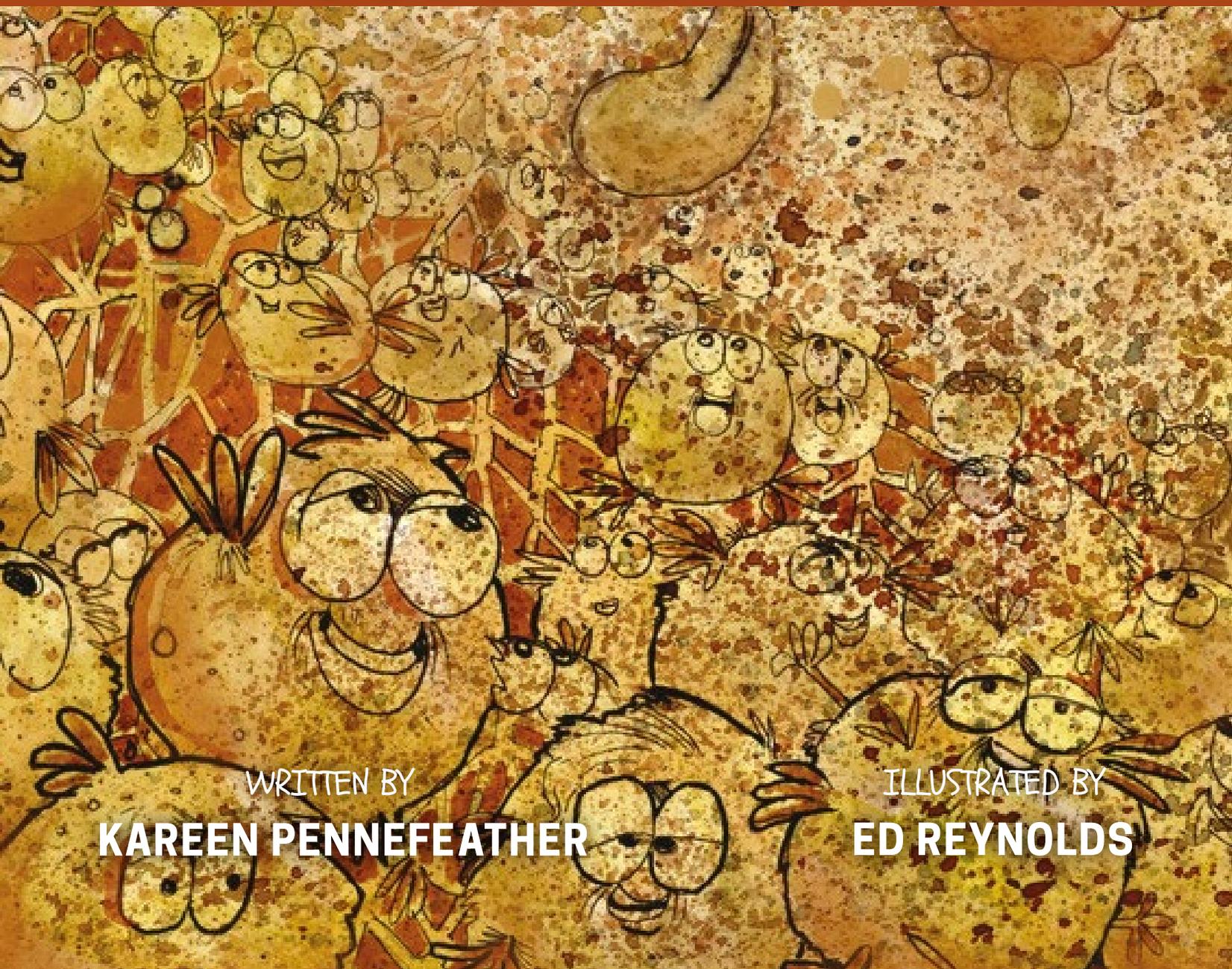


A detailed illustration of a microscopic view of soil, showing various particles and structures. A large, white, brushstroke-like underline is positioned above the title.

