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What's the Scoop on Pee and Poop?



Pat the rat wants to know, where does pee and poop go? He cannot read about wastewater, so there is only one way to find out. Pat the rat takes a dive into the toilet so that he can ride the water down the pipes.

Some people put things in the water and should not be there. What will happen to these things along the way? How does wastewater get cleaned so that it is safe for plants and animals? Pat the rat is ready to learn about wastewater treatment.



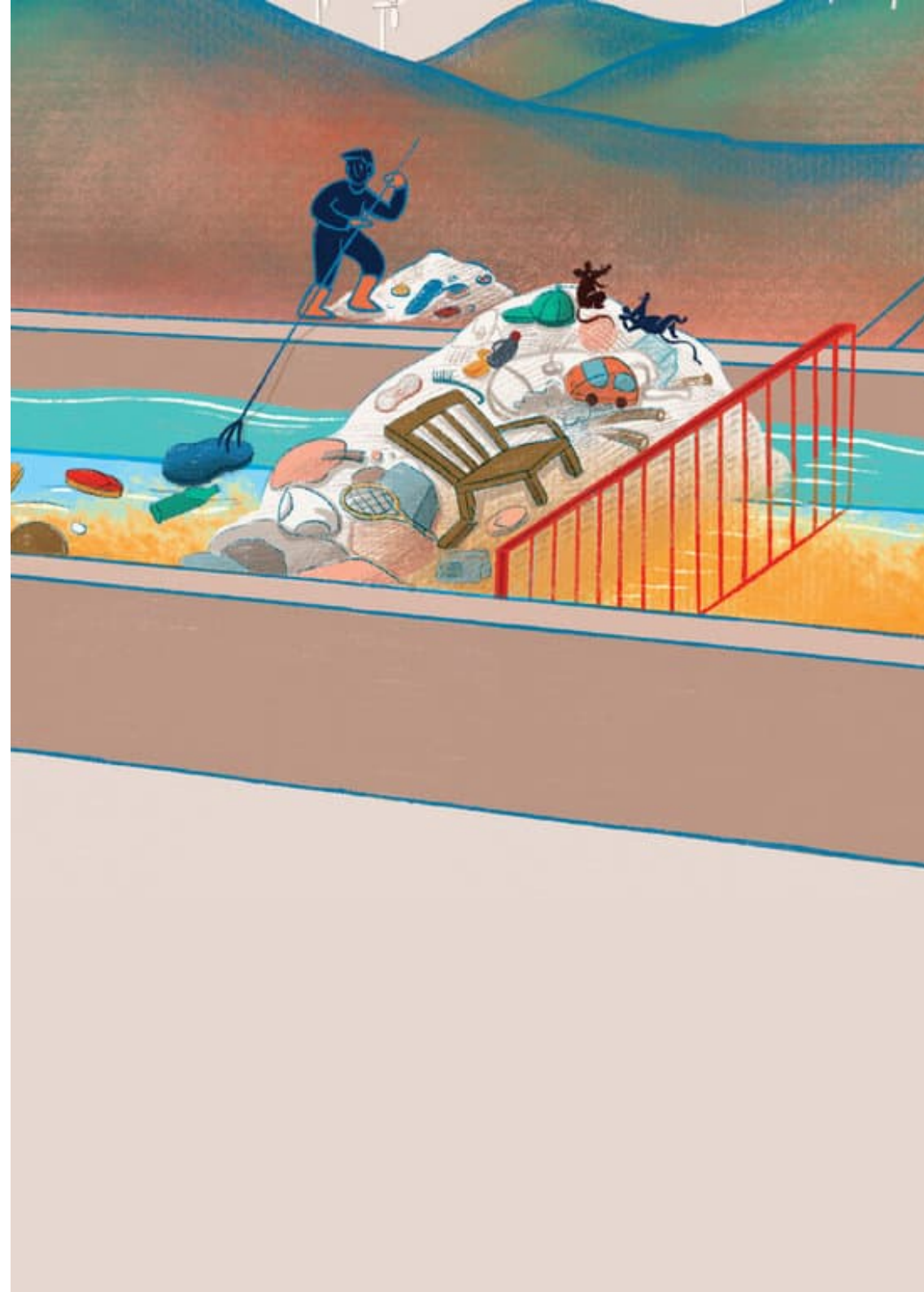
Pat runs down a pipe. He meets a sewer rat at the other end. Pat has spent his whole life in a house. He does not know about the sewer. His new friend says that he will show Pat where the pee and poop go.





