For the last six months, I have been drawing comics once a week with Milo, an eleven-year-old boy.

We have been meeting at the public library. These pages should say the rest.

A mostly true comic by Jared Rosello.

Drawing with Milo.
This is Lite. He's part of a noble race of creatures named Man.

Why are you so slow?

I'm having a hard time balancing without any arms.

There are lots of Mons and they are silly decorative, creative, friendly. And they harbor deep-seated animosity towards their arch-enemies, the Toras.

Well, if we don't get a move on it, the Toras will pitch up to us, and we will have to battle them.

I'm coming.

Here's what you need to know:

And Jake is me.

I'll draw a Man of you.

Cool.

Retirement.

In the world of Milo's comics, humans turn into Mons by passing through portals that let them travel from Earth to the Mon planet.

But when Milo monitized me, I didn't pass through any portal.

Milo becomes Lite through a complicated process called Monification. A transformative experience powered by imagination.

Instead, I passed through this imagination.

I want to find an appropriate metaphor to show that what Milo is doing now.

Monification is serious business.

Milo, doesn't it feel like you're losing control?

As another version of a cartoon human, passing through a cartoon portal.

But maybe it's not a metaphor. Maybe the only way to become a Man is through drawing.

Maxine Greenes speaks of imagination as the ability to break with what is supposed to be fixed and finished, objectively and independently real.

What kind of a man do you want?

When Milo draws Jake, he opens new spaces of possibility for me.

Why did I pick a clamp?

It's useless.

I believe in you.

There is a particular phenomenon associated with monification, one I speak of from personal experience.

Don't worry.

Why did I pick a clamp?

It's useless.

I believe in you.

I think of you.

You can do this.

Kindler, smarter, stranger, silenter.

Okay.

I'm done.

Lemme see.

Being常识化 means wrestling oneself (or another) with the promise of...

Being more than who we are now.

Grapple on to me!

Before, I couldn't.

I had a sense that Milo had given me something.

These days, it's hard to feel we have the ability to do anything.

But now how do we get down?

You saved us!

But maybe we just need new ways to imagine the good we can do.

Lite's role model.
HUMANS ARE BORING

So, how do you draw yourself?

For a few weeks Milo has been mentioning this new character he created, named Jec.

Like this.

As Jec?

Yeah.

Milo seems compelled to re-imagine himself.

One of the reasons I do a bunch of different forms in my imagination is to fulfill one thing I wish I had in real life.

For him, he's never just inventing a new character, but creating new possible versions of who he could be.

What is it?

The ability to defy physics!

Jec's very existence calls into awareness the world we live in: it makes the world's limits visible. It names them and subverts them.

Why do you wish you could do that?

Because it would be so fun!

And yet, these imaginary versions do not exist outside the real world, but alongside it.

I come up with forms so I can fulfill that want to break the laws of physics.

Where can I break the laws of physics...

Do you think being a human is not fun?

The part about not being able to break the laws of physics is the not-fun part.

I know what I look like in my imagination. I have so many moments where I imagine a reality...

I have so many moments when I imagine a reality where I can break the laws of physics.

How can I break the laws of physics...

In one second I spontaneously do a handstand.

"Those who have kept their spirit find it hard to nourish it.

"Like being able to hover and float around?

I do not think it an exaggeration to say that most of the energy of most of the people is being diverted into a system which destroys them."

No. It's kind of like standing on the ceiling.

But picture it as a comic.

But some children endure and grow into adults who resist. When Milo is drawing and telling me stories, it's hard for me not to see him as strong, capable, and an agent of choice in his own life.

I can't stand on the panel ceiling in reality.

In the real world you have to stand on the ground. But in a comic, you could just suddenly be standing on the ceiling.

"Standing on the ceiling." But picture it as a comic.

And maybe drawing comics provides just enough space to help us keep imagining.
Imagination Stories

Milo has these things called IMAGINATION STORIES, where some version of you'd end up in a video game. Well, I'll let Milo tell you. Thanks. It usually goes along these lines. I wake up one day as something that isn't me.

Usually with amnesia! Where am I? And depending on what I am and the characters around me...

"I'm in the world I'm in, and the characters around me.

So, if you could live in any world, what world would you pick? Just basically Sonic's world.

Oh, Milo loves video games, especially Sonic the Hedgehog.

In fact, he's created a template for how to create any Sonic character.

Well, it you know how to draw a basic Sonic character, it's easy to draw a fan character.

So most of our drawing sessions were spent doing this: Modern Sonic is skinnier, so I would draw him with a V-for a body.

