The background of the title card features a hand-drawn style illustration of a desert scene. A large, light brown sand dune is centered, surrounded by smaller dunes and wispy clouds. The sky above is a pale blue with more cloud formations.

# The Tale of the Sands

LIST OF IDRIES SHAH CHILDREN'S BOOKS

The Onion  
The Ants and the Pen  
Speak First and Lose  
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 Voice and the Men Who Couldn't Hear  
The Tale of Melon City

The Tale of the Sands  
BY IDRIES SHAH

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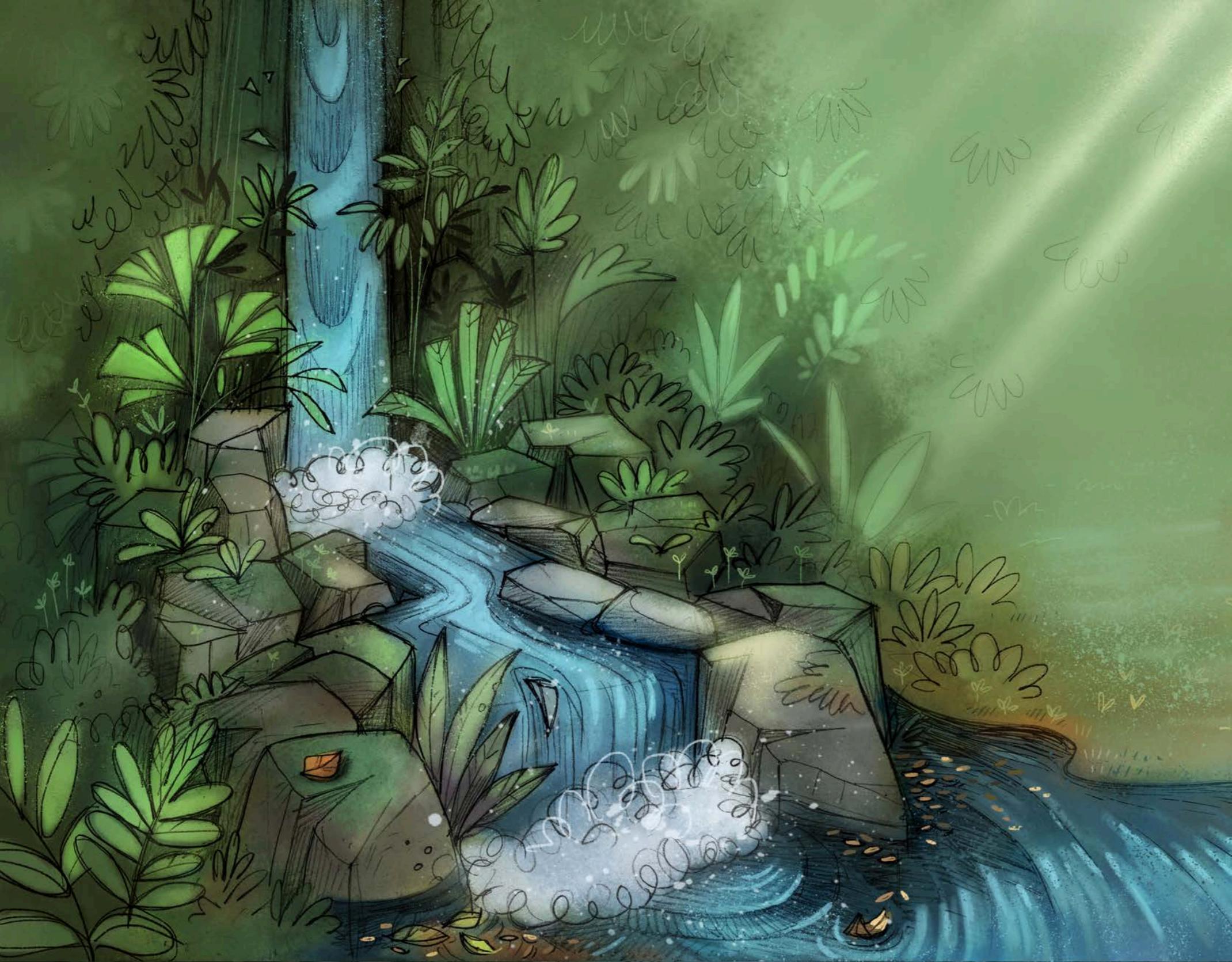
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THE IDRIES SHAH FOUNDATION



