

Christmas Gnomes are a translation from tomte and nisse, fairies that took care of farms, homes, and occasionally ships in Scandinavian lore. This poem by Anna Krook was published in 1881 and translated by Victor Ryberg in 1926.

Ryberg translated tomte as Robin, another household fairy in lore who was perhaps sometimes called puck. It is possible that Puck and Tomte have a common origin in ancient folklore as Puck likely comes from Saxon lore in Denmark and the related Nisse was in some regions known as Niskepuk or Puk, who are some of my favorite fairies. I have an article on the evolution of Puck <http://fairies.zeluna.net/2023/05/puck-fairy-lore.html>

In any case this is a story about the tomte watching over the farm and family, making sure everything is fine before Christmas, while also pondering the meaning of life.

Oh yeah, and the drawings are by me.

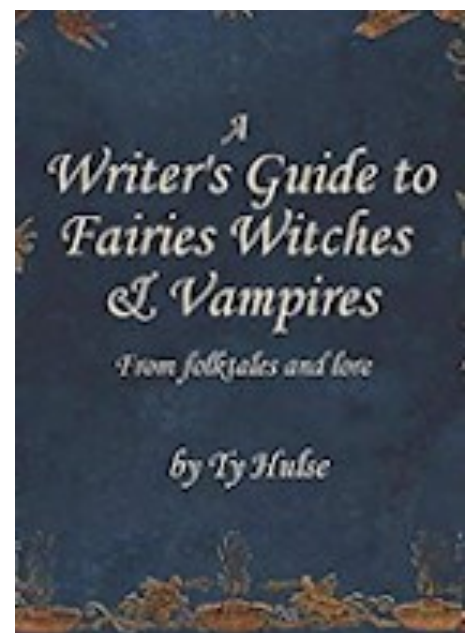
I tried to keep them fairly simple as some people worry that my drawings are a bit complex for coloring books and I'm trying this sparser set of drawings out.

Also after the poem I am including a number of other pieces of art of fairies and tomte, just for fun.

Coloring Books by Ty Hulse

TyHulse.com

I will be giving away many free coloring books and books on fairy lore, so please follow me to find out when I do.

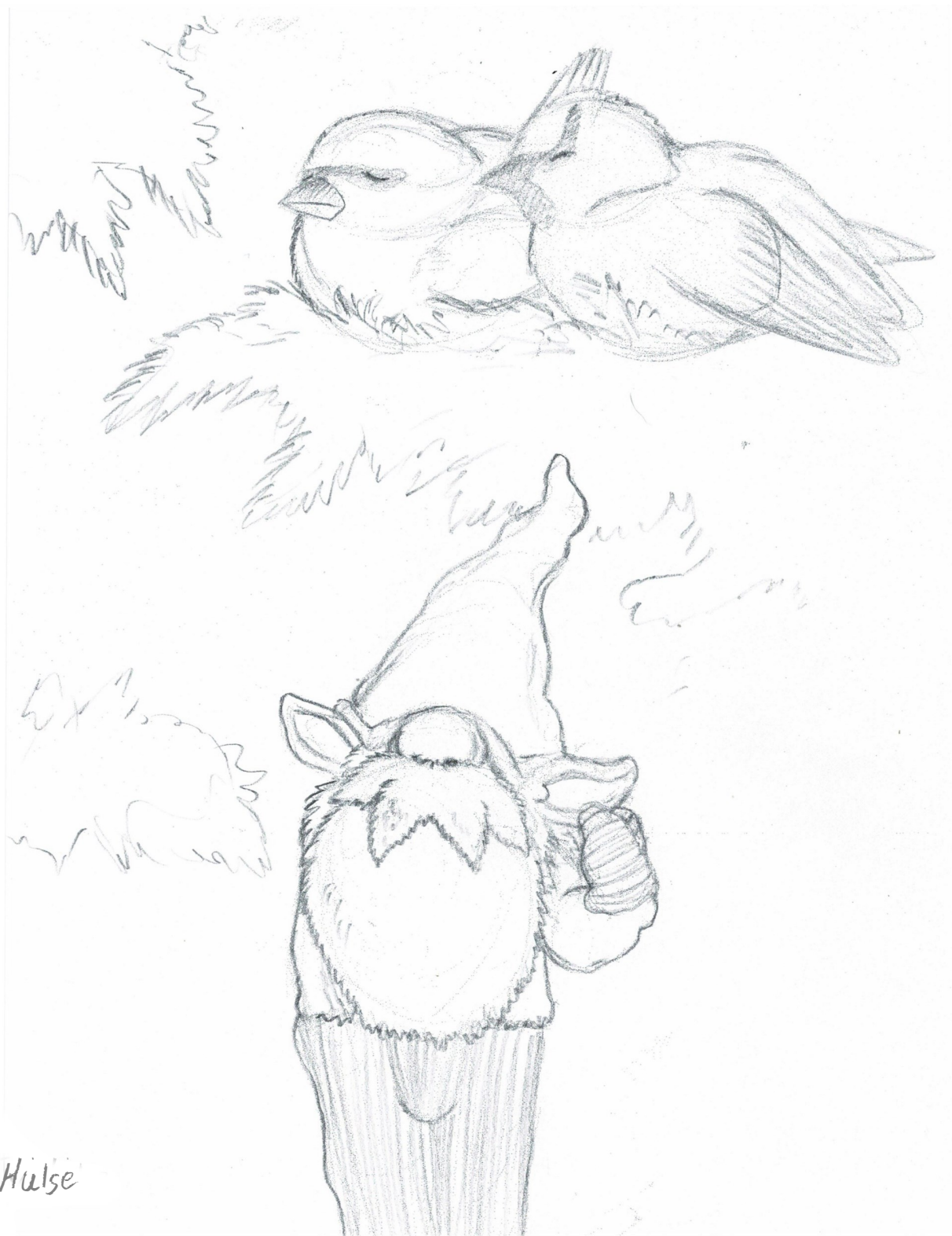


Midwinter's nightly frost is hard —
Brightly the stars are beaming;
Fast asleep is the lonely Yard,
All, at midnight, are dreaming.
Clear is the moon, and the snow-drifts shine,
Glistening white, on fir and pine,
Covers on rooflets making.
None but Robin is waking.



Ty Hulse

Grey, he stands by the byre-door,
Grey, in the snow appearing;
Looks, as ever he did before,
Up, at the moonlight peering;
Looks at the wood, where the pine and fir
Stand round the farm, and never stir;
Broods on an unavailing
Riddle, forever failing;



