

DÁNIEL ANDRÁS

A
Nyúl-
formájú
KUTYA

The
Rabbit
Shaped
Dog

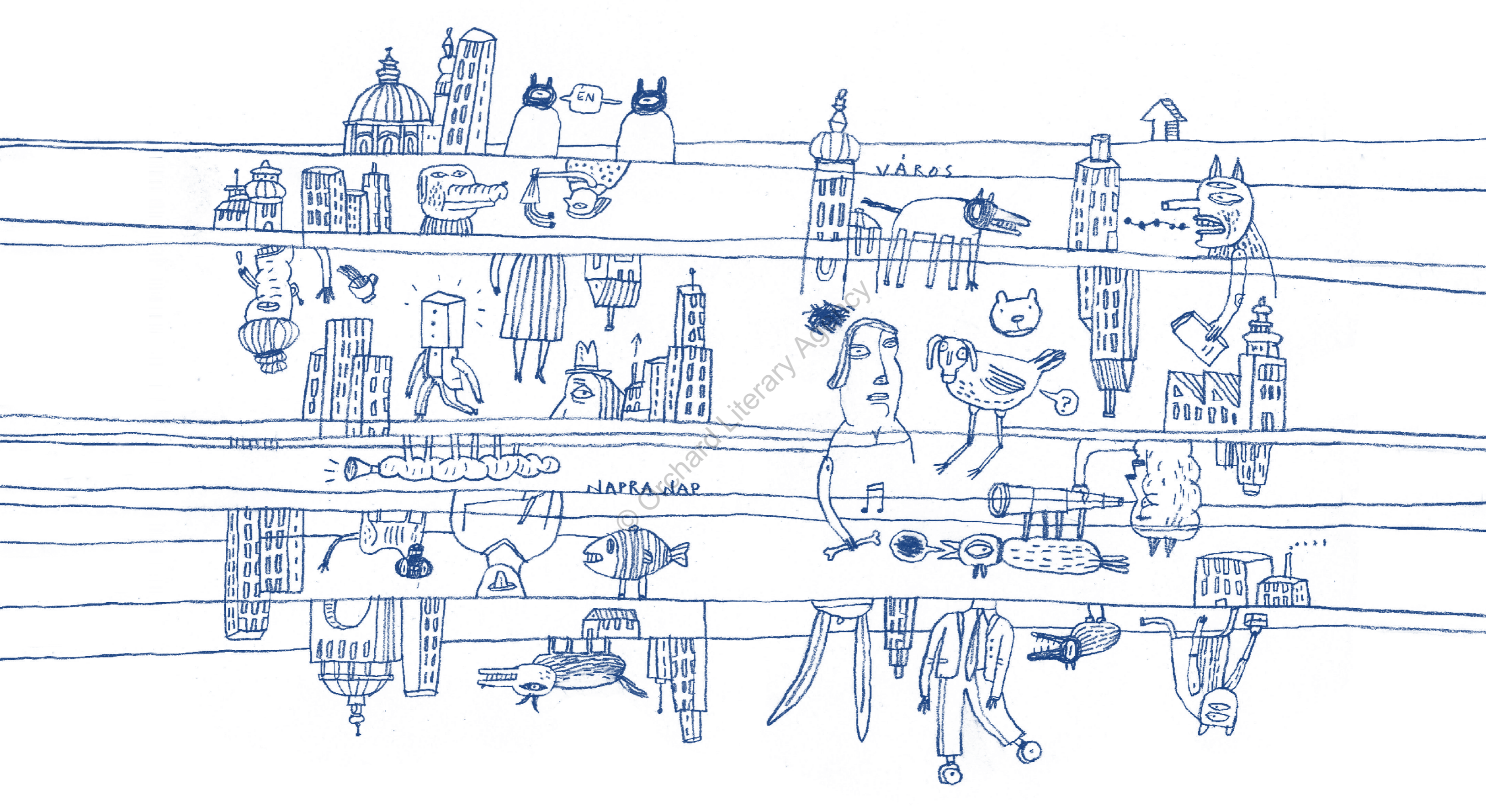


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VÁROS

NAPRA NAP

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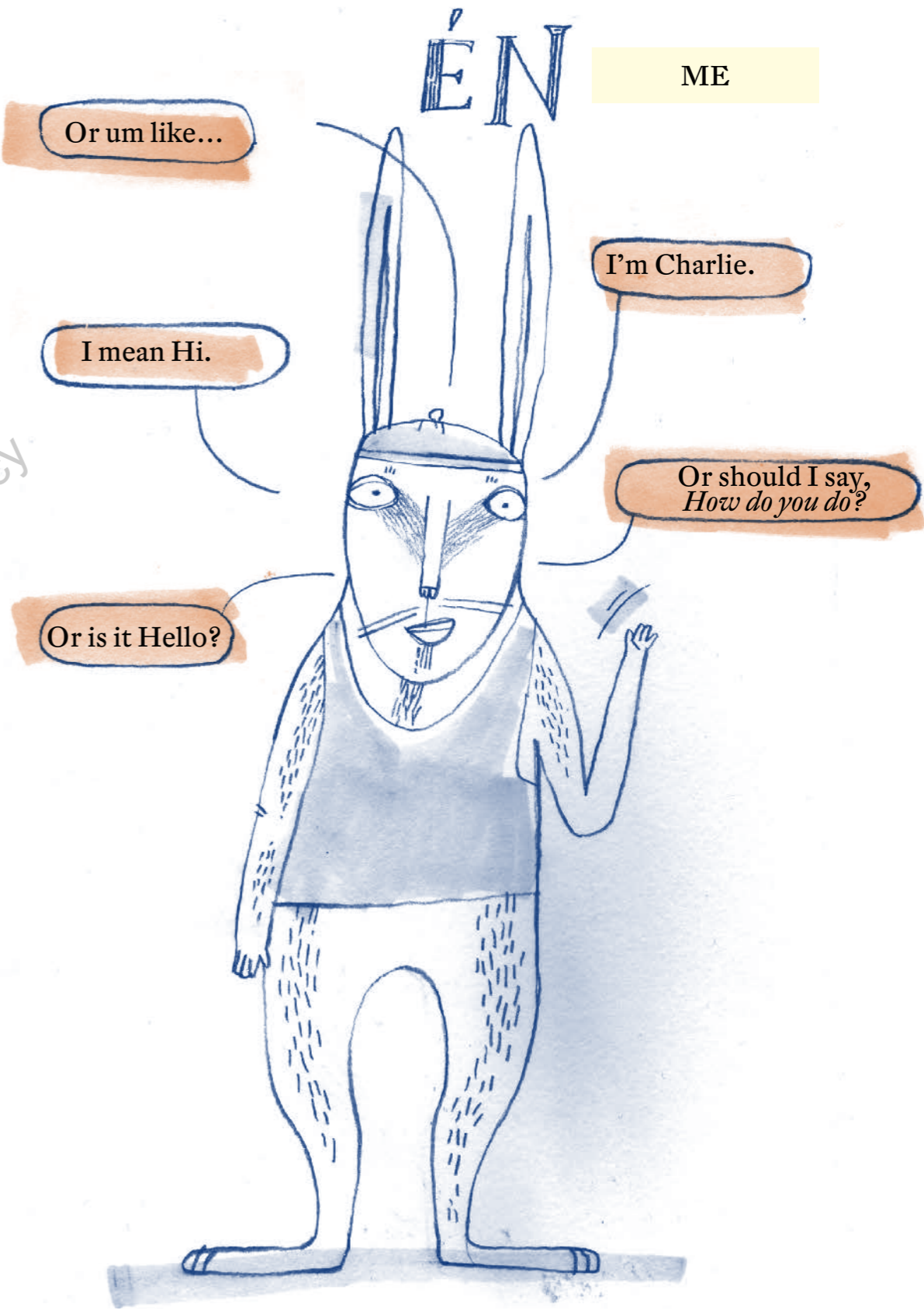
- A SZERZŐ RAJZAIVAL -


written and illustrated by
András Dániel



Let's stick with Hello?

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I can't see who you are – it's a difficult place for greetings. I'm just pretending to look at you, but from here on the page I can't tell if you're there or not. It's not weird, I'm used to it. All I can see is what's drawn here around me. If I look out there, all I see is this great whiteness. Like it's forever snowing.




Snow, except it isn't cold.

If I reach out to feel around, I only touch warm air. Is it possible there's nothing here to touch?

But if there's nothing, you can't be either.

In that case, if there's only emptiness out there, then I'm just talking to myself. It's not weird, I'm used to it.

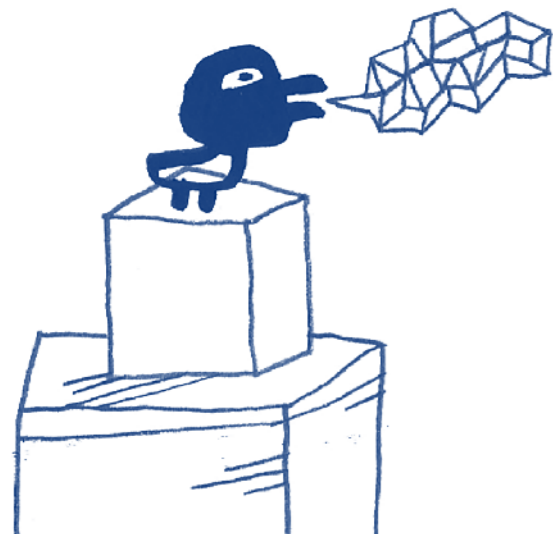


I'm Charlie.
I know because it's written right here:

CHARLIE
KÁROLY

If it was any other name here,
say William or Henry, that's what my
name would be. That's how it goes in
books: something is written beside
you and that's what you are.
Charlie, in this case.
I am Charlie.

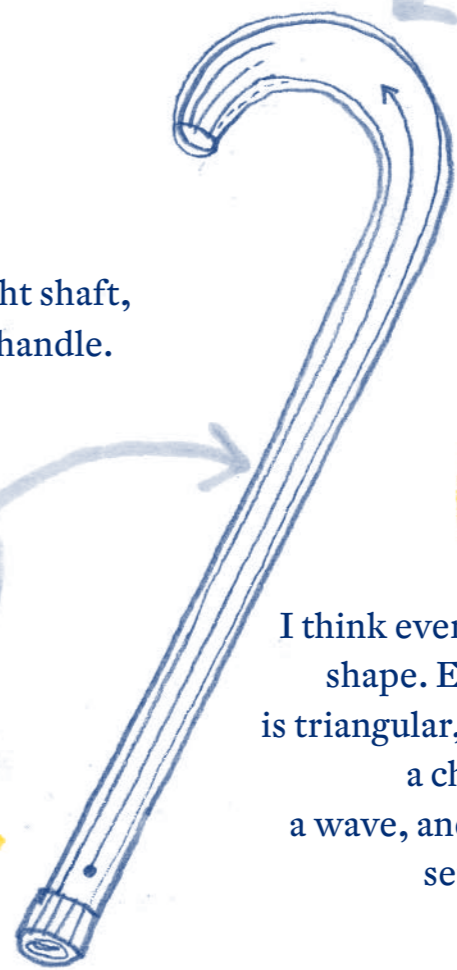
It would be nice to know if this is acci-
dental. It may be, but we can't rule out
intentionality. Somebody made it up,
let's say. And wrote it here. But I'm
just guessing.



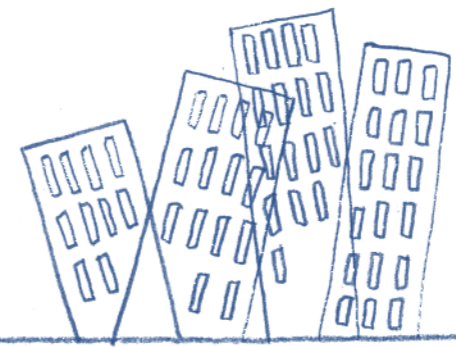
It's not a name I like.
It's like a cane.
CHAR – this is the straight shaft,
LIE – this is the crooked handle.


Char

lie



I think every name has its own
shape. Emma is oval, Kevin
is triangular, John is shaped like
a chair, Leonard is like
a wave, and Ellie is like a little
semicircle, and so on.






Everything has its own shape,
so why wouldn't names?



For example, I have a shape.



