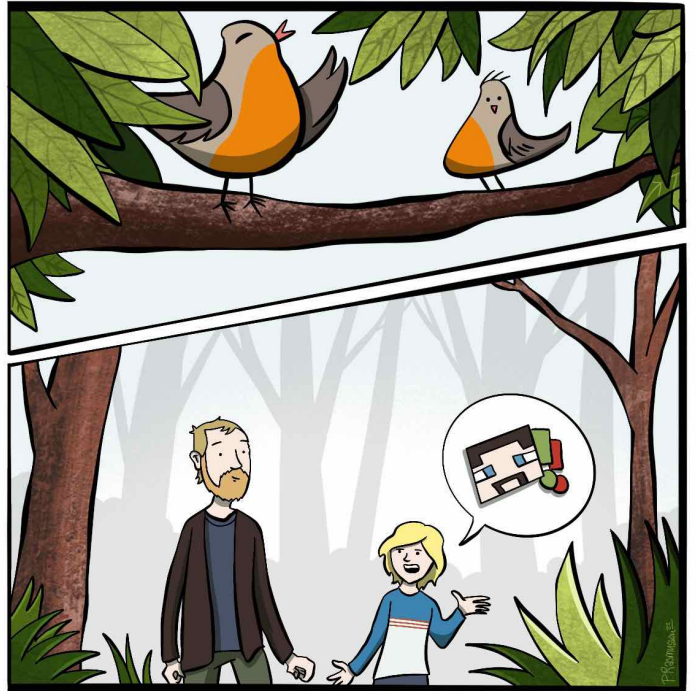
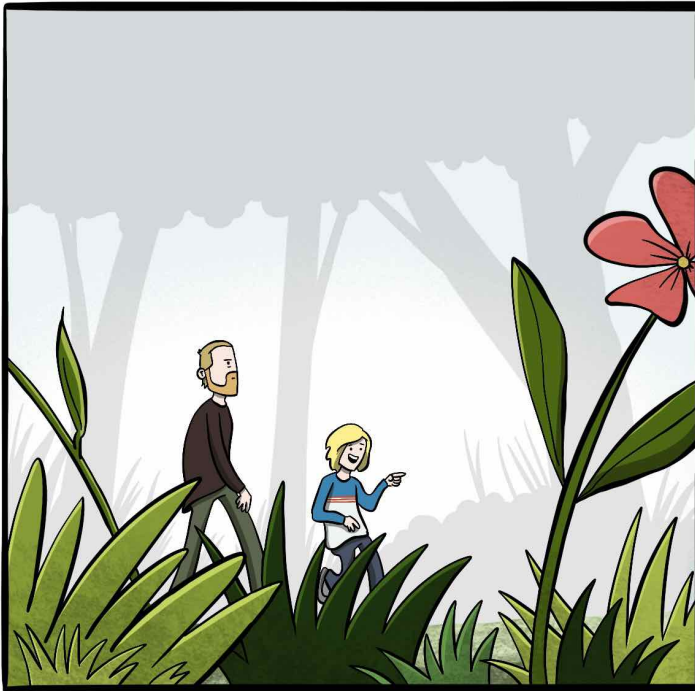


