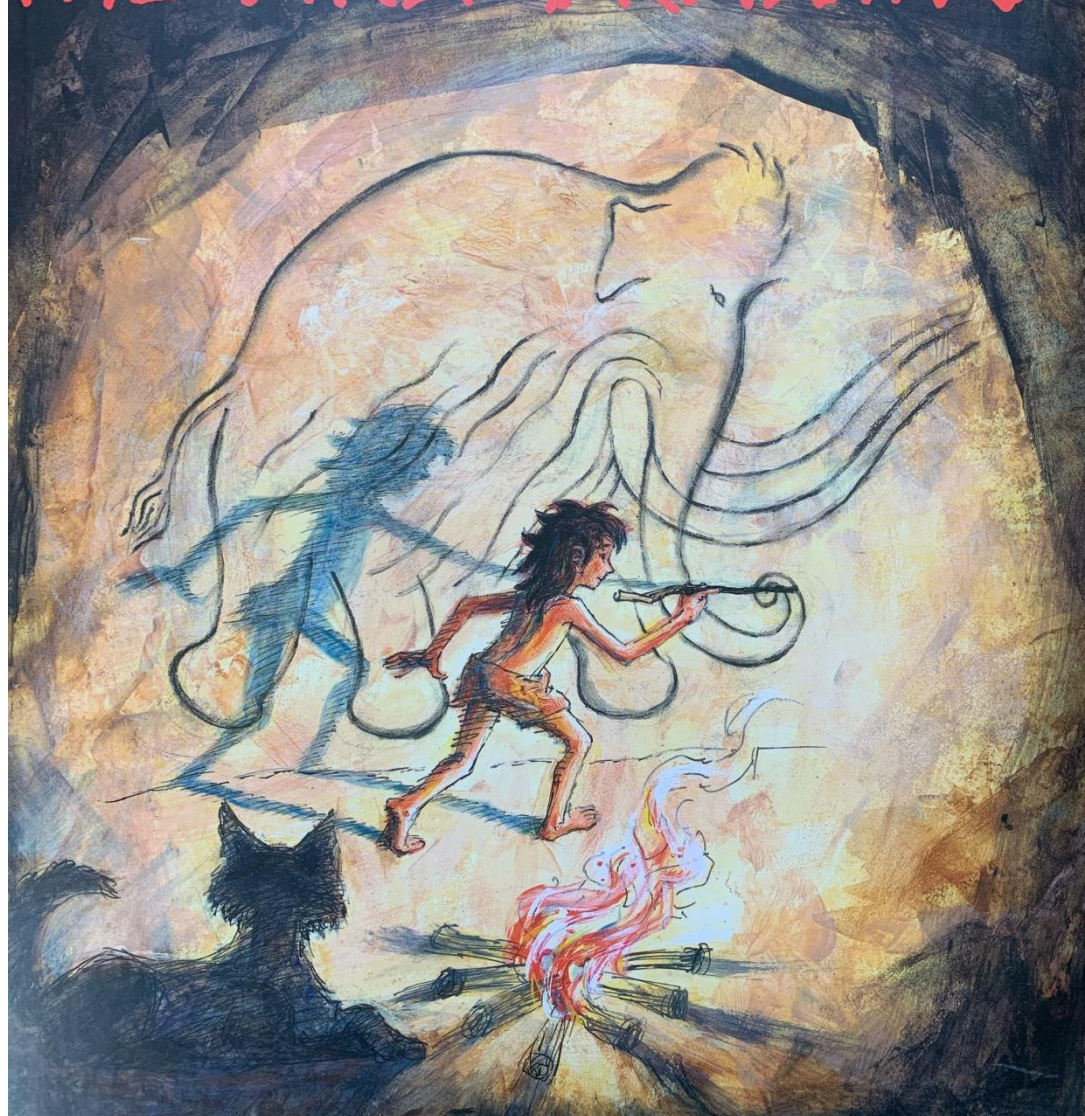


THE FIRST DRAWING



by Caldecott Medalist

MORDICAI GERSTEIN

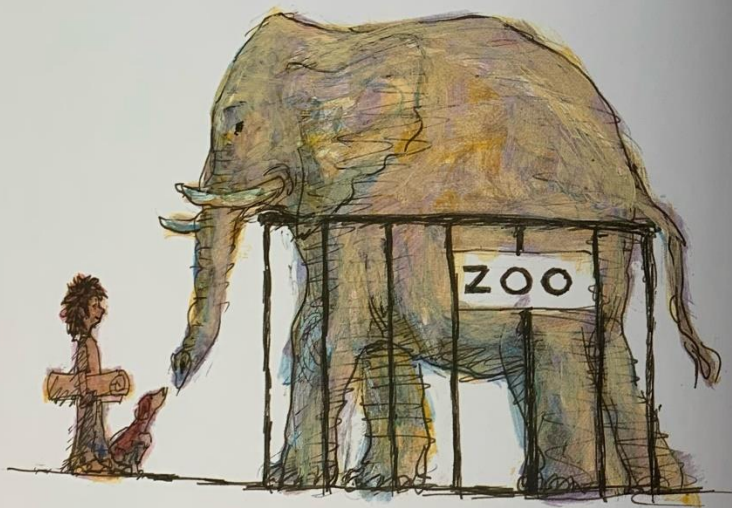
*Some of the oldest drawings ever found were made
more than thirty thousand years ago in a cave in southern France.
In that same cave is the footprint of an eight-year-old child.*

Alongside it, the footprint of a wolf.



For Susan, with love.
Your beautiful drawings
open our eyes to
our own imaginations.

