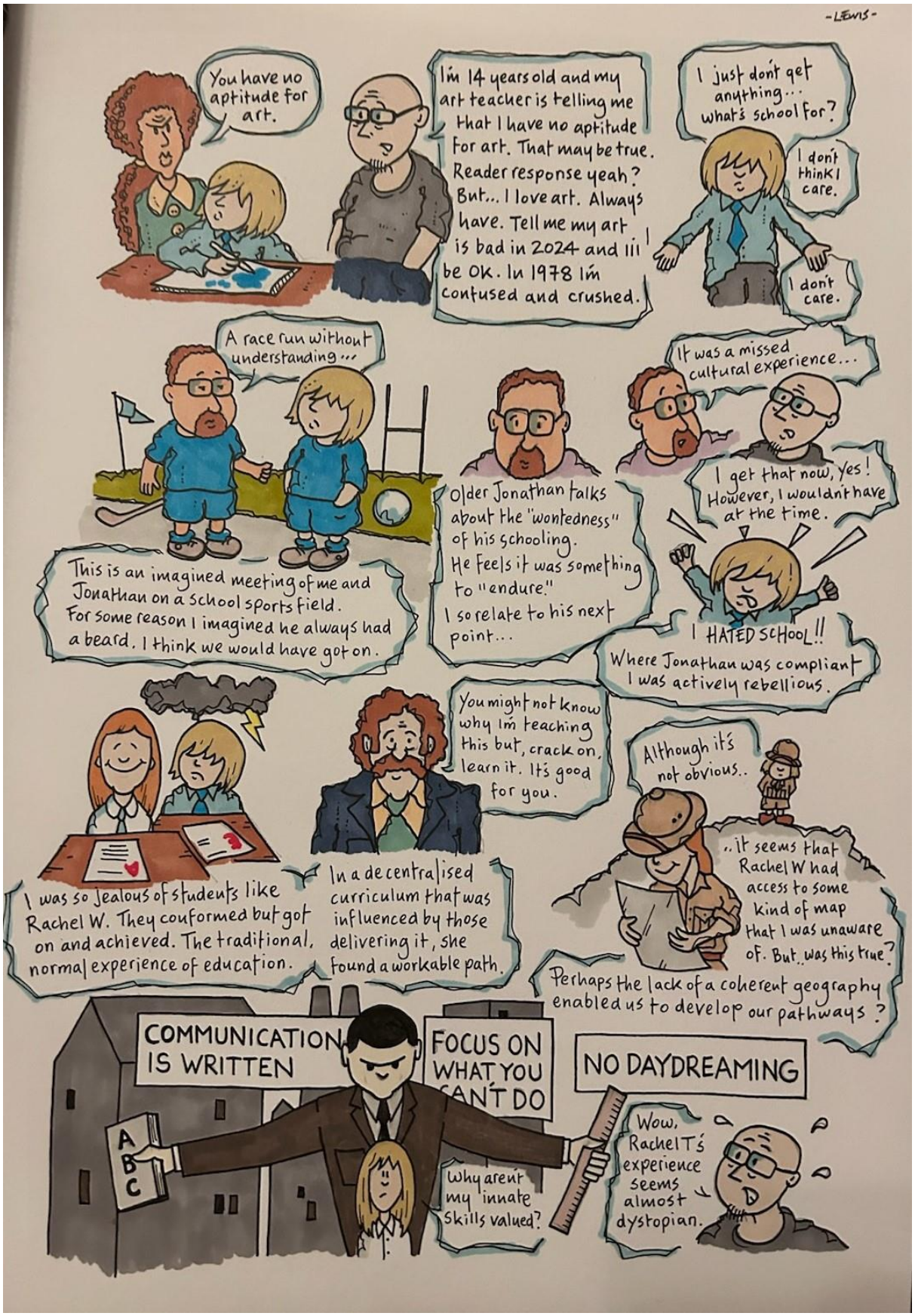
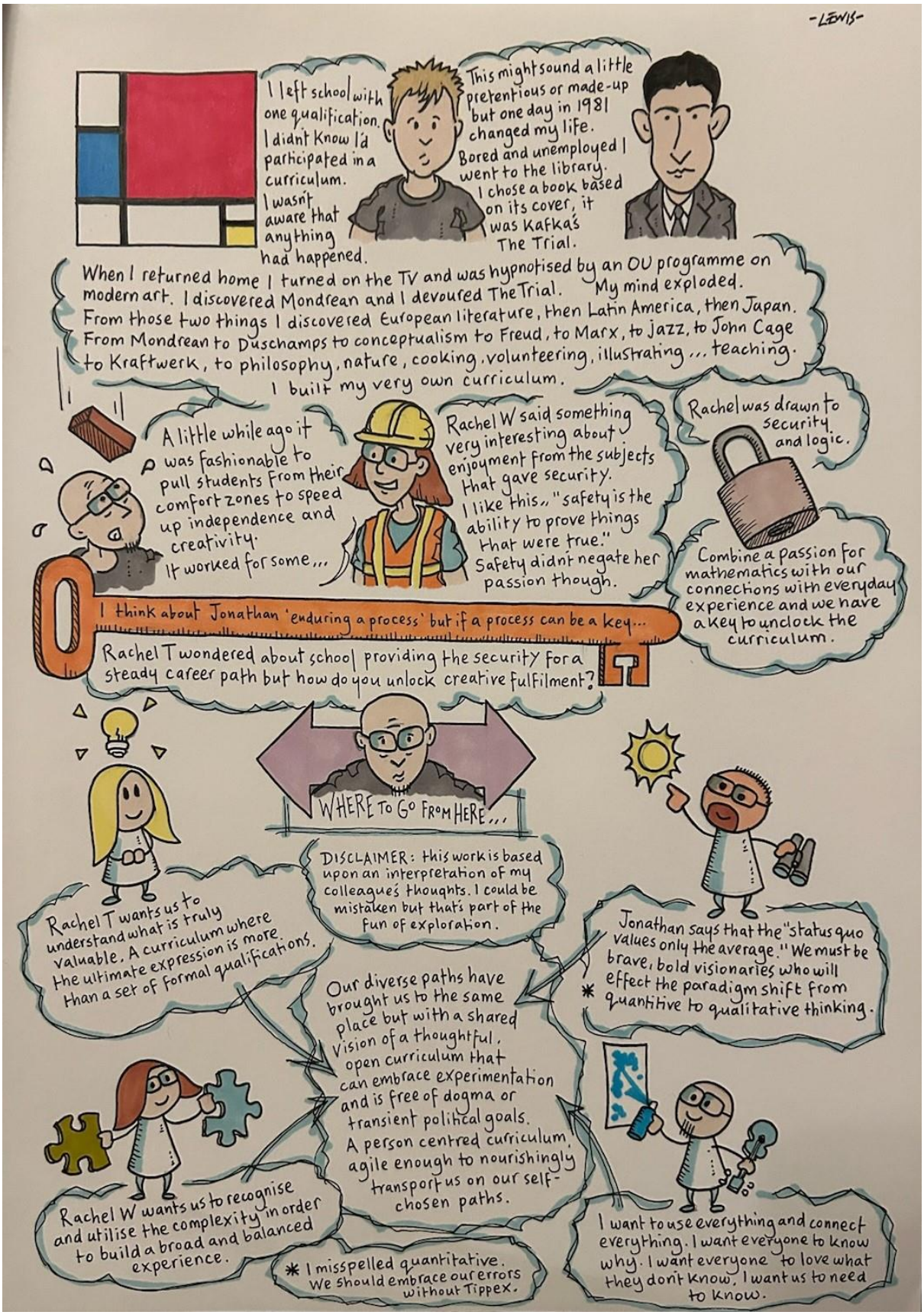

-LEWIS-
You have no aptitude for art.
I'm 14 years old and my art teacher is telling me that I have no aptitude for art. That may be true. Reader response yeah? But... I love art. Always have. Tell me my art is bad in 2024 and I'll be OK. In 1978 I'm confused and crushed.
I just don't get anything... what's school for?
I don't think I care.
I don't care.
A race run without understanding...
This is an imagined meeting of me and Jonathan on a school sports field. For some reason I imagined he always had a beard. I think we would have got on.
Older Jonathan talks about the "wontedness" of his schooling. He feels it was something to "endure." I so relate to his next point...
It was a missed cultural experience...
I get that now, yes! However, I wouldn't have at the time.
I HATED SCHOOL!!
Where Jonathan was compliant I was actively rebellious.
You might not know why I'm teaching this but, crack on, learn it. It's good for you.
I was so jealous of students like Rachel W. They conformed but got on and achieved. The traditional, normal experience of education.
In a decentralised curriculum that was influenced by those delivering it, she found a workable path.
Although it's not obvious..
..it seems that Rachel W had access to some kind of map that I was unaware of. But..was this true?
Perhaps the lack of a coherent geography enabled us to develop our pathways?
COMMUNICATION IS WRITTEN
FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN'T DO
NO DAYDREAMING
A B C
Why aren't my innate skills valued?
Wow, Rachel T's experience seems almost dystopian.


-LEWIS-
I left school with one qualification. I didnt know I'd participated in a curriculum. I wasn't aware that anything had happened.
This might sound a little pretentious or made-up but one day in 1981 changed my life. Bored and unemployed I went to the library. I chose a book based on its cover, it was Kafka's The Trial.
