

# An Environmental Guide from A to Z

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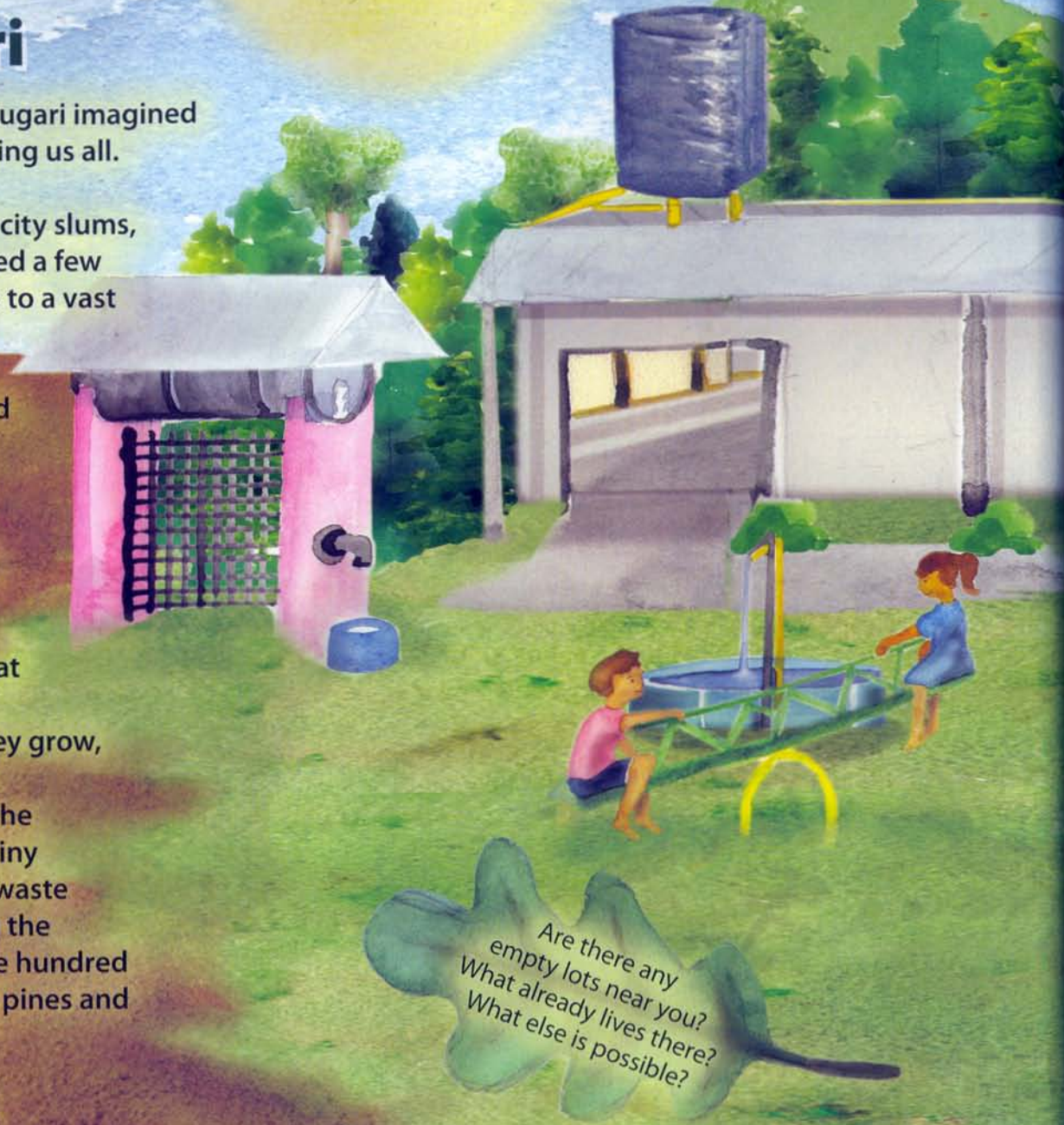
# L is for Paolo Lugari

A crazy dreamer who dared to think differently, Lugari imagined the unimaginable. He now grows a forest benefiting us all.

Fed up with wars, shrinking forests and crowded city slums, Lugari dreamed of something better. He convinced a few adventuresome engineers and scientists to move to a vast South American wasteland named Gaviotas.

He and his team listened to the locals and learned about their environment. With barren soil and contaminated water, Gaviotas didn't support much life. With nothing to lose, Lugari's team experimented over and over. Each failure taught them something and brought success closer.

Finally, they discovered a mushroom compost that thrives in their soil. Paired with a pine tree, the mushrooms feed the tree nutrients. Together, they grow, with the trees springing up seven feet each year! The tall trees bring an increase in rainwater and the new shade keeps the ground cool. Needles fall. Tiny animals munch on the rotting needles and their waste creates rich soil. Birds and wind bring seeds from the Amazon rainforest hundreds of miles away. Three hundred new tree and plant species sprout up among the pines and diverse animals arrive. A new forest emerges.



Are there any  
empty lots near you?  
What already lives there?  
What else is possible?





Gaviotas succeeds because Paolo Lugari understands focusing on individual solutions for food, water and health problems doesn't work. To consider everything at the same time, Paolo opens his eyes wide and his mind wider. So, while Gaviotas is a real place, it is also a way of thinking.

"The only deserts are deserts of the mind."  
—Paolo Lugari