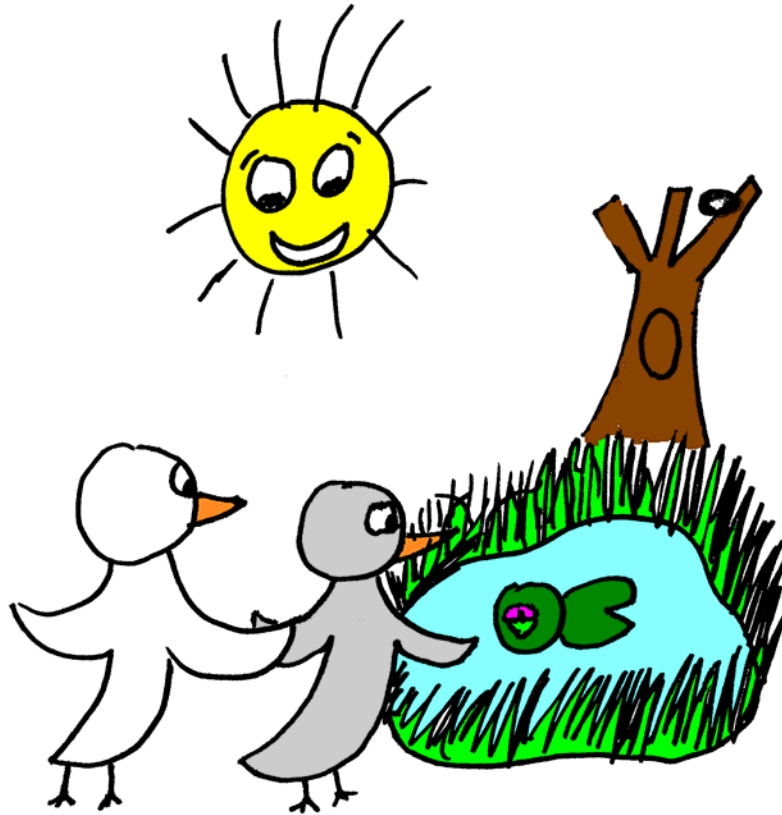


Can Do and the Storm



A story about new
beginnings

By Ducktor Morty, M.D.
with
Esther Deblinger, Ph.D.

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Letter to parents and teachers

Can Do and the Storm: A Story About New Beginnings

Many scholars of psychology, philosophy, religion, and even business have said that it is not so much what happens to us that shapes our lives – but it is how we think about our experiences and respond to them that most influences our futures.

“Experience is not what happens to you. It is what you do with what happens to you.”

– Aldous Huxley

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are but small matters compared to what lies within us.”

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Children begin to develop attitudes and beliefs about themselves, others, and the world around them when they are very young. Children’s beliefs often develop as a function of experiences (both positive and negative) and frequently reflect the attitudes of those around them, particularly the adult role models in their lives.

It is not possible to protect children from all potential negative events nor can we predict or eliminate children’s emotional reactions to these experiences. In fact, many of these negative responses are normal and may be reactions influenced by children’s temperaments and other innate predispositions. However, we can help children cope with and interpret stressful experiences in ways that may reinforce healthier views of themselves and others, thereby encouraging feelings of resilience and personal strength.

Can Do and the Storm: A Story About New Beginnings was written to help children who experienced the frightening and traumatic events of the recent hurricanes. It was written by a child psychiatrist with help from a child psychologist who works with children who have been through traumatic experiences. The pictures were illustrated by children. This story is about animals who live through a hurricane. It is an uplifting story of hope, perseverance, working together, and new beginnings.

This story is meant to help children begin to think about and share their feelings regarding the frightening events they may have experienced. Many children find it much easier to talk about traumatic experiences in the abstract or in general terms before talking about their personal experiences. This story allows children to do just that. Children will likely relate to the experiences of the animals in this story. Reading this story ultimately may help children, who

might otherwise be afraid to talk about the hurricanes, feel more comfortable talking about their own feelings, thoughts and experiences. This can be enhanced by engaging children in a discussion during and after reading the story. Finally, the story is intended to inspire hope and optimism by highlighting the positive lessons the animals learned as a result of their experiences. Some examples of questions you might pose to your child include the following:

1. How do you think the ducks felt during the storm?
2. What did the ducks say or do to help the other animals get through the storm?
3. How do you think the animals felt about leaving their homes?
4. Did any of the experiences in the story remind you of something that happened to you?
5. What helps you to feel safe and strong?
6. What do you think is the most important message in this story?

The above questions are relevant for all children. However, when appropriate, some of the questions may be personalized (ex: How did you feel during the storm? What did you do to stay safe during the storm?) to help children who have endured hurricanes themselves process their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

You will probably come up with many other questions as a result of reading this story with your children. We hope that you and your child or student find this story helpful. Thank you for taking the time to read it. We think you will find that it is time well spent.

Please print out this file and share it with anyone you think it could help. The cover page is the only page in color so it can be used as a coloring book or you can also encourage children to draw pictures of their own.

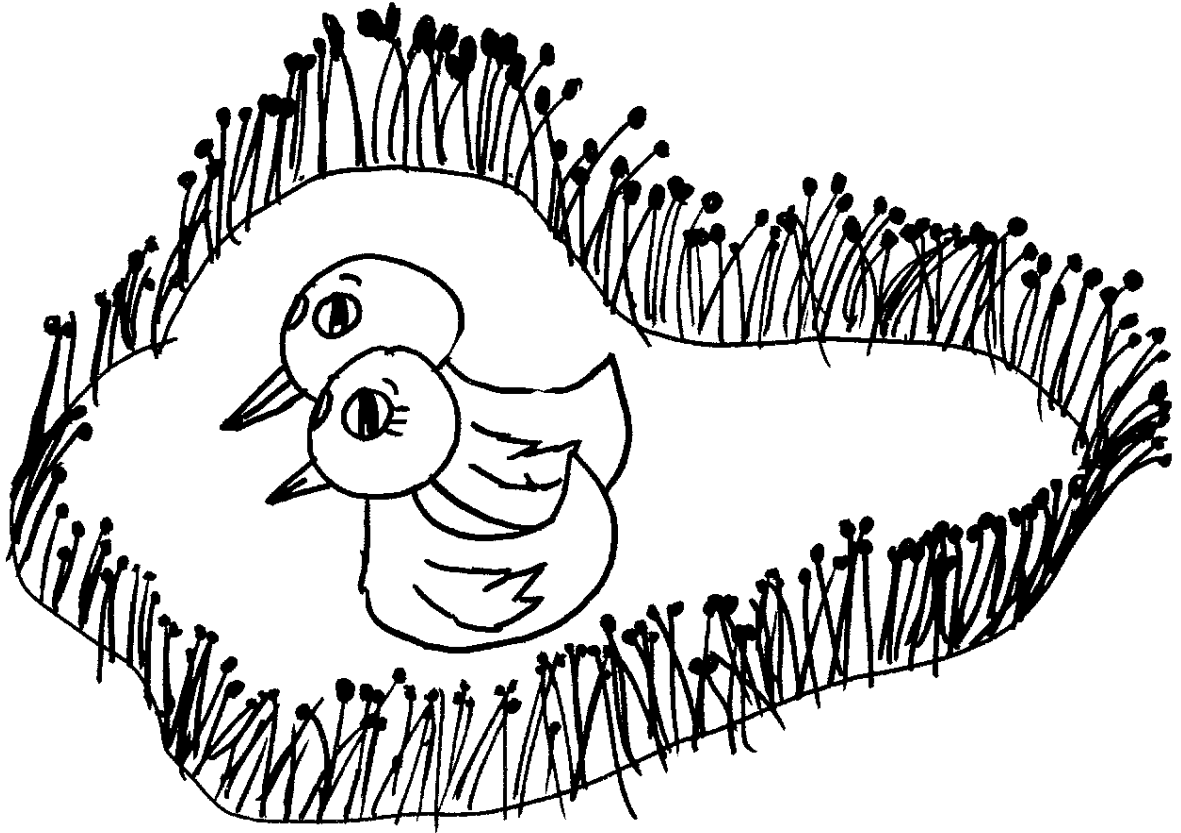
Finally, we would like to hear from you. We would greatly appreciate any feedback you or your children or students would like to provide.

To send your comments or for further information,
please contact

Ducktor Morty or Esther Deblinger at
DucktorMorty@TheCanDoDuck.com

Ducktor Morty is the pseudonym of Morton D. Sosland, M.D. Dr. Sosland has written a series of positive, motivational children's stories about the CAN DO DUCK that appeal to children and adults alike. They are available at his web site www.thecandoduck.com. Dr. Sosland is a graduate of Harvard College and Jefferson Medical College and is a practicing child and adult psychiatrist in New Jersey.

Esther Deblinger, Ph.D. is a professor of psychiatry and co-director of the C.A.R.E.S. Institute at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-School of Osteopathic Medicine. Dr. Deblinger has been recognized as a "shining star" by Women's Day magazine for her work in helping children overcome post-traumatic stress. She is also a member of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.



Here's the story of a duck named Can Do and his duck friend Lilac, too. They cared for others, as you'll see, and helped their whole community. So if you want to find out how let's begin the story now!

It seemed like just another day.
The ducks and geese were hard at play.
Swimming, splashing to and fro,
that pond of theirs -- they loved it so.

