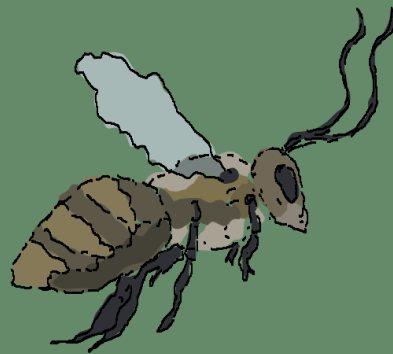
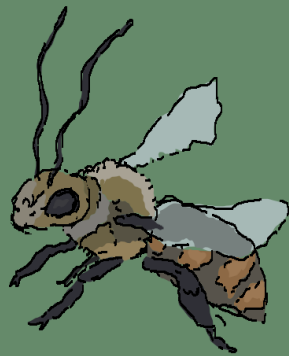


AFTER UTOPIA:
AN AGROPOLIS FOR FUTURE ANCESTORS



SZ SHAO

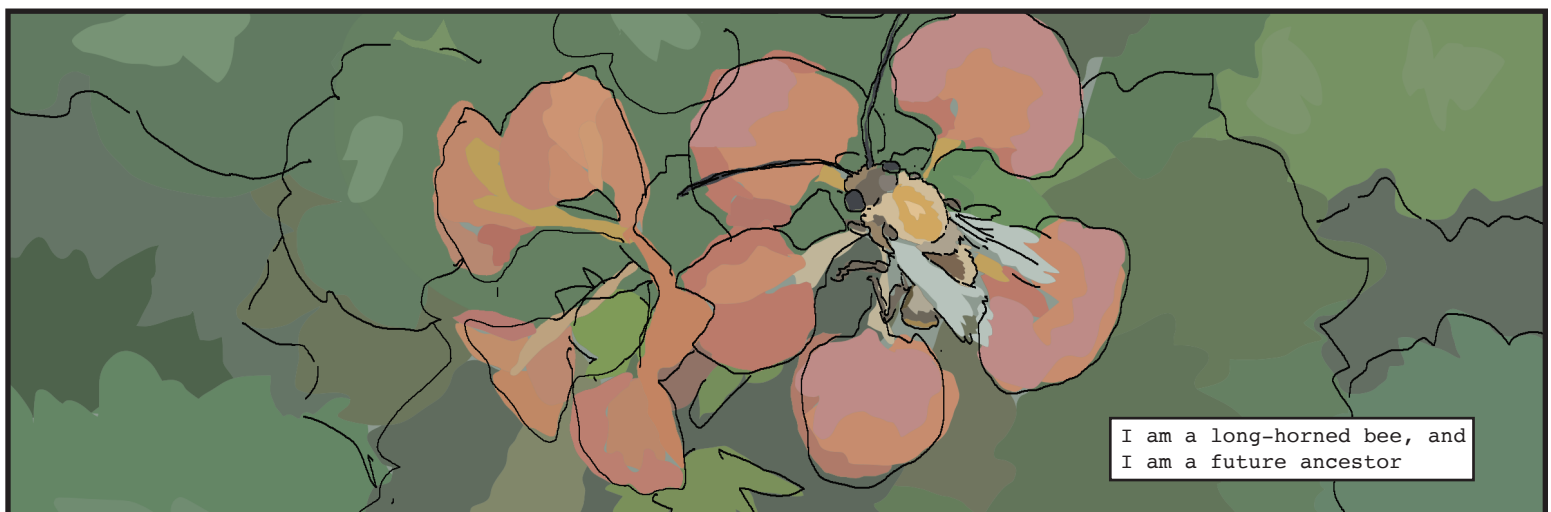
GM KUHN



It's spring in the Agropolis. The days are warm and blustery, legume flowers just starting to bloom



I was born from a nest in the ground this morning, and by the winter I'll be dead. I'll spend my fleeting life gathering food for my children, who will emerge from their own nests next spring, long after I'm gone



