

Winnie's Whoosh Went Walkabout

Jeff Williams Dzana Serdarevic



320 Sycamore Studios



Imagine you've just lost a backpack or ball,
or a library book and the book's overdue.
You'll think of the places you've been and you'll call.
Someone will have it. They'll hold it for you.



Okay, now imagine that you've lost your Whoosh.
Where do you ... What? You don't know what that means?
A Whoosh is what gets you up off of your toosh,
and do-ing and you-ing away from your screens.



Say you paint with your feet or you dance on both hands,
construct a cool castle from corks you collected,
or like to do things no one else understands,
and do them when doing them's NOT what's expected.



Say you go off alone for long walks in the woods,
or sneak out at night to watch far stars parading.
If you tend to ignore all the oughts and the shoulds,
your Whoosh is what pushes away the afraiding.



Your Whoosh gives you poems, new colors in art,
suggestions you find inconveniently true,
Your Whoosh is the part that says, "Follow your heart.
Follow the way meant for Y-O-U you."



The thing about Whooshes though — they're pretty shy.
If they feel forgotten or smothered or swirled,
they may leave you one night without saying goodbye.
And then you'll be Whooshless, adrift in the world.



That's what had happened in a town called Yagott,
where people liked thing-ing. It's what they called "fun."
If they weren't thing-ing they watched screens a lot.
That's why they were Whooshless. (Well, all except one.)



Their Whooshlessness caused them to live life out-loudly.
On weekends they trooped to the Thing-a-Lot store,
Yagotters were groupers. They went places crowdly.
Their motto was "Nothing's enough when there's more!"



They craved shiny treasures and treasured distraction,
like fireworks shows that could make them applaud
or shoot-em-up movies that jangled with action.
Only one had a Whoosh, and she was a bit odd.



While other Yagotters spent lots of time counting, this girl, Winnie Wisp, really didn't like math. While others used counting to rank their amounting, this girl and her Whoosh walked a different path.



Their path meandered to the hills beyond town,
where nothing much happened, yet everything did.
A day in the hills was a verb, not a noun,
where sunbeam-dreams streamed, said hello and then hid.



They played hide-and-seek with the marmots and mice,
joined posses of daisies who shimmied and danced.
They came in all weather — whether cold, wet, or nice.
The world buzzed with life and these friends were entranced.



On some days they'd fashion a scepter and crown
from branches and bunches of grasses they'd braid.
Winnie'd say, "I'm the Wish Queen, protecting the town!"
Her Whoosh would say, "I wish other Whooshes had stayed!"



They'd leap in a stream and emerge coughing phlegm.
They'd shake themselves dry and lie down in the grass.
They'd watch a worm and the worm would watch them.
They'd stare at the sky just to watch the clouds pass.



Then they would bounce up and bound through a field,
to the base of a cliff, which they'd climb for the view.
They'd wait-wait-wait-wait till the stars were revealed.
When the stars blinked and twinkled, they'd ask, "How are you?"



At times they got bruised. They got scratched or got scraped.
Winnie startled a moose once. It scared her. She hurled.
Her Whoosh once got lost in a fog but escaped.
They were each other's happy place, each other's world.



Eventually darkness would come and they'd go,
go back to Yagott with its sparkle and glitz.
But things started changing, all sneaky and slow.
Good things, when we lose 'em, we lose 'em in bits.



Every day down in town Winnie heard people say,
"Life's about numbers! About keeping score!
So rate every moment you work and you play,
then compare to your neighbors to see who scores more."



If people say something, no matter how dense,
and then say it louder, and say it a lot,
sooner or later they'll seem to make sense.
Later or sooner you'll get a Yagott.



It's hard to stay you when a whole town's gone mad.
Winnie Wisp wondered if people were right.
The town ground her down, bit by bit, tad by tad.
She neglected her Whoosh, so it left her one night.



But Winnie did something nobody had ever.
Instead of erupting in hurt-masking laughter
or going to sleep with a mumbled, "Whatever."
Winnie woke up and thought: "I'm going after!"



