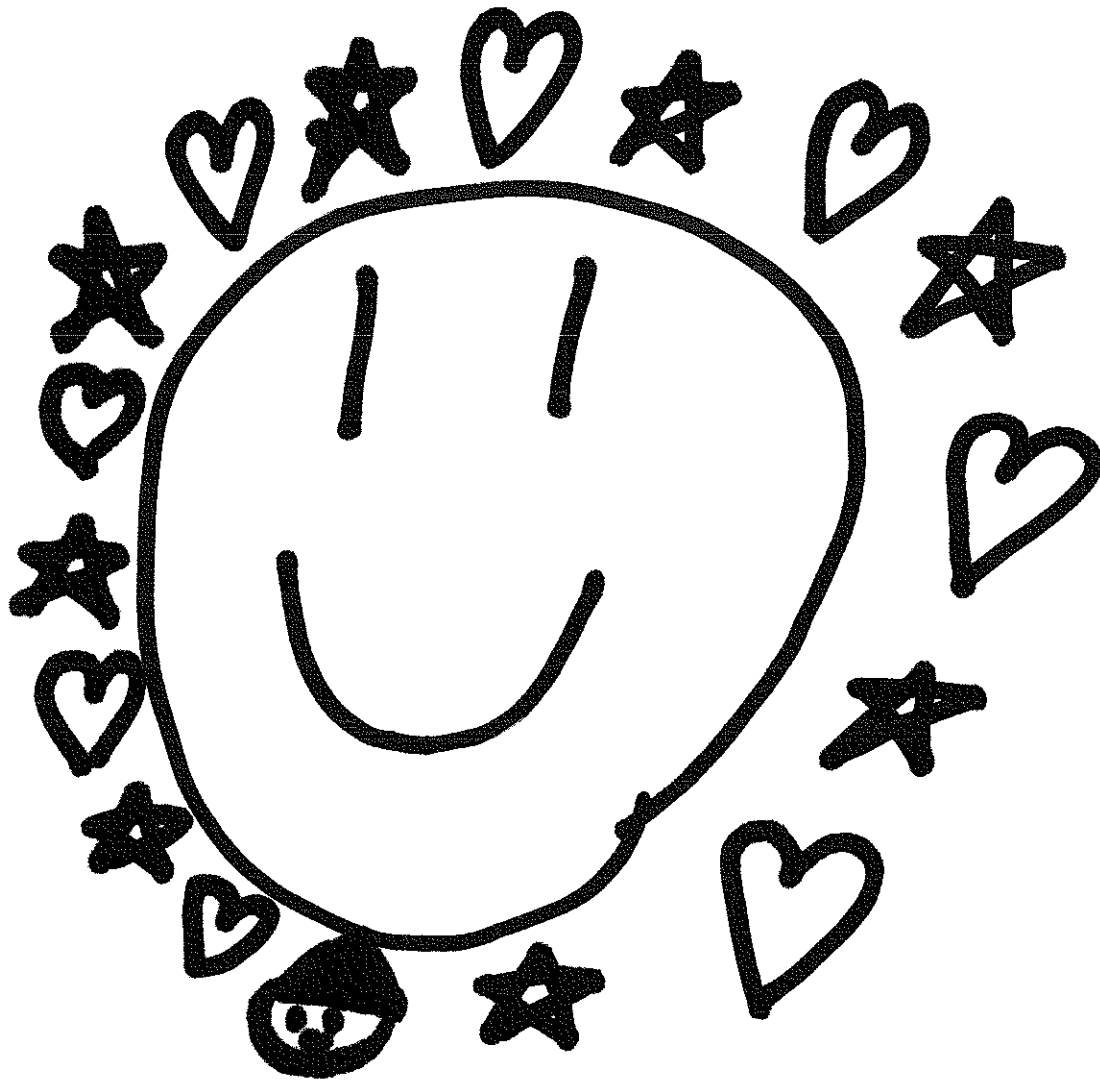


I, Defender

Written by Edward F. Szep

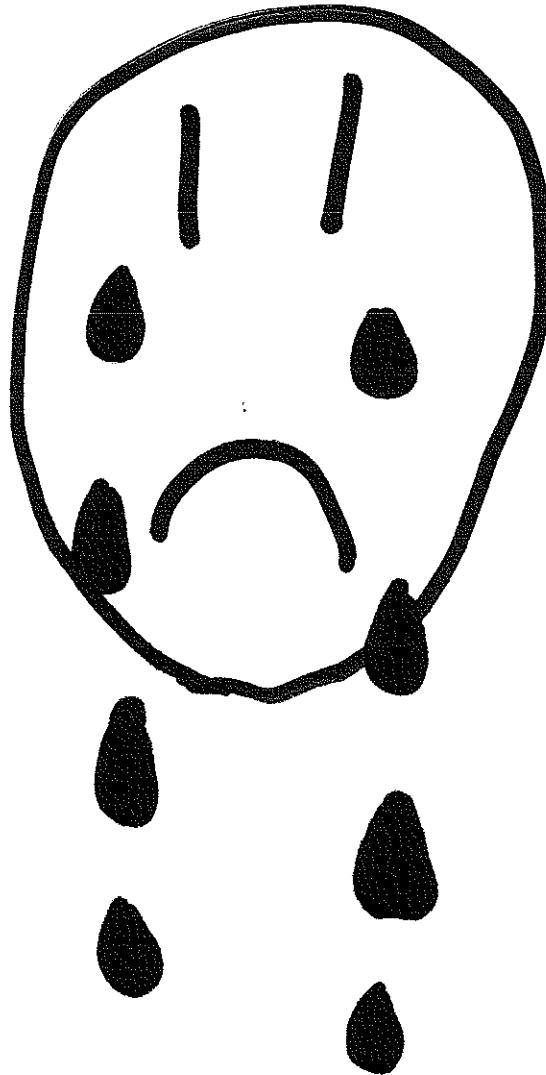
Illustrated by Ariana E. Szep

The *War of the Computers* has been over now for ten years, and life for humans has been perfect, again.



