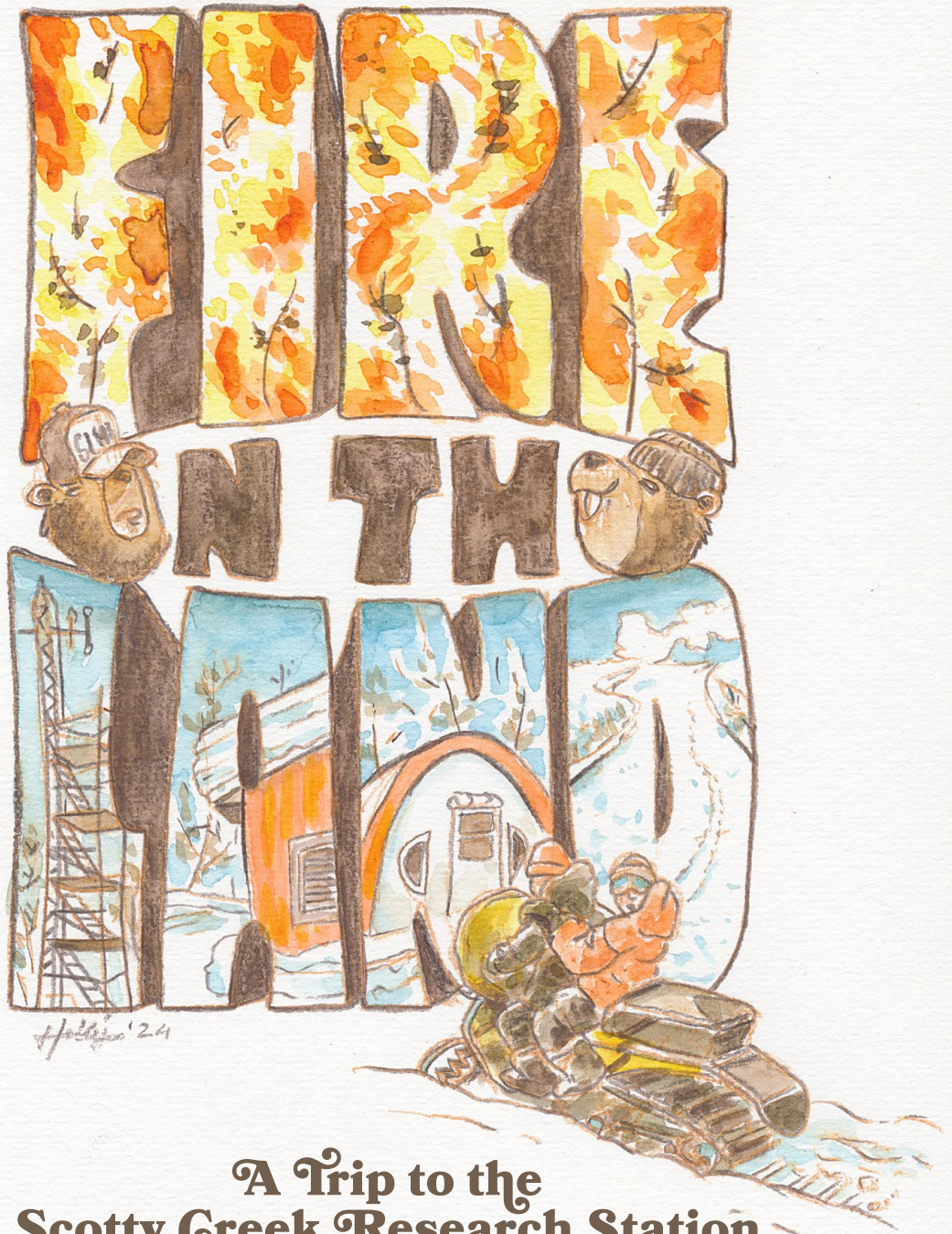


A Graphic Novel Concept



A Trip to the Scotty Creek Research Station

Against many odds, a bustling scientist strives
to rebuild his burned research tower on
Indigenous land in the Canadian North.

Journalistic graphic novel (180 pages)
Work in progress (Unpublished)
Planned publishing 2025
(Jaja Verlag, Berlin, signaled interest)

Contact:
dominik@aisu.studio
www.aisu.studio/scrs
IG: @aisukurimu_dude

Story

«Fire on the Land—A trip to the Scotty Creek Research Station» is a graphic novel that blends journalistic reporting with narrative storytelling. It delves into the daily magic and madness of scientist Oliver Sonnentag and his quest to confront climate change in Canada's Northwest Territories.

Oliver, an experienced professor at the Université de Montréal, dedicates his life to exploring the local and global consequences of thawing permafrost due to global warming. The daily academic grind isn't Oliver's cup of tea—he's a field researcher at heart, eager to get his boots in the mud alongside other mavericks.

In October 2022, a wildfire destroyed Oliver's first and most cherished research tower at the remote Scotty Creek Research Station, Canada's first Indigenous-led research facility.

Devastated and unsure if that's a sign to end the project after ten successful years, Oliver is offered a sacred deal in a vivid dream. Now, he races against time to restore the tower before the start of the snowmelt season when traveling the soggy land becomes too cumbersome.

With the blessing of Dieter Cazon, the witty and visionary land resources manager of the Liidlii Kue First Nation, Oliver and his international team embark on an ambitious and risky journey into an icy wilderness, facing colonial legacy and many logistical challenges.

Science, humour, and lots of coffee are the key ingredients of Fire on the Land to illustrate the importance of daily resilience and intercultural friendships in the face of the climate crisis.

Style

The graphic novel aims to highlight the adventurous nature of scientific research and describes the challenges of marginalized groups whose ancestral land is heavily affected by climate change.

Oliver's perspective makes the story tangible while keeping it scientific. The story is commented on by Beavis & Bearta, two comical and critical spirit animals.

The light watercolor style connects to nature and conveys a documentary feel, contrasting hectic urban views with mesmerizing natural landscapes.

