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FOREST EXPLORER



Goldie and the riddles of life

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FOREST EXPLORER

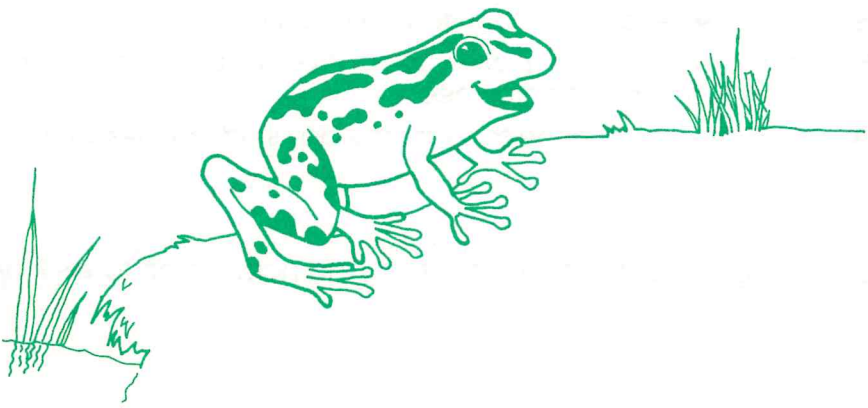
Goldie and the riddles of life

Written by Rae Burrows.
Illustrations by Louise Burch.

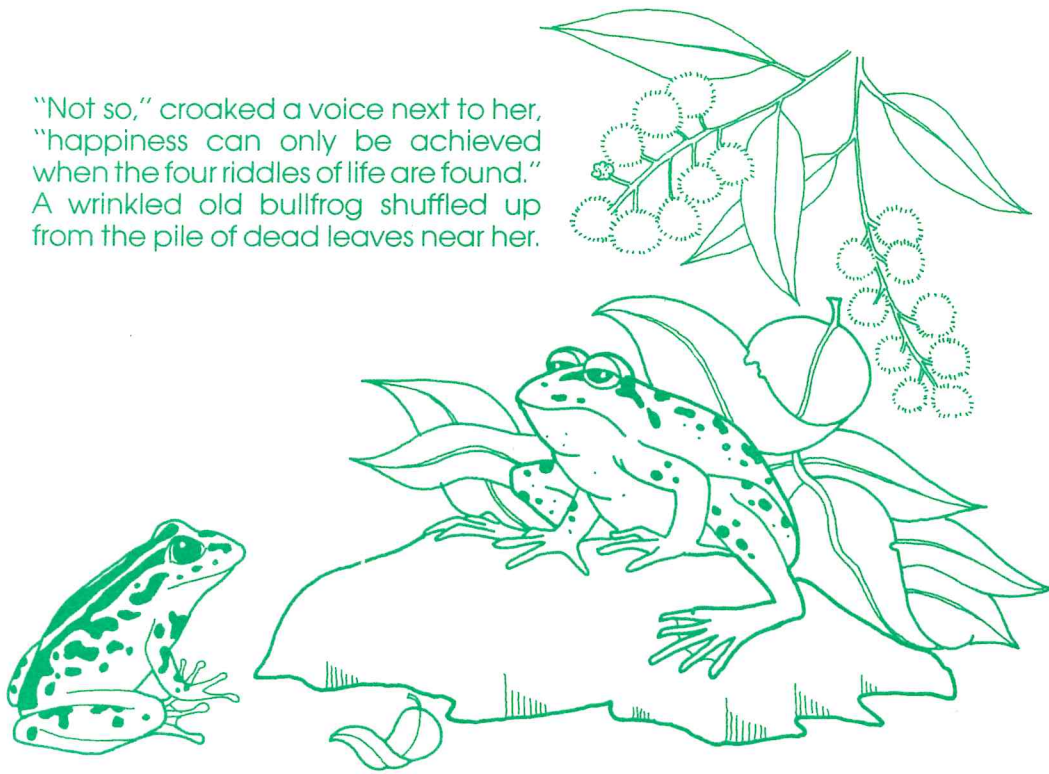


Goldie, the green and gold tree frog, jumped out of the water onto the bank.

