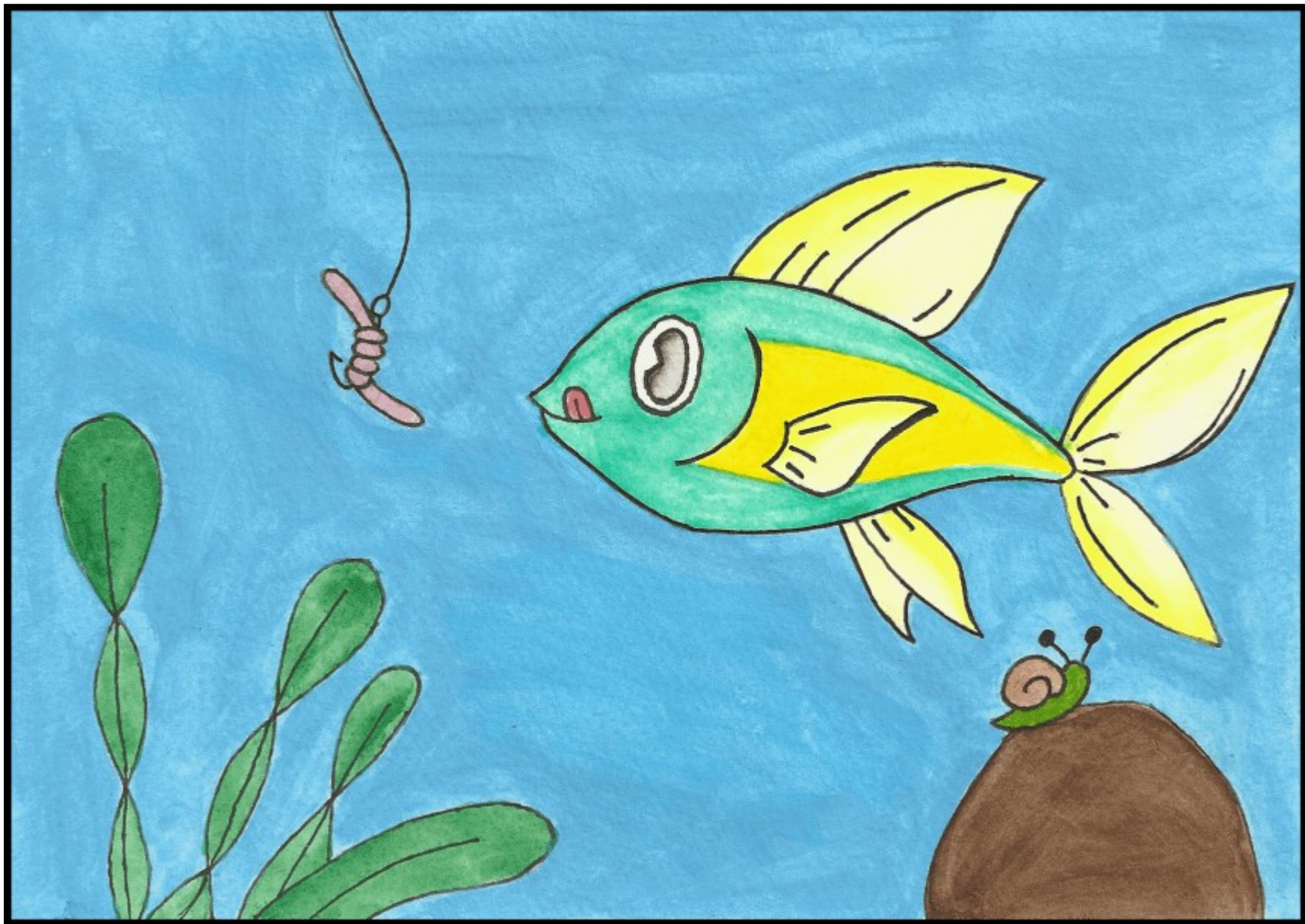


Don't Get Hooked

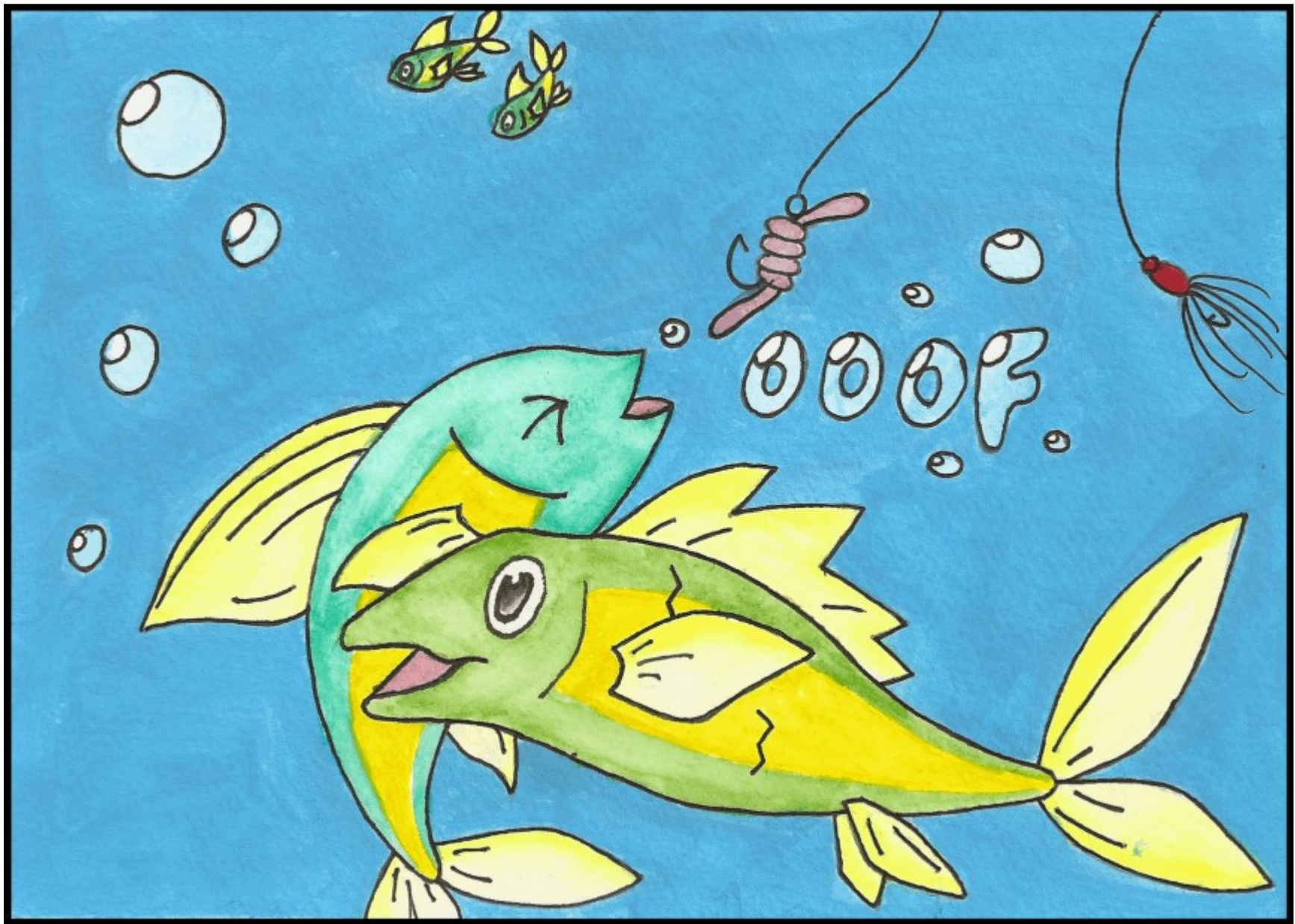
Written by Mike Covell

Illustrations by Jared Wehmeyer

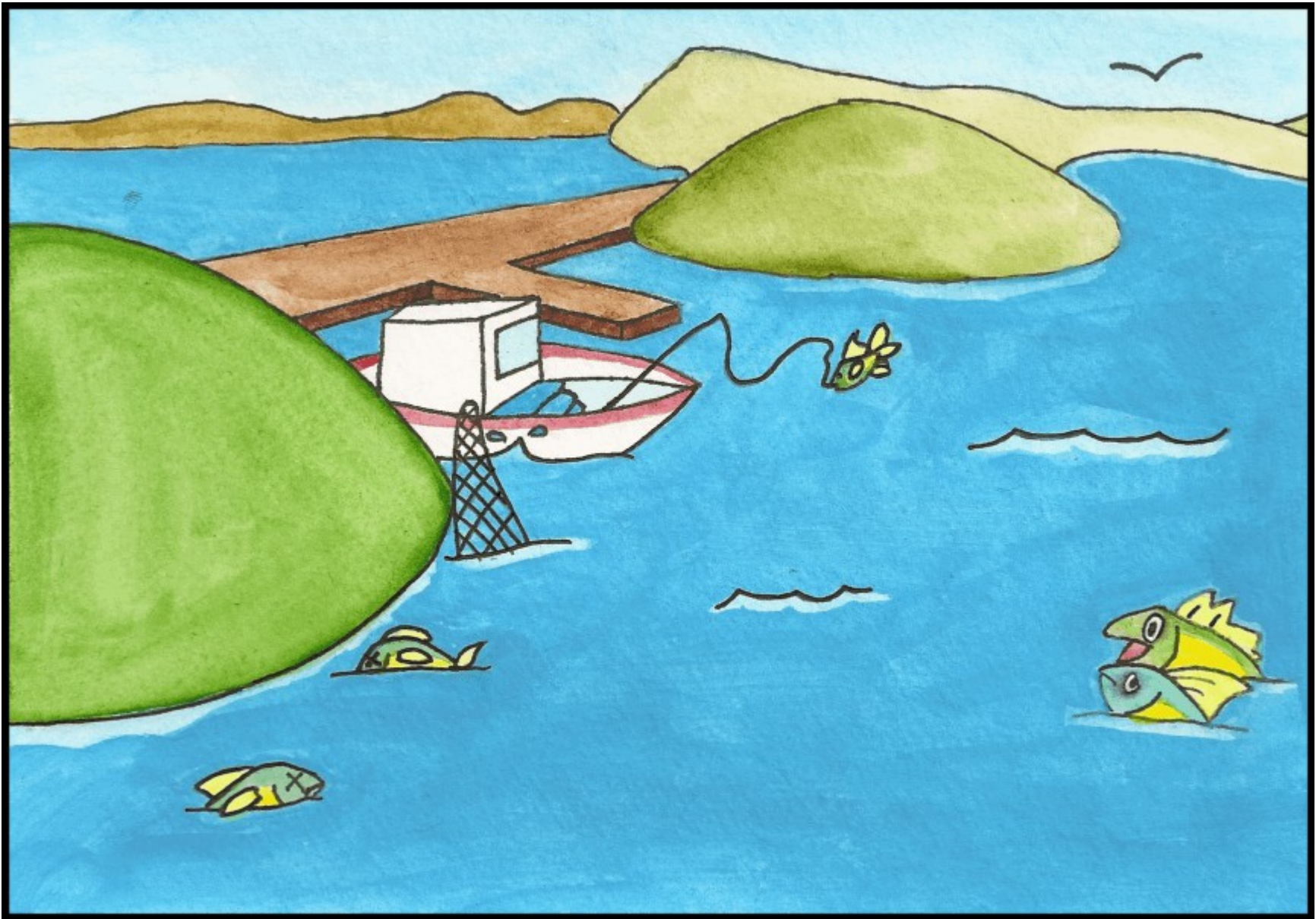




