

Lauren L. McMurray

“The Man with the Blue Boots”

The story is written for both children and adults. It is a story of friendship, self-discovery, and childish enthusiasm. I wrote this story in response to a strong friendship, full of creative energy and imagination. This friendship reminded me to keep actively dreaming and creating. Things that seem unattainable or impossible can always be achieved with the right heart and attitude. The story was illustrated using various hand-sewn textiles and fabric layering. After the images were created they were then transferred and manipulated further in Adobe Photoshop.

Lauren L. McMurray  
Honors Thesis

## “The Man with the Blue Boots”

### Note from the Author:

I have been interested in creating a children's book for the last decade. Unfortunately I was always uncertain about where to start. I felt I lacked access to the tools in order to create the project. It was not until I entered college, that I was introduced to programs like Photoshop and other digital media, which made it possible to easily write and illustrate a book. I spent a brief amount of time learning these programs until I had to direct my attentions to applying myself in my chosen studio art medium: fiber and textile.

By nature I am an illustrator. I have always been fond of creating characters for stories and books since I was a child. I wanted to grow as an artist by searching for various ways to illustrate and create my artwork. I started using textile collage embedded in high relief painting, but I was not satisfied with the loss of delicate detail. I then carefully applied minute textile elements to my drawing and watercolor illustrations. The result was successful, however I wanted the ability to change or highlight the elements without overworking the piece. I tried to retrace my steps and explore different avenues of manipulating textile within my work. It was not until I came across a fashion illustration book, given to me by a friend, that I realized that the combination of digital media and textile could produce a remarkable, and unique illustration.

During my studies, I had separated the education I had received from learning art through digital media and art through fiber and textile manipulation. I had never thought to combine the two. The more I searched for examples, I realized there were several designs that used textile in digital media to create interesting illustrations.

Digital design programs have been widely used in fashion and design. Textile has the ability to add color, texture, and pattern to digital images. The result of combining digital design and textile to an artwork, adds depth with the ability to enhance and refine finer details.

It is my intent to explore different techniques in textile manipulation enhanced by the use of digital media. The result will be the multifaceted illustrations for *The Man with the Blue Boots*.

I hope the use of these techniques help create fun and interesting illustrations for all readers to enjoy.

Sincerely,

Lauren L. McMurray

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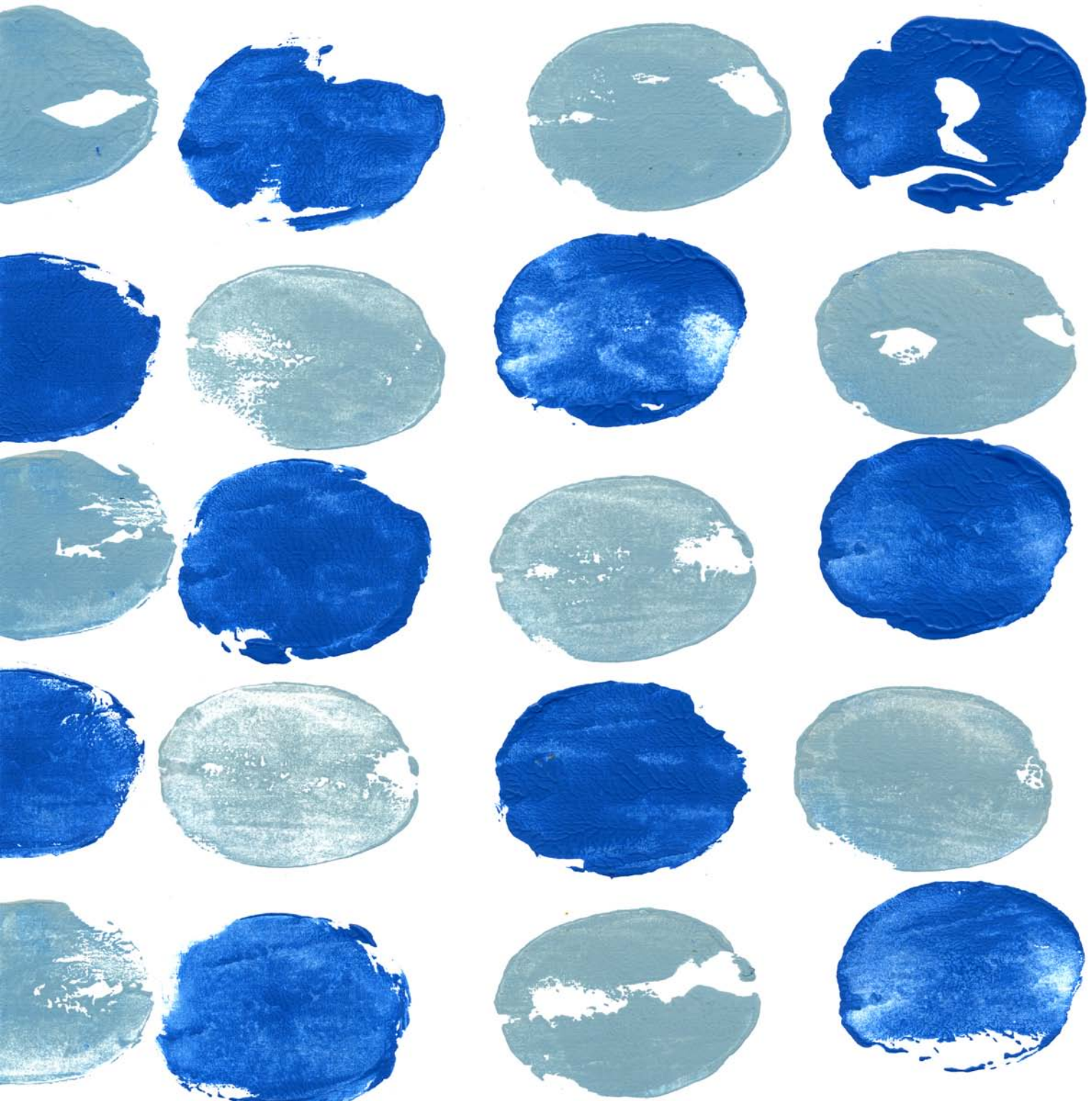
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# The Man with the Blue Boots