FATHERHOOD ARTHRITICALLY DOODLED

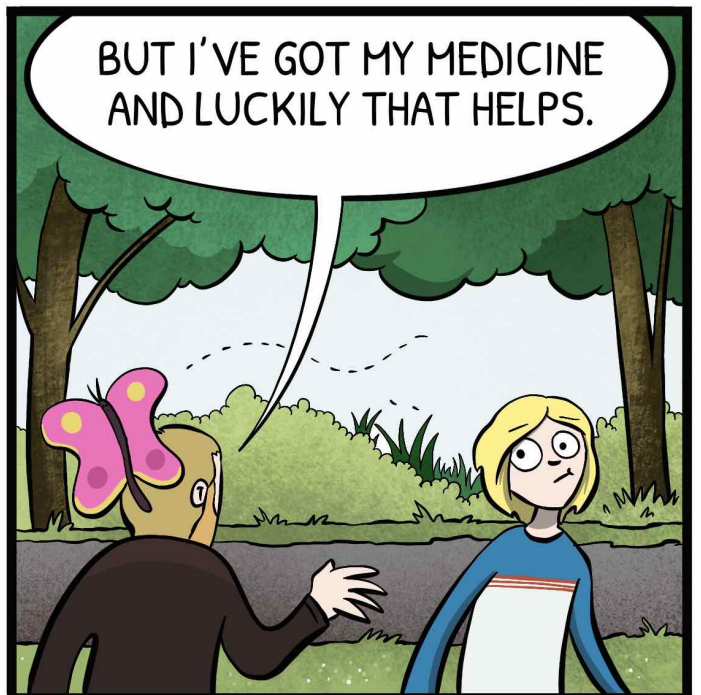
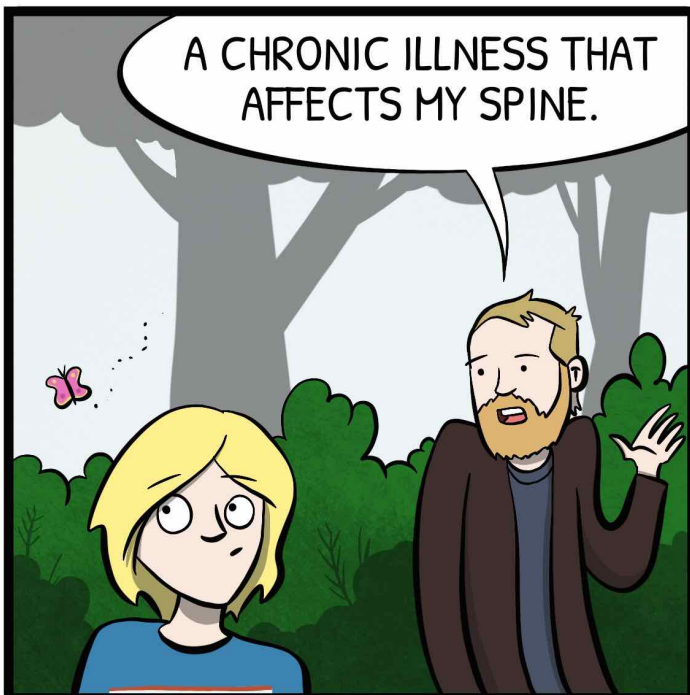
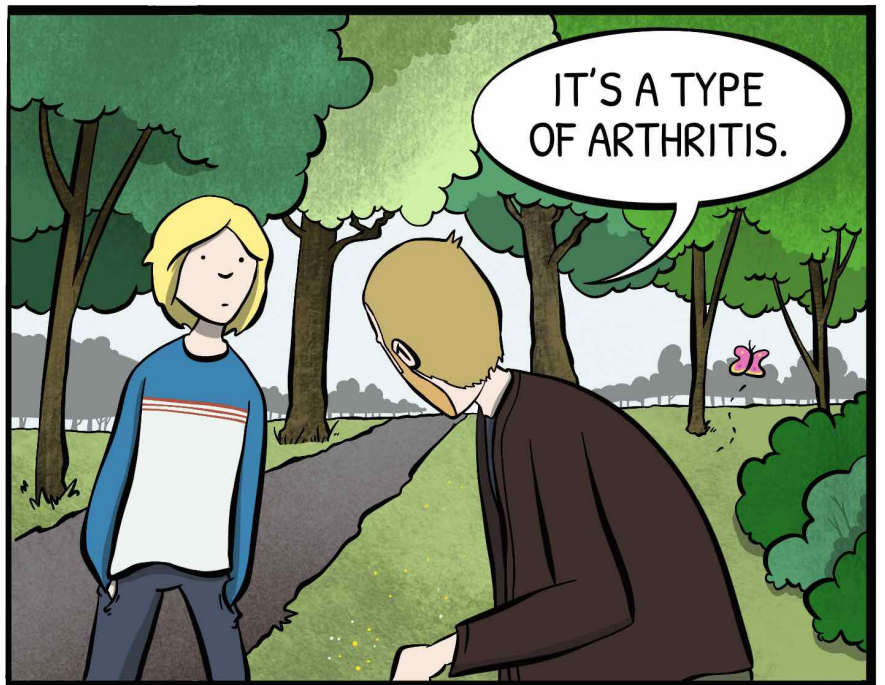
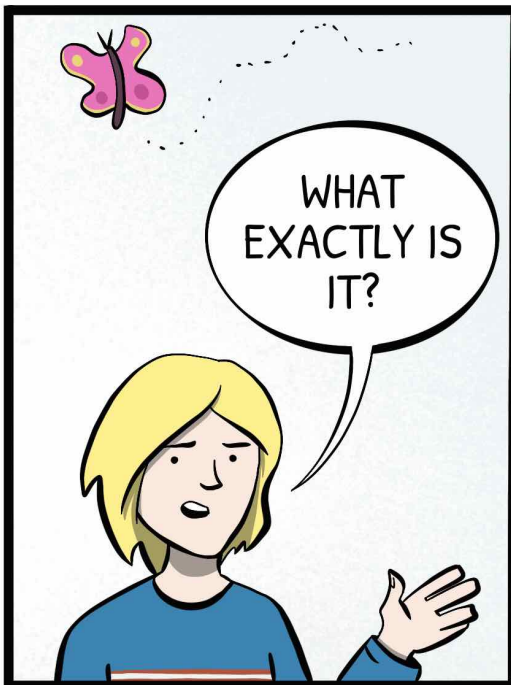
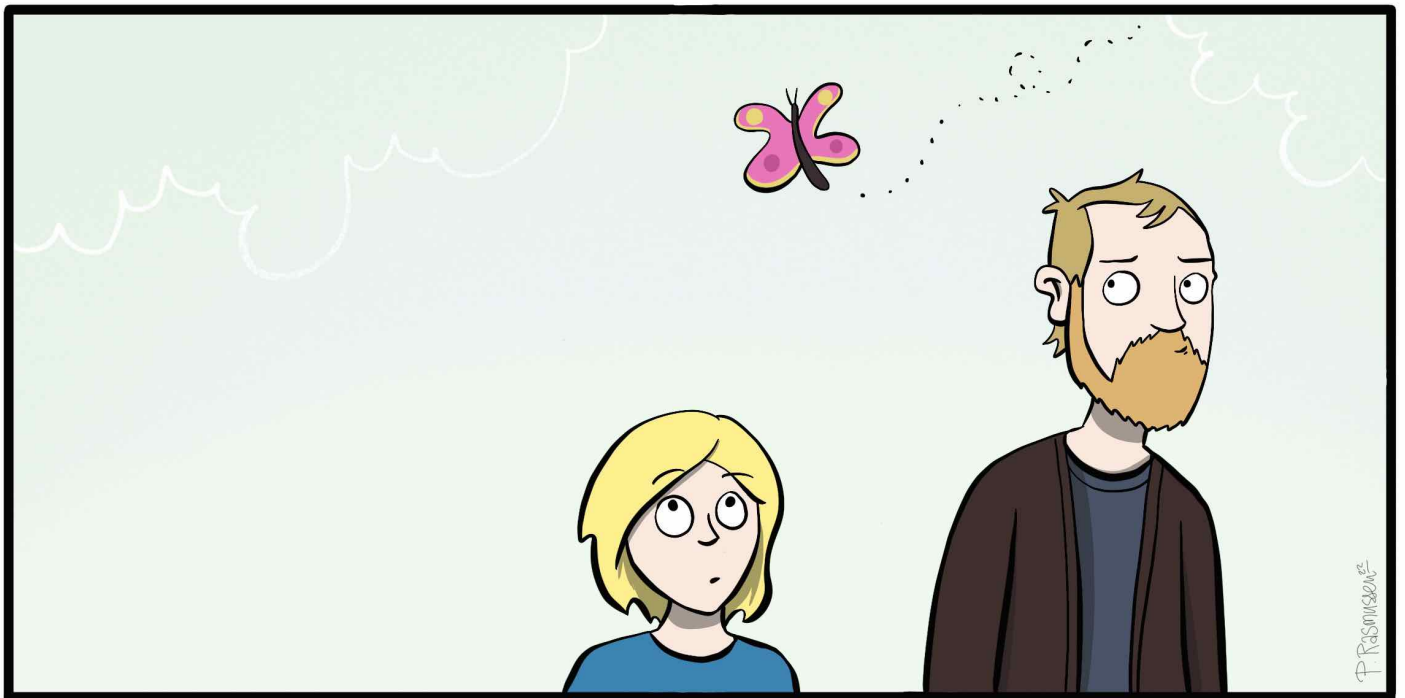
A story about ankylosing spondylitis

