



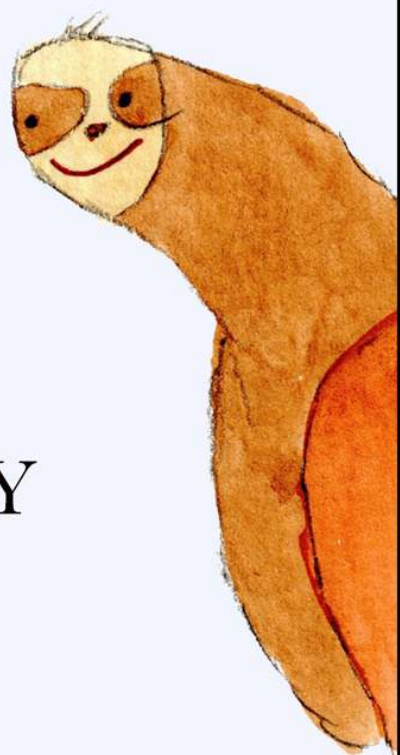
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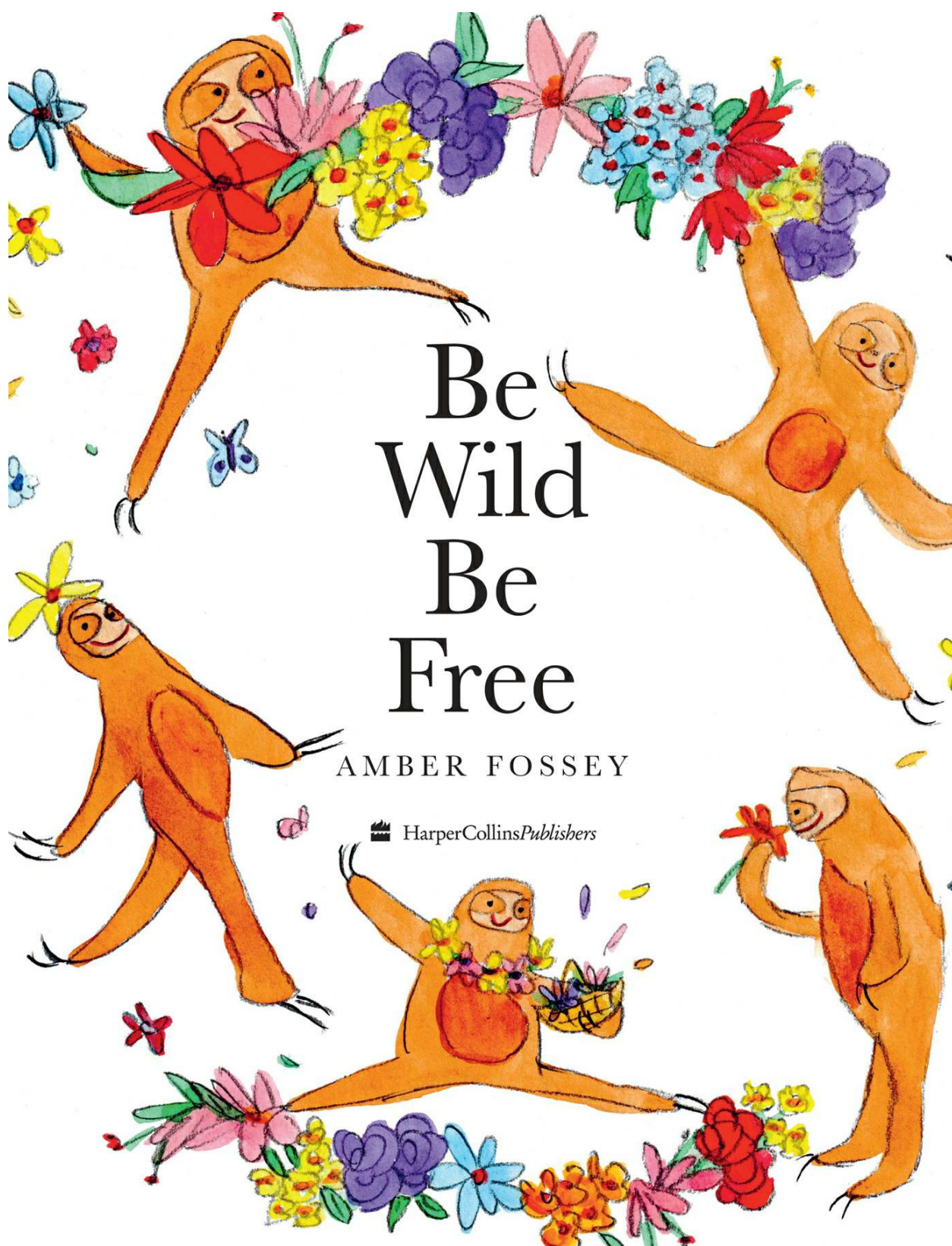


Be Wild Be Free



AMBER FOSSEY





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~Prologue~

oh hallo, friend.

do you hear the beasts scratching at the door?

they want to be let out, to be wild and free!

they were sleeping too long, and now they're getting feisty.

don't be afraid, they're pretty lovely inside.

and never did i see a more pretty beast than you.



well now, my pretty beast, do *you* ever wonder how to be wild and free
again?



i do. so naturally, i asked a sloth.

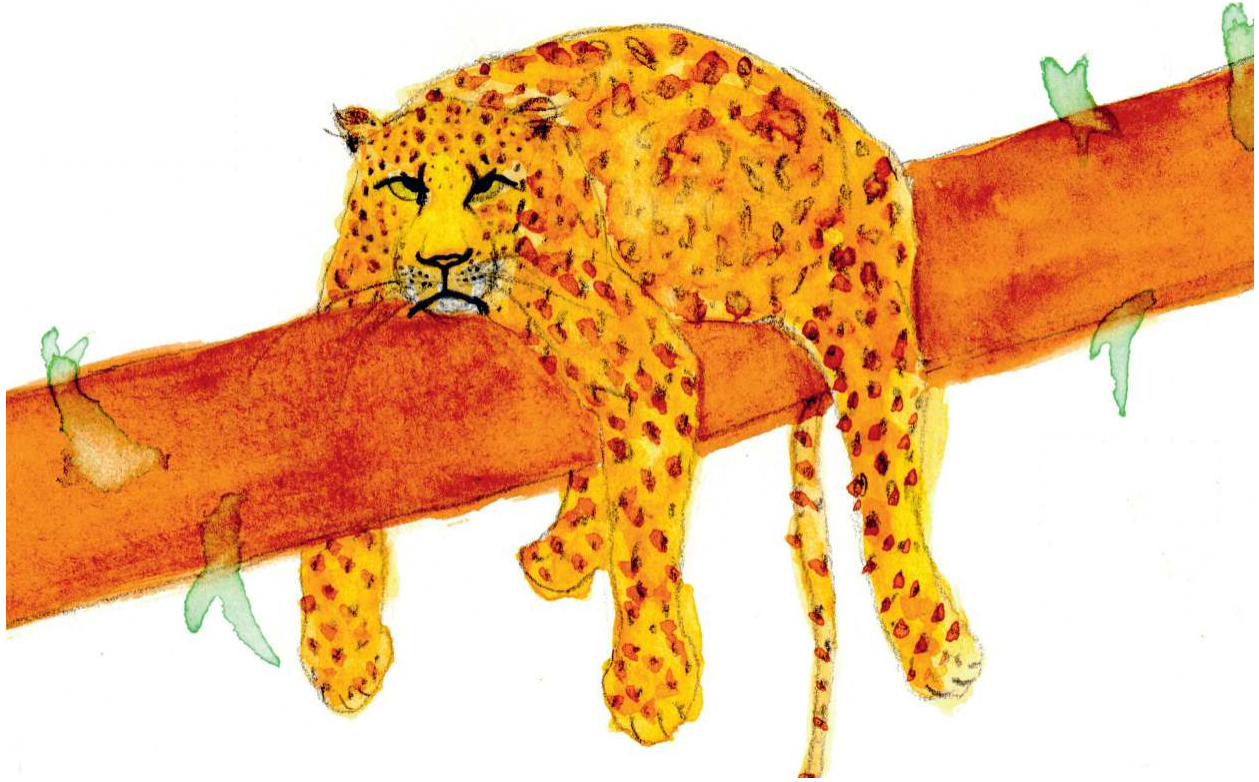
but he was *busy*.

so he sent me off to ask his friends.



leopard did not care, no, not a bit.

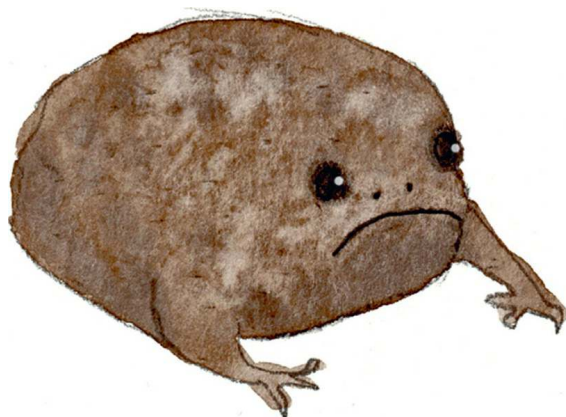
he frankly did not give a shit.



bear could not even remember where he put his fucks.



so i sat and looked at rain frog and rain frog looked at me, and we realised,
answers don't come easy.



but one cricket shouting is louder than a hundred people sleeping,
if you listen.



dear heart, we must creep deeper into the kingdom of claws, and listen for the secrets of the beasts.

come! we are all in this together.



you are not a lone wolf.



a good place to start is to follow your toes. it doesn't matter if you have two,
or three.

(or ten, if you're a *very* silly creature.)



but if your nose says no to your toes and wants to hide from what's outside,
well it's just fine to take it slow.



when it gets cloudy red panda hides under her octopus hat.
it shelters her from rainy thoughts and tickles her into small smiles.



of all the places you can go, your imagination is as great as any.



reality is just
one way of looking at things.



see this ant? he is thinking incredible things and dreaming of flying if he
could grow wings.

well, i've seen an ant fly, it got on a plane. so i think you'll get high if you try
just the same.



but beware, beloved! thinking *too* much is bad for your thoughts.

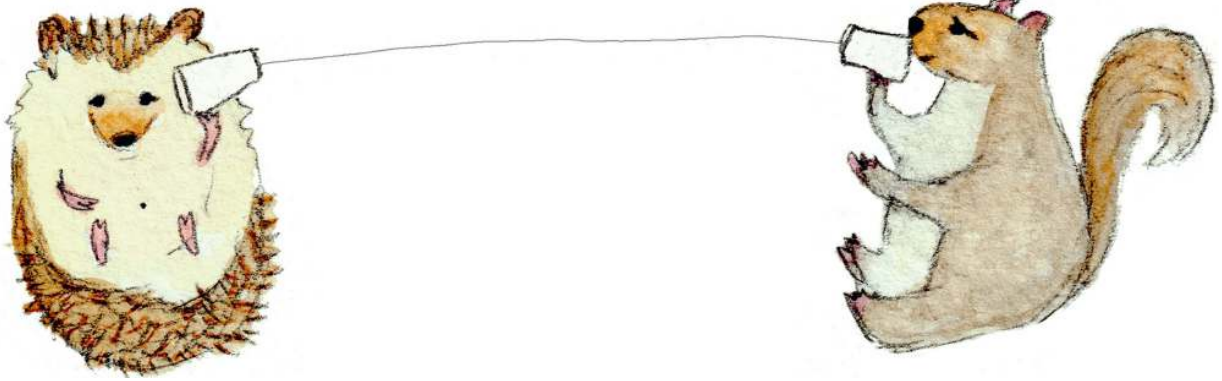


most days beetle packed her bags and went on a nice little guilt trip, to see what she had fucked up the day before.



whisper in my ear the things that keep you up at night.

together we can stumble from the darkness to the light.



you see, this special world can be a tricky sausage.

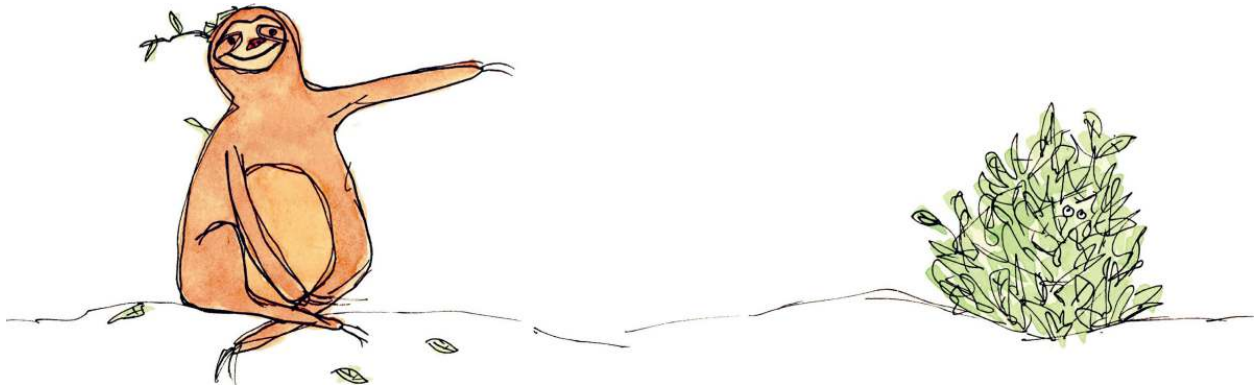
every sausage has two ends, happy and sad.



a *perfect* life smells of bullshit.



sloth said he has put your sad in a bush over there, he hopes it won't bother you for a while.



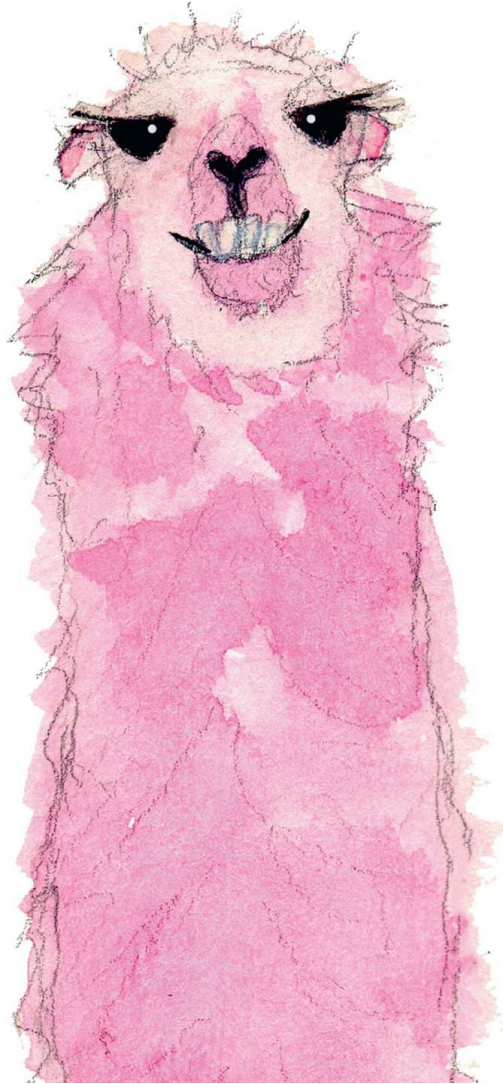
poor old donkey has forgotten what happy feels like,
even in his happy socks.



so donkey called in sick to work, because his mind was hurting and he needed to lie down.



