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Opening extract from
The Story of Life
A First Book About Evolution

Written by
Catherine Barr and Steve Williams

Illustrated by
Amy Husband

Published by
Frances Lincoln Children's Books

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The truth is stranger than fiction... a story for Hannah,
Iola and Web and families all around the world – CB

For Jules, Ames and Els, with love – SW

For Jay, with love – AH



JANETTA OTTER-BARRY BOOKS

**The publishers and authors would like to thank
Dr Brian Rosen of The Natural History Museum, London
for his invaluable advice and support as science consultant for this book.**

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First published in Great Britain and in the USA in 2015 by
Frances Lincoln Children's Books,
74-77 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF
www.franceslincoln.com

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Saffron House, 6-10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-84780-485-3

Illustrated with mixed media and collage

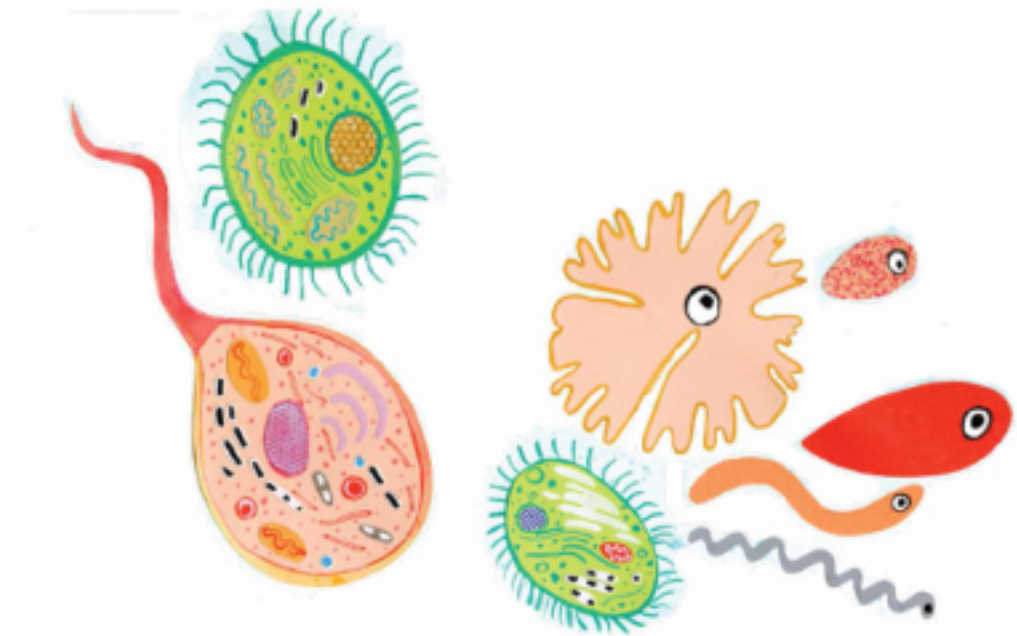
Set in Gill Sans

Printed in China

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The Story of LIFE

A first book about evolution



Catherine Barr and Steve Williams
Illustrated by Amy Husband

F
FRANCES LINCOLN
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

At first, nothing lived on Earth.
It was a very hot and noisy place.

Choking gas exploded from volcanoes
and oceans of lava bubbled around
the globe.

Fountains of melting rock spattered
burning land under clouds of ash.

And massive rocks
from space, called
meteoroids, smashed
into churning seas.