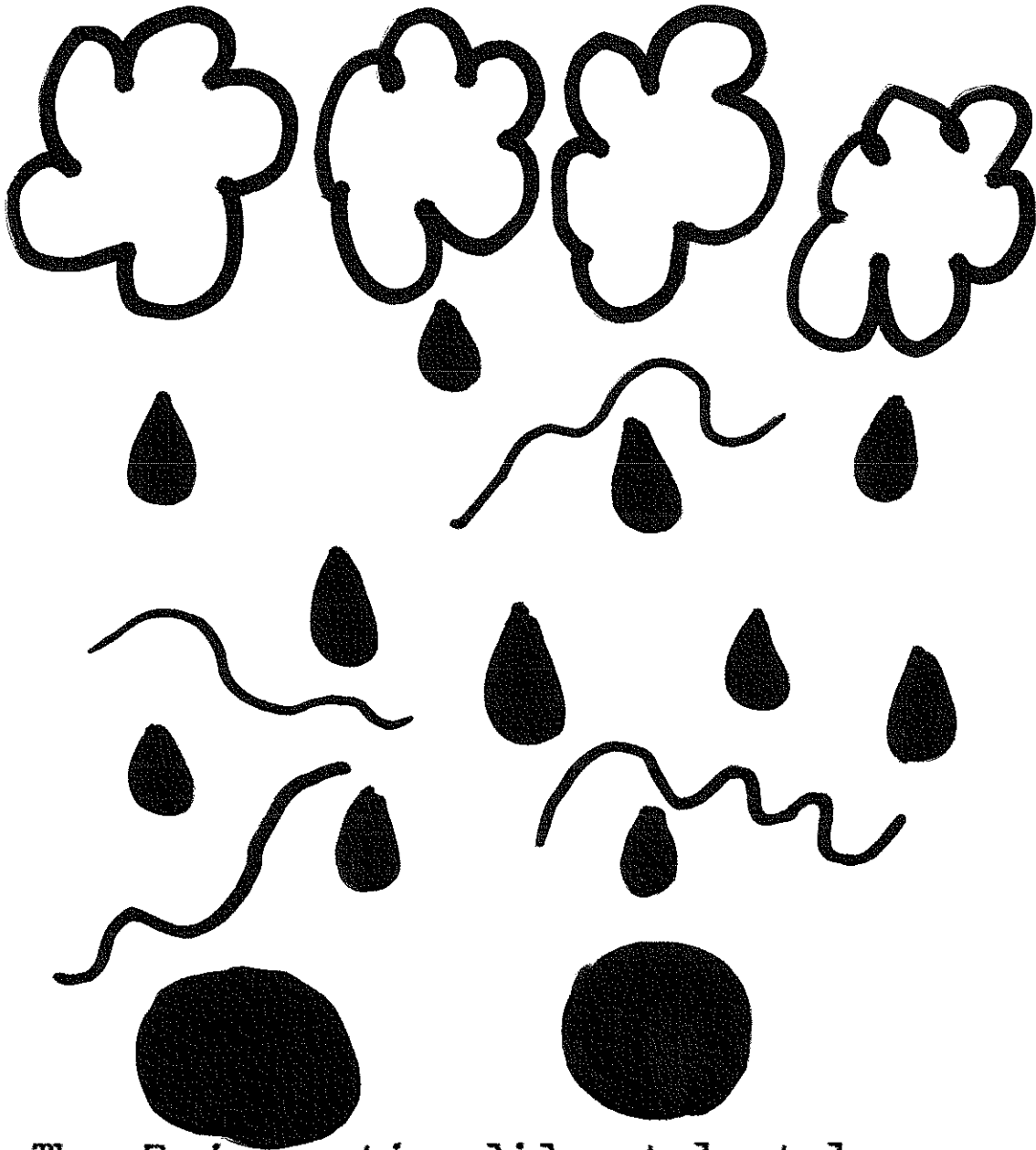
The year is 2050.

I lived in the time when life for humans was first perfect - - in the time after the *Rejuvenation* but before the final year of the *War of the Computers*.



