

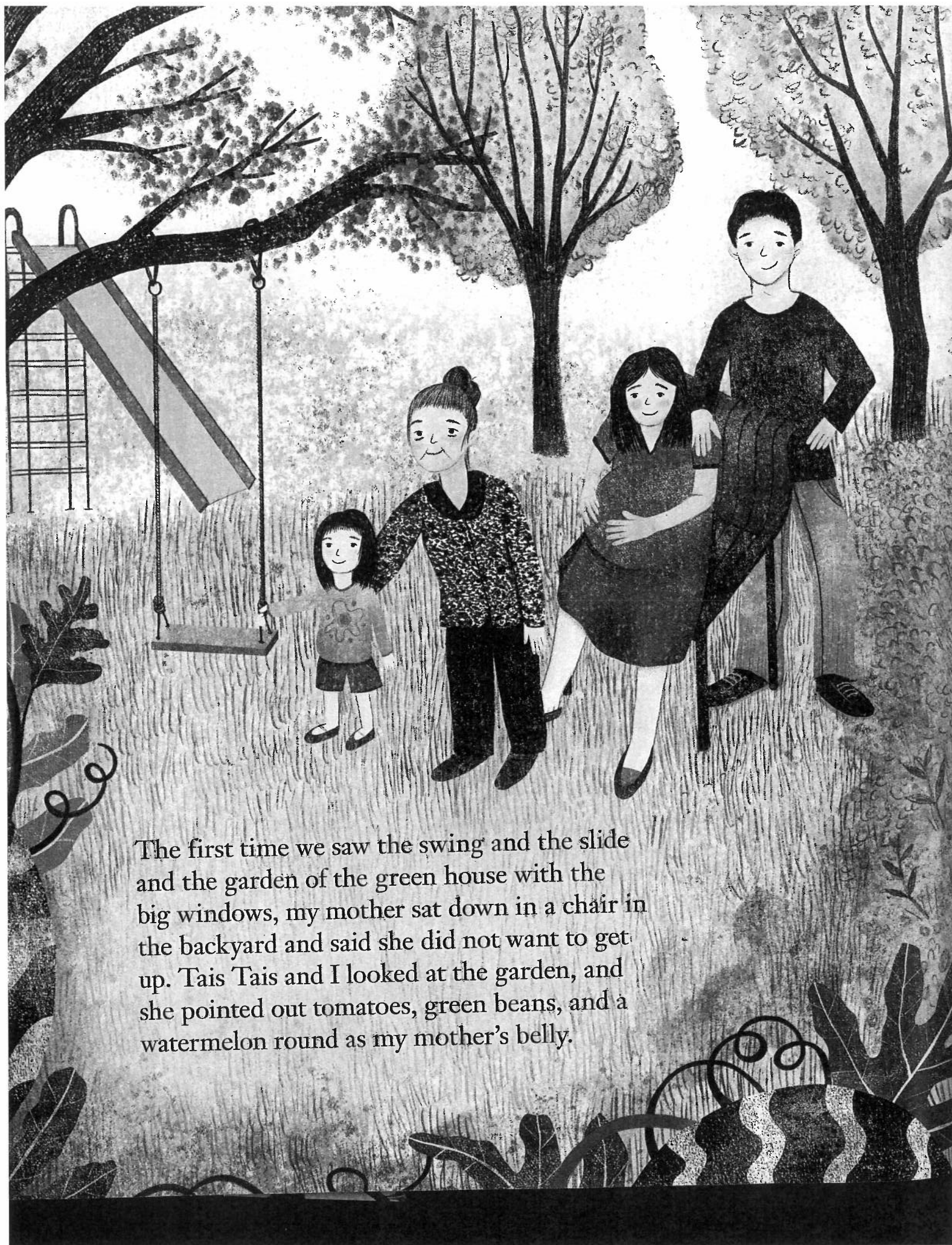
"Filled with wonder and sorrow and happiness."

—Alison McGhee, #1 *New York Times* bestselling  
author of *Someday*

# A MAP INTO THE WORLD

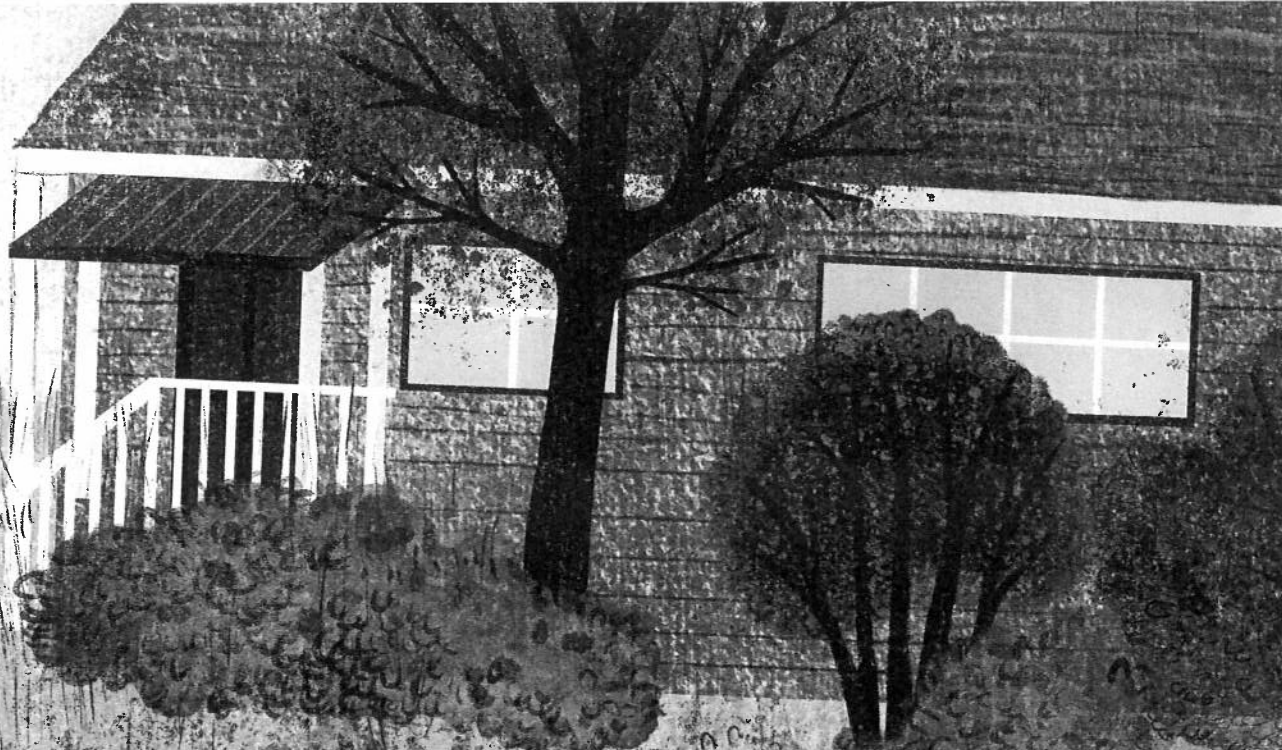


Kao Kalia Yang  
illustrated by Seo Kim



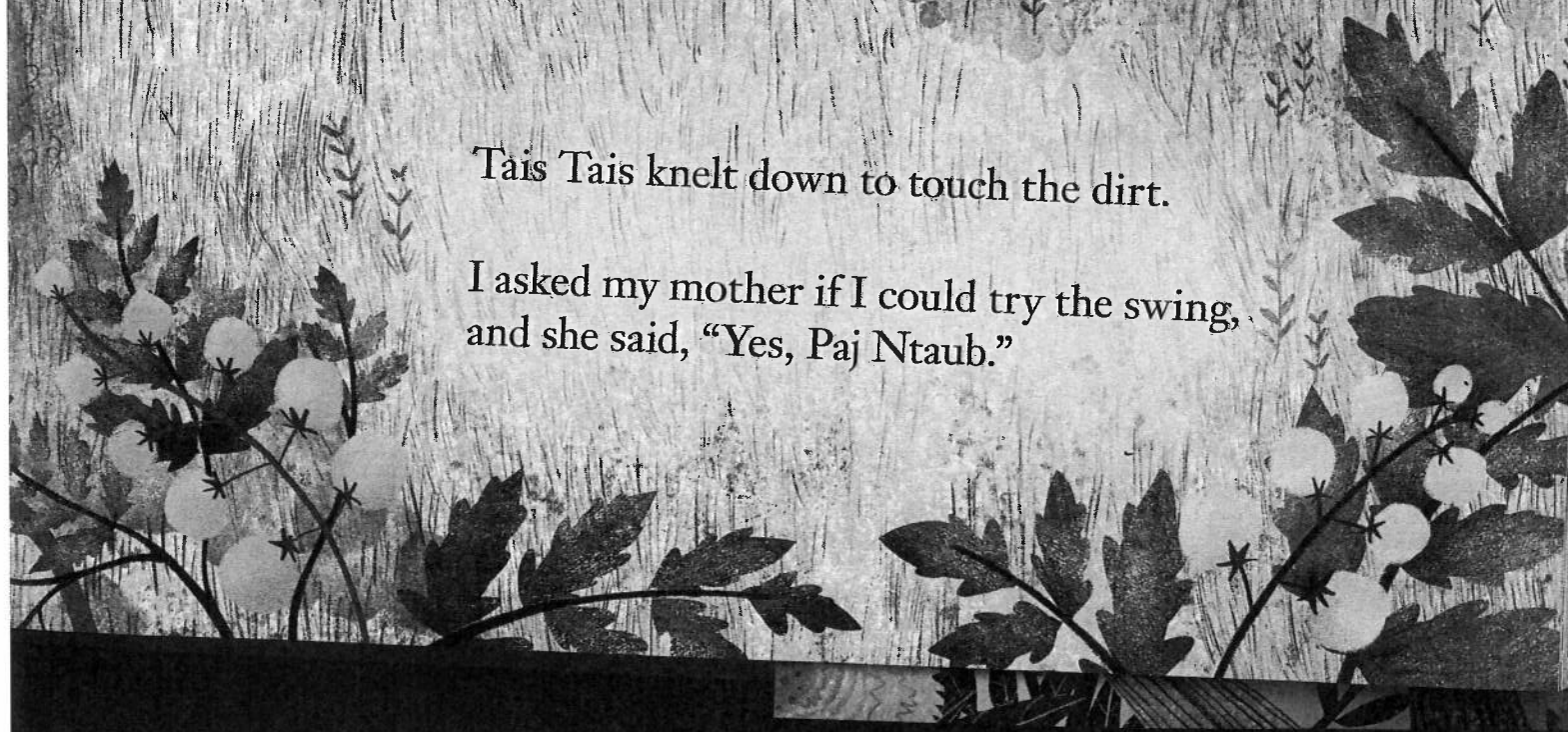
The first time we saw the swing and the slide and the garden of the green house with the big windows, my mother sat down in a chair in the backyard and said she did not want to get up. Tais Tais and I looked at the garden, and she pointed out tomatoes, green beans, and a watermelon round as my mother's belly.

