



**Sophie, Milo
and the
Great Change**
A Children's Fable

Written by Jody Walker
Illustrated by Shannon Benson

Dedicated to:

Evan and Kendall and to all the precious children of the world.

Editors:

Carolyn Washburn, Kathryn Ekstrom

Layout: Brad Walker

About the Author:

Jody believes that behind all the discernible laws and connections, there remains something subtle, intangible and inexplicable. Veneration for this incomprehensible essence is her passion. She is a mother of two and grandmother of two and lives in Cumberland with her husband, Carey, their pugs and two cats. She taught third grade for twenty wonderful years and treasures the young, with a special thanks to her own children, Amy and Brad. She feels that writers and artists have a responsibility to create art that inspires, teaches and heals humanity. She owns a pottery studio called “Sacred Earth Art”.

ISBN: 9780692535226

LCCN: #2015915173

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Printed by Lulu.com

About the Artist:

Shannon resides on a brigadoon goondock in a state of Maryland Westernness with the loveliest, little ladies in all of Everness, Chrissier and Pretzy. He thanks Boo, Tray, and the rest of his friends and family for their support, love, and inspiration. Seek out your stoke and find your you.

Preface (for parents)

*Wind was in a singing mood.
Pond indulged her that night
And they rippled together in laughter,
Alarming the zigzagged moon.
I envied them their philharmonic secret.
The stars had been allowed to join
The madrigal, yet, why not I?
I tossed a token offering into her watery womb
Cajoling the star flies to dance.
Their music seemed so far away.
My swallowed stone gave birth to a dream
That dauntlessly beaded for shore,
Nudging my toes in its urgency.
Had I defiled this canvas with my
Love, with my intrusion?
Its still life, water-colored half tones had
So nourished my hungry eyes.
I turned to give them privacy,
The pond and waltzing wind,
Indebted to them for the unveiling,
And humbled by sweet revelation.
For the wind is the earth's soul, breathing*

*And the stars guard with vigilant eyes
While I recklessly cling to illusions.
If only that pond and woods needed me, too!
But, then again, maybe they do.
For had I not nourished their plasmic pulse
With one tossed stone
Submitted in love and rippling still?
(J. W.)*

The following story is one pebble tossed into the sea of wonder and mystery. May its ripples touch your heart and the hearts of your children. Our goal is to reawaken in children a view of the natural world as a living, breathing sanctuary. In order for us to transcend our mechanistic, materialistic thought system, we simply need to practice visioning with eyes that can see our connectedness through a higher consciousness. Sophie, Milo and the Great Change illustrates a spiral of connection directed from and to the heart.

Sophie and Milo offer a sacred wish for each and every Willabee. As you discover that special wish please know that we also desire the same for you as you, the “**Grand Parents**” of our time, pass on the wisdom that every choice we make sends ripples into the future.



Chapter One

Once upon a time in the land of Evernow lived a potter named Sophia. One day she took her wheelbarrow and shovel across the meadow and into the woods behind her home seeking clay for a new project. She walked in rhythm to the words that kept repeating themselves in her head. “Follow the little white moths. Follow the little white moths.”

The fields were alive with honeybees, butterflies, grasshoppers, sparrows, and sure enough, directly in front of her a white moth fluttered, reflecting the golden rays of sunlight. Sophie followed the alluring sky/dance as more and more moths joined in flight.

Suddenly her favorite spot on the entire mountain appeared as if from a dream. Resting her tools under a tree, Sophie stepped out onto a small wooden bridge and, as always, the world seemed to stand still. “Breathe deeply,” the old boards squeaked. She did. How good it felt!

The stones in the dried up creek bed never seemed more inviting as the sun reflected glistening reds and browns mixed with specks of yellow and tan. Climbing down underneath the bridge, Sophie began touching the larger rocks. They were warm, smooth and inviting. Suddenly she got the urge to dig right there, so she slowly began rolling aside the stones exposing the dark, rich soil underneath.



The digging began. Sophie inhaled the earthy smells till she finally nudged a harder spot about six inches down. Soon a wider area had been cleared and Sophie cheered, “Yes!” as moths and butterflies hovered close to see the new clay. It seemed as though that wonderful “yes” began echoing back to her from the surrounding hillside.

Just then, her brother, Milogos, bound up the hill to help and together they dug up some of the smoothest clay they had ever seen. On their way home, Sophie dreamed about what she would make with her new earthen treasure.

