

The Stygofauna



A Story for Children

By

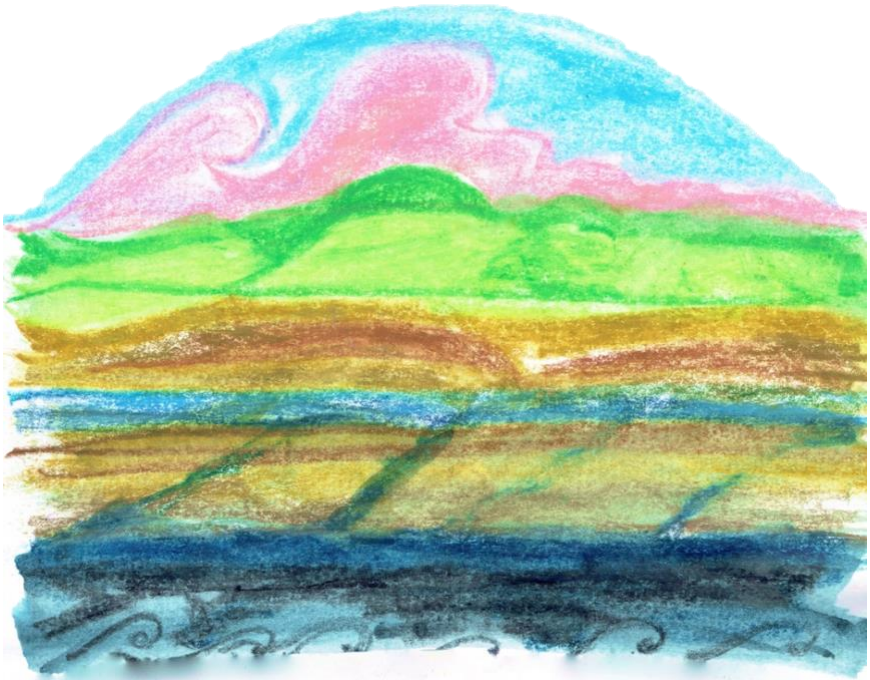
R.Dale Dengage

Stygofauna are amazing tiny creatures which play an important role in keeping ground water trickling into springs, waterholes, bores and wells, clean and safe to use. Without them many other creatures including humans, would find it harder to survive. Meanwhile many human activities put them at risk.

This story is a celebration of stygofauna and their protection over many thousands of years by First Nations people and the cultural values they place on water and country.

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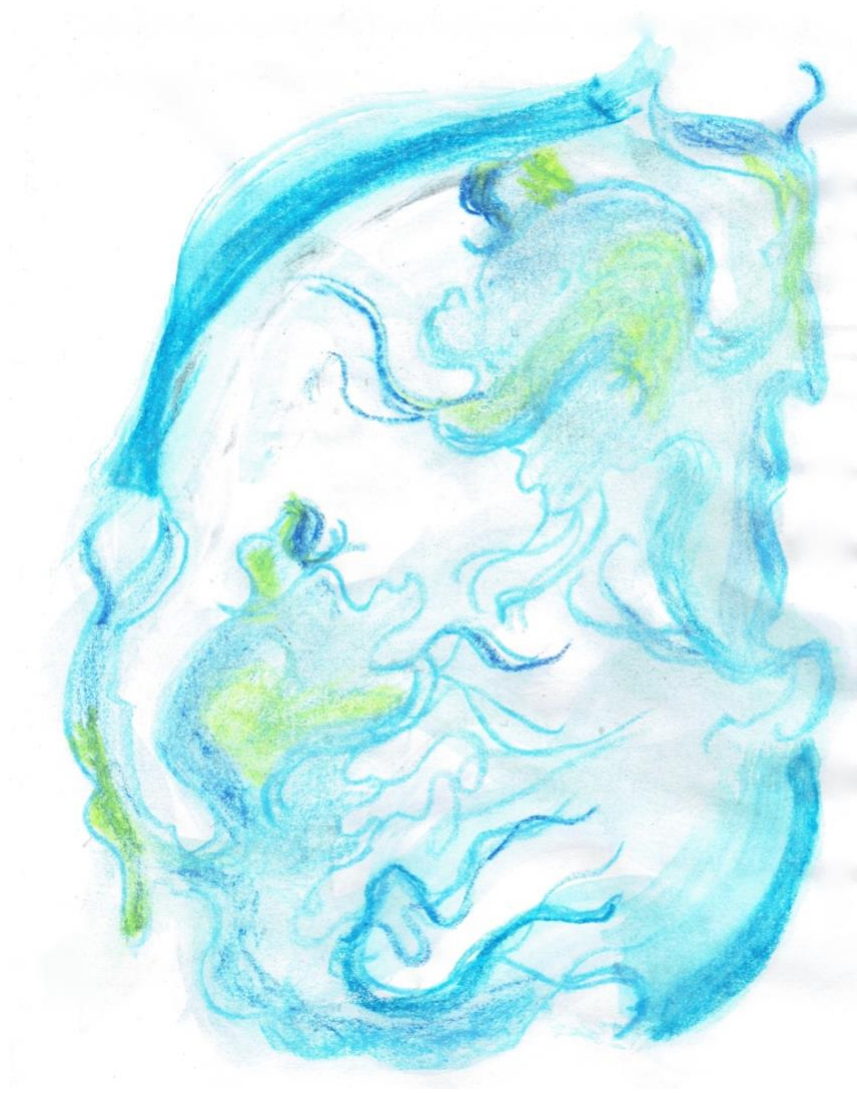
Once upon a time, long before our memories began, there dwelt upon earth ancient creatures called stygofauna. Actually they lived below the land in an aquifer.



