

Rubbish *in the* River

ENVIRO stories

Gabrielle Wilks, Claire Crouch, Rosie Davis,
Charlotte Mence and Billy Smith
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Hunter Local Land Services

Hunter Local Land Services works with land managers and the community to improve primary production within healthy landscapes. We help people make better decisions about the land they manage and assist communities and agricultural industries to be productive and sustainable into the future.

The Hunter Local Land Services region covers an area of approximately 33,000 square kilometres, extending from MidCoast Council in the north to Lake Macquarie City Council in the south and Upper Hunter Shire Council in the west.

The landscape ranges from estuarine wetlands and mangroves, rainforests and freshwater wetlands to open grasslands, woodlands, eucalypt forests, lakes and foreshores.

The region has good soils, a subtropical climate and abundant rainfall which support a wide range of industries, including farming, forestry, fishing, oyster farming, tourism and nature-based recreation.

www.hunter.lls.nsw.gov.au

Hunter Water

Hunter Water provides drinking water, wastewater, recycled water and some stormwater services to a population of almost 600,000 people in homes and businesses across the Lower Hunter. We work with contractors, stakeholders and the community to build our water resilience capabilities and ensure a sustainable water future for our region. Our water storages are at their lowest levels since the Millennium drought, and now, more than ever, we need to Love Water. It's our most valuable resource, and like all the things we love in life, we want to protect and treasure it.

www.hunterwater.com.au

Rubbish in the River

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Charlotte Mence and Billy Smith

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School: Maitland Public School

This book has been published as part of the Every Bit Counts Enviro-Stories program and involves schools learning about the importance of sustainably managing our farmland and natural resources and protecting them from biosecurity threats.

The Every Bit Counts Enviro-Stories program forms part of a collaborative project between all four coastal Local Land Services regions, including Hunter, Greater Sydney, South East and North Coast. This project has been assisted by the New South Wales Government through its Environmental Trust.

Hunter Local Land Services has also partnered with Hunter Water Corporation since 2014 to provide education programs which engage school students and teachers in projects to improve water quality and catchment health.

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Enviro-Stories is a PeekKdesigns initiative, www.peekdesigns.com.au.

Wilks, Crouch, Davis, Mence and Smith. 2019. *Rubbish in the River*. Local Land Services, NSW.





"Don't drop me!" I screamed at my oblivious owner as she threw me on the ground.

Here I flapped about until the wind picked up and I slowly rolled into the dirty drain.

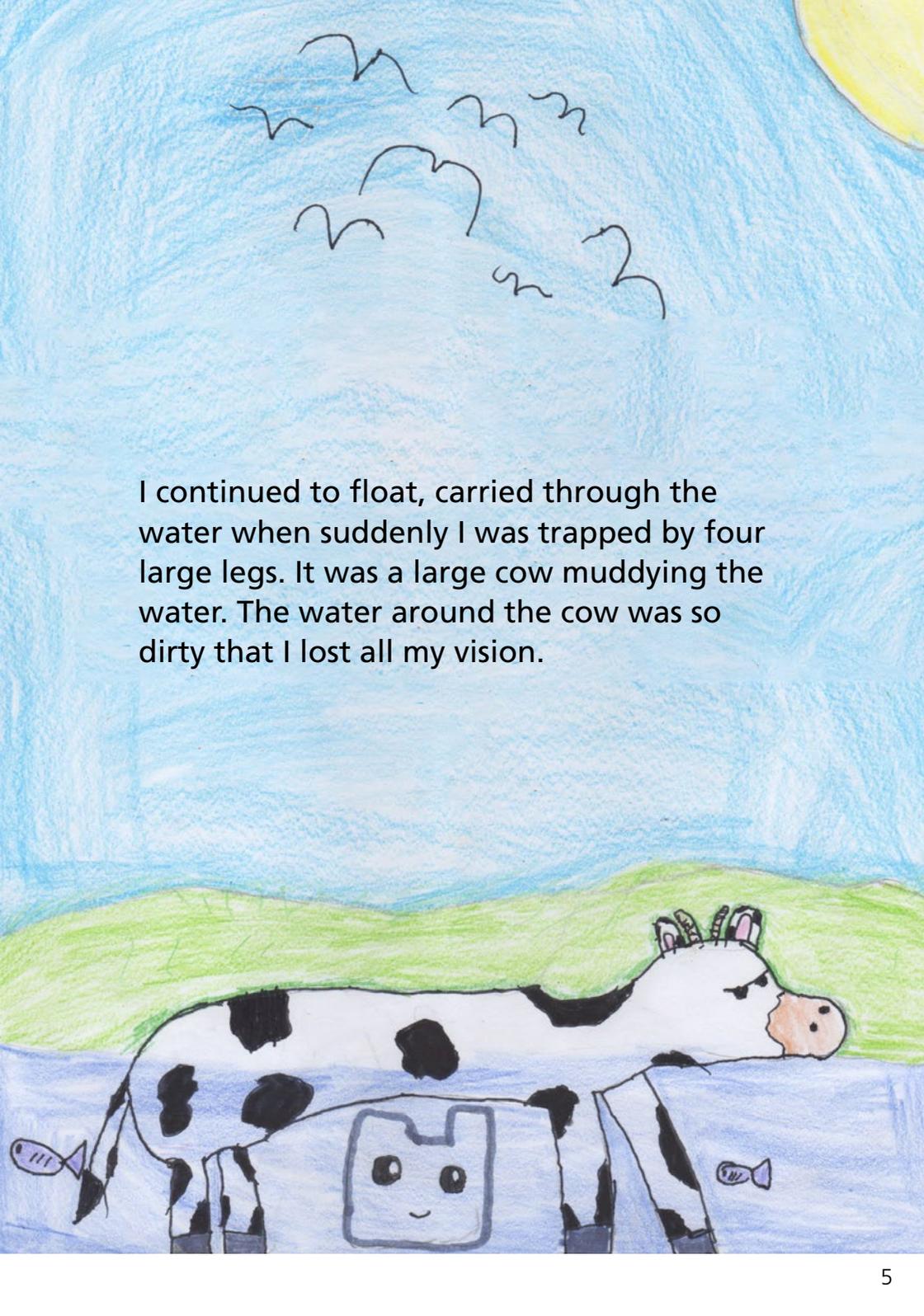
After a dark couple of days stuck in the dirty drain, the rain finally came.

