



*My name is Roy Livingston.*

Self portrait

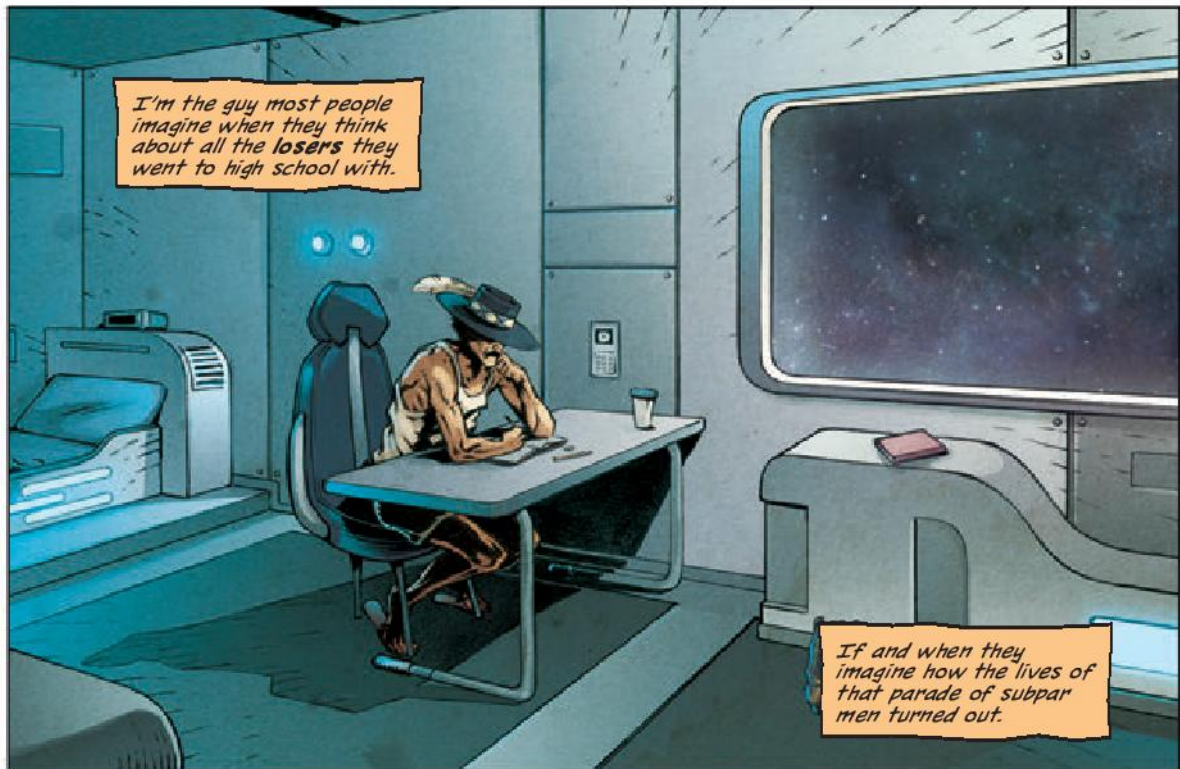
My name is Roy Livingston.



*Wasn't "college material", whatever that means.*

*I'm divorced. And until one week ago, I was the manager of a pet store in Efaula, Alabama.*

*The town where I was born.*



*I'm the guy most people imagine when they think about all the losers they went to high school with.*

*If and when they imagine how the lives of that parade of subpar men turned out.*



*JUNE 23RD, 2048.*



*Of course, a lot has changed over the past week.*









My father was always obsessed with obituaries.

WELL, WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT?



To my Dad, the worst fate imaginable was to die unworthy of a five line obituary in the Montgomery Advertiser.

GUY STEPPED ON A LANDMINE AFTER SAVING HIS PLATOON IN AFGHANISTAN.

NOW, THAT'S AN OBITUARY!



AND I TOLD THAT TEACHER--NO, I DON'T KNOW THE PYTHAGOREAN THEOREM. BUT I KNOW WHERE I'M GOING WHEN I DIE...

DO YOU?