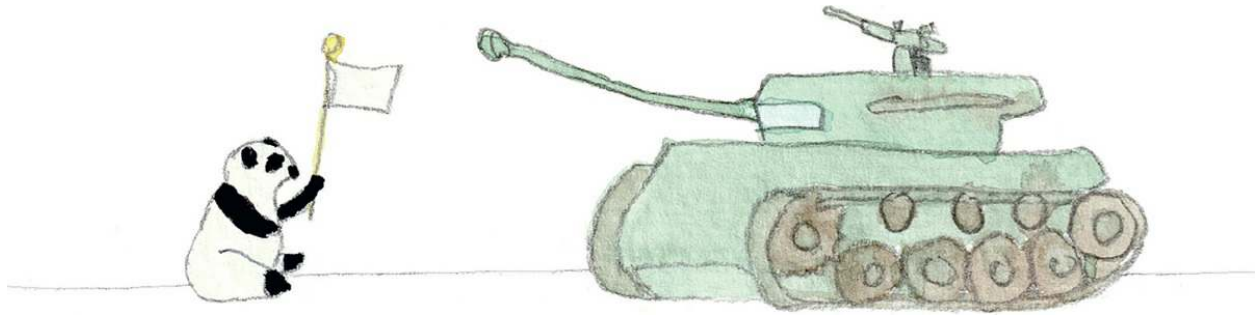
‘it all comes,’ said llama, ‘of having a weak constitution.’



‘it all *comes*,’ frowned donkey, ‘of being surrounded by dickheads.’



well, it is true that in the great dickdom of dickishness, there are many lieutenants.



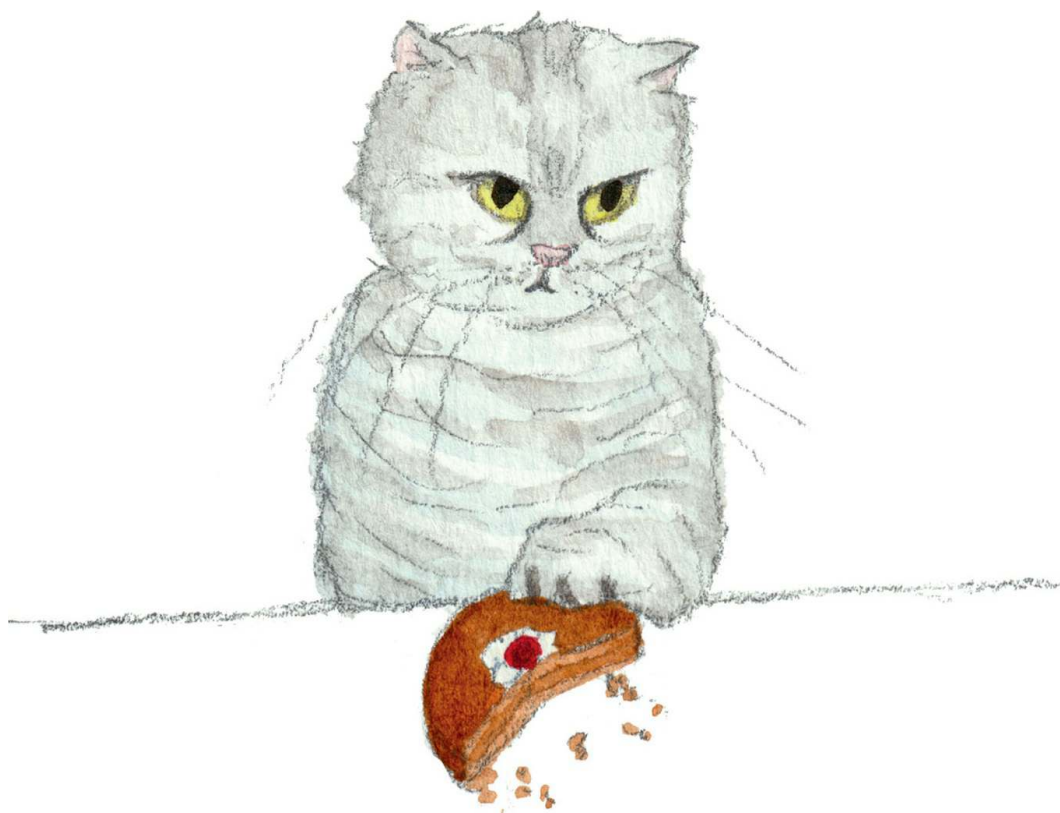
‘for fuck’s sake,’ whispered emu to herself, after ducking to avoid yet another low-flying dickhead.



don't be a dick.



the cake of forgiveness gets smaller every time you eat a slice.



it's cool to be kind.



accepting your flaws and those of others can be somewhat *liberating*.



there are flies on my wall.

‘what’s she crying about now?’ they say.



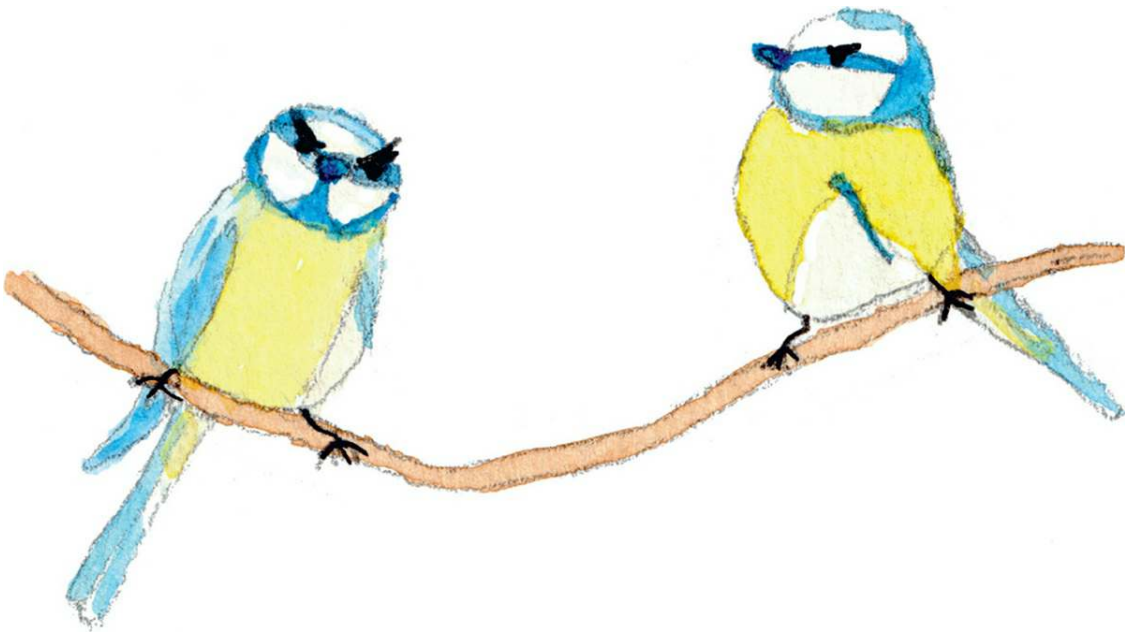
‘things that haven’t happened yet but might,’ i say.



the trouble with problems is there's so *many* of them.



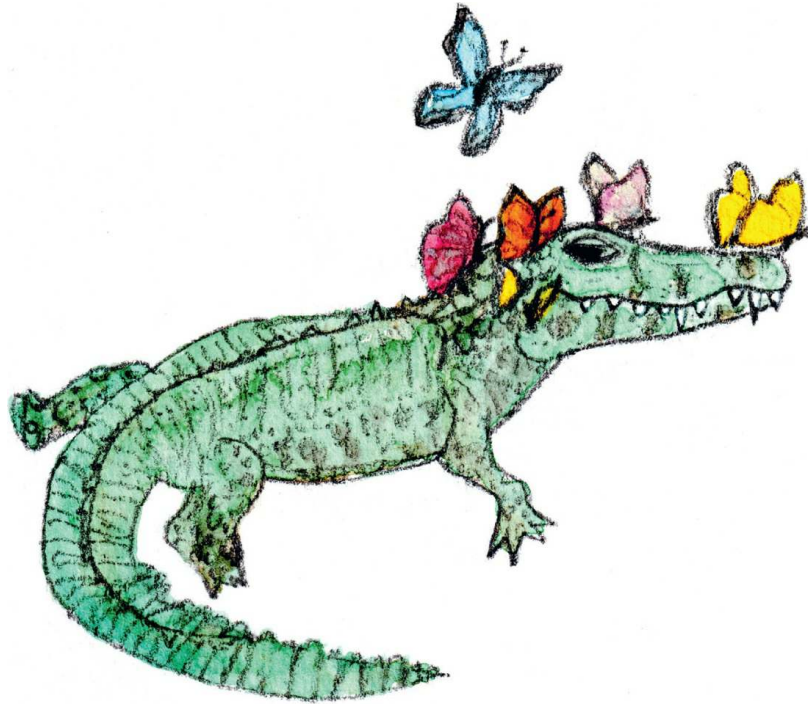
i've got 99 problems, but my tits aren't one.



where do all the worries come from?

do we find them,

or do they find us?



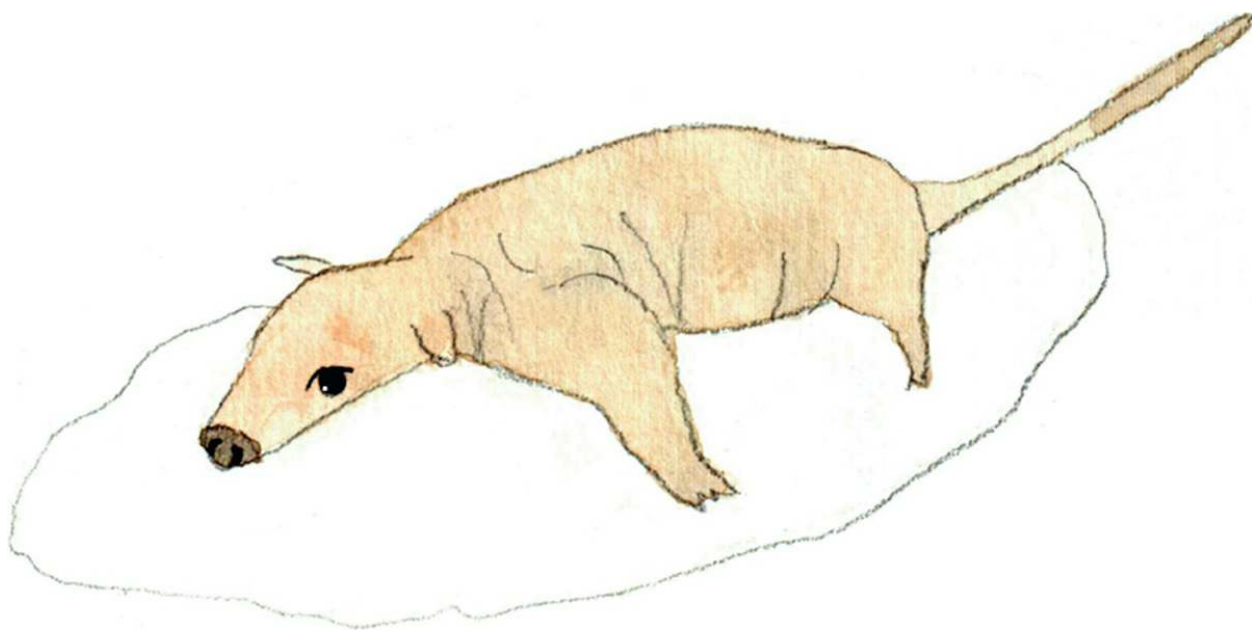
maybe we are working too hard!



snail fucked off early because he decided a three-day weekend would *greatly* increase his lifespan.



maybe we are *too tired*?



sloth slept so long that when he woke he found a sunflower growing out of his head.

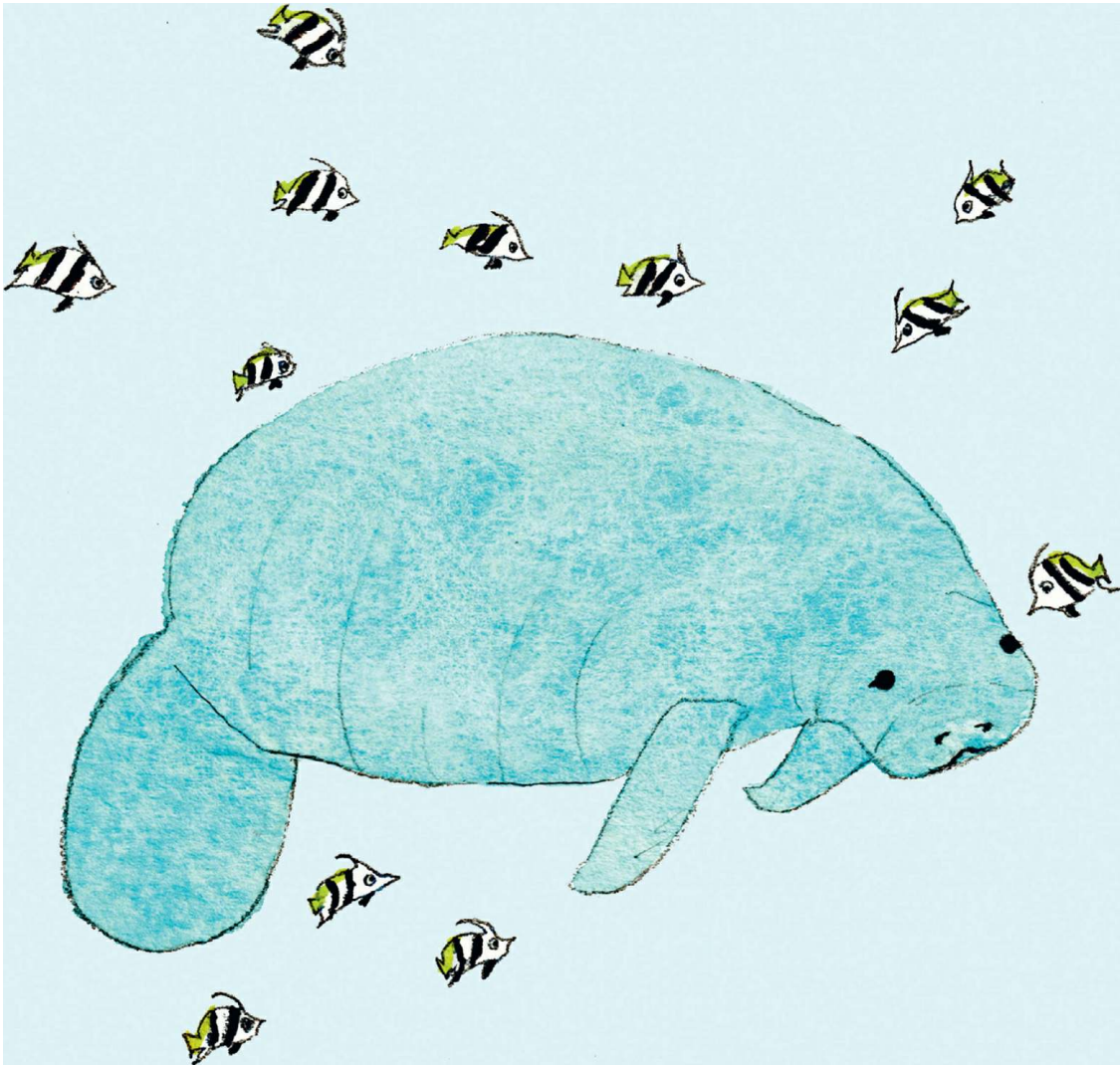
‘a-Ha!’ said sloth, ‘it must be spring!’



