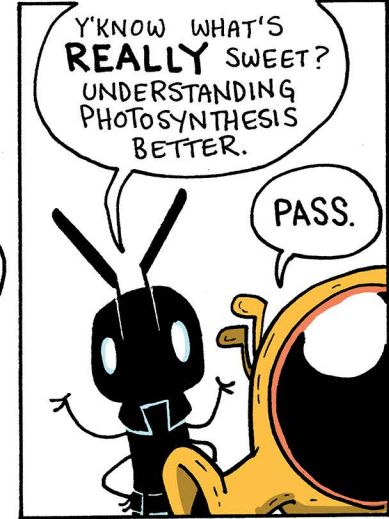
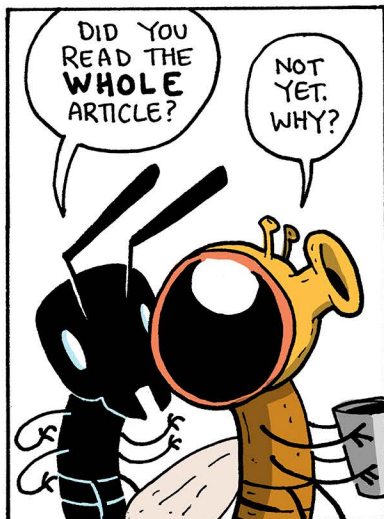
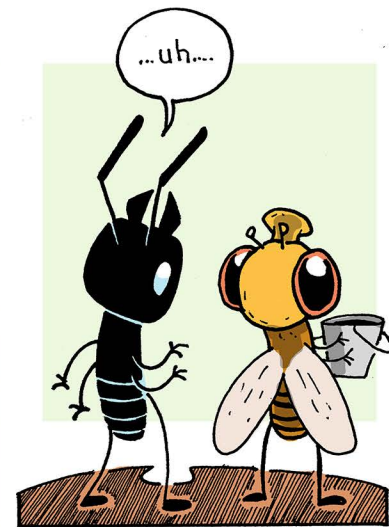
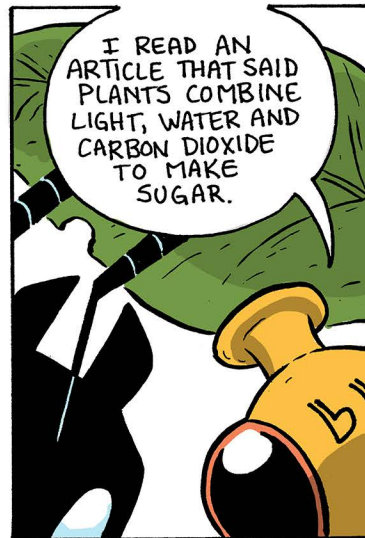
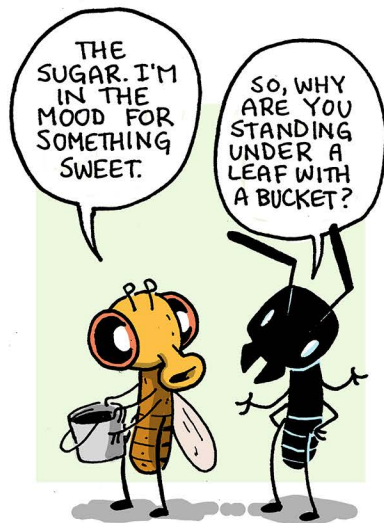


Written and Illustrated by Jay Hosler

# Photosynthesis

OR "Gimme Some Sugar"

STARRING  
WILBUR &  
ANT EDNA





WHAT DO YOU MEAN "PASS?"



I MEAN, I'M NOT INTERESTED IN HOW PHOTOS ARE SYNTHESIZED. I DON'T EVEN HAVE A CAMERA.

I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT DEVELOPING PICTURES! I'M TALKING ABOUT THE PROCESS THAT TRAPS A TINY PACKET OF THE SUN'S ENERGY IN THE LIFE-SUSTAINING MOLECULE OF GLUCOSE THAT MAKES OUR VERY **EXISTENCE** POSSIBLE.

YOU'RE PULLING MY LEG.

NO. I'M TOTALLY SERIOUS.

oh. You ARE PULLING ON MY LEG.

oh.

sorry.

JUST LET ME EXPLAIN IT TO YOU.

**PLEASE?**

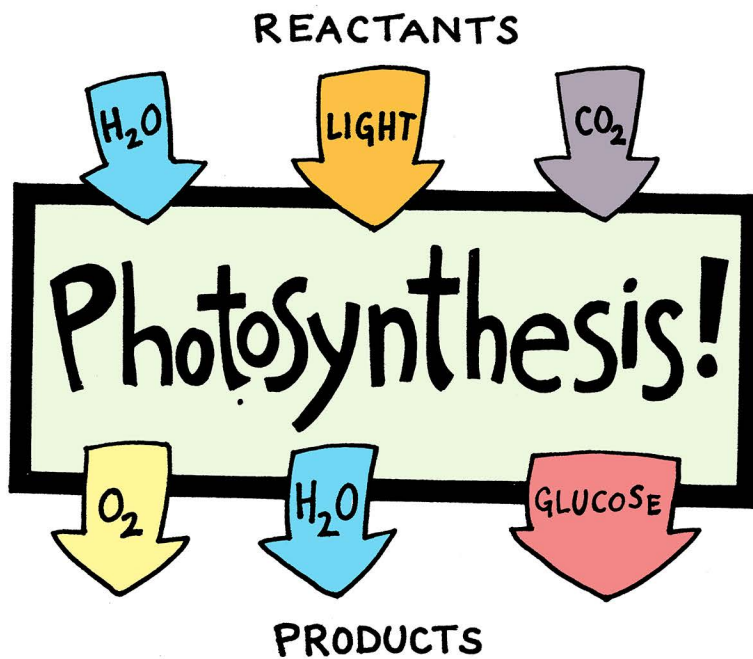
I FANCY MYSELF A BIT OF AN EXPERT.

fine

BRILLIANT! FIRST, LET'S CONSIDER THIS CHART.

YOU HAVE A CHART?

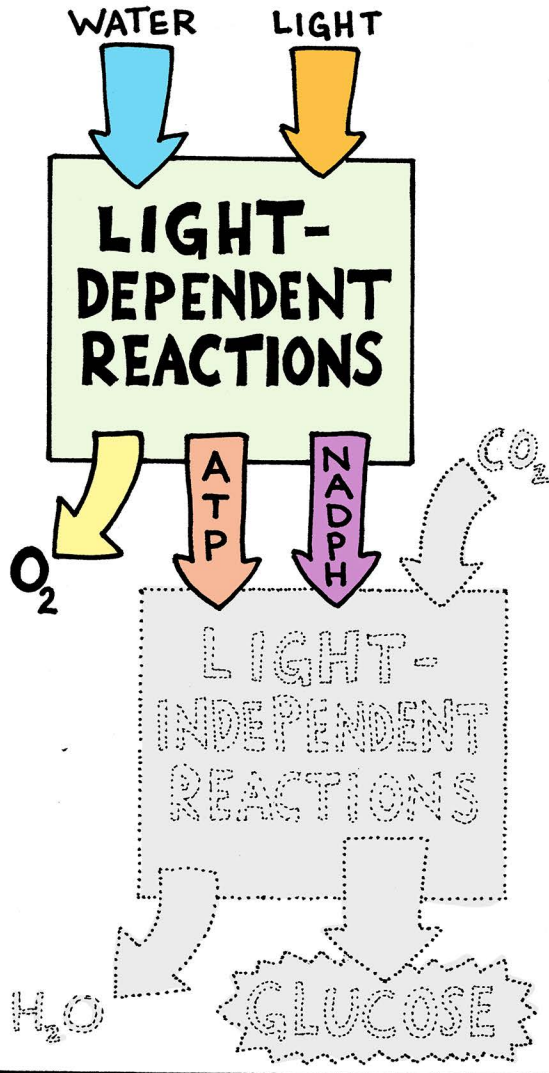
HOW ELSE WOULD I EXPLAIN IT?



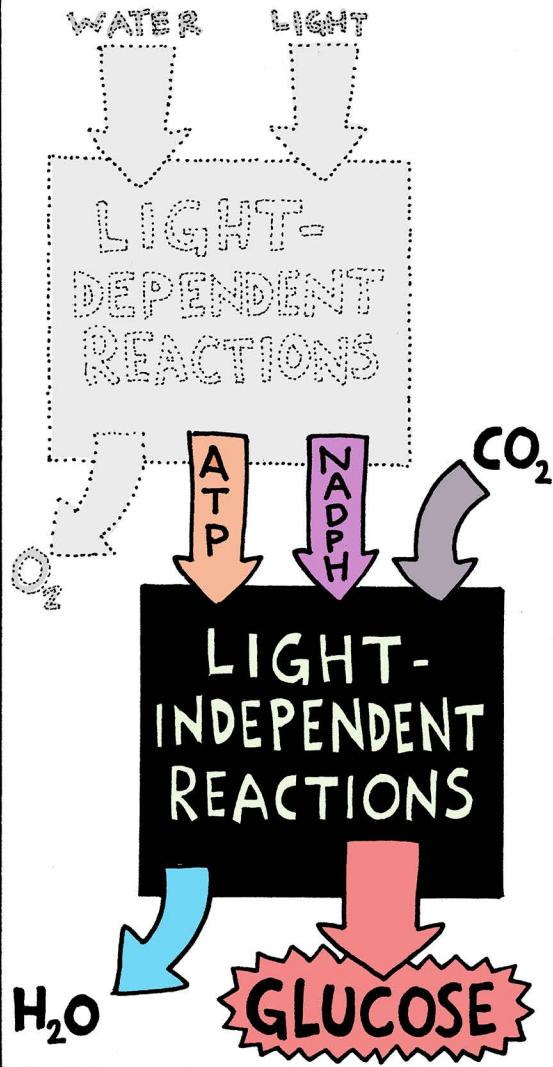
NOW, AS YOU CAN SEE, WATER, LIGHT AND CARBON DIOXIDE GO INTO THE PHOTOSYNTHETIC PROCESS AND OXYGEN, WATER AND GLUCOSE COME OUT.

PHOTOSYNTHESIS IS COMPOSED OF TWO SEPARATE SETS OF CHEMICAL REACTIONS: THE LIGHT-DEPENDENT REACTIONS AND THE LIGHT-INDEPENDENT REACTIONS.

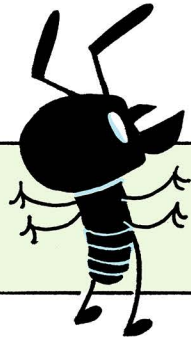
THE LIGHT-DEPENDENT REACTIONS USE WATER AND ENERGY FROM A PHOTON OF LIGHT TO BUILD THE MOLECULES ATP AND NADPH. OXYGEN IS RELEASED AS WASTE. ATP AND NADPH ARE USED AS FUEL FOR THE LIGHT-INDEPENDENT REACTIONS.



THE LIGHT-INDEPENDENT REACTIONS DO NOT REQUIRE LIGHT DIRECTLY. IN THESE REACTIONS, CARBON DIOXIDE IS PULLED FROM THE AIR AND ATTACHED TO AN EXISTING MOLECULE. THEN THE ATP AND NADPH ARE USED TO TURN THAT MOLECULES INTO GLUCOSE.



