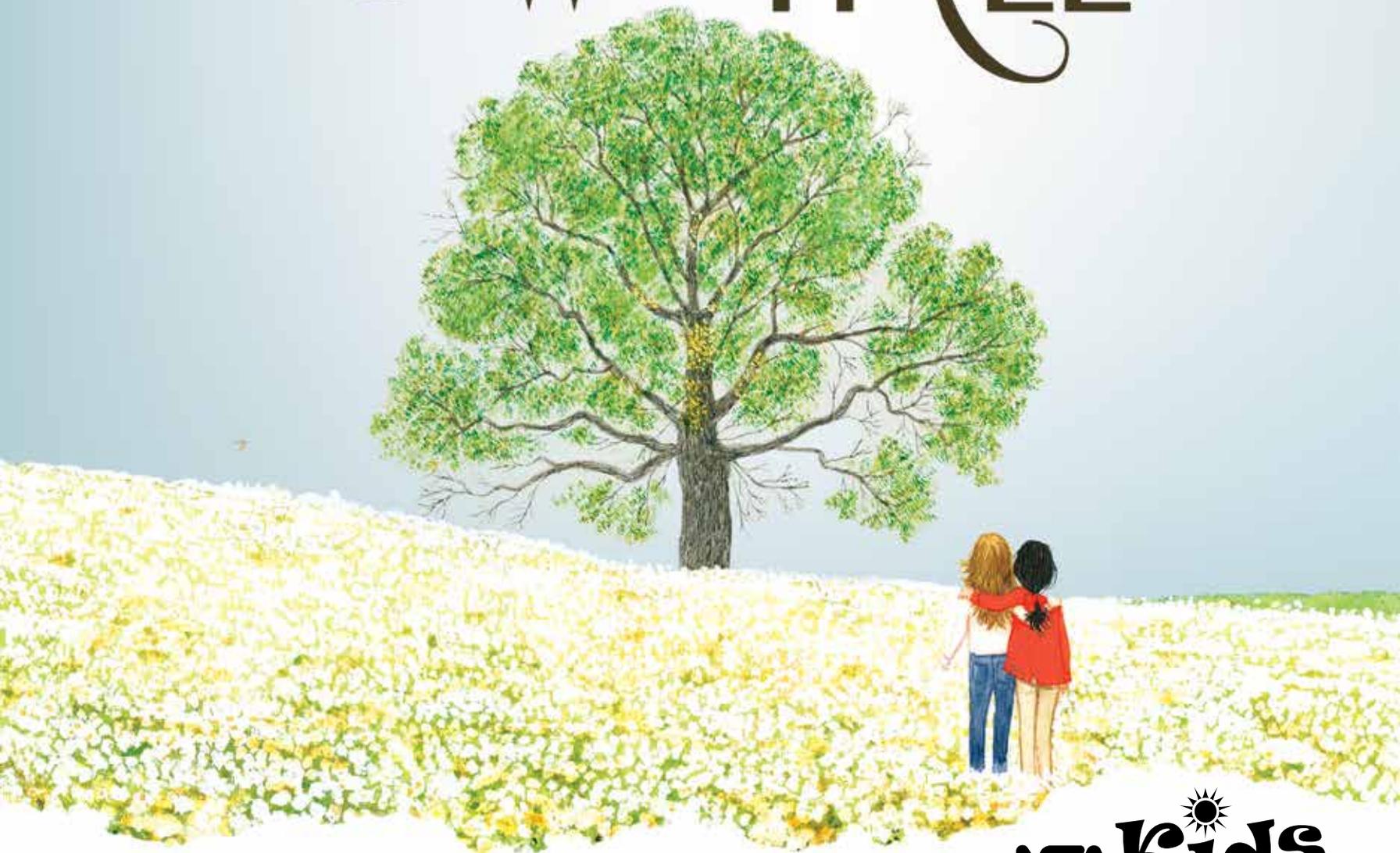




# OUR VERY Own TREE



By **Lawrence F. Lowery**

**NSTA Kids**  
National Science Teachers Association

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By **Lawrence F. Lowery**

Illustrated by **Tim and Gregg Hildebrandt**





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**Introduction**

The *I Wonder Why* series is a set of science books created specifically for young learners who are in their first years of school. The content for each book was chosen to be appropriate for youngsters who are beginning to construct knowledge of the world around them. These youngsters ask questions. They want to know about things. They are more curious than they will be when they are a decade older. Research shows that science is students' favorite subject when they enter school for the first time.

