

PRESS

STAGER

CUMMINGS

WALDEN

the graphic novel



WALDEN

the graphic novel

ADAPTED FROM

Still Waters

BY CURT STAGER

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Walden: The Graphic Novel © 2017

Created by David Press & Curt Stager & Emilyann Cummings

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“A lake is a landscape’s most beautiful and expressive feature. It is Earth’s eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his nature.”

- Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*.





"MY FIRST VISIT TO WALDEN POND
WAS IN MAY 2015."



"I SEE TIME ITSELF,
RECORDED IN THE
LAKE'S SEDIMENT."

DR. CURT STAGER,
PROFESSOR OF NATURAL SCIENCES,
PAUL SMITH'S COLLEGE, NEW YORK.




"LOOKING DEEP INTO
WALDEN POND'S HISTORY
REVEALS OUR CONNECTIONS
TO NATURE IN WAYS THAT—"




"HENRY DAVID THOREAU,
THE AUTHOR OF WALDEN,
COULD ONLY HAVE GUESSED AT
WHEN HE BUILT THE CABIN IN 1845."




THOREAU BUILT HIS CABIN ON PROPERTY OWNED BY HIS FRIEND, THE PHILOSOPHER AND AUTHOR RALPH WALDO EMERSON.



BECAUSE OF THOREAU'S WRITINGS, WALDEN POND HAS BECOME A SYMBOL OF WILD NATURE UNSPOILED BY HUMANITY.



IN WALDEN, THOREAU EXPLAINED THAT HE NEVER MEANT TO LIVE IN TOTAL SOLITUDE AT THE LAKE.



"OFTEN, PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS. HIS CABIN WAS MEANT TO BE HIS WRITING WORKSHOP AS WELL AS A RETREAT."

"HE OFTEN HAD DINNER WITH THE EMERSONS,
AND ENTERTAINED GUESTS AT HIS CABIN.

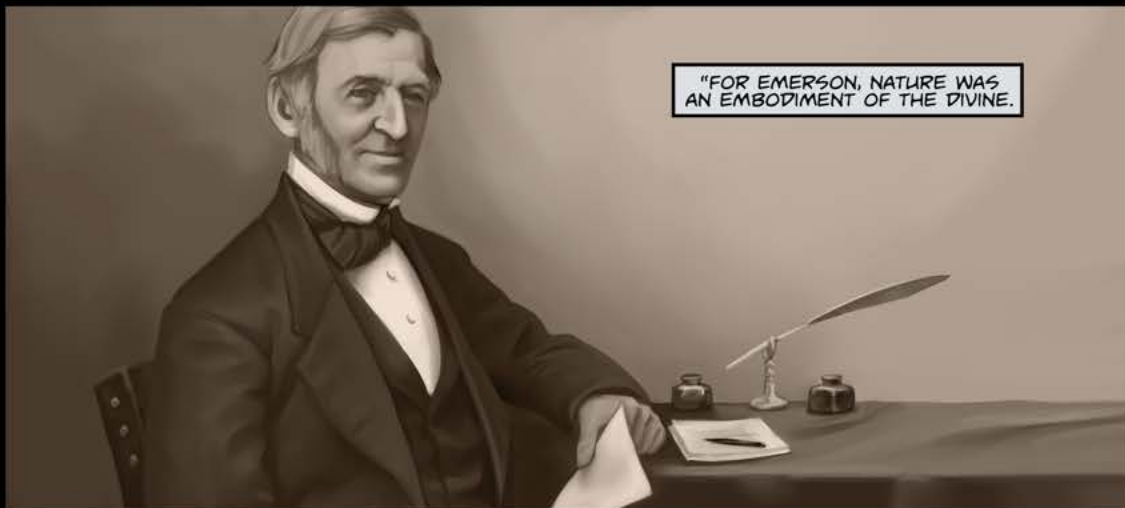


HOW'S THE LAKE, HENRY?

DELIGHTFUL, EMERSON.



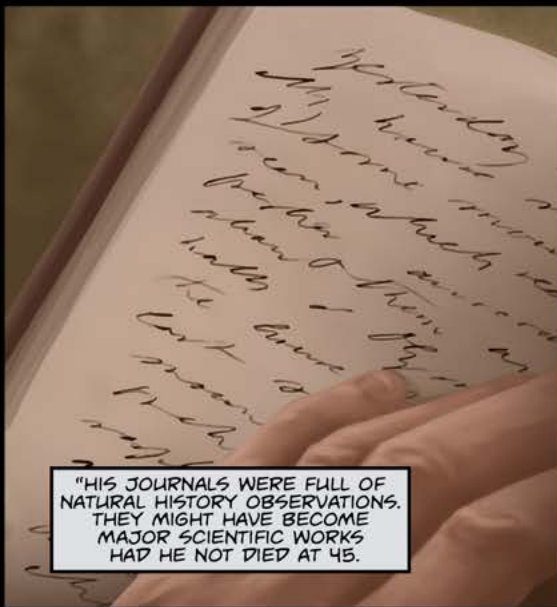
"THOREAU USED THE CABIN
TO TRY OUT EMERSON'S
TRANSCENDENTALIST PHILOSOPHY.



