



Vehicle of the future

# ON YER BIKE!

Ondřej Buddeus & Jindřich Janíček

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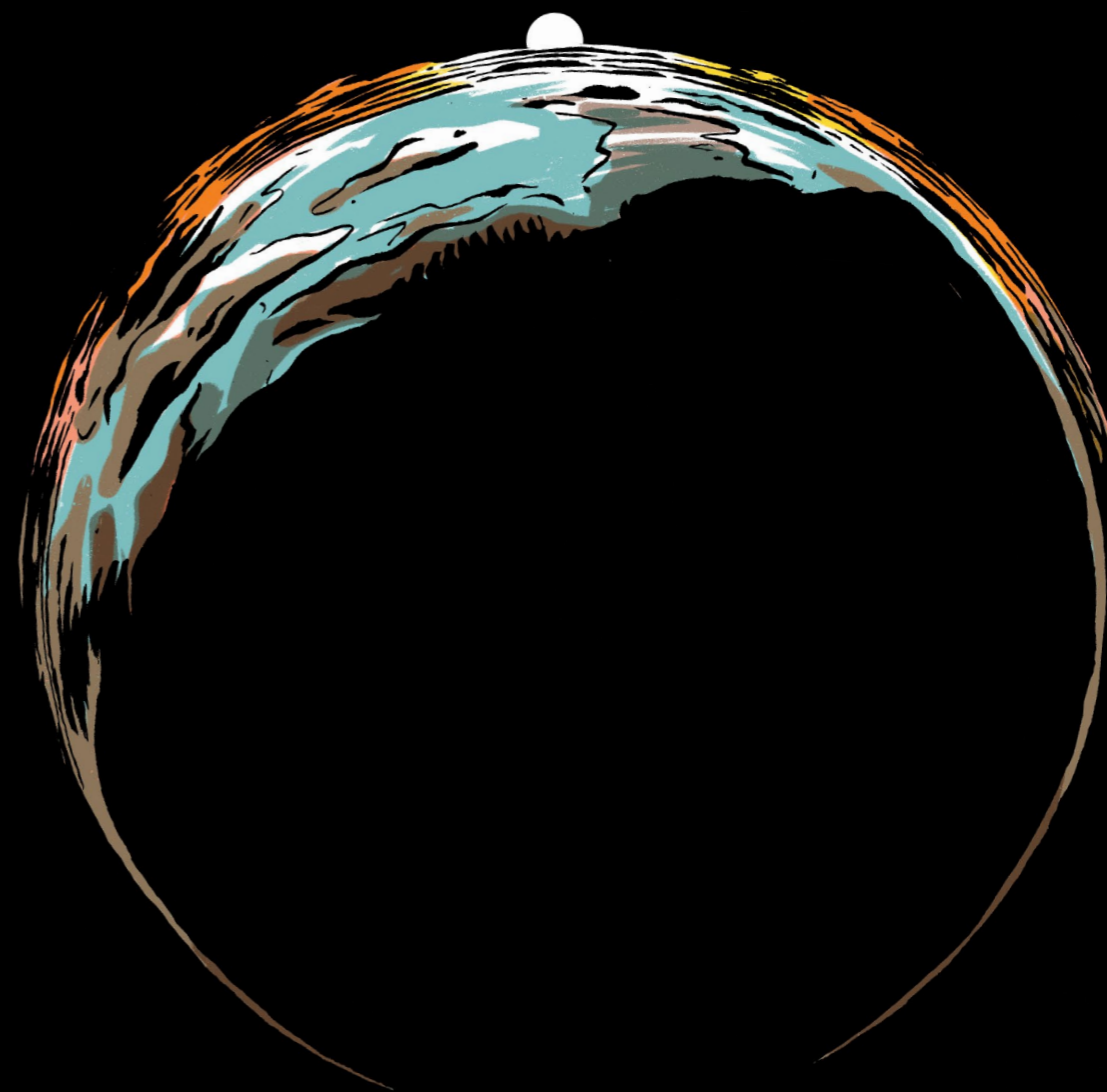
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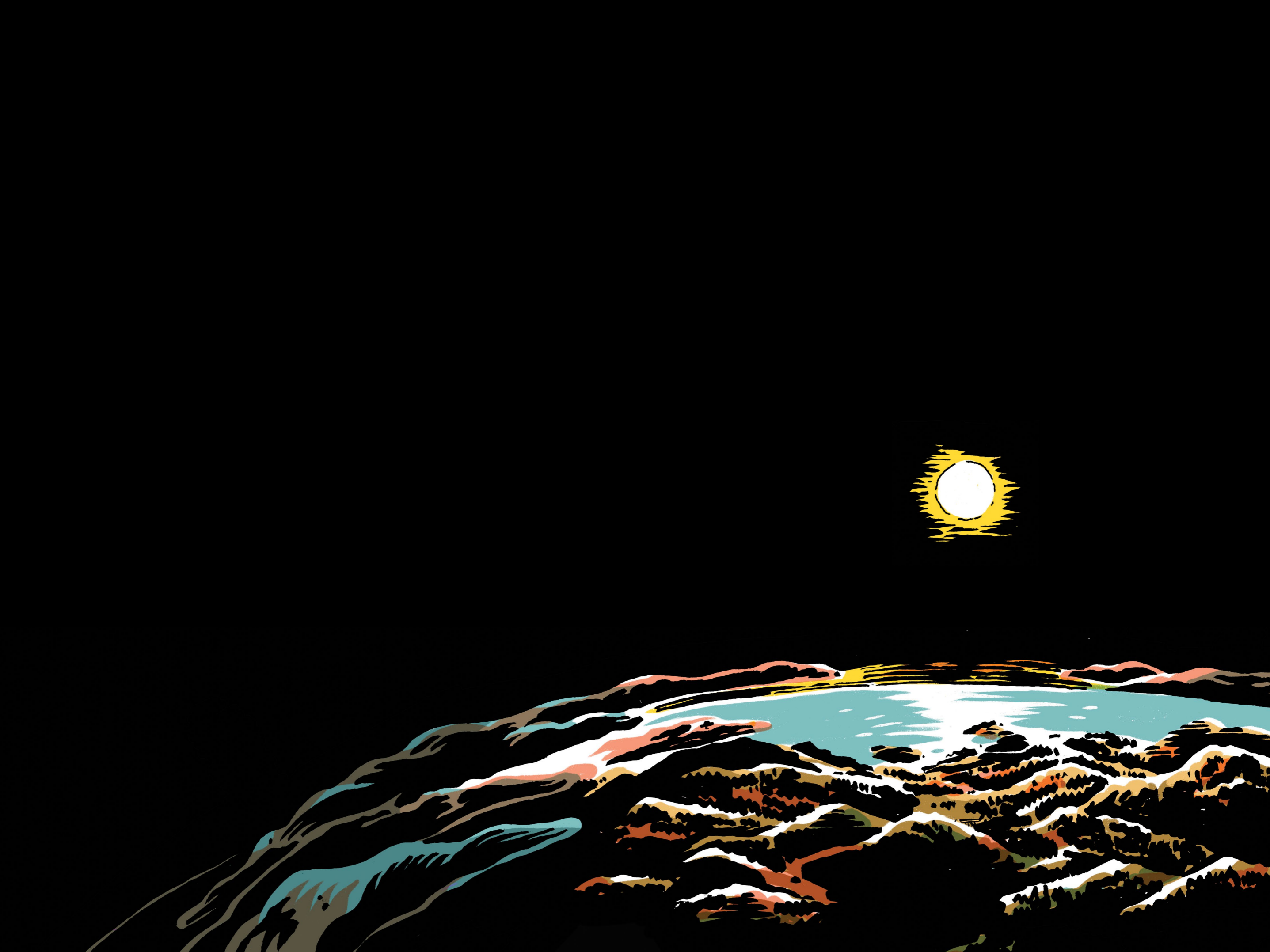


