

HOW
BIG IS
BIG?

SCOTTIE STAMPS
ILLUSTRATED BY
THE FERRARIS'S





HOW BIG IS BIG?

For my children

-S.S.

To Mom and Cookie

-F.4.

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HOW BIG IS

BIG?

STEPHEN STRAUSS • THE FERNANDES 4

The Millbrook Press

Brookfield, Connecticut



If you could take all the water from all the earth's oceans, multiply it by 16, and then make all that water into a ball, that ball would be as big as the moon.

HOW BIG IS BIG?

How big is big?
A super fat pig?
A giant tomato?
A skyscraper potato?
No, bigness is something no one can consume,
Like how many oceans
Fit into the moon.



HOW SMALL IS SMALL?

How small is small?
Something minus-feet tall?
The point of a pencil?
The line on a stencil?
No, smallness is something that's quite hard to see,
Like the fluff in the air
And the dust on your chair.



HOW SLOW IS SLOW?

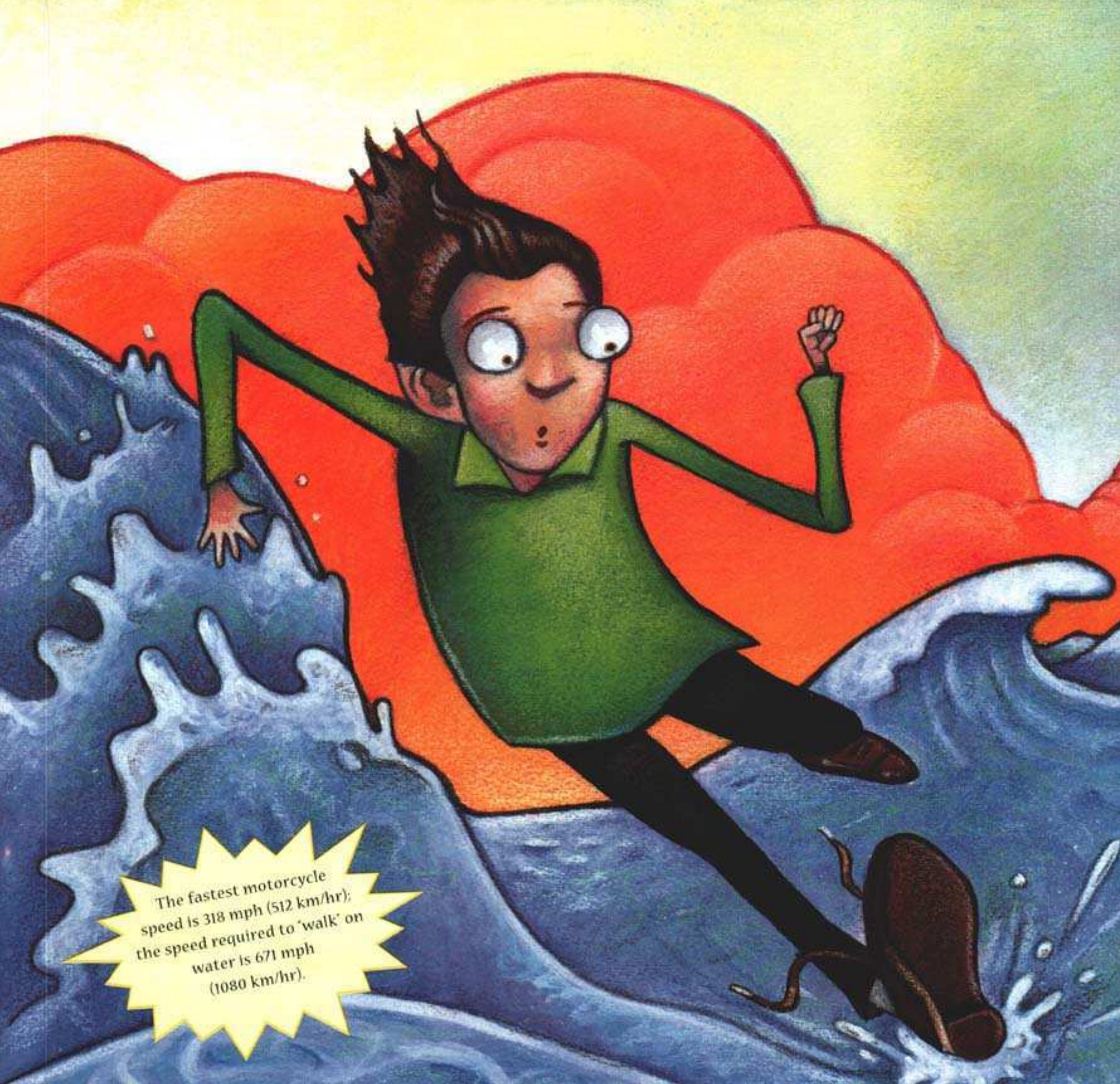
How slow is slow?
As we all know,
A snail in a hurry
Will never scurry,
But glide at the pace
Of a drop of molasses
That drips off your face.

The fastest
snail can slither
at 275 feet
(8.4 meters) an
hour.

HOW FAST IS FAST?

How fast is fast?
I'm glad that you asked.
To walk on water,
You oughta oughta
Use all o' your might,
And double the speed
Of a motorbike.






The fastest motorcycle speed is 318 mph (512 km/hr); the speed required to 'walk' on water is 671 mph (1080 km/hr).



HOW HIGH IS HIGH?


How high is high?
Well, how high is the sky?
I'll say it out loud:
It's higher than a cloud,
It's where the air plays peek-a-boo,
Changing nighttime's black
To daytime's blue.



Between 125 to 185 miles
(about 200 and 300 km) up
in the sky, the blue sky
color ends and becomes
black.

HOW DEEP IS DEEP?

How deep is deep?
No, I don't mean deep sleep,
And I don't mean a well,
or a deep prison cell;
But rather imagine the fishies' commotion
If a kid ever walked
On the bottom of the ocean.



People have descended
35,814 feet (10,915 meters) into
the ocean. The deepest spot in
the Pacific Ocean is 36,201 feet
(11,034 meters) deep.



