

제 포트폴리오에 오신 것을 환영합니다

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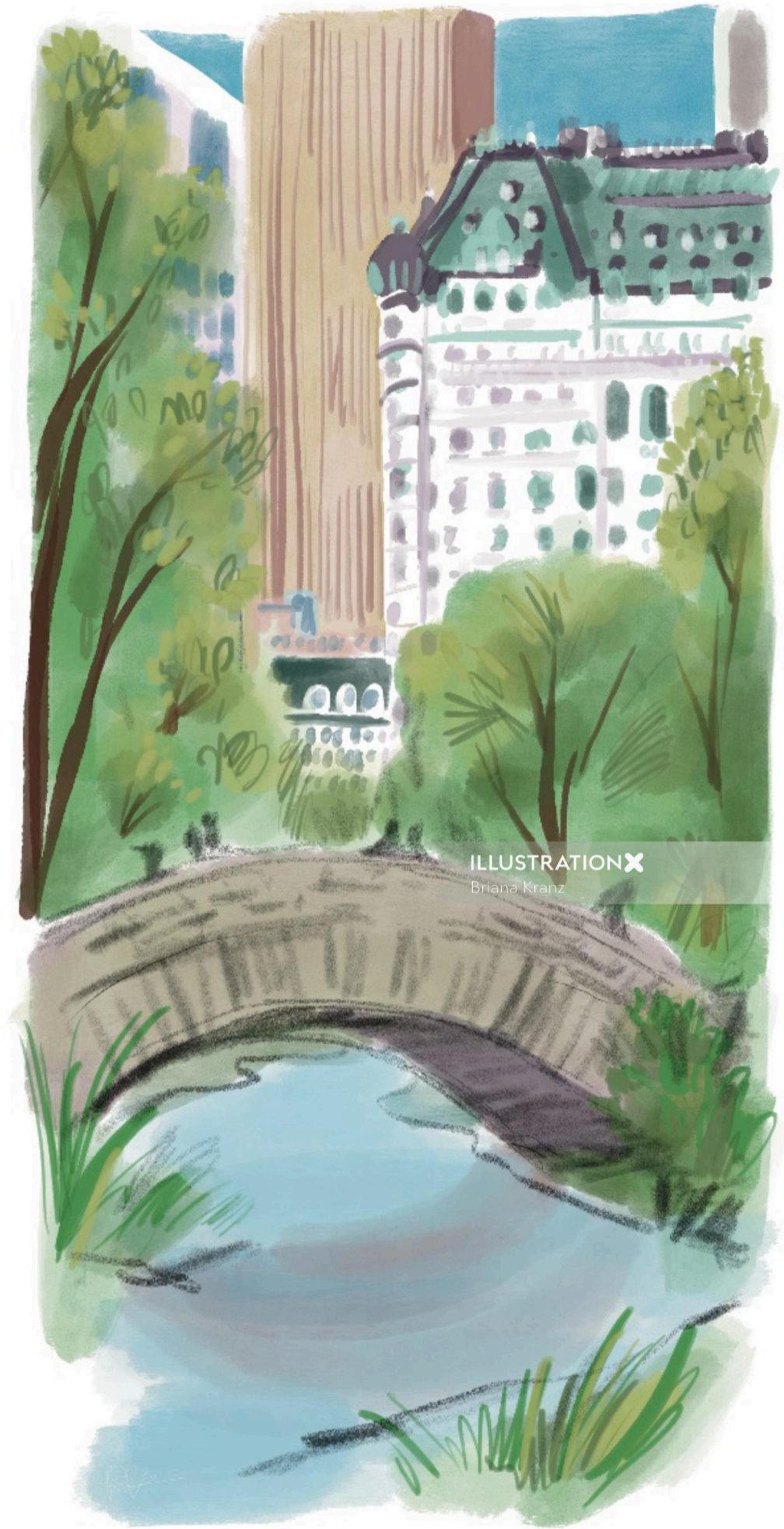
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