



by John Akre

①

13

was a
big year
for me.



Wichita

② I had been 13 for only
a few days when we

moved from
a town of
less than
5,000
inhabitants
to a city of
almost 70,000
in the middle
of the school year.

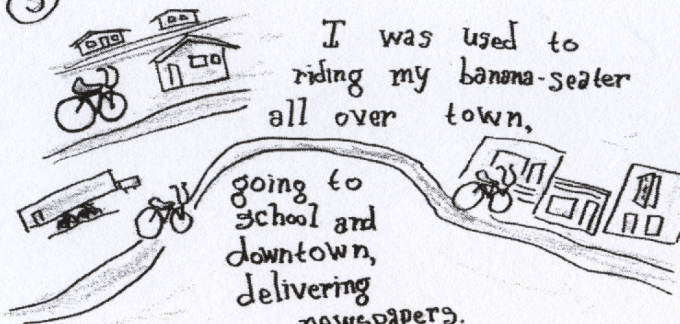
"Powell"

"Billings"

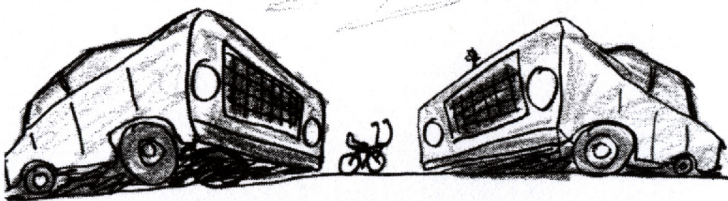
③

I was used to
riding my banana-seater
all over town,

going to
school and
downtown,
delivering
newspapers.



④



The busier streets
in my new home
intimidated me.

6/15/75 JAM

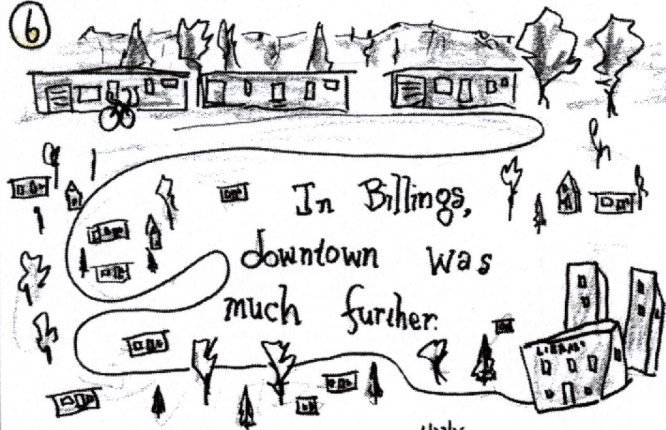
⑤

In Powell, I would bike
downtown to the library



and read all the
movie books.

⑥

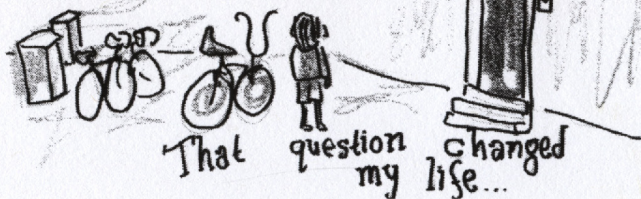


4/15/76

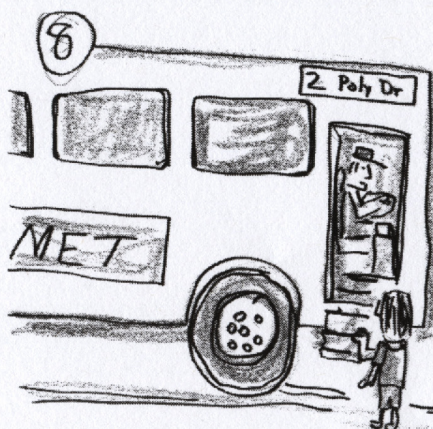
⑦

My mom asked me:

"Why don't
you take
the bus?"



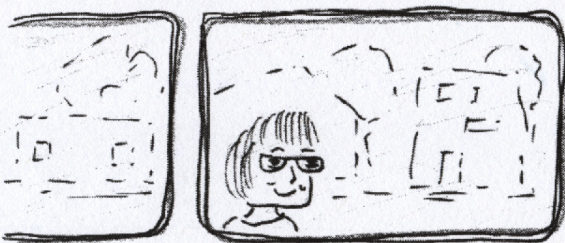
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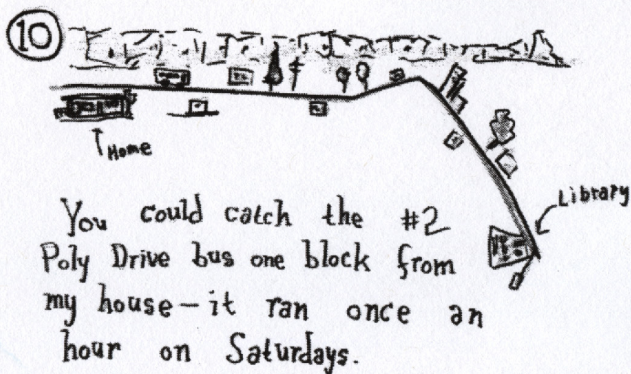


Because
I
did.