HOW LIGHT IS LIGHT?

How light is light?

Well, there's light as a kite...


And do you know whether

That's ten times a feather?

But, oh—I think there's been some mistake!

For both weigh much more

Than a single snowflake.



A chicken feather
weighs roughly .0007
ounces (.02 grams), and
a snowflake only
.00000035 ounces
(.000001 grams).



HOW HEAVY IS HEAVY?

How heavy is heavy?

Asked a boy named Levy,


Who decided to buy a dinosaur,

But couldn't carry it out of the store.

So he left instead with a lovely toy lion,

Whose weight, while great,

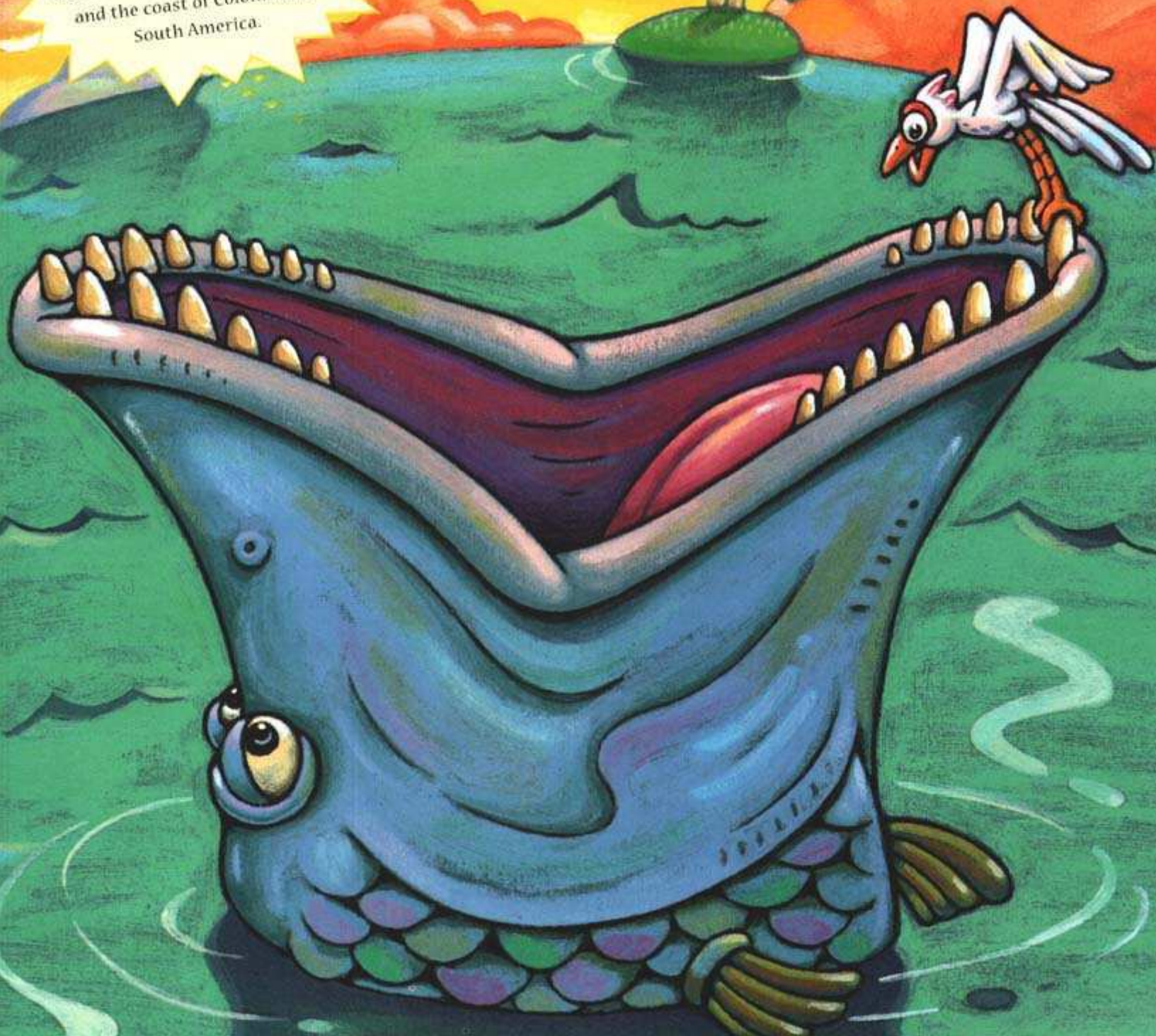
He could lift without try'n.



The largest dinosaur
weighed between 110,000 and
175,000 pounds (50,000 and 80,000
kilograms) while the largest lion
weighed in at only
690 lbs (313 kg).



The Pacific Ocean is 12,300 miles (19,800 kilometers) wide and stretches between Indonesia and the coast of Colombia in South America.





HOW WIDE IS WIDE?