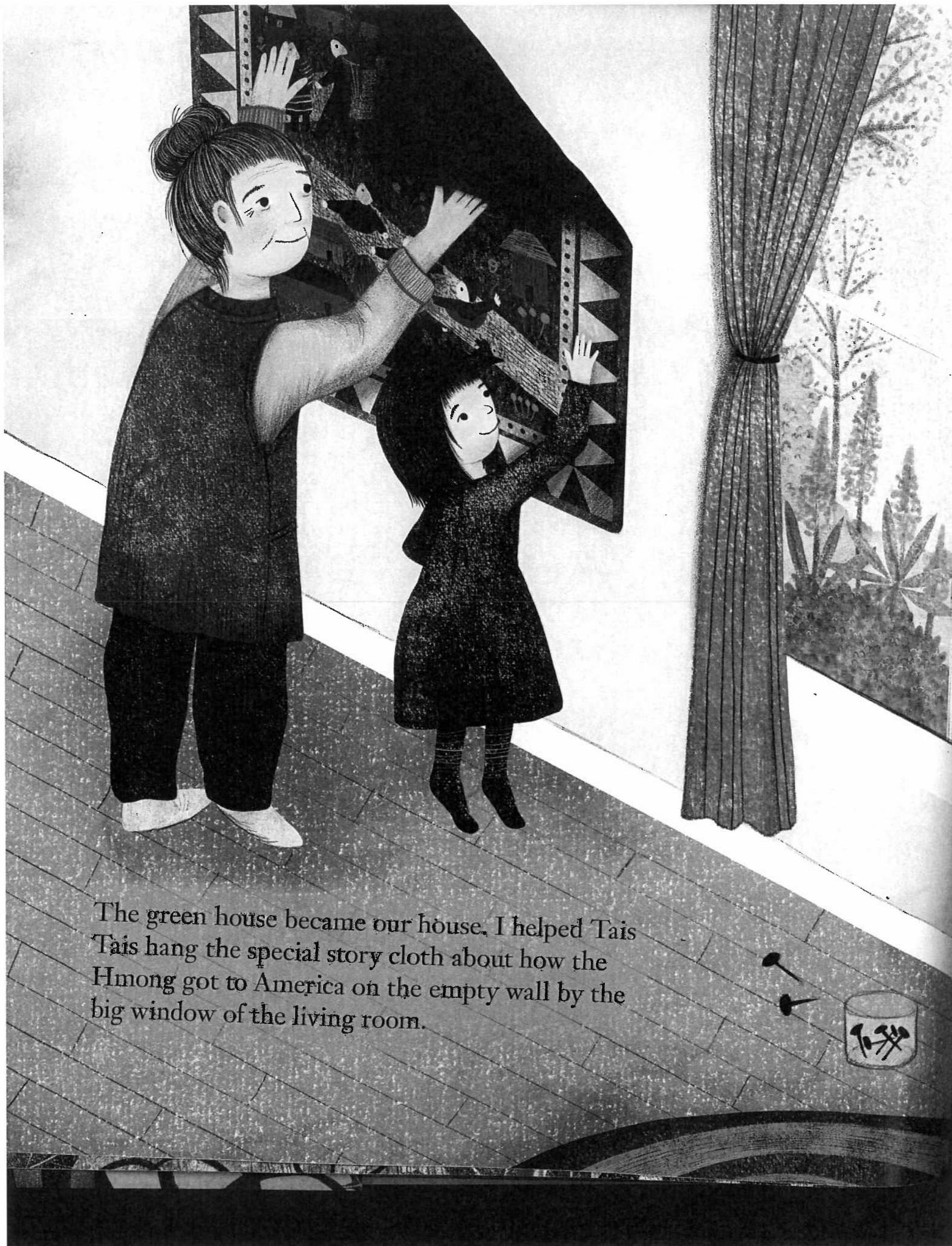




Tais Tais knelt down to touch the dirt.

I asked my mother if I could try the swing,  
and she said, "Yes, Paj Ntaub."





The green house became our house. I helped Tais  
Tais hang the special story cloth about how the  
Hmong got to America on the empty wall by the  
big window of the living room.

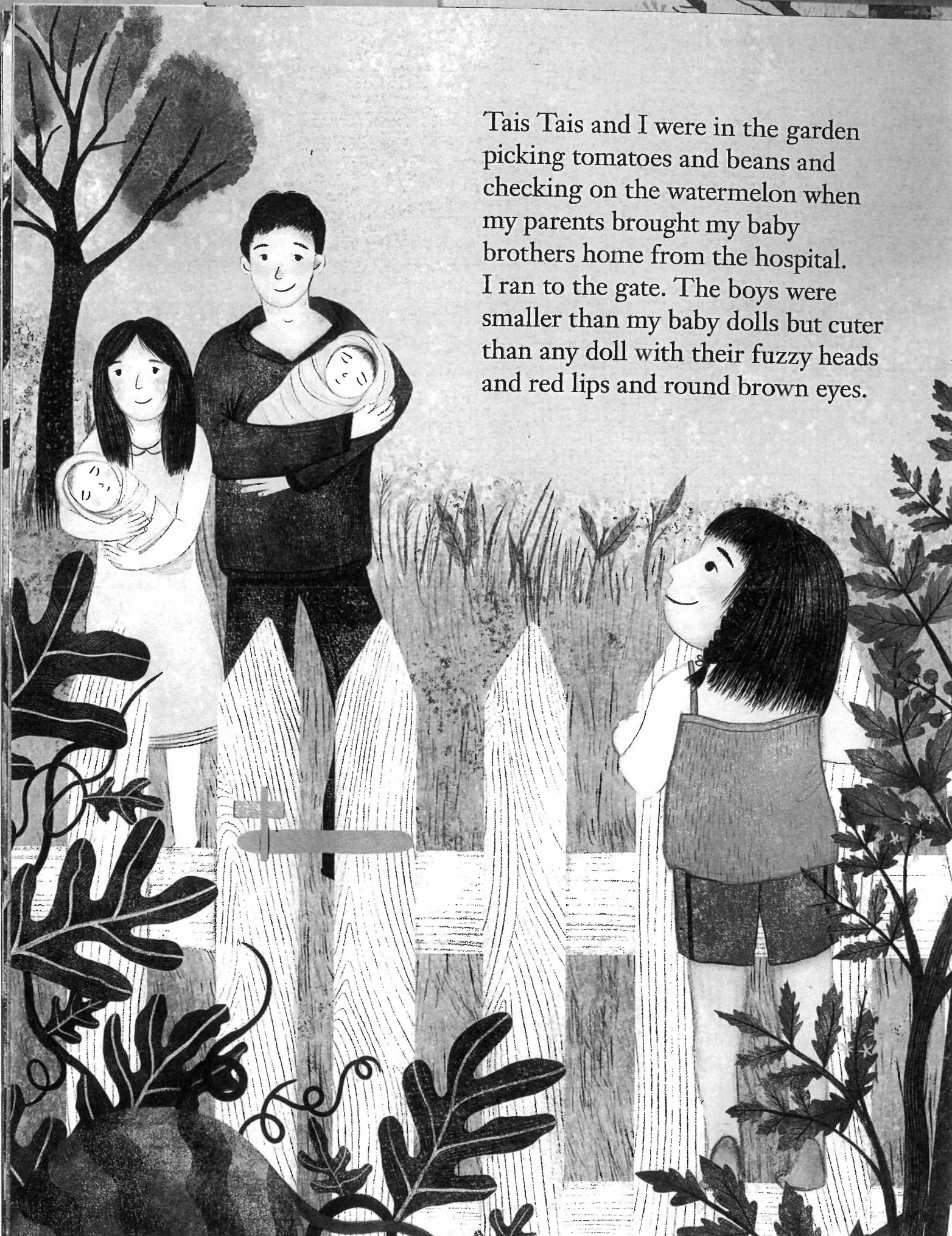


We saw an old man and woman through  
the window. They waved. We waved back.



Later, my mother and father brought me across the  
street. The old man's name was Bob, and the old  
woman's name was Ruth. Up close, I could see that  
they were even older than Tais Tais.

