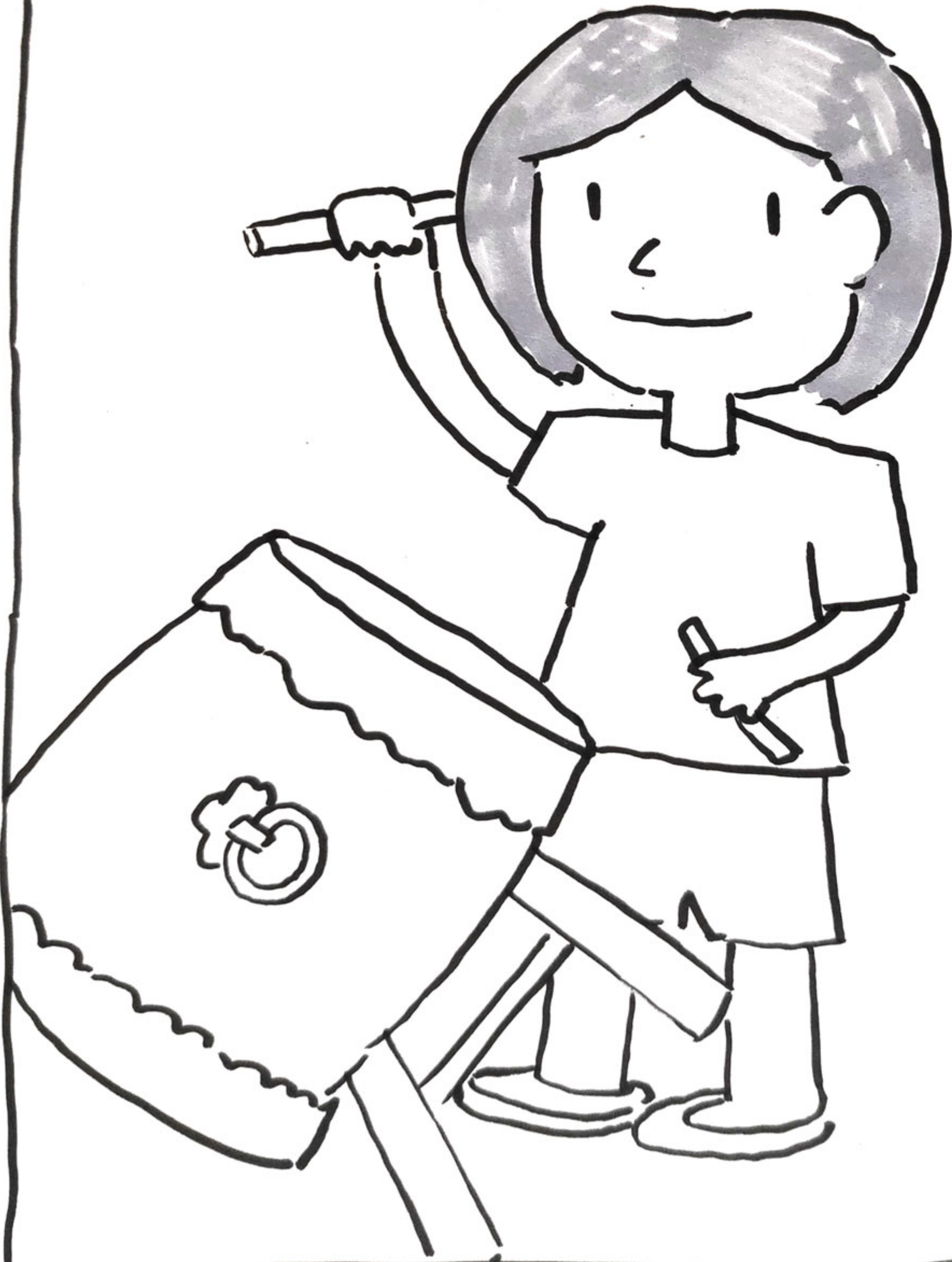
