




The Hope-o-potamus

In a drought, in the dust, in a dry river bed
A sad hippopotamus hung his grey head.
He'd had nothing to drink since the start of this week.
If he didn't find water things could get quite bleak.

The hippo was sad and the hippo was hot.
But did he sit down and give in? Of course not!
He remembered the words of a wise old giraffe,
That he'd heard long ago, when he'd been a young calf:

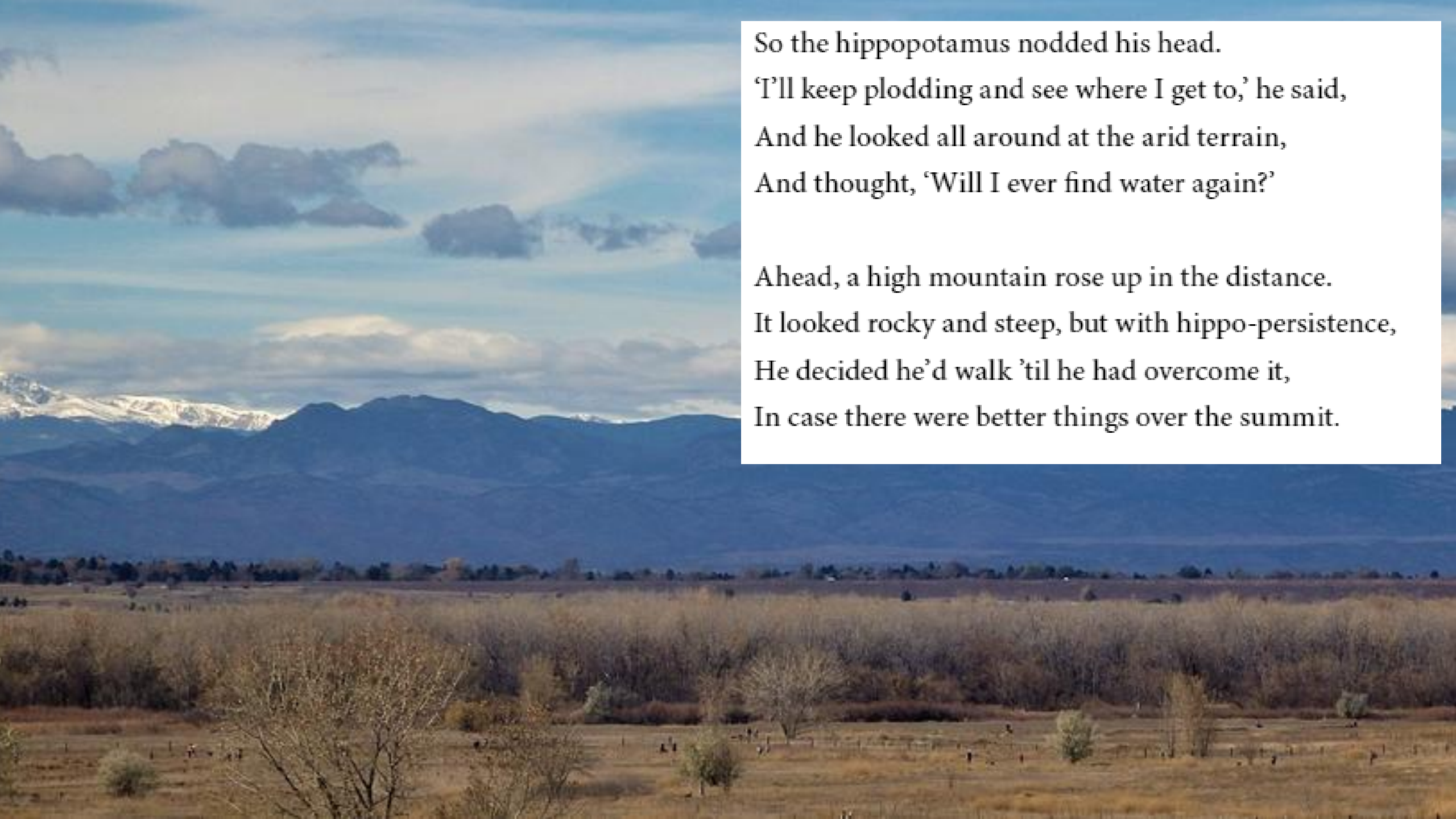
A giraffe and a hippopotamus are shown in a savanna setting. The giraffe is on the right, leaning its head towards the hippopotamus on the left. The giraffe has a brown and white spotted pattern. The hippopotamus is dark grey and has a large, rounded body. The background is a light brown, textured wall.

