

FUN-ETICS

(Phonetics for Kids)

Rod Caborn

Illustrated by Amie Forest



Dedicated to grand “B” for her love and support of
reading and the arts – R.C.

For the Redwoods and the Forests – A.F.

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The illustrations in this book were created in colored pencil.
Book design by Amie Forest
The text is set in Muli Regular and Lora.

FUN-ETICS BRILLIANT ANIMALS/ Rod Caborn; illustrated by Amie Forest. – 1st ed.

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Summary: FUN-ETICS™ is a collection of 24 completely phonetical animal-themed poems. This beautifully illustrated treasure invites parents, children and English language learners to share the joy of language. It also serves as a delightful tool for teachers to facilitate success with reading, writing and pronunciation skills.

FUN-ETICS

FUN-ETICS is a teaching and learning system in which phonetic words are the predominant instructional tool.

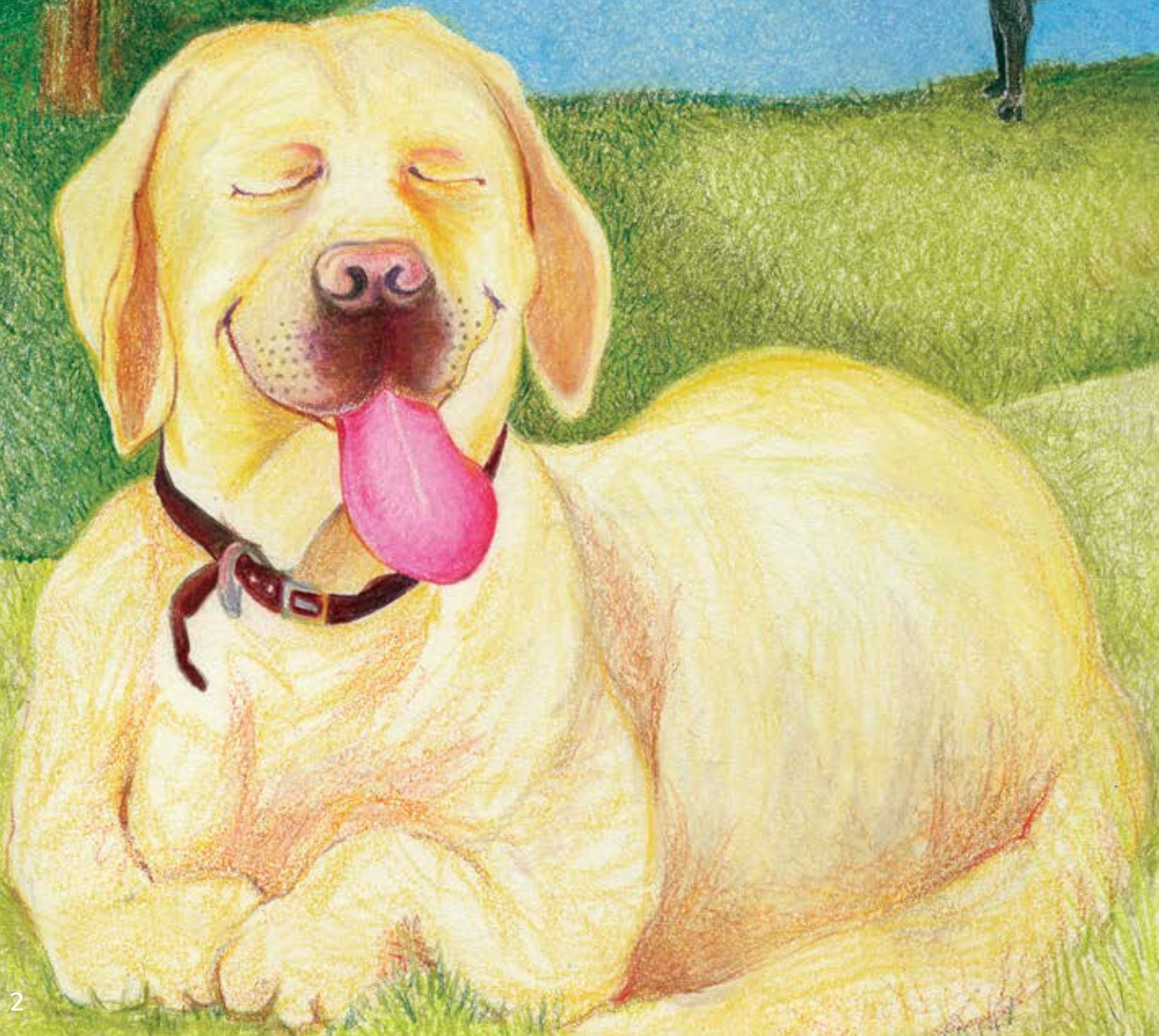
FUN-ETICS can best be presented within a poetic form called a “fun-etic.”

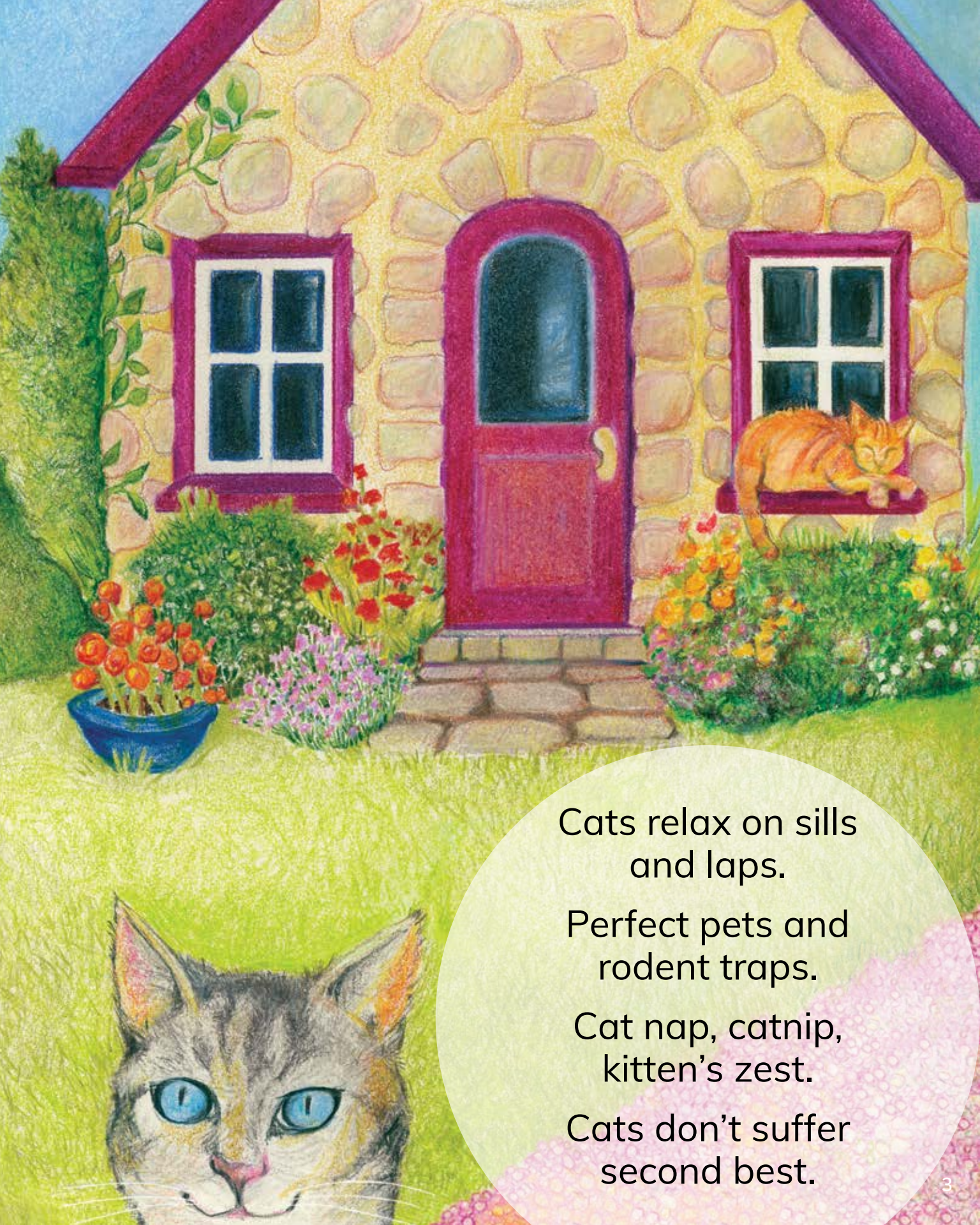
A fun-etic is a four-line verse (quatrain) that consists of two consecutive rhyming couplets. Each of the four lines contains seven syllables, and every word in the verse is phonetic.

Turn the page and check it out!

*(For more information about **FUN-ETICS**, turn to page 31.)*

Wagging dogs jump up on beds.
Gobbling scraps and dragging sleds.
Loyal pal and barking stud,
Wins "Top Dog" as man's best bud.



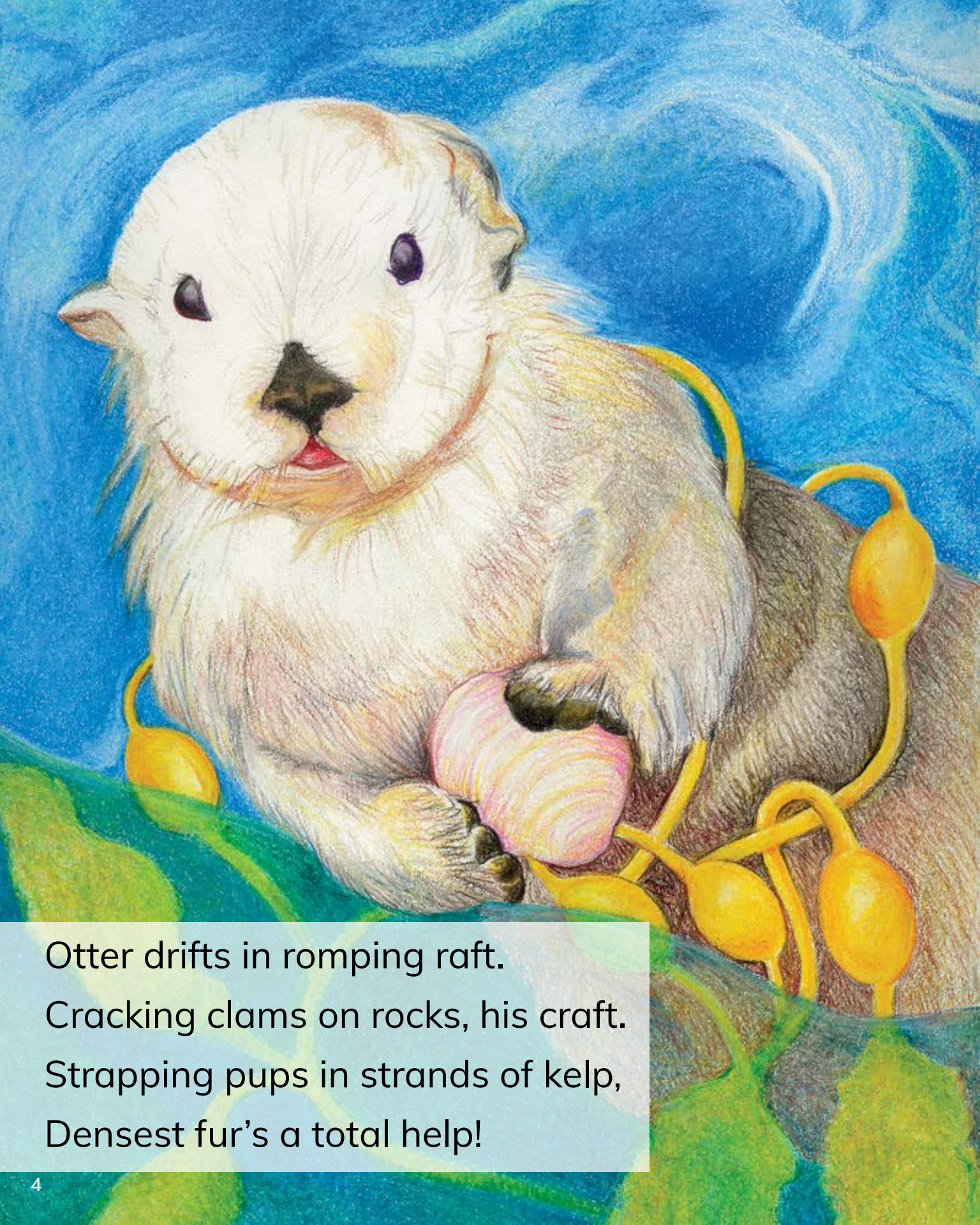


Cats relax on sills
and laps.

