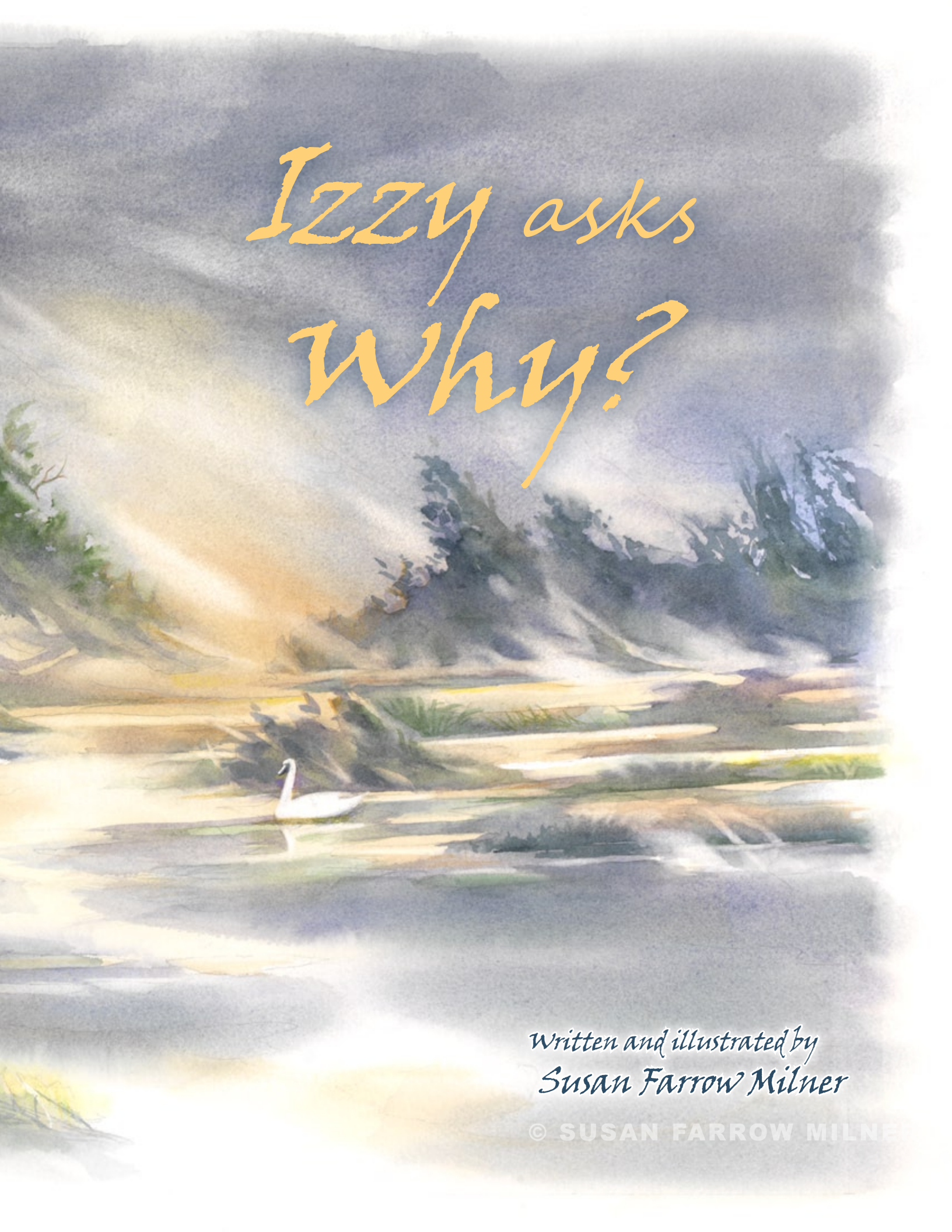




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Izzy asks Why?

*Written and illustrated by
Susan Farrow Milner*

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IZZY ASKS WHY?