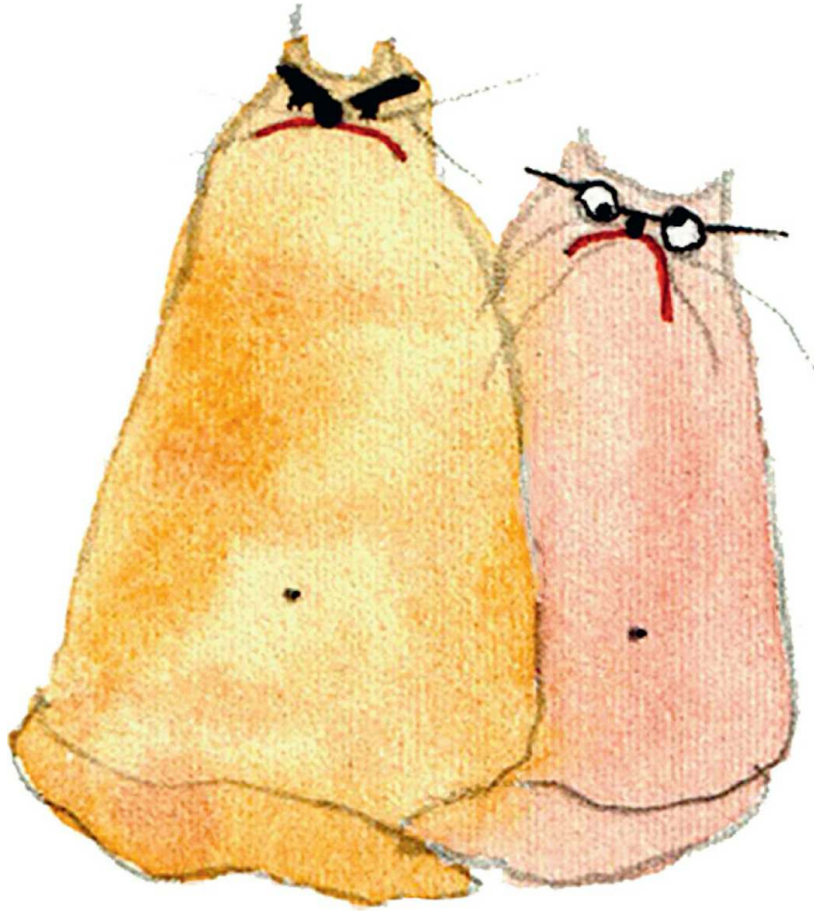
maybe we are trying too hard to make everything perfect?



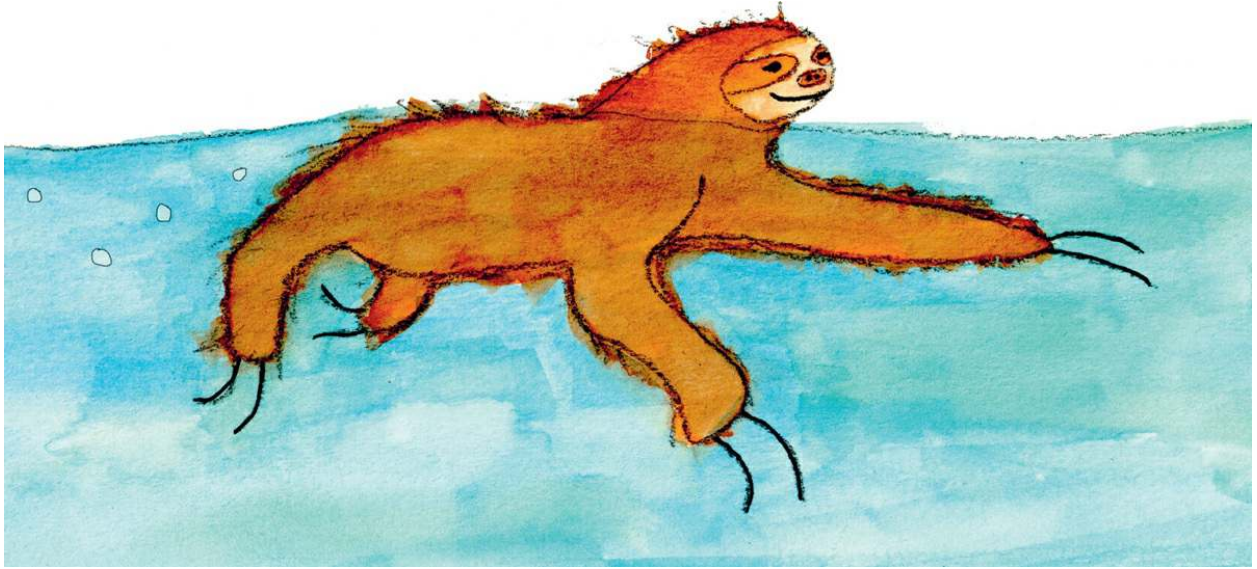
manatee stopped trying to please others with her perfect body, when what they fell in love with was her imperfect soul.



maybe we are too uptight?

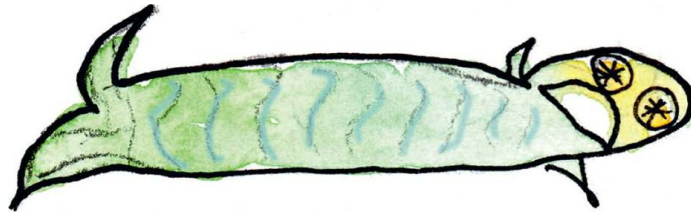


sloth farts like no-one's listening.



oh *do* let it out!

expressing emotion is not a sign of *weakness*. it's a sign **you're alive!** and not
a cold, dead fish.

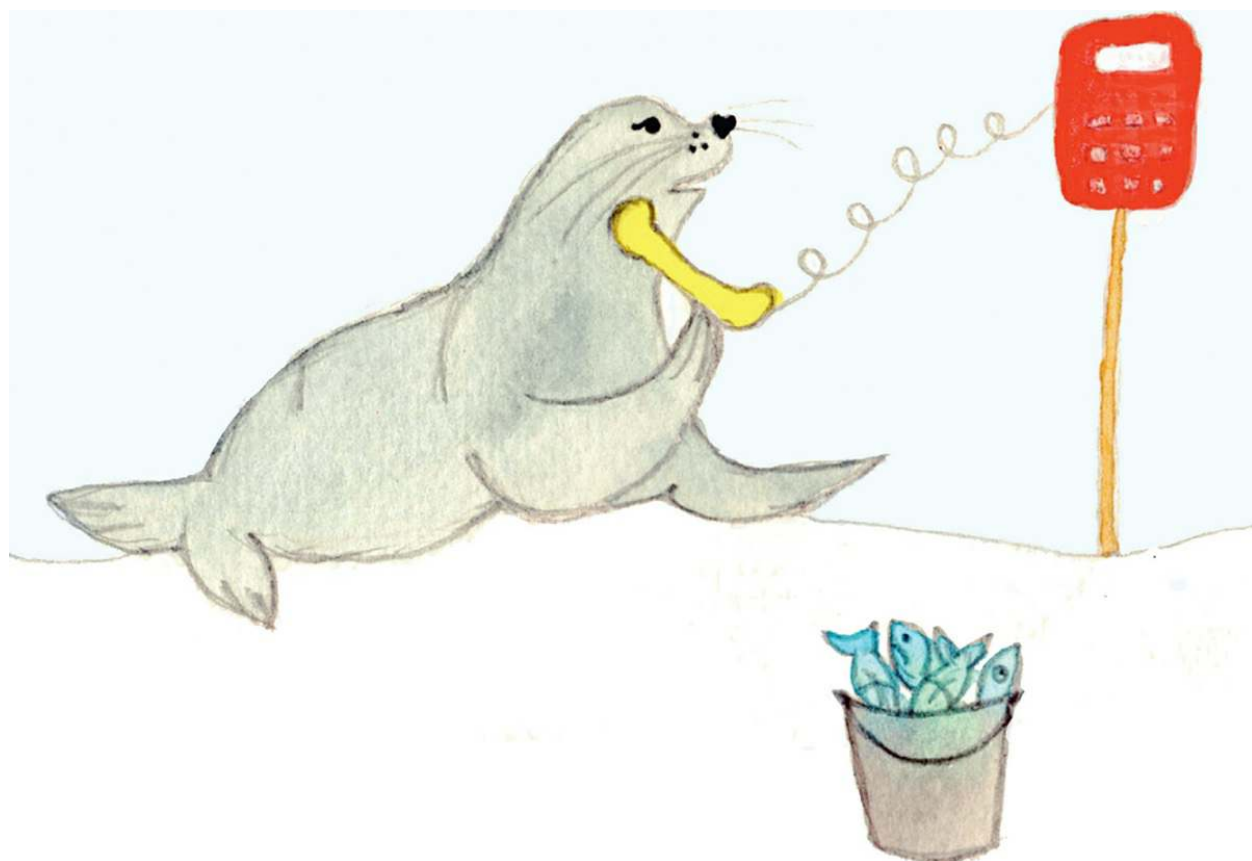


i'm pretty fucking cool

and i cry a lot.



what if you're unhappy and you know it, and you really want to show it,
should you still clap your hands?



koala is here, munching on something green, funky and illuminating; let's ask him.



well, koala is a *vociferous* proponent of a plant-based diet and mindfulness.

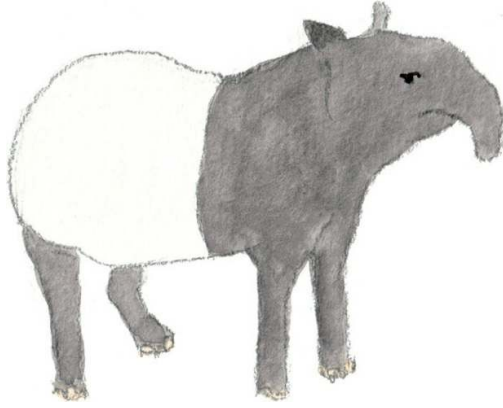
alternatives include doughnuts and parties.

this is how doughnuts are made.



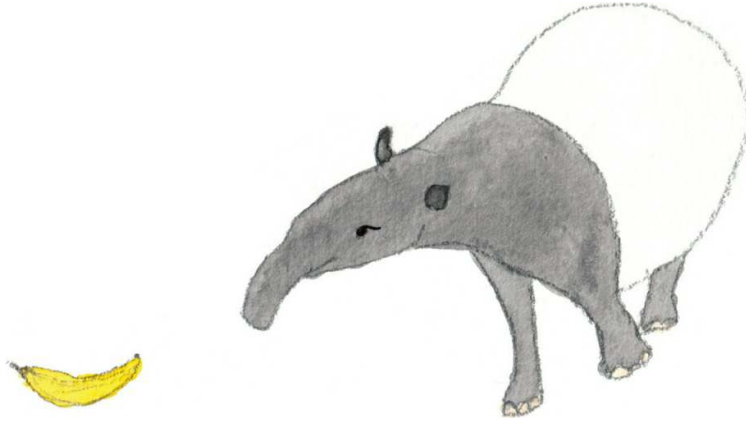
such simple pleasures are not to be sniffed at.

tapir did not *know* he was endangered.

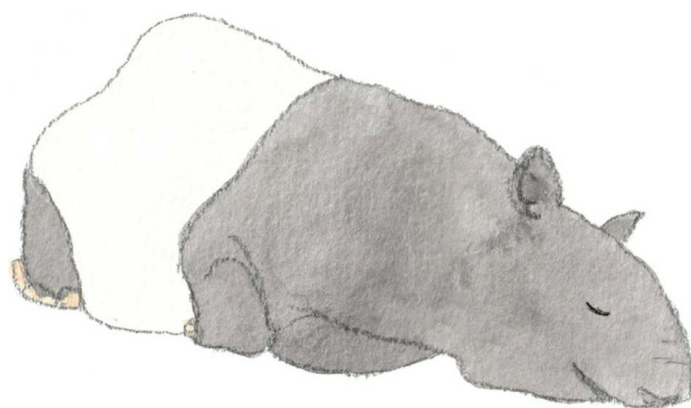


so he rose, snuffled a bit, sniffled a tad, huffed much.

at some point, he ate a banana



he couldn't be sure what tomorrow held, but he had survived today! and that was good.



what a surprise to be alive!



thanks to all the heavens for that.

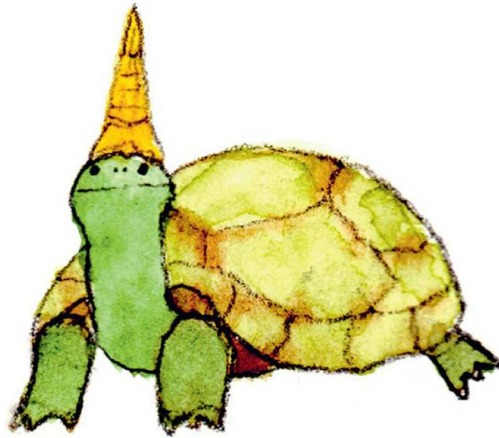


sloth says life depends on which way you look at it.



by the time tortoise had got back from the shop, his damn ice cream had all melted.

he was pleased with his funky new hat though.



when rat discovered the life expectancy of a wild rat was less than a year, he realised he would never have a birthday party. 'fuck it!' said rat, 'i'm gonna wear my spiderman costume *every day!*'

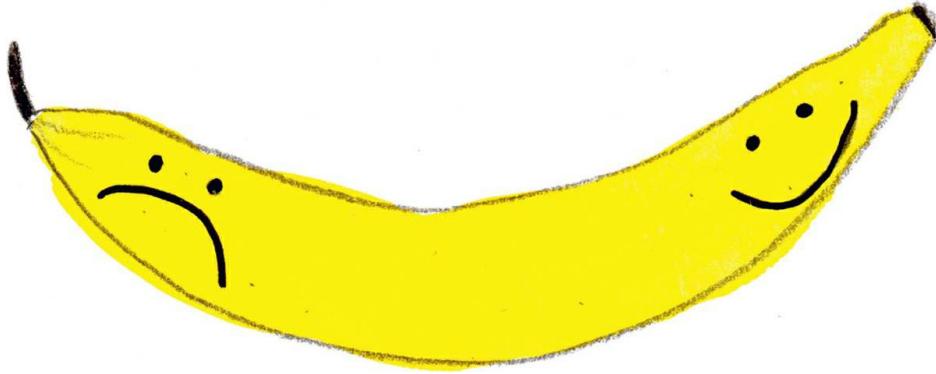


life is fucking beautiful! even when it's not, baby, even when it's not.



you see, we are all bananas.

every banana has two ends, good and bad.

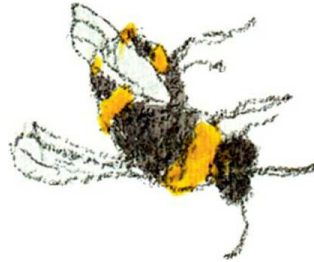


never is a thing *all* bad.



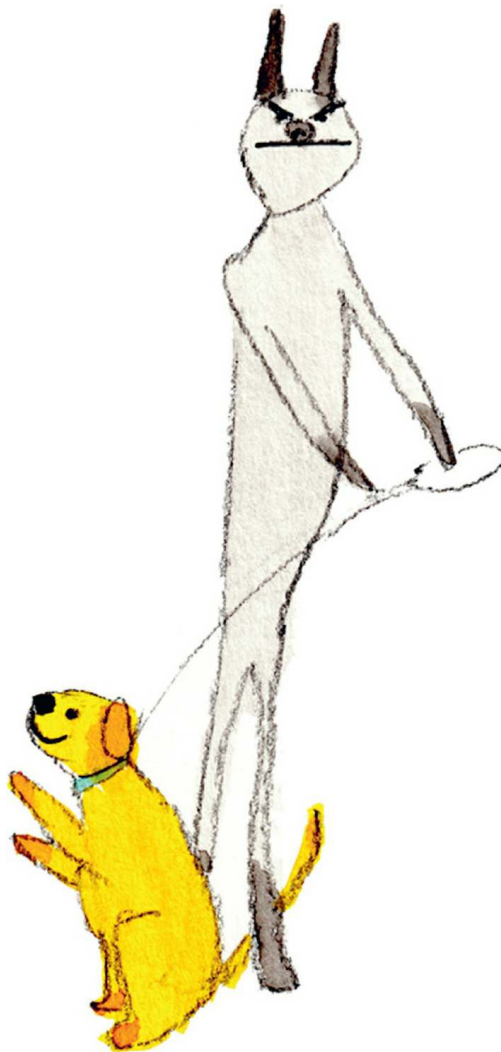
the people were angry with bee as he lay there dying.

so they took his honey to ease the sting and walked away with flowers in
their hair.



beasts are often Very Naughty Indeed.

dog does *not* want to sit! he wants to boogie.



my tits will not be calmed.