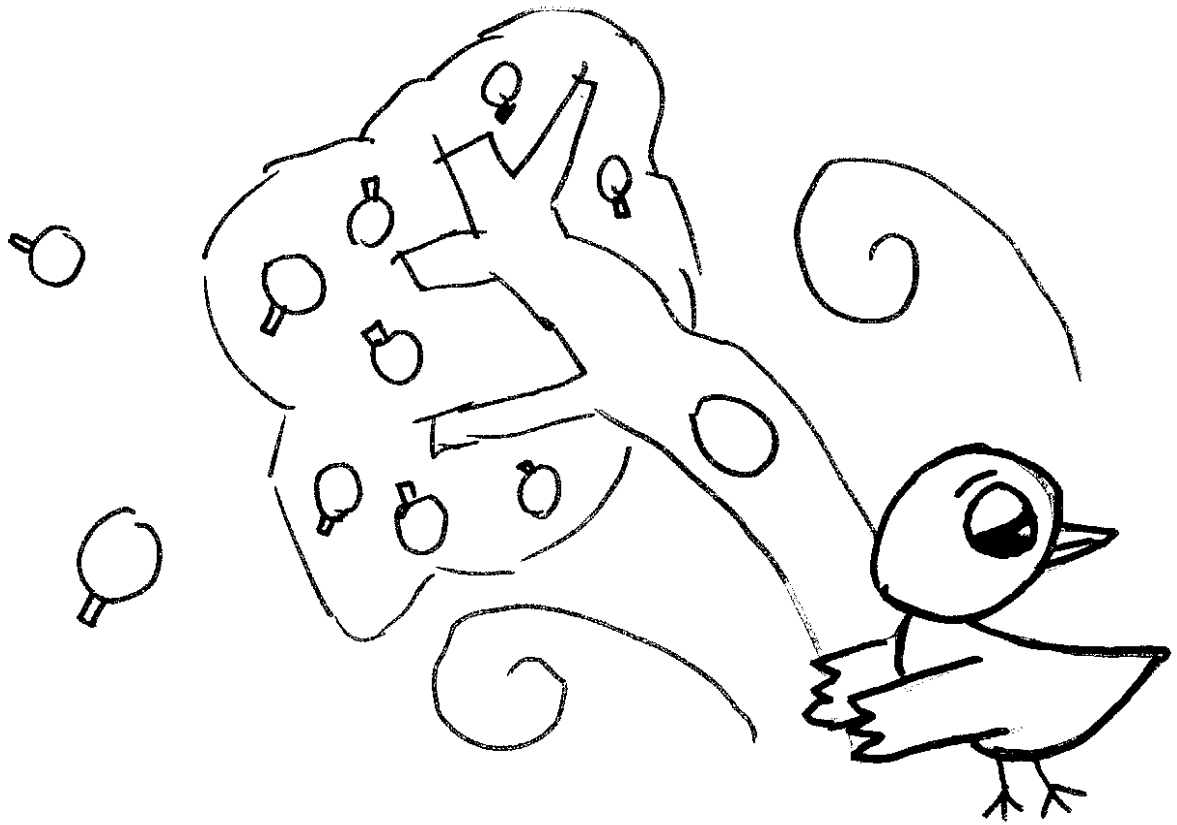


And then the sky turned dark and gray.
Was it night or was it day?
A storm was coming very soon.
The lovely day would soon be ruined.





Mayor Green came out to say,
"You all had better go away.
There's gonna be a hurricane
with lots of wind and lots of rain.
The water could rise in the pond –
up to the shore and far beyond."

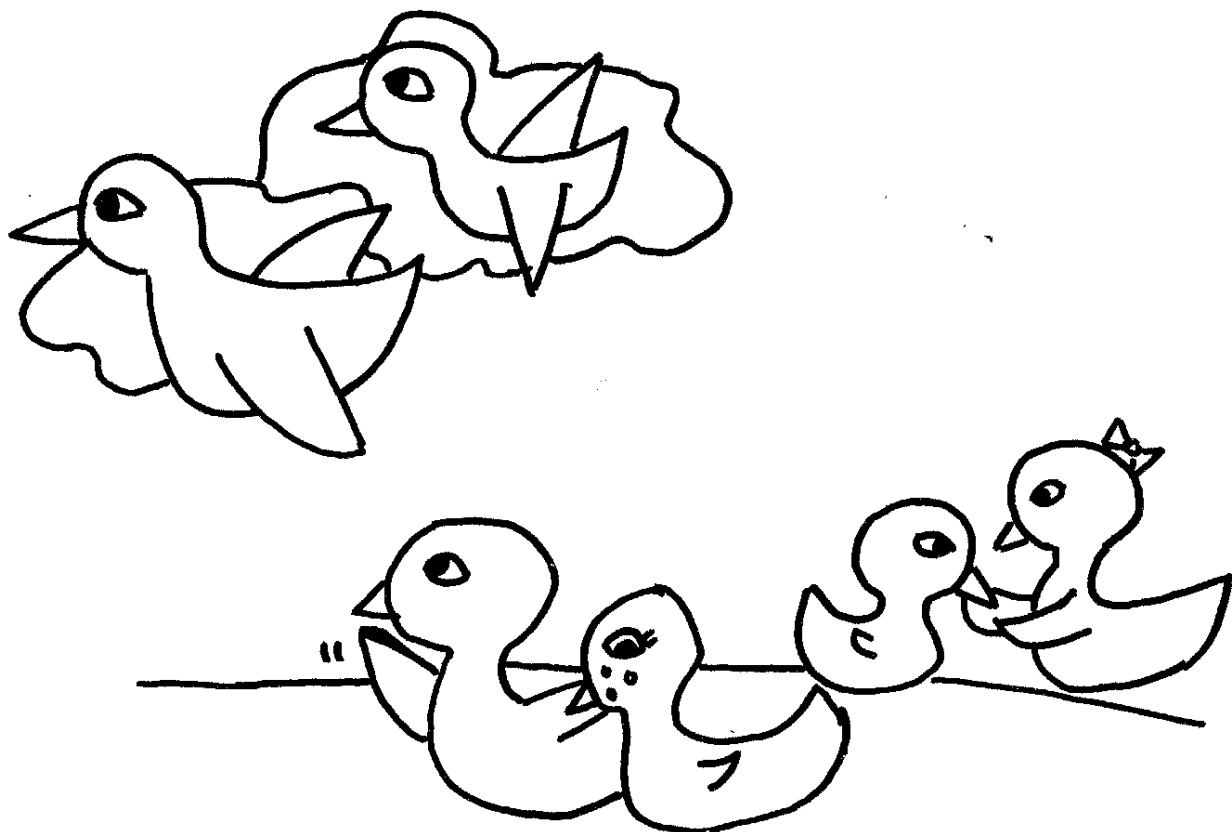


The winds began to blow and blow.
The ducks that could began to go.
But others were too old or sick.
They couldn't fly or move too quick.
Some ducks wanted to just stay.
The storm, they thought, would go away.
They'd talk about it with Can Do.
He would know just what to do.

Can Do discussed it with Lilac.
They knew that they had better act.
They got together, ducks and birds
and all together spelled out words.
They wrote a warning in the sky.
They made these words as they flew by.

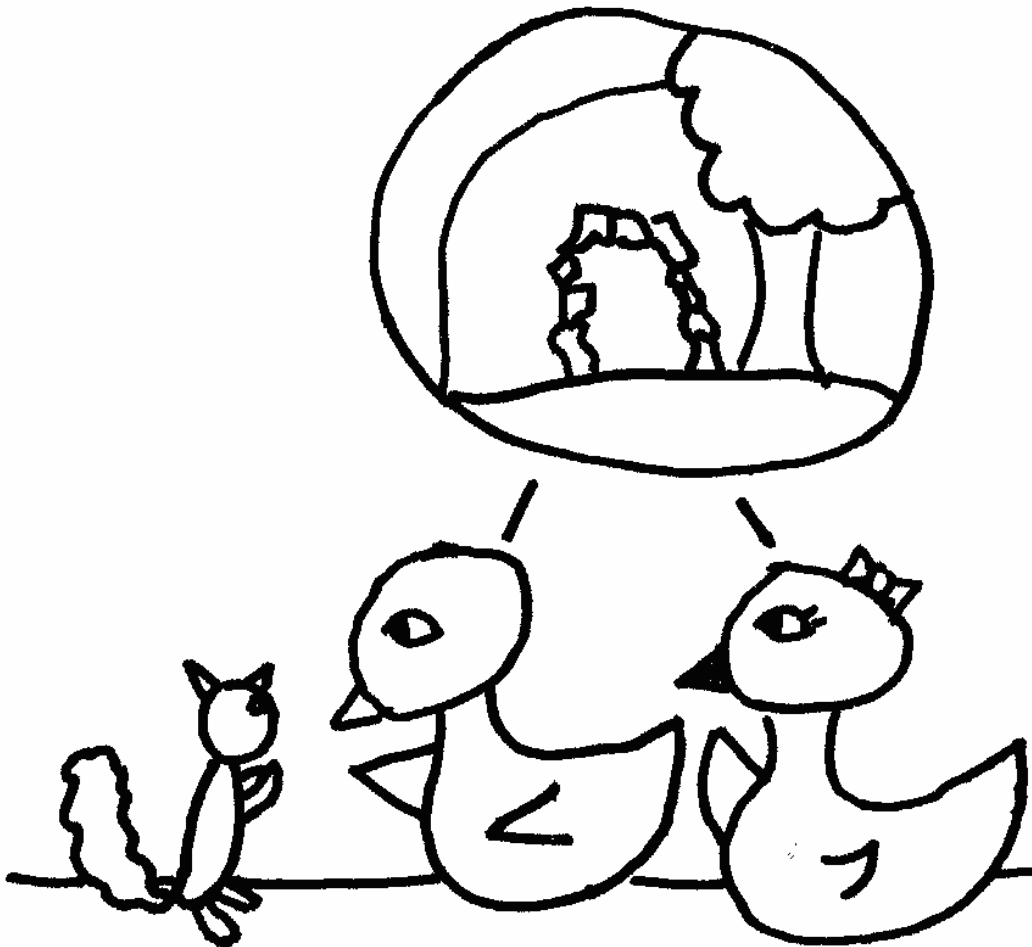


***GET AWAY.
A HURRICANE IS
ON THE WAY.***



The ducks who could flew right away.
They would come back another day.
As for the ducks who couldn't go,
Can Do and Lilac let them know,
"We'll stay with you through the night,
We'll make sure that you're all right."

