

# **A Narrative Approach to Authorship: The Work of Evi Tampold from Her Mother/Publisher's (and Her Own) Perspective**

CAROL NASH AND EVI TAMPOLD

**Abstract:** Collaborative authorship in graphic medicine is examinable from a number of perspectives. One neglected approach is to look for developments in how an individual artist collaborates over the course of illustrating different graphic medicine novels. In the first, the artist collaborated with her younger self in trying to regain memories of an until then forgotten past. In the second, she worked closely with the writer to try to determine exactly what the author intended, adding a new dimension to the piece unavailable without the illustrations. In the third still to be completed work, her illustrations are based on collaboration with only the text and a few photographs, lacking direct contact with the author. How this artist's three methods of collaboration have defined her collaborative authorship will be the focus. What is unique is this study will be undertaken from the stand point of the illustrator's publisher, who is also her mother.

**Bio:** Carol Nash PhD (Scholar in Residence, History of Medicine Program, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto), has facilitated the Health Narratives Research Group through the Department of Psychiatry, Toronto Mount Sinai Hospital, since 2012. She is a published philosopher of education and, during the 2006/7 academic year, co-founded Alpha II Alternative School with the Toronto District School Board, a secondary school where, based on a passion for learning in response to something they personally value, students self-direct while developing a consensus that includes each person's voice in school-wide decisions. 2015 marked her founding of Tampold Publishing as its publisher, a graphic medicine publishing company supported by Yorkville Design Centre. Her academic work in philosophy of education, alternative education, graphic medicine, and history of medicine is presented nationally and internationally.

Evi Tampold is a young Canadian graphic medicine artist and author associated with the University of Toronto, pursuing an individualized studies degree at Goddard College, Vermont, USA. She presents her work at two international conferences: Comics and Medicine and Canadian Society for the Study of Comics. Her graphic medicine art has been displayed at exhibitions in the faculties of Medicine and of Education at the University of Toronto and at the PathoGraphics exhibition, Berlin Museum of Medical History at the Charité. Interviews about Evi and her work have appeared in national and international newspapers and websites. Published by Tampold Publishing, Evi's books are sold through Caversham Bookseller, North America's largest psychiatric bookseller. Resident artist at Yorkville Design Centre ([yorkvilledesigncentre.ca/service/art-installations](http://yorkvilledesigncentre.ca/service/art-installations)), samples of Evi's work can be found at [Evizoa.tumblr.com](http://Evizoa.tumblr.com) and [linktr.ee/evizoa\\_art](http://linktr.ee/evizoa_art).

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## Introduction



I'm Carol Nash, a narrative researcher and the publisher at Tampold Publishing, a company I founded to publish graphic medicine novels by my teenage daughter, Evi Tampold. Now in its third year of operation, I have witnessed the development of my daughter's conceptualization of her role as a comic artist in authoring and co-authoring her three books. As her mother, editor and publisher, I have more than one perspective for evidencing how her changing role as a comic artist has redefined her authorship over this period. However, as a narrative researcher, the lens I want to use, and I find most intriguing in examining her role as an author, is that of her publisher.

If the publisher works closely with the author, as I have with Evi, the novel is viewed as a whole during its production with respect to the author's vision of the book as an art work and as a material object meeting certain practical and personal specifications. The publisher's perspective can therefore be a valuable source of insight into the authoring practices of comics. However, while focusing on the author-publisher relationship I also acknowledge that our mother-daughter relationship adds a more intimate and emotional dimension (as well as more trust and understanding) to the publishing and authoring of Evi's work.



## Combining Narrative Research and Graphic Medicine for Understanding Comics Authorship



As a philosopher of education facilitating a weekly Health Narratives Research Group through the Department of Psychiatry at the Mount Sinai Hospital, a major university teaching hospital associated with the University of Toronto, I, along with other members of the group, take the stories researchers present for why they initiated their research interest and develop these stories into narratives with a particular point of view. Evi has been a member of this five-year-old group, founded in 2012, since October 2016. According to this research practice, I see stories as differing from narratives: stories have a beginning, middle and an end; narratives tell a story from one perspective based on what the narrator values. Determining what is valued is then the purpose of my narrative research.

Recognized by Rita Charon and Martha Montello as a distinct form of research since 1986 with the publication of Jerome Bruner's *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*, these collaborators brought narrative research to the attention of those working in medicine in 2002 with their edited collection, *Stories Matter: The Role of Narrative in Medical Ethics*. Through the contributors they engaged for the collection, Charon and Montello introduced and examined the legitimacy of narrative as research, its components, methods and consequences of those methods while also speculating on the future of narrative understanding. In their view, narrative practice affects medical decision-making, patient health and treatment, and the everyday

practice of medicine profoundly while providing clarity and insight into medical ethics. A subsequent book in 2006 by Charon, *Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness*, offered a deeper understanding of the bioethical importance of narrative research and recognized the increasing acceptance and use of narrative research by medical researchers.

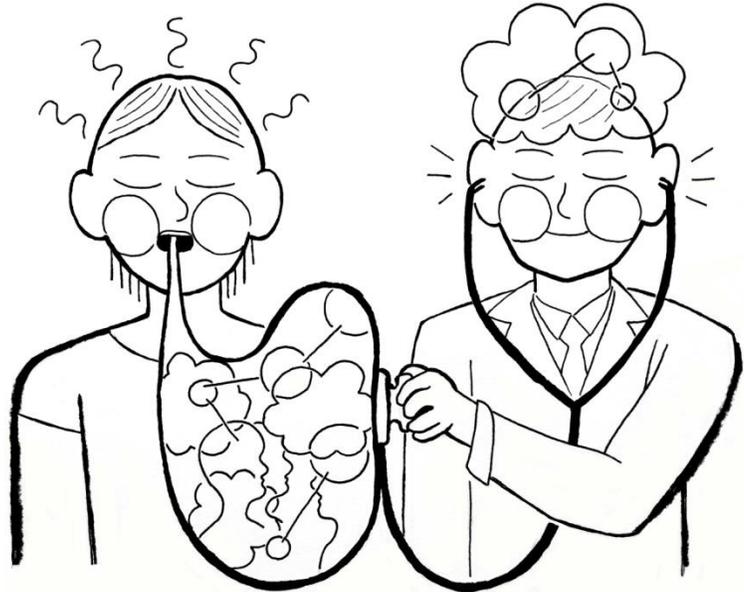


For those working in narrative research in medicine, Charon and Montello's book is the accepted history of how narrative came to be associated with medicine.<sup>1</sup>



What does narrative research in medicine have to say about authorship? Authorship in narrative research concerns identifying what is distinctly valued within the story. According to psychiatrist Richard Martinez, "[n]arrative becomes a tool that allows for penetration deep into the human moral drama that is involved in illness. Narrative methods help us to listen and see with intensified accuracy and reach—a hermeneutic stethoscope of a sort. Narrative improves our perception of the moral dilemmas and their complexity contained within all

clinical encounters and can help us to focus on the ethical and existential elements involved in the care of those with mental suffering" (2002, 131). By penetrating deep into the human moral drama involved in illness, the narrative researcher identifies what the storyteller distinctly values. In doing so, the storyteller reveals a unique voice.



