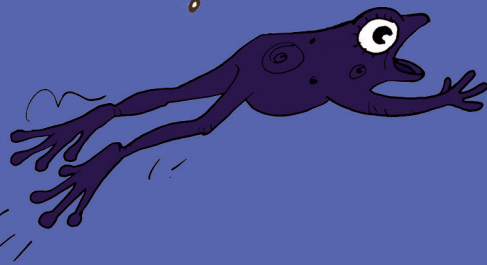


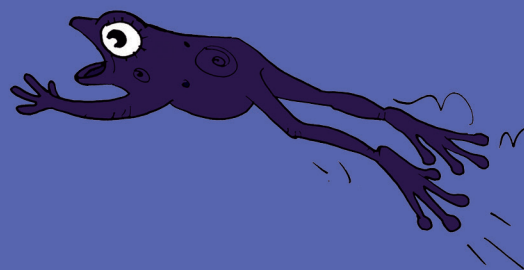


Why the owl never sleeps

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Why the owl never sleeps

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with the help of the Book Dash participants in Johannesburg on 17 August 2024.

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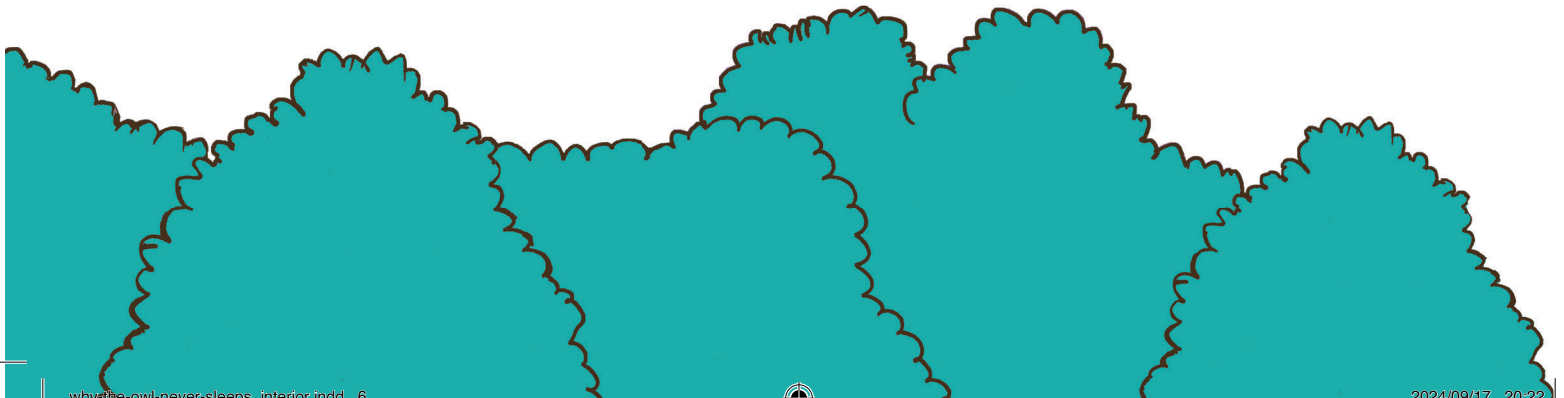
Why the owl never sleeps

Gerald Bedeker Wandile Mathe Luke Mateman





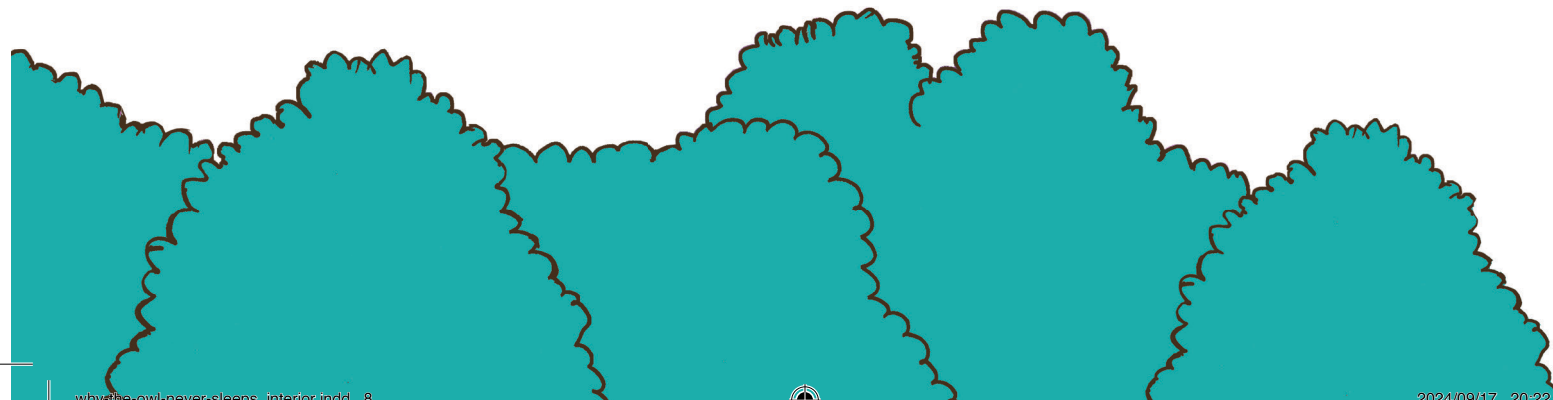
Ages ago, when rocks were still soft
and trees could talk, all the animals
lived on land under one big shed.