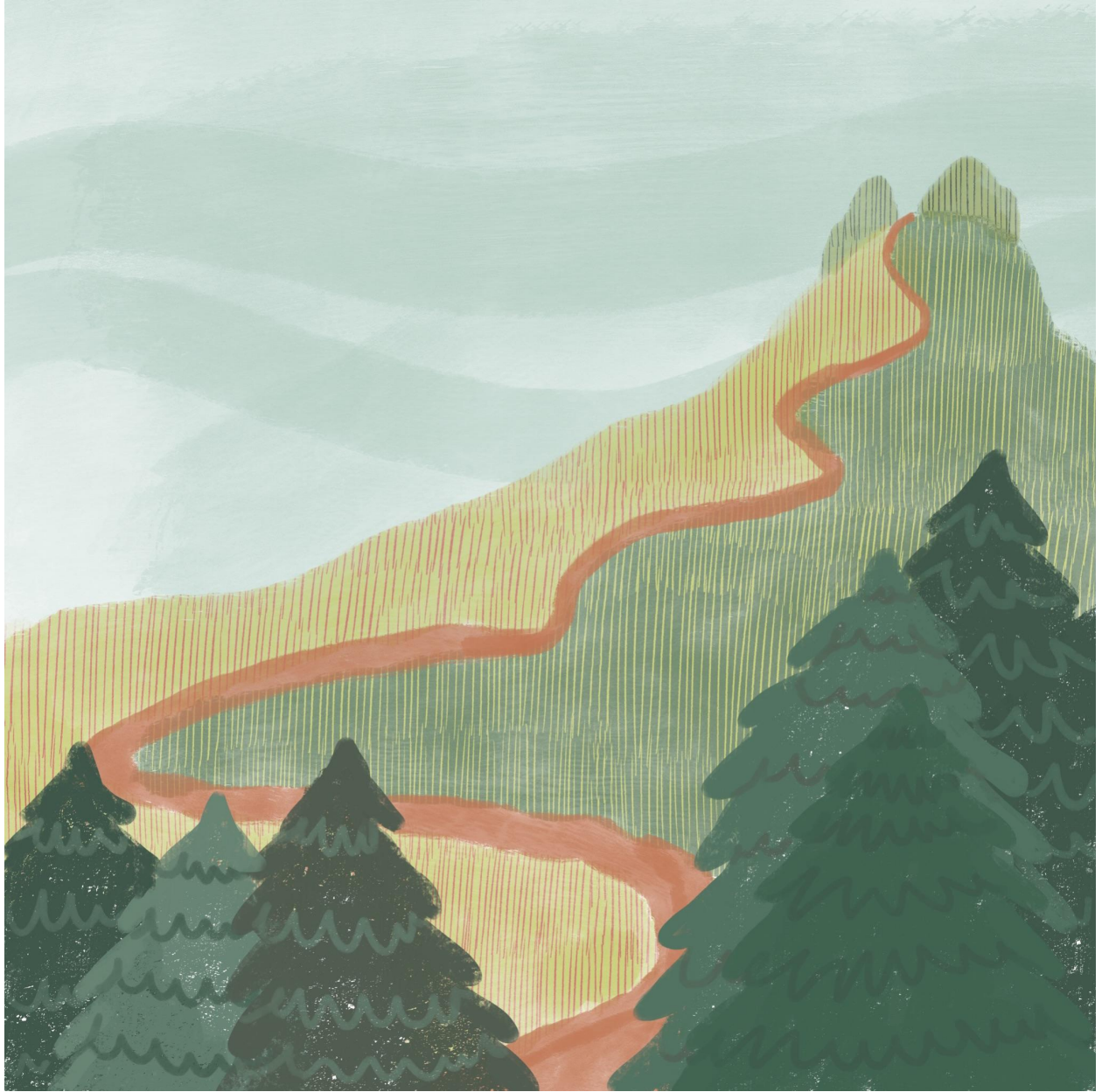
She threw off her quilt and jumped up and got going.
She clambered through backyards, leapt dogs and climbed walls.
Her Whoosh wasn't trusting. Her Whoosh wasn't slowing,
despite her cajolings and coaxings and calls.



The whole chase took place with no people remarking.
No one was outside to hear her or see.
No one heard clanging or banging or barking.
Yagotters were inside, all watching TV.



Although Winnie Wisp felt a little bit foolish,
she trusted the tug on the feet in her shoes.
Although Winnie Wisp felt a little uncoolish,
that tug was a feeling she couldn't refuse.



She let the tug tug her out into the night,
away out of town and up into the hills,
toward the Pass of Pazain, keeping her Whoosh in sight,
up way up high, till the air gave her chills.



The chase and the chills cleared the clouds in her brain,
and when your brain's clear then your heart can start seeing.
What Winnie soon saw gave her heart a hard pain:
Her Whoosh had grown lonely while Winnie'd been ME-ing.



"I've gotten distracted. I've acted so blindly.
Me and my Whoosh are a pair. We're a TWO.
We're partners together when life treats us kindly,
and also when life makes us so scared we poo."



The thought made her dizzy, she had to sit down.
Her next thought, however, was even intenser.
She scrunched her eyes shut and she made a small frown,
"Life's even *more* than we two — it's immenser."

*We ALL need our Whooshes, though most have forgot.
Perhaps I can help, though I'm small and alone.
We're in this together. This world's all we've got.*

When she opened her eyes, she found her Whoosh had flown.



