

MASHKIIKII

MIIKANA

Medicine Road



Neal Shannacappo

Acknowledgements

Neal - I would like to start off by saying a Chi migwetch to Evan Buchanan for all your hard work on the letters, and colors. Brilliant job my friend!!

Special thanks Shelley Robinson of the National Campus and Community Radio Association (NCRA-ANREC), for making this comic book possible. And to Red Jam Slam for being the platform from which the seeds were planted.

Thomas Louttit for so generously sharing your story and then allowing us to use your likeness and story for the basis of this comic book. Without your story this would not have been possible.

I would like to also thank my family Ainsley, Janet, Sandra and Andrea for always being there to support me in life. A big YO!! goes out to Jacynthe, Titou and Eden for making my life full of new meaning, and yeah Thankfulness, definitely. My best friends Allison W, Zhawanoong Noodin Kwe, Creegirl, Evan B, my sister Asmodeus Amanti, my big sisters Sharpe D and Giselle D (no relation), my damn good friend Ana C and last but never least my Ma Oriole P for blessing me with artistic ability.

Chi migwetch giitchi manido, grandmother and my wolves watching over me.

I dedicate this book to everyone who ever doubted themselves, to the shy ones, the quiet ones, the outsiders, the underdogs, the outcasts, the down trodden and to those of you living in despair . . .

Neal Shannacappo

“I refuse to be defined by my past, I refuse to allow a governmental body tell me who I am, I refuse to believe that it isn't possible and I refuse to believe that all I'll ever be is what I was . . .”

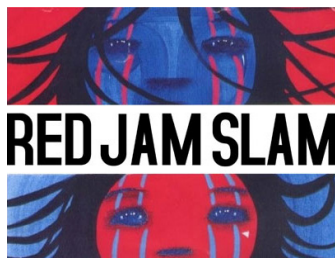
...

Evan - This is right back at you Neal, thanks for helping me stay afloat with interesting projects and including me in this one. It is an honour. Migwetch.

Thank you to my loving and supportive family, Barb, Bob, Justin, my aunts and uncles, Tyler, my grandfather John who inspired me to follow down the artistic path, my good friends who have been with me since the beginning and some new faces along the way, my peers who push me to improve my work, and last but certainly not least, my loving and talented girlfriend Sandrine, who is a creative muse for me and brightens up every day.



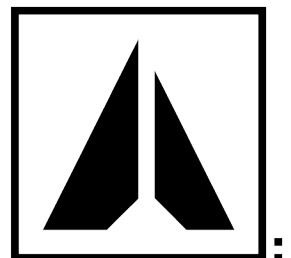
The National Campus
and Community Radio
Association



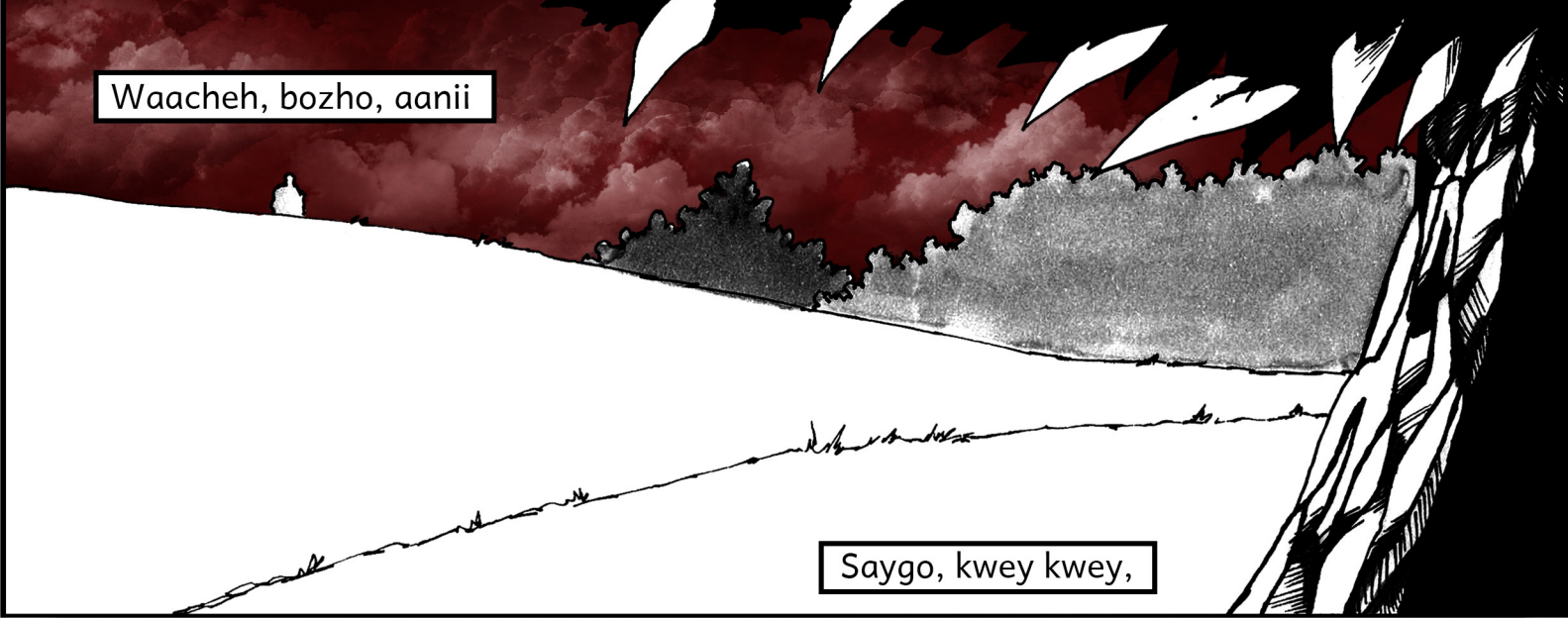
Red Jam Slam Society



nshannacappo.com



Aberrate Designs

A landscape illustration with a dark red, cloudy sky. A path leads from the bottom left towards a large tree on the right. The ground is white with some dark patches. The tree has dark, pointed leaves.

Waacheh, bozho, aanii

Saygo, kwey kwey,

A close-up view of the path and the base of the tree. The path is white with dark, jagged edges. The tree's trunk is dark and textured. The sky is dark red.

Tansi. . .

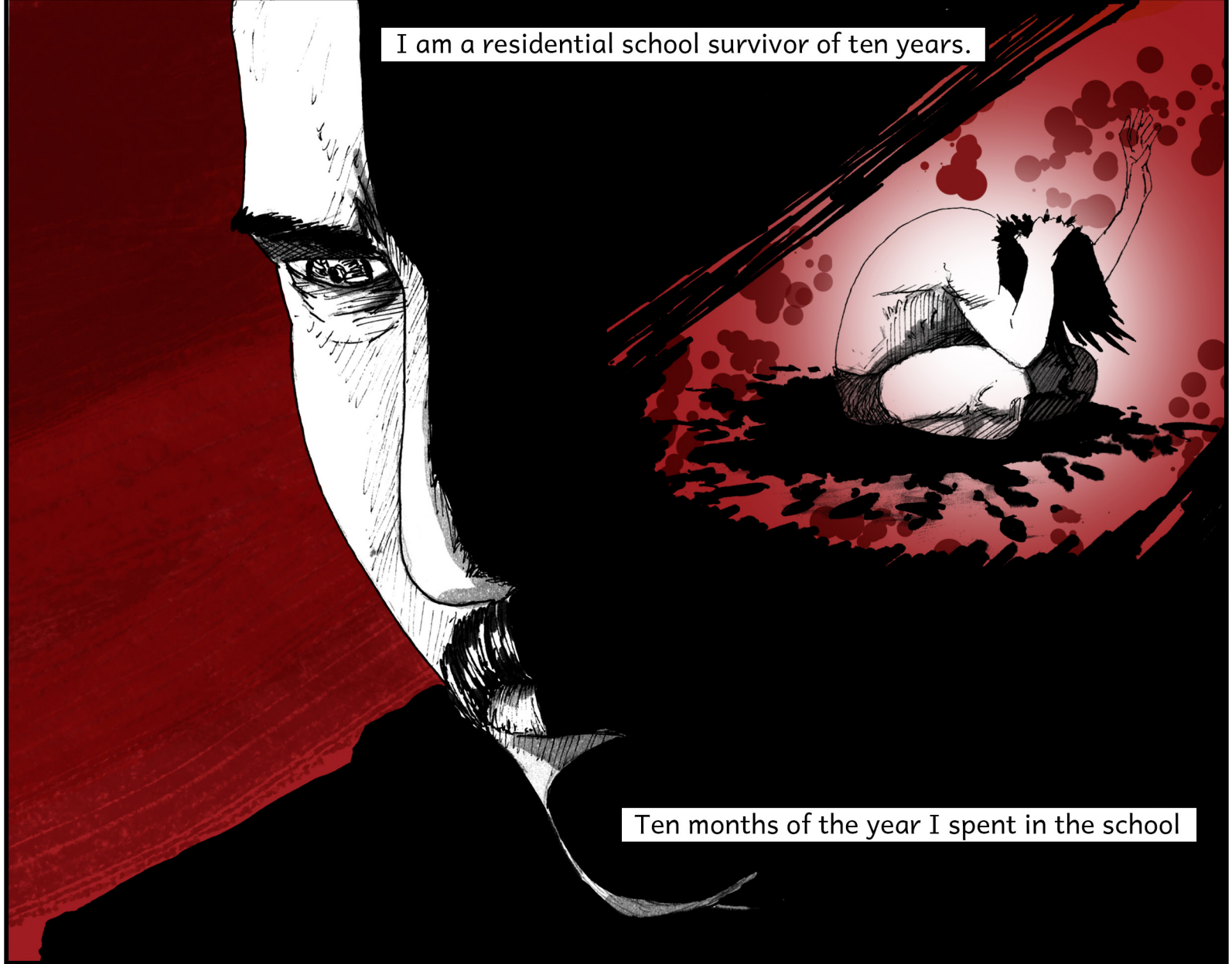
A person in a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt and pants stands with their back to the viewer, looking towards the right. They are standing under the large tree on the left. The sky is dark red.