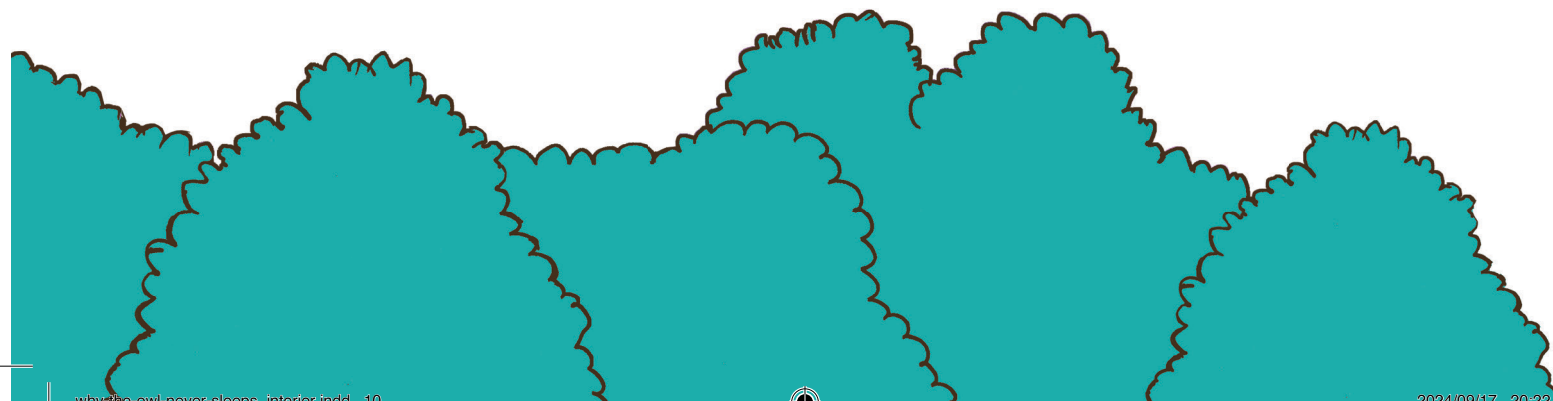
They took care of each other
and protected one another
from human trouble all day and night.

