Appendix
Appendix B: Tsang, Fiona (2011) - *Tsuruhane*, Newcastle, University of Newcastle
Dark waves embrace him
Water closes over him
Prince of Fishes now.

- Haiku for the Drowned
CHAPTER 1

THE WARRIOR IN THE WATER

第一章
Nihon country, Ōkawa han
Eighty-fifth Year of the Ninkyou Era

It was a cool night in early spring when she found him, lying motionless in the shallows. He had washed up on the shore of Lake Urashima like an old piece of driftwood. His face was still young – barely one-and-twenty years of age, she supposed, for all the seriousness of the expression writ upon it. It wore a sternness that even the waves had been unable to wash away.

She made a makeshift camp in a small clearing, and built a fire to drive away the cold, clammy fingers of fog that emanated from the nearby waters. Having tended to him as best she could and unsure of what else to do, she waited patiently for him to awaken.

He was at first unyielding. In the forest, a light wind sprang up, streaming through the branches and still whispering vaguely of winter. It almost seemed to mimic the sound of a distant ocean.

Indeed, from where he listened, in a realm that lay just beyond wakefulness, he thought he heard the encroaching clamour of shifting waves. For a moment longer, he dreamed of a watery abyss; of mountains which flowed, constantly ascending, only to come crashing back down
overhead; of deep, dark valleys that ebbed around him, drawing him further into their shifting embrace. He floated tranquilly in a lake that was no longer real; it was a lake filled with nothingness, and yet this ‘nothing’ had depth and substance, undulating around him, lapping gently on all sides. Then, the sound changed, gradually at first. It drew away, becoming indistinct, until it came rushing back, and he suddenly recognized it. It was the sound of a hungry flame voraciously devouring dry kindling.

From what seemed a great distance, he felt fingers curl around his arm. It was a light touch, yet it sent a jolt straight through him. Then a hand closed on his left shoulder, dragging him swiftly back into the world of the living.

Too swiftly. He lurched forwards, his eyes instinctively snapping open. For a moment, his senses swam. A hoarse gasp escaped him, and as the air hit his lungs, flames seared through his chest. He choked and gasped for breath like he had forgotten how to breathe. Reality reappeared as though a veil had been ripped away from his senses. He felt solid earth beneath him; sounds sharpened, damp smells reached his nostrils. His vision, at first impossibly bleary, gradually began to clear.

A vague array of colours rearranged themselves until he recognized a human form – that of a young woman – kneeling beside him. She seemed in the act of drawing away from him, as though startled. Her hand remained outstretched towards his shoulder. He realized that as he had risen from his prone position upon the ground, he had clutched at his own left arm involuntarily.

Panting heavily from the exertion of raising himself, his lungs seemed to be on fire. Nausea and dizziness assailed him and overcome, he lowered himself onto his back again. The ground beneath him was a cold, yet solidly comforting presence against the giddiness. His temples maintained a slow, relentless throb. His garments were damp and clung
to him, their weight heavy on his weakened limbs. Heavier still was the realization – he was still undoubtedly, miserably alive.

“Um, I…”

The gentle voice came from close beside him. He reopened the eyes he had closed against the dizziness, and silently surveyed the woman from where he lay. Her hands were clasped before her self-consciously, and she gazed shyly at him from beneath two delicate rows of black eyelashes.

“I’m sorry if my actions seemed presumptuous.” Her voice was soft; respectful. She continued somewhat haltingly: “I pulled you from the water. At first I believed you drowned, but then I saw that you still breathed…I feared you’d catch your death in wet clothes and I… I thought it prudent t-to…”

She trailed off, a slight blush suffusing her cheeks with colour. Her words remained unsaid, yet their implication, and the hand that had touched his shoulder, were eloquent.

“You found me in the water?”

His voice was little more than a strangled whisper, sounding harsh and otherworldly in his own ears. She nodded acquiescence. He glanced around; he could see the jagged outline of treetops in his peripheral vision. “How did I…?”

