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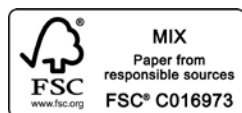
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DAVID BOWIE

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DAVID BOWIE

During an interview*, Bowie once said:

**"I CHANGE MY MIND A LOT.
I USUALLY DON'T AGREE WITH WHAT I SAY VERY MUCH.
I'M AN AWFUL LIAR."**

Talking about David Bowie in different parts of the world or in the most disparate contexts, it's hard not to notice how everyone seems to have a different opinion about him: from those who exclaim how much his music changed their lives to those who simply consider him an eccentric; and from those who understand his shifting personas to those who find them excessive.

So if everyone perceives Bowie in their own way, what was it like for him to live inside such a mind and body, with his own thoughts and sensations?

*David Bowie: The Last Interview and Other Conversations, 2016



WHO WAS DAVID BOWIE TO DAVID BOWIE?

Did he feel more like the lesser-known young man who grew up in Bromley, England, to a cinema usherette mother and PR officer father, or more the man who revolutionized glam rock?

Did he see himself as Ziggy, Major Tom, or the White Duke?

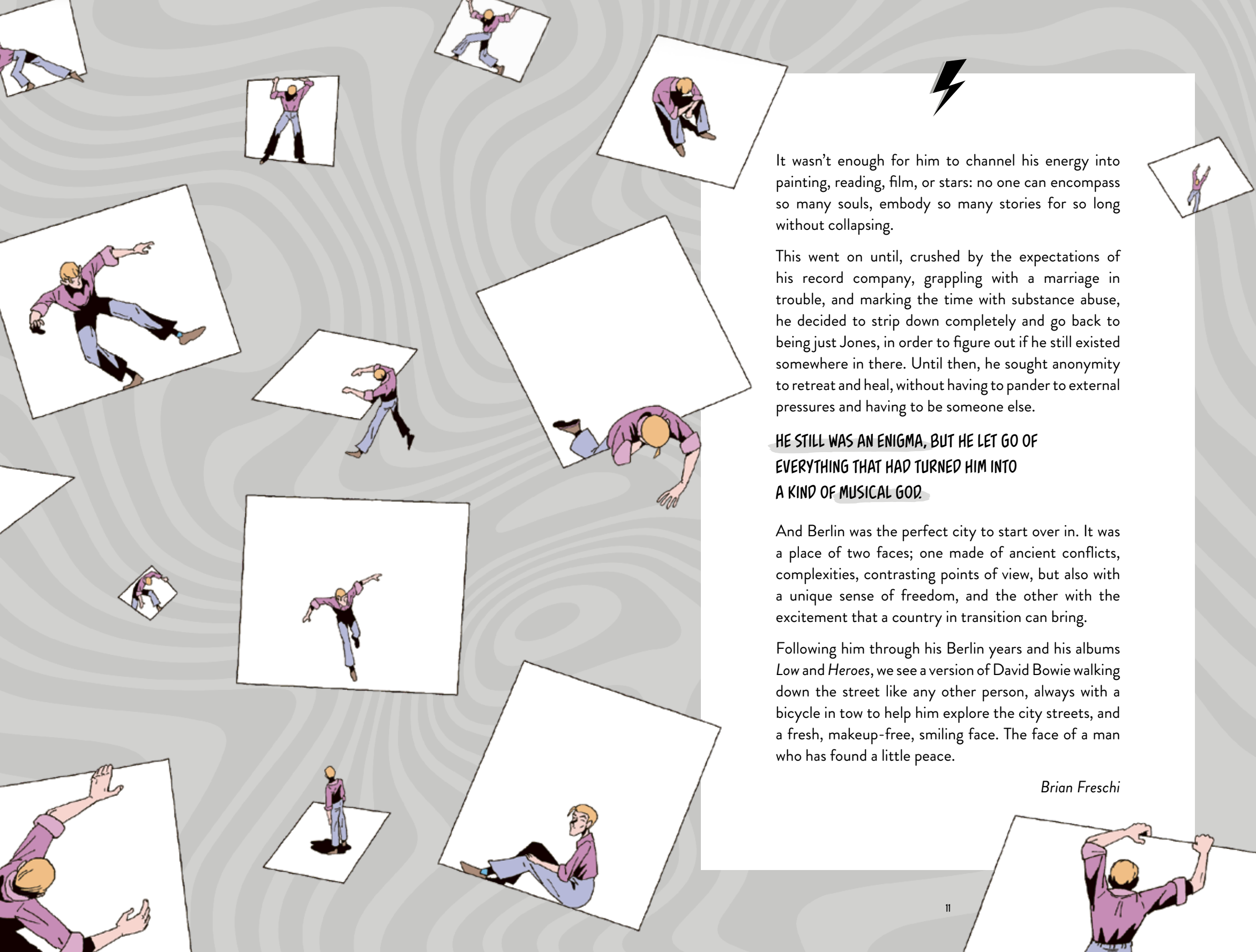
Of the many voices and masks Bowie took on, which did he consider his real voice and true face?