THE MUCKERS

LIFE BENEATH YOUR FEET

A detailed illustration of a microscopic view of soil, showing various particles and structures. The scene is populated with numerous cartoonish, round organisms with large eyes and small limbs, some wearing glasses. They are scattered throughout the soil, appearing to be engaged in various activities.

WRITTEN BY
KAREEN PENNEFEATHER

ILLUSTRATED BY
ED REYNOLDS

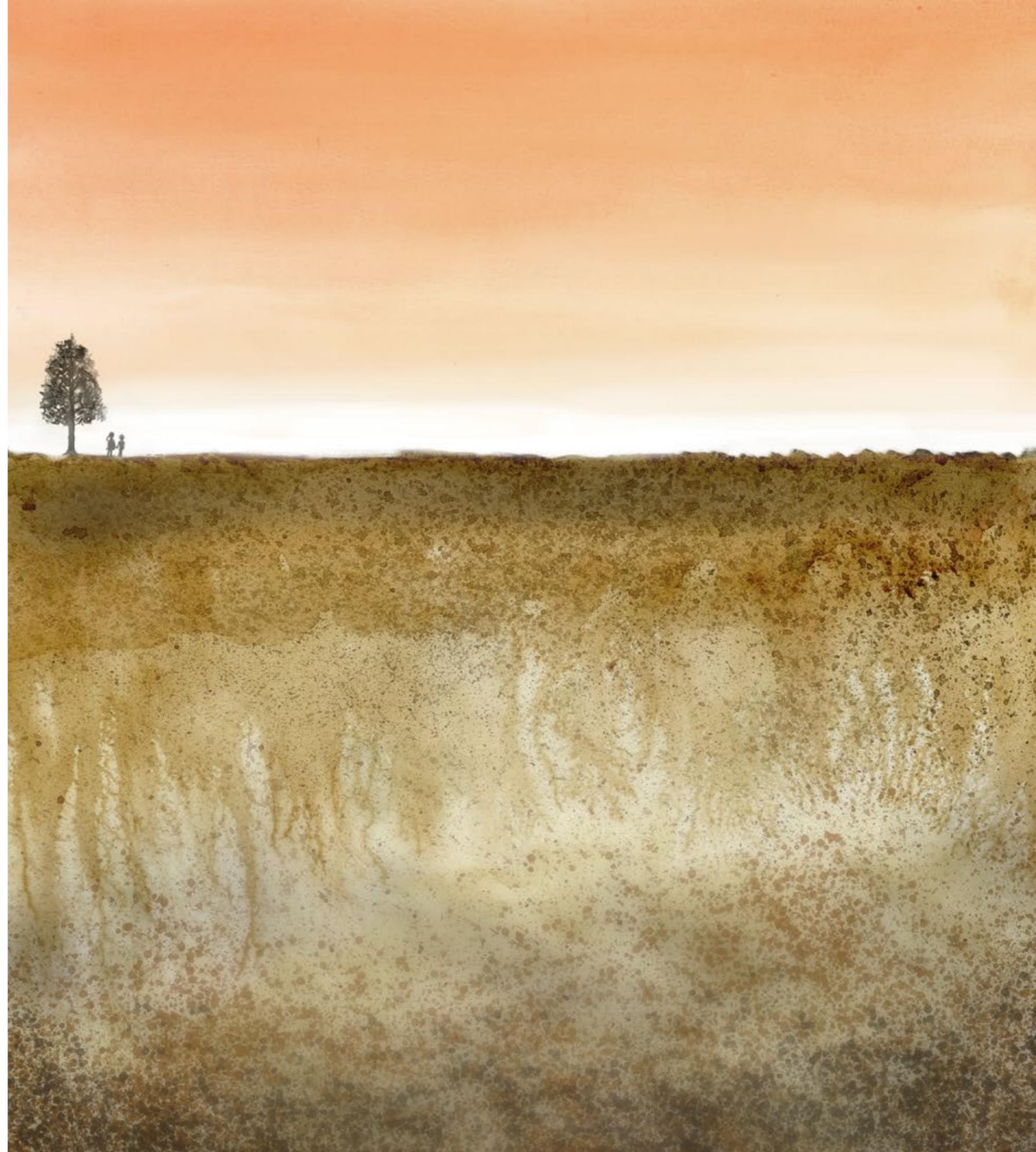
THIS BOOK BELONGS TO





Stand barefoot on the cool bare earth, feel the soil
between your toes and listen to the story
under your feet.

Deep down underground lives a nation of tiny friends called The Muckers. They are humble tribe of little folk who have no idea just how important they are.





Muckers are Soil dwellers. They are as much a part of the soil as the soil is a part of them. They live almost everywhere. In gardens, parks, fields and forests. In that grassy patch on the side of the road, in flower beds and even in the plant pot on your window sill.