“I managed to convey you here, in the shelter of the woods,” she explained. “Nights can still be bitterly cold at this time of year. Without a fire, I feared you would die out in the open.”

Having learned all this, he closed his eyes again. For a moment, he again dreamt of undulating waves. Of being immersed within their depths, within their silence; of the void that had existed in their tumultuous embrace…

Of the peace he had found within chaos…

“Thank you, Miss, for saving my life.”

The words were spoken with something that might have resembled reluctance. Almost bitterness. However, if the girl noticed it, she did not show it.

“My name is Kotori. Might I inquire after yours?”
His mind struggled with the question for a moment, simple though it was. "It's Shiro."

He was rewarded with a very pretty smile. “Can you rise, Shiro-san? You should move closer to the fire and warm yourself.”

He obeyed gingerly, pausing once he had risen to sit, as the dizziness and pain tried to reclaim him. Reaching out, his hand touched something smooth and hard – the lacquered surface of a sword’s sheath. It had been strapped to his back when he had entered the water. It was a wonder that it hadn’t been lost in the current’s throes.

He pulled himself along the ground towards the flickering glow of the fire, leaning heavily on his right arm. His movements were stiff and slow. Every muscle in his body felt bruised, as though the rough waters of the lake had battered him about at their leisure, like a cat toying with a hapless mouse. As he moved closer, the warmth of the flames washed over him. He seated himself by the fireside, and unabashedly removed his right arm from its sleeve, letting his shirt fall partly open. Kotori politely and properly averted her eyes, but for a moment he felt their gaze rest upon him. It made his skin prickle, particularly when it swept over his left arm which, perhaps out of modesty or self-consciousness, remained stubbornly enclosed in its sleeve. Not so much as a finger was visible within the expanse of cloth; the end of the sleeve was bound securely closed with a cord. The fabric, though wet, still hung loosely, refusing to divulge any hint of the form beneath. This was the same arm he had clutched defensively when Kotori had roused him. Perhaps the limb was deformed, or had been lost to battle or disease?

The rest of his body seemed to negate this last theory. Not so much muscular, he was lean and slender. The muscles of his right arm were more pronounced, as though their strength had been cultivated by frequent use. It was the body of a practiced swordsman; powerful, yet slight and agile. The sword, which he kept close at hand, was at least one shaku longer than a regular katana, and therefore would also be heavier. It would take powerful arms to wield such a weapon effectively. A scar snaked up his right arm...
from wrist to elbow, the skin pale and slightly puckered where an extensive wound, possibly a burn, had long-since healed over.

Kotori fed the flames with sticks from a pile by the fireside. Shiro considered her with a sidelong glance.

She knelt beside him in a formal position, her legs tucked beneath her, her hands resting lightly on her knees. She looked into the fire solemnly, her face bathed in a rosy glow. Now that he truly looked at her, he noticed that she was remarkably attractive. Her mouth was a beautiful shape, her skin uncommonly pale. She knelt beside him with a subtle grace; her manner resembled the daintiness of a bird on a limb.

Despite himself, he began to wonder who she was and what she was doing here. She appeared to be approximately his age, or perhaps younger; it was so hard to tell with women. Though her adornments were quite modest – her face was free of cosmetics, her hair ornaments simple, her clothes well-made but hardly elaborate – every nuance of her speech and bearing somehow suggested refinement. A folded fan was tucked into her sash. Her entire accoutrement somehow resembled a shrine maiden’s garb, yet was also dissimilar. He could glean little about her from her appearance; she was neat and composed, despite camping in a desolate forest clearing. On the contrary, she looked as though she could have just stepped out into the gardens of an elegant mansion. Why would a maiden of high-birth – or any woman, for that matter – venture out, alone and well after nightfall, into open wilderness?

For a few moments, perhaps, Shiro’s thoughts ran thus; then his interest in her seemed to pass like a cloud before the moon, and he returned his gaze to the fire that was greedily consuming the kindling. The warm air radiating from it evaporated the moisture from his bared skin, until he was able to replace his semi-dry clothing. The heat had by now suffused his cold, numb limbs with a returning sense of feeling. Yet there was a part of him, an aloofness, that couldn’t seem to thaw before the flames.

