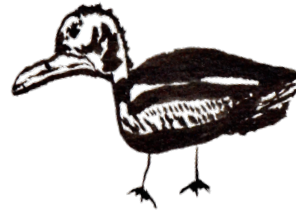
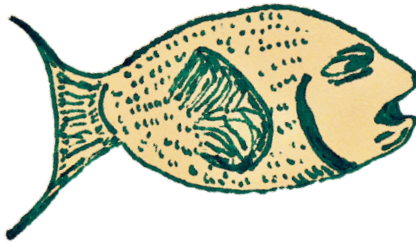




I Feel Like You're an Idiot



And Other Rumblings from Warm Waters

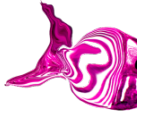
Overheard by Mark Daniel Gordon



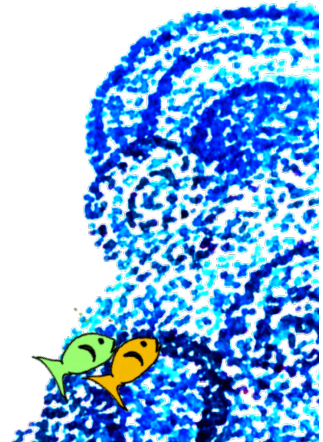


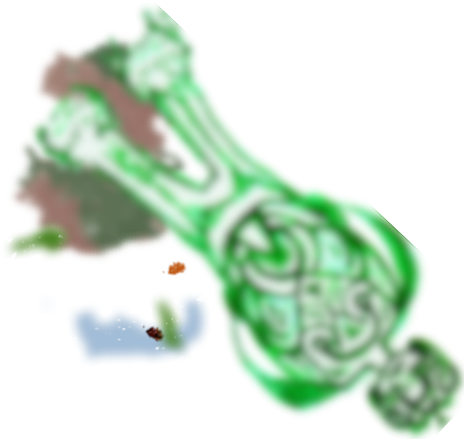
(If you listen very closely...



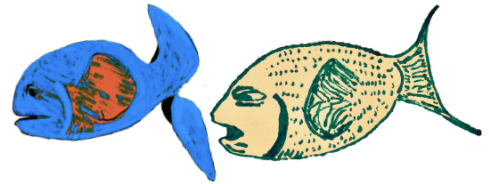
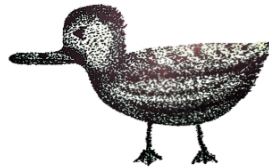
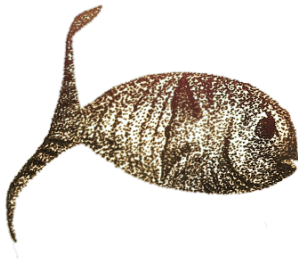


...the shallow tides roar...





...with currents and conjecture.)

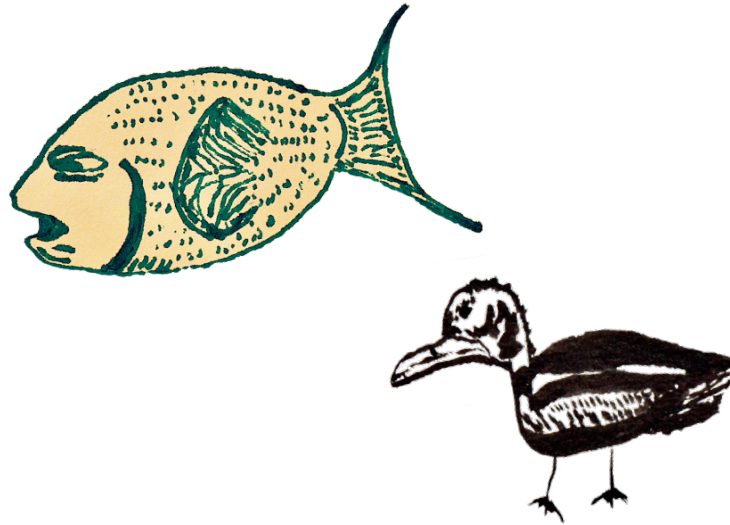




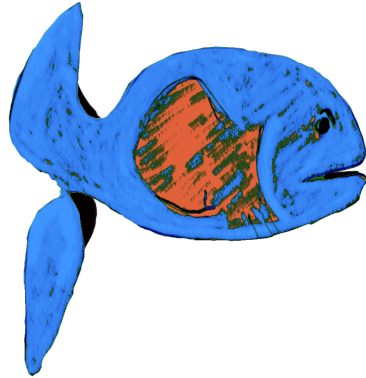
Where do you summer?



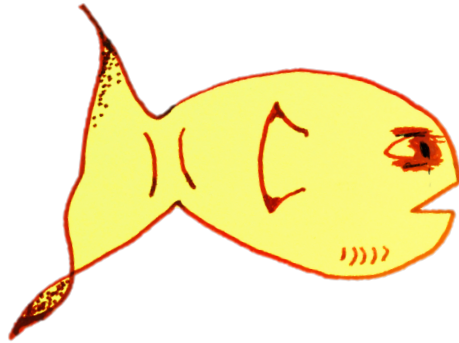
I can't believe the year went by so fast.



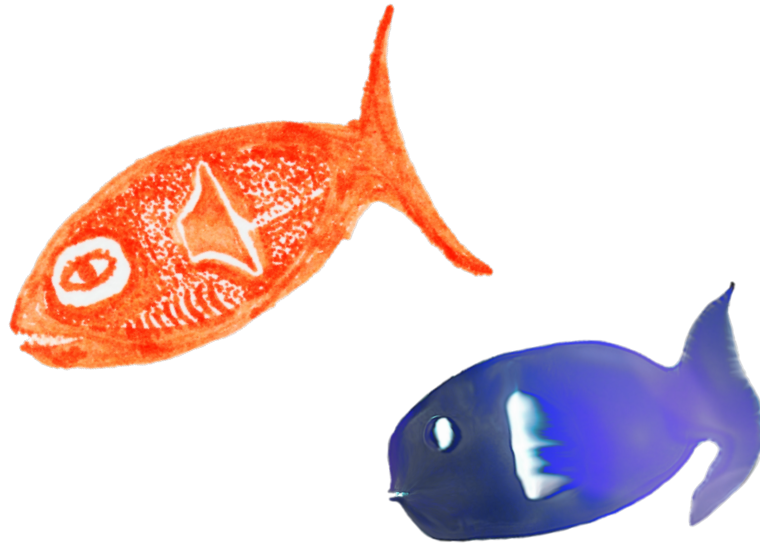
*I'm trying to use more "I feel..." statements.
And I feel like you're an idiot.*



We should work on our origin story.



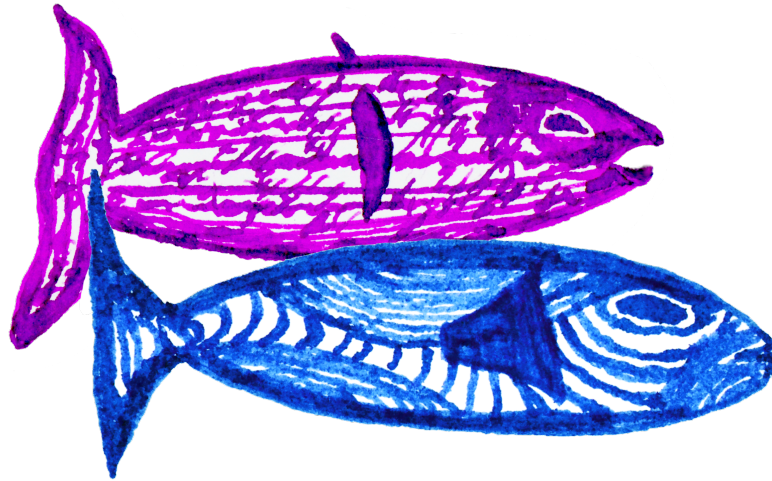
*It's not complicated.
Fight, or flight! Pick one!*



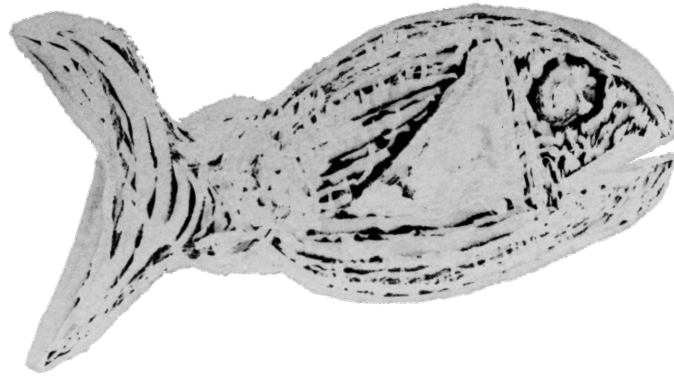
*I have a number of thoughts.
Some of them, on this very issue.*



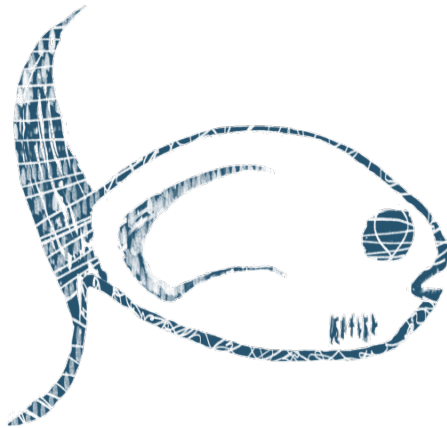
“Agree to disagree”? Not on your life!



