

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To the memory of my friend
Marilyn Handler LeGette
who encouraged me to tell my story.
And Ruth Kirschner who made sure
this book saw the light of day.

INTRODUCTION

This may look like a child's book, heavy with illustrations and scant text, written in the voice of a little girl. In fact, it is a book for adults, designed to

convey the experience of a child. It provides a window on abuse, one that may help you address the issue whether in your own life, or in the life of someone close to you.

This book is a call to healing, an offer to readers to look more closely at their own experience or be ready to assist others for whom childhood abuse is a past or present danger.

The creation of *I'm Telling* began one Friday afternoon when I painted a watercolor image based on a childhood photo. It looked incomplete, so I wrote a few words on the painting. Several paintings later I shared my words-and-



watercolor images with the men and women in my art class. The combined paintings told a story of my relationship with my abusive father—the fear, guilt and confusion that it engendered. Several of the women in class said my story touched them personally. As girls they too had been mistreated by an adult or an older boy. One of the men said he could relate to the feelings I expressed, as well.

The emotions my paintings evoked in my classmates were real and powerful, even though the memories of their experiences may have been hazy. It is common for children to block out specific details of abuse as a way of protecting themselves from frightening experiences over which they have no control. Even when memories are vague, the emotional impact remains intact and doesn't diminish over time. If untreated, these memories can trigger strong feelings when anything reminiscent of the abuse occurs—even decades later.

As I shared the book more widely, I was stunned to discover that more than half the women I spoke with and several of the men had experienced childhood sexual abuse. My reading on this topic revealed that, before the age of eighteen, more than one in four girls experience sexual abuse at the hands of a man or an older boy. By the time they are eighteen at least one in six boys is sexually

abused by an older boy, man, or woman. Abuse of children, especially sexual abuse, is a topic often kept in the shadows, yet for personal healing and societal change to occur, it must be discussed openly.

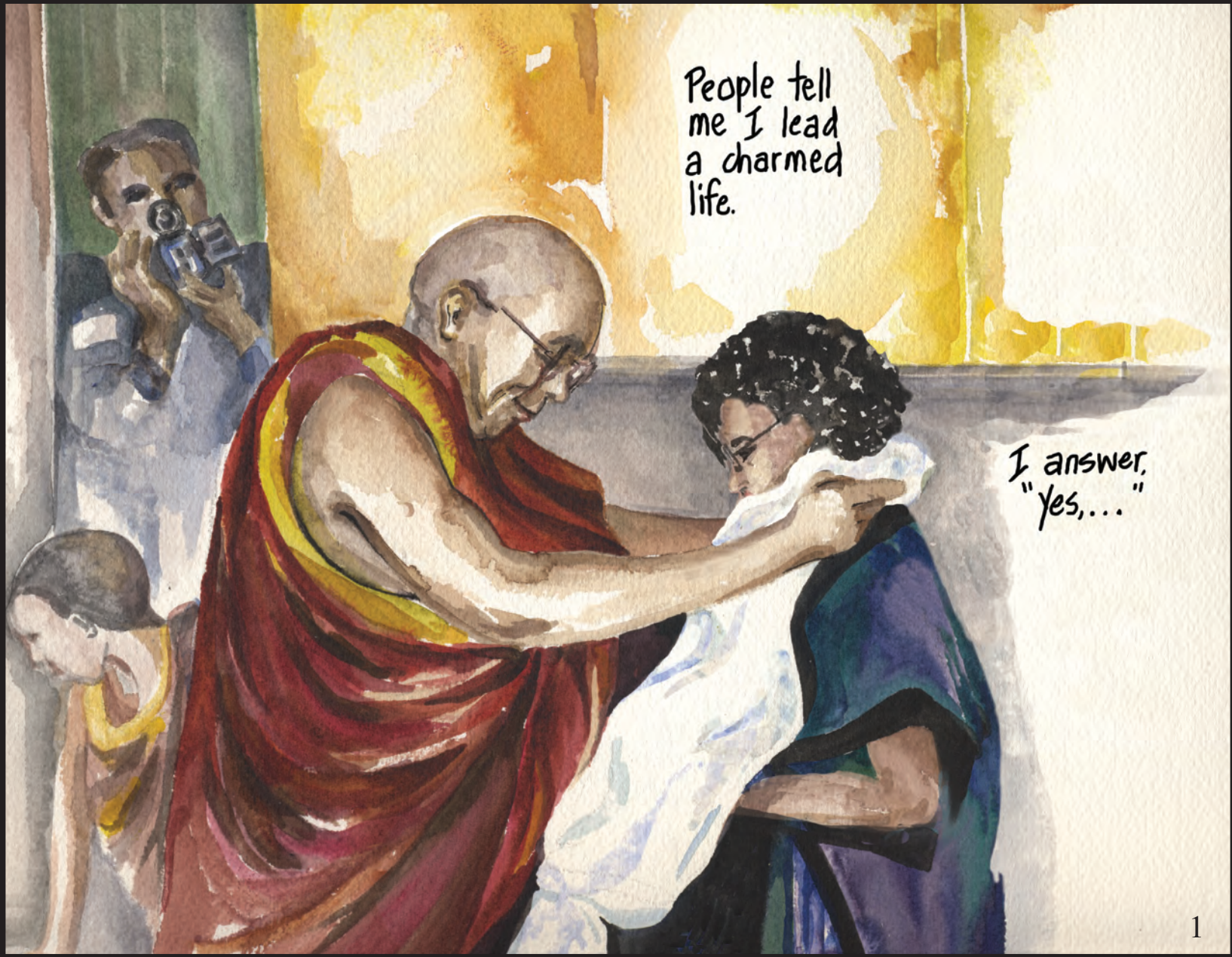
I was saddened that the majority of women who previewed this book, a much larger sample than my original art class group, told me they related to the topic from personal experience. They were encouraged by reading my story and by my willingness to seek resolution in order to live a more fulfilling life.

Therapists who looked at the book asked how soon they could have copies to give clients who were ready to come to terms with their experiences of abuse. School counselors and concerned adults have said that the book touched them deeply and encouraged them to take a more active, informed stand. Fortunately, once concerned adults have the facts and know how to spot signs of possible abuse, it becomes clear we can make a difference. We can prepare children to be less vulnerable and to keep lines of communication open so that they feel safe and heard when expressing fears and concerns.

Becoming aware of others' stories can lessen feelings of isolation and self-doubt common among survivors of childhood abuse. This book does not contain a

detailed description of my sexual abuse. Rather, it reveals the patterns of abuse, both emotional and sexual; the ways a child is seduced into keeping secrets and made to feel powerless and thus more vulnerable to abuse.

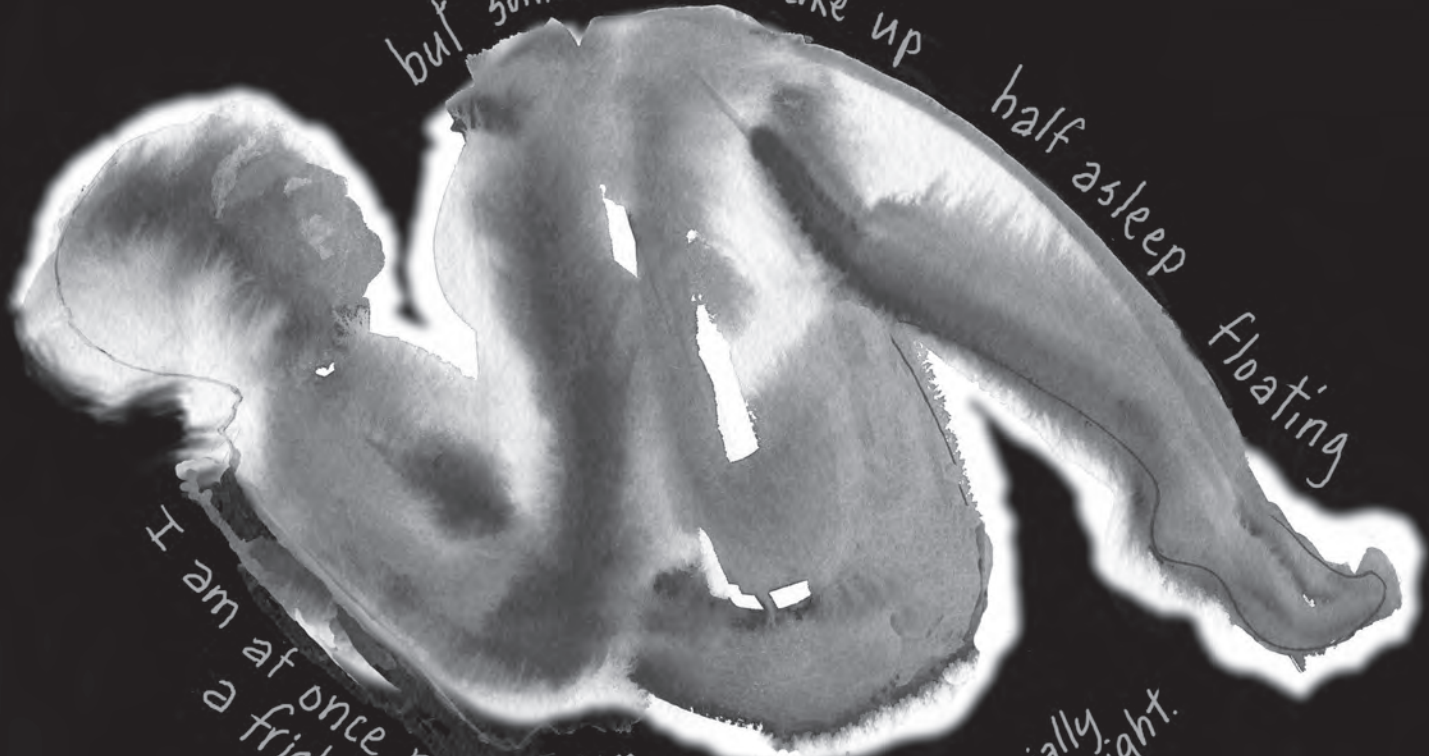
I hope that, by sharing my story, I will inspire others to take healing steps. Perhaps the first step will be to tell a trusted friend, family member, or a therapist. My story ends on a note of hope. The process of healing and the strength I gained as a survivor are meant to encourage others on their journeys. *I'm Telling* ends with a list of resources and links for those who wish to explore the topic further. Speaking out is a first step towards ending childhood sexual abuse: molesters avoid children who talk. Let us all raise our voices and break the silence that enables sexual abuse of children.



People tell
me I lead
a charmed
life.

I answer,
"Yes,..."


but sometimes I wake up half asleep floating



I am at once my grown self and a frightened little girl. She is still there, especially at night.







Dad taught me
to sing like
Eartha Kitt.

♫ I want to be evil

I want
to be bad ♫

I didn't want to
be bad. I just
wanted Dad to like me.

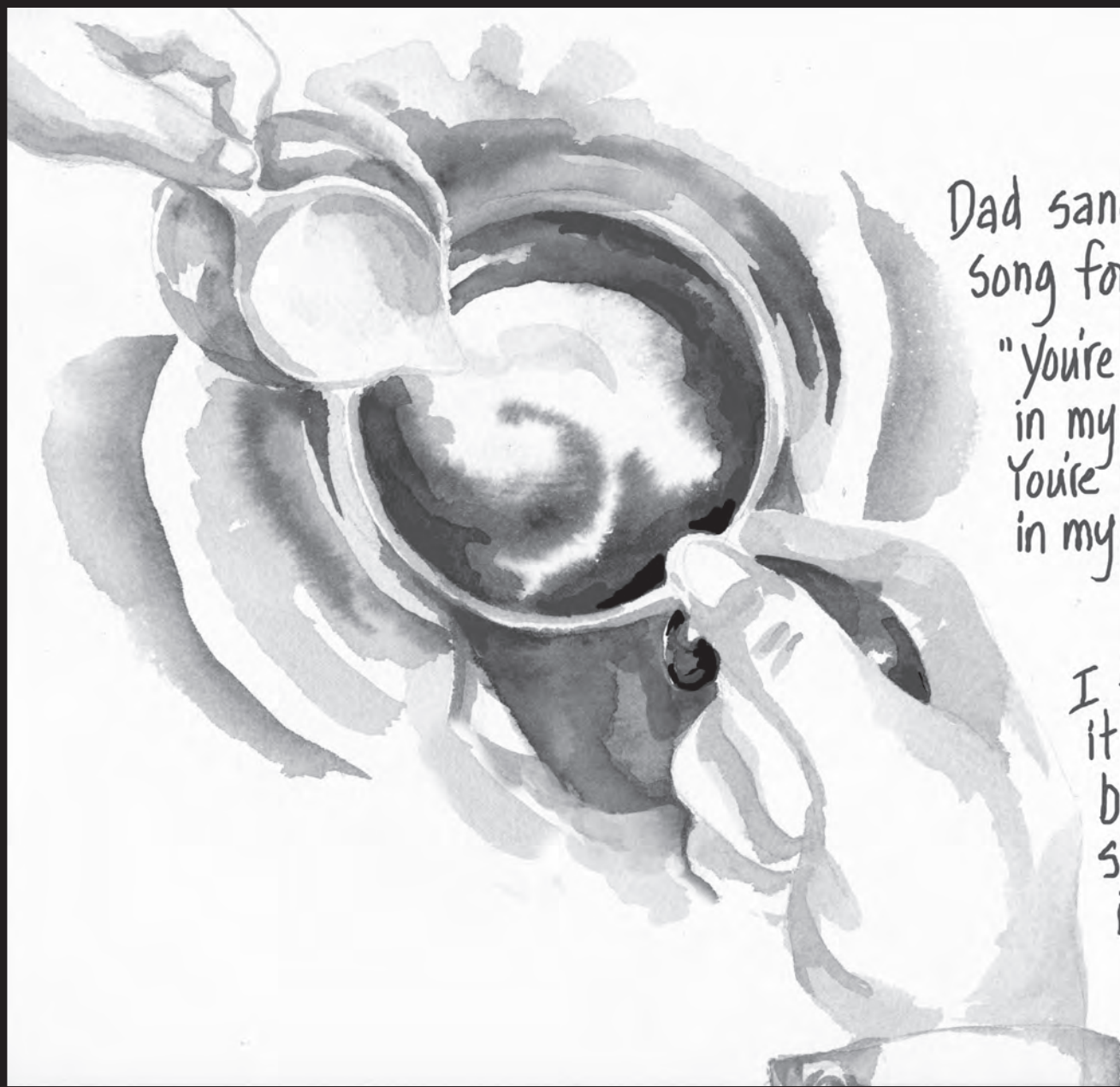
Once I sang the song it
was too late to take it back.





