

This book is dedicated to you.
You are braver than you know and mightier
than you can ever imagine. Be bold.
—A. B. and D. R.

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Sofia Valdez was inspired by not one person, but many. Some small. Some tall. Some young. Some old. People from every part of the world. Girls. Boys. Women. Men. People who saw a problem and worked to fix it. Even when that was hard. Even when it was scary. Some are famous; most are not. They took one small step and then took another and another, and they inspired others. Through their journeys, they changed the world.

The illustrations in this book were made with watercolors, pen, and ink on Arches paper. For some pieces, pencil and graph paper were also employed.

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She and Abuelo went out every week
to help elderly friends around Blue River Creek
who couldn't get out and about on their own
and with no place to gather, were stuck home alone.





Raking the leaves, taking pets for a walk,

or just dropping by for a treat and a talk,

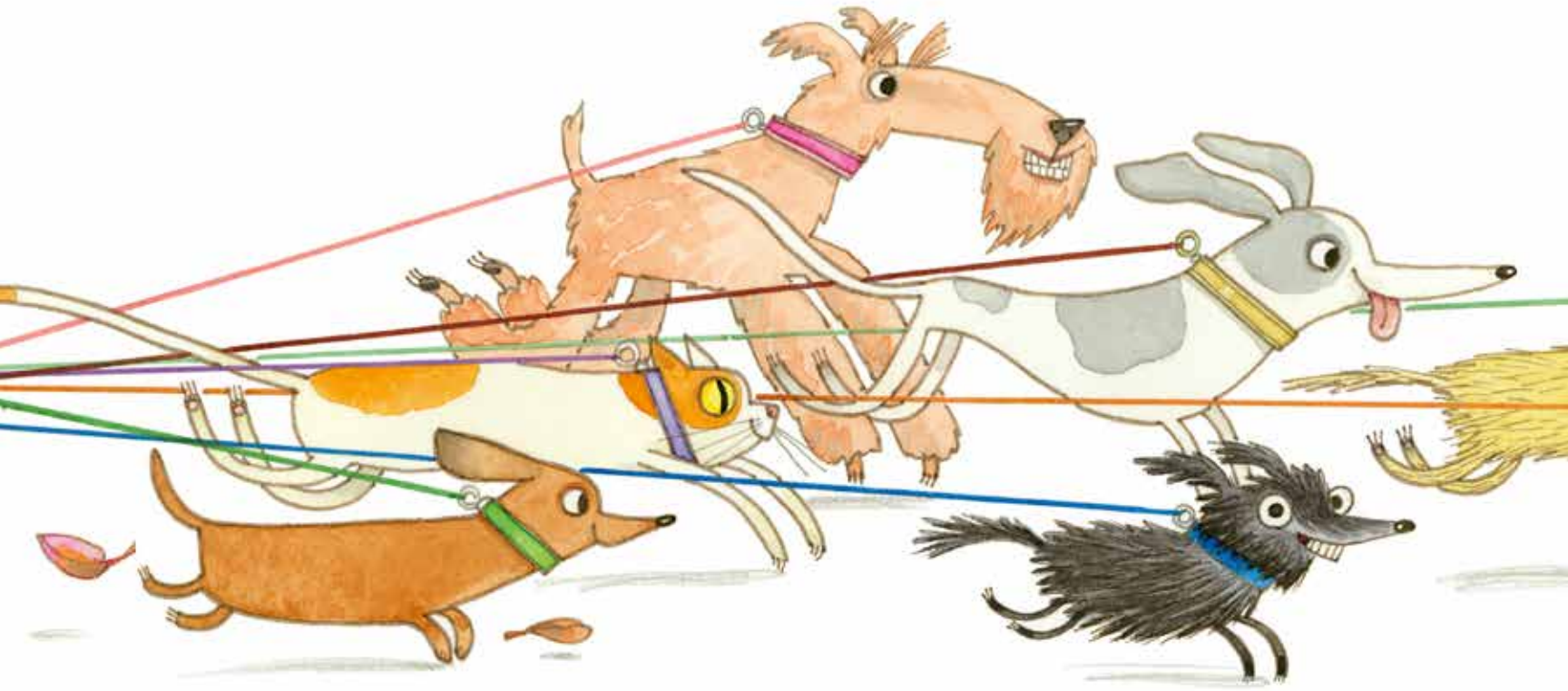
Sofia Valdez did as much as she could

for her family and friends and her whole neighborhood.

A dreamer. A doer. A real-life go-getter.

Most people like good,

but Sofia liked better.







except for that Tuesday when Pup saw the squirrel!

Each morning, Abuelo walked Sofi to class.

They walked home again along Blue River Pass.

Making plans. Munching cookies. Abuelo and girl . . .



Sofia scrambled to try to keep up with the hollering man and the bellowing pup.

With a howl, Pup took off, racing all through the town—*Over! Under! Beneath!* And around!


SODA
LUX



Up the squirrel ran to the top of a hill
made of leftover junk for the local landfill.
They reached the tip-top of that mountain of trash
which jiggled and broke with an earsplitting *CRASH!*



Down they all tumbled and hit with a *THUD*
on a moldy old pumpkin surrounded by mud.

"Ouch!" cried Abuelo. He struggled to stand.

"A dangerous mess!" he said, grasping her hand.





The next day Sofia walked to school solo
but it wasn't the same without her Abuelo.
"This is not right!" declared young Sofia,
who glared at Mount Trashmore and got an idea.