

# Mayfly Island (Prequel)

蜉蝣之島

**Scriptwriter:** Li Shang-Chiao **Comic Artist:** Evergreen Yeh **Publisher:** Slowwork Publishing Ltd.

**Date:** 9/2020 **Right's contacts:** bft.children.comics@moc.gov.tw

160 pages | 17 x 23 cm **Volume:** 1 (Planned publication of other works within the same universe)

**Rights sold:** Italian, French, Spanish in Spain

**Awards:** 2021 The 15th Japan International Manga Awards, Bronze Award

**BFT2.0 Translator:** Yunching Ko and Michelle Kuo

In the near future, climate change has led to the emergence of independent island city-states. The drifting island Mayfly stands as one of the last remaining pure lands. In this devastated and resource-scarce world, the protagonists gently and bravely seek their paths to sustain life. This acclaimed collection features three interconnected short stories and explores environmental and women's issues in a post-apocalyptic setting, as well as the shamanic culture of the Austronesian.



## Li Shang-Chiao

A director and scriptwriter for both film and comics, Li served as the scriptwriter for the animated film and comic *Mayfly Island*, which was nominated for Best Original Screenplay and the Golden Horse Film Project Promotion.



## Evergreen Yeh

Evergreen Yeh graduated from the University of Melbourne's Graduate School of Art and is a full-time illustrator and comic artist. Since 2019, he has been fully dedicated to comic creation. When not racing against deadlines, one can find him sketching, writing, or spending time with his children in the mountains. Evergreen Yeh is also the recipient of the Bronze Award at the 15th Japan International Manga Award, with the rights to his works sold for publication in both French and Italian.

# Taiwanese Comics at the End of Civilization: Reading *Mayfly Island*

by Lin Yunhong

As a long-time fan of anime, comics, and games and a self-proclaimed otaku, I felt both excitement and a little trepidation after finishing *Mayfly Island*, illustrated by Evergreen Yeh and written by Li Shang-Chiao. Could it be that our long-cherished hope of seeing local Taiwanese comics flourish, mature, and go global is finally becoming a reality?

In recent years, despite the obstacles facing the broader industry, Taiwanese comics have excelled, showcasing remarkable talent from both veteran and emerging creators. *Mayfly Island*, published by Slowwork—a company focused on documentary-style comics with a reputation for quality—is their first venture into apocalyptic sci-fi. The reading experience is exceptional, combining top-notch art and deeply layered storytelling while still preserving Slowwork's alternative, experimental style.

*Mayfly Island* embarks on a grand mission: telling a sci-fi allegory about all of humanity. The story is set in a near-future world surrounded by polluted oceans, where the few remaining survivors try to rebuild a collapsed civilization. The comic also serves

as the “prequel” for an upcoming animated film of the same name.

The book consists of several short, interconnected stories. These fragments, floating in a vast ocean, hint at much more beneath the surface—harrowing events that have befallen human civilization and the devastation of our blue planet at the hands of industrial development.

The narrative takes place in a not-too-distant future where climate change has melted the polar ice caps, raising sea levels and submerging traditional land nations. The remaining humans are scattered across small islands, forming numerous city-states. In the world of *Mayfly Island*, humanity is trapped by the “Inner Ocean,” which hides many secrets beneath its turbulent waters. In the final story, readers glimpse the seabed, where a vast ship graveyard and industrial debris block the paths of Mayfly Island. Amid these oppressive scenes, there is a cold, eerie beauty.

Visually, *Mayfly Island* is exceptional. Readers will share my delight in feeling “cheated” by the publisher; I thought I was buying a plot-driven comic only to discover that the money I spent was an

incredible bargain. It abandons the typical dip pens of Japanese comics, boldly mixing charcoal, crayon, watercolor, and colored pencils. The use of expressive art techniques—from the indigo-tinted, rain-soaked tin cities to the giant waves painted in stark, bold strokes—makes the book feel more like a deluxe art collection.

