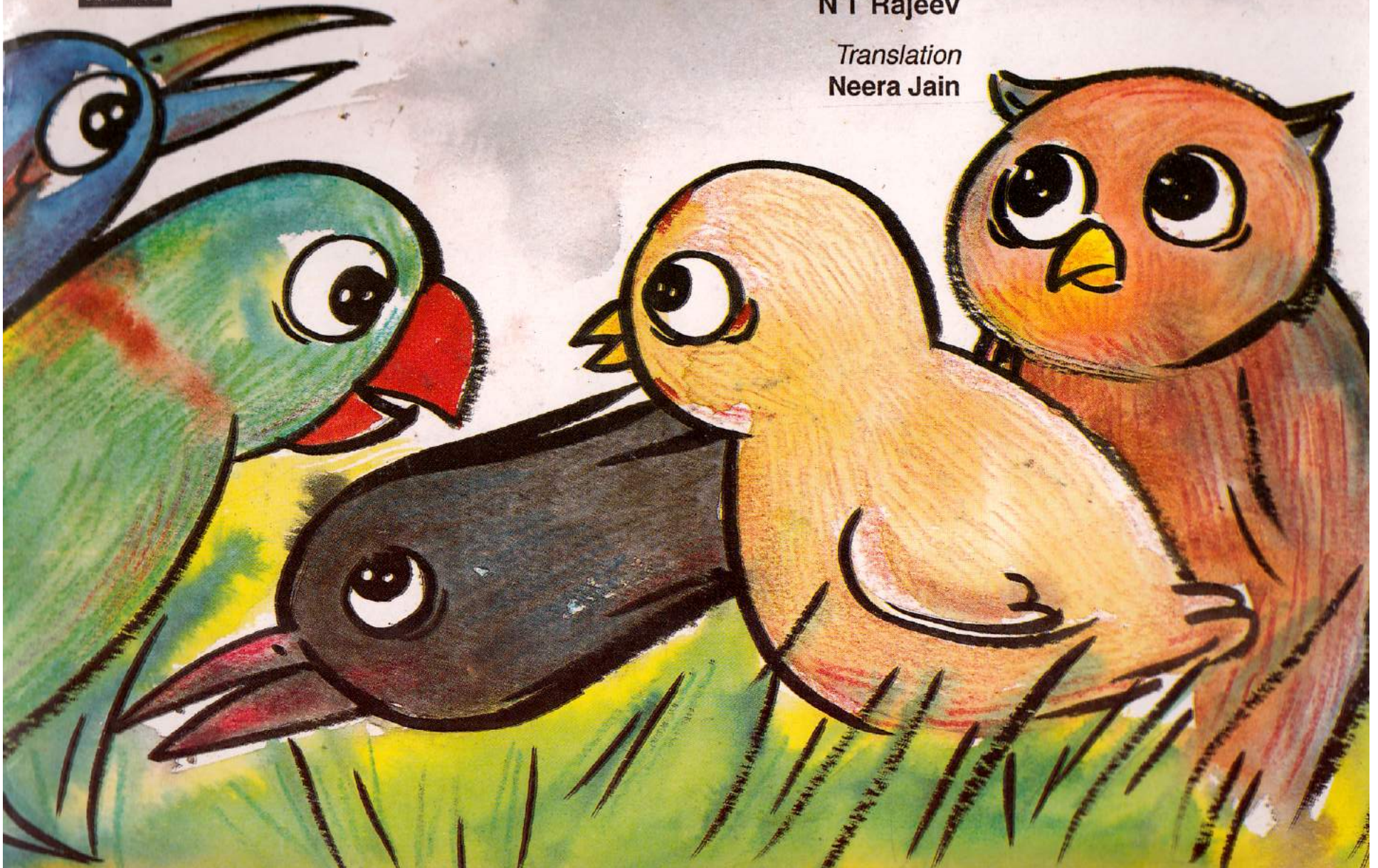




Nine Little Birds

N T Rajeev

Translation
Neera Jain



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