

The
Little Reindeer
Michael Foreman



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For my wife, Louise, who told me about the Little Reindeer.

— *The* —
Little Reindeer



Michael Foreman



THE little reindeer wondered what all the fuss was about. He could see lights blazing in the windows of the snow covered buildings. Shadowy figures rushed in and out of doorways carrying mysterious bundles.



The little reindeer picked his way through the deep snow towards the biggest building. As he got closer he could hear singing and banging, whirring and rustling.

The little reindeer peeped round the door into the warm, noisy room.





Amazing animals were streaming between rows of singing people. The little reindeer moved further into the room and suddenly found himself being carried along amongst the rest of the animals.



He tried to back away but was pushed forwards by the animals pressing from behind. Suddenly they all disappeared in a blizzard of coloured paper.

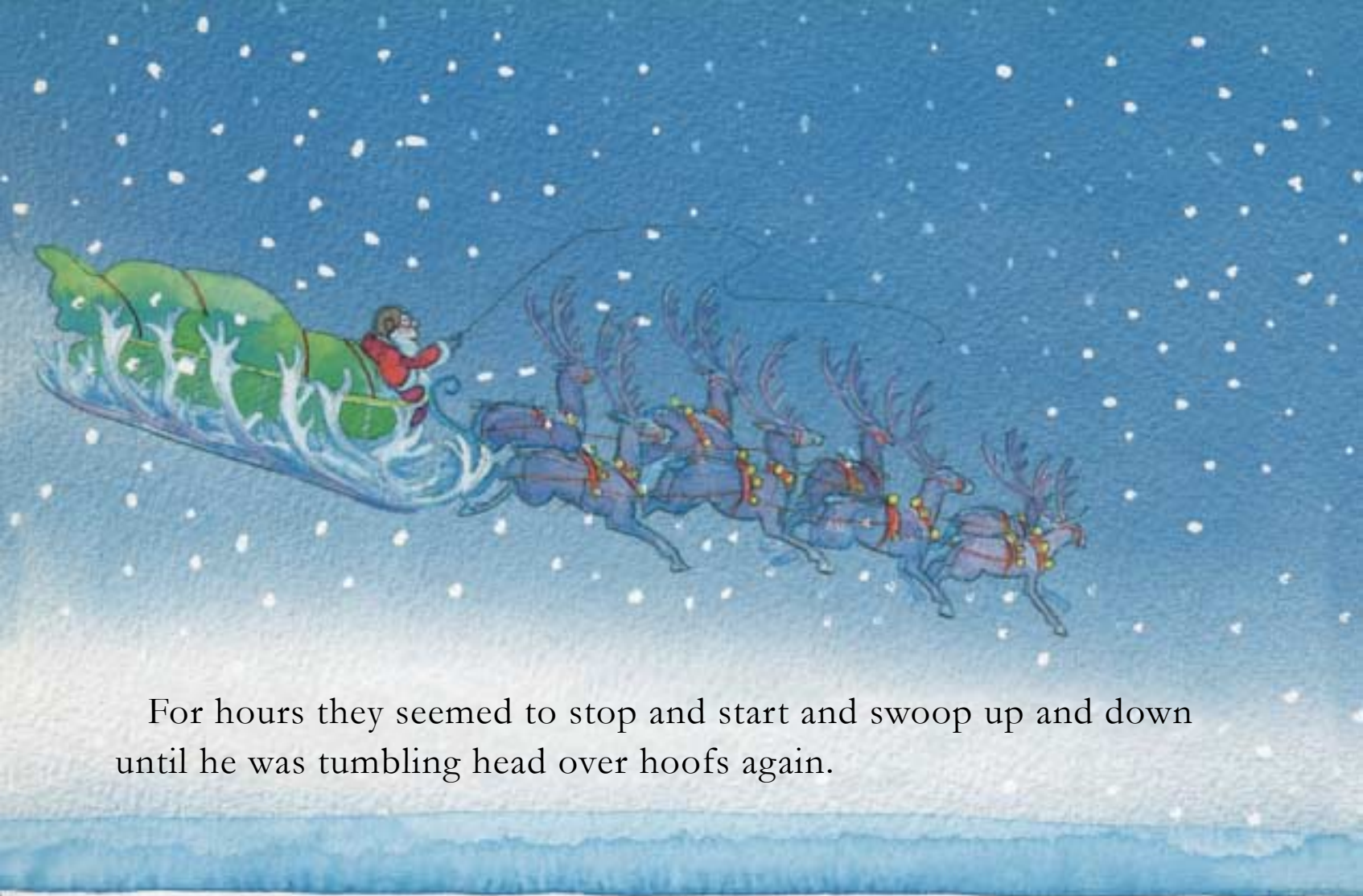


He was turned over and over in swirling colours. Then it went black and cold and things bumped down on him until he couldn't move.





He heard jingling bells and cheering and he felt a great whoosh.



For hours they seemed to stop and start and swoop up and down until he was tumbling head over hoofs again.

