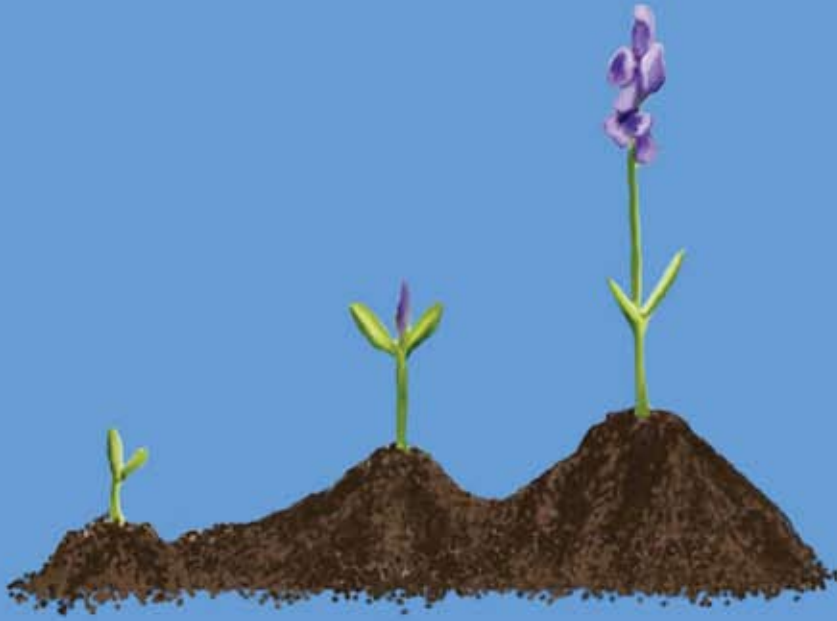


To all the amazing children at St Jude's
and
with many thanks to the staff
for keeping my family whole.



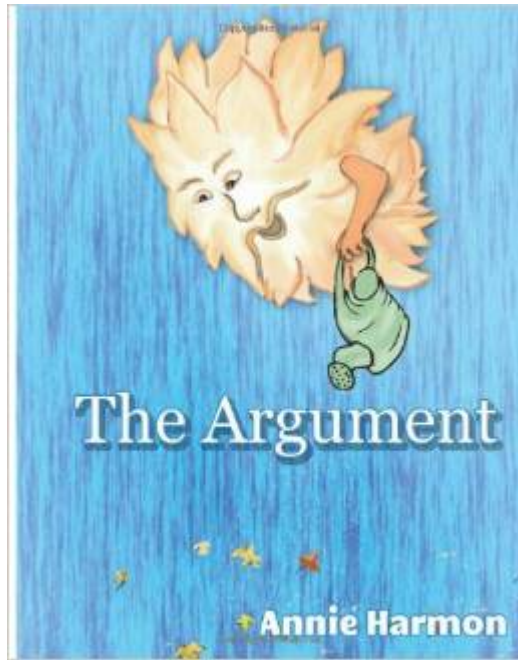
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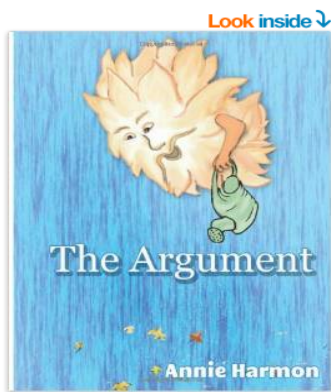
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In this tall tale Old Max explains to Sarah that weather changes are caused by the Sun, Rain and Wind fighting each other as they strive to make things grow tall, sprout, and spread. When he insists he actually heard this argument, and shares what transpired that day, Sarah doesn't believe Old Max. But as the wind howls and the rain taunts, she begins to wonder if he might be telling the truth after all... (ages 4-7)

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The Argument

by

Annie Harmon



GENERAL

OPEN

cats and dogs
on sale-
Sudden overstock
predicted!



umbrella
blowout
sale!



It was a cloudy, windy, sunny, mixed-up sort of day when Sara Hamilton marched out of the general store and ran smack into old Max McGregor.

Old Max said, "I see you just bought an umbrella."

Sarah nodded. "Mama says it's going to rain.
But I think the sky's just foolin' us."

