



Embodied. A memoir comic by Rae Lanzerotti, 2023. This text includes full narration, process notes, and sound description.

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.

[page turn]

My hand holds a pen, and I make a dot on the page where there wasn't one before.

[page turn]

Now I turn the dot into a curved line. I am starting to create the shape of a person's hand. My smaller hand sketches the outline of a bigger hand.

[page turn]

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.

[page turn]

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?

[page turn]

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.

[crumpling!] [page turn]

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.

[page turn]

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.

[page turn]

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.

[page turn]

As we begin to revive, our story changes direction. It is not identical. Our body heals in undulating lines. The next page flips over.

[page turn]

The inside of the figure we've drawn is empty yet full of potential. Go... go... go!

[page turn]



And I am drawing myself. We find our way into the curved shape of a ball, quietly resting head to earth.

[page turn]

Facing upward again, I lie on my back, with knees diagonal to chest. The outside line and boundary of the body is stabilizing. Steady.

[page turn]

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.

[page turn]

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.

[snap!] [page turn]

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.

[page turn] [snap!]

Endnotes:

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,

QR code links to website audio.



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.

Sounds:

Bonus! Sounds I heard in recovery: 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.