Maybe it was
already too late
when Dad sneaked
me downstairs
for ice cream
way past bedtime
and we agreed
it was just our
secret.

Mommy
wouldn't
understand.



Dad sang a
song for me,
"You're the cream
in my coffee.
You're the lace
in my shoe."

I thought
it was silly
but Dad
said no,
it wasn't.

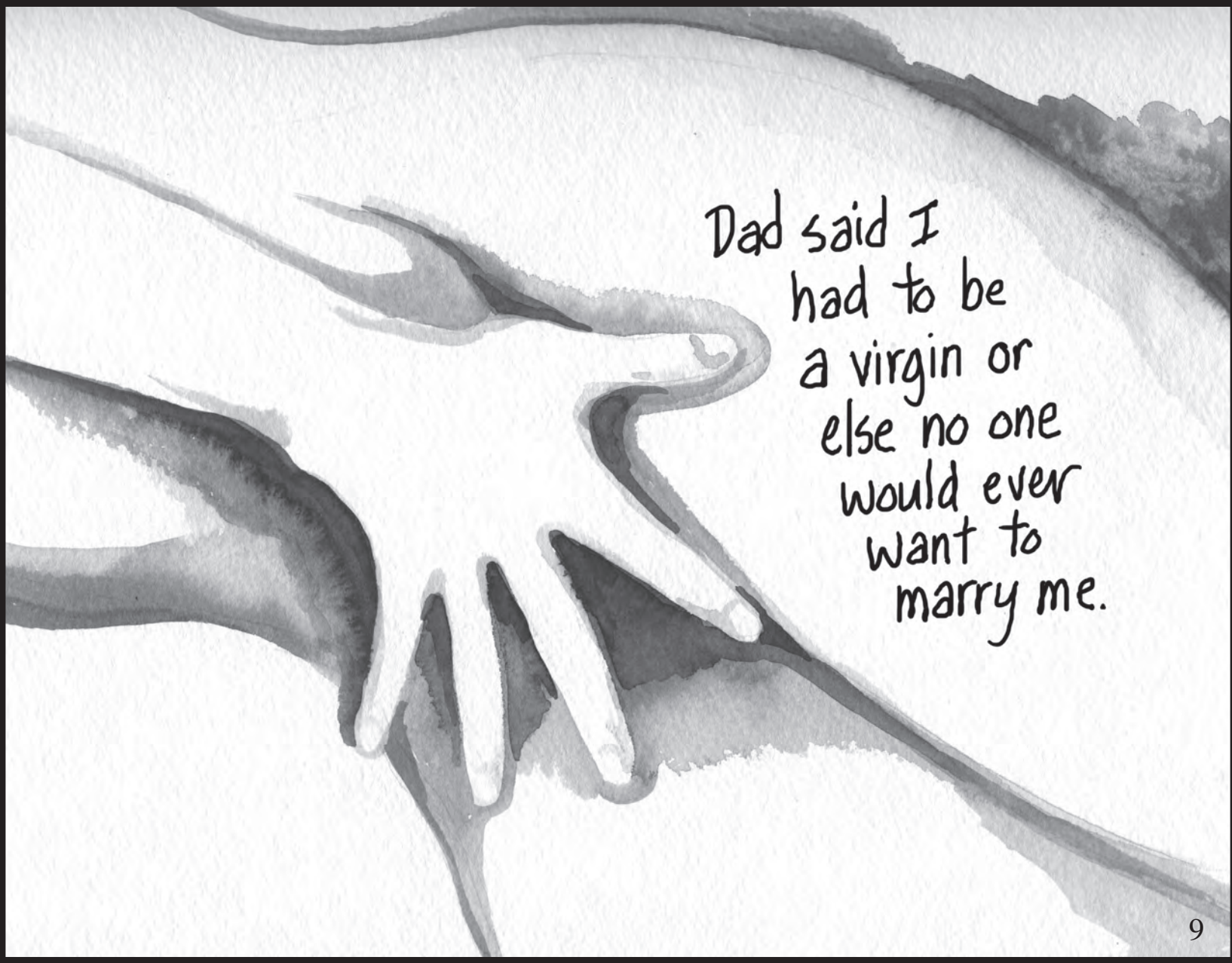


"I'm old enough
for huggin' but
I'm too young
to Tango."

That was a
Theresa Brewer
hit.

I sang it for
Dad's friends.

Theresa was a
virgin.
Dad could tell.



Dad said I
had to be
a virgin or
else no one
would ever
want to
marry me.

Dad said he was a Ladies' Man. Lots of ladies. And I was just a girl. But he told me stuff no one else knew. And I could ask him anything in the world. Anything.



One of his girlfriends
from before Mom was an
Indian Princess.

Which is exactly
what I wanted
to be.



Dad could be fun and I
usually liked it when he
paid attention to me.

But sometimes, all of a sudden,
he would be angry and punish me
for being a

Very
bad
girl.

It was
like having
two dads.

A daytime
dad in front
of other
people
and the
other one.



I guess there were two of me, too.
One was lucky and could catch
leaves right out of the sky.

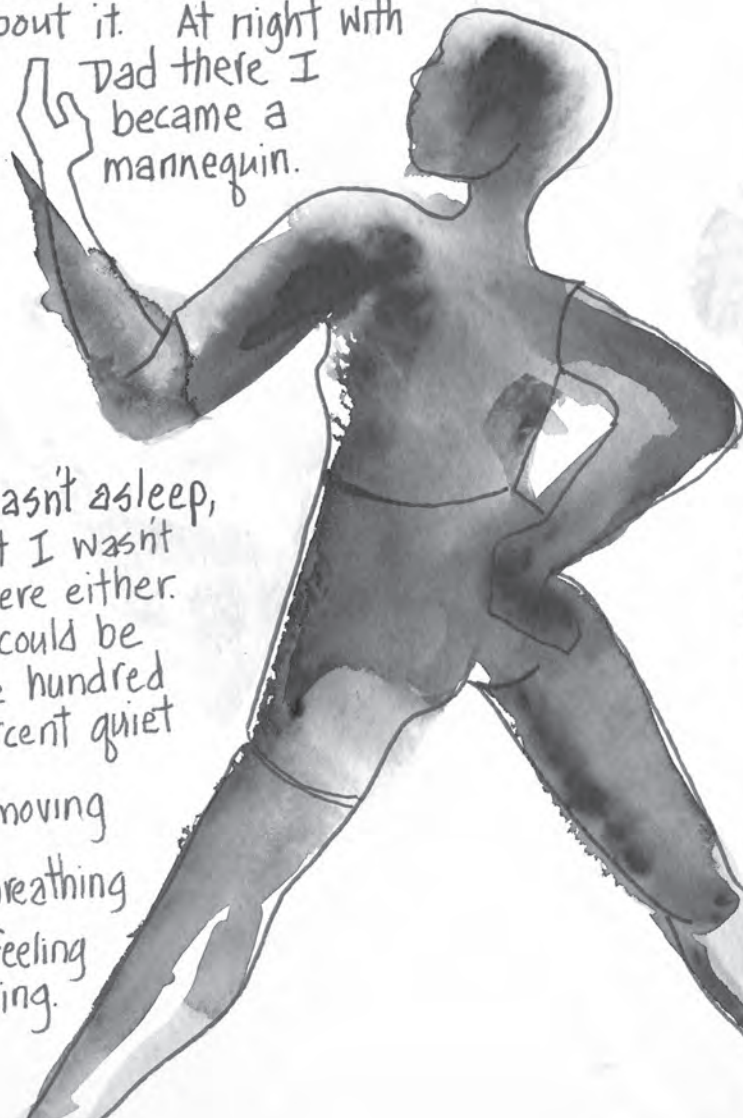
The other had to
make up
special tricks.



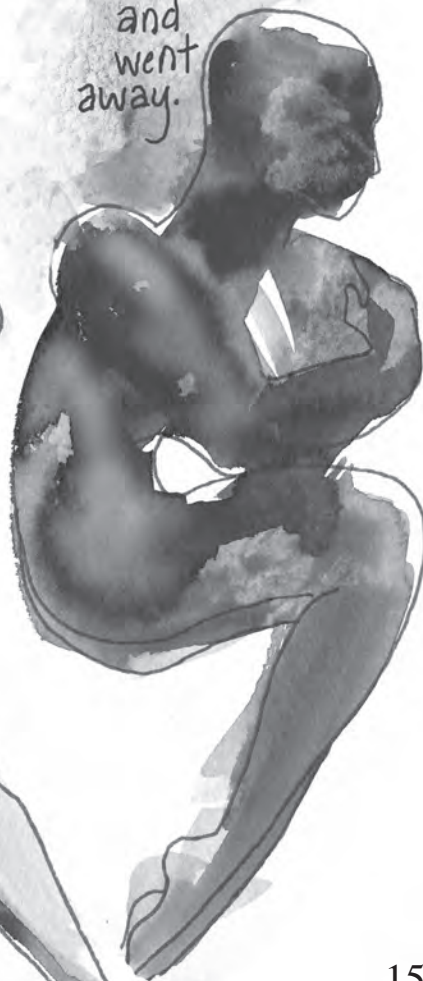


I didn't even have to
think about it. At night with
Dad there I
became a
mannequin.

I wasn't asleep,
But I wasn't
there either.
I could be
one hundred
percent quiet
not moving
not breathing
not feeling
anything.



I just
curled up
and
went
away.



My teachers said I was the luckiest girl in Iowa to have such a talented mother.

She made me skirts with happy clowns all over.

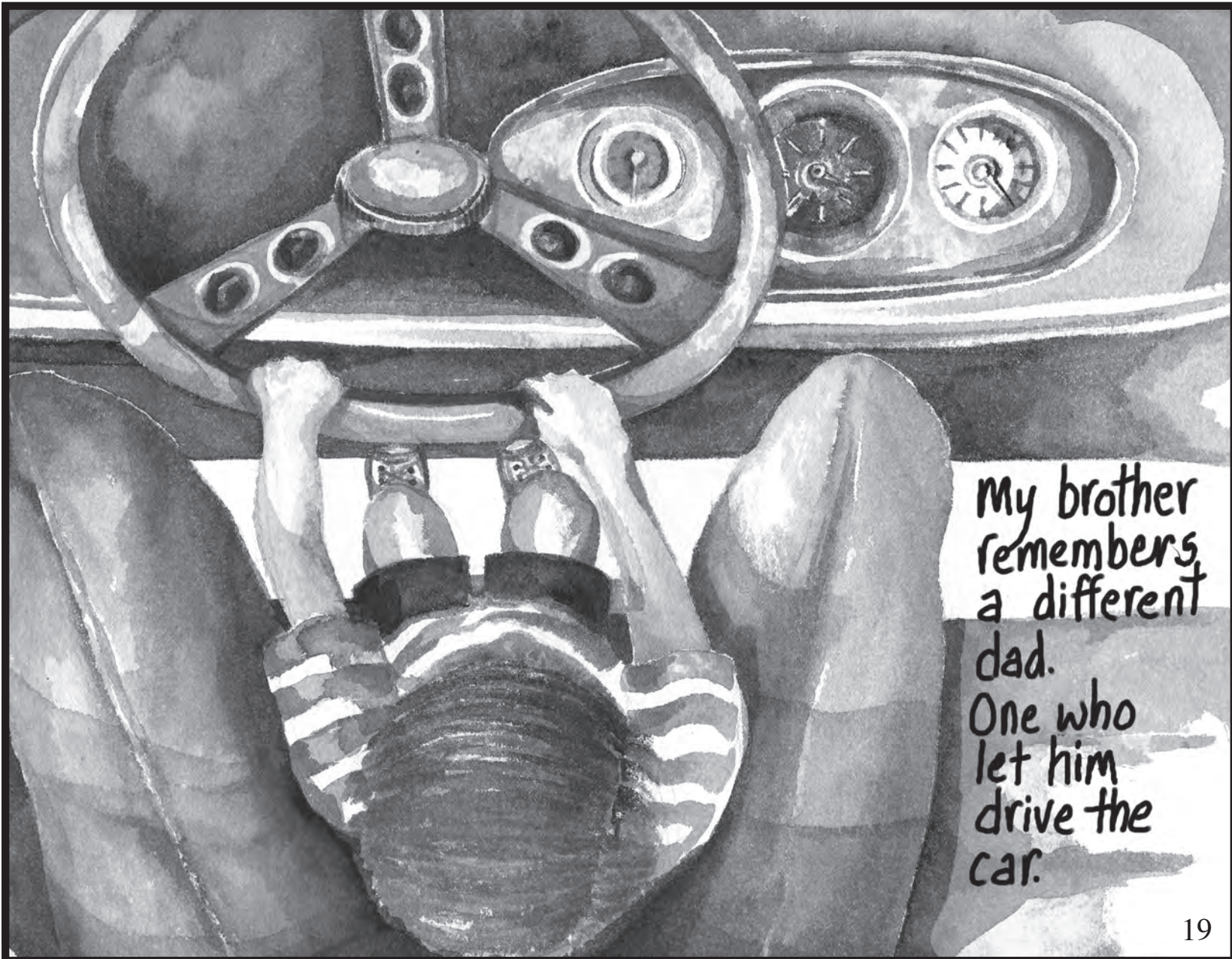






I usually told
Mom when my
vagina hurt, then
I sat on the
toilet while
she poured warm
soapy water
on me.

