

The Ants and the Pen



CHILDREN'S BOOKS BY IDRIES SHAH

Speak First and Lose
The Onion
The Tale of the Sands
After a Swim
The Man, the Tree and the Wolf
The Horrible Dib Dib
The Fisherman's Neighbour
The Magic Potion of Oinkink
The Rich Man and the Monkey
The Boy With No Voicea nd the Men Who Couldn't Hear
The Tale of Melon City

The Ants and the Pen

BY IDRIES SHAH



Text Copyright © The Estate of Idries Shah

Illustrations Copyright © Prashant Miranda
Layout and Design: Rachana Shah

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, or photographic, by recording, or any information storage or retrieval system or method now known or to be invented or adapted, without prior permission obtained in writing from the publisher, ISF Publishing, except by a reviewer quoting brief passages in a review written for inclusion in a journal, magazine, newspaper or broadcast.

Requests for permission to reprint, reproduce etc. to:

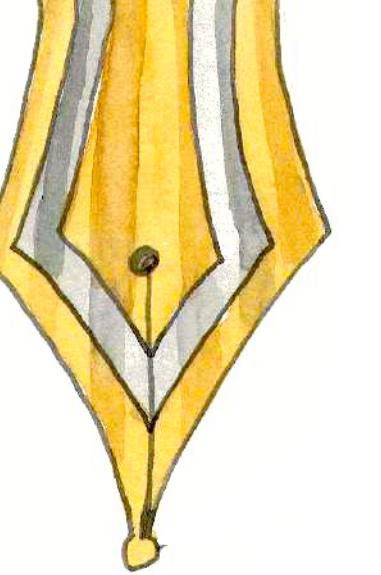
The Permissions' Department
ISF Publishing
The Idries Shah Foundation
P. O. Box 71911
London NW2 9QA
permission@isf-publishing.org

ISBN: 978-1-78479-309-8

Published by The Idries Shah Foundation,
In association with
The Estate of Idries Shah

First published in this Illustrated Edition, 2018

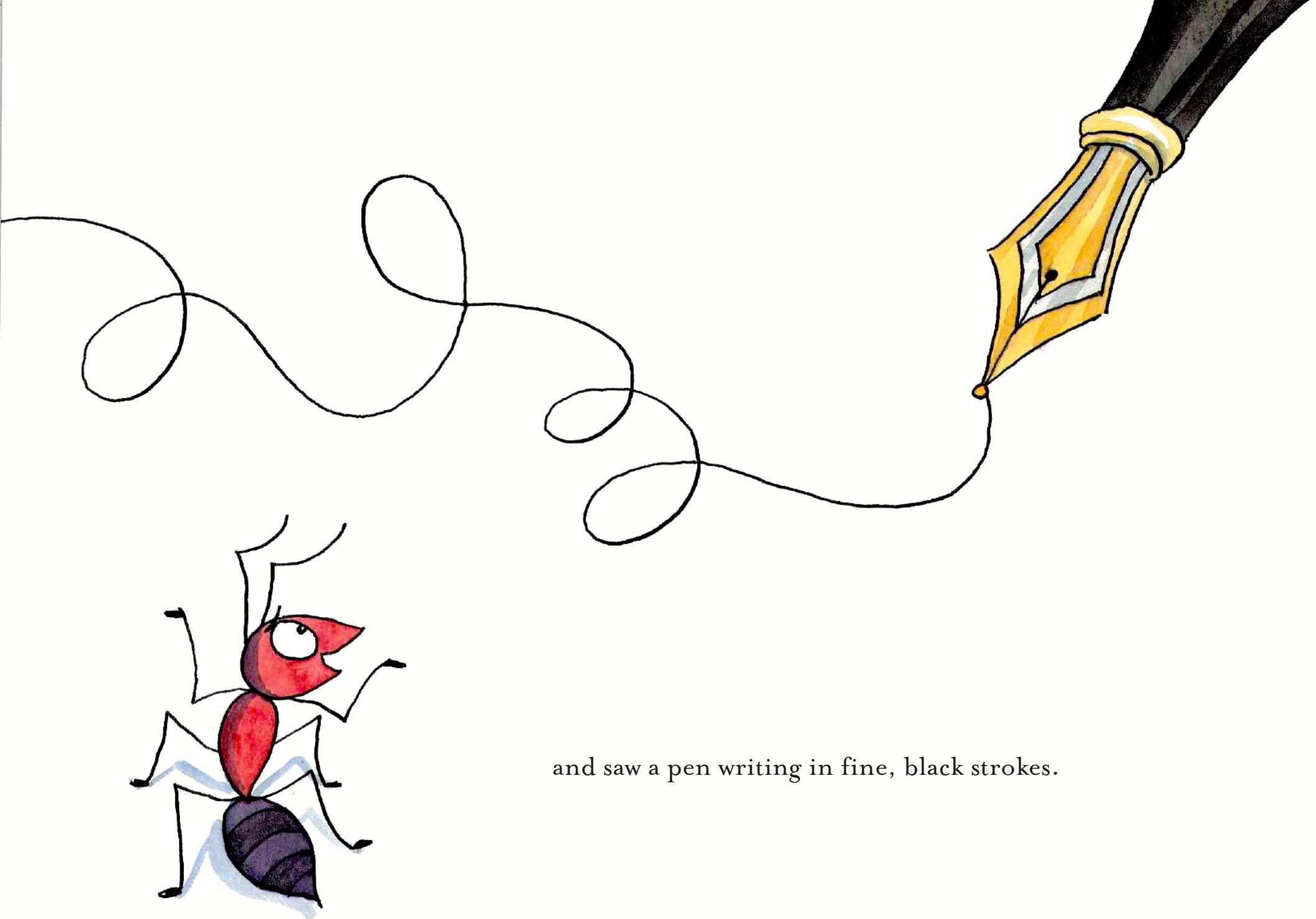
THE IDRIES SHAH FOUNDATION



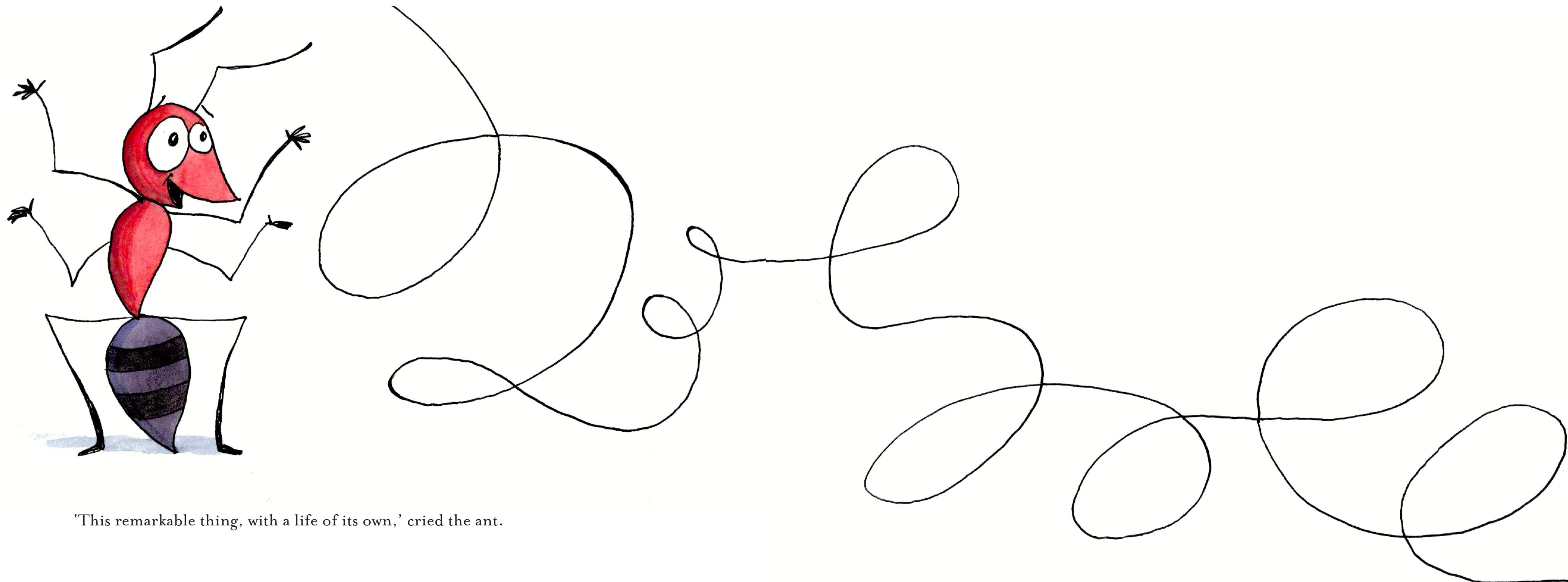
Dedicated to the sense of imagination which lives within us all.



One day a lone ant strayed across a piece of paper

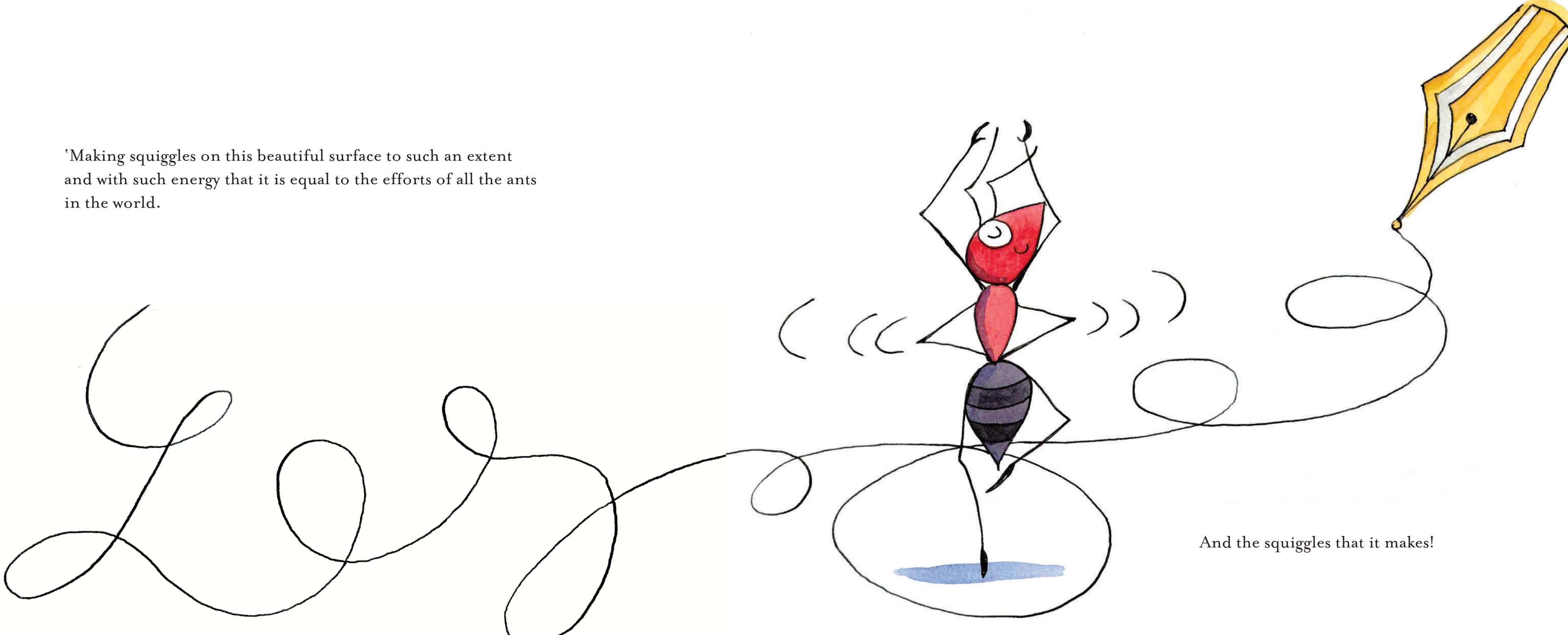


and saw a pen writing in fine, black strokes.

