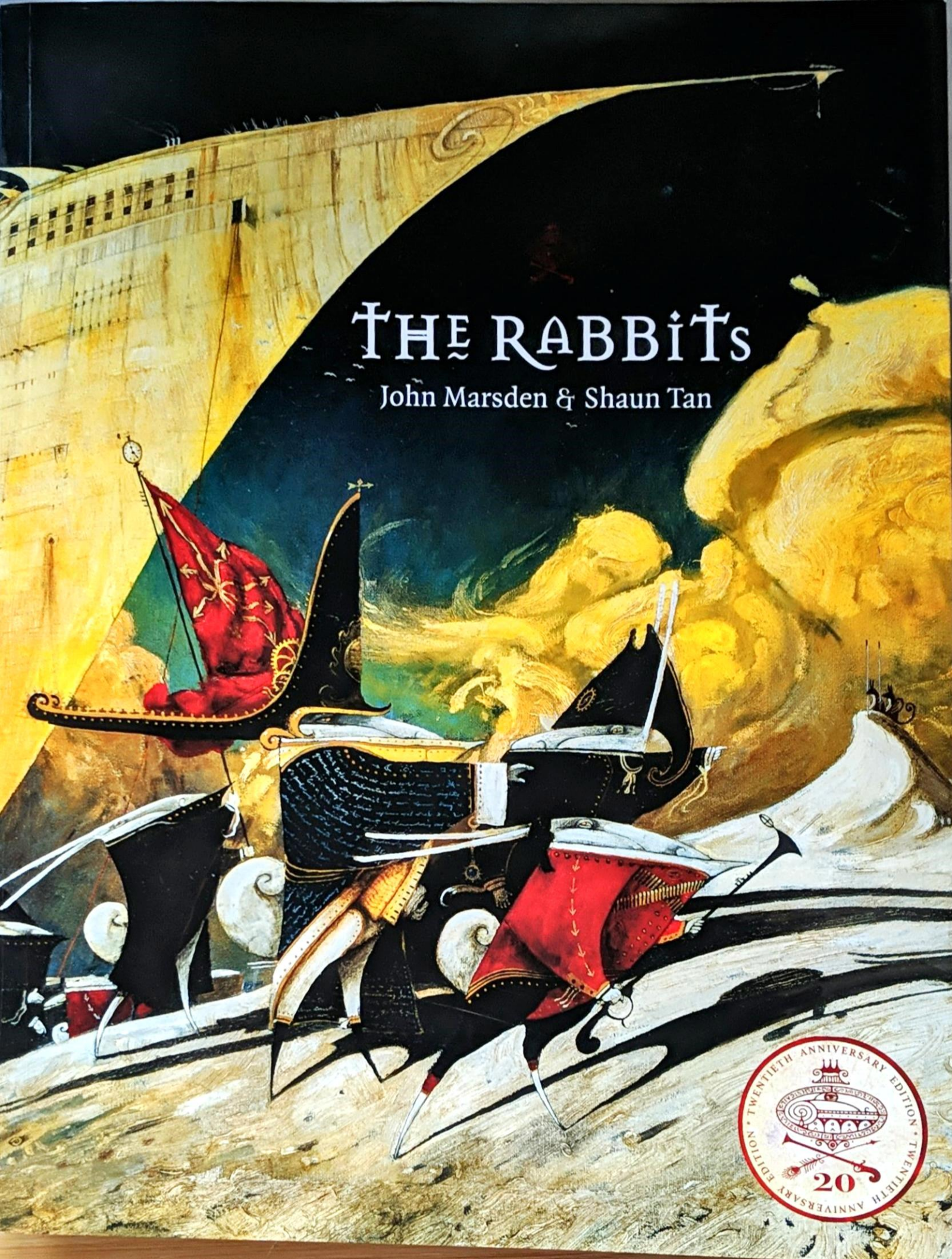


THE RABBITS

John Marsden & Shaun Tan



I was heading home late one summer's night. It was a two-hour drive, through the countryside, and I was fascinated and horrified by the number of rabbits I saw. They were on the roadside, across the fields, in the scrub... everywhere I looked.

It made me reflect on the way in which these invaders had, like cane toads, foxes, cats and blackberries, infested a vast and ancient land. They had not asked to come here; it was not their choice; but they were like a pernicious skin disease. A person with severe eczema can be so busy scratching their body that important parts of their life get neglected. As well, a person with severe eczema is more vulnerable to many other infections.

It seemed to me that Australia was so busy scratching its rabbits and feral cats and Scotch thistles that it had lost its way. It was not the country it could have been.

The analogy between the animal invaders, the weed invaders and the human invaders seemed all too obvious to me, as I drove on, along that lonely country road.

John Marsden, 2018



THE RABBITS

[The page is filled with dense, handwritten text in various directions, including vertical columns and diagonal lines. The ink is dark brown and black, with some red highlights. The text is interspersed with sketches of mechanical parts, including gears, wheels, and structural frames. Some sketches are labeled with letters like 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E', 'F', 'G', 'H', 'I', 'J', 'K', 'L', 'M', 'N', 'O', 'P', 'Q', 'R', 'S', 'T', 'U', 'V', 'W', 'X', 'Y', 'Z'. There are also some numbers and dates, such as 'JAN 1947' and '1946'. The overall appearance is that of a complex technical or scientific manuscript.]



[Handwritten notes and a small table.]