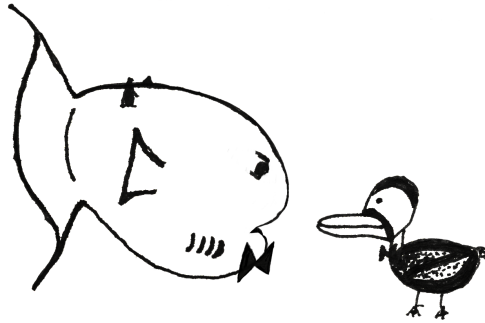
What's your earliest memory?



...OR... maybe it's delicious.



My identity politics foreshadowed my identity crisis.



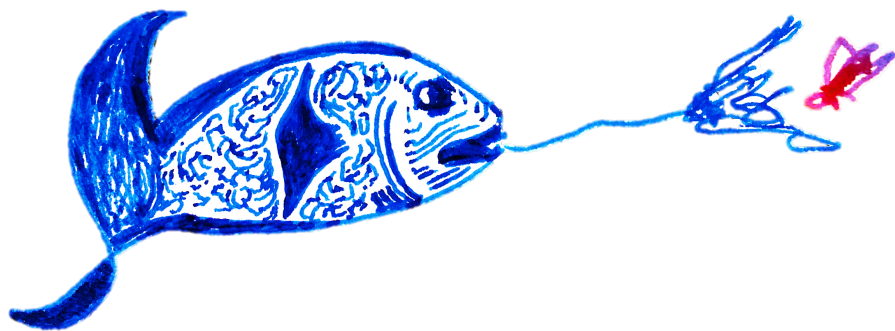
No, a clip-on. Why, is it obvious?



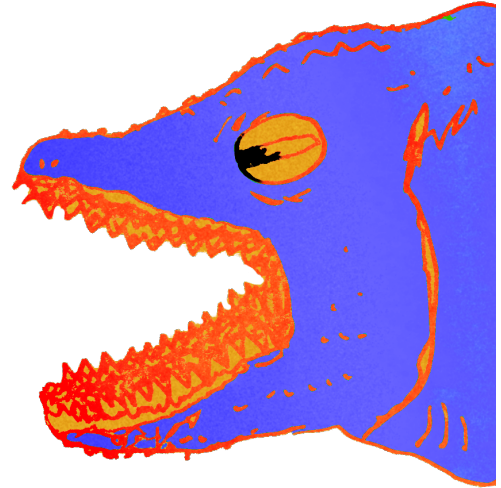
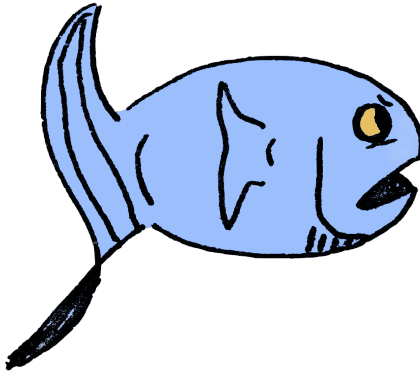
South Beach diet?



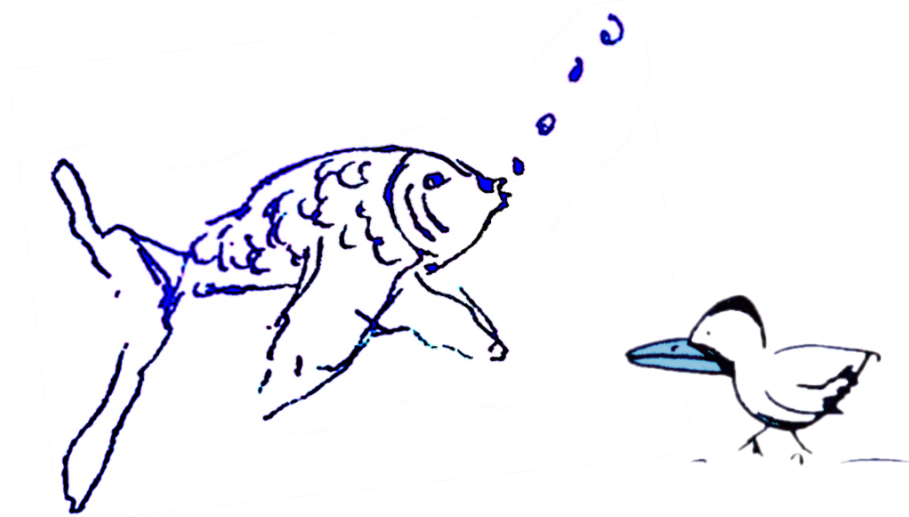
Well, you could start with “I’m sorry.”



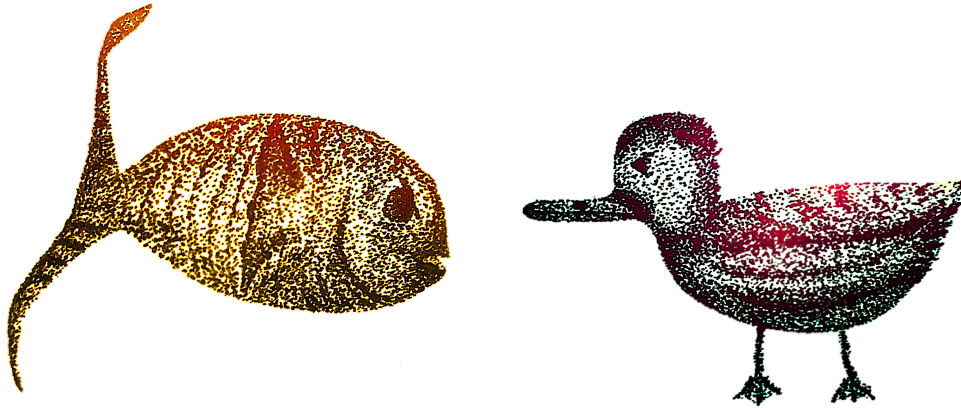
I see our time is up.



Stop asking “why” and just accept that you “are.”



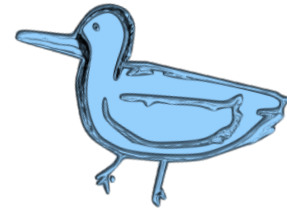
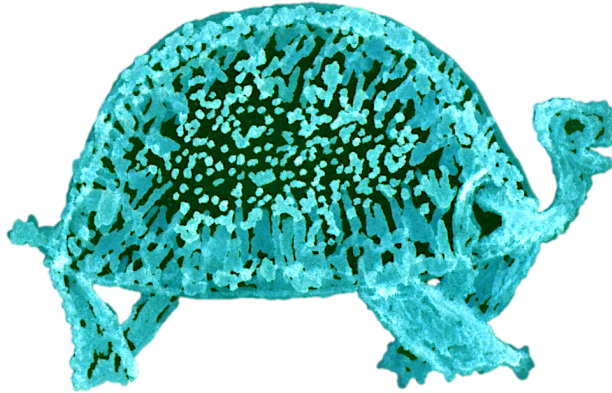
OH! Blowing bubbles! Let's do that!