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

1



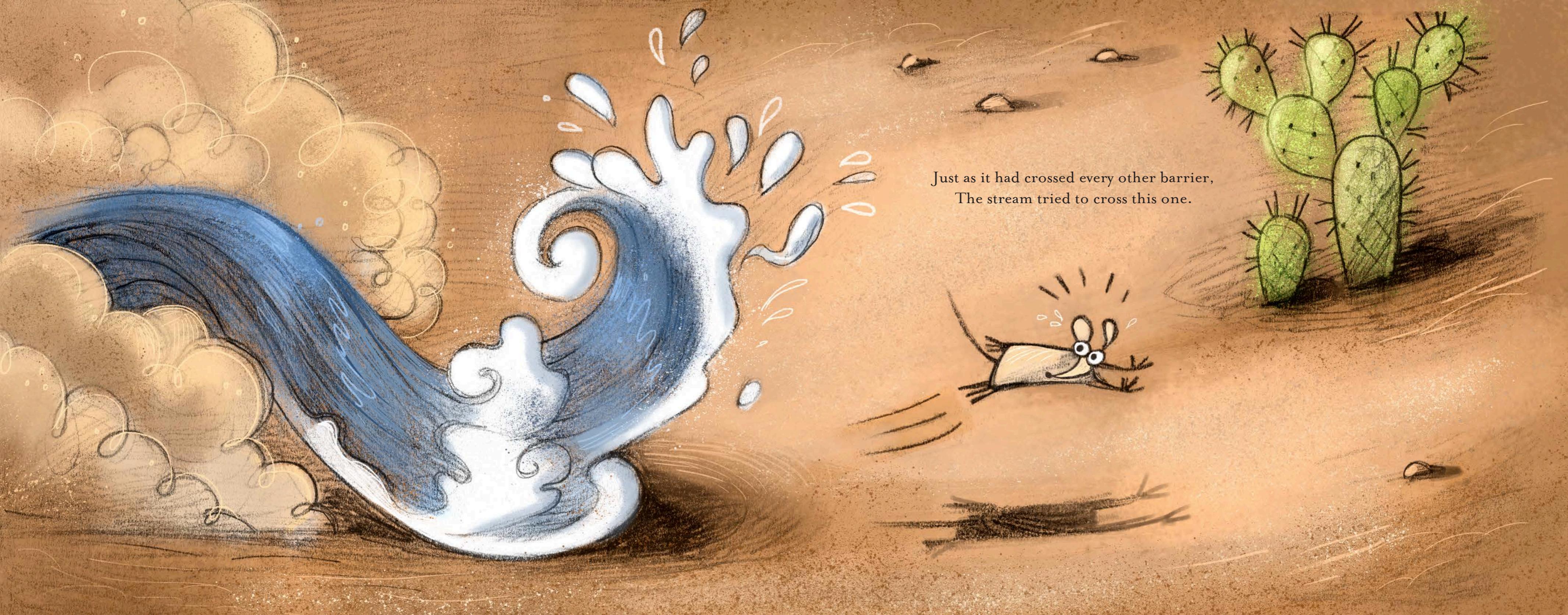
A stream, from its source in far-off mountains ...



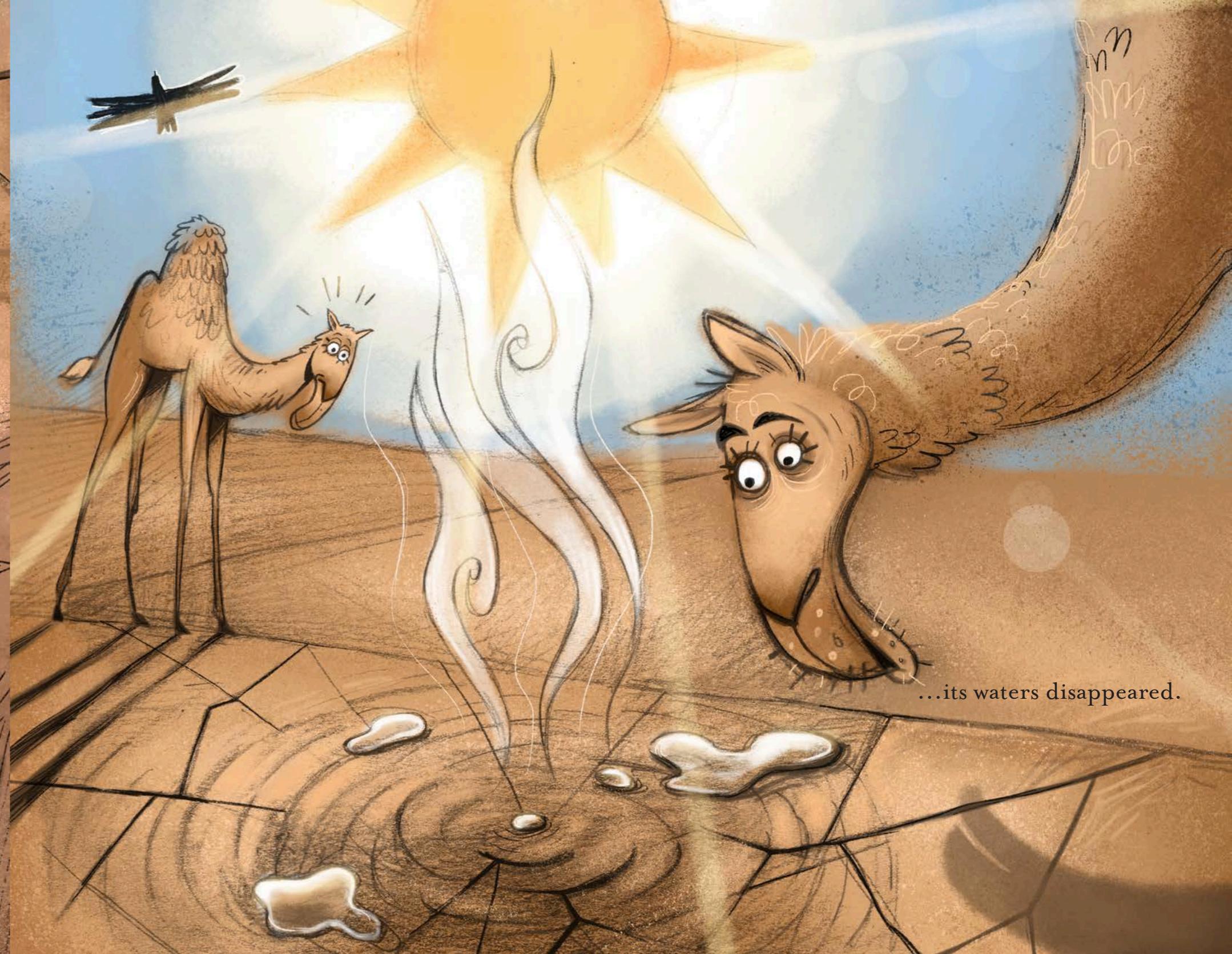
... passing through every kind  
and description of countryside ...