⑨

And
I
liked
it.

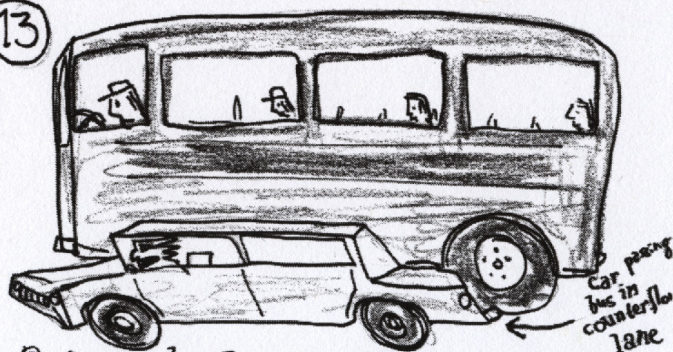




(11) It stopped in front of the library



(13)



Riding the bus made me think about how bad cars were.

26th Nov 2000

(14)

I went to the library to read about old movies - which had lots of scenes where people walked.



26th Nov 2000

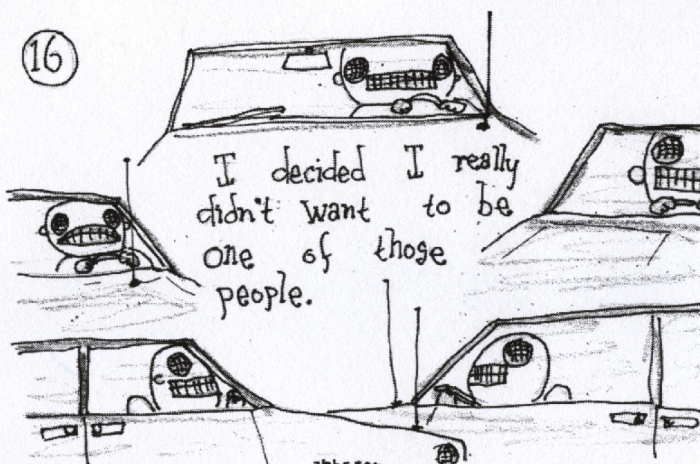
(15)



In the real world, I didn't see adults walk much - I saw them walk only far enough to get in a car.

26th Nov 2000

16



17



At the library
I read about tail-pipe pollution -
especially how harmful it was
for children.

2/15/75 Sam

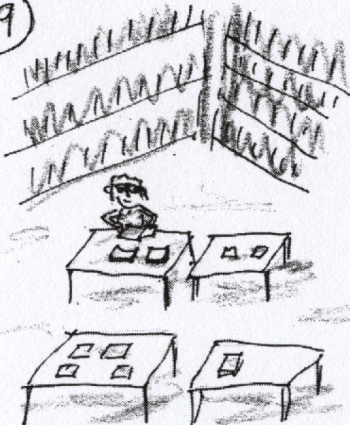
18

And about
how government
investment supporting
cars and disinvestment
in public transit
drives social
inequity



2/15/75 Sam

(19)



I read about the inefficiency of cars - you do the math: divide your weight by the weight of your vehicle...

alike 700

(20)



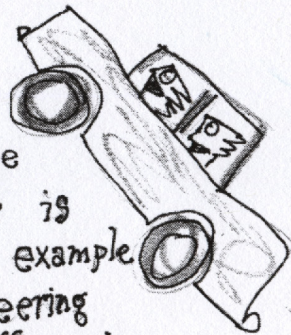
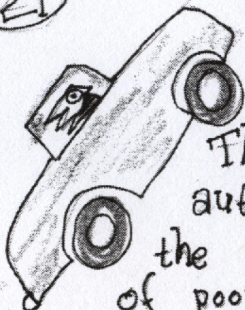
$$\frac{\text{Your weight}}{\text{Weight of vehicle}} = 10\% \text{ or less}$$



You will find that when you choose to drive, over 90% of the energy goes to moving your car - your tool - not you!