—MG



MORDICAI GERSTEIN

THE FIRST DRAWING



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the walls of the cave he shares with his family, but no one else can see them until he makes the world's first drawing.
Includes author's note on cave drawings. • ISBN 978-0-316-20478-1 • [1. Drawing—Fiction. 2. Imagination—Fiction.
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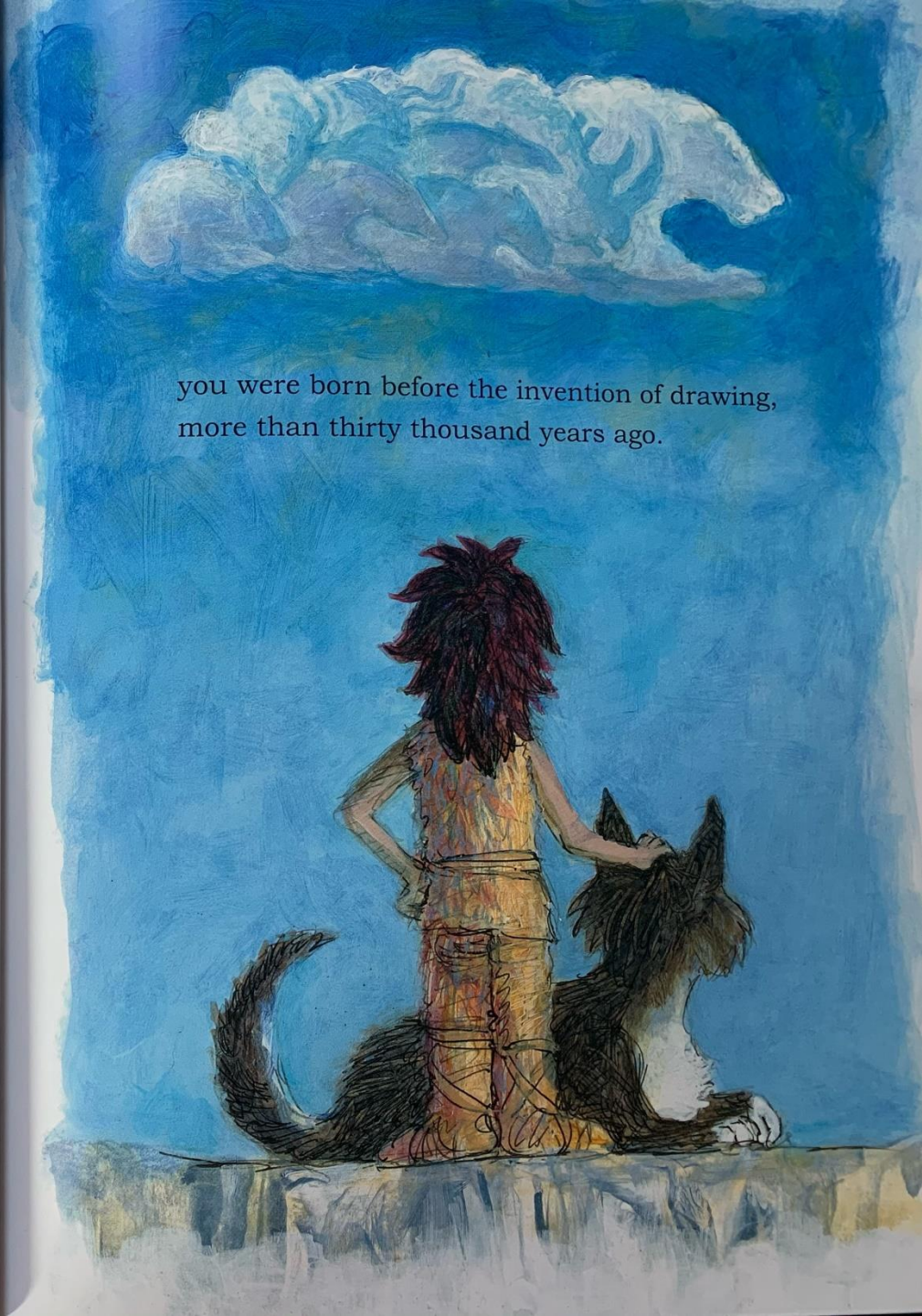


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Imagine...

