



Non-fiction workshop and picture book competition

Catherine Barr

This workshop and competition was originally developed for KS2 children at Longtown Community Primary School in Herefordshire. It is based on my own experience of writing picture books: both fiction and non-fiction. However it can be adapted to involve any ages in any setting: from a library to a book group or at home.

The aim is simply to spark interest and stimulate enthusiasm in discovering non-fiction and creating a non-fiction picture book together. This may be in small teams within school year groups, as a whole class or as a group of friends. The idea is to play to children's strengths, to encourage them to do what they enjoy doing most and enable them to enjoy working together to create a book they are proud of.

Non-fiction workshop

The workshop has three sections:

Introducing non-fiction

Reading a selection of non-fiction

Creating an illustrated non-fiction book

- 1) The team
- 2) The process
- 3) The illustration roughs
- 4) The How to Draw film
- 5) The ideas



What you need

- selection of non-fiction books
- **cut out words set A*** (can add pictures: not supplied) of the typical picture book team members
- a flip chart
- **cut out words set B*** describing the process (print a few sets)
- a white board or projector to show a short **How to Draw Polar Bears film on YouTube***
- **illustration roughs***

*supplied resources

Many thanks to Francesca Chessa and Amy Ponting for sharing their illustration roughs.

Introducing non fiction

- Ask the children what the difference is between fiction and non fiction
- Ask them to describe their favourite non-fiction books
- Talk about different styles of non-fiction writing
- Create a table display of non-fiction books for children to browse

Reading

Read short extracts from a couple of non-fiction books and briefly talk about different styles and approaches.

Creating an illustrated non-fiction book

1/5 The team

Hand out the team member **cut out words set A**: children can then be asked to bring them up to the front, so the team comes together – explain who is who. This can be accompanied by pictures of each of the team to make it more engaging. Perhaps add images of favourite authors, illustrators, publishing logos, well known 'experts' or sources of expert information e.g. the Natural History Museum, pictures of the children (readers) and the local bookshop or library.

Emphasise the importance of different roles and ask the children what they like doing best. Explain that creating a picture book is a team effort and involves working together. Who is good at writing, drawing, spelling, planning, reading and researching? Talk about enjoying different skills.

- Authors (there might be more than one)
- Illustrator (illustrators can also be authors)
- Publisher & editor (a book's editor will work for the publisher)
- Expert consultants (an author might work with someone who is an expert in a particular subject)
- Readers (the joys of discovering non fiction)
- Bookshops (different ways of buying books, ask about favourite local bookshops or libraries)

2/5 The process

Hand out sets of **cut out words set B** to different teams and ask them to work out the order. Explain that there is no fixed 'right' answer; but rather a general flow. This can work as a race. When they have finished ask them to explain the order they have put down. Talk about the process as a group.

- idea • thinking • research • drafting copy • editing • send to a publisher • meet an illustrator
- layout plan • illustrator roughs • more editing • final illustrations • publication • party! • royalties

3/5 The illustration roughs

Show **the roughs**. They can look at these in groups to see and understand the development of illustrations.

4/5 The How to Draw film

Show the children this lovely short **film**, which will help them draw in easy line-by-line steps. Even children who think they can't draw will be encouraged by their ability to join in.

5/5 The ideas

As an introduction to the non-fiction competition, ask the children to call out their ideas for non-fiction picture books. Write them up as a source of ongoing reference.

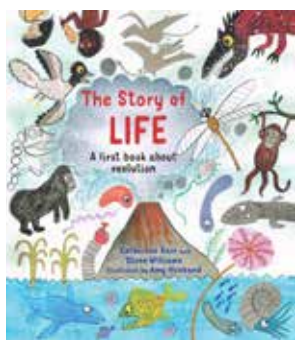
Competition to create an illustrated non-fiction book

The challenge is to do what you love best... as part of a team. Are you a writer or do you love drawing? Are you really good at spelling and do you enjoy reading other people's work? Or do you like looking up lots of facts and stories in books and on the internet?

Work together in teams (from teams of two to a whole class) to create your illustrated non-fiction book. It could be about friendship or beetles or deep space or tree houses.

- First your team need to decide what your book will be about.
- Then you need to discover lots of facts and information to give you ideas.
- Then you need to chat about a plan.
- Then you need to write a first draft (including the front and back cover)
- Then you need to draw pictures to go with the words.
- Then you need to write some better drafts.
- Then double check facts and edit again.
- Then you make a final copy and proudly present your picture book.

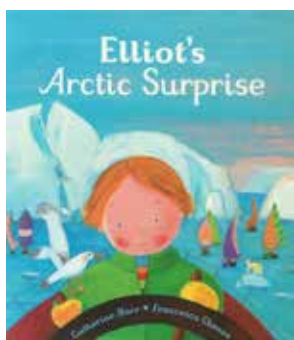
About



The Story of Life: a first book on evolution

ISBN 9781847804853

A non-fiction narrative written in consultation with the Natural History Museum



Elliot's Arctic Surprise

ISBN 9781847806680

A story about protecting the Arctic, written in conversation with Greenpeace UK

Catherine Barr writes picture books as springboards for conversation between adults and children: to spark curiosity in nature and issues shaping our world. *The Story of Life* was shortlisted for the English Association 4-11 Picture Book Awards and long listed for the School Library Association Information Book Award 2016. She is currently working on picture books for publication in 2017 and 2018.



@catherine_barr

I would love to see pictures of illustrated non-fiction books that children have create in response to this competition, so please tweet me! Thank you.

Resources

Set A

authors

readers

illustrators

expert consultants

publishers & editors

bookshops

Set B

ideas

meet an illustrator

thinking

illustration roughs

research

more editing

drafting copy

final illustrations

lots of editing

publication

layout plan

party!

