“Every single person has something unique to them which is impossible to recreate, without exception.”
—John Smith, acting coach

From the acclaimed author of Sabrina, Nick Drnaso’s Acting Class creates a tapestry of disconnect, distrust, and manipulation. Ten strangers are brought together under the tutelage of John Smith, a mysterious and morally-questionable leader. The group of social misfits and restless searchers have one thing in common: they are out of step with their surroundings and desperate for change.

A husband and wife, four years into their marriage and simmering in boredom. A single mother, her young son showing disturbing signs of mental instability. A peculiar woman with few—if any—friends and only her menial job keeping her grounded. A figure model, comfortable in his body and ready for a creative challenge. A worried grandmother and her adult granddaughter; a hulking laborer and gym nut; a physical therapist; an ex-con.

With thrumming unease, the class sinks deeper into their lessons as the process demands increasing devotion. When the line between real life and imagination begins to blur, the group’s deepest fears and desires are laid bare. Exploring the tension between who we are and how we present, Drnaso cracks open his characters’ masks and takes us through an unsettling American journey.

PRAISE FOR SABRINA
“Sabrina is the intimate story of one man’s suffering, but it also captures the political nihilism of the social-media era.”
—The New Yorker

“A Midwestern gothic tale for our times.”
—The New York Times Book Review, 100 Notable Books of the Year

“A clever and chilling analysis of the nature of trust and truth.”—The Guardian

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FULL TITLE LIST
I LEFT IT OPEN FOR YOU!

WELL, THAT’S NOT ENTIRELY TRUE, BUT ANYWAY... I THINK IT MEANS... I THINK... I THINK THEY MEAN... 

LETS START BY ESTABLISHING SOME RULES FOR THE NIGHT.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY NORMAL?

I WOULD LIKE TO OBJECT.

I WOULDN’T BE THE ONE TO SAY IT, BUT I MEAN... 

ON THE OTHER HAND, I HAVEN’T STAYED IN A HOTEL FOR A MONTH AND A HALF.
Nick Drnaso was born in 1989 in Palos Hills, Illinois. His debut, *Beverly*, received the LA Times Book Prize for Best Graphic Novel. His followup, the graphic novel *Sabrina*, was a *New York Times* Notable Book of 2018 and received nominations for the Booker Prize, the Eisner Award, the LD and LaVerne Harrell Clark Fiction Prize, the Orwell Prize for Political Fiction, and the New York Public Library’s Young Lions Award. *Sabrina* has been published in fifteen countries. Drnaso lives in Chicago with his wife and their two cats.
In the winter of 2004, a shy woman named Emma sits in Toby’s office. She wants to share this wonderful new book she’s reading, but Toby, her therapist, is concerned with other things. Emma is transgender, and has sought out Toby for approval for hormone replacement therapy. Emma has shown up at the therapy sessions as an outgoing, confident young woman named Katina, and a depressed, submissive workaholic named Ed. She has little or no memory of her actions when presenting as these other two people. And then Toby asks about her childhood...

As the story unfolds, we discover clues to Emma’s troubled past and how and why these other two people may have come into existence. As Toby juggles treating three separate people, each with their own unique personalities and memories, he begins to wonder if Emma is merely acting out to get attention, or if she actually has Dissociative Identity Disorder. Is she just a troubled woman in need of help? And is “the third person” in her brain protecting her, or derailing her chances of ever finding peace?

The Third Person is a riveting memoir from newcomer Emma Grove. Drawn in thick, emotive lines, with the refined style of a comics vet, Grove has created a singular, gripping depiction of the intersection of identities and trauma. The Third Person is a testament to the importance of having the space to heal and live authentically.
There's something else from when I was a kid...

Something I've done since I was a little kid, and I don't know why...

What's that?

I've always thought of myself in the plural!

Like, whenever I think to myself, it's...

God, I hate that fucking name!

I'm going to come up with a new name to call myself!

So now you don't like the name "Katina"?

A new name to call my self!

No, I mean...

Well... so, okay...

Whoever it is that I'm talking to now...

Who do you think the "we" refers to?

I don't know...

"Let's go here"...

