

Royal Fireworks Language Arts by Michael Clay Thompson

Book 2 of the Poodle Series

Poodle and the Blue Mountain Monster



Michael Clay Thompson

Illustrations by Christopher Tice



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Royal Fireworks Press
41 First Avenue, P.O. Box 399
Unionville, NY 10988-0399
(845) 726-4444
fax: (845) 726-3824
email: mail@rftp.com
website: rftp.com



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This book features QR codes that link to audio of Michael Clay Thompson narrating the text so that readers can follow along.

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This book addresses the parts of sentence. The parts of speech were addressed in the first volume, *Poodle Knows What?* We assume that students will be comfortable with the parts of speech before moving to this volume.

*In this volume we will use the terms AVP and LVP for **action verb predicate** and **linking verb predicate**. In the first volume, we simply used AV and LV.



Dramatis Personae

Poodle A chicken

What? A beagle

Sidney A snail

Maybe A mouse (the director)

Gramlet A pika

Dickinson An angry blue wind

Lou A stage hand

Children The audience

The Narrator A hidden voice

Author Unknown





Prologue

[A vast blue plain. Enter Poodle,
What?, and Sidney, walking steadily
toward far blue mountains.
An unseen narrator speaks,
his voice booming mysteriously
from somewhere.]

You remember—I hope—
how Poodle’s legend ended. Nope?
Poodle and What?
and Sidney (I thought)
departed the land of the eight—
but wait—departed the eight parts of speech
and set out for the far blue
world of sentences,
searching for entrances
and hoping they could reach it,
and that is how their legend ended:
they walked off the final page
and blended into the distance, and
it was splendid, like a stage
on paper. Remember?
These were the final words:

It was a very good day.
As the good day wore on,
and the air got cool and intelligent,
the friends reviewed the shrewd
thoughts they had found.

They saw that, unlike birds,
there are eight kinds of words,
but the noun and verb
are the two main kinds,
the core of their minds,
and the other six just help.

They saw how
the picked words click
and whirl to make a sentence,
a world of words
like a beautiful brass brain machine.

The more they looked at words,
the more they liked them.
Words are irresistible.





The world began to glow
somewhere over there, in the distance,
across a vast blue plain,
and they saw that over there
was a world of words
all before them.

More than anything, ever,
they wanted to go there,
to that far horizon,
to the line where the rising
dark blue meets the high light blue,
and one star floats above,
like a white spot.

The three friends looked at one another,
smiled, and set off for that distant spot,
and their images grew smaller
and smaller as they
moved farther away,
toward the world
of words.

And that is how the legend ended.





Act One:
Subject (subj.)

[Enter Poodle, What?, and Sidney.
They are hiking toward far blue mountains.
The narrator begins.]

During the nights,
they followed the star
far, followed that guide
that glistened o'er distant heights.
In the cold nights, those toes froze,
everyone knows,
but they had persistence.
Long they walked, 'cross the blue,
blue plain, to find a high world of words,
and through this vast dry scene
strode those three,
those three little dots. Spots.
I mean Poodle, What?,
and Sidney.



It was adventure,
a big one—a clincher.
It was fun, but whew-ooo, this blue.

The farther they walked,
the more the distance receded.
They were shocked;
that was not what they needed.
Would they ever reach it?

Their daily quest was no low jest:
the sun rose here, went down there,
and swept the best sunset with it,
and slowly crept behind the west,
above the mountain crest,
as you probably guessed.
On they pressed.