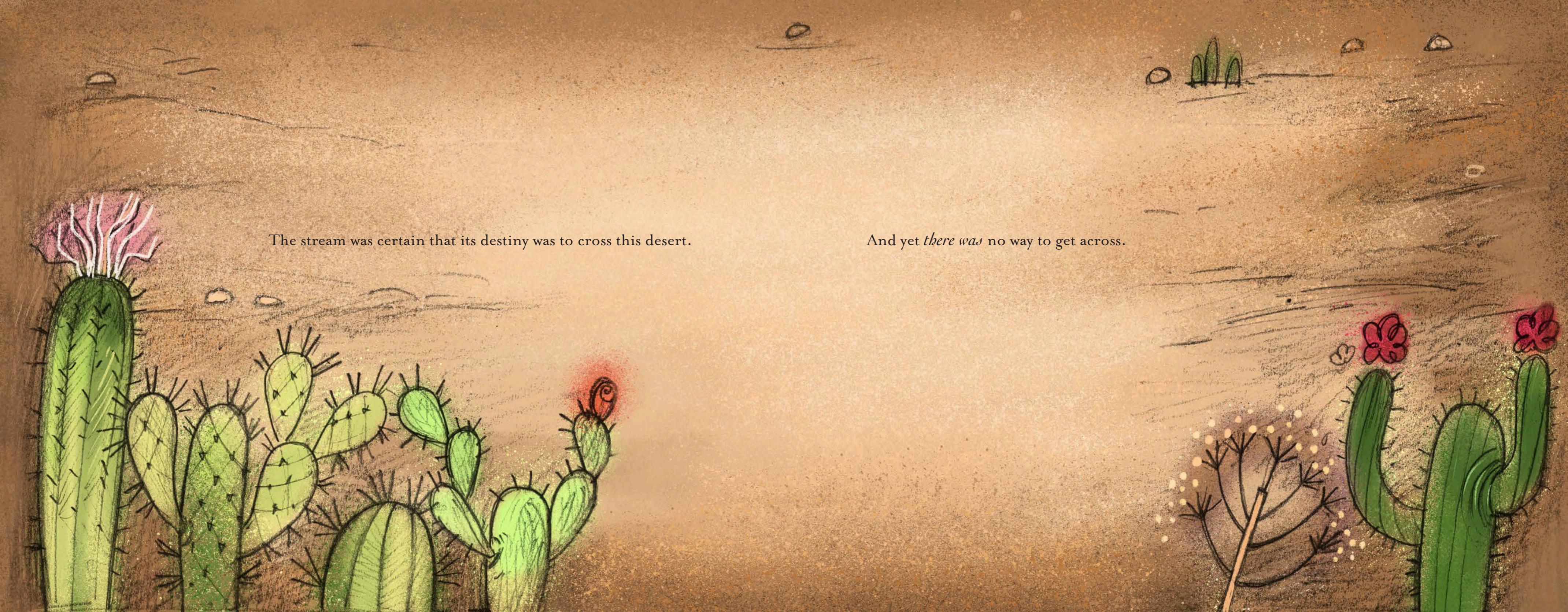


... at last reached the sands of the desert.



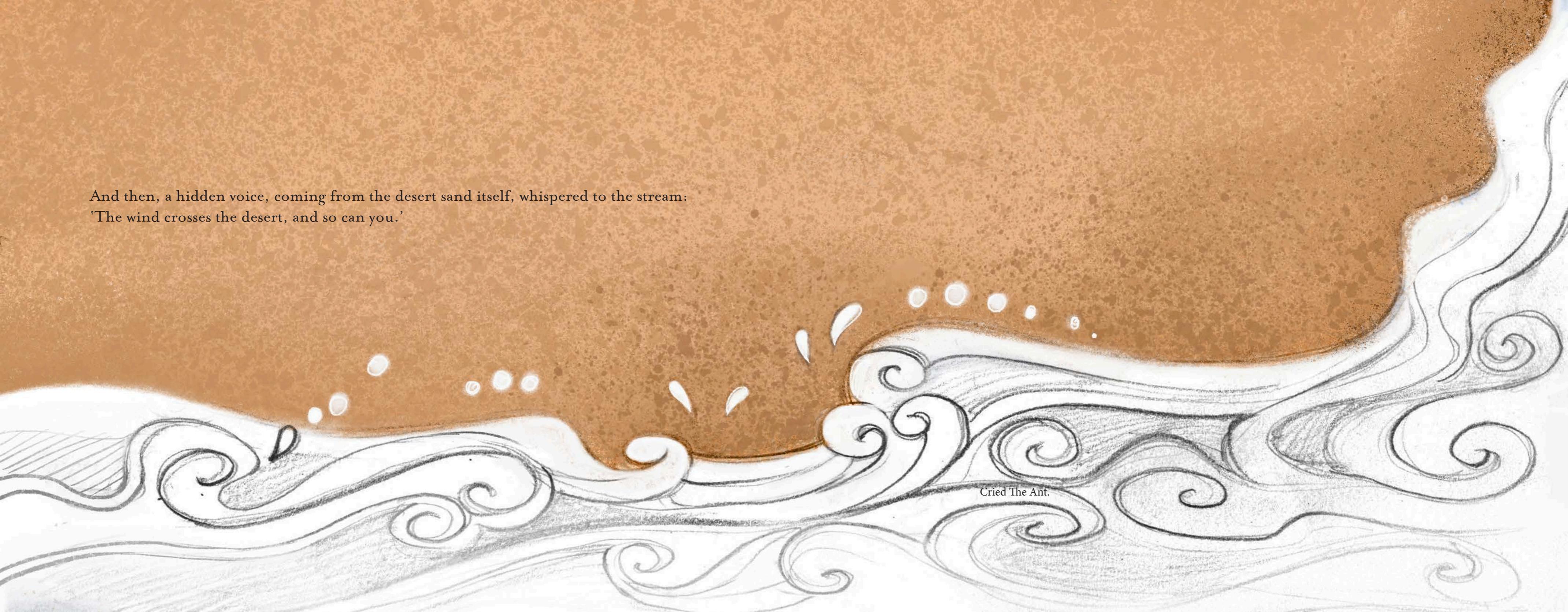
Just as it had crossed every other barrier,  
The stream tried to cross this one.





The stream was certain that its destiny was to cross this desert.

And yet *there was* no way to get across.



And then, a hidden voice, coming from the desert sand itself, whispered to the stream:  
'The wind crosses the desert, and so can you.'