The water runoff picked me up and I found myself sliding down the stormwater drain, heading towards the bottom and the river.



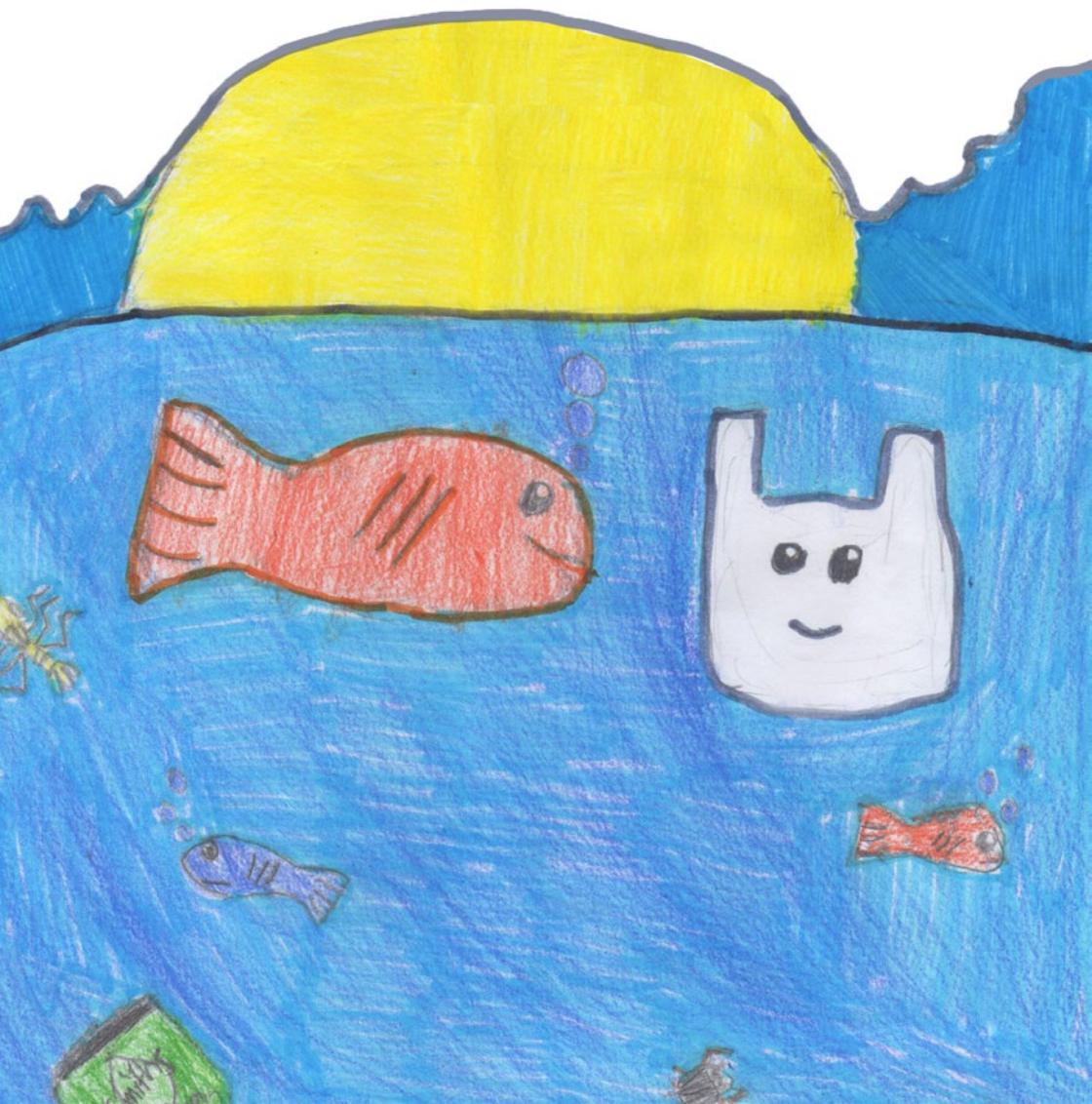
I looked around and the things I saw were unimaginable. The river was a very polluted place! There was lots of rubbish, weeds, dead animals, animal poo, grass clippings and even an oil slick on the surface.

