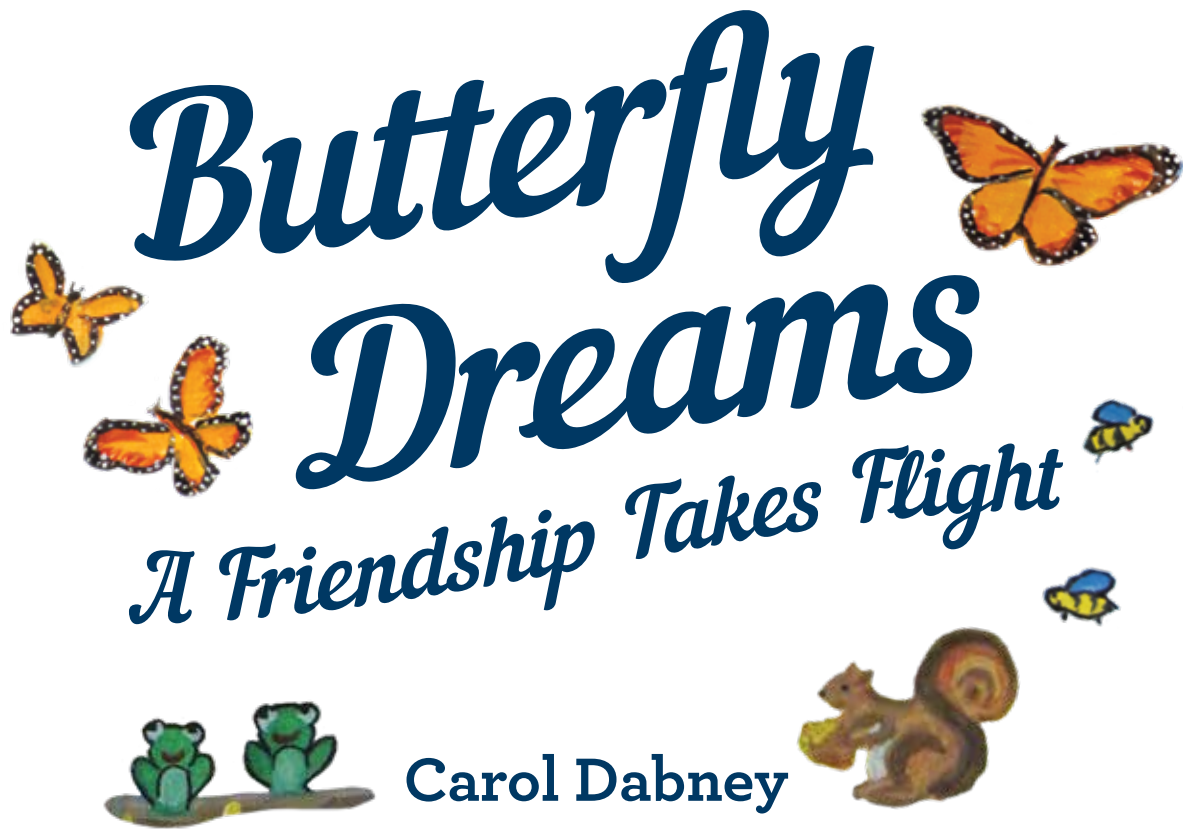


# Butterfly Dreams

*A Friendship Takes Flight*

Carol Dabney



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*This book is lovingly dedicated to my music students at Saint Mark's Episcopal Day School in Little Rock, Arkansas, and especially to my five children and nine grandchildren. May you all be blessed with strong friendships and big dreams.*

