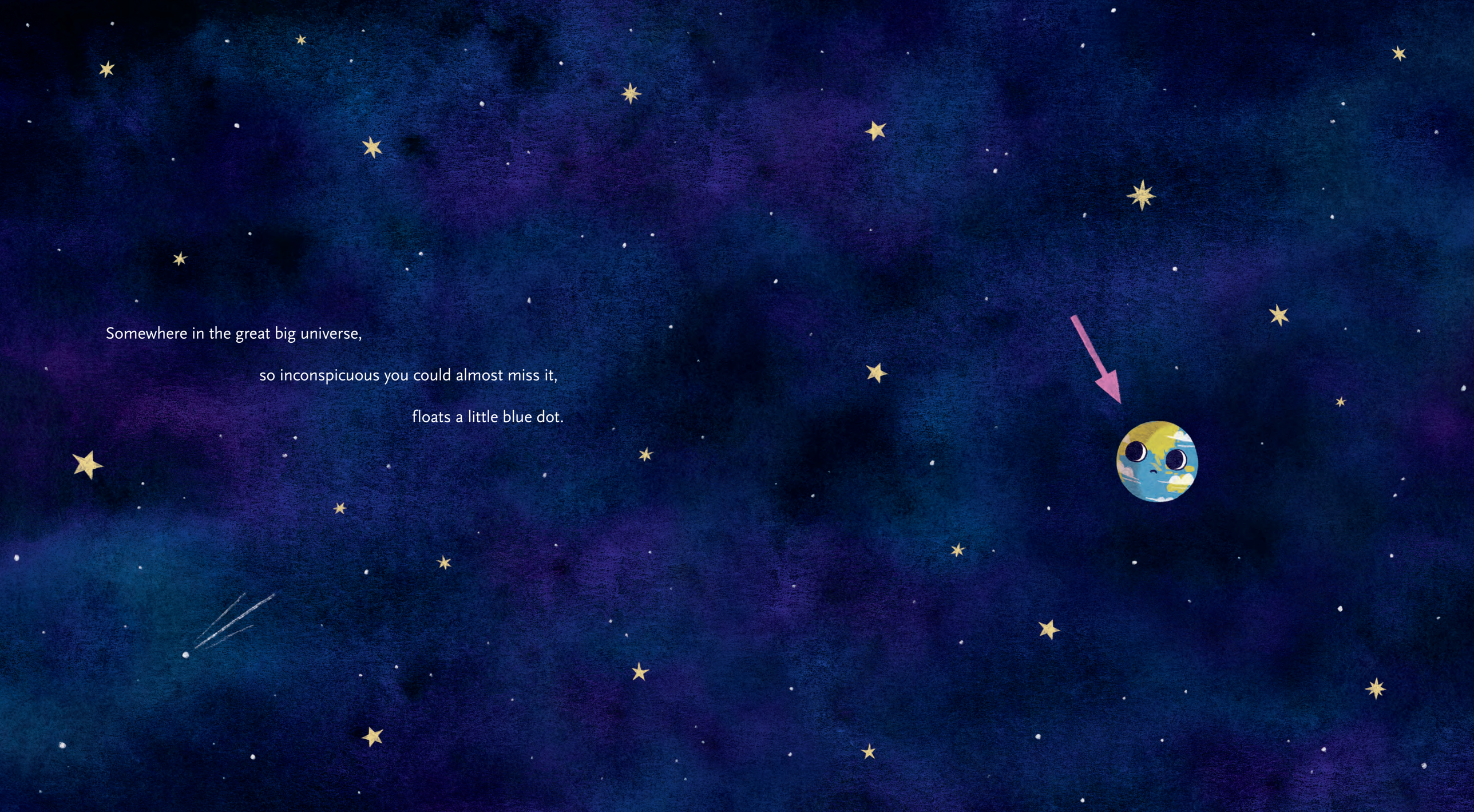
For everyone who works day after day
for our little blue dot

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Translated by Leah Francis

A little BLUE Dot




Somewhere in the great big universe,
so inconspicuous you could almost miss it,
floats a little blue dot.



If you take a closer look, you'll see that this little blue dot is a planet.

The planet is called Earth – and it's not alone. Together with seven other planets it revolves around a gigantic, bright ball of fire – the Sun.

When Earth sees one of her neighbours passing by again, she lets out a deep sigh. "All the other planets are so special," she says, "I wish I could be like them..."



"Mercury is the closest out of all of us to the Sun. They're probably great friends! Because they are so close to each other, the Sun looks three times bigger from Mercury's surface than it does from mine.

"But you couldn't stand on Mercury without seriously burning your feet! When the Sun is shining there, temperatures can reach over 400 °C. At night, it gets cold and drops down to -170 °C. That's unimaginably cold..."

There you are, finally!

"Mars is my next-door neighbour and he's really popular. They keep sending up probes, which are small robots or satellites, to explore him.

"There are lots of mountains on Mars, and one mega-volcano. 'Olympus Mons' is over 20 km high – that's a record-breaking height across all the planets! Wow...

"Mars will probably be the first planet that humans can fly up to visit."

"So far more than 40 probes have been sent to Mars, but not all of them have arrived. Some orbit the planet, while others stay in the spot where they landed. A few have driven around exploring their surroundings, and one little helicopter flew around taking photos!"