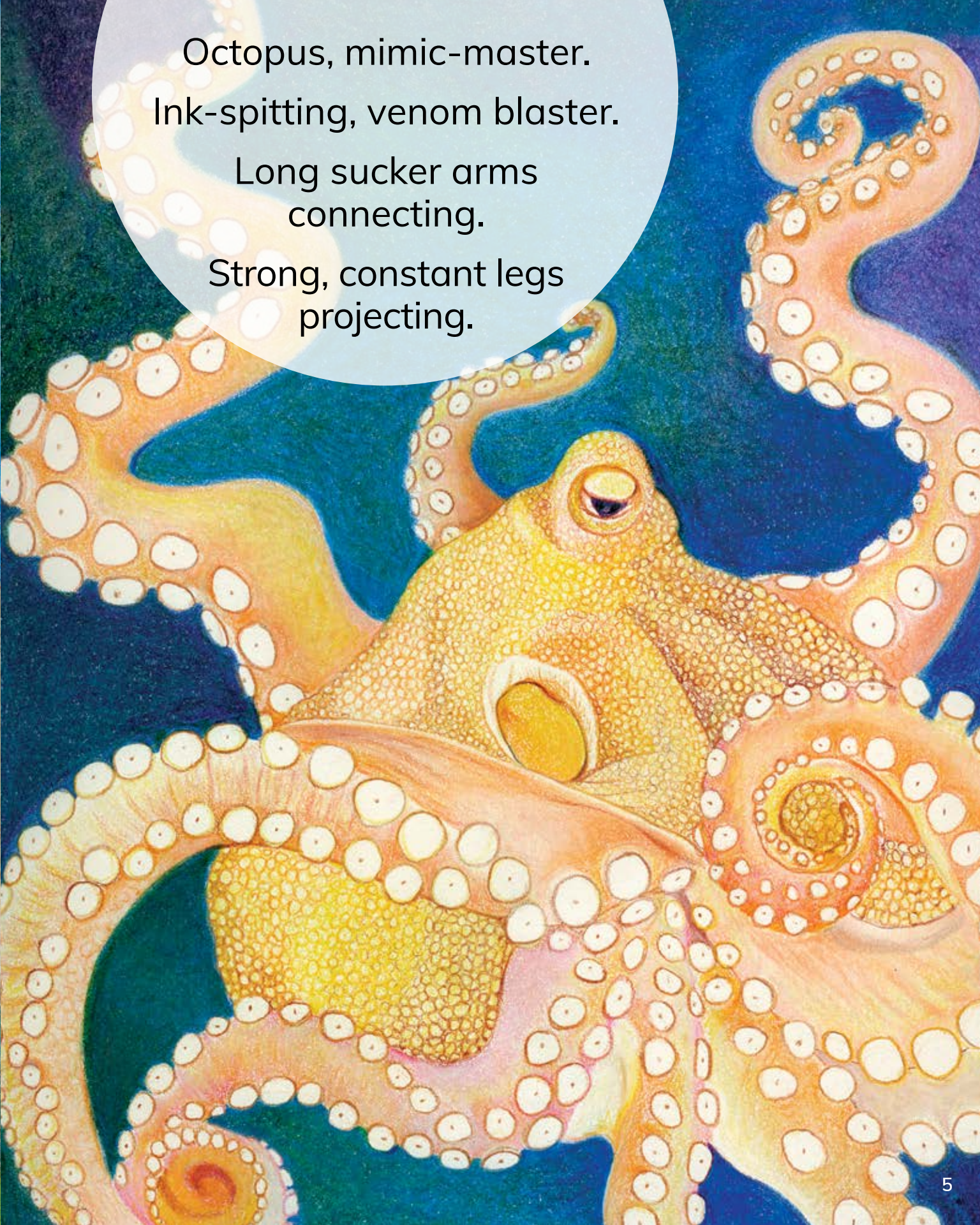
Perfect pets and
rodent traps.

Cat nap, catnip,
kitten's zest.


Cats don't suffer
second best.



Otter drifts in romping raft.
Cracking clams on rocks, his craft.
Strapping pups in strands of kelp,
Densest fur's a total help!



Octopus, mimic-master.
Ink-spitting, venom blaster.
Long sucker arms
connecting.
Strong, constant legs
projecting.

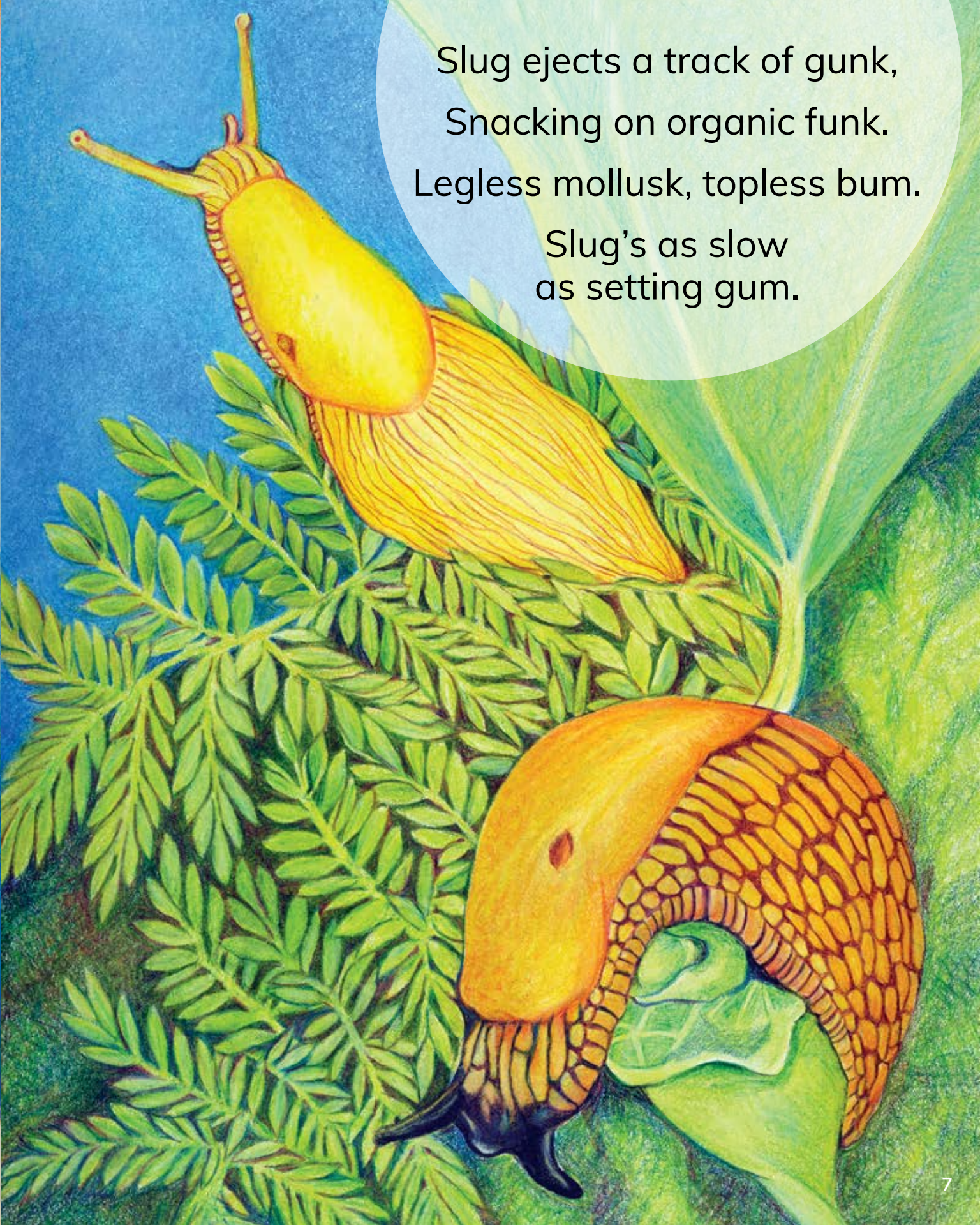


Dabbling, paddling
mallard ducks.

Mom-led ducklings'
twitting clucks.

Bill down, rump up,
angling arts.

Ducks kick butts
in comic parts.

A detailed illustration of two slugs on green foliage. The slug in the upper left is yellow with a yellow body and a yellow shell, moving upwards. The slug in the lower right is orange with a brown and orange patterned shell, moving downwards. The background is a dense field of green leaves.

Slug ejects a track of gunk,
Snacking on organic funk.
Legless mollusk, topless bum.