She liked it
when I used
grown up words
for things like
vagina and penis.



And he wanted
to grow up to be
just like Dad.



I wished it
could be just
the two of
us, Mom and
me before
my brother

and she
would
sing her
camp
songs.

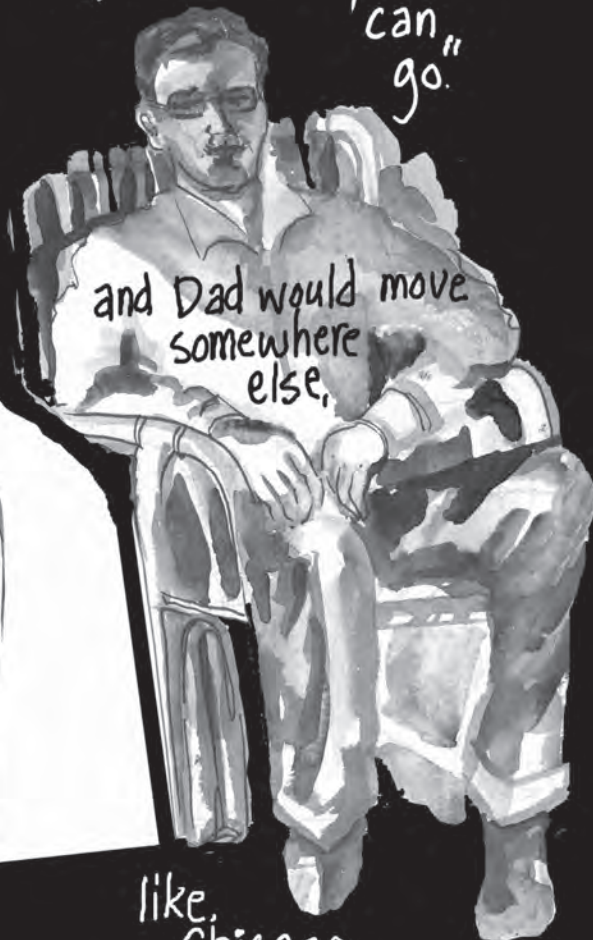
"Oh say
have
you
heard
of the
tattooed
lady



tattooed from head to
toe, as far as you
can,
go."

and Dad would move
somewhere
else,

like
Chicago.



When I was five and a half I met my new
neighbor, Sara Blume.

Sara was older than me
and she knew stuff.


She said it was illegal in Iowa
to kiss for more than a
minute.

We timed it.
Nothing happened.

But then two days
later when Dad
got real mad at me

I thought,
he knows.






Sara had
an amazing
mother named
Willie Mae.

Willie Mae
was the best.
She cooked and
baked and sang
songs, too.

When she
hugged me
I felt 100%
safe. She was
big and strong and
I felt lost in
all her
softness.

She gave me warm
chocolate chip cookies,
she called me Sugar.

I wished my mom
could change and be
more like Willie Mae.



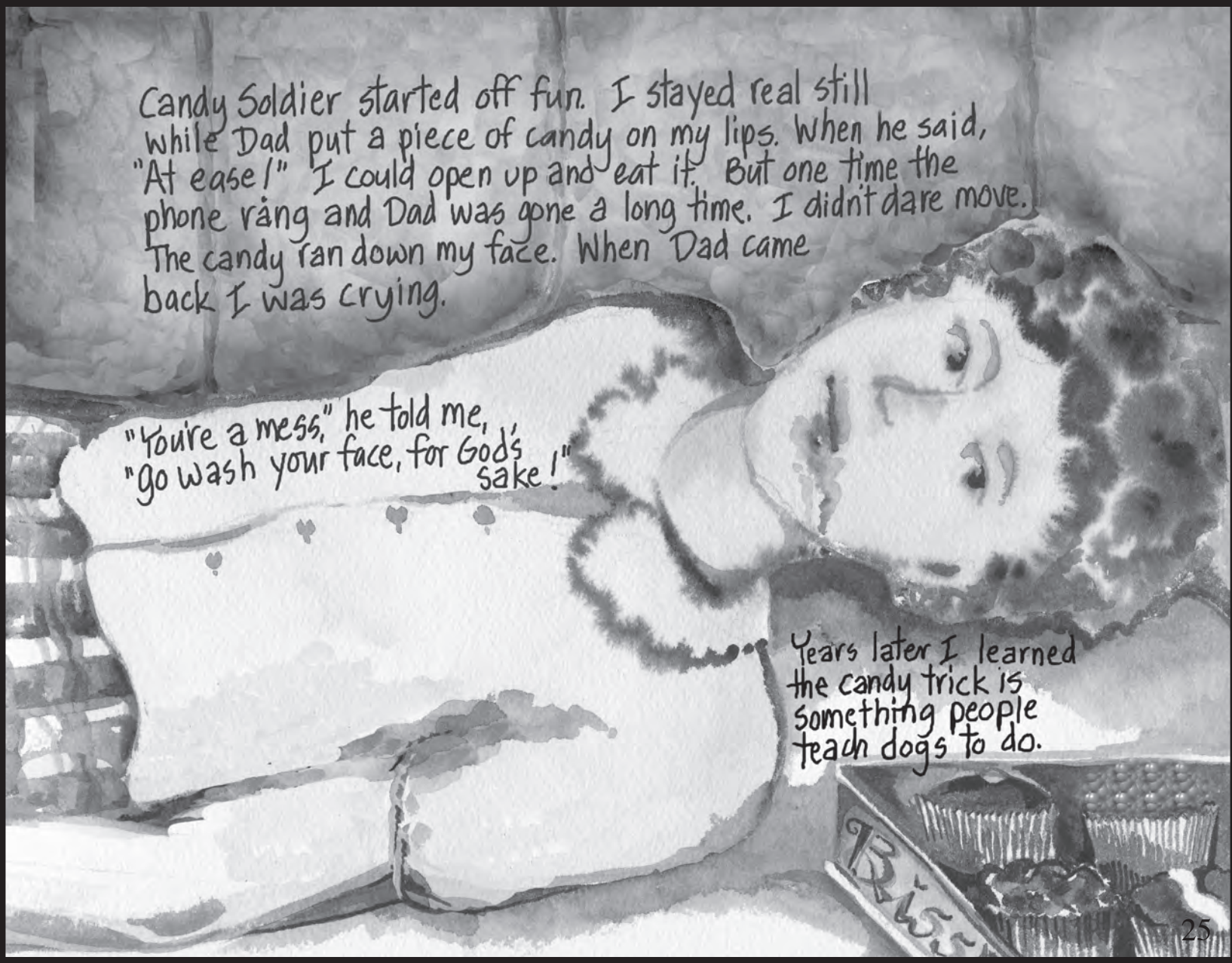
I told Sara that I liked her mom best
because she sang and baked and hugged.

"That's Willie Mae," Sara told me.

"She's not my mom you stupe. She's my maid.
She's a Negro for Pete's sake!"

I didn't
like Sara
after that,
but I still
loved
Willie
Mae.


I decided when
I grew up
I wanted
to be a Negro,
too.



Candy Soldier started off fun. I stayed real still while Dad put a piece of candy on my lips. When he said, "At ease!" I could open up and eat it. But one time the phone rang and Dad was gone a long time. I didn't dare move. The candy ran down my face. When Dad came back I was crying.

"You're a mess," he told me,
"Go wash your face, for God's
sake!"

Years later I learned
the candy trick is
something people
teach dogs to do.



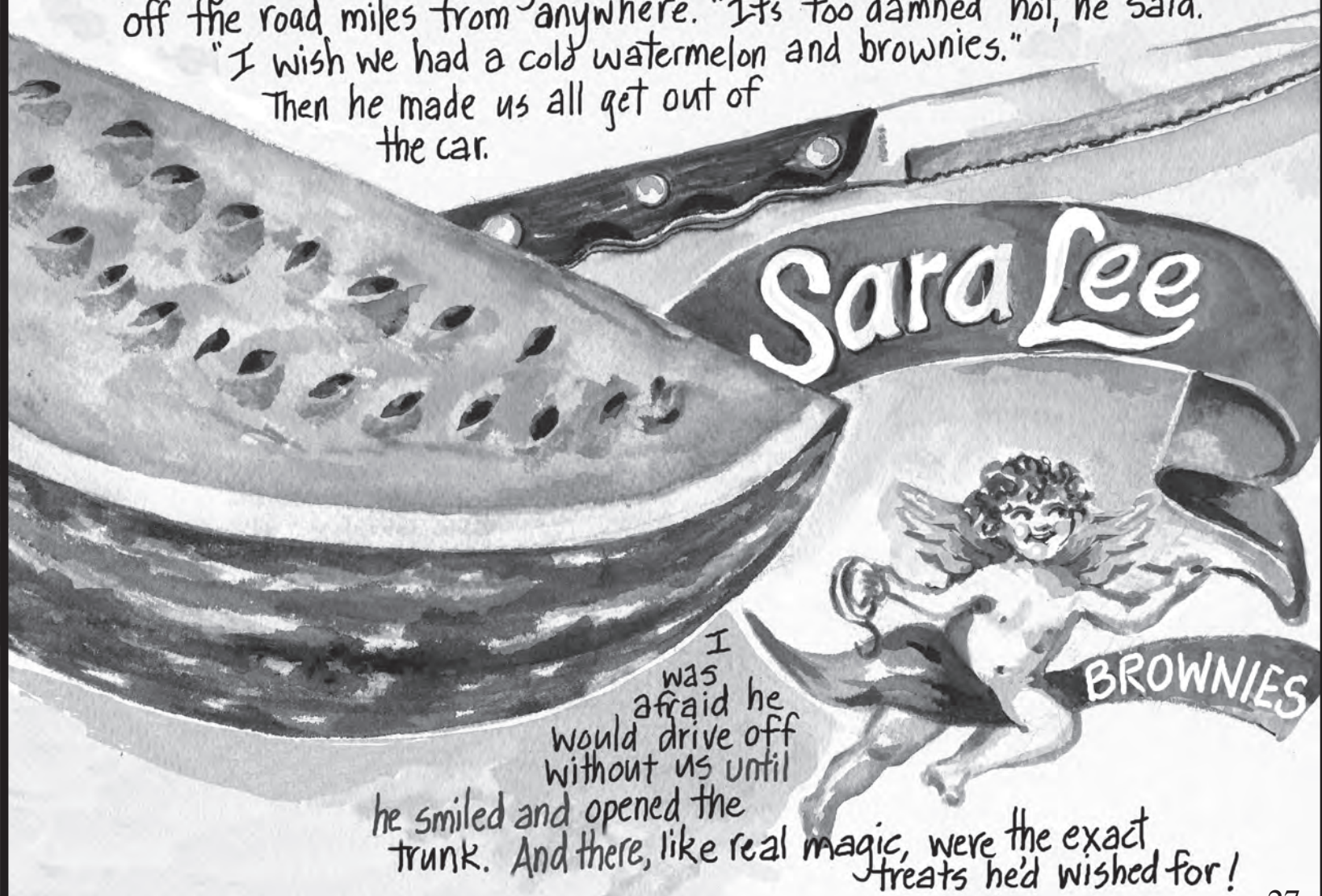
One visit to
Chicago Dad
got mad at me
and he walked
away fast.

I couldn't figure
out which
feet were his
which coat,
which legs.

Then I guess
he came back;
I don't remember.

I just
remember
how mad
he was,
how
scared
I was.

I thought Dad was really mad on vacation when he pulled the car off the road miles from anywhere. "It's too damned hot," he said. "I wish we had a cold watermelon and brownies." Then he made us all get out of the car.



I was afraid he would drive off without us until he smiled and opened the trunk. And there, like real magic, were the exact treats he'd wished for!

The next summer I asked for a Betty Betz locking diary.


One day on vacation, we went to a small town diner.

When I walked in everyone yelled, "Congratulations, you are our one millionth customer!"

They gave me a pink balloon and a Betty Betz diary.



I didn't realize until years later
that Dad had arranged the
whole surprise.



The illustration shows an open diary with a small flower sticker on the top left of the left page and the top right of the right page. The right page contains handwritten text in cursive. A fountain pen with a silver nib and a dark barrel lies diagonally across the bottom right of the diary. Two small, rectangular erasers, one labeled 'Skip' and the other 'Skip', are placed near the bottom of the pen. The entire scene is rendered in a soft, painterly style with muted colors.

Dear Diary:
Mom said I can
write ~~at~~ my secrets
here. I told her
I don't have any
secrets. Love, your
friend, Nancy M.

Annette
had
curly
hair like
me. She was
my favorite
Mousketeer.

