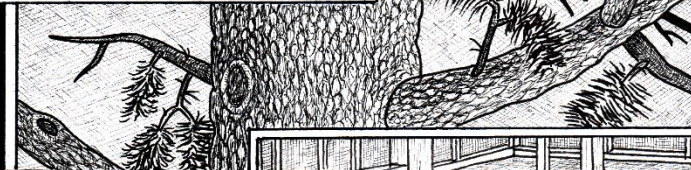
IN THE SPRING 2001 DAD WAS DIAGNOSED  
WITH CANCER IN THE LEFT KIDNEY, AND HAD IT  
COMPLETELY REMOVED IN THE SUMMER OF THAT YEAR.

I HAVE ALWAYS IMAGINED A TUMOR LOOKING  
LIKE A CROSSOVER BETWEEN A FALLEN TREE  
AND A LUNAR LANDSCAPE.

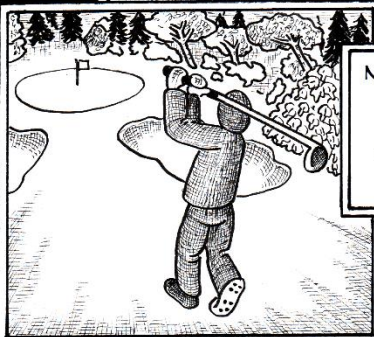
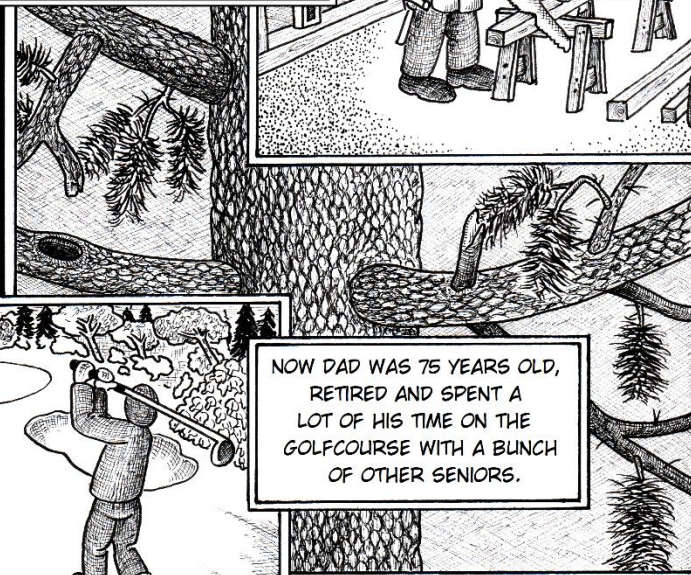
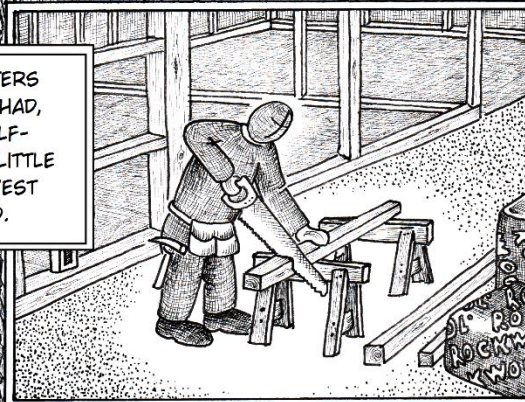
FALL 2015



WHEN I LOOKED IN ON MY PARENTS,  
I STARTED NOTICING; DAD HAD SUDDENLY  
BECOME OLD, HE WAS BEGINNING  
TO "BEND" A LITTLE.