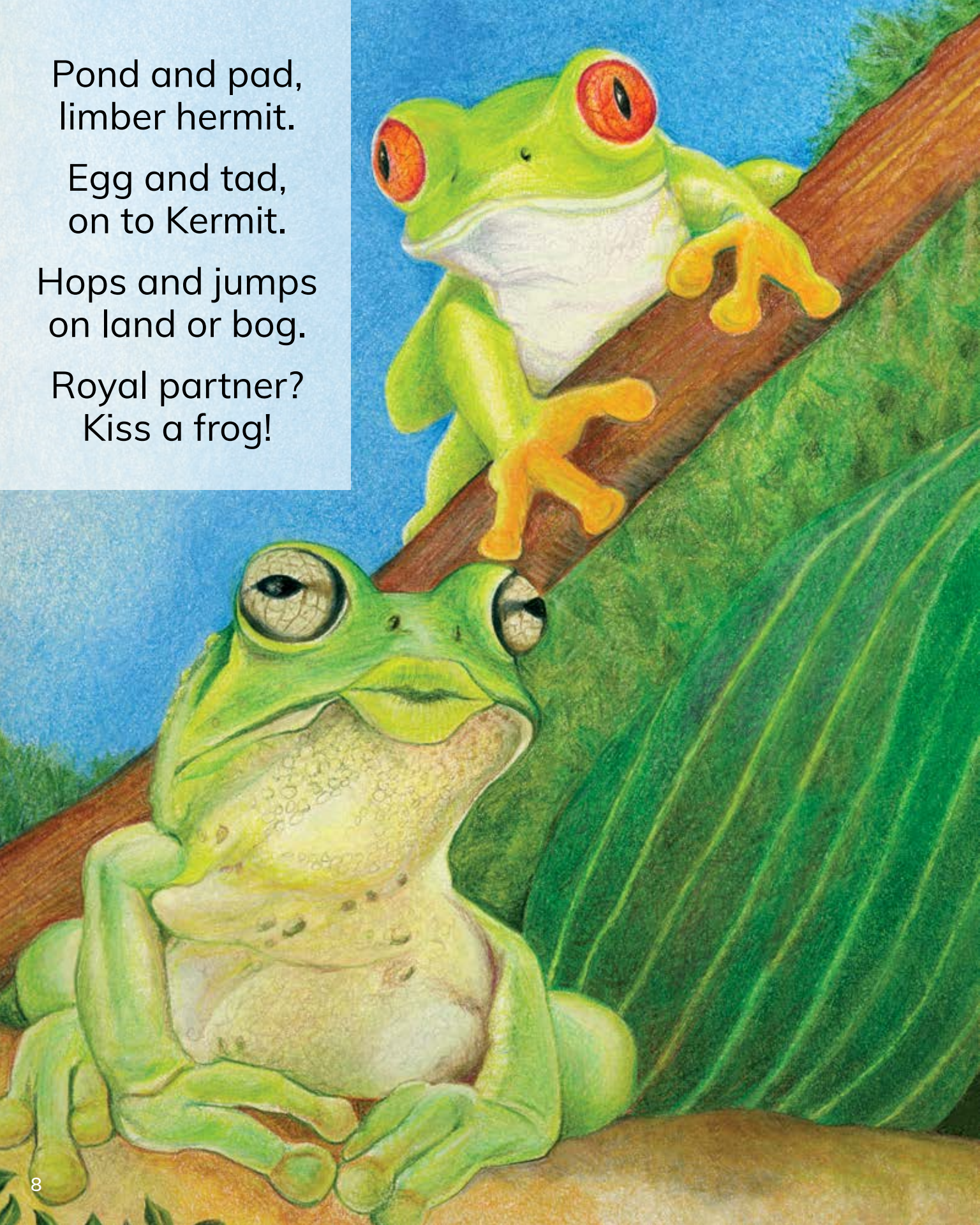
Slug's as slow
as setting gum.

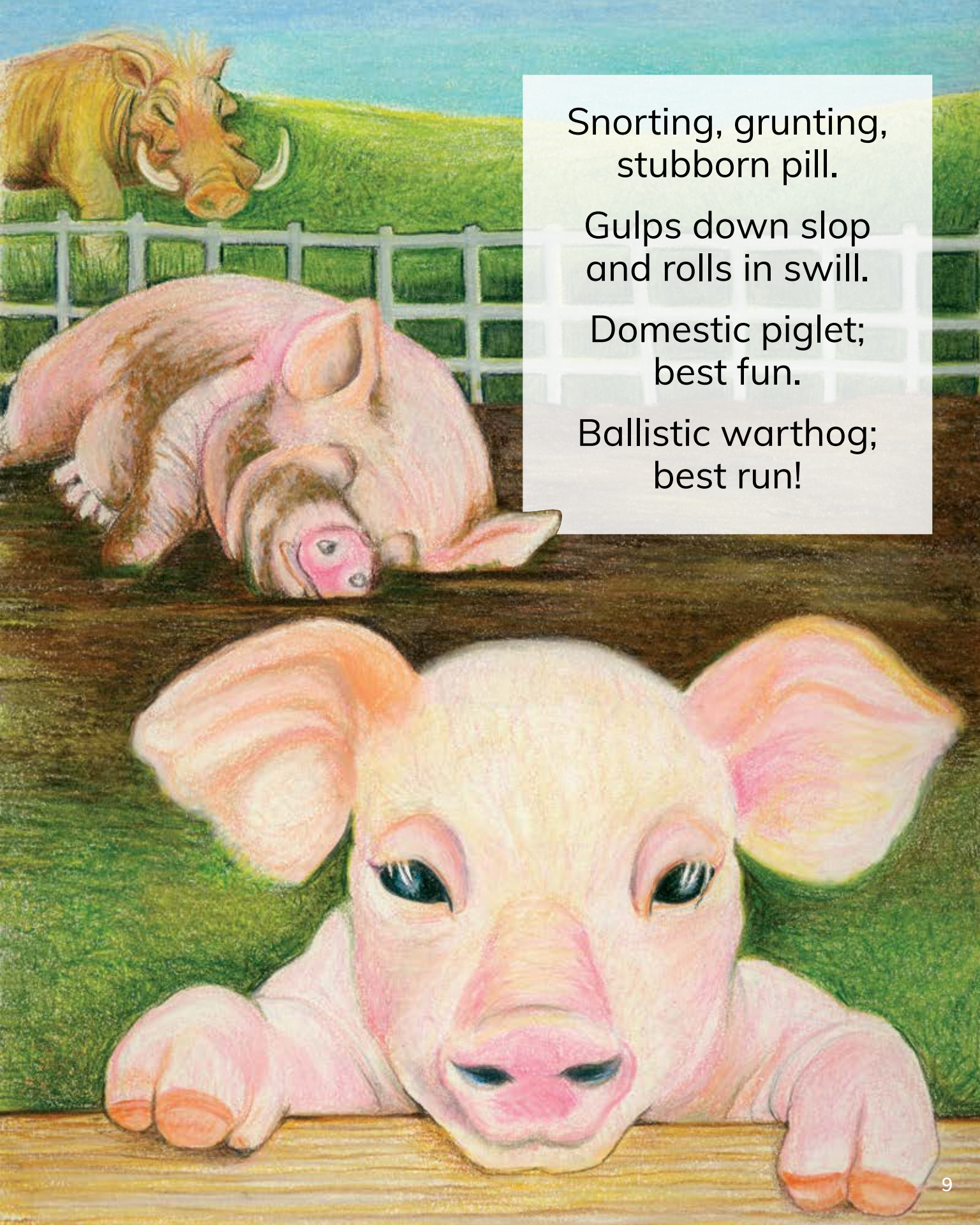
Pond and pad,
limber hermit.

Egg and tad,
on to Kermit.

Hops and jumps
on land or bog.

Royal partner?
Kiss a frog!





Snorting, grunting,
stubborn pill.

Gulps down slop
and rolls in swill.

Domestic piglet;
best fun.

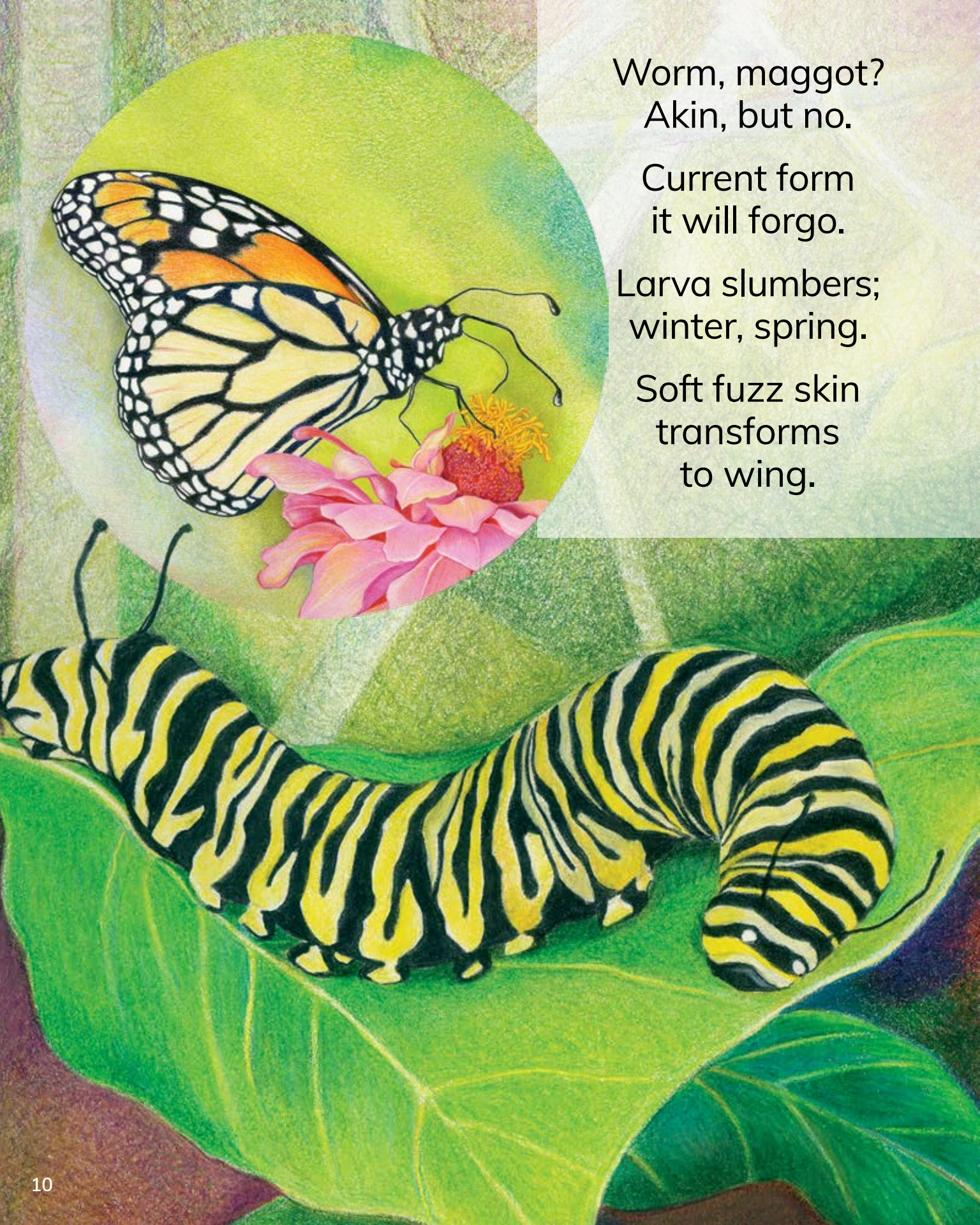
Ballistic warthog;
best run!


Worm, maggot?
Akin, but no.

Current form
it will forgo.