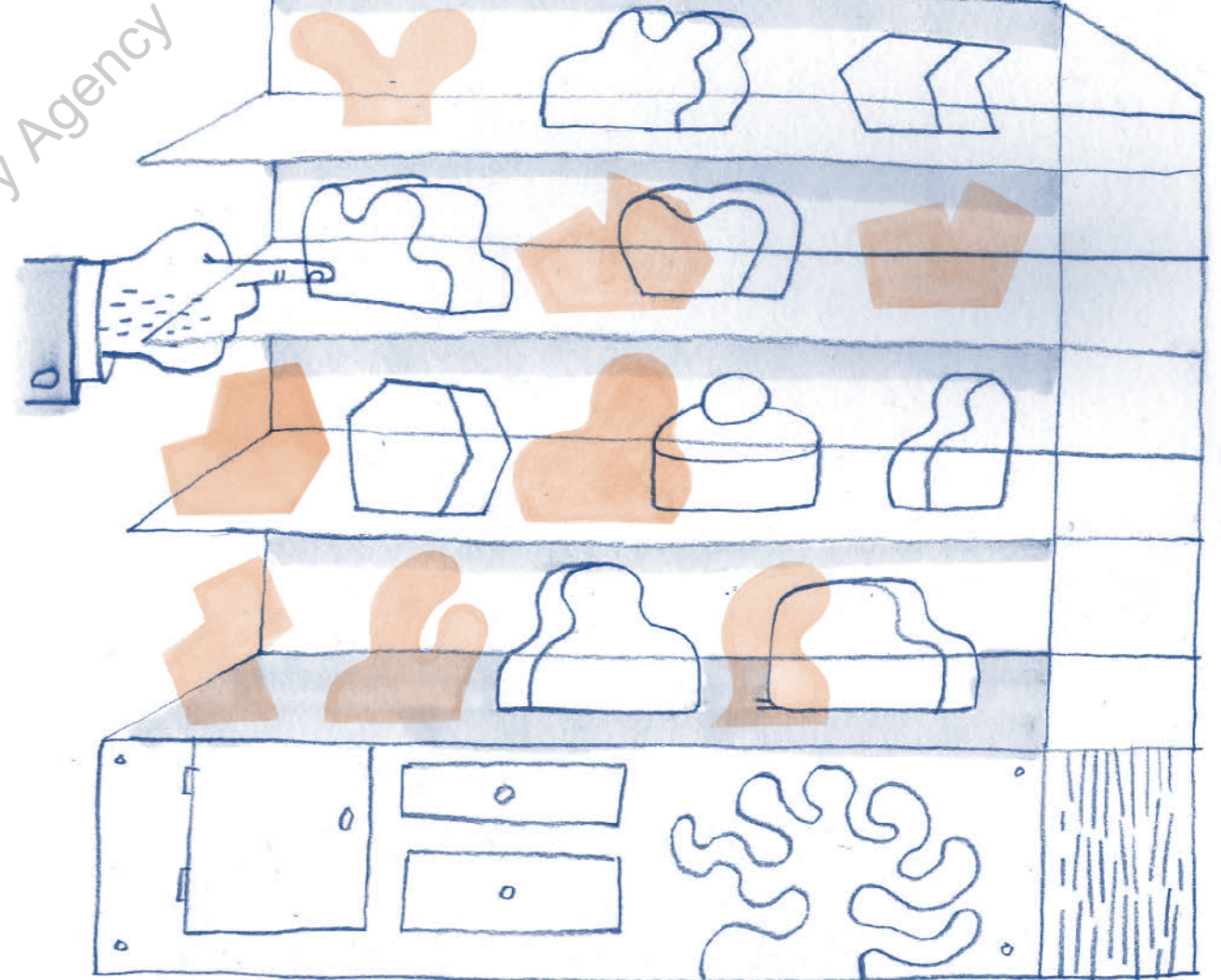
It looks just so.



I'm sure you have a shape too.
Assuming you exist – out there in the whiteness. Or beyond it.
Because what doesn't exist probably doesn't have one. I mean a shape.
But I'm not entirely sure.

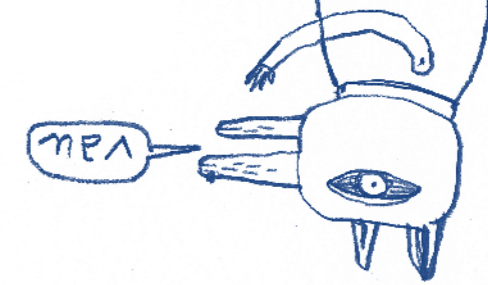


I've even thought up a place for keeping shapes of things not yet in existence. Like a storage room. Whenever something needs bringing into existence, that's the pick-up point for a shape, just so it has one. A rummage and a browse around before finally settling on one: aha! this will do just fine! And from then on, that thing exists.





AMAZ
 EZ EMEZ
 EZ MEG AZ EZ IS
 AZ MEG EZ AZ IS
 IGY EZ ES AZ AZ IS
 MEG EMEZ MEG IMIGY
 UGY AMAZ AMUGY
 EZ EZ MEG AZ
 AZ EZ IS AZ IS
 AMAZ
 EMEZ



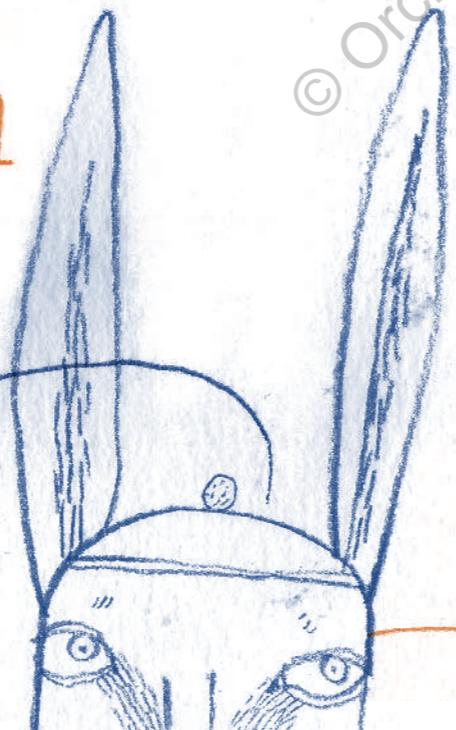
Haha, a talking dog.
 I'd love to believe that's what you'd say.

I'm not a hundred percent sure that's how it goes, I'm just saying. I like saying all kinds of things. It's nice to talk. Sometimes I just stop, look into the whiteness and say things. If you're there and you hear me, you may be laughing now.

Like this:

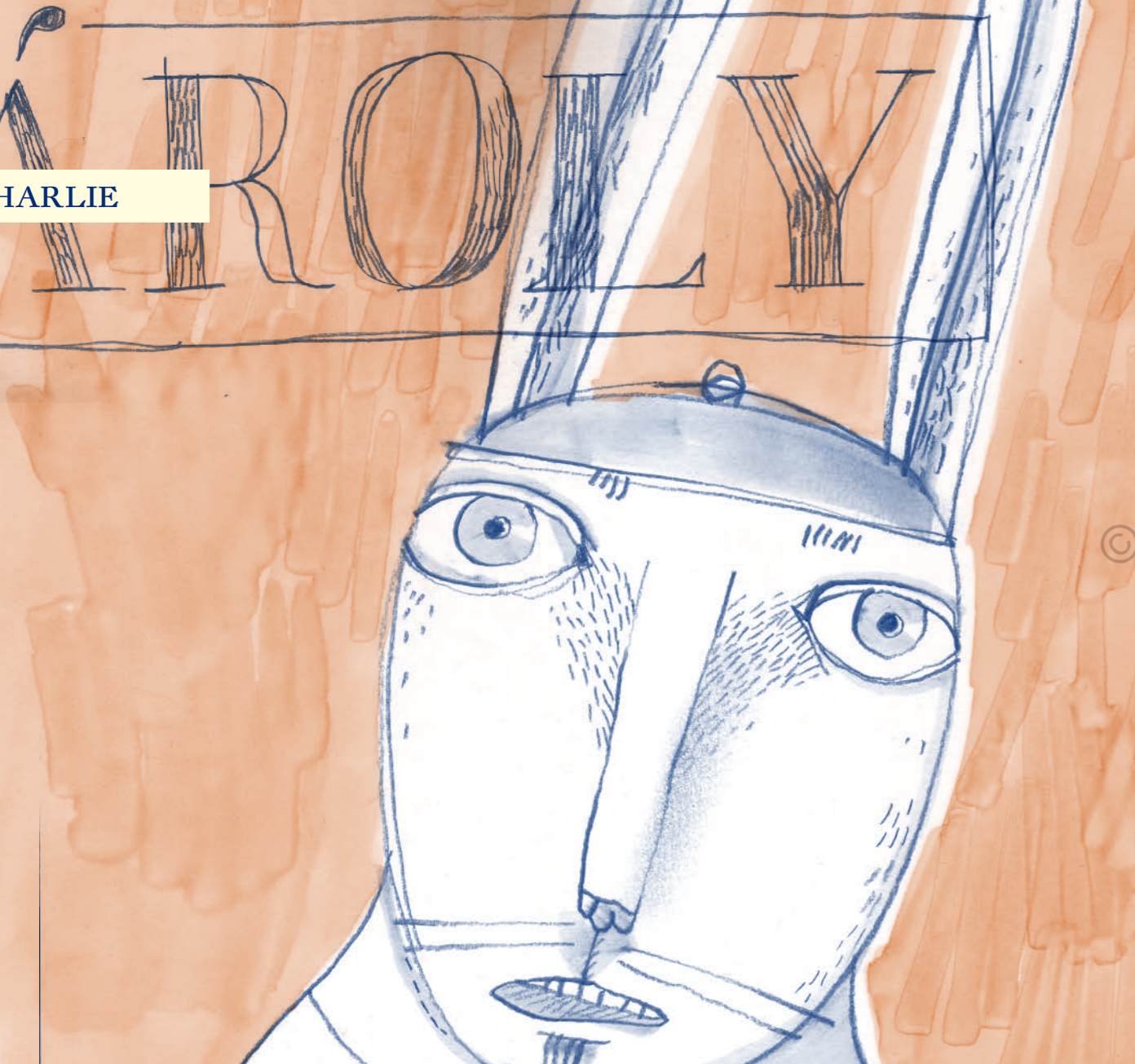
haha

I imagine hearing it.



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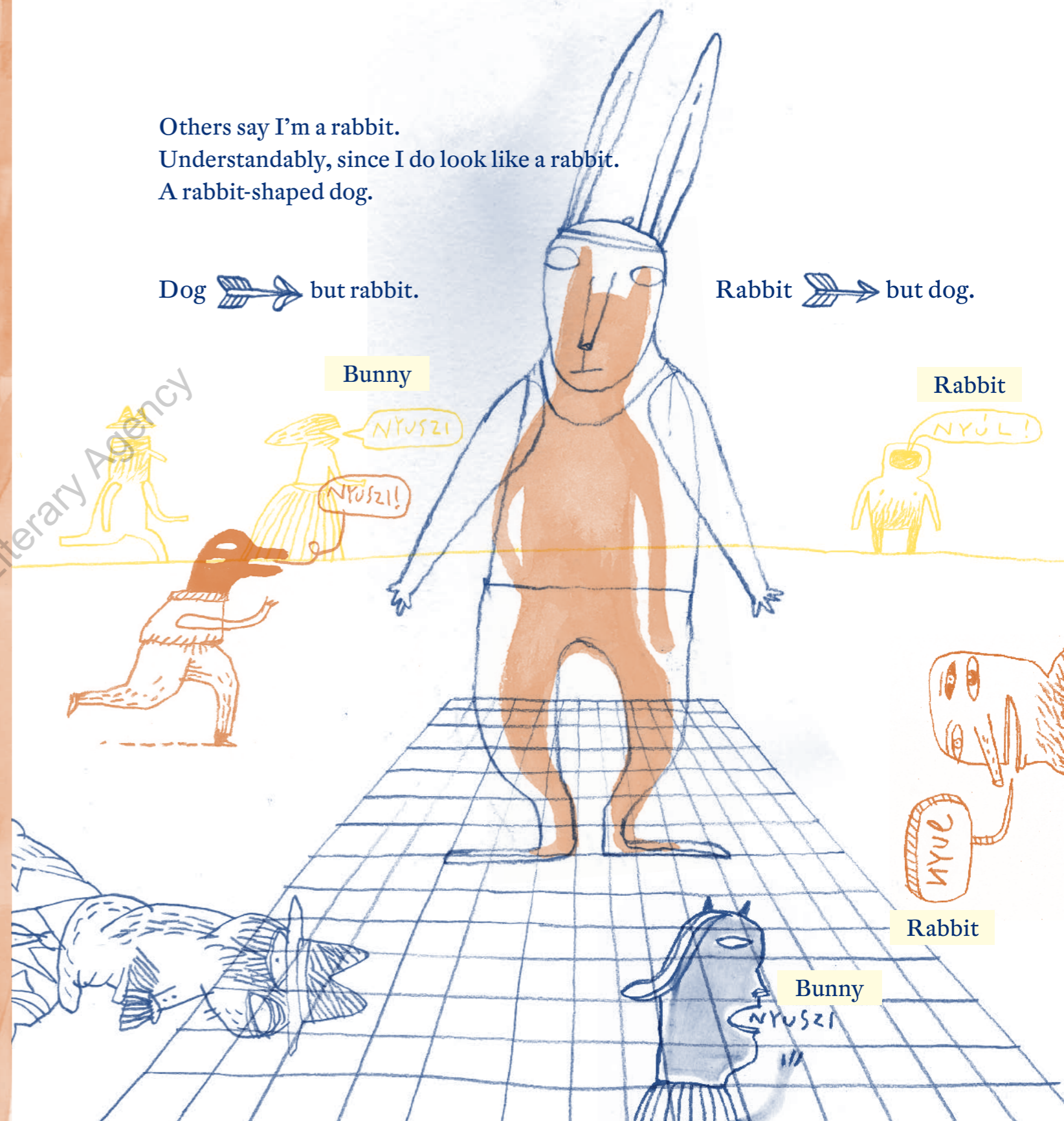
Charlie, and dog.
Charlie is written here,
the dog part you'll have to believe.
If you can, you'll be the first to.



Others say I'm a rabbit.
Understandably, since I do look like a rabbit.
A rabbit-shaped dog.

Dog → but rabbit.

Rabbit → but dog.