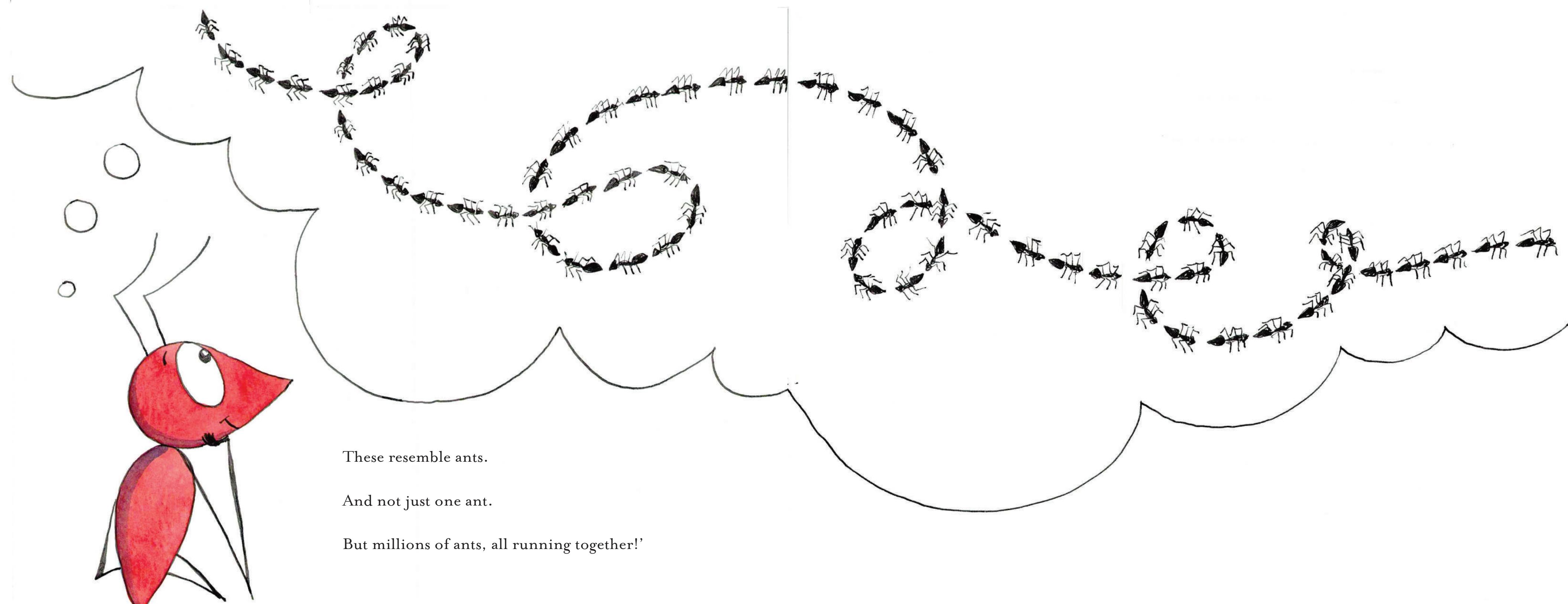


'This remarkable thing, with a life of its own,' cried the ant.

'Making squiggles on this beautiful surface to such an extent
and with such energy that it is equal to the efforts of all the ants
in the world.



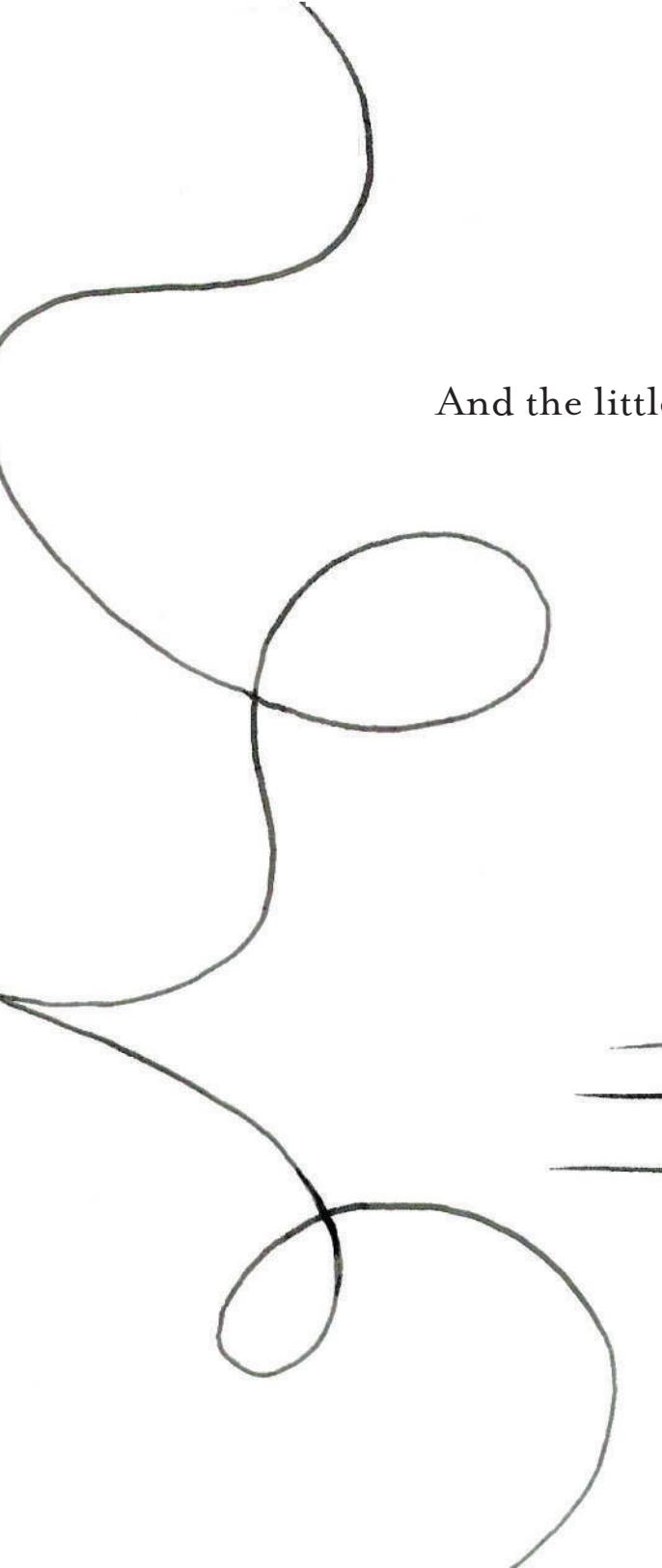
And the squiggles that it makes!



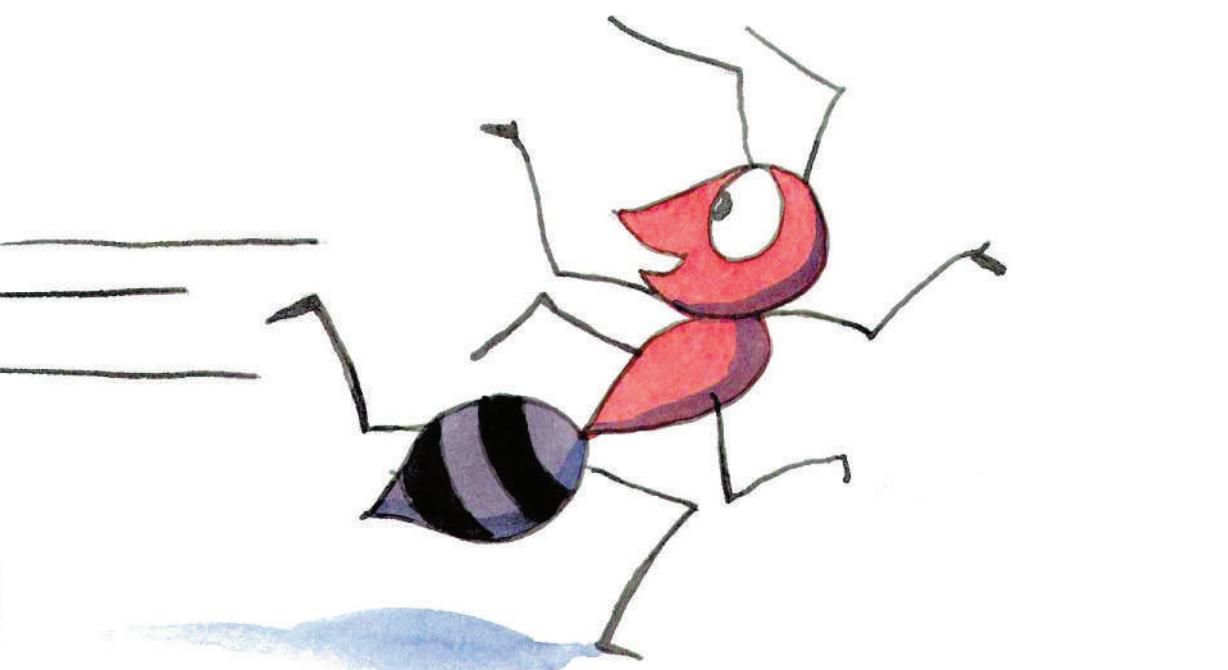
These resemble ants.

And not just one ant.

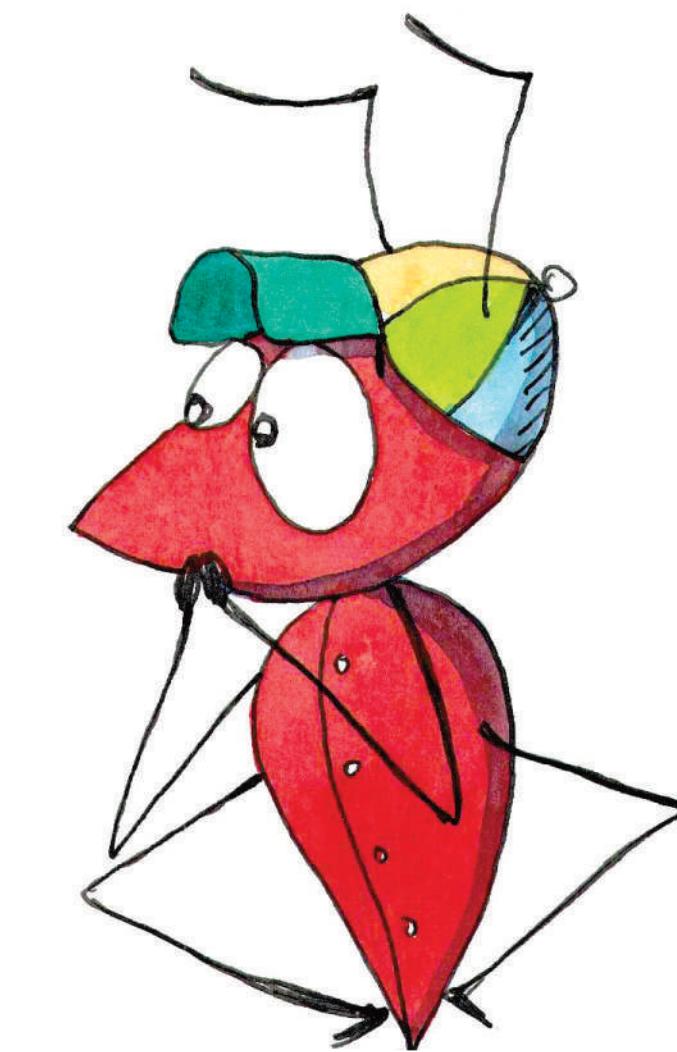
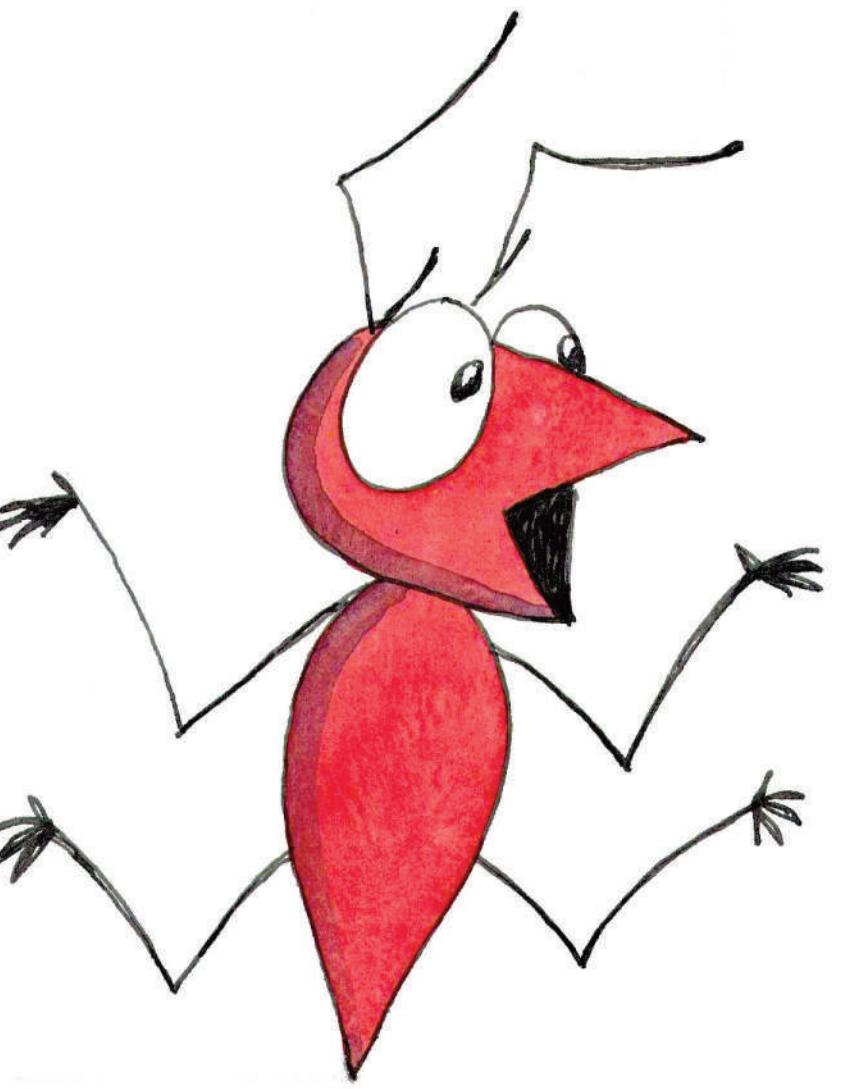
But millions of ants, all running together!'



