

Stories in pictures

A FOODLESS THOUGHT

VIDYA AND RAJARAM SHARMA



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Online

A PARTNERSHIP FOR TEACHERS, CHILDREN AND EDUCATION



A story photographed in 2022 at Hadinaru lake of Mysore district.

Photographs in this book may not show the actual size of birds.



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That day, like every other day,
young Little Cormorant
rose with the rising Sun.
He was hungry.
Very hungry!



Yearning for a meal, the little black one readied himself to seek the waters of a familiar lake or pond, or even an open drain or a river bend, teeming with the choicest of fish; the only food he relished.

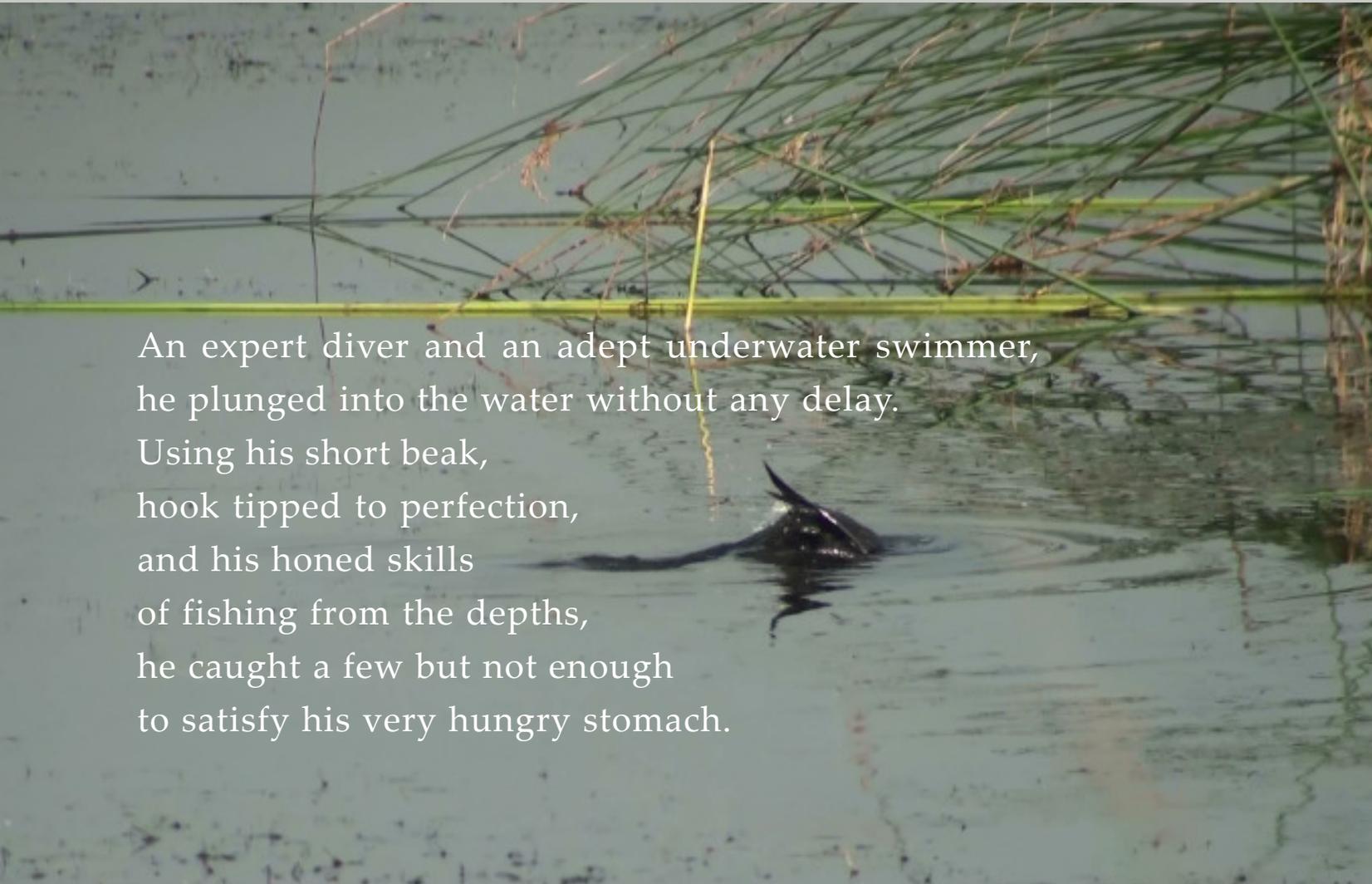
They set off together,
he and his co-roosters.
All from the same
bare branched tree.