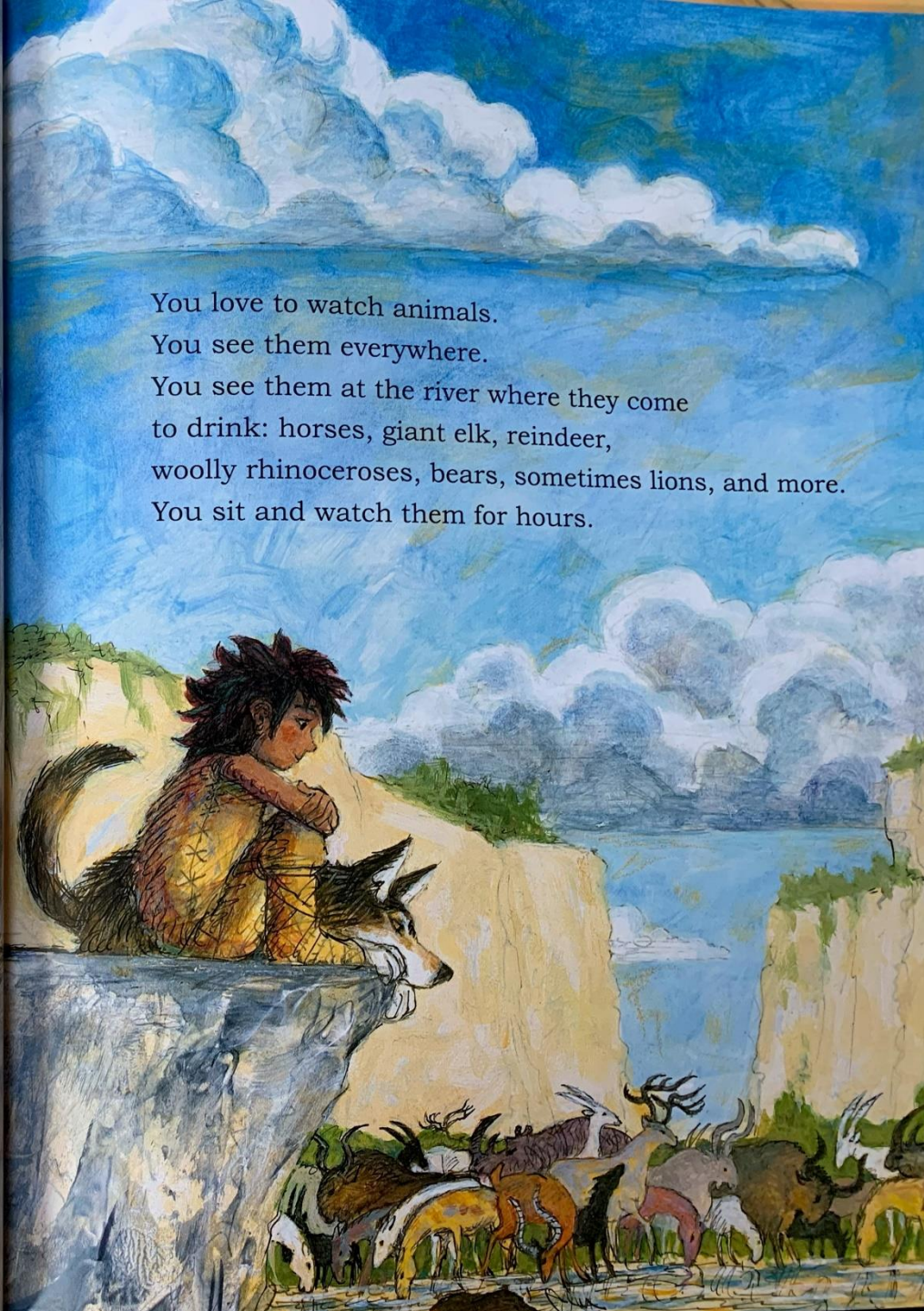


you were born before the invention of drawing,
more than thirty thousand years ago.

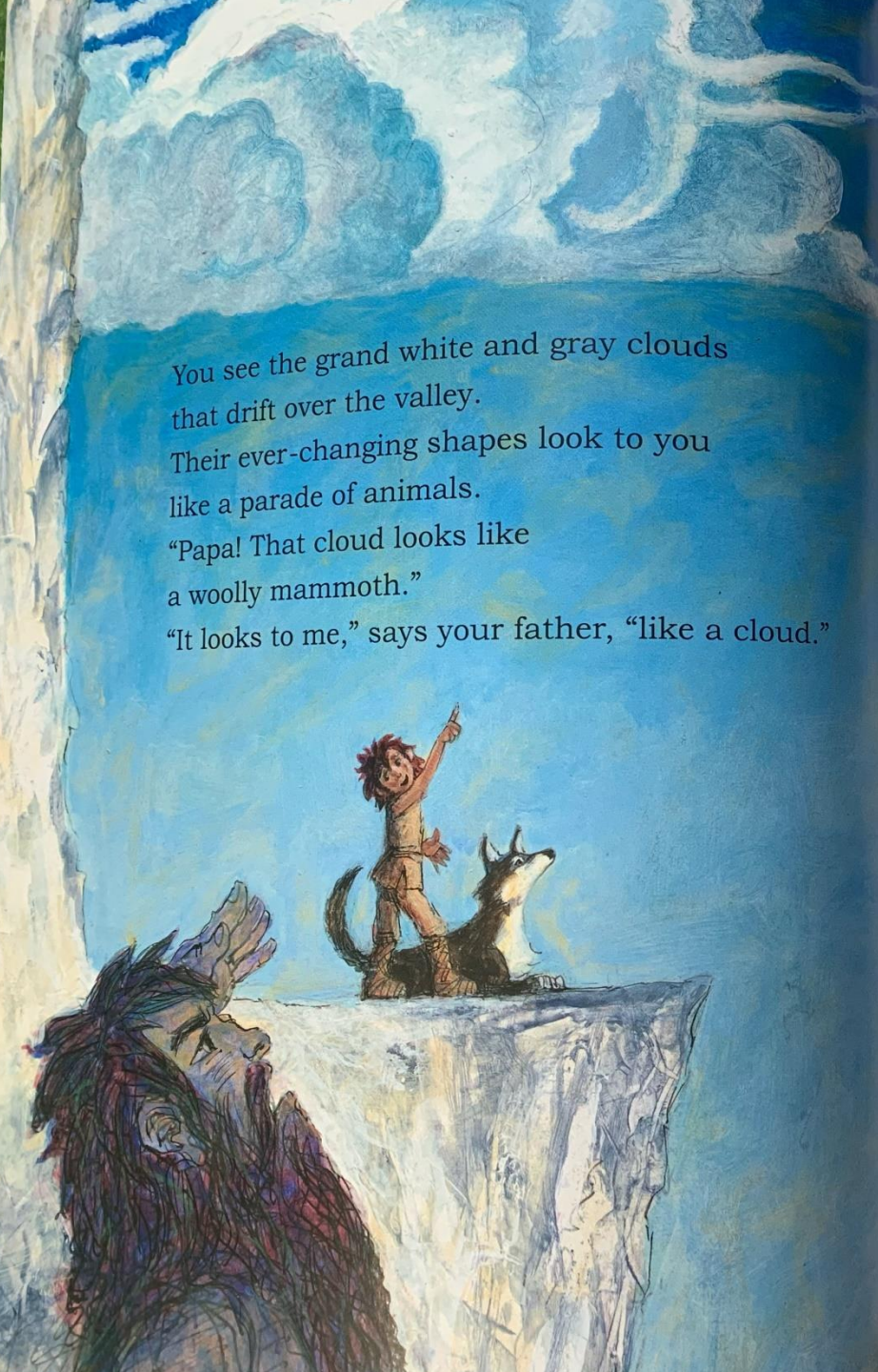




You live in a cave with your parents, grandparents, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts, many cousins, and your wolf, Shadow. It's a big cave.