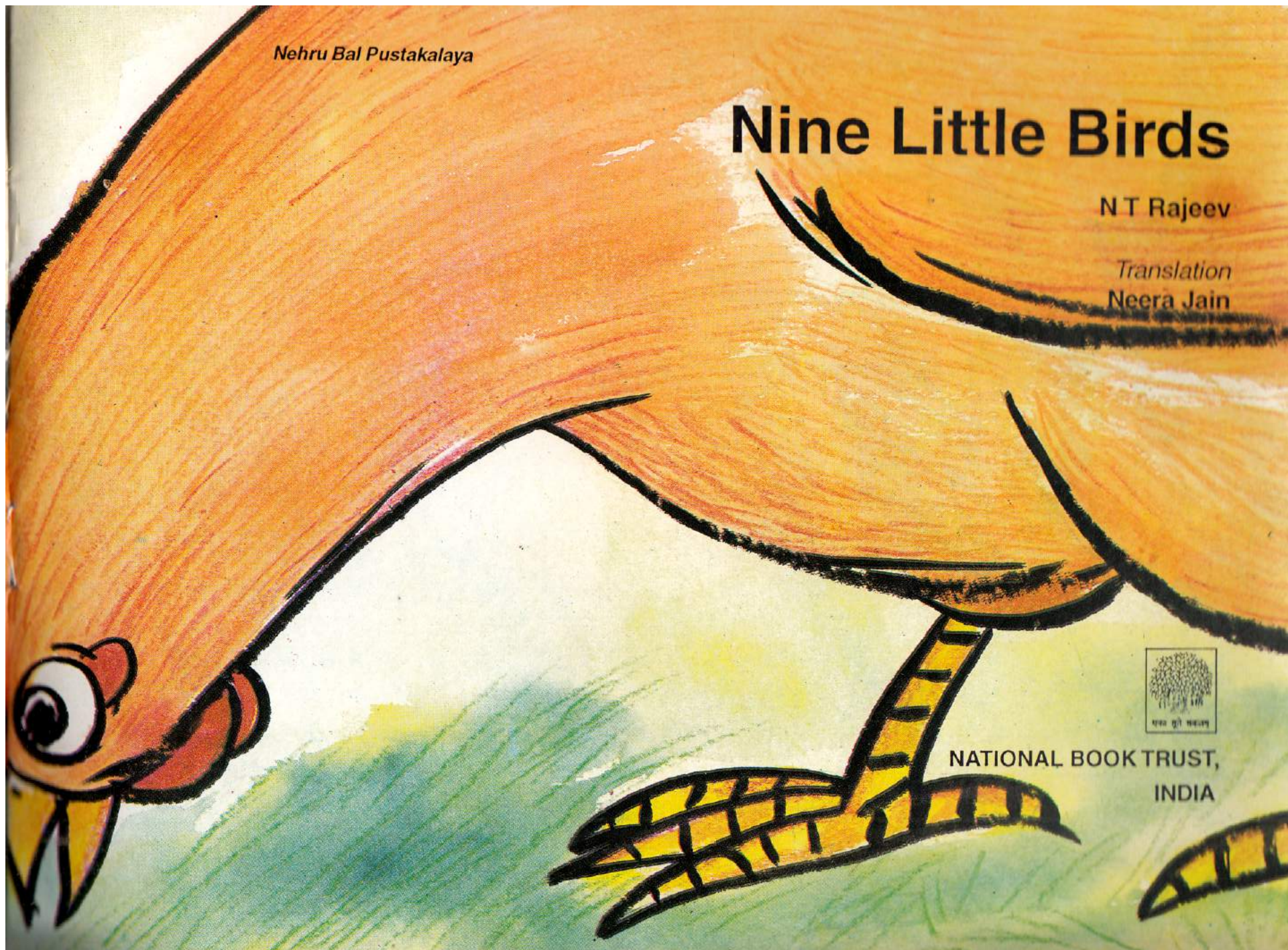
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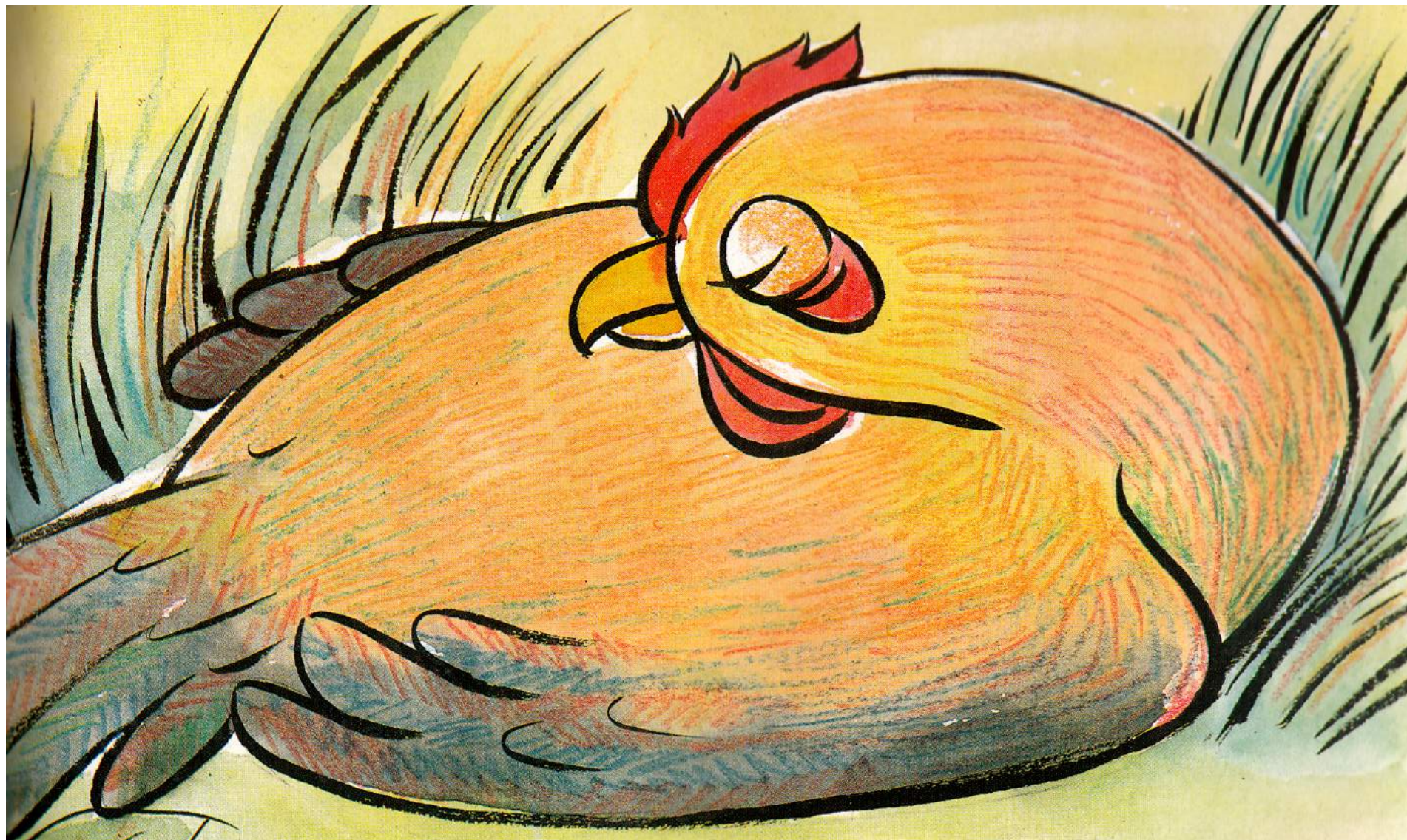
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