Breaking away from the flock, he headed straight to Lake Hadinaru, a lake large and full, in the village of Hadinaru.



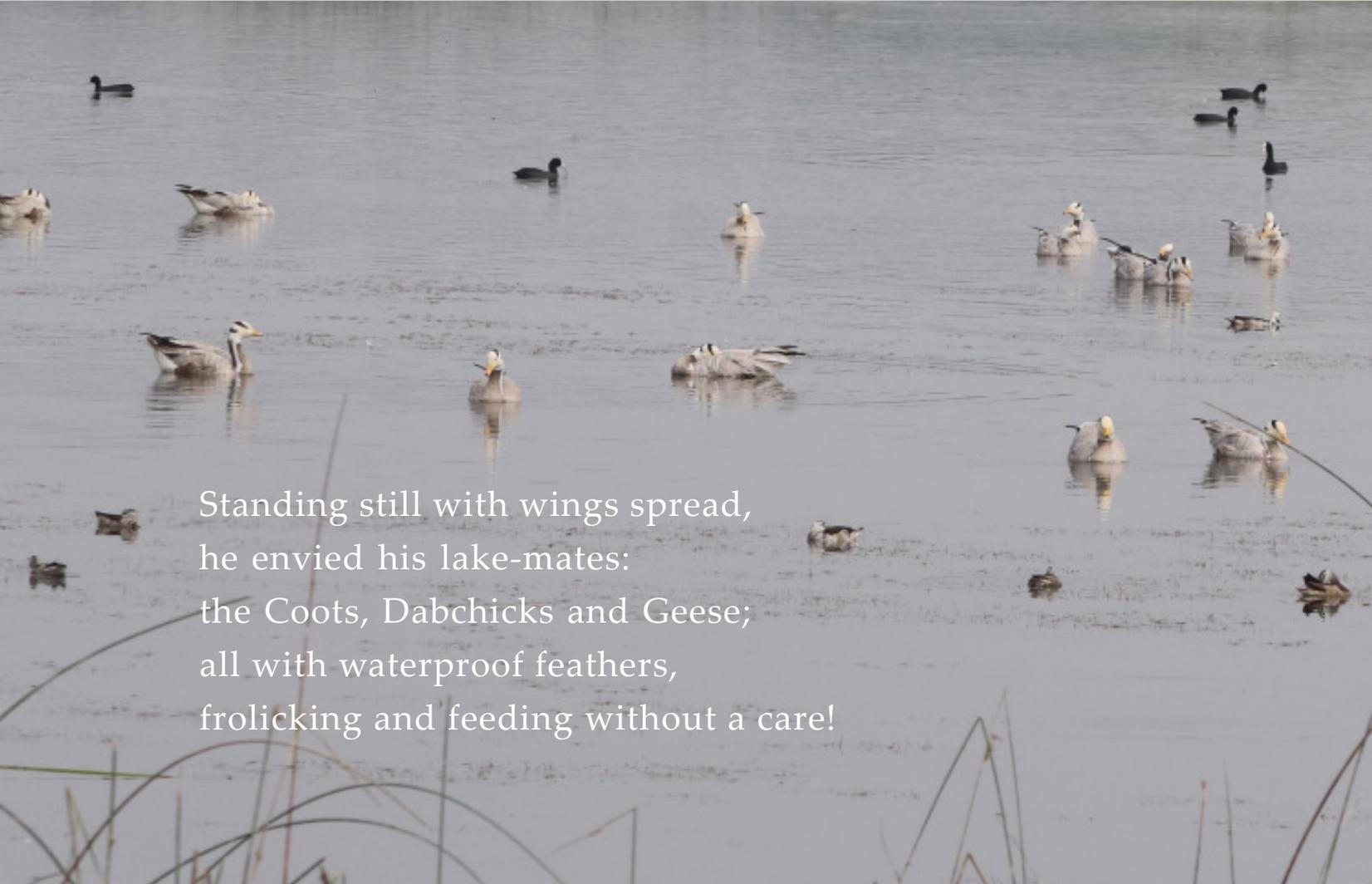
An expert diver and an adept underwater swimmer,
he plunged into the water without any delay.
Using his short beak,
hook tipped to perfection,
and his honed skills
of fishing from the depths,
he caught a few but not enough
to satisfy his very hungry stomach.