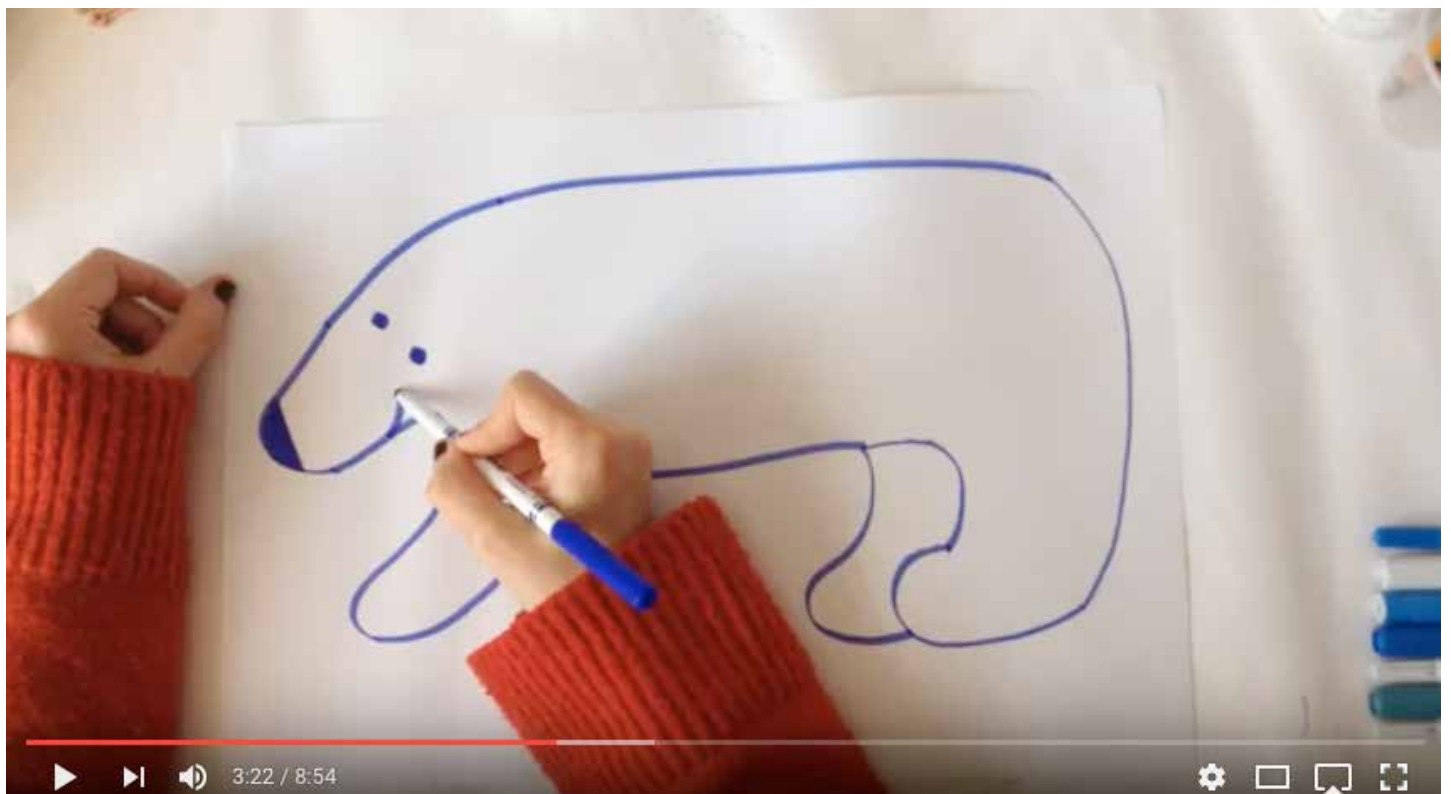
send to a publisher

royalties

How to draw Polar Bears Film

This 8.54 minute film was originally created for an event about *Elliot's Arctic Surprise* at Hay Winter Festival. It inspires and shows children how to draw four Arctic creatures, line-by-line.

It was created and edited by the picture book's illustrator Francesca Chessa and directed by Luca Barello in Francesca's studio in Turin, Italy. It was uploaded to YouTube by Quarto UK: <http://bit.ly/YouTubeElliot>





