

This book is dedicated to my nine grandchildren: Henry, Adrienne, Shane, Carson, Lucien, Eli, Colette, Cecilia, and Lumina as well as the McKeldin family and Baltimore's mounted police and their horses, especially Charlie who was Sergeant Bill's first mount.

—P.E.D.

Dedicated to my mother for her loving support and to my teacher Shadra Strickland for her endless guidance and encouragement.

—M.G.C.

The material on Sergeant Bill (a real person) was gleaned mainly from articles in the Baltimore Sun. I am grateful to their authors Frank Henry (1946), Peter Q. Allison (1948), Ralph Reppert and Hans Marx (1962), Jacques Kelly (1996), and Frederick N. Rasmussen (2004) as well as Gilbert Sandler whose essay "Wrong McKeldin Honored?" in his book Baltimore Glimpses Revisited (1984) first suggested that Sergeant Bill also be honored in McKeldin Square. The part of the story involving President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his dog Fala is fiction.



Sergeant Bill and His Horse Bob



Peter E. Dans

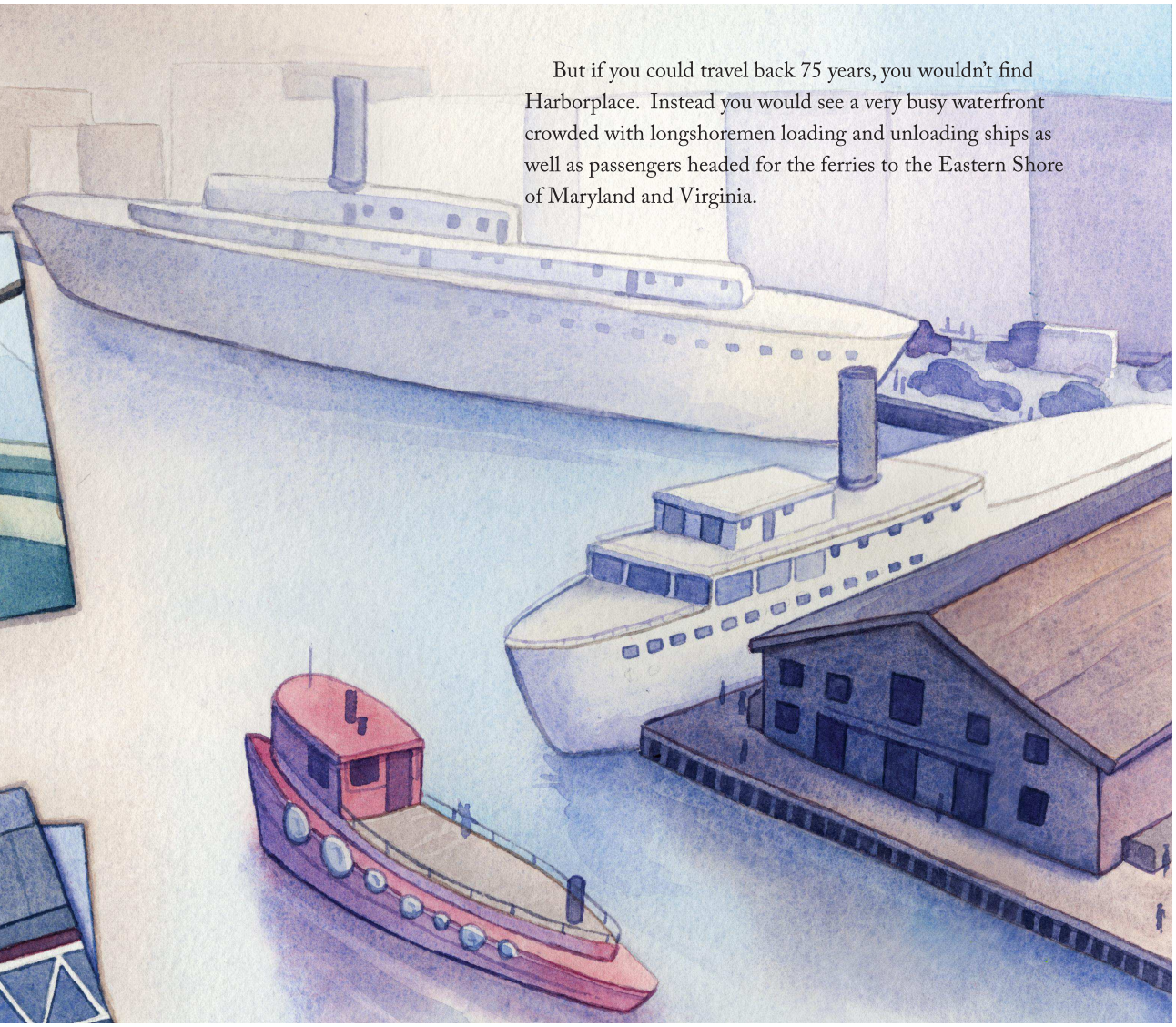
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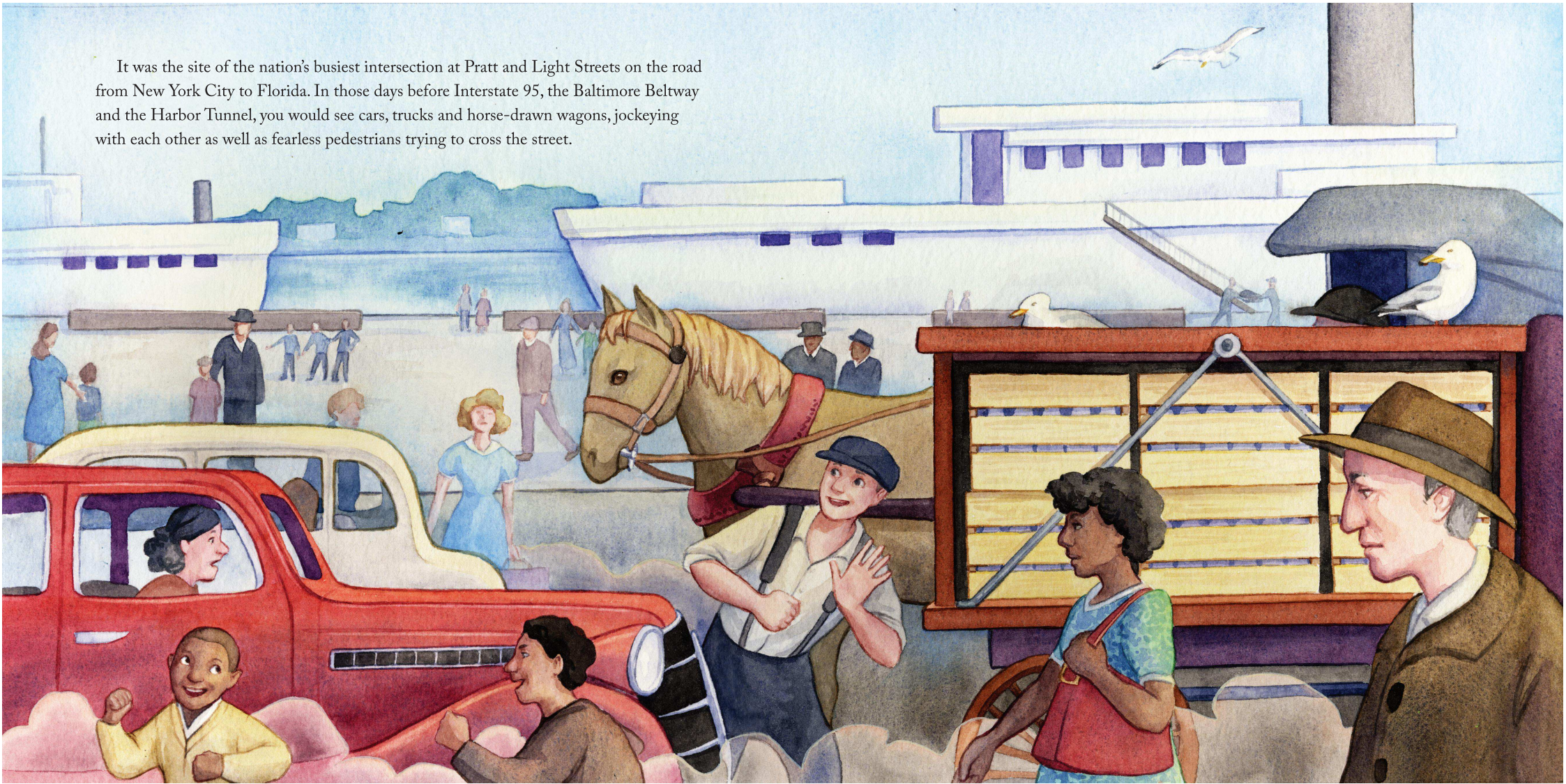