Cried The Ant.

The stream grumbled that it was racing towards the sand  
with all its might, but that it was only getting absorbed.

It pointed out that the wind could fly, and this was why it  
could cross a desert.

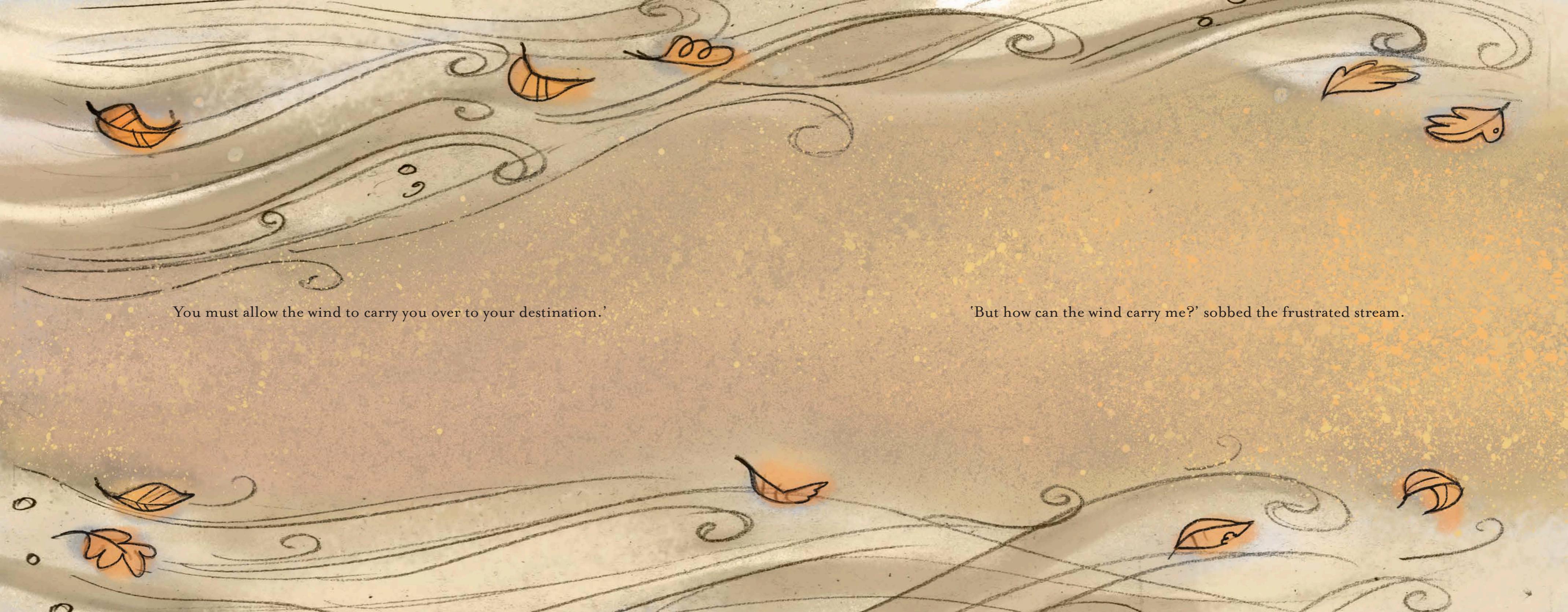




'By hurtling at things in your usual energetic way you will  
not get across,' cooed the voice of the sands.

'You will either disappear.

Or become a marsh.



You must allow the wind to carry you over to your destination.'

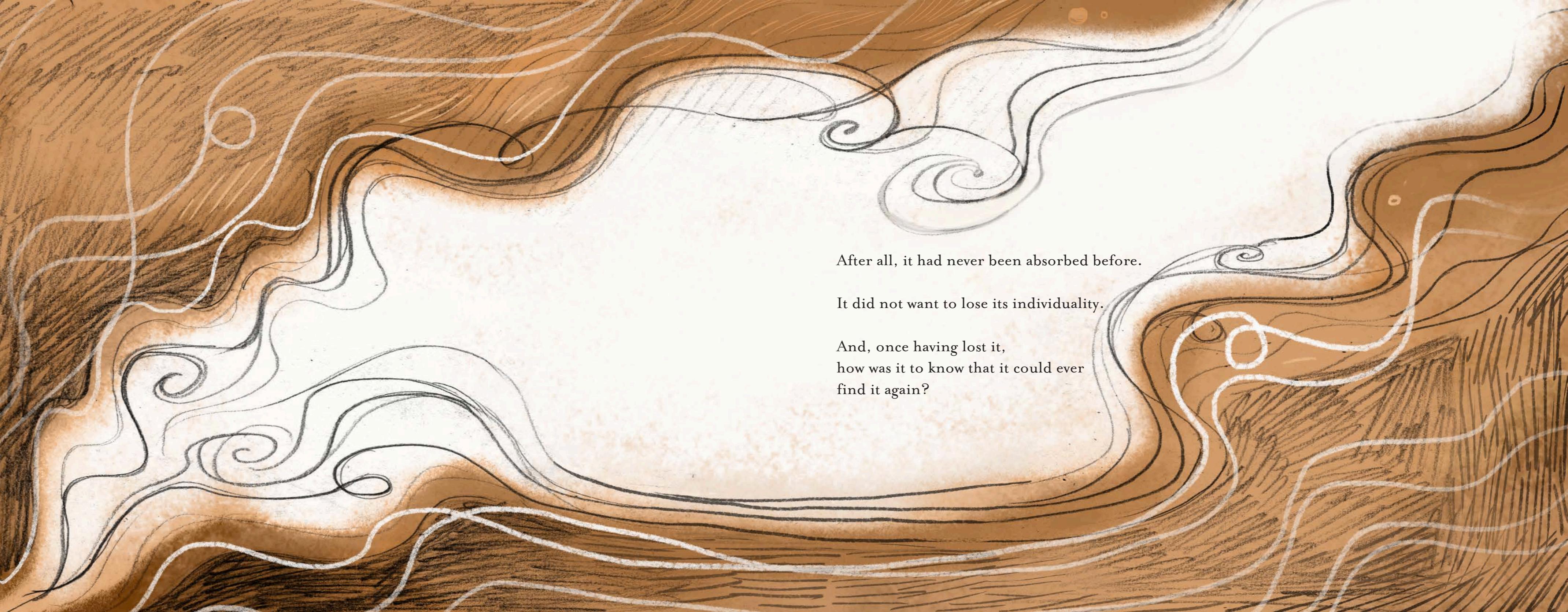
'But how can the wind carry me?' sobbed the frustrated stream.