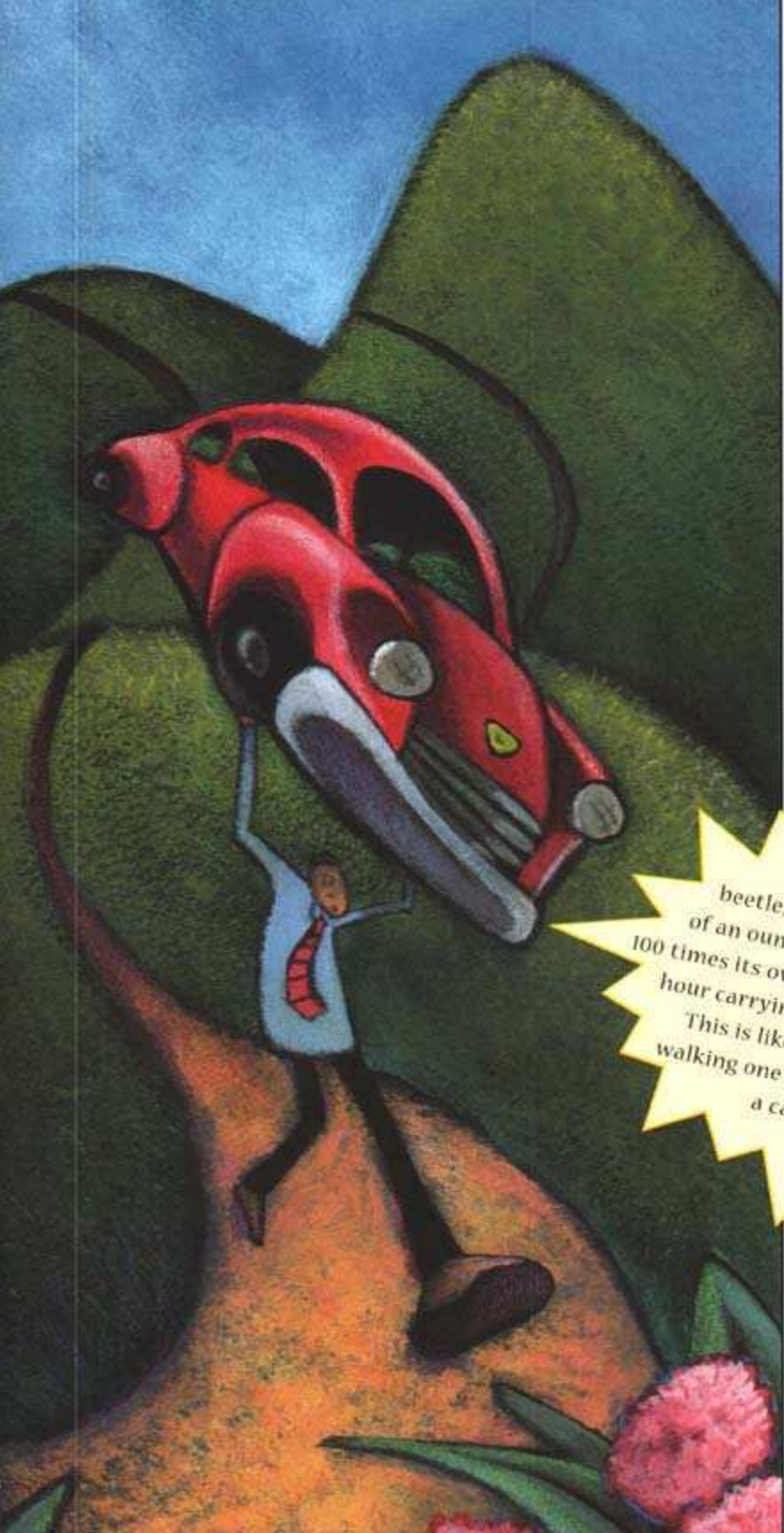
How wide is wide?
Well, there's wide as outside,
And there's wide as a smile,
And there's wide as the Nile,
But wider by far—sort of wideness terrific—
Is the width of that ocean
They call the Pacific.

HOW STRETCHY IS STRETCHY?

How stretchy is stretchy?
It may seem far-fetchy,
But spiders, quite scary,
And sometimes quite hairy,
Make stuff so fantastic,
It's totally, totally,
TOTALLY, elastic.

A spider's silk can stretch up to 10 times its original length without breaking. A web made by an American spider has been known to trap a small mouse.





HOW OLD IS OLD?

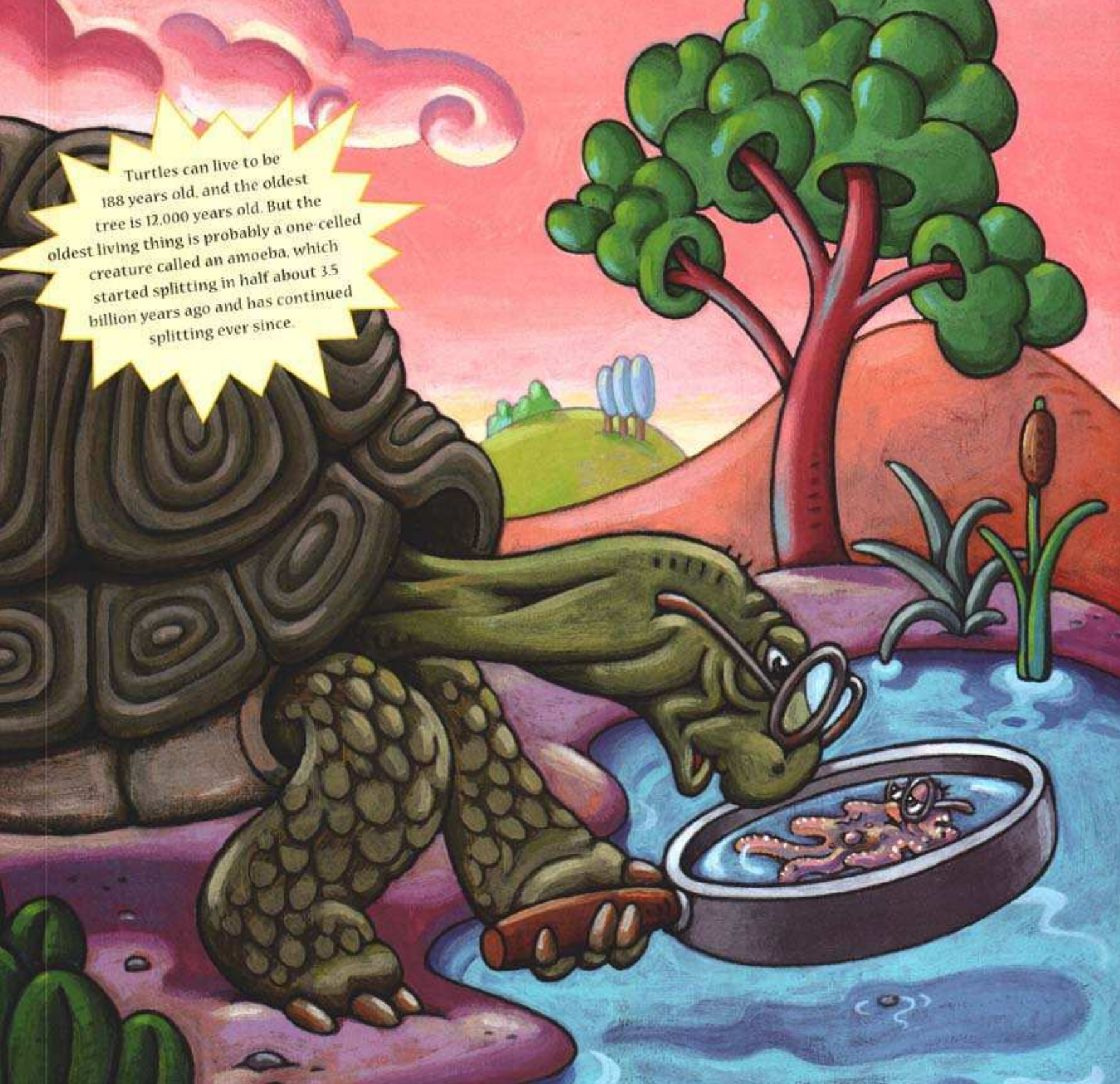
How old is old?
I have been told
That turtles live long
And trees linger on,
But if true oldness you want to convey,
Then try wishing an amoeba
A happy birthday.