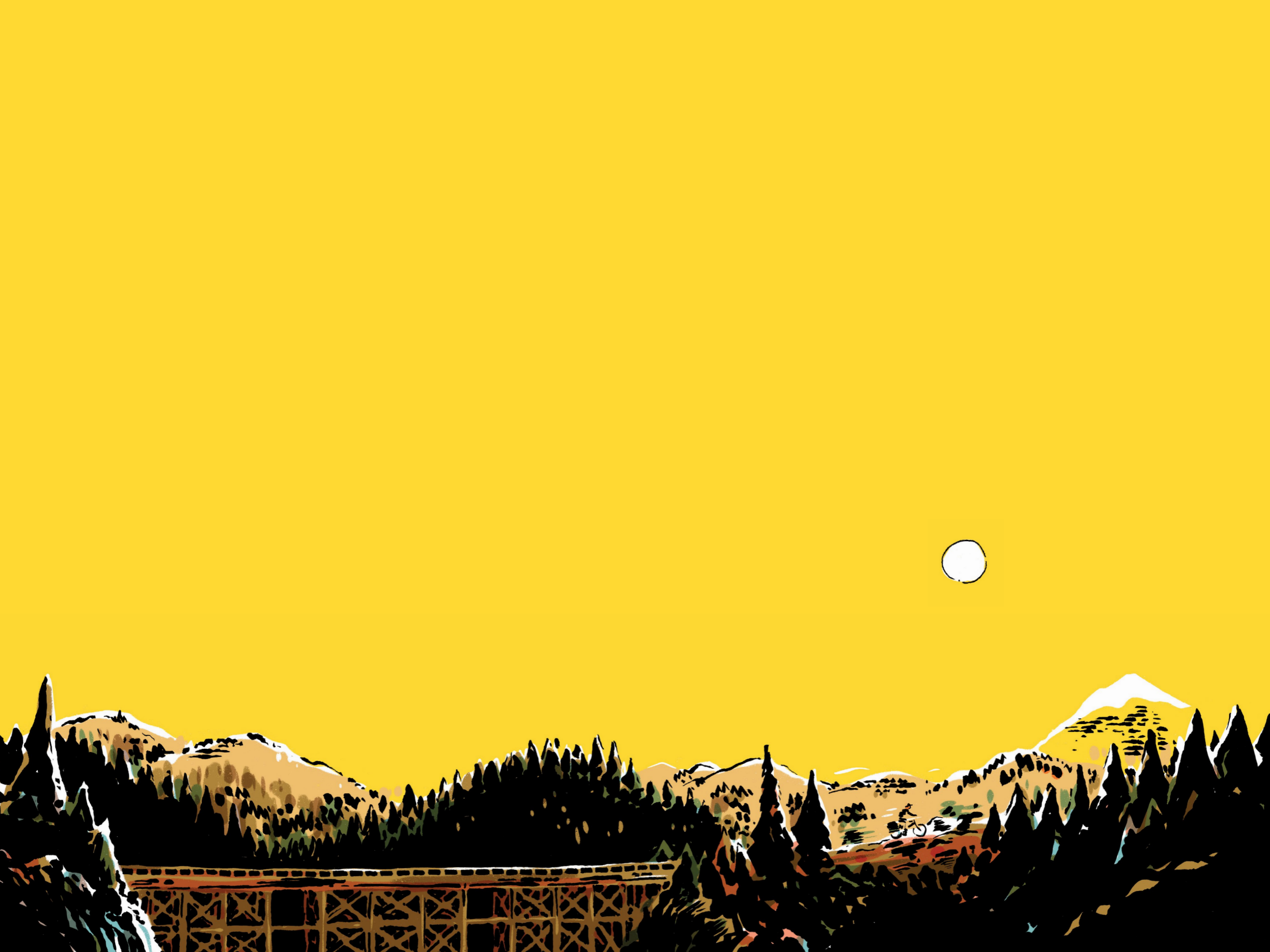
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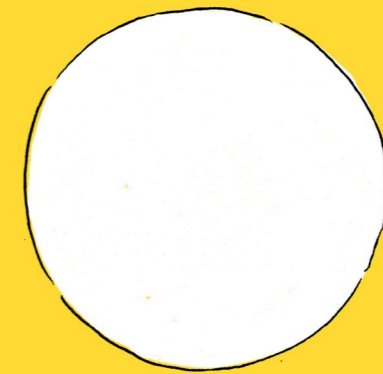