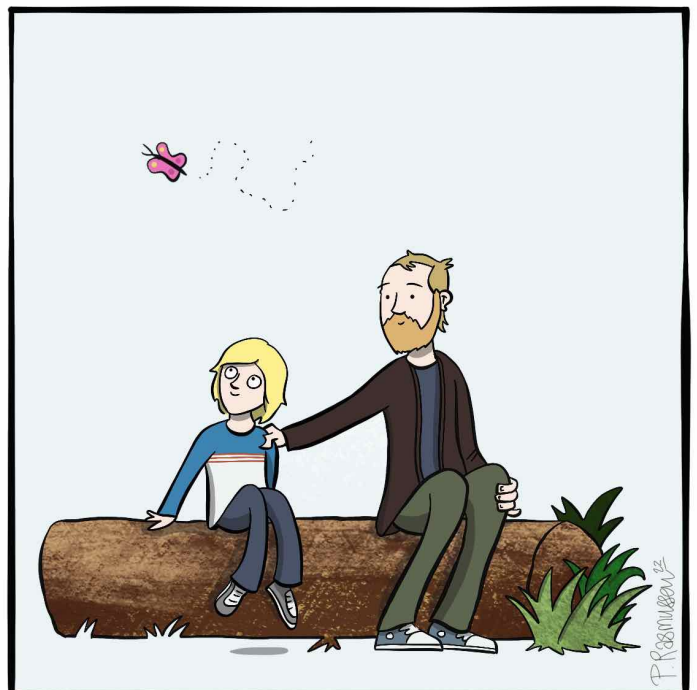
by
Peter Rasmussen











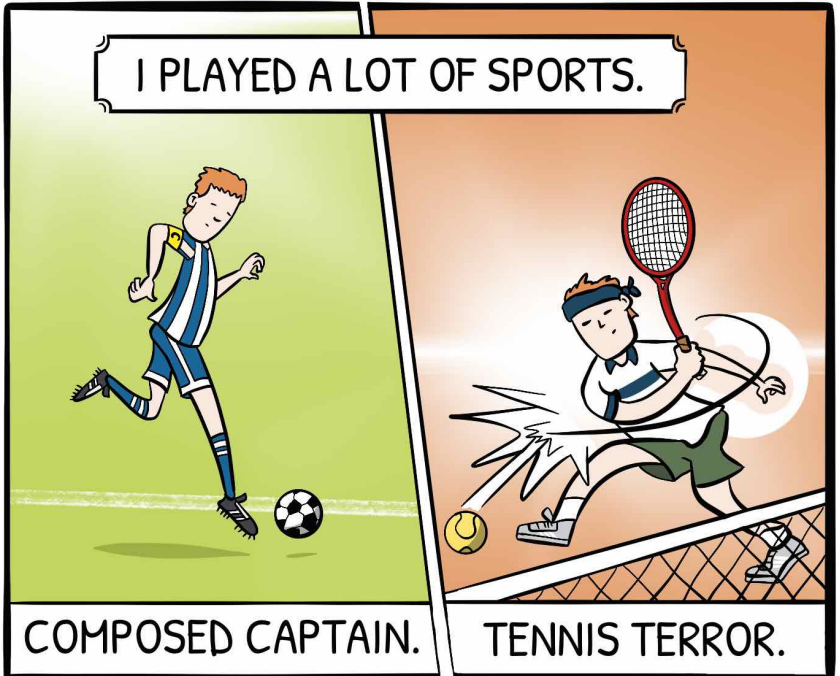
I HAVEN'T ALWAYS SUFFERED FROM MY ARTHRITIS, BUT IT'S BEEN PART OF ME FOR LONGER THAN I THINK.



MY BACK HAS HURT SINCE MY TEENAGE YEARS, BUT WE DIDN'T KNOW THE CAUSE AT THE TIME.