The rhinoceros beetle, which weighs one-tenth of an ounce (only 2.8 grams), can lift 100 times its own weight and walk for a half hour carrying 30 times its own weight! This is like an average-sized man walking one mile (1.6 kilometers) with a car on his head.

HOW STRONG IS STRONG?

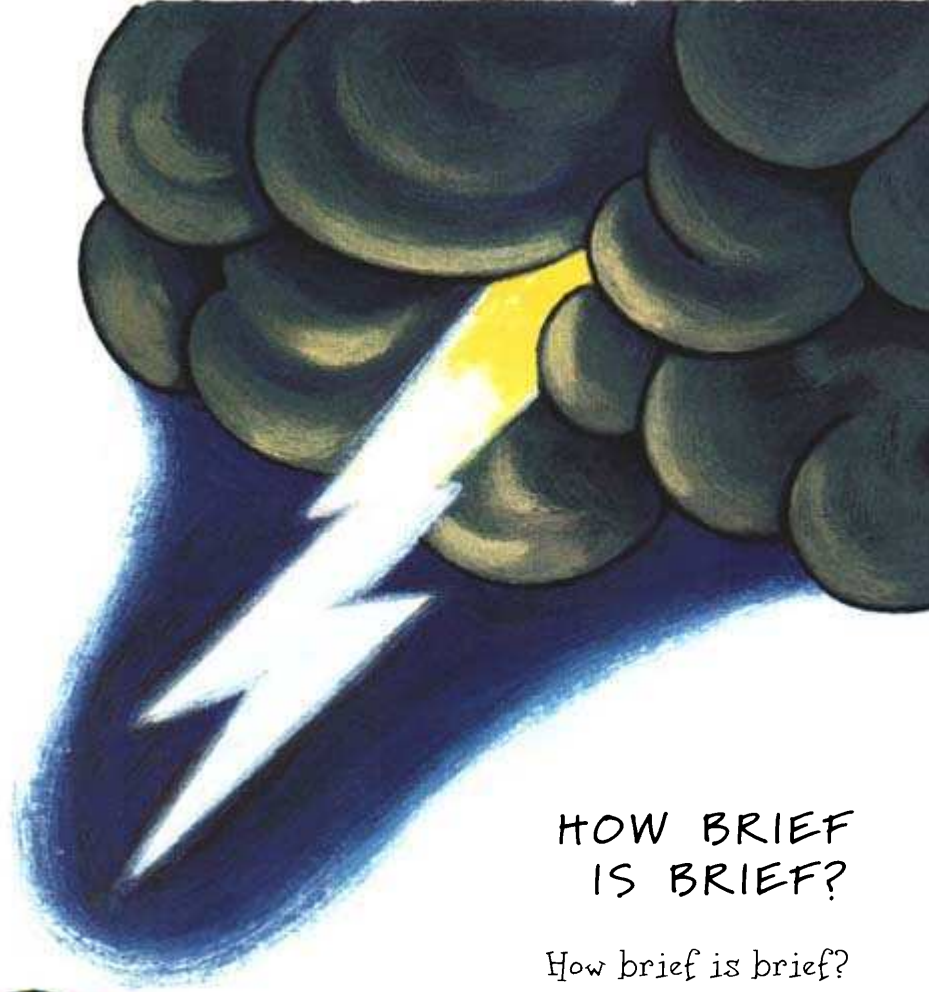
How strong is strong?
Consider King Kong,
The movie gorilla,
Whose death was a thrill.
But even old Kong was monstrously feeble
When compared
To the mighty rhinoceros beetle.



Turtles can live to be 188 years old, and the oldest tree is 12,000 years old. But the oldest living thing is probably a one-celled creature called an amoeba, which started splitting in half about 3.5 billion years ago and has continued splitting ever since.

HOW LONG IS LONG?

How long is long?
You'll be long gone
Once the sun
Ceases to run,
And the only light
Is endless, endless,
Starry night.



HOW BRIEF IS BRIEF?

How brief is brief?
Well, it's my belief
That when you blink,
Or slyly wink,
The time that passes
Is much, much more
Than lightning flashes.

A blink takes about one third of a second, and a wink only about a second. A lightning flash takes about a thousandth of a second.

It is estimated that the sun will burn itself out in 5 billion years. You will likely live about 75 years.





HOW SHAKY IS SHAKY?


How shaky is shaky?
Something kinda earthquaky?
If a mountain of Pekingese,
Those dogs love to tease,
Were to jump from a ladder,
They'd make
The ground clatter.

If 3.5 billion
Pekingese dogs jumped
from a ladder that was 6 feet 7
inches high (2 meters), they would
create an earthquake measuring
about 4.5 on the Richter Scale. That's
enough to make anything close
by, including cars and
trees, start to shake.


HOW FULL IS FULL?

