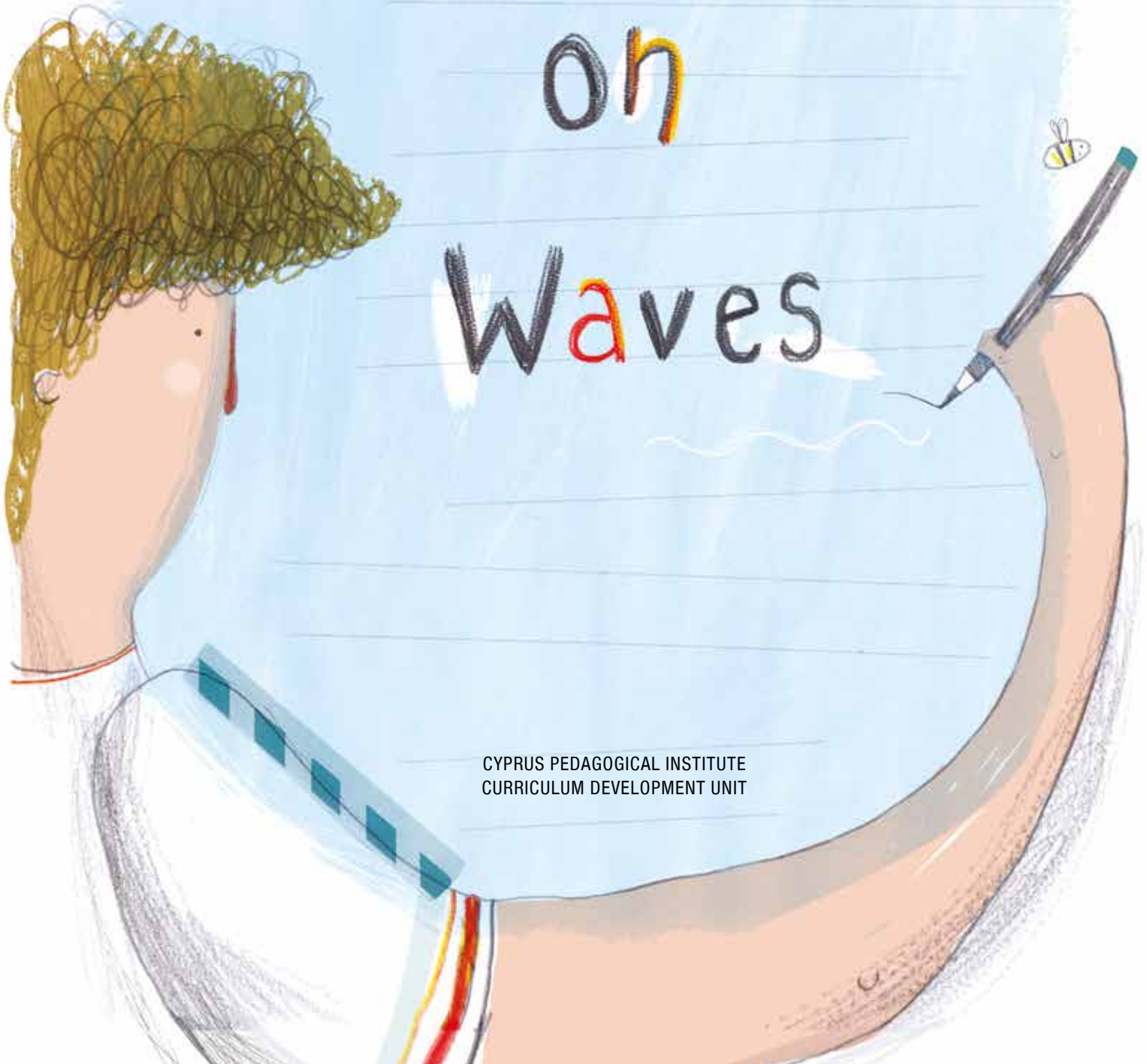
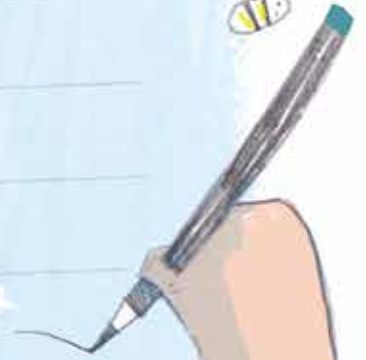


