



Image: Cliff Eyland

Pottsie had waited so long for his turn at happiness, but when it finally paid him a visit--unannounced, mind you, and interrupting his favorite reality TV show--he decided that it really wasn't his cup of tea after all.



George Toles, Facebook status update, 23 January 2011



Image: Cliff Eyland

Little things can mean a lot. When Claudia set off the alarm at the library turnstile by accident and was prevented from going through, she felt drenched in exposure. She had the sudden sense of being guilty not only for everything she had ever done, but for the very fact of her being. Why was she this guilty something or other, this assassin of souls, rather than an innocent nobody? She had a desperate desire for sex before this feeling left her. Maybe the man at the library desk going through her knapsack would be willing. He had thick, inquisitive glasses, a loud coffee stain on his shirt, and seemed suspicious of her to just the right degree.



George Toles, Facebook status update, 01 March 2012





Image: Cliff Eyland

How sweetly authoritarian Owen's mother was. With five, perfectly-timed-to-detonate, nonchalant words, she effectively destroyed his relationship with Samantha. "She sure likes to laugh."



George Toles, Facebook status update, 06 April 2011



Image: Cliff Eyland

He went through the door marked Restrooms, only to find but a small bathroom inside, lit by a hanging bare lightbulb. He checked the walls carefully for secret passageways or instructions on how to gain access to the other, undoubtedly grander restroom, but no dice. He checked the sign on the door again. The word Restrooms was bold and unmistakable. Beneath it were the usual hairless, faceless outlines of a male and female with a divider bar between them, perhaps for their protection. He went back inside, and drew the bolt. He was in no mood to share. There was a purple three legged stool in the restroom, which seemed inviting but strangely gratuitous, more for relaxation than for doing one's business. He sat down on it and pondered. He wished he could make a new acquaintance and talk over this mystery with him. But then he remembered his last new acquaintances, and how fatiguing they had proved to be. Better to leave well enough alone.