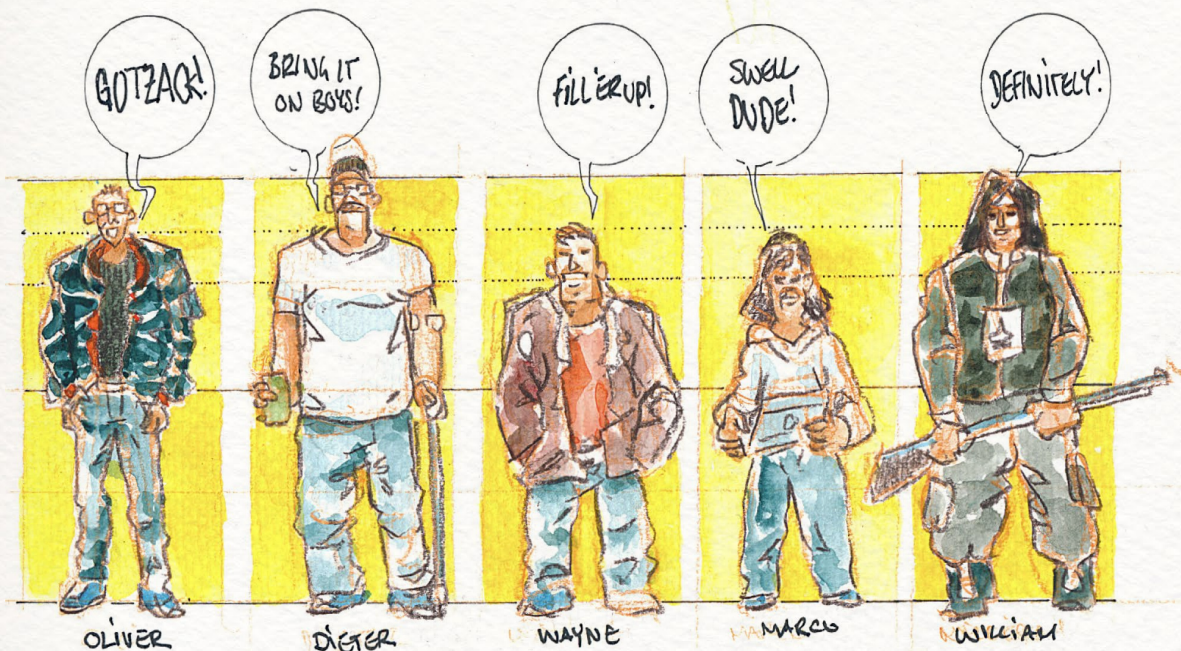


Dominik and Oliver at an interview with the news outlet Cabin Radio in Yellowknife, NT, Canada, March, 2023



Scotty Creek Research Station after the October 2022 wildfire.
©2022 Mason Dominico

Character Studies



A Journey to the Scotty Creek Research Station

Supported by the «atmosbios Lab» at the Université de Montréal, the illustrator Dominik Heilig accompanied Oliver on his trip to the Scotty Creek Research Station to rebuild the research tower. During this journey, Dominik met protagonists, conducted interviews, sketched, all while gaining an understanding of the challenges involved in field-based scientific research in remote areas.

After the research trip it was a priority to develop a solid understanding of the scientific and traditional knowledge aspects in the context of decolonisation. This requires ongoing research via scientific literature and articles, conversations with the involved scientists and members of the Liidlii Kue First Nation, podcasts, tv-shows, music and graphic novels.

Beyond telling the story, we will also provide an annotated bibliography for reference and further reading, and introductions by western scientists and traditional knowledge holders from the Liidlii Kue First Nation.

Production Team

«Fire on the Land» is a close collaboration between: Oliver, the main protagonist and as scientific advisor.

Dieter, protagonist and traditional knowledge holder of the Liidlii Kue First Nation, who shares community insights and recommends Indigenous literature and other valuable media.

Dominik, artist and illustrator, shaping the events into a compelling narrative with input from Oliver and Dieter.

The close collaboration with stakeholders from the Liidlii Kue First Nation serves as an intercultural bridge to amplify Indigenous voices in scientific research.

Outreach

Thanks to Oliver's extensive network, we have already been interviewed by CBC-North and Cabin Radio about the graphic novel project. We were also mentioned in a NASA newsletter and a news article by the Woodwell Climate Research Center.

Languages

The commitment to publishing the graphic novel in German, French and English and Dene-Zhatie reflects cultural sensitivity and inclusivity, broadening the potential readership.



STATUS

Story development

160 of 180 pages

Character Development

Ongoing

Storyboard

70 of 180 Pages

Final Drawings

10 of 180 pages

Sketches from the Research Trip



MONTREAL 8-3-23



8-3-23



BLKS-HIL
8-3-23

Montréal



Various sketches of the scientists at the Scotty Creek Research Station.



11-5-23

JANOR HOUSE - FORT SIMPSON - NWT

Portrait of Indigenous Ski-doo racers, who came for the annual Beaver Tail Jamboree.
Janor House, Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories, 2023



View of the Scotty Creek Research Station

Photos from the Research Trip

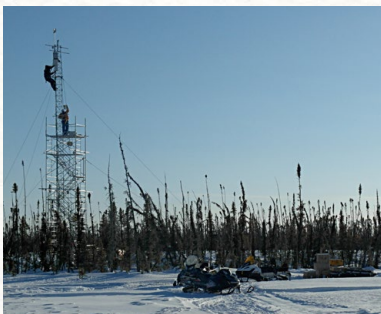


Rebuild team in the main tent of the Scotty Creek Research Station.

Marco holding a piece of an exploded propane cylinder.