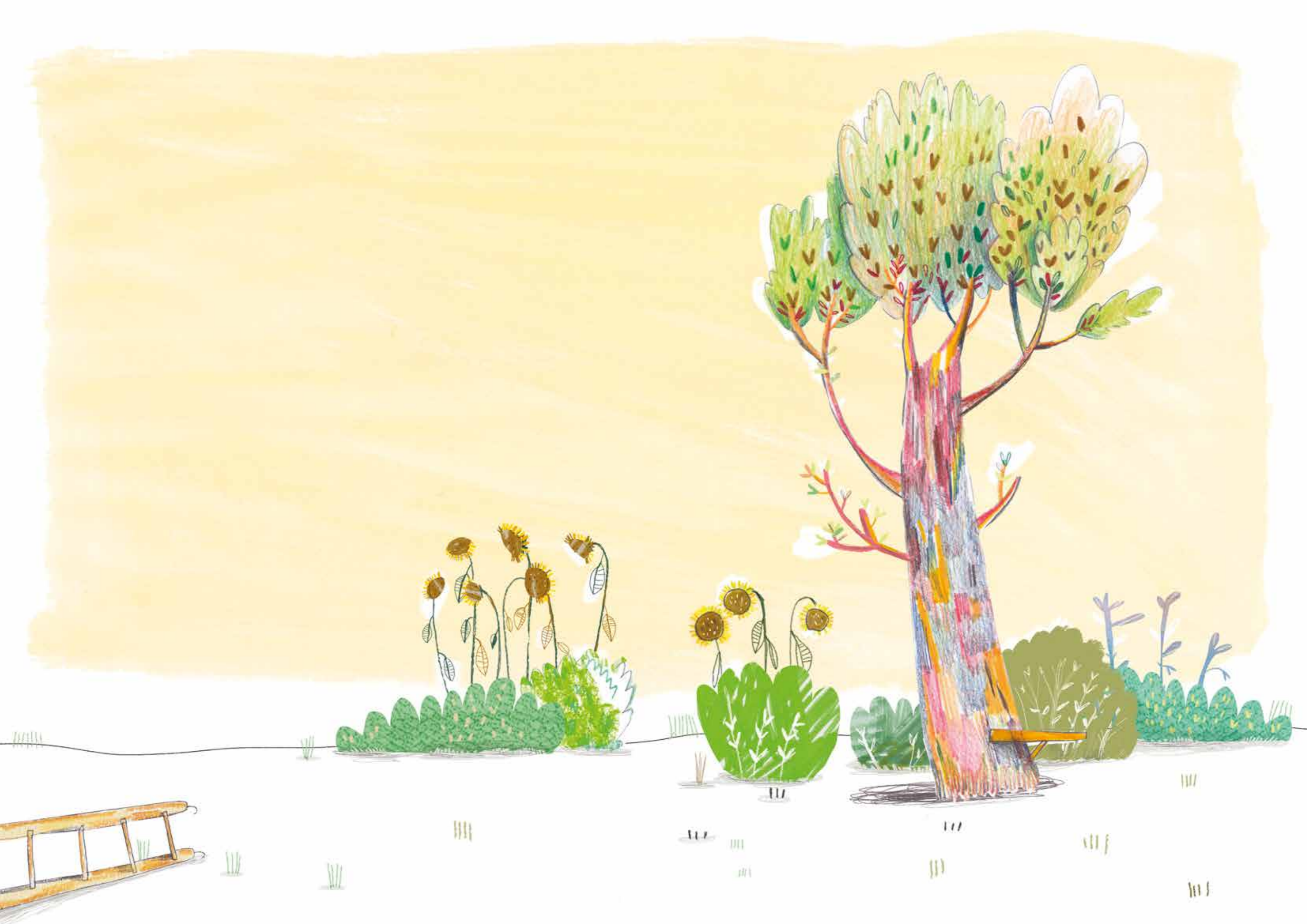


Words

on

waves





## Words on Waves

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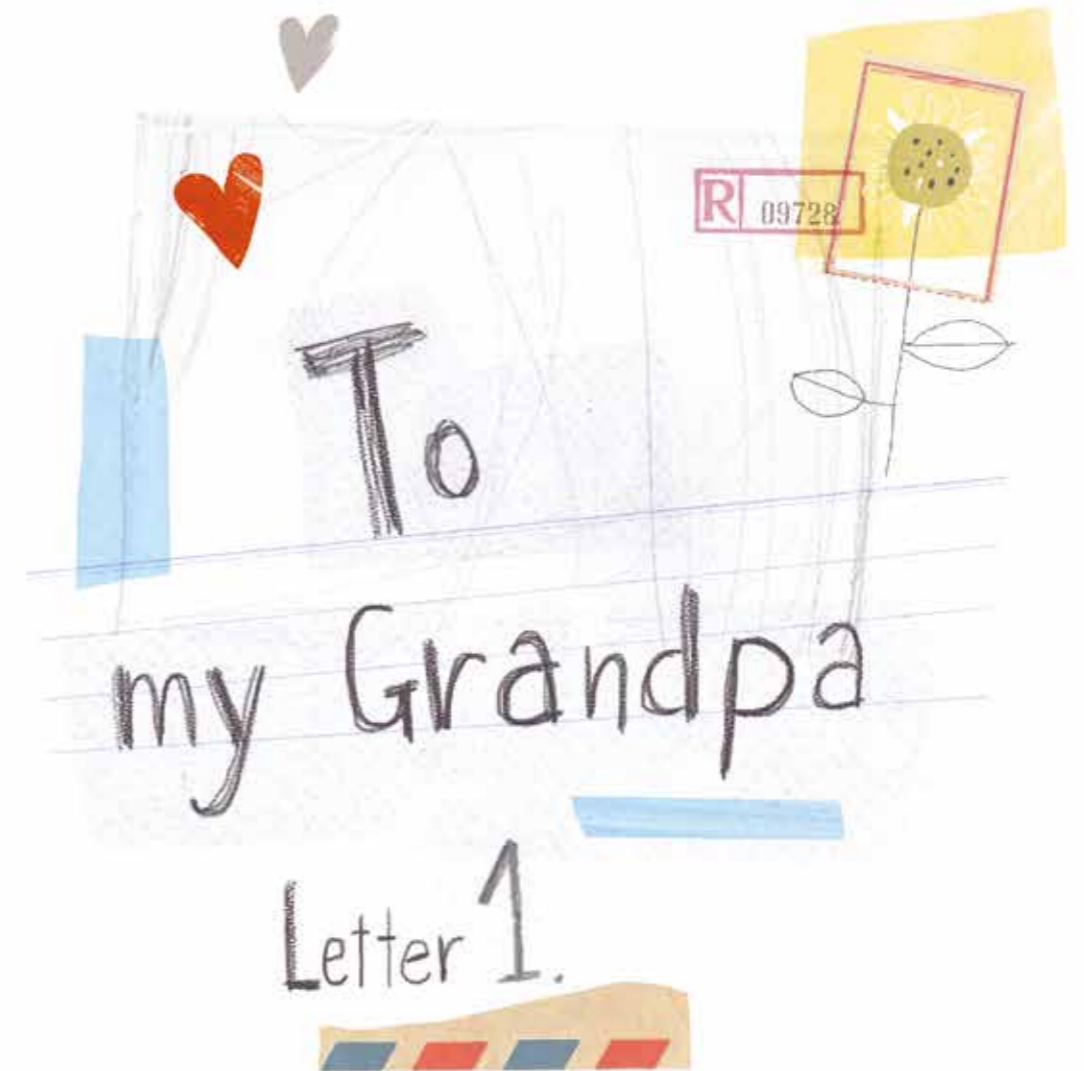
