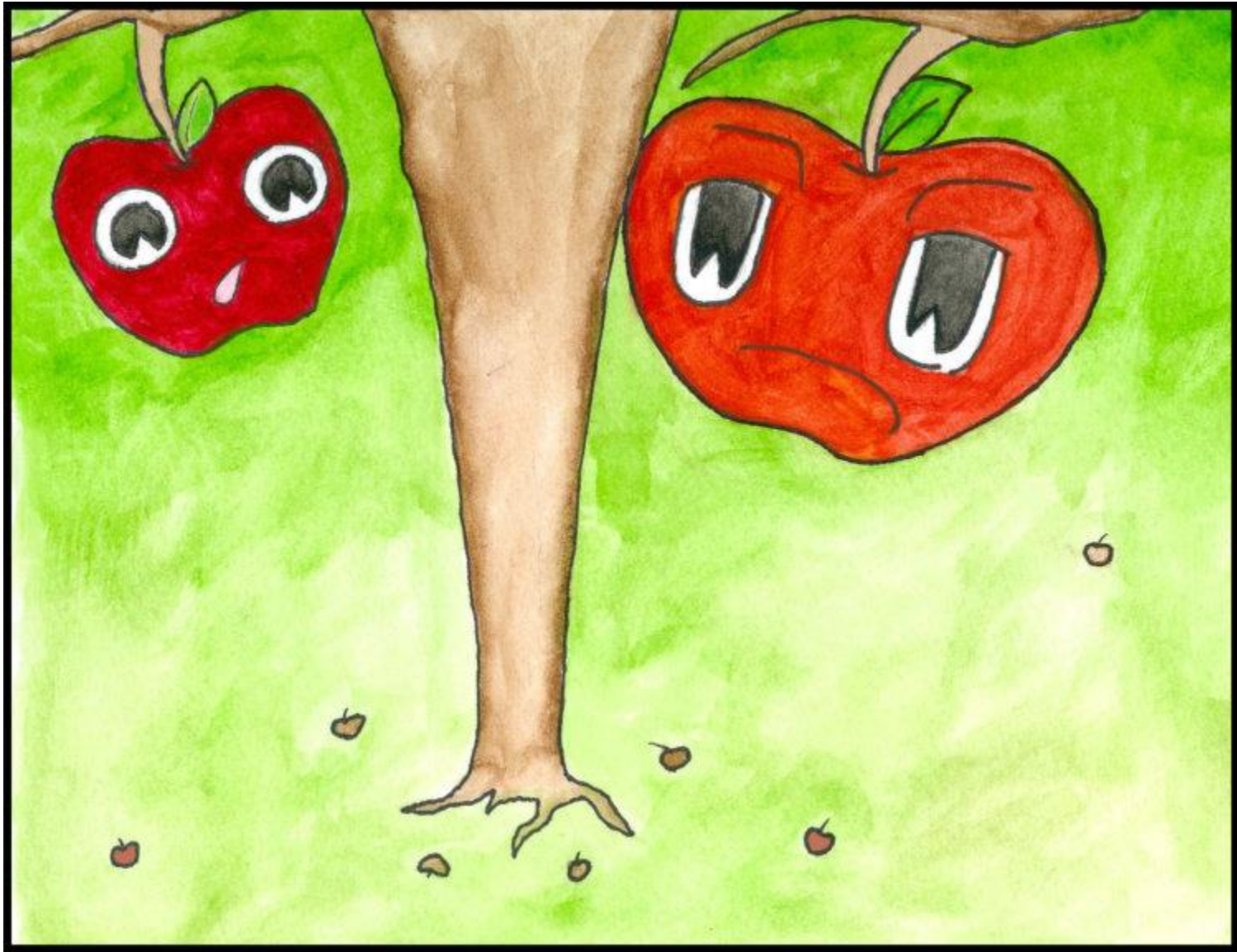


The Little Apple

Written by Mike Covell

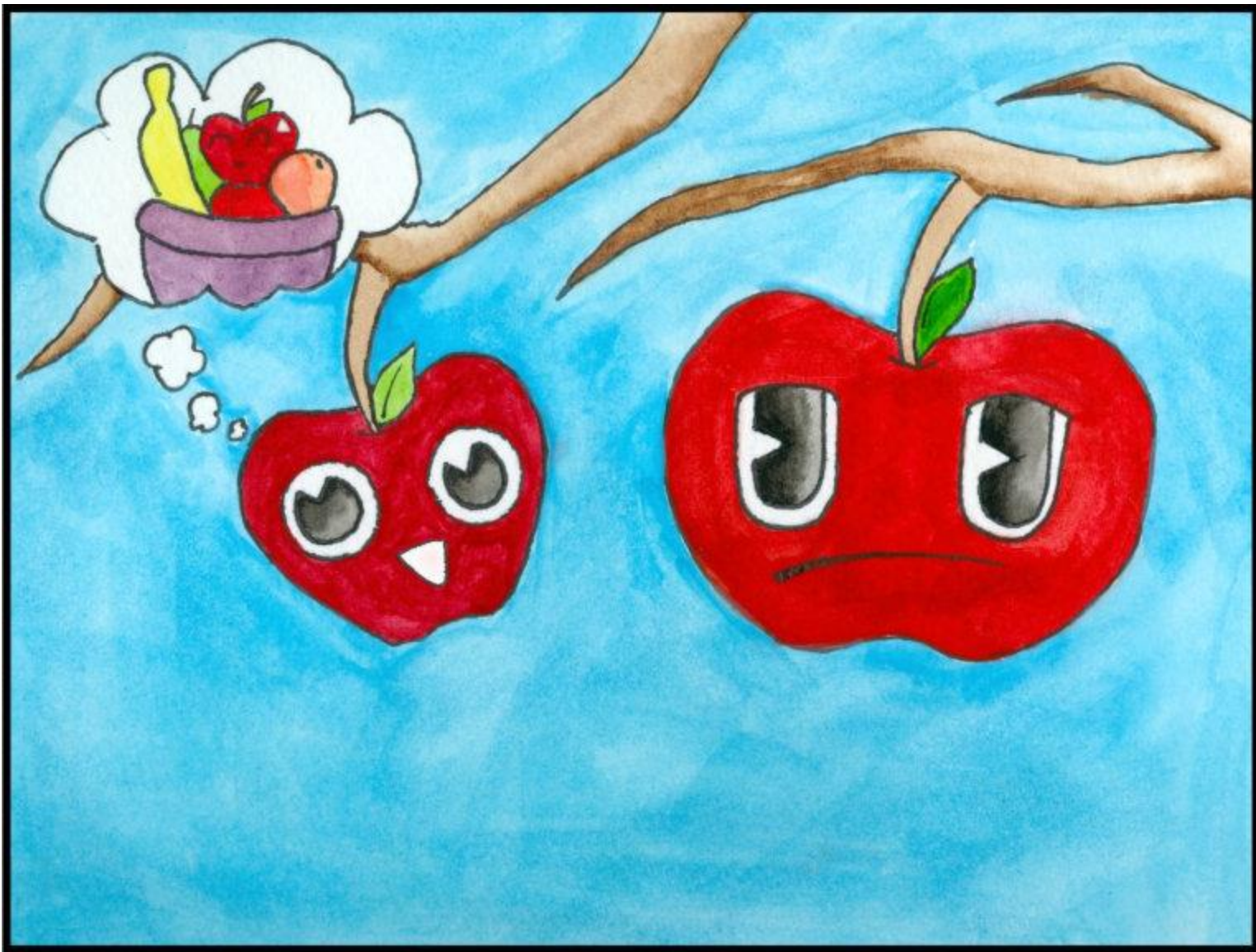
Illustrations by Jared Wehmeyer





The little apple clung tightly to the branch as a gentle breeze blew by. An older apple noticing the younger apple's despair, chuckled and said, "Looks like you're holding on to that branch for dear life little buddy."

The little apple glanced up at the older apple and said, "I am! I don't want to fall to the ground. Don't you know it's hard and dusty down there? The ground is filled with worms and creepy crawling bugs. Why just take a look for yourself, can't you see all the rotten apples down there?"



The older apple thought for a moment, and then replied, "I know you're concerned about falling from the tree, but some good things have come from the ground."

"That's not the life for me," retorted the little apple, "I plan on being hand picked by a special family, taken to their home and placed into a beautiful fruit bowl. With my shiny red skin, I shall be the most delicious looking piece of fruit in the entire bowl!"