'You can be carried but only by allowing yourself to be absorbed into the wind.'

The sands whispered.

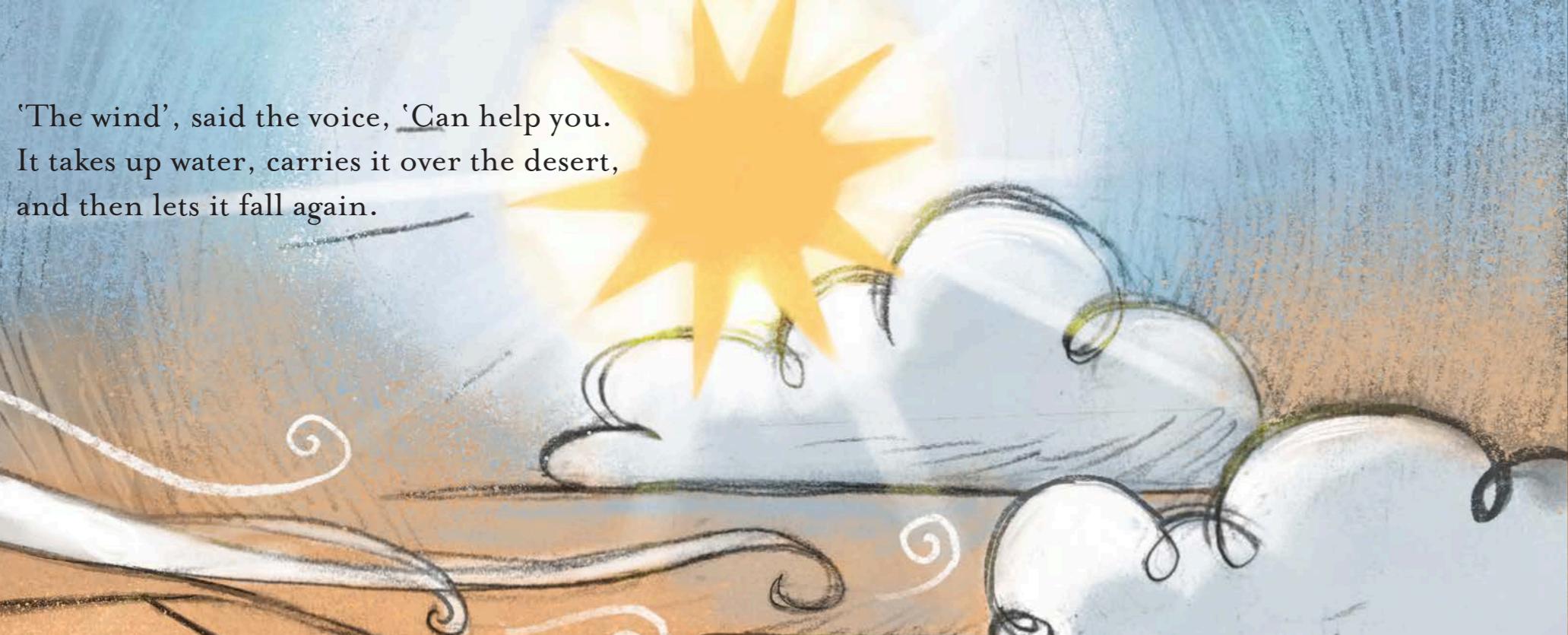
The stream did not like the idea of being swallowed up by the wind at all.



