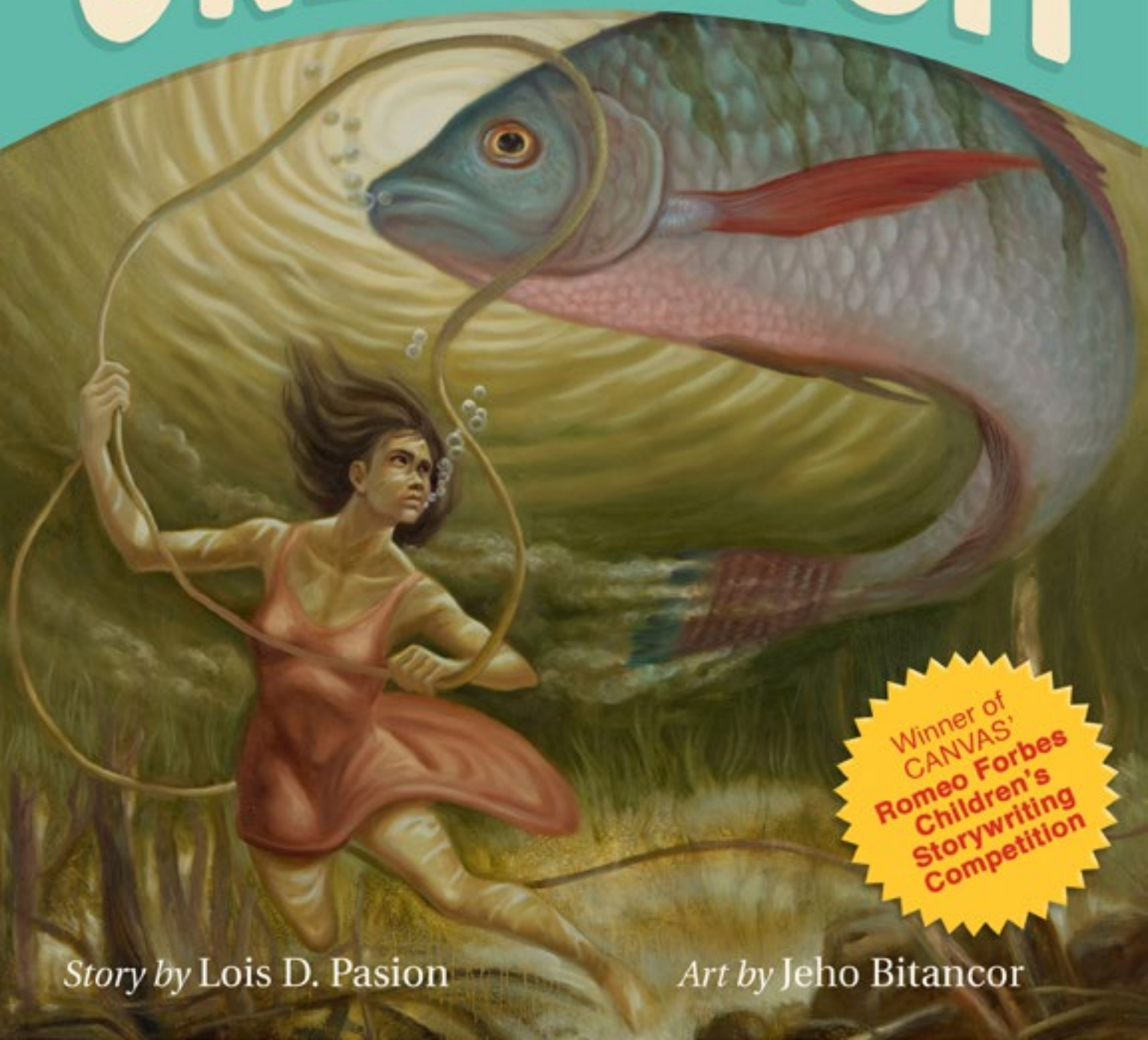


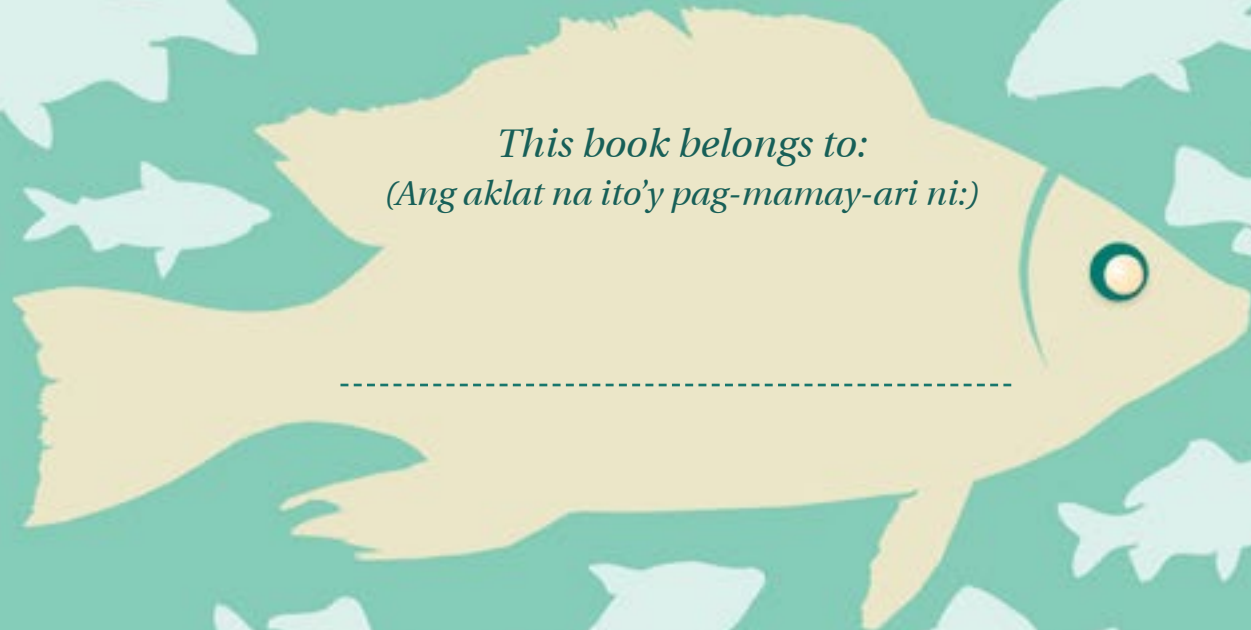
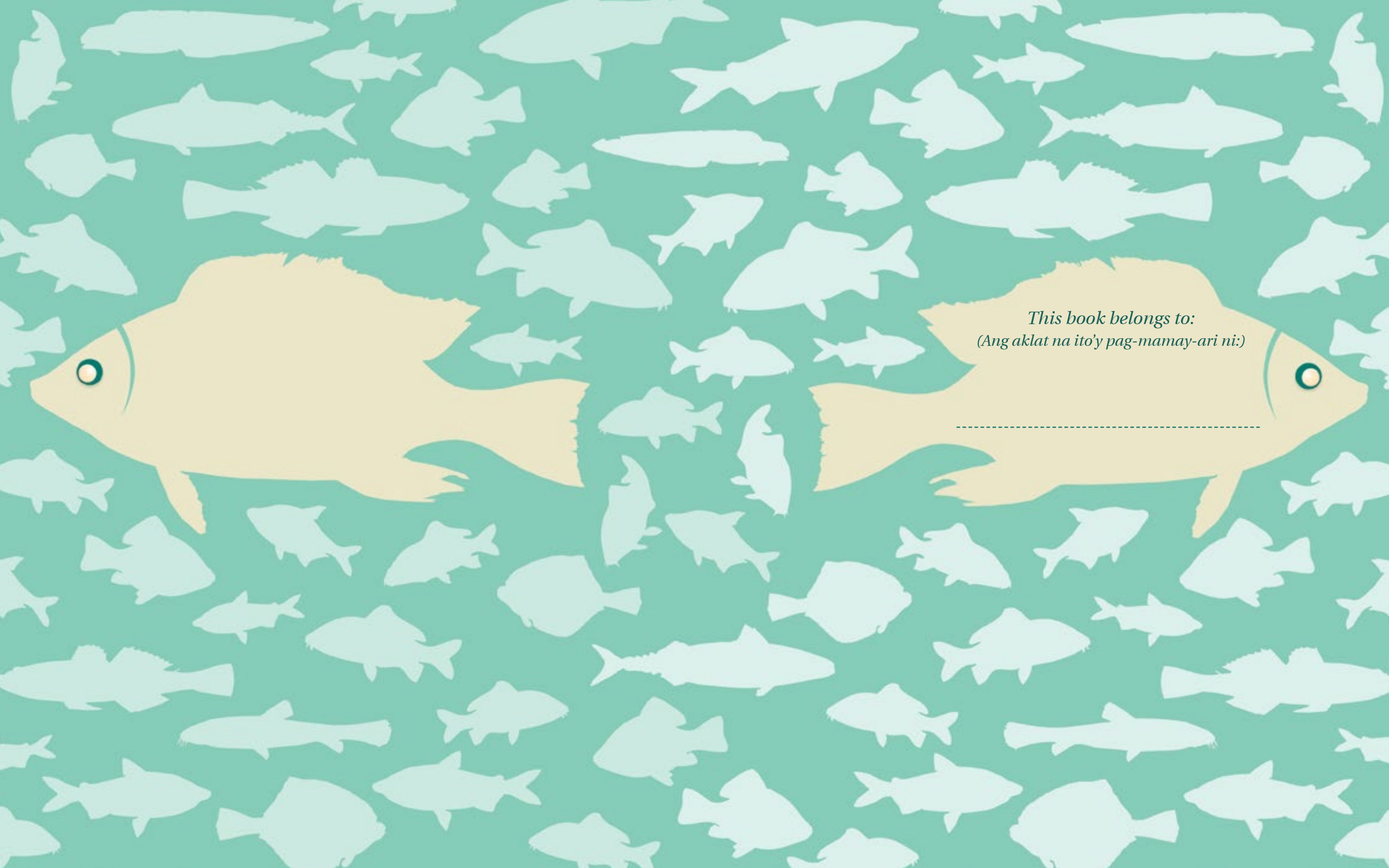
DAUGHTER and the GREAT FISH



Winner of
CANVAS'
Romeo Forbes
Children's
Storywriting
Competition

Story by Lois D. Pasion

Art by Jeho Bitancor



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(Ang aklat na ito'y pag-mamay-ari ni:)

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DAUGHTER^{and} the GREAT FISH

Anak at ang Dambuhalang Isda

Story by LOREN PERIA

Art by JEHO BITANCOR

Translated into Filipino by EUGENE EVASCO, PH.D.