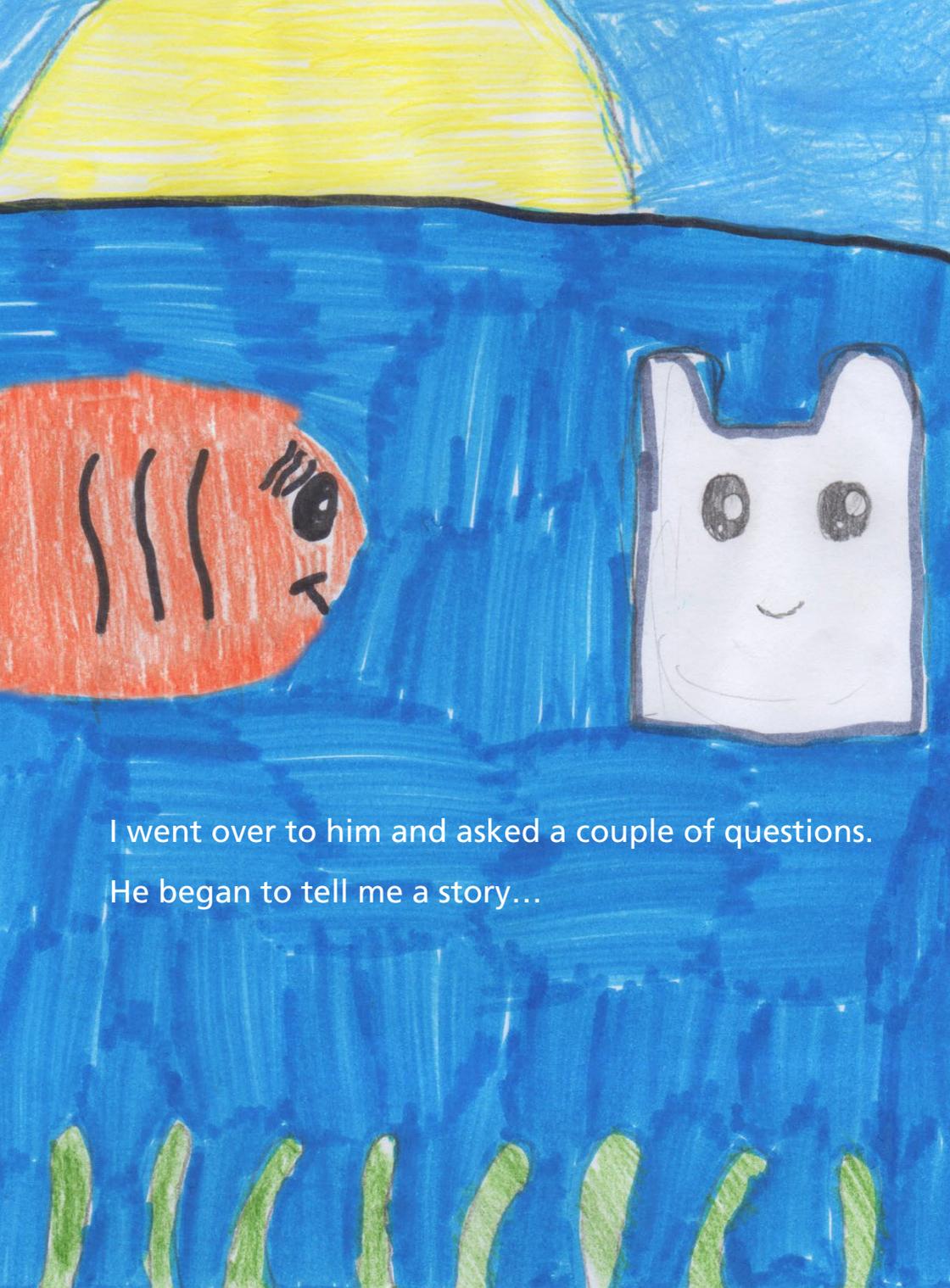




I continued to float, carried through the water when suddenly I was trapped by four large legs. It was a large cow muddying the water. The water around the cow was so dirty that I lost all my vision.