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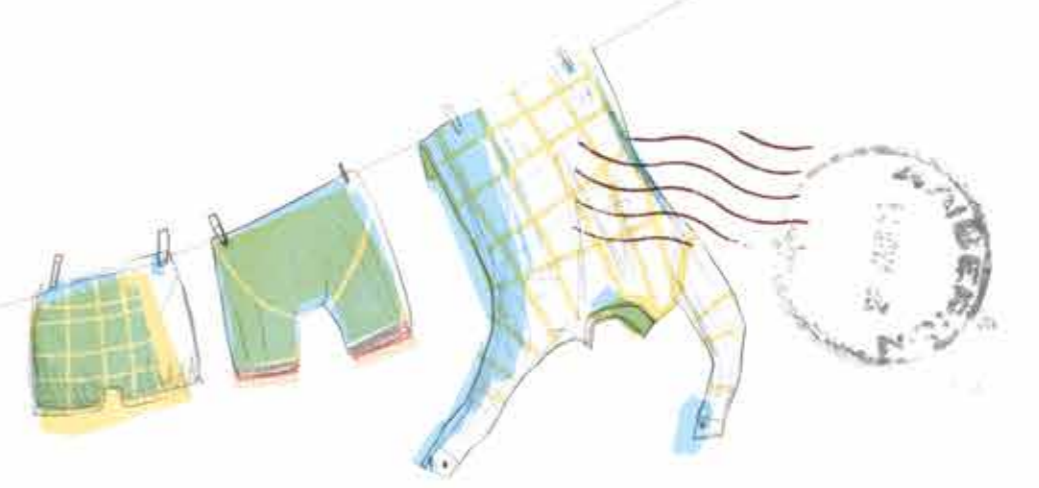
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## My dearest Grandpa,