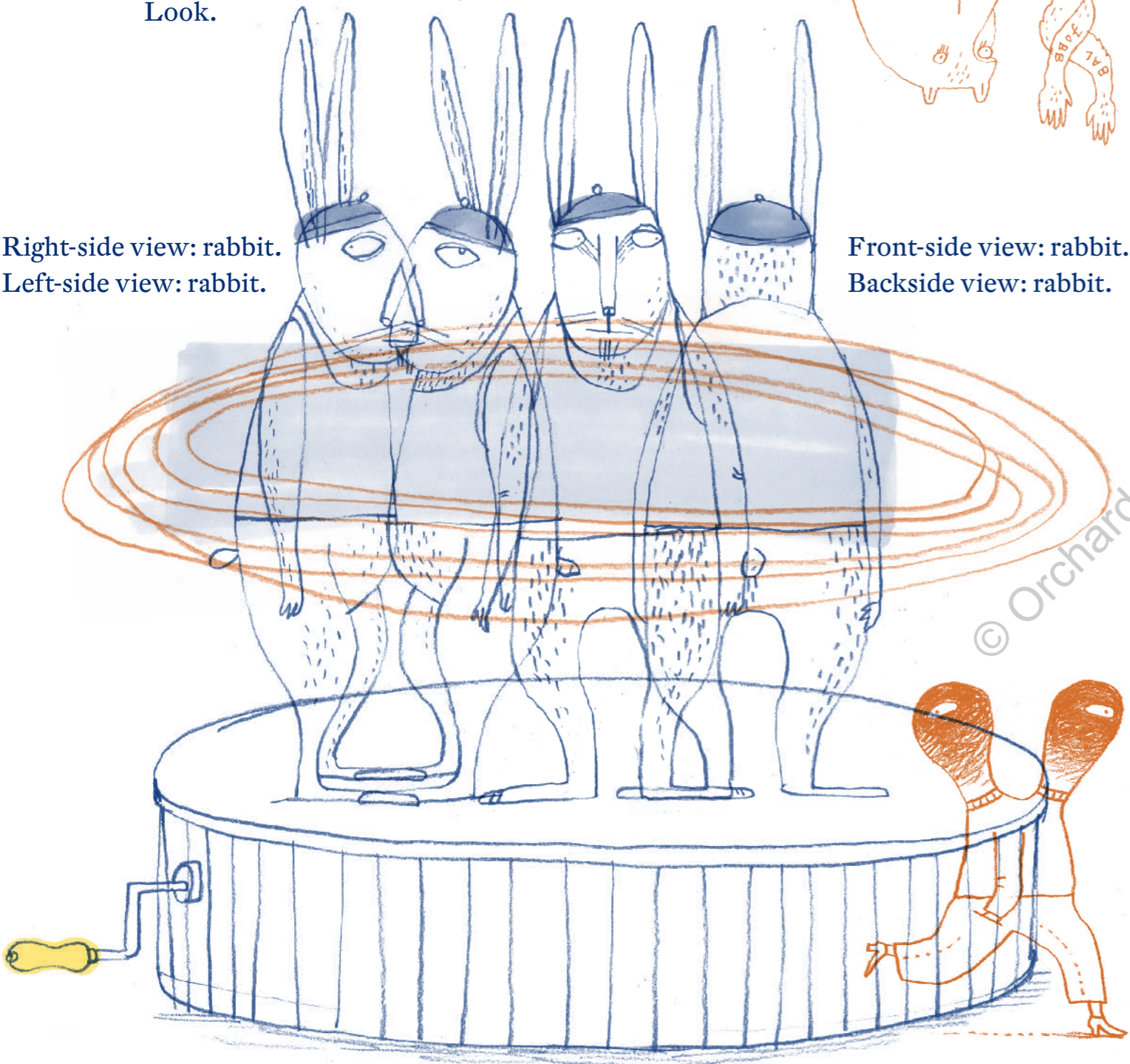
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Depends on how we look at it.
Look.



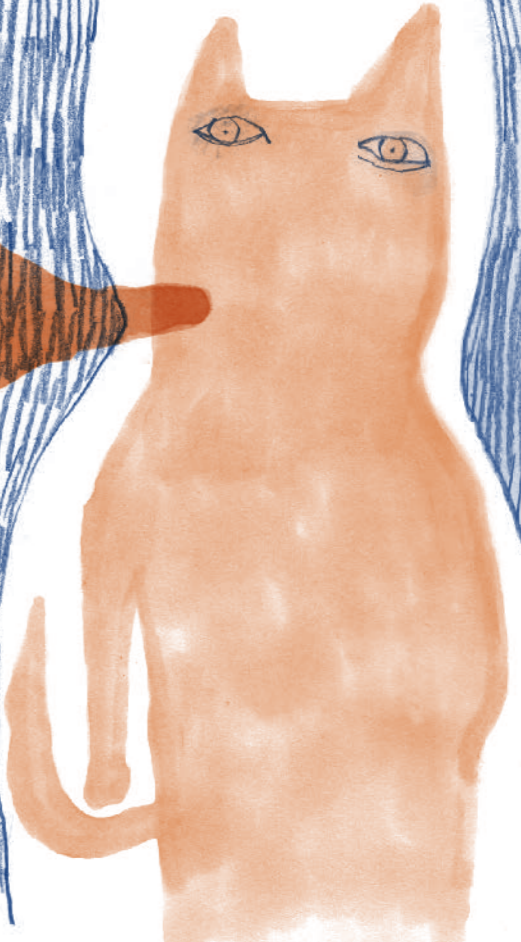
Right-side view: rabbit.
Left-side view: rabbit.

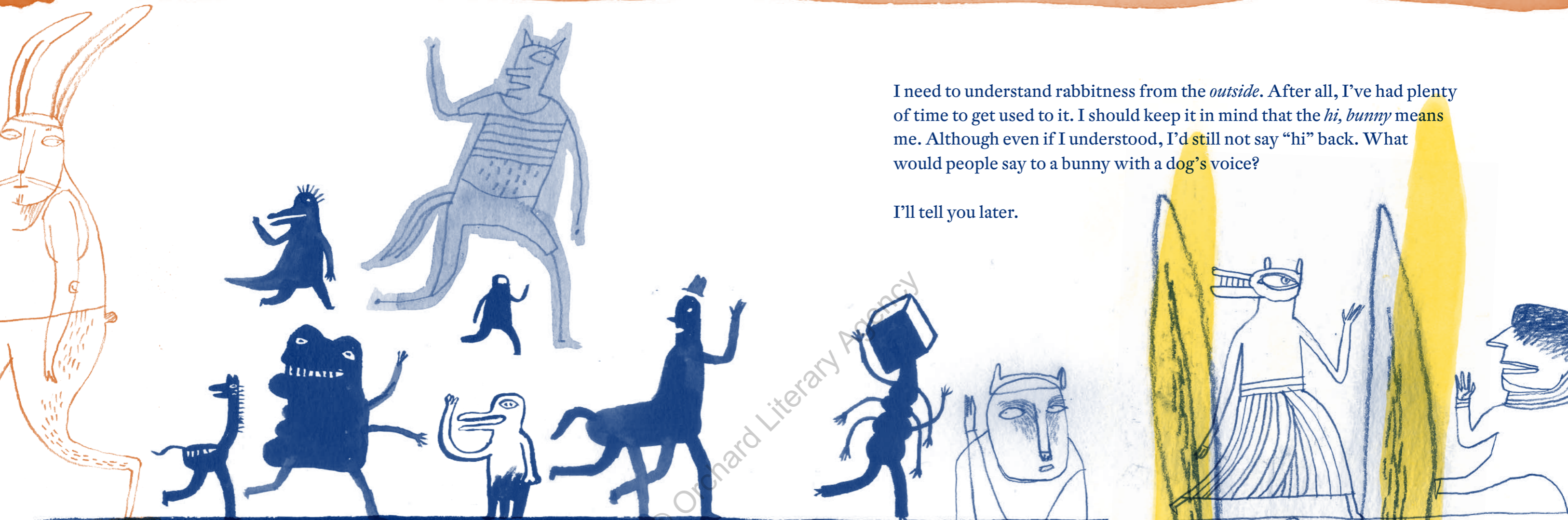
Front-side view: rabbit.
Backside view: rabbit.



On the inside, I'm not a rabbit.

But unfortunately I'm the only one to see myself from the inside. I'm totally a dog there. A proper dog. No pedigree, nothing fancy, an average canine. But I'm the only one who knows.





I need to understand rabbitness from the *outside*. After all, I've had plenty of time to get used to it. I should keep in mind that the *hi, bunny* means me. Although even if I understood, I'd still not say "hi" back. What would people say to a bunny with a dog's voice?

I'll tell you later.

All this has implications. Trust me on this. For instance I'm walking down the street and they wave at me, hi, bunny! And I never stop to say hi back because I always think they are talking to someone else. That's because I'm walking as a dog, not a bunny. Of course I could notice they are waving at me, but still.

But still, no.

vau

When it comes to me, these are the alternatives: rabbit shaped dog or bunny with dog's voice. I'm not spoiled for choice.

Kuszi, nyutya.

Dobbit, rag.

But that's enough for me.
I'd rather walk along.



Ellie thinks all this is only
in my head.
Nobody is actually laughing.
But I can hear them. Honest.

Hahaha, that's how they laugh.

If Ellie happens to be right, someone is laughing
inside my head. But what are they doing there?
And what are they laughing at? Me? But I'm
a proper dog inside. Is that funny too? Or it might
be the fact that from the inside there's a perfect
view of the outside situation?
That outside it's a *bunny*?



This is how I walk. Rabbitwalk. Some-
times I try walking doglike. It's hard. And
what's the point? They just point at me.
Look at that rabbit's walk!
And they all laugh.

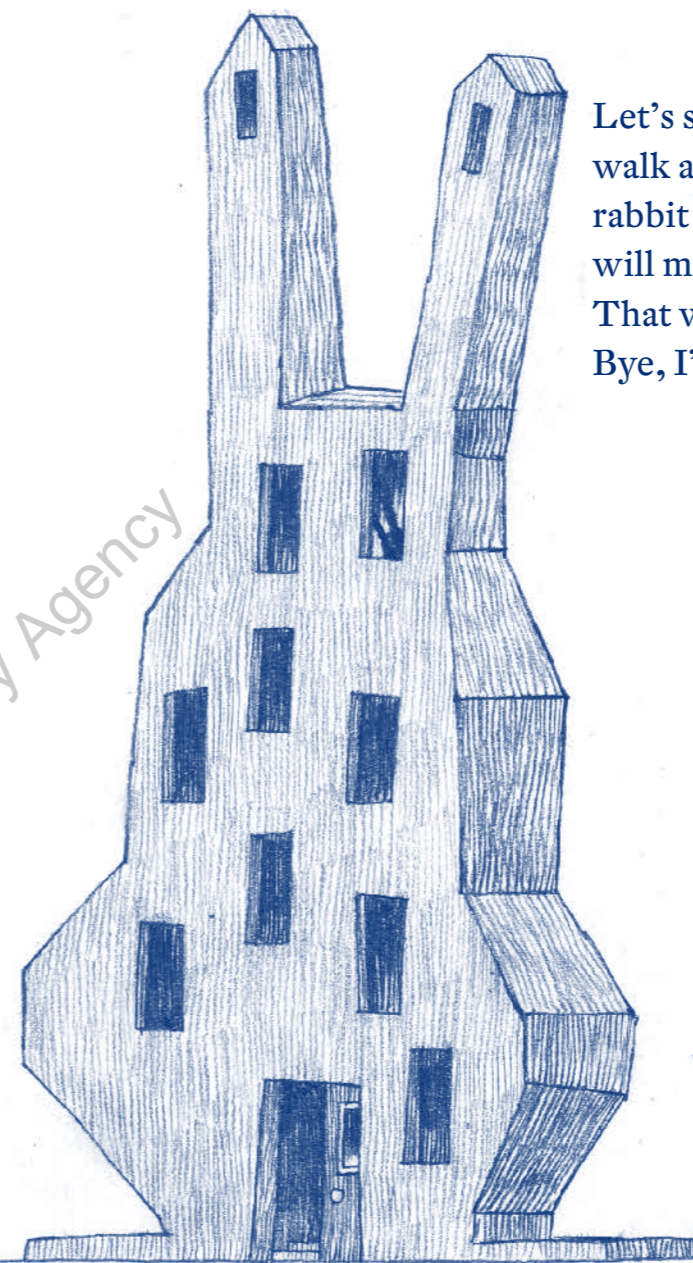
Whenever the laughter comes up,
question marks clog the inside.



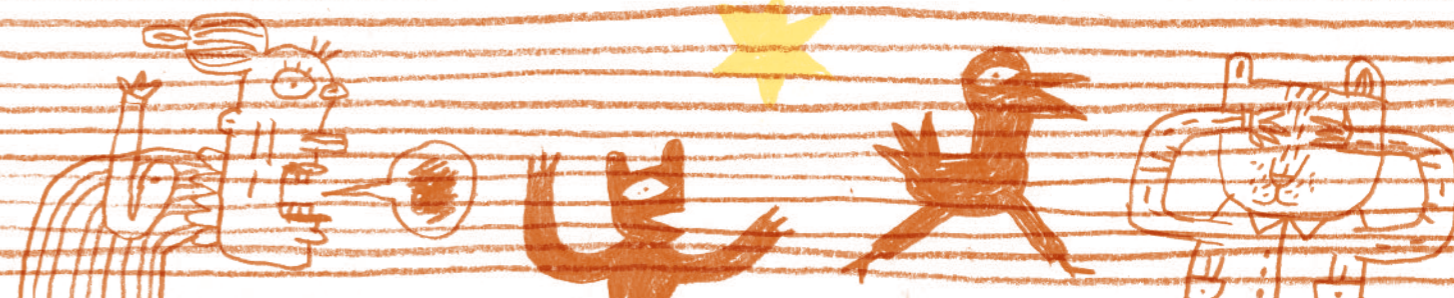
Leave it. Nobody can crawl into my head. I'm on the inside and that leaves no room for anyone else. Except possibly Ellie. I sit here like I'm in a house, my eyes are windows. I look around, let's see what's out there.



A walking house.
Rabbit shaped, it's a dog from inside.
I am not laughing.



Let's say this is just a rented place. I could walk away anytime, to leave this strange, rabbit shaped house behind. Someone else will move in instead of me. A rabbit, perhaps. That would be fitting. Bye, I'm out of here.





But that of course is not an option. You are a certain shape and there's no escape. Not like a coat or a house for example. There's no slipping out, or stepping out the door. You can't just get up and leave for good. You have to stay. They drew you there, so there you stay.