Rough illustrations: Elliot's Arctic Surprise

Illustrated by Francesca Chessa





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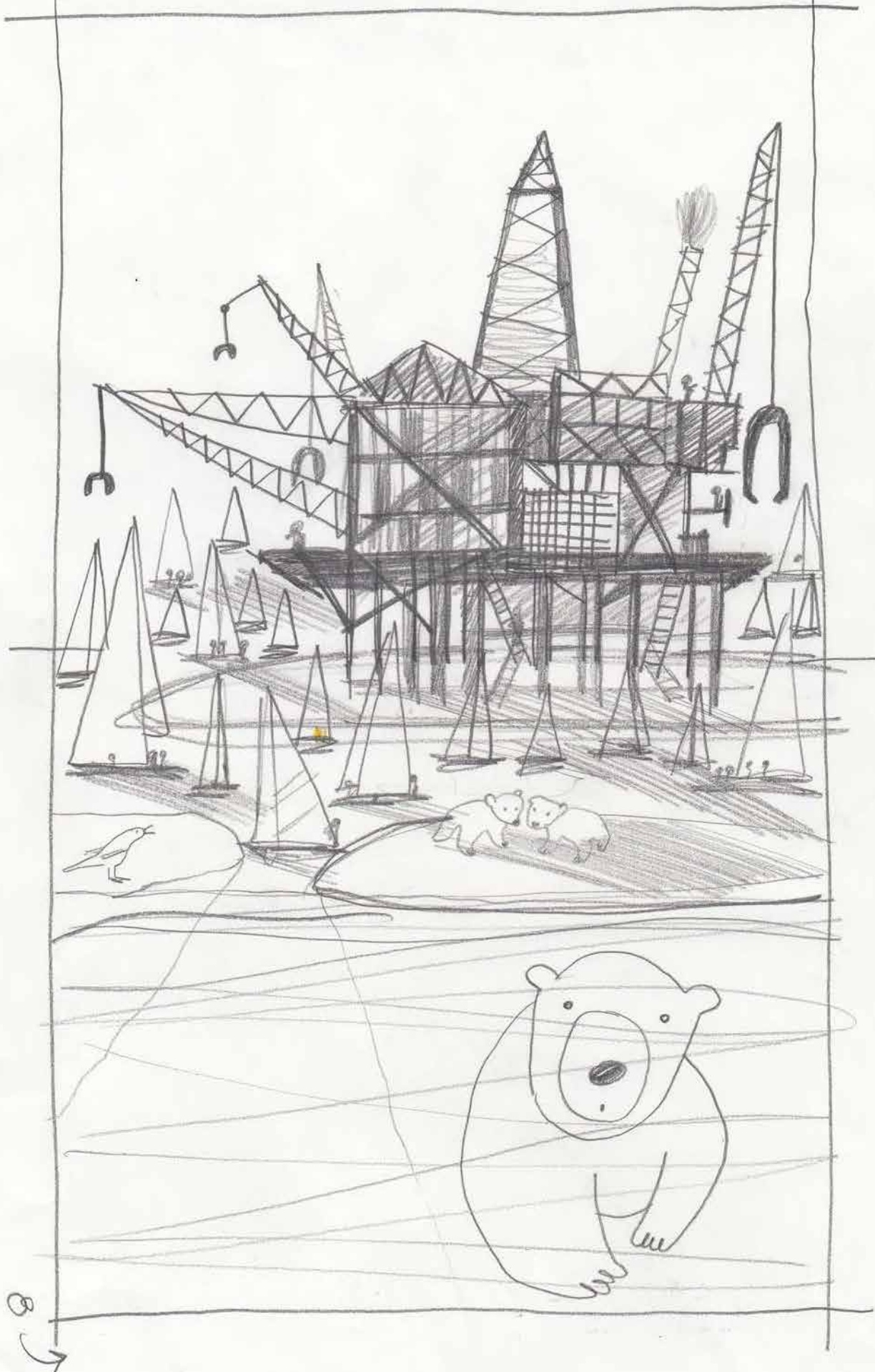