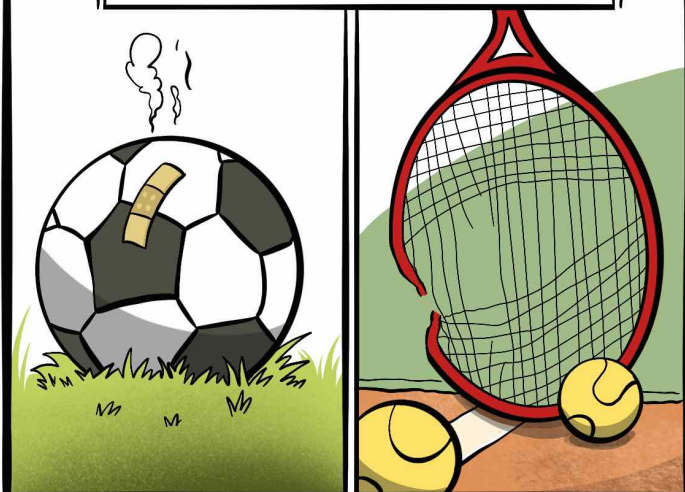
I PLAYED A LOT OF SPORTS.



COMPOSED CAPTAIN.

TENNIS TERROR.

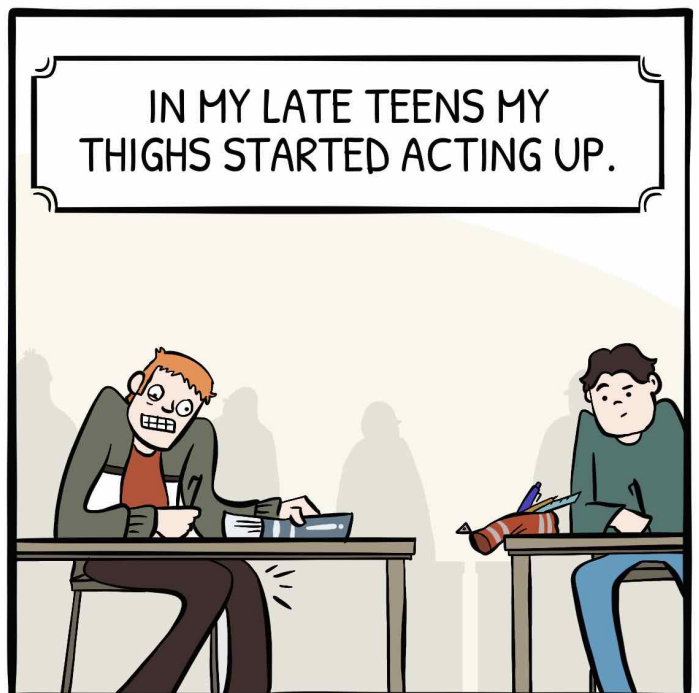
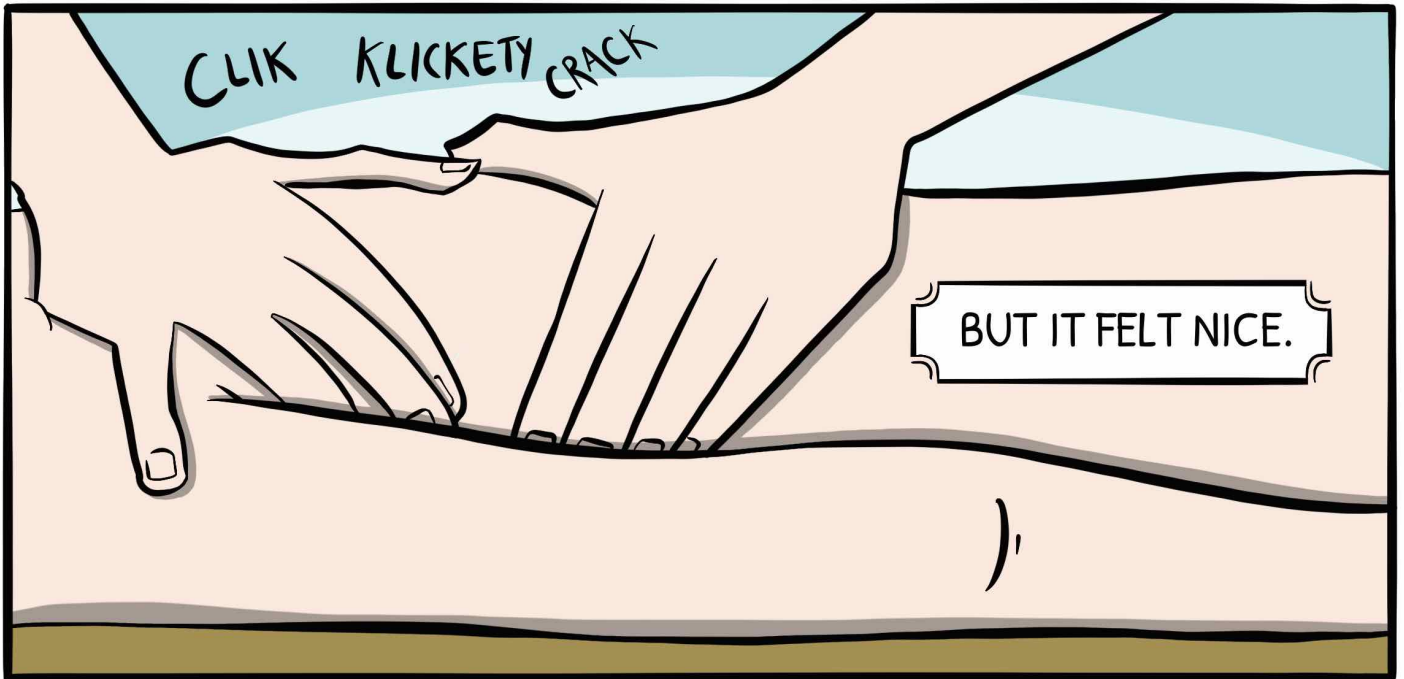
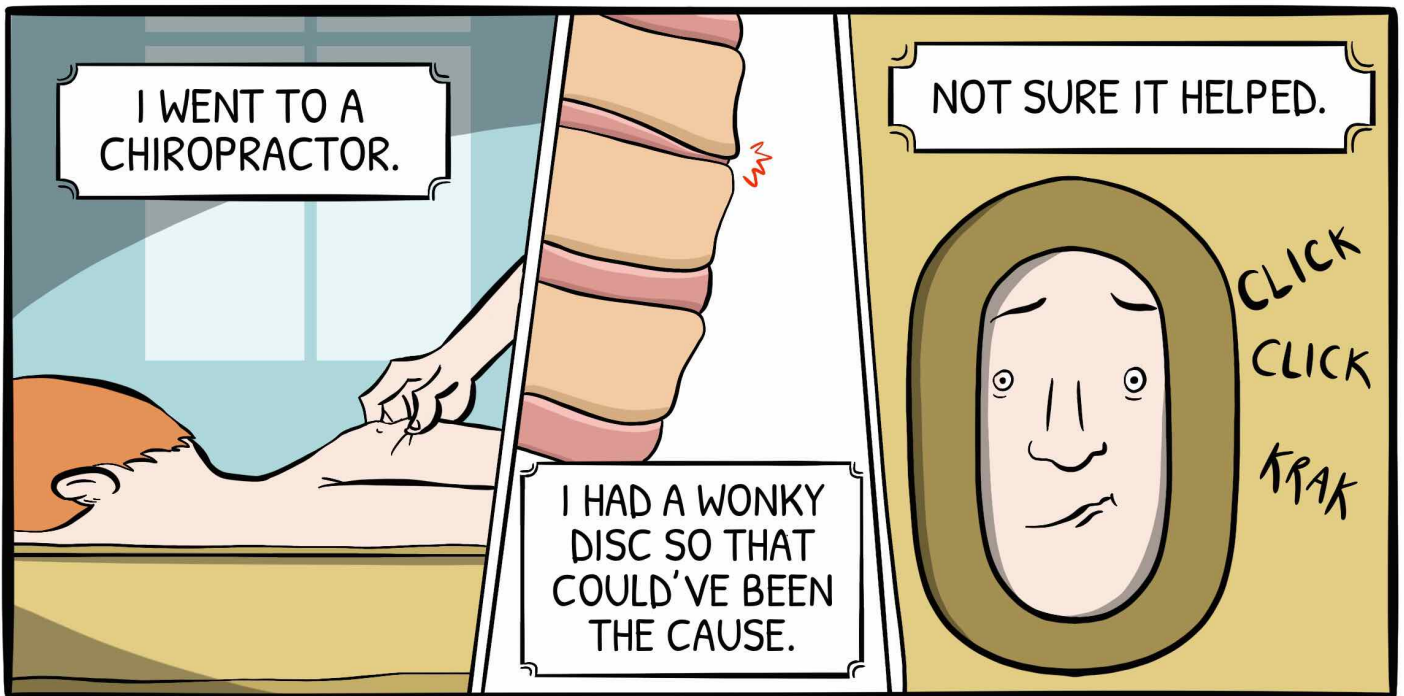
I GUESS WE ALL THOUGHT IT WAS A SPORTS RELATED INJURY.