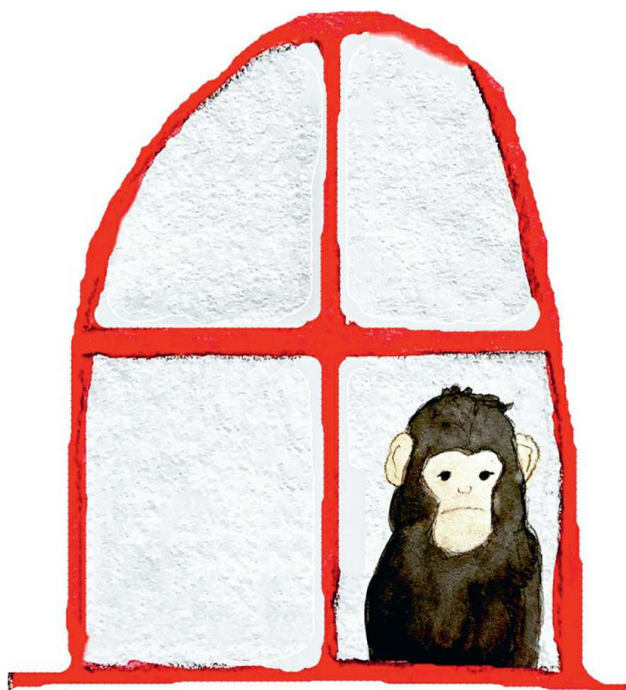
beasts do not like being trapped.



they like to escape!



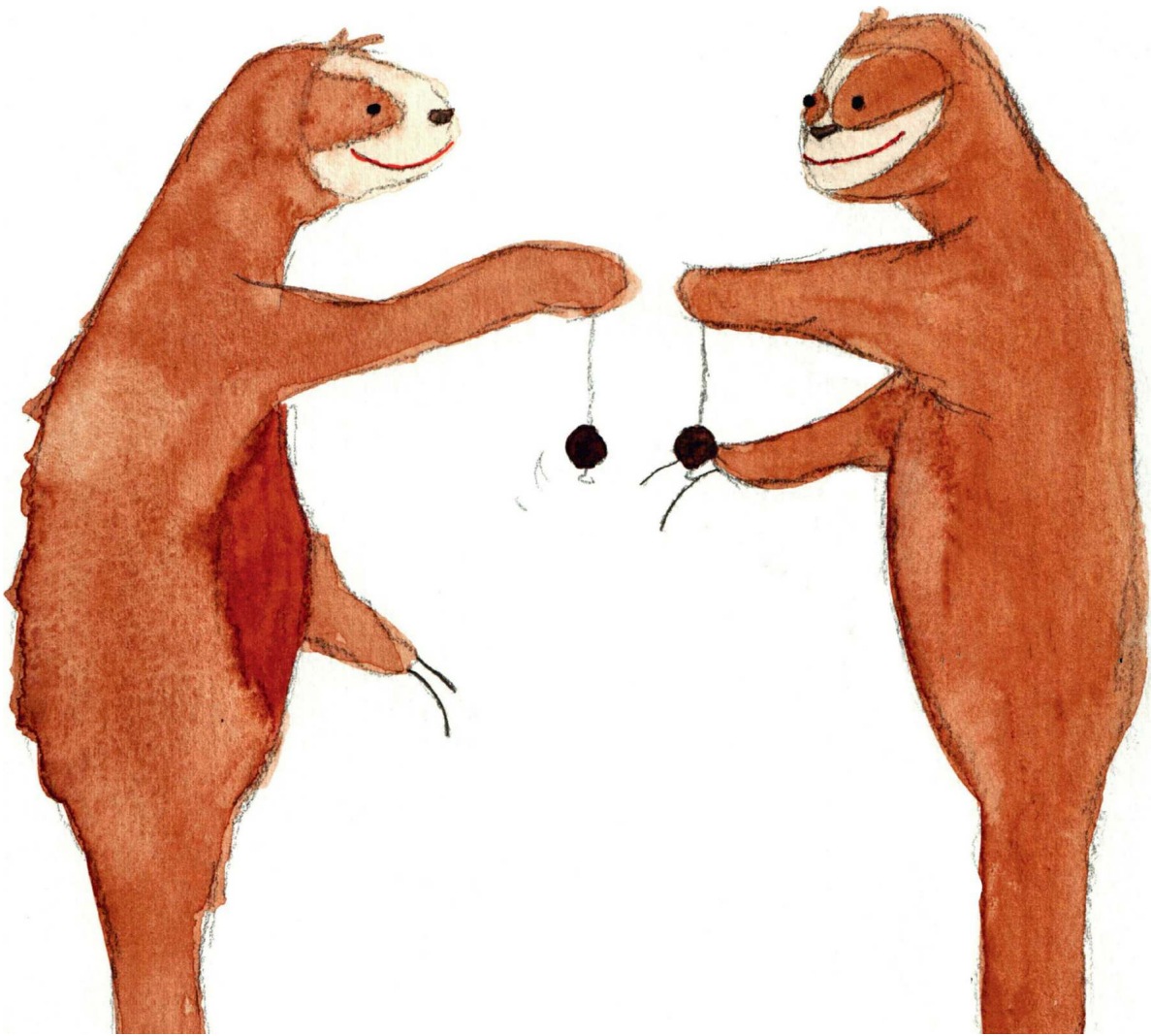
so, there's a thing – humans build a lot of walls.



maybe it's time we tore some of them down



and *lived* a little.



the world isn't black and white. it's fucking *fabulous*.



you are a rainbow.



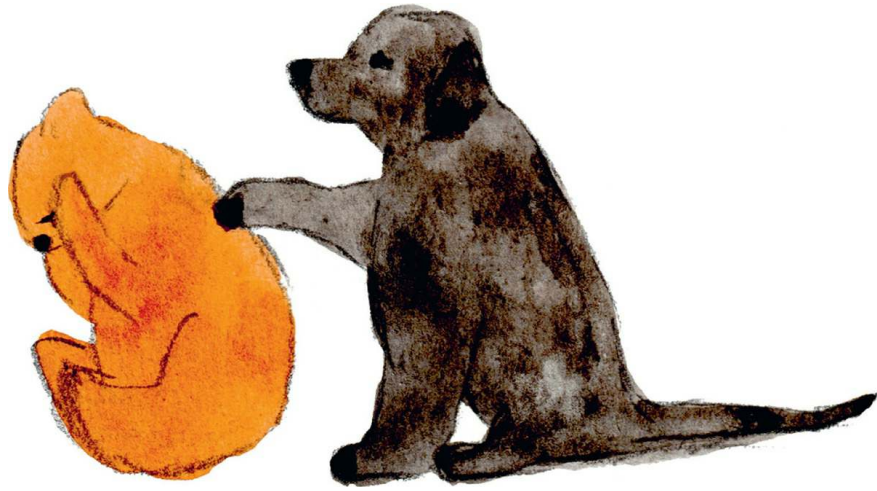
you were born yellow, a beam of light,



you cried gaping red, fought till you went blue and rode out purple, waving
banners.



you let a black dog in, shook his paw and fed him dinner.



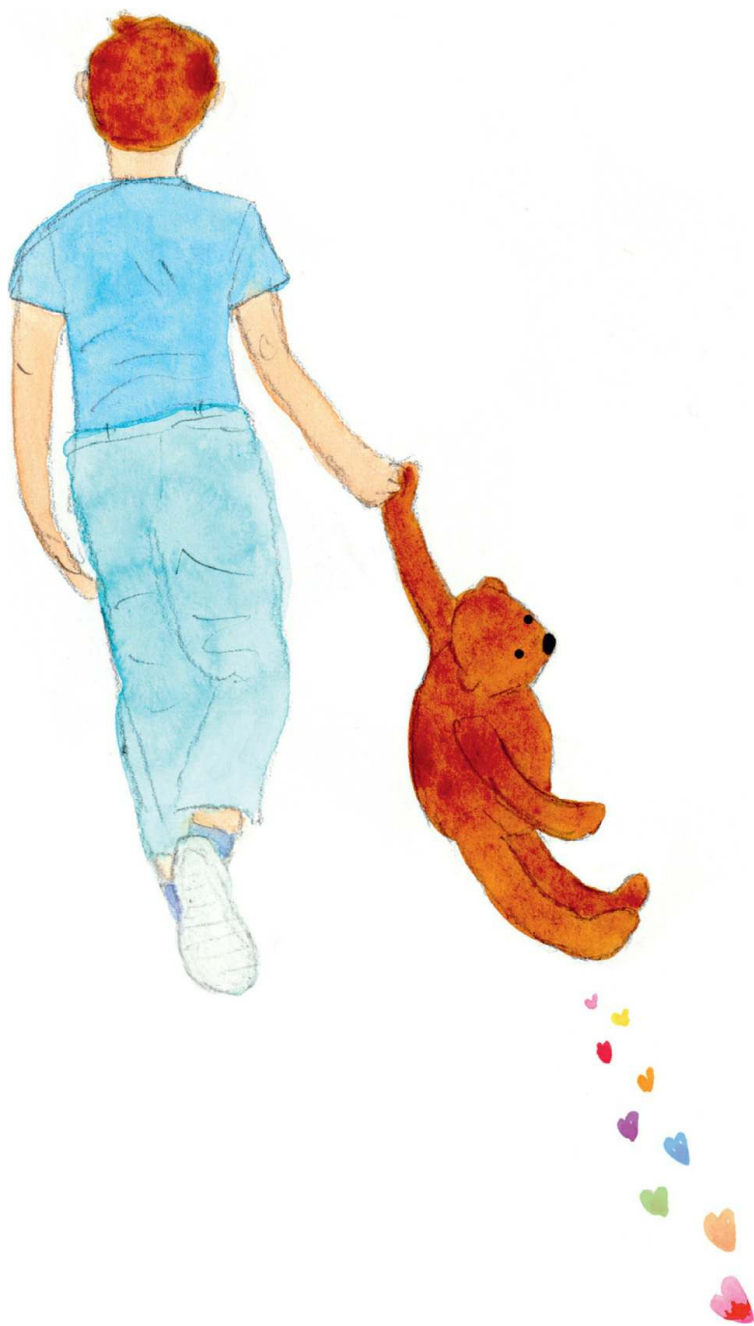
you can build a green den.



you can heal a grey king.



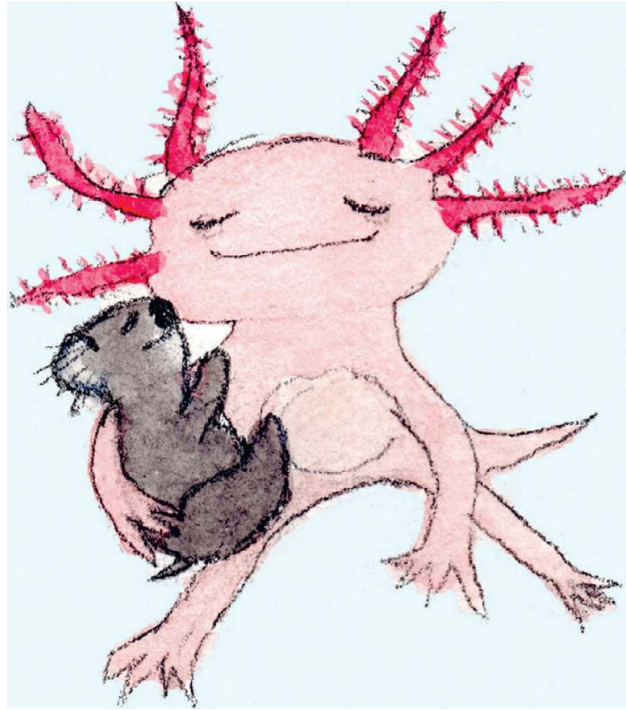
your footprints reflect it all, like everlasting puddles.



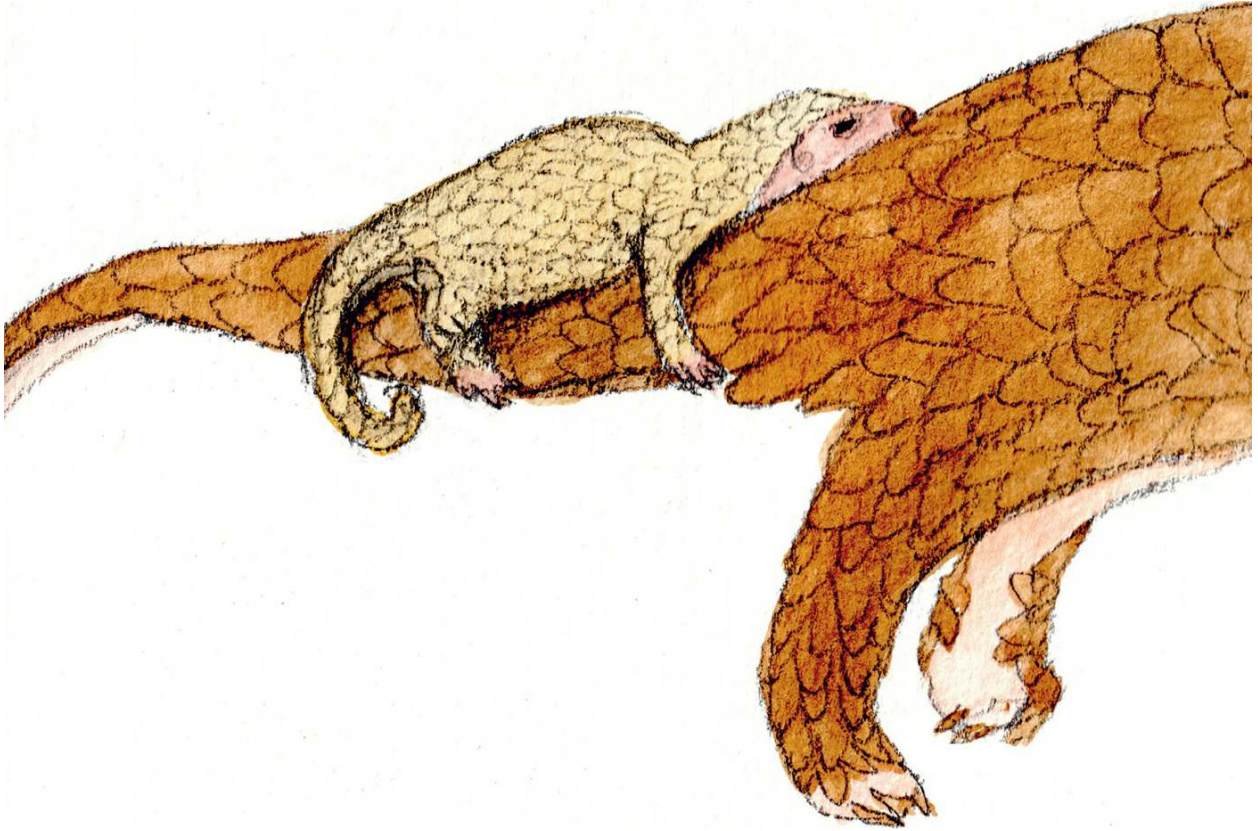
there's a baby beast deep inside of you that never grew up,
and it remembers things the rest of us have forgotten ...



