What Do You See When You Look At A Tree?



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For Phil – E.C.

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew carries out vital scientific and horticultural work to protect and restore trees and forests around the world. Kew Gardens is home to 14,000 trees including many that are rare and endangered. Around 40,000 trees grow at Wakehurst, Kew's wild botanic garden in Sussex.

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DUMMY

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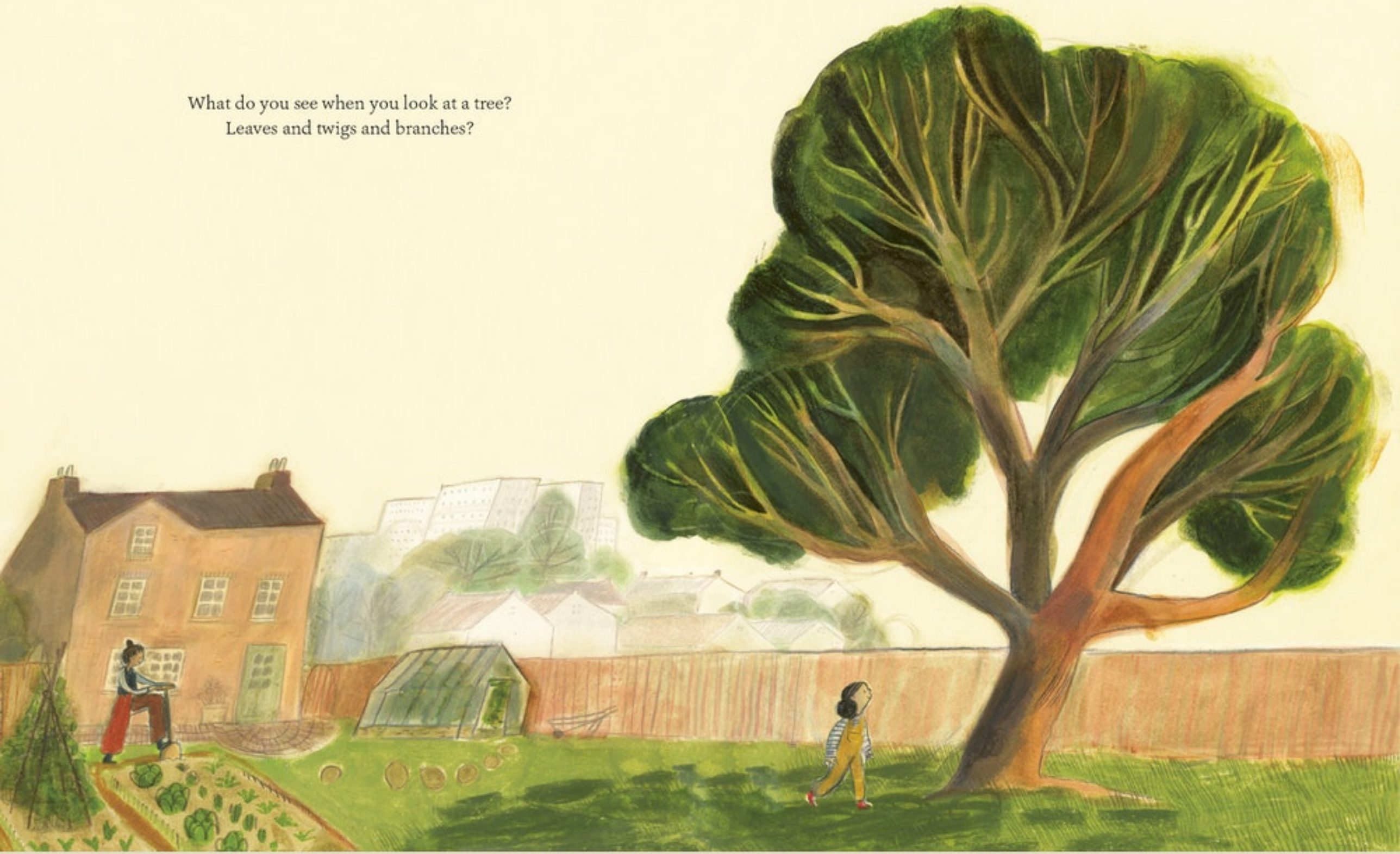
What Do You See When You Look At A Tree?



Emma Carlisle

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What do you see when you look at a tree?
Leaves and twigs and branches?

