

Between a
thunderstorm
and a
purple frog

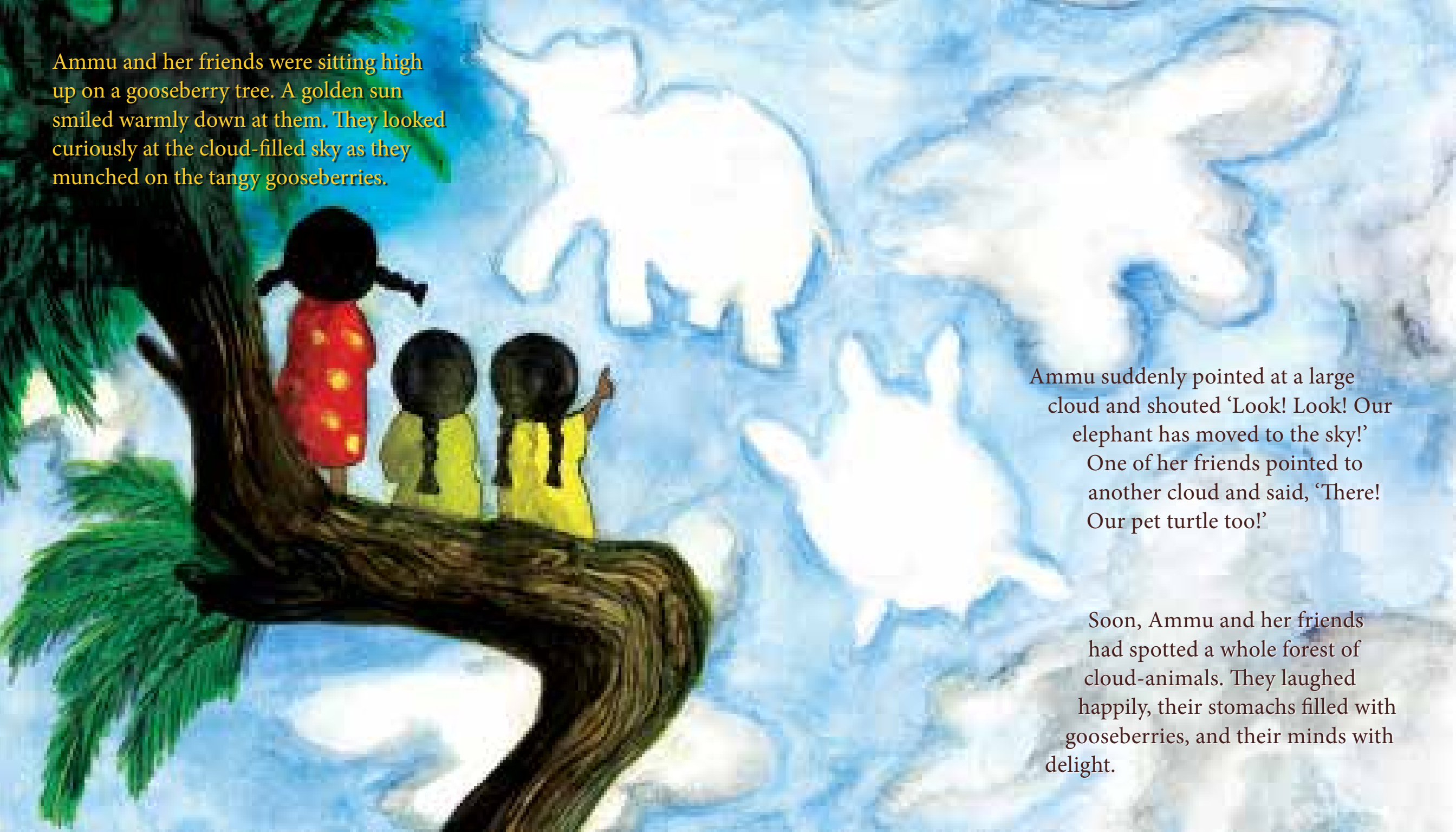
Arun Kanagavel & Sethu Parvathy
Illustrated by Christopher J Michaels & Inez Januszczak

Between a
thunderstorm
and a
purple frog

Arun Kanagavel & Sethu Parvathy

Illustrated by Christopher J Michaels & Inez Januszczak

Book design by Anirban Dutta Gupta

An illustration showing three children sitting on a thick, dark brown tree branch. The child on the left is a girl with black hair in pigtails, wearing a red dress with yellow polka dots. The two children on the right are boys with black hair, wearing yellow shirts. They are all looking towards a bright blue sky filled with large, white, fluffy clouds. Some of the clouds are shaped like animals, including an elephant and a turtle. The background is a soft, hazy landscape with green foliage on the left.

