

Nostalgic Notions

Austin P. Torney

NOSTALGIC NOTIONS

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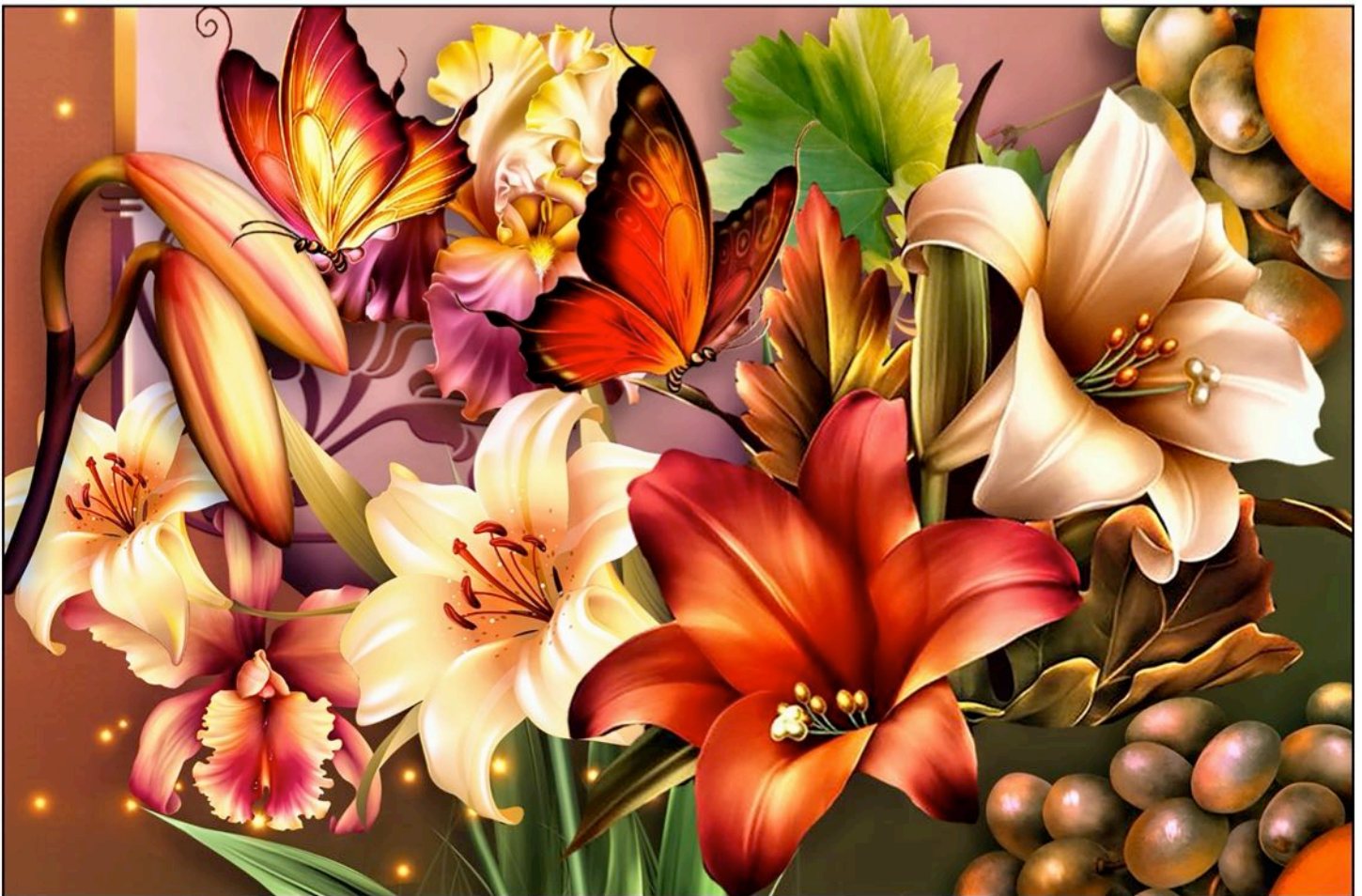
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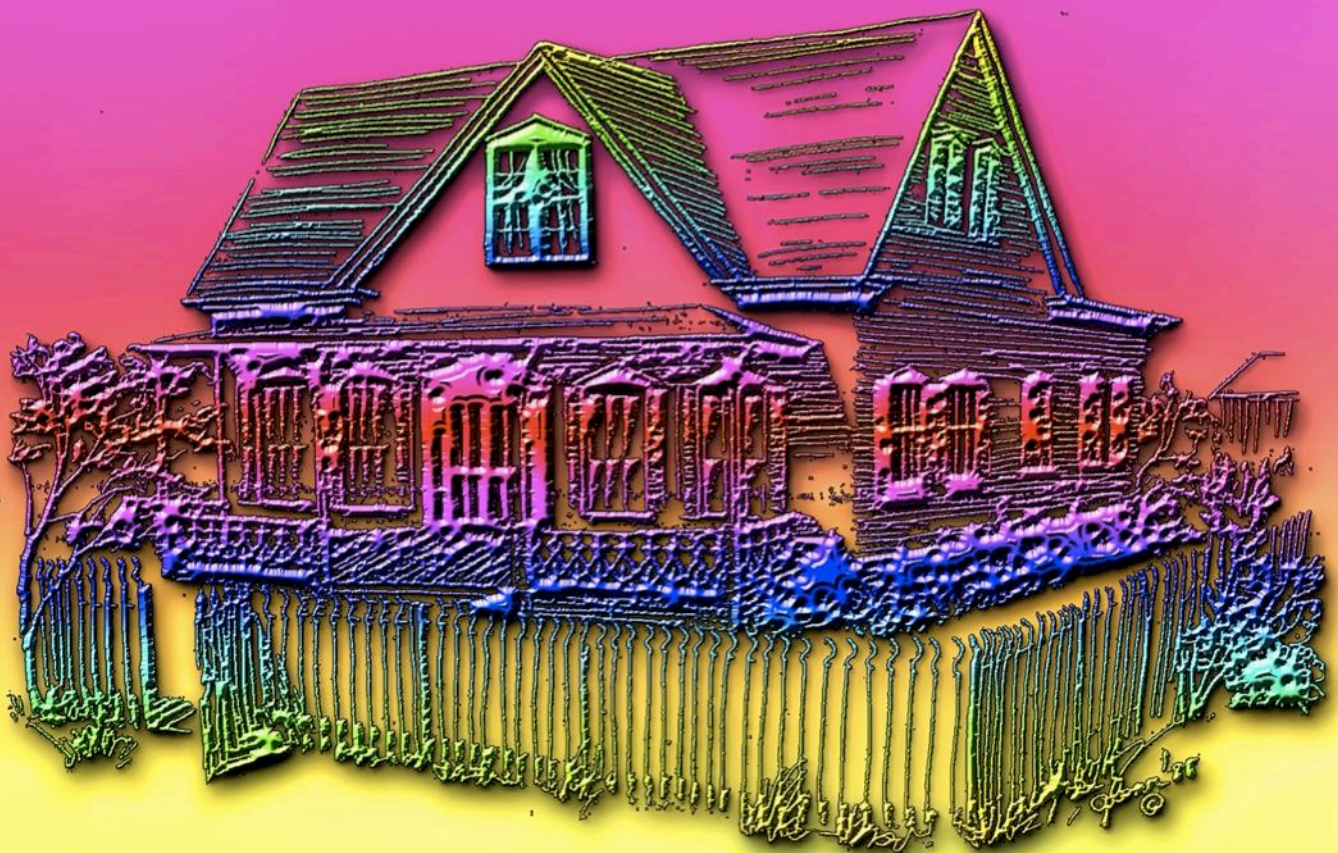
YouTube Videos: MagicalVideos Channel

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DeviantArt: Look under AustinTorney



Nostalgic Motions

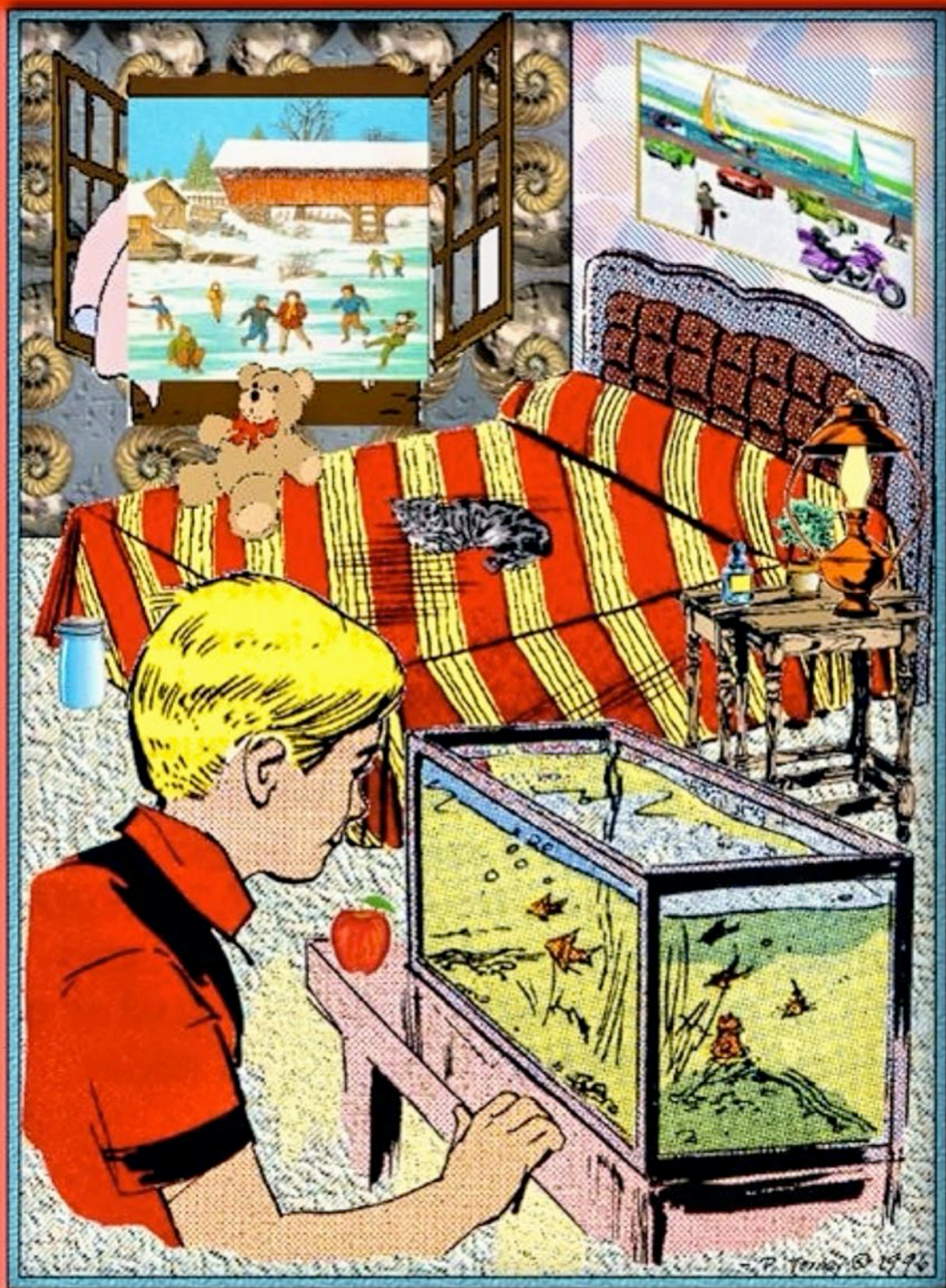


Austin W. Torney

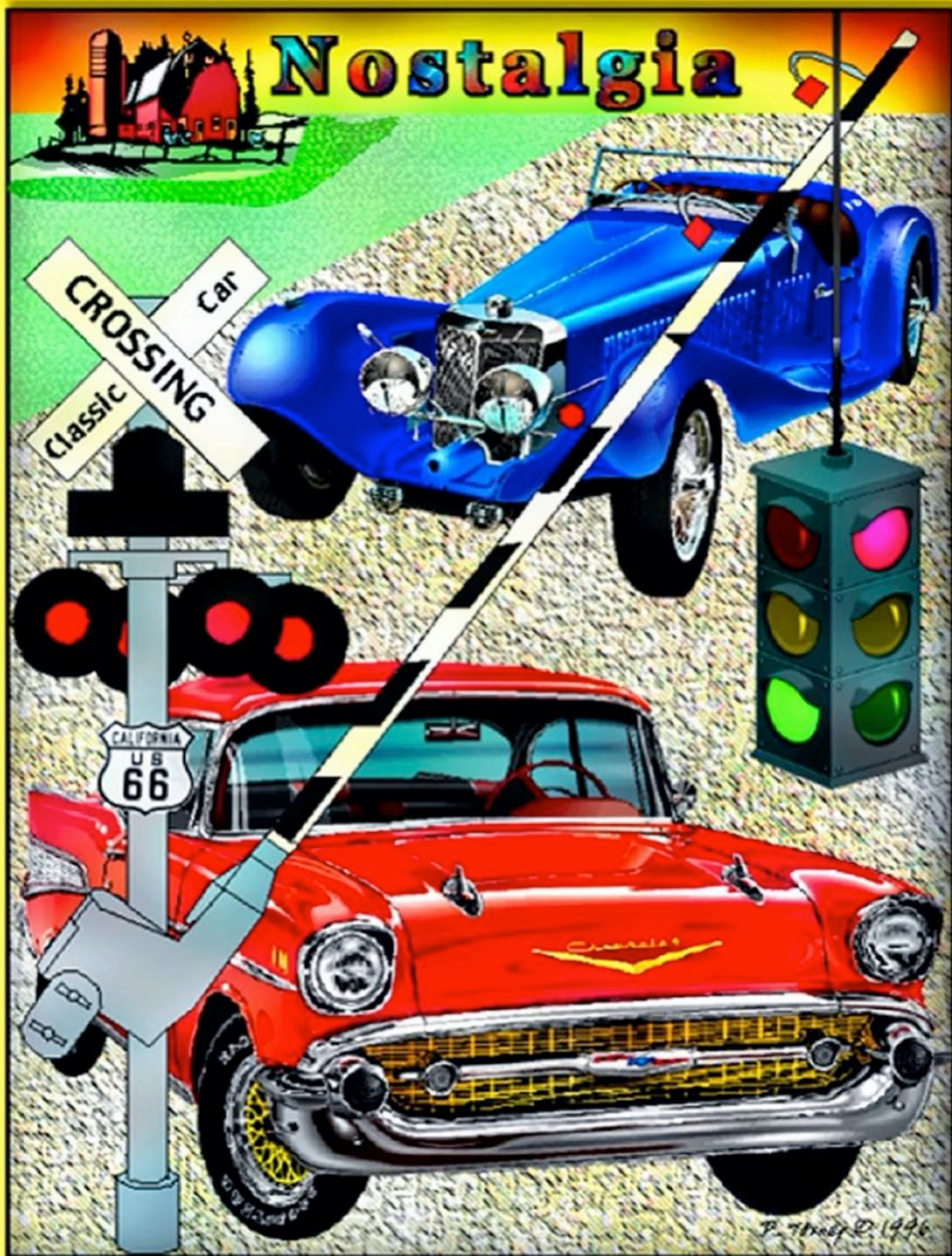


The Good Old Days

Nostalgia




c Notions



I learned to drive a '57 chevy, practicing on the cemetery roads, going nice and slow, learning to work the gears. My father told me that this was a good place to learn, for, if you run over someone, they're already dead!



Gumballs were only a penny back in my time, and sometimes you even got a prize, too. Somebody even said that there was a real diamond ring in a gumball machine somewhere. We got lots of cute plastic junky little toys and charms, but no diamonds. Perhaps the cranky, turning noise that the machine made was the real charm of it




I ran my hand
along a picket fence,
Counting heartbeats
and running like a child,
Still carefully not stepping
on the cracks,
Noting the furrowed ants
bustling, thriving.





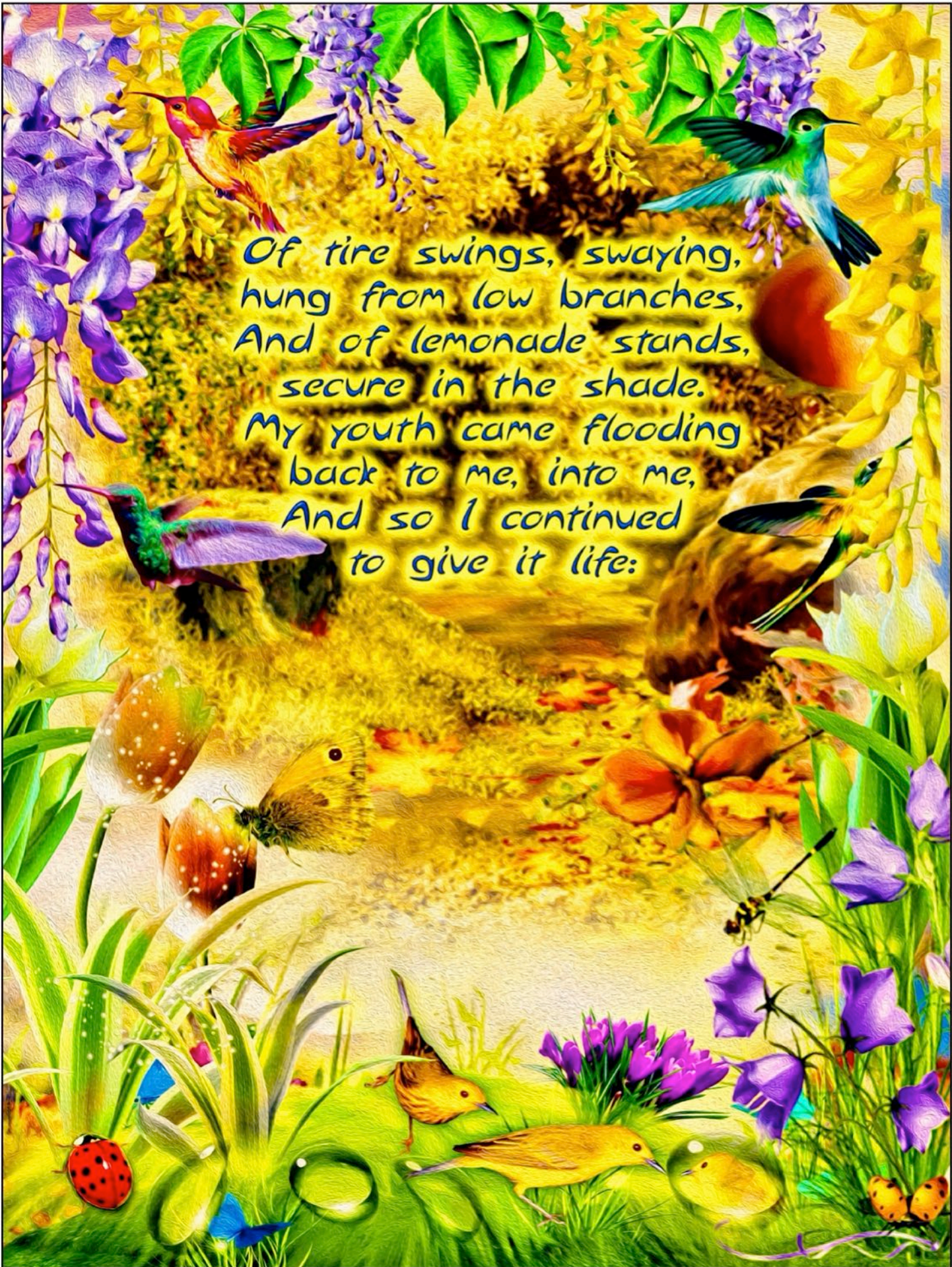
We'd always wondered just how the insects found water during droughts or in deserts—until we discovered the dew-drops on the flower petals in the early morning—and saw a thirsty spider drinking them: so, we tried it, too, and found the morning dew to be a most refreshing drink.



A vibrant autumn forest scene. A path leads through a dense forest of trees with yellow and orange foliage. In the foreground, there are several tree stumps and a large log, surrounded by colorful autumn leaves and small plants. Two birds are perched on a log in the lower left. The sky is a mix of blue and purple, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The entire scene is framed by a thin brown border.

*I wondered at an
old chestnut tree that
Had somehow survived
the blight, it towering
And ever so gently tilting
the walking plane—
Presenting me with
more ancient notions:*





*Of tire swings, swaying,
hung from low branches,
And of lemonade stands,
secure in the shade.
My youth came flooding
back to me, into me,
And so I continued
to give it life:*



a.p.t.

I remember the days when
the skies were filled with kites.

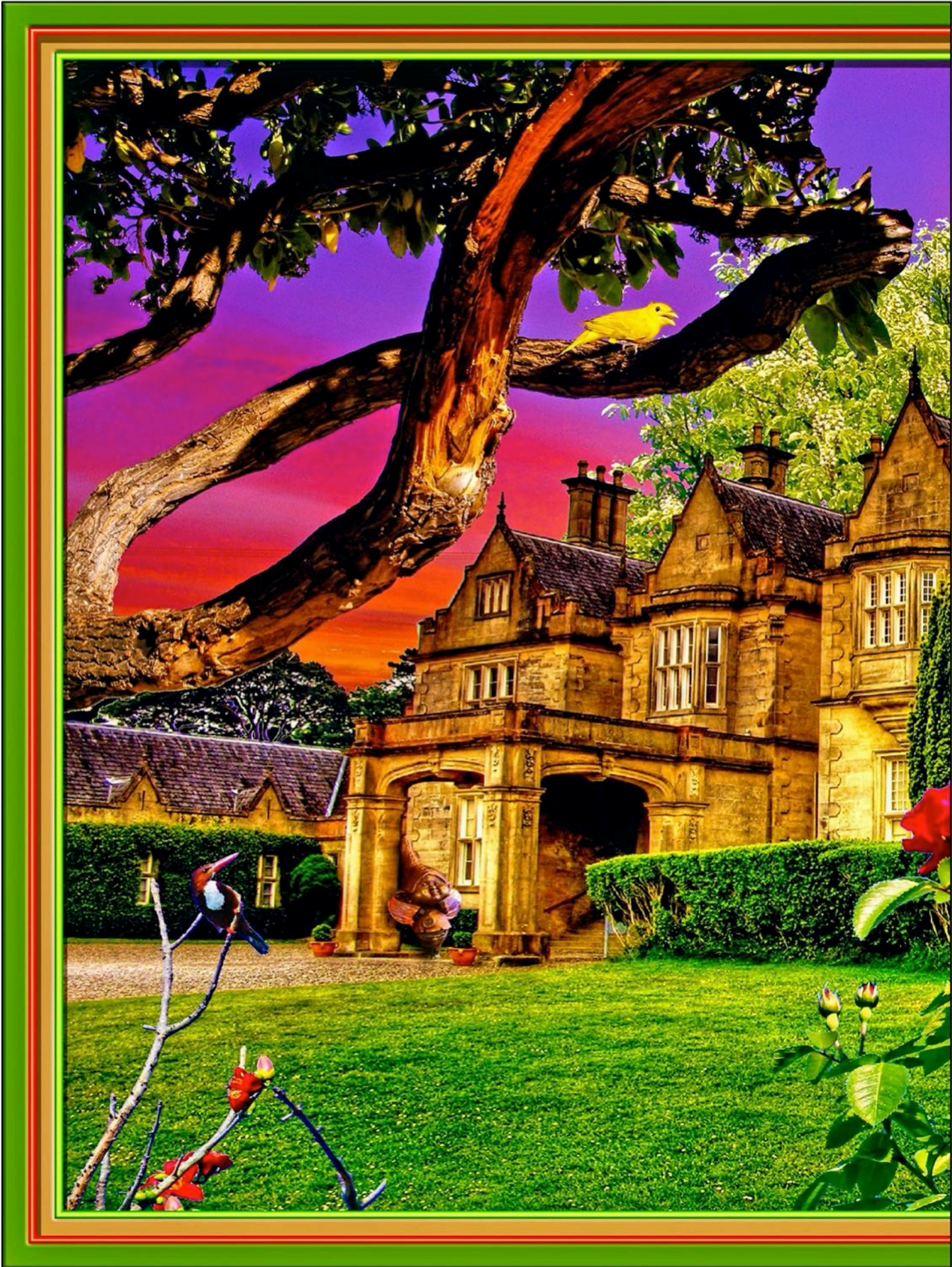


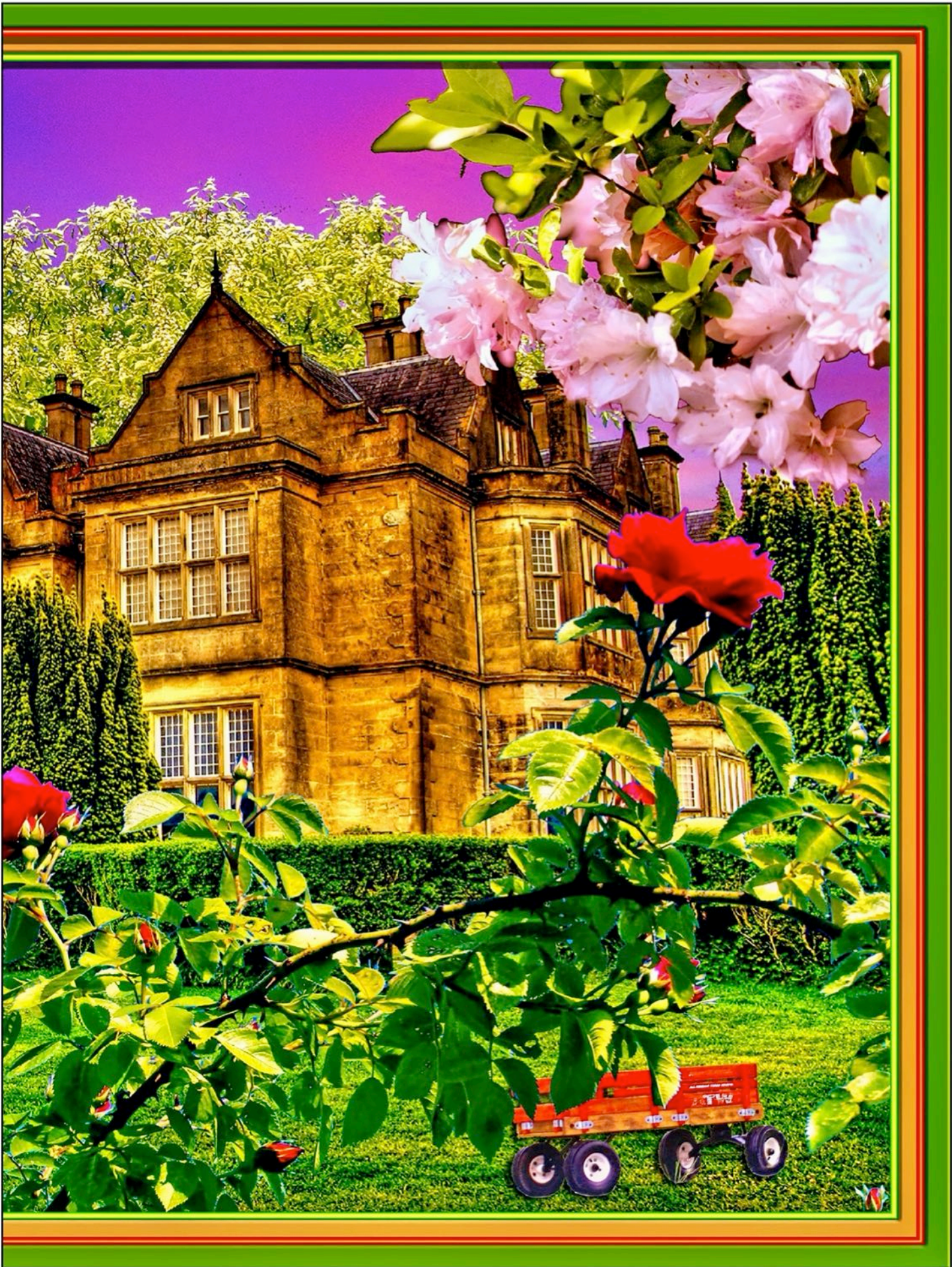
Remember as a girl you played mother and a boy played daddy and together you played house, using your doll as the baby? Yes, it all started innocently enough, but as we got older this was not a game that our parents wanted us to play—so we played doctor instead!

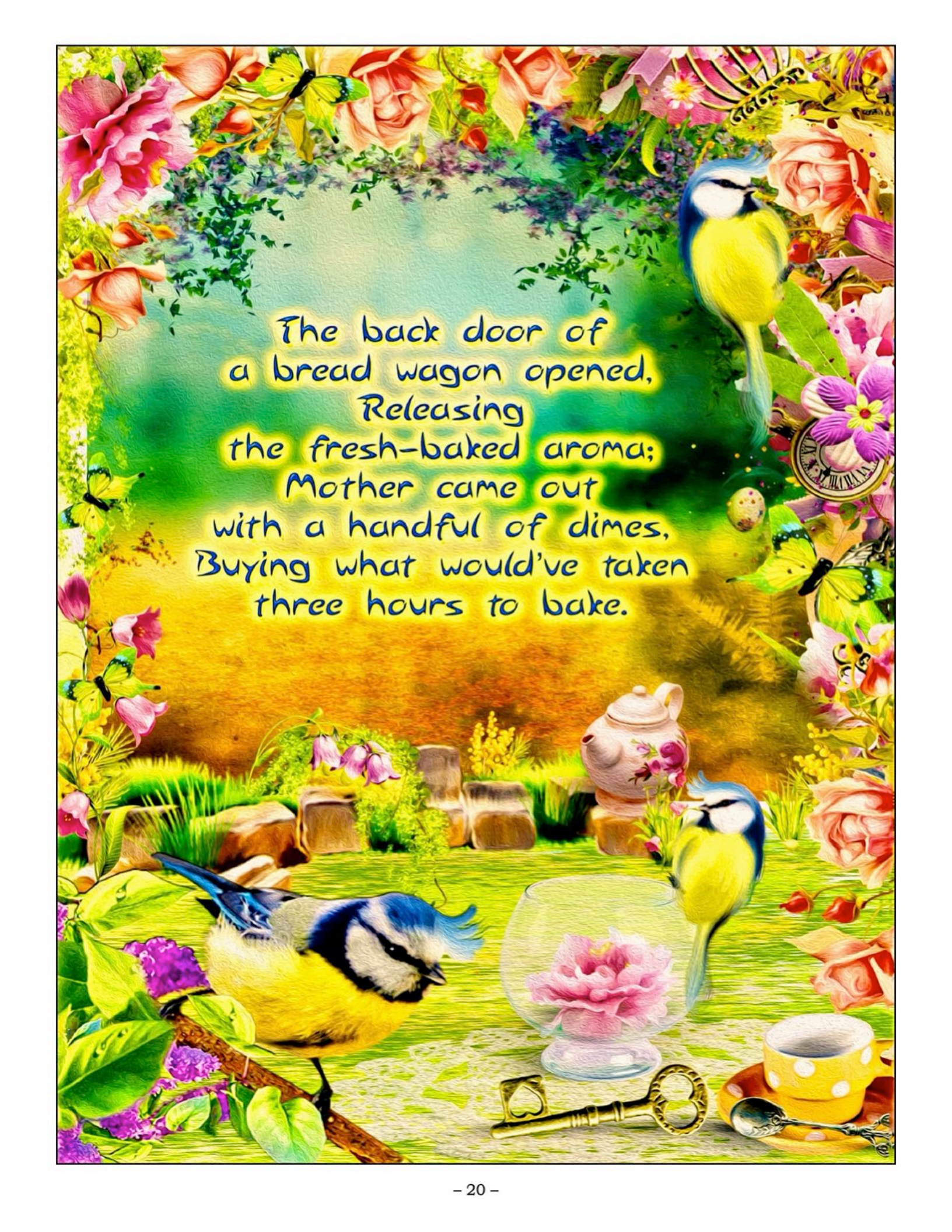
School Daze



P. Tornay © 1996








The back door of
a bread wagon opened,
Releasing
the fresh-baked aroma;
Mother came out
with a handful of dimes,
Buying what would've taken
three hours to bake.





On the houses' steps
rested newspapers
And the sturdy
rounded bottles of milk,
Compliments of
Elsie the cow, truly
A vision from the
grazings of childhood.





We played games
on these walkways,
like hopscotch,
Roller skating, and marbles.
My bag of jewels:
A cool green cat's-eye,
a big blue boulder,
And varicolored
pockmarked throwaways.







