

A colorful illustration of a child wearing a red and yellow striped cap, riding a bicycle. The child is wearing a dark green shirt and red shorts. The background is a textured, painterly style with warm tones. There are some starfish-like shapes on the ground.

Charmaine Aserappa

# MESSAGE IN THE SAND

*(Sulat sa Buhangin)*

Original Illustrations by  
Roel Obemio

Coloring &  
Activity Book  
(Magkulang Tayo!)

Charmaine Aserappa  
MESSAGE  
IN THE  
SAND

*(Sulat sa Buhangin)*

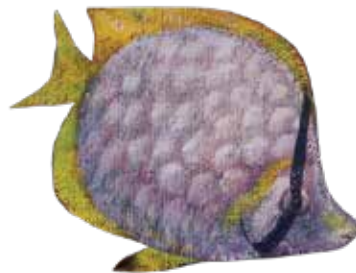
Original Illustrations by Roel Obemio

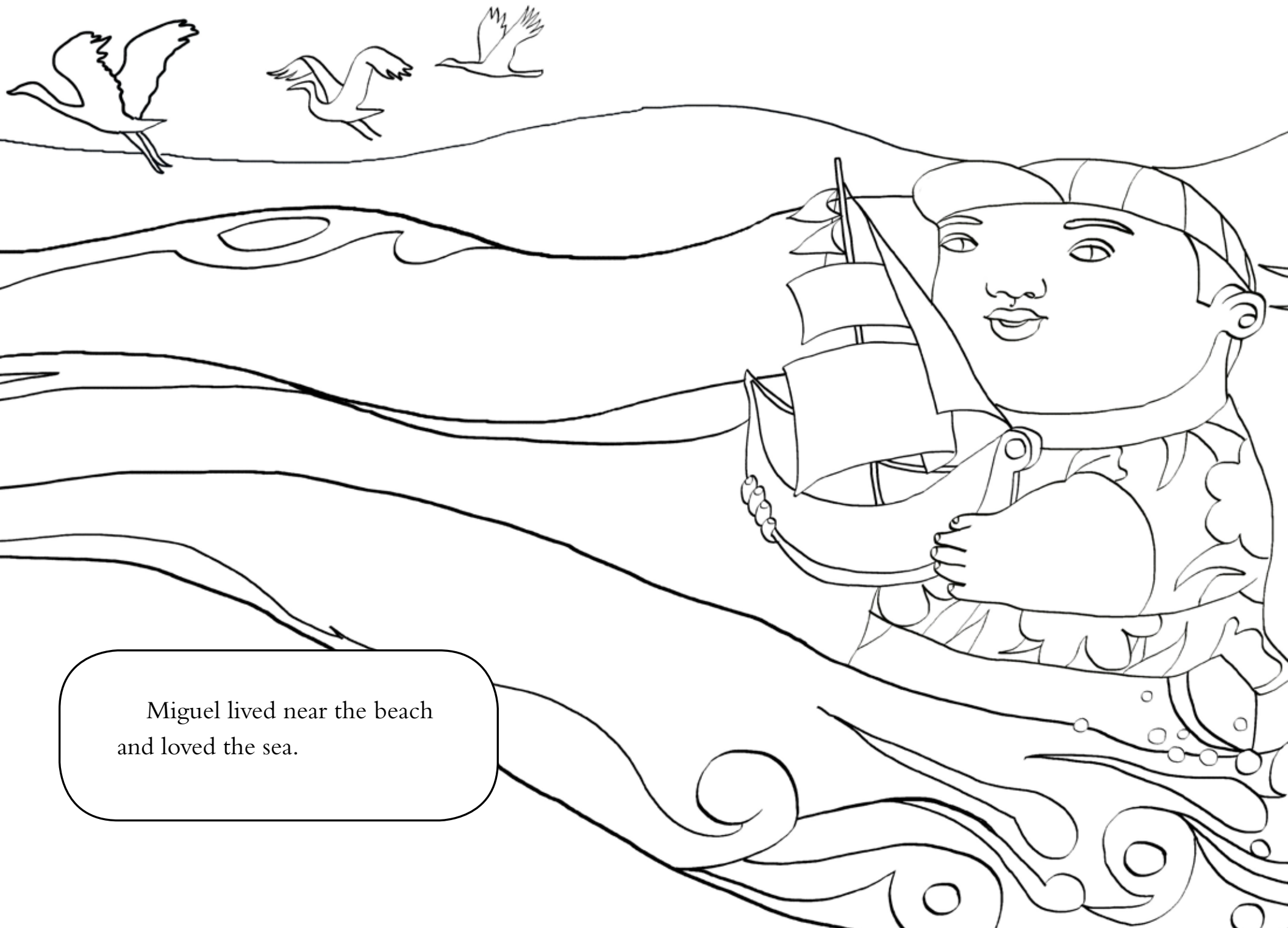




This is a message written  
in the sands of time.

The sands of time  
are running out.





Miguel lived near the beach  
and loved the sea.

But he was sad that the beautiful fish were dying.

His mother told him how a local mining company was dumping waste into a river which led out to the sea.





“Who can stop them?” Miguel asked.

“You,” she replied.

“Me?”

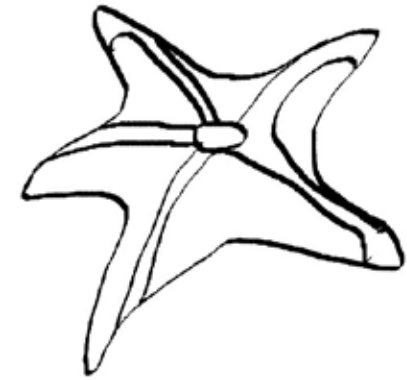
“It’s always up to us,” said his mother.  
“Send them a message.”

