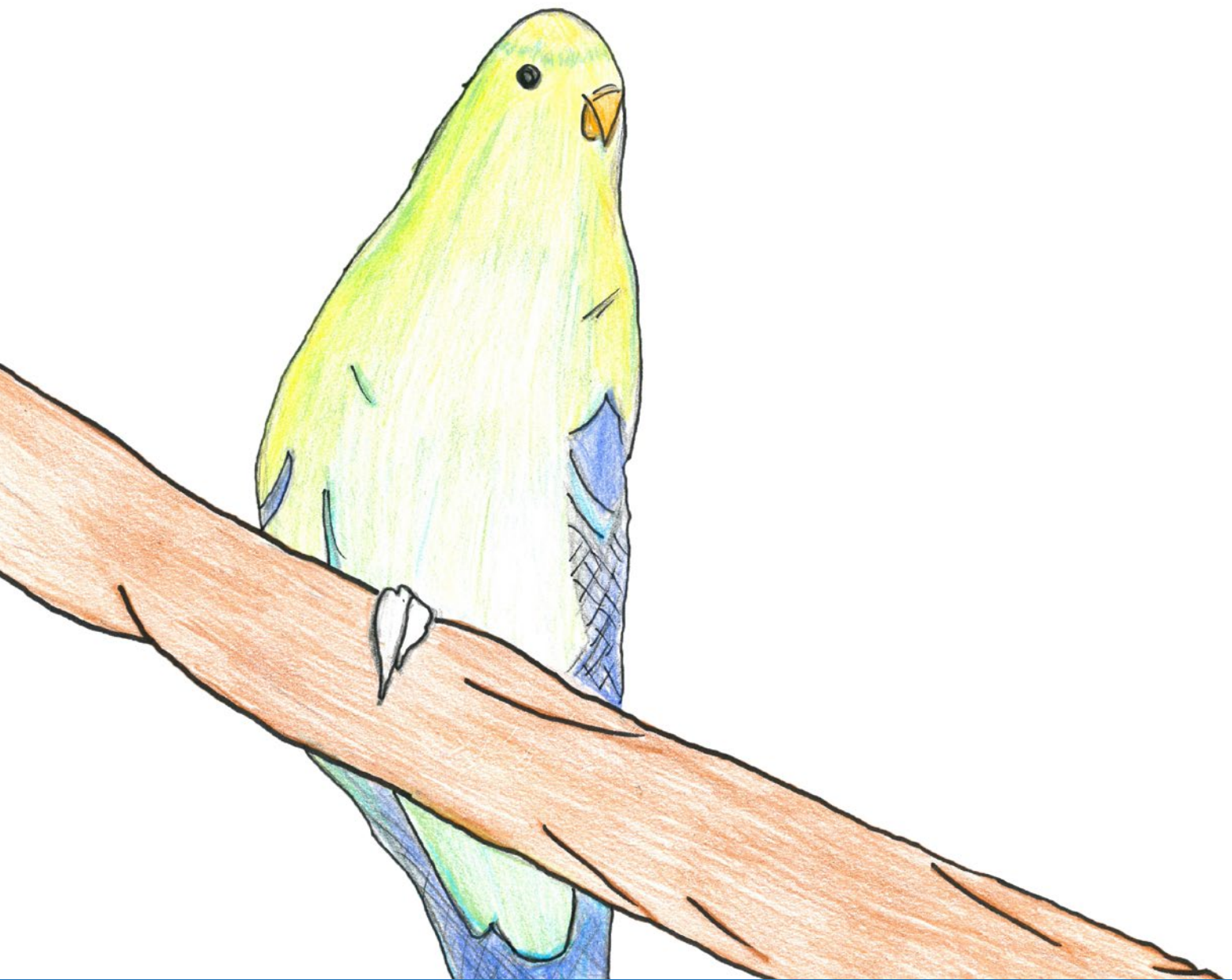


How Elin and Rani Protected their Eggs

Special birds in a special place



Written and illustrated by Year 5-6 students from
Euston Public School



Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive, cooperative activities that encourage students to learn about and respond to, natural resource management and the importance of agricultural production.

wirraminna.org.au/petaurus/creative-catchment-kids/

Petaurus Education Group

Petaurus Education Group identifies, develops and delivers a range of learning and curriculum experiences, resources and initiatives for schools and community groups to connect with land, water, productive farming, sustainability and cultural issues at the local level. The group was established by Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre in late-2014 to support its operations and education activities.

wirraminna.org.au/petaurus

Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative 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.

envirostories.com.au

How Elin and Rani Protected their Eggs

Special birds in a special place

Authors and illustrators: Year 5–6 class, 2019

School: Euston Public School

Teacher support: Anna Phillips

This book was prepared, written and illustrated by Year 5 and 6 students at Euston Public School in far south western NSW. Although they had access to photographs, it was the students' decision to illustrate the book with their own drawings. Each student drew at least one picture. To prepare this book, the students researched the parrots; were involved in workshops on the birds and their environment; studied the process of scientific drawing to ensure accuracy; and went on a field trip to observe the birds, their nesting and feeding areas. The students also received valuable assistance from staff of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and Western Local Land Services.