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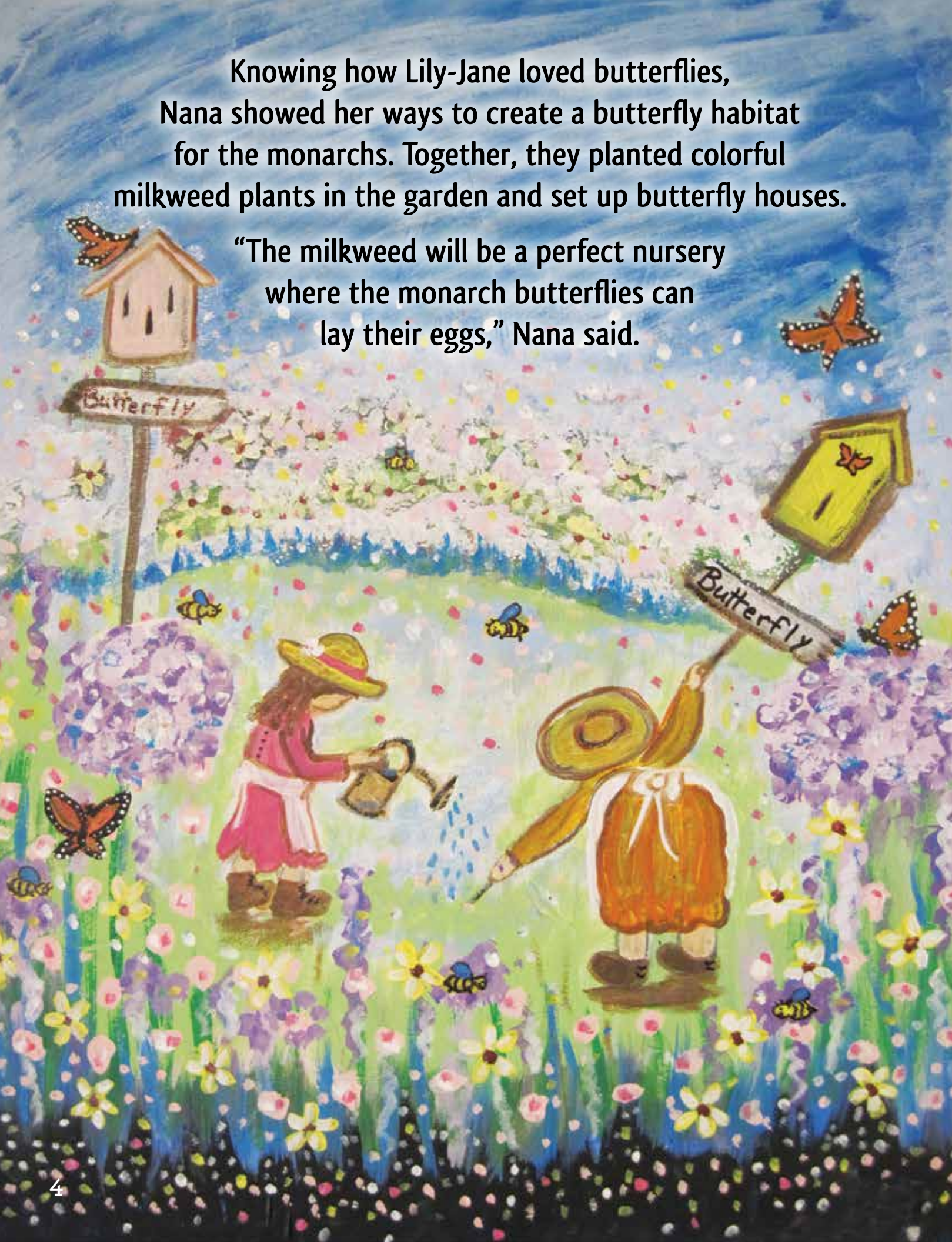
Lily-Jane lived with her grandmother,  
Nana, on a farm in Arkansas.



Every spring, Lily-Jane's favorite thing to do was sit  
on the fence overlooking the whole farm as butterflies  
filled the blue sky and painted the clouds with colorful  
bows. Her beagle, Ragsdale, followed her everywhere.

Knowing how Lily-Jane loved butterflies, Nana showed her ways to create a butterfly habitat for the monarchs. Together, they planted colorful milkweed plants in the garden and set up butterfly houses.

“The milkweed will be a perfect nursery where the monarch butterflies can lay their eggs,” Nana said.



Each day, Lily-Jane eagerly checked the plants, looking closely with her binoculars. One morning, she and Nana found tiny white eggs dotting the underside of the milkweed leaves.



A few days later, yellow and black caterpillars were crawling on the leaves. One looked especially intriguing. Wanting to see his spots, Lily-Jane got close.

“Hola, señorita. Cómo estás?”

Lily-Jane jumped backward in shock. Did she really just hear a caterpillar speak? Was that Spanish? The only thing she could think to do was say something back.

“Hello,” she giggled. “I’m Lily-Jane. What’s your name?”

“Me llamo Carlos.”

“It’s very nice to meet you, Carlos. How do you do?”





“I’m awfully hungry,” Carlos frowned. With one of his many legs, he rubbed his tummy.

Lily-Jane handed him a leaf to eat. “This milkweed will keep you safe. Nana says it’s poisonous to other insects that might harm you, so if you eat it, they should leave you alone.”

