

Becky Bravo's

A Tale FISH

sculptures by
Daniel dela Cruz





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A Tale FISH





In the underwater world of the Mer, hidden deep beneath the sea, there lived extraordinary creatures far, far more complex than average fish.

Certainly, they swam like fish, and possessed the general contours of fish, but that was where all likeness ended.

Each of the Mer had the power to take anything he saw above the water and wish it into becoming part of his own form. And so there were some of them who sported wings, some who sported wheels, and some who sported gadgets, tools, and all sorts of thingamajigs. There even some who had taken it into their heads to wear human faces.





This was an unusual preference sometimes looked upon with dismay, though only by an inconsiderable few. But what an uproar arose when there was a boy born to them who did not have the fishlike form and silver tail that made the Mer who they were, but an objectionable human body. Far worse, he did not have the ability to alter his form.

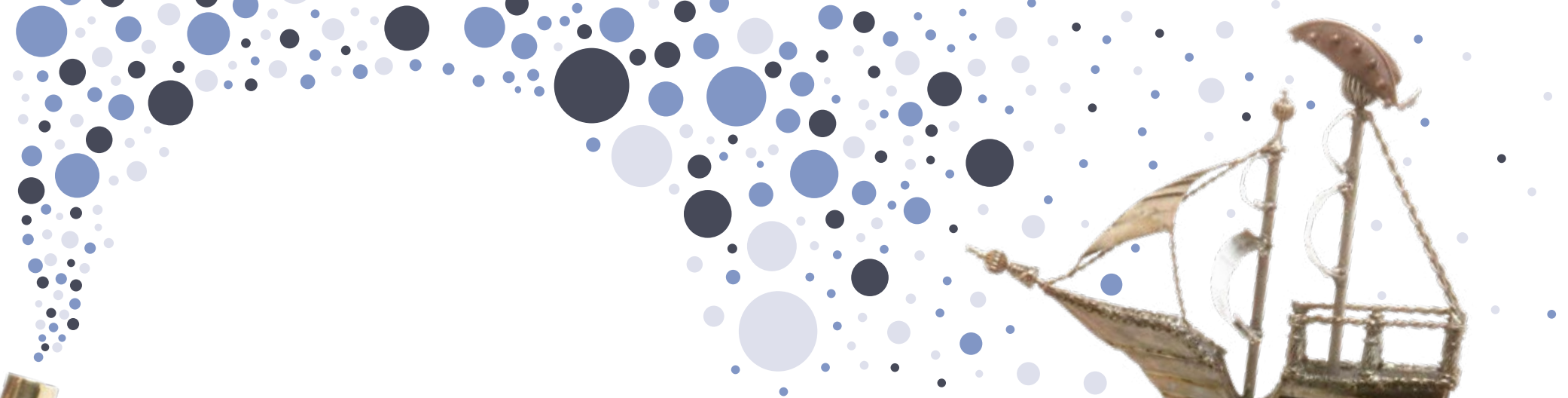


His father would have nothing to do with him, and placed the blame for the boy's deformities firmly upon his mother, who he had once seen making eyes at a mortal man, a lowly fisherman, around whose boat she had swum lazily in circles, flicking and swishing her silver tail.





Neither of his parents wanted the boy, so his grandfather took him in, and he was glad to do it, for he was a rather lonely old fish. He had a motor for a heart, but that didn't mean he had lost the ability to feel. He looked through his spectacles at the pitiful little creature, and saw only a grandson in need of his love.