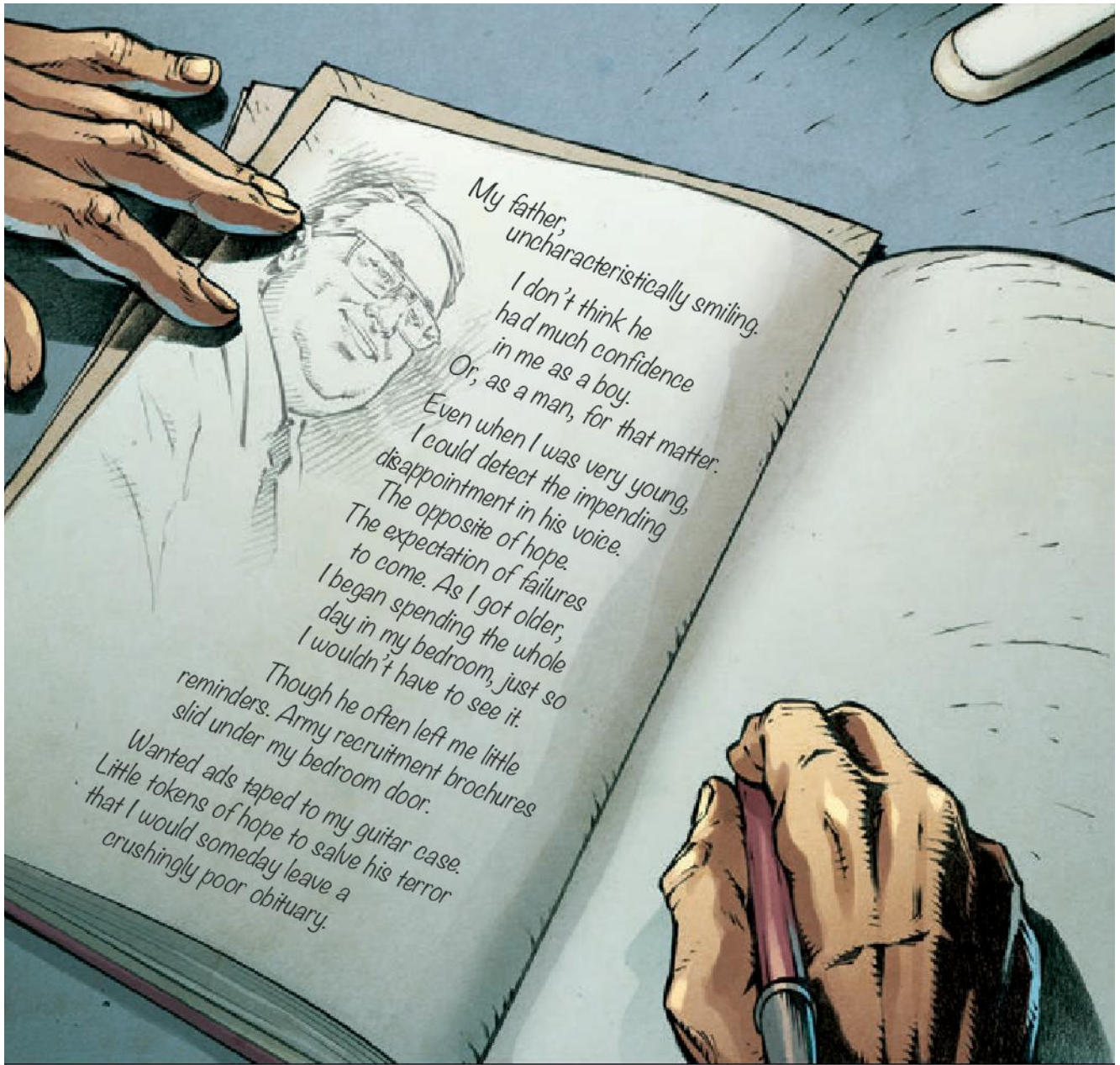
I grew up believing that the only part of a story that matters is its end.



From that perspective, I suppose I've done pretty well for myself.

My Dad would be happy, if he were around to see it.





My father,  
uncharacteristically smiling.  
I don't think he  
had much confidence  
in me as a boy.  
Or, as a man, for that matter.  
Even when I was very young,  
I could detect the impending  
disappointment in his voice.  
The opposite of hope.  
The expectation of failures  
to come. As I got older,  
I began spending the whole  
day in my bedroom, just so  
I wouldn't have to see it.  
Though he often left me little  
reminders. Army recruitment brochures  
slid under my bedroom door.  
Wanted ads taped to my guitar case.  
Little tokens of hope to salve his terror  
that I would someday leave a  
crushingly poor obituary.



And I suppose  
he would **know**.

He died of **herpes**  
after a **monkey** bit  
him at the zoo.

Now there's  
an obituary you  
**don't want**.