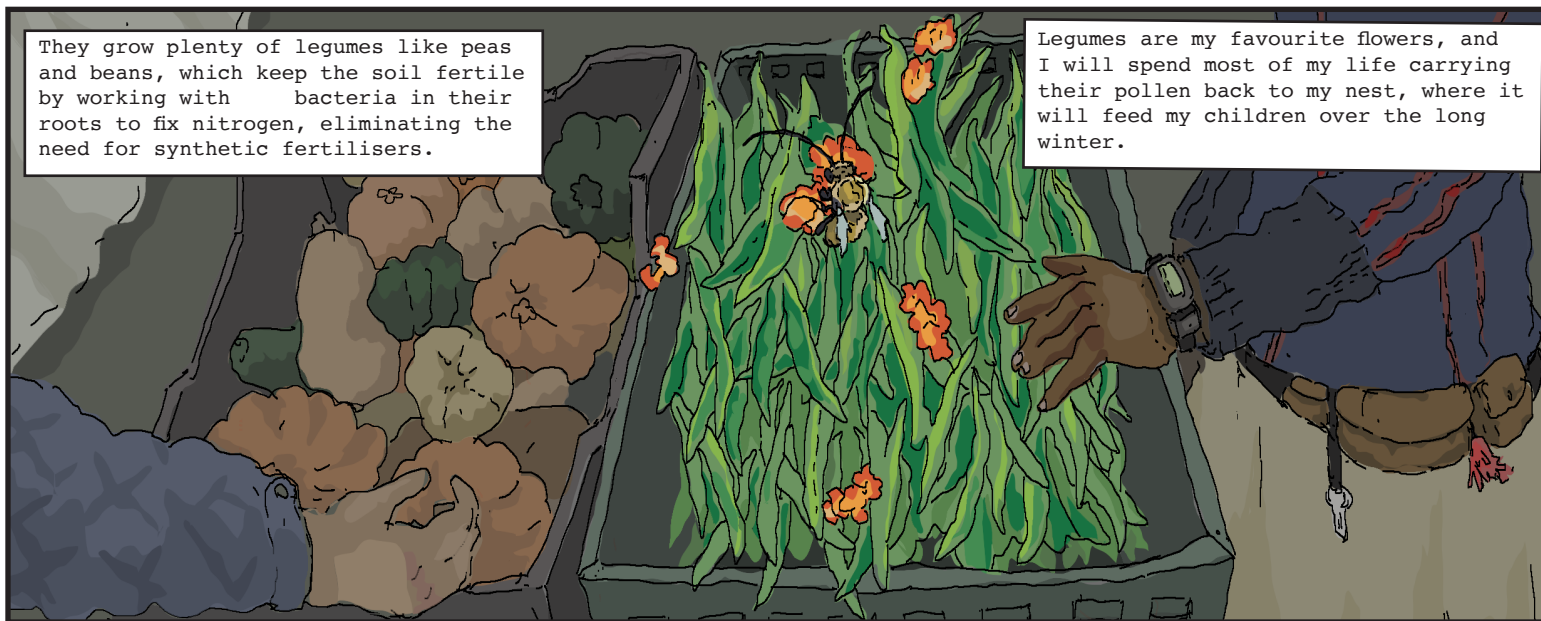
I am a long-horned bee, and I am a future ancestor

The old quarry where I was born is a farm owned by the local community. They tend it with care, using tools, skills, and seeds given to them by the state. The land gives them food and herbal medicines, with plenty left over to sell at market. Many people earn a good income selling their produce at local markets, so the city can meet much of its food needs within its own boundaries



They grow plenty of legumes like peas and beans, which keep the soil fertile by working with bacteria in their roots to fix nitrogen, eliminating the need for synthetic fertilisers.

Legumes are my favourite flowers, and I will spend most of my life carrying their pollen back to my nest, where it will feed my children over the long winter.