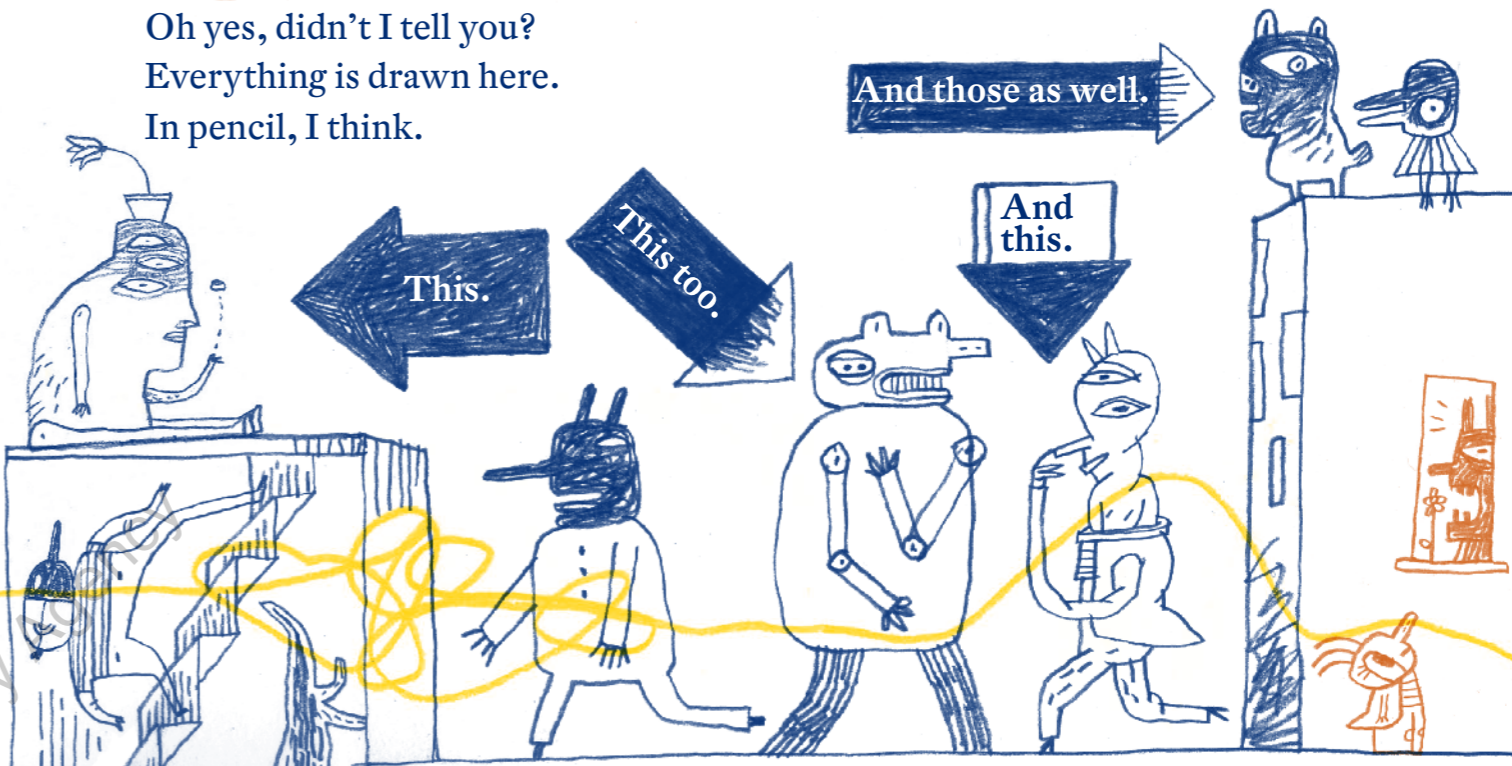
Oh yes, didn't I tell you?
Everything is drawn here.
In pencil, I think.

And those as well.

And this.

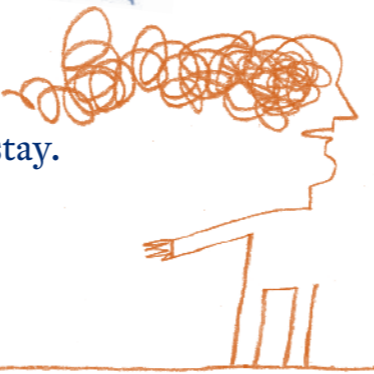
This.

This too.



Or is it obvious?
Somebody drew all the things
here.
Including me. It's that kind of
place.

ah



I'm a dog-drawing.

A dog that was drawn shaped like a rabbit.

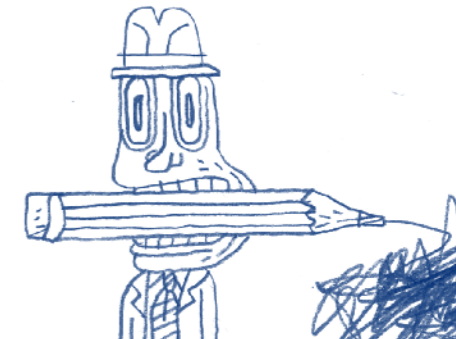
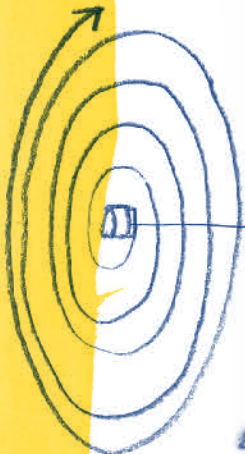
Rabbit.

Dog.

Rabbit.

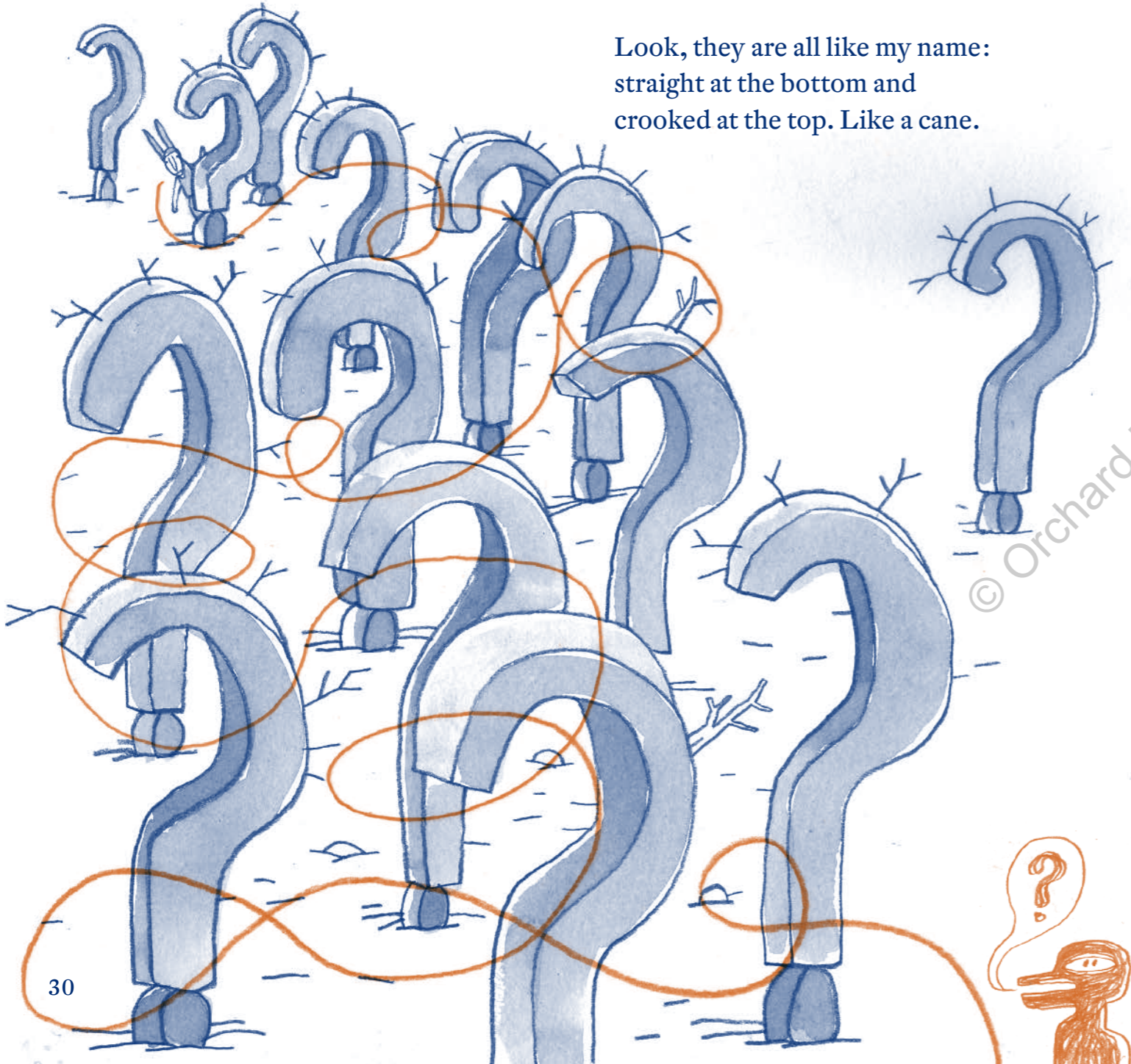
Sometimes I wonder why they did it.
Why give me such a shape?

Because someone felt like it? Was it a pleasant shape?
Was there a smile when I was drawn? Drawing the rabbit head and the rabbit legs? Were the ears finally adjusted to look longer? To make the overall effect more *rabbitlike*?
Funnier?
Is it *funny* to be a rabbit?
When really you're not?

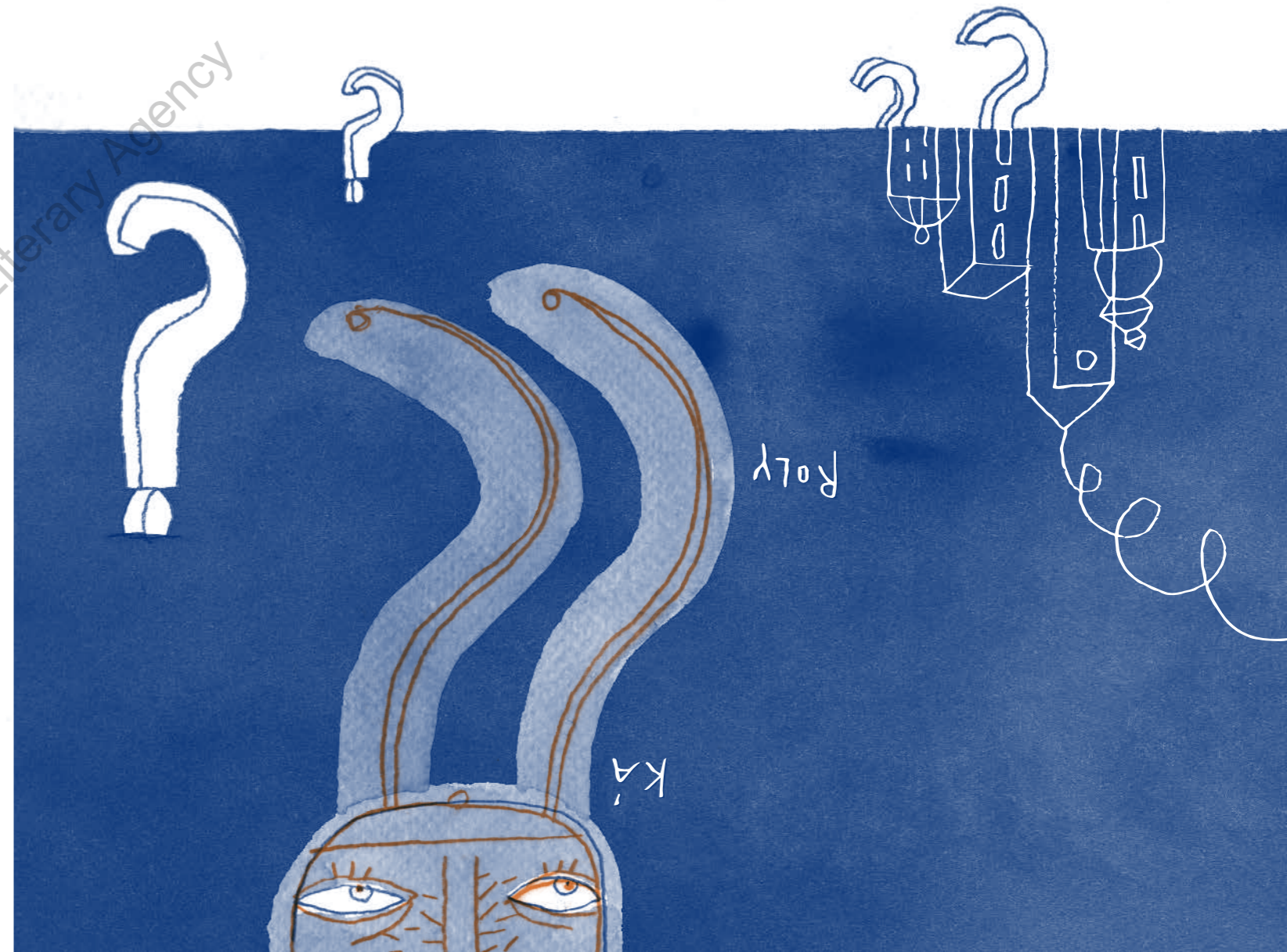


These question marks again. When I walk around and wonder, sometimes it feels like I'm lost in a forest of question marks.

Look, they are all like my name: straight at the bottom and crooked at the top. Like a cane.



Maybe it's because I'm a question mark too. This is why CHARLIE was written beside me. Just so I know. A rabbit shaped question mark. Not a dog.