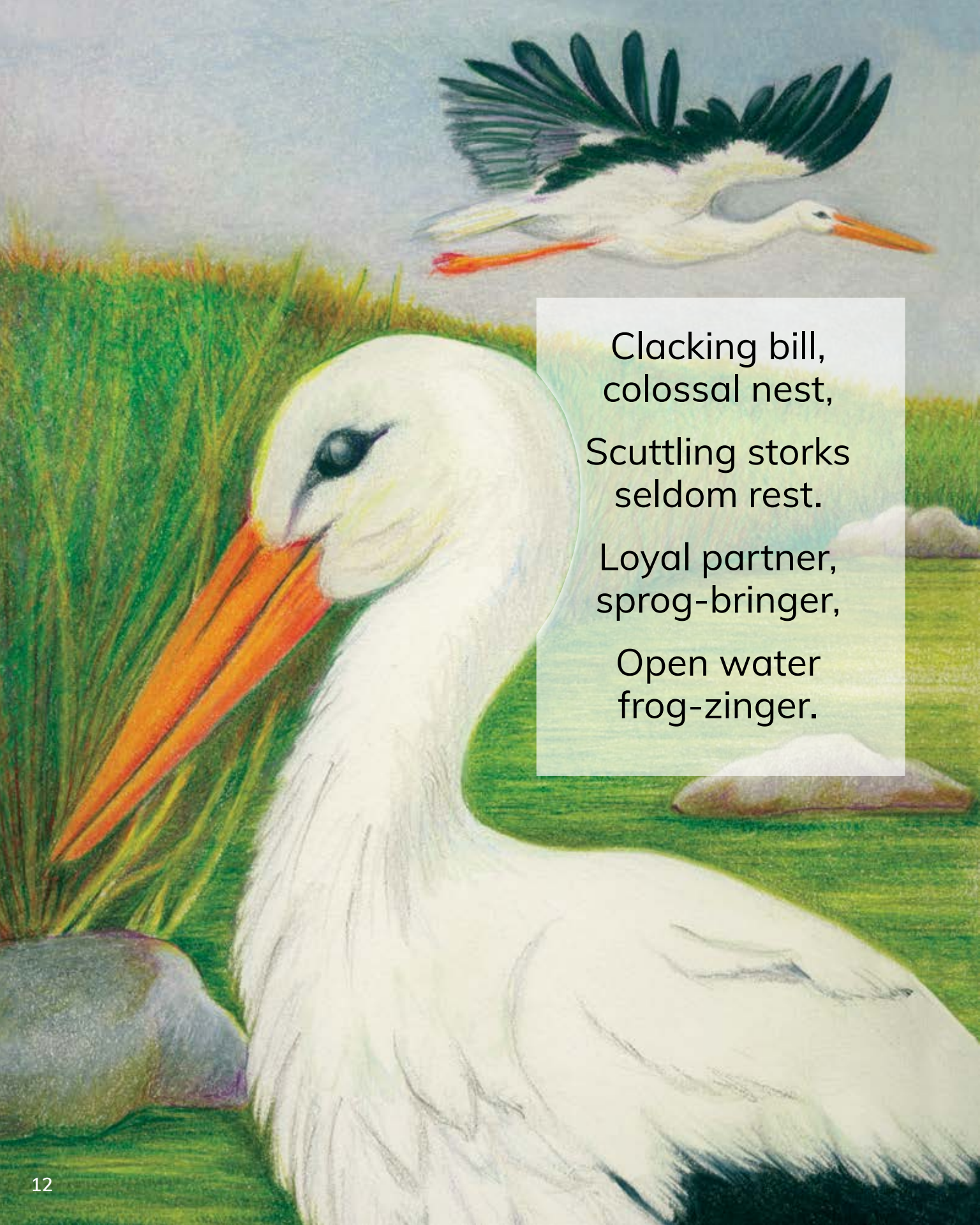
Larva slumbers;
winter, spring.

Soft fuzz skin
transforms
to wing.

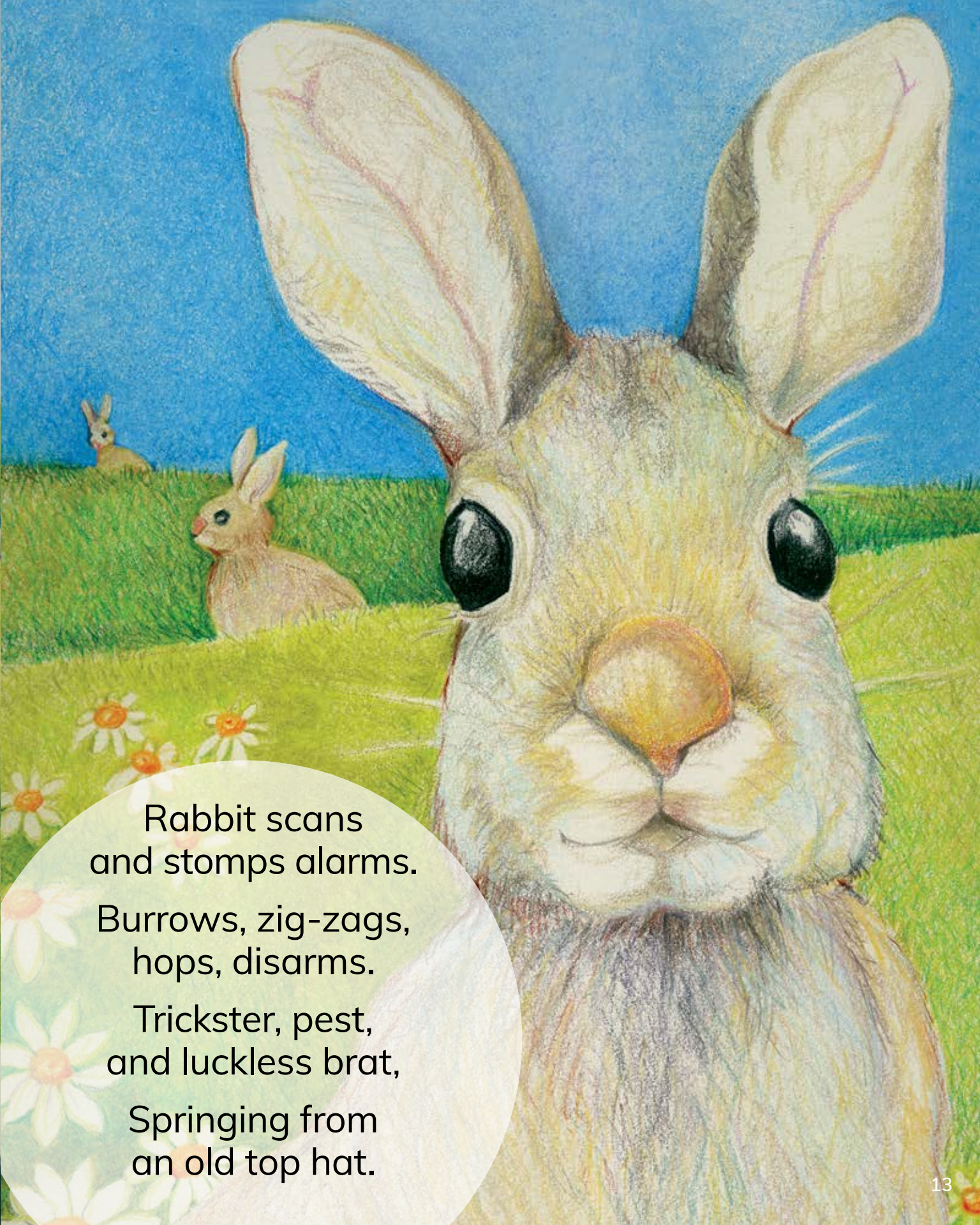




Yellow jacket's hornet's bling.
Stabbing, smarting, vespa sting.
If a fan of calm and rest,
Don't step on
a hornet's nest!



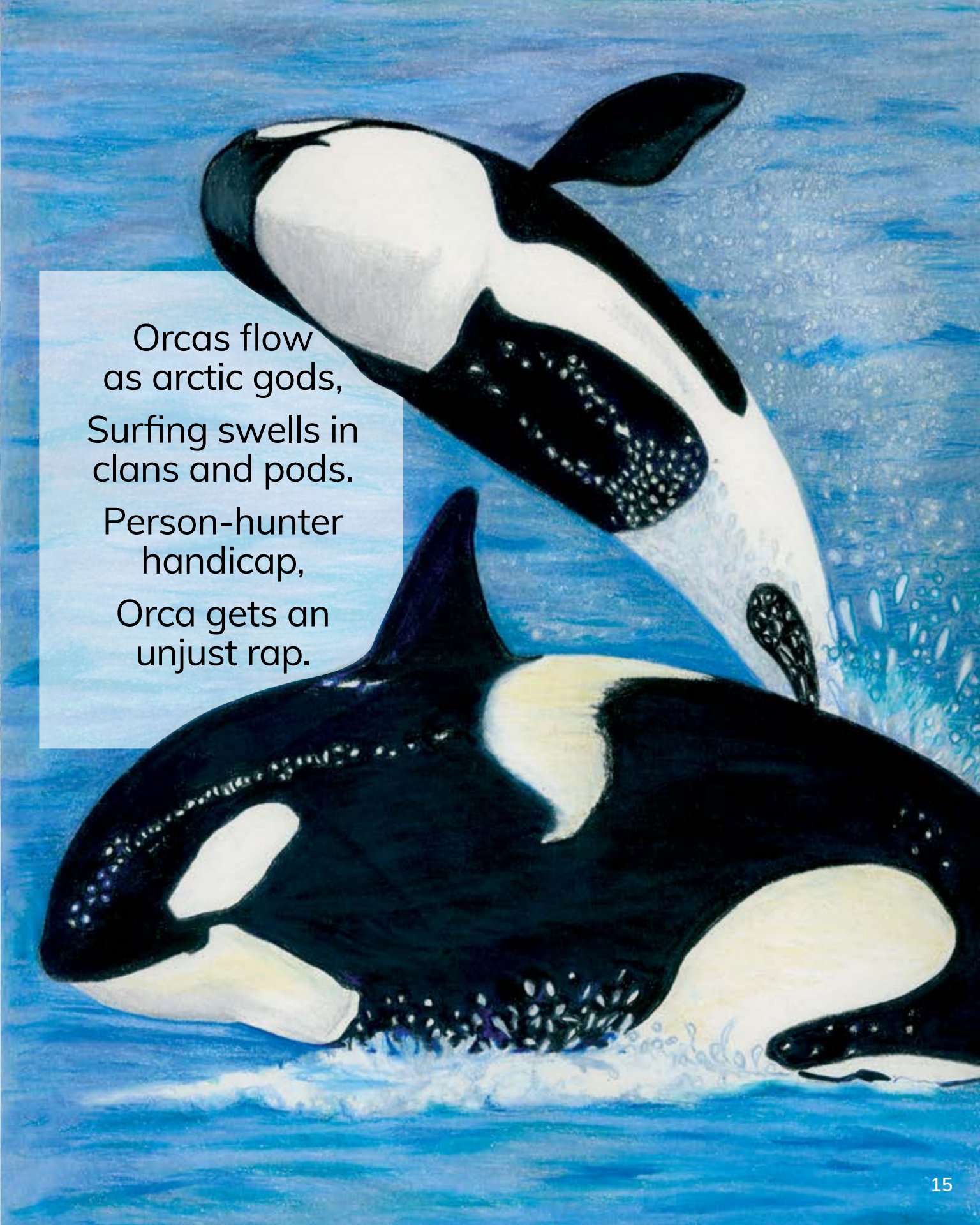
Clacking bill,
colossal nest,
Scuttling storks
seldom rest.
Loyal partner,
sprog-bringer,
Open water
frog-zinger.