“Gracias amiga,” Carlos replied. “You’re a good friend.”

Each day, Lily-Jane visited Carlos. He ate and ate and grew bigger. One morning, she found Carlos crying.

“What’s the matter?” she asked.

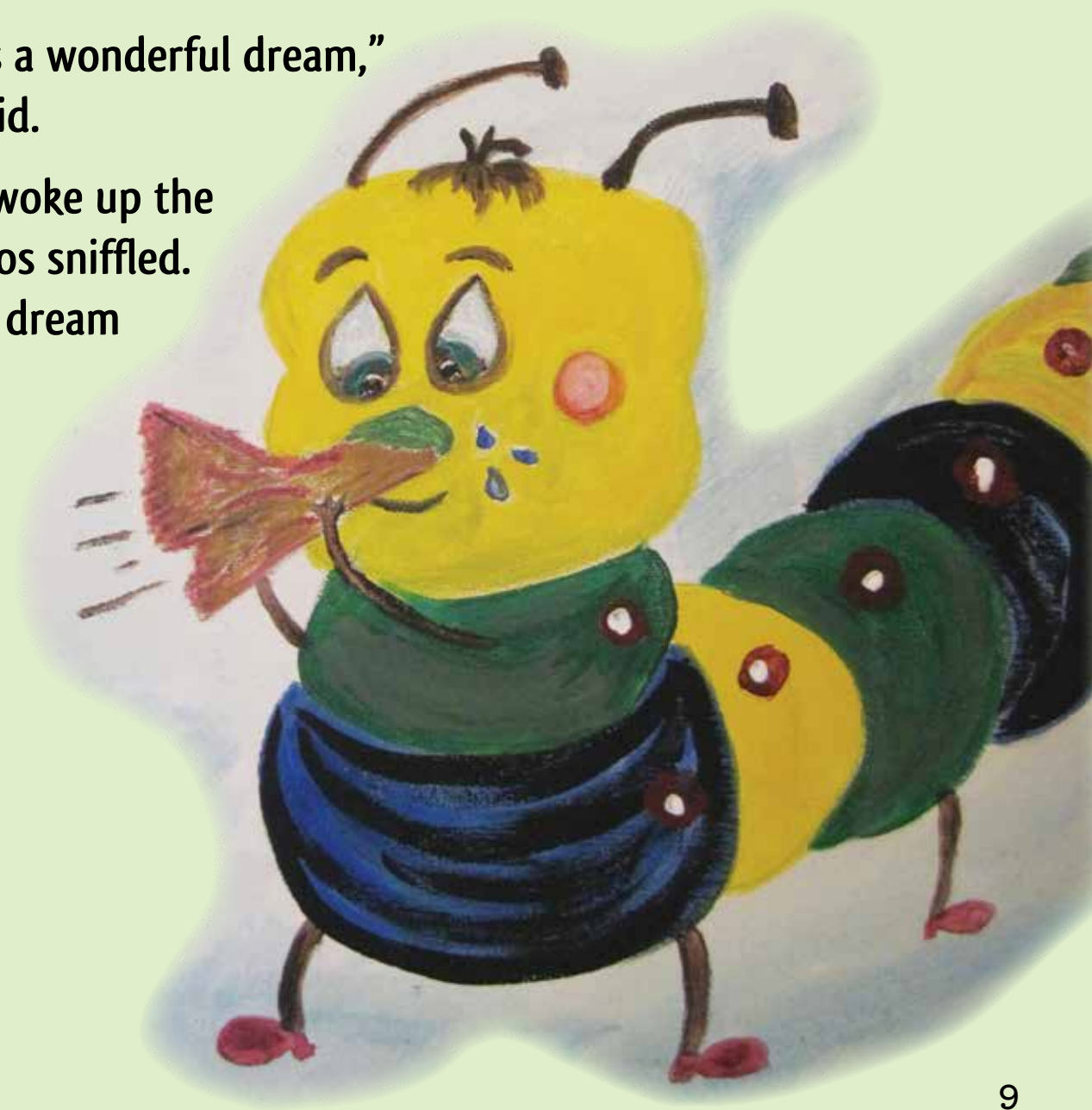
“I have been watching the mariposas fly all day,” he sobbed, looking toward the sky.

