

Jenn Bailey is an author, editor, documentarian, blue-ribbon pie baker, and eager traveler. She received her MFA from the Vermont College of Fine Arts. Born and raised in Rhode Island, she now calls Kansas City home where she lives with her husband, three sons, and numerous cats and dogs. Jenn was inspired to write Henry's story after watching her own sons, one who is on the autism spectrum, navigate finding a friend—a process which took patience, time, and courage. But finding just the right one was always, always worth it.

Mika Song grew up in Manila, Philippines, and Honolulu, Hawaii. She moved to New York to attend the Pratt Institute and worked in animation before making children's books. She lives in New York City with her husband and daughter.

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Bailey · Song

A Friend for Henry

chronicle books



# A Friend for Henry



by Jenn Bailey

illustrated by Mika Song

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In Classroom Six, second left  
down the hall, Henry is looking for  
a friend.

A friend who shares. A friend who  
listens. Maybe even a friend who likes  
things to stay the same and all in order,  
like Henry does. But in a day full of  
*too close* and *too loud*, when nothing  
seems to go right, will Henry ever find  
a friend—or will a friend find him?

With insight and warmth, this heart-  
felt story from the perspective of a boy  
on the autism spectrum celebrates the  
everyday magic of finding a first friend.





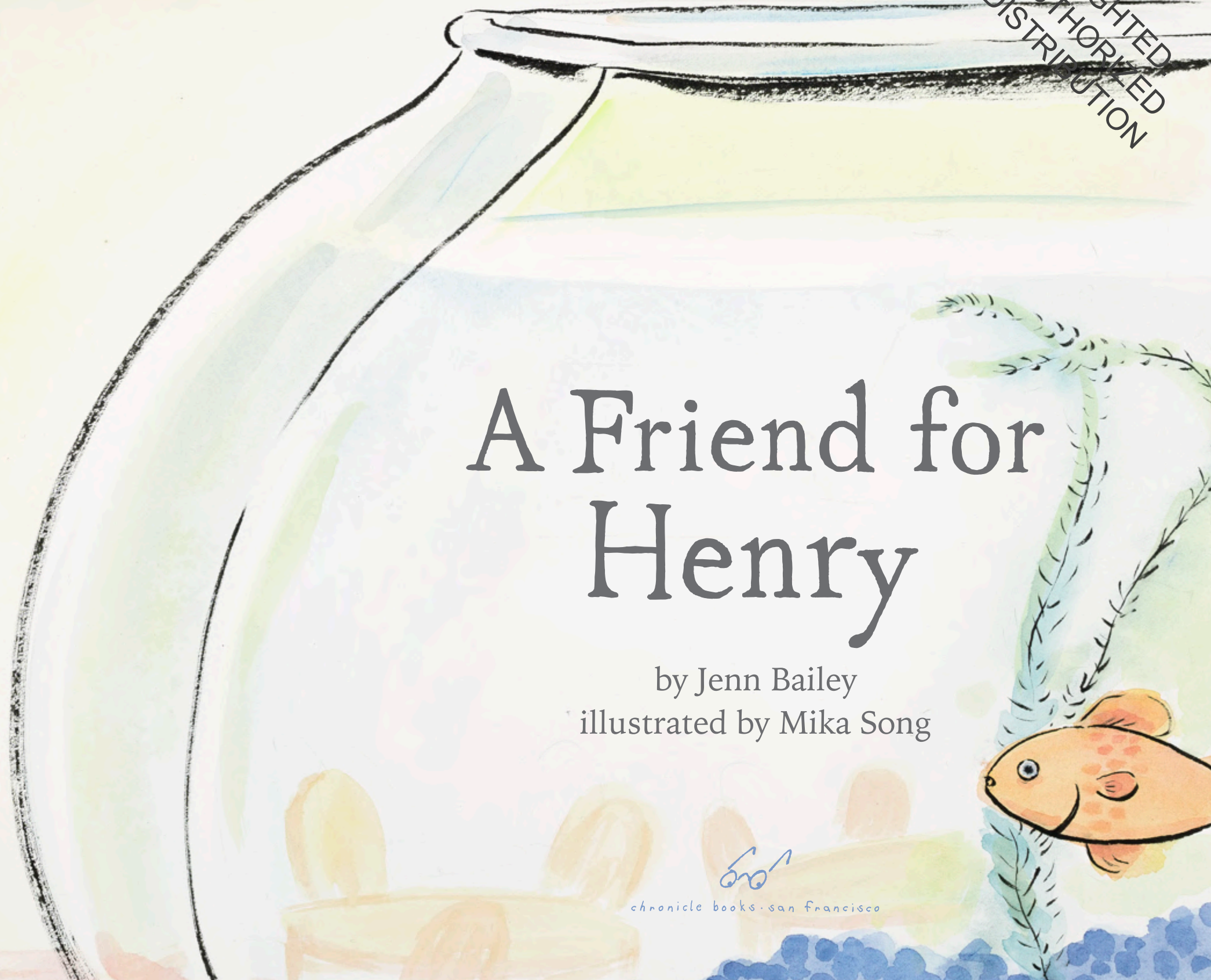
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chronicle books · san francisco