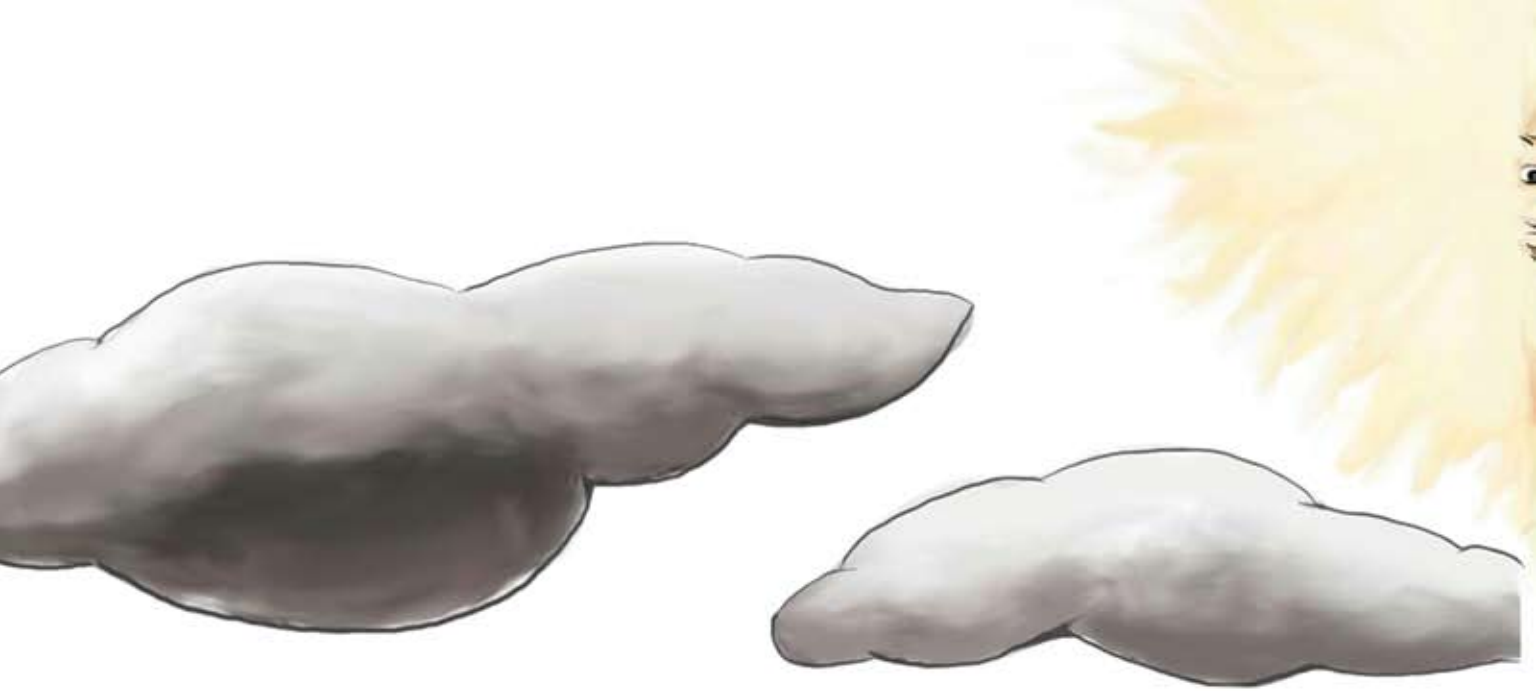
"Could be," old Max said.
"You never can tell who's going to win the argument."