Science is both *what we know* and *how we come to know* it. What we know is the content knowledge that accumulates over time as scientists continue to explore the universe in which we live. How we come to know science is the set of thinking and reasoning processes we use to get answers to the questions and inquiries in which we are engaged.

Scientists learn by observing, comparing, and organizing the objects and ideas they are investigating. Children learn the same way. The thinking processes are among several inquiry behaviors that enable us to find out about our world and how it works. Observing, comparing, and organizing are fundamental to the more advanced thinking processes of relating, experimenting, and inferring.

The five books in this set of the *I Wonder Why* series focus on the biological sciences. Biology is the study of living things. It is such a large field of study that scientists have divided it into two parts: botany (the study of plants) and zoology (the study of animals). Each of those parts is then divided into many more fields of study.

These books introduce the reader to basic science content pertaining to plants and animals. The content includes

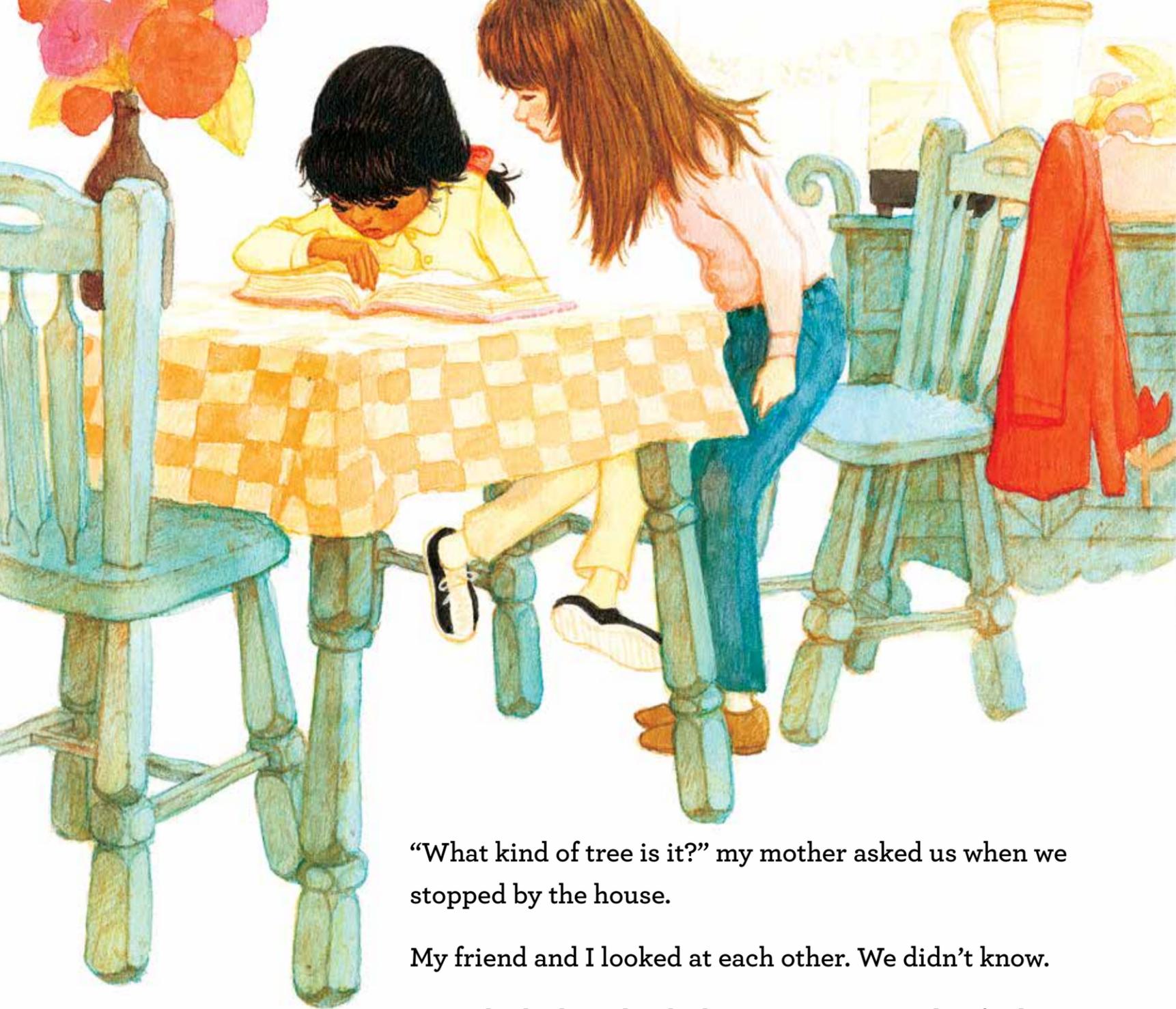
the concepts of growth, life cycles, and food chains (*The Tree by Diane's House*); inferences derived by observing patterns in plant structures (*Our Very Own Tree*); factors needed for a healthy living environment (*Tommy's Turtle*); protective coloration and camouflage characteristics of animals (*Looking for Animals*); and comparisons of observable similarities and differences among animals (*Animals Two by Two*).