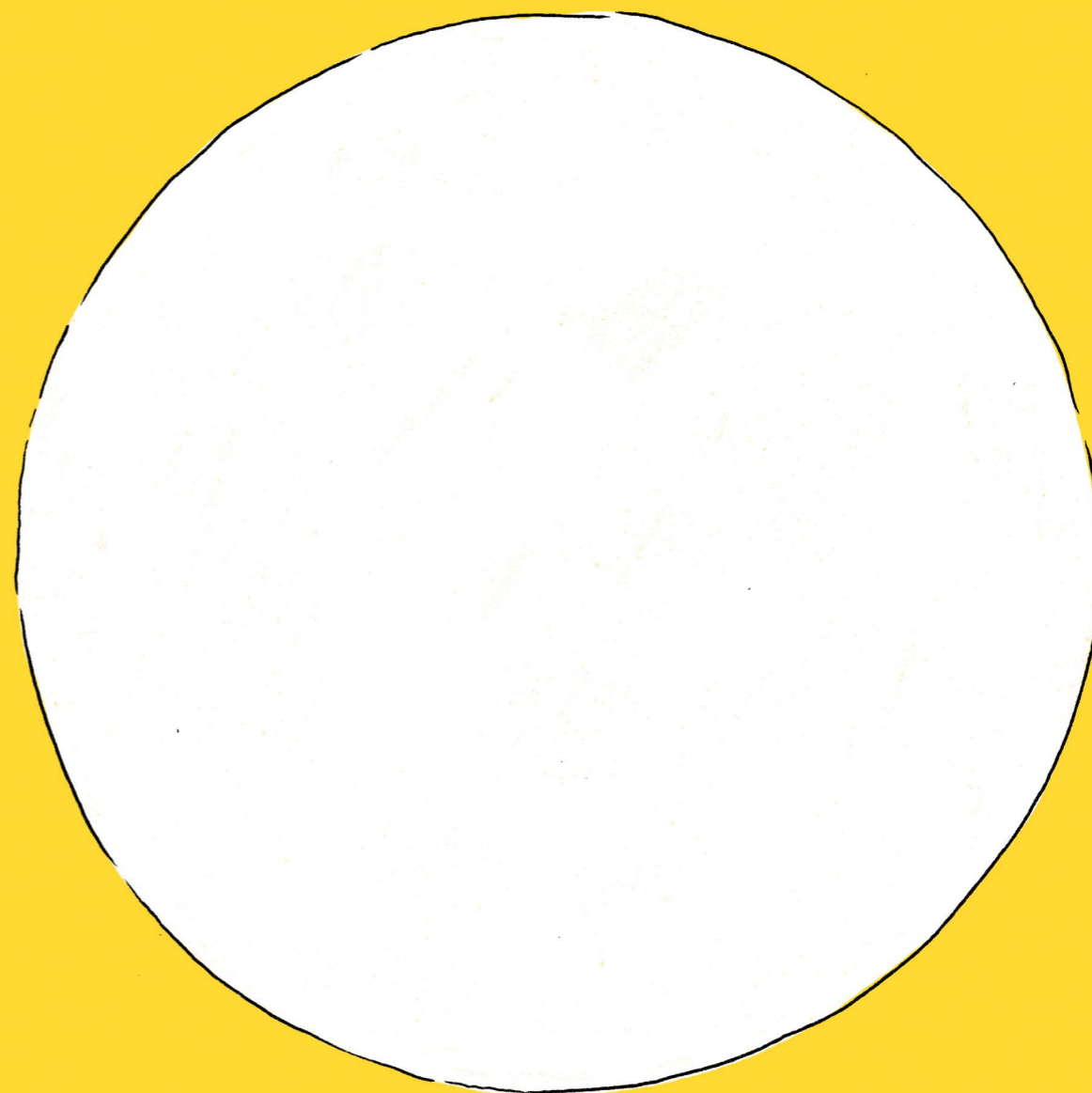






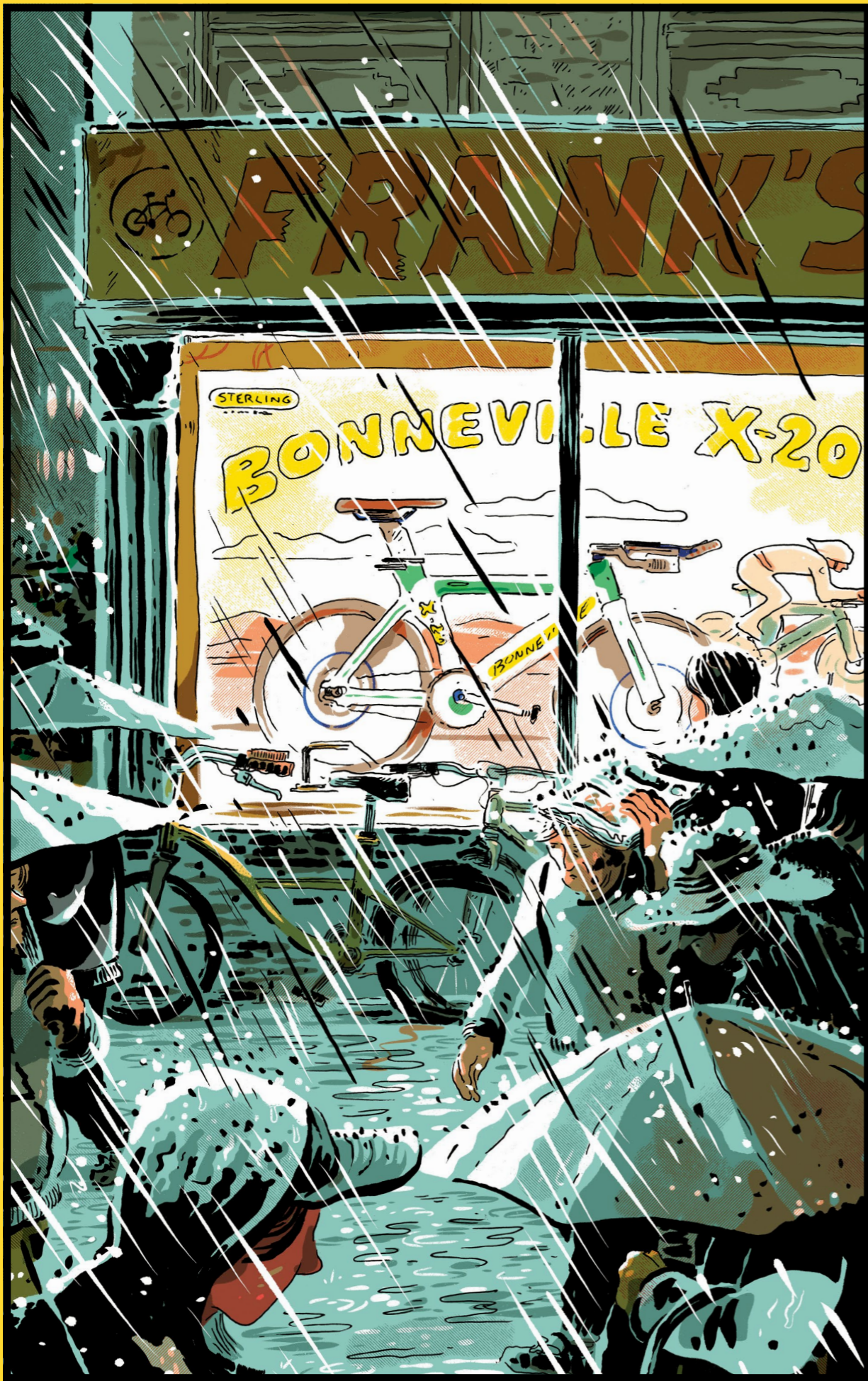






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**ON YER BIKE!**



# WHY DO WE RIDE BIKES?



Anyone who rides a bike can be considered a cyclist. Some people genuinely enjoy it, and even though they could walk, drive, or go by hot-air balloon, they still go for the bike. Some choose the bike because it's simply the fastest and most convenient way to get around. As in, no overcrowded buses or getting stuck in traffic jams. A bike will take you from your front door to wherever you need to go. For a lot of people, cycling is also a way to get together with your friends and head out for a trip. And some people ride a bike to clear their heads, to be with their own self for a while.

Some folks have to bike, like couriers rushing through town, delivering packages as fast as possible.

And there are others who don't really have a choice – cycling is their only way to get around. Maybe a bus ticket is too expensive, or there's no public transit nearby, and they don't have a car.

We all know it's healthy to keep your body moving – it's good for the body and soul. Some people bike to lose a few pounds, others to gain muscle. But it's not always just about personal health. Plenty of people bike because they care about the health of the place they live in. Bikes don't burn fuel, don't make noise, and don't kick up dust.

There are endless reasons to bike, and sometimes it's as simple as... just wanting to get out in the world.

Jack's brother Tom has been blind since birth. They love taking their tandem bike on trips into nature.



The Staines-upon-Thames water polo team is off for a friendly match against their rivals from Walton-on-Thames.



Vlado rode like a boss, loving the way everyone stared.



Ice cream-bound!

Jan was at the skatepark trying to nail his barspins - he wiped out twice, but overall, it was epic.



Karla's taking T-Bone, her retriever, to the vet.



After 30 kilometers, it was high time for Sara to take a break and finally have a snack.



Today, Amir spotted 7 does, 2 pheasants, 2 chateaus, 1 castle, 1 burger and 1 coke, 12 bikes a-bikin', and 20 brand-new vistas.



Lena's on her way from her grandma's place and she's stuffed.



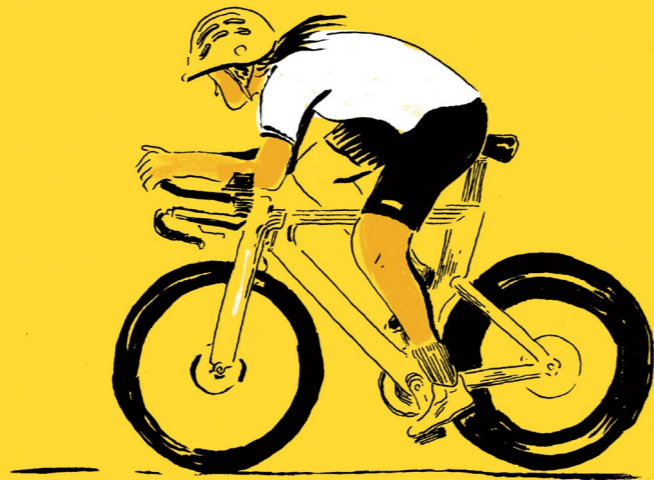
"Are you off your rocker?" some boys yelled at Lucie as she rode by.



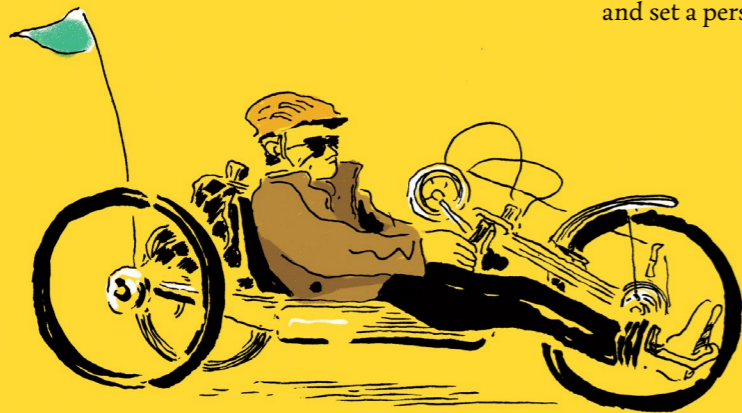
Matyáš wanted to ride through the stream, but the mud was so thick, he ended up having to wade across.



On her way to work, Marie always plays it safe and gets off her bike at this crazy intersection and walks.



Elena slept like a baby, had a hearty breakfast, and set a personal best on her 10-kilometer ride.



The open road sings Jonathan a beautiful, hilly song.

**THE FIRST GROWN-UP VEHICLE** To operate most vehicles – cars, motorcycles, buses, trains, tractors, motorboats, helicopters, you name it – you need to do special training, pass a test, and get a license. Not with bikes, though. Anyone who knows how

to ride a bike can, no questions asked. It's like that everywhere, except for North Korea, where you need to pass a cycling exam first. Most people learn to ride a bike before they even start school, so for most of us, a bike is the first grown-up vehicle we master.



## ISN'T A BIKE JUST A HORSE?

In either case, you'll feel the wind in your hair. It's no coincidence – bikes and horses have a lot in common! Horses have been with humans for thousands of years, not just as helpers, but as mythical creatures guiding us beyond this world. A bike might be just a mechanical

horse, but it's you who brings it to life. Once you saddle up, it'll take you where you wish, down the path you choose. There's wisdom in the saying: no hour of life is lost that is spent in the horse's saddle. The same could be said for time spent on a bike...



