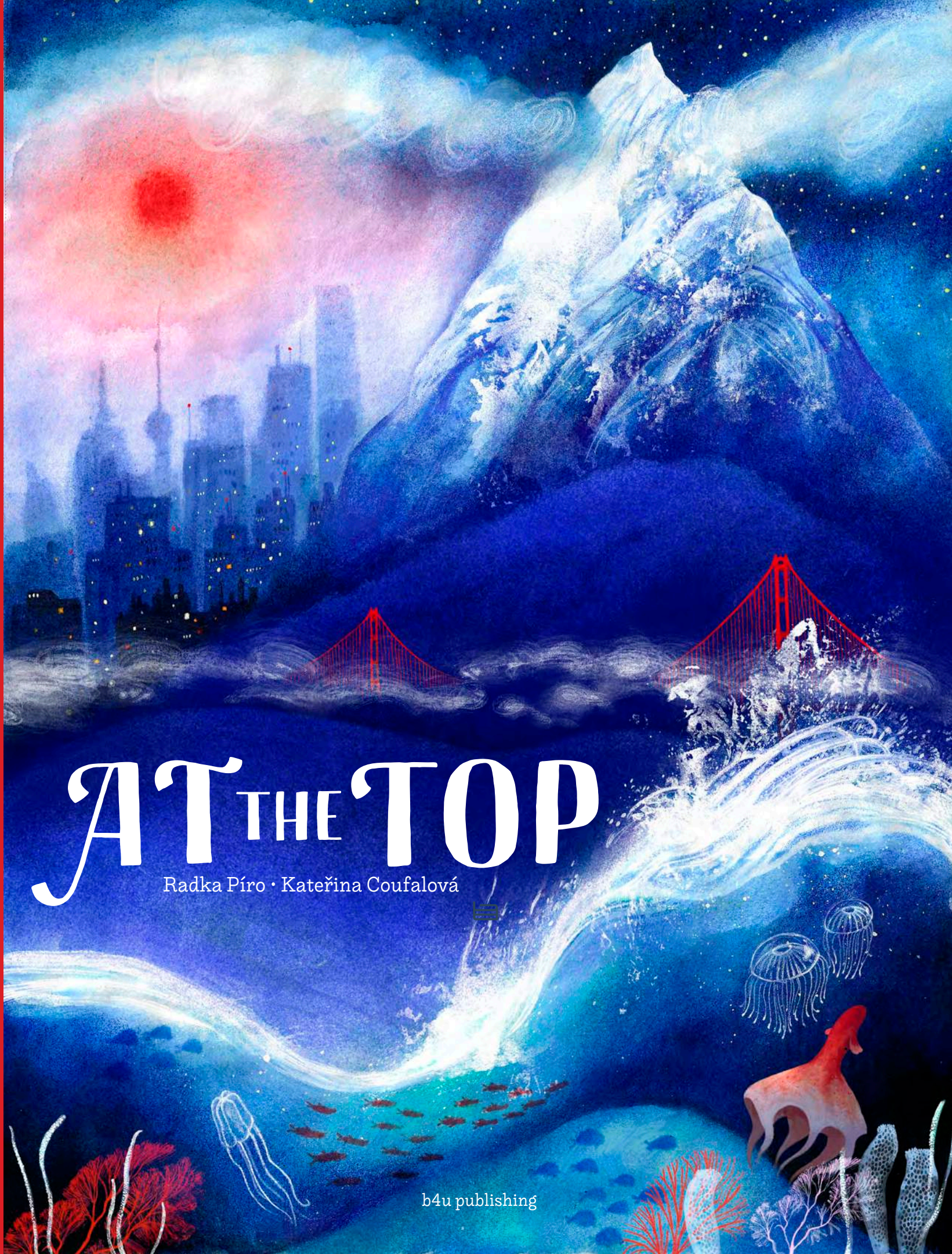




Radka Píro · Kateřina Coufalová

AT THE TOP



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Golden Gate Bridge



Kamaehuakanaloa



Eiffel Tower



Vaalserberg



Burj Khalifa



Mount Everest



Angel Falls



Steel Dragon 2000

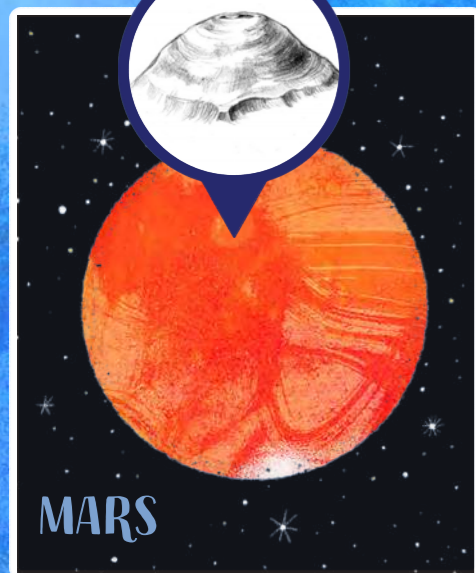


Great Pyramid of Giza

Olympus Mons



Les Éclaireurs Lighthouse







**T**he flashing colours of cars below, like motley birds flying in a red cage. Now you see them, now you don't – and then more come along. Ow! What was that? The outstretched wing of a gull striking your shoulder. Already far away, the bird is screeching. The blue of the ocean all around. The odd dazzling flash of a white sail...



## GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

**HEIGHT:** 227 m (height of towers above the water)

**LOCATION:** USA

.....  
The outline of a magnificent red tower emerges from the morning mist. It is 1933, and the iconic bridge over the Golden Gate strait is being built. With strong winds above, raging waters below and the occasional local earth tremor, the work is very dangerous. Workers must wear protective helmets. When up high, they are attached to a safety net. Even so, some accidents cannot be avoided. In the end, though, the effort pays off: the first cars cross the bridge in 1937.

At the time of its completion, the Golden Gate was the tallest, longest suspension bridge in the world – a true revelation! Three kilometres long it lit up the landscape. To keep its beauty intact, it is continuously repainted to this day.





## BURJ KHALIFA


**A.K.A.:** Burj Khalifa

**HEIGHT:** 829 m

**LOCATION:** Dubai,  
United Arab Emirates

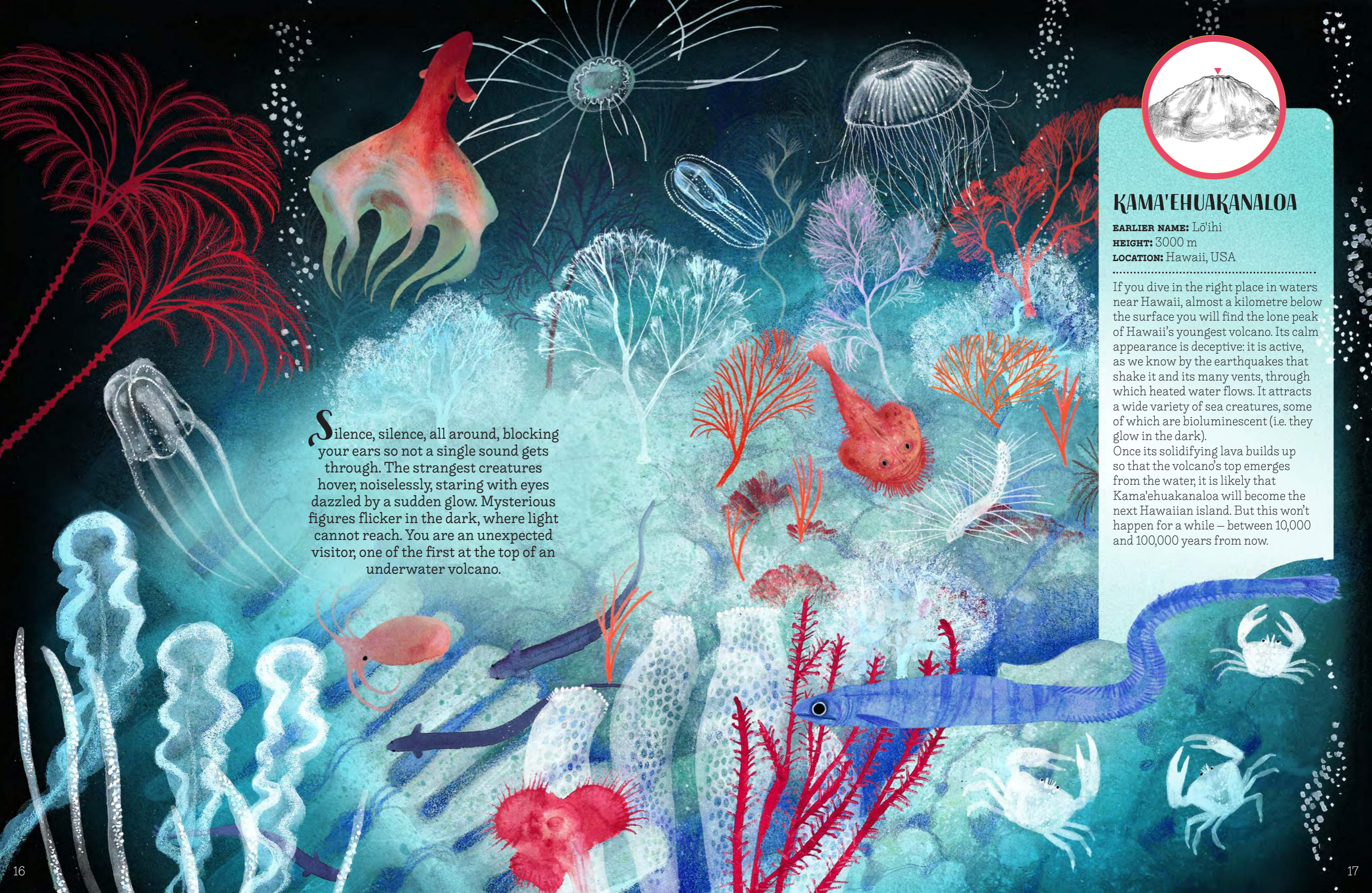
To be the world's tallest building is quite something! This distinction has been enjoyed by many iconic structures over the years. The latest titleholder is the Burj Khalifa, which is 300 metres taller than its predecessor as tallest building. As wind almost a kilometre above ground is very strong, the tower has been designed to resist wind damage and the danger of overturning. The tower's foundations are very deep, and it has a solid core. Its "Y" shape serves to distribute the wind force acting on it.