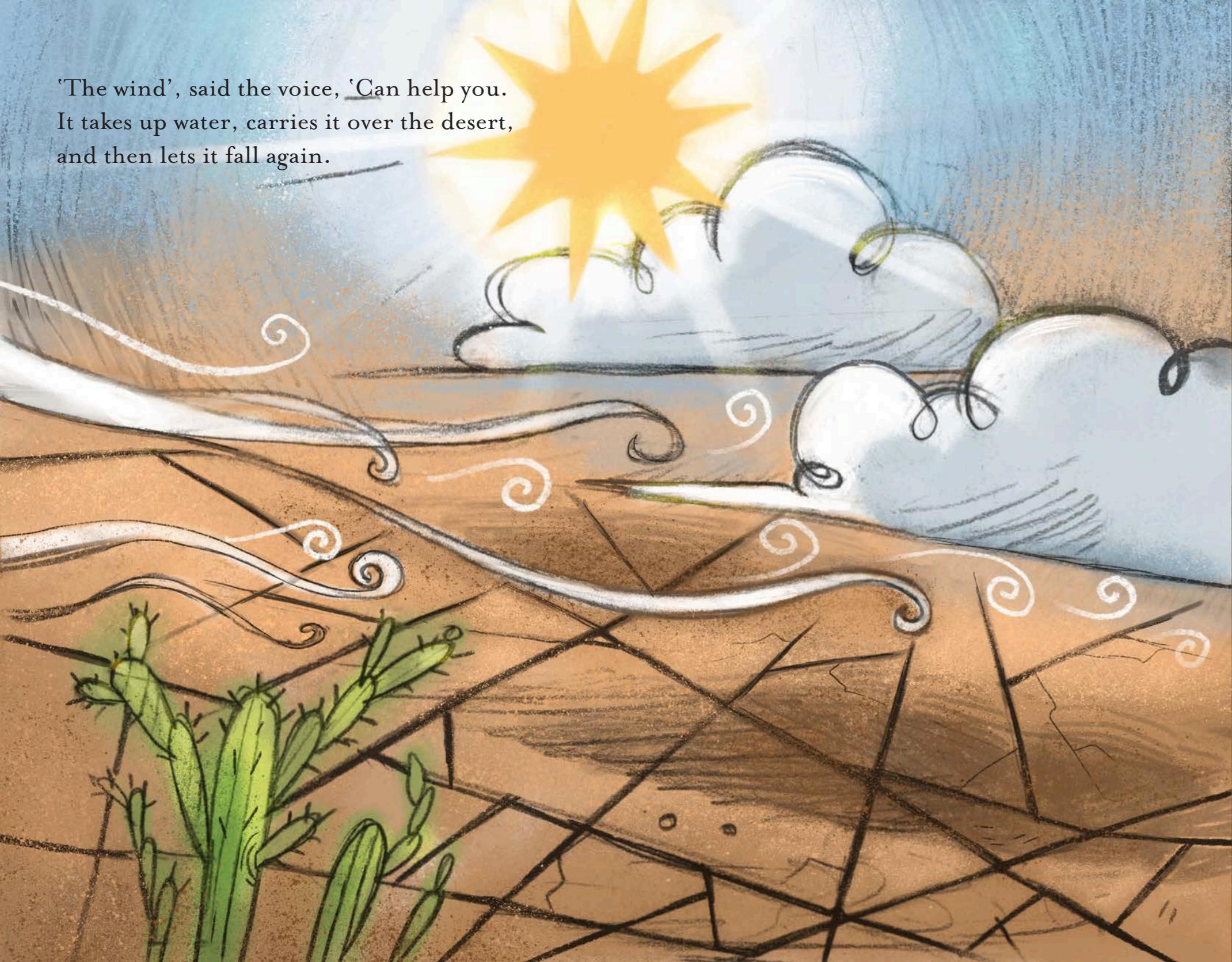
After all, it had never been absorbed before.

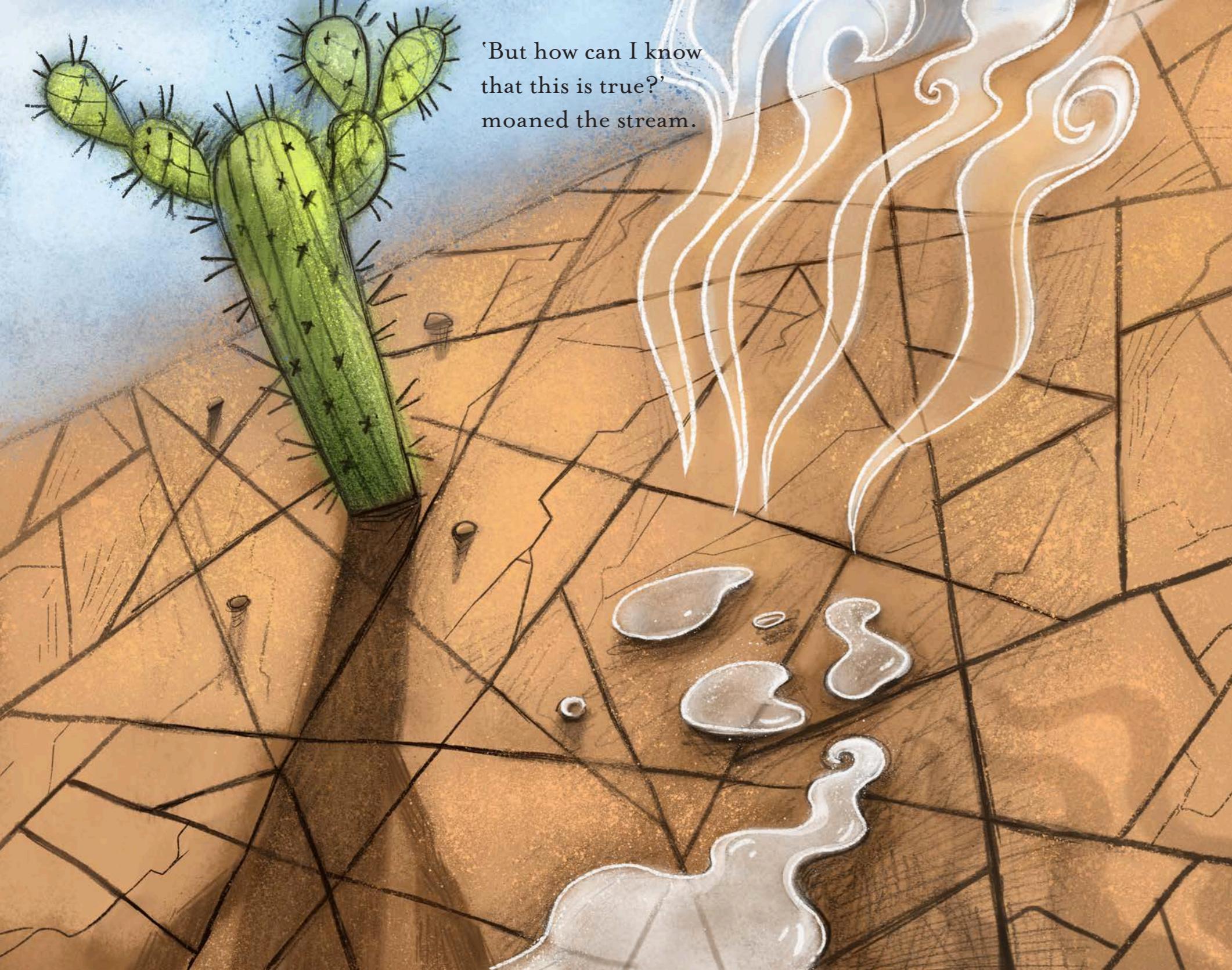
It did not want to lose its individuality.

And, once having lost it,  
how was it to know that it could ever  
find it again?