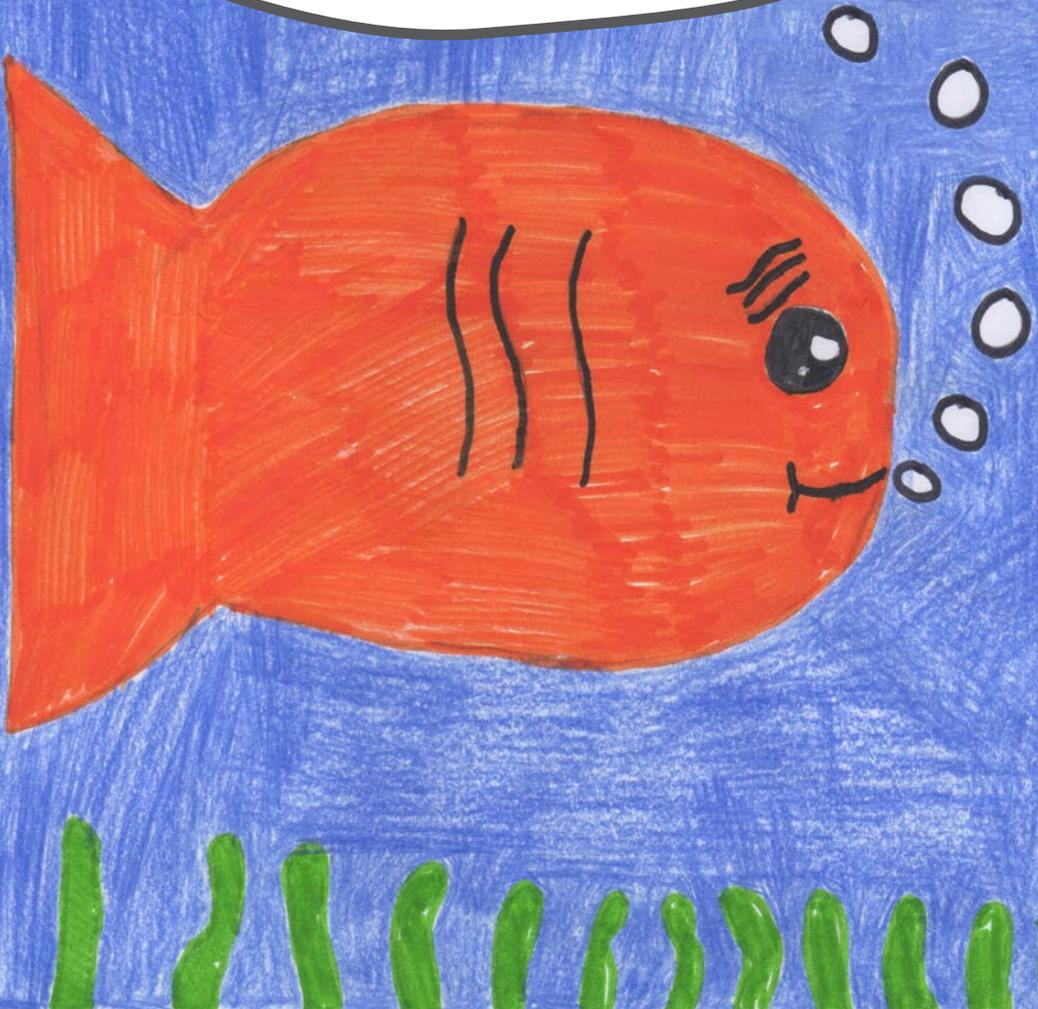
Eventually, once the dirt settled, I was able to see again. As I was washing down the river, I saw an elderly fish. He looked like he had been here long enough to know everything about the river.

