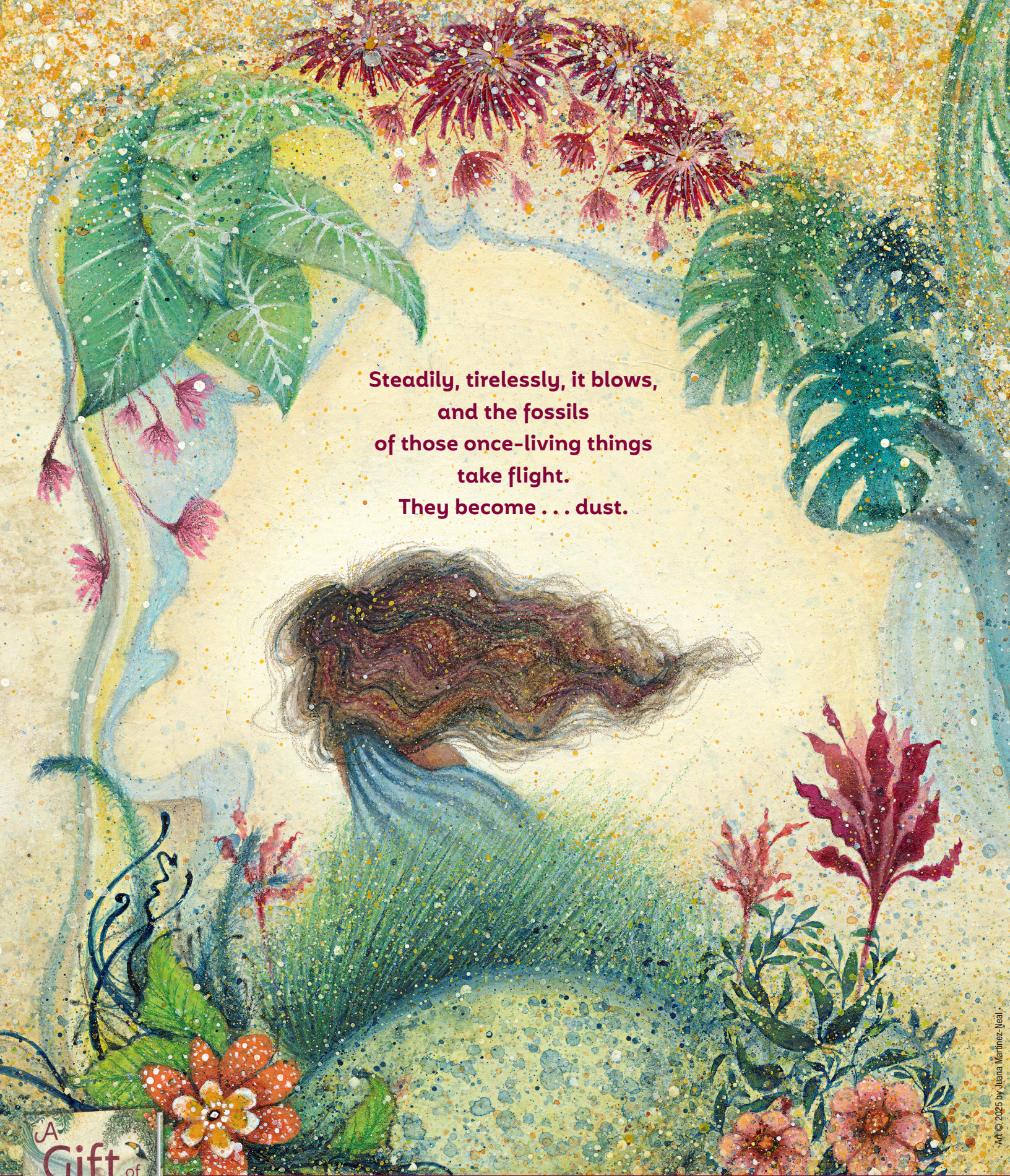
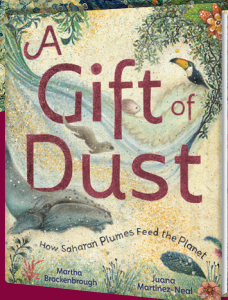




Steadily, tirelessly, it blows,
and the fossils
of those once-living things
take flight.
They become . . . dust.



A Gift of Dust

Martha Brockenbrough • Juana Martinez-Neal





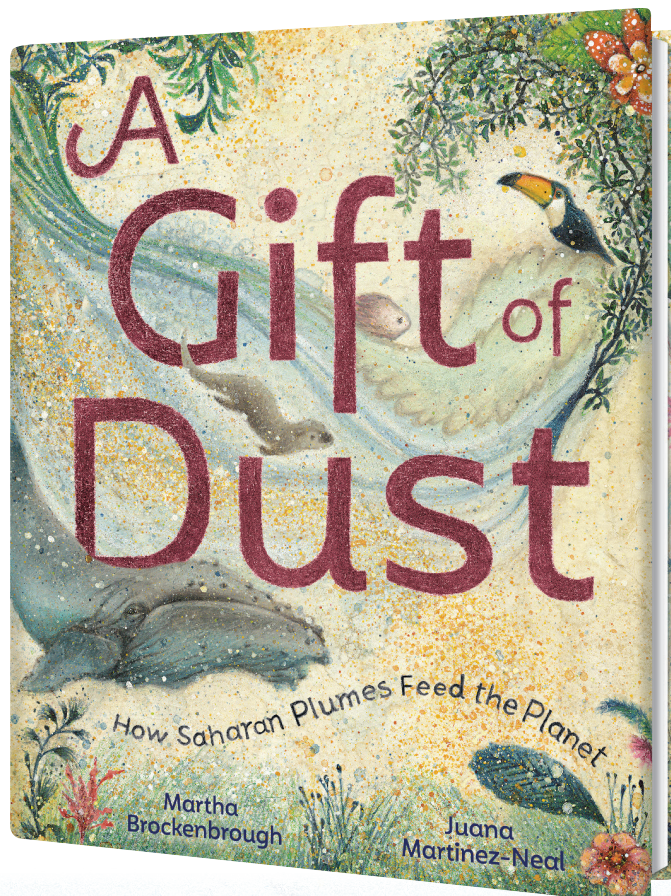
A Gift of Dust

Activities

About the Book

An ancient catfish becomes a fossil, and as the lake where it lived dries up, the fossil turns to dust—but this isn't ordinary dust. This dust begins in Chad, West Africa, but winds carry it across the continent, over the Atlantic ocean, to nourish and replenish the Amazon rain forest and beyond.