A cormorant is swimming in a body of water, surrounded by tall reeds. The bird is dark-colored with a white patch on its neck. The water is calm, reflecting the reeds and the bird. The scene is set in a natural, marshy environment.

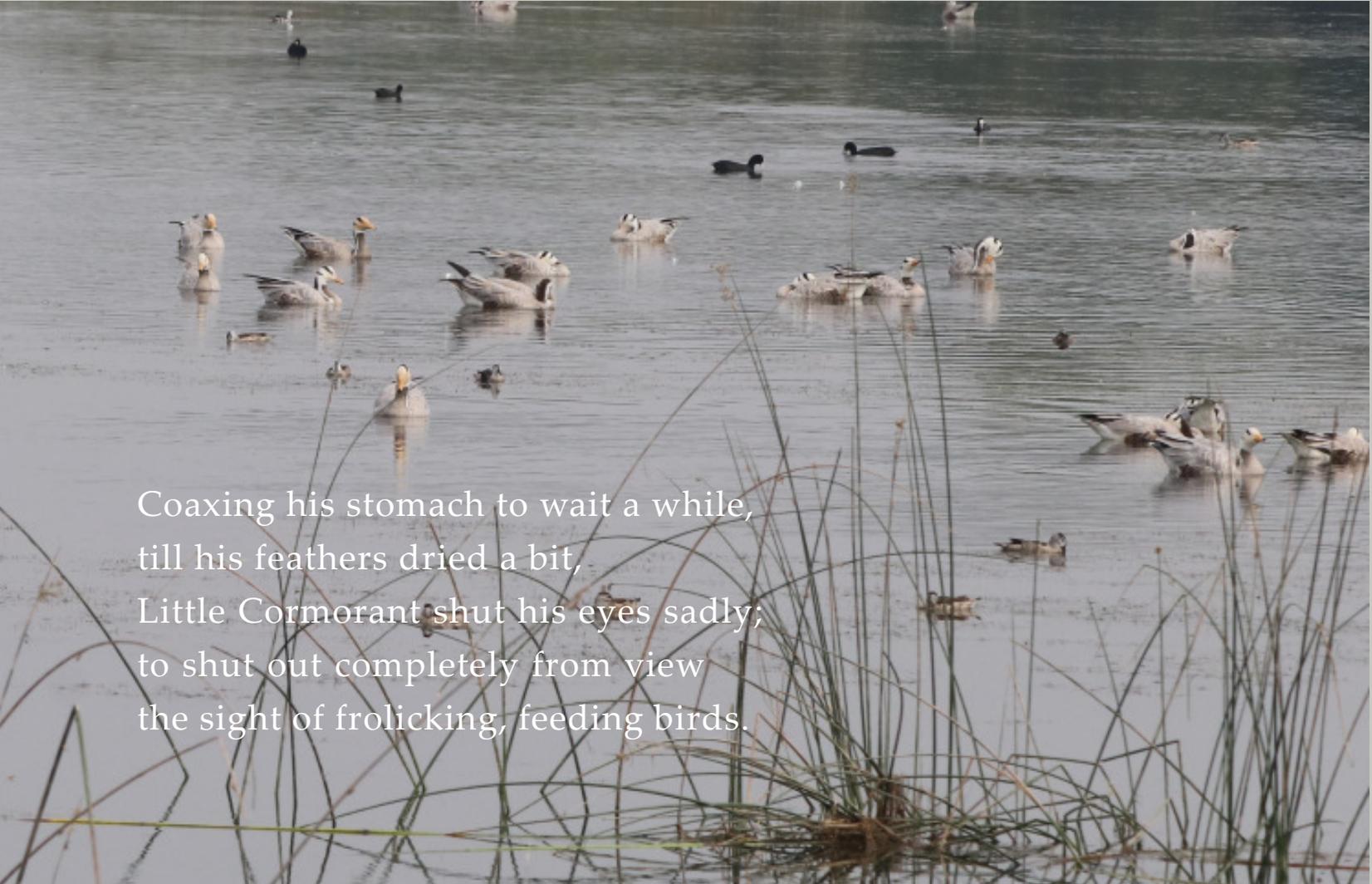
The plunge wet his feathers
and wet feathers made him heavy.

