

THE MONEY TREE

SARAH STEWART

Illustrations by DAVID SMALL



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FARRAR · STRAUS · GIROUX / *New York*





For Edwin and Mary

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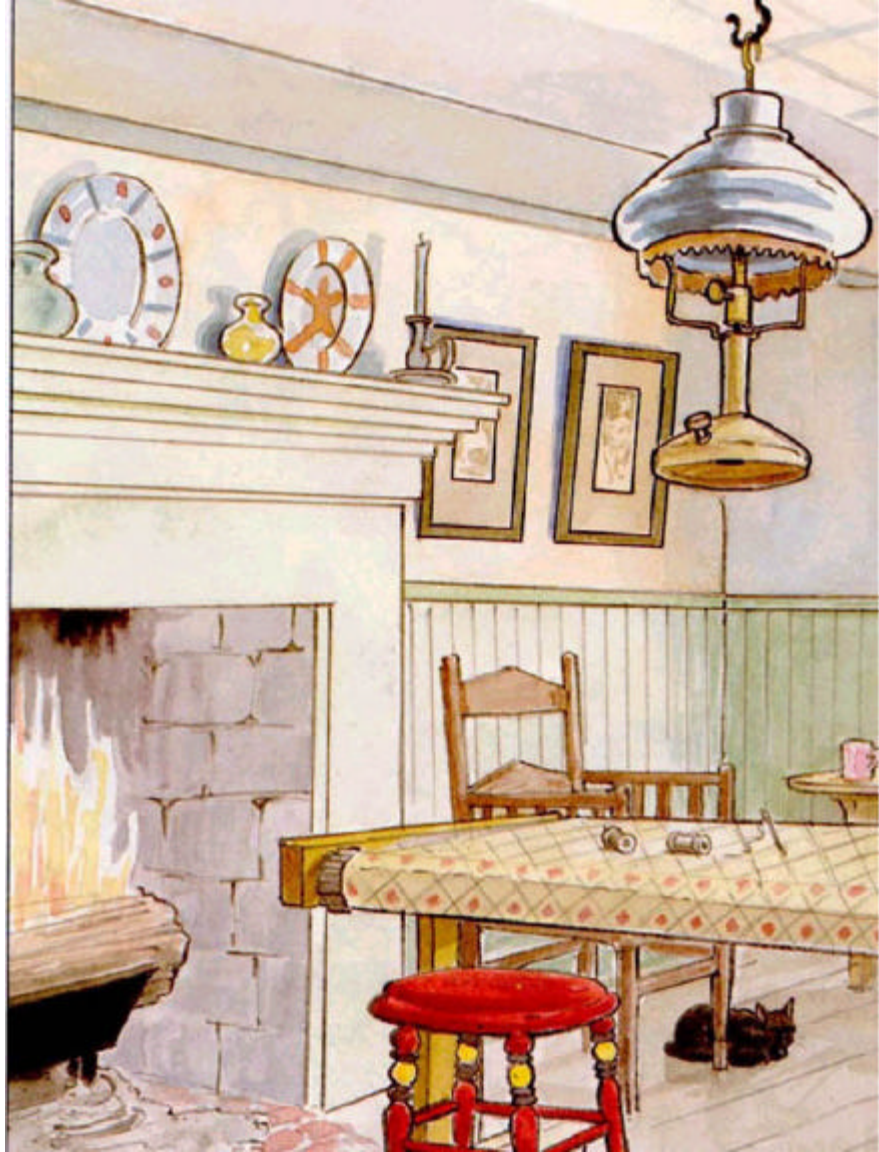
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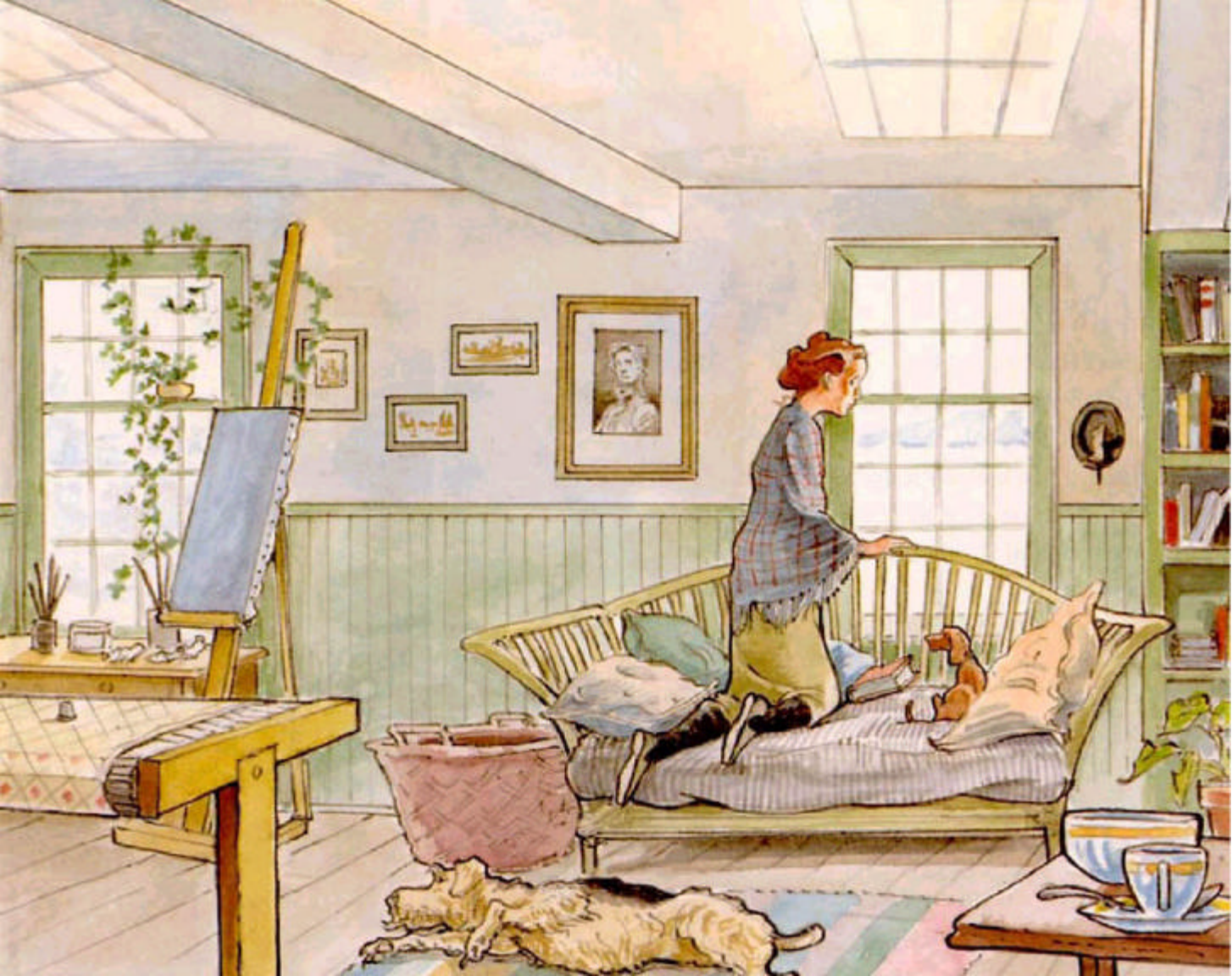
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In January, when Miss McGillicuddy was making a quilt in front of the fire, she noticed an unusual shape outside her living-room window.