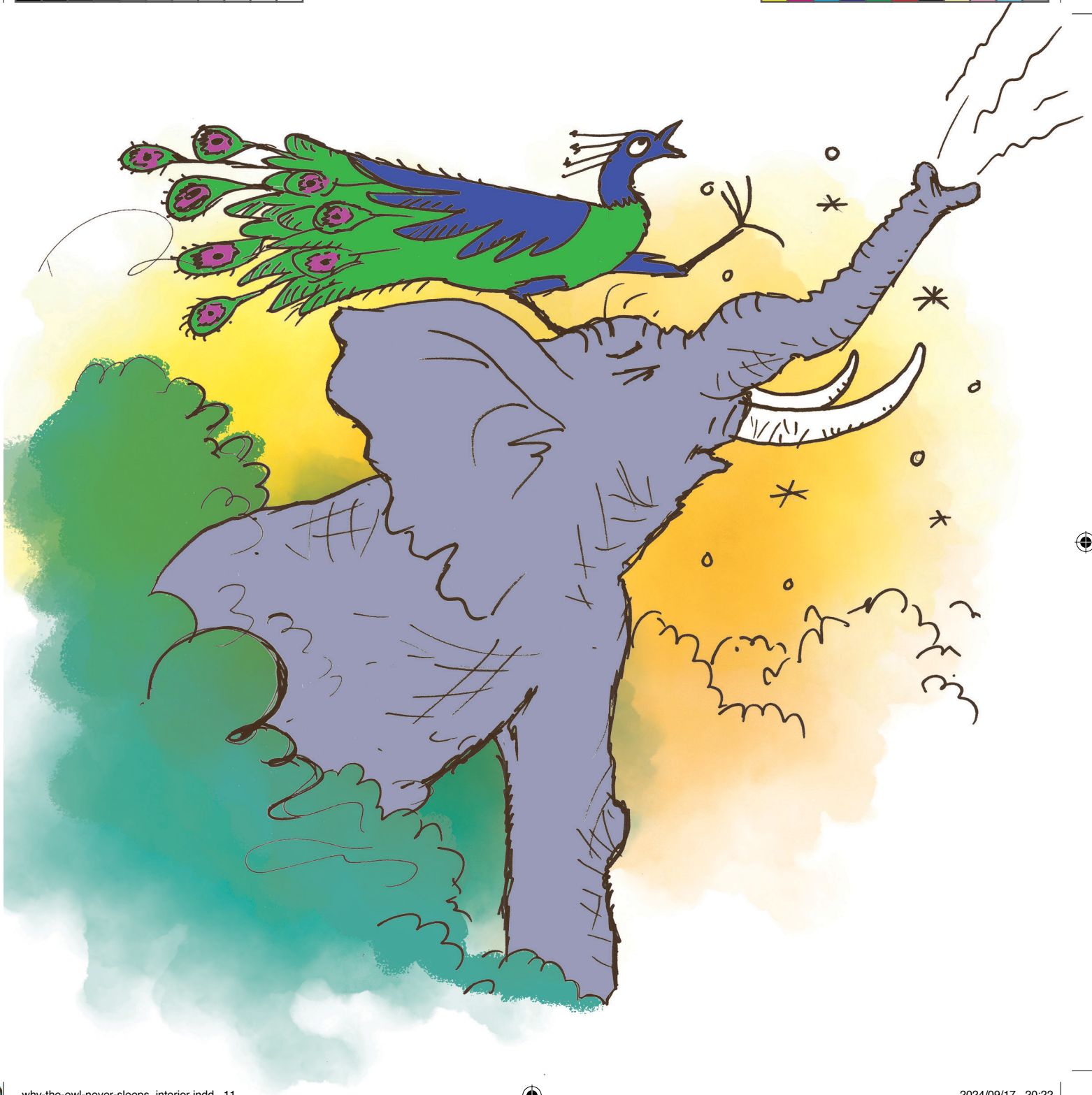






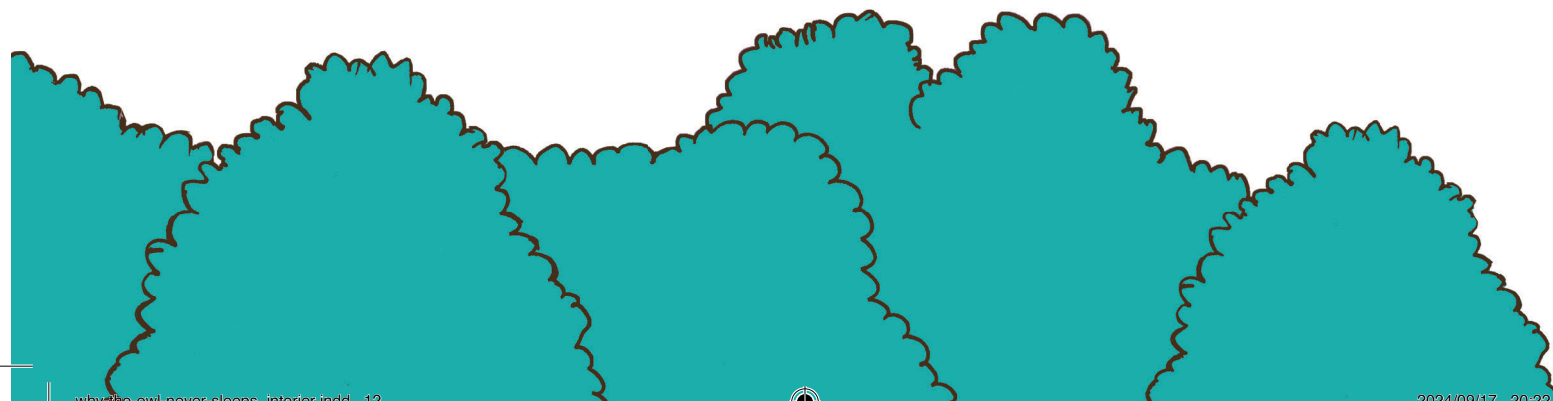
At sunset, the elephants trumpeted
and the birds chirped along in harmony,
while the peacock danced.