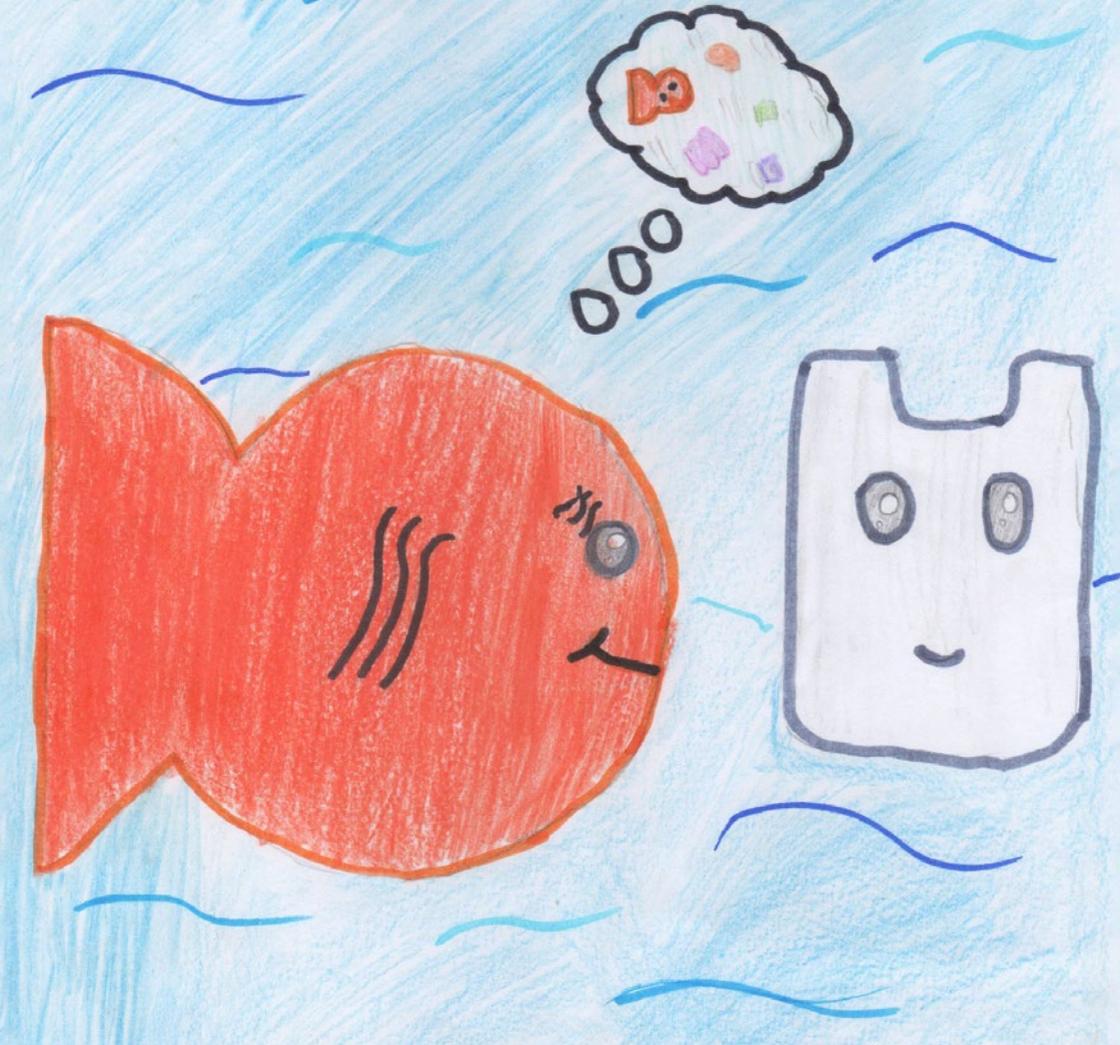




I went over to him and asked a couple of questions.
He began to tell me a story...

"When I was growing up the water was crystal clear, the river was a beautiful spot to be and life was awesome. Gradually, it became dirtier and dirtier and visibility became poor. Every day there was more and more rubbish like you wrecking the place."



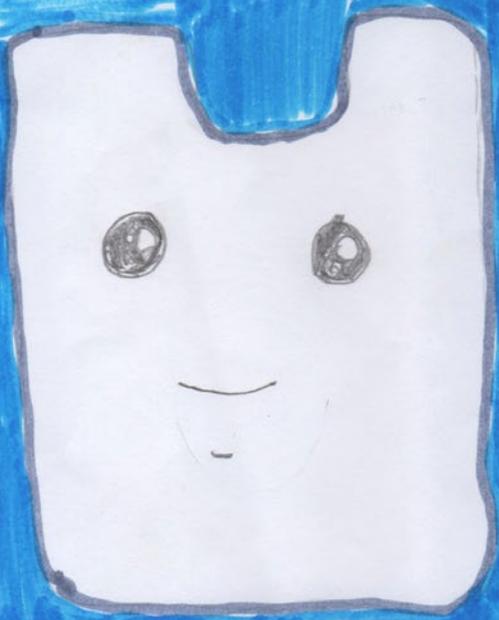


"Many times, I have mistaken rubbish for food, which is very dangerous as it can make us fish very, very sick.

As the years passed, the water has just got dirtier and dirtier and now the river is not a nice place.

I'm leaving now, but look out as you will see some weird things around here," he finished lecturing as I raced off in embarrassment.

Many ups and downs went by and I finally found a nice place to rest. Just as I was about to continue on my journey, I saw something that looked just like me. I made my way over to it.

