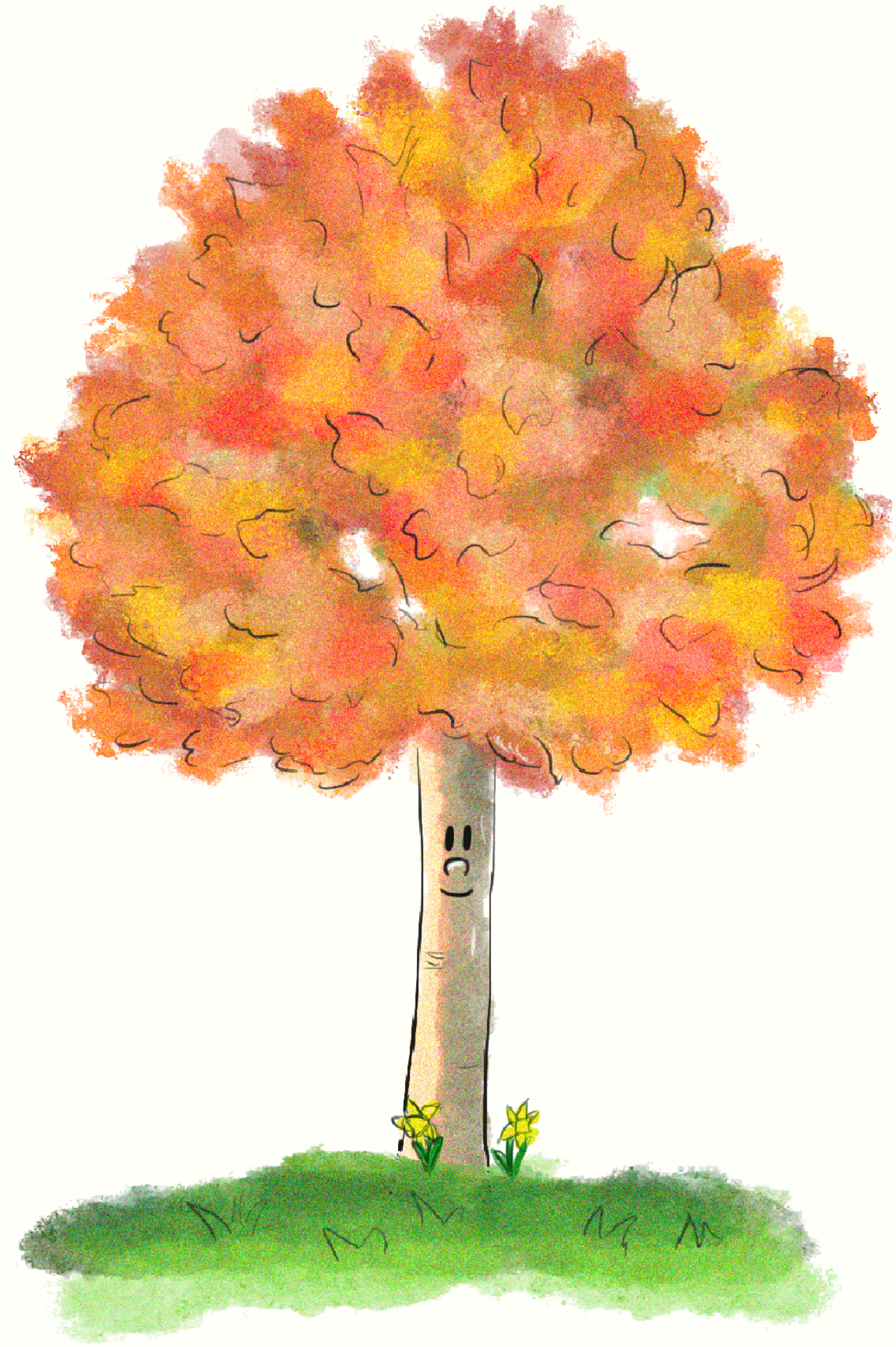


 Marvin   
The Maple Tree



Richard Littledale  
*Illustrated by* Tara Simmons

## **A note to parents & carers**

To lose a person we love is a seismic shock at any age. With the loss of that person, the world changes in an instant. When a child loses an adult, whether it is a family member, a neighbour, or a friend -it can be hard for them to process what has happened and harder still to articulate it. This story is designed to help you have that hardest of conversations. As children read this tiny tale of Marvin's loss - Maybe they can reflect on their own...

This is story of Marvin the  
Maple.

Marvin lives in a small grove  
of trees just on the edge of  
the park. On Summer days, he  
loves to watch the children  
play on the swings and on  
Winter days they come to  
gather snow from beneath the  
trees and roll them up for  
snowmen.

In the Spring, his little  
roots tickle when the  
daffodils come up between  
them, and in the Autumn, he  
adds his tiny leaves to the  
pile from all the big trees  
around him





Marvin is not alone. Around him there are other trees.

There is a big old hornbeam, whose branches creak in the wind and whose leaves catch the morning sun just so.