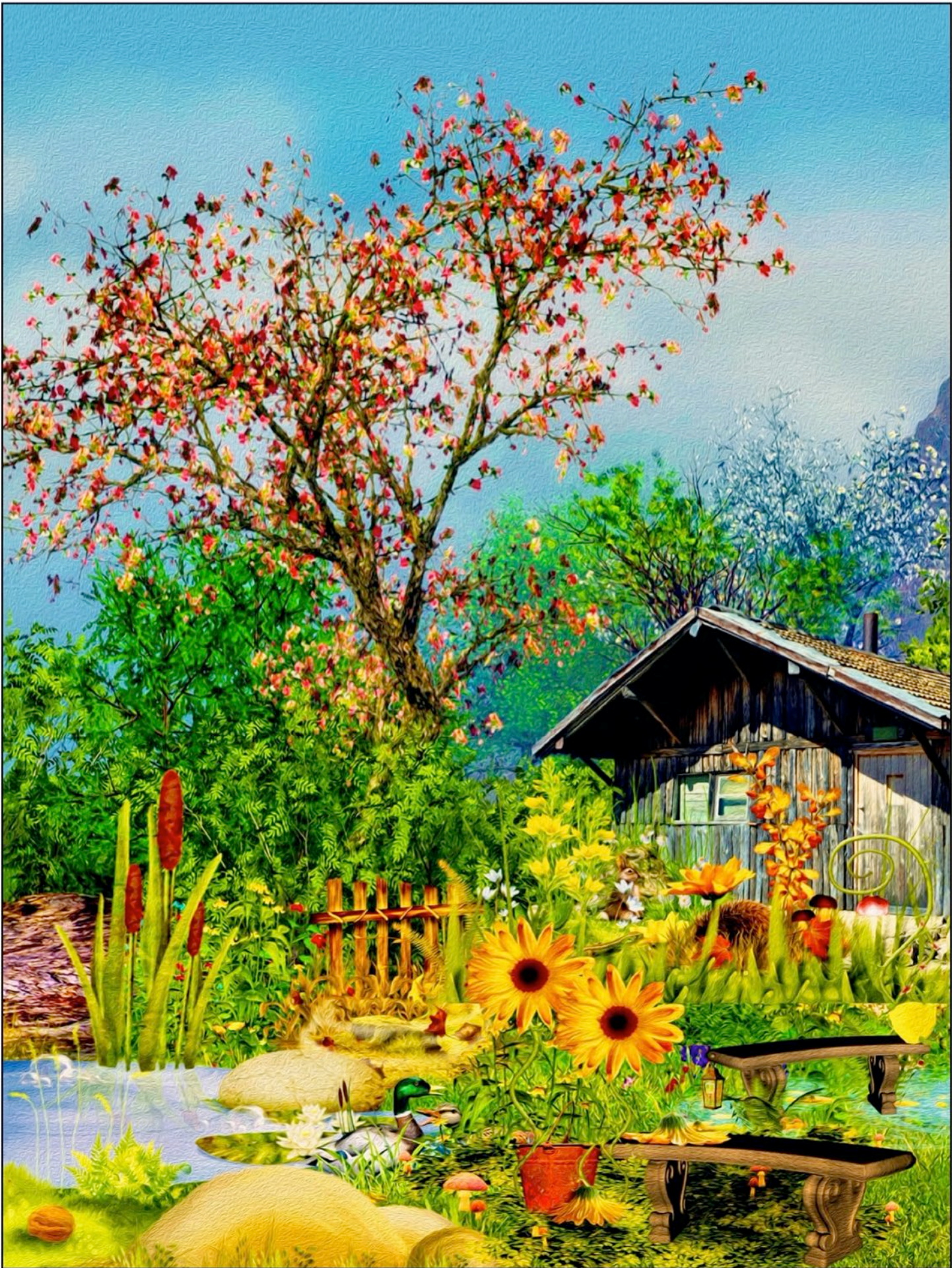


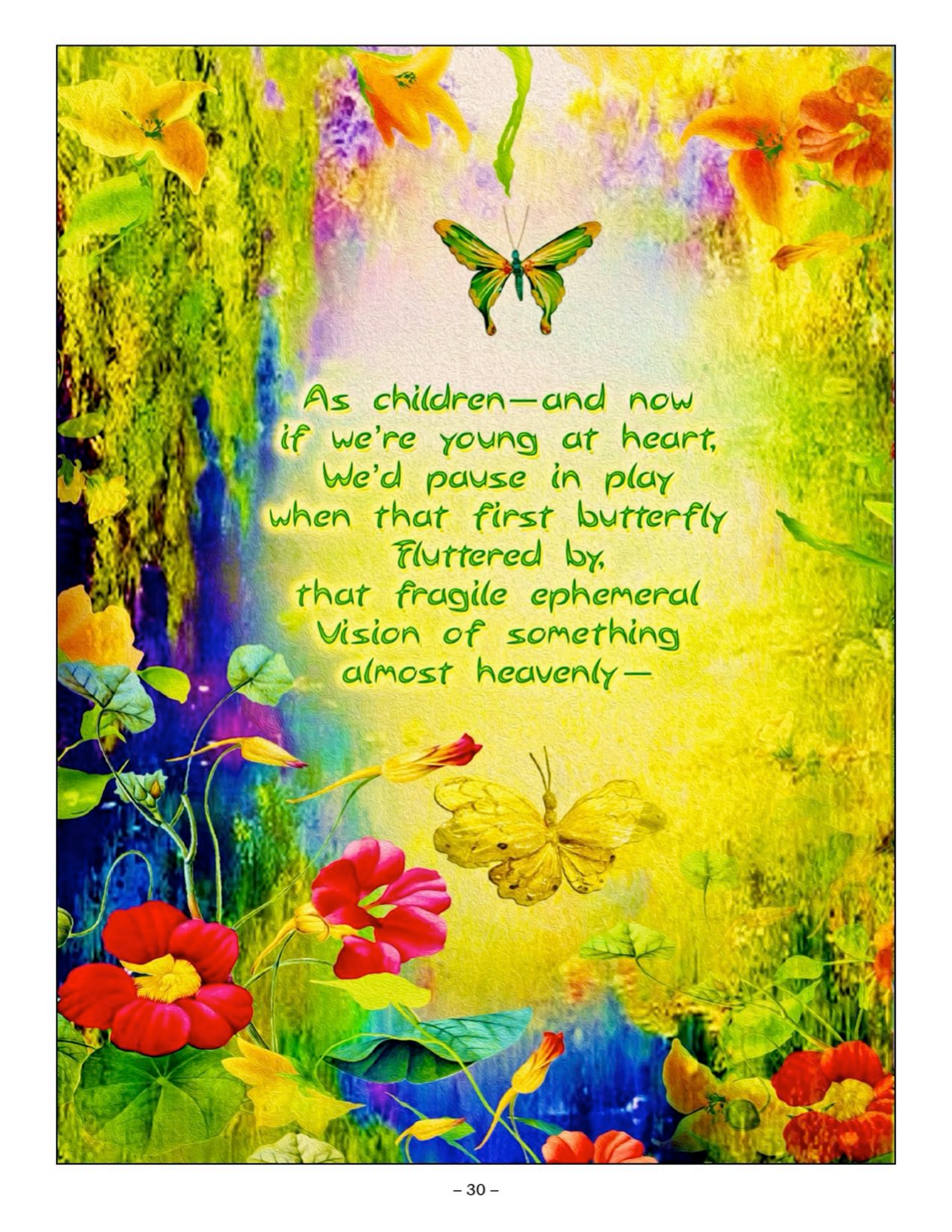
There—
a lush garden
lovingly attended

By an old lady,
accompanied by bees

And butterflies,
all of which caused further

Indulgences in
my flights of fancy:



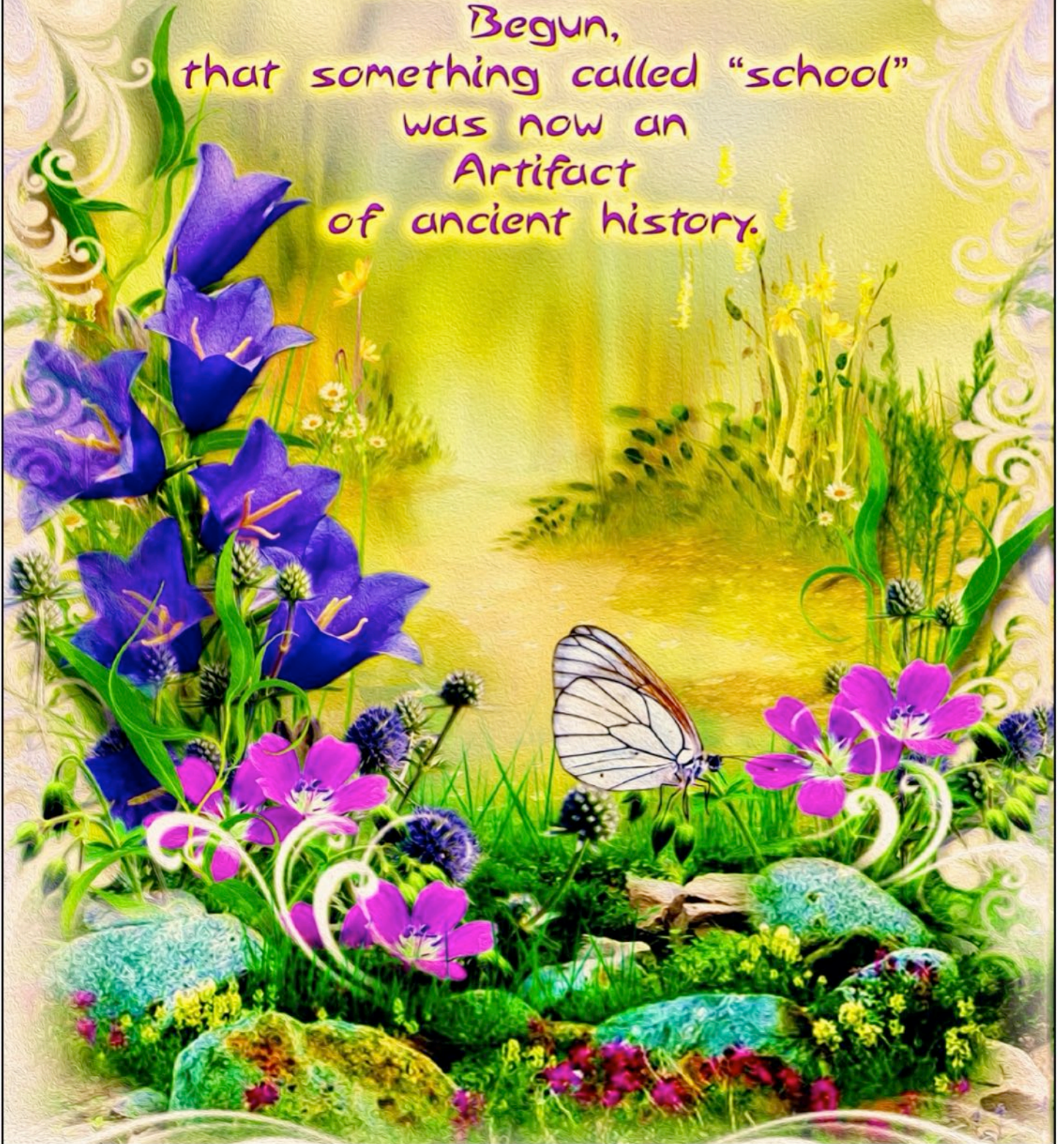


As children—and now
if we're young at heart,
We'd pause in play
when that first butterfly
Fluttered by,
that fragile ephemeral
Vision of something
almost heavenly—

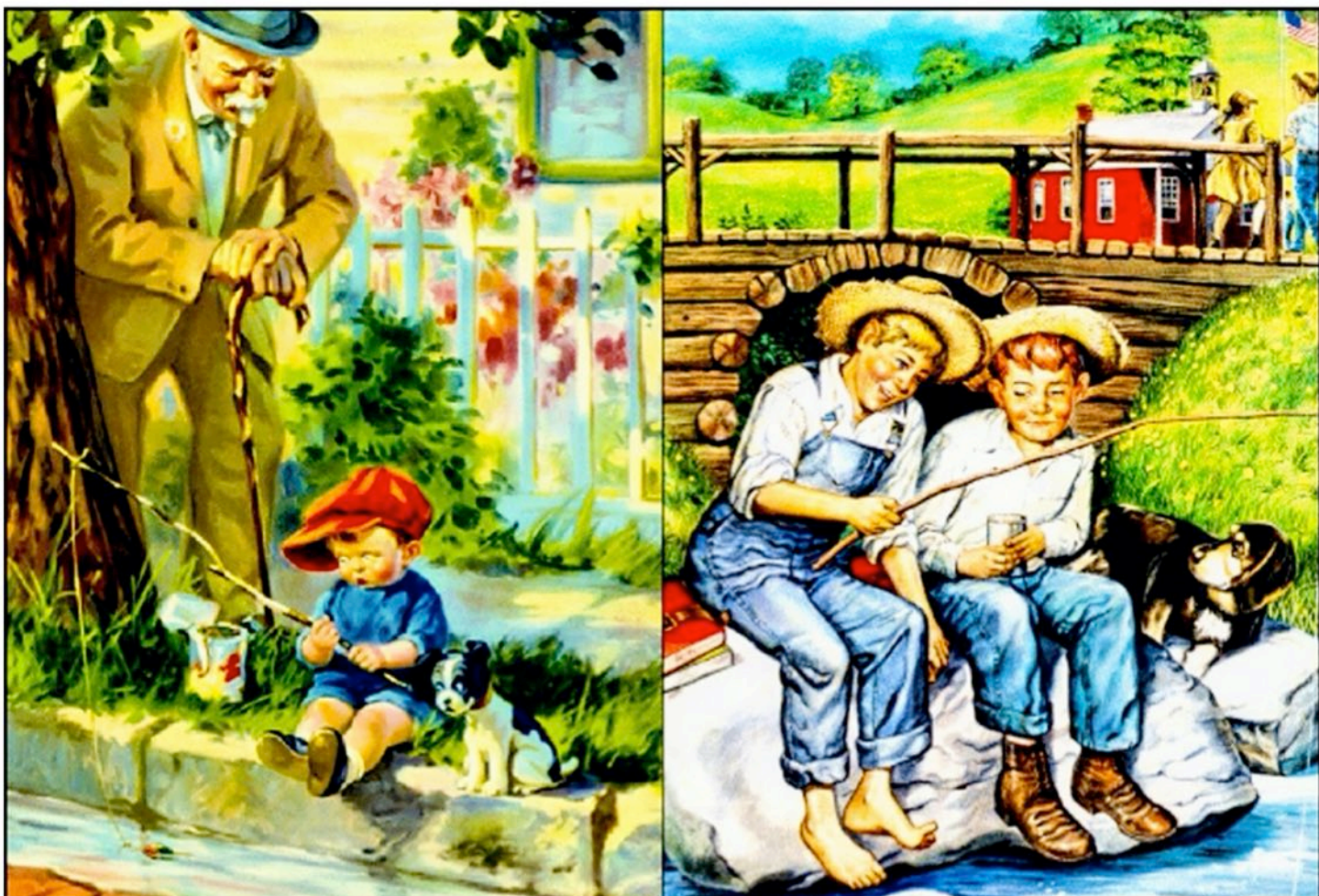




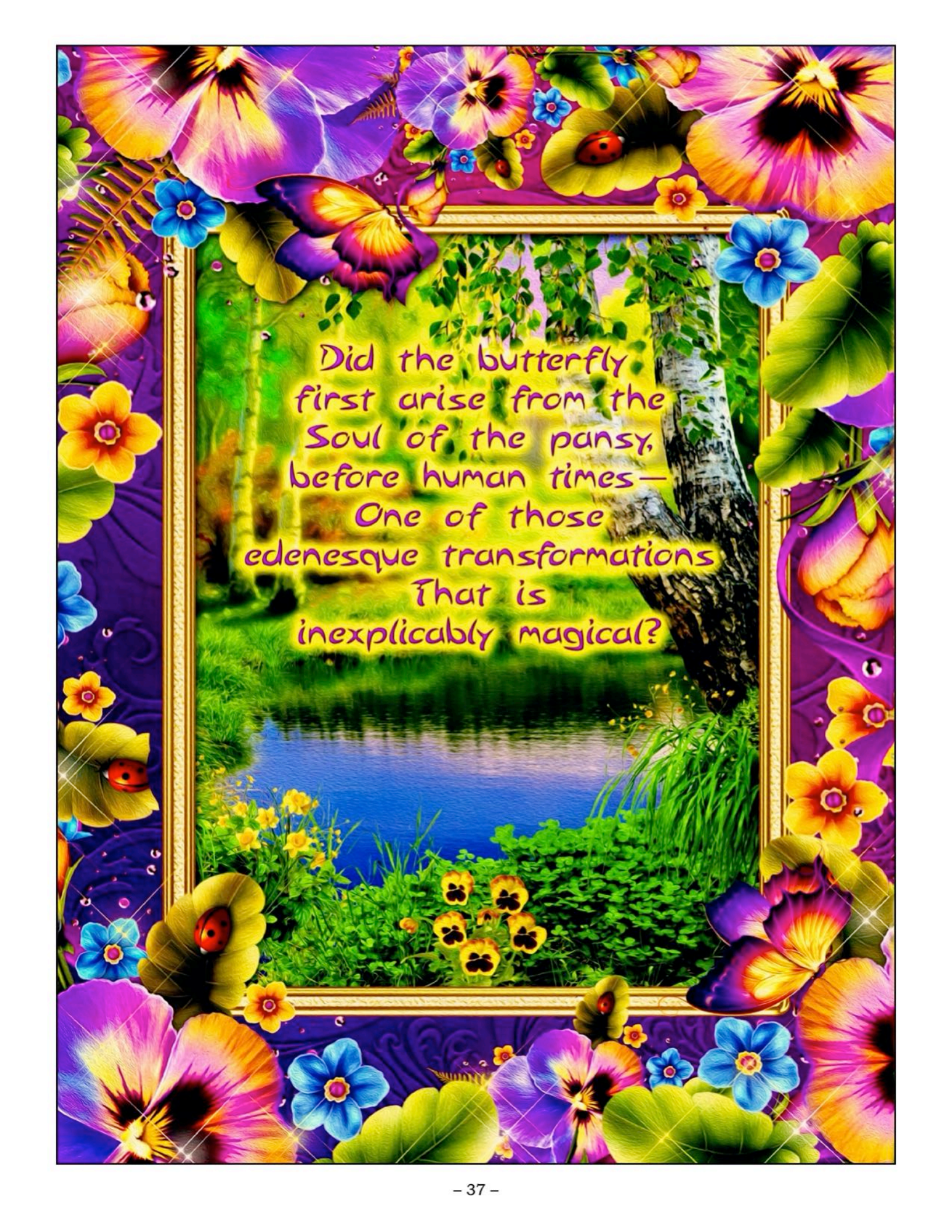
A flower floating on the air, perhaps,
Signaling that
our endless summer had
Begun,
that something called "school"
was now an
Artifact
of ancient history.



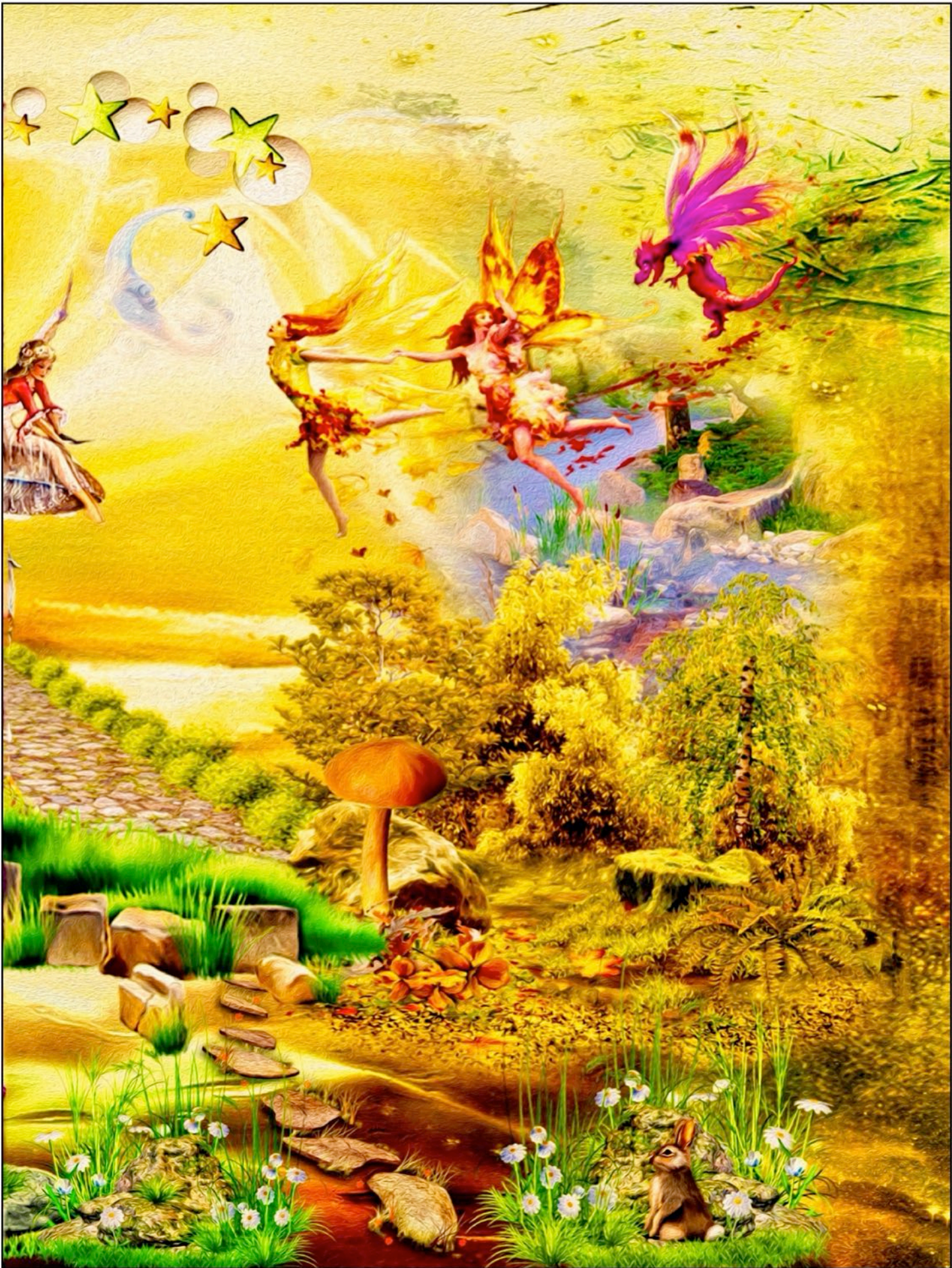









Did the butterfly
first arise from the
Soul of the pansy,
before human times—
One of those
edenesque transformations
That is
inexplicably magical?







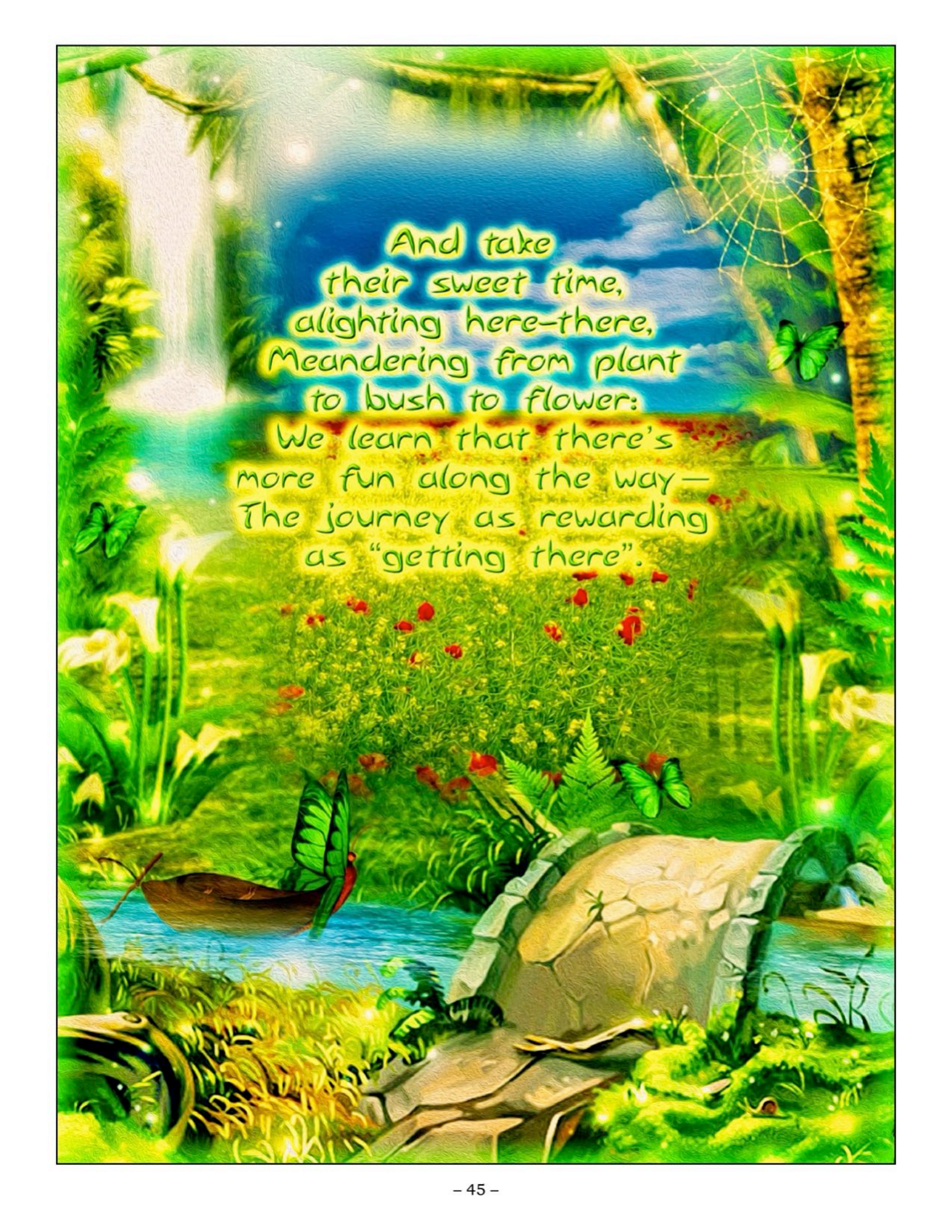


The metamorphosis
is still charming,
Albeit but
from a caterpillar;
Amazingly, delicate
as they seem,
They flutter all
the way to Mexico,



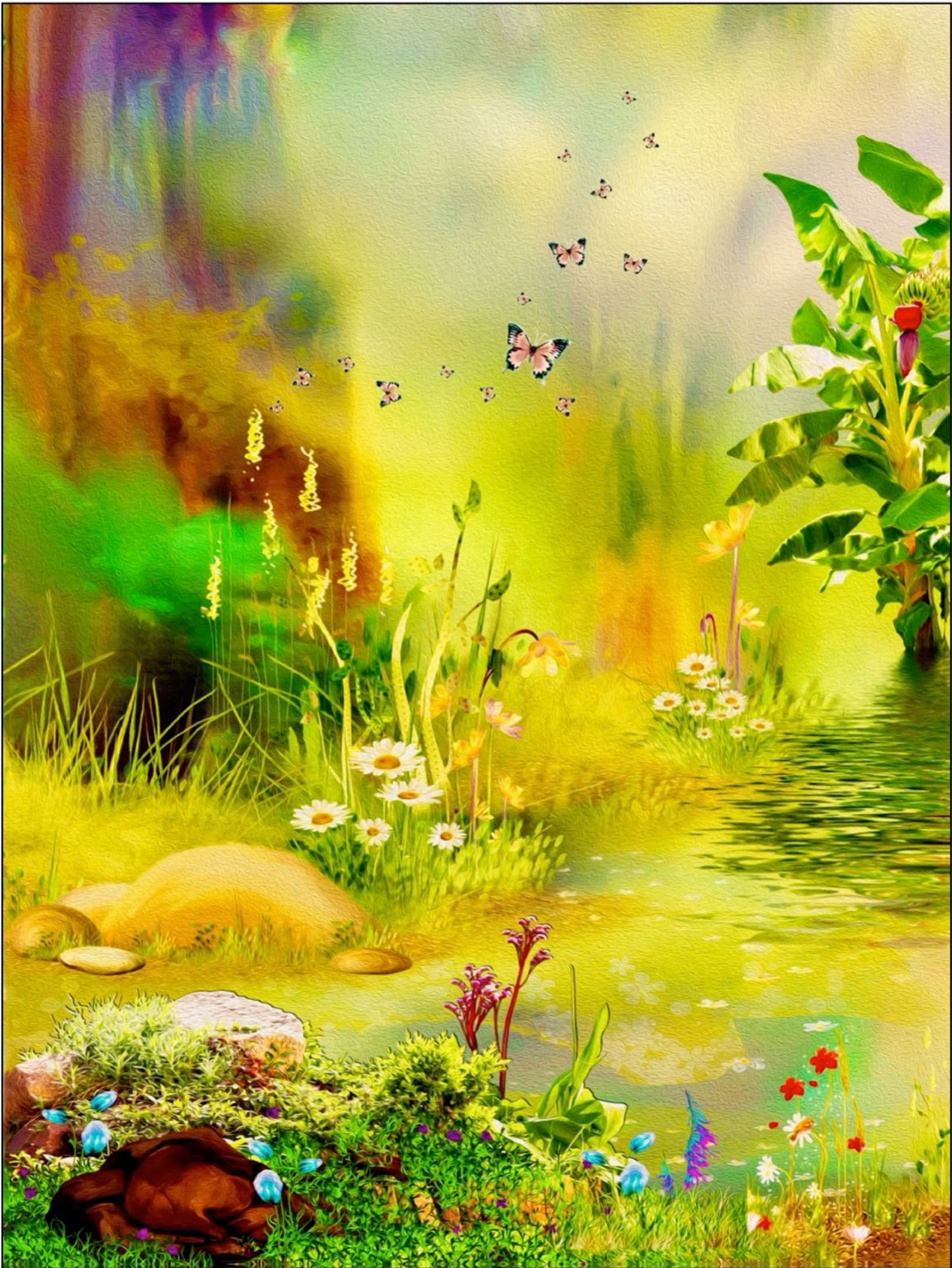






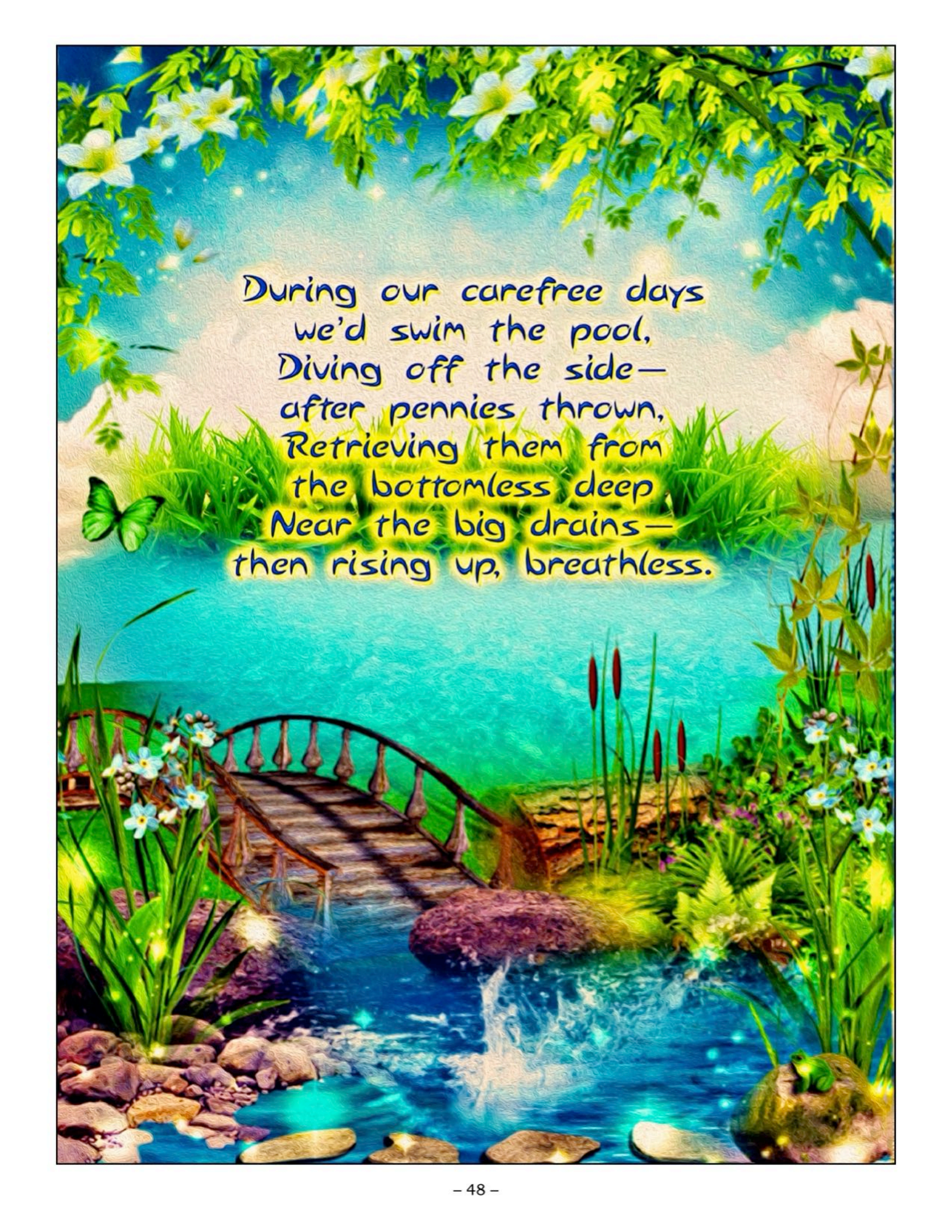
And take
their sweet time,
alighting here—there,
Meandering from plant
to bush to flower:

We learn that there's
more fun along the way—
The journey as rewarding
as “getting there”.