Given its limited page count, the prequel story in *Mayfly Island* unfolds across just a few islands. Yet many details reflect the writer's thorough world-building. For example, regarding politics, the main character's hometown, “Red Soil City,” has the slogan “Increase Production, Serve the Nation” written on its fortress walls. With modern nation-states collapsing due to natural disasters, the scattered city-states likely operate as semi-dictatorial, semi-feudal oligarchies. The diverse skin tones, multilingual names, and Spanish folk songs sung by the residents suggest that this city has become a refuge for global climate refugees—perhaps a medieval-like merchant city with arms and a treasury. Meanwhile, in terms of ecological world-building, Red Soil City has greenhouse farming that relies on renting bees for pollination. The rising sea levels likely destroyed most animal habitats, making it

*Mayfly Island reflects on whether human civilization can continue expanding without end. Just as profoundly, it draws readers back to the deep oceans surrounding the island and the cultural heritage of Taiwan's Austronesian Indigenous peoples.*

impossible for crops to rely on natural bird or insect dispersal. In a specimen room, readers also see extinct species like the Sabre Orchid, Formosan Clouded Leopard, and Ornithoptera beetles on display.

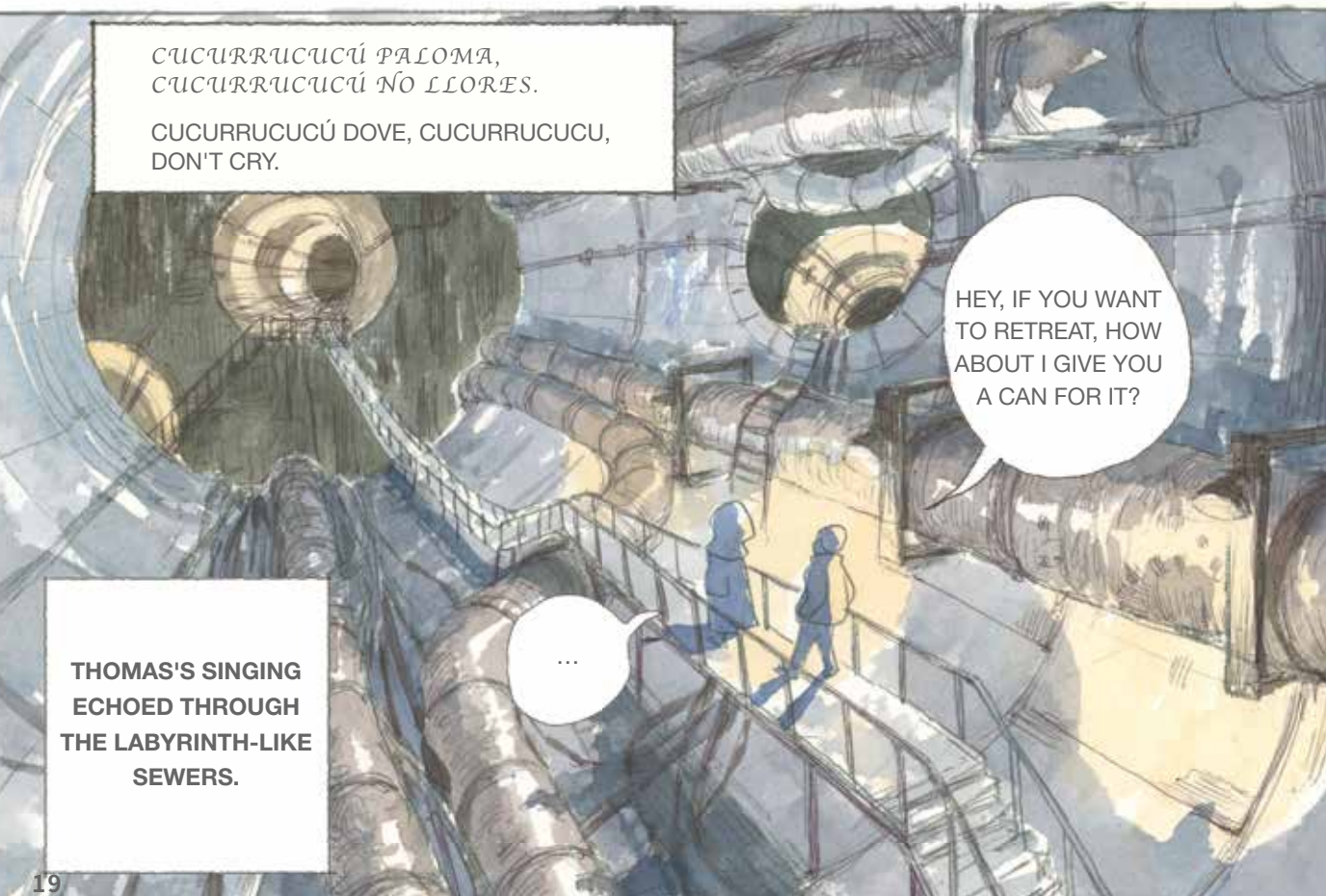
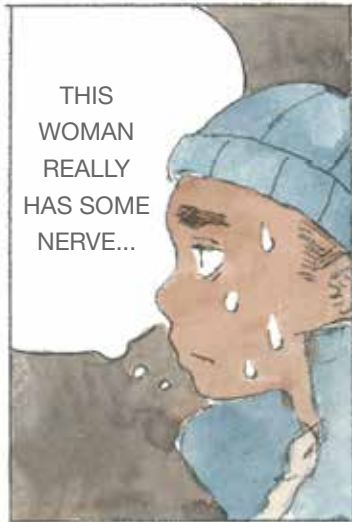
Since the new millennium, scientists concerned about rapid environmental changes have proposed the developing geological concept of the Anthropocene. Human activities have irreversibly altered the environment, leaving behind carbon footprints, radiation, and indestructible waste, which will remain in the soil and atmosphere. *Mayfly Island* reflects on whether human civilization can continue expanding without end. Just as profoundly, this skillfully crafted Taiwanese comic also draws readers back to the deep oceans surrounding the island and the cultural heritage of Taiwan's Austronesian Indigenous peoples. Ironically, in searching for our roots, we connect to a more “universal” imagination that joins Taiwan to the world.