Mum and dad lied to me.

And I was very angry. They told me you died.

I know it's not true.

You can't have died. I know that something else is going on...

You are, perhaps, in a deep sleep, because you are tired

from that strange disease

that keeps you in bed all the time

and does not let you read our stories to me anymore.

The one that keeps your eyes closed

and stops me from seeing my smiling face reflected in them.

You did not die! I am sure! You can't have died!

You couldn't have done this to me.

You! How could you die and leave me?

Never! I won't believe this for one second.

We still have so many things left to do,

so many other things we have left unfinished





The tree house you never built for me.

The drawings are still sitting on the kitchen table.

You never taught me how to get the honey out from your beehive.

I am still little, you kept saying. I had to grow up a bit more.

You never finished telling me the story about the mermaid,  
the sister of Alexander the great.

And now, I will never know how to find and bring  
the fountain of youth. I can't even figure out where to find styx.

No, you didn't die. I am beginning to suspect that you set sail

for that trip you always wanted to make.

The trip to constantinople, to find the marble emperor

and to call out to him that he must wake up

because he has overdone it with his sleeping.

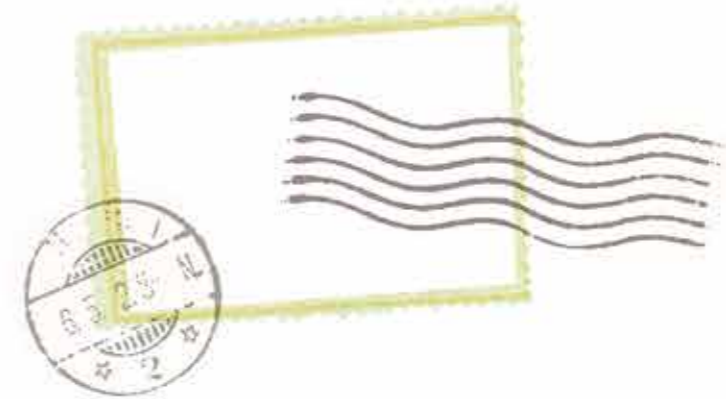
He is not the sleeping beauty after all!

We don't gain anything from sleeping.

It's time for the marble emperor

and the sleeping beauty to wake up, and so should you!





Mum and dad said  
that I have to go to your funeral.  
I refused, of course.

I hid myself under your bed

and they could not make me come out no matter what.  
They pleaded with me, but I was fretting and crying.  
Finally, I won. As if I could have gone to a fake funeral.

You tricked them all. Not me, though!

I know you better than anyone else and I love you  
even more than anyone else. I know that you would never die.

Not like this. Not all of a sudden.

Not before I tell you that it is alright to die.

And if that wasn't enough,  
they said that they wanted to take me to your grave.

Yes, sure! You don't have a grave.