You love to watch animals.
You see them everywhere.
You see them at the river where they come to drink: horses, giant elk, reindeer, woolly rhinoceroses, bears, sometimes lions, and more.
You sit and watch them for hours.



You see the grand white and gray clouds
that drift over the valley.
Their ever-changing shapes look to you
like a parade of animals.

“Papa! That cloud looks like
a woolly mammoth.”

“It looks to me,” says your father, “like a cloud.”



When collecting stones for spearheads and knives,
you think some look like animals, too.

“Mama! This stone looks like a bear!”

“To me,” says your mother, “it looks like a stone.”

You wonder, *Why can't they see what I see?*



At night, wrapped in deerskins, you see shadow images
of all the animals again in the firelight flickering over the
bumps and hollows of the cave walls. And they seem to move.
“Look, Mama—galloping horses!”
“What horses? Go to sleep.”
“Papa, Grandpa, there on the ceiling—elk!”



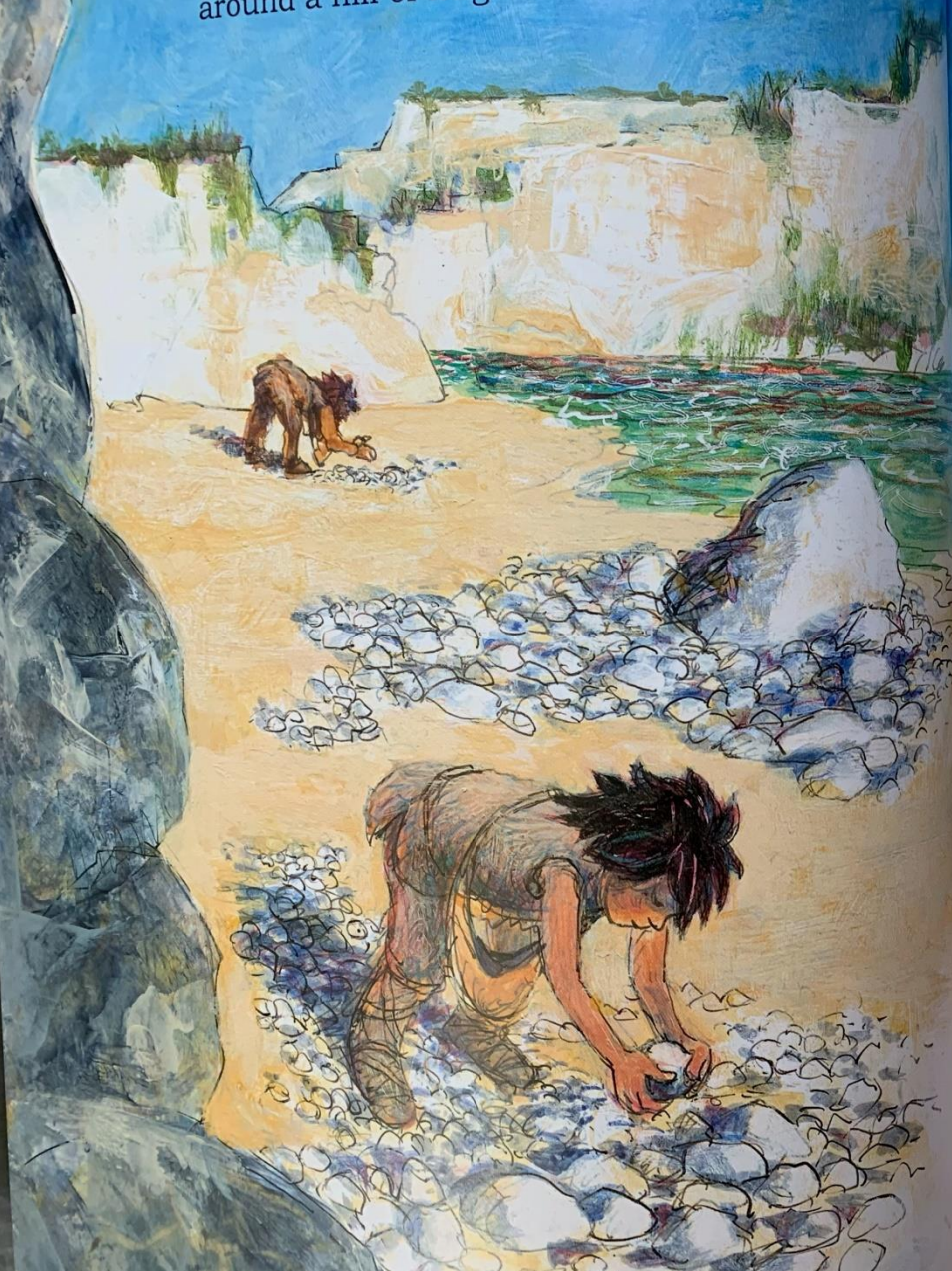
“There are no elk. Go to sleep!”
“Sisters, brothers, cousins,
don’t you see the rhinoceroses?”
“No!” shouts everyone.
“Now go to sleep!”



They call you "Child Who Sees What Isn't There."
How can you make them see what you see?
Every night you watch the animals on the walls.
Then you dream you're running with them, like one of them.



One morning you're out with your father
searching for stones. You wander off
around a hill of huge boulders.