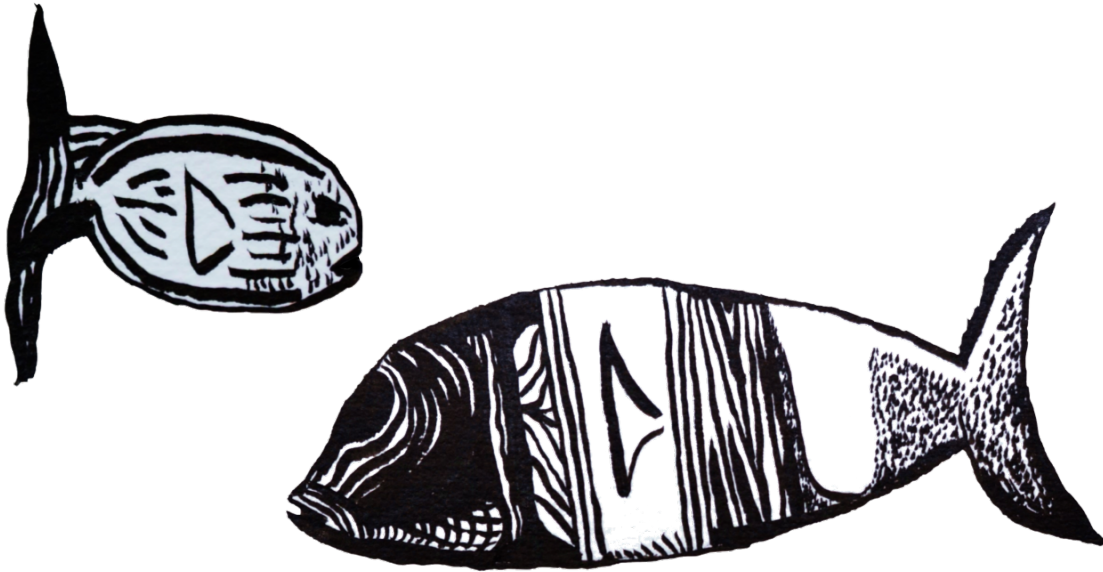
There are lots of “shoulds” that aren’t.



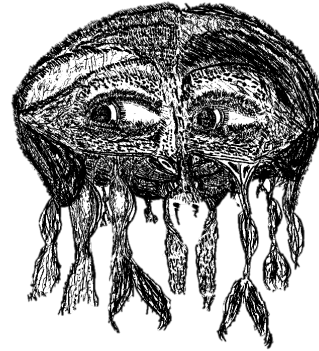
*Yeah, meditation is great....
at increasing your odds of being eaten.*



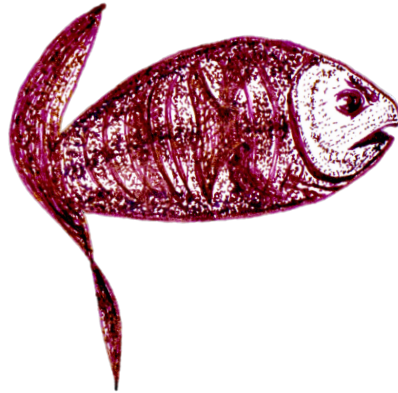
What do I "do"? You're looking at it.



I spend most of my time pretending I understand stuff.



Impulse... control? To what end?



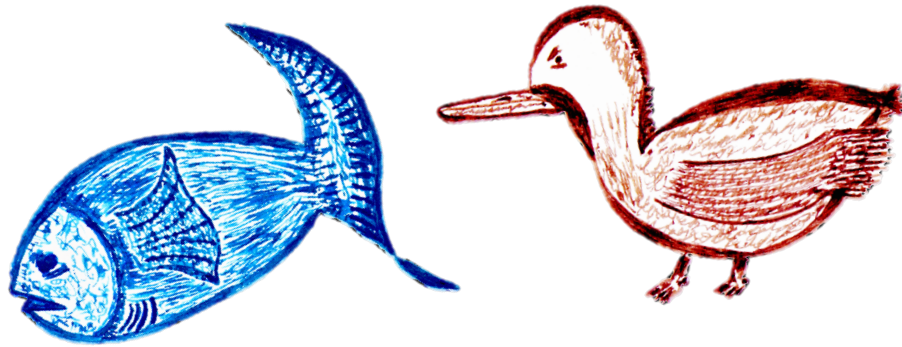
An effective “spoiler alert” precedes the spoiler.



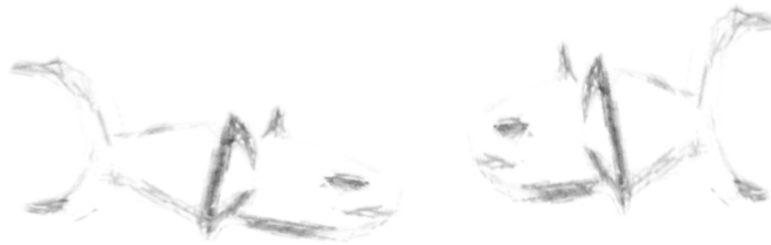
I know it doesn't make sense. But it's how I feel.



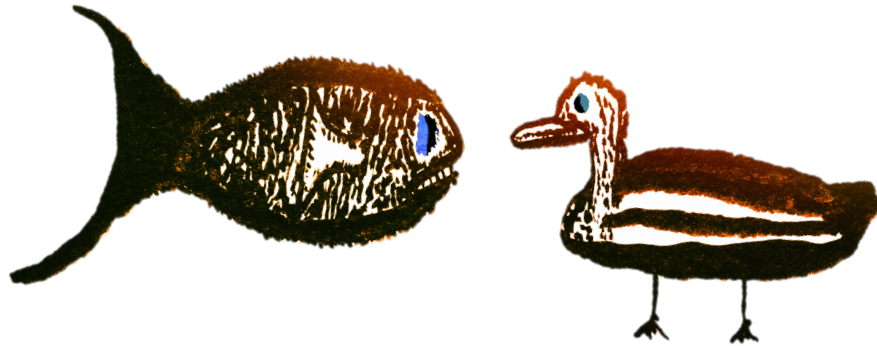
When did seabream become a thing?



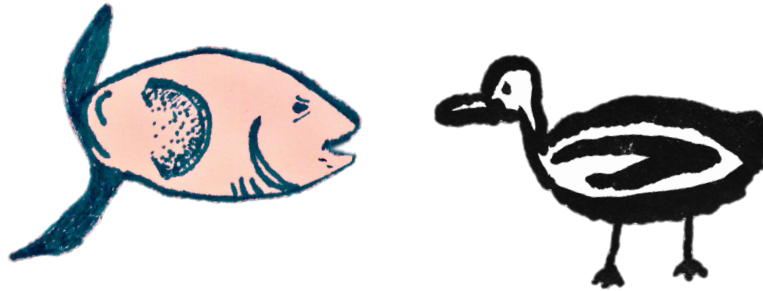
I'm not even angry. I'm just disappointed.



*It's like, "Go back" to where?
I didn't choose to be a "non-native" species.*



*I can't promise in advance not to tell.
What if, later on, I really want to tell?*



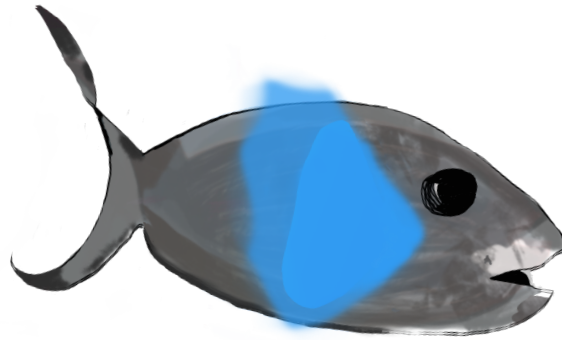
I motion we should stand on ceremony. All opposed?



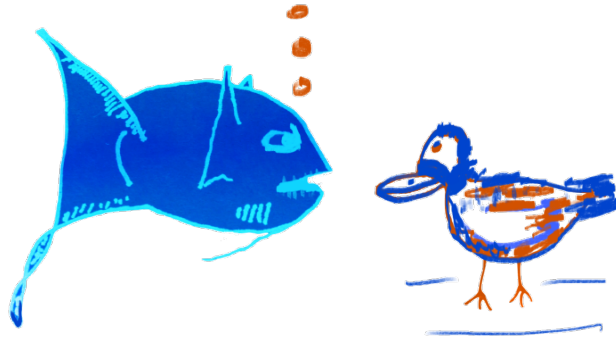
“Dog years” seems like a less relevant measurement today than it did growing up.



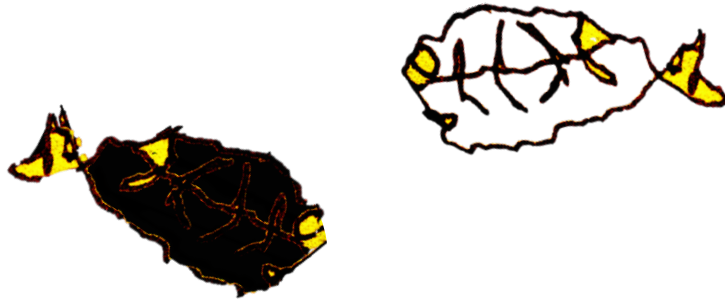
I don't know about "kosher." But I'm certainly OK with it.