"Free at last," she said, "from the restrictions of my tadpole body. Now I can explore both land and water. I'll be a citizen of the world — the happiest being alive!"



"Not so," croaked a voice next to her, "happiness can only be achieved when the four riddles of life are found." A wrinkled old bullfrog shuffled up from the pile of dead leaves near her.

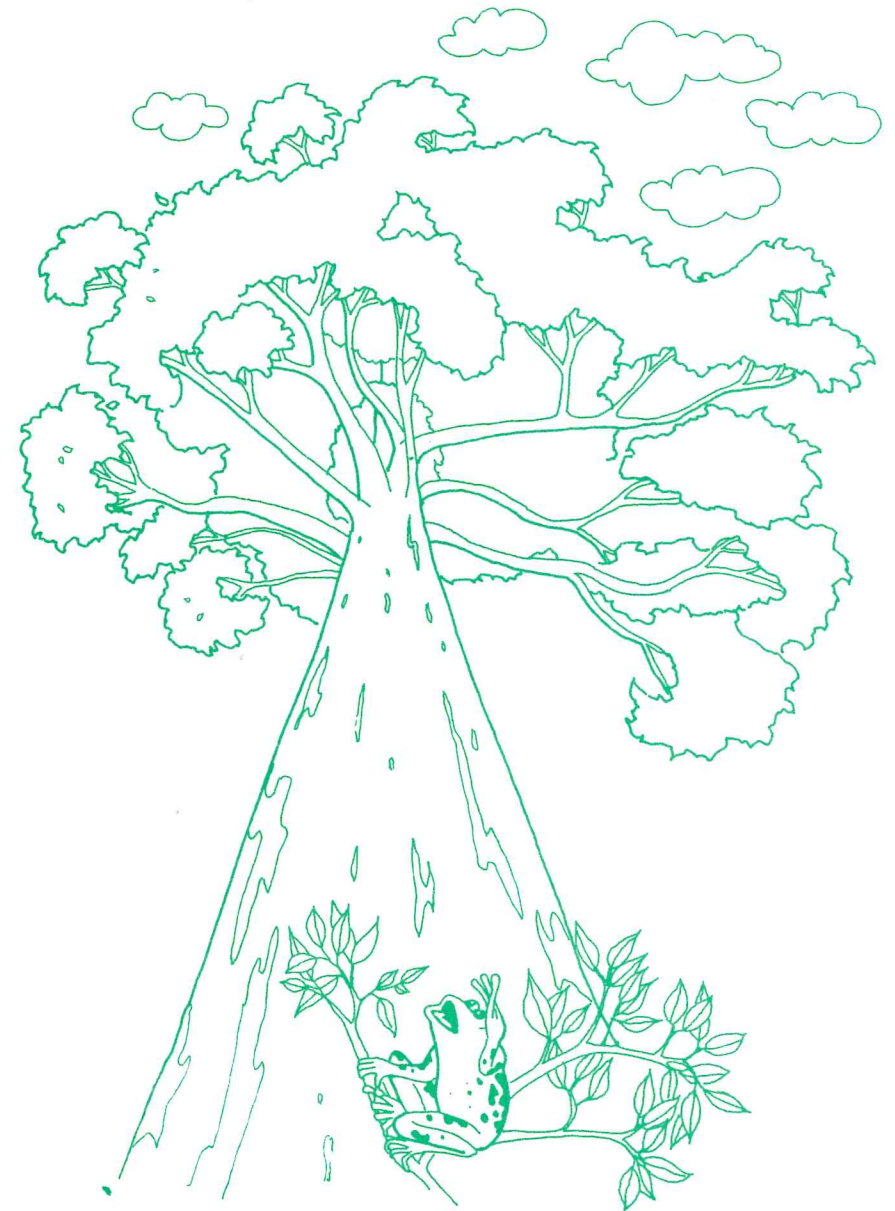


"Silly old toad," thought Goldie, "what would this old wrinkled thing know about happiness?" Just to be polite she asked him, "What may those be, old one?"