This is where the Stygo family lived. There were six children in this Stygo family.

They were so small that they could wander among grains of sand, cleaning the aquifers.

The twins were called Stephanie and Stephan. They looked alike, however, their pale colour and shape changed in the water.





There was Stella and Stanislau but no one knew how old they were even though their long lanky limbs looked like strands of Nanna's white hair.



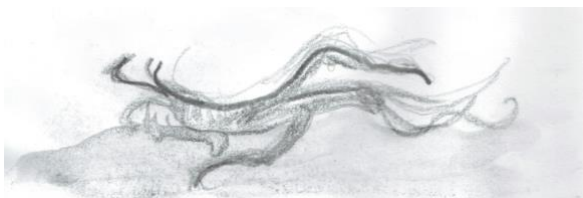
Then there was Staci and Stewart, who were almost transparent. You could see through them to the other side. Although you really could not see anything in the dark.



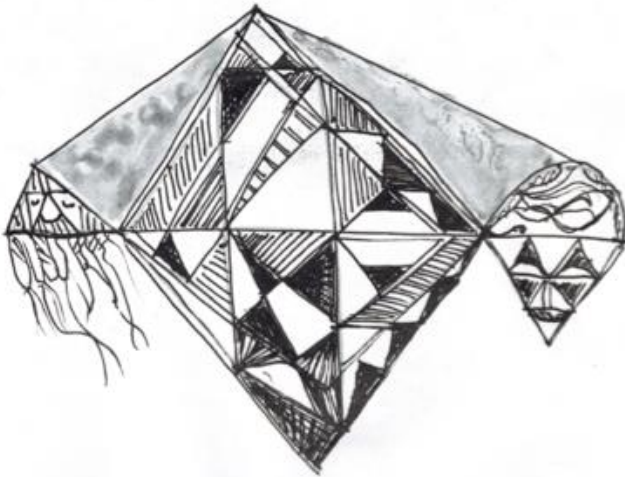
They were all good swimmers, even though they were blind.

They were good swimmers because they had always lived in water that had moved from the ground through rocks into the aquifer.

They were blind because it was so dark below the rocks, that they could not see anything. However, they were not afraid.



Past generations had adapted and could navigate through water filled caves. Indeed the Stygofauna had changed over a long time, so the Stygos could swim safely in the dark water.