The many accounts of those who knew him and who experienced at least one side of his character, suggest that he spoke a different language – one that was comprehensible but as if from an alien planet, an unknown world that existed in a parallel dimension.

EVEN IF WE COULD SEE HIM WALKING DOWN THE STREET LIKE ANYONE ELSE, IT WAS CLEAR HE WAS HEADING SOMEWHERE DIFFERENT, THAT HIS SHOES WERE TREADING THE GROUND UNLIKE ANYONE ELSE'S.

From his early successes to the many years he was consumed by Los Angeles fervor, Bowie alternated almost maniacally between one identity and another: from solid to liquid and back, always in a new guise. However, all that energy, all that drive to reinterpret life each time by harnessing the power of a new avatar, slowly wore him down.





It wasn't enough for him to channel his energy into painting, reading, film, or stars: no one can encompass so many souls, embody so many stories for so long without collapsing.

This went on until, crushed by the expectations of his record company, grappling with a marriage in trouble, and marking the time with substance abuse, he decided to strip down completely and go back to being just Jones, in order to figure out if he still existed somewhere in there. Until then, he sought anonymity to retreat and heal, without having to pander to external pressures and having to be someone else.

HE STILL WAS AN ENIGMA, BUT HE LET GO OF EVERYTHING THAT HAD TURNED HIM INTO A KIND OF MUSICAL GOD.

And Berlin was the perfect city to start over in. It was a place of two faces; one made of ancient conflicts, complexities, contrasting points of view, but also with a unique sense of freedom, and the other with the excitement that a country in transition can bring.

Following him through his Berlin years and his albums *Low* and *Heroes*, we see a version of David Bowie walking down the street like any other person, always with a bicycle in tow to help him explore the city streets, and a fresh, makeup-free, smiling face. The face of a man who has found a little peace.