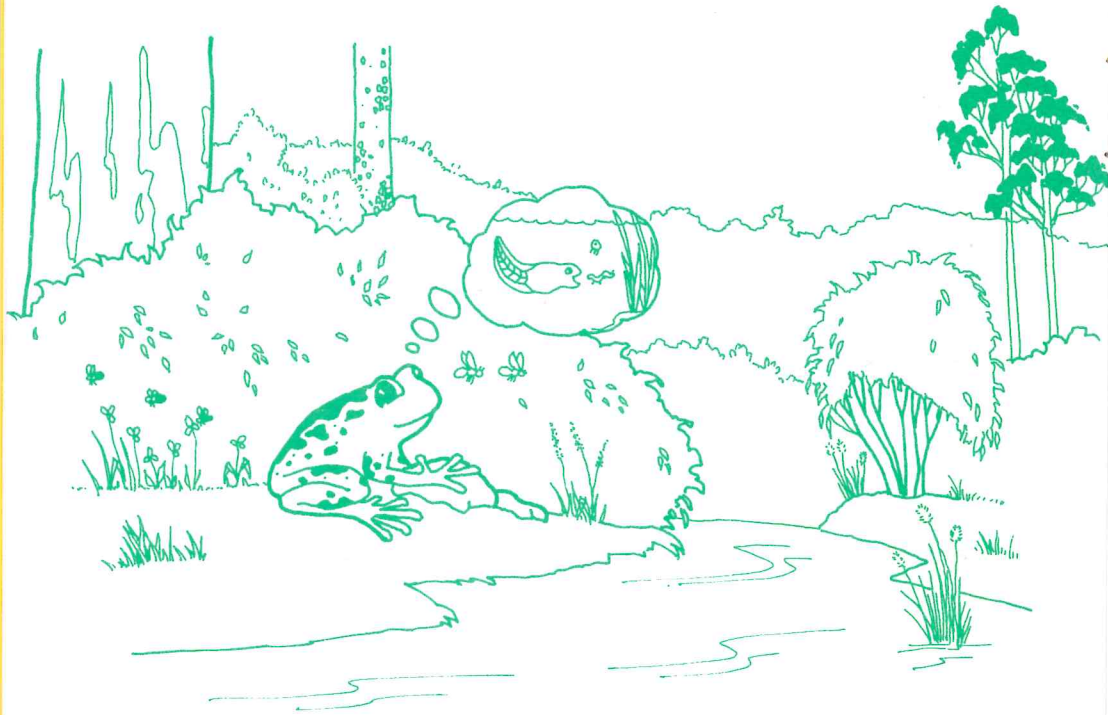
"Find the meaning of these letters and you will find happiness and contentment."

- O** is an empty letter — how you feel when your tummy is o so empty.
- H** is for house — a place to hide your head in.
- E** is for the extent of the space you can live in. It can't be too large, but if it's too small it's crowded.
- M** is for mate — someone to share the day's adventures with.

Goldie laughed at the funny old frog and hopped off to seek her fortune.



She hopped along examining the new world around her. The sights, smells and sounds were all so different to those in the pool where she had spent her tadpolehood. She found trees that were so tall she couldn't see the tops of them. Their fallen leaves smelled of eucalyptus as she jumped through them.

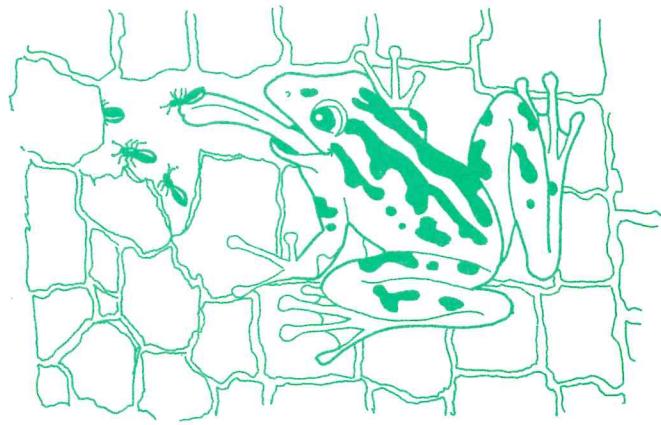


She also found smaller, bushier trees whose branches and leaves hung down like a weeping willow. These leaves, however, filled the air with their peppermint scent.

