

CMX 304: Making Comics 1

I: Grids & Gestures activities

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San Francisco State University

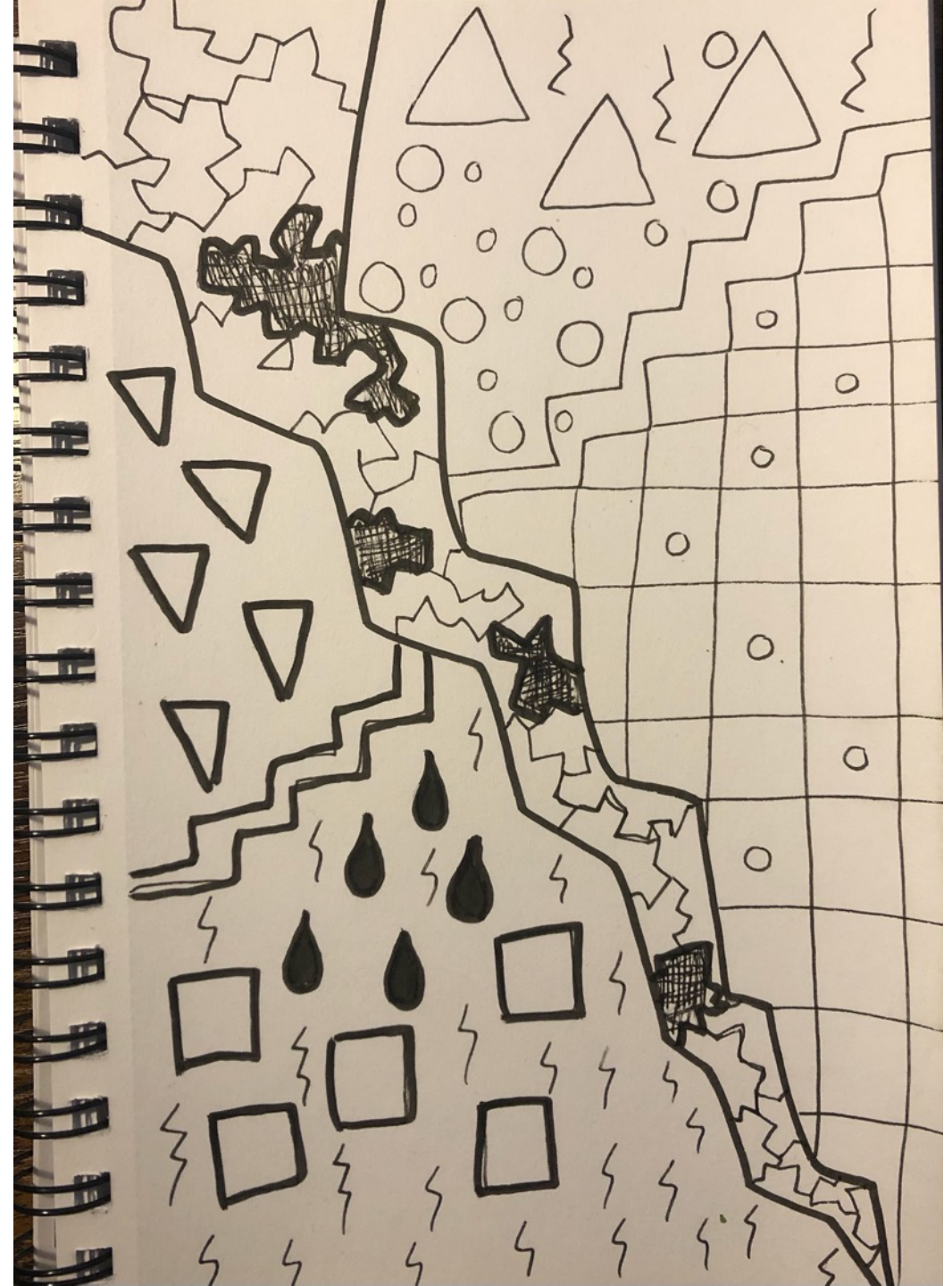
Grids & Gestures explained:

Have a look at your ceiling tiles or other grid-ish things around you. If you then imagine putting these features to music, you might have regular long notes on the tiles, some shorter notes, and maybe rapid staccato beats on a ventilation grill. Ok, now come back to a comics page – and think about the idea that in comics, time is written in space. Comics are static – and it's in the way we organize the space that we can convey movement and the passage of time. Unlike storyboards, to which comics are frequently compared, in comics we care not only about what goes on in the frame, but we care about the size of the panel, its shape, orientation, what it's next to, what it's not, and its overall location within the page composition. The way you orchestrate these elements on the page is significant to the meaning conveyed – there are some strong correspondences between comics and architecture in terms of thinking about the way the entire space operates together.

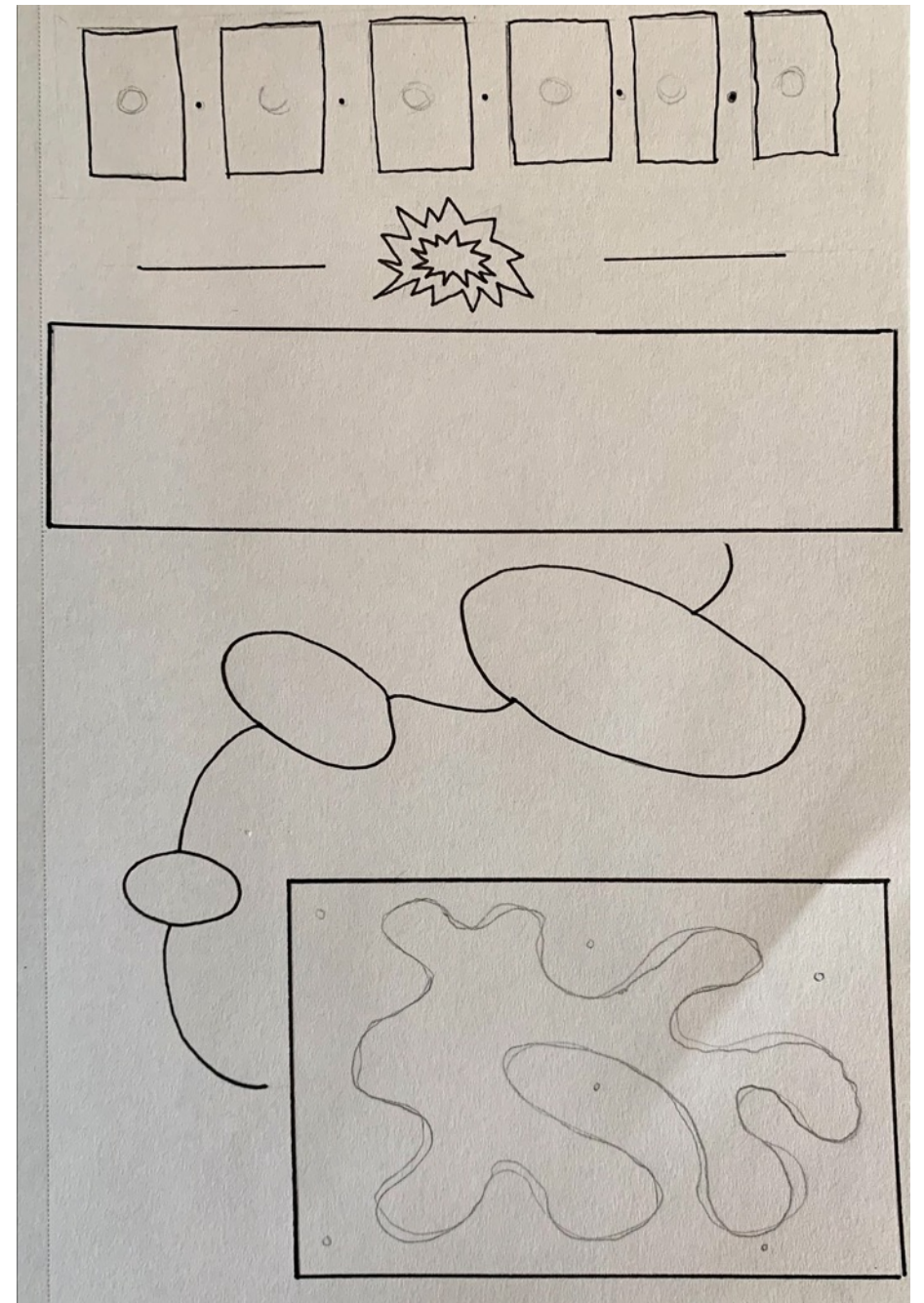
Having briefly thought about this, I want you to take a single sheet of paper (any size, shape will do) and drawing with a pencil or pen, carve it up in some grid-esque fashion that represents the shape of your day. It can be this day, a recent day, a memorable day, or a typical/amalgamation day. And then inhabit these spaces you've drawn on the page with lines, marks, or gestures that represent your activity or emotional state during those times represented. The emphasis here is to do your best to not draw *things*. (You can always do that later!) And also, you *can* leave space blank on your page – but that *has* to mean something. This isn't writing where you can finish a final sentence mid-page. Every inch of the composition is important in comics – so be aware of that as well. Finally, when I do this in class or with groups, I give people about 5-10 minutes to do it, so they have to make decisions quickly. Try to give yourself a similar limit if doing at home. See www.gridsgestures.com for more...

Grids & Gestures

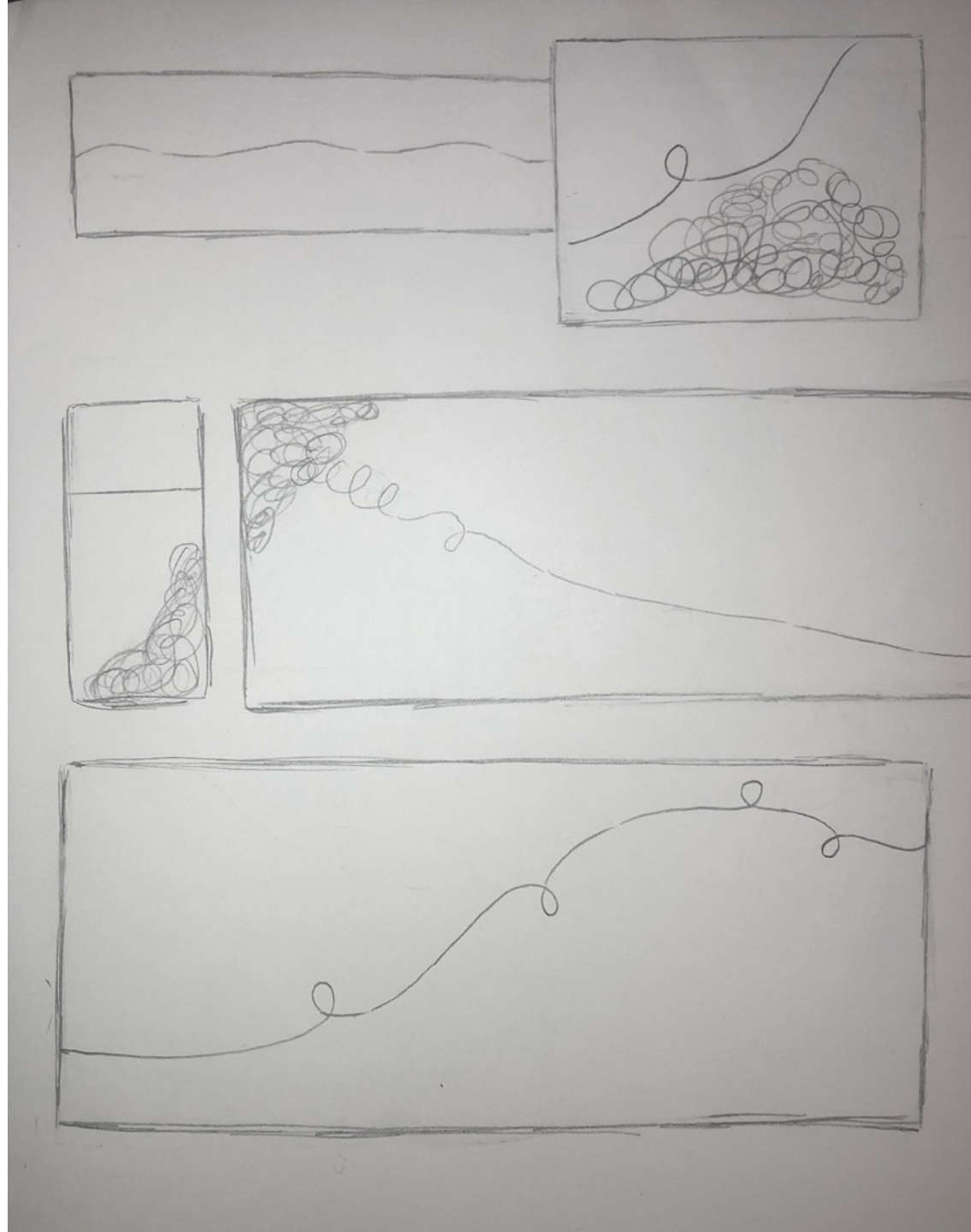
M: I have been struggling with depression recently, so this drawing represents the ups and downs I have throughout the day. The break in the middle shows how I feel torn between the negative emotions I have and the positivity that I try to portray daily.



