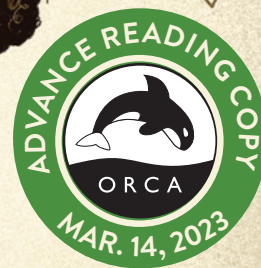
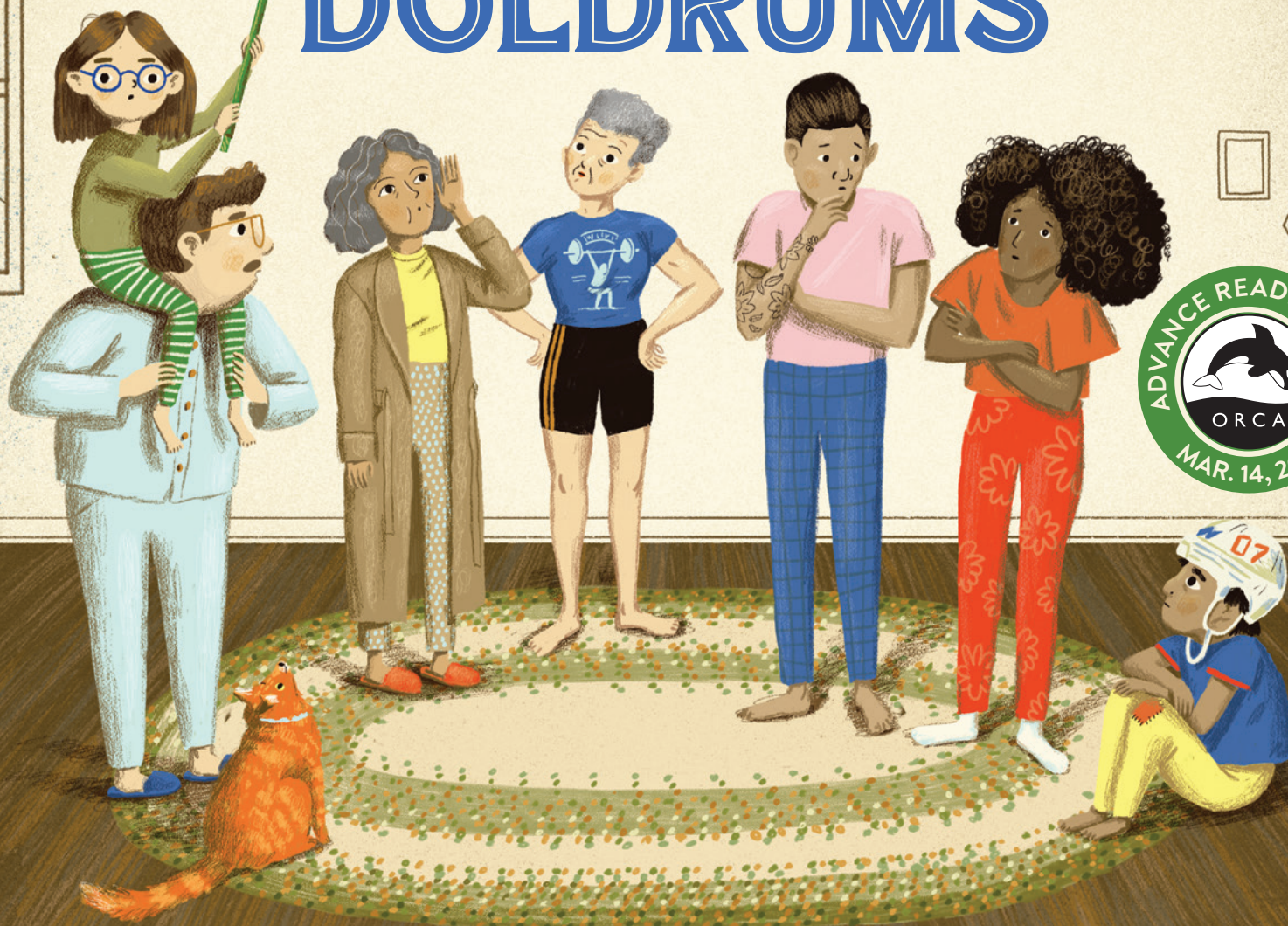




Waking BEN DOLDRUMS



Heather Smith

Byron Eggenschwiler

"Ben Doldrums! Are you in there?"

FRIDA BELLOWS LIVES IN A BIG HOUSE made up of four apartments. Every morning, she gets on her father's shoulders and taps on the ceiling with a broomstick. This wakes her neighbor, a student named Ben Doldrums, who knocks on the wall to wake the Mercredis, who in turn knock on the floor to wake the Reynolds. Frida likes this morning tradition. It makes her feel like she's part of something big. Things change, however, when Ben stops getting out of bed to wake the Mercredis, which throws off the whole routine. Frida notices that Ben Doldrums is not himself and she wants to help. But how?