This is what defines authorship in narrative research: an author takes responsibility for (rather than controls) what is revealed plus its effect on the intended reader in telling the story. Issues and implications of this understanding of authorship in narrative research were recognized by Freema Elbaz-Luwisch as early as 1997:

Narrative researchers often work on a small-scale, do not aspire to generalization in the usual sense, nor do they promise immediate practical benefits; yet they make strong claims for the authenticity and power of narrative research. They aspire to true collaboration and to the giving of voice to participants, yet still work from within traditional academic structures which value individuality, originality and ownership of intellectual products (76).

<sup>1</sup> Margarete Sandelowski (1991) points to an earlier narrative and medicine relationship that remains unrecognized by Charon and others. Sandelowski references work by Banks (1982), Churchill & Churchill (1982), Fisher and Todd (1983), Mishler (1984) and Williams (1984) as narrative research in medicine. Charon does reference Mishler, yet not his work as founding narrative research in medicine (Charon 2006, 252). I recognize these earlier works as an older foundation for narrative research in medicine. Even further back are the philosophical beginnings of narrative research in the hermeneutics of Ricoeur (1971) and Taylor (1971) influencing narrative researchers in education (cf. Beattie 2004, 143). Although Charon has works by both Ricoeur and Taylor in her bibliography, she references later publications by both rather than the earlier works that were available (cf. Charon 2006, 254, 257).



Mindful of its limitations, narrative medicine is a developing discipline. It is inclusive of all forms of narrative research—writing, visual art, film, dance, theatre, sculpture and through the advent of graphic medicine, comics. In 2015, MK Czerwiec and Ian Williams, produced the *Graphic Medicine Manifesto* with four other narrative researchers from various backgrounds in



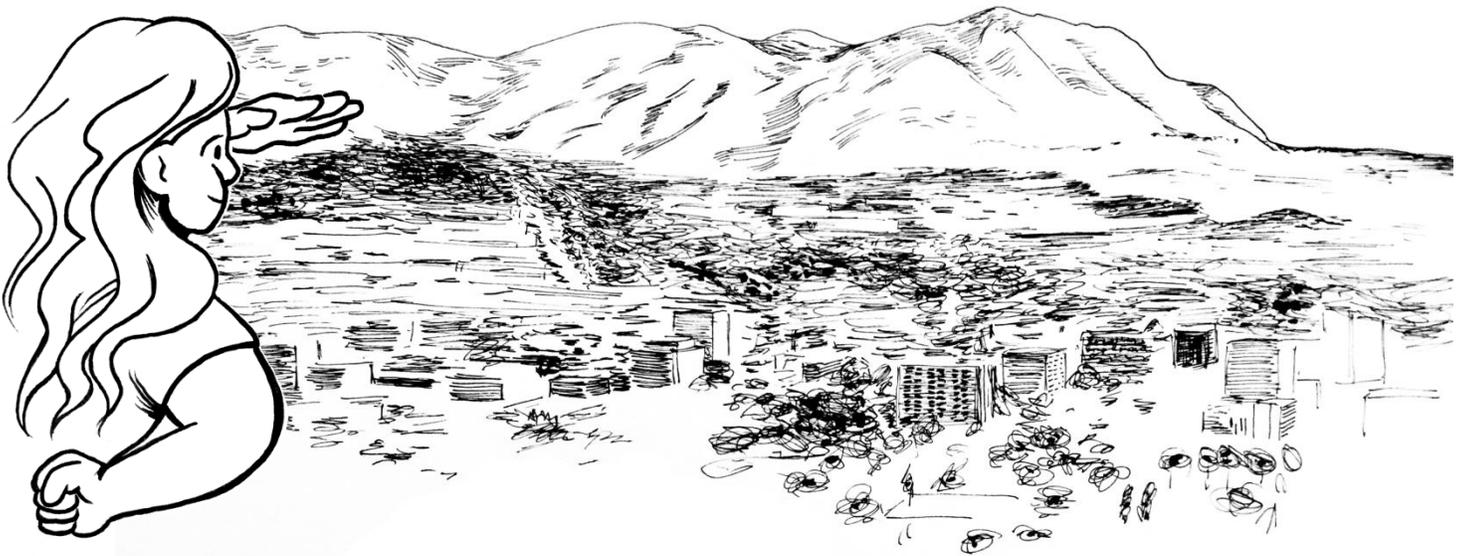
healthcare—Susan Squier, Michael Green, Kimberly Myers and Scott Smith. To summarize the purpose of calling their collaborative work a graphic medicine manifesto, Ian Williams writes, “[m]anifestos acknowledge that there is not one ‘universal subject’ [...] so too graphic medicine resists the notion of the universal patient and vividly represents multiple subjects with valid and, at times, conflicting points of view and experiences (Czerwiec *et al.* 2015, 2).

With this understanding of graphic medicine as a specific and growing form of narrative research in medicine, I want to investigate how Evi Tampold has developed as an author in the journey from her first to her third graphic medicine novel. For her first graphic novel, *The Hallway Closet*, she was both writer and illustrator of the story about her gaining self-control over her ADHD. A year later, as publisher, I witnessed the collaboration between my daughter and another writer resulting in her second graphic novel, *Keeper of the Clouds*. Here, she illustrated a story written by doctoral student Liza Futerman about one moment in time between Liza and her mother who has Alzheimer’s disease. Now, during 2017, Evi is creating the illustrations for a third graphic novel, *Just to Talk*, about a therapy program that psychiatrist Pracha Vatsya participated in during her medical training which convinced Pracha to become a psychiatrist. In this third graphic novel, Evi collaborates as an author in a different way by using her illustrations to give voice to and elaborate on other perspectives unspoken in the original written text.