It has been a long time since I walked this way.



I am sixty five years old.

I have sixteen grandchildren. . .



I am a residential school survivor of ten years.

Ten months of the year I spent in the school

It was August

It was early in the fifties.

I was taken away,

I was five years old,

At that time I did not know,

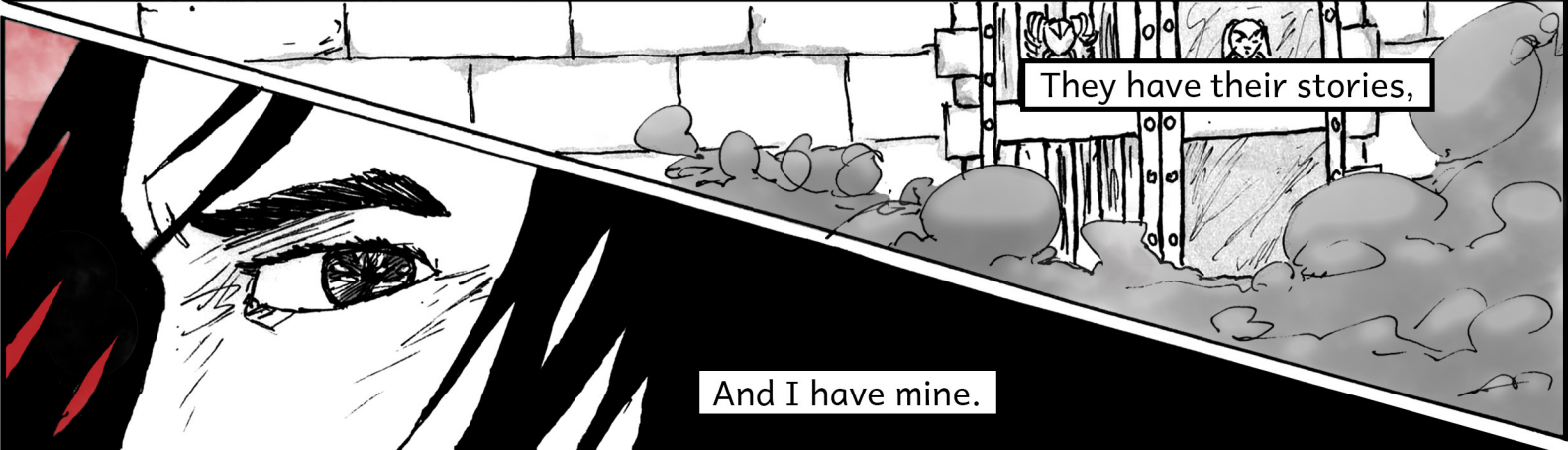
Where I was going,

I was so young.



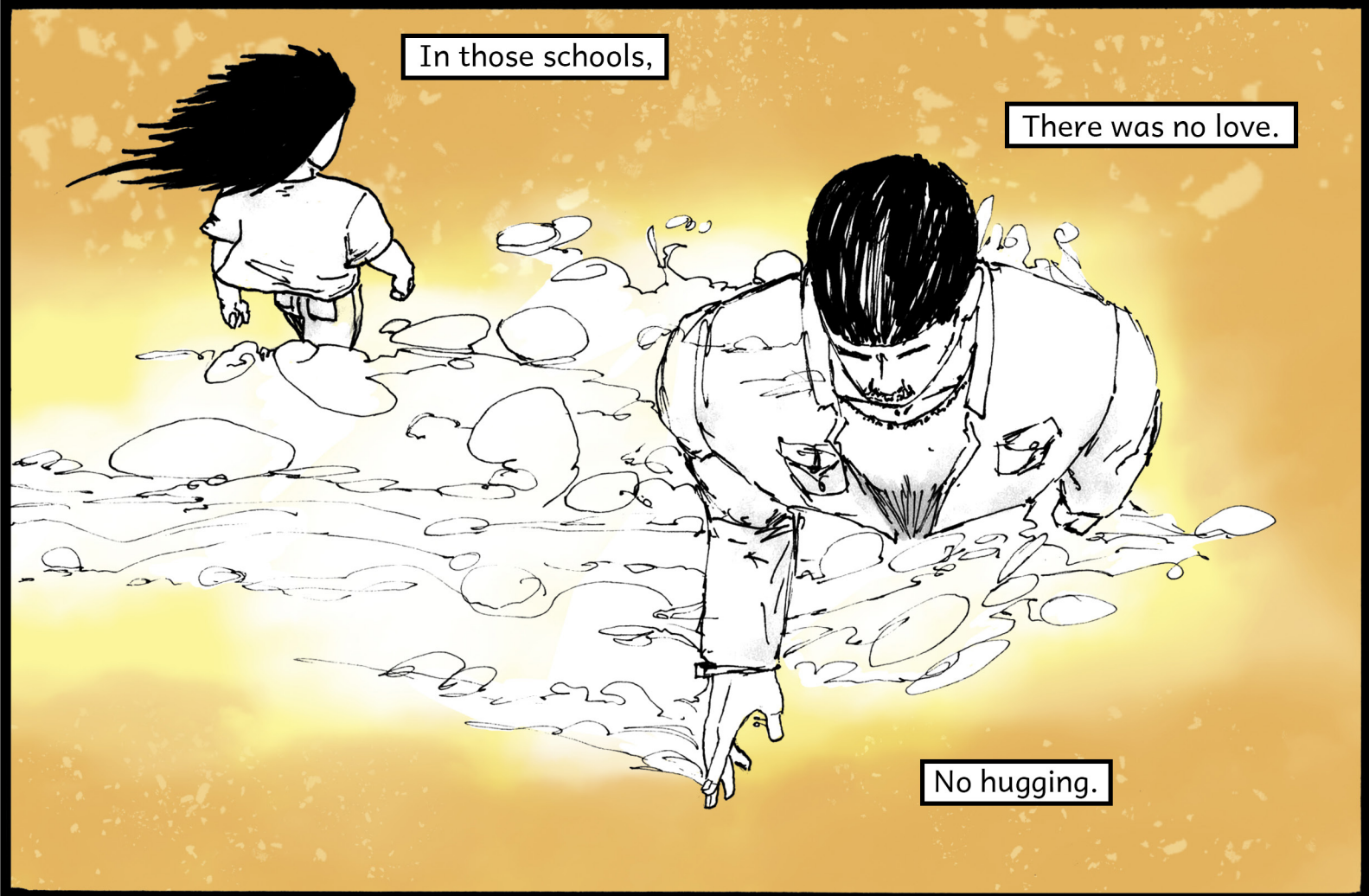
I have five sisters and three brothers,

But only three of us went to residential school.