Ammu and her friends were sitting high up on a gooseberry tree. A golden sun smiled warmly down at them. They looked curiously at the cloud-filled sky as they munched on the tangy gooseberries.

Ammu suddenly pointed at a large cloud and shouted ‘Look! Look! Our elephant has moved to the sky!’ One of her friends pointed to another cloud and said, ‘There! Our pet turtle too!’

Soon, Ammu and her friends had spotted a whole forest of cloud-animals. They laughed happily, their stomachs filled with gooseberries, and their minds with delight.

Suddenly, the sky began to fill up with a mass of bigger, darker clouds. The elephant, turtle, and the sun quickly hid behind this wave of darker clouds.



Within minutes, everything had

An illustration of a stormy landscape. A large, ancient tree with thick, gnarled roots stands in the center. Three children are present: one in a red dress with yellow polka dots is climbing the tree trunk; another in a yellow dress is standing in the middle ground; and a third in a white dress with a yellow border is in the foreground. The sky is filled with dark, heavy, grey clouds, and the ground is green with scattered grey rocks.

The clouds rumbled madly. Ammu and her

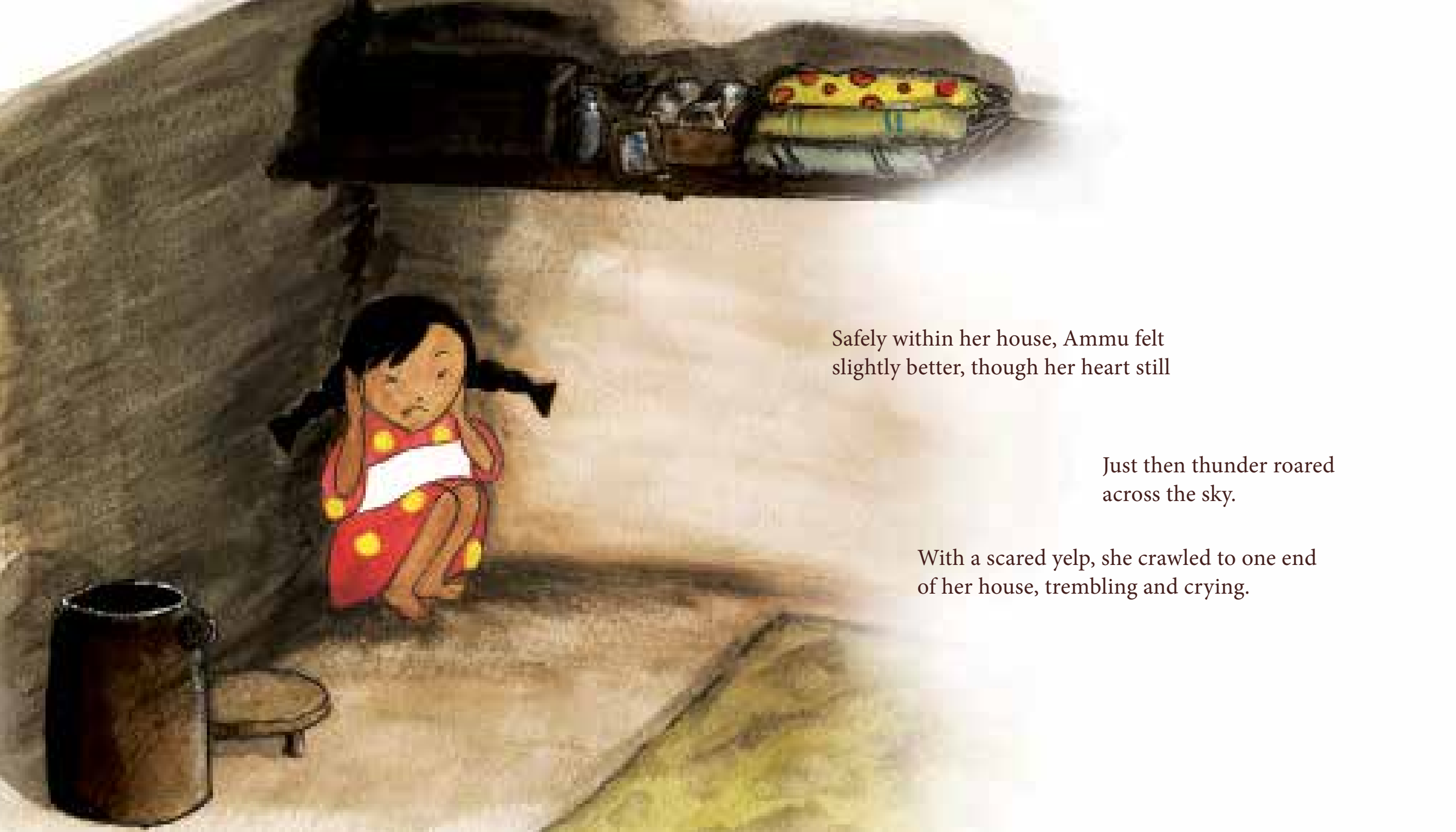
They quickly climbed down the tree and ran back towards their homes, fearful of being caught in the storm.