'The wind', said the voice, 'Can help you.  
It takes up water, carries it over the desert,  
and then lets it fall again.'







'And anyway, if you don't listen to me,  
the best you can hope to become is a quagmire ...

and even that could take you many, many years ...

And being a quagmire isn't nearly as good as being a stream.'



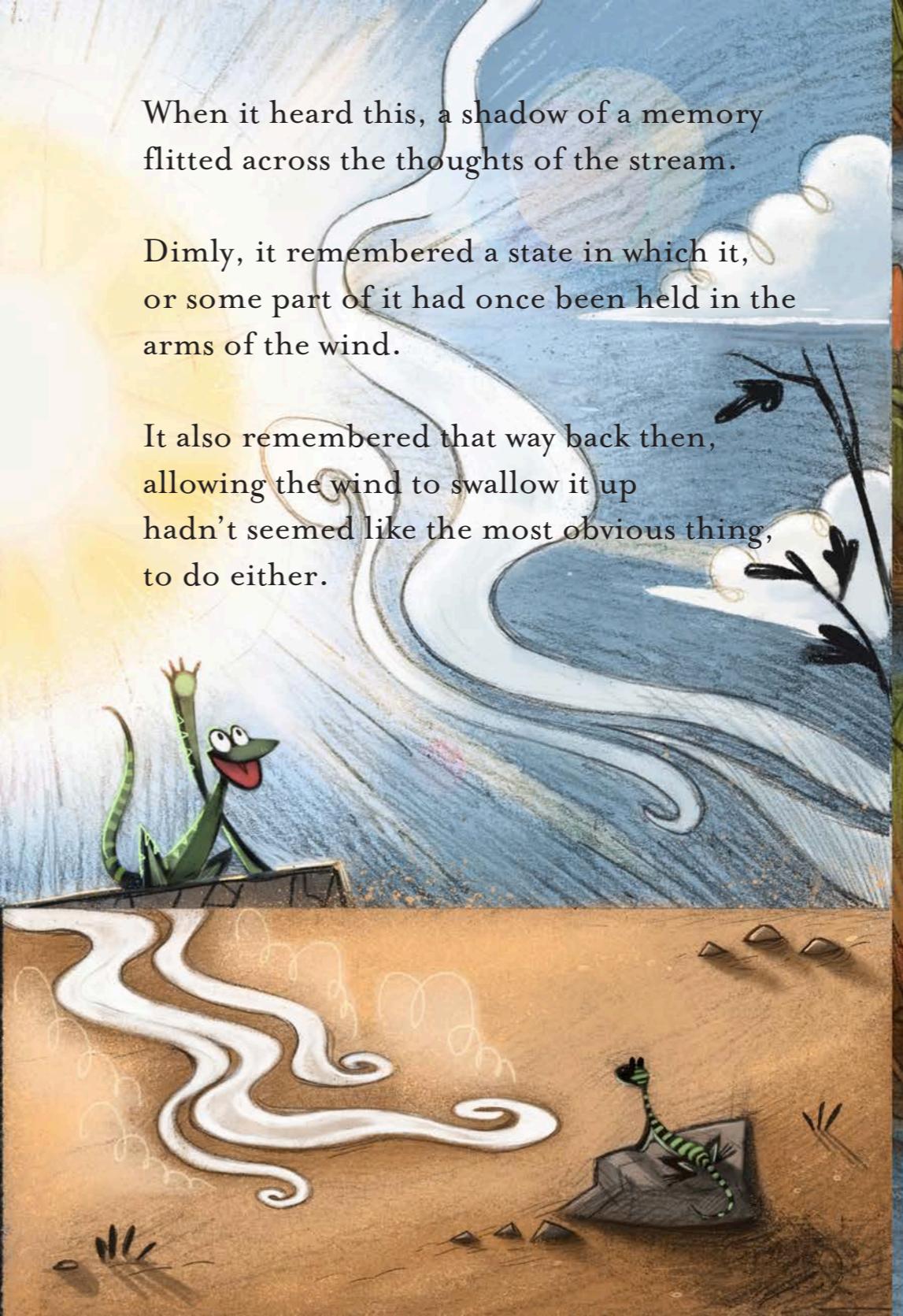


'But I just want to stay the same as I am!' wailed the stream.

'Whatever happens, you can't stay *exactly* the same as you are now,' the voice said.



'But if you act now, the wind will carry your most important part away, so that it can re-form you into a wonderful *new* stream.'



When it heard this, a shadow of a memory flitted across the thoughts of the stream.

