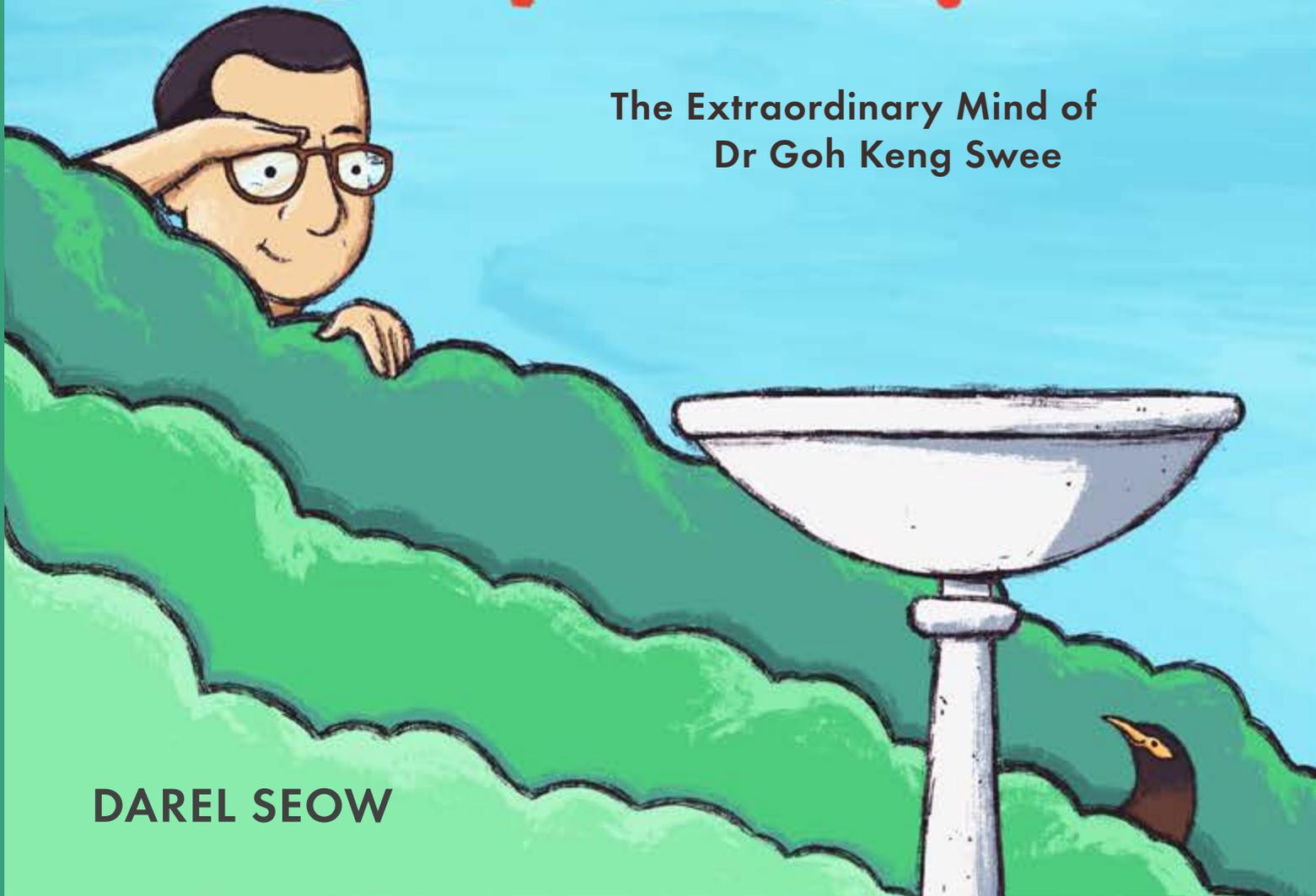


PROMINENT SINGAPOREANS

# WHERE ARE ALL THE BIRDS?

The Extraordinary Mind of  
Dr Goh Keng Swee

DAREL SEOW





To my parents, who taught me how to question. — DAREL

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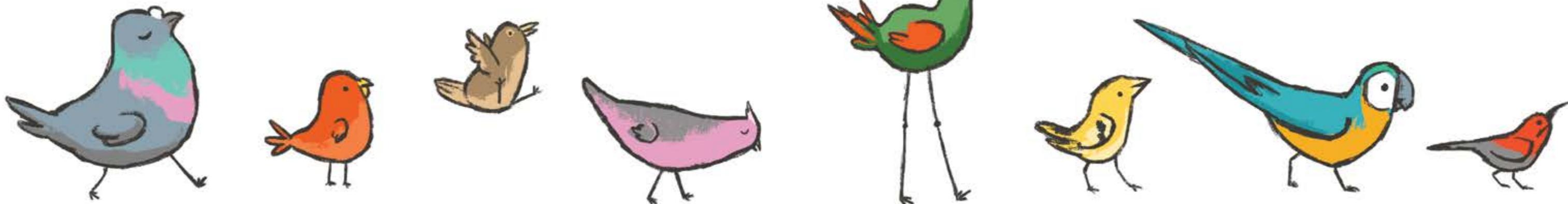
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# WHERE ARE ALL THE BIRDS?

The Extraordinary Mind of Dr Goh Keng Swee

DAREL SEOW

**E**

EPIGRAM BOOKS / SINGAPORE

# Why am I in this world?



Swee was a quiet boy, but his head always brimmed with questions. He enjoyed observing people and things, learning from books and the world around him. One day, a puzzled Swee asked his teacher, "Why am I in this world?" His wise teacher explained that searching for answers to such basic questions was part of growing up. Then, to Swee's delight, he recommended even more books for him to read and ponder over.

# Where does rubber come from?