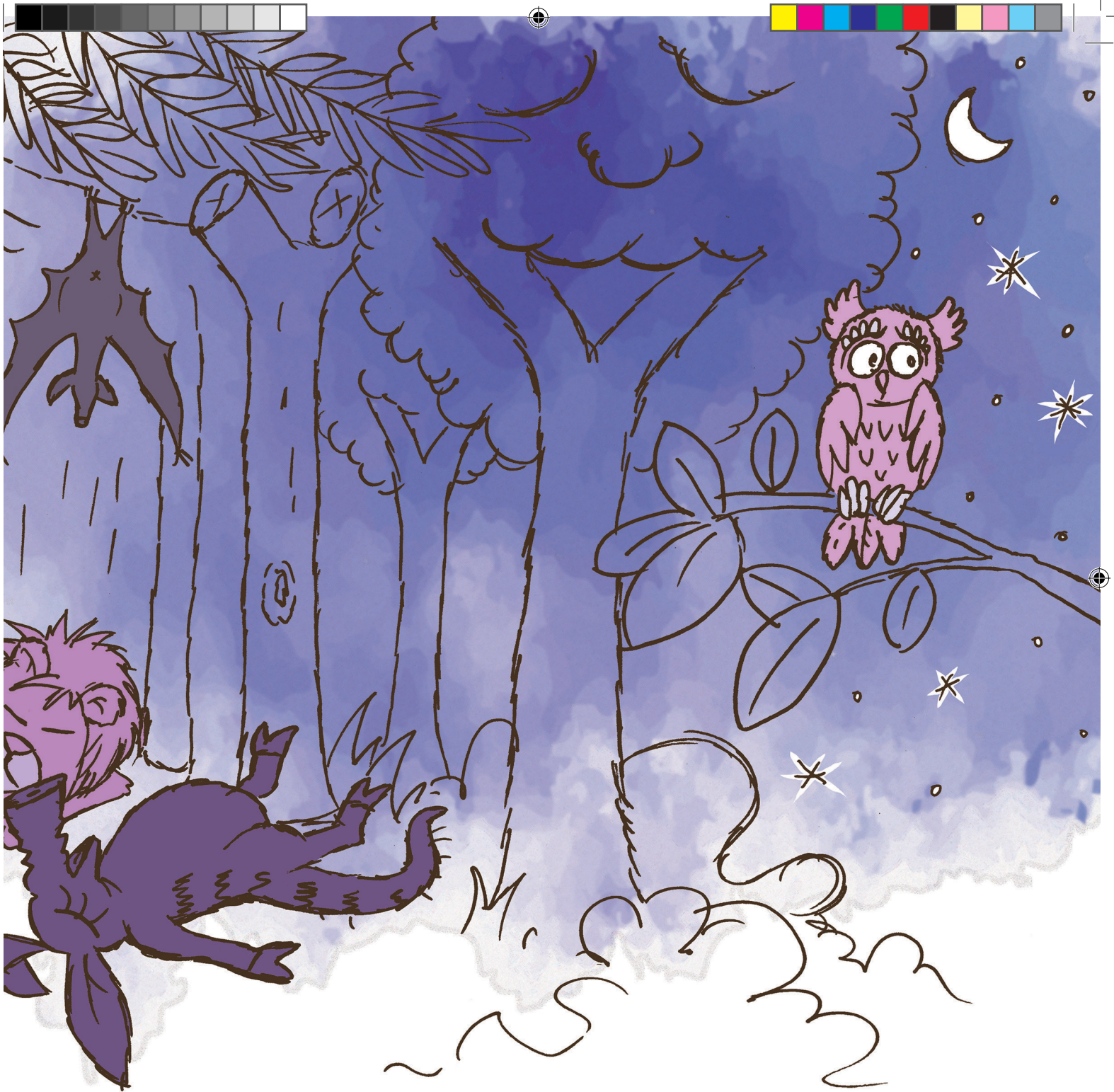






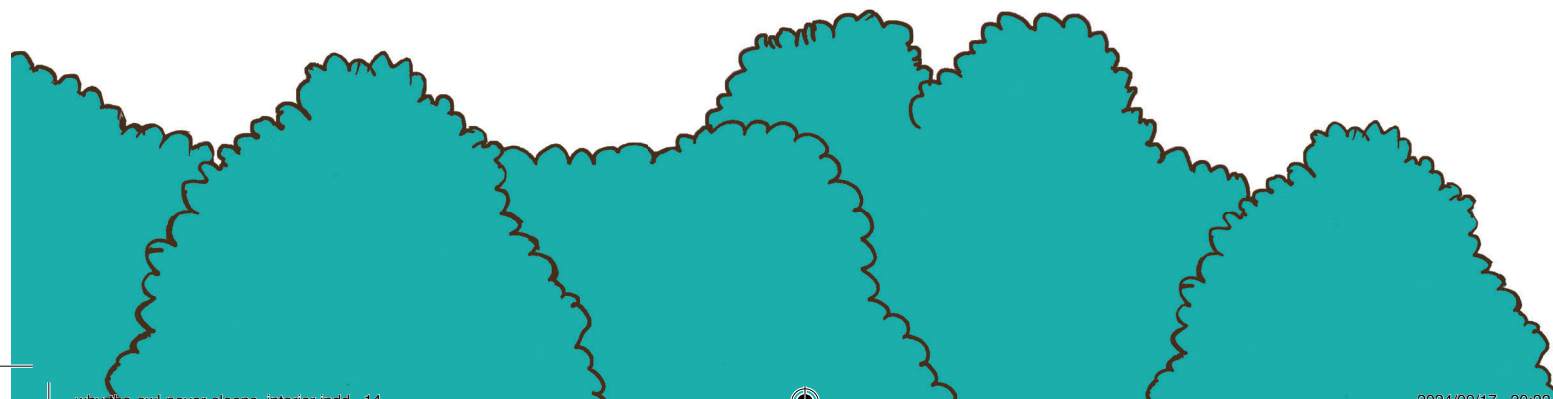
One night, it was Mr Owl's turn to guard