How full is full?
Not a belly full of wool,
Not a mountain of hay,
Not Santa's toy sleigh.
No, fullness is more like that quenching of thirsting
Which comes to a camel
Whose drunk till she's bursting!



A cartoon illustration of a camel's head and neck. The camel is shown drinking from several glasses of water simultaneously using multiple green and silver striped straws. The camel's mouth is wide open, and water is splashing around the straws. The background is a mix of green and brown tones. A yellow starburst shape is on the left side of the image.

A camel can drink up to 30 U.S. gallons (114 liters) in ten minutes and 50 U.S. gallons (189 liters) over several hours.



People have walked
across coals heated to
1,546°F (841°C). Do not, repeat,
DO NOT try this yourself. You
will toast your toes.

HOW HOT IS HOT?

How hot is hot?
How hot you got?
I wouldn't choose
To take off my shoes
And go for a stroll
On a flaming bed
Of burning hot coal.



HOW COLD IS COLD?

How cold is cold?
You'd be quite bold
To stick out your nose,
Or undress your toes,
In any cruel breeze
Cold enough to make
Thermometers freeze.

A mercury thermometer will freeze at -38°F , (-39°C). Your skin will freeze within a half minute at -58°F (-50°C) with a 12 mph (20 km/hr) wind.

HOW SWEET IS SWEET?

How sweet is sweet?
Now this poem's a treat.
Though sugar is dandy,
And it rhymes with candy,
Little can give such a sweetening rush,
As the leaves of a green
South American bush.

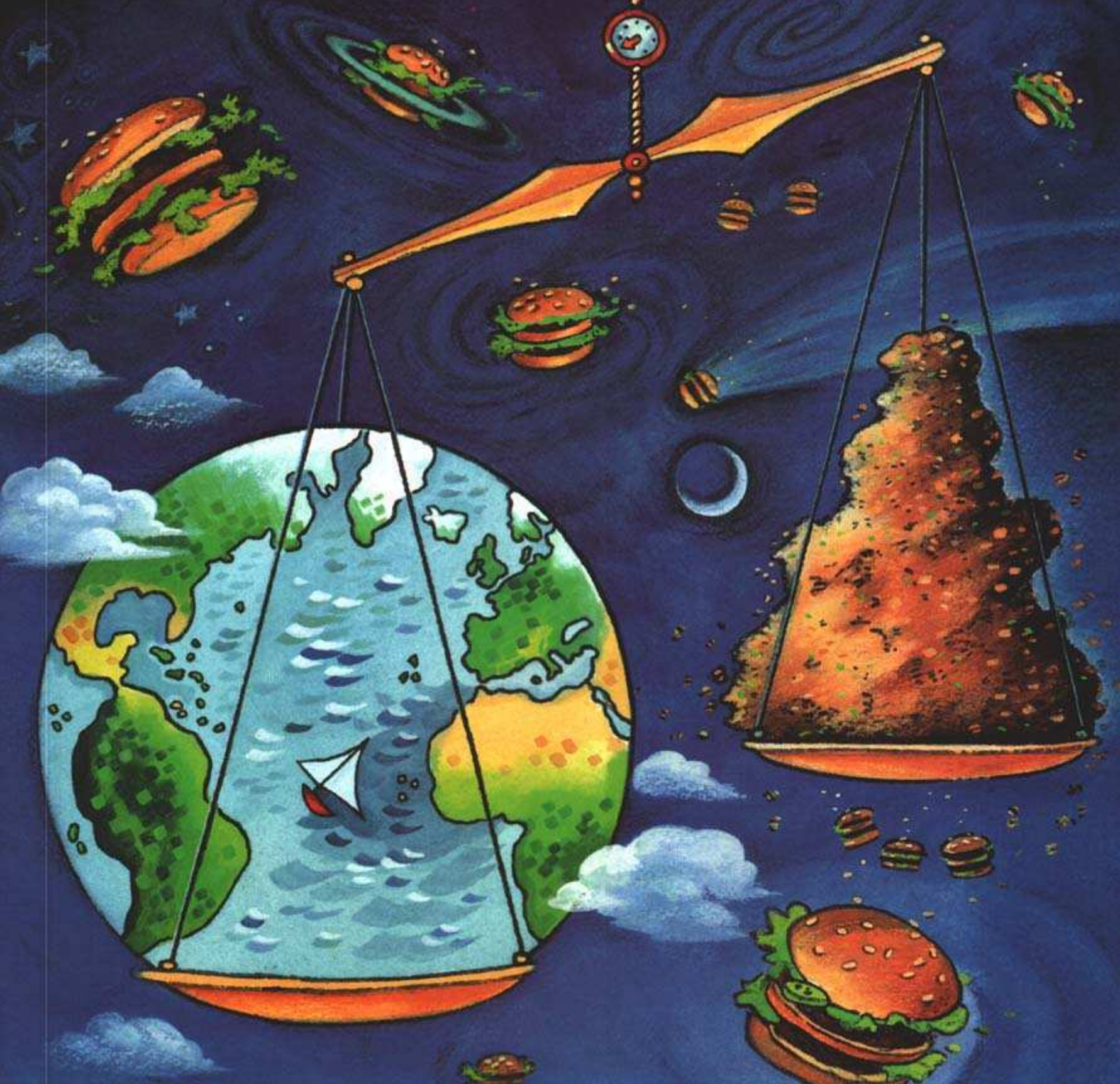
The Paraguayan plant
Stevia rubidiana has leaves
that are more than 300 times
sweeter than sugar. One
teaspoon of *Stevia* is equal to
about 6 cups of sugar!