SENG MOTOCICLO  
大成車行

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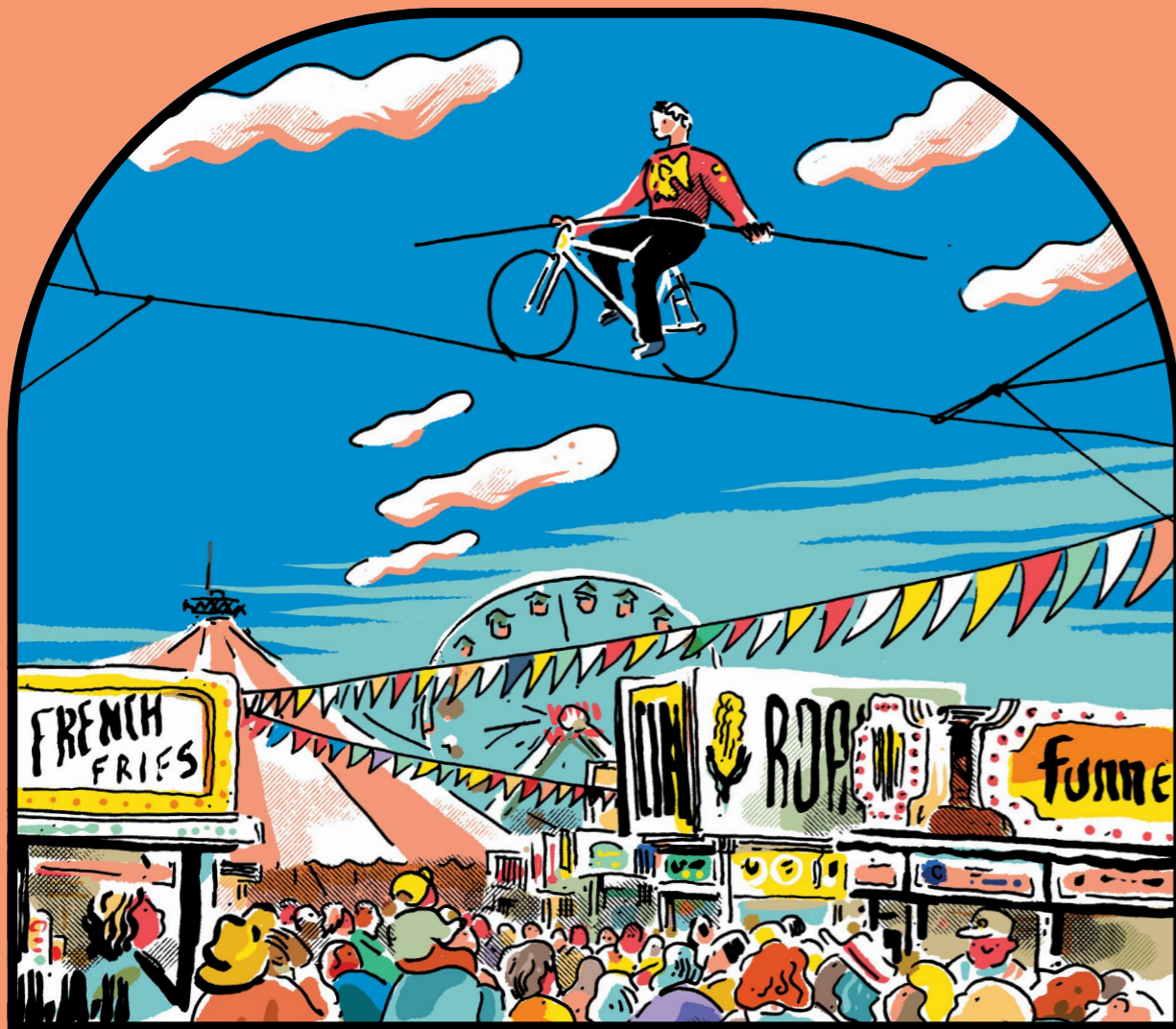
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TAXI

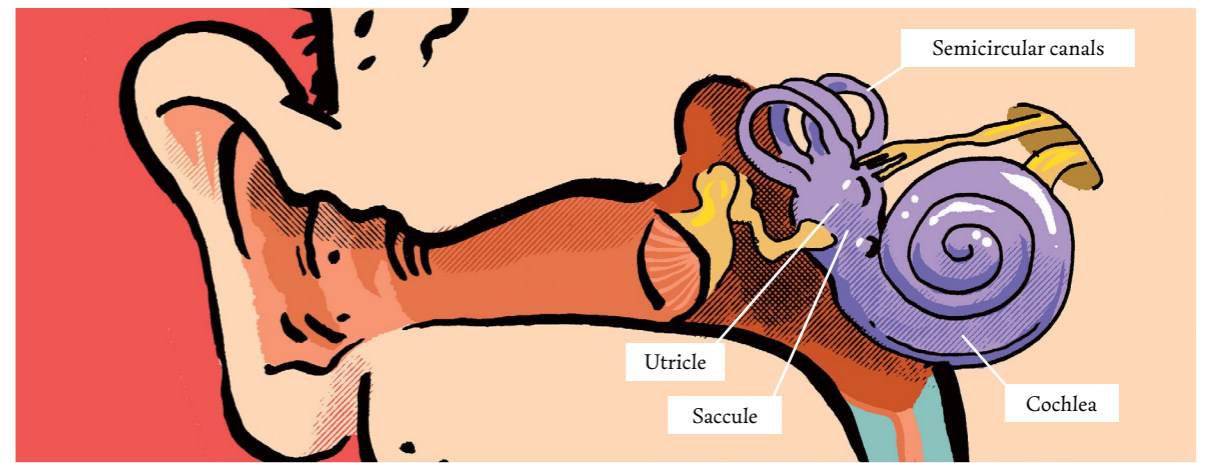
TAXI

# THE MAGIC OF BALANCE...

“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.”  
Albert Einstein, 1930



It's not just muscles that make riding a bike possible. There's another essential superpower we have and rely on, the ability to keep our balance. Thanks to our inner ear's balance system, we can tell which way we're tilting, whether we're going uphill or downhill. This system works in perfect harmony with other organs. Our eyes send in info about what's around us, and the brain puts it all together, telling our muscles and tendons what to do so we don't topple over – whether we're riding straight, turning, jumping, or braking...

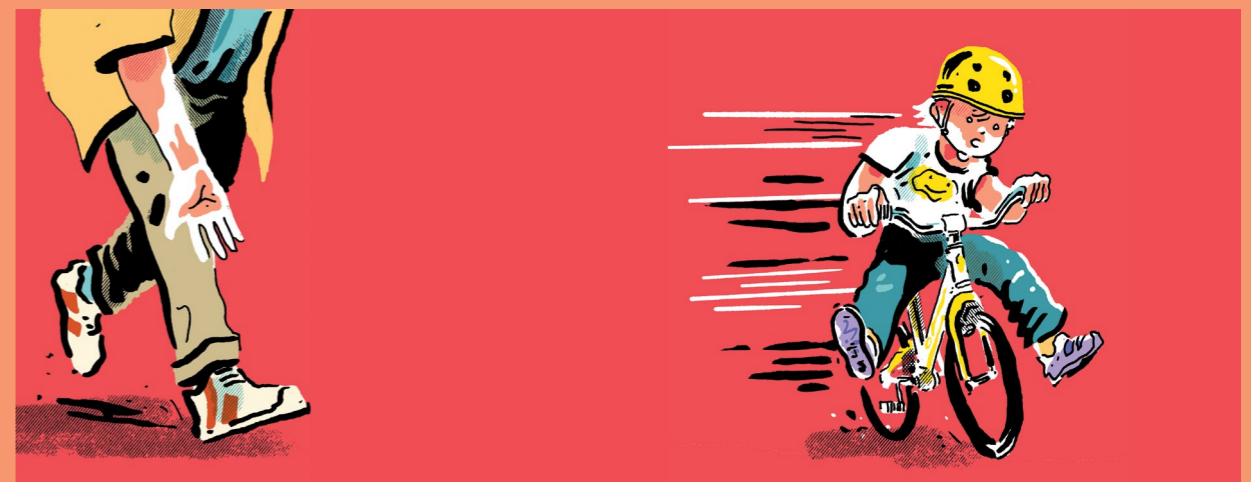


## THE INNER EAR

The **COCHLEA** sends signals to the brain – without it, we wouldn't hear. At the heart of the inner ear are **TWO OTOLITH ORGANS**. They tell us about the position of our body and if we're speeding up or slowing down. The **UTRICLE** responds to forward and backward motion, the **SACCULE** to up and down movement. The **SEMICIRCULAR CANALS** are filled with fluid, and the way the fluid moves informs our brain about our head and body position when we're turning.

