

As the friends dropped, the bottom rushed up,  
and they aimed their feet (or consonants)  
toward the landing zone, braced for impact,  
and *poof!*, landed in a different world.

A different different world.

This was no Van Gogh.

They had fallen four centuries  
and had landed in a frozen vista,  
a gray scene of sixteenth-century Belgium,  
a snowy landscape near Antwerp,  
alive with busy people  
swarming in all directions  
like ants.

“Where is this?” asked Sidney.







The shivering monsters looked  
at the land in the dead of winter  
and at buildings stretching to the horizon  
and saw crowds of crowdy people  
skating on ice, slipping on ice,  
buying food, **and** having fun.

(See the Oxford comma in that list?)

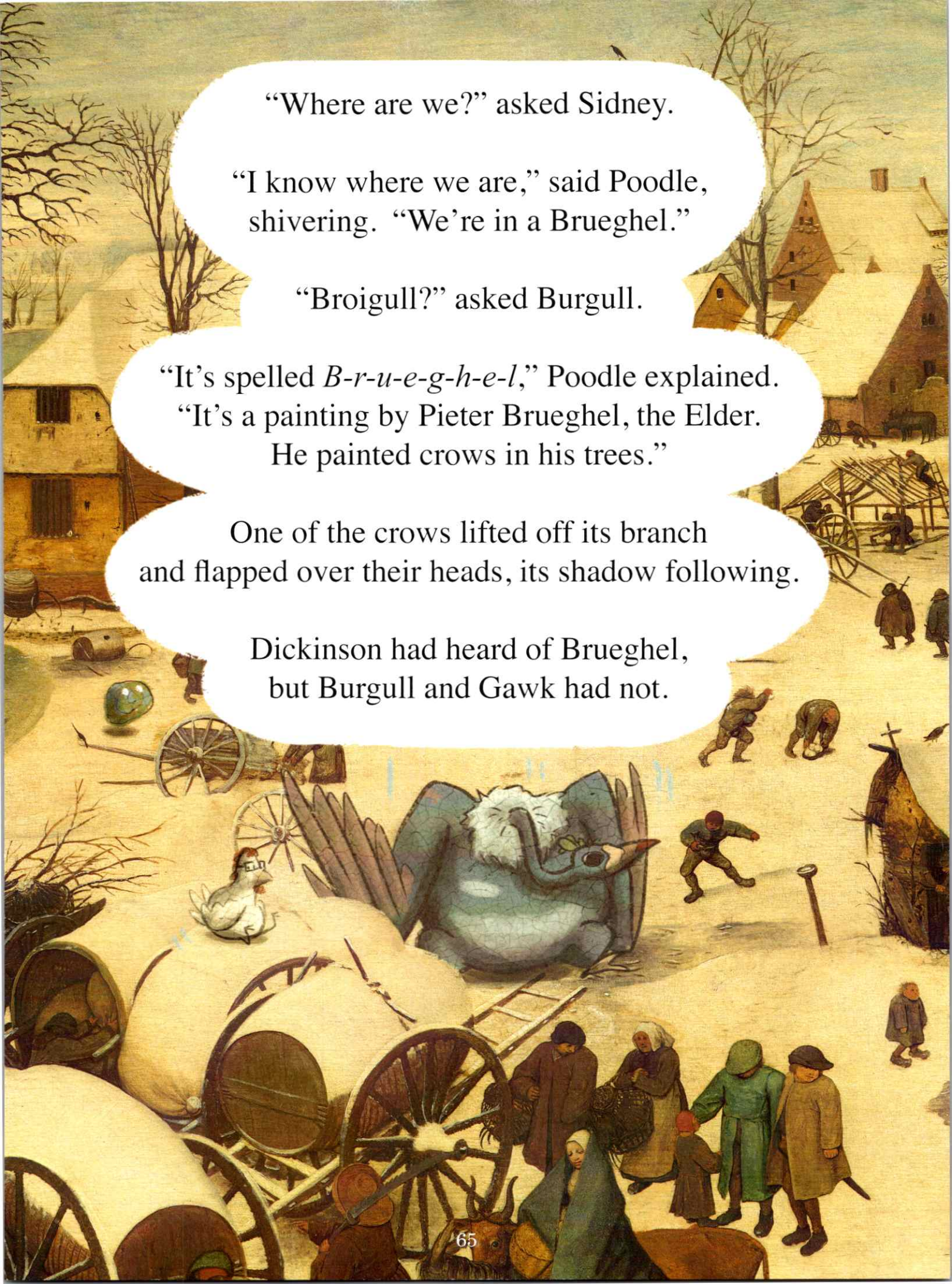
It was a winter world, shrouded in snow.

The brooks were frozen.  
People crowded around fires,  
talking, laughing, and joking.

In the trees there were crows.  
Every child sees those.

Everyone was cold.  
Burgull's old consonants rattled.  
The monsters shivered in unison.  
They'd been practicing.





“Where are we?” asked Sidney.

“I know where we are,” said Poodle, shivering. “We’re in a Brueghel.”

“Broigull?” asked Burgull.

“It’s spelled *B-r-u-e-g-h-e-l*,” Poodle explained.

“It’s a painting by Pieter Brueghel, the Elder. He painted crows in his trees.”

One of the crows lifted off its branch and flapped over their heads, its shadow following.

Dickinson had heard of Brueghel, but Burgull and Gawk had not.