Madilyne: The start of my day was slow, the little boxes at the top show the small moments I took to myself before starting my day with a cup of coffee (shown by the little explosion). After getting up, I worked out which felt like it took forever (shown by the long horizontal panel). Before this class, I did small chores and tasks without any real structure (shown by the circles) and then sat in this zoom class (shown by the last square).



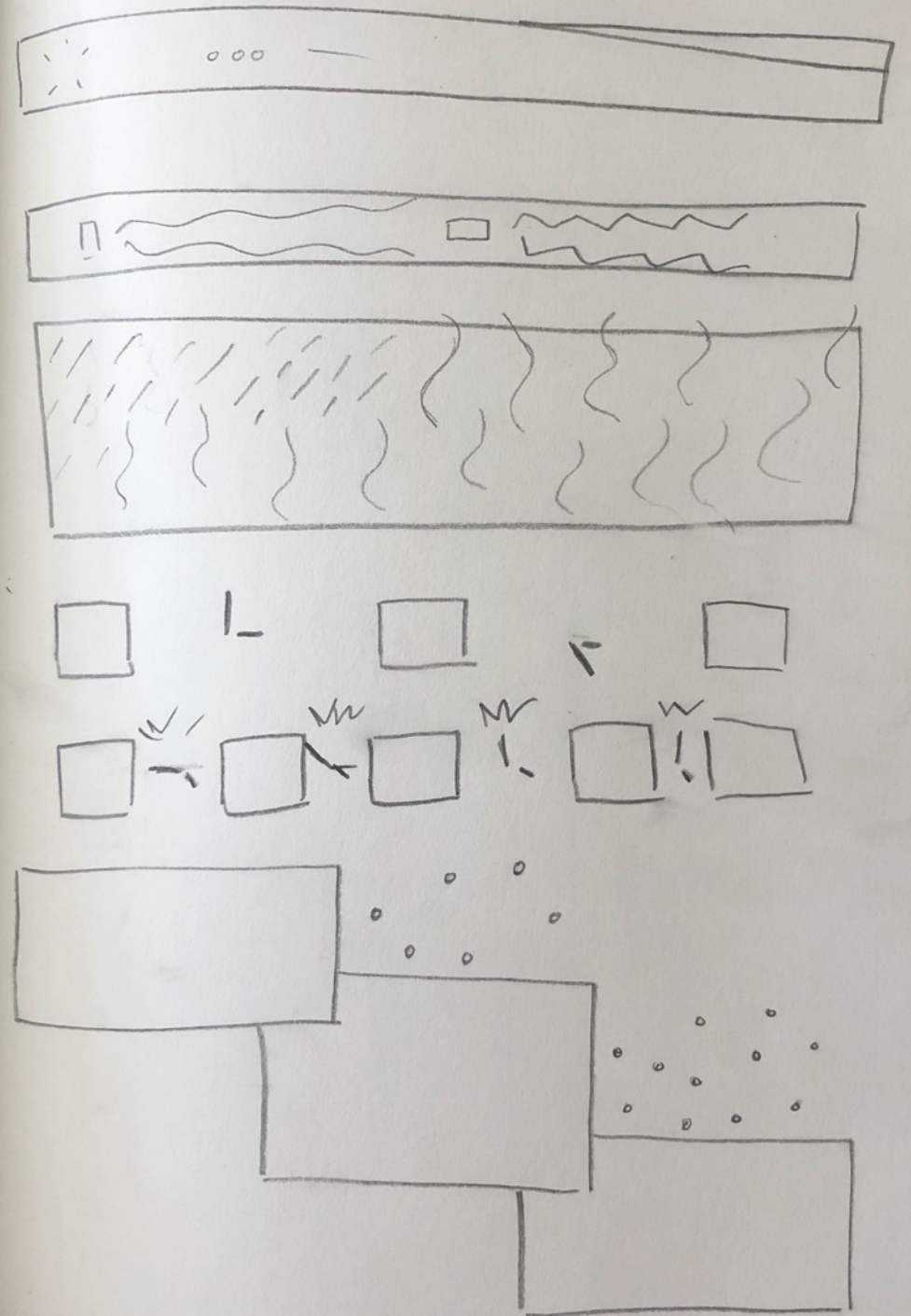
Jade:



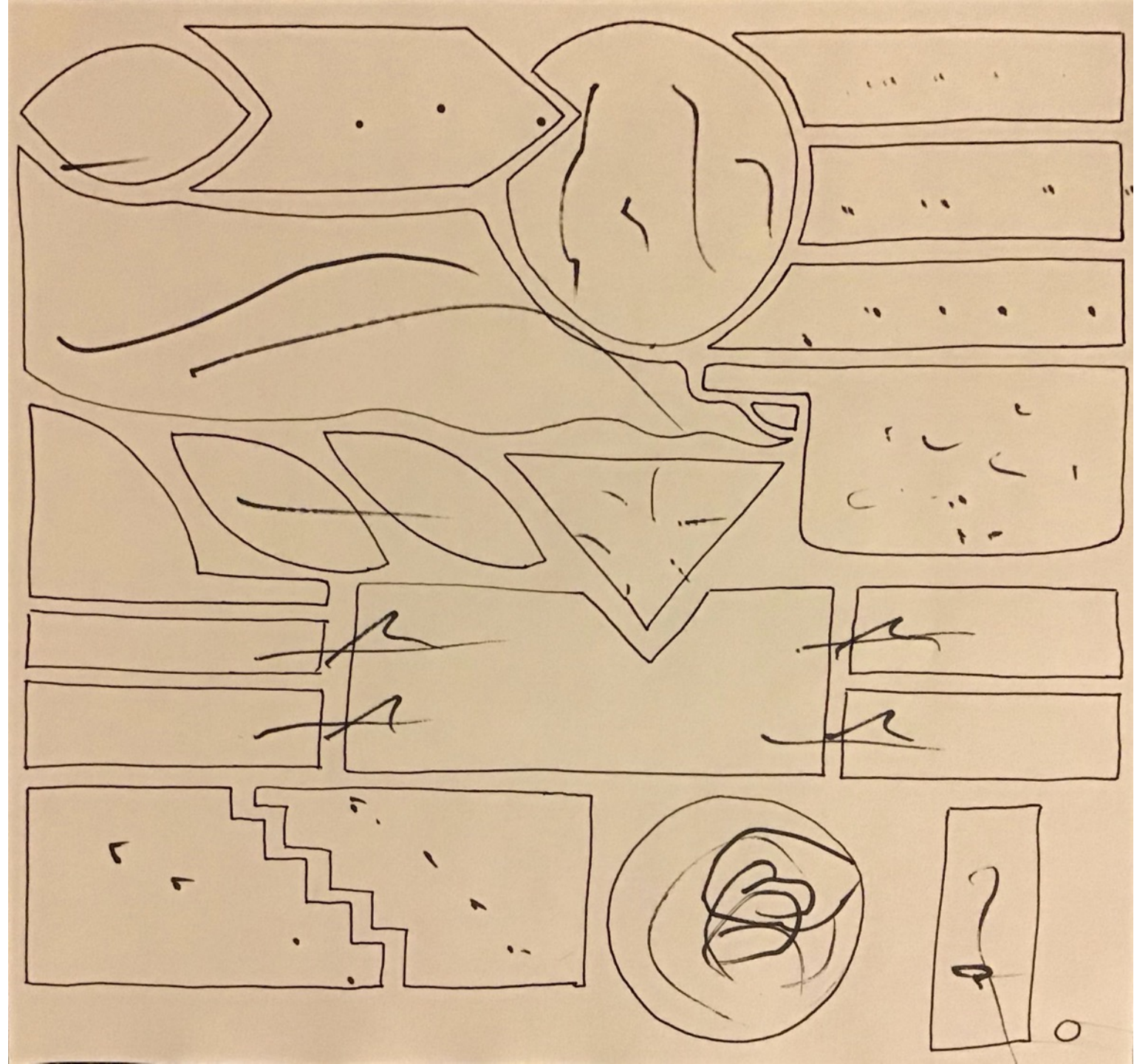
Cody



Rebecca: My grids and gestures comic represents my Monday before and during class. The first two panels at the top are my morning, empty because I was really groggy, with the second panel being me on my phone for the rest of the morning. The larger panel is the afternoon and it is bigger because it felt a lot longer than the morning. I live down in San Diego, and we had really bad winds and rain yesterday, hence the scattered lines in the corner of the panel. But my mom had made some soup which was really comforting, and it made the storm not seem so bad. The smaller boxes was the hour right before class, and I couldn't concentrate on anything because I tend to get nervous before the first day of class. The last three boxes take place during class, and they're overlapping because we were all connecting and talking to each other. I was really nervous when told what the assignment was, but when I started I felt more confident, and looking over it it makes sense to me. It was fun to draw out my day differently, and it will be interesting to see what the other days look like.



Bailey: When making this grid I couldn't help but realize how mundane my days have been the past few months. The first few shapes are the beats quite a lot of people do every morning, they wake up, get ready, and accomplish small daily tasks. The first shape is an almond type shape to represent eyes, since it is the first experience we all have every morning. Then I walk to the shower where I spend a lot of time gearing up mentally for the day, hence the large circle for the time spent there. The rectangles following are fast and simple to show how I quickly do those daily tasks mentioned before. The large cape like shape is representing me making my bed and how that is a very zen moment for me before I start my hectic day. There are other shapes in there that show the amount of time I'm on the computer, as well as how much the television consumes my time. Most of the strokes within these frames feel like how active my brain was during that part of my day and less about my emotions, its hard to have strong emotions when your life is incredibly routine currently. Hopefully as time goes on these shapes and strokes will become less simple and more complex because I have more excitement going on in my life haha.

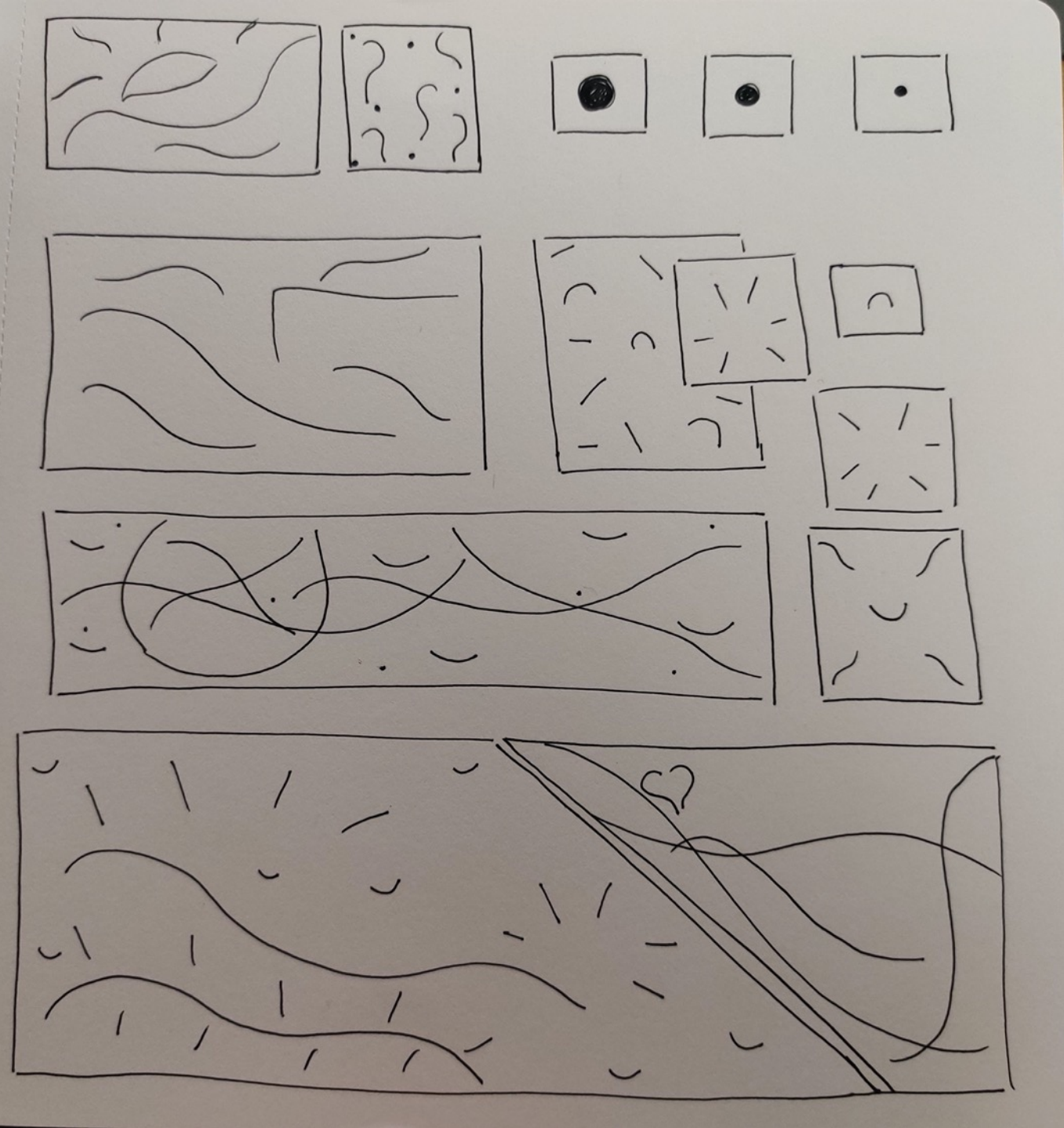


Raqshan: This was a reflection of my day. The beginning of the day started off normal if a little nervous before the start of the term. But the morning was slow. My first class did not provide a Zoom link or open their iLearn and so I was waiting for an update all morning.