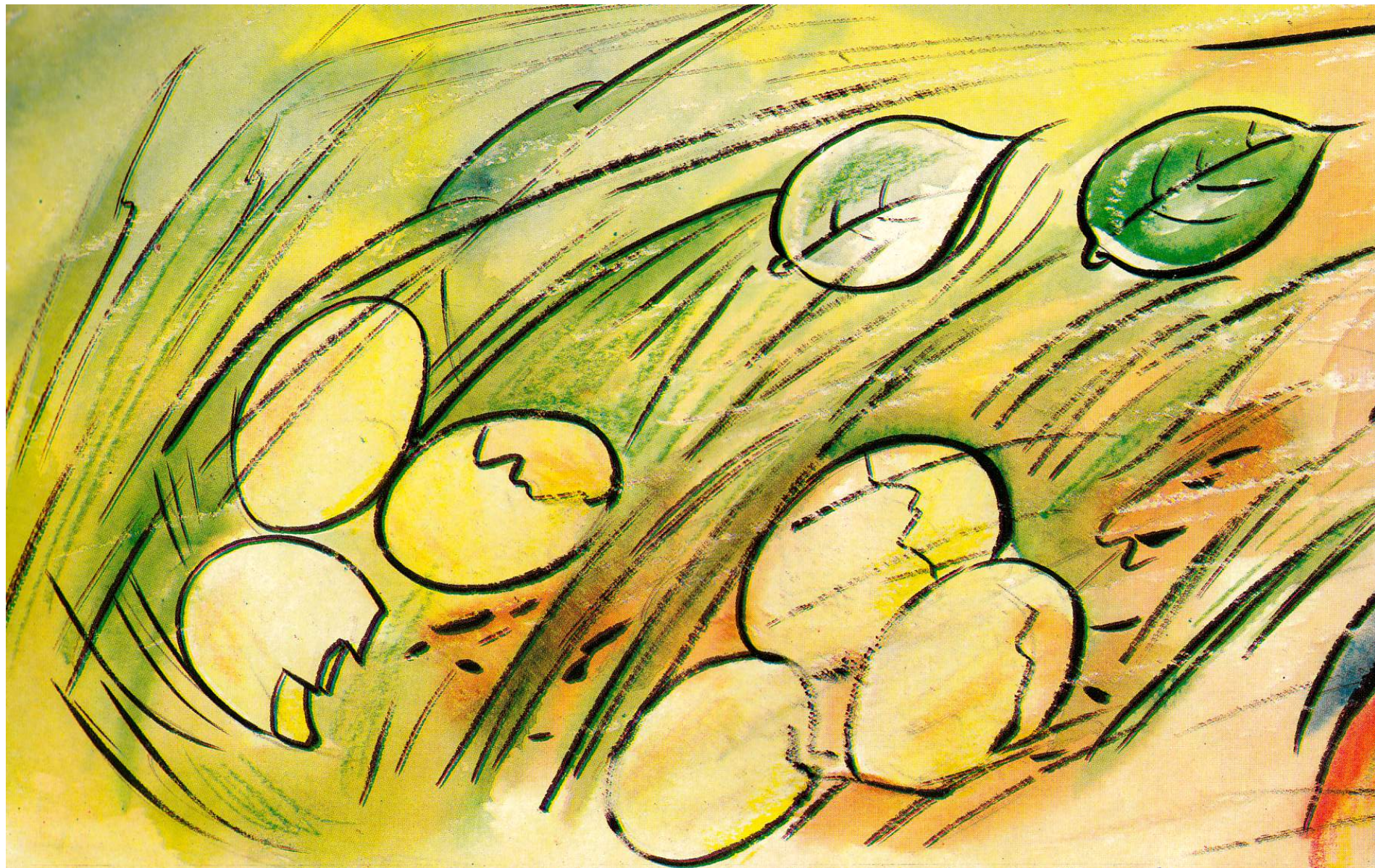
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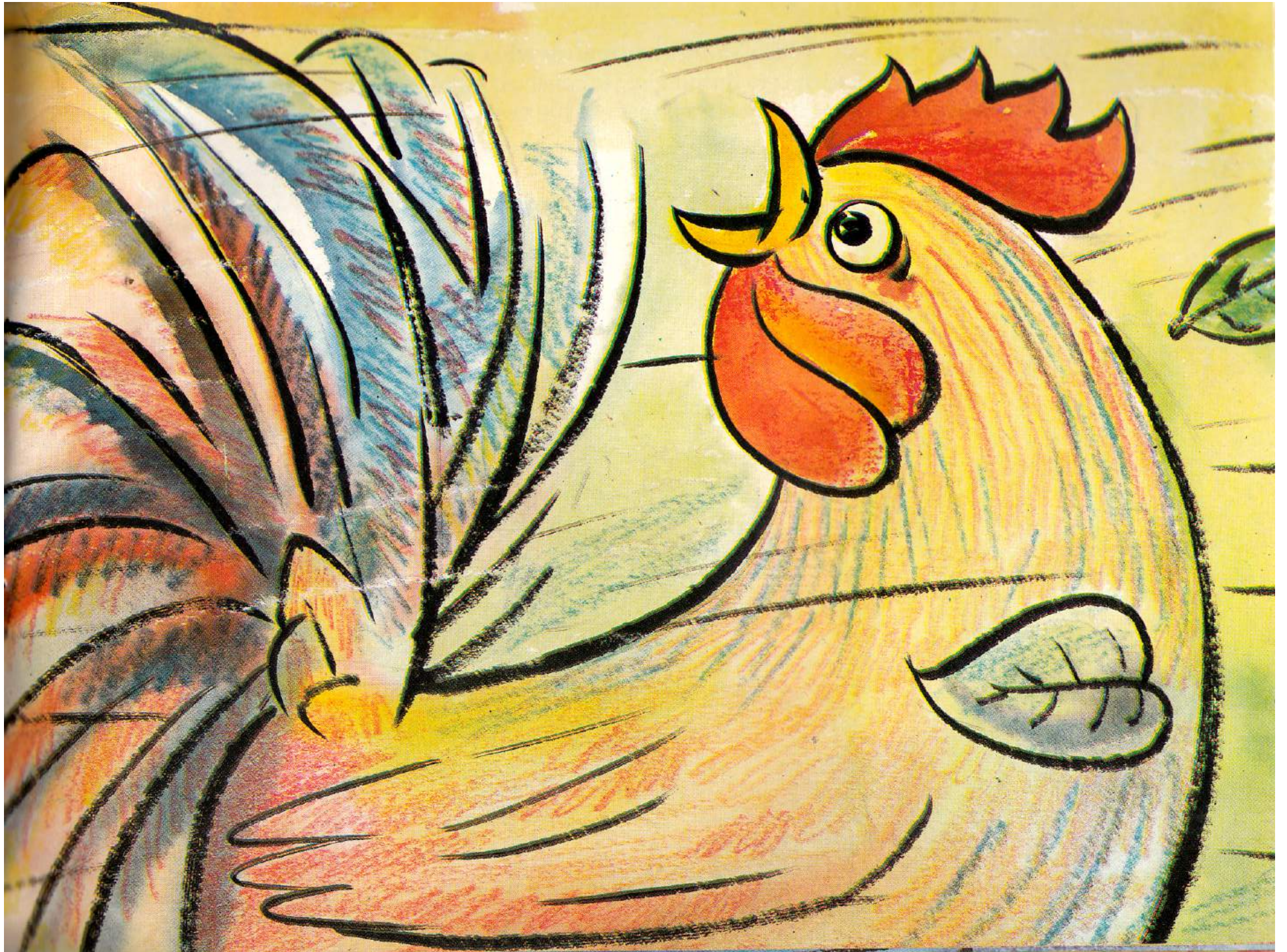