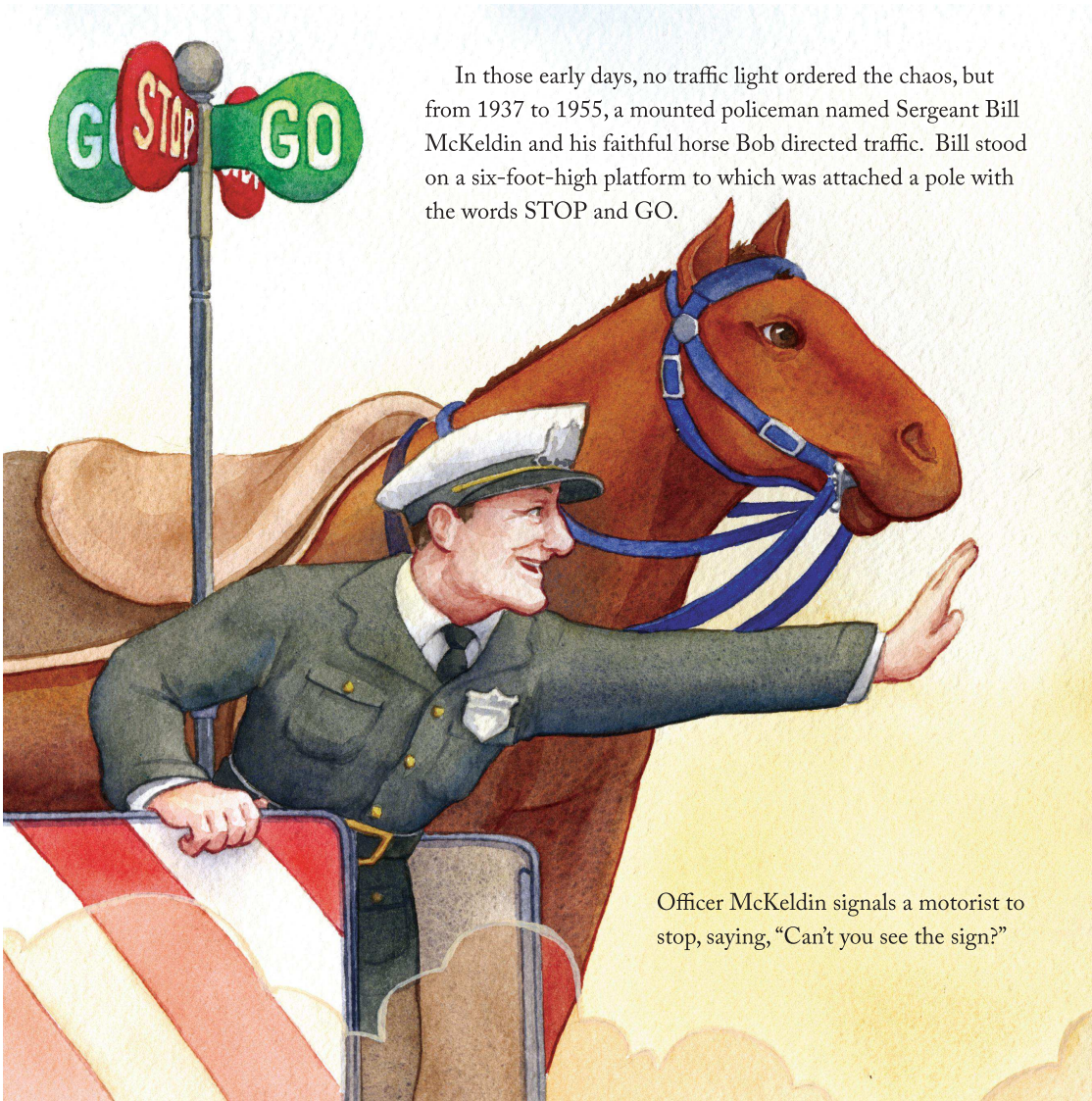
Harborplace is one of the coolest places to visit in Baltimore. There you can see blacktip sharks swimming at the National Aquarium and you can board the USS Constellation, built in 1854 to replace the original 1797 frigate of the same name.

But if you could travel back 75 years, you wouldn't find Harborplace. Instead you would see a very busy waterfront crowded with longshoremen loading and unloading ships as well as passengers headed for the ferries to the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia.