Can Do and Lilac looked around.
A safer place had to be found.
Where could they wait out the storm?
Where could they stay dry and warm?
A squirrel told them about a cave
where they could go and all be saved.



They told animals of every kind.
It would be tight but they didn't mind.
Ducks, Lizards, frogs, a bear,
There even was a skunk in there.
They were feeling rather scared
so they planned and they prepared.
Food and water – they had to store
enough to last three days or more.



In a bird's nest overhead,
A mama put her babes to bed.

“A storm is coming,” said Can Do.

“There's room inside the cave for you.”

“We'll be okay,” Mama Bird said.

“I'll keep my babies dry and fed.”

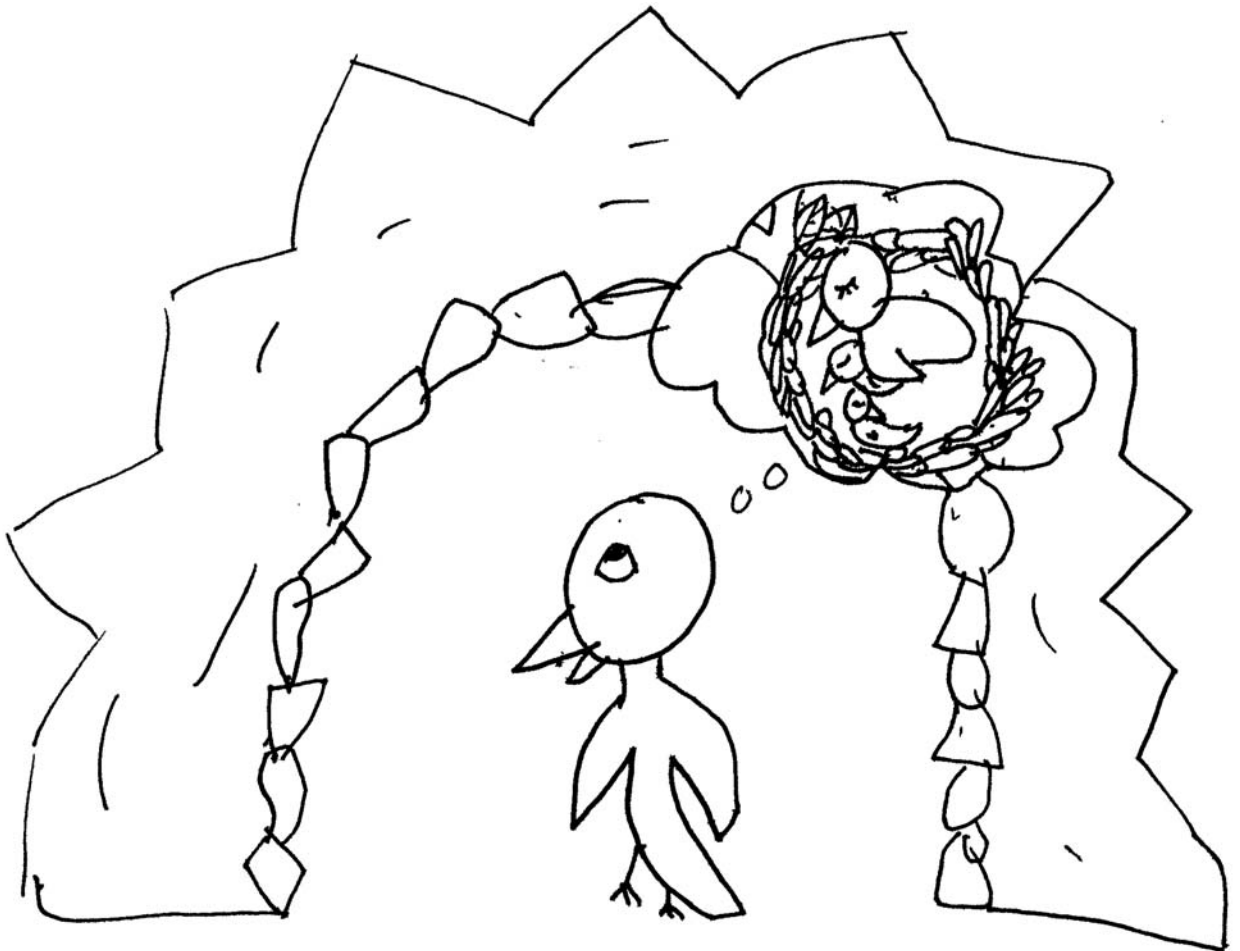
“But this storm is a hurricane
with lots of wind and lots of rain.”

“This nest and tree are very strong.

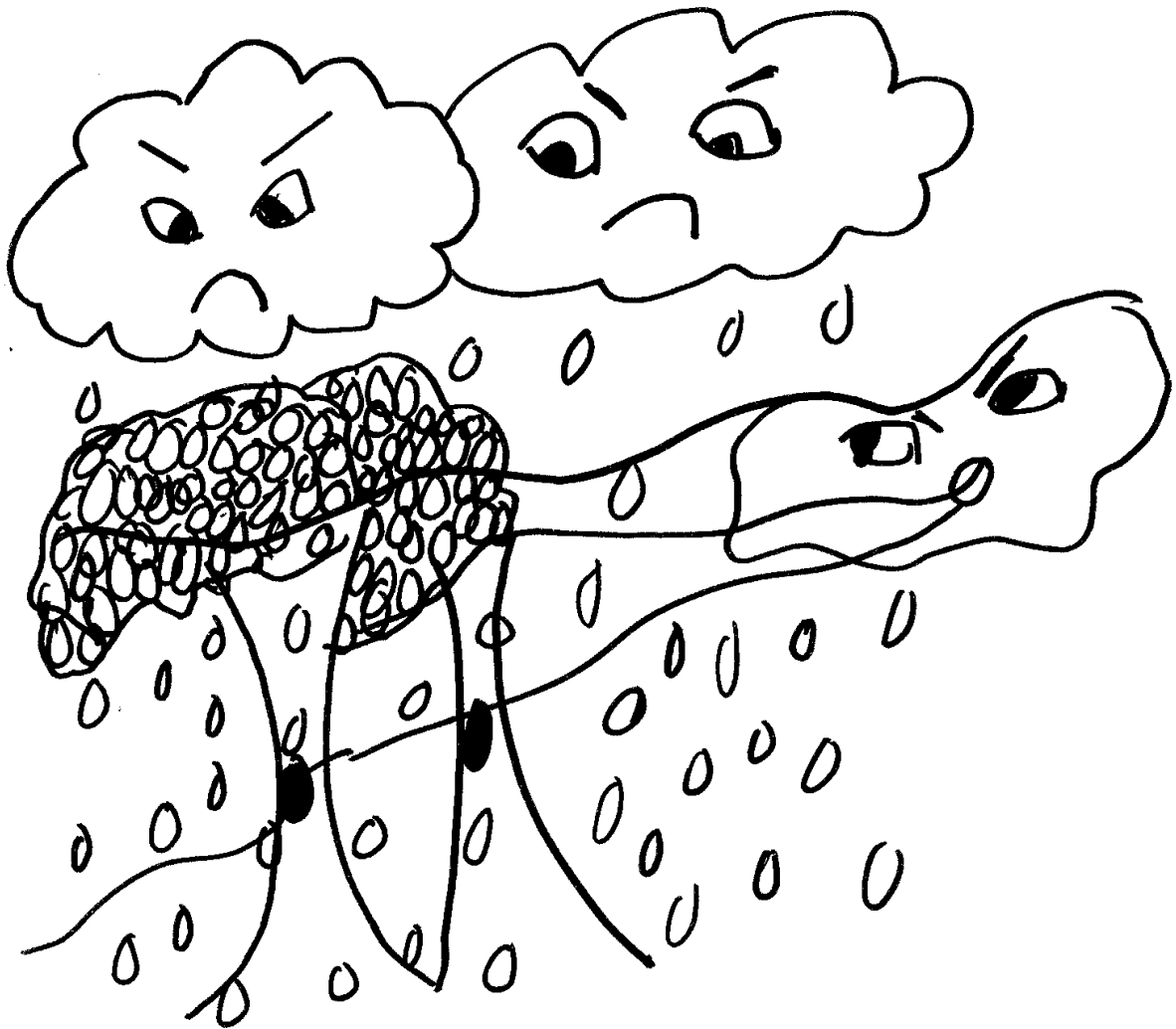
The storm will pass before too long.”