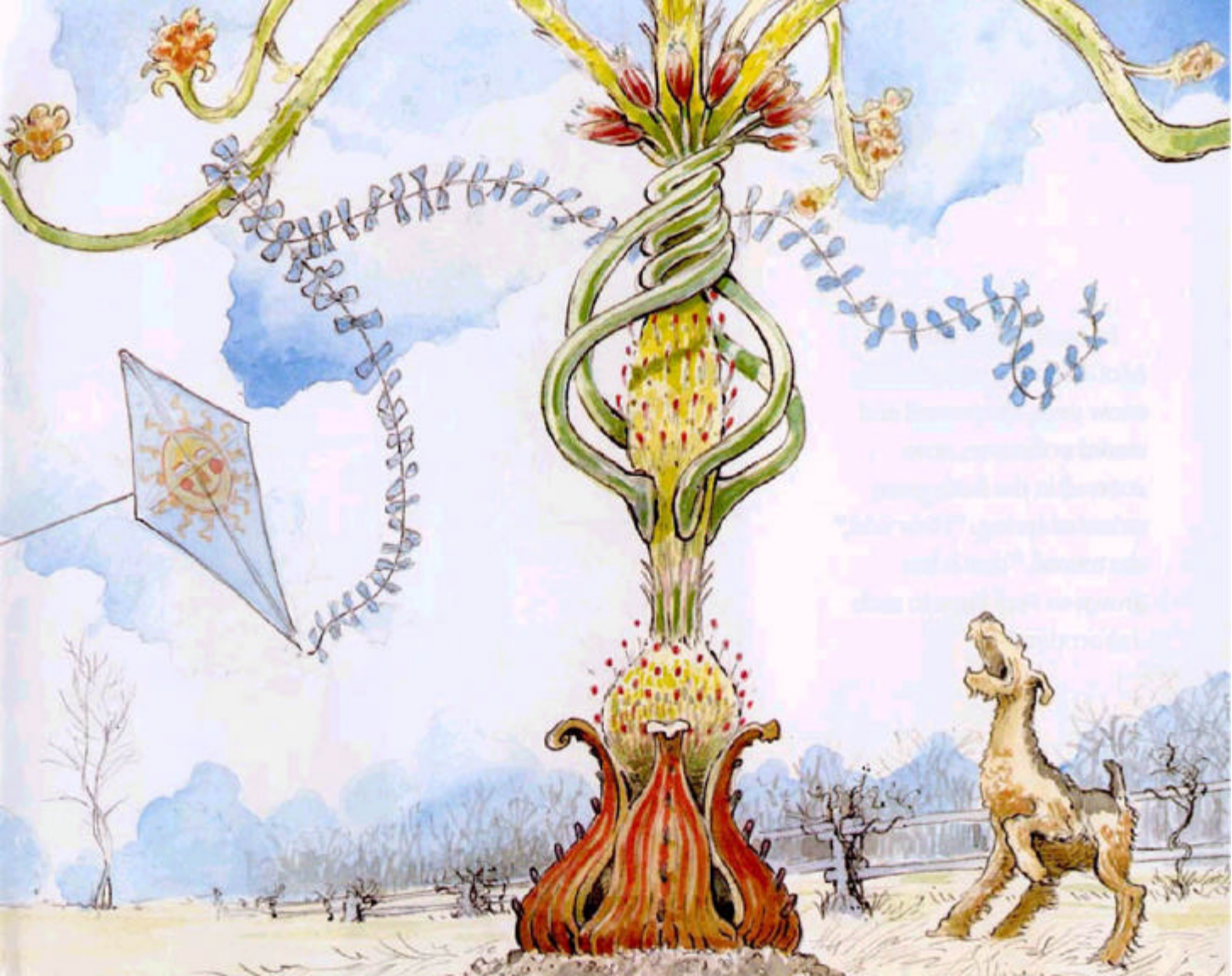
In February, as Miss McGillicuddy was looking up from her book, she realized that the new shape was a small tree. "A gift from the birds," she said to herself.