Tais Tais and I were in the garden picking tomatoes and beans and checking on the watermelon when my parents brought my baby brothers home from the hospital. I ran to the gate. The boys were smaller than my baby dolls but cuter than any doll with their fuzzy heads and red lips and round brown eyes.





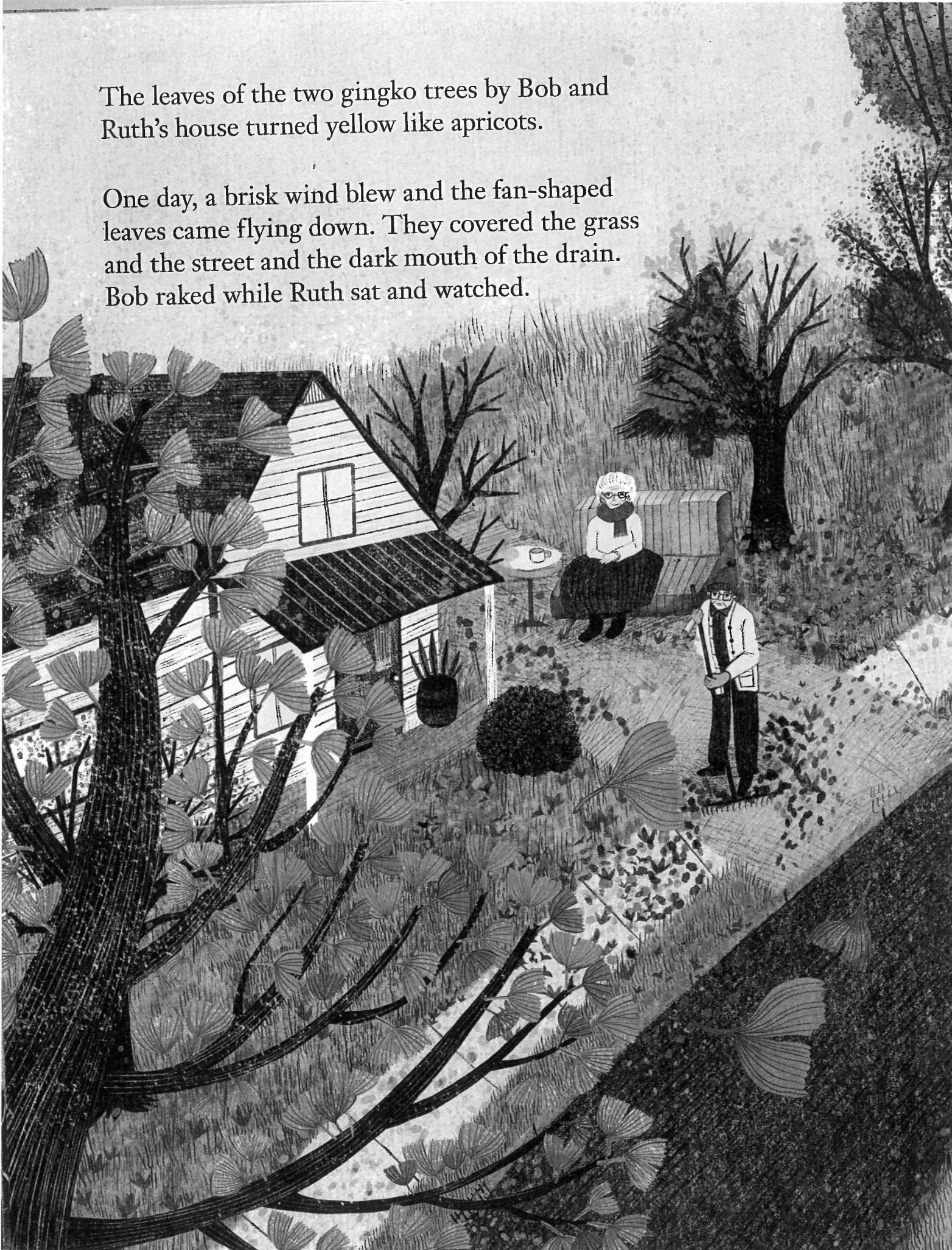


Some days the babies cried very loud. I covered my ears with my hands and asked my father to take me outside. Bob and Ruth sat on their special bench. We waved back and forth.

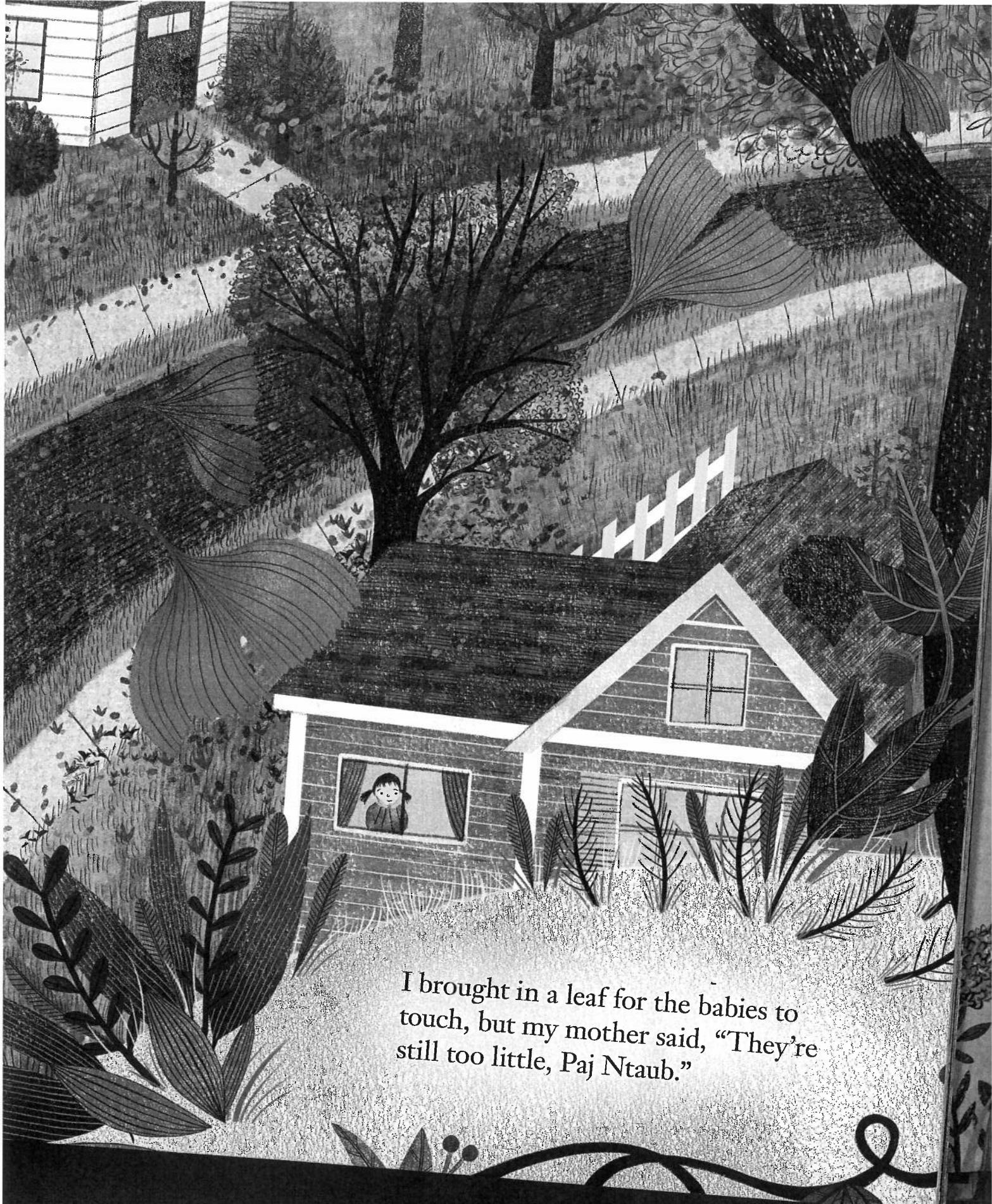


The leaves of the two ginkgo trees by Bob and Ruth's house turned yellow like apricots.

One day, a brisk wind blew and the fan-shaped leaves came flying down. They covered the grass and the street and the dark mouth of the drain. Bob raked while Ruth sat and watched.