*Lin Yunhong is a passionate enthusiast of contemporary literature and popular culture. As he puts it, “Someone once told me, ‘You need to have your own opinions.’ I nodded vigorously, thinking I had never heard anything more reasonable!”*





THE SINGING  
CAME JUST IN  
TIME AND WE  
MANAGED TO  
BREAK THROUGH  
THE DEFENSES...



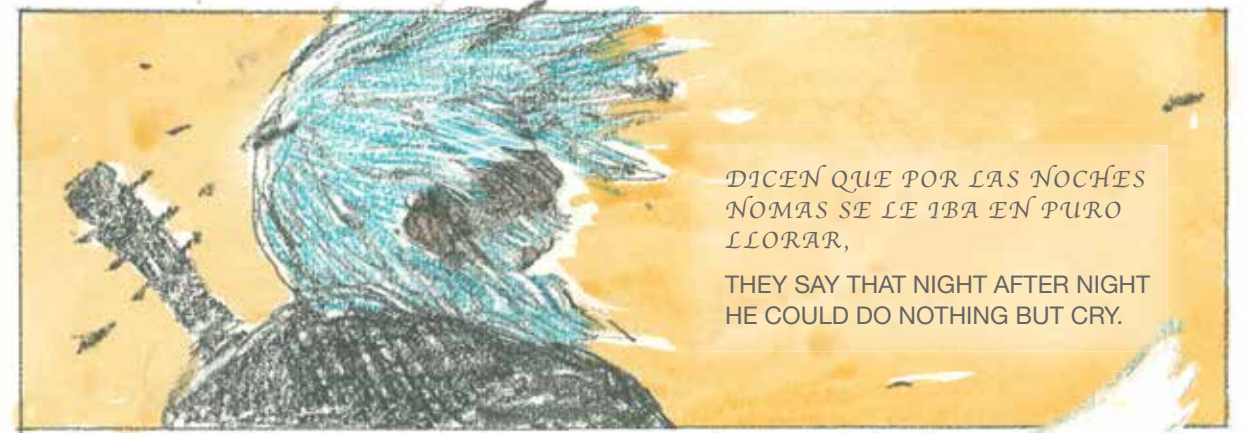
CUCURRUCUCÚ PALOMA,  
CUCURRUCUCÚ NO LLORES.

CUCURRUCUCÚ DOVE, CUCURRUCUCU,  
DON'T CRY.

HEY, IF YOU WANT  
TO RETREAT, HOW  
ABOUT I GIVE YOU  
A CAN FOR IT?