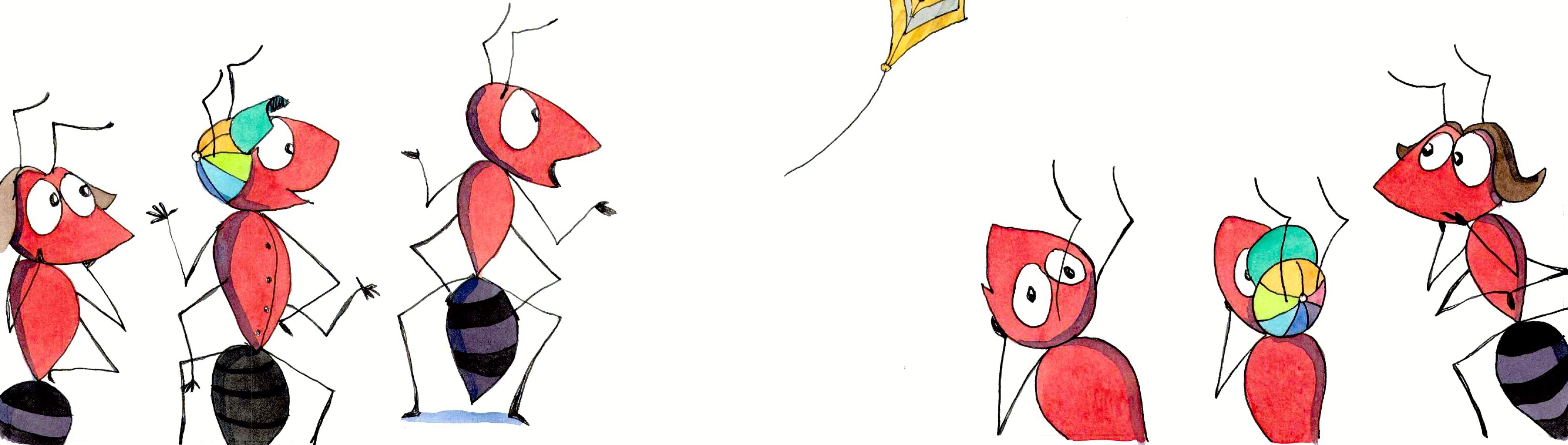
And the little ant was so excited that he rushed off to spread the news,

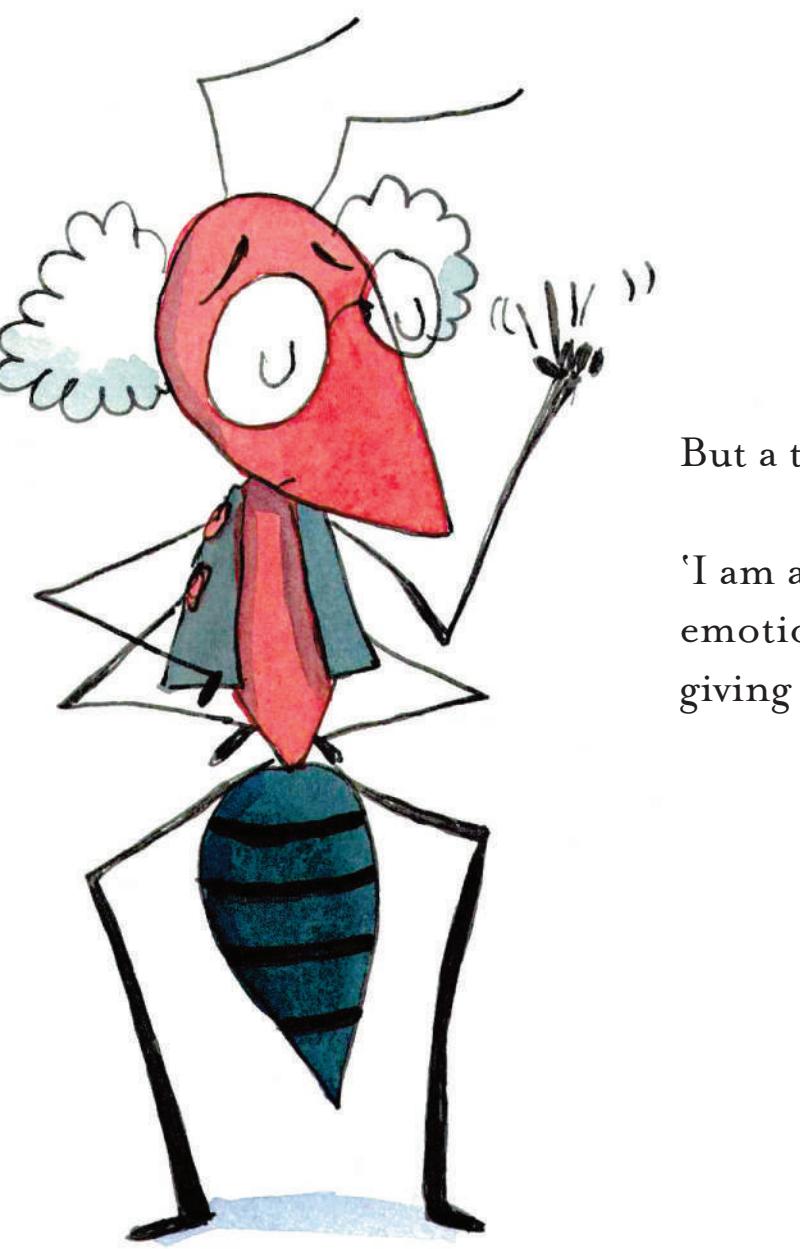


passing on his ideas to the first ant that he saw.



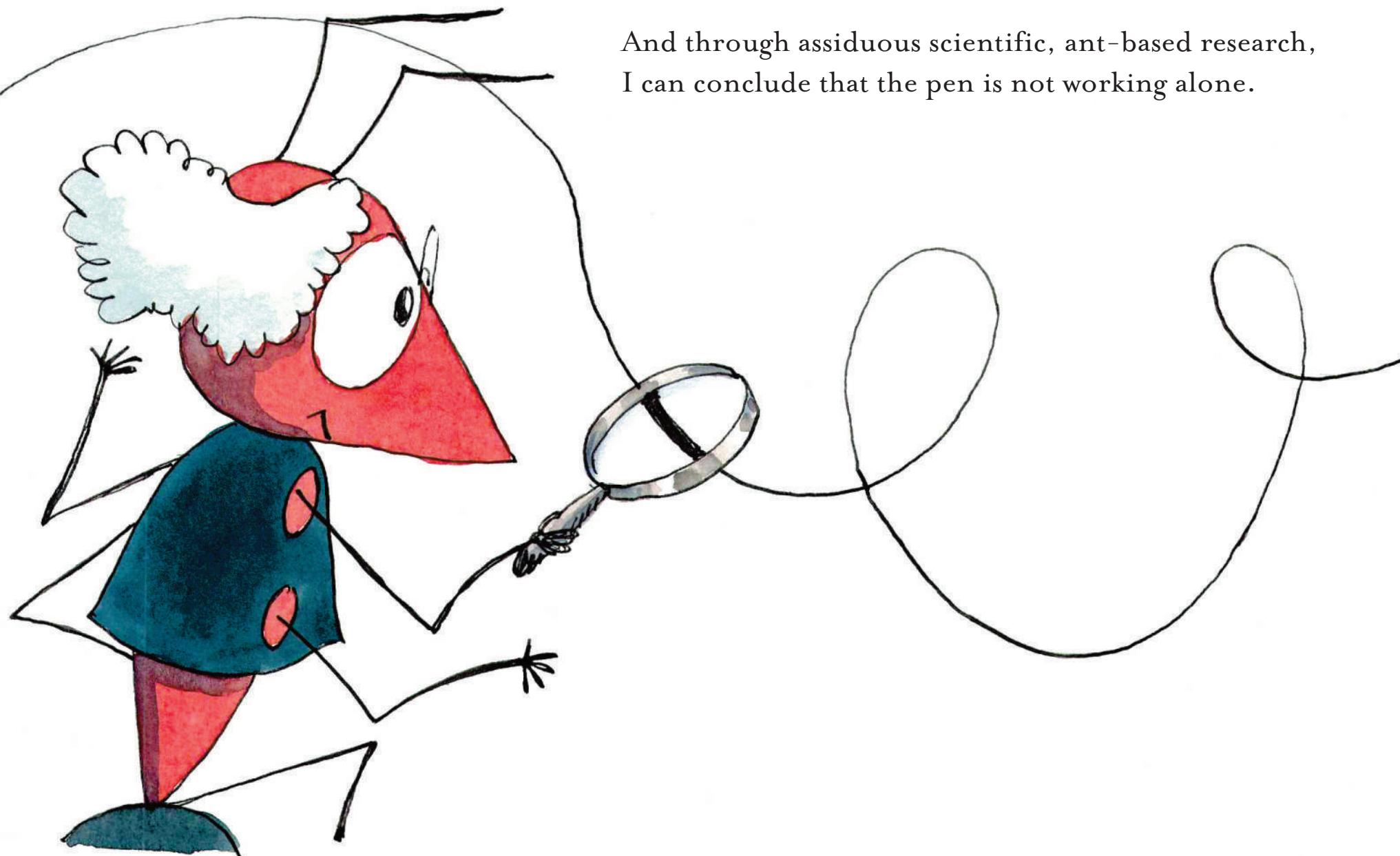
This second ant was just as thrilled by the squiggles and congratulated the bearer of the news for his discovery and for his powers of observation.





But a third ant wasn't so impressed, saying:

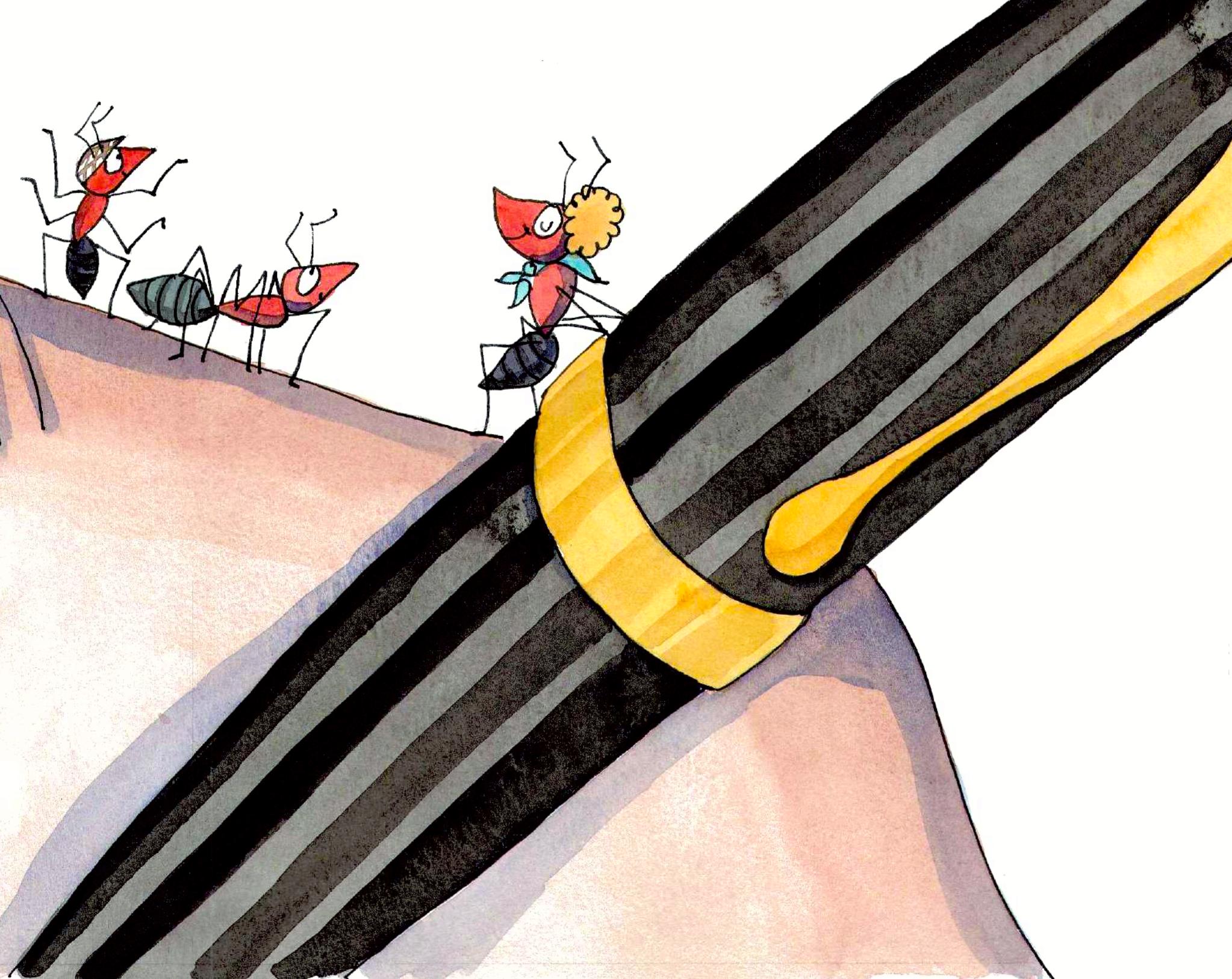
'I am afraid that you have allowed your emotions to run away with you, rather than giving the matter serious scientific ant thought.'