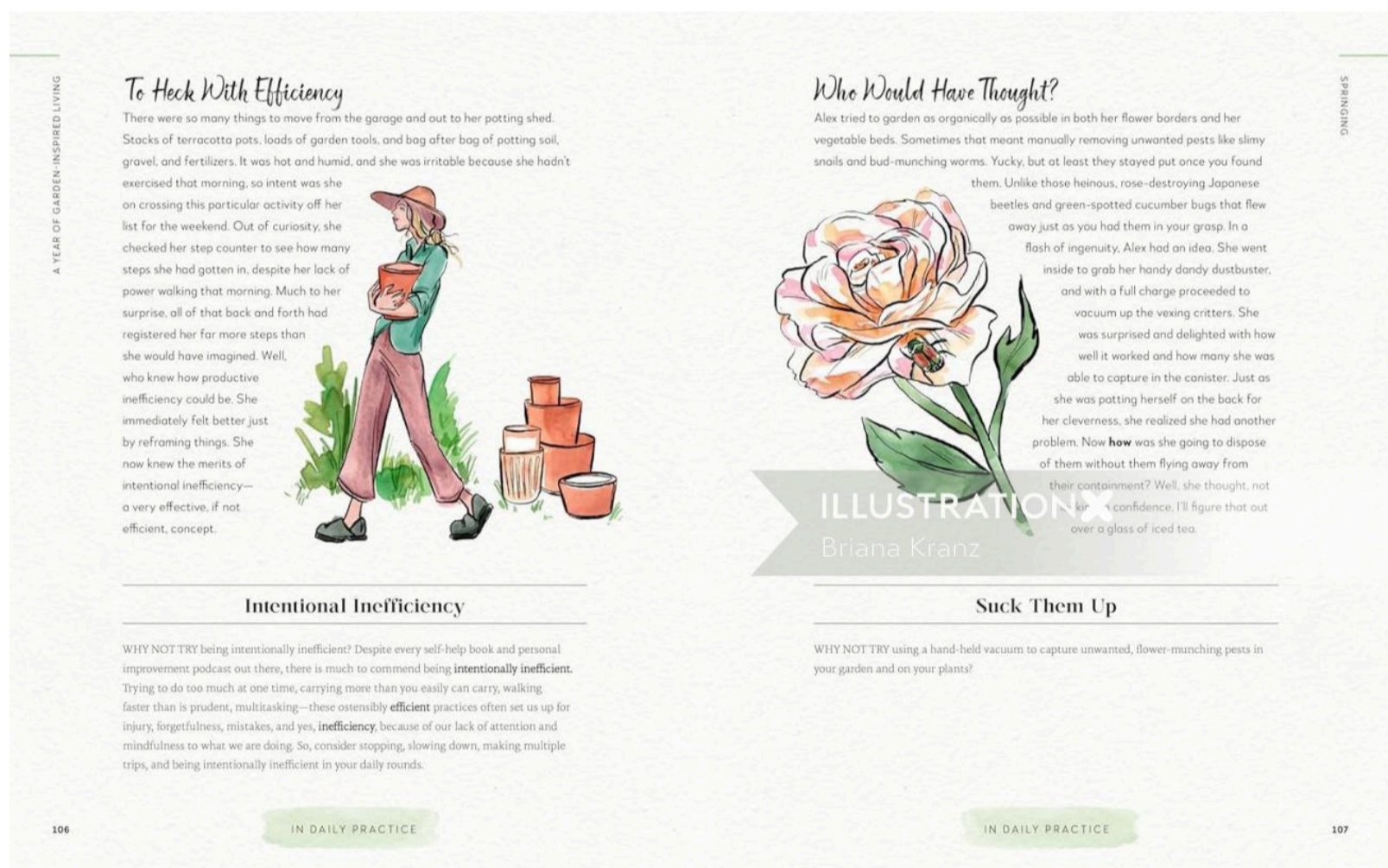
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A YEAR OF GARDEN-INSPIRED LIVING