As narrative researcher and Evi's publisher, I will examine the changes taking place in Evi's graphic storytelling as she works to unearth her own past or collaborates to understand stories written by others. Moreover, as you can see, I will be collaborating with my daughter as she interprets my narrative research in this work through her drawings. In other words, this is a collaboration in words and images about examining the authorship of comics through looking at three distinct comics.

Sousanis has given a behind-the-scenes perspective on making and thinking about comics. The view he puts forward is similar to the one I adhere to as a narrative researcher: "A primary concern of the work is that the visual is never mere illustration to accompany ideas in written text, rather the form itself embodies the content. Visual and verbal are equally integral to making meaning" (Sousanis 2015, 1).



### ***The Hallway Closet: Evi's Personal Narrative***

A call for papers for the 2015 Comics and Medicine conference held in Riverside California was the impetus for the development of *The Hallway Closet*. Although only sixteen at the time, my daughter had been selling her work as an artist for a number of years. Over that same period, she had studied and developed a keen interest in comics and the idea of creating a comic related to medicine intrigued her. However, she was unsure of what she had to say about comics and medicine until she remembered how her ADHD had had such a controlling effect on her life and how I was compelled to find a way to assist her in deciding when she was calm. This was done through Evi making the decision of whether she was calm by herself in a place of reduced sensations, inside the dark, confined space that was the hallway closet. I stayed with her, waiting outside the unlocked closet door, until she decided she was calm enough to come out.

Although Evi was both the writer and artist of this story, she had to remember what she would have wanted to say ten years



earlier when she had spent time in the closet. So, in effect, although she worked alone in writing the story, she collaborated with a younger self by looking back in time to feelings she had previously forgotten. In this way, what Evi engaged in through remembering her experience as a child ten years later is somewhat similar to the emotionally deep work undertaken by both Phoebe Gloeckner and Lynda Barry after they forgot their difficult childhood experiences but didn't forget them entirely.<sup>2</sup> Unlike Gloeckner and Barry whose reason for forgetting may have been related to the traumatic nature of what they were trying to remember, Evi said recently (in a comment made as member of the Health Narratives Research Group) that she believes she has forgotten much of her childhood because she sees the world so differently than she did as a child.

The story of what happened to help Evi gain control over her ADHD is not chronological, as stories often are in the genre of graphic medicine.<sup>3</sup> Evi's differing treatments of time-independent segments is similar to Sousanis' dissertation in comic form. For Sousanis: "[u]nlike storyboarding, to which comics are often compared, working in comics requires a concern not just for what goes in the panels, but also attention to the size, shape, and location of the panels on the page—where they are and what they're next to—really a consideration of the entire composition as a whole experience" (2015, 4).

Evi begins *The Hallway Closet* with sparse comic drawings in a sequential comic format (fig. 1).<sup>4</sup>



fig. 1

<sup>2</sup> In *Graphic Women*, Chute makes the connection (and speaks of the differences) between how both Gloeckner and Barry remember childhood trauma (Chute 2010, 95-134).

<sup>3</sup> *Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant* (2014), *It's a Bird* (2004) and *Tangled* (2012) are examples of graphic medicine novels that tell a memoir chronologically. It should be noted that even when graphic novels are predominantly chronological they still often make use of flashbacks to earlier periods. *The Bad Doctor* is an example.

<sup>4</sup> Copyright to all pictures from *The Hallway Closet* held by the author and the publisher.

In fig. 2, a transition from the white background to a black background next shows the difference between the world and the closet.

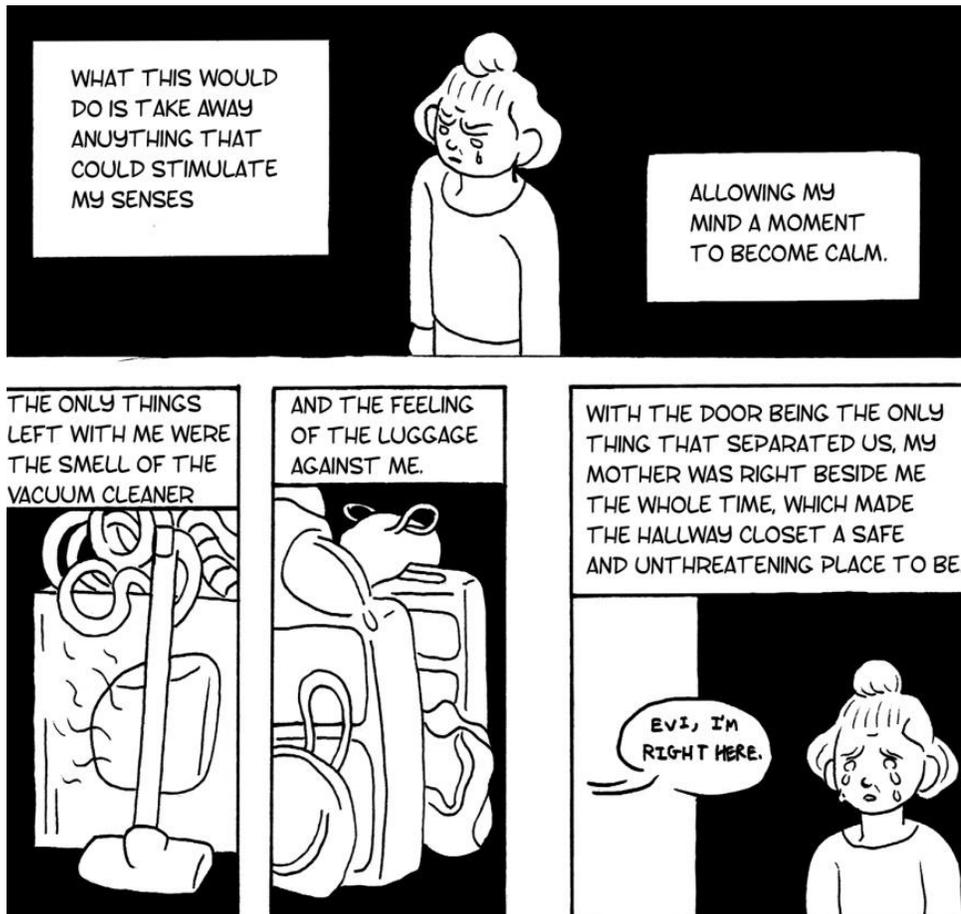


fig. 2

Evi then presents the reader with one incident of her time in the closet followed by our reconciliation. Here, the use of word balloons is prominent (fig. 3). One of the stylistic difficulties Evi considered in this panel was how to tell the story of being in the closet and at the same time represent the heightened emotions associated with the closet. The use of both the bounding box for the narrative and the word balloons for the dialog was her solution.