A coldness that appeared to be rooted in his soul.

After some time in silence, Kotori spoke. The very fire seemed to quieten itself at the sound of her voice, so lovely was it to the ear.
“I presume you are not from around here, Shiro-san. Most people from
the village know the dangers of the cliffs, and the spillway from the dam.
Might I ask what brought you to such a place as this?”

Innocent though her question seemed, he did not answer it right away.
He stared pensively into the leaping flames, sparks seeming to fly from the
intensity of his gaze. Then the slightest of smiles twisted his lips, yet it was
a smile of irony rather than pleasure; his eyes remained cold.

“I came here for one purpose, and one purpose alone.” His voice, now
that he had recovered from the asphyxiation, was low and composed, yet
there was something sullen in the seriousness of his tone. If Kotori’s voice
coaxed forth images of spring, Shiro’s seemed to speak from within the
depths of chill autumn winds. “I battled outlaws and thieves on the roads
to arrive at this wretched place, so that I might dash my bones upon the
cliffs and bury their fragments beneath the waves – put simply, I came
here to die.”

He seemed to refuse to look at her; lost in his own thoughts, his eyes
remained on the flames, which leapt and writhed fretfully. Kotori’s own
eyes widened in shock at his frankness. Forgetting what was proper, she
stared at him openly. His resoluteness chilled her. Now she realized why
his words of thanks had seemed so stilted, so false…they had been false…
but he had felt obliged to thank her for the service she had rendered him,
despite the fact it had been unwelcome.

Despite the fact that he had wanted to be left to die. Her efforts hadn’t
been appreciated; he had not wanted her to save him at all.

She watched him with a strange feeling in her heart, a feeling that was
in part a horrified fascination, but also a great deal of pity. What could
drive a young man, able in body and nearing the prime of his life, to long
for such a vulgar and pain-filled death?

Suddenly, Shiro’s eyes darted from the fire to the surrounding
woodlands. After a moment, Kotori heard a repetition of what he must
have heard before her; the snap of a twig. It was followed seconds later by
rustling foliage.

Something – or things – roamed the woods.
Shiro methodically scanned the dark sea of vegetation with his eyes, searching for a source of the disturbance. The wind had dropped, rendering the trees completely motionless. Several long moments of near-silence ensued.

Then,

without any prior indication,

a branch on the edge of the clearing

swung unnaturally in the stillness of the night.

**HA, A NICE WARM FIRE!**
THE WARMth OF A WOMAn WOULD SE NICE, TOO
HEH HEH

FIVE MEN -- BANDITS...
I I THEY HAVE US SURROUNDED...

HA HA HA HA HA

HA HA HA HA
TK

SHRK

TRY IT AGAIN, SWORDSMA, AND I’LL PUT A HOLE IN YOUR HAND
YOU'RE TWITCHY THERE, PAL - MUST BE SITTIN' ON SOMETHING VALUABLE

HEY, GUNBE!

YEAH, BOSS?

TAKE THIS GUY DOWN TO THE SHORE

BRING BACK HIS WALLET, AND DUMP HIS CORPSE IN THE LAKE

HEH, SOUNDS LIKE MY KINDA WORK

KRCK
DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY PAL, BUT YOU'D ONLY BE IN THE WAY.

THE WOMAN STAYS WITH ME. DON'T WORRY, I'LL MAKE SURE SHE'S SHOWN A GOOD TIME.

DAMN IT!

I CAN'T MOVE BECAUSE OF THOSE SHURKEN.

IF ONLY I COULD REACH MY SWORD...
KOTORI-DONO...?

BUT SHE WAS JUST HERE - DID SHE ESCAPE...?
SHRIEK

JUST A BIRD...

NOW!

GRAB

!!
FWWT

WHSSH

?! 

!?
TSURUHANE - END OF CHAPTER ONE - TO BE CONTINUED...
A picture is worth a thousand words.