When I returned home I turned on the TV and was hypnotised by an OU programme on modern art. I discovered Mondrean and I devoured The Trial. My mind exploded. From those two things I discovered European literature, then Latin America, then Japan. From Mondrean to Duschamps to conceptualism to Freud, to Marx, to Jazz, to John Cage to Kraftwerk, to philosophy, nature, cooking, volunteering, illustrating ... teaching. I built my very own curriculum.
A little while ago it was fashionable to pull students from their comfort zones to speed up independence and creativity. It worked for some...
Rachel W said something very interesting about enjoyment from the subjects that gave security. I like this,, "safety is the ability to prove things that were true." Safety didnt negate her passion though.
Rachel was drawn to security and logic.
Combine a passion for mathematics with our connections with everyday experience and we have a key to unclock the curriculum.
I think about Jonathan 'enduring a process' but if a process can be a key...
Rachel T wondered about school providing the security for a steady career path but how do you unlock creative fulfilment?
WHERE TO GO FROM HERE...
DISCLAIMER: this work is based upon an interpretation of my colleague's thoughts. I could be mistaken but that's part of the fun of exploration.
Rachel T wants us to understand what is truly valuable. A curriculum where the ultimate expression is more than a set of formal qualifications.
Jonathan says that the "status quo values only the average." We must be brave, bold visionaries who will effect the paradigm shift from quantitive to qualitative thinking. *
Our diverse paths have brought us to the same place but with a shared vision of a thoughtful, open curriculum that can embrace experimentation and is free of dogma or transient political goals. A person centred curriculum, agile enough to nourishingly transport us on our self-chosen paths.
Rachel W wants us to recognise and utilise the complexity in order to build a broad and balanced experience.
* I misspelled quantitative. We should embrace our errors without Tippex.
I want to use everything and connect everything. I want everyone to know why. I want everyone to love what they don't know, I want us to need to know.