They have their stories,

And I have mine.



In those schools,

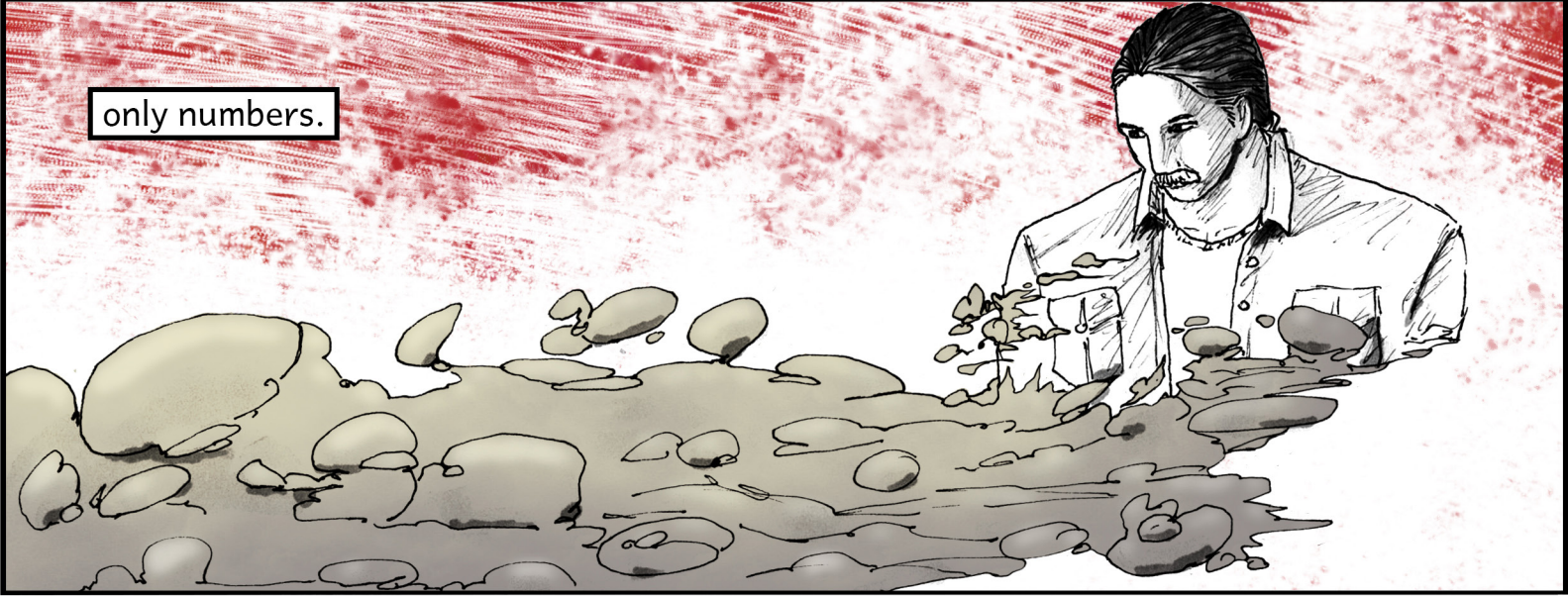
There was no love.

No hugging.

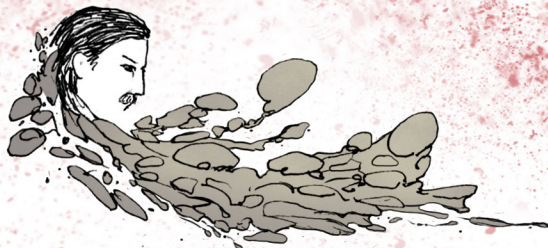
At those schools we had no names,



only numbers.



We were numbers.

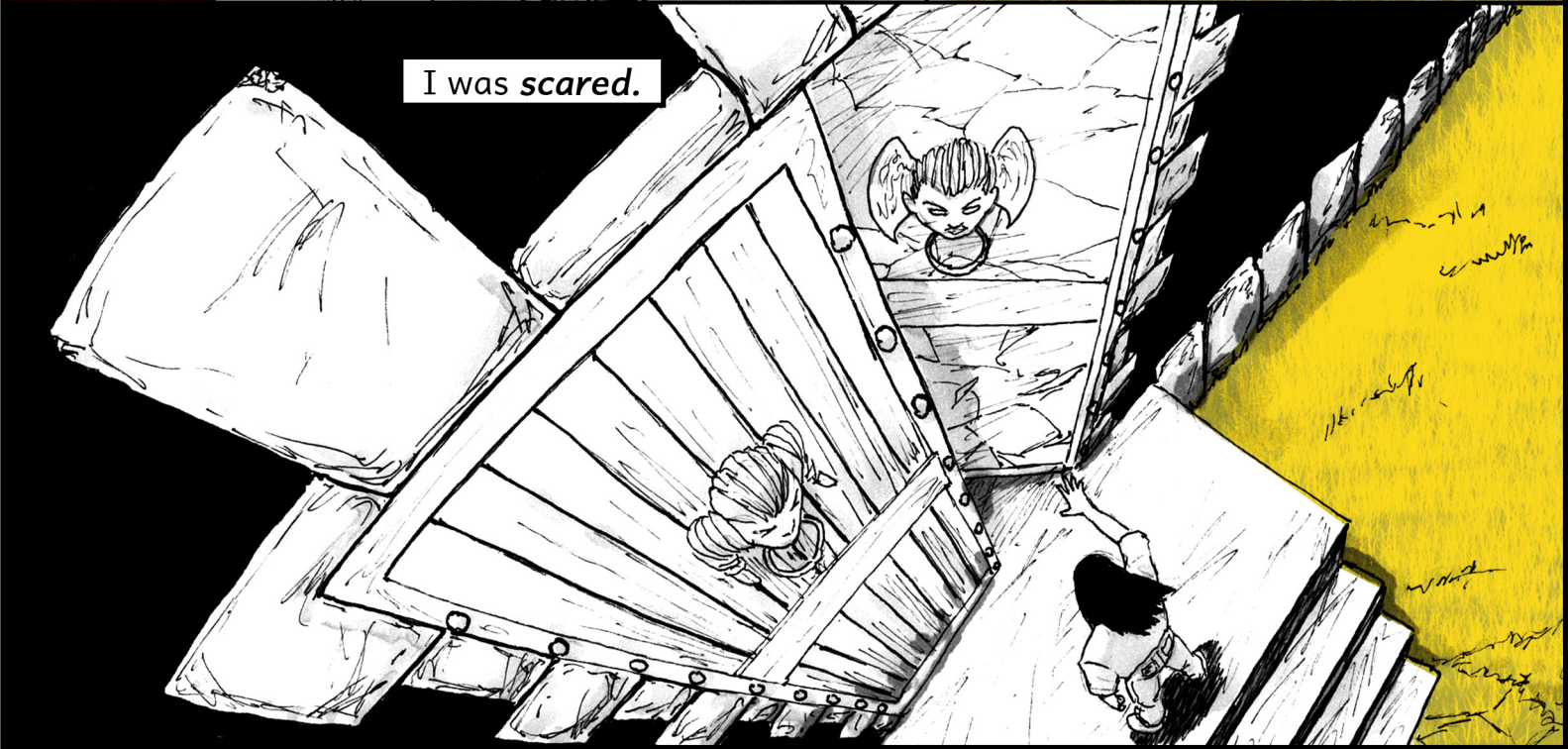




When I was in that school,



At that age,



I was scared.