The old quarry wasn't always like this. Not long ago, it was a sad and broken place, full of industrial waste. The Utopianists left it like that - those strange, unhappy ancestors of our city. The Utopianists dreamed of a planet without limits, and the ancestors of this community paid the price.

They demanded the government help them turn the old quarry into a farm by giving them ownership of the land and resources to help them nurture it back to life.

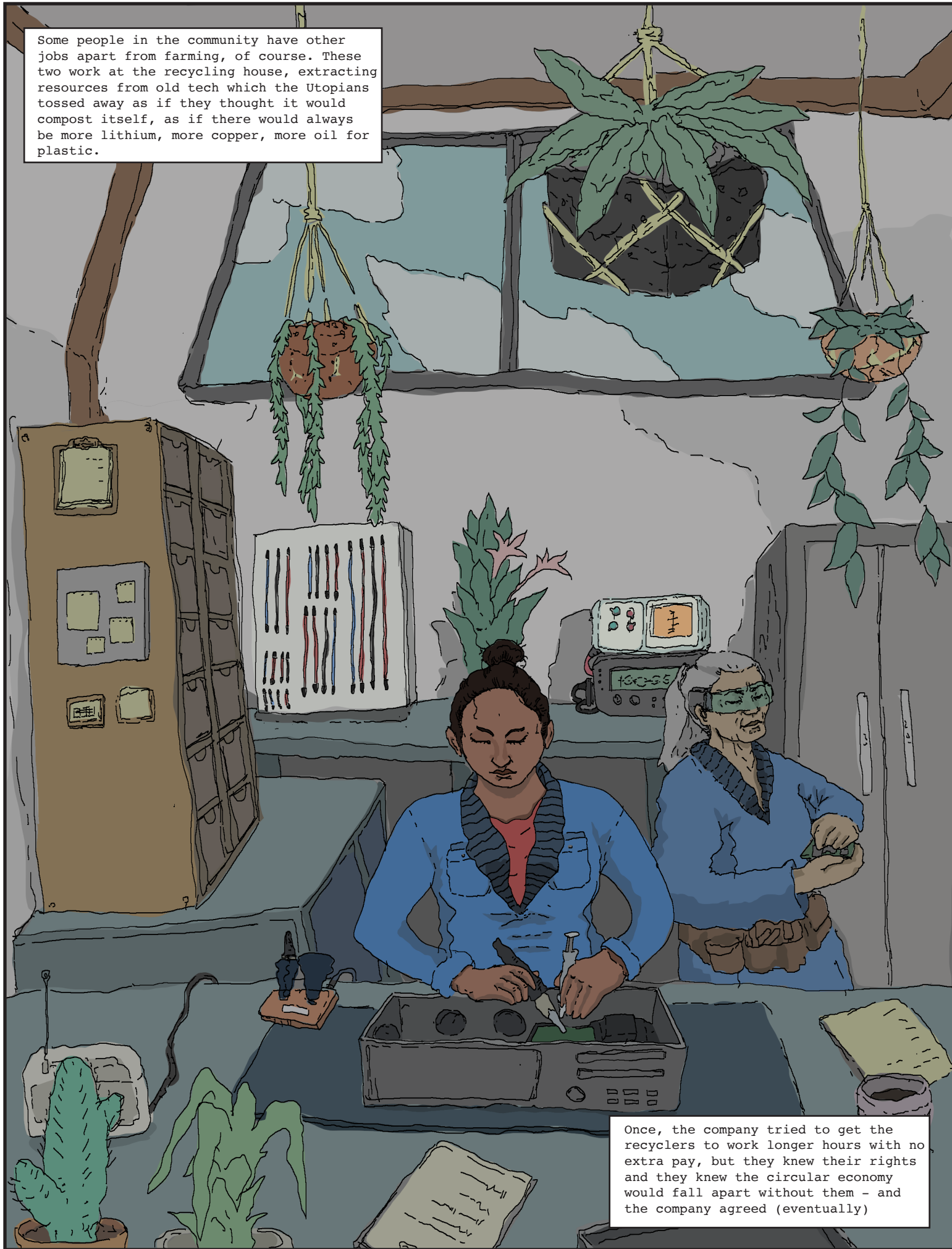
Now, decades later, the farm's healthy soils absorb carbon, while also protecting the city from floods by sucking up the torrential rains caused by climate change.