A Gift of Dust takes readers on a journey that shows just how interconnected our planet is, and how something so small can have such a huge impact. With lyrical, awe-inspiring verse based in fact, and stunning art from a Caldecott honoree, this is a story for our times.



Art © 2025 by Juana Martinez-Neal

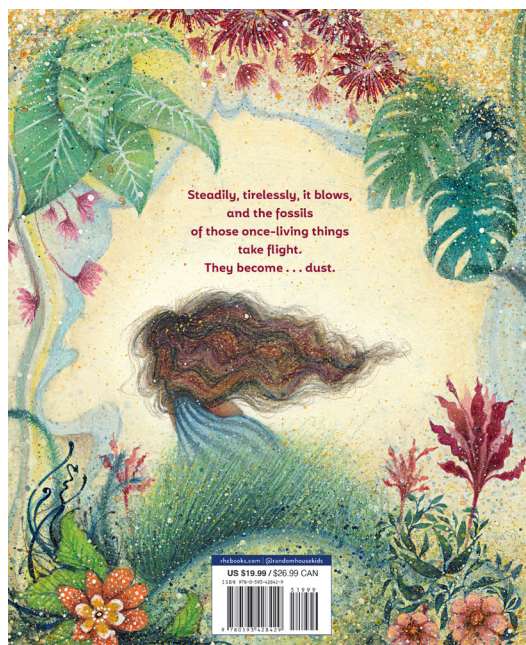
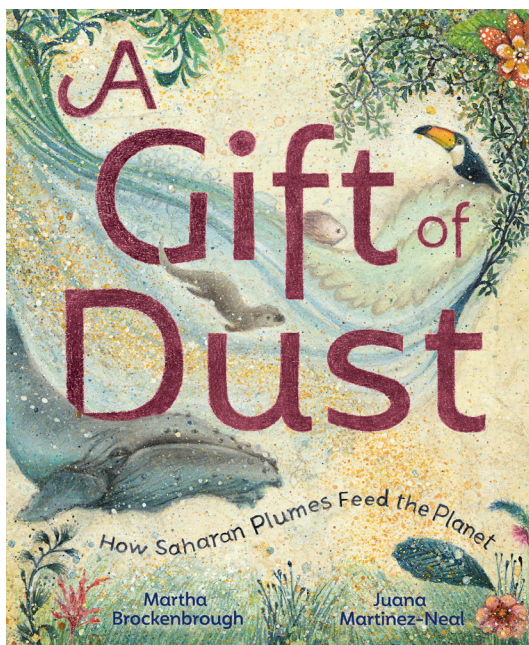


Visit [RHTeachersLibrarians.com](https://www.RHTeachersLibrarians.com), your online destination for all the resources you need for your school or library!



Discussion Questions

for Before and After Reading *A Gift of Dust*



Before Starting the Story

What do you know about dust? Why would it be considered a gift? Let's look at the book's front and back cover. Can you name the different plants and animals that you see? What could be the connection between the images on the book cover and dust?



After the Story

How does the final page in the story connect to the beginning? Why is there an illustration of a mother and child? What significance do they have to the dust we have read about?



Art © 2025 by Juana Martinez-Neal



Visit [RHTeachersLibrarians.com](https://www.RHTeachersLibrarians.com), your online destination for all the resources you need for your school or library!

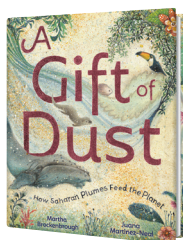


The Air We Breathe



Air quality is impacted by the Saharan plume as explained in the back matter of *A Gift of Dust*. Conduct the following experiment to discover the air quality in your school, home, and neighborhood.

- Cut three, three-inch squares from heavy paper such as cardstock, a paper plate, or poster board.
- Punch a hole at the top of each square. Thread string through the hole and tie it so it forms a loop.
- Cover one side of the square with petroleum jelly, solid coconut oil, or two-sided sticky packing tape.
- Identify a location within the school, at home, and in the neighborhood to hang your square (be sure those in the school and at home know you are conducting an experiment and not to disturb your card).
- Leave the squares for 3–5 days. Be careful when collecting the squares so they do not touch each other or another surface. Examine each square with a magnifying glass. (You can also take digital photos to record this information).
- Create an observation sheet to write and draw what you see on each card. Label each drawing with the location where it was hanging.
- Compare your findings with others. What conclusions can you make about the air quality in those locations?



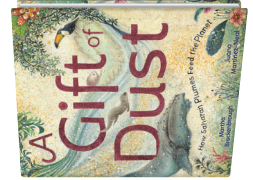
Visit RHTeachersLibrarians.com, your online destination for all the resources you need for your school or library!





The Path of Dust

Plot on the world map above where the dust has traveled.
How long do you think it takes for the dust to travel that far?



Visit [RHTeachersLibrarians.com](https://www.rhteacherslibrarians.com), your
online destination for all the resources
you need for your school or library!