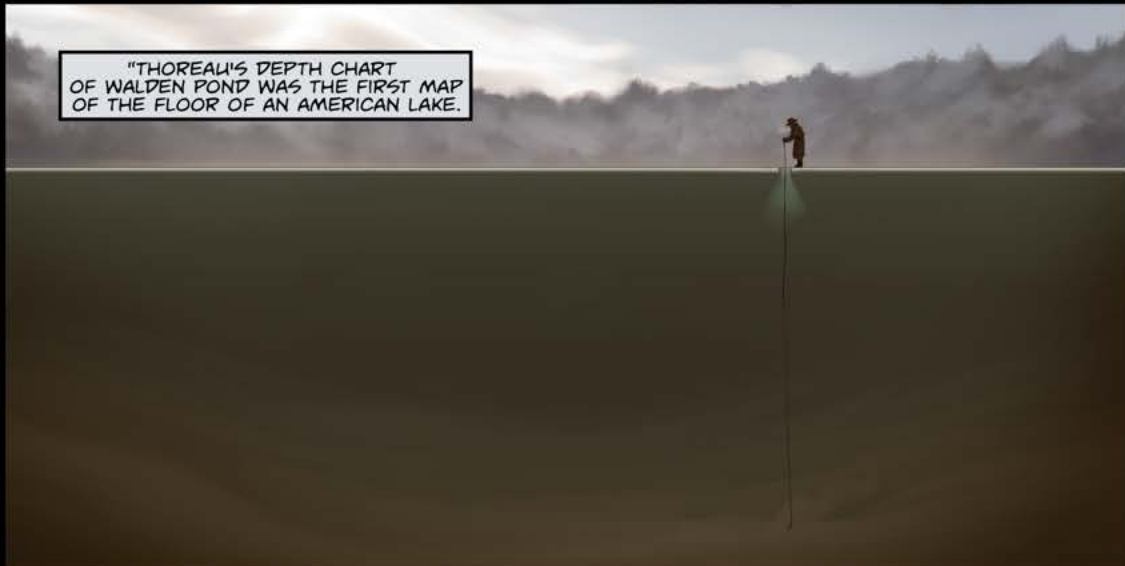
"FOR EMERSON, NATURE WAS AN EMBODIMENT OF THE DIVINE."



"THOREAU'S PHILOSOPHER-POET SIDE IS WELL KNOWN, BUT HIS SCIENTIST SIDE IS LESS FAMILIAR."



"HIS JOURNALS WERE FULL OF NATURAL HISTORY OBSERVATIONS. THEY MIGHT HAVE BECOME MAJOR SCIENTIFIC WORKS HAD HE NOT DIED AT 45."



"THOREAU'S DEPTH CHART OF WALDEN POND WAS THE FIRST MAP OF THE FLOOR OF AN AMERICAN LAKE."

WALDEN POND.



Depth in the basin of the pond, 1840



From the top of the pond to the bottom of the deepest part of the pond, the depth is 102 feet. The depth of the pond is 102 feet. The depth of the pond is 102 feet. The depth of the pond is 102 feet.

Area of the pond is 27 acres. The depth of the pond is 102 feet. The depth of the pond is 102 feet. The depth of the pond is 102 feet.



"HE DISCOVERED THE DEEPEST POINT NEAR THE COVE WHERE HIS CABIN WAS. OVER 102 FEET."



WHAT VARIOUS TEMPERATURES THE FISHES OF THE POND CAN ENJOY. IN A FEW MINUTES THEY CAN SINK TO THE WINTER OR RISE TO THE SUMMER.



IN 1939, **ED DEEVEY** CONFIRMED THOREAU'S MEASUREMENTS. TEMPERATURES OF 80 F AT THE SURFACE FELL TO 40 F NEAR THE BOTTOM.

ECOLOGIST **RICHARD PRIMACK** COMPARES TODAY'S SIGNS OF SPRING WITH THOREAU'S JOURNALS...

...AND FOUND THAT WALDEN'S **WINTER ICE SEASON** IS NOW SEVERAL WEEKS SHORTER, THANKS TO GLOBAL WARMING.



MY STUDENTS, RORY, ELLIOTT, AND I HAVE COME HERE TO EXAMINE THE LAKE'S SEDIMENT TO FOCUS ON WALDEN'S FUTURE.

"PHOSPHORUS IS A STRUCTURAL ELEMENT IN EVERY LIVING THING. WE CONSUME IT IN OUR FOOD AND RELEASE IT IN OUR WASTE."

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	Phosphorus	
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33		



DO YA KNOW WHERE THE SEAWEED IS?



"NITELLA WEEDS TRAP PHOSPHORUS POLLUTION IN THE SEDIMENTS, KEEPING IT AWAY FROM ALGAE THAT CLOUD THE WATER."



WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO CATCH?

RAINBOW TROUT. MAYBE A BROWN TROUT.