Brian Freschi

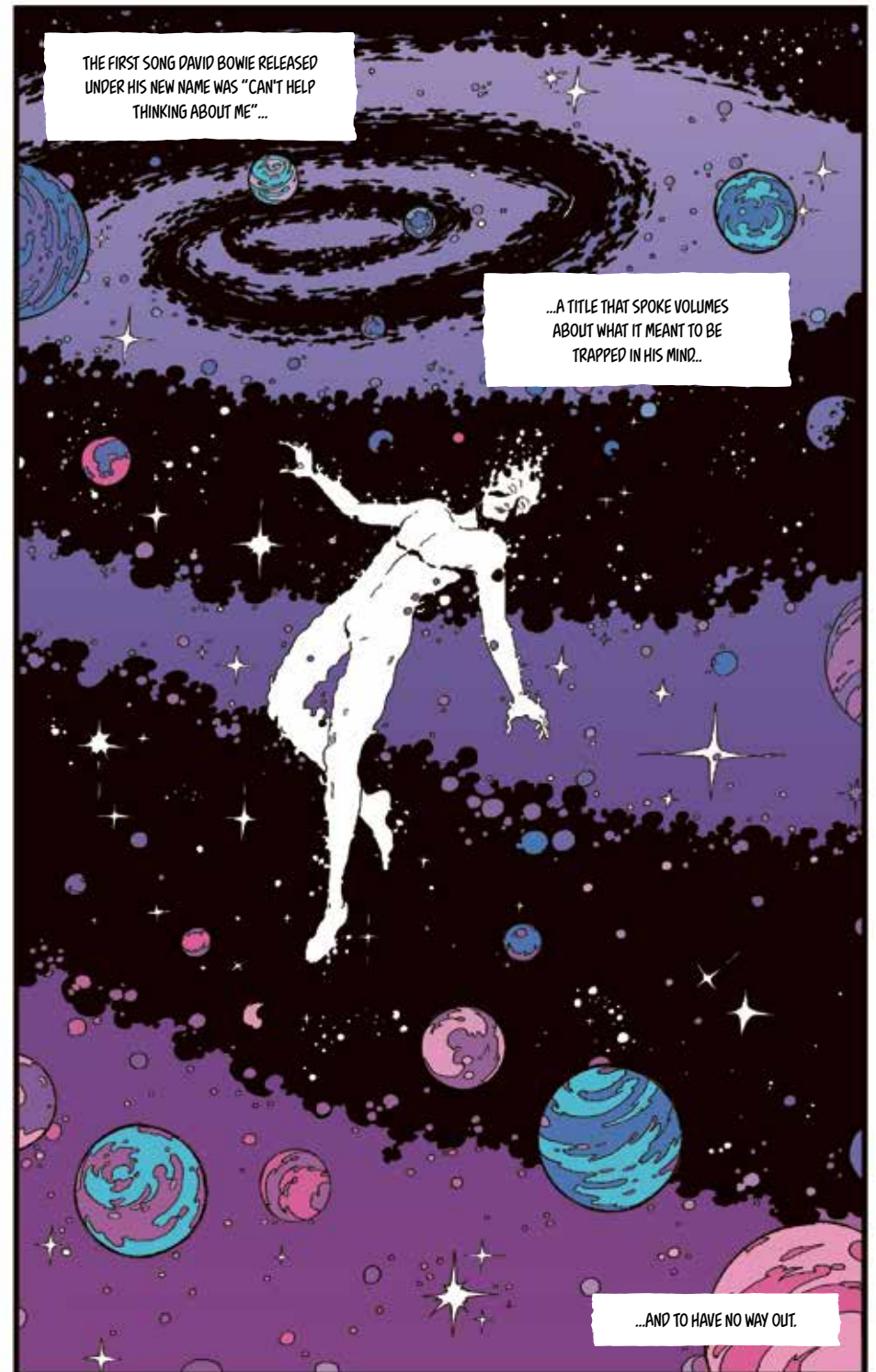


Prologue



"It was like being in a car where the steering had gone out of control and you were going towards the edge of a cliff."

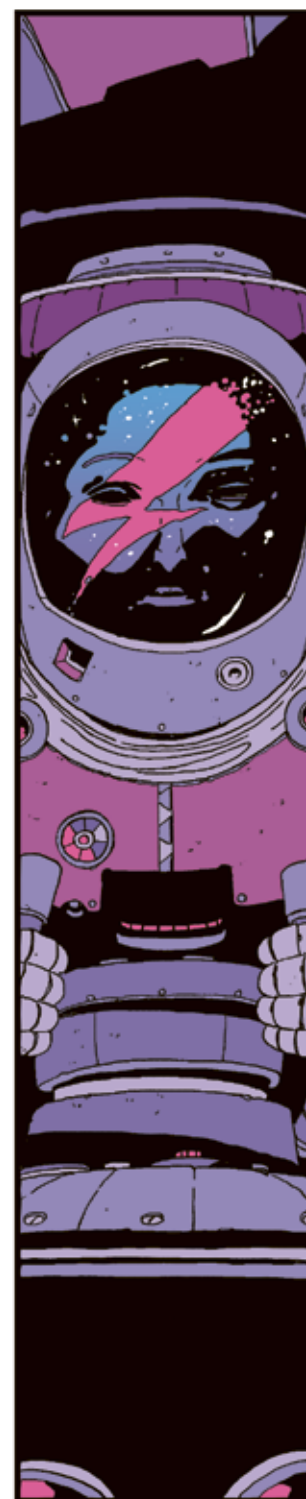
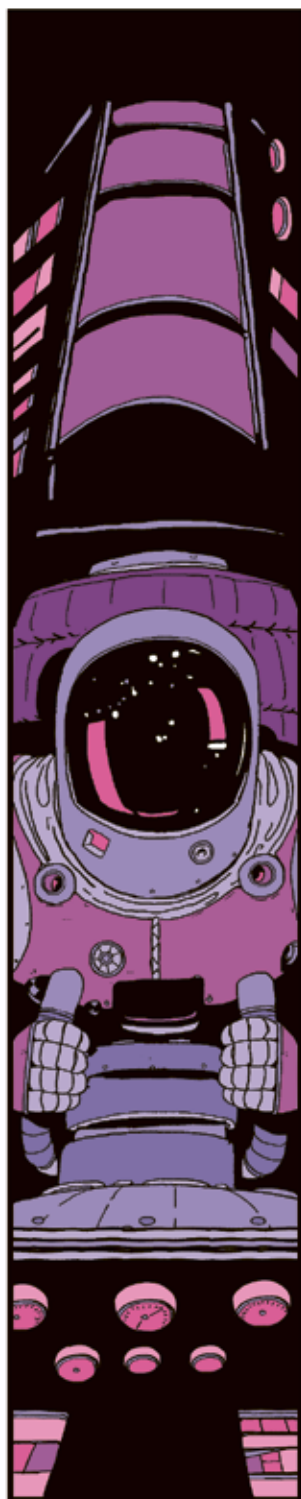
David Bowie, 2005 interview by the BBC