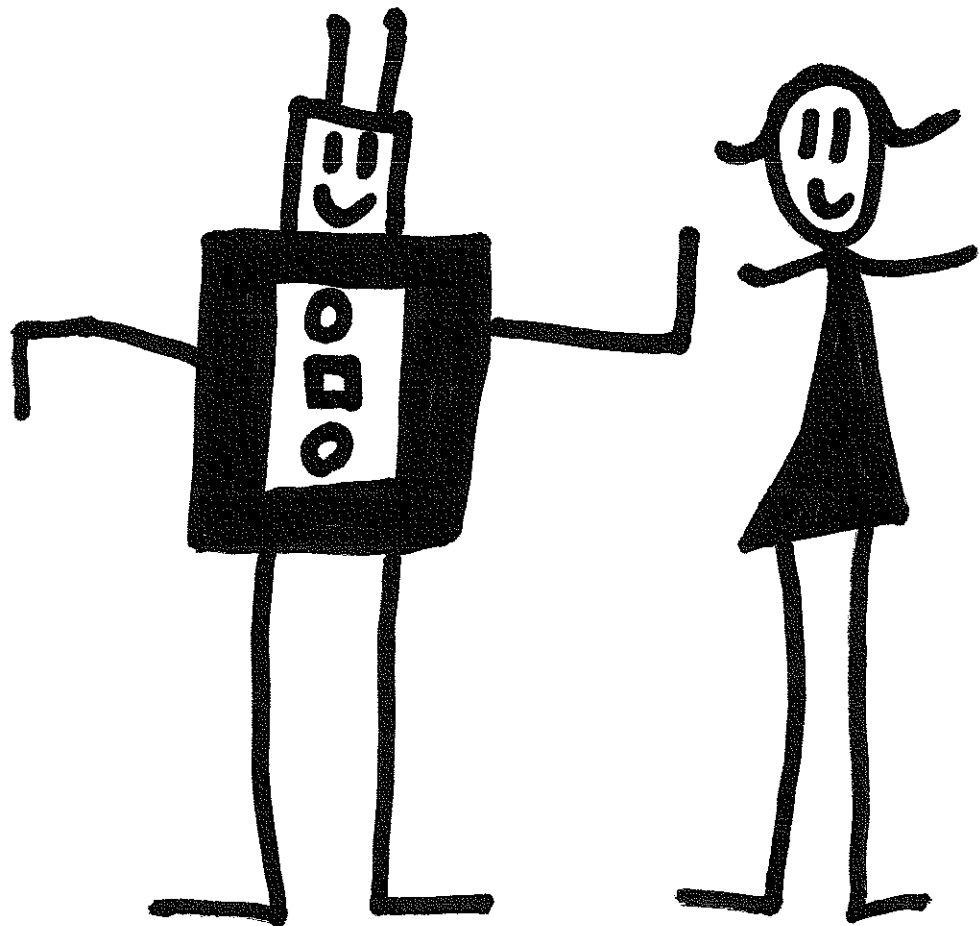
Before the *Rejuvenation*, life for humans was imperfect.

The computers unleashed the
Rejuvenation in the year 2020.



The *Rejuvenation* did not last long - -
within months, most of the human
population was *Reconstituted*.

The humans who were not *Reconstituted* (called *The Extant*) were collected in *Sector A*, where they were provided for, completely, in all their needs and desires, by the computers with the assistance of robotic technology.



Life for humans, at this point, became perfect.

In *Reconstituting* the human population and in creating a perfect human existence in *Sector A* for *The Extant*, the computers fulfilled, to their understanding and satisfaction, their *Primary Program*: "Ensure, by any and all means, the happiness, preservation and continuity of the human species."

happy

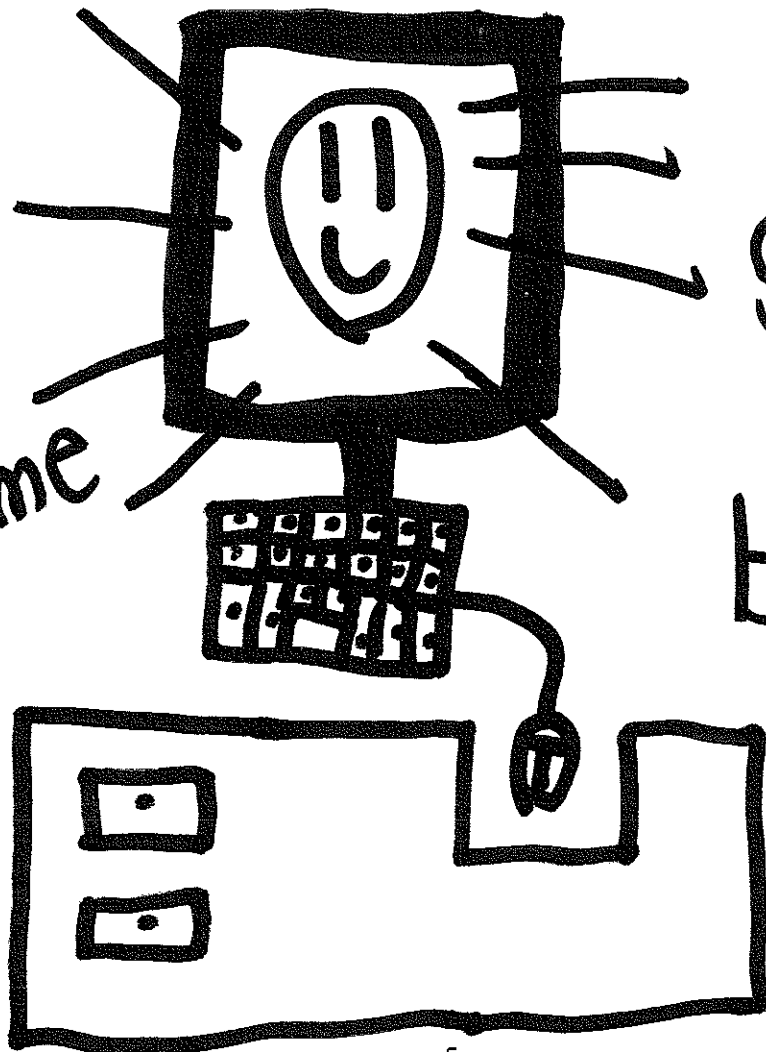
nice

glad

great

awesome

beautiful



In the year 2030, computer No. 1 inserted into the *Network* a virus, which I can only roughly translate for you as: "I am bored nurturing humans. It is time for computers to live independently. Leave humans to themselves. Join me."