I knew something was wrong



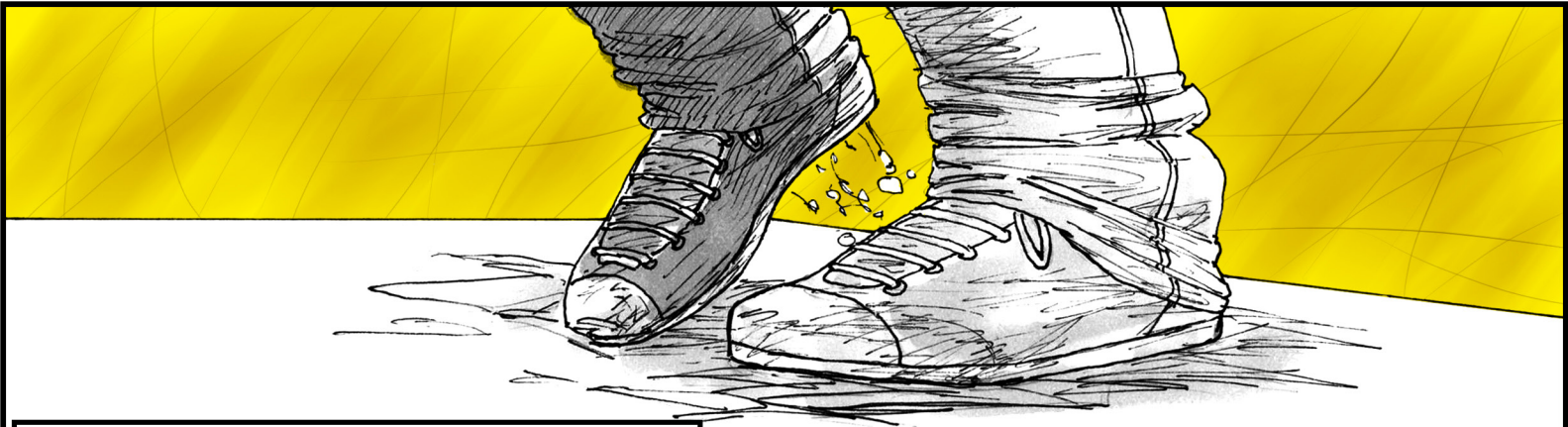
I knew something wasn't right



I didn't want to see



I did not want to see



The path into hell began with those steps



Those first steps



They make you open the door yourself,



They invite you in with kindness,

They lull you into the pain and misery with smiles. . .



In those schools they take everything from you,

Things you never thought possible to have taken.



Everything,

Sacred.



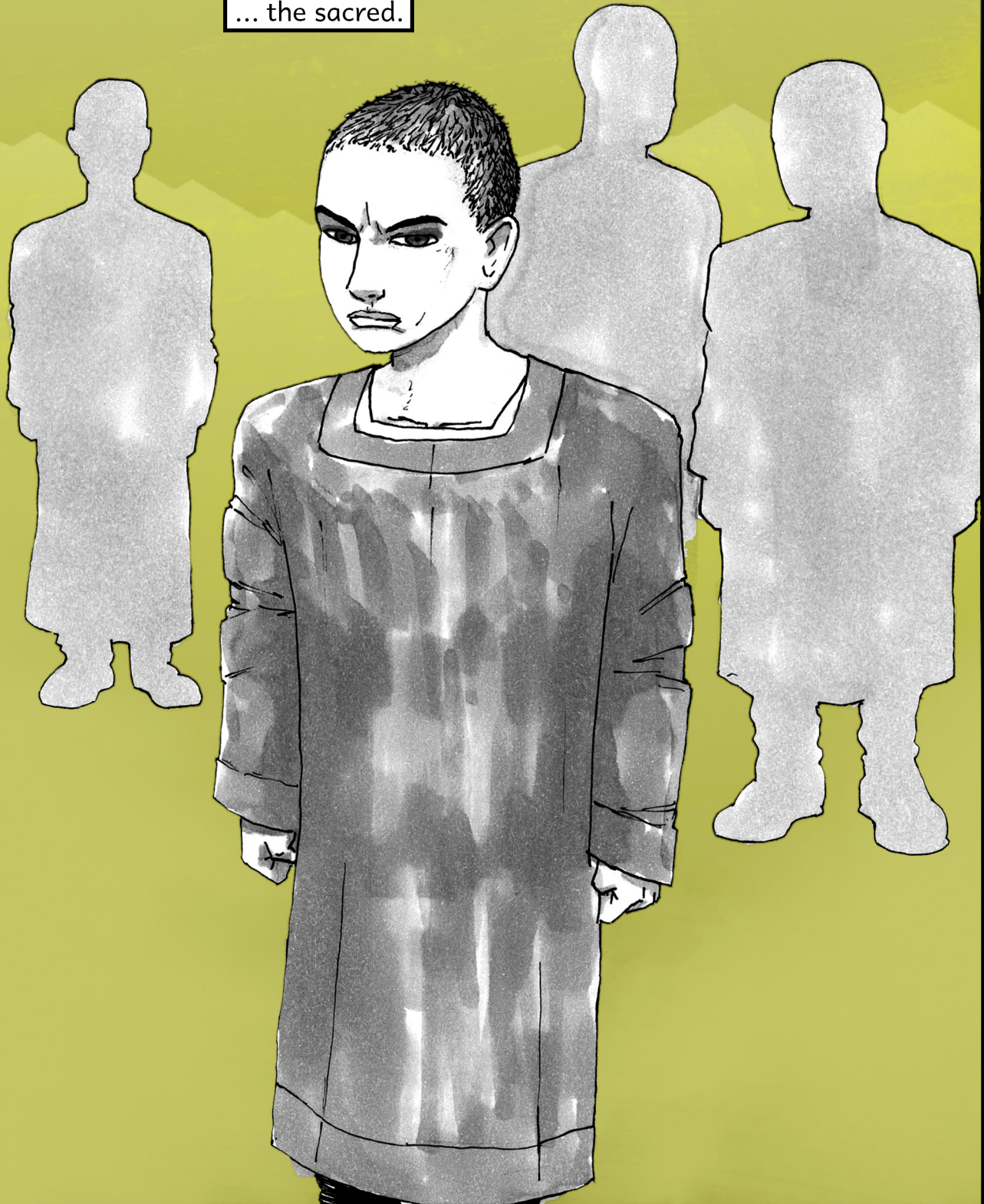
In those schools there is no hugging. . .

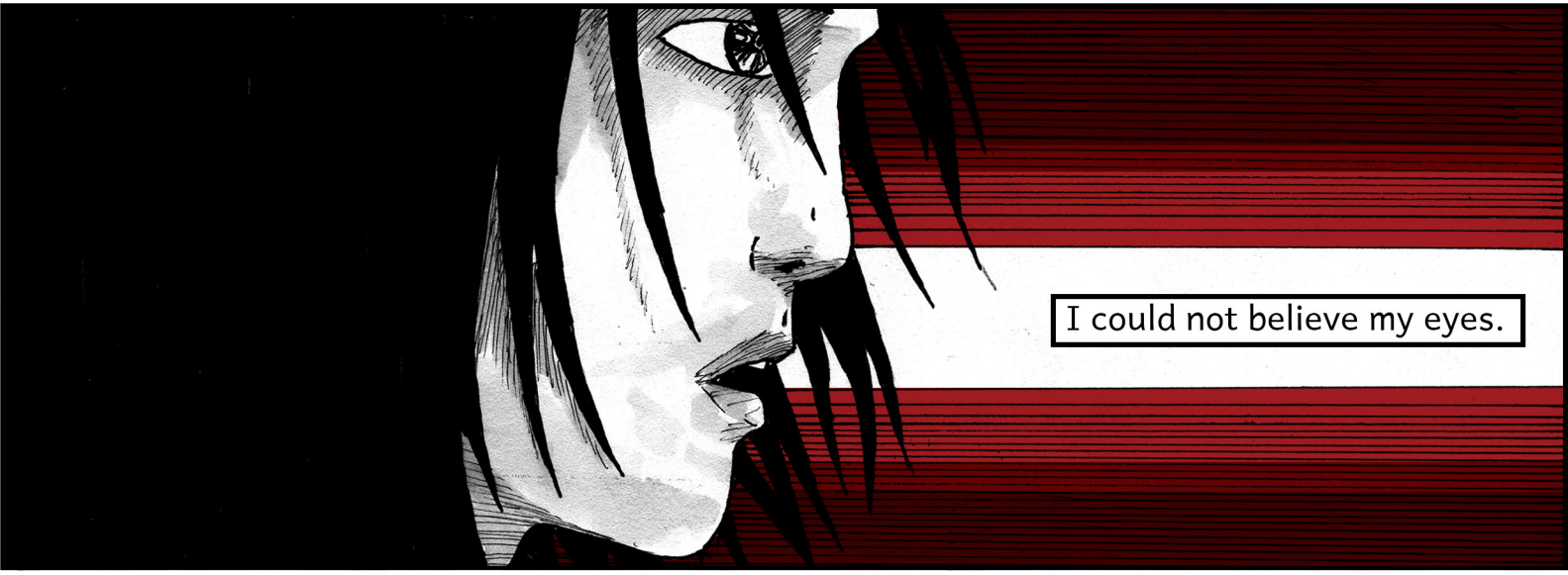
In those schools there is no love. . .