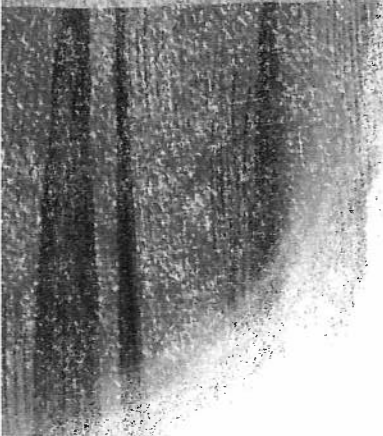




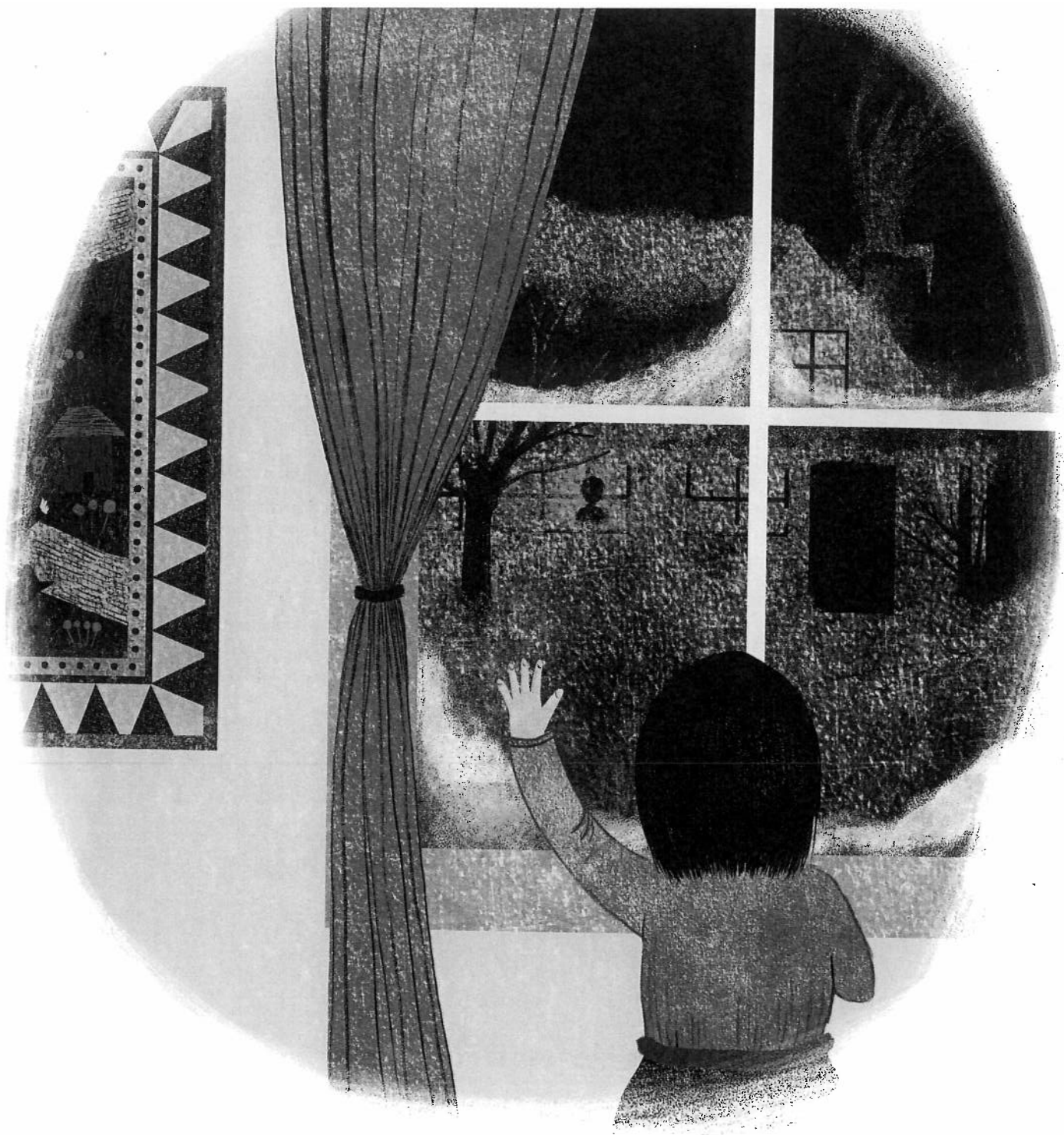
I brought in a leaf for the babies to touch, but my mother said, "They're still too little, Paj Ntaub."

The snow made the world quiet around us. We stopped seeing Bob and Ruth outside. The snowflakes fell on their driveway and glittered in the gray light.

I made a ball of snow for my brothers, but it melted before they woke up from their nap.







At night, I looked out our big window at Bob and Ruth's house to see their lights shining across the dark street. Sometimes I saw a shape of a person looking back at me. I waved, but the shadow person never waved back.

On a cold morning, cars came to our block, filling the street. Car doors slammed as men and women in thick jackets walked quickly to Bob and Ruth's house.

My father said, "Ruth has died. Her family is coming to say goodbye."

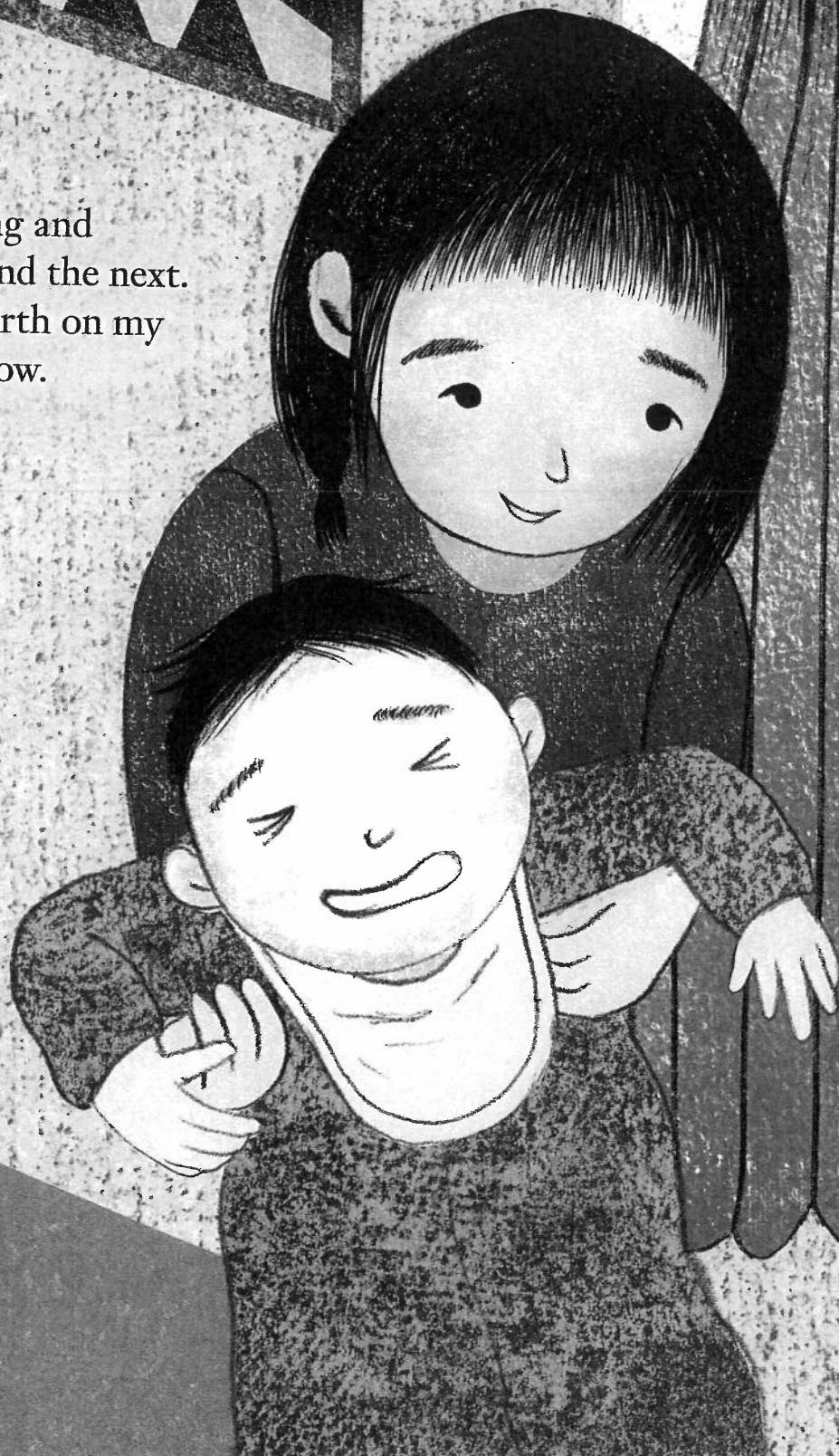




I felt sad for Ruth. My brothers just  
played with the toys above them.



n  
y  
The cars kept coming and  
going the next day and the next.  
I swayed back and forth on my  
toes by the big window.