They already had enough bowls and pitchers and pots and mugs. Milogos, of course, knew what was on her mind and suggested she begin

designing little clay figures like the ones he had seen so often in her sketchbooks. This made Sophie smile. “We will call them **Willabees!**”, she declared twirling around and hugging him as he continued to balance the load. “Thanks, Milo,” she declared before twirling again.

“Willabees they shall be!” he repeated, pretending to be an actor on a great stage. He lifted some clay into the air, watching it plop back into the barrow with a thud. “Let’s go home, Sis! I’ll help you set things up for your new project.”

Chapter Two

Before long, Sophie's skillful hands were wedging and kneading, kneading and wedging. It was the most amazing clay she had ever laid her hands on. It immediately became warm and soft and easy to shape into little figures like the ones she had seen in her dreams.

She gave them strong arms and nimble hands, eyes that could see, ears that could hear and legs that would allow them to walk and run and dance. Also, she added voices so they could talk and sing, laugh and cry.

Milo carved a brain from his best lumber, breathed his mind into it and gently placed a piece into each of the tiny beings. As a

final touch, Sophie gave every little Willabee a bit of her own heart. What fun Sophie and Milo had, teaching their little clay creatures all they knew about life! Before long these new beings had learned to tell stories and sing songs, to celebrate life and to care for each other.

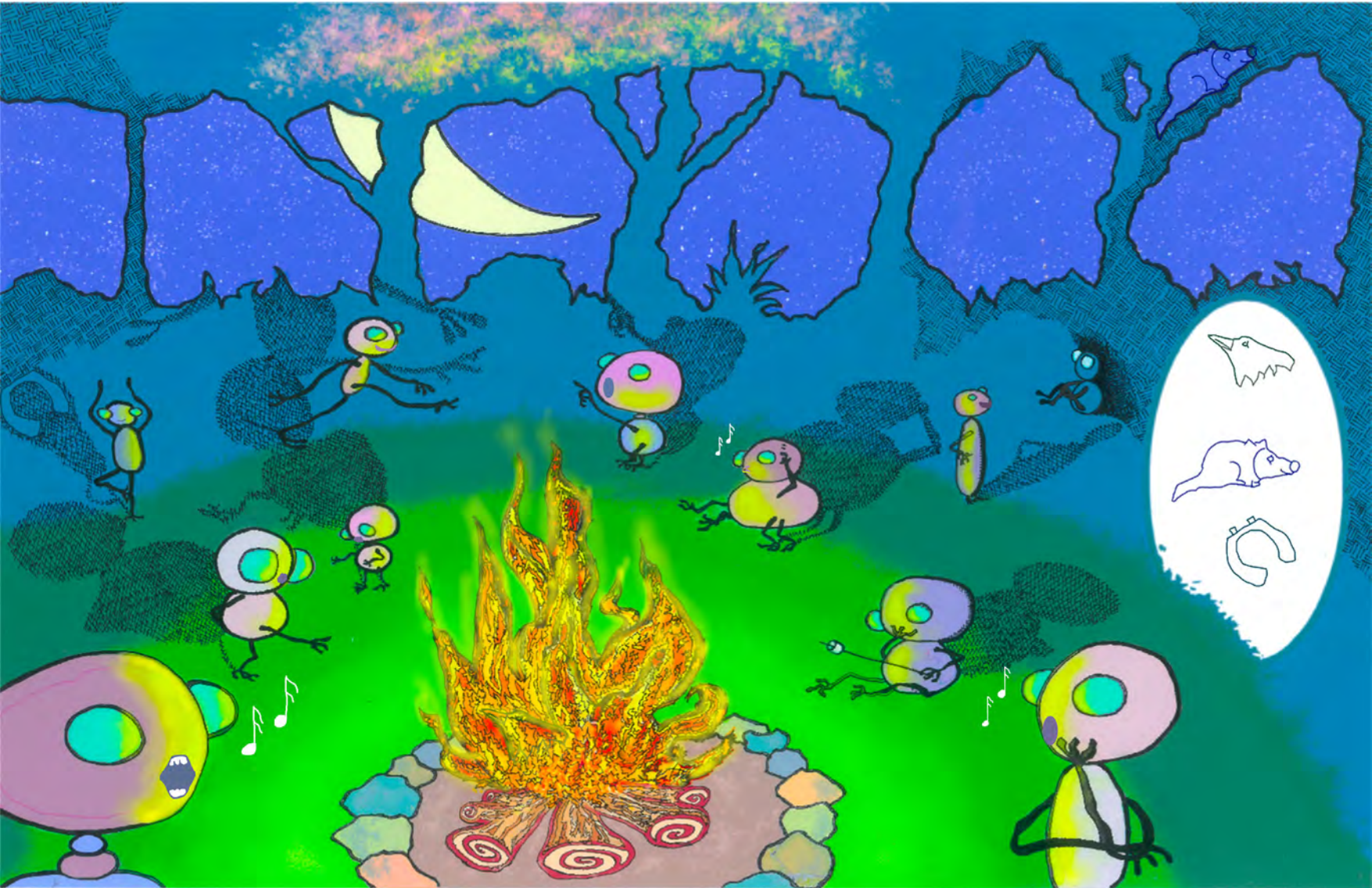
The Willabees began tending their own little gardens and they built things they needed, using tiny tools made by the woodsman. Sophie and Milo loved each and every Willabee. "May you always choose wonder," they continually repeated, for they both knew that in order for little souls to grow and mature, they would need the freedom to decide for themselves how best to keep love alive.