story and pictures by Lali McMurray



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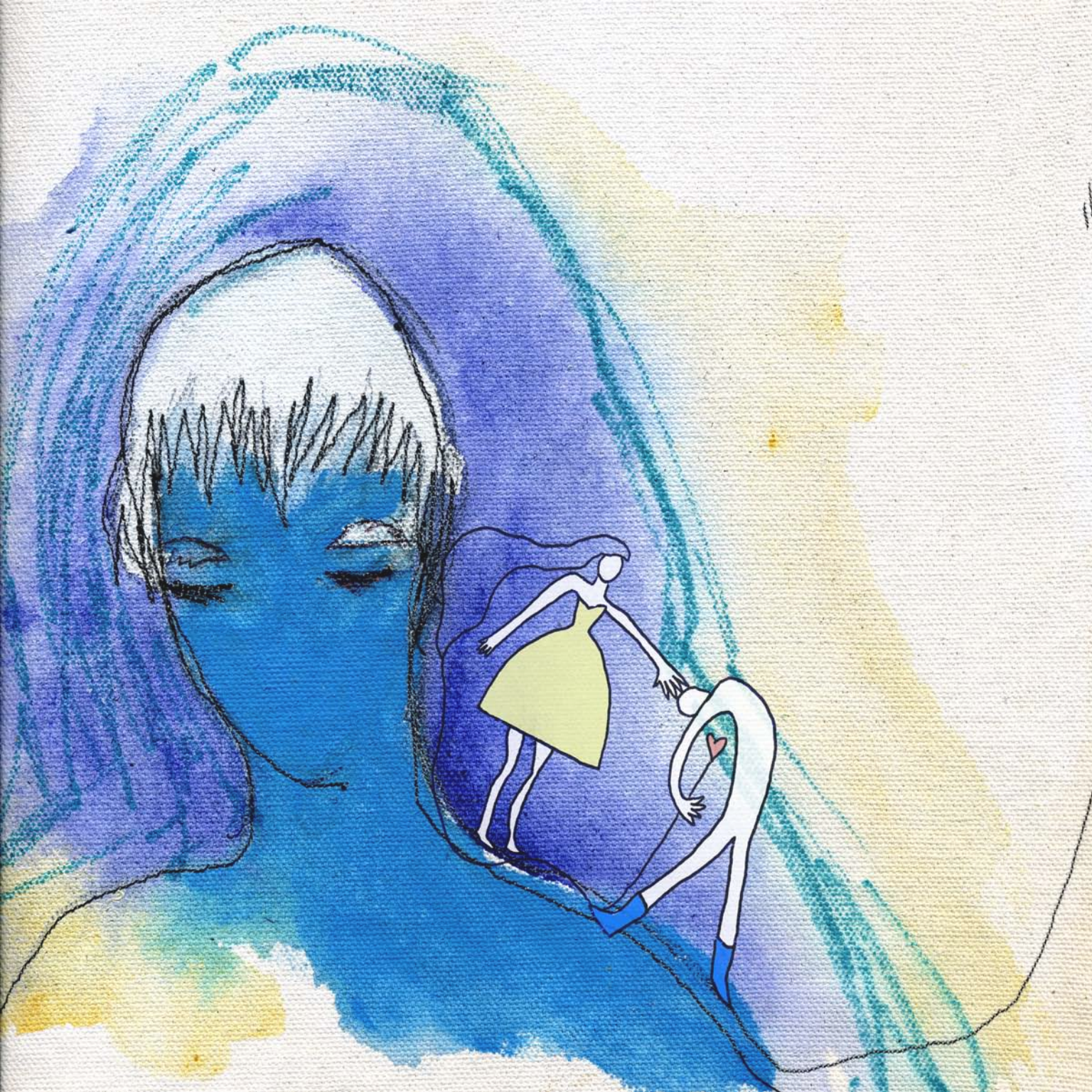


There once was a man with blue boots. He had a cat-like smile and a pair of bushy eyebrows, which resembled a pair of dancing hedgehogs that wiggled about his forehead when he smiled. The man loved blue things, for he thought love was blue. It reminded him of the great blue whales in the great blue sea, which made him very happy.

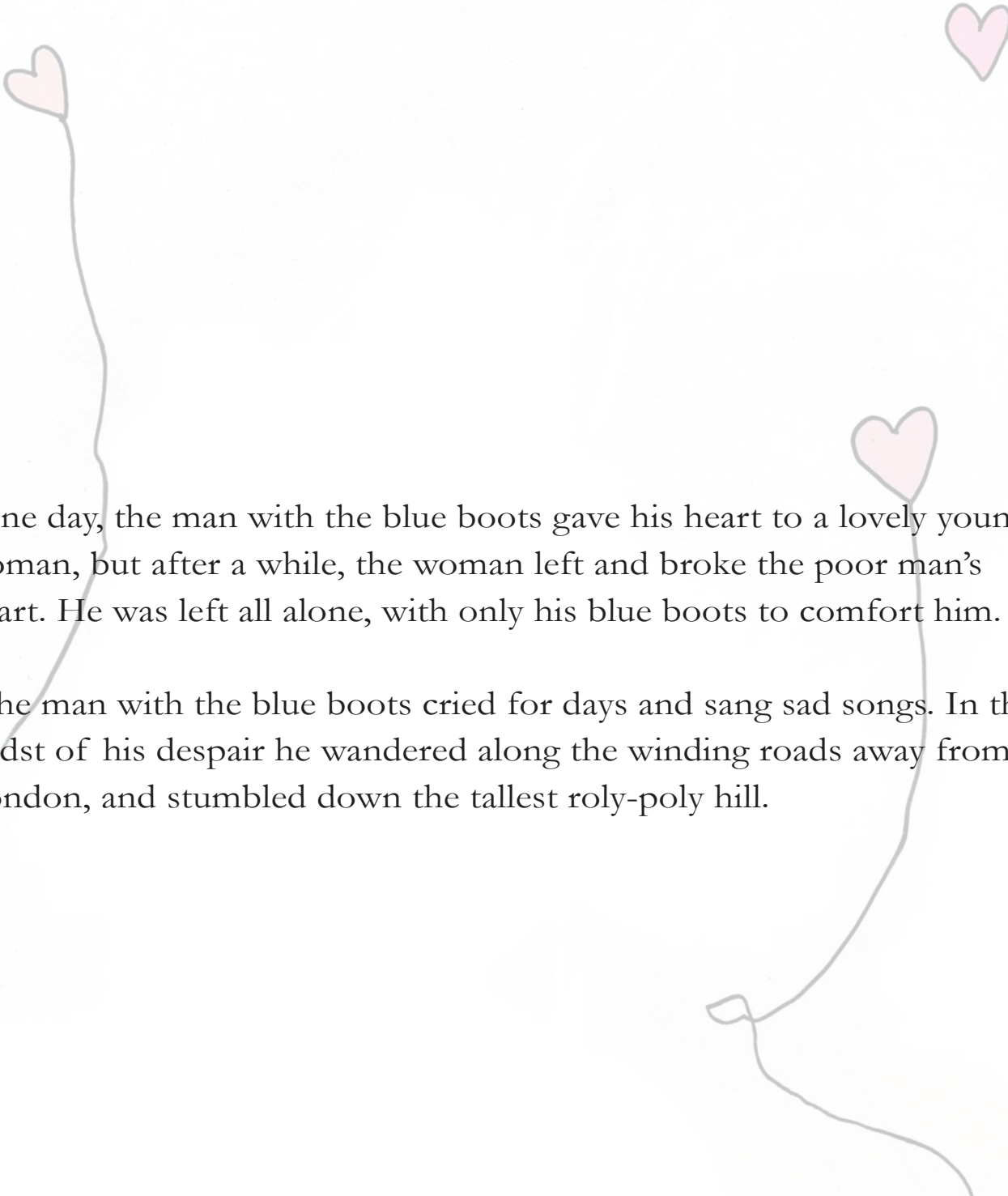
He always wore his favorite blue boots, because when he was in them he felt he could sing, dance, and paint beautiful dreams. In his blue boots he could climb the tallest roly-poly hill and dance up and down long winding roads to London.