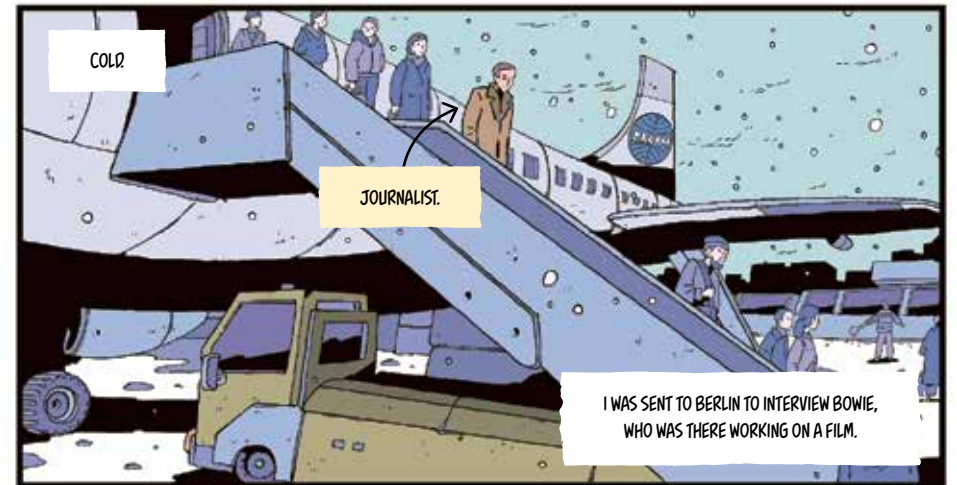


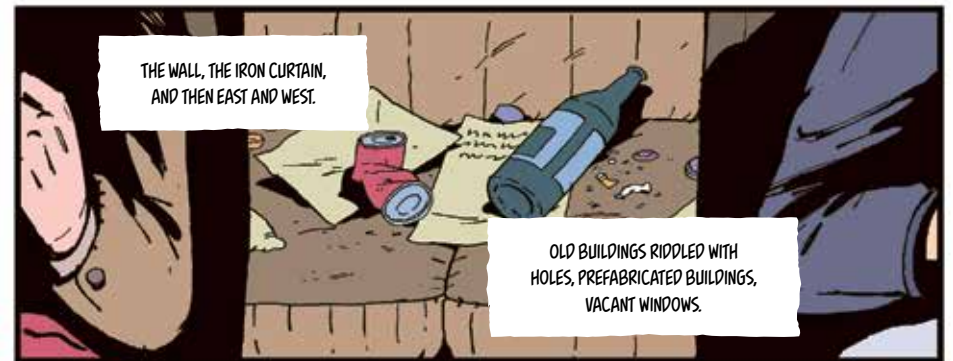
THE FIRST SONG DAVID BOWIE RELEASED UNDER HIS NEW NAME WAS "CAN'T HELP THINKING ABOUT ME"...

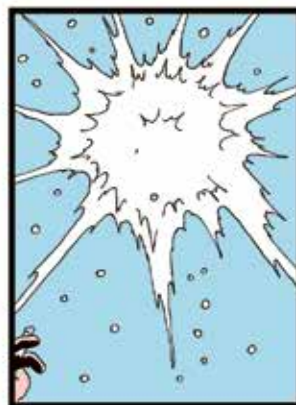
...A TITLE THAT SPOKE VOLUMES ABOUT WHAT IT MEANT TO BE TRAPPED IN HIS MIND..

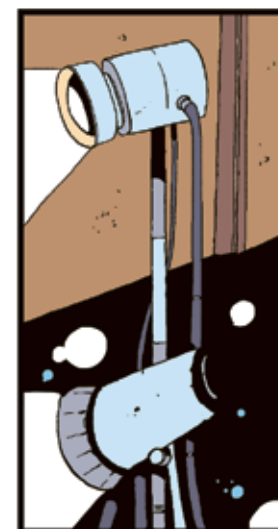
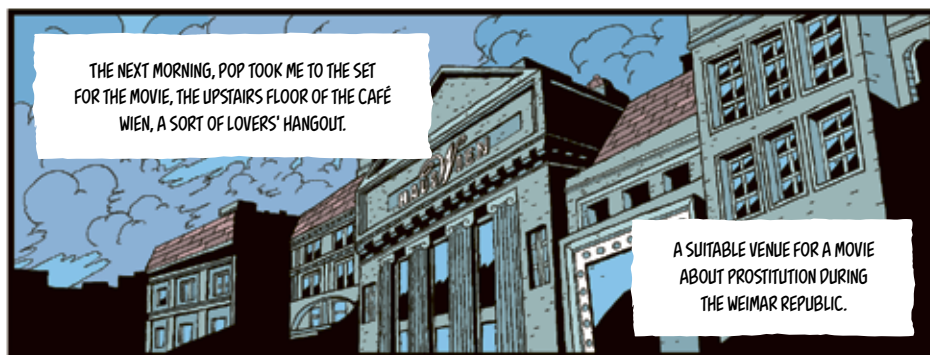
...AND TO HAVE NO WAY OUT.