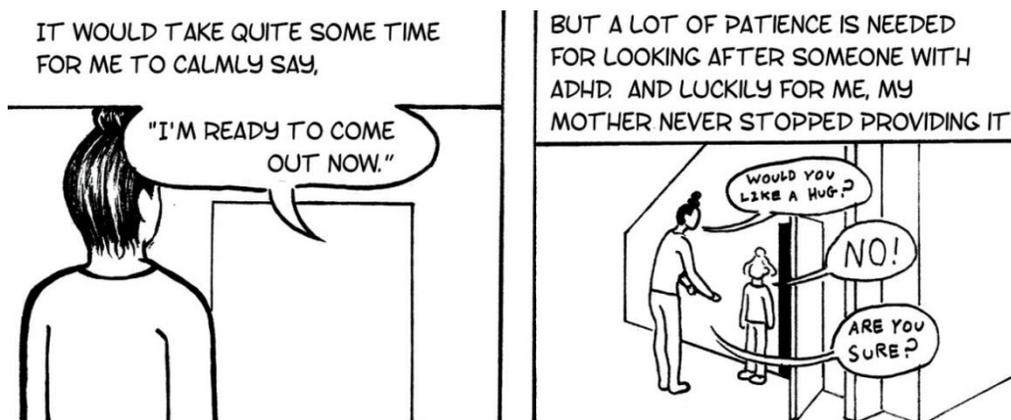
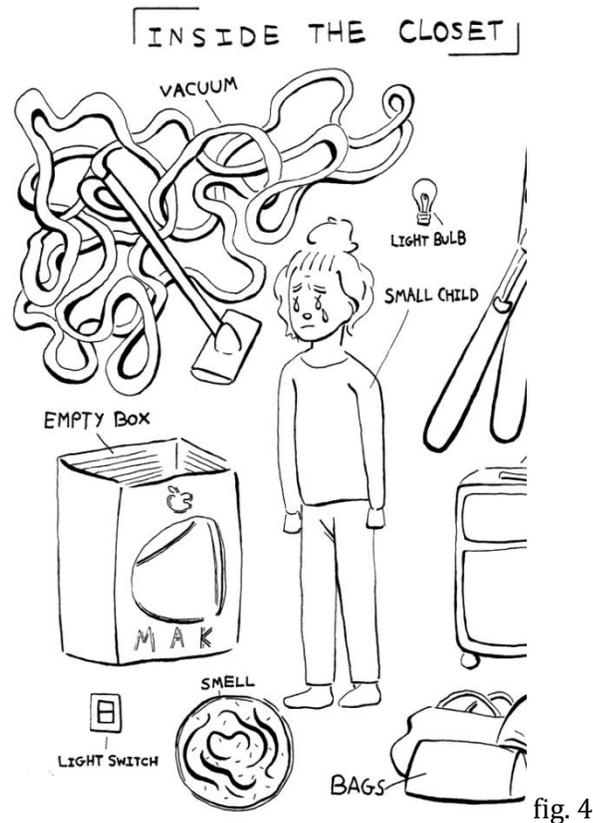


fig. 3

As Sousanis has pointed out, “thinking about the page as a spatial experience, it is both a sequential reading experience as well as a simultaneous viewing experience” (2015, 7). This view fits well with Evi’s stylistic solution to this particular problem.



This is also illustrated by a page revealing what was inside the closet when Evi spent time in it as a small child (fig. 4). The items are presented as they might be in a catalogue for purchase. Each item is separated and identified with an indicating line leading to an individualized caption written in capital letters. Even things that might not normally be recognized as present in a space are named—including the light switch and the smell of the closet. Evi chose this method of presenting the things in the closet to make it clear to the reader that each component mattered and each mattered in a way that was essentially equal, yet still somewhat distant from her.

For the next few pages that follow, Evi takes the reader back to the present, the day she received the call for papers. This receiving is illustrated by a drawing of my hand passing the paper to Evi from the upper right edge of the page to the lower left edge of the panel. Hands, my daughter’s face, and the movement of her body lying on her bed, as she comes to recognize first her interest in the call for papers and then her remembering of the hallway closet, dominate the visual layout of these pages (fig. 5 is an example). The call for papers represents the connecting thread. The section ends with Evi crying in my arms while asking me to put her back in the closet so she could once again experience and remember being in that sensory reduced space where she recognized how to be calm.

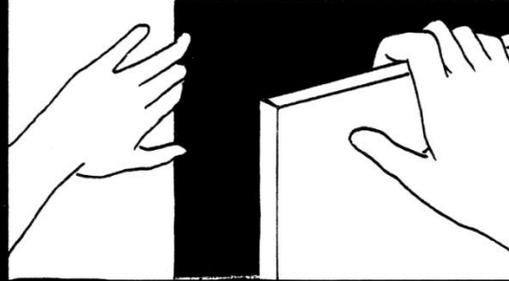


The flood of memories that came over her once she was back in the closet is again illustrated with a strong black background to show the darkness of the closet as well as the powerful effect it had on her to be back in the closet with me remaining there but outside, separate from her intense experience.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAME OVER ME NEXT BUT I TOLD MY MOTHER I WANTED TO GO INTO THE HALLWAY CLOSET AGAIN.



IT JUST FELT APPROPRIATE THEN. I PROBABLY WANTED TO PROVE TO MYSELF THAT ALL OF THE THINGS I WAS REMEMBERING WERE TRUE.