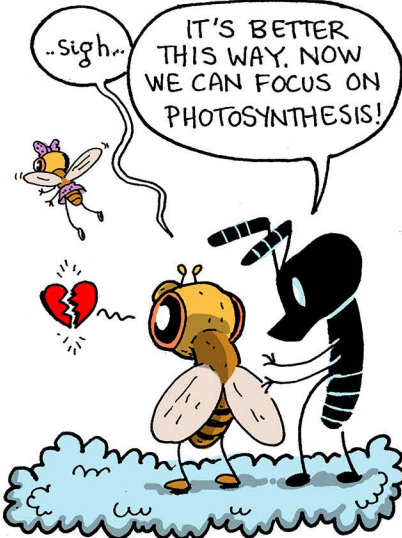
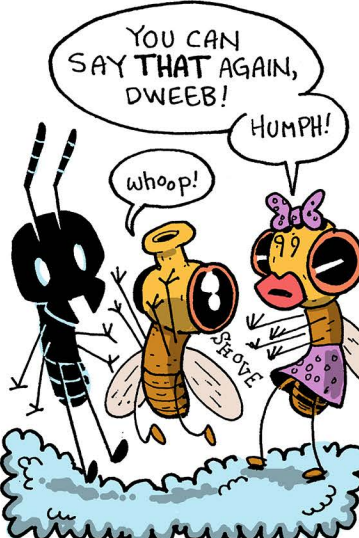
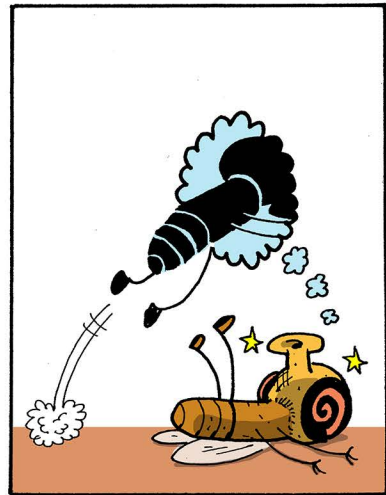
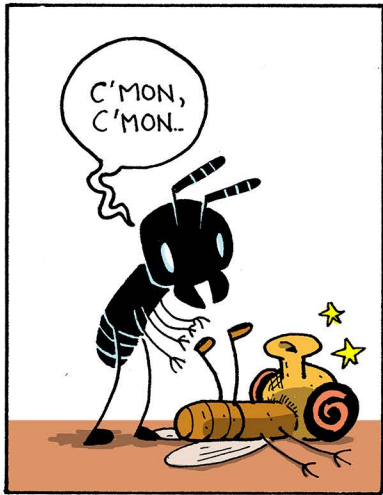
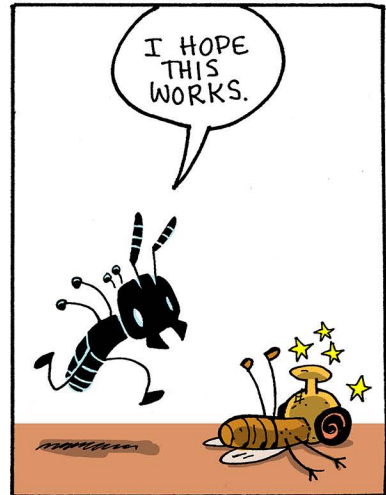
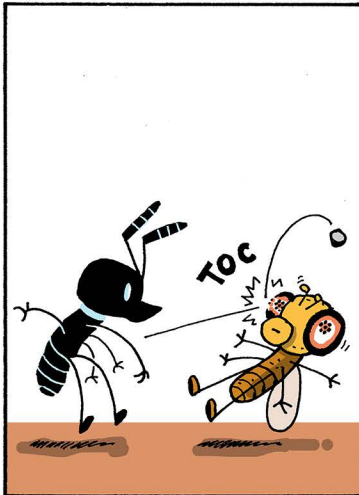
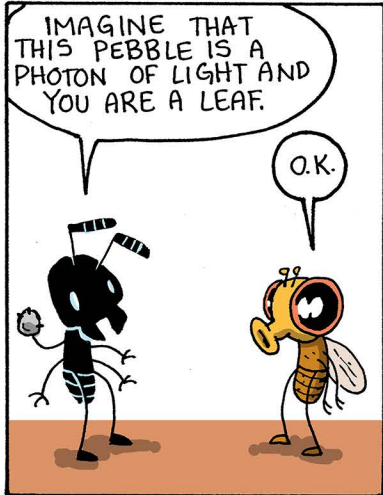
IMPRESSIVE, HUH?



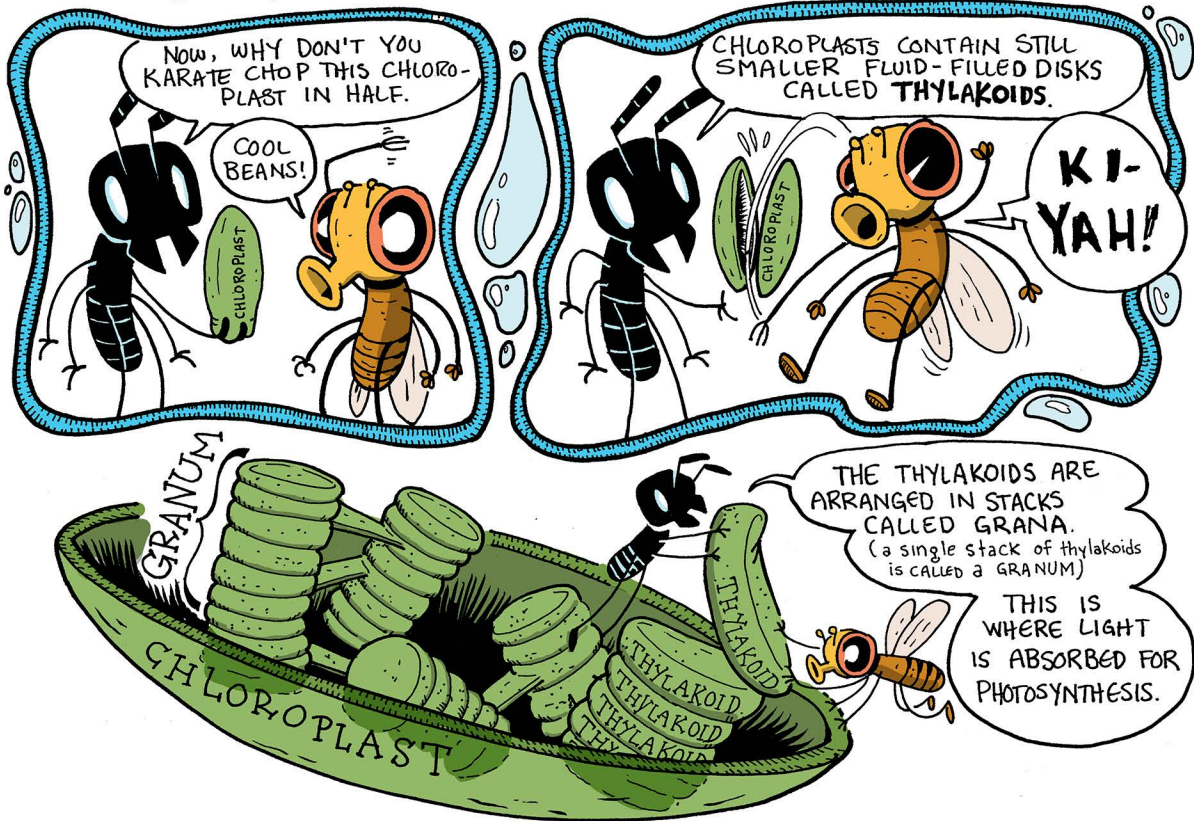
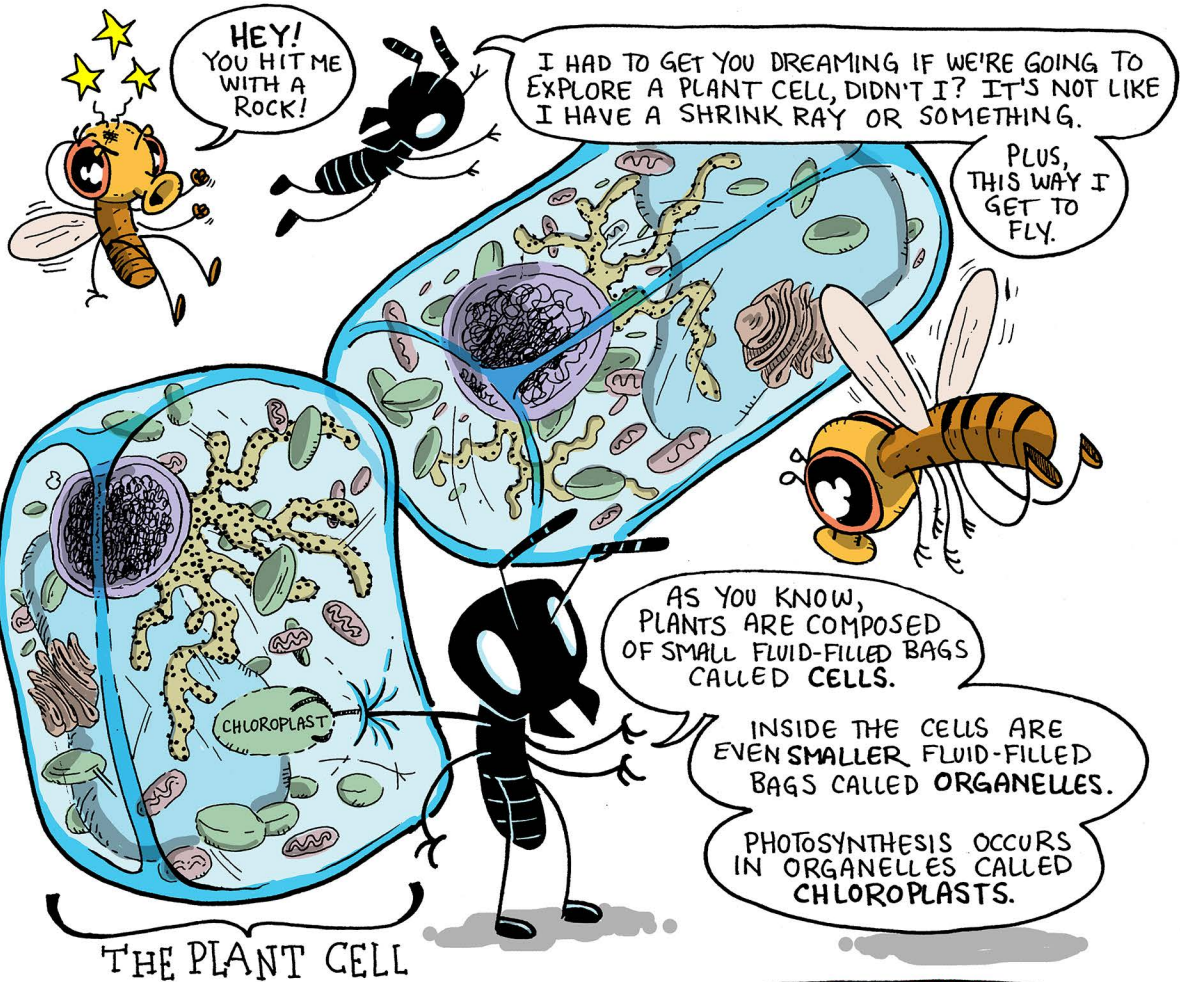
YEAH. MOST ANTS DON'T HAVE CHARTS