Mother hen and Father hen lived in the thick of a jungle. Once, Mother hen laid nine eggs in her nest—dum... dum... dum... dum... dum... dum... dum... dum... dum...! She sat on the eggs for them to crack while Father hen collected food for Mother hen.

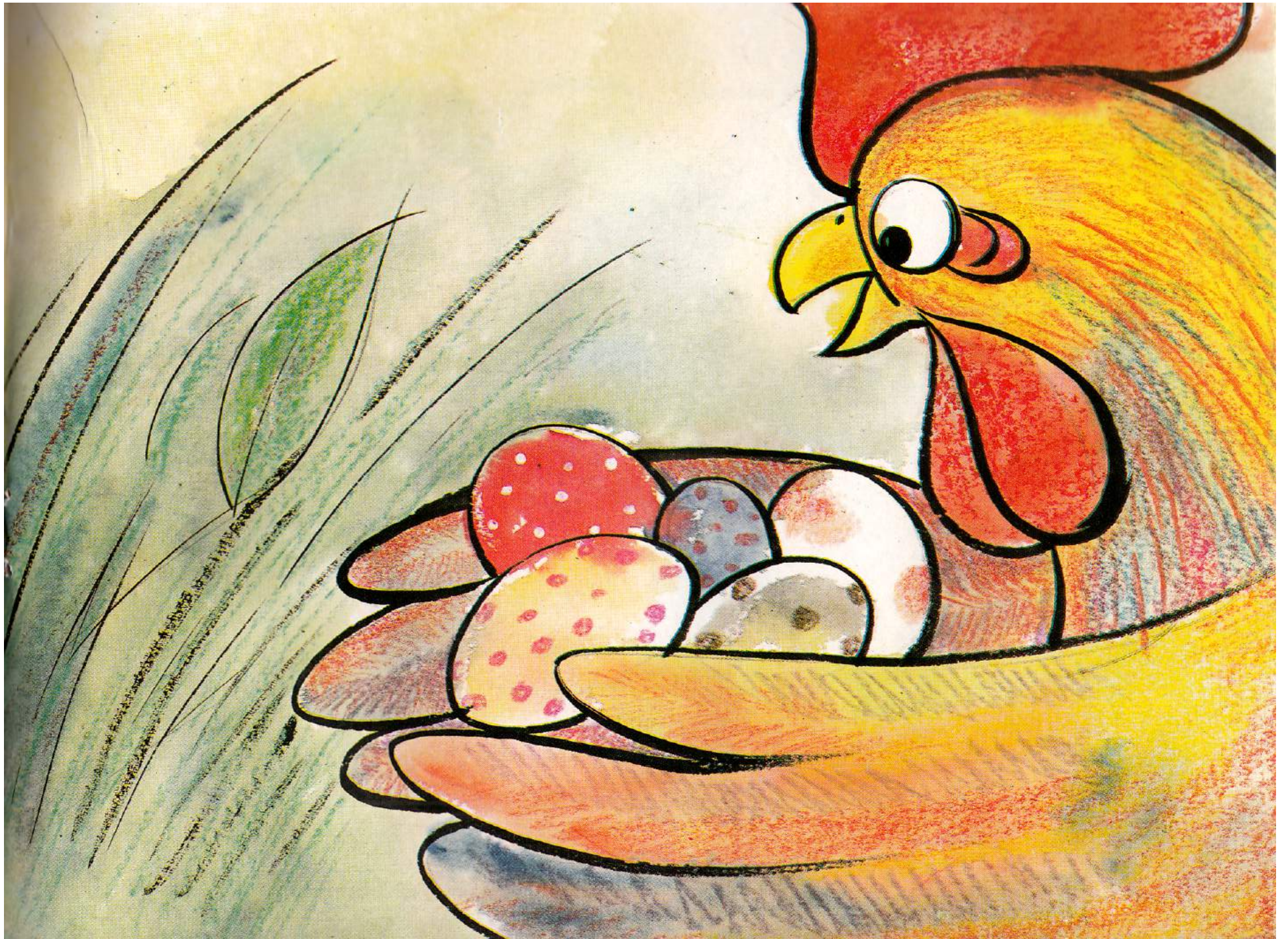


One fine day, Mother hen told Father hen to take care of the eggs and went to the nearby pond to drink some water. Just then, a strong gust of wind blew—shoo... shoo... shoo...! And the nest was broken! Eight of the nine eggs rolled down and crackled. Only one egg remained.



Father hen became sad. 'When Mother hen returns what will I say?' He thought. Suddenly an idea struck him. He went to the jungle. He collected eight eggs. Eight eggs, different in colours and shapes. He quietly placed them in the nest!