Rebuild team



Team on the tower



Burnt batteries

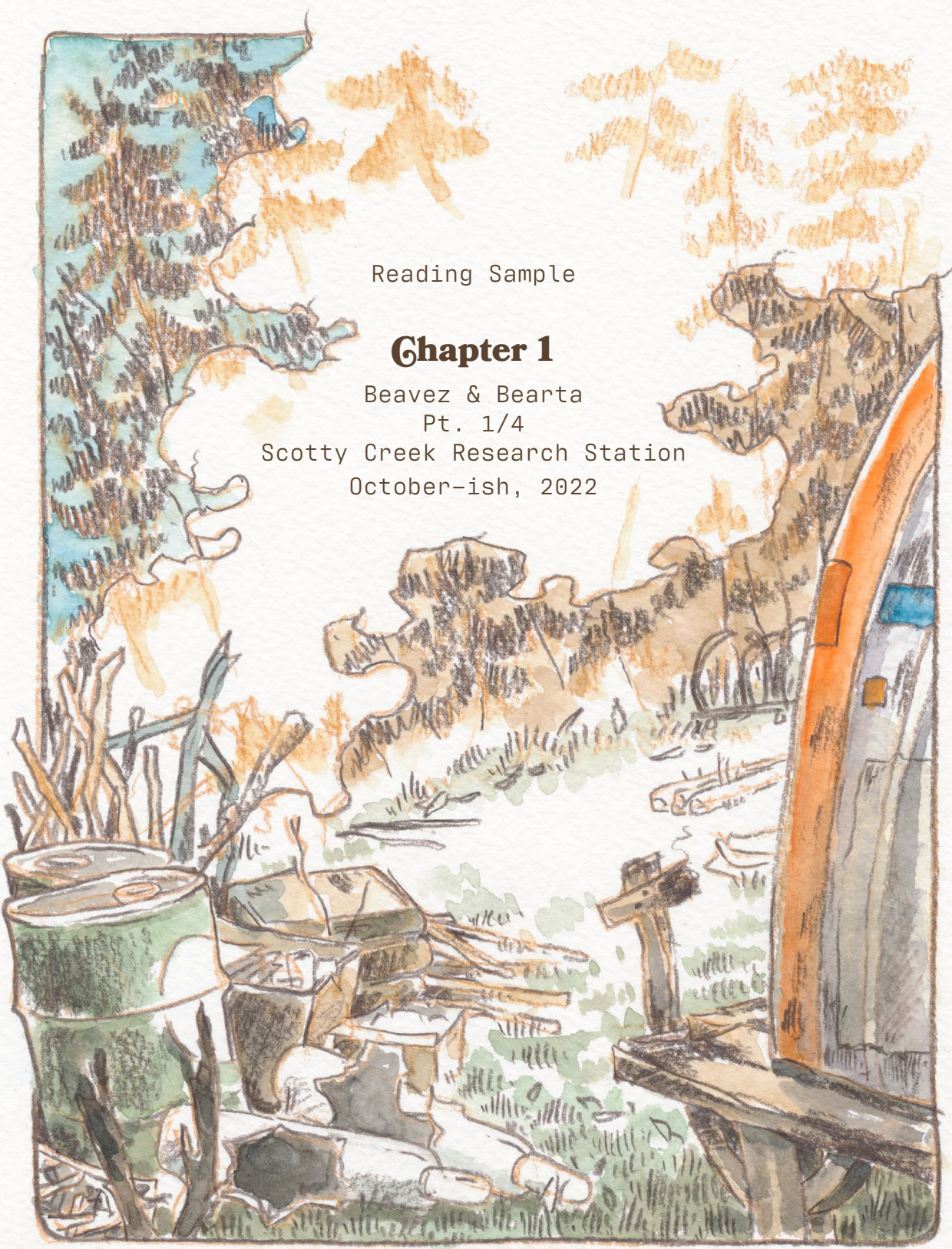


Partly burned tree



View of the burnt landscape from the rebuild research tower.

Photos by
Dominik Heilig

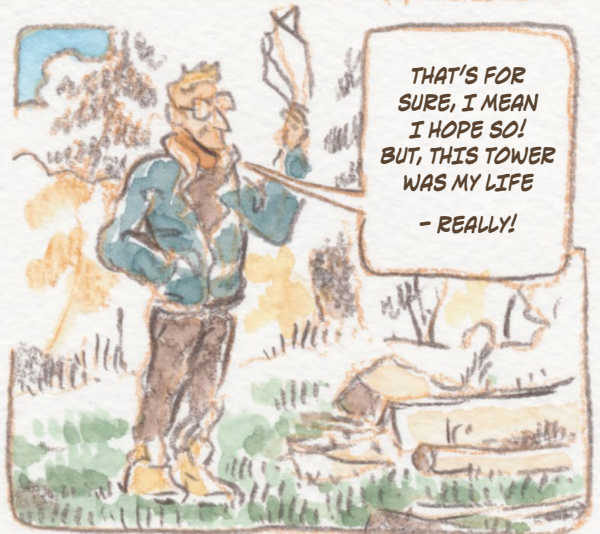
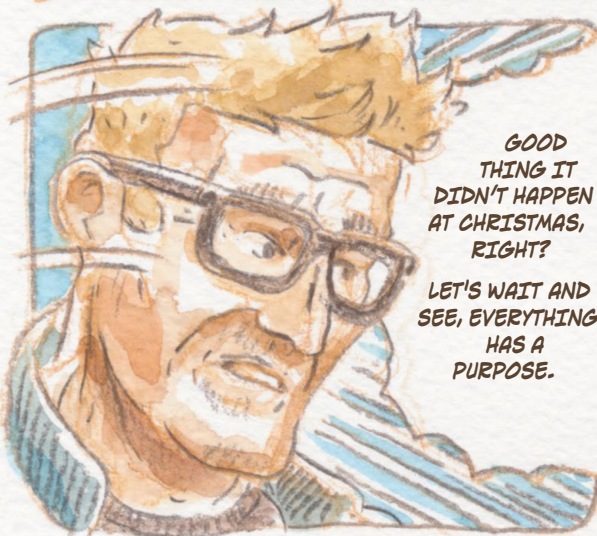
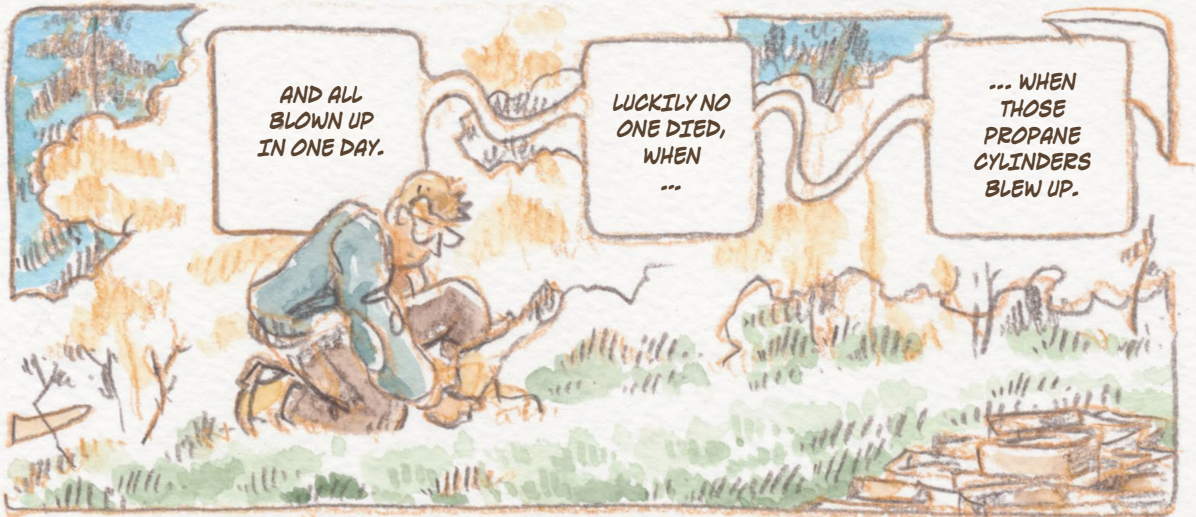
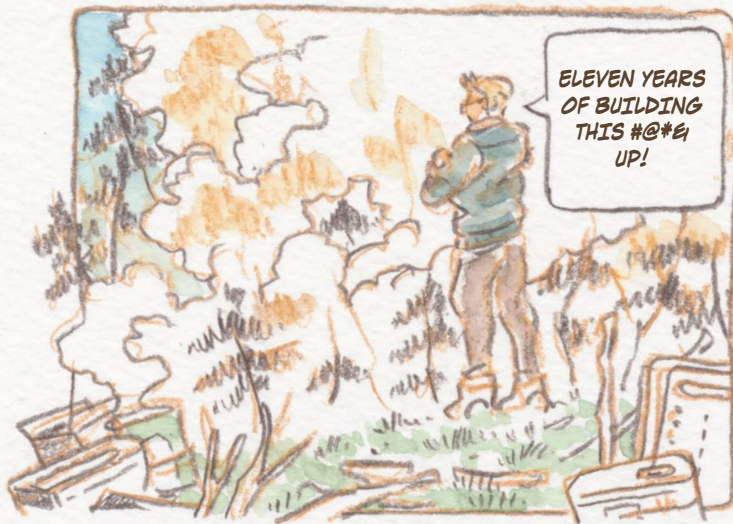