Grandfather Agu

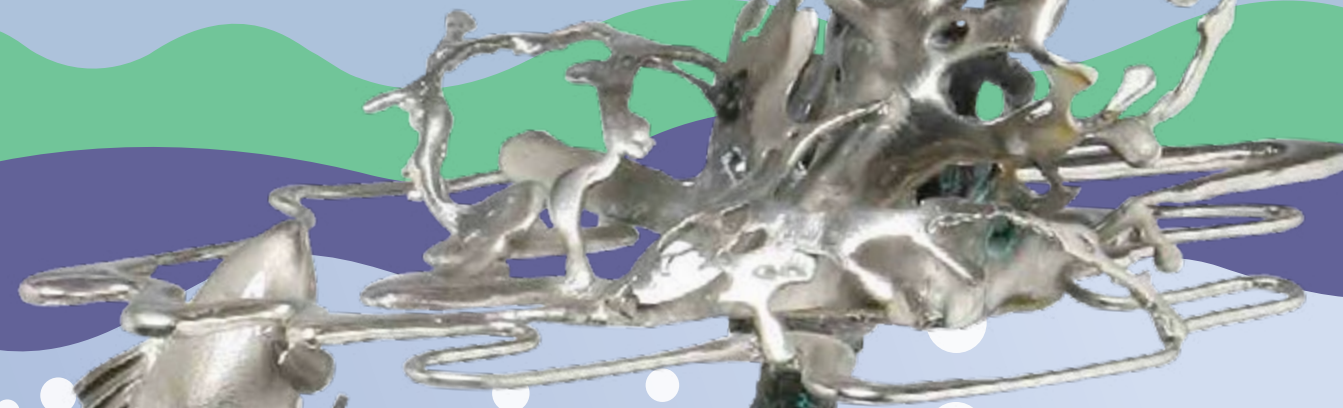
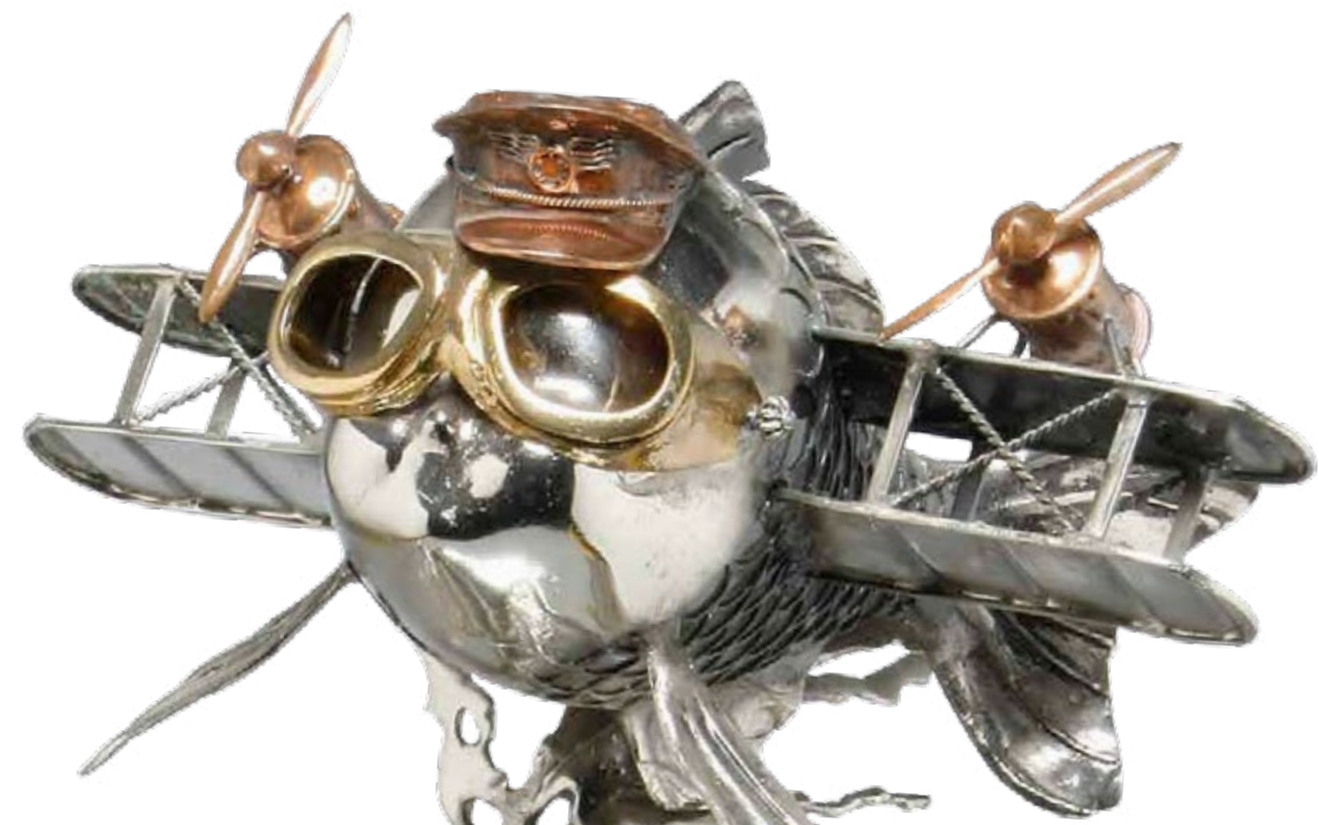
named his grandson Koi, and raised him the same as any other Merling. And Koi certainly was, save for the fact that he looked just like a human child.