To Heck With Efficiency

There were so many things to move from the garage and out to her potting shed. Stacks of terracotta pots, loads of garden tools, and bag after bag of potting soil, gravel, and fertilizers. It was hot and humid, and she was irritable because she hadn't exercised that morning, so intent was she on crossing this particular activity off her list for the weekend. Out of curiosity, she checked her step counter to see how many steps she had gotten in, despite her lack of power walking that morning. Much to her surprise, all of that back and forth had registered her far more steps than she would have imagined. Well, who knew how productive inefficiency could be. She immediately felt better just by reframing things. She now knew the merits of intentional inefficiency—a very effective, if not efficient, concept.



Intentional Inefficiency

WHY NOT TRY being intentionally inefficient? Despite every self-help book and personal improvement podcast out there, there is much to commend being **intentionally inefficient**. Trying to do too much at one time, carrying more than you easily can carry, walking faster than is prudent, multitasking—these ostensibly **efficient** practices often set us up for injury, forgetfulness, mistakes, and yes, **inefficiency**, because of our lack of attention and mindfulness to what we are doing. So, consider stopping, slowing down, making multiple trips, and being intentionally inefficient in your daily rounds.

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IN DAILY PRACTICE

SPRINGING

Who Would Have Thought?

Alex tried to garden as organically as possible in both her flower borders and her vegetable beds. Sometimes that meant manually removing unwanted pests like slimy snails and bud-munching worms. Yucky, but at least they stayed put once you found them. Unlike those heinous, rose-destroying Japanese beetles and green-spotted cucumber bugs that flew away just as you had them in your grasp. In a flash of ingenuity, Alex had an idea. She went inside to grab her handy dandy dustbuster, and with a full charge proceeded to vacuum up the vexing critters. She was surprised and delighted with how well it worked and how many she was able to capture in the canister. Just as she was patting herself on the back for her cleverness, she realized she had another problem. Now **how** was she going to dispose of them without them flying away from their containment? Well, she thought, not with a confidence. I'll figure that out over a glass of iced tea.



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Suck Them Up

WHY NOT TRY using a hand-held vacuum to capture unwanted, flower-munching pests in your garden and on your plants?

IN DAILY PRACTICE

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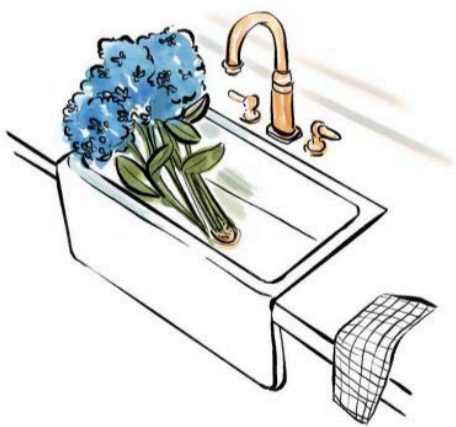


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MINGLED & MERRY

By CRAIG STOLTZ

MY BROTHER LIKES TO SAY WE WERE scheduled to be Jewish. But due to a series of baroque family calamities there's no need to detail here, we didn't keep to that schedule. And so after having completed one year of Hebrew school—I can still recite the first six letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and remember dressing up as a frog, I think, for a holiday play—we drifted into a sort of multi-faith way of life, one that fused vaguely Jewish and gentle ways around a strong belief in family, community, and friends.

And, as Americans above all, we developed a strong enthusiasm for the December holidays, shaped by Christmas. We indulged in all the familiar seasonal gatherings, foods, festivities, entertainments, and, of course, gifts. We had a tree. We sang the popular songs. We watched Jimmy Stewart and Charlie Brown navigate the season. This lite version of the holiday suited the young me well.