Each book uses a different approach to take the reader through simple scientific information. A couple of books are expository, providing factual information. A few are narratives that involve the reader in the discovery of the properties of living organisms. Another book uses cumulative rhythmic sentences to engage the reader in a form of literary growth that corresponds with the biological growth in the story. The combination of different literary ways to present information brings the content to the reader through several instructional avenues.

In addition, the content in these books supports the criteria set forth by the *Common Core State Standards*. Unlike didactic presentations of knowledge, the content is woven into each book so that its presence is subtle but powerful.

The science activities in the Parent/Teacher Handbook in each book enable learners to carry out their own investigations related to the content. The materials needed for these activities are easily obtained, and the activities have been tested with youngsters to be sure they are age appropriate.

After the reader completes a science activity, rereading or referring back to the book and talking about connections with the activity can be a deepening experience that stabilizes the learning as a long-term memory.



“What kind of tree is it?” my mother asked us when we stopped by the house.

My friend and I looked at each other. We didn’t know.

So we looked at a book about trees. We tried to find a picture of a tree that looked like ours. We finally found one. Next to the picture were the words *Oak Tree*. That’s how we found out that our tree is an oak tree.

The pictures in the book gave us something new to notice. Our tree was different from others in many ways.

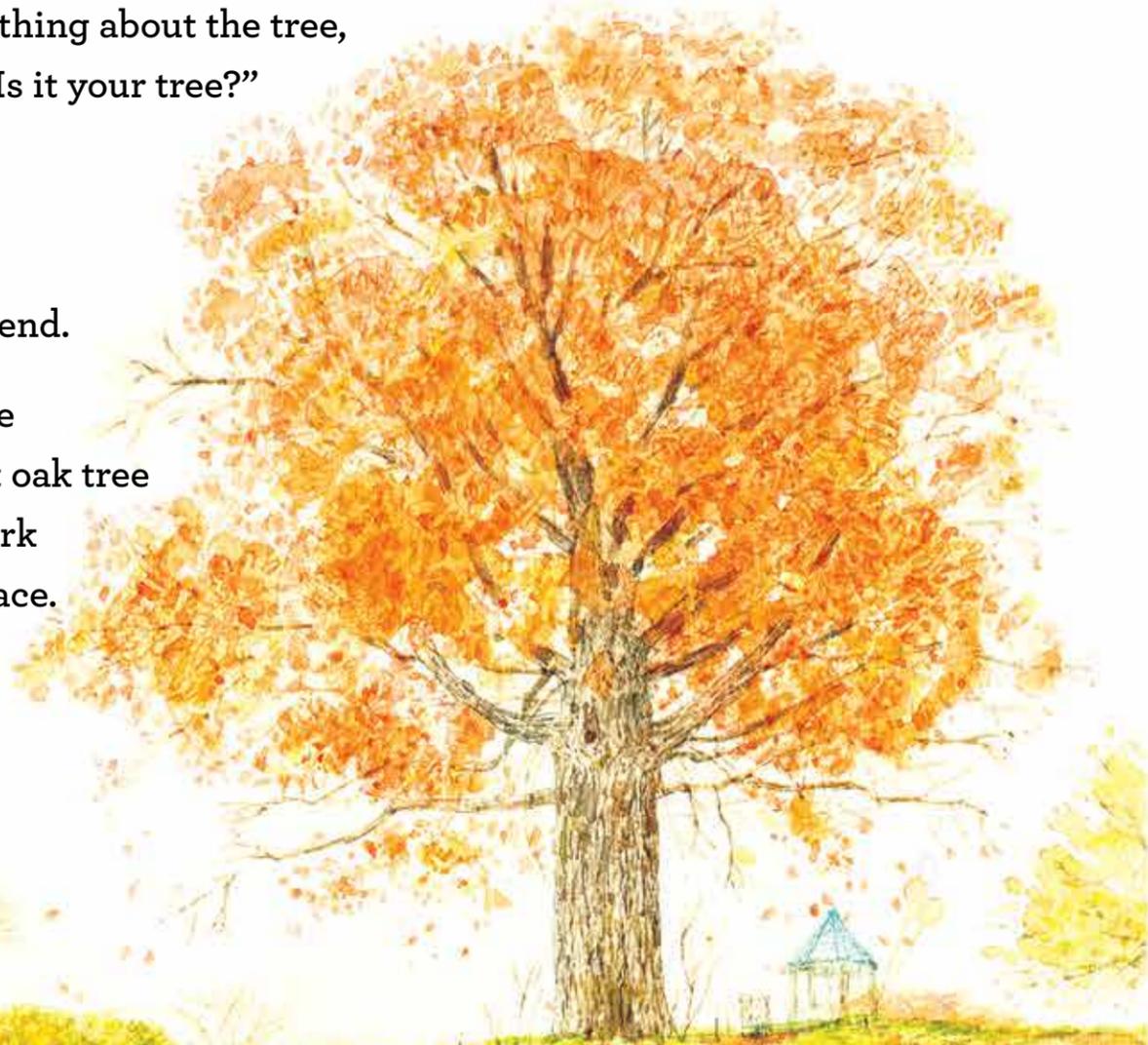


Each time we said anything about the tree,  
we called it our tree. “Is it your tree?”  
my mother asked.

“Yes,” I said.

“It is now,” said my friend.

And it was. At least, we  
pretended it was. That oak tree  
and that part of the park  
became our special place.



One day, we were drawing little faces on some acorns. That  
started us thinking about something new. What were acorns?  
What were they for? We wondered about that.

We checked the book and found out. Acorns were seeds!  
Inside each one was the beginning of a tiny oak tree!



# OUR VERY OWN TREE

**W**hat happens when two friends take an interest in an oak tree? They begin to notice more about the world around them, such as the seasons changing and squirrels making homes. They are inspired to do independent research, from studying acorns to looking up scientific terms, and to be creative, by composing pictures and poems. And they discover new things, such as their tree's structure and characteristics—all because they stopped to look around them. As warm and dreamy as a summer day, *Our Very Own Tree* will inspire readers to seek out their very own places in nature.

*Our Very Own Tree* is part of the *I Wonder Why* book series, written to ignite the curiosity of children in grades K-3 while encouraging them to become avid readers. These books explore the marvels of animals, plants, and other phenomena related to biology. Included in each volume is a Parent/Teacher Handbook with coordinating activities. The *I Wonder Why* series is written by an award-winning science educator and published by NSTA Kids, a division of NSTA Press.

**Grades K-3**

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