7 "WONDER'S"

Many years passed and these new little Willas (a fun nickname for Willabees) felt so at home on the land! They had forgotten completely about the two kind ones who had given them minds to think and hearts to love. Sophie and Milo were so vast and so much a part of everything that was, that they had become invisible to the clay beings who were now very busy building, inventing, creating and tending. Little baby Willabees were born and they grew up and had young ones of their own and their young had young and many settlements grew up across the hills and valleys.



Chapter Three

The Willabees were quite happy, but that's not to say they didn't have disagreements from time to time. No two Willabees were alike and so they often thought differently about all kinds of things like how best to share the workload, or how much land should be cleared for planting, or how to mend hurt feelings. They never saw disagreements as problems however, because any time two Willabees or their families or communities couldn't resolve a conflict, everyone was invited to a poetry party.

These festivals would sometimes last for days as members of the group recited favorite poems

and stories or made up new ones. Though no one understood why, for some reason, during the festivities, the solution to the conflict would magically present itself. It would alight on someone's shoulder like a soft pink butterfly. The idea would be passed around and all the Willabees would know at once that a perfect plan had been there all along.

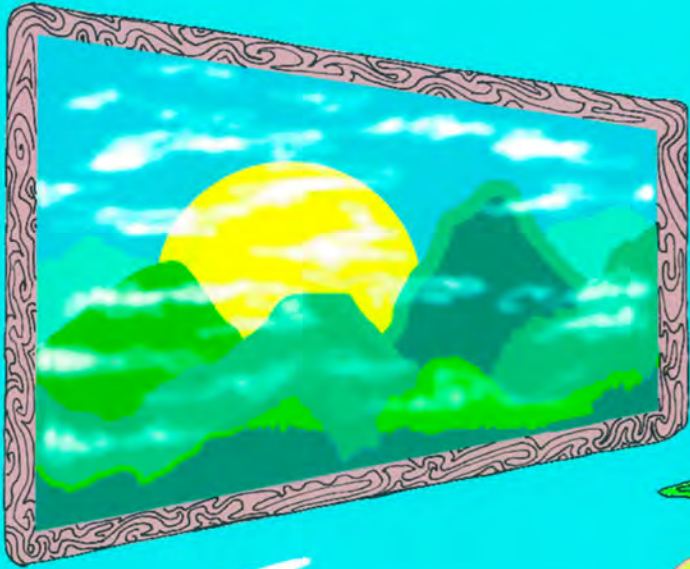
Sometimes, instead of reciting poetry or telling stories, songs would be sung and everyone would dance the solution into existence. And when a really tough decision had to be made, the Willabees would simply walk around the campfire or stroll through the woods until the soft pink insight dreamed down around them.

Chapter Four

Times change, however, and so did the Willabees who began spending more and more of their time indoors. Instead of sleeping under the moon and stars they used indoor lighting to replace the wondrous night sky. Rather than climbing trees or enjoying their shade on warm summer days, Willabees watched pictures of nature by connecting to visionpods. These special goggles were used to remind the Willas of the awesome woodlands. This presented a problem. The more the Willabees forgot about their connection to All of Life (to plants and animals, oceans and streams, forests and meadows) the more impatient they became.