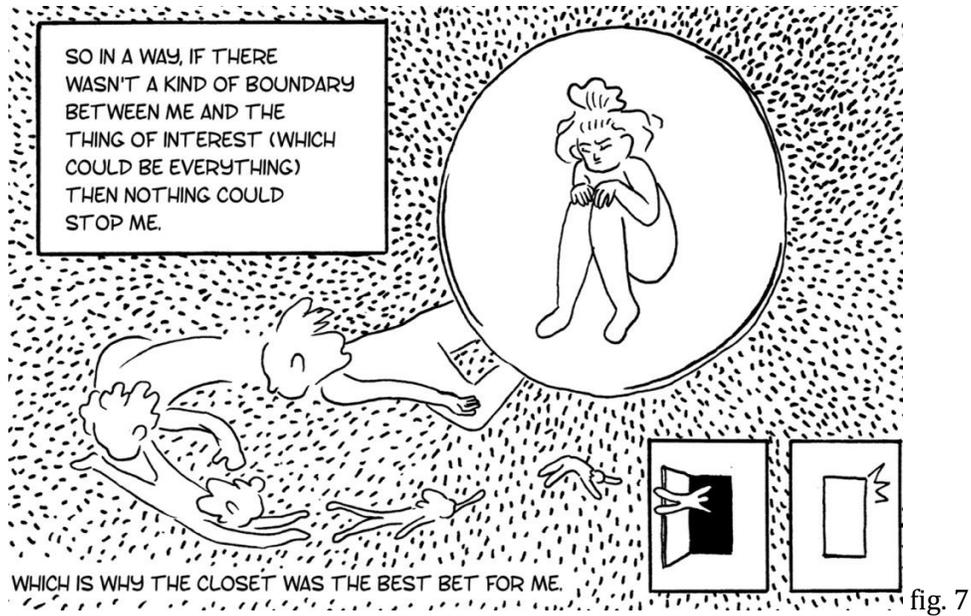


THOUGH, SEEING AS I AM NOW, A 16 YEAR-OLD GIRL, IT WAS KIND OF HARD FOR ME TO FIT INTO THE TINY SPACE MY EVEN TINIER BODY ONCE STOOD IN.

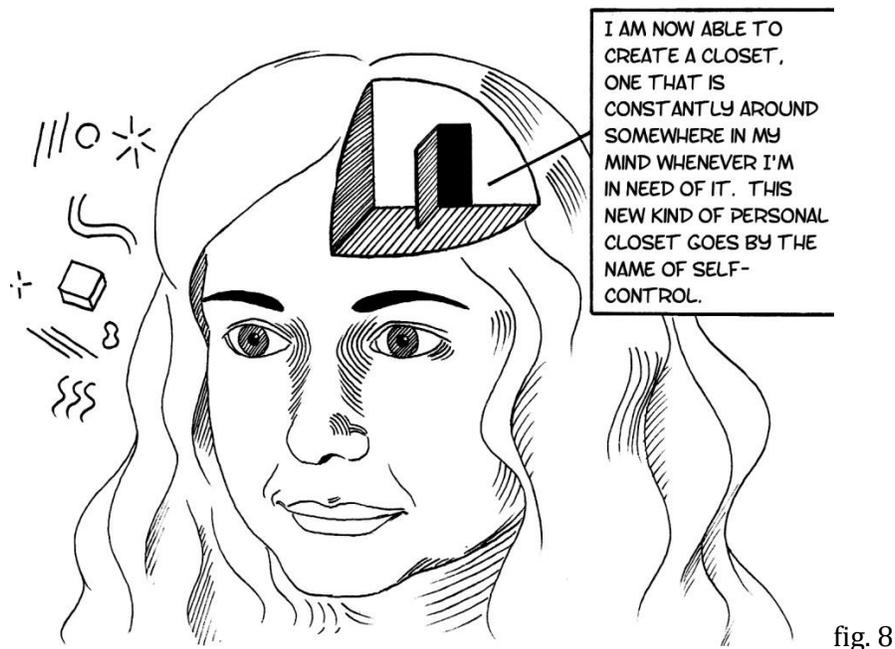


fig. 6

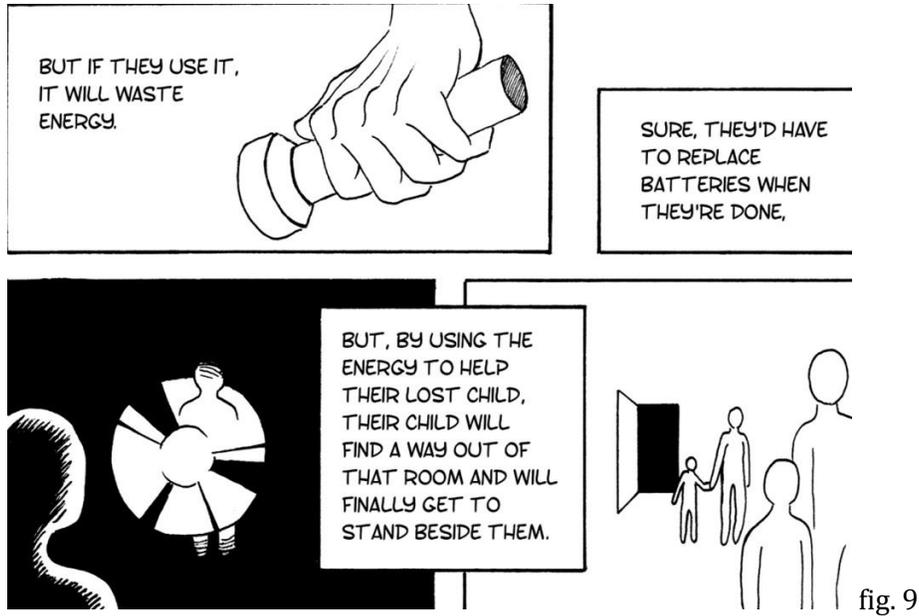
A remarkable panel in the book shows Evi inside a bubble separating her from the rest of the world accompanied by drawings of her breaking out of the bubble with six increasingly smaller and more abstract drawings of herself flying into the closet with the last drawing, showing the binary nature of the event: first the door open, then the door shut (fig. 7). The text that accompanies this dynamic panel is separated into two parts. One, inside a bounding box, the other written within the space with which the six drawings of her float, a space constructed using a pointillist style, reading like random large pieces of dust in a beam of light. Specifying the need for boundaries to contain such randomness, the caption concludes, “Which is why the closet was the best bet for me” (Tampold 2015, 22).