**ACROBATICS FOR EVERYONE** Balance isn't a given – it's a skill we all have to learn, starting with that first wobble when we start walking as babies. A couple steps... and bam! A few more steps... and down we go. Over and over, until the crawling baby finally turns into a toddler, a tiny human on two legs. Playing with balance is fun – whether it's doing cartwheels, handstands, skating, rollerblading, or skiing. Balance is a challenge and can be trained. For some, like gymnasts or acrobats, it's an art they've

perfected. For the rest of us, watching such feats is mesmerizing – our breath catches at the sight. One wrong move, and disaster could strike! Acrobatics have always fascinated humans. Over 4,000 years ago in Crete, people were performing stunts on the backs of running bulls. Around the same time, acrobats in China were wowing crowds too. In the 19th century, one of the most popular circus acts was riding a bike on a tightrope stretched between the tent poles.

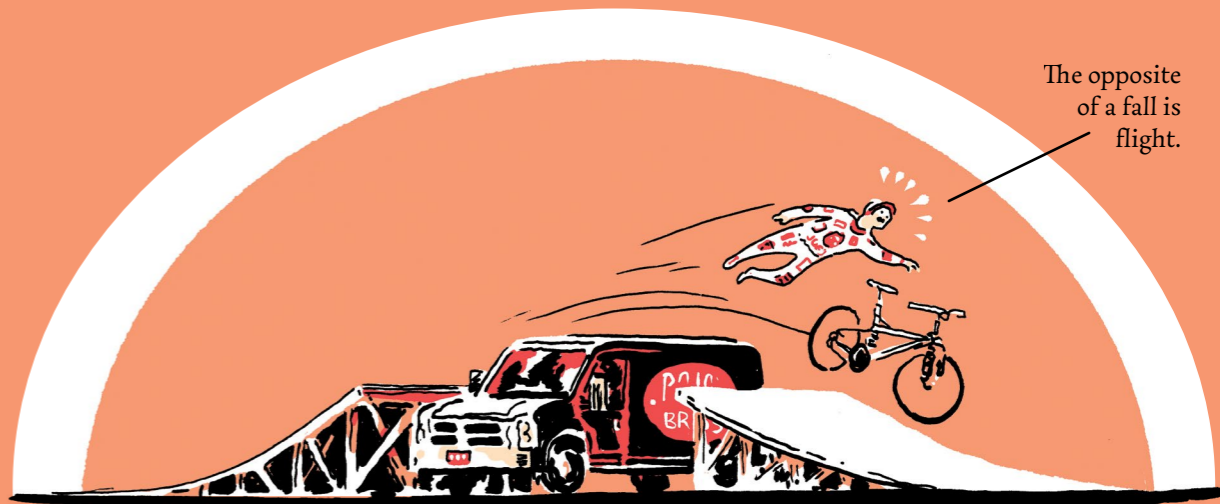
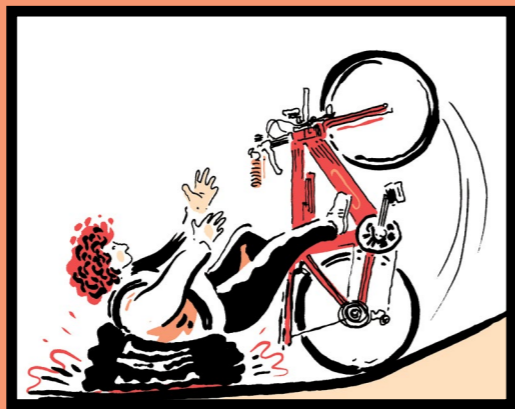


**THE BIG MOMENT...** Why do so many of us remember the first time we rode a bike on our own? When our balance is shaky, mom or dad run beside us, holding onto the back of our seat. Then, the big moment comes – they let go. And we're off! Riding solo, steering where we want, in control of this big,

heavy vehicle for the very first time. It's a moment of pure joy with a hint of fear. Heart racing, eyes wide with excitement. It's these moments – when so many new feelings collide – that stay with us, long after the ordinary ones have faded.

# ... AND THE HARSH REALITY OF FALLING

Why do people learning to ride a bike wobble so much? Because they're figuring out where balance ends and falling begins. Anyone who can ride has also learned how not to fall. Since you sit quite high up on a bike and move pretty fast at times, a fall can really hurt... That's why helmets matter. The best fall is the kind you avoid, of course. But what if you can't?



## THE PAIN SCALE OF SURFACES

### 1. BLACKTOP

A smooth ride, but asphalt hurts the most and can cause scrapes.

### 2. DIRT OR FOREST PATH

If it's rocky, it's just as bad as asphalt. Without rocks, you'll end up a bit scraped and dirty.

### 3. ARTIFICIAL TURF

Found on playgrounds, has a bit of give but still isn't a pleasant fall.

### 4. HOSTILE PLANTS - THISTLES

A thick patch of these doesn't mean a hard but a prickly fall.

### 5. GRASS AND CO.

Grass, berry bushes, non-prickly shrubs... all offer a more forgiving tumble.

### 6. MUD

Mud loves to slip you up. You will land with a splat, sink, or get stuck. The top contender for the messiest landings.

### 7. WATER

Falling into water doesn't hurt much but might give you a shock. How unpleasant it is depends on the temperature of both the water and the air you'll be drying off in.

### 8. FOREST MOSS AND FALL LEAVES

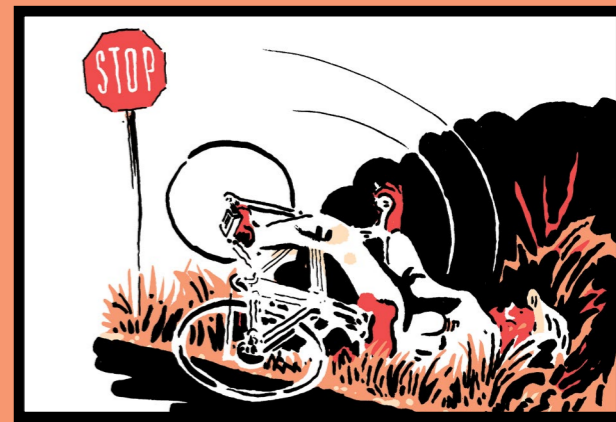
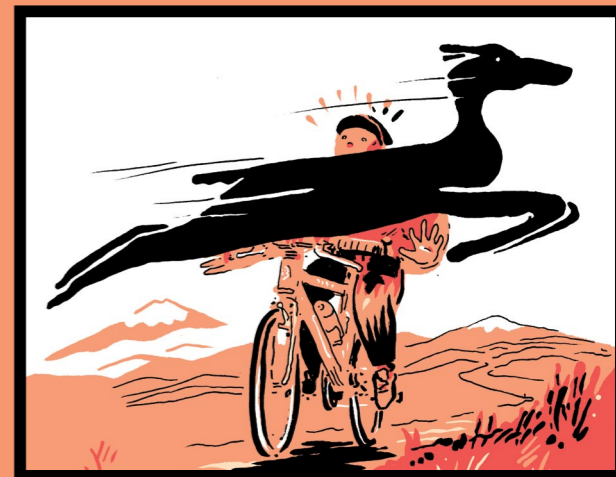
Thick, soggy moss makes for a cushy, but rather damp, landing. A pile of leaves might not be wet, but could be hiding a sneaky stick. Best to check before crashing in!