Pat gets some soap on him. The sewer rat tells him to wash himself off. He does not want Pat to get hurt by any of the muck that flows along with the wastewater.

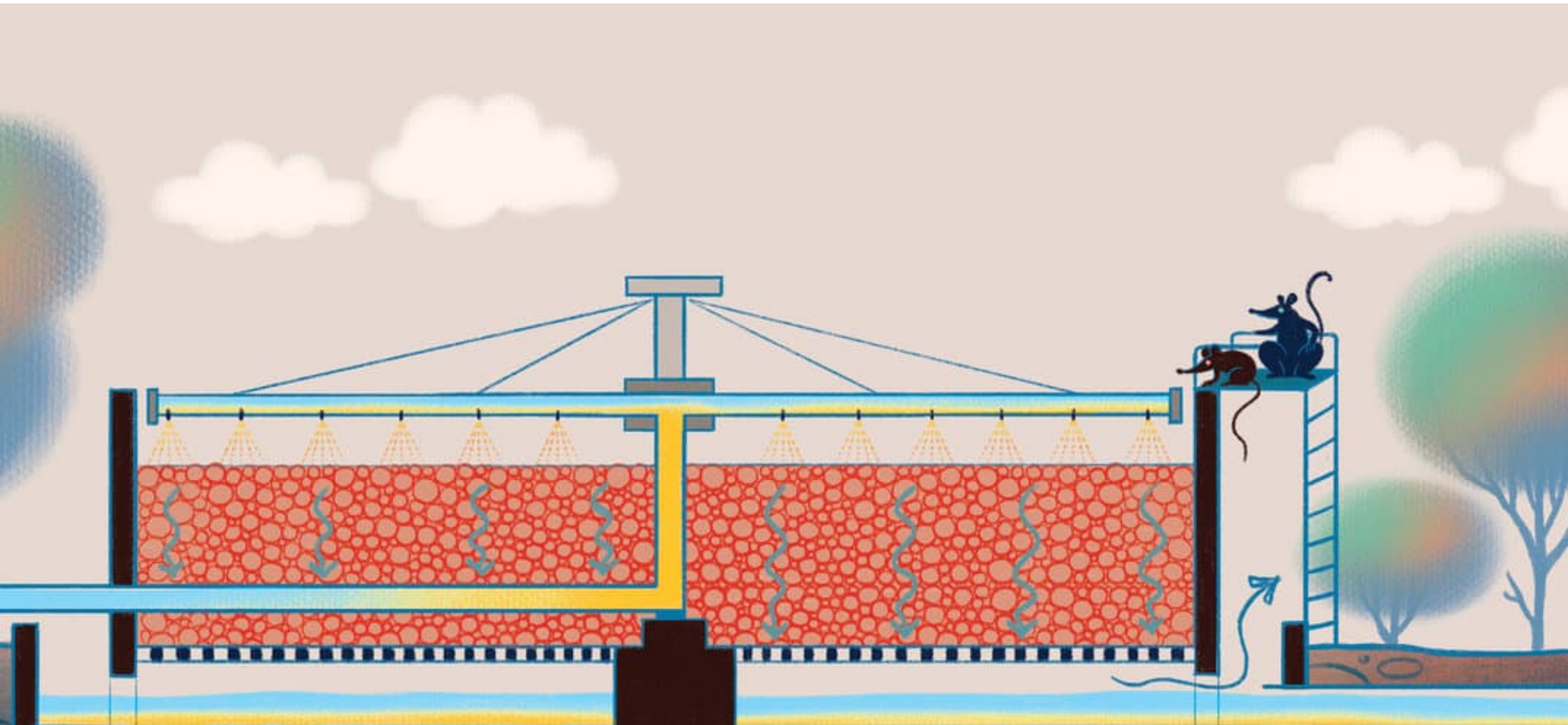
Here is the first way that the junk is sorted. The big bits of trash get stuck on a grate. A man rakes the big bits so that they can be taken to the dump. The water still has small bits of junk in it, so it flows on.



