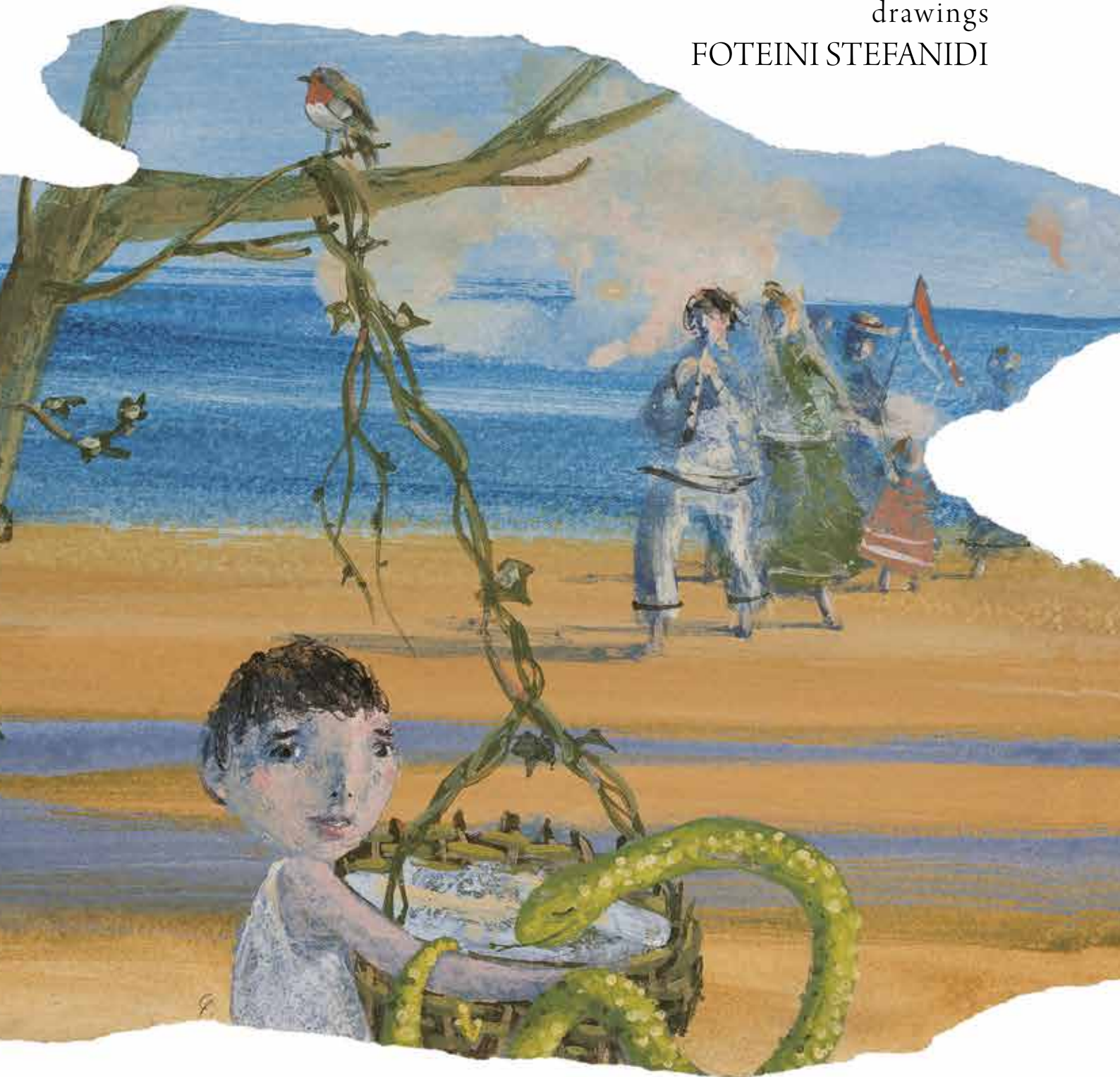


LILY LAMBRELLI

The hidden water

drawings

FOTEINI STEFANIDI



PATAKIS
PUBLISHERS



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Translated into English by
BRUCE WALTER



