

**Embodied.** A memoir comic by Rae Lanzerotti, 2023

This file gives image descriptions, narrative text, and sound descriptions. Endnotes discuss project design, followed by a selection of sounds. (Updated 4/21/23)

Page 01: Embodied

Image Description: Title page for the short graphic memoir comic, Embodied, by Rae Lanzerotti 2023. Black line drawing from pen and pencil. A rectangular banner unfolds. Large script scrawls across the banner, as one letter per page spells out the word: Embodied. Beneath the banner, a large hand holds a pen. Small lines emanate from the pen, indicating movement. Text reads: Embodied. A Memoir Comic. Rae Lanzerotti, 2023.

**Narration: Hey this is Rae, a low vision artist! This comic is called Embodied. In hindsight, unlooked for change appears and disappears. We can feel small inner movements in any moment. This is a sketch of my hand holding a pen.** [sound: page turn]

Page 02: A dot

Image Description: A large hand fills the page, holding a pen. There's a newly drawn, slightly smudged dot on the page below the pen. Black line drawing.

**Narration: My hand holds a pen, and I make a dot on the page where there wasn't one before.** [sound: page turn]

Page 03: A line

Image Description: A small hand holds the pen, drawing the simple outline of a larger hand. Black line drawing.

**Narration: Now I turn the dot into a curved line. I am starting to create the shape of a person's hand.** [sound: page turn]

Page 04: Wiggle

Image Description: A large right foot, without a shoe or sock, fills the page. The outline of each of the toes is distinct. The foot appears to belong to

someone at rest, with heel on the earth and toes pointing toward the sky.  
Black line drawing.

**Narration: Next, I wiggle the line shape into a foot. This is the main character's foot. In this story, the main character is me and it also could be you.** [sound: page turn]

Page 05: Rest

Image Description: A person reclines on their back. They're depicted in outline from the waist up, without detail or specific features. The dark surface beneath them is soft and cushions their head.

**Narration: The line we're drawing becomes a person lying on their back. They are in a posture of rest. Notice in your imagination where you or I might be lying down. How does it feel?** [sound: page turn]

Page 06: Crumple

Image Description: Drawn in jagged angles with tension, a hand clenches paper into a crushed ball. This hand is either emerging from or sinking into being covered by scribbled, tight dark lines.

**Narration: And... as we start to get comfortable, here comes change... inevitably, something happens in our story.**

**How does unwanted change feel? How does it sound?**

**In this story, a change wave hits. It's rough. It's jagged.**

**During the early months of the covid pandemic, I lose vision.**

**My sight goes blurry then flashy then blobby then dark.**

**Here, a clenched fist crumples paper into a ball.**

[sound: crumpling!] [sound: page turn]

Page 07: Collapse

Image Description: A small human figure, drawn in a loose outline of their full body, lies prone. The floor, and the earth below the floor, made with a heavily scribbled black line, indicate downward pull, weightiness, and collapse.

**Narration: After a first eye surgery, I must stay face-down for weeks. Face down all day and night. We're all sheltering in place, and no one can visit. We're all stopped. I stay prone. Even here, the person we've drawn now lies face-down on the floor. [sound: page turn]**

Page 08: Dissolve

Image Description: A loose outlined shape of a low mountain range or distant landscape, a body becoming less distinct as the individual person loses solidity and cocoons or dissolves into earth.

**Narration: I am uncertain and grieving: lost vision and work and connection. Also, the collective ruptures. The people we miss. The care we miss. This requires surrender. The body becomes the ground. [sound: page turn]**

Page 09: Revive

Image Description: This loose, rippling, horizontal shape, a person's body or an amoebic landscape without specific features begins to emanate movement and sound. The movement goes down toward the earth and up into the sky, represented by sequential curved lines pulsing from the center.