Rough illustrations: Elliot's Arctic Surprise

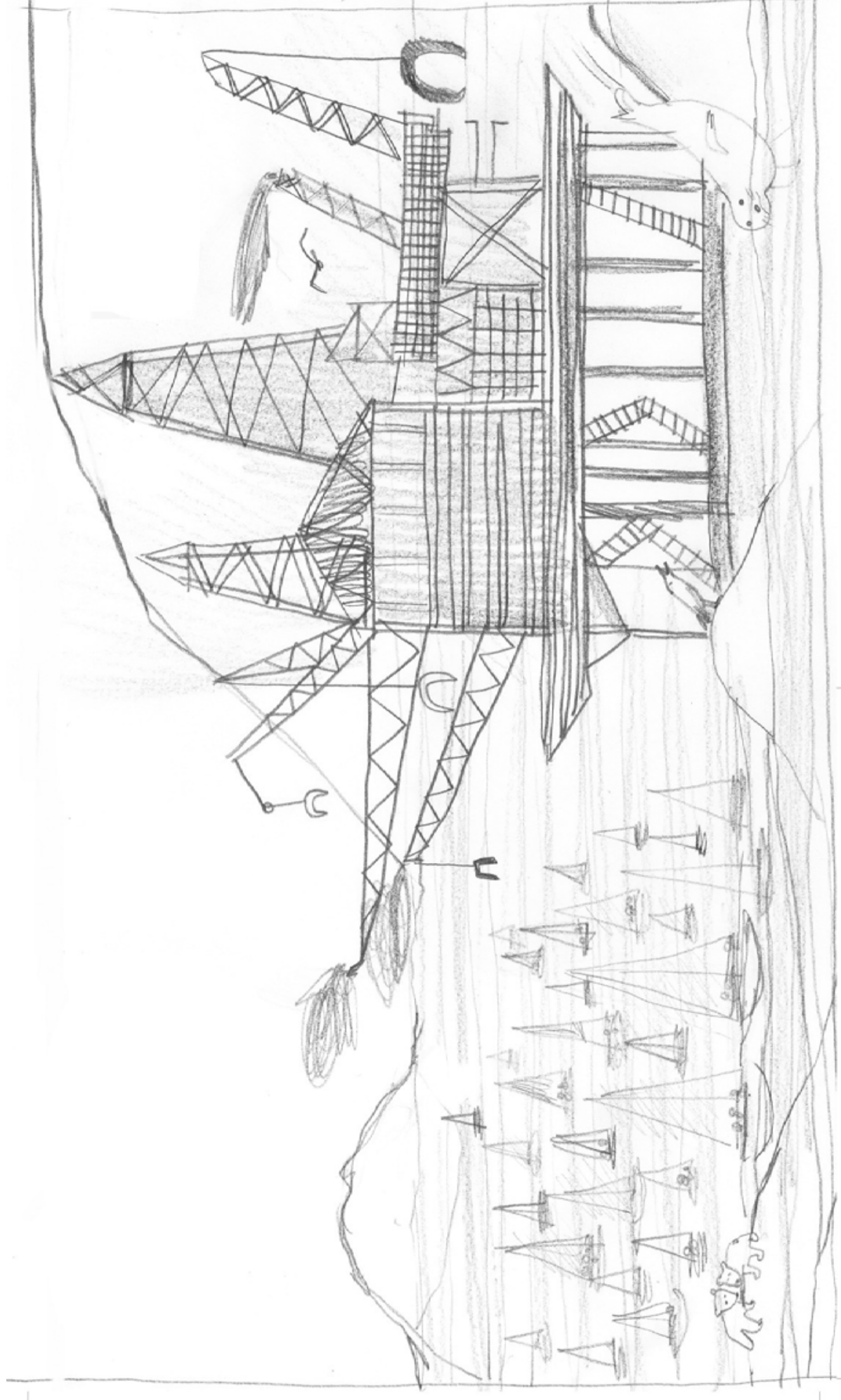
Illustrated by Francesca Chessa





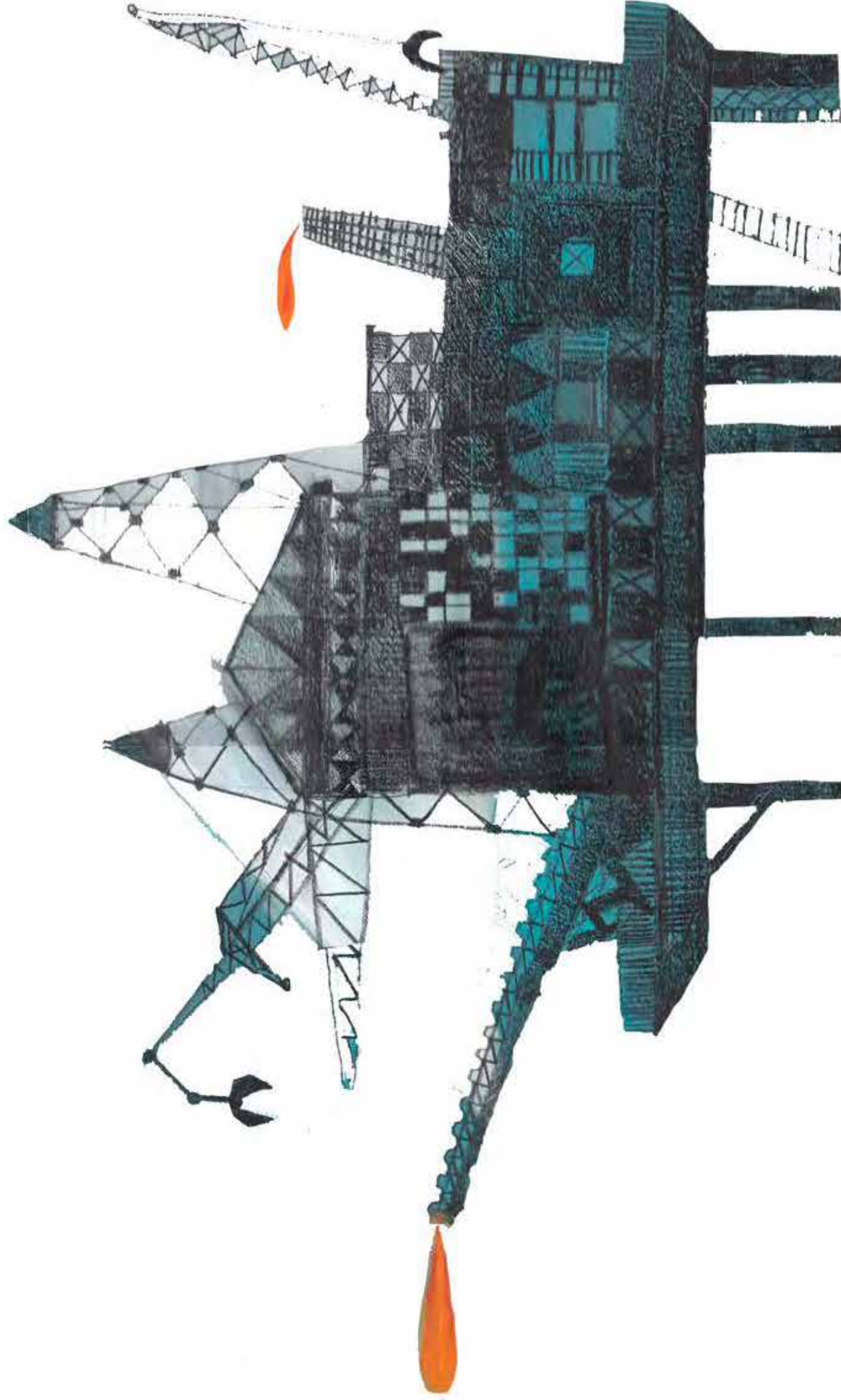
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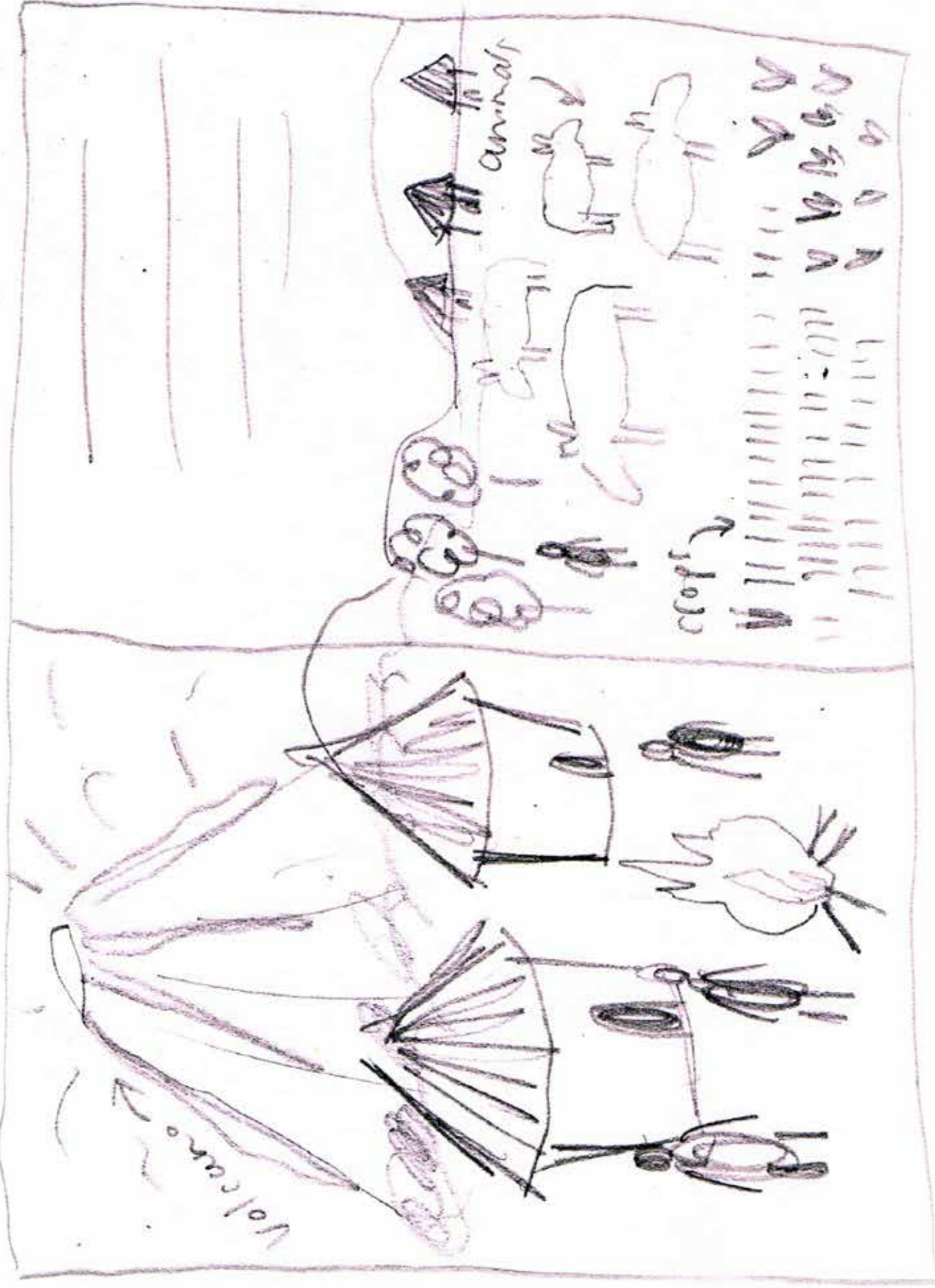
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Rough illustrations: Elliot's Arctic Surprise