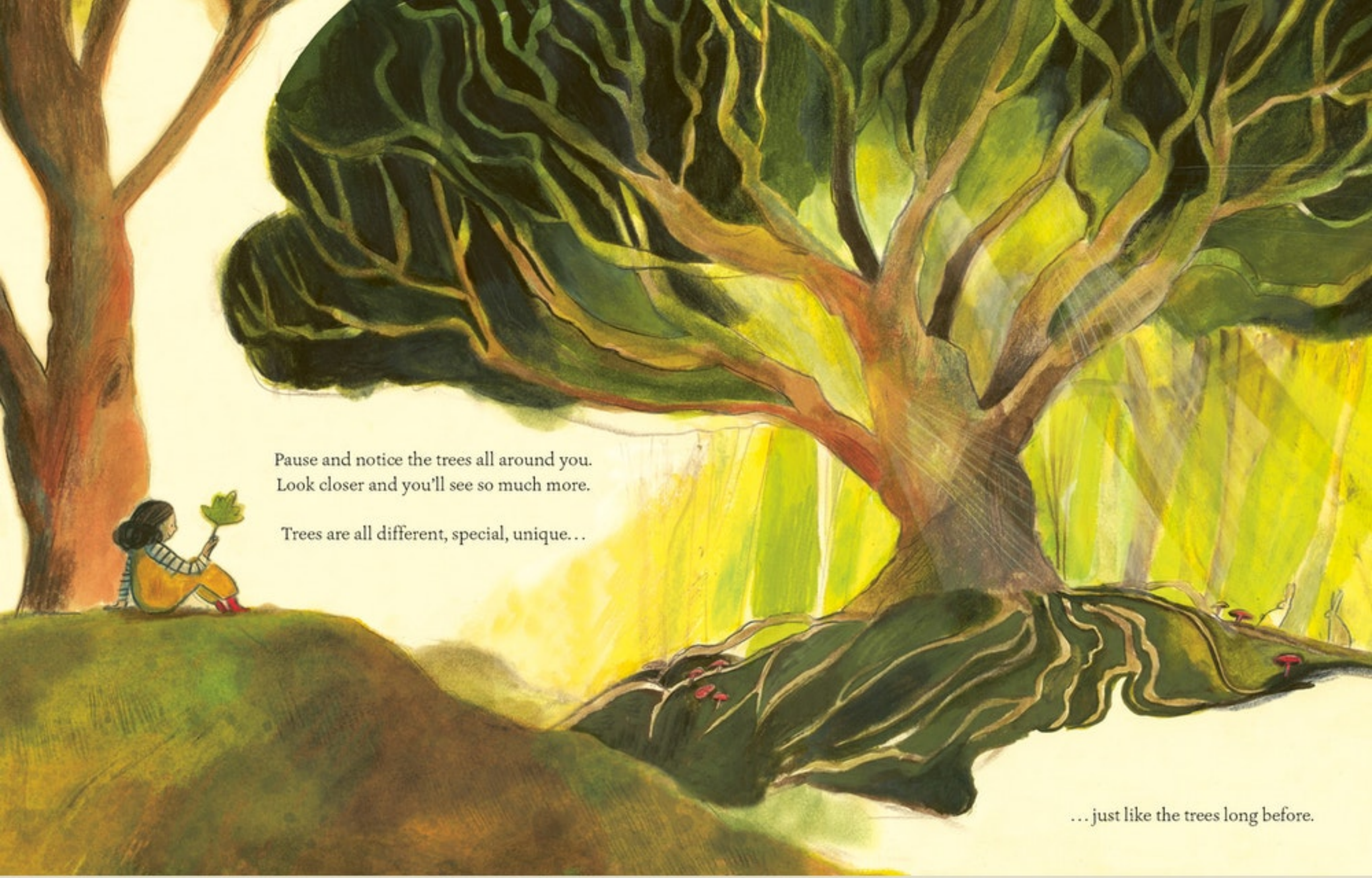


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Or do you see a living thing
that moves and breathes and dances?



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Pause and notice the trees all around you.
Look closer and you'll see so much more.

Trees are all different, special, unique...

...just like the trees long before.

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Is this tree here like any other?



Do any of these trees look the same?









Most trees have branches, leaves and a trunk.
But each has its own special name.