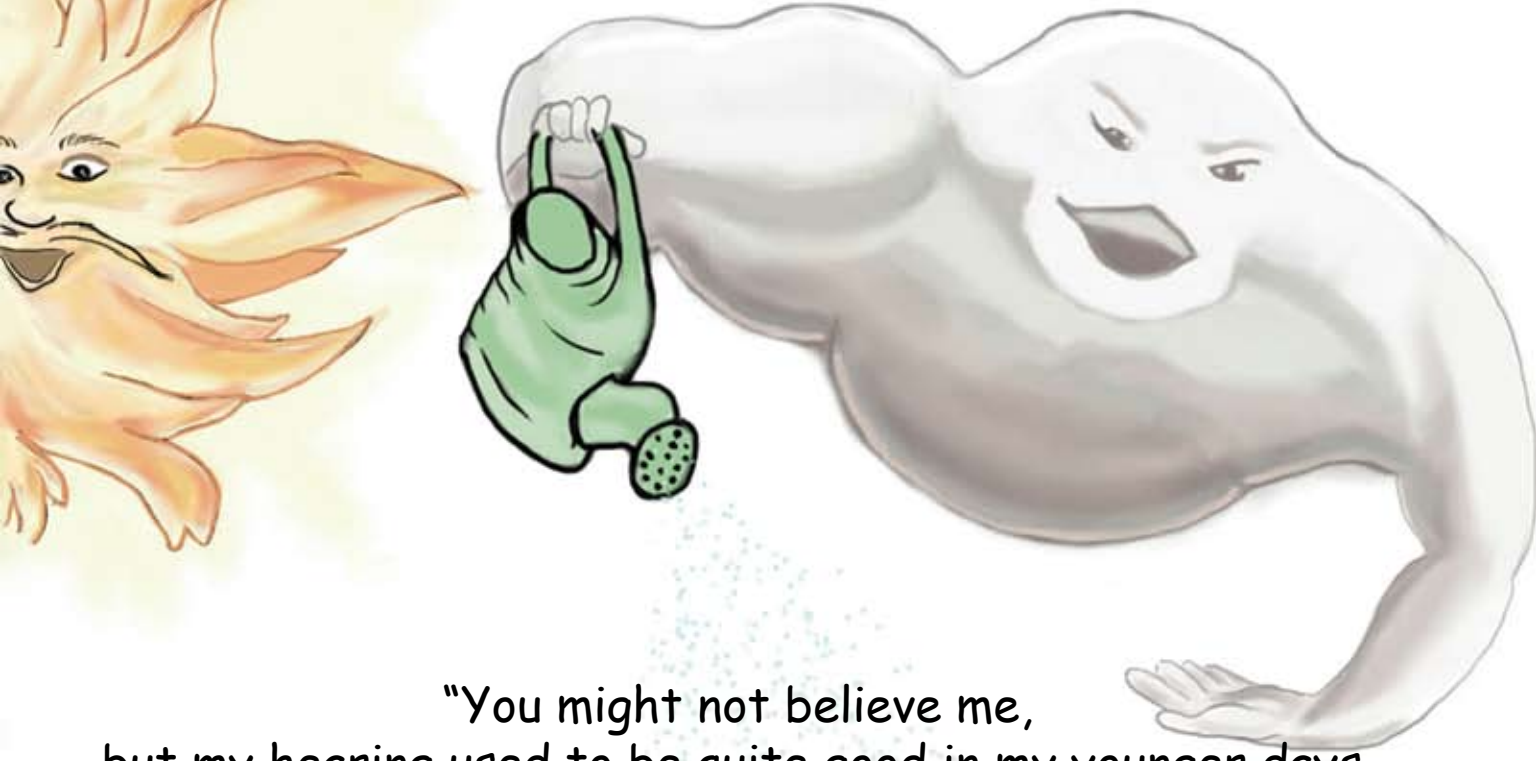




"Argument?" she asked. "Who's arguing?"

"Why, **THEY'RE** arguing, of course,"
Max nodded toward the sky.






"You might not believe me,
but my hearing used to be quite good in my younger days.
And one day I heard the rain bragging
to the sun because he could make the seeds sprout.

And don't get me wrong, he could.
The rain came down like
a velvety curtain and
softened the dirt.
Next thing I knew,
a little seed was sprouting up."





Then the sun pushed those rain clouds out of the way.

I am more powerful, he said.

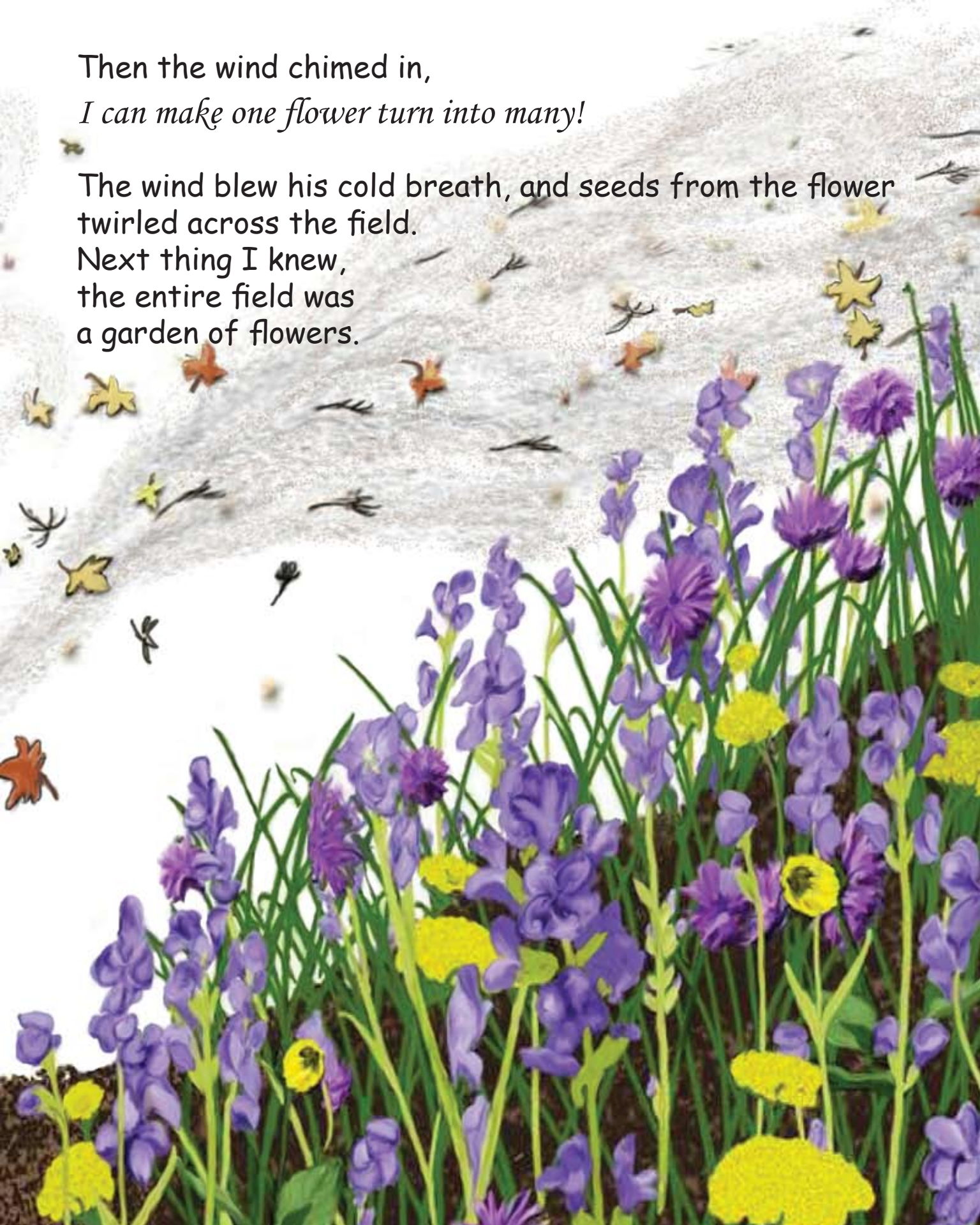
The sun shimmered over the ground, and the little sprout stretched into a beautiful flower.