There is a very old beech whose smooth trunk and strong branches seem to reach all the way up to the sky.

There is an old oak too. He never says much, and the children don't climb on him as much as they used to, but sometimes when the wind is rustling his leaves, Marvin feels like he can hear all the wisdom of the ages drifting down to him from that big old oak.

Today, Marvin is sad.

If you've never seen a sad tree - then you maybe need to look a little closer. Sometimes it's in the branches - they droop a little, as if someone were pulling them down.

Sometimes it's in the leaves, as they seem to curl up a little bit at the edges.





April, a blackbird, has seen it though, and she has fluttered down to ask him what is wrong.

'Everything' he says.

'I woke up this morning and I knew something was wrong. The whole world felt different. I should have been in the shade from the old oak tree - but instead I felt the heat of the hot, hot sun.

I should have heard the wind waking up his rustl leaves - but I heard nothing.

I should have looked up through his branches to see little patches of the blue, blue sky- but now I can see it all.

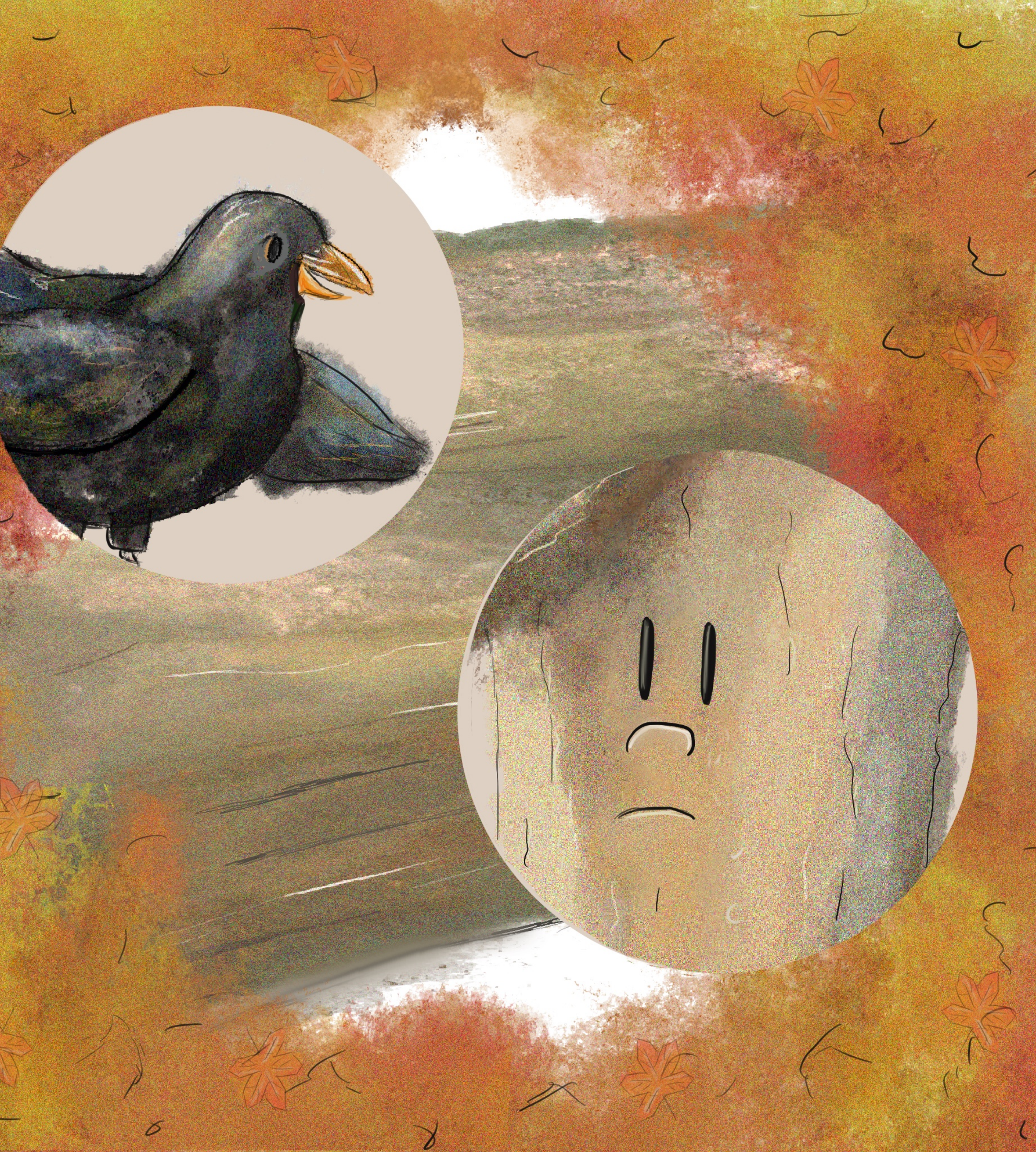
I felt safe with him there to watch me'. The little tree seemed to droop even further down

April put her head on one side, the way blackbirds love to do - and she could see the problem.

In the night, the old oak had fallen - and it would not stand tall again.