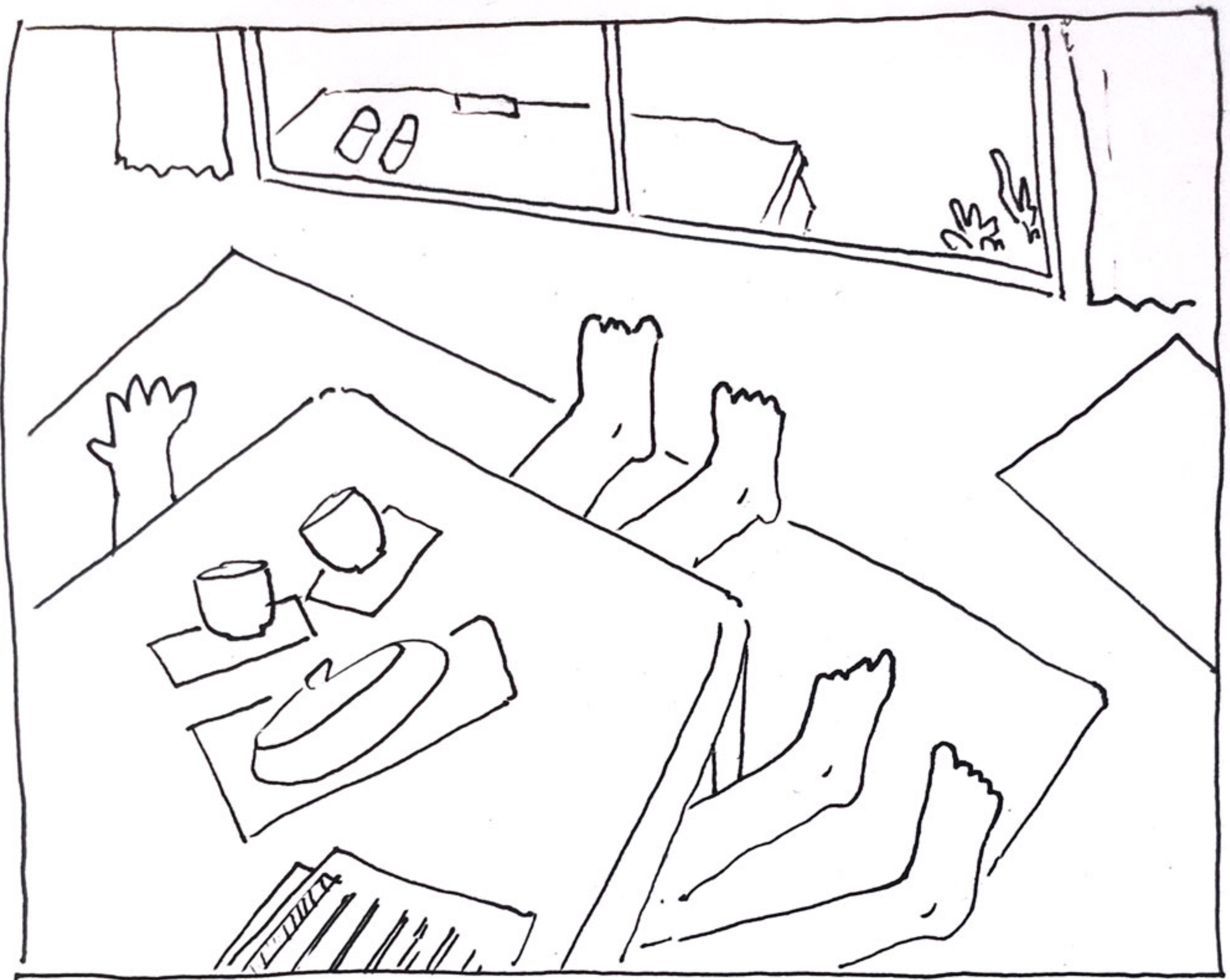