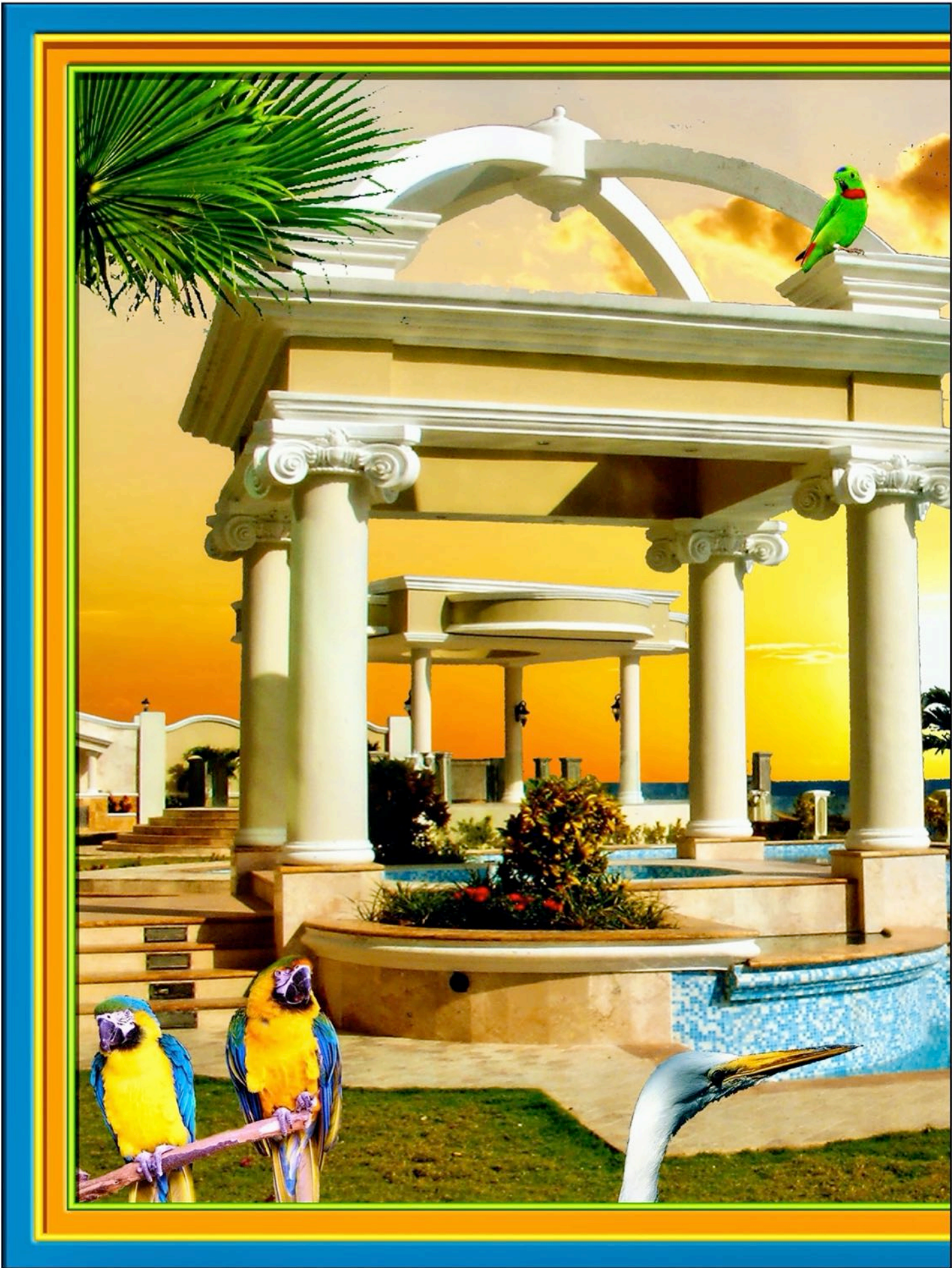


You had to know just where and how to hold Snapdragons, just around the crease, then slowly they would open on the unsuspecting person and then SNAP! Got you!




During our carefree days
we'd swim the pool,
Diving off the side—
after pennies thrown,
Retrieving them from
the bottomless deep,
Near the big drains—
then rising up, breathless.









*Still at the garden,
my mind back from flight,
The gardener
beckoned me inward, and
I leaned over
the fence to smell a flower,
And a
thousand memories reoccurred:*










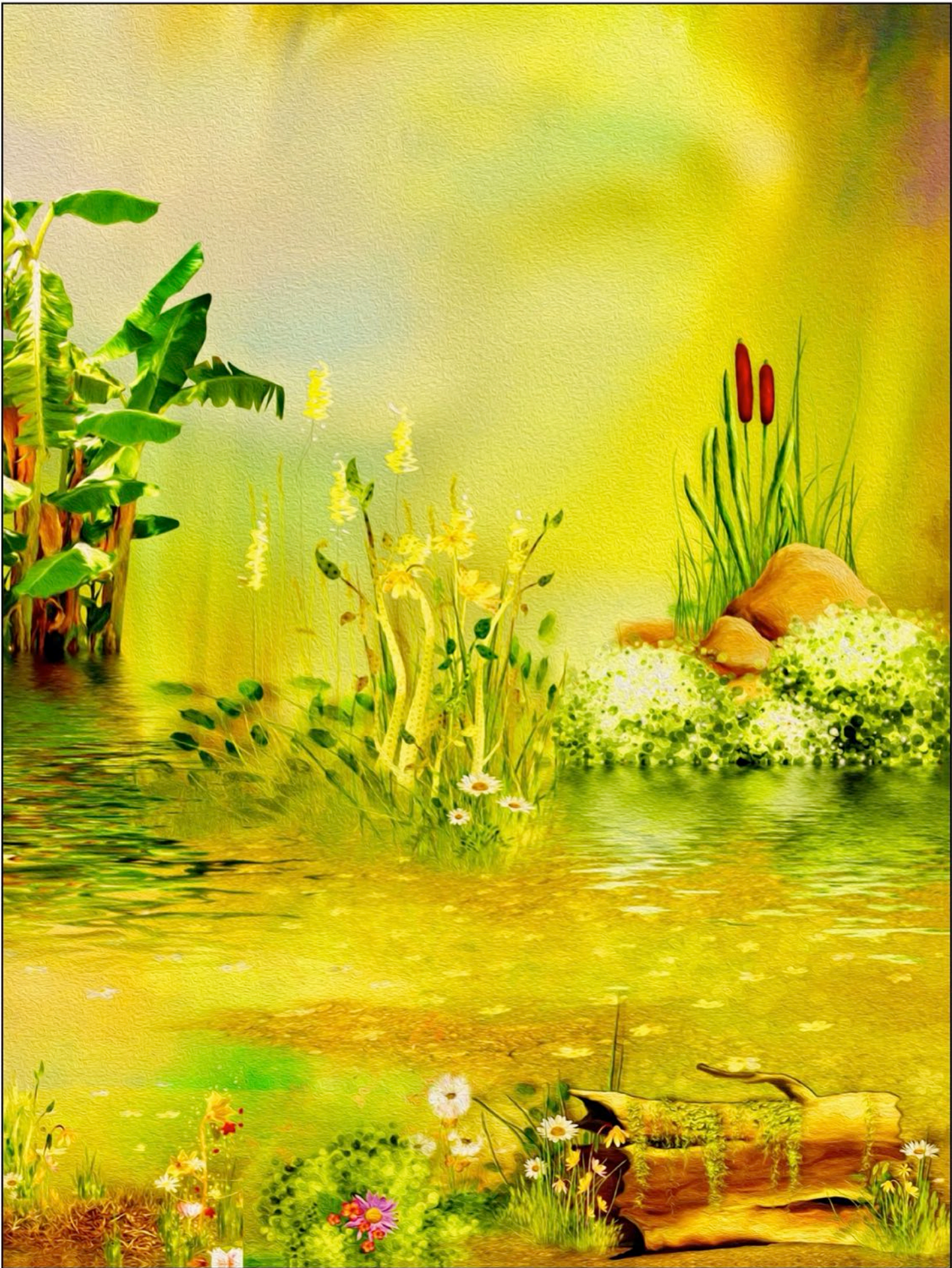
Each Morning Glory blossom
lives but for
A single day, and is replaced by

Another, each in succession shining
In its morning glory,
wilting in noon's heat—





Withering quickly
in the afternoon,
Then languishing
throughout the evening—
Their happy message
to us being that
Another day
will always come on.









The Amaranth intrigues—
its leaves never fade,
Even long after death,
ever remaining
Vivid red;

could it be,
somehow,
that a
Portion of the immortal
lives on there?





Rock and roll music was not allowed for us children, although teenagers still got yelled at plenty for it—and any music, if loud, was not tolerated, for it could make you go deaf. As for Elvis the pelvis, forget it—he was way too sinful.

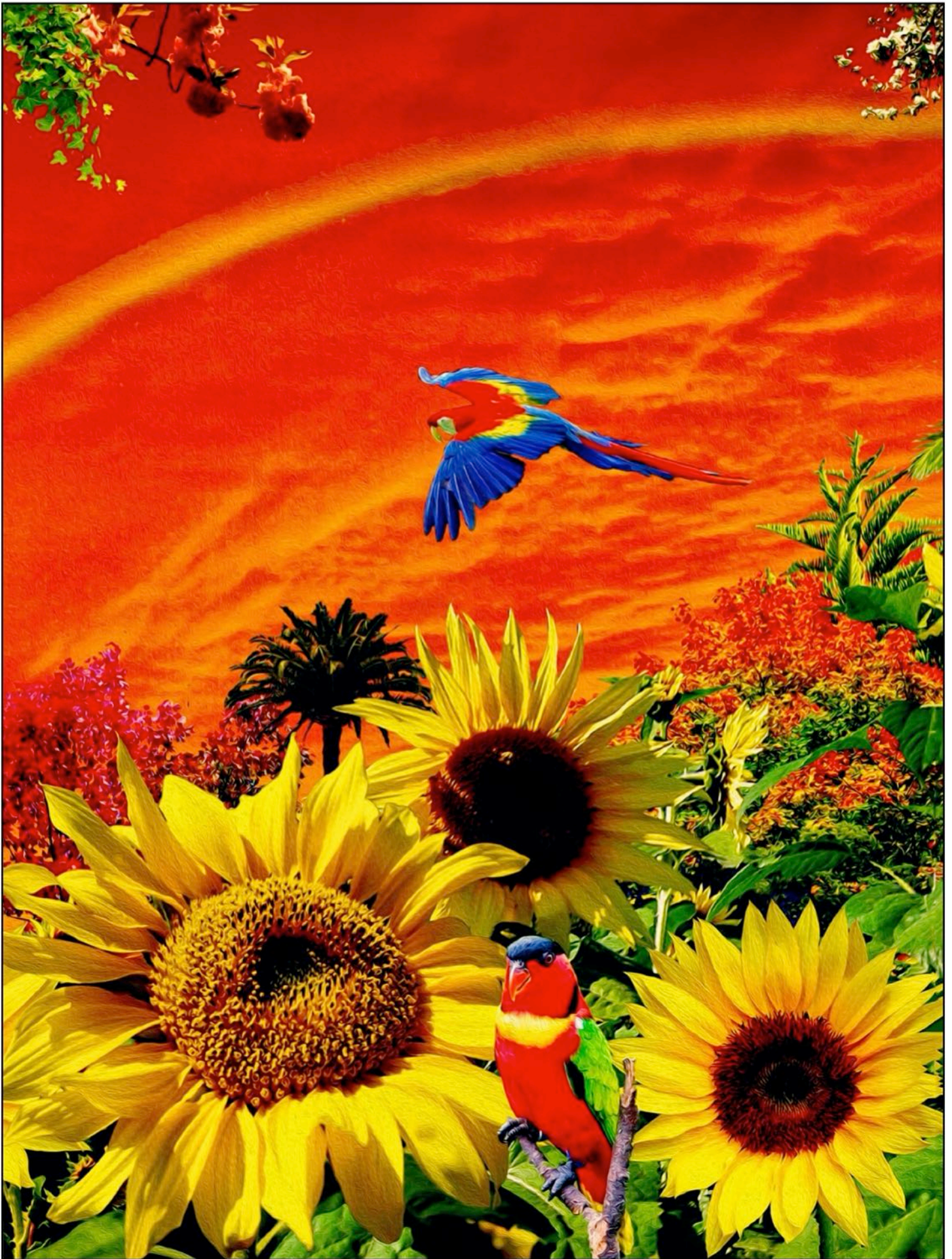



Along the old wood side trail we caught the secret scents of the Jasmine, deciphered the messages of the Honeysuckle, sensed the signals of Wisteria, recalled the memories of Rosemary, inhaled the sweet breath of Violets, heard the thoughts of the Pansies, and felt the early youth of the Primrose.



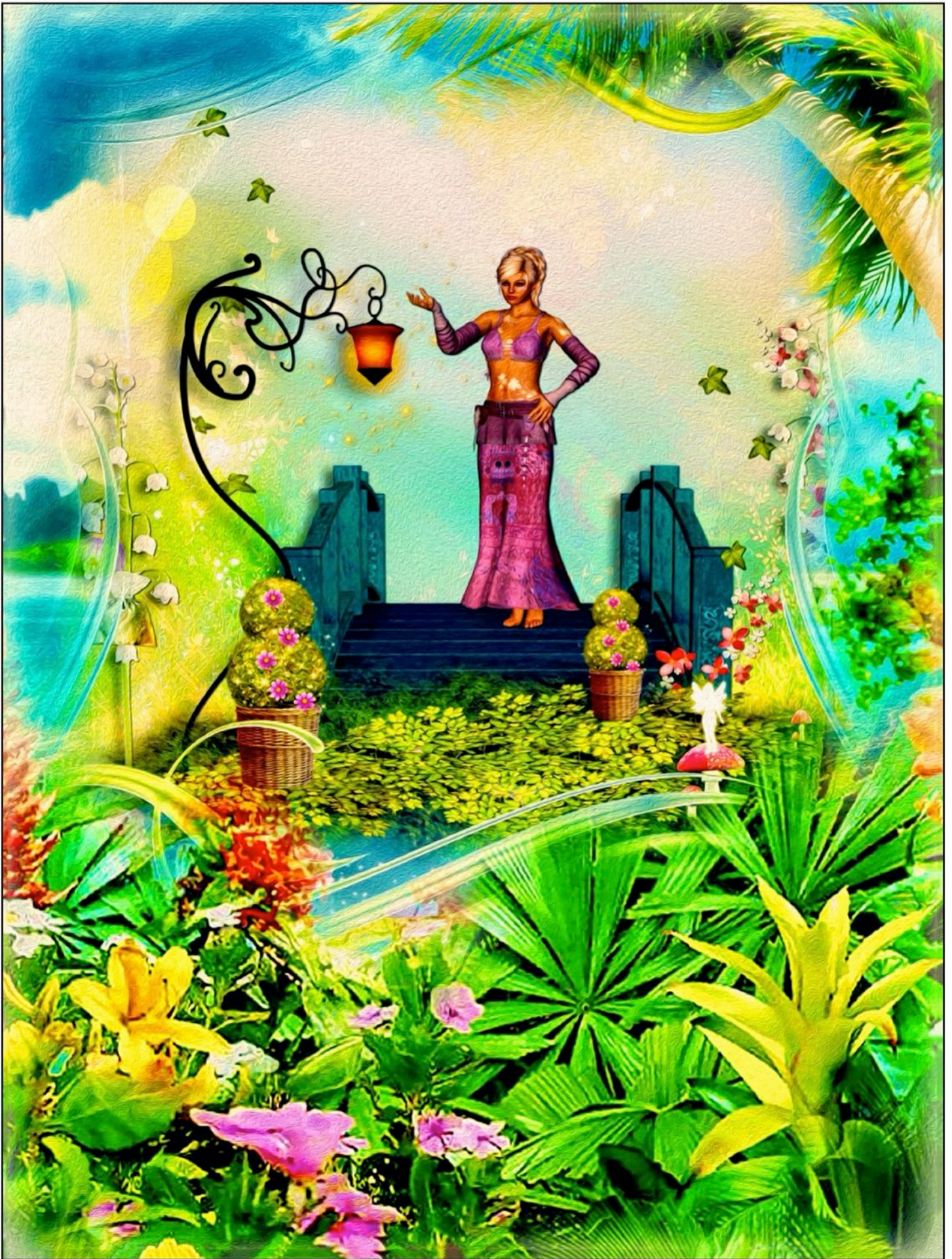
There, the blinding luminosity of
Sunflowers; we dried the seeds and ate them,


Each still a glowing ember of memory
Of the bright days among a thousand suns.





I drank up
Buttercup portions of the
Bright yellow light
from the elfin goblets—
And entered the realm
of fairies, pixies,
Fays, trolls, goblins, brownies,
gremlins, and sprites.






We had cherries,
and a grape arbor, too—
Eating them fresh,
competing with squirrels
And birds,
always forgetting
to wash them,
So sour they were,
then spit out the seeds.










I walked on, and saw
a lake surrounded by
Old and broken down
vacation cabins.

Of course we were
never "there yet" when we
Asked, but soon dozed off,
tired of asking.

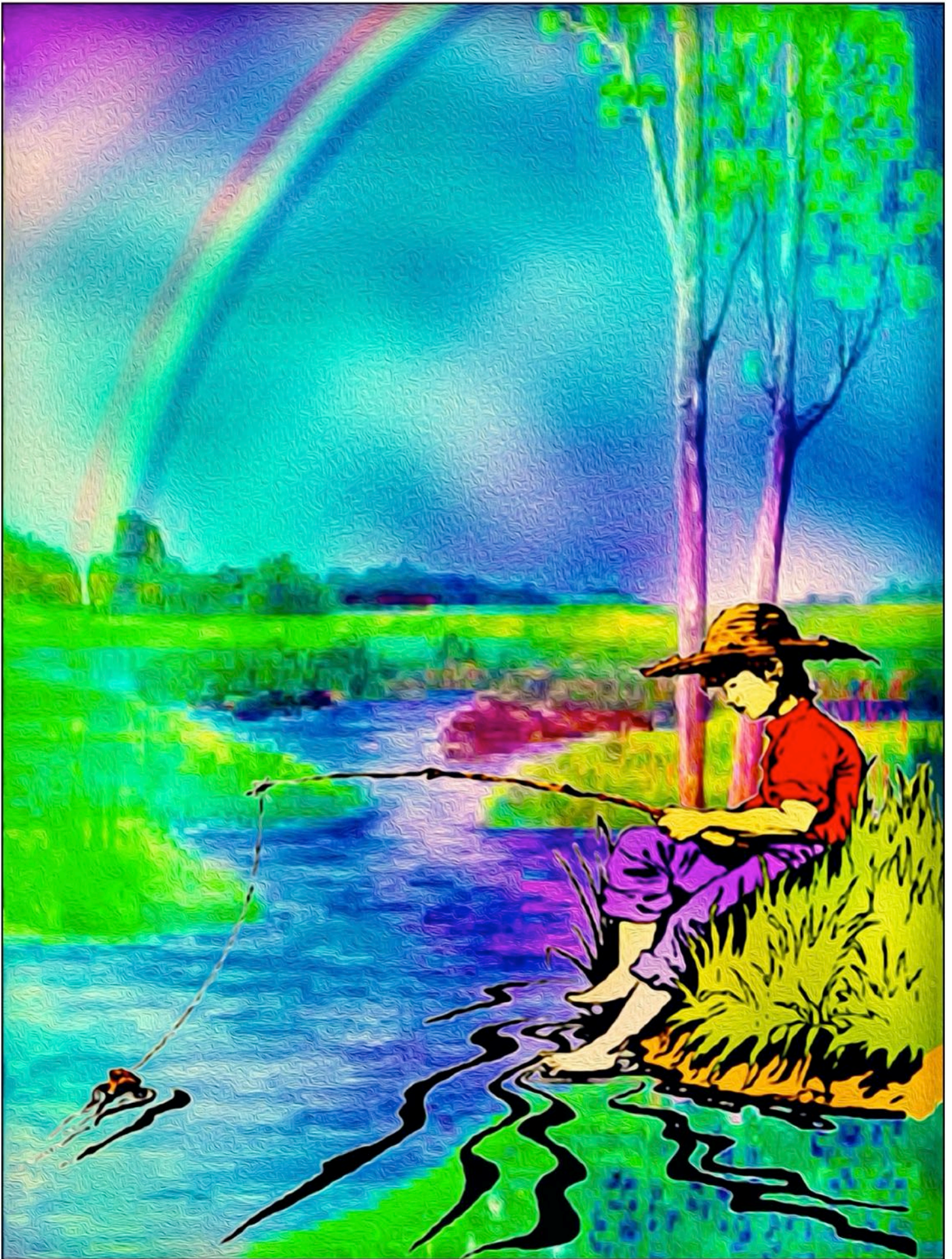









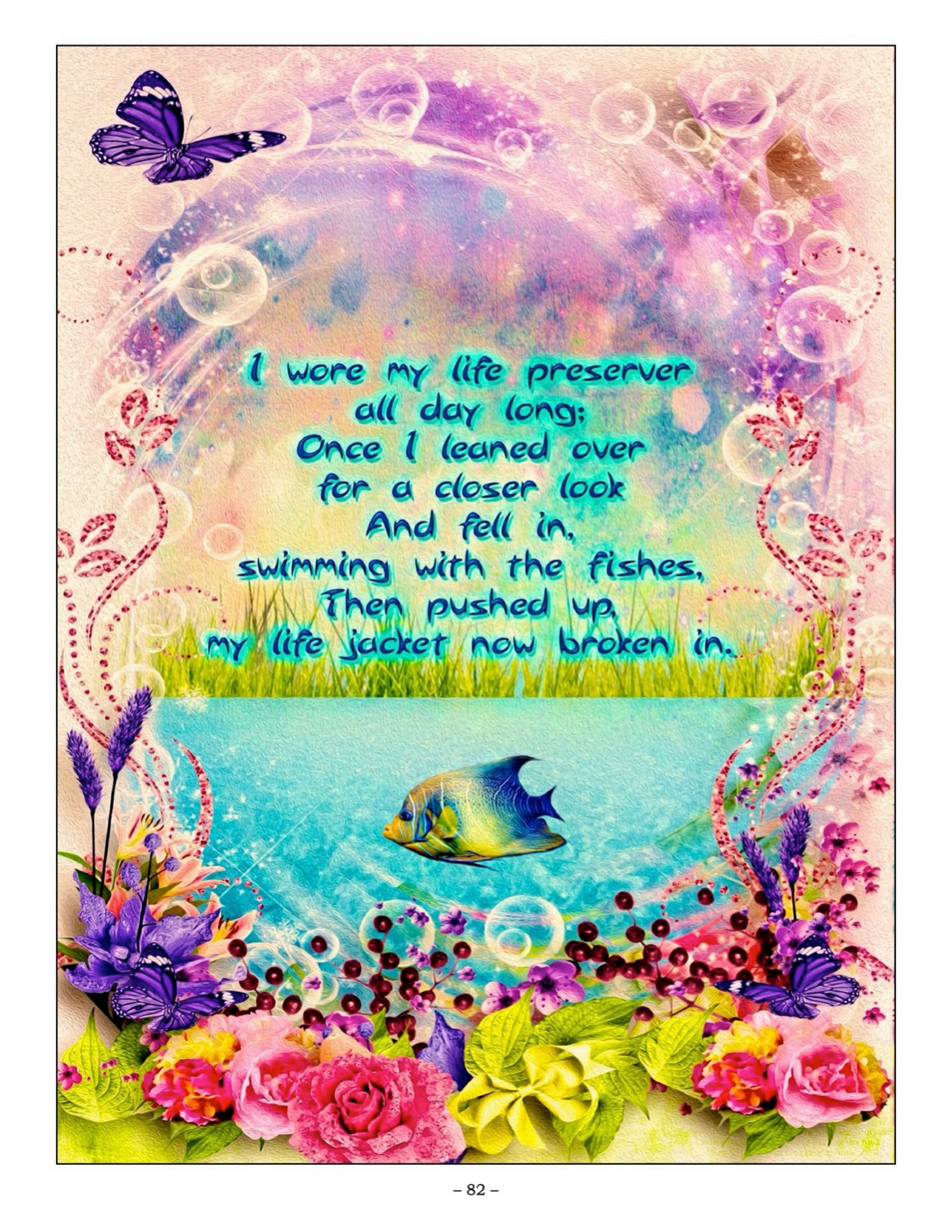
We dug
the worms at night,
keeping them moist,
And got up with the sun
to fish, and then
Skinned them
and cooked them
for lunch or dinner—
This to me is
America Remembered.





Dad was
always out fishing—
my brother too,
And me less often.
Now I clearly see
That fishing has little
to do with fish,
But with cool breezes,
moist air,
peace, and quiet.

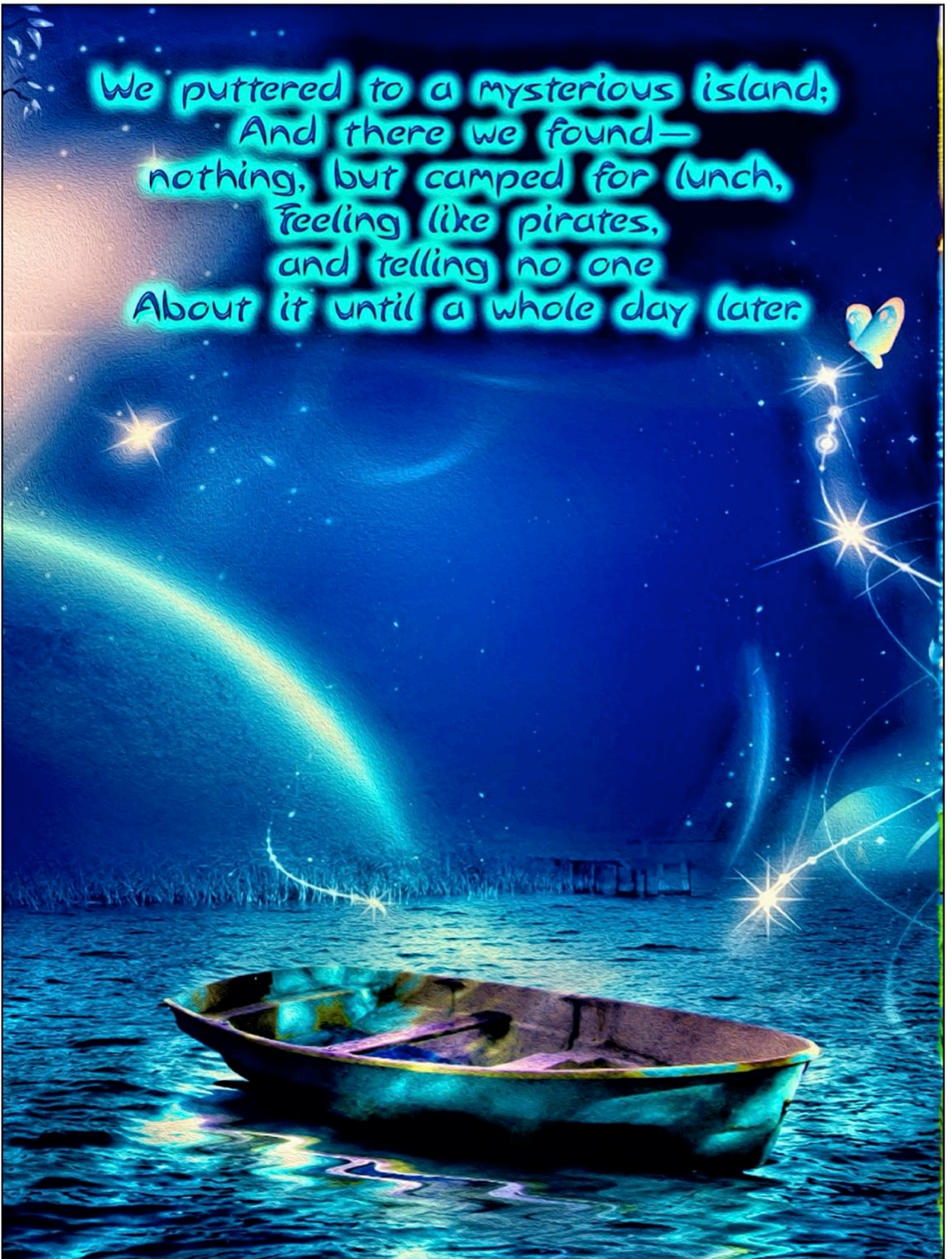





I wore my life preserver
all day long;
Once I leaned over
for a closer look
And fell in,
swimming with the fishes,
Then pushed up,
my life jacket now broken in.



We pattered to a mysterious island;
And there we found—
nothing, but camped for lunch,
Feeling like pirates,
and telling no one
About it until a whole day later.

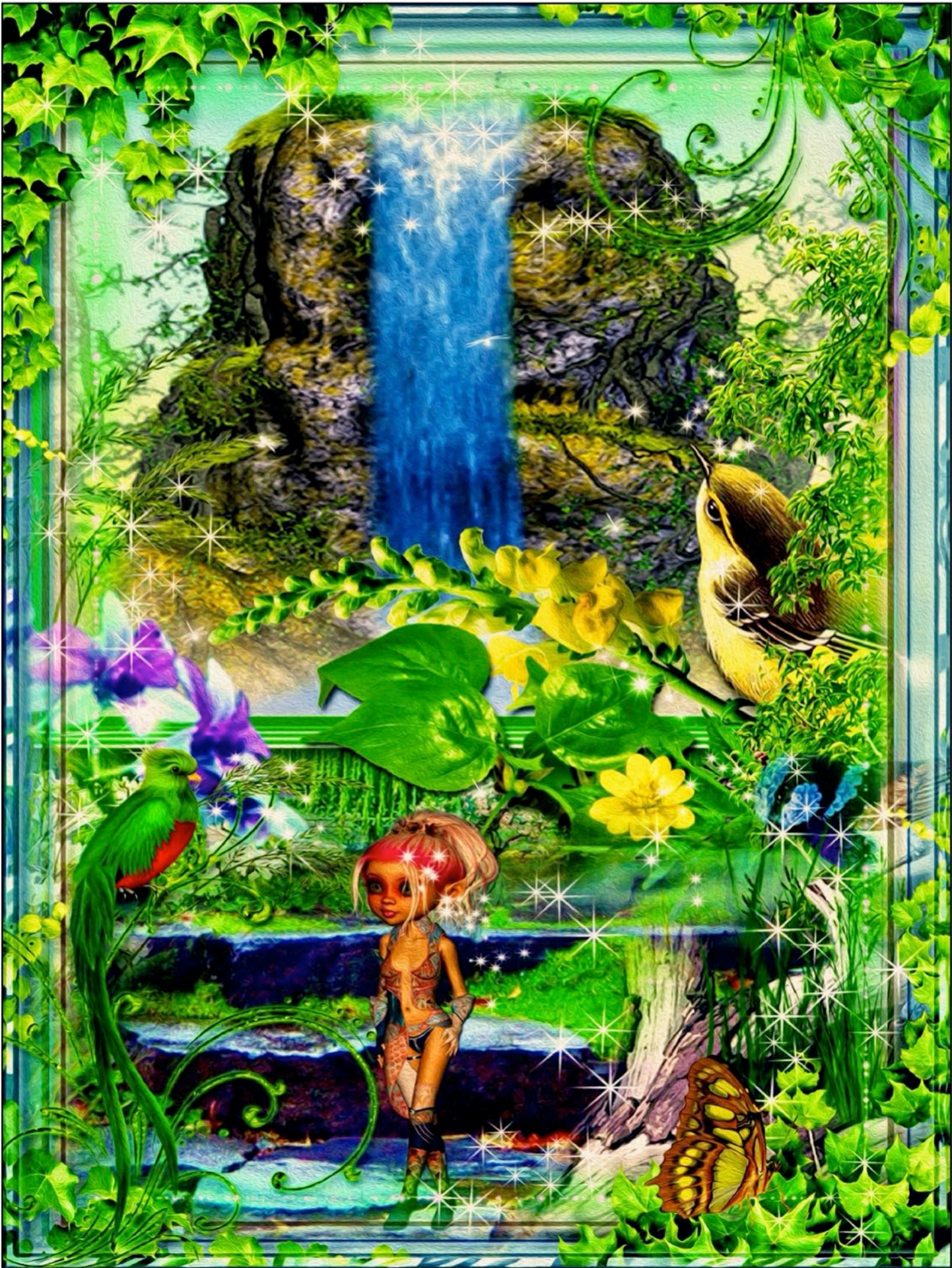







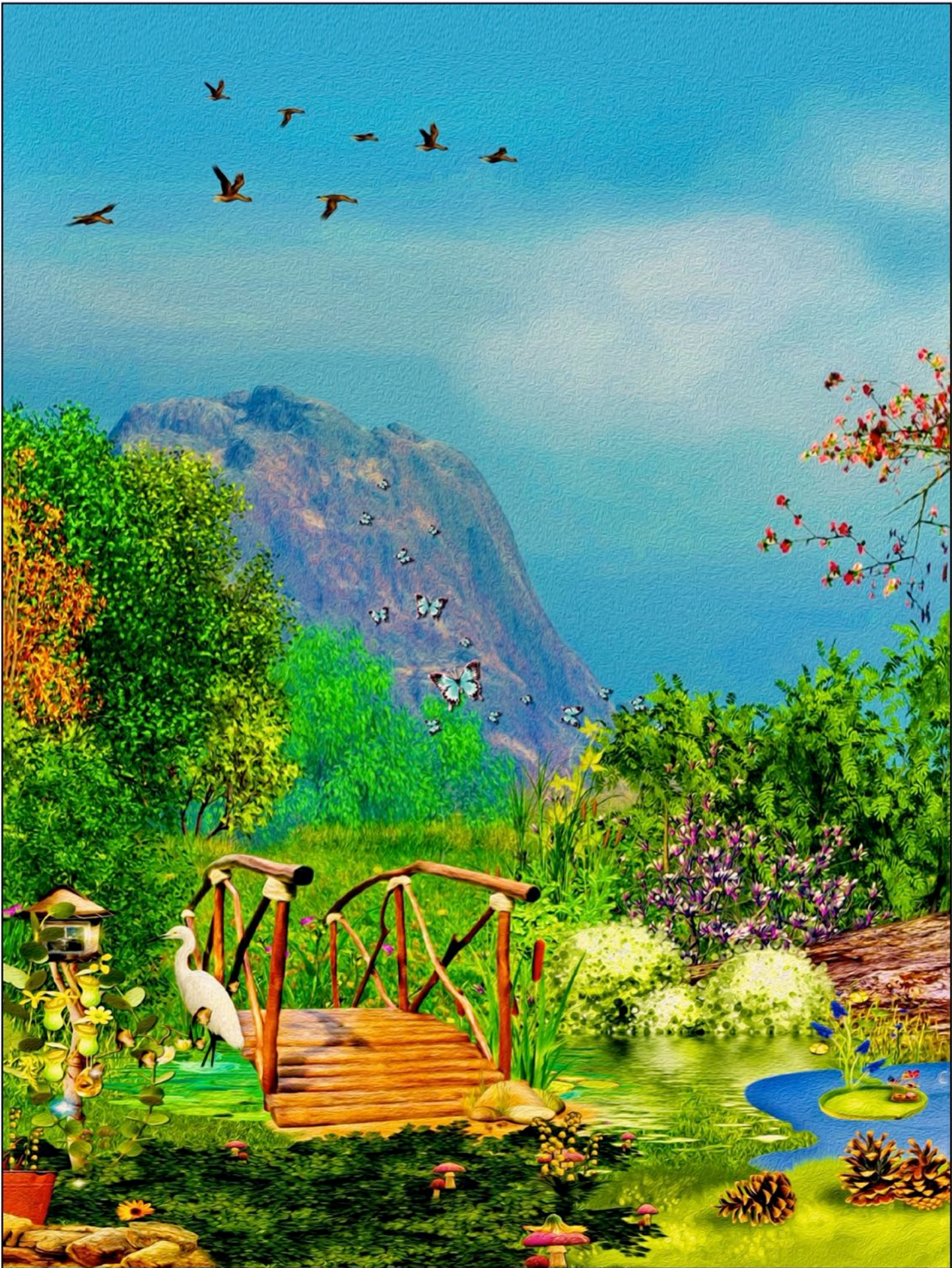
At night,
we watched the bears
forage for scraps
At the garbage dump;
however, one night
The bins were empty
when the bears came out—
Then they all turned
and looked over at us!