the animals as they slept.







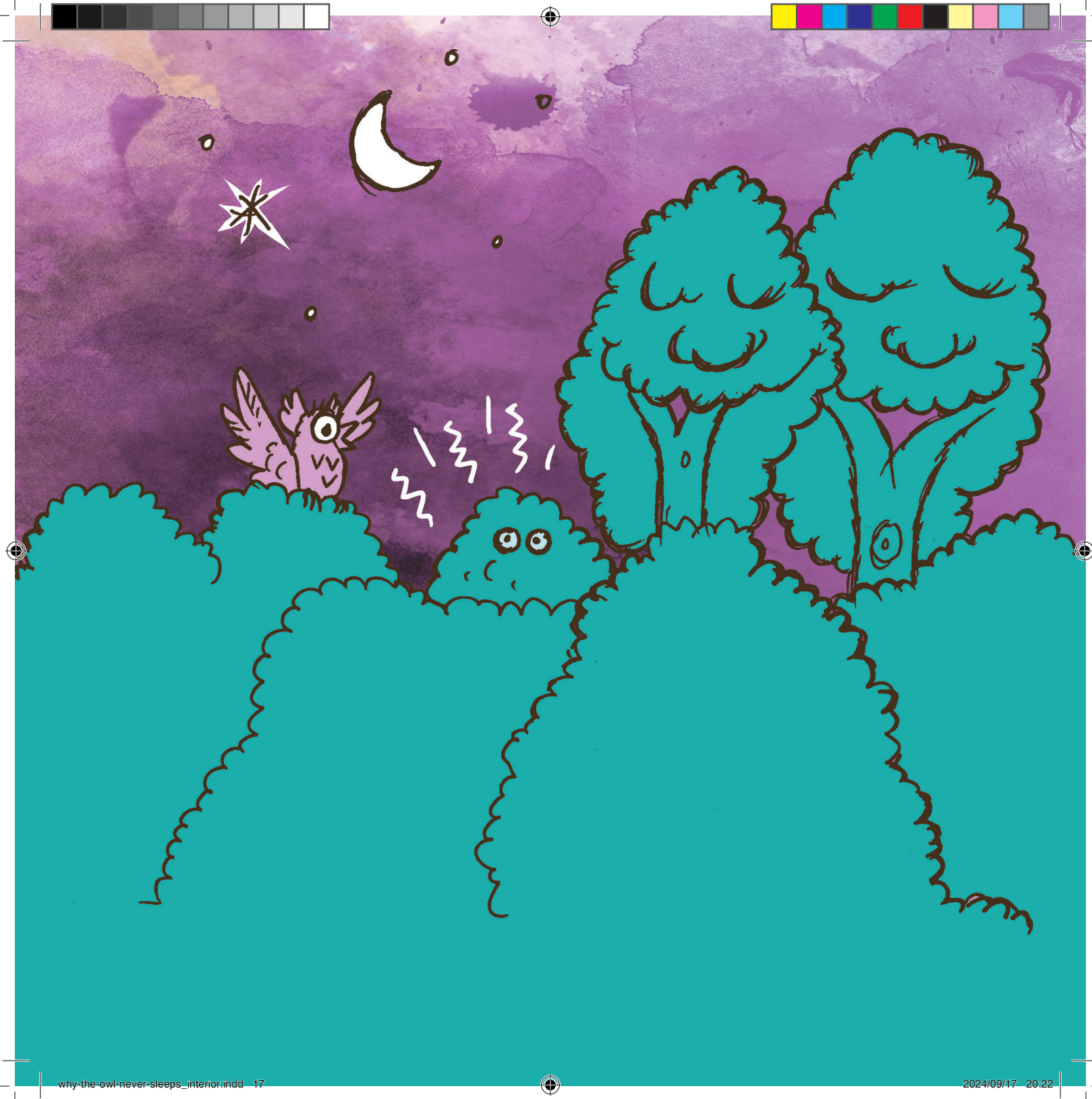
He stayed up watching
far and wide for any
sign of humans.