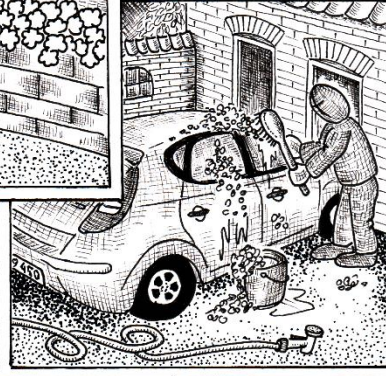
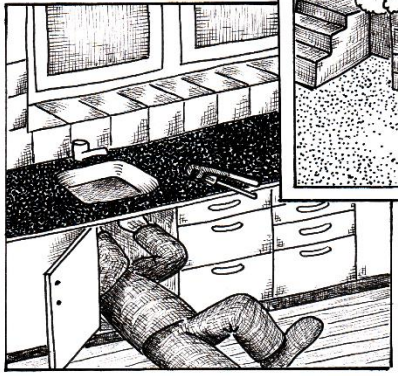
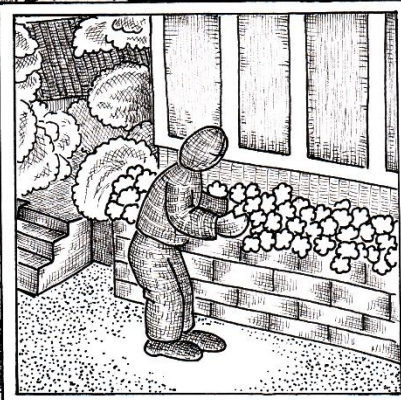
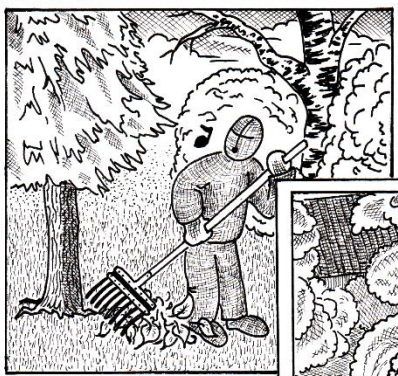
HE HAD FINISHED HIS CARPENTERS  
APPRENTICESHIP IN 1964. AND HAD,  
FOR MANY YEARS, BEEN A SELF-  
EMPLOYED CARPENTER IN OUR LITTLE  
COMMUNITY 10 KILOMETERS WEST  
OF HOLSTEBRO IN JUTLAND.



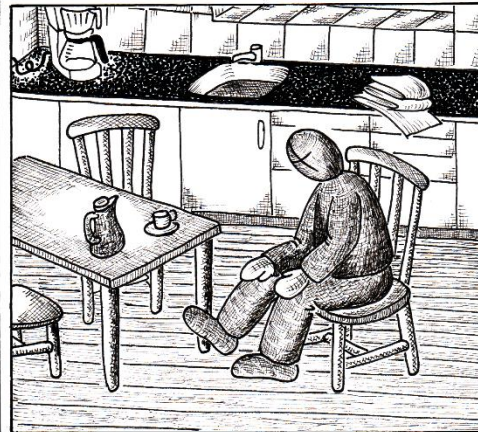
NOW DAD WAS 75 YEARS OLD,  
RETIRED AND SPENT A  
LOT OF HIS TIME ON THE  
GOLFCOURSE WITH A BUNCH  
OF OTHER SENIORS.



WHEN DAD WAS NOT ON THE GOLF-COURSE,  
HE WAS ALWAYS DOING SOMETHING.  
YARDWORK, FIXING UP THE BATHROOM, WASHING THE CAR,  
INSTALLING A NEW KITCHEN OR TENDING TO HIS FLOWERS.  
- HE LOVED HIS FLOWERS!



HE WAS ALWAYS QUITE ACTIVE,  
BUT IN THE FALL HE SUFFERED A  
BRAIN HEMORRHAGE. THAT HURT  
HIS MEMORY A BIT.  
HIS LEGS BEGAN TO HURT. THE  
HEMORRHAGE PUT PRESSURE ON  
SOME NERVES, SO OFTEN, HE HAD  
TO SIT DOWN FOR A "LITTLE BREAK"



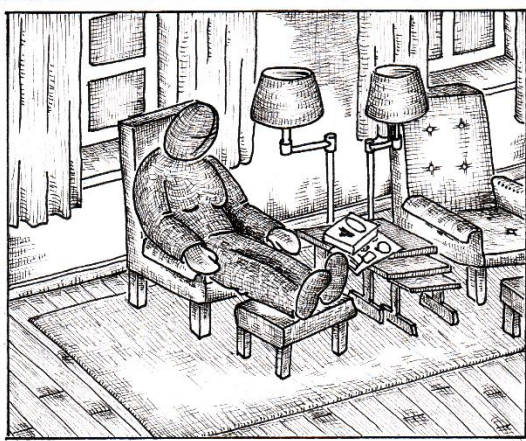


THAT VERY SAME FALL, MUM  
SUFFERED FROM A COLLAPSED  
SPINAL DISC.