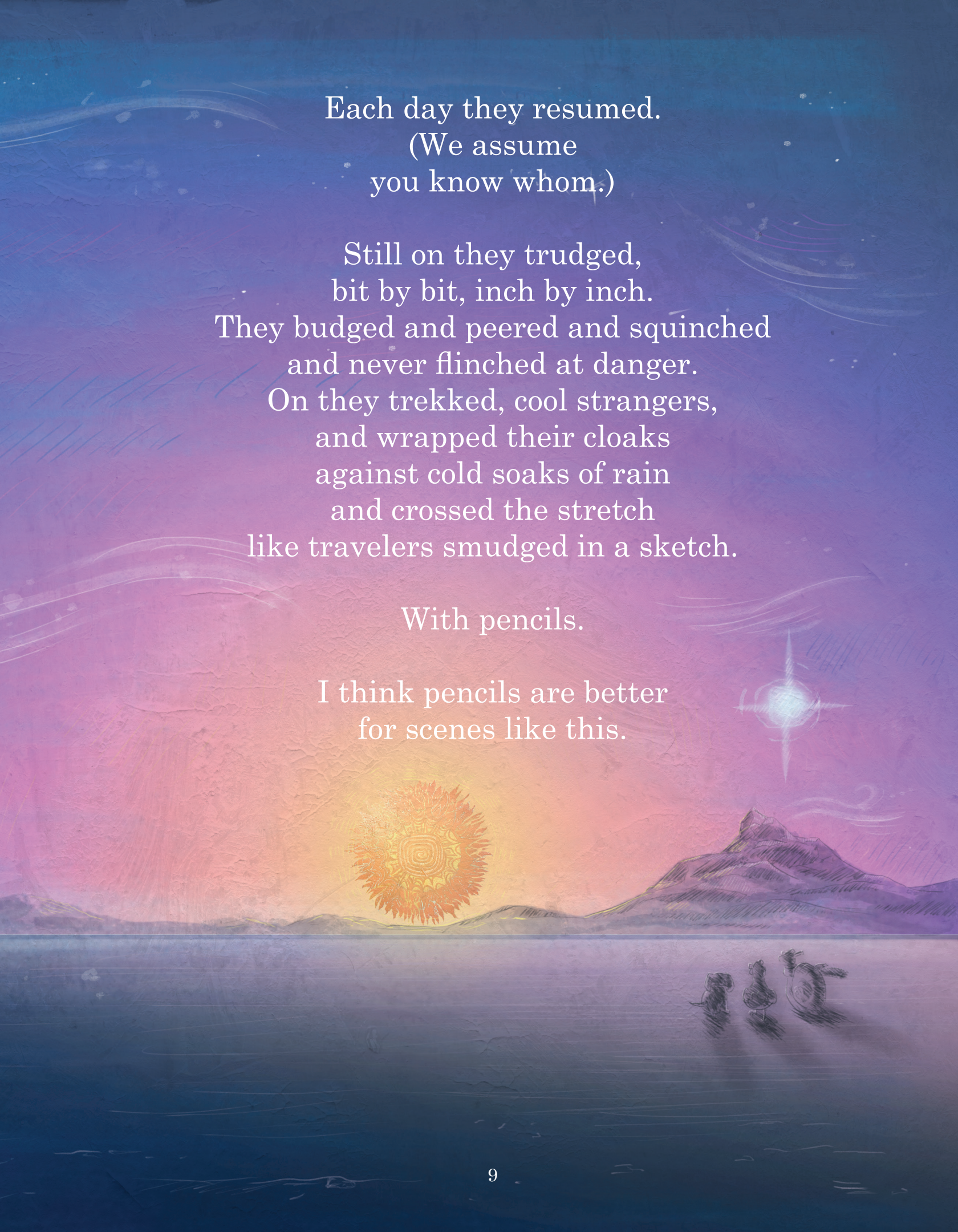
Days and nights passed on and on,
one by one—lights out, lights on,
sunset, night. Then wan Dawn
showed her long hands,
purple and red strands,
and sunrise loomed
with plumes of dawn
bright o'er the route.

Each day they resumed.
(We assume
you know whom.)

Still on they trudged,
bit by bit, inch by inch.
They budged and peered and squinched
and never flinched at danger.
On they trekked, cool strangers,
and wrapped their cloaks
against cold soaks of rain
and crossed the stretch
like travelers smudged in a sketch.

With pencils.

I think pencils are better
for scenes like this.





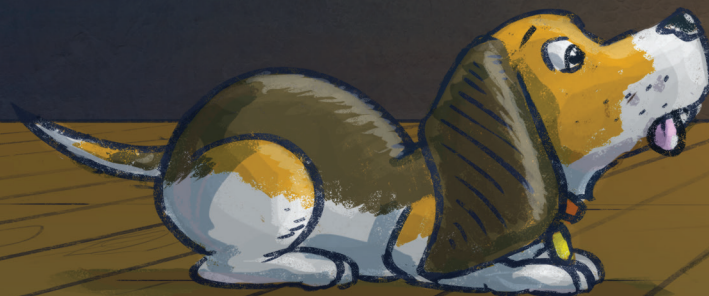
As they walked, they talked.
You're shocked?
Be advised: they talked.

Poodle began:
"This journey, you lot,
is to the next spot.
It ends where it ought.
You know where it ends:
at the SUBJECT,
and I thought—"

What? said, "What-what-what-what-what?"

And speed-snail Sidney zapped *poof*,
and zipped *zooooooooooooooooooop*,
and zurped with a whoof
'round her friends with flair,
like a loop drawn in air.

From somewhere high above,
a cool wind blew blue, yup, and
Poodle could hear it whisper, almost.
A warning, a ghost, it sounded like—



“CUT!”

came a voice from somewhere back there.

Back where? I don't know.