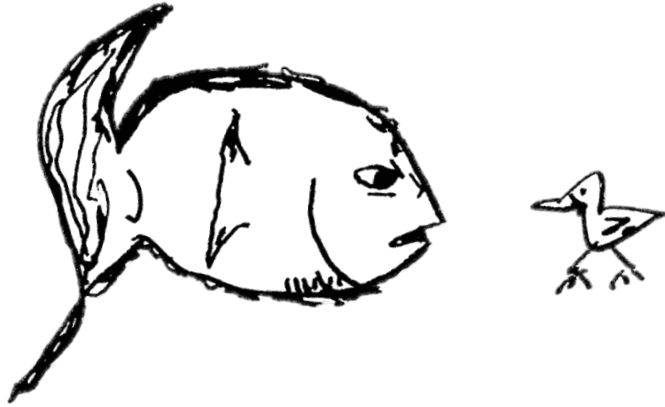
...Wait up.



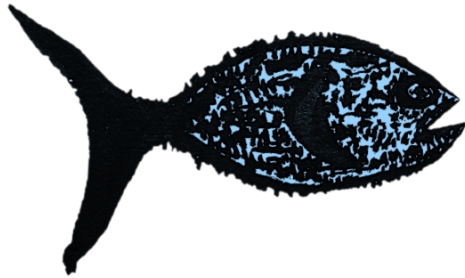
*I already lowered my expectations
in advance of meeting you.*



Even my good memories are now bad memories.



Basically... Everything was the same. Until it wasn't.



"BEGS the question"? No... At most, it thoughtfully suggests an inquiry wouldn't be unreasonable.



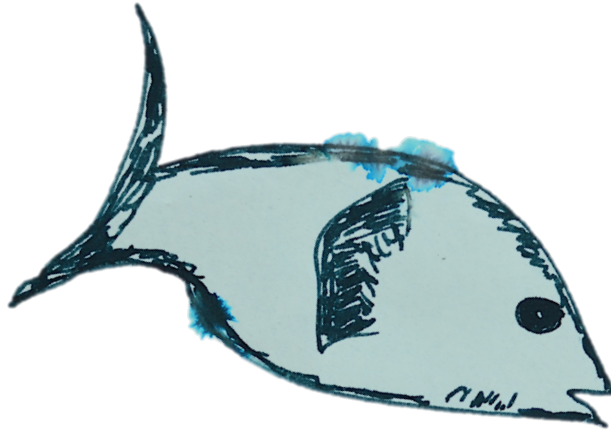
I'm not "trying" to say anything...



Would you rather be a “has-been” or a “never-was”?



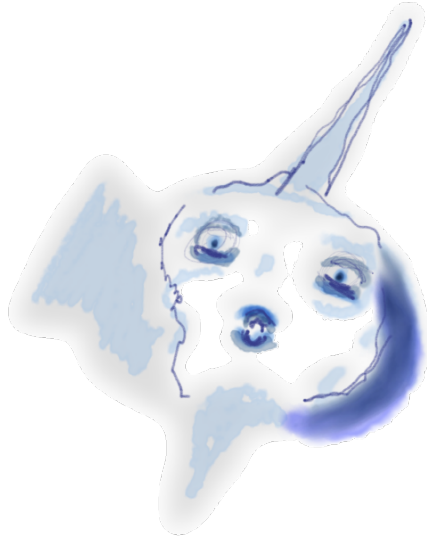
Maybe it's all just too much.



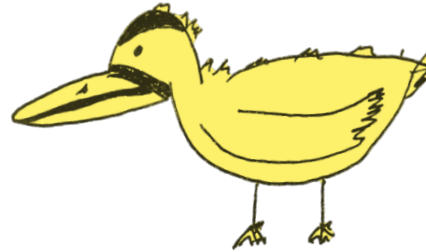
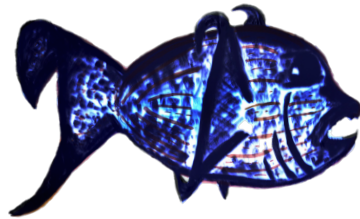
I'm pretty sure I forgot to eat lunch today.



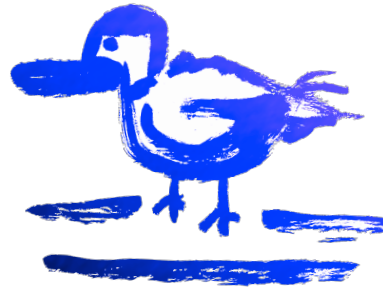
I do understand. I simultaneously disagree.



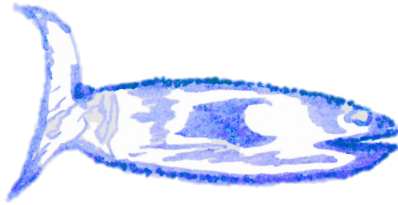
*The house phone would ring. Someone would shout, "I'll get it!"
... I miss that.*



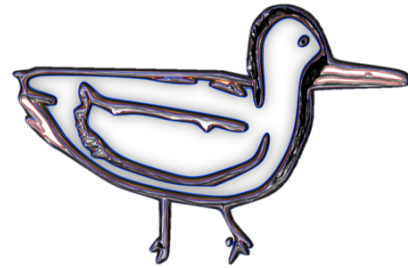
You are literally nothing more than a reptile modified for flight.



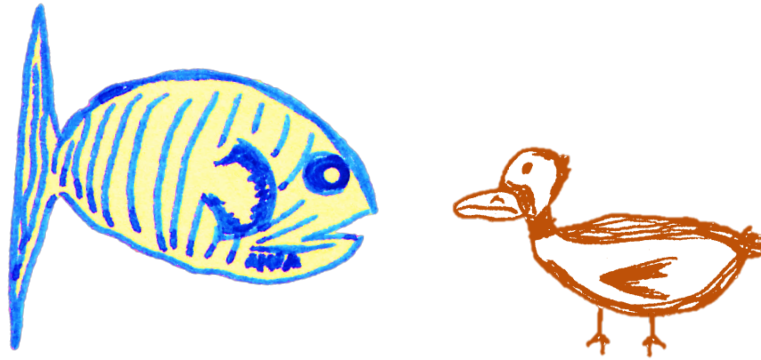
But, of course, doodling on cave walls is hardly “art.”



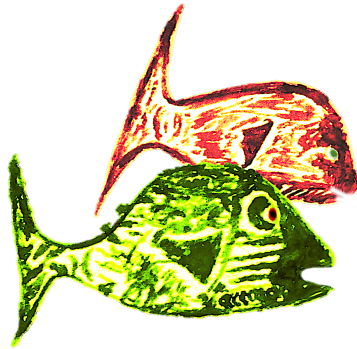
There's no Wi-Fi password when there's no Wi-Fi.



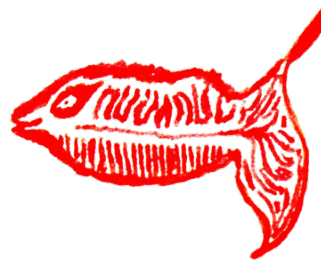
But what's hiding under all that "sweet" and all that "sour"?



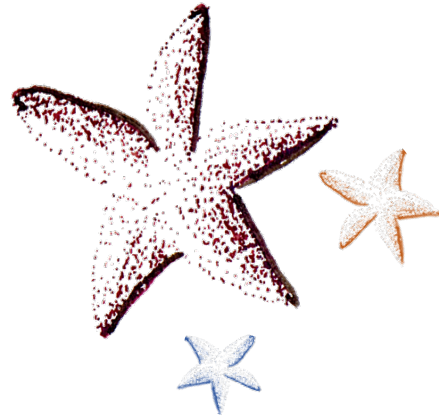
Sure... Lots of stuff makes sense on paper.



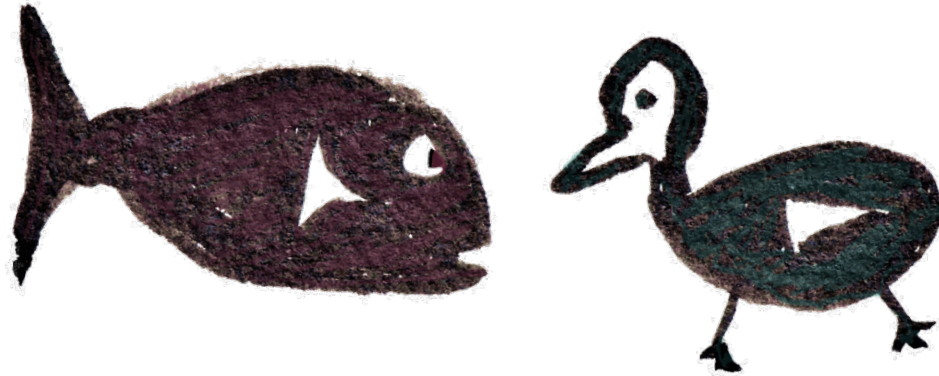
*You want higher stakes?
Play Hungry Hungry Hippos with actual hippos.*



What is a “bitcoin”? ...And, do I want one?