In Classroom Six, second left down the hall,  
Henry was looking for a friend.





It couldn't be Gilly, who circled her fishbowl.  
*She's quiet*, thought Henry. *But she can't play*  
*on the swings.*

It couldn't be Mrs. Magoon, who knew about  
hugs. *She shares*, thought Henry. *But she has to.*

Could it be someone else in Classroom Six?





In Art Class, Vivianne shared Henry's double easel.

Vivianne was a kaleidoscope, a tangle of colors.

She had ribbons and clackety shoes. She knew every pony song. Her fingernails were painted like rainbows.

"When I get paint on my fingers," Henry said,

"I wash it off."

Vivianne waved her hands *too close* to Henry's face.

"My mommy painted them. Aren't they pretty?"

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“Painting on people is Against the Rules,”  
said Henry. “Did your mommy get in trouble?”

“No.”

Henry lowered his voice. “Did you get angry?”

“Why should I?”

But Vivianne was very angry later.

“He ruined them!”

“She likes rainbows,” Henry explained.  
And he thought, *a friend would say  
thank you.*



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Reading Time was Henry's favorite.

*My friend will like it, too.*

It was Henry's turn to put out the carpet squares. He tucked the blue ones next to the brown ones. Green in the very middle. All the edges met and the corners fit perfectly.



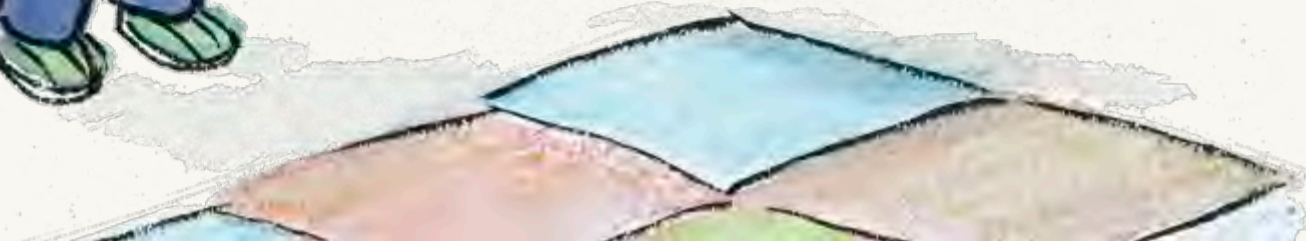
"Reading Time!" shouted Samuel. "My favorite!"

Samuel was a thunderstorm, booming and crashing. He was kind of scary if you didn't have your blanket. He could pick up crayons with his toes and do proper somersaults.



Henry stepped in front of Samuel. "Somersaults are hard."

Samuel dodged past. "I want a green one!"



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“Wait.” Henry’s throat felt tight. “They’re perfect.”

“Mine’s a magic carpet from a genie’s lamp,”  
said Samuel.

“It’s not!” Henry’s face was hot. “It’s from Rug World.  
There’s the sticker.”

“Up, up, and away, Magic Carpet!”



*Booming and crashing. Henry’s fingers curled closed.*

A friend listens!