“Okay,” said Can Do with a sigh.
“If you need us we’re nearby.”
To the cave, Can Do hurried
but inside he was worried.
He hoped that they would be all right.
It would be a long, long night.
As soon as Can Do had got in,
he heard the sound of roaring wind.



It kept on raining for a day.
The wind made the trees start to sway.
That night they heard the wind and rain.
It sounded like a mighty train.



Then all at once the wind blew strong,
They worried something would go wrong.
And then they heard a sudden crack.
A tree fell down. It was pitch black.
And that night more trees fell too.
And the wind just blew and blew.
The animals were scared all night.
They held each other very tight.

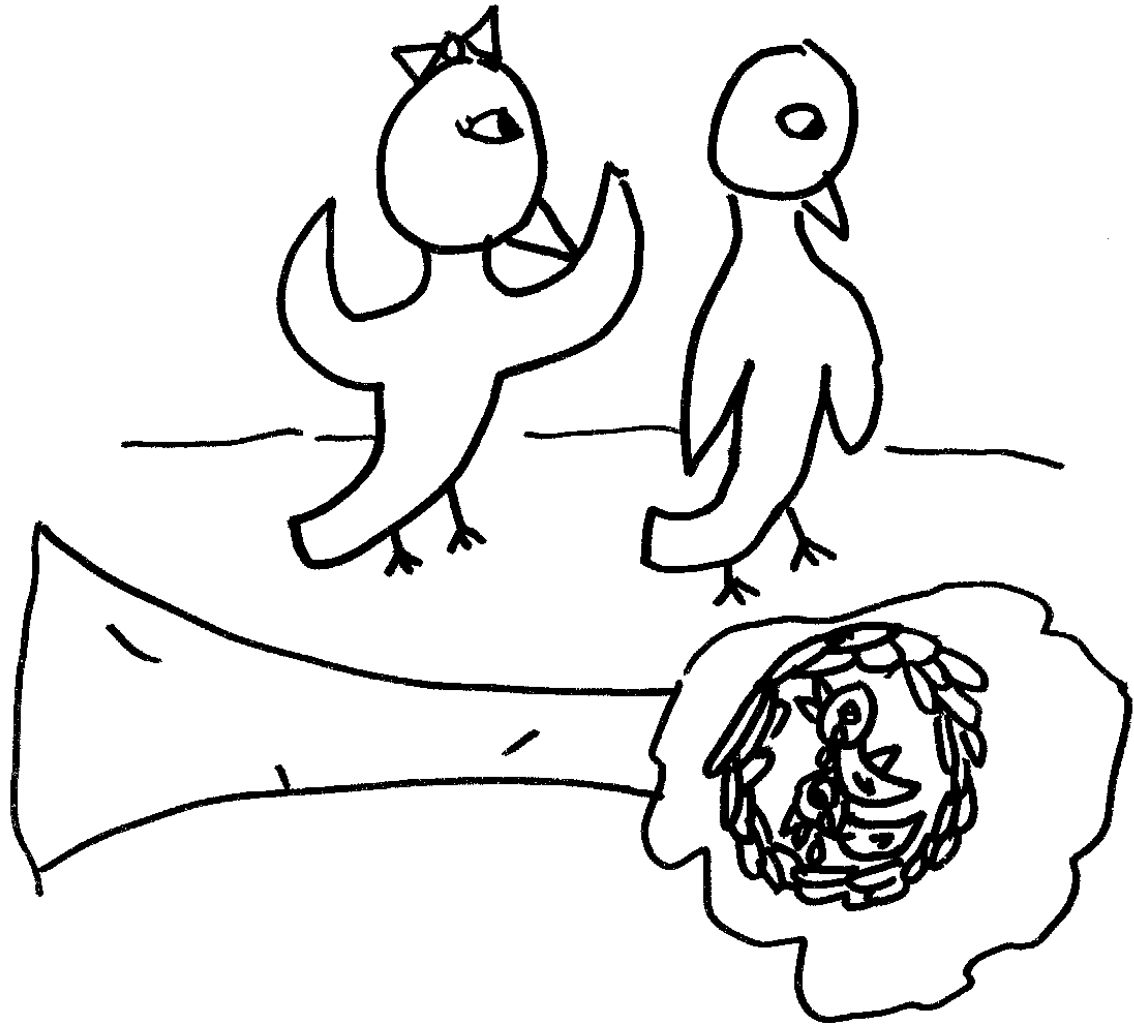


They read out loud to pass the time.
They really loved the books that rhymed.
Doctor Seuss. The Can Do Duck.
They had them both. They were in luck!
They sang old songs in harmony.
They even had a spelling bee.
The spelling bee was lots of fun
and she did not sting anyone.



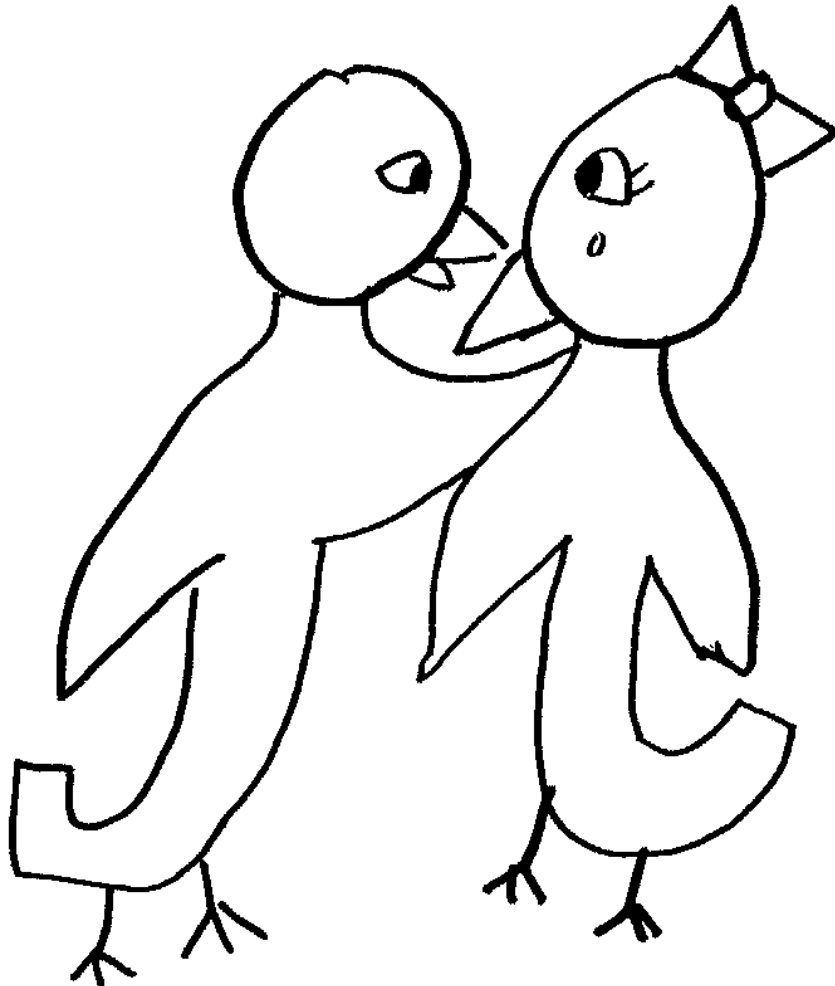
When morning came, the storm had passed.
Now they could leave the cave at last.
Trees were knocked down everywhere.
The forest really looked quite bare.
As they looked out in the dawn,
they saw the leaves were mostly gone.
There were trees that were uprooted
and the whole pond looked polluted.
The pond water was now so high,
it seemed like it would touch the sky.