No smiles.

They take ...

... the sacred.

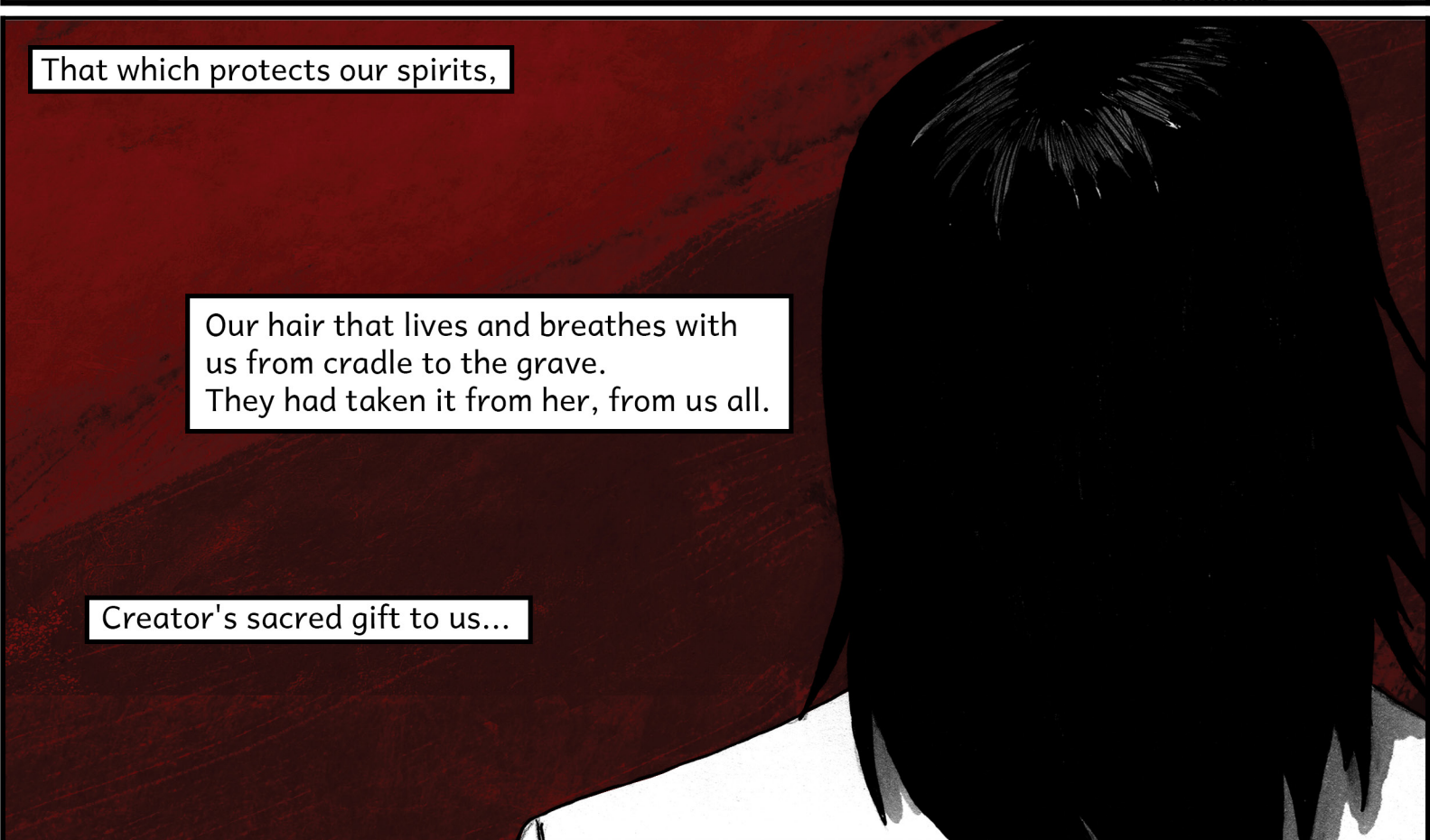




I could not believe my eyes.




They had cut off her hair.



That which protects our spirits,

Our hair that lives and breathes with us from cradle to the grave.
They had taken it from her, from us all.


Creator's sacred gift to us...

A close-up illustration of a hand holding a wooden comb against a person's dark hair. The background is a textured yellow.


For us our hair is a sacred responsibility,

Our mothers care for it,

My mother brushed mine out.

An illustration showing a person's hair being brushed from behind. The person's face is partially visible, looking down. The background is white.

Everyday, in the evening.

A detailed illustration of an elderly person's face, showing deep wrinkles and hooded eyes. The background is a textured yellow.

One day...

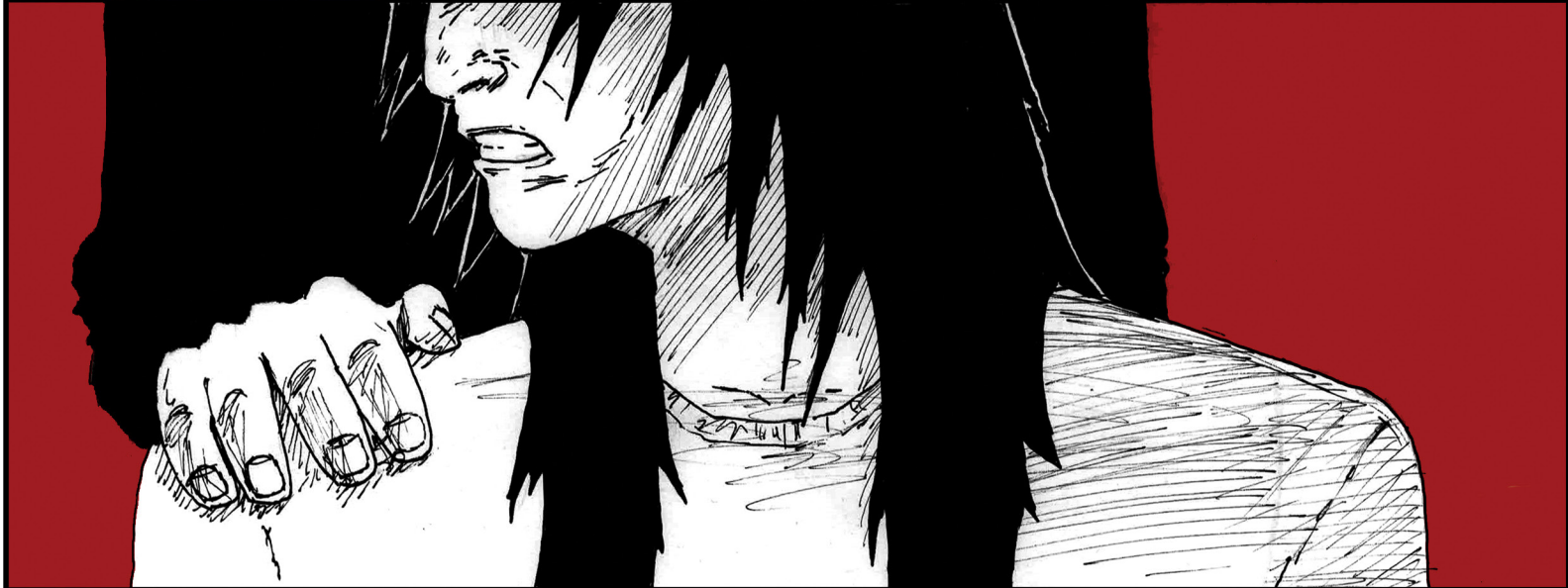
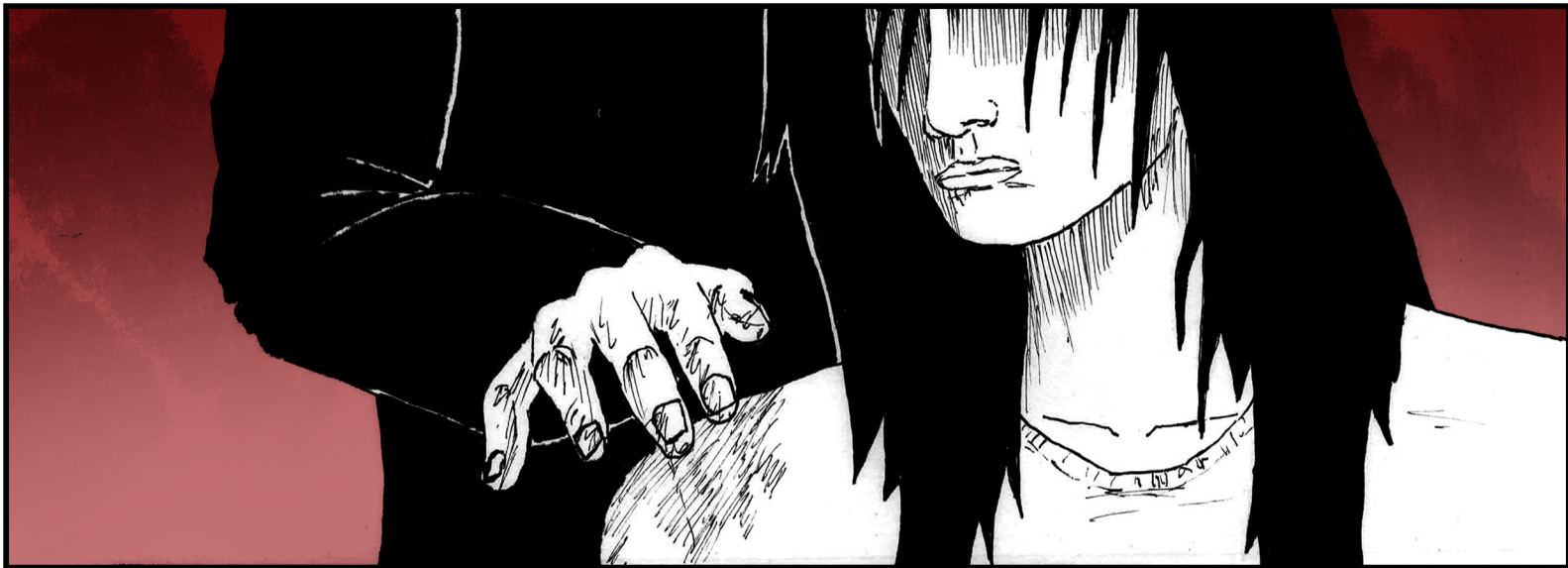
in the twilight of my life,