Miguel found a stick and wrote a message in the sand.

“Save Our Seas,” Miguel explained.

S O S





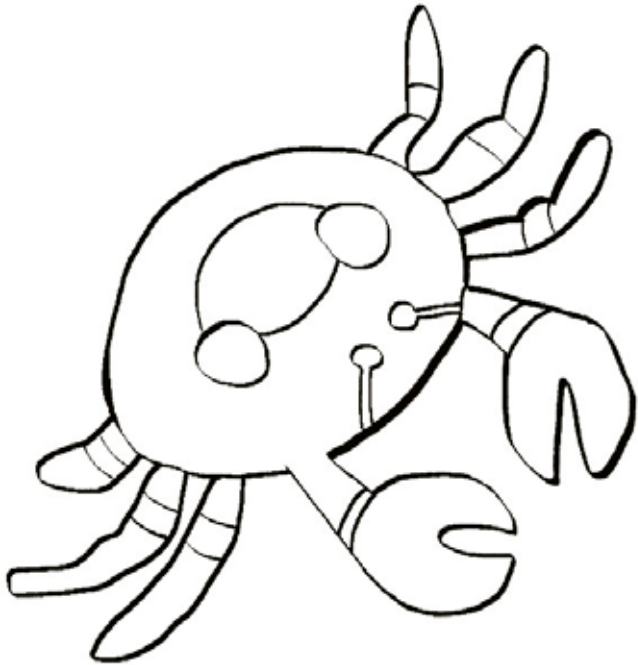
The tide roared in. It washed away his words.





Over and over, Miguel  
wrote the message.

He wrote it in fronds  
of seaweed.





He wrote it using broken seashells.



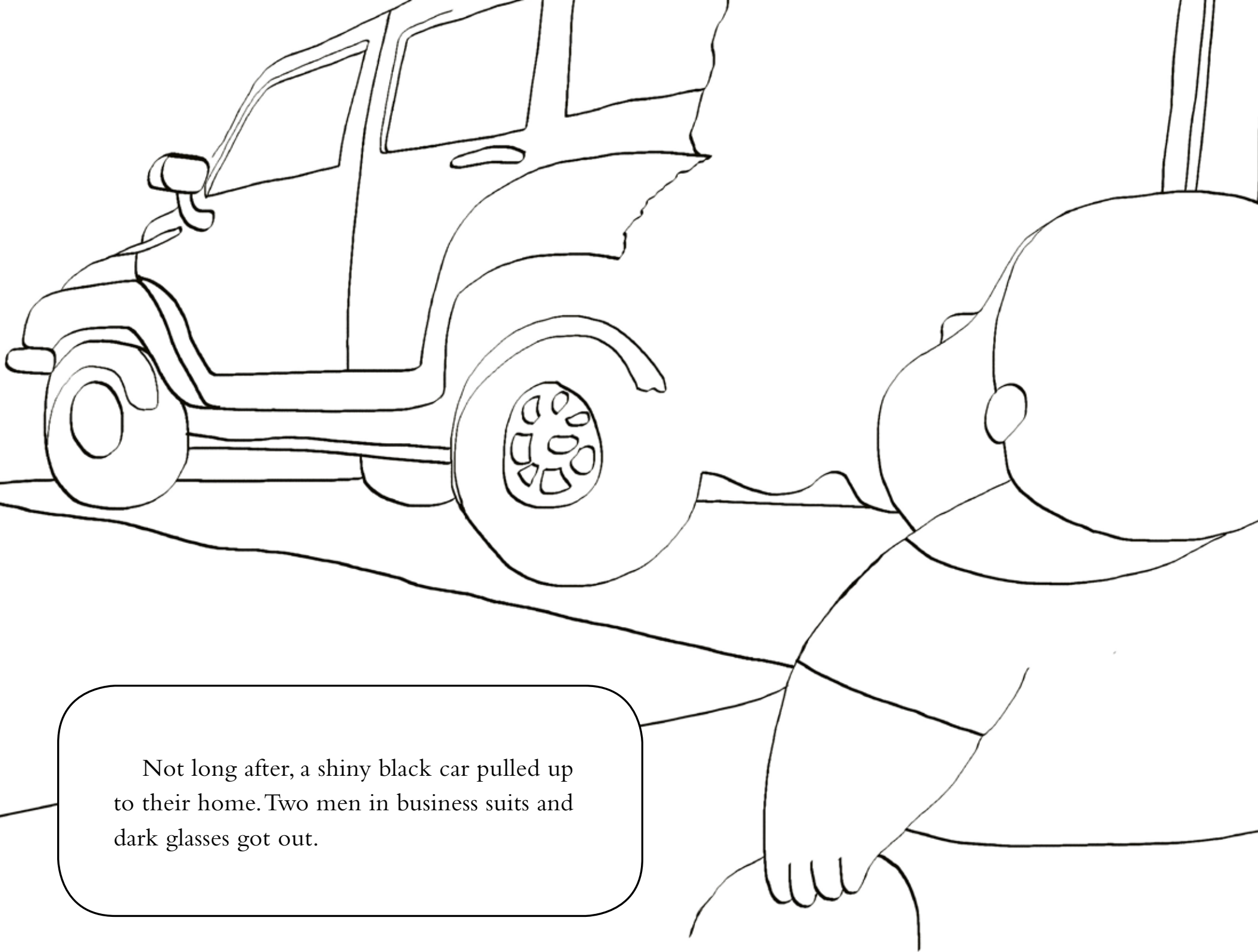


Over and over, the waves washed  
away the words.