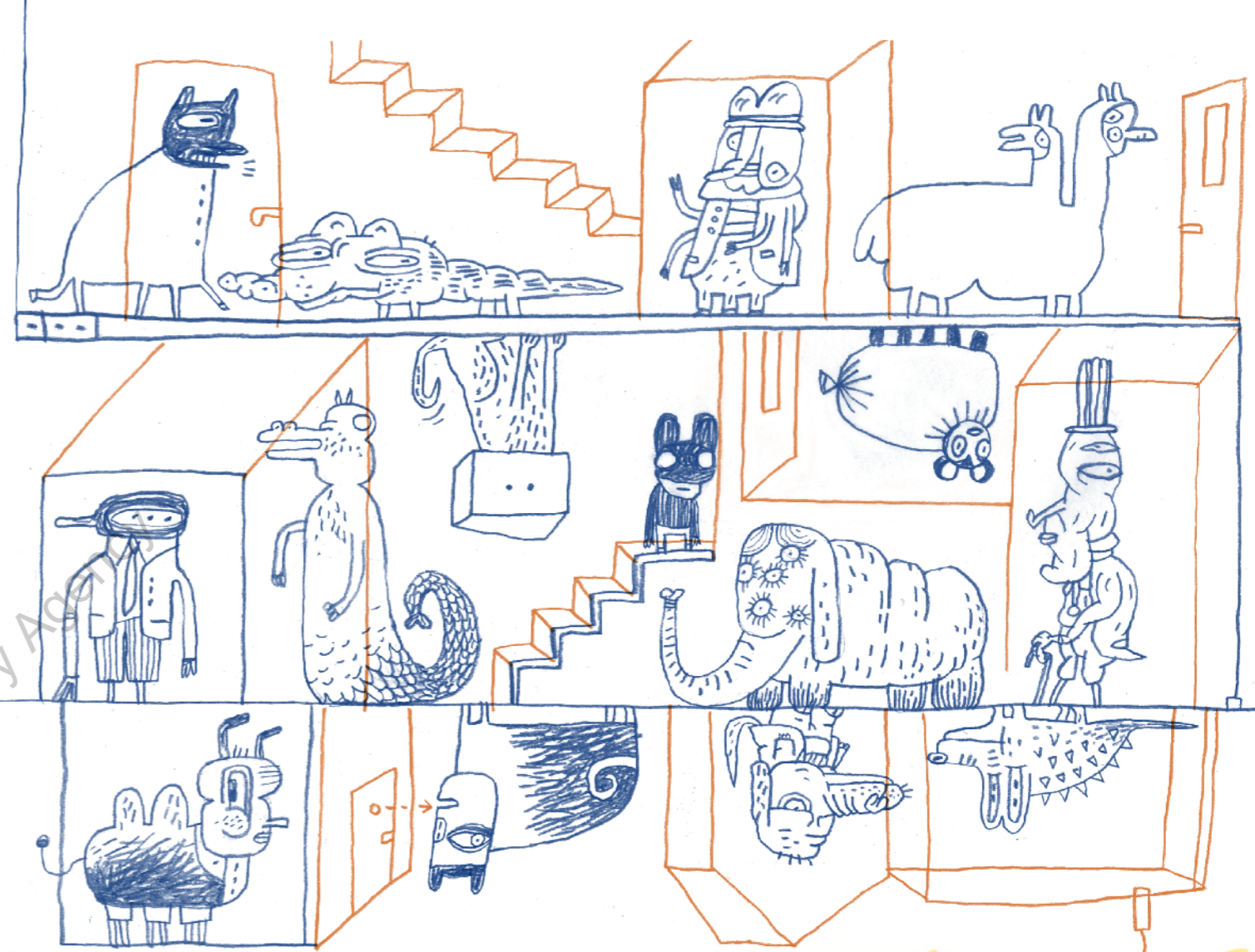


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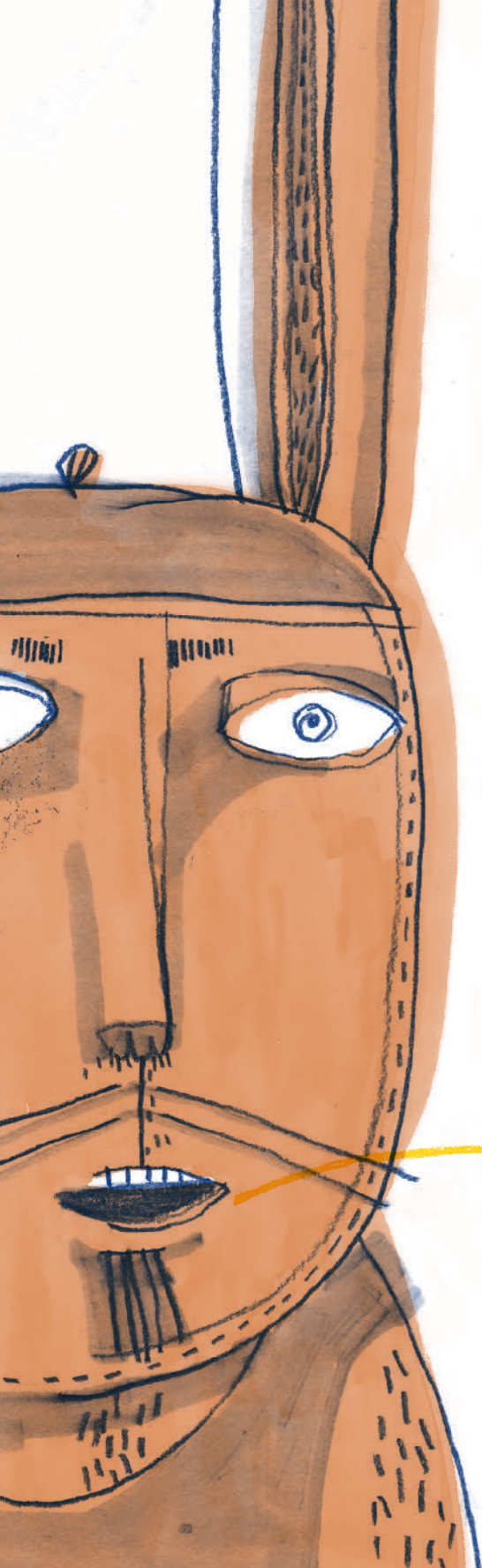
Ellie says it may have been unintentional. That the person was not paying attention. They wanted a dog, but it somehow ended up a rabbit. Maybe they didn't know how to draw a proper dog. And there was no time for corrections. They were otherwise engaged or something. Or, say, the eraser went missing.

With an eraser, Ellie says, everything that was drawn can be removed. Us too, anything. You just rub the paper with it for a while and there you go. Like we were never even here.



I know it's like that too. Elsewhere. But not here. You can't do that in a book. Once you get into a book, you stay like that and it's final. You can't be erased or corrected. It's like a magic spell. Or some kind of curse. Whether you like it or not.

Sometimes it comes to mind.



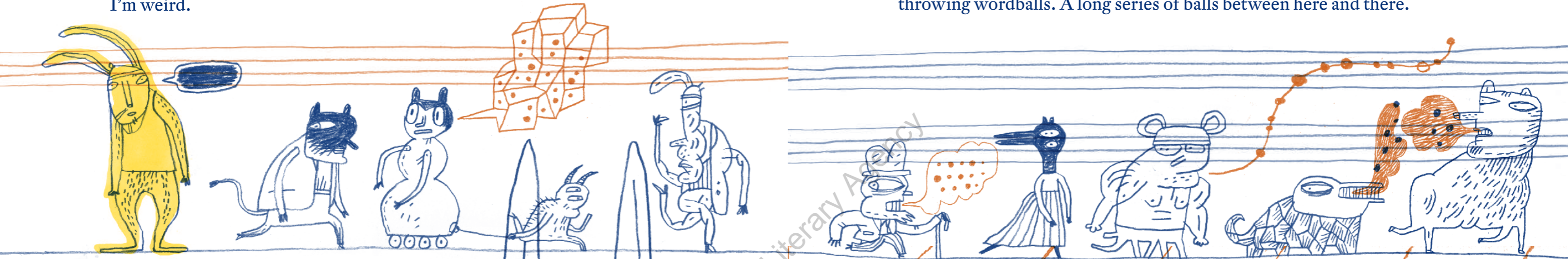
Like now that I stopped to talk to you again. If you exist! Because it already occurred to me that they may have erased you away. You're not in the book, so it's a possibility. That may be why everything is blank and white whenever I look out there. If books could be erased too, maybe there would be nothing in here either. But they can't. I imagine it anyway. I imagine how everything here is the same blank white. Like this:

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I think about this, and I like it.

But nobody erases anything around here. They can't. They can where you are, though. So it's possible that I am talking to myself here. Passers-by see a muttering rabbit when they walk past. I imagine they think I'm weird.

Right now I'm on about trying to have a conversation here. There are a lot of folks in this book. So I walked up and started talking. The way others would do. I talk – they answer. They talk – I answer. Like we were throwing wordballs. A long series of balls between here and there.



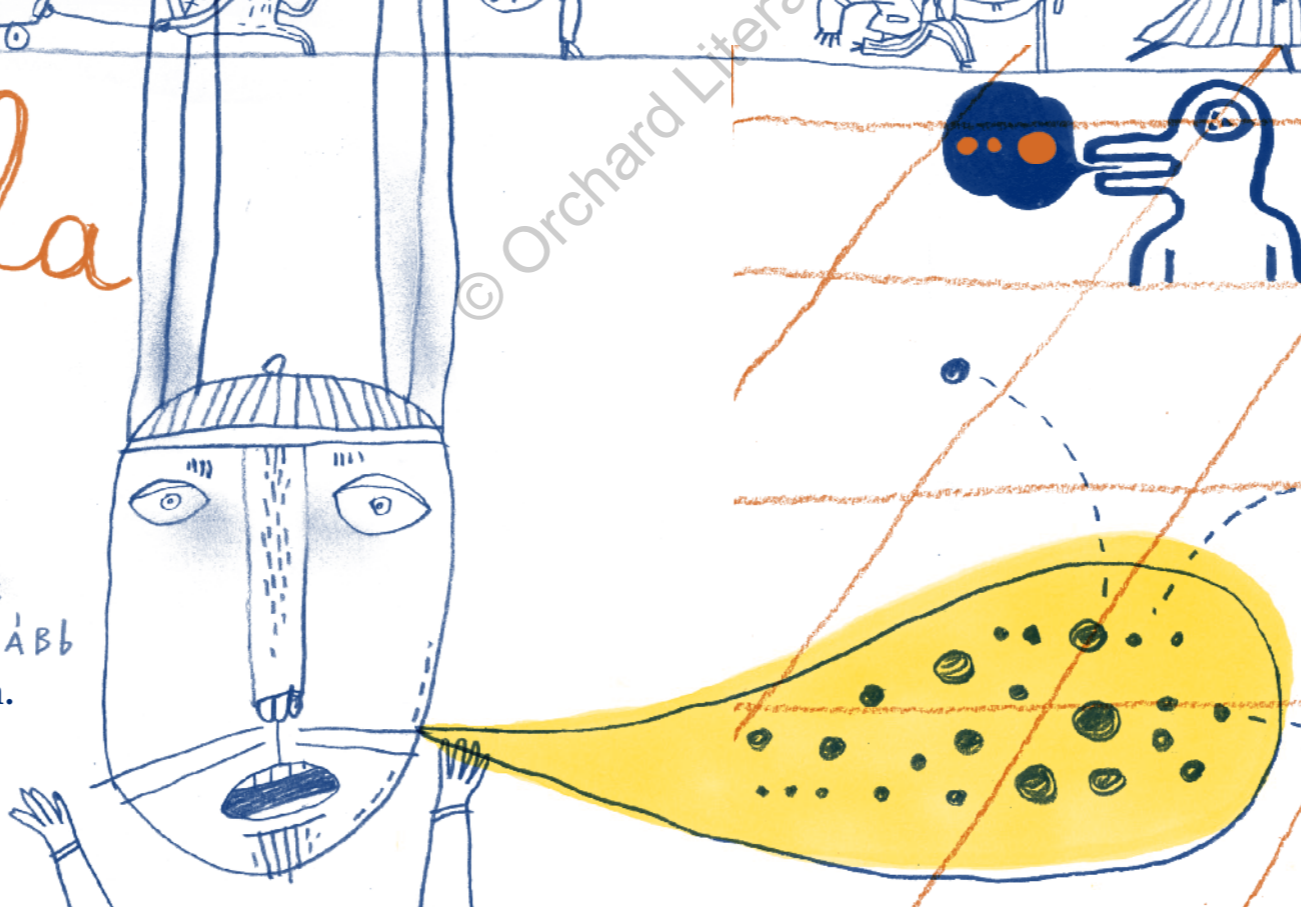
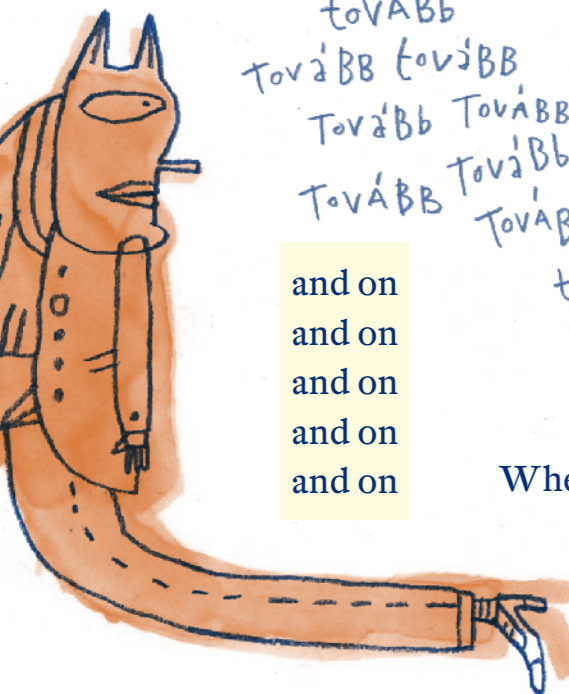
Whenever someone walks up I start humming.

lala

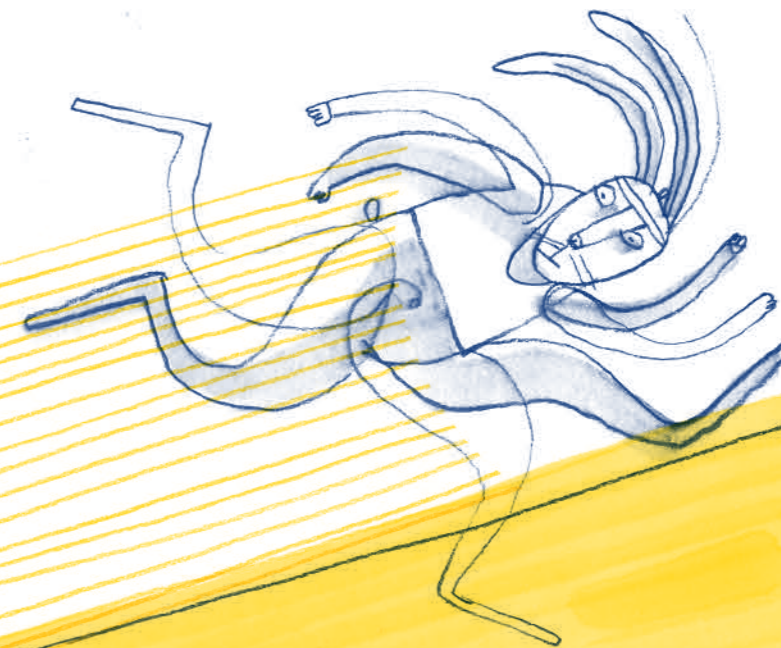
tovÁBB
 tovÁBB tovÁBB
 tovÁBB tovÁBB
 tovÁBB tovÁBB
 tovÁBB tovÁBB
 tovÁBB tovÁBB
 tovÁBB tovÁBB
 tovÁBB tovÁBB
 tovÁBB
 tovÁBB

and on
and on
and on
and on
and on

When they leave, I go on.