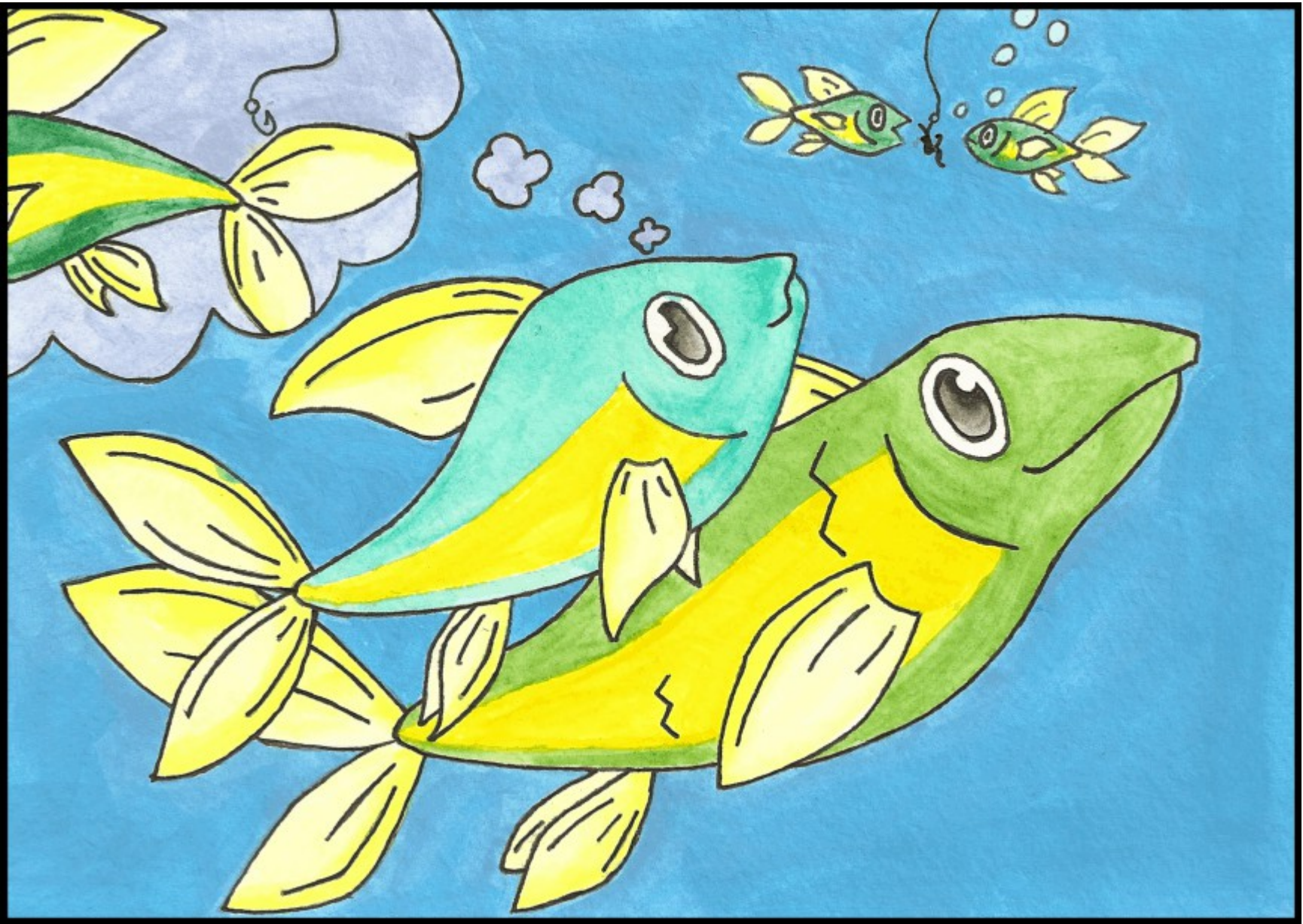
Finney swam slowly past the enticing morsel dangling just inches away. He could almost taste the scrumptious delicacy. The young fish wanted to gobble up the worm, but all the warnings that were drilled into his head, by the older fish kept him from doing so. Finney had his doubts about the advice the older fish continued to give him. He did not see how something so delicious could be so dangerous. The older fish probably told the younger fish those horror stories so there would not be as much competition for the food.