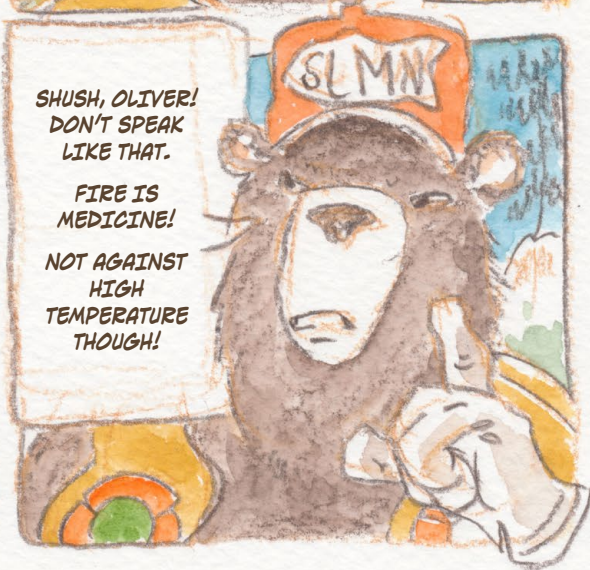
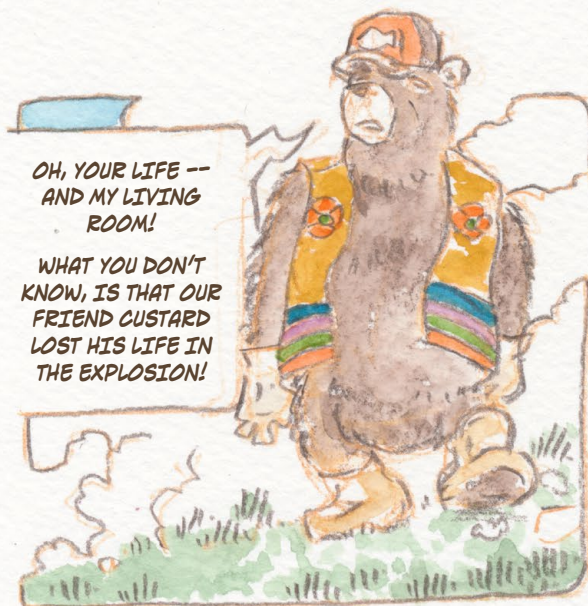
Reading Sample

Chapter 1

Beavez & Bearta
Pt. 1/4

Scotty Creek Research Station
October-ish, 2022

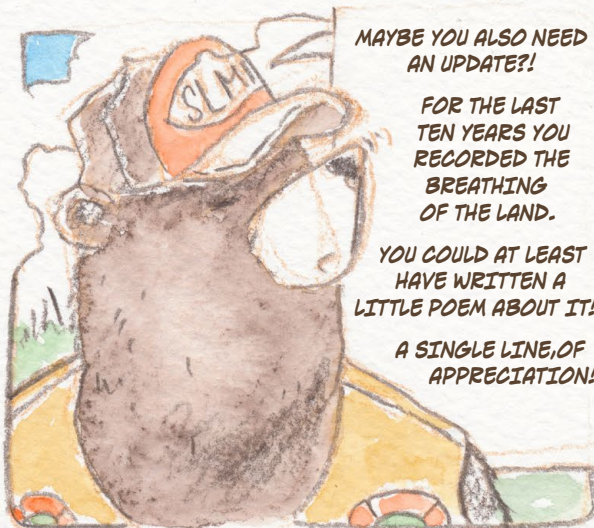






YOU KNOW, MAYBE, THERE
WAS A NEED FOR A
FRESH START AFTER THE
HANDOVER.

SCOTTY CREEK
2.0!
HOW DOES THAT
SOUND?

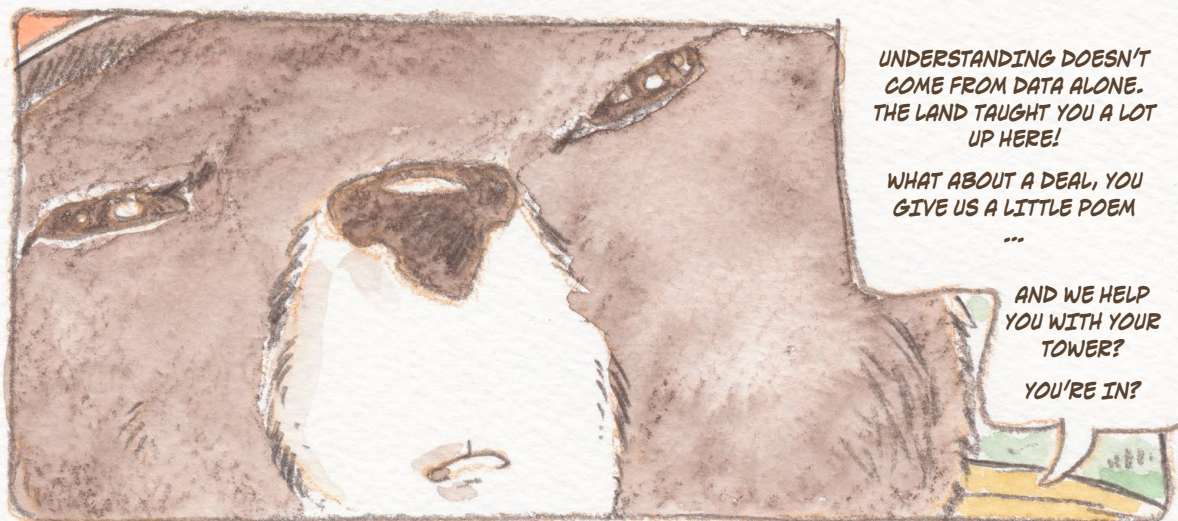


MAYBE YOU ALSO NEED
AN UPDATE?!