AKIHA





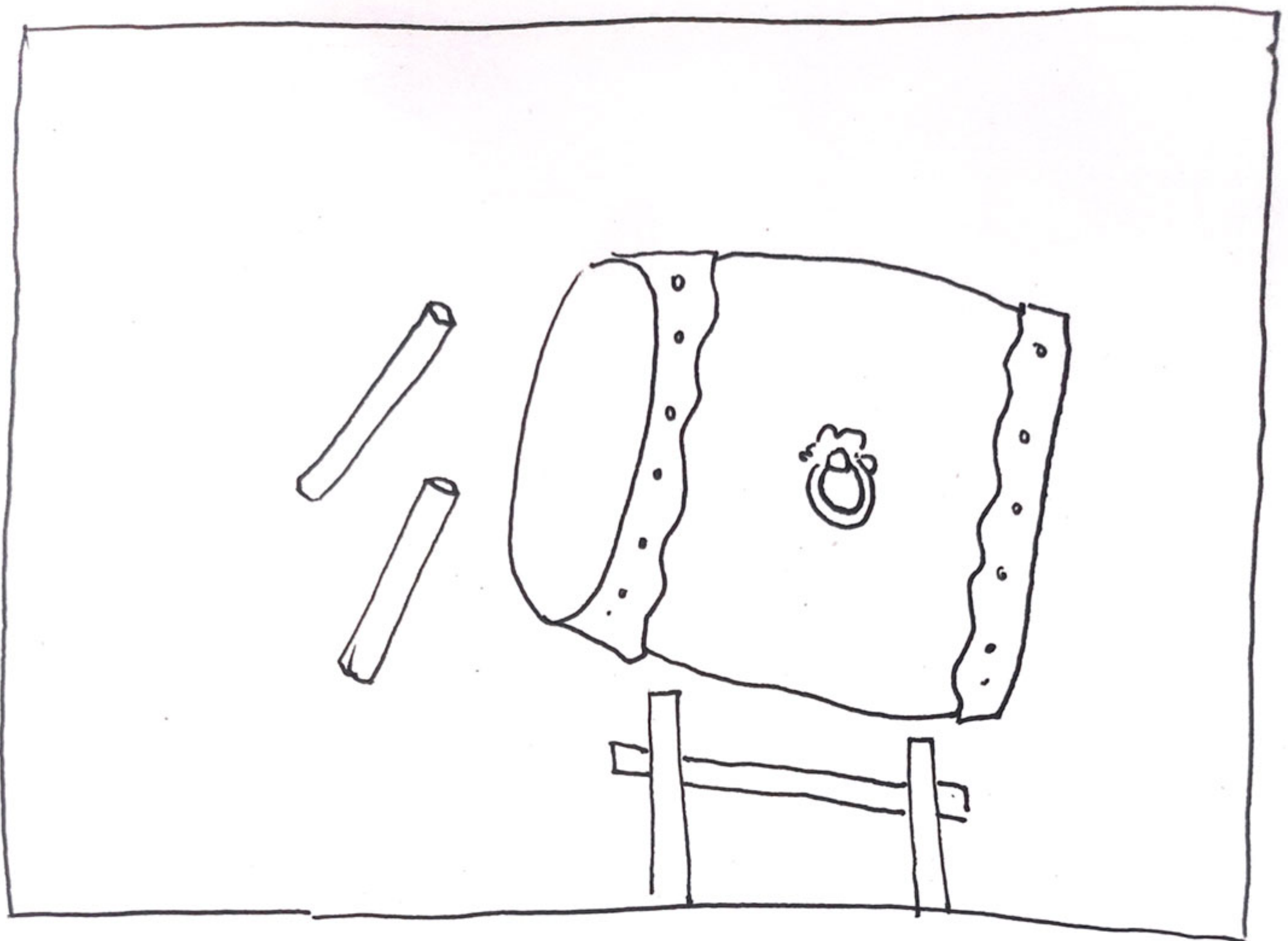
## CHAPTER ONE

Akiha and I are playing Hide and Seek at my grandmother's house. It is during summer and we try running around the house looking for good hiding spots, while grandfather looks for us. We find spots like under the coffee table as well as a closet space between my room and my grandfather's room. While hiding, my friend Akiha is about to sneeze and we both panic. She manages to at first but covering it up lets out a small sneeze.



## CHAPTER TWO

While at school, Akiba had a classmate that took a really sharp pencil and stabbed her in the face. Even after it healed there is a small dark spot visible on the cheek. Akiba told the teacher what happened and was sent to the nurse's office to have it taken care of. All they did was put a bandaid over it.



### CHAPTER THREE

Akiha's family was involved in traditional drumming. Her mum gives traditional Japanese drum (Taiko) lessons to other neighbourhood children. I got to join them for a lesson and learnt that it was much harder than it looks.

Every time there is a summer festival Akiha's family supplies the drums and also performs them at the summer Obon festival.



## CHAPTER FOUR

When I was about 18, I went back to my hometown for the summer again. We lost contact for a long time and I wanted to see how Akiba was doing.

