

Natalie Portman's
FABLES



Retellings by
NATALIE PORTMAN

Illustrations by
JANNA MATTIA



Feiwel & Friends
New York

TABLE OF CONTENTS

*For my favorite kids in the world,
Aleph and Amalia*



The Tortoise and the Hare · Page 1



The Three Little Pigs · Page 17



Country Mouse and City Mouse · Page 39

A Feiwel and Friends Book
An imprint of Macmillan Publishing Group, LLC
120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271

NATALIE PORTMAN'S FABLES. Copyright © 2020 by Natalie Portman. All rights reserved.
Our books may be purchased in bulk for promotional, educational, or business use.
Please contact your local bookseller or the Macmillan Corporate and Premium Sales Department
at (800) 221-7945 ext. 5442 or by email at MacmillanSpecialMarkets@macmillan.com.
Library of Congress Control Number: 2020908579
ISBN 978-1-250-24686-8

Book design by Mallory Grigg
Title lettering by Mike Burroughs
Printed in China by RR Donnelley Asia Printing Solutions Ltd., Dongguan City, Guangdong Province
Feiwel and Friends logo designed by Filomena Tuosto
First edition, 2020
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
The art was created with watercolor, gouache, and colored pencil.
mackids.com



*The Tortoise
and the Hare*





While sipping their juices from all types of grapes,
They cheered to find who was the greatest great ape.

Once at Sheep's vineyard, with very fine weather,
The townsimals gathered for the games together.

But when it came time to compete with the hare,
No one stepped forward. No one would dare.

"I'm so fast and so strong, I win distance and sprint.
I'll kick up the dust, you'll just sit there and squint."

"Where's your hu-mi-li-ty?" asked Wolf that day.
"The one tea I care for is creamy Earl Grey."



Tortoise stepped forward, her home on her back.
"I'll race Mr. Hare. He's a nut I can crack."

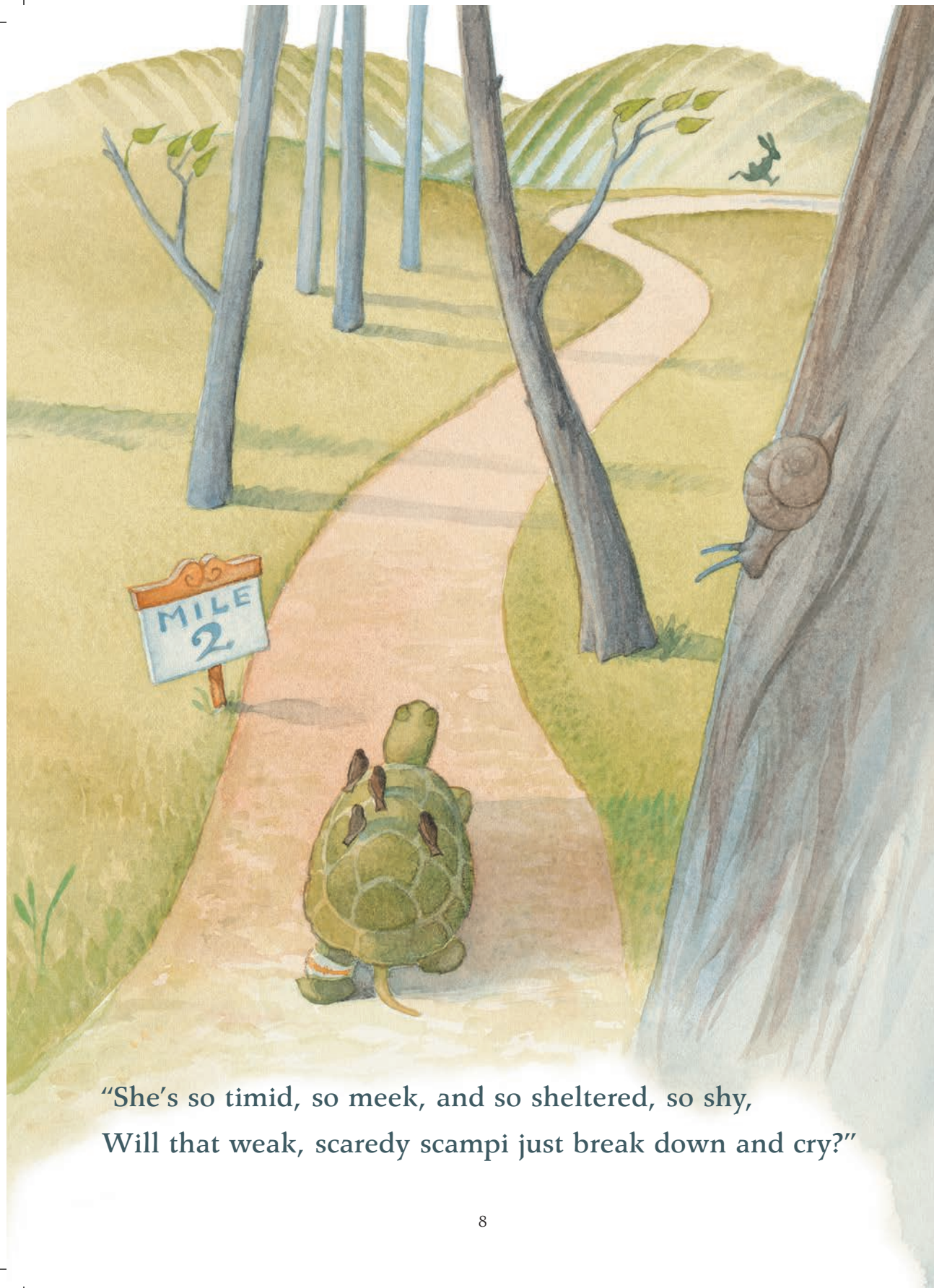
"Hare has a sleeker and shinier sweater,
But maybe he'll learn, sometimes more isn't better."