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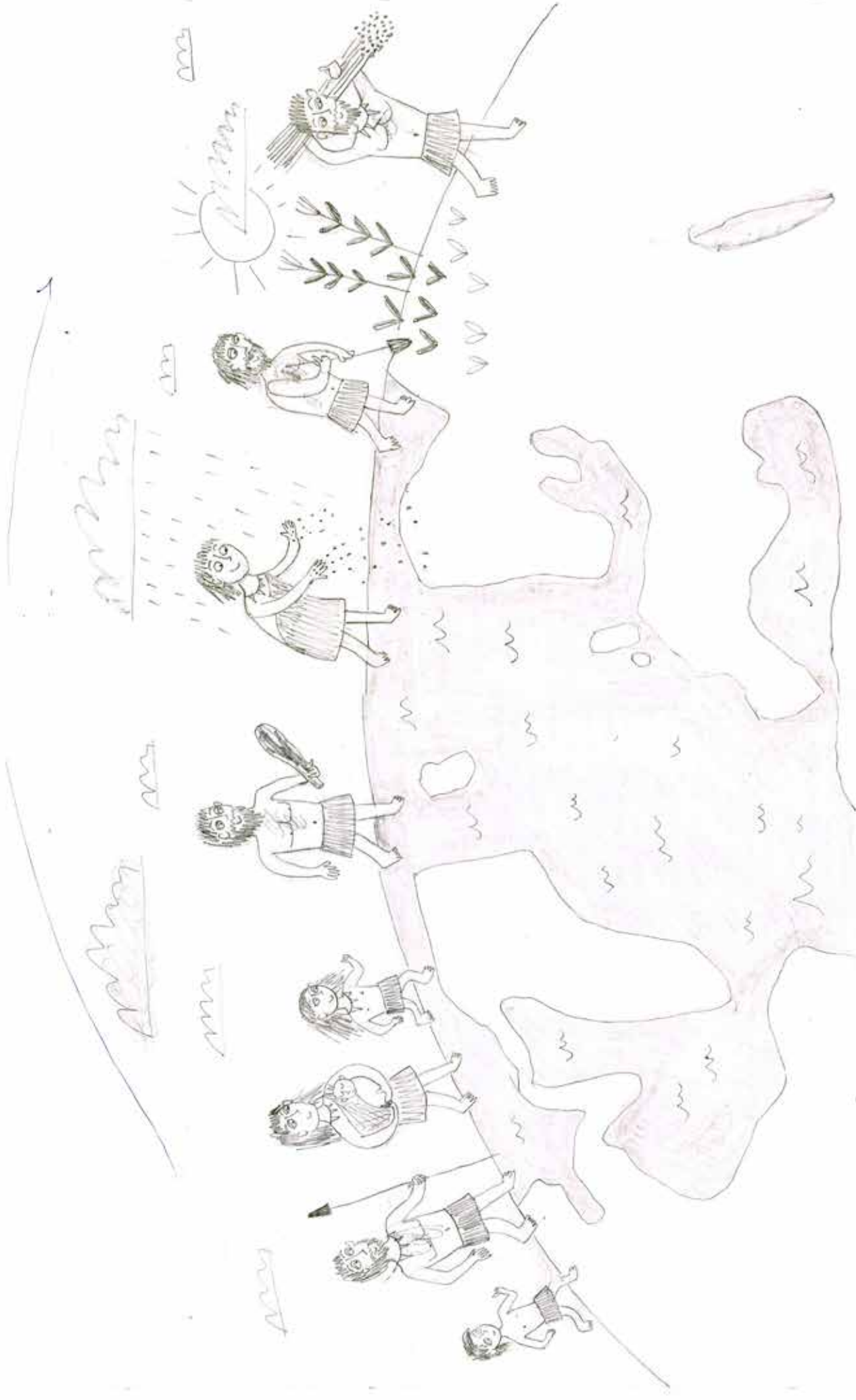