One day, the man with the blue boots gave his heart to a lovely young woman, but after a while, the woman left and broke the poor man's heart. He was left all alone, with only his blue boots to comfort him.

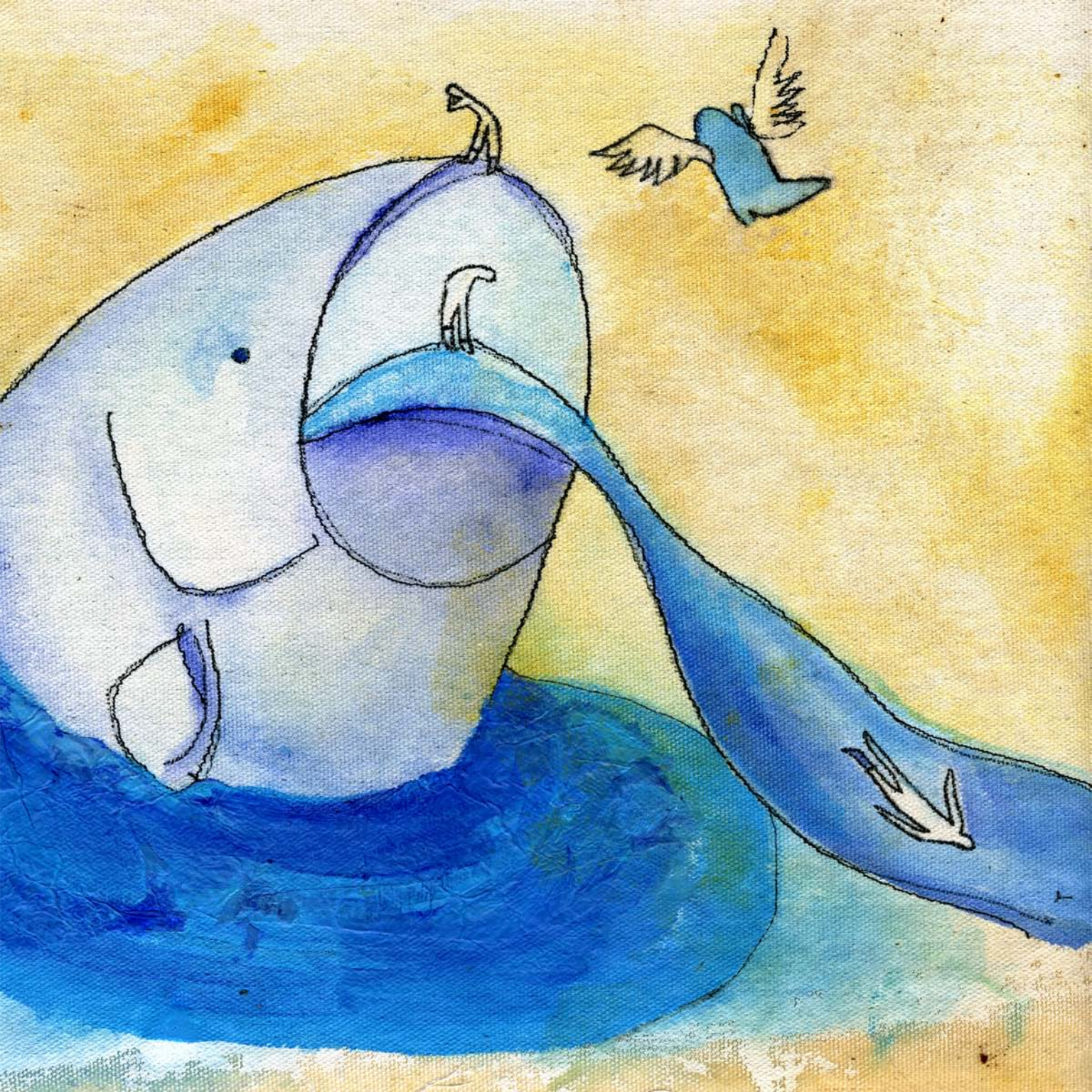
The man with the blue boots cried for days and sang sad songs. In the midst of his despair he wandered along the winding roads away from London, and stumbled down the tallest roly-poly hill.

It was on this particular sad day something even more dreadful was to happen to the man. As he was climbing down the tallest roly-poly hill he had a great slip and tumble. It was during this terrible tumble that one of his blue boots went flying off!

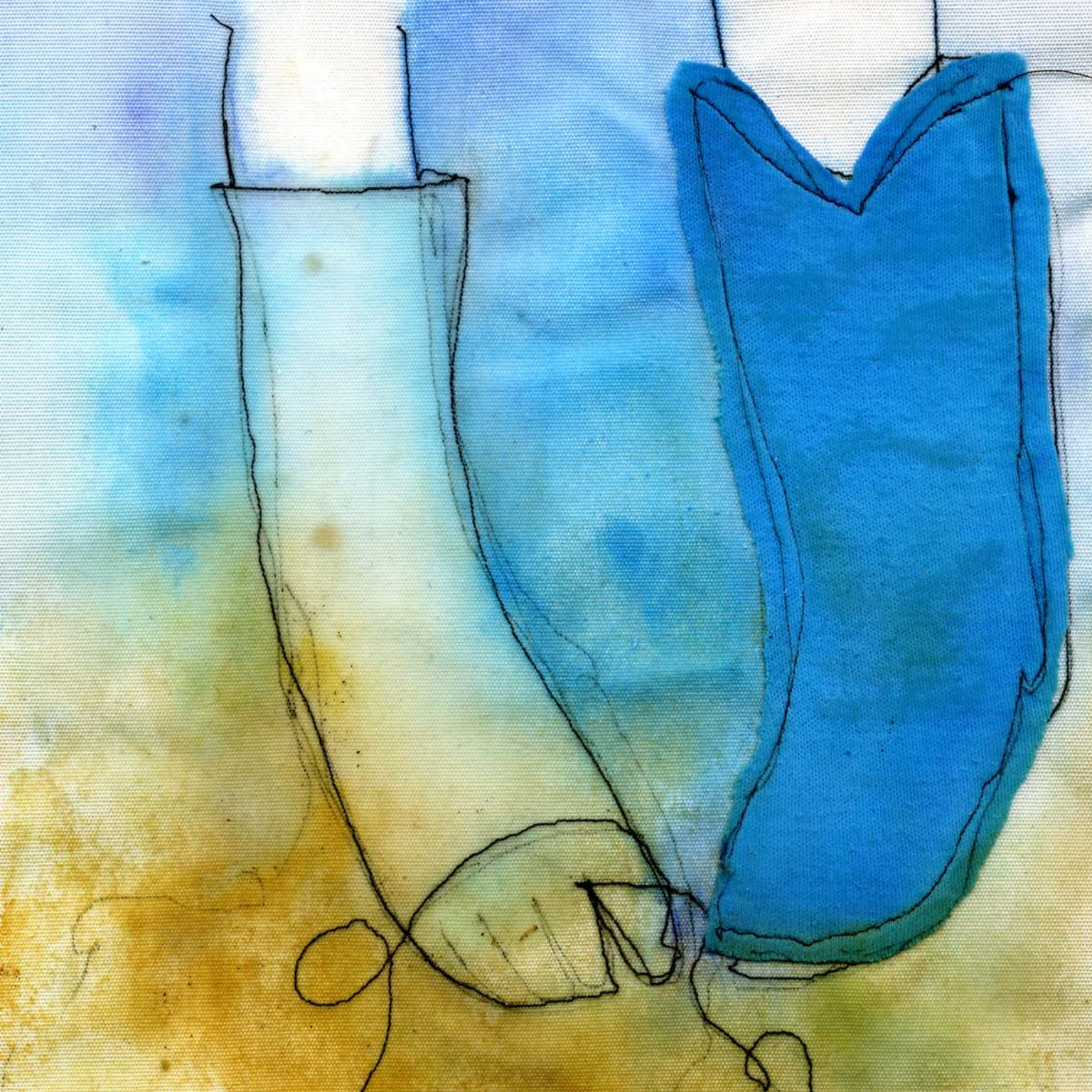
As the man rolled down the tallest roly-poly hill, he watched as his blue boot flew off into the sky. Then he hit his head and was knocked unconscious.