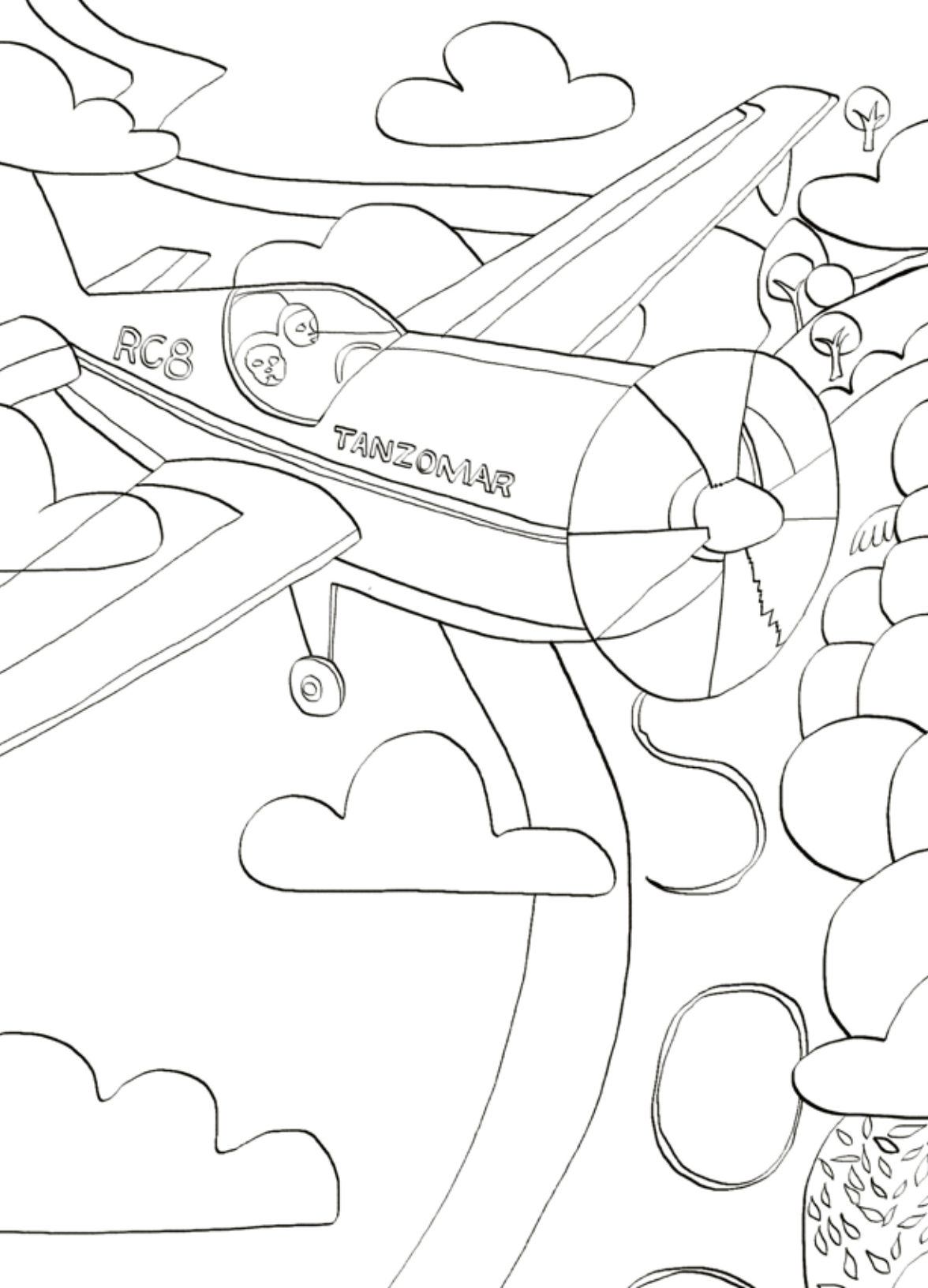
“It’s just no good. Nobody will ever see my message,” Miguel sighed.

“Try again,” his mother encouraged him. “Pray, and be patient. Never give up. One day someone will see your message and things will change.”





Not long after, a shiny black car pulled up to their home. Two men in business suits and dark glasses got out.



“Every morning, when the President of our mining company flies his private airplane over this beach, he sees your message in the sand down below,” said one of the men.

“He sent us here to find out: What does this S.O.S. mean? Are you in trouble?”



“Tell your President, S.O.S. means  
‘Save Our Seas,’” said Miguel.

“Tell him to stop dumping his  
waste in the river.”





“The river leads to the ocean. Waste poisons  
the fish and plants. It makes the water and beach  
dirty. It makes the birds sick.

And that makes me sick!”