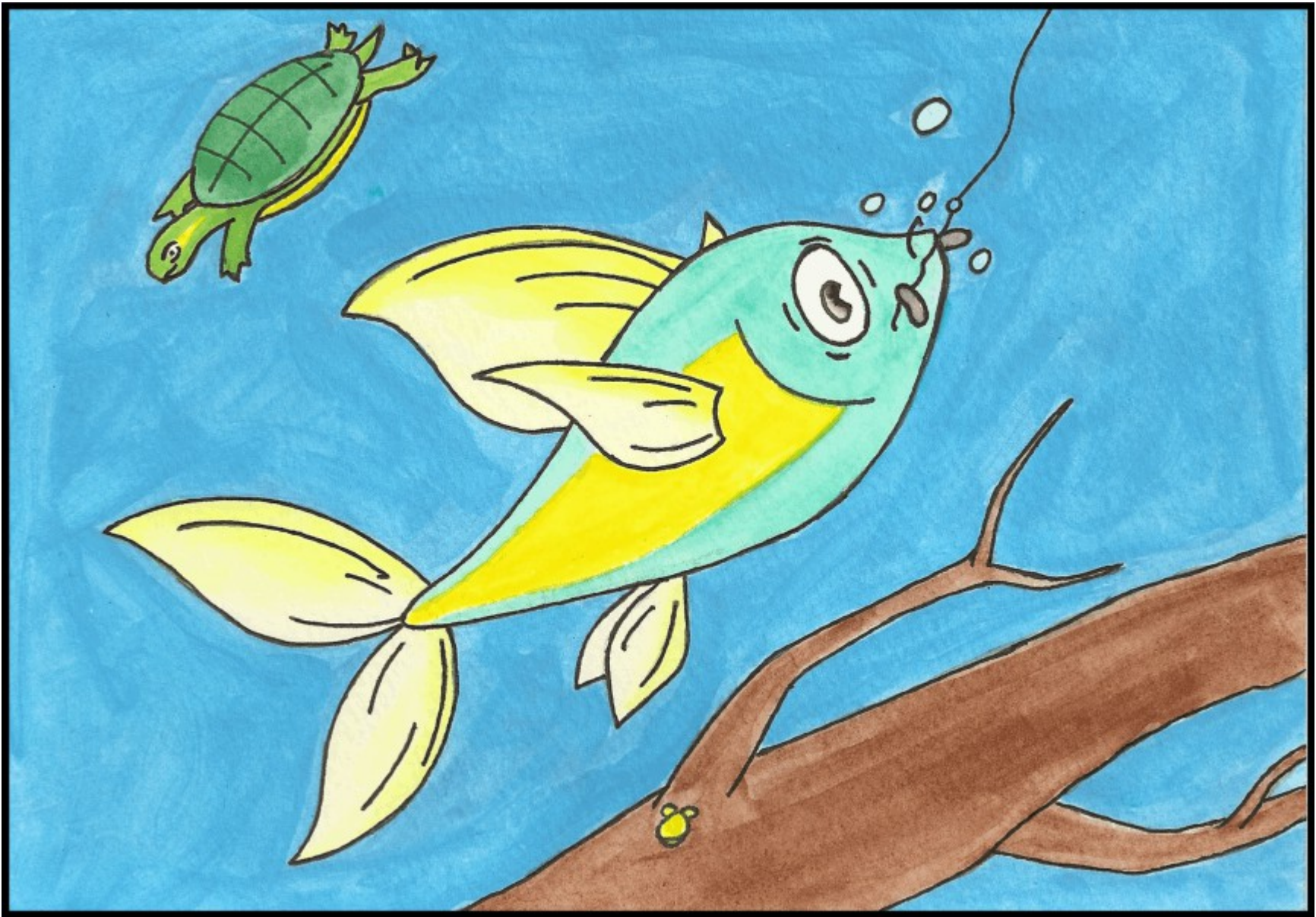
Were the stories true? Finney decided that he would have to find out for himself. He turned and swam back to the worm. He did not see any steel or sharp barbed hooks. All he saw was the worm. He opened his mouth wide and then felt a dull thud in his side. Finney's Uncle had rammed into him and pushed him away from the worm. "What in the deep blue waters is wrong with you!" demanded Uncle Corky. "Do you think we warn you about the hook just for the fun of it?" Finney stammered, "I, I don't know, sometimes I wonder if the stories are true."



Uncle Corky closed his eyes and said with a broken voice, "Follow me. It is time you see what the hook can do." Finney followed his uncle to the shallows, which were close to the shoreline. Before them were countless fish, many swimming on their sides and barely alive. Others had gaping rips in their jaws and were unable to eat. It was a brutal site, one that Finney would not soon forget. Just then, a bird swooped down and scooped up one of the fish that had been swimming on its side. Uncle Corky explained, "The hook has caused all this devastation. You see the stories are true. I wish you would have believed without being brought to the shallows."