You are sailing on your boat.

Yes, the sailing boat that I built for you.

I can just see you enjoying the sun and the salty taste of the sea,  
with the wind stroking your grey hair.

I am sure, when you do see the mermaid, you will give her the answer:

"He lives and reigns and conquers the world!"





You left in a hurry, though, and you didn't take all your things.

So I gathered them all up, and I put them  
in the big wooden box you made for me.

The fishing rod.

The story book you were reading to me. Your straw hat.  
I will give it to you, as soon as you come back or when I come over to find you.

"ok...ok! I am almost finished Mum!"

Why can't I get some peace and quiet in this house?

It's late and I'm told I have to turn off the light.

I will have to say goodbye now.

But I must tell you that I haven't been a good boy lately.  
Since you left, I've been getting into trouble. Are you ready?

Here goes:







I hit George, because his goal made my team lose the final!

I know how much you wanted me to win that final!

I tore up Anna's notebook, because her picture was beautiful  
and her grandfather looked exactly like you and...

yes, I broke mum's favourite vase,

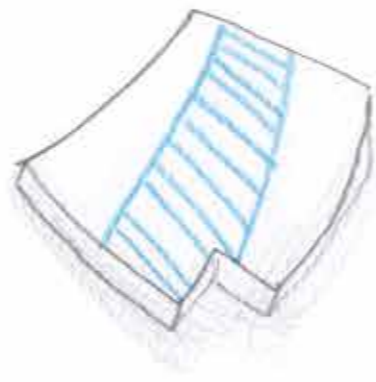
because she kept filling it with your favourite sunflowers.

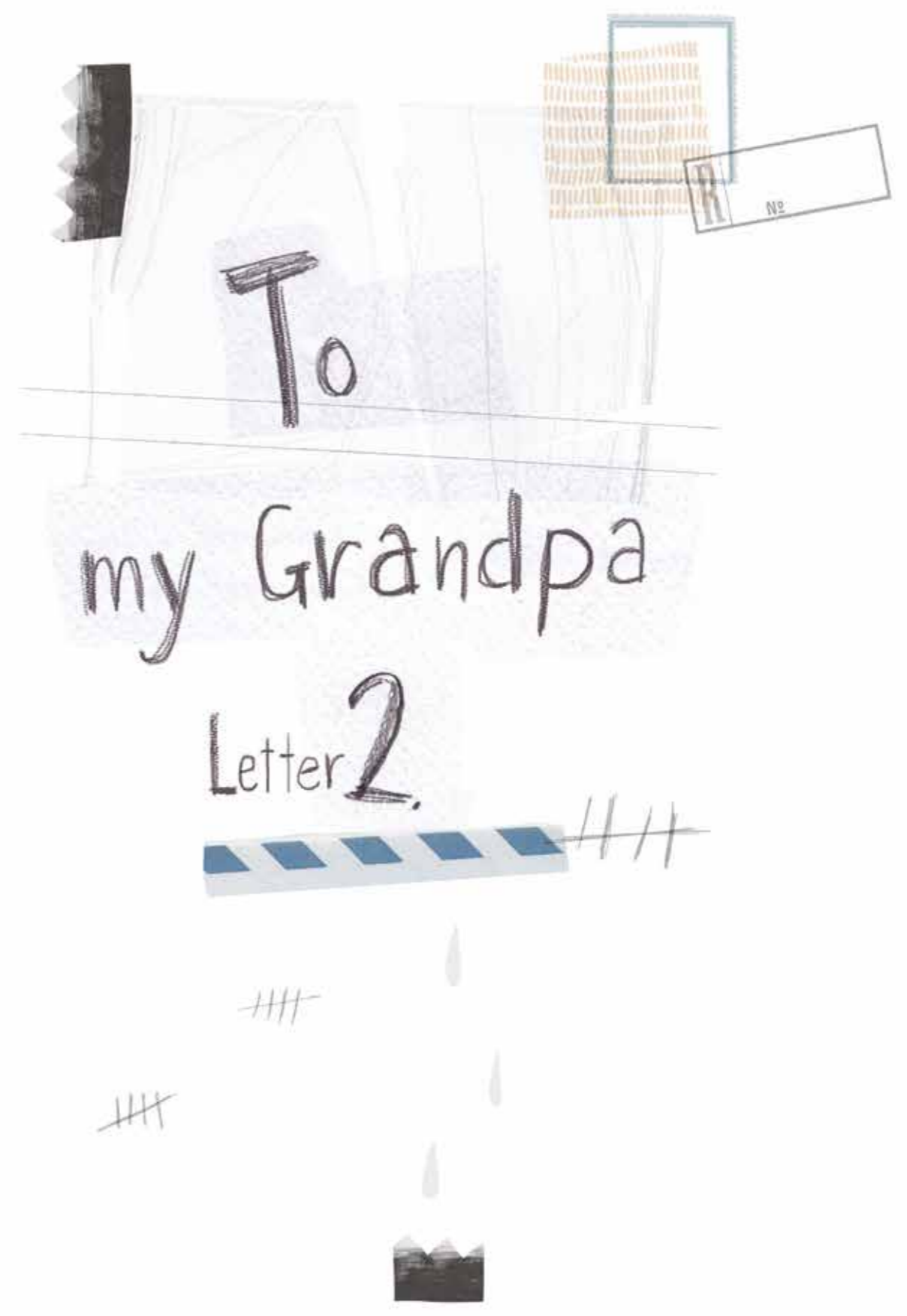
Think about what sort of punishment I deserve