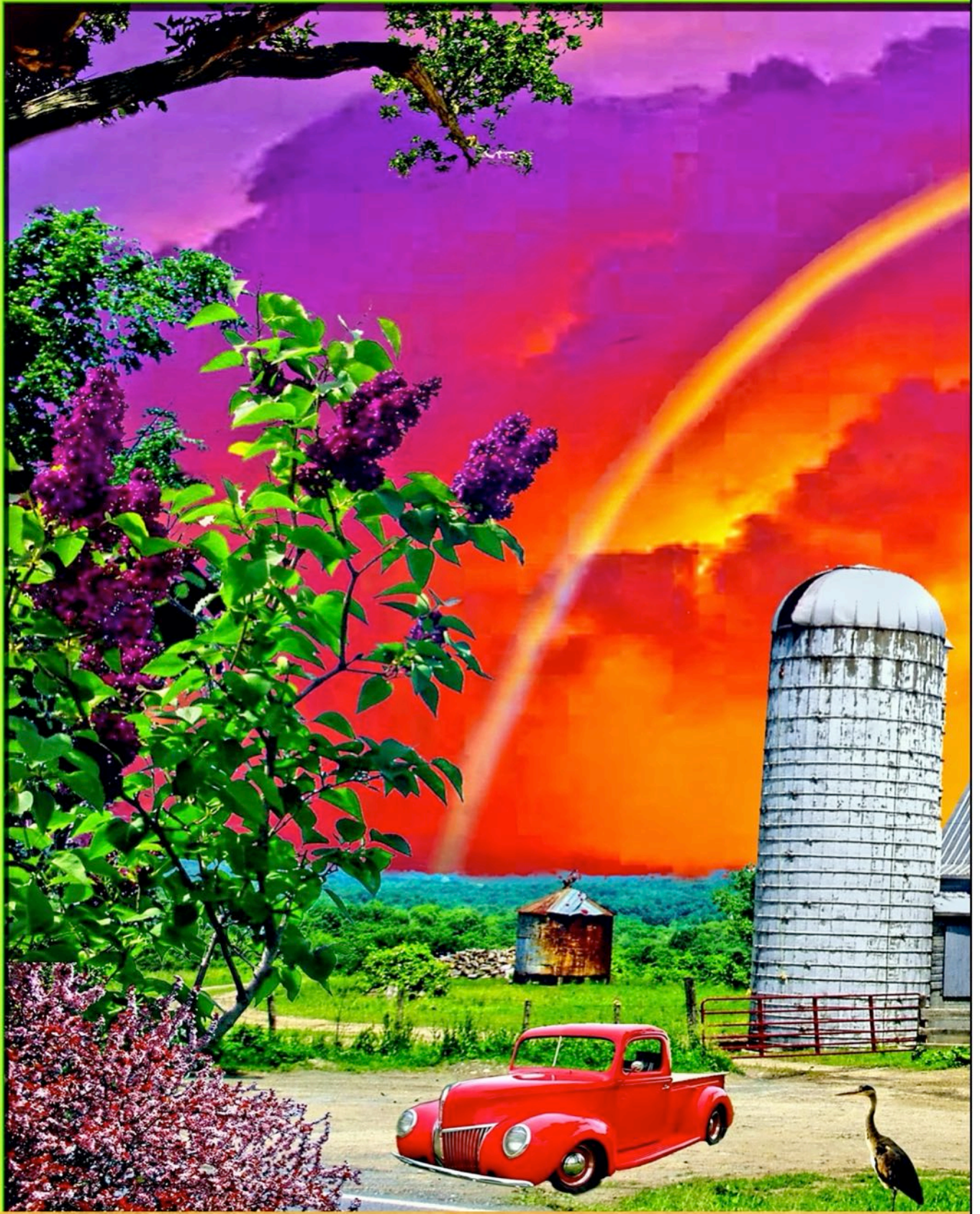




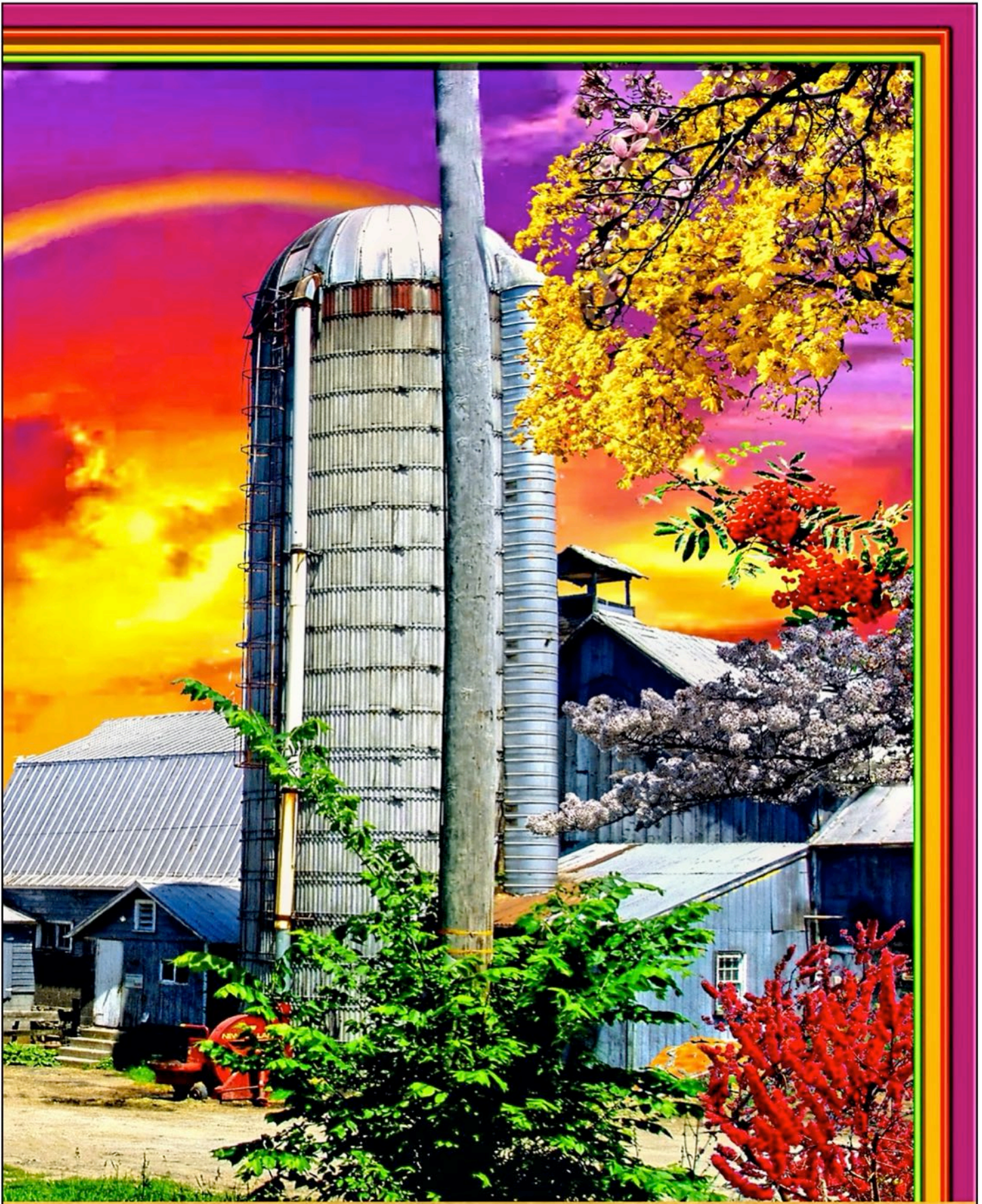


Mom used to say
"Come in out of the rain",
But, nowadays,
the sun is dangerous,
Unless we wear sunblock,
so she says,
"Have enough sense
to get out of the sun!"

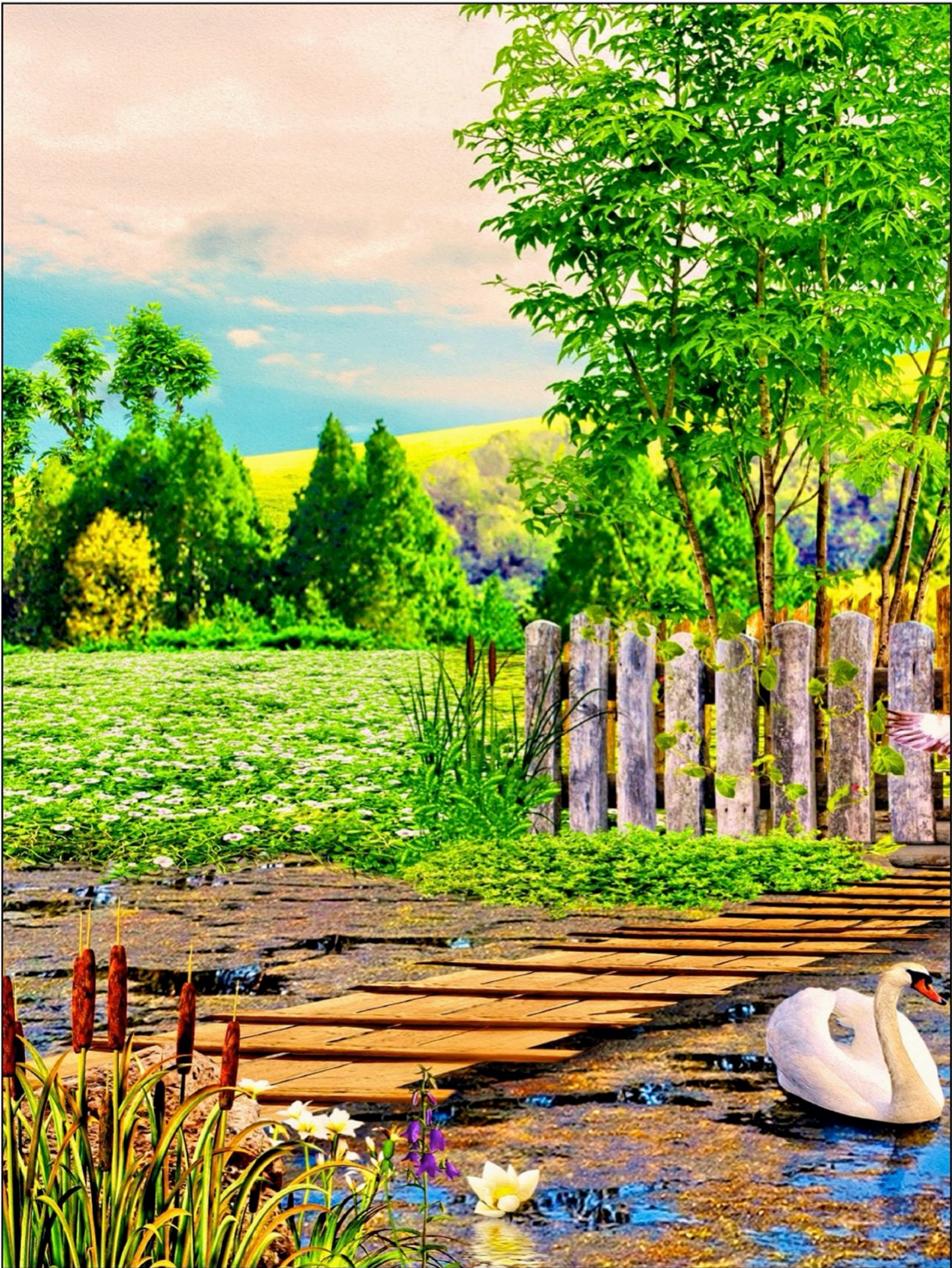




**After a storm, when the sun returned, / We
That shimmering otherworldly vision of /**



**e'd run out to see if there was a rainbow—
The colorful secret of simple white light.**



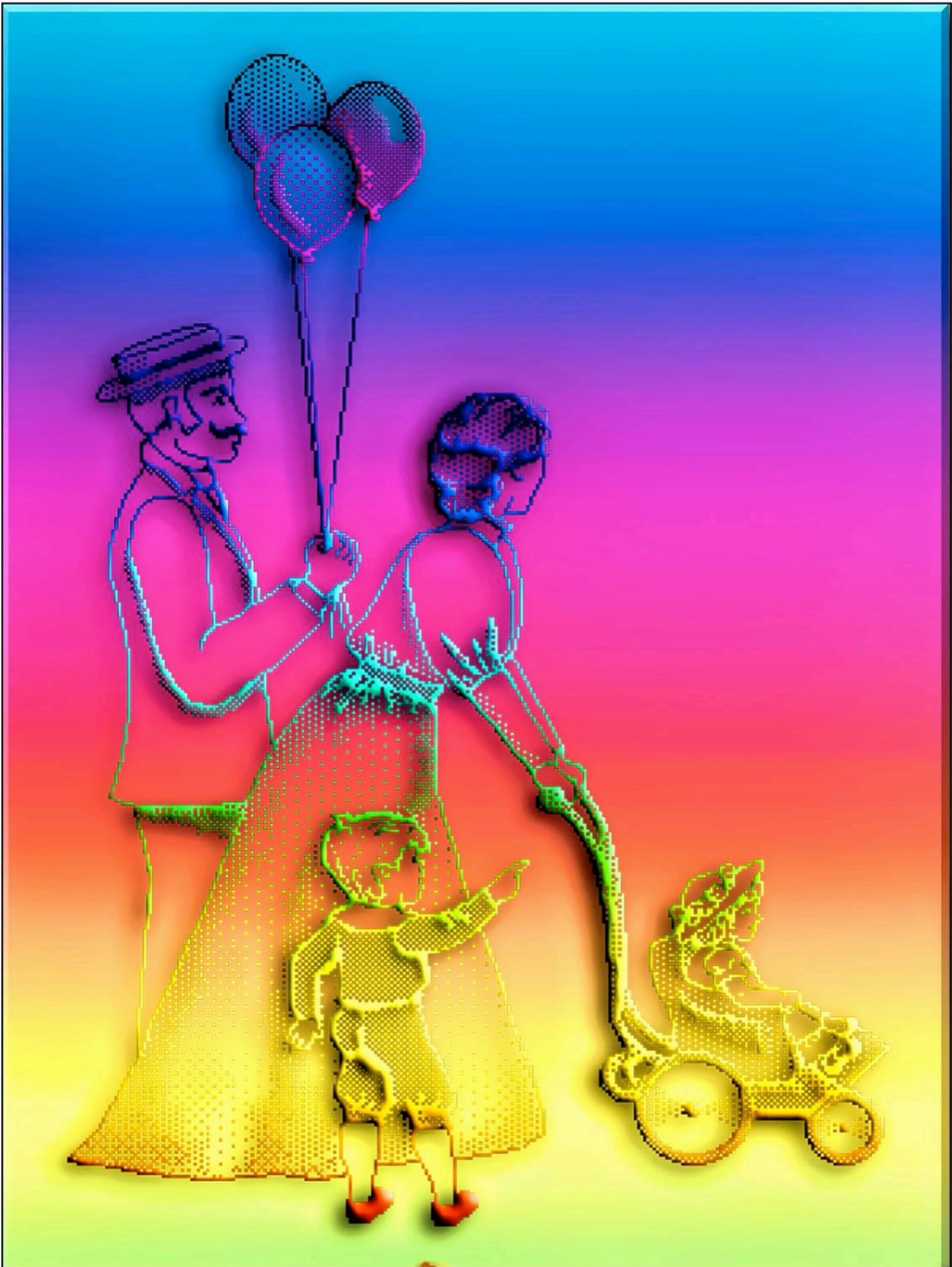




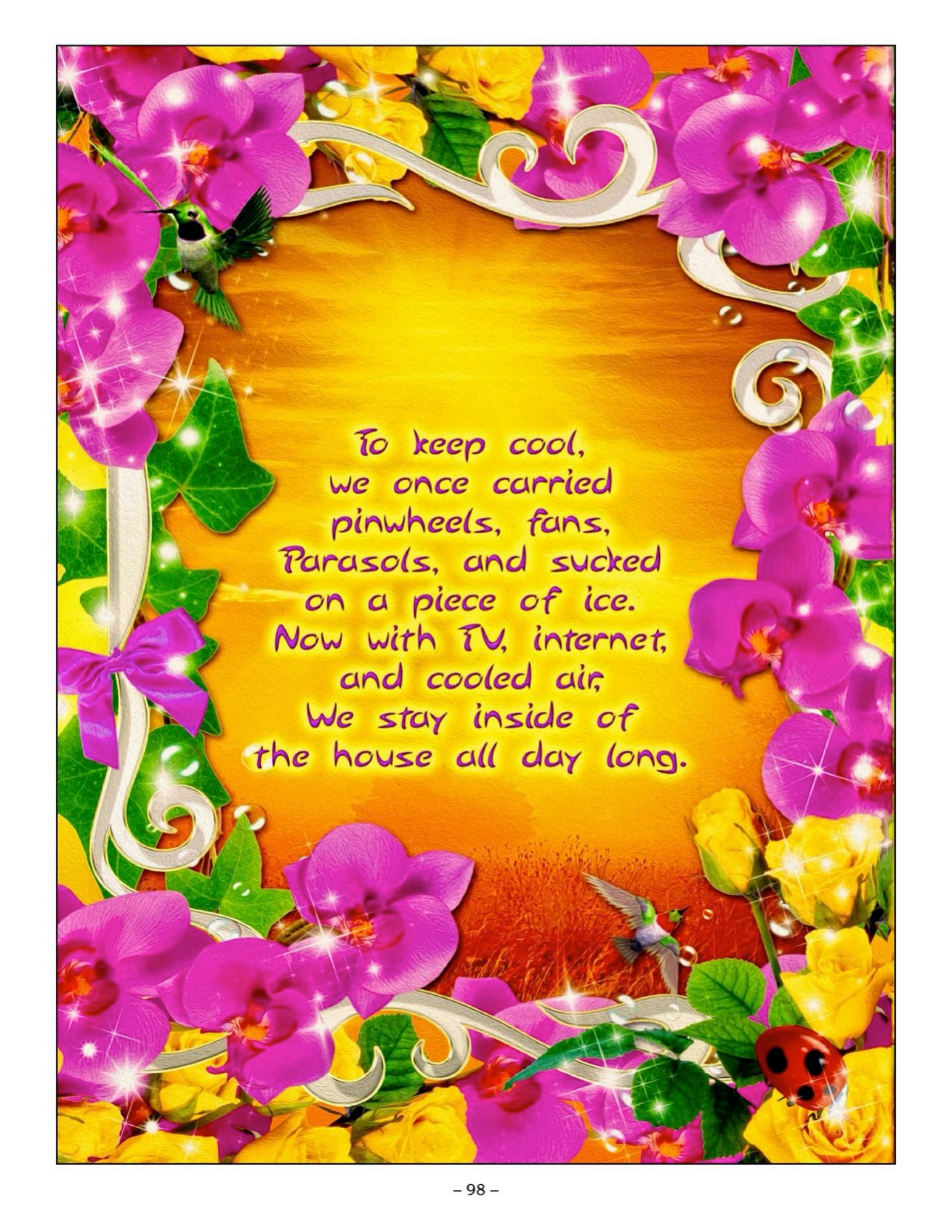
How are colors made
from three primaries?
Why is the sky blue?
What unknown colors hide?

Well, color was invented
in the 60's;
Just look at TV shows
made before then!









To keep cool,
we once carried
pinwheels, fans,
Parasols, and sucked
on a piece of ice.
Now with TV, internet,
and cooled air,
We stay inside of
the house all day long.



THINGS TO DO

Remember

Funday Two's-day Wed-day Thirst-day Fry-day Sat-day Sundae

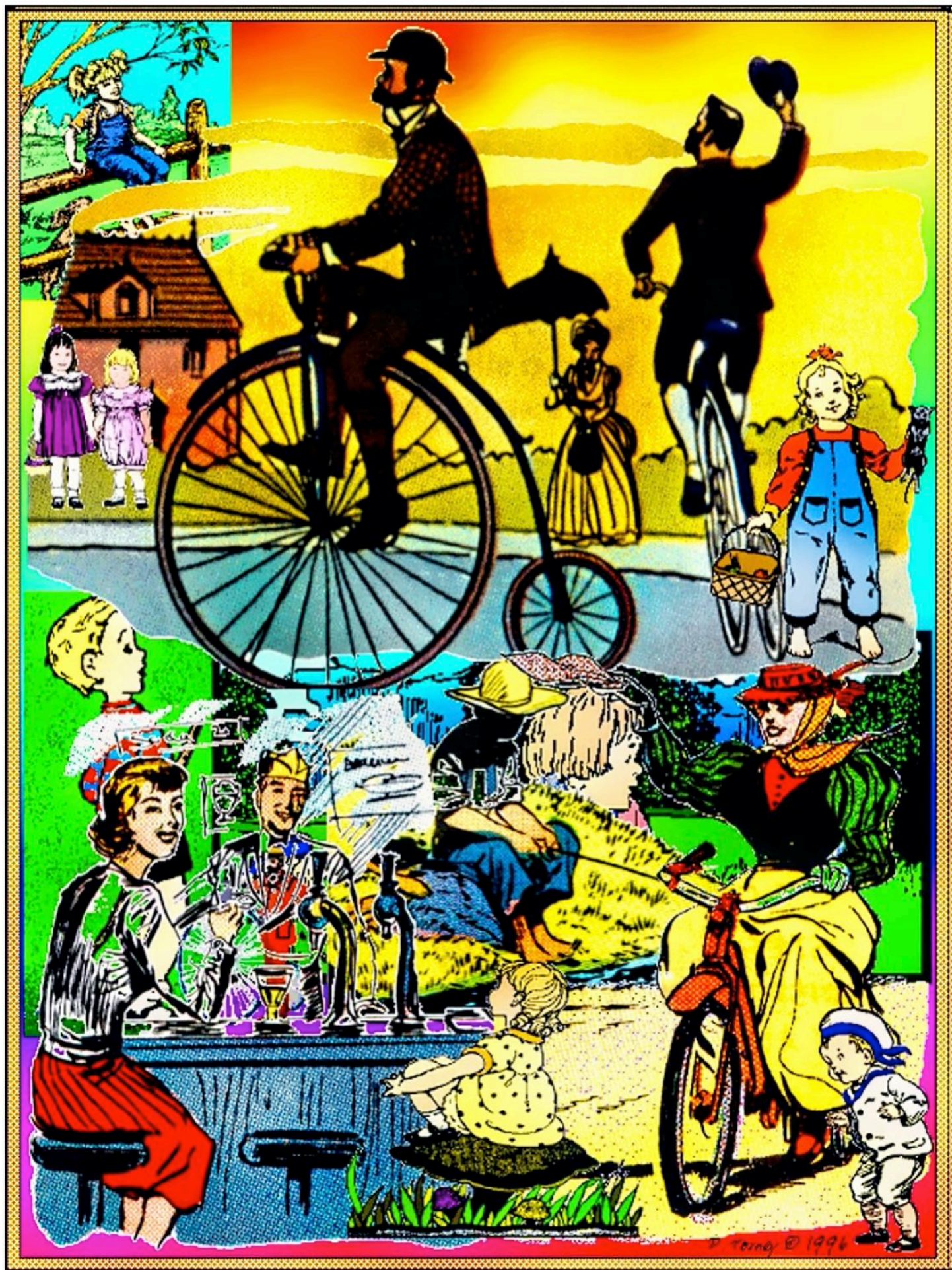
Good Old Days


Yesterday

1945




V. Turner EJ 2006



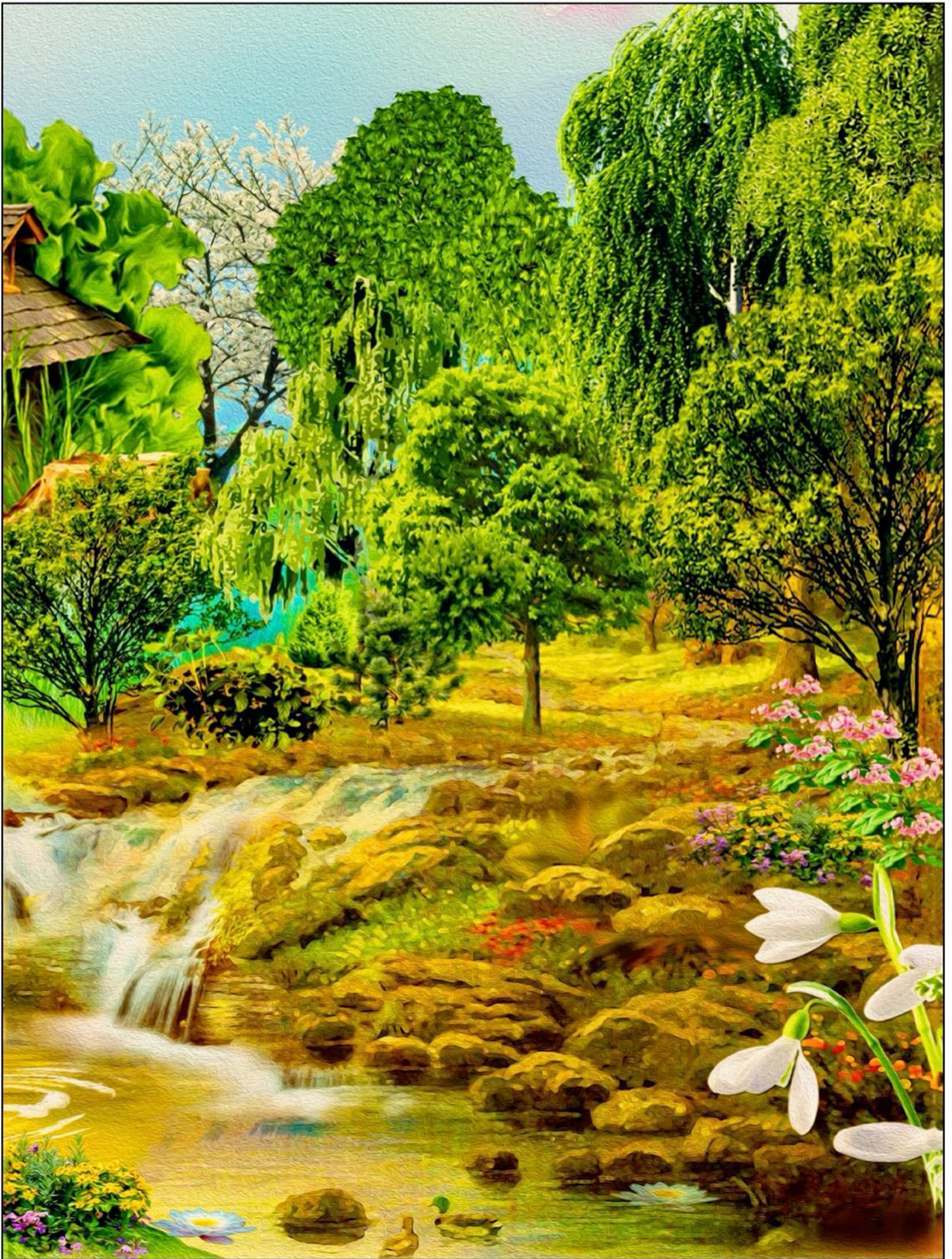


By eavesdropping on
the party line, we could
Hear real scandals
and idle rumors, and,
If it was more interesting
than watching
The grass grow,
we stayed to hear
the whole story.





Before the invention
of the telephone,
All was conveyed by
tell-a-woman, but now
We only answer to
computers, saying,
"To talk to a human being
please hang up".



