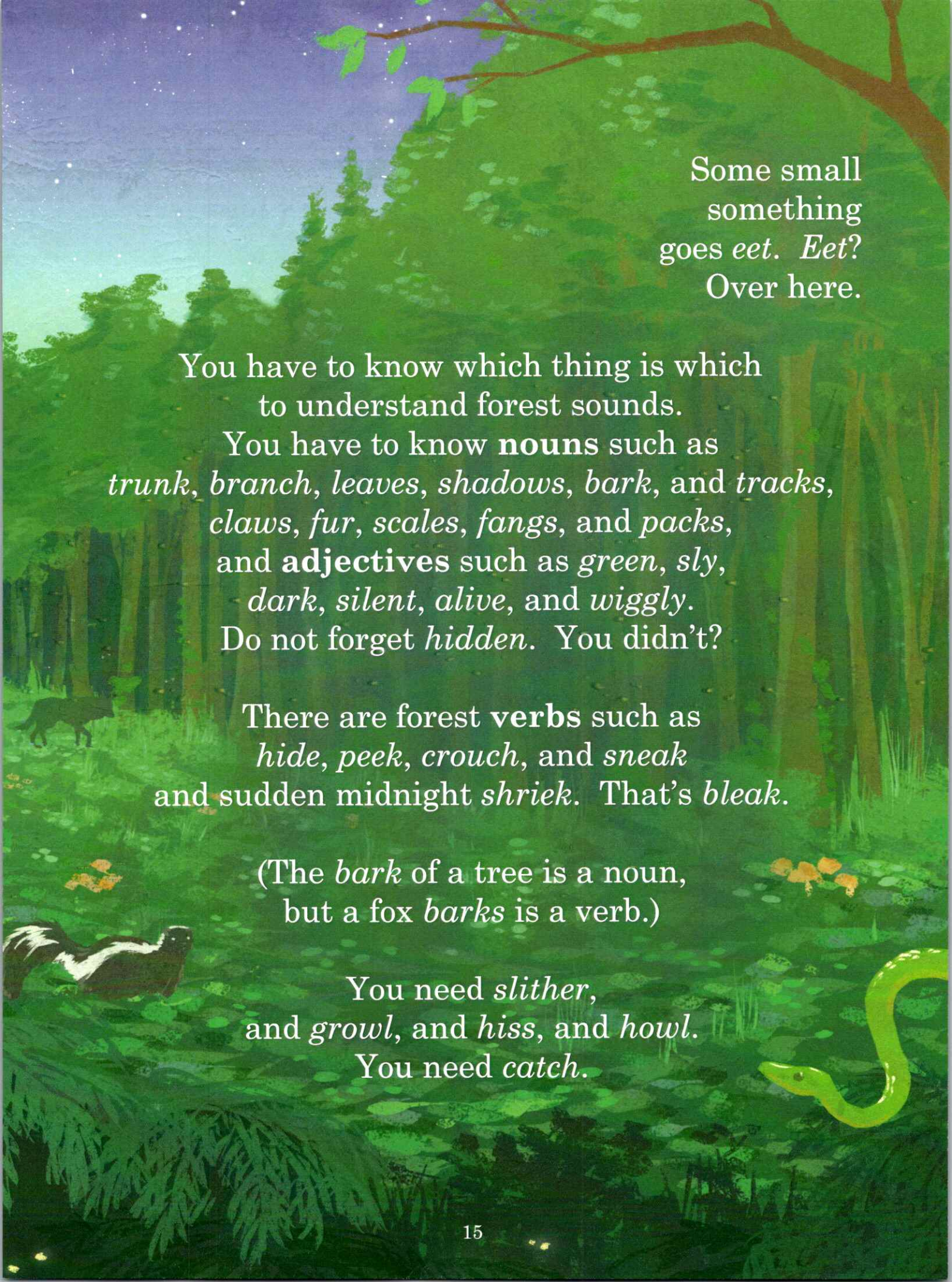




Some small  
something  
goes *eet*. *Eet?*  
Over here.

You have to know which thing is which  
to understand forest sounds.

You have to know **nouns** such as  
*trunk*, *branch*, *leaves*, *shadows*, *bark*, and *tracks*,  
*claws*, *fur*, *scales*, *fangs*, and *packs*,  
and **adjectives** such as *green*, *sly*,  
*dark*, *silent*, *alive*, and *wiggly*.  
Do not forget *hidden*. You didn't?

There are forest **verbs** such as  
*hide*, *peek*, *crouch*, and *sneak*  
and sudden midnight *shriek*. That's *bleak*.

(The *bark* of a tree is a noun,  
but a fox *barks* is a verb.)

You need *slither*,  
and *growl*, and *hiss*, and *howl*.  
You need *catch*.



You need forest **adjectives**  
such as *gloomy*, and *umber*,  
and *scratchy*, and *thorny*, and *lumber*,  
and *squishy*, and *soft*, and *aloft*.