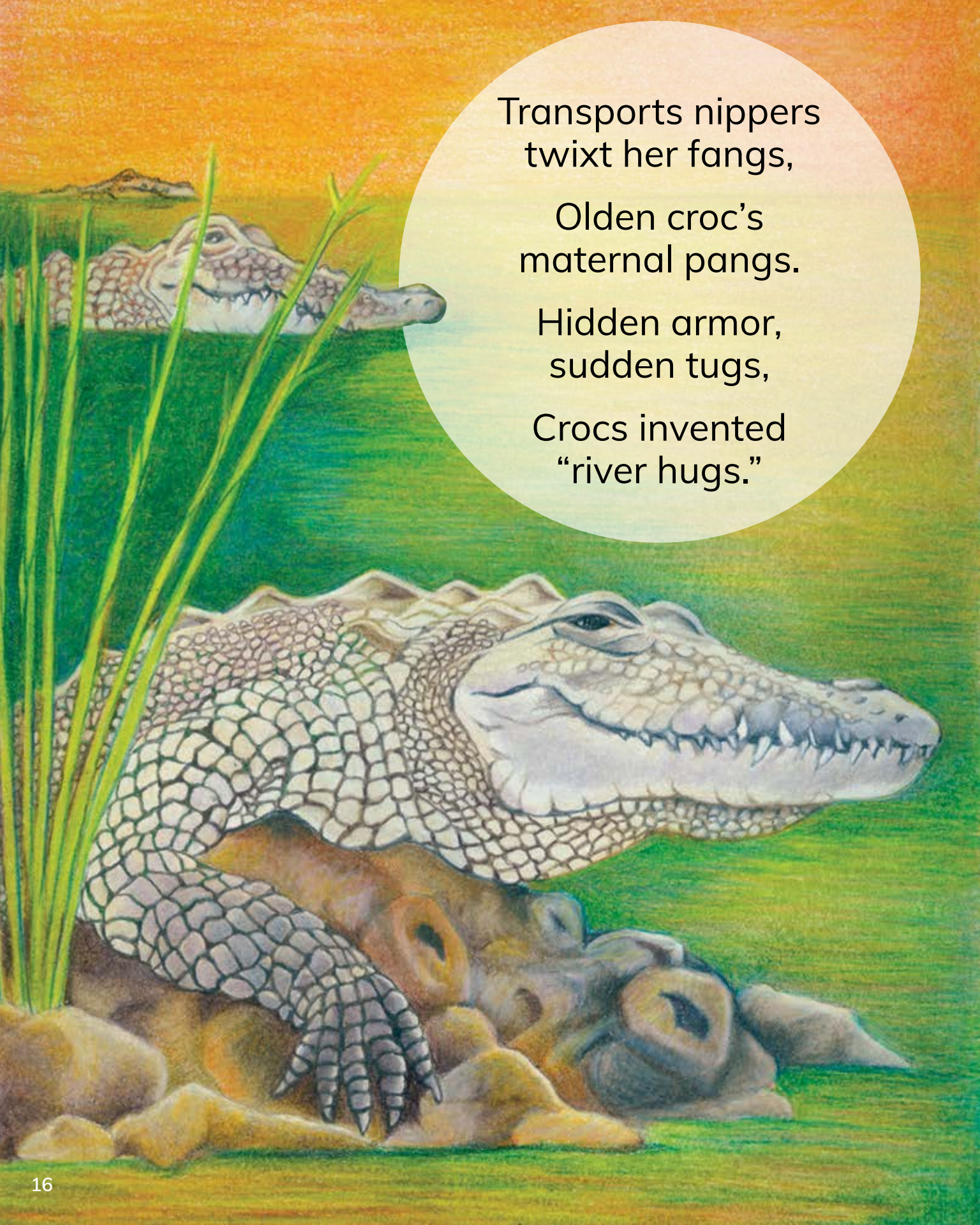
Rabbit scans
and stomps alarms.
Burrows, zig-zags,
hops, disarms.
Trickster, pest,
and luckless brat,
Springing from
an old top hat.



Bold walrus, tundra lubber.
Old whiskers, sack of blubber.
Stuffing guts on mollusk husks.
Scuffing ruts on yard-long tusks.

An artistic illustration of two orcas (killer whales) leaping from the water. The orca in the foreground is shown in profile, moving towards the left, with its body arched and its tail fluke visible. The orca in the background is also leaping, positioned higher and further back, with its body angled upwards. Both animals exhibit the characteristic black and white coloration of orcas, with white patches on their chests and bellies. The water is depicted with vibrant blue and white splashes, suggesting movement and energy. A semi-transparent light blue rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

Orcas flow
as arctic gods,
Surfing swells in
clans and pods.
Person-hunter
handicap,
Orca gets an
unjust rap.

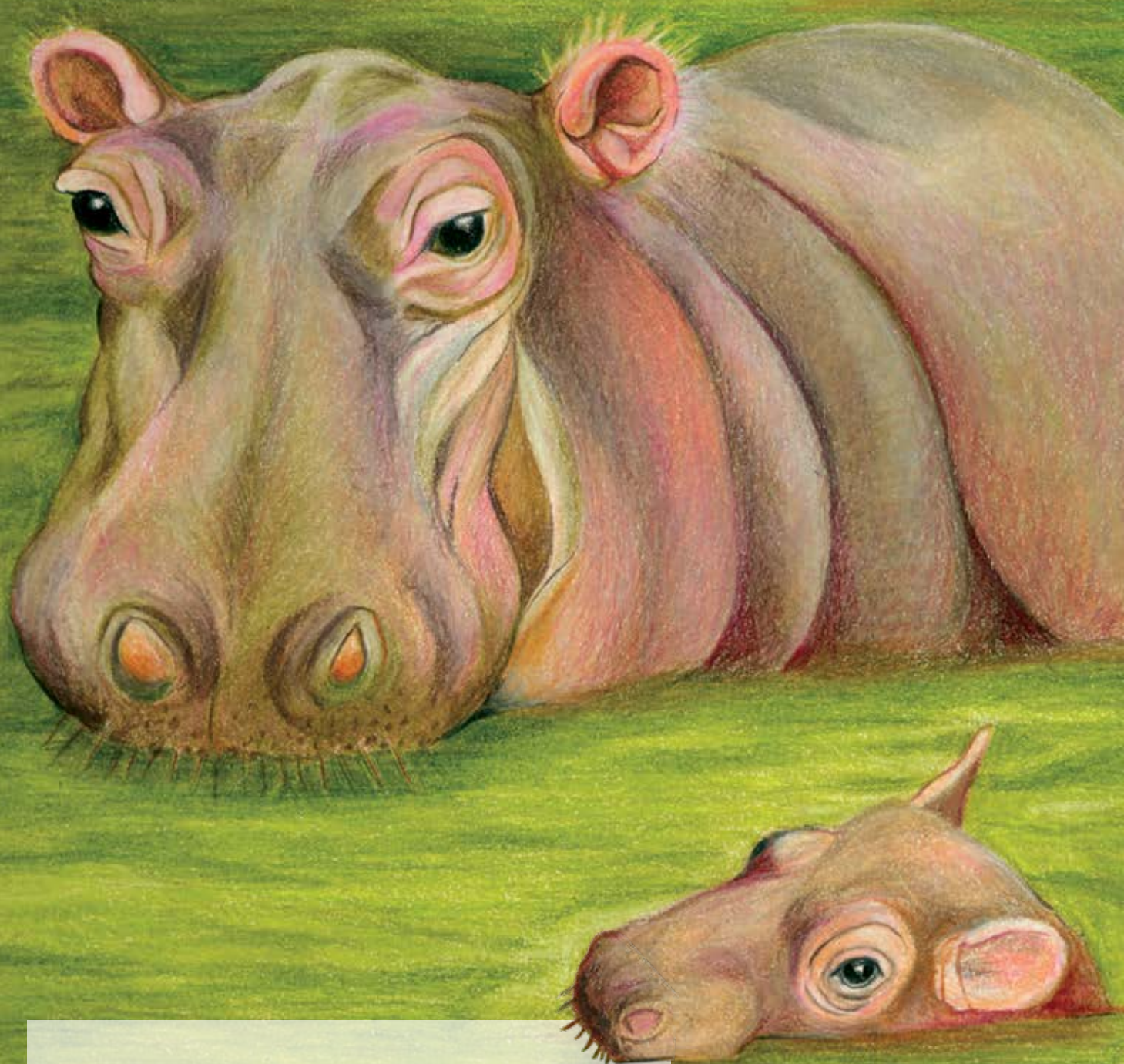


Transports nippers
twixt her fangs,

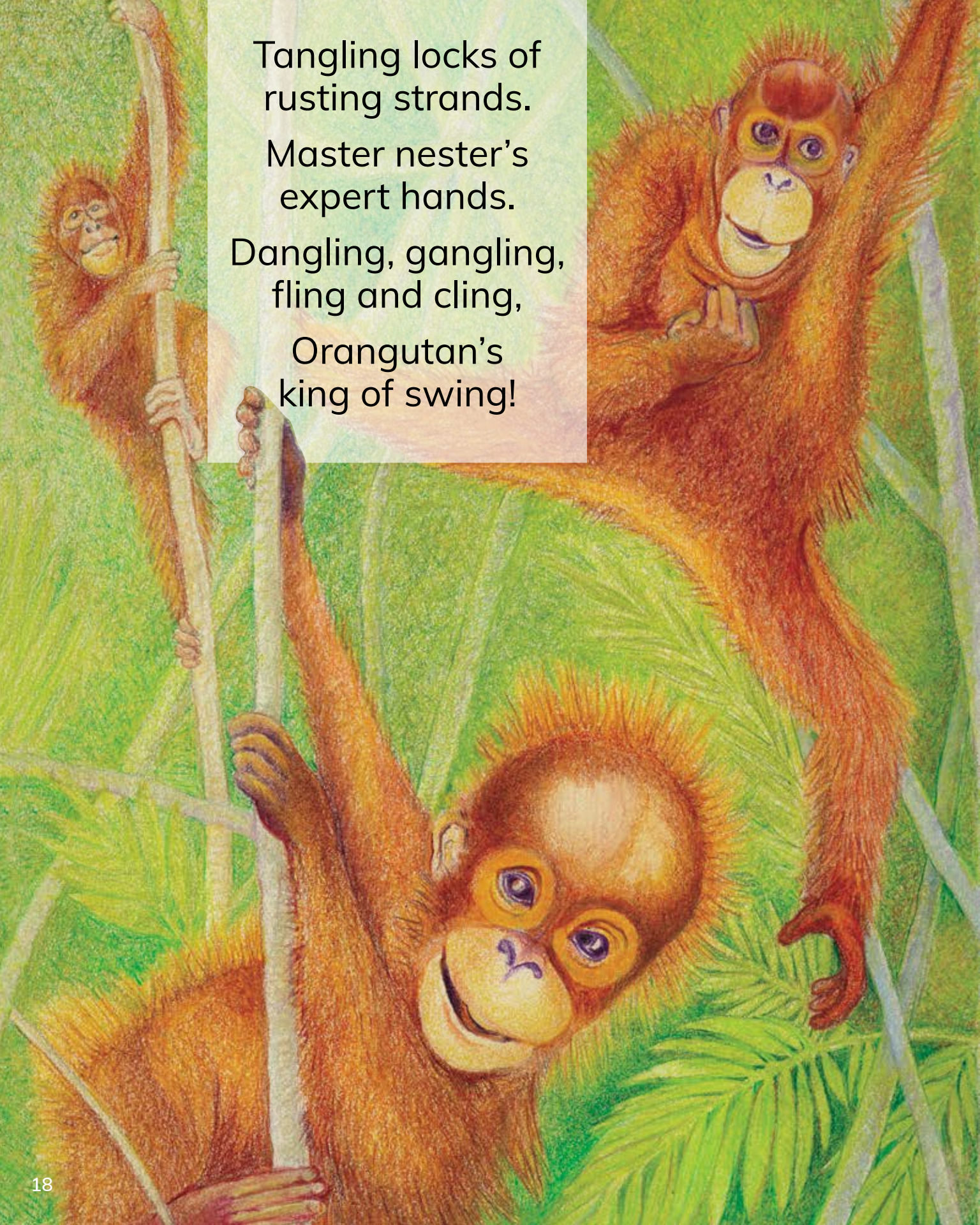
Olden croc's
maternal pangs.