"NEITHER OF THOSE FISH LIVED IN WALDEN WHEN THOREAU WAS HERE. RAINBOWS COME FROM OUT WEST, AND BROWNS ARE NATIVE TO GERMANY."


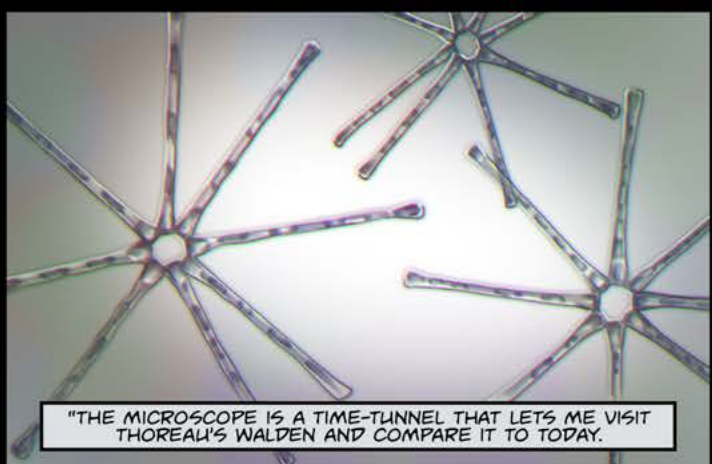




"A SINGLE SMEAR OF THIS MUD ON YOUR FINGERTIP CONTAINS MILLIONS OF TINY DIATOM SHELLS."



"THE DIATOMS WILL TELL US IF THE LAKE IS RECOVERING FROM RECENT PHOSPHORUS POLLUTION PROBLEMS."



"ME, YOU, AND THOREAU, WE'RE ALL A PART OF THE LAKE'S ECOSYSTEM, AND WE'VE ALL HELPED TO CHANGE IT."





THE SEDIMENT LAYERS SHOW THAT WE'VE BEEN SLOWLY LOVING THIS LAKE TO DEATH.



"DECADES OF SOIL EROSION AND SWIMMER WASTES HAVE BEGUN CLOUDING THE WATER BY PUTTING EXTRA ALGAE-STIMULATING PHOSPHORUS INTO THE LAKE.

"THIS DIVER IS REACHING DIRECTLY INTO RELICS OF *THOREAU'S* CLEANER, PURER WORLD THAT NO LONGER EXISTS HERE.



"FORTUNATELY, WALDEN IS STILL A BEAUTIFUL AND BELOVED RESOURCE PROTECTED BY LAWS- AS WELL AS BY LITERATURE.



AS LONGER, WARMER SUMMERS BRING MORE SWIMMERS, THEY WILL BE A DOUBLE THREAT TO THE LAKE. BOTH CAN CAUSE MORE ALGAE TO GROW IN THE WATER.

TO KEEP PLACES SUCH AS WALDEN AS BEAUTIFUL AS THEY ARE, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO WORK EVEN HARDER TO PROTECT THEM IN A WARMING WORLD.



“We are not separate from nature. We *are* Nature, a truth that can perhaps most clearly be seen through the eyes of lakes.”

DAVID PRESS taught composition, comics, creative writing, and film at Paul Smith's College in New York's Adirondack Park. Since he was thirteen he has been writing comics because he believes they have unique potential for students who struggle with confidence in reading and creative writing. He is a graduate of St. Bonaventure University and Brooklyn College. He lives with his family in Bloomington, Indiana. You can find out more about him at davidpress.net.

CURT STAGER is an ecologist, paleoclimatologist, and award-winning science educator at Paul Smith's College, where he investigates lakes and other aspects of the natural world with his students. He has published in major journals including *Science* and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, has written for periodicals such as *National Geographic* and *The New York Times*, and is the author of four books including the forthcoming *Still Waters*, which examines the secret lives of lakes around the world. He is also co-host of *Natural Selections*, a weekly science program on North Country Public Radio. You can find more about Dr. Stager's work online at curtstager.com.

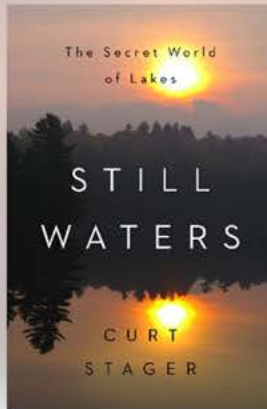
EMILYANN CUMMINGS is a freelance illustrator and perpetually concerned citizen living in Brooklyn, NY. She is a little more wary of ponds and lakes than she likes to admit, but certainly does like to look at them. For more of her work, go to emilyanncummings.com.



To access the full technical report
on the Walden Pond study:

Google search "Climate variability and cultural
eutrophication at Walden Pond during the last
1800 years" (Stager et al., 2018, PLOS ONE)

For more information about Walden
and lakes in general:



"Still Waters: The Secret World of Lakes"
by Curt Stager (W.W. Norton, 2018)

For information about student research and Paul Smith's College,
or to request copies of this graphic novel:



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