Doe started the race with her banner all pink,
And Hare left poor Tortoise in bunny-cloud stink.

What does bunny stink smell like? I'll give you a clue.
It smells like when carrots come out in a poo.



The pig siblings gasped: "Is she brave or weak-headed?"
"Vroom vroom," said proud Hare, "I run fast on unleaded!"



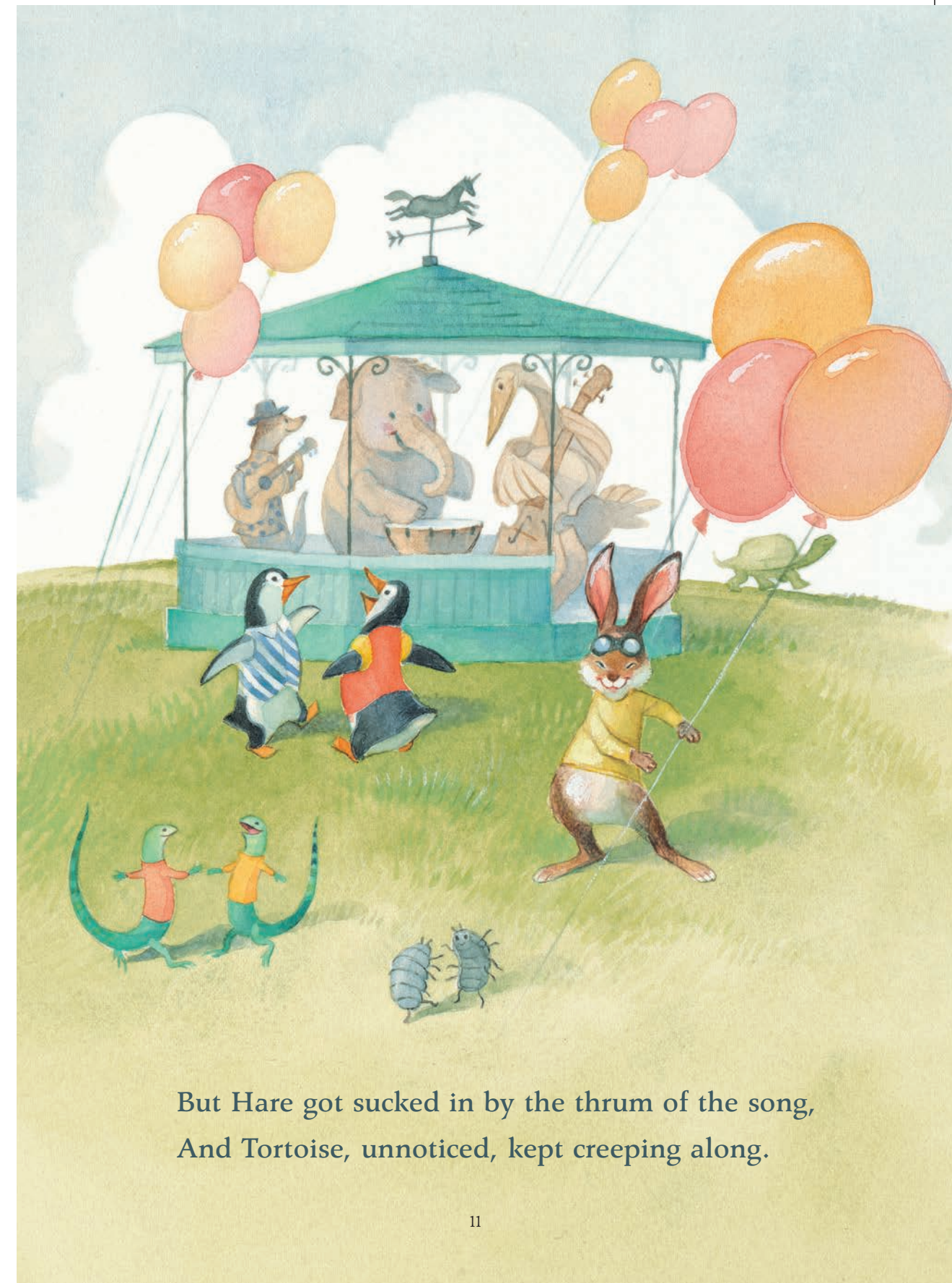
“She’s so timid, so meek, and so sheltered, so shy,
Will that weak, scaredy scampi just break down and cry?”