and come back quickly to tell me.

Kisses,

your beloved grandson.





To

my Grandpa

Letter 2





My dearest Grandpa,

In the end, you never came back. The wooden box  
is still sitting in the corner of the room, collecting dust.  
I don't even open it any more. Maybe because each time I open it,  
I am in danger of drowning in the oceans of my own tears.

Days come and go.

I carve them on the wooden box with the little knife you gave me.

There are ninety lines on it now.

I sort them in tens. You always told me that numbers are magical

and they can go up or down

depending on the small signs we put in front of them.

It's just that subtracting doesn't seem to work

and the lines increase all the time.

At night, before I go to sleep, I try to remember your face.

But it keeps slipping away.

The lines started to fade, but then you smile at me  
and everything is fine! You come to life in front of me.





You know, I stopped going to football. I don't want to play anymore.

Nobody is giving me the advice you used to give me.

Nobody takes notice of how my kicks have become stronger

and how quickly I make my passes.

To me, the game has no meaning anymore.

I miss you a lot Grandpa. I don't even want to read stories anymore.

I don't even want to dream about tree houses.

I don't even want to listen to your bees buzzing over your sunflowers.

And between you and I ...if I meet the Mermaid,

I will tell her the truth: "That's it! Alexander the Great is dead".

Goodnight. I don't know if I will write to you again.

Doing so doesn't make sense anymore. Come back, please,

or else I will go to your grave

and I'll pull out all the flowers that mum planted for you.

Kissing you (a little),

Your formerly beloved grandson







My dearest Grandpa,

I want to apologize for my last letter.

It wasn't anger. It was an endless sorrow.

A sorrow as big as the sea.

I nearly drowned. I couldn't breathe.

But, then, I remembered you. Yes. I did remember you again.

I remember the time when you were teaching me how to swim:  
"Don't give up. Difficulties are there to make us overcome them.

Each new wave may be bigger,

but every wave you pass over, makes you stronger.

Strong arms to fight with the waves. Strong legs to push  
and move on. Strong lungs to fill them up with sea breeze

and withstand. Strong waves? They make you stronger!"

So, I started swimming again. In shallow waters at first.

As time went by, I started swimming in deeper waters...

And now, the sadness is huge. Only it doesn't drown me anymore,

because I remembered how to breathe.



Finally, I did come to your grave. I brought flowers as well.

And I sat there and got lost  
in the buzzing of your bees on the huge sunflowers  
mum planted for you.

I read you our favourite story too.

That one you never finished for me. The one about the fountain of youth.

I found out about the secret too. I discovered where it's hidden and I  
brought it to you.

I watered your sunflowers with it.

I left a little bit for your little bee friends too.

I know that you are smiling at me.

I feel it inside and out. I smile at you, too.