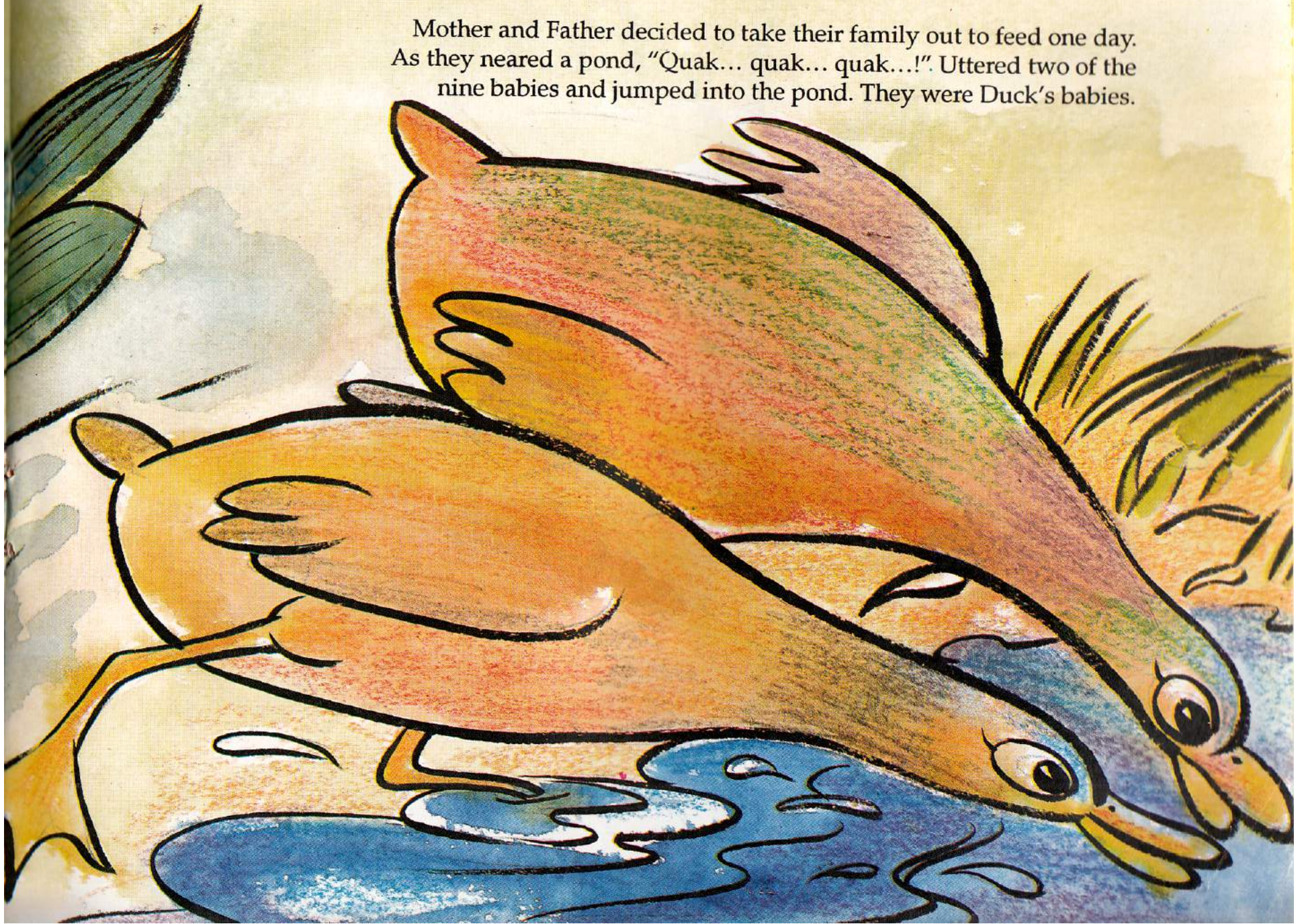


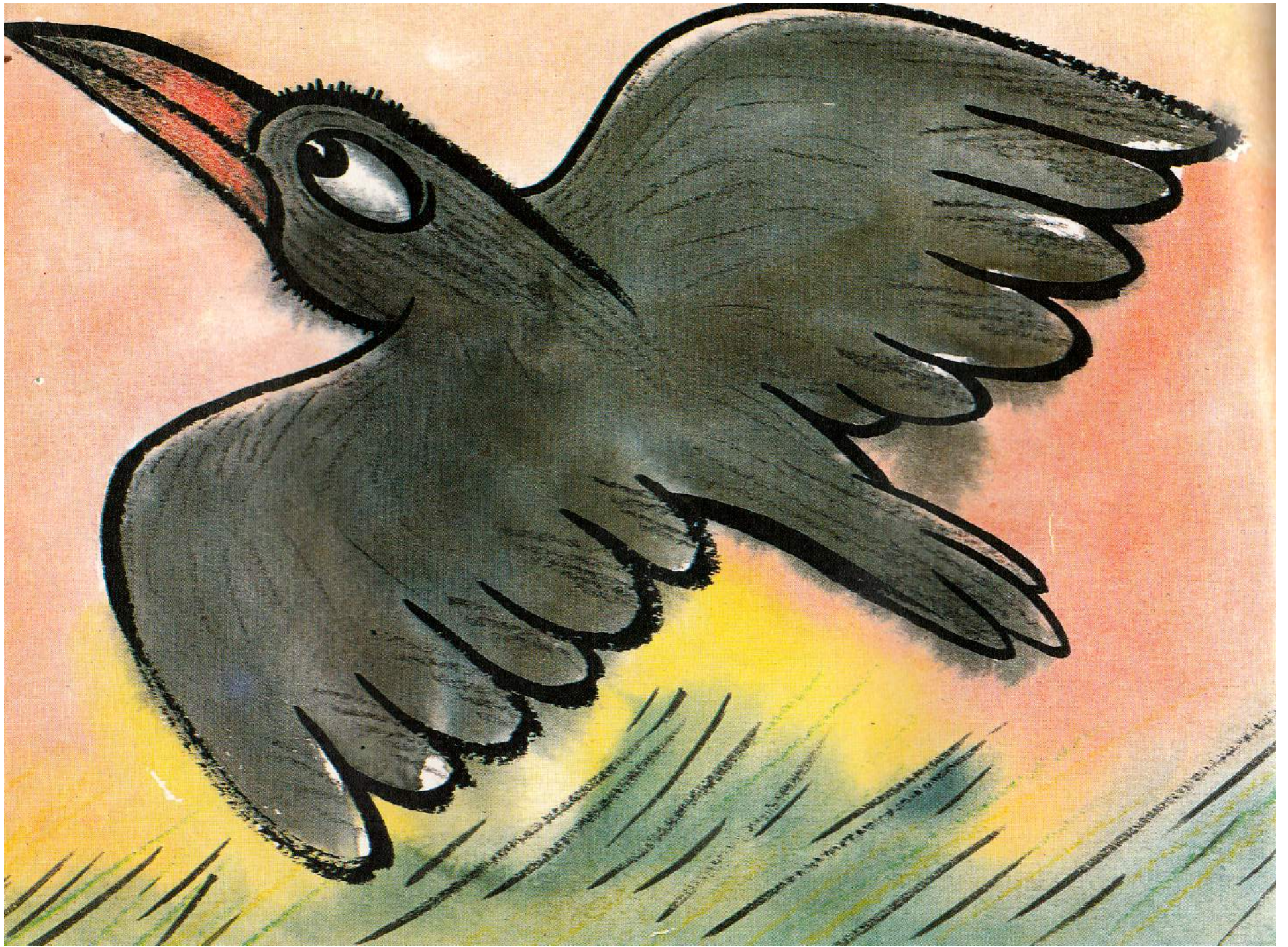




Days passed by. Then, babies began to emerge from the eggs. Each one different in size and appearance! Their voices also sounded different—quak... quak, quak... quak, kaw... kaw, trrr... trrr, gutter... goon, kri... kri, heeaw... heeaw, uunn... uunn, chi... chi...!

Mother and Father decided to take their family out to feed one day. As they neared a pond, "Quak... quak... quak...!" Uttered two of the nine babies and jumped into the pond. They were Duck's babies.

