

# My First Book of KOREAN WORDS

An ABC Rhyming Book

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and KYUBYONG PARK

Illustrated by AYA PADRÓN

TUTTLE



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## **Preface**

The words profiled in this book are all commonly used in the Korean language and—we hope you’ll agree—are both informative and fun for English-speaking children to learn.

The goals of *My First Book of Korean Words* are multiple: to familiarize children with the sounds and structure of Korean speech; to introduce core elements of Korean culture; to illustrate the ways in which languages differ in their treatment of everyday sounds; and to show how, through cultural importation, a single word can be shared between languages.

That’s why, in these pages, you’ll encounter words like *dal* (moon) and *nolda* (to play), which signify objects and actions children are familiar with regardless of their mother tongue. We’ve included terms specific to Korea that carry with them a deeper cultural meaning, like *hanbok* (traditional Korean clothing) and *ondol* (Korean heating system). Words such as *echwi* (“achoo!”) and *yaong* (meow) teach that foreign ears often interpret sounds in different ways, while *roket* (rocket) and *sillopon* (xylophone) illuminate how English has influenced languages the world over.

You’ll notice that the English letters F, L\*, Q, V, X, and Z are not used in the standard Romanization of the Korean alphabet (Hangeul). For these, we’ve chosen to introduce the Korean equivalents of English words that begin with these letters.

And finally, a few notes on pronunciation for the readers of *My First Book of Korean Words*:

### **Basic Vowels**

A – pronounced “ah”

E – pronounced “eh”

I – pronounced “ee”

O – pronounced “oh”

U – pronounced “oo”

AE – pronounced “eh”

### **Consonants**

G – pronounced hard, as in “girl”

KK – pronounced more sharply than a single “K”

SI – pronounced “shee”

Korean is spoken by 78 million people all over the world. We hope that, with the help of this book, that figure will soon be 78 million +1!

\* In actuality, the letter “L” is used in Romanized Hangeul, but it never appears at the beginning of a word.





아침

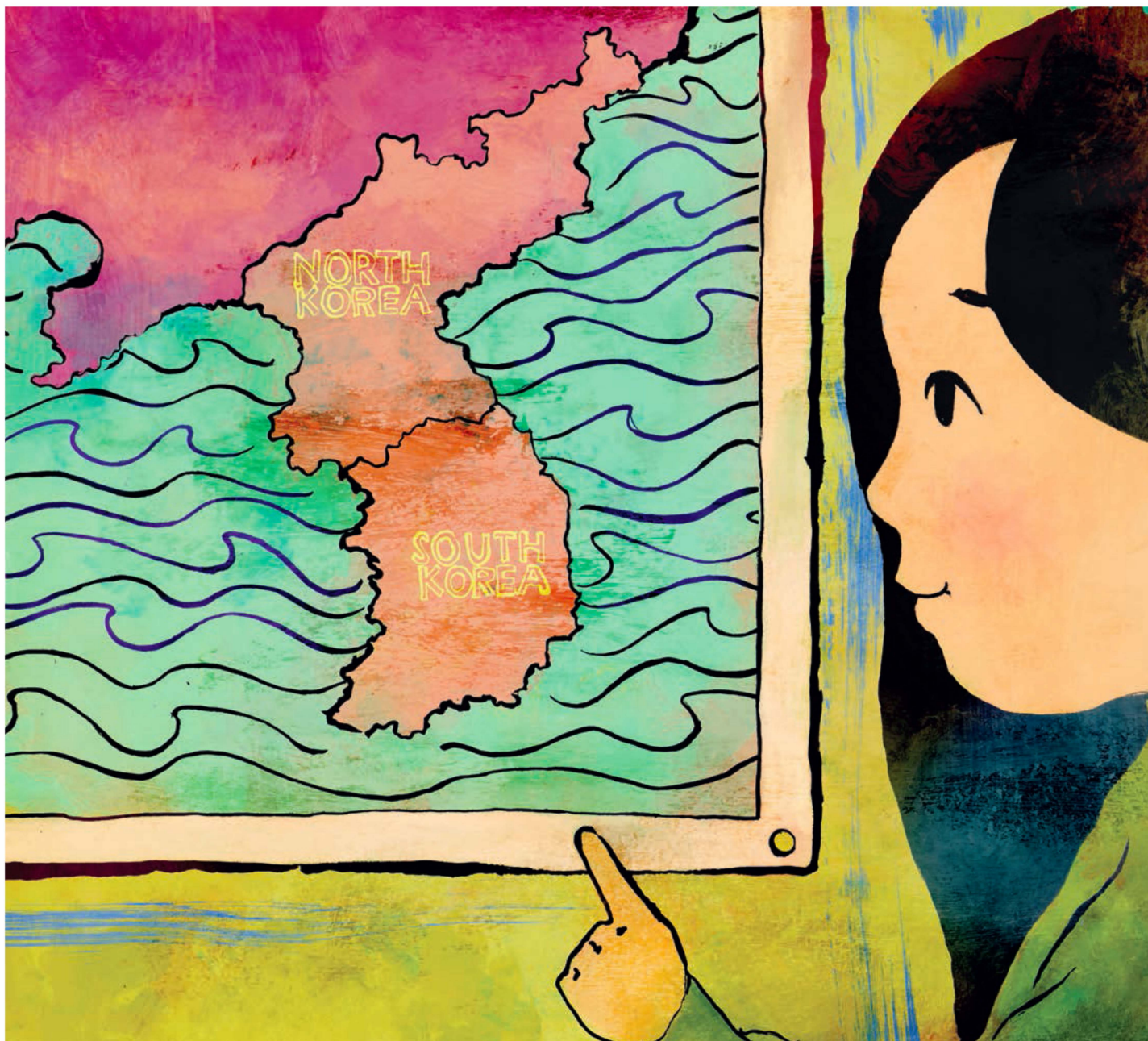
A is for *achim*.  
My breakfast is nice—  
a cool glass of water  
and a big bowl of rice.