Or, "let's do this"...

Or "we should do that"...

And why do you think that is, Katina?
Emma Grove could draw before she could write. A classically-trained animator, she lives in New England with her cat, Little Mischief.
“Now that we’ve woken from the dream, what are we going to do?” Chiharu thinks to herself, rubbing her husband’s head affectionately.

Set in an apartment complex on the outskirts of Tokyo, Yamada Murasaki’s Talk To My Back (1981–84) explores the fraying of Japan’s suburban middle-class dreams through a woman’s relationship with her two daughters as they mature and assert their independence, and with her husband, who works late and sees his wife as little more than a domestic servant.

While engaging frankly with the compromises of marriage and motherhood, Yamada remains generous with the characters who fetter her protagonist. When her husband has an affair, Chiharu feels that she, too, has broken the marital contract by straying from the template of the happy housewife. Yamada saves her harshest criticisms for society at large, particularly its false promises of eternal satisfaction within the nuclear family—as fears of having been “thrown away inside that empty vessel called the household” gnaw at Chiharu’s soul.

Yamada was the first cartoonist in Japan to use the expressive freedoms of alt-manga to address domesticity and womanhood in a realistic, critical, and sustained way. A watershed work of literary manga, Talk To My Back was serialized in the influential magazine Garo in the early 1980s, and is translated by Eisner nominated Ryan Holmberg.
I was thinking about getting a job.

So, darling...

Look at the brain on you!

Part-time?

Here's my idea... There's this poor sheltered wife who knows nothing but her antiseptic home, who then starts working part-time at the supermarket, where she and the young man who works in the fish department meet eyes...

Not only do you fail to appreciate the value of a wife's labor inside the home...

Look, your...

I know, your job is at home... right?
Yamada Murasaki (1948–2009) debuted as a cartoonist in 1969. Informed by her upbringing—she was raised by her mother and grandmother—and her background in fashion design and poetry, Yamada’s early work was unique in form and content, with realistic portraits of young women negotiating their mothers. Later, after having a family of her own, her work shifted to young mothers negotiating children, husbands, and the balance between social responsibilities as a housewife and self-respect as a woman. Considered one of the Three Daughters of Garo, Yamada published manga in practically every issue of Garo from 1978–1986, and is considered the first cartoonist to use the modes of alternative manga to explore womanhood and domesticity with an unromantic eye.
Still reeling from the death by suicide of his drug addicted father, Travis moves in with his grandmother to become her caretaker as she battles cancer. Meanwhile he tries to live a typical teen life of pulling pranks, occasional shoplifting, dating, and endless drives through the twisting backroads of Central Massachusetts with Nirvana’s *Nevermind* as the soundtrack. When the police intervene after a prank backfires, the boys realize that their time as children is rapidly disappearing and they may never fully understand each other as they move apart.

After his Lynd Ward Prize-winning graphic novel, *King of King Court*, explored the power that parents hold over their children’s emotional lives, Travis Dandro employs his signature dream imagery and crass humour to tell the story of teenage independence and resilience as he prepares to head off to art school. *Hummingbird Heart* is a detailed and stylistic account of a time of great uncertainty. Dandro’s densely crafted pages create a deeply emotional experience as his story swings from character confrontation to finely-wrought domestic detail—a slapstick cafeteria destroying brawl gives way to the beautifully rendered flight of the impossible hummingbird.

**PRAISE FOR TRAVIS DANDRO**

“Dandro has a gift for the cinematic.” —*Times Literary Supplement*

“This is a powerful debut, skilfully drawn, cleverly told and as raw as a wasp sting.” —*The Guardian*

“Inventive...A visually engaging and human story of early trauma and how art and the imagination persist through the toughest of times.” —*Library Journal*
Travis Dandro was born August 2, 1974 in Leicester, Massachusetts. He started publishing his first comic strip, Twerp, in the local newspaper when he was thirteen years old, earning $15 a week. After graduating from Montserrat College of Art in 1996, Travis continued drawing comics, his work appearing in dozens of college newspapers across the USA and Canada. He also self-published Journal which was a notable comic in the 2010 and 2012 editions of The Best American Comics. King of King Court is his first graphic novel. Travis lives in Maine with his wife and three sons.
Rarely does a new talent arrive in the medium as unmistakably distinct as Rumi Hara. With immersive art and a clear-eyed storytelling rhythm, her un-categorizable debut, Nori, put her playful cartooning on display. Her new collection, The Peanutbutter Sisters and Other American Stories, delights with equal mischievousness.

