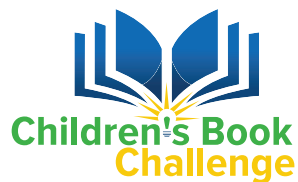


Lightbulb



By: Zephan Hunter



Lightbulb, by Zephhan Hunter, was selected as the winner of the 2018 Children's Book Challenge, sponsored by EnlightenSC—an educational initiative of The Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina. The competition

challenges fifth-grade students to write and illustrate stories that focus on how electricity has impacted their lives, communities and the history of our state.

South Carolina's electric cooperatives have been committed to powering rural communities since 1938. Since their founding, the Seven Cooperative Principles have included a commitment to education, concern for their communities, and attention to the future of young people. Those same ideals guide co-ops today. By inspiring students to learn about the history of electricity in our state, S.C.'s electric co-ops hope to spark a passion for critical thinking in the minds of tomorrow's energy leaders.



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Mrs. Whittemore's 2017-18 fifth-grade class
East End Elementary School, Easley, S.C.

Tim was a squirrel. He lived in a tall, hollow, dead tree. It was eight o'clock at the moment and he sat on his bench, eating an acorn, and watching the sunset. He didn't always enjoy the evening in his little tree house, it was just too dark. Of course he could light a candle, but that wasn't much help, and the fire could burn down his tree!





It was now dark and all was silent. Not a sound was to be heard. And then he heard it! A loud, drawn-out rumble in the distance, then — **FLASH! BOOM!** Lightning. It was the most amazing and most frightening thing he had ever seen. He just loved the way it zipped out of the sky like a knight unsheathing his sword. But then he thought of an idea. He saw the light the lightning gave off — like some sort of special fire — and then he thought, what if he could have easy access to that power! No more dark nights full of bumping around!



But then he thought, how could he do it? He didn't know how to share it with the public, or if he even should. "Only the special, rich, fancy places have electricity!" Tim thought, "If only everyone could have it for free." He just decided to put that dream away for a while and hope someone braver than him had a similar idea.





Tim awoke the next morning and sat down at his table for a nice meal of toasted pecans and raisins drizzled with some freshly-made orange dressing. His electricity idea was still fresh in his mind and kept following him no matter how hard he tried to get rid of it. When he was finished eating, he decided he was going to go for a walk around town.