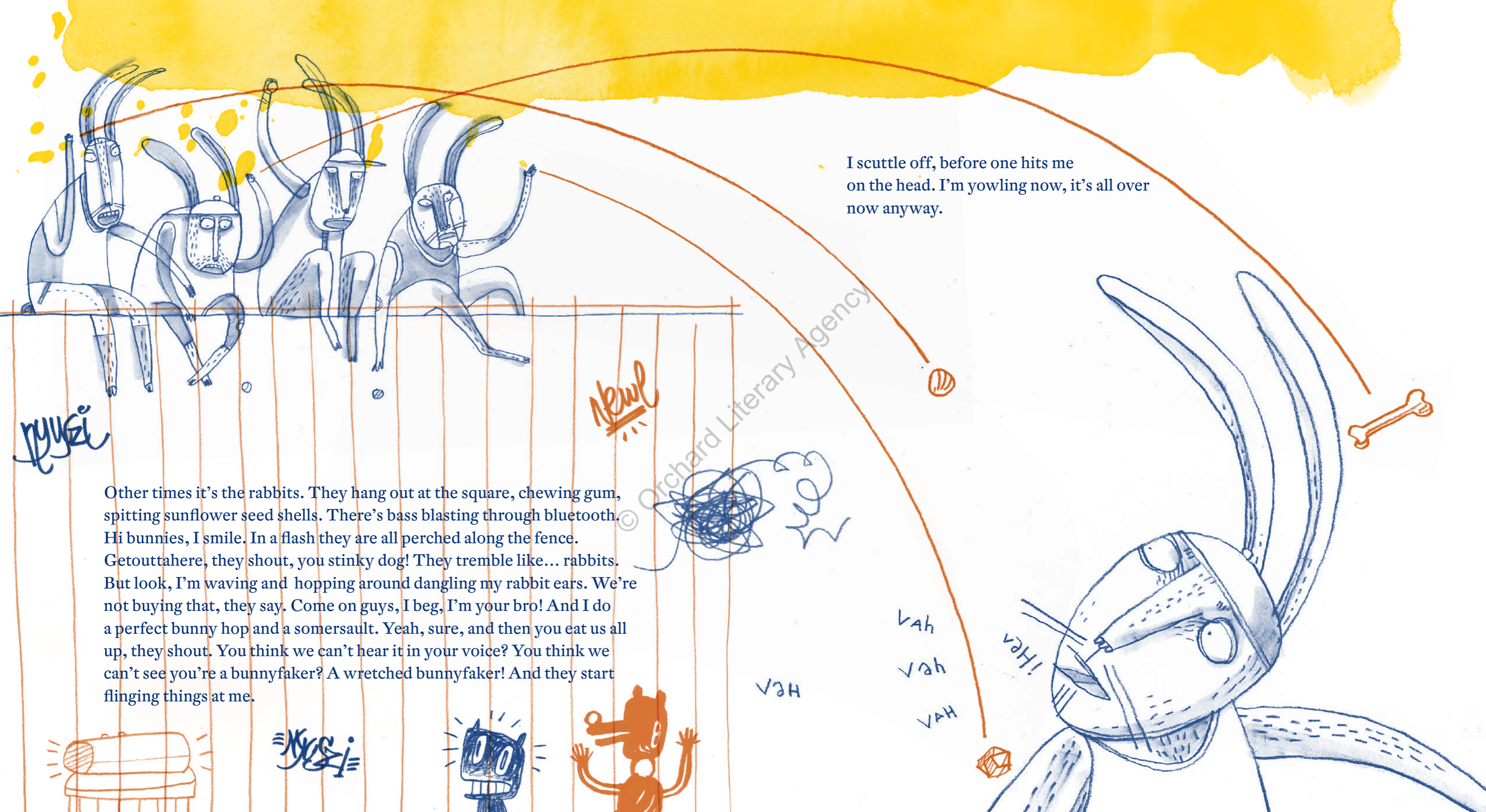
Like one day I walk up to the dogs, good morning, how do you do. They are sitting on a coffeshop terrace, stirring their lattes, nibbling on bone cookies. Whassup rabbit, they say. Excuse me, I'm a dog, I quietly remark. Though rabbit shaped, but still a dog like you. Oh come on, they giggle and slurp their milk froth, you're a rabbit, totally a rabbit! Maybe a bit rabbitlike, I nod, or even rabbity. But a dog all the same! Consider my voice for instance. And I show them. *Bow-wow*. They guffaw, crumbs are flying around. Only we get to bark here, honey-bunny, they shout. There's no such thing as a rabbitdog, or a dograbbit for that matter, we're not in a fairytale, buns! And they storm me to tear at my fur.



Rabbit runs. It's useful, when needed.



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I scuttle off, before one hits me on the head. I'm yowling now, it's all over now anyway.

Other times it's the rabbits. They hang out at the square, chewing gum, spitting sunflower seed shells. There's bass blasting through bluetooth. Hi bunnies, I smile. In a flash they are all perched along the fence. Getouttahere, they shout, you stinky dog! They tremble like... rabbits. But look, I'm waving and hopping around dangling my rabbit ears. We're not buying that, they say. Come on guys, I beg, I'm your bro! And I do a perfect bunny hop and a somersault. Yeah, sure, and then you eat us all up, they shout. You think we can't hear it in your voice? You think we can't see you're a bunnyfaker? A wretched bunnyfaker! And they start flinging things at me.

nyugi

New!

scribbled blue lines and symbols

Heh

Vah

Vah

Vah

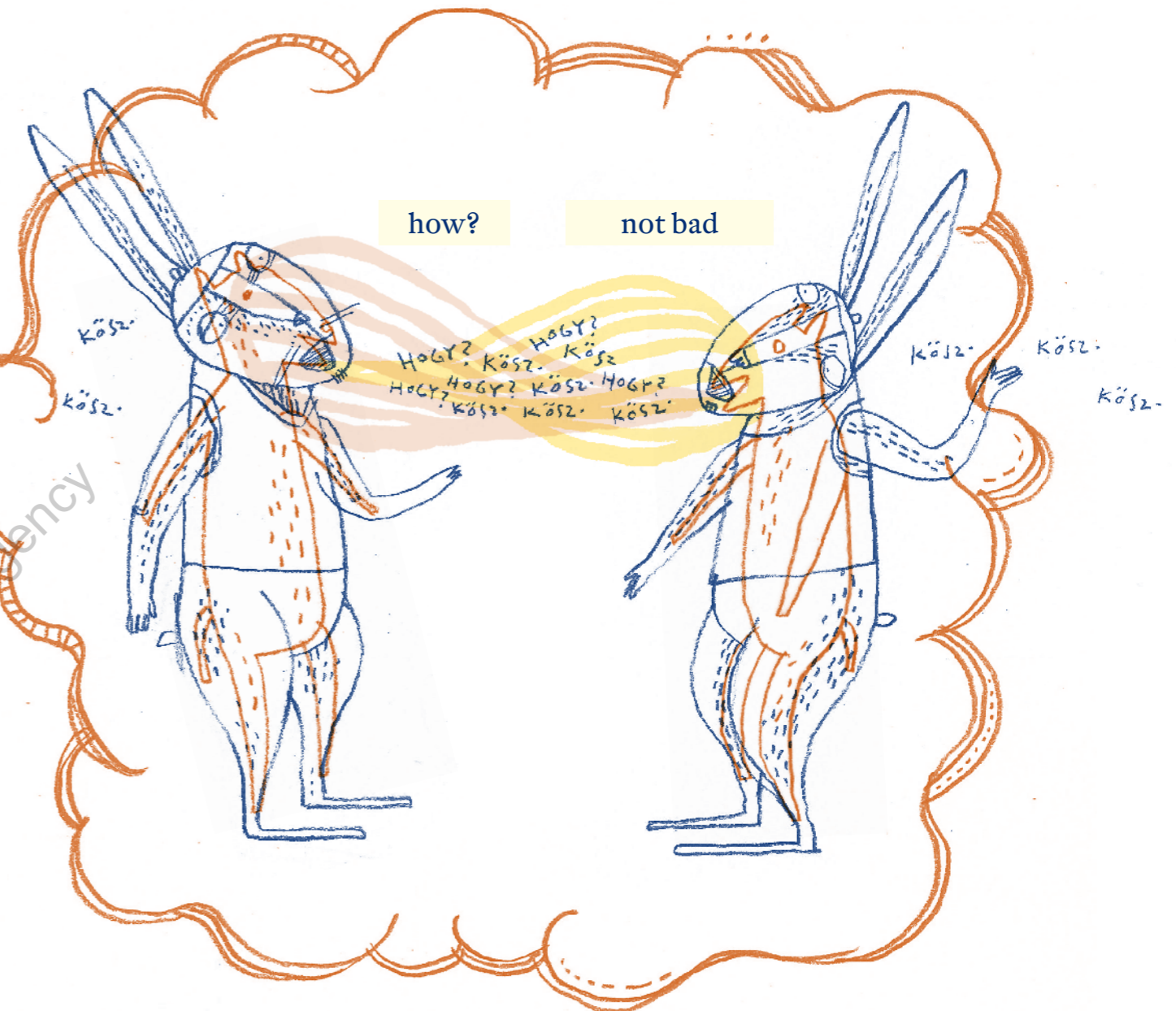
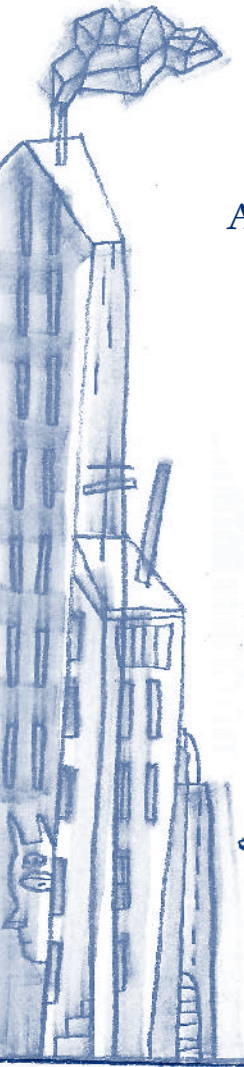
!Heh

nyugi



No problem.
I'm walking here. My name walks along with me. Charlie. Page after page. It's like I could walk on forever in this book. I really could. It's not weird, I'm used to it.

As I walk, I fantasize, I've got the time.



Like I fantasize about finding another one like me. Exactly the same. Well not exactly, but still. Another dog messed up in the exact *same way*. We would chat a while. *How are you? Not bad.* The way two dogs talk. Nothing special, two average dogs. We would be talking to a rabbit, but saying things to the dog *inside*.





Or just the opposite: I would find a dog shaped rabbit. Let's say. A rabbit that is messed up exactly the opposite of me. Then what? Would I scare him if I asked *what's up* – in a dog voice? Would he make silent gestures just to hide his inward rabbit? Would he even run away? Would people stare saying look, the dog's running from the rabbit?

Would an inward rabbit be afraid of an inward dog?

Or could the same happen with roles reversed? Would I run away with not so much as a *what's up*? Because all I'd only see would be like wow, a dog? What with me looking all rabbit, of course? Best leave things as they are? Best avoid torn fur and gnawed rabbit ears? Would it never even occur to me he's a rabbit inside all along?

Would the rabbit shape flee the dog shape – though no less of a dog himself inside?



Now I'll stop, and shake my rabbit ears.



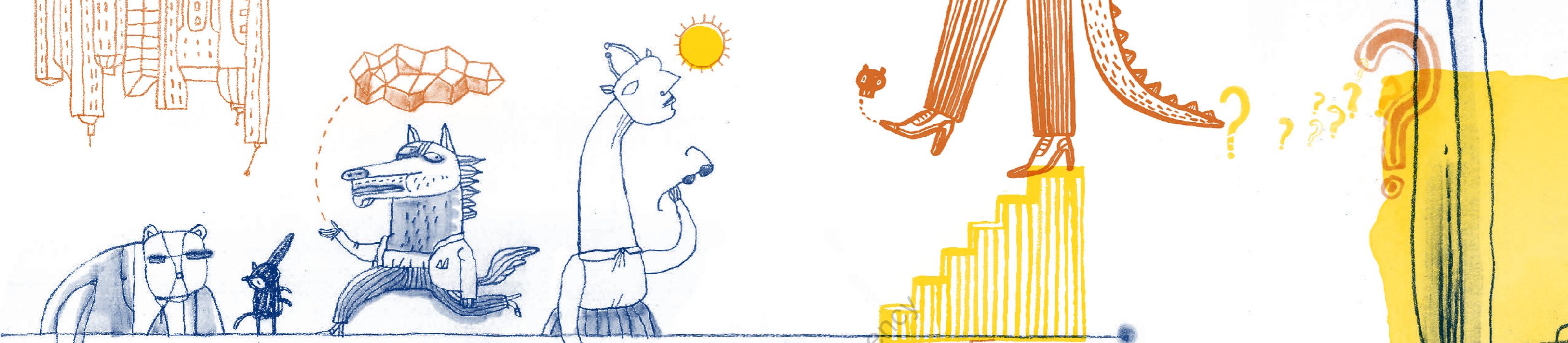
I'm not walking alone here, there are others. There's quite a bustle going on in this book.



