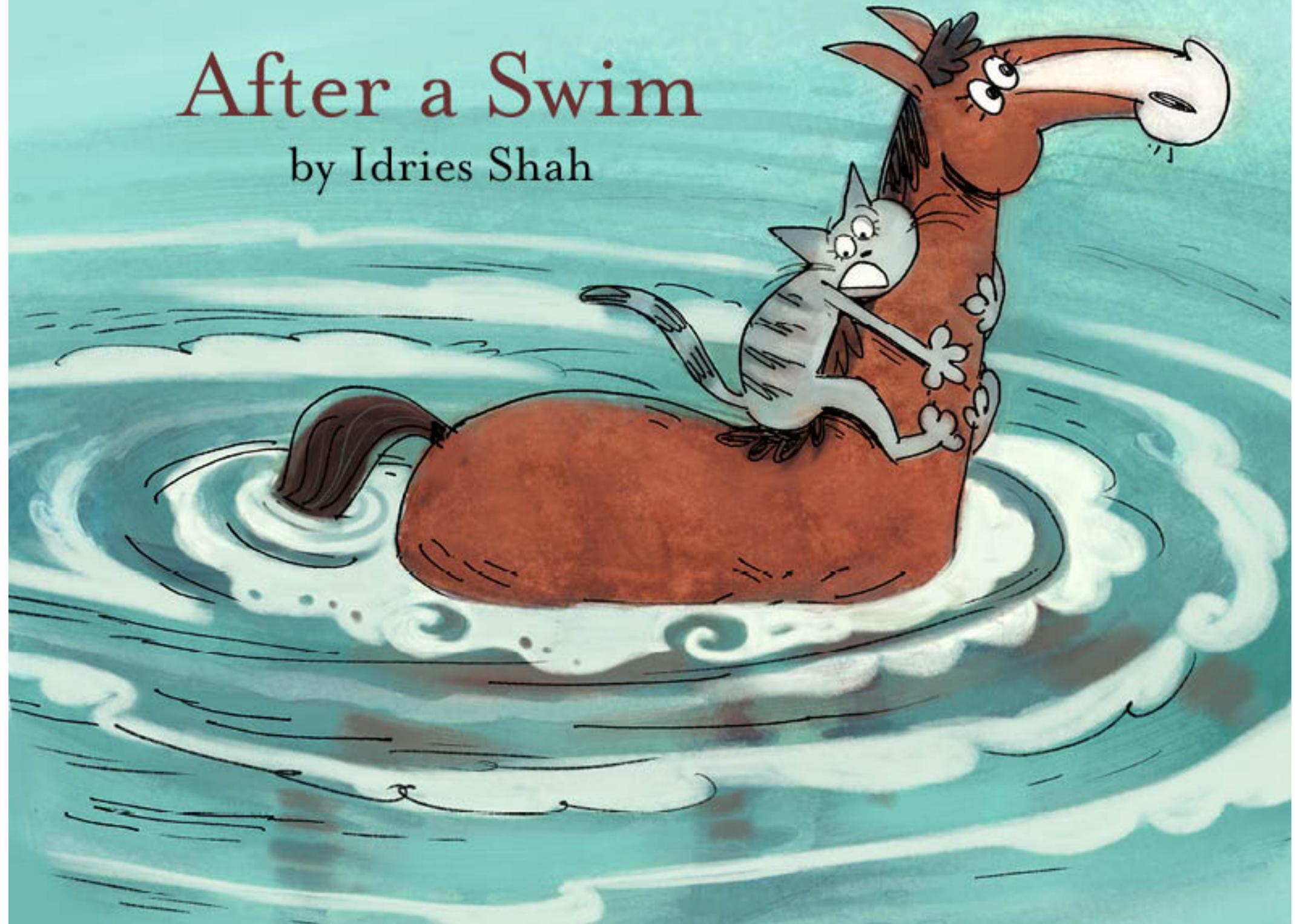


After a Swim

by Idries Shah



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Layout and Design: Rachana Shah