And happily, it prepared me well for holidays with what became a blended family. I married a lapsed Catholic; we took our young kids to a Unitarian Universalist Church; we sent them to an Episcopal elementary school.

Our younger son married a lovely Catholic woman from El Salvador, who brings a Latin American flavor to the family celebrations. Our older son married a lovely woman from Bolivia; she adds some indigenous practices and beliefs to our holidays. We are a family mingled in faiths and united in each other, delighted to spend as much time together around Christmas as our scattered lives allow.

My own joys are less religious than seasonal. I relish pulling out the little plastic wreath ornaments with the pictures of the kids when they were around 7 and 8, and hanging them from the tree. I love greeting carders at the door. I get a bang out of those neighborhoods full of spectacularly overdecorated houses that strike like Frosty's flash mob. I cherish spatchcocking a turkey and gathering our sons, daughters-in-law, and grandkids around the table, my eyes moist with paterfamilial joy.

My religion may not have been delivered as scheduled, but my holiday gifts continue to arrive.

Craig Stoltz is a Shenandoah Valley journalist. A former travel editor at The Washington Post, he's written about restaurants for Virginia Living and about travel for Garden & Gun, Foodie's, and many other publications.

VIRGINIA LIVING 142 DECEMBER 2025

THE MEMORY CRYSTALLIZES LIKE FROST on a window—sharp, pure, impossibly clear for something that happened when I was barely 3. Pinecone Road stretched before us—to me, we might as well have been on top of the Matterhorn—a white ribbon unfurling down the hill, unmarked except for the occasional neighborhood dogs whose paw prints crossed our path. This was back when winter in Richmond meant business, when storms dumped a full foot of snow at a time and the world transformed overnight into something magical.

My father positioned my brand-new-from-Santa Flexible Flyer at the top of the hill, its red runners gleaming against the pristine white. Without hesitation, he threw himself onto the sled face-first, his long frame stretched out like an arrow ready for flight. I can still see him there—this grown man suddenly turned boy again, grinning over his shoulder at me with snow already dusting his coat and hat.

"Hop on!" he shouted, and I didn't think twice. I scrambled onto his back in my red snowsuit, my small mittened hands gripping his jacket, my legs straddling his waist. We were ridiculous—a 3-year-old jockey and her willing steed, about to hurtle down Pinecone Road on a piece of wood and steel.

Then we were flying. The world blurred into streaks of white and gray, wind stinging our faces, laughter trailing behind us like a banner. My father's body absorbed every bump and jolt, keeping me safe while we surrendered completely to gravity and joy. In that moment, sledding wasn't just about the ride—it was about trust, about a father willing to be both cushion and captain, about the wild freedom that only comes when snow falls thick enough to remake the world.

Madeline Mayhood is editor-in-chief of Virginia Living. She grew up sledding down hills in her neighborhood, ice skating on the University of Richmond lake, and fervently believed in Santa Claus through lower school. She's still not ruling him out.

CUSHION & CAPTAIN

By MADELINE MAYHOOD

THE GLOW FROM GRANDPARENTS' HOUSE

By HOPE CARTWRIGHT

GROWING UP IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN WITH MY grandparents, mom, and two sisters under the same roof meant a particular kind of Christmas. Our house stood tall on a tree-covered slope that gave way to the inland Long Lake, a setting plucked from a snow globe when winter arrived—some plinking 3 feet high on the deck and the lake slowly freezing over. Inside, the air was rich with the usual holiday scents of peppermint candies and hot chocolate, but also the ones only a grandmother can create: incomparable Christmas cookies (shortbread, sugar, and pecan-topped chocolate in my house); wax from decades-held seasonal candles, from tree-shaped to candy cane tapers; and that other, indistinguishable scent of warmth and family—the one that simply says *grandma lives here* and this is a home.