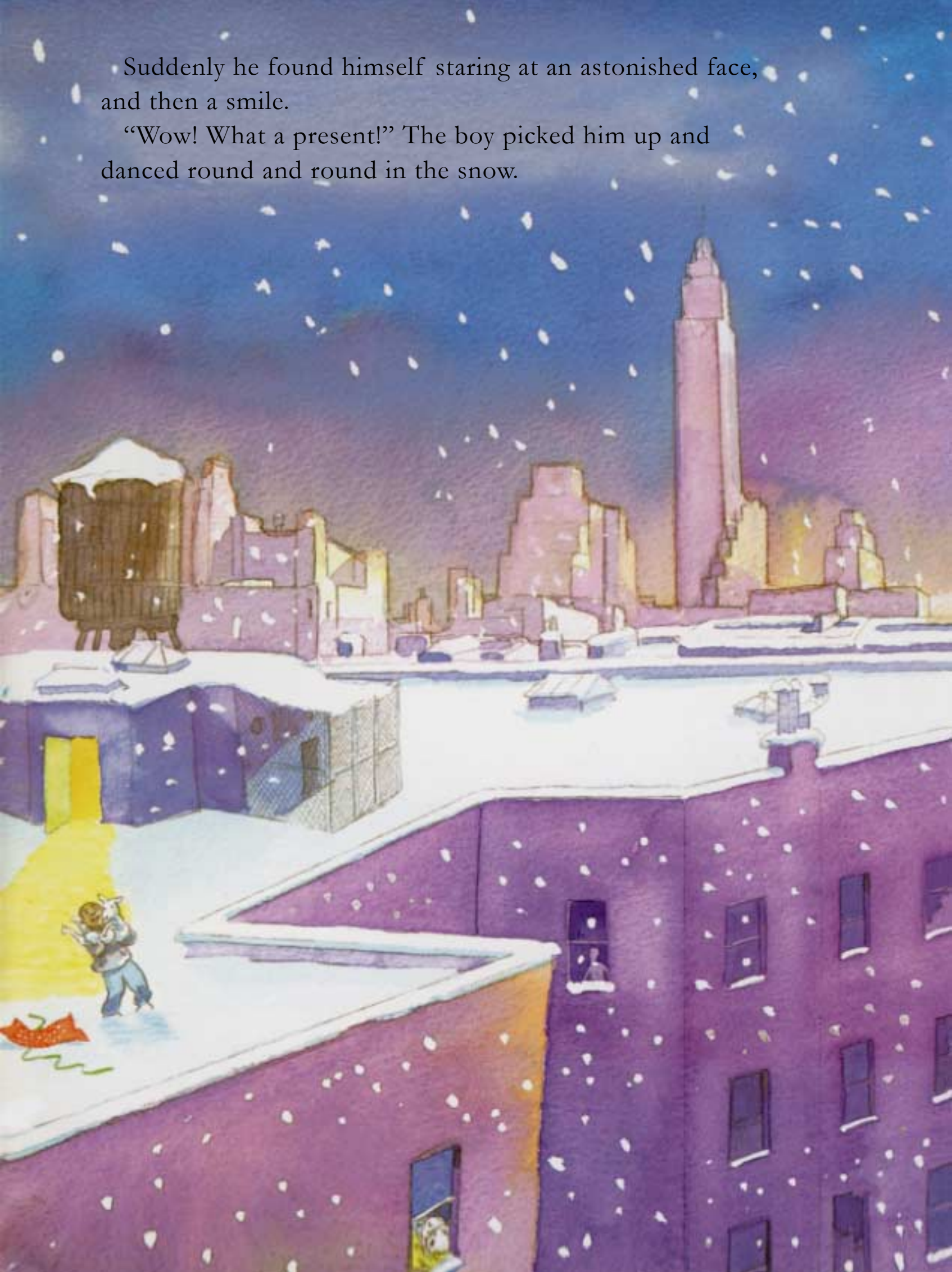




He tried to move his legs, and managed to stand up. Although he was relieved to feel the softness of snow beneath his hoofs, he still couldn't see anything. The little reindeer stood in the darkness, surrounded by strange sounds. Then he heard footsteps crunching towards him.

Suddenly he found himself staring at an astonished face,
and then a smile.