See?
The sun smugly announced, I have made it grow.



Then the wind chimed in,
I can make one flower turn into many!

The wind blew his cold breath, and seeds from the flower
twirled across the field.
Next thing I knew,
the entire field was
a garden of flowers.





"About that time, my sister Emma came out of the house. She saw the pretty field of flowers growing, ran right over, and started picking them.

"Now she never could hear as good as me, so I don't s'pose she heard what was said after she picked all those flowers. But I did."

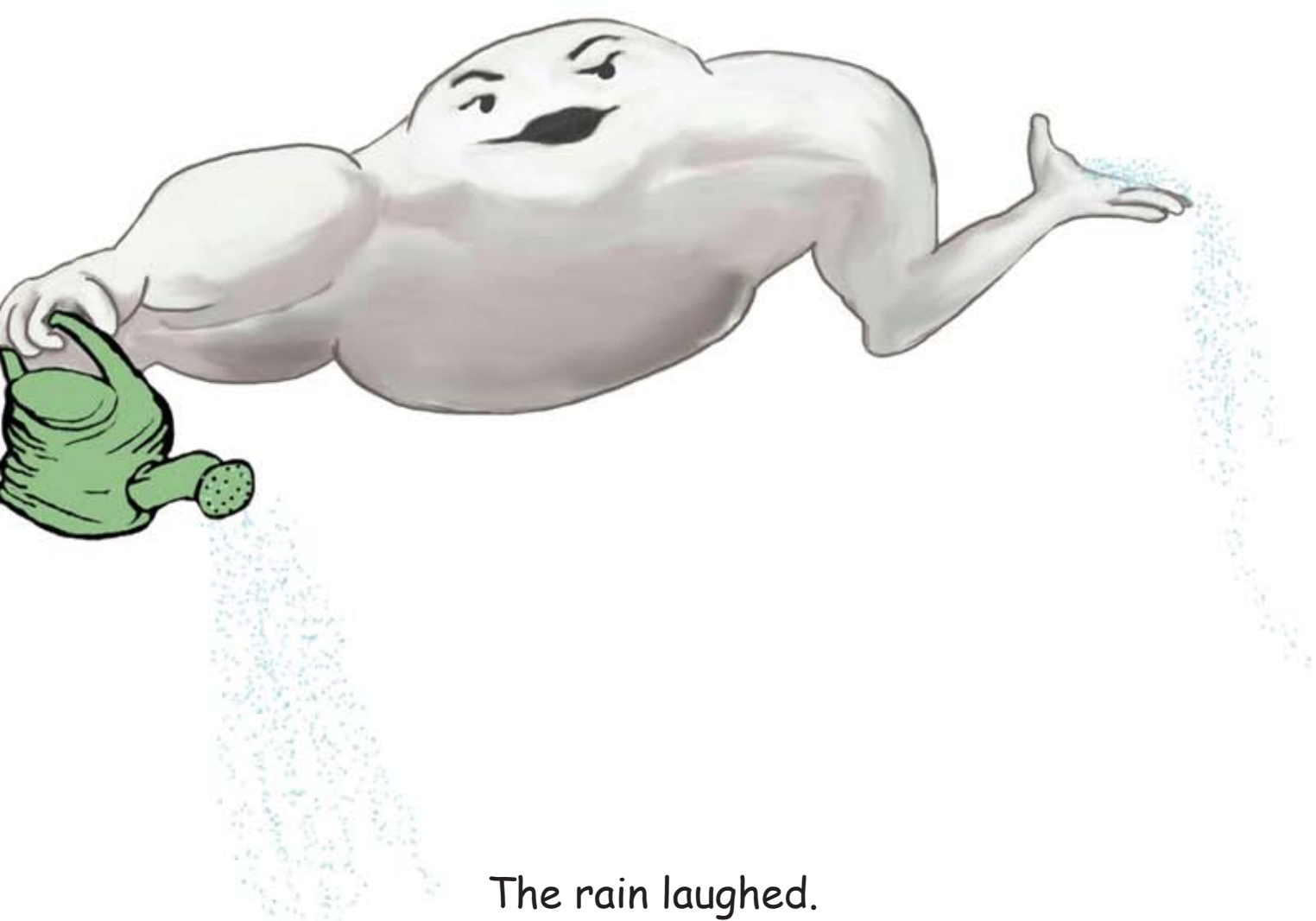
It was the sun who spoke up first:

Look!

What we have made, the little girl has taken. She must also be powerful!







The rain laughed.

If I can make her sprout
then she is no more powerful than the flowers.

The rain kissed her shoulders with soft,
wet drops and Emma was tickled with joy.
She started jumping up and down in the puddles.

See!
the rain exclaimed when he saw her rise up,
Look at how she sprouts!



After that it became a contest.

The sun said,
What you can make sprout,
I can make grow.
And he shined brightly down on Emma.

Emma stopped jumping around
and held her hands up into the air,
trying to reach the rain that was no longer there.

