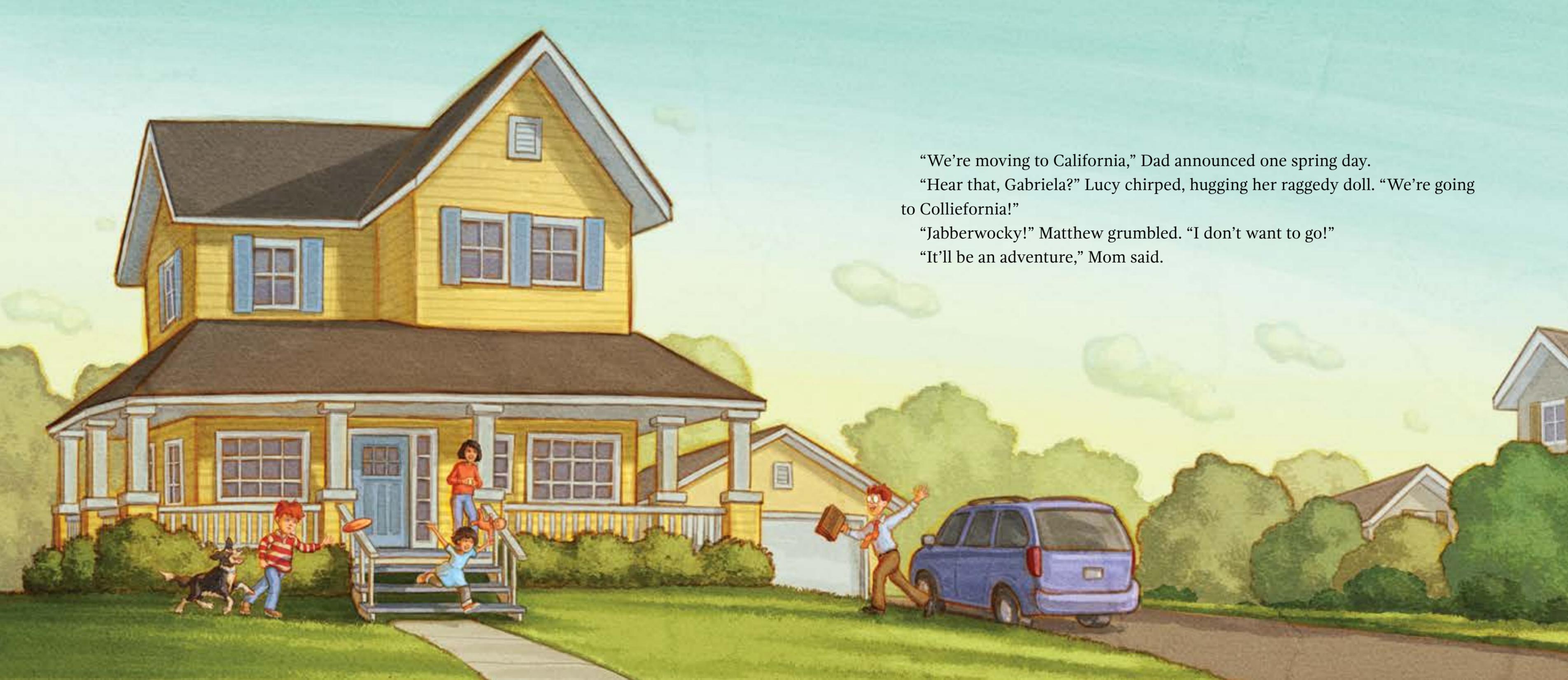


The book cover features a vibrant illustration. On the left, a young boy with bright red hair and large green eyes looks slightly to the right with a neutral expression. He is wearing a red and white horizontally striped polo shirt. In the center, a green Christmas tree is topped with a large, five-pointed gold star. On the right, a black and white dog with large, upright ears and purple eyes looks towards the viewer with a slightly sad or grumpy expression. The background is a clear, light blue sky. The title 'The Worst Christmas Ever' is written in a large, red, rounded font across the middle of the tree.

# The Worst Christmas Ever

Kathleen Long Bostrom • Guy Porfirio



“We’re moving to California,” Dad announced one spring day.

“Hear that, Gabriela?” Lucy chirped, hugging her raggedy doll. “We’re going to Colliefornia!”

“Jabberwocky!” Matthew grumbled. “I don’t want to go!”

“It’ll be an adventure,” Mom said.



That night, Matthew snuggled under the covers with his old dog. Jasper licked Matthew's tears and fell asleep, snoring his groggy, doggy snore.