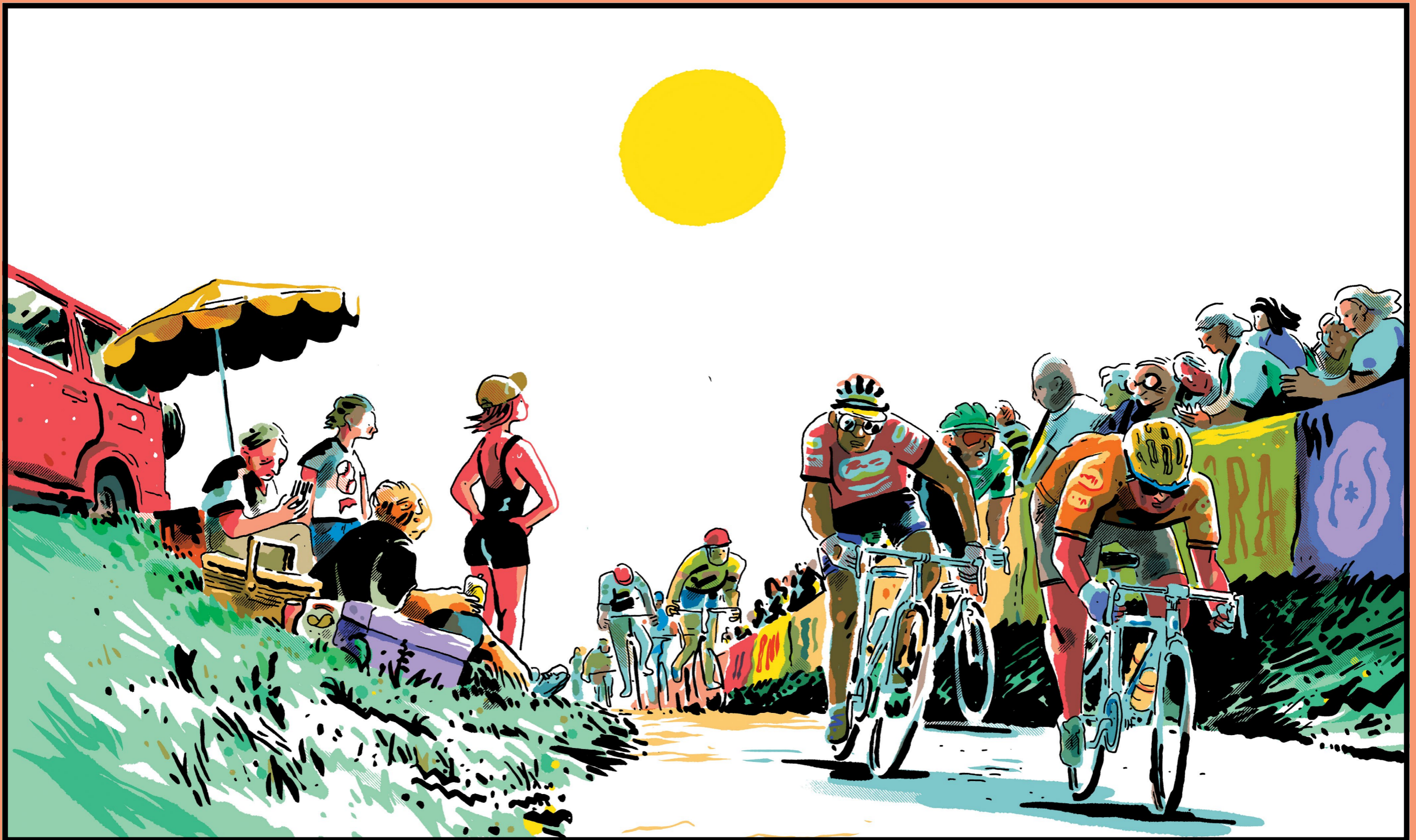
### 9. A HAYSTACK

Promises such a soft landing, it practically invites you to crash into it on purpose.

### 10. BED

At the end of the day, the one place a tired cyclist wants to fall into.





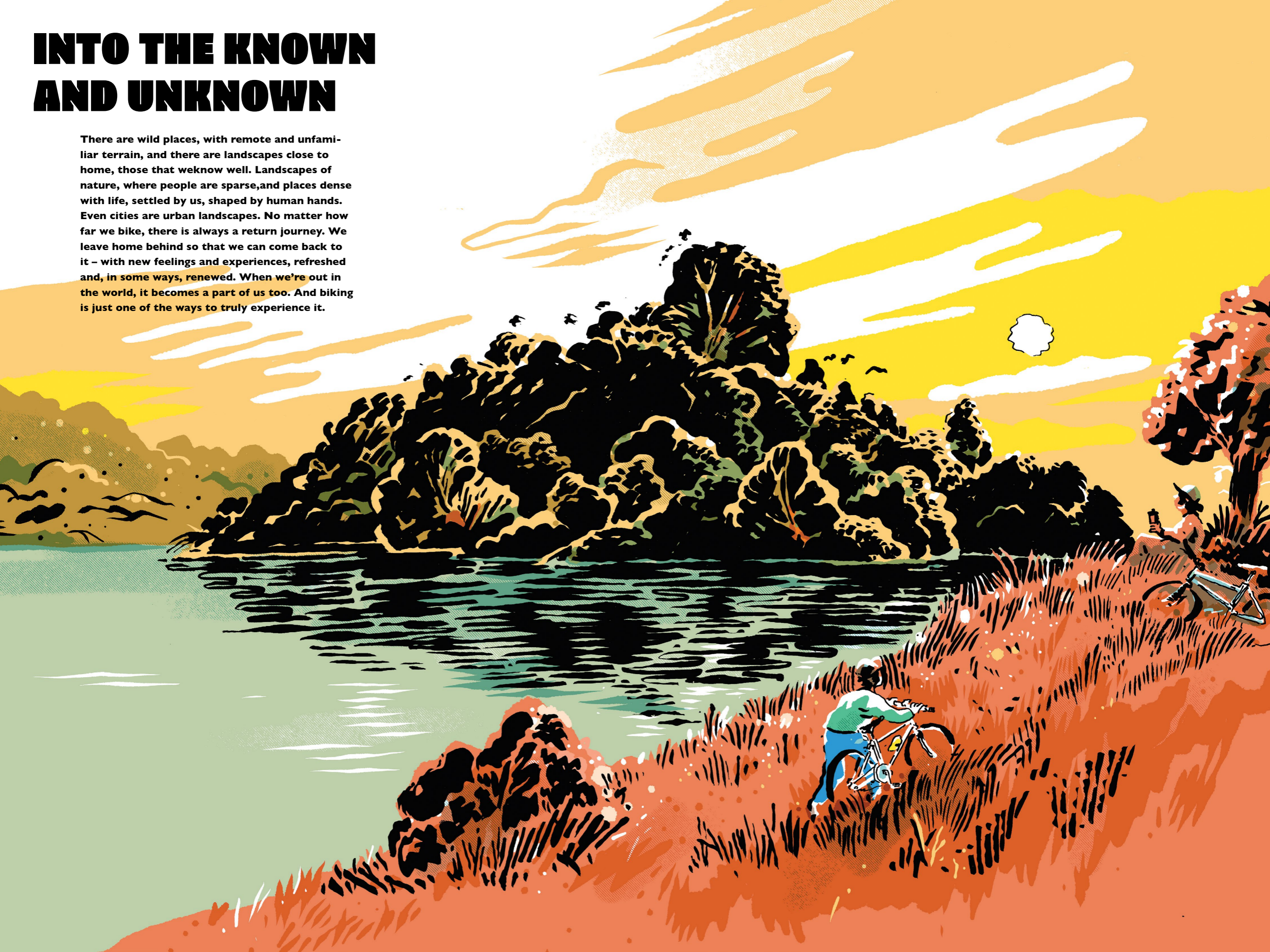
# BICYCLES AND SPORT

Every race tells a story, every tournament is a drama. Who will win? Who will lose? It comes down to performance and willpower, cleverness and strategy, endurance and determination – but also the rules of the game, which luck can sometimes twist in unexpected ways. Athletes first take on themselves during training – discover their limits and push to

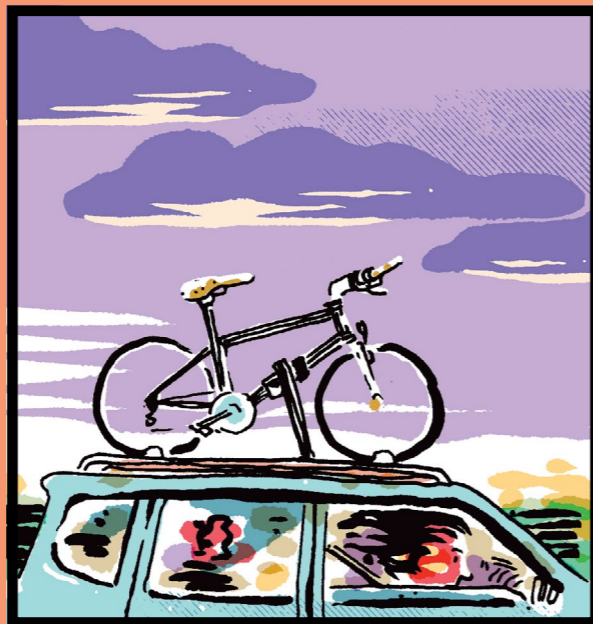
overcome them. Only then can they face off against others. The clash of strength stirs up almost every kind of passion. Winning is hard, but handling defeat? Even harder! Friendship and teamwork come together with the drive to beat the competition. But sport isn't a fight – it's a game of rivals, one that can't exist without respect for others.

# INTO THE KNOWN AND UNKNOWN

There are wild places, with remote and unfamiliar terrain, and there are landscapes close to home, those that we know well. Landscapes of nature, where people are sparse, and places dense with life, settled by us, shaped by human hands. Even cities are urban landscapes. No matter how far we bike, there is always a return journey. We leave home behind so that we can come back to it – with new feelings and experiences, refreshed and, in some ways, renewed. When we're out in the world, it becomes a part of us too. And biking is just one of the ways to truly experience it.