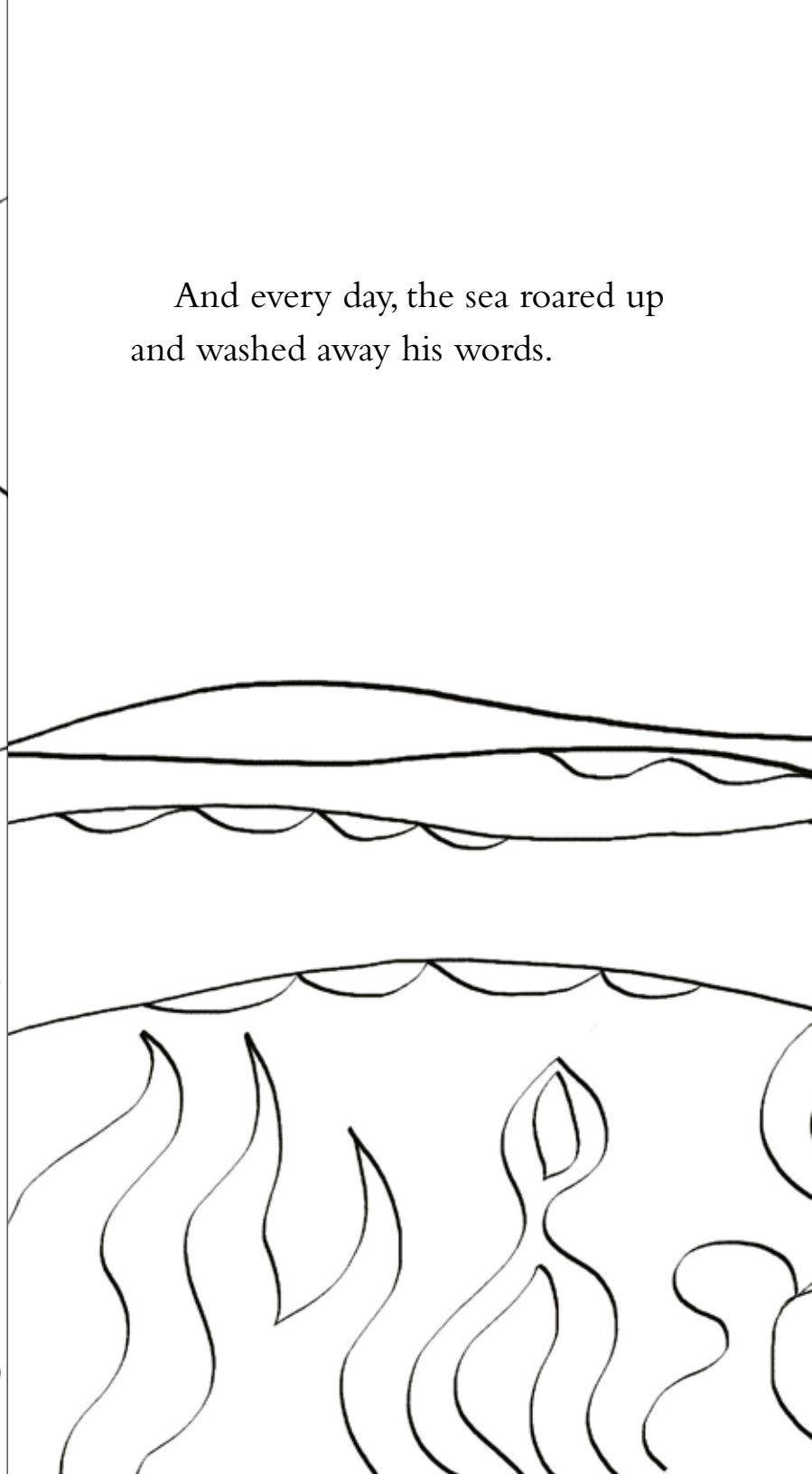
Miguel continued to pray.

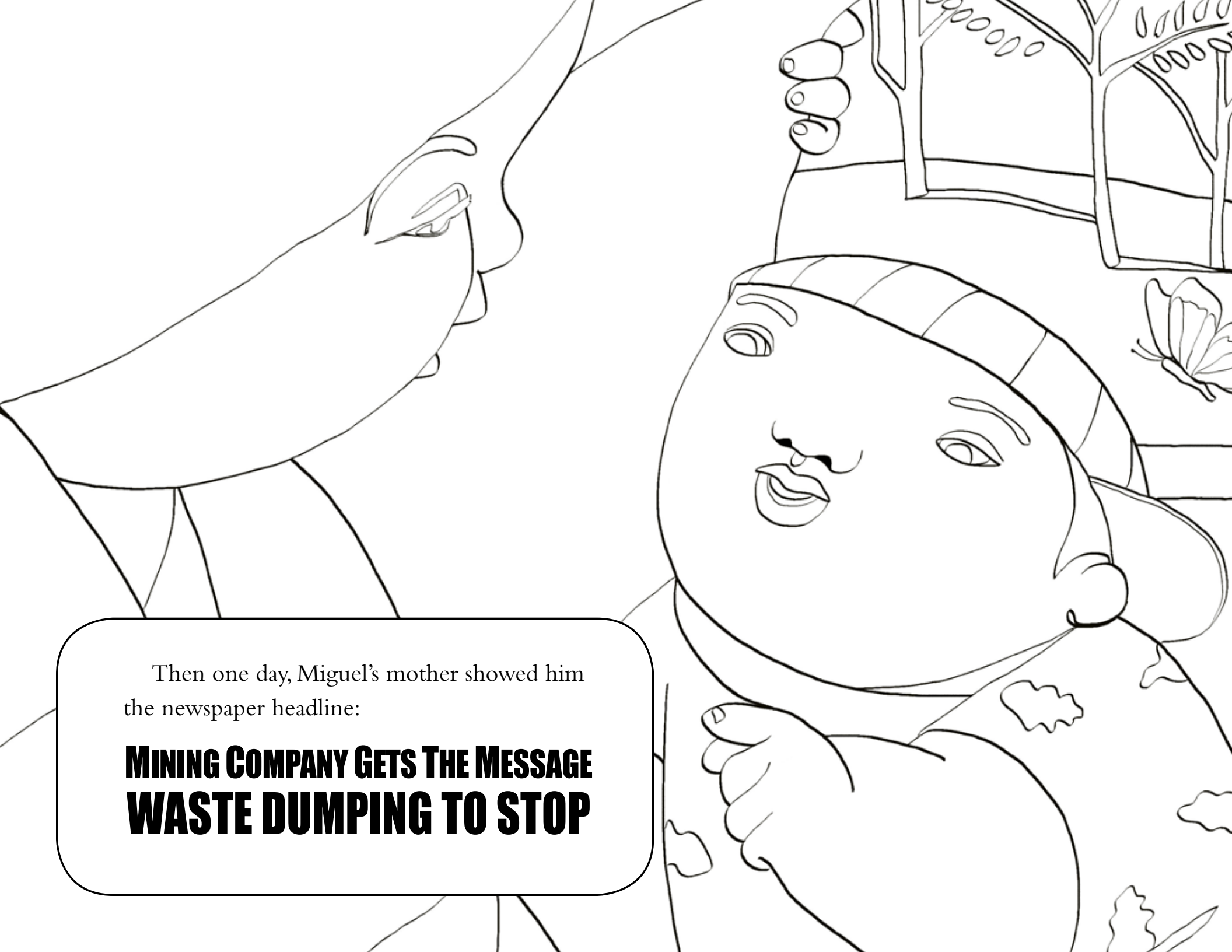
And every day, he wrote the  
message in the sand.