That was all the sun needed to see.
He turned and gloated.
See! I have made her grow tall!



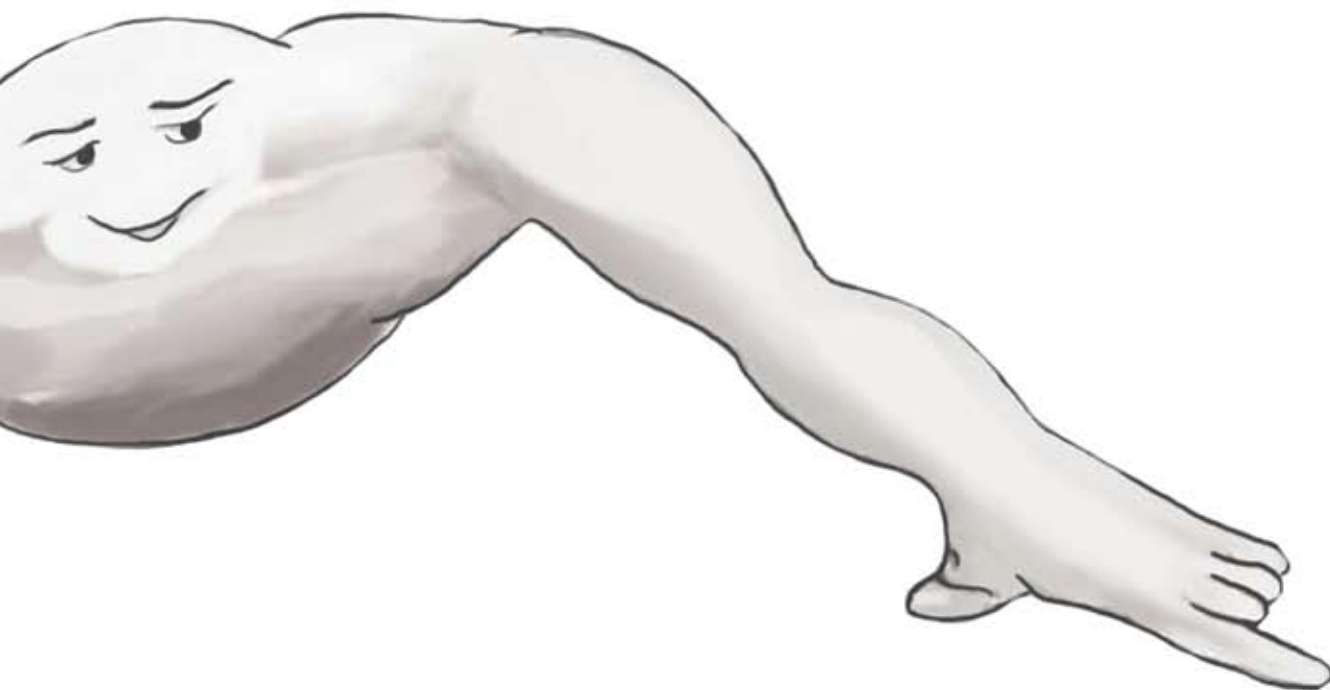
It certainly must have looked that way
because the wind bellowed,
What you can make grow, I can spread across the field.

He blew his cold breath over Emma.
What cold breath it was!
Emma huddled down to keep herself warm,
but it wasn't long before she gave up
and ran back into the house.

The wind calmed, and turned to the rain.
Yes! I am powerful. I made her fly across the ground.







Emma came back out of the house.
She had Daddy's umbrella to protect her.

