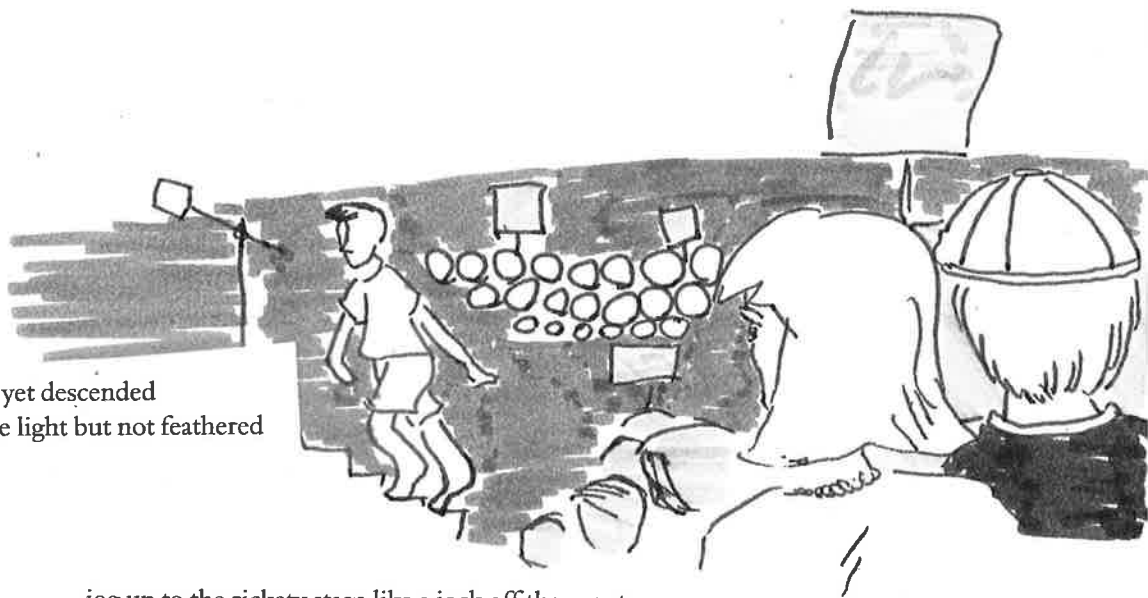


Rally

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(Miami, October 2008)



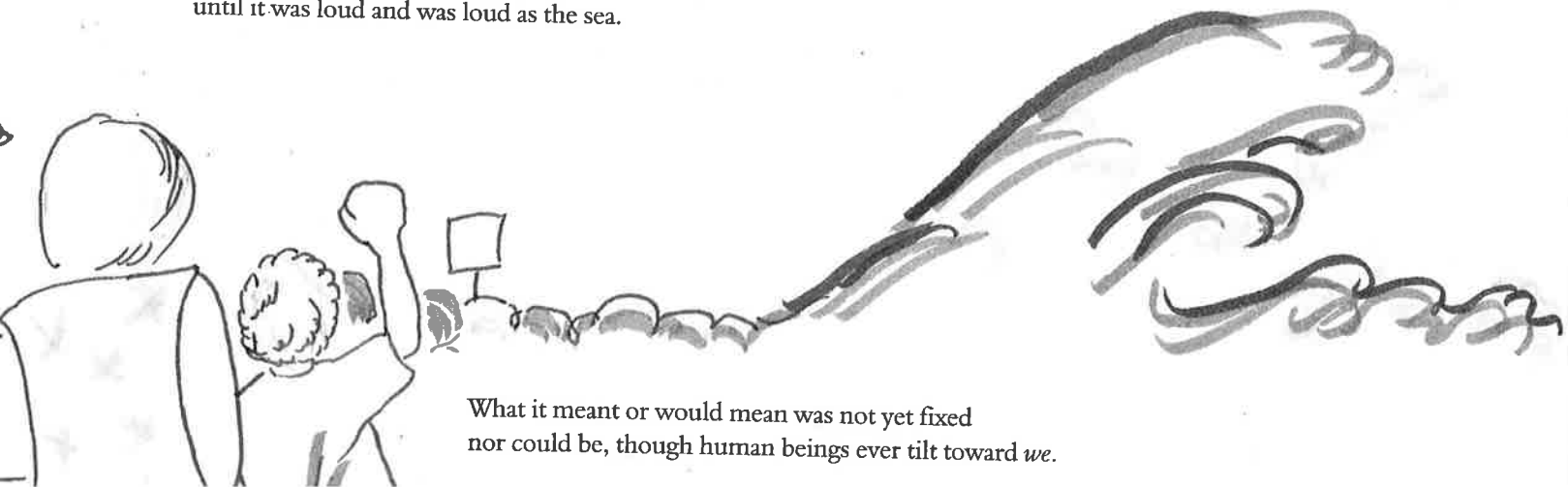
The awesome weight of the world had not yet descended upon his athlete's shoulders. I saw someone light but not feathered

jog up to the rickety stage like a jock off the court
played my game - did my best

and the silent crowd listened and dreamed.
The children sat high on their parents' shoulders.



Then the crowd made noise that gathered and grew
until it was loud and was loud as the sea.



What it meant or would mean was not yet fixed
nor could be, though human beings ever tilt toward *we*.



Valediction

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I know, I know, I know, I know, I know
That I could not have convinced you of this,

But these dark times are just like those dark times.
Yes, my sad acquaintance, each dark time is

Indistinguishable from the other dark times.
Yesterday is as relentless as tomorrow.

There is no relief to be found in this,
But, please, "Yours is not the worst of sorrows."

Chekhov wrote that. He meant it as comfort
And I mean it as comfort, too, but why

Should you believe us? You didn't believe us.
You killed yourself because your last dark time

Was the worst, I guess, of many dark times.
None of my verse could have saved your life.

You were a stranger. You were dark and brief.
And I am humbled by the size of your grief.