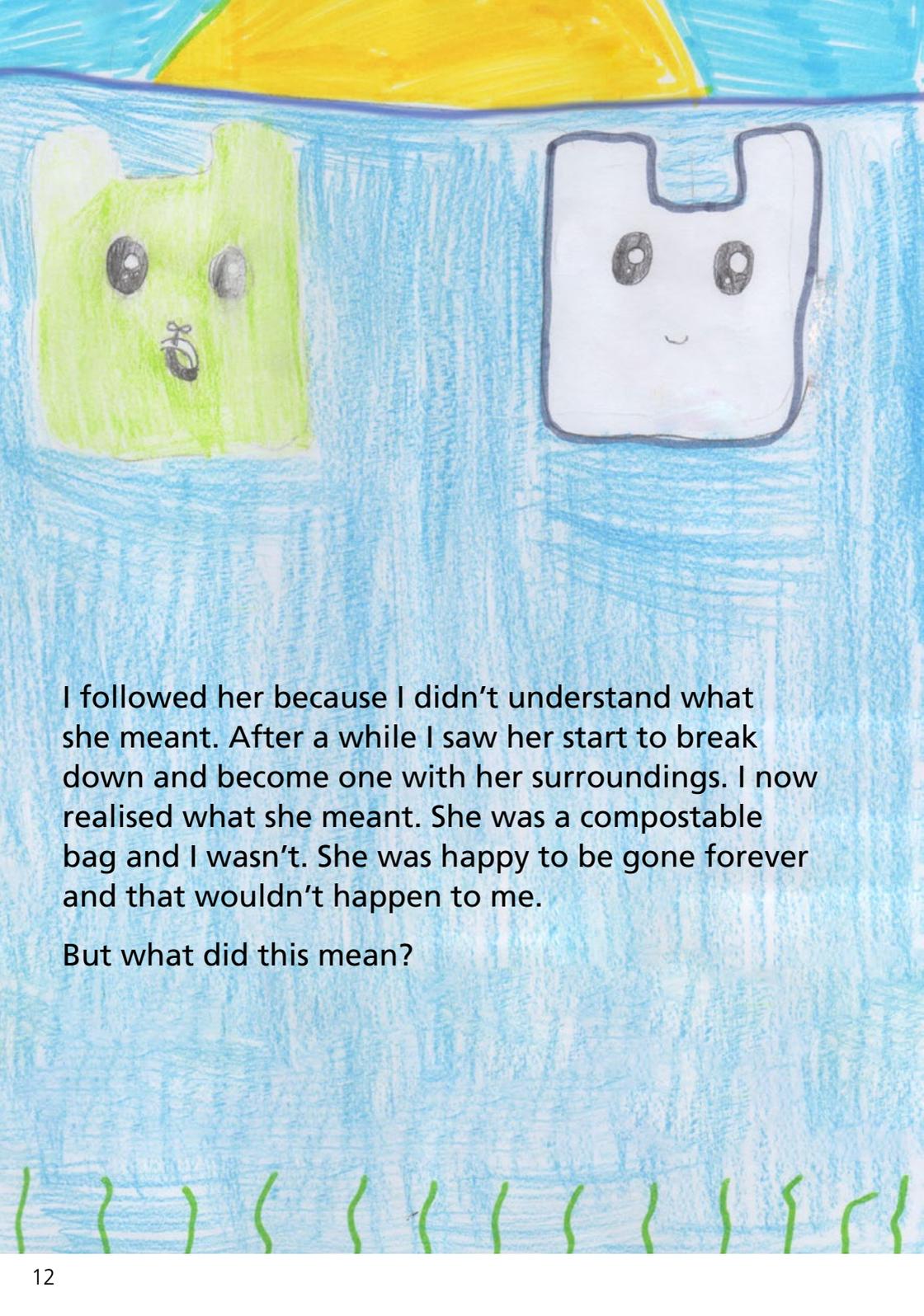




It was a green bag. The bag looked at me strangely.

I asked why and she said, "because you are disgusting! You're bad for the environment, whereas I am compostable and soon shall break down. You, however, will live on and pollute the river forever."

She began to swim away.