SHE HAD BEEN OUT SHOPPING  
FOR GROCERIES AND AS SHE  
LIFTED THE BAGS OUT OF THE  
CAR BOOT, HER BACK GAVE IN.

IT WAS VERY PAINFUL, AND ALL  
SHE COULD DO NOW WAS SIT.

IN ORDER TO TAKE THE WORST  
OF THE PAIN, SHE WAS HEAVILY  
MEDICATED

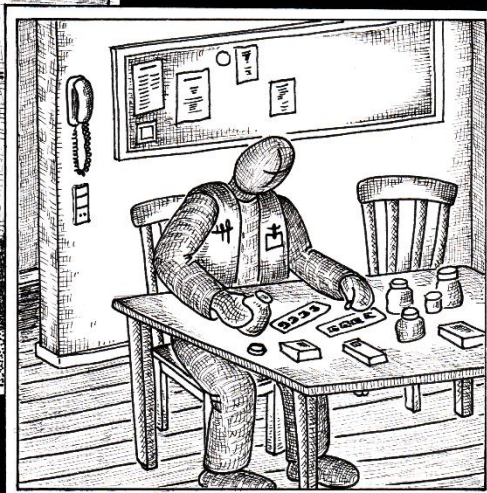
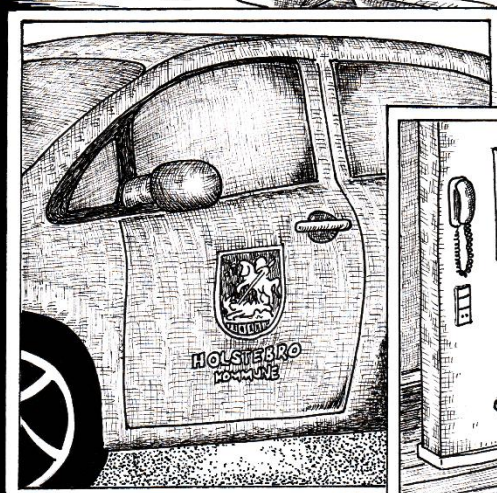


NOW, NEITHER OF THEM  
WAS ABLE TO DRIVE,  
AND SINCE MY SIBLINGS  
LIVED 1.5 HOURS AWAY,  
IT FELL TO MY WIFE  
TINA AND I TO HANDLE  
THEIR WEEKLY SHOPPING  
AND SUCH

A collapse in the back is also called a compression fracture in the back.  
The reason for the fracture is that a vertebra is compressed. It is a very common  
condition among the elderly, especially among people with osteoporosis.  
In addition to the fracture being painful, the function of the back is impaired.



SO MANY PILLS.



JANUARY 2016

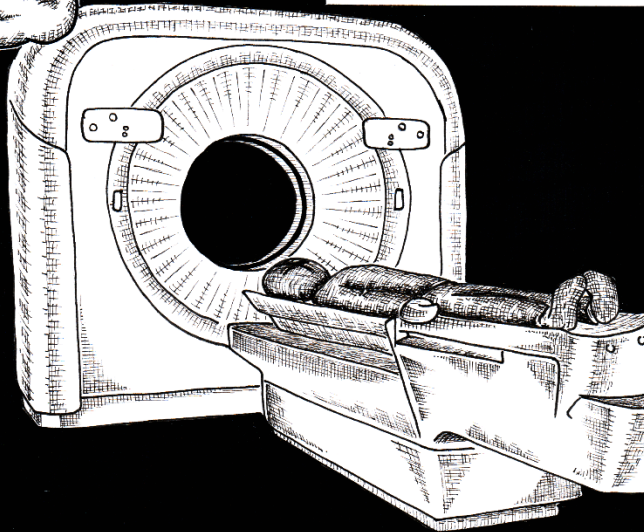


A NEW CT SCAN OF DAD'S HEAD WAS SUPPOSED TO SHOW THAT THE BLEEDING WAS GONE, OR AT LEAST SMALLER, IT HAD NOW GROWN LARGER...