Suddenly Winnie went all *pffffft* inside.
Her ten toes were blistered. Her fingers were numb.
She felt hungry and angry and totally fried.
A voice in her head began chanting, "You're dumb."



What do you do when you find yourself Whooshless,
and tattered and weak when you tried to be strong?
Can you go on feeling meek, bleak, and useless?
Or do you go back? Do you try to belong?



Winnie Wisp wobbled down at her rock bottom,
but in that dark moment she found her BIG WHY
(and BIG WHYS cannot be forgot once you got 'em):
Results aren't important. What counts is to try.



When behind you it's warm and ahead it may freeze,
when all your self-doubting gets hard to ignore,
the World's here to say, "There are no guarantees.
But you're not here for safety. You're here to explore."



Winnie trudged herself upward in spite of her pain.
She clomped, stomped, and shambled, in spite of her aches.
When she got to the top of the pass of Pazain,
and took in the vista it gave her the shakes.



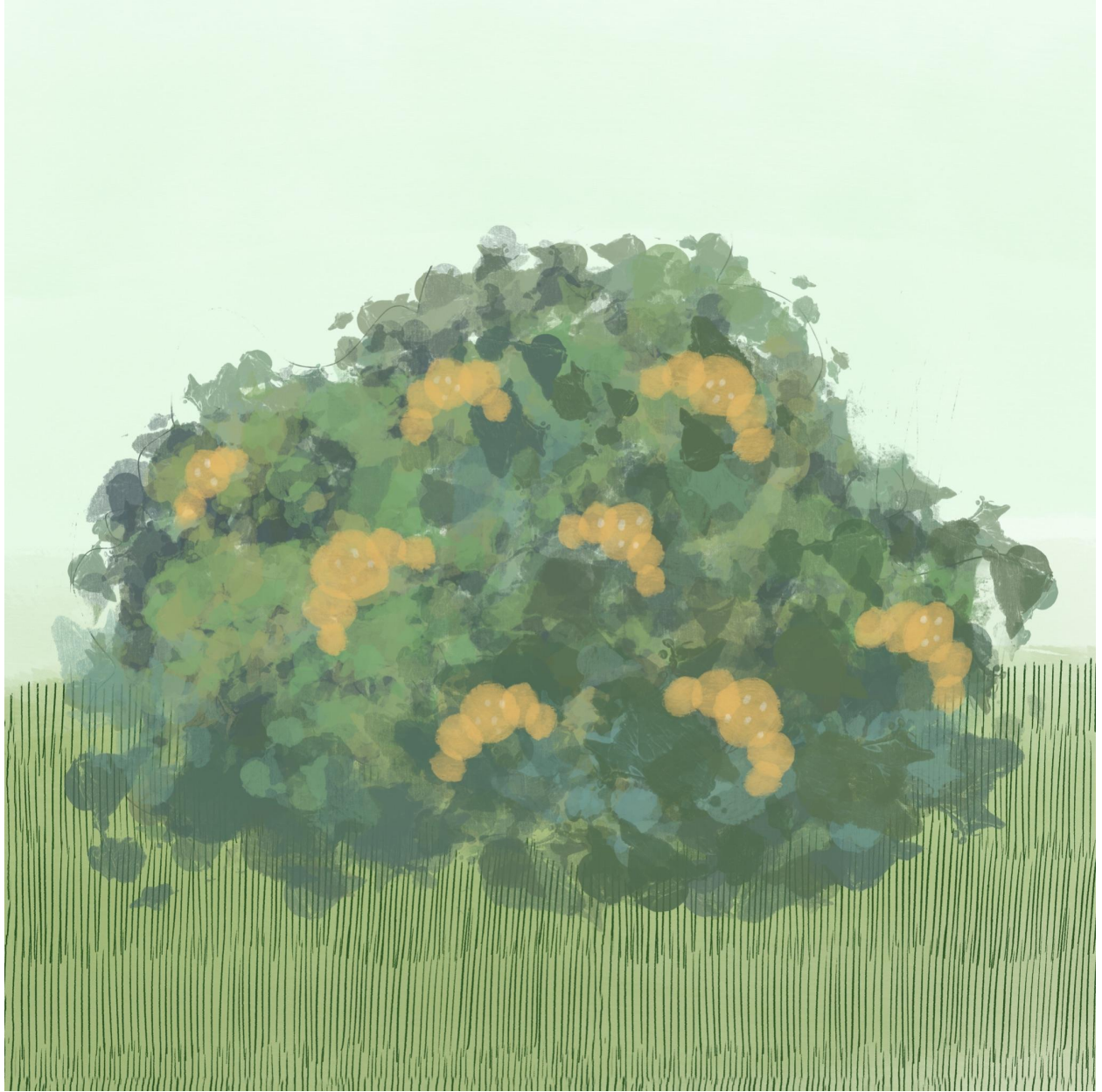
Soft morning sunshine suffused the whole view —
a river, a forest, some meadows, a plain,
flowers on hillsides still spangled with dew,
streams everywhere singing with yesterday's rain.