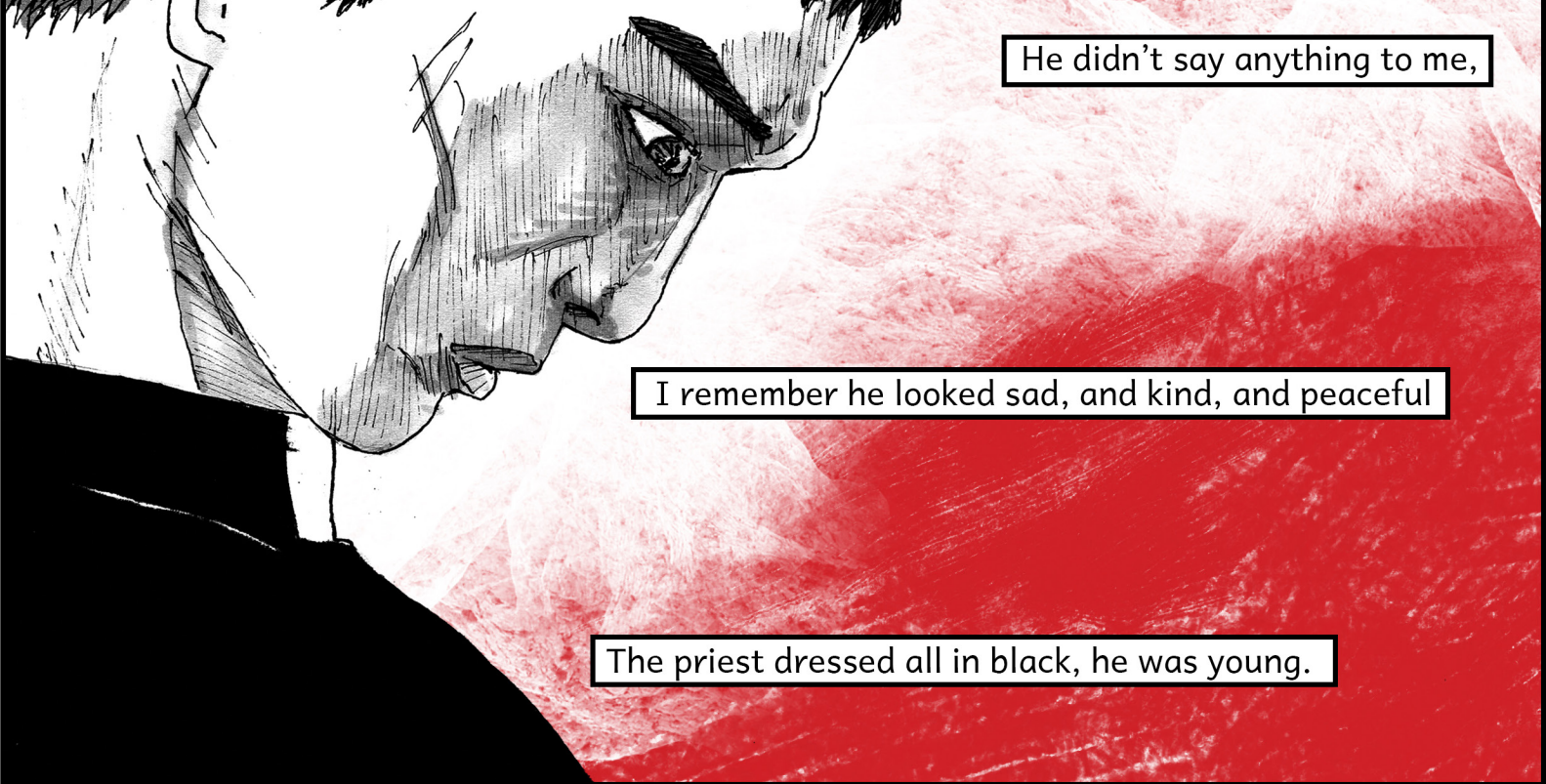
Beneath hooded eyes, age fully upon me,

with hair as gray as smoke, my love would brush my hair.

That is what we were taught.

Our sacred hair, protects our spirits.