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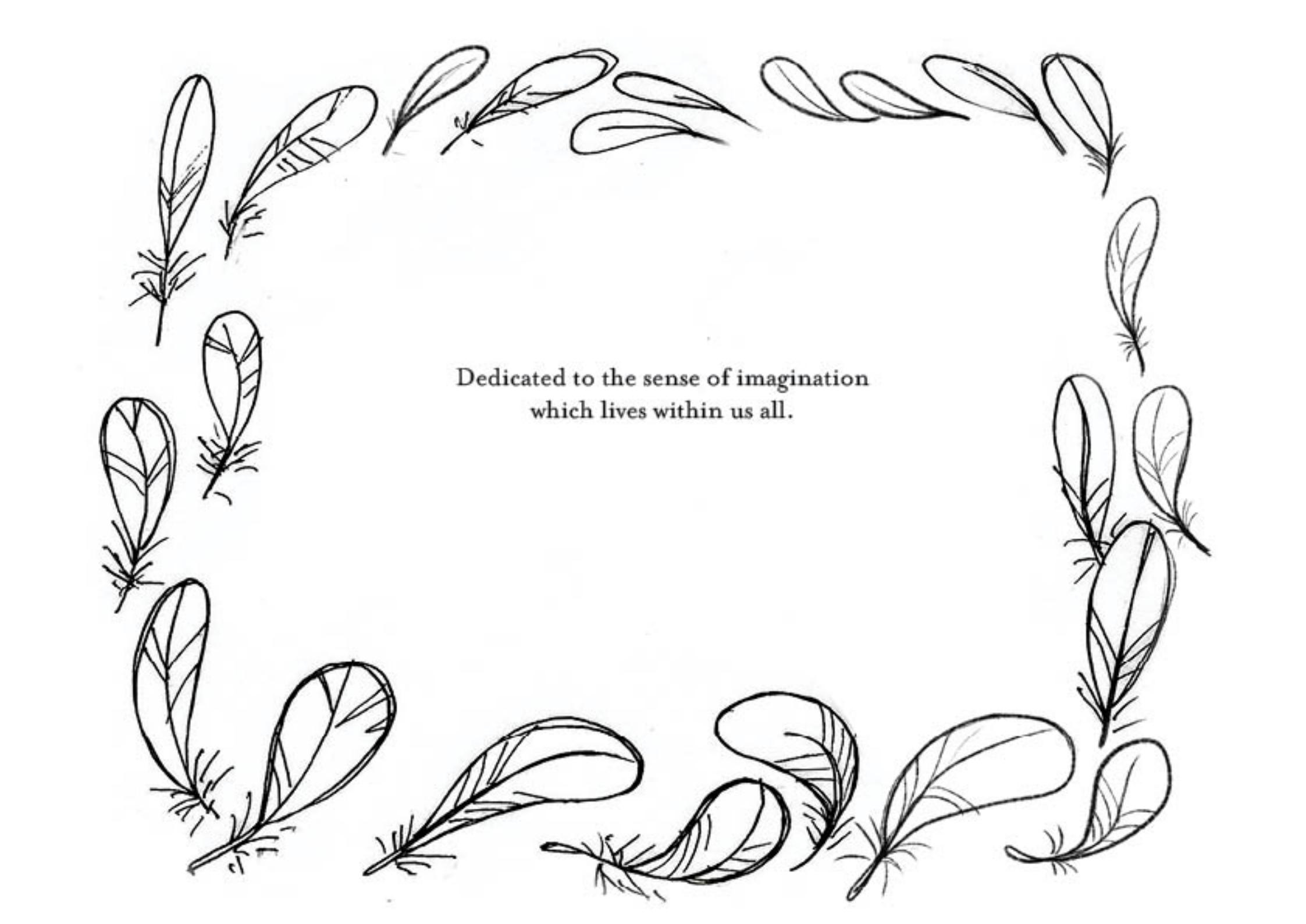
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