The Regent Parrot project at Euston Public School was initiated by the Western Local Land Services and was funded by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's *Saving Our Species* Program.



**Local Land
Services**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
SAVING OUR SPECIES



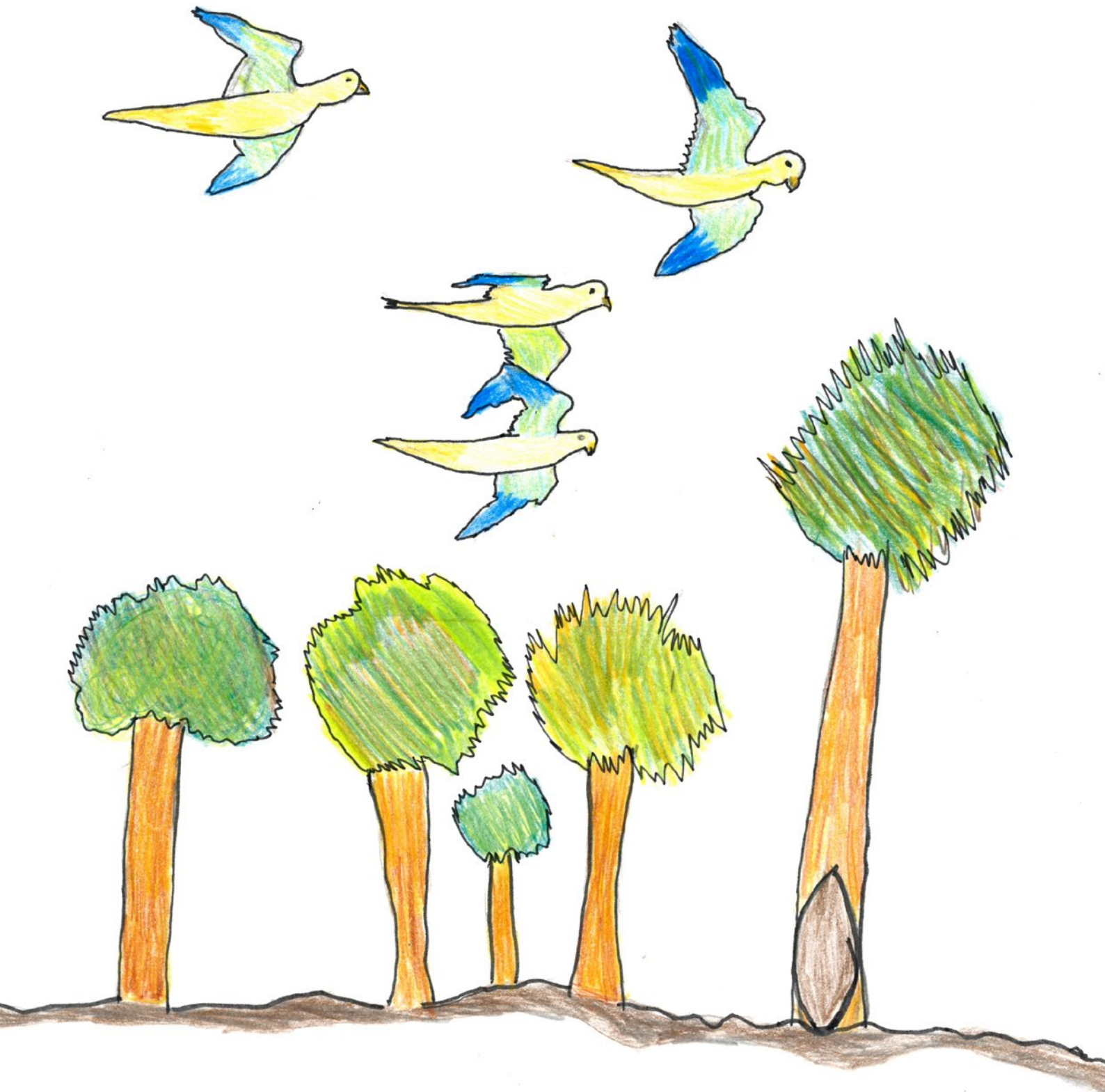
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Design by PeekKdesigns, peekdesigns.com.au

As the sun rose over the Murray River,
Elin the Regent Parrot was in the White
Mallee tree, perched very still like a
soldier. Waking up slowly, his bright
yellow feathers were glistening in the
first rays of the morning sun.