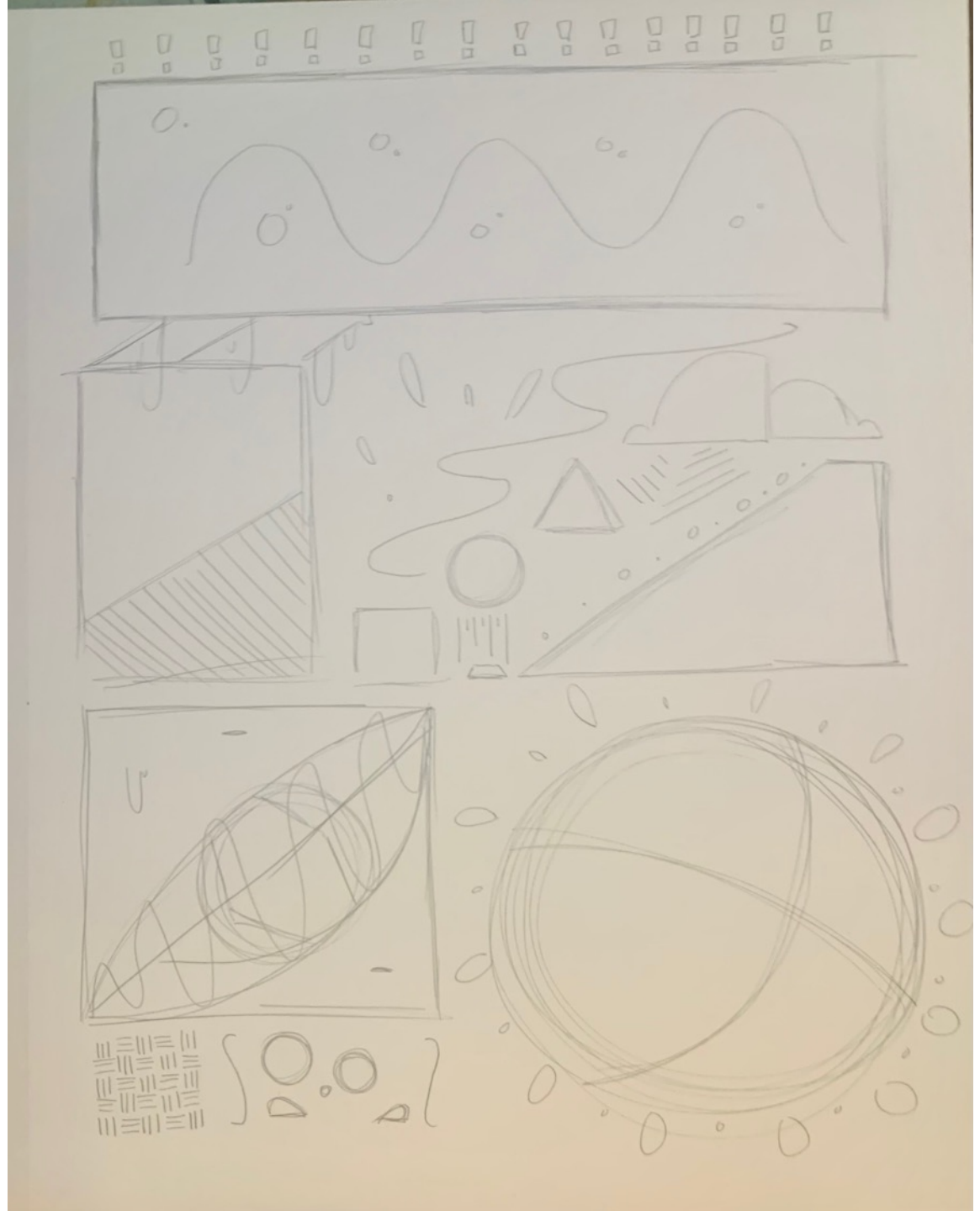
Then came the afternoon when I sat through a class - or tried to. My cat, Ivy, needed my attention apparently and kept meowing at me to play with her more than usual.

Then came my mid day break. It was a nice time to relax, sun bathe in a pool of sunshine with Ivy, talk on the phone with a friend, and relax before my last class of the day,

Then I chilled and had an awesome time in this class. It was an enjoyable evening.



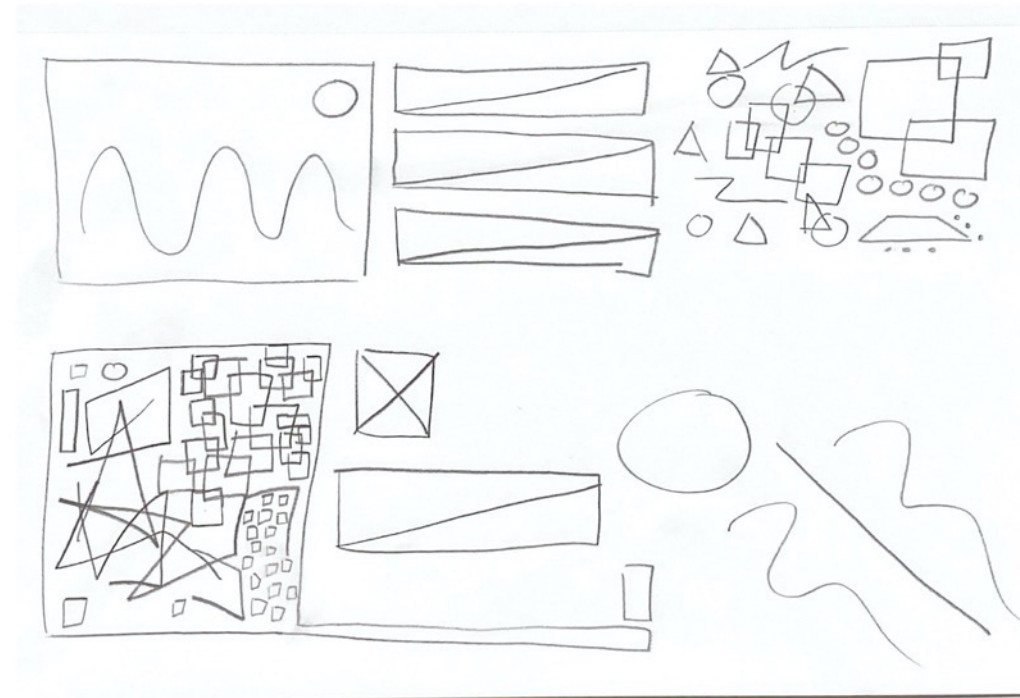
Natasha: Each section/box is a chunk of my day. The beginning is how slow it takes for me to get out of bed, often fighting the want to return to bed. The center is about how the room feels and smells, including how I affect that. The bottom has three sections. It is what I do after cleaning, like practicing drawing, handling finances, and enjoying video games. I wasn't sure if a cloud was a thing I could draw and tried salvaging it by cutting it in half, not sure if it worked.

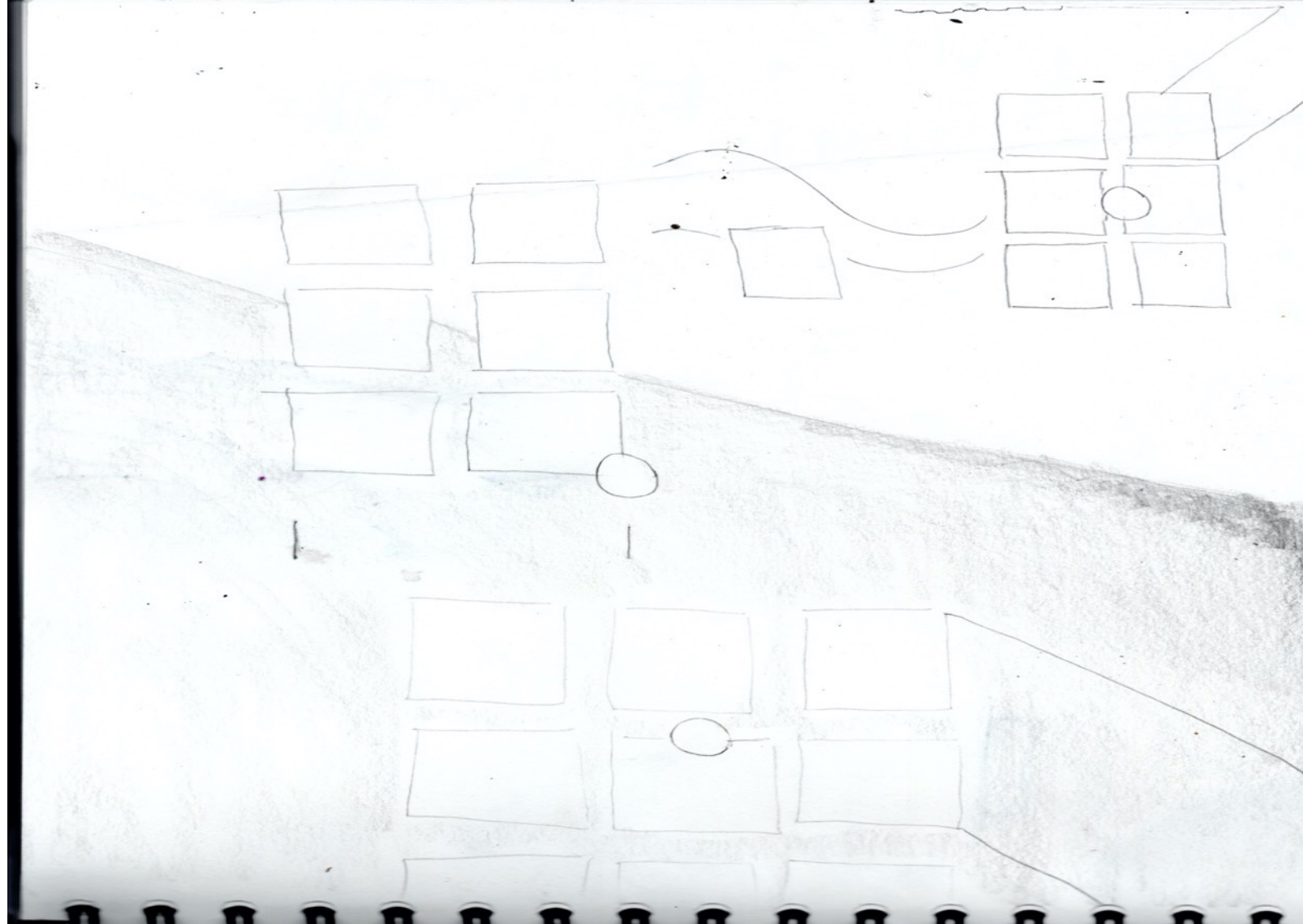


Kiana: I tried to make four larger "sections" of the day. The first panel at the top with the rounded edge is supposed to represent my morning/early afternoon which is spent laying in bed and looking out the window (basically doing nothing). The next section is the part of the day where I start to get anxiety about "wasting time" and having to do something. It's also the part of the day where I start to overthink a lot of pointless things, and so the lines are just going into loops. The next section is when I just do "normal" things like talk to my family, eat dinner, etc, which is why the lines are just straight. I made the panels triangle because I kind of feel like a triangle when I'm with my family (does that even make sense??). Then finally, I made these last boxes smaller as even though night is my favorite time of the day, it feels like the shortest. The firework-like design is supposed to be how I get bursts of energy and creativity during that part of the day. Thanks for reading :)