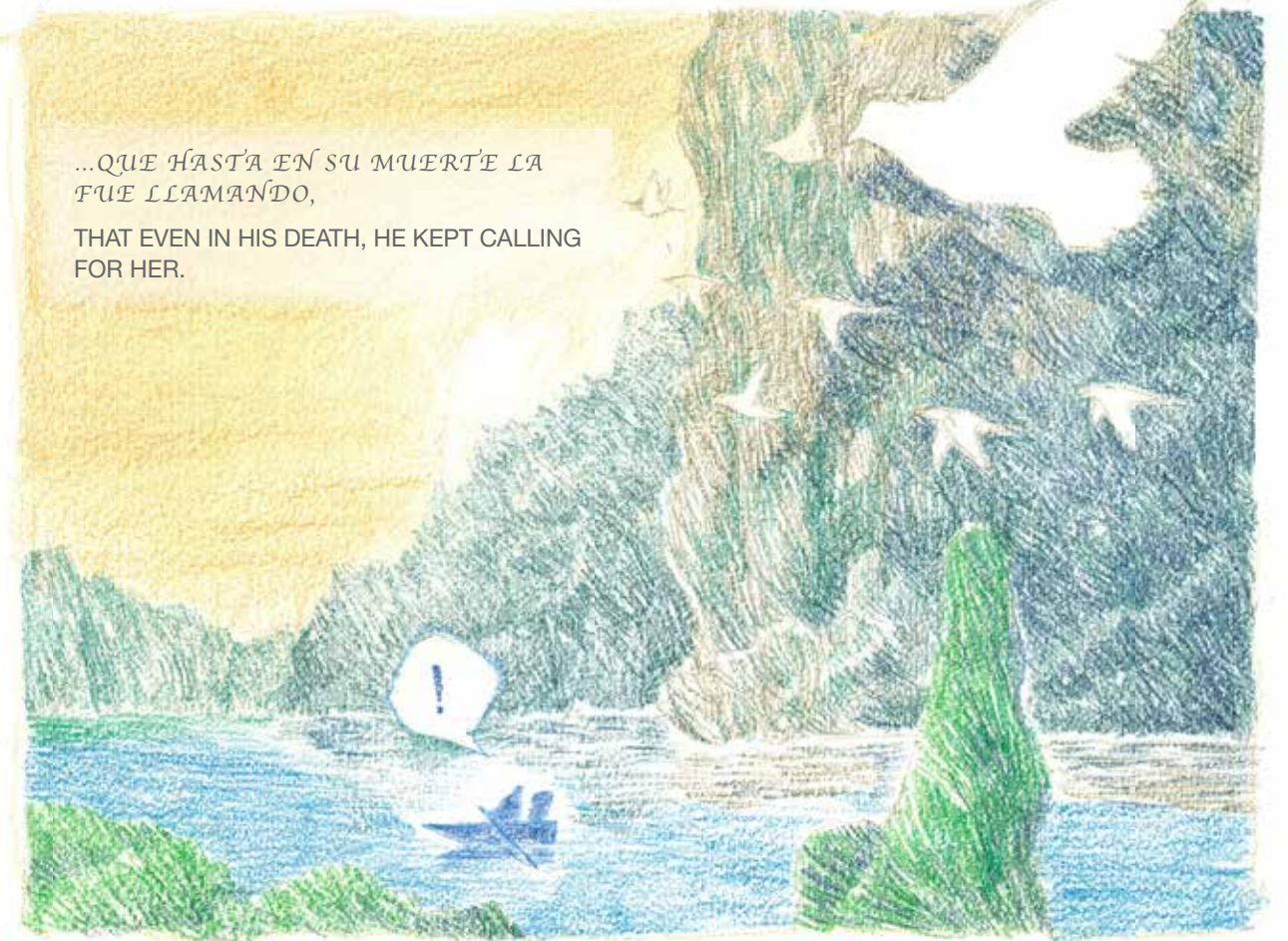
THOMAS'S SINGING  
ECHOED THROUGH  
THE LABYRINTH-LIKE  
SEWERS.

...



DICEN QUE POR LAS NOCHES  
NÓMAS SE LE IBA EN PURO  
LLORAR,

THEY SAY THAT NIGHT AFTER NIGHT  
HE COULD DO NOTHING BUT CRY.



...QUE HASTA EN SU MUERTE LA  
FUE LLAMANDO,

THAT EVEN IN HIS DEATH, HE KEPT CALLING  
FOR HER.