# WHAT IS A TRIP?



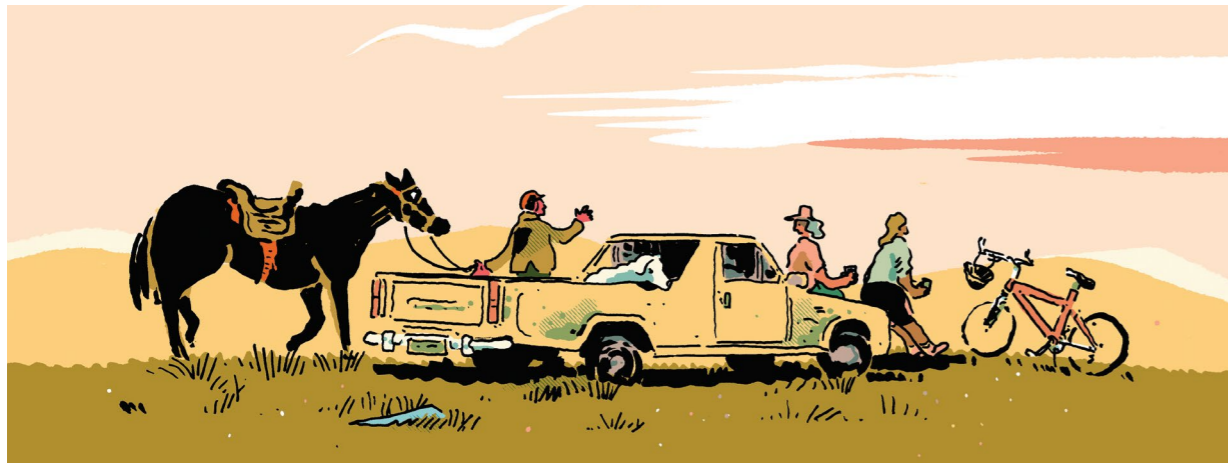
Apart from our everyday going to school, work, soccer practice, or the grocery store... there are journeys that are a little more special. So when does it become a trip? When we don't think of the journey itself as a hurdle to get past because we want to "be there already."

And when the destination is something exciting – a new city, a national park, or an old castle. When we're curious about what we'll see and experience. A trip is a journey with your eyes wide open. Or to put it another way: a trip is when the journey is the destination

**HOW DO YOU MEASURE A TRIP?** There are half-day outings and multi-day ones. If you go overboard, it can turn into an excursion or even an expedition. You often measure trips by distance and ascent (that's the total of all the uphill bits). If you bike ten kilometers

along a river, the path will be flat and quick. But ten kilometers with two killer hills in the mix? That can take half the afternoon, and if the climbs are steep enough, you'll reach your goal ready to drop. But there are other ways to measure trips...

**LIKE BY HOW MANY NEW HORIZONS YOU SEE.**



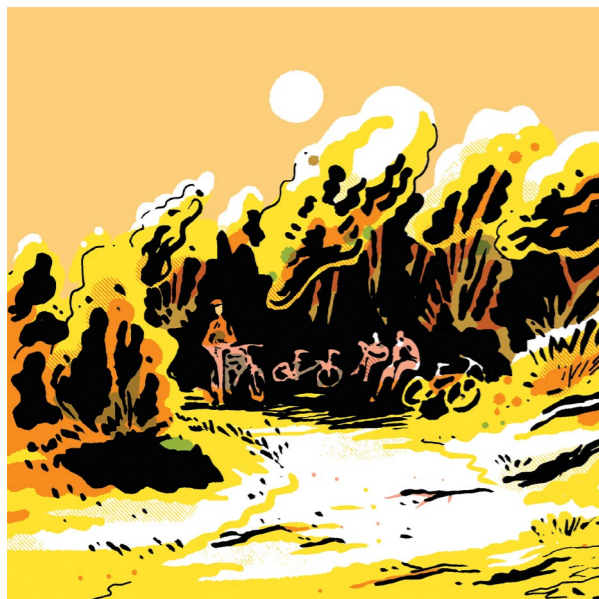
**A FIVE SCOOP TRIP** At dawn, we set out from the harbor, our plan to circle the whole island. The mountains ahead of us were so big they touched the clouds. Dad got a flat tire three times – poor guy. By the time we got back, it was dark, and there was music and dancing under the big sycamore tree.



**A ONE SCOOP TRIP** The destination was clear. The famous ice cream shop in the town over had extra raspberry flavor that day. We were back in less than two hours, just in time to beat the storm.



**A TWO SCOOP TRIP** The second hill really wore us out, but there was a little stand at the top selling hot dogs, soda, and beer. So we took a snack break. When we got to the town we were going to, we stumbled upon a café that had amazing donuts.



**A THREE SCOOP TRIP** It was so hot today – we must've drunk about a hundred liters of water. The best part was riding through the forest where there was shade. By evening, we arrived at a perfect swimming spot in an old quarry..



**A FOUR SCOOP TRIP** We took the train part of the way to get to the edge of the national park as early as possible. We just barely caught the last train back, and it even had a dining car, where we treated ourselves to whatever we were craving.



**HOW DO YOU KNOW IF THE TRIP WAS A SUCCESS?** If you experience something out of the ordinary – and all ends well. Not everything goes according to plan, but that's part of the adventure. Maybe it starts raining, you slip and scrape your knee, you miss the train home, or you're just having an off day and have to push through it. Sometimes a trip is a breeze, and sometimes it's a challenge thrown at you by the unknown. But if you come back with a story to tell, it was worth it.



# WHAT IS A CITY?

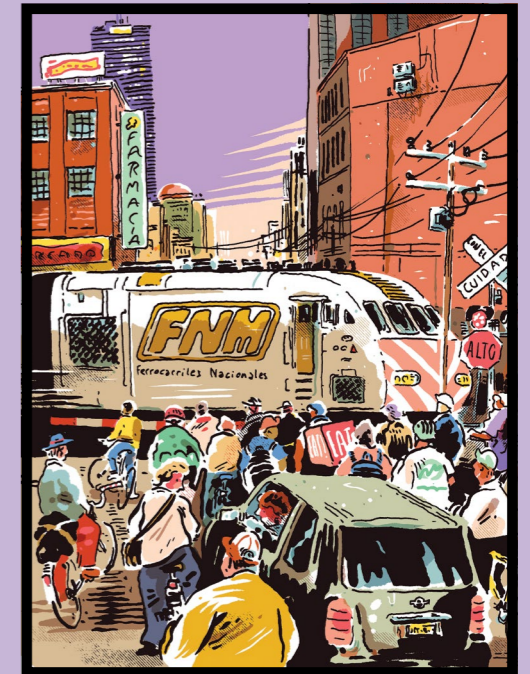


Cities are layers of the past. The city we know and live in is just the current layer, soon to be covered by a new city. It'll be different, but somehow the same.

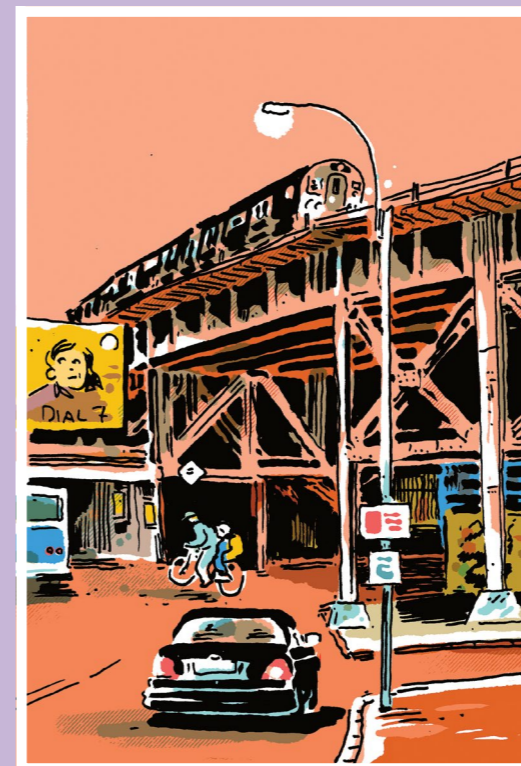
We've inherited cities from the past. Brand-new cities are rare.

Just like you can't step in the same river twice, you can't step into the same city twice, either. A living city is constantly changing, always in motion. And so are you.

In a city, people most often communicate wordlessly. A girl on a kickbike might wait for a dad to walk by with a stroller, a bus driver might let a pedestrian cross the road, or a teenager might let an elderly lady get on the tram first.



