

The Little Acorn

Story by Christa Kauble
Illustrations by Mary Jo Tannehill



The Natural Resources Conservation

Service helps people help the land through scientifically based, locally led, voluntary, natural resource conservation efforts.

Wise stewardship of Missouri's natural resources benefits each of us through a healthy environment and productive lands.

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About this booklet:

This booklet is the result of volunteer efforts through the Earth Team. Earth Team volunteers donate their time and talents to help USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service carry out its mission of conserving and protecting our natural resources.

For more information about the Earth Team or about how the Natural Resources Conservation Service helps people help the land, contact the NRCS office serving your county. Look in the phone book under "US Government, Department of Agriculture," or click on the "Find a Service Center" link on the Missouri NRCS website: **www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov**

Special thanks to the South Missouri Water Quality Project Office in Ozark, Missouri, for helping to make this booklet possible.

The Little Acorn



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Once upon a time,
there was a little acorn that
longed to become a big,
beautiful oak tree.

One day, a squirrel passing by
found the little acorn
and buried it near a stream.



Mary G



When the rains came,
the little acorn began to sprout.

Down went its roots
searching for water and
up came leaves
to catch the sunlight.





The squirrel passed by
every day on his way to the
stream to get a drink and
watched the little acorn
grow with each rain
into a small oak tree.





As fall approached,
the small oak tree's leaves turned
beautiful colors. The winds began to
blow and the small oak tree shivered
until its leaves fell to the ground.

The leaves gave the animals of the
forest winter shelter and protected
the ground and the small oak tree's
roots against the coming cold.





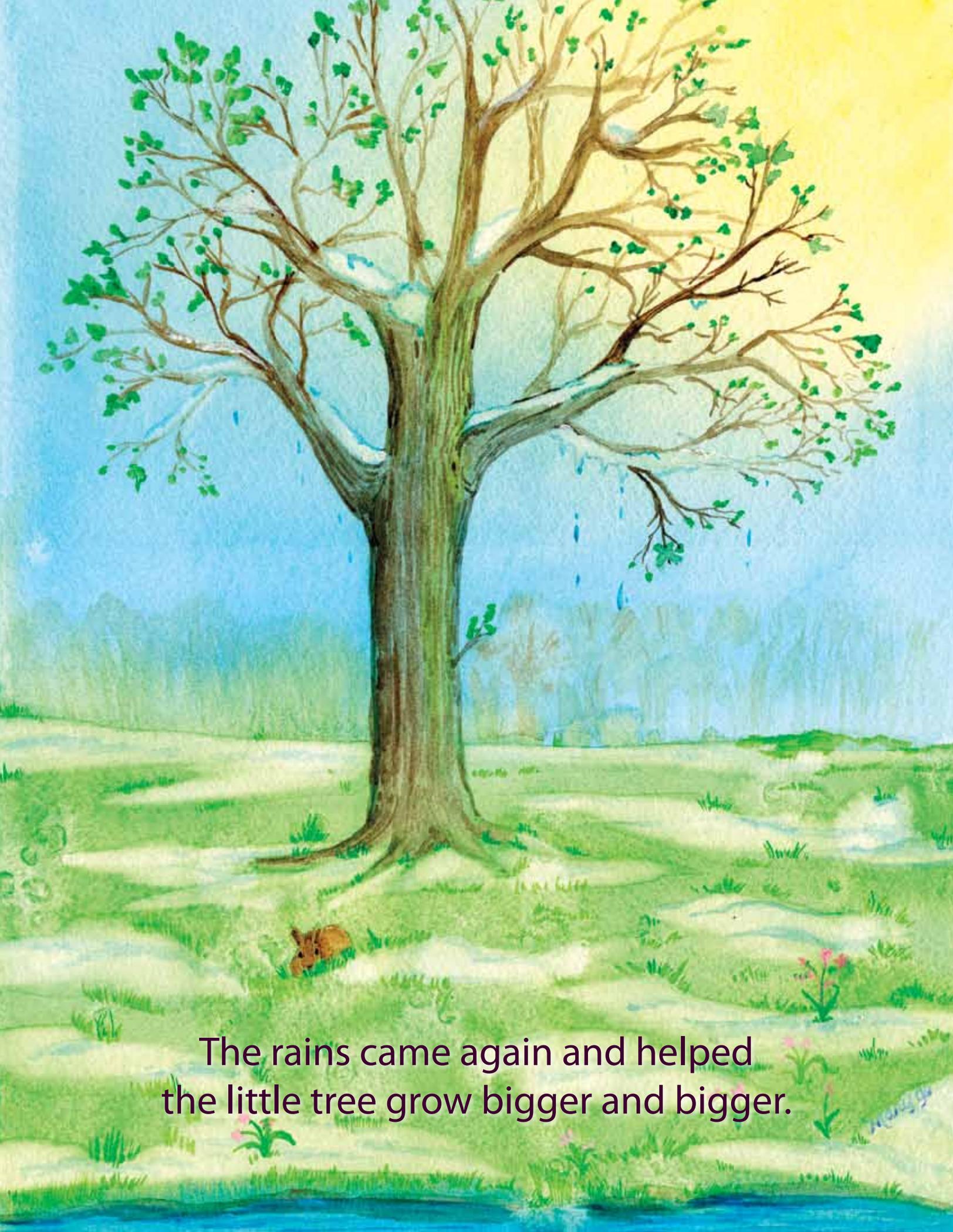
Snow began to fall
and the ground was covered
with a beautiful white blanket.





