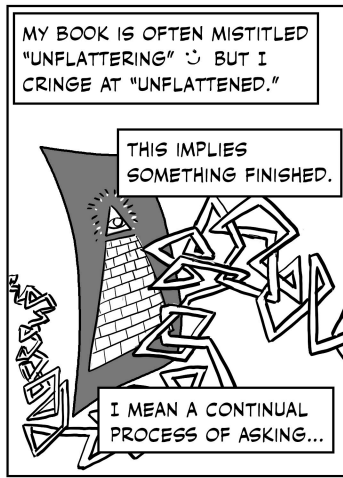


IN A TALK ON UNFLATTERING,

A STUDENT ASKS ME:

CAN WE ACHIEVE A KIND OF PERFECTION?



MY BOOK IS OFTEN MISTITLED "UNFLATTERING" 😊 BUT I CRINGE AT "UNFLATTENED."

THIS IMPLIES SOMETHING FINISHED.

I MEAN A CONTINUAL PROCESS OF ASKING...



I THINK OF MY BEST TEACHERS AS CONSTANTLY CURIOUS,

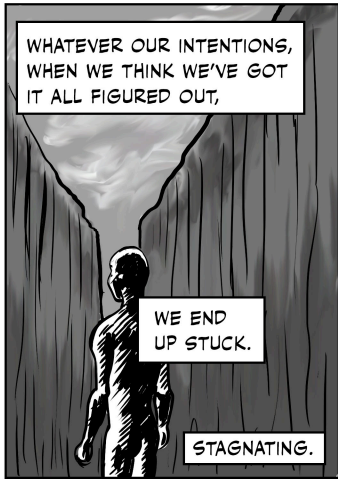
UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY CAN LEARN FROM EVERYONE.



THESE CONVERSATIONS ARE A GIFT FOR ME,

AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THROUGH FRESH EYES,

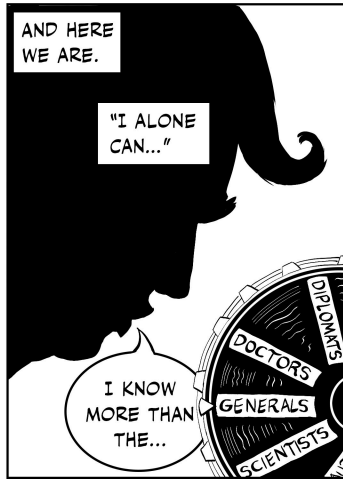
TO CHALLENGE MY THINKING.



WHATEVER OUR INTENTIONS, WHEN WE THINK WE'VE GOT IT ALL FIGURED OUT,

WE END UP STUCK.

STAGNATING.



AND HERE WE ARE.

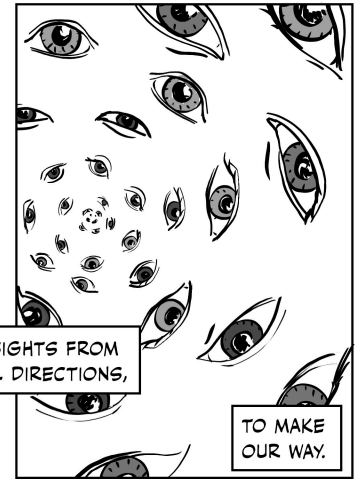
"I ALONE CAN..."

I KNOW MORE THAN THE...



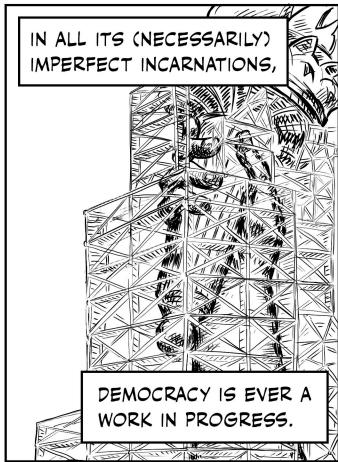
THIS RUNS COUNTER TO DEMOCRACY -

WHICH THRIVES IN ENGAGING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES,



INSIGHTS FROM ALL DIRECTIONS,

TO MAKE OUR WAY.



IN ALL ITS (NECESSARILY) IMPERFECT INCARNATIONS,

DEMOCRACY IS EVER A WORK IN PROGRESS.



FOR IT WASN'T HANDED DOWN TO US,

RATHER, DREAMED UP.

AND, LIKE THOSE WHO WROTE IT INTO EXISTENCE,



WE AUTHOR ITS FUTURE.



NO ONE IS COMING TO SAVE US. IT'S UP TO US. ALL OF US.

AS 44 ADVISED:

CITIZEN IS "THE MOST IMPORTANT OFFICE IN A DEMOCRACY"



AT ITS MOST BASIC, THIS MEANS ENSURING WE ALL SHOW UP AND ARE COUNTED.

BUT ELECTIONS AREN'T ENDPOINTS.



DEMOCRACY IS NOT SOMETHING WE HAVE -

IT'S SOMETHING WE MUST ALWAYS BE IN THE ACT OF DOING -

DEMOCRAC-ING, IF YOU WILL.



TOGETHER WE KEEP MOVING FORWARD,

ALTHOUGH A PERFECT UNION MAY ALWAYS LIE BEYOND THE HORIZON,



AN ONGOING JOURNEY OF BECOMING...

ING...