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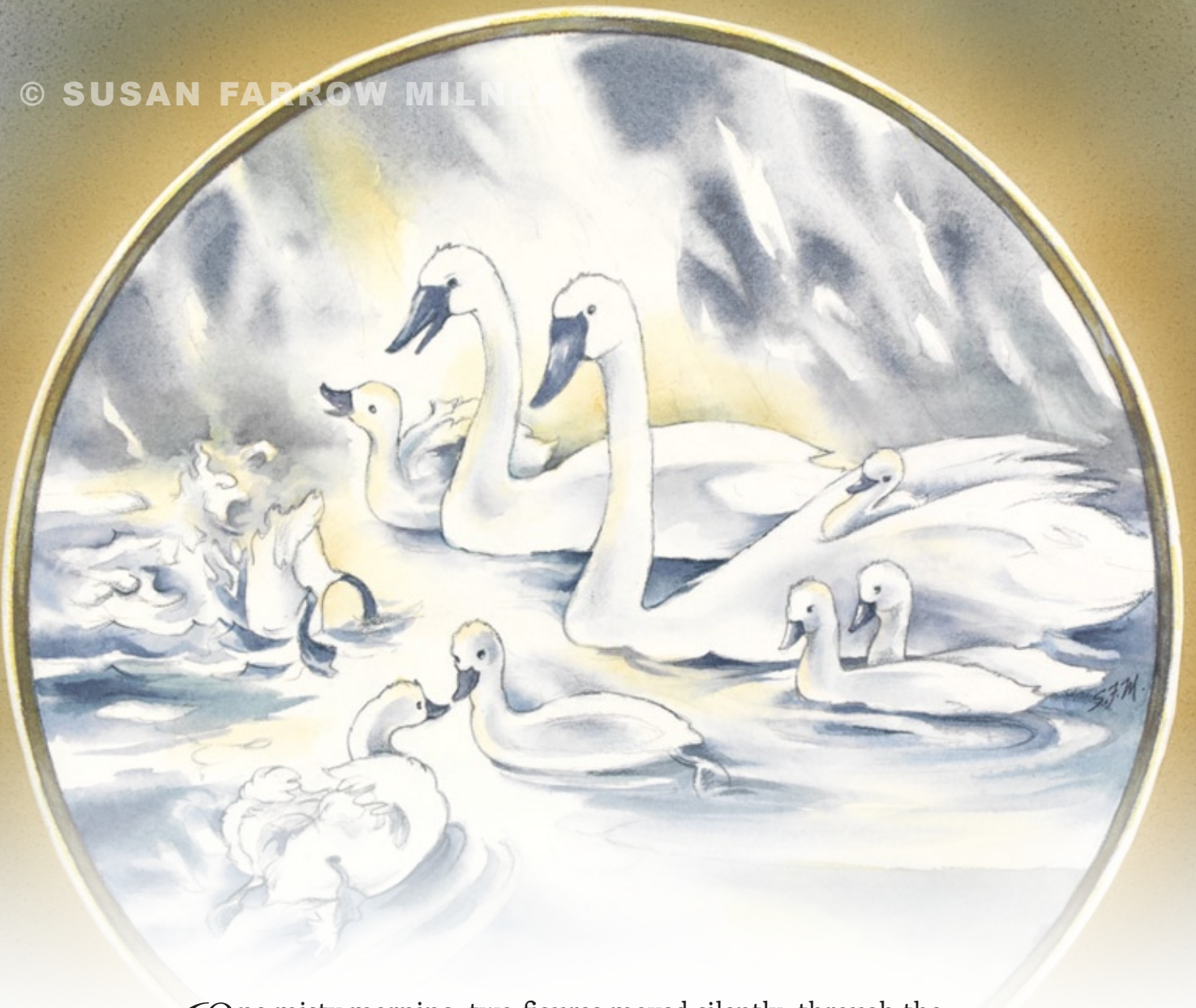
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One misty morning, two figures moved silently through the sun-washed wetlands. Pushing aside the tall grass, they stepped carefully, searching for the nest of two elusive trumpeter swans.

Isabella had been on many such nature journeys with her Grandpa. They walked with anticipation, as if entering some mysterious secret kingdom.

For many months, they had followed the movements of a trumpeter family. Like good nature detectives, they delighted in guessing exactly which patch of marsh hid their nest. Binoculars in hand, it had taken several hours to find the spot. Isabella (nicknamed Izzy) had fun the day they saw the mother and father swans teaching their babies to swim and hunt for food. Some days, they laughed to see the little swans play in their watery home.

Izzy enjoyed being with Grandpa because he knew a lot about birds, especially swans. The two happy birdwatchers twittered back and forth, like chirping sparrows on a sunny branch.

“Why do swans have long necks?” Izzy asked.

Grandpa responded thoughtfully, “To scratch themselves, remove dirt... old feathers, and pick up food from the bottom of the pond.”

“Why do they make such funny noises?”

“Each sound tells how the swan is feeling. One call might alert another bird to danger,” then he jokingly added, “A different squawk might say, ‘Back off! These reeds are my food!’”

They laughed.



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“Now, I’ve a question for you dear curious Izzy. Little cygnets (baby swans) have fluffy feathers that need to grow firm and strong. What do young swans feel when they first learn to fly?”

“I think a little afraid, but happy to be out of the nest.” She paused... “Grandpa, how do mom and dad swans find each other to ... you know... have a family?”

“Well that’s a mystery! We don’t know how, but we do know when a male swan turns two years old, he starts dating female swans. Usually at the age of five he will choose a bride to nest with, and stay with her his whole life.”

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