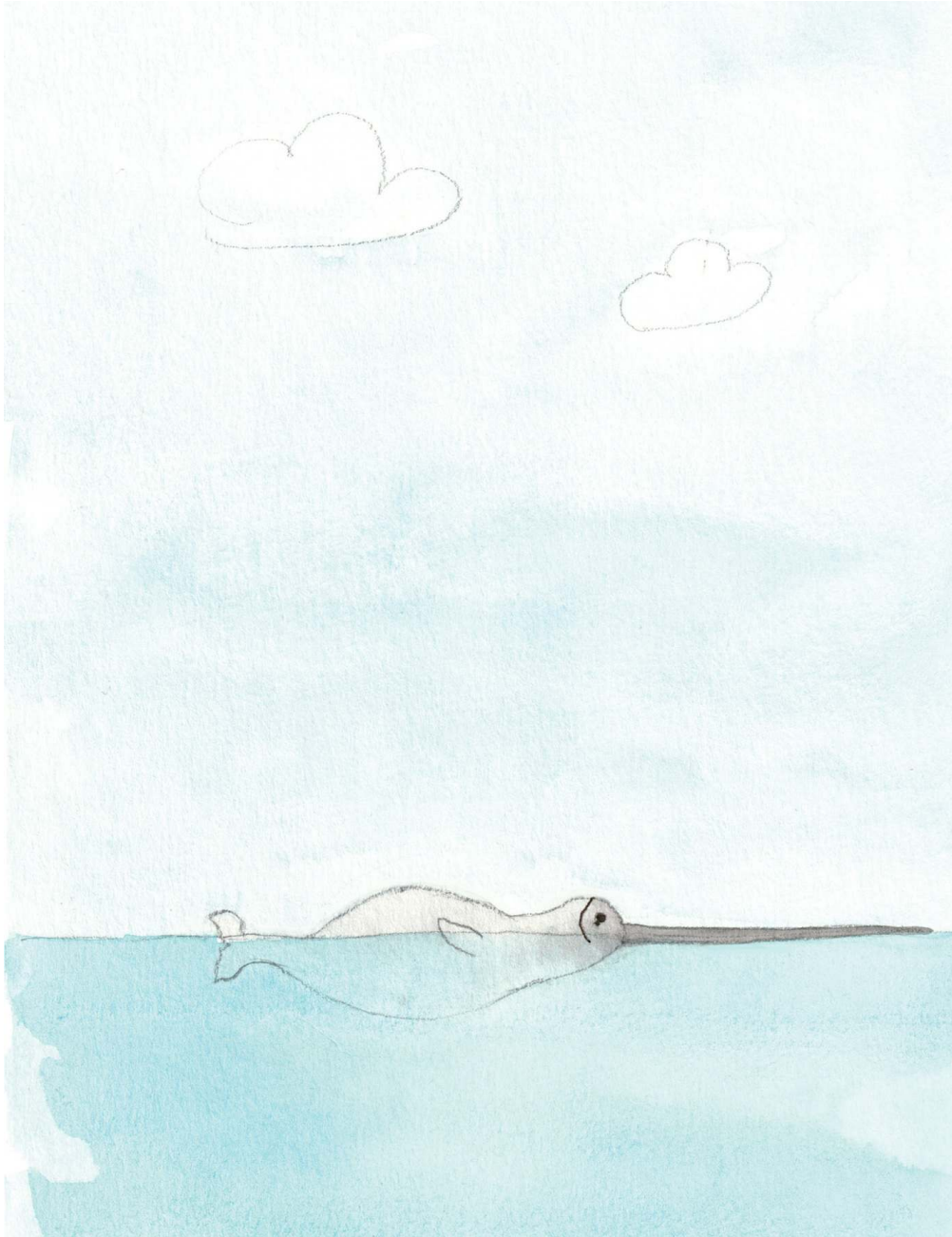
like the simple joy of being alive,



the safe feeling of being connected,



the wonder of the infinite,

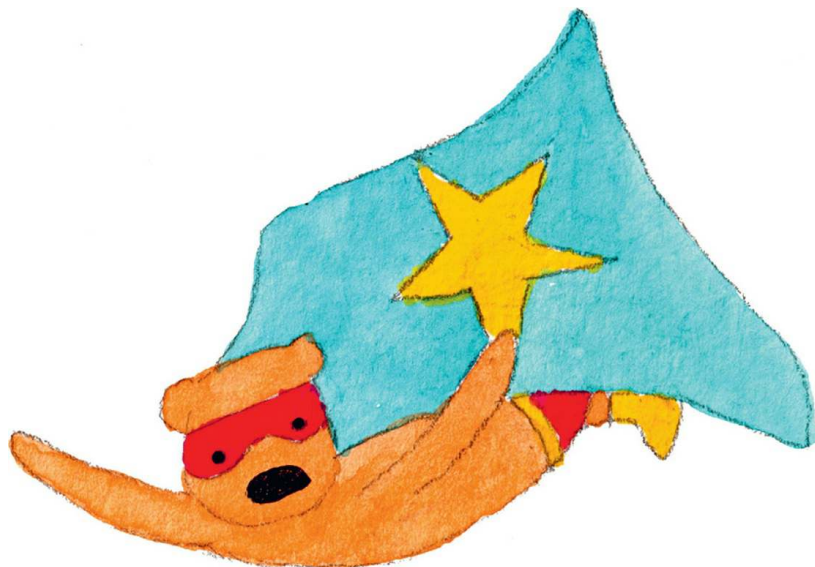


and how, sometimes, we need to be held.



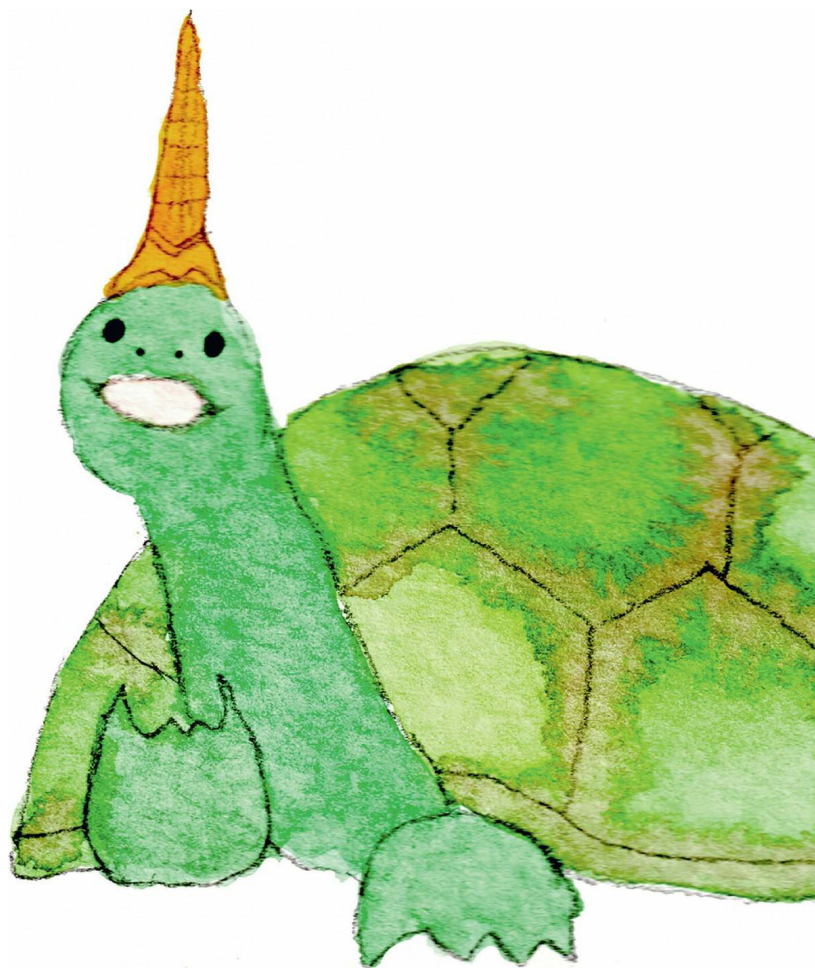
when we are small, it is easier to believe in *big* things.

like fairytales that come true!

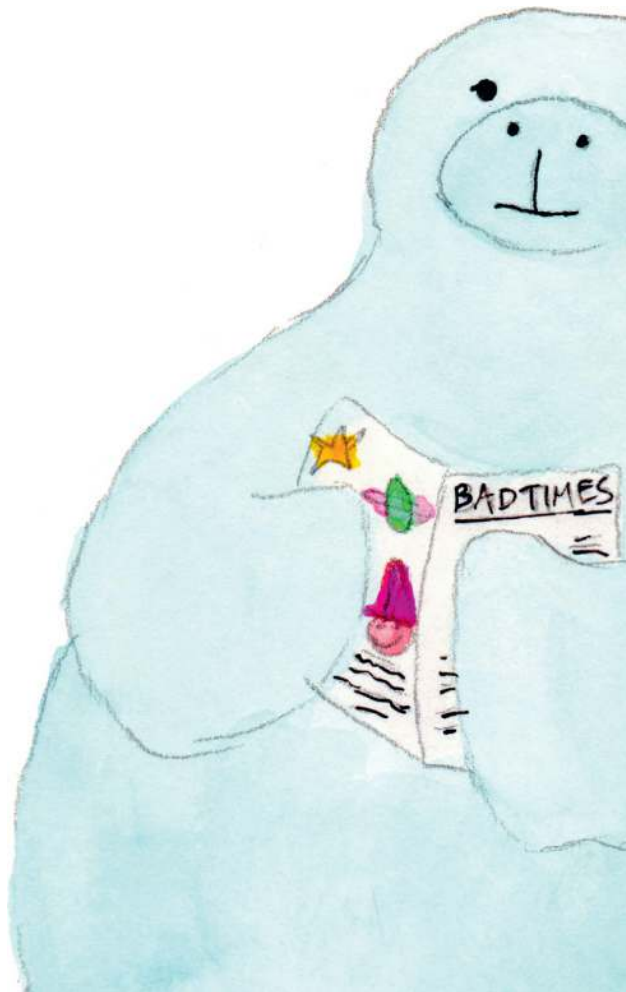


some people told unitort that he didn't exist!

some people are silly.



when we grow big, we get flummoxed.

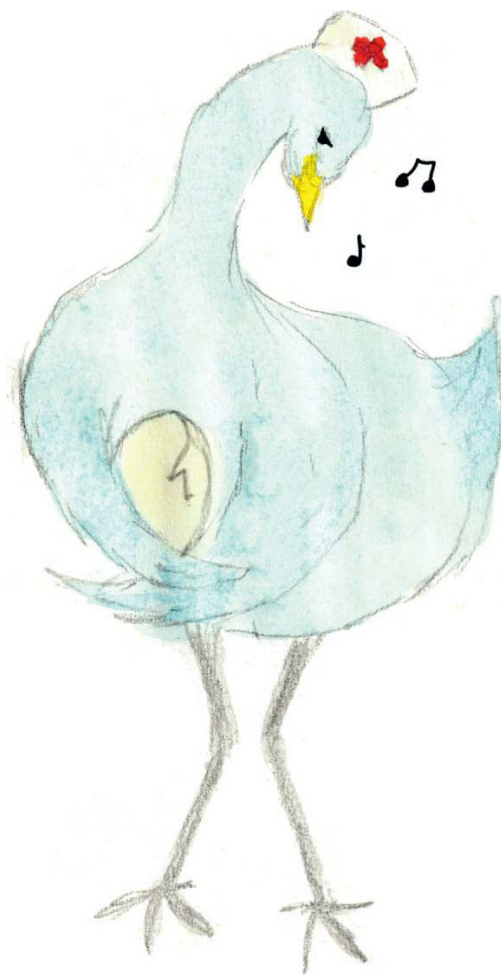


bear has been rowing so long gently down the stream, but he doesn't feel
merry and his life is not a dream.

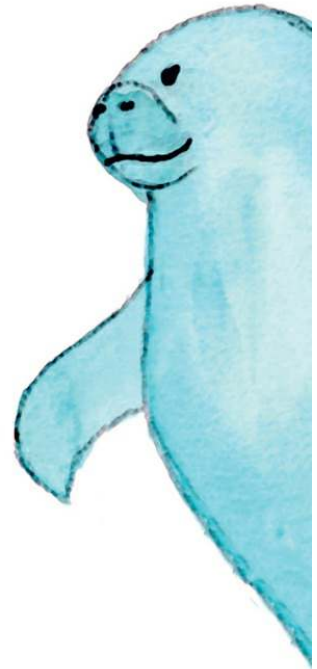
so bear called for help.



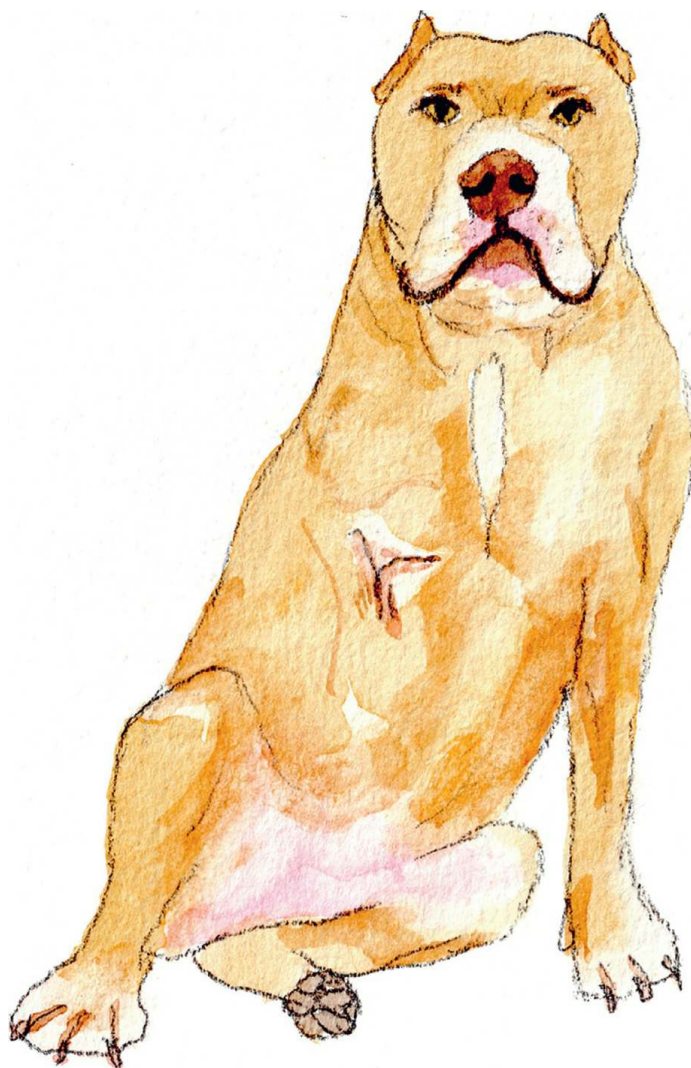
because talking saves lives.



we can talk about how you're a bit of alright in a sea of shite.



we can talk about how broken things are beautiful.



a fallen feather is a treasure, as perfect lying on the ground as flying high.