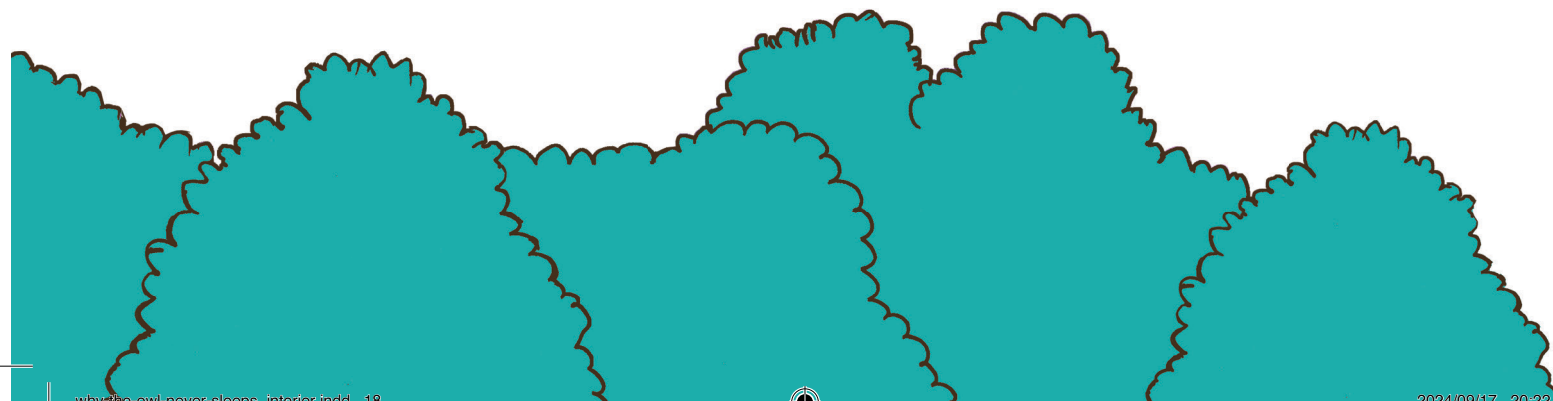
Suddenly the bush in front of him
crackled and shook.





“Aww!” Mr Owl was trapped
in the hands of a small boy.

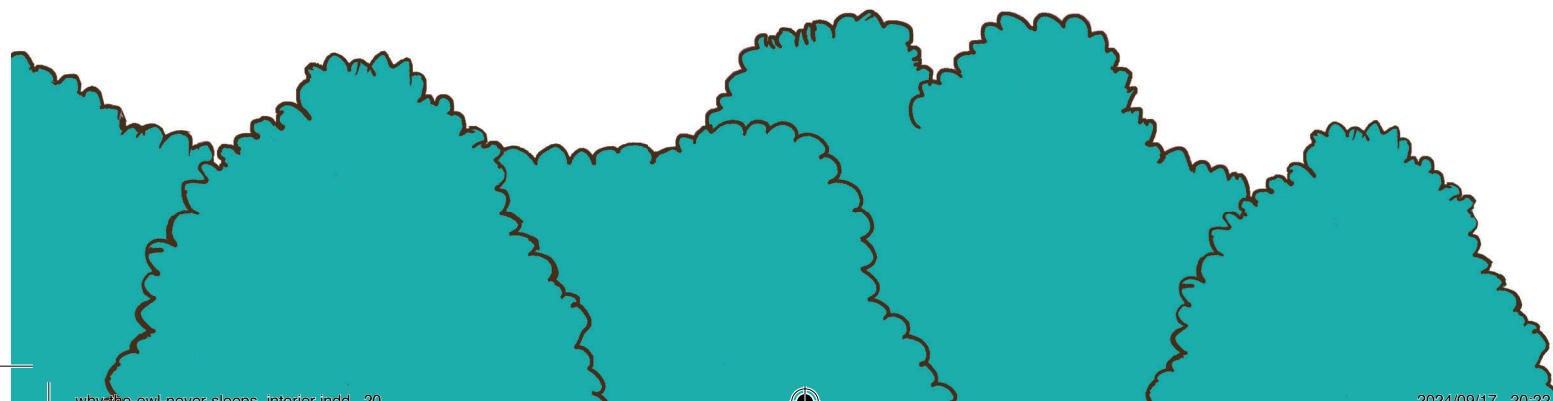
Owl hooted and ruffled his feathers.
There was even a toot.