Don't argue with me. Argue with the fossil record.



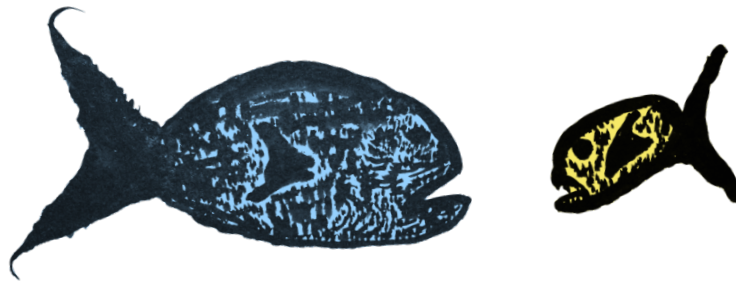
"Joyful sorrow." That's the best way I can describe it.



...New hat?



Shall we reach out, circle back, or put a pin in it?

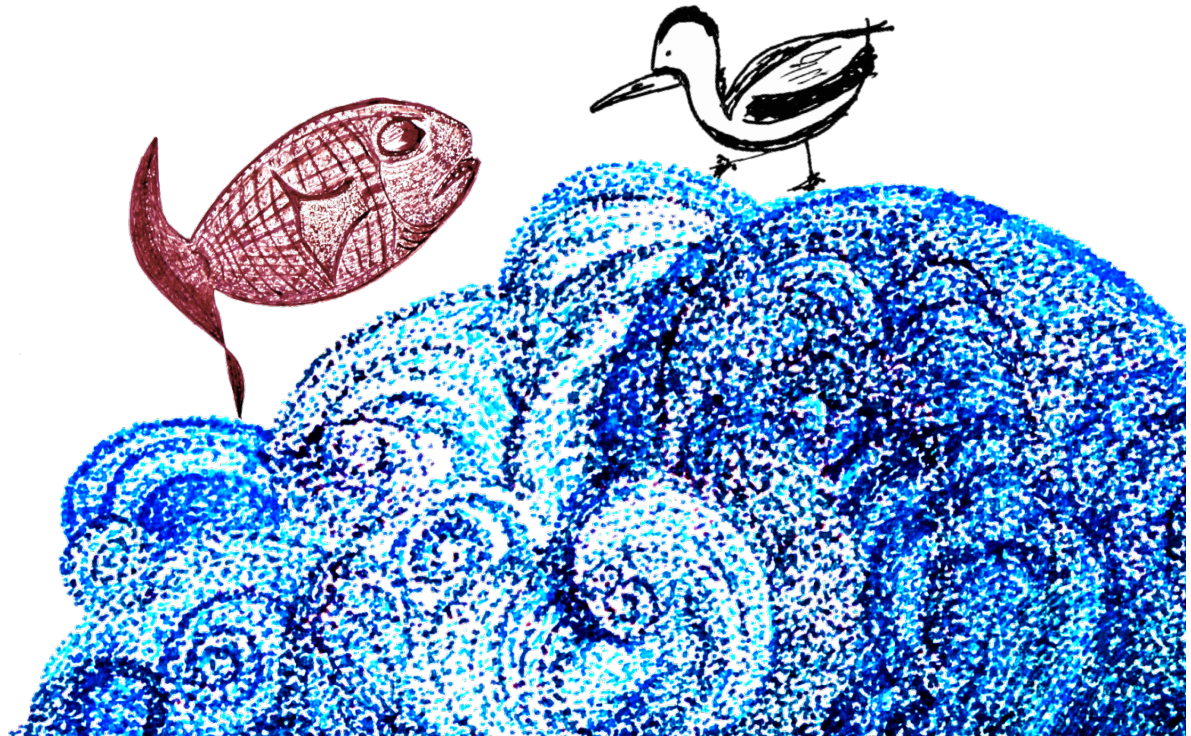


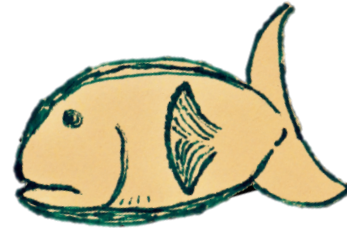
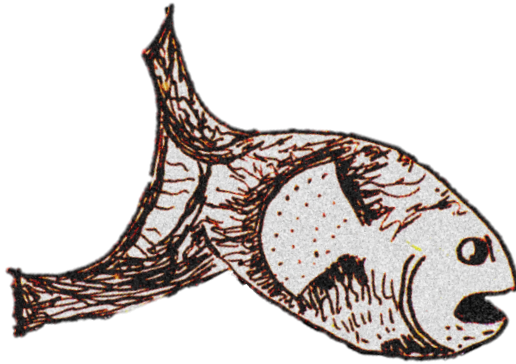
*“High-net-worth individual.”
Say it out loud. ...Fun, right?*



*How long's it been since you
believed you could make a difference?*

Funny seeing you here.

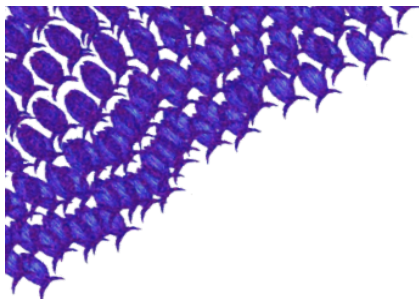




“Sustainable”? “Line-caught”? I’m not sleeping any easier.



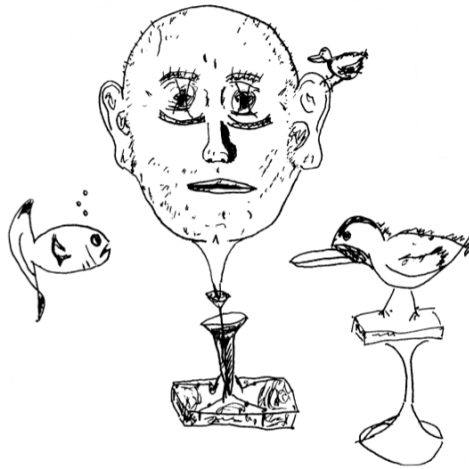
What do you think it wants?



Leave my comfort zone?
I'm barely comfortable in my comfort zone.



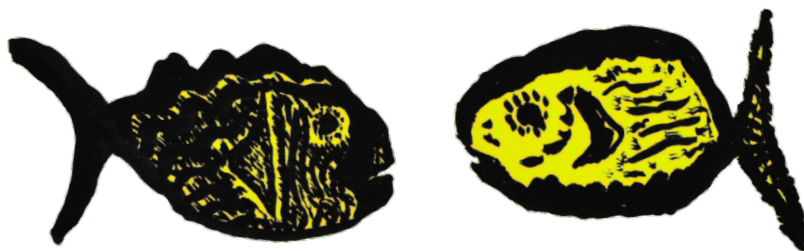
*Please stop asking if I remember
when MTV “actually played music videos.”*



My kid could do that.



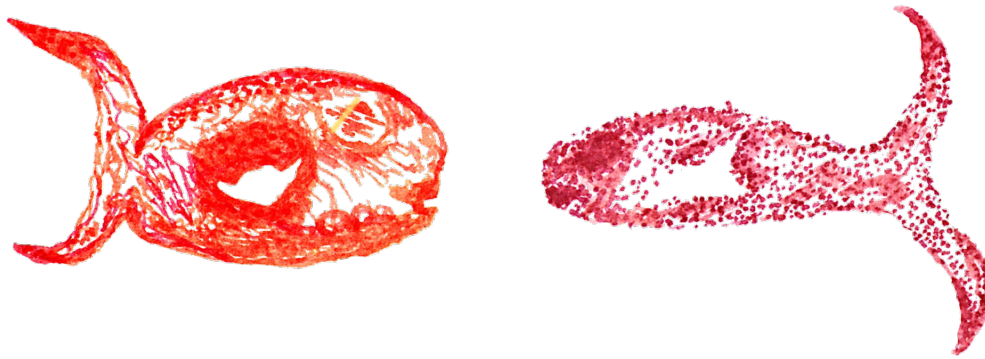
Give me one good reason.
...Alternatively, I'd accept three mediocre reasons.



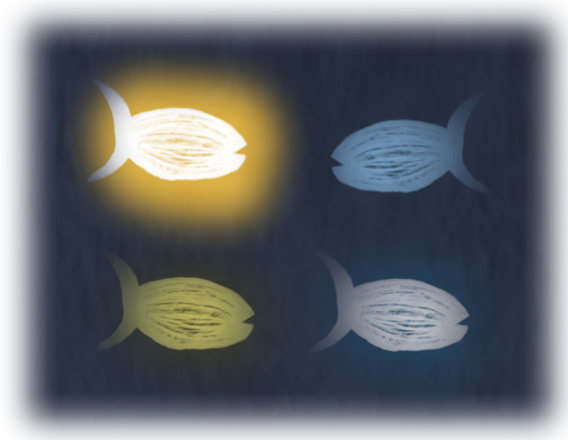
Don't say that. It's never too late.