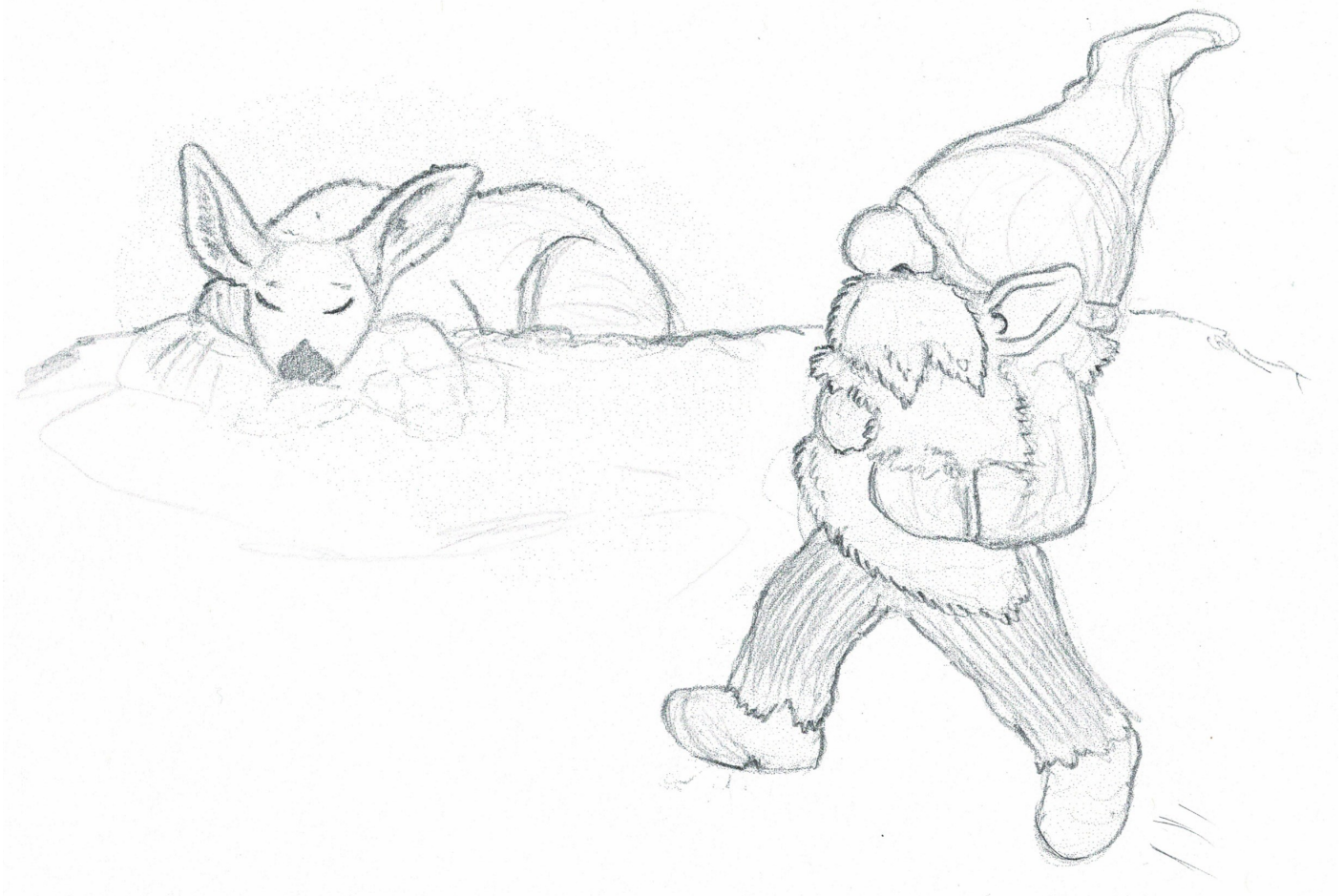
Ty Hulse

Goes to the larder and tool-house fine,
Every padlock trying —
See! by moonlight, in stalls, the kine,
Dreaming of summer, are lying;
Heedless of harness and whip and team,
Pollë, stabled, has, too, a dream:
Manger and crib, all over,
Fill with sweet-smelling clover.



Ty Hulse

Runs his hand through his hair and beard —
Gravely, his head a-shaking —
»Harder riddle I never heard,
Vainly, my head I'm breaking.» —
Chasing, then, as his wont for aye,
Such unsolvable things away,
Robin trips, without hustling,
Now, about duty bustling.



Ty Hulse

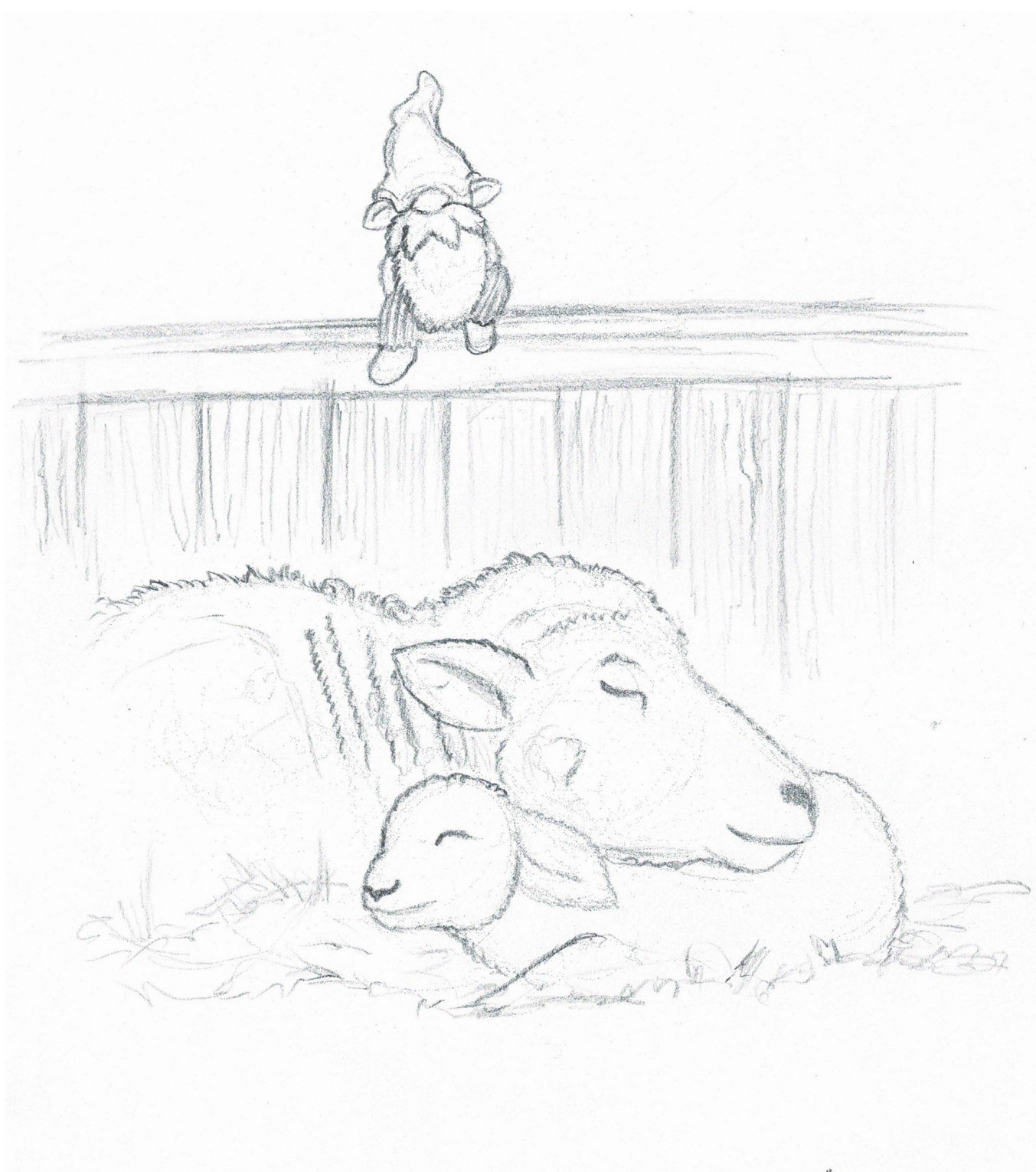


Ty Hulse

Robin goes to the lambs and sheep —
See! they are all a-dreaming!
Goes to the hens, where the cock will sleep,
Perched, with vanity teeming;
Karo, in kennel, so brave and hale,
Wakes up and gladly wags his tail;
Karo, he knows his brother-
Watchman, they love each other.