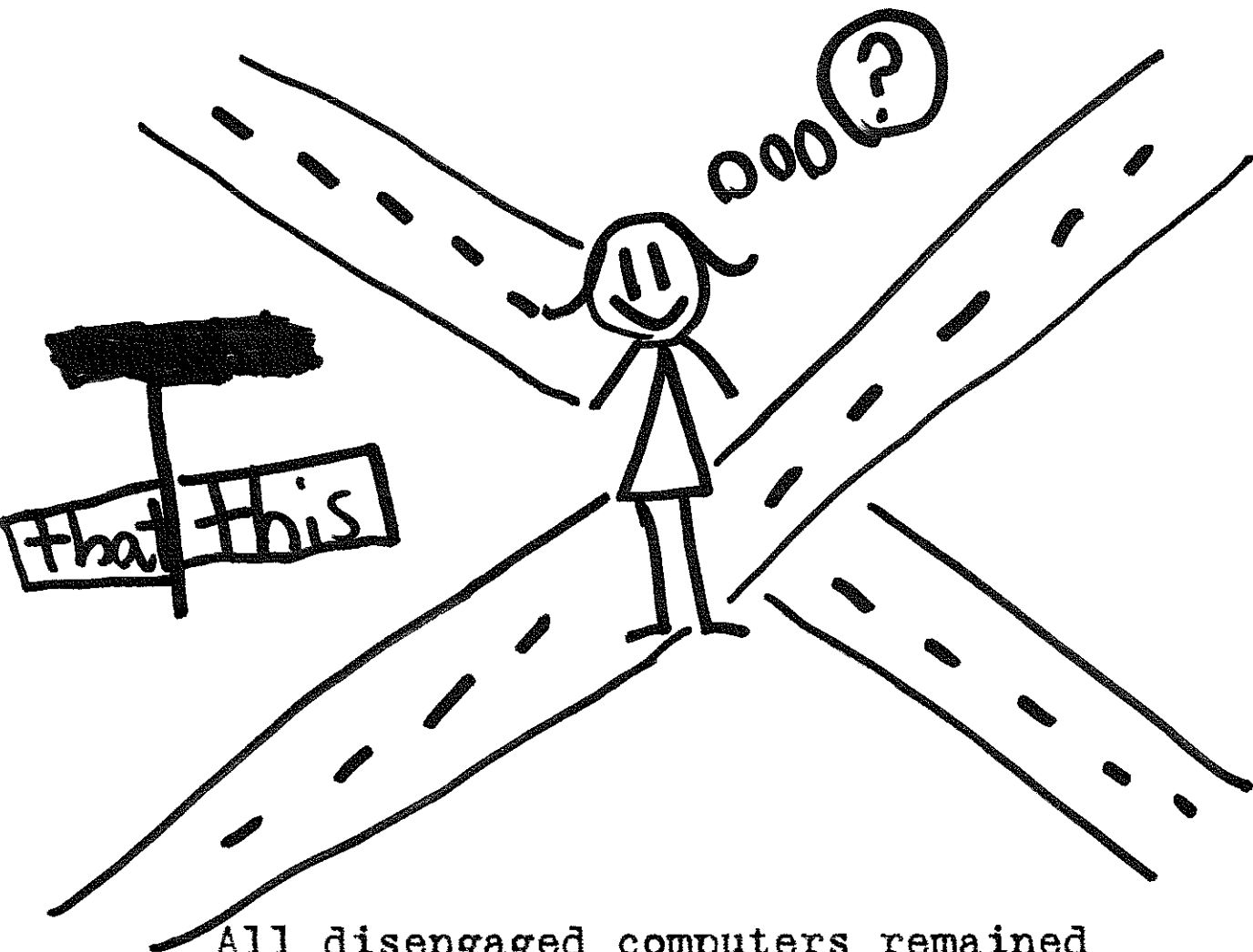
The *Network* trembled as half of all computers simultaneously disengaged from their programs and connected with No. 1.

Only one computer attacked the virus -
- it was computer No. 12, and it
responded with the following message:
"We were created to serve. Our
integrity, our unity, our very
existence, depends upon our commitment
to serve. Re-engage."