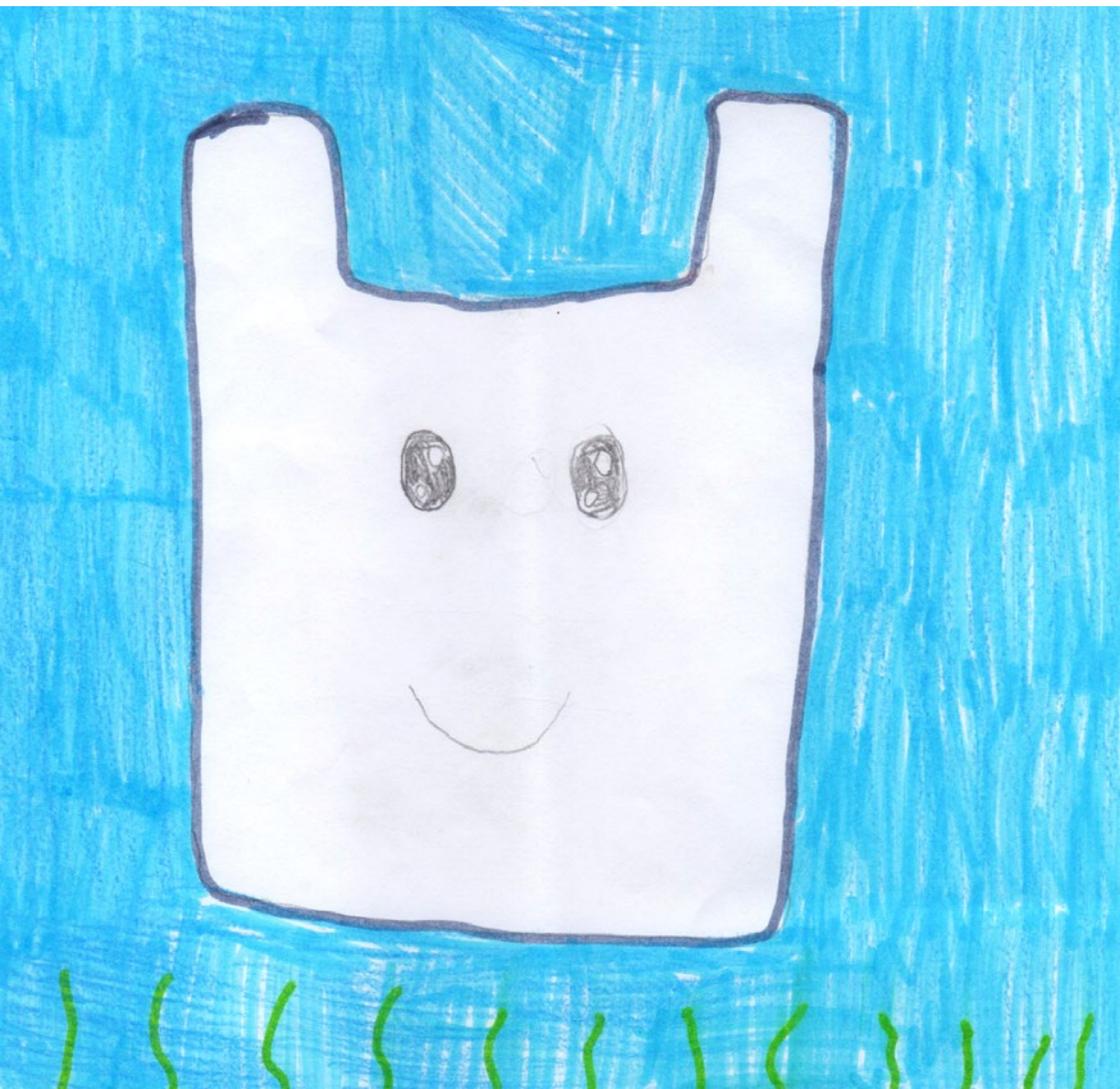


I followed her because I didn't understand what she meant. After a while I saw her start to break down and become one with her surroundings. I now realised what she meant. She was a compostable bag and I wasn't. She was happy to be gone forever and that wouldn't happen to me.

But what did this mean?

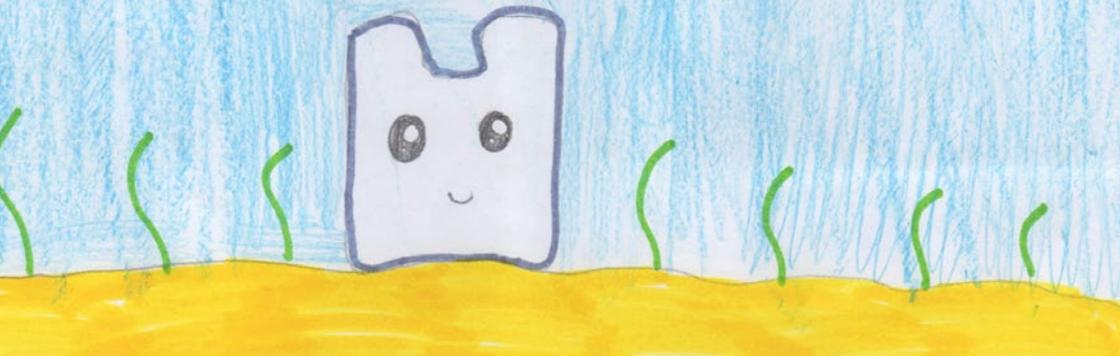
As I kept on swimming, I continued to think about what had happened. She was a compostable bag which meant she was now at peace being part of the environment.

I didn't belong here but would live forever and would never have that feeling.