They wanted quick results to their problems and they wanted things done their way. Willabees began to focus more and more attention onto themselves, leaving little time to be concerned about anything else, including the earth. Sophie's love energy seemed weaker and weaker in the hearts of some, simply because they had chosen to ignore that part of themselves, and that's when all the trouble began.

As the heart energy in many of these tiny beings became dimmer and dimmer, things were thrown out of balance all over the land. There was too much thought energy vibrating through the minds of the Willabees and not enough love energy to balance things out. Without even knowing why, many of the little



FAKE PLASTIC TREES
NO WATER NEEDED
NO CARING NECESSARY
NO LOVING ATTENTION



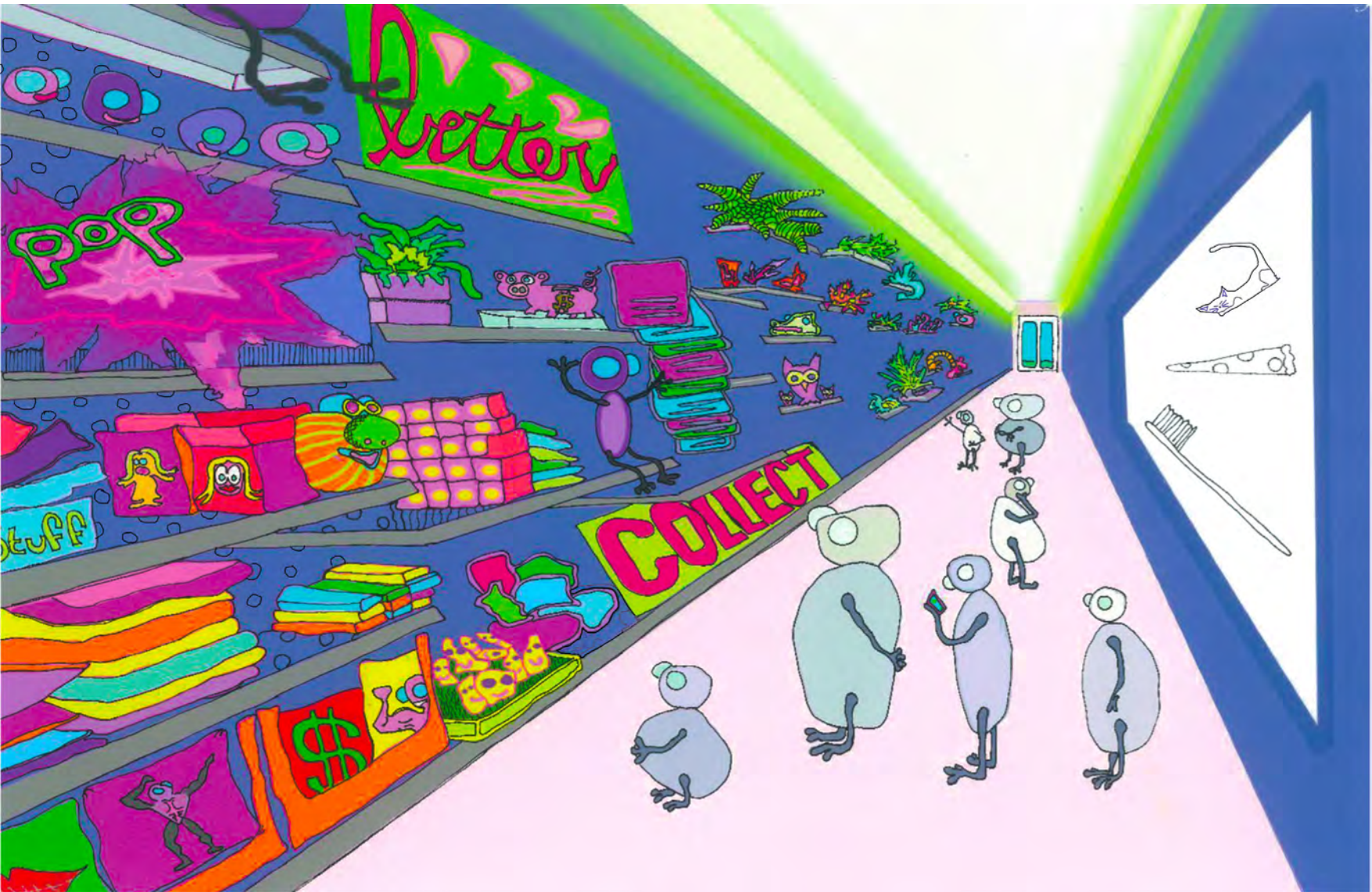
creatures began thinking more and more about clever ideas, but they didn't seem to have enough wisdom, or heart energy, to realize that some of their cleverness could be harmful. Now you might ask, **“How can something clever be harmful?”**