Evi then returns to the present to show that she is now a productive young person because of her experience in the closet and, although she still has ADHD, she is able to control herself by creating a closet in her mind whenever she is overwhelmed (fig. 8). In her words, “[t]his new kind of personal closet goes by the name of self-control” (Tampold 2015, 23). The question of how to represent the imaginary closet inside her was solved by Evi in creating a more realistic drawing of herself and adding a cut-away of her left frontal lobe (where the executive function in those with ADHD is considered lacking) to show where the idea of the closet permitted her self-control. The result of this self-control is her ability to think rationally—stylized by the abstract shapes to her right.

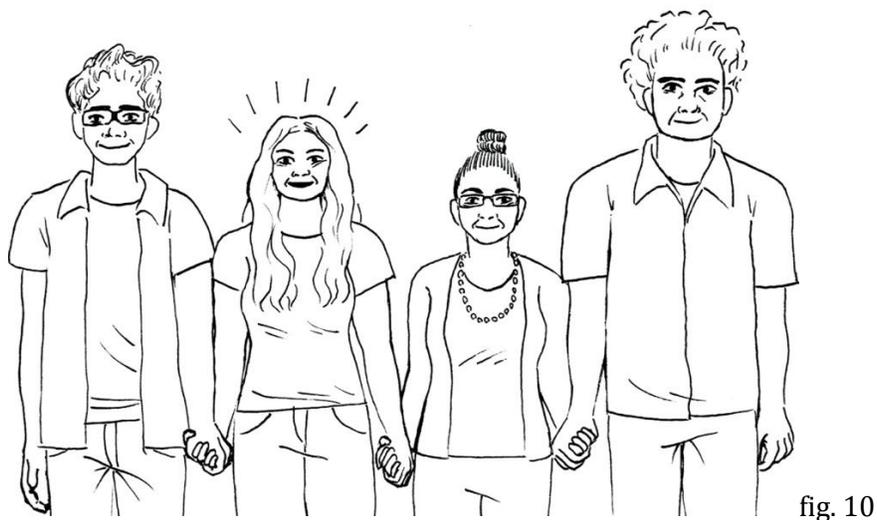


The story's penultimate page brings visual closure to the juxtaposition between the black of the closet and the white of reality as well as the importance of hands as a metaphor for bringing new opportunities. These visuals are demonstrated through the use of the flashlight as a connecting object (fig 9).



The final page takes the abstract idea of families providing help and makes it concrete with an illustration of our own family (fig 10).

DON'T GIVE UP ON YOUR CHILD BECAUSE IT  
ALL PAYS OFF IN THE END FOR EVERYONE.



Before she wrote this graphic novel, Evi had previously concentrated on being an abstract artist, the form of expression that felt most authentic to her. Consequently, she thought it important to include on the inside back cover of the book six superimposed abstract drawings of herself as a child in six different colors to represent the energy and uncontrollable nature of what it was like for her to experience ADHD when she was young (fig. 11). One of the biggest hurdles to doing this illustration was getting the colors right for the picture. Exactness in color is not often a feature of comics and it took many iterations of this page to get the colors just right. It is a fitting end to a book that used artistic style in so many different ways to tell a multi-layered story.



fig. 11

Although there was only one actual author of this book, Evi tries to show (with a switching back and forth in time and a change in the visual style she uses) that working with oneself through accessing long-forgotten memories is similar to the type of work done in collaboration. This was made evident to me as publisher and mother as I watched my daughter work through the challenge of accessing her memories, and ask for help when she thought she had forgotten certain aspects of them during the production of this book.

### ***Keeper of the Clouds: Trying to Be in the Writer's Head***

According to philosopher Christy Mag Uidhir, “in terms of contributory significance [...] illustrators can be just as important as writers (if not more so)” (2012, 2). Although just as important, the idea of a writer and illustrator each being authors of the same work may be problematic for Mag Uidhir in upholding a particular view of auteur theory since he also notes that:

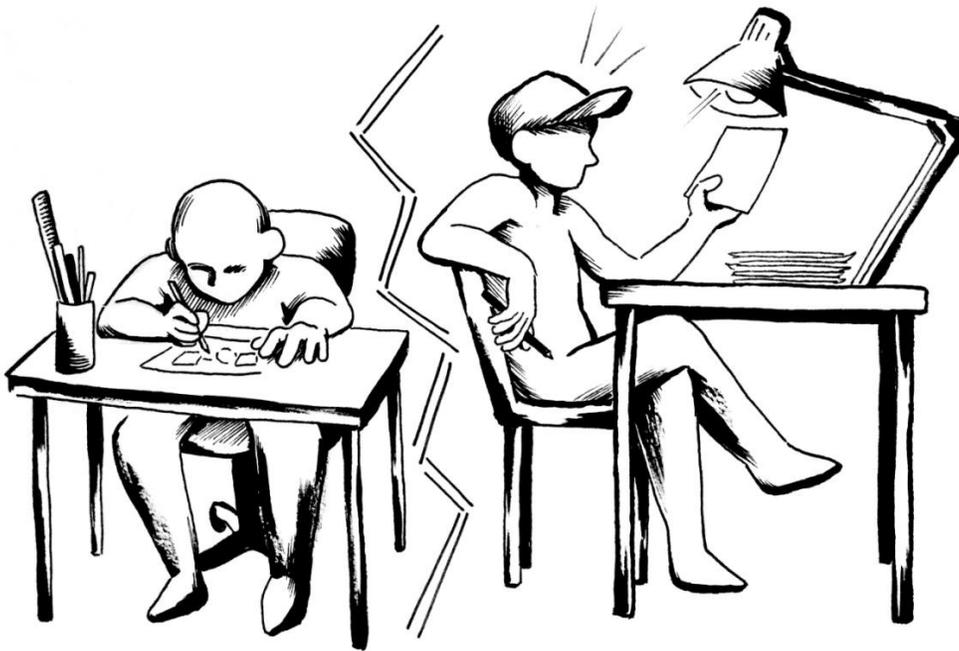
*auteur* theory construes authorship as being largely a matter of a singular individual exerting sufficiently substantial control over production of a work such that the work is seen as executing that individual's singular vision, being in that individual's singular style, employing that individual's singular technique (3).



Nevertheless, Evi's second book is an example of how an illustrator, by having a distinct point of view that is present throughout the comic, can be considered an author of a graphic novel she didn't write.