It was easy to find their house and Akiba's mum opened the door. It seemed Akiba was not

home but was doing a job at a Pachinko Parlor. We spoke about how Akiba was doing

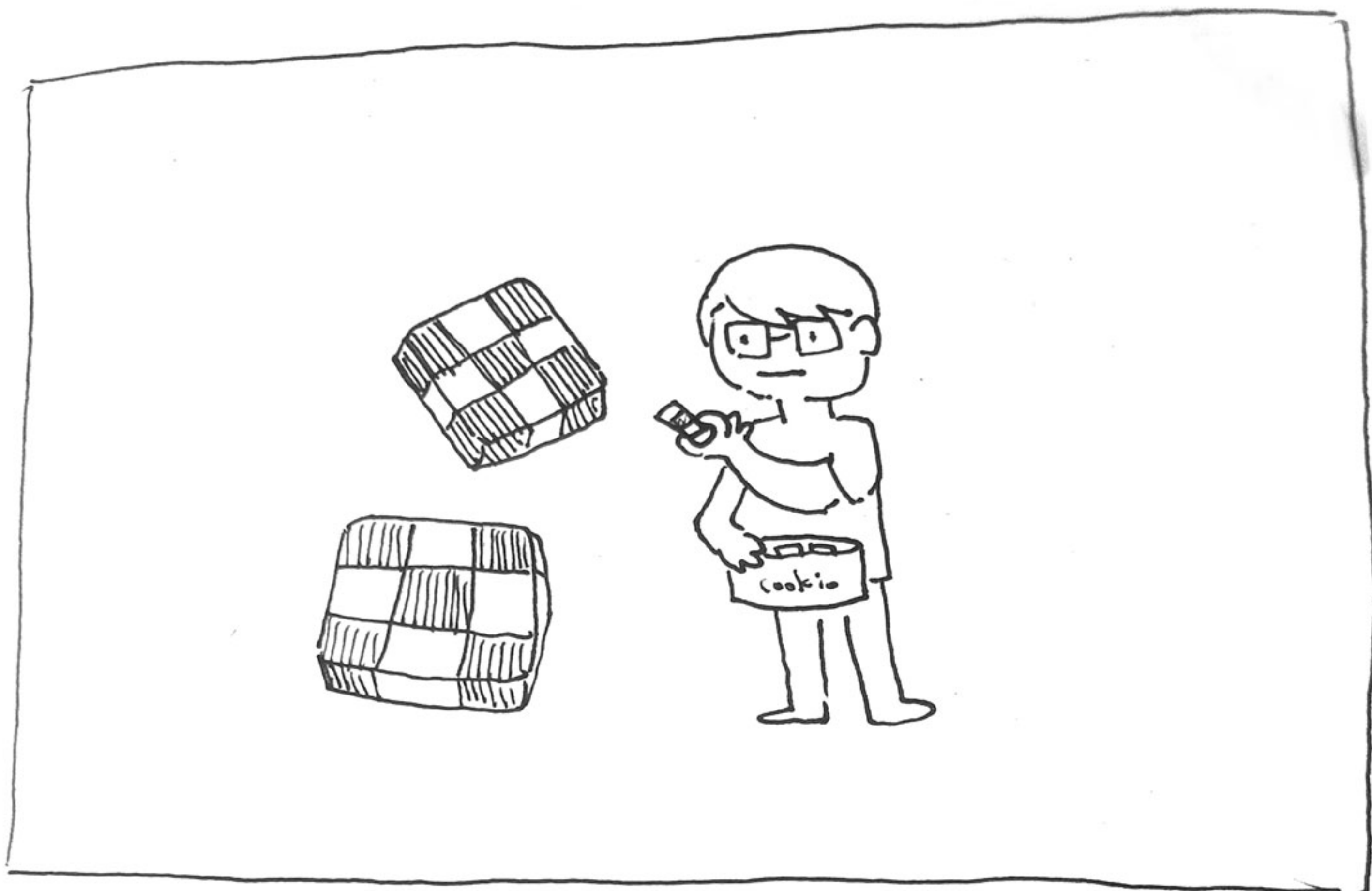
and I went home, not being able to see

her for the rest of the summer.