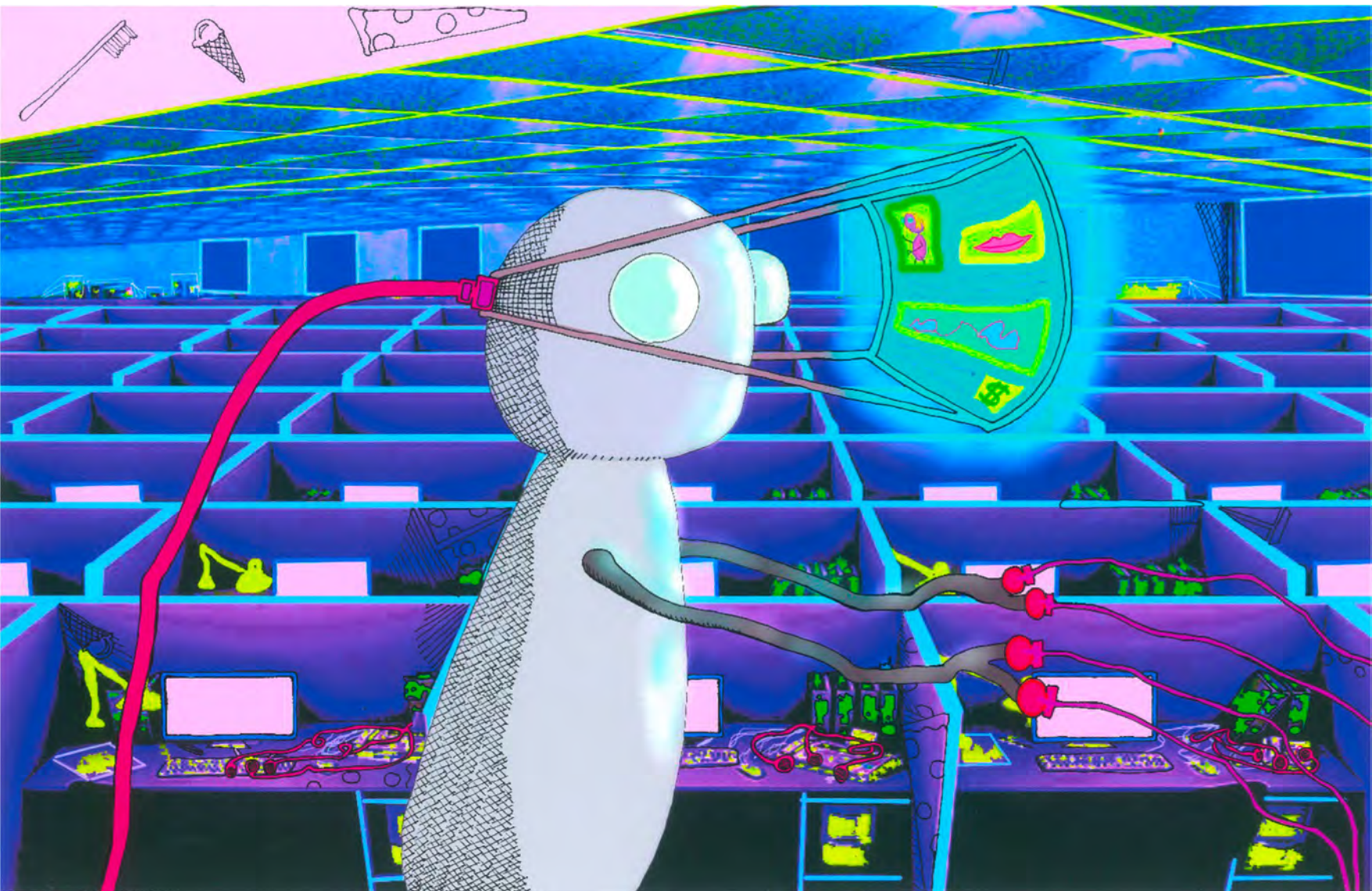
Well, with all their brainpower, they had discovered clever things to do with plants and animals, and clever ways to control the land and water, and clever designs to change plants and animals. They could even re-shape the rocks and minerals they had dug up from deep inside the earth. But lacking in the energies of caring and tenderness, some of the Willabees began using cleverness to try to control each other—especially each other! As leaders became more powerful they felt that they couldn't

stop until they were in complete control of everyone and everything.