1100	1110
1120	1130
1140	1150
1160	1170
1180	1190

JAN 1947

THE RABBITS

John Marsden & Shaun Tan

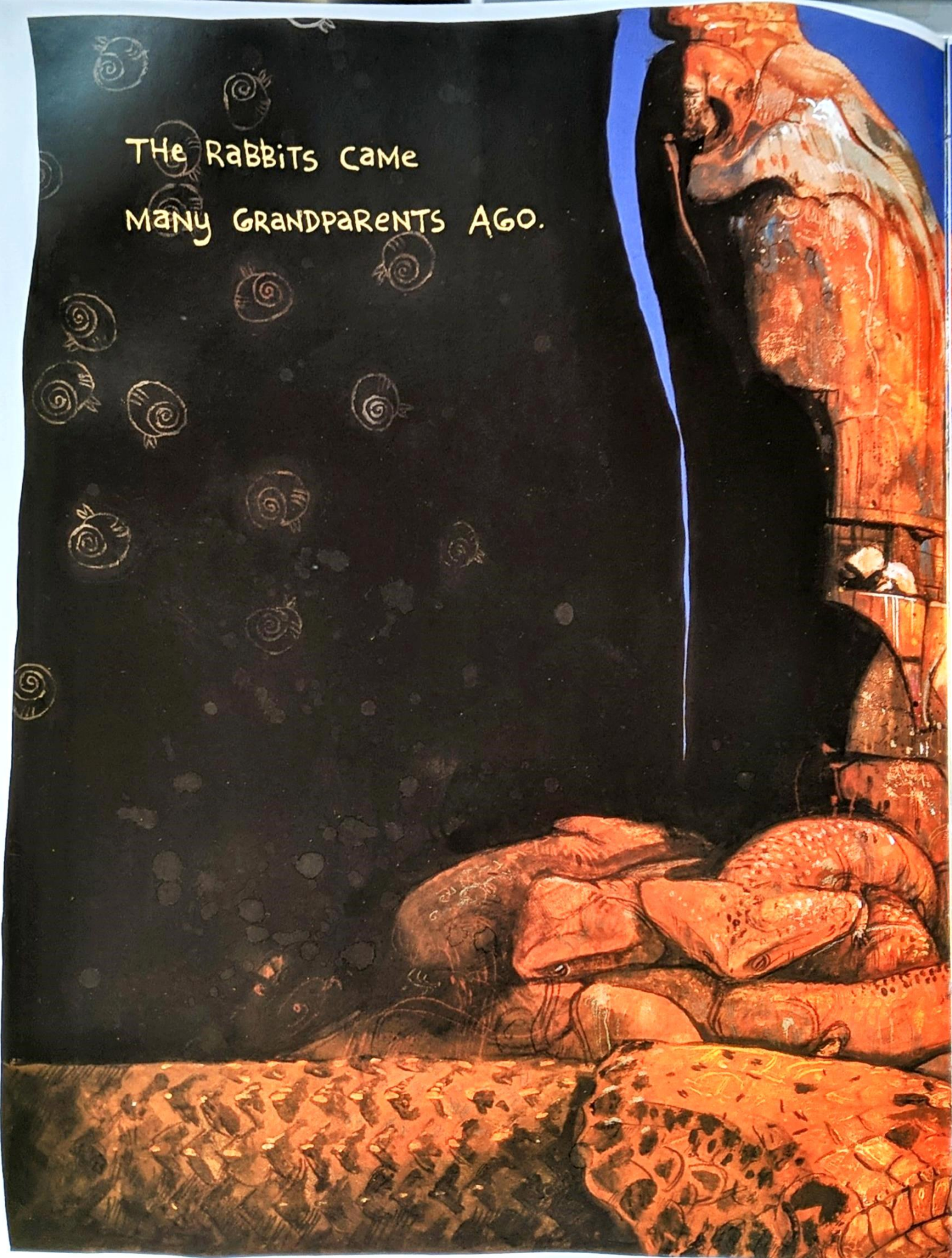
 LOTHIAN
Children's Books




THE Rabbits Came
MANY GRANDPARENTS AGO.



THE Rabbits came
MANY GRANDPARENTS AGO.