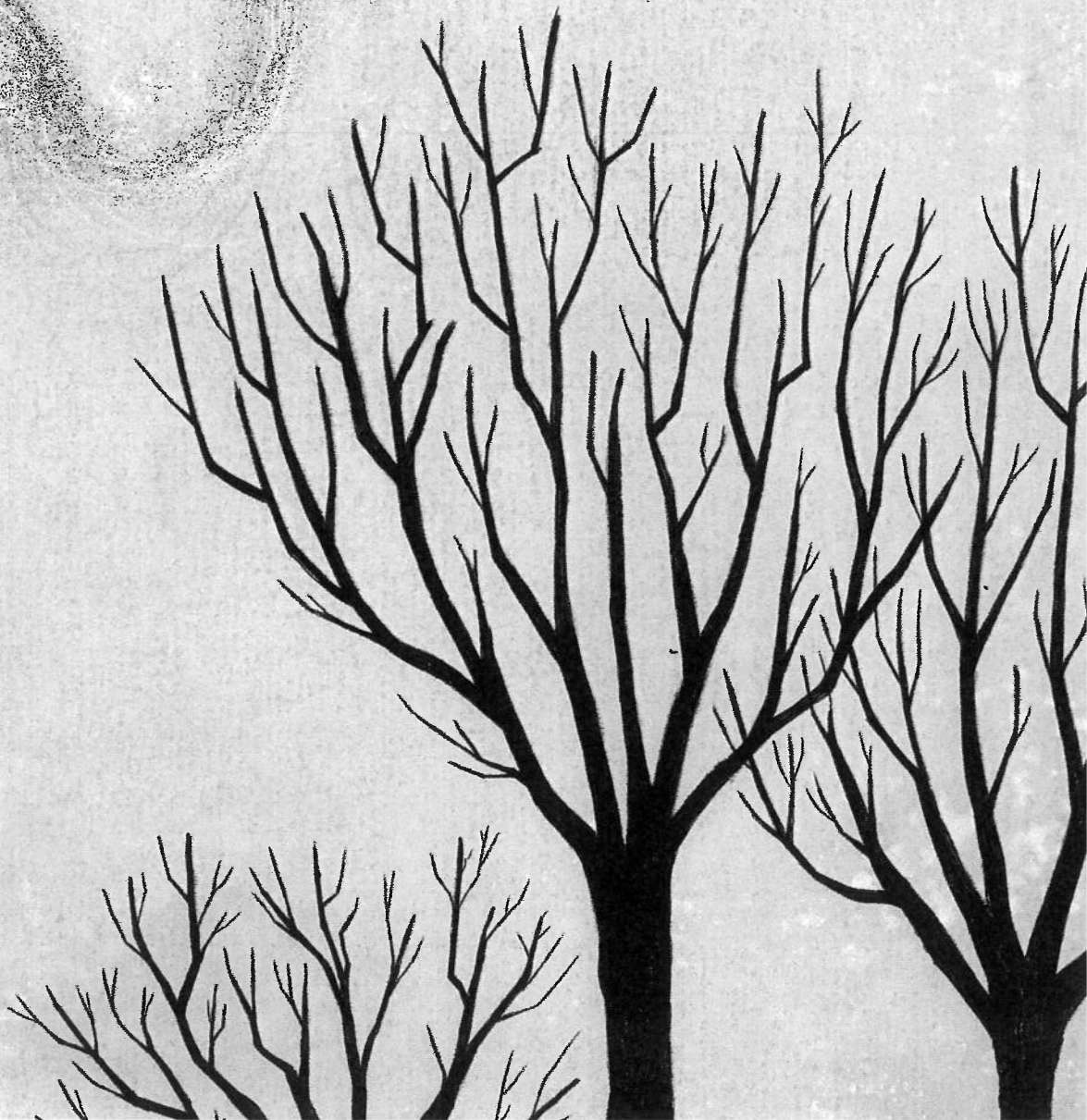
I tried to lift one of my brothers so the people could see how cute he was, but he cried and my mother said, "You're still too little to carry him, Paj Ntaub."

After the Hmong New Year, my baby brothers learned how to sit on their own and we all sat looking out the window together. I clapped for them when a plane flew across the high skies. They laughed every time.





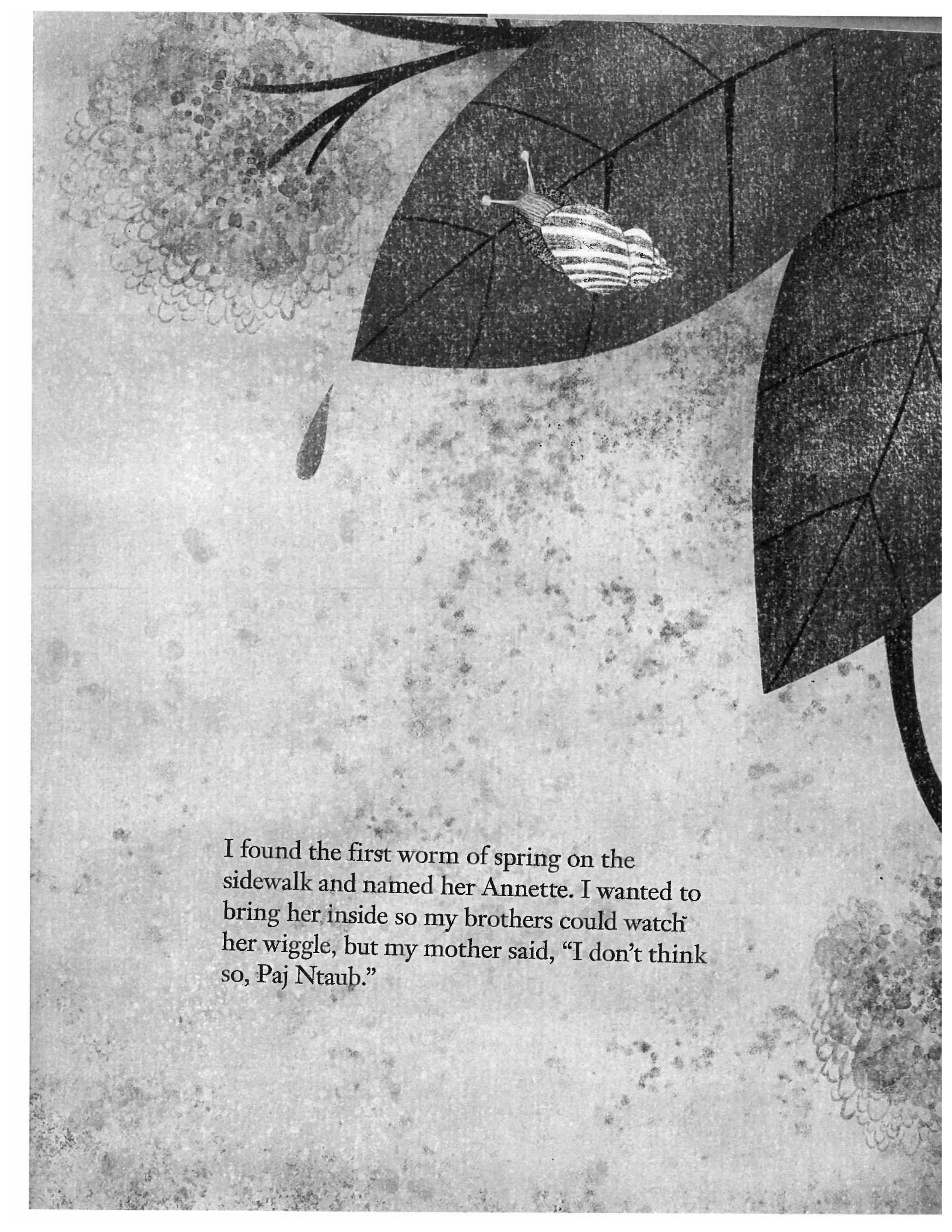
The house across the street looked empty.  
The gingko trees reached for the sky with  
their thin fingers.



When the snow started melting, I could not wait to return to the swing and the slide and the garden. My baby brothers crawled all over the floor, underneath the table and the chairs. They were like puppies, their tongues licking everything.

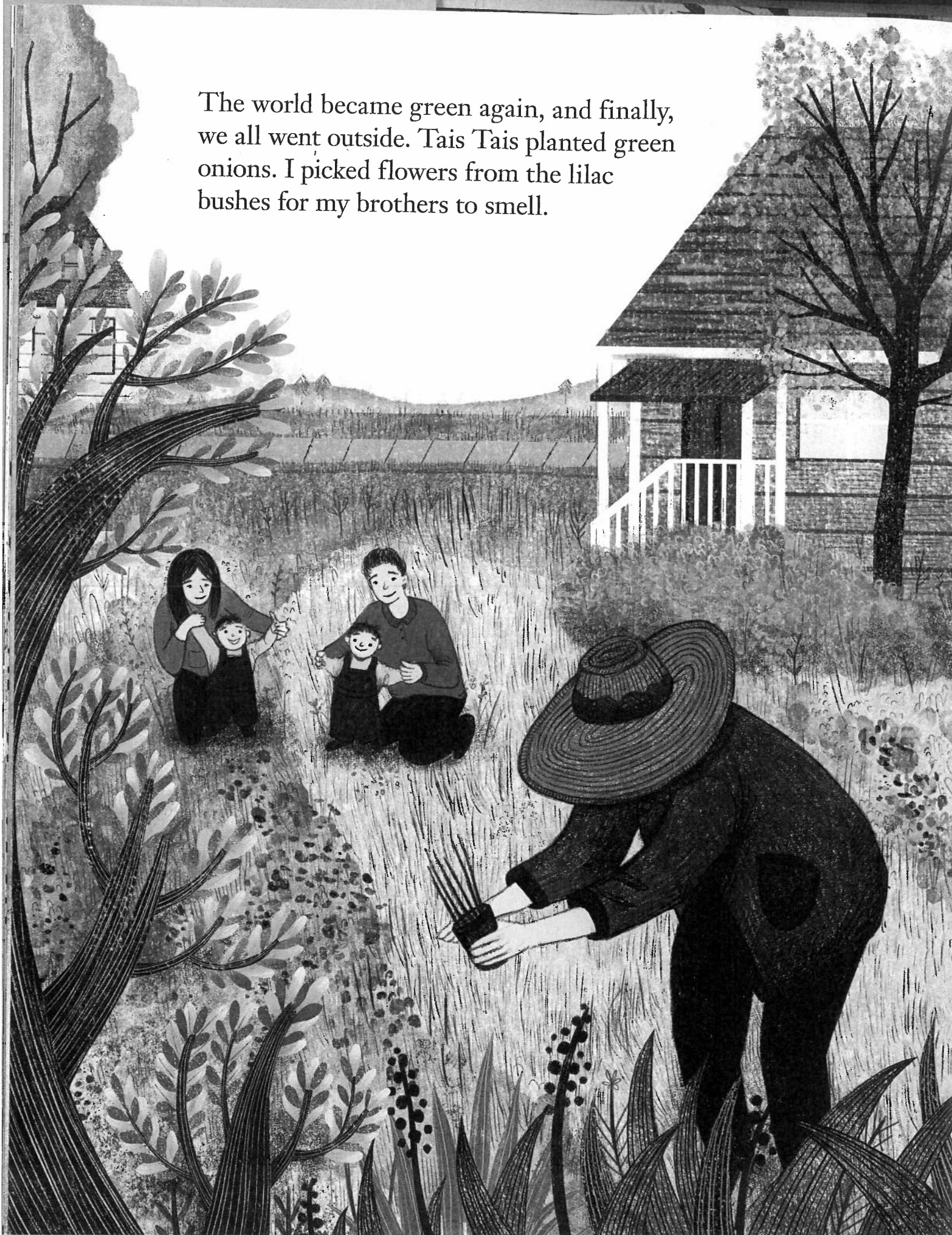




A black and white illustration of a snail on a large leaf. The snail has a shell with dark and light horizontal stripes and its body is extended. It is positioned on a large, dark leaf with prominent veins. To the left of the snail, a single water droplet is falling from the leaf. The background is a light, textured surface, possibly a sidewalk, with some faint, stylized foliage in the upper left and lower right corners.