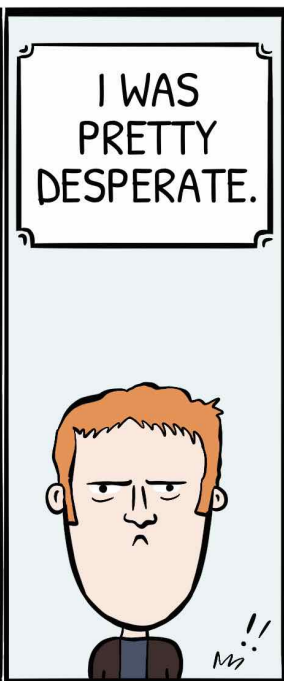
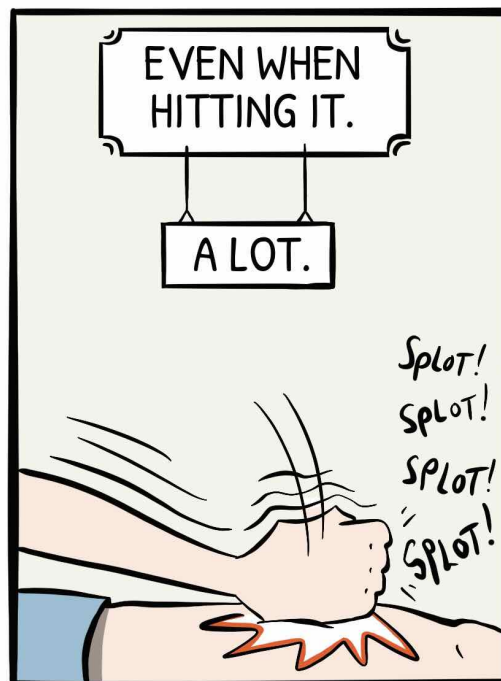
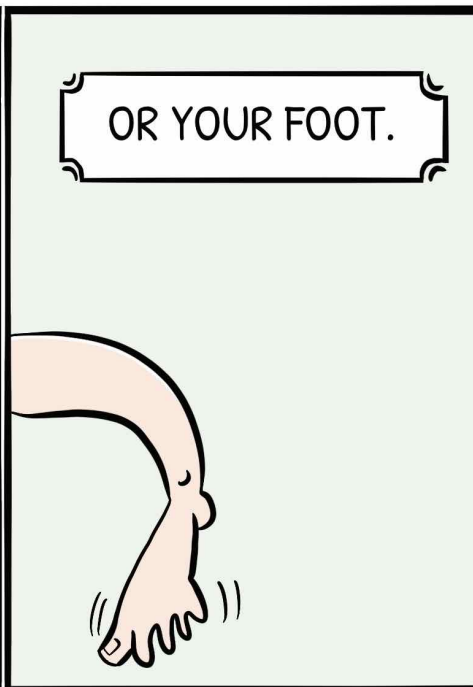