George Toles, Facebook status update, 17 July 2012

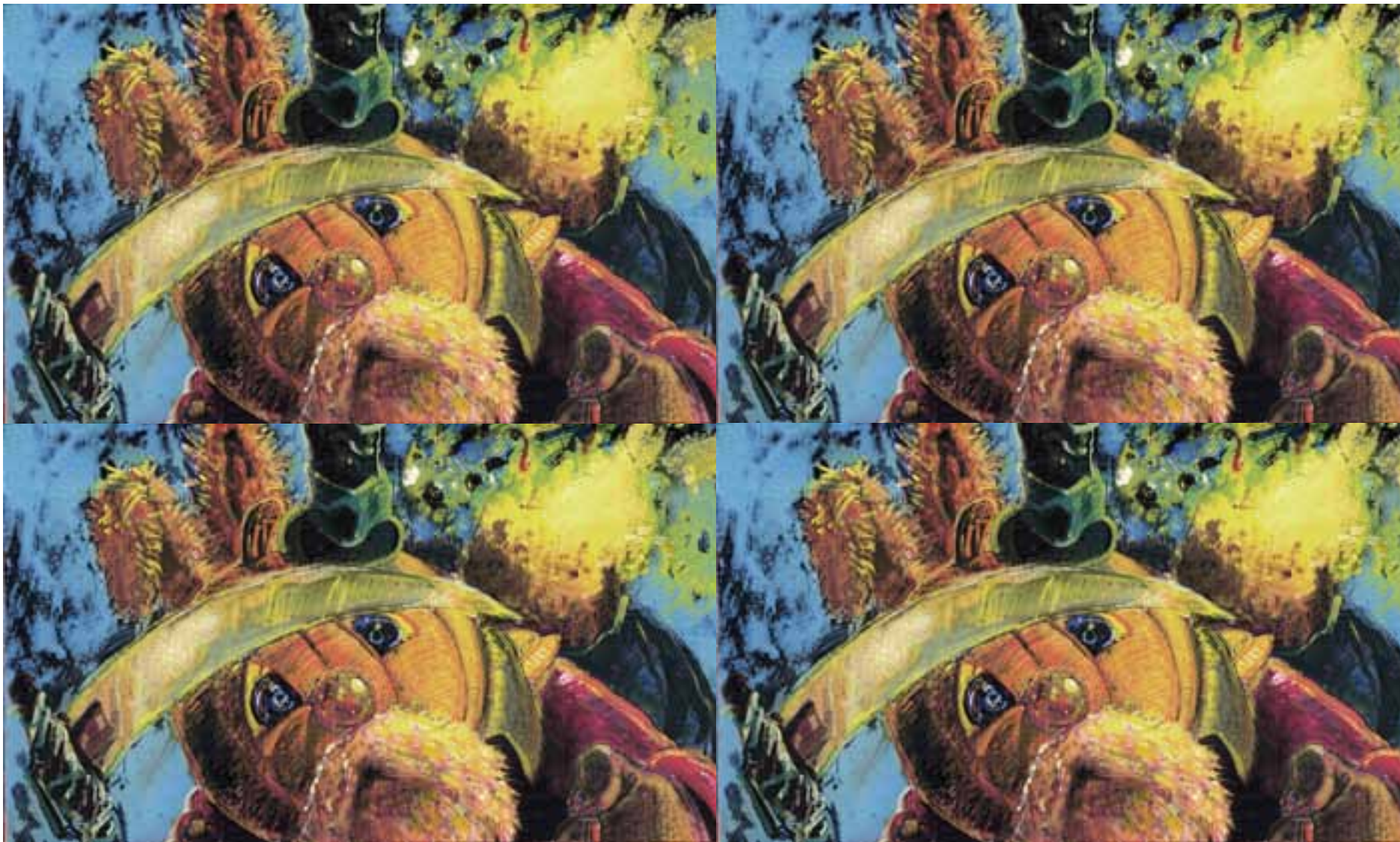


Image: Cliff Eyland

It was one of those North Pole moods again. He knew that a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do, but he had difficulty explaining to himself why this was so. At such times, the often blurry figure of Irma Claus came into focus for him. "You still believe in me, don't you?" he asked, trying not to sound too beseeching. She gave him his freshly laundered sack, and replied carefully. "Your fame, like that of many people, is based on a misunderstanding. And at the beginning, the misunderstanding had to do with something beautiful." She became silent. If more reassurance was necessary, he would have to talk with the reindeer.