Father, Mother, and Daughter sat together on a low table inside their thatched house.

“Daughter, go forth and bring us food to eat, for the drought has consumed our crops. Mother and I are too sick and old to step outside.”

“Yes, Father, I shall go,” Daughter said.

Magkakatabi sa may dulang si Ama, Ina, at Anak sa loob ng kanilang kubo.

“Anak, humayo ka’t dalhan kami ng makakain. Sinalanta ng tagtuyot ang ating mga pananim. Matanda na’t mahina na kami ni Ina para maghanapbuhay pa.”

“Opo, Ama, ako’y hahayo na,” sabi ni Anak.



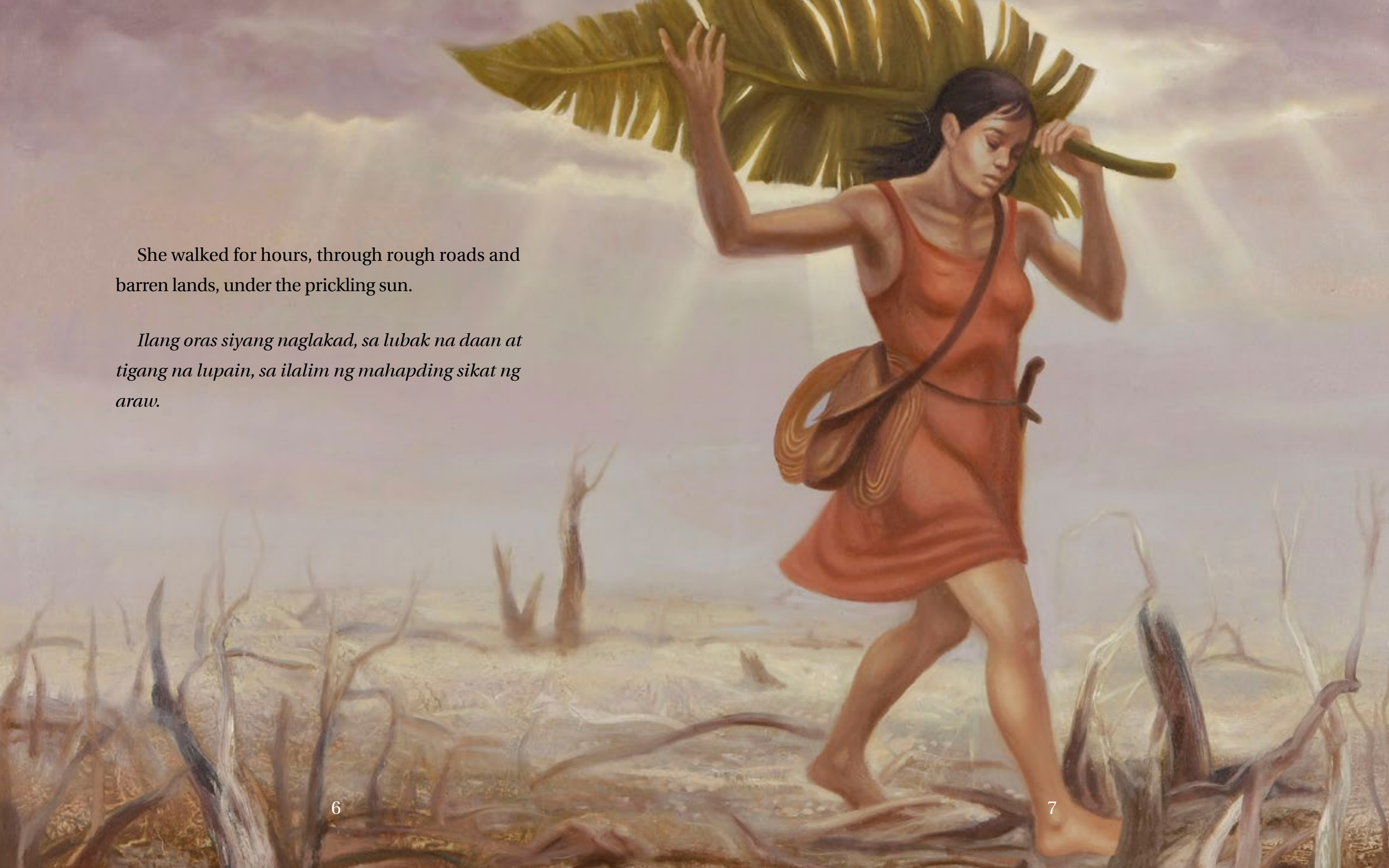


Gearing herself with a *bolo* and a hemp rope,
Daughter set out to bring home food for her parents.

*Naghanda si Anak, dala ang bolo at lubid na abaka,
upang makapag-uwi ng pagkain para sa kanyang
mga magulang.*

She walked for hours, through rough roads and barren lands, under the prickling sun.

Ilang oras siyang naglakad, sa lubak na daan at tigang na lupain, sa ilalim ng mahapding sikat ng araw.





At last, Daughter came across a hunter.

“Good day. I have travelled for hours looking for food. Can you tell me where I can find any in this barren land of ours?”