Those in power decided that some Willabees were more skillful at cleverness than others and thus more worthy of receiving the praise that went along with being clever. If their hearts had been more centered that would never have happened.

The young were encouraged to compete more and more with each other even though they sometimes didn't want to. Winning became the new code—to be better than, to be “brighter” than, to be stronger or smarter or more beautiful than—and the grown ups who seemed to have forgotten all about love and kindness got to decide what defined goodness and strength and skill and beauty. The little Willabees spent hours making





things, selling things, collecting things and achieving rewards, but since their heads and hearts were out of balance, they actually thought that more and more stuff would make them more and more happy.

They made clever gadgets; designed clever rules; timesaving cleaners and lots of cool tools; clever sales gimmicks and jewels trimmed in gold; lectrronics that talked and slogans that sold; clever metallics and cheap, colored plastic; mechanical toys and clothes with elastic; ingenious cookware and lift-out recliners; tele-screen ads with clever one-liners.

Willabees began working for hours and hours at jobs they didn't even enjoy simply because the work rewarded them with shiny chump-

chips. They began using more and more of their free time exchanging their hard-earned chips to buy more and more things that were constantly being redesigned. The problem was that not only did the little Willabees use more and more stuff, the stuff began to use them, causing hurt feelings, fear and anger.

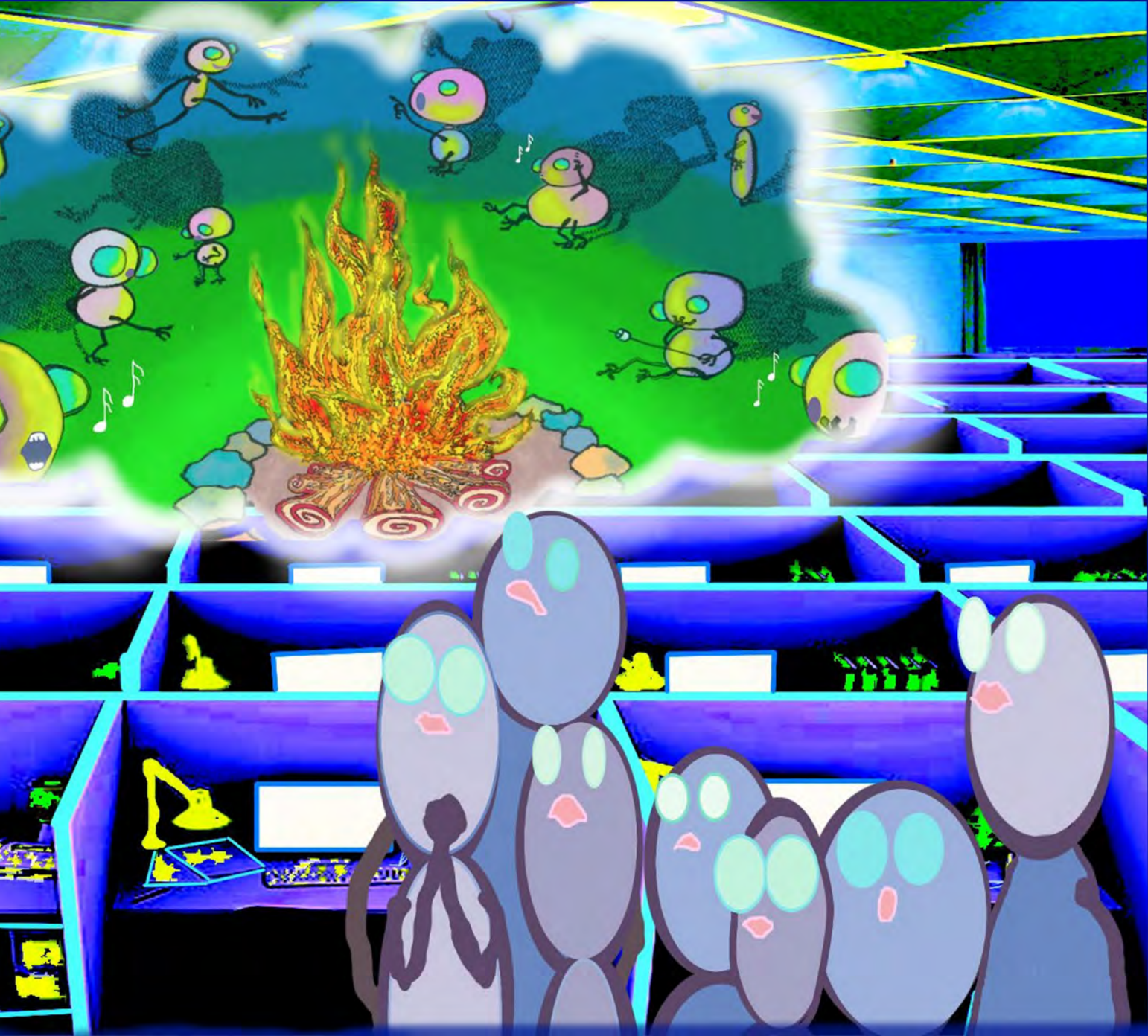
Without Sophie's heart, some of the Willabees became bullies. They got this crazy notion that in order to control their neighbors all they had to do was control speech. Now you might wonder, **“Why did they do that?”**