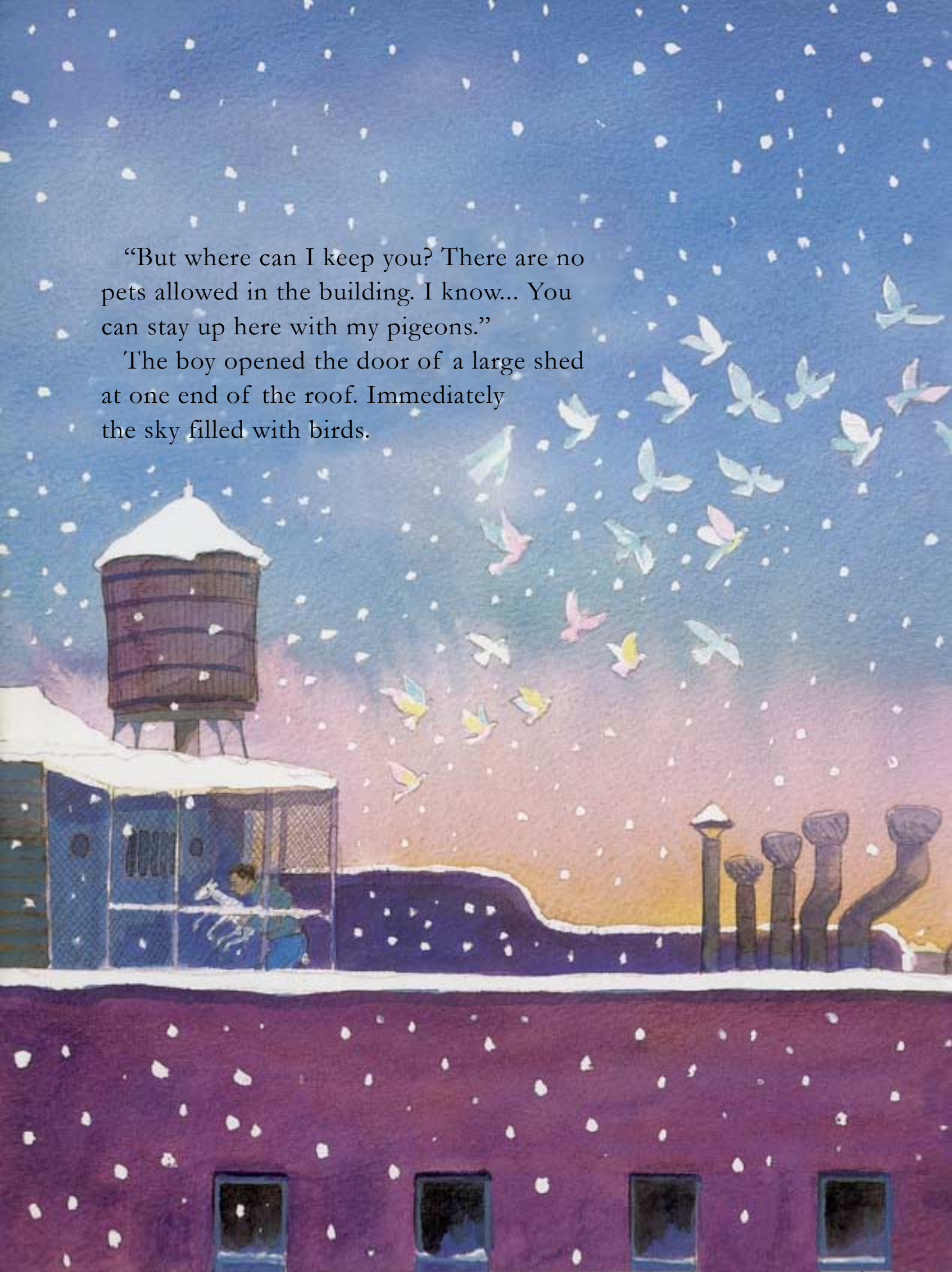
“Wow! What a present!” The boy picked him up and
danced round and round in the snow.

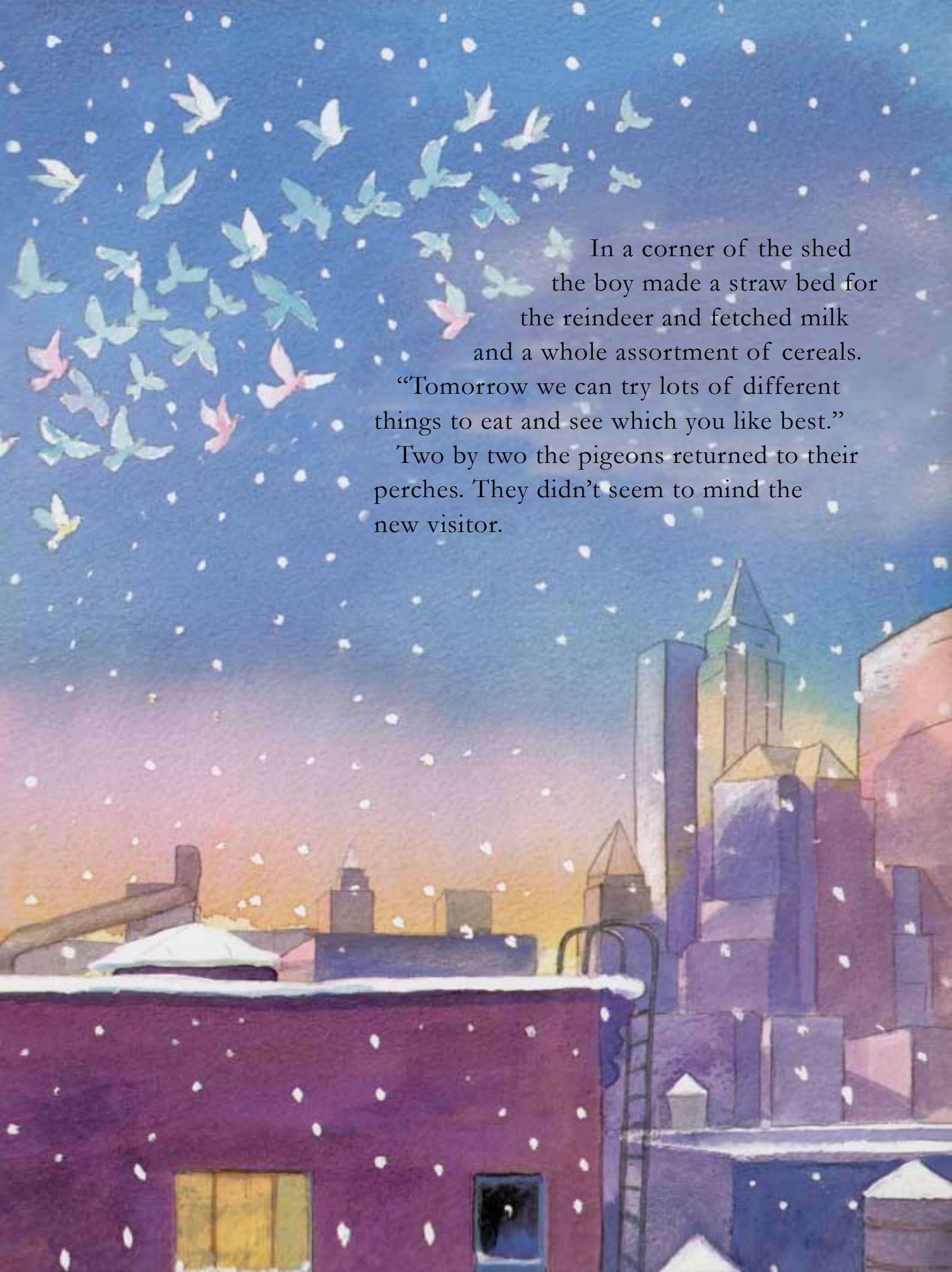




“But where can I keep you? There are no pets allowed in the building. I know... You can stay up here with my pigeons.”