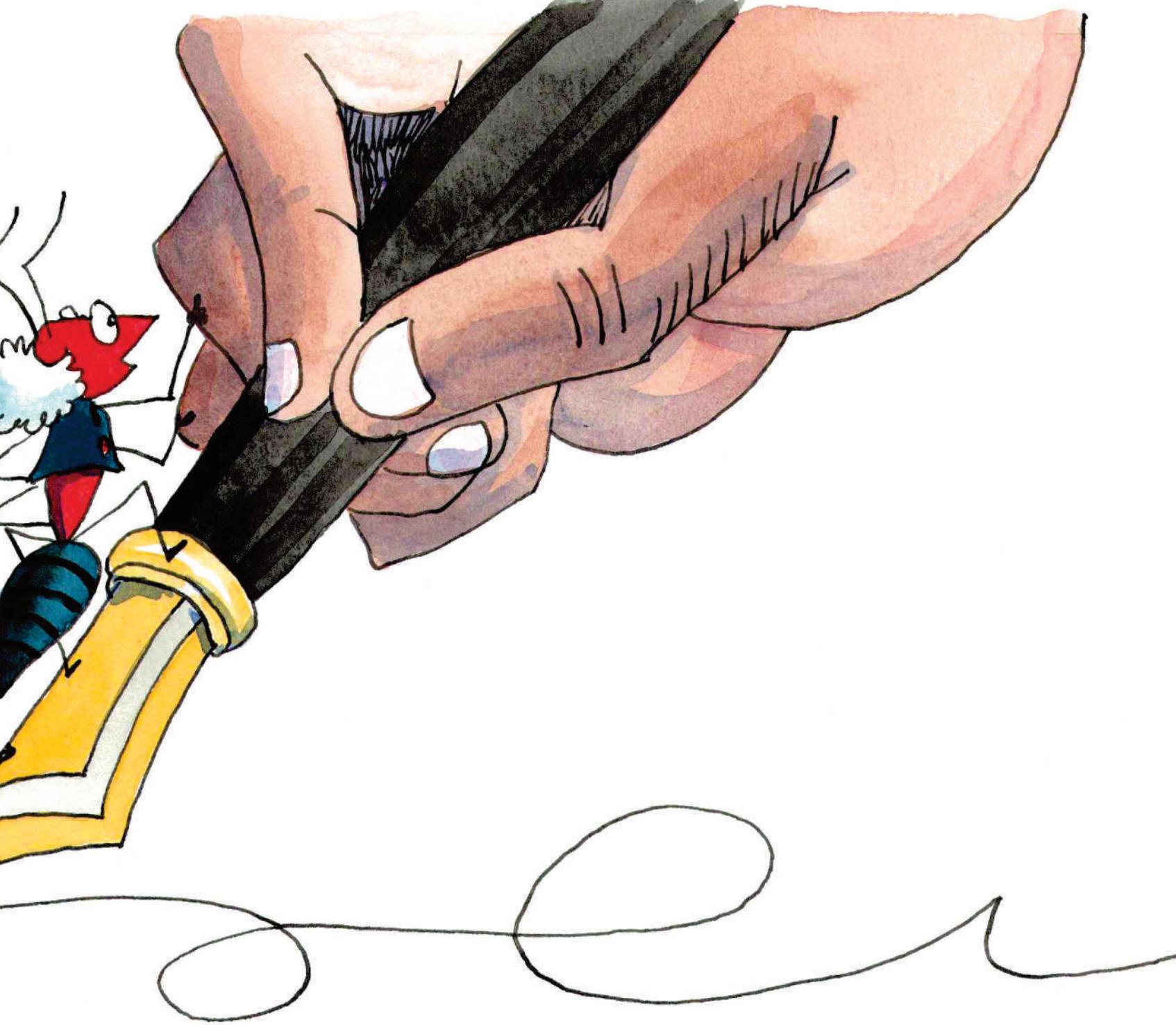
Luckily, now that you've drawn my attention to all these squiggles, I have also been studying the strange object that is making them.

And through assiduous scientific, ant-based research, I can conclude that the pen is not working alone.

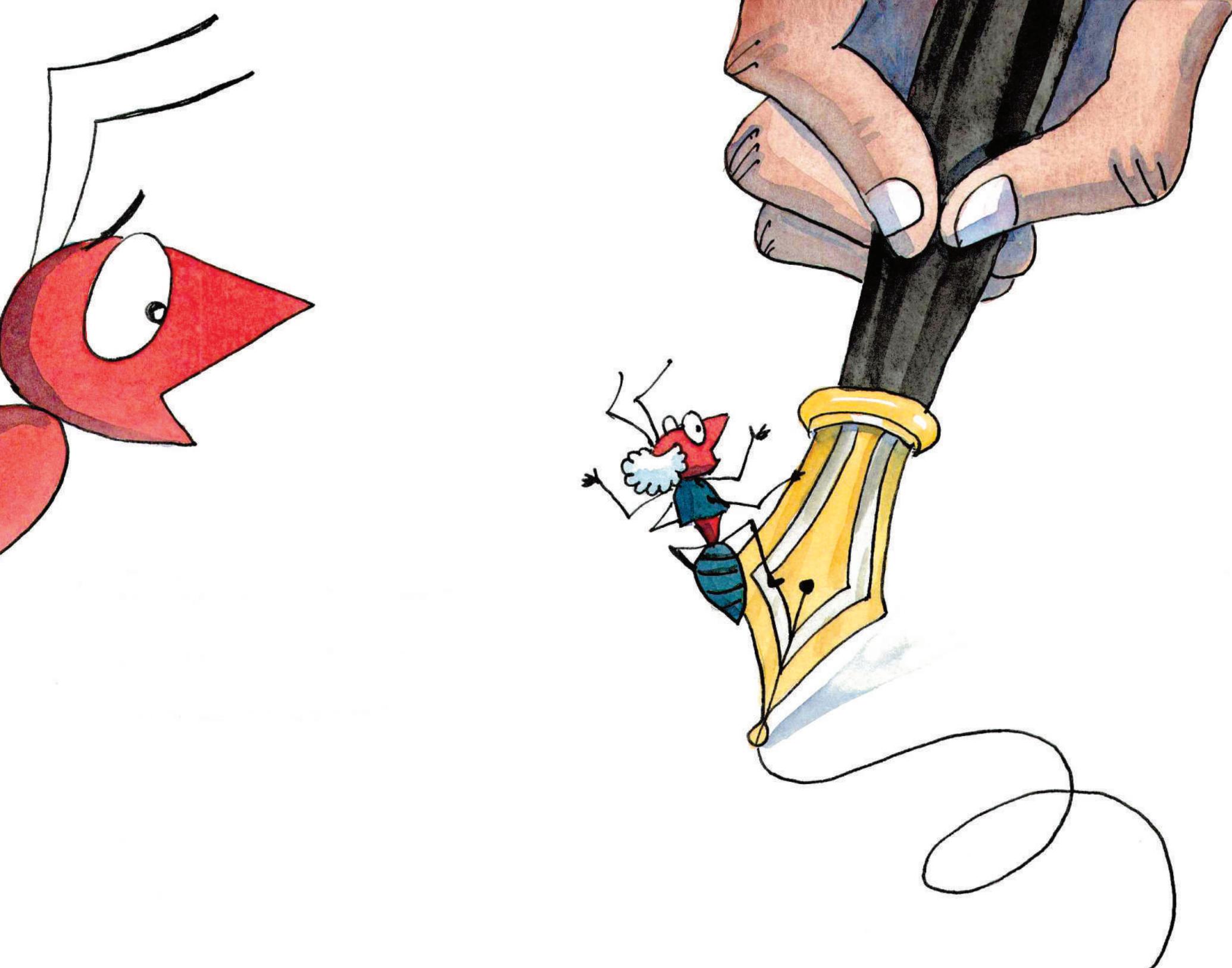
Didn't you notice that the pen is actually attached to
and surrounded by all sorts of other things?



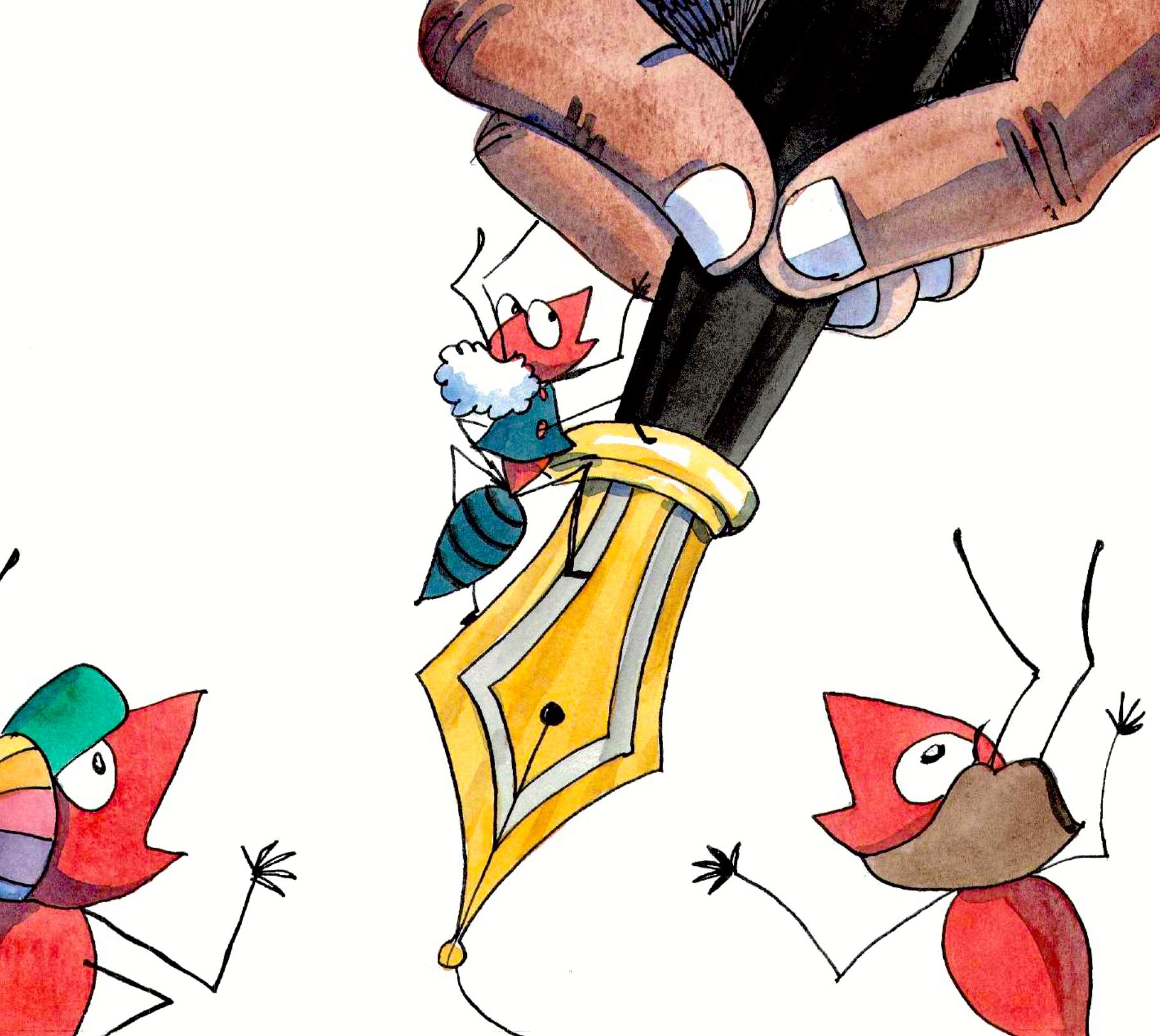
It is my scientific conclusion
that these other objects are powering it.