One year, when I was 7 and my sister Abby 12, my grandpa suited us up

in full snow gear for a serious duty; our fate chance to pick out a living tree. Other years, a real one was deemed too likely to die while my grandparents snowbirded to Florida. But this time, we drove through snowbound roads until we reached a real-life White Christmas scene: a wooden barn, pre-cut trees, and beyond it, a forest blanketed in white. My eyes swept greedily, sparking Rockefeller-level visions. I begged for towering 12-footers, but reason prevailed—we cut a sensible 7-foot pine. My glow dimmed when I realized we had to lug it back, though I quickly found new amusement in Abby's scheme to saw leftover branches from stumps for decorative swags.

At the barn, steaming hot cocoa waited, which my grandpa—sweet tooth supreme—downed by the mugful. Back home came the ordeal: how to wedge the tree through the door. "Oh, John," my grandma sighed, as she often did. At last it stood, dressed in her lifetime collection of ornaments—sparkling bulbs, White House annuals, those honoring Manassas, where my grandpa was longtime city manager; and my favorite, a beewax cherub. Then came the barrage of tinsel, and a plate of cookies to fortify us, my grandpa sneaking the extras.

Through the huge living-room windows, tree lights and fireplace glow reflected back at us, while beyond the glass stretched the icy blue of Long Lake—warmth within, winter without. ❄️

Hope Cartwright, associate editor of Virginia Living, grew up in a lakefront house outside Traverse City, Michigan, and now calls Richmond home, where she's become the type to scoff. "Please, this is nothing," at the city's dustings of snow.

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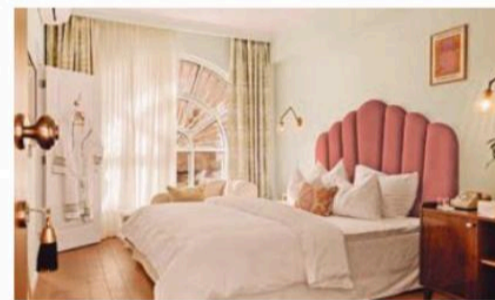
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Mythical mud

Greek mythology beckons at the Adonis Baths near Paphos, where lovers Adonis and Aphrodite are said to have met and bathed together under the trickling falls. Today, clear blue pools of water and mythological statues flank the forested beauty spot. But the real draw is the mud therapy, where mineral-laden, detoxifying natural mud is applied to the body – the perfect counterpart to a refreshing swim in the falls.

Further inland into the Troodos Mountains, fertile hiking trails wind to more waterfalls, and the ancient spa village of Kalopanayiotis, which sits among sulphur-rich spring waters, celebrated for their curative properties for centuries. These waters form the foundation of treatments for many nearby spas. A wellness retreat at Casale Panayiotis offers bathing rituals promising to soften the skin, relieve swelling and joint pain and fight disease. casalepanayiotis.com



Beauty sleep

For the creatively inclined, The Agora Hotel in Lefkara, 30 minutes from Larnaca, is the ideal launchpad into Cypriot wellness. Tucked among this traditional lace-making village's narrow, sun-dappled streets and with a soothing, Scandi-style interior, the hotel generates an immediate sense of calm. While respecting of Cyprus's cultural roots – think traditional hand-stitched lace on linen-covered tissue boxes and pottery workshops to connect with local craft – it's effortlessly modern in its approach to wellness. The spa menu goes well beyond the typical, offering treatments like Reiki and reflexology that feel genuinely restorative, not just indulgent, and those brave enough to wear lycra in 30°C heat can take one of their custom-designed, carbon road bikes out for a spin. From weekly yoga to Sunday hikes, the adults-only Agora offers wellness that's deeply rooted within the surrounding landscape. theagorahotel.com