Well, the most powerful of the group was certain that once they were able to control others' thoughts and ideas, all they would have to do then was confuse meaning. It was

like declaring a war on words, those beautiful words that Sophie and Milo had worked so hard to teach them.

Slowly the poetry was replaced with distorted verses and slogans. Complaining and arguing polluted the buildings, making talking and listening impossible. Wisdom seemed completely out of the picture. There was so much boasting and bickering that no one could possibly think. Words were like poison and those who did try to speak out about this awful mess were teased and shamed into silence. Many thought that the Land of Evernow would be lost to them completely.







Chapter Five

The rulers of cleverness had no time for things of the heart. Tenderness? Kindness? Forgiveness? “Get real!” they’d say. Unfortunately for them, however, they had listened and repeated their clever slogans for so long they actually began to believe in the nonsense. They forgot the one truth that had been passed down to Willabees for thousands and thousands of years.

They forgot that Love is alive! That Sophie lives! That Milogos lives! We all live because of wonder, a sense of awe, for the great All-That-Is! So even at times when Sophie’s heart energy seemed weak and unimportant, it was still

vibrating and growing stronger.

Now, I know you must be confused. You’re probably thinking, “How could Sophie get weaker and yet be growing strong at the same time?” And that is a very good question.

It’s very complex, yet at the same time very simple. Think of a field of dandelions. What would happen if someone came along and picked all the adorable yellow flowers and took them away? Would those dandelion blooms wilt and die very quickly?

“Yes. Yes. Of course.”

You would say.

But wouldn’t DANDELION really be stronger? Wouldn’t the field be loaded with more dandelion blooms again in a few weeks,

and wouldn't their seeds even be spreading to more and more places as they were carried off by the wind? DANDELION is still alive even though it sometimes takes the shape of a tiny seed floating on the breeze. And what's the energy that empowers that tiny speck of a seed to push its way up even between rocks? Did I hear you shout **"Life"**? Did I hear you yell **"Love"**?

**Yes! Life is Love
and Love is Life!**

**Life is loved into being,
and love is life's grandest
wish, and even though
its energy is always shifting,
it's always present.**

And so it was, even in the Land of Clever. Remember how these little creatures began feeling restless

as they spent more and more time indoors? Many of the Willabees also began to notice aches and pains, sometimes in their heads or in their stomachs. Often, their hands or legs or feet would begin to feel odd.

One day, a little Willa named Eshon, who wasn't considered very clever (and therefore not very smart) made an astonishing discovery! The muscles in his left arm began to feel sore so he decided to stop what he was doing. He searched and searched and finally he discovered a door that was slightly ajar. A small beam of light filtered into the factory. Slowly, Eshon opened the door wider and walked outside.

Before long, his pain disappeared. It worked like magic and oh, how he had missed the sounds



of the birds and crickets and the rustle of dried leaves under his feet. He was so grateful that he decided to rake up some leaves in Mamu Shaunna's yard. Then he rescued a rabbit stranded in some old fencing and he returned a fallen birdhouse to its post by the maple tree.