“There is no more food here. Up that hill and through the dead forest, you may stumble upon the Great Fish that placed the curse upon this land. You must catch and bring it back to lift the curse.”

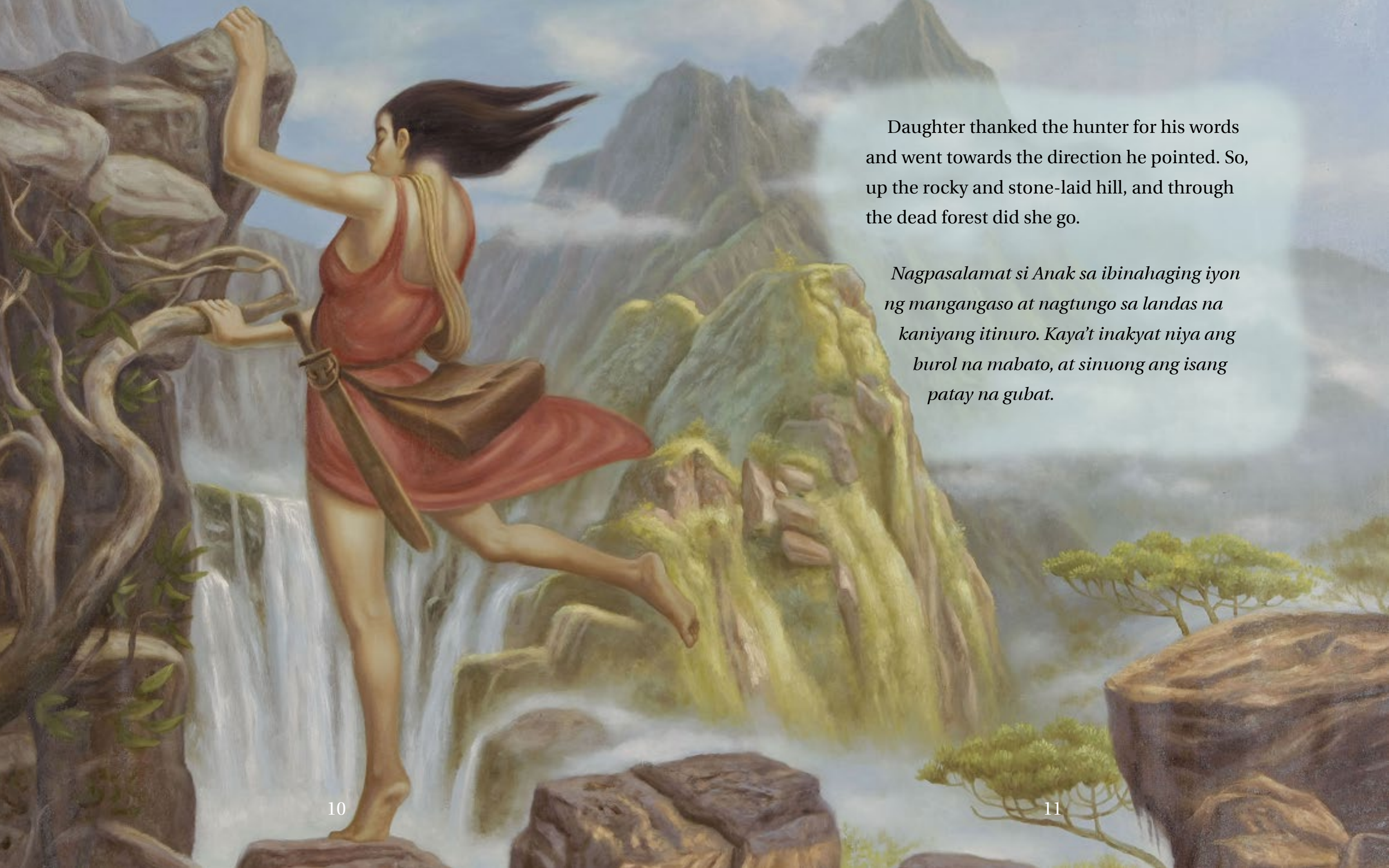
“Be warned. Many have tried to capture the Great Fish. All have failed,” the hunter said.

Sa ‘di katagalan, nakasalubong ni Anak ang isang mangangaso.

“Magandang araw. Ilang oras na akong naglalakbay upang maghanap ng pagkain. Maaari bang malaman kung saan makakahanap dito sa ating tuyong lupain?”

“Wala nang pagkain dito. Akyatin mo ang burol at sumuong ka sa patay na gubat at masusumpungan mo ang Dambuhalang Isda na naglagay ng sumpa sa lupaing ito. Ibalik mo siya rito upang maalis ang sumpa.”

“Ngunit babalaan kita. Marami na ang nagtangka, at lahat ay nabigo,” sabi ng mangangaso.



Daughter thanked the hunter for his words and went towards the direction he pointed. So, up the rocky and stone-laid hill, and through the dead forest did she go.

Nagpasalamat si Anak sa ibinahaging iyon ng mangangaso at nagtungo sa landas na kaniyang itinuro. Kaya't inakyat niya ang burol na mabato, at sinuong ang isang patay na gubat.

Dead husks of trees, low-hanging branches, and gnarled roots blocked her way and tripped her bare feet. The sharp thorns of braided vines made deep cuts on her skin.