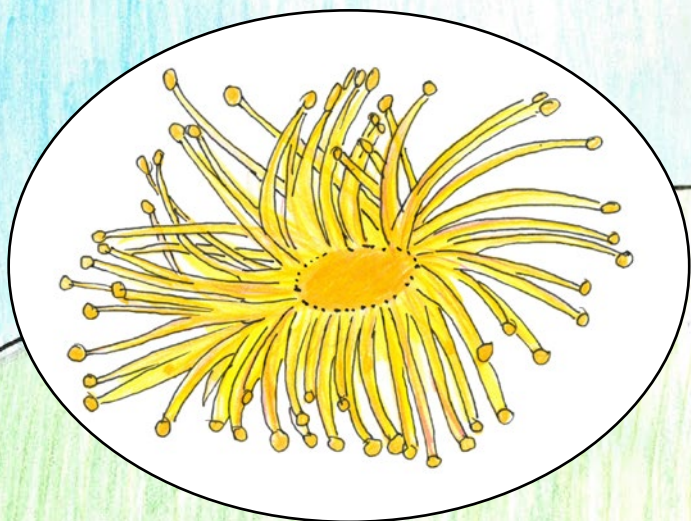


It was the time of day when Elin and his flock would forage for their first meal. In a flash, the mallee trees emptied. The flock was hungry for grass seeds and fruit but mainly they craved the hardest food to get - eucalypt flowers.





Flying high above the region, the flock saw that students at Euston Public School had planted a new nature garden. Filled with plants that provided all their favourite foods, the parrots landed to take full advantage of this boon.





Elin ate ravenously while watching for dangers. Amazement, curiosity, and confidence filled his heart. The magnificent golden wings of a beautiful female regent parrot swooped down, making his heart skip. Rani, a female parrot, did not notice Elin on the grass until she bumped into him. For a moment, their heads touched. In a great surprise, they were immediately attracted to each other as they shared their seeds and their feathers shimmered in the sun.

Out of nowhere, a Peregrine Falcon circled above the feeding parrots. The falcon had a hunger for a feast of delicious parrot meat. Elin also knew that it was one of the only birds that could fly faster than a Regent Parrot.



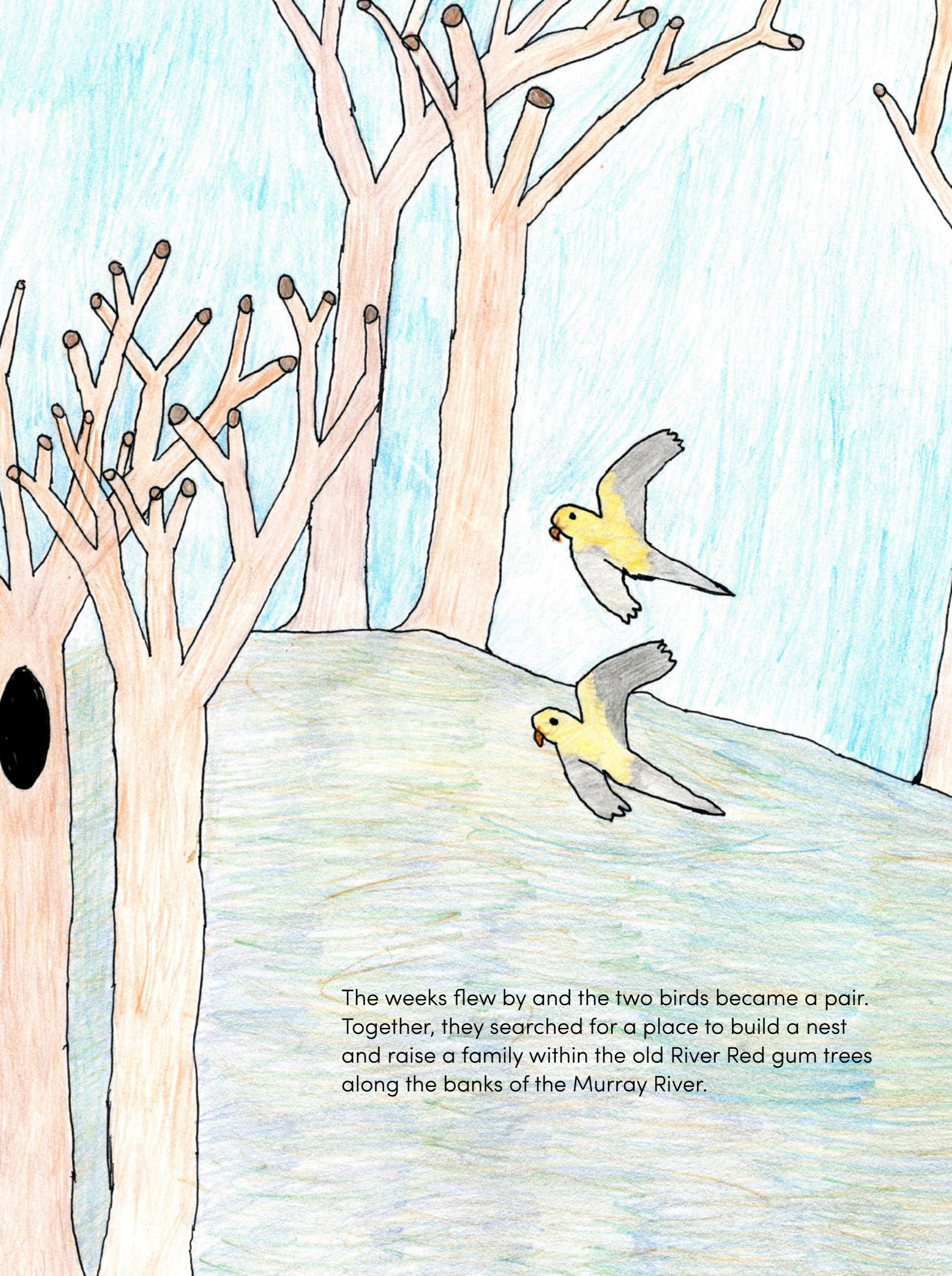
In a heartbeat, the falcon swooped down, going after Rani and Elin. All their joy was going to sink away with one swoop of the falcon's sharp talons.