All sorts of folks are walking up and down. I'm watching them. They're all different. A bear, a shrew, a man with a horse's head, a giraffe-like figure over there. And a lot of other folks, too.

Sometimes it's the outside we fear, other times it's the inside. Or is that just me? Is this a rabbit thing? I'd rather move along.





I'm looking at them. I say: this is a bear, this is a shrew, this is a man with a horse's head. And that's a giraffe-like figure. And all the rest. There, that's how they're shaped. They were drawn this way. *Somebody* drew them this way.



If you weren't erased, maybe you can see them too. Here they come: a snake, a squirrel, all kinds. Beautiful, ugly, funny, big and small. Passers-by pencilled in. They're walking in a book – they can't be erased or even corrected. And a little to the side there I am too. Me, the rabbit.

CHARLIE. KAROLY.
A rabbit shaped dog.



What are you looking at, asks Ellie. She always asks me that when I come to look out from the edge of the page. She keeps asking questions, too. Making more question marks. That's not what she was made up for. Nothing, I'm just looking, I tell her. And I shrug. I'm just looking and thinking things. Thinking this and that.

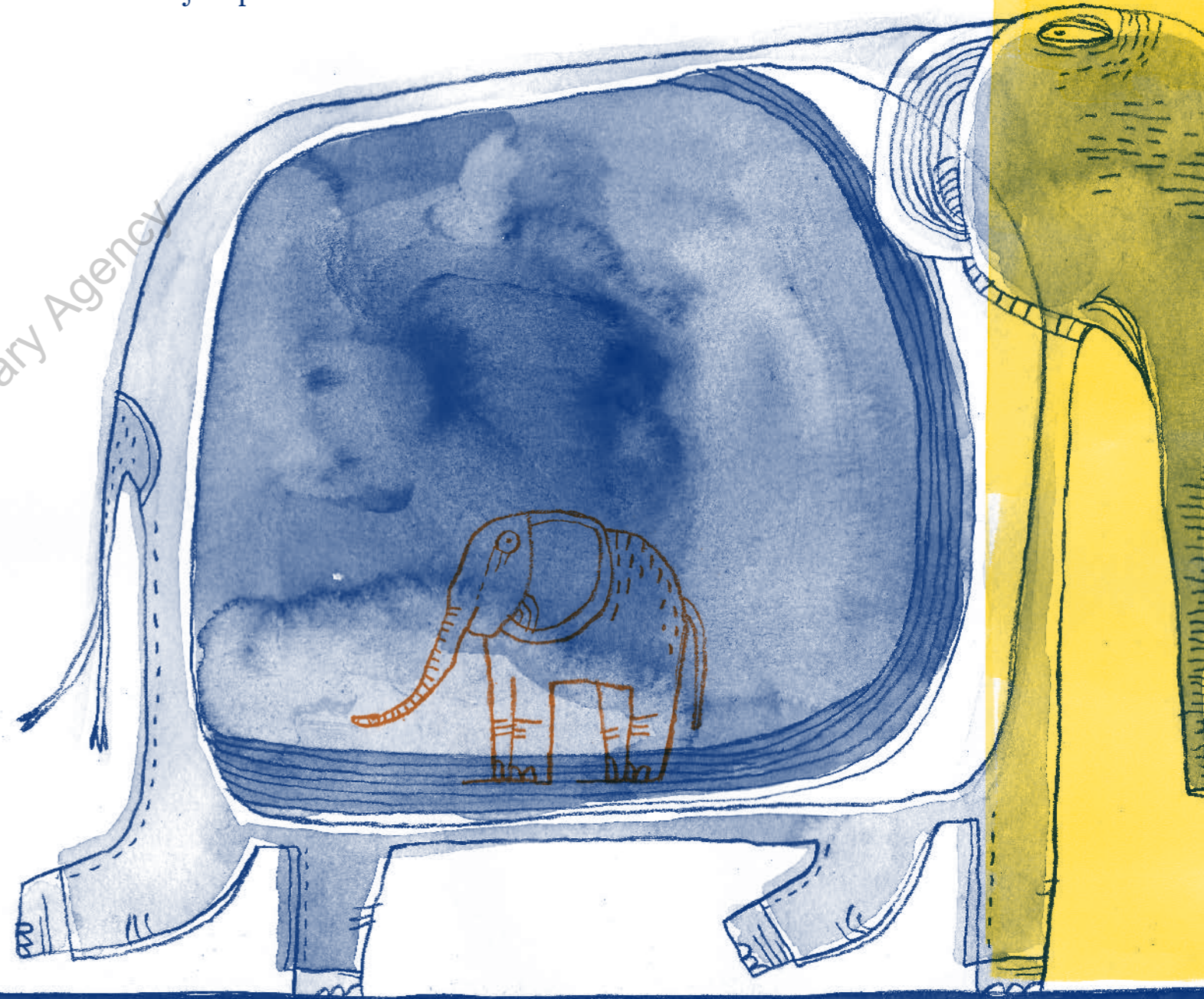
This and that.
This and that.
This and that.
This and that.
This and that.
This and that.



Like what?
Like for instance could the bear walking along there have *another* bear living inside it? I mean he's a bear on the inside too, but not the same one. A different kind of bear than on the outside.



Or take that elephant over there. I imagine there's an inside elephant too, only a much smaller one. A scruffy trunked creature lurking inside the burly elephant.



Or take that sprat of a mouse with the tote bag. Could it be he's only small by mistake, while really he is big? A huge mouse inside the tiny one? Only they drew him too small, like me being a rabbit? How does the poor thing squeeze into himself?



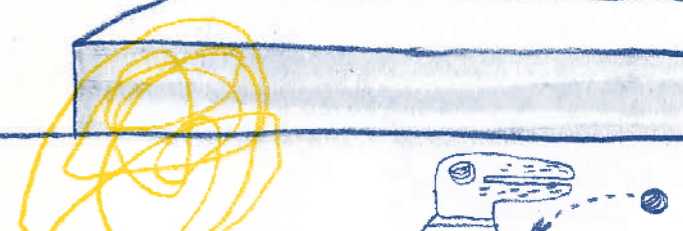
These are the things I think about.
I'm poking the page's edge and wriggling my whiskers rabbit-like.
I see, says Ellie.
Then again I don't.



Suddenly I pretend to hum,
because somebody is
coming this way.

Lala.

They're gone.



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I mean there's no knowing for sure what lurks beneath the shapes, I tell Ellie. What's really inside. Shapes are like closed boxes, we can't see inside. The shape of the bear, the elephant, the mouse. And all the rest: the squirrel, the weasel, the bat, the two headed pony. That giraffe-like individual.

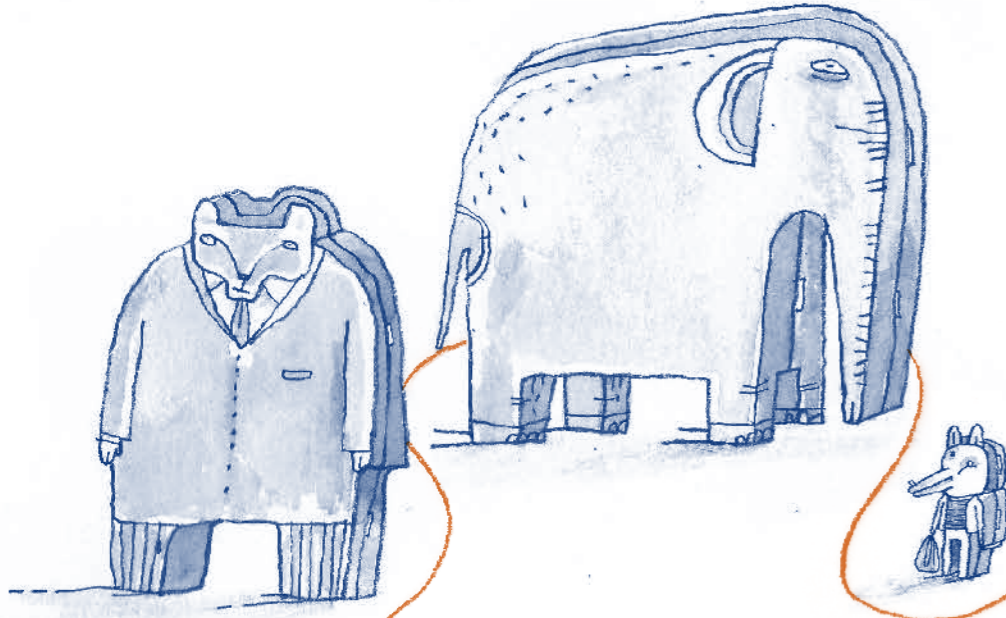


Of course I may be quite wrong, I don't know. It's a secret. I don't have secrets. I speak up. A rabbit with a dog's voice.

~~TITOK~~ ~~tiTok~~ ~~tiTok~~ ~~tiTok~~
TITOK ~~tiTok~~ ~~tiTok~~
~~TITOK~~ ~~tiTok~~ ~~tiTok~~

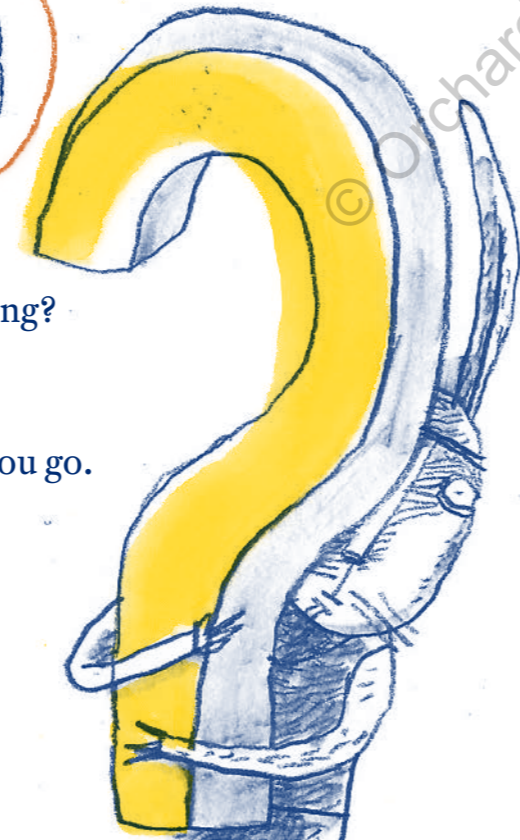


Vau

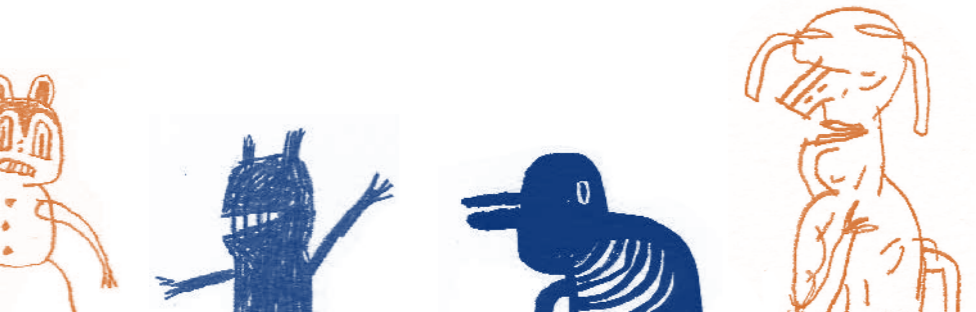


They were drawn this way – but wait!
What if they didn't turn out perfect either?
If they too have been different on the inside all along?
Even if only a little different?

We need a huge question mark here. Here you go.



I should go up to them once.
Hello, are you sure this is really the kind of bear you are? Are you really such a big elephant? And are you truly such a trifling little mouse?
Where would that get me? What would they think? Would there be shouting and *getoutofherebunny?*
Or would they just stare at me dimly, like what the heck? Like what does this weird guy with the dog's voice want?



Could they possibly not even follow what I tell them?
Because bears only speak bear, elephants only elephant, and mice only squeak mouse?



Or could they possibly not even bother to stop and listen, but walk along their business?

With not so much as a shrug?

Like I'm not even drawn here?

Like I'm just empty space on the paper? A nonexistent rabbit?

Whatever. I'll be moving along my way too.

Meanwhile I'm thinking this over. Really, what would it be like to be invisible? The idea comes to me out of the blue. It can happen. It's not weird, I'm used to it. It may be easier that way. Nobody would mistake me for a rabbit.

Someone is coming.

LaLa

They are gone.

However!

Would people know then that I'm here in the book?
Would I exist at all? If somebody has no shape at all, do they actually exist?
Wouldn't people think it's just a random bark they hear?
Or maybe just an imagined bark?
Which doesn't actually exist?
Supposing I would bark... Can invisible dogs bark, I ask. Can one bark out of a nonexistent rabbit?

And my name?