And every day, the sea roared up  
and washed away his words.





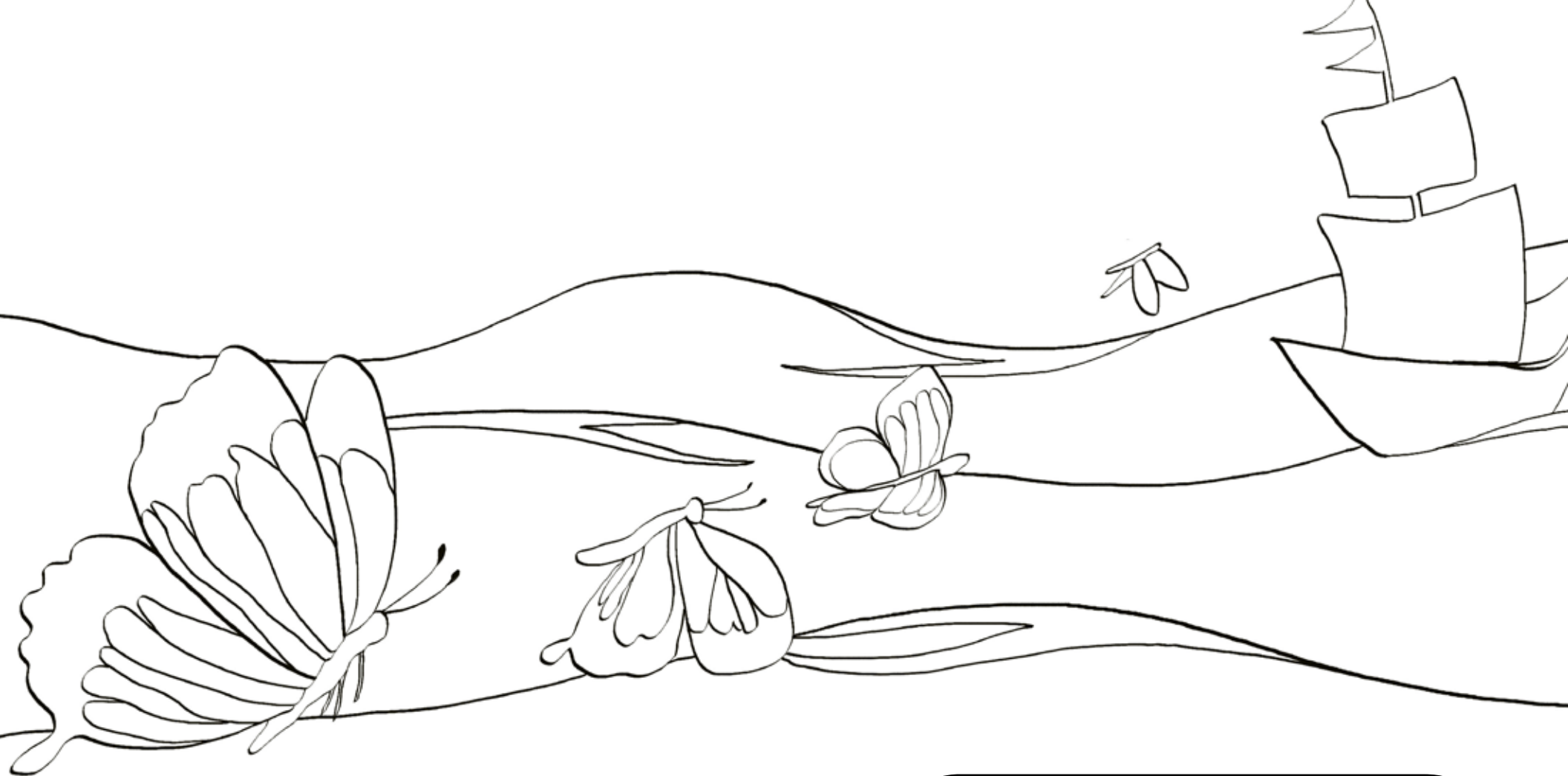
Then one day, Miguel's mother showed him  
the newspaper headline:

**MINING COMPANY GETS THE MESSAGE  
WASTE DUMPING TO STOP**



Miguel smiled, ran out to the beach and found a stick. He wrote a message in the sand.

THANK YOU



The sea roared up and washed  
away his words.

It carried them to lands far away.