✈ Wizz Air flies to Cyprus

PHOTOS: ADOBE STOCK, COURTESY OF THE AGORA HOTEL

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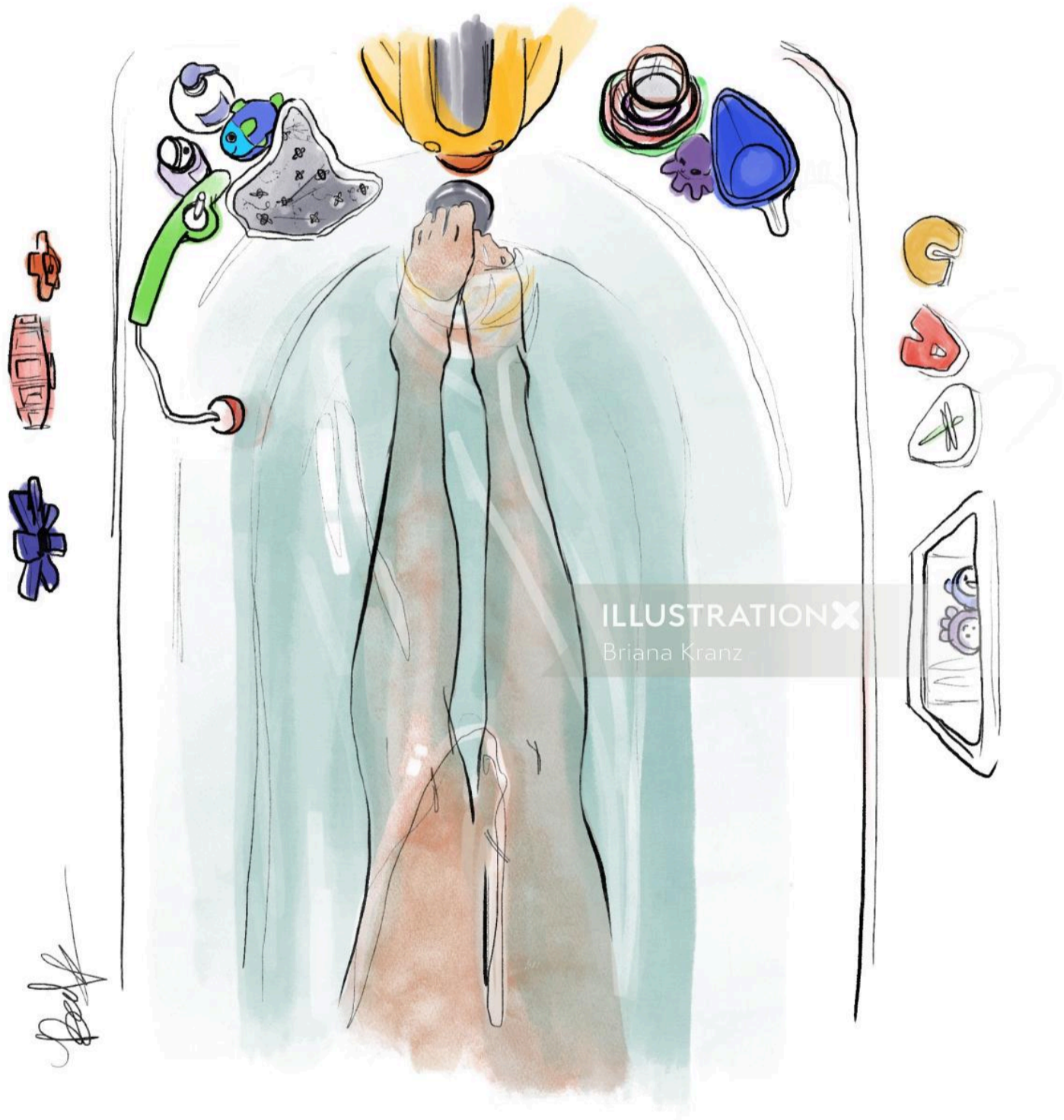
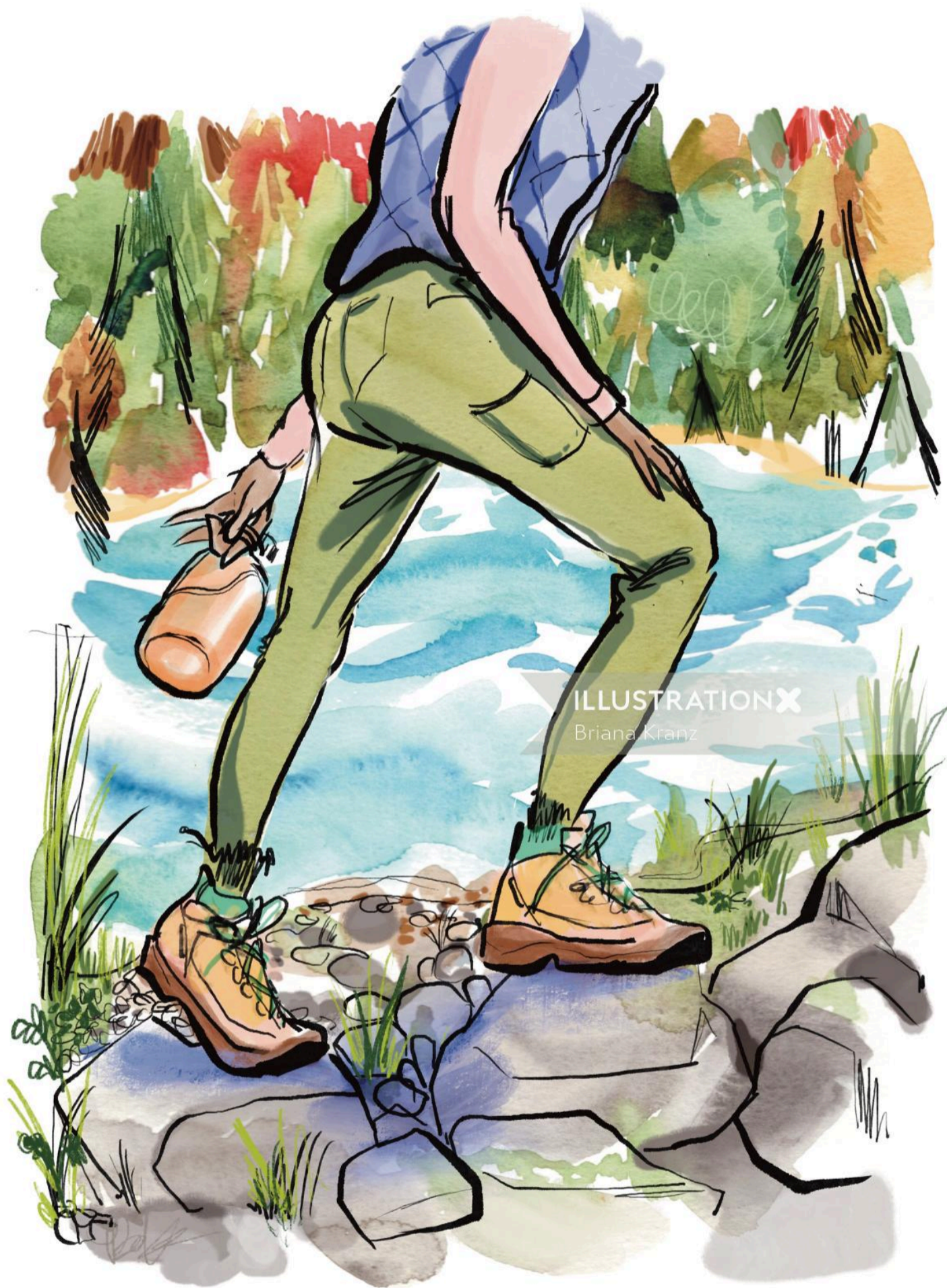


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