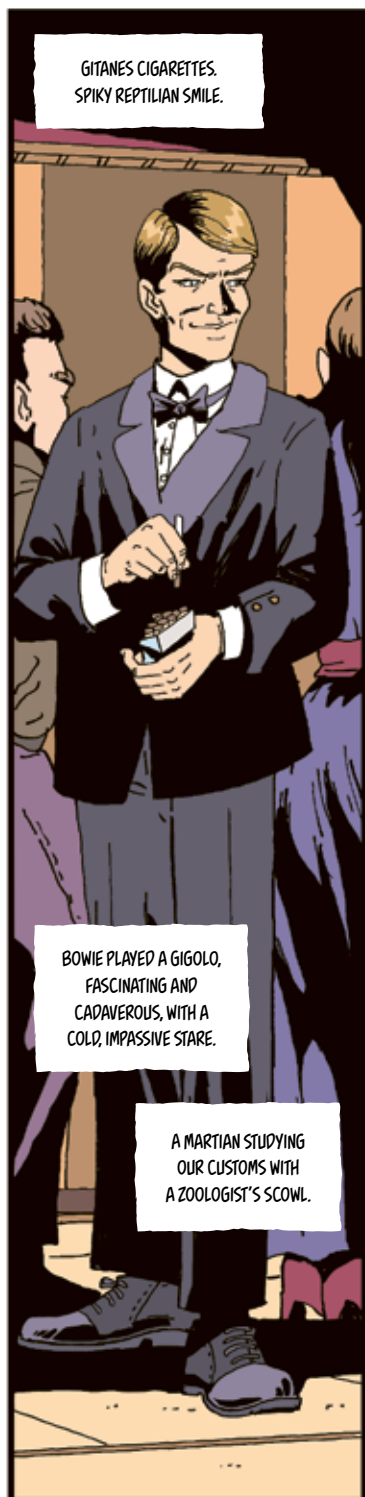












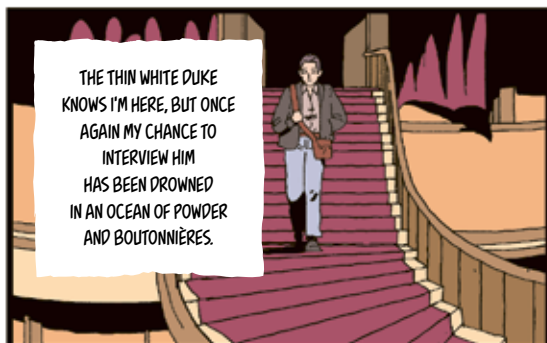
GITANES CIGARETTES.
SPIKY REPTILIAN SMILE.

BOWIE PLAYED A GIGOLO,
FASCINATING AND
CADAVEROUS, WITH A
COLD, IMPASSIVE STARE.

A MARTIAN STUDYING
OUR CUSTOMS WITH
A ZOOLOGIST'S SCOWL.



DAVID HEMMINGS.
DIRECTOR OF JUST
A GIGOLO.



THE THIN WHITE DUKE
KNOWS I'M HERE, BUT ONCE
AGAIN MY CHANCE TO
INTERVIEW HIM
HAS BEEN DROWNED
IN AN OCEAN OF POWDER
AND BOUTONNIÈRES.



AND NOW WHO'S GOING
TO HEAR THE SCREAMS
OF MY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF?

I WAS SUPPOSED TO FAX
HIM THE ARTICLE
BY TOMORROW MORNING.



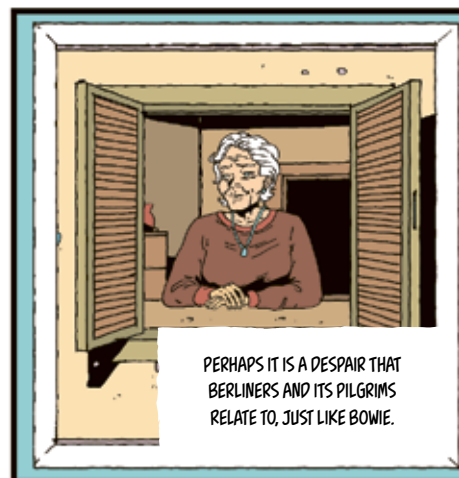
WHAT AM I DOING HERE?
WHAT PUSHES PEOPLE
INTO THIS WORLD
OF CONTRASTS?