‘There’ll be times in your life when your road will be tough.

You’ll be tempted to say that you’ve had quite enough.
‘There’ll be people that try and convince you to stop,
And you’ll feel that you’re just about ready to drop.

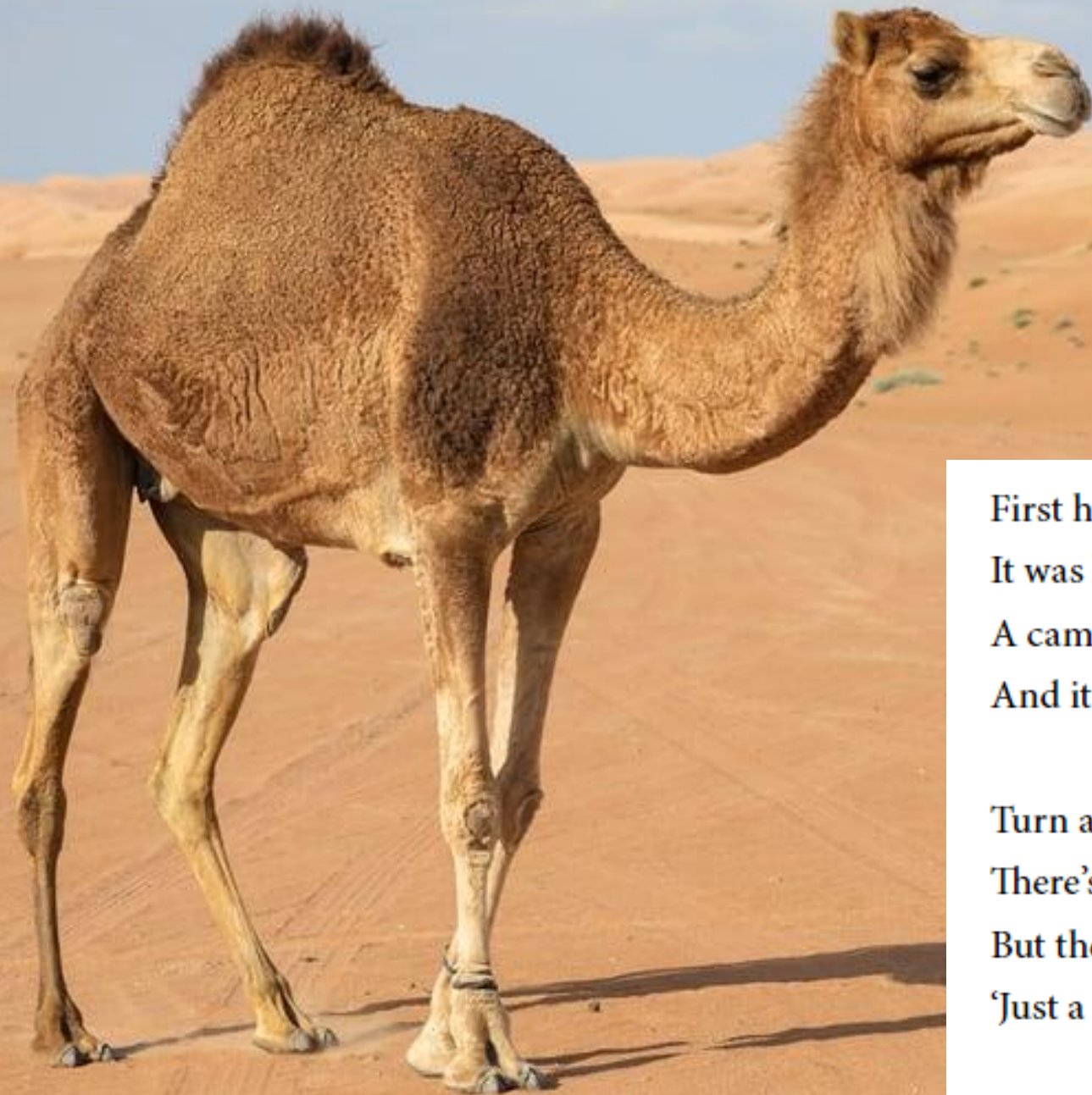
But those are the times when you’ve got to keep moving,
And with every small step you will see things improving.
Just point any way that seems hopeful to you,
You move one foot forwards, then foot number two.