Their days are spent running and jumping, rolling and splashing, digging and tunnelling as they work hard to keep the soil happy and healthy. Each season brings new jobs for the Muckers to do.

When spring quietly begins it is the Muckers who wake up the sleeping seeds. They give them breakfast and help them dress. As the little plants make their way upstairs, poking their heads into the clean fresh air, the Muckers check they haven't forgotten anything and wave goodbye.



Next they must prepare a feast. As summer erupts into a colourful festival of blossoms and blooms the world above celebrates with a beautiful party. The plants and trees, the animals, birds and insects all come and enjoy the earth's delicious bounty. The Muckers rush about down below making sure that everyone has enough to eat and a comfortable spot to sit.



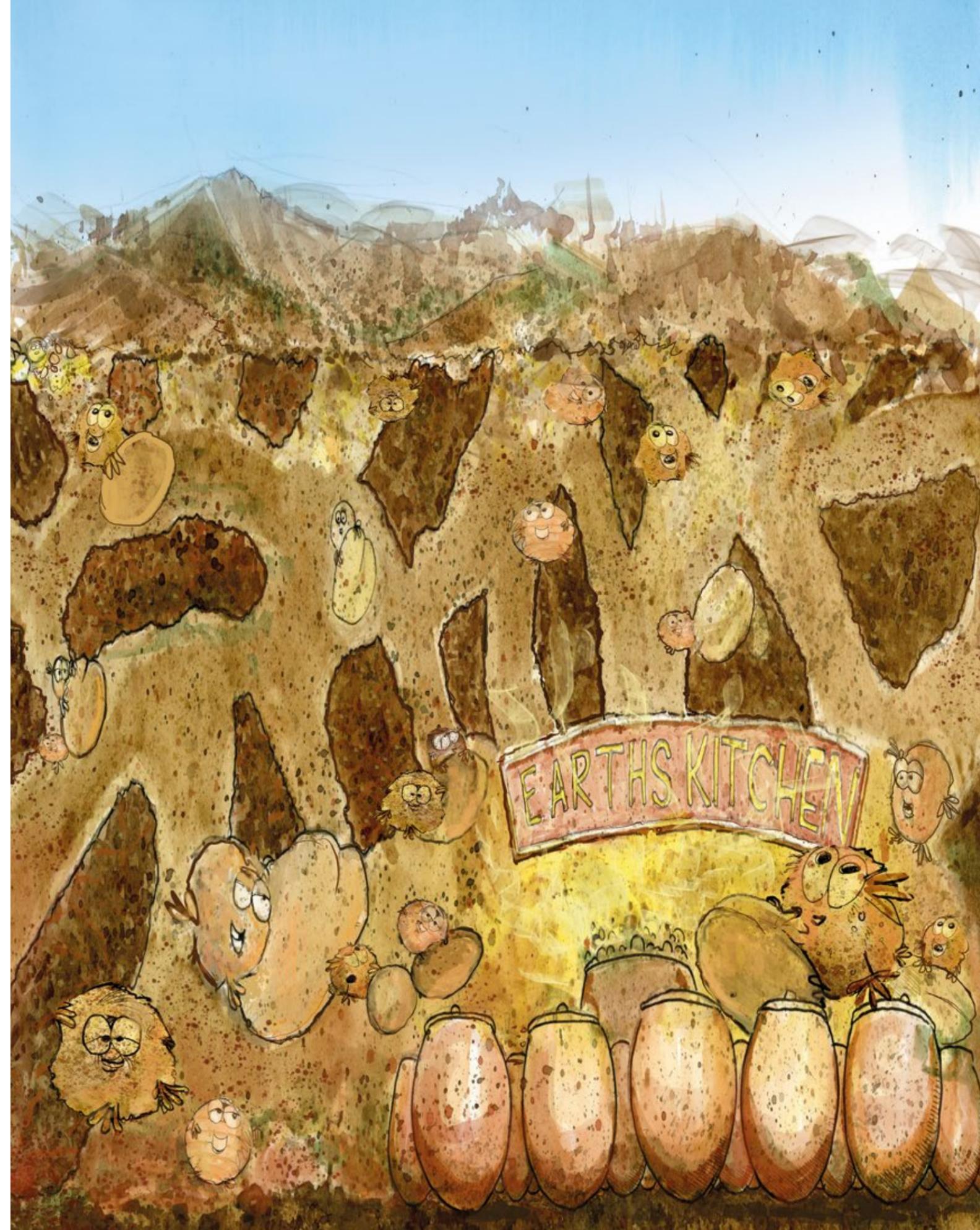
When everyone is fed and watered The Muckers rest a little in the cool darkness and listen to happy sounds above.