**Narration: And yet, even when we're locked down and lose so much, movement finds us again. Movement finds me! It finds me through songs. Songs and audio messages are a lifeline after my first eye surgery. Friends record nature sounds, stories, meditations, and even a nightly podcast. The body begins to ripple and revive. [sound: page turn]**

Page 10: Heal

Image Description: In this black line drawing against a translucent background, an undulating form is becoming distinct from earth. Light lines move skyward and heavier water lines ripple downward. Above left, a star emanating radiant lines. Above right, a small circle moon.

**Narration: As we begin to revive, our story changes direction. It is not identical. Our body heals in undulating lines. The next page flips over.**  
[sound: page turn]

Page 11: Go, go, go!

Image Description: A spiral shape emerges from a prone figure. The spiral line makes differentiation inside and outside the empty form, like the start of a shell or unwinding yarn. The black line drawing merges a prone figure with a figure shifting into a rounded posture.

**Narration: The inside of the figure we've drawn is empty yet full of potential. Go... go... go!** [sound: page turn]

Page 12: Sh, sh, sh

Image Description: Outline of a person curled into a curved shape, forehead rested on the floor and rounded back.

**Narration: And I am drawing myself. We find our way into the curved shape of a ball, quietly resting head to earth.** [sound: page turn]

Page 13: Steady

Image Description: Black line art of a person lying on their back, hands resting on bent-in knees. A dark flowing line connects downward along the settling surface of their back.

**Narration: Facing upward again, I lie on my back, with knees diagonal to chest. The outside line and boundary of the body is stabilizing. Steady.** [sound: page turn]

Page 14: Lift

Image Description: Black line drawing of a supine person stretching as they reach and lift their arms and legs upward.

**Narration: I start to stretch long lines of arms and legs up toward the sky. My hands and feet reach into the space above and the space beyond. Lifting.** [sound: page turn]

## Page 15: Change

Image Description: Black line drawing of a person's outline, as they pause on hands and knees.

**Narration: In time, we kneel on hands and knees in an oblong shape that can transform into many possibilities. The figure is still. Pausing. Reorienting for change. We can feel lots of small, inner movements. Embodied.** [sound: snap!] [sound: page turn]

## Page 16: Draw

Image Description: A loosely sketched hand holds a pencil, On the page there's a new self-portrait, a double image in penciled outline of the artist standing. How would you record, draw or narrate yourself in a memoir comic?

**Narration: What goes on the next page? A dot becoming a wiggly line? A friend reaching out? What is moving in you? This comic is called Embodied. And this is a self-portrait.** [sound: page turn] [sound: snap!]

A few endnotes about the design of Embodied.

Embodied is an audiographic, memoir comic of change and adaptation. The artist, that's me, encourages the reader, that's maybe you, to follow the unfolding process narrative. And so, I also invite you to become an artist and main character. Here's how it works: In the sound recording, process narration moves the listener forward in time by pacing events, bringing autobiographical details and image descriptions into the storyline. The reader can interact with the drawings in any direction. Without text, high contrast images in a symbolic, minimalist style use medium heavy black lines to emphasize body postures and shapes. Separate text mirrors the process narration. In the physical comic, pages unfold into a small accordion-fold 'zine.

Raised lines and braille add to the tactile experience of holding the comic, and a QR code links to my website with audio, images, and text as well as more details about the project.

Story, art, audio, design by me, Rae Lanzerotti, a low vision artist and somatic teacher. Thank you, Accessible Comics Collective, jurors and funders of the 2022 Accessible Comics Competition. Love and gratitude to Carol and many friends who set sounds and listened.

This is a selection of sounds and friends' messages, from when I was face down during recovery after eye surgery: ukulele, friend singing: "me-me-me, hello it's me, I've been wondering how you're doing after surgery, hello, can you hear me? I'm in California dreaming about how things used to be... before covid"; drum solo; sounds of birds chirping, with friend saying, "I'm sending you a little nature to keep you calm... including the bullfrog"; friend saying, "and for all of your sight, your outer sight and your inner sight which has had a lot of time to sharpen"; ukulele.

R Lanzerotti, 2023