Waking Ben Doldrums is a story of community, compassion and hope. It is a reminder that, while we can't always fix another person's problems, a simple act of kindness can go a long way.

Heather Smith is the author of several picture books, including the award-winning *The Phone Booth in Mr. Hirota's Garden*. Her middle-grade novel *Ebb and Flow* was shortlisted for the Governor General's Literary Award and won the TD Canadian Children's Literature Award. Her YA novel *The Agony of Bun O'Keefe* won the Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Children's Book Award and the OLA Forest of Reading White Pine Award and was shortlisted for the Amy Mathers Teen Book Award and the Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction for Young People. Originally from Newfoundland, Heather now lives in Waterloo, Ontario, with her family.

Byron Eggenschwiler is an award-winning illustrator whose recent books include *Song for the Snow*, *The Strangest Thing in the Sea*, *The Little Ghost Who Was a Quilt* and *Operatic*. Byron's work has also appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Walrus* and *GQ*. He lives in Calgary.



PICTURE BOOK • AGES 6-8

Publication March 14, 2023

FINAL BOOK WILL BE A HARDCOVER

9781459833913 HC \$21.95

9781459833920 PDF • 9781459833937 EPUB

This is an advance reading copy of the uncorrected proofs and is not for sale. Changes may be made to the text before publication, so **all quotations for review must be checked against the final bound book.**

@orcabook



ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS
orcabook.com • 1-800-210-5277

For more information,
contact Kennedy Cullen
1-800-210-5277
kennedy@orcabook.com

Waking Ben Doldrums

Author: Heather Smith

Illustrator: Byron Eggenschwiler

March 14, 2023

Neighbors come together to support a university student experiencing depression in this illustrated picture book about the power of community and kindness.

FORMAT:	Hardcover	PDF	EPUB
8.75 x 10.75"	9781459833913	9781459833920	9781459833937
32 pages	\$21.95		

KEY SELLING POINTS

- A gentle introduction to depression and mental health for young readers.
- Demonstrates neighbors coming together as a community to support each other.
- Addresses the reality of mental health challenges experienced by some university students.
- Quirky illustrations feature cutaways of the apartment building and neighborhood.
- The story's setting was inspired by the Warner Estate in Walthamstow, England, where homes were split into four flats and the walls were so thin that the occupants created a morning alarm system by knocking on the walls.

PHOTO CREDIT: ROBIN SMITH



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Heather Smith is the author of several picture books, including the award-winning *The Phone Booth in Mr. Hirota's Garden*. Her middle-grade novel *Ebb and Flow* was shortlisted for the Governor General's Literary Award and won the TD Canadian Children's Literature Award. Her YA novel *The Agony of Bun O'Keefe* won the Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Children's Book Award and the OLA Forest of Reading White Pine Award and was shortlisted for the Amy Mathers Teen Book Award and the Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction for Young People. Originally from Newfoundland, Heather now lives in Waterloo, Ontario, with her family.



ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Byron Eggenschwiler is an award-winning illustrator whose recent books include *Song for the Snow*, *The Strangest Thing in the Sea*, *The Little Ghost Who Was a Quilt* and *Operatic*. Byron's work has also appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Walrus* and *GQ*. He lives in Calgary.

PROMOTIONAL PLANS INCLUDE

- Print and online advertising campaigns
- Promotion at national and regional school, library and trade conferences
- Extensive ARC distribution, including NetGalley
- Blog and social media promotion
- Outreach in Orca newsletters

BISACS

JUV039240 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Depression & Mental Illness
JUV039060 JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Friendship
JUV013090 JUVENILE FICTION / Family / Alternative Family

RIGHTS

Worldwide

AGES

6–8

PUBLICITY

For more information or a review copy, please contact Kennedy Cullen
at kennedy@orcabook.com

Order online at orcabook.com or orders@orcabook.com or 1-800-210-5277

@orcabook



ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS
orcabook.com • 1-800-210-5277