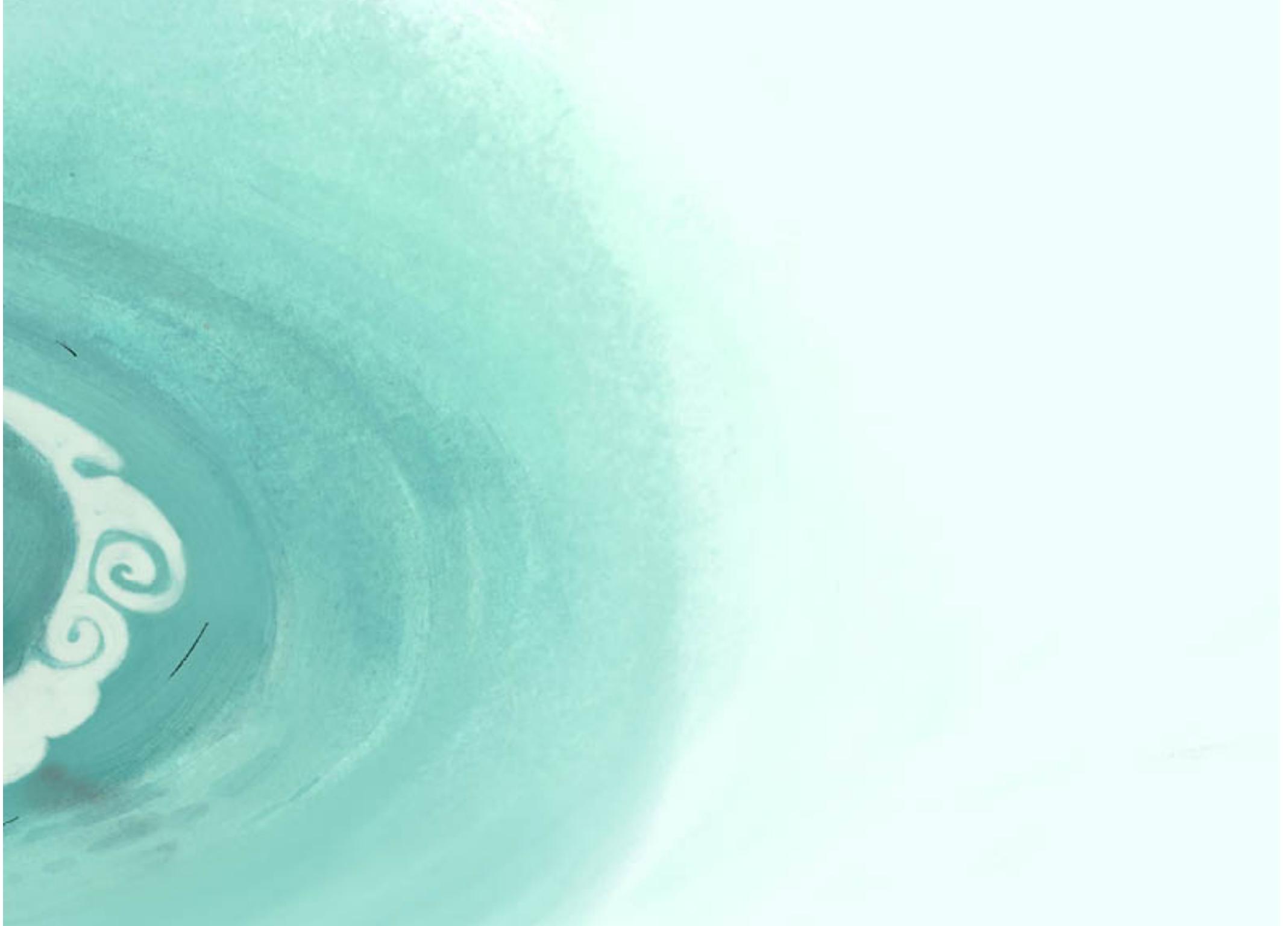
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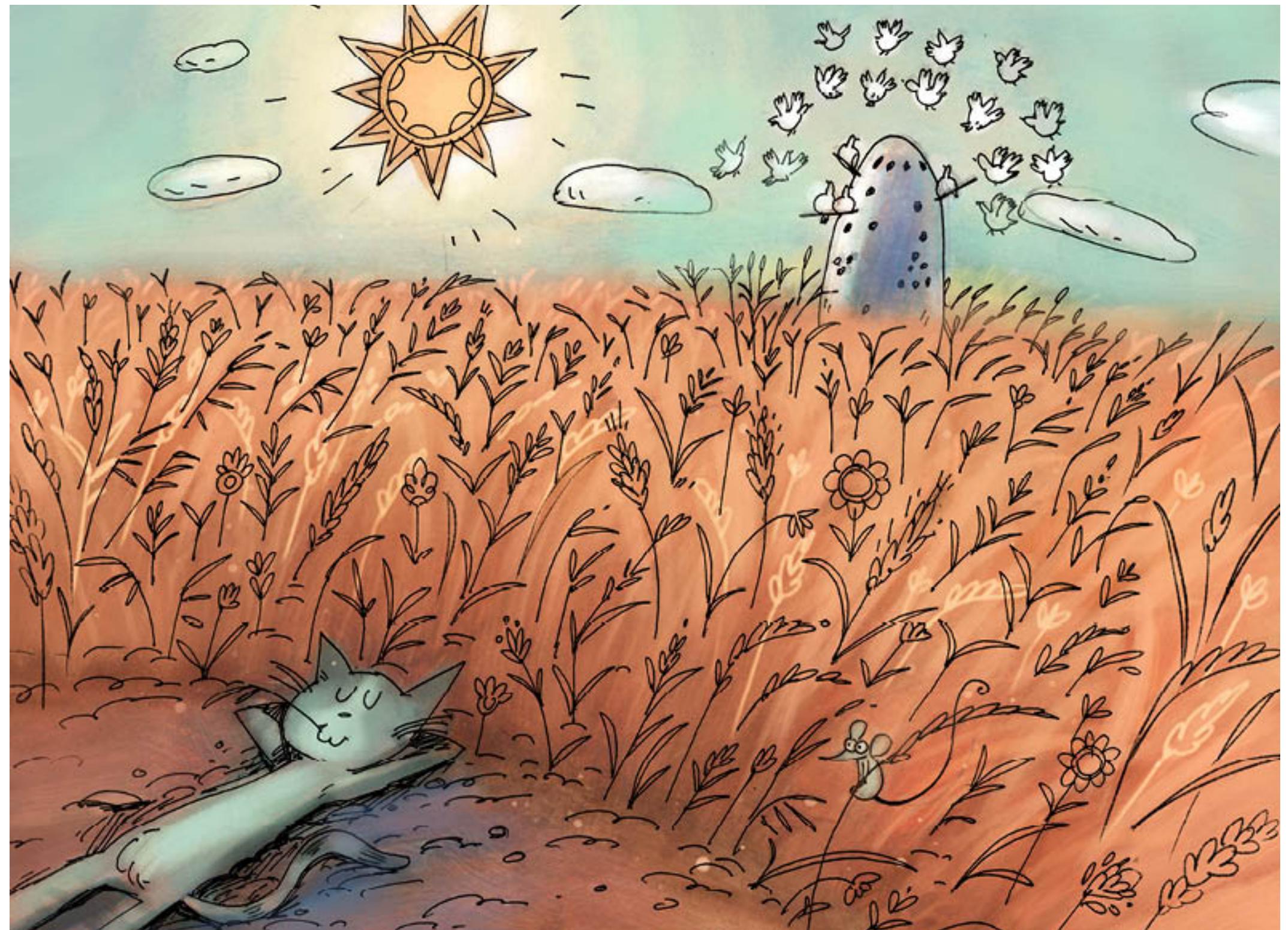