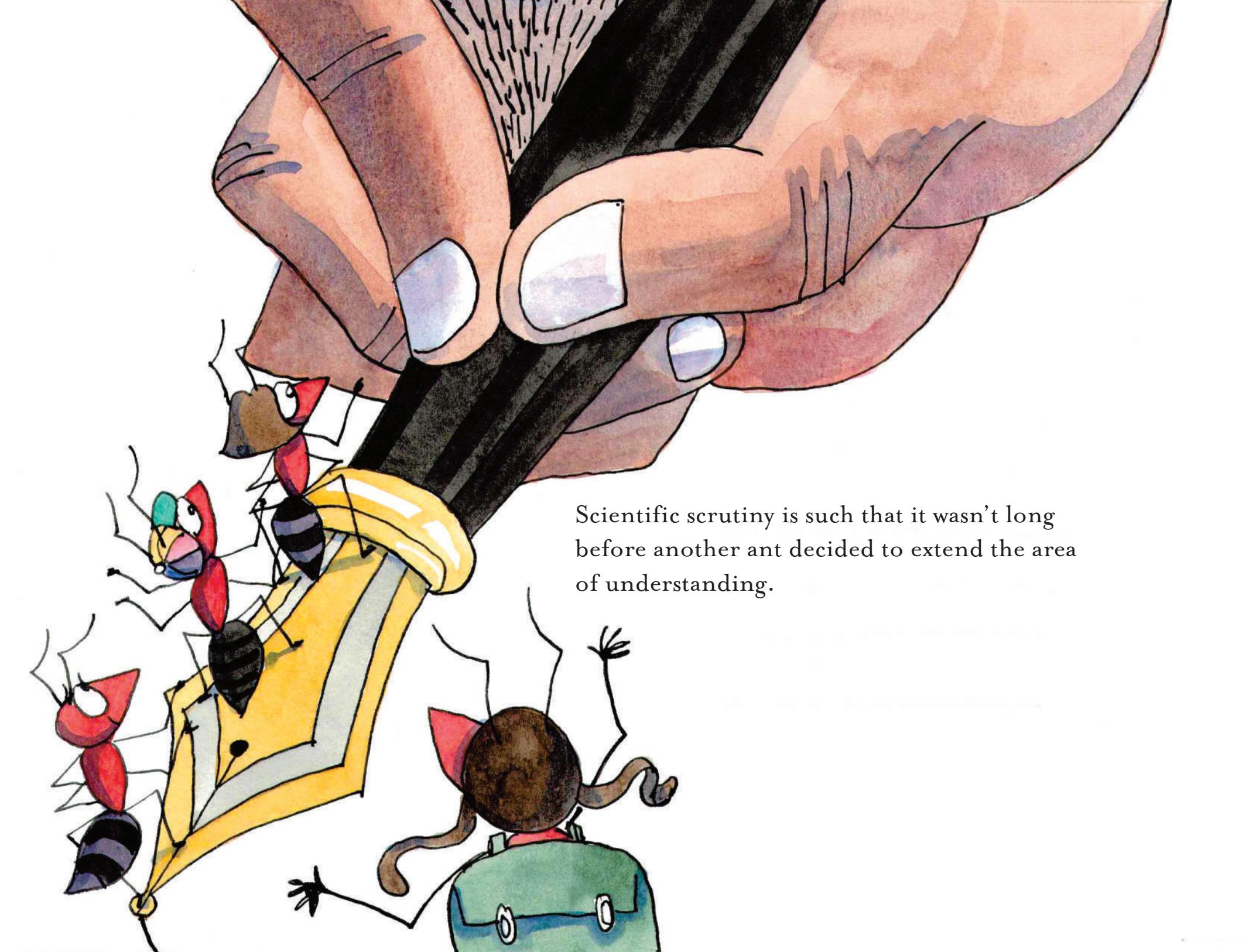


So whatever is supplying the power is responsible for these squiggles.'



And this is how the group of ants first discovered fingers.



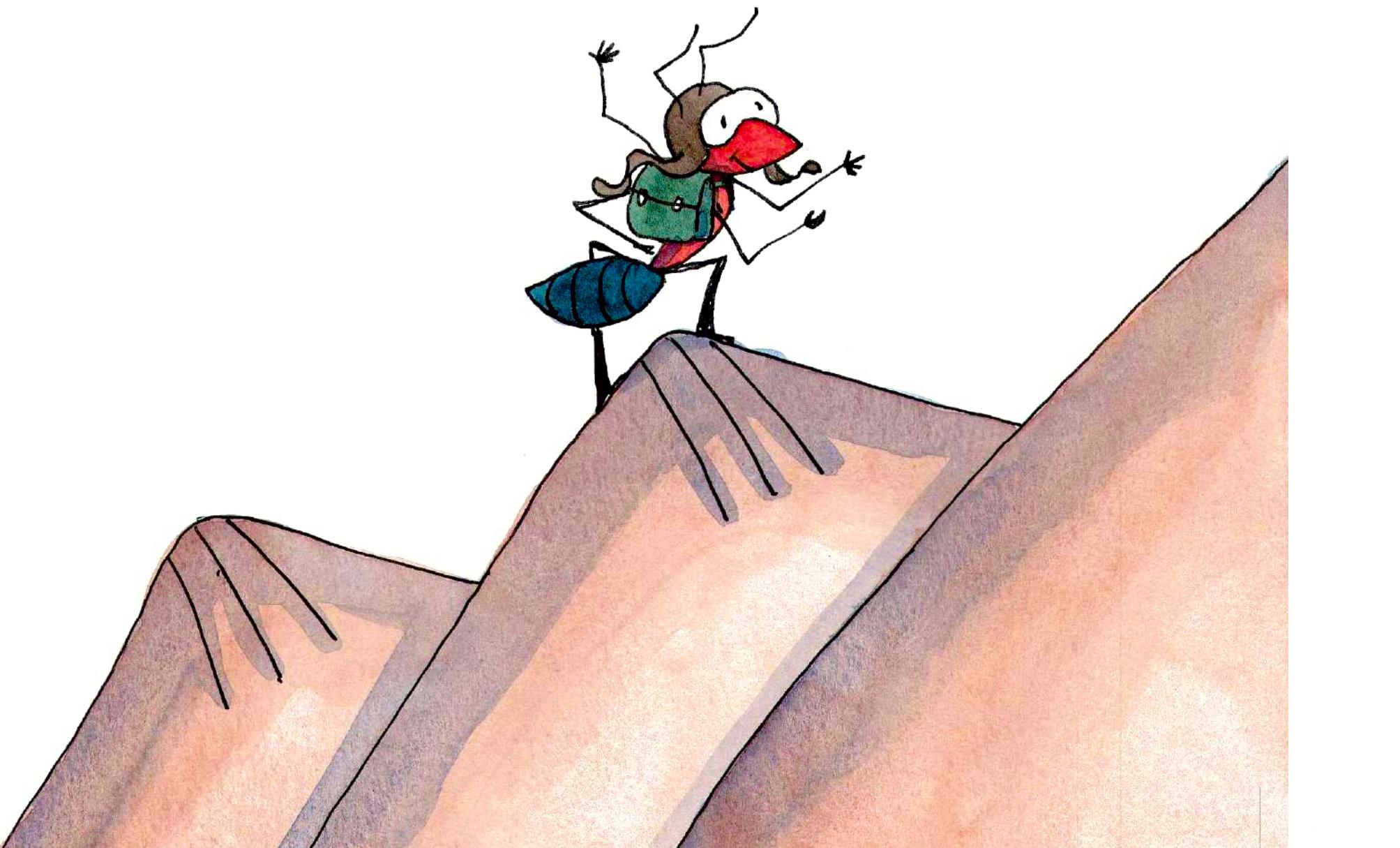


Scientific scrutiny is such that it wasn't long
before another ant decided to extend the area
of understanding.

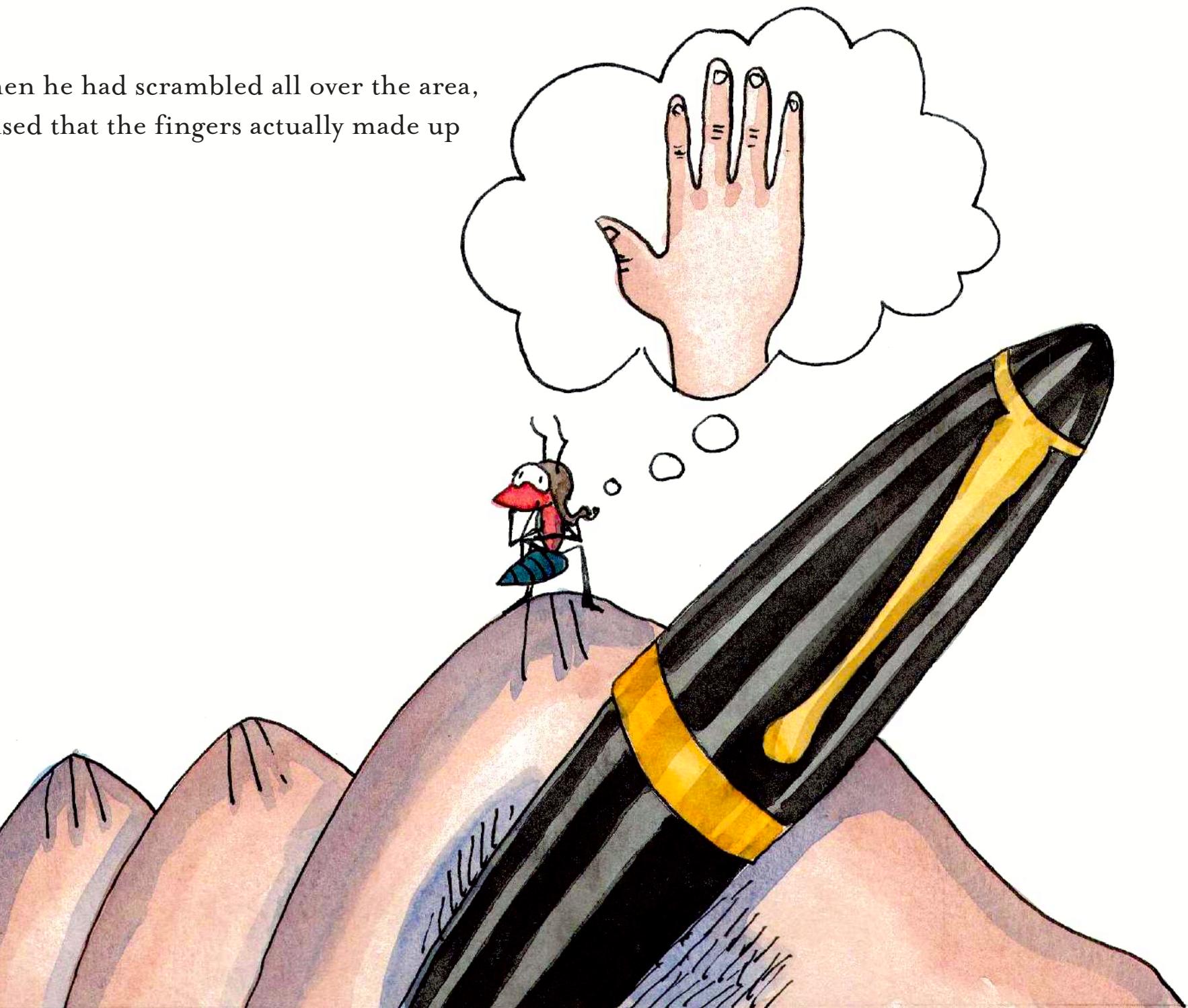


And wanting to explore the fingers further,
he scrambled all over them.

Because this is what exploring ants do.