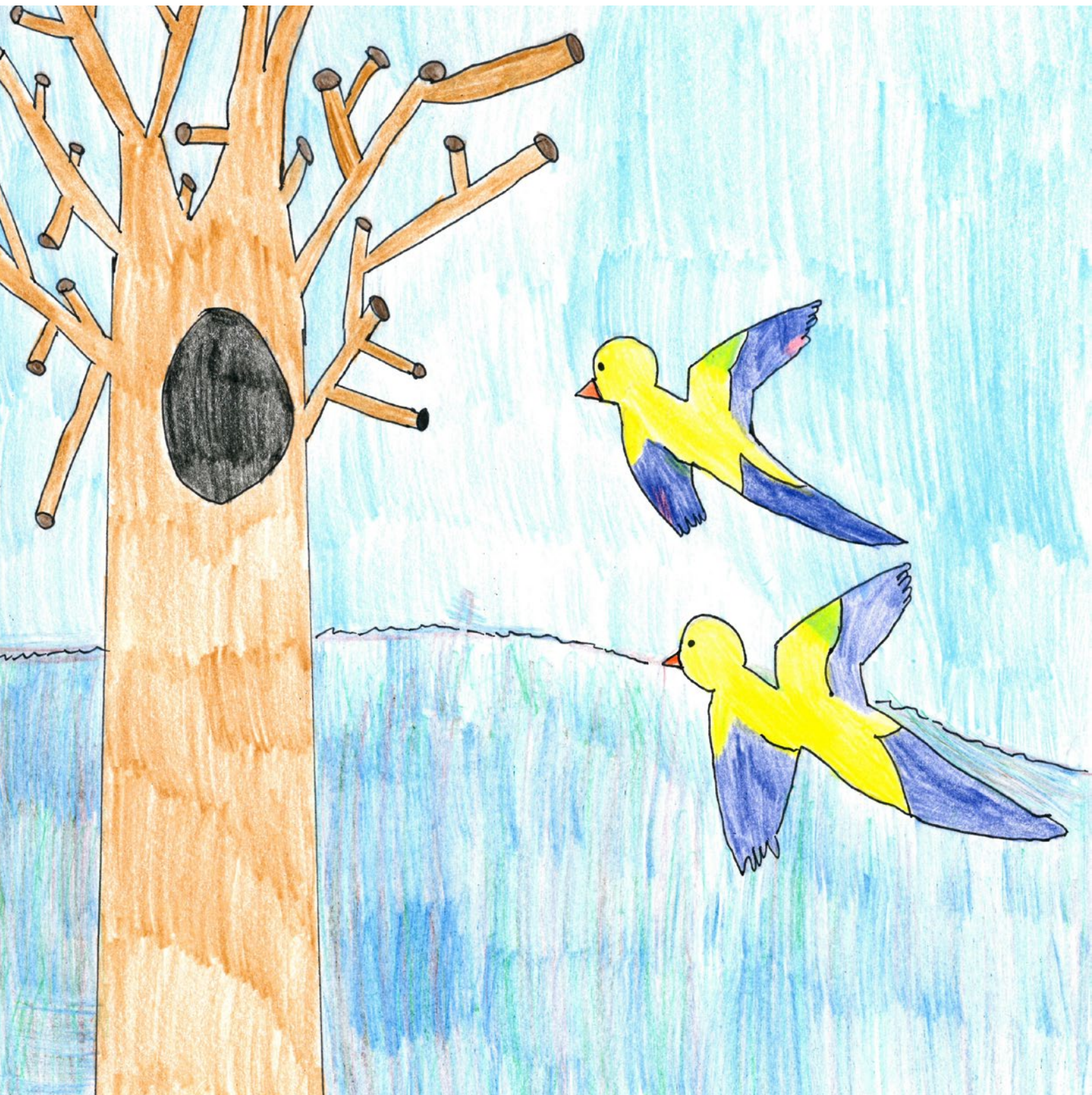
Out of the corner of her eye, Rani noticed a Peregrine falcon feather falling from above. Without hesitation, she shoved Elin aside leaving the falcon flying headlong into a mallee tree.