Still, Daughter walked steadily, swinging her *bolo* to clear her path.

Sinalubong niya ang mga sumasagabal at nakakatisod na mga tuyong talupak ng mga puno, mga pilipit na mga ugat, at nakabiting mga sanga. Malalim ang mga galos na natamo niya mula sa matutulis na mga tinik ng mga nakatirintas na baging.

Ngunit patuloy na naglakad si Anak, habang hinahawi niya ang landas sa pagwasiwas ng kanyang bolo.







Down a sloping ravine, Daughter walked into a valley with a flowing river.

Pababa sa gulod ng isang bangin, narating ni Anak ang isang lambak na may umaagos na ilog.



She waded in its waters, and a chilling cold swept up her entire body.

Lumusong siya sa tubig, at nangingig ang buong katawan niya sa lamig.



Finally, she came across the Great Fish swimming between big rocks. Its scales were a beautiful grey color that reflected the rays of the sun, its fins gleamed a bright red, and its belly had a glowing white shimmer.

“Great Fish, I have come to take you back to our land and lift the curse,” Daughter declared.

The Fish answered harshly, “Why would I go back with you? Your people have constantly shown only greed, taking without giving back to the land that provides nourishment and life.”

Sa wakas, natagpuan niya ang Dambuhalang Isda na lumalangoy sa pagitan ng mga malalaking bato. Nagniningning na abuhin ang mga kaliskis nito na nagpapamalas ng mga sinag-araw, matinkad na pula ang mga palikpik, at makinang na puti ang tiyan.

“Dambuhalang Isda, narito ako upang iuwi ka sa amin at alisin ang sumpa,” pahayag ni Anak.

Galit na tumugon ang Dambuhalang Isda, “Bakit ako sasama sa iyo? Kayong mga tao ay walang ipinakita kung hindi kasakiman, kumukuha nang hindi marunong mag-aruga sa lupang nagbibigay-buhay.”

Humbled in the face of rebuke yet still resolute, Daughter said, “We offered only our prayers of gratitude, thinking they were enough. Too late did we realize that it is also our duty to care for the land that has been generous to us.”

Daughter continued, “Give me a chance to prove that not every human action stems from greed and thoughtless destruction, but from love and devotion as well. Come with me back to our land and lift your curse. Allow me to provide for my father and mother, just as they have provided for me when I was a child.”

Moved by her sincerity, the Great Fish relented, “I will come with you, but can you bear my weight and carry me? Many men have tried, yet all have failed. How can a woman such as you succeed?”

Nanliit man sa harap ng matinding galit, walang tinag na nagwika si Anak, “Kadalasan, nag-aalay lamang kami ng pasasalamat sa pag-aakalang iyon ay sapat na. Huli na nang aming malaman na kailangan naming alagaan ang lupaing kumandili sa amin.”

Nagpatuloy si Anak, “Bigyan mo ako ng pagkakataong patunayan na hindi lahat ng kilos ng tao ay bunga ng kasakiman at walang-patumanggang pagwasak, kundi ng pag-ibig at ng pagmamalasakit din. Hayaan mo akong kalingain ang aking ama’t ina, gaya ng pagkalinga nila sa akin noong ako’y paslit pa lamang.”

Bakas ang maalab na pagmamahal sa puso ni Anak, nagwika ang Dambuhalang Isda, “Sige, sasama ako sa iyo. Ngunit kaya mo ba akong buhatin at pasanin? Kayrami nang lalaking nagtangka’t sumuko. Paano pa ang isang babae lamang na tulad mo?”



Daughter smiled and said, “I am a woman, and I am twice as determined as any man. I will carry you back home. I will not fail.”