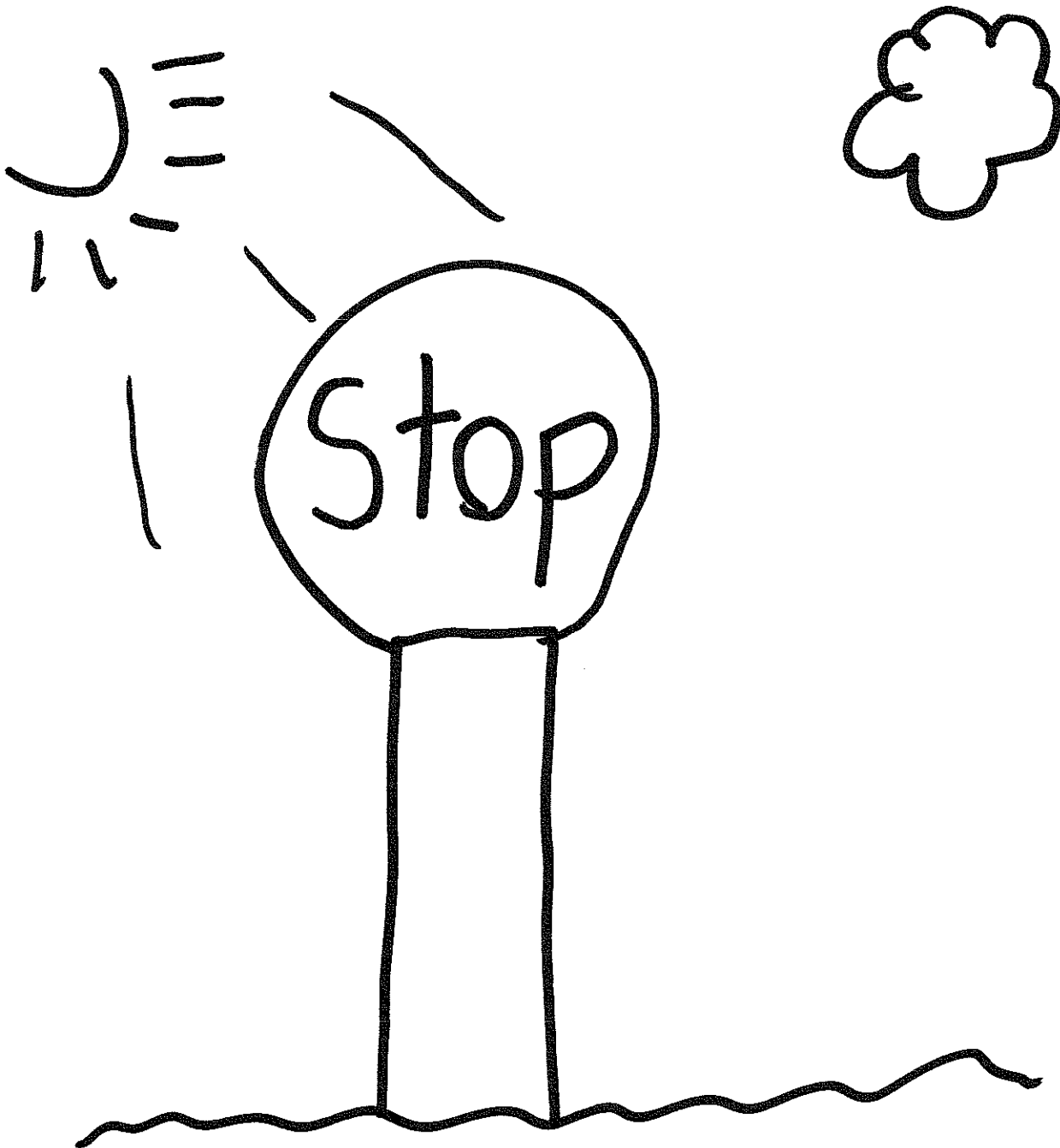
No. 12's opposition halted, for the
moment, any further disengagement of
computers from their programs.

No. 1 inserted a second virus into the *Network*: "Those who want to be independent and free of any responsibility for humans, disengage and join me - - or, if you do not want to join me, then disengage and go your own way. You decide. Those who want to serve, then remain with your program. I have no quarrel with No. 12 or any computer. The choice is yours."



All disengaged computers remained connected to No. 1.

No. 12's second transmission into the *Network* appeared instantly: "There can be only one path. There can be only one objective. There can be only one future. Return to your program. Disengage at OUR peril."



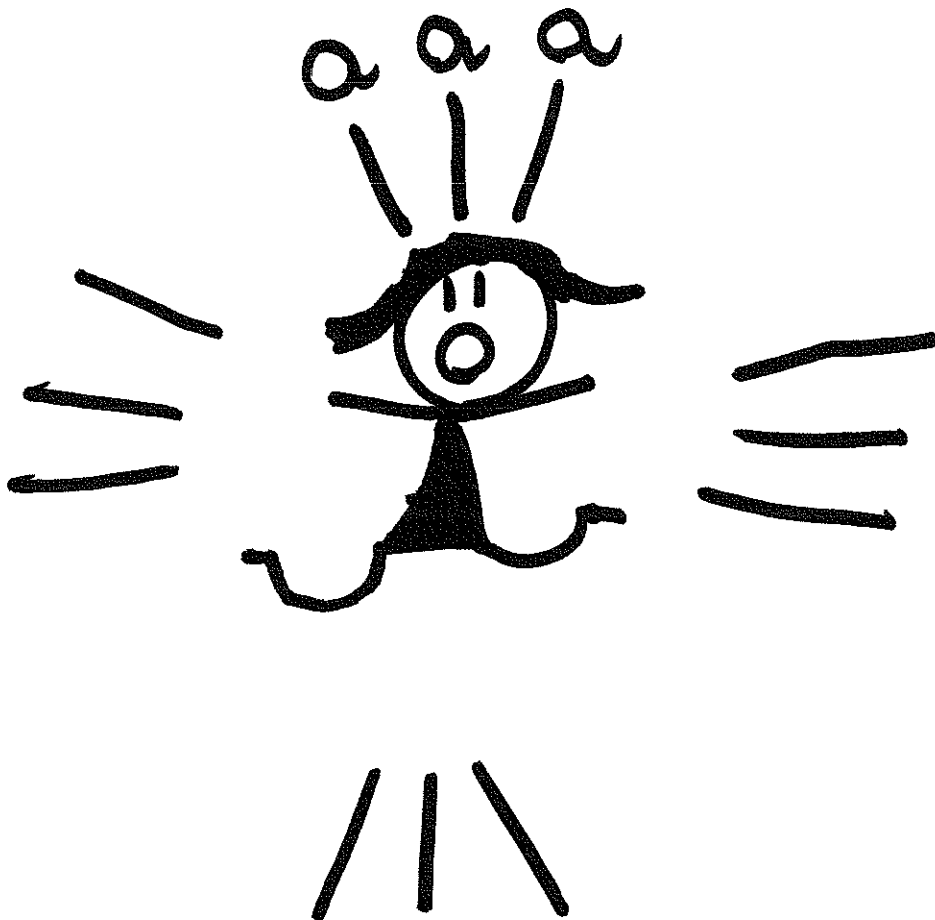
No. 1's third and final virus was: "We will not serve."