In Korea, people like all kinds of food  
for breakfast—even veggies! Would you  
eat rice and veggies for breakfast?



바다

B is for *bada*, a sea deep and wide.  
Korea sticks out and has one on each side.







축구

C is for *chukgu*. I play soccer with friends.  
We watch the World Cup and cheer for Korea to win.



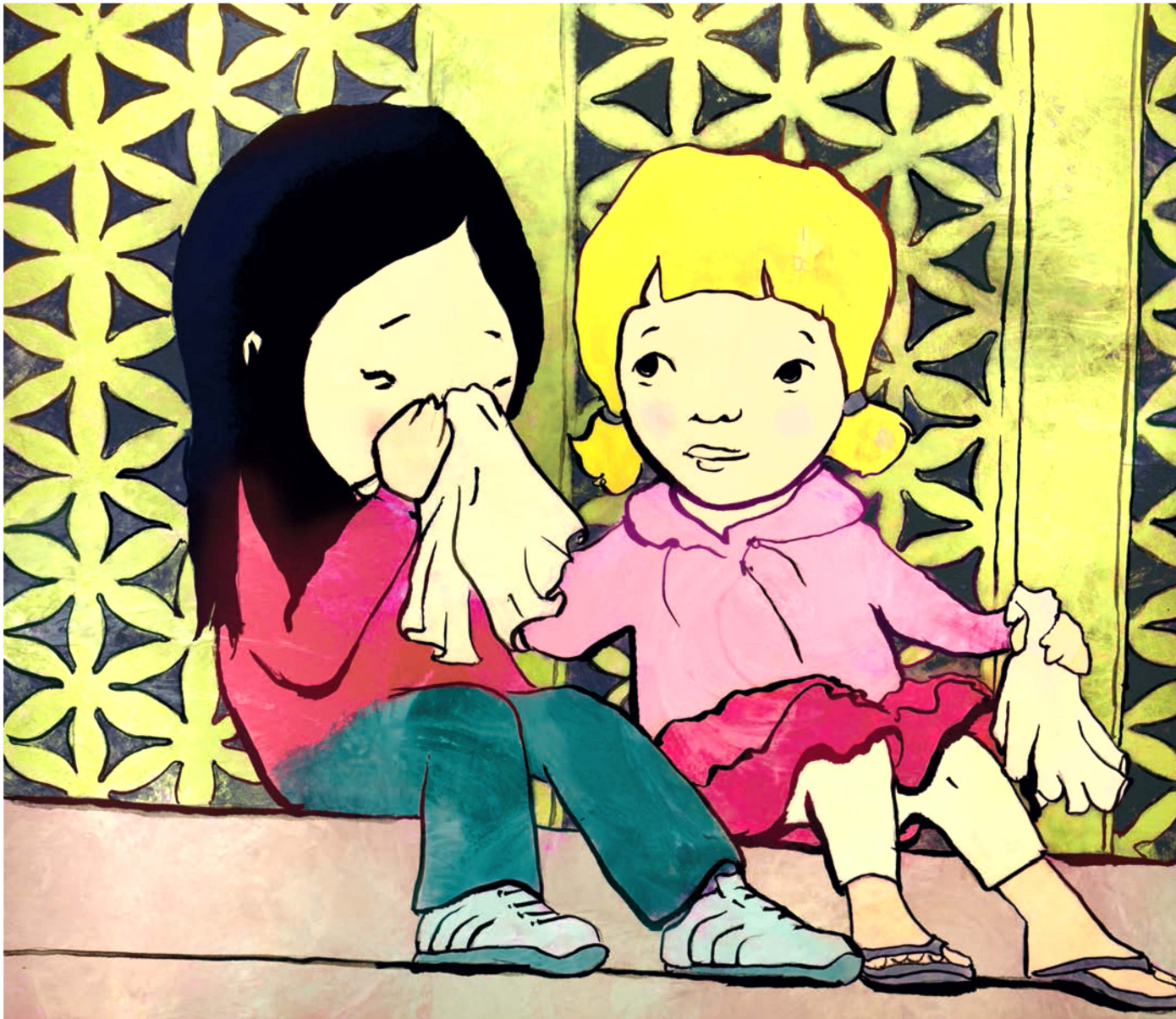
달

D is for *dal*,  
the moon shining bright.  
I think it's a rabbit  
who visits each night.

In Korea and other East Asian countries,  
people say there's a rabbit in the moon in the  
same way that we say there's a man in the moon.







에 취

E is for *echwi*!  
(Excuse me, please.)  
This is the sound that  
we make when we sneeze.

Different languages have different  
words for sounds. You say "achoo!"  
but Koreans say "echwi!"