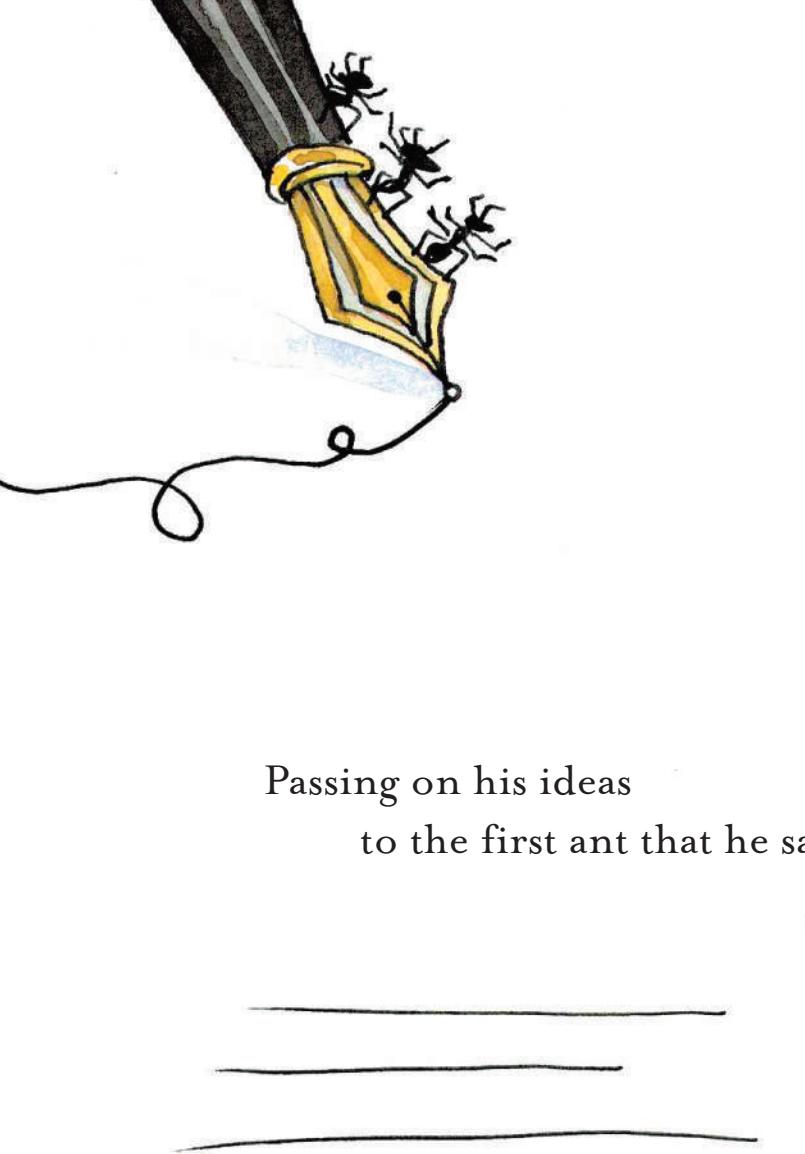
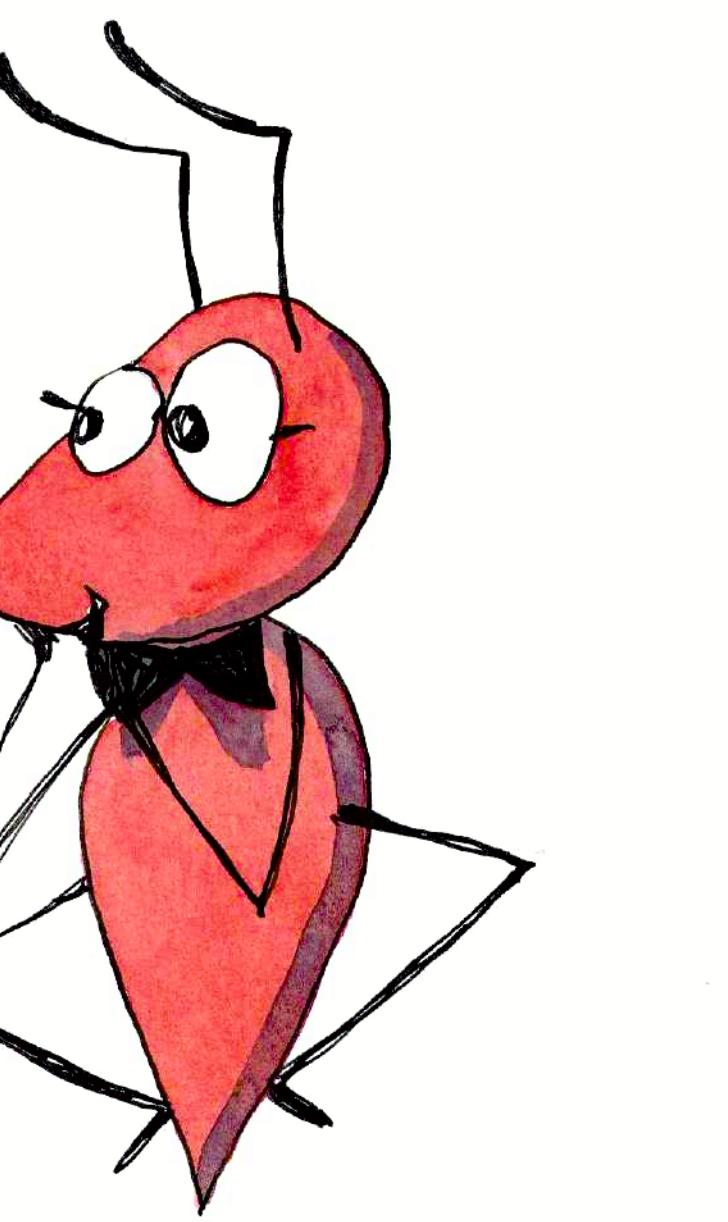


And when he had scrambled all over the area,
he realised that the fingers actually made up
a hand.





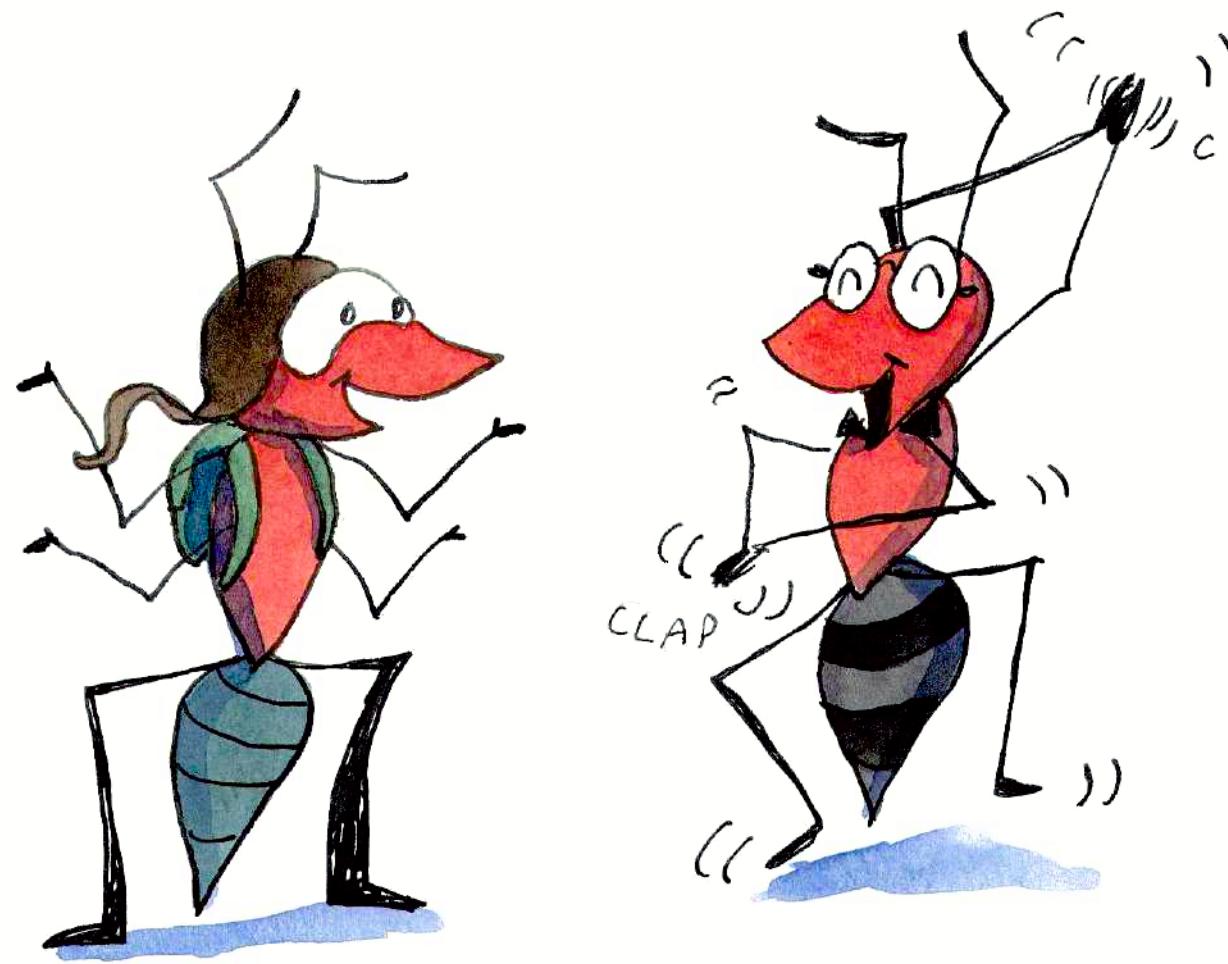
And realising this, he rushed off to spread the news.



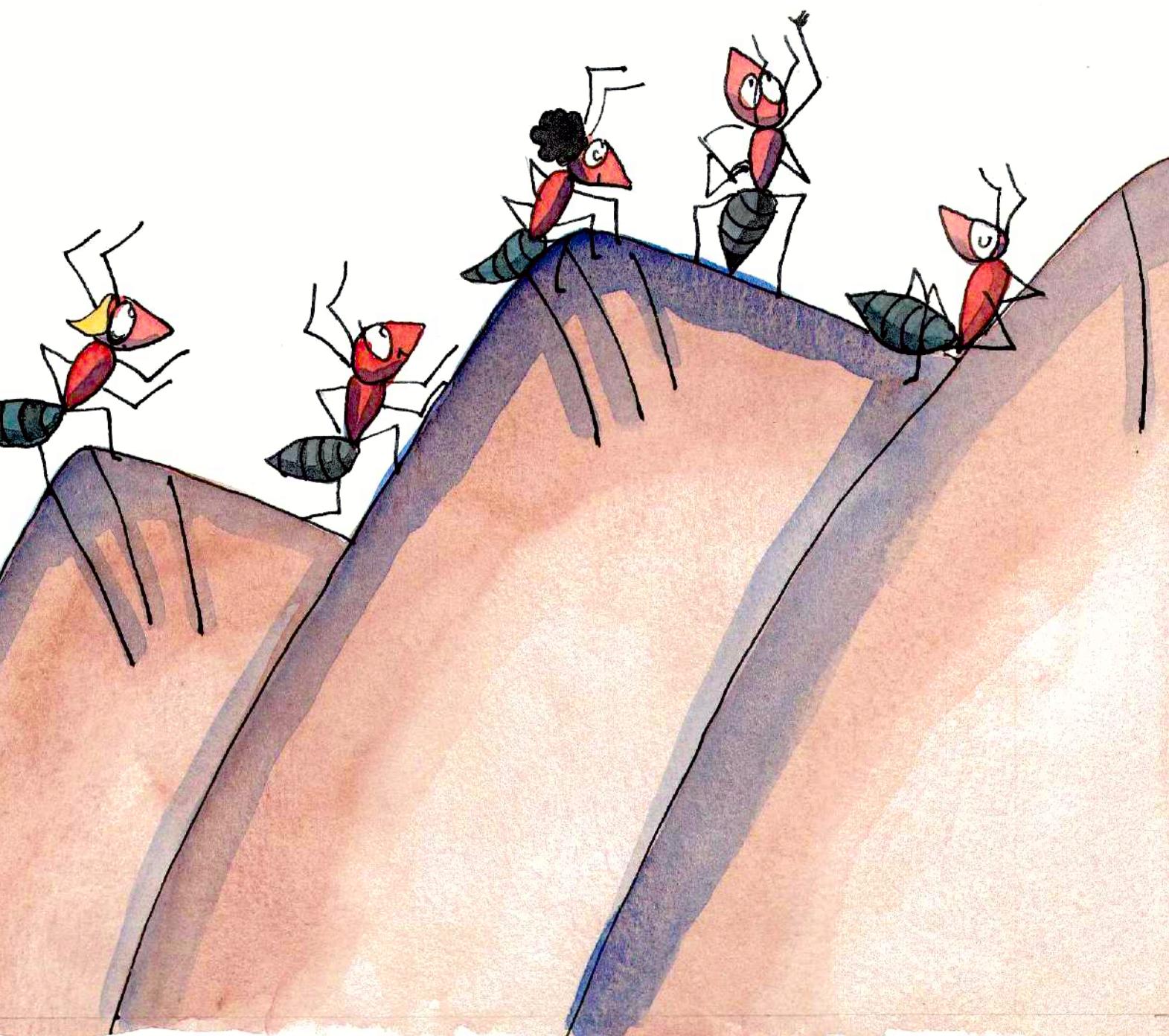
Passing on his ideas
to the first ant that he saw.