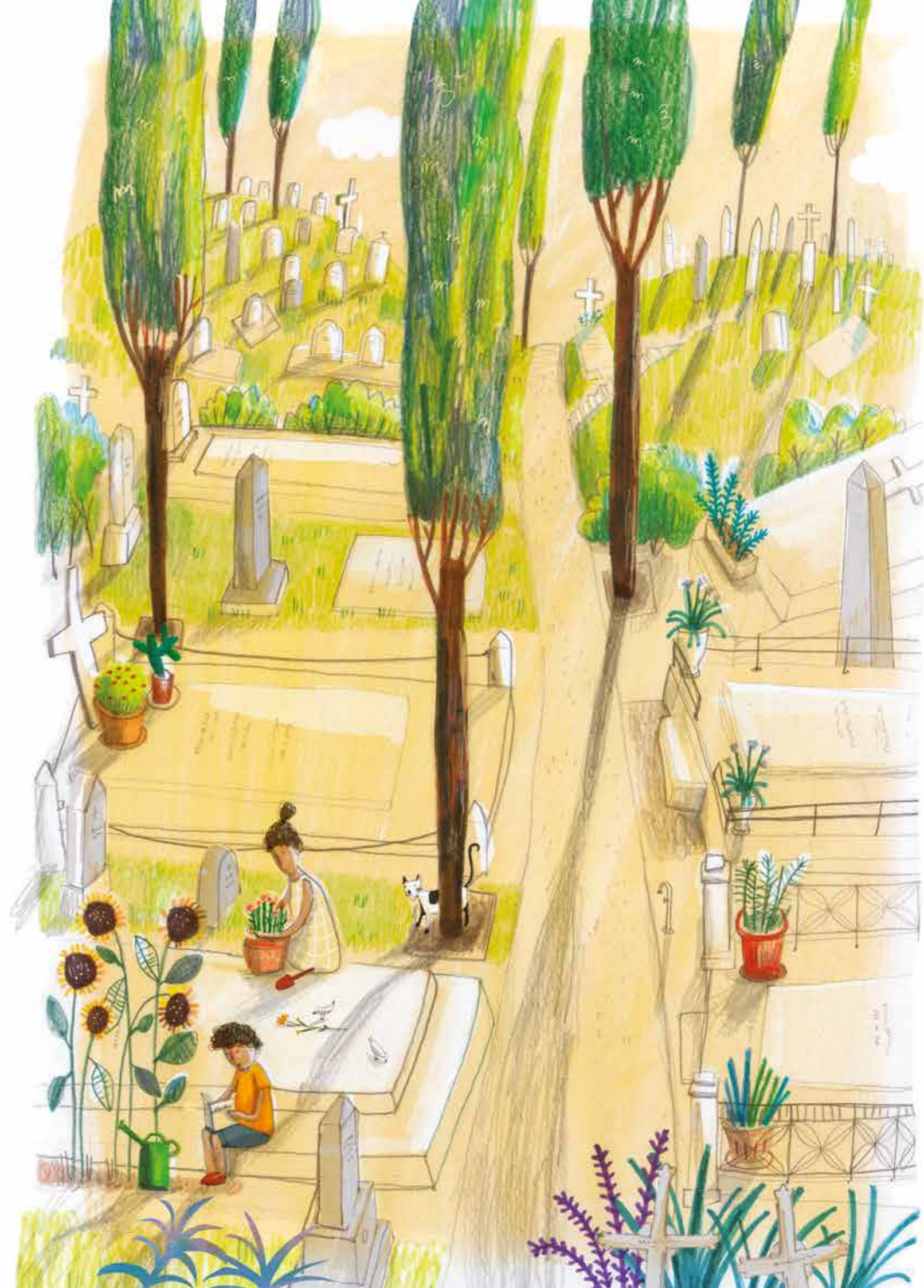
The only thing left now is a visit to our rock.

Yes, the one by our sea edge.

I won't write to you again grandpa, but we'll talk often.

I kiss you (a lot),

Your forever beloved grandson



I am sending you words on waves,  
to tell you that I love you,  
to tell you how much I miss you,  
and that you'd be here forever.







**Elena Pericleous** is an incurable bookworm.

She officially received the title when she read her 1000th book.