The Peanutbutter Sisters is a glorious balance of contradictions, at once escapism and realism; science fiction and slice of life. Two students explore the urban landscape while following Newton Creek, the polluted Queens-Brooklyn border. As they do, they plan a traditional Japanese play with contemporary pop culture. Another story features an intergalactic race of all living things set in the year 2099 and is a dazzling treatise on the environment and journalism. Yet, sometimes the fantastical collides with the quotidian in the same story. A man struggling with vertigo during quarantine encounters a world of sexual revelry whenever he has a dizzy spell. The Peanutbutter sisters ride a hurricane into NYC and yet aren’t able to hitch a ride back with a whale due to a heavily polluted ocean.

Hara’s magical realist tendencies and diverse cast of characters all contort the tropes of the American comics canon. Yet above all else, her innate control of the comics language—her ability to weave the absurd with the real on such a charming and commanding level—is refreshingly unrivaled.

PRAISE FOR NORI
“Dreamy and intoxicating.”
—Buzzfeed Books

“Magically illustrated, the collection combines Japanese traditions with modern life through the eyes of the curious and adorable Nori.”
—Ms. Magazine

THE PEANUTBUTTER SISTERS
AND OTHER AMERICAN STORIES
RUMI HARA

An immigrant weaves a new, surreal Americana, complete with bubblegum fights and bomb queens.
MISSISSIPPI, WE CALL HER VI. DECIDES WHAT TO TAKE.

RETRIEVING IS LIKE ART. YOU NEED VISION, INSPIRATION.

LOL, I'M SO THIRSTY.

I MADE some WATER IN MY BACKPACK.

I'M NOT DRINKING ANYTHING THAT'S NOT ICE COLD.

SODA!

SODA!

SODA!

I'M IN CHARGE OF MONEY.

GO PUT THESE BACK.

WHY?

ACCOUNTING IS AN ART, TOO, SORRY CF.

WHILE VI AND BUNNY GET EVERYTHING SHIPPED READY, IT'S MY JOB TO TEND OUR STOREFRONT.
Rumi Hara was born in Kyoto, Japan, and started printing her comics on a tiny home printer while working as a translator in Tokyo in 2010. After receiving an MFA in illustration from Savannah College of Art and Design, Rumi moved to New York in 2014, where she now lives and works as an illustrator and comics artist. Her comics series Nori was first self-published as minicomics and was nominated for an Ignatz Award in 2018.
Long after the demise of humankind, birds roam freely around a new Earth complete with fruitful trees, sophisticated fungal networks, and an enviable socialist order. The universal worm feeds all, there are no weekends, and economics is as fantastical a study as unicorn psychology. No concept of money or wealth plagues the thoughts of these free-minded birds. Instead, there are angsty teens who form bands to show off their best bird song and other youngsters who yearn to become clothing designers even though clothes are only necessary during war. (The truly honourable professions for most birds are historian and/or librarian.) These birds are free to crush on hot pelicans and live their best lives until a crash-landed human from the moon threatens to change everything.

Michael DeForge’s post-apocalyptic reality brings together the author’s quintessential deadpan humour, surrealistic imagination, and undeniable socio-political insight. Appearing originally as a webcomic, *Birds of Maine* follows DeForge’s prolific trajectory of astounding graphic novels that reimagine and question the world as we know it. His latest comic captures the optimistic glow of utopian imagination with a late-capitalism sting of irony.

**PRAISE FOR MICHAEL DEFORGE**

“Frequently funny, sometimes harrowing, and always deeply strange.” — *Slate*

“DeForge examines both how we build our own sense of self and how others take on the roles we create for them.” — *The Guardian*

“Another DeForge classic—tender, depressing, and overflowing with his mind-melting, uber-satisfying surrealistic style.” — *Interview Magazine*
Dad, what's below us?