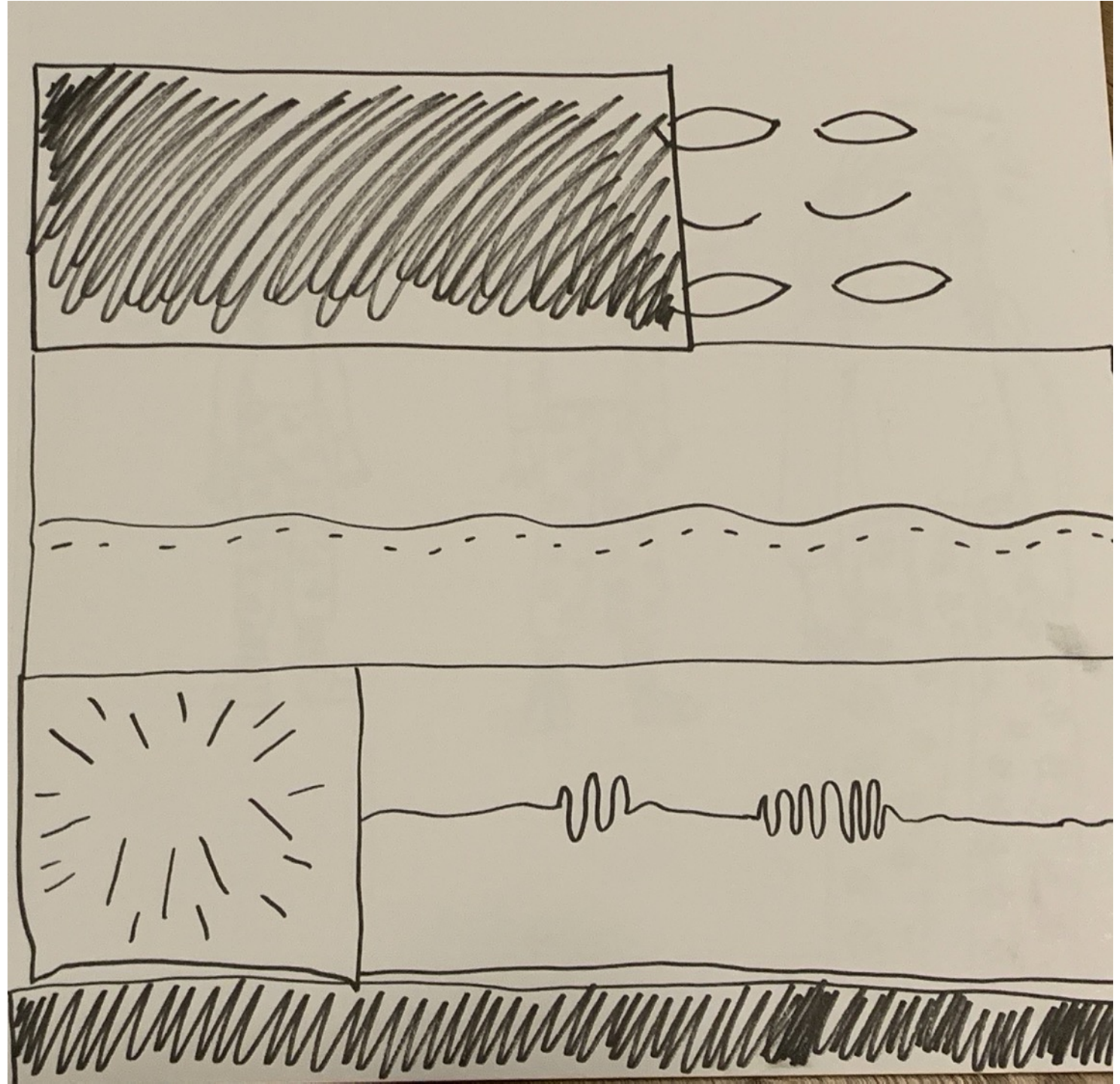
Julia: After over a month of being home, I recently drove back up to SF. This grid represents how I spent the day driving around and cleaning out my entire apartment after being gone for so long. I really liked this activity and think it will be interesting to document my next few days this way.





Evie: On monday, nine and a half hours of my day were spent in zoom calls, starting at ten in the morning and finishing at 2.45 the next morning. So these grids look like literal representations of zoom calls but they also describe how my day feels as it is so neatly organized into little grids of faces most of the time. The little tiny blobs are brief calls to my girlfriend - also a digital relationship for the last 16 weeks or so. There isn't much else around these grids because it was a day that existed almost entirely virtually... a bit strange. I plotted when it got dark because I did notice that.

Keren: In this comic, I sleep in for the day. When I finally wake up, I go with the flow of the day. I don't follow any set plans. Just taking it easy. I go out for a walk. I wait for my class to start, which makes me a little nervous. After class, the day goes on. End the day back in bed.



Response Gallery 3: Grids & Gestures as Diary.

Do Grids & Gestures at home 3 times over the week – spending about 7 minutes each time. See how your days differ, how your approach differs, etc.

Grids & Gestures as Diary

Mikyla: For this assignment, I documented my weekend (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday)

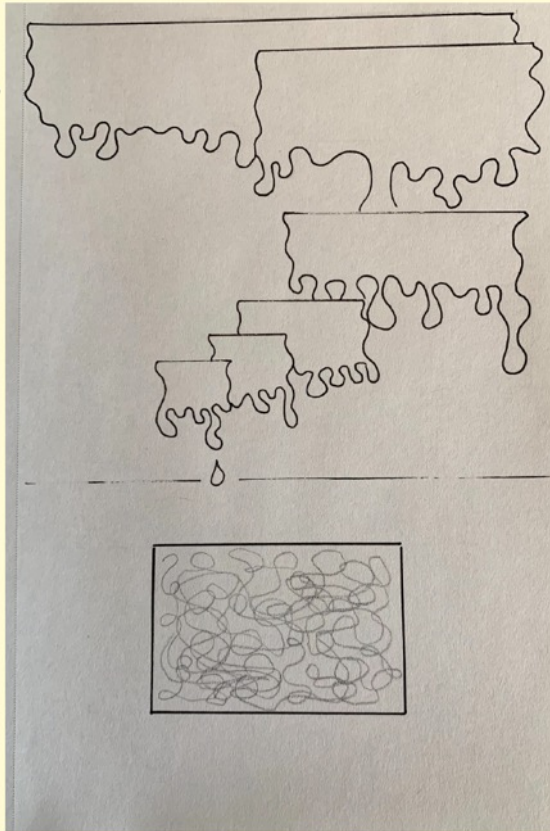
Friday was fairly structured, I worked on some homework in the morning and had a pretty chill afternoon. Friday night we celebrated my grandma's birthday and had some wine and cake!

Saturday I was feeling down. My day was mostly comprised of distractions which are represented by all the overlapping triangles.

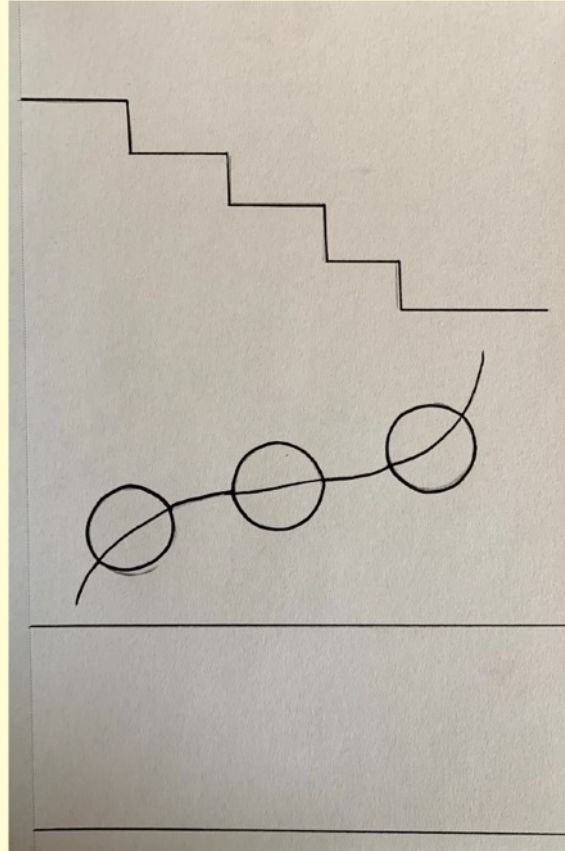
Sunday was a good day. I felt bubbly and happy because I got to see my dad's new cat and eat some good food (happiness for me is represented by the wavy lines and bubbles).



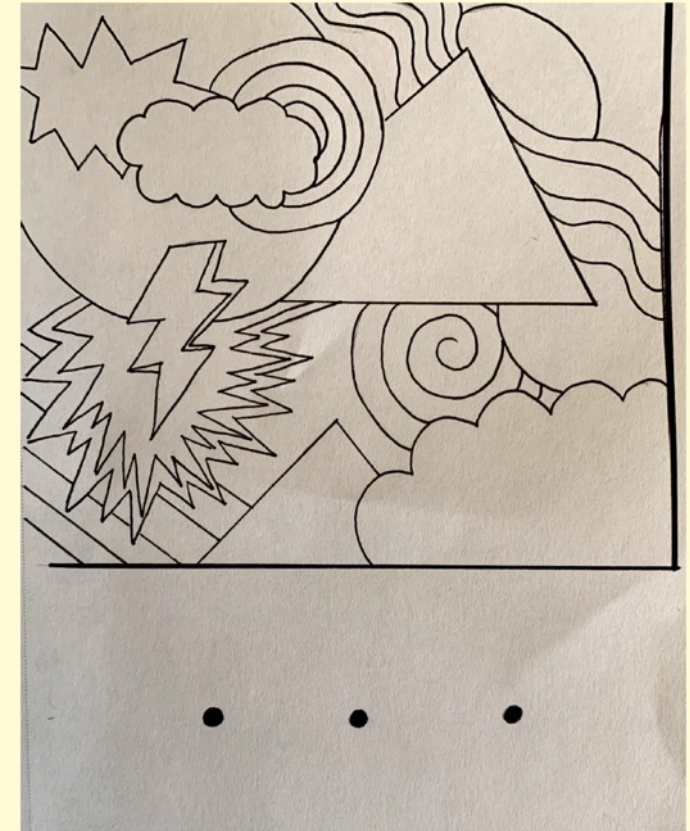
Grids and Gestures as Diary



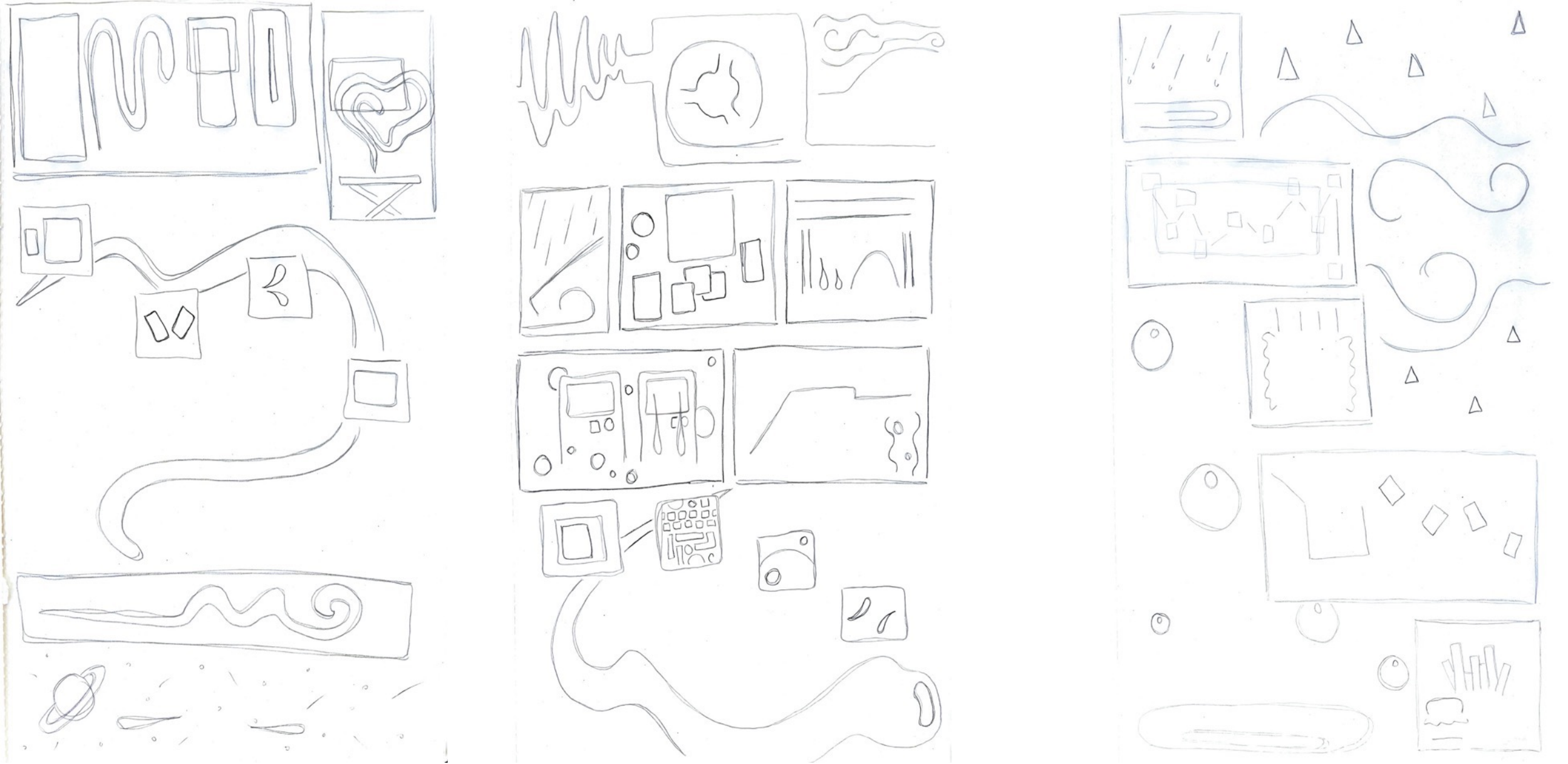
For Day 1, I felt an overwhelming amount of responsibilities with classes and work which all seemed to overlap and lead to a large amount of anxiety. This all accumulated into a giant ball of stress which I tried to shove into a little box. It was one of those days that you just have to get through and hope for a better day tomorrow.