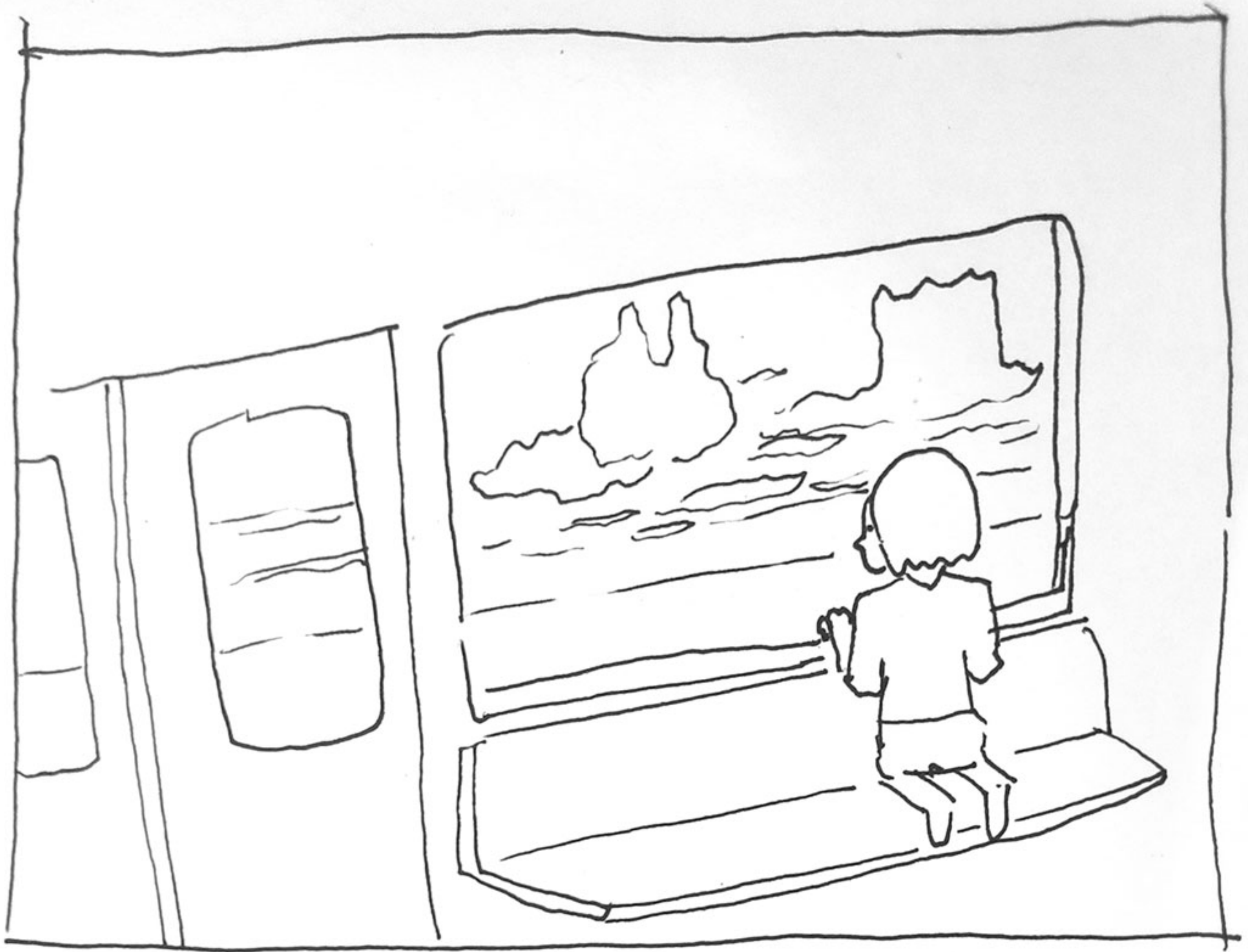
## CHAPTER FIVE

Akiha has a black cat named ji ji, it was named after a fictional cat from a Ghibli animation. when Akiha is alone, she plays and takes care of her cat ji ji, she even teaches him tricks like shaking their paw or sitting down to get treats. when Akiha plays with her black cat, the world around her becomes a bit more quiet for a small time.