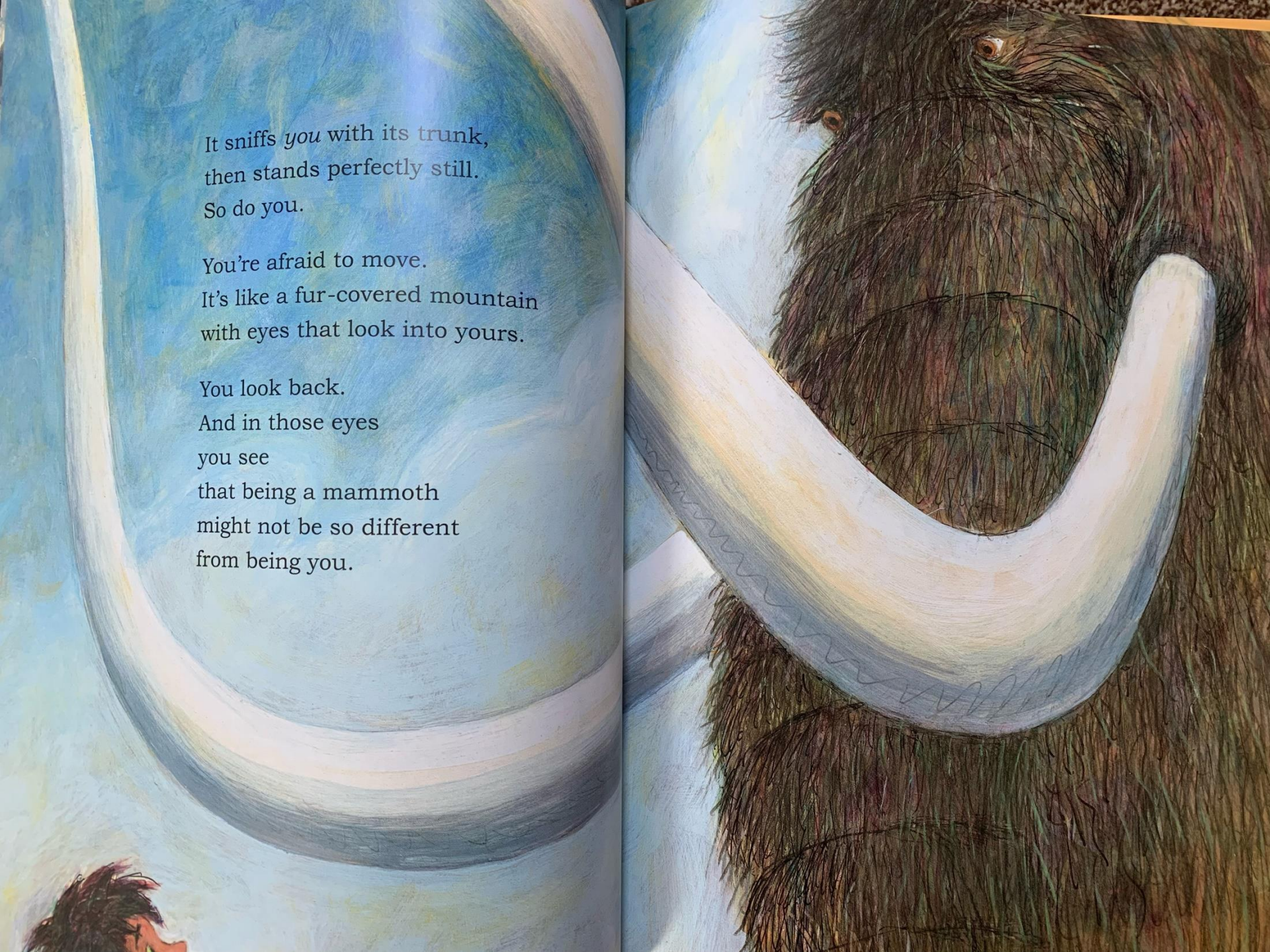
You look up
and see, right in front of you...





...a **WOOLLY MAMMOTH!**

It's not made of lights and shadows or clouds.
You can smell it, warm and musky.

The image is a two-page spread from a children's book. The left page features a large, curved, white mammoth trunk against a background of blue and green brushstrokes. The right page shows a close-up of a mammoth's face, covered in dark brown, shaggy fur, with its trunk curving downwards. Two small, brown eyes are visible in the fur. In the bottom left corner of the left page, the top of a small child's head with dark hair is visible, looking up at the mammoth.