The term “mid-life” crisis is somewhat optimistic.



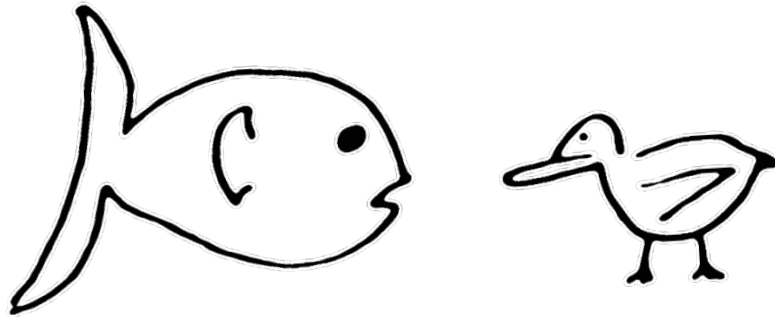
*I can't even imagine living in any
other time in history besides now.*



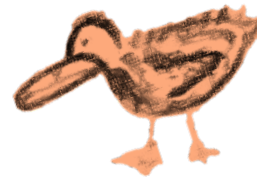
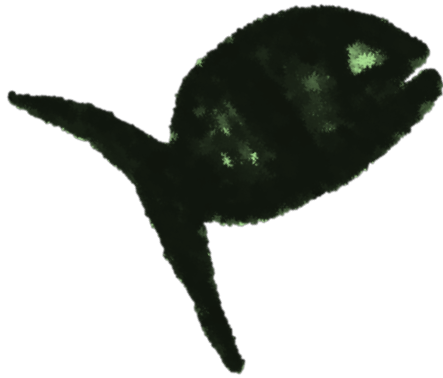
Two words: Bio. Luminescent.



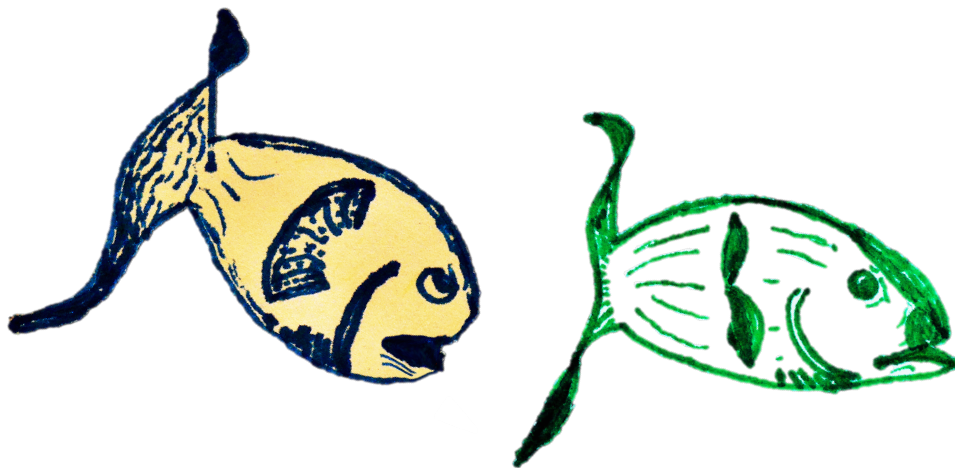
*I look forward to a tepid friendship,
followed by an inevitable falling-out.*



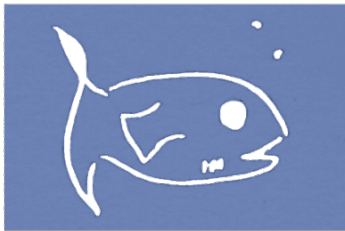
“Happy” or “right.” I’d take either one.



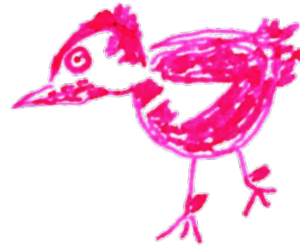
*Other way around.
Acknowledge the statement. Then validate the feeling.*



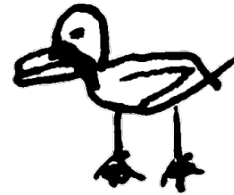
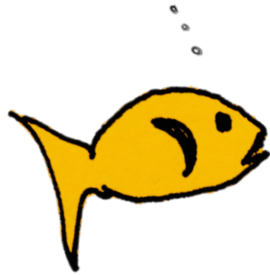
I know it's a good question. That's why I asked it.



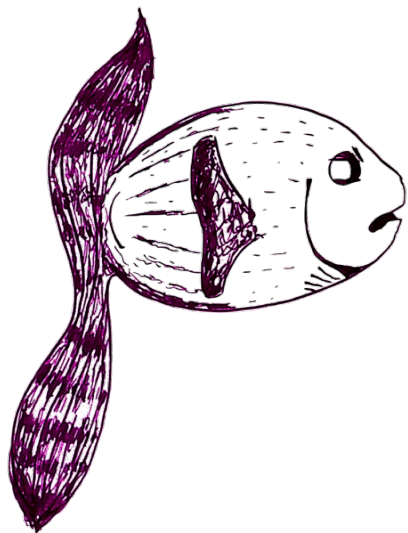
Isn't it funny sometimes how life turns out?



Is that apathy? It looks good on you.



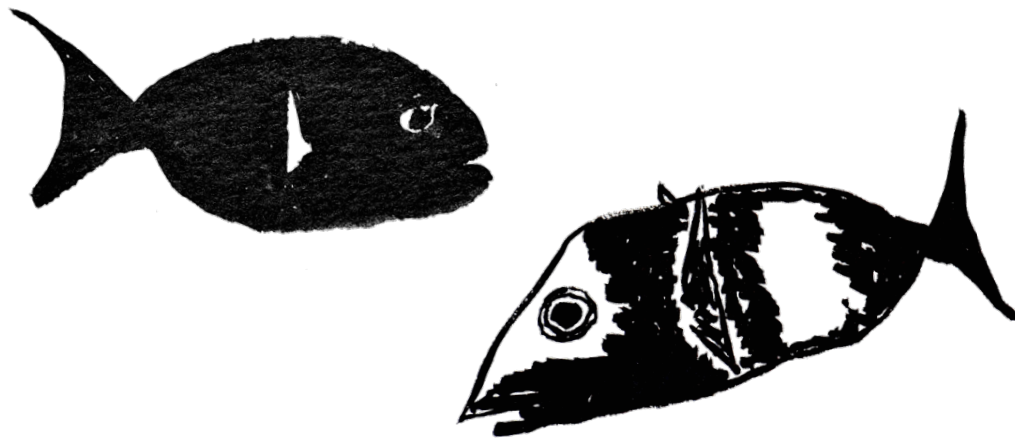
“Never been better”? That’s a depressing outlook.



Very respectfully, no, thank you.



Don't worry. There are plenty of us.



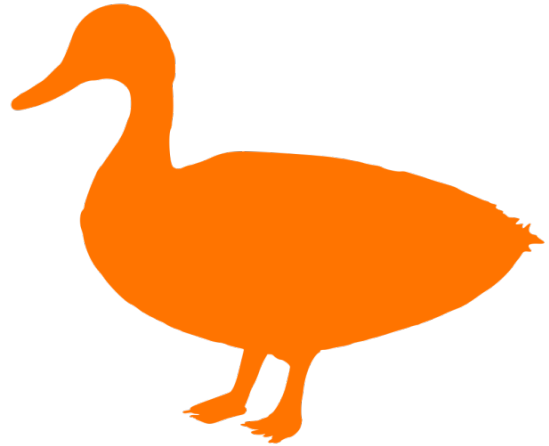
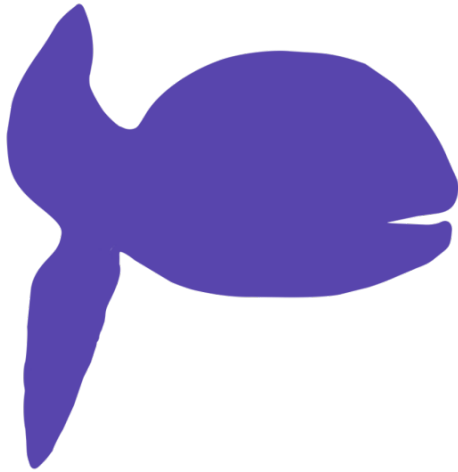
I imagine you're as unsatisfied as I am.



But... what if there isn't any "there" there?