Ammu was just a few feet away from her home when a bolt of white lightning burst from the dark blue sky.

The door of her house had been thrown open

She ran inside her house and quickly



Safely within her house, Ammu felt slightly better, though her heart still

Just then thunder roared across the sky.

With a scared yelp, she crawled to one end of her house, trembling and crying.

An angry burst of wind
banged the door of her house

As Ammu ran to close the
door, a strange thing appeared



Its shadow covered the whole house. She
screamed and rushed towards the door
and closed it.

When she turned around, she realised that the strange thing was right behind her!

It was small and shiny.

It sat with its head slightly tilted.

As it hopped close to her, Ammu held her breath in fear.



When it reached very close, she realized that it was just...



Ammu reached out and picked up the frog in her hands and held it close to her.


It had a funny pointed nose, beady eyes, and its skin was shining.



After a while, she heard strange sounds from outside the house.

The frog looked into Ammu's eyes and began to wriggle in her hands.





Ammu looked at the frog fondly,
and opened her hand.

In one swift motion, the frog
jumped down and hopped
towards the door.

The frog began to make the same sound
that she could hear from outside.

Ammu opened the door for him.

At that moment, the sky lit up with lightning. But she was not bothered. She saw that there were many more purple frogs outside.

The frog looked at her once again, and hopped outside to join the others. His croaking joined with that of his purple friends in a cheerful orchestra.

Looking at the assembly of frogs, and listening to their merry croaking, Ammu felt a comfortable warmth spread inside her.

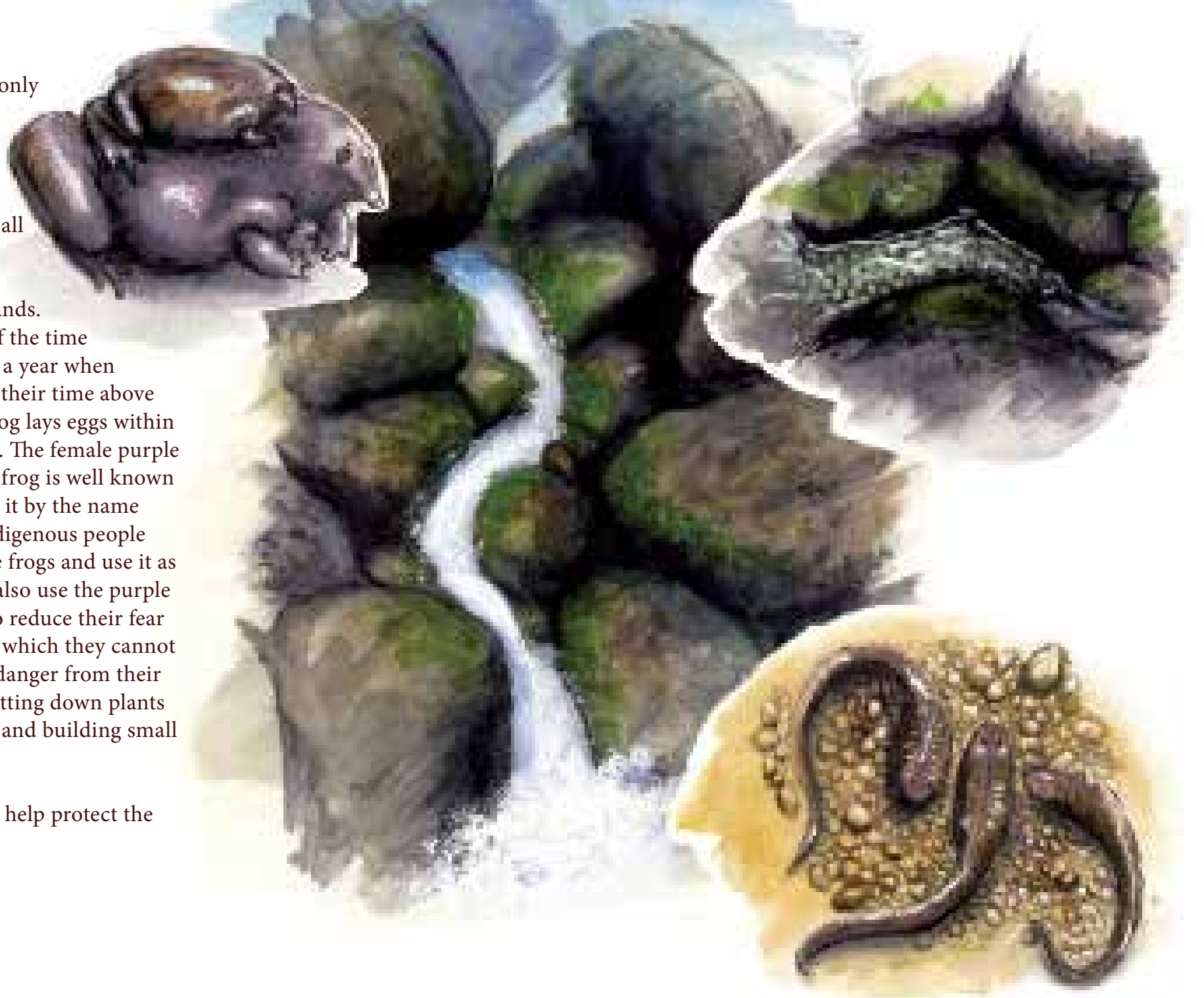
Though the lightning and thunder continued to rage outside, Ammu was not scared anymore.