When Spring came,
the snow melted and soaked
into the ground.
The thirsty little tree
drank and drank.

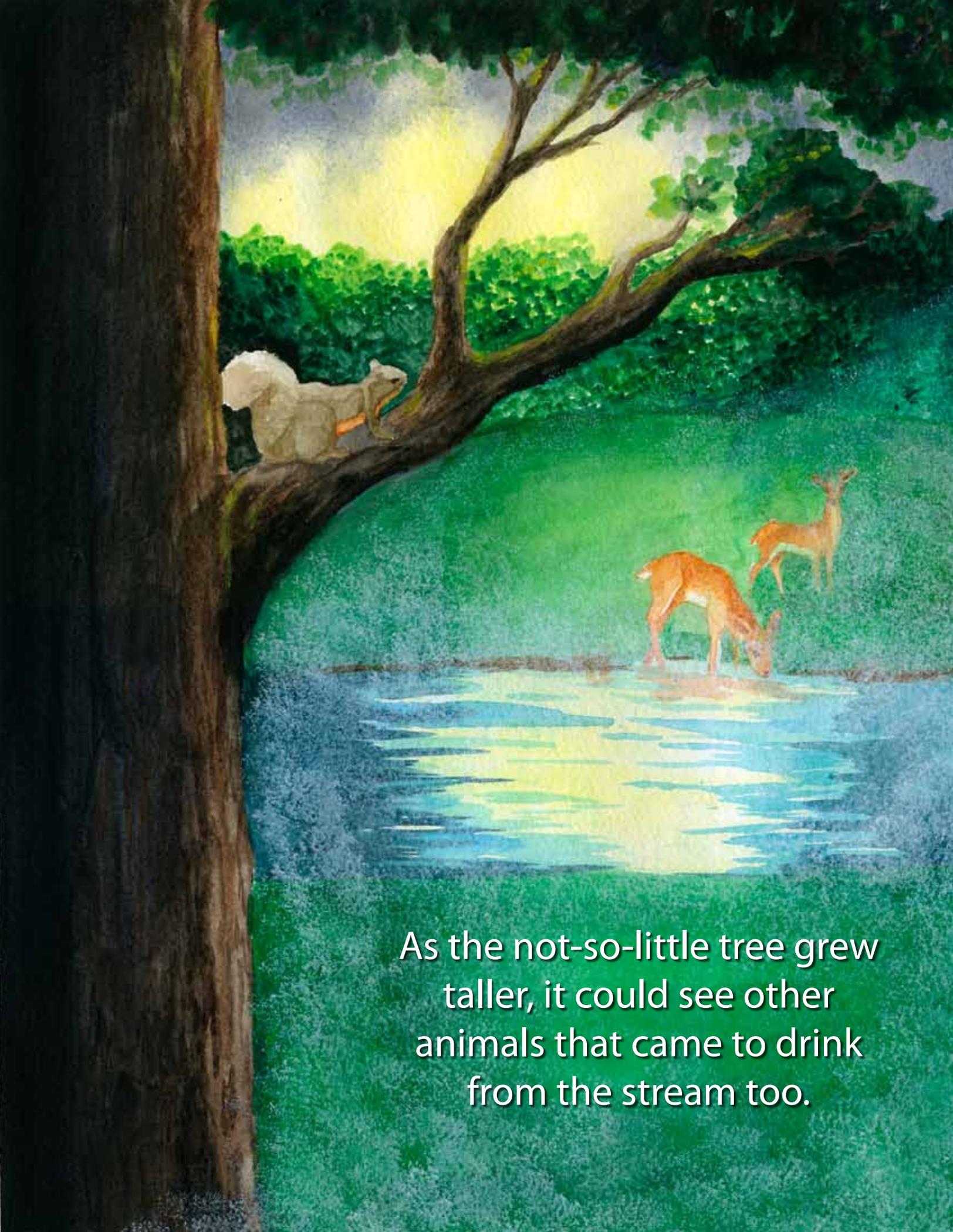
As the weather warmed,
the little tree began to
sprout new leaves.