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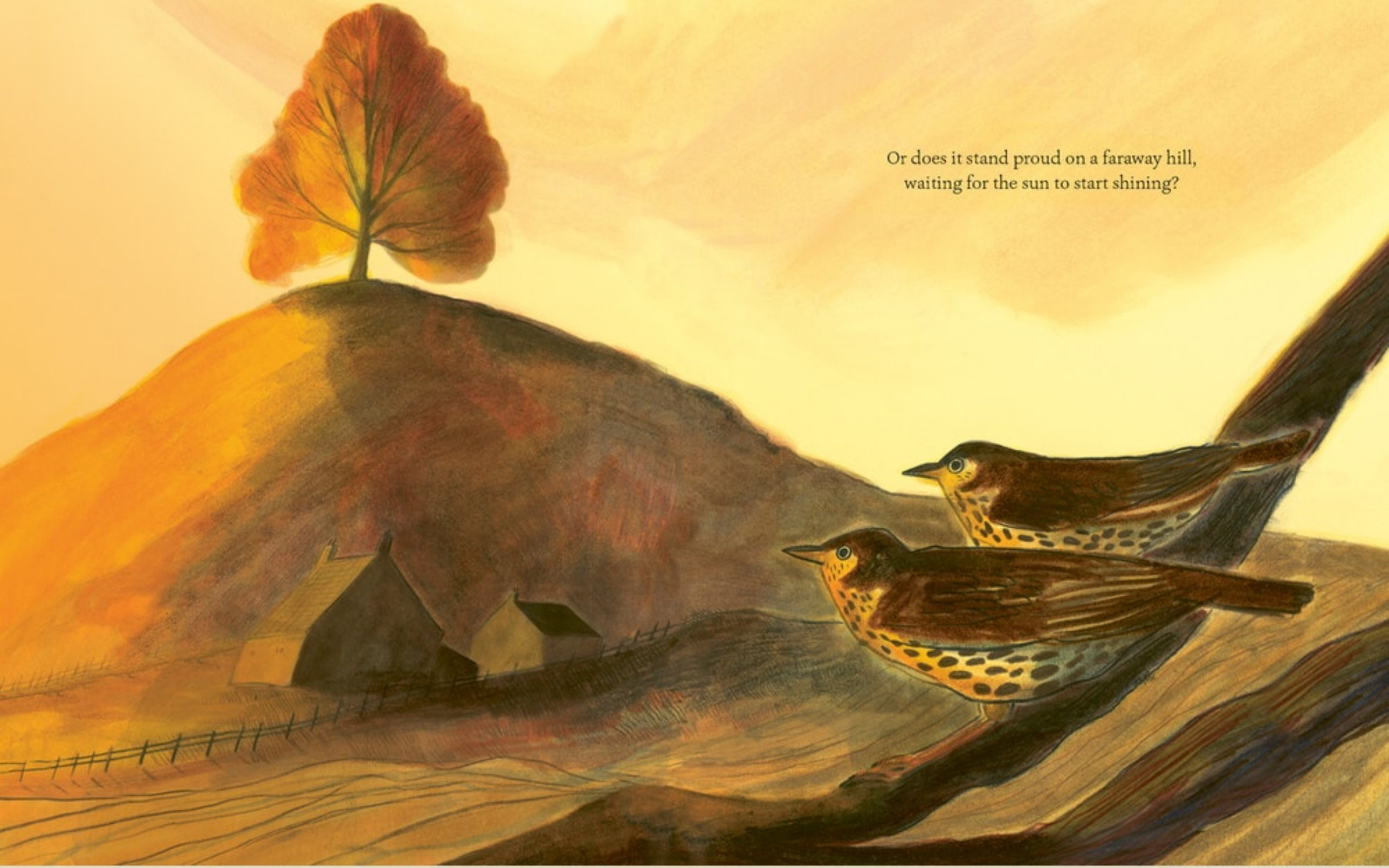
Does it lean
on its friends?

Does it swoop
down low?

Does it have branches perfect for climbing?

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Or does it stand proud on a faraway hill,
waiting for the sun to start shining?



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A Note from Emma Carlisle



The idea for this book came when I started a daily walk around where I live in Plymouth, Devon. Every morning, I took a cup of tea to a small patch of grass. I wanted to make sure I had time to relax before work. I live by the sea, where most people like to sit by the shore and listen to the waves, but I wanted somewhere quieter where I could read a book, write in my journal or watch the world go by.

To begin with I saw all the trees around me the same way – nothing special or unique. However, the more I visited, the more I noticed how each tree was different. The curve of a branch, the variety of colours, the way people interacted with them – using them for shade on sunny days and shelter when it rained. The more I noticed these trees, the more I started noticing every tree I walked past. It made me think about trees as individuals. How long had they been there? What could they see from the tips of their branches? Soon I found myself asking bigger questions: How old is this tree? Does it think or feel like I do? I started taking photos of trees, researching their history and drawing them in my sketchbook. I even visited an ancient woodland that is spoken about in myths and legends.

I hope this book inspires you to look closer at trees, whether it's from your bedroom window, in a local park or on your walk to school. Who knows what else you might notice? A butterfly on the last flower of the summer, a flock of geese flying overhead, or small sprigs of grass poking between the pavement . . . nature is all around you.

Emma x

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