*Keeper of the Clouds* is a book that represents a story written by one person but one that is more fully revealed through the illustrations of another in a way that would not be available to the reader if the story were not in comic form. How can we reconcile the idea that authorship reflects a singular vision which, in the case of graphic novels like *Keeper of the Clouds*, is developed together by both the writer and the illustrator? For Mag Uidhir, any reconciliation is closely tied to the essence of comics:

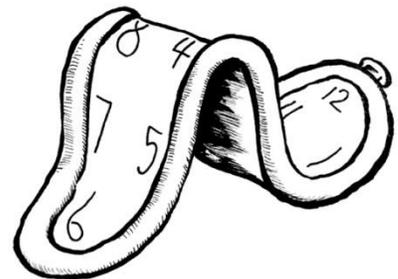
[W]hat it is to author a comic should have everything to do with what it is to be a comic. Given the collective-production of comics, the more disparate comic production roles we begin to regard as significantly or uniquely contributory, the more difficult questions of comic authorship become, and the more we view various distinct production roles as potentially constitutive is the more we must view comic authorship as potentially collective authorship (3).



Based on this idea of collective authorship, Mag Uidhir has argued that to be an author of a comic those involved have to be directly responsible for the work (6). And as collaborators, this entails for Mag Uidhir that they have distinct intentional sources evident from the ways in which the contribution satisfies the conditions of the work (7).

When Liza Futerma met Evi Tampold and asked her to illustrate *Keeper of the Clouds*, Liza had already completed the writing of the story. Yet, their collaboration brought out features of the story that would have remained obscure were not for the illustrations. The importance of the collaboration between the two to solve issues that were difficult to understand is something Liza and Evi talked about in a recent podcast about *Keeper of the Clouds* on the Graphic Medicine website.<sup>5</sup>

One of the things they highlight on the podcast is their extensive discussion for determining how time, once Liza's mother could no longer understand it, would be represented in the book.<sup>6</sup> Initially, Liza had wanted time to



<sup>5</sup> Liza and Evi were specifically asked about their collaborative process as part of the podcast. <http://www.graphicmedicine.org/new-podcast-episode-keeper-of-the-clouds/>.

<sup>6</sup> Copyright to all pictures from *Keeper of the Clouds* held by the writer, illustrator and the publisher.

be represented by a dripping clock similar to Dalí's iconic clocks. However, interpreting the text Liza had provided, Evi came up with another solution that both felt represented time more effectively to tell the story. The page in question concerning time (fig. 12) begins with Liza looking at her mother while her mother is looking at her watch, thinking that it was her mother's eyesight that prevented her from seeing the time. The page ends with the following words above a picture of the mother's eyes with 00:00 reflected in each of her eyes, "It was not about her vision. It was about time" (Futerman and Tampold 2016, 5).



fig. 12

The illustrations throughout the book act to tell the story through defining how the reader sees the story as taking place. The first page of the book (fig. 13) relates that on a specific date the daughter (Liza) was driving her mother to the doctor. Evi illustrates this by having the reader look down on a white, sub-compact car travelling on a road. Although the type of car and its color are not part of the story itself, by choosing this exact, white, compact car, Evi let the reader know that

this is a story that might affect anyone—there was nothing special about the circumstance that made what was happening to the mother exceptional. By putting the car at a distance, Evi also concentrates on showing the reader, that although this story could happen to anyone, it happened to someone other than the reader. The reader is a witness, not a participant.

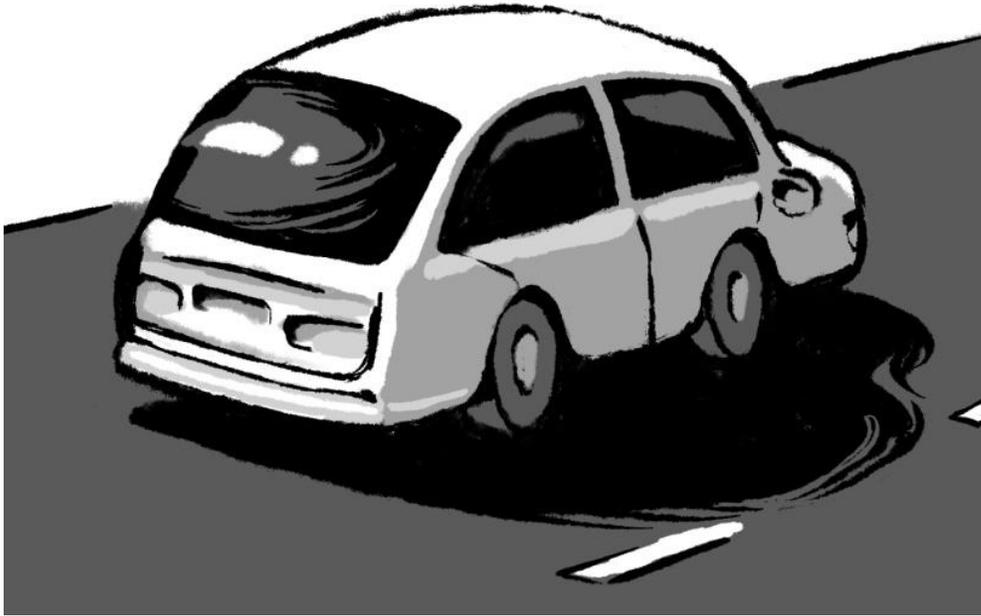


fig. 13

Unlike in *The Hallway Closet*, panels less often confine the illustrations in *Keeper of the Clouds*. This lack of confinement is seen by me as the publisher to be a purposeful decision by Evi to express the problem Liza's mother had in meeting social expectations regarding public interactions. To illustrate this further, all the lettering was irregularly drawn by hand (unlike in *The Hallways Closet* where Evi used the standardized font SF Toontime for the lettering).

One example of a decision to be made during the process of creating the book was how to represent the part of the story explaining that a personal support worker could be hired to live with her parents to help Liza's father take care of her mother. Rather than showing a drawing of a personal support worker, Evi chose to show two frames, one of a dirty dish surrounded by spilled food and the second of a couch with garbage on one of the cushions and, beside the couch, a pile of dirty clothes on the floor (fig. 14). Increasing the feeling of chaos experienced by the family, the words are bounded in panels that further obscure the scenes.



fig. 14

In comparison with *The Hallway Closet*, which lacks almost all shading, *Keeper of the Clouds* represents the depth of problems associated with the story while also adding a more realistic dimension and highlighting the vividness of Liza's memories through the use of different tones in shading. The shading is almost a separate character in the story acting as a bridge from scene to scene and panel to panel.



fig. 15

Evi twice uses length and thickness in designing Liza's hair to display various thoughts that Liza might be thinking. On page three (fig. 15), her hair holds four separate drawings: one of her talking with a doctor, another of her phone, a third of her thinking of bills and a fourth of an institutional building in which she needed to book a further appointment. And at the bottom of this page, in a space made by the

parting of Liza's hair, we see Liza's mother who was oblivious to all the mental pressure Liza was experiencing. The second time this use of Liza's hair occurs is on page ten (fig. 16). Here the purpose is to bring to light something that Liza had talked with Evi about that was not part of the story itself. Liza had told Evi how she wanted to reach out to her mother and really connect with her.