Winnie dashed to a freshet and knelt for a drink.
Then she rose and strode forward, her stomach content.
When your stomach is happy, your brain's free to think.
Winnie thought on her Whoosh, and which way it went.



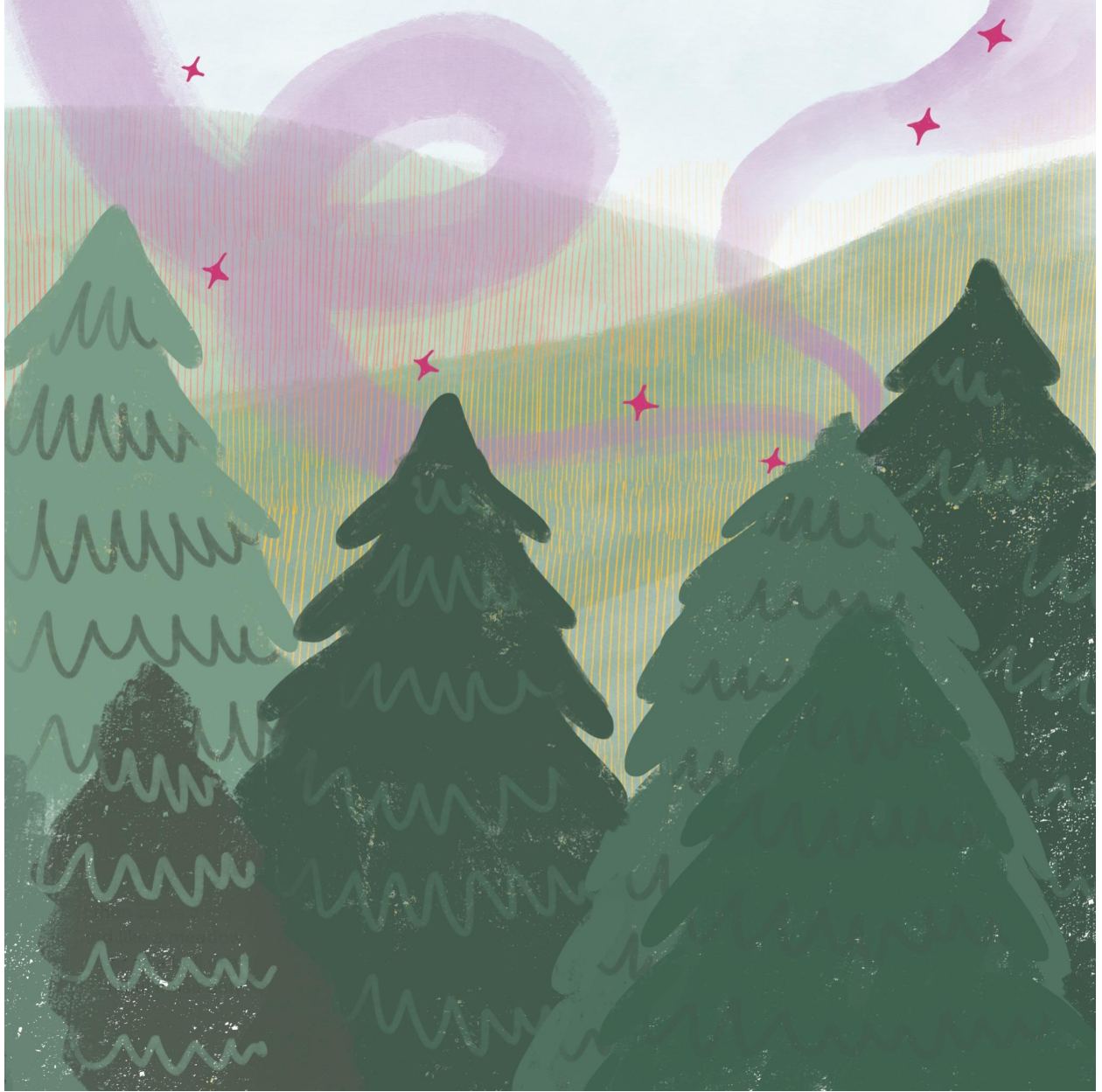
When thinking proved useless, she turned to the bushes,
the mice and the marmots, the clouds and the flowers.
"Do you, you, or you have a clue where my Whoosh is?"
she asked and kept asking for 51 hours.



As Winnie Wisp wandered, the whole world got better.
She found pastry bushes abloom with croissants.
And hot-cocoa rivers and plants made of cheddar.
Her needs were all met, and also her wants.



