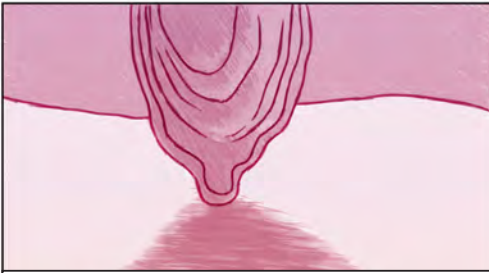




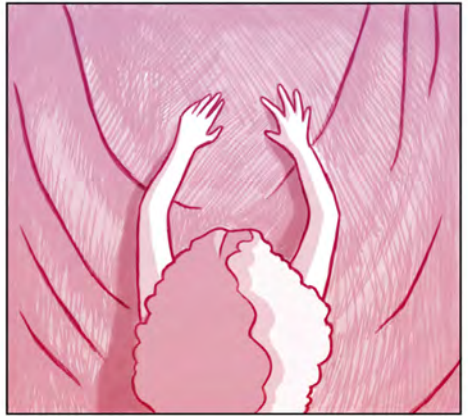
# The Oyster

Mathilde Heu & Francis Ponge

The oyster, about as big as a fair-sized pebble, is rougher, less evenly colored, brightly whitish.



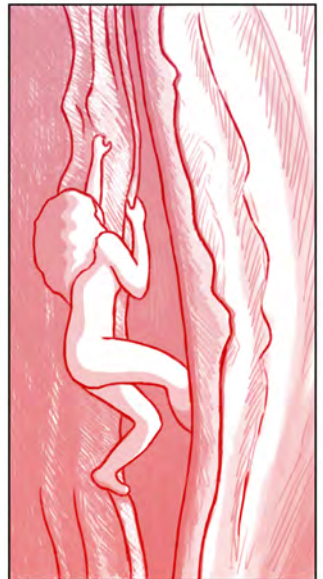
It is a world stubbornly closed. Yet it can be opened: one must hold it in a cloth, use a dull jagged knife, and try more than once.

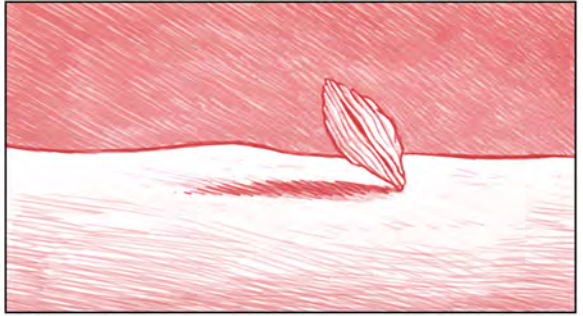


Avid fingers get cut, nails get chipped: a rough job.