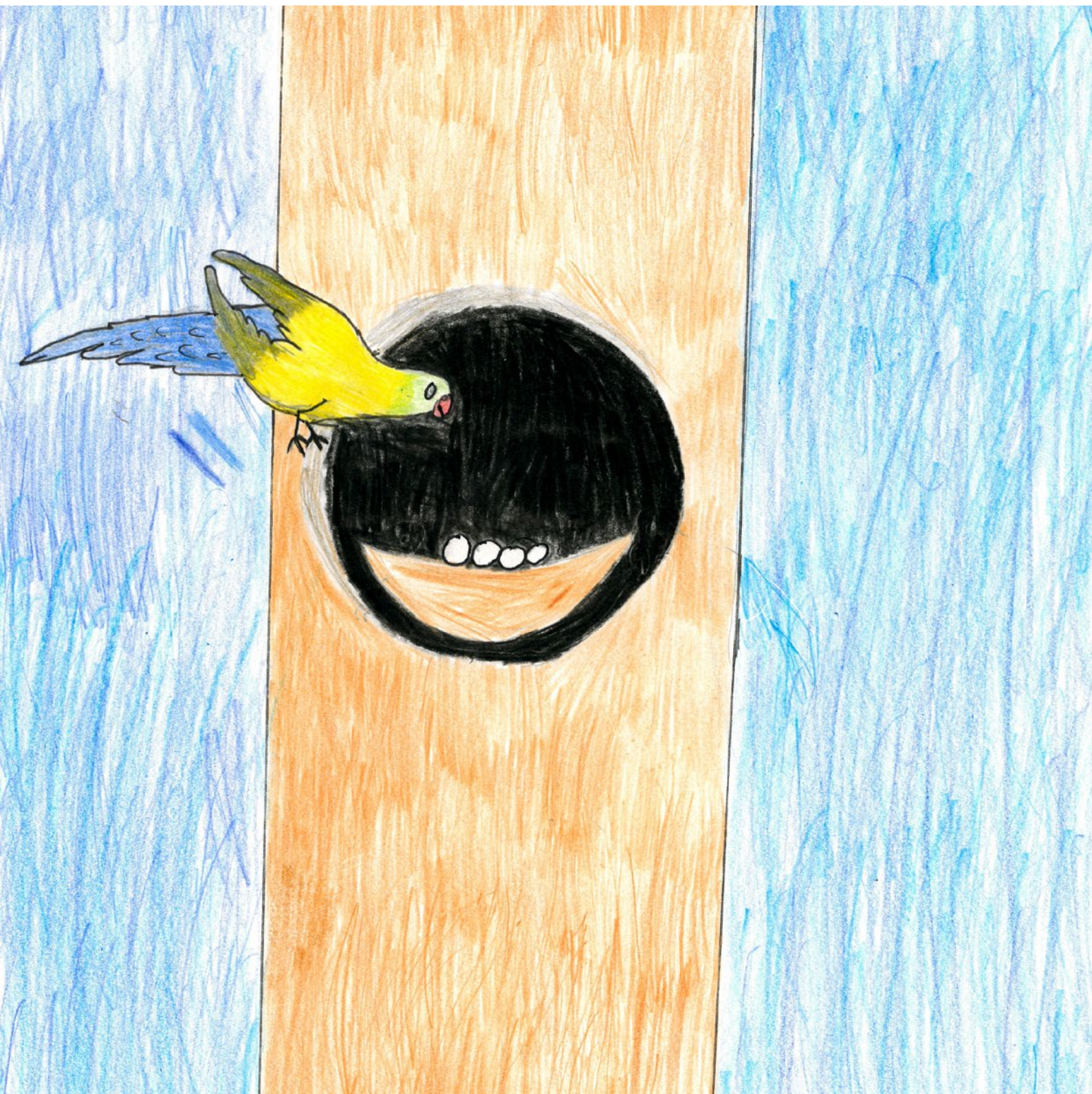


The weeks flew by and the two birds became a pair. Together, they searched for a place to build a nest and raise a family within the old River Red gum trees along the banks of the Murray River.

Elin spotted a perfect shaped hollow for their nest. It was not too wide but deep enough to protect their eggs and young.



Proudly, Rani and Elin were soon to be parents to fledglings, but before that could happen Rani needed to sit on her four white eggs for three weeks and keep them warm.