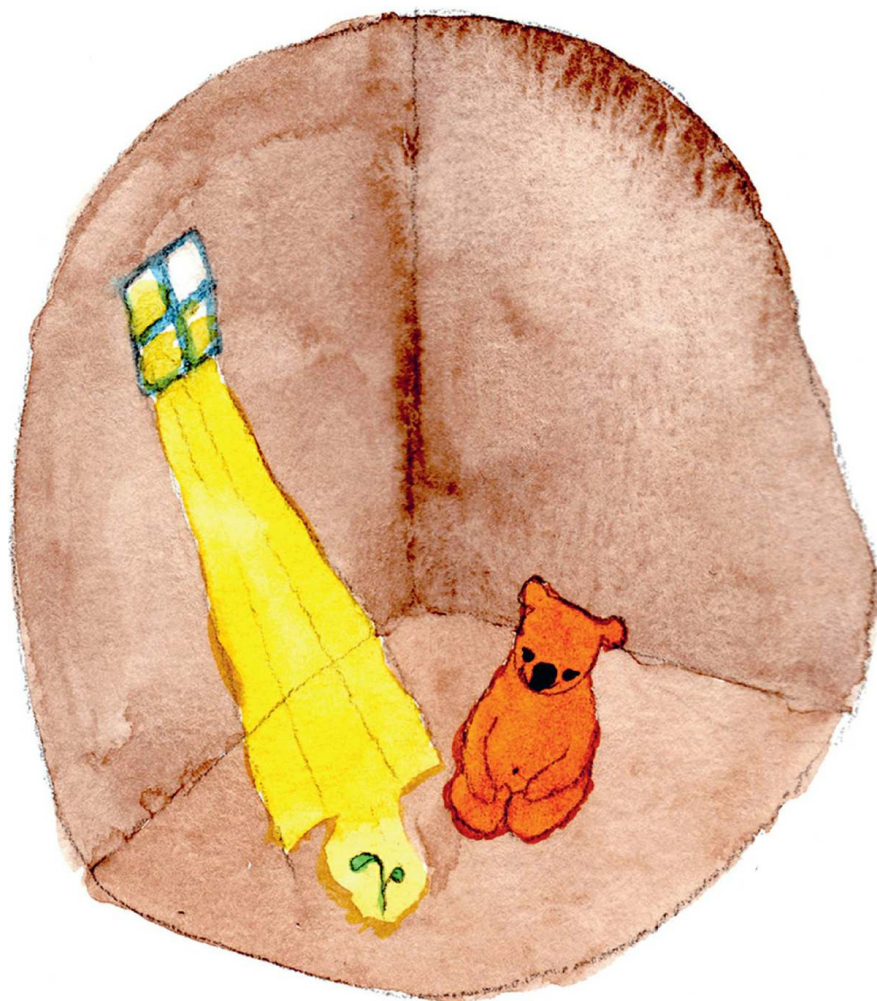
it *looks* like it has broken, but the power of the feather is it lifts our eyes and takes them to the sky.



don't let the fuckers get you down, my love.



remember, flowers grow from shite, they just need a little light.



isn't that fucking lovely.



come what may, never a day is dull, my love.

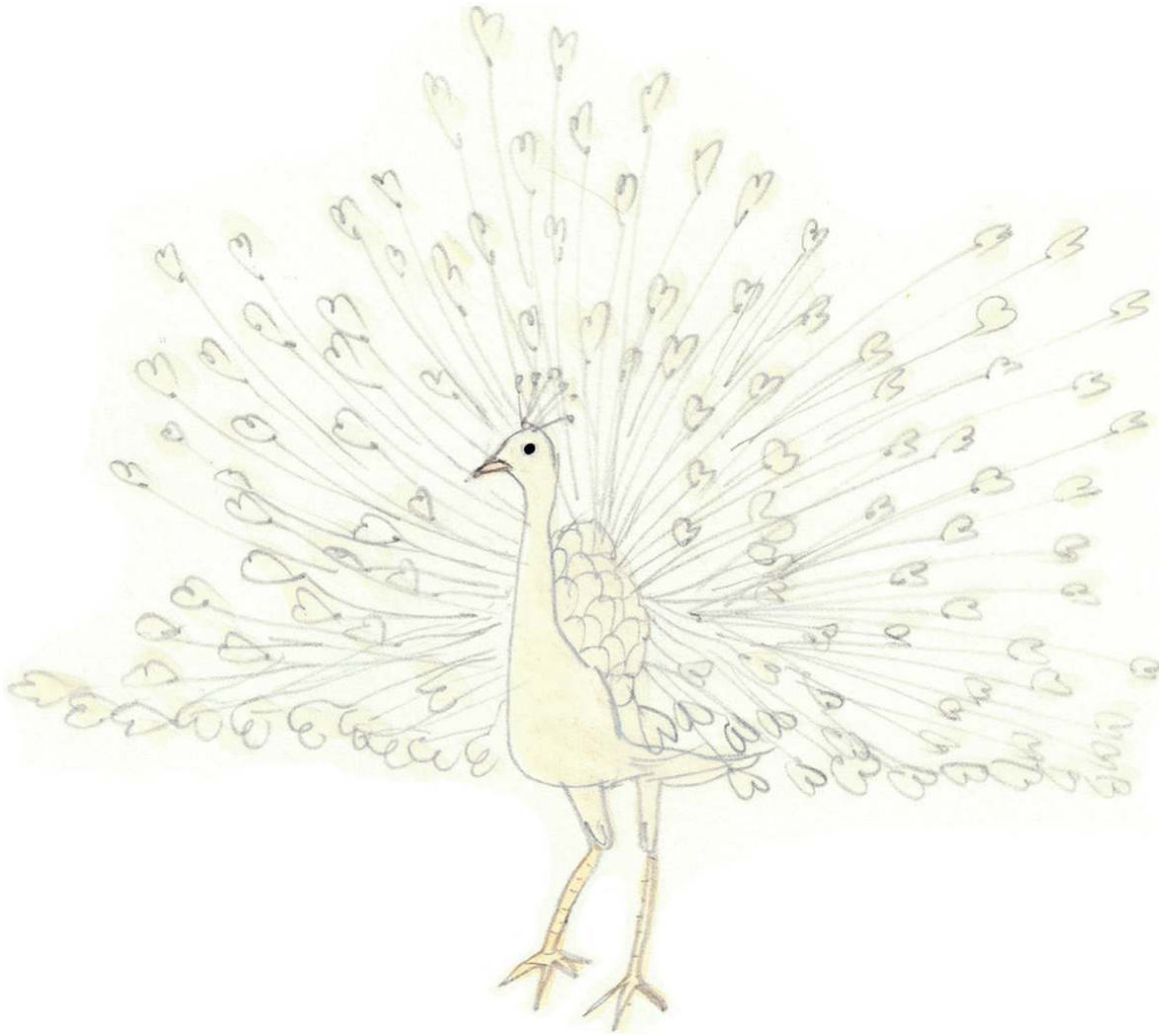


the forecast said '*cloudy with a chance of dickheads*'. so emu put on her
dickproof jacket, kept calm and carried on.



life is *full* of surprises.

i never even dreamt of you, then there you were!



if you ask a lioness, they are likely to confess that beasts do tend to cherish
earth and flesh.



one day cougar looked in the mirror and realised she was no longer young
and beautiful.

no, she was more than that. she was majestic. she was divine.

she was the whispering kiss goodnight of the dusk to the day. she was the
magnitude of all those who climbed the mountain. she was the gift of answers
swept in by the tide.

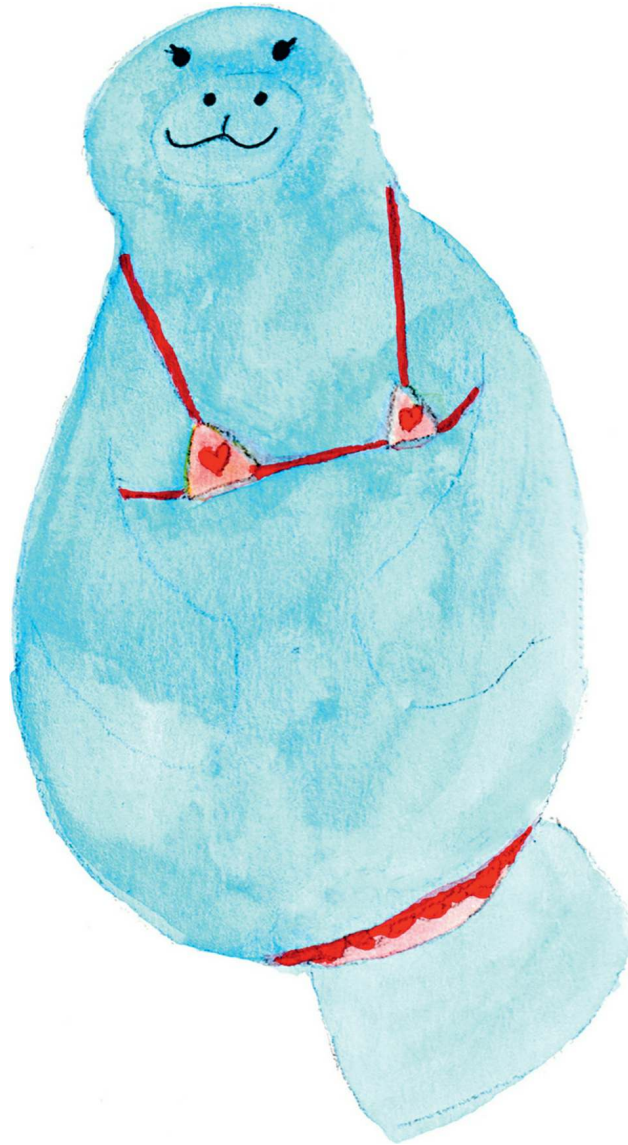
‘i am no longer a princess,’ said cougar.

‘i am queen.’

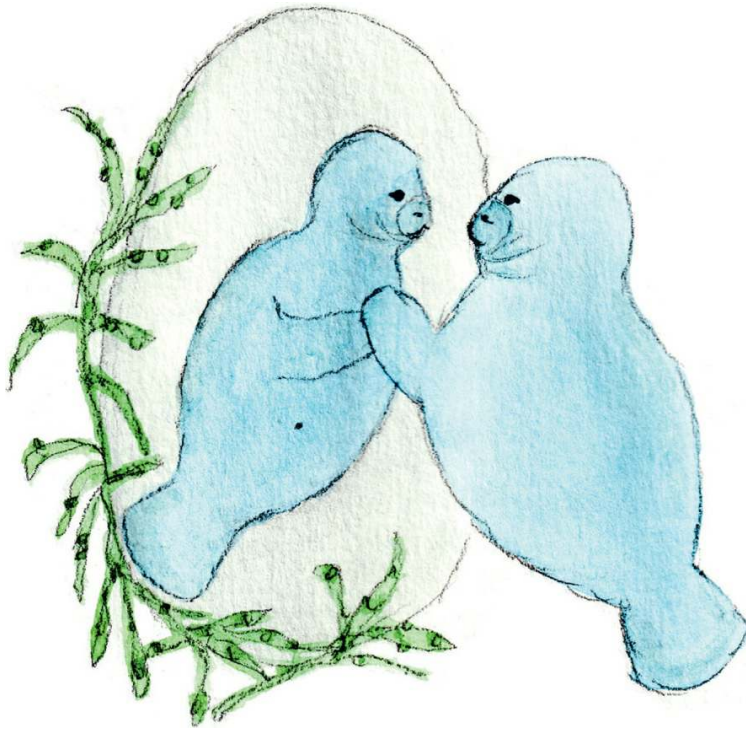


manatee did not worry about getting her body ready for the beach. instead she
hollered at the beach, 'are you ready for ME?'

the sea lowered his sunglasses, smiled and said, 'you betcha, baby.'



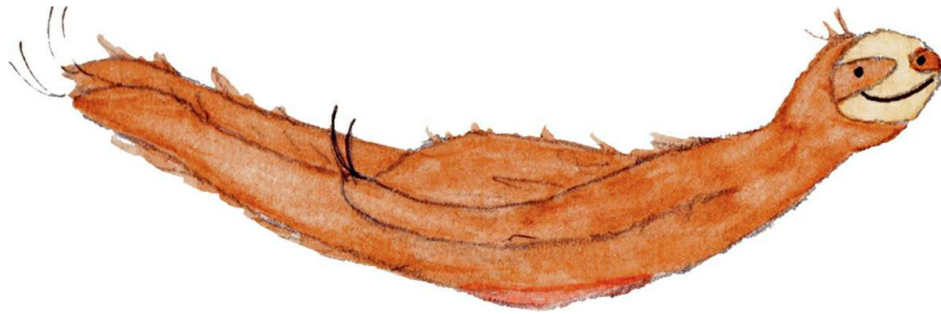
every day your body is different to the day before. why do we only love it the way it was one day a long time ago? or promise to love it one day that is not to come? you have had a thousand bodies, you will have a thousand more. they all carried your soul. they will carry it well.



in all of nature, bodies are *remarkable* things!



sloths like doing yoga. that is banana position.



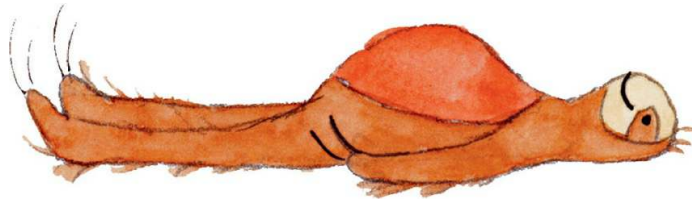
trapped wind position.



dreaming of pizza.



i can do this one.



bear looked at his tum and thought, i really ought to do some sport.



he joined a gym but never went, so that was money poorly spent. he tried a diet lollipop but hunger struck by 12 o'clock.



poor bear was sad, until he found that more of him to go around meant bigger
hugs



and *anyway*, he fucking wanted cake, ok?

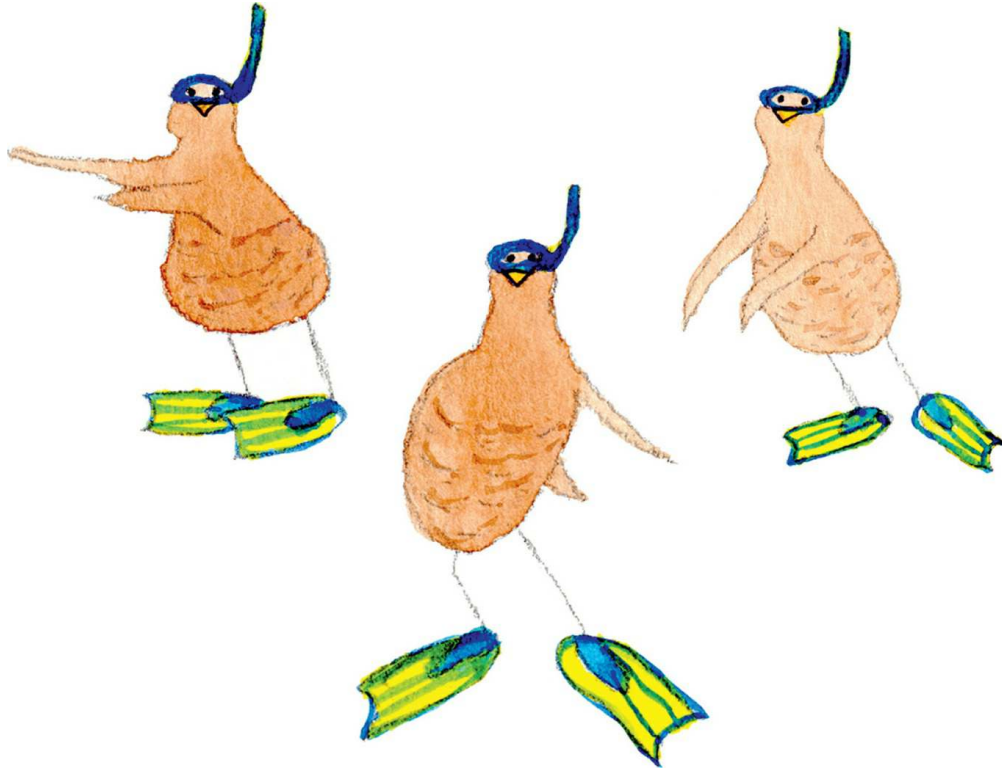


beasts are easily *excited*.