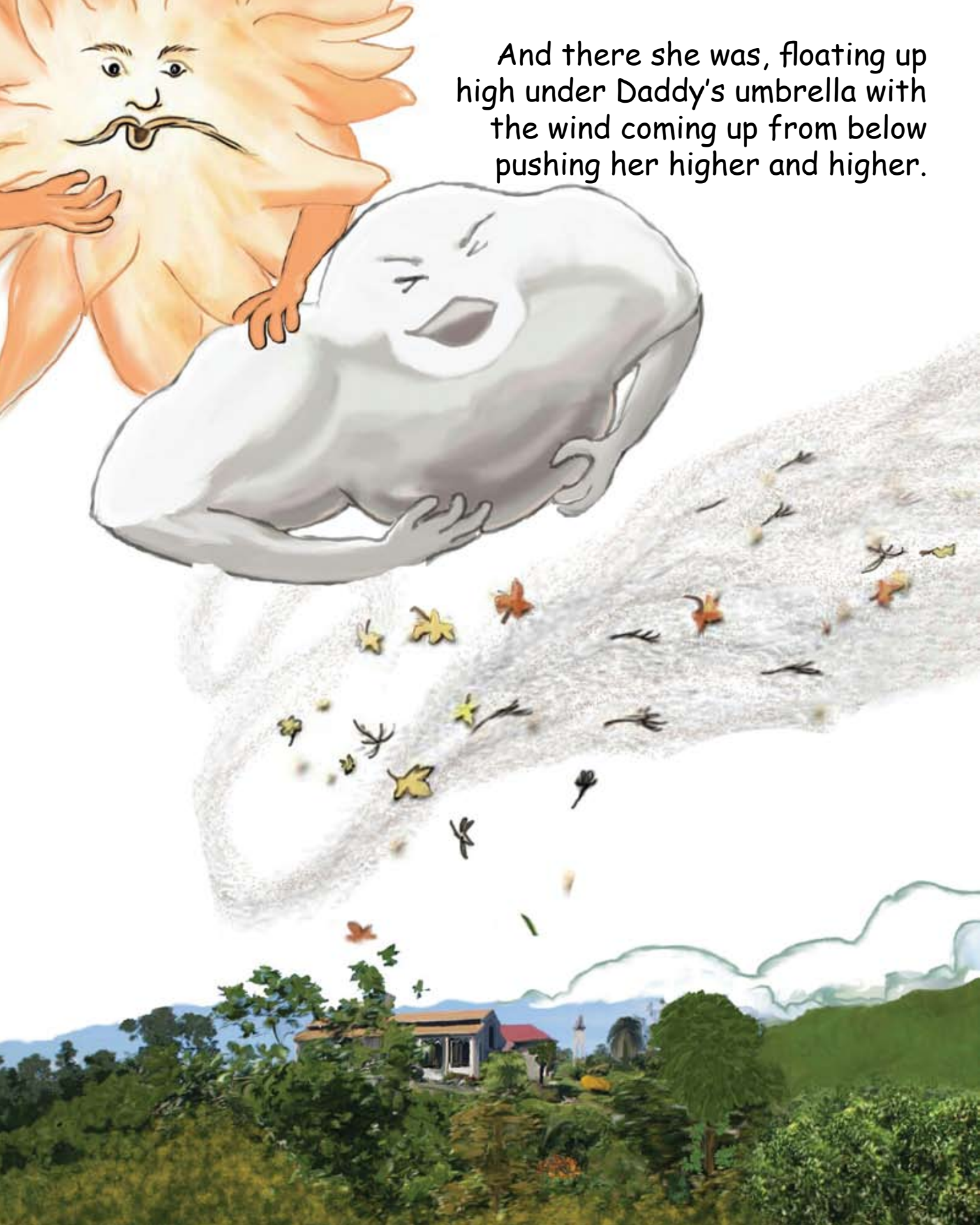
But the rain never noticed this.
What he did notice was that there was only one of her.

He said,
She has not grown into many! You need to try again.

The wind blew on Emma like he had never blown before.
He blew so hard that she was lifted off the ground.



And there she was, floating up high under Daddy's umbrella with the wind coming up from below pushing her higher and higher.