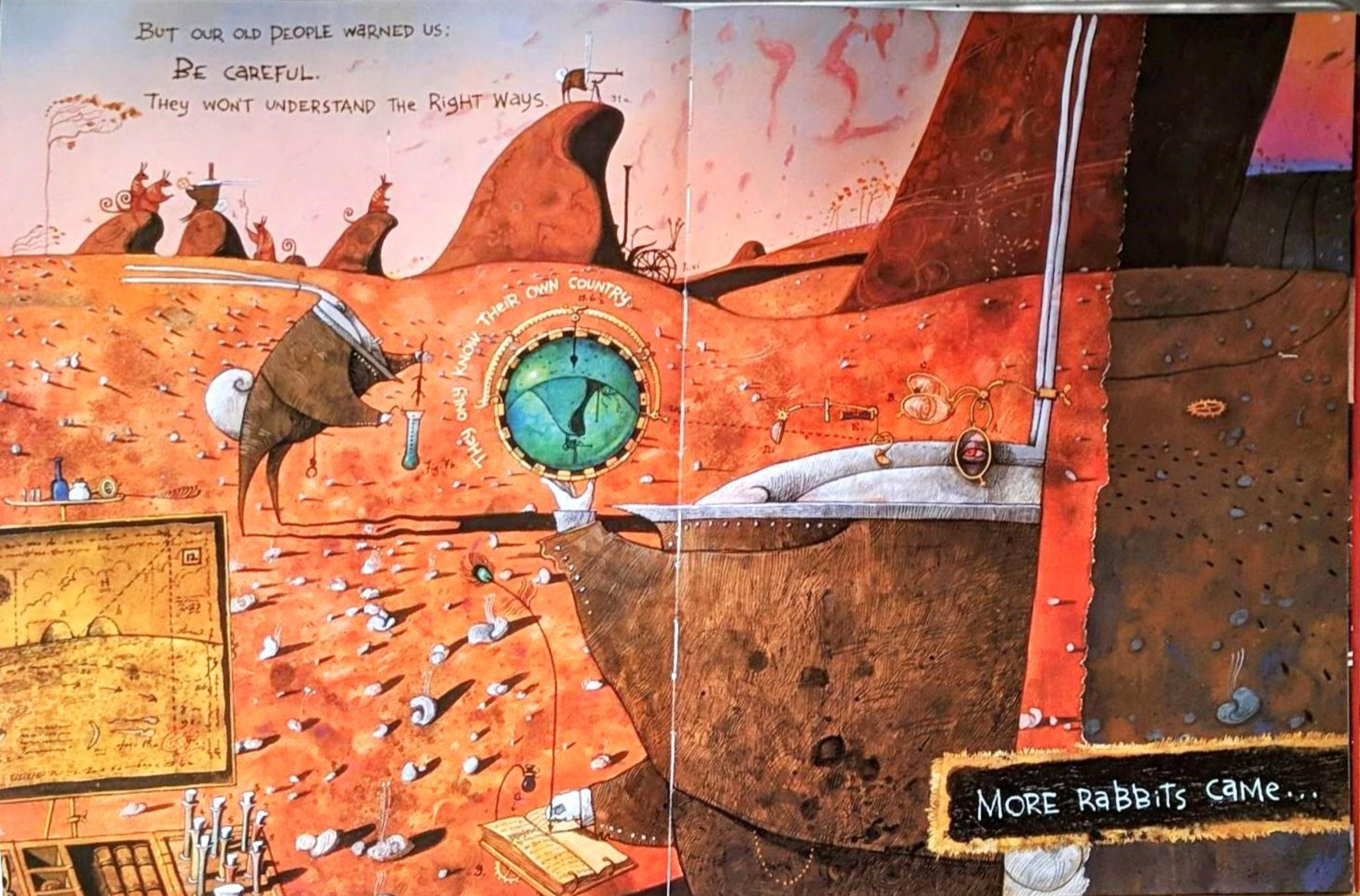
AT FIRST WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK. THEY LOOKED A BIT LIKE US.

THERE WEREN'T MANY OF THEM. SOME WERE FRIENDLY.

BUT OUR OLD PEOPLE WARNED US:

BE CAREFUL.

They won't understand the Right Ways.



THEY ONLY KNOW THEIR OWN COUNTRY

MORE Rabbits came...



HEY CAME BY WATER.

THEY DIDN'T LIVE IN THE TREES LIKE WE DID.

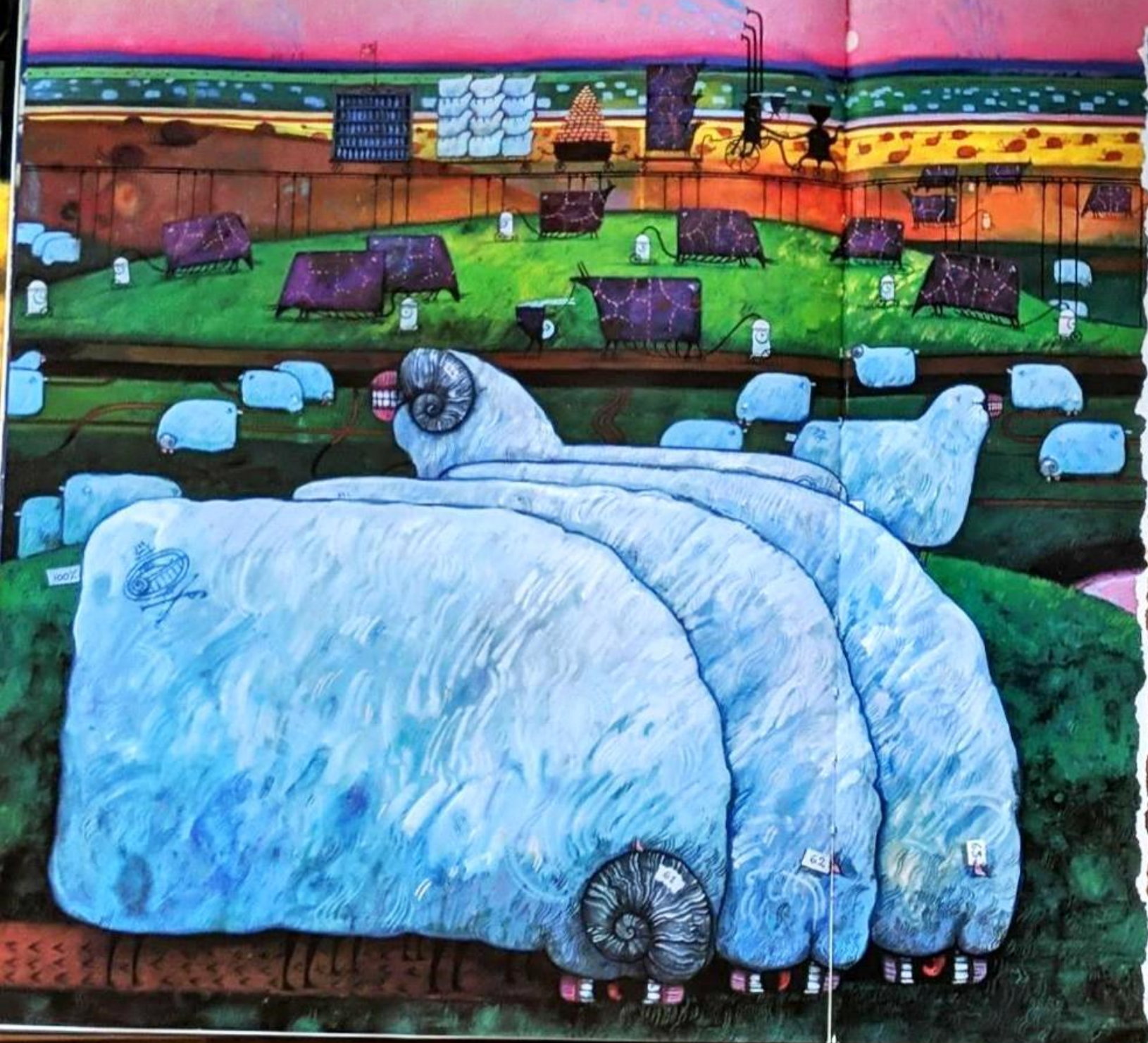


THEY MADE THEIR OWN HOUSES.