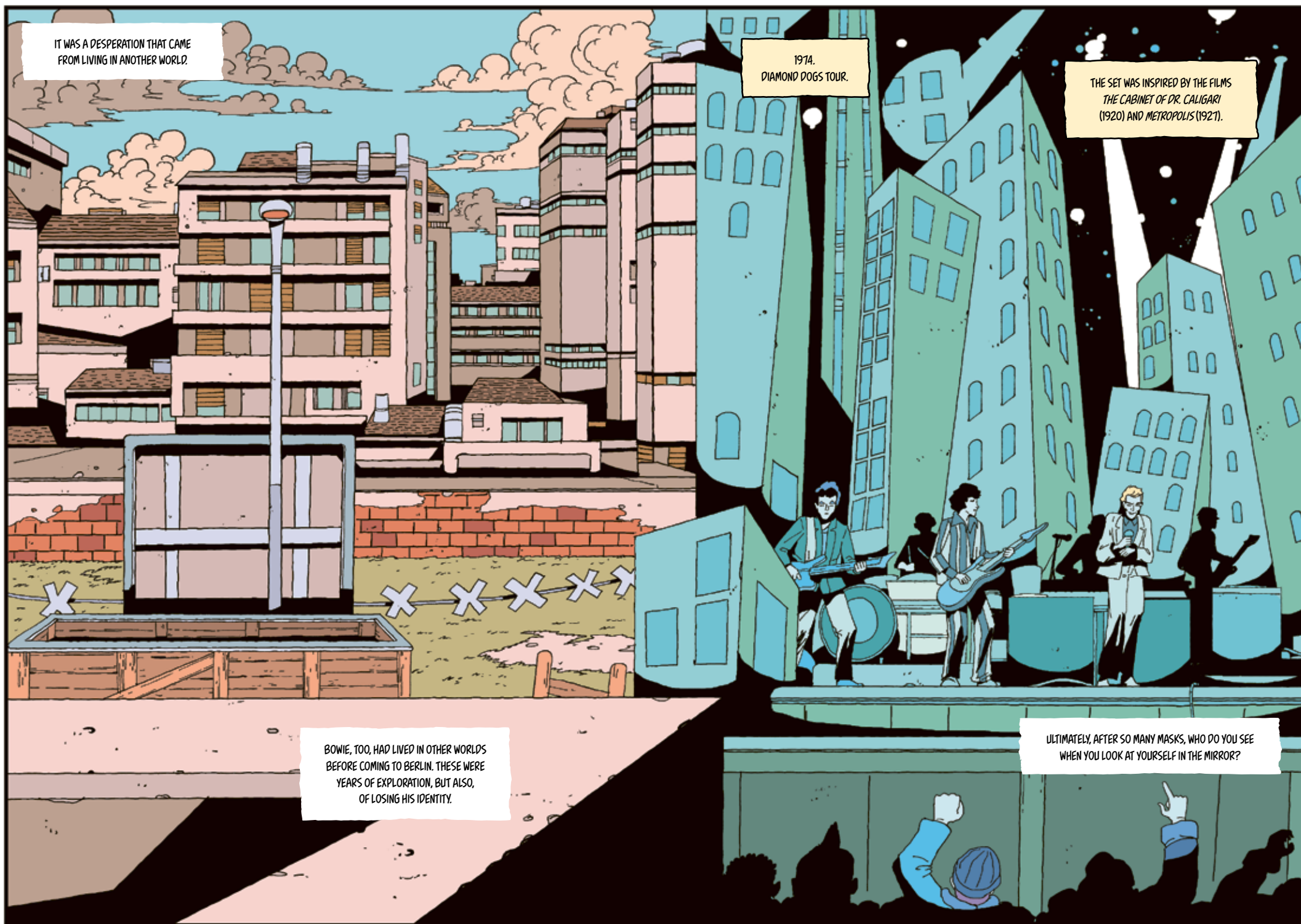
OF DRIFTING,
INCOMPREHENSIBLE
EXISTENCES.



BUT PEOPLE WHO ARE REBORN, TOO.
AND WHO BELIEVE, VISCERALLY,
IN SOMETHING NEW.



PERHAPS IT IS A DESPAIR THAT
BERLINERS AND ITS PILGRIMS
RELATE TO, JUST LIKE BOWIE.