FOR THE LAST
TEN YEARS YOU
RECORDED THE
BREATHING
OF THE LAND.

YOU COULD AT LEAST
HAVE WRITTEN A
LITTLE POEM ABOUT IT!

A SINGLE LINE, OF
APPRECIATION!



UNDERSTANDING DOESN'T
COME FROM DATA ALONE.
THE LAND TAUGHT YOU A LOT
UP HERE!

WHAT ABOUT A DEAL, YOU
GIVE US A LITTLE POEM

...

AND WE HELP
YOU WITH YOUR
TOWER?

YOU'RE IN?



AN
ADVENTURER
LIKE YOU

...

CAN'T JUST
LEAVE DATA
BEHIND.

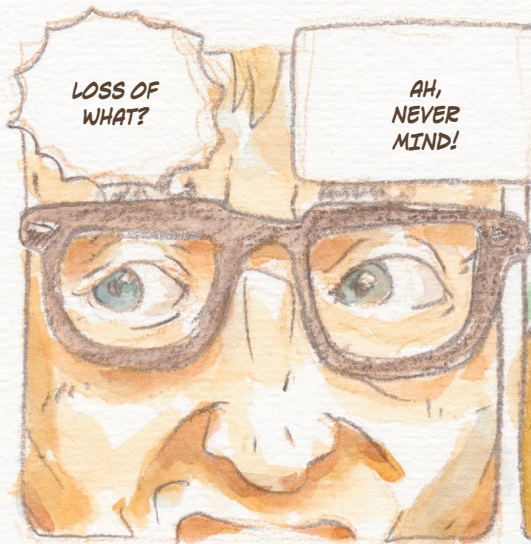


BUT ANYWAY
OUR MAIN
CONCERN
IS NOW

...



THE LOSS OF
OUR SECRET
FOOD STASH!



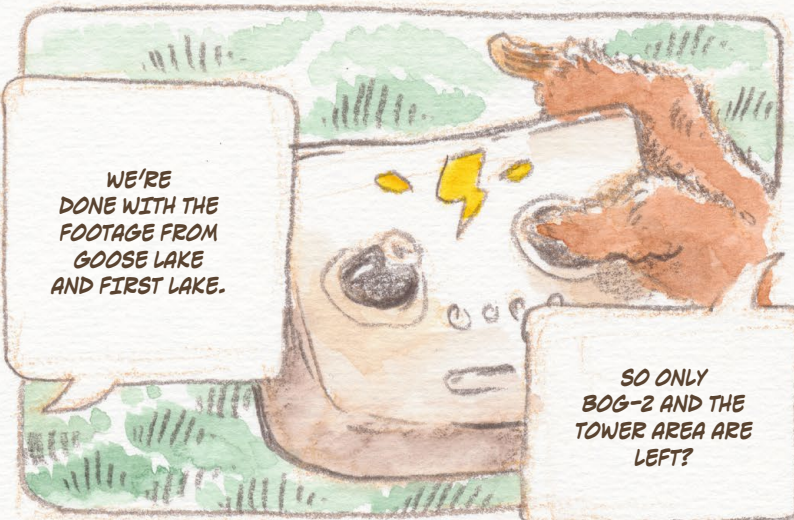
LOSS OF
WHAT?



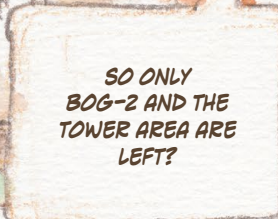
AH,
NEVER
MIND!



BEAVEZ, HOW
ARE THE DRONES
COMING ALONG?



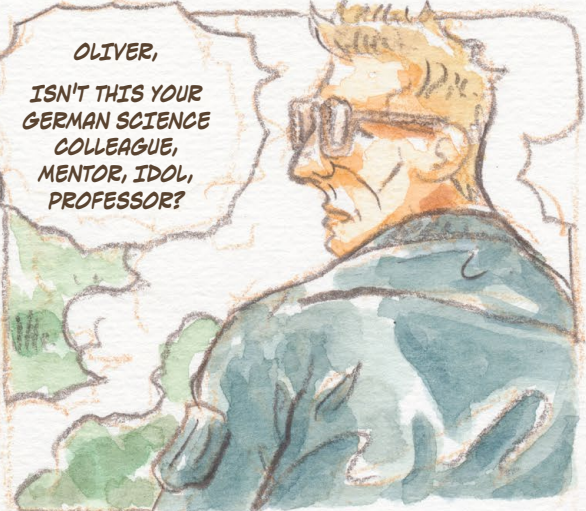
WE'RE
DONE WITH THE
FOOTAGE FROM
GOOSE LAKE
AND FIRST LAKE.



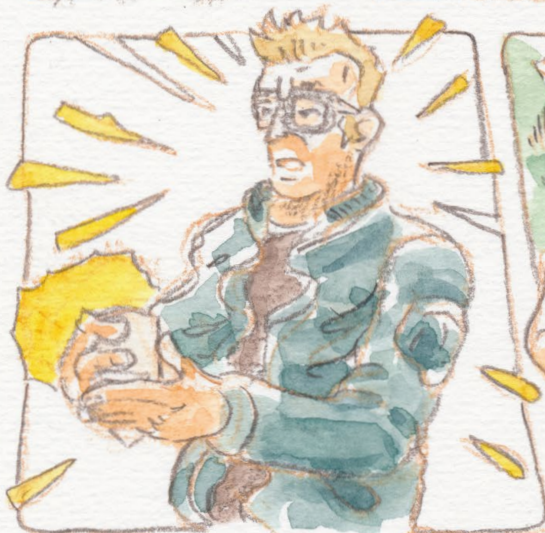
SO ONLY
BOG-2 AND THE
TOWER AREA ARE
LEFT?