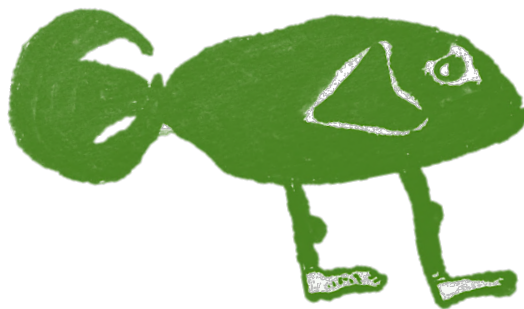
We're doomed to repeat history whether we remember it or not.



Something's different. Wait, don't tell me.



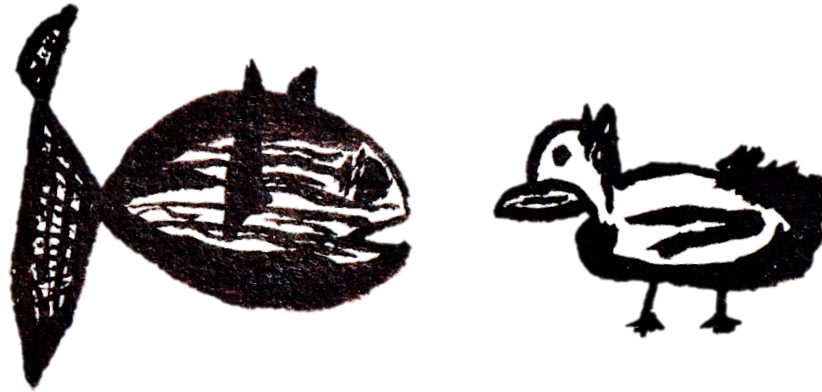
It always takes longer in the rain.



Well, what did you think I was going to say?



I'm fine. ...Just fine.

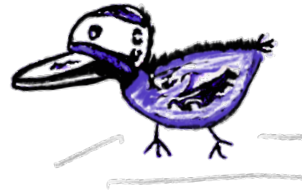
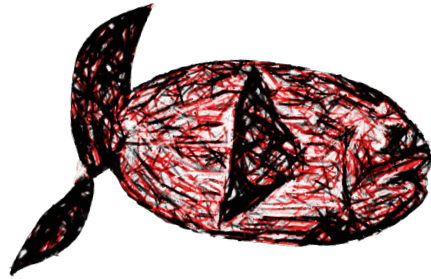


Between us... Forget sinker. Hook and line are perfectly sufficient.



Marco...!

Marco...?



*I have no problem with borderline personality.
It's the disorder that poses the only challenge.*

A detailed illustration of a crab, likely a coconut crab, positioned on the right side of the frame. The crab has a brownish-orange body with intricate patterns and textures. Its large, powerful claws are prominent. The background is a deep blue, featuring a large, stylized blue flower with dark blue outlines and a central yellow dot. The overall style is artistic and somewhat whimsical.

*I'm pretty sure I forgot
to eat lunch today.*



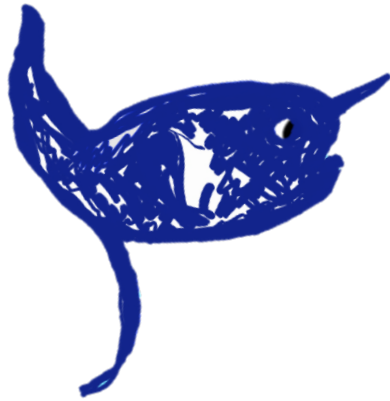
Patent Pending.



You are WAY out of your depth.



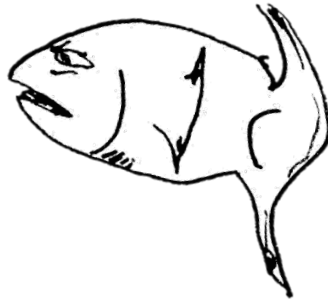
Why not look at it as, “Pond half-full”?



"Sea... World." Redundant, no?



The crow won't take the scenic route. That's not how he flies.

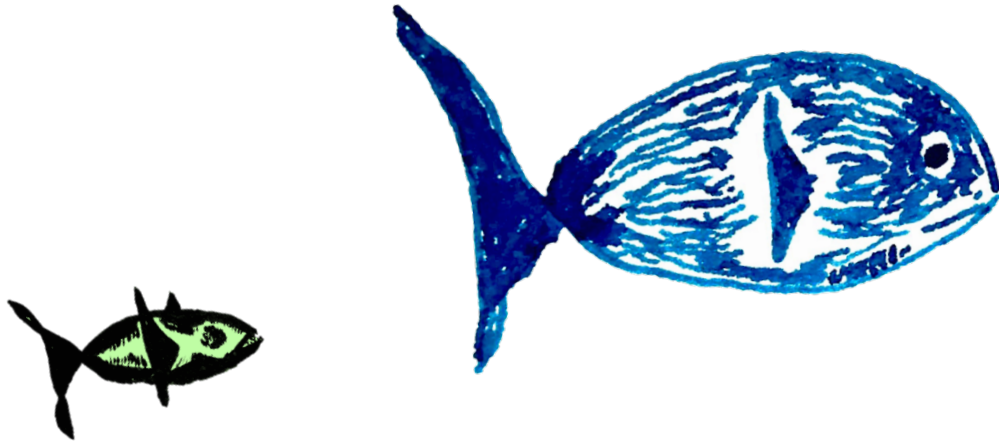


*Look... A coup is a coup.
Obviously, you hope for the bloodless variety.*

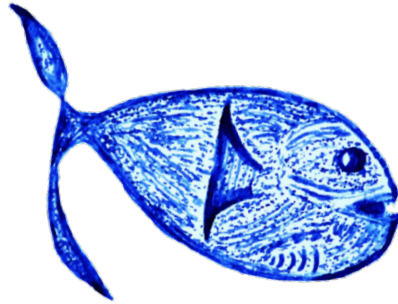


Not bad, not bad... Made a few exceedingly-ambitious to-do lists, chastised myself for not being more productive, then spent the remaining Sunday evening hours bemoaning time's arrow's inextricable one-way-ticket to an ever approaching future in which we are forgotten soon after we die.

And you? How was your weekend?



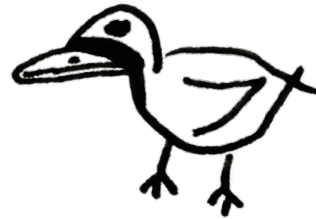
*I want to have good intentions
regardless of which road they pave.*



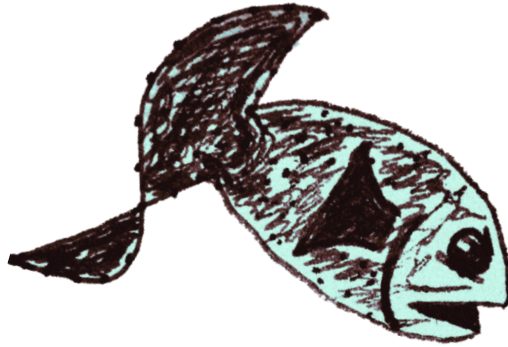
We've actually met before.



Terrestrial life-forms abducted my cousin.

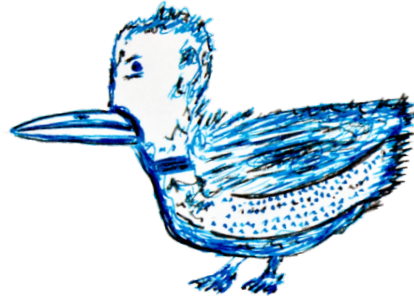
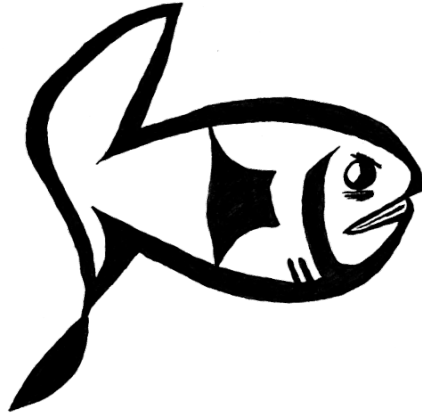


Officially, it's a "Get Rich" scheme.
Quick is merely a welcome bonus.

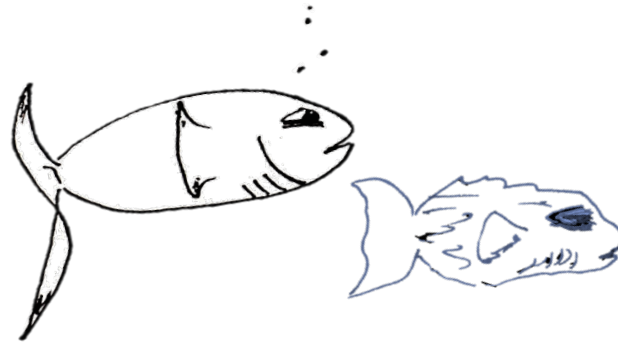


*I can.
I have.
I know how.
I'm not opposed.
I choose not to.*





There's nothing "so-called" about fish-out-of-water scenarios.