MUCH LARGER.

THEN A MRI SCAN WAS PERFORMED. TURNED OUT, IT WAS NOT A HEMORRHAGE, BUT A TUMOR!

IT WAS THE TUMOR THAT HAD CAUSED THE HEMORRHAGE LAST FALL.



CT scan is a method based on X-rays and takes a few minutes. Radiologists call it incision imaging, that is, "slices" of the brain of a predetermined thickness, usually 0.5-1.0 cm.

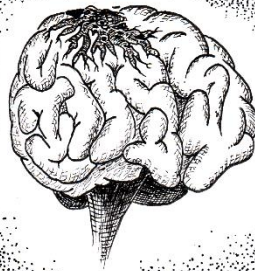
MRI scan is short for scanning using magnetic resonance. If you need an MRI scan, you will be placed in a strong magnetic field. By sending ordinary radio waves into the body and recording the echo, a computer can make a detailed picture of the body's interior.



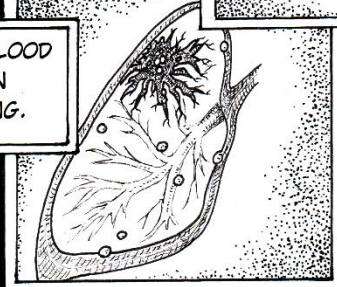
ANOTHER MRI SCAN OF DAD'S CHEST AND STOMACH WAS DONE TO RULE OUT (OR CONFIRM), THAT THE CANCER ON DAD'S LEFT KIDNEY FROM 16 YEARS AGO HAD NOT SPREAD TO OTHER ORGANS.

UNFORTUNATELY THE SCAN SHOWED A NEW TUMOR, EVEN BIGGER THAN THE KIDNEY THAT HAD BEEN REMOVED, AS WELL AS NEW BLOOD CLOTS.

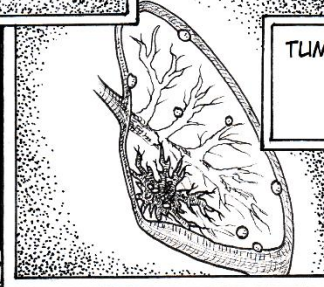
BRAIN TUMOR.



TUMOR AND BLOOD CLOTS ON RIGHT LUNG.



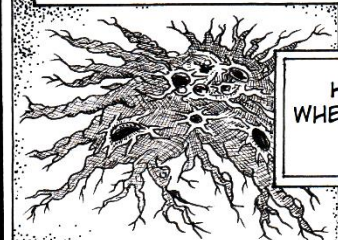
TUMOR AND BLOOD CLOTS ON LEFT LUNG.



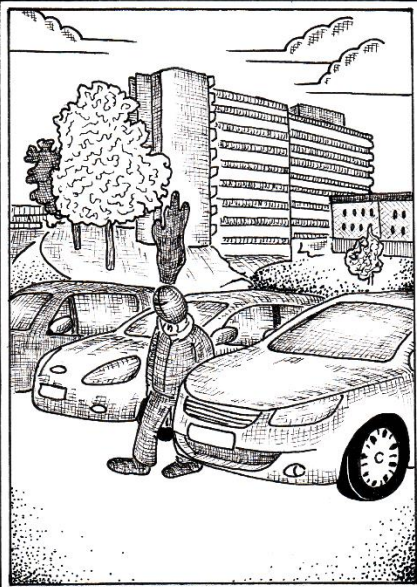
TUMOR ON RIGHT KIDNEY.



HUGE TUMOR WHERE LEFT KIDNEY ONCE WAS.