Day 2 was straight forward. I had a slow morning, some small tasks and chores, and then ended my day with a zoom class.

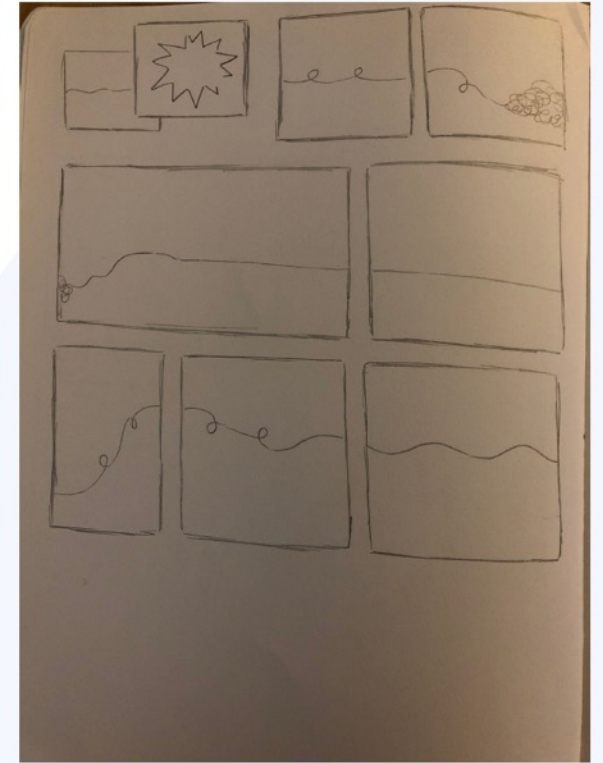
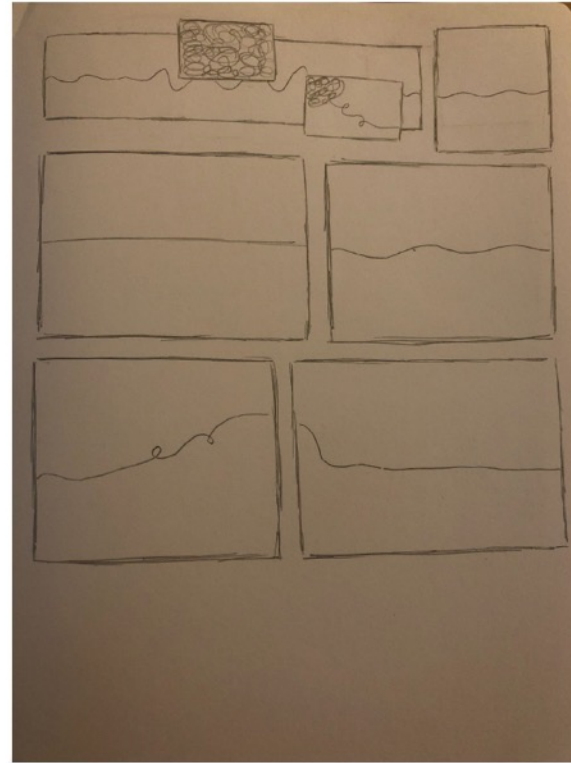
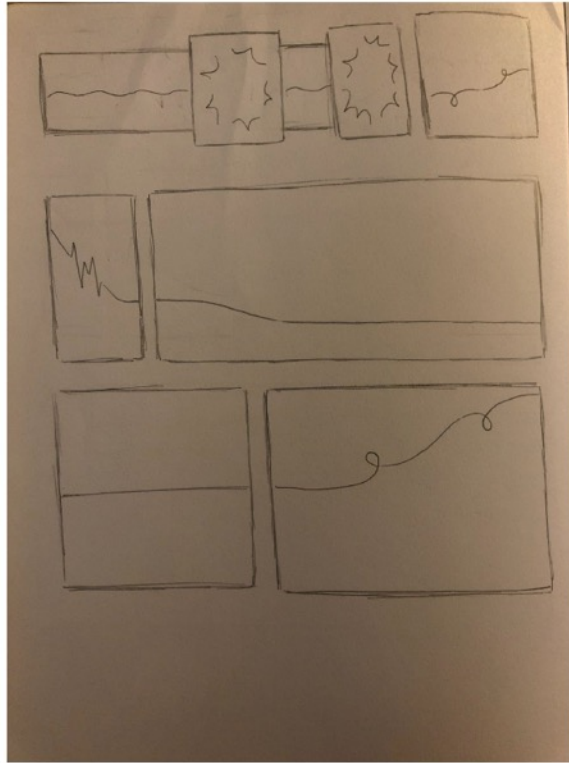
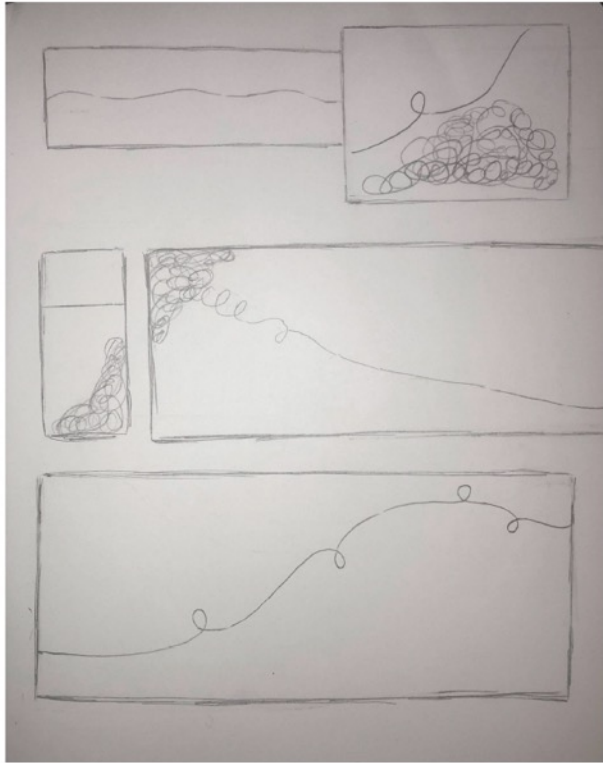


For Day 3, work took up the majority of my day. Currently, I nanny three boys (ages 2, 5, and 8) and my day was filled with bug hunting, science experiments, and lots and lots of questions. It's always so much fun watching them, but it takes a lot out of ya so the rest of the day was mostly Netflix and mindless tasks.



Tiph: I tried to representatively draw what my energy and the energy of the day felt like to me. I tried to boil down what I did each day into a few things like “go to work,” or “do laundry.” Mostly, I tried to capture how I felt at each section of the day.

✧ Grids & Gestures



I have done this activity many, many times before. I think that it is interesting how when I first started doing this, I just did more random markings. However, for this, I represented my emotions throughout the day as (for the most part) a continuous line that moves through the panels.



Cody: I had a really weird dream to start off this day and then spent most of the day relaxing as the sun went buy. Eventually climbed some really tall stairs and ordered a pizza with my roommates on the couch.



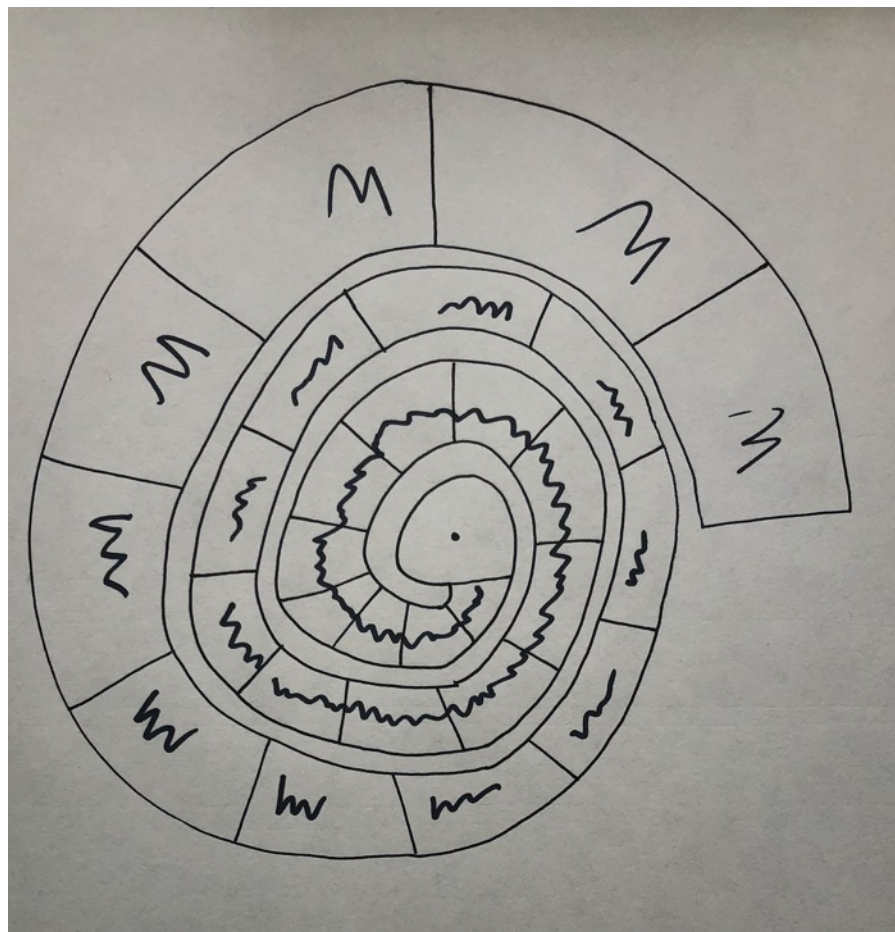
This depicts a very full day for me. I had a fun time trying to depict long car rides in this comic by trying to recreate a panoramic landscape. I enjoyed creating abstract depictions of the people in my day (my partner, roommate, boss, and coworkers). I decided to use more than one color and I had a good time with it.



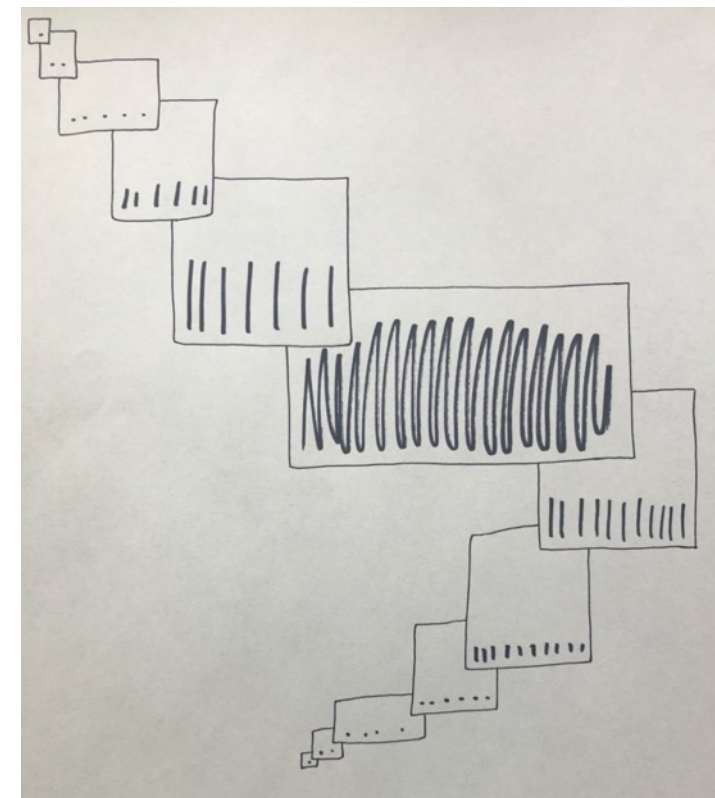
This final grid diary was one I tried to play with space the most. I was trying to get to the end of my day and go to bed so I was played with organization. I was feeling some type of way and did not want to be confined to a box.