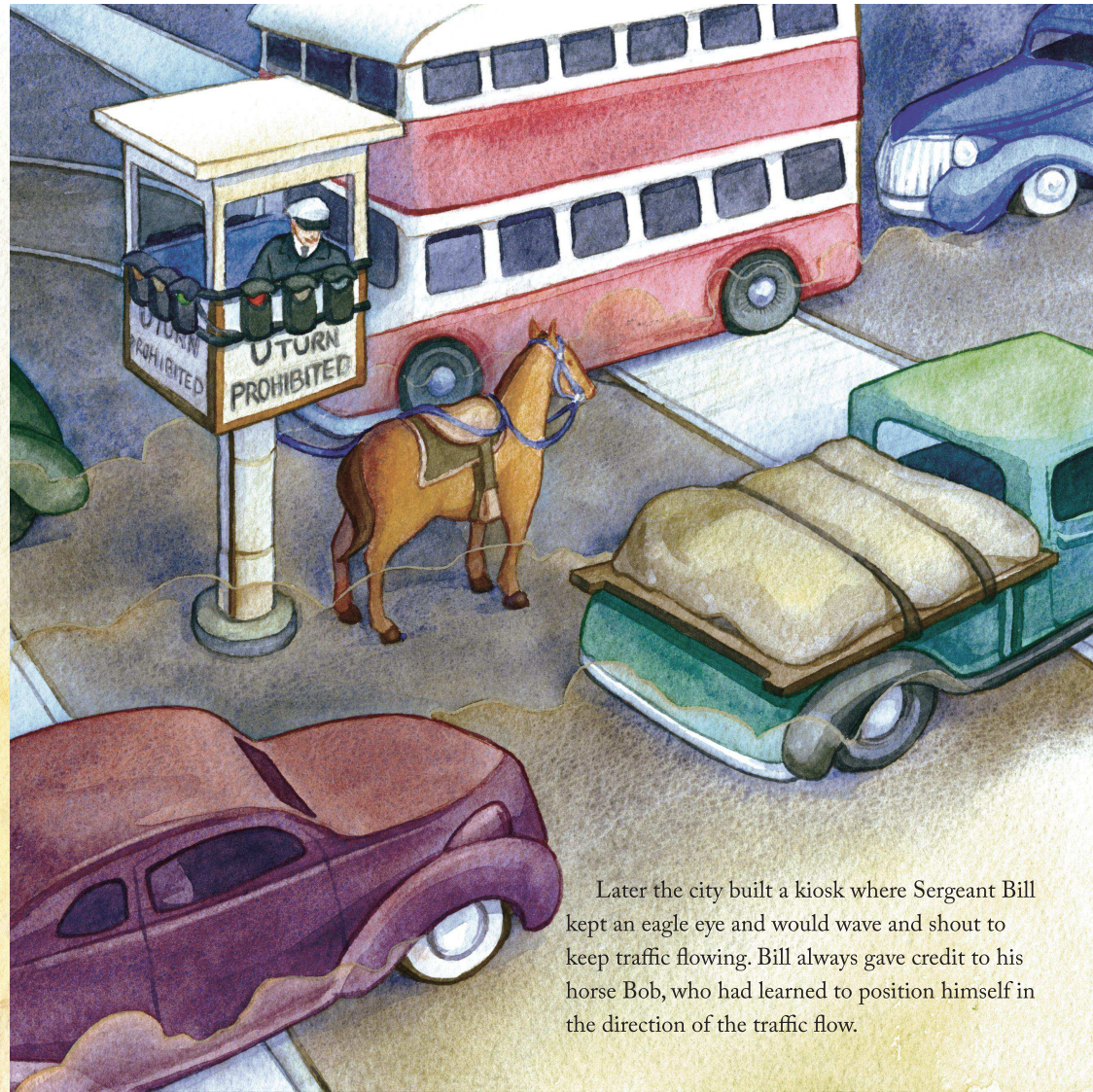
It was the site of the nation's busiest intersection at Pratt and Light Streets on the road from New York City to Florida. In those days before Interstate 95, the Baltimore Beltway and the Harbor Tunnel, you would see cars, trucks and horse-drawn wagons, jockeying with each other as well as fearless pedestrians trying to cross the street.





In those early days, no traffic light ordered the chaos, but from 1937 to 1955, a mounted policeman named Sergeant Bill McKeldin and his faithful horse Bob directed traffic. Bill stood on a six-foot-high platform to which was attached a pole with the words STOP and GO.