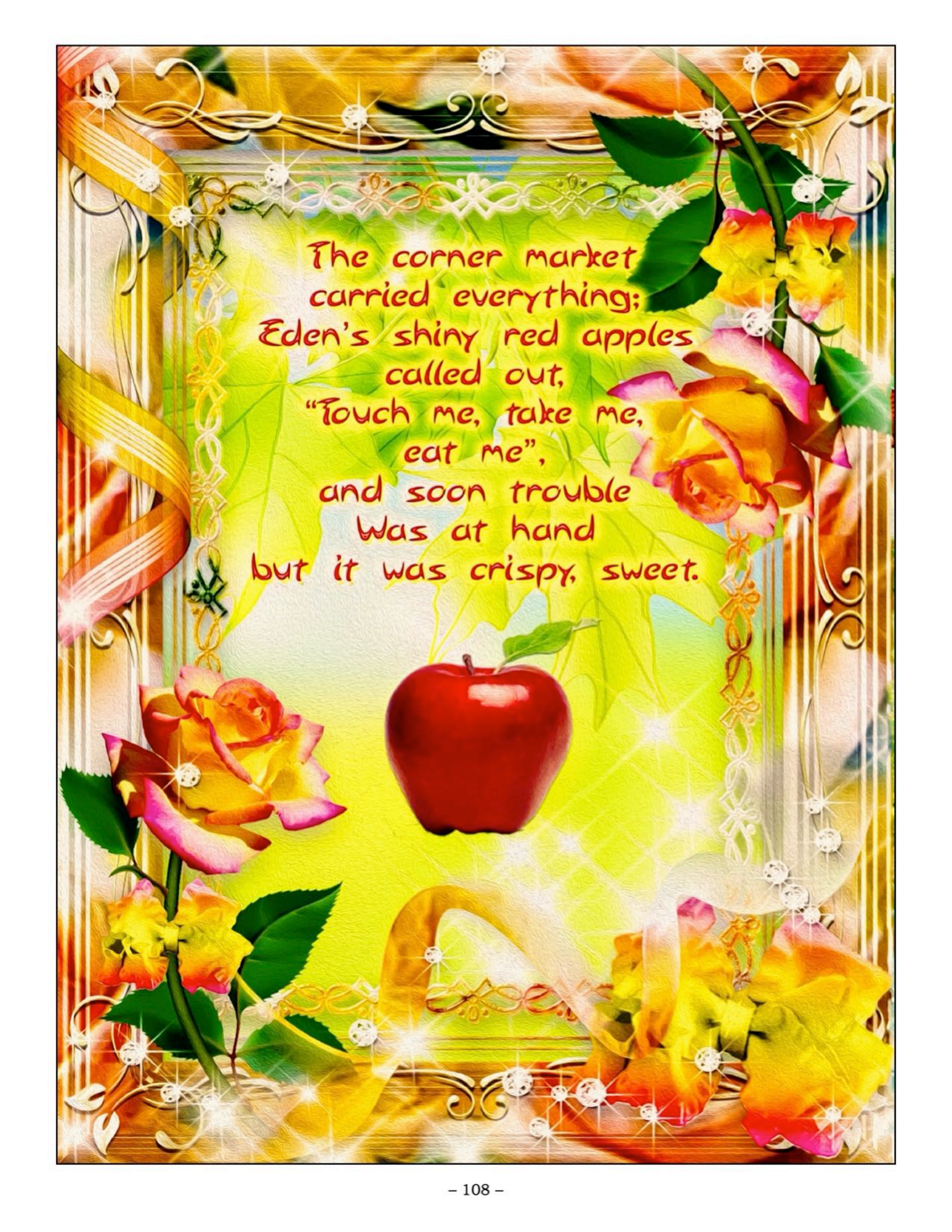
**HUMOR THY PARENTS:
NEVER TELL THEM
WHERE YOU'VE BEEN!**



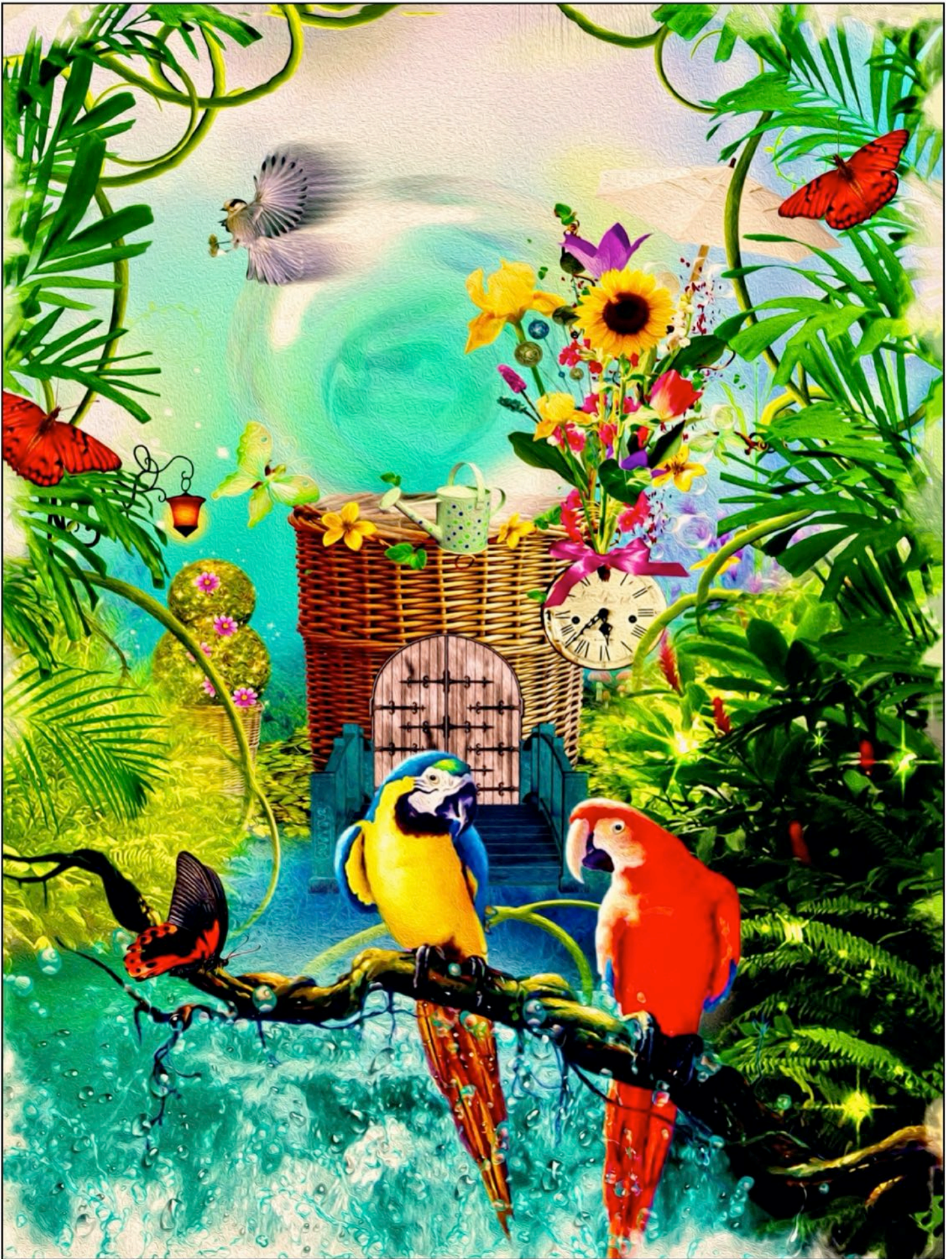
Moods
are
Contagious.

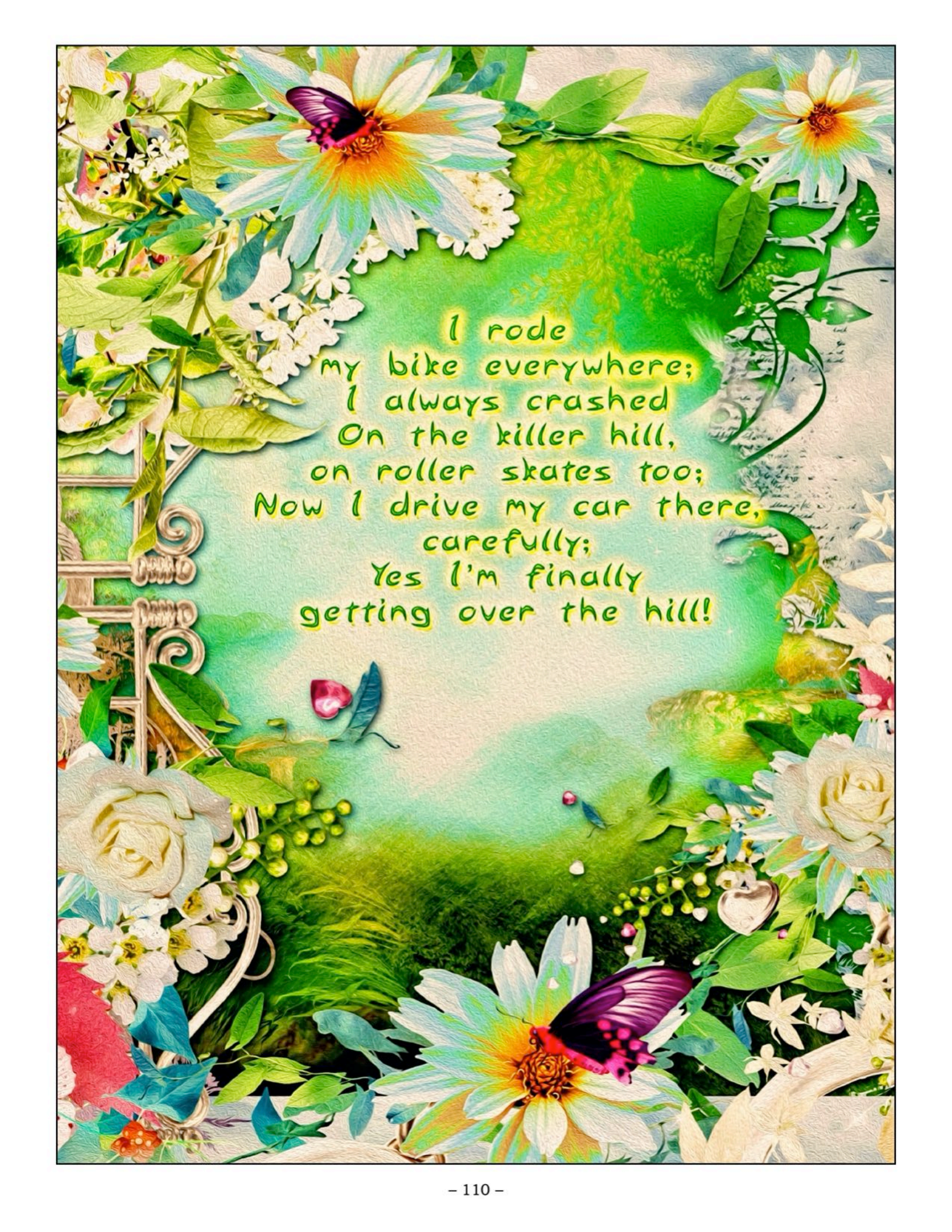


ap.t.

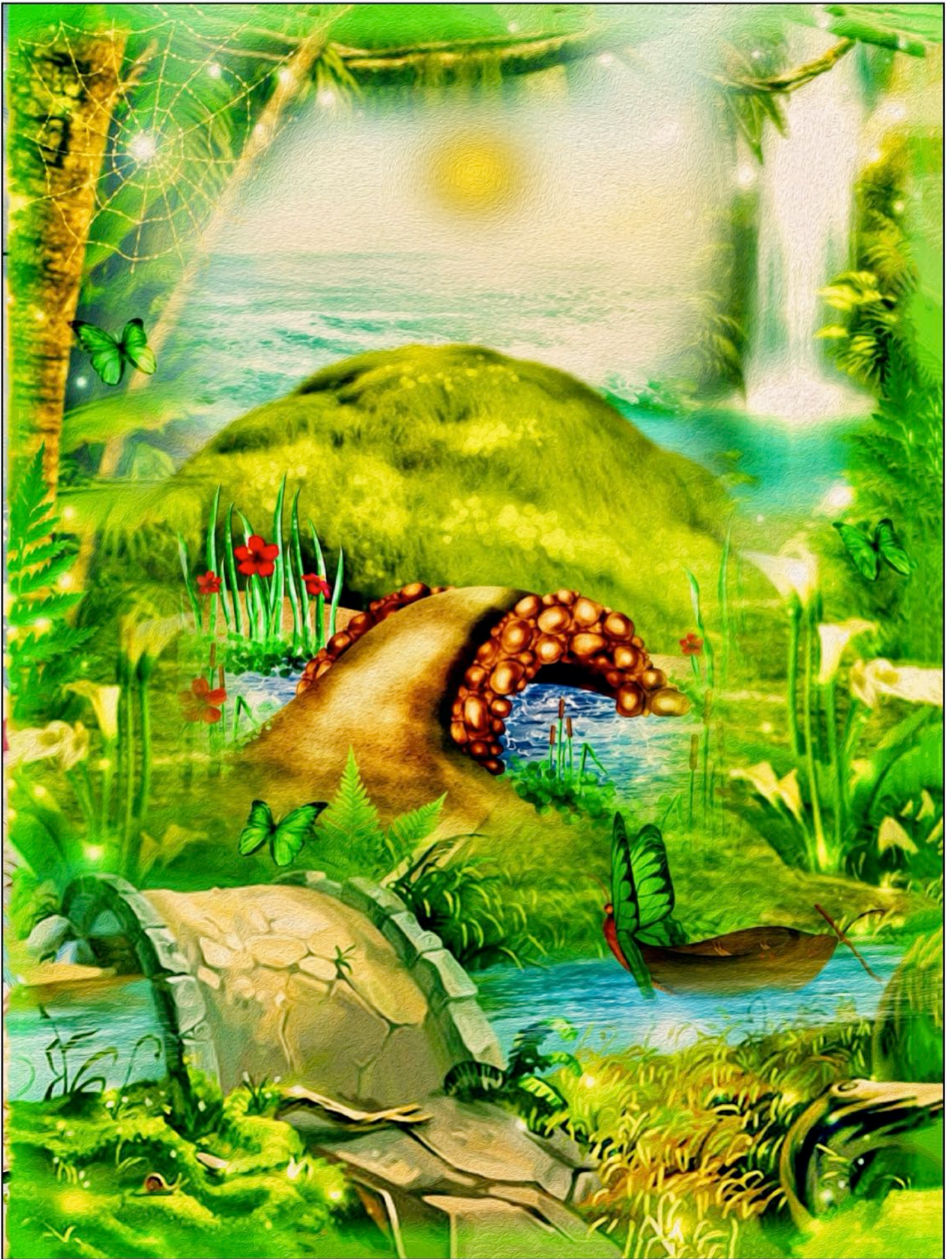
The page is framed by a complex, ornate border. It features a central text block in a red, cursive font. Below the text is a single, vibrant red apple. The background is a soft, yellowish-green with a subtle pattern. The border is composed of white and gold filigree, a wide gold ribbon on the left, and several large, colorful roses in shades of yellow, orange, and pink. Small white starburst effects are scattered throughout the design.


The corner market
carried everything;
Eden's shiny red apples
called out,
"Touch me, take me,
eat me",
and soon trouble
was at hand
but it was crispy, sweet.



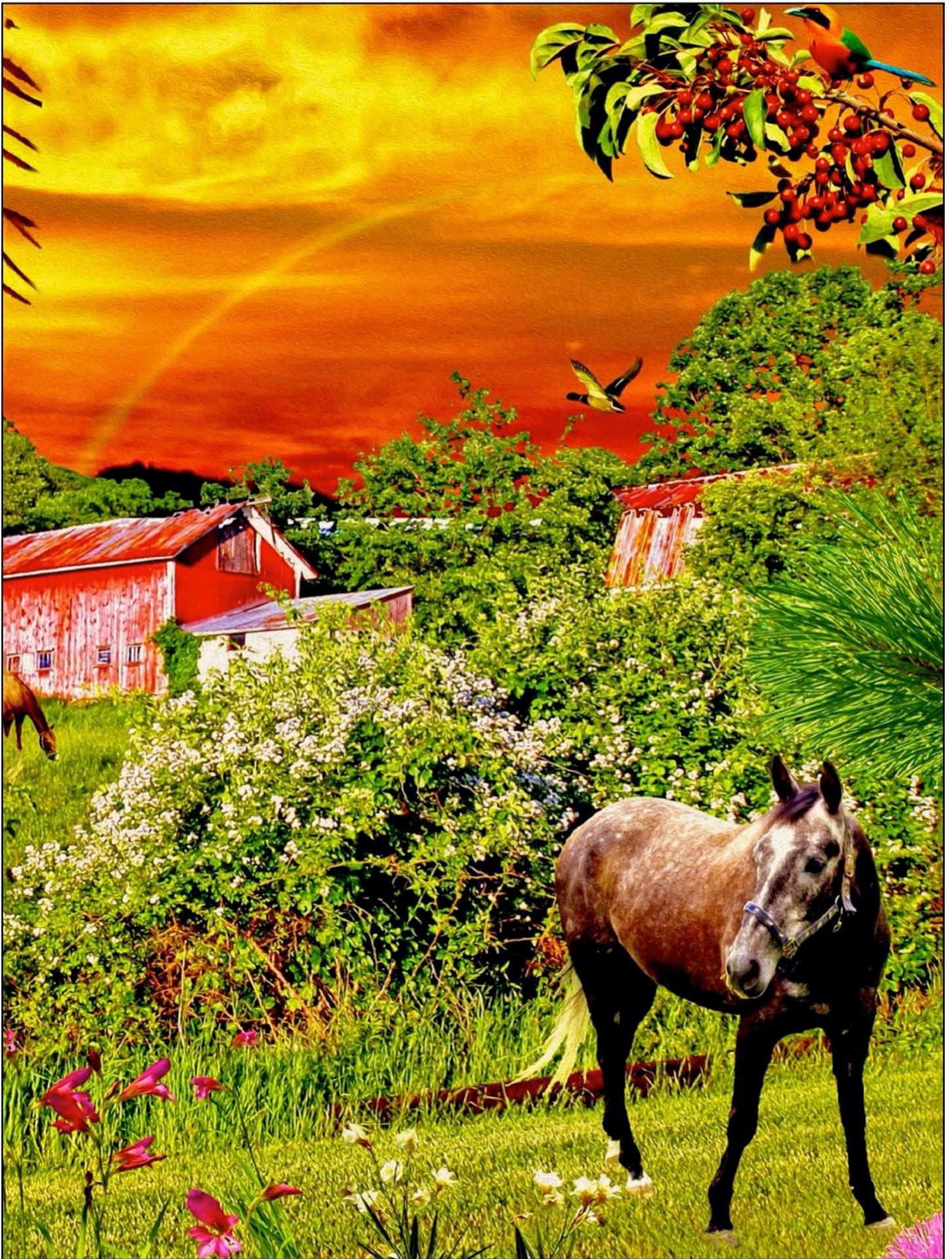


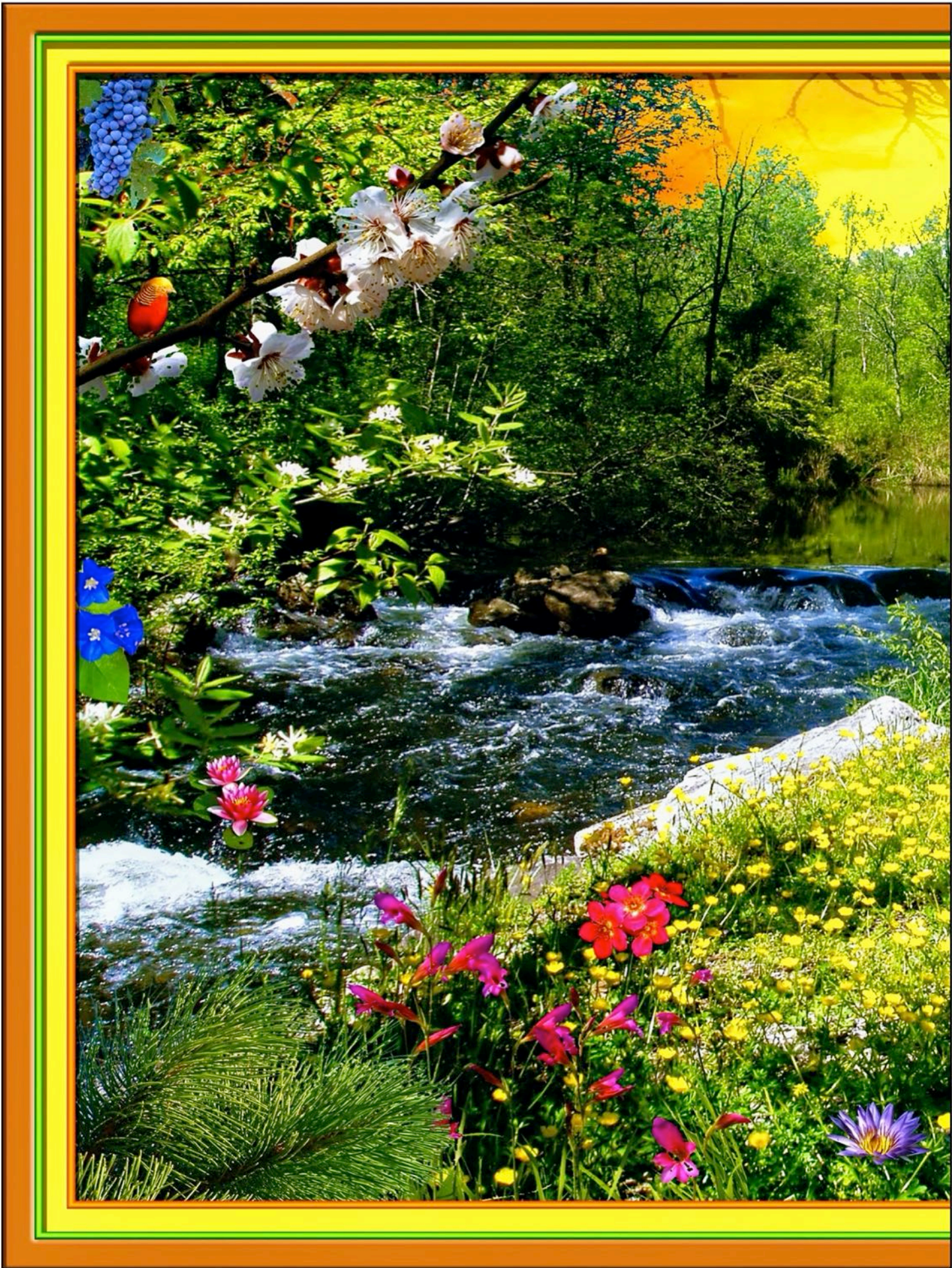
I rode
my bike everywhere;
I always crashed
On the killer hill,
on roller skates too;
Now I drive my car there,
carefully;
Yes I'm finally
getting over the hill!

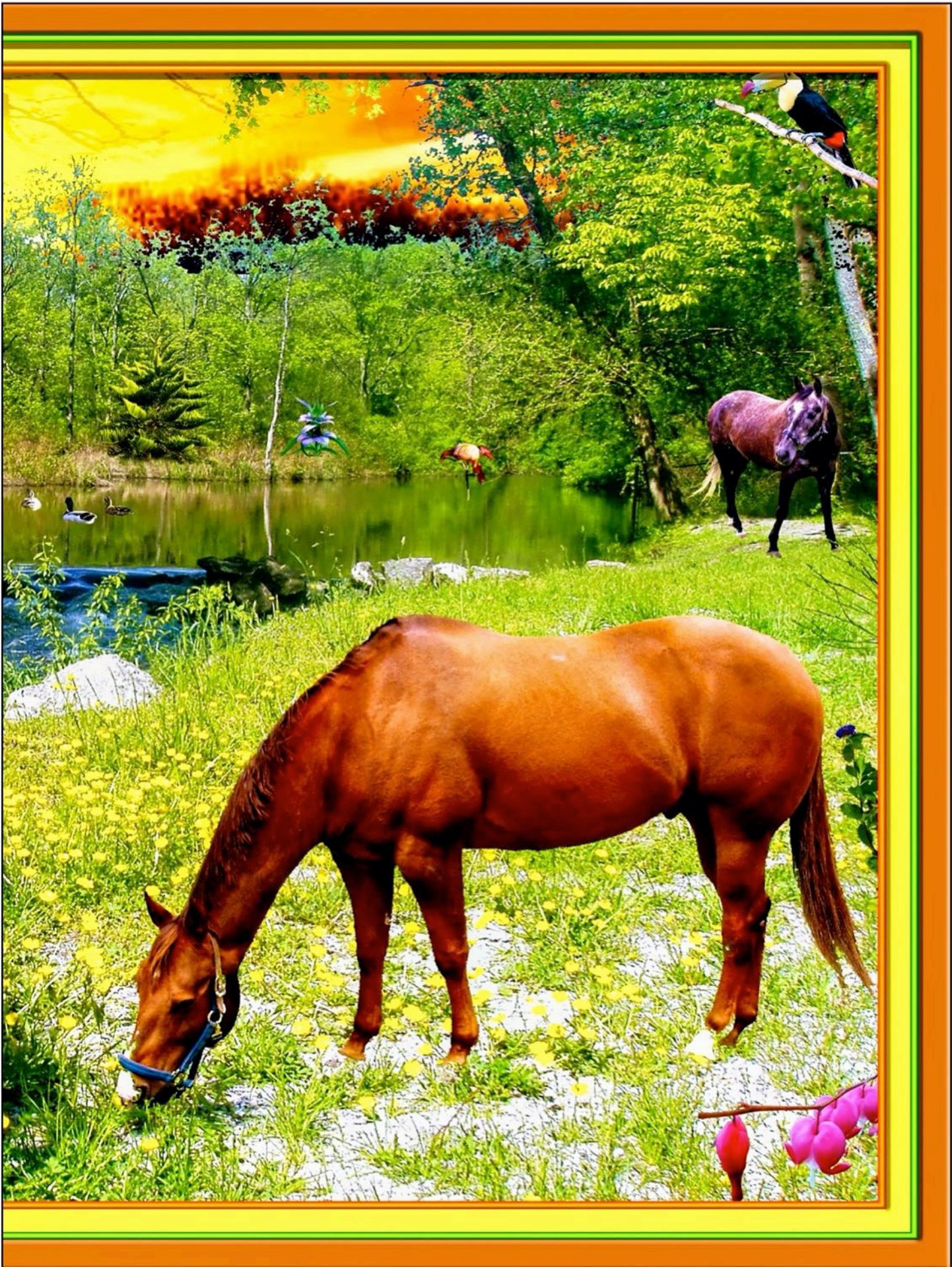


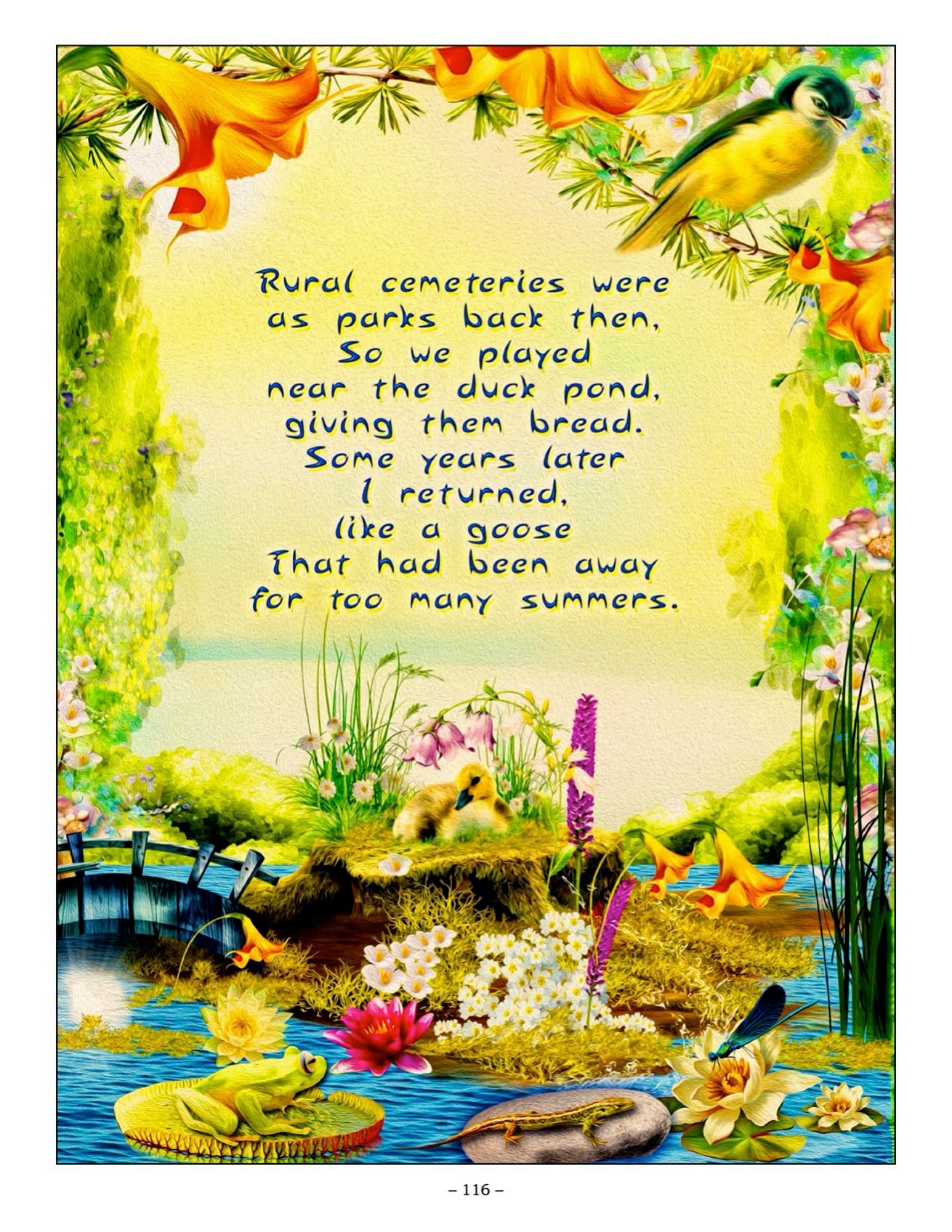


Always picked up
a penny
for good luck,
And pins too,
for even more good fortune.
I found a horseshoe
all of the sudden—
'Twas bad luck 'twas still
on the horse's foot!



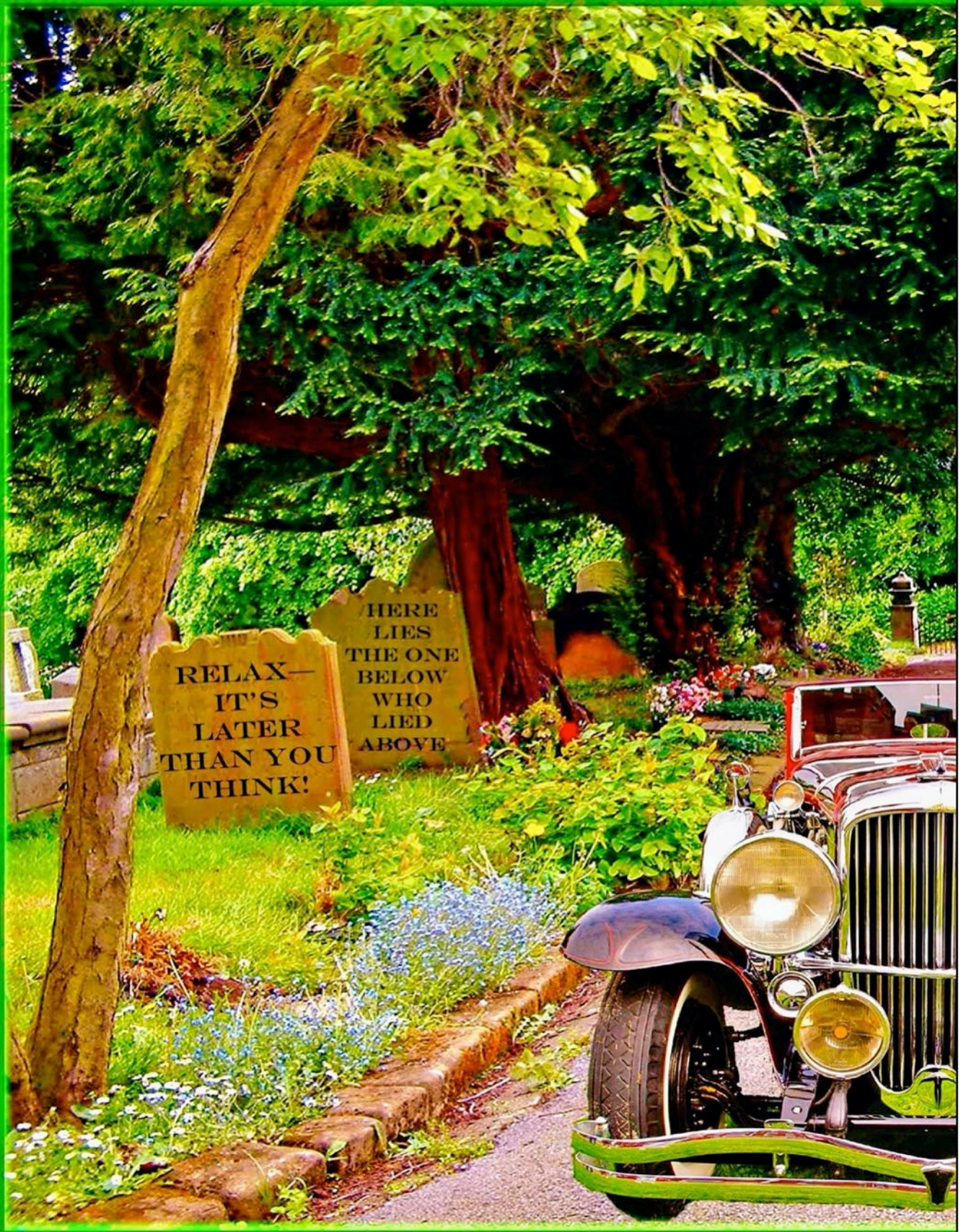


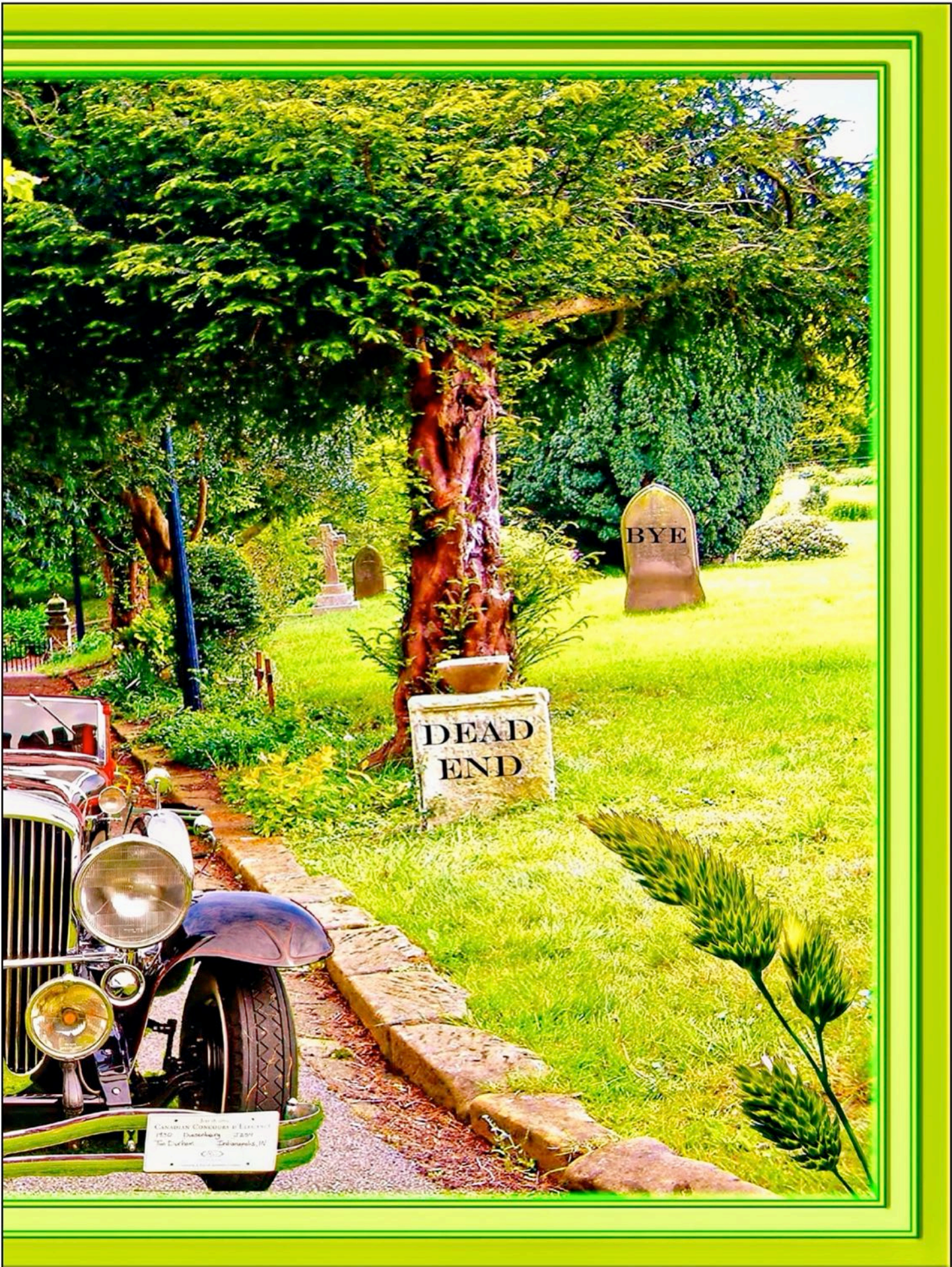


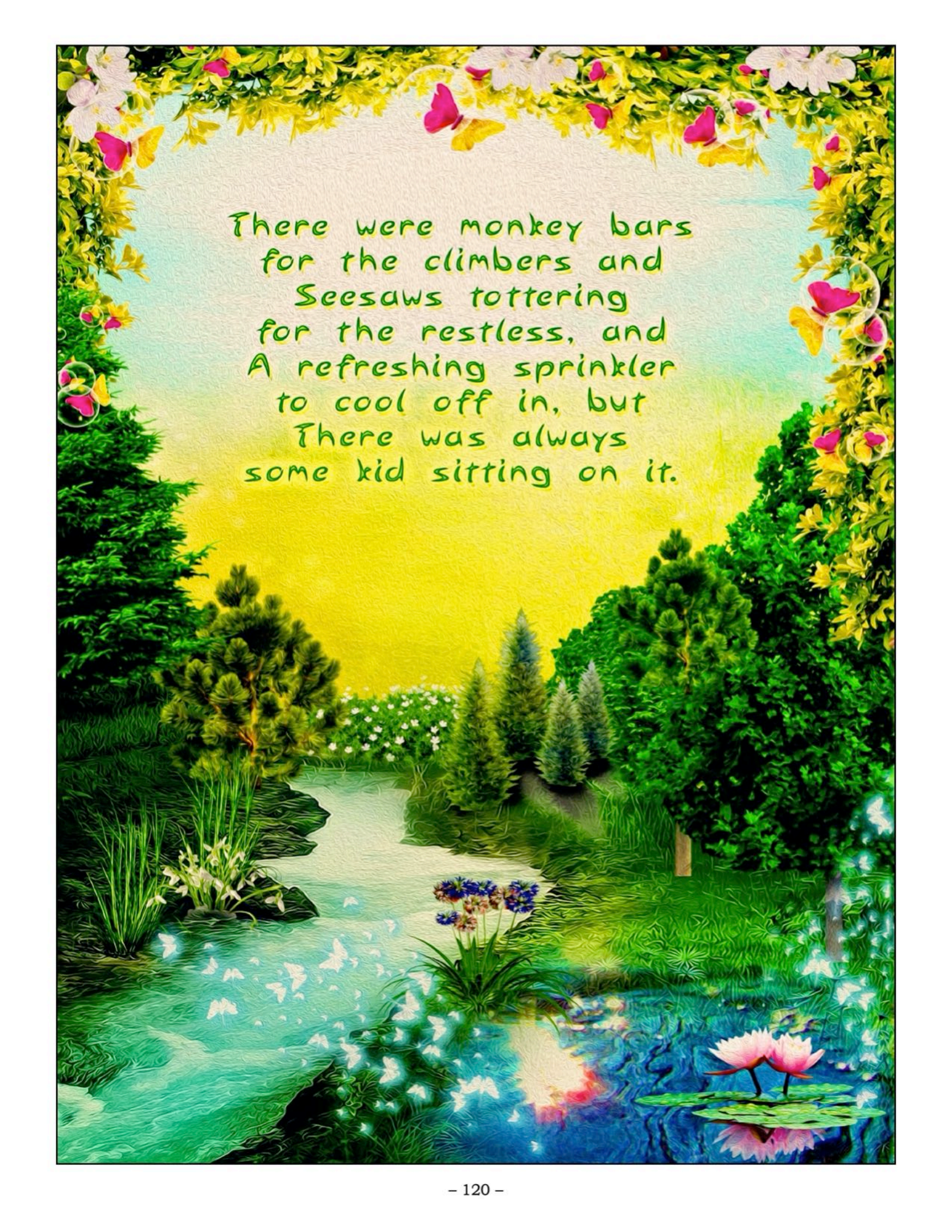


Rural cemeteries were
as parks back then,
So we played
near the duck pond,
giving them bread.
Some years later
I returned,
like a goose
That had been away
for too many summers.