The rains came again and helped the little tree grow bigger and bigger.

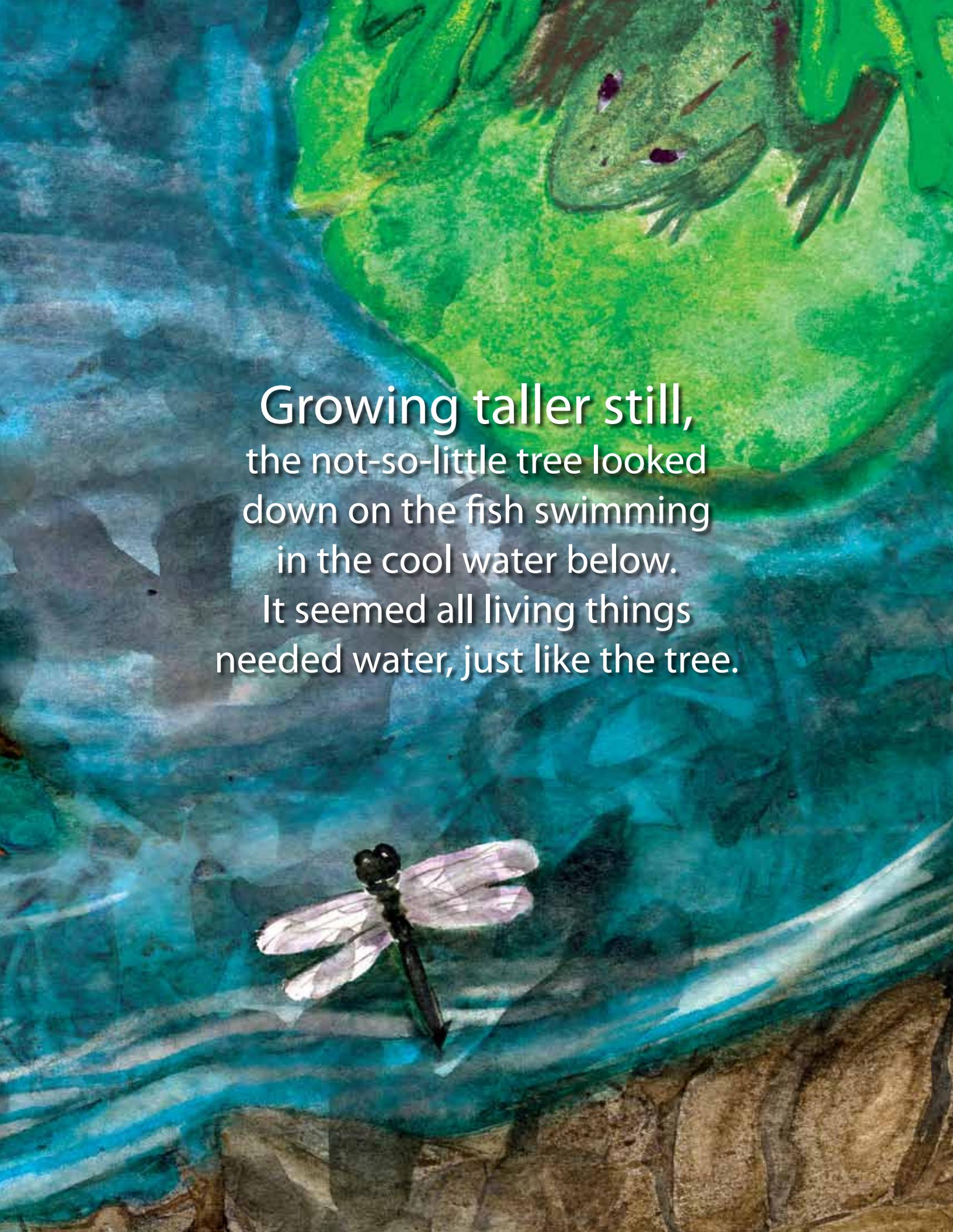


The squirrel passed by
day after day, even climbing
on some of the not-so-little
tree's branches, on his way
to drink from the stream.



As the not-so-little tree grew taller, it could see other animals that came to drink from the stream too.