## CHAPTER SIX

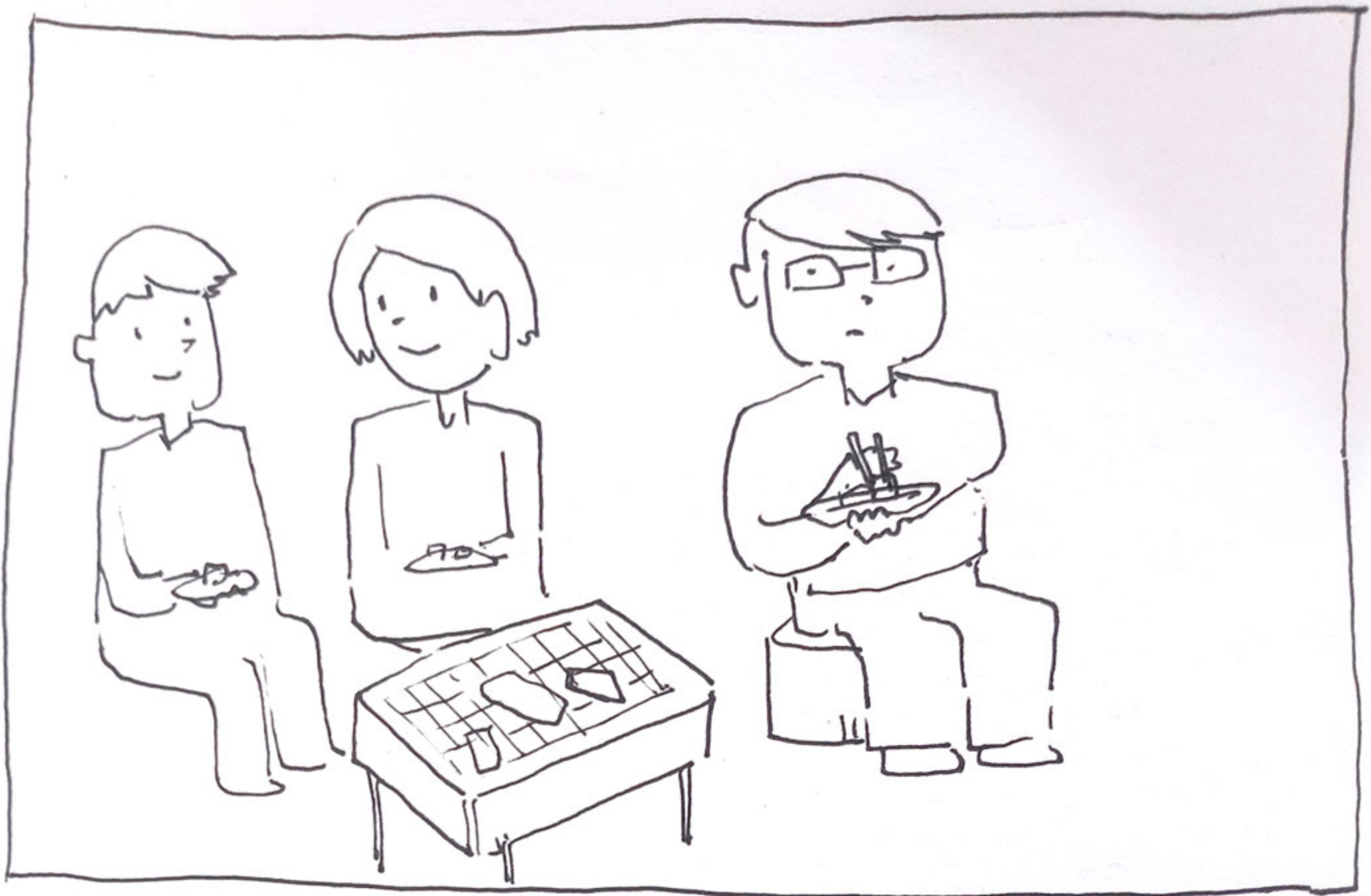
When ever I see butter cookies with a checkered pattern, I would always think of Akiha. It was one of the final summers we played together and I was leaving to the airport. She had baked me some butter cookies as a farewell gift and cried as I had to leave to go back to Malaysia. Ever since then we had slowly drifted apart and didn't get to speak to each other again.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

while Akiha is on a school trip, they are all in the train to go camping in the mountains. The scenery outside is of the mountains on one side while the other side is the view of the ocean. Across the ocean there are large clouds. Akiha points towards one of the clouds and says. "That cloud looks like a floating castle!"





## CHAPTER EIGHT

The last time I ever saw Akiha was at a family BBQ and Akiha had invited her new boyfriend. I enjoyed my BBQ but I didn't really have a chance to talk to Akiha as much anymore. Akiha seemed happy and I was really happy for her too. It was after that where I felt that we are going our separate ways and I have not met or seen her for over 10 years or so, I assume that they are happily living their life somewhere in the city.



by Ryu  
2022