That's not to say that those hours were easy.
The best things in life take a good deal of work.
Sometimes she felt glitchy. Sometimes she felt queasy.
Sometimes she got turned all around in the murk.



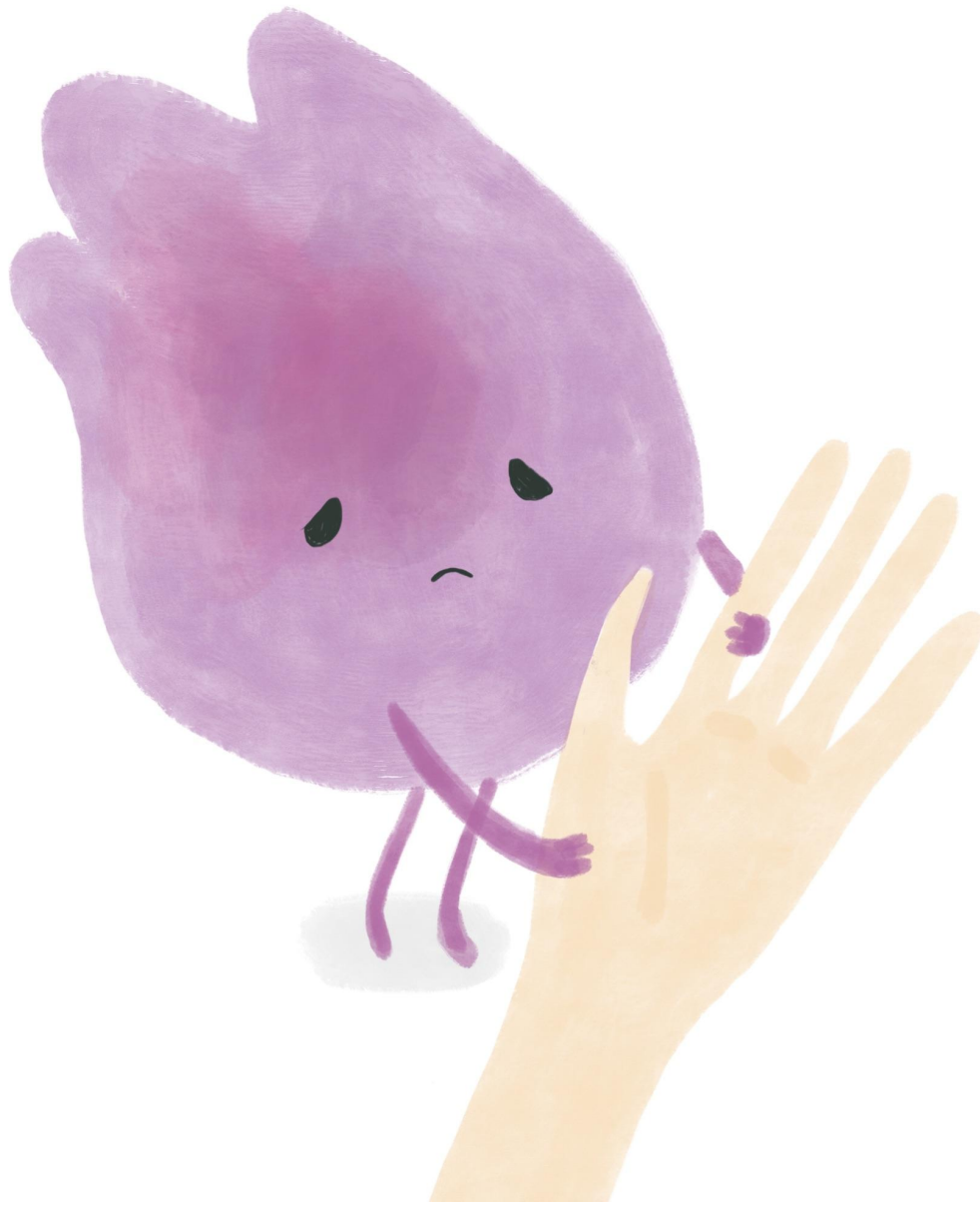
But then came a moment when Winnie heard singing —
a sound like a meadow that's coming awake,
as clear as a bell in a hilltop town ringing —
a beautiful noise only Whooshes would make.



The song was transporting, transcendent, melodic.
Her two ears were hungry and here was a feast!
The sound was uplifting, upwelling, hypnotic.
When Winnie broke into a clearing, it ceased.



