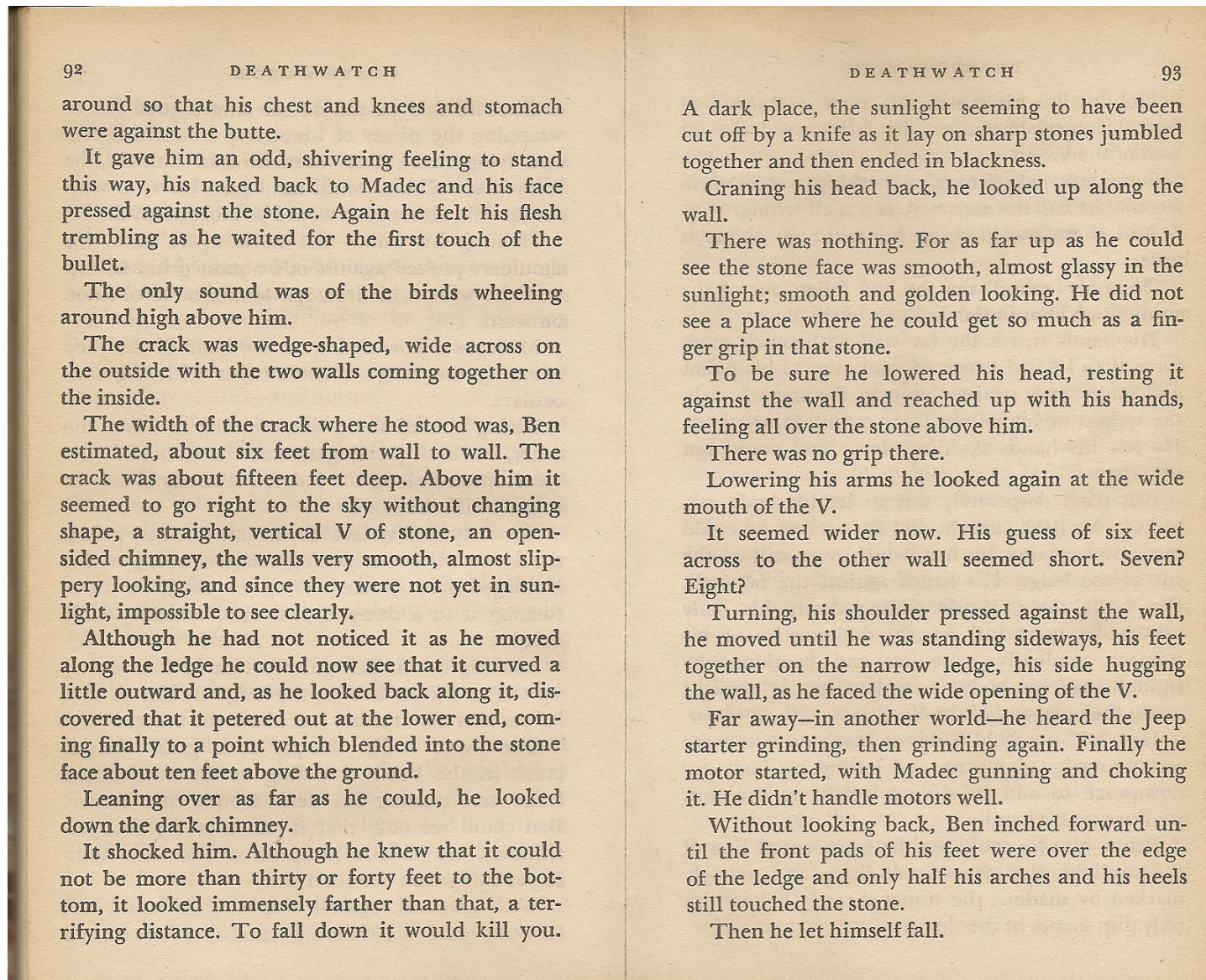


Building background knowledge to visualize a difficult scene: This is from the book *Deathwatch* by Robb White. To put the scene in context, Ben—the boy who is climbing—is fleeing from Madec, who is trying to frame him for a murder. Madec has cut off water supplies from Ben, and Ben is close to death from dehydration.

Read this scene, and then look online to see if you can find information about rock climbing that will help you visualize the scene. Draw pictures in the margin that show how you visualize the scene. (Stick figures are fine.) Tomorrow we'll figure out a way to act this out.



Holding his body stiff, his arms out ahead of him, his hands flat open, he fell toward the far wall of the V.

Something was wrong, something was happening that he had not expected. It was all wrong.

And there was nothing he could do about it now.

Then he realized that he had fallen out of the sunlight and was in the darkness of the V.

His hands struck the far wall with much more force than he had expected, and even as his palms and finger pads strained to grip the smooth wall, the weight of his falling body came against them. He felt his hands skidding down and could not stop them.

Ben tried desperately not to let his body sag, to keep his back straight and flat so that he could ram power against his feet, which were still on the cut of the ledge. His hands against the far wall, Ben hung there, slowly sliding down, his body stretched out at full length, the muscles of his stomach gradually loosening and breaking the rigid bridge his body formed as he lay straight across the open end of the V.

He could not hold it, his stomach muscles were jerking again, giving up and letting his body sag downward to add its sliding weight to the thin pressure on his hands.

Below him he could see the exact cutoff line of the sunlight, the stones in it sharp and strongly marked by shadow, the stones directly below him only dim shapes in the shade.

Somehow, never knowing how he did it but knowing he could never do such a thing again, Ben flung himself in toward the angle of the V and as his body moved he turned it, rolling over in the air, his feet scampering along the stone on one side, his outreaching hands scrabbling against it on the other.

He wound up five feet below the ledge, on his back, suspended from his hands and feet which were pressed against the stone, his little bundle of leaves and the slingshot lying on his belly. He arched his back, putting more pressure against the palms of his hands and the soles of his feet.

Moving only one hand or one foot at a time and moving them only an inch or so before slamming the pressure back against them, he edged deeper into the angle of the V, moving until the top of his head scraped the stone and on, his head hard against his chest as his shoulders touched stone, and on until he was compressed into the V, his back against one wall, his knees up against the other.

Ben did not look either up or down as he began working his way higher, the rock face cruel against the skin of his back as he ground his way up.

All of his flesh hurt so that he could not even tell whether the stone grinding the skin off his back was more painful than the skin being ground from his knees and shins and the tops of his feet.

His tongue was now so swollen that it filled his