SUBSEQUENT TISSUE SAMPLES SHOWED THAT IT WAS THE CANCER FROM 16 YEARS AGO THAT HAD SPREAD.



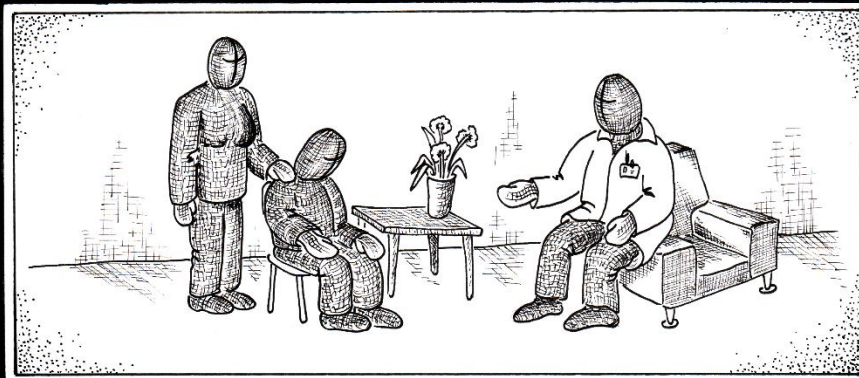
DAD HAD A MEETING WITH  
THE DOCTOR, AND MY WIFE  
TINA WENT ALONG.

SHE HAS BEEN A NURSE  
FOR MANY YEARS AND  
COULD EASIER MAKE SENSE  
OF THE "MEDICAL GIBBERISH".



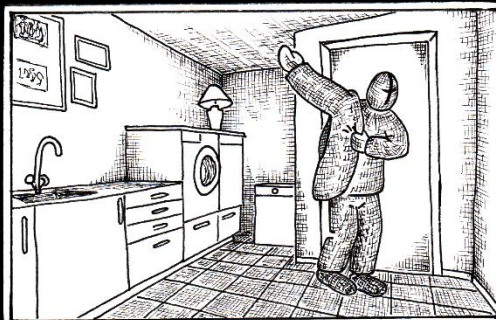
THE DOCTOR SHOWED  
NO EMPATHY  
NOR COMPASSION,  
IT WAS COLD FACTS AND NUMBERS, GIVEN AT A  
SMALL TABLE IN THE HOSPITAL HALLWAY.

THE ODDS WERE NOT IN DAD'S FAVOR!





WHILE DAD WAS  
BEING DISCHARGED,  
TINA WENT HOME  
TO PICK ME UP.



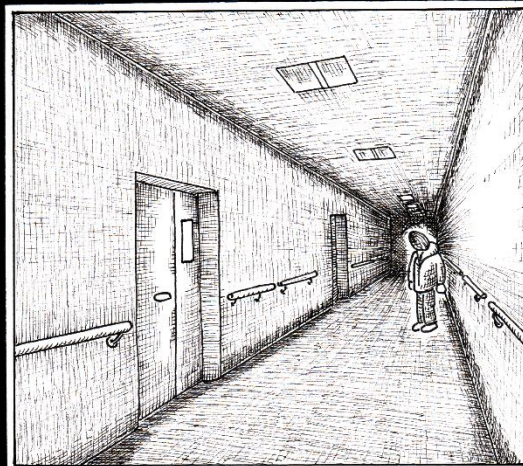
I PUT ON MY JACKET IN A  
HURRY, AND WE DROVE  
BACK TO THE HOSPITAL  
TO GET DAD.

WE FOUND DAD STANDING  
IN A HALLWAY, ALL ALONE  
IN HIS OVERCOAT.

NOW HE WANTED TO GET  
HOME TO MUM.

HE STOOD DOWNHEARTED  
WITH RED EYES.

I COULD TELL HE  
HAD BEEN CRYING.



DAD NOW HAD TO UNDERGO YET ANOTHER CANCER TREATMENT  
AT THE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL SKEJBY IN AARHUS.

WHEN DAD STARTED TREATMENT, HE CONVINCED  
HIMSELF THAT HE WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEMS  
BEATING THE CANCER.  
AS HE HAD DONE 16 YEARS EARLIER.