Below the trees? Grubs, water you know, grass.

What's below that? Worms, bird bones. And what's above us?

Clouds, glass. What would happen if I flew as far and as fast as I could past the clouds to shatter the glass?

You would die. Grubs would eat you then. We would eat you. Why do you ask?

Just weighing my options.

You could get sucked into space, probably taking a number of nearby birds with you. A portion of the moon's atmosphere would get sucked out as well.

And what would happen if we flew as far and fast into the soil instead?

Thanks for using the library. Would you like to revisit any songs before you go?

Sure.
Michael DeForge is a cartoonist, illustrator, and community organizer in Toronto, Ontario.
This is going to be Frank’s year. He’s going to do it all: find love, become a famous comedian, and responsibly parent his plants. But then, Giorgio gets hit by a bus.

Self-assured and utterly entitled, Giorgio has always seemed like “Frank, but better.” Moving in with and caring for his estranged childhood friend quickly starts to chip away at Frank’s sense of self, as well as Giorgio’s carefully curated online persona. Is Giorgio’s penchant for overindulgence truly aspirational? Or is it ultimately a red flag? The further Frank is pulled into Giorgio’s orbit, the quicker his existential dread blooms. Expectation and reality soon collide in a singular tale about trust and confidence.

Luke Healy’s playful, hilarious third graphic novel uses crisp lines and physical comedy to portray an uneasy friendship between two young men on the cusp of adulting. Snippets from Frank’s middling stand-up routines are punctuated by the subtle farce of Healy’s mise-en-scène and the lively, at times scathingly pointed, banter of old friends. The Con Artists is a stylish character study that asks the question of who fools who once everyone is off-camera.

PRAISE FOR LUKE HEALY

“Smart, funny, restrained and beautifully drawn.”— The Irish Times

“Healy’s pilgrimage through America is also a journey into his own mind, soundtracked by blistered footsteps and breathless huffs, and told with winning honesty.”— The Guardian, Best Comics and Graphic Novels of 2019

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Heyyyyy Frankie!

Hey Giorgio! Are you feeling OK?

Mmmmm.

He'll be a little loopy for the next hour, but then he'll be back to normal.

I'm hungry.

Why do I feel like we're lost?

Because you let a man high on codeine lead the way.

GASP!

Look at this alley.

OK, bud. Let's order something on the way home.

I know a place that has the best chicken korma.

It's perfect!

Perfect for mischief and mayhem...?
Luke Healy was born and raised in Dublin, Ireland, where he also received a BA in Journalism. He has an MFA in Cartooning from the Centre for Cartoon Studies in Vermont, USA. His work has been exhibited in the Museum of Comics and Cartoon Art in Manhattan, and his clients include Seven Days VT and Narratively.
Universally beloved cartoonist Guy Delisle showcases a career-spanning collection of his work with a sly sense of humour and warm characterization. Before Delisle became an international superstar with his globe-hopping travelogues, he was an animator experimenting with the comics form. Always aware of the elasticity of the human form and honing his keen observer’s eye, young Delisle created hilarious set pieces.

*World Record Holders* ranges from wistful childhood nostalgia to chagrined post-fame encounters, touching on formally ambitious visual puns and gut-busting what-ifs. Delisle again and again shows how life is both exhilarating and embarrassing. Delisle visits an exhibition of his work in another country and is confronted by an angry spouse who blames him for destroying her marriage. A coded message from space creates different reactions from different people—debates, dance festivals, gallery shows. Translated by Helge Dascher.

**PRAISE FOR GUY DELISLE**

“One of the greatest modern cartoonists.”

--- *The Guardian*

“Guy Delisle is the real thing: a skilled and wryly funny cartoonist [with an] acute sense of timing.”

--- *NPR*

“Delisle, a former animator, has a knack for visual shorthand...and for drawing environments.”

--- *The New York Times*
in the line-up at the hardware store, a customer wanted his purchase—a hammer—wrapped in bubble wrap...

Why the hell would a guy need his hammer wrapped, I wondered. Was he afraid he might damage the thing?