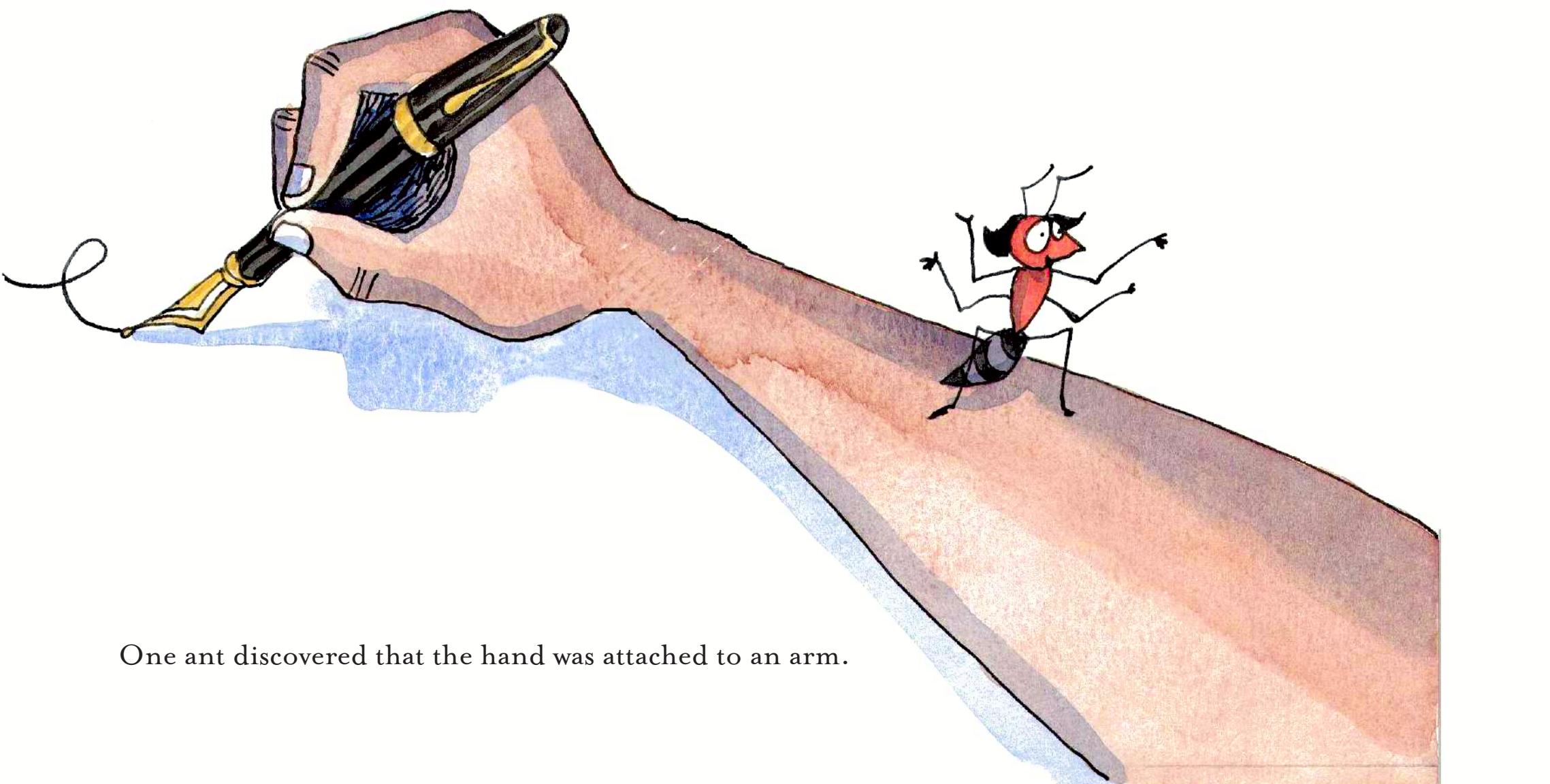


This latest ant was equally thrilled by the description of the hand, and congratulated the bearer of the news for his discovery and for his powers of ant observation.

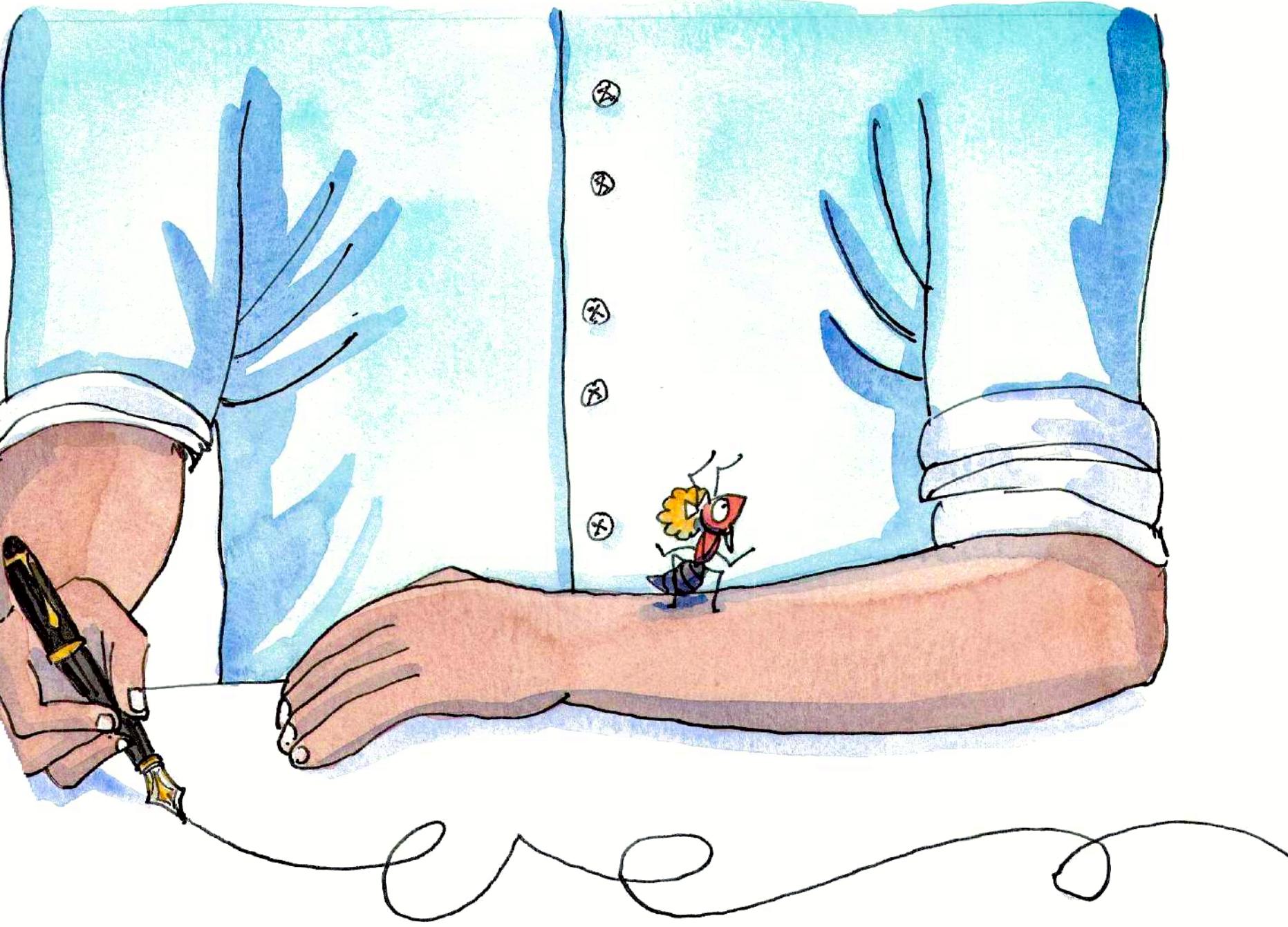


As time went by, ant after ant set out to extend the boundaries of the ants' understanding.

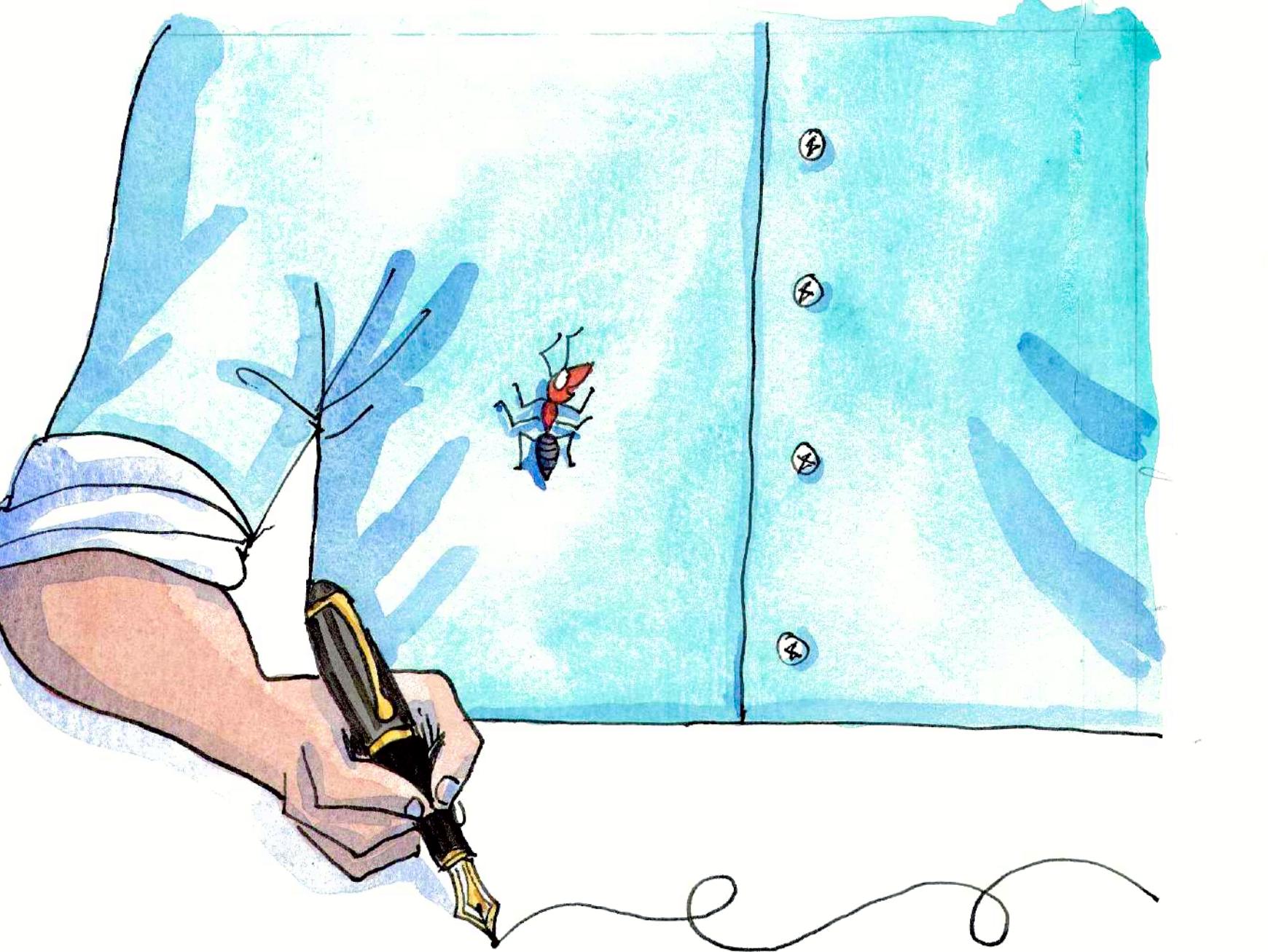




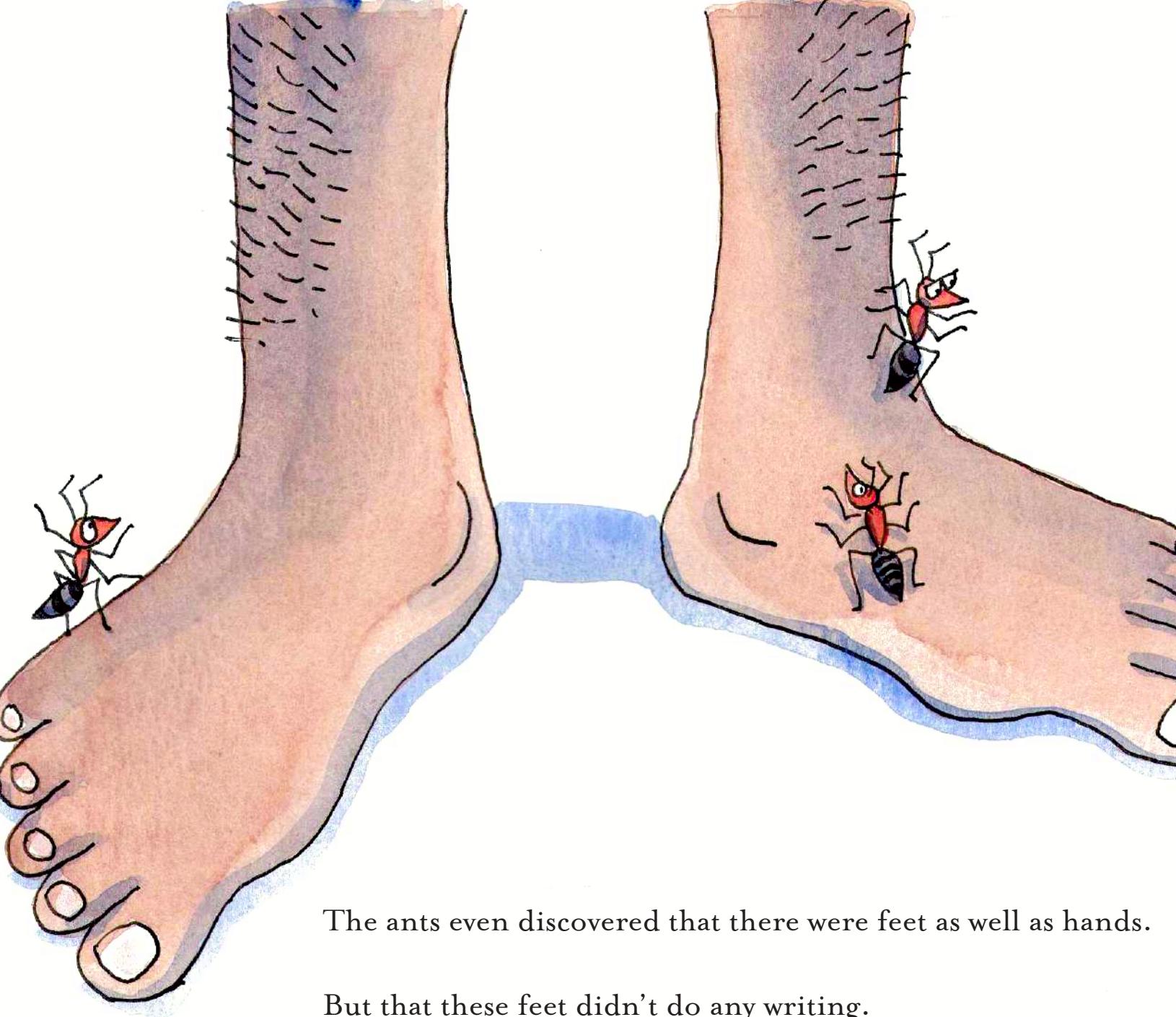
One ant discovered that the hand was attached to an arm.