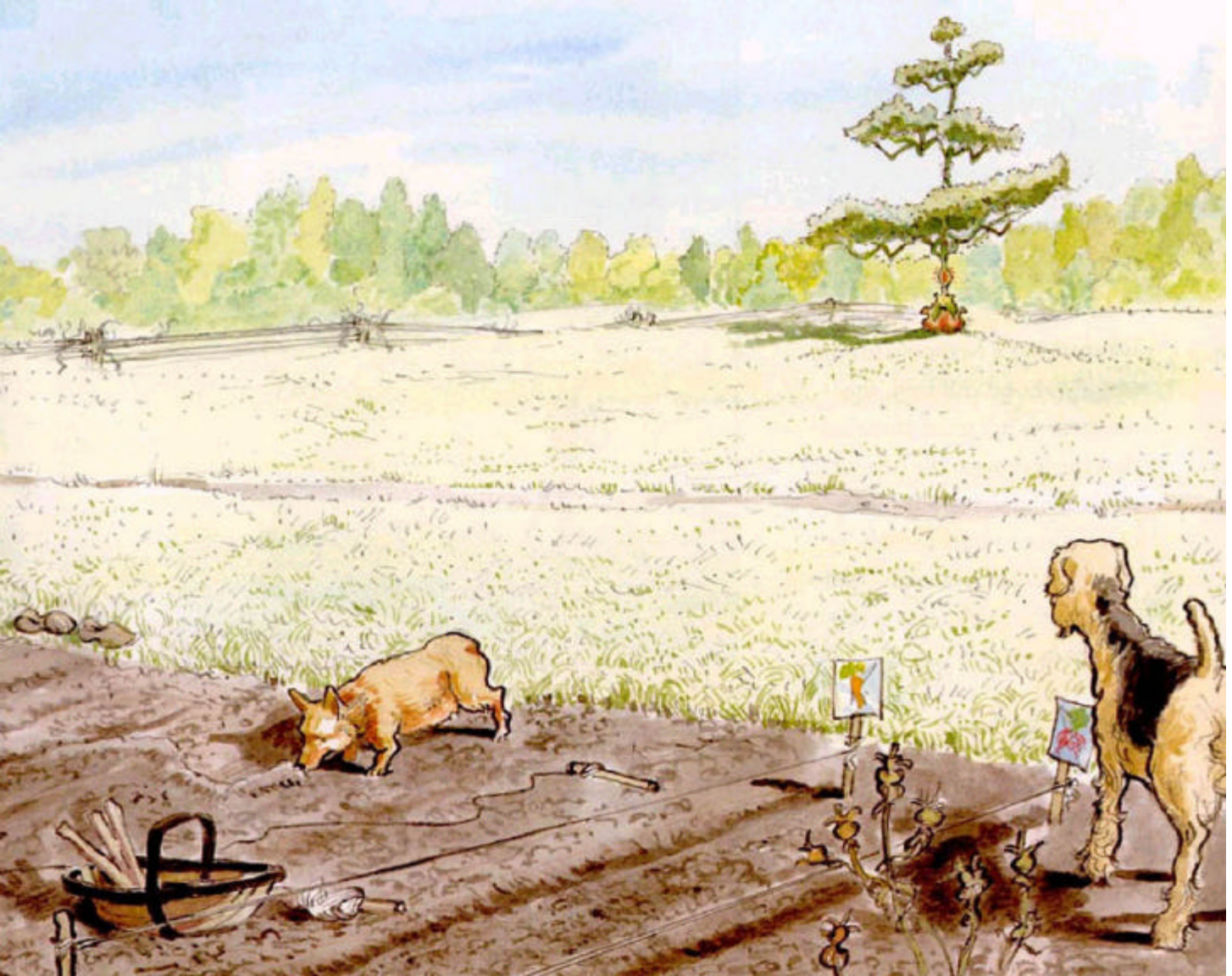
In March, while Miss McGillicuddy was flying her favorite kite, its tail got caught in a limb of the new tree. "What a strange shape," she thought as she tugged.