farming

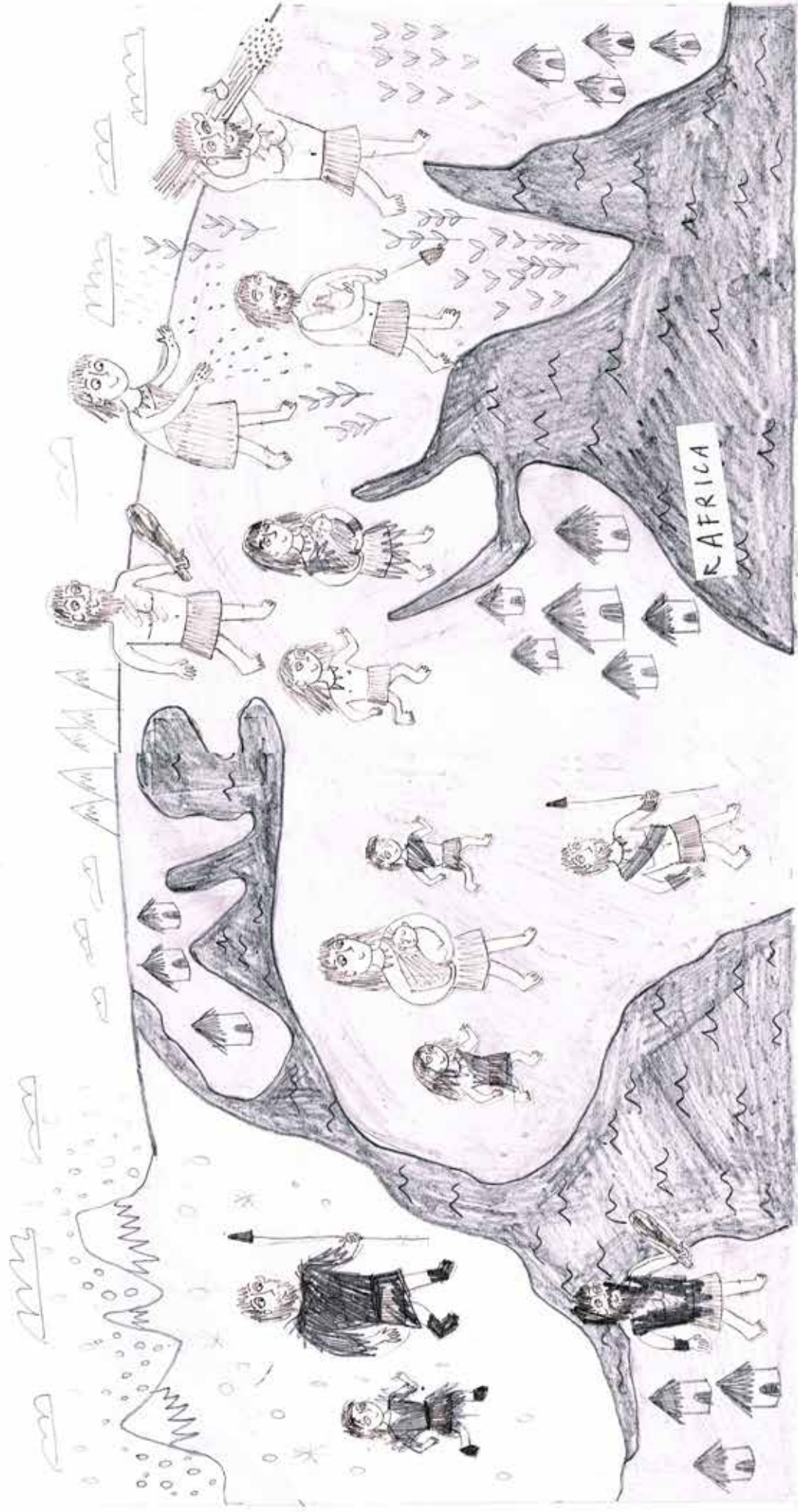
Rough illustrations: *The Story of Life: a first book on evolution*

Illustrated by Amy Husband



Rough illustrations: The Story of Life: a first book on evolution

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Rough illustrations: The Story of Life: a first book on evolution

Illustrated by Amy Husband

As they explored, the Earth got colder and colder, ice spread and the seas froze.

In these ice ages, life for early people was a real struggle.