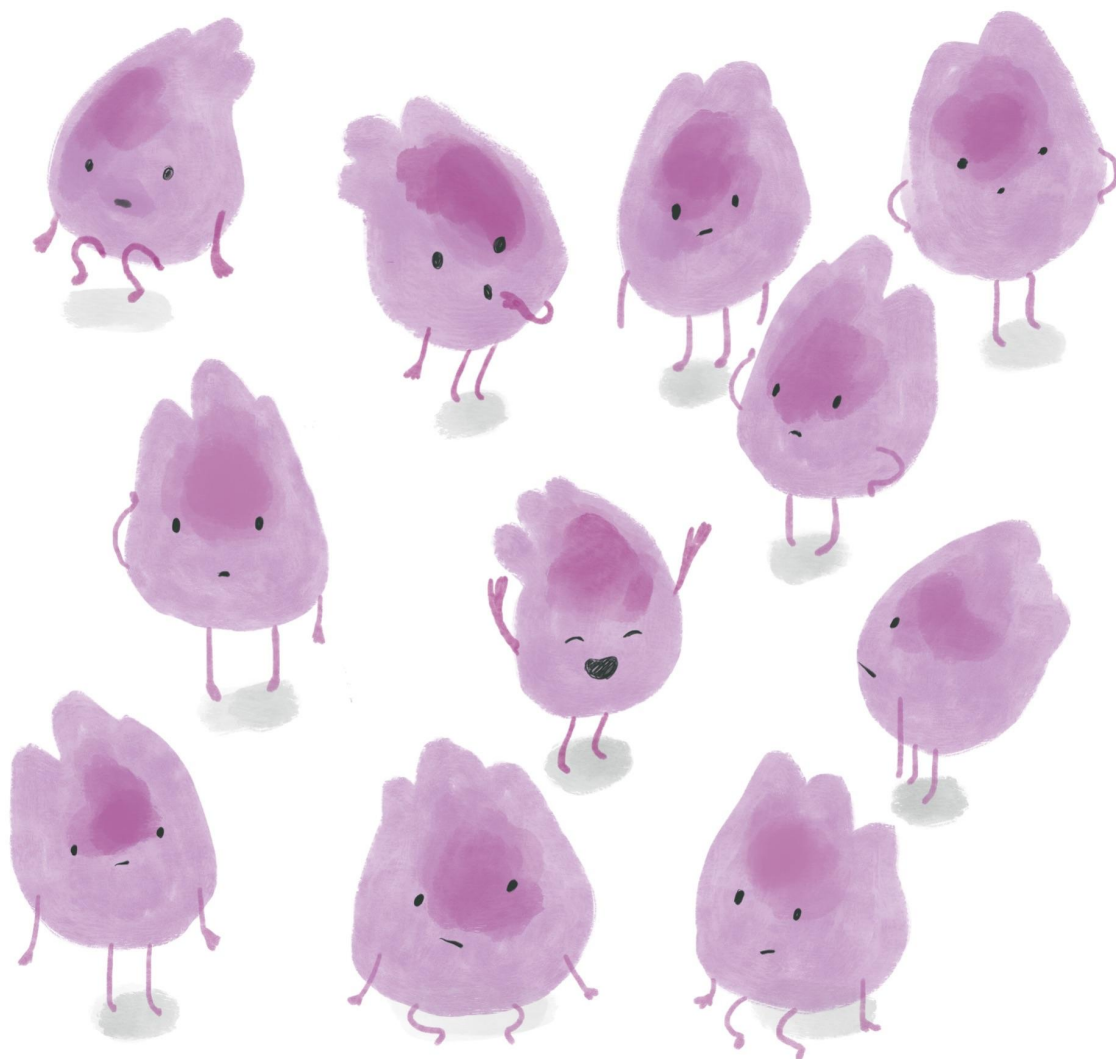
Winnie opened her mouth, unable to speak.
Some Whooshes got frightened and murmured, "Yagotter!"
Winnie Wisp wobbled. Went woozy. Went weak.
But before she could topple, Winnie's Whoosh caught her.



A few minutes later she opened her eyes
and her heart broke a bit when she sensed all their fear.
Winnie's Whoosh squeezed her hand. It looked sad. It looked wise.
Winnie said, "I have something for you all to hear."



"I want you to know I don't care about more-ing.
And maybe if I don't, then others don't, too.
Yagotters, I think, want to be out exploring,
but they're lost and they're frightened. That's why they need YOU."