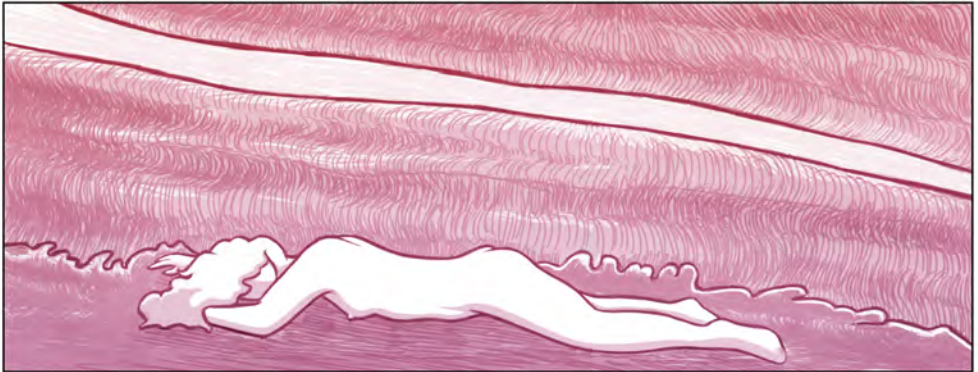


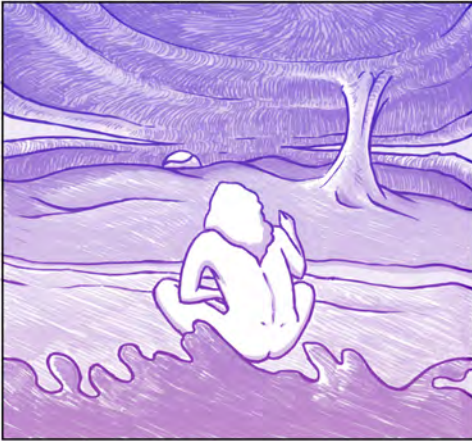
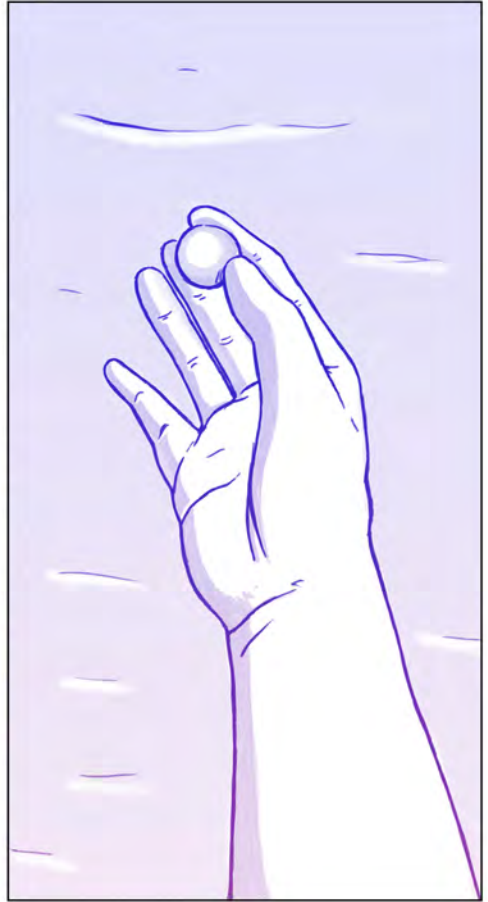
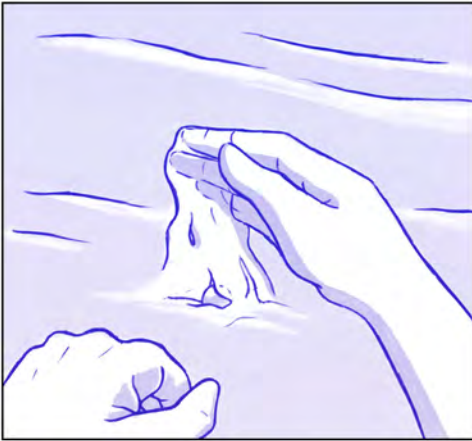
The repeated prying-s mark its cover with rings, like haloes.





Inside one finds a whole world, to  
eat and drink:

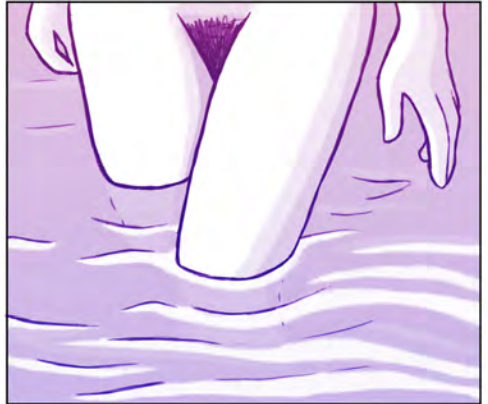
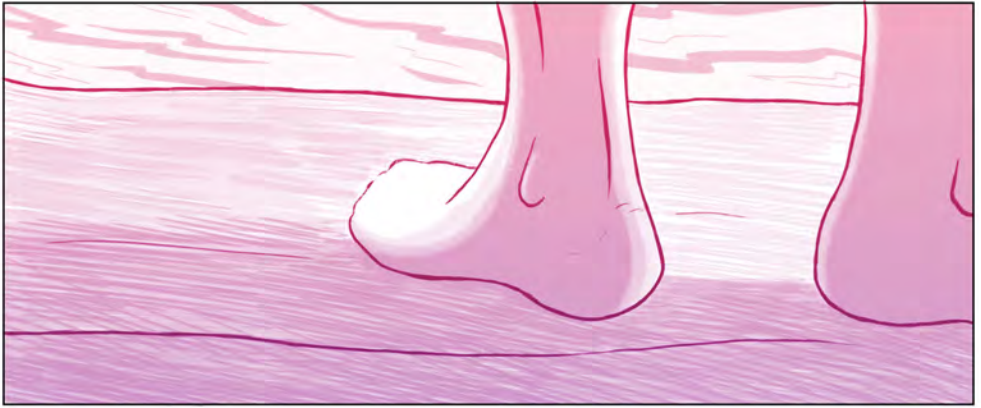