Hidden armor,
sudden tugs,

Crocs invented
"river hugs."



Hippo brags a monster skull.
Drifting hulk in river's lull.
Tipping vessels' hippo's art,
Hippo's fun from far apart!

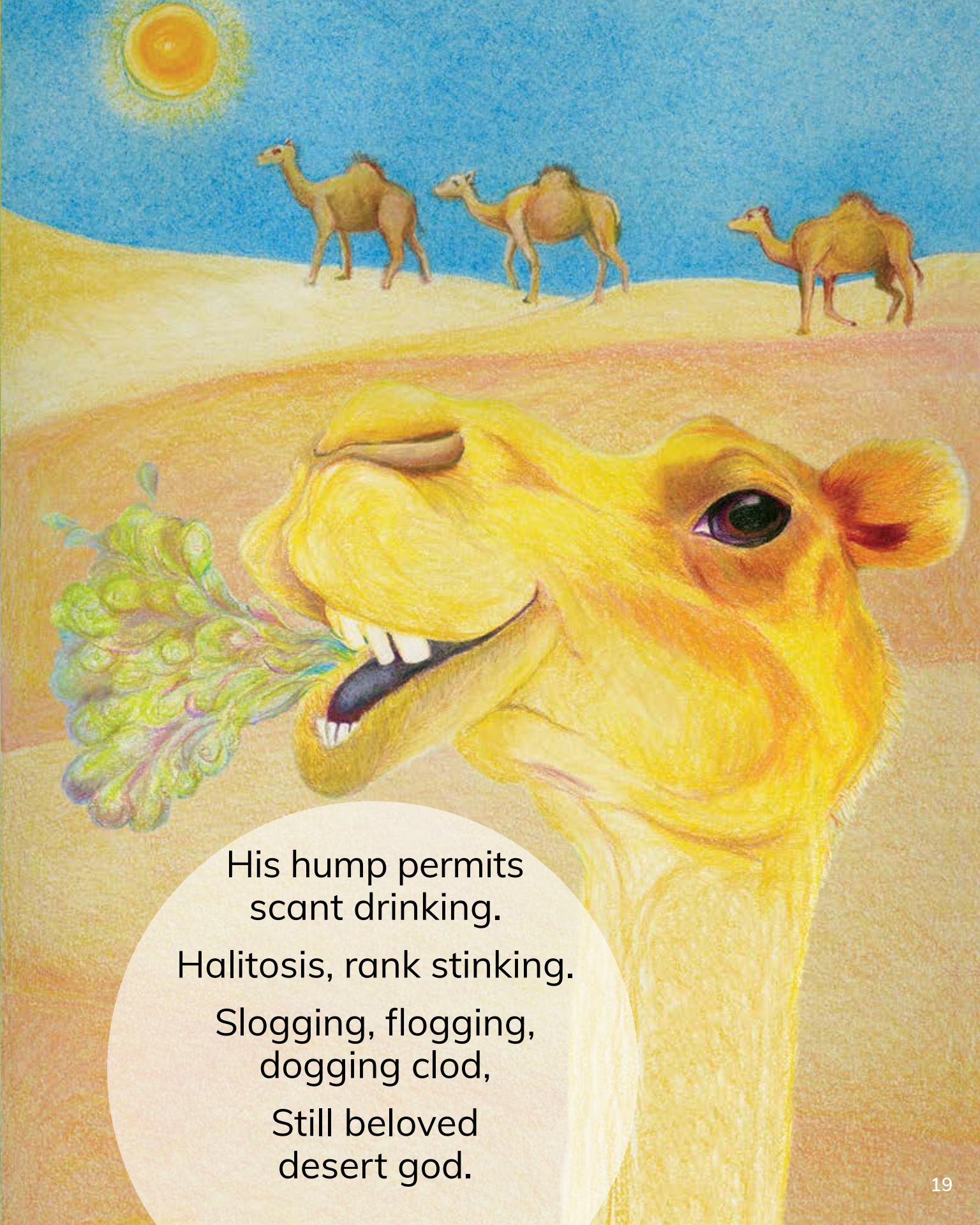
An illustration of three orangutans in a lush green jungle. One orangutan is on the left, holding a long vertical branch. Another is on the right, looking towards the viewer. The third is at the bottom, hanging upside down from a branch and smiling. The background is filled with green foliage and tree trunks.

Tangling locks of
rusting strands.

Master nester's
expert hands.

Dangling, gangling,
fling and cling,

Orangutan's
king of swing!



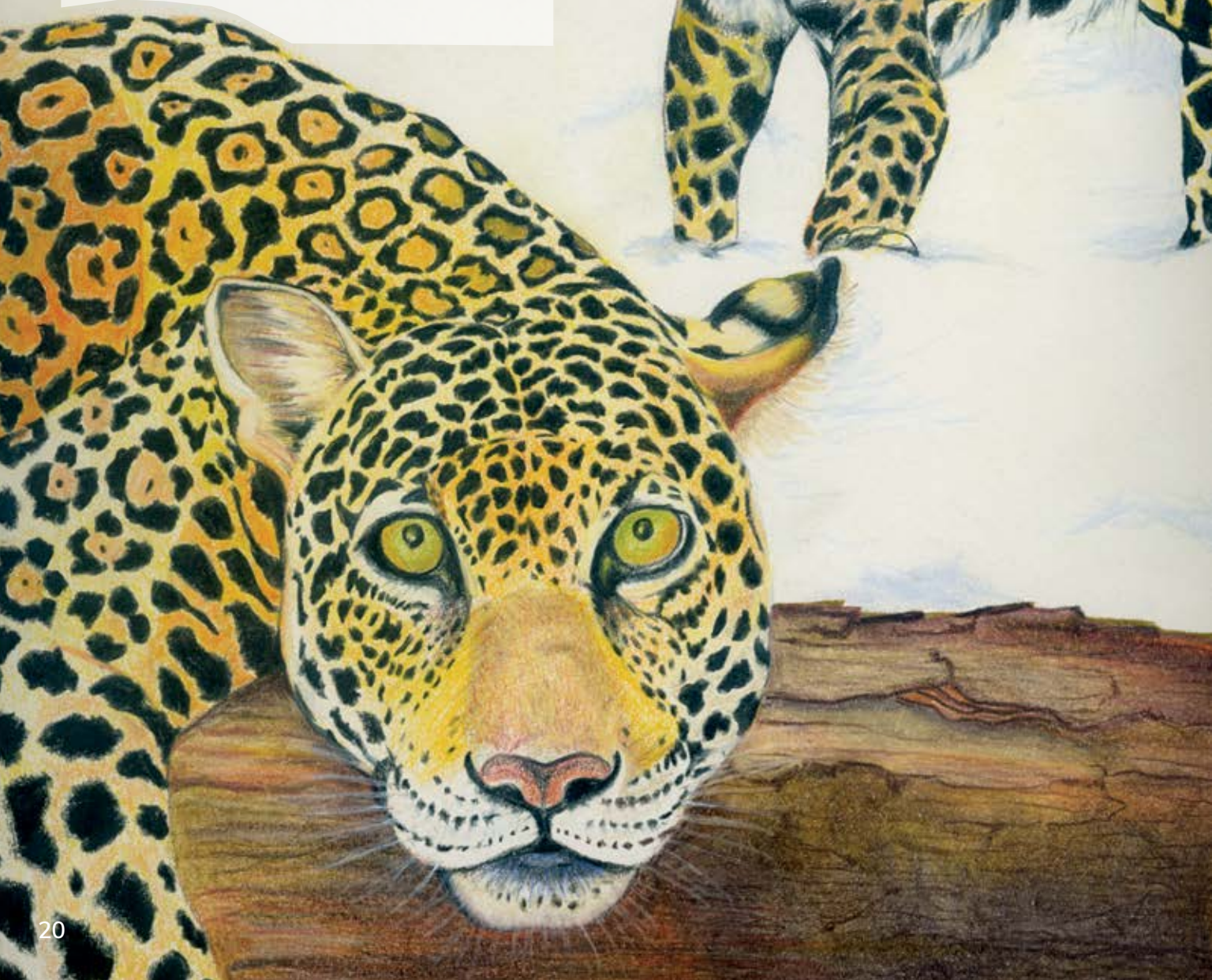
His hump permits
scant drinking.
Halitosis, rank stinking.
Slogging, flogging,
dogging clod,
Still beloved
desert god.

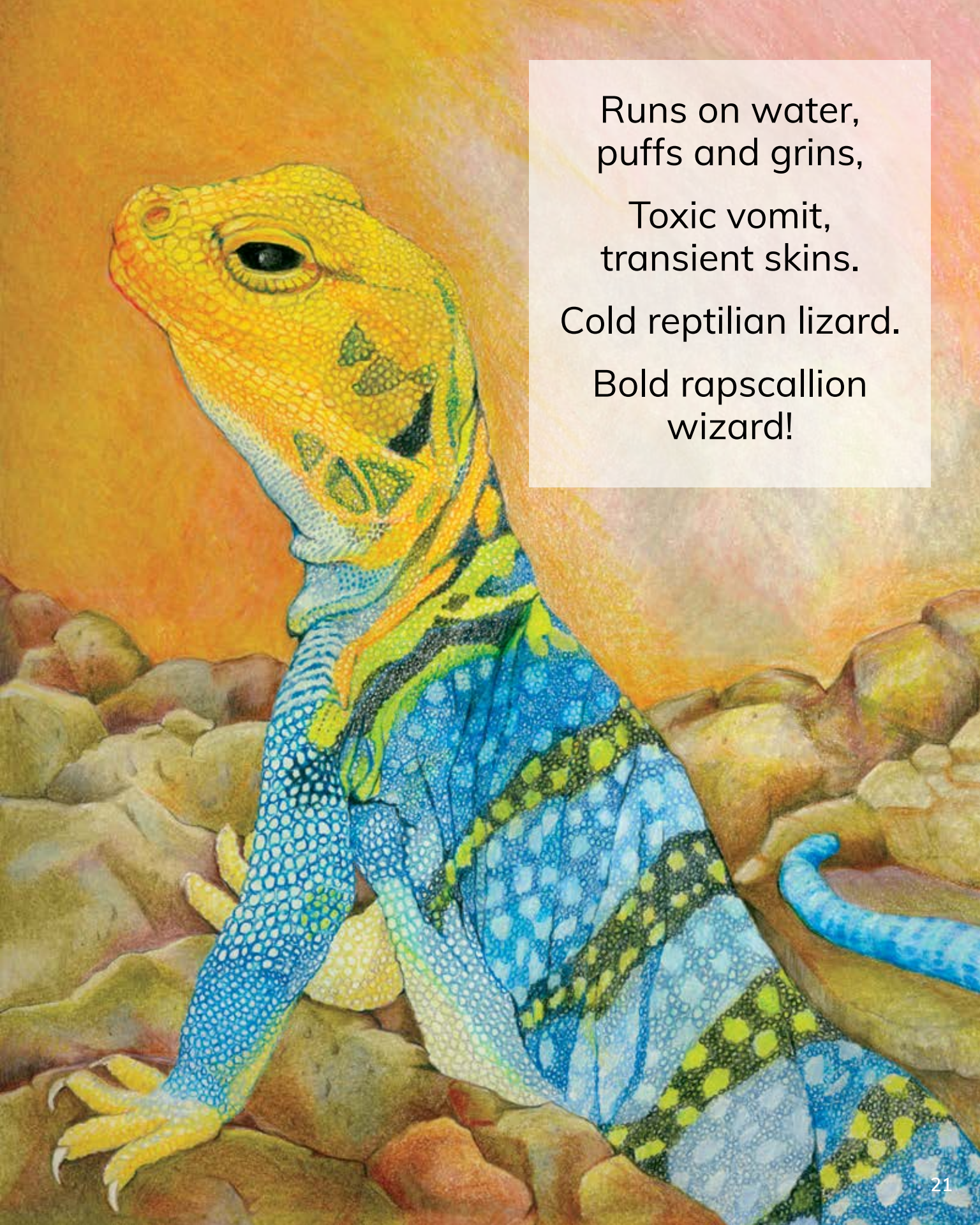
Strapping cat,
alarming jowl.