Koi never outgrew the inability to alter his appearance, but grew up able to do everything else the other Mer boys could. He swam just as well as any other, did as well as could be expected in school, and rarely never made trouble for his grandfather, except for the occasional scrapes young boys were won't to find themselves in, being at such an impressionable age.

Koi's oddness did not make it easy for him to make many friends. The ones he made were those who themselves were a little unusual. One of them was a rather foolhardy fellow named Kuda, who had a habit of spending much of his time with his head above the water, gazing up at the sky. It was on one such occasion that he had turned his fins into a biplane's wings.





One day, at Kuda's insistence, the two of them went swimming close to the fishing boats, where the elders always warned young Mer never to go unless they were looking for trouble. Koi knew this to be foremost among Grandfather Agu's rules, but Kuda was not a friend easy to refuse.



“You’re not afraid, are you?” asked Kuda, smirking.

“Certainly not!” answered Koi, though his knees shook at the thought of breaking the rules.

“Then let’s go. Stay right behind me!” cried Kuda, and he shot off towards the boats. Koi followed, swimming as fast as his legs could take him.



Kuda came to a stop beside the hull of a fairly large skiff, and when Koi came up behind him a moment later, the two of them poked their heads out of the water.

Five burly fishermen were in the boat, their backs towards them as they strained to draw their nets back on board. Koi and Kuda watched in wonder as a wriggling mass of sardines struggled inside the bursting nets. They were afraid, and yet they couldn't tear their eyes away from the gasping fish.

Neither of them were aware of how long they were frozen in place, but the next thing they knew, a net came swooshing through the water underneath them and caught poor Koi, who darted to safety a second too late.