It wasn't long before post-Utopianist governments were supporting communities to set up farms all across the city, converting car parks, vacant lots, golf courses - but the old quarry was the first.



Some people in the community have other jobs apart from farming, of course. These two work at the recycling house, extracting resources from old tech which the Utopians tossed away as if they thought it would compost itself, as if there would always be more lithium, more copper, more oil for plastic.



Once, the company tried to get the recyclers to work longer hours with no extra pay, but they knew their rights and they knew the circular economy would fall apart without them - and the company agreed (eventually)

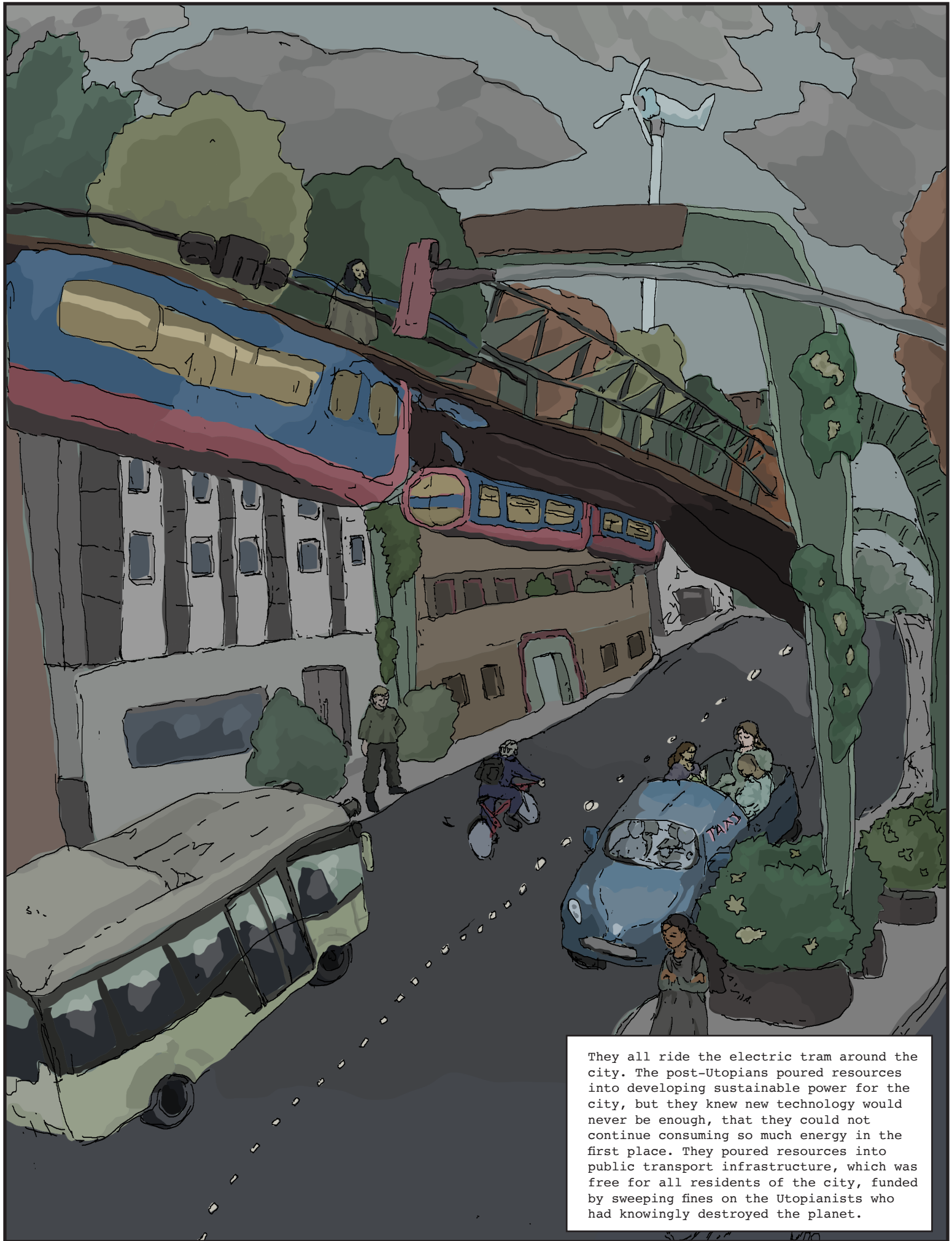
This one is an ecological engineer, working to restore the river wetlands. When the post-Utopianists moved into a circular economy, they made sure workers impacted by the transition were given new jobs, like his. The wetlands had been drained to make way for development centuries ago.