alike 700

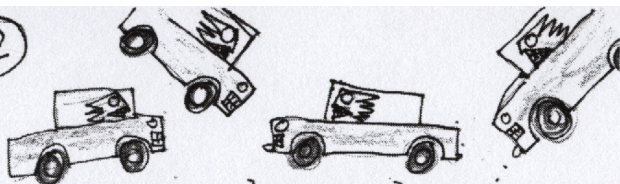
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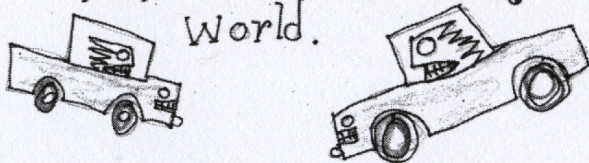
The private automobile is the supreme example of poor engineering and energy inefficiency.

alike 700

(22)



Cars also close
people off from the
World.



©1968 TAA

(23)

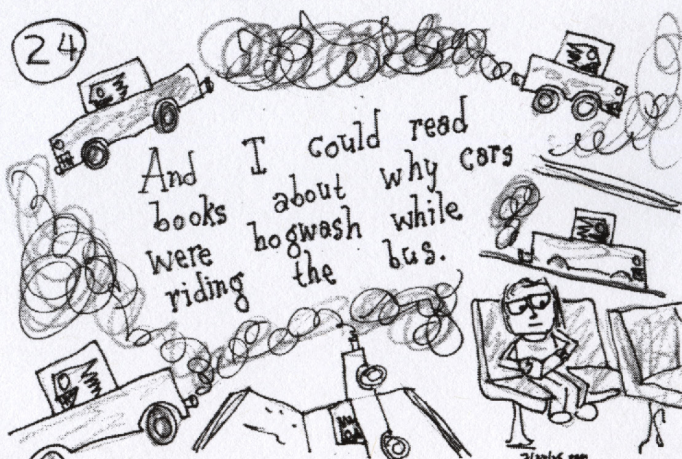


Riding transit,
and walking keep you
in society.



©1968 TAA

(24)

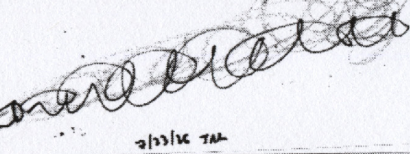


And I could read
books about why cars
were hogwash while
riding the bus.

©1968 TAA

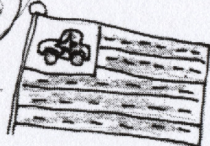
(25)

I decided,
at age 13,
that I was never
going to drive.



2/13/16 TAD

(26)



Telling others
that you
decided
not to drive
at age 13 forces you to oppose
the whole hegemony of the
United States -
and parents!



(27)

Although they were later
supportive of my decision not to
drive, when I was a teen
my parents were unable to understand
my reasons and my resolution.

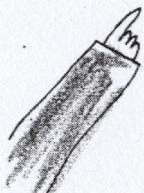


28



They told me
that I was going
to take

Driver's Training - held during summer
school - no ifs ands or
buts.



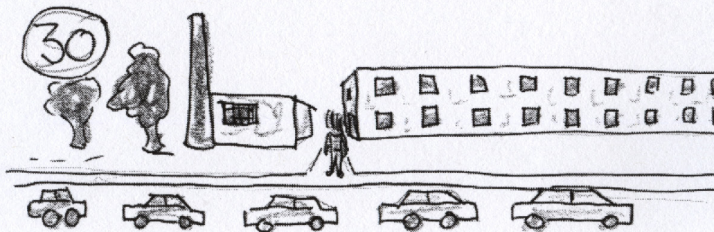
29

The first year they
wanted me to sign up
for Driver's Training,

I "lost" the check
to pay for it.



30

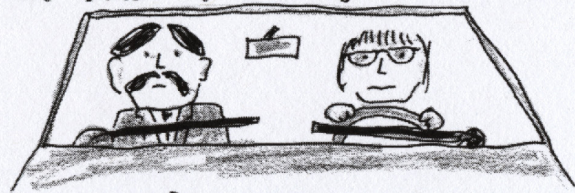


The next summer they signed
me up for it without my
involvement.

31 In the Summer, my high school transformed into a place of higher indoctrination - science, math, literature were out-car culture immersion was in.



32 I took Driver's Training under duress - my one experience behind the wheel of a large automobile -



but everything about it reinforced my resolve.

33 At the end of Driver's Training, my instructor gave me a note to give to my parents:

John is not ready for the driving environment.

34

John is not
ready for the
driving environment.

I didn't like to
fail, but I also felt
like finally somebody
understood me!



John
ready
driving
is not
for the
environment

Getting behind the wheel of
a car made me sick to the
stomach - his grade was at least a
personal validation.