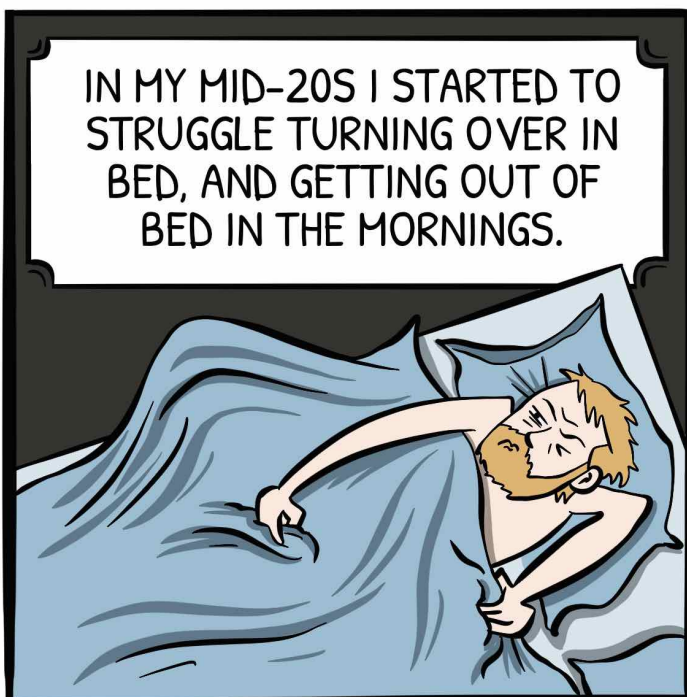
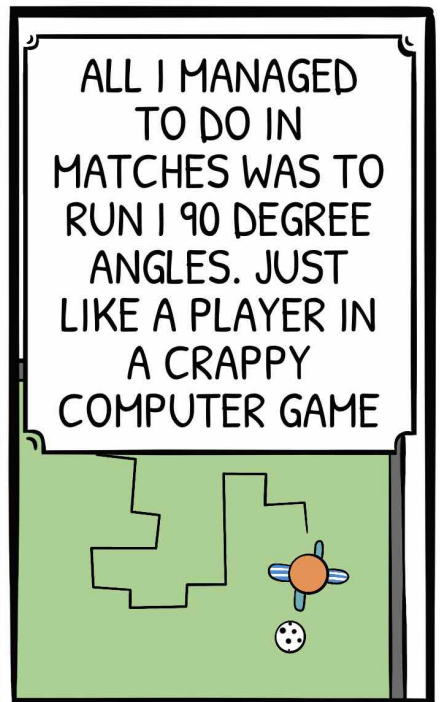
OR MAYBE GROWING PAINS.



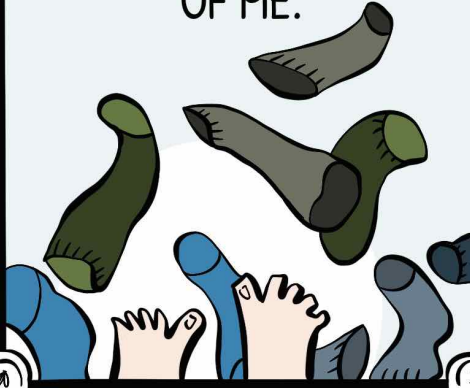
P. Rasmussen







SOUNDS FUNNY WHEN TALKING ABOUT IT BUT IT WAS HORRIBLE. IT FELT LIKE MY FEET REFUSED TO BE PART OF ME.



ANOTHER BONUS WAS STRUGGLING TO SIT UP AFTER LYING DOWN. I HAD TO PULL MYSELF UP BY HOLDING ON TO MY KNEES.



SOME NIGHTS I'D SPEND SITTING UPRIGHT ON OUR SOFA, BECAUSE LYING DOWN WAS TOO PAINFUL.



LONG LONDON COMMUTES WERE AWFUL. SITTING OR STANDING IN THE SAME POSITION FOR LONG PERIODS HURT LIKE HELL.



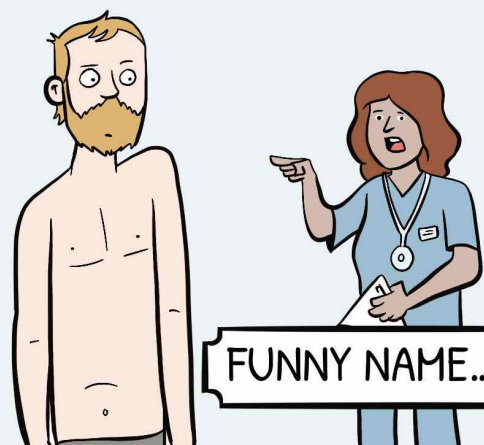
THEN ONE DAY MY WIFE POINTED OUT THAT MY POSTURE WAS VERY WONKY.

