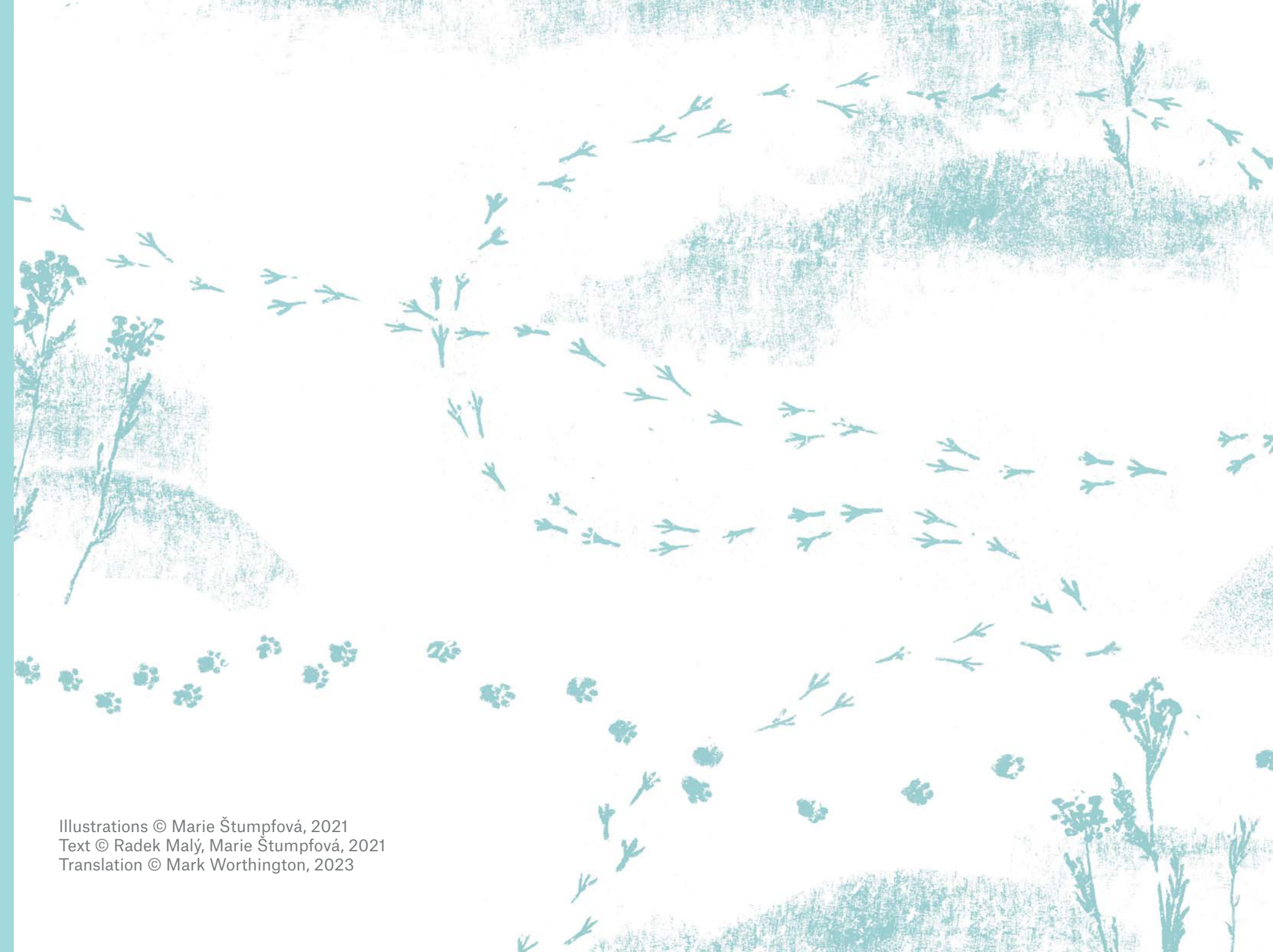


Marie Štumpfová & Radek Malý

The first snow

THE FIRST SNOW






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Text © Radek Malý, Marie Štumpfová, 2021
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THE FIRST SNOW



It also covered the village where Stefan and Agnes live with their mum. The village was quite ordinary yesterday. Now, as if by magic, it's been transformed. There's snow everywhere! It's as if someone cast a spell overnight.



It suddenly seems brighter in the room. Even Puss is looking out curiously. The light woke up Stefan and Agnes earlier than usual. Even though it's Saturday, and they could lie in if they wanted to, they run to the window in their pyjamas. Everything is different. Everything is covered with a white blanket. Isn't it beautiful, Stefan? Oh, yes! It's like magic.



Yay! Mummy, it's been snowing! Can we go and play outside?
Of course you can, right after breakfast. Make sure you wrap up warm.
Stefan asks: Are you coming with us, mummy? Mum shakes her head.
I have to cook and sweep the snow off the path.



Here, take some seed with you.
Seed in winter? wonders Agnes.
Perhaps it will come in handy.
Agnes's mother helps her put on her boots.
The children put on their hats and gloves
and run outside.



Where the lawn was,
there is now a white plain as far as the eye can see.
It's like being in another world.
Agnes, can you see that pool? Where did it come from?
Agnes laughs. That's the sand pit, silly!



And what's that molehill?
That's probably the ball, guesses Stefan. You just can't see it.
Look how deep the snow is! he calls.
He makes a little path with his footprints. Everything is white.
But the white has lots of other colours in it, thinks Agnes.



We're like Sámi reindeer herders! Stefan calls out.
He's pulling a sledge, perhaps he thinks he's a reindeer.
Or we can be angels, suggests Agnes.
She's making wings in the snow with her arms.
Stefan, come and make one too!

Stefan makes a little angel of his own.
The snow's falling in my eyes,
says Agnes joyfully.
And in my mouth! shouts Stefan.
It feels pleasantly cold.
Like winter-flavoured ice cream.

Here and there in the snow, there are prints.
A skilled tracker can read them like a message.
Here you can see where a squirrel jumped from the tree into the snow.
And a bird walked this way.
Maybe a crow or a raven.

Whose are these prints? Do you think it's a hare? asks Stefan.
Look where they lead! Agnes replies.
A short way off sits Puss, licking her paws. The tracks are hers.



Then the work begins. Snow is good for building.
They get nice and warm while they're doing it.
Agnes rolls a ball of snow around the frozen larch trees and roses.
She leaves a zig-zagging trail behind her.



Stefan takes a shovel and scoops snow off the path.
So much snow in one pile. Mum'll be happy.
Perhaps she'll come and play with us later.



Let's ride it. To the north. Hop on!
Hold on, Stefan. We have to say the magic words.
To make it come alive. Agnes starts: The first snow is magical ...
Her brother finishes ... nothing stays the same!

A pile of snow is full of secrets.
It's like clouds. It always reminds you of something.
Look, here's a snout! calls Agnes.
And I can see ears and a paw, says Stefan gleefully.
It's a whole bear. White as snow.

"The first snow is magical, nothing stays the same."

Stefan and Agnes can't wait for it to snow. Finally, one morning, they see the brightness through the window and run outside happily into the garden. Where lawn was, there is a white plain as far as the eye can see. They ride through the snowy countryside on a bear's back. What's that, sparkling over there? Is it really true that the first snow is magical?