Dogged prowl,
startling growl.

Swimming rivers,
crossing plots,

Black jag DID
transform his spots.



A detailed illustration of a lizard, possibly a spiny-tailed lizard, with a yellow head and neck, blue body with yellow spots, and a long, blue, spiny tail. The lizard is perched on a rocky surface. The background is a warm, orange-yellow gradient.

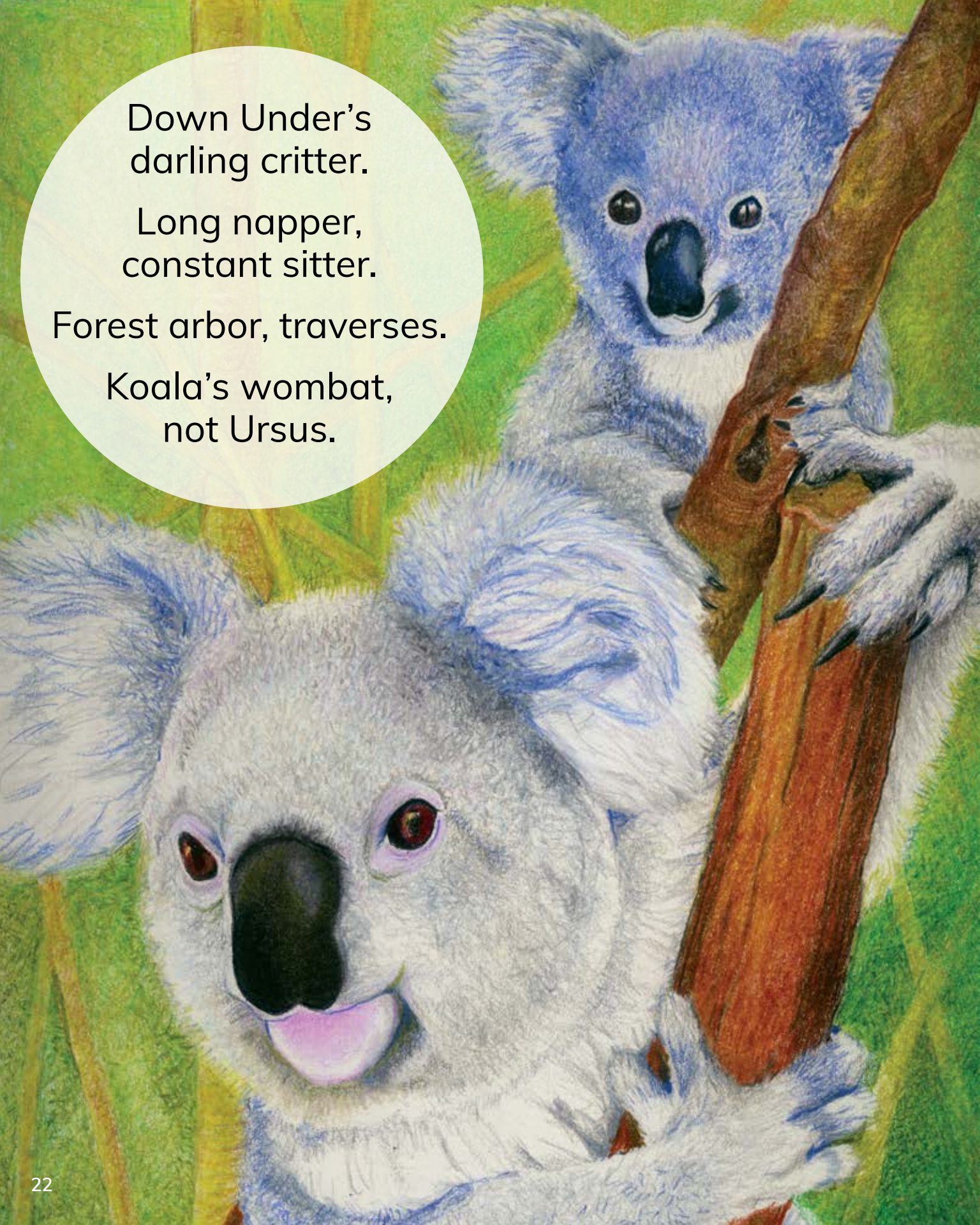
Runs on water,
puffs and grins,
Toxic vomit,
transient skins.
Cold reptilian lizard.
Bold rascalion
wizard!

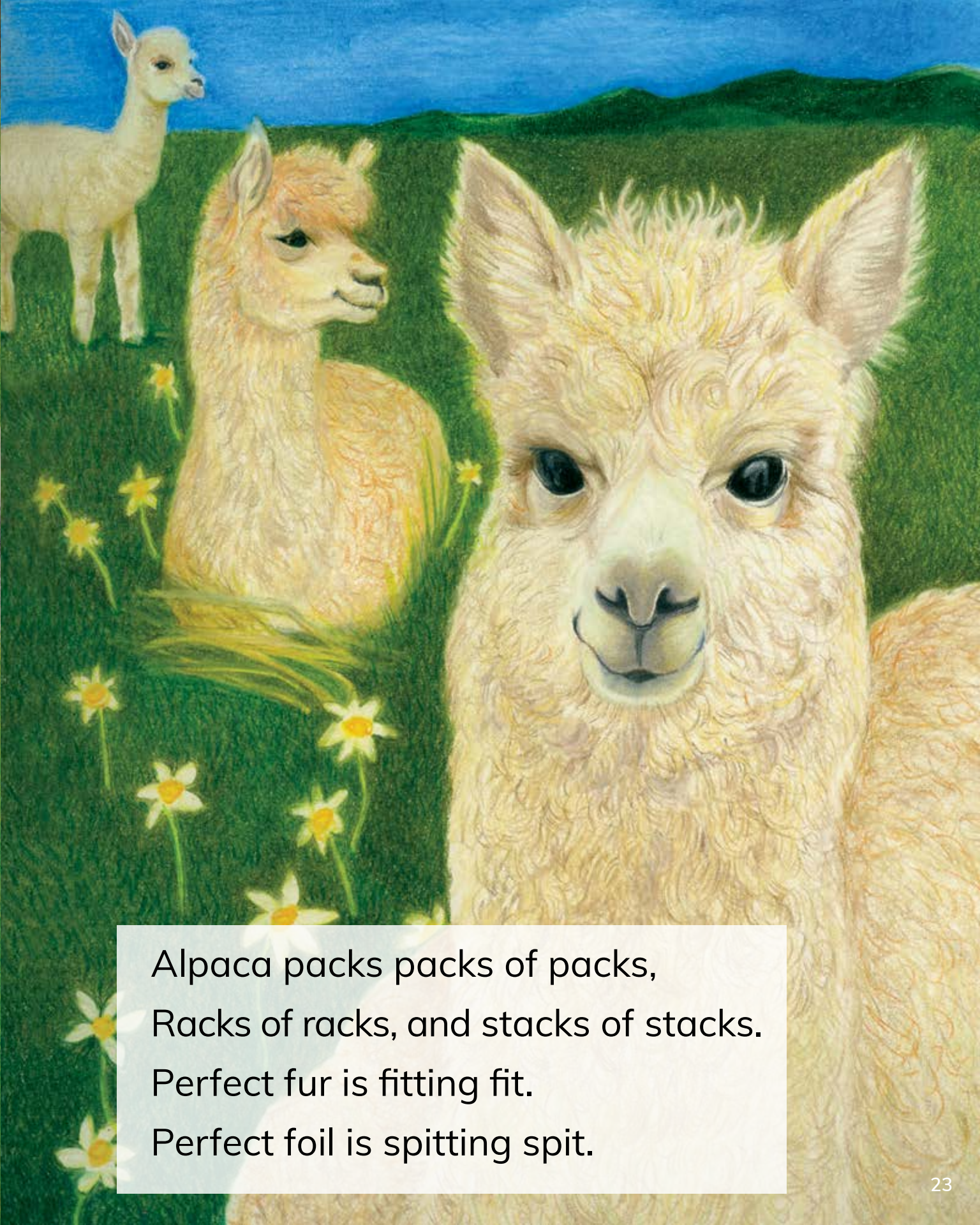
Down Under's
darling critter.

Long napper,
constant sitter.

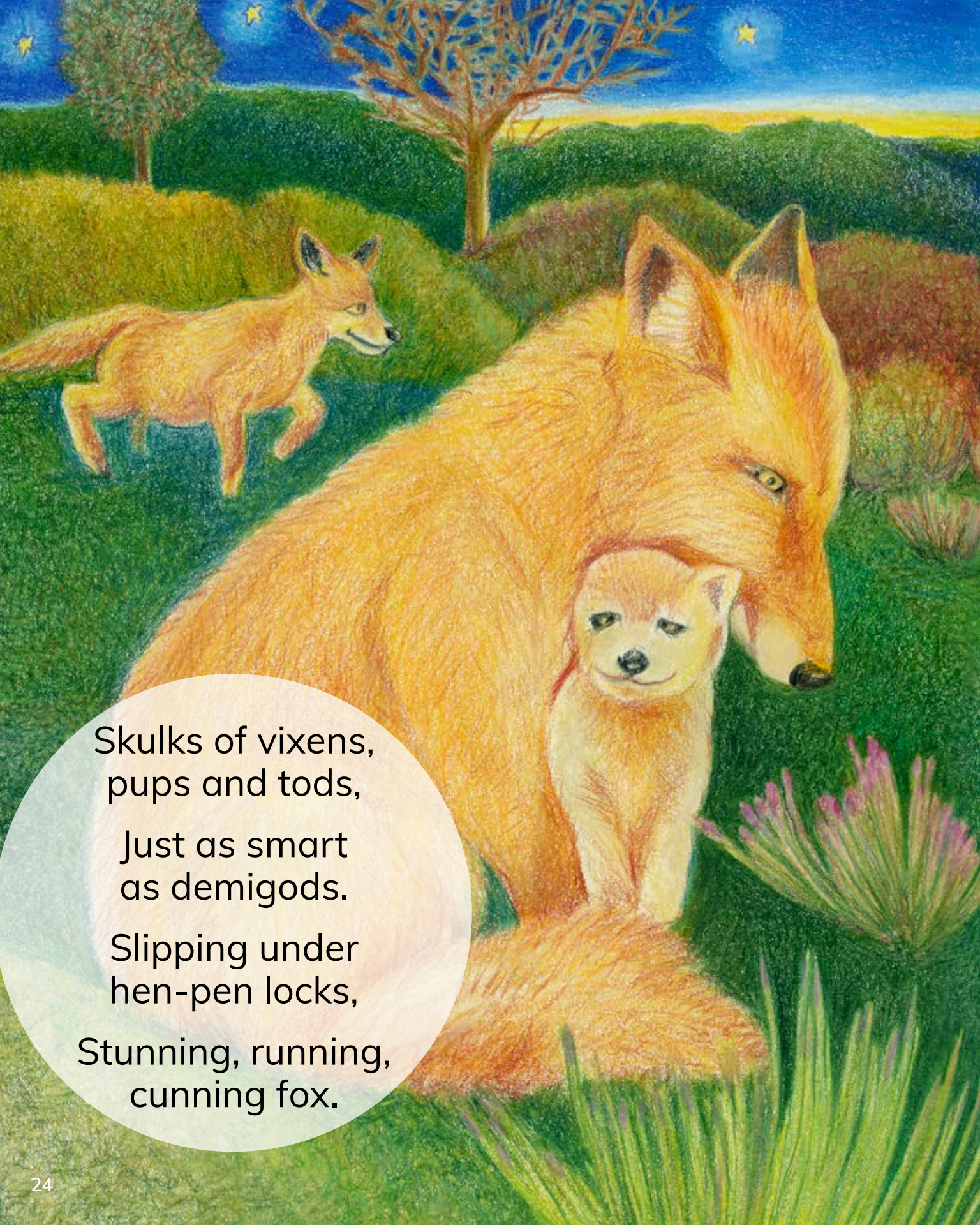
Forest arbor, traverses.