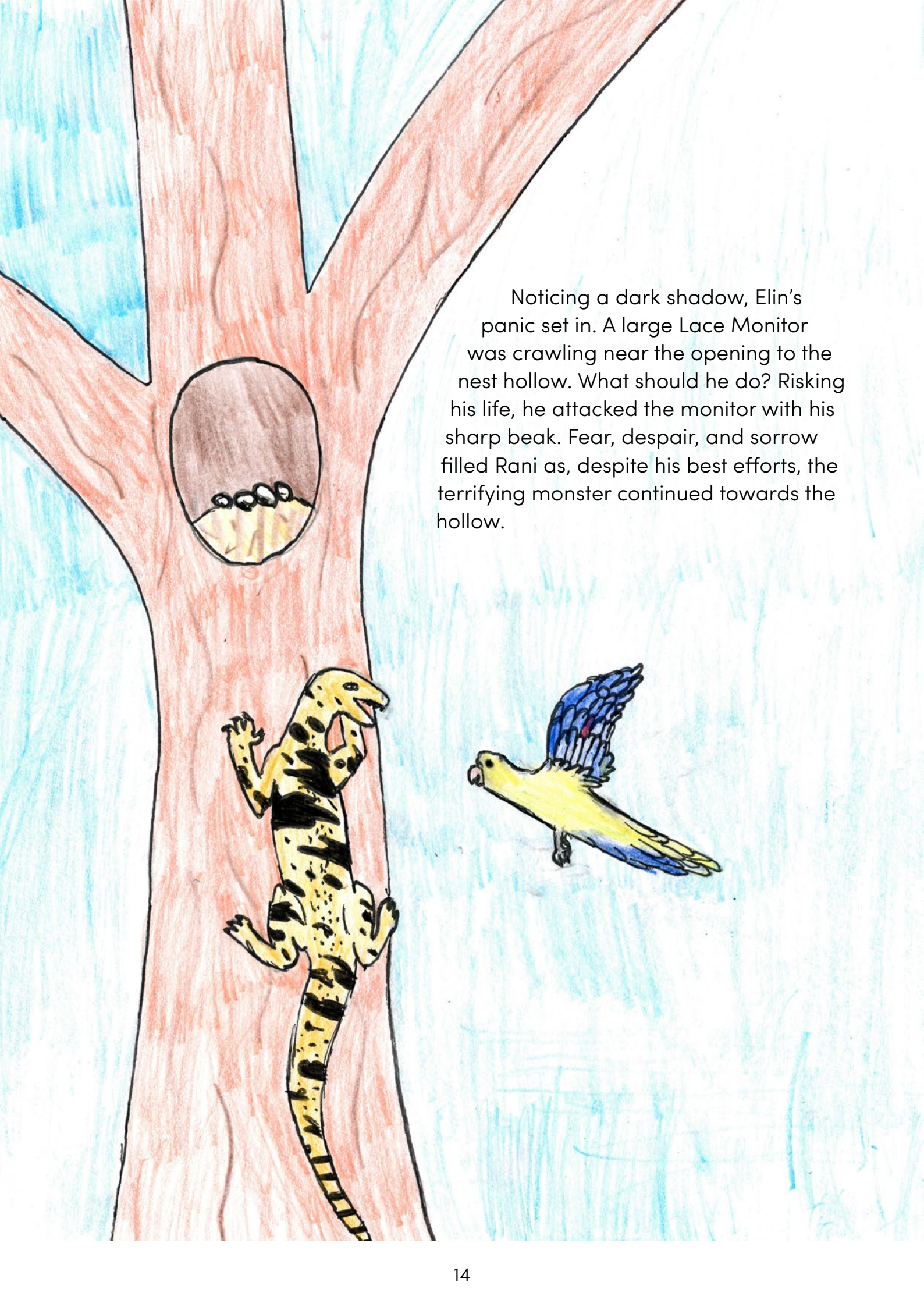


Each night, Elin would leave Rani sitting on the eggs in the tree hollow. He and the other male parrots would spend their nights in the Mallee trees nearby.