Then follow this up with your other two feet,
Then return to foot one, and repeat and repeat.
Remember these words,’ said the wise old giraffe,
To our hero the hippo, when he was a calf.



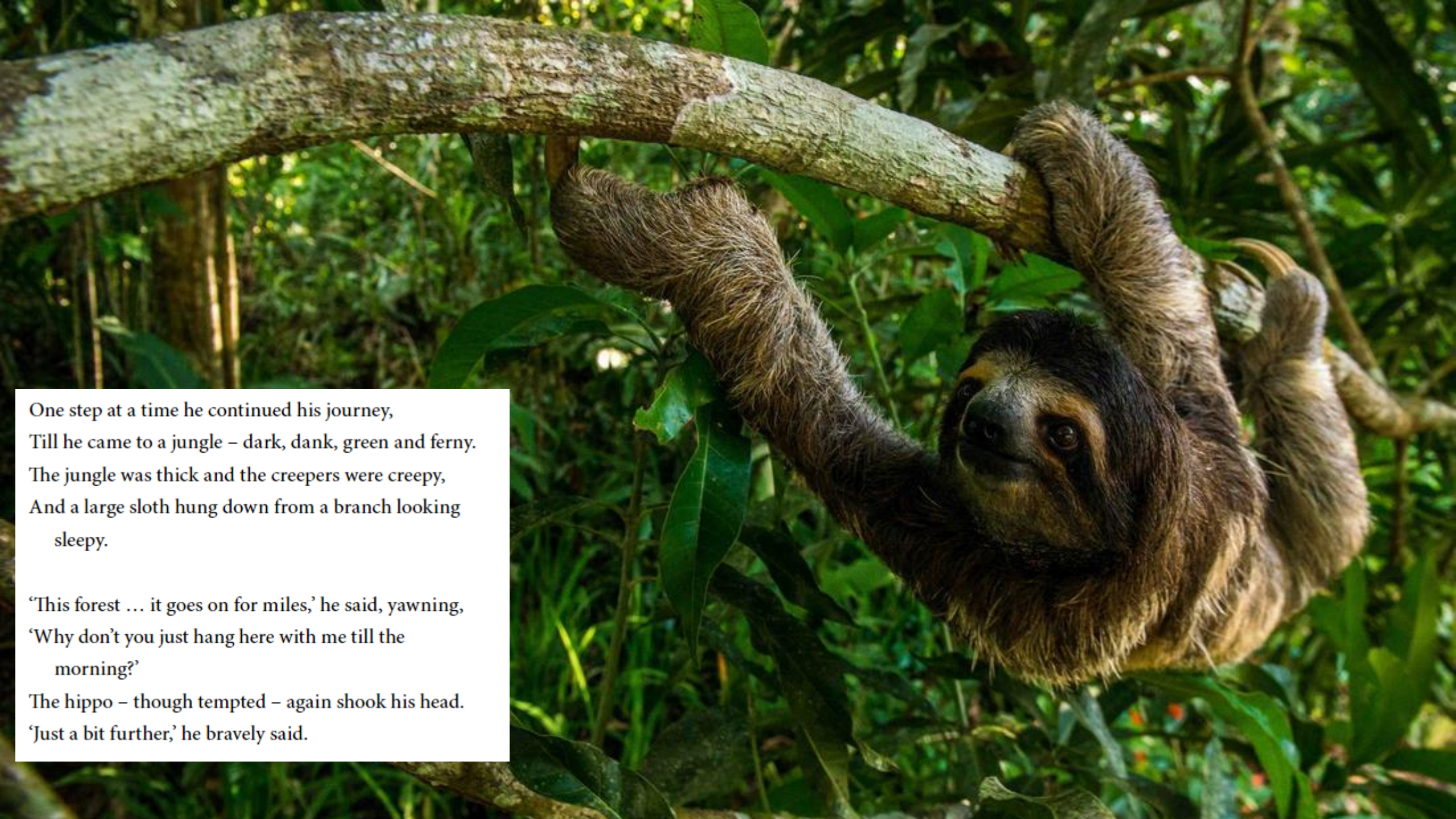
So the hippopotamus nodded his head.
'I'll keep plodding and see where I get to,' he said,
And he looked all around at the arid terrain,
And thought, 'Will I ever find water again?'