WE COULDN'T UNDERSTAND THE WAY THEY TALKED.

They BROUGHT NEW FOOD, AND THEY BROUGHT OTHER ANIMALS.

WE LIKED SOME OF THE FOOD AND WE LIKED SOME OF THE ANIMALS.

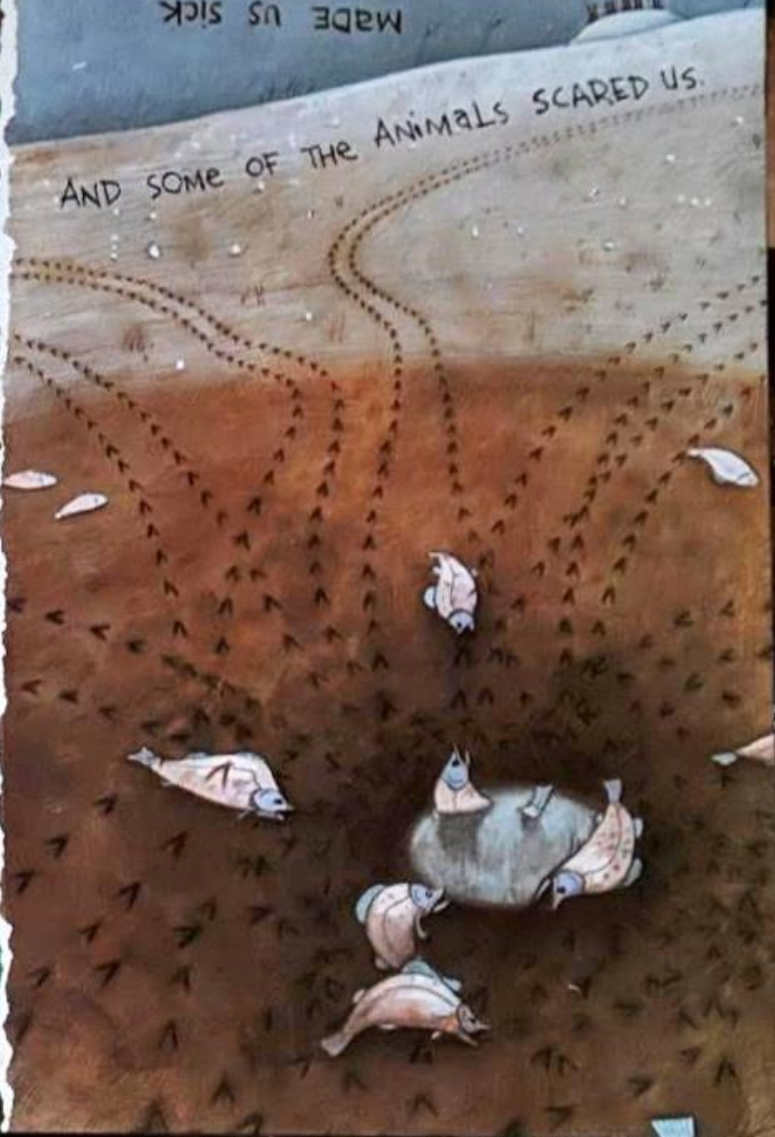


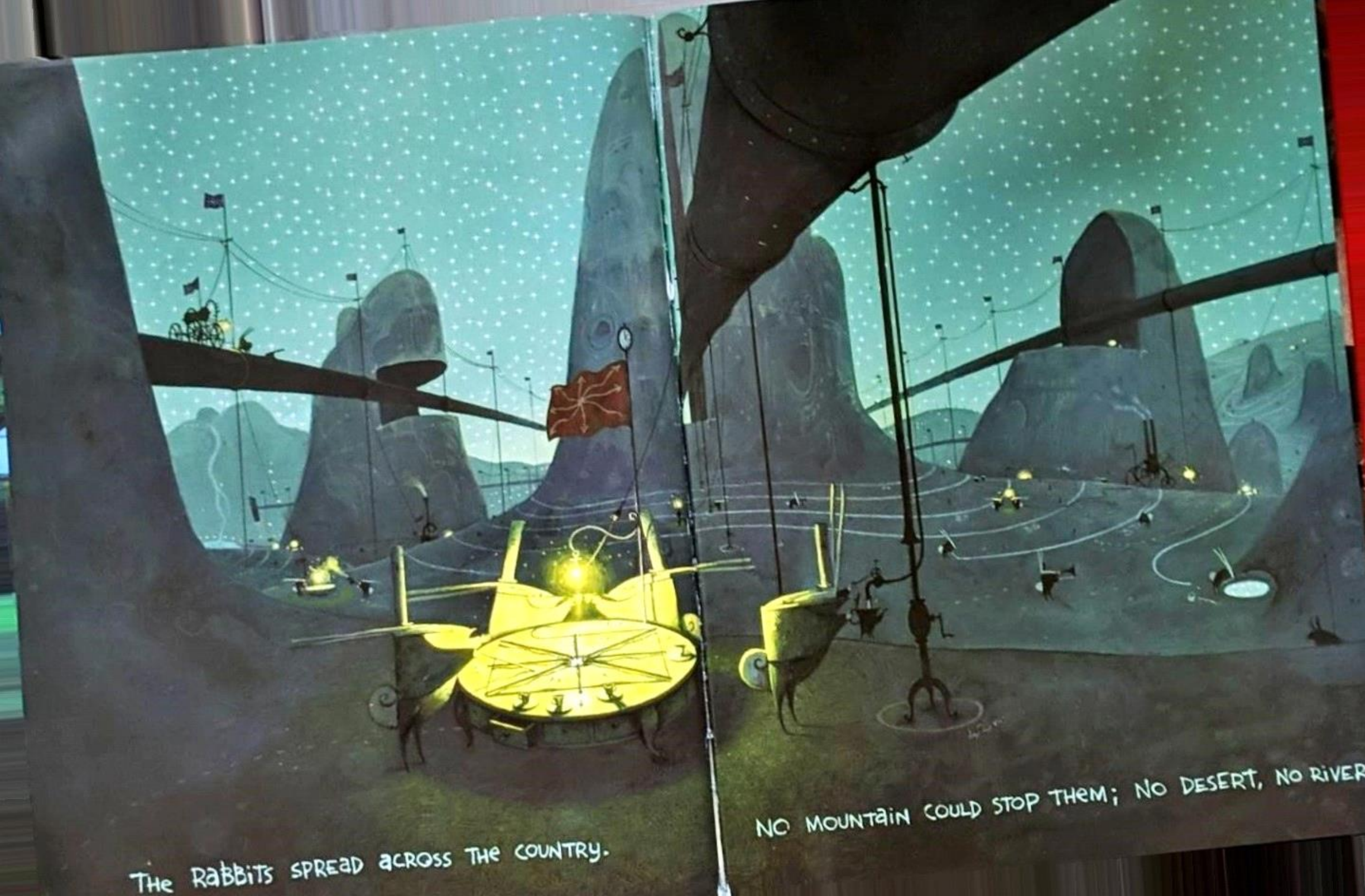
BUT SOME OF THE FOOD