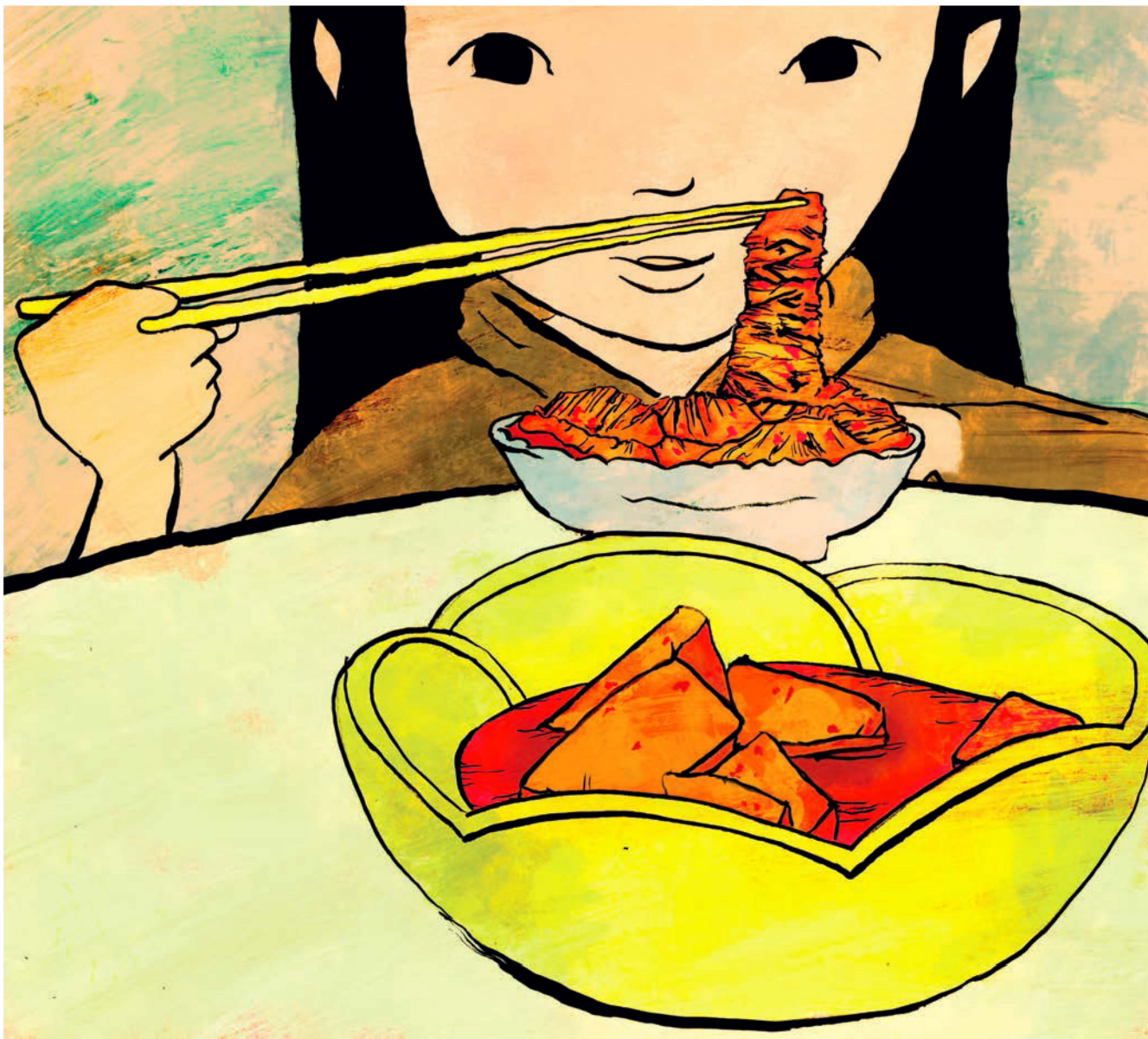


날다

F is for flying—*nalda*, we say.  
I fly in my dreams—whoosh!  
Up, up, and away!

The English language has some letter sounds that the Korean language doesn't have. The F sound is one of those.





김치