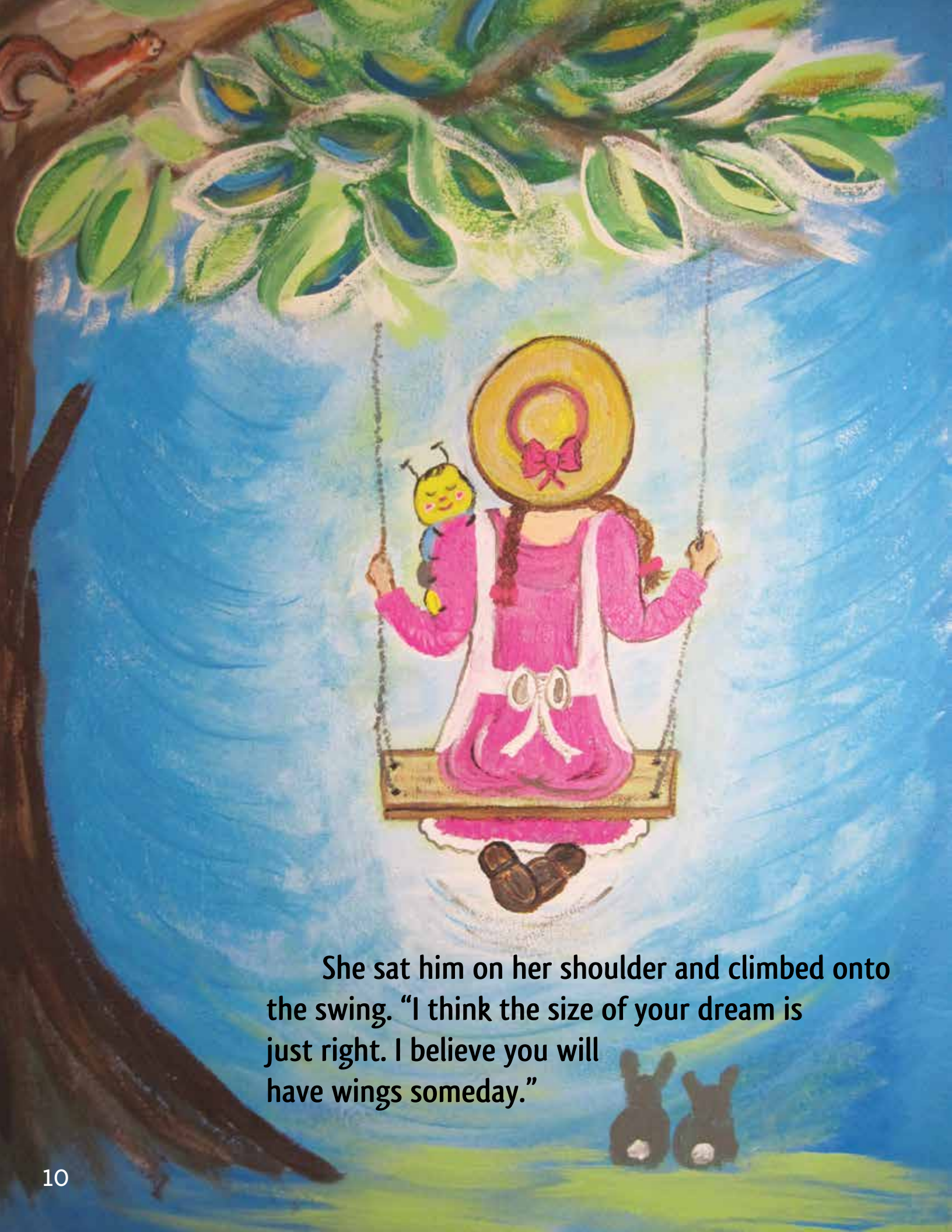
“Mariposas?” she repeated thoughtfully. “Oh, butterflies!”

“Si. I dreamed that I grew wings and could fly too.” Tears rolled down his cheek.