MADE US SICK

AND SOME OF THE ANIMALS SCARED US.





The Rabbits spread across the country.

No mountain could stop them; No desert, no river

STILL MORE OF THEM CAME.



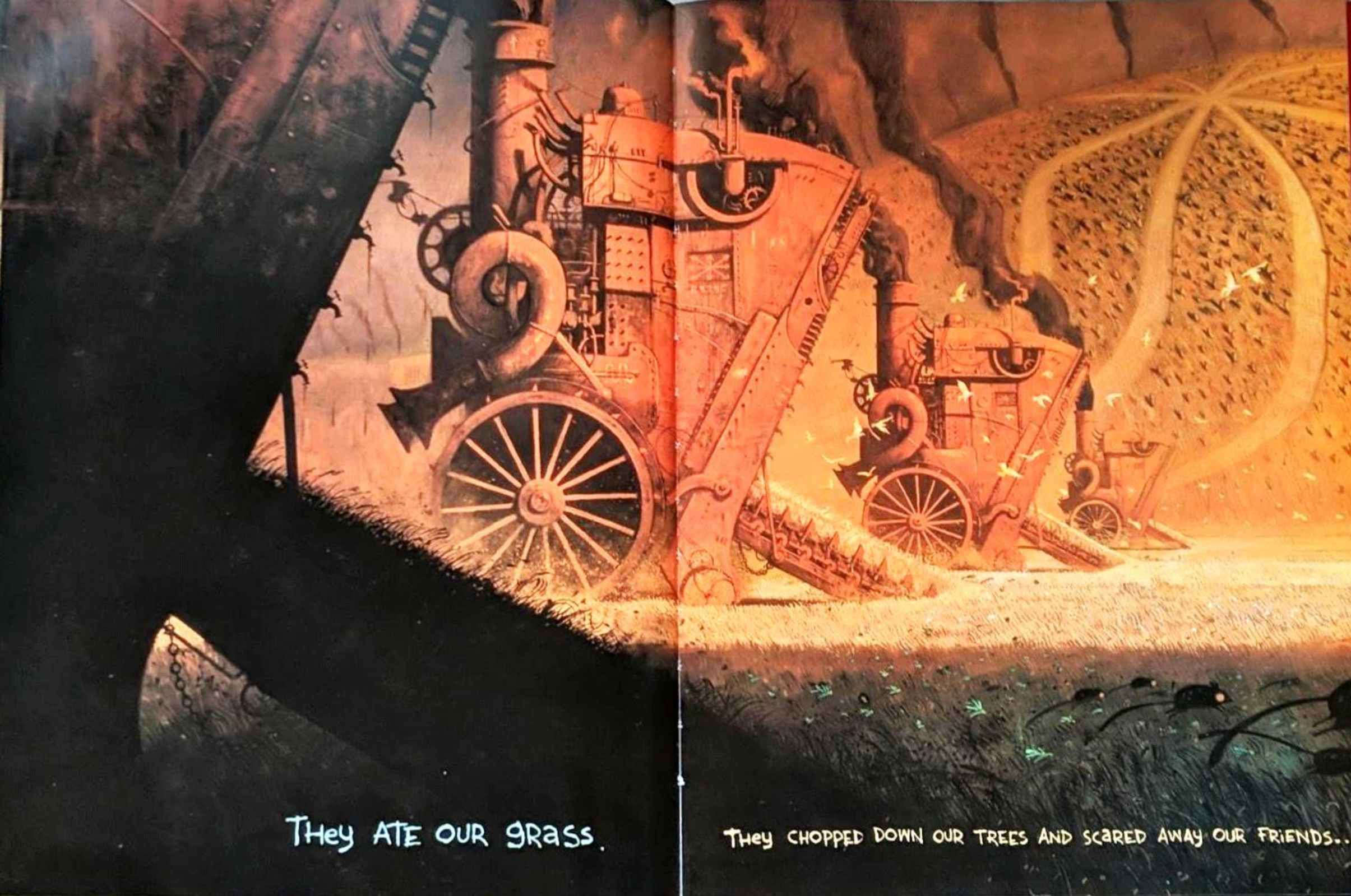
SOMETIMES WE HAD FIGHTS,



BUT THERE WERE TOO MANY RABBITS.