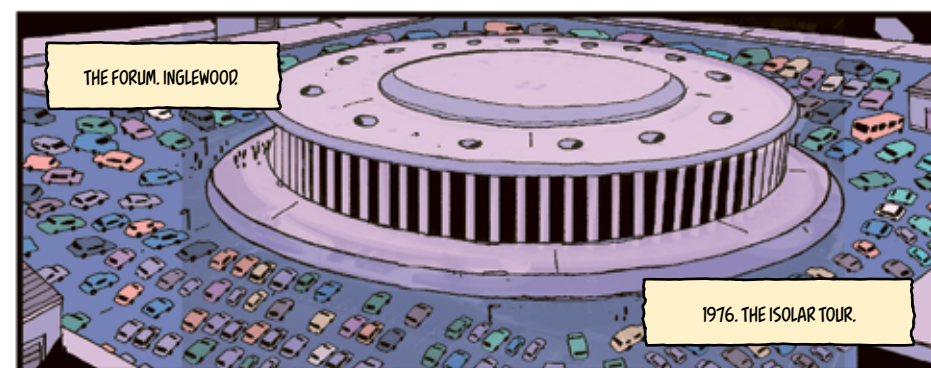
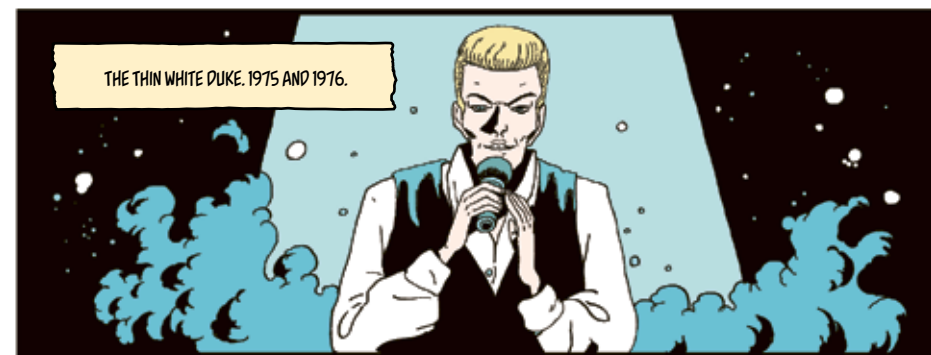
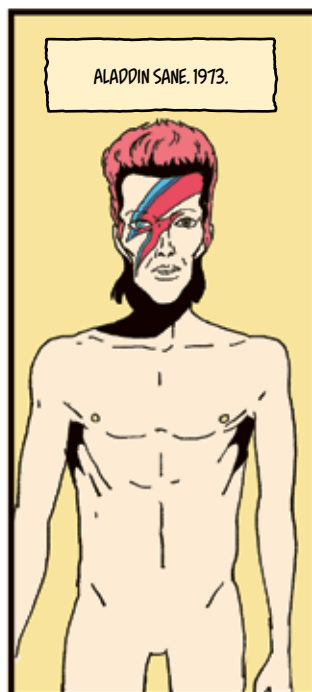
IT WAS A DESPERATION THAT CAME FROM LIVING IN ANOTHER WORLD.