When will humans build a tower more than a kilometre high? Well, work on such a tower is already in full swing!



Far below, thousands of lights flicker and merge into a golden nebula. The town pulses to a beat: boom, boom, boom... Cars whizz this way and that. Tiny people weave their way through a glowing maze. From up here, super-high skyscrapers look like little toys.






## KAMA'EHUAKANALOA

**EARLIER NAME:** Lō'ihi  
**HEIGHT:** 3000 m  
**LOCATION:** Hawaii, USA

If you dive in the right place in waters near Hawaii, almost a kilometre below the surface you will find the lone peak of Hawaii's youngest volcano. Its calm appearance is deceptive: it is active, as we know by the earthquakes that shake it and its many vents, through which heated water flows. It attracts a wide variety of sea creatures, some of which are bioluminescent (i.e. they glow in the dark). Once its solidifying lava builds up so that the volcano's top emerges from the water, it is likely that Kama'ehuakanaloa will become the next Hawaiian island. But this won't happen for a while – between 10,000 and 100,000 years from now.

Silence, silence, all around, blocking your ears so not a single sound gets through. The strangest creatures hover, noiselessly, staring with eyes dazzled by a sudden glow. Mysterious figures flicker in the dark, where light cannot reach. You are an unexpected visitor, one of the first at the top of an underwater volcano.





You jump with ease and your feet land in a bed of moss. But what for you is one step is the world's highest peak for the small creatures hereabouts. Do they, too, see how a golden glow weaves itself through trees, and how its touch turns dewdrops into glittering diamonds?



## ROTTING TREE STUMP

**HEIGHT:** from a few centimetres to over a metre

**LOCATION:** natural forest

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An old, decaying tree stump rests peacefully on a blanket of moss. Hard as it may try, it will no longer grow. So the stump falls asleep and gives itself over to the forest, which takes back from the stump the nutrients it gave it earlier.

Such stumps or trunks are known as dead wood because the tree of which they were once part has died.

But this doesn't mean that nothing more will happen to this wood – quite the opposite, in fact! On dead wood, we find animals galore... Beetles and other insects help the rotting wood decompose further. Small mammals, reptiles and amphibians find shelter in hollows in a rotten stump. Growing on one, we often see a blanket of moss, colourful mushrooms or even a young tree.





## STEEL DRAGON 2000

**HEIGHT:** 97 m  
**LOCATION:** Japan

You are carried at over 150 kilometres per hour – about the speed of a car on a motorway! So it takes you a mere four minutes to cover nearly two and a half kilometres. What ride is this? Well, it's the longest and one of the highest roller coasters in the world, Steel Dragon 2000. Do you fancy another go?

Originally, the roller coaster was to be only 94 metres high. But in Japanese culture the number "4" is considered unlucky, hence the short extension. The track has had to be specially strengthened as protection against frequent earthquakes.

The "steel" in "Steel Dragon 2000" refers to the metal of which it is made. The "dragon 2000" refers to the year in which it was opened to the public – in the Chinese zodiac calendar, which is also used in Japan, 2000 is the year of the dragon.



A vast view opens before you, taking your breath away... Then you tip forward and start to fall. Your heart leaps to your mouth and you're falling, falling, flying faster and faster, into the depths below, the wind whistling around your ears. Whee-ee! What speed!



Things look different from the top. The world opens before you like a book – with lines of wavy landscape and letters made by individual houses that depend on the place you are looking from. There is so much to read, including mountains, buildings of many shapes and sizes, unexplored depths, old lighthouses, even other planets... The height itself doesn't always matter – what attracts us is a different, new view of the world. It takes a lot of energy to reach and explore new heights, but we know that our efforts will pay off. If all this appeals to you, read this book to see the world from the top. Maybe you'll discover the best views in some unexpected places...