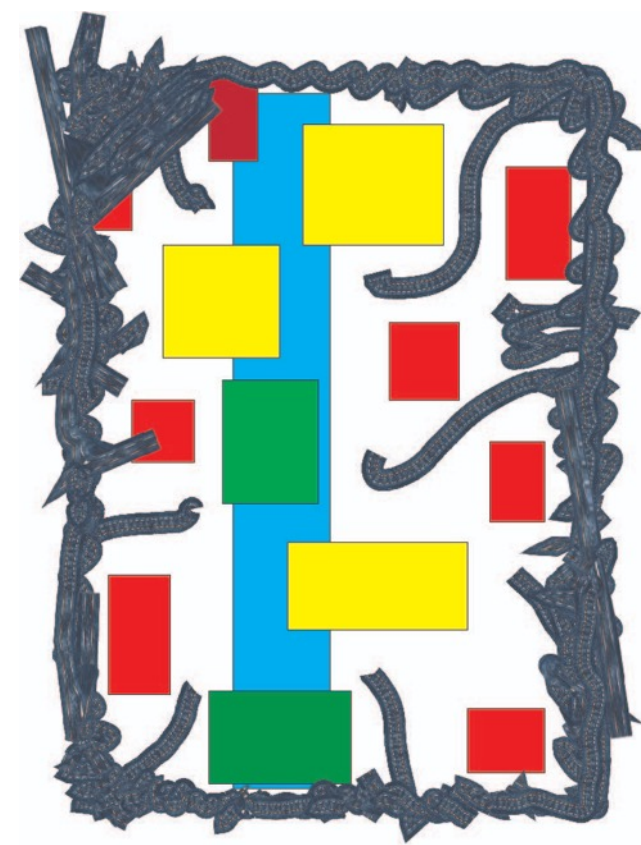
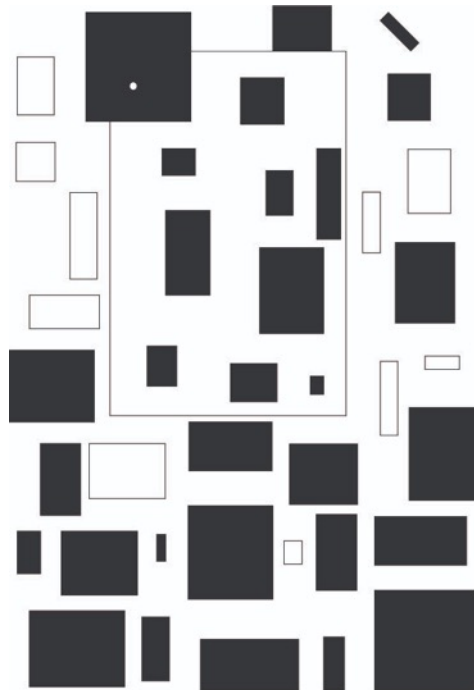
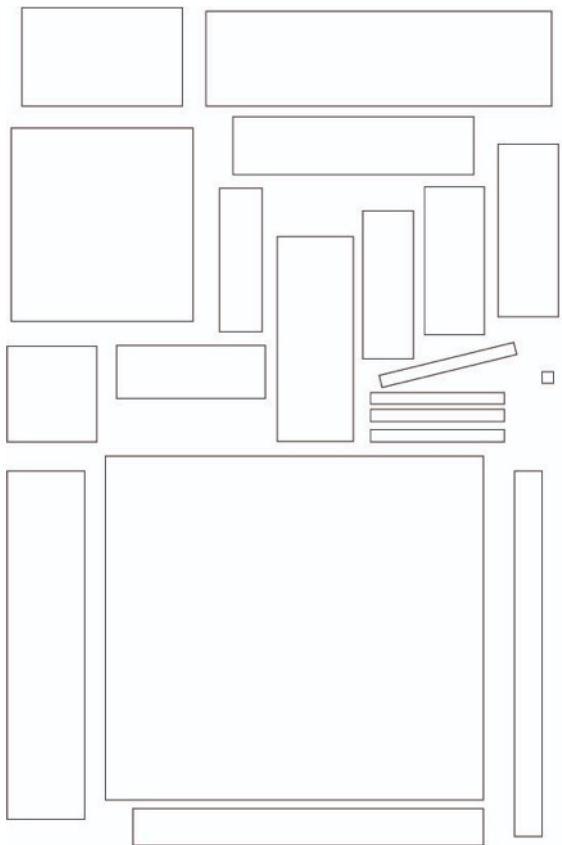
Bailey: The first day of creating a grid I chose to reflect on my day as a whole and try to take it step by step. Some of the longer boxes represent me going somewhere or doing something static. The more fluid shapes represent the weather and my family. Most of the harsher angles are for when I was feeling nervous or anxious and the smoother angles the more I was at peace.



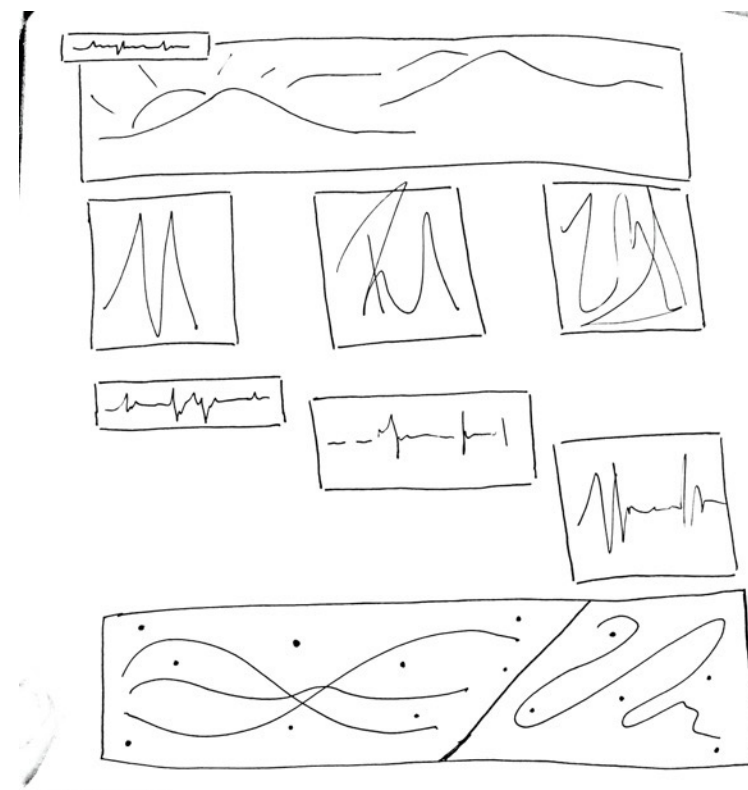
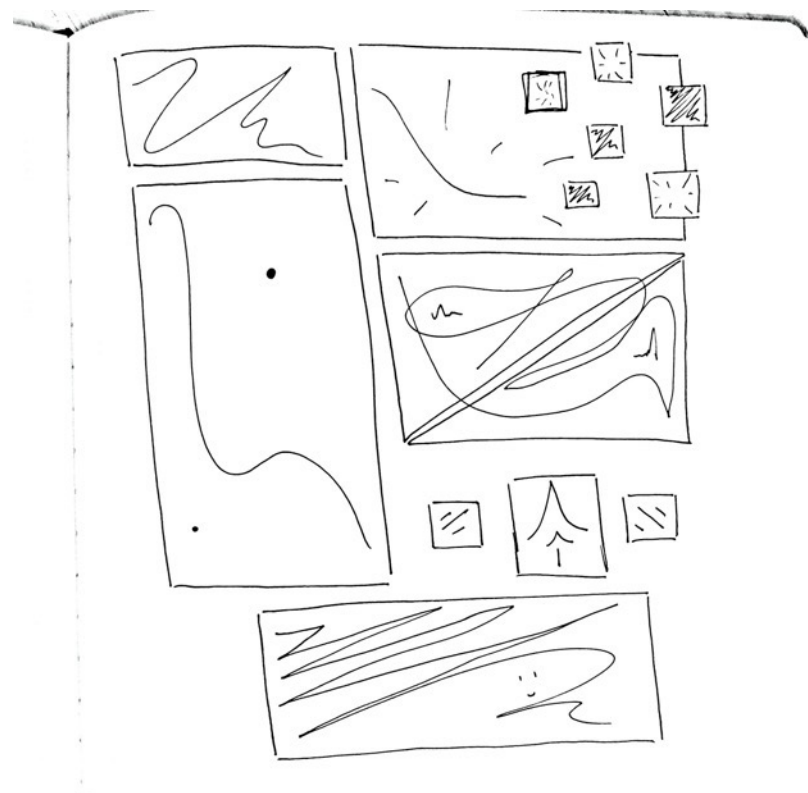
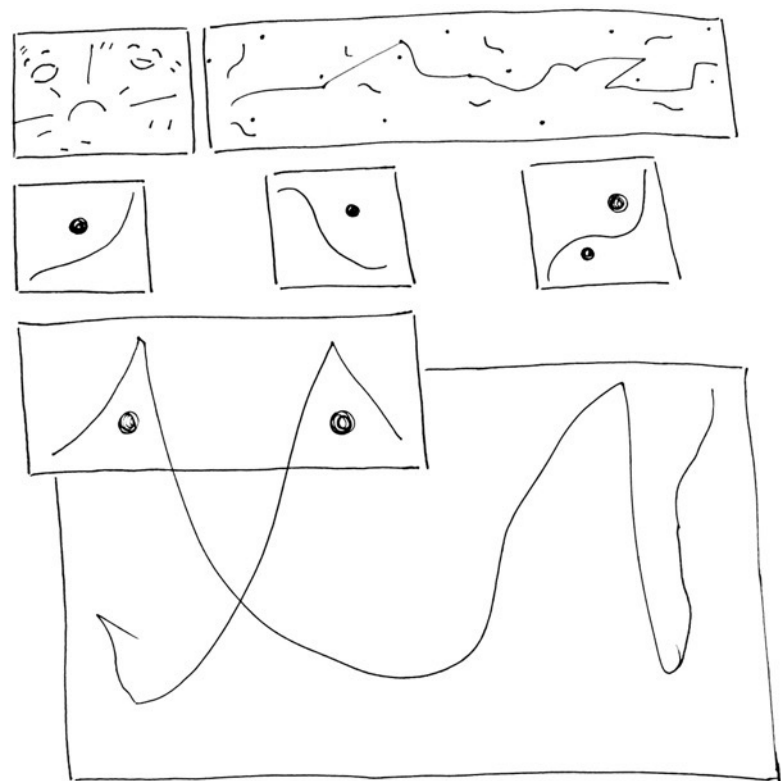
The second day I chose to draw just one event that happened in the day rather than its entirety. This moment felt as though I was spiraling mentally the closer and closer I got to its finally. I was nervous for hours awaiting the event only to finally get there and be more peaceful than I was doing other things.



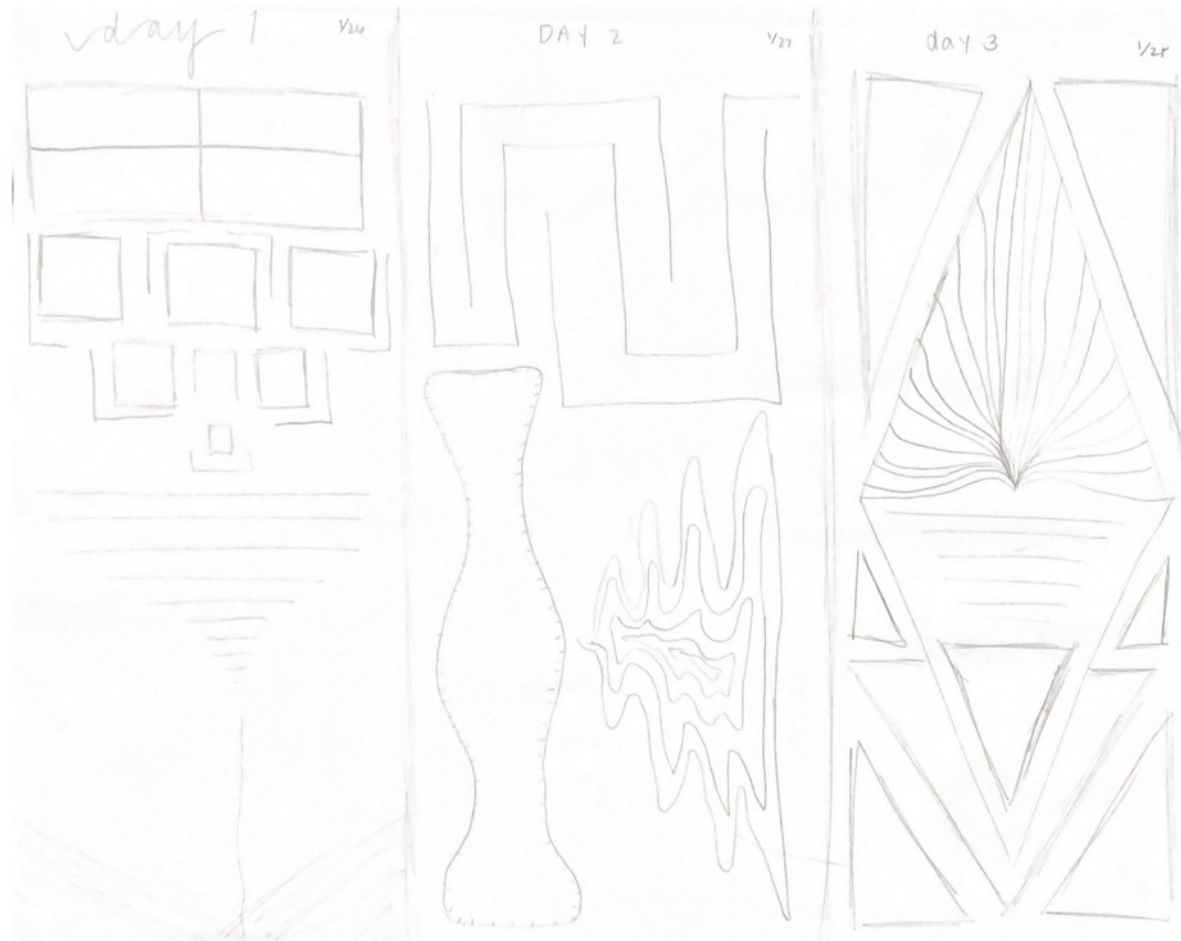
And for the last day I chose to focus on representing a conversation I had with someone close to me. It started out simple and easy going but slowly new walls would break down and the conversation would get more intense and elaborate. After it reached a dramatic swell, it slowly traversed back into day to day conversation.