Koala's wombat,
not Ursus.






Alpaca packs packs of packs,
Racks of racks, and stacks of stacks.
Perfect fur is fitting fit.
Perfect foil is spitting spit.



Skulks of vixens,
pups and tods,
Just as smart
as demigods.
Slipping under
hen-pen locks,
Stunning, running,
cunning fox.



Bumblin skunk burrowing pits.
Stinking spritz protects her kits.
Grubbing for nocturnal bugs,
Huddling for maternal hugs.

Guide to Vocabulary



DOG

A sled dog is a dog trained and used to pull a land vehicle in a harness—most commonly, a sled over snow. *Top Dog* refers to dog shows where the winners are crowned “Top Dog.”



CAT

Catnip is a fragrant plant with either pink or white and purple flowers. Its name is derived from the intense attraction many cats have towards it. *Rodent trap* refers to the fact that cats are expert mice and rat catchers. *Not suffering second best* is an adage for only accepting first place (or being “number one”).



OTTER

Otters often link up in groups to form what is termed a *raft*. Otters are famed for their ability to use a rock to break open shells while floating on their backs. Otter mothers literally wrap their pups in strands of kelp so that they don't get swept away by strong currents. Otters have the densest fur in the world; it can contain up to an amazing one million hairs per square inch!



OCTOPUS

Mimic means copy or disguise, and octopuses are experts at it. They can impersonate as many as fifteen dangerous animals to escape predators and can almost instantly change the color of their skin. Whether their eight tentacles are arms or legs is up for debate, but one thing's for sure, they're long, strong, and curious!



DUCK

Ducks sometimes feed by submerging their heads in the water, which makes their butts stick up. *Angling arts* refer to ducks' great fishing abilities. A *mallard* is a male duck. Donald Duck, Daffy Duck, Drake Mallard, Scrooge McDuck, Daisy Duck, and Dewey Duck are six of the most famous duck-centric comic cartoon characters.



SLUG

Topless bum alludes to the fact that slugs, unlike snails, don't have shells. A snail's shell, which appears to sit on top of its body, is often characterized as its home. Therefore, the slug might be considered "topless" and "homeless."



FROG

Kermit the Frog is a Muppet character created by Jim Henson who also created the *Sesame Street* television series. The Frog Prince is a classic fairy tale (most notably told by the Brothers Grimm) about a princess who befriends a frog. The frog is actually a prince under a spell, and, in most versions of the story, the spell is broken by a kiss between the two.



PIG

A *pill* is a jerk or a belligerent creature, which a pig can sometimes be. *Swill* is liquid food for animals. It is typically a combination of meat scraps, food waste, and fluids, and most people consider it extremely unappetizing. A wild pig, or *warthog*, is viewed as fast and dangerous. The word *ballistic* refers to fast-moving objects, like bullets and rockets. A piglet, on the other hand, is considered sweet and loving. You have fun with one and run from the other!



CATERPILLAR

Akin means alike or similar. Some people consider the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly as one of the most magical occurrences in nature.



HORNET

The reference to a *yellow jacket* is a play on words. In the poem, a flashy garment of clothing (the hornet's fancy attire, or *bling*) bears the same name as one of the hornet's close relatives, the yellow jacket. *Vespa* is the scientific name given to the group of insects that includes wasps and hornets.



STORK

Storks build large nests and use them year after year. They clack their beaks to communicate. A *sprog* is an informal British word for a baby. European folklore answers (or rather, avoids the answer to) the age-old question of "Where do babies come from?" by stating that storks bring babies to new parents.



RABBIT

Rabbits are often portrayed as mischievous and sneaky characters who routinely get in trouble. A classic old-school magic trick involves making a rabbit miraculously appear from out of a magician's top hat.



WALRUS

Walruses are voracious eaters and feed on many marine creatures, including various types of mollusks. They use their giant tusks to form and maintain holes in the ice, and they pull themselves up onto the ice from these access holes. They also use their tusks as displays to establish dominance. One particular display is that of scraping ruts in the ice to draw attention to the length of their tusks.



ORCA

Orcas are very social mammals. They live in female-led social groups of 5-50 animals, called *pods*. Pods that share common calls belong to the same *clan*. Orcas were originally called whale killers because some pods did just that. For an unknown reason, the words got flipped, and their informal name became “killer whales.” This characterization was problematic for two reasons. First, an orca is not a whale but is rather the largest mammal in the dolphin family. Second, it suggests that orcas attack and kill humans. While there have been a few tragic accidents with orcas in captivity, there hasn't been a single recorded instance of an orca killing a human in the wild, hence the references to orcas being saddled with a *grim handicap* and an *unjust rap*.



CROC

River hugs are in no way warm and cozy. Crocodiles wrap themselves around their prey in what looks like a hug—then they drown them! Female crocodiles carry their young in their mouths, between their rows of razor sharp teeth. Surprisingly, crocs can be extremely delicate, and their young do just fine. *Nipper* is a word for baby that is particularly appropriate for young crocs!



HIPPO

Hippos, unlike orcas, do attack humans, and they are considered to be one of the most dangerous land animals. They only attack when they are protecting their territory—most commonly on rivers and waterways where they are likely to attack an approaching boat and tip it over. Hippos are delightful animals—when viewed from a distance!



ORANGUTAN

Rusting strands refers to the orangutan's distinctive rust-colored hair. These primates use a variety of sophisticated tools and make elaborate sleeping nests from branches and foliage. *King of Swing* is a shout-out to the brilliant song from Disney's first *Jungle Book* movie, where King Louie the Orangutan owns his crown!



CAMEL

Halitosis is the medical term for bad breath, and camels are notorious for it. But in spite of this and other unattractive characteristics, camels are justifiably treasured by many cultures and literally worshipped in parts of India.



JAGUAR

While they generally seek solitude deep in rain forests, jaguars are sometimes seen hunting in cultivated wetland areas (*plots*) because of their abundance of water and low-lying cover. Jaguars have a powerful jaw and a roaring growl. A rare member of the jaguar species is the black jaguar. It has spots too, but they are so close together that the animal looks black from a distance. *Transform his spots* refers to an old adage about another big cat, the leopard, who supposedly never changed his spots.



LIZARD

A *rapscallion* is a mischievous character. *Transient skin* refers to the fact that lizards regularly shed their skin as they grow.



KOALA

Down Under is the nickname for Australia, the only continent where koalas live in the wild. While they are often called “koala bears,” they are not a part of the bear family (*Ursus*). They are actually wombats. This misnomer may be a result of koalas being considered to be as cute as teddy bears.



ALPACA

Alpacas and llamas are often confused. In this poem, “poetic license” has been used to talk about pack animals, since it’s llamas and not alpacas that are widely used to carry heavy loads. The alliteration associated with a “packing” alpaca was simply too irresistible! Fortunately, it is accurate to say that alpacas, like llamas, use spitting as a first line of defense.



FOX

A *skulk* is a group of foxes. A *vixen* is a female fox, and a *tod* is a male fox. Foxes are notorious for getting into farmers’ henhouses.



SKUNK

The front claws of skunks are perfect tools for digging tunnels, dens, and underground pits. *Spritz* is another word for spray. The foul-smelling liquid that a skunk sprays from its anal glands wards off predators. It’s commonly used by mothers to protect their *kits* (babies). Skunks don’t hibernate, but they do huddle together for extended periods of time during cold weather.

FUN-ETICS

(Phonetics for Kids)

FUN-ETICS is a teaching and learning system in which phonetic words are the predominant instructional tool.

The system starts by using completely phonetic words—words that are made up of letters that have only one distinct sound. Upon sounding out each individual letter in a word and blending those sounds together, the reader is able to immediately recognize every word.

The **FUN-ETICS** system develops a learner's reading skills by establishing a fun and rich phonetic foundation and then gradually introducing non-phonetic sounds and letter clusters to produce expanded competence in English. Words containing these elements are carefully selected and visually highlighted.

FUN-ETICS.com

The fun-etic

A fun-etic is a poetic structure within the teaching and learning system of **FUN-ETICS**. Like a Japanese haiku, a fun-etic has a rigidly defined form.

A fun-etic possesses these seven elements:

1. Every word has to be made up of letters that have only one distinct sound. Upon sounding out each individual letter in a word and blending those sounds together, the reader is able to immediately recognize every word.
2. All 5 vowels make only the short vowel sounds (as in cat, hen, pig, dog and duck).
3. C and K make the same sound (as in cat and kitten).
4. The G is always hard (as in gecko).
5. All other letters make the common consonant sounds of Standard North American English (B as in bat, D as in dog, F as in frog, etc.).
6. Words are combined into a quatrain (four lines) that consists of two consecutive rhyming couplets.
7. There can only be seven syllables in each line.

About the Author

ROD CABORN has a Master's Degree in Linguistics and TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language) from San Jose State University in California.

Early in his education, Rod recognized that English language learners struggled because the majority of the 170,000 words that make up our language are not phonetic—that is to say, there is often no direct correspondence between the letters used in a word and the sounds those letters make.

Still, while most English words are not phonetic, there are thousands that are. So, Rod wondered:

Why don't we spend more time focusing on the thousands of words that ARE phonetic when teaching young children and English language learners to read?

The simple answer?

Writing anything with substance and meaning using only phonetic words is challenging. But Rod loves a challenge! The FUN-ETICS system and the elegant and delightful fun-etic structure are the results of his journey to overcome that challenge.

As a professional emcee and charity auctioneer, Rod's skill with words and love of language are at the heart of everything he does. He wrote this book to share his passionately held belief that learning English can be a truly inspiring and fun experience for children and second language learners.

About the Illustrator

AMIE FOREST has 30+ years experience as a graphic designer, creative director, animator and illustrator. In 2010, Amie and Rod first collaborated in the non-profit sector. When he came back to her in 2022 with this wonderful idea of creating the FUN-ETICS teaching and learning system, starting with an illustrated book, she knew that they were the perfect team to build this project together. It has been a lifelong goal for her to work on childrens' books, and Rod's delightful poems about animals were a dream to illustrate. The medium for the drawings in this book is colored pencil. Amie also designed the book and the fun-etics.com website.

Learn more about FUN-ETICS at

FUN-ETICS.com