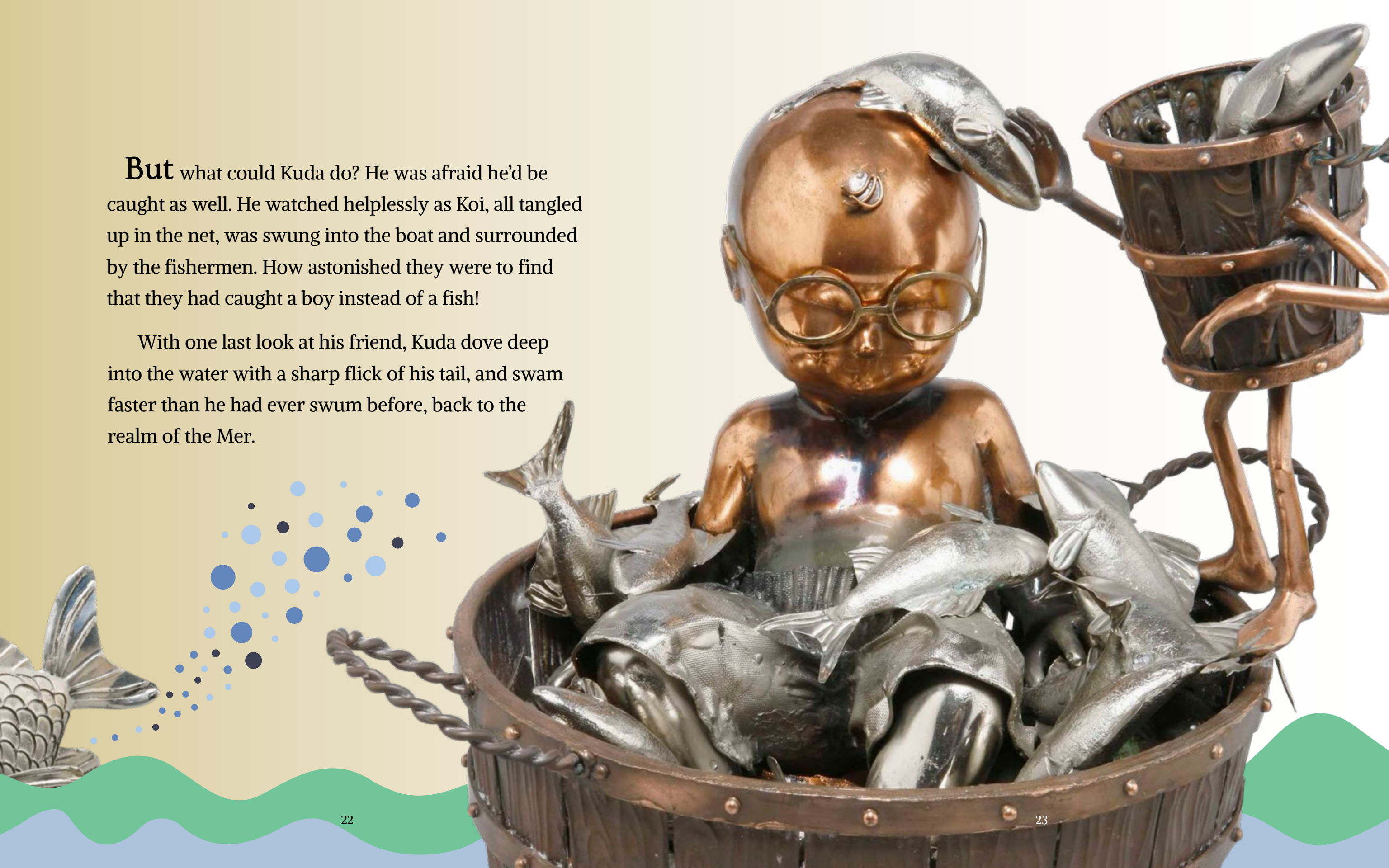
“Gotcha!” rang the voice of one of the men from the boat.

“Kuda! Help me!” screamed Koi as the net was dragged up to the surface.