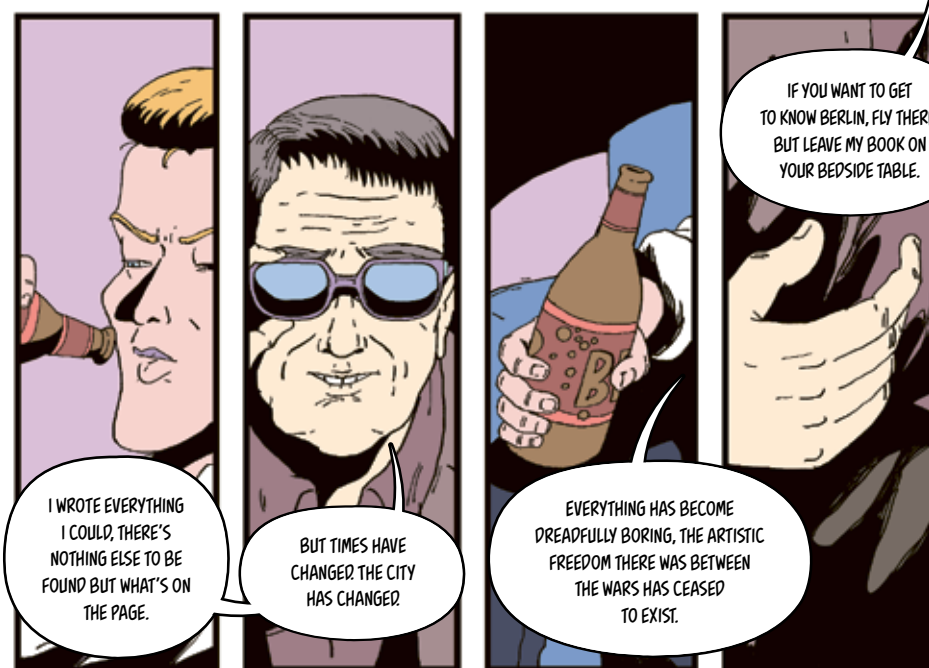
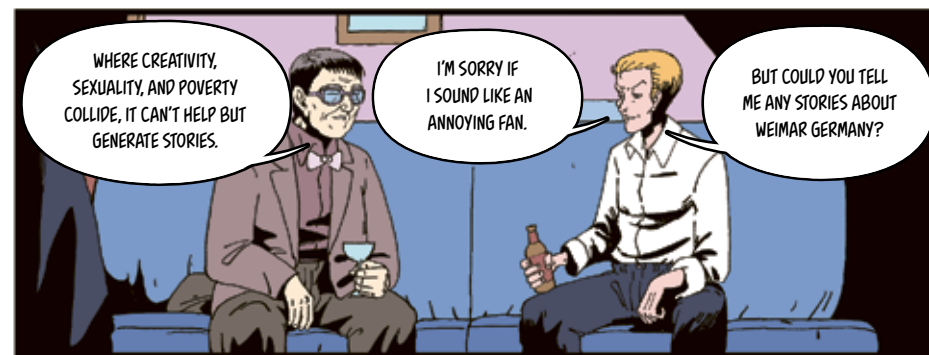
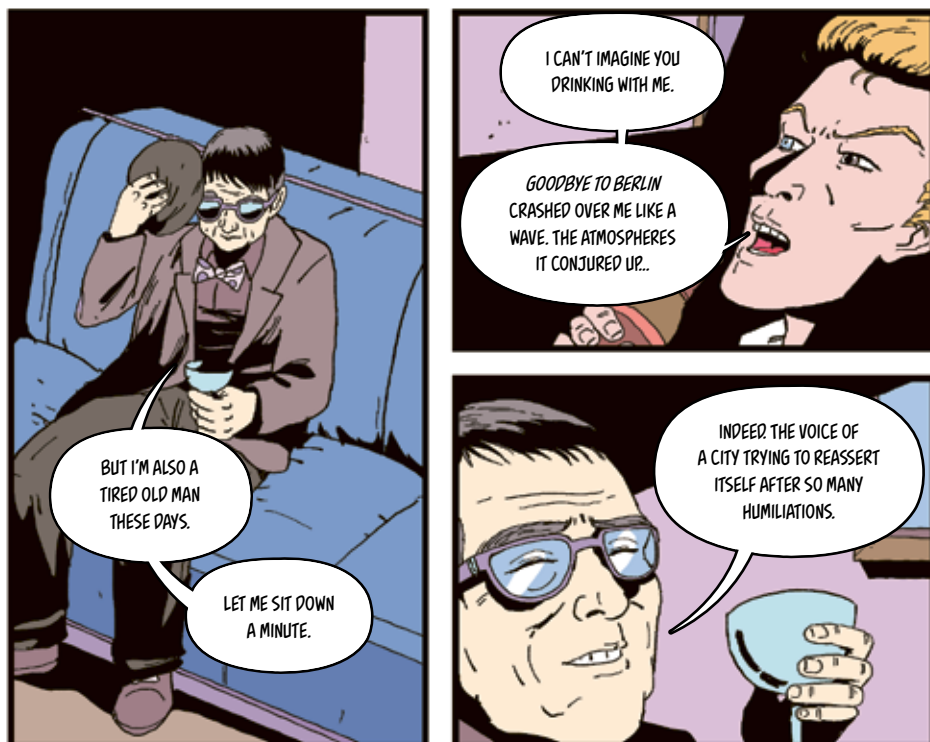
1974.
DIAMOND DOGS TOUR.

THE SET WAS INSPIRED BY THE FILMS
THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI
(1920) AND *METROPOLIS* (1927).

BOWIE, TOO, HAD LIVED IN OTHER WORLDS BEFORE COMING TO BERLIN. THESE WERE YEARS OF EXPLORATION, BUT ALSO, OF LOSING HIS IDENTITY.

ULTIMATELY, AFTER SO MANY MASKS, WHO DO YOU SEE WHEN YOU LOOK AT YOURSELF IN THE MIRROR?







THAT ENCOUNTER
CHANGED EVERYTHING.

"COME TO ME," BERLIN SAID

"COME TO ME
TO SAVE YOURSELF"

IF BERLIN HAD BEEN A PASSION
THAT TOOK SHAPE ONLY IN THE BOOKS, MUSIC,
EXPRESSIONIST ART THAT BOWIE LOVED,
NOW IT WAS CALLING TO HIM.



Chapter 1

Low



“Low was a reaction to having gone through that peculiar... that dull greenie-gray limelight of America and its repercussions; pulling myself out of it and getting to Europe and saying, For God’s sake, re-evaluate why you wanted to get into this in the first place.”

David Bowie, to Charles Shaar Murray, NME, 12 November 1977