This is true in many respects; or, perhaps a better way of putting it would be, a picture can be worth a thousand words. To the artist or illustrator, a blank page can contain or omit as much as they wish to put into it. A simple event can take ten images to express; the complexity of the cosmos can be captured in a single, frenzied scrawl. The greatest advantage of imagery is that it can be truly liberating; there are no right or wrong ways of drawing a thing, not really. It is all about self-expression.

Some people may wonder why I chose to tell my story in this format; it is half words, half drawings, vaguely divided into two parts, loosely joined at the middle. Is it a picture book, or a comic book? Some people may see it as being not one thing or the other. I see it as being both.

I can’t remember a time when I didn’t want to tell stories. I suppose it came from being born into a family of librarians; I always had books around, and those first books were all picture books. I used to create my own books, written and drawn with texta on sheets of coloured paper, bound with sticky tape and staples. As I grew older, though I learned to read and enjoyed written words just as much, I never quite forgot about picture books; they still remained constant companions, reminding me of a childhood which gradually receded into the distance (and which, I suspect, will soon disappear completely beyond a dip in the horizon).

Then, in my teens, I discovered graphic novels. Once I stumbled upon this revelatory, revolutionary format, I realized this was what it had all been about – this was what I would be all about. I wanted to tell stories, and I would tell them by drawing them.

When it came to telling this particular story, Tsuruhane, I struggled for a time as I tried to figure out how many drawings there would be, and how many words. As much I as I love drawing things, I also love writing...
things, and in a way, writing comes more easily to me. At the same time, there were so many parts of this story which I felt would benefit from a visual representation. Around the time of this seeming state of quandary, I was captivated (and still am) by the work of Yoshitaka Amano - a veritable kaleidoscope of colours and forms, breath-takingly lush and intricate, truly beyond words to describe. In fact, the inverse is the case; Amano’s art always accompanies the text of authors, augmenting a fully-formed narrative, yet always completing it rather than merely decorating it. At the other end of the spectrum are the Japanese manga I enjoy reading – particularly the works of Nobuhiro Watsuki, Ima Ichiko and Goseki Kojima – full of expressive lines and a sense of motion that seems to flow from panel to panel, with the odd speech-bubble dotted about the page.

I never really considered these types of storytelling as two separate genres; I read both with equal enthusiasm. However, the more I looked at them as separate media – the graphic novel and the illustrated novel – the more I began to notice the differences. Comparing the two, I saw that there was a change in dynamic, in the interaction between word and image; how they could be combined, how variations in the word/image ratio would slightly alter the reading experience. I could see the advantages of both these formats, and for about a month, I tried to choose between them. Then it occurred to me: *why did I have to choose?*

I returned to that idolized mantra, common to all branches of design: *form follows function*. My choice of visual expression followed my story’s content. In scenes which contain a lot of dialogue or less direct, more abstract events, I wrote the scene in prose, accompanied by illustrations (because there were fewer of these, I was able to produce them in full colour). For scenes where more kinetic action took place, I switched to a manga or ‘comic book’ style, using sequential art to carry the story onwards (in the tradition of manga and out of a need for economy (in time, not cost), I drew these monochromatically; or at least, with a limited colour scheme). The two formats I used are quite different in terms of structure, yet they are united here for a common purpose, and I do think the combination lends itself to the story. Both parts, prose and imagery, are essential to the storytelling process; to dispense with either, or change
them to a single format, would result in something that would be far less effective. Furthermore, this multimodal format truly expresses my values and interests: both my affinity for the written word, and my obsession with all things visual.

I had initially thought I was the first person to try an experimental format like this; however, I was pipped at the post by one of my heroes, Australian writer/artist Shaun Tan. His book, ‘Tales of Outer Suburbia’, features a number of short stories, each told in a slightly different format, from prose to sequential art, and in some places, a near-seamless transition between both. Whereas Tan’s publication contained numerous separate tales, mine is a single story told in two slightly different ways. I don’t yet know whether it works as a combined storytelling medium; it works in Tan’s example, but as for mine...

Perhaps you, dear reader, can be the judge of that?