I found the first worm of spring on the sidewalk and named her Annette. I wanted to bring her inside so my brothers could watch her wiggle, but my mother said, "I don't think so, Paj Ntaub."

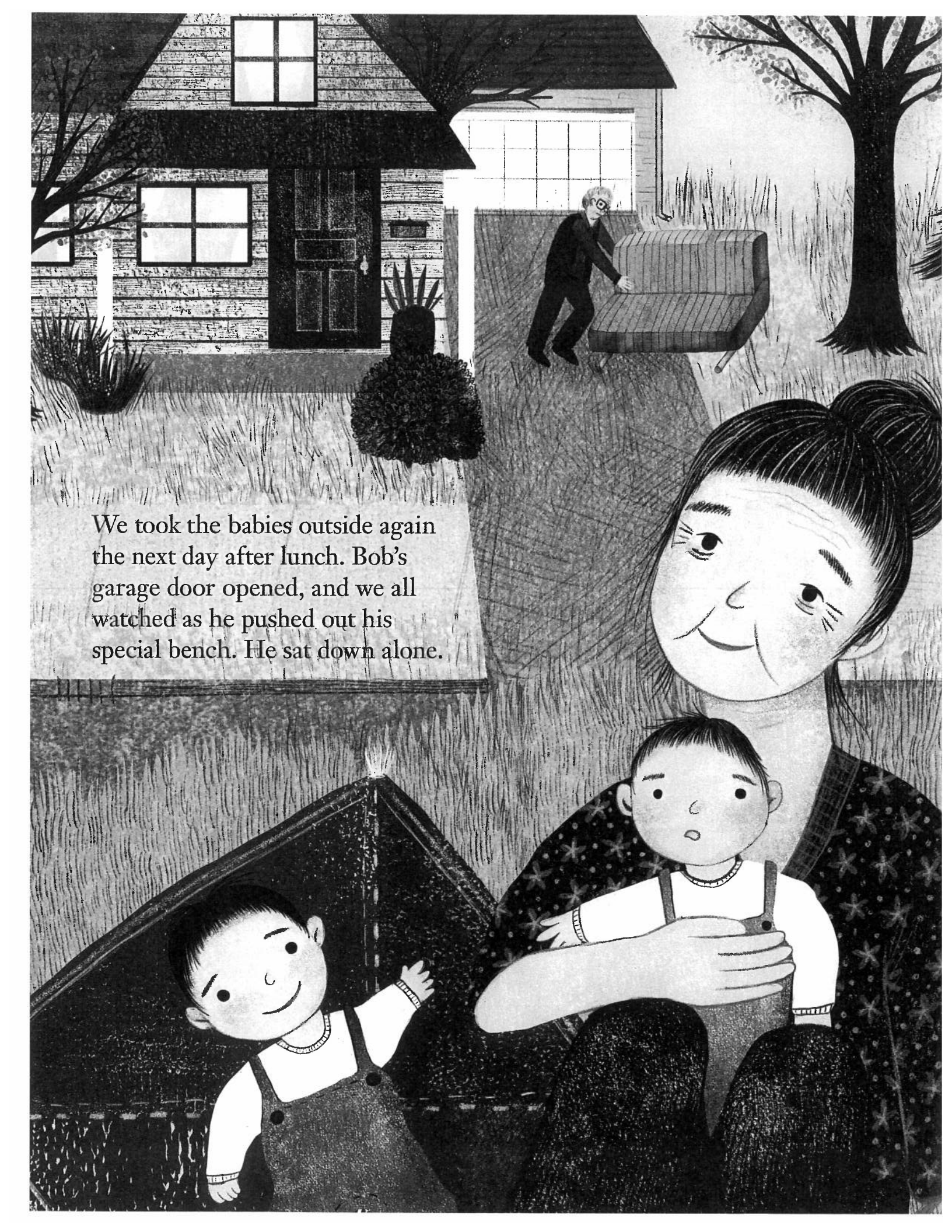
The world became green again, and finally,  
we all went outside. Tais Tais planted green  
onions. I picked flowers from the lilac  
bushes for my brothers to smell.





They opened their mouths and tried to eat them. My mother said, "Don't let them eat the flowers, Paj Ntaub."

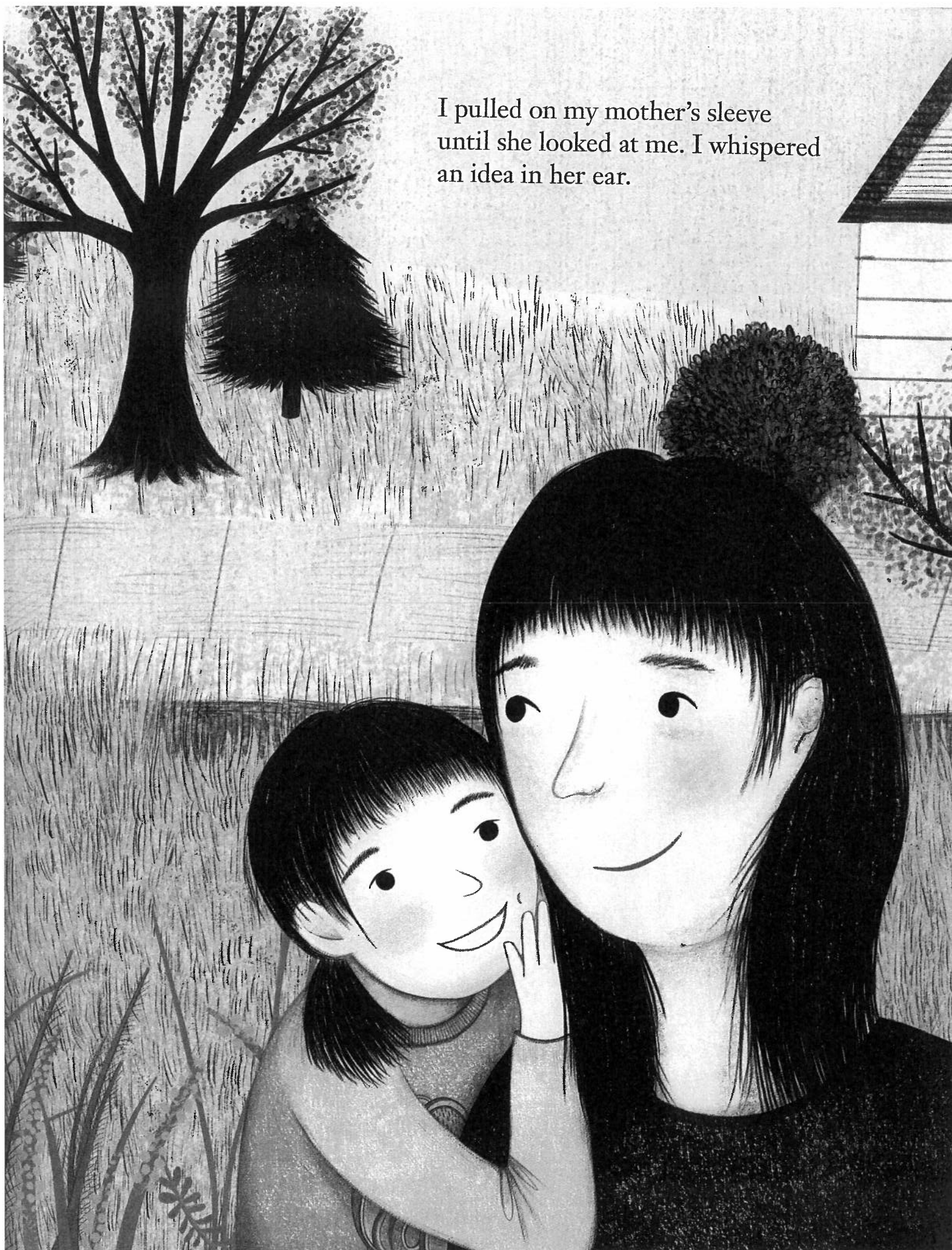




We took the babies outside again the next day after lunch. Bob's garage door opened, and we all watched as he pushed out his special bench. He sat down alone.