From somewhere—who knows?

The three friends froze,

and from the right side

of the page strode

a mouse!

What page? This page.

“LIGHTS!” she cried
with a voice like a cello.

Her ears were tied back,
and she wore a long yellow scarf
and a long cloak, black,
and big sunglasses.

A Hollywood type.





“LIGHTS!” she cried,
and the stage-lights popped bright
with a crack, and the three
stepped back and
shaded their eyes,
and somehow they were
standing on a stage,
and the loud mouse
walked up to the three.

“This won’t work!” she cried.

“No, no, no!

We’ll do it again.

Poodle, you’re too close
to those two. Sidney, slow it down,
and face the star as you walk!

Stop zooping around!

You’re making me nervous!

Now, start again, everyone,
from the top, from when

Poodle begins to speak.

ACTION!” she cried. “STAGE LEFT!”

And she stomped
off-stage.



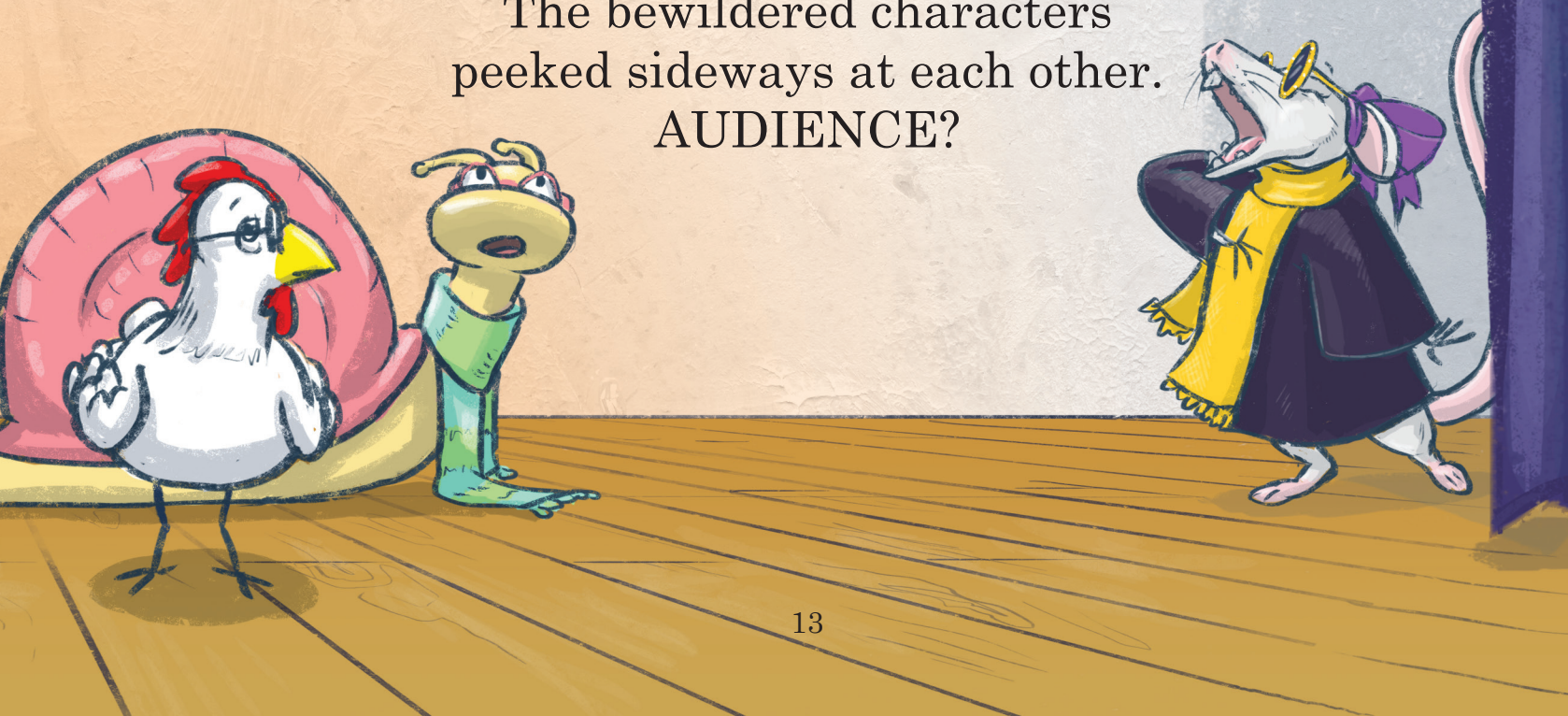
“Wait!” cried Poodle. “Who are you?”

“I’m Maybe,” she said.