KáRoly? CHARLIE

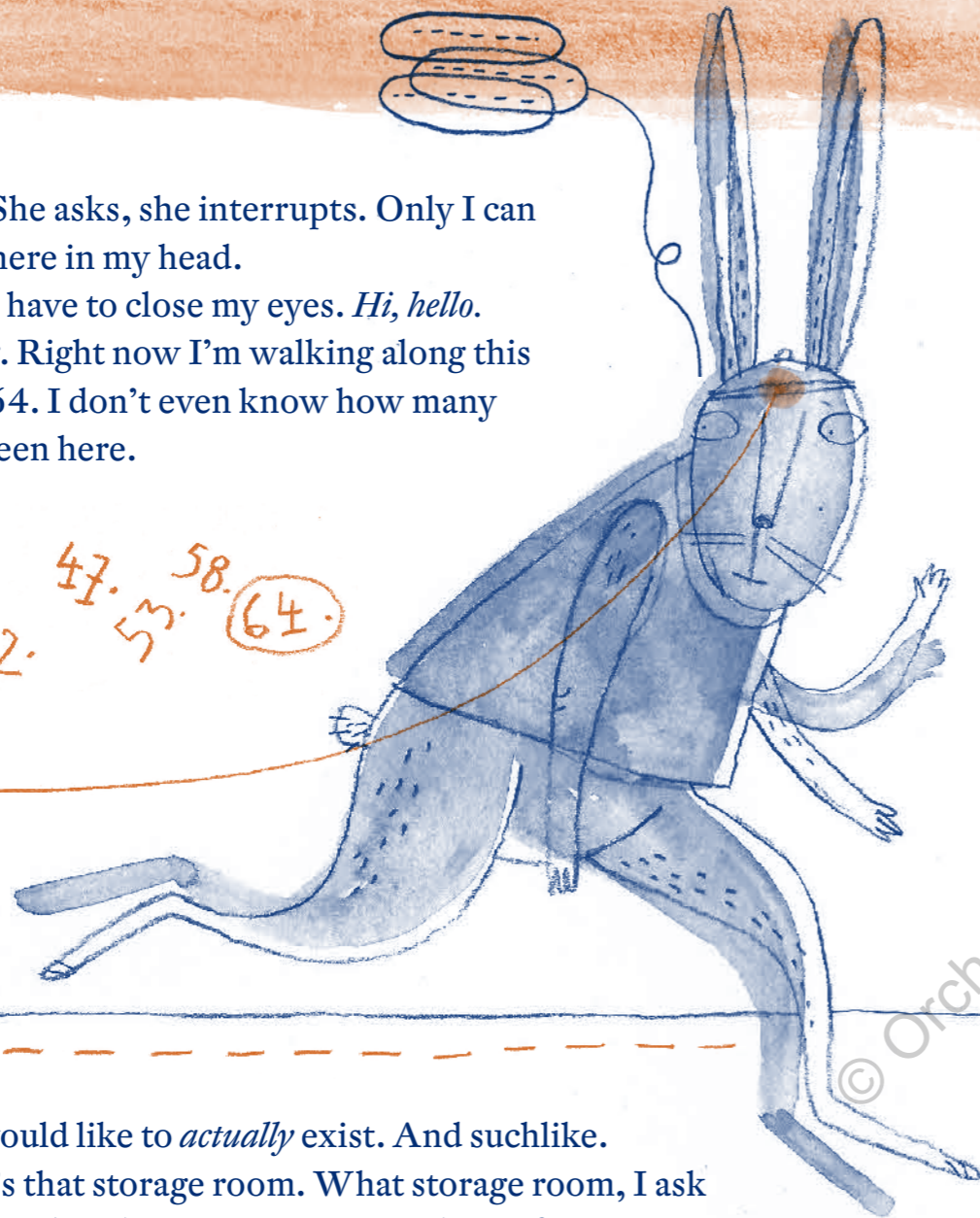
What would happen to that?

Ellie is looking at me. I imagine her looking at me as if she understood my idea.

Ellie talks. She asks, she interrupts. Only I can hear. She's here in my head.

I don't even have to close my eyes. *Hi, hello.* I'm walking. Right now I'm walking along this page, page 64. I don't even know how many times I've been here.

1. 4. 15. 23. 39. 47. 58. 64.
34. 42. 57.



That's too bad, she sighs.

If I actually existed, you wouldn't be alone. That's what she says. We would walk around together. Maybe we could find others. Who, I ask. Others like us, you know. Uh-huh, I say. Maybe some day I will really find others. Chill. On some backwoods page I've accidentally missed. In a hidden place. That's why I walk up and down the book all the time. I guess that's why... And you walk along with me. This way and that.

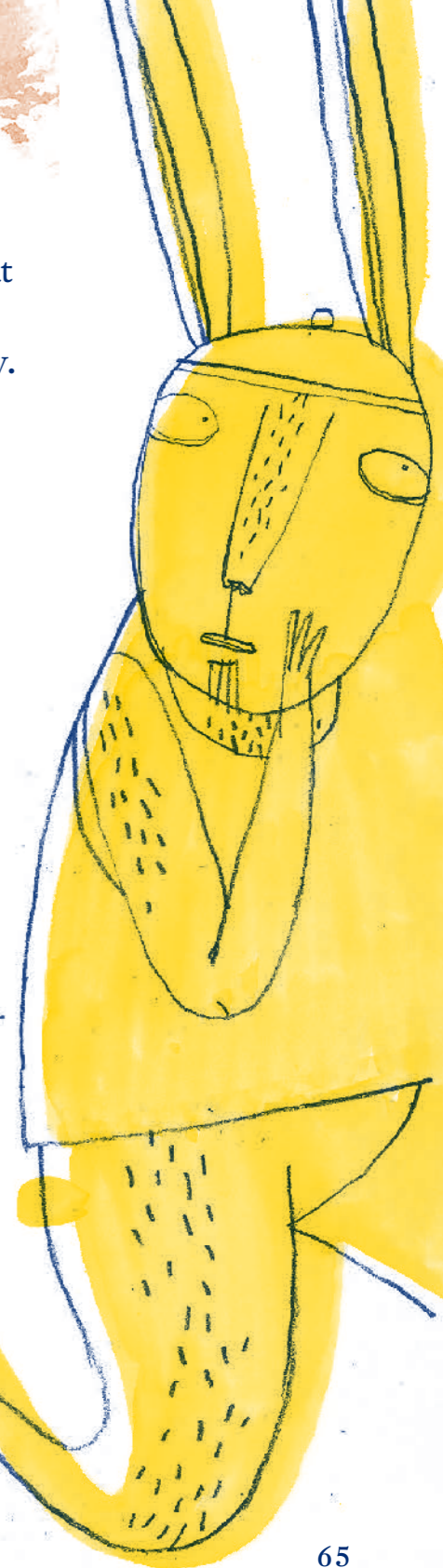


Says she would like to *actually* exist. And suchlike. And there's that storage room. What storage room, I ask her in my head. Where you go to get a shape if you want to exist. *Go, exist.* This is silly, I say. There's no such thing. You said so on page 13, Ellie sulks. And then on page 14 I said I'm not a hundred percent sure, I reply, I just made it up.



I walk and talk alone.

MEGY MEGY MEGY MEGY



Someone is coming.

LALV

And they're gone.

Isn't it possible that when we think something up, it'll somehow exist after all? That's what I think. Ellie, for instance. She isn't, but she still exists. She talks to me. She listens.

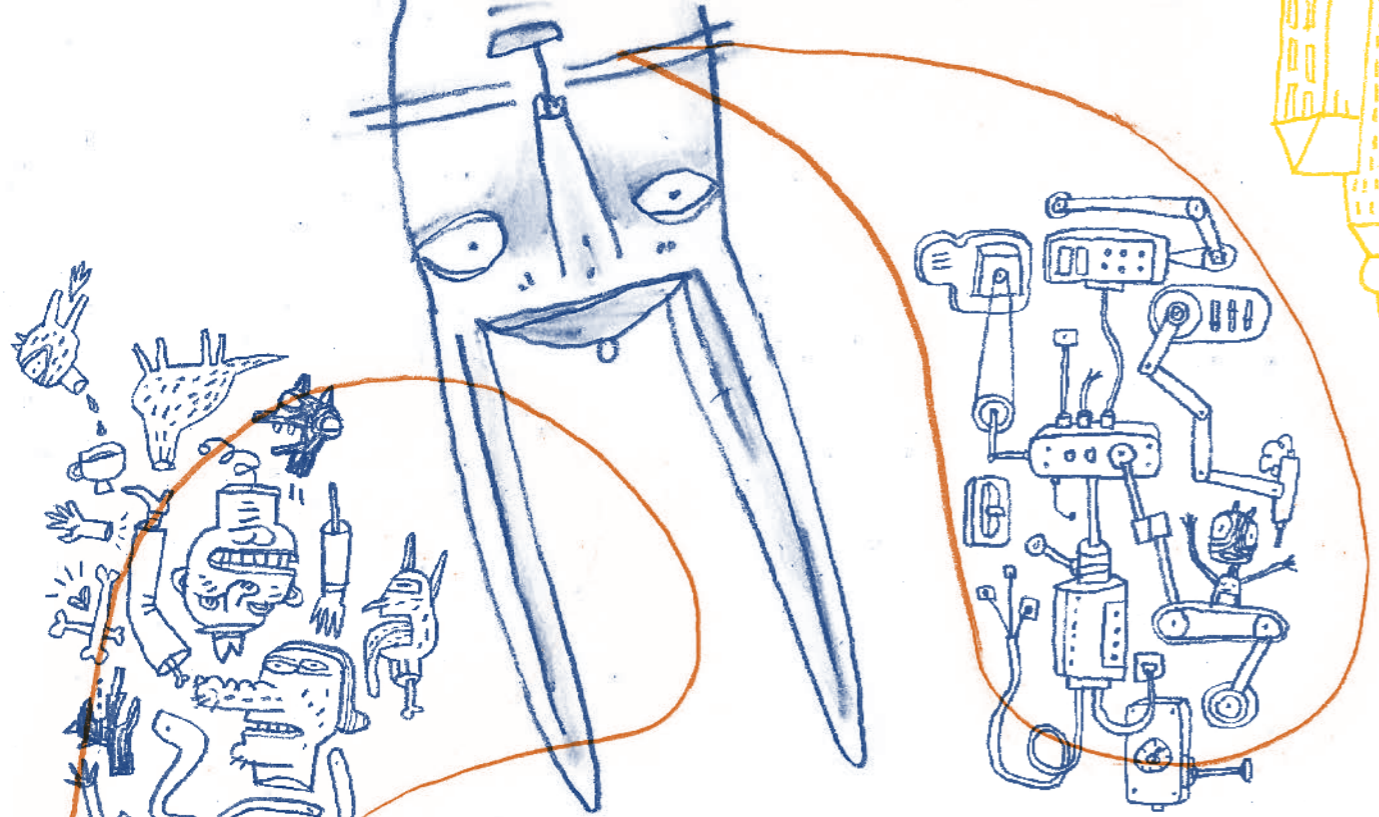
I walk.



Who knows. Maybe there really are others. Like me. Like Ellie. Let's say there was a park. They are sitting on a bench. Or just standing around in the middle of an empty page. What else could they do, having been drawn there. And they're waiting. Messed up figures. A camel shaped horse for instance. A crocodile shaped pig, a hippo-like monkey and suchlike. They ended up different. They stand there and spend their time. There's no erasing them, they can't even be corrected. They're waiting for someone to come.

For me to come.

HÁ
HA



I'm not a hundred percent sure about it, but I'm saying it.
I like to say all kinds of things.
I don't know if there is such a page. I'm searching.

Watch me.
I roam the book, back and forth, always. Like I was drawn here to
do just that. Walk up and down. To find something. Meanwhile
I keep watch in case there's something to see.



A house, a coffee-mill, a pair of glasses.
These are the kind of things in this book.



A cactus. A crooked tower.

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I'm walking along fully drawn pages. I see all kinds of passers-by. They look at me: a walking rabbit. Nothing special. Rabbitwalk. Rabbitfur. Rabbitears. They can't see my thoughts. Dogthoughts.



Or they never even look at me. What for. Just a rabbit. I pay attention anyway, in case I notice something. A signal, a trifle. Something to help, to show me where to go. Where I'm welcome. If there is such a place.



Camel shaped horse, crocodile shaped pig, hippo-like monkey. There they are sitting on the bench, eating something out of a paper bag. Maybe they'd have names. I don't know: Leslie, Tony, Martha. Suchlike. They may not like their names. Leslie is oval, Tony is triangular, Martha is shaped like an arch, like the letter U upside-down. There they sit, eating something from a bag.

Raisins, let's say. Salted peanuts.

Sweet, salt.

Dog, rabbit.

Charlie, Ellie.




I don't know, something like that. That's how I imagine it.
When they see me they scootch over so that I can sit with them on the bench. All right. Let's say I sat down. Why not? Hi, hello. I'd say my name in a dog's voice. They would tell me theirs. The camel would neigh, the crocodile would go oink, a hippo would gibber.

I'm not sure if we'd understand what the others are saying. It would be weird, but that's okay. Let's say one would offer me the paper bag so I can have a taste. Raisins. Maybe salted peanuts.
We'd sit on the bench together. A couple of slightly messed up figures. On a secluded page of this book. We couldn't be erased. We couldn't be corrected. We would talk. Or try to. *How are you? Thanks.*

Maybe we wouldn't always really understand each other.





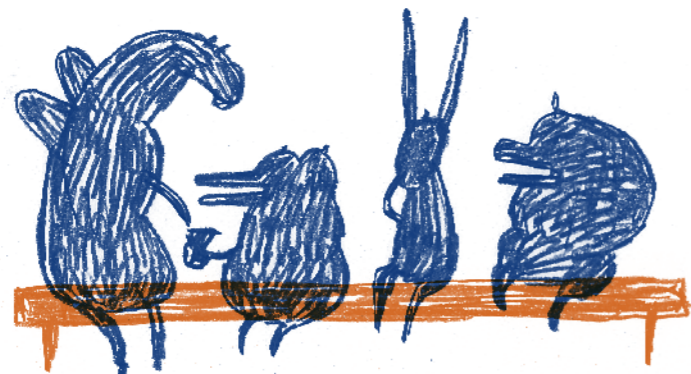
Meanwhile we'd also be looking out of the book. To where everything is pure white, into blank nothing. We'd dangle our feet from the bench.

We'd stare at imaginary snowfall.
Camel eyes, crocodile eyes, hippo eyes.
And rabbit eyes, my eyes.
We'd try to guess if someone's there.
You. For instance.
And in that case, who would that be?

Somebody just watching from outside?
Somebody who's reading this book right now?
Turning the pages? Looking at the pictures?
Or the person who made this whole thing up? Who wrote what we say and drew our shapes? And checking it all out?

Or maybe someone who

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In the end I don't think we'll figure it out.
We'd sit on the bench, eating raisins out of a paper bag.
Salted peanuts.

Either, or.
A bit of both.

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