

In a Village by the Sea



By Muon Van

Illustrated by
April Chu



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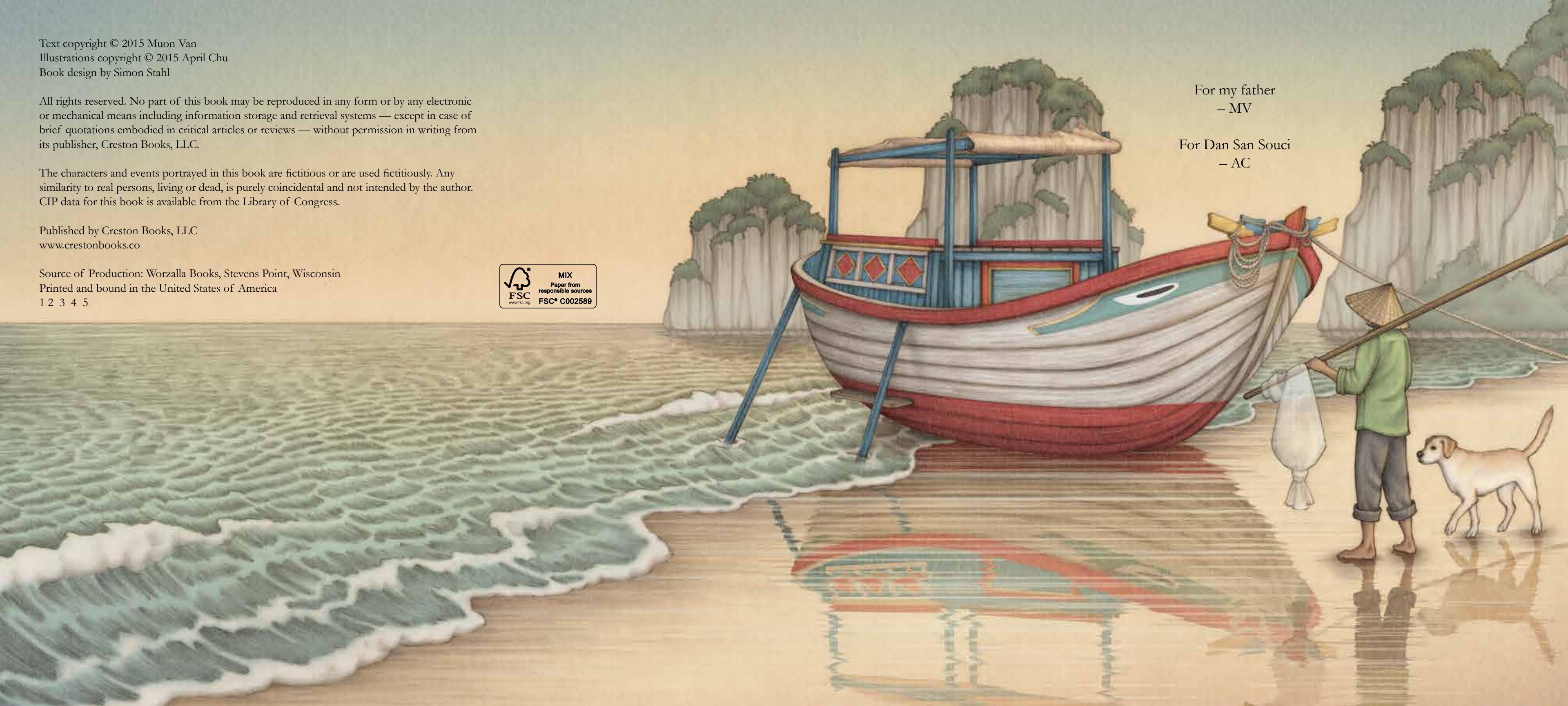
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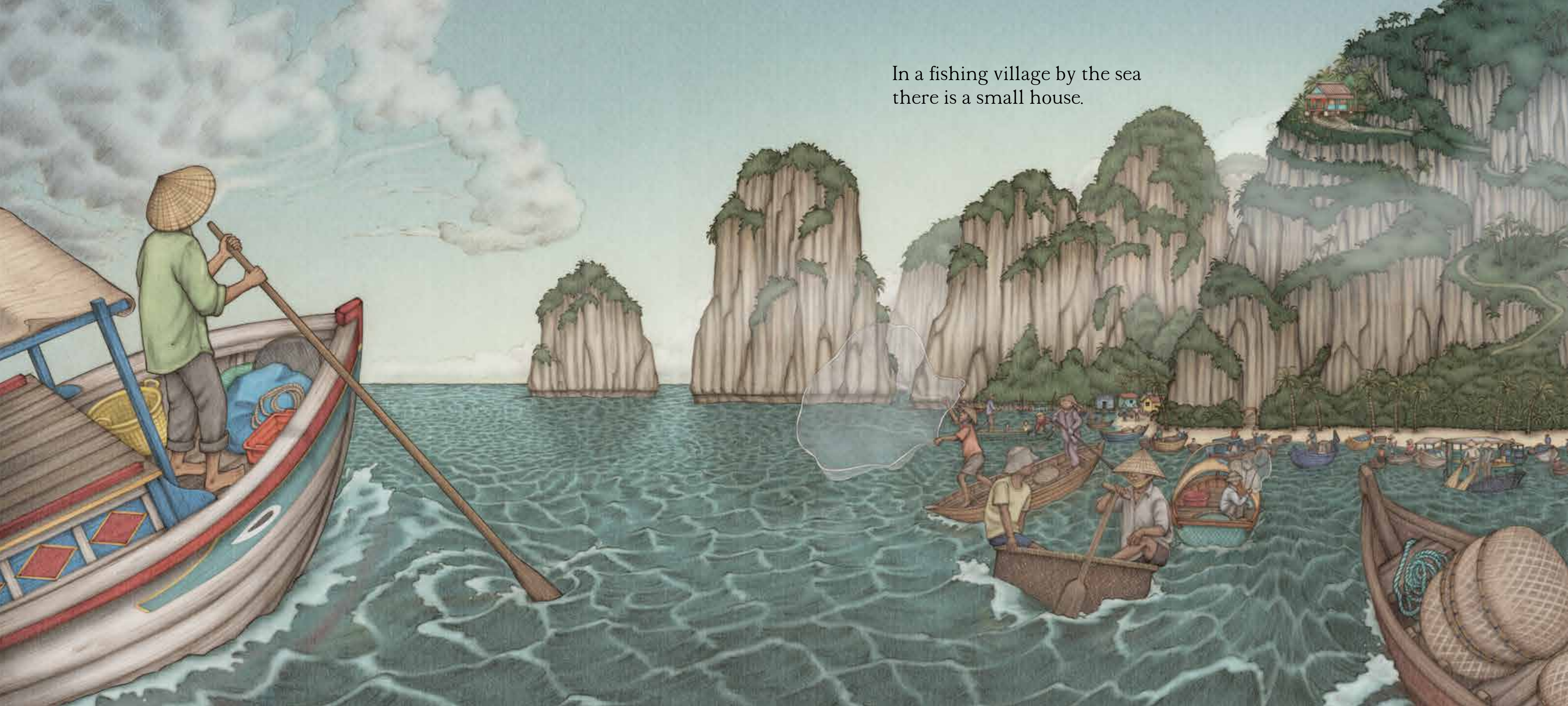