Two days went by as the man rolled and rolled down the tallest roly-poly hill. And as he rolled he cried great salty tears that rolled down his cheeks forming a great stream leading into the salty sea.









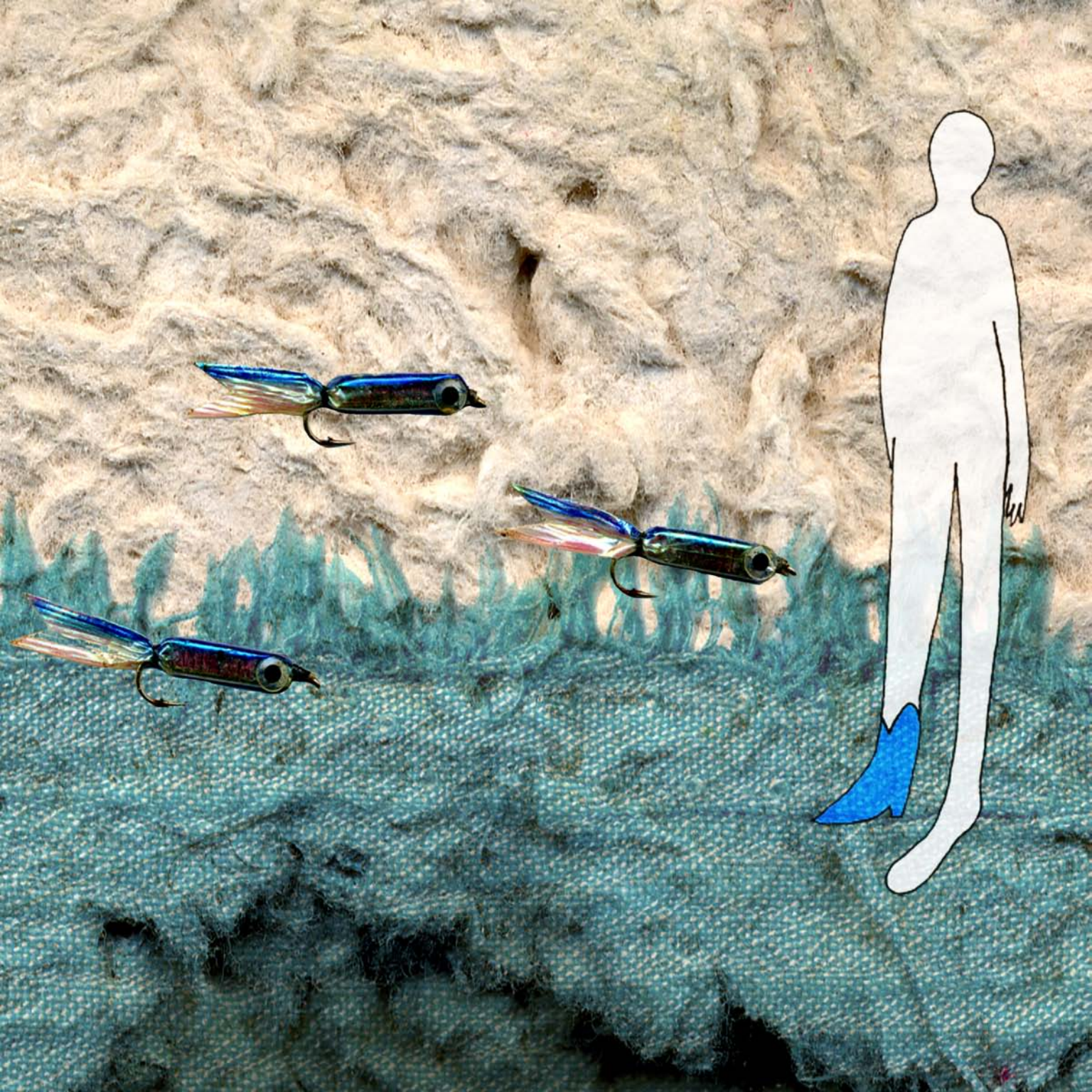


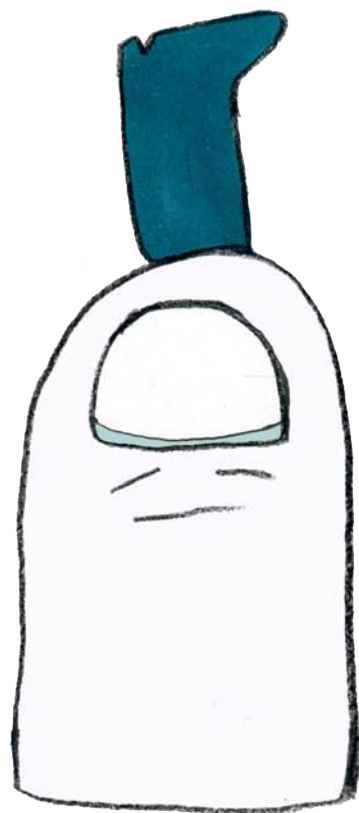


The man walked along the beach for two whole days and nights in search of his missing boot. On the third morning, he saw a little blue boot sticking up out of the sand. He rushed to the blue boot and dug it out of the sand. To his despair, it was not his blue boot. It was far too small to fit even on his thumb. So the man placed the blue boot in his pocket and decided to retrace his steps.