Dedicated to the sense of imagination
which lives within us all.



Once upon a time, there was a cat that lived in a field
beside a wide, wide river.



He often wished that he could swim.



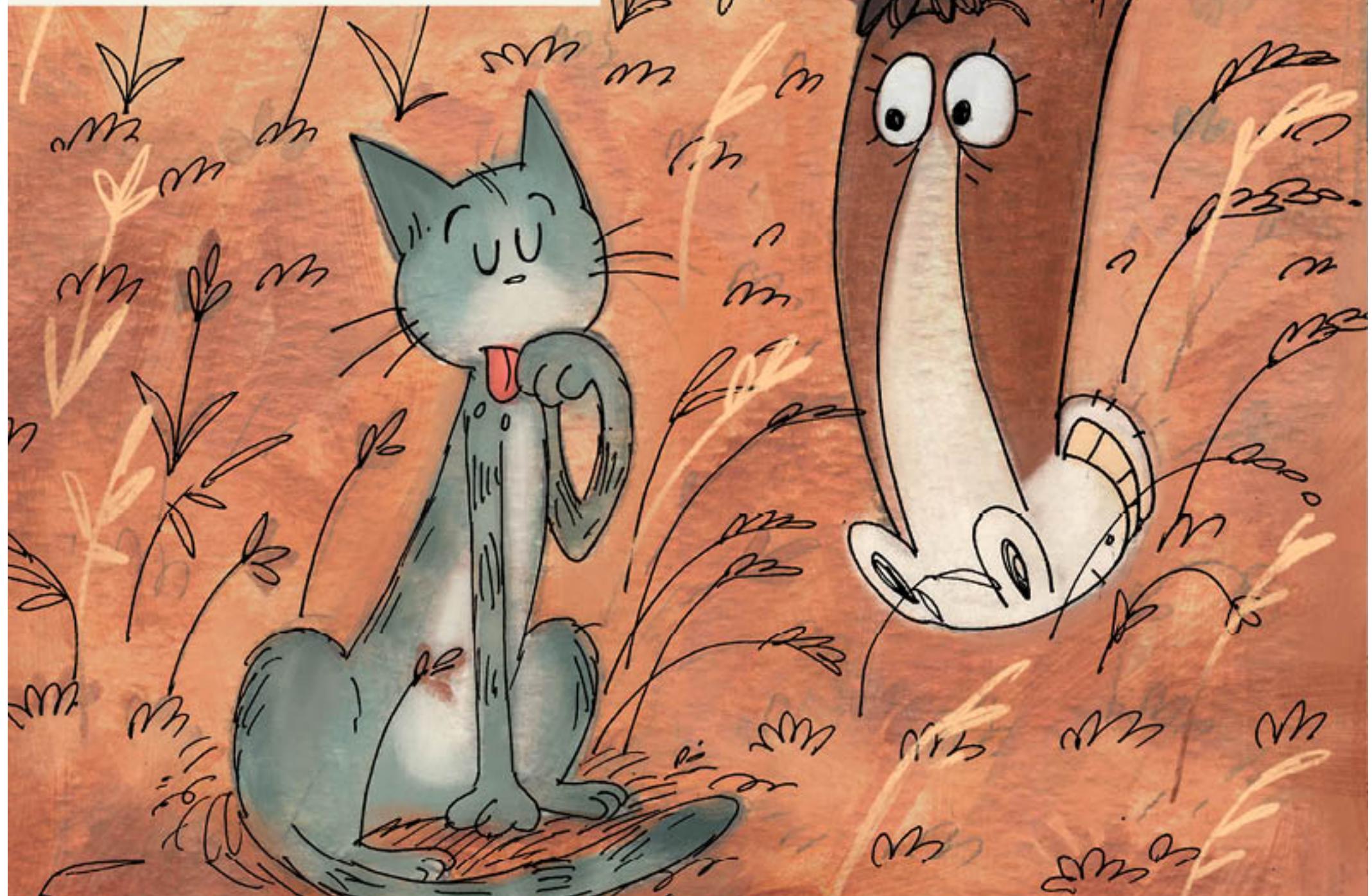




Because, that way, he might cross the river, reaching the large and well-stocked pigeon-house, which was on the other side.