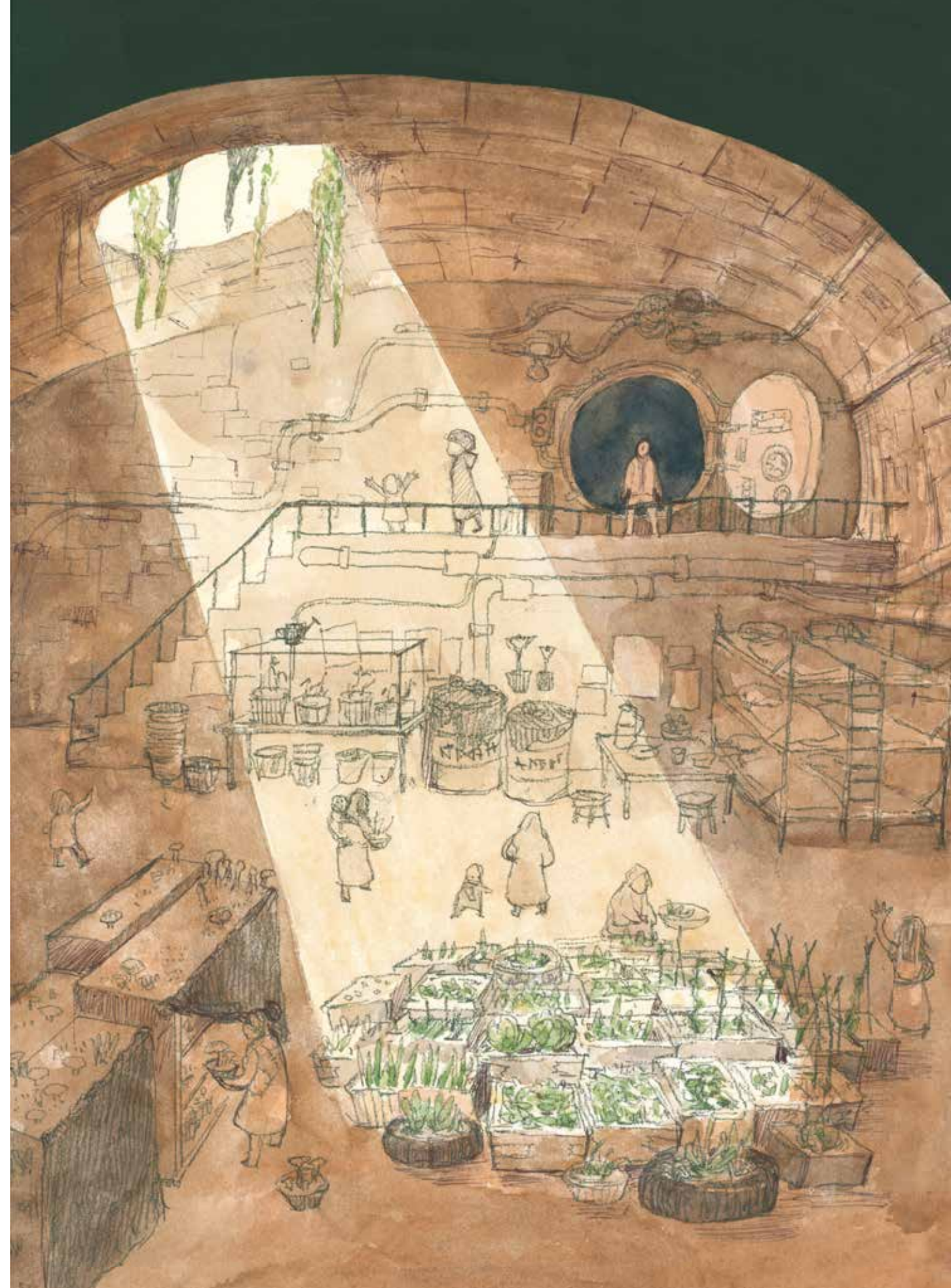
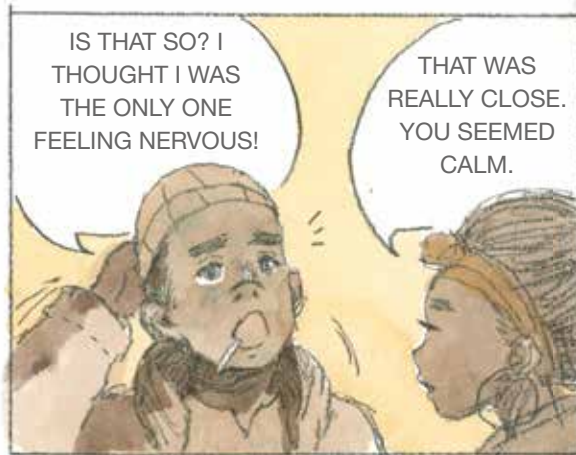