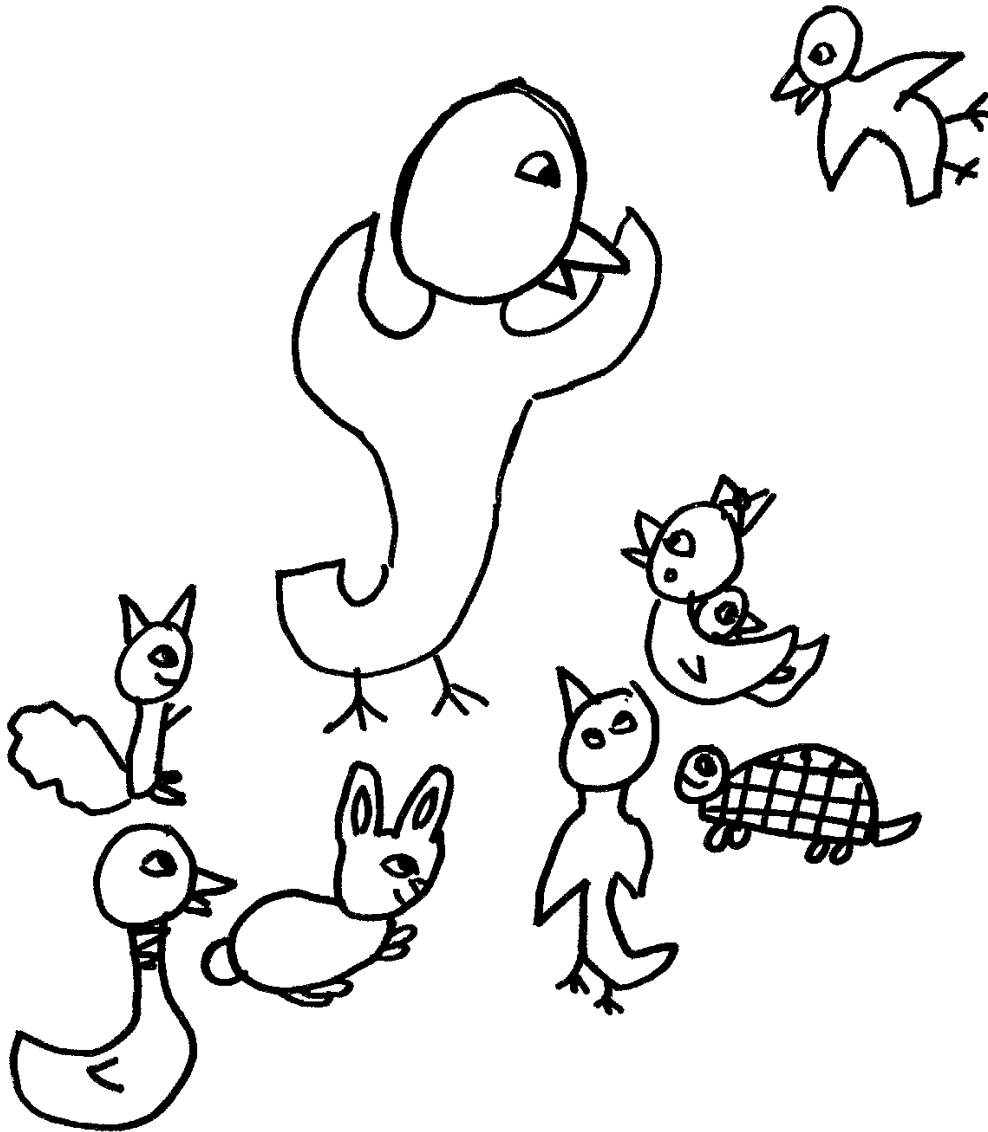


The tree and nest had been knocked down.
The bird's nest lay there on the ground.
The baby birds were still inside
and they just cried and cried and cried.
Can Do and Lilac looked around
but Mama Bird could not be found.

The birds felt scared and all alone.
The animals had lost their homes.
Everyone was feeling sad.
Things were really, really bad.
“I don’t know what there’s to do,”
Lilac whispered to Can Do.
Can Do patted Lilac’s wing.
“I know one important thing.
What we can do is just be there
and show them all how much we care.”



Now Can Do spoke to the crowd.
He spoke clear and he spoke loud.
“We are all sisters and brothers.
Now we all must help each other.
If you’re scared then we’ll help you.
Just tell us what we can do.
Tell us if you’re feeling sad.
Then it will not feel so bad.”



Please repeat these words with me,
They'll make things better, you will see.

We say we can.
We make a plan.
We get right to it.
And then we do it.

We'll solve our problems one by one,
Step by step, we'll get things done.

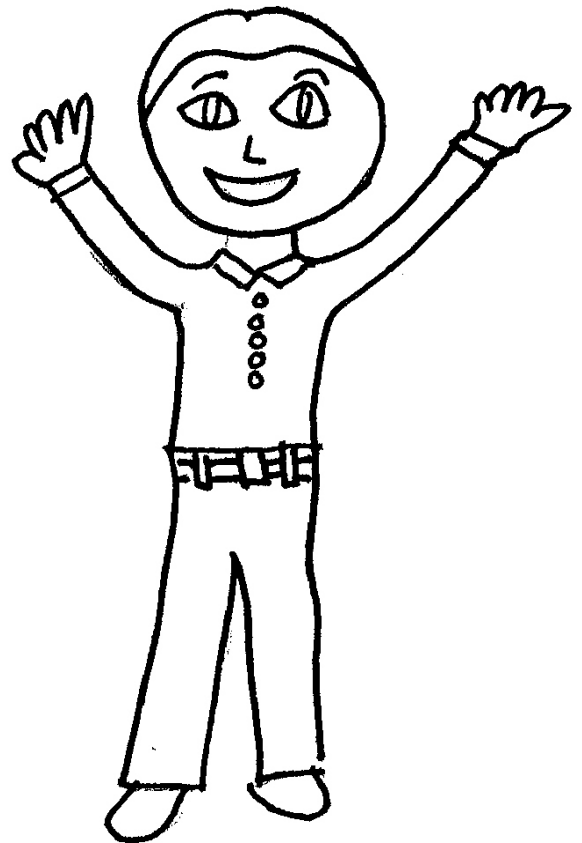


The animals one and all
said the words from small to tall.
They got started right away
to find Mama Bird that day.
Ducks flew and spelled out word by word

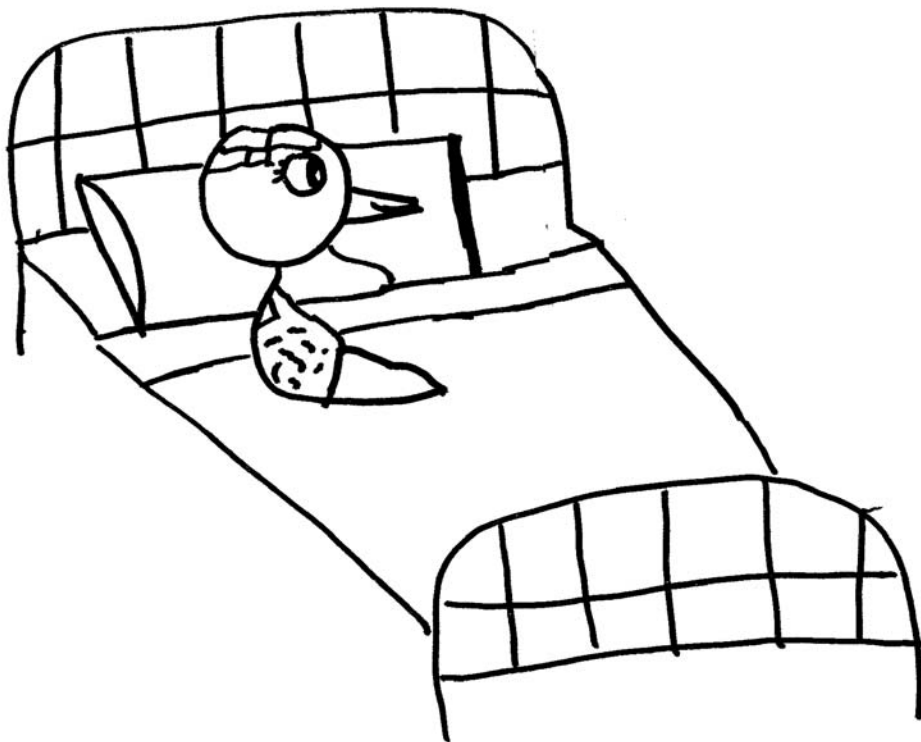
HAVE YOU SEEN...



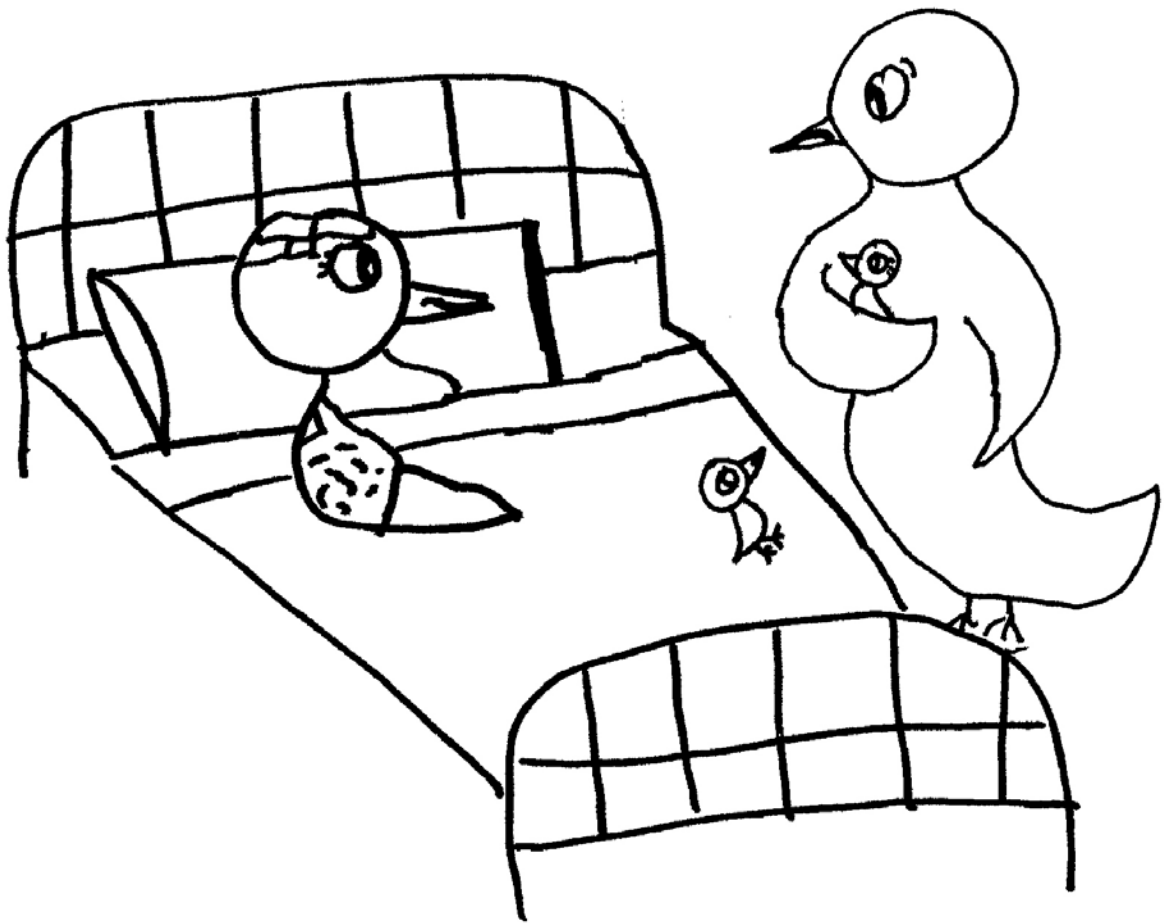
Just as soon as they were through,
a man ran up to tell Can Do,
“The bird you’re searching for’s okay!
I’ll take you to her right away.
Someone must have carried her in
to see the veterinarian.”
Can Do had waited for these words.
He ran and got the baby birds.