Whichever of the two formats you may or may not prefer, the story that runs through both remains the same. Whatever the outcome, I feel the exercise is somehow still successful, even as just an experimental format. In any case, I am fulfilling a quest I started on when I was a child: to tell a story. Though the means and materials have changed, the intent is still the same, as is my single, motivating wish as a storyteller:

I hope you enjoyed reading my story.
**Glossary**

*haiku*: a traditional form of Japanese poetry. It is made up of 17 syllables (or ‘*on*’ in Japanese), arranged into three lines in a 5-7-5 sequence. All the poetry featured in *Tsuruhane* are original English-language *haiku*.

*Nihon*: the official name for the country of Japan, used by native Japanese speakers. The English name ‘Japan’ is actually an exonym which is not used within Japan itself. *Nihon* literally means ‘the sun’s origin’, otherwise translated as ‘land of the rising sun’. Although the country of Nihon in this story bears the same name, it is not a historically correct version of Japan; it is a fictionalized culture, made up of various aspects of Japanese tradition. It is probably best described as a pastiche; an outsider’s romanticized vision of what feudal Japan may have been like.

*Ōkawa han*: in feudal Japan, a ‘*han*’ was an administrative division in land, similar to a state or province. Each *han* was ruled by a feudal lord known as a *daimyo*. Ōkawa is a made-up place name.

*Ninkyou Era*: Japan’s history is divided into various periods or eras, usually differentiated by a change in political power, or some other significant cultural development. The fictional name of the era *Tsuruhane* is set in, ‘*Ninkyou*’, roughly translates from Japanese as ‘chivalry’.

*Urashima*: this imaginary lake takes its name from an old Japanese folktale not dissimilar to Rip Van Winkle. Urashima Tarō was a fisherman who freed a stranded turtle; this turtle turned out to be a disguised princess, the daughter of the Emperor of the Seas. Urashima married the princess, but longed for his old home; when he returned to land, he found that though to his perception he had only been away for three days, in fact three hundred mortal years had passed in his absence.
**sun:** an old measurement used in some parts of Asia. It was traditionally
the typical width of a person’s thumb, measured at the knuckle, and is the
equivalent of 30.30 millimetres (1.19 in.). 10 sun make up a single **shaku**.

**katana:** otherwise known as a samurai sword, a **katana** generally refers to a
Japanese sword with a single cutting edge and a curved blade. The term is
often used to describe blades of a particular length, usually greater than 59 cm
and less than 165 cm. The length of the sword one carried varied according to
the height of the wielder; ideally, when held pointing straight down beside
the body, the tip should stop just above the ground.

**-san:** to this day, some Japanese use a name suffix or honorific when
addressing one another. Though similar to the English use of ‘Mr.’ and ‘Mrs.’,
its use is a form of social etiquette. Honorifics are only dispensed with when
two people are on intimate terms, or as a blatant show of disrespect. ‘-san’ is
the most commonly used honorific, used when speaking politely to others on
the same social level as oneself, such as colleagues or peers.

**-dono:** an honorific which is more respectful than ‘-san’, roughly translating
as ‘milord/milady’. In using this honorific to address Kotori, Shiro is being
extremely polite and deferential, as well as indicating his suspicions that she
may come from an affluent background.

**shuriken:** also known as a ‘throwing star’, this is a common ninja weapon.
Its name literally translates as ‘sword concealed in the hand’. Though it is
primarily used as a projectile, it can also be used for stabbing or slashing in
close-quarter combat. **Shuriken** are made in a variety of shapes and designs,
but the best-known style is the star-shaped **hira-shuriken** (‘hira’ meaning ‘flat’ or
‘palm’), such as Ujiki uses.
Shiro (白/しろ)

Age: 21
Eyes: clear, cold blue
Hair: blue-black
Weapons: ōdachi (longsword)

A tactiturn warrior who protects Kotori from bandits soon after meeting her. Though carrying an overly-long sword which would require great strength to wield, he doesn’t use his left arm, which remains hidden in his sleeve. Despite this, he shows great skill as a swordsman, taking out a bandit with a single blow from an unsheathed sword. Sullen and secretive, he was found by Kotori when a failed suicide attempt caused him to be washed up on the shore of Lake Urashima. He treats her with great respect and politeness, but there seems to be a dark side to his personality which is yet to be fully revealed...