For my father
– MV

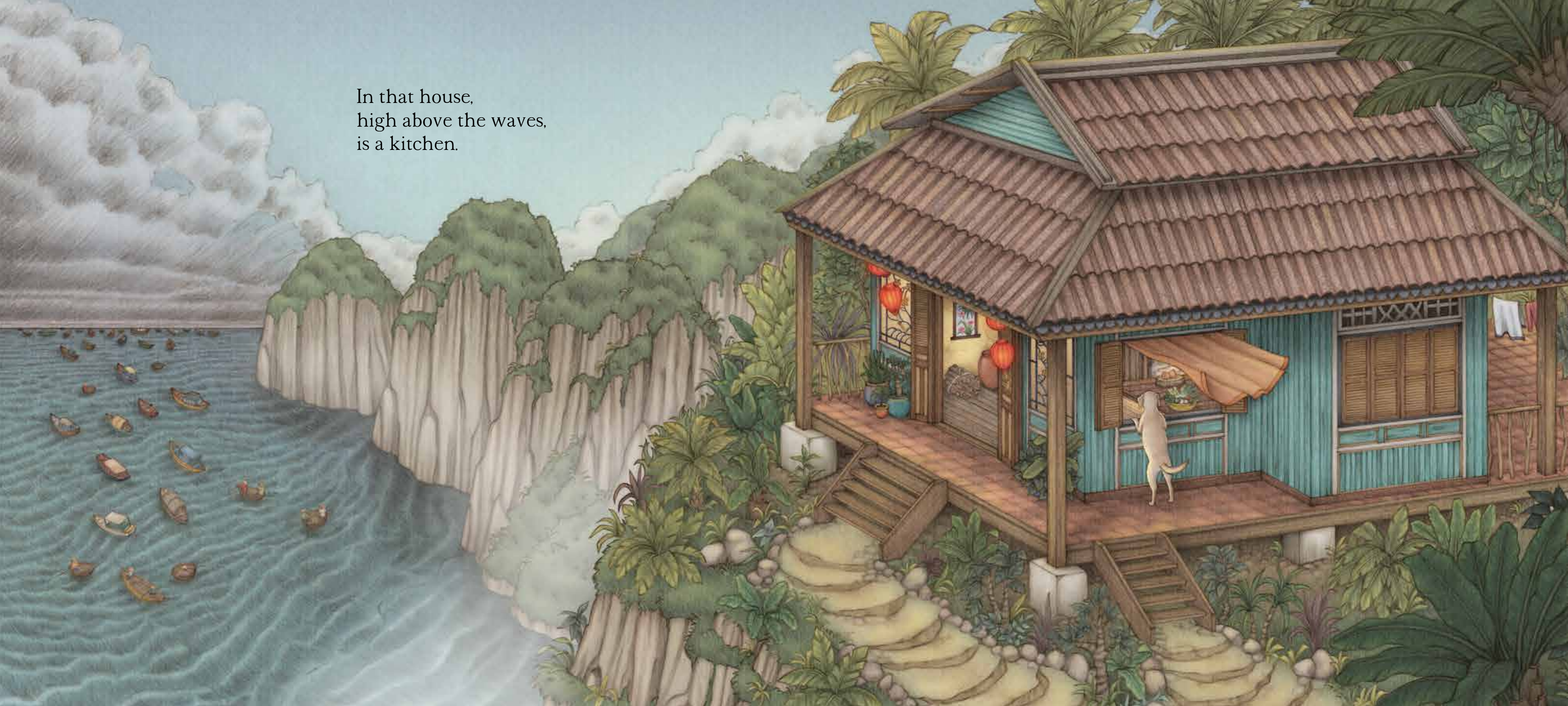
For Dan San Souci
– AC

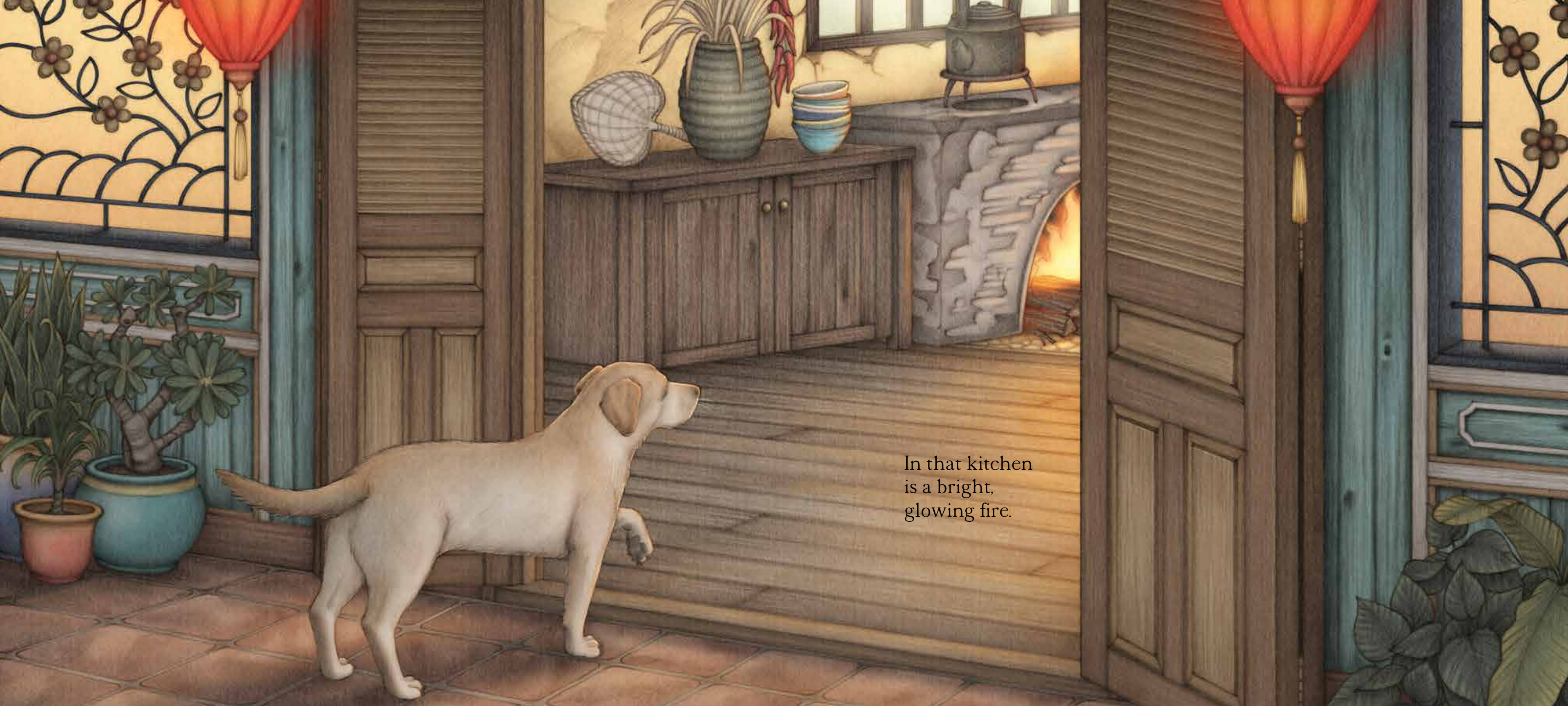


In a fishing village by the sea
there is a small house.



In that house,
high above the waves,
is a kitchen.





In that kitchen
is a bright,
glowing fire.



Author's Note:

In a Village by the Sea was inspired by my father and An Bàng, my ancestral village in Central Vietnam. For as long as anyone can remember, ancestors on both sides have lived and worked as fisherfolk in this small village near Huế. Typically, the men went to sea in small boats and caught fish and other edible sea creatures. When they returned to land, their wives and daughters carried the fish to the market and sold it, bargaining hard and fast. It was a village proverb that a rich man owed his success to his wife, and that a talented fisherman would stay poor as long as his wife was bad at business.

The Vietnamese-American war interrupted my father's life as a fisherman but after he moved to the United States, he worked as a fisherman and shrimper again, first off the Gulf Coast of Texas, and later in the vast Pacific waters of the Hawaiian islands. With my father at sea most of the time, my mother bore the brunt of managing the household and rearing their nine children. Just like the family from *In a Village by the Sea*, we would often wonder where my father was, if he found the catch he was looking for, and when he would return home again, safe and sound.

About the Author and Illustrator:

Muon Van was born on the run in the southern port city of Rạch Giá, Vietnam. When she was nine months old, she left Vietnam as part of the "boat people" mass exodus. Her family fled on her maternal grandfather's fishing boat, which her father captained all the way to Hong Kong. From there, she immigrated to the United States and lived in Galveston, Texas and Honolulu, Hawaii, both cities by the sea. She now lives in Northern California with her family, where she gets a glimpse of the sea every morning and every evening.