George Toles, Facebook status update, 25 December 2011



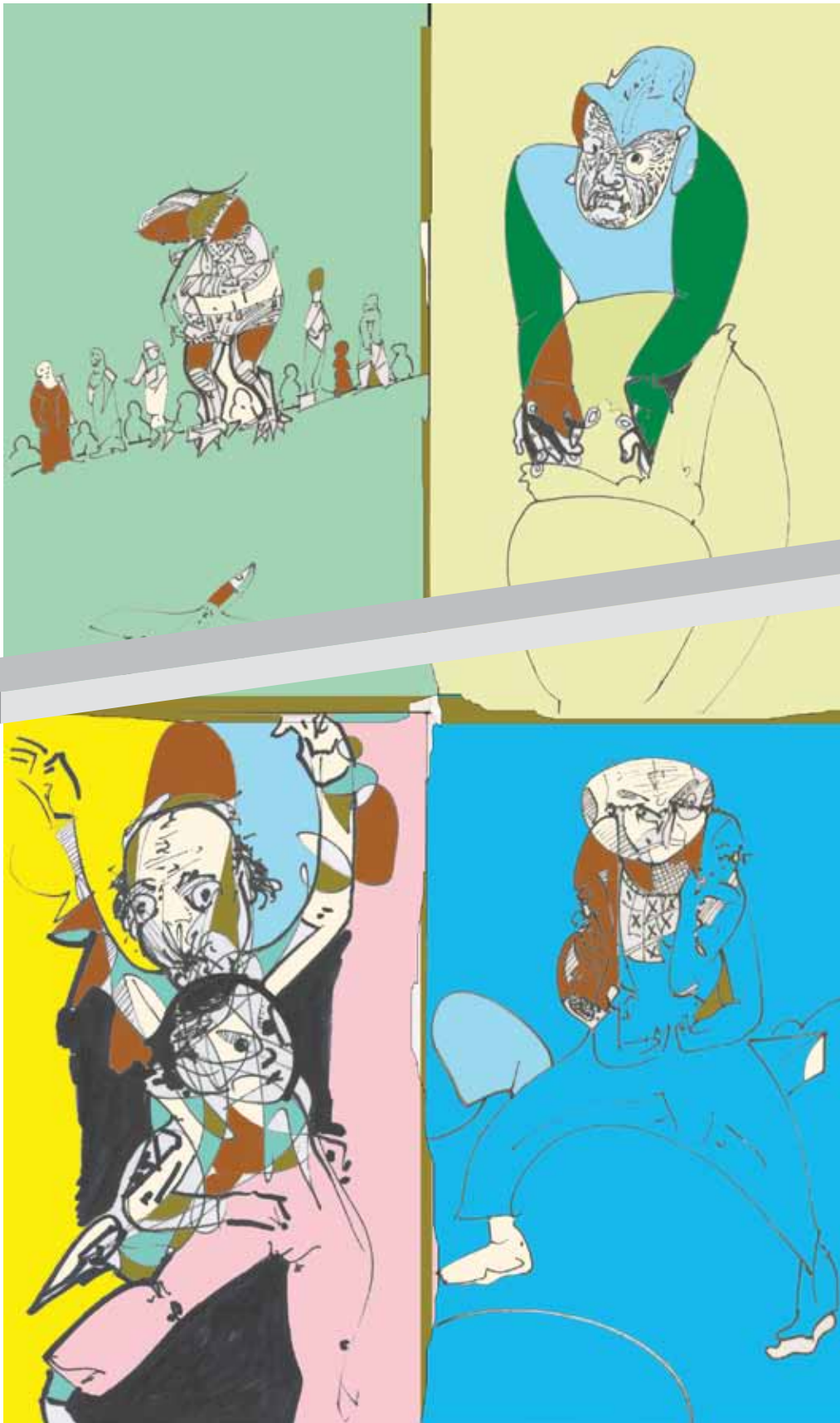


Image: Cliff Eycland

Their new roommate, Ollie, spoke chiefly in theatrical asides to an invisible audience. "Prithee, I fear the gurgling rivulet." "Fie on dishes, I will soon be crowned king." "Soft, gentle now, I will soon be carrion." "This servant girl, methinks, has a madcap air about her. But suppose she prove a heretic between my sheets."



George Toles, Facebook status update, 09 July 2012



Image: Cliff Eyland

After all those months at the gym and her Cooking Aroma diet, Twyla finally looked exactly the way she was supposed to. She nodded at her reflection, and bestowed on it the approving smile of a folk musician. Her satisfaction was shortlived. Someone else had used the towel she was drying herself with. Instant fury. She hadn't yet found a way to lose the weight of meaninglessness.