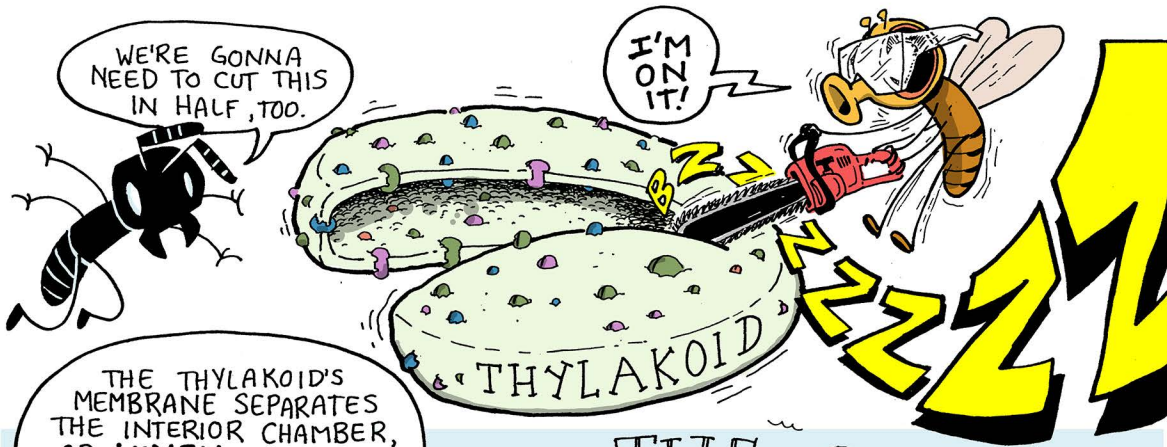




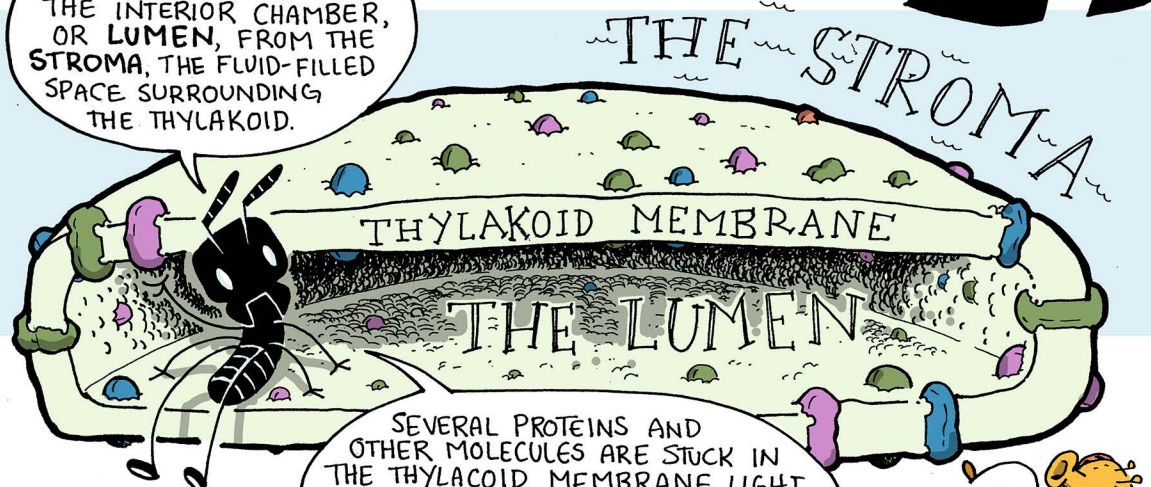




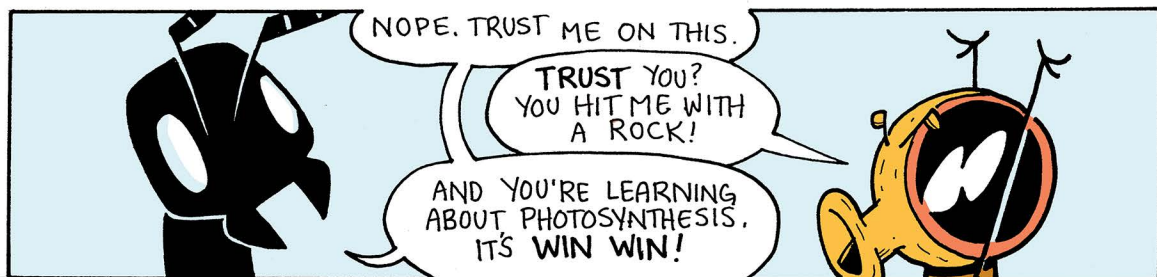
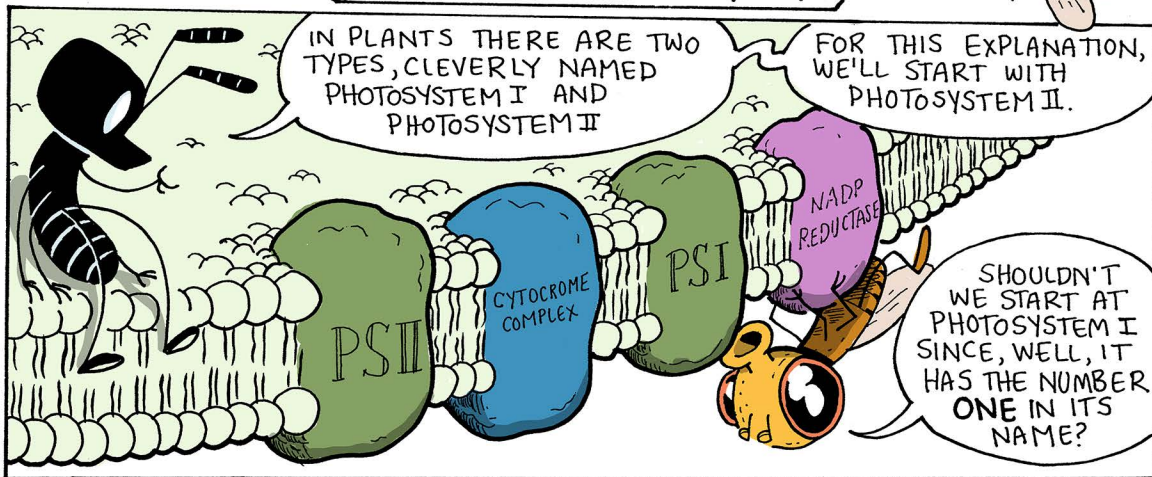




THE THYLAKOID'S MEMBRANE SEPARATES THE INTERIOR CHAMBER, OR LUMEN, FROM THE STROMA, THE FLUID-FILLED SPACE SURROUNDING THE THYLAKOID.

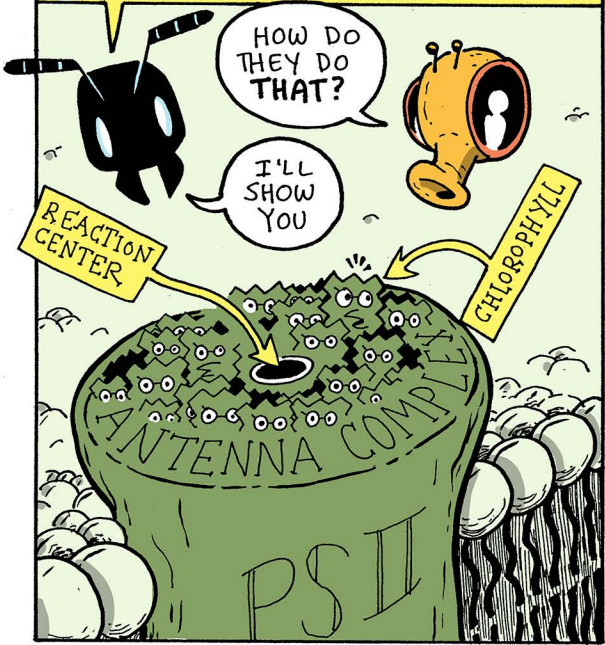


SEVERAL PROTEINS AND OTHER MOLECULES ARE STUCK IN THE THYLAKOID MEMBRANE. LIGHT IS CAPTURED BY CLUSTERS OF CHLOROPHYLL MOLECULES IN THE MEMBRANE CALLED PHOTOSYSTEMS.

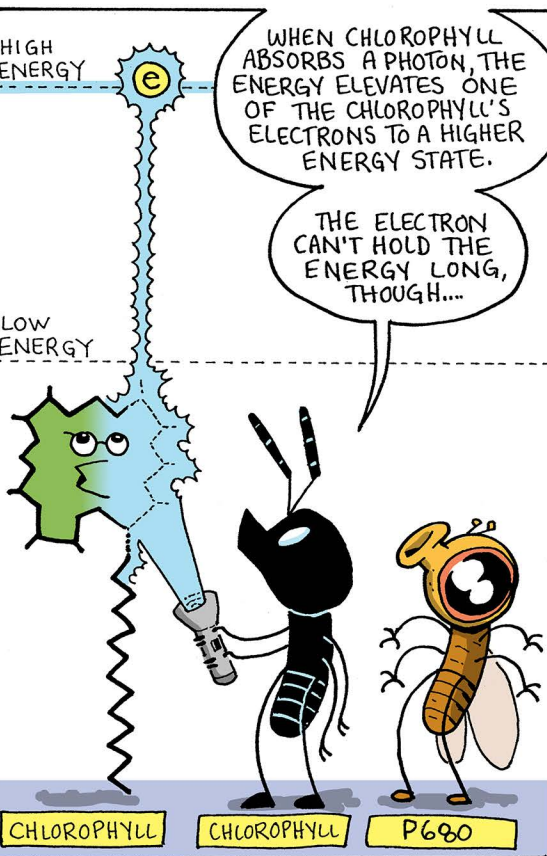
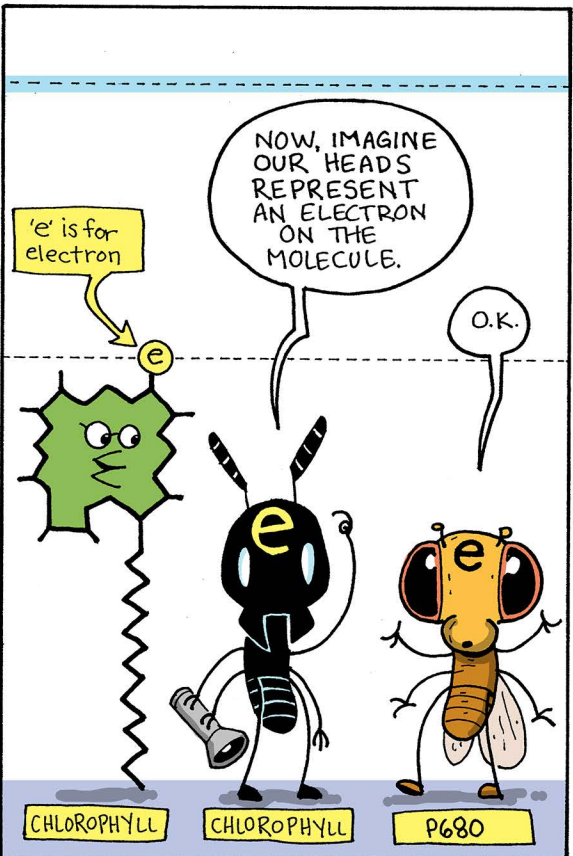
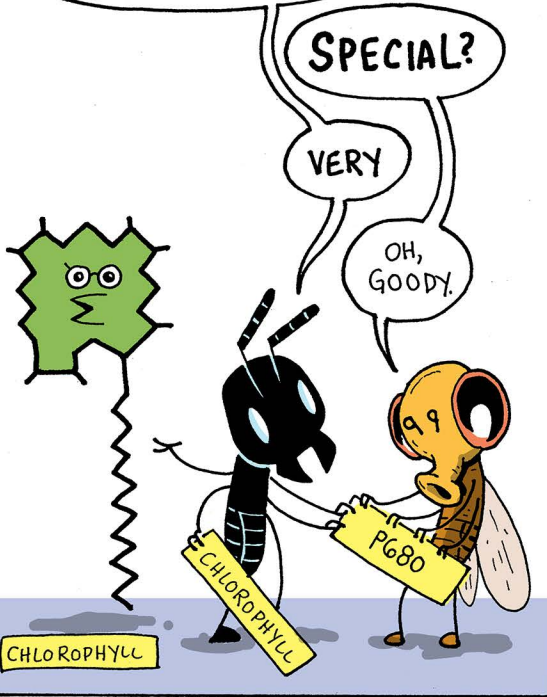




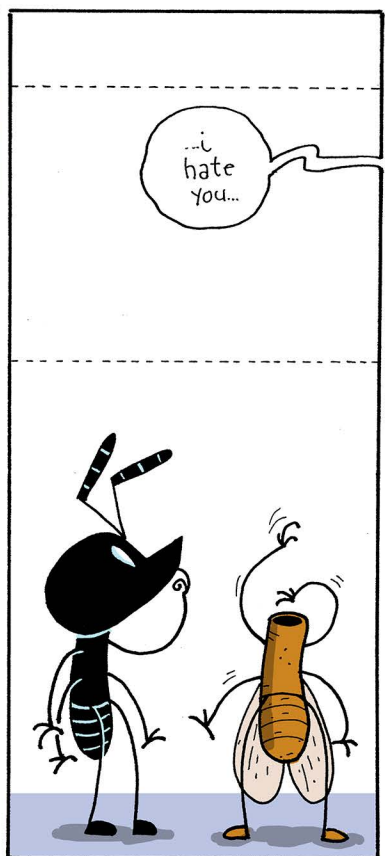
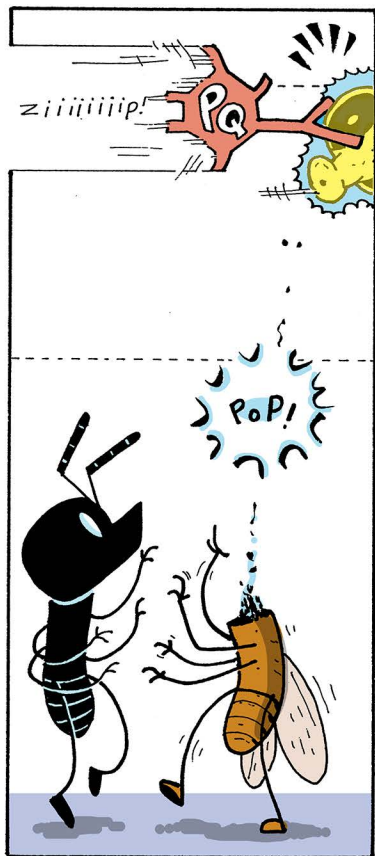
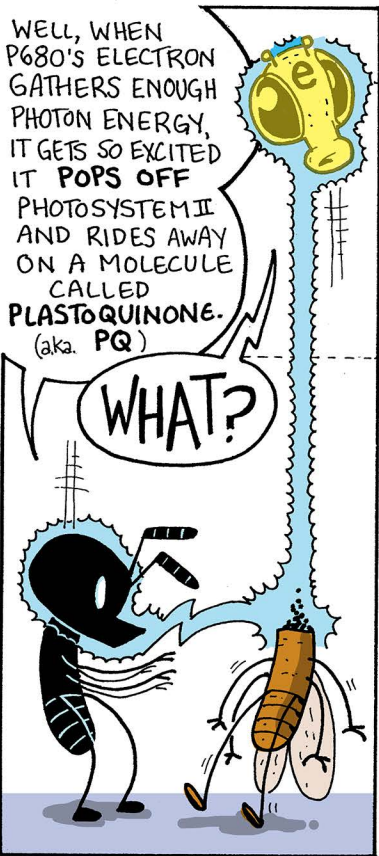
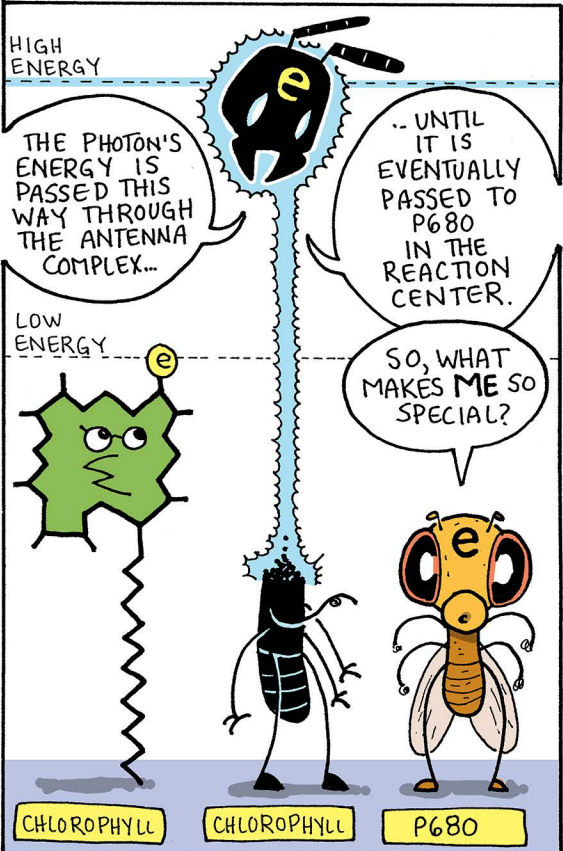
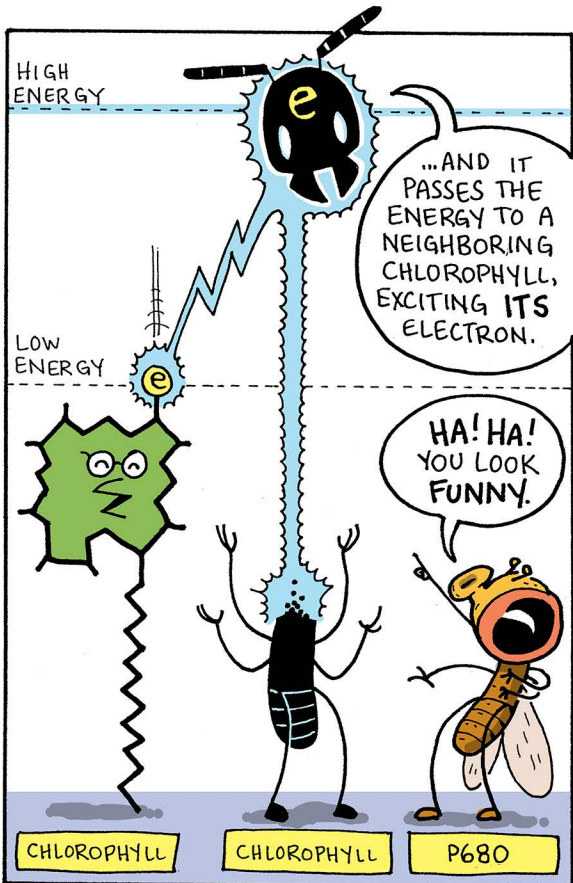
THE PHOTOSYSTEM HAS TWO MAJOR REGIONS. THE LARGE **ANTENNA COMPLEX** SURROUNDS THE SMALLER **REACTION CENTER**. ENERGY FROM A PHOTON OF LIGHT IS ABSORBED BY THE CHLOROPHYLL IN THE ANTENNA COMPLEX AND FUNNELED TO THE REACTION CENTER.