Kotori (小鳥/ことり)

Age: 18(?)
Eyes: soft blue/green
Hair: blue-black

The young woman who found Shiro in the water and helped him recover after his near-drowning. Not much is known about her, save that she is camping alone in the forest, and appears to be from an affluent family. Her clothes are similar to those of a Shinto shrine-maiden, and she carries a folded fan tucked in her sash. She seems to be a kind and honest gentlelady, yet there may be more to her than meets the eye...
Kuno (区野/くの)

Age: 38
Eyes: feral yellow
Hair: straw-coloured, nearing grey/white
Weapon: katana

Leader of a gang of bandits, Kuno is ruthless, and somewhat lecherous. He thinks nothing of murdering a man for his wallet. Bearing a battered sword on his back and an old scar over his right eye, he appears to have weathered many battles. As leader of the group, he easily bosses the others around, but has the gang’s best interest at heart... though this consideration doesn’t extend to his victims. When he first stumbles across the pair camping in a clearing, he takes an instant liking to Kotori... though Shiro may have something to say about that.

Gunbei (ダンペイ)

Age: 32
Eyes: dull brow
Hair: grey-flecked black
Weapon: fist-fighter; wears armoured gauntlets

Though the most intimidating bandit in terms of size, Gunbei has in baulk what he lacks in brains. An impetuous fist-fighter with a disproportionately short temper, he manages to waylay the average traveller, yet is easily felled by a skilled fighter... such as Shiro.
Ujiki (日本語)

Age: 28
Eyes: steel-grey
Hair: grey-flecked brown
Weapon: shuriken

An expert at throwing blades, Ujiki is genuinely skilled and deceptively dangerous. His impeccable aim means he can incapacitate an enemy from a distance. His ability is such that he is able to accurately launch several shuriken in one throw. Though he is often relegated to the background, he is an integral part of the gang and usually escapes notice in a skirmish... until it’s too late.

Benji (愛慈/べんじ)

Age: 24
Eyes: tawny brown
Hair: brown/ginger
Weapon: naginata

Tetsu (テツオ)

Age: 22
Eyes: flat brown
Hair: black/dark brown
Weapon: ?
Sketches
Thieves
Determined to repay Kotori for saving him, Shiro leads the bandits deep into the forest, giving her a chance to escape. Shiro proves himself to be more than an average swordsman, which is just as well. With five battle-hardened warriors after his blood, he just might get another chance to end his life – or have someone else end it for him.

As the night wears on and the battle escalates, the mystery surrounding its key participants grows ever deeper. Is there any honour – or mercy – among thieves? How is it that Kotori has vanished so completely into the night? Does Shiro possess the skill – and the willingness to live – needed to win this fight? And just what hidden weapon does he conceal within his bound left sleeve?
Appendix B: Tsang, Fiona (2010) - Yokai Forest, featured in Scribble: Volume 1, Roger Quin and Trevor Weekes (ed.), Newcastle, University of Newcastle
In old Nihon, demons were known as YOKAI.

This was in bygone years, when Man was less sure of his place in the scheme of things.

Back then, creatures of legend were as real as you or I.

They roamed the land freely, behaving as they pleased.

They could appear as malevolent tricksters or protective allies, beautiful or grotesque.
MIND IF I JOIN YOU?

SURE

GOTTA TAKE CARE AT DUSK ROUND THESE PARTS

THEY SAY THERE ARE YOKAI IN THAT THERE FOREST

AH, SURE IS GOOD TO REST MY BACK!

WANT A RICE CAKE?

ER...THANKS
YESSIR, ALL KINDS OF YOKAI OUT THERE THEY SAY...