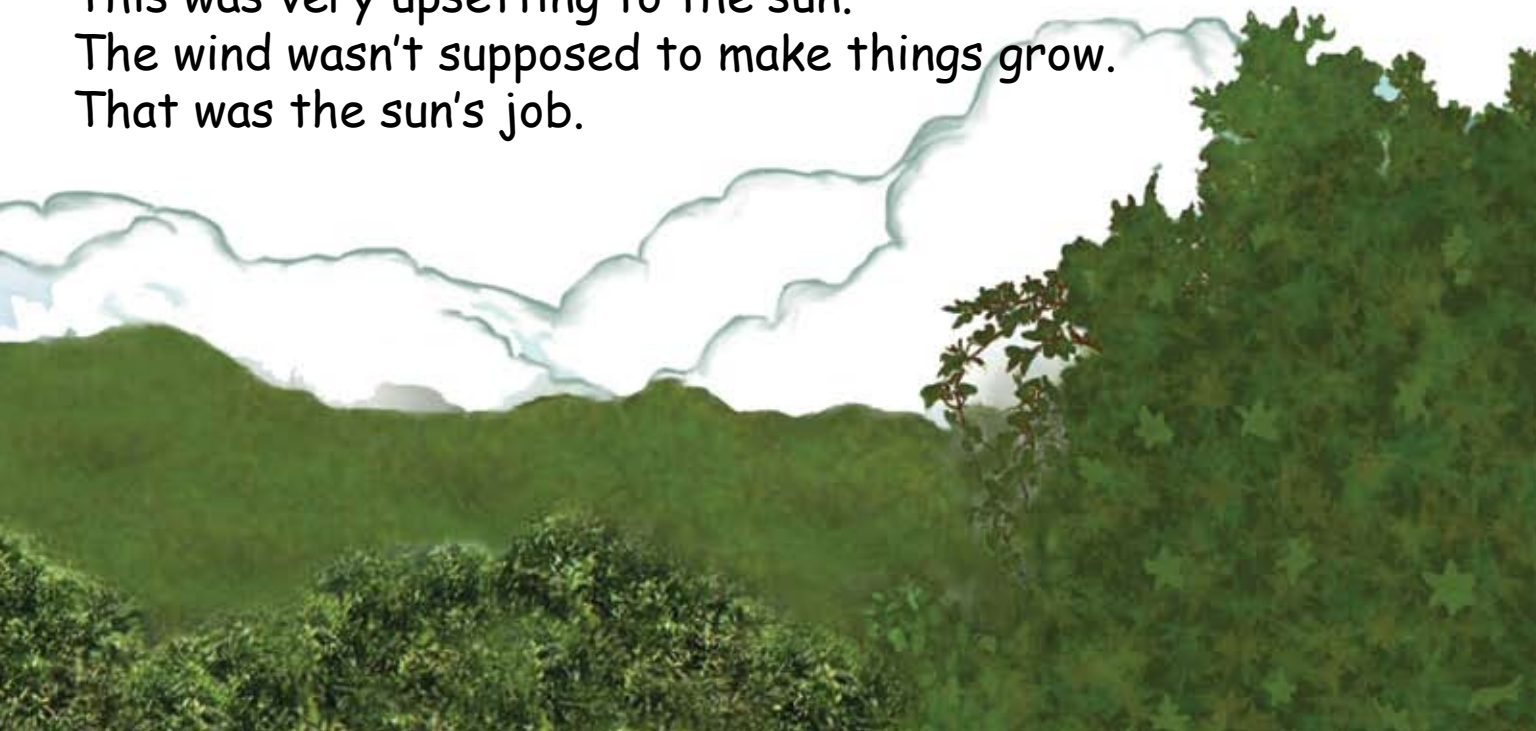


Look at her!
The wind screamed
to the others.

*Not only can I make seeds spread
across the earth, but this one I
have made grow TALL!*



This was very upsetting to the sun.
The wind wasn't supposed to make things grow.
That was the sun's job.



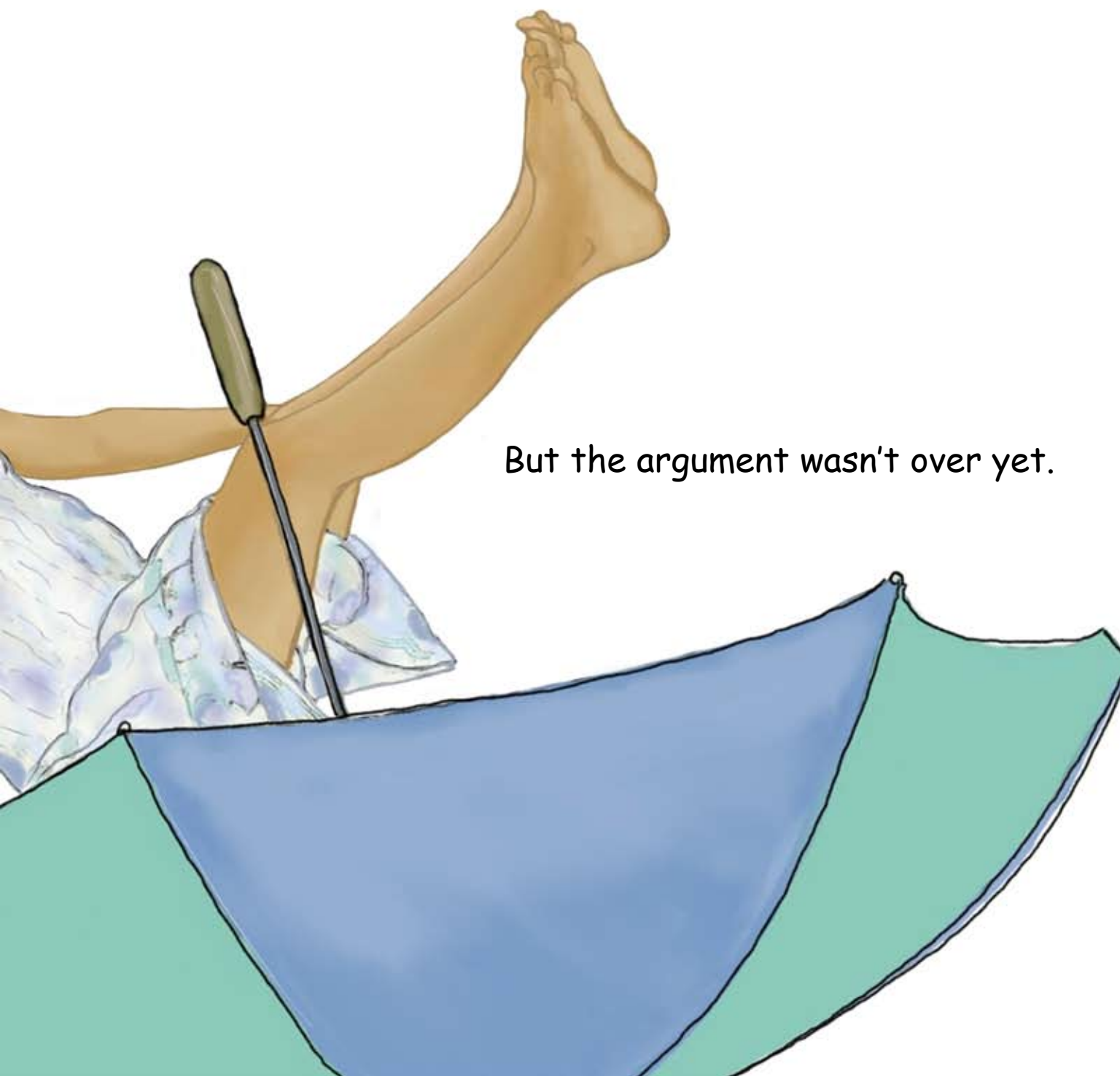
The rain decided that if the wind could do the sun's job, then the rain could do the wind's.