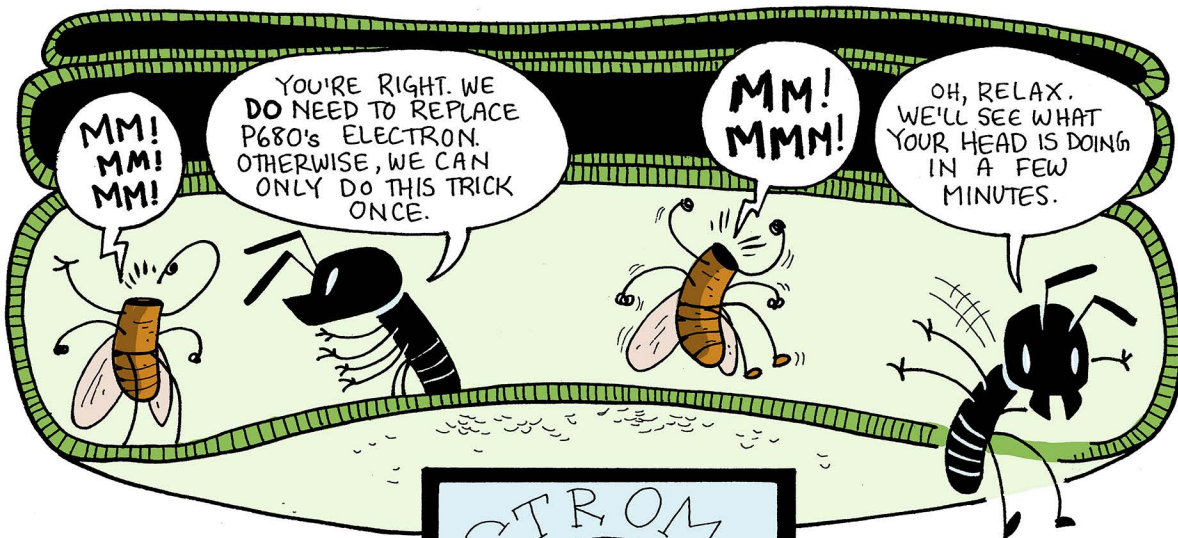


IMAGINE I'M A **CHLOROPHYLL** MOLECULE AND YOU ARE A SPECIAL PAIR OF MOLECULES IN THE REACTION CENTER CALLED **P680**.

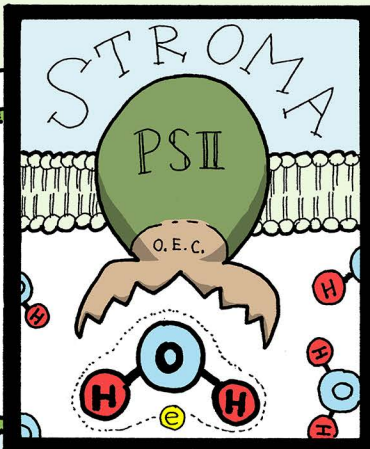




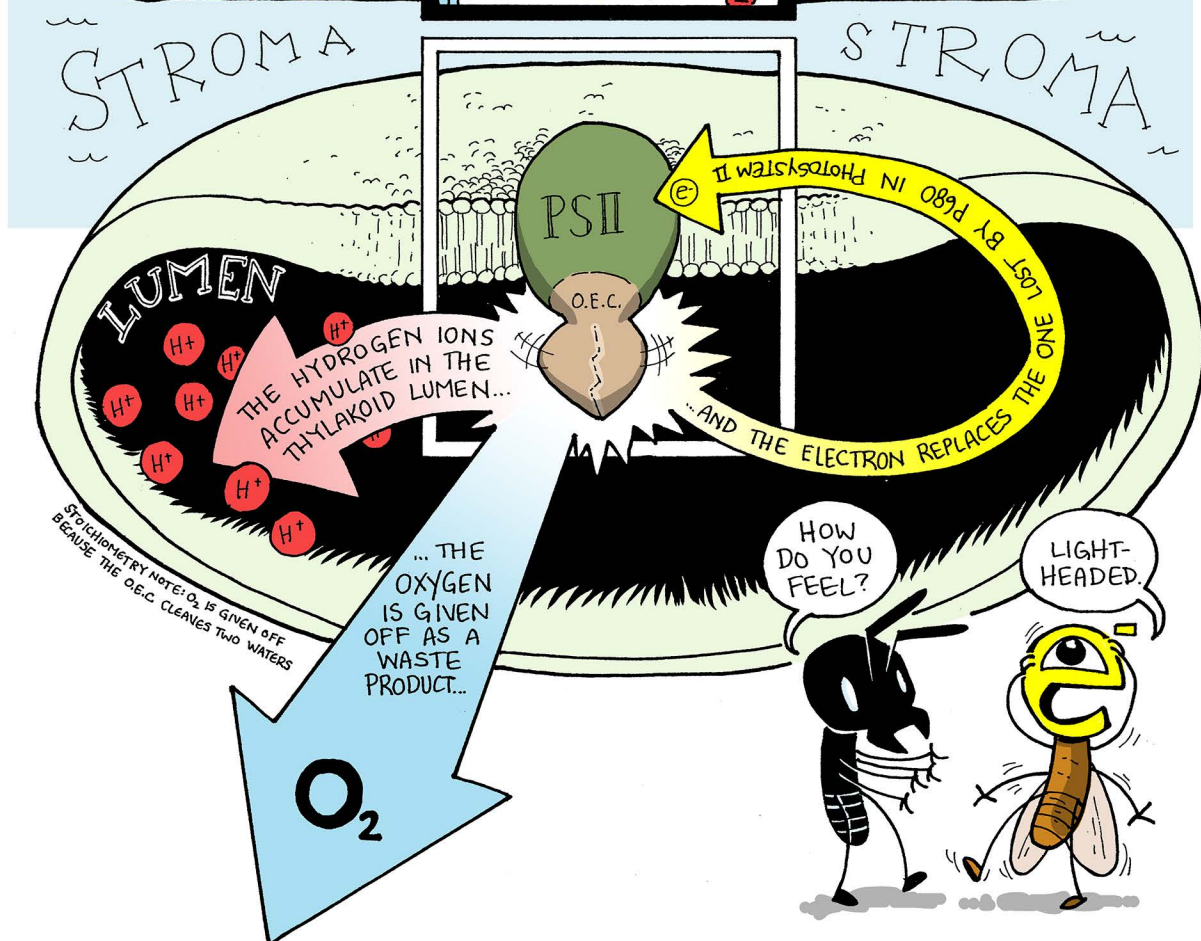




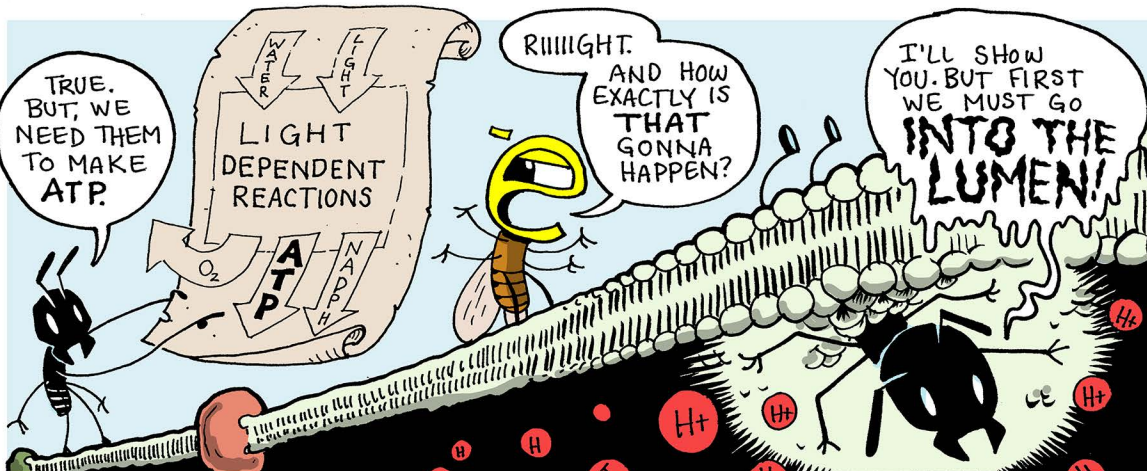
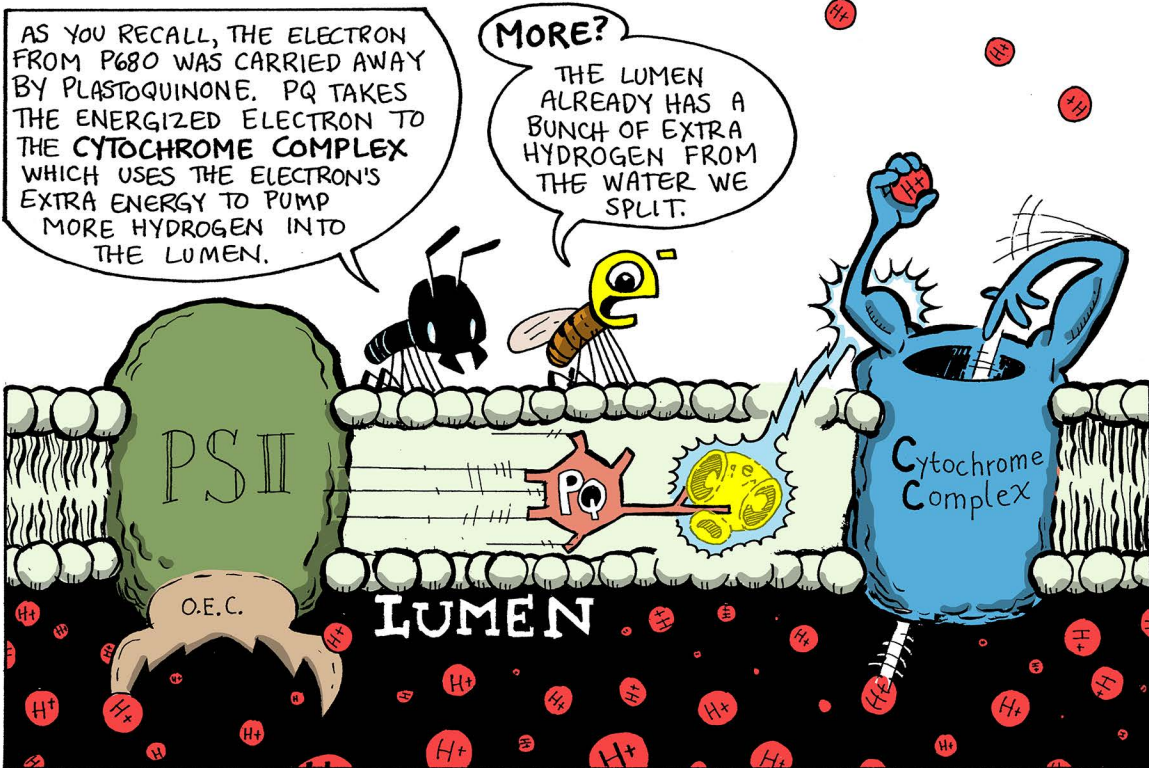
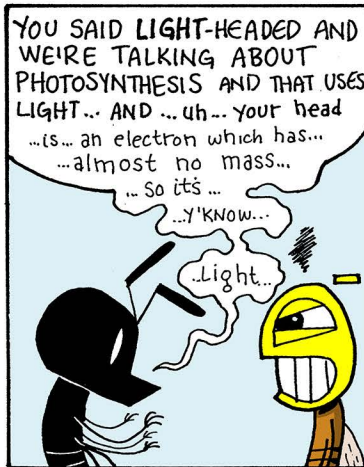
TO REPLACE THE ELECTRON LOST BY P680 IN PHOTOSYSTEM II, WE WILL NEED TO TAKE ONE FROM ANOTHER MOLECULE. IN THIS CASE, THAT OTHER MOLECULE IS WATER.