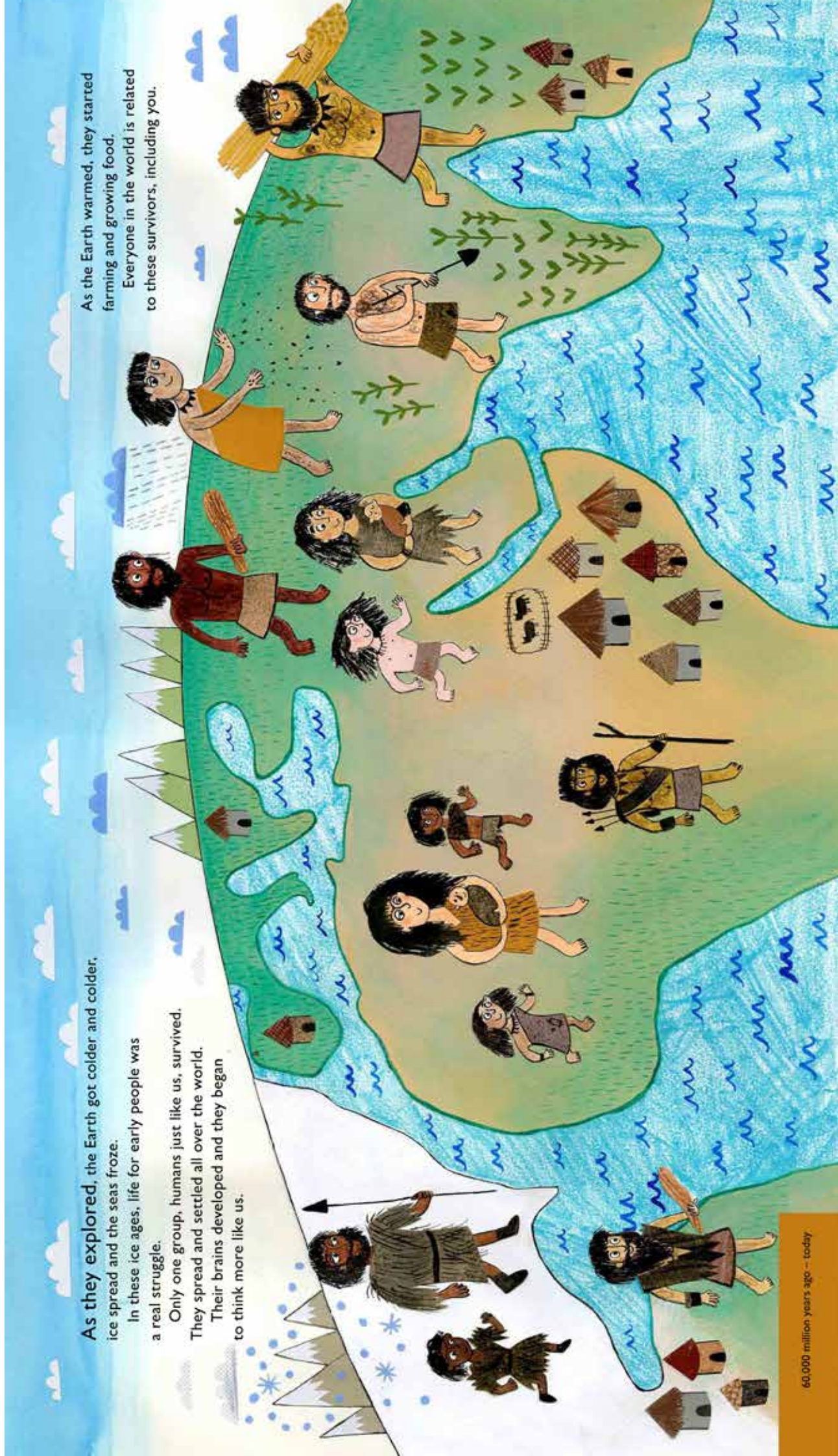
Only one group, humans just like us, survived.

They spread and settled all over the world.

Their brains developed and they began to think more like us.

As the Earth warmed, they started farming and growing food.

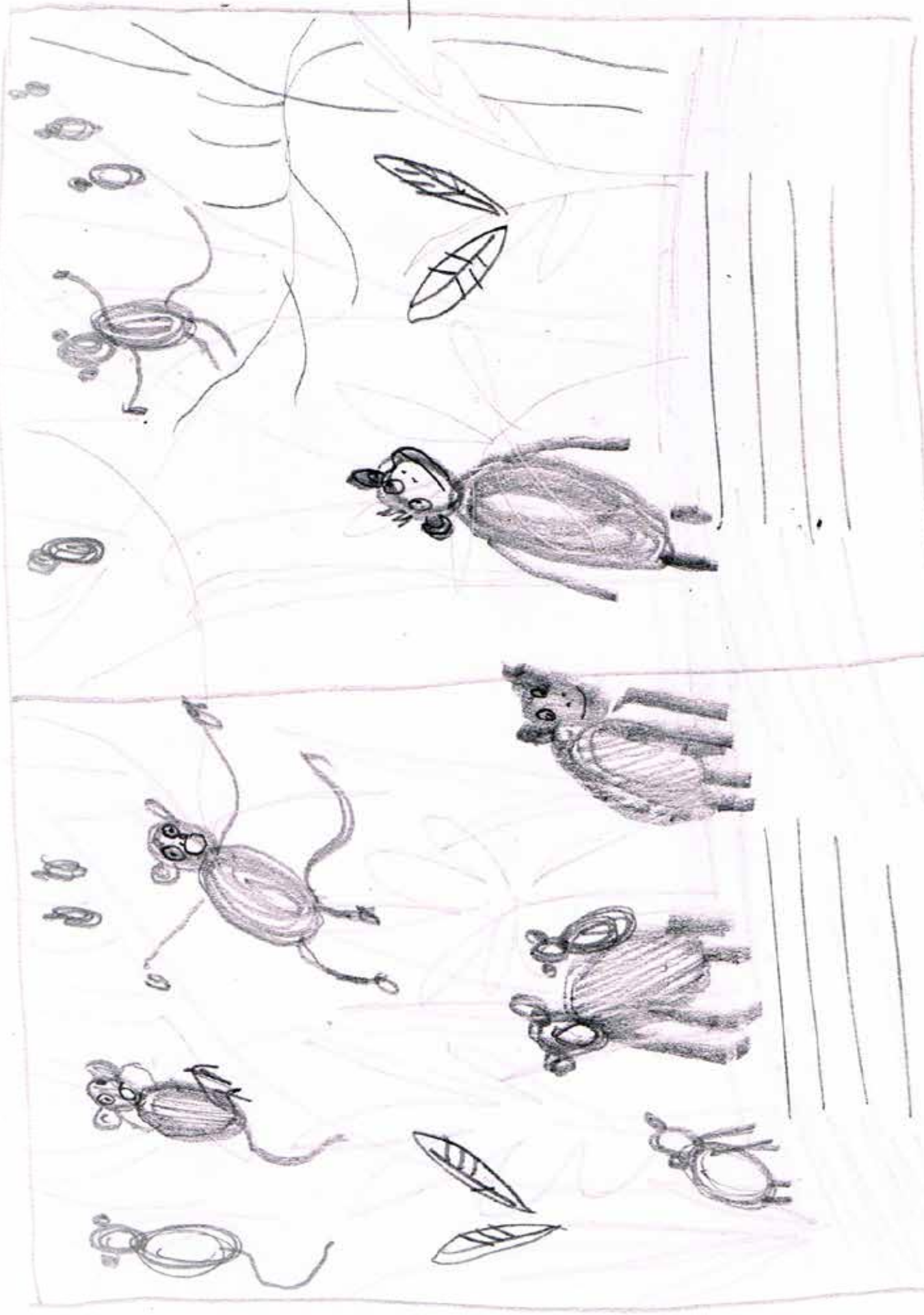
Everyone in the world is related to these survivors, including you.