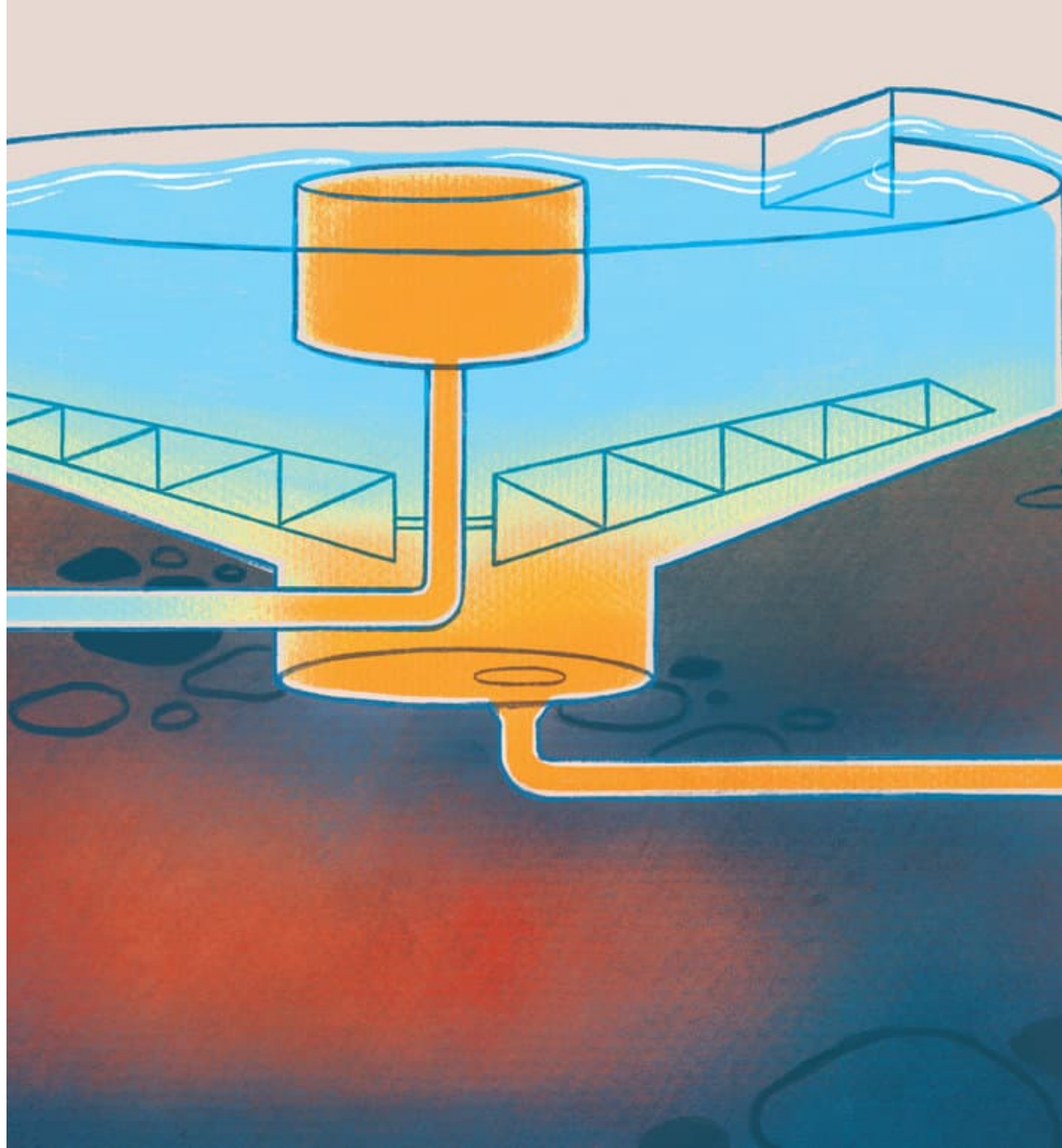


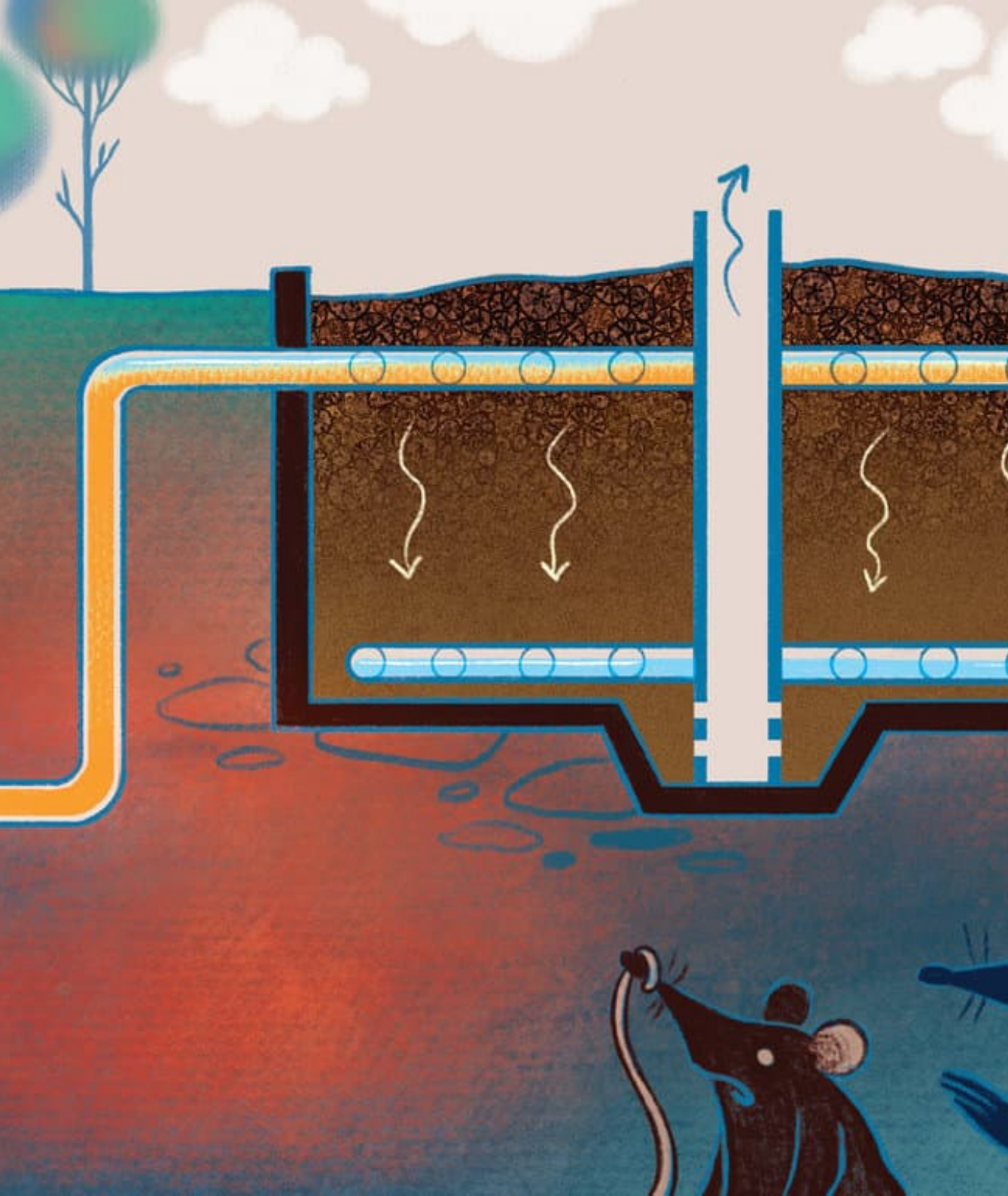
Pat and the pipe rat run to the next part of the treatment. Pat is having a good time. He asks the pipe rat things as they go so that he can understand all that there is to know about wastewater.

The tanks all have jobs. Here is where the water is sprayed over a material that will soak up some of the bad bits. The water that comes out the other end will be a lot cleaner. Wastewater treatment needs to be done in stages. Each stage takes out different bits until the water is clean enough to put out into the environment.