Ahead, a high mountain rose up in the distance.
It looked rocky and steep, but with hippo-persistence,
He decided he'd walk 'til he had overcome it,
In case there were better things over the summit.



First he came to a desert, which wasn't too handy.
It was hard to walk through, rather slippy and sandy.
A camel was sitting on top of a dune,
And it told the hippo, 'You absolute loon!

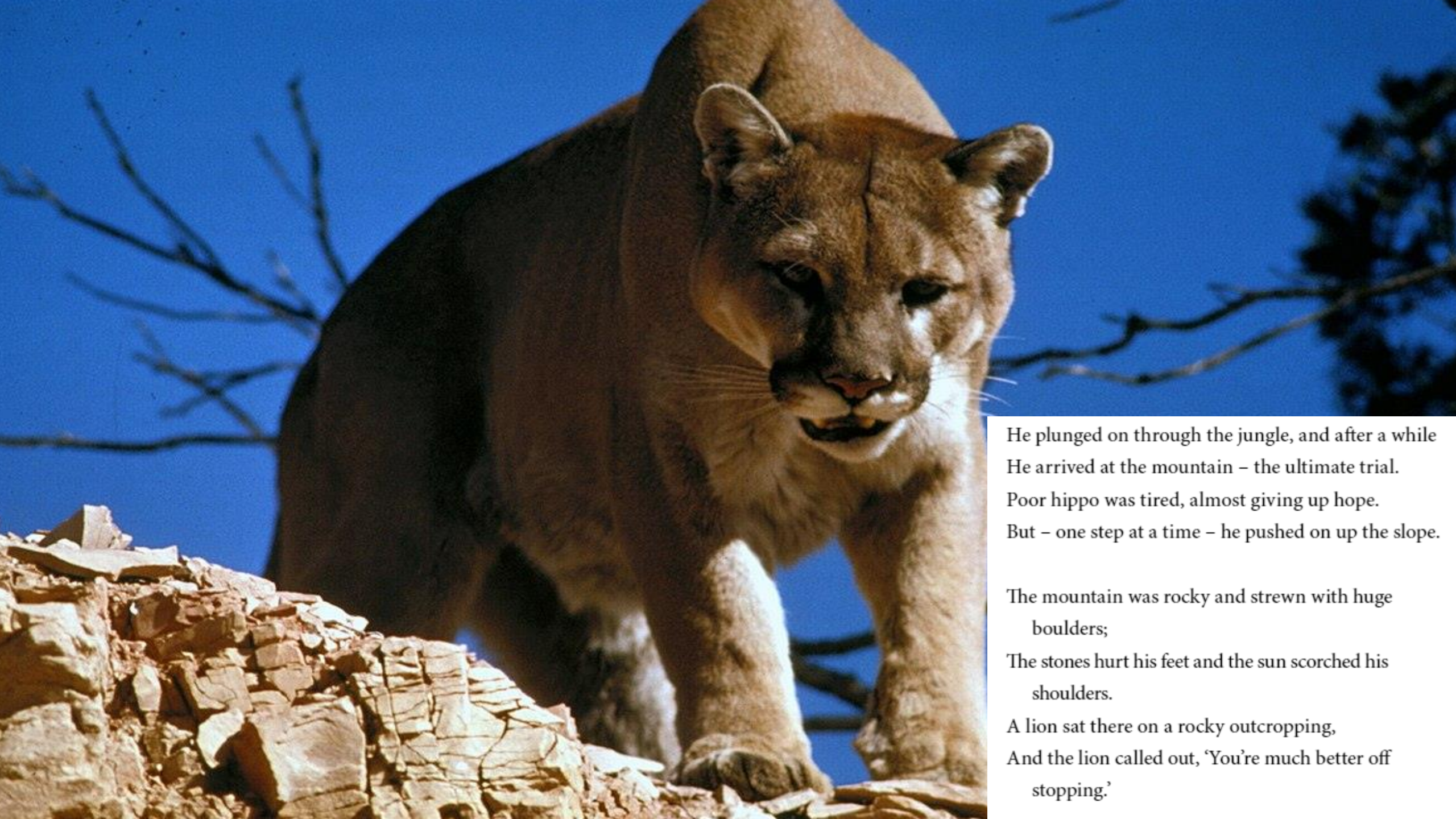
Turn around! Go back! Or you'll look like a chump.
There's no water this way, except this in my hump.'
But the hippopotamus shook his head.
'Just a bit further,' he boldly said.