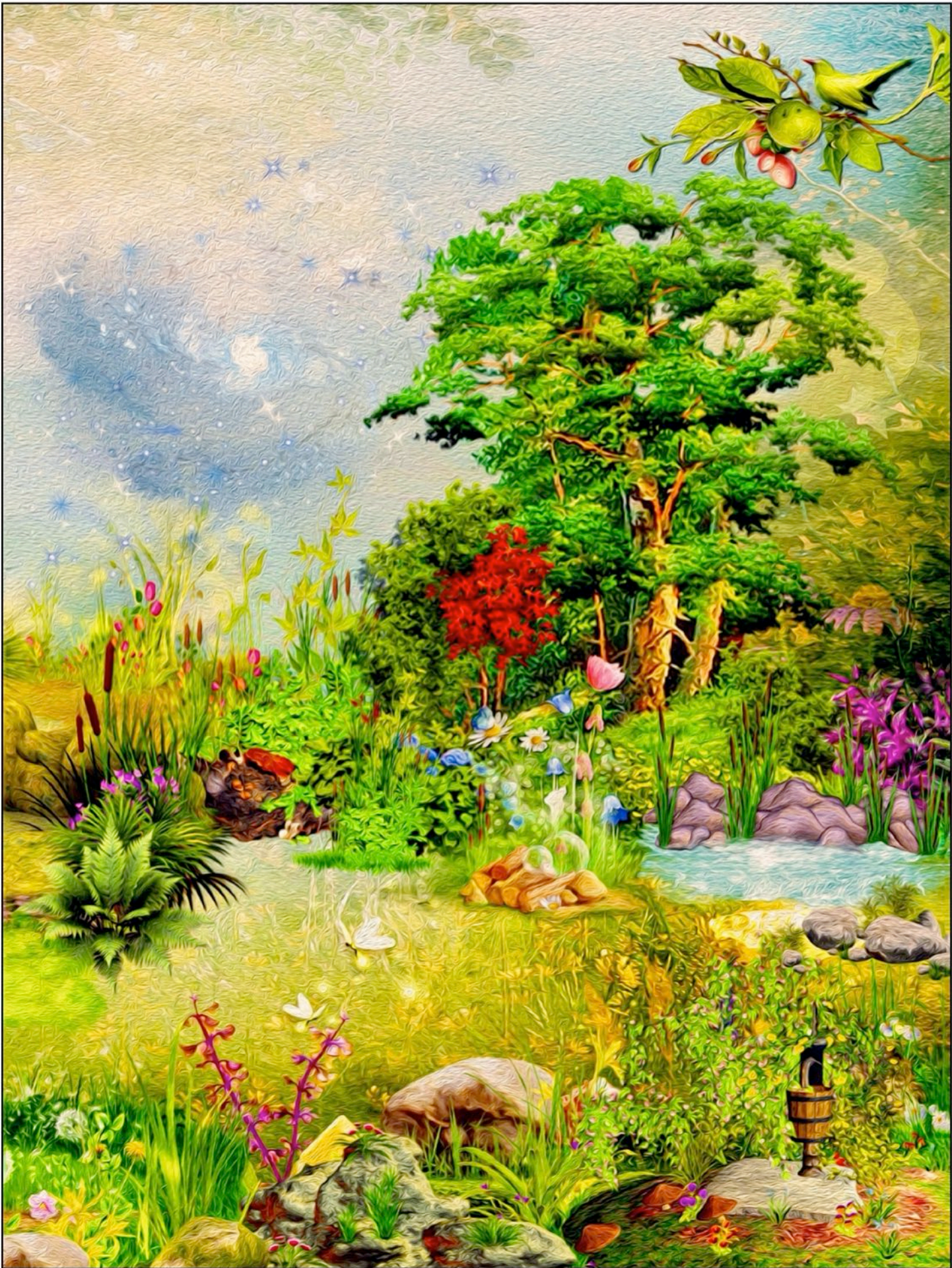








There were monkey bars
for the climbers and
Seesaws tottering
for the restless, and
A refreshing sprinkler
to cool off in, but
There was always
some kid sitting on it.









We made greeting cards,
keepsakes, with ribbons,
lace, assorted scraps,
and original words.

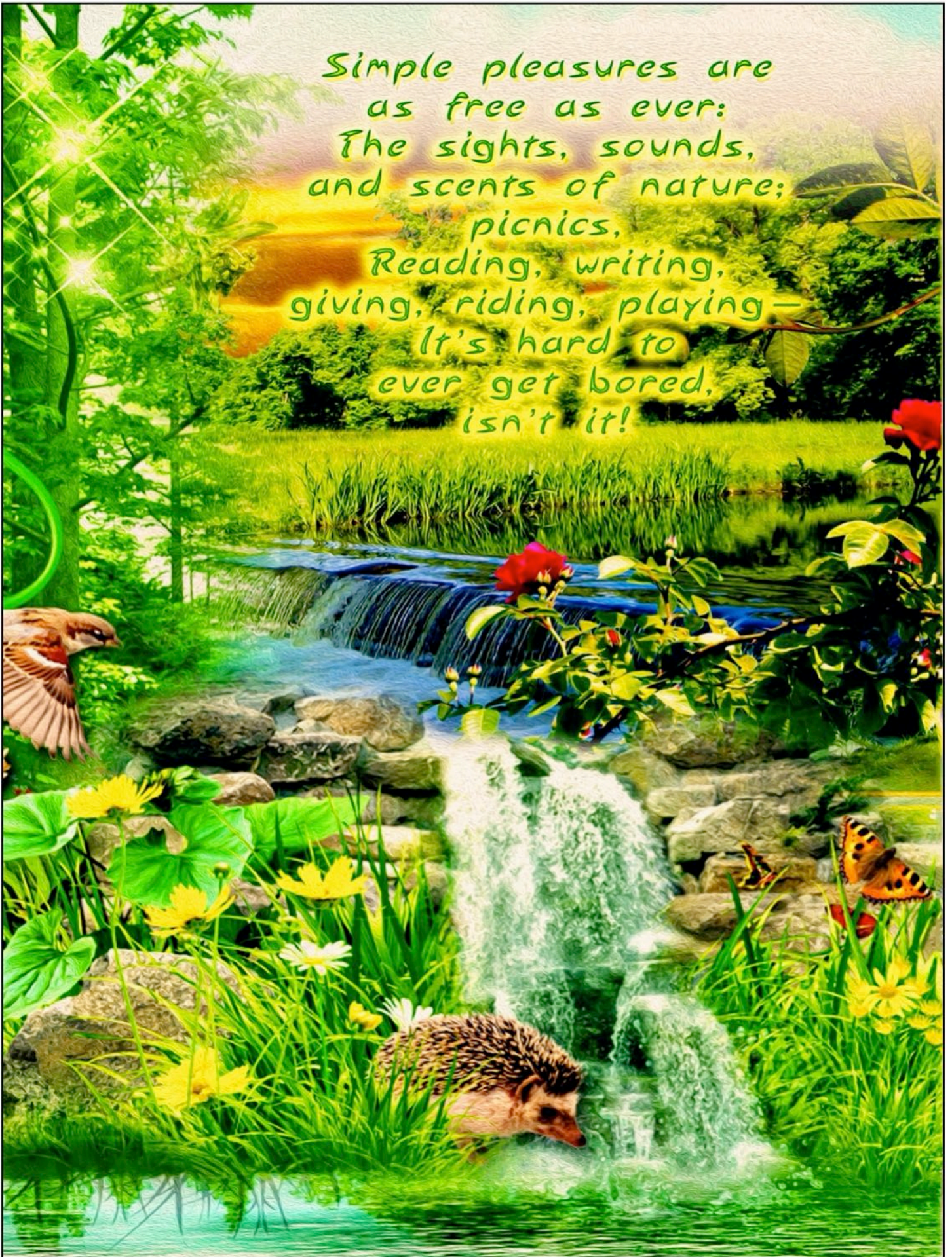
Now we buy
ready made cards
with fluffy words—
In a day or two
they are in the trash.

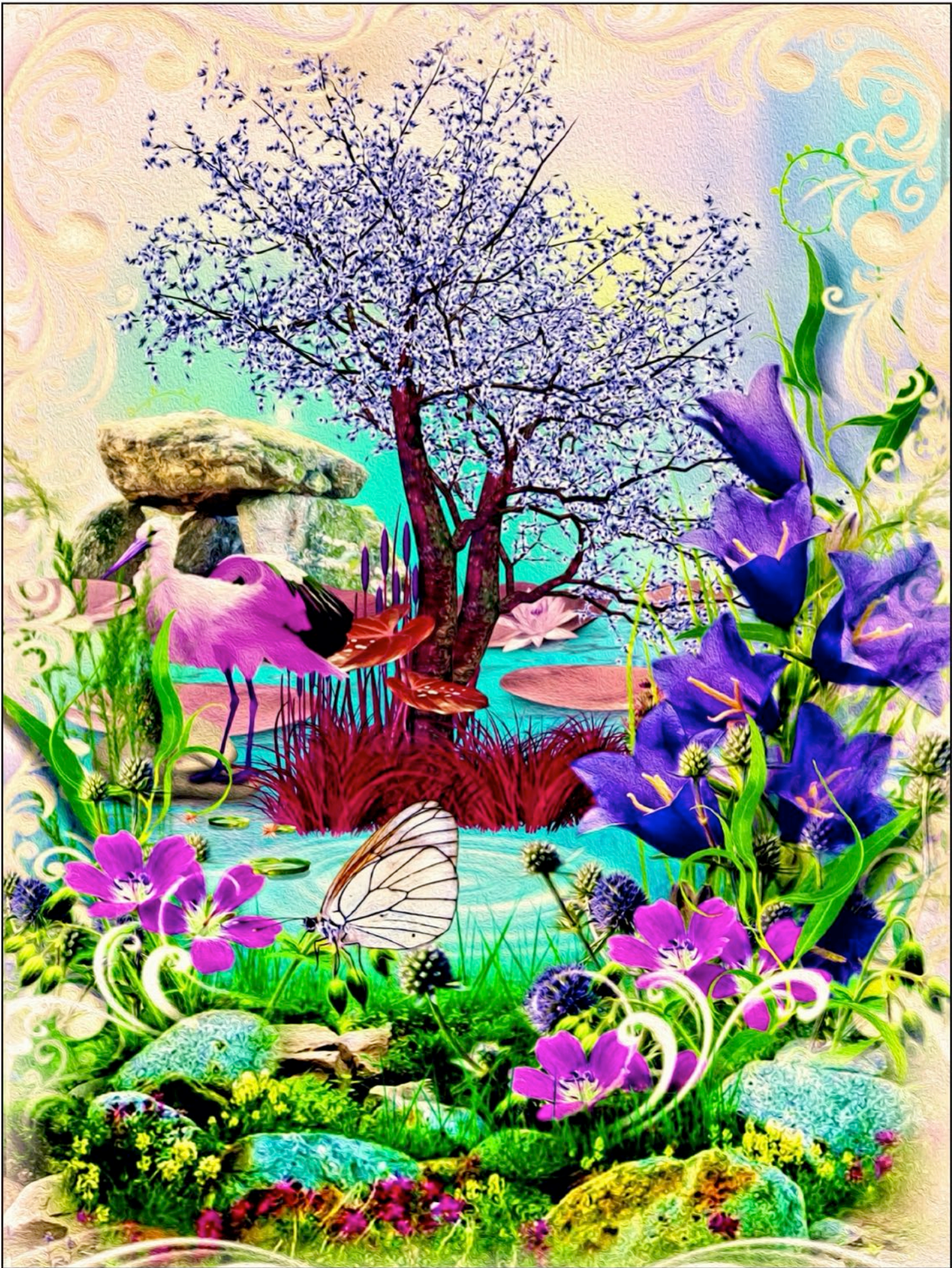






Simple pleasures are
as free as ever:
The sights, sounds,
and scents of nature;
picnics,
Reading, writing,
giving, riding, playing —
It's hard to
ever get bored,
isn't it!







P. Torney © 1995





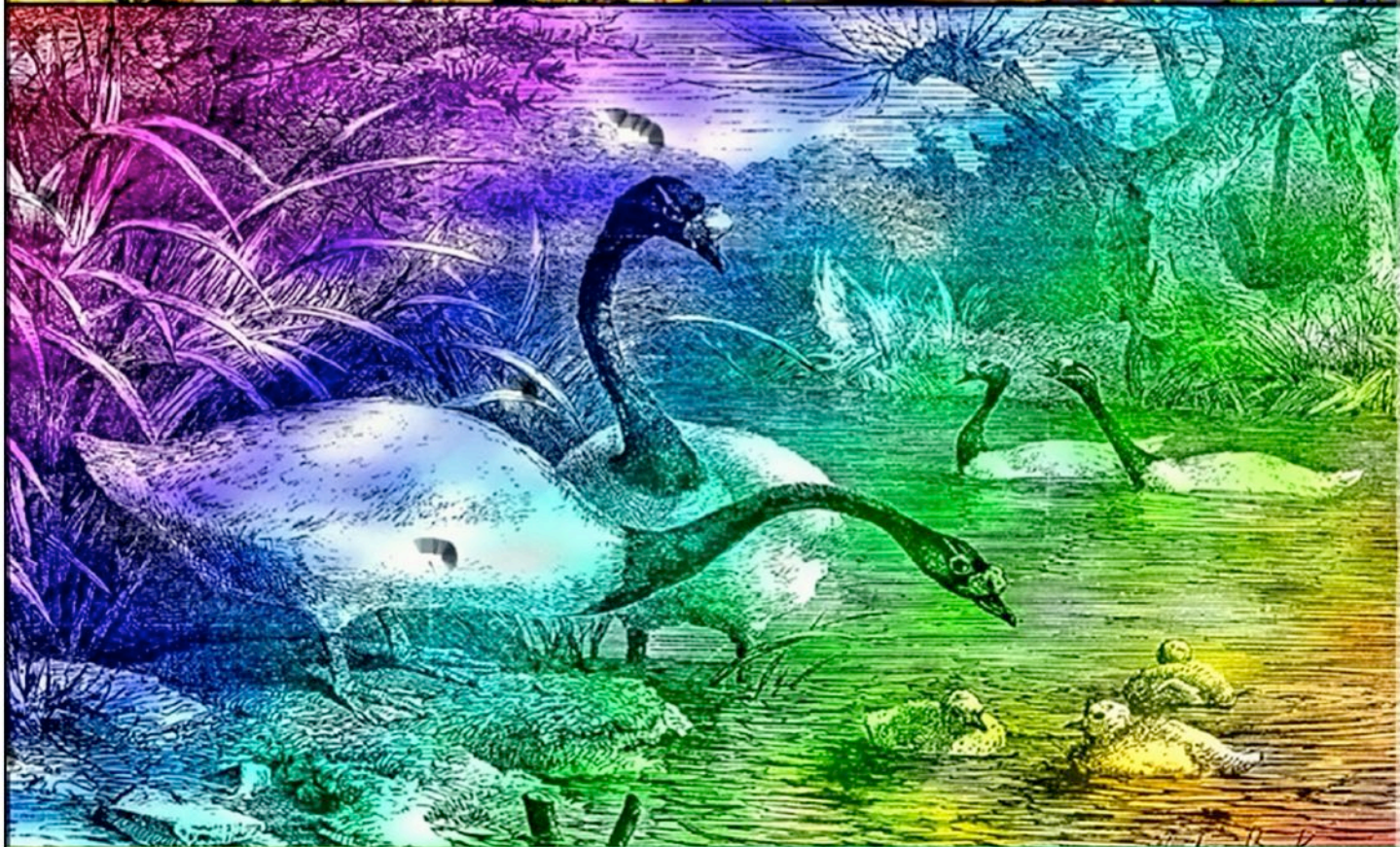
I've always been intrigued by the Amaranth, for its leaves never fade in color, even long after death, and remain a vivid red for ever and ever. Could it be that some portion of the eternalness of the Infinite has somehow made it into the unfading red leaf of this flower?



Grandpa's chicken ranch was all that was left of the great farm—and so we had eggs and more eggs and, sad to say, roast chicken. Then we started naming all the chickens, for there was a rule that you couldn't kill and cook a chicken to whom you'd given a name.



I never knew much about other lands until we went to the new Chinese store. There we ate dumplings, chicken wings, egg drop soup, and noodles while drinking hot tea. Mother bought us treasures from the great silk road to take home—and from then on I was the “egg”, white on the outside, but yellow on the inside.



Rural cemeteries were meant to be used as parks, and so ours became a familiar place, especially the duck pond where we'd give the ducks stale bread but soon run away when the geese stampeded us. Many years later I returned with my sweetheart—like a duck that had been away for too many summers.



Take this yucky looking stuff—it will grow hair on your chest and make you big and strong like dad—but, I'm a girl! Just give it to me and I'll hold my nose and take it—but really I'll just give it to the dog, for dogs will eat or drink anything!



Men always wore hats in the old days—I can remember trying on my father's many hats—but women still wear hats, although less and less, and not as fancy as before. Now we're lucky to find any hats, for we must wear many hats in life—and so we wear none. As for dad's hats, they're gone—all old hat now.



We'd lay our baseball cards out on the sidewalk, trading famous pitchers and batters, looking up their stats. My friend had seven Mickey Mantle cards. Now, grown up, I play another kind of game in which I juggle players, go to bat each day, make some errors, and look at stats like stocks and bonds.



We were afraid of the scissors grinding man, but we all screamed when the ice cream man came ringing down the street. After a scramble for loose change, we'd cut him off on the next block, always asking for a piece of dry ice to play with as he reached way way back into the truck to retrieve our cones.



Did you play post office, mailing a letter in the closet with a friend who you had a crush on? Or play spin the bottle with a hopeful sweetheart but end up kissing the dog when the bottle pointed that way—always happening just when you thought that you had the market cornered!



On carefree summer days I'd walk down to the stream with my sister and we'd pick the yellow flowers and put them in a basket for a table centerpiece. Then we'd pick dandelions and make a salad of some of them while dad made wine from the remainder.

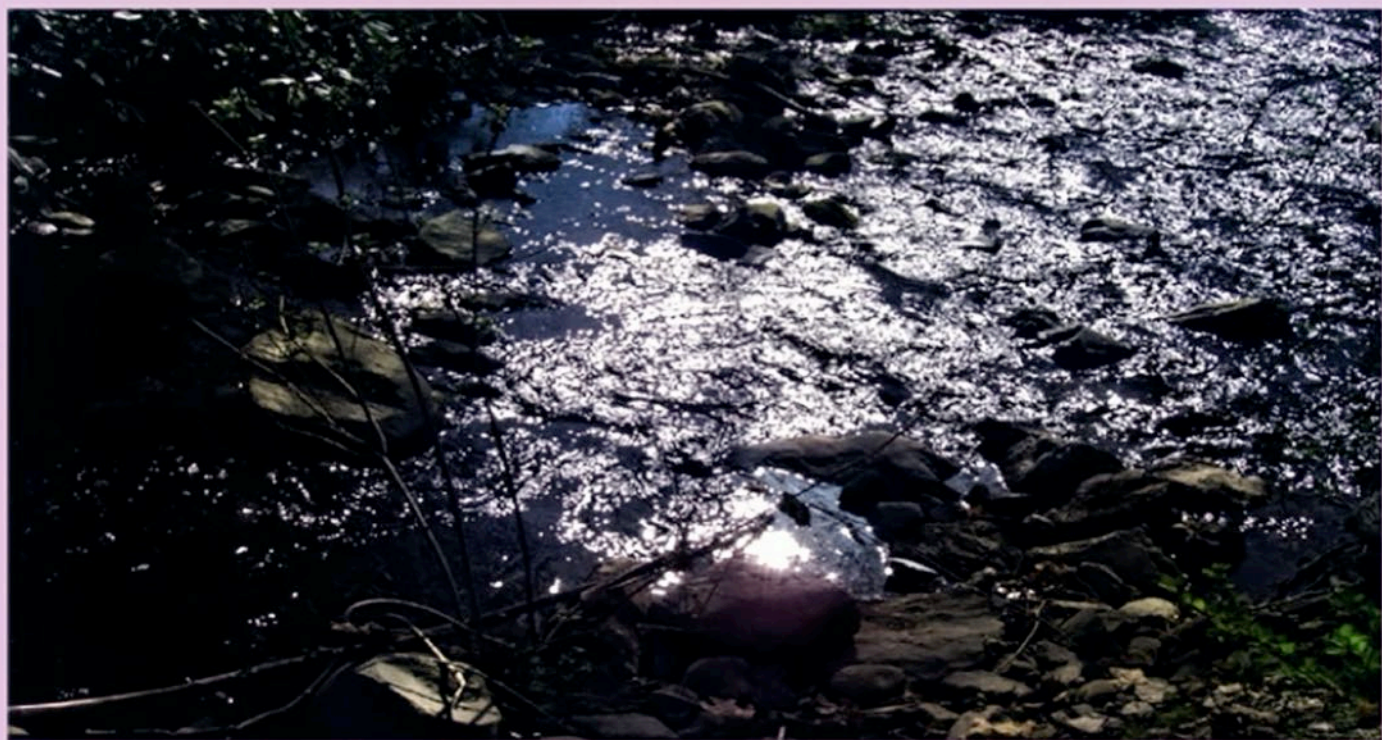
*Toward the end of a sunny day,
A storm came and washed away,
And the sunset clouds, being glad,
Held a party for the returning lad.*

*The sun then peeked,
and soft shone
Into the mist of
the departing squall,
Its light split into
particolors lone,
Separating, each
from the ALL—*

*A bouquet of colored rays
Swirled into sight,
And promised good weather
For the rest of the night.*

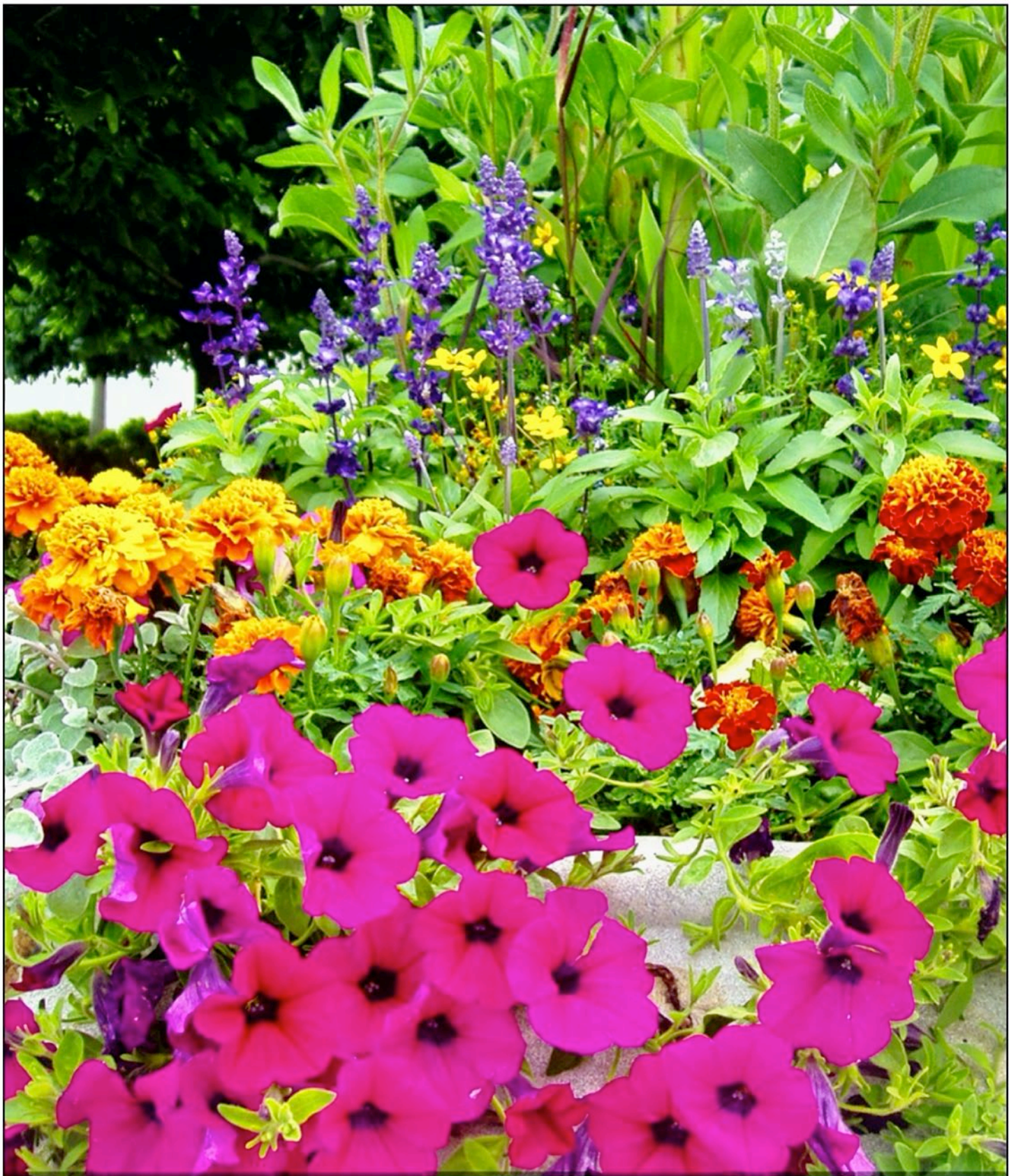
*The rainbow lit up the east,
As long we attended the feast
Of both the east and the west,
Till into darkness we descended blest.*

*The stars guided our homeward flight
By shining their jeweled lights
Of ruby, emerald, and sapphire
In living colors of blazing fire.*



*Like the bright faces that define the jewel, Friends enrich each other's view of life's gem:
As love's reflection in life's diamond, they're Glints and gleams of reality's sparkle!*

Once upon a time, there was gold at the end of the rainbow, but now we find toxic gases and chemicals there—so, the message for today is an IOU there instead of gold that says we'd better take care of the colors of the sky or nature will be no more.



A few last flowers from fall's second spring yet followed the summer lost, poking their heads above winter's white death wrap that was being drawn up around them. This then was the smothering of the earth's last warm sweet odours, the blanching of the green banks of streams—summer's wake.

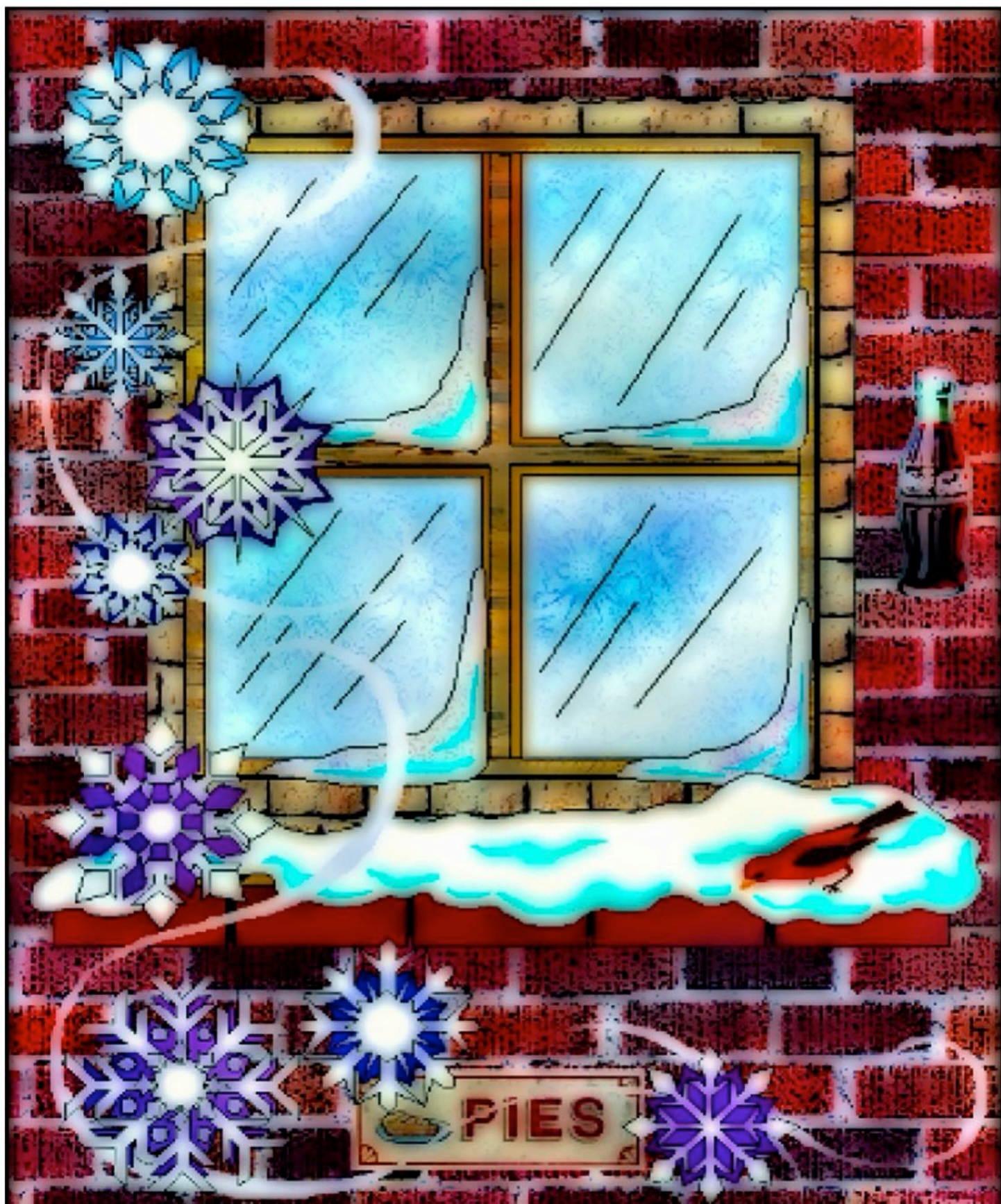


The ducks are the one who inspired me high,
I got over my fears, I will not cry.
So, I say to myself these ducks were a lot.
I'll pray for them – give them great dreaming luck.