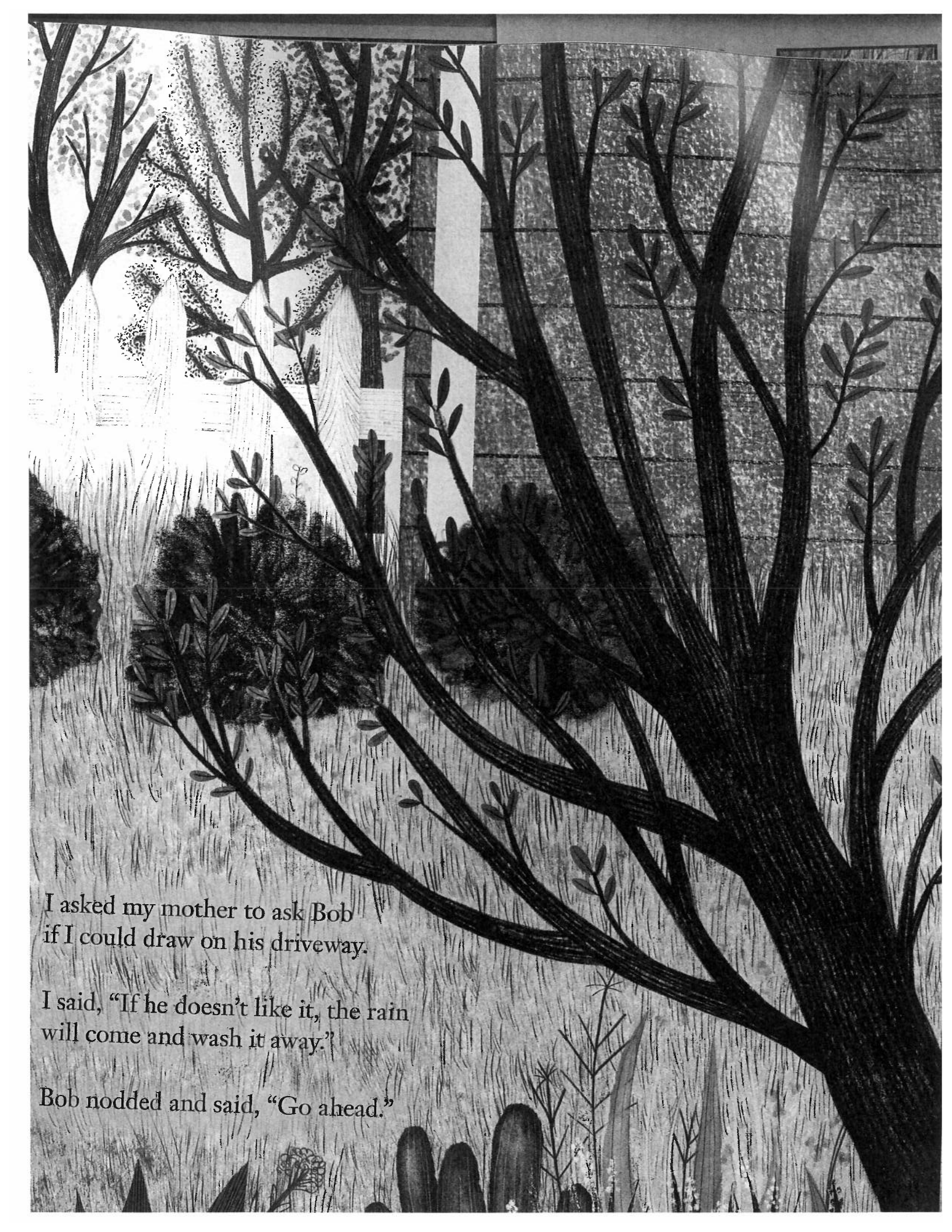
I pulled on my mother's sleeve  
until she looked at me. I whispered  
an idea in her ear.



My mother and I crossed the street and walked over to Bob. I let the sidewalk chalk bucket swing in my hands.







I asked my mother to ask Bob  
if I could draw on his driveway.

I said, "If he doesn't like it, the rain  
will come and wash it away."

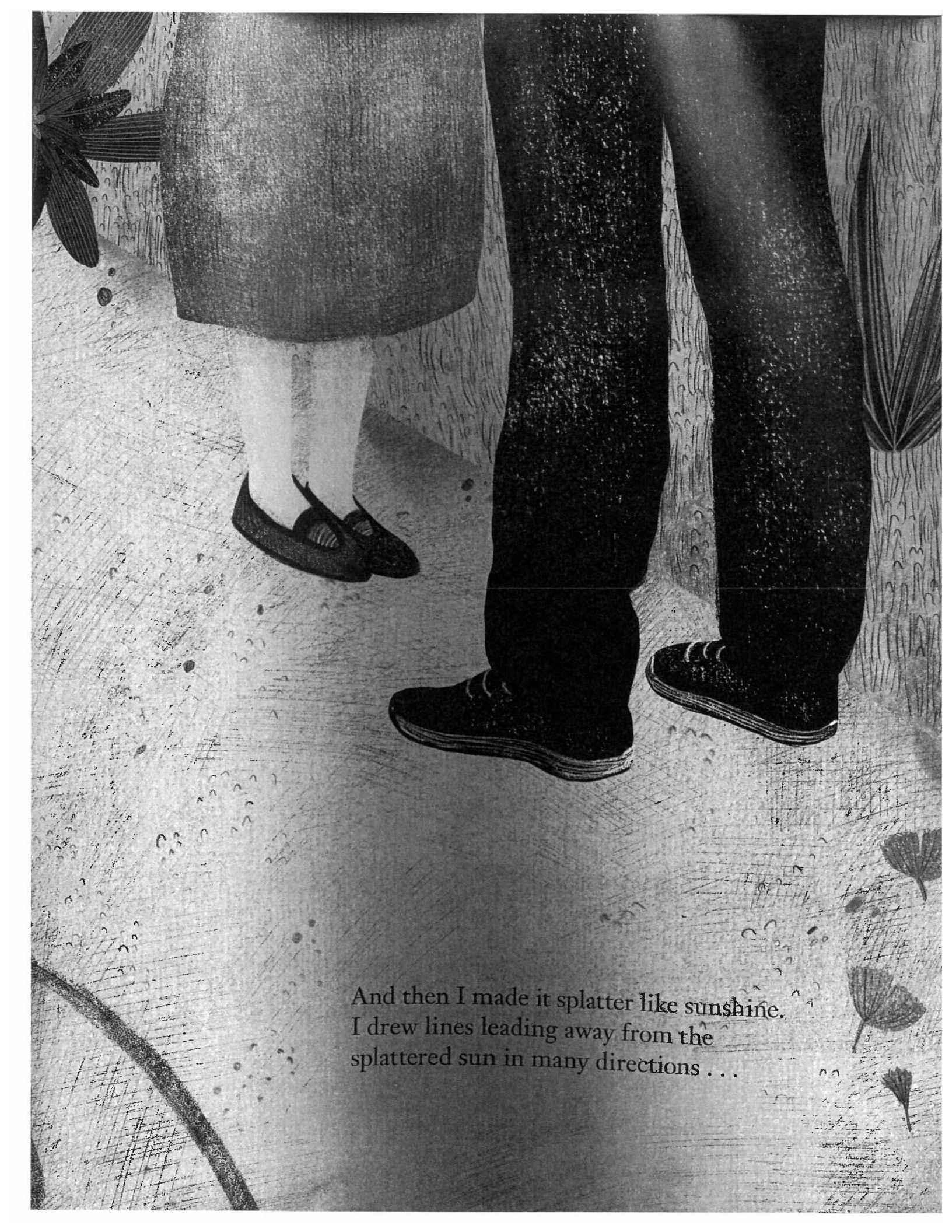
Bob nodded and said, "Go ahead."

My mother and Bob talked in low voices.  
I could hear Bob say, "Ruth, she was with  
me for sixty years . . ."

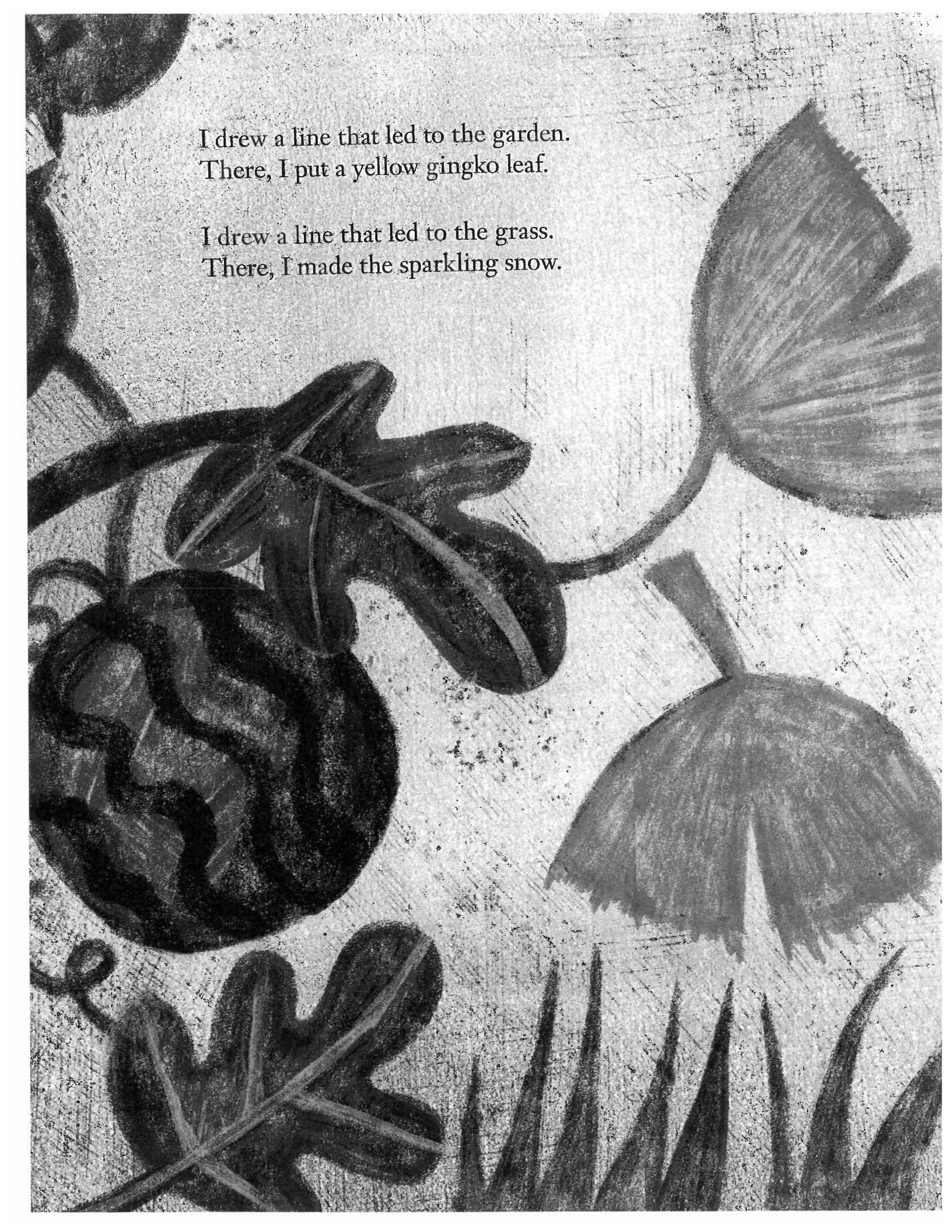
I started my picture with a teardrop.