FORGET IT, LET'S  
GO LISTEN TO  
THOMAS SING.

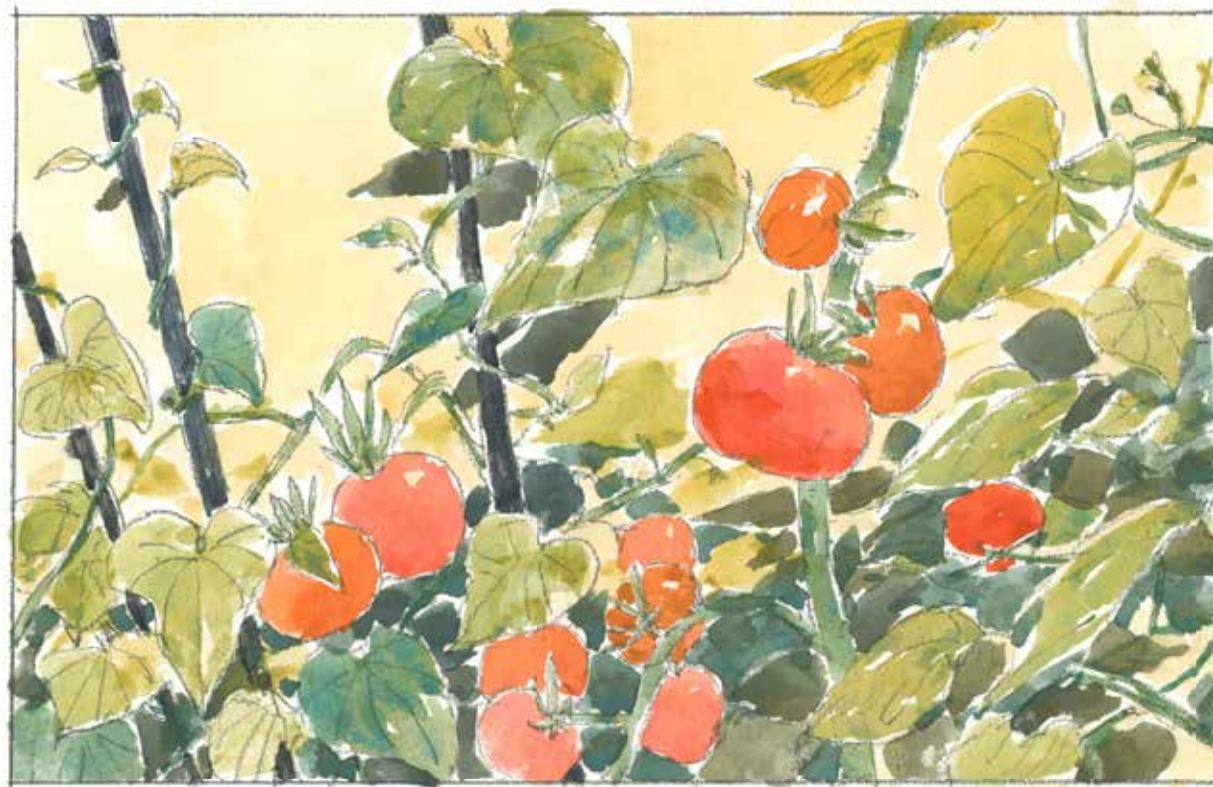
LIGHT'S  
OFF.