In April, when Miss McGillicuddy was planting snow peas, she paused and stared at the tree, now covered in the fresh green colors of spring. "How odd," she mused, "that it has grown so very large in such a short time."



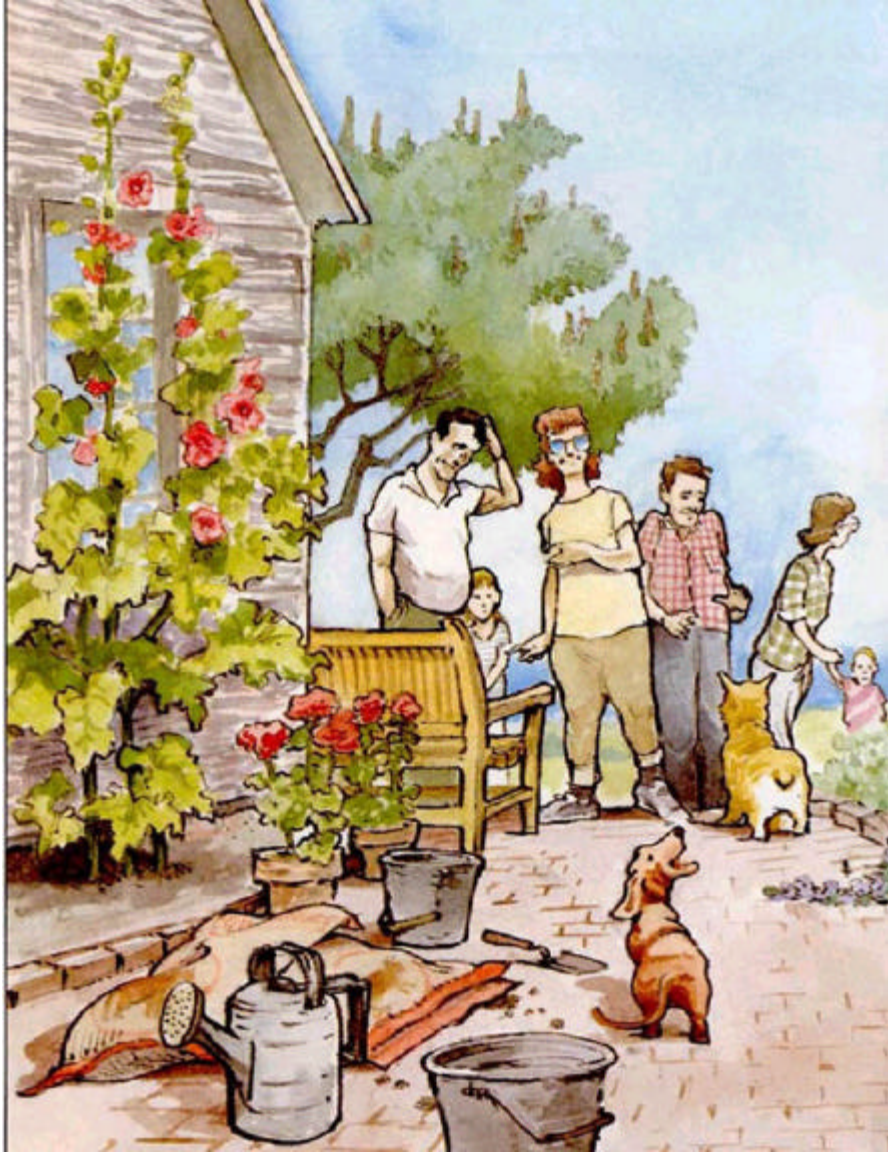


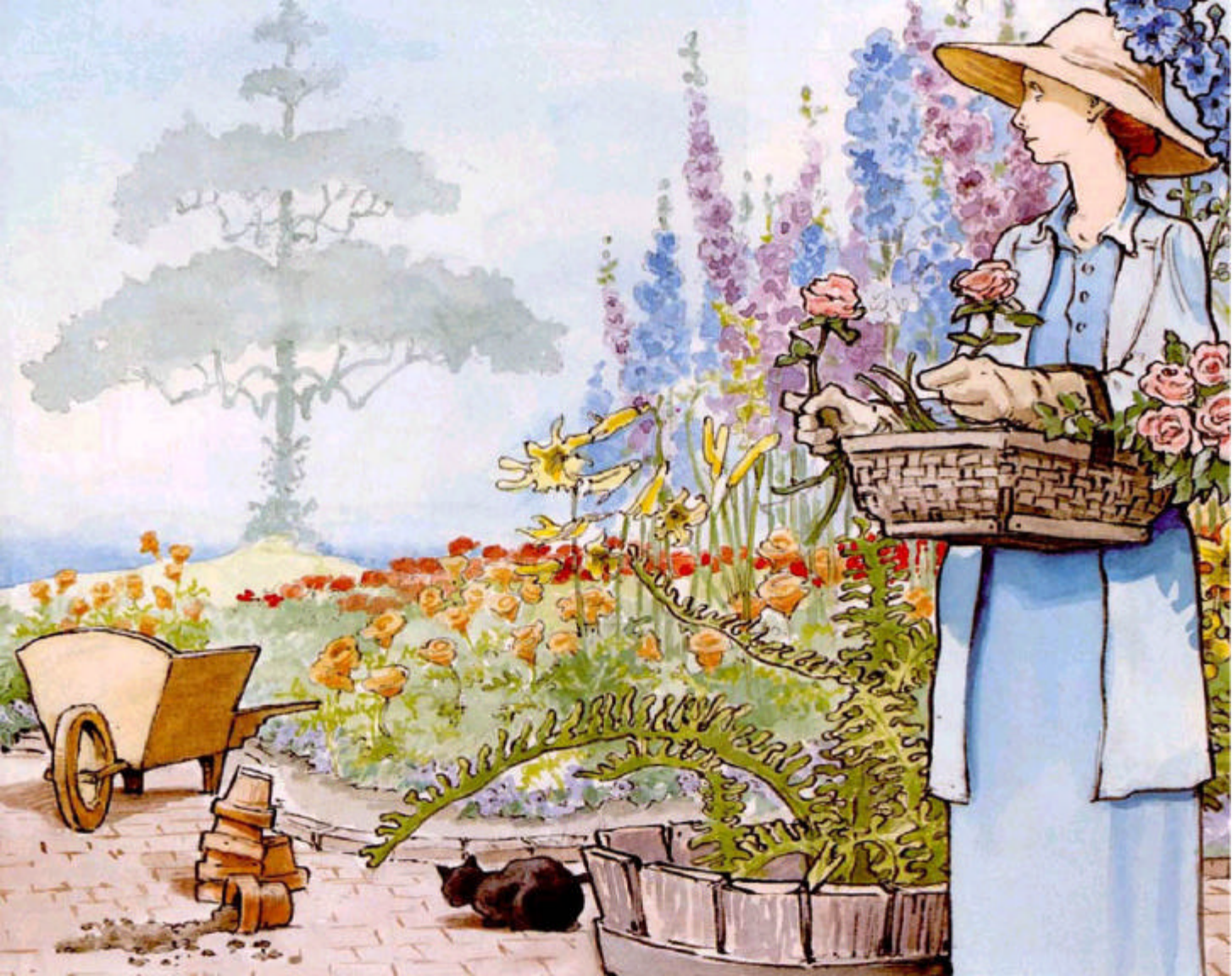
In May, as Miss McGillicuddy was making a Maypole for the neighborhood children, she realized, to her great surprise, that the leaves on the tree were not leaf-shaped at all! Being careful not to hurt the tender branches, she gave each child some of the tree's crisp green foliage as a party favor.