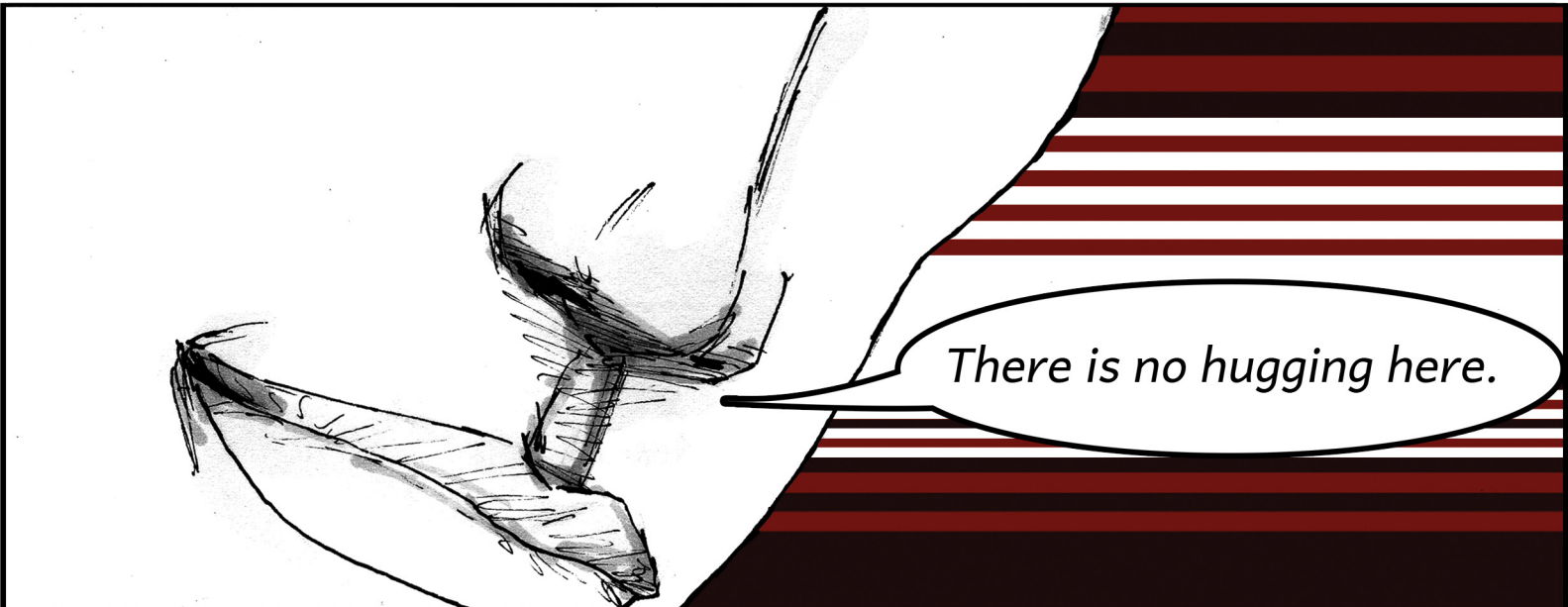




He didn't say anything to me,

I remember he looked sad, and kind, and peaceful

The priest dressed all in black, he was young.



There is no hugging here.

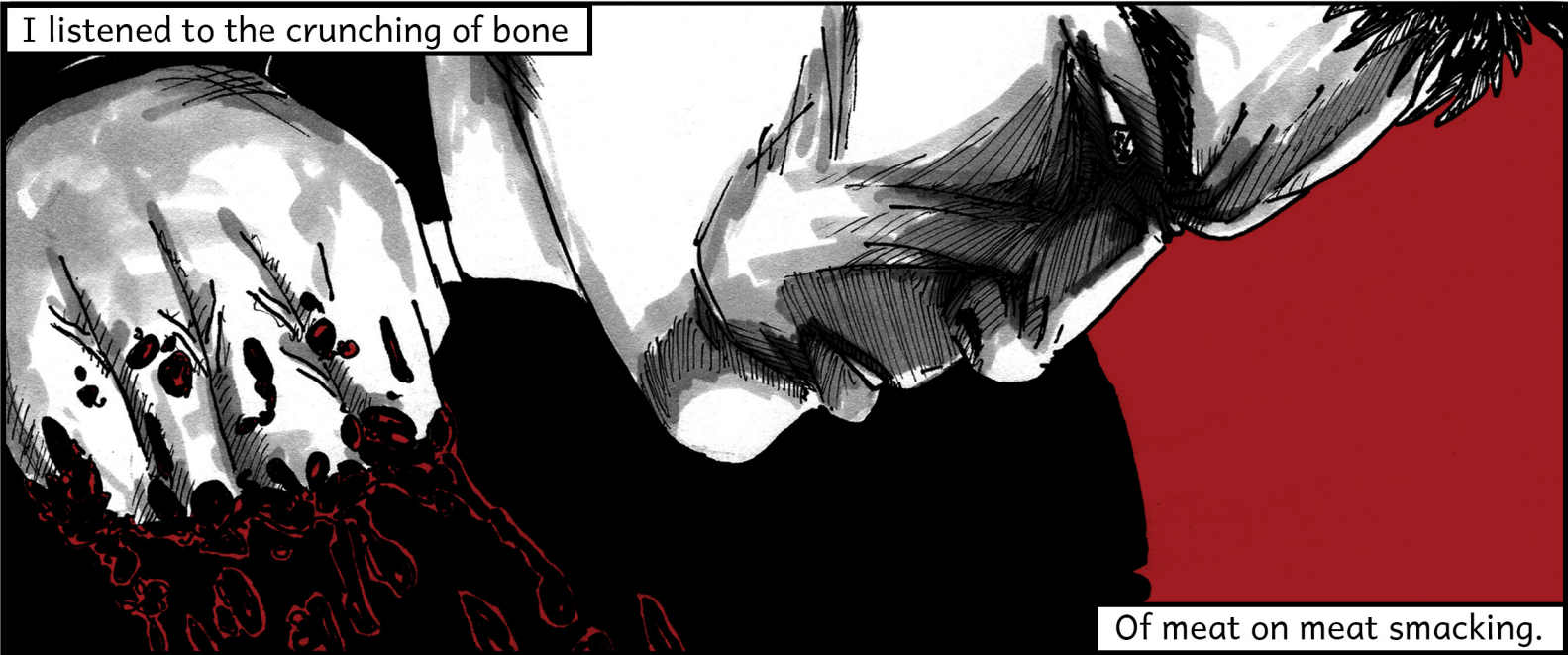
I remember the pain.



Bright and hot.

Like a fire in my face.

I listened to the crunching of bone



Of meat on meat smacking.

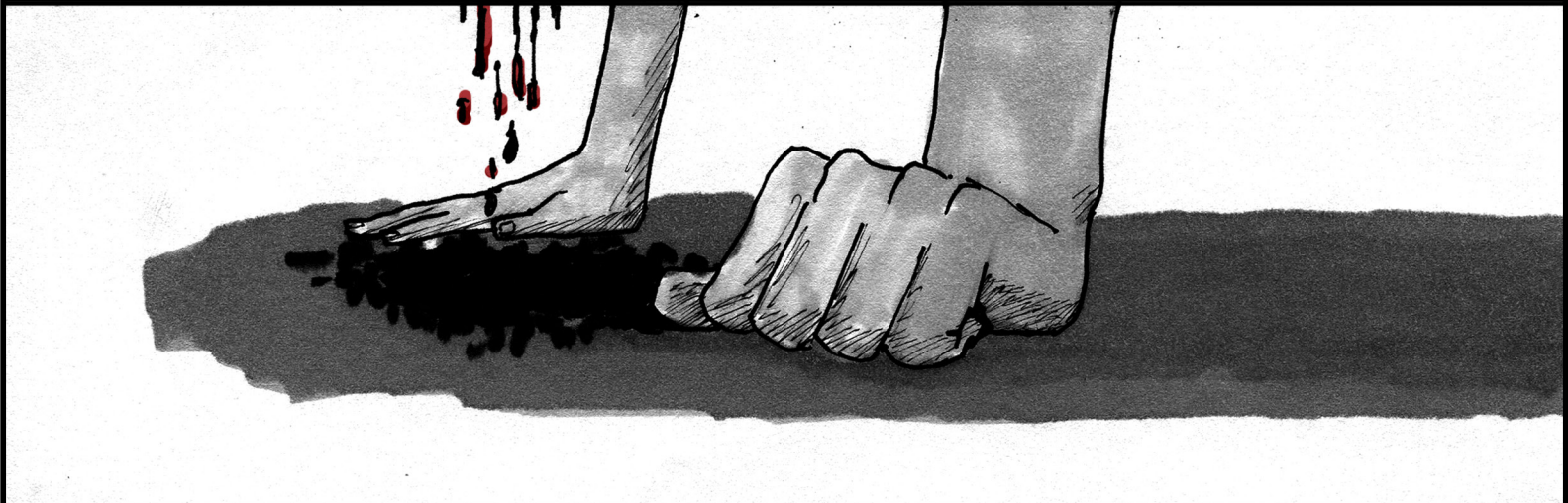
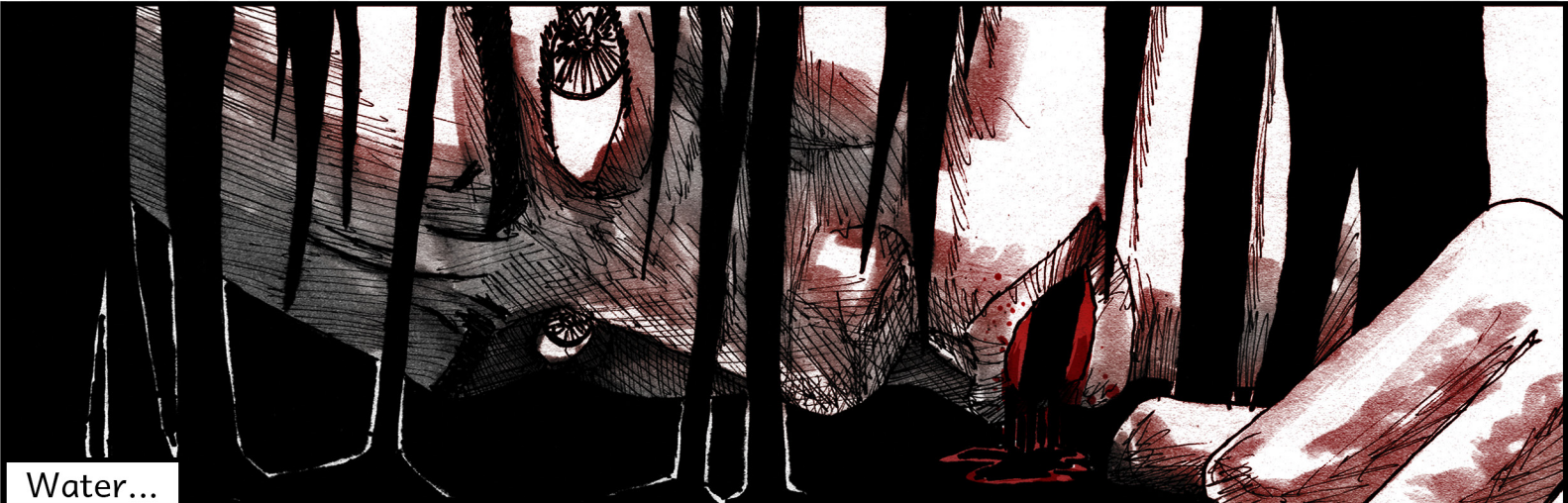
And then there was silence. . .