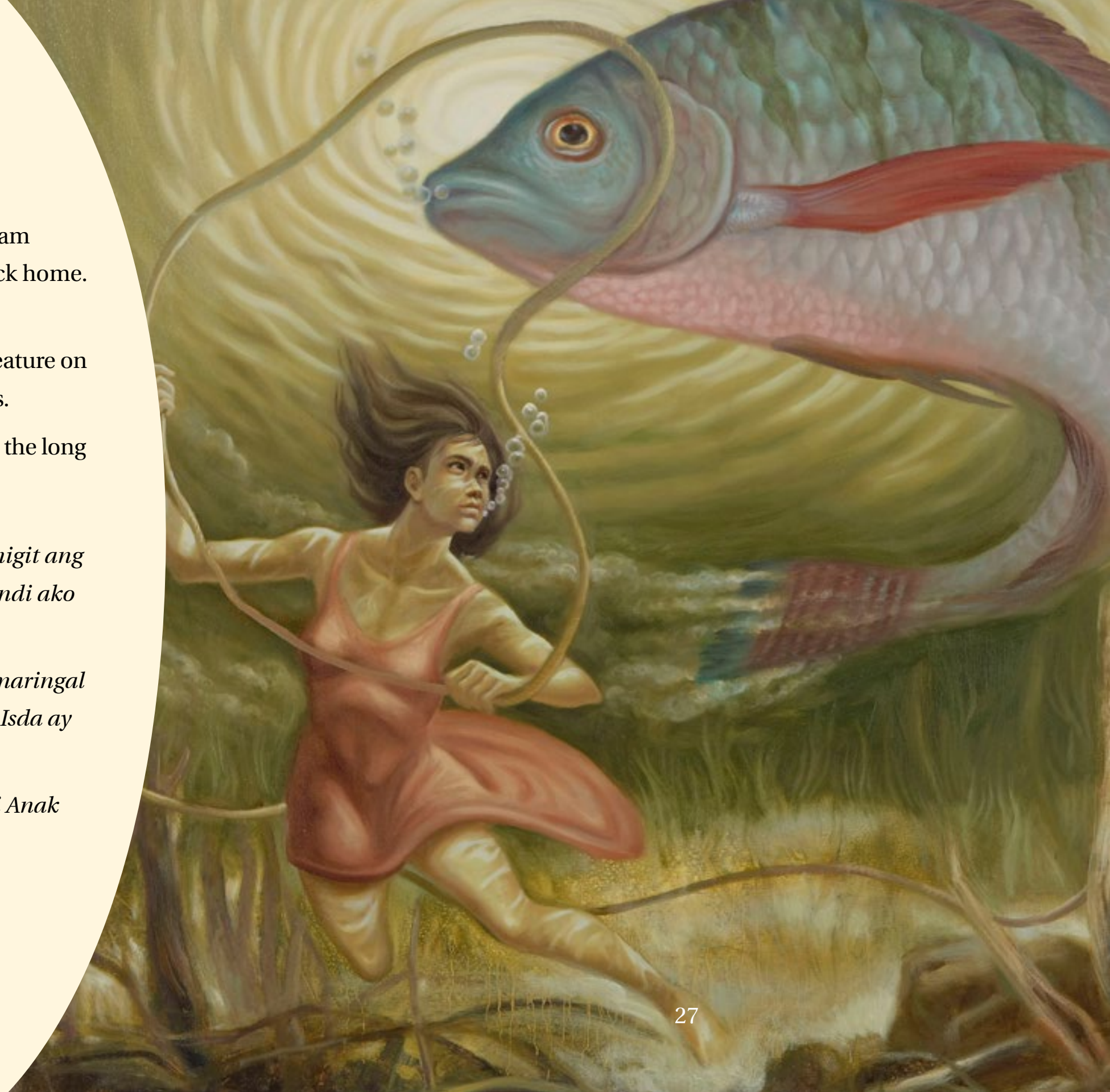
She took her rope and secured the magnificent creature on her back. The Giant Fish was almost as tall as she was.

Bearing the fish’s massive weight, Daughter began the long journey home.

Ngumiti si Anak at nagwika, “Babae nga ako, at higit ang aking sigasig kaysa sino mang lalaki. Iuuwi kita. Hindi ako mabibigo.”

Inihanda niya ang kaniyang lubid at itinali ang maringal na nilalang sa kanyang likuran. Ang Dambuhalang Isda ay halos kasing-tangkad niya.

Pasan niya ang buong bigat ng isda, sinimulan ni Anak ang mahabang paglakbay pauwi.



Step by heavy step, Daughter walked carrying the Great Fish. When they reached the ravine, a new challenge faced her.

“This is your final test. This forest is angry and it will not make things easy for you,” the Great Fish spoke. “Your land lies on the other side. Bring me across this river and you will have brought me back. Then, and only then, shall the rest of your passage be safe.”

Daughter scanned the river. Its waters were now a torrent moving too fast and too strong for her, even if she did not have the added weight of the Great Fish on her back.

Daughter removed the rope from the Great Fish. She tied one end around a boulder, and fashioned a lasso with the other. She held herself steady, and threw the rope around a jutting rock at the other side of the river.

But it simply wasn't long enough. Her rope could not reach the other side.

Mabigat man ang bawat yapak, naglakad si Anak pasan ang Dambuhalang Isda. Nang nakarating sila sa bangin, isang panibagong pagsubok ang humarap sa kanya.

“Ito ang huli mong pagsubok. Galit ang gubat at pahihirapan ka niya,” wika ng Dambuhalang Isda. “Ang lupa ninyo ay nasa kabilang dako. Itawid mo ako sa ilog at makakabalik ka na. Doon ka lamang tiyak na makakauwi nang ligtas.”

Minasdan ni Anak ang ilog. Masyadong malakas at mabilis ang pagragasa nito para sa kanya, kahit na hindi pa niya pasan sa likod ang mabigat na Dambuhalang Isda.

Tinanggal ni Anak ang nakagapos na lubid mula sa Dambuhalang Isda. Itinali niya ang isang dulo sa isang malaking bato at binuhol sa isang laso ang kabilang dulo. Matatag siyang tumindig, at inihagis niya ang lubid sa isang nakausling bato sa kabilang pampang.

Ngunit ito'y sadyang kulang sa haba. Hindi ito makaabot sa kabilang pampang ang kanyang lubid.





Daughter had an idea. With her *bolo*, she cut thorny vines that hung from nearby trees. She fashioned a sturdy rope and tied it to her own.

She swung the now longer rope across the river with all her might. It did not catch. She tried again and again.

Her muscles screamed in protest, but she never stopped. Until at last, the other end of her rope looped around the jutting rock on the other side!

She now had a tightrope for a bridge. But how would she carry the Great Fish on her back without any rope left?"

May naisip si Anak. Gamit ang kaniyang bolo, tinabas niya ang mga matitinik na baging. Pinilipit niya ang mga ito at ipinandugtong sa kanyang lubid.