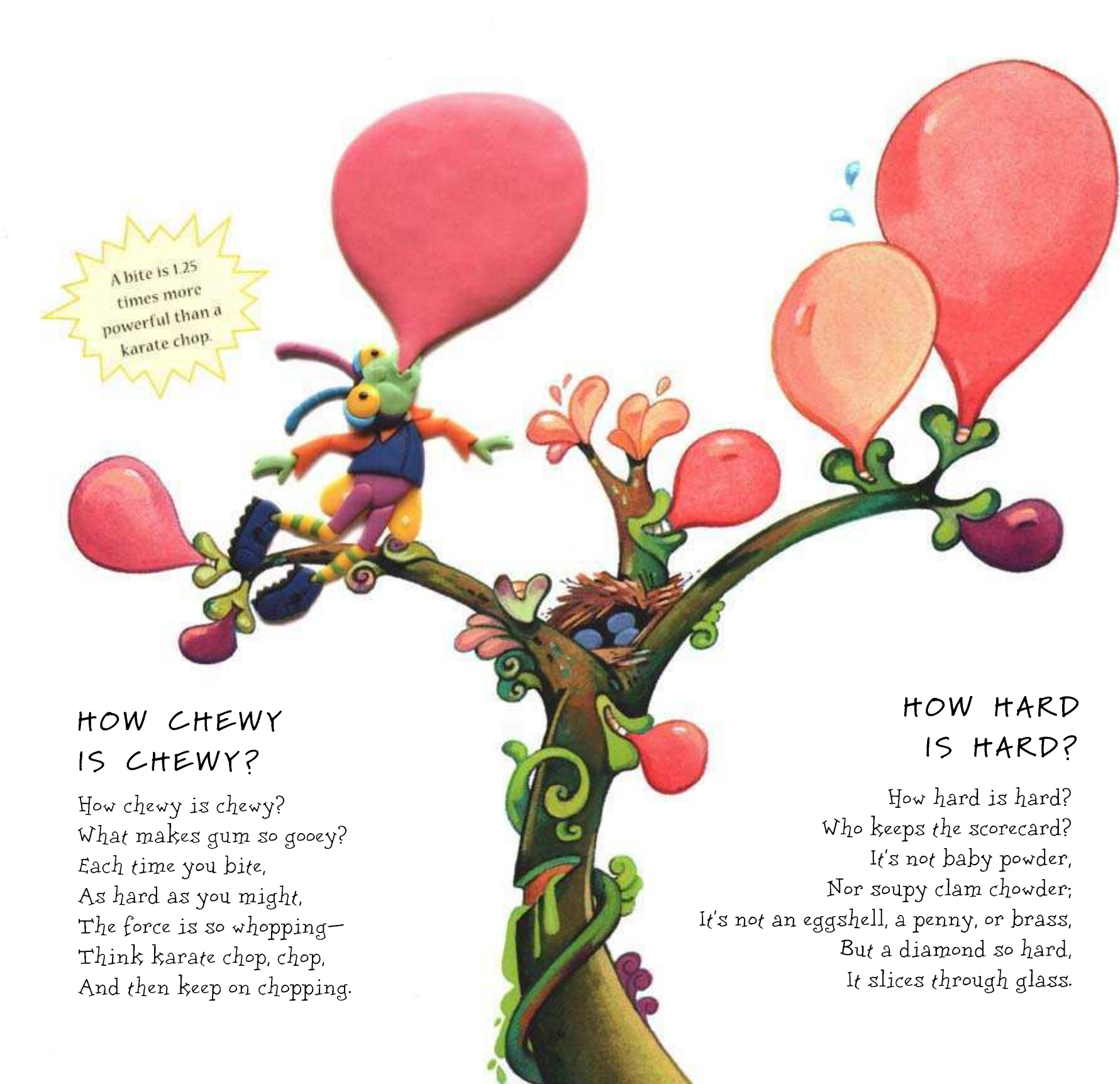


HOW MANY IS MANY?

How many is many?
Two dimes or ten pennies?
All grapes in a bunch?
Forty crackers for lunch?
No, many is something beyond stacks and stacks,
It's how much the earth weighs
In piles of Big Macs.

If you were to put
the earth on a scale, you would
need about
27,800,000,000,000,000,000
Big Macs on the opposite side
to balance it.





A bite is 1.25
times more
powerful than a
karate chop.

HOW CHEWY IS CHEWY?

How chewy is chewy?
What makes gum so gooey?
Each time you bite,
As hard as you might,
The force is so whopping—
Think karate chop, chop,
And then keep on chopping.

HOW HARD IS HARD?

How hard is hard?
Who keeps the scorecard?
It's not baby powder,
Nor soupy clam chowder;
It's not an eggshell, a penny, or brass,
But a diamond so hard,
It slices through glass.



A diamond is the hardest thing in the world. It is much, much harder (10,000 times harder, in fact) than your teeth.

HOW THIN IS THIN?

How thin is thin?

Well, there's thin as a pin.


Then there's thin as a sliver

(Ouch! sharp things make me quiver).

But thinness is something to measure with care;

It's a slice, of a slice,

Of a slice, of a hair.



A slice, of a slice,
of a slice of a hair is
about .00026 inches
(about 6.4 microns)
across.



HOW THICK IS THICK?

How thick is thick?

That question's a trick!


Thickness is thinness, just turned on its head,

And one is the other, so don't be misled.