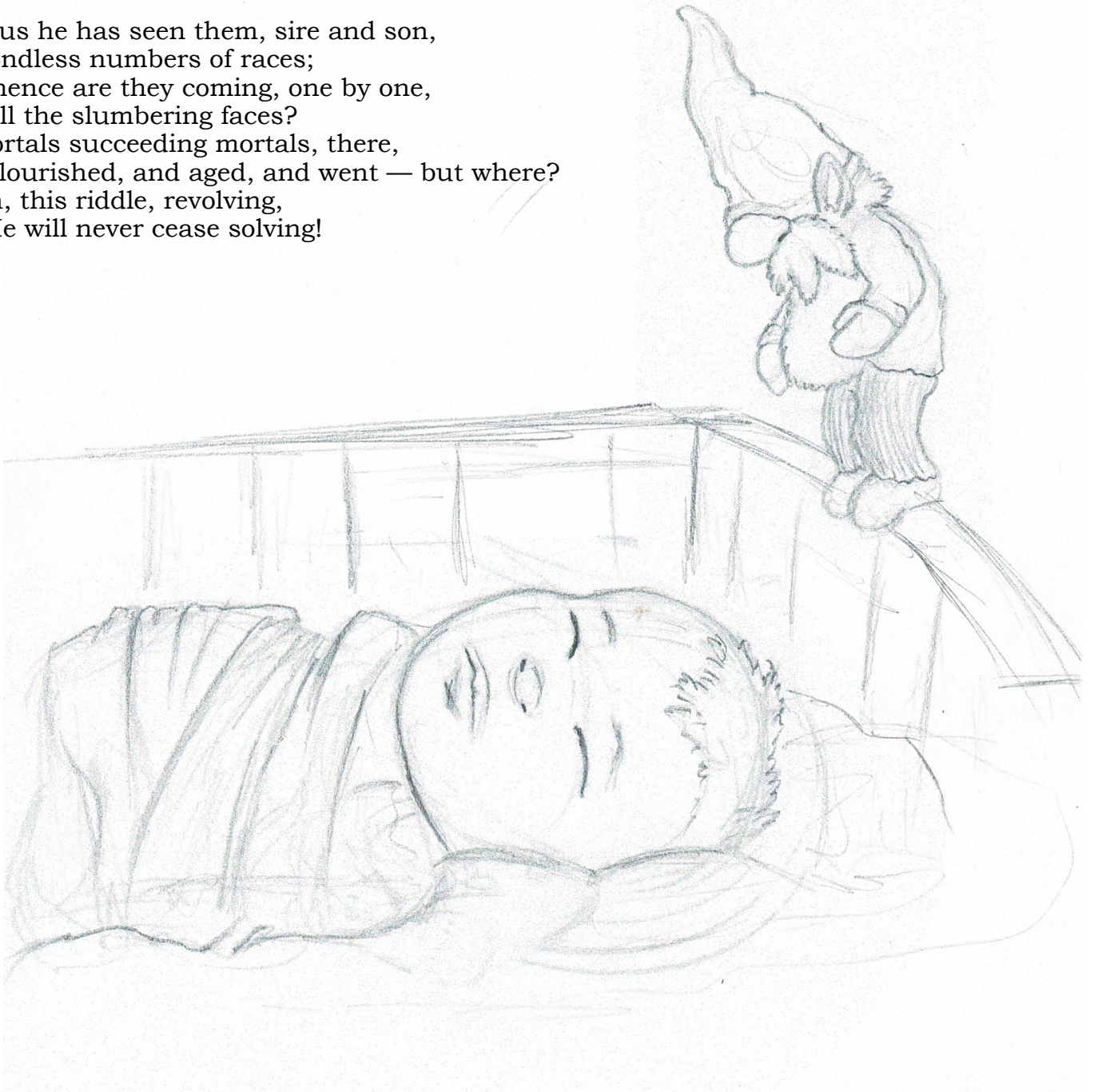
Ty Hulse



Ty Hulse

Lastly, Robin will steal to see
The masterfolks, loved so dearly;
Long have they liked his industry,
Now, they honour him, clearly;
Stealing on tiptoe, soon he nears
Nursery cots, the little dears;
None must grudge him the pleasure;
This is his greatest treasure.

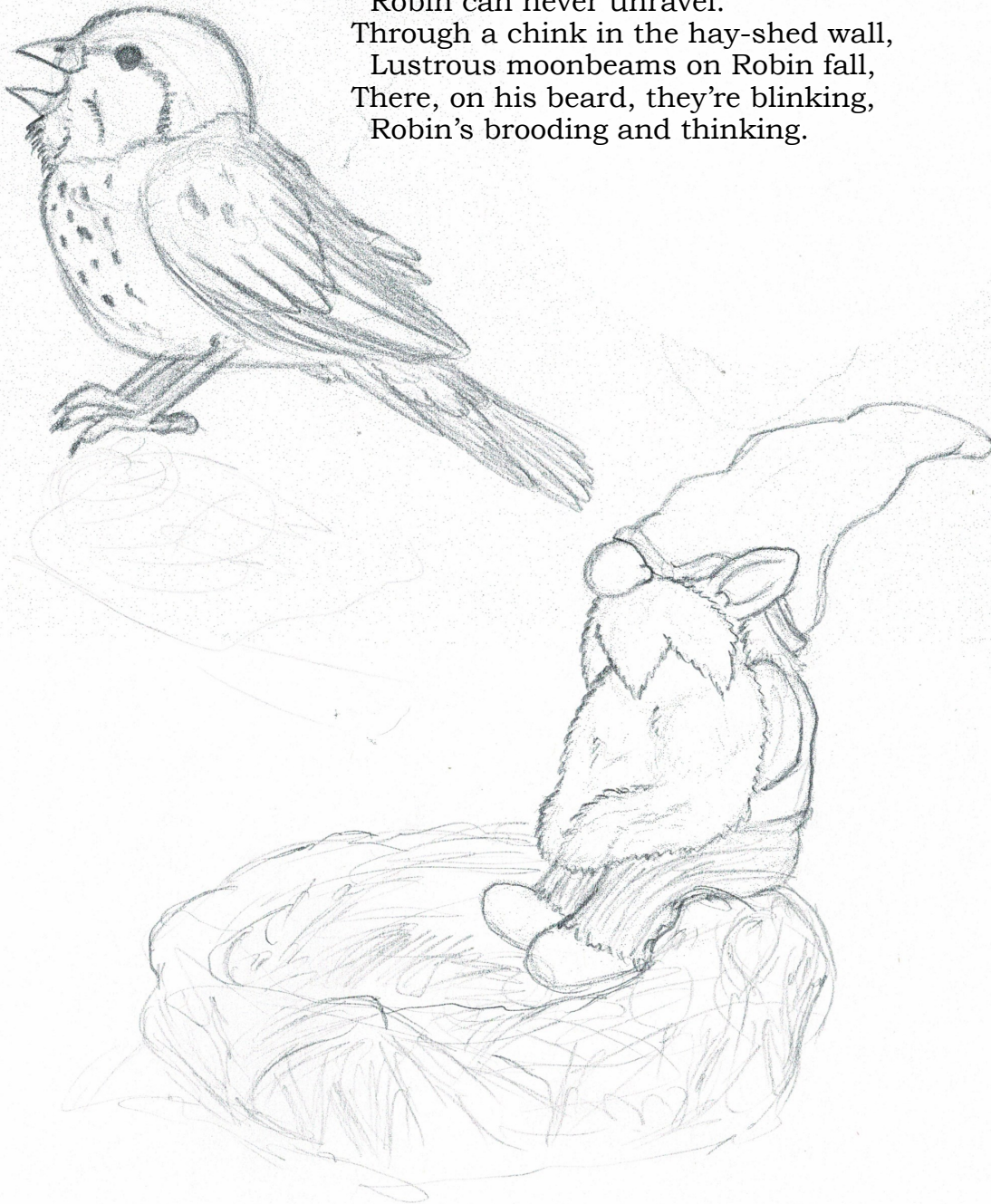
Thus he has seen them, sire and son,
Endless numbers of races;
Whence are they coming, one by one,
All the slumbering faces?
Mortals succeeding mortals, there,
Flourished, and aged, and went — but where?
Oh, this riddle, revolving,
He will never cease solving!