Inihagis ni Anak nang buong lakas ang ngayo'y mas mahabang lubid. Hindi ito kumapit. Paulit-ulit niya itong sinubukan.

Pumipintig na sa sakit ang kanyang mga kalamnan ngunit hindi siya tumigil. Hanggang, sa wakas, nasilo ng kanyang lubid ang nakausling bato sa kabilang pampang!

May lubid na siya ngayong matatawiran. Ngunit paano niya mabubuhat ang Dambuhalang Isda sa kanyang likod ngayong ubos na ang lubid ?

Daughter lifted the Great Fish upon her shoulder. It felt heavier than ever. Carefully, she set her foot on the rope, and began to cross. The rope swung dangerously, the vine's thorns dug deep into her bare feet, but still she trudged on. She was back in her land.

"You have won, Child!" the Great Fish exclaimed with admiration. "I have lifted the curse, now return me to the river. Your lands will again bring you food and nourishment, and the river will bring you plenty of fish."

The Great Fish continued, "But I warn you. You and your people must not waste this chance. Return to your old ways, and I will renew the curse. I will no longer be so forgiving."

Daughter nodded and gently placed the Great Fish on the riverbank. With a thrust of its mighty tail, the Great Fish swam easily in the raging waters.

Free of burden, Daughter turned and began to walk home where her beloved parents waited.

Pinasan ni Anak ang Dambuhalang Isda sa kaniyang balikat. Napakabigat nito. Buong ingat niyang inihakbang ang kanyang paa sa tulay na lubid, at nagsimulang tumawid. Mapanganib na umugoy ang lubid, bumaon nang malalim ang mga tinik ng mga baging sa kaniyang walang saplot na talampakan, ngunit ipinagpatuloy pa rin niya ang paghakang. Sa wakas, nakatawid siya.

"Nagtagumpay ka, Anak!" may paghangang bulalas ng Dambuhalang Isda. "Tinanggal ko na ang sumpa, ibalik mo na ako sa ilog. Magiging hitik muli sa pananim ang inyong mga lupain, at aapaw muli ang ilog ng mga isda."

Nagpatuloy ang Dambuhalang Isda, "Ngunit ika'y aking babalaan. Huwag ninyong sayangin ang pagkakataong ito. Bumalik kayo sa dati ninyong mga gawi, at ibabalik ko ang sumpa. Wala nang pagpapatawad kayong maaasahan."

Tumango si Anak at dahan-dahang ibinaba ang Dambuhalang Isda sa pampang ng ilog. Sa isang sikad ng kanyang malakas na buntot, madaling nakabalik ang Dambuhalang Isda sa rumaragasang tubig.

Wala nang pasan, tumalikod si Anak at nagsimulang naglakad pauwi kung saan naghihintay ang mahal niyang mga magulang.



LOREN D. PERIA is a student facilitator based in Pangasinan. A kid at heart, stories from her childhood shaped her love for prose became her gateway towards the human psyche. A somewhat frustrated artist, she is amazed by the power of images in telling stories that words cannot convey. She was a student journalist in college and has been given several awards at the Regional Higher Education Press Conference and Luzonwide Higher Education Press Conferences she participated. At present, she is the technical adviser for the campus paper of a university. She graduated with a degree in Science in Psychology at Lyceum-Northwestern University.

JEHO L. BITANCOR is a Filipino painter, performance artist, and graphic designer based in New Jersey, USA.

Known in the Philippines for his paintings and performance art pieces that tackle social and political issues, his own brand of symbolic figurative painting developed in the early eighties often dealt with issues of diaspora, alienation, resistance, and assertion. He has been featured in 24 solo and 90 group exhibitions in the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, Hongkong, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, and the United States. He is represented in the Singapore Museum, the UP Heritage Museum, Ateneo Art Gallery, De La Salle University Museum, Iloilo Museum of Contemporary Art, Cojuangco Museum, and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts among others.

A recipient of numerous awards including the CCP 13 Artists Award, the Freeman Foundation Asian Artists Fellowship award in Vermont, USA and the Dangal ng Aurora (Outstanding Citizen of Aurora Province) award, he studied Painting and Visual Communications at the University of the Philippines, the Art Students League of New York, and New York University.

All images for this book were based on original artworks done in *oil on canvas* by Jeho Bitancor.



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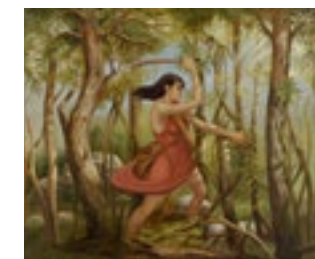
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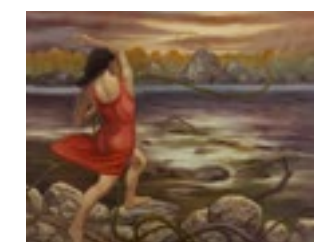
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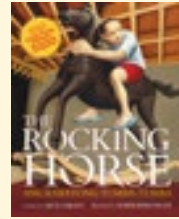