The boy opened the door of a large shed at one end of the roof. Immediately the sky filled with birds.



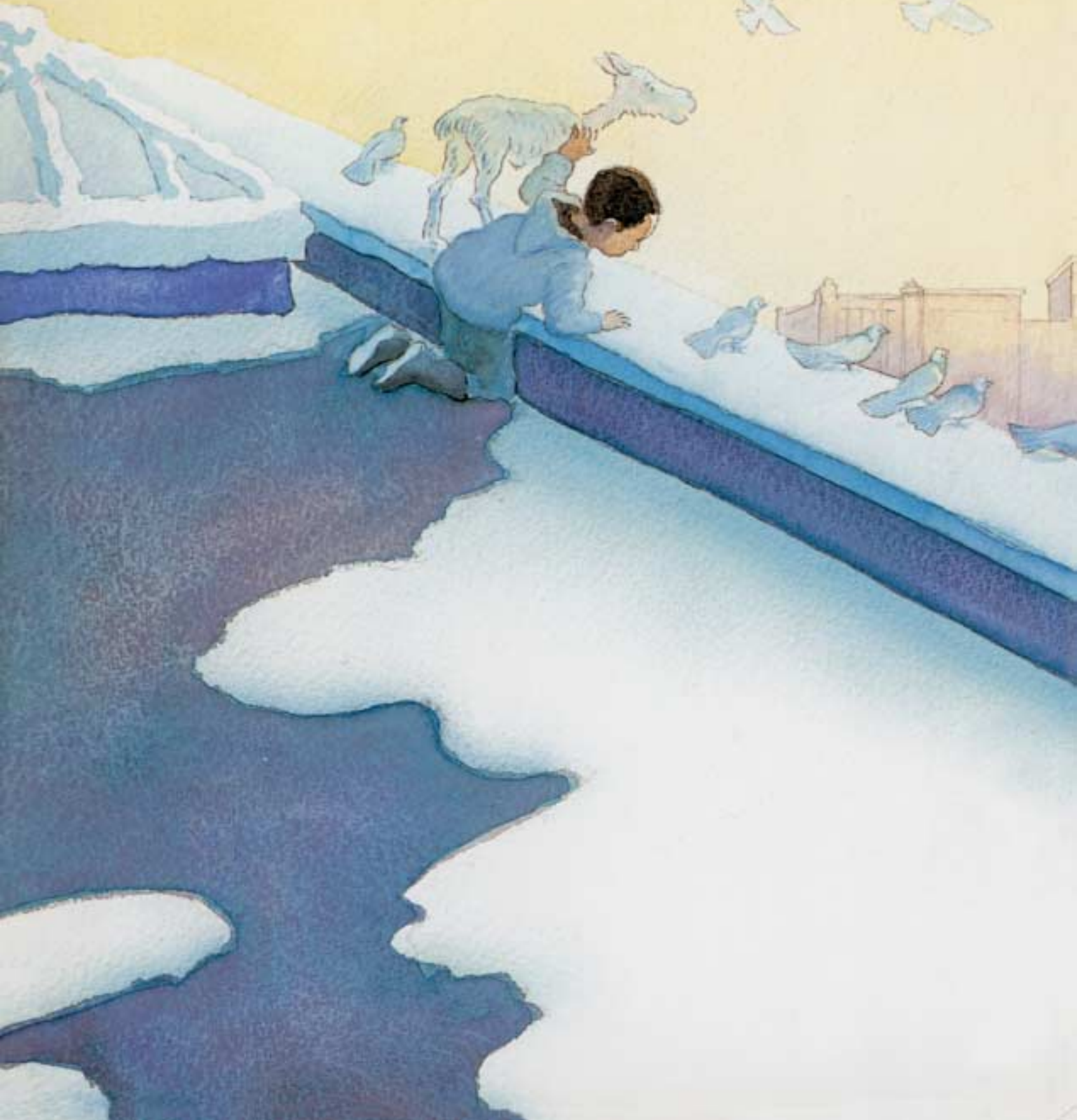
A vibrant, stylized illustration of a city skyline at night. The sky is a deep blue, transitioning to a lighter, hazy purple and orange near the horizon. Numerous small, white, snow-like particles are falling from the sky. In the upper left quadrant, a large group of colorful birds, including white, light blue, and pink ones, are flying in various directions. The city buildings are rendered in a blocky, geometric style with various colors like purple, blue, and orange. In the foreground, a dark red building with a white roof and a small window is visible. The overall scene is whimsical and dreamlike.

In a corner of the shed
the boy made a straw bed for
the reindeer and fetched milk
and a whole assortment of cereals.

“Tomorrow we can try lots of different
things to eat and see which you like best.”