“I direct this play,
and when I say,
‘Do it this way,’ I mean it! Okay?
Just as you’ve seen it.
Get it right this time! Please!
You see that audience?”

Audience? This was new.
They had no clue.
Maybe pointed straight up,
and high o’er the stage
they saw children’s faces
peeking down at the antics below.
The children were giggling.
One blinked.

The bewildered characters
peeked sideways at each other.
AUDIENCE?





With the bright lights on, they could
not see the heights ahead.

Instead, there was a white wall
where the mountains had been.

Poodle touched the wall.

The wall was a wall.

That was all.

What did we expect?

Where were the mountains?

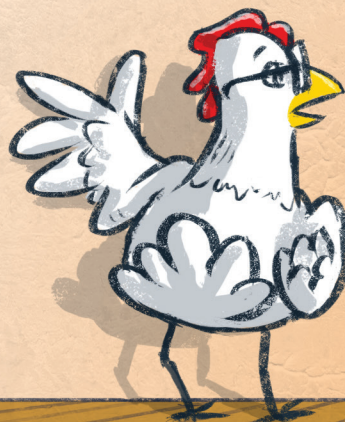
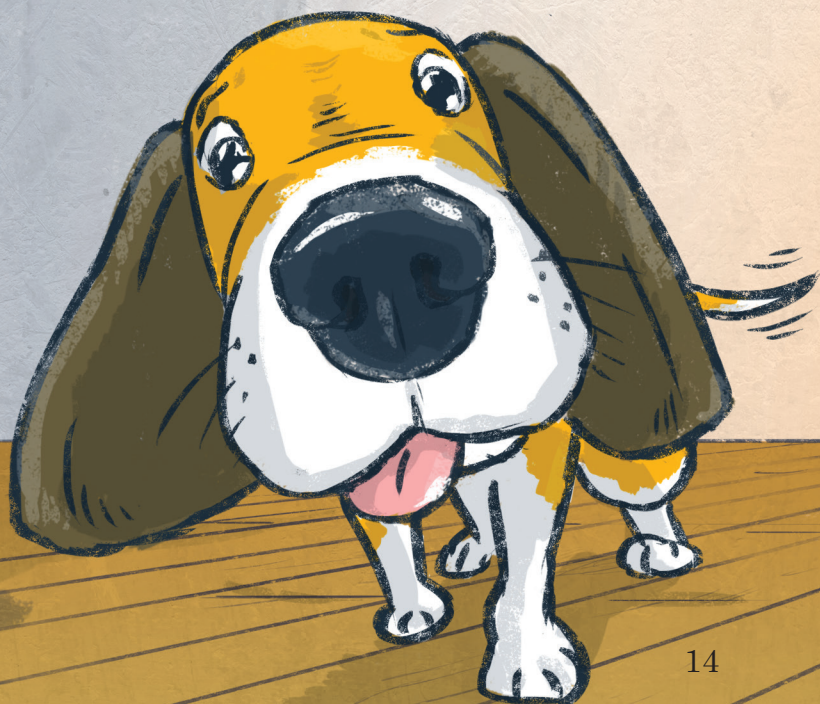
Where was the plain?

Where was the star?

Who could explain?

They looked down, and the
ground had become a wooden floor.

What? barked, “What-what-what?”



Poodle stepped forward.
“You’re Maybe Mouse?” he asked.

“Maybe MOUSE?” she shouted.
“Did I say my name was
Maybe MOUSE???”

“Well, um, no,” said Poodle, abashed.

“You think I’m a cartoon?”
she clamored. “Don’t hector me;
I’m the DIRECTOR!”

The three looked down. No one spoke.
No one snickered. No one croaked.
It was quicker if no one joked.
She gathered her cloak,
swept it back with pride,
and strode for the side
of the page.





At the edge of the page, she turned.
“Take it from Poodle’s first line!
Lights off!” she cried. “ACTION!
Stage right!”

and she vanished off-page
as the lights dimmed the stage,
and the scene grew dark,
and the star was a spark, as before.
As they stood on their marks,
the white wall dissolved,
and the great sky revolved,
and the mountains resolved
to rise clear in the distance.

It was a long, blue mountain range,
and it went from over here
to wayyyy over there.

No, over THERE.
No, where I’m pointing. Right.

Poodle, What?, and Sidney
found themselves back on the plain,
facing blue mountains and rain
far in the distance, and when they
looked down, they saw sand.
There were no children above.

Their world had flipped.
What a script.

This was too much.
Poodle touched
the right side of the page, where
Maybe had gone. He sneaked. He peeked.
There was nothing there.
It was just the edge of the page.
The plain stopped there.
Ahead, the mountains beckoned.