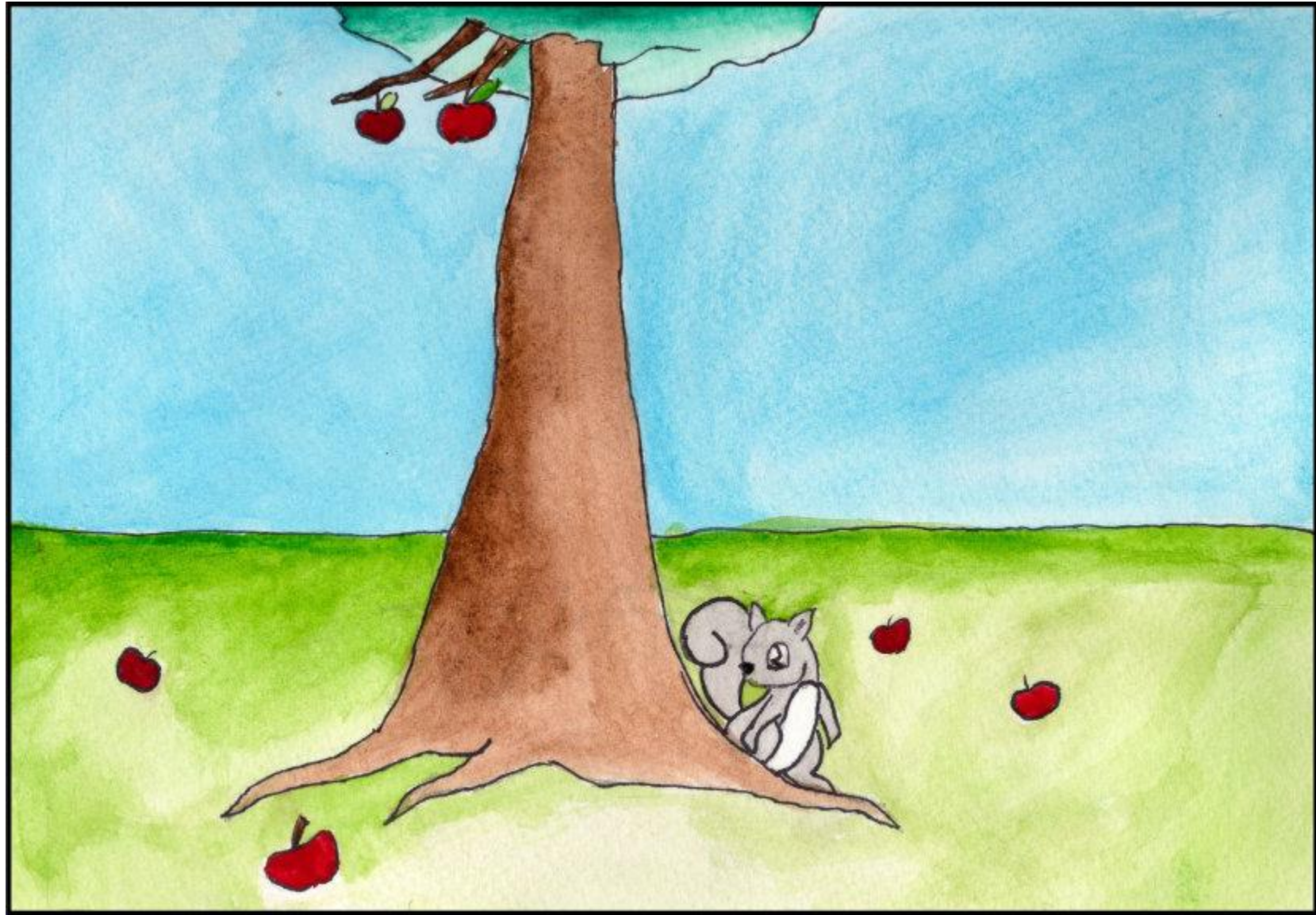
The older apple gently replied, "There is much more to being an apple than just having shiny red skin."



“Yes, I know!” the little apple quickly interrupted, “One of the children will probably take me to school for lunch or perhaps have me for a snack after school. He or she will know that I was more than just a beautiful apple with a shiny red peel, he or she will find out that my fruit is great tasting and healthy for him or her.”

“Yes, yes, you could be all those things for a season,” the older apple tried to reply.

But once again the little apple broke in, “Why, after he or she has finished eating the fruit, and all that is left is my core he or she will... will...” The little apple’s voice dropped, “will probably throw my core in the trash.”



“Yes,” replied the older apple, “That is what your life could be like, if you decide to live for the moment and choose to reap the quick rewards.”

“Whatever do you mean? What other life is there?” asked the little apple.

“I have been trying to tell you, if you’d just slow down for a moment and listen. The older apple calmly explained, “When the winds come, you may be shaken from the tree and fall to the ground. It is then that your shiny red skin will keep you from splitting apart and becoming applesauce. Once on the ground a hungry bird or squirrel may find you and carry you away from the base of the tree. Once you’ve met it’s needs and filled it’s stomach, it shall leave your core and a little fruit behind.”



"That doesn't sound a bit better," the little apple screeched, "in fact it sounds worse!"

"Please allow me to finish," the older apple said sternly, "Then your real work begins. Once you are left on the ground, the rest of your fruit shall slowly rot and blend into the ground. It is at this point that your seeds shall be buried into the earth. For a period of time the seeds will remain in the ground, but then ever so slowly something wonderful begins to happen. The seeds begin to sprout, breaking through the dirt. The sunlight and the rain help the sprout to grow into a small tree. Within a few seasons the tree shall grow big enough to start producing apples of its own. From then on the tree shall produce hundreds of apples each season.



"So you see, little apple, there is so much more you can be."

All the little apple could say was, "Wow!"

As the winds picked up you could see both the apples swinging in the breeze hoping beyond hope to fall to the ground and begin their life's work.



Our lives can be very much like the little apple's. We can choose to live only for the moment, fulfilling our own plans and desires. The plans we have for our lives may be good, but God always has a better plan for us, if we're patient, if we take the time, and if we listen to what He softly tells us.

We can surround ourselves with many "things" to make us comfortable, but alas, these things only last for a season. Or we could use the time, talent and money God gives us for His purpose and glory. It is only then that we can reach our full potential.