Or maybe it was meant as a gift... a hammer, really? Ha ha ha!

I looked around for amused smiles... nothing. No amusement...

As if wrapping hammers was a normal thing! Well, I'd never seen anything like it...

it wasn't until after I went to the barber that I noticed how many curious incidents had happened in just one day.

After a few mundane remarks about eclipses and astronomical phenomena, he proceeded to tell me about the peculiarities of his profession.

He's a heavy-sat man, and he told me that his belly often rubs against the chair... (why do people always confide in me, I wondered).

The rubbing causes little hair cuttings to pass through the fibres of his clothes. Not often, but it happens...
Born in Québec City, Canada, in 1966, Guy Delisle now lives in the south of France with his wife and two children. Delisle spent ten years working in animation, which allowed him to learn about movement and drawing. He is best known for his travelogues about life in faraway countries, Burma Chronicles, Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy City, Pyongyang, and Shenzhen. He has since expanded his oeuvre by telling a Doctors without Borders acquaintance’s story as nail-biting thriller (Hostage) and revisiting his teen years and first summer job (Factory Summers).

In 2012, Guy Delisle was awarded the Prize for Best Album for the French edition of Jerusalem at the Angoulême International Comics Festival.
Maybonne and Marlys Mullen endure the mortifying highs and lows of middle school in this Lynda Barry classic.
THE CHANGES

People say you can change yourself. For example, if you have a defective personality you can keep on striving and soon you will walk in the rays of a beautiful sun.

But if a guy you like is defective and does things cold blooded to you, people say close the door because no way is he ever going to change. Personally, I don't get the difference.

DOUG SAYS NOW HE WANTS TO BE MY BOYFRIEND BUT DON'T TELL ANYONE BECAUSE IT'S TOO COMPLICATED. I TOLD ONE PERSON, NANCY NEWBY AND SHE SAID SEE HOW SHE'S USING YOU BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE BUT DOUG, I BELIEVE IN YOU AND TRUST IS OUR MOST BEAUTIFUL THING. NOTHING CAN DESTROY IT.

SO WHAT IF YOU DIDN'T CALL ME TO-NIGHT AND SO WHAT IF YOU WENT TO THE GAME WITH CINDY LUDERNESS? I KNOW IT'S LIKE YOU SAID. YOU HAVE TO EXPRESS YOURSELF AND YOU DON'T WANT NO ONE TO BE A CHAIN ON YOU AND I KNOW WHAT WE HAVE IS SECRE-TLY BEAUTIFUL BECAUSE BEAUTIFUL GOD LET YOU COME BACK TO ME. I PRAYED AND HE LET YOU COME BACK. THANK YOU SO MUCH.

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?

I SAID SHUT UP.

SHUT UP!

MARLY'S SPRING

I share the bed with my little sister Marlys who sometimes just kills me. Like this morning she was singing JERINAN WAS A BULLFROG OUT THE OPEN WINDOW OF OUR BEDROOM.

I never did like her when she was a little one but now I have to admit she's quite the dancer. She has the only dance where you stick your butt out as much as possible. She invented it.

She climbs out the window and starts singing LA CUCARACHA then she bends over and sings "SOMEONE LEFT THE CAKE OUT IN THE RAIN." A CAR HONKS AT HER AND SHE STICKS HER ARM IN THE AIR AND SHOUTS "BLACK POWER!" THEN THE DOOR FLIES OPEN AND IT'S MY GRANDMA YELLING IS MARLYS TRYING TO KILL HER?

At breakfast my grandma won't shut up about how I have no responsibility. How could I let my sister behave that way. She could have fallen off the roof and what about the neighbors then she turns her head to get the toast and Marlys looks at me and smiles. Man, I never knew I loved her so much.
Lynda Barry has worked as a painter, cartoonist, writer, illustrator, play-wright, editor, commentator, and teacher and found that they are very much alike. She is the inimitable creator behind the pivotal comic strip *Ernie Pook’s Comeek* as well as numerous comic books and graphic novels, including most recently *Making Comics*. In 2019 Barry received a MacArthur Genius Grant. She lives in Wisconsin, where she is an associate professor of art and a Discovery Fellow at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.