The first image has the daughter standing across from her mother—both in profile. The second shows just the daughter's hands reaching out to her mother's one, unresponsive hand. In the picture that follows, the daughter takes her mother's limp hand in hers. The final drawing is a distant picture of the same scene with both figures in black—Liza reaching out to her mother and the two connecting. And what ties together these pictures in Liza's hair is that Evi has presented the profile of Liza's face in tears.



fig. 16

It has been mentioned that the illustration of time was something on which Liza and Evi successfully collaborated. Yet, there were other representations of time in the book that were purely Evi's inventions such as the car still waiting at the light depicted by a superimposed image of the car four times, time passing illustrated with an increasingly lighter shade of gray (fig.17).



On the podcast, Evi mentions that when she initially started this project with Liza she had thought that it would be much easier to complete this book than her first because two people were working on it instead of one. What she found, instead, was that it was much harder because when she was unsure of what to do the answers were not in her head as they had been for *The Hallway Closet*. Instead they were in Liza’s head, and it was up to Evi to find a way to know what was in Liza’s head and interpret it for the illustrations in the book.

### Just to Talk: Working Together Apart

McCloud has defined comics as “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence” (1993, 9). With respect to collective authorship, Mag Uidhir sees his definition as lacking: “McCloud’s definition appears at least *prima facie* to exclude non-collaborative collective authorship” (17).<sup>7</sup> In a discussion of Evi’s work with respect to her authorship of her third graphic novel, *Just to Talk*, whether or not she is an author of the book through not directly collaborating is an important consideration.



<sup>7</sup> In footnote 27 of his paper, Mag Uidhir presents an argument based on formal logic as to why this is the case.

Unlike Evi's first two books, *Just to Talk* was a story given by a third person to Evi. She has had no personal contact with the writer. I was the one who happened to meet the writer, Pracha Vatsya, and told Prachaher of an opportunity to publish her story regarding her medical training with Evi providing the illustrations. Shortly thereafter she sent her story to me by email. Evi then began on the illustrations. In addition to the story, Evi was provided with a few photos of Pracha to do her drawings but, otherwise, the collaboration was undertaken entirely separately. So, if Evi continues by only working on the illustrations with no contact with the writer, could she be considered an author? This question seems to be addressed and answered by Mag Uidhir:

[W]hether or not one finds McCloud's definition of comics persuasive, questions of comic authorship, collective or otherwise, can be properly answered only by first specifying the work-description comic. Determining the work-description comic then allows for determining whom, if anyone, is directly responsible, at least in part, for the work being under that description. Subsequently, the presence of any (or at least a preponderance of any) non-empirical difficulties in determining comic authorship suggests that the source of the difficulty firmly rests with that operative theory of comics, revealing either that the work-description comic itself is in principle resistant to authorship or that the account of comics under consideration is itself unworkable (18).

From this comment, it seems that to the extent that Evi is directly responsible for any aspect of the story she should be considered an author, even though there is no direct contact between author and illustrator. For a narrative researcher, this consideration of Evi as an author without direct collaboration is reasonable because each provides her own point of view based on what they value.

An example of how Evi has worked to elicit additional meaning from the story in relation to other voices is her focus on illustrating a volunteer patient Pracha met. She was someone described in the story as having many personal problems. Evi's intention is to do more than show these things from Pracha's point of view. In addition, she plans to use her illustrations to bring out the story of this volunteer and the effect that talking with Pracha had to improve her condition.

These are augmentations Evi is in the process of making to Pracha's story. But in taking responsibility for this transformation of the story, Evi, in this particular type of collaboration, is both taking on the role of author as well as illustrating this non-collaborative collaboration.

## Conclusion

Johnson and Gray, in their introduction to *A Companion to Media Authorship*, have summarized the problem of authorship as follows:

Whether we care about art or industry, creation or reception, production or consumption, text or theory, culture or aesthetics, or all of the above, the author naggingly reappears as a problem to be solved. If authors need “solving,” though, this also suggests that fresh answers, theories, and understandings of how authorship work may have significant knock-on effects for our understandings of how art, texts, production cultures, audiences, power, identity, aesthetics, and meaning work (2013, 5)



As a narrative researcher, I would like to argue that an author is thus anyone substantially contributing to text with a particular point of view. And although I don't want “substantially” be a stumbling block, not everything that contributes to a comic's production realizes authorship. For example, in the work I did helping Evi remember what she had forgotten regarding her ADHD, I acted only as a catalyst. As such, I did not provide my own point of view, I merely encouraged her to remember her own and should not be considered an author of *The Hallway Closet*.

Where does this take us? In examining Evi Tampold's authorship of her three published graphic novels, I believe, as a narrative researcher and her publisher, that I can support Sousanis in his estimation:

Perhaps the most important thing that has emerged for me in working in the manner that I do[...] is that in trying to address aesthetic concerns, I'm prompted to do more research, and delving into the reading pushes me to pursue new images. It's a generative cycle and I find it takes me places that absolutely wouldn't occur to me were I working only in text. In this regard, I find that comics are not only more than up to the challenge of presenting serious inquiry, but also they serve as a powerful thought-space to help expand our research process from the ground up (11).



In each of the three graphic novels she has worked on, Evi has looked closely at what she values in constructing the narrative and how this might be accomplished while remaining sensitive

to the story to be told. For me, as a narrative researcher, what defines an author is determined by attending to what acquires value in any collaborative effort in creating a comic. Ultimately, where there is a distinct voice, there is authorship. The originality offered by this article is in how it provides an account of the collaborative and affective work that goes into creating graphic medicine narratives based on actual/autobiographical experiences, which can be one of the paths to explore in search of the fresh answers called for by Johnson and Gray.



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