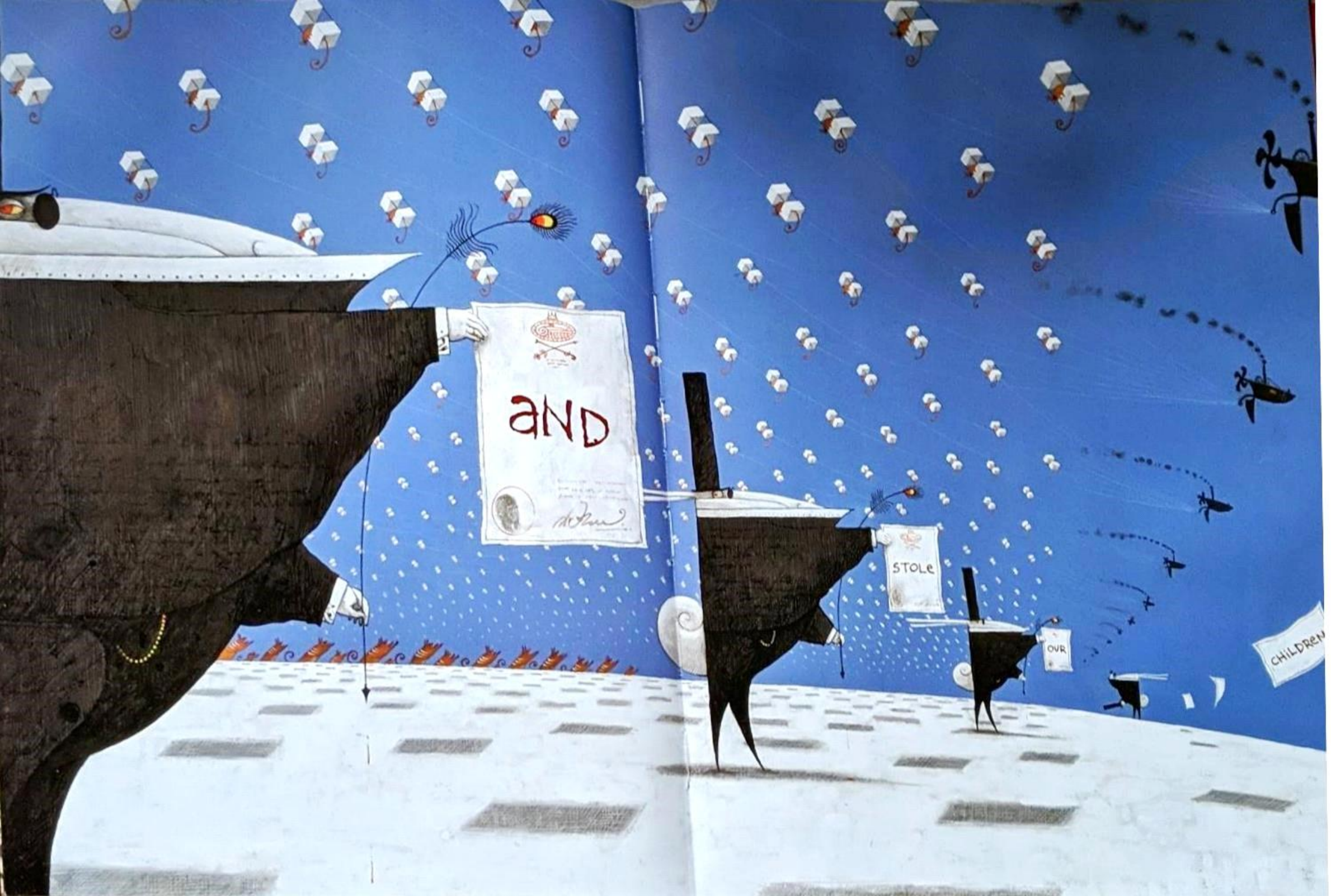


WE LOST THE FIGHTS.