Animals were everywhere,
a duck, a goose, even a bear.
There was a baby squirrel who fell.
A turtle who had hurt its shell.
A goose who had a broken toe.
An old frog with a sore elbow.
And in a corner in a bed
was Mama Bird who bumped her head.
Mama Bird was full of joy
when she saw her girl and boy.
“Oh, my babies, how I’ve missed you.
It’s been so long since I kissed you!”
The baby birds kissed their mother
and they all hugged each other.
Mama Bird thanked everyone
for everything that they had done.

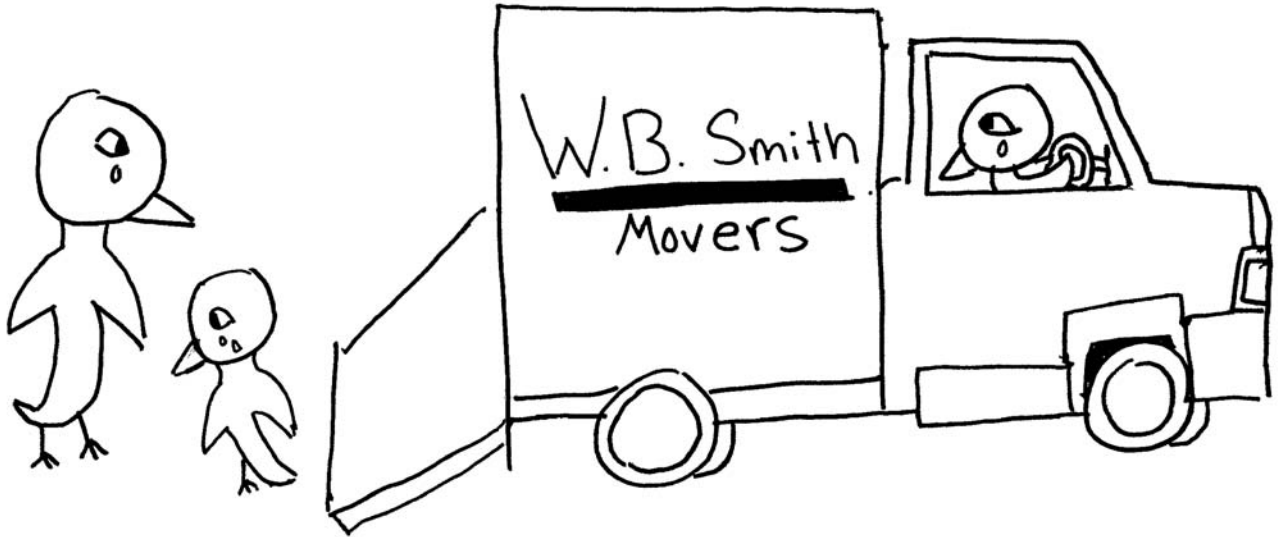


“Mama Bird,” said Can Do.
“Now that we have found you,
there is something we must do.
We have to leave the homes we knew.
Our pond is full of trees and logs.
It isn’t good for ducks or frogs.
We must go. We cannot stay.
We have to leave our pond today.”

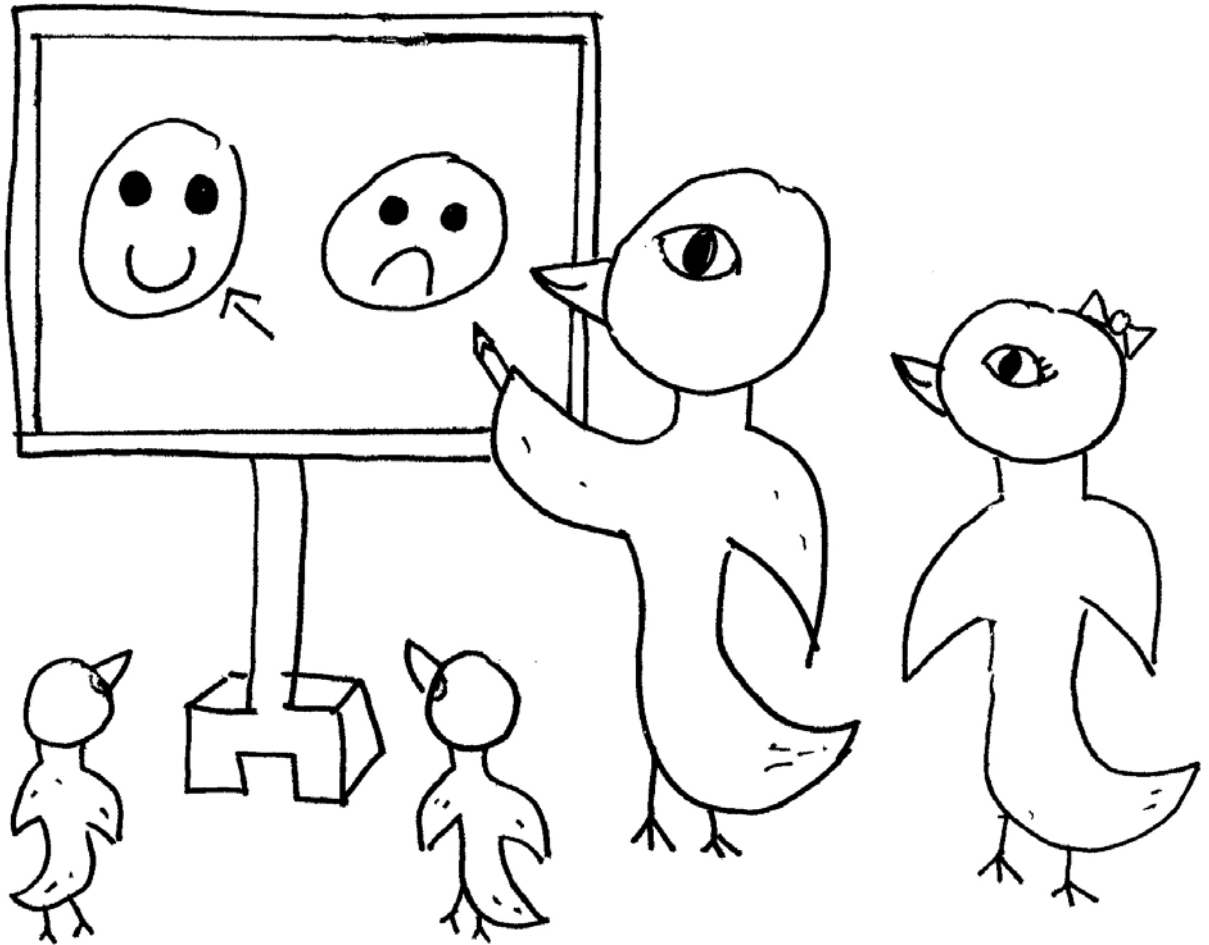


Mayor Green supplied the trucks
for all the animals and ducks.
Ducks from close and way beyond
said they could come stay at their pond.

They found a pond where they could stay –
where they could fly and swim and play.
But it was hard to be away.
They felt so sad every day
they did not even want to play.
Would they always feel this way?