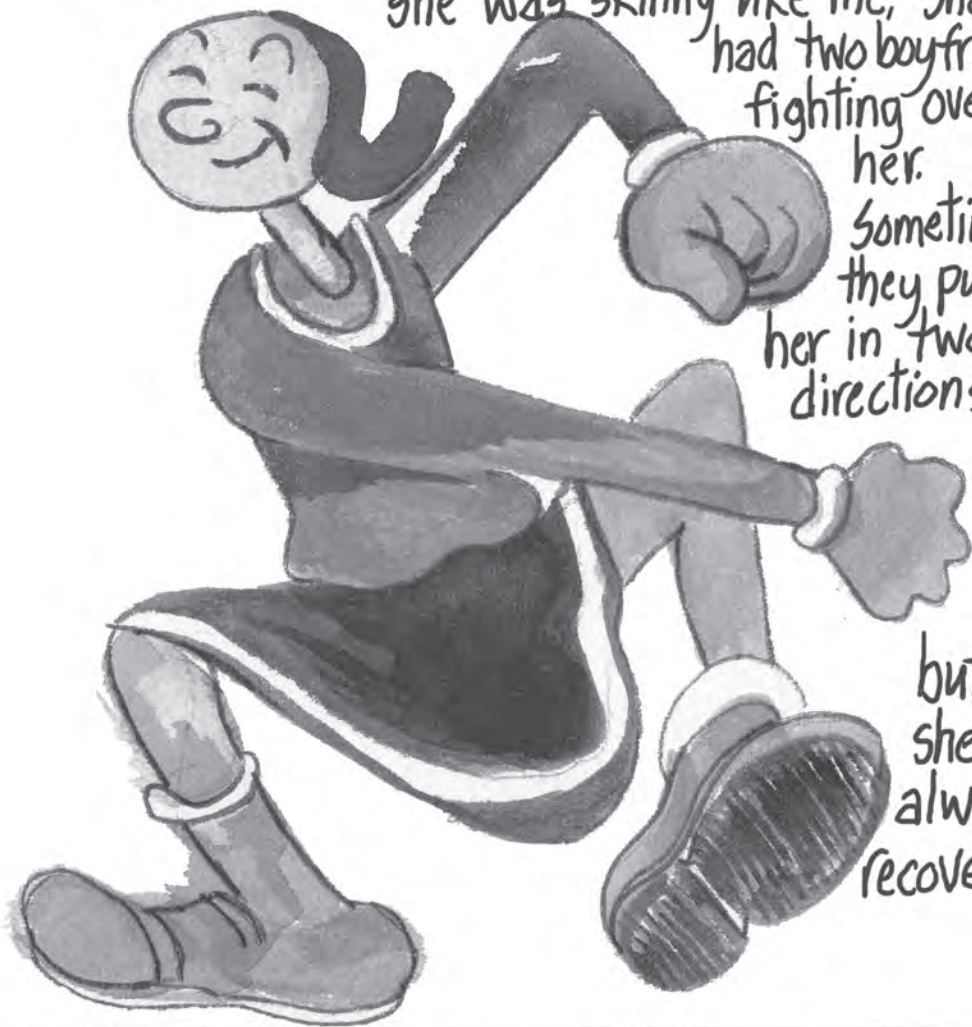
She was sort
of a girl and
a grown up at
the same time.

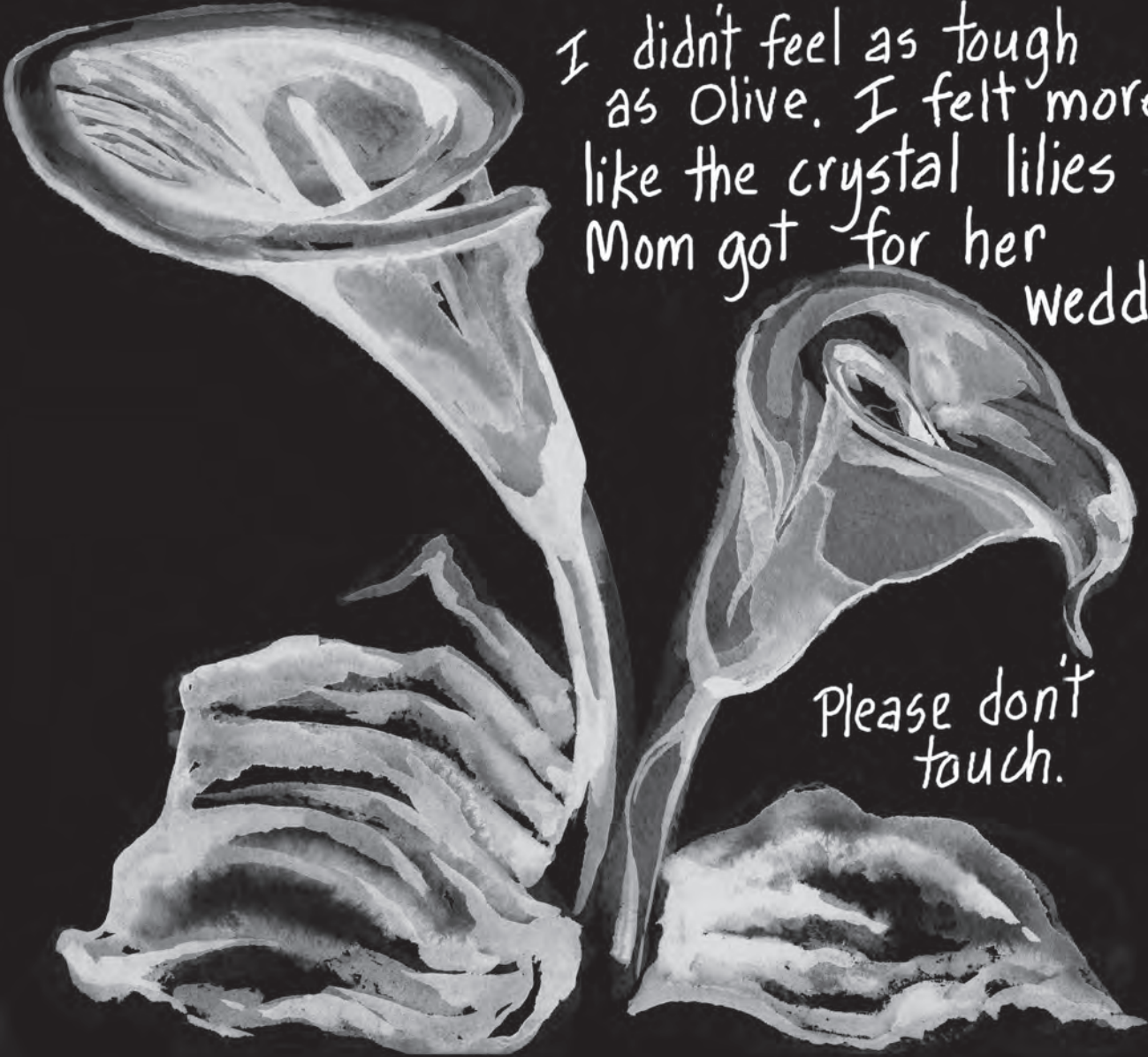


If I couldn't be Annette my
second choice was Olive Oyl. Even though
she was skinny like me, she
had two boyfriends
fighting over
her.

Sometimes
they pulled
her in two
directions

but
she
always
recovered.





I didn't feel as tough
as Olive. I felt more
like the crystal lilies
Mom got for her
wedding.

Please don't
touch.

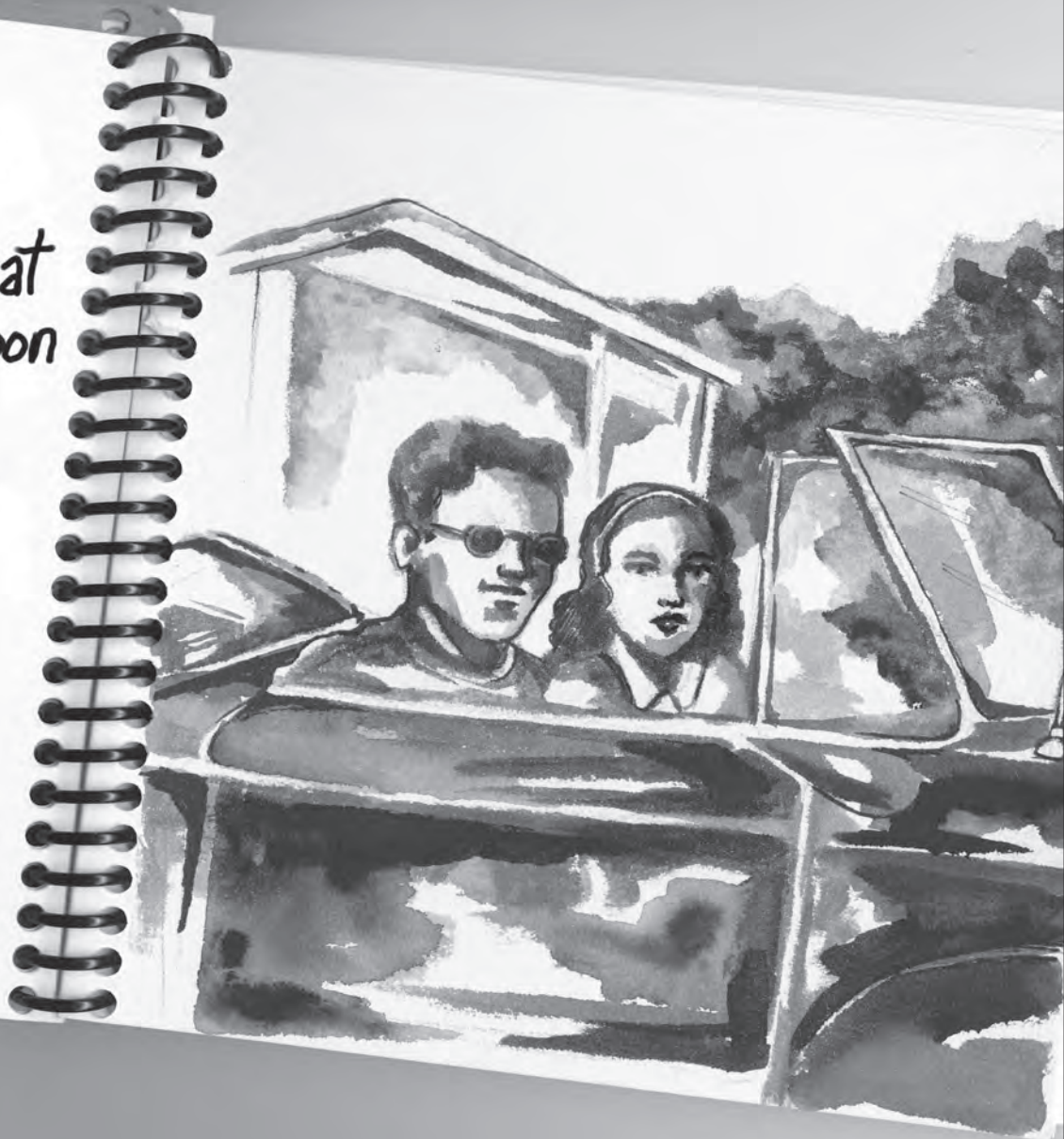


When Mom was
19 she was a
beauty.

Dad saw her
and said,
"That's for me!"

Dad let mom sit
in the driver's seat
for their honeymoon
photo.

Then he drove her
all the
way to
Niagara Falls,
in New
York.




On the way Dad
recited his
favorite poem,
"The Raven,"

He
knew
it by
heart.

So do I.





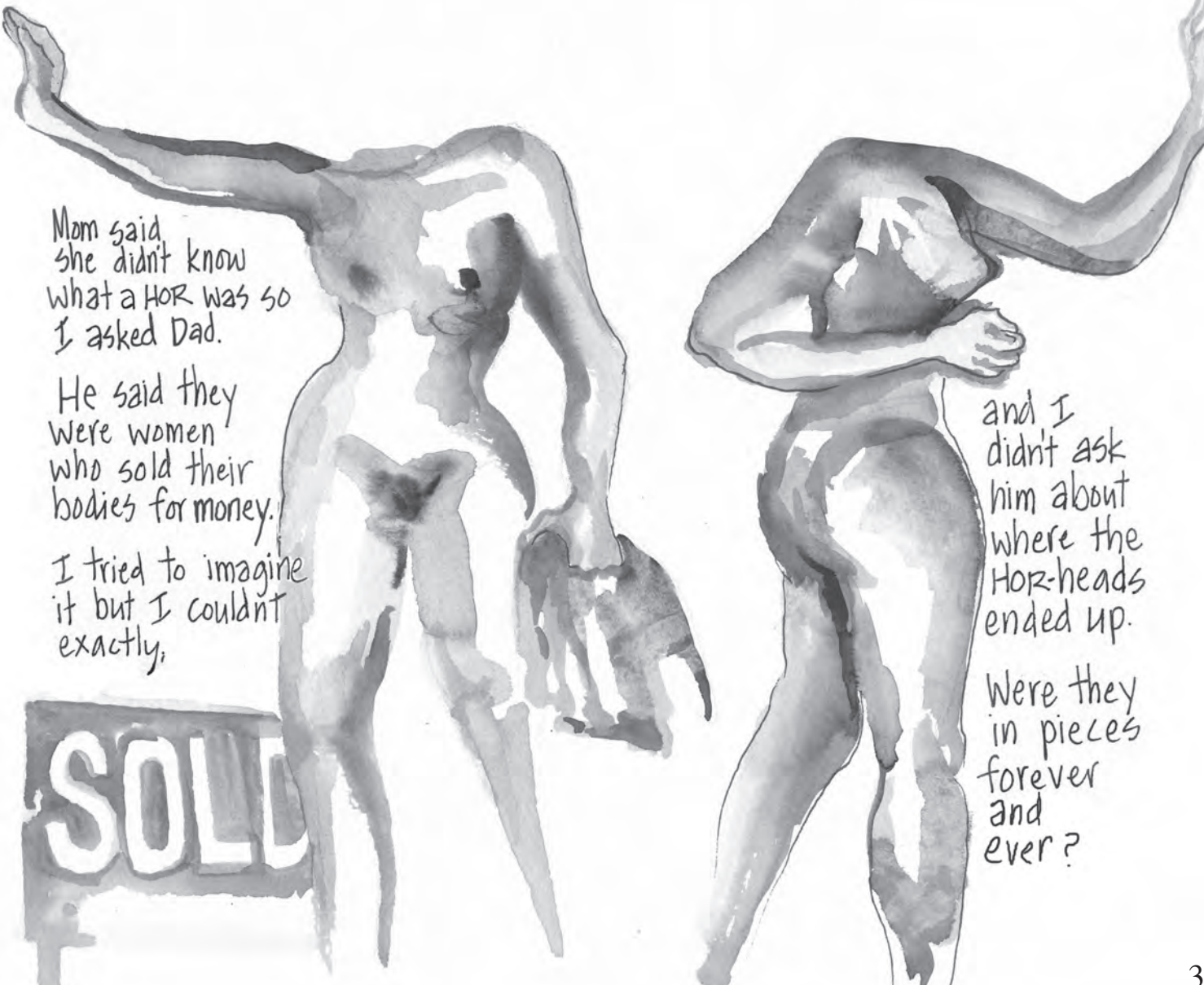
The poem I heard most was this one:

There once was a girl
who had a curl
right in the middle of her forehead.