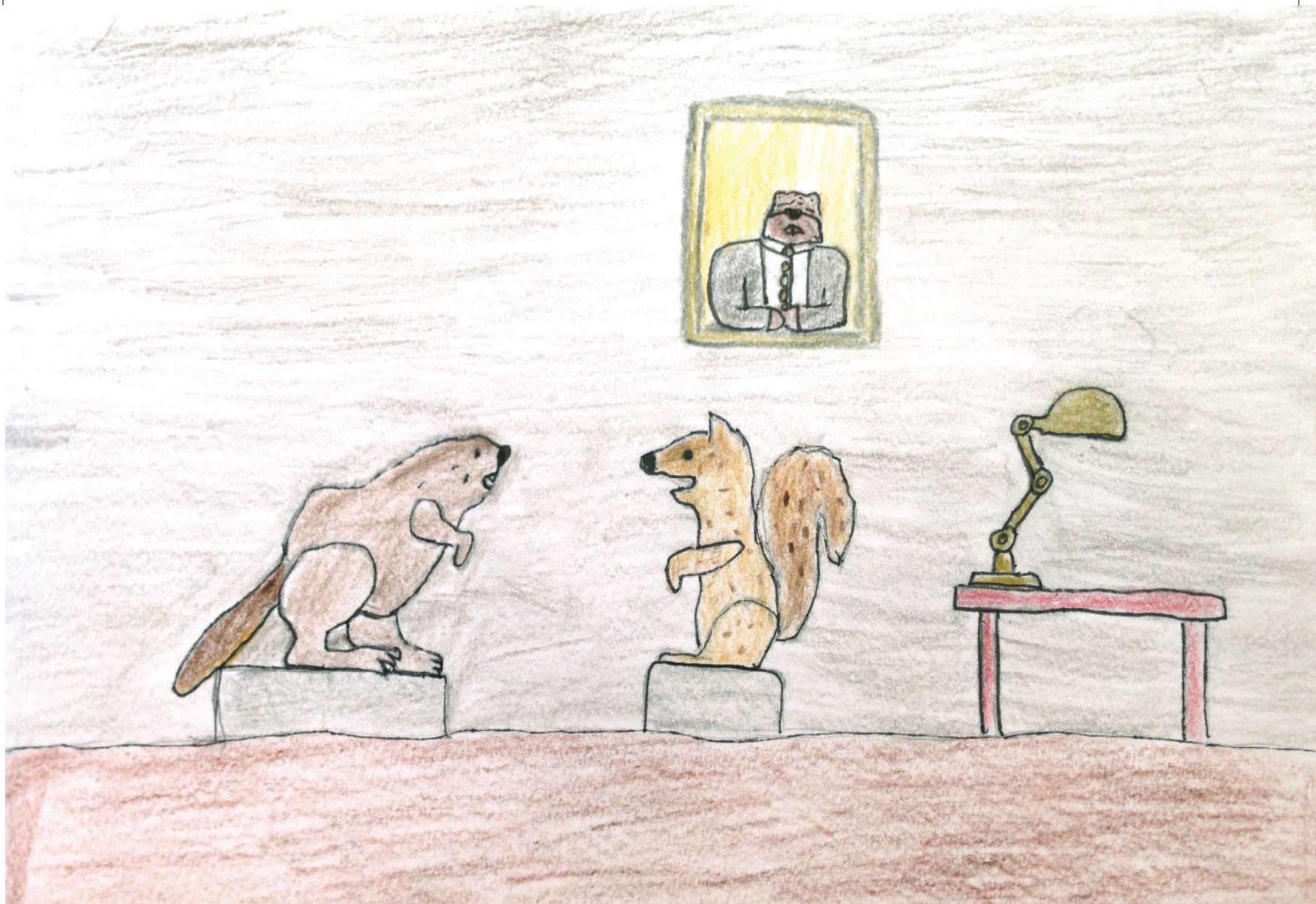




While he strolled in the square, he saw the leader of the forest, Mr. Ringtail, a wise, old raccoon, talking to a crowd of animals. “I have just created a new industry called the Rural Electrification Industry that I think you all will really like,” he announced. “All you have to do is pay five forest tokens and you will be a member. You will be provided with your own electricity!” Tim was speechless. This was exactly the thing he had been waiting for!



He immediately pulled five coins out of his pocket, thanked Mr. Ringtail, and ran to his friend Birch, the beaver, to tell him the good news. Birch was almost as excited as Tim, and they talked about the fun things they would soon be able to do inside together. They chatted all day long about playing games, throwing parties, and reading books inside their cozy little homes. Tim spent the night over at Birch's, dreaming about light and electricity.



In the morning, they wolfed down breakfast and headed outside for their new work. In the little stone square at the center of the forest, a large crowd of creatures and beasts of all sizes whispered amongst themselves about electricity and energy. In the center of them all stood a thin and tall jackrabbit wearing a hard yellow helmet. To Tim, that was a sign that hard work was coming down the road.





“Listen up!” hollered the young hare, clapping his hands. “In this new community you all have joined, you have to work your own electricity. This means you must set up some power lines. It’s also a non-profit. A non-profit is all about community and working together. So we’re not about money, we’re about teamwork. We are calling this an Electric Cooperative. Today we will be setting up the first power lines.”



Tim and the other animals followed the rabbit to a big truck and hopped in. They slowly drove down the bumpy road. Tim noticed that even the wolf, who was known to terrorize the smaller animals, was on everyone's side on this one. All animals desired electricity. Tim wasn't alone.