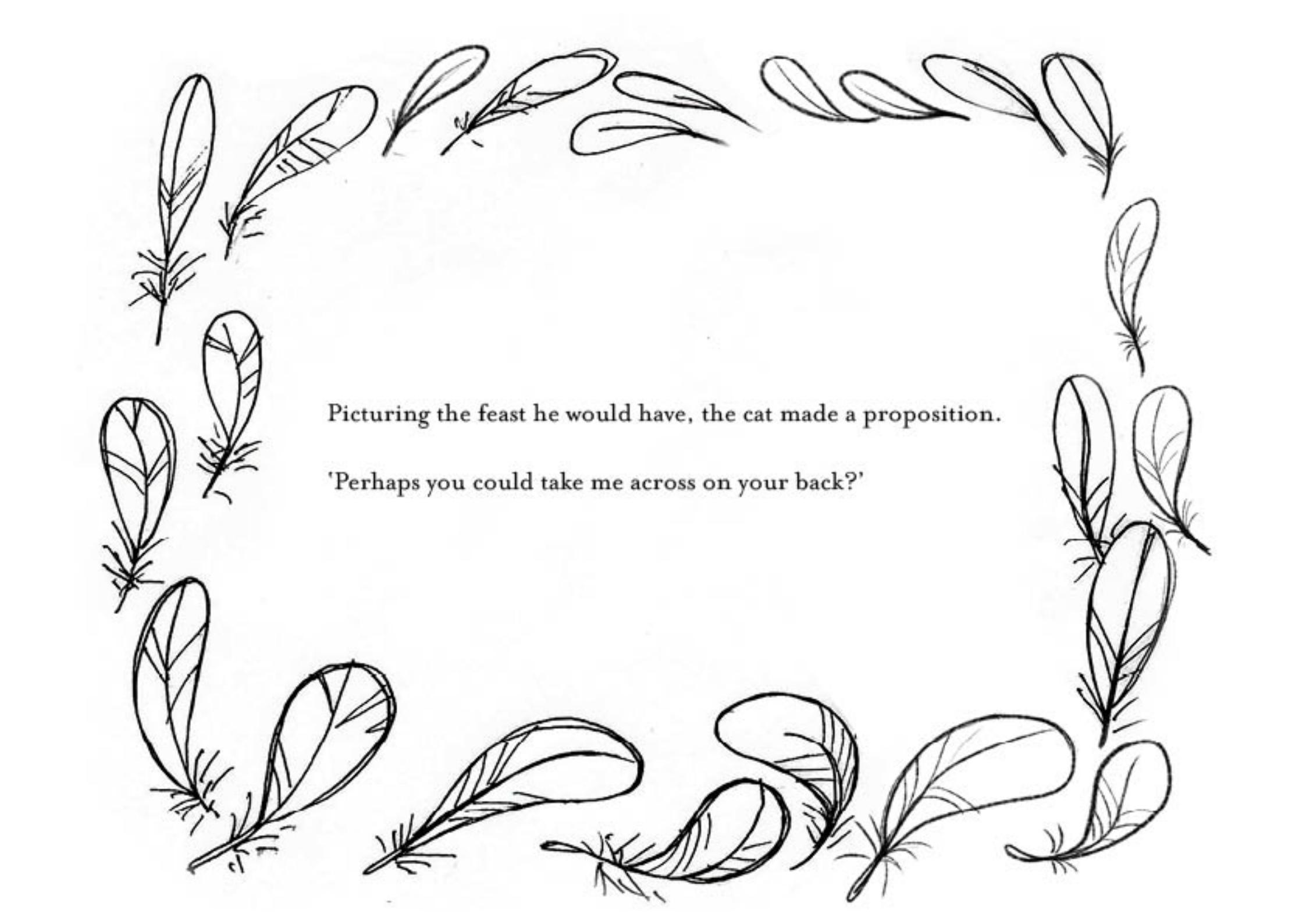
'If only I knew someone who could swim
and who liked sweet juicy corn,' said the cat.



Because that delectable golden corn really
is wasted on those fat foolish pigeons.



'What a coincidence,' said the horse, 'I'm thinking of swimming across the river, to graze on some of that lovely ripening corn on the other side.'



Picturing the feast he would have, the cat made a proposition.

'Perhaps you could take me across on your back?'



The background of the image shows a portion of a teal-colored book cover or endpaper. On the left side, there is a white, stylized decorative element resembling a cloud or a series of swirling lines. The rest of the image is dominated by a large, soft-focus white area.