36

In my high school years
I rode my bike more -

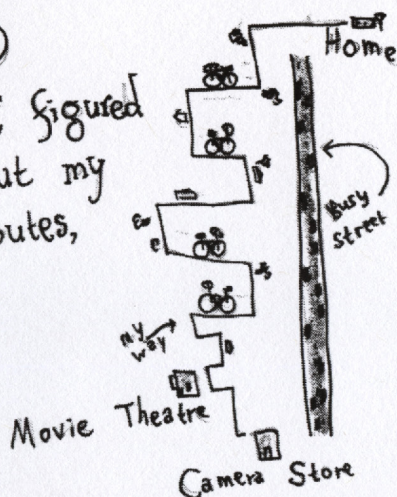
I gained confidence

on those busier
streets



(37)

I figured
out my
routes,

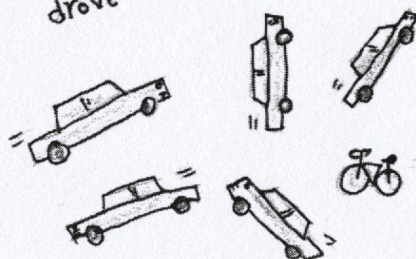


the back
ways
that took
me where I
needed to
go.

(38)

While all my
got their licenses
drove around,

classmates
and



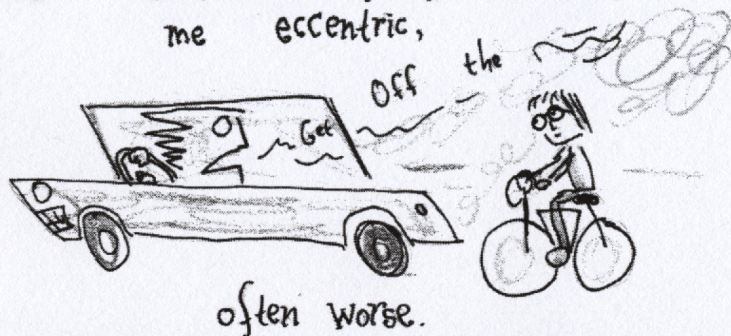
I stuck to my
bike and the
bus.



2/6/15 TAP

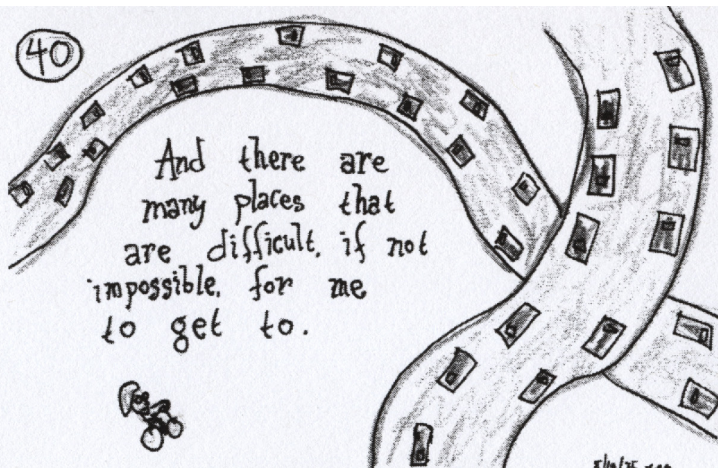
(39)

Sometimes people called
me eccentric,



40

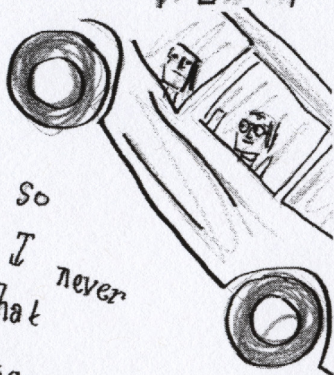
And there are
many places that
are difficult, if not
impossible, for me
to get to.



sketch 40

41

But I'm so
glad I never
got that
driver's
license.



sketch 41

42

The 13-year old me was
pretty smart - I have to
keep trusting that beginners' wisdom,
particularly in this age of noticeable
climate change that nobody seems to
notice.



sketch 42

43



I've lived
13 year old
for me - I've
the



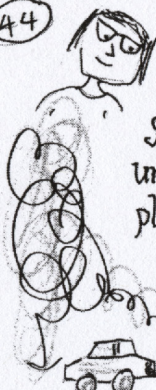
the self
I've
only
moving

life my
wanted
never been
person in a
motor vehicle.



slushy rain

44



My 13 year old self
saved me from an
unhealthy life of
planet-mangling
car driving...



45



respect

And

I



him

for

that.



END

slushy rain