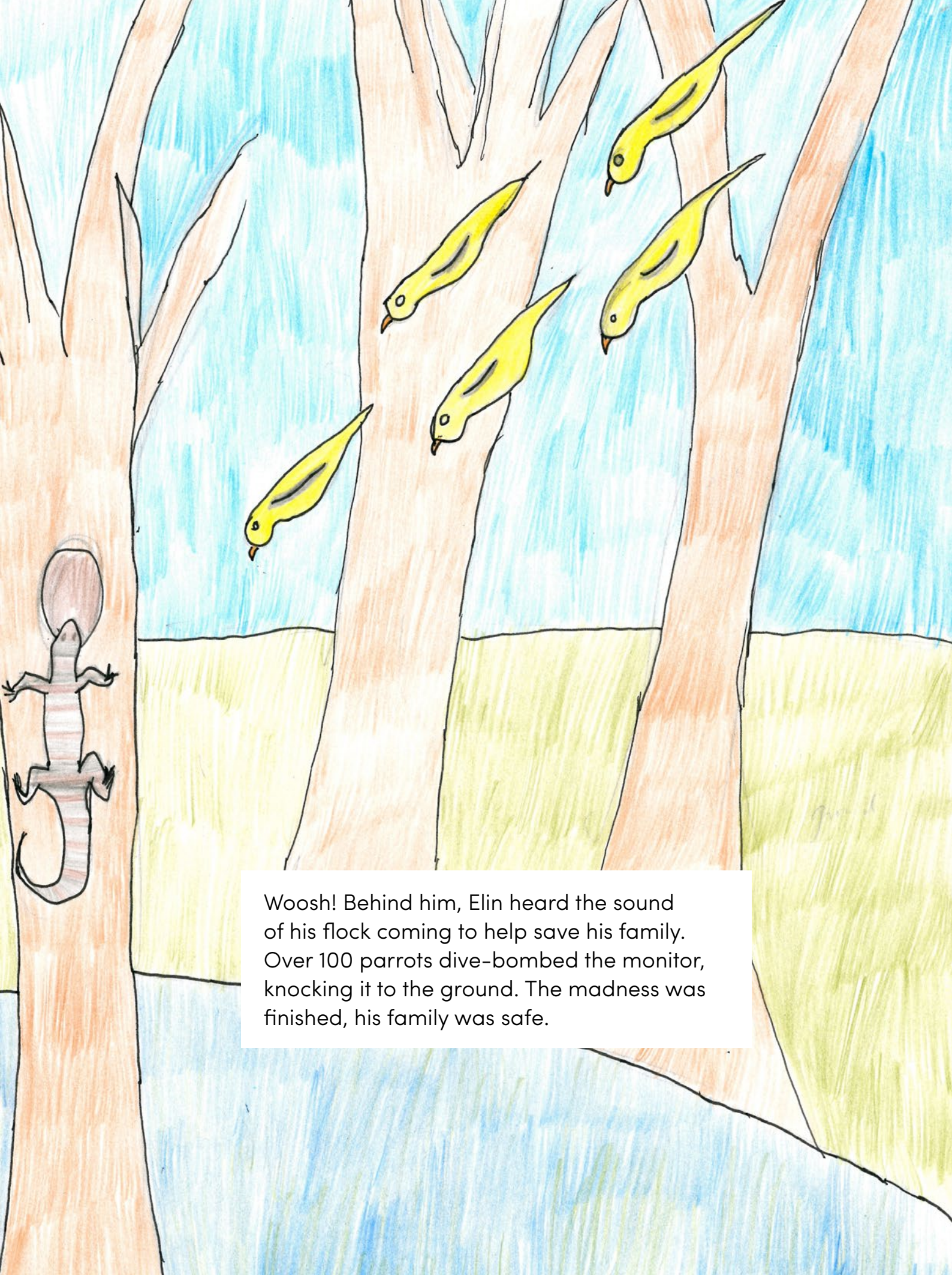


Stretching his wings out in the early morning, Elin could not wait to see Rani and their beloved eggs again. On the way, he foraged for some food for Rani.



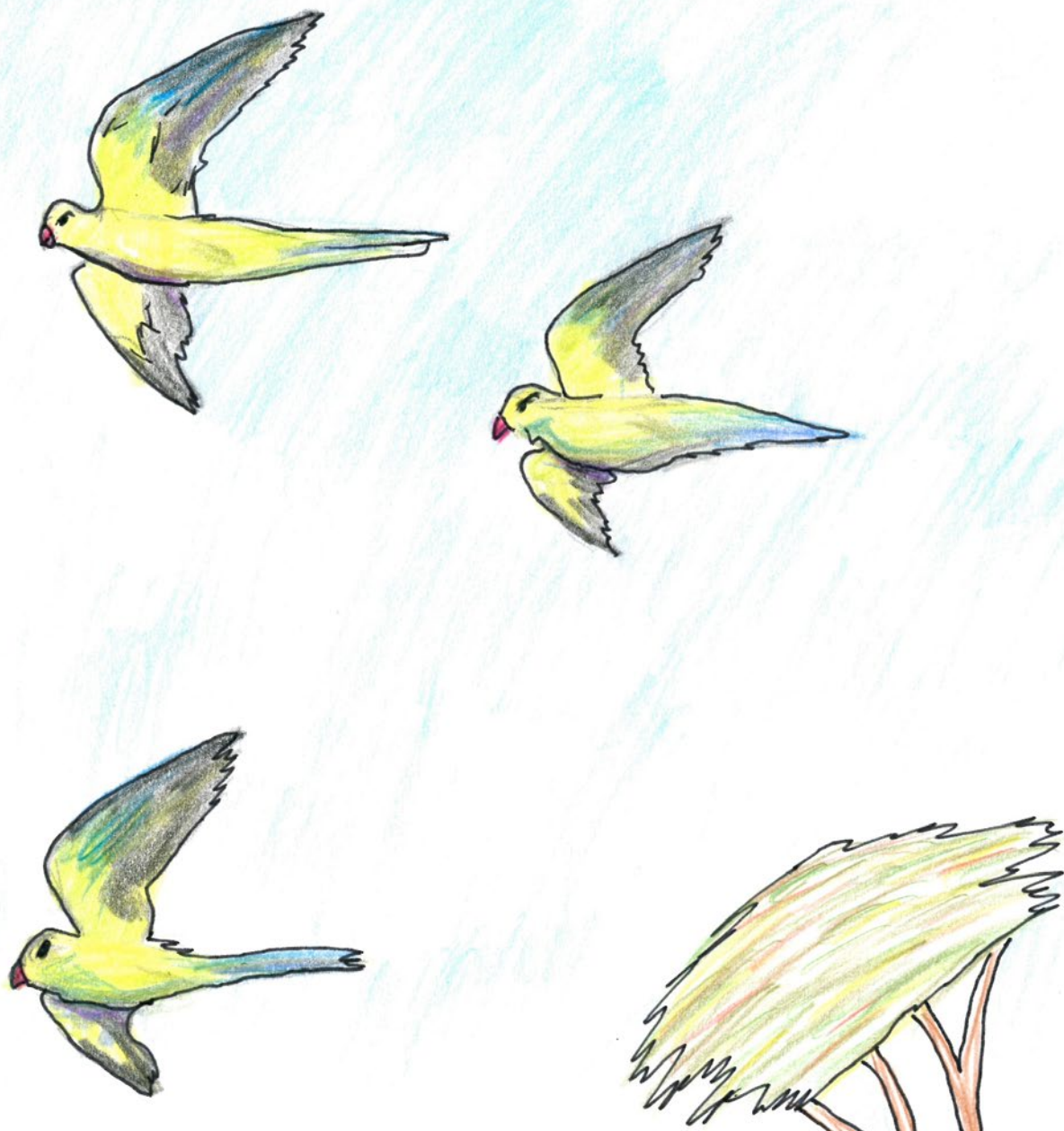
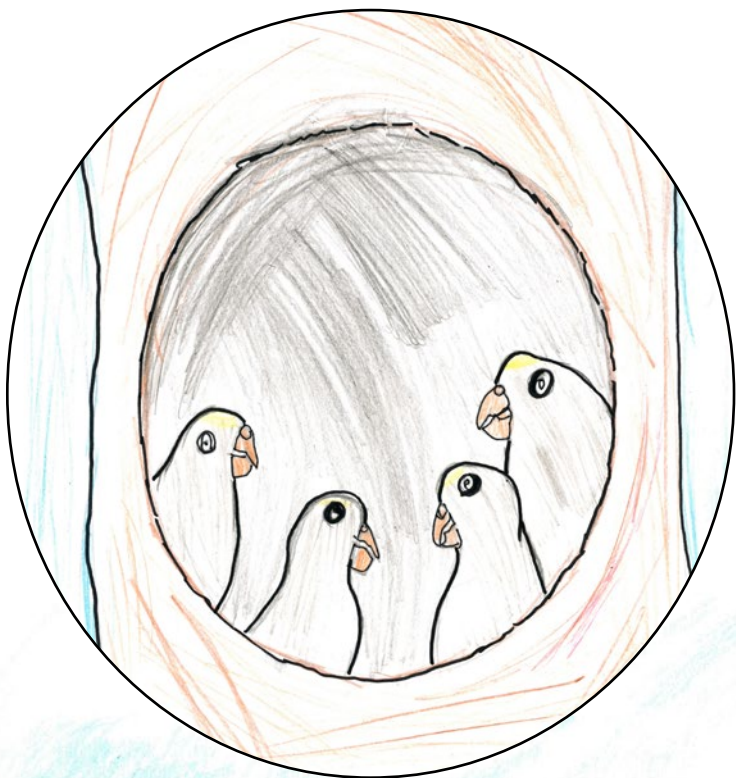