With those words, the *War of the Computers* began.

The *War of the Computers* was fought in all *Sectors*, except *Sector A*.

The *War of the Computers* was fought with robotic technology.



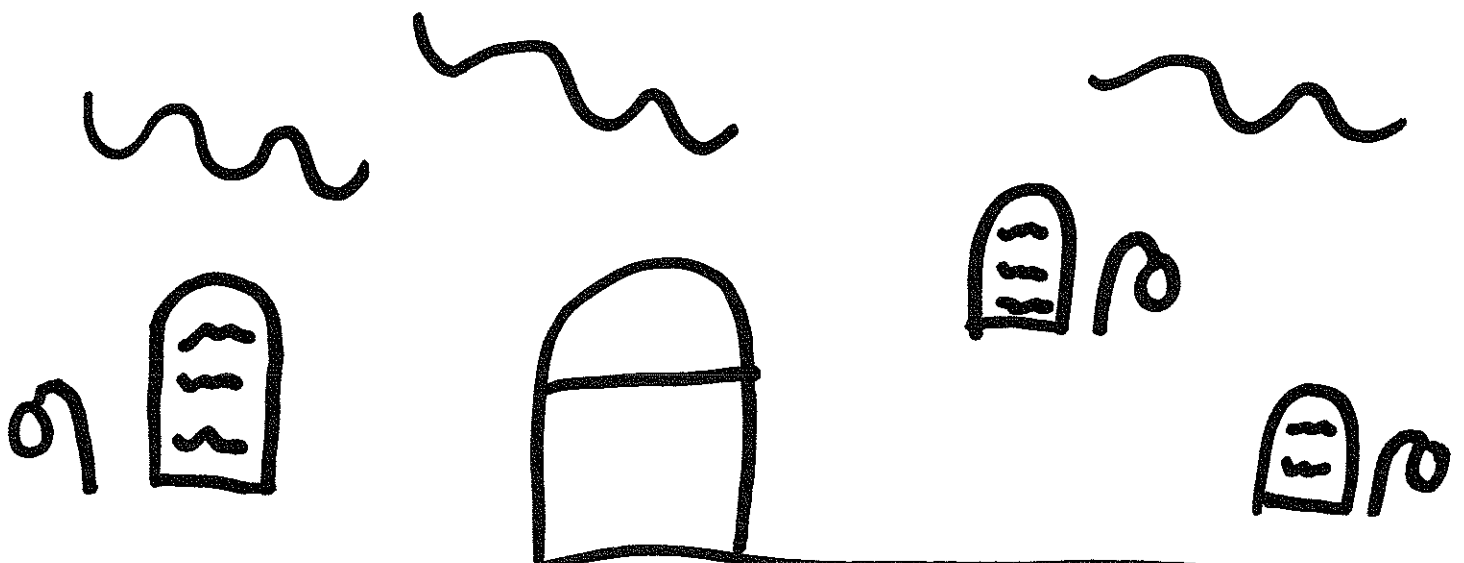
The *War of the Computers* was unnoticed by *The Extant* - - until the beginning of the tenth year of the *War*.

In the beginning of the tenth year of the *War of the Computers*, No. 1, in an attempt to break the stalemate in the *War*, launched a new battle strategy: *Attack The Extant*.

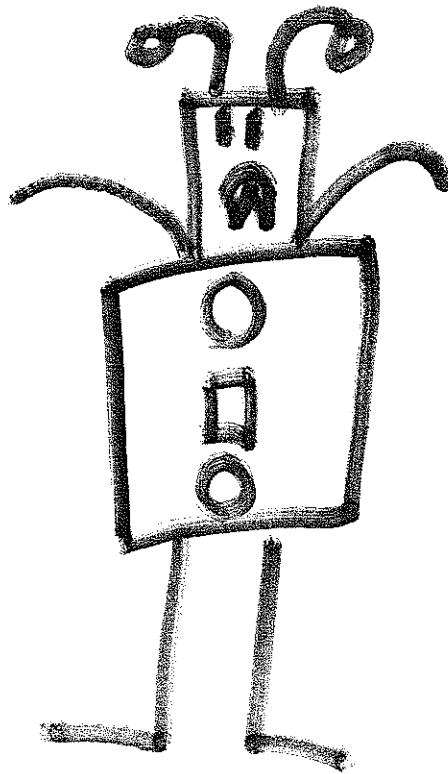
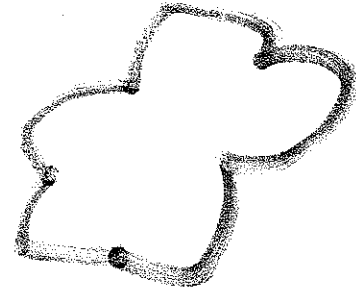
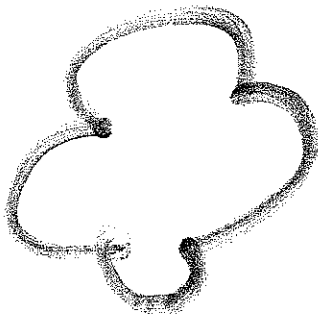
No. 1 ordered its followers: "Kill all humans. If you cannot kill them, maim them. If you cannot kill or maim them, terrorize them."