THAT'S RIGHT,
BEARTA!



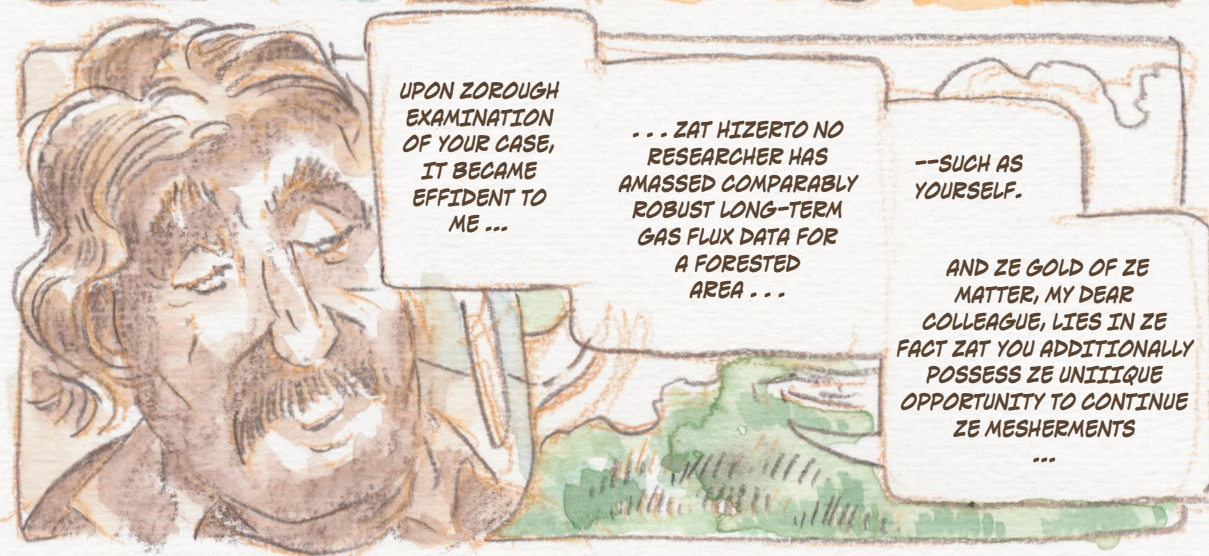
OLIVER,
ISN'T THIS YOUR
GERMAN SCIENCE
COLLEAGUE,
MENTOR, IDOL,
PROFESSOR?



MY DEAR
COLLEAGUE,
DON'T YOU
WORRY!

ZIS IS
FERRY
EXTRA-
ORDINARY!

MAY I
EXPLAIN?



UPON ZOROUGH
EXAMINATION
OF YOUR CASE,
IT BECAME
EFFIDENT TO
ME ...

... ZAT HIZERTO NO
RESEARCHER HAS
AMASSED COMPARABLY
ROBUST LONG-TERM
GAS FLUX DATA FOR
A FORESTED
AREA ...

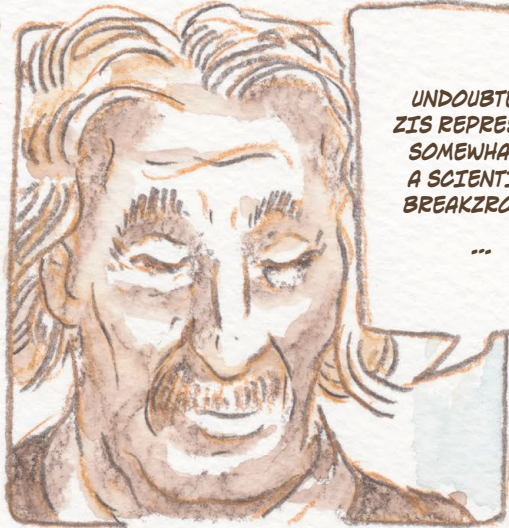
--SUCH AS
YOURSELF.

AND ZE GOLD OF ZE
MATTER, MY DEAR
COLLEAGUE, LIES IN ZE
FACT ZAT YOU ADDITIONALLY
POSSESS ZE UNIIQUE
OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE
ZE MESHERMENTS
...



DIRECTLY
FOLLOWING A
FOREST FIRE
AND COMPARE
ZE DATA WIZ
ZE PRECEDING
RECORDS.

VOILA!!



UNDOUBTEDLY,
ZIS REPRESENTS
SOMEWHAT OF
A SCIENTIFIC
BREAKZROUGH,

...



...
LET ME STRETCH
IT A BIT, BUT
SOMEWHAT
OF GLOBAL
SIGNIFICANCE!!



IS ZIS NOT
EXCEEDINGLY
INTRIGUING?
DO YOU NOT CONCUR,
MY DEAR
COLLEAGUE?



REMEMBER,
IN CRISIS
ALWYAS LIES
OPPORTUNITY.