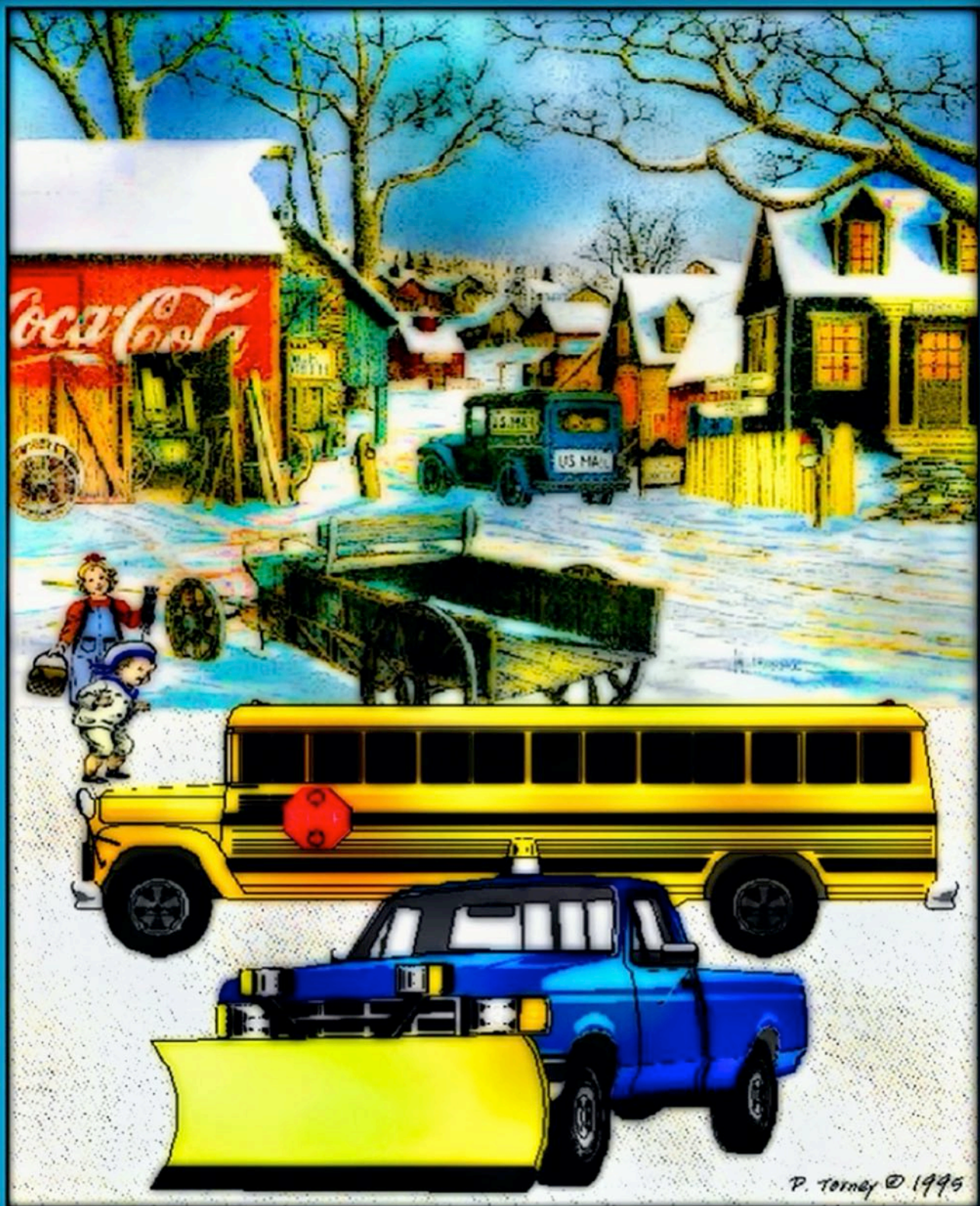
We'd often seek refuge from the noise of day in the wildlife sanctuary, languishing there, down by the creek side, throughout those legendary autumnal afternoons, reading new poems to each other and laughing and loving and living as we, like the second season blossoms, raised our final cheer of the year.



*Never did I discover a world so white,
As when the snow-field was lit by moonlight.
Oh, it was a crystalline cathedral,
Built from falling stars in the holy night.*



Larger than a corner store, the corner market carried all that we needed, especially vegetables and fresh fruits over brimming with their natural healthiness and normal color. I ate plums on the walk home—they were soft, ripe, juicy, and dripping down the front of my shirt.



It snowed half of the night and so we thought we'd have a day off from school—we really didn't want to go anywhere on such a dangerous day—we'd go anywhere but school, that was. However, school was on, but the bus couldn't make it up our hill, but, then along came a snow plow and ruined our day off.



THE YEAR

WINTER storms the YEAR

In the **MONTH** of Bran-new-airy,

Then **FEB-BURIES** us in **SNOW**...

March, Lady April! Spring! —

Let's reign as we *May*

With sum(mer)maids

Named *June* and *Ju-lie*,

Until, after *A-gust* of

HOT withering wind,

The sunny **FIRE** burns out —

'Cept embers, when

Leaves **FALL** into **OCT-TOMB-BURR** —

Till — no leaves, no sunlight,

No sky, no warmth — **No-venber!**

Next de **RAIN**, de sleet, de **COLD-**

De-cember,

When all that we can do

Is but sweet Remember.

— P. Torney© 2004 —



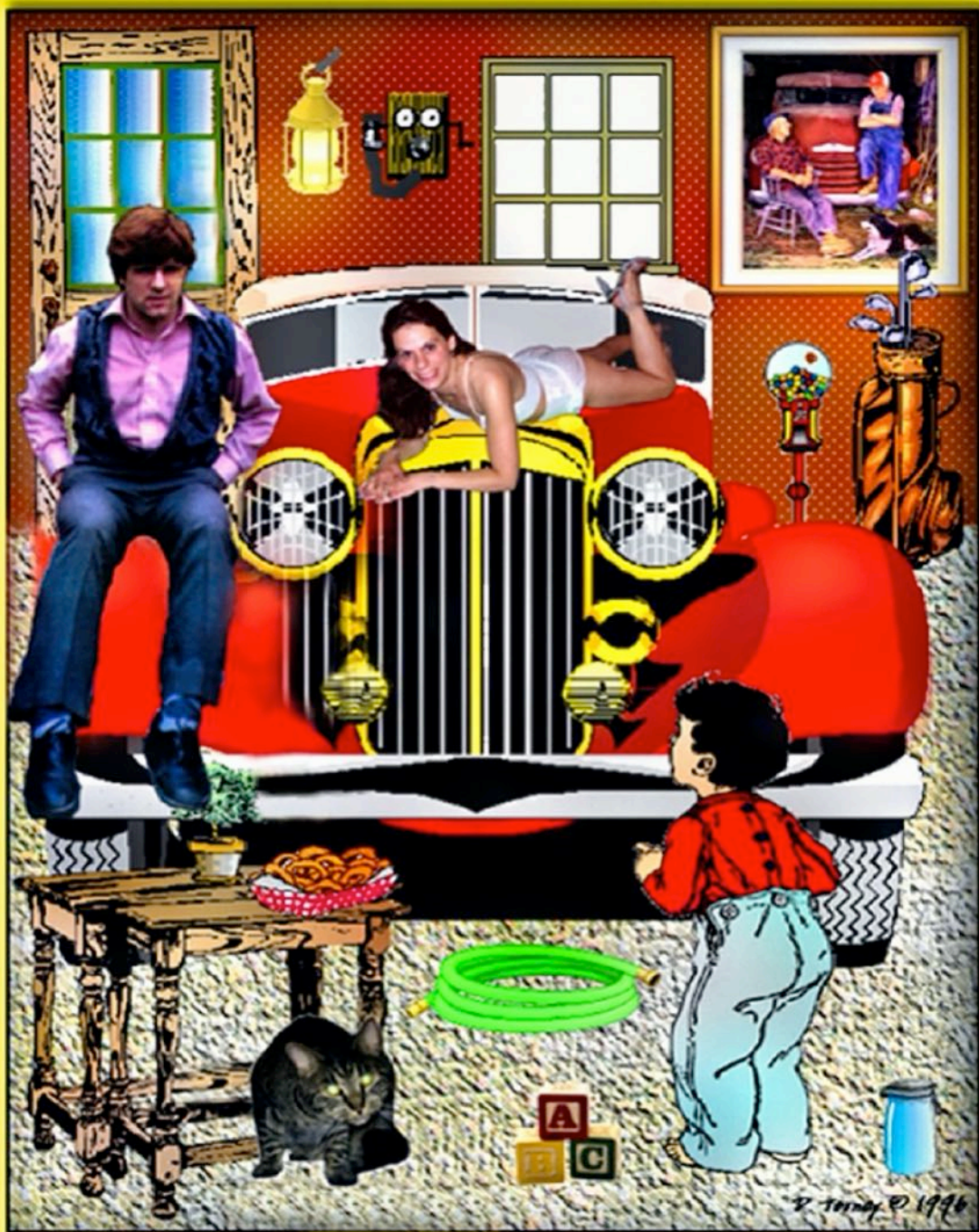
On Memorial Day, once called Decoration Day, we'd weave crepe paper through the spokes of our bike wheels and ride along at the back of the parade after we'd watched it from the curb side and waved our flags. Now-a-days, not much happens on Memorial Day—it's a pretty dead day, but that is only fitting.



Reading was the main diversion in the old days, since there was no TV. Children's books were lavishly illustrated, as seen now in the libraries' special collections. Chromolithographic colors were vivid, but laborious to create—yes, they just don't make colors like that anymore!



I dropped by the Flower Shop for the first time ever on Mother's Day, making sure that no one saw me doing such a sissy thing, however, my thirty-five cents wouldn't cover it, so, on the way home I stole old lady Johnson's prize rose and gave it to my mom, bugs, thorns and all.



*If you were old or sick you might regret or pine,
And give anything to have back some better time,
But, now you are young and fine, so, be glad, smile,
For you will never again live this life of thine.*

The Perfect Day

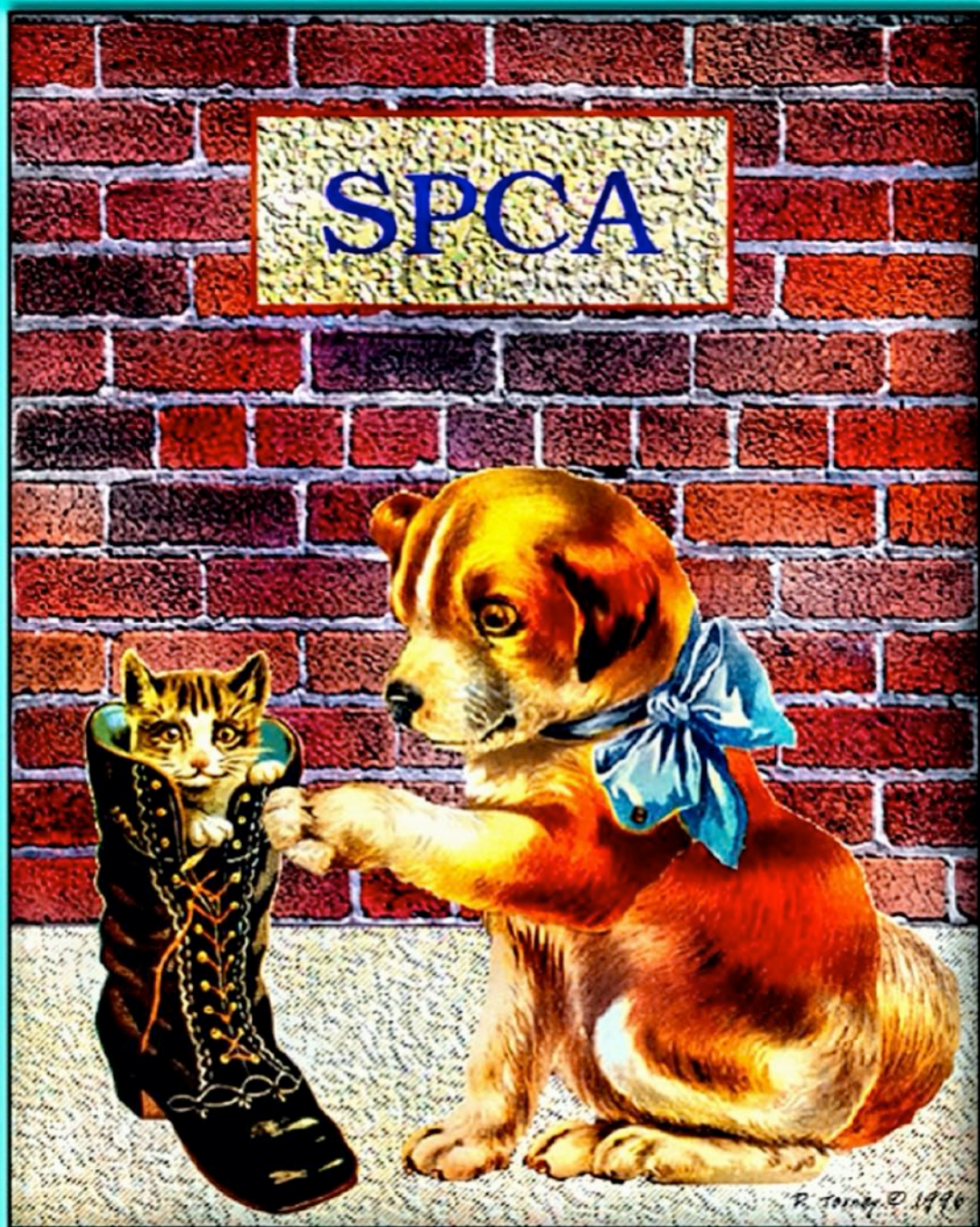


A Torrey © 2001

The hot-air balloon slowly inflated, their panels looking like a rainbow, containing every color under the sun. Up, up, and away toward Heaven's gateway they rose, coloring the blue sky, drifting on air like some sort of spectral cloud.



Purple Crocus, with its golden grains inside, demonstrates the complimentary colors of spring, seen also in the yellow Primrose and its romantic friend the purple Violet—it's the loving sun, as it were, warming the virginal earth with love and life into spring.



Wow, that screeching cat has to go, for there's no mice and I can't catch my sleep, but, oops, there's a rat—and so, instead, the cat has a home for good. At first, I wasn't even going to waste color film on my black-and-white cat, named Oreo, but then I noticed that his little red tongue was sticking out.



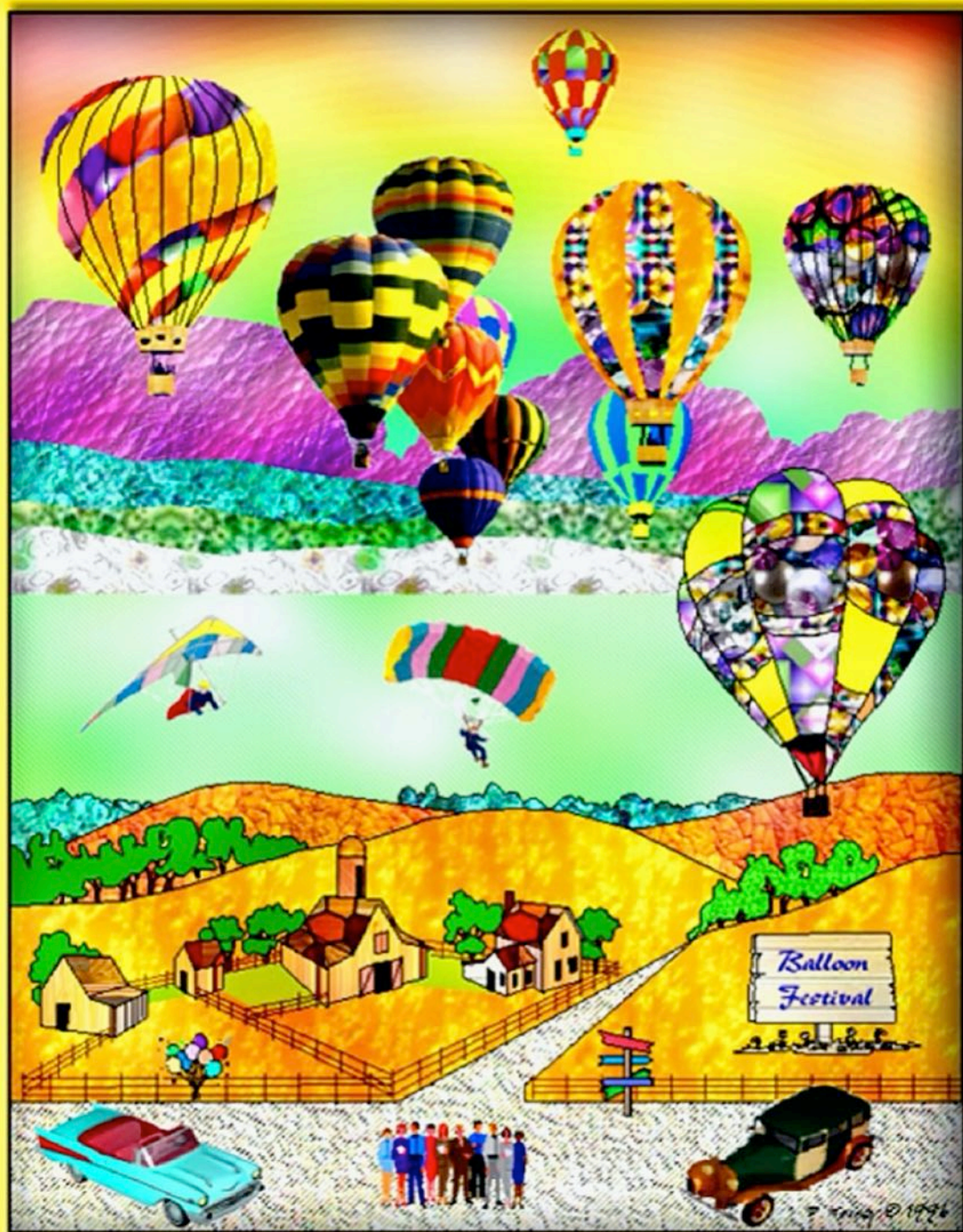
We looked for bottles to get the two cent deposit, especially on playgrounds. We also collected popsicle sticks to glue together into little boxes. Then I got hooked on cigarette packs, sometimes finding a smoke left inside, but my mother threw them all away. Even now my hand still tries to pick them up when I spot one.



I saw a penny on the ground and picked it up for good luck or bad, heads or tails. And I always picked up a pin—more good luck. And I must nail a horseshoe over the front door. I had a friend who once found a horseshoe all of the sudden—it was very bad luck for him that it was still on the horse's foot.



Who ever remembers the leaves but the child in you who raked them into a pile so that it could be jumped into. Some days later, the by then dispersed pile was regathered for a few last jumps and then lit with a match—ah, the wonderful smell of burning leaves on a cool autumn night.

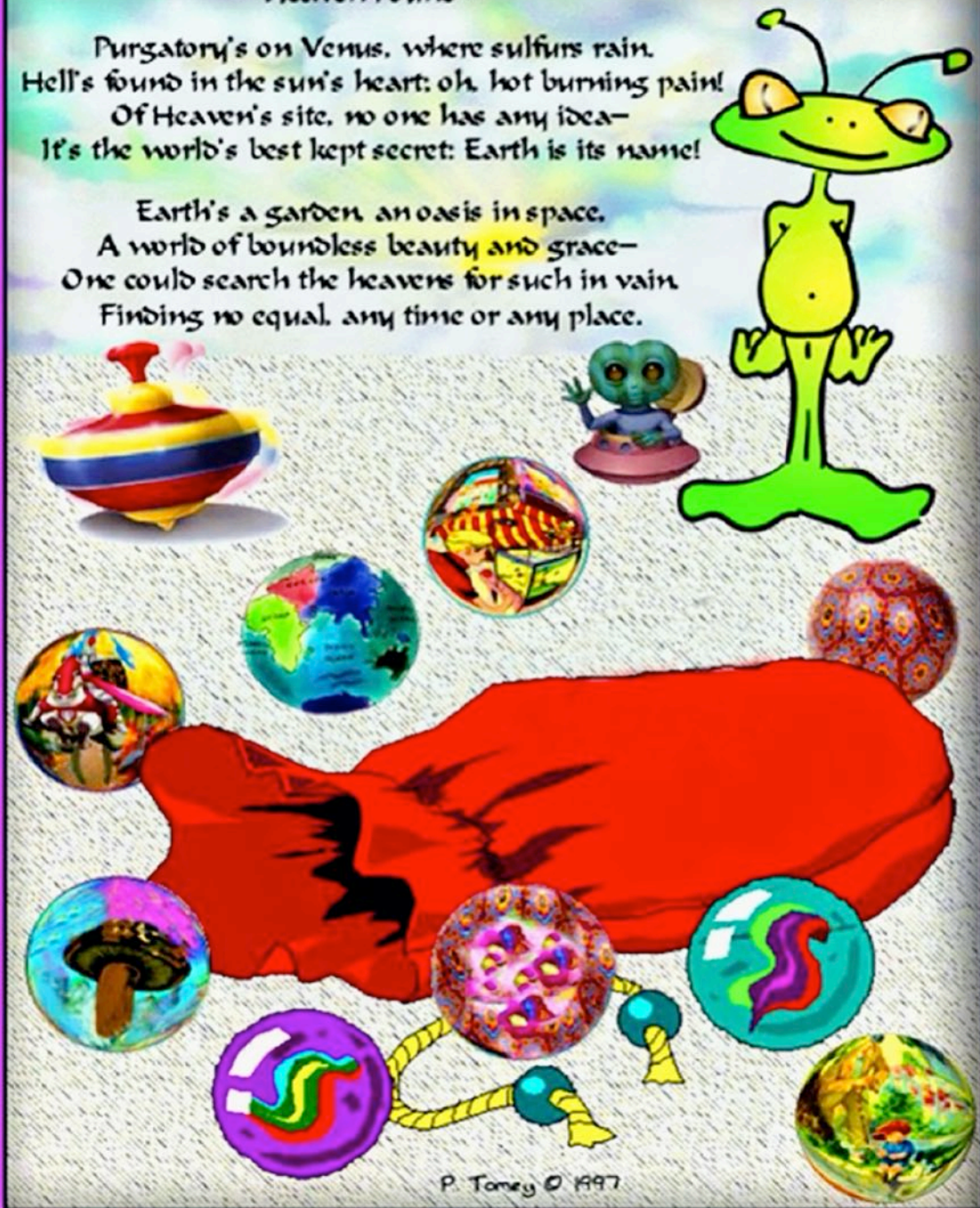


Hot-air balloons were inflated by starlight, and they filled slowly, looking like giant turtles. We fired heated air into ours, too, at sunrise, as the hare took off. We all followed, searching at different altitudes for the right winds that would drive us, the hounds, after our prey.

— Heaven Found —

Purgatory's on Venus, where sulfurs rain,
Hell's found in the sun's heart: oh, hot burning pain!
Of Heaven's site, no one has any idea—
It's the world's best kept secret: Earth is its name!

Earth's a garden, an oasis in space,
A world of boundless beauty and grace—
One could search the heavens for such in vain,
Finding no equal, any time or any place.



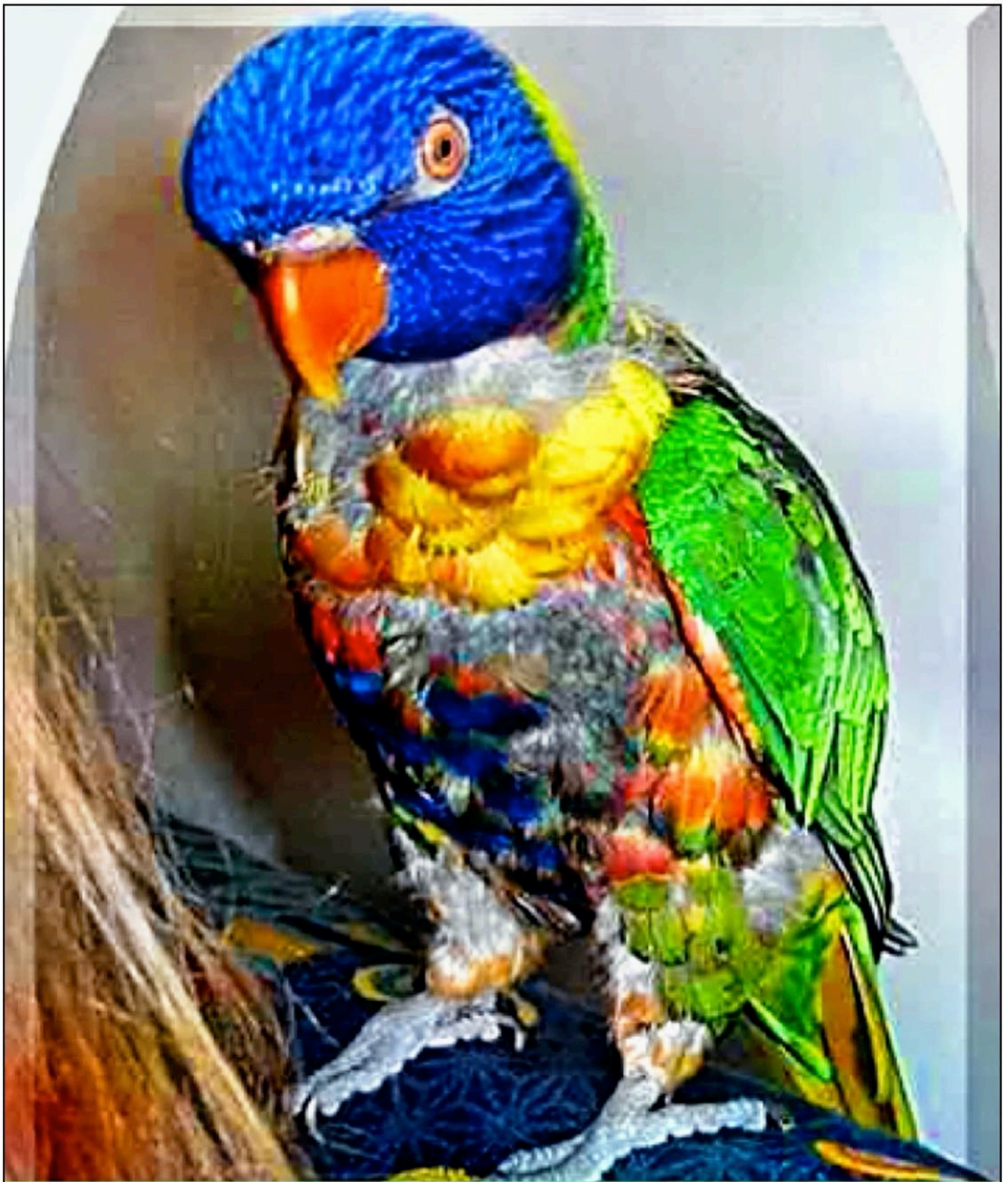
They were like a bag of jewels, my many and assorted marbles. One day I brought to school a cool green cat's eye, a big blue boulder, and various pockmarked throwaways. Never mind if the marbles got scratched on the concrete, although we always started on the dirt, for there was nothing like that long roll and a hit!



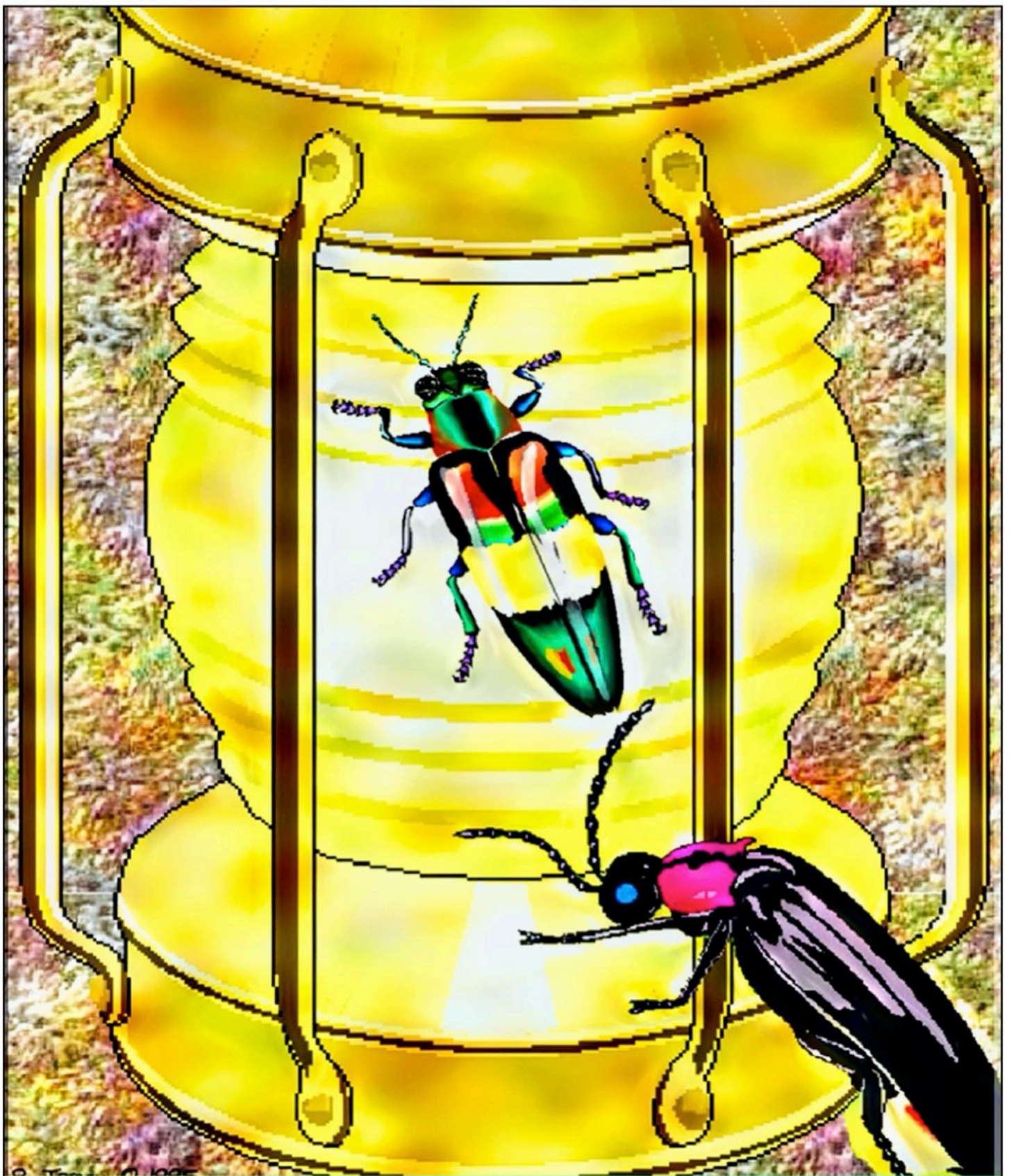
The songs of larks rose to greet us in our hot-air balloon, piercing the stillness of the sky. Way down below we could see the wheat ripening, and, near it, the flower gardens, in which we could somehow, although far above, sense the bees bumbling along, laden with the pollen of the foxglove and the honeysuckle.



We humans, too, can drink from the little yellow flowers that populate every lawn—those buttercup potions of lively yellow light, the color that is the easiest and the quickest for the eye to see; Yellow flowers grab our attention so they can take us into the secret realm of fairies, elves, pixies, fays, goblins, trolls, and sprites.