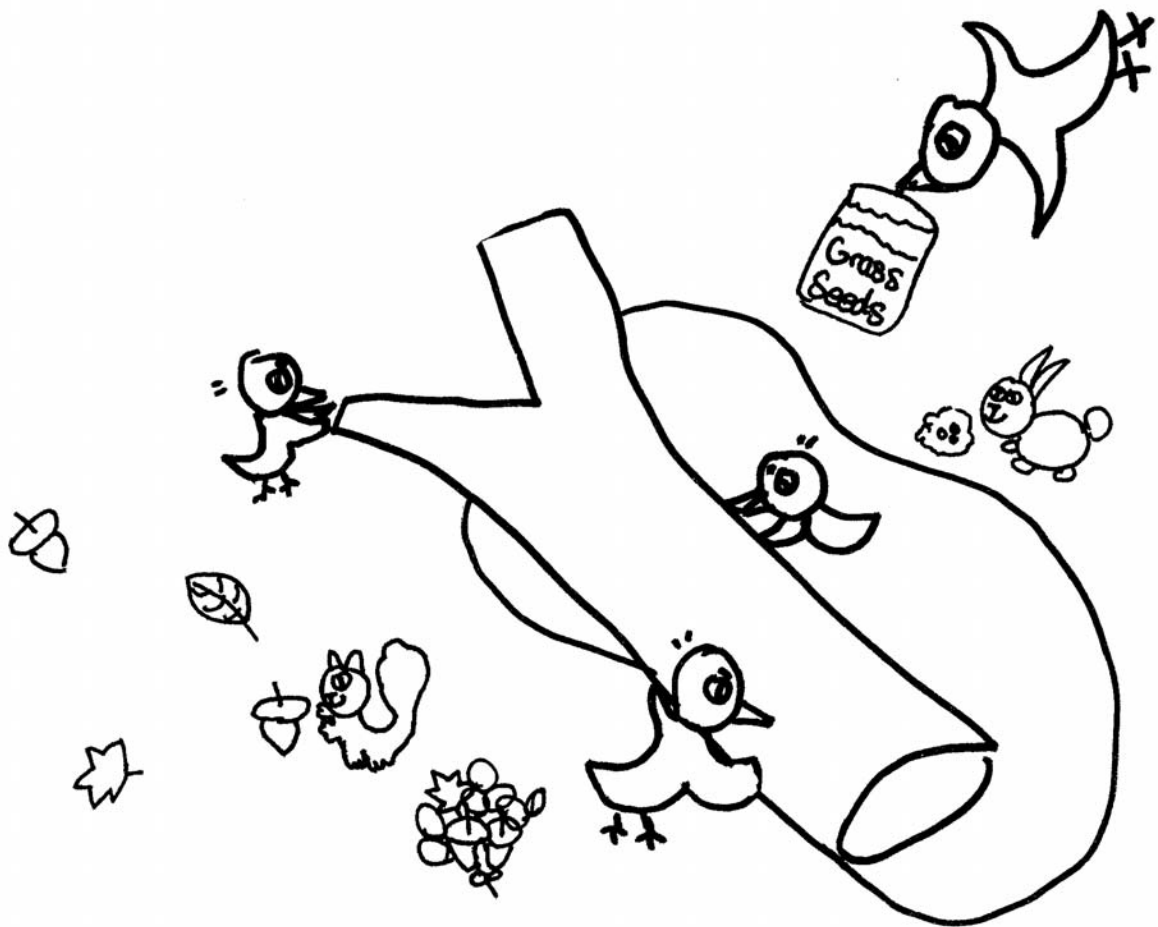
Now Lilac said to Can Do,
"There must be something to do."
Can Do thought and then he said,
"We can be happy instead.
It is sad to be away
but let's be happy we're okay!
We can be mad at the weather
but let's be glad we're together!
There is so much to be done.
Let's begin and make it fun!"



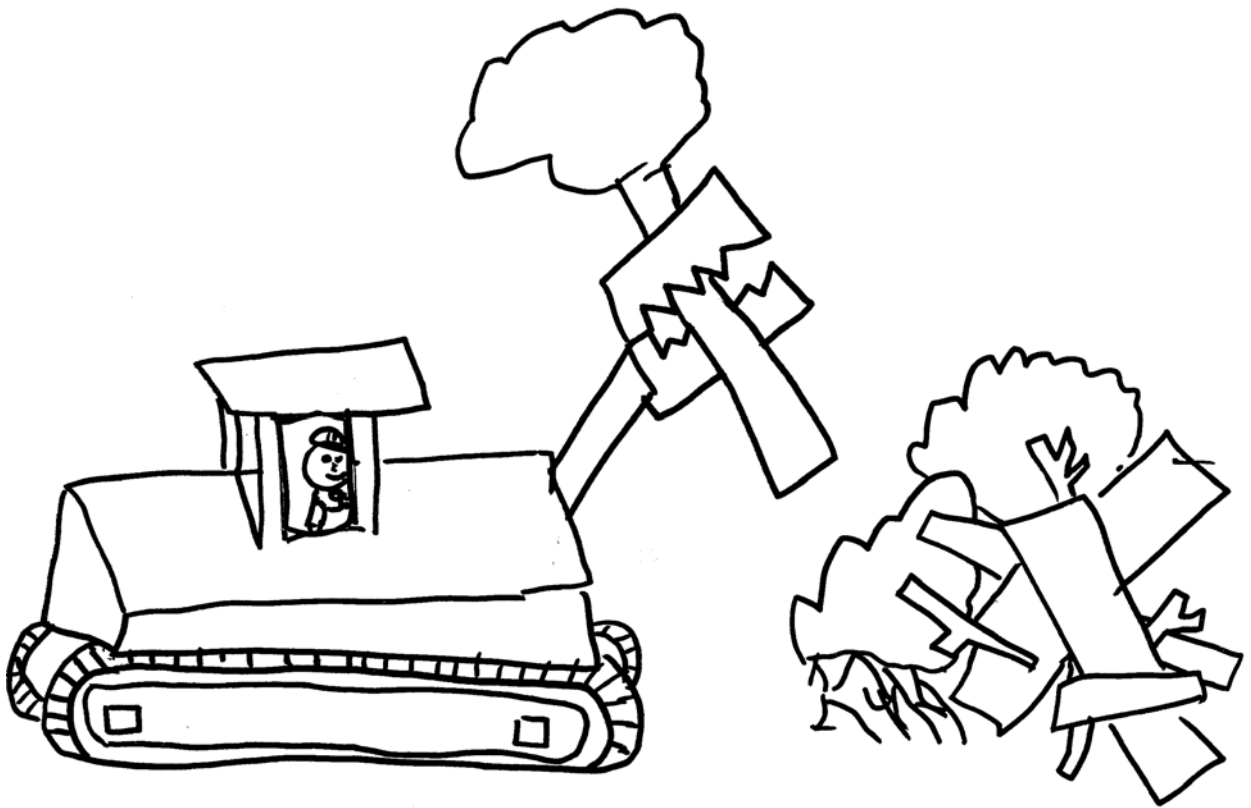
Little by little, day by day.
Their sadness started to go away.
They built new homes and built new nests.
They felt at home and not like guests.
They missed their pond, sometimes felt sad.
But life was good. It wasn't bad.
And then slowly after a while,
one by one they started to smile.
They made new friends in their new pond.
They swam and played in fields beyond.



But the dream remained for some
to go back to where they were from.
For those for whom this wish was true
there was a lot they'd need to do.
So every day, those that could
flew back to their pond and woods.
They helped to build their pond anew.
They did whatever they could do.
The birds chirped a melody.
It helped the work go easily.
They worked together side by side,
all of them so filled with pride.



One day some men in tractors came to make the pond again the same. The pond was filled with dirt and silt. They cleaned it out and they rebuilt.



Can Do came to them one day.
He said he had something to say.
“I’m glad to say the time is good
to go back to our pond and woods.”

Some cheered and shouted out, “Hooray.
We have waited for this day!”
And others said, “Thank you, Can Do,
but we’ve decided to start anew.
We are happy here, you see,
in our new community.
Even though we’re not so near
this is our new home right here.”

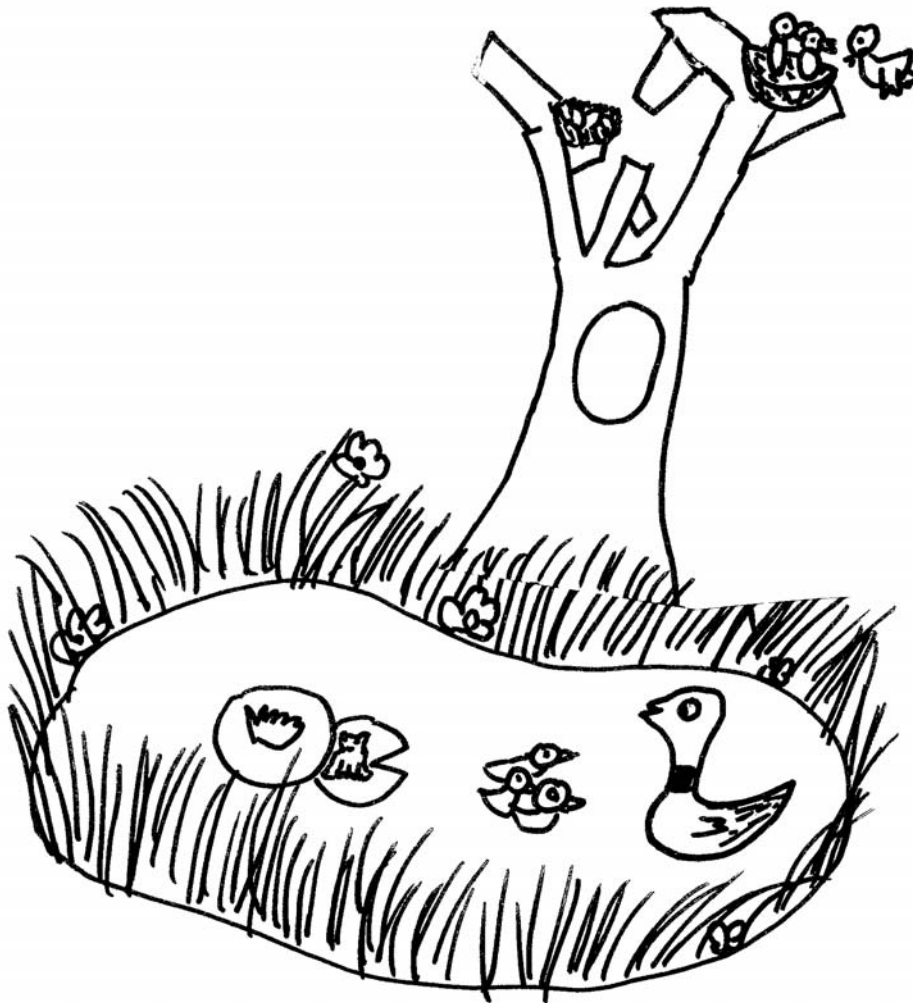


“It doesn’t matter where you are –
or whether you are near or far.
What matters most is that you know
someone loves you head to toe.
If you’re happy that is great
even if you’re out of state.
We will visit. We will write.
We will make sure you’re all right!