My thanks...

to God, for the glory and bounty of the oceans.

to Gigo Alampay and CANVAS for the opportunity

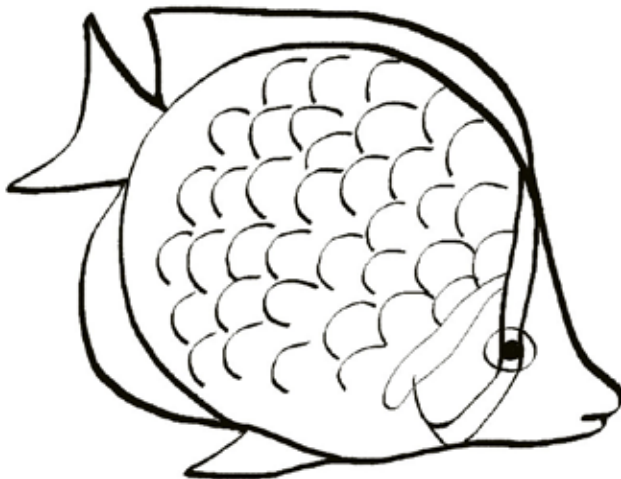
to write this book.

to Roel Obemio for his illustrations.

to my mother, Gladys May Aserappa, for her kind support.

to my son, Nicolas Bernard Re, whose art inspires me.

Charmaine Aserappa



## THE AUTHOR

CHARMAINE ASERAPPA is Communications Officer of a church named in honor of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of living creatures and the environment. She has lived in Asia, North America and Europe, and is the author of the international bestseller, *IN A JAPANESE GARDEN* (Council Oak Books, 1999).

Charmaine Aserappa is Poetry Ambassador for the Keats Society.

## THE ARTIST

ROEL OBEMIO completed Fine Arts studies at the University of the East, in the Philippines, where he majored in Painting. Widely admired for his works in watercolor and acrylic, his art is influenced by his admiration for the art of two great painters: Fernando Botero (Colombia) and Mauro Malang Santos (Philippines).

# ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

## HELPING THE BEACH (AND THE OCEAN) STAY HEALTHY

This activity involves a cleaning up a beach and trying to understand the trash that humans leave in the oceans that end up on beaches around the world. At the end of the activity, the participants (children and adults alike) have to be able to: (1) observe the beach environment more closely and the man-made things present on it, (2) analyze what types of trash are present on the beach, (3) formulate an individual or group plan of action to prevent or decrease human impact on the beach and our oceans.

### CLEANING THE BEACH

Depending on the children's ages, group them into clean-up groups with one (1) adult preferably with a group to ensure safety. Provide environmentally-friendly trash bags or containers (reusable or biodegradable) for each individual. You can also ask the participants to bring their own trash container/bag before the activity.

Organize the clean-up groups in a line along the beach, each group spread across the width of the beach for better coverage. Designate start and end points for the clean-up groups. Set the time for the end of the clean-up. Although not necessary, a prize for the most volume of trash collected may be given as an incentive. For smaller children, a shorter period of time may be given so that they can do the rest of the activity without tiring them out.

### WHAT'S IN TRASH?

At the end of the collection period, ask the children to sort the trash that they've collected into two main piles: those that are natural and those that were made by humans. Depending on the school-level of the children, ask them to sort the natural pile into those that are from plants and from animals. For the human-made pile of trash, sort them out according to what they think the trash is made out of: plastic, rubber, cloth, glass, metal, etc.

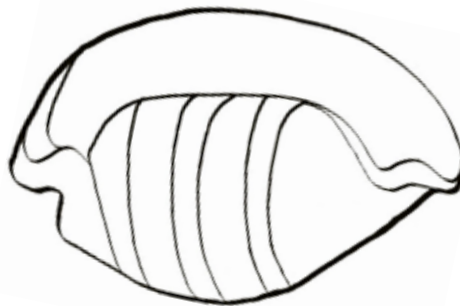
## LET'S TALK ABOUT TRASH

After the sorting, a discussion leader/facilitator should ask the group to determine which material the majority of the human-made trash is made of. Discuss the connection of this material to their daily lives. Most of the trash is probably made of plastic or related products. The discussion leader can ask the children what types of plastic material were found and what they used it for in their daily lives. They may be bags of chips or snacks they eat, water or soda bottles, or other disposable food containers or plastic packaging. The discussion can lead to how most plastic takes a long time to biodegrade in the ocean and even while buried in landfills. Plastic bags have been known hazards to marine life - to fishes and birds, for example. If they do decay/degrade, plastic chemicals dissolved in seawater can pose a threat to both marine life and the humans that eat them.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Ask the children what they think should be done about this problem but keep the discussion on the level of what they can do as individuals or with their families or schoolmates. How can they use less of these man-made ocean pollutants in their daily lives? Some suggested actions:

- recycling plastic products
- using reusable containers (e.g., for school snacks or lunches from home, personal refillable drink containers, no disposable straws, etc.)
- supporting vendors/establishments that use less disposable plastic products or have green programs
- talking to friends about the benefits of recycling
- using reusable shopping bags instead of the store-issued plastic (or even paper) bags
- finding ways of safely reusing plastic items (repurposing) for craft, art or other creative projects





## SOME SUGGESTED WEB ARTICLES ON PLASTIC

Barry, C. 2009. Plastic Breaks Down in Ocean, After All—And Fast. Retrieved from <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2009/08/090820-plastic-decomposes-oceans-seas.html>

Bourne, J.K. 2006. Loving Our Coasts to Death. Retrieved from <http://science.nationalgeographic.com/science/earth/surface-of-the-earth/loving-coasts.html>

Harris, W. 2009(?). How Long Does It Take for Plastic to Biodegrade? Retrieved from <http://science.howstuffworks.com/science-vs-myth/everyday-myths/how-long-does-it-take-for-plastics-to-biodegrade1.htm>