When
she was good
she was
very very
good.

but when she was
bad she was
hor-head.

That's what
I heard,
hor-head.



Mom said
she didn't know
what a HOR was so
I asked Dad.

He said they
were women
who sold their
bodies for money.

I tried to imagine
it but I couldn't
exactly,

SOLD

and I
didn't ask
him about
where the
HOR-heads
ended up.

Were they
in pieces
forever
and
ever?

I liked TV shows
where the
Moms were
the smart
ones, where
the
Dads
said, "I'm
sorry, honey."

Nobody
got
hit
or even
really yelled at.



Harriet
didn't
have
any girls
to worry
about.

just
two boys,
three, if
you count
Ozzie.





I never let my arm hang over the edge of the bed.
Something might be under there.


I knew some
kids felt safe
with their
Dads,

but with
my dad,
I never
knew.

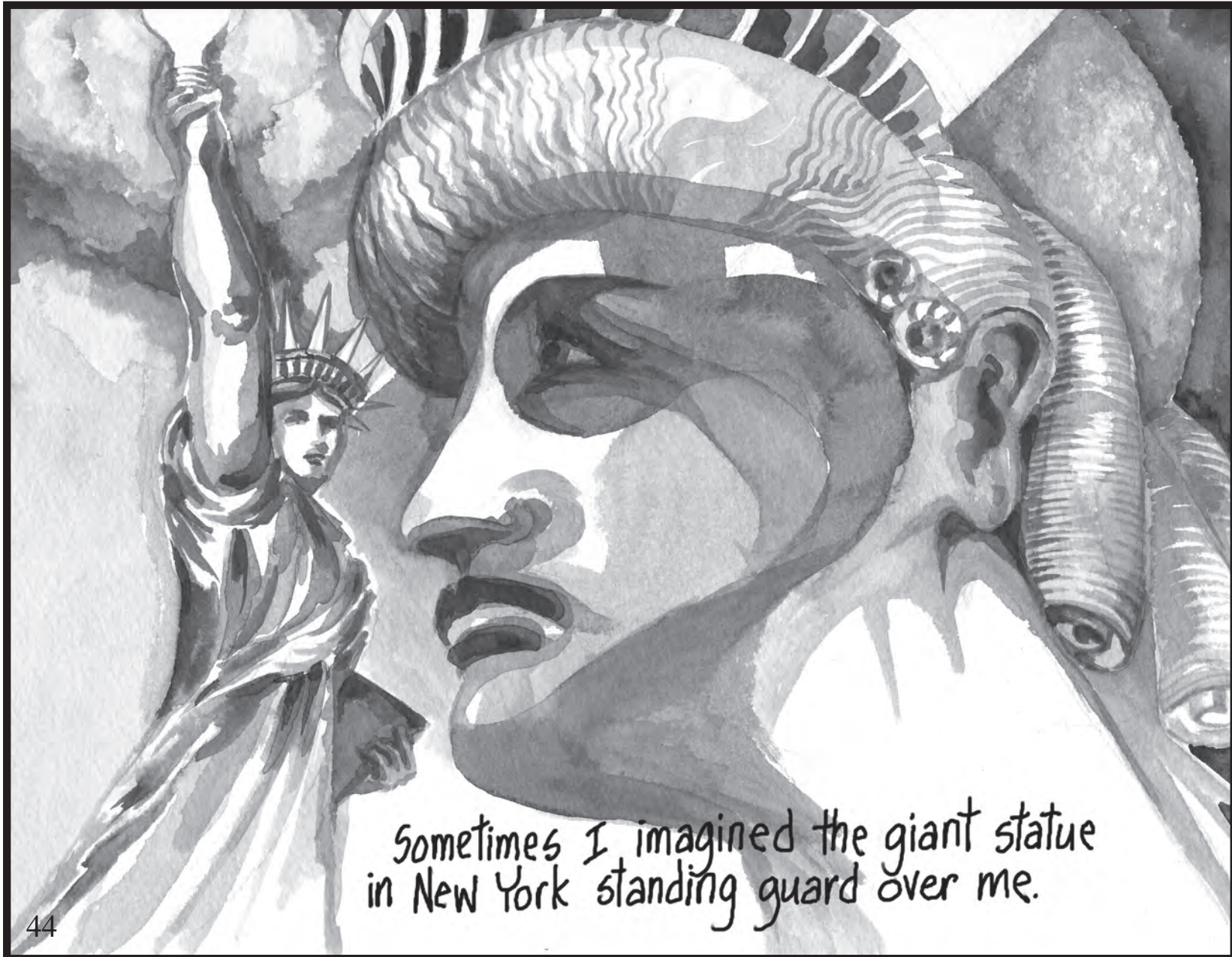


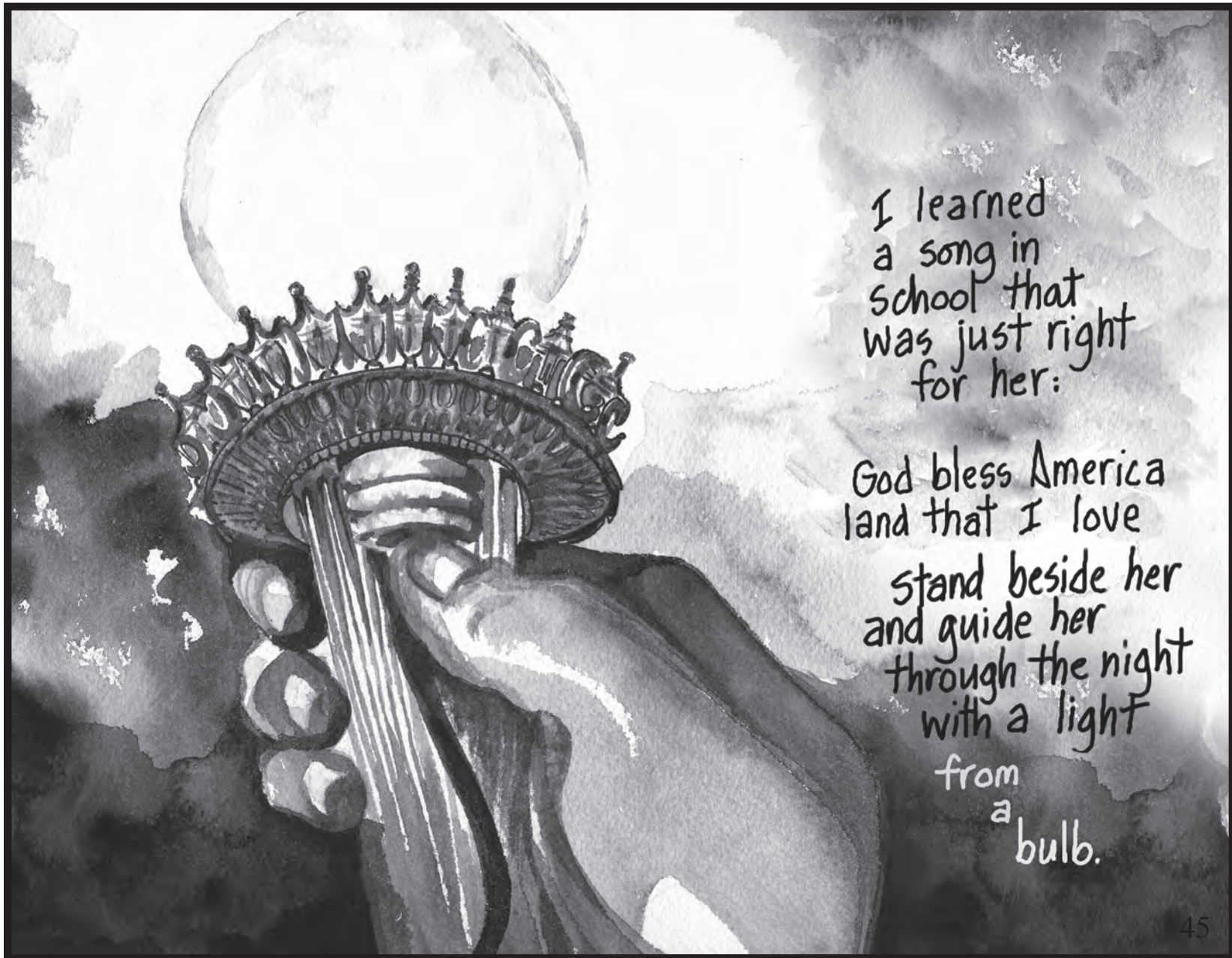
When I told Mom I was afraid every
single night, she got me a
night-light shaped like
a seashell.






In the shadow
from the nightlight
my good guys
survived, even
when they
were eaten
alive
night
after
night.





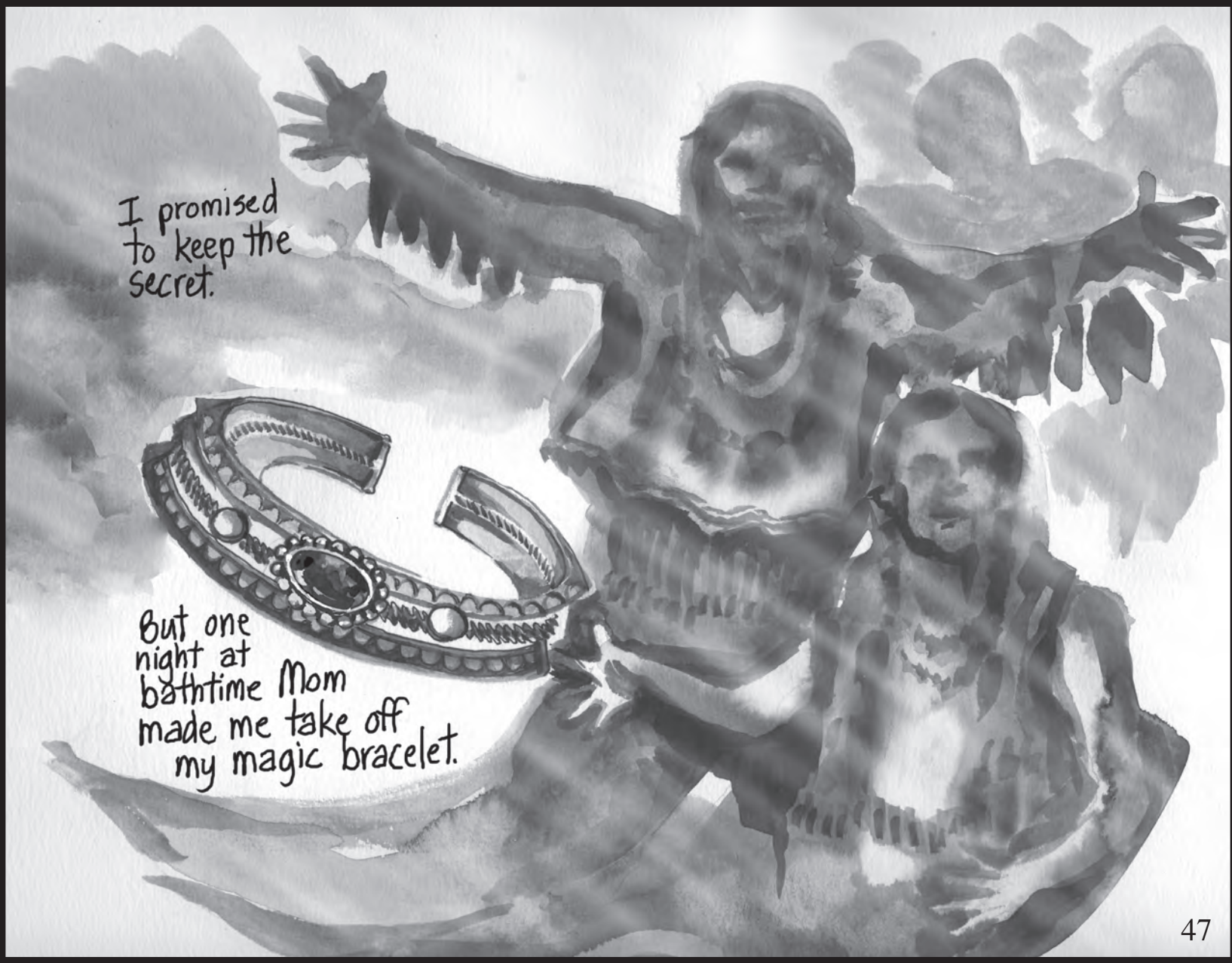
I learned
a song in
school that
was just right
for her:

God bless America
land that I love
stand beside her
and guide her
through the night
with a light
from
a
bulb.