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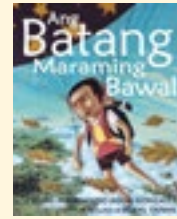
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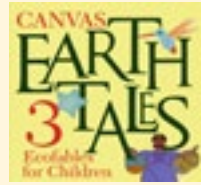
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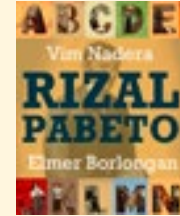
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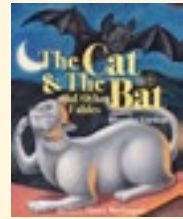
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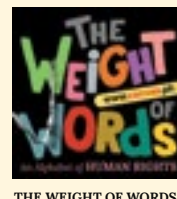
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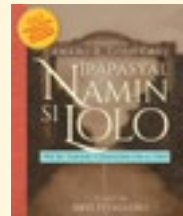
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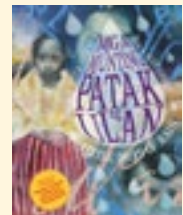
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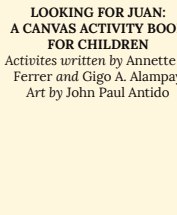
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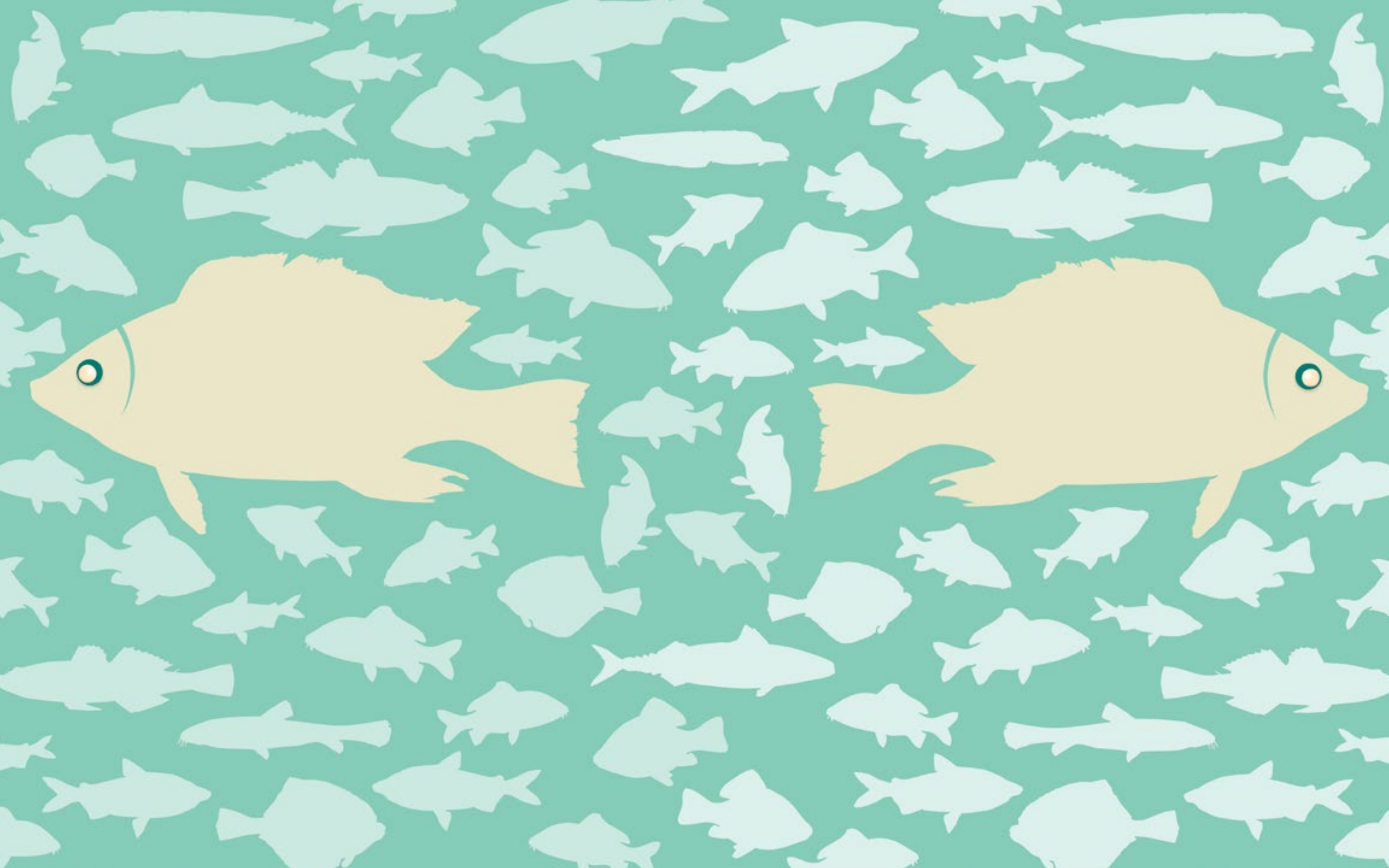
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The drought caused all the crops to wither away.
Hope lies in Daughter, strong and independent,
brave and determined.

They say there is a Great Fish that can restore the land.
She only has to find and bring the Great Fish home.

Tagtuyot at ang lahat ng pananim ay lanta na.

*Na kay Anak ang pag-asa, na siyang malakas at may sariling sikap,
matapang at may pagpapasya.*

Sabi nila may isang Dambuhalang Isda na maibabalik ang sagana.

Kailangan lang niyang mahanap at maiuwi ang Dambuhalang Isda.

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