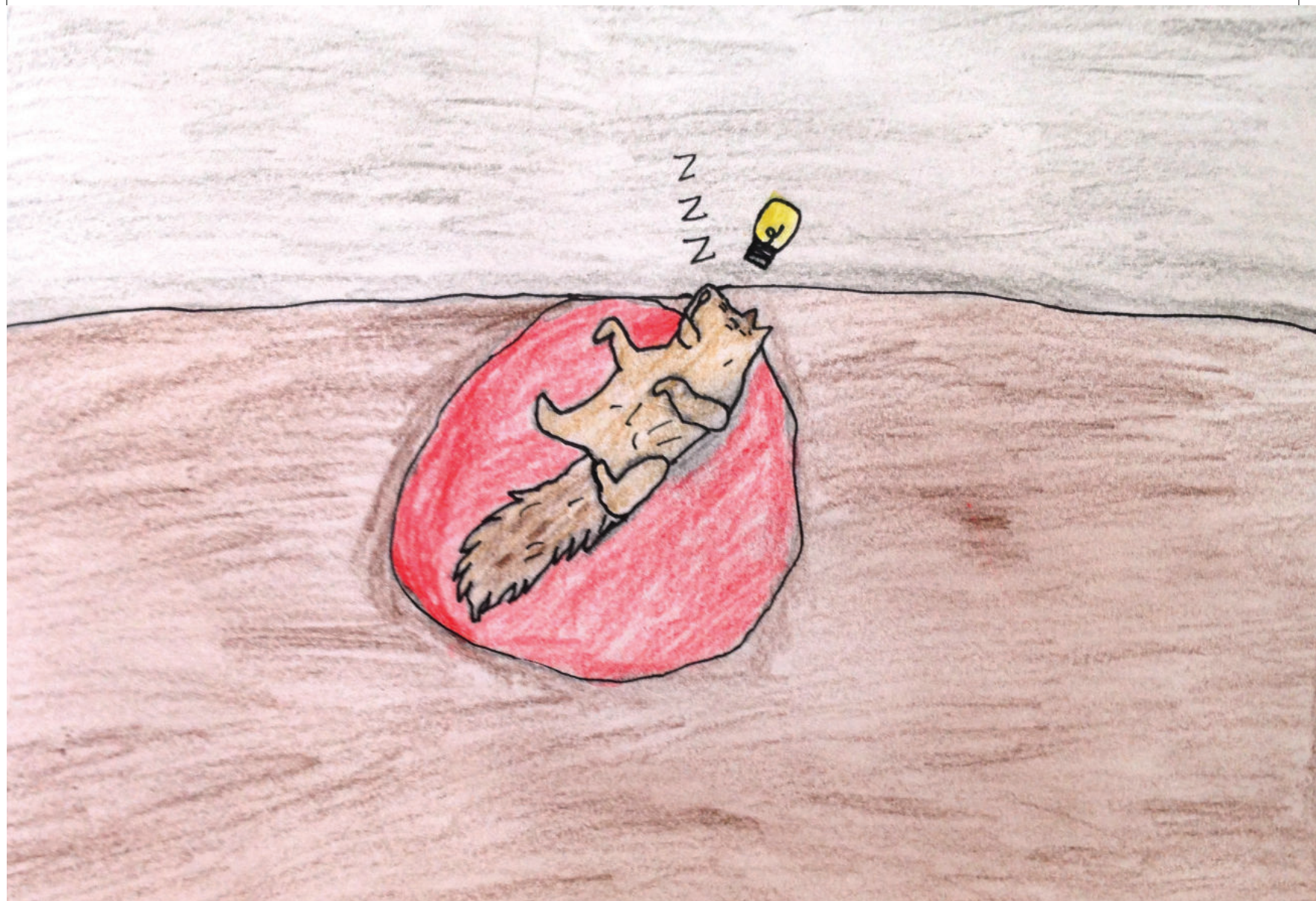




When they arrived, Tim and the other animals unloaded themselves out of the truck. The truck was full of tall metal and wood poles. By using hand signals, they were able to direct each other where and when to dig the hole, place the pole, and make the pole's supports. Once the utility pole was placed, Tim, using his squirrel skills, climbed the pole, stopping frequently to drill holes, place bolts, and, at the top, connect the wires.



They did that process most of the day, and in the end, they had their very own first pair of power line poles. At the end of the day, Tim thought about all his new friends, new job, and new electricity. He soon learned that to get his prize — his electricity — he was gonna have to work his bushy tail. When Tim arrived home, he plopped down on his bed, and was asleep before his head hit the pillow. But while he slept, he dreamt of lightbulbs.







enlightensc.org | ecsc.org



Zephan Hunter is a fifth grader at East End Elementary. He lives in Easley, South Carolina, with his Mom, Dad, brother and two dogs. He enjoys reading, making short films, and cooking for his family.