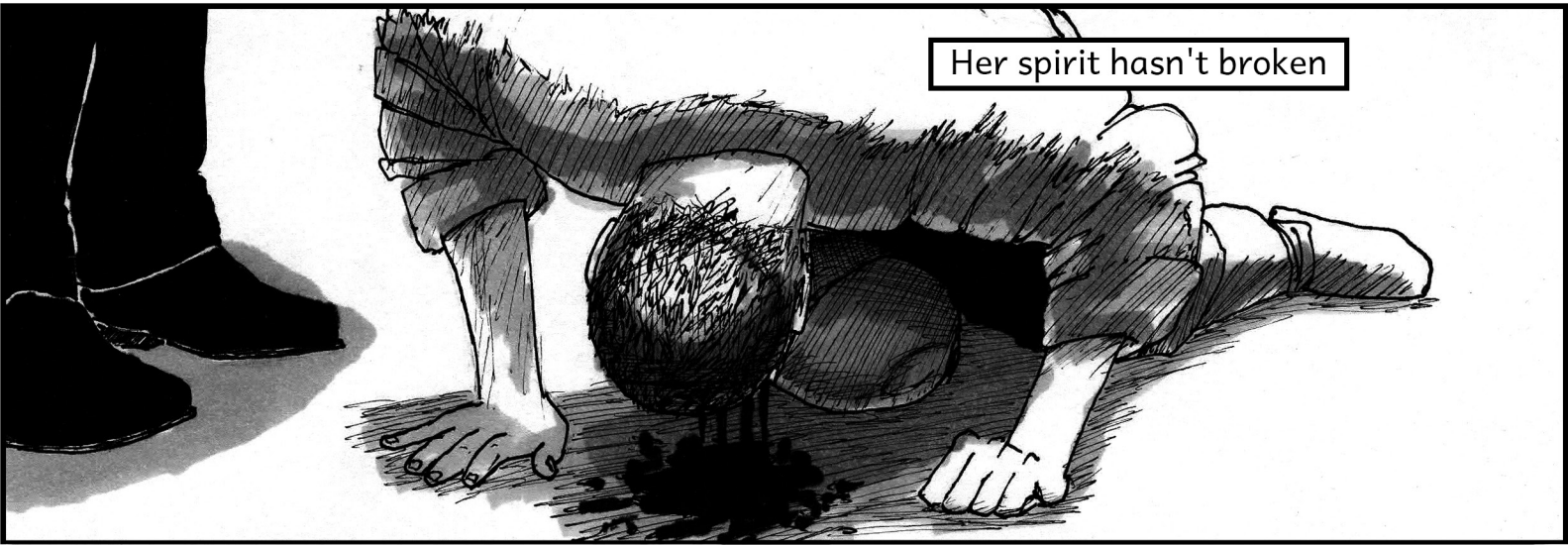


Just water dripping.



Water...



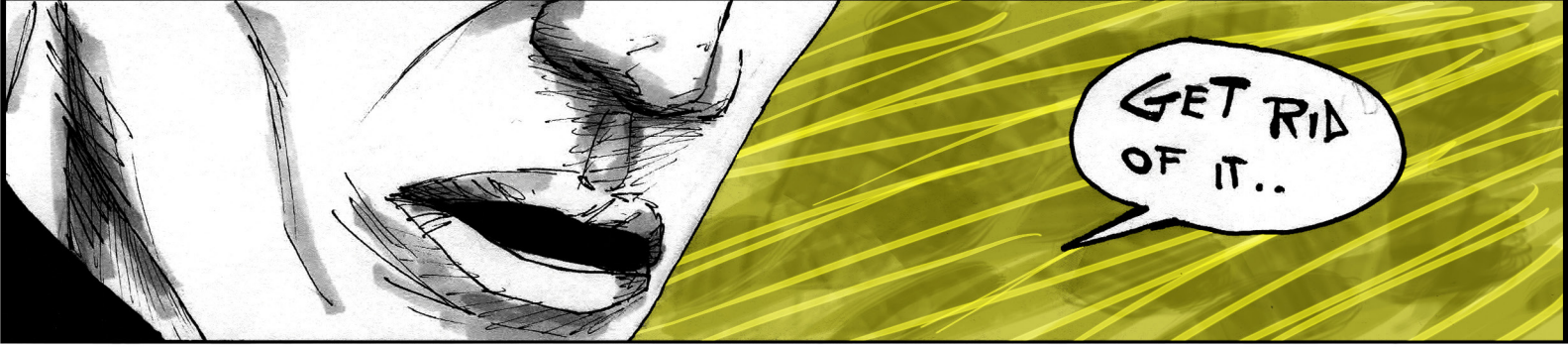


Her spirit hasn't broken



He watches as she struggles to get up

All over again



GET RID OF IT..



I am five years old.

I remember despair.

Being too small to do anything.

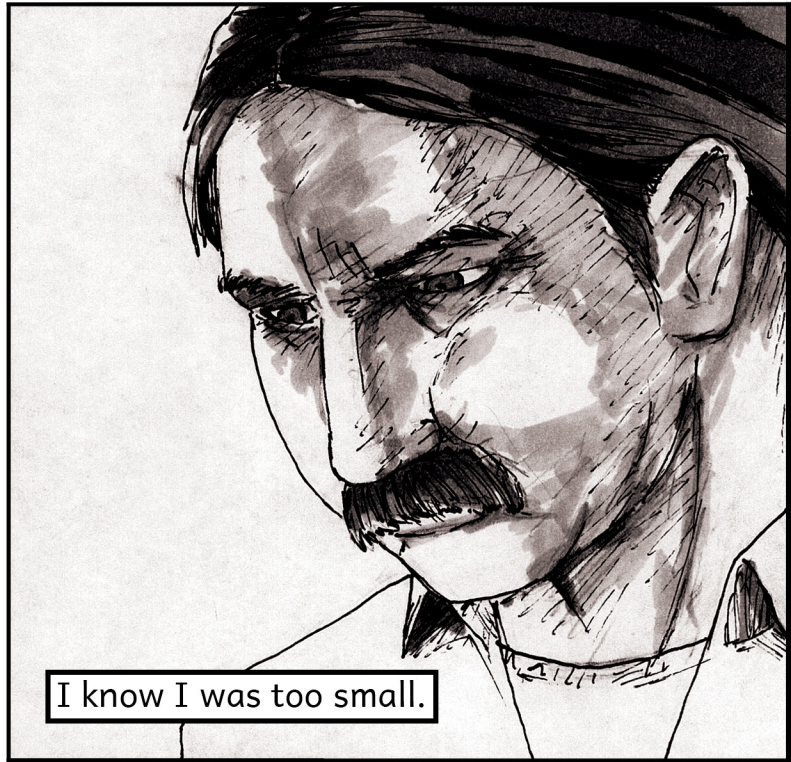


I look down and I see blood on my hands

Not my blood.