One step at a time he continued his journey,
Till he came to a jungle – dark, dank, green and ferny.
The jungle was thick and the creepers were creepy,
And a large sloth hung down from a branch looking
sleepy.

‘This forest ... it goes on for miles,’ he said, yawning,
‘Why don’t you just hang here with me till the
morning?’

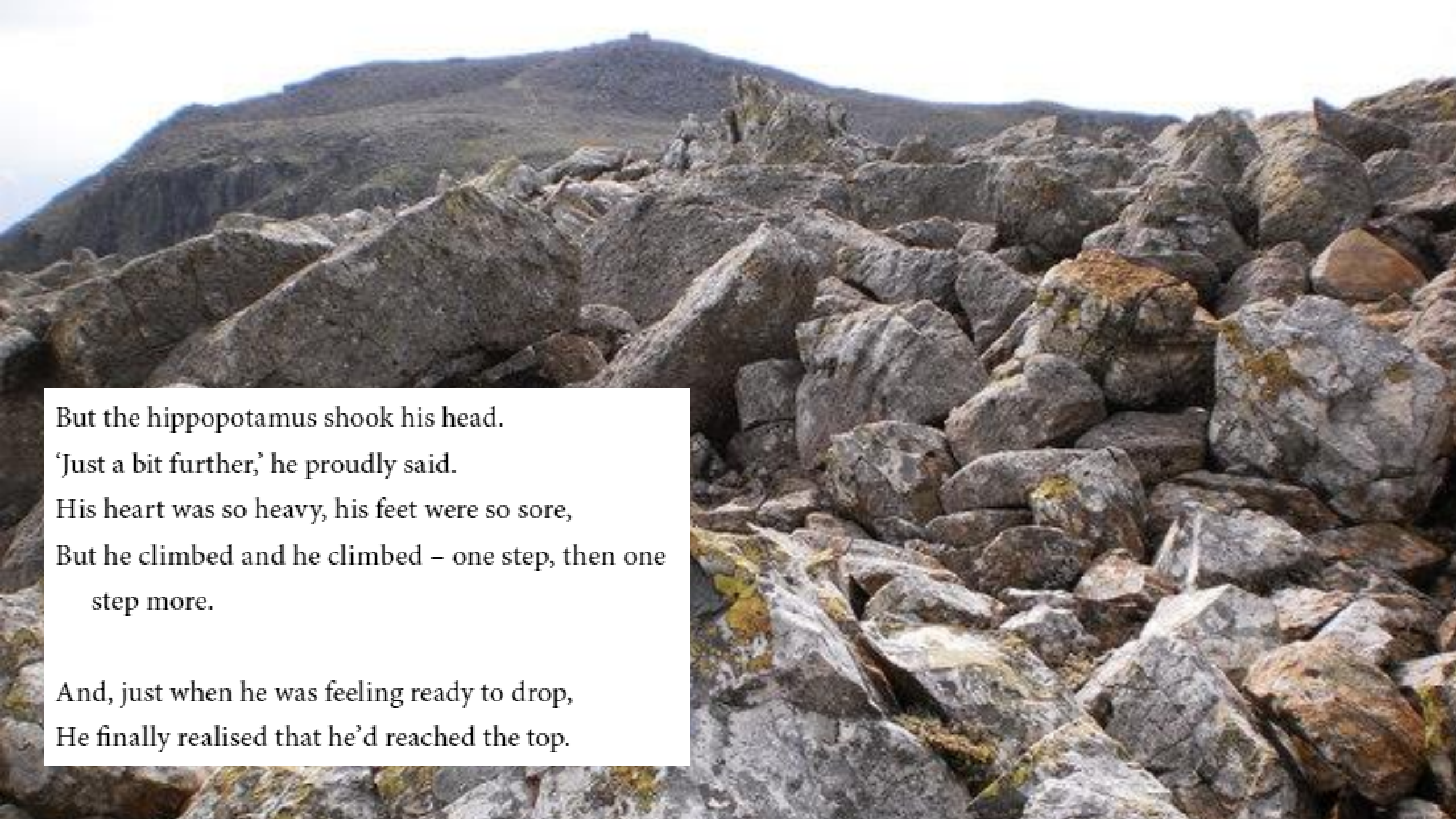
The hippo – though tempted – again shook his head.
‘Just a bit further,’ he bravely said.



He plunged on through the jungle, and after a while
He arrived at the mountain – the ultimate trial.
Poor hippo was tired, almost giving up hope.
But – one step at a time – he pushed on up the slope.

The mountain was rocky and strewn with huge
boulders;
The stones hurt his feet and the sun scorched his
shoulders.

A lion sat there on a rocky outcropping,
And the lion called out, ‘You’re much better off
stopping.’

A photograph of a rugged mountain landscape. In the foreground, a stone wall made of large, grey, angular rocks runs across the frame. The wall is built on a steep, rocky slope. In the background, a dark, forested mountain peak rises against a pale, overcast sky. The overall scene is one of a challenging climb.

But the hippopotamus shook his head.
'Just a bit further,' he proudly said.
His heart was so heavy, his feet were so sore,
But he climbed and he climbed – one step, then one
step more.

And, just when he was feeling ready to drop,
He finally realised that he'd reached the top.



And a splendid sight met his eyes when he looked
down:

A wide muddy waterhole, gleaming and brown.



He could see lots of splashing – someone was there bathing.

A hippo! A friend! And they seemed to be waving.

And the hippopotamus nodded his head.

‘I’m glad that I chose to keep going,’ he said.

Then a voice from behind him called out, ‘We were wrong!’

The lion, sloth and camel had followed along.

And the animals cried, ‘You’re more brave than the lot of us.

Hip hip hooray for the hope-o-potamus!’