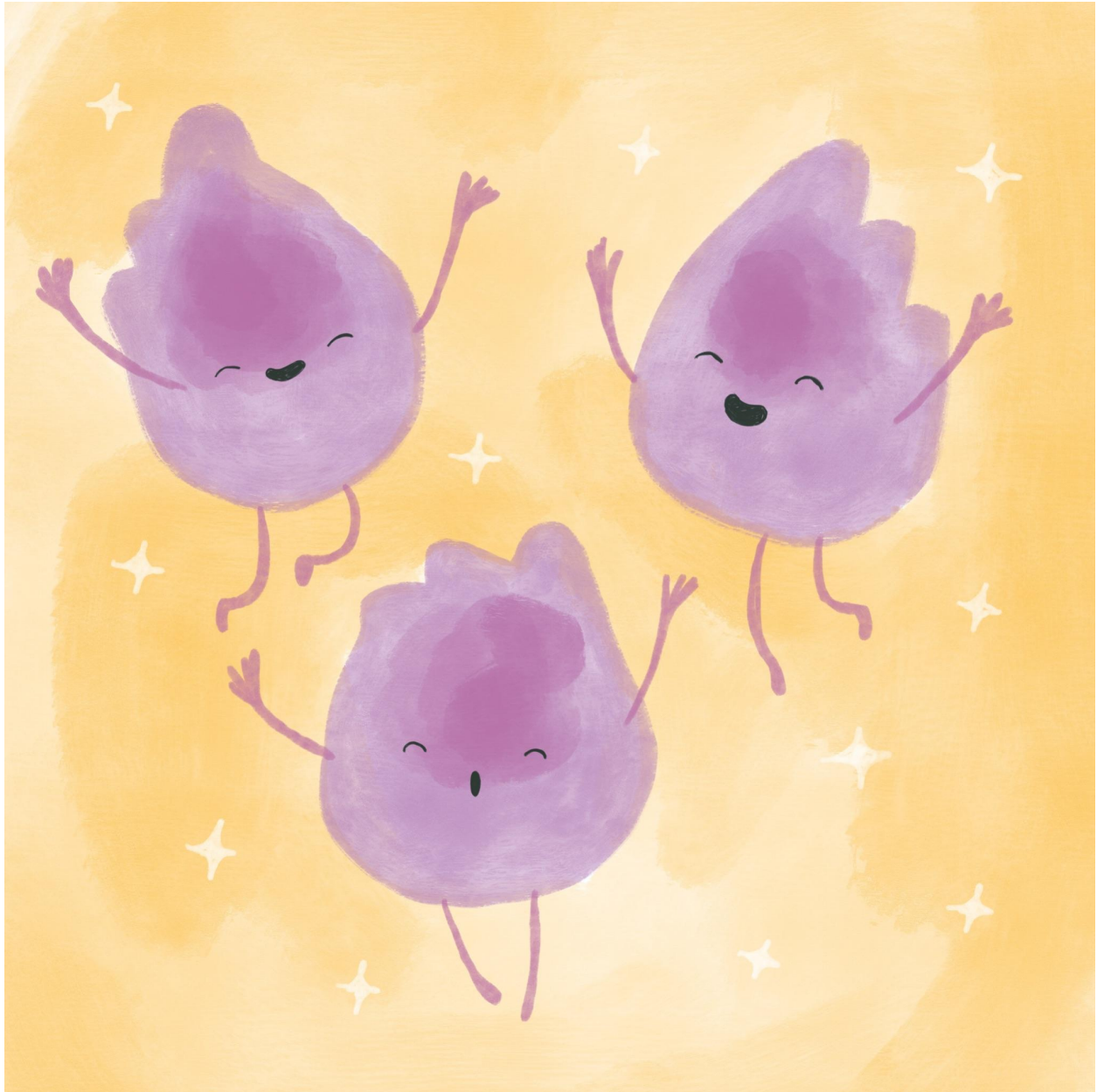
The Whooshes reacted as Winnie expected.
They grumbled and mumbled and said, "We think not."
(We tend to do that when we're hurt or rejected.)
Winnie said, "Please? Yagott needs you a LOT."



"Their world's gotten frightful, they're in such a hurry.
They all run around, but they never arrive.
The days hurtle past them so fast they get blurry.
They think being busy means being alive.



Perhaps if we all could go back to Yagott,
the town would wake up to the life that you bring.
They'd remember alive-ness that they've all forgot.
How cool would it be to march in there and sing?"



The Whooshes discussed it. It just took a minute.
A mere sixty seconds of singing and songing.
Deep down they missed home. They missed being in it.
They missed their people. They missed belonging.