After the wind had let go of Emma, the rain cleared his throat with a thunderous boom. It rained so hard and fast, it formed a small river that swept Emma up off her feet and carried her away.

Emma was just fine with this; she sat inside Daddy's umbrella and floated all the way to the edge of town.



WEE!
I could hear her hollering,
YIPPEE!



But the argument wasn't over yet.

It was the sun's turn to see what he could do.
He looked down at Emma and shined brighter
than I've ever seen the sun shine.

It was shining so brightly, the river dried right up
and Emma climbed out of the umbrella
and started splashing around in the few puddles
that were left.

She jumped in every puddle leading back to the house.

While she was still jumping,
the sun softened, turned to the rain and said,
Yup, she's sprouting.



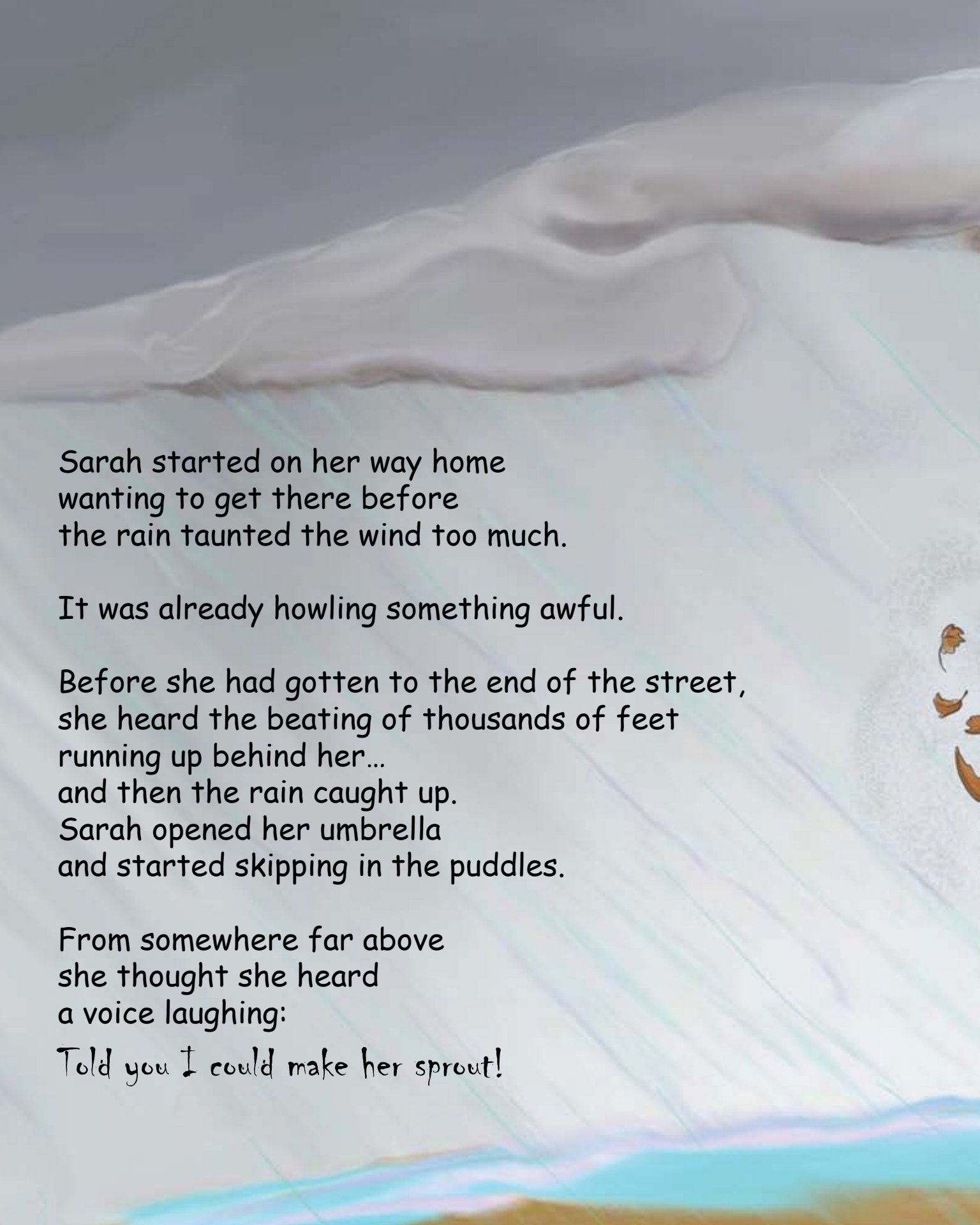
Old Max said, "That was the end of their arguing that day,
but some days it seems
they still haven't gotten it figured out."

Sarah stared at Max.
"You didn't really hear all that, did you?"





"I most certainly did. If you don't believe me,
just listen for yourself.
When you hear the wind a'howling,
it usually means the rain is taunting him.
Then you'd better have your umbrella ready."



Sarah started on her way home
wanting to get there before
the rain taunted the wind too much.

It was already howling something awful.

Before she had gotten to the end of the street,
she heard the beating of thousands of feet
running up behind her...
and then the rain caught up.
Sarah opened her umbrella
and started skipping in the puddles.

From somewhere far above
she thought she heard
a voice laughing:
Told you I could make her sprout!



The
END