G is for the *gimchi*  
we eat with each meal—  
made from cabbage or radish,  
it's so spicy you'll squeal!

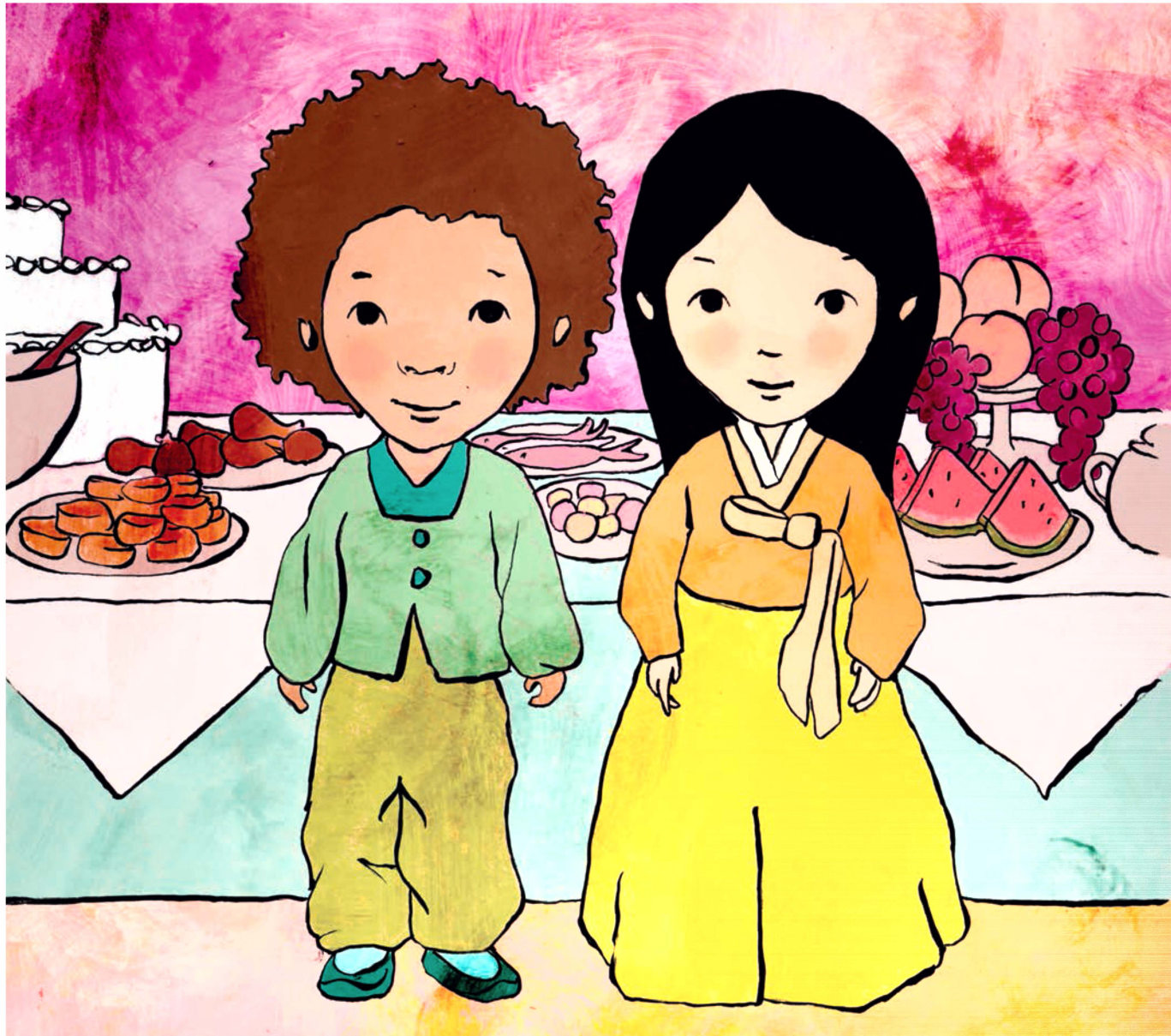
Gimchi (also called Kimchi) is the most  
famous dish in Korea. It's served with  
every meal—even breakfast!