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“Henry.” Mrs. Magoon knelt in front of him.  
“Sit with me, please.”

Henry did. But he couldn’t see the pictures.  
And his carpet square was brown.



During Snack Time, Jayden took  
three crackers instead of two.



At Recess, Riley dug up worms and  
let them use the swings.

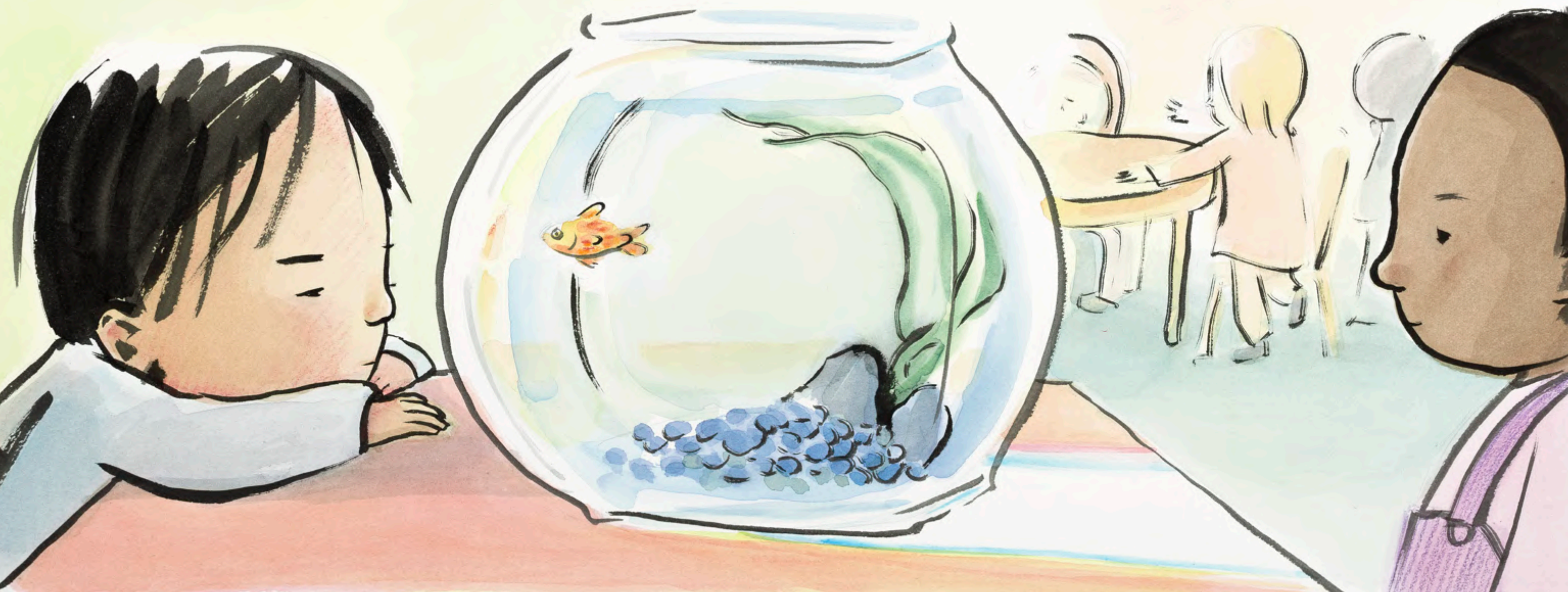
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At Free Time, Henry's hope for a friend felt small. He watched the sunlight play along Gilly's scales. He could watch Gilly for a long time.

Katie watched, too.

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Katie smelled like strawberry milk.  
She read storybooks all by herself.  
She slid down the Big Slide. Sometimes backwards.



“The Big Slide is too big,” said Henry.





Gilly floated past.

"She's shimmery," said Katie.

"But she doesn't blink," said Henry.

"What does she do?"