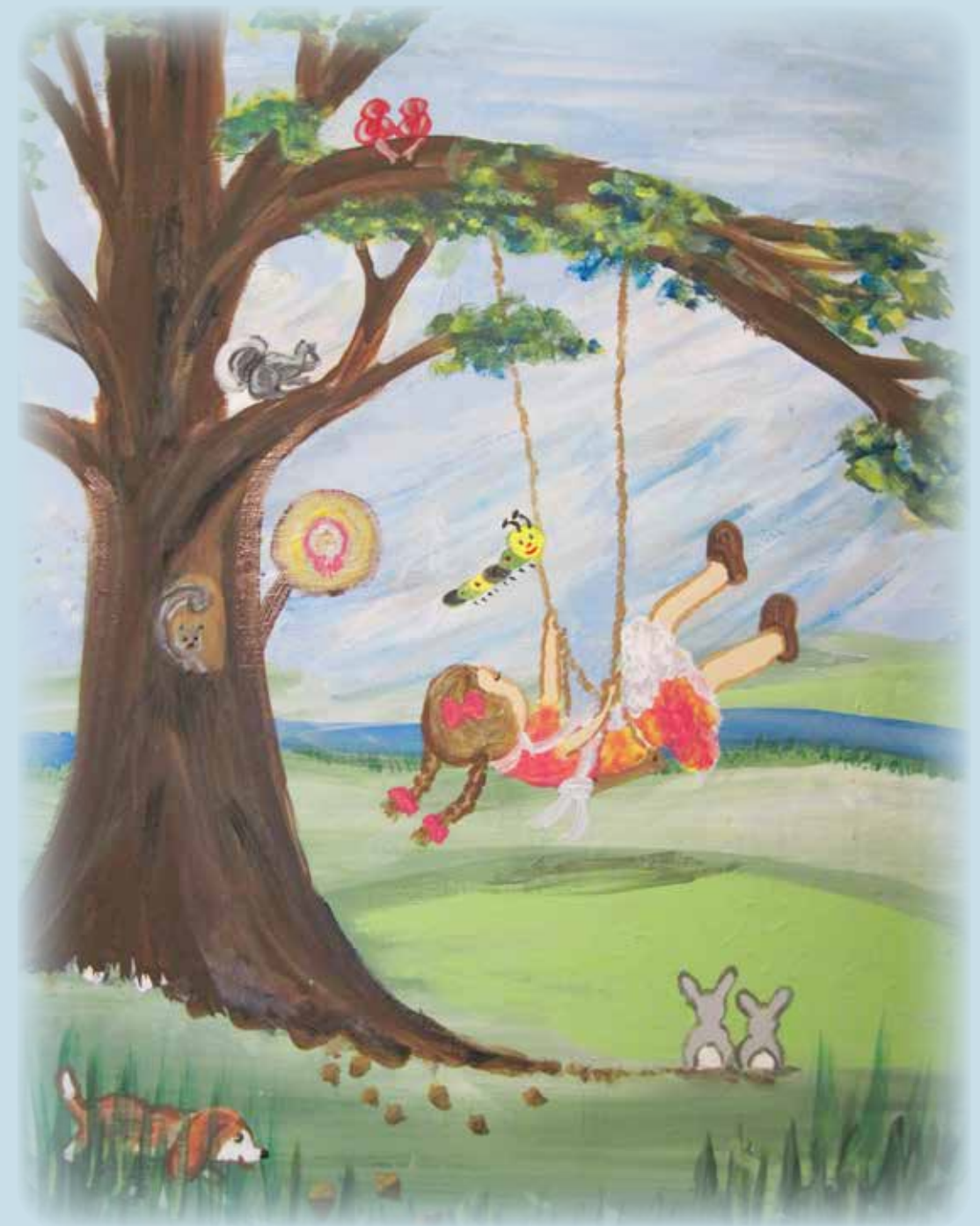
“That’s a wonderful dream,” Lily-Jane said.

“But I woke up the same,” Carlos sniffled. “Maybe my dream is too big.”





She sat him on her shoulder and climbed onto the swing. "I think the size of your dream is just right. I believe you will have wings someday."



As they sat in the swing under the oak tree, Lily-Jane had an idea to help Carlos feel as if he were flying. She told him to hang on tight as she pumped her feet as high as she could. When the swing reached its greatest height, they could see a meadow and the river winding through the valley. They looked at each other and giggled with glee.

His biggest smile would come the day she placed him atop her kite during a windstorm.



When Lily-Jane told Nana about her new friend, Nana laughed to herself, knowing that caterpillars don't really talk. But wanting to protect Lily-Jane's heart, she just smiled and gently explained, "You are right that Carlos will have wings when he becomes a butterfly, but did you know that he will migrate with the other monarchs to Mexico in the fall?"

"Oh no! He can't go," Lily-Jane protested.

"He has to follow his instincts," Nana told her.

"But why?" Lily-Jane demanded.

"It's too cold here in the wintertime, and Carlos will feel himself called to where monarchs are meant to be," Nana explained. "But I have heard that some can return to their birthplace in the spring."