Swee grew up on a rubber plantation far away from neighbours, with few friends to play with. Yet, he was never bored. He wandered around looking at workers tapping trees. Just watching did not satisfy his curiosity. He soon found out that the sap collected was turned into rubber sheets and that selling rubber to other countries brought in a lot of money.

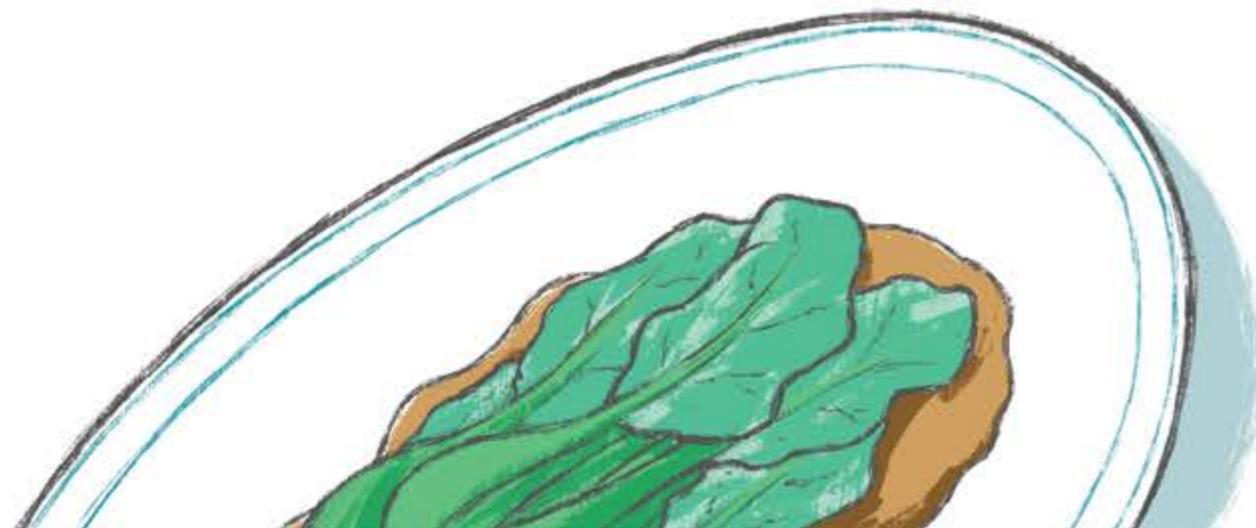




**Why do  
prices go  
up and down?**

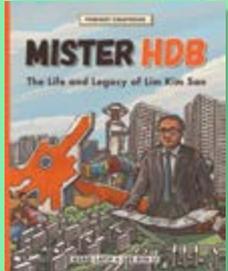
One day, noticing less food during mealtimes, Swee asked his father if all was well at home. His father, the plantation manager, explained, "Life has become more difficult as rubber prices are falling."

Swee was intrigued by how the world was so connected and was determined to learn more.



Where are all the birds? Why am I in this world? How do we bring life to a dead island? Questions, questions, questions. They buzzed non-stop in Dr Goh Keng Swee's mind, even as a little boy, and drove him into becoming one of the titans in Singapore's success story. From providing jobs to building a formidable army to delighting in the wonders of nature, he left a lasting imprint on his fellow citizens at work and in play.

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