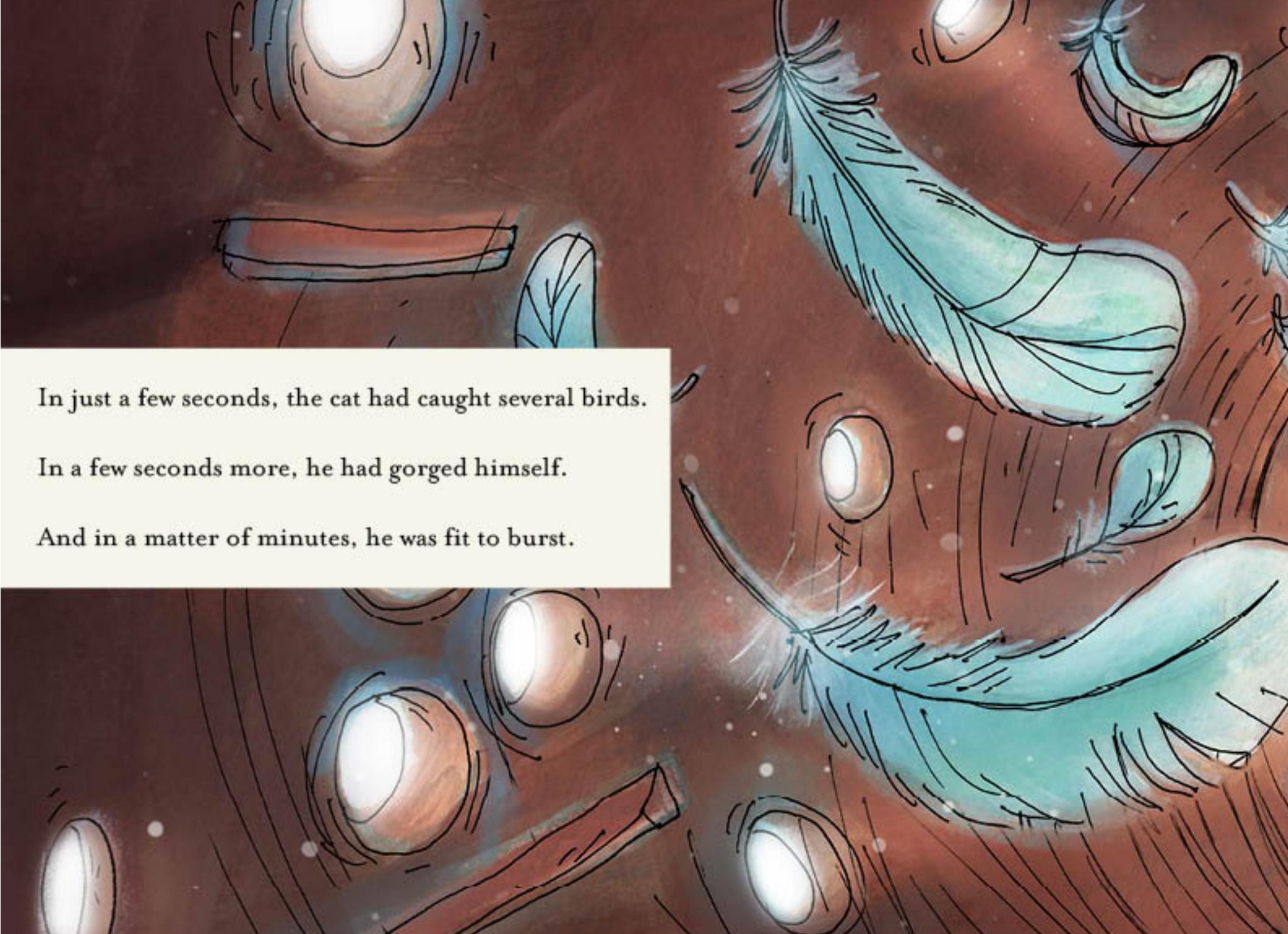
And in next to no time the horse and the cat were in the water.

On the opposite bank, the horse slowly started to graze.

While the cat immediately leapt upon the pigeons.







In just a few seconds, the cat had caught several birds.

In a few seconds more, he had gorged himself.

And in a matter of minutes, he was fit to burst.







Unable to eat another mouthful, the cat started to yowl as loud as he could.

'What delicious birds those were!' he sobbed.

'Shhhh!' cried the horse, still munching.





But the cat kept on making a terrible din.

'Keep the noise down!' hissed the horse, his mouth full of corn.



'The villagers will come out, if they hear that awful racket.

And they'll do us all sorts of harm!'







But the cat carried on yowling at the top of his voice.

'Please stop it!' gasped the horse.

'You don't understand the damage you are doing...'

'I simply cannot help it, my friend,' screeched the cat,
the tears still streaming from his eyes.



'I always do this after I have eaten.

It's simply the way I am.'