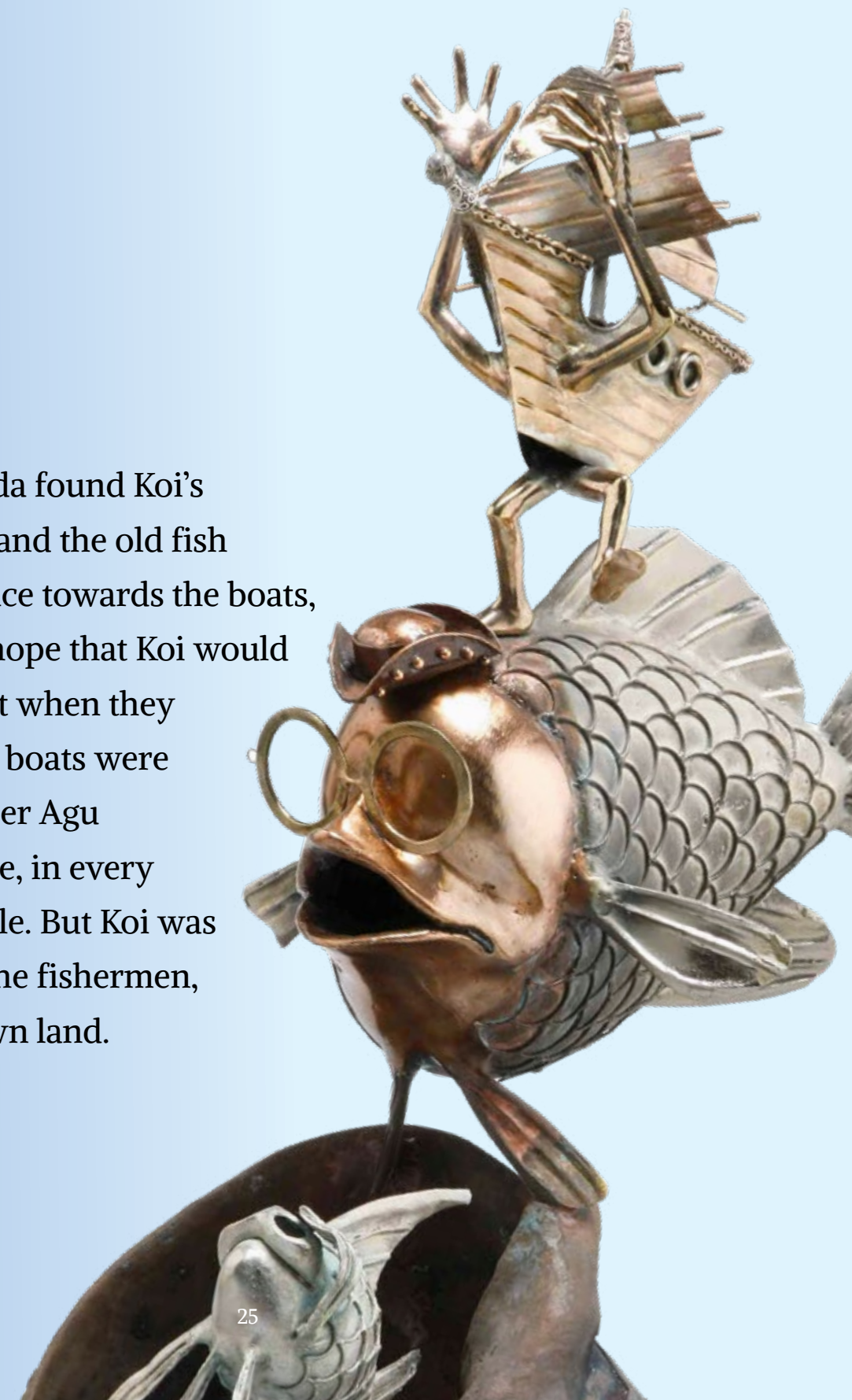
But what could Kuda do? He was afraid he'd be caught as well. He watched helplessly as Koi, all tangled up in the net, was swung into the boat and surrounded by the fishermen. How astonished they were to find that they had caught a boy instead of a fish!

With one last look at his friend, Kuda dove deep into the water with a sharp flick of his tail, and swam faster than he had ever swum before, back to the realm of the Mer.





When Kuda found Koi's grandfather, he and the old fish raced back at once towards the boats, hoping against hope that Koi would still be there. But when they got there, all the boats were gone. Grandfather Agu swam here, there, in every direction possible. But Koi was gone, taken by the fishermen, away to their own land.





Grandfather Agu was inconsolable. The grandson he had raised like his own child, how did it happen that he had lost him this way? Each day at the break of dawn, the old fish swam back to that spot where Koi was taken, and looked for him.



He waited for him, though he knew it was unlikely that he would find him there. He swam around in circles until sunset, looking desperately everywhere.