Not wanting to risk drowning, he abandoned the fish and forced himself out, onto the nearest dry patch, safe but soggy wet!



A wide shot of a pond with numerous ducks and geese. Some are swimming with wings spread, while others are resting. The water is calm, reflecting the birds. In the foreground, there are some reeds and grasses.

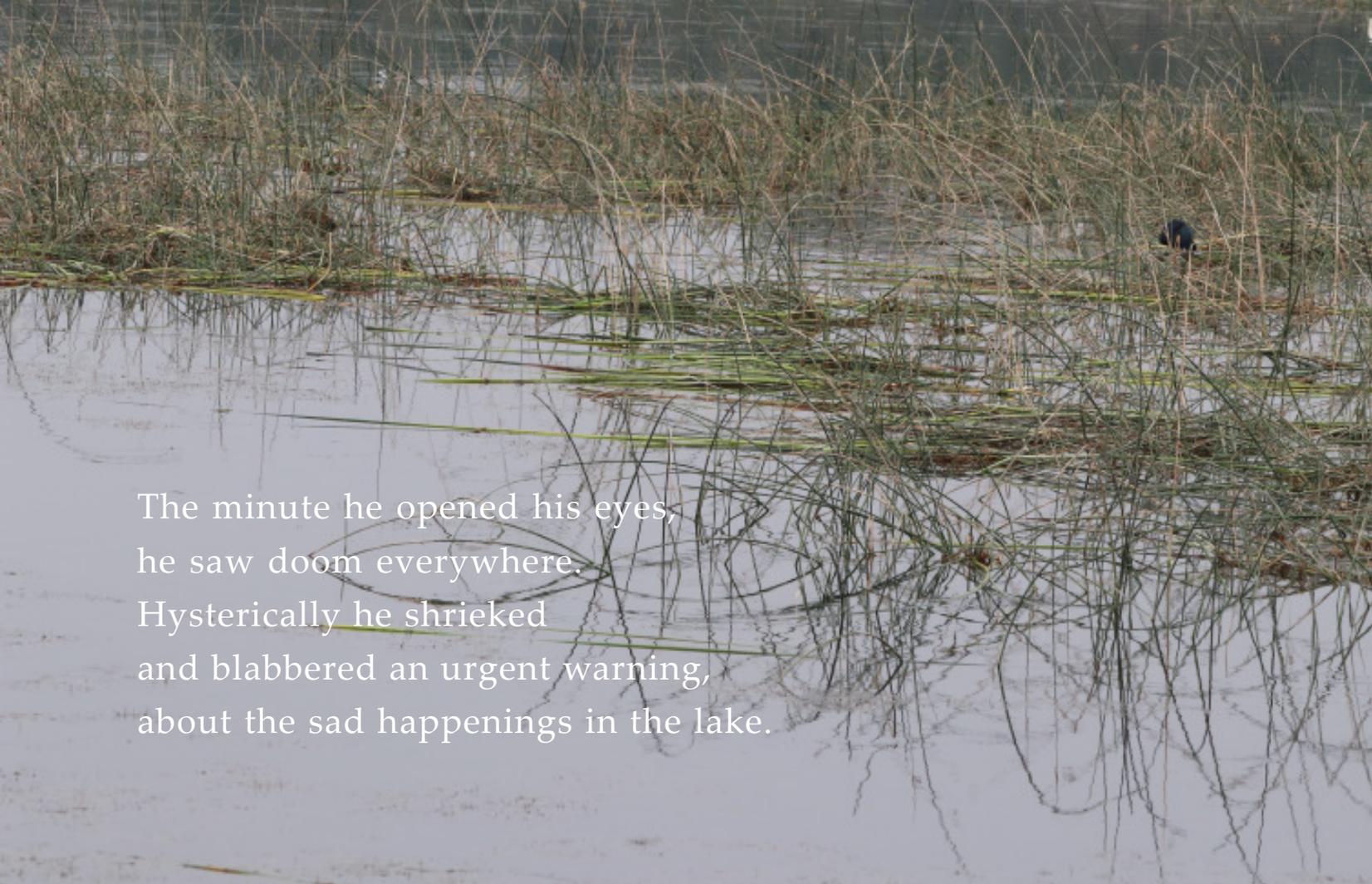
Standing still with wings spread,
he envied his lake-mates:
the Coots, Dabchicks and Geese;
all with waterproof feathers,
frolicking and feeding without a care!