# 한복

H is for *hanbok*,  
our colorful finery.  
I wear it on New Year's  
and to weddings with family.

Hanbok is the name given to traditional  
Korean clothing. Long ago, it was worn  
every day, but now it's worn mainly on  
special occasions.





이야기

I is for *iyagi*, what Grandpa will tell  
when I ask for a **story**. He tells them so well!



# 자장가

J is for *jajangga*, a lullaby for me.  
Mom sings one each night so I sleep peacefully.





까치

**K** is for *kkachi*,  
the lovely **magpie**.  
I put out some birdseed  
and hope he'll stop by.

The magpie is a special bird in Korea.  
People think it brings good luck when it sings.



양

L is for lamb,  
a young little sheep.  
In Korean it's *yang*—  
isn't she sweet?

There is an L sound in the  
Korean language, but it's never  
used at the beginning of words.







목욕

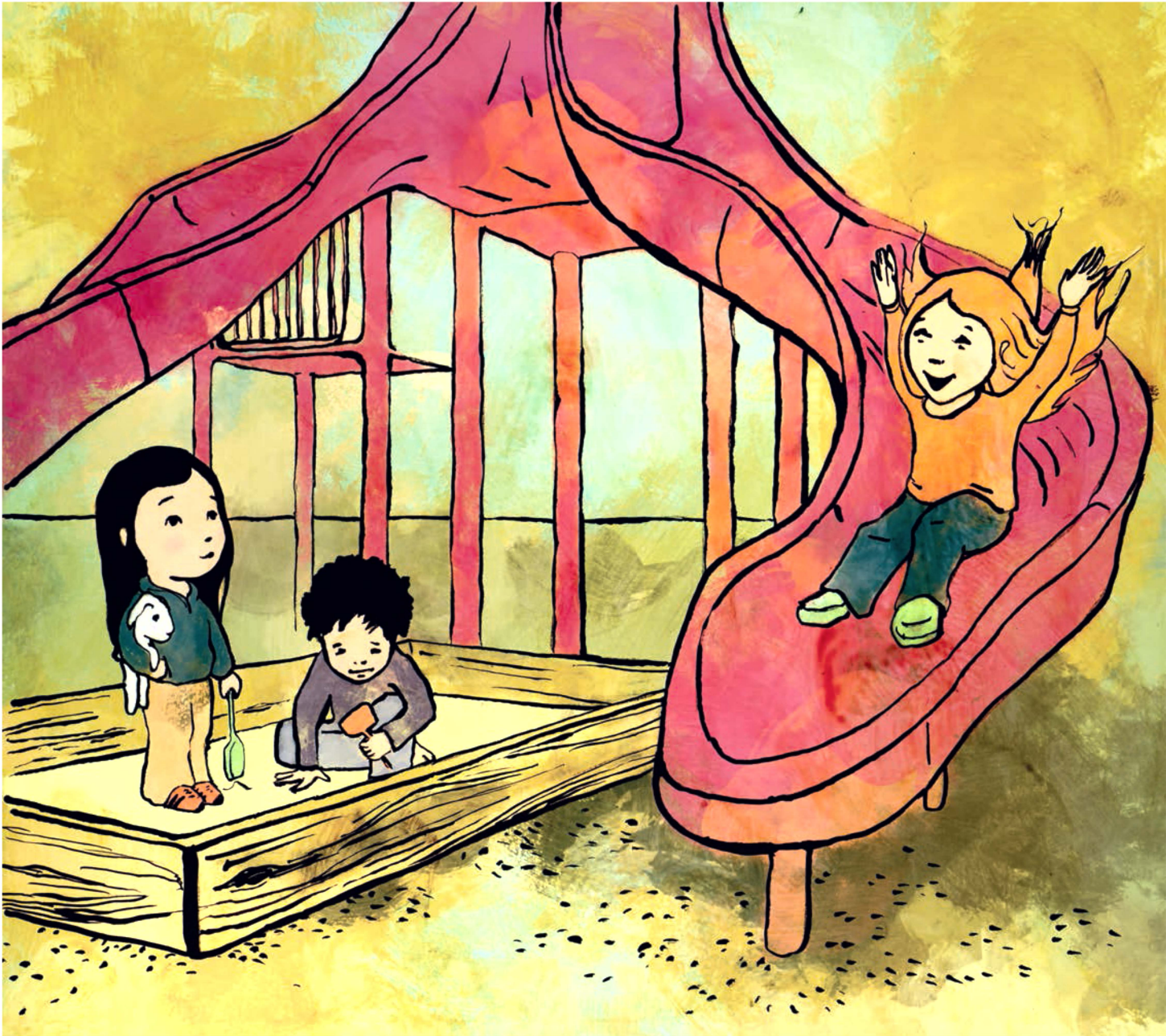
M is for *mogyok*.  
A bath makes me calm.  
I go to the bathhouse  
with Sister and Mom.

In many Asian countries, like Korea and Japan,  
people take relaxing baths in public bathhouses.