He peered into his old telescope, sweeping the horizon for the slightest sign of Koi, but there was nothing. Nothing.

When a month had gone by with still no sign of his grandson, Grandfather Agu gave up hope of ever finding him. With a heavy heart he swam back home, wishing he had never let the boy out of his sight for even a moment. Imagine how startled he was when he came through the doors of his house and found Koi standing there, waiting for him!

“What took you so long, Grandfather?” Koi said, as if

he had been waiting for him right there all this time.

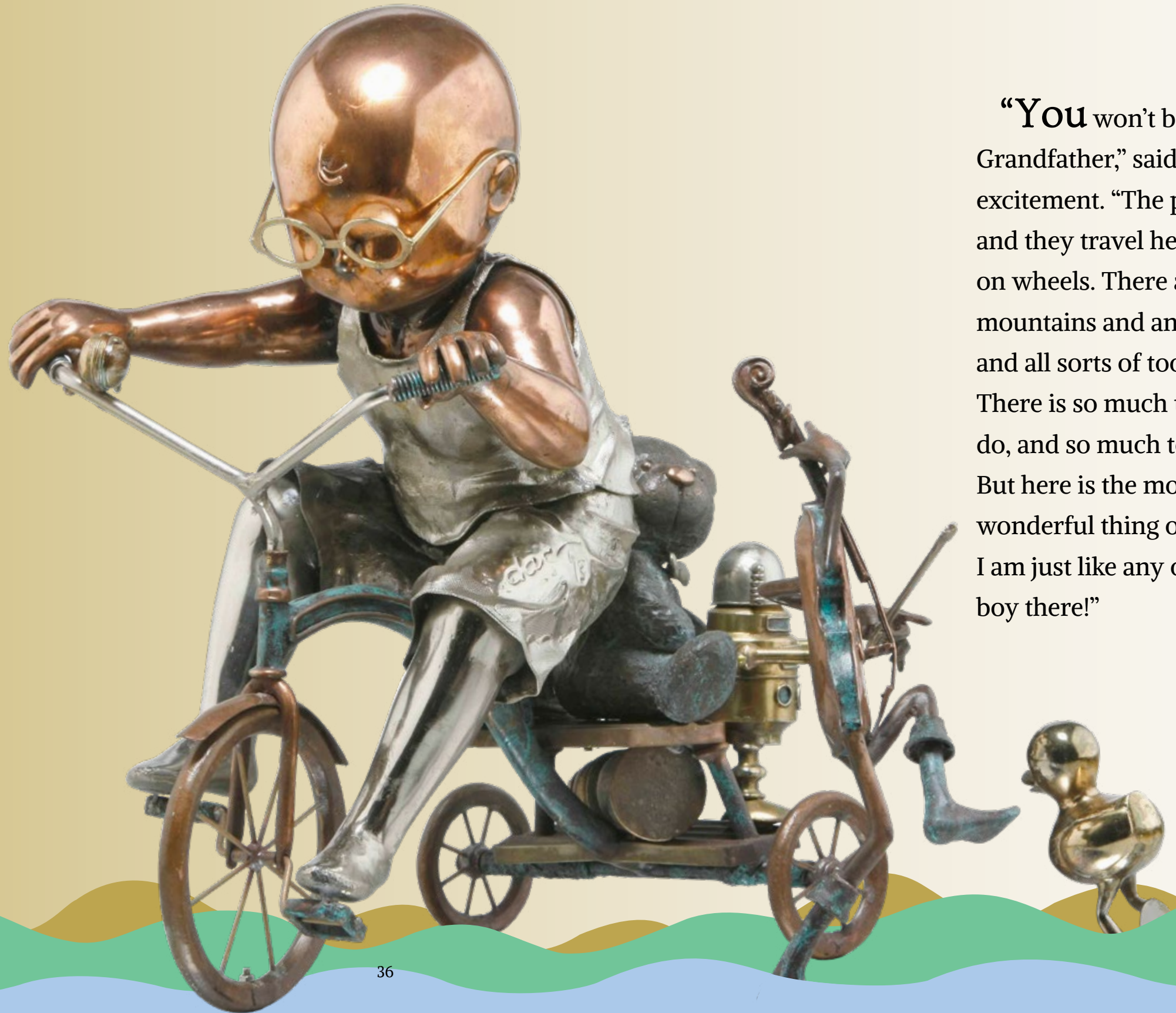
Grandfather Agu was so glad to see him that all he could do was weep for joy. “How-- why--” began Grandfather Agu, but he was just so happy he could hardly speak. His mechanical heart raced so fast felt as if it might, at any moment, jump out of his chest.