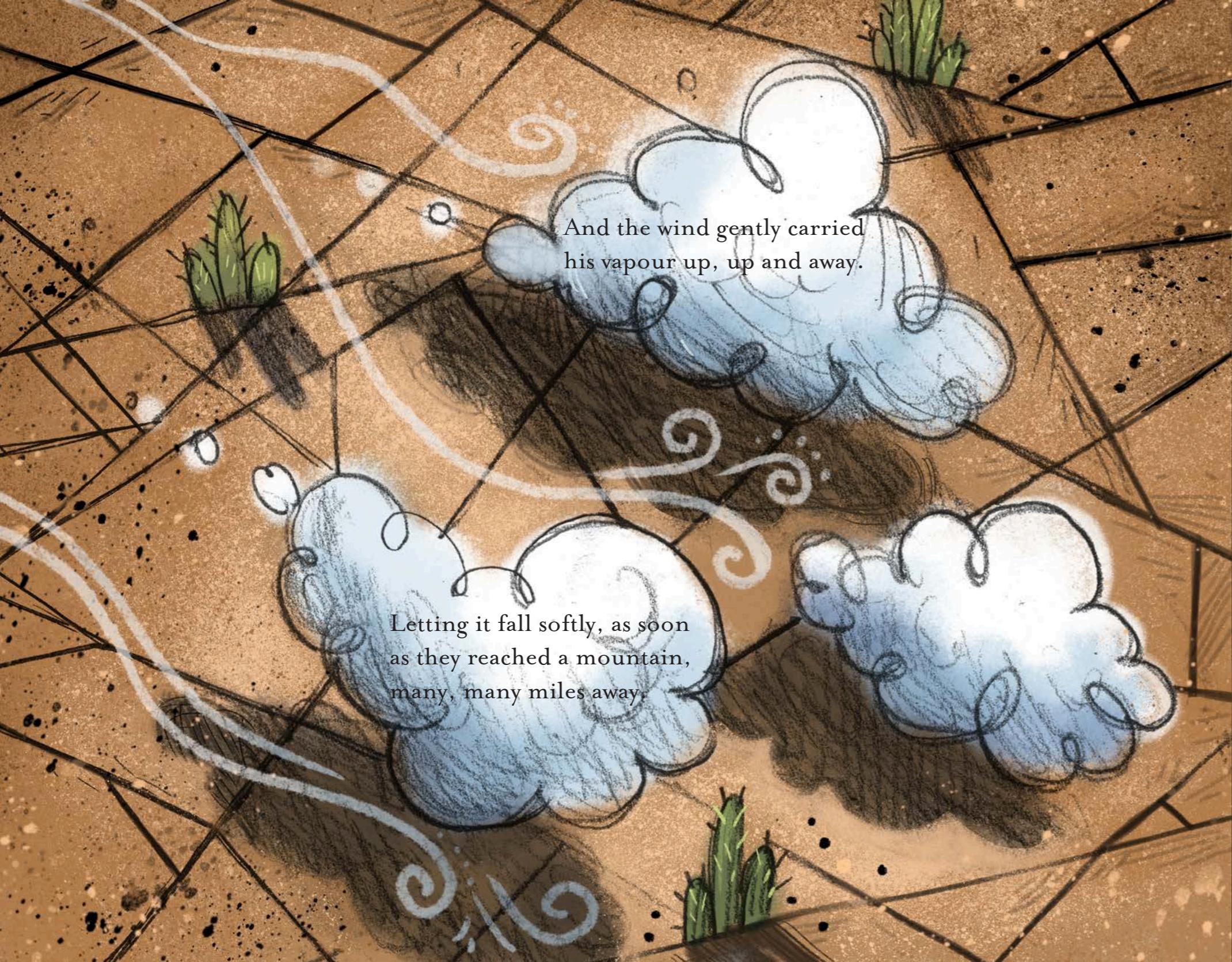
Dimly, it remembered a state in which it, or some part of it had once been held in the arms of the wind.

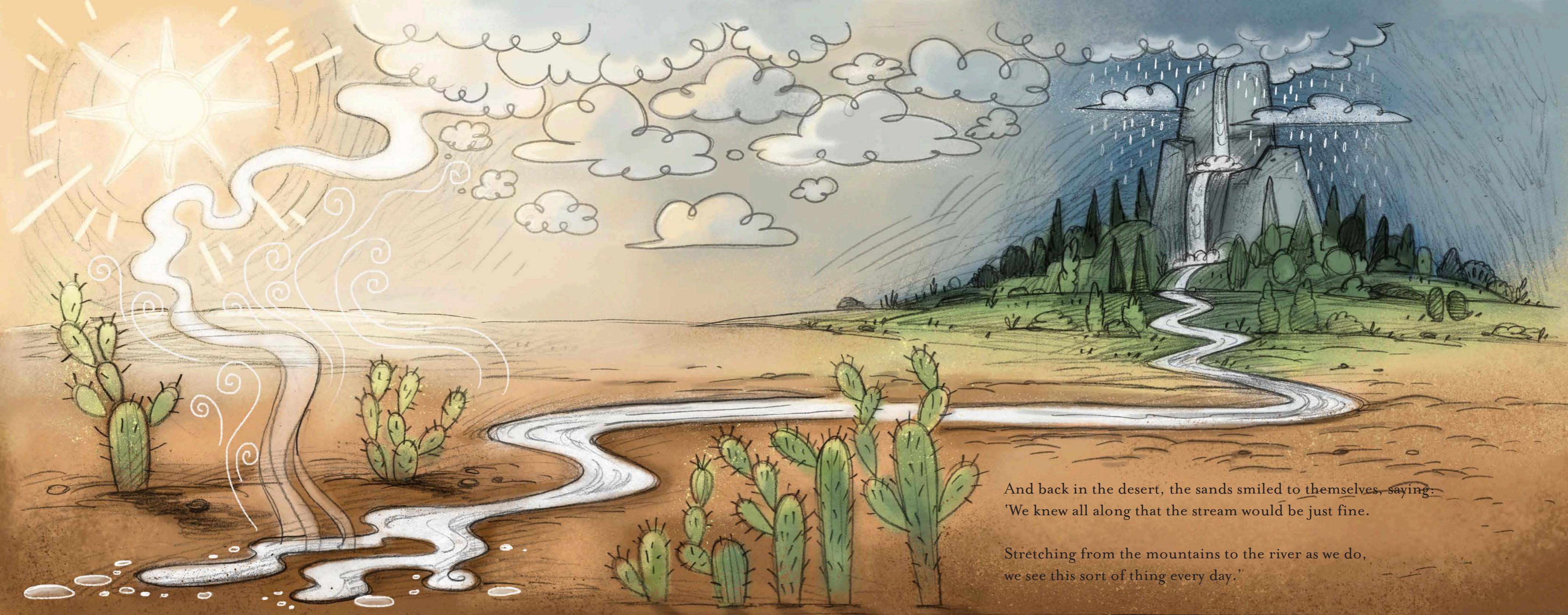
It also remembered that way back then, allowing the wind to swallow it up hadn't seemed like the most obvious thing, to do either.





So with a whimper of fear, the stream raised his vapour into the welcoming arms of the wind.





And back in the desert, the sands smiled to themselves, saying:  
'We knew all along that the stream would be just fine.'

Stretching from the mountains to the river as we do,  
we see this sort of thing every day.'

And that is why it is said that the 'Stream of Life' is written in the sands.