George Toles, Facebook status update, 01 September 2010

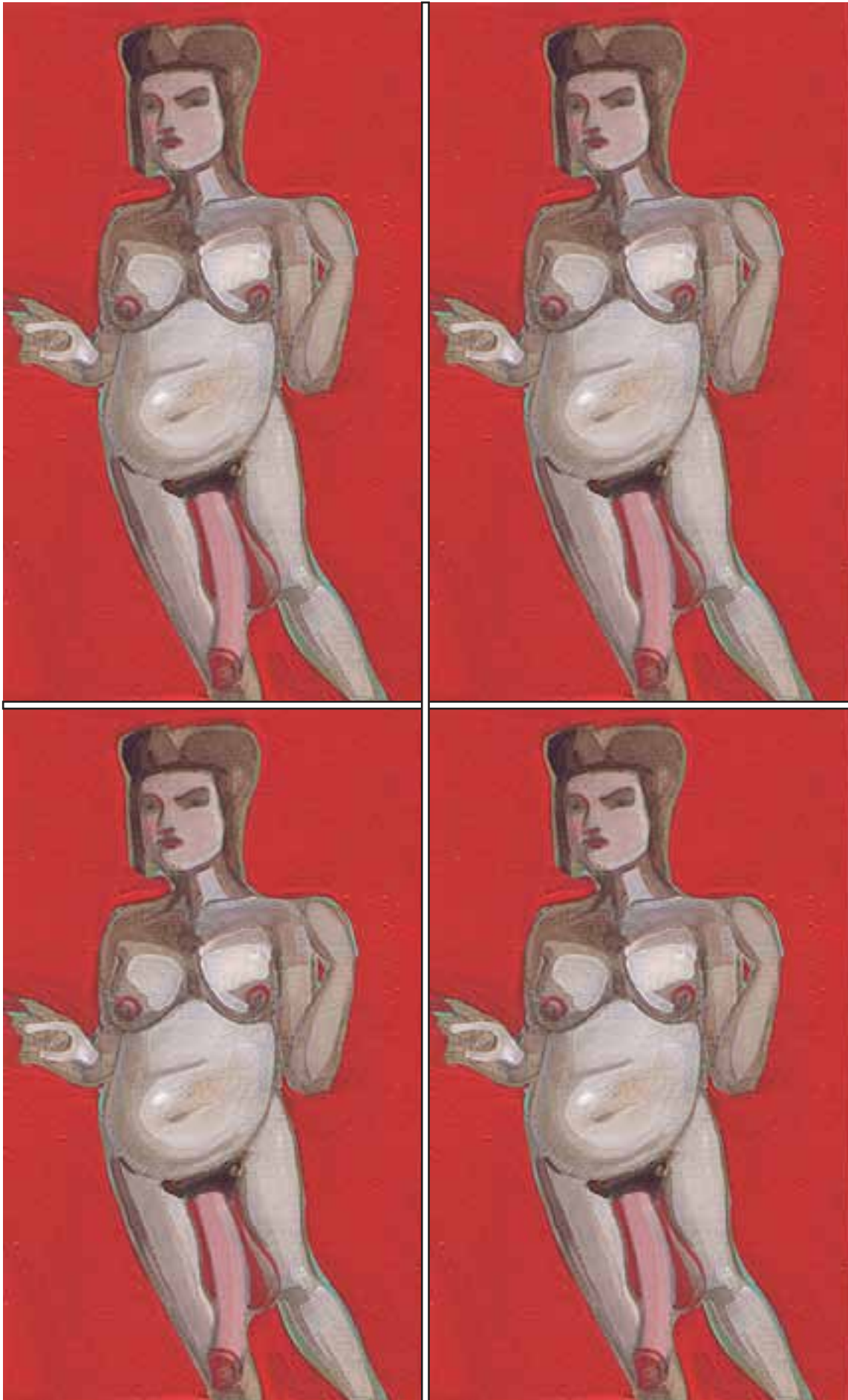


Image: Cliff Eyland

It was another setback for Rhoda. The judge recounted her legs and confirmed that she had one too many to compete in the Miss Nevada contest.