Noticing a dark shadow, Elin's panic set in. A large Lace Monitor was crawling near the opening to the nest hollow. What should he do? Risking his life, he attacked the monitor with his sharp beak. Fear, despair, and sorrow filled Rani as, despite his best efforts, the terrifying monster continued towards the hollow.



Woosh! Behind him, Elin heard the sound of his flock coming to help save his family. Over 100 parrots dive-bombed the monitor, knocking it to the ground. The madness was finished, his family was safe.

Within two weeks the eggs had hatched into fluffy, grey chicks. Over the next 40 days, their four chicks grew into large fledglings until they themselves could fly. They then left the nest in the tree hollow and joined their small flock of Regent Parrots that had saved their lives.



Regent Parrot ... Did you know?

The scientific name for the Regent Parrot is *Polytelis anthopeplus monarchoides*.

The Regent Parrot is an elegant, slim parrot, with bright yellow feathers, blue-black wings and tail. They can fly very fast.

Regent Parrots have a unique call.

The Regent Parrot lives in the Mallee regions of south-east Australia and is endangered. In New South Wales, viable populations of Regent Parrots only live in and around the small town of Euston. Regent Parrots need mallee trees to feed in and River Red gums to nest and breed in. The mallee trees need to be near to the river so that the birds don't have to fly too far.



Photo courtesy of Michael Todd (NSW DPIE)

Regent Parrots eat seeds, plants, grasses, flowers, insect larvae and flower buds.

Male and female Regent Parrots mate for life and often return to the same tree each year to lay their eggs.

Regent Parrots lay their eggs in hollow branches or holes in old River Red gum trees along the Murray River.

Lace Monitors will try to eat the parrot eggs and Peregrine Falcons will attack flying adults. The falcon is the only bird that can fly faster than a Regent Parrot.

Their eggs hatch in roughly three weeks.

There is little evidence to show that Regent Parrots damage cereal, grape or nut crops.

As well as natural enemies, Regent Parrots can be affected by land clearing; removal of flight corridors; fire; logging; salinisation; and the impacts of prolonged droughts on River Red gum trees.



Year 5-6 class
2019 Euston Public School



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