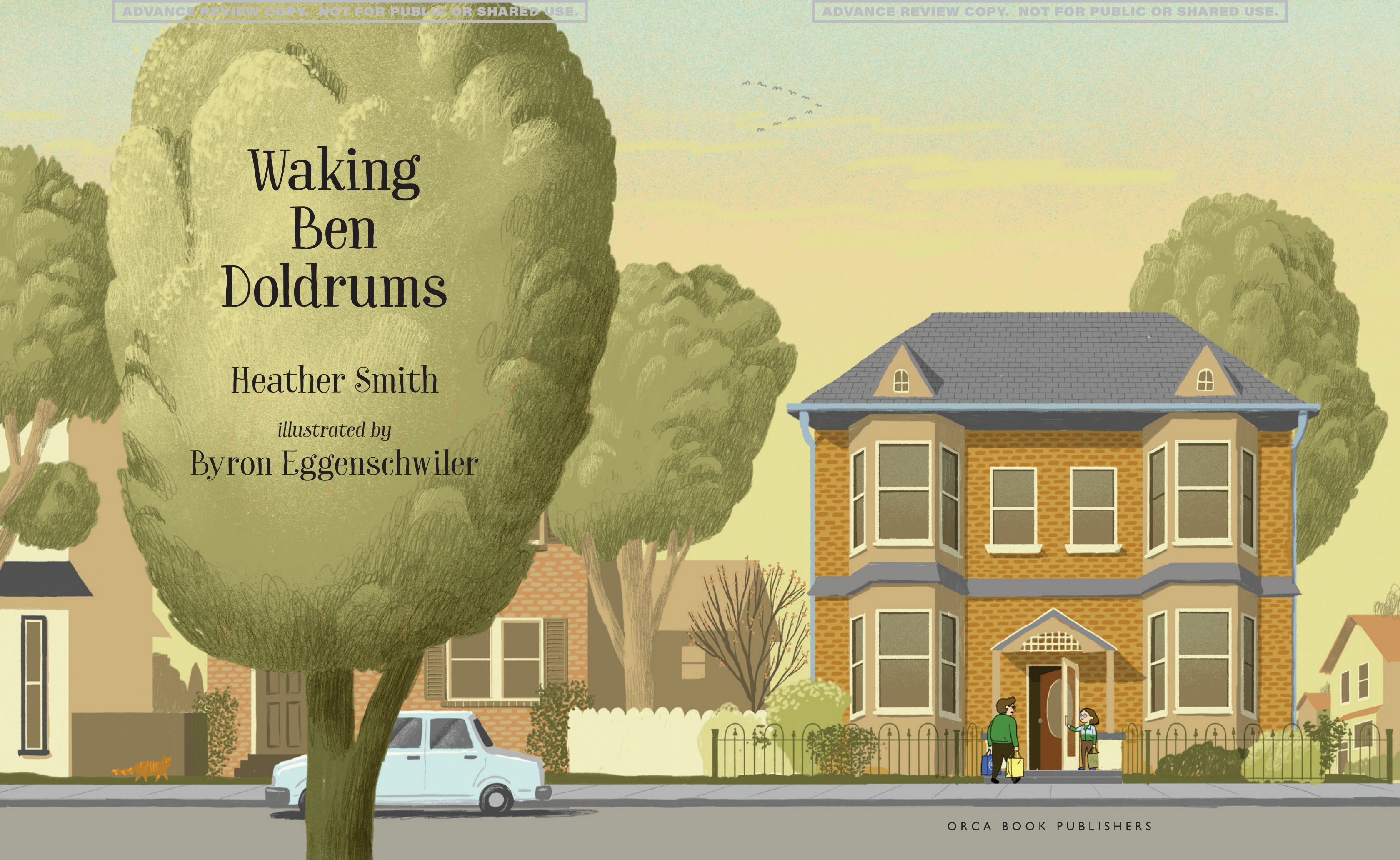
Waking Ben Doldrums



Waking Ben Doldrums

Heather Smith

illustrated by
Byron Eggenschwiler



In the Big House, there are four apartments.
Two up and two down.



I live with my father in the bottom left.



Ben Doldrums lives above us.



BEN DOLDRUMS

university student

video-game player

age twentysomething

The Mercredis live in the top right apartment.

DAN



chef
practical joker
age thirtysomething

MAGGIE



yoga teacher
meditator
"age is but a number"

BILLY



go-kart builder
go-kart crasher
age eleven and three-quarters



MERCREDIS

Edwina and Martha Reynolds live in the bottom right apartment with their cat, Trouble.

EDWINA



party planner
party animal
age sixtysomething

MARTHA



bodybuilder
health nut
age "none of your business"

TROUBLE



ex-stray
couch shredder
age unknown



REYNOLDS

Every morning at six o'clock, our parrot, Paul Macawtney, wakes us with a cock-a-doodle-doo. I get out of bed and climb on Dad's shoulders. Then thump-thump-thump! I hit the ceiling with our old wooden broomstick.