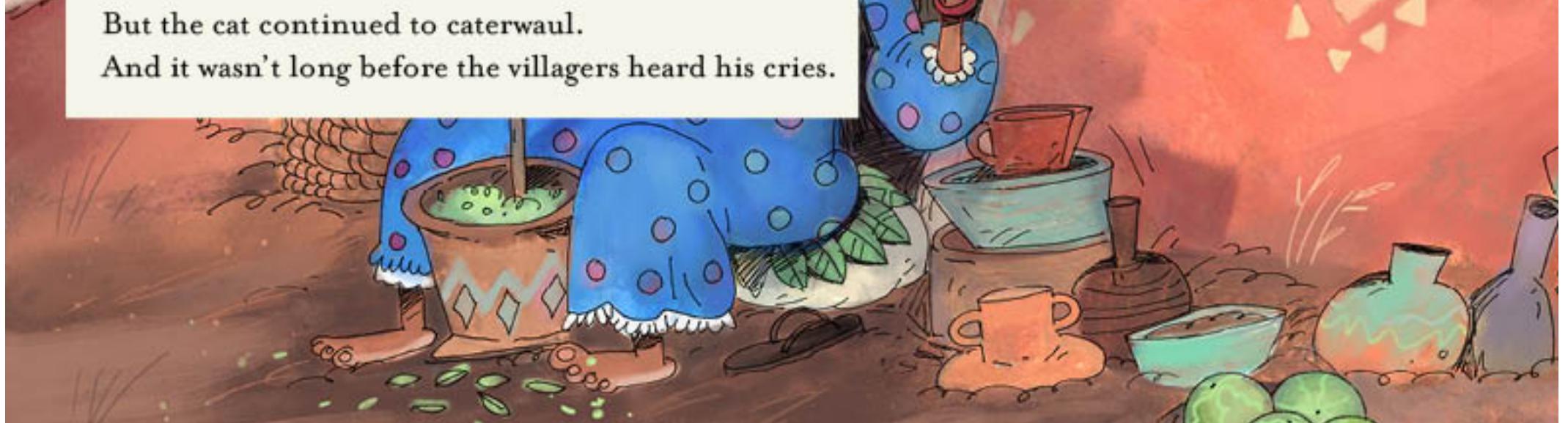
The horse was extremely annoyed.

It took him longer than the cat to eat his fill.

And he wasn't yet ready to leave the delicious cornfield.



But the cat continued to caterwaul.
And it wasn't long before the villagers heard his cries.









They came charging into the cornfield,
brandishing sticks and hurling stones.



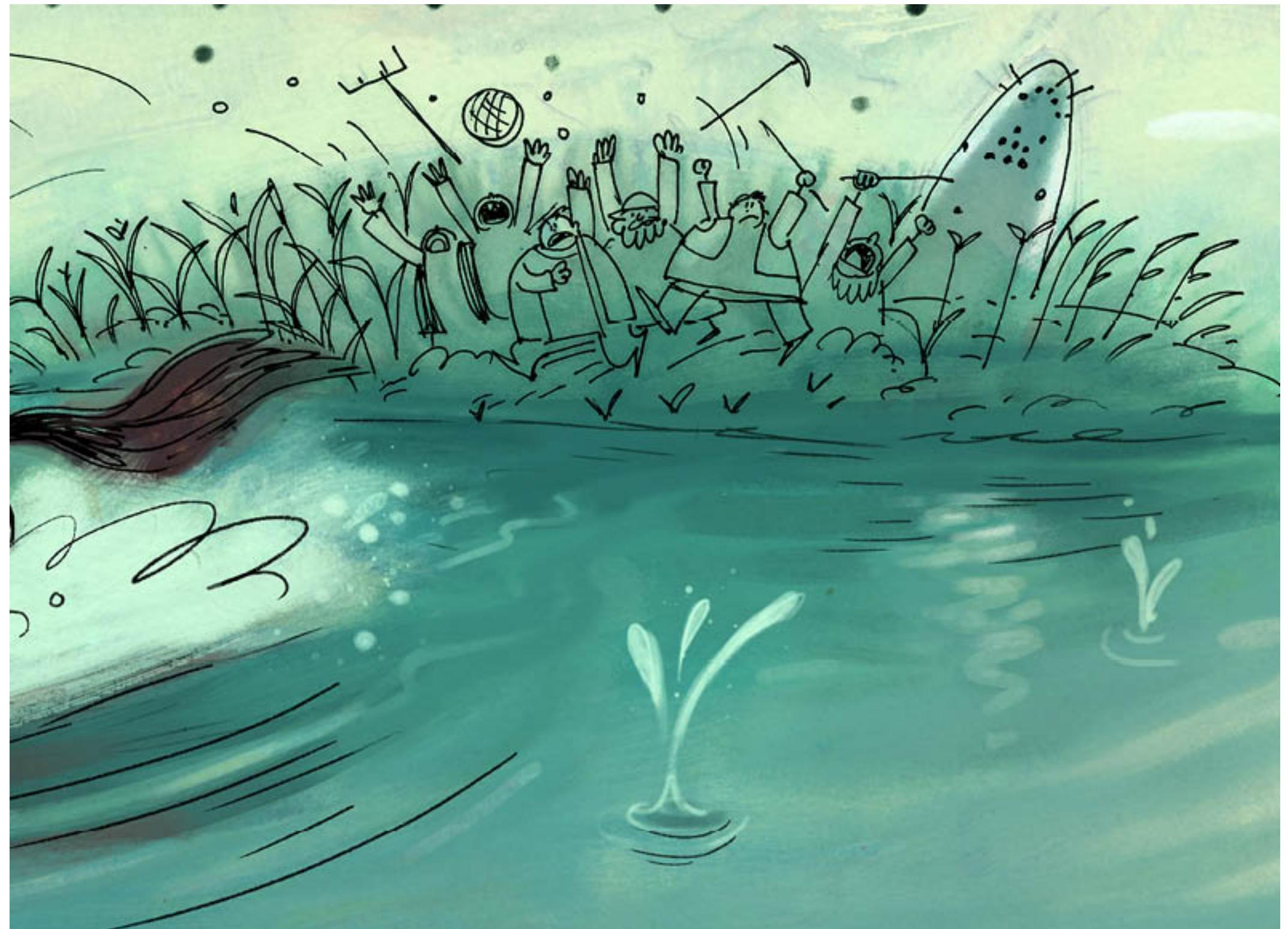


Giving the horse no option but to stop eating.