I ask you to take ten heads full of hair,

Glue one to another—

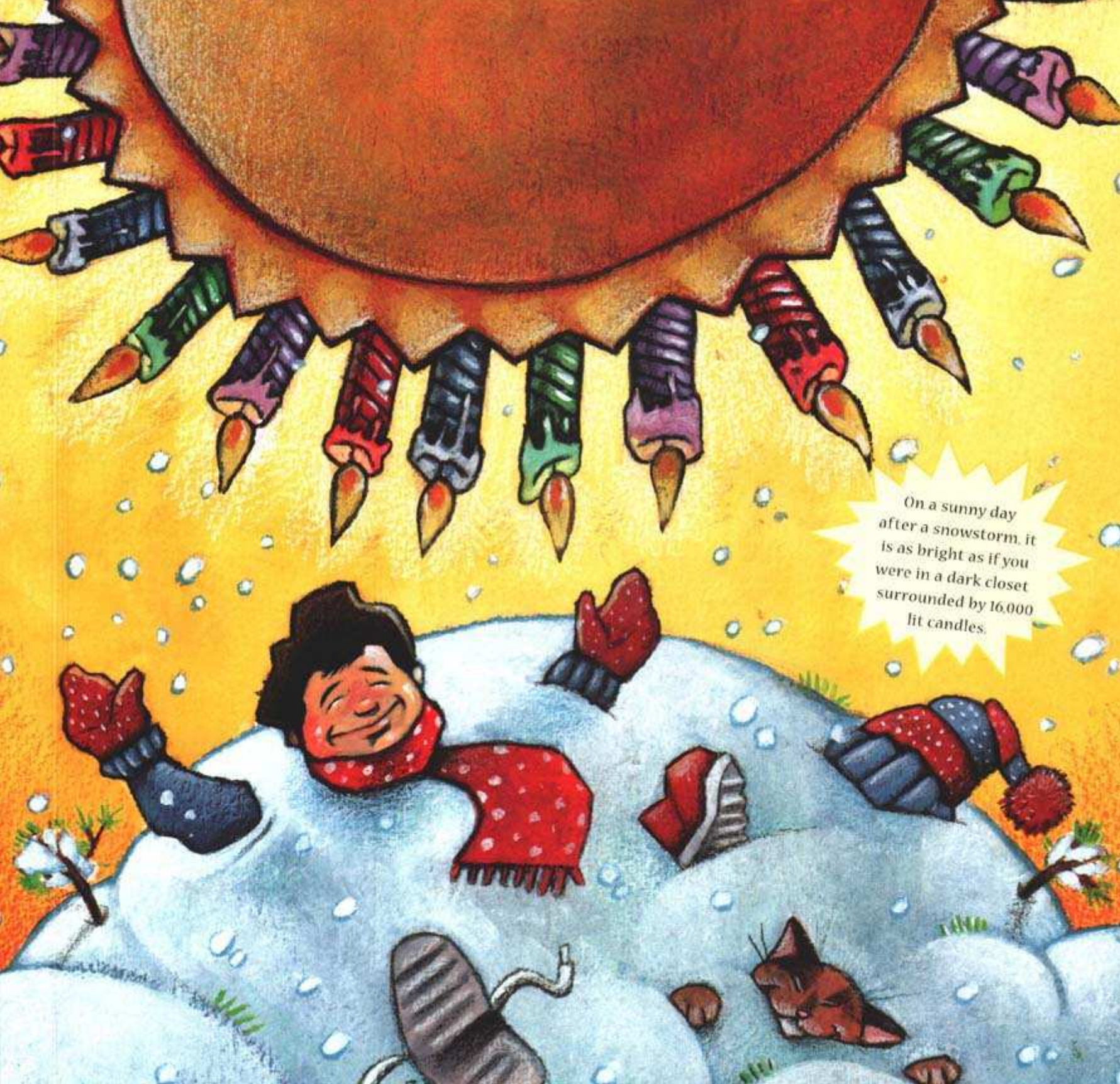
And see thickness right there.



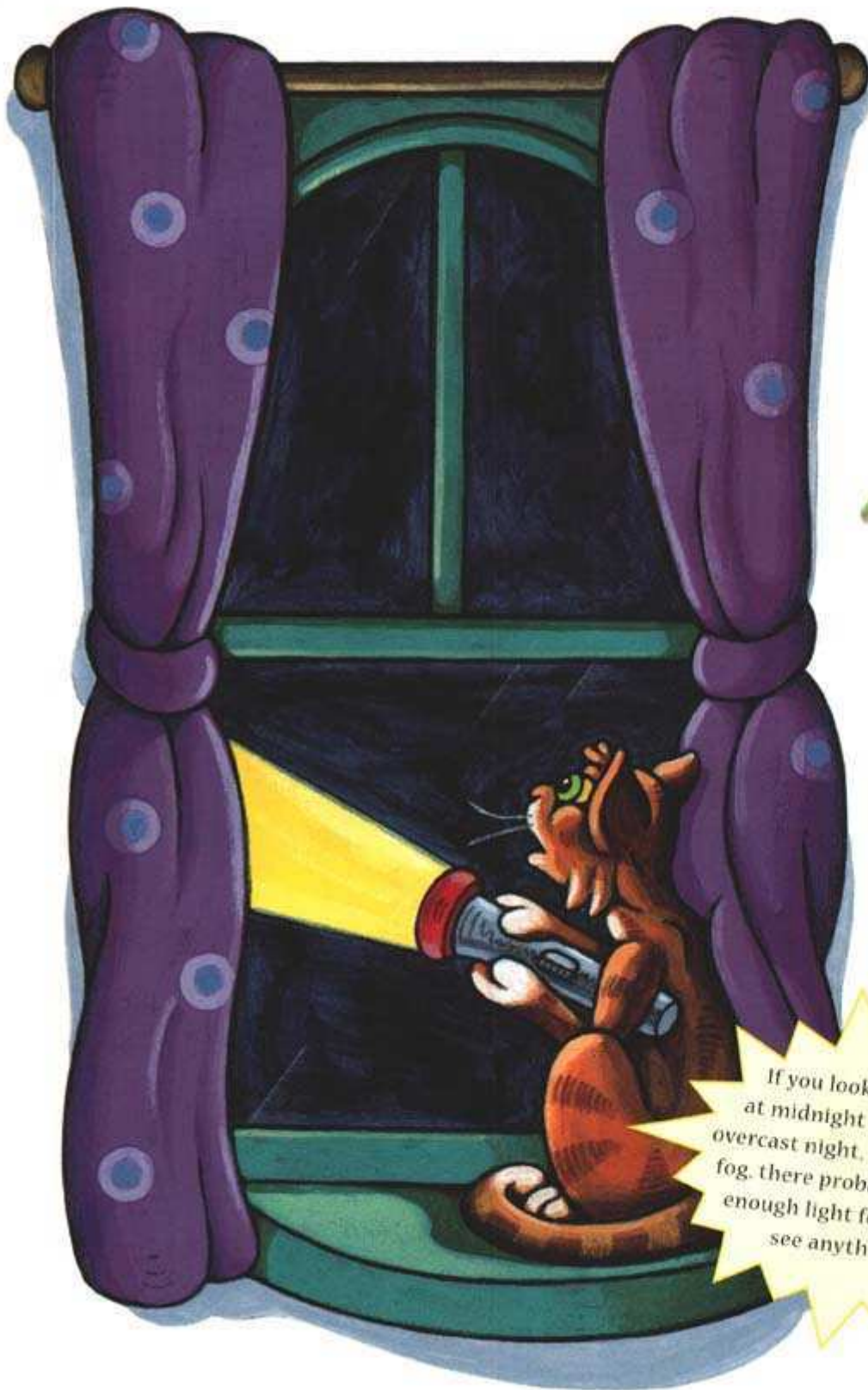
If you took hair from
ten different heads and
glued one on top of the
other, you'd end up with a
pile about 165 feet (50
meters) thick.







