

THANKSGIVING  
·IN THE·  
WOODS

By Phyllis Alsdurf

Illustrations by Jenny Løvlie



When fall winds blow cold  
and jack-o-lanterns lose their smiles,  
when branches lie bare,  
and corn stalks rustle in the wind,



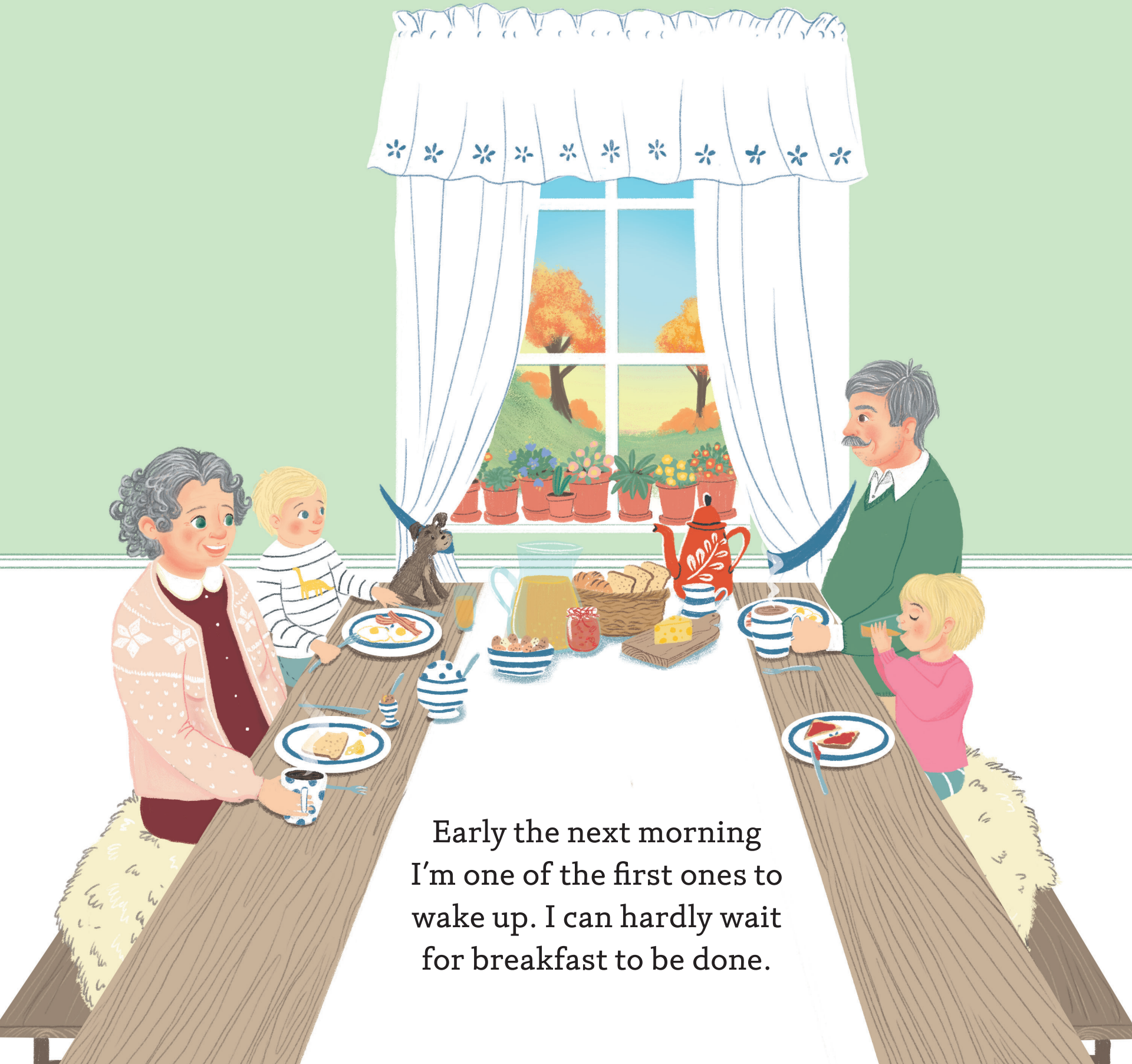
that's when it's time for  
Thanksgiving in the Woods.



Daddy and Grandpa unload long wooden planks for tables and bales of straw for us to sit on.



Uncle Charlie makes a bonfire  
while neighbors hoist a tarp over branches.  
Everyone's rushing to get ready for  
Thanksgiving in the Woods.



Early the next morning  
I'm one of the first ones to  
wake up. I can hardly wait  
for breakfast to be done.



While grown-ups laugh and talk,  
kids pull on sweaters and boots.  
We want to get there first for  
Thanksgiving in the Woods.

At one o'clock Grandma rings her special bell.  
We form a huge circle and sing:  
*'Tis the gift to be simple, 'Tis the gift to be free.*  
People talk for a long time about being thankful.







Brownie gets very  
hungry waiting  
until it's time to  
start Thanksgiving  
in the Woods.

Grown-ups are playing fiddles,  
banjos, and drums and singing songs  
that everyone knows.



Soon Daddy joins in on his guitar,  
and I make up a tune of my own on my  
recorder — my way of celebrating  
Thanksgiving in the Woods.



An illustration of three children sitting on a wooden log around a bonfire at night. The child on the left is a Black boy wearing a blue jacket and a red and yellow striped beanie. The child in the middle is a boy with brown hair wearing a green beanie and a brown jacket with a yellow and brown striped scarf. The child on the right is a girl with red hair wearing a yellow jacket and orange boots. They are all smiling and holding sticks with marshmallows over the fire. A dog is curled up on the ground near the fire. In the background, there are trees and other people sitting around the fire. The scene is lit by the warm glow of the bonfire and string lights hanging from the trees.

We stand around the bonfire,  
warming up on both sides.



Grandma passes out marshmallows,  
and I take two to roast toasty and brown—  
one of my favorite parts about  
Thanksgiving in the Woods.

# Simple Gifts

Joseph Brackett, 1848  
a Shaker from Maine



'Tis the gift to be sim-ple, 'tis the gift to be free, 'tis the gift to come down



where you ought to be; and when you find your-self in the place just right, 'twill



be in the val - ley of love and de-light. When true sim -



pli - ci - ty is gained, to bow and to bend, we shan't be a-shamed; to



turn, turn will be our de-light, 'til by turn - ing, turn - ing we come 'round right.

**Phyllis Alsdurf** grew up on a Southern Minnesota dairy farm where one of her chores was to run down the lane and bring the cows up to the barn for milking. In addition to *Thanksgiving in the Woods*, she is the author of *It's Milking Time* (Random House, 2012). Phyllis is a former journalism and creative writing professor at Bethel University and lives in the Twin Cities with her husband, Jim, and miniature Golden Doodle, Lloyd.

**Jenny Løvlie** is a Norwegian illustrator, designer, creative, foodie, and bird enthusiast! Her work is fun and colorful with lots of animals, brave kids, and plants in all shapes and sizes. Jenny is fascinated by the strong bond between humans, animals and nature.