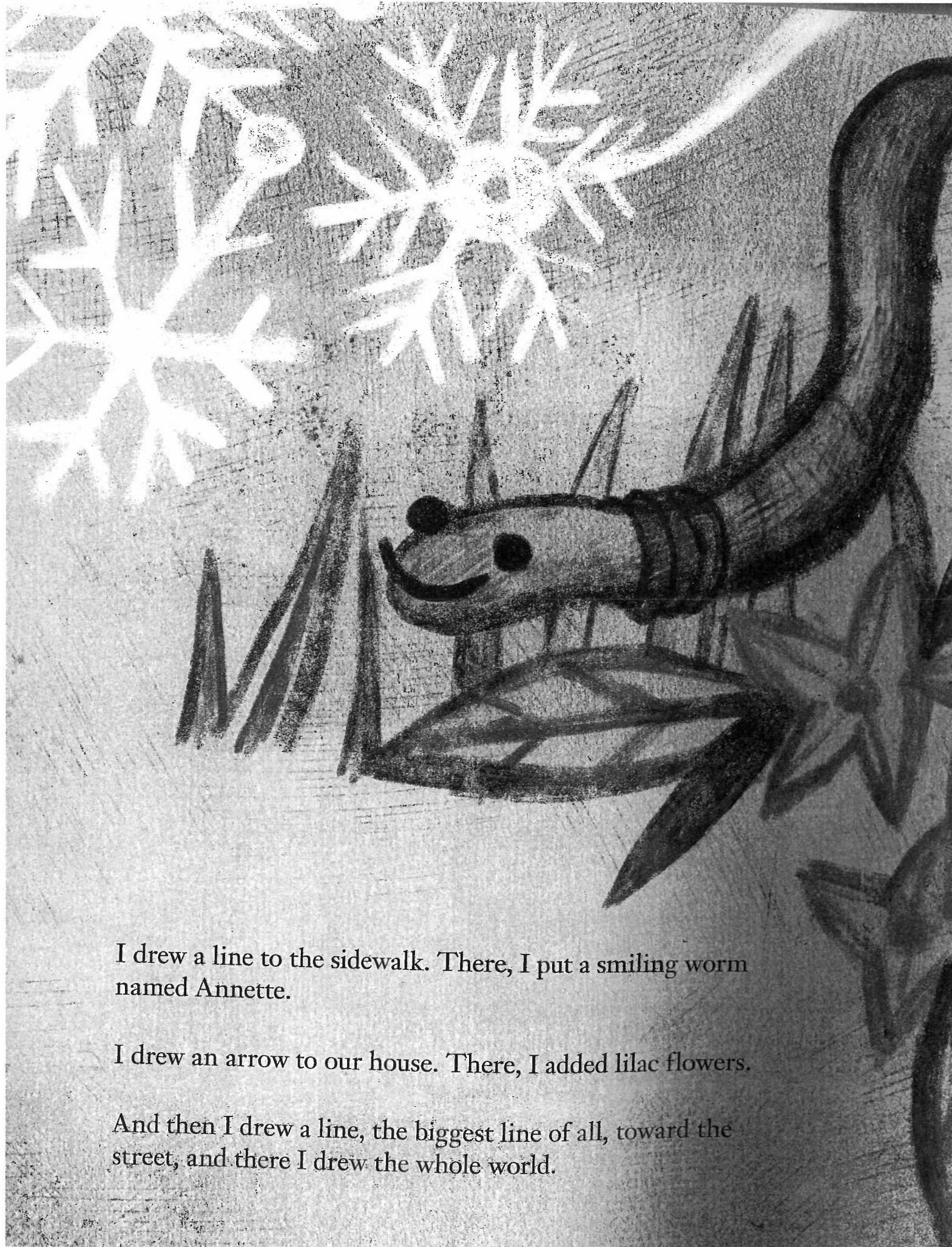
And then I made it splatter like sunshine.  
I drew lines leading away from the  
splattered sun in many directions . . .

The background of the entire page is a textured, light-colored surface with a fine, cross-hatched pattern. Scattered across this background are several dark, stylized illustrations of leaves and grass. In the upper left, there are a few dark, rounded shapes. In the center, there is a large, dark, lobed leaf with prominent veins. To its right, there is a large, fan-shaped leaf with many fine, radiating lines. In the lower left, there is another dark, lobed leaf. In the lower right, there are several long, narrow, pointed leaves that look like blades of grass. The overall style is minimalist and artistic, using dark ink or paint on a light, textured paper.

I drew a line that led to the garden.  
There, I put a yellow ginkgo leaf.

I drew a line that led to the grass.  
There, I made the sparkling snow.



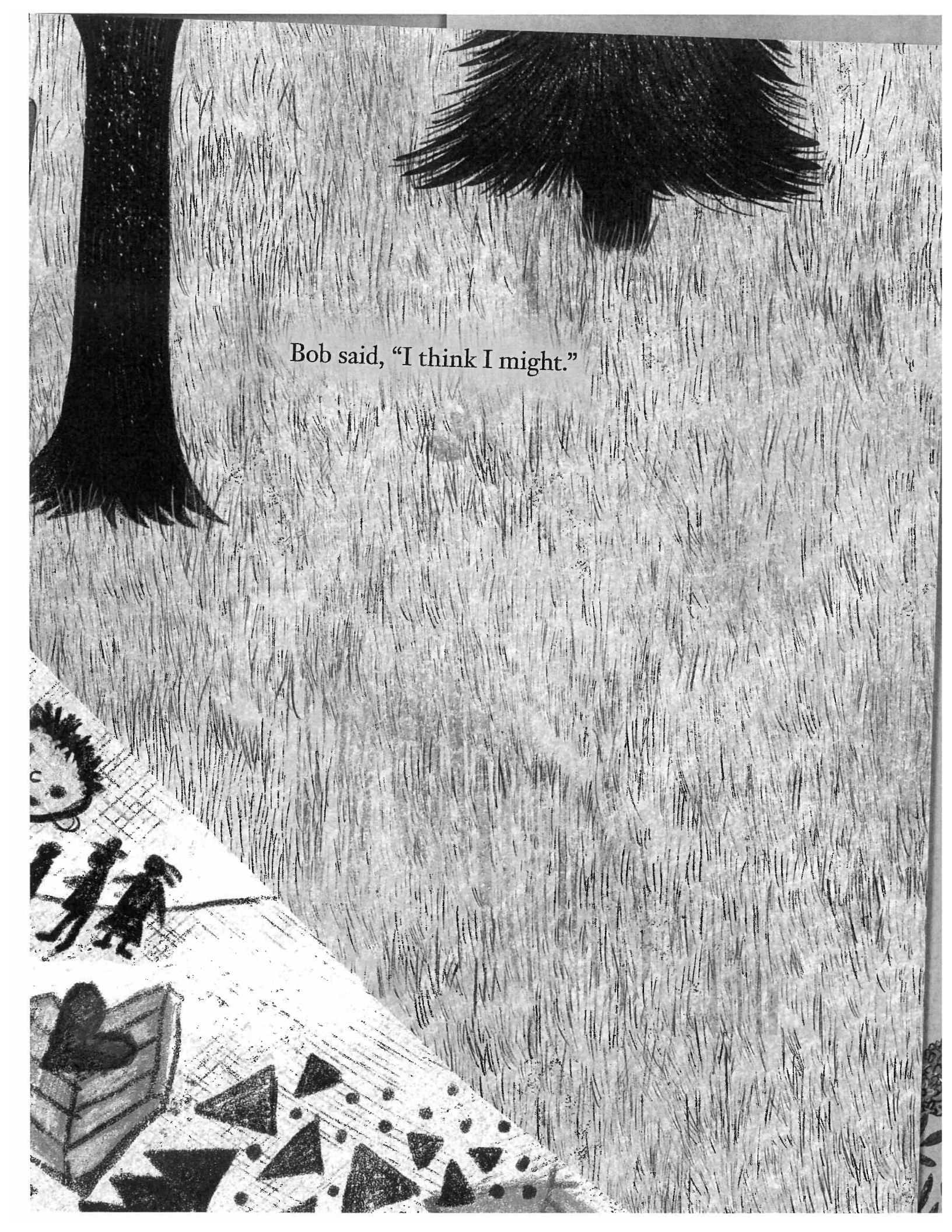


I drew a line to the sidewalk. There, I put a smiling worm named Annette.

I drew an arrow to our house. There, I added lilac flowers.

And then I drew a line, the biggest line of all, toward the street, and there I drew the whole world.





Bob said, "I think I might."