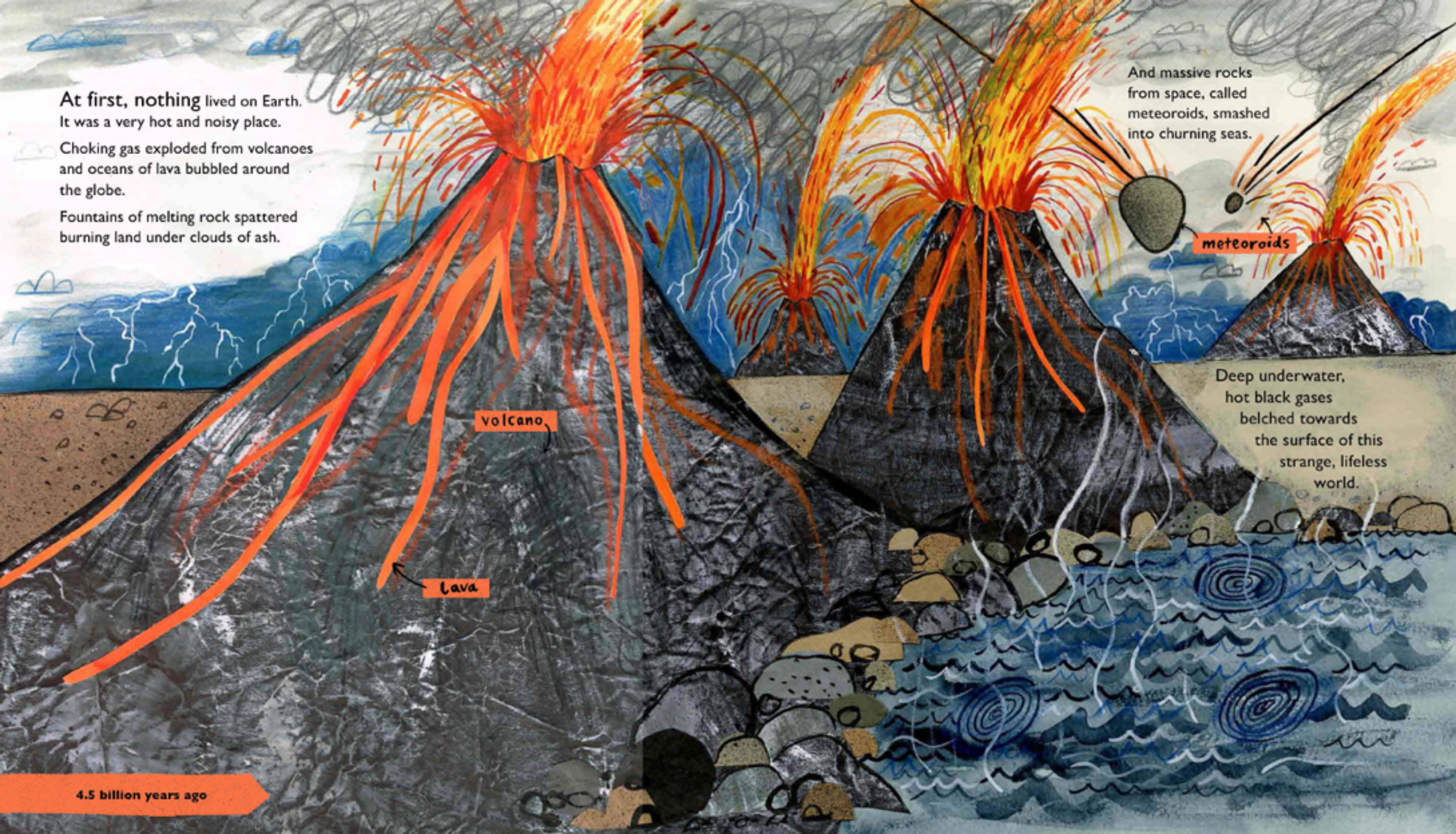
meteoroids

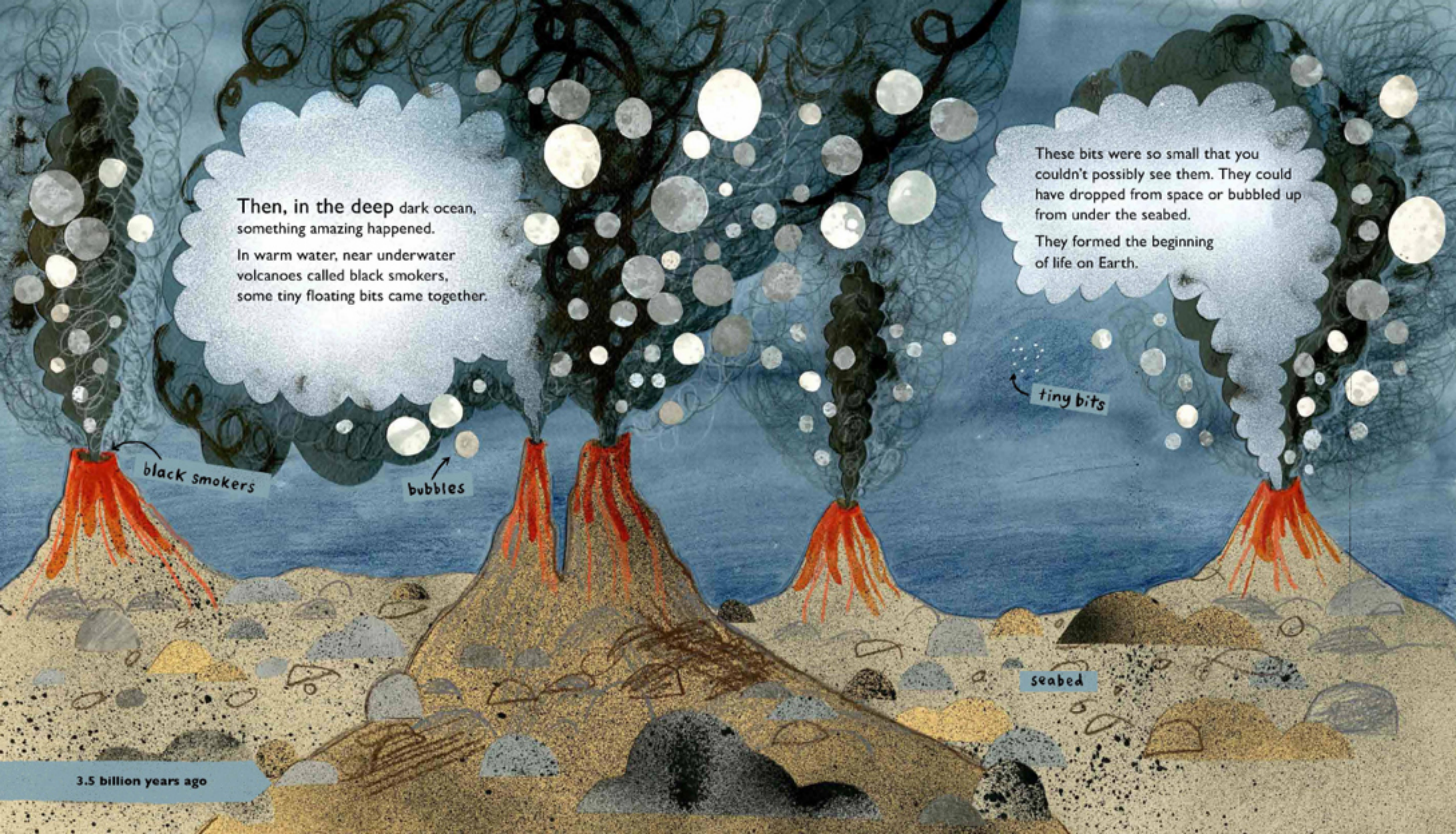
volcano

lava

Deep underwater,
hot black gases
belched towards
the surface of this
strange, lifeless
world.

4.5 billion years ago



An artistic illustration of a deep-sea hydrothermal vent system. In the foreground, a sandy seabed is dotted with various rocks and small, dark, rounded structures. Four black smoker vents are visible, each with a red, lava-like base and a black, smoke-like plume rising from it. The plumes are filled with numerous white and grey bubbles of varying sizes. The background is a dark blue, swirling ocean. Two large, white, cloud-like shapes contain text. Labels with arrows point to 'black smokers', 'bubbles', 'tiny bits', and 'seabed'.

Then, in the deep dark ocean,
something amazing happened.

In warm water, near underwater
volcanoes called black smokers,
some tiny floating bits came together.

These bits were so small that you
couldn't possibly see them. They could
have dropped from space or bubbled up
from under the seabed.

They formed the beginning
of life on Earth.

black smokers

bubbles

tiny bits

seabed

3.5 billion years ago

This first life was just an incredibly small shapeless blob, called a cell.

first cell

As time passed cells lived together, making sticky, slimy mats that grew into mounds as big as pillows.

slimy mat of cells

3 billion years ago

invisible oxygen

invisible oxygen

first continents

Some cells started using sunlight, water and a gas in the air, to help them grow.

Cells multiplied into billions. And so the seas clouded with lots of new kinds of life.

Some cells puffed out an invisible gas called oxygen, which completely changed the air and even the colour of the planet. Circling the globe, the oxygen turned black rocks shades of yellow, red and brown.