A photograph of a pond with many ducks and a small cormorant. The ducks are of various breeds, including mallards and greylags, and are scattered across the water. Some are swimming, while others are partially obscured by tall, thin reeds in the foreground. The water is calm, reflecting the sky and the birds. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

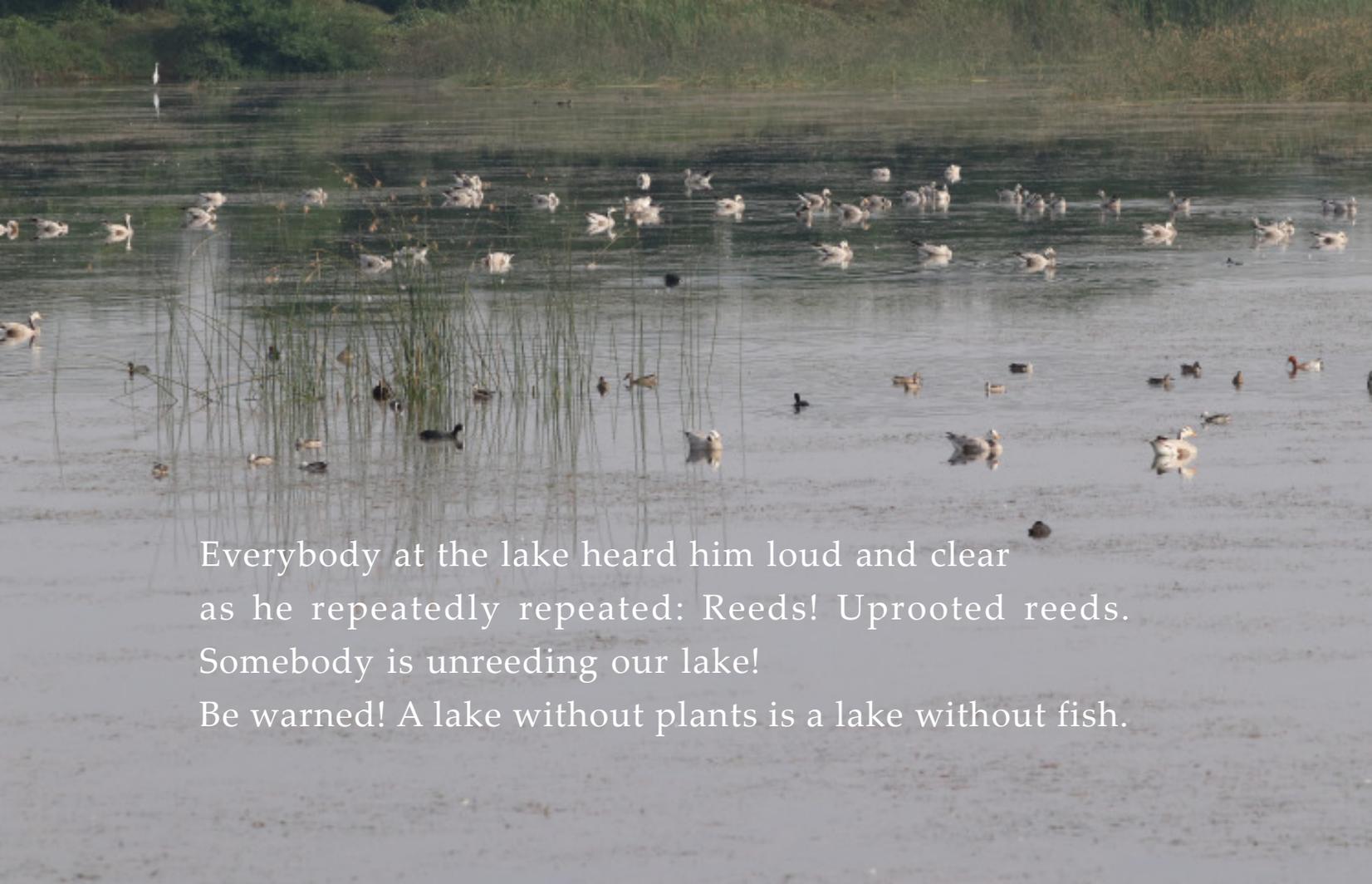
Coaxing his stomach to wait a while,
till his feathers dried a bit,
Little Cormorant shut his eyes sadly;
to shut out completely from view
the sight of frolicking, feeding birds.