Should I maybe start a podcast?



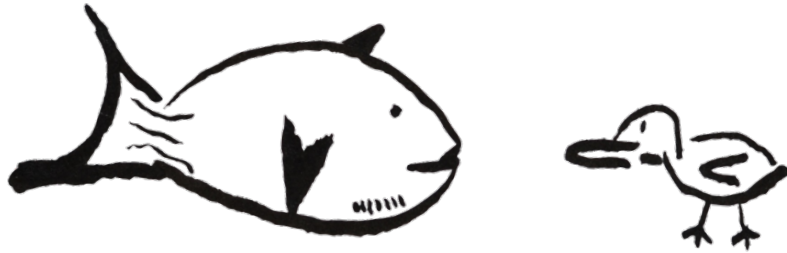
“Last you checked”? When was the last you checked?



Is it “meme” or “mee-mee”?



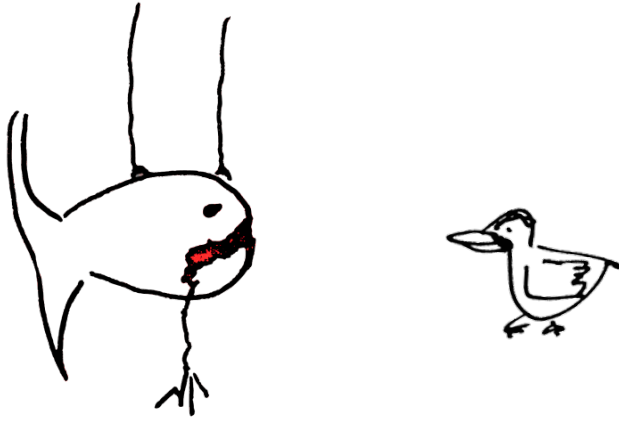
*Wasn't everything supposed
to be slightly more magical?*



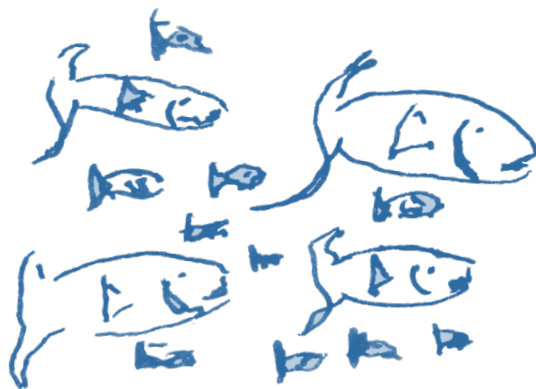
*I should get going. That eco-system
isn't going to out-compete itself!*



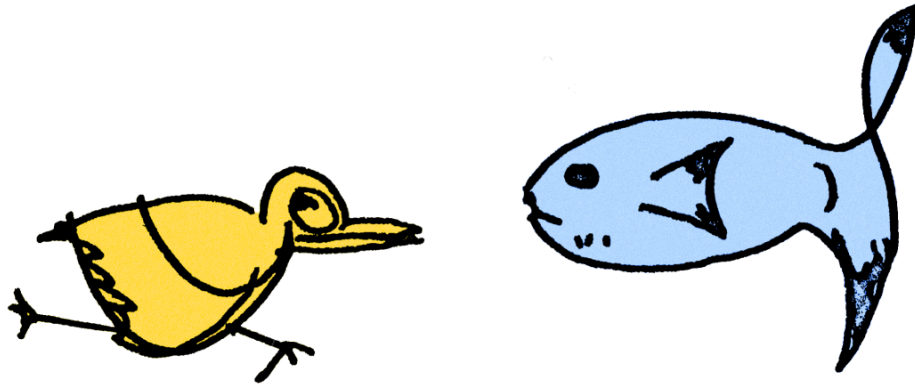
*Those were certainly days.
I wouldn't commit to proclaiming them THE days.*



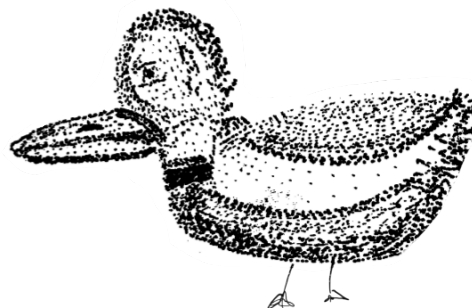
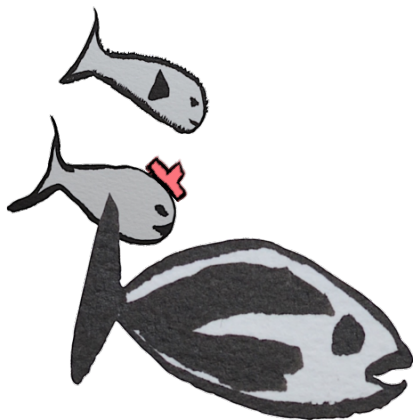
It is absolutely terrible out there.



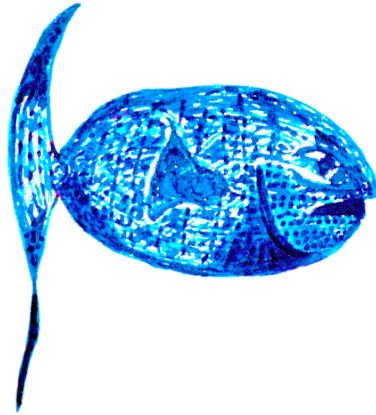
Travel anxiety. Without fail.



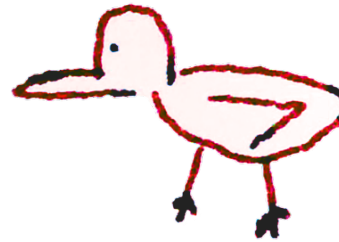
Both! It's urgent and important.



What's your favourite heavy metal? Ours is Tungsten.

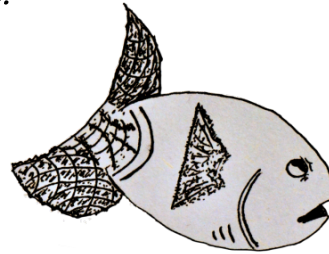
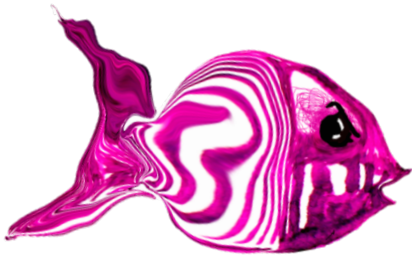


I may not be right, but you are still wrong.

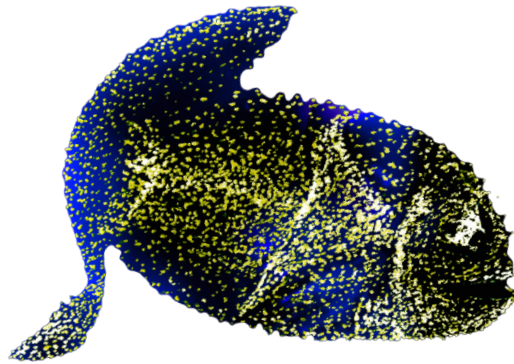


Which aspect of “Neither fish nor fowl” is ambiguous to you?

You go talk to your friends.
Talk to my friends.
Talk to me.

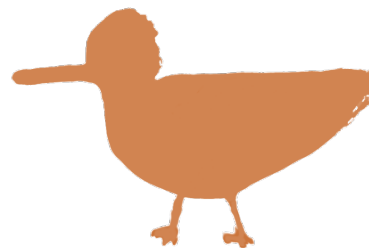
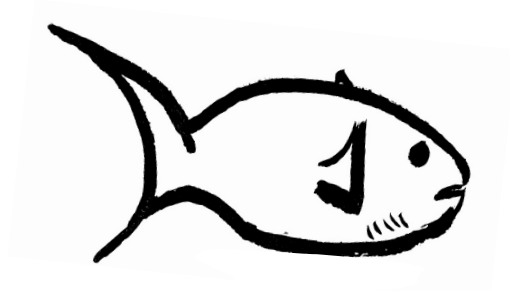


But, We.
Are never, ever, ever.
Getting back together.
Like, ever.



*Happy? Sure. Content? I suppose.
Relevant? To be determined.*





*And... If you're lucky,
you live to fight another day.*