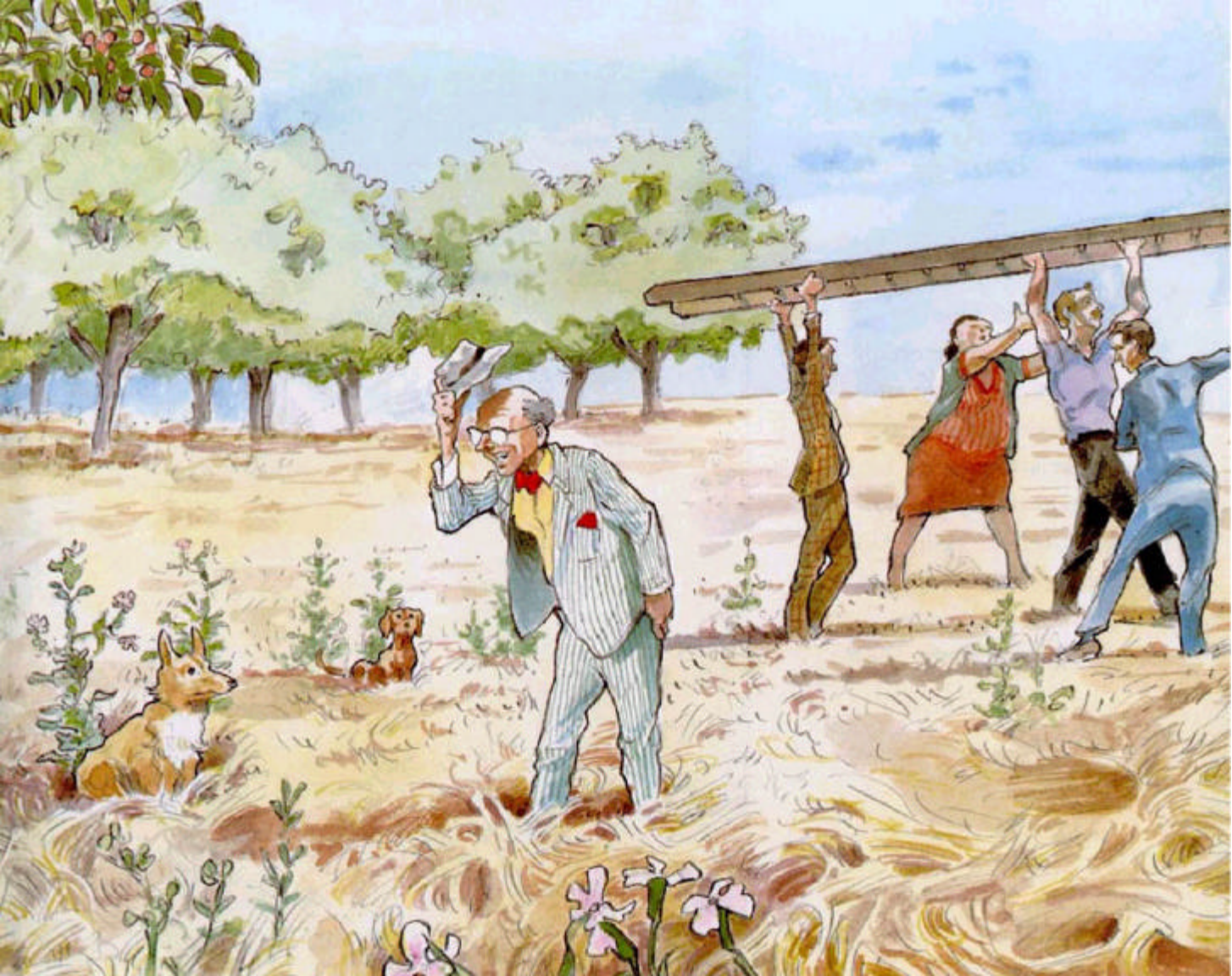
In June, while Miss McGillicuddy was gathering a bouquet of roses, parents of the neighborhood children appeared in the yard. When they said they had come to see the strange tree, she invited them to take home a few cuttings.