Grandma Nell told me not to be afraid.
She gave me a magic bracelet.

"It holds the secret power of your
Navajo ancestors," she told
me, "Never take
it off."



I promised
to keep the
secret.

But one
night at
bathtime Mom
made me take off
my magic bracelet.

When I got
in the tub
without my
secret
protection
the water seemed
dark and scary.

It was hot
but I felt
frozen in place.

I made my
breath slow and
tried to be quiet
but still I felt
danger all around me.



Later I told mom
the secret of the
Navajo ancestors.

She said
Grandma Nell isn't
a Navajo.

Then what is she?
I asked

She's... a
psychotic.

Mom said
that wasn't
a tribe
at all.

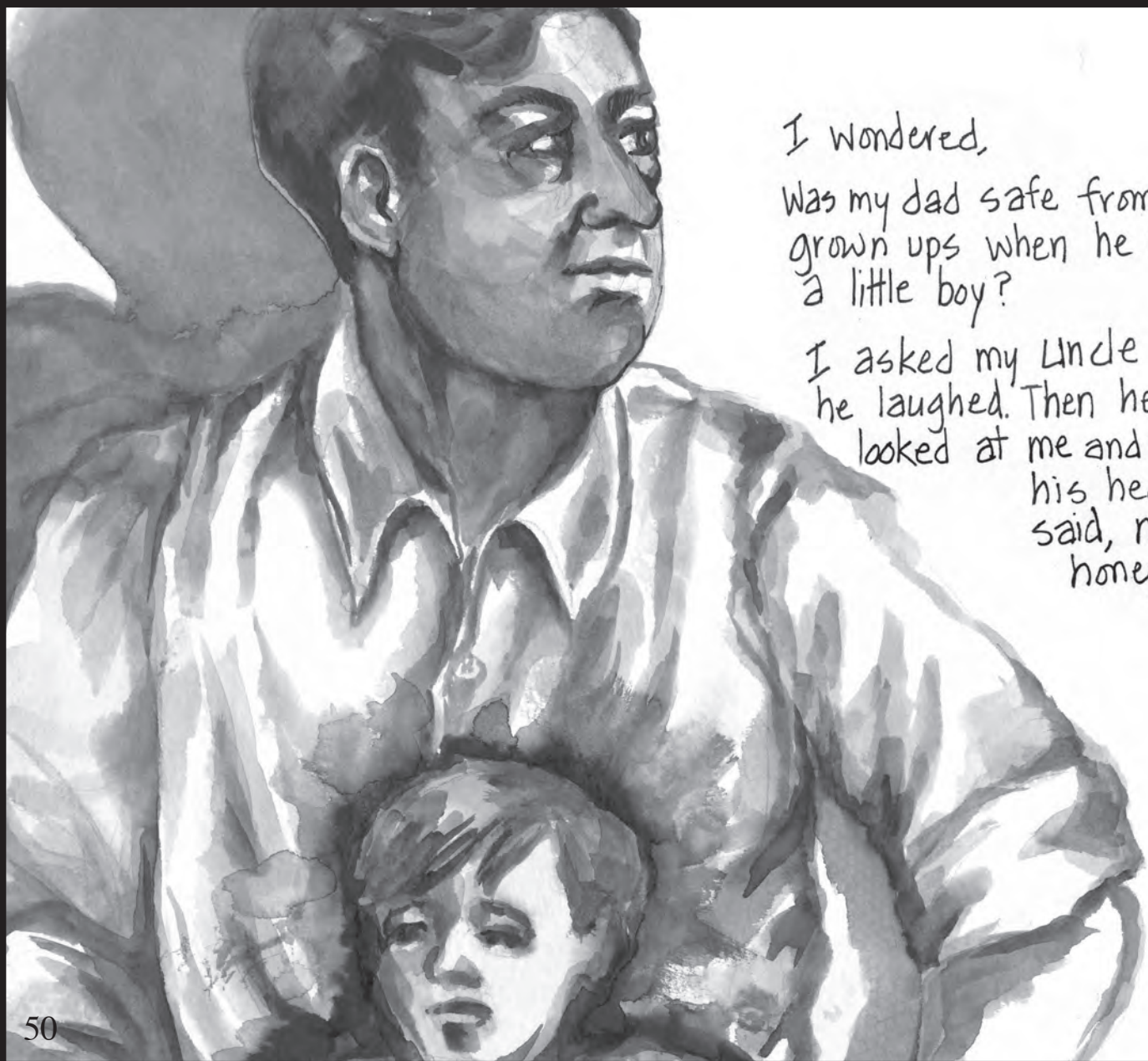
Then she said,
Well. It's
your Dad's
tribe I
guess.



Grandma Julie was Mom's mom.
She made her children
do what they were told --
or else!

So, Mom learned to
be a good girl. She did
whatever she was told
by her mom,

and later,
by my dad.



I wondered,
Was my dad safe from
grown ups when he was
a little boy?

I asked my Uncle and
he laughed. Then he
looked at me and shook
his head and
said, never,
honey.

Other children weren't safe from grown-ups either.
They kept secrets, too. But I didn't know that.



One night
when I was ten
Dad took me to
Ron's Hair'em in
Chicago.

We stood in the cold
and looked down at
all the ladies with
very very fancy hair-dos

The men watching with
us were quiet but
Dad's voice was
loud.

He told me one
man would pick
one woman to go
across the street.

Time it, he said.
They'll be back in
less than 30 minutes.

I keep'em going for
an hour he said and
someone laughed.

I stayed very
still hoping no one
would notice me.





One of the
ladies
looked up
and I
was afraid
she saw
me.

What
would she
think of
me being
up way
past
bedtime?

Then Dad took me by the hand down into the beautyshop.
He told them it was my birthday but it wasn't.
He said I wanted a fancy hairdo but I didn't.

One man got
mad. "Get
out," he
said.

Everyone
stared at us
so we left.

When we got into
the warm cab,
Dad said,
"Quite a
night!"

When I turned
eleven Mom said
I was old enough
to get my hair cut
at a real beauty salon.

I said, "Please, no!"

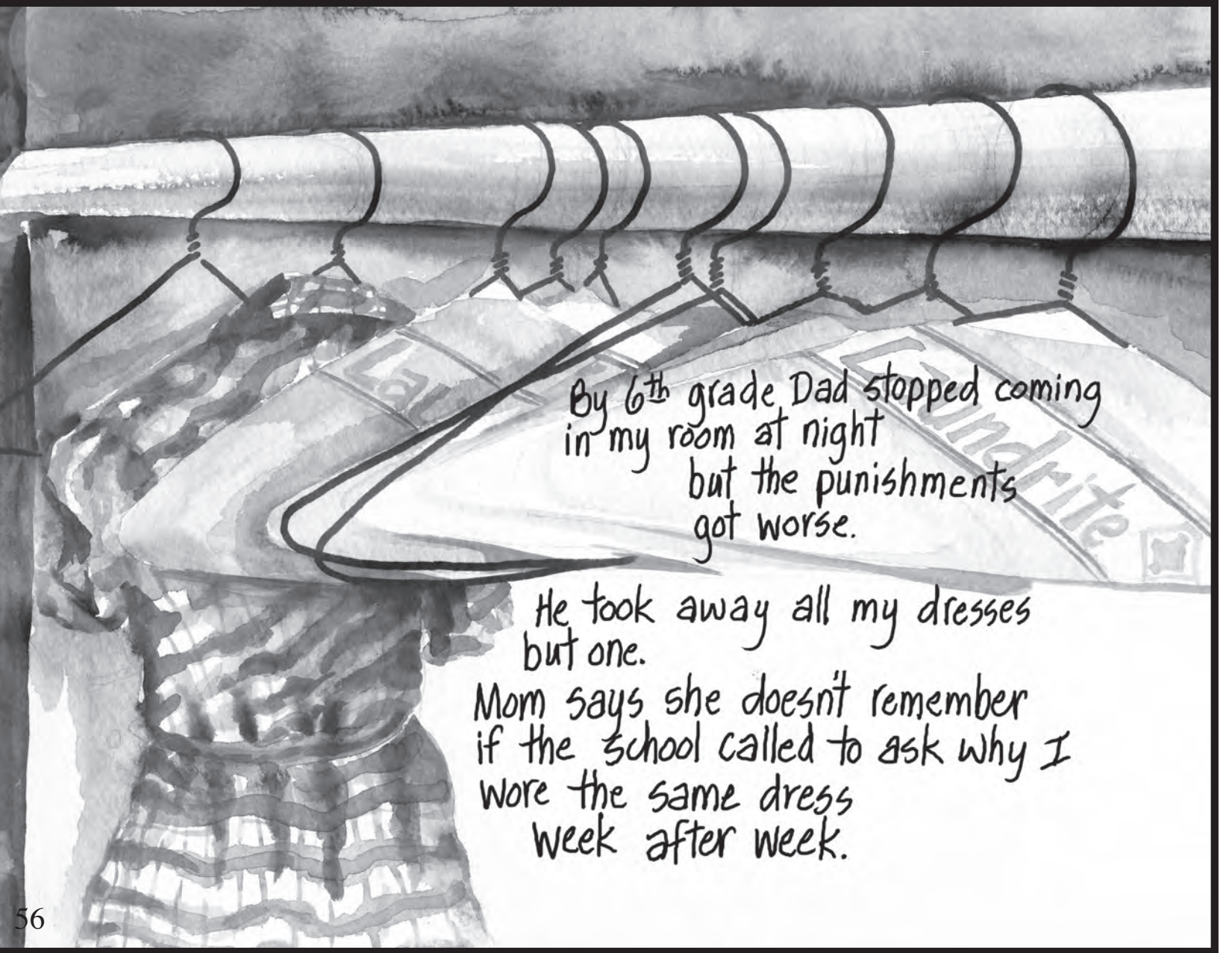
She said, "Don't be
silly, you will have
fun. You will feel
so grown up."

"No," I told her,
"please don't make
me."

She said, "Well,
we're going. You
can get a
poodle cut."




You will look adorable."



By 6th grade Dad stopped coming
in my room at night
but the punishments
got worse.

He took away all my dresses
but one.

Mom says she doesn't remember
if the school called to ask why I
wore the same dress
week after week.



The summer before
7th grade I found
out

Scott A.
liked me.

Dad said,
"Tell him
you already
have a
boyfriend."



The next summer
Dad warned me
about boys
and their
urges.

He said
they can't
really
control
themselves
so I
should
be
extra
careful.

But I
liked
boys,
especially
older
ones.




I liked boys who
looked tough. Strong
ones who could
protect me and tell
me I was their
one and only.

maybe run
away with
me to
some place
like
Florida.

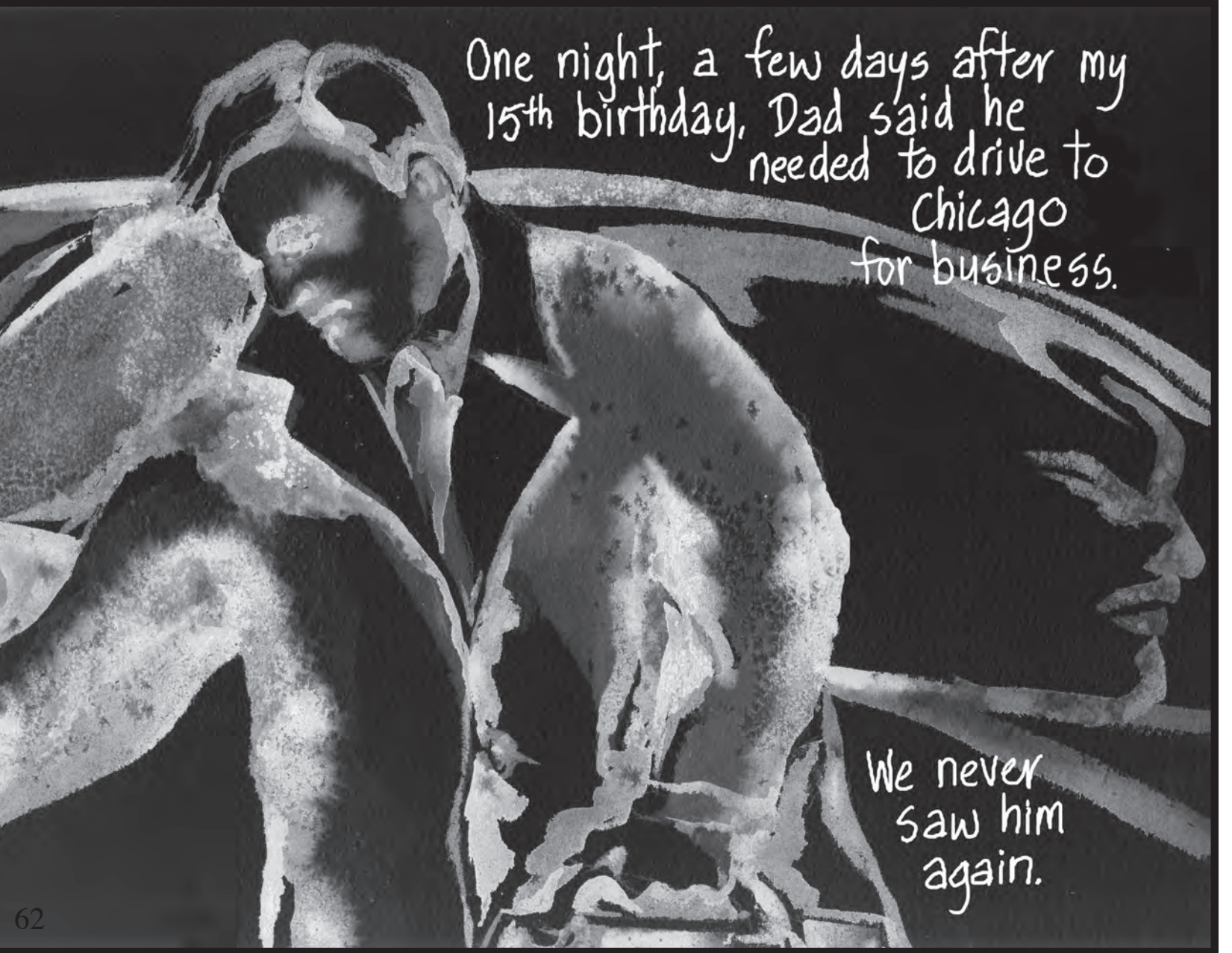
I dropped
Olive Oyl
for Tina
Turner.