Sometimes they feel a little sad that they can't join in.



When the sun is high in the sky its time for the gifts. No one has forgotten the Muckers! Everyone wants to show their appreciation to their hosts. The plants pour sweet sun juice down through their roots, the trees, insects, birds and animals each leaving little gifts for the Muckers. Everyone is very thankful for all their hard work.

With full happy bellies the Muckers begin their autumn tasks. They catch the little sleepy seeds as they leave the summer party and tuck them into cosy, safe beds to rest for the winter. They gather all the fallen leaves and fruit and bring them deep into the earth's kitchen. With great skill they turn summers leftovers into a delicious pot of steaming stew which will keep the Muckers and all their underground guests warm and nourished through the long winter months.





When the first frost seals the surface of the ground
The Muckers gather together deep in the
roots of the oldest trees...



They listen to the fungus telling stories from far and wide. Tales of their cosy familiar soil home and stories of the beautiful and mysterious faraway world above. Stories of wide oceans and tall mountains, rushing rivers, rain forests and deserts.

The fungus describes a rainbow of creatures that fill the land and sea and sky. Painting dream like pictures of birds that dance in the air, dolphins that dive to the bottom of the ocean, reindeer that walk across the top of the world and butterflies that change from one thing to another like a magician's trick. Sometimes the fungus tells stories of human children that run and jump and climb and laugh just as the Muckers do. Children who like to pick flowers, crunch apples, pop sweet tasting peas from their pods and lie on the soft grass watching the clouds roll by overhead.

The little Muckers listen to all these stories with shining hearts, knowing that their busy days and their hard work help to make this planet the beautiful place that it is. As they settle down for a long winter's sleep they are wrapped in love and filled with hope for all that spring will bring.

Next time you are outside look around at the beautiful world that you are a part of, breathe in the air you share with the birds and feel the strong earth beneath your feet.



“When you can, remember to whisper a little thank you to the Muckers for all their hard work.

You may be small but you are very important. I thank you for all that you do and I won't forget you.”

The End