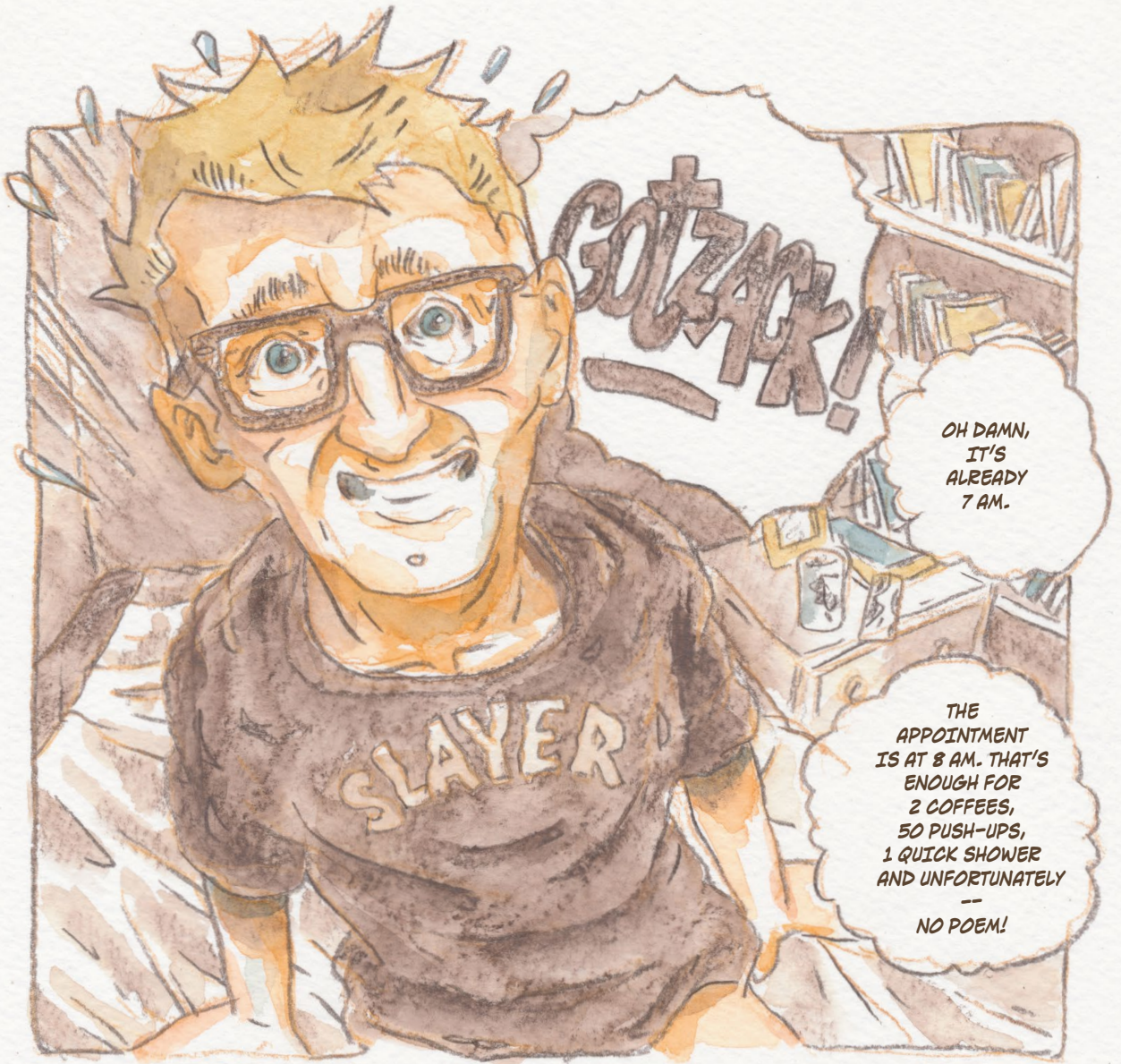
AN
OPPORTUNITY
OF ZIS SCALE,
DOESN'T
KNOCK
TWICE!



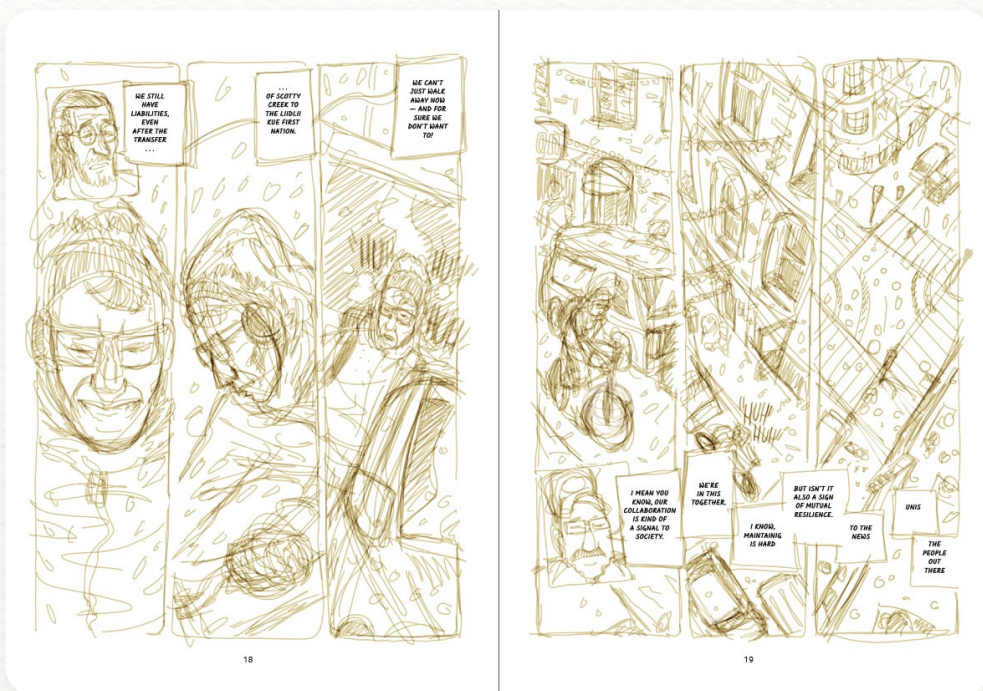
SIR, I
THINK YOUR
DOCTOR'S
APPOINTMENT
IS COMING
UP.

HAVE A GOOD
REST OF THE
DAY SIR.

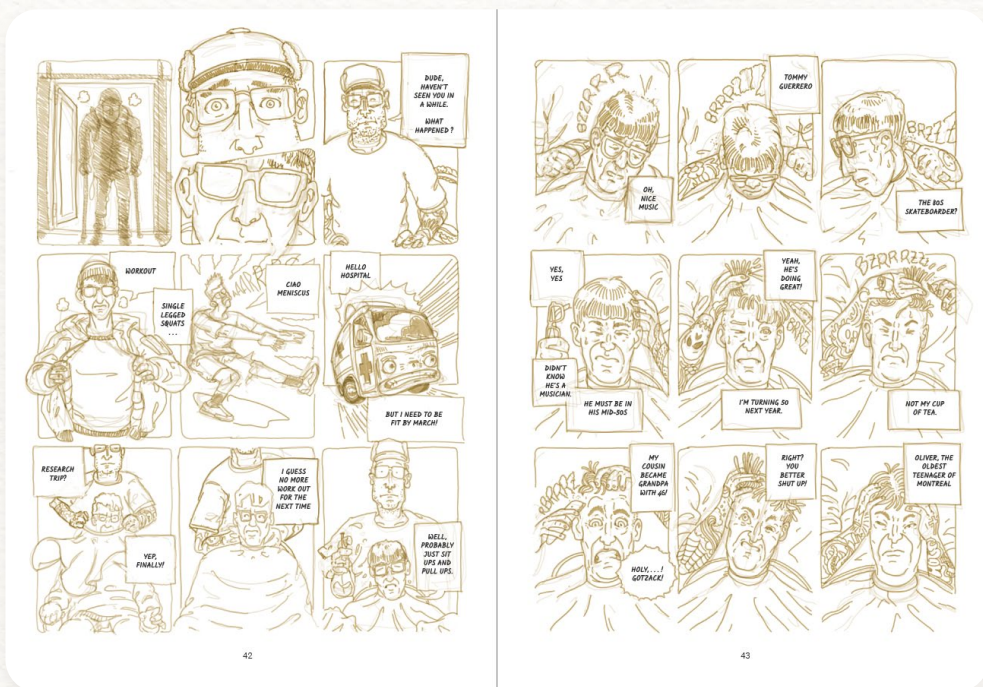
AND
REMEMBER
THE POEM.