The post-Utopianists restored these wetlands, which protect them from rising sea levels and provide a haven for biodiversity. There are long-horned bees here now, too, for the first time in decades.



This one is a social care worker. In the strange Utopianist fantasy-world, the essential labour of caring for children, elders, and vulnerable people was left without proper funding, causing countless social problems. After utopia, they invested heavily in social work, creating millions of sustainable jobs and saving vast resources the utopians poured into policing and prisons.



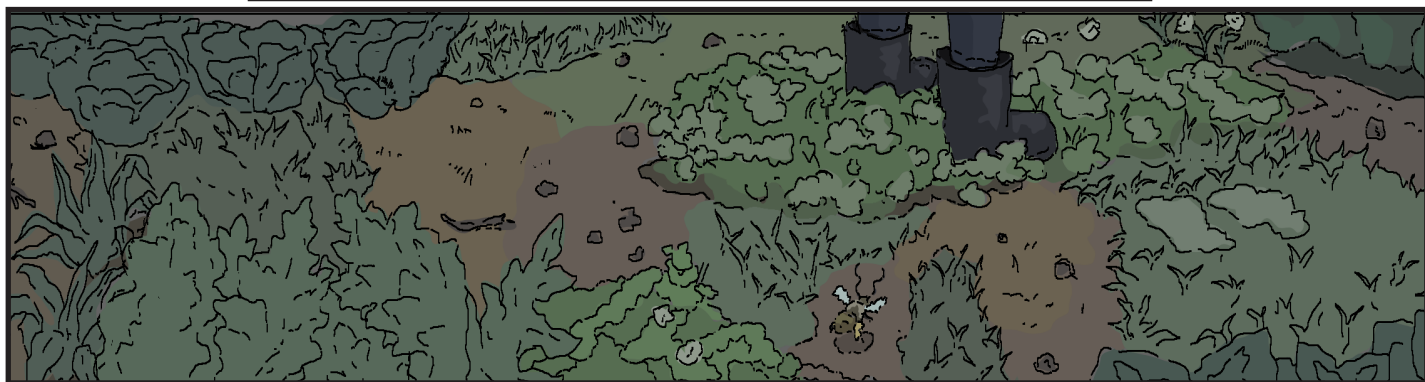


They all ride the electric tram around the city. The post-Utopians poured resources into developing sustainable power for the city, but they knew new technology would never be enough, that they could not continue consuming so much energy in the first place. They poured resources into public transport infrastructure, which was free for all residents of the city, funded by sweeping fines on the Utopianists who had knowingly destroyed the planet.

These people of the Agropolis work all over the city, but all of them are nourished by food grown in the old quarry. Their plots on the farm bring them community, self-sufficiency, and resilience against the ecological chaos left by Utopian fantasies.



Like me, they are future ancestors, building a new city after utopia



cultivating their corner of the world



for those who will come after them