After a while she realised that she was feeling very hungry — but what did she eat here? In the pool she had eaten water plants and tiny water bugs that floated by. However, her appetite now was for things more tasty than weeds, and of course there were no water bugs floating by — or were there?



A buzzing insect flew above her. She leapt after it. It led her to a bush aglow with purple flowers like tiny butterflies around which hundreds of little insects were buzzing. They looked very tasty. Goldie licked her lips — and to her surprise her tongue flicked out and captured one of the flying insects! It was delicious. She tried to repeat the trick but the insects realized the danger and flew away in fright.



Unfortunately, the taste of a meal had only sharpened Goldie's appetite. She was very hungry. To try to find the flying bugs, she climbed up a nearby gum tree. The bark felt rough and crumbly to her toes and some of it fell away as she climbed. To Goldie's joy, there underneath was a hoard of bugs of all shapes and sizes. Her tongue worked quickly.

"My tummy's no longer empty like an 'O'," she said happily after her meal as she settled down on a branch to have a sleep.

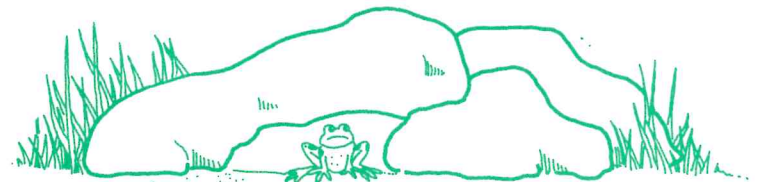


Suddenly she sat up. She had heard a rustle and some instinct warned her it was danger. She jumped down onto the ground; in the sand she saw tracks which only increased her terror. She frantically hopped away searching for a place to hide.



She seemed to hop for hours. At last she found a crack underneath a rock and squeezed through it into the cool darkness of a little cave. As she squatted there panting, she remembered the old bullfrog's second riddle: "H is for house and a place to hide your head."

"Well, two of his riddles have certainly been necessary for a happy life," she thought, "I wonder about the others."



Late the next day, Goldie was so hungry again that she knew she'd have to find some more food. She felt sure that yesterday's tree would still have lots of bugs but it was so far away from the safety of her hole. If she met any dangerous animals today she wanted to be close to her house so that she could escape them and hide.

Goldie looked carefully around and found a few trees close by with lots of bark bugs. Looking more closely she found termites in the rotting branches and insects amongst the leaves and flowers. She could have her fill of tasty insects and still be close to her shelter. As she settled down to sleep in her house that night she realized that she had solved another of the riddles. Her 'E' was the extent of the area between her food trees and her house. She felt quite content.



For a week or so Goldie was quite happy in her part of the forest. Then she started feeling very lonely. Although there were many birds and other animals for neighbours, there was no-one who really appreciated what she found and what she did in her frog-way.



Her loneliness continued until one day she met a handsome frog near the edge of her part of the forest. They could talk for hours, sharing their experiences. They often visited each other.