Another discovered that the arm was attached to a body.

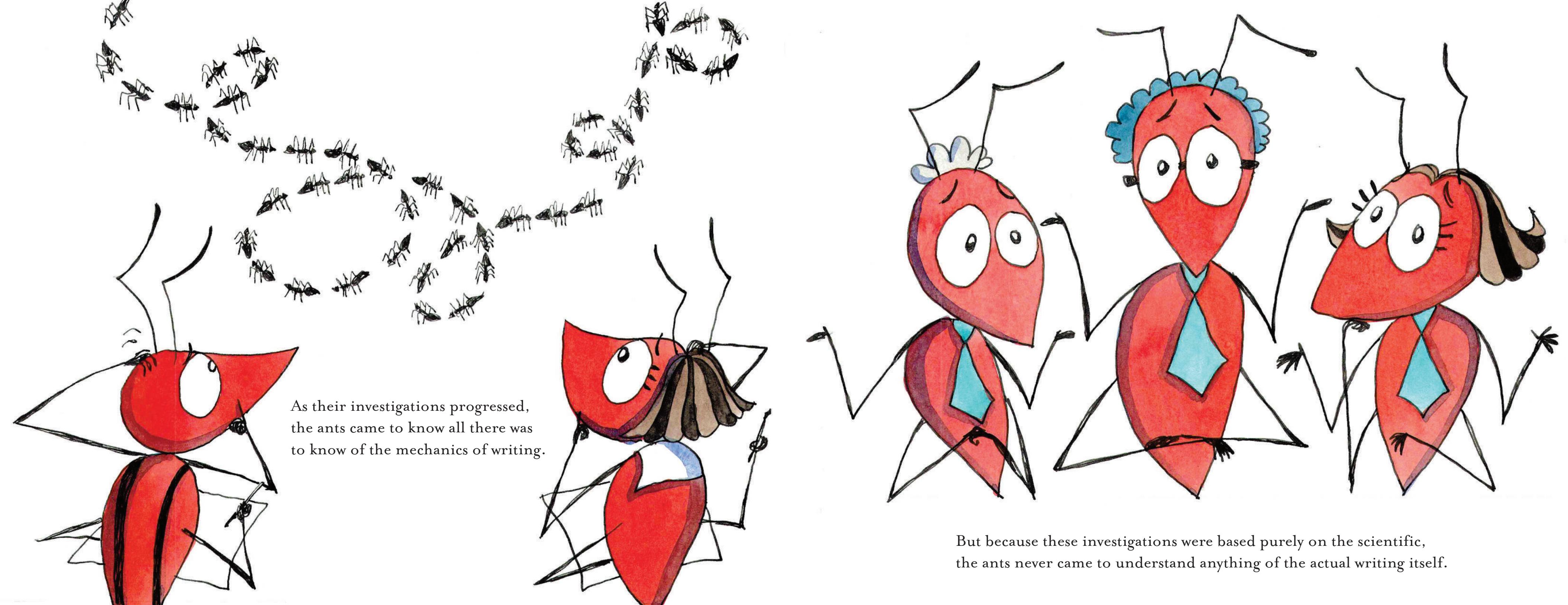


Another discovered that there were in fact two hands.



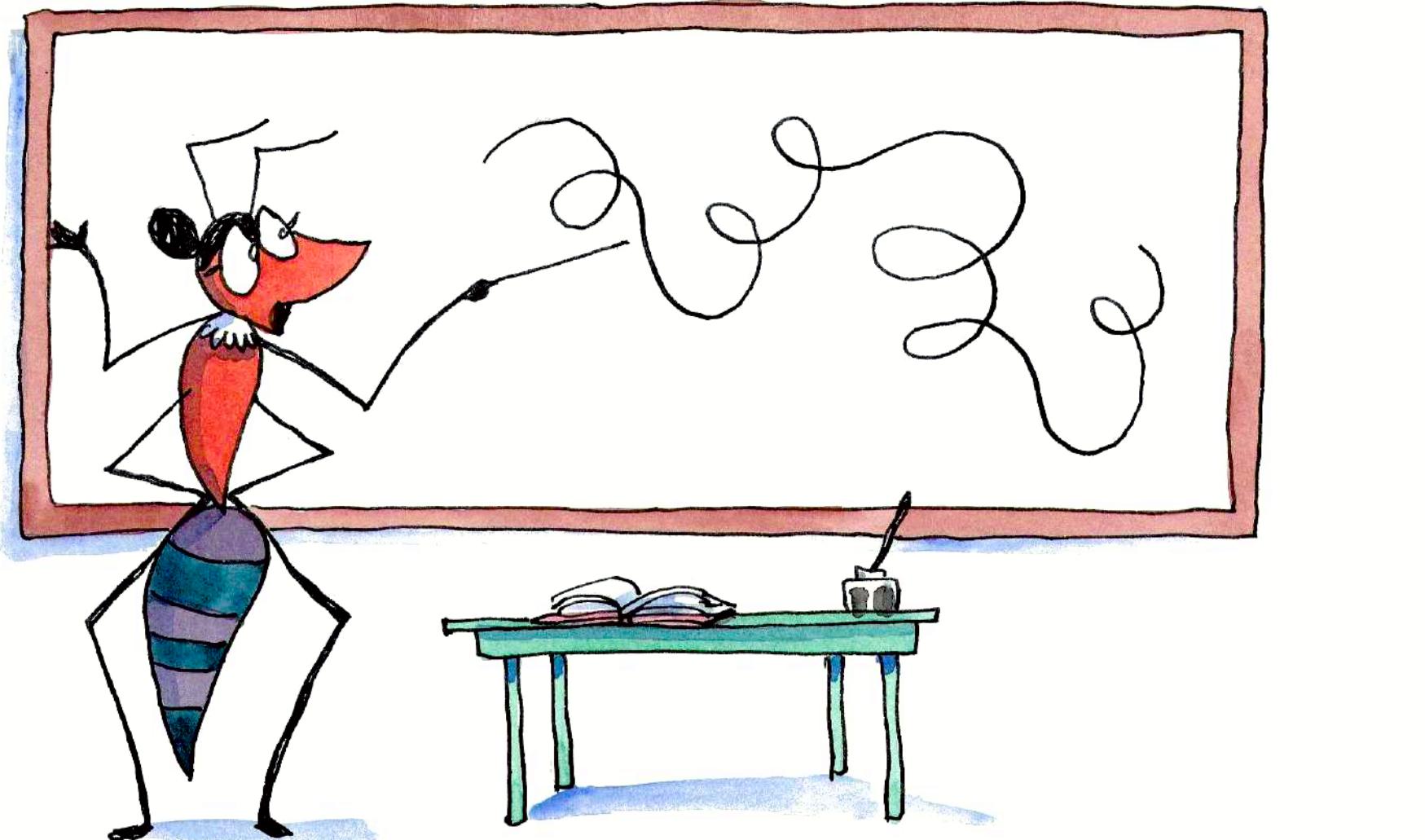
The ants even discovered that there were feet as well as hands.

But that these feet didn't do any writing.



As their investigations progressed,
the ants came to know all there was
to know of the mechanics of writing.

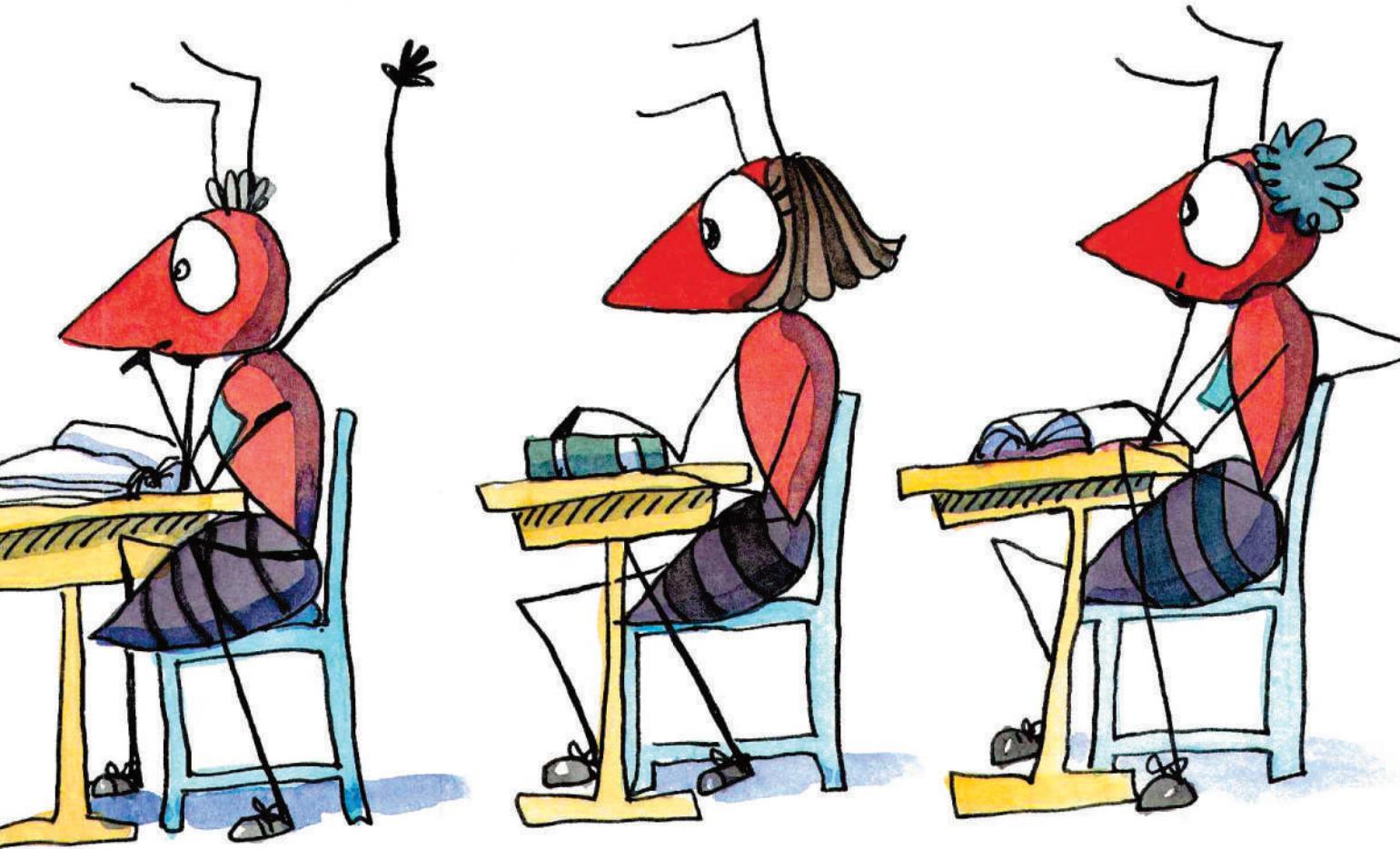
But because these investigations were based purely on the scientific,
the ants never came to understand anything of the actual writing itself.



So after all this time, if you were to ask an ant to read a word...

...or what message a squiggle is attempting to communicate...

...it would simply look at you blankly...







...and tell you that you had completely missed the point of thorough, ant-based research.