Koi told him that one of the fishermen who had caught him had taken him home to his wife. They had no children, and it had been their fondest wish to raise a son. They gave him everything a human boy could wish for and treated him like their own little prince.

Koi certainly had the time of his life. Never had his feet felt so steady on the ground, and never had his eyes been met with so much to see. Koi threw his mind wide open to all the strange new things in the world above the water, and discovered his own wonderful ability -- an imagination which gave him the power to take anything he liked and make it come alive.





“**You** won’t believe what it is like up there, Grandfather,” said Koi, his eyes shining bright with excitement. “The people there live in houses of stone, and they travel here and there in crafts that move on wheels. There are things like trees and mountains and animals and flowers, and all sorts of tools and contraptions. There is so much to do, and so much to see. But here is the most wonderful thing of all – I am just like any other boy there!”





“**But** why have you come back?” asked Grandfather Agu. “Why would you leave such a wonderful place where you say you are just like the others?” He could not understand why Koi had chosen to return. He had finally found somewhere he could belong. Why had he come back to a place where some did not think of him as one of their own?

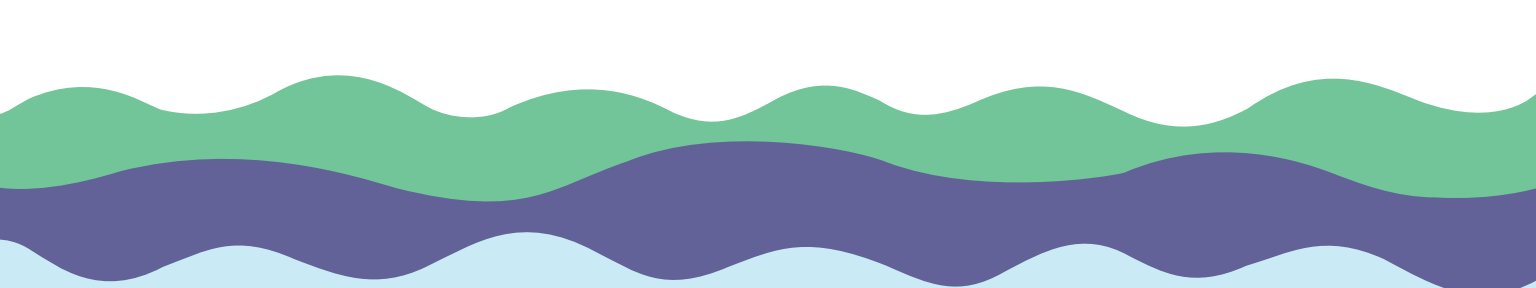


“**Because** home is here with you, Grandfather,” said Koi, giving the old fish a fond embrace. He might look like a creature that belonged on land, but there was only one place where Koi’s heart felt at ease. When news of his return reached the rest of the Mer and word spread of his adventures on land, it was with awe and newfound respect that they welcomed him back to the world under the water.

“It’s good to be home,” Koi told them, and if he had had any doubts about it in the past, they now all floated up and away from him, like bubbles rising to the surface of the sea.








Meet Koi of the underwater world of the Mer.
With two unsightly legs and an unmistakably human face,
he seems to have been born in the wrong place.

When chance takes him to the land of the humans,
he fits right in for the first time in his life.

But will he stay?



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