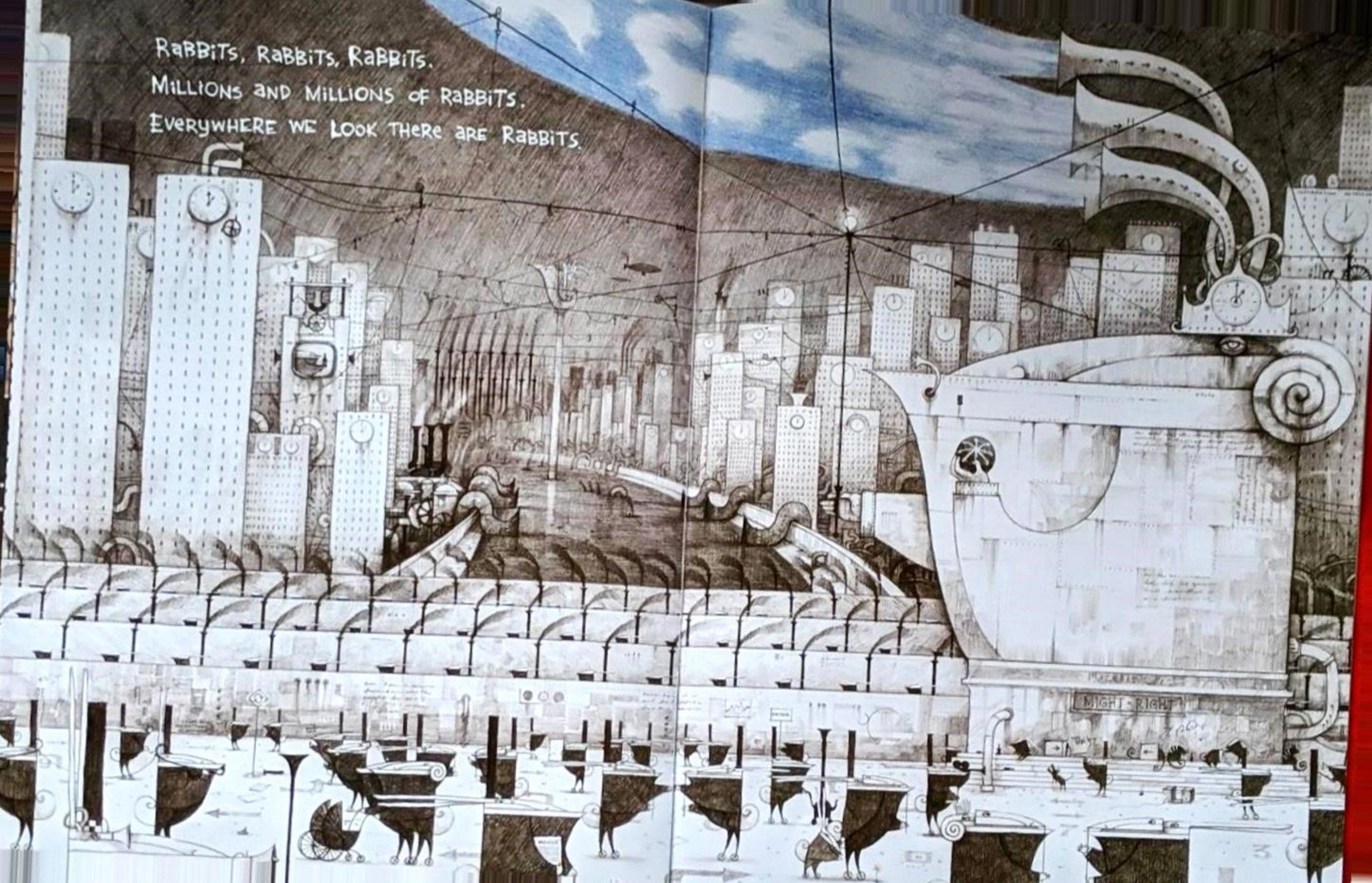


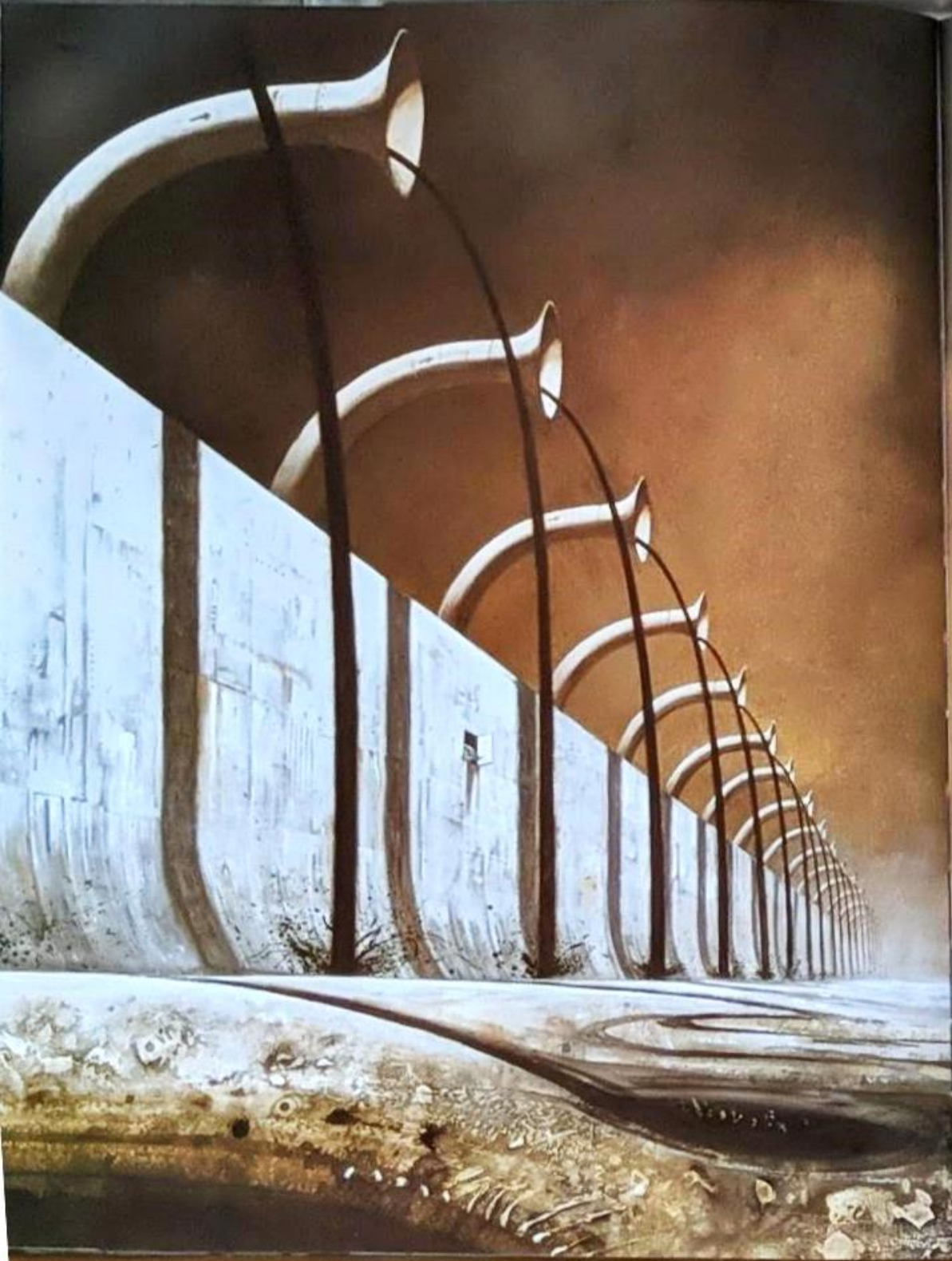
They ATE OUR GRASS.