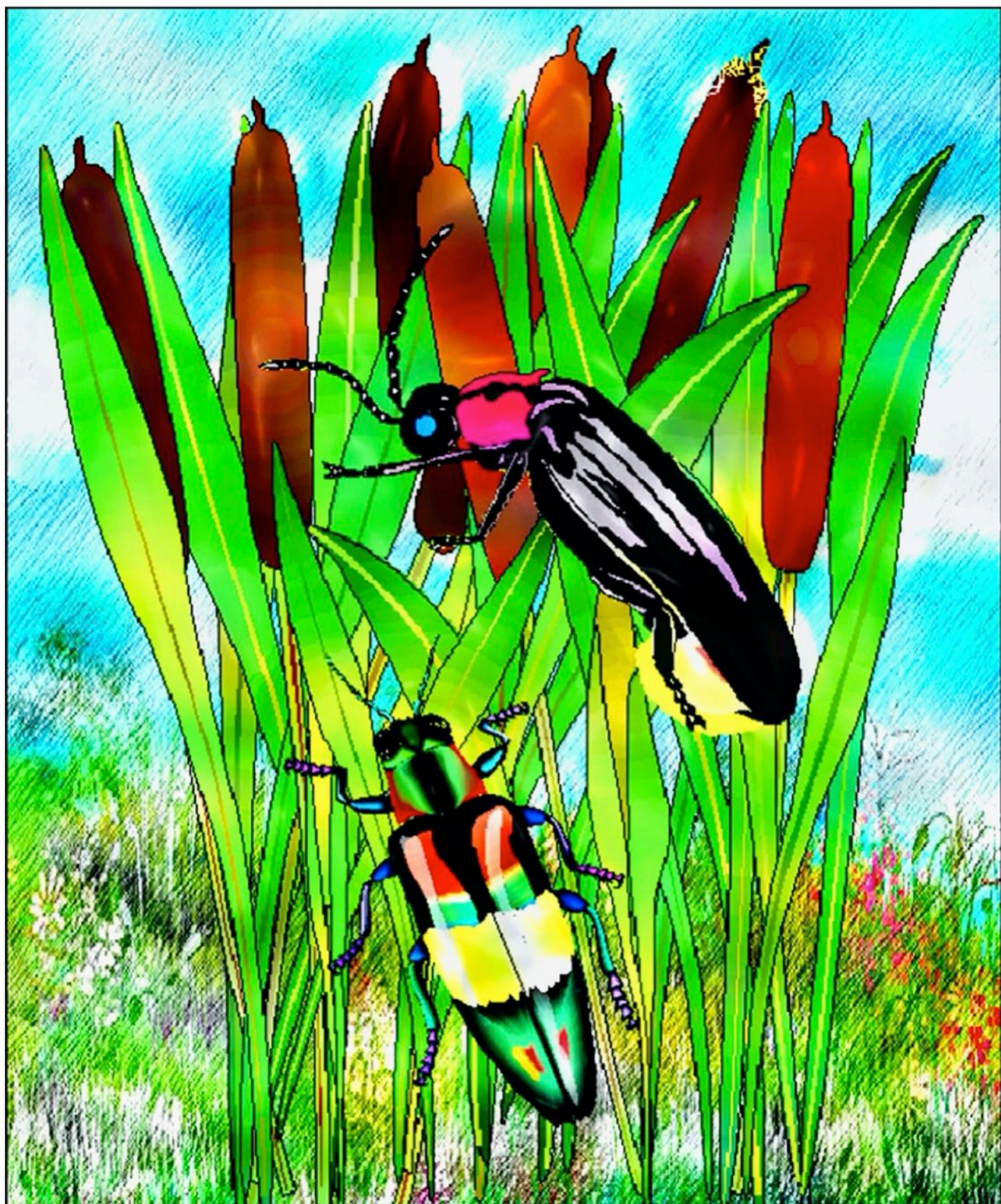
At the zoo, as children, we saw various birds from exotic lands, their hues unbelievably vivid and deep—and, sometimes, they even talked! Where was this strange kingdom of colored animals that could think and speak? A boy could only wonder and imagine and come up with his own wild answers.



One night in mid July, we saw a ghostly glow coming from the flowers and what looked like Christmas lights on the evergreens. Looking into the flowers we saw fireflies lumining them, like lanterns, with their pulsing greenish yellow light. The lightning bugs were kissing, with electric hugs.



*The dusk deepens, night's pot of tea steepens:
Silence descends, as when a gift opens:
Eventide rises. On high, Orion camps.
The eyes catch stars like fireflies in lamps.*



*The glow-worm rose into the summer sky,
Twinkling, love's light unspent, now a firefly
Sighting the beacon of reply—they then,
With electric hugs, became lightning bugs.*





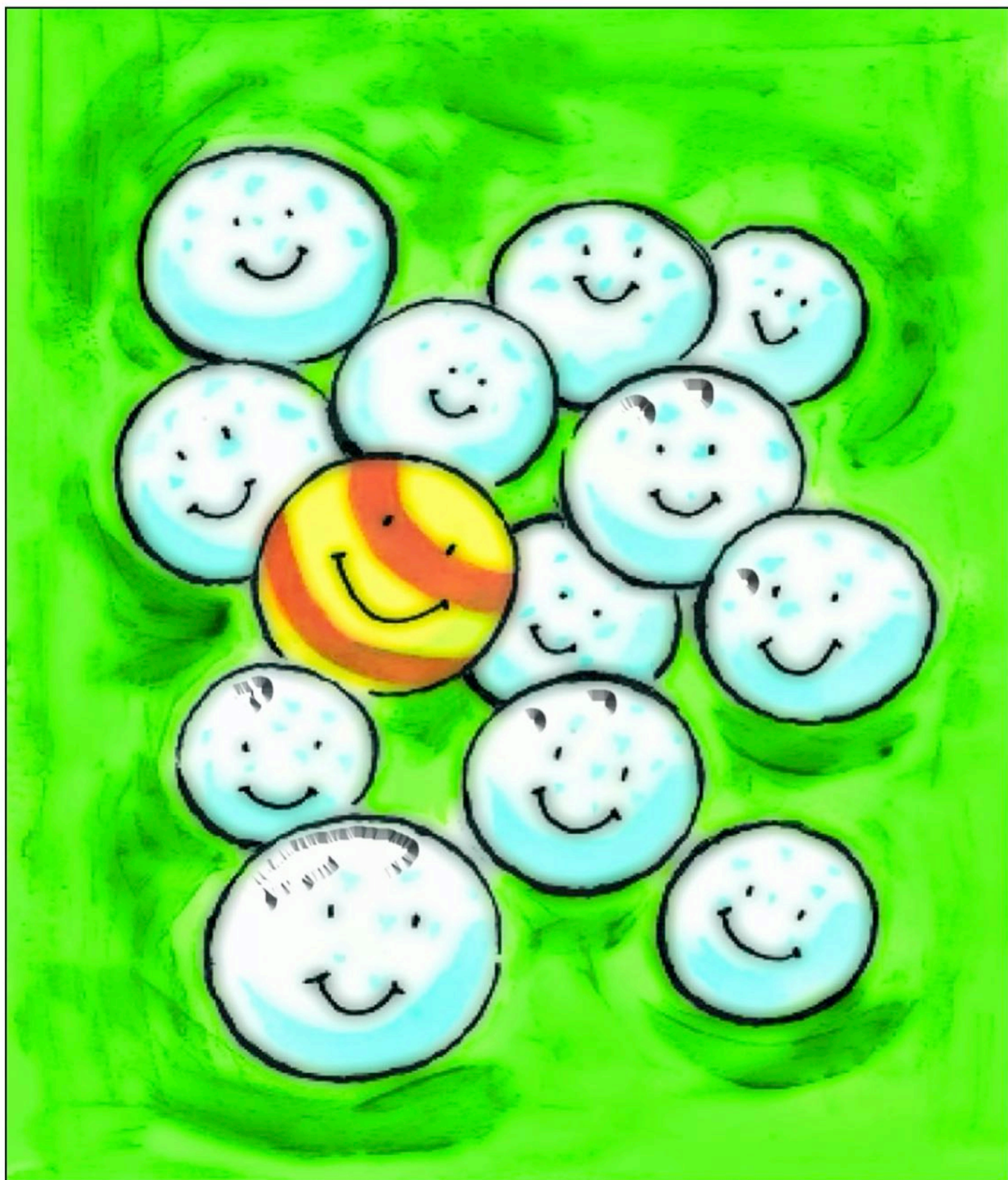
We were scared when we first stumbled into the pumpkin field on that misty autumn night. There were huge creatures from outer space, laying orange eggs amid the hay and the stubble. Commenting about it to each other sent a chill through us and only frightened us all the more.



Monkey bars for the climbers, swings for the movers, see-saws teeter tottering for the restless, and a sandbox for the diggers—and then a refreshing sprinkler to go into afterwards—but there was always some kid sitting right on top of the sprinkler, blocking the spray.



As soon as we knew that our neighbor was occupied we'd climb her fence and scramble up onto her garage, from where we could bend down the apple branches and steal some good ones before we got yelled at, for nothing tasted better than a stolen apple!



When we tired of playing pool, there were always the pinball machines with their bells, buzzers, and flashing lights. For a few brief moments all life was reduced to keeping that ball bouncing and out of the drain, something like what we had to do with our own fragile lives as teenagers.



The Poetic Form



The verses beat the same, in measured chime;

Lines one/two set the stage, one/two/four rhyme.

Verse three's the pivot around which thought turns;

Line four delivers the sting—just in time.

The Quatrains of Austin Patrick Torrey



"What is the
name
of the rose?"

Over a thousand years ago in old Persia, Omar Khayyam wrote a book of quatrains about living well and living for today. He and his houri camped where the grass fledged the stream, bringing along a leg of lamb, a book of verse, and their passionate love—and this of them was all that it took.



The lighthouse at land's end drew in the ships lost in the mist and fog, its rotating beacon flashing and sweeping the sea. I sat on the rocks at the edge of the world one day and bathed in the beam's glow, each pulse energizing me like some external heartbeat.



Queen of the flowers, the rose blooms on the first day of summer, defining its start, when the departing spring caresses the coming summer in that instant when they pass. You can feel it happening—a certain warmth enters you—and from their one and only kiss blooms the most beautiful flower on earth, the rose.



The attraction of a sailor for the opposite sex is heightened by his long absence from them, as are all his senses, passions, and deep feelings—an exuberance unparalleled—and quite irresistible to the young lady, who soon closes the distance for many of the same reasons.


If flowers had never existed,
could you have imagined them?



I set out to find the original primeval forest—always taking the most impossible route whenever I had a choice. Months later, lost in the middle of nowhere, I came upon acres of Lady's Slippers in colors heretofore unseen, in a virgin forest that, of course, must have once been Paradise, since the rare and precious flowers had remained unpicked.



*Joy and exuberance are spring's largesse.
Sunlight, warmth, and growth are summer's bequest.
Autumn brings wealth with the mellow harvest.
Winter's fruit is peace—its bounty is rest.*



Fall Into Spring

The Autumnal Joys of Life's Picnic transform into the Witching Hour, thence into the Fire in the Hearth of a Cozy Cottage, our Home Sweet Home, wherein, by Candle and Lamp-light, the Linen Closet gives Warmth through the Winter Embers, as we while away the snow, writing with Heart and Hand, enjoying our Antiquities, Pastimes, Photographs, Memories, Literary Treasures and Curiosities, each other to Have & to Hold, planting the seeds that become the Garden of Blossoms.



Church was pure torture for us young boys who couldn't sit still for long, and so we'd pass the endless time by shuffling someone's shoe away, snacking from our lunch bags, or by losing ourselves in the imagination of climbing the wall buttresses and sliding down wires and such until our kneeling knees hurt, snapping us back to reality.

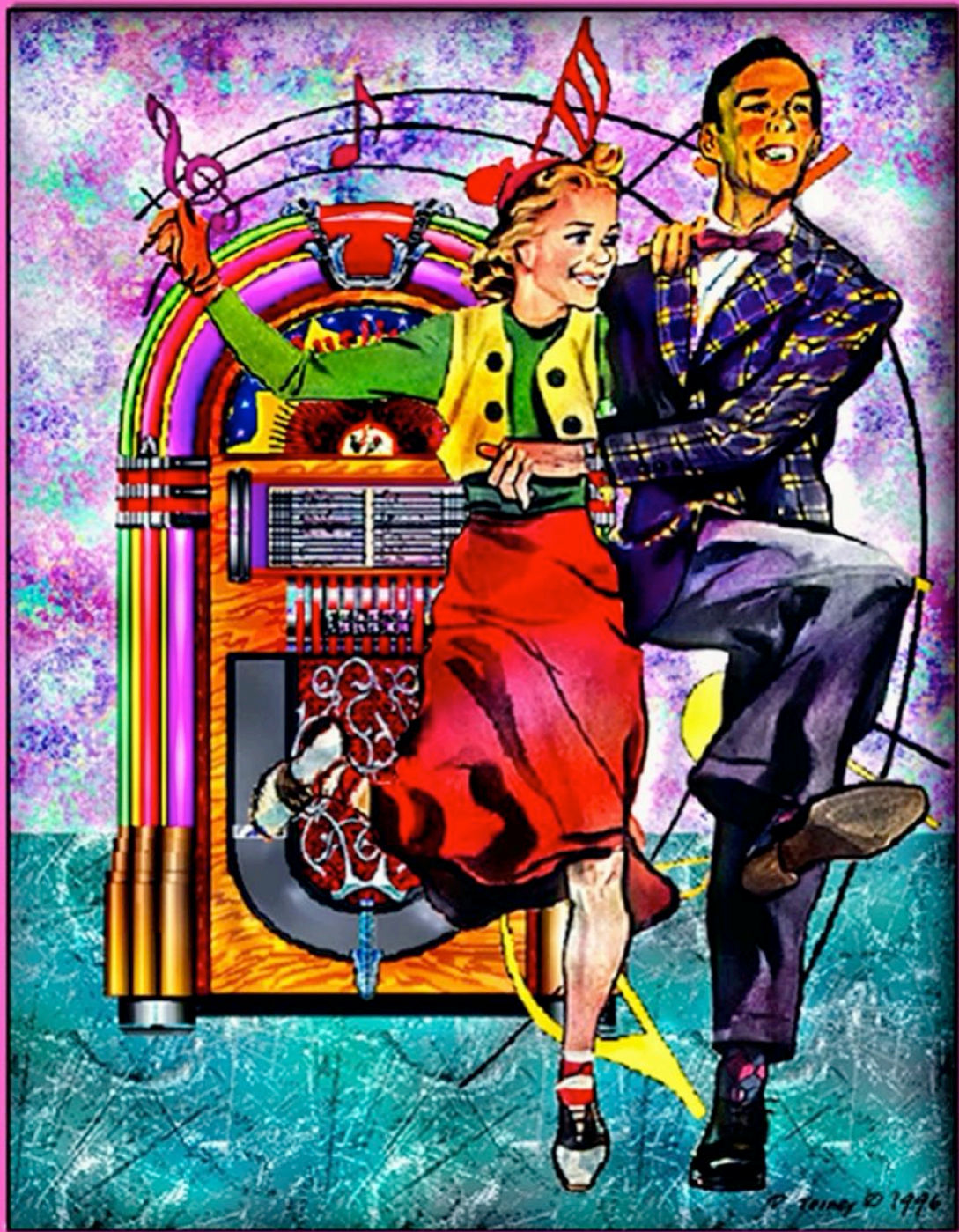


WINTER-EMBERS

November, December,
and Remember are
the winter's embers.



The more adventurous, or foolish, of us boys would sneak up on the bees as they gathered nectar from the Hollyhocks, and we'd quickly bend the flower around and over them, trapping them inside. After a few rough shakes, we'd listen to their aggravated buzz, then let them fly away. Now and then we'd get stung, but not very often



Whether an old jukebox whose arm picked up 45s or a new one spinning shiny CDs, the charm is the same. Take your partner, put in your money, choose a song, watch the movements of the machine's mechanism, and then dance your way back into the 50s and on into your partner's heart.



We fixed the crumbling stone wall, filling the gaps from the rocky rubble, always putting one stone on two, and two stones on one, for stability, often having to jiggle them into a fit, sometimes twisting and turning them, as in a Tetris game, ever planning, saving the flat stones for the top and the larger ones for the base.



Flowers pave the way to Heaven—as they once paved the way on earth in the Garden of Eden. Though many Heavenly things were removed from the Earth when we were cast out of Paradise, love, dreams, and flowers were allowed to remain, forever borrowed by us from another dimension.



*I dare to walk the line, balancing fun
There between adventure and misfortune—
For, the greatest blunder in life is to
Repeatedly fear that you might make one.*



— Vacations —

Of course, we were never "there yet" when we asked to leave early on in a vacation trip, but, soon we were tired of asking and dozed off into a warm sleep, the fight for the window seat long forgotten, and, when we awoke, there it was—a crystal blue lake just beyond the turn and through the pine trees. "We're there," said dad.

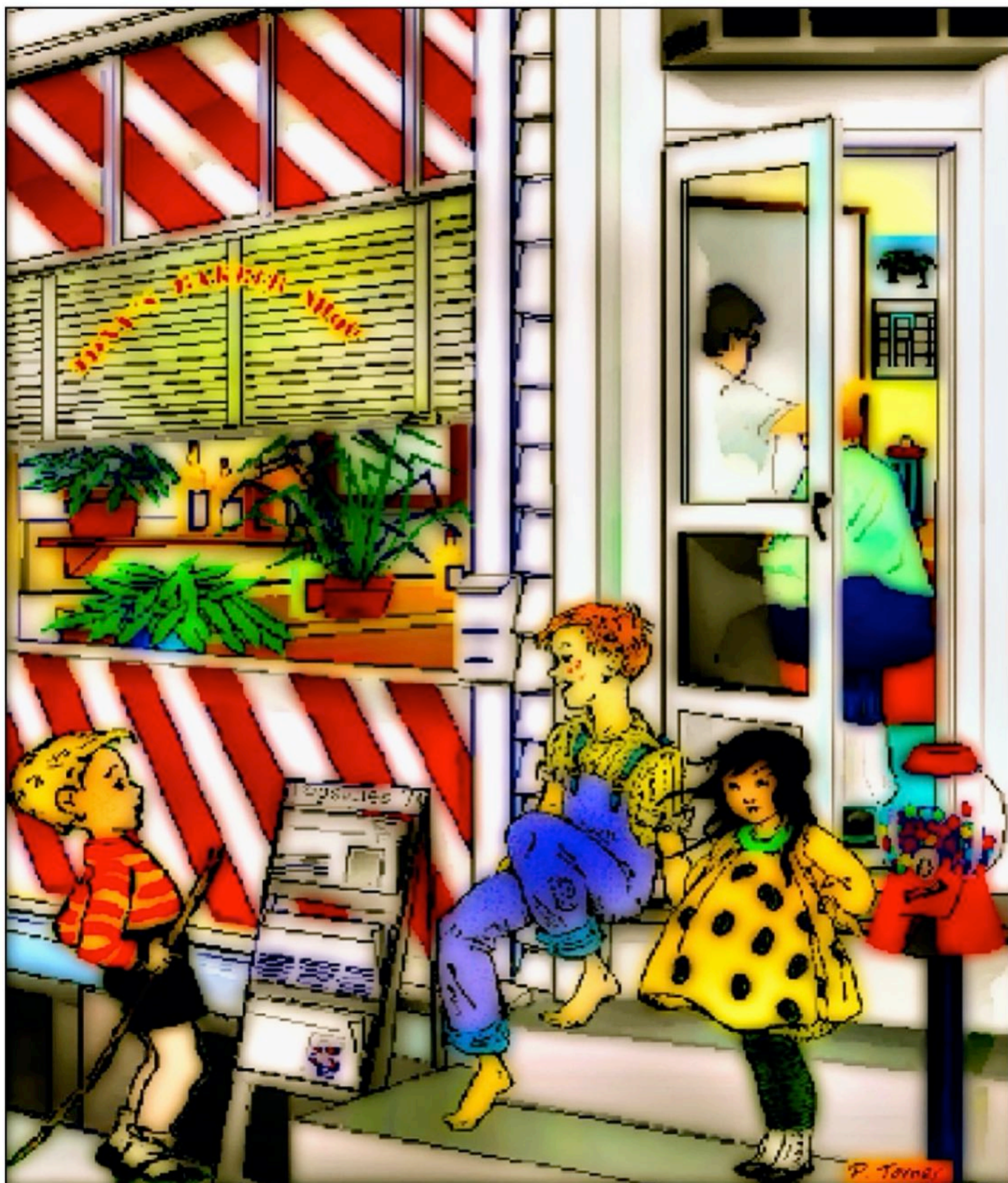
No one ever gets up as early as children do on a vacation and, so, by 7 AM we'd already seen the chipmunks, pools of minnows, and had collected shells and driftwood. Waves chased us up and down the shore as we ran along barefoot. No one knew that we were out—everyone was asleep—we owned the world.

We wore our life preservers all day long, even on land. One time, leaning over the pier for a closer look at the fish darting in the water, I fell in and went straight to the bottom. I was then pushed up with my feet, swimming with my feet but for an exciting instant, and surfaced like a rocket, my life-jacket working perfectly. I was broken-in.

Dad was often out fishing on vacations and caught many fish in his time. Though he sometimes came back with only one fish once or twice and my brother Mike more often. I see now that fishing has a little to do with more than just warm sun, cool breezes, and the smell of water, and peace and quiet.

P. Torney © 1996

First there was Fish, and then Solitaire and Rummy, each getting more and more complicated, until we mastered Hearts, playing with our aunts, but, we could never understand Canasta. Today we often play Bridge on long carefree summer afternoons, but we still play Hearts together on rainy vacation days.



When I was young, I had many choices at the mom and pop store, often choosing a few: a Mary Jane, some round candies stuck on a long paper strip, little wax bottles with liquid in them, sodas, like Green Rivers, and so on—as long as I had my allowance to spend, which was never for very long.



The lake water was too cold to stay in for long, so we made little dug-out pools near the shore and swam in them on those summer days that could never be too long. Afterwards, at home, a tired but soothing and drowsy feeling soon came over us, the effect of sun, sand, and water—and we all conked out and fell asleep early.



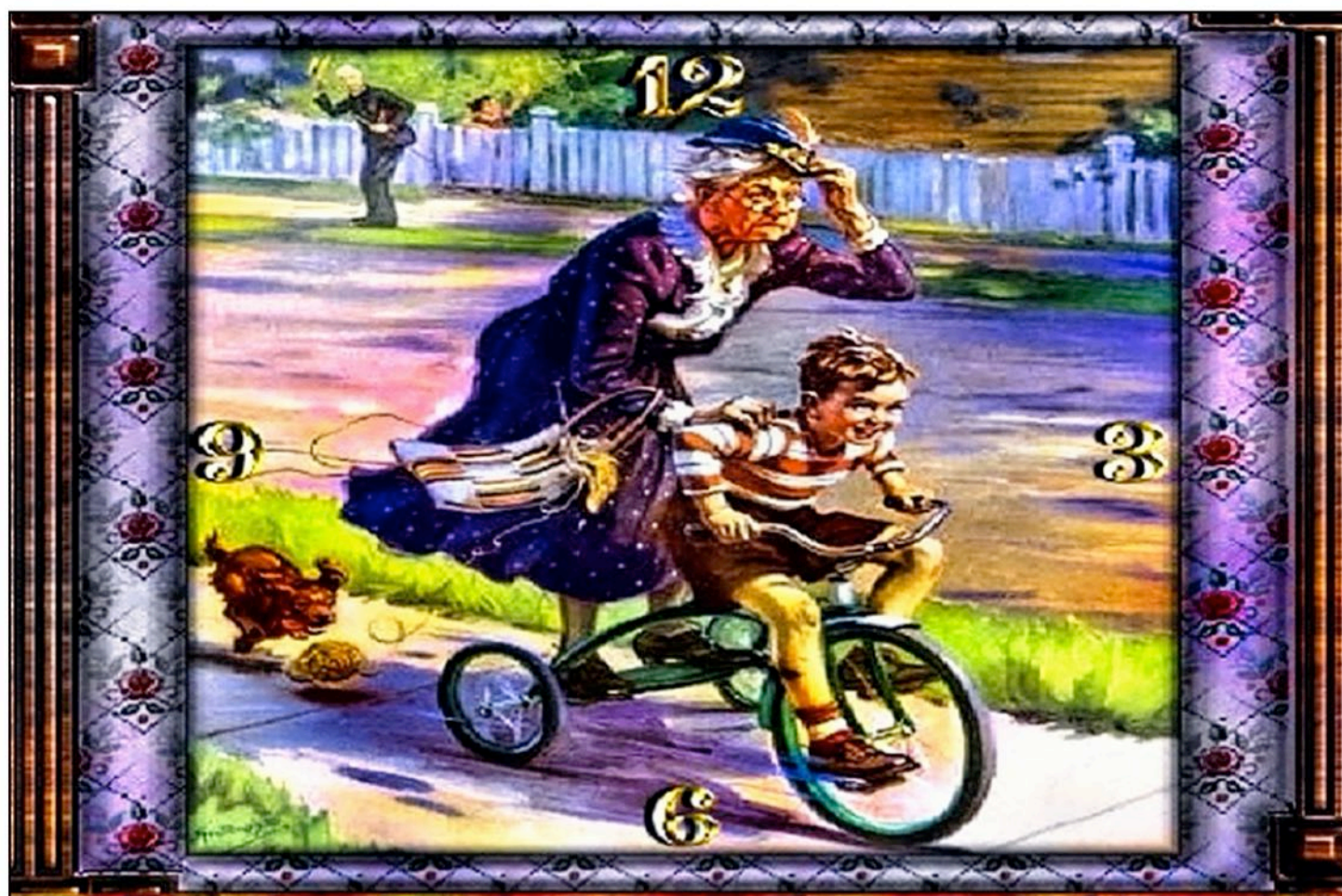
Orange plants are said to be very generous since they show all at once their foliage, fruit, and flower. They were once called golden apples and were believed to have been guarded by never-sleeping dragons. They, like Violets and Cherries, were named after a color, or was it the other way around?



Looking at the old sepia print: She was my grandfather's sweetheart, his paramour. He gave her the gift of the spring flowers, the wealth of the summer hours, the colorful walks of autumn, and the winter's warm fire. The spirit of love still lives, calling them back, to/from somewhere in time.



I can finally reveal the secret place, now that I am older: Follow the old railroad tracks along the river and turn uphill just beyond the pond, following the faint path up to a large bush, behind which is a cave entrance. Enter and bear left to find a cool cavern that the Indians once used. It hasn't changed much since then.



R e m e m b e r



In the back of the yard, just past the birdbath and the grape arbor, were Bleeding Hearts, Tulips, Bluebells, Honeysuckle on the fence, orange spotted Lilies, Black-Eyed Susans, and Roses everywhere—an old-fashioned garden that was always new to us.



— Gold-Dust —
She picked some
Dandelions ripe enough
To have gone from gold
to just so much fluff,
Reminding us, when
soft blown with a puff,
That time will spread us,
too, amid the dust.

P. Jorrey

The plant that is the most alive is the one that is the wildest—and, therefore, the dandelion is the most ever present flower, although it's better known as a weed. Of course, when its dried blossom is blown with a puff, it turns into just so much fluff, reminding us that someday we, too, will lie amid the dust.



Kids now play Nintendo or go to the arcades or just hang around the mall, but we as youngsters played kick the can, hopscotch, and especially hide and seek—I remember once counting to a hundred and then finding out that everyone else had left town.



No one ever gets up as early as children on a vacation and so by 7AM we'd already seen chipmunks, pools of minnows, and had collected shells and driftwood. Waves chased us up and down the shore as we ran along barefoot. No one knew that we were out—everyone was asleep—we owned the world.



Not touching the apples, or anything else for that matter, was nearly impossible for a young child in the local supermarket, for the shiny red apple called out, "touch me, buy me, eat me", and so, before the mind knew what the hand was doing, a bite had been taken—and trouble was at hand, but crispy, sweet.



"All aboard", remember? First, the golden spike linking east and west, then the steam engines, and later coal and diesel, and now electric. Ride all night on the Lake Shore Limited to Chicago and have a tasty breakfast in the dining car. In the future, trains will run in the air, lifted there by the magic of magnetism.

Four Bidden Fruits

LOVE



TRUTH

BEAUTY

PEACE

We had a strawberry patch and also a grape arbor. Following their progress each day, we beat the squirrels to the berries, eating them fresh, forgetting to wash them, then drove the birds from the grapes, eating them, too, sour as they were, and spitting out the seeds. Had a good cherry tree for awhile, too, until it fell in a storm.





Nylon Stockings

As the men were away at war, the women took off their stockings and donated them for the making of balloons and parachutes so a soldier could land safely on many legs. Now women have panty hose, thigh highs, and many other variations to hold men up.



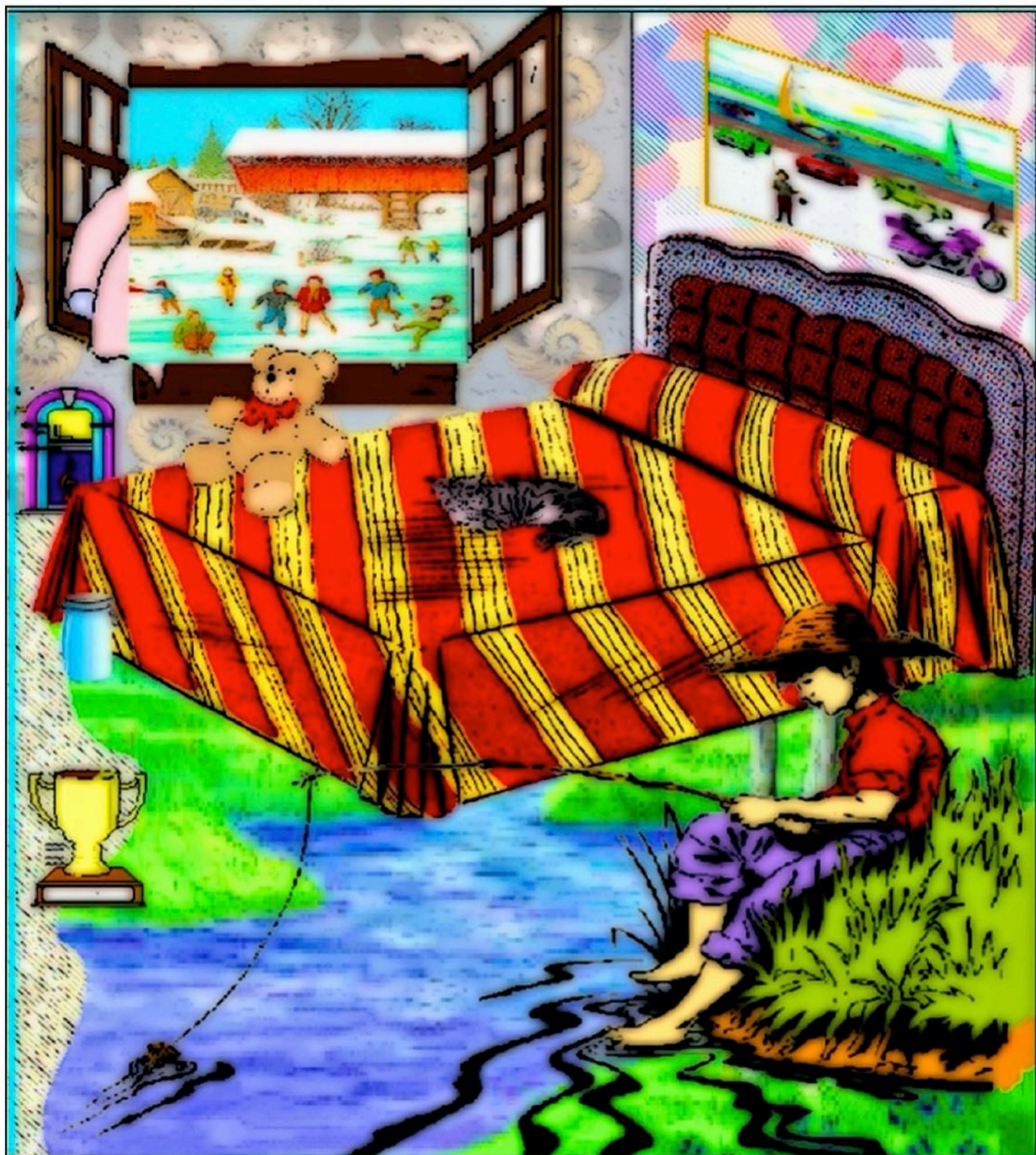
Dungarees

The craze now is for designer jeans, or better yet, for new jeans that appear to be worn-out—and for only fifty dollars! I remember my father always wearing worn-out dungarees—but back then no one else would be caught dead in them, whether they were old or new or torn or what.

We'd walk across the log over the creek, ever thrilled by the danger of slipping off—a twilight state in which we were neither drunk nor sober, nor ever reckless, but ever balancing the excitement with responsibility, each paving the way for the other then as now as we walk the thin line between sheer foolishness and true adventure—the log across the creek.

*— From *Nostalgic Motions* and *PT's Almanac*® by Patricia Torres*





The Last Great Water-Slide

A long time ago our parents took us to the great water slide. After sizing it up for a long while and watching people plunge into the water, sometimes coming up gasping, we deemed it dangerous enough to try out and had many wild rides down. It's gone now, too dangerous, and too liable to cause lawsuits.



I first learned about love from some postcards that I found in the attic, old ones showing the formalities of hand kissing, the language of the flowers, and other courtship rituals. So, when I bowed down and kissed the hand of the girl down the street, inviting her to play in the sandbox, she most readily accepted.



The Evening Primrose remains closed all day, opening only at night to those insects that are guided therein by its phosphorescent light—when it opens its cup to drink up the lunar light, as it makes love with the moon in the haunt of midnight.



Playing near the railroad was i
we knew it was. We'd hitch o
open boxcars, put pennies on t
ter there once—and talk to the
the crossing gates and rang the



irresistible, no matter how dangerous
n the slow moving trains, sit in the
he track—a rich kid even put a quar-
man in the little house who worked
bells.

LET NOT THE
CERTAINTY OF THE
PRESENT BE HELD
MORTGAGE FOR THE
DEED OF FUTURITY.