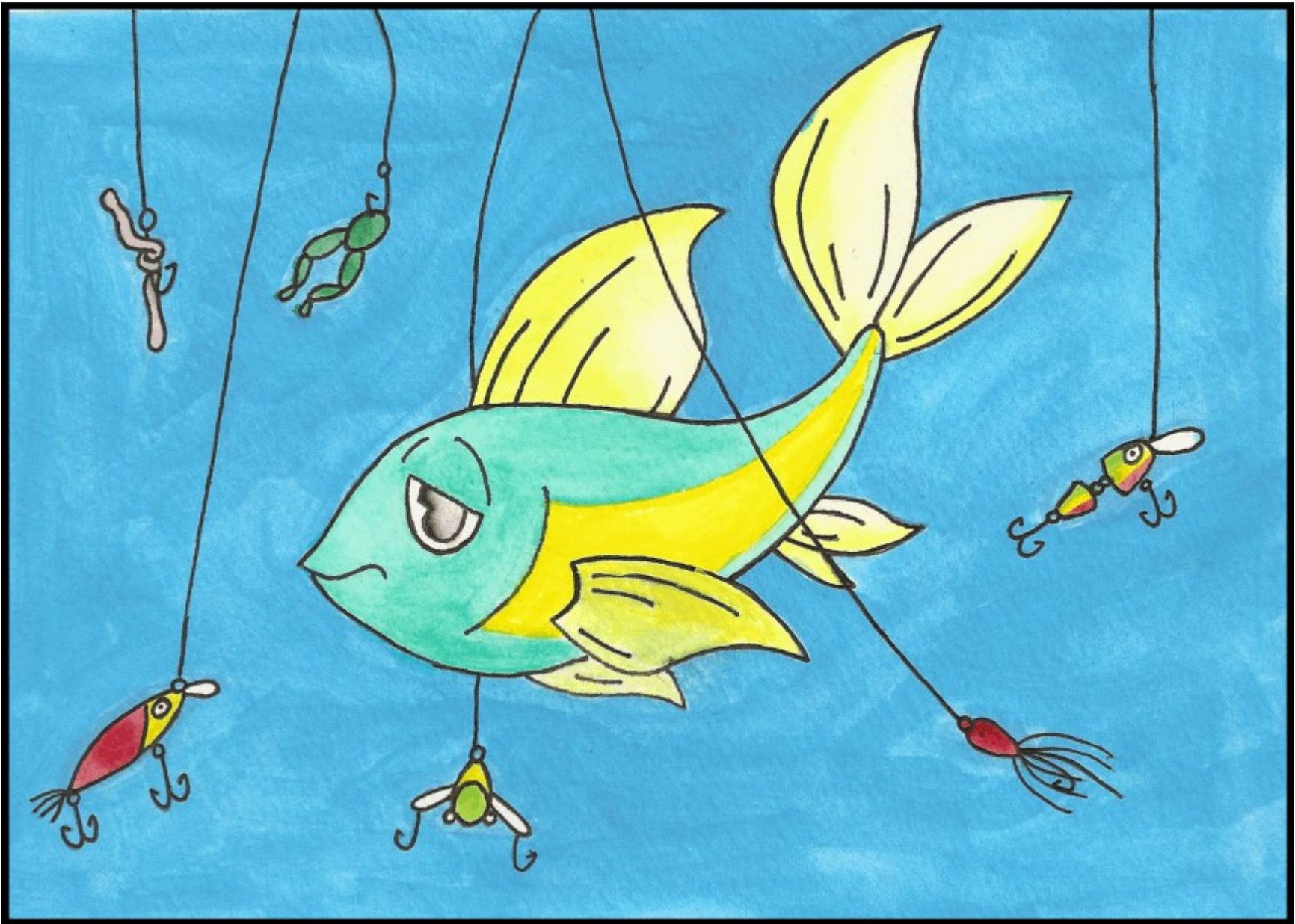


Even as the two fish swam away, Finney recalled the stories that some clever fish were able to take the worm without being hooked. A prideful thought entered his mind, "Maybe these broken fish had not been as smart or as fast as he was."



Day after day Finney continued to see enticing morsels floating in the water, they came in all kinds of shapes and colors. Finney would swim closer and closer to the bait, slowing down with each pass he took. One fateful day the temptation got the better of Finney and he swallowed the bait. "Why it's not tasty at all. It tastes like plastic!" he thought with horror.

Before Finney could spit out the bait, he felt a sharp pain in his jaw, and began to feel as though he was being pulled through the water. The young fish put up a good fight, but his strength was gone. He knew that he had lost the fight. There would not be another day.



Boys and girls, Satan tries to tempt us to sin each day. The devil wants to drag us away from God. Satan never grows weary of putting new types of bait or temptation before us. Satan doesn't care what he uses or abuses for bait. He is the father of lies and wants to destroy those whom God loves. Put on the full armor of God so that you can resist the devil and all his schemes.