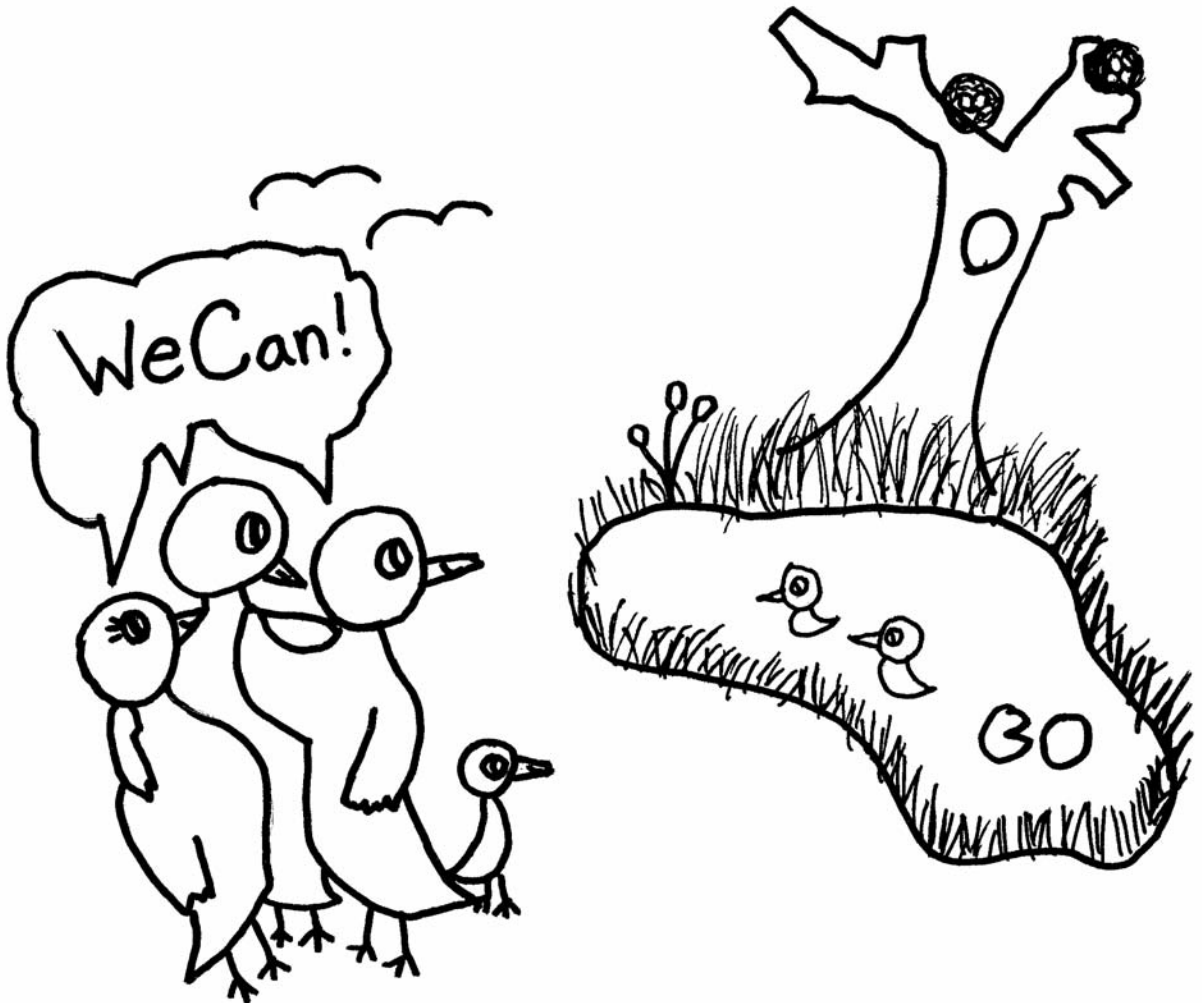
Can Do hugged them and said, “Goodbye.”
He joined the others in the sky.
“We are off to our old pond –
that pond of ours of which we’re fond.”

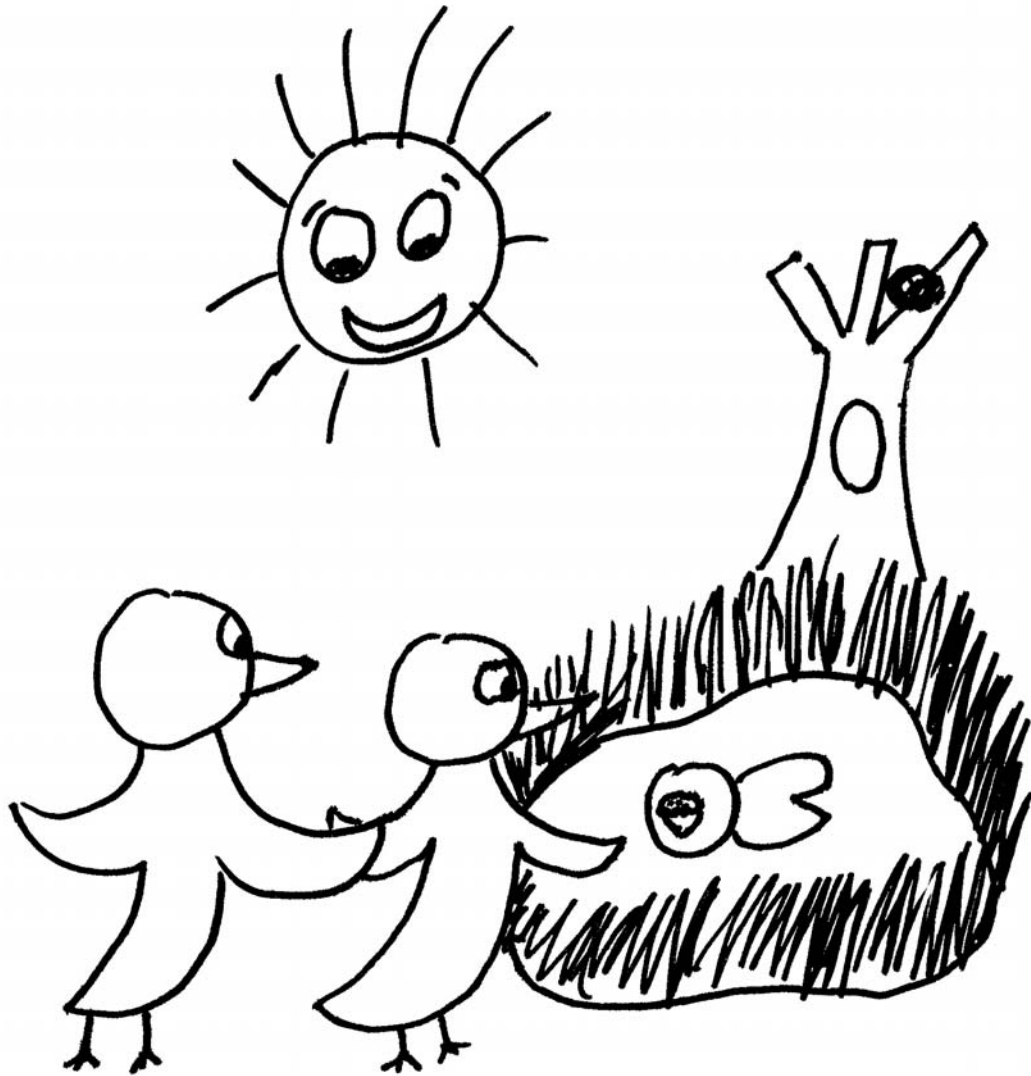


The old pond was now brand new.
On the shore bright flowers grew.
The water was as clear as day.
The animals began to play.
Ducks and geese and frogs and all
that day rejoiced and had a ball.
Most of the trees had been knocked down,
but a few still stood their ground.
Without their leaves, the trees looked bare.
The little birds – they didn't care.
Because at last, now, they could rest
with Mama Bird in their new nest.



Can Do and Lilac looked around.
They were back on their old ground.
“We have made it,” said Can Do.
“We’ve come back to start anew.
We are all at home today
whether here or far away.
Mother, sister, father, brother –
we have cared for one another.
Ducks and birds, frogs and man –
we have all shown that we can.”





Then they held each other's wings.
"We have learned important things.
When we all are together
we can face any weather.
No matter what may come along
we have learned that we are strong!"

The End
Or
The New Beginning