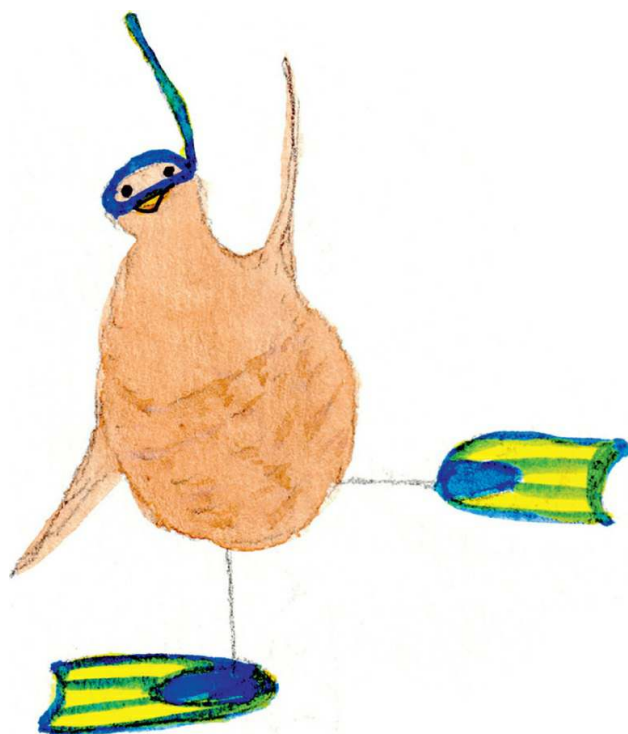


have you ever heard anyone say ‘quails can’t dance in scuba suits’?

no, you have not.



because they can, and they do.



this cat is partying on the inside.



beasts say do what makes your heart beat happy!



stoat spent all his wages on new jeans. *fuck*, thought stoat, now he could not pay his rent.

but damn, he felt fine in his fancy jeans.



chameleon was tired of changing himself to fit in. 'i don't want to *hide* anymore!' he yelled. so he turned his camouflage off and suddenly shone the most vibrant, dazzling, magic colours the world had ever seen.



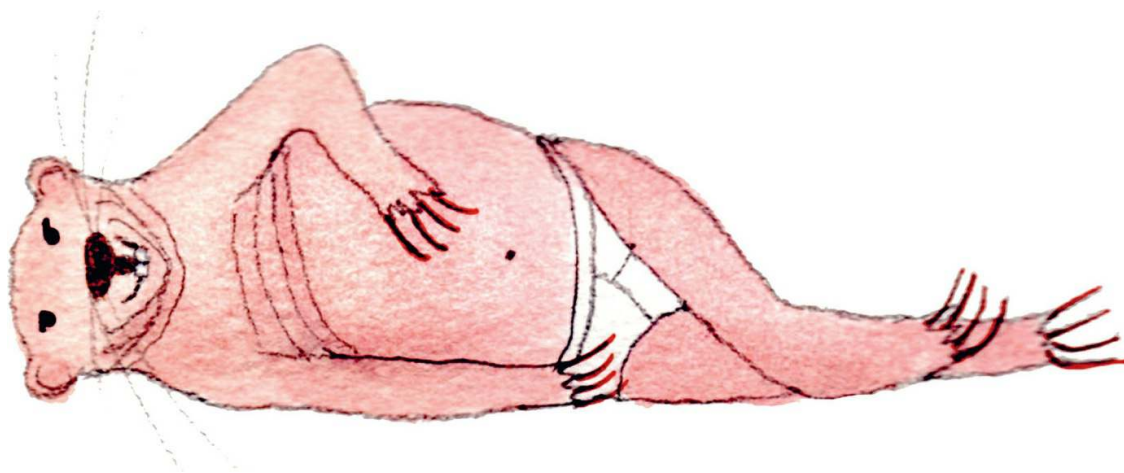
be kinder to your little furry self.



monkey was tired of seeking affirmation from virtual likes, so he quit social media and made himself a t-shirt instead.



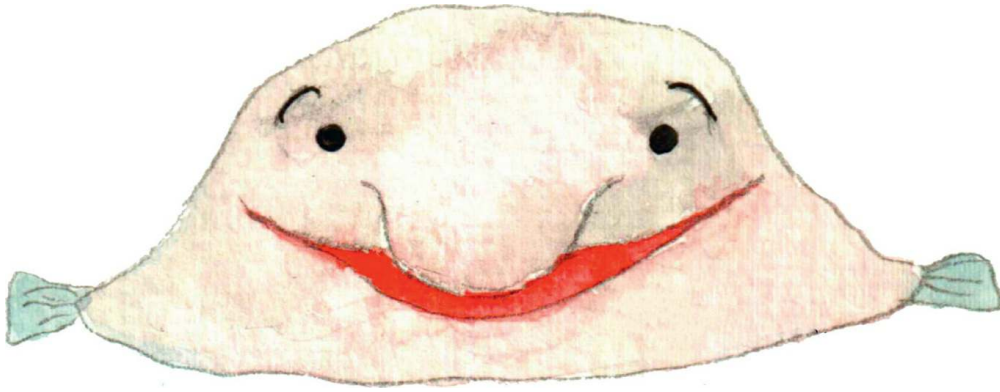
beasts know the key to survival is to stun every other fucker with the
awesome essence of YOU



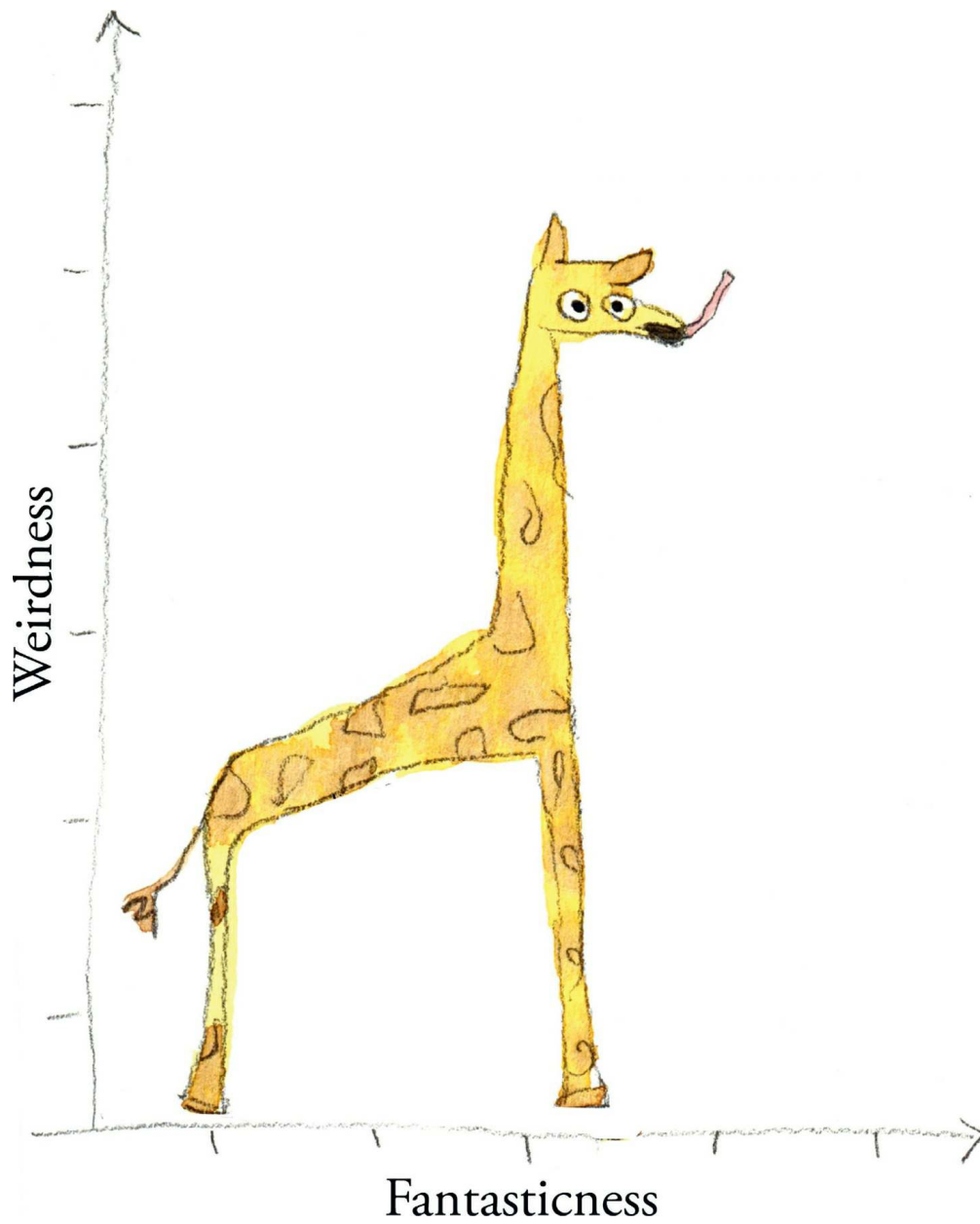
because you are the most lovable thing my heart has ever seen.



blobfish loved it when people looked at him and called him weird. weird was special, unique, extraordinary! he basked in weird, gobbled it up and cackled it out even more shiny! all over the fucking sand! for boring people to trip over.



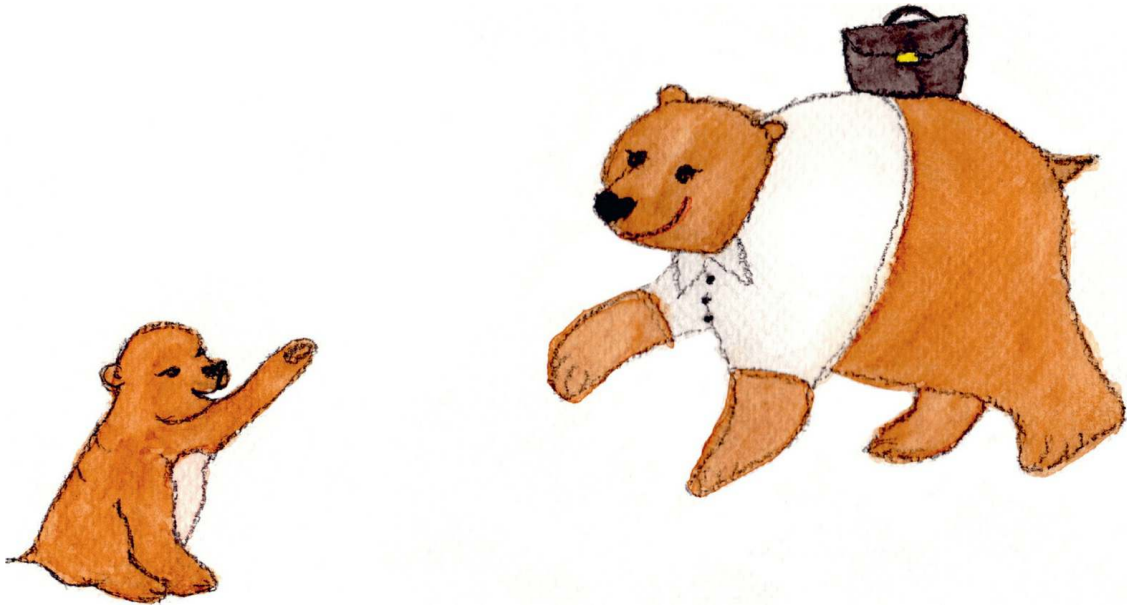
if you're not too sure, here is a helpful g-raph.



you are *precious* and must be protected.



well now, friend, if you're not going to be a dick when you grow up, then
what the devil *are* you going to be?



‘i want to be a sunshine, i want to be a storm, i want to be a lover and a friend. i want to be a hugger, i want to be a home, i want to be a laugher and a brave,’ said baby chimp.

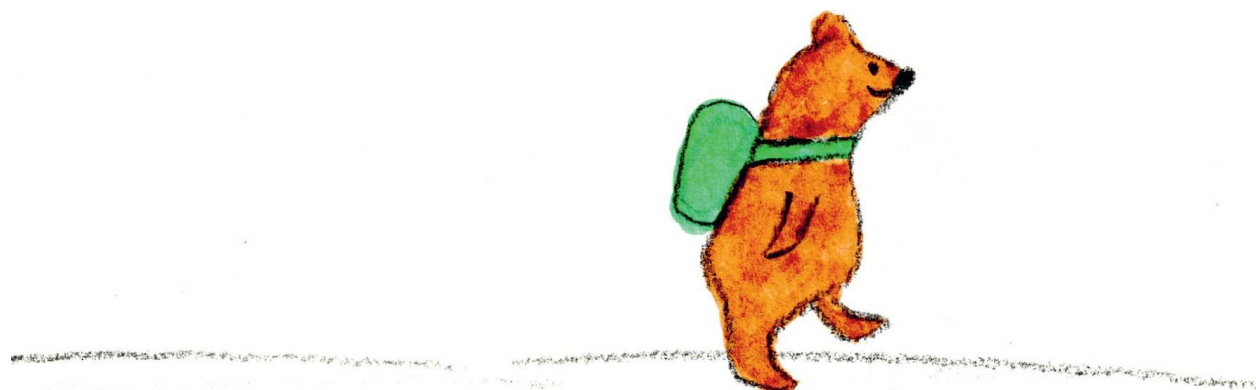
but the careers advisor could not find *these* in her book.



off you go, small one, with your big heart.



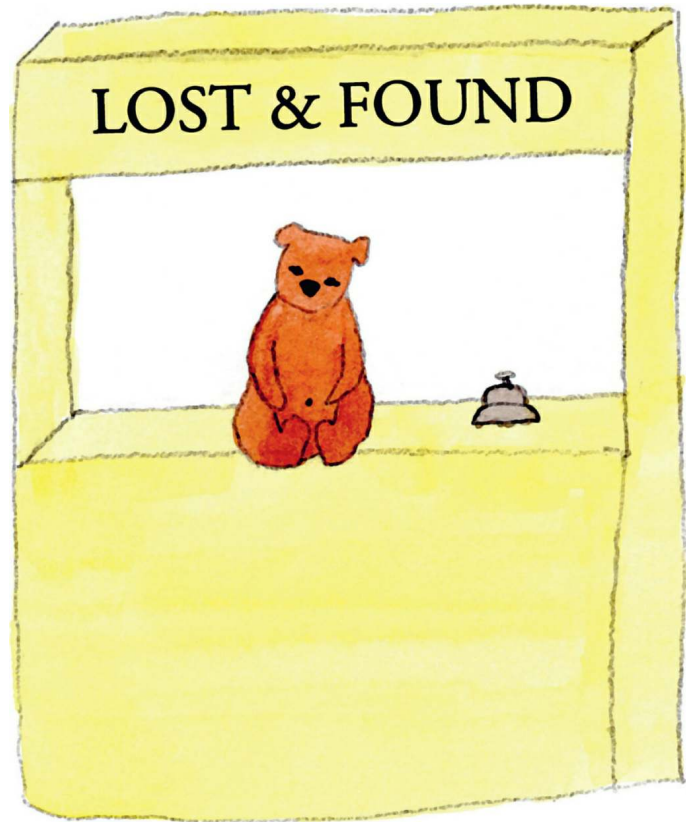
be brave, be free.



if you get lost along the way, you can always be found.