He walked along the beach until he came to a large sand dune. He climbed up the sand dune and saw where a little stream trickled down into the sea. “This must be the way,” he said, and followed the stream up and down the tallest roly-poly hill, and down the winding roads, until he came, once again, to London.







“Where do I go now?” He was so tired of walking with only one boot on and the hole in his sock was very uncomfortable. He decided to have a rest and take public transport instead. So to the tube he went, riding back and forth across town trying to remember the last stop he had departed from before he had left London.

The subway car was nice and cozy and the man, exhausted from his search, was rocked back and forth by the motion of the little train along the tracks until he fell into a deep sleep.







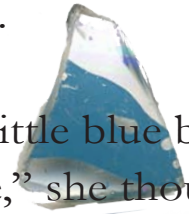


Meanwhile far across the great wide Atlantic Ocean, a young woman paddled her blue boat out along a great river that ran into the sea. The woman had a great fondness for blue things and was always searching for them. Everyday she would go out searching for blue things.

Blue candy wrappers, and straws, yarn balls and silly string, blue buttons and ribbons, blue plastic rings, blue chewing gum, blue paper, and blue eggshells and birds, anything and everything blue. She would place them in her pockets and in a little blue bag she carried.



She found the bluest things when she traveled by her little blue boat down along the river and into the ocean. “Love is blue,” she thought. She collected blue things because it made her smile and dream of the great blue whales in the great blue sea.



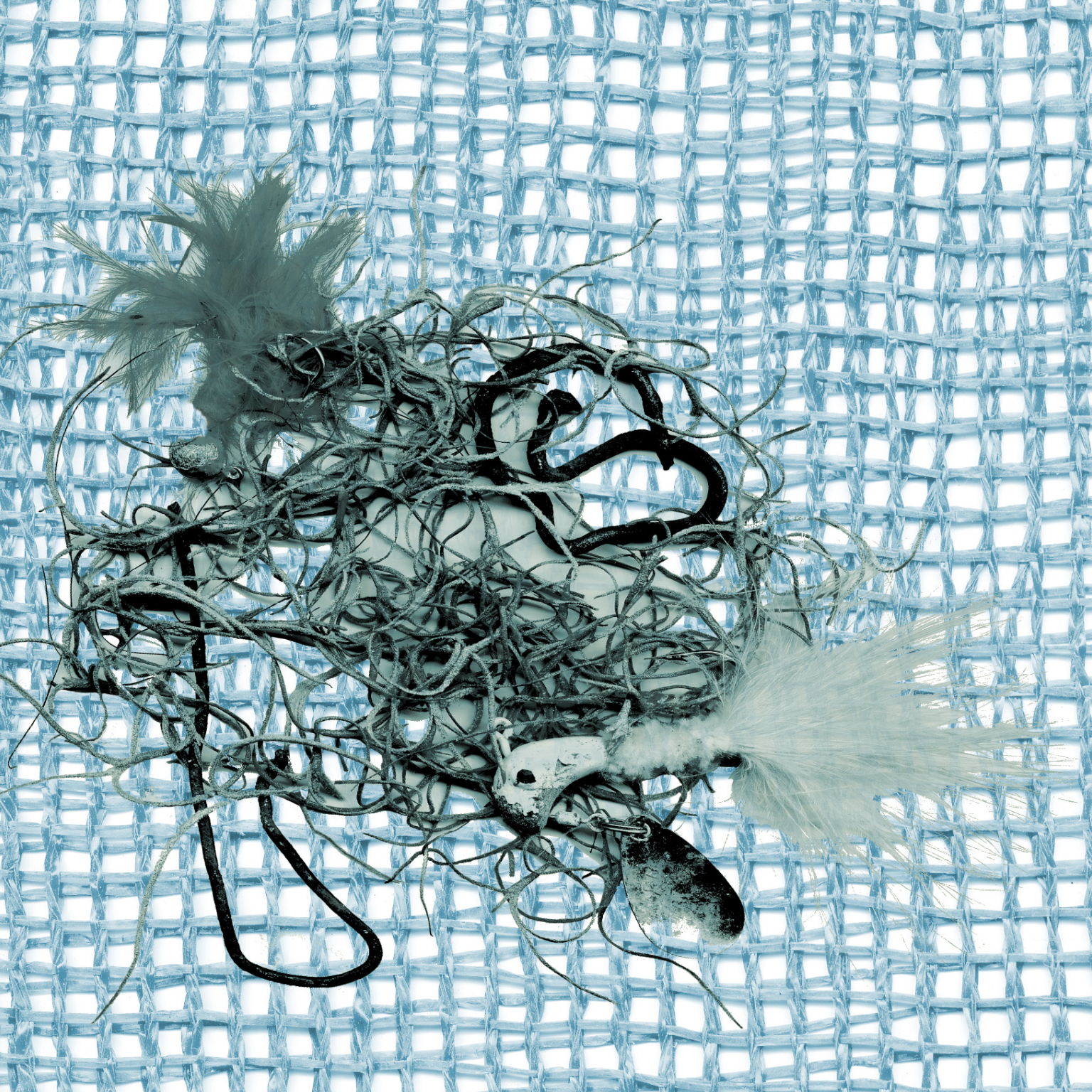


It was on this particular day, as she paddled her blue boat along the ocean shore, that she came across a sad sight. A poor fish swam awkwardly with his head stuck in a strange object covered with seaweed, fishing hooks, and ocean muck.