Most cities came into being long before cars or bikes did. Back then, the streets were full of people on foot and horse-drawn carriages.



Animals live in cities, too. They're good at hiding and we barely notice them. Well, except for pigeons.



The city is like a giant screen, showing all the people who live and work there. Shops show cashiers and customers, theaters show actors and spectators, schools show teachers, kids, and so on. What does the city show about you?

There are places where people know each other, where they say hi on the street, and places where thousands of strangers pass each other every day.

Most of us live where we can, not where it's closest to work or school. That's why we spend so much time commuting through the city. As our lives change, so do our routes.

Cities are actually quiet. It's the cars, buses, trucks, and trams that are loud. On Sunday mornings or the first weekend after school's out, you can really hear the silence of the city.



How many people are falling in love today? How many have said something mean or meaningful to each other? How many have given someone a hand? And how many have turned the other way, ignoring what they don't want to see?

A bike is like a musical instrument. It reads the streets it goes down like sheet music.



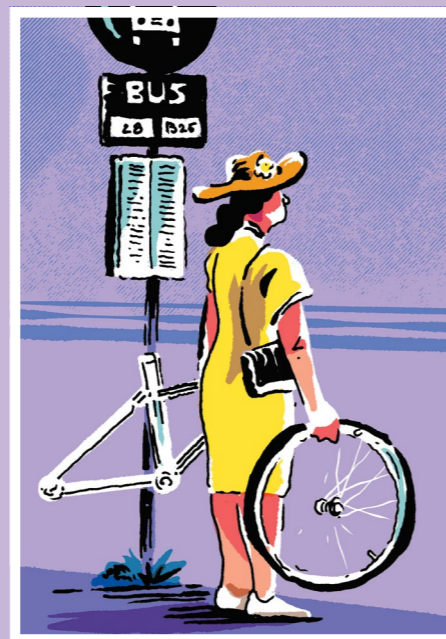
There are parts of the city that get in the pedestrian's way, elsewhere it's in the car's way or the bike's way. Some parts get in the way of everyone – and those need to change. But there are rare parts of the city where everyone feels good – and those are worth protecting.

Cities are centers of learning, power, and money. What would the world look like if parliaments stood in clearings, banks in alpine meadows, and schools in the middle of apple orchards?

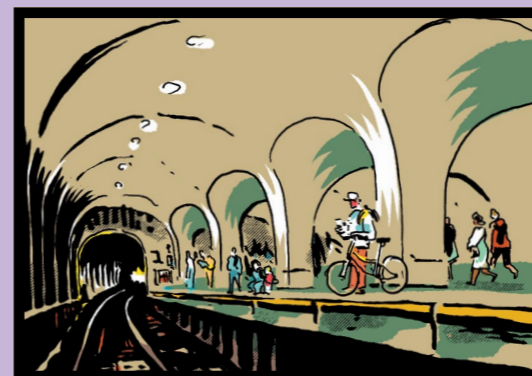
There are paths we've gone down so many times we don't even notice them anymore. Try stopping on a familiar path sometime and take a good look around. You might be surprised at what you see.

The pedestrians are walkin' here.

Urban wilderness? That's grass growing out of the gaps in the sidewalk, self-seeded saplings and weeds on empty lots. If people ever left the city, nature would take it back.



Parks are carefully tended memories of nature.

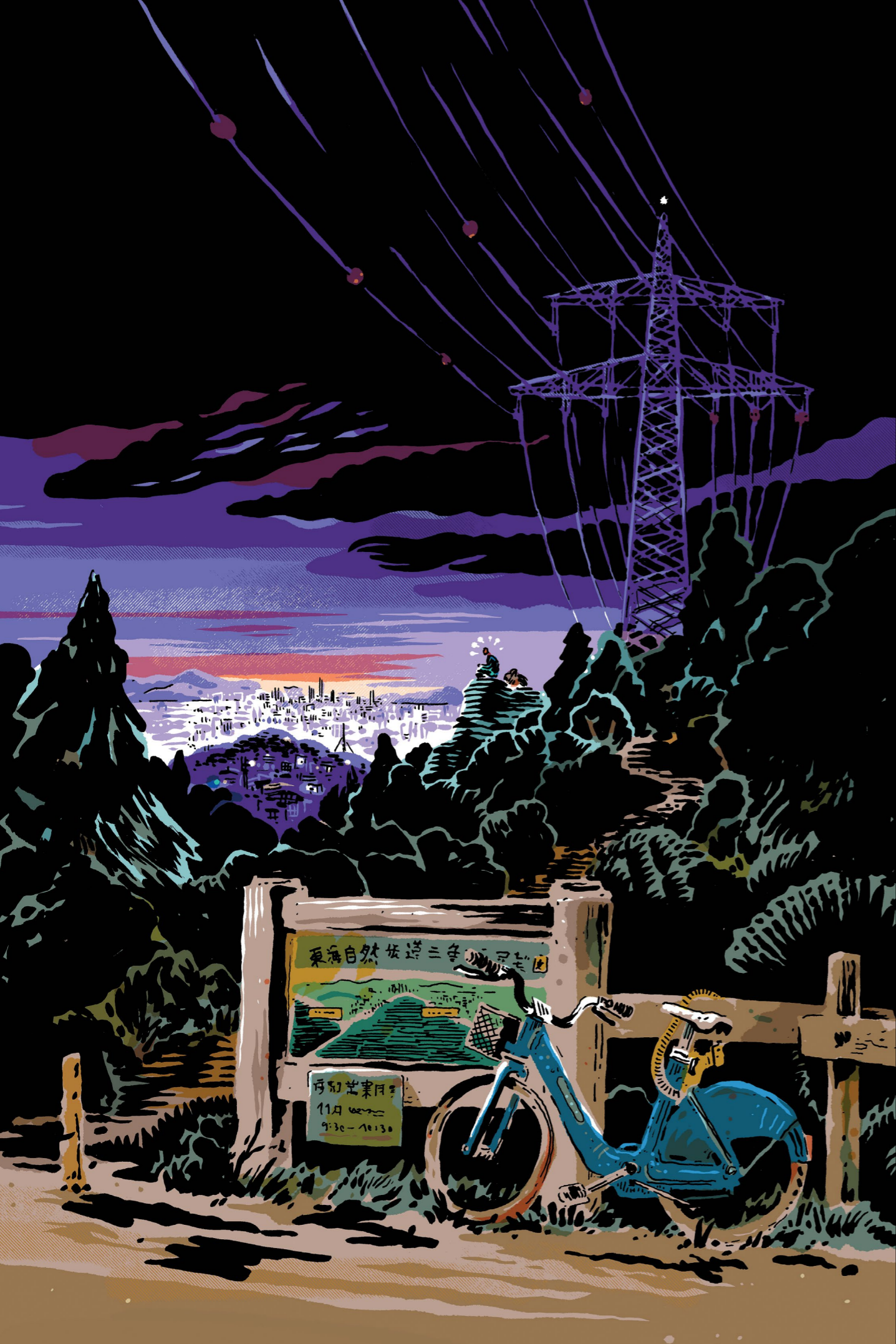




DISCOVER PLACES YOU DON'T KNOW,  
AND DISCOVER YOURSELF.







Ondřej Buddeus (1984) lives in Prague and is a writer, translator, and editor. He studied Scandinavian Studies and Translation Studies – German. He writes texts for children, prose, and poetry. Among other accolades, he is a recipient of the Czech Jiří Orten Award (2014) and the Magnesia Litera for the book *Kopf im Kopf*, for which he and David Böhm were nominated for the German Youth Literature Prize (2017). He works at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague.

Jindřich Janíček (1990) was born in Znojmo. He studied animation in Zlín and later illustration at the Academy of Arts Architecture & Design in Prague. He decided to pursue a career in illustration and won the Czech Grand Design Award for the second time in 2023.

# ON YER BIKE

***When it's alone, it waits and acts like a sleeping animal.  
But when you saddle up, it suddenly has the power and lust  
for life that you give it.***

**The bicycle has been man's humble companion for more than 200 years, serving both young and old on their everyday journeys, but also for unusual journeys. But the most important thing is that it can give us a feeling of complete freedom. Perhaps because a person on a bicycle is only one pedal stroke away from taking off.**

**Where does the fascination and passion for cycling come from? What does it do to our bodies and our feelings, to our journeys through landscapes or cities? How did the idea of the bicycle come about, how has it changed the world and how can it still change it?**

**Told and illustrated with humour and enthusiasm, this is a book for cycling enthusiasts of all ages.**

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