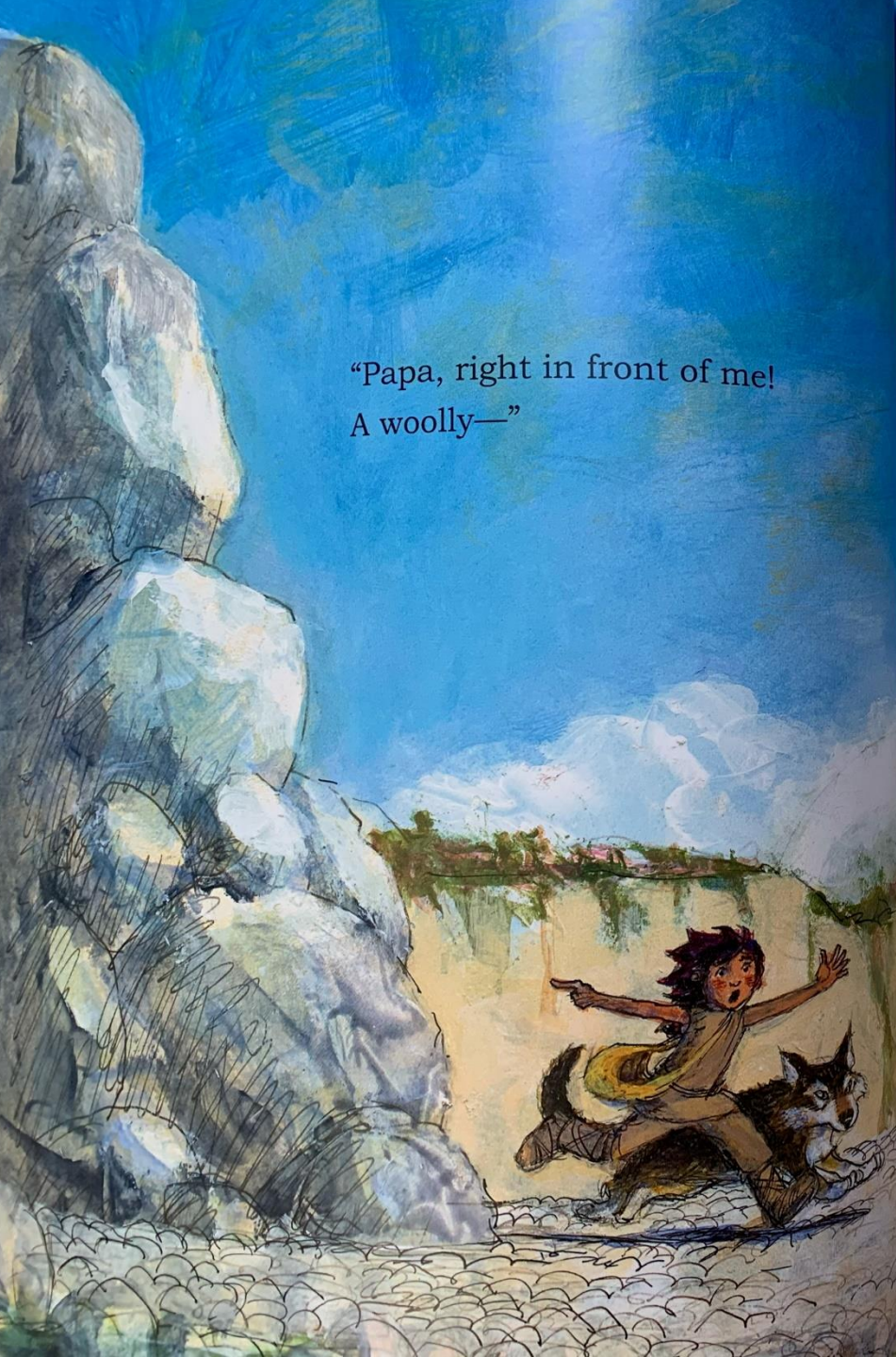
It sniffs *you* with its trunk,
then stands perfectly still.
So do you.

You're afraid to move.
It's like a fur-covered mountain
with eyes that look into yours.


You look back.
And in those eyes
you see
that being a mammoth
might not be so different
from being you.

The mammoth sighs through its trunk.
And like a mountain walking,
it turns and slowly lumbers away.
You begin to breathe again.



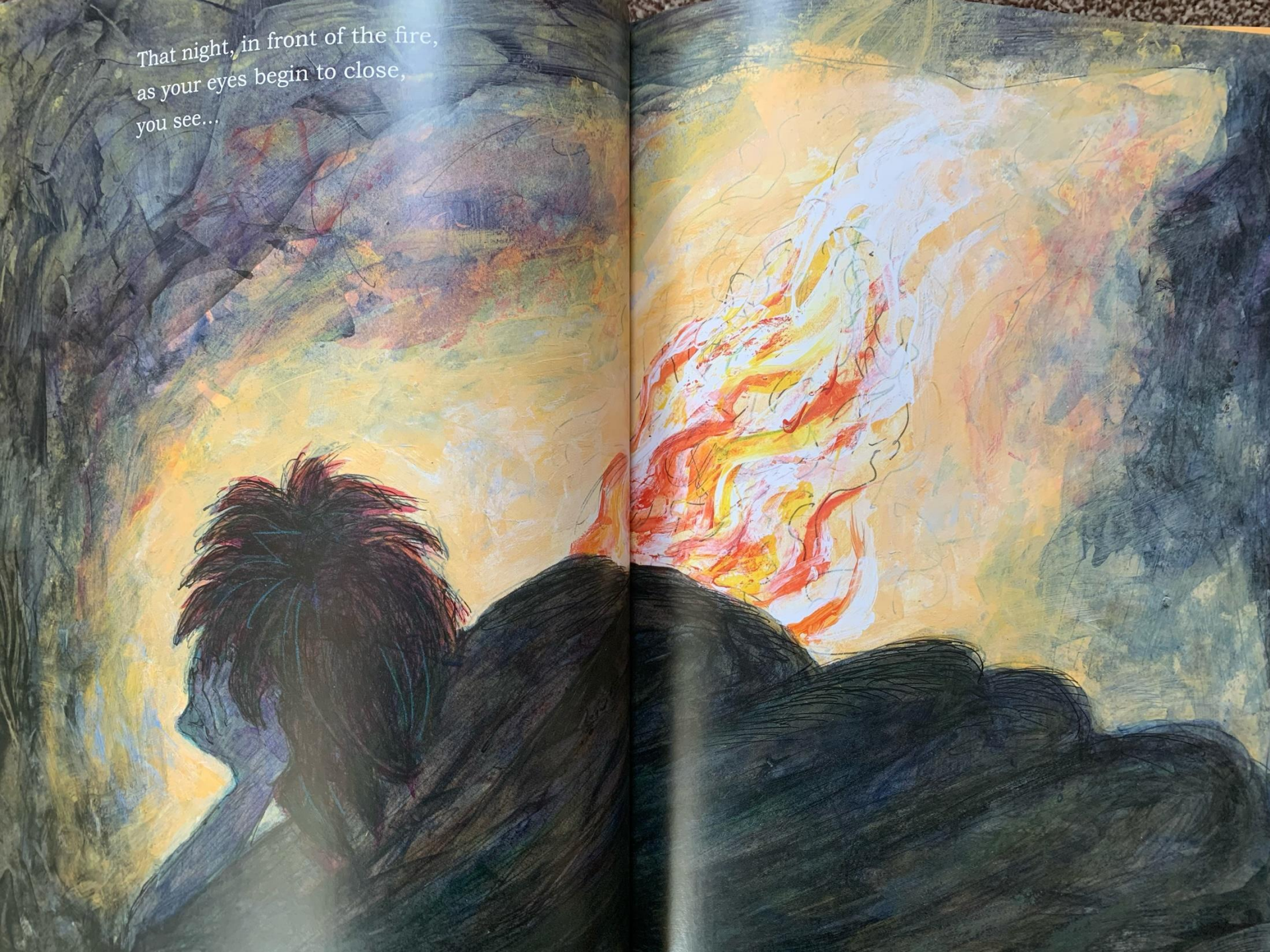
A child with dark hair, wearing a brown tunic and a yellow sash, is running towards the viewer on a rocky path. A dog is running alongside the child. The background features a large, craggy rock formation on the left and a blue sky with white clouds. The style is a textured, painterly illustration.