Something changed in Eshon at that moment. Something shifted inside him. It's not as though he had never been outside before, but on this particular day, he actually stopped long enough to enjoy the wonderful sights and sounds and smells that were all around him. At that moment, he had chosen wonder instead of worry! Suddenly, all of his thoughts and fears and plans quieted and he breathed deeply and smiled. Eshon simply allowed himself to **be**.

There's a powerful energy released when kindness enters the heart. It's an invisible seed, yet its strength is unmatched. Before long, without ever knowing why, other Willabees felt the urge to go outside, and each became overjoyed with the cool, fresh breezes and the colors of fall! Aches and pains vanished as hundreds of common, ordinary little Willabees were quietly looking for ways to give back, to help, to do nice things for others.

The hungry would receive food sometimes without even knowing where it came from. Wanderers would receive warm blankets and a place to sleep. Beings who became ill would be tended to even if they had no way to pay. Of course, this wonderful reaching out to others

was never reported on the talk-boxes or the visionpods, **but guess what happened? What's that you say?**

“The love grew even stronger!”

Very Good! Can you say it louder?

THE LOVE GREW EVEN STRONGER!

I am so proud of you! Now, let me see. Where was I? Oh, yes.

And so it wasn't just hundreds of Willabees reaching out and caring, it became thousands, and then tens of thousands until finally all the clever talk-boxes and visionpods were turned off, and the clay beings spent more and more time outside. They began to grow their own food again, and they started to repair all the damage they had done to the land

with their mining. They no longer allowed poisons to be dumped into the streams and rivers. They worked to make the air clean from all the smoke and chemicals. Finally, without the talk-boxes and visionpods, the rulers of cleverness lost their power. Instead of being part of the problem, they joined everyone else to help.



Chapter Six

Now that the Willabees were no longer trying to compete, to out-do each other, they realized how easily they could clean up the messes they had made, and they began to love life and use things instead of the other way around. They knew that in order to heal each other from all the pain and bad feelings, they would also have to heal the earth.

It wasn't like one great BIG change made the Land of Clever a better place. It took 'gazillions' of ordinary Willabees doing small, caring things without wanting anything in return. That's what caused the Great Change!

The ways that the Willabees

had of understanding the world had changed. Their thoughts about life had shifted. They became more balanced. In the past, little ones coming into the earth had always been born knowing their connectedness with the All-That-Is. When the Land of Evernow became the Land of Clever, however, this knowing about the oneness, the sacredness of all things, faded from the awareness of most little ones because, by the age of three or four, they usually became plugged into the culture of cleverness.

The Great Change made things different. The new young ones were encouraged to celebrate life as they explored the One-Mind-One-Heart Universe. No longer were they forced to forget who they really were.



The Great Change was a Grand Shift away from Willabees who thought they were separate and alone, to Willabees who knew that everyone mattered and that all life was somehow connected.

So that's the end of the Story of the Great Change. And even to this day, Sophie and Milo can be seen

everywhere, can be known anytime, can be felt right here, right now!

Look for wonder in the sky and in the clouds and in the sun. Sophie and Milogos are there. Feel the wonder in a cool breeze, in the birth of the young, in the smells of autumn. Wonder at birds in flight and the stars at night.



Can you sense Sophie and Milogos and all the little Willabees now?

Wonder is all around us but some choose not to see. Look under any rock. Wonder is there offering its energies of **Grand Mind and Loving Heart**. Stop by any bush or stream or pond and you can choose to be filled with awe, for all

things are in you and you are in all things. Life is wonder-**full** anytime we decide to see it that way. **And keep your eyes open, because little Willabees continue to show up, often in the most unlikely of places.**

The End...Or is it?



**Have you ever seen a Willabee?
“What’s a Willabee?” you might ask.**

Well, if you’ve ever been outside chasing a butterfly or climbing a tree or hiking through the woods, I’ll bet some Willabees have probably spotted you! They love children most of all and want your world to be beautiful and exciting.

Willabees have been with us for a long time. Their story begins when Sophie and her brother, Milo, discover the Magic Clay. Sophie dreams her little creatures to life with her potter’s hands and her kind heart and Milo gifts their minds with the ability to think and to reason.

Things go along quite well for all these new, fun loving creatures until.... until.... well, that you must discover for yourself. But when you step into their crazy, mixed up world, you’ll meet a little Willa named Eshon and you’ll be there when he makes an amazing discovery that changes everything!

Look for some hidden pictures and try to find a mystery word along the way.

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