“Please don’t roast me!
Take the other animals.
I am too wise to be eaten –
I won’t be as delicious.”

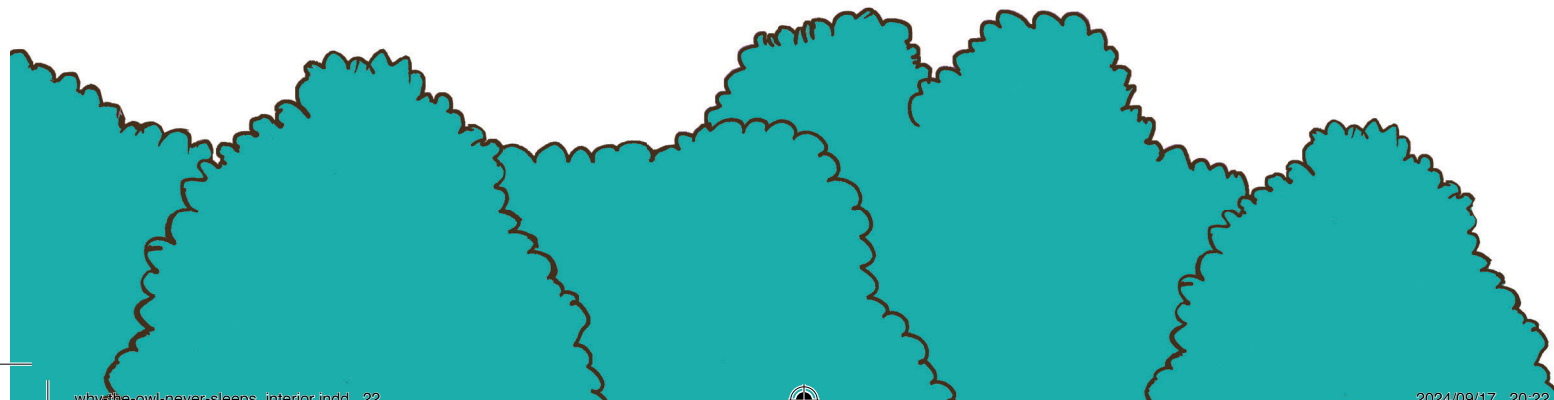






The boy shrugged, heading under
the animals' shed.
He lit a fire, waking the animals
from their sleep.

“Fire!” they shouted, as they scattered all over.



