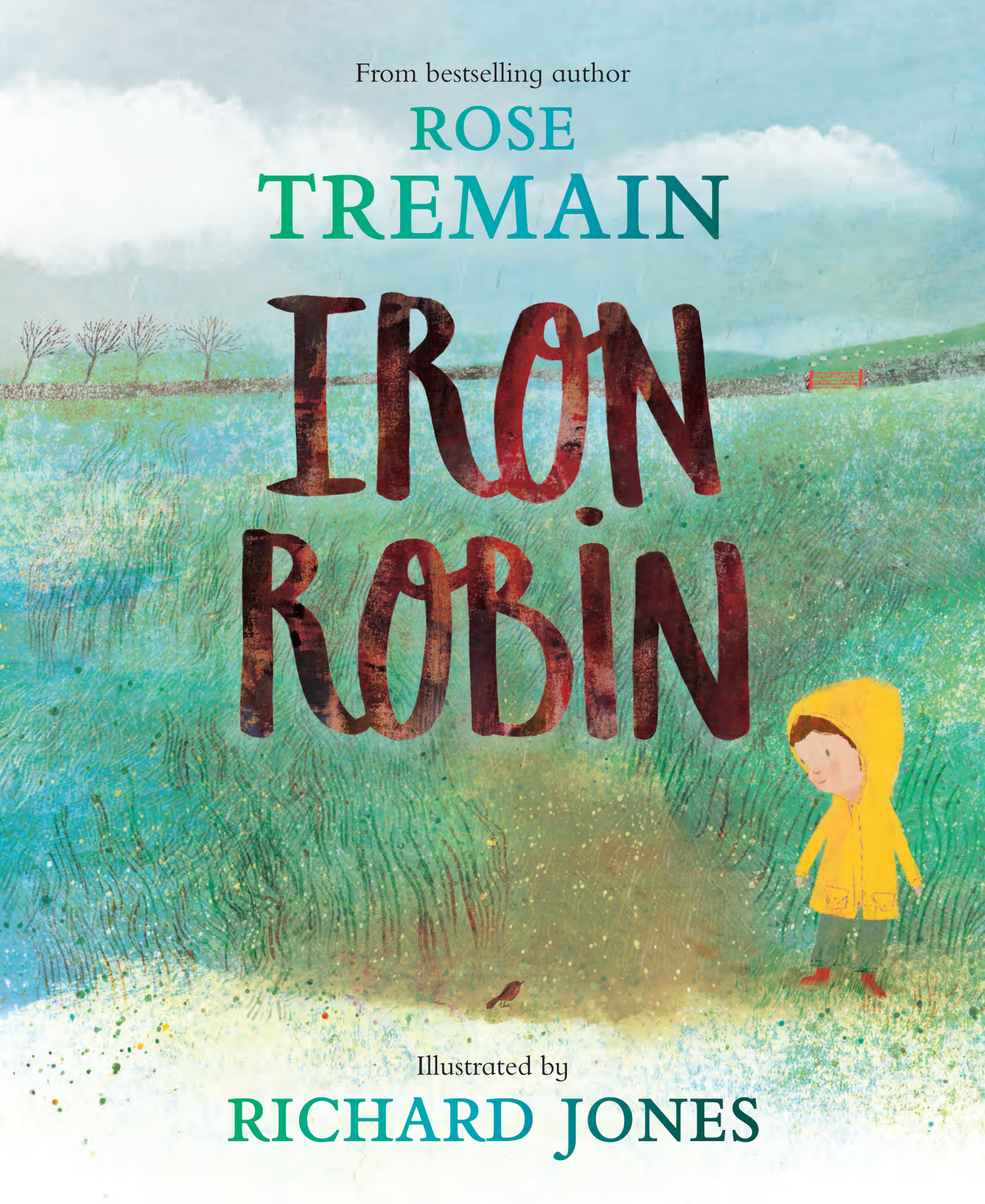

From bestselling author
ROSE
TREMAIN
IRON
ROBIN
Illustrated by
RICHARD JONES

ROSE
TREMAIN

IRON ROBIN

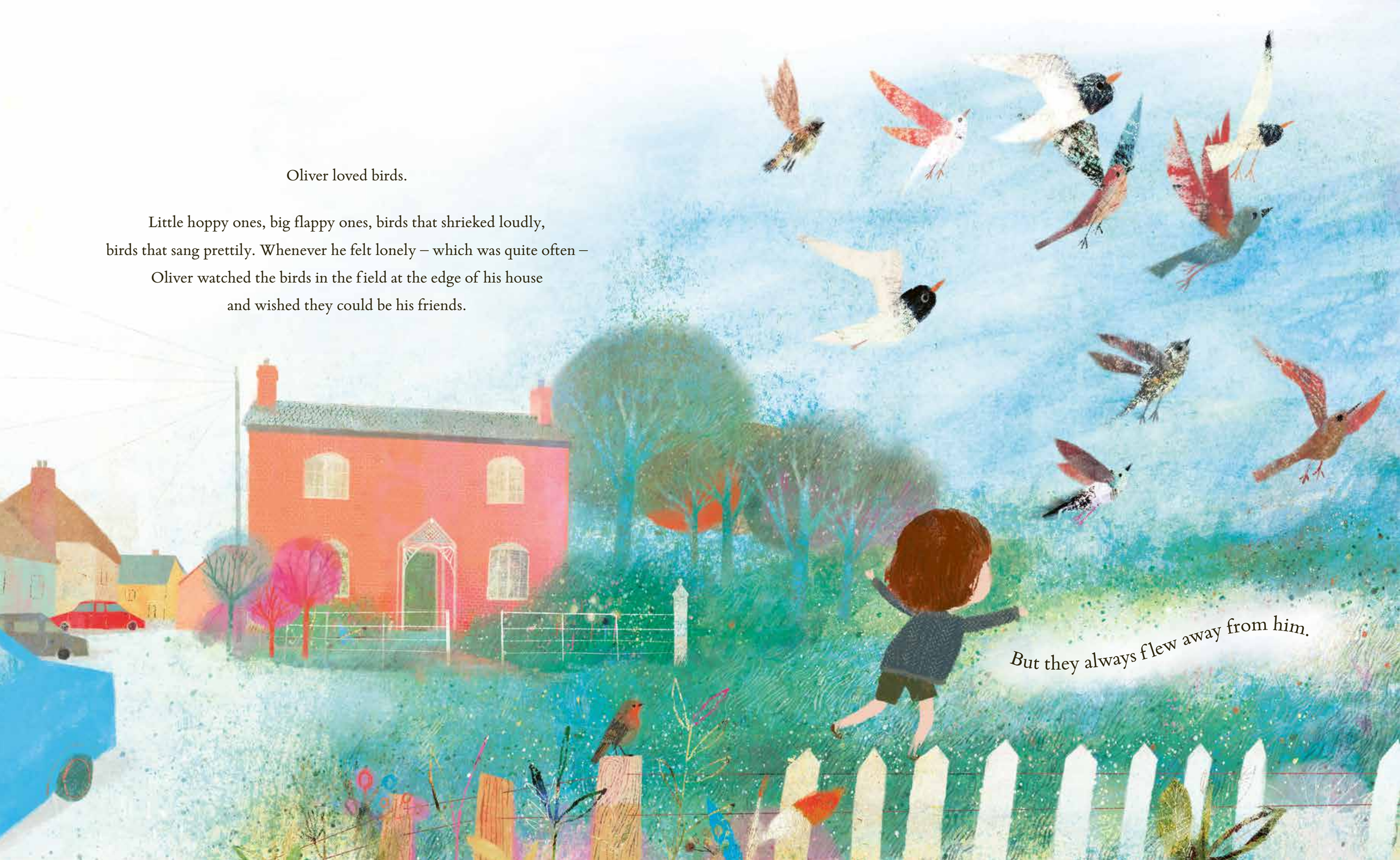


Illustrated by
RICHARD JONES

PUFFIN

Oliver loved birds.

Little hoppy ones, big flappy ones, birds that shrieked loudly,
birds that sang prettily. Whenever he felt lonely – which was quite often –
Oliver watched the birds in the field at the edge of his house
and wished they could be his friends.