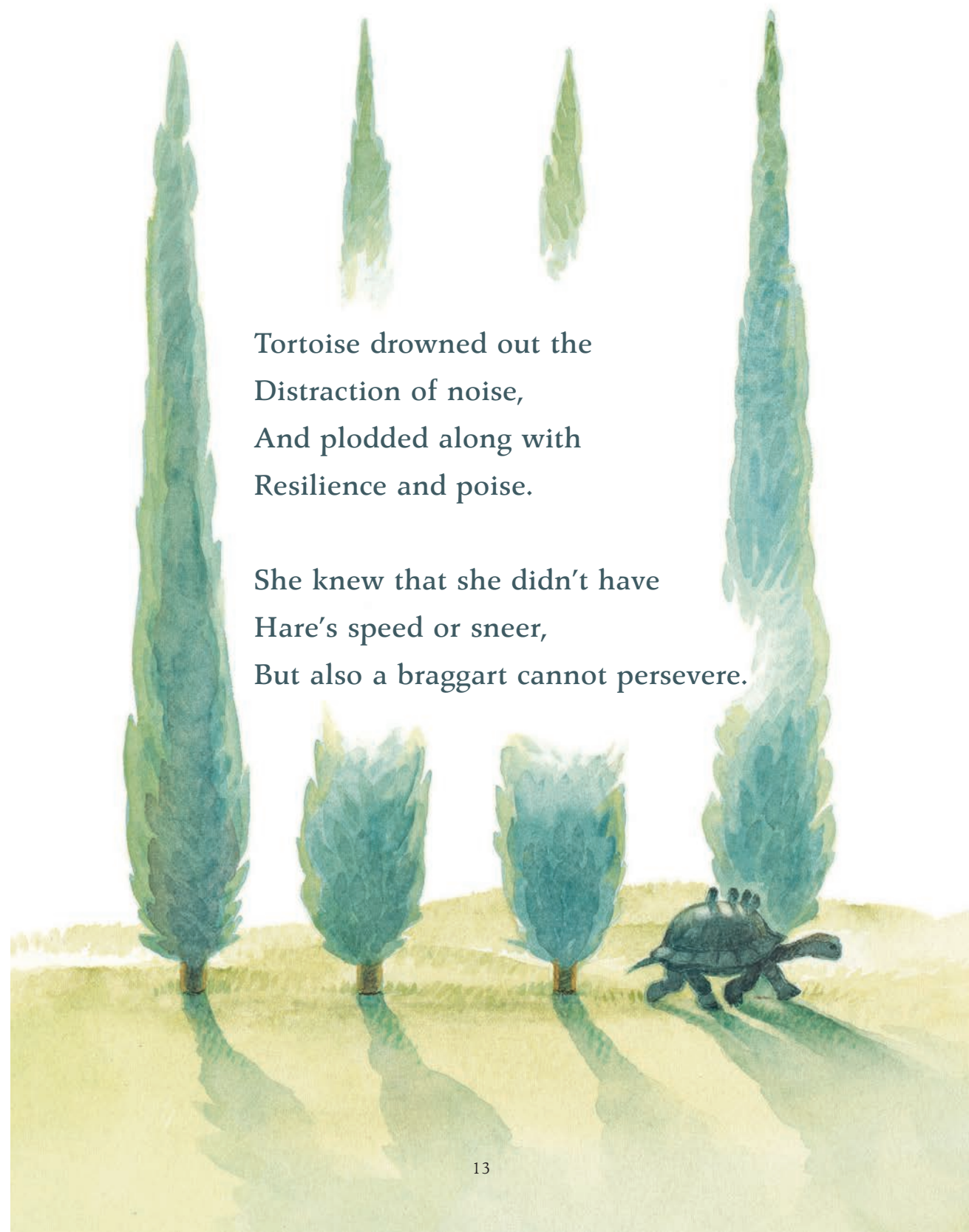
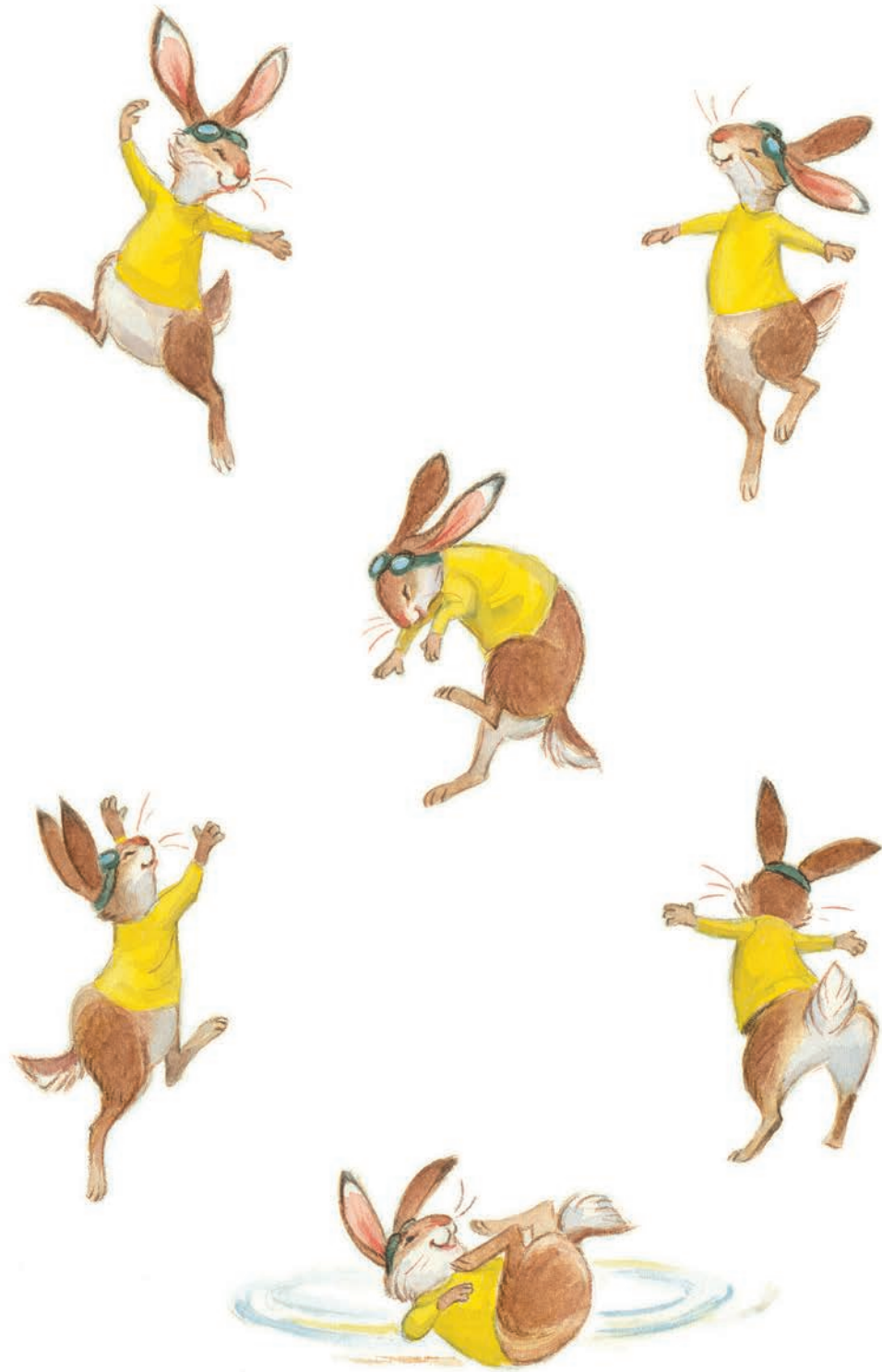
“What’s your response to his words about you?”