SCARY THING IS, THEM DEMONS CAN S'POSEDLY SHAPE-SHIFT, DISGUISE THEMSELVES AS ANYTHING

Y'NEVER KNOW WHEN A KITSUNE WILL NIP AT YOUR HEELS, OR A TENGU COULD SWOOP DOWN OUTTA THE SKY

'Course, I've been a woodcutter nigh on forty years, and I ain't ever seen none

I GUESS EVEN YOKAI WOULDN'T BOTHER WITH AN OLD MAN LIKE ME

* kitsune = fox, tengu = bird demon

BET IF ANY SHOWED, YOU COULD CUT 'EM WITH THAT SWORD!

HEH

HEH

FWAP

EXCUSE ME, GOOD SIRS ..
MAY I JOIN YOU?

What a beauty!
C-CERTAINLY, MILADY!

....

A PRETTY LADY LIKE YOU SHOULDN'T BE OUT ALONE THIS LATE

THEY SAY THERE ARE YOKAI IN THAT FOREST

INDEED?
YES MA’AM, ALL KINDS OF DEMONS THEY SAY, FROM KITSUNE FOX-DEMONS --

... TO WINGED TENGU-BIRDS AND THE LIKE

THERE’S NO TELLING WHAT TYPE OF YOKAI COULD BE OUT TH...

!? FWWTT
MEDDLER! GET OUT OF MY WAY!

FWp

FWSh

A KITSUNE!
WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH HIM?

THAT BASTARD!

HE’S BEEN STEALING MY TREES FOR FORTY YEARS!
SLWP

FWWT

NGH!

SKRSH
13-4-09, 7:12 PM

It’s been a while since the last entry. I know. I think I’ve been waiting for something tremendous to happen, & it hasn’t so I just have to catch up now & write about all the less-than-tremendous stuff that’s happened. I’m not sure if there really any not-bad things. I’m not even sure if anything much happened at all! I’ve had to look at the sketches & pieces from the week to figure out what I did. I think a lot happened, but most of it happened in my mind rather than on paper. In hindsight, I spent the week worrying about 3 things: Shë’o’s anatomy, Kitor’s outfit, & the overall rendering technique.

It’s strange; I told myself I wouldn’t get too hung up on anatomy, yet somehow it’s been lurking subtly in my mind every time I sit down to draw, & every time it happens, what I draw turns out wrong. What I drew two years ago looks horribly anatomically incorrect now, yet somehow

Appendix C: Excerpt from learning journal (Author’s own collection)
looks more like my characters than the current incarnations do. I think I worried too much about ‘fleshing out’ a character, not realizing that all they really are is a bunch of lines on paper. I need to worry less about my art imitating life & more about my art having life, as art, if that makes sense. Ahamo’s art is wonderful not because of a realistic resemblance, but because you can see the lines & patterns - the art - in it. Of course my work isn’t going to be that abstract, but it’s more what I want to lean towards. I realized recently that my drawings are more realistically - proportioned - compared to the manga I love. That’s not really a con, but it demonstrates that I’m starting to drift away from what I’m trying to achieve. Shin’s physique has been giving me trouble, & I never used to struggle to draw him. I think I need to focus more on the features of the character & regard him less as an ‘anatomical study’ drawing. He’s
supposed to be unrealistically gaunt, inhumanly strong. Should be styled as such, rather than having a 'correct' body type.

One of the big things I was experimenting with was how to rend the damn thing. I struggled with ink; I just couldn’t control the brush enough to use it for an entire novel. Yet just inking lines from a pen looked stilted & lacked the 'feel' I was after. Then, I think I hit on it—questionably enough, I think. Reading an unrelated Neil Gaiman book brought on divine inspiration. Ink it with a marker & trace it with a wet brush! My sample sketch looked nice, but I have yet to try it on an actual drawing. We’ll see.

Luckily, I found two good sources for inspiration. The first is an anime called Ayanami/Neon Genesis, which takes inspiration from Kurosawa's paintings with its obvious brush strokes & myriad paper patterns. The entire thing has a nice paper texture to it, a sharp contrast to old-school painted cells, & a wonderful effect. The art style is very experimental & varies in