Two by two the pigeons returned to their
perches. They didn't seem to mind the
new visitor.

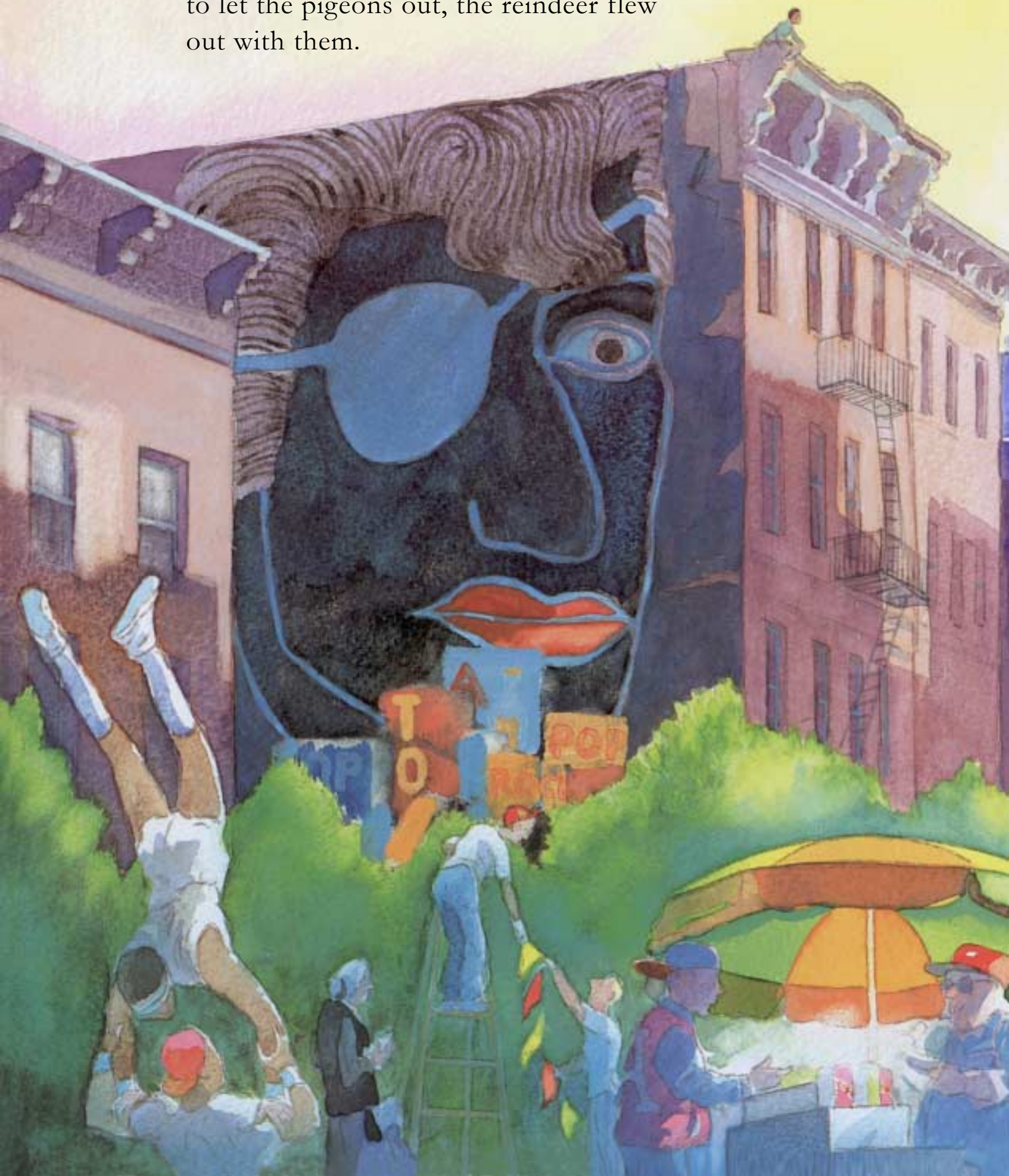
Each day the boy brought food and milk.
The reindeer liked peanut butter sandwiches
best of all. While the pigeons flew higher and
higher in the sky, the boy and the reindeer
strolled around the roof and watched the busy
city life below.