Ty Hulse

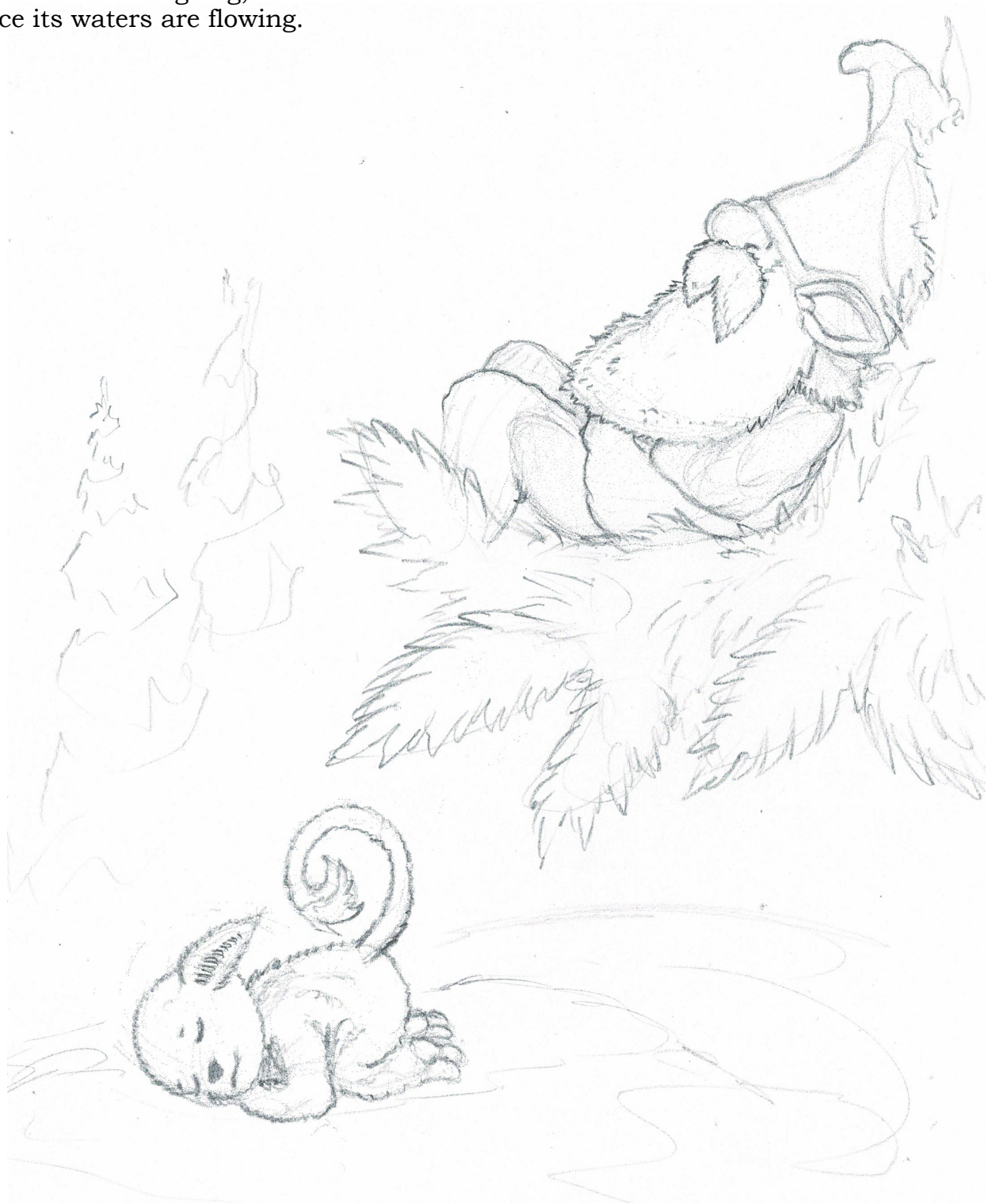
Robin goes to the hay-shed loft,
There, is his haunt and hollow,
Deep in the sweet-smelling hay, aloft,
Near the nest of the swallow;
Empty, now, is the swallow's nest,
But when spring is in blossom drest,
She for home will be yearning,
Will, with her mate, be returning.

Then she'll twitter, and sing, and chat
Much of her airy travel,
Nothing, though, of the riddle that
Robin can never unravel.
Through a chink in the hay-shed wall,
Lustrous moonbeams on Robin fall,
There, on his beard, they're blinking,
Robin's brooding and thinking.



Ty Hulse

Mute is the wold, is nature all,
Life is so frozen and dreary;
From afar, but the rapids' call,
Murmuring, sounds so weary.
Robin listens, half in a dream,
Fancies he hears the vital stream,
Wonders whither it's going,
Whence its waters are flowing.