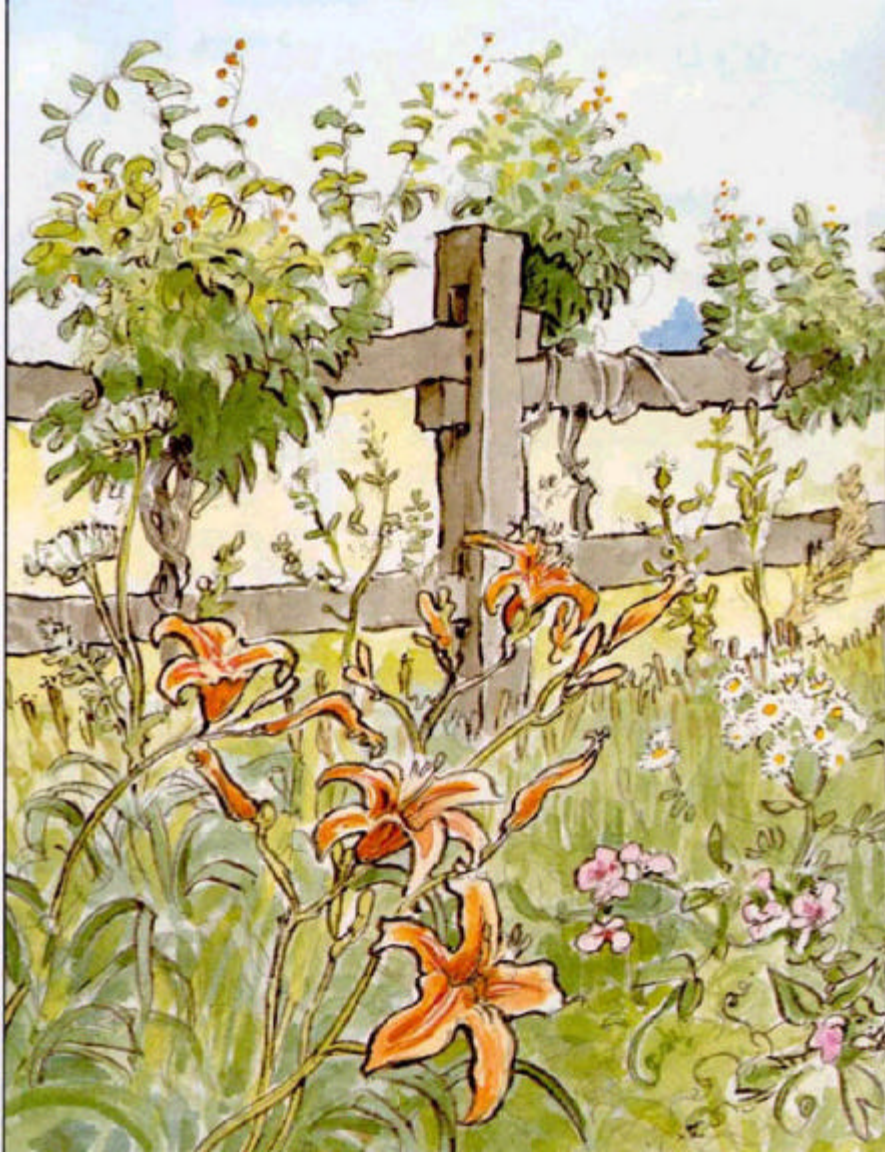


In July, when Miss McGillicuddy was picking cherries in her orchard, the town officials asked if they could use some of the greenery for special projects. She let them borrow her ladder – the tree was growing larger every day – and went inside to make cherry cobbler.



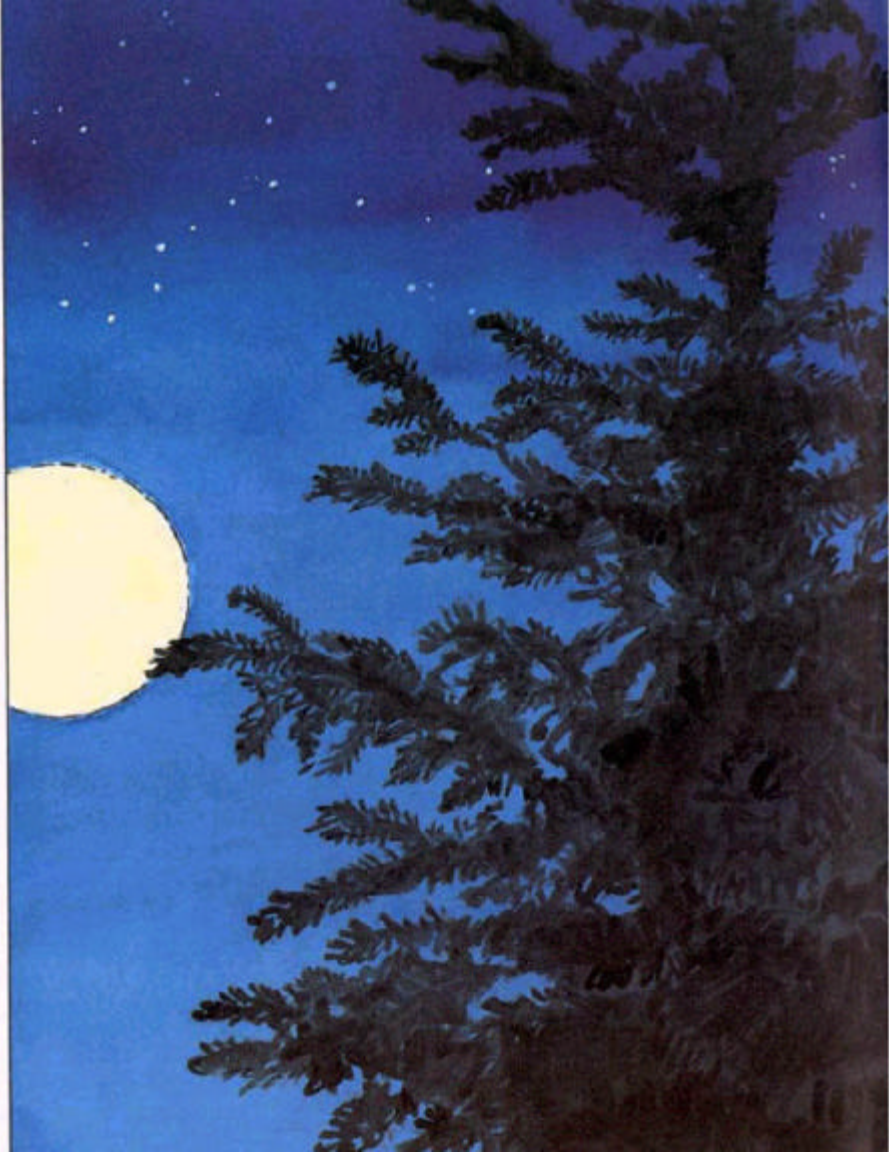


In August, as Miss McGillicuddy was returning home, she noticed that most of the people carrying bags and baskets away from the tree were perfect strangers! “No matter,” she said, “the branches would break from their burden if someone was not picking all the time.”