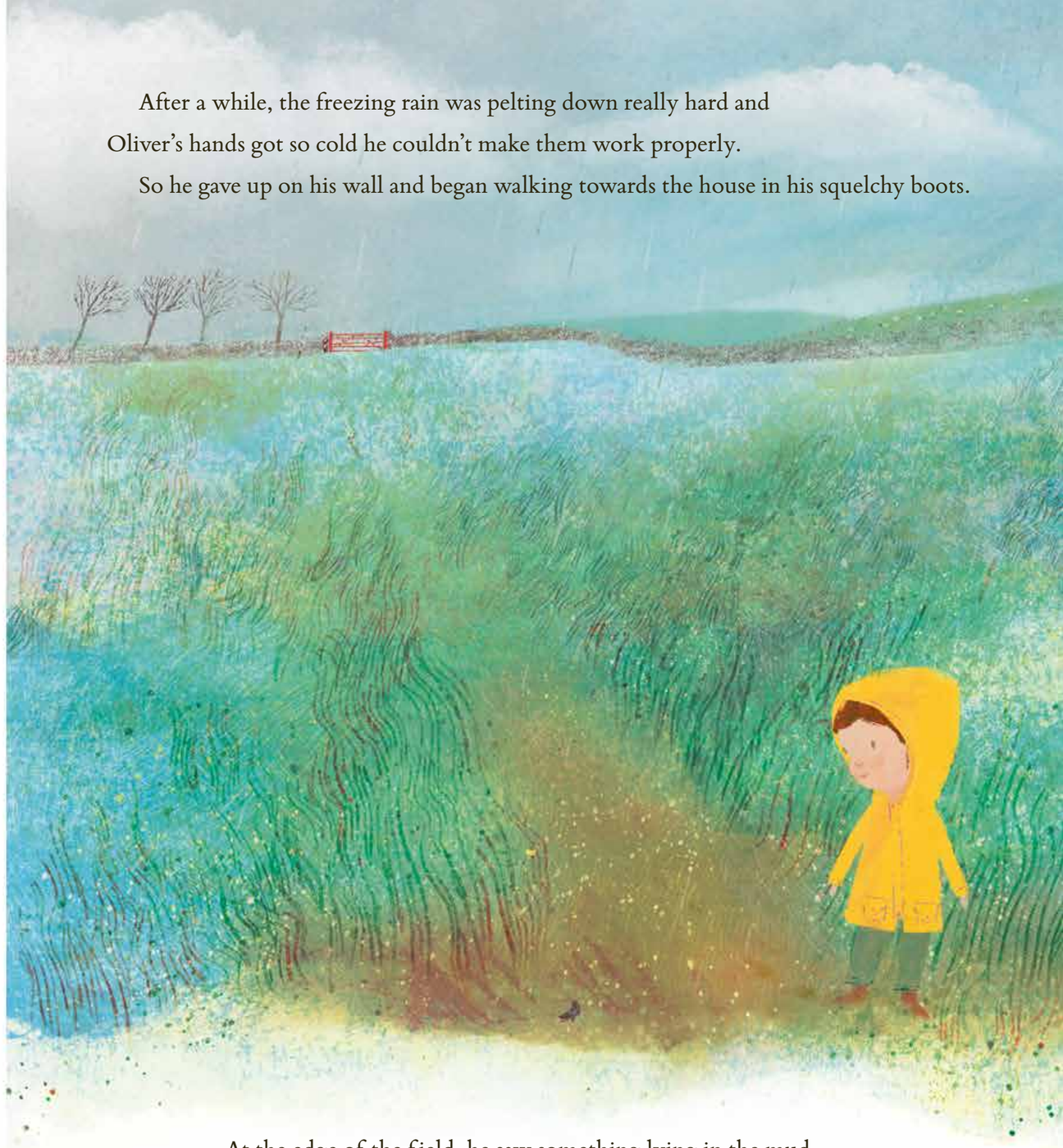
But they always flew away from him.

One wet day, Oliver trudged out into the rain and tried to make
a little wall out of stones, like the neat wall at the edge of the field,
but the stones were slippery
and his
wall kept
falling
down.



Oliver felt like crying.
Why was it that the things you
really, really wanted to do so often went wrong?

After a while, the freezing rain was pelting down really hard and
Oliver's hands got so cold he couldn't make them work properly.
So he gave up on his wall and began walking towards the house in his squelchy boots.



At the edge of the field, he saw something lying in the mud.
At first, he thought it was a rusty can.

It wasn't a can. It had a pointy kind of shape.
When Oliver stooped down and brushed away some of the mud,



a little beak appeared,
then a feathery tail.



It was a bird
made of iron.

Oliver picked it up and held it gently in his hands.

He said, "Hello, iron bird. My name is Oliver. Can you be my friend now?" And all his crossness about his hopeless stone wall went away.

Oliver ran to show his mum. "Look what I just found!" he said, gasping for breath.

His mum, whose name was Jane, was making tea. "What's that lump of mud?" she asked.

"Mum!" said Oliver. "It's not a lump of mud, it's an iron bird, look!"

"Oh," said Jane. "Sorry. I didn't have my specs on."



Jane asked Oliver to wash the iron bird. When all the mud was gone, they both saw that on its breast was a bright slash of red colour.



"Is it blood?" said Oliver.

"No," said Jane. "It's just part of him. He's a robin."



Oliver got some straw from the chicken house and made a nest for Iron Robin in a corner of his bedroom. He whispered to him, "There's a very bossy dragon called Draggi who lives in this room, but I'll tell him not to annoy you, OK?"

He brought his bossy dragon over to meet Iron Robin.



"Draggi," he said,
"this is Iron Robin from the field.
Say hello."

"Hello to what?" said Draggi. "To that little flake of metal?"

"Oh, Draggi," said Oliver, laughing. "That's no way to talk to a new friend!"

"New friend?" said Draggi. "Oh all right, but I've never had a friend that small. You're a bit titchy, bird. And, sorry to say this, but you actually look a bit rusty as well, don't you?"

But Iron Robin didn't reply.
He just sat very still in his nest of straw.