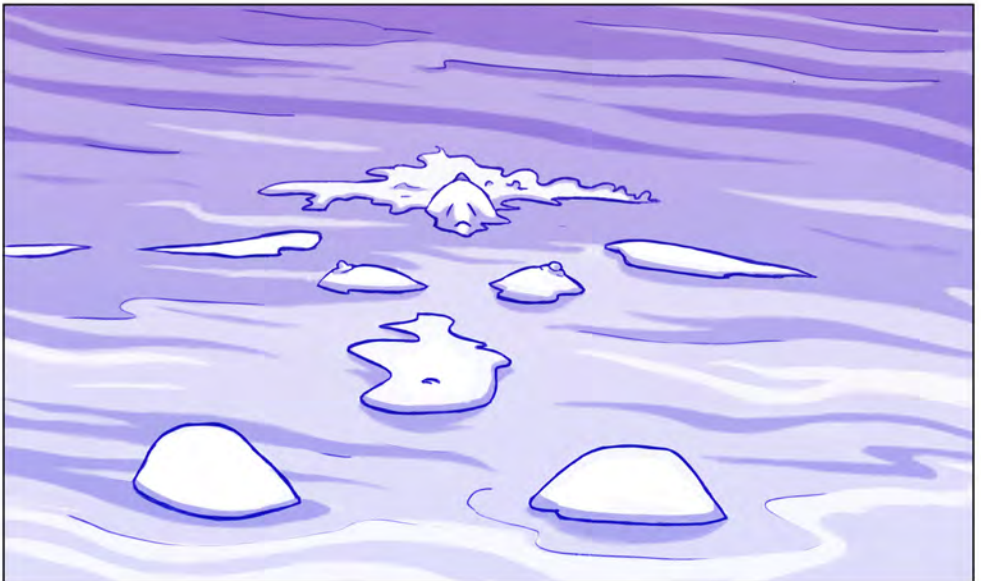
under a firmament (properly speaking) of nacre,



the skies above collapse on the skies below,

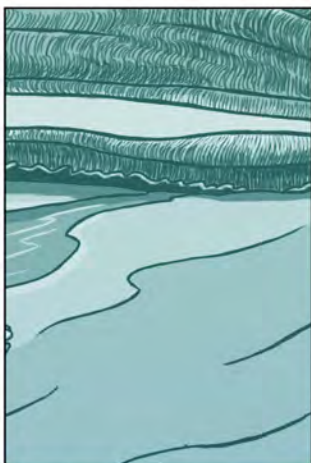
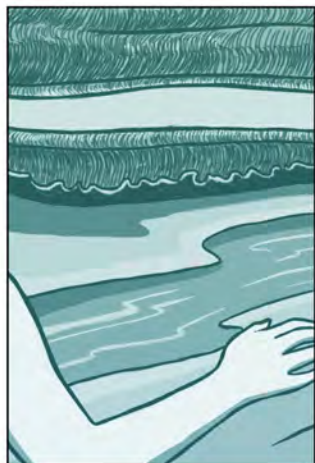


forming nothing but a puddle,





a viscous greenish blob that eibs and flows on sight and smell, fringed with blackish lace along the edge.



Once in a rare while, a globule pearls in its nacre throat, with which one instantly seeks to adorn oneself.



Artwork: Mathilde Heu  
Text: 'The Oyster', extract from 'The Voice of Things'  
by Francis Ponge, translated by Beth Archer.