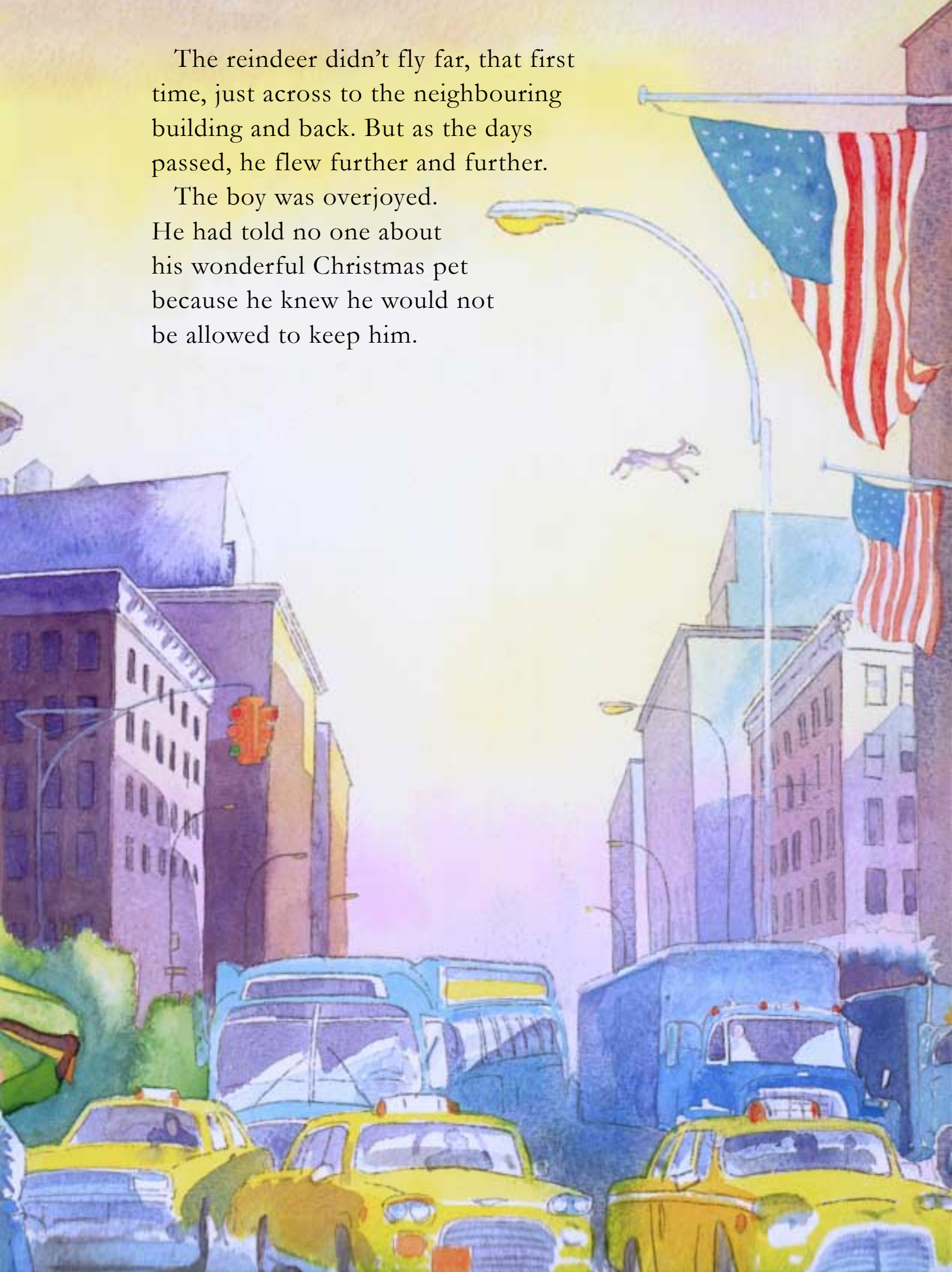
The weather gradually grew warmer and the little reindeer grew bigger.

One day when the boy opened the door to let the pigeons out, the reindeer flew out with them.



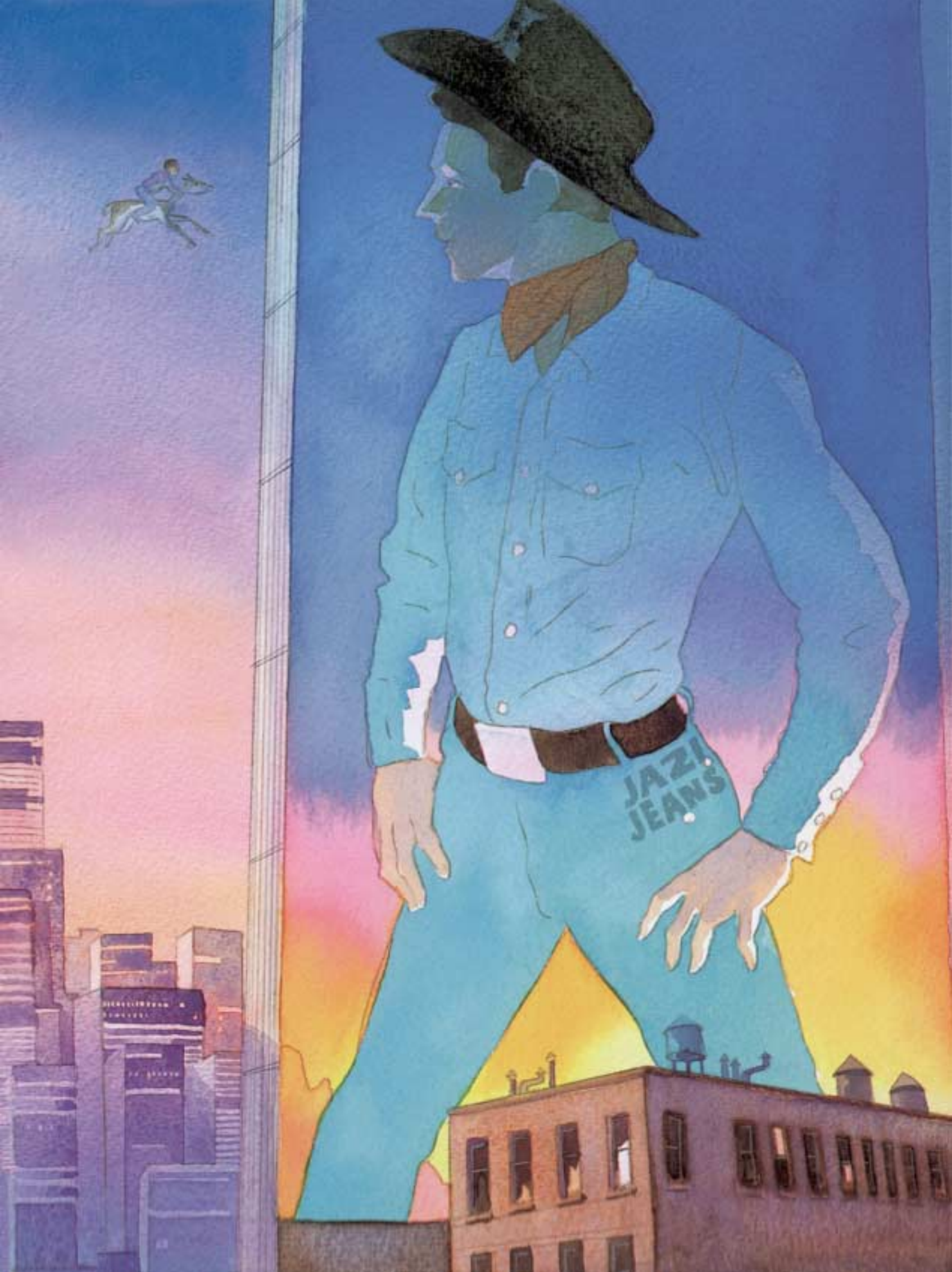
The reindeer didn't fly far, that first time, just across to the neighbouring building and back. But as the days passed, he flew further and further.