Drifting off to sleep
he nodded his head till his beak
dipped down to his chest
but woke up with a jolt!
Jolted rather rudely
by a dream very strange.





The minute he opened his eyes,
he saw doom everywhere.
Hysterically he shrieked
and blabbered an urgent warning,
about the sad happenings in the lake.



Everybody at the lake heard him loud and clear
as he repeatedly repeated: Reeds! Uprooted reeds.
Somebody is unreeing our lake!
Be warned! A lake without plants is a lake without fish.

The repeated warnings and the uprooted reeds put a scare in one and all. Some paused to think, others discussed and probed but all concluded soon; that Lake Hadinaru was indeed doomed!



Quiet!

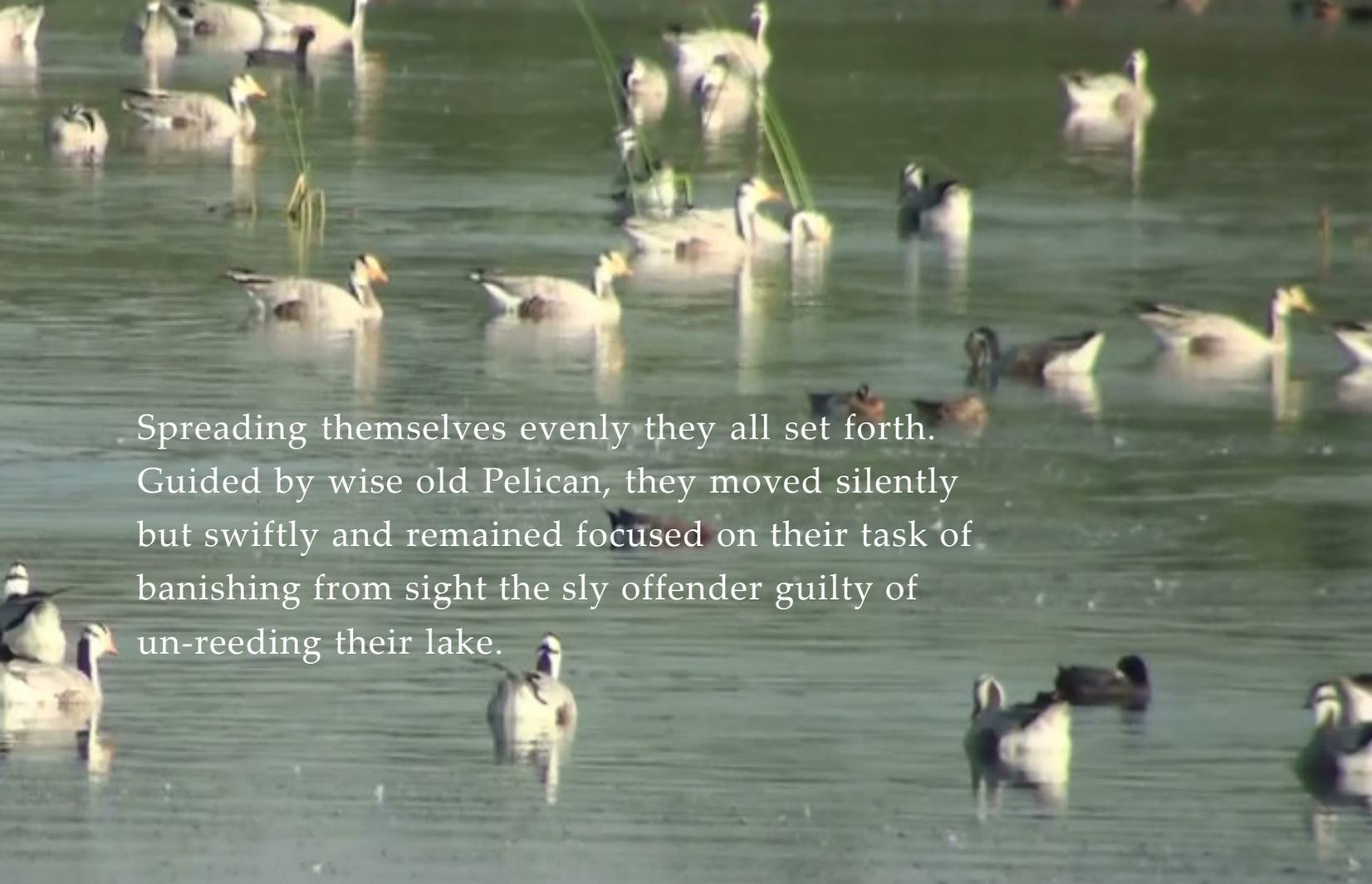
Ordered Spot-billed Pelican.

She had seen something from afar.

A movement in the reeds
in the eastern corner of the lake.



She drew up a plan quickly
to get to the very bottom of
the crime being committed
under their very noses.

A large group of ducks and geese are swimming in a lake. The water is dark green and reflects the sky. The birds are scattered across the frame, some in the foreground and some in the background. They appear to be engaged in a task, possibly related to reeding the lake as mentioned in the text. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, serif font.

Spreading themselves evenly they all set forth.
Guided by wise old Pelican, they moved silently
but swiftly and remained focused on their task of
banishing from sight the sly offender guilty of
un-reeding their lake.



As they neared they stopped and watched, the struggles of a red beak unearthing a simple reed; the expertise of long pink toes balancing the removed reed; the deftness of the same beak extracting the white pulpy insides...



Recognizing a friend they called out,
Oh! It's Purple Moorhen, a bird of the swamps.
Fear not, they said, for every reed pulled out,
ten more will the lake nourish!
Fear not, they said, he is one of us,
living on a meal bestowed by the lake.







The mystery solved, they returned satisfied and begged Little Cormorant to throw away imagined fears. A pair or two of Moorhens, they said, or all creatures living off the lake, can in no way be a threat to the large Lake Hadinaru.

Little Cormorant felt silly for dreaming a silly dream,
in which he found himself in a plant-less fish-less lake.
And there he had searched frantically for food not to
be found.



Apologizing sheepishly, he said: It's all my fault.
A hungry stomach cooked up a story and a sleepy
mind accepted it willingly!

Never again will I permit, he promised,
a hungry stomach to rule the mind!





Lake Hadinaru is a large waterbody near Mysore and is home to many local birds. It is also a hotspot for migratory birds.



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