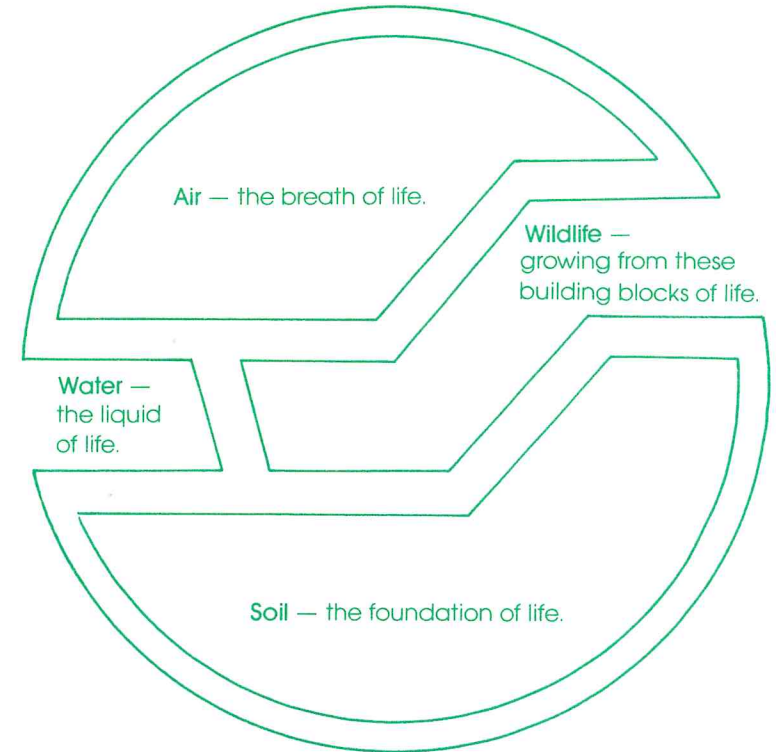
During one of these visits Goldie suddenly remembered the old bullfrog's riddles of long ago.

"I have found the 'M' of his fourth riddle. My friend is my mate. The old bullfrog was right. If I change the letters around they do spell happiness and contentment."

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The building blocks of all life on Earth are Sun, Air, Water and Soil.
See if you can find the CALM logo to know which colours represent the building blocks of life.

Sun — the source of all energy for life on Earth.



Air — the breath of life.

Wildlife —
growing from these
building blocks of life.

Water —
the liquid
of life.

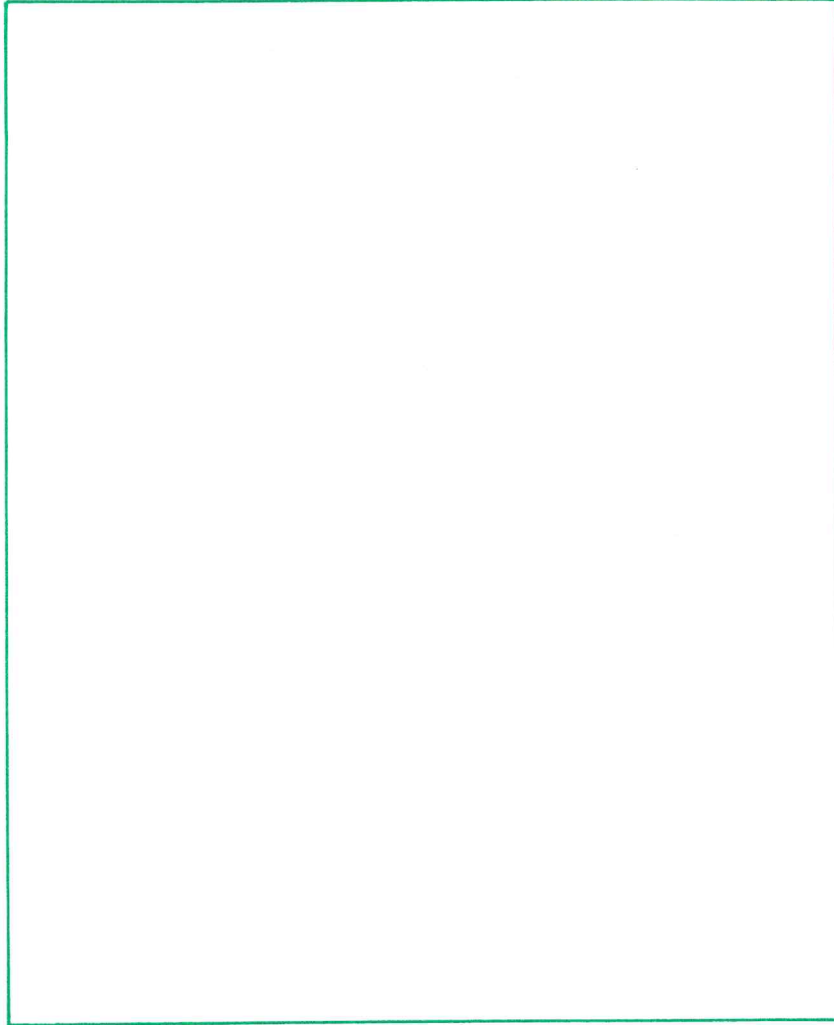
Soil — the foundation of life.