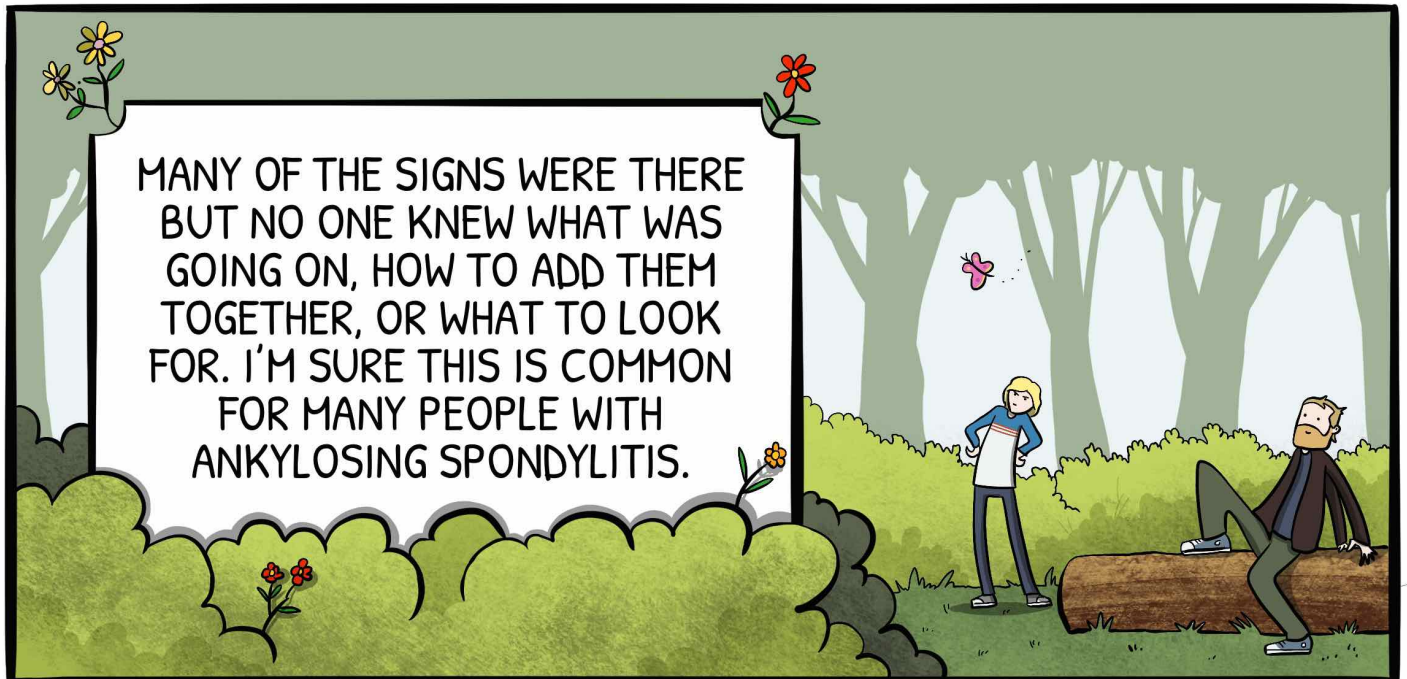
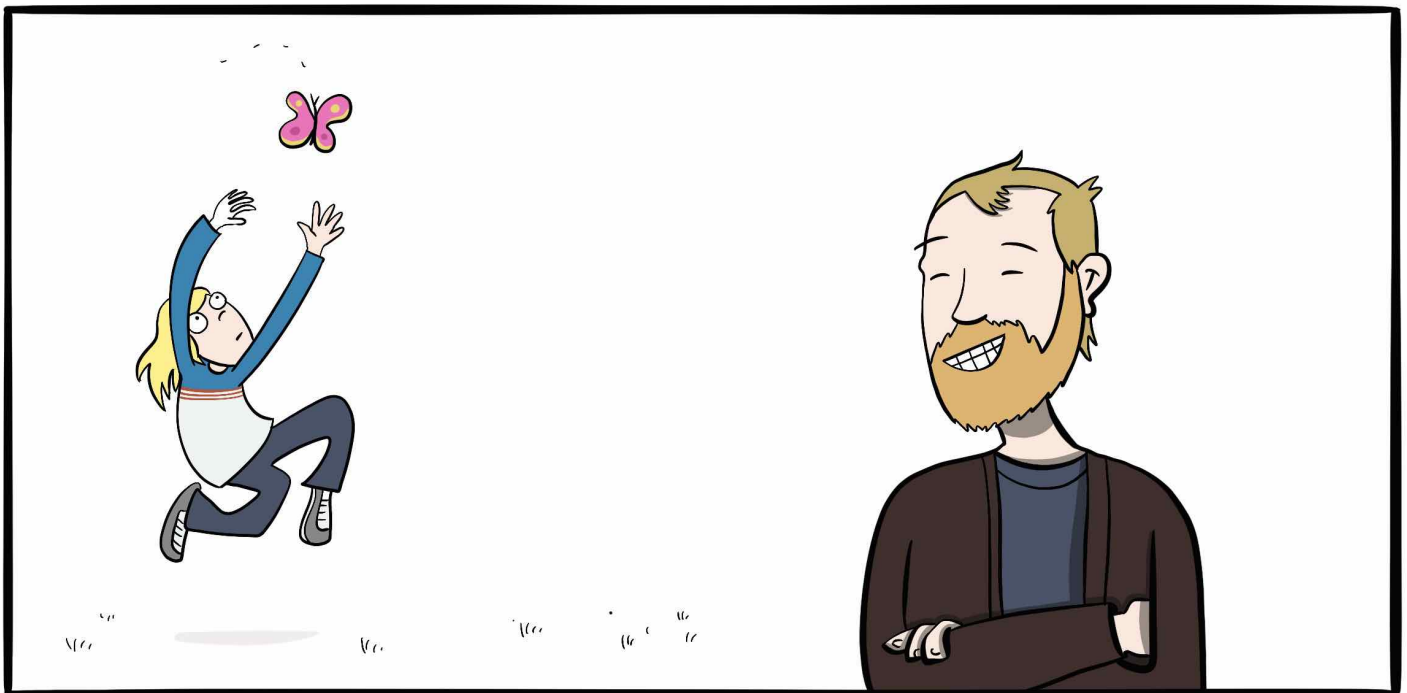


SO I WENT TO SEE THE DOCTOR, WHO INSTANTLY SENT ME TO THE HOSPITAL.