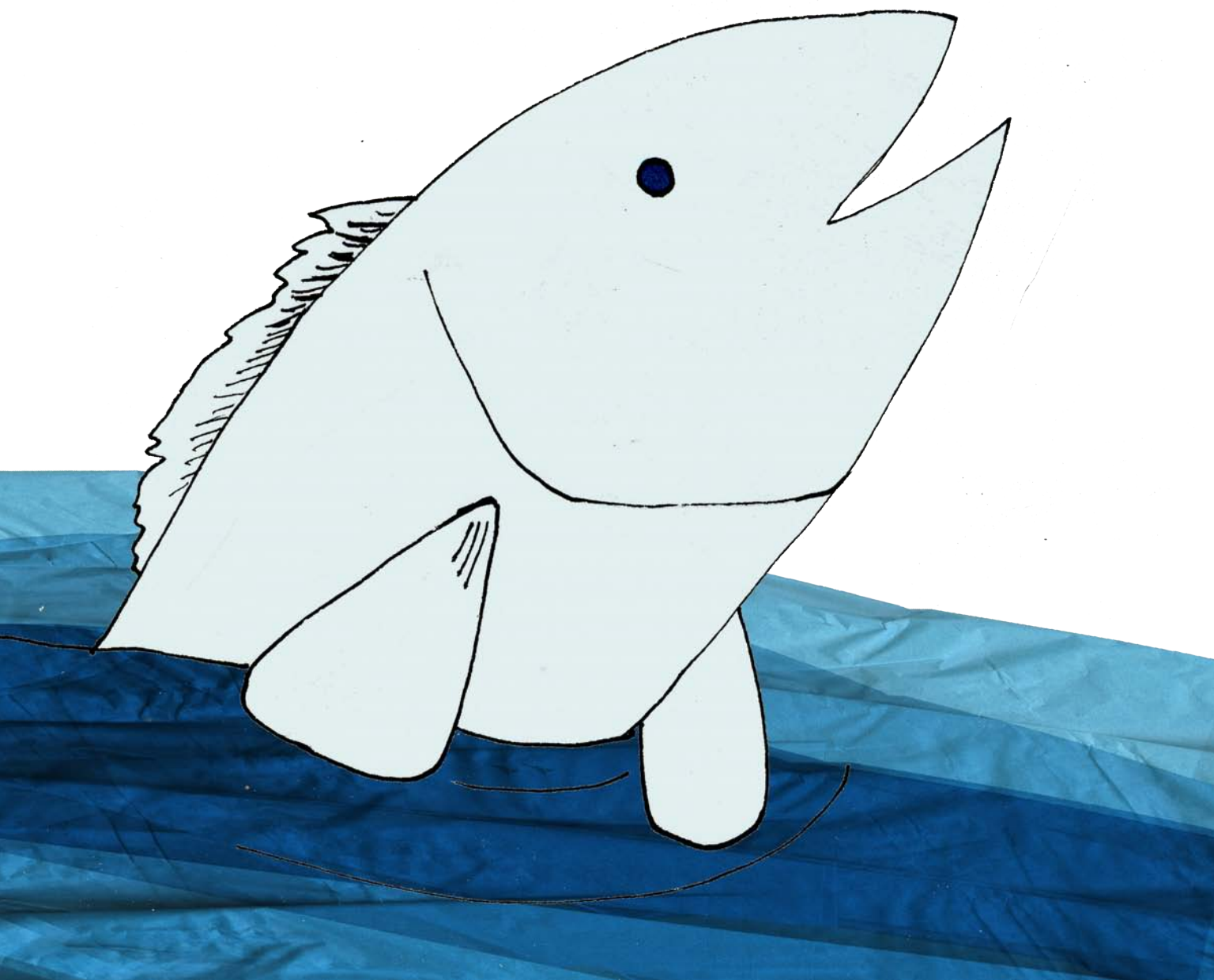
“Oh dear” cried the woman, and she pulled out her net and scooped the fish up out of the water and into her boat.

The fish lay very still as the woman pulled the strange objects from his face. He coughed and sputtered and asked to be let back into the water. The woman gently slipped him back into the sea.









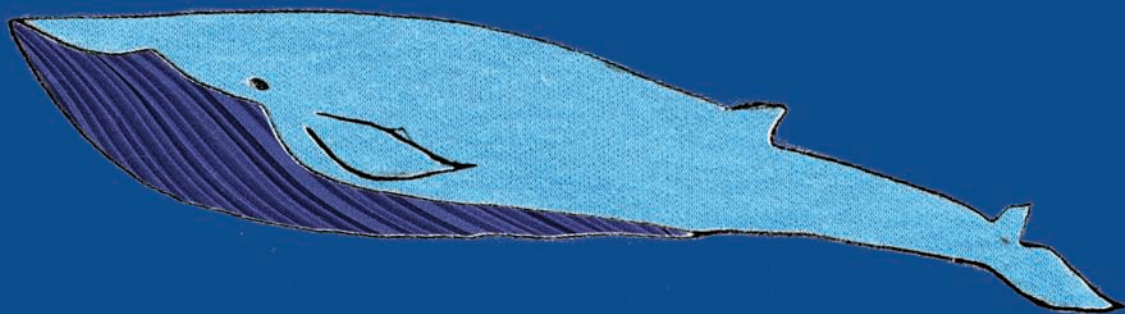
He then turned around, and, poking his face out of the water, said “Thank you! I tried to hide from being eaten by a great sea bird. I have been stuck in that wretched thing for several days, and I could not even see where I was going. I must not be too far from home, I think?” The woman asked, “Why, where do you come from?” The fish exclaimed, “I come from the English Channel.” The woman gave a great cry of astonishment and said as softly as she could to the fish that he was indeed very, very far from home.

“Whatever do I do?” cried the fish for he had never swum so far away from home. The woman discarded the muck from the strange object, and uncovered the blue boot. “Oh my!” said the woman. “Someone is missing their blue boot and must want it returned. I will go with you back home,” she said to the fish. The fish was very happy for a companion after he had come so far, and he and the woman set off together across the great Atlantic.

