



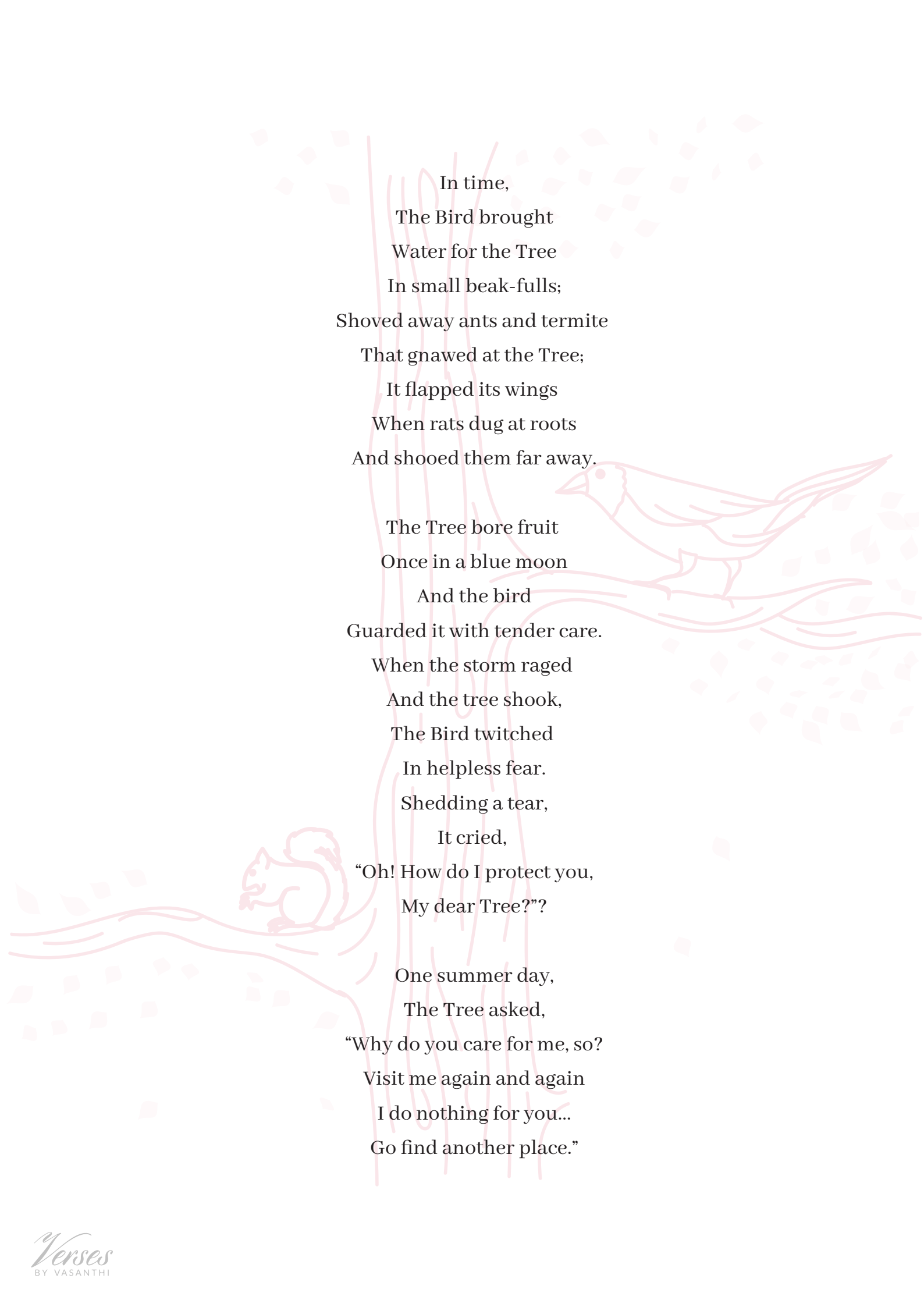
Refuge

Vasanthi Vasudev

A little Bird
Visited every day, a tree,
Dense...
Full of leaves and branches
That had grown with time.

The Tree was all alone
Single in a treeless landscape
And none lived in the Tree ...
Not any bird, not any creature;
Squirrels ran up and down
But none lived there.
The Tree never asked why.






In time,
The Bird brought
Water for the Tree
In small beak-fulls;
Shoved away ants and termite
That gnawed at the Tree;
It flapped its wings
When rats dug at roots
And shooed them far away.

The Tree bore fruit
Once in a blue moon
And the bird
Guarded it with tender care.

When the storm raged
And the tree shook,
The Bird twitched
In helpless fear.
Shedding a tear,
It cried,

“Oh! How do I protect you,
My dear Tree?”?

One summer day,
The Tree asked,
“Why do you care for me, so?
Visit me again and again
I do nothing for you...
Go find another place.”



The Bird smiled sadly,
And said :
“What more do you have to do?
You shield me
From heat of lust,
From gusts of greed,
From sky of loneliness,
From rains of fear,
You give me Peace
And strength to live!
What else is there to do?
What more is there to find?
Who else is there seek?
I have come to you, to stay
And want nowhere to go!”

Verses
BY VASANTHI