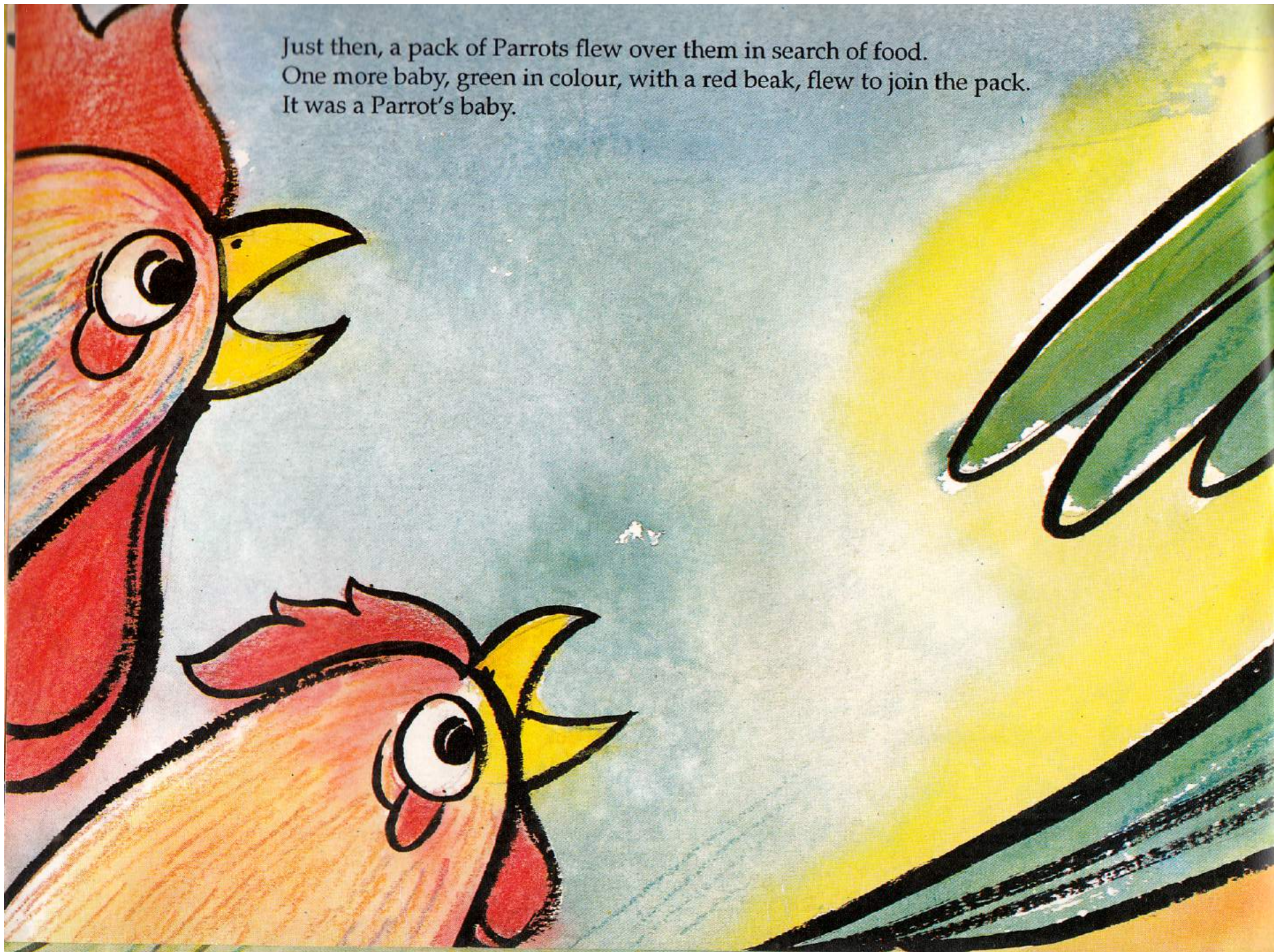




Seeing this, some Crows began to crow.
Another black baby with a long pointed beak flew away.
It was a Crow's baby.



Just then, a pack of Parrots flew over them in search of food.
One more baby, green in colour, with a red beak, flew to join the pack.
It was a Parrot's baby.





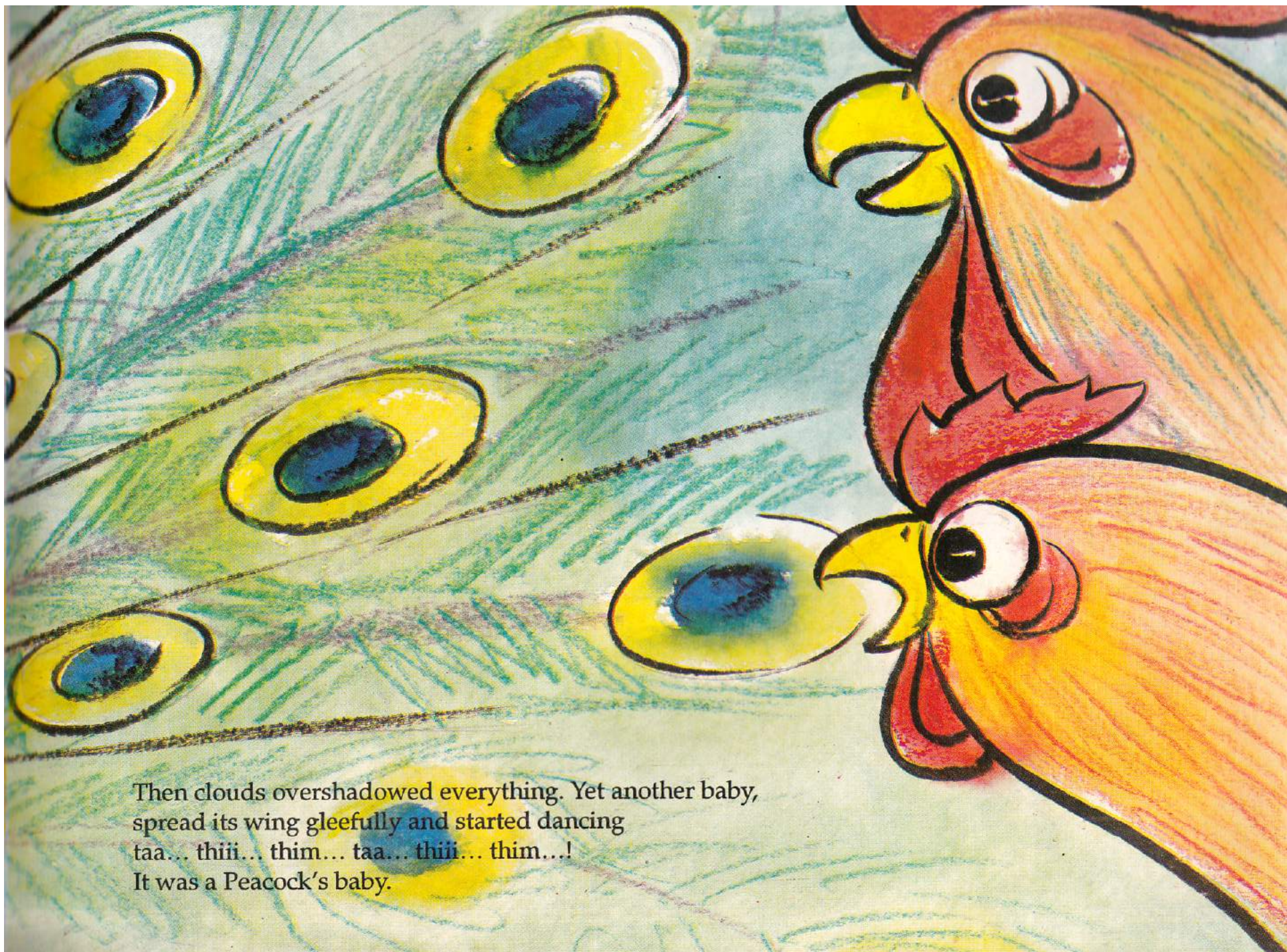


In front of them was a big tree, with a flock of Pigeons sitting idly.
Another baby let out a gutter... goon... sound and headed in that direction.
It was a Pigeon's baby.