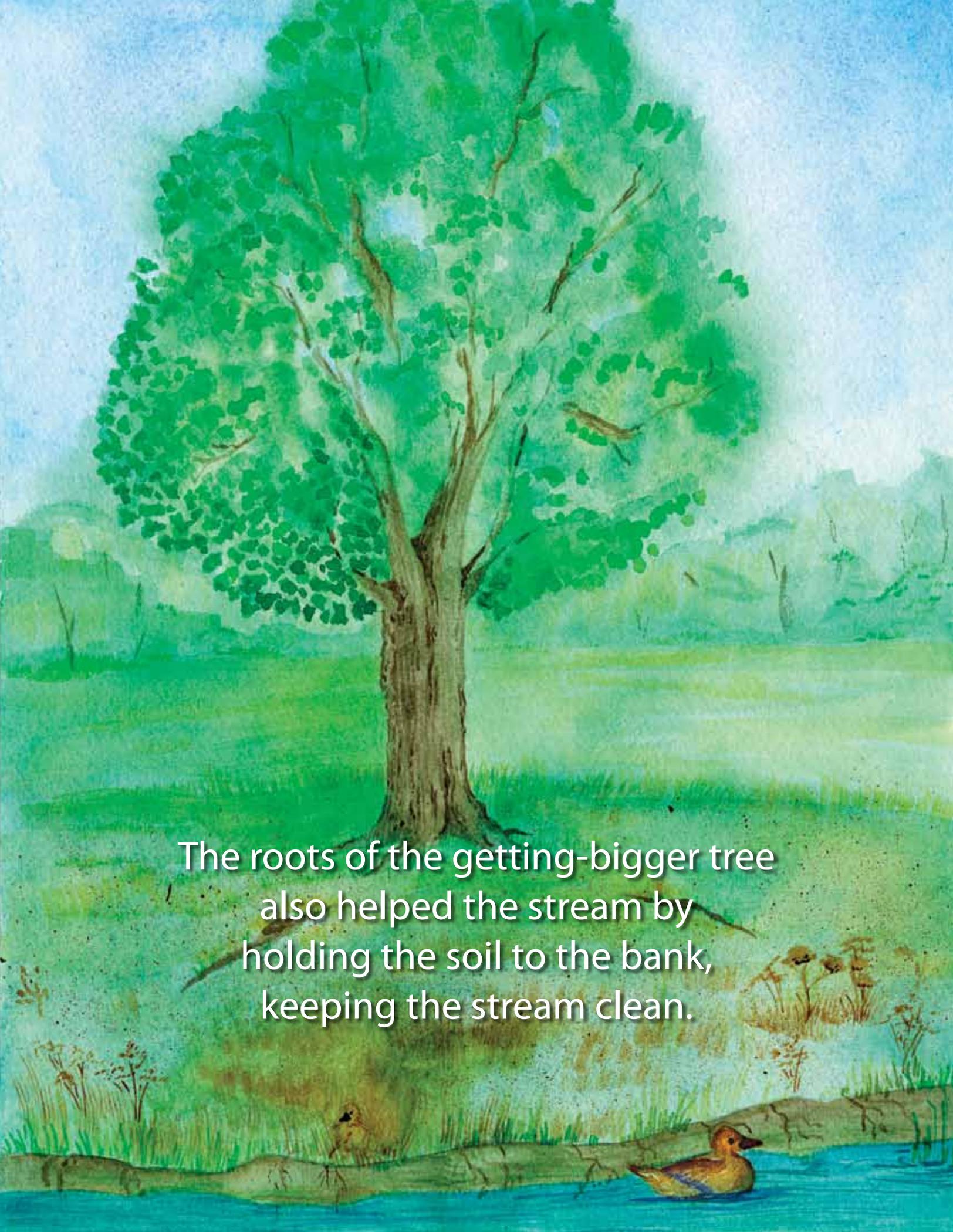




Growing taller still,
the not-so-little tree looked
down on the fish swimming
in the cool water below.
It seemed all living things
needed water, just like the tree.



When the heat
of the summer came,
and the rain did not fall, the
getting-bigger tree stretched its roots
to the edge of the stream where
it could drink and continue to grow.



The roots of the getting-bigger tree also helped the stream by holding the soil to the bank, keeping the stream clean.



The bigger the tree grew,
the more water it needed to drink.

The animals that came to drink
at the stream would stretch out
in the shade of the oak tree
or rest on its branches which
by now had grown very big.





Before long,
the squirrel that had buried
the little acorn and watched it grow
brought his family to live in the tree.
The big, beautiful oak tree that
was once a little acorn was
very happy and began dropping
little acorns of its own.





The End



About the Author



Christa Kauble wrote “The Little Acorn” while a student at Ozarks Technical Community College in Springfield. As a student in a children’s literature class, Christa became an Earth Team volunteer