Andrew



Raqshan



Gabriela: Day 1: I had a very eventful morning which meant I could relax the rest of the day.

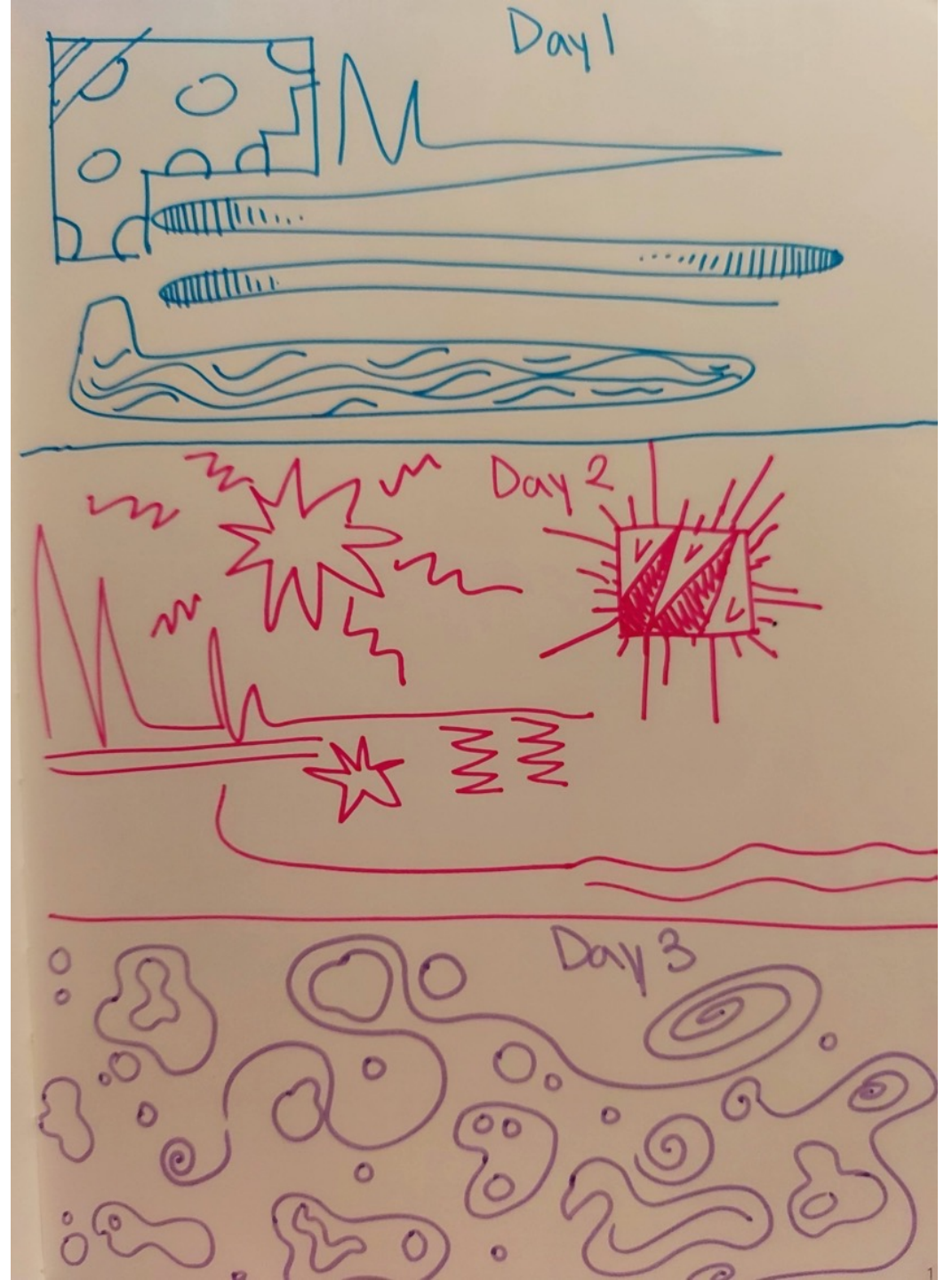
Day 2: I was given really unclear directions so it felt like I was lost. Then I played some video games. Splatoon splat marks kinds came through.

Day 3: I had a yoga buti class in the morning so I felt like I was just resonating energy throughout my whole day.

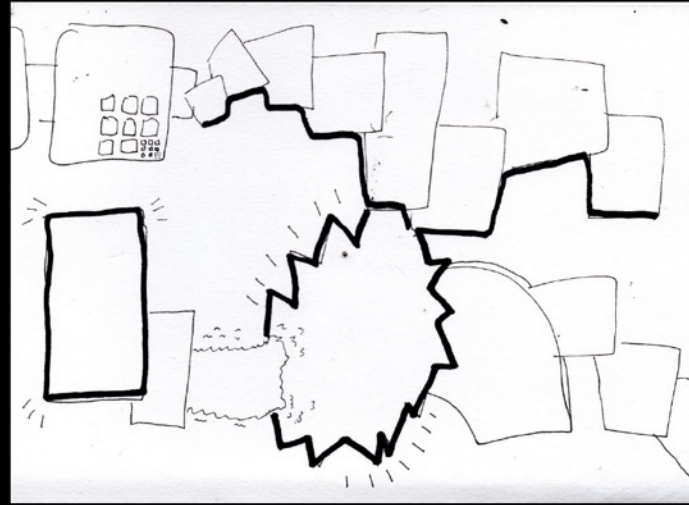
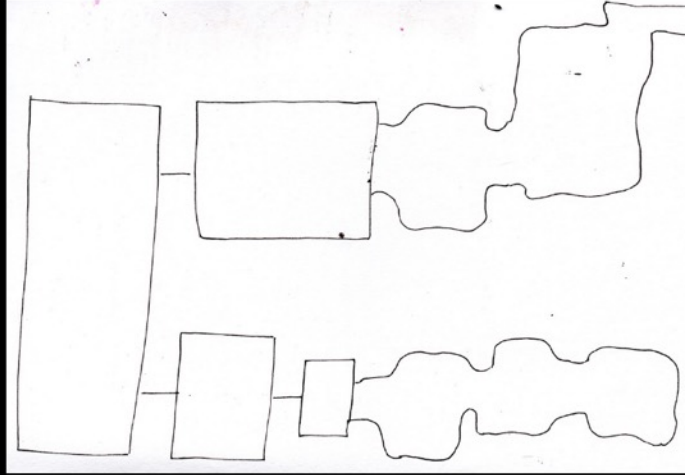
Cherokee: Day one represents how bored I was that Saturday. There wasn't much to do, read, or watch. I ended up just rewatching some movies, doing the 7 minute drawing for this class and starting early on some homework due for my friday class.

Day 2 represents how annoyed I was. I must have slept weird because I woke up and my arm was sore and I had a dull headache all day that faded a bit by the time I went to bed.

Day 3 is Monday and I woke up with plenty of rest which was nice for a change. My sleep schedule sucks but even when it's normal I have trouble falling asleep. So that's why this drawing is supposed to look calm because so far the day has been good.



GRIDS & GESTURES AS DIARY...

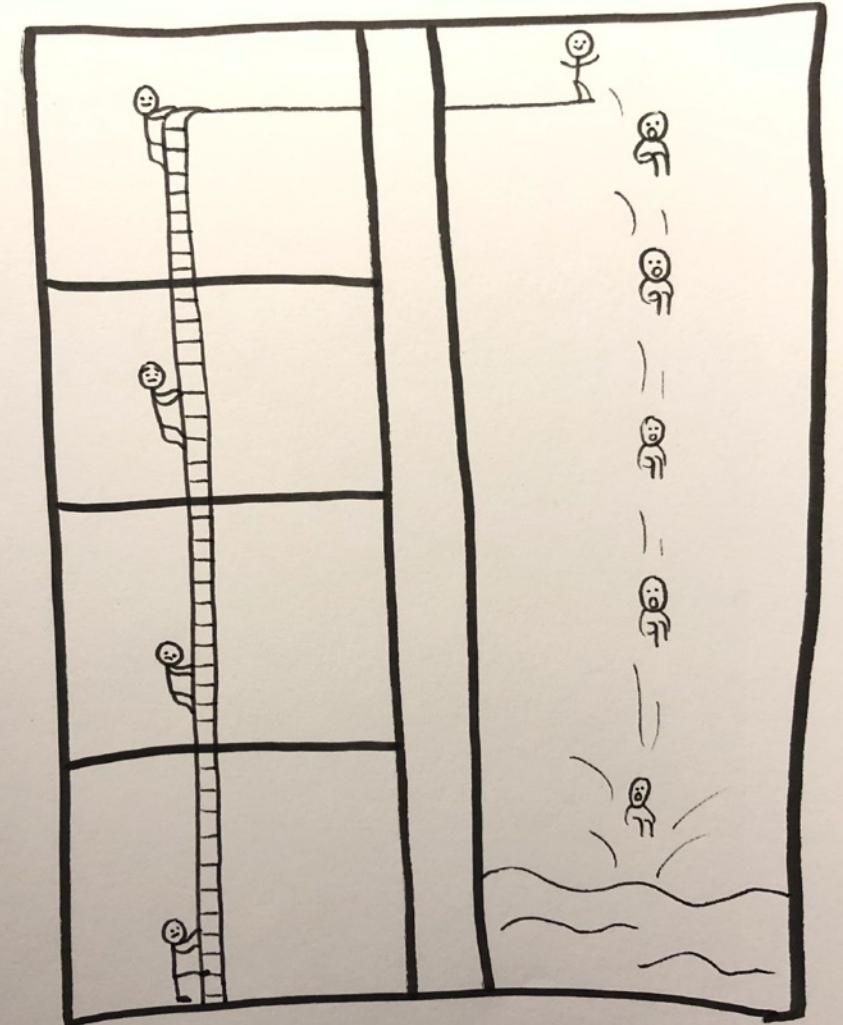


1. I ended up drawing the wibbly feeling of time just disappearing with no actual events happening, until I had a lesson and a chat with a friend that gave me a little structure, before that disappeared again.
2. On this day I made the comic page, so the top left hand corner is the weirdness of doing a comic about a comic. Then later I gave a talk so here are my nerves followed by the adrenaline hit.
3. Today is my birthday! so this is the happy floaty feeling of a really lovely day, and feeling very happy about the wonderful people in my life

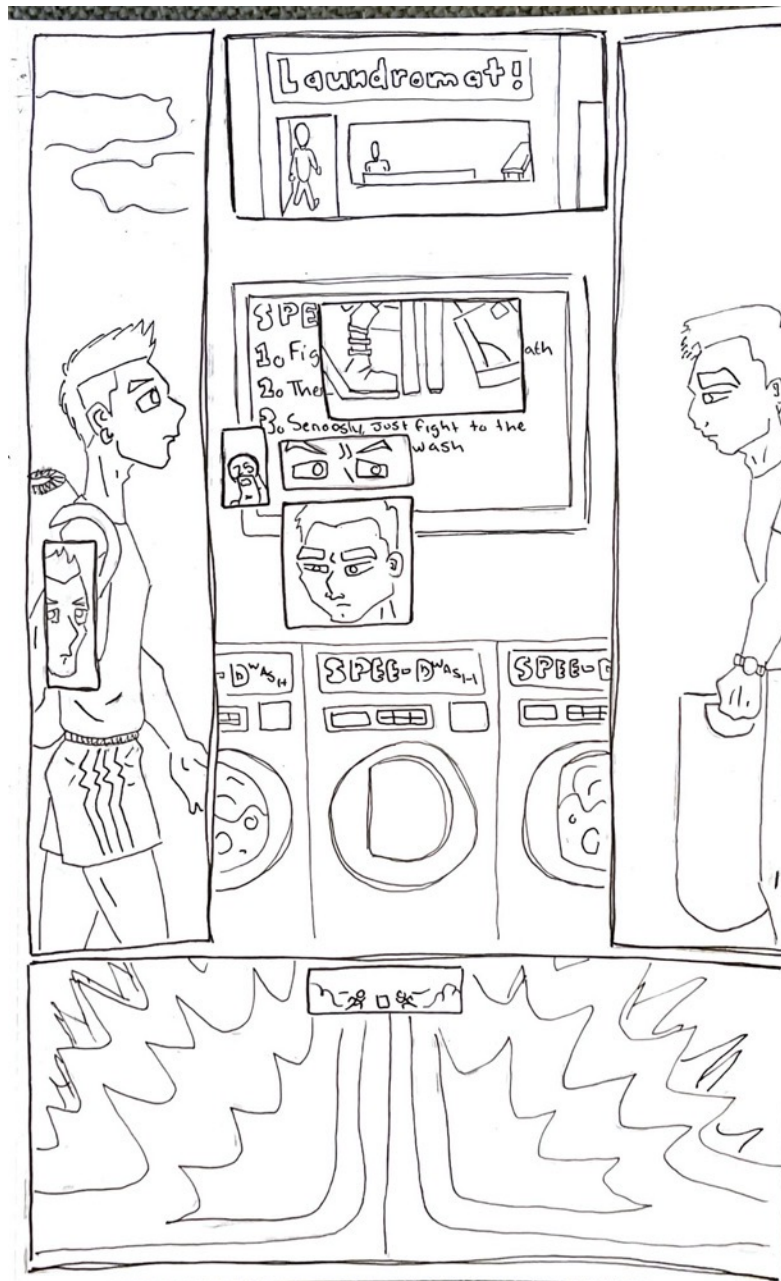
Response Gallery 4: Real Grid to Comics.