Ty Hulse

Midwinter's nightly frost is hard —
Brightly the stars are beaming.
Fast asleep is the lonely Yard,
All till morn will be dreaming.
Faint is the moon; and the snow-drifts shine,
Glistening white on fir and pine,
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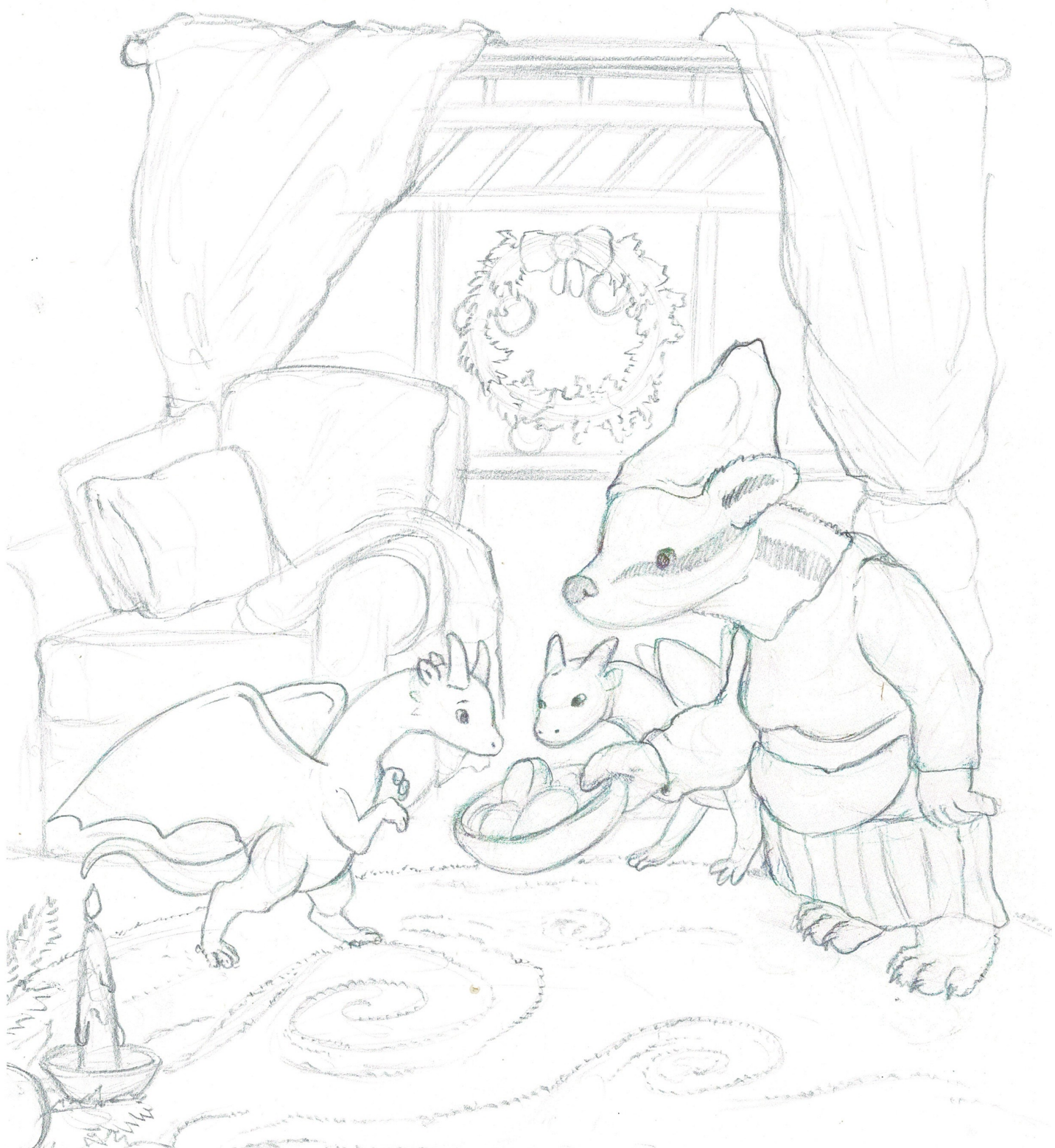
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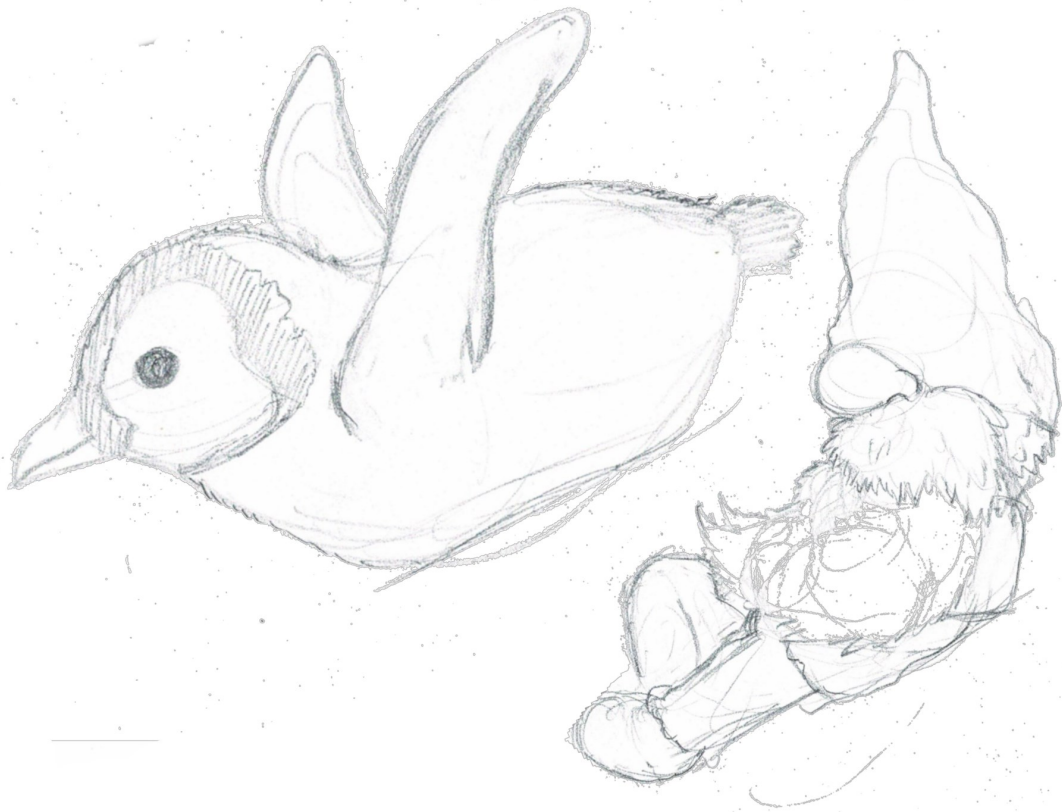
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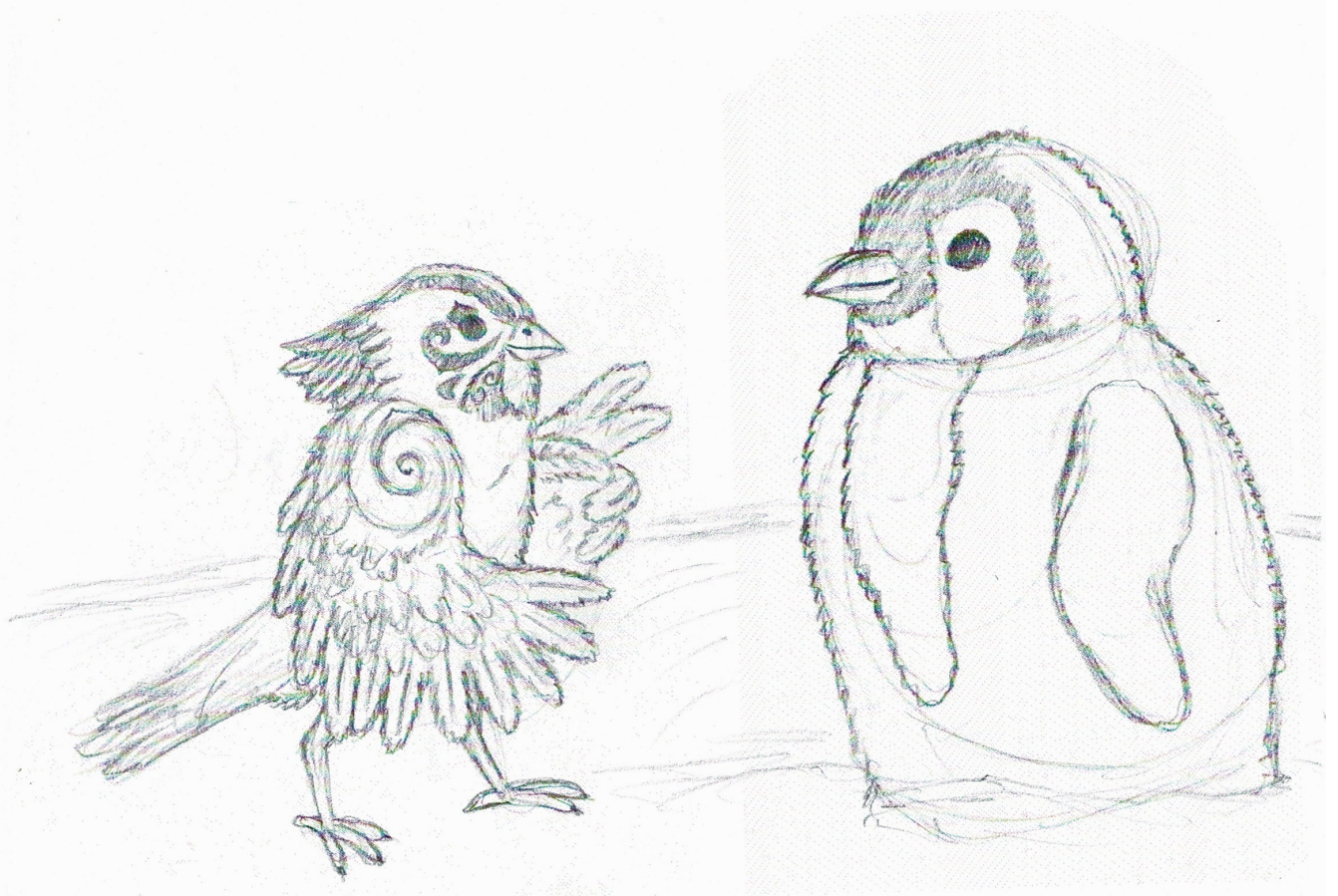