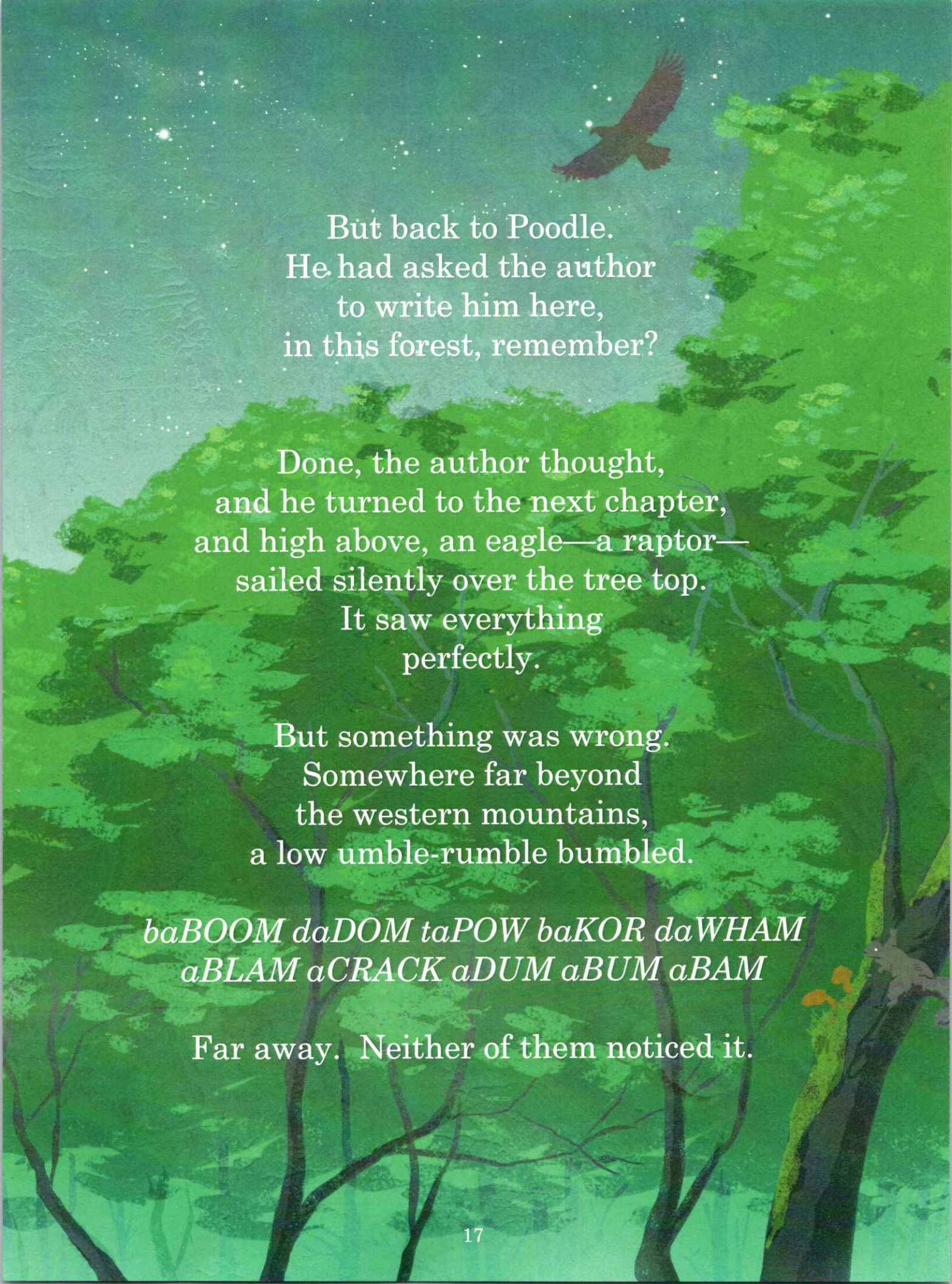
Always, hidden somethings watch you.  
You never see them.  
They are back there,  
between the words,  
in the shadows behind the sentences,  
or under that fern.

One blinks.

One snaps a twig.

One of them is in this sentence.  
You never see them. They see you.

As the author wrote,  
ferns crept up from the bottom  
of the page, and the pine  
boughs fell low, so you  
had to duck.



But back to Poodle.  
He had asked the author  
to write him here,  
in this forest, remember?

Done, the author thought,  
and he turned to the next chapter,  
and high above, an eagle—a raptor—  
sailed silently over the tree top.  
It saw everything  
perfectly.

But something was wrong.  
Somewhere far beyond  
the western mountains,  
a low umble-rumble bumbled.

*baBOOM daDOM taPOW baKOR daWHAM  
aBLAM aCRACK aDUM aBUM aBAM*

Far away. Neither of them noticed it.