Planet Earth — home to humans, the caretakers of all life on Earth.

Conservation and Land Management . . . caring while sharing the natural environment with wildlife and people.

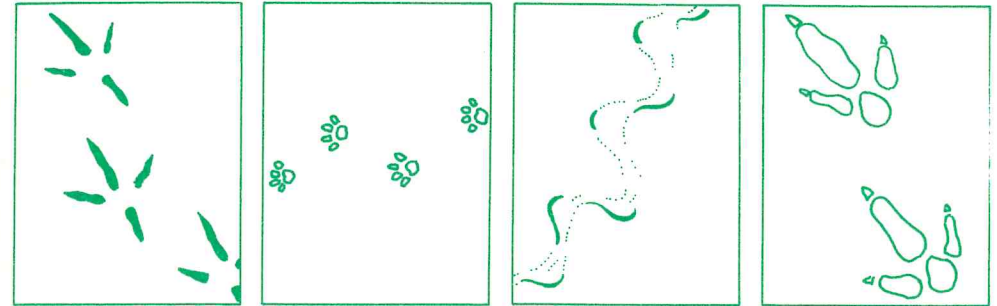
Forest Explorer Activities

Use this space to record the spots where Goldie may have been. You'll first have to mark in a few familiar spots such as your campsite, the picnic area, the toilets, the creek, "You are here" and the direction of the sun to get you started.



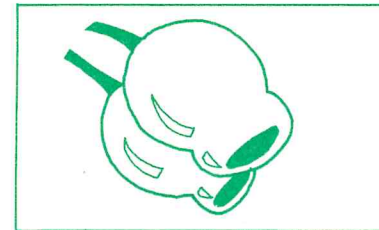
Keep an eye out for Goldie's lunch munch spot. If you find a tree with bugs under the rough bark mark it on your "explorer's map" above.

Look at these tracks and see if you can tell which ones would be frightening to Goldie. If you came across any of these in the forest mark their location on your map as "spooky spot".

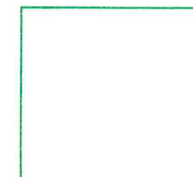
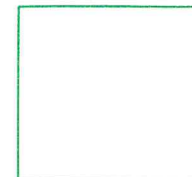
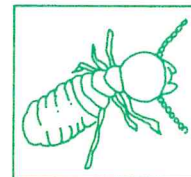


See if you can find Goldie's hiding place. Remember it must be big enough for Goldie to fit into. It must not be too big so that it is easy for a native cat, fox or carpet python to find and enter to Goldie's peril. Mark it on your explorer's map as "hide and seek".

Goldie found some insects on the trunk of a eucalyptus tree. If you want to find them too you'll first have to find a eucalyptus tree. You'll know one when you crush some leaves and smell that refreshing oil. To be sure it's the right tree look for the gum nuts on the ground. If you find any gum nuts you might like to sketch them in this space.



Goldie's insects were both under the bark and amongst the leaves and flowers. See if they are still there. You can mark this place "the supermarket tree" on your map. Perhaps you'd like to sketch in these spaces a drawing of the insects you discover.





Department of Conservation and Land Management, W.A.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management not only manages public lands and wildlife, but seeks to promote community interest in the natural environment.

The "explorer" series of publications is aimed at encouraging children to experience nature, while developing an understanding of the relationship between living things and their environment.