Officer McKeldin signals a motorist to stop, saying, "Can't you see the sign?"

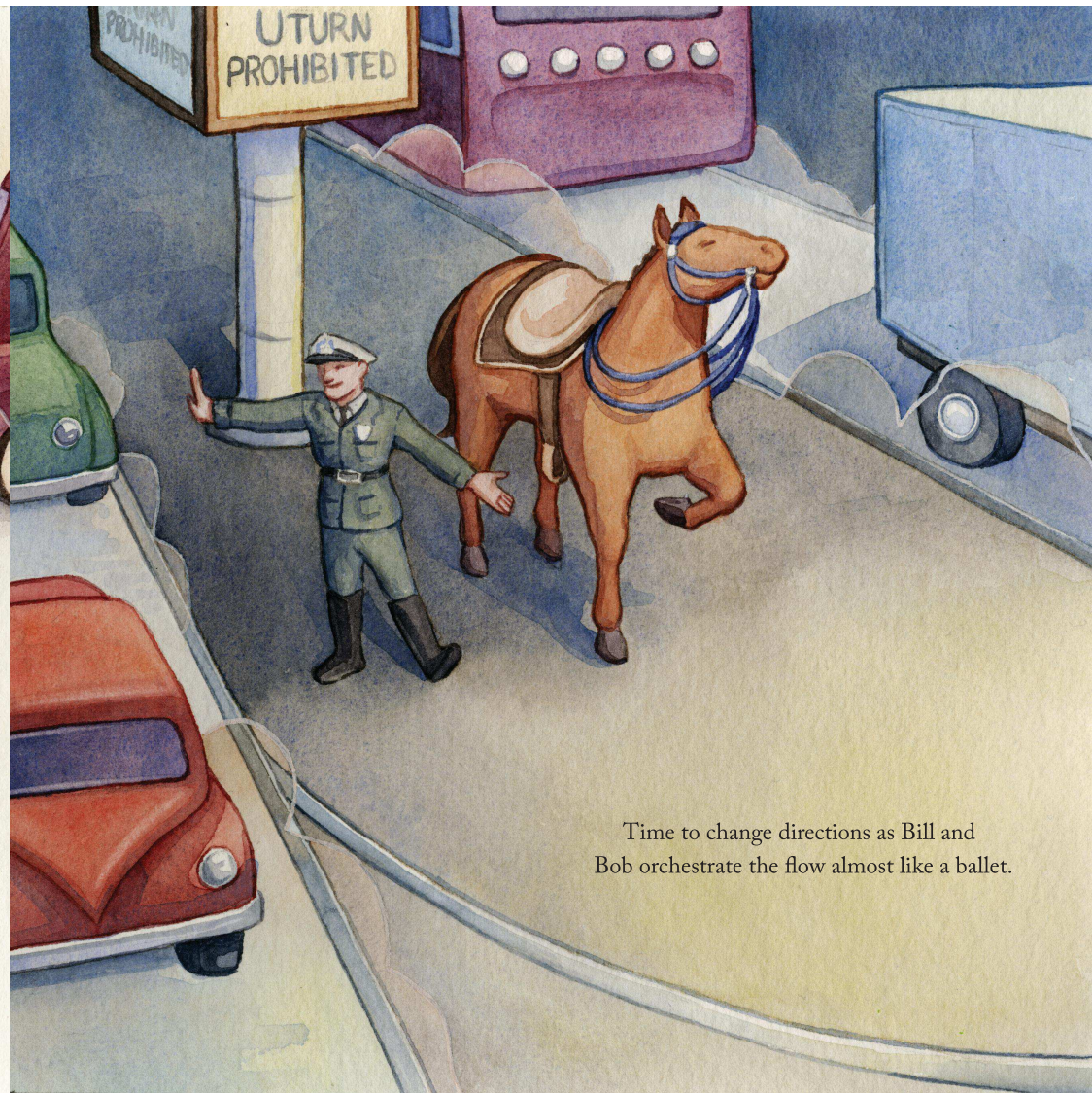


Later the city built a kiosk where Sergeant Bill kept an eagle eye and would wave and shout to keep traffic flowing. Bill always gave credit to his horse Bob, who had learned to position himself in the direction of the traffic flow.



Sometimes Sergeant Bill had to go down and untangle the traffic; Sergeant Bill tells motorists to "Move it."

Sometimes he answered questions from lost drivers.



Time to change directions as Bill and Bob orchestrate the flow almost like a ballet.