“Papa, right in front of me!
A woolly—”

A large, bearded man with a thick, dark beard and hair, wearing a brown tunic and a yellow sash, stands on a rocky path. He has his hand to his forehead in a gesture of distress or worry. The background shows a rocky landscape under a blue sky with white clouds. The style is a textured, painterly illustration.

“Child! Child!” Your father sighs.
“What are we going to
do with you?”

That night, in front of the fire,
as your eyes begin to close,
you see...



...an image on the wall, so big and so real.

You sit up and say,

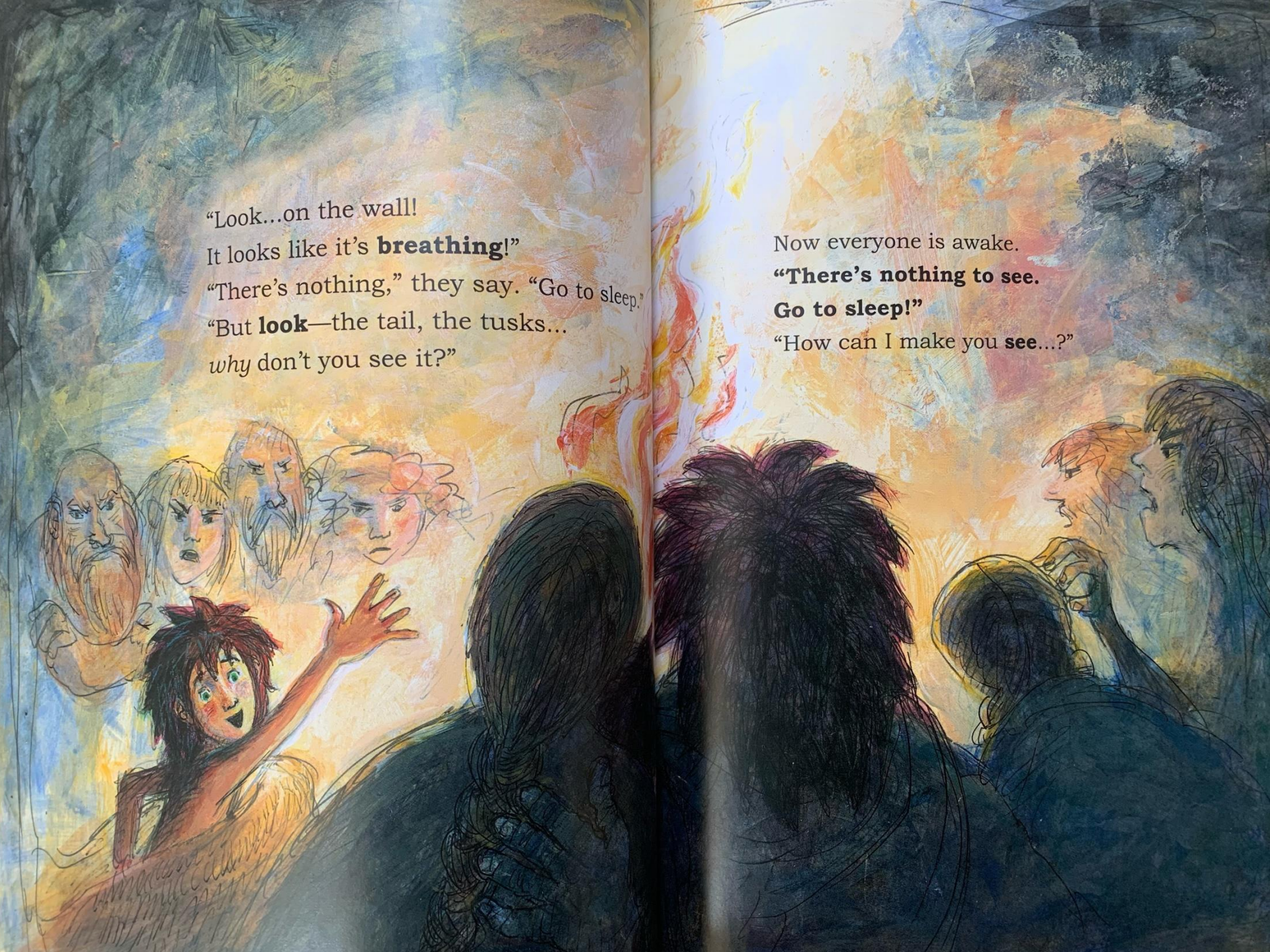
“Yow!”



“Huh?” says your father.

“What’s wrong?” says your mother.





“Look...on the wall!

It looks like it’s **breathing!**”

“There’s nothing,” they say. “Go to sleep.”

“But **look**—the tail, the tusks...
why don’t you see it?”

Now everyone is awake.

“**There’s nothing to see.**

Go to sleep!”

“How can I make you **see**...?”

And without thinking, you leap out of bed,
take a burnt stick from the fire, and run to the wall.



“Look! Here’s the tail. Here, the back legs.”
You make marks on the bumpy wall to show them where to look.



“...and the back...”

the front legs...

“the ears...the eye—watching us...its trunk...and its tusks—”



“STOP!” shouts your father.

He aims his spear at the wall.
Everyone huddles by the doorway,
the wide-eyed children clutching
their parents' legs.
"I can see it!" gasps your father.
"This...is **MAGIC!**"



"No, Papa," you say. "I'm just showing you...."