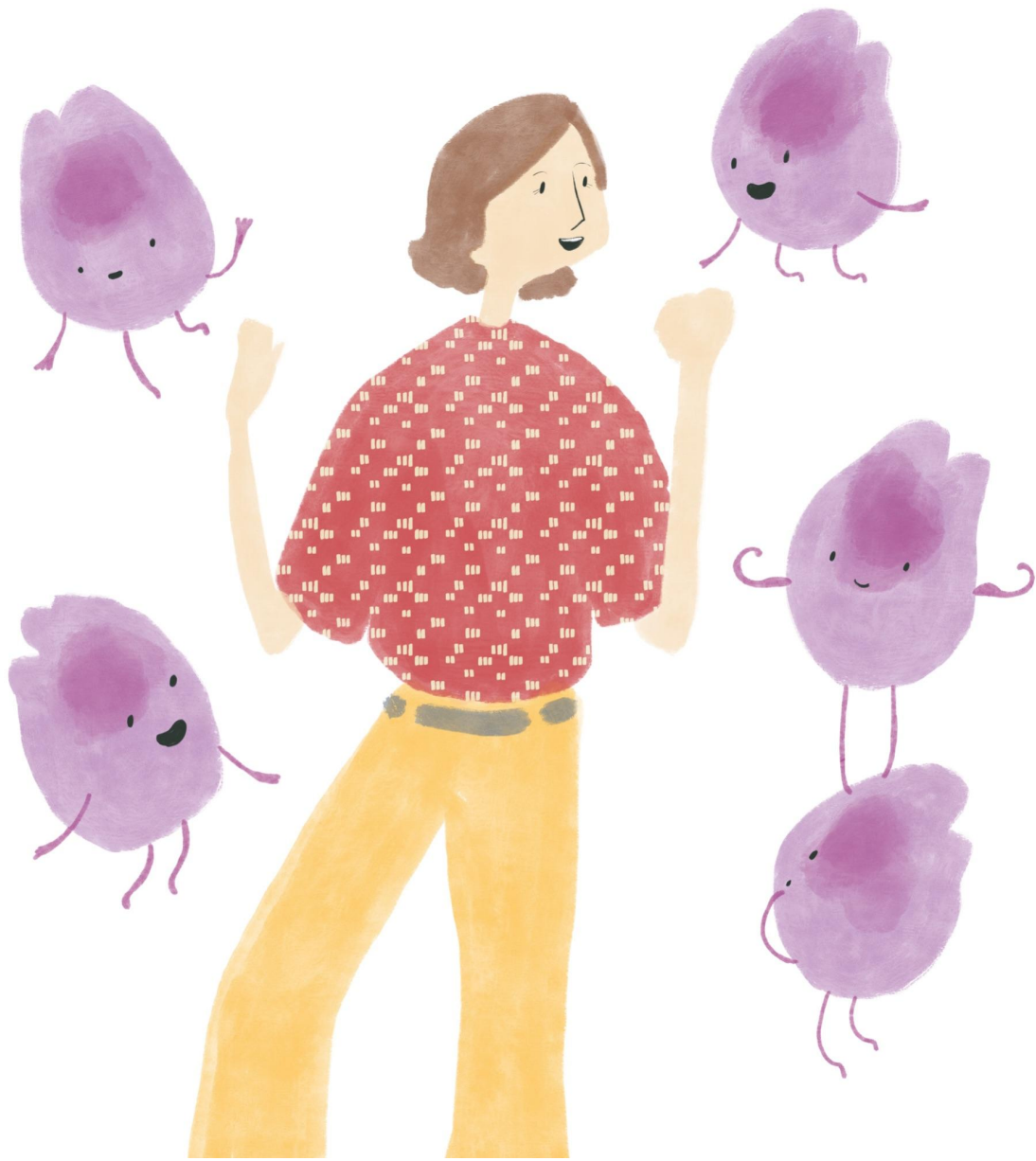
That day, Winnie Wisp and the Whooshes marched back in a glorious, noisy, and boisterous parade. Sometimes the parade marched completely off-track. When it did they all napped. Then they got up and played.



As they passed by the fields of the cheddary plants,
they plucked them and ate them with croissants for brunch.
When they crossed a river, they'd sip and they'd dance,
then a few hours later, they'd all stop for lunch.



They passed through the murk and some blustery weather,
and yes, there were moments of blisters and rain,
but they didn't mind because they were together.
They eventually got to the Pass of Pazain ...



... where they slowed and they stopped and they froze, full of fear.
Winnie assured them, "You're where you belong!"
Then she yelled out what they needed to hear.
"You're loud and you're proud and you're Whooshes! Be strong!"



The Whooshes and Winnie howled down from the pass.
They surged into town in a bang-jangly caucus,
electric with attitude, moxie and sass,
and songs that were reckless and joyous and raucous.



And the people WOKE UP! Slow at first and then fast.
People re-found their Whooshes, and Whooshes found them.
That night in Yagott likely won't be surpassed.
Everyone partied until ten p.m.



Yagotters got new thoughts that clicked into place.
How there's beauty in difference, and good in unique.
How life gets richer the less that you race.
Everyone felt so giddy they played hide-and-seek.



Later, Yagotters and Whooshes went walking.
Pairs on their own paths to see where they went.
Just walking and listening and being and talking.
Suddenly getting that's what it all meant.



Winnie went to the hills with her Whoosh for the view.
They saw a day dawning without so much stuff.
When you've got your Whoosh and your Whoosh has got you,
you've got each other. That's more than enough.