Life flowed on peacefully until *fracking!*



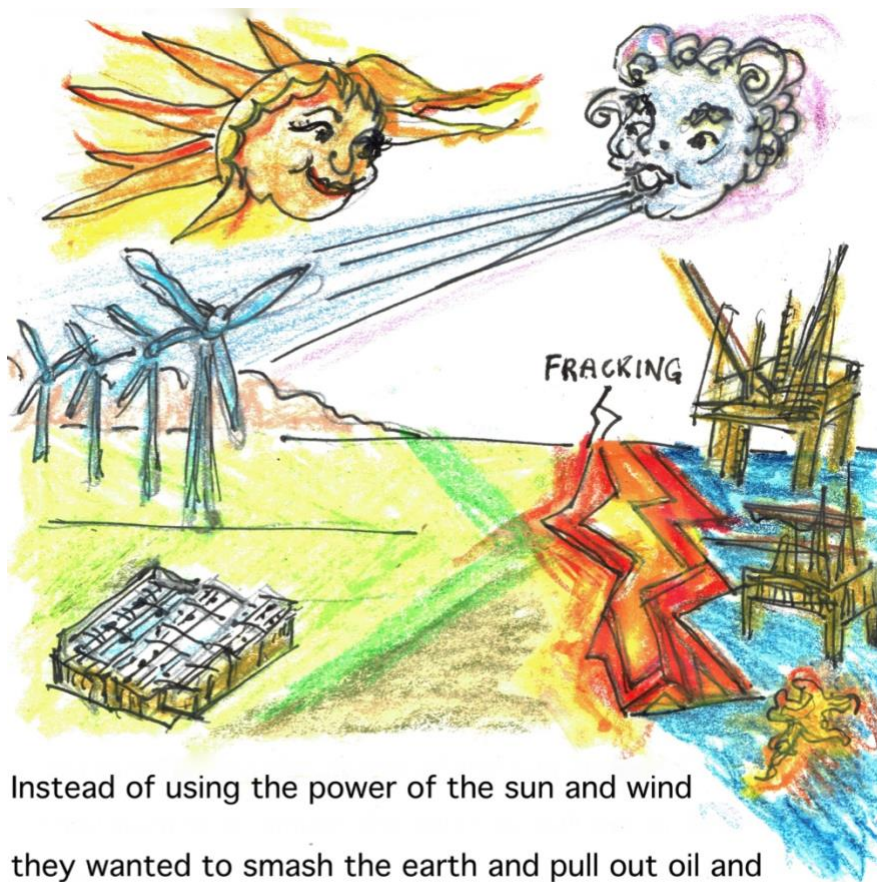


Above ground were other life forms who were often too greedy. They were lazy about learning to use the natural power of the sun and wind to generate the energy used to light their houses and move them from one place to another.

Instead they wanted to go on disturbing mother Earth. These life forms were called 'People'.



These people decided to break the layers of rocks and drill through coal seams with ...

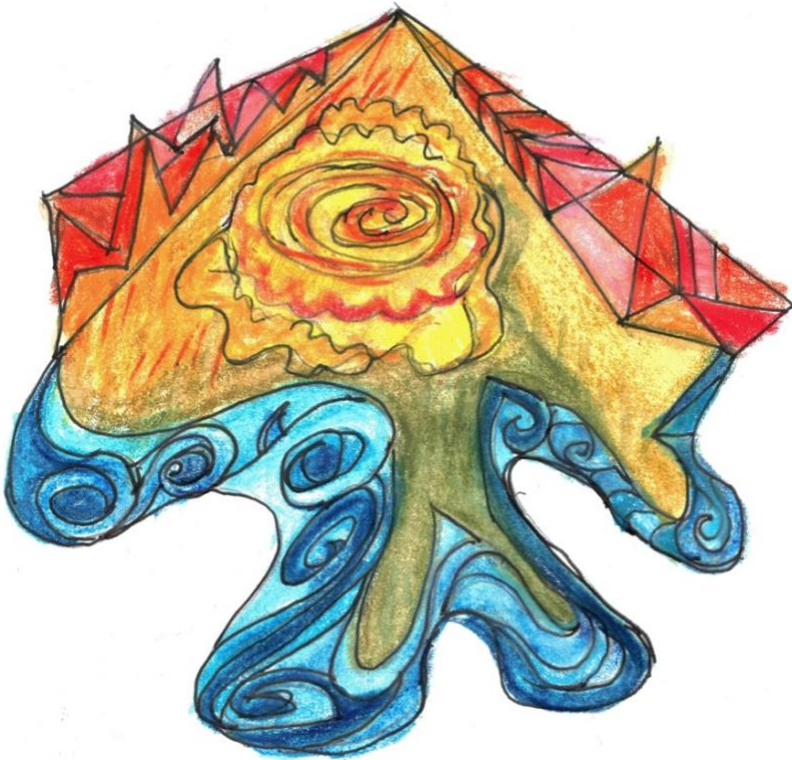


Instead of using the power of the sun and wind they wanted to smash the earth and pull out oil and gas. This disturbed the water flow and the Stygo family.



As the rocks around the six children began to crack and shake, the water swirled in unusual patterns.

Sometimes the process of drilling went wrong. The cracked and broken wells leaked. This caused contamination, which polluted the water supplies. This could mean death for the Stygo family.



Fortunately, other people decided this fracking process was not safe and should be stopped.

They wanted a future where all children could live in a healthy environment and would feel safe.



If these people can stop the fracking process then the six little children in the Stygo family will be safe and keep the aquifers clean.

Then life in the aquifer will flow peacefully again.



Author's Note:

This booklet is the result of many people's concern about the future of our world and especially the concern about the impact of fracking on the environment.

I would like to thank the following people for their comments and encouragement to me. They helped me to learn more about, to write, design and illustrate the story about stygofauna: Elizabeth and Luce Morley, Marie and Peteris Grislis, Ann and Arthur Crutchfield, Kerith Powers, and the Knitting Nannas.

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