She smiled, happy once again.



The purple frog is a rare frog found only in the Western Ghats mountains of India, in the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Its closest relatives are from the Seychelles Islands, which proves that millions of years before, all the continents were one single land-mass. It is found near rocky streams that flow through forests and grasslands. It remains under the ground most of the time and comes up only for two weeks in a year when it is raining. They reproduce during their time above the ground and the female purple frog lays eggs within spaces between rocks in the streams. The female purple frogs are bigger than the males. The frog is well known to many indigenous people who call it by the name “kottraan” and “kunjuni”. Some indigenous people eat the tadpoles and adults of purple frogs and use it as medicine. Some indigenous people also use the purple frogs as amulets for their children to reduce their fear of lightning and thunder because of which they cannot sleep at night. The purple frog is in danger from their homes being changed into farms, cutting down plants for buildings, being eaten by people and building small dams on their streams.

This book is a part of our attempt to help protect the purple frog and its home.



We would like to thank Christopher J Michaels and Inez Januszczak (Zoological Society of London, UK) for bringing our story to life with their illustrations,

Rupa Kamathe and Mala Somway (Vidya Vinayalaya School, Hyderabad) and Sethu Lekshmi (Christ College Vizhinjam, Trivandrum), for proof-reading and making our story suitable for children,

GS Kartikeya for improving the story,

Anirban Dutta Gupta (Runaway Planet, Mumbai) for designing the book and Aditya Somway for helping with printing it,

Benjamin Tapley (Zoological Society of London, UK), Rajeev Raghavan (KUFOS, Kochi) and Stuart Paterson (Conservation Leadership Programme, UK) for their support in our attempt to conserve threatened amphibians in the Western Ghats of India and, Babu and his family of the Kadar indigenous community at Chalakudy, Kerala who inspired this story.

This book was developed with financial support from the Kate Stokes Memorial Trust, UK through the 2016 Kate Stokes Memorial Award and the Inlaks Ravi Sankaran Fellowship Program – Small Grants Project 2017 and Rufford small grant 2017.

Arun Kanagavel & Sethu Parvathy

You can read more about our project on:

<http://www.conservationleadershipprogramme.org/project/purple-frog-president-improving-profile-amphibians-among-local-communities-western-ghats-india/>

https://www.rufford.org/projects/sethu_parvathy

and contact us on: sethuparvathy13@gmail.com
arun.kanagavel@gmail.com





Ammu is a 10 year-old girl who lives with her family deep in the forests of India. Although surrounded by tigers, snakes and spiders, she is not scared of any of these animals. What scares her is thunder and lightning, which gives her sleepless nights! One evening, Ammu finds herself caught in a thunderstorm and not only this, she is approached by a strange, purple colored frog.

Will she have another sleepless night from the thunderstorm, or will the purple frog be the 'one' animal in the forest she is scared of?



Kate Stokes
Memorial Trust



The Daily Wild