On a sunny day
after a snowstorm, it
is as bright as if you
were in a dark closet
surrounded by 16,000
lit candles.



HOW BRIGHT IS BRIGHT?

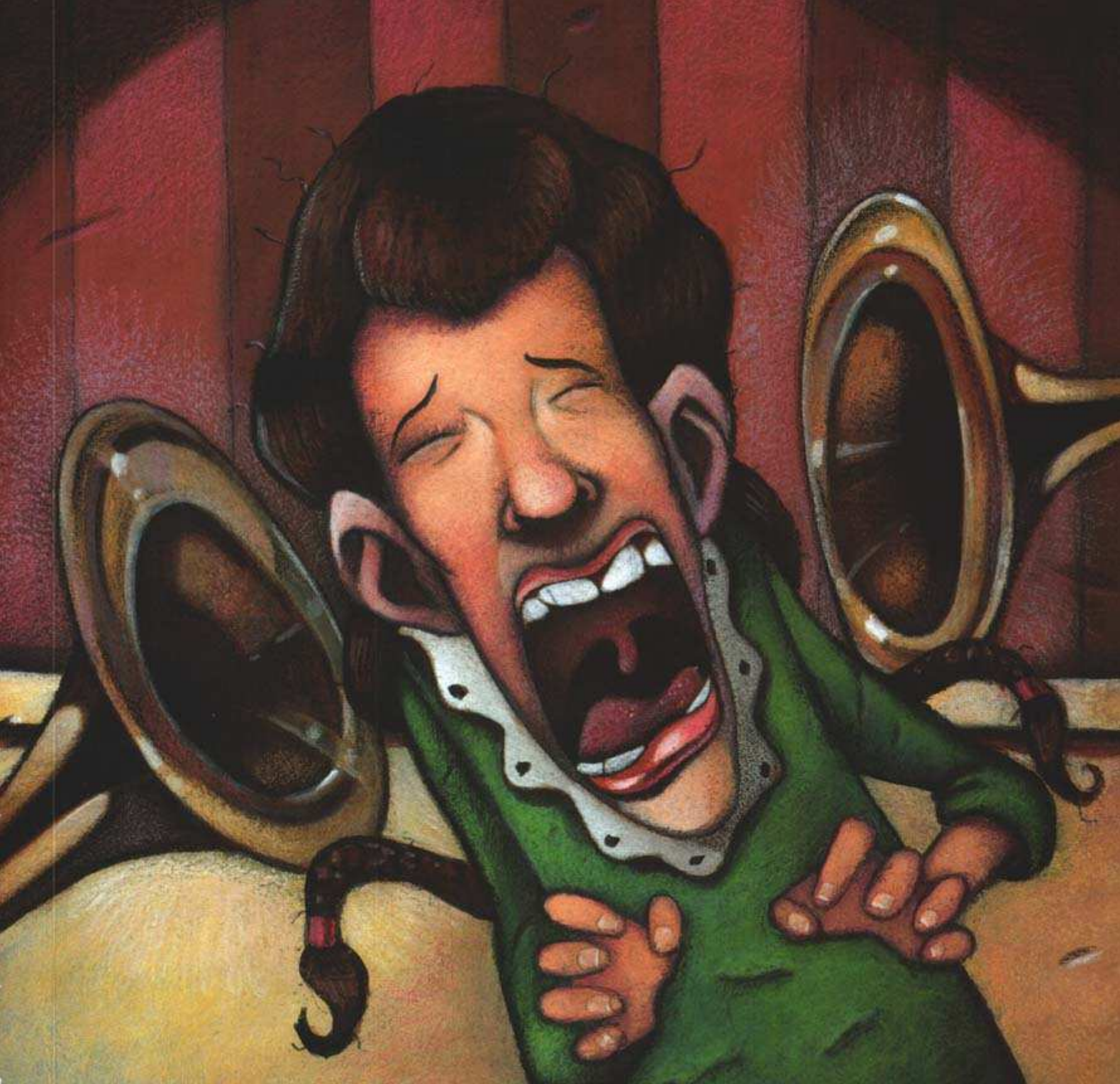
How bright is bright?
Imagine the sight
When the snow has snowed,
And the sun has glowed,
And a little kid sits
Counting 16,000
Candlesticks.



HOW DARK IS DARK?

How dark is dark?
There's as dark as a park
In the middle of the night,
With no moon in sight,
And a fog billowing billows.
I guarantee
You won't spy armadillos.

If you looked to the sky
at midnight on a moonless,
overcast night, in a really dense
fog, there probably wouldn't be
enough light for your eyes to
see anything at all.



HOW LOUD IS LOUD?

How loud is loud?
The screams of a crowd?
The snap of your gum?
The bang of a drum?
No, loud is every hurtful noise
That pains the ears
Of girls and boys.

Sound above 130 decibels is painful. That is 100 times louder than the sound of a horn blast from 20 feet (6 meters) away, and roughly twice as loud as the loudest scream.



The amount of sound that your hair growing over your ears would block you from hearing is 300 times softer than a whisper.

HOW QUIET IS QUIET?

How quiet is quiet?
Not a schoolyard riot,
Not a loud snore,
And not a dance floor.
No, quiet is something you almost can't hear,
Like the sound that your hair
Keeps away from your ear.