THERE'S A REGION OF PHOTOSYSTEM II CALLED THE OXYGEN EVOLVING COMPLEX (o.e.c.) THAT SPLITS WATER INTO THREE PARTS: HYDROGEN, OXYGEN & ONE OF THE ELECTRONS THAT KNITS THEM TOGETHER.

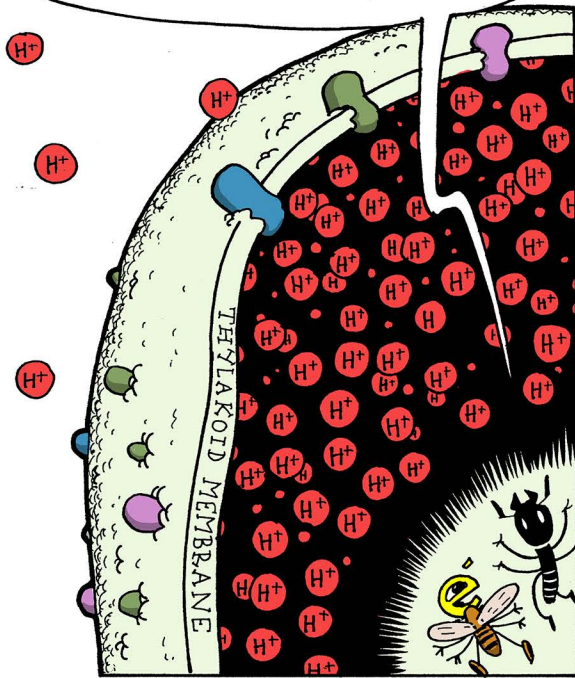




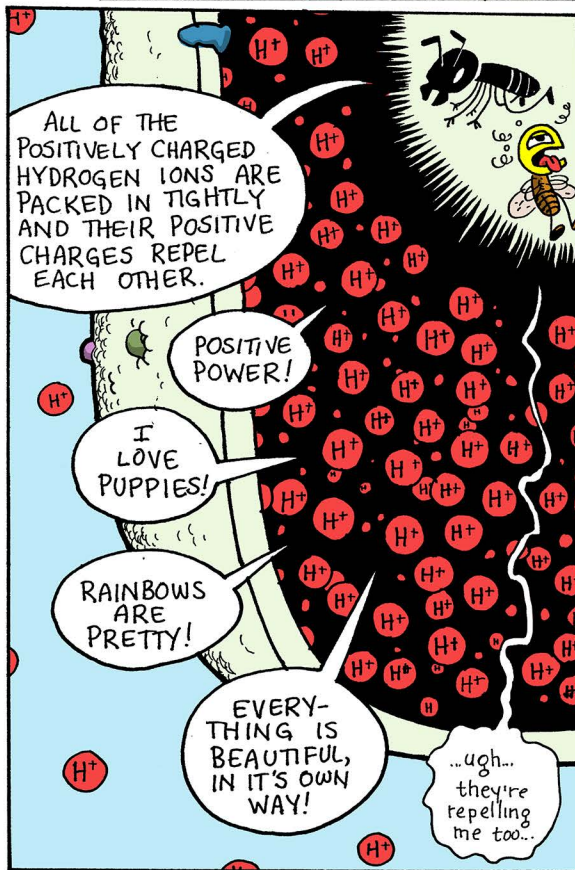
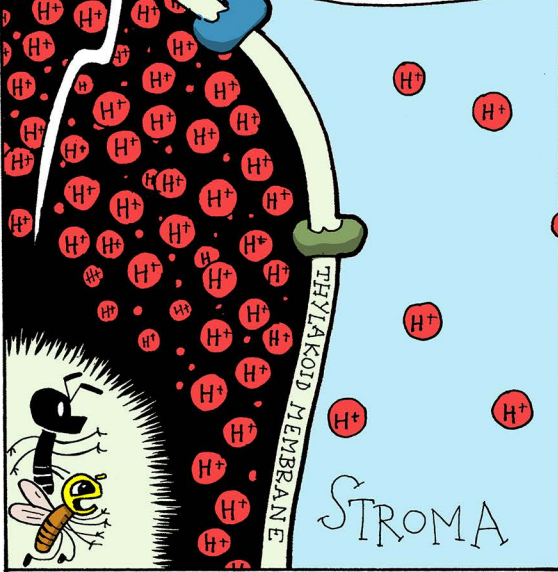




THERE ARE LOTS OF HYDROGEN IONS INSIDE THE LUMEN, BUT NOT VERY MANY IN THE SURROUNDING STROMA. THE DIFFERENCE IN CONCENTRATION ACROSS THE THYLAKOID MEMBRANE IS CALLED A CONCENTRATION GRADIENT.



IT TAKES THE HARD WORK OF THE CYTOCHROME COMPLEX TO MAINTAIN THE CONCENTRATION GRADIENT. IN NATURE, THINGS LIKE TO SPREAD THEMSELVES OUT EVENLY. GIVEN A CHANCE, THE HYDROGEN IONS CRAMMED INTO THE LUMEN WOULD CROSS THE THYLAKOID MEMBRANE AND SPREAD OUT INTO THE STROMA.



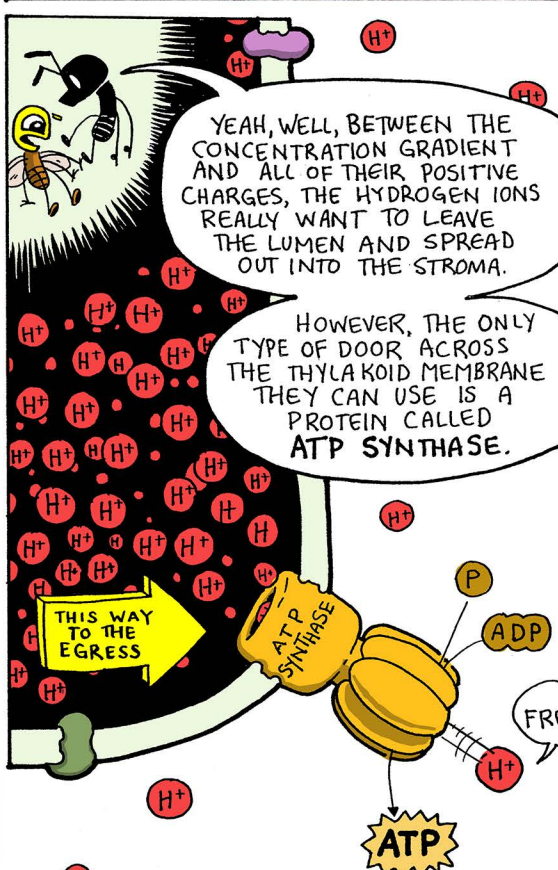
ALL OF THE POSITIVELY CHARGED HYDROGEN IONS ARE PACKED IN TIGHTLY AND THEIR POSITIVE CHARGES REPEL EACH OTHER.

POSITIVE POWER!  
I LOVE PUPPIES!

RAINBOWS ARE PRETTY!

EVERYTHING IS BEAUTIFUL, IN IT'S OWN WAY!

...ugh... they're repelling me too...



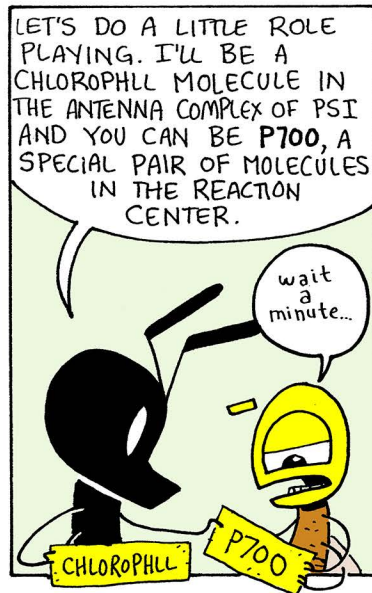
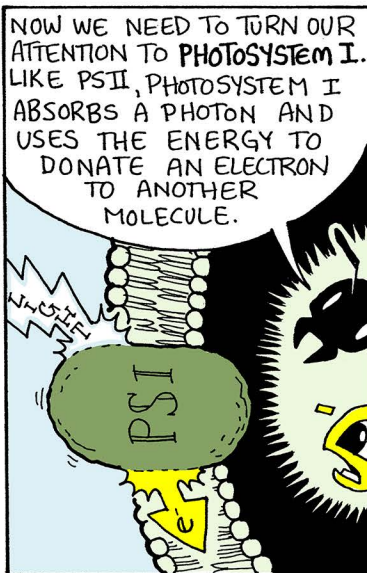
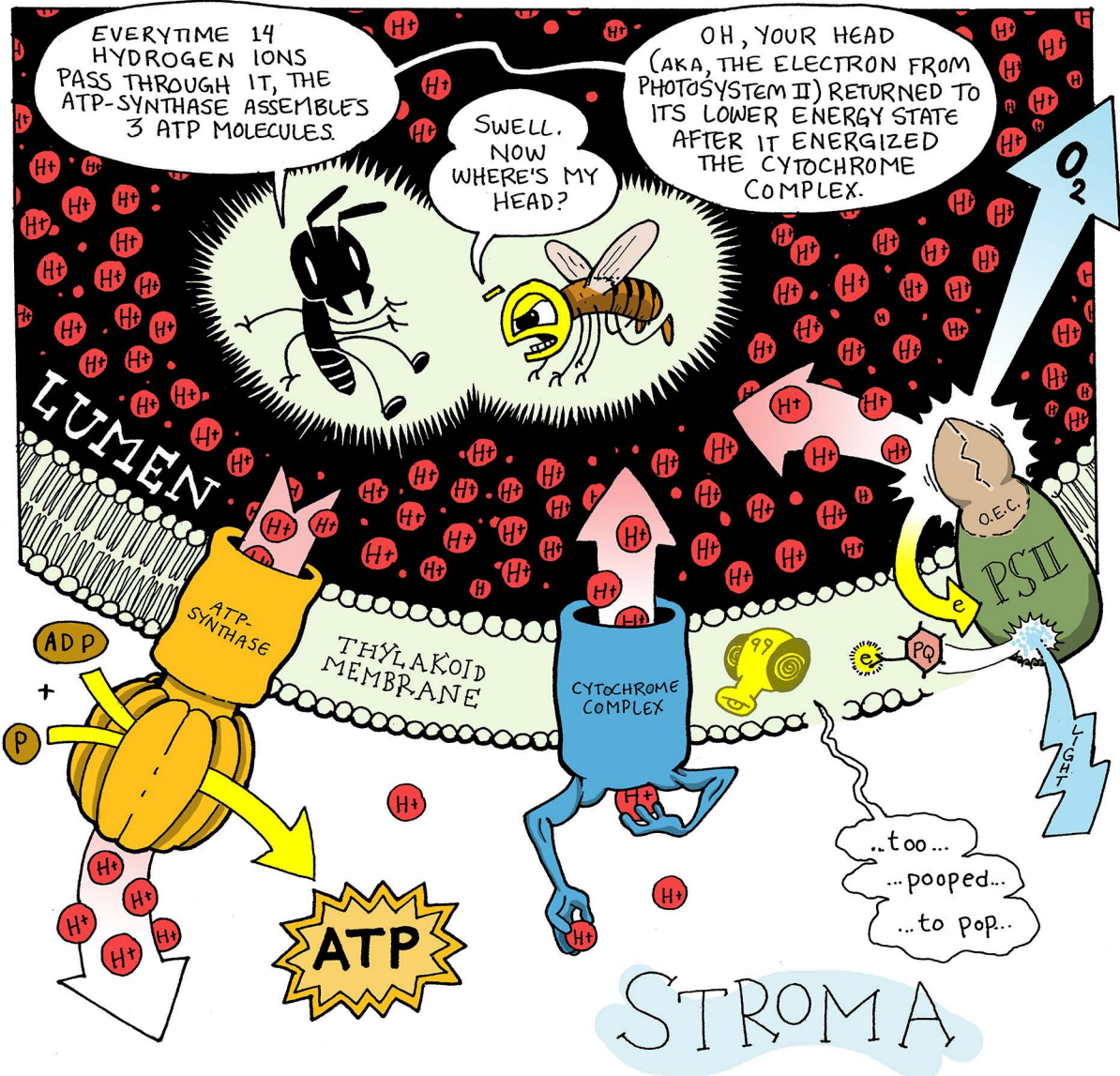
YEAH, WELL, BETWEEN THE CONCENTRATION GRADIENT AND ALL OF THEIR POSITIVE CHARGES, THE HYDROGEN IONS REALLY WANT TO LEAVE THE LUMEN AND SPREAD OUT INTO THE STROMA.