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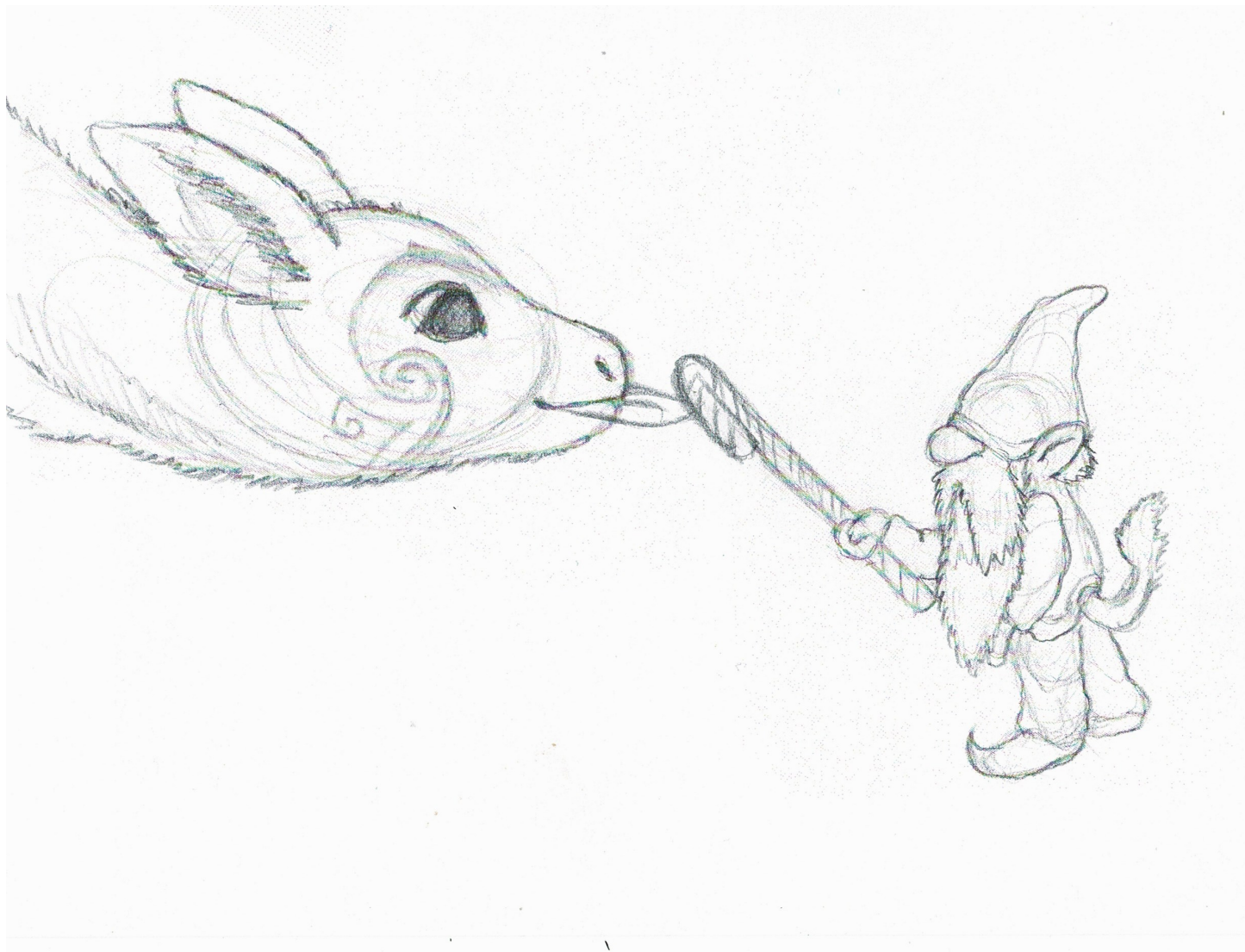
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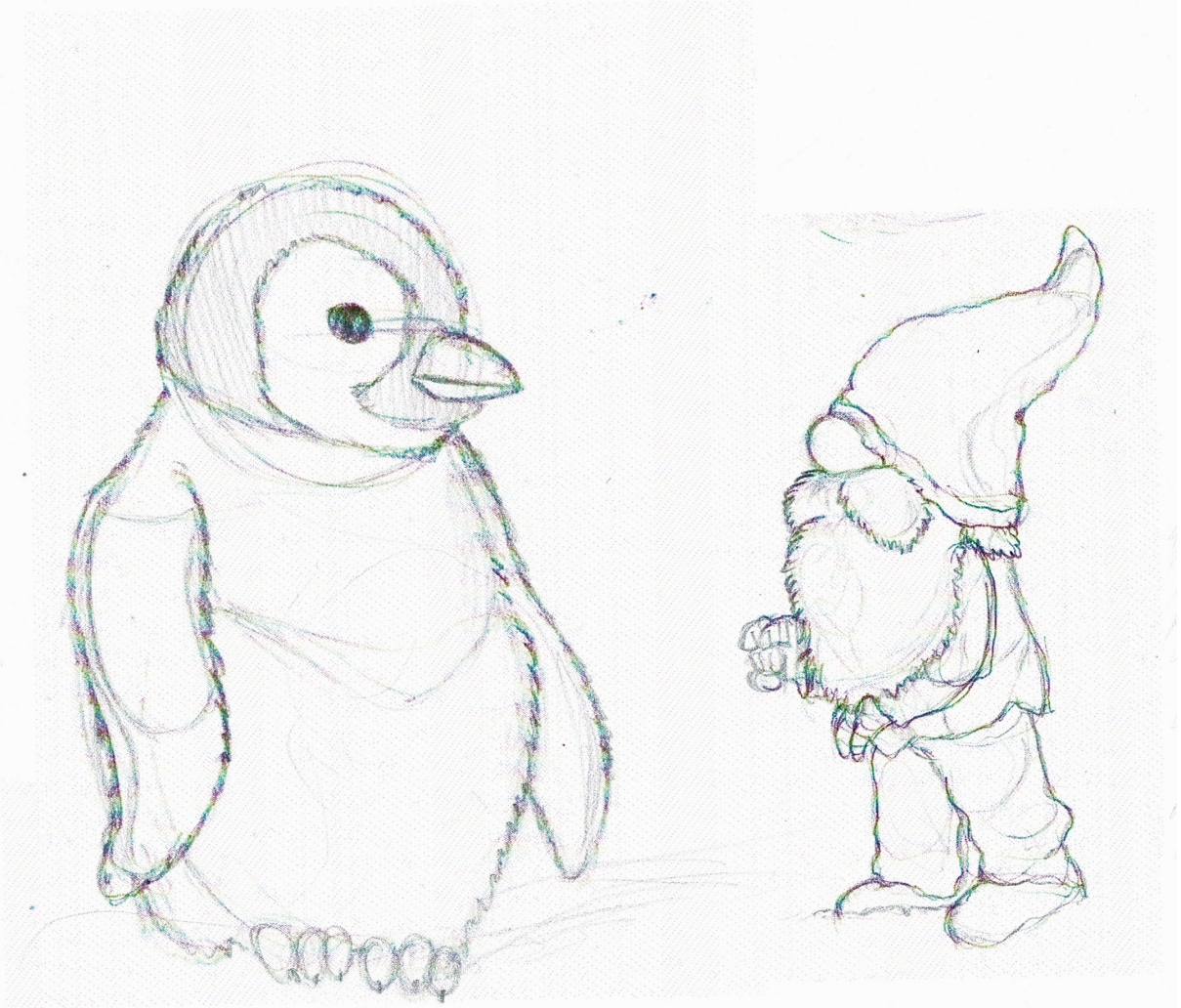
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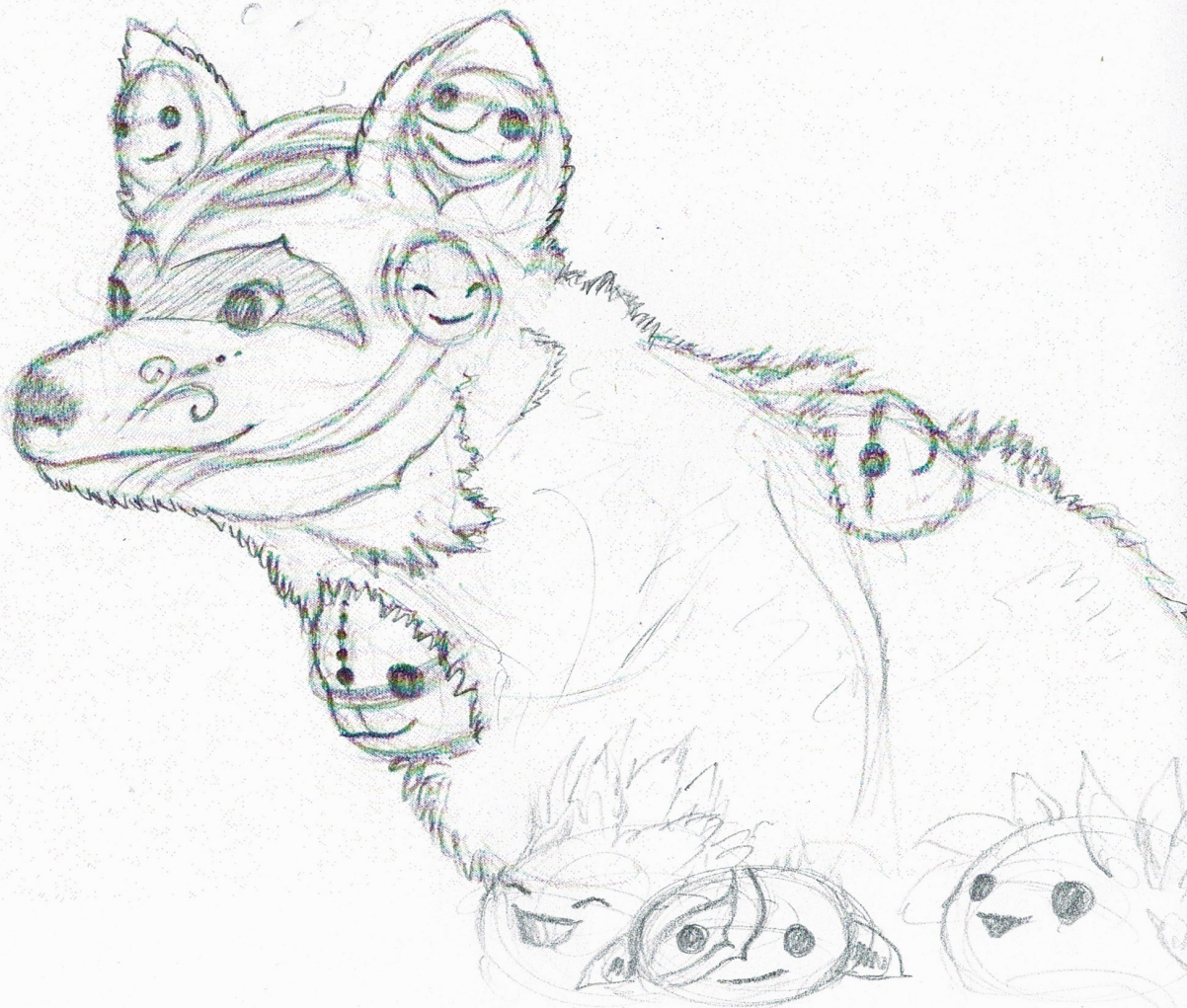