and participated in the USDA-NRCS Early Childhood Education Program through the South Missouri Water Quality Project in Ozark. As a volunteer, Christa wrote this story through the program partnership to introduce conservation concepts to children. Christa now attends Missouri State University in Springfield, where she majors in elementary education.

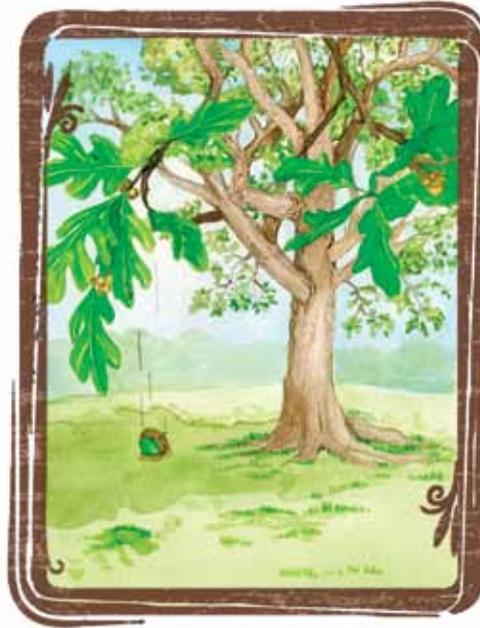
About the Illustrator



Trees have been a favorite subject of **Mary Jo Tannehill’s** since her youth, so having the opportunity to illustrate “The Little Acorn” seemed like a dream come true.

Because Mary Jo is a firm believer in the importance of education in protecting our natural resources, using her talents as an Earth Team volunteer was a natural fit.

Mary Jo lives in Lebanon, Missouri, and has worked for the Laclede County Soil and Water Conservation District since 1999. Her employment with the district has allowed her to see some of the most spectacular Missouri landscapes. She loves to paint outdoor scenes and takes some of her inspiration for these from the state parks and national parks she has visited.



Helping People Help the Land in Missouri