She
was my
new
hero.





Eleanor Roosevelt
was my hero, too.
But the idea of dressing like her
her wasn't as much fun.



One night, a few days after my
15th birthday, Dad said he
needed to drive to
Chicago
for business.

We never
saw him
again.

I had never
really been
alone before.

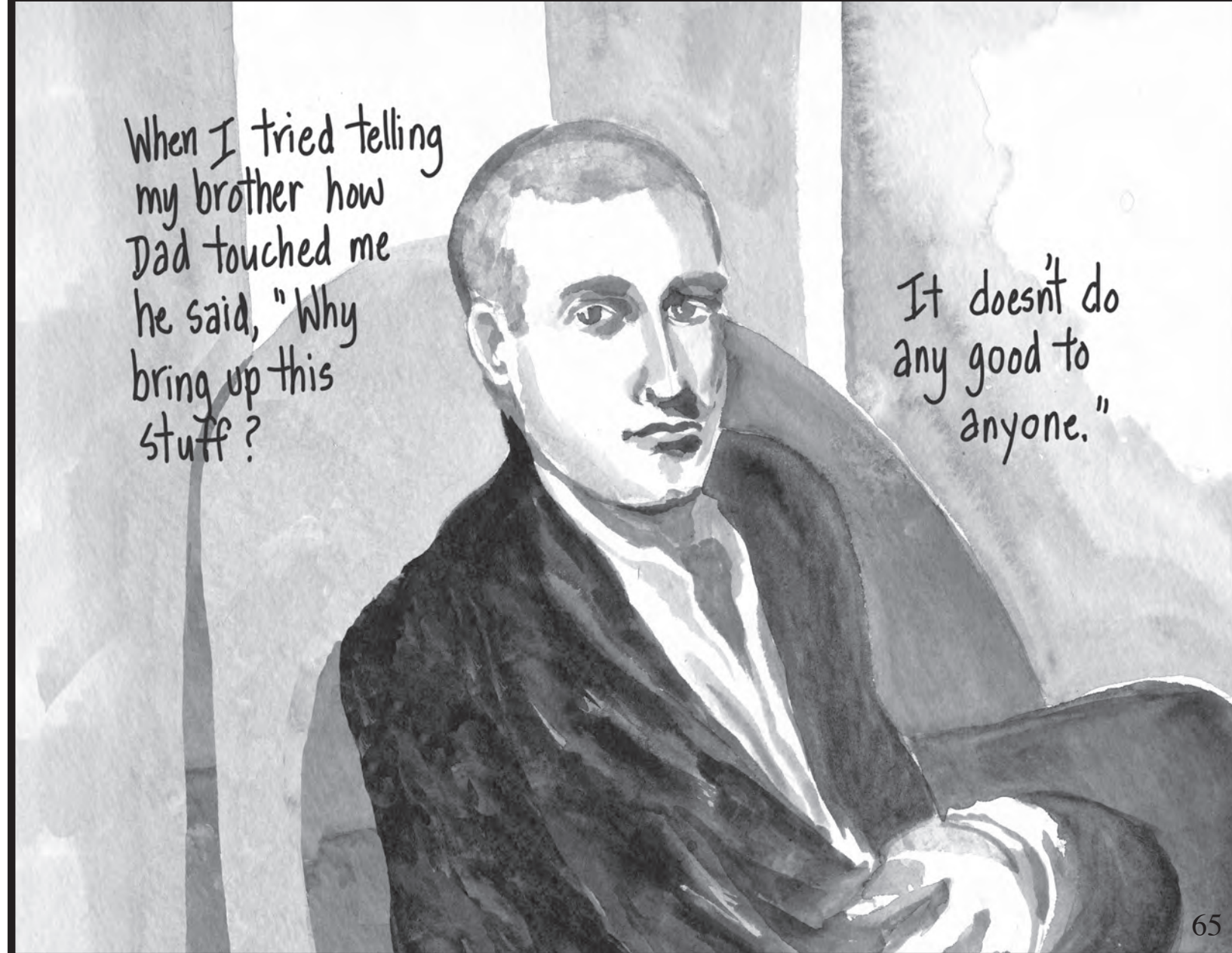




I felt safer with
Dad gone.

But alone in a
new way.

not sure
if I was
still me.



When I tried telling
my brother how
Dad touched me
he said, "Why
bring up this
stuff?"

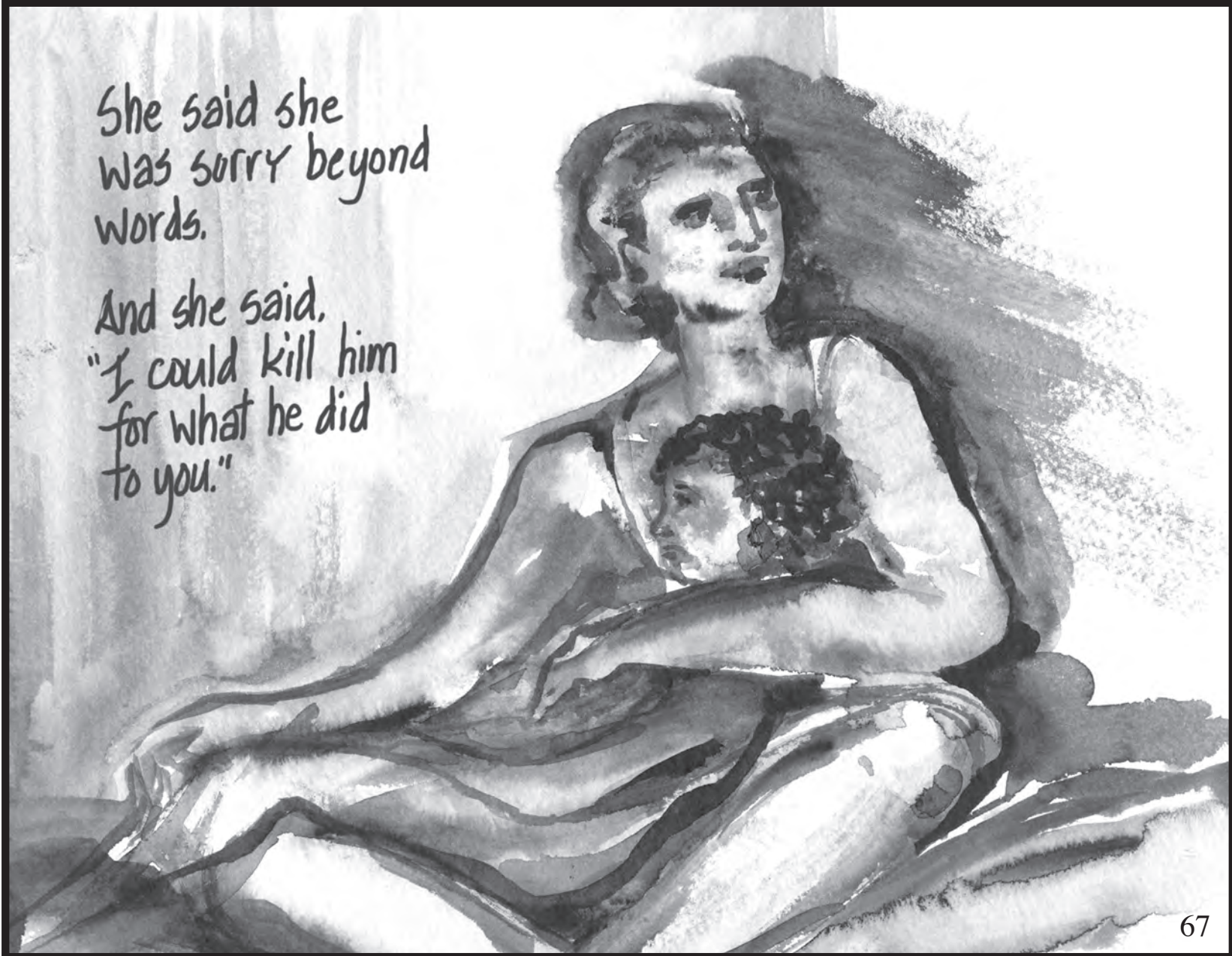
It doesn't do
any good to
anyone."

I'm lucky that when I told Mom she believed me.
She knew about the punishments, but most of what happened
at night she didn't
even suspect.

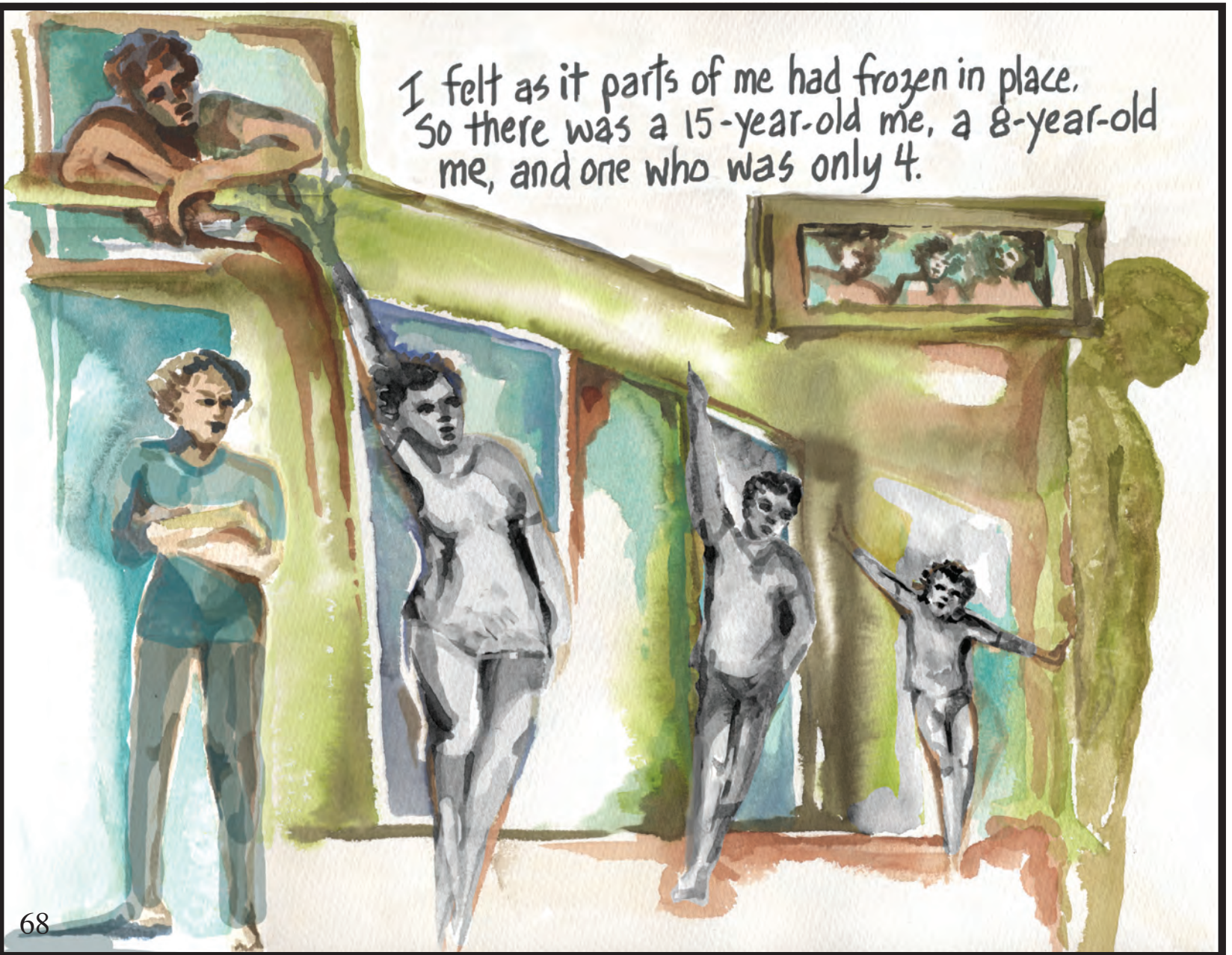


She said she
was sorry beyond
words.

And she said,
"I could kill him
for what he did
to you."



I felt as if parts of me had frozen in place.
So there was a 15-year-old me, a 8-year-old
me, and one who was only 4.



At the same time,
I could imagine
growing up to be
someone who is
unafraid.



I found a really
good therapist,
someone I
could grow to
trust.

Over time I told her
all that I could
remember from my
childhood secrets.