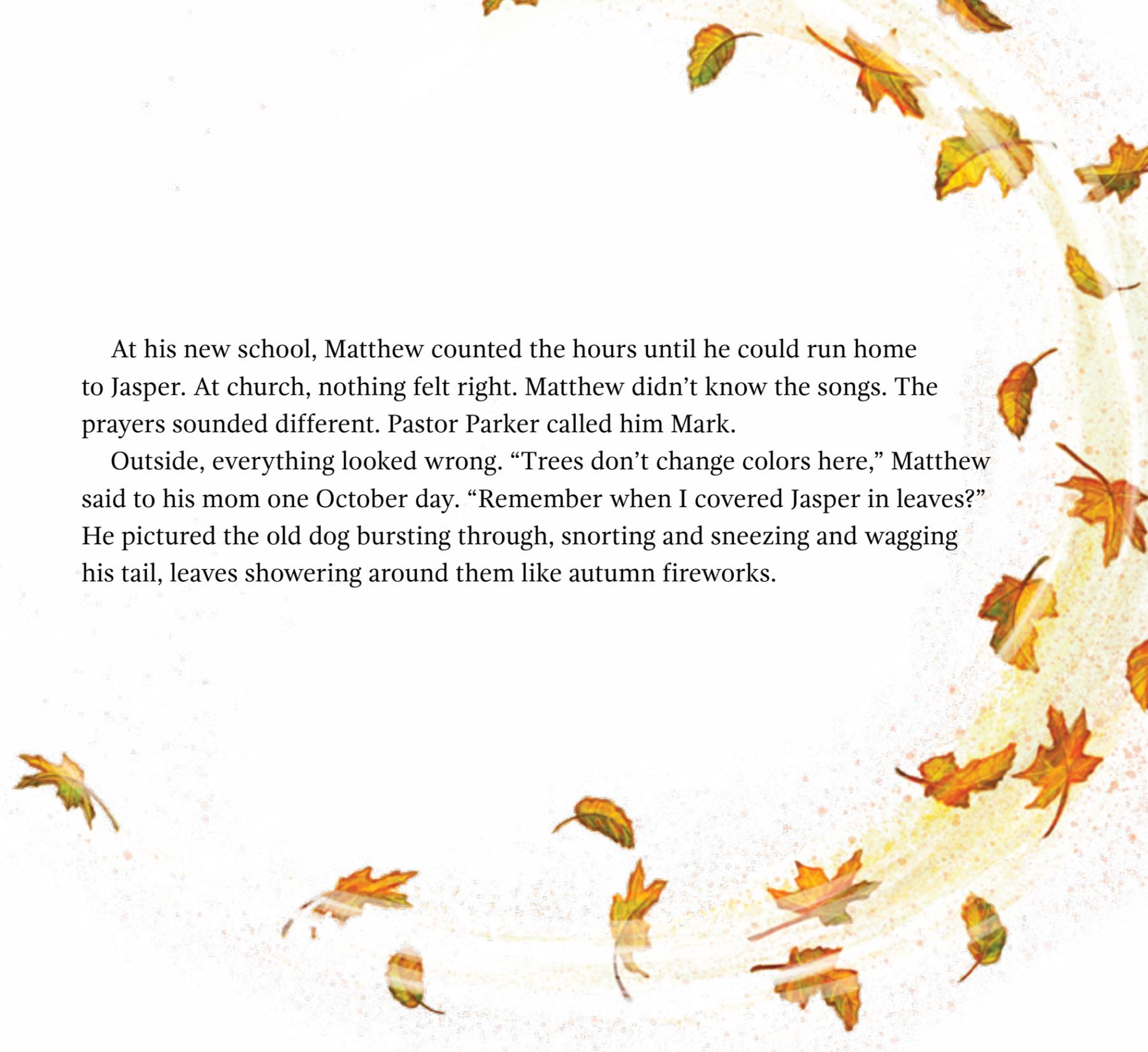
Spring and summer flew by much too fast. Fall quickly arrived, along with the moving truck. Matthew watched his life being packed away. And then it was time to leave.





At his new school, Matthew counted the hours until he could run home to Jasper. At church, nothing felt right. Matthew didn't know the songs. The prayers sounded different. Pastor Parker called him Mark.

Outside, everything looked wrong. "Trees don't change colors here," Matthew said to his mom one October day. "Remember when I covered Jasper in leaves?" He pictured the old dog bursting through, snorting and sneezing and wagging his tail, leaves showering around them like autumn fireworks.



Fall blended into winter. "Christmas is coming!" Lucy shouted.

"Let's get our tree," Mom said. "That will put us in the spirit."

"Jabberwocky," Matthew muttered. "No snow. Worst Christmas ever. It'll take a miracle to make it feel like Christmas."

"What's a miracle?" asked Lucy.

"Something more wonderful than you could ever imagine," Matthew said.

"You won't find one here."

"Oh, yes, I will!" said Lucy. "I'll find the miracle!"

Matthew sighed.