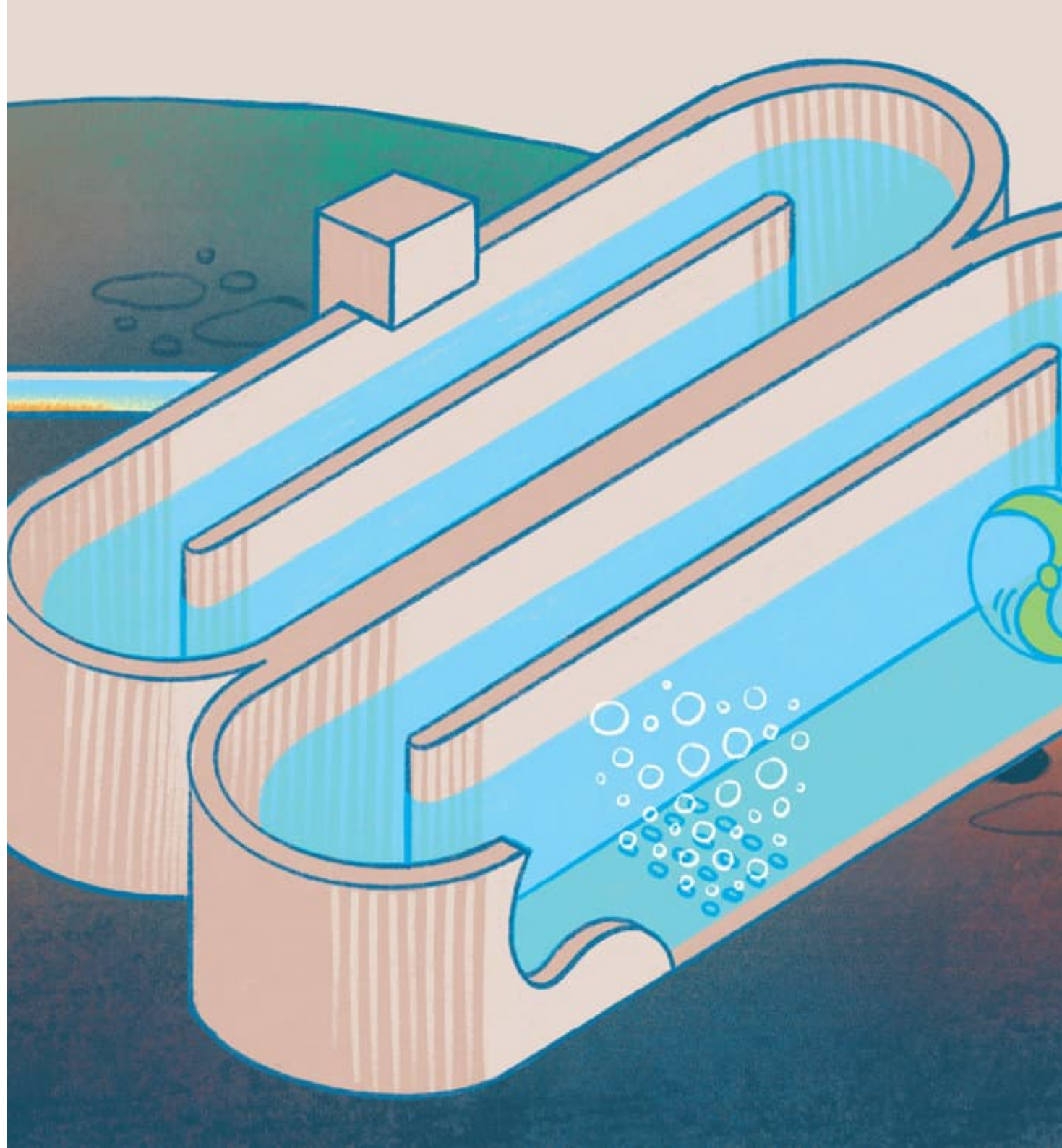
Some parts of the jobs take time. In this tank the water settles. The heavy bits sink to the bottom and are drained off. The water is looking much cleaner now, but it is not ready to drink or put out into the environment. There are small things that we cannot see that are bad for us.





The waste will get used on farms, so it must not make us sick. It might seem gross that this is how waste is used, but poop is very good for making plants grow. We know how to use it so that it does not do any harm to our bodies when we eat the plants. This saves on making fertiliser and puts the waste to good use.

The last part of the treatment is to disinfect it with chemicals or UV light. After this is done, the water is safe to drink. It is also safe to send out into the environment. This water will not cause problems for fish and other animals living around that water or the plants that grow there.





At the end, the water is safe to go into the sea. It gets released so that it can be a part of the water cycle again. By treating water and releasing it, we can have less of an impact on the water cycle while we still get all of the water that we need for drinking, bathing and cleaning.

The pipe leads all the way to the sea. Pat the rat pops out. His family are having a day at the sea! What luck. Pat the rat wishes that he could tell them all about what he has learned. Maybe one day they will take their own trip to the wastewater treatment plant to get the scoop on pee and poop.





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