And she taught
me how to
change the

way I
view
myself.

It took me a long time to know that
I wasn't to blame for the things that he did,
for the way that he left,

that it
wasn't my
fault.




I was able to
dismiss the judge
and jury who
pronounced me
"guilty!"

I no longer
needed to carry
them inside me.

I realized that the worst was
behind me. I had already
survived it.







And when I wake up
feeling like a frightened
child, there is
an adult me who
is bigger and
stronger.



And I
grew up
to be
someone
who no longer
has to keep secrets.



If you are
keeping abuse
a secret,



you are
not
alone.

Find someone
you trust.

It's never
too late
to tell.



COMMENTARY

Sadly, my encounter with abuse is not a unique story. In fact, it is quite mild compared to what happens to countless boys and girls of all ages and economic levels throughout the world. Clearly, it is wrong when any adult abuses the control inherent in his or her relationship with a child. Hurtful behavior may be verbal, physical, sexual, or a combination of these. Tolerating the misuse of power in any form creates a context in which we overlook signs of childhood abuse or fail to believe it when reported. The patterns of abuse will only be stopped when they are widely recognized and addressed. This responsibility rests with each and every adult.

Diving beneath the surface of the narrative of my story reveals the typical aspects of child abuse that include invading the child's boundaries, tearing down the child's self-esteem and making threats that cause the child to be fearful. Even if these issues have not touched your life directly, you can help reduce childhood abuse by taking a stand whenever power is exploited. Begin by noticing the messages we give children. For example, teaching children to be wary of strangers implies that strangers are the only perpetrators of abuse. Statistics show that abuse is much more likely to come from someone known to the child.

Although children need to be cautious with strangers, most sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone who has easy access to the child: a parent, a

family friend, a minister or coach. The child often loves and trusts this adult and assumes blame for anything “bad” that happens between them. What we really need to teach children is that they should never agree to be touched, looked at, or talked to in a way that doesn’t feel safe or is supposed to be kept secret. This



approach is not a guarantee against abuse, but it does arm the child with rules that reduce his or her vulnerability.

When parents say, “Go give Uncle Frank a kiss,” or “Give a nice big hug to Grandpa” they are reinforcing the notion that their son or daughter should engage in physical contact whenever told to do so, regardless of his or her feelings or comfort level.

When abuse occurs between a child and an adult in a powerful role, it is likely to have a lasting effect on the child’s core identity, self-esteem, ability to trust, and sense of safety. Other than cases of extreme physical abuse, the impact can be easily hidden from view. As with

alcoholism and drug abuse, families often conspire to protect the abuser and keep the outside world from suspecting and intervening.

Adults in power who use children to gratify their own sexual desire without regard for the needs of the child don't require force or threats to get their way. They hold all the power in the relationship by virtue of their size, strength, position of authority or role in society.

Young children understand the concept of games such as Peek-a-boo and can read the moods and needs of their parents long before they can put such understanding into words. Innocent games can morph dangerous liasons. Young boys and girls may enter into agreements without fully understanding the implications of their actions and without the ability to express their needs and concerns in language.

Children learn early that meeting the needs of an adult may be the only choice they can



"I learned that it was not my fault."

safely make. In short, to survive they must surrender. They may grow up believing it is essential to entertain, give, and produce while asking little in return. That is how they survive their childhood and, without being conscious of the pattern, replicate that behavior long after they grow old enough and strong enough to say, "No."

Abusers often begin by gaining the child's trust, offering special favors, or flattering them. Initially harmless, the games children are lured into become increasingly uncomfortable, sexually or in other ways threatening. A child who already has agreed to keep secrets may be uncertain where to draw the line, afraid to stop the games when they become abusive. The cycle continues as the abuser reinforces the child's sense of helplessness and concurrent feelings of shame about her own desires and behavior. Children are likely to feel like co-conspirators, as I did.

After sneaking around behind my mother's back for something as innocent as ice cream, and agreeing to sing songs I sensed were for grown women, I felt trapped in a world of secrecy, complicit in the offenses. It didn't occur to me to tell my mother what had happened until I was in my 30's with children of my own. After talking with her I began to explore the ways my father's actions impacted me as an adult. I realized that my experiences of pleasure were mixed with the abuse. In my twenties it was difficult to enjoy sex without feeling that I was doing something wrong. And I felt responsible for contributing to what was clearly

“wrong” in my life, such as my frequent depressions and self-doubt.



“Mom said, ‘Never tell a lie’, Dad said, ‘Never tell.’”

In my story when I say, “I didn’t even have to think about it. At night I became a mannequin. I wasn’t asleep but I wasn’t there either,” I am referring to my ability to dissociate: to shut myself off from painful or frightening experiences. This splitting off is common among traumatized children, in some cases leading to severe psychiatric disorders. For me, dissociation was a tool that worked at the time. Years later I was left with a feeling that in some ways younger

versions of myself still lurked in my consciousness, showing up when I was frightened or lonely. Adults who abuse children often treat them as small adults, confiding in them and teaching “lessons” that encourage passivity and obedience. The adult may be convinced that the child is receiving valuable training and

even enjoys the abuse.

It is healthy and normal for a girl to want attention from her father or other authority figures, to keep whatever secrets she is sworn to and to put the needs of others first. Dad flattered me when he said I was “the cream in his coffee,” but now I see how that phrase reflected the way we were intertwined in unhealthy ways.

When my father introduced me to the world of prostitution by taking me to Ron’s Hair’em, not only was he exposing me to a world I was too young to understand, but he also was treating me like an adult, implying that I belonged there by taking me inside for a haircut. I knew, without being told, that I shouldn’t mention the experience to anyone.

Feelings of shame, guilt and fear of being punished or abandoned keep children silent. The best way for the child to assure they never tell is to forget



“Maybe it was already too late when he snuck me downstairs for ice cream...”

the incidents ever occurred. This form of repression is the most common coping mechanism for abused children. Suspecting she will be blamed, abandoned, or accused of lying, the child finds the act of telling pointless and dangerous. However, the very act of telling is a way to claim power and reduce the isolation the child feels when shut off from speaking the truth.

Even when abuse is not remembered or takes form in a shadowy memory, it may manifest later as depression, addiction, anxiety, or problems with sexuality and intimacy. In many cases, the abused child who has grown into an adult knows something happened but can't remember details. Years of intensive therapy are often necessary to uncover the memories. It is understandable that one would want to repress the recollection of violation. I tell women who confide in me their painful realization that your personal boundaries were transgressed can result in an



“...I became a mannequin.”

inability to trust the very people upon whom they depend. However, even if they cannot remember the incidents clearly, it is still possible to address whatever consequent issues come up in the present and work toward healing.

The long process of coming into my own began when I broke my silence and



"...like girls frozen in time."

no longer kept the abuse secret. I tried several therapeutic modalities until I found what worked for me. In therapy I began to explore childhood memories and their impact on my adult life. Working with a skilled female therapist helped me to build trust. With her as my witness and guide, I felt courageous enough to explore the frightening memories.

Eventually I told a close friend. Later I gathered my

courage and told my mother. She listened to my memories, those that were vivid as well as the vague recollections. She believed me. She had witnessed

86 my punishments and my verbal abuse, and she knew enough about my father

to believe he was capable of sexual abuse. It took many conversations over a period of years for us to share our feelings and come to peace. She explained that at the time, she had been very naïve, in denial, and afraid of my father. She believed she couldn't manage without him and that defending me might result in his leaving.

Over time, therapy enabled me to sort out feelings and responses from the past and put them in perspective.

I began to believe fully that I was no longer a helpless child. I was not alone in the world, cut off from those who didn't know my secrets. I have evolved into a capable adult protecting myself, claiming my body as my own and enjoying the intimacy of my marriage. This new sense of self gradually replaced the helpless child and has become my core identity.

As Judith Hermann points out in *Trauma and Recovery*, "Having come



"...I keep them going for an hour', Dad said.."



"I found a therapist I could trust..."

to terms with the traumatic event, the survivor faces the task of creating a future. She has mourned the old self that the trauma destroyed and now she must develop a new self. The old beliefs that gave meaning to her life and relationships have been challenged; now she must find a new sustaining faith."³

Over time I realized I could be accepted without constantly performing and

that being attractive to men was not my most important quality. It is possible to reframe the frightening memories in such a way that they become less "immediate" and, though not forgotten, they fade into the past. EMDR⁴ was especially helpful for me. It is a methodology that involves revisiting traumatic memories and essentially reprogramming the mind to see them through an adult's point of view. Using that process, I was able to focus on events that were
88 traumatic, like being left alone on the streets of Chicago. For years after that

incident, I panicked any time I experienced what felt like abandonment. Someone arriving late to pick me up triggered fear and anger. Once I relived the experience in therapy and put it into perspective, it no longer had a powerful hold on me. I could still remember what happened and accept that it had been upsetting, yet the feelings faded and no longer impacted me in the present.

In therapy I realized that, without being conscious of it, I had developed the habit of assuming guilt for anything that went wrong in my life. It was as if I had appointed a judge and jury to pronounce me guilty. No matter what crime I believed I had committed in childhood, I had already served a lengthy sentence. And more than that, I came to realize that although I can't predict what will happen in life, I do have control over how I interpret it and how long I hold onto painful memories.

I still work on slowing down and saying, "no" when I need to. The lifelong pattern



"...no longer trapped inside a frightened little girl."

of compliance is common among people who have been abused. I have a sign on my office wall, “No is the new Yes.”

The feelings I carried into my adult life didn’t represent reality, but were only one way of interpreting my circumstances. Now, I can decide to look through the lens of giving myself the benefit of the doubt. I can even see an up-side to the experiences of my childhood. Resilience.

Many victims of childhood abuse grow up to live good, productive lives filled with healthy relationships. They are often highly creative and especially empathetic to the plight of others.

My life includes healthy, loving relationships, including those with my husband, children and mother. I enjoy public speaking; perhaps this is because I grew up feeling afraid and vulnerable at home in my room, so the outside world seemed safer.



...”you’re the cream in my coffee...”

Today, when I am in front of groups of people, I feel as though nothing bad can happen. By necessity, I have learned to be creative, have developed my imagination and become deeply empathic. My work has enabled me to travel the world and work with people I greatly admire.

Writing this book feels like the final step in the healing process. I hope my story will encourage others who have experienced, or continue to experience abuse, to take a stand, share their stories, and believe that it is possible not only to survive, but to thrive.



“...Dad got angry with me and he walked away fast.”

RESOURCES

This list will be up-dated with each printing of the book and on line at:
www.NancyMargulies.com

On line: *Darkness to Light, Confronting Sexual Abuse with Courage*:
<http://www.darkness2light.org/GetHelp/national.asp>
An excellent, well organized web site with many resources

Some states designate Child Protective Services as the agency that accepts reports of suspected child abuse. Others designate the police. Some do not designate or designate both. Many states have centralized toll-free lines that accepts reports of abuse from the entire state. To find out where to make a report in your state visit:

http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/reslist/rl_dsp.cfm?rsid=5&rate_chno=11-11172

or call the ChildHelp USA National Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-422-4453

Cavanagh Johnson, Dr. Toni, *Understanding Children's Sexual Behaviors: What's Natural and Healthy*. An internationally respected expert, only 26 pages long,

written in simple language for all parents (\$ 2.50). See also, *Do Children Sexually Abuse Other Children*, a free online 'guidebook' published by Stop It Now.

Foltz, Linda Lee, *Kids Helping Kids*, Pittsburgh, Lighthouse Point Press 2003
True stories that capture the way kids speak of their experiences. Monahan, Cynthia *Children and Trauma: A Guide for Parents and Professionals*, Jossey-Bass, 1993.

Kagan., Richard, *RealLife Heroes: A Life Storybook for Children*, Haworth, 2004.
Available from Amazon or the Sidran Foundation

Mather, Cynthia, Debye, Kristina, Wood, Judy, *How Long Does it Hurt? A guide to recovering from incest and sexual abuse for teenagers, their friends, and their families*, Jossey-Bass, 1994.

If you are the parent or caregiver of a child or teen with sexual behavior problems, Stop It Now publishes an excellent newsletter, "PARENTtalk". It is written by and for parents of children and teens with sexual behavior problems, and offers "an opportunity to break the isolation surrounding this issue and offer support to each other through personal stories." All issues are free online.

For the sexual assault crisis center closest to you contact:

RAPE, ABUSE & INCEST NATIONAL NETWORK (RAINN)

635-B Pennsylvania Ave S.E.

Washington, DC 20003

Phone: 800-656-HOPE

Fax: 202-544-3556

E-mail: info@rainn.org

Web: <http://www.rainn.org>

For more information contact:

Childhelp USA

15757 N. 78th St

Scottsdale, AZ 85260

National Child Abuse Hotline

Phone: 800-4-A-CHILD

TDD/Hearing Impaired: 800-2-A-CHILD

Fax: 480-922-7061

Web: <http://www.childhelpusa.org>

Children Now

1212 Broadway, 5th Floor

Oakland, CA 94612

Phone: 510-763-2444

Fax: 510-763-1974

E-mail: children@childrennow.org

Web: <http://www.childrennow.org>

The Children's Defense Fund

25 E Street N.W.

Washington, DC 20001

Phone: 202-628-8787

E-mail: cdinfo@childrensdefense.org

Web: <http://www.childrensdefense.org>

Parents Anonymous Inc

675 W. Foothill Boulevard, Suite 220

Claremont, CA 91711

Phone: 909-621-6184

Fax: 909-625-6304

E-mail: parentsanonymous@parentsanonymous.org

Web: <http://www.parentsanonymous.org>



Special thanks
to my husband, Gary,
for his love and
support on my journey.