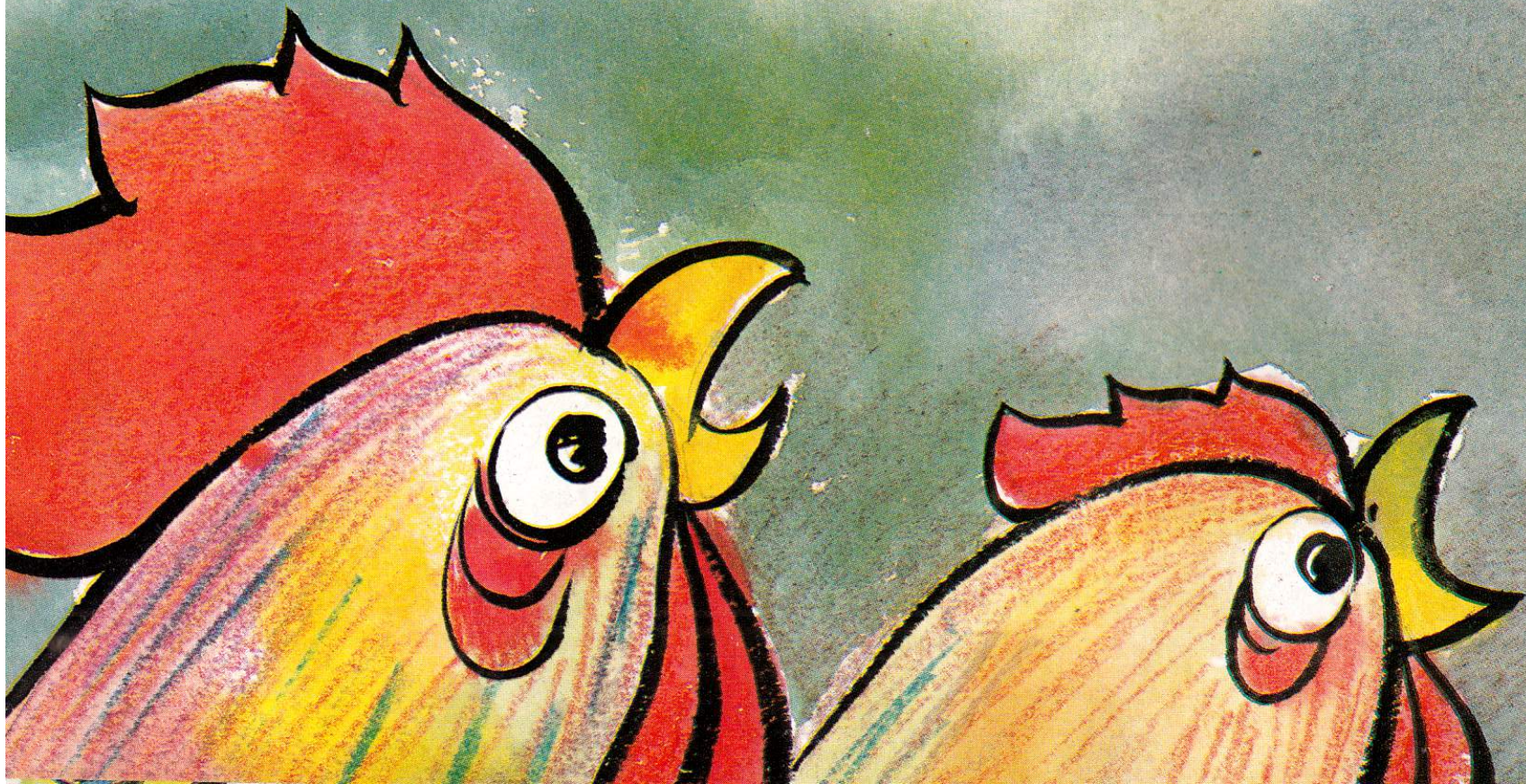
As Mother and Father moved further, some King Fishers could be seen swimming on the other end of the pond. "Flep...flep!" The blue bird with a long beak yelped and ducked into the pond. Just like the other birds. It was a King Fisher's baby.