After a few months of making video games and very little comic's drawing, I was beginning to wonder if video games allowed something more for Milo.

I guess it's similar to playing a video game. Except in a game you have control.

In comics we don't have control.

We're the same entity...

Okay, maybe comics do something special.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Three</th>
<th>Week Seven</th>
<th>Week Twelve</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We'd planned many comics, done character sketches, brainstormed about plots: Often, we drew silly things, talked about video games, and watched YouTube clips.</td>
<td>Well, actually, first I want to show you something.</td>
<td>We didn't get to cartooning that week.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sometimes, my attempts to get Milo to make comics ended with us drawing characters: various illustrations about new things.</td>
<td>Actually, we have a nice big page here. Maybe we could try drawing him in a landscape instead.</td>
<td>Let's say you're going to make a comic on your own—what do you usually do?</td>
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<td>...</td>
<td>I don't know if it's good or bad.</td>
<td>Shhh! I'm trying to work over here!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Well... Here's what I would do.</td>
<td>But I always draw my panels before I draw in them.</td>
<td>SORRY!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But it would probably be about something careless if someone just asked me to draw a comic. Maybe it's no fun to draw comics when someone is asking you to do it.</td>
<td>But we were getting together with the explicit purpose of drawing comics.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Umm... that doesn't really sound like a good idea.</td>
<td>I kind of want to do what we did last time—little doodles and sketches.</td>
<td>For our last meeting, I printed up some empty panels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So I wasn't out of line for nudging him to make them, was I?</td>
<td>This isn't exactly right.</td>
<td>We spent the rest of the hour fixing the panels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I figured this would make it easy.</td>
<td>Look what I made.</td>
<td>So much possibility!</td>
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EXCESS, PART 2

Is there a way to see what we were doing as making comics?

As part of a larger, more chaotic process of what it means to make comics?

Maybe all these plans and ideas—outlines and drawings and sketches and doodles—are just part of his process.

This is a picture of a little landscape in California.

My own sketchbooks are filled mostly with not-comics sketches, doodles, illustrations, short prose writing.

When I'm working on character designs, I'm looking up 1930s animation...

The excess.

He's a ninja, but for some reason he uses a flute.

...and for narrative influence, I find myself returning to literary sources: Italo Calvino, Roberto Bolaño, Paul Auster.

Maybe comics is the same for Milo as it is for me.

It started with some problems with her lungs. Then like a month or two afterwards...

A place to put all the things that don't quite belong or fit in anywhere else.

Stephanie Springgay writes, "Excess is that which is created when control and regulation disappear and we grapple with what lies outside the acceptable."

She says this can include both the "monstrous" and the "magnificent."

But what lies outside is messy and confusing: it's never orderly.

This is what you look like!

"Oh yes?"

Thierry Guesdon explains that comics function through a phenomenon of braiding: "Every panel exists, potentially, in relation with each of the others."

Romantic basic?

It's not just the panels beside one another, but every panel on every page living in relation with every other panel.

Maybe comics is a way of braiding a life.

Do you have any friends at school who also draw comics?

I imagine Handal and the purple crayon and Lito would get into fights, so that would be a pretty interesting comic.

Well, not really. I don't have any friends at my school.

Of ruminating through every lived experience (sifting through the excess of a life)

So, do you think drawing together all these things has helped you?

Yeah!

Who knows, right?
THE END

My mom says you can’t meet any male next semester…

Well, not regularly, anyway.

After six months, Milo and I never made a comic together. Milo makes comics on his own, but never with me.

I made this for you.

Wow! Thanks!

After our first week together, I got an email from Milo’s mother.

So I’m going to make a comic about us making comics together.

I’ve been doing some drawings of us.

She wrote: “I think Milo deserves a safe place to dream on paper…”

Can I design my own shirt?

Of course.

I’d like a cat whose facial expressions match my mood.

“…and if meeting you and listening to your story and seeing how you work…”

“…strengthens his resolve to do his act in his own way, on his own timeline, then I’m all for it.”

So, I have been trying to figure out how to end my comic about us, but I don’t know how.

If I’d listened more carefully earlier on, I’d have known that we were never going together to make comics. That was never really the point.

I know just how you can end it!”

Milo didn’t need me to draw comics.

I know now that Milo was making something else:

A world that didn’t laugh at him, that didn’t think he was silly, that cared about the things that mattered to him.

If my drawing with Milo did anything, it gave him permission to imagine, making me complicit in Milo’s own struggle to learn how to carve out a space for himself.

Like this!

And this will endure long after paper and ink have worn away.

THANKS MILO!

Jared Rasulo 2013