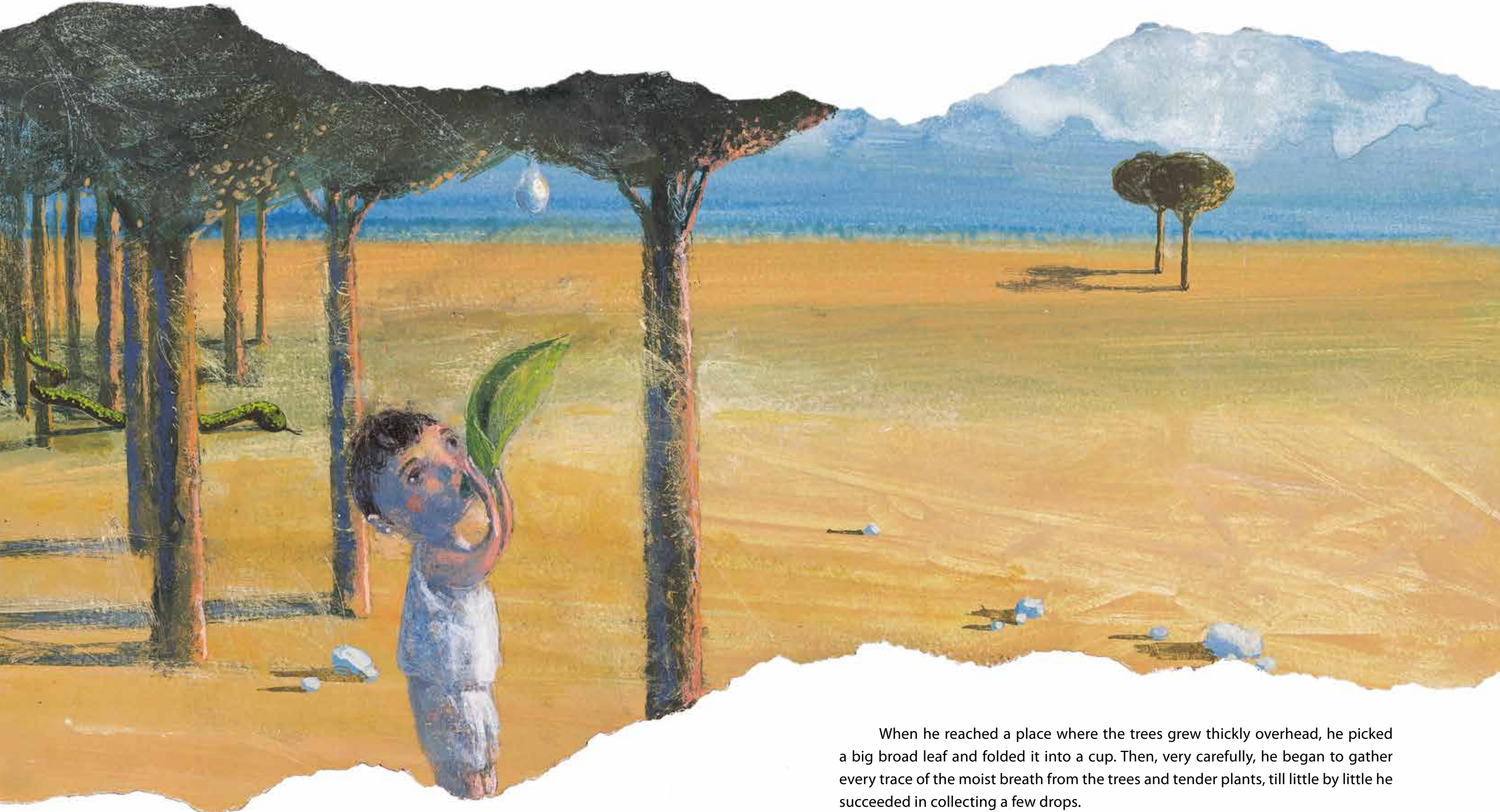
Once upon a long, long time ago a terrible drought descended on the watery planet Earth. Its rocks, its plants, its animals and people, all of them were parched and thirsty. And the wind, hot as a dragon's breath, gave no relief or comfort.

The creatures of the Earth were so desperate for water that they were tortured day and night with worrying how to quench their thirst. But of them all it was the humans who were suffering most, the children worst of all. And among those children...

There was a little boy who lived in a poor village with straw huts for houses and narrow streets of mud dried hard as stone. One night, when thirst made even sleep too weak to close his burning eyelids, the boy decided he would go into the forest before daybreak to find a little coolness in the dew that wraps itself around the leaves at dawn.

So even before the moon had set, he set off down the path that led towards the forest.

He walked and walked, the only sounds to keep him company the groans of the dusty earth and the snapping of dry branches underfoot.



When he reached a place where the trees grew thickly overhead, he picked a big broad leaf and folded it into a cup. Then, very carefully, he began to gather every trace of the moist breath from the trees and tender plants, till little by little he succeeded in collecting a few drops.

He was about to cool his dry, cracked lips when suddenly, from among the deep, dark shadows overhead, a snake slid down.

The boy was terrified and stepped back with a little cry. But...