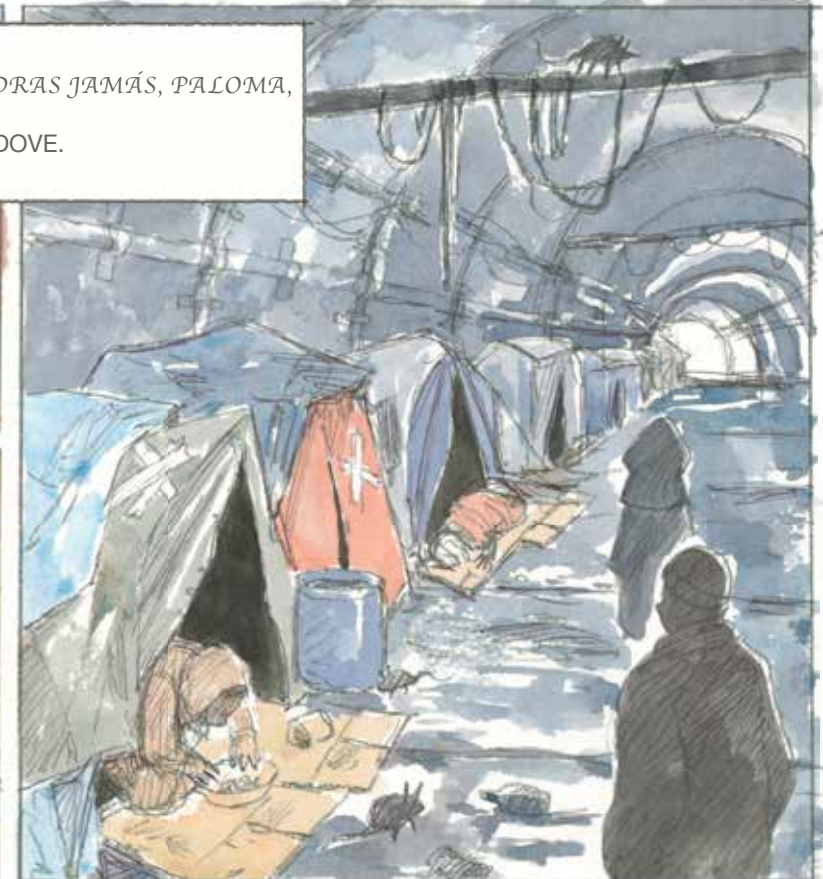




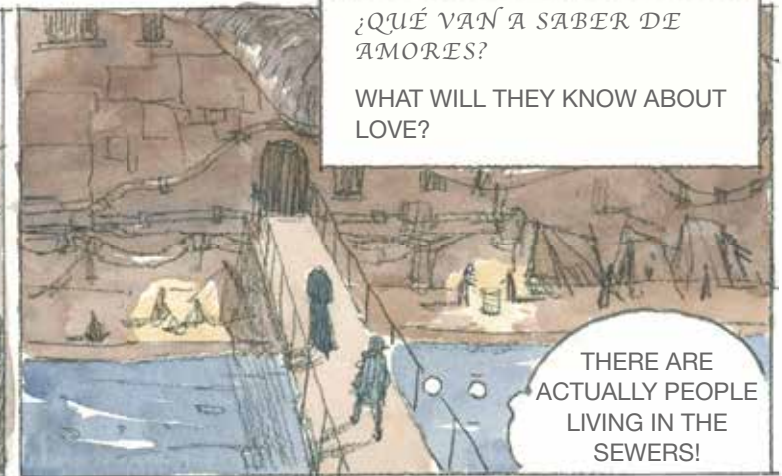




LAS PIEDRAS JAMÁS, PALOMA,  
STONES, DOVE.



KNOCK, KNOCK,  
KNOCK-KNOCK-  
KNOCK.



¿QUÉ VAN A SABER DE  
AMORES?  
WHAT WILL THEY KNOW ABOUT  
LOVE?

THERE ARE  
ACTUALLY PEOPLE  
LIVING IN THE  
SEWERS!

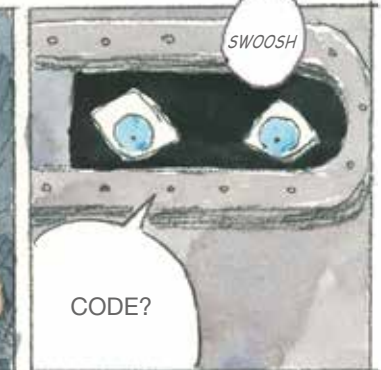


CREAK

WOW,  
IT'S LILY!



THE  
NIGHTINGALE  
AND THE  
SPARROW.



SWOOSH

CODE?