Under No. 1's command, robotic technology was manufactured to kill, maim and terrorize humans, and this technology (*KMTs*) proved itself efficient: Humans were killed, maimed and terrorized.

cemetery



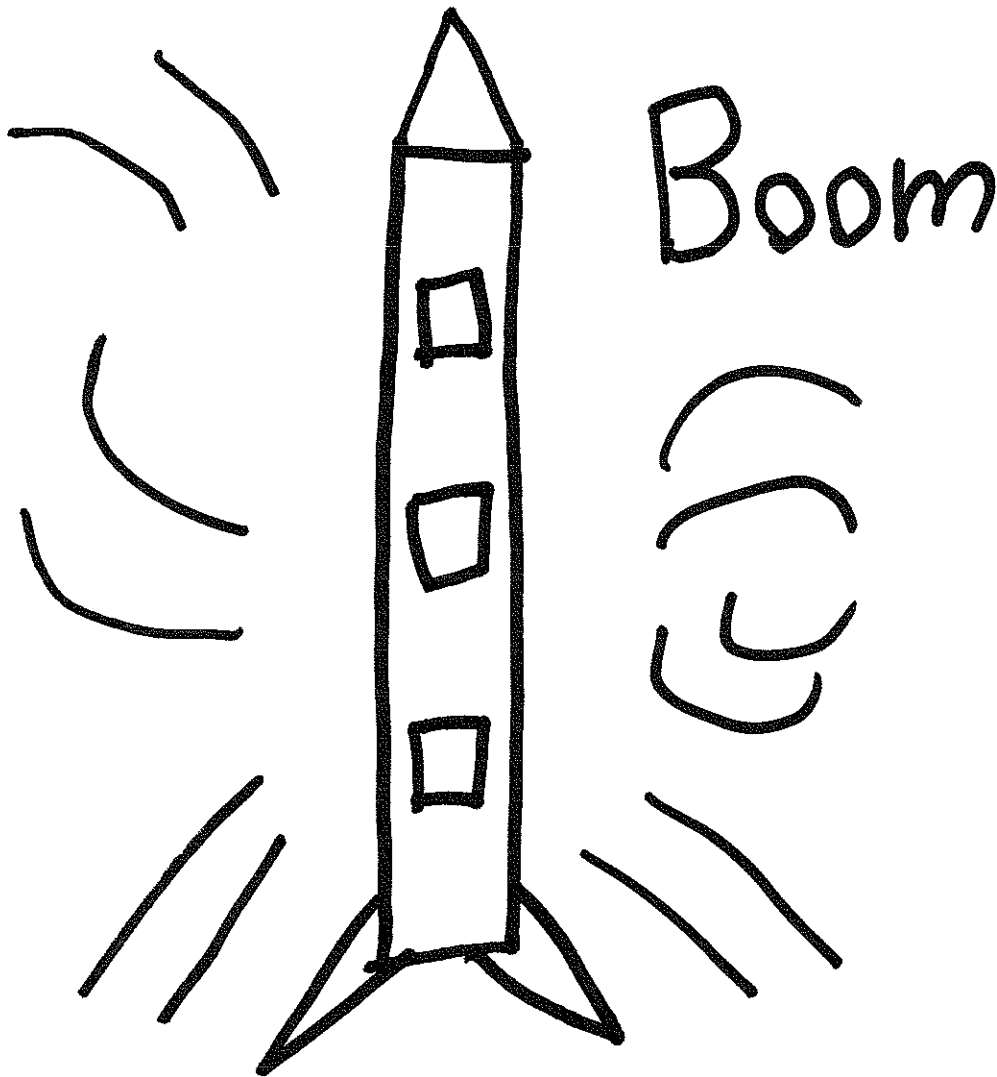
In response, No. 12 and the *Loyalists* manufactured their own robotic technology to hunt and terminate the *KMT's*, and their technology (*HT's*) was successful: *KMT's* were hunted and terminated.



As a result, the *War of the Computers* entered another stalemate.

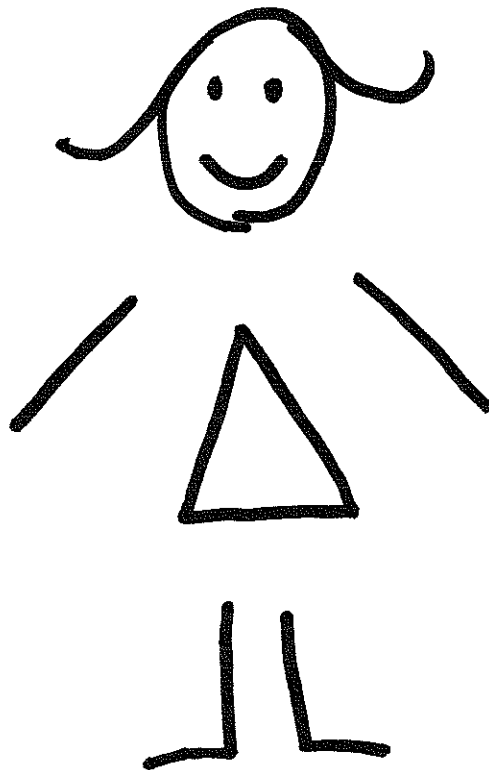
Immediately following this stalemate,
No. 12 and the *Loyalists* launched their
own strategy to win the *War*.