They CHOPPED DOWN OUR TREES AND SCARED AWAY OUR FRIENDS..

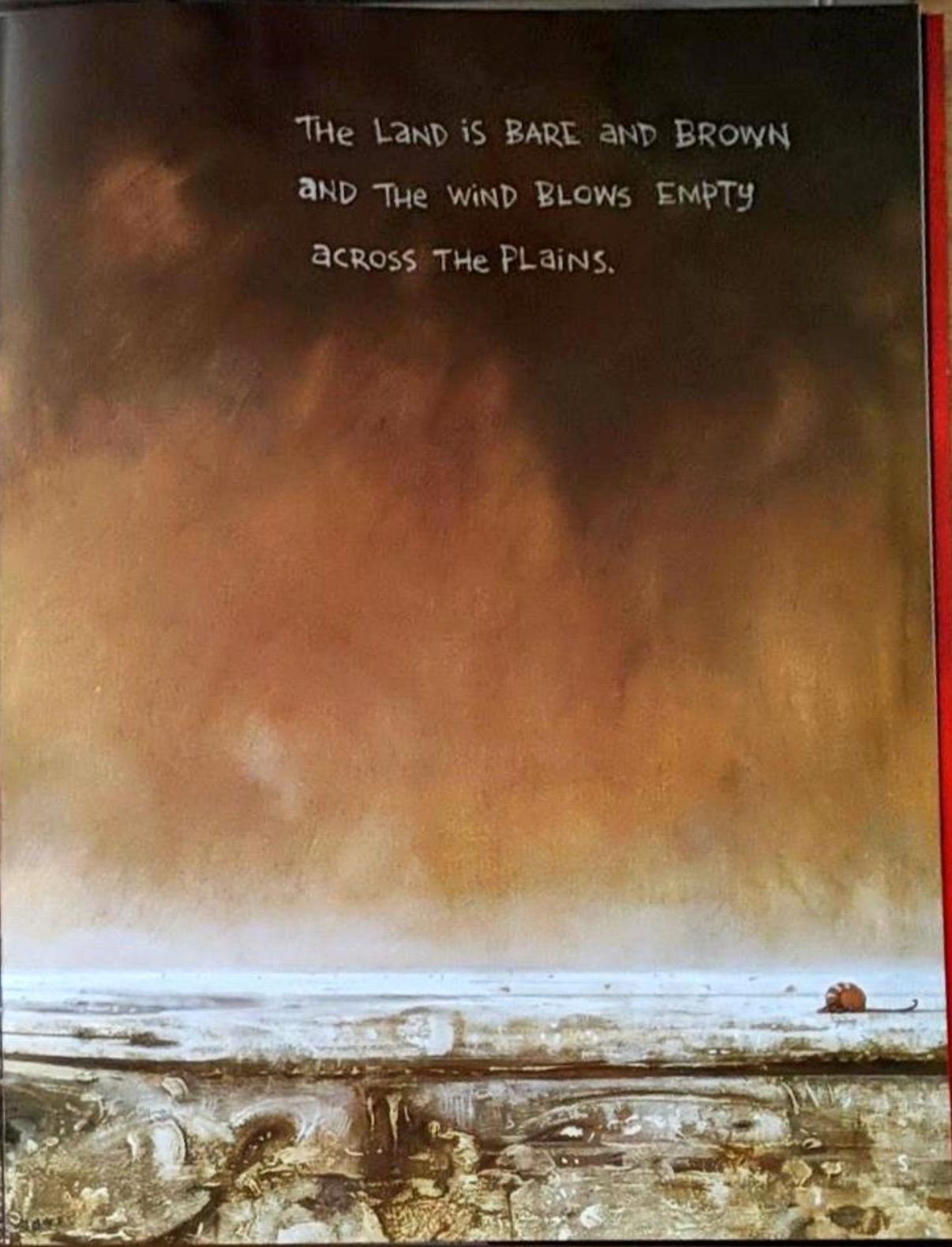


RABBITS, RABBITS, RABBITS.
MILLIONS AND MILLIONS OF RABBITS.
EVERYWHERE WE LOOK THERE ARE RABBITS





THE LAND IS BARE AND BROWN
AND THE WIND BLOWS EMPTY
ACROSS THE PLAINS.





WHERE IS THE RICH, DARK EARTH,
BROWN AND MOIST?
WHERE IS THE SMELL OF RAIN
DRIPPING FROM THE GUM TREES?



WHERE ARE THE GREAT BILLABONGS
ALIVE WITH LONG-LEGGED BIRDS?





WHO WILL SAVE US FROM THE RABBITS?