Observe some architectural composition in your world – a building, windows, a street layout, floor tilings, the dashboard of a car, whatever – find one you are inspired by, take a picture of it, then make a single comics page based on the composition of the actual architecture. Post both the image of the architectural element and your comic here.

Real Grid to Comic



Tiph: This grid was based on the door at my local laundromat. The middle section with all the smaller panels was the window which had little signs in it. The top, bottom, and side panels were the structure of the door. I decided to make the theme battling over a washer at the laundromat, because that's what it feels like doing laundry in the city.



Real Grid to Comic



For this activity I attempted to play with time and sequence in comics by having a figure (at the bottom) break the page while another figure is seen falling in sequence. The floor panels in my room that I choose seemed to fit with a falling motion.

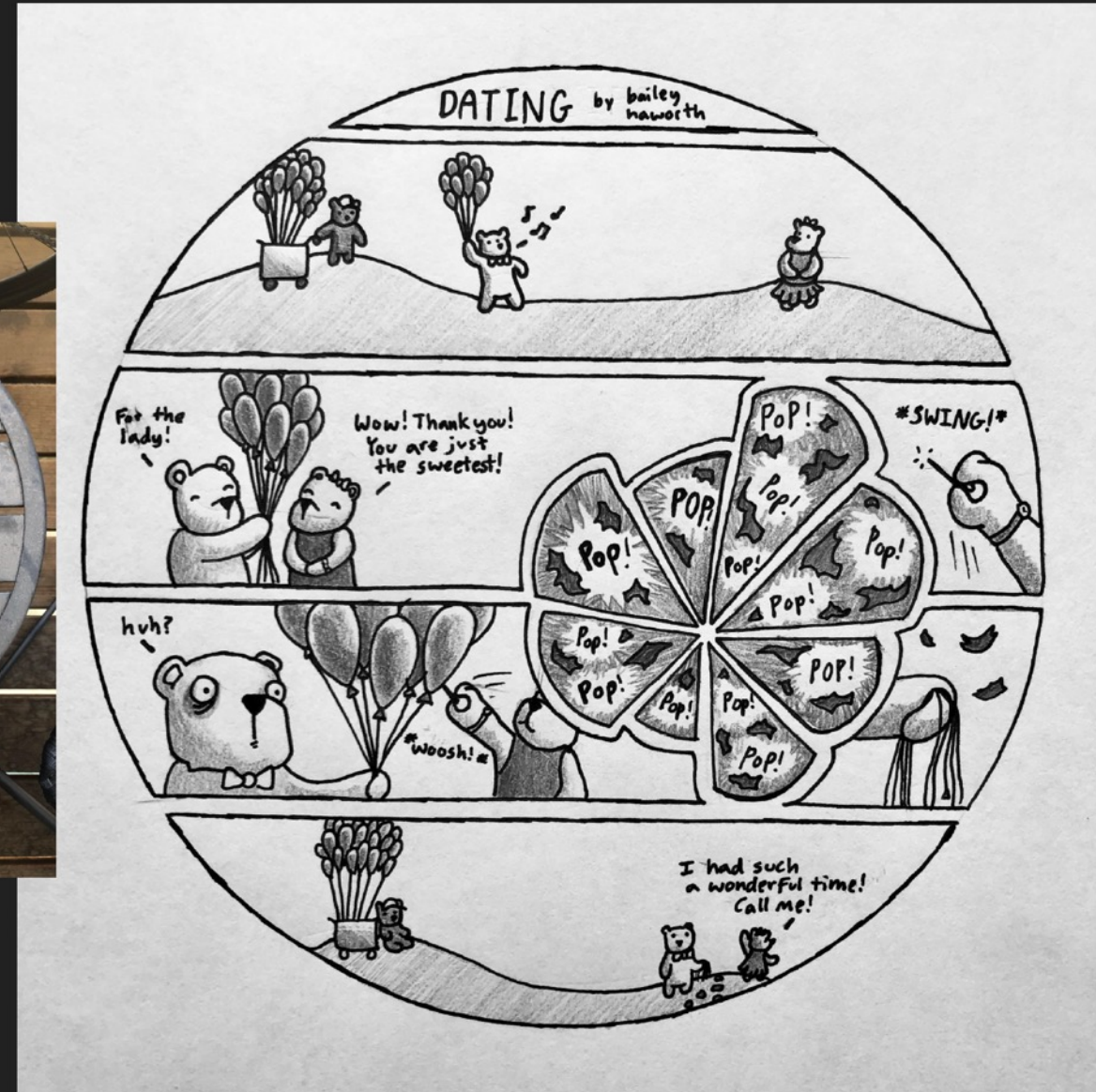
Edmund



Real Grid to Comic

Suddenly I now found myself searching for panel grids in my environment. What stories could I tell with the panel structure of my window? Or perhaps my outside table with a succulent on it.

And that's just what I did. The mundane slated structure of the table with the flare of the succulent reminded me of a story that could burst like a couple balloons after a rough date.

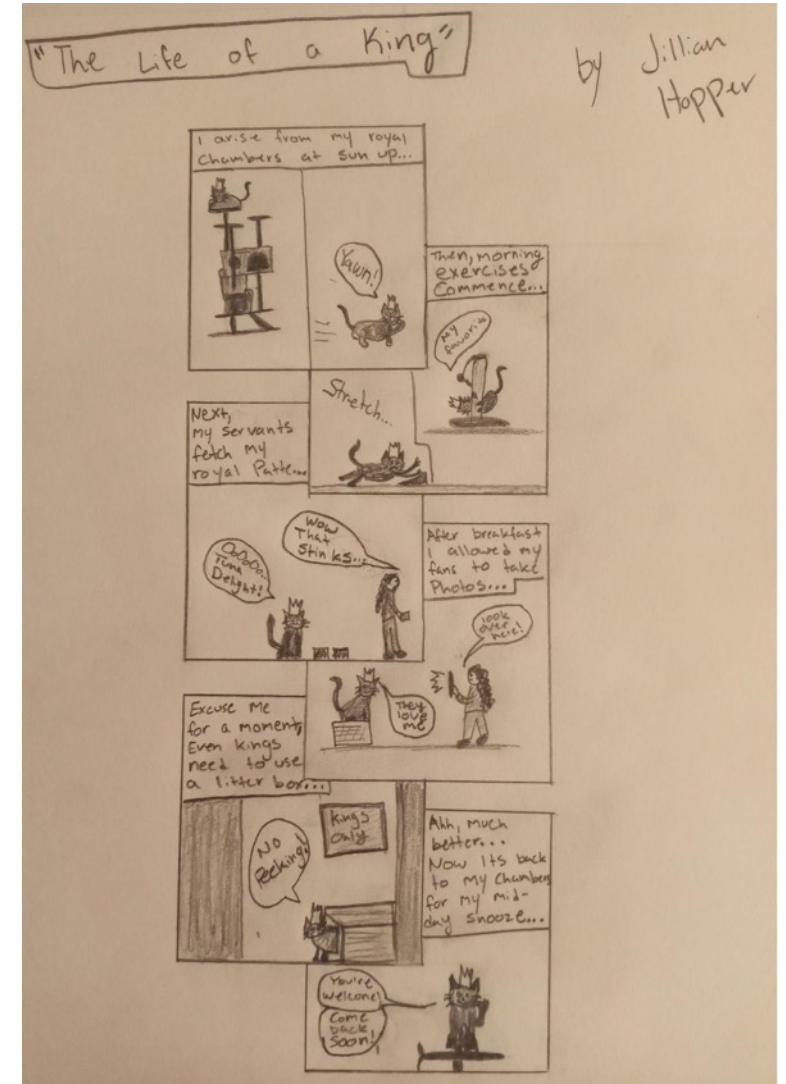


Real Grid to Comic

Jillian

This is my cats tower, and they act like they are royalty because they are too spoiled.

The cat in the comic is basically my two cats morphed together. It has the physical appearance of one but the personality of his brother. Then the shape of the tower inspired the panel layout which I tried to get creative with. The flow of the comic is how the trail the cats take to get down from the tower. I enjoyed making this one a lot.

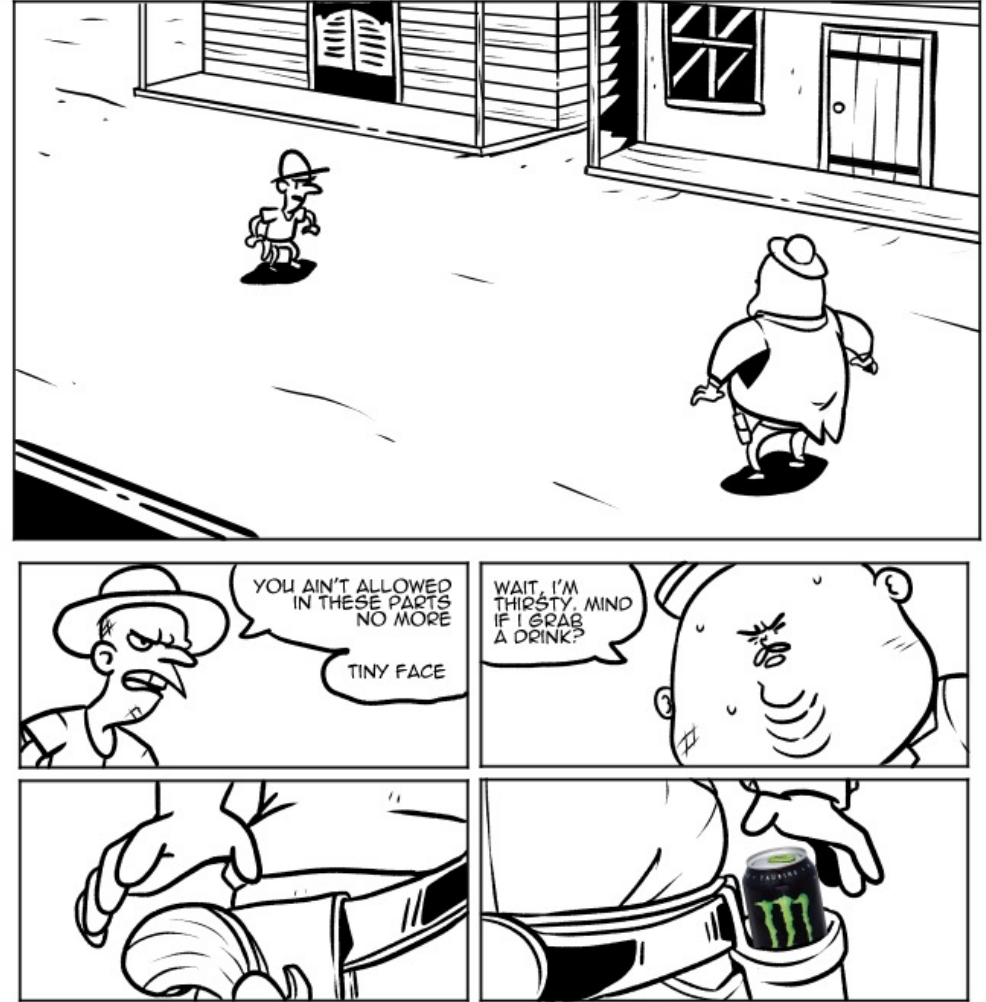


Real Grid to Comic





Alijandro



REAL GRID TO COMIC



I loved how there was a key that said 'end' so decided to focus on that.



Real Grid to Comic

This was such a fun first project. I went to Coit Tower while it was raining. I was listening to Fred Neil & really enjoyed how peaceful the experience was. The comic really wrote itself once I saw which real grid I wanted to use.