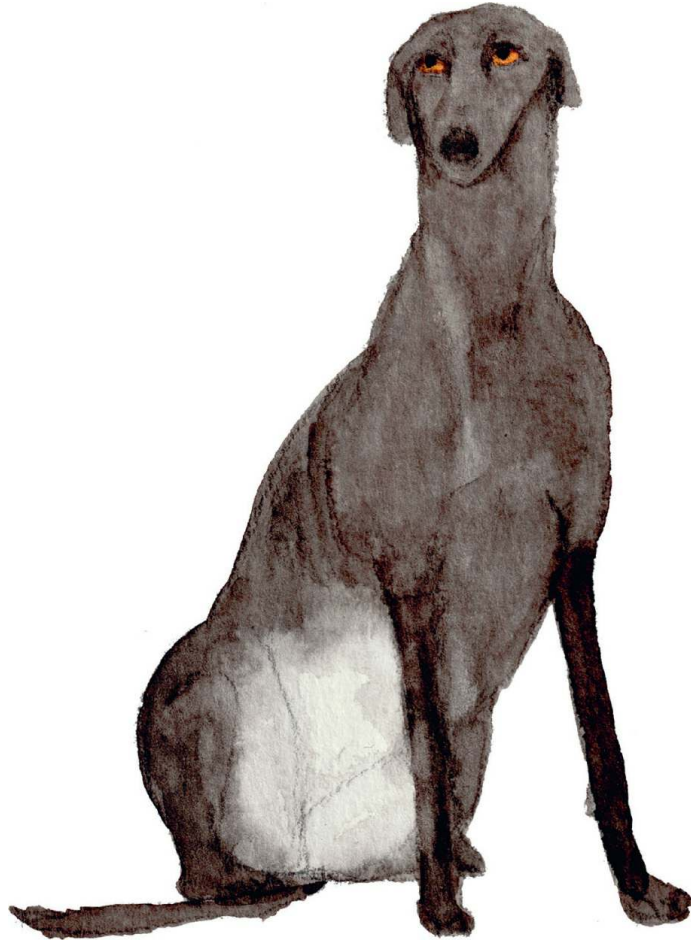


after waiting rather long, bear decided, 'i belong to me.'



black dog heard them as they walked past say, 'too big, too old, too damaged.' so still he waited, patiently, for someone to accept the things he could not change.

for someone to stop and say, 'i choose you.'

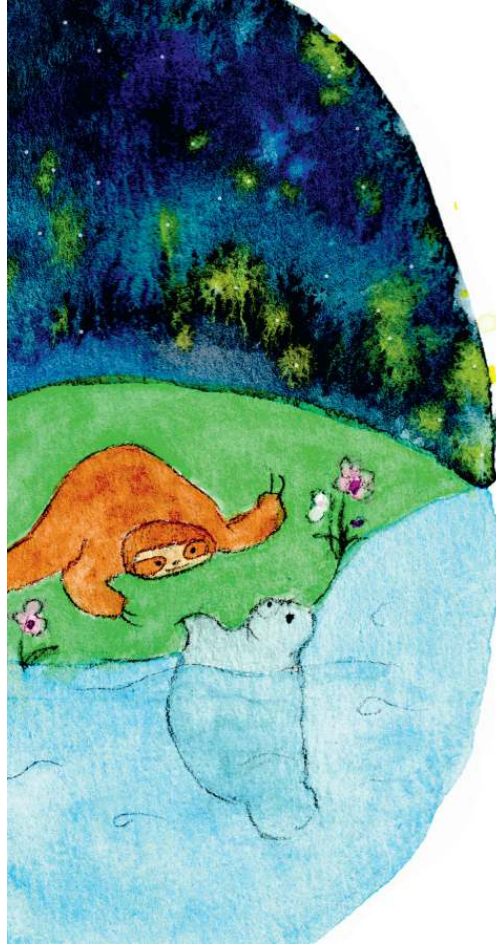


they said his waiting was over, they said he was going home! his tail was beating as fast as his heart. they said there would be a nice soft bed and pats on the head and *biscuits*. they said it was ok that he was big, old and damaged. they said he would be loved.

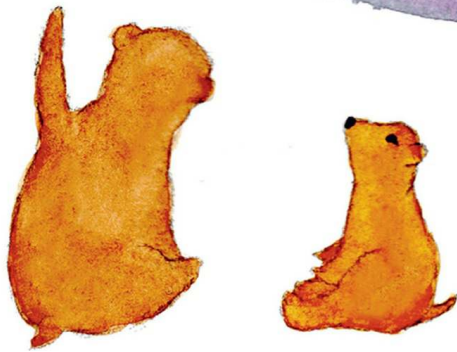
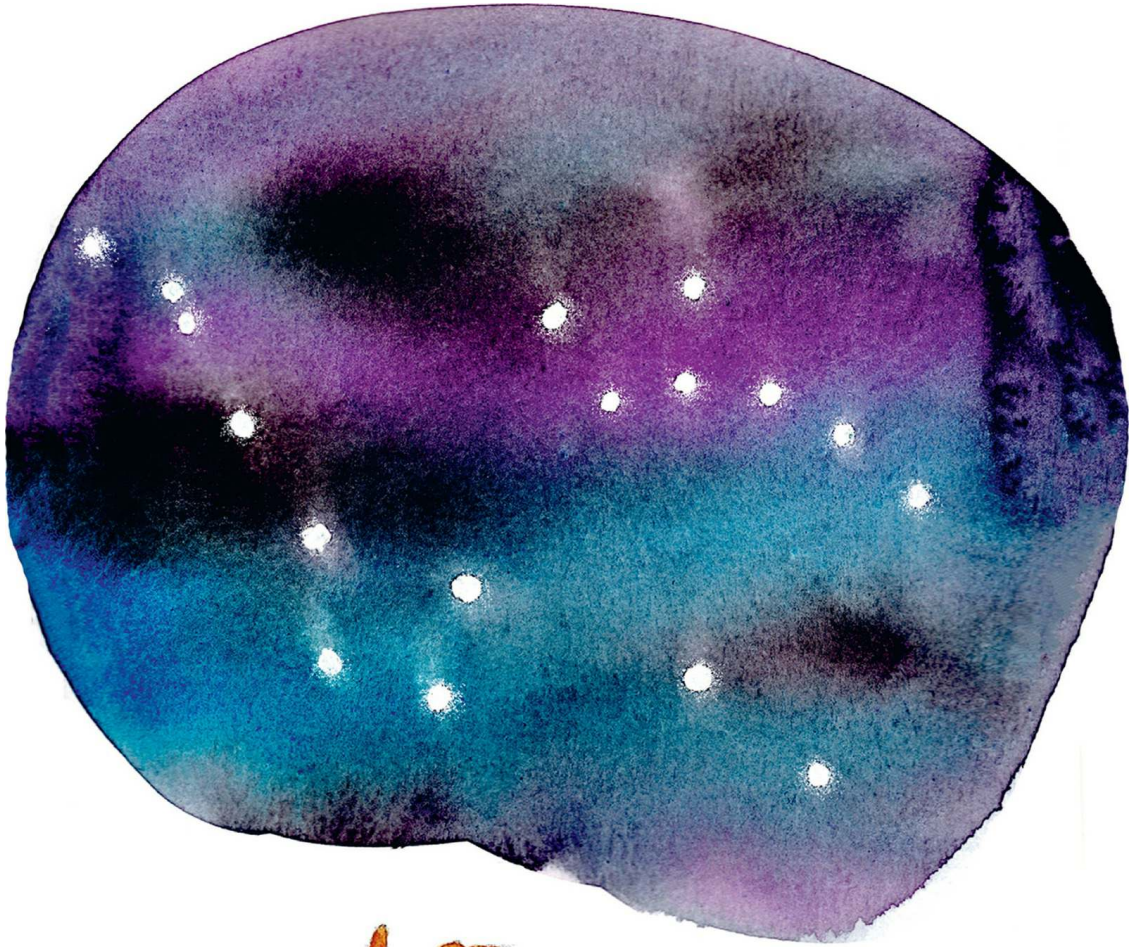


don't ever let them tell you magic isn't real, my love.

those lights they are so far away, but every night they come back just for you.



look up, baby, it's all for you.



wherever you roam, let them hear you roar.

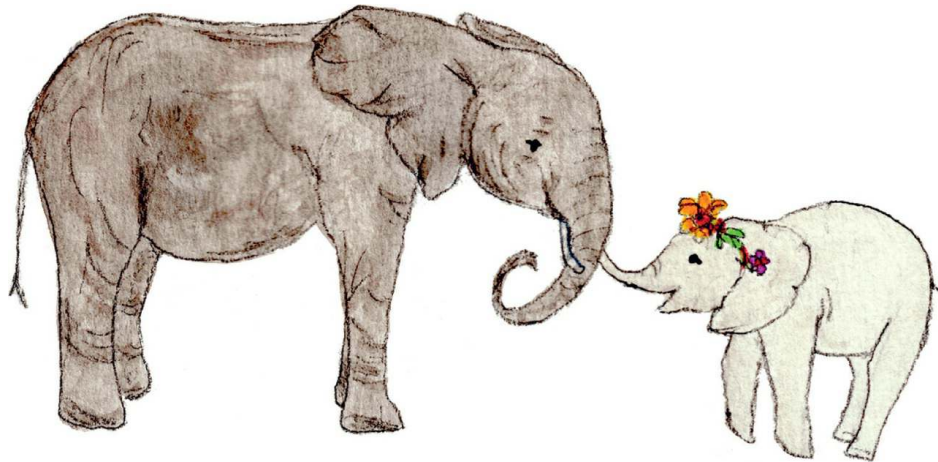
there *will* be waves. waves are as sure as the tides and the moon.

things that make waves are never forgotten.



‘where are you going?’ said the babba to the old, old elephant. ‘i’m going where i can live forever!’ said the old, old elephant, ‘in your memories.’

‘can i come too?’ said the babba. ‘no,’ said the old, old elephant. ‘you must live here for now, and make your own.’



old dog was tired now. his bones had carried him so far, for so long. 'well done, bones,' said old dog, as he lay down and licked them sweetly.



let's meet again, i have to go. i'll find you where the wild things grow.



sloth didn't know if god was real, or if there was a big bang, or if he was just
a fragment of someone's imagination.

but he had today, and he had flowers.



you see, the secret and the magic that was in you all along is that you're not
just a songbird,

you wrote the song.



you're not just a free bird, you're free to fly.

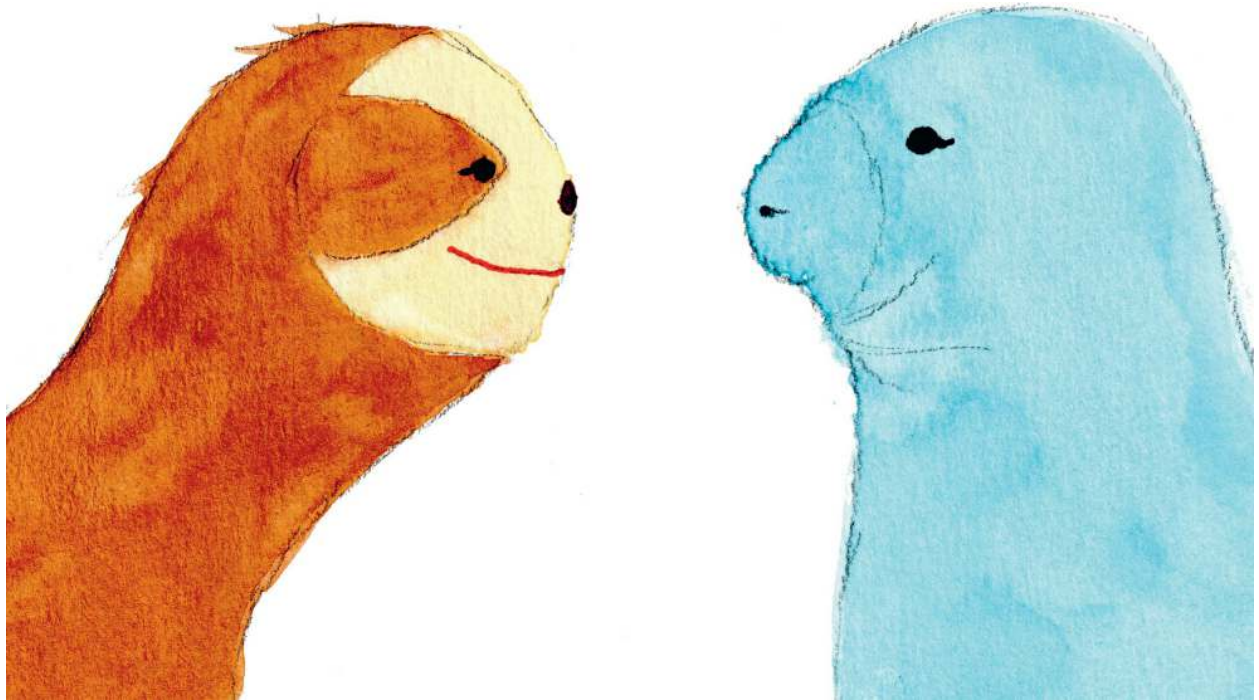


and you're not just a wild bird,
you own the sky.



the wild ones have spoken. the children of the sea, the earth, the sky, who
belong here as much as you and i. we share roots, teeth, flesh, big beating
hearts. this planet loved us from the start. all of us, small souls dancing under
a billion stars.

and i can tell, you're just a beast, like me.



~Epilogue~

there is beauty in being a human.

with a heart to feel, a mind to learn and hands to build extraordinary things.

you are a gift, dearly beloved soul, a child born unto wilderness.

go forth, fiercely, bravely.

kiss the future.



zeppelin moon



About the Author

Amber Fossey worked as a doctor in the NHS for 14 years before carving out a new career for herself as an artist. She specialised in forensic psychiatry, working with severely mentally ill offenders in hospitals, prisons and the community. She is driven by a deep-rooted compassion for those that society rejects, mistreats and ignores and for those suffering mental anguish. She believes all souls, human and animal, deserve to be loved and treated as equals. This manifests in her art, where she often champions the unloved, the feared and the endangered. She shares her stories and illustrations on her popular Instagram platform, Zeppelinmoon.

~Acknowledgements~

Let me begin as I started, with the animals. I am grateful to Mother Earth for her shelter and her jewels, the best of which walk on four legs, make waves or speak with beaks. I am grateful to be alive at the same time as her wisest beasts, so that as a human race we can learn from them. May we love, respect and protect them all, and raise our children to set them free.

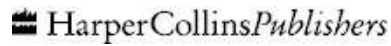
As for people, I am lucky enough to have been helped by some of the very best. Smallest baby bear and the even smaller baby bobo, you unlocked the cage and let the beasts out. You gave me everything. My international bad man, you said I could, but I couldn't have without your unswervingly patient eyes. No woman is an island. My mama, my sister, my best girl friends, all women of fire and laughter and grace, you are my archipelago. Dad, you drew them all first, wonky pigs and cheery-uppy chumley beasts. You showed me how powerful a thing is a drawing drawn with love.

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There would be no book without Hannah Dussold who went to the mat for me, Laura McNeill at Gleam who lifts me up to the sky and Lydia Good at HarperCollins who made my dream come true. Huge thanks to all the publishing team at HarperCollins, including Josie Turner and Hattie Evans for all the energy they invested in *Be Wild, Be Free*.

Dearest beast, don't think I forgot you. You read my book, and for you I am eternally grateful.





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