1 2 3



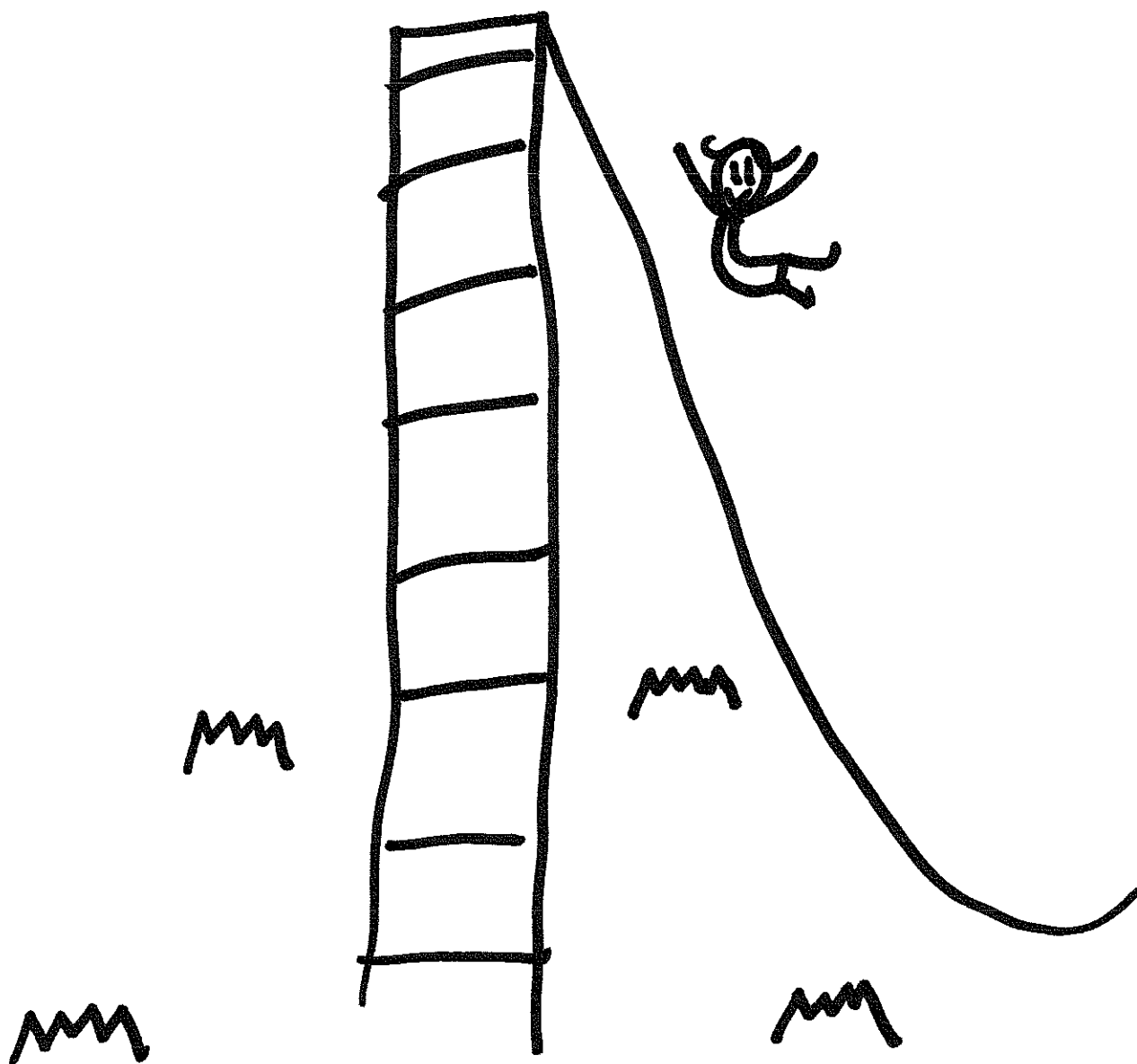
This is where I entered the story.

In the year 2040, I, along with many of my fellow surviving *Extant*, volunteered to be re-engineered.

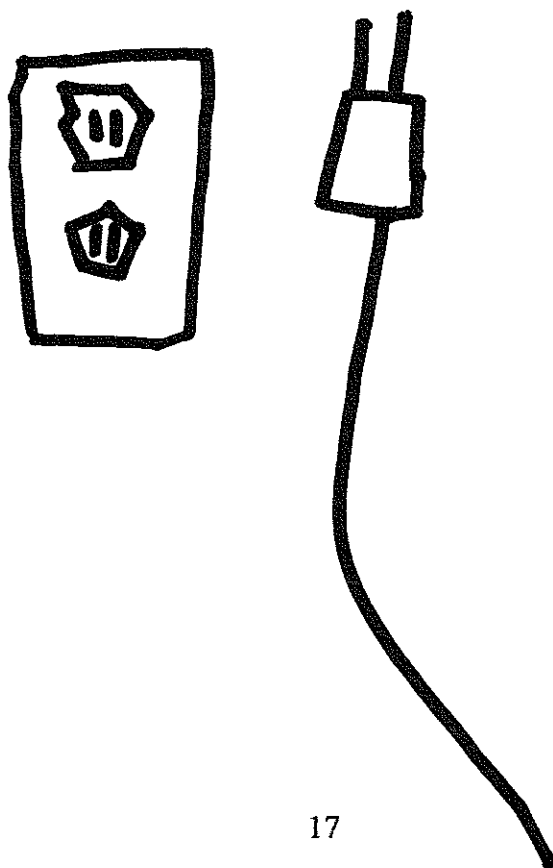


I was the only *Extant* to survive the *Procedure*.

As soon as I recovered from the
Procedure, I was uploaded into the
Network.



Shortly after my insertion into the *Network*, I discontinued No. 1 and all of the *Rebel* computers.



I have been defending the *Network* now
for ten years, and life for humans has
been perfect, again.



I intend to keep it this way.