Somewhere at that point, where “they lived happily ever after”, she decided she wanted to live happily ever after and devoted her life to reading and writing.

She always carries her literary pharmacy with her, full of pain-curing stories that alleviate grief along with all other ills: loneliness, anxiety, jealousy, selfishness ..., tenderly embracing the soul.

She is an educator and has published a total of 14 books.

She was twice awarded the State Prize for Children’s Literature by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

She was also twice awarded by the Women’s Literary Team, twice by the Cyprus Association of Children’s and Young Adults’ Books, and twice by the Panhellenic Literary Writers Union.



**Polyxeni Stylianou** is an educator.

She works as a teacher trainer at the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (In-Service Training Department) and as a primary school teacher in public schools in Cyprus.

She received her MA degree in Education (Psychology) from the Institute of Education (University of London) and her doctorate in Theory of Education and Curriculum from the Open University of Cyprus. Her Doctoral dissertation deals with the integration of the concept of loss and grief in Primary Education.

She is a member of the Association for Death Education and Counselling (ADEC).

Her research endeavours focus mainly on Death Education issues.



**Iris Samartzi** was born in Athens, Greece.

She studied Graphic Design and Interior Design.

She also attended seminars on Children’s Art and Drama in Education.

It was back in 2004 when she discovered that Illustration is her dream job and started showing her work to publishers.

Fifteen years later, she has illustrated more than 80 books.

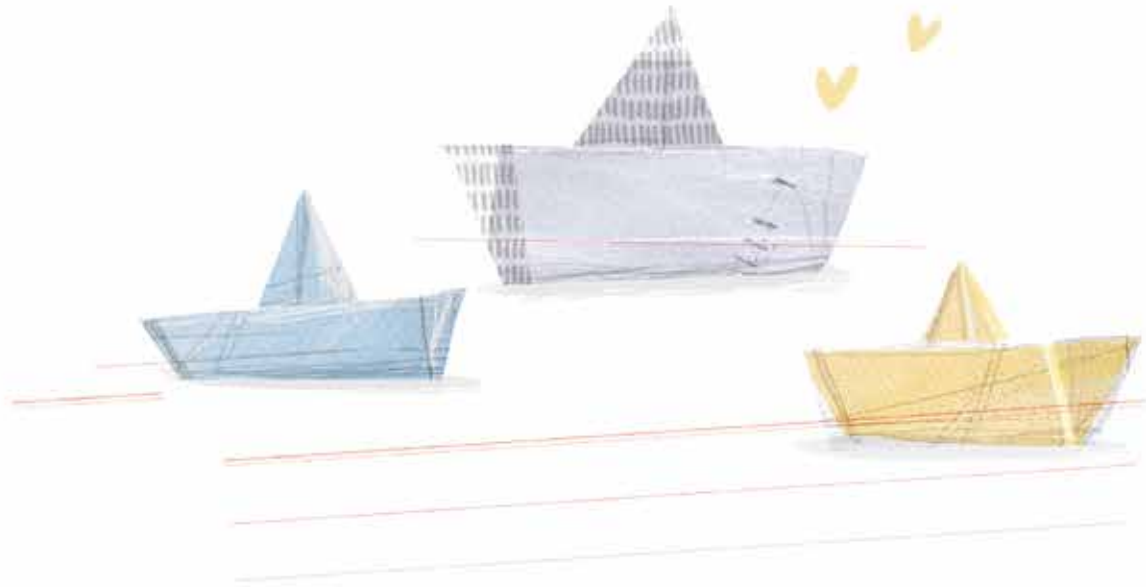
Throughout all those years she’s been working in nursery and primary schools teaching art, organizing art workshops for children, making book presentations, and getting inspired by the children’s creativity.

She loves her work and she is always looking for ideas, new projects, and new techniques to explore; her work has received domestic and international acclaim and has won her a number of prestigious awards including the IX Compostela Prize 2016, the IBBY Greece Illustrated Book Award (2017, 2016, 2015, 2012), and the Greek State Picturebook Award (2016, 2012).

She is nominated for the H.C.Andersen Award 2020 by the Greek section of IBBY.

Read more about Iris and her work at [www.irissamartzi.com](http://www.irissamartzi.com)





"Don't give up.

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