George Toles, Facebook status update, 01 September 2011



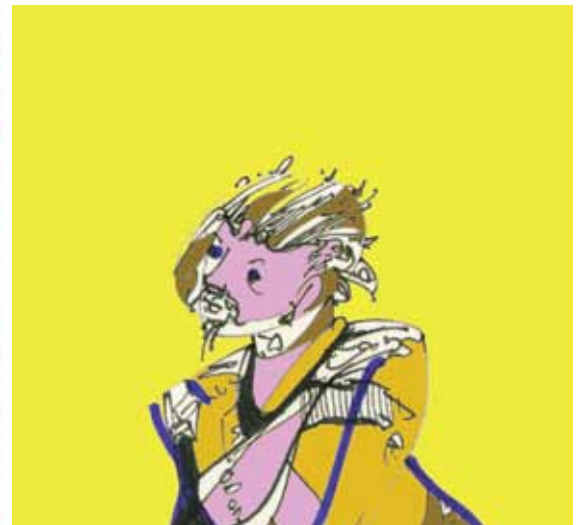
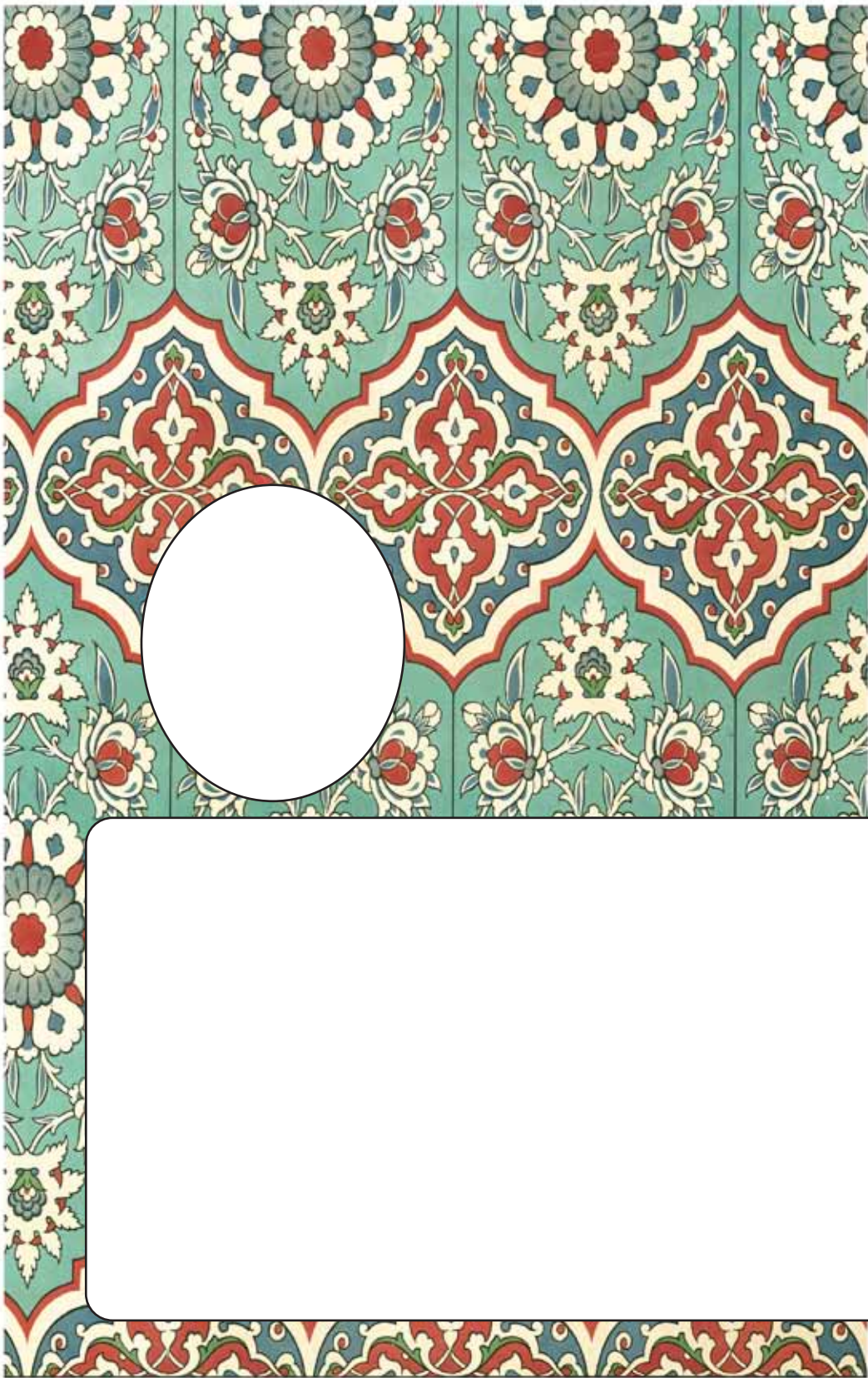


Image: Cliff Eyland

He lay in the tub under a fine ripply rug of water, his cheeks flushed with tranquillity, going about his soapy business. He was surprised by the sight of a familiar, in fact a troublingly familiar, face slowly, slowly rising up over the tub rim. The face tried to appear nonchalant as its owner peered at him and blinked. "Do you think it might be possible for us to be friends again?"



George Toles, Facebook status update, 04 November 2009



Image: Cliff Eysland

The large freedoms (where and when to shop and take vacations, or gripe about the boss and neighbors; the freedom to diet and jog) had gradually dimmed for Ralph, but other freedoms were always there to take their place. He was currently free to decide whether to be buried or cremated. The air crackled with suspense as he weighed his new options.



George Toles, Facebook status update, 6 May 2012