The boy was overjoyed. He had told no one about his wonderful Christmas pet because he knew he would not be allowed to keep him.



By early summer the reindeer was big enough to give the boy rides around the roof on his back. Then, one evening, they flew together over the roofs of the city.





JAZI
JEANS



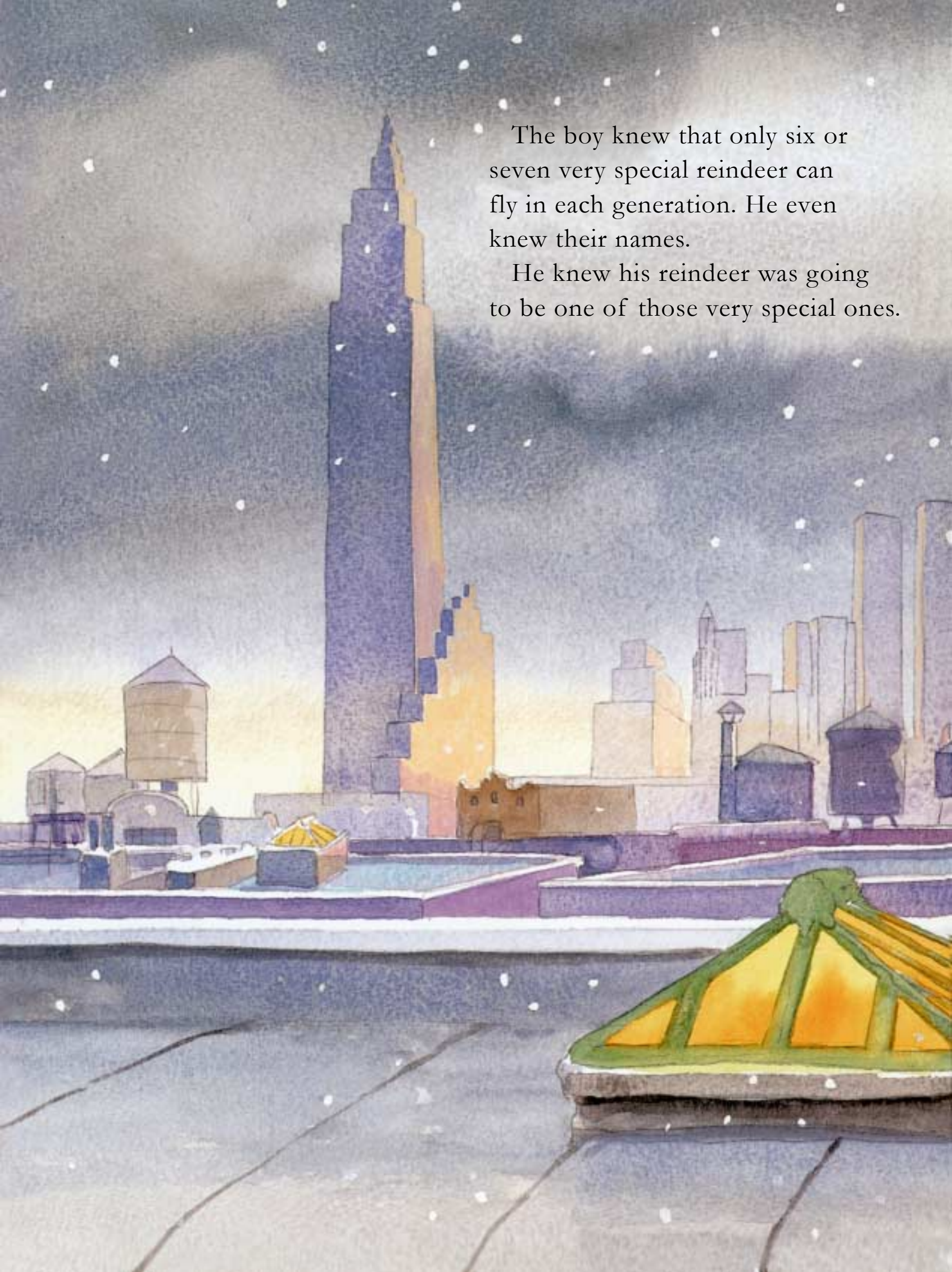
They flew together every night of the long summer
and over the golden leaves of autumn.