And you look at what you've done.
You have made the world's first drawing.



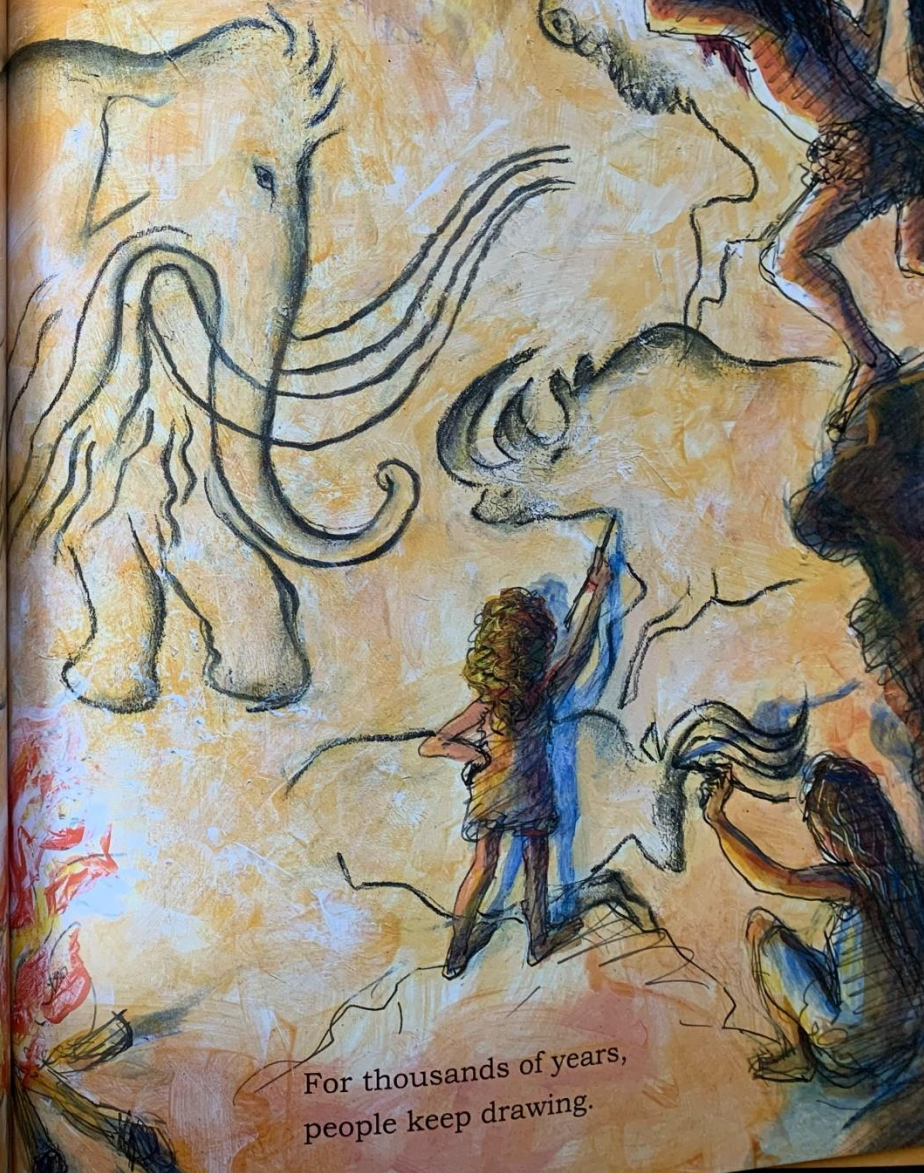
"Yes!" you say.
"It is magic!"



Now everyone can see what you see.
And so you make more drawings.

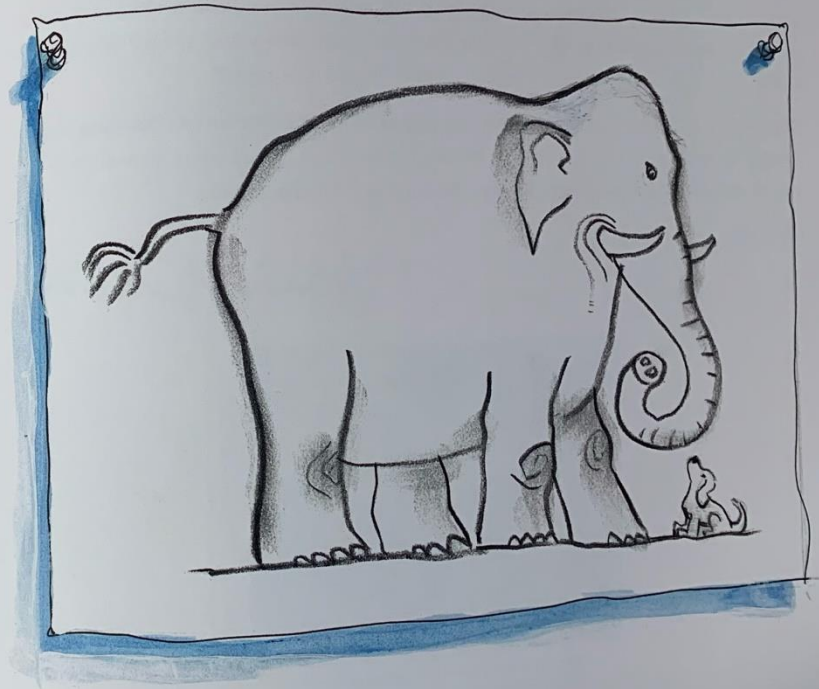


You show your parents,
grandparents, sisters,
brothers, uncles, aunts,
and cousins how to draw, too.



For thousands of years,
people keep drawing.

Even today, people are still doing it.
And that's how—
if you'd been around
more than thirty thousand years ago—
you might have invented drawing.



And it's *still* **magic!**

Can you imagine who made
the world's first drawing?



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