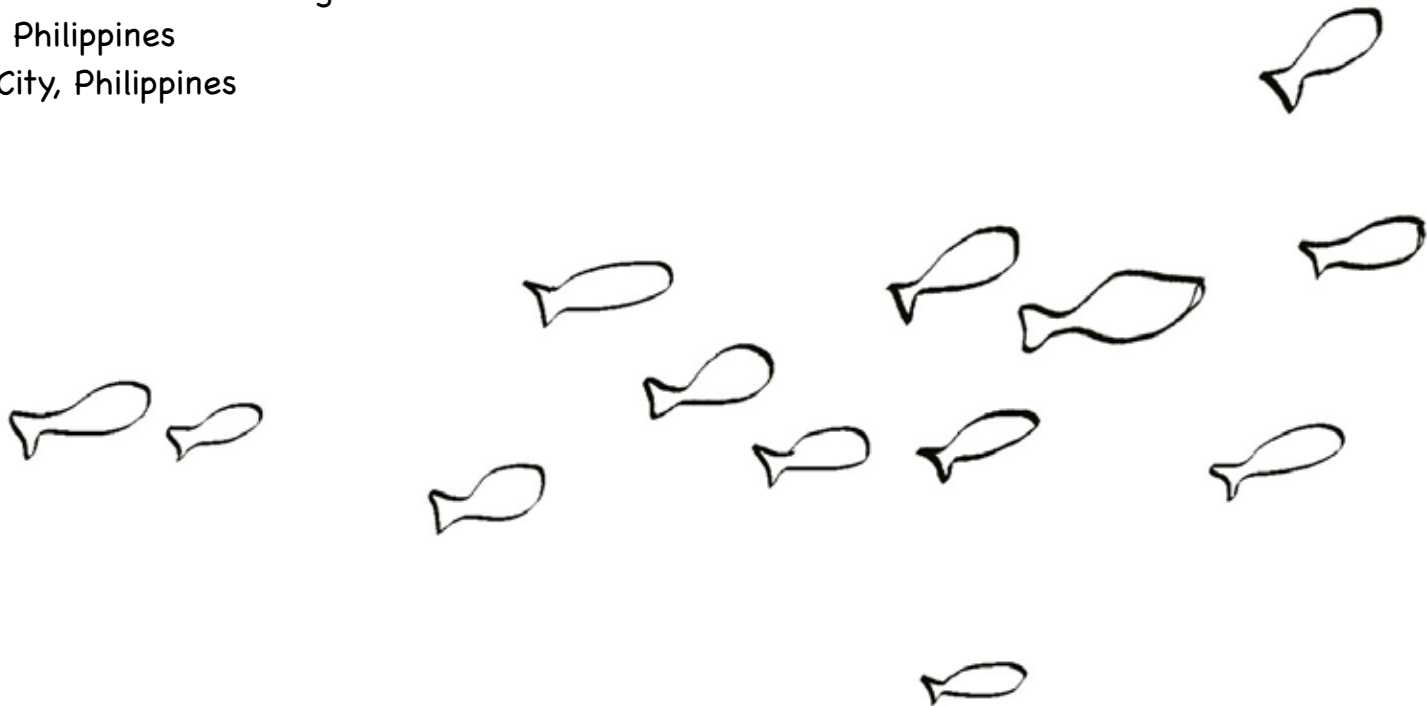
Lapidos, J. 2007. Will My Plastic Still Be Here in 2057? Retrieved from [http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/explainer/2007/06/will\\_my\\_plastic\\_bag\\_still\\_be\\_here\\_in\\_2507.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/explainer/2007/06/will_my_plastic_bag_still_be_here_in_2507.html)

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T	F	I	N	D	P	V	J	T	D	F	O	N	D	T	V
J	U	R	G	K	Z	T	H	A	T	U	R	F	K	H	Y
X	X	M	W	R	H	G	O	A	M	T	W	O	R	D	Y

## WORDS RELATED TO CLIMATE CHANGE

**Atmosphere** - the air around us

**Carbon Dioxide** - the air we breathe out. It is a greenhouse gas

**Climate** - the condition of the atmosphere in area over a long period of time

**Ecosystem** - the system where living and non-living things interact

**El Niño** - ocean and atmosphere condition that brings drought to Southeast Asia and Australia

**Fossil Fuel** - oil, coal and natural gas

**Global Warming** - increase in the average temperature of the atmosphere

**Greenhouse Gas** - a gas which absorbs and holds heat in the atmosphere

**La Niña** - ocean and atmosphere condition that brings more rain to Southeast Asia and Australia

**Ocean** - a large saltwater body that can absorb sunlight

**Monsoon** - seasonal winds in the tropics

**Ozone** - a layer in the Earth's atmosphere which absorbs sunlight

**Tsunami** - an ocean wave caused by an underwater earthquake

**Water Vapor** - the gas phase of water; also a greenhouse gas

**Weather** - the day to day condition of the atmosphere in an area

T	F	I	N	D	P	V	J	T	D	F	O	N	D	T	V
J	U	R	G	K	Z	T	H	A	T	U	R	F	K	H	Y
X	X	M	W	R	H	G	O	A	M	T	W	O	R	D	Y

Today, the earth is experiencing the effects of climate change, which is thought to be caused by humans.

Look for the words in the list below. This will help you learn more about the terms and processes involved in climate change.

Have fun!