With the cat on his back,
he fled across the river once more.





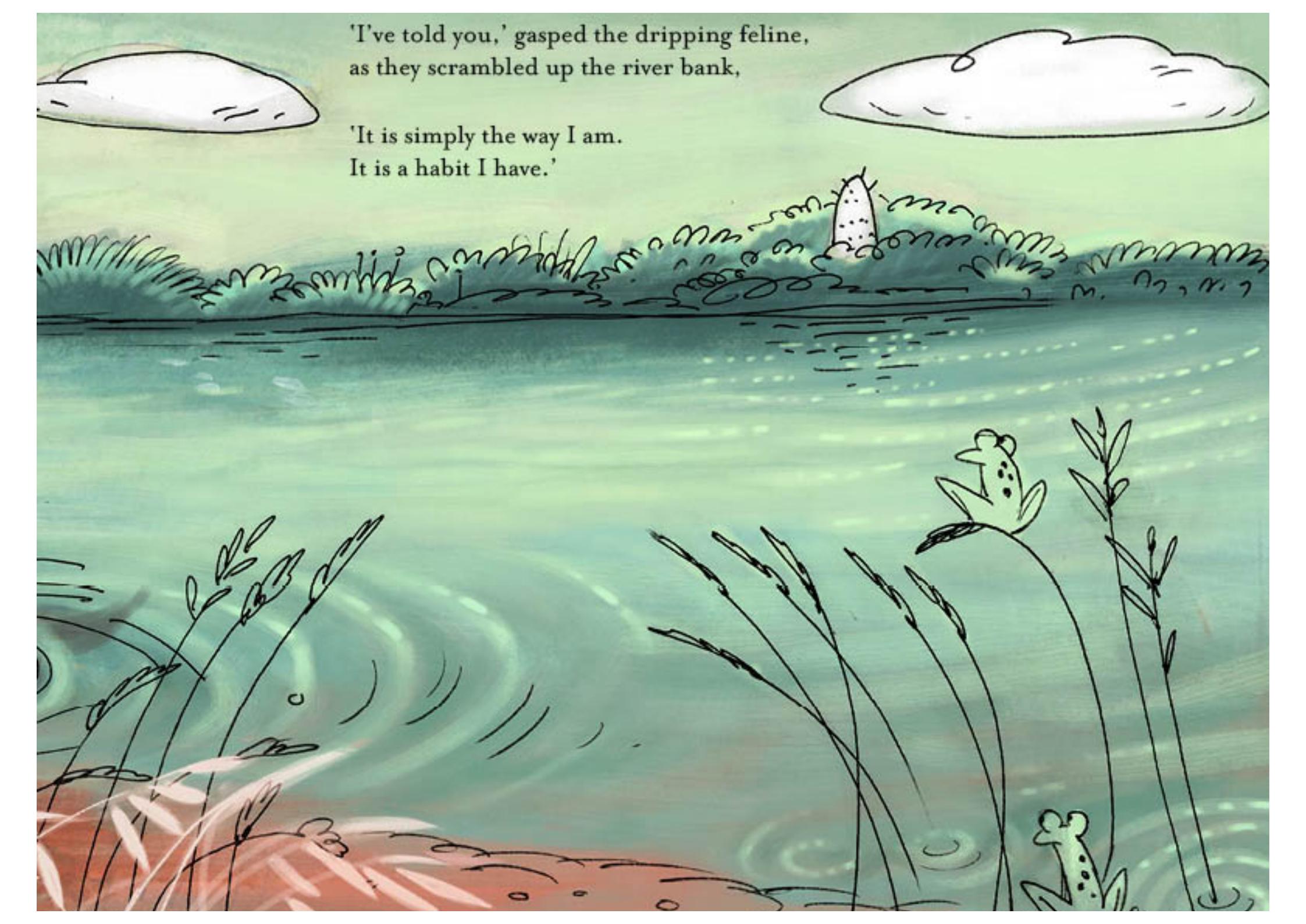
'You've ruined everything!' the horse complained to his companion.

'Now we can't go back, and I'm still hungry.'









'I've told you,' gasped the dripping feline,
as they scrambled up the river bank,

'It is simply the way I am.
It is a habit I have.'



Suddenly, the horse dropped to the ground.

And started to roll on the grass...

...trapping the cat beneath him.





'Stop it!' gasped the cat.
'You're squashing me!'

'I can feel my backbone crunching!
'You don't understand the damage you are doing...'



'Oh well, my friend,' whinnied the horse.
'That is simply the way I am.
It is a habit I have.'



The
End