HOWEVER, THE ONLY TYPE OF DOOR ACROSS THE THYLAKOID MEMBRANE THEY CAN USE IS A PROTEIN CALLED ATP SYNTHASE.

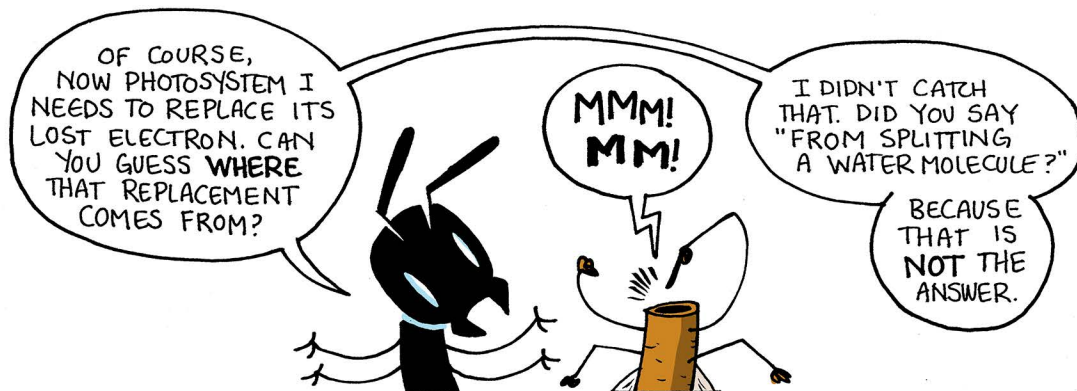
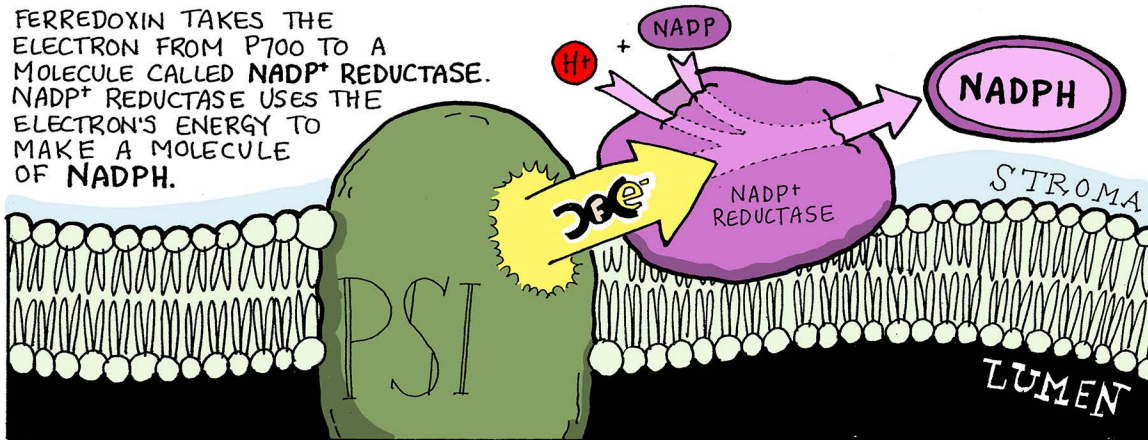
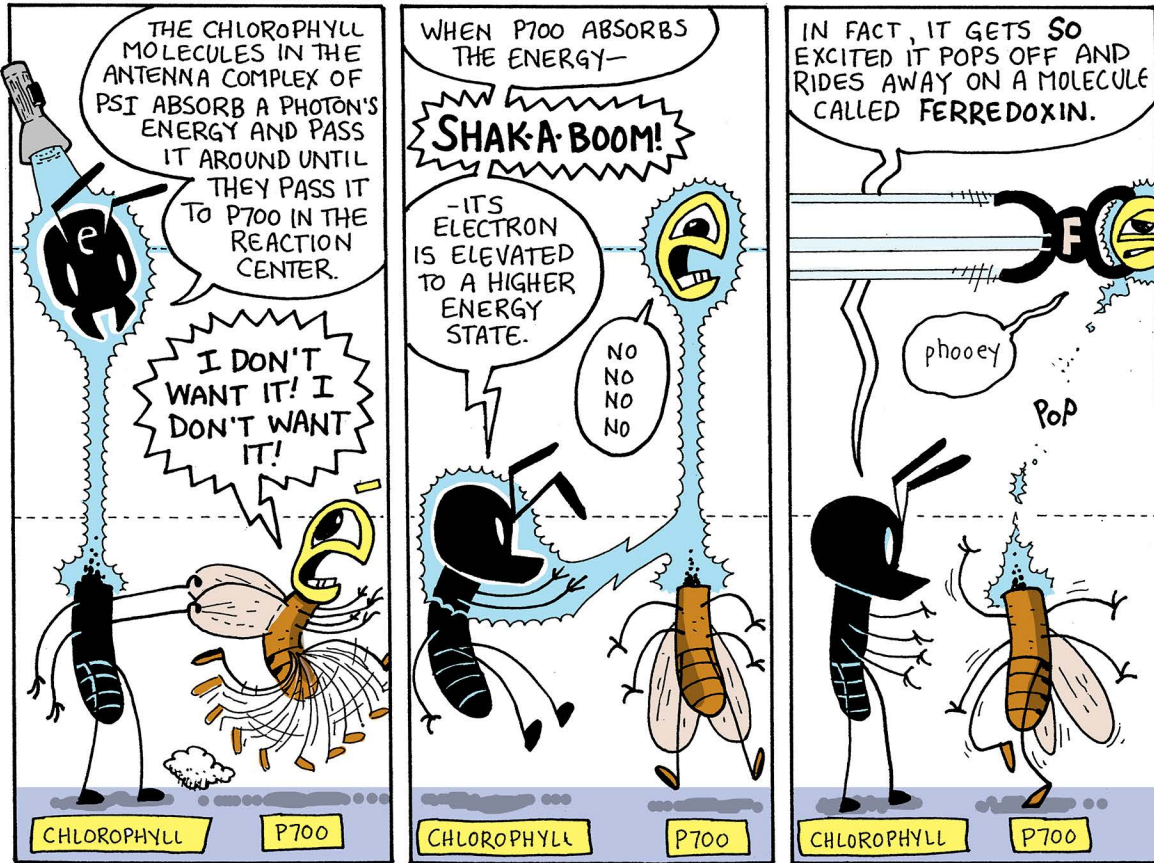
FREE!

ATP

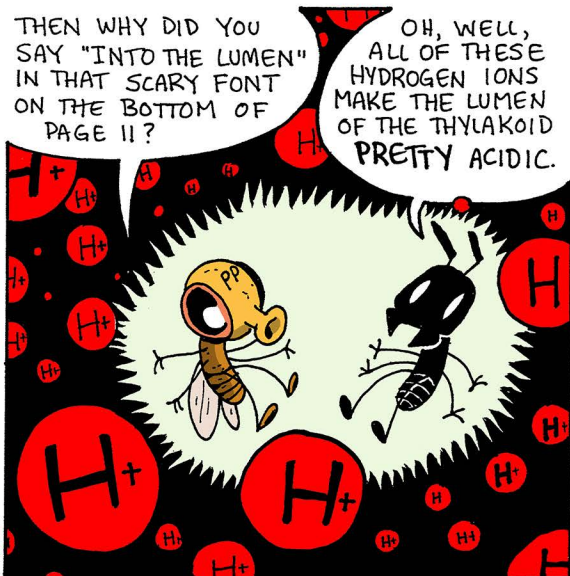
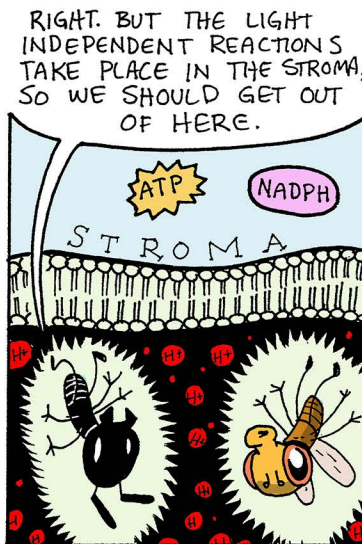
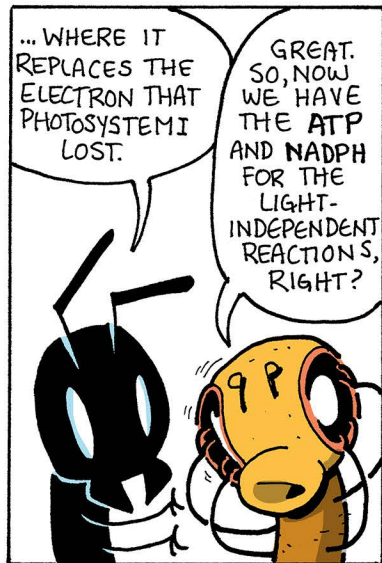
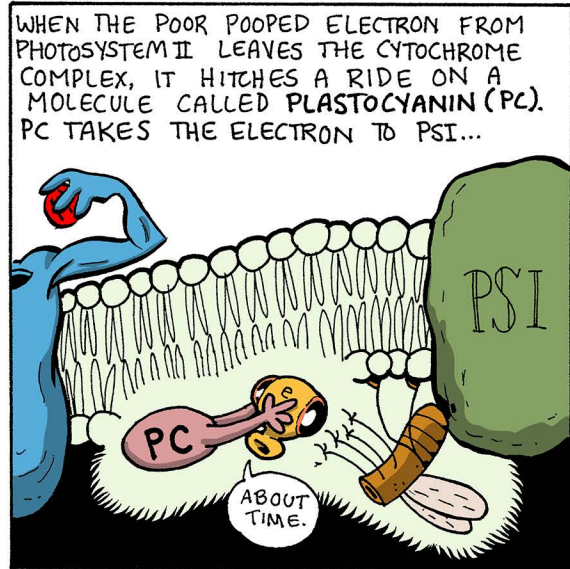
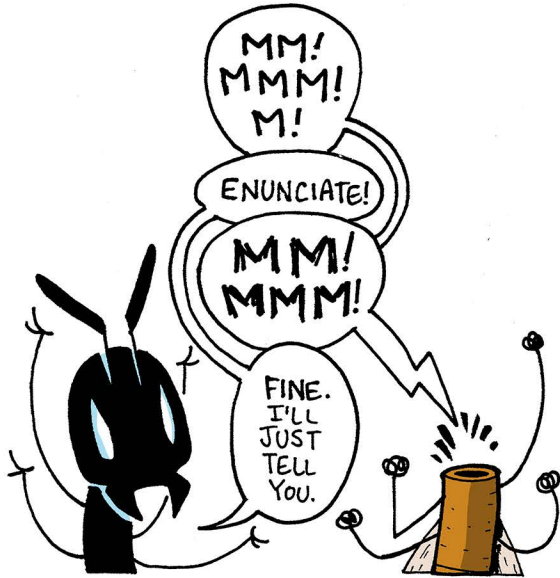