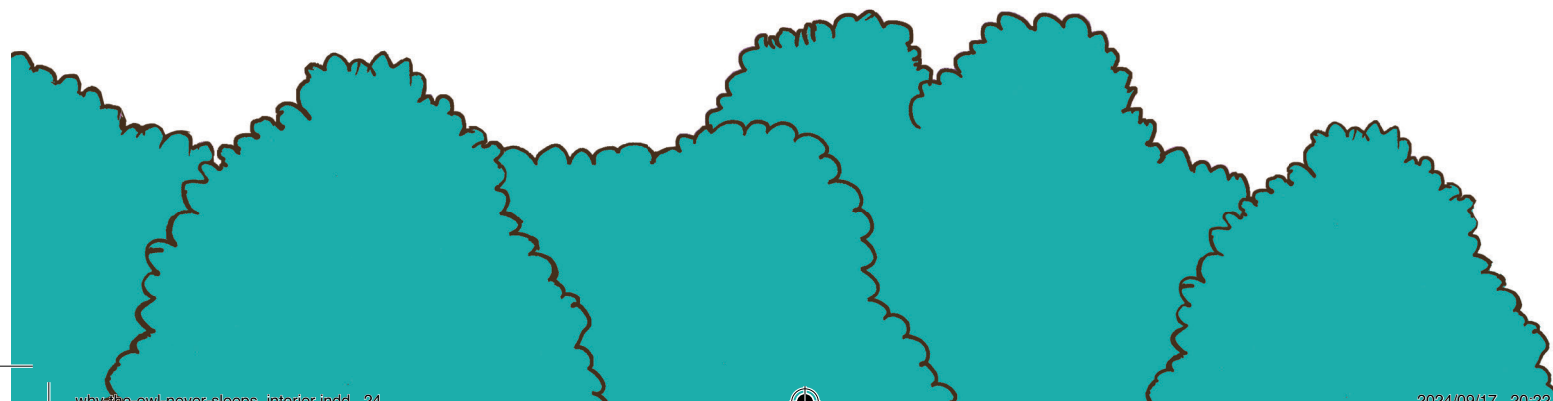


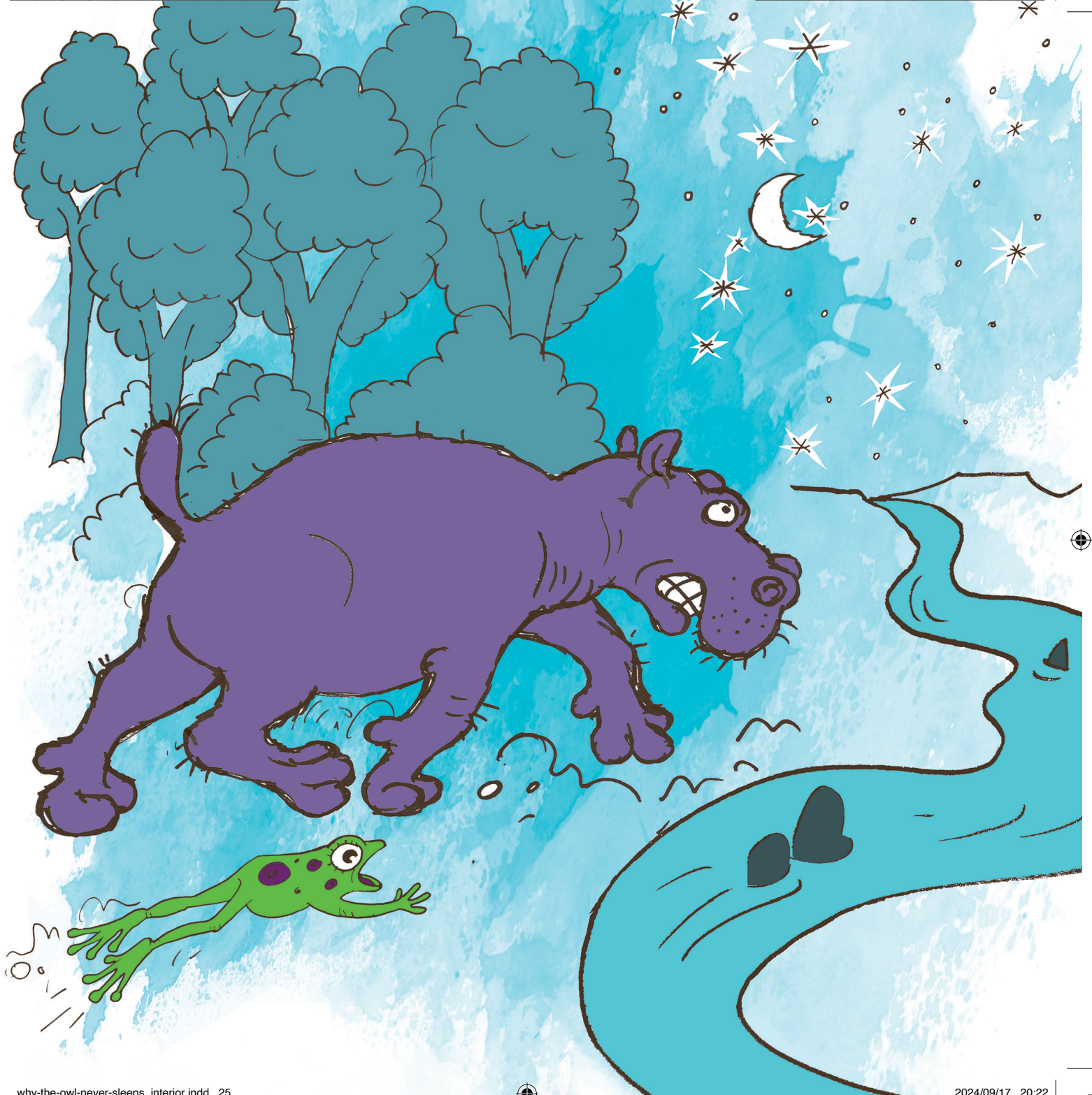


The insects hid underground.

Some animals ran for the river
and never came back.

The birds flew deep into the night sky.







The humans left with the cats, cows
and dogs, leaving Mr Owl ashamed.
“They must never see me again.”







From that night, he vowed never
to show his face in daylight ...
only at night to eat and stretch his wings.