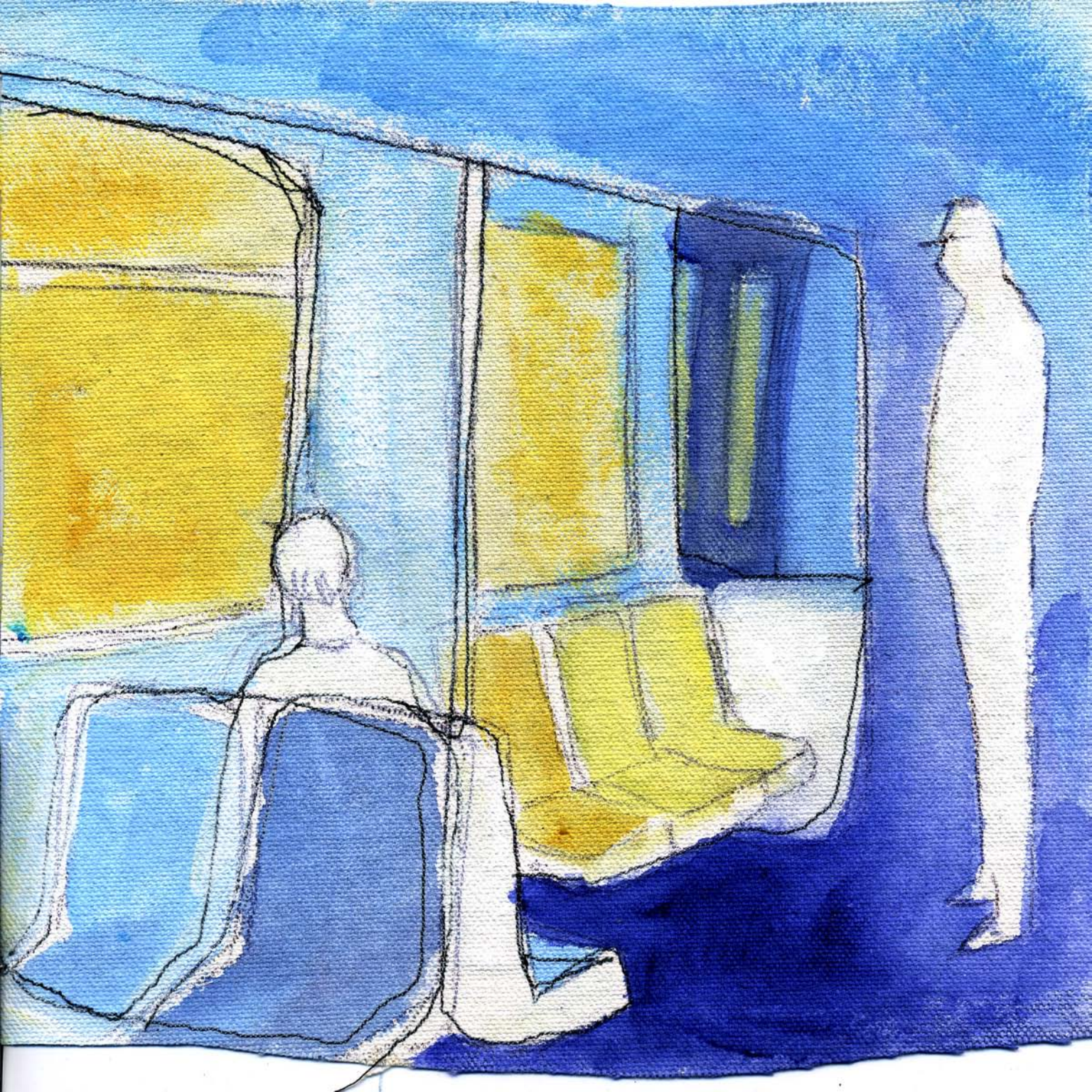


Several days went by and the woman tied a rope to the fish's tail, unfurled a big blue sail up on her boat, and placed the blue boot to the prow to point the way. She lay down to sleep and the woman, exhausted from her travels, fell asleep to the soft rolling sway of the ocean. She dreamt of a person who wore the blue boots, and wondered if they liked blue things too.











At the same moment, the man was suddenly jolted awake. The little subway car needed maintenance and a tall station employee shook the man awake to have him exit the car. “Off you go sir, routine check-up you see, once every few days, you know.” The man had been asleep for quite some time.

He got off at the station and to his surprise he saw across the platform a blue boot! “It must be mine!” he cried, and he ran with a thump and plod as quickly as his one boot and one sock could carry him. He stopped and scooped up the boot, but alas it was not his for it was no bigger than his hand, and he placed the boot into his pocket with the other. The man began to feel even more despair.

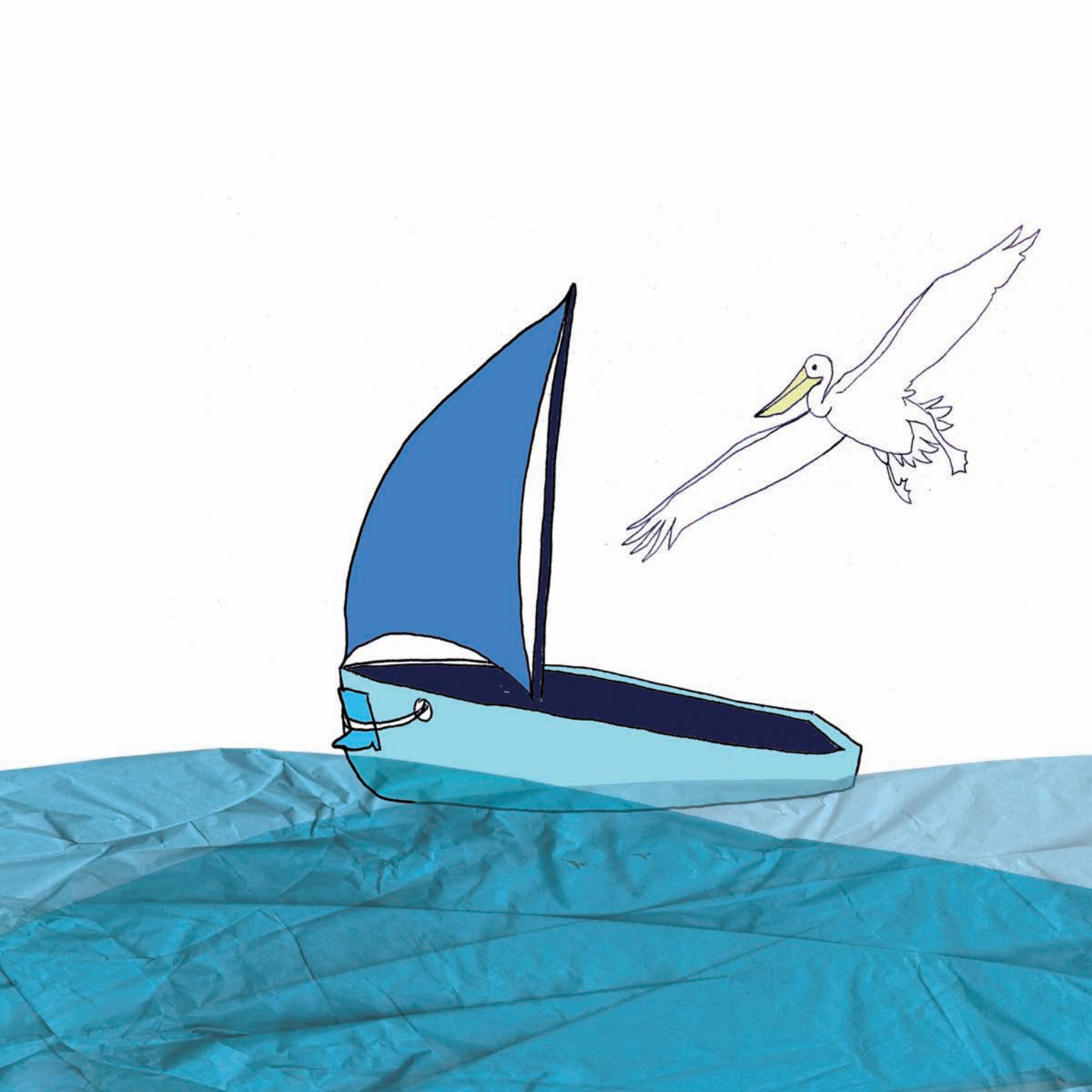
Without his blue boots the man felt he could not sing, dance, or paint his beautiful dreams and he wandered away from the city life again back down the winding roads, back down the tallest roly-poly hill, and back down to the sea.



He watched the ocean swells rise and fall. He felt hopeless without his blue boot, and he lay back on the soft warm sand to watch the clouds go by contemplating his life without it.

The young woman was very close by. Her little boat had finally reached the English Channel. She had woken from her sleep to the sound of the fish calling out to her. “I must hide!” he said as he dove under her blue boat. “What is the matter?” the woman called out, but the fish did not hear her for he was very afraid. The woman looked up into the sky and saw a great sea bird flying about.