“I have nothing to say, I have too much to do.”

Tortoise stayed focused on moving her feet,
Hare got distracted by drum 'n' bass beat.
"OOOOH, there's a party! I love nothing more.
There's plenty of time, I'll just dance near the door!
Then, if that slowpoke just happens on by,
I can jump out in the blink of an eye."



But Hare got sucked in by the thrum of the song,
And Tortoise, unnoticed, kept creeping along.



Tortoise drowned out the
Distraction of noise,
And plodded along with
Resilience and poise.

She knew that she didn't have
Hare's speed or sneer,
But also a braggart cannot persevere.



Tortoise took her sweet time, but enjoyed every step.
When she passed the finish line, the townsimals wept.

“We never thought a poor, burdened, old reptile
Could outpace a winner, mile after mile.”

As tortoise stepped up to receive her gold
She spoke in a voice both loud and bold:

“Honey moves slowly, and it is the sweetest.
A life lived attentively is the completest.”

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR



The one who led me to fall in love with language, with animals, and with art is my mother. She was the first to read to me, the first to teach me respect for all creatures, the first to draw with me and for me, and is the one who still plays with words to make me laugh. I am so lucky that she does that now for my children too, and that I get to enjoy the love letters that are her portraits of the children, seen here reading one of their favorite books.