Atmosphere  
Ecosystem  
Global Warming  
Ocean  
Tsunami  
Carbon Dioxide  
El Niño  
Greenhouse Gas

Monsoon  
Water Vapor  
Climate  
Fossil Fuel  
La Niña  
Ozone  
Weather

E	O	A	T	M	O	S	P	H	E	R	E	L	G
R	C	L	Y	E	E	C	Y	O	D	E	H	E	L
O	E	O	T	S	U	N	A	M	I	B	I	U	O
P	A	L	C	G	K	M	A	P	X	S	Z	F	B
A	N	A	R	X	L	R	U	N	O	T	Q	L	A
V	I	N	E	C	E	T	A	M	I	L	C	I	L
R	O	I	S	H	N	R	V	Ñ	D	G	O	S	W
E	J	Ñ	T	W	S	I	L	A	N	I	Ñ	S	A
T	M	A	E	M	O	N	S	O	O	N	I	O	R
A	E	P	A	N	E	V	D	V	B	E	N	F	M
W	A	R	N	E	R	A	X	W	R	E	L	T	I
I	X	D	O	Z	O	N	E	I	A	Q	E	E	N
Z	U	M	E	T	S	Y	S	O	C	E	Y	K	G
S	A	G	E	S	U	O	H	N	E	E	R	G	V



**CANVAS' 1 Million Books for One Million Filipino Children Campaign** aims to inspire in children a love for reading by donating its award-winning books to public schools, hospitals, and disadvantaged communities throughout the country.

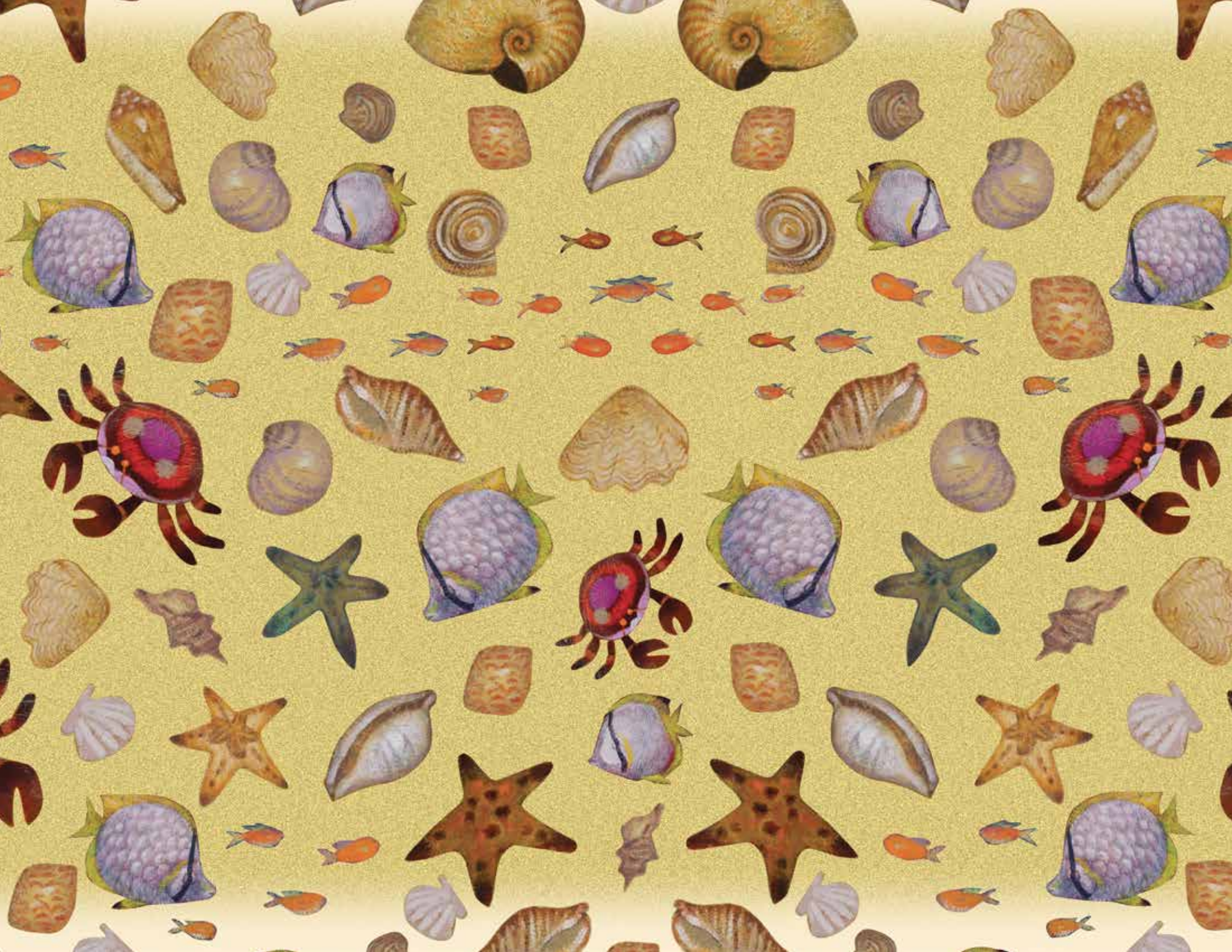
*Imagine and believe. A child with art and stories can change the world.*

You can help us!

For more information, visit [www.canvas.ph](http://www.canvas.ph), email [info@canvas.ph](mailto:info@canvas.ph), or find us on Facebook: **Center for Art, New Ventures and Sustainable Development**.

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*CANVAS, a non-profit organization,  
works with the creative community to promote children's literacy,  
explore national identity, and broaden public awareness  
of Philippine art, culture, and the environment.*





Miguel loved the sea,  
and was sad that the fish  
and seabirds were dying.

*Kinagigiliwan ni Miguel ang dagat,  
at siya'y nalulungkot na ang mga isda  
at mga ibong dagat ay namamatay.*



[www.canvas.ph](http://www.canvas.ph)  
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