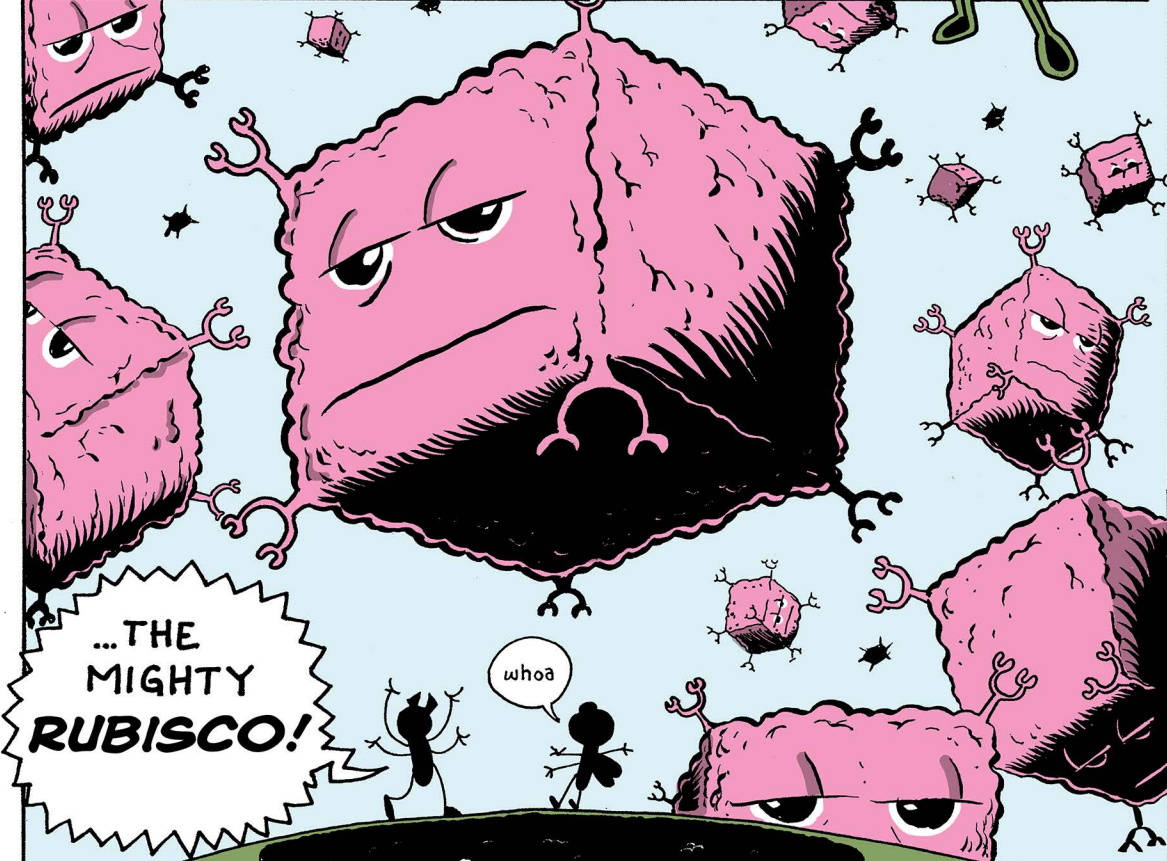


NOW WHAT?

NOW THE ATP AND NADPH ARE USED IN THE LIGHT-INDEPENDENT REACTIONS TO MAKE A SUGAR MOLECULE.

FINALLY. WHERE DO WE START?

THERE! IT ALL BEGINS WITH...



...THE MIGHTY RUBISCO!

WHAT IS THAT?

THAT IS PROBABLY THE MOST ABUNDANT ENZYME ON EARTH.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

RUBISCO COMBINES CO<sub>2</sub> WITH A FIVE CARBON MOLECULE CALLED RuBP IN A PROCESS KNOWN AS "CARBON FIXATION."

WHY?

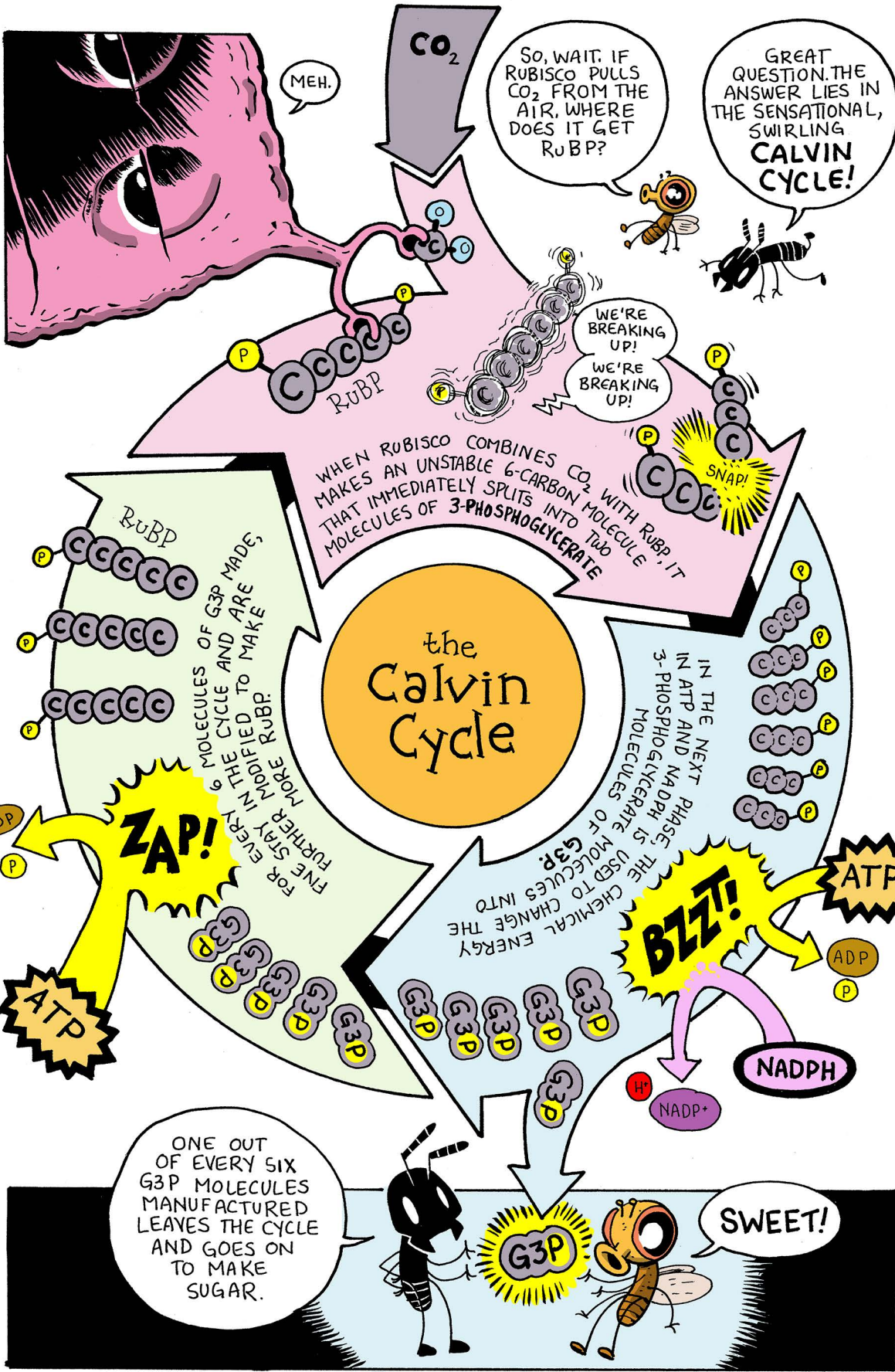
RuBP  
CCCCC=C  
 CO<sub>2</sub>

BECAUSE SUGAR IS A RING OF CARBON. IF THE LIGHT-INDEPENDENT REACTIONS ARE GONNA MAKE SUGAR, THEY'VE GOT TO GET THE CARBON BUILDING BLOCKS FROM SOMEWHERE.

SO, PLANTS PULL WHAT THEY NEED RIGHT FROM THE AIR.

O.K. THAT'S COOL.





SO, WAIT, IF RUBISCO PULLS CO<sub>2</sub> FROM THE AIR, WHERE DOES IT GET RuBP?

GREAT QUESTION. THE ANSWER LIES IN THE SENSATIONAL, SWIRLING **CALVIN CYCLE!**

WE'RE BREAKING UP!  
WE'RE BREAKING UP!

**SNAP!**

WHEN RUBISCO COMBINES CO<sub>2</sub> WITH RuBP, IT MAKES AN UNSTABLE 6-CARBON MOLECULE THAT IMMEDIATELY SPLITS INTO TWO MOLECULES OF 3-PHOSPHOGLYCERATE

**ZAP!**

FOR EVERY 6 MOLECULES OF G3P MADE, FIVE STAY IN THE CYCLE AND ARE MODIFIED TO MAKE MORE RuBP.

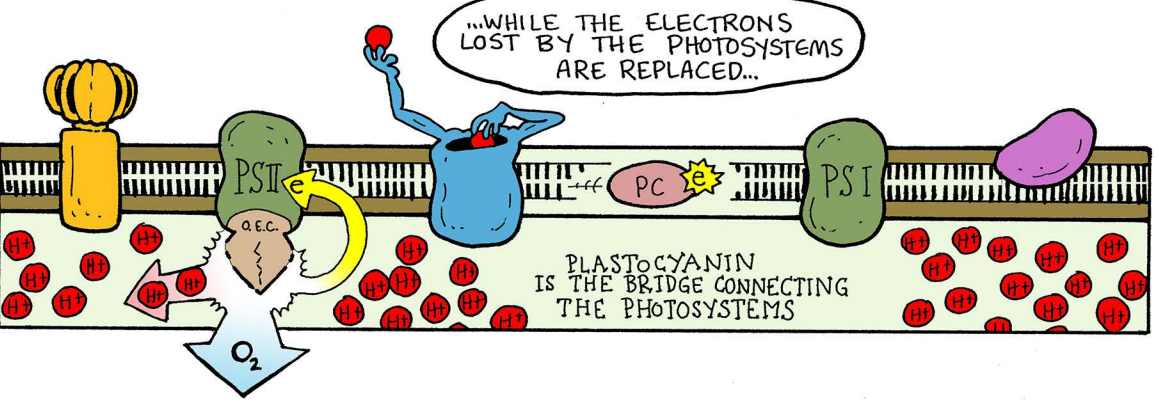
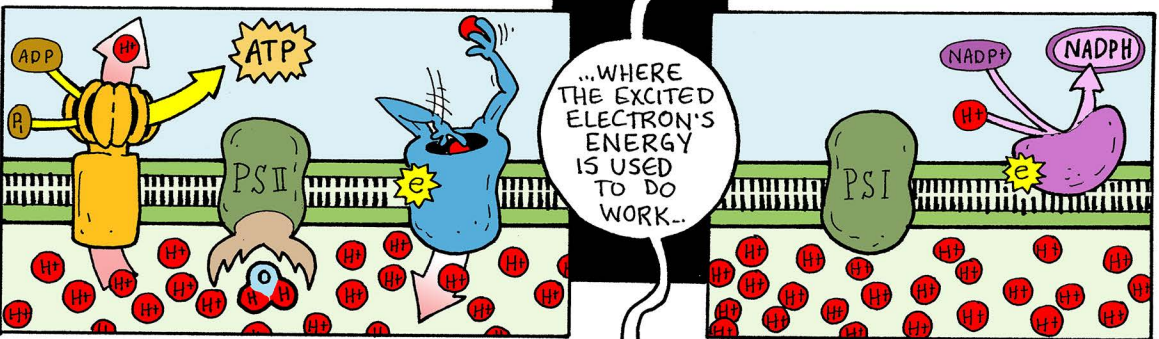
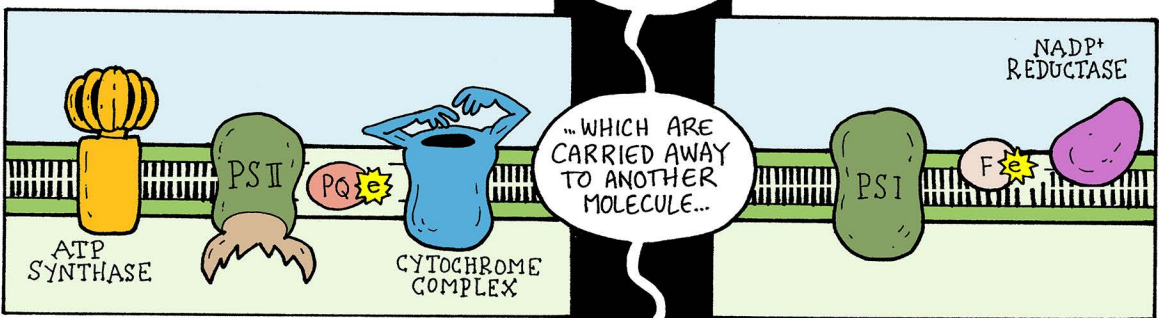
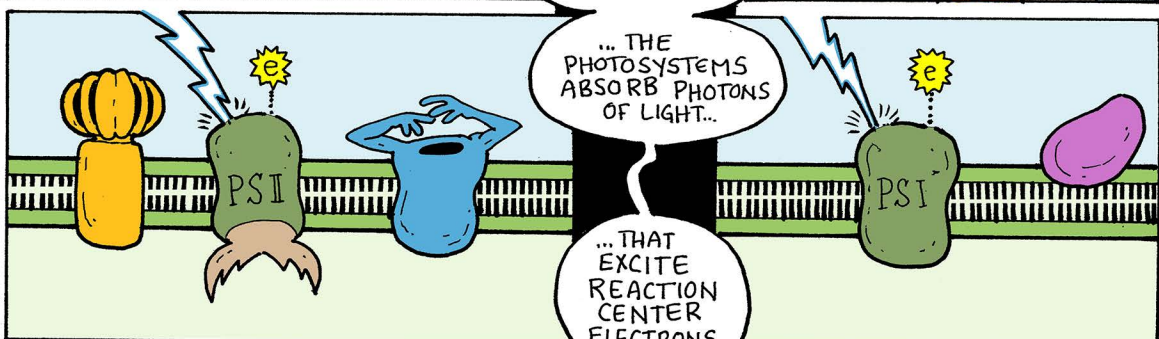
**BZZT!**

IN THE NEXT PHASE, THE CHEMICAL ENERGY IN ATP AND NADPH IS USED TO CHANGE THE 3-PHOSPHOGLYCERATE MOLECULES INTO G3P.