When the first snowflakes of winter began to fall, the boy noticed a look of sadness in the reindeer's eyes. The boy hugged him as always, but the reindeer looked up at the swiftly moving grey clouds and sighed.





The boy knew that only six or seven very special reindeer can fly in each generation. He even knew their names.

He knew his reindeer was going to be one of those very special ones.

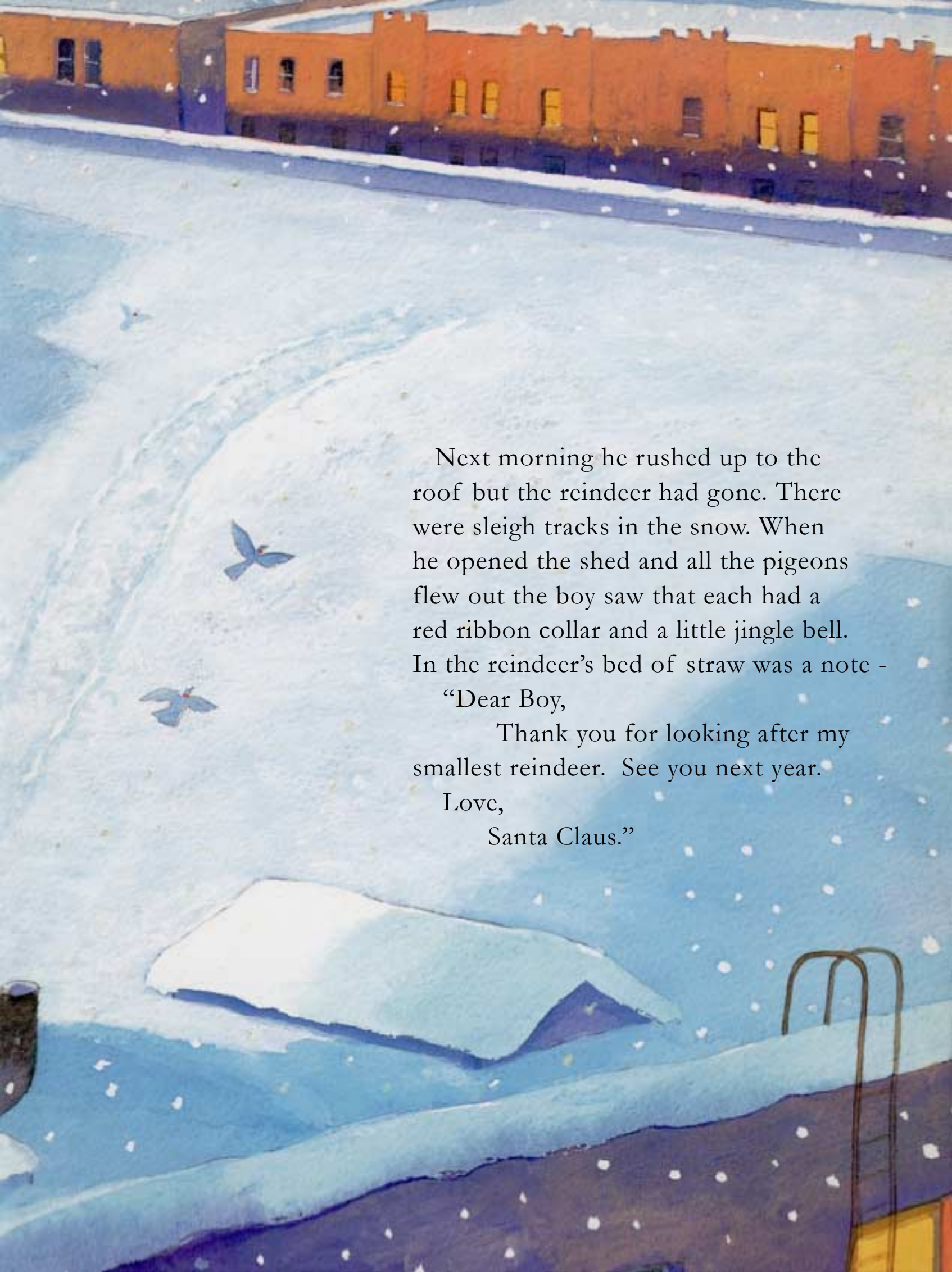
On Christmas Eve the boy gave the reindeer his favourite dinner and the pigeons sang. They were still singing when he kissed the reindeer goodnight.



From his bed, he thought he heard jingling bells,
but he was probably dreaming by then.





A snowy rooftop scene with a brick building in the background and pigeons flying in the sky. The sky is a deep blue with white snowflakes falling. The roof is covered in a thick layer of snow, with some tracks visible. A brick building with several windows is visible in the background. Three pigeons are flying in the sky, one in the foreground and two further back. The overall scene is a winter wonderland.

Next morning he rushed up to the roof but the reindeer had gone. There were sleigh tracks in the snow. When he opened the shed and all the pigeons flew out the boy saw that each had a red ribbon collar and a little jingle bell. In the reindeer's bed of straw was a note -

“Dear Boy,

Thank you for looking after my smallest reindeer. See you next year.

Love,

Santa Claus.”



Through the next spring, summer and autumn the boy heard the tinkling and jingling of bells each time the pigeons flew. And on Christmas Eve, when he heard the real jingle bells coming down from the snowy sky, he was waiting on the roof with milk and peanut butter sandwiches.