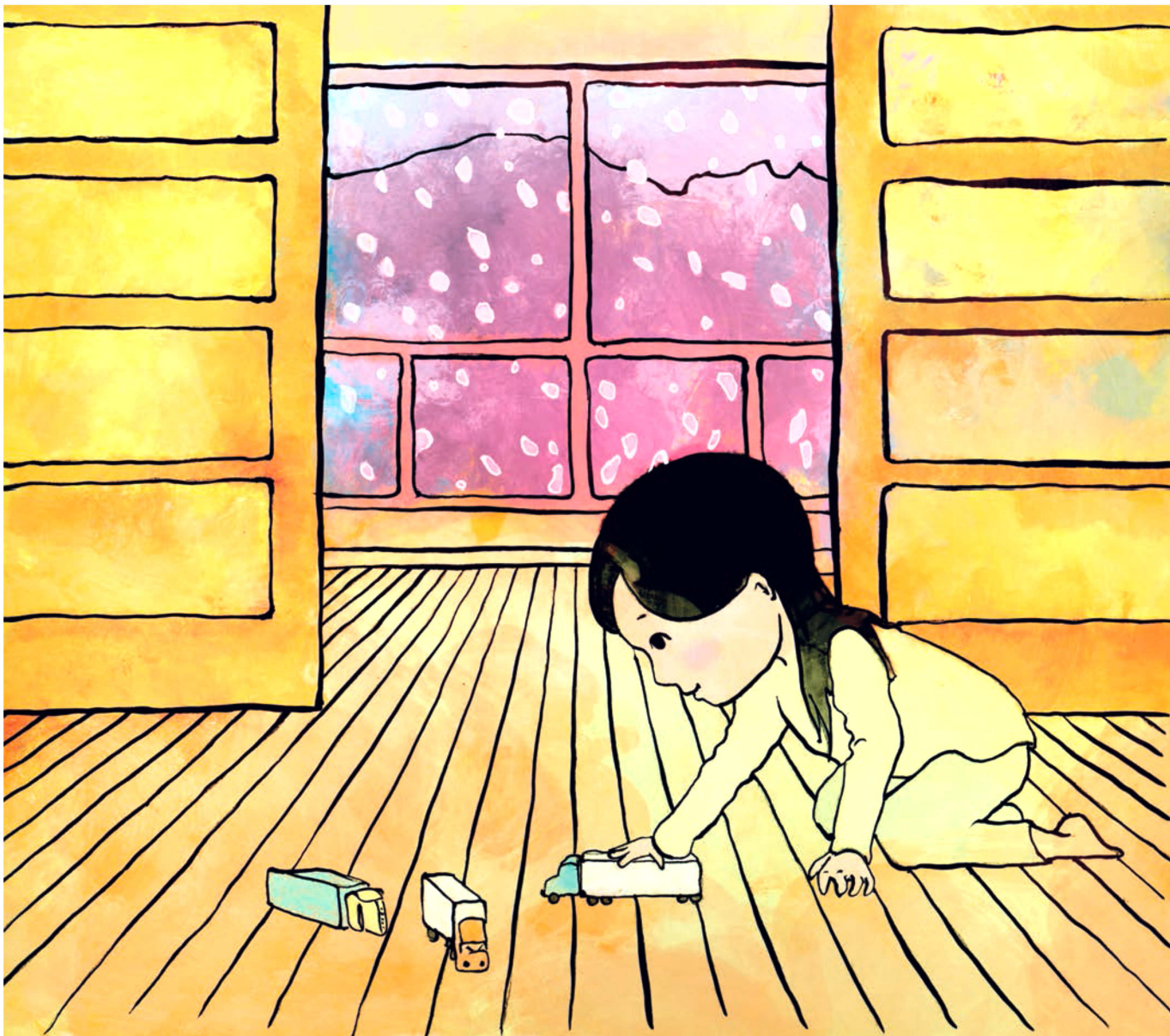


놀다

N is for *nolda*, what I do every day.  
Won't you come join me? It means "to play"!







온돌

**O** is for *ondol*.

When it's cold outdoors,  
our house is kept warm  
by the heat in our floors.

**Ondol** is a heater under the floor that  
uses hot water or air to warm the home.  
It's been used in Korea for 3,000 years!



팽이

P is for *paengi*,  
a toy top that spins.  
Round, round they all go.  
The last one up wins!

Paengi are small tops with a sharp point  
to spin on. Kids keep them spinning by  
striking them with long strings.







왕비

Q is for queen.  
We call her *wangbi*.  
Look closely, now—  
do you recognize me?

Did you guess that the Korean  
language doesn't have a Q sound?



# 로켓

R is for *roket*.  
I fly to the moon,  
but please don't worry—  
I'll fly back again soon.

Many languages share and  
borrow words. Korean  
borrows "roket" from the  
English word "rocket."







세 다

S is for *seda*. Counting is fun,  
forwards or backwards—three, two, one, none!



# 태권도

T is for Taekwondo.  
It helps me stay strong  
in body and mind.  
Can you follow along?

Koreans created Taekwondo  
for fighting, but it's also  
great exercise!





우산

U is for *usan*. Rain falls from the sky,  
but my trusty **umbrella** keeps me comfy and dry.



야채

V is for vegetables,  
the *yachae* on my plate.  
Cabbage, carrot, zucchini—  
dessert has to wait.

Korean doesn't have a V sound,  
but Korea has plenty of vegetables.





원

W is for *won*.  
That's the money we use.  
I saved up my won  
to buy fancy new shoes.

Different countries use  
different kinds of money.  
What money does your  
country use?



# 실로폰

X is for xylophone.  
It sounds really cool!  
We call it a *sillopon*.  
I play one at school.

The X sound doesn't exist  
in Korean, but "xylophone"  
and "sillopon" sound a lot  
alike, don't they?







야옹

Y is for *yaong*,  
what Korean cats say.  
My cat Nabi cries “Yaong!”  
when she wants me to play.

We hear cats say “meow,”  
but Koreans hear “yaong.”  
What do you think they say?



붕

Z is for zoom—  
*bung!* goes the airplane.  
I have to go now,  
but I'll see you again!

"Zoom" is fun to say, but Korean doesn't  
have a Z sound. Kids in Korea say  
"bung!" instead. That's fun, too!