There would be no more snow building up on it's branches, and there would be no golden leaves when the Autumn came.





Landing gently on Marvin's lowest branch, which bent beneath her weight - she tried to explain.

'I think he was tired', she said.

'Maybe it was time for him to lie down now, instead of standing up'. The little tree shivered at the thought. 'Even the biggest of trees fall sometimes Marvin' she chirped gently.

'You're the one the children will see first when they come to play. Come Autumn, they'll all be playing with your orange-golden leaves'

Marvin brightened, just a little at the thought of that.

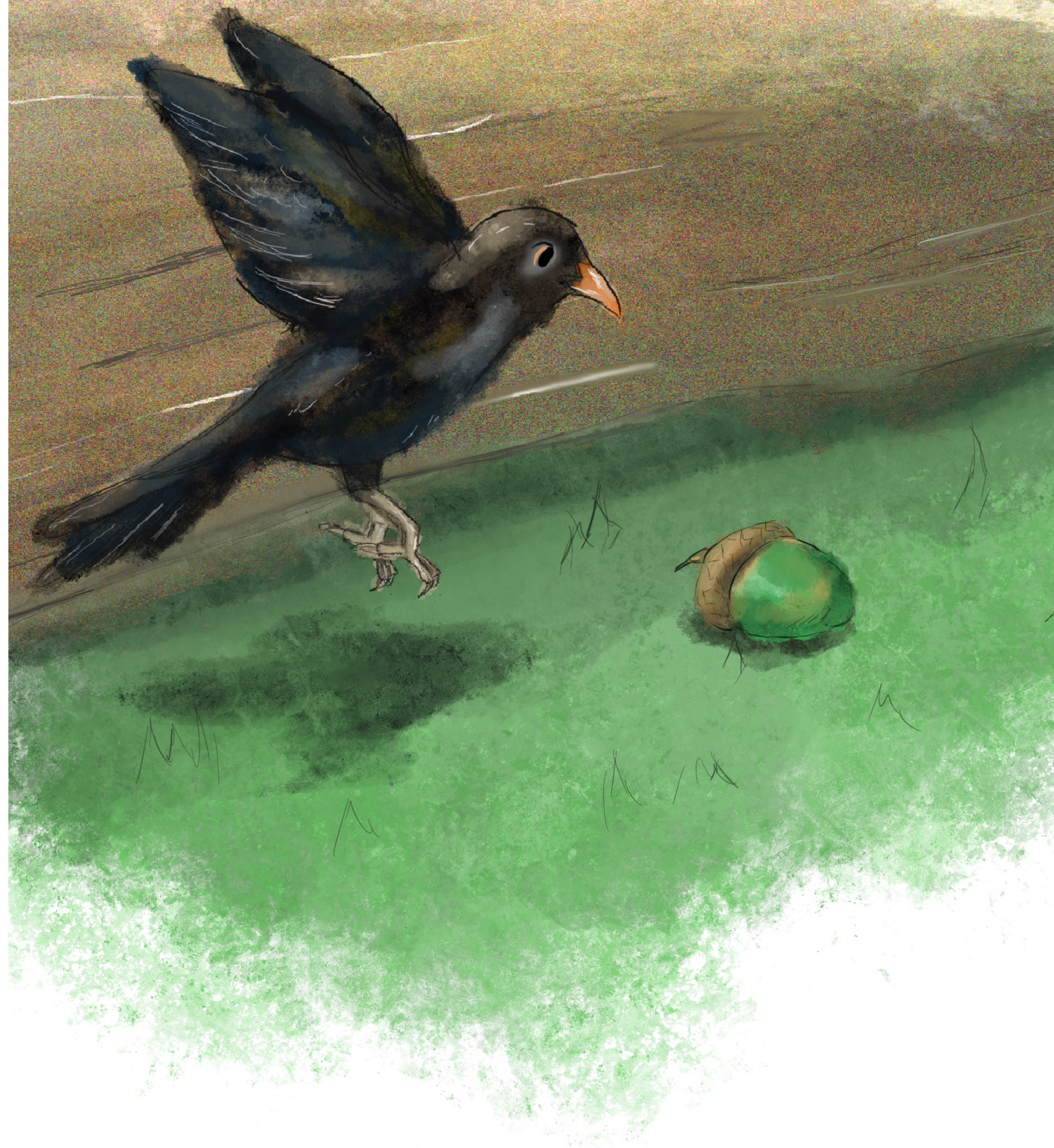


The branch bounced up and down  
as April flew off to where the  
great tree lay.

Coming back with something in  
her beak, she wedged it  
tightly in a little V between  
Marvin's trunk and his biggest  
branch.

It was a bright green acorn,  
bursting with life.

'Look Marvin' she chirped-  
'all of him is wrapped up in  
all of this. If you hold onto  
it, he'll always be with you.



With that, she flapped her wings and made for the clear blue sky.

'I'll be back', she called.





Marvin stretched his branches  
a little, being careful not to  
drop the acorn-

and he reached out to hug the  
big blue sky