*She burps pebbles, Henry thought. And breathes underwater.*

*And turns sunshine into colors.*

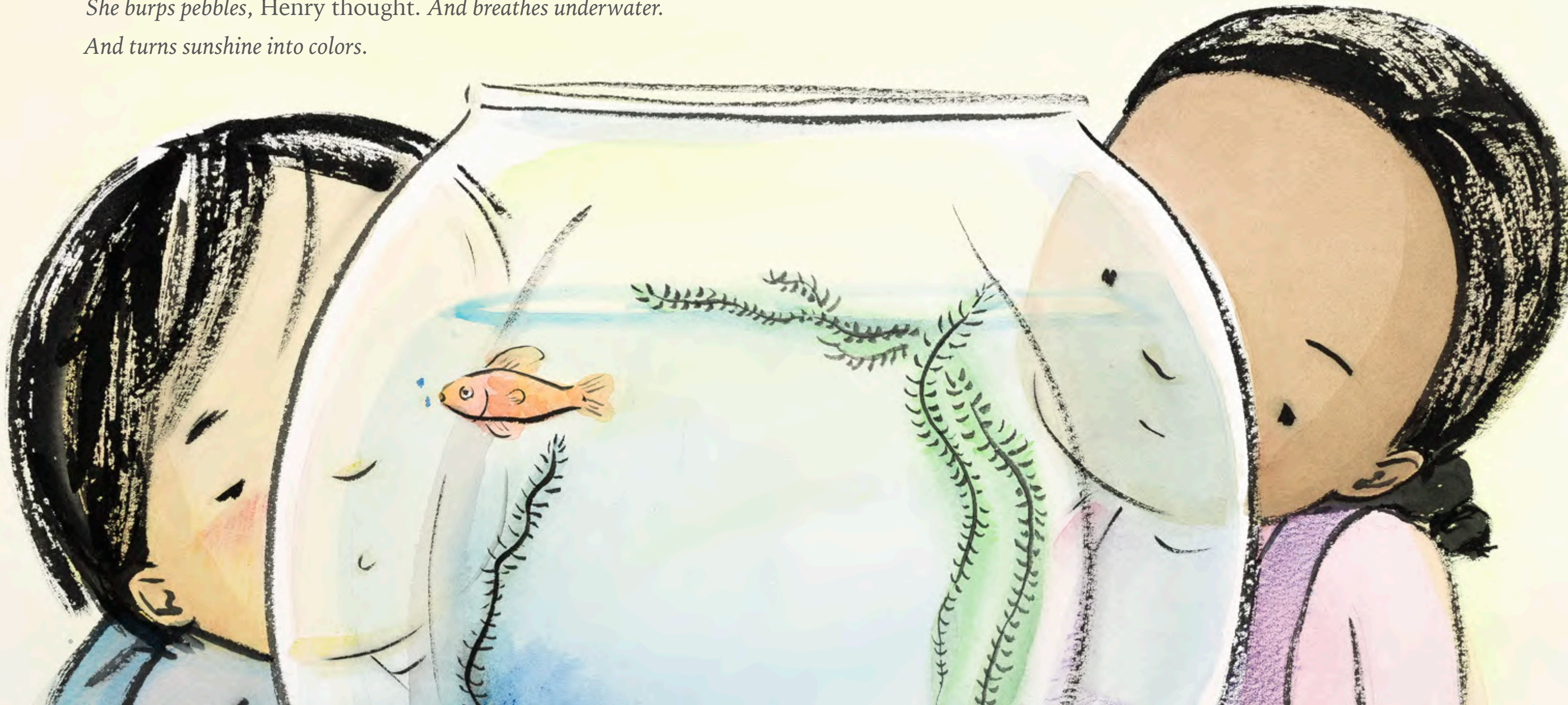
Henry hunched into his sweatshirt. "Fish things."

Katie bent to have a closer look. "I like her."

Henry tried not to blink. "Want to play blocks?"

"Sure."

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"I don't like triangles," said Henry.

"I don't like broccoli," said Katie.



Together they built a tower.  
It had rectangles, cylinders, and squares.  
But no triangles. Or broccoli.



"It's perfect," said Henry.

"Thank you," said Katie.





The next day, they played on the swings,  
and Katie went down the Big Slide.



Henry waited at the bottom for his friend.



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To Cameron, Harris, and Kellen, each  
Henry in his own way.

And to K, H, and L, your patience abounds.  
—J. B.

To Erica.  
—M. S.

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