AND THAT WAS IT. I WAS DIAGNOSED WITH THE AUTOIMMUNE DISORDER, ANKYLOSING SPONDYLITIS.

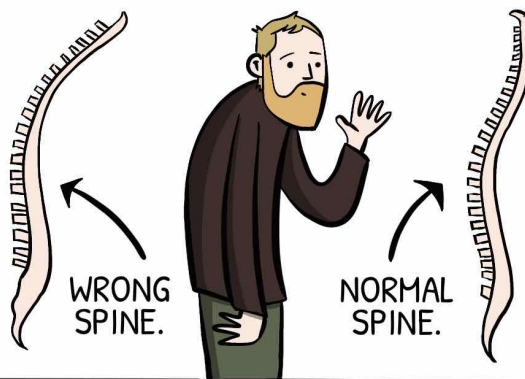




IT HAS AN IMPACT ON MY POSTURE. I HUNCH DUE TO THE BONES IN MY SPINE FUSING TOGETHER. IT MAKES MY SPINE LESS FLEXIBLE LEADING TO SOME SERIOUS HUNCHING.



OVER TIME THIS COULD LEAD TO A COMPLETE FUSION OF THE BONES OF MY SPINE, TURNING IT INTO ONE LONG BONE, RESEMBLING A BAMBOO STALK.



THAT PROCESS HAS OBVIOUSLY ALREADY BEGUN.



PEOPLE USED TO TELL ME I HAD BAD POSTURE. TO STRAIGHTEN MY BACK. THAT IT LOOKS LAZY.



OTHERS WHO KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THE ILLNESS ADVISED ME ON WHAT TO DO. EXPLAINING MY LIMITATIONS TO THEM DIDN'T STOP THE ADVICE COMING.



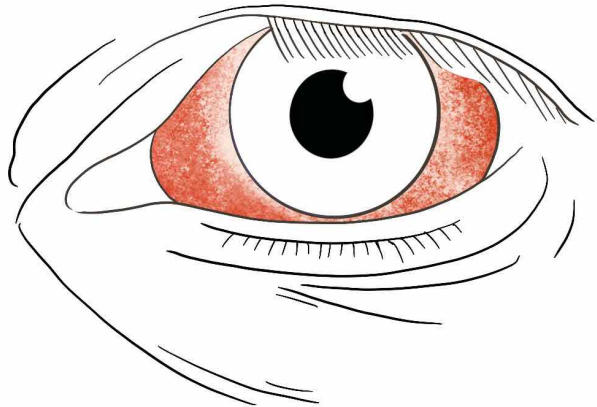
THEY MEAN WELL, OF COURSE, BUT I GUESS IT HIGHLIGHTS HOW HARD IT CAN BE TO EXPLAIN WHAT THE CONDITION IS AND ITS IMPACT ON MY BODY AND MIND. IT'S NOT A NORMAL BACK PAIN. IT'S SO MUCH MORE.



EYE INFLAMMATIONS CAN ALSO OCCUR, GIFTING YOU THE MOST HORRIBLE MIGRAINES.



BUT ALSO A SEXY RED IRIS. IT'S CALLED IRITIS AND NOT PARTICULARLY PLEASANT.



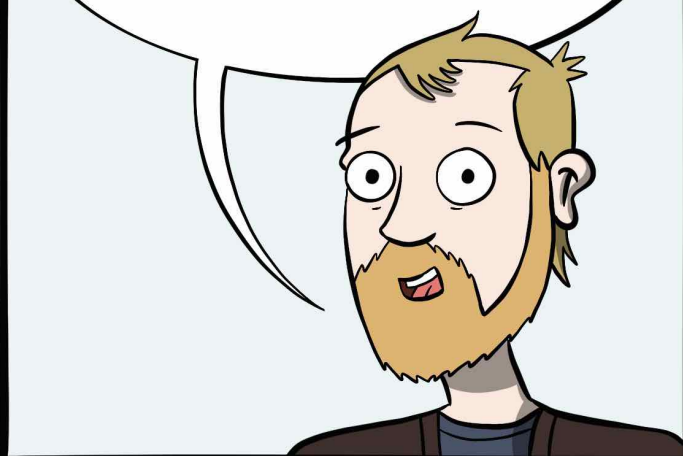
BUT I CAN'T REALLY COMPLAIN.



THE MEDICINE HELPS ALLEVIATE THE PAIN. I'D BE A WRECK WITHOUT IT.



AND I'VE LEARNT TO LIVE WITH IT ALL. YOU HAVE TO AND TO BE HONEST I RARELY THINK ABOUT IT.



IT'S NOT WHO I AM, JUST PART OF ME. BUT, I HOPE MY STORY CAN HELP PEOPLE WHO MAY BE GOING THROUGH SOME OF THE STUFF I DID. HELP THEM RECOGNISE SOME OF THE EARLY SIGNS. FINALLY, I HOPE IT'S SHED SOME LIGHT ON ONE OF THOSE INVISIBLE ILLNESSES MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT.