60,000 million years ago – today

Illustrated by Amy Husband

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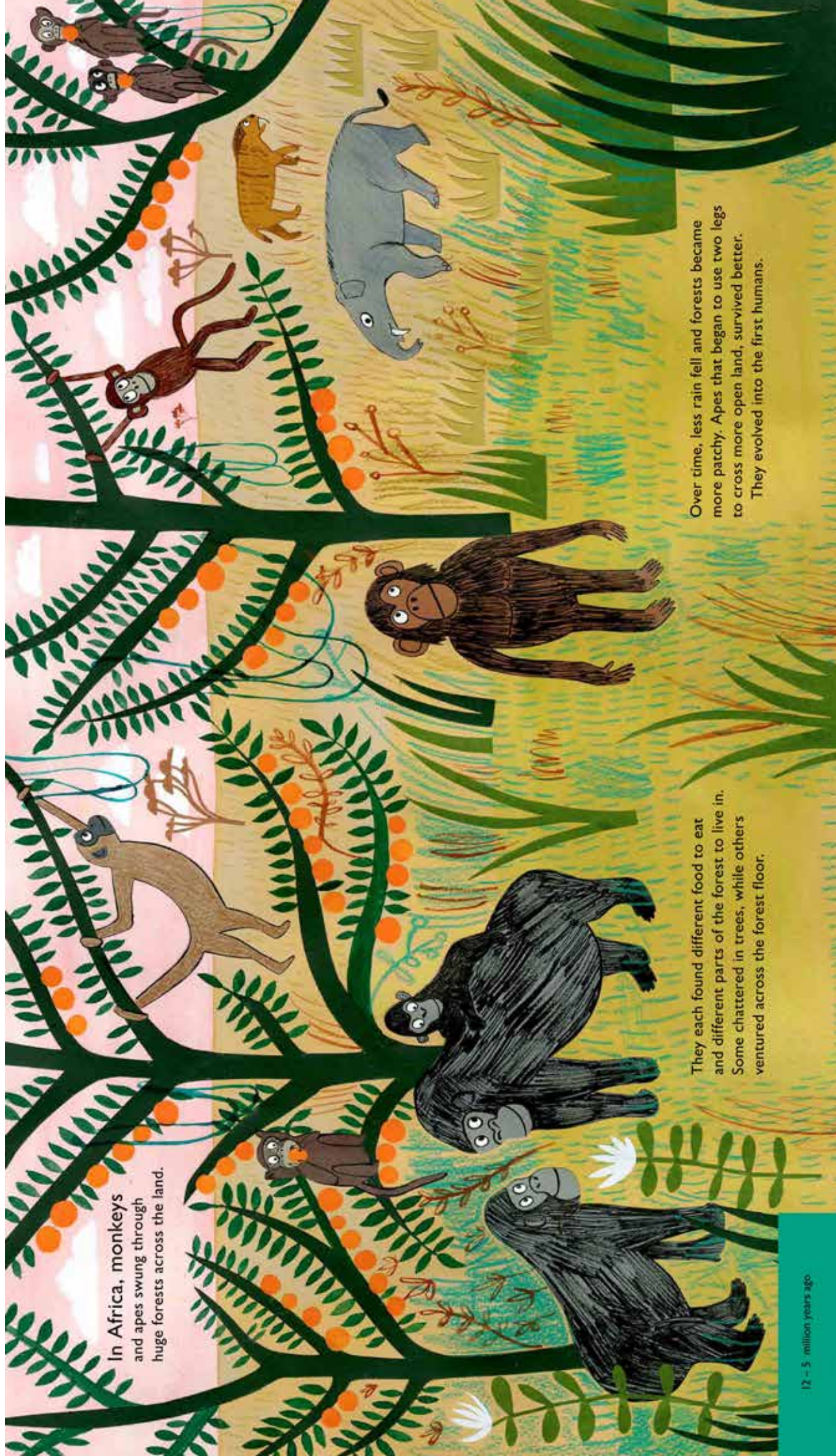
Rough illustrations: The Story of Life: a first book on evolution

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In Africa, monkeys
and apes swung through
huge forests across the land.

They each found different food to eat
and different parts of the forest to live in.
Some chattered in trees, while others
ventured across the forest floor.

Over time, less rain fell and forests became
more patchy. Apes that began to use two legs
to cross more open land, survived better.
They evolved into the first humans.