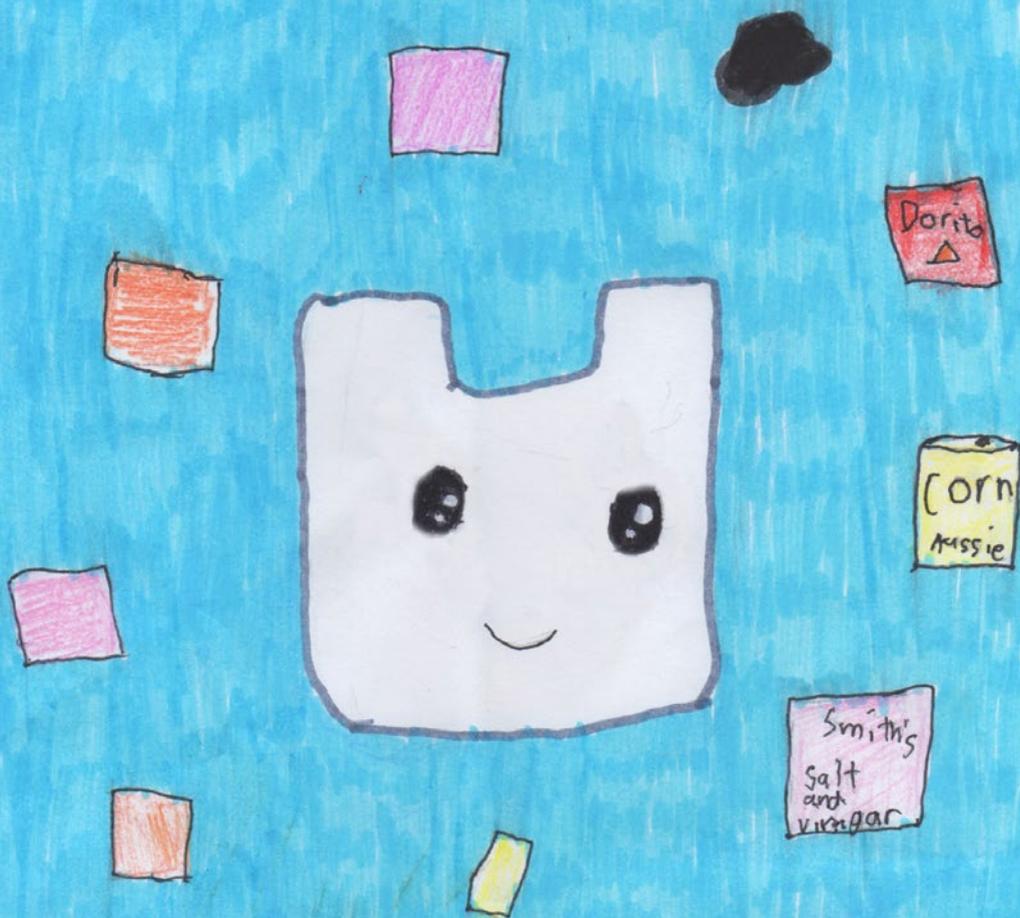


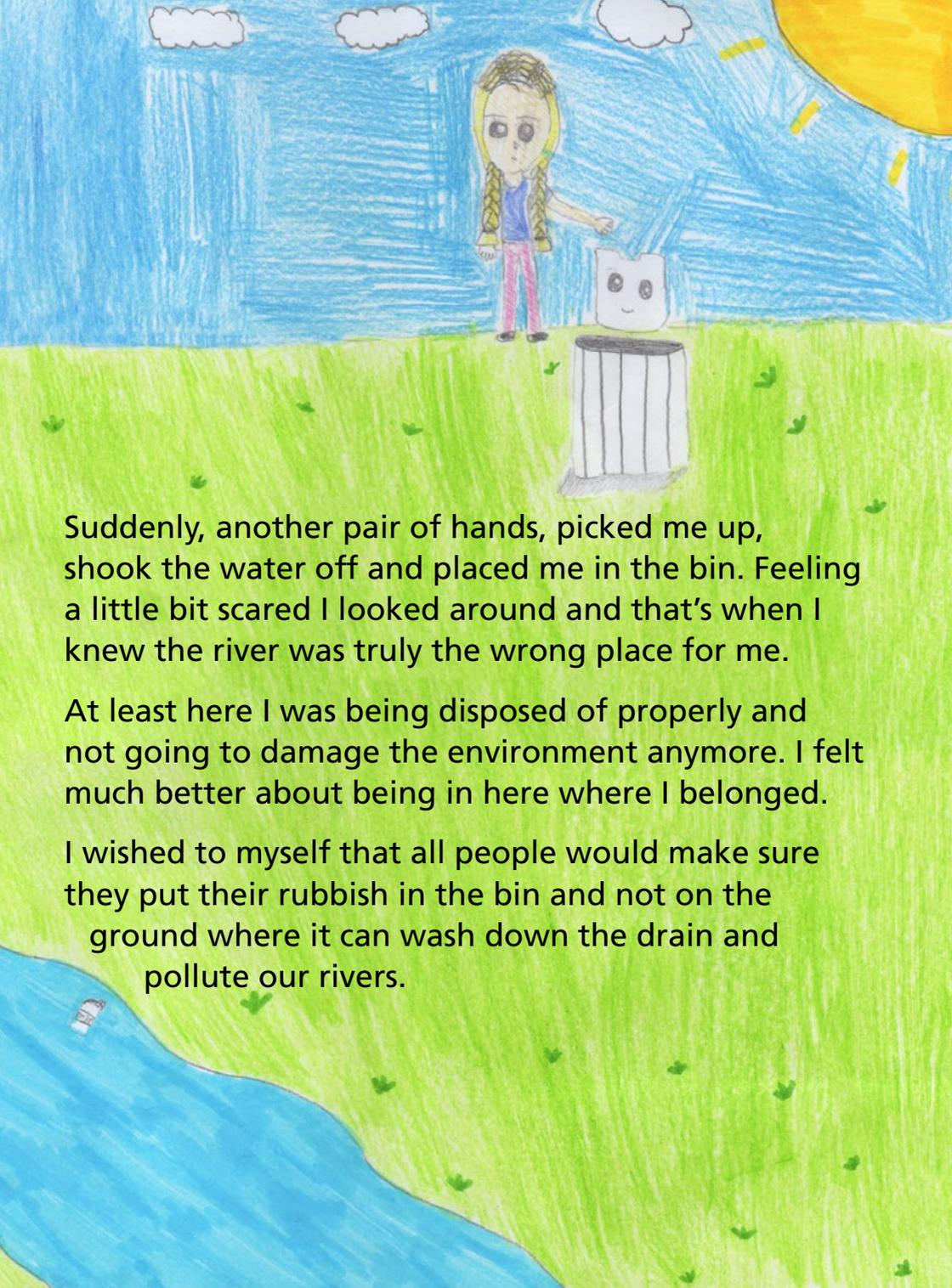


I came to a stop when I heard a splash!
Multiple hands were reaching down
and grabbing pieces of rubbish around
me out of the river.



I kept floating down the river
wondering what happened to the
pieces of rubbish and other pollutants
that were grabbed by the hands.





Suddenly, another pair of hands, picked me up, shook the water off and placed me in the bin. Feeling a little bit scared I looked around and that's when I knew the river was truly the wrong place for me.

At least here I was being disposed of properly and not going to damage the environment anymore. I felt much better about being in here where I belonged.

I wished to myself that all people would make sure they put their rubbish in the bin and not on the ground where it can wash down the drain and pollute our rivers.

Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is a literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

www.envirostories.com.au

ENVIRO stories



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Maitland Public School, Year 5 2019