“Oh how terrible!” cried the sea bird, as she eyed the blue boot tied to the prow with disgust. “That terrible tasting fish is back, I see.” The woman was quite confused and asked the sea bird, “Whatever do you mean?” “Well,” said the bird, “I have a nest of chicks to feed up past the sand dunes, next to a little stream. One day I was flying about along the stream, and I saw a great blue fish jump up, so naturally I caught the fish to take back to my chicks. But it was the worst tasting fish I have ever tasted, and not like a fish at all, so I spat it back out into the water and it swam away.”





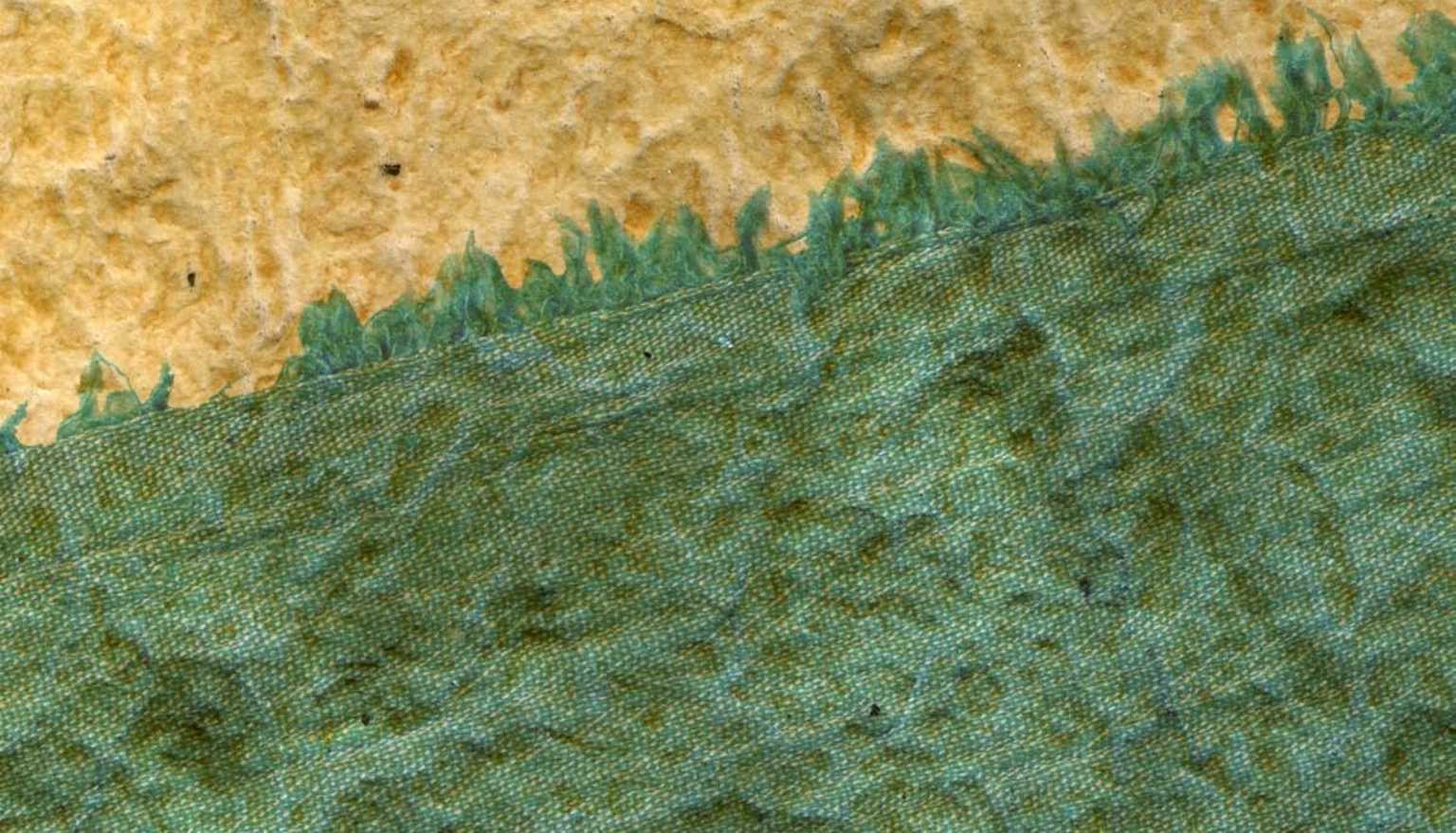
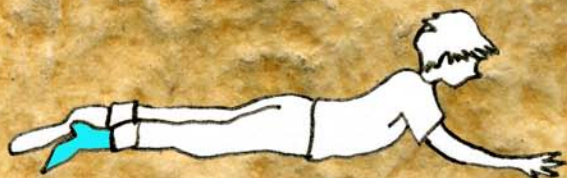


The woman thought for a moment, “Perhaps the sea bird can take me to the place where she first found the blue boot.” “Can you please show me the place where you have found this strange blue fish?” the woman said to the sea bird. “Why of course,” said the bird, “but I dare say you would not want to eat that fish. All the same, I will take you.”

The woman followed the sea bird to the shoreline where a little stream ran into the ocean. She called out a thank you to the fish and he thumped her boat with his tail as if to say he had heard her, but remained hidden. The woman waded out into the water and followed the bird to the stream. “It was right along here,” said the bird. The woman called out a thank you as the bird returned to her nest.

It was then that the woman noticed a strange blue object sticking up out of the sand. Unable to resist collecting blue things, she grabbed her little blue bag and walked along the soft warm sand towards the blue.





She was very surprised to come across a man sleeping. And even more surprised to find that he had on one blue boot. The man, having the sun blocked from his face, opened one eye and stared at the woman. “Hello,” said the woman, “I believe I have something that belongs to you, and I have come a long way to return it.” The man, still in his despair, rolled over in the sand with a mumble. The woman dropped his blue boot next to him, and asked, “Does this blue boot belong to you?”

The man jumped up quickly and looked at the woman, and then looked at the boot. He picked up the blue boot and held it in his hands and, for a moment, stood in disbelief staring from the woman to the blue boot. “Why, it is my blue boot!” he cried as he slipped the boot on his foot. “I have been searching everywhere and had nearly given up all hope!” The man grabbed the woman’s hands and danced with her around and around. “Thank you, thank you!” he cried out and embraced the woman. “However did you find it?”



The woman sat with the man and told him her story. She told him of how she collected blue things in her blue boat, of how she had come across the poor fish stuck inside the muck which uncovered the blue boot, of how she followed the fish back home crossing the entire ocean and meeting the sea bird, and of how she had followed the sea-bird and found him lying asleep. The man smiled his cat-like smile, and his hedgehog eyebrows gave a great dance across his forehead, and he kissed the young woman who loved blue. And together they would always be. They would sing, dance, and paint beautiful dreams, and think about the great blue whales in the great blue sea.