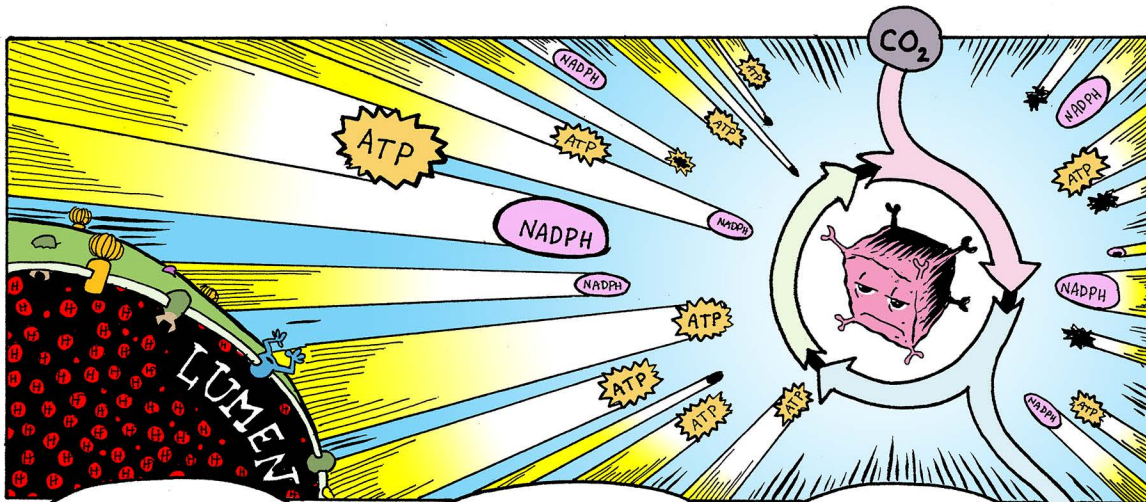
ONE OUT OF EVERY SIX G3P MOLECULES MANUFACTURED LEAVES THE CYCLE AND GOES ON TO MAKE SUGAR.

**SWEET!**

**the Calvin Cycle**



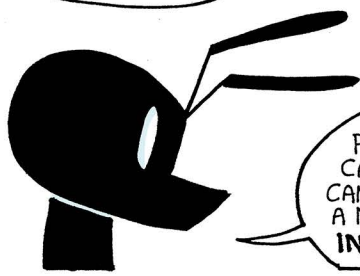




... AND THE ATP AND NADPH IN THE STROMA MOVE ON TO THE CALVIN CYCLE...

... WHERE RUBISCO GRABS CO<sub>2</sub> FROM THE AIR AND COMBINES IT WITH RUBP ULTIMATELY MAKING G3P...

... AND YOU'RE TELLING ME AFTER ALL OF THAT WE STILL DON'T HAVE ANY GLUCOSE?



AFTER IT POPS OUT OF THE CALVIN CYCLE, G3P CAN BE TURNED INTO A NUMBER OF THINGS INCLUDING GLUCOSE.



CORRECT.

GREAT. SO LET'S KEEP GOING.

WELL, I DON'T KNOW.

TECHNICALLY G3P IS THE END OF PHOTOSYNTHESIS AND THAT'S ALL I SAID WE'D TALK ABOUT.

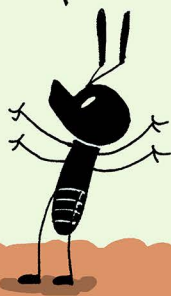
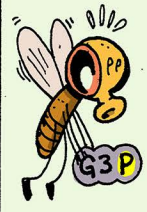
I'M NOT REALLY FAMILIAR WITH THE BIOCHEMICAL PATHWAYS THAT CONVERT G3P INTO GLUCOSE.



BUT... I WANTED SOMETHING SWEET!

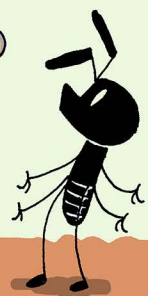
AND YOU GOT IT!

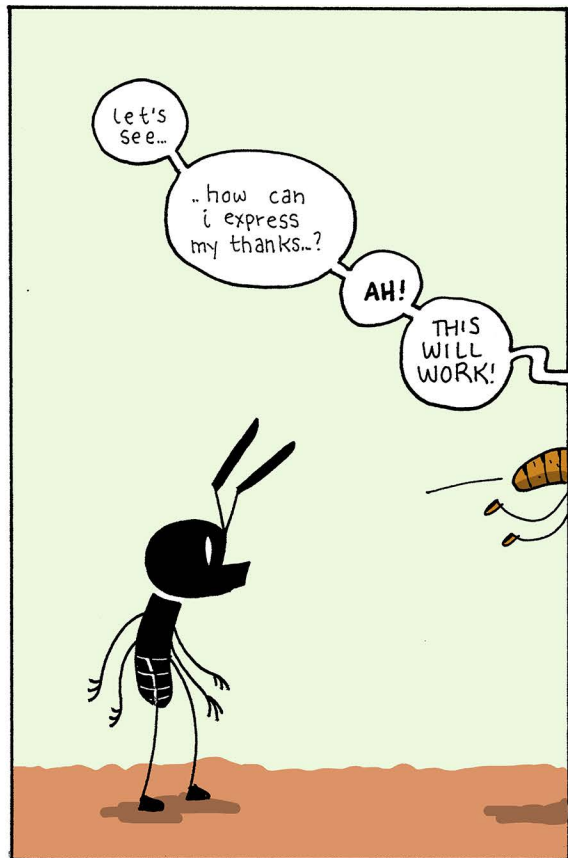
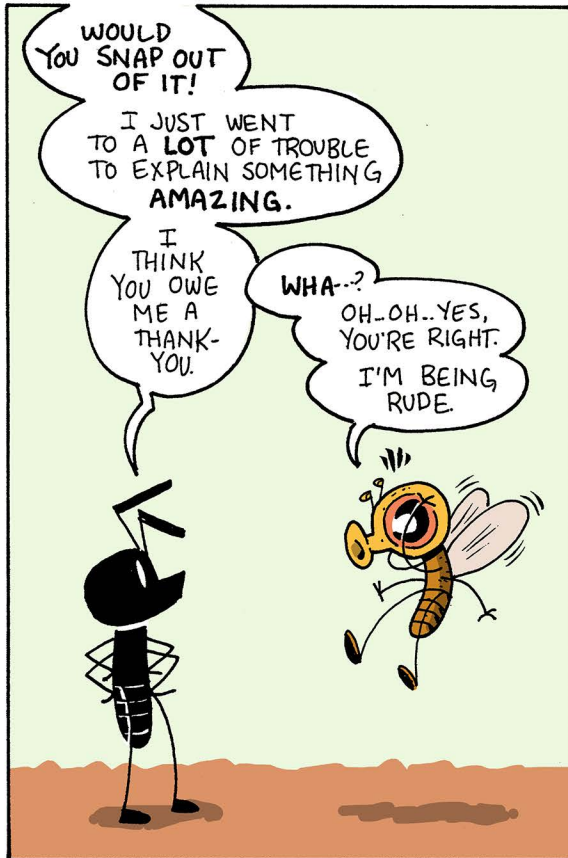
THE SWEET, SWEET TASTE OF NEW KNOWLEDGE!



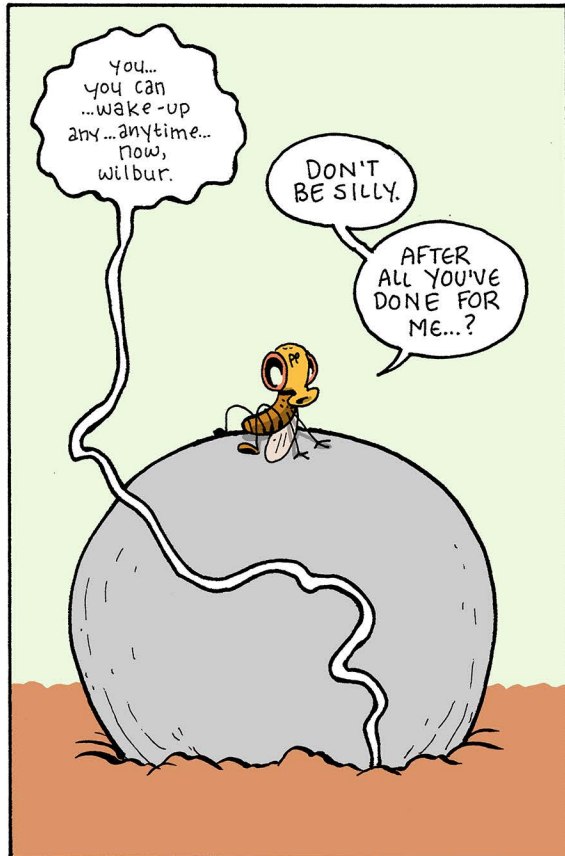
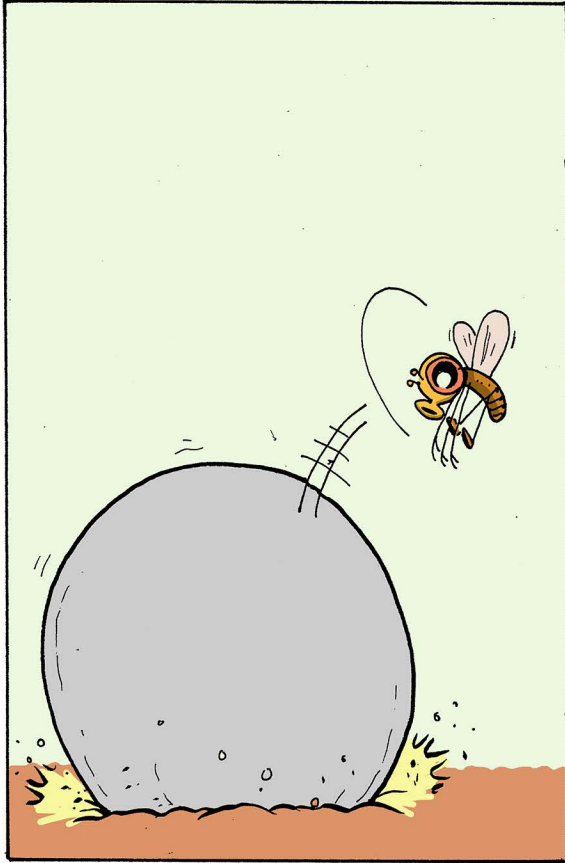
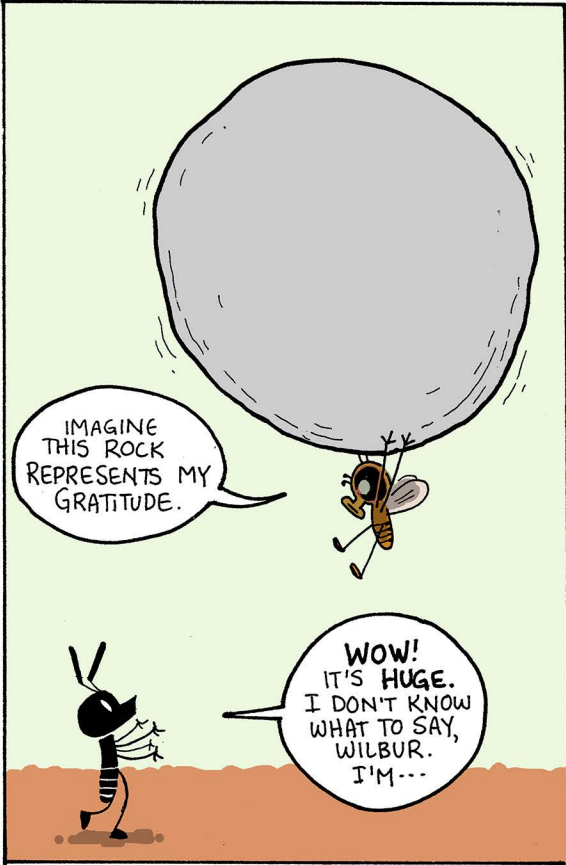
AND YOU GOT IT!

THE SWEET, SWEET TASTE OF NEW KNOWLEDGE!









... I  
WOULDN'T  
DREAM OF  
IT.