In September,
while Miss
McGillicuddy was
feeding the animals, she
watched the crowd
around the tree surging
back and forth beneath
the harvest moon.
“Don’t they ever rest?”
she asked herself.



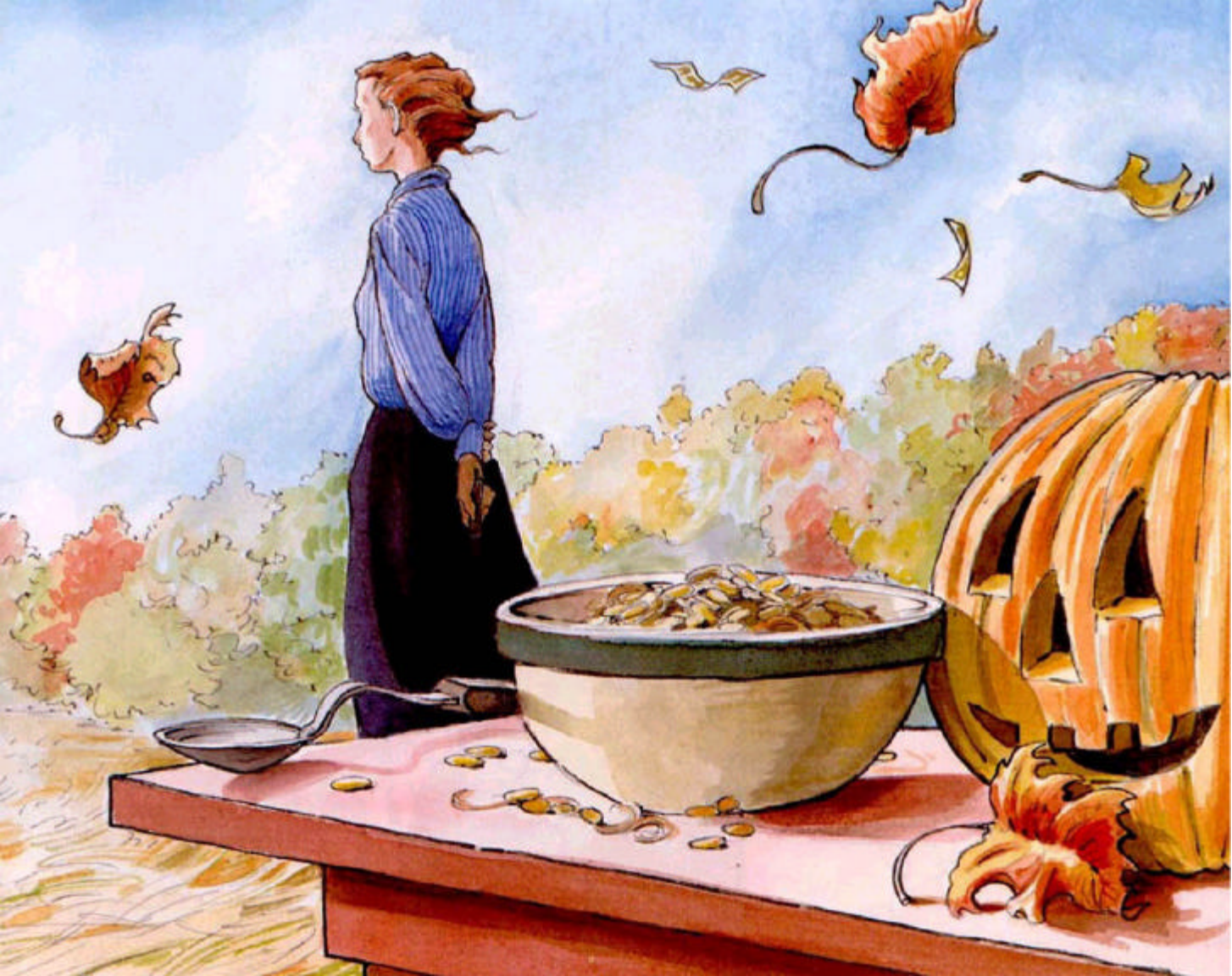






In October, when Miss McGillicuddy was making faces on her pumpkins, she realized that the leaves on the tree were turning yellow and brown. She sighed with relief.





In November, as the first winter storm arrived, Miss McGillicuddy watched a few determined strangers scratching at the snow under the tree.





In December, Miss McGillicuddy and the neighbor boys cut down the tree. Although the wood was green and certain to smoke a little, she didn't mind, for now she had enough to keep warm through the coldest winter.





Miss McGillicuddy gave each boy a loaf of homemade bread, a jar of strawberry jam, and a bouquet of dried flowers. Then she said goodbye, walked toward the warmth of the fire, and smiled to herself.