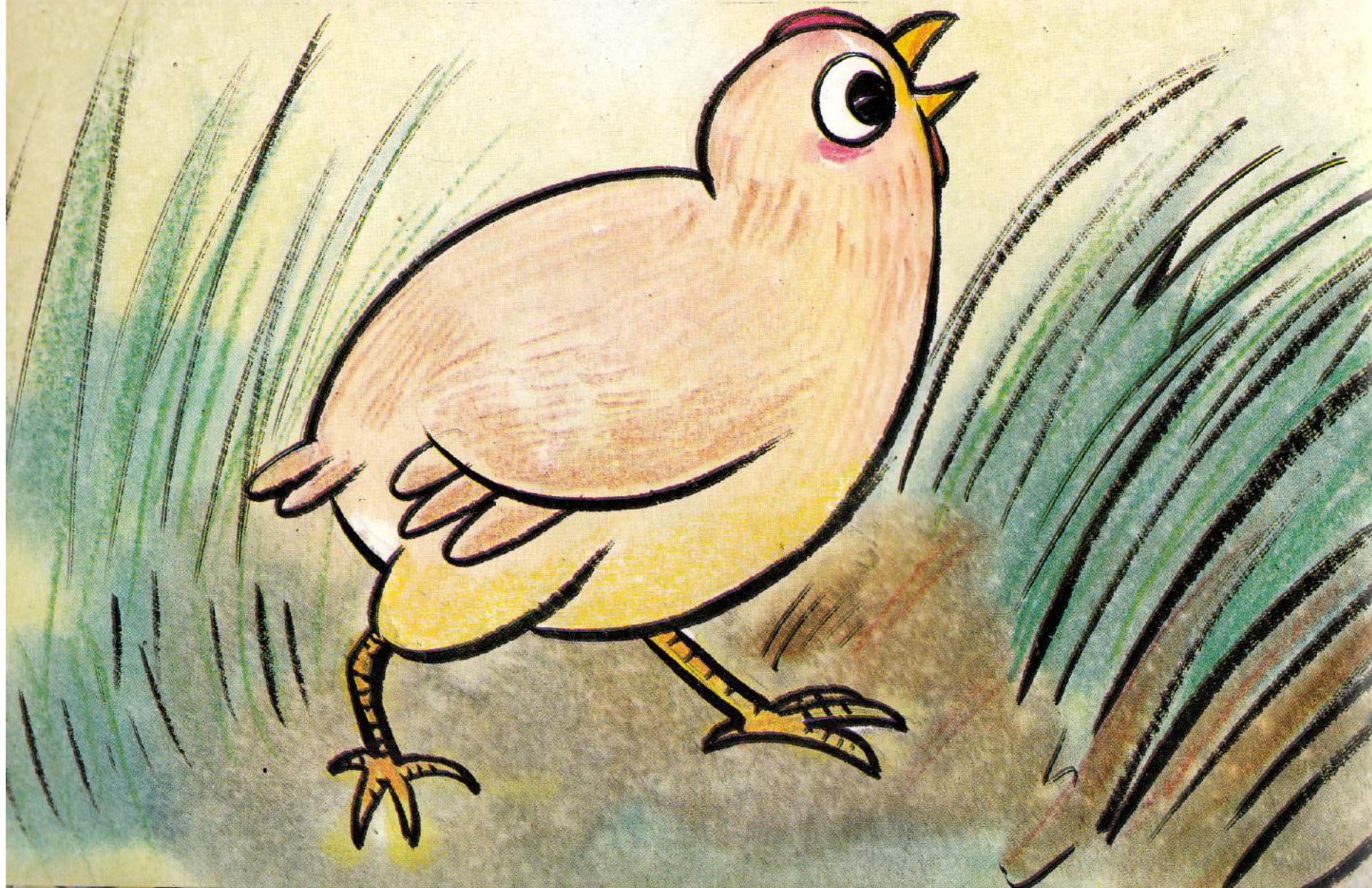
Then clouds overshadowed everything. Yet another baby,
spread its wing gleefully and started dancing
taa... thiii... thim... taa... thiii... thim...!
It was a Peacock's baby.

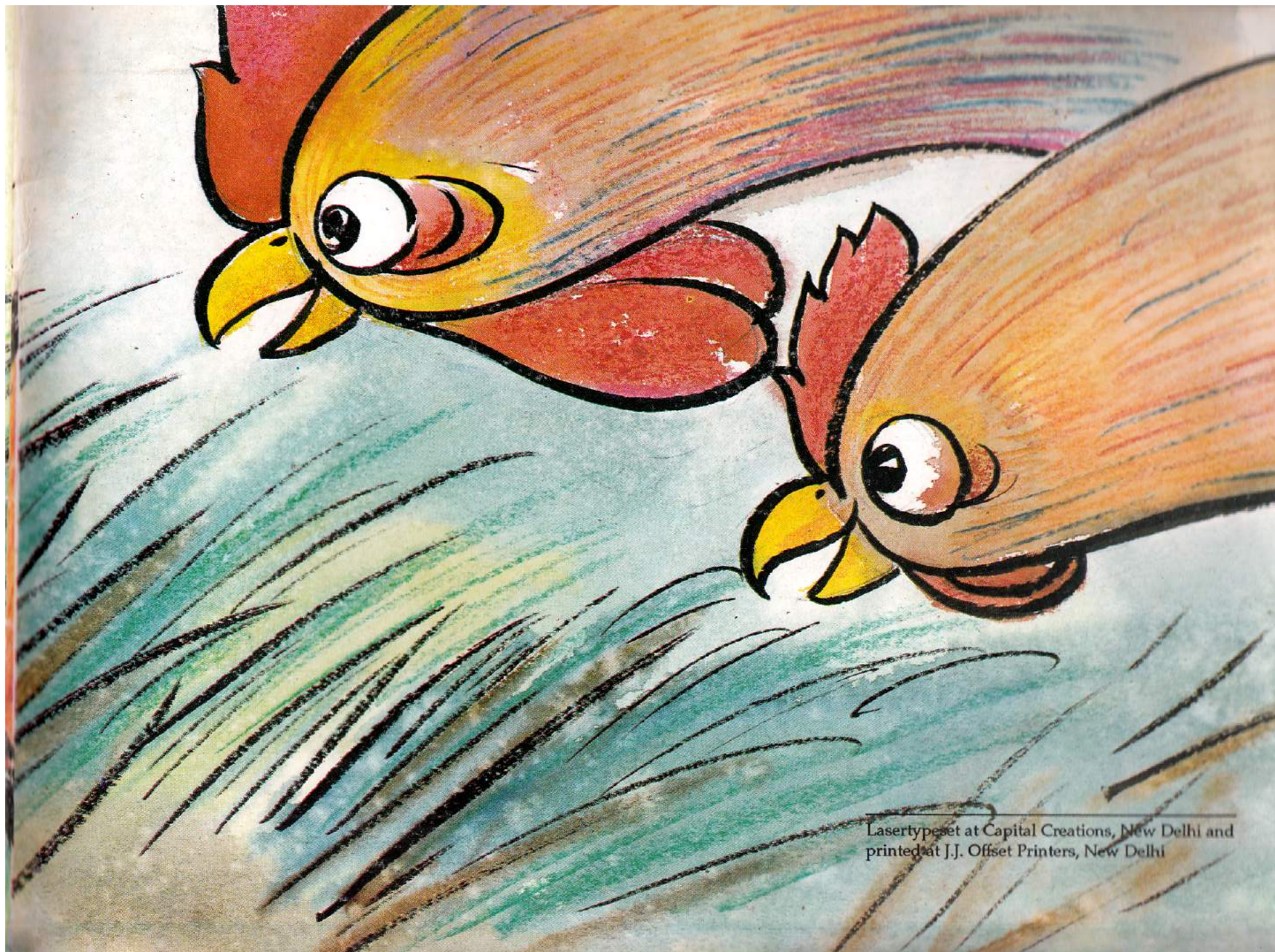
It became dark! Now the Mother and Father were left with two babies. They heard a weird sound—uuunn... uuunn... uuunn...! The eighth baby with big round eyes also flew into darkness! It was an Owl's baby.





Now, only one child remained. It was the only Chick!
The parents sighed with relief—kukrooh...kurh... kukrooh...kurh...!
Chick also answered— kukrooh...kurh... kukrooh...kurh...!





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