Storyboards Excerpts



Chapter 2 Doctor's Appointment



Chapter 3 No Pain - No Gain



After a forest fire destroyed the research facility of my childhood friend Oliver, in Canada in October 2022, the shared desire to document the story in a graphic novel arose in phone calls. Shortly after I found myself in the canadian north.

Dominik Heilig
Author and Illustrator

Dominik Heilig (he/him)

is a seasoned visual designer, narrative illustrator and an active member of the Comic Invasion Berlin — a Berlin based independent comic festival since 2012.

Born in southern Germany, he discovered his passion for design and illustration through music, comics and skateboard-graphics. He became friends with Oliver during a skateboarding session in 1986.

Heilig's career began as a storyboard artist for a 3D animation studio in 1998. Dominik further refined his skills at the Hamburg Animation School from 2001 to 2003.

In 2003, he moved to Moscow to work at the Art Lebedev Studio as a senior illustrator before relocating back to Berlin in 2010. Since then, he has been working independently as a designer and illustrator and published two graphic novels at Berlin based «Jaja Verlag».

For the Comic Invasion Berlin 2024 he was responsible for the art-direction, event curation, sponsorship management and the set-up of a permanent comic library in Berlin's 3rd biggest hotel.

Publications

Trikl I: Shorts, 10 pages, self published, 1995

AWE: Adventure, 70 pages, self published, 1996

Trikl II: Shorts, 20 pages, self published, 1997

Domino: Picture book, self published, 1998

Inhabited Island: Sci-Fi, coloration, 160 pages,
Olma Media Group (RU) 2009

Kazka: Sci-Fi, 170 pages, Jaja Verlag, Berlin, 2012

God Bless India: Comic Documentary, 44 pages,
Jaja Publishing Berlin, 2014

Moonflight: 24hrs comic, 24 pages,
self published, 2015

Aisu Kurimu: Webcomic 2015-2017

Soundwaves: a 24hrs comic, 24 pages, self published, 2023



Dominik approached me with the idea to turn the story of the fire into a graphic novel.

It's great to communicate co-developed knowledge to a broader audience, going beyond academic cycles. For instance, in my research group we read «Paying the Land», a journalistic graphic novel by Joe Sacco, as part of an Indigenous sensitivity training.

Oliver Sonnentag
Associate Professor
Université de Montréal
Département de géographie
Atmospheric Biogeosciences
(«atmosbios Lab»)

Oliver Sonnentag (he/him)

is an Associate Professor at the Université de Montréal and a prominent scientist in atmospheric biogeosciences. His research focuses on how environmental changes affect the land and atmosphere, particularly in northern regions.

Oliver has set up a network of research towers across research towers in Canada's northern boreal forests to better understand how ecosystem function and services are affected by climate change and permafrost thaw. He collaborates with numerous major research initiatives, including NASA's Arctic-Boreal Vulnerability Experiment.

Oliver has (co-)authored over 130 scientific articles and serves on various influential committees, including the Steering Committee of Permafrost Pathways. His dedication and impact in his field led to his induction into the Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars, Artists, and Scientists in 2022.

In addition to research, Oliver is committed to education and mentorship, having supervised many students and postdocs. He also works closely with Indigenous communities in the Northwest Territories to support local capacity-building.



References

Excerpts

BOOKS

Yamoria the Lawmaker – Stories of the Dene, George
Blondin
Trapping is My Life, John Tetso
Dawn of everything, Graeber & Wengrow
Mooratlas – Daten und Fakten zu nassen Klimaschützern,
Heinrich Böll Stiftung
Stories Told: Stories and Images of the Berger Inquiry,
Patrick Scott
Lahontan's New Voyages to North-America
Permafrost for Homeowners, Government of the NWT
All the Quiet Places, Brian Thomas Isaac
Humankind: A Hopeful History, Rutger Bregman
Indigenous Storywork, Jo-Ann Archibald
Braiding Sweetgrass, Robin Wall Kimmerer

GRAPHIC NOVELS

World Without End, Christophe Blain, Jean-Marc Jancovici
Paying the Land, Joe Sacco
Ducks, Kate Beaton
Vertigo Grönland, Hervé Tanquerelle

PODCASTS

What on Earth (Revisiting the Flood in FS, Laura Lynch,
Liny Lamberink)
Kemfert's Klima Podcast, diverse
Carbon Copy, diverse
The Urbariginal, Rudy Kelly / CBC
Permafrost peatlands and mental health with Dr. Merritt
Turetsky - For Peat's Sake
Thawing Frontiers, Lina Mansouri
(Unpublished)

NEWS OUTLETS (Excerpts)

Cabin Radio

CBC-North
The Conversation
CKLB Radio

OTHER SOURCES (excerpts)

Building local capacity for community-based
micrometeorological monitoring
Oliver Sonnentag, PhD
CRC in Atmospheric Biogeosciences
Elyn Humphreys, PhD Professor

Quinton, W.L., Berg, A.A., Braverman, M. et al. incl.
Sonnentag, O. (2019), A synthesis of three decades of
eco-hydrological research at Scotty Creek, NWT, Canada.
Hydrology and Earth System Science, 23, 2015-2039

Helbig, M., Chasmer, L., Desai, A., Kljun, N., Quinton, W.L.,
Sonnentag, O. (2017), Direct and indirect climate change
effects on carbon dioxide fluxes in a thawing boreal forest-
wetland landscape. Global Change Biology, 23, 3231-3248.

Cameron (2012), Securing Indigenous politics: A critique
of the vulnerability and adaptation approach to the human
dimensions of climate change in the Canadian Arctic. Global
Environmental Change, 22, 103-114

INSTAGRAM CHANNELS (excerpts)

colonialismskateboards, jonathandehchoantoine,
oerzeinan, indigenousshitposting, decolonizemyself,
sterlinharjo, bini_adamczak, liidliikue, thaidenenene

MAPS & TOOLS (excerpts)

Nativeland

Contact:

dominik@aisu.studio
www.aisu.studio/home-blog/fotl
IG: @aisukurimu_dude