April Chu began her career as an architect with a degree from the University of California, Berkeley, but decided to return to her true passion of illustrating and storytelling. She recalls spending most of her childhood drawing whimsical characters in her notebook after school everyday, and she hasn't stopped drawing ever since. April currently lives and works in Oakland, California. This is the second picture book she has illustrated. For more information, visit www.aprilchu.com.

"With stunning illustrations (the expressive eyes of the family dog alone are worth the price of admission) the calm, circular tale offers us the world of hearth and home, juxtaposed with the distant and possibly dangerous seas where a father works. Adults will appreciate the role of the artist (a wise cricket) while children will want to pore over the gorgeous pages, each time discovering something new. This already counts as one of my very favorite picture books I've seen this year."

-- Robert McDonald, The Book Stall

"Rhythmic text and gorgeous illustrations follow a whimsical dog on an imaginative adventure through a tranquil Vietnamese home as it discovers a magical cricket painting a turbulent storm that threatens a fisherman as he tries to get home safely. Decide for yourself if the cricket is the creator or window into to the world of storytelling in this delightful debut picture book."

-- Barbara Middleton, librarian, Taipei American School

"I absolutely love *In a Village by the Sea*! I think it will be a strong contender for awards. Our families love multicultural books, and it's extremely rare to find a good one with a Vietnamese setting."

-- Kathy Balch, BookTree

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