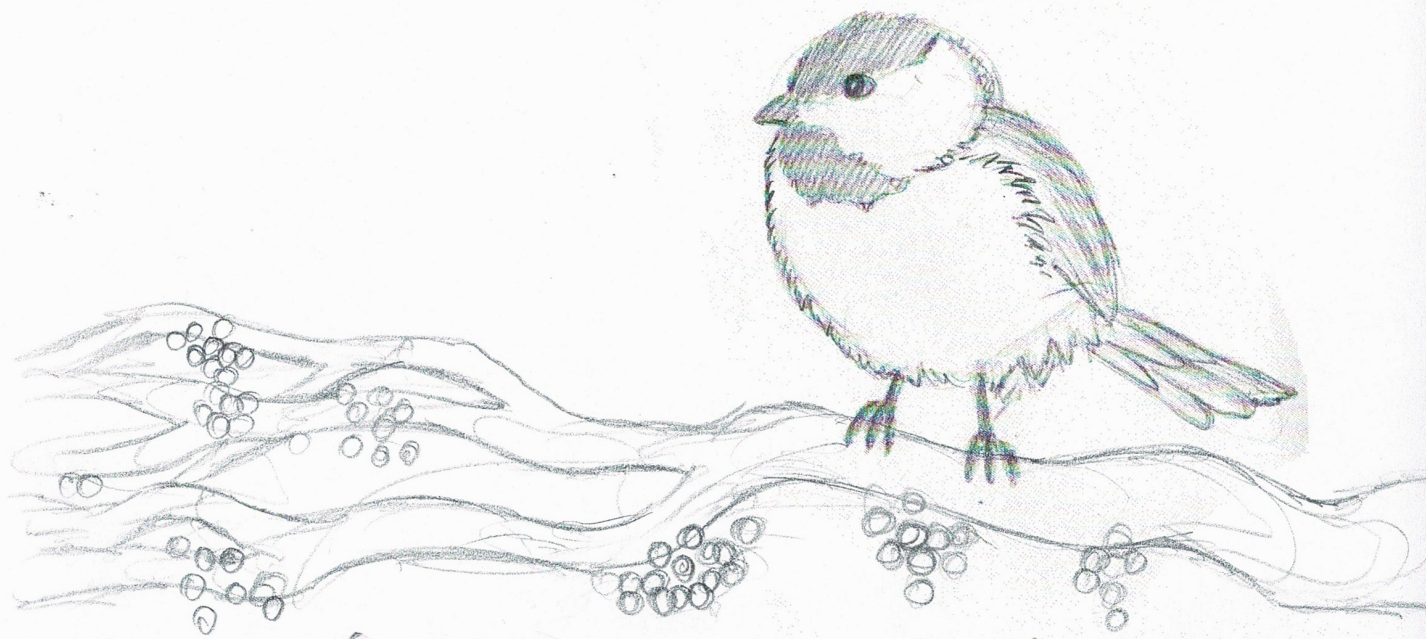
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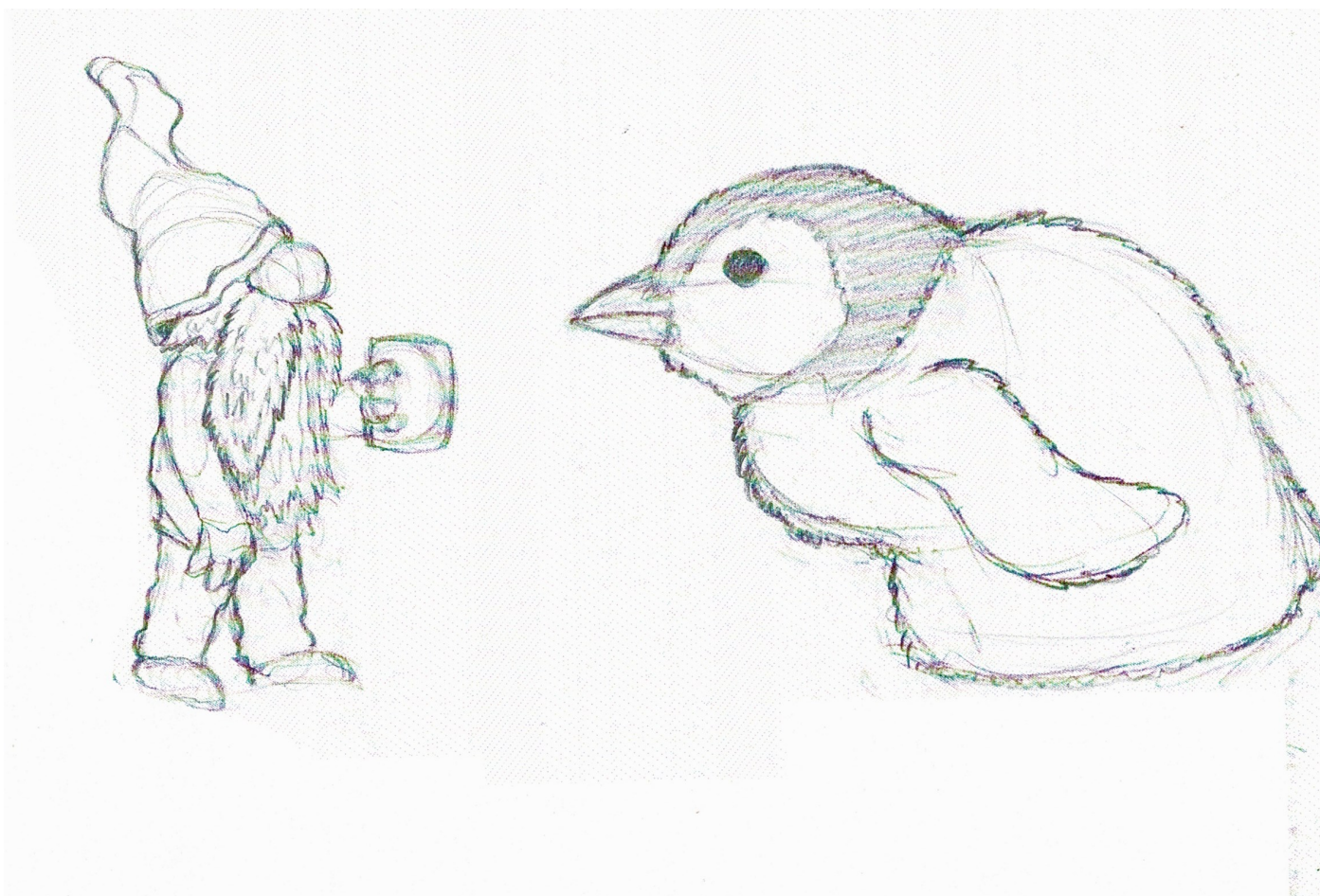
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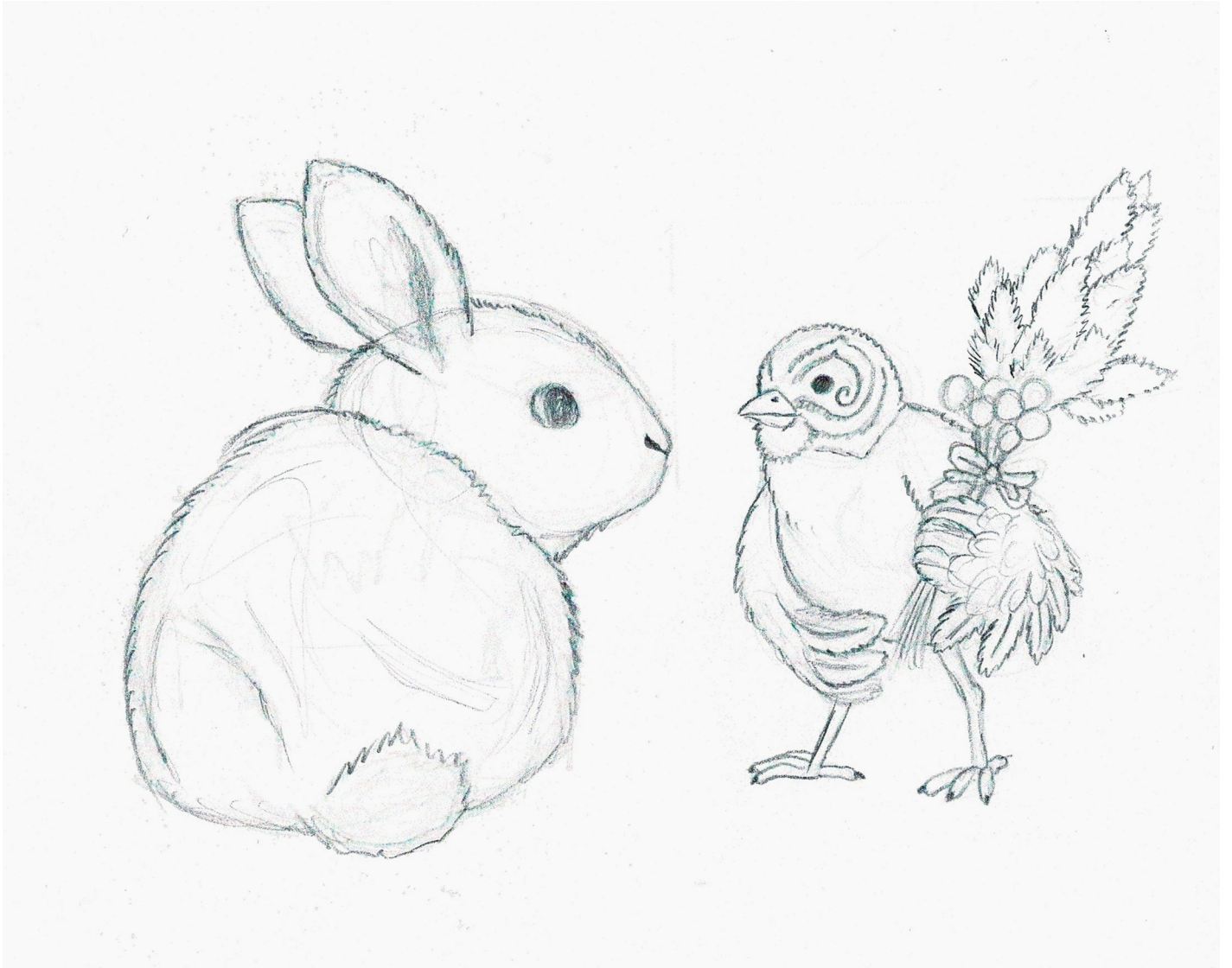
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