A minute later we hear the creak of Ben Doldrums's bed, his feet pattering across the floor, then his knuckles rapping on the interior wall. Tap-tap-tappity-tap!



A moment after that we hear movement at the Mercredis', followed by the sound of six hands knocking on the floor.

Seconds later Trouble is let out and comes to our windowsill. Dad lets her in and gives us each a boiled egg.

I like our early-morning routine. It makes me feel like I am part of something big.





One morning, after thumping on
our ceiling, there was silence.
No creak of the bed.
No footsteps across the floor.
No tap-tap-tappity-tap.
Dad took me off his shoulders.
“Frida? Go wake the Mercredis.”

After I woke the Mercredis, I hammered
on Ben Doldrums’s door.
“Hey! Ben Doldrums. You in there?”
I poked my head in his room.
“You didn’t wake the Mercredis,” I said.
Ben Doldrums shrugged. “So?”



I stormed downstairs. “He said ‘So’! SO! Can you believe it? What
about the Mercredis? What about our morning tradition?”

The next morning it was the same.

“Frida? Go wake the Mercredis.”

After I woke the Mercredis, I yelled through
Ben Doldrums’s keyhole.

“You didn’t wake the Mercredis!”

He shouted back, “And?”

And so it continued for days on end,
until my father organized a meeting.





“Is he mad?” asked Edwina and Martha.
 “Is he sad?” asked the Mercredis.
 “Is he confused?” asked my father.
 “Meow, meow, meow?” asked Trouble.
 “I’ll go ask him,” I said.



“Ben Doldrums. Are you
 mad? Are you sad? Are you
 confused?”

He stared at the ceiling.
 “I don’t know what I am.”



I went back to the meeting
 and reported my findings.
 “To be honest, he could be all
 of the above.”

For the next few weeks everyone tried to make Ben Doldrums happy.



Dad gave him a private accordion performance.



Dan Mercredi brought him
quail legs with a tamarind
glaze and fig chutney.

Maggie Mercredi taught
him how to breathe.



Billy Mercredi showed him
the ten bruises and five
cuts he'd received from a
spectacular go-kart crash.





Edwina threw him a party.

Martha demonstrated
a dead lift.



Trouble brought him a dead rat.

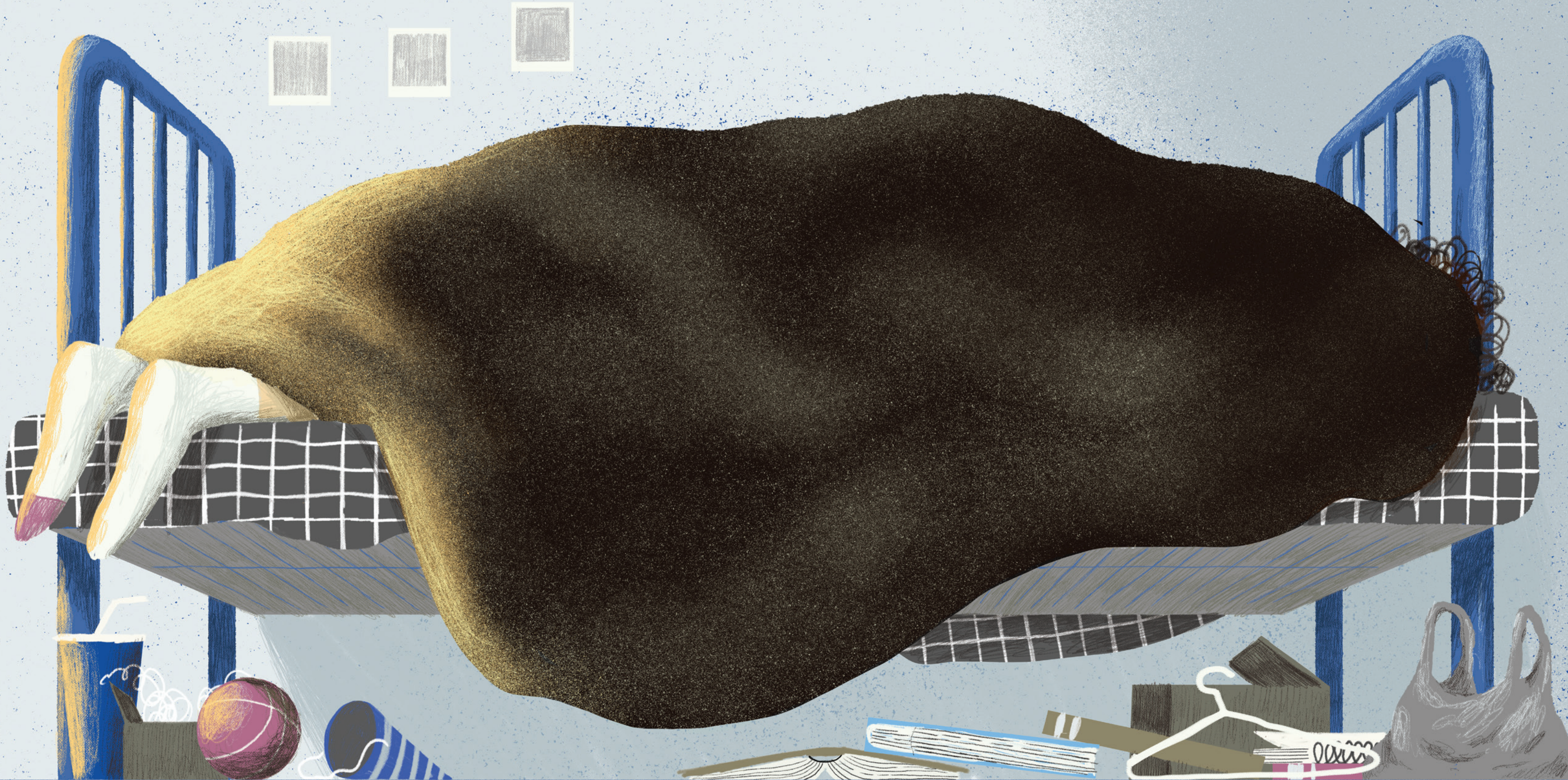


I read him excerpts from my
How to Be a Good Chinchilla Owner manual.



None of these things helped.
In fact, they seemed to make matters worse.
Especially my dad's private accordion performance.





One morning I said, “Ben Doldrums. What would make you feel better?”
“I don’t know,” he said. “I’m just...tired.”

That night I thought about Ben Doldrums and how awfully tired
he must be to stay in bed for so long.

The next morning I went straight to Ben Doldrums's apartment.

"Ben Doldrums. I have something for you."



He sat up. "What is it?"

I held out our old wooden broomstick.

"This way you don't have to get out of bed."

He stared at it for a long time. "Don't you need it?"

I shrugged. "It's okay. I have a hockey stick."

I pointed to the wall. "It should reach."

Ben held the broomstick out and leaned forward.

"That's it," I said. "Keep stretching...just a little bit more."

Tap-tap-tappity-tap!

A moment after that we heard the sound of six hands
knocking on the hardwood floor.

"Well," I said. "I should go.

Trouble will be waiting for her boiled egg."



Every morning Ben Doldrums wakes the Mercredis.

Sometimes he uses the broom.

Sometimes he doesn't.



We all are.



For anyone who's been in the doldrums.
–H.S.

For Pickles and Mitts.
–B.E.

Text copyright © Heather Smith 2023
Illustrations copyright © Byron Eggenschwiler 2023

Published in Canada and the United States in 2023 by Orca Book Publishers.
orcabook.com

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system now known or to be invented, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Title: Waking Ben Doldrums / Heather Smith ; illustrated by Byron Eggenschwiler.
Names: Smith, Heather, 1968– author. | Eggenschwiler, Byron, illustrator.
Identifiers: Canadiana (print) 20220223106 | Canadiana (ebook) 20220223114 |
ISBN 9781459833913 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781459833920 (PDF) | ISBN 9781459833937 (EPUB)
Classification: LCC PS8637.M5623 W35 2023 | DDC jC813/.6—dc23

Library of Congress Control Number: 2022936828

Summary: Neighbors come together to support a university student experiencing depression in this illustrated picture book about the power of community and kindness.

Orca Book Publishers is committed to reducing the consumption of nonrenewable resources in the production of our books. We make every effort to use materials that support a sustainable future.

Orca Book Publishers gratefully acknowledges the support for its publishing programs provided by the following agencies: the Government of Canada, the Canada Council for the Arts and the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council and the Book Publishing Tax Credit.

The artwork was created digitally.

Cover and interior artwork by Byron Eggenschwiler
Design by Byron Eggenschwiler and Rachel Page

Printed and bound in the United States.

26 25 24 23 • 1 2 3 4



Orca Book Publishers is proud of the hard work our authors do and of the important stories they create. If you are reading this book and did not purchase it or did not check it out from a library provider, then the author has not received royalties for this book. The ebook you are reading is licensed for single use only and may not be copied, printed, resold or given away. If you are interested in using this book in a classroom setting, we have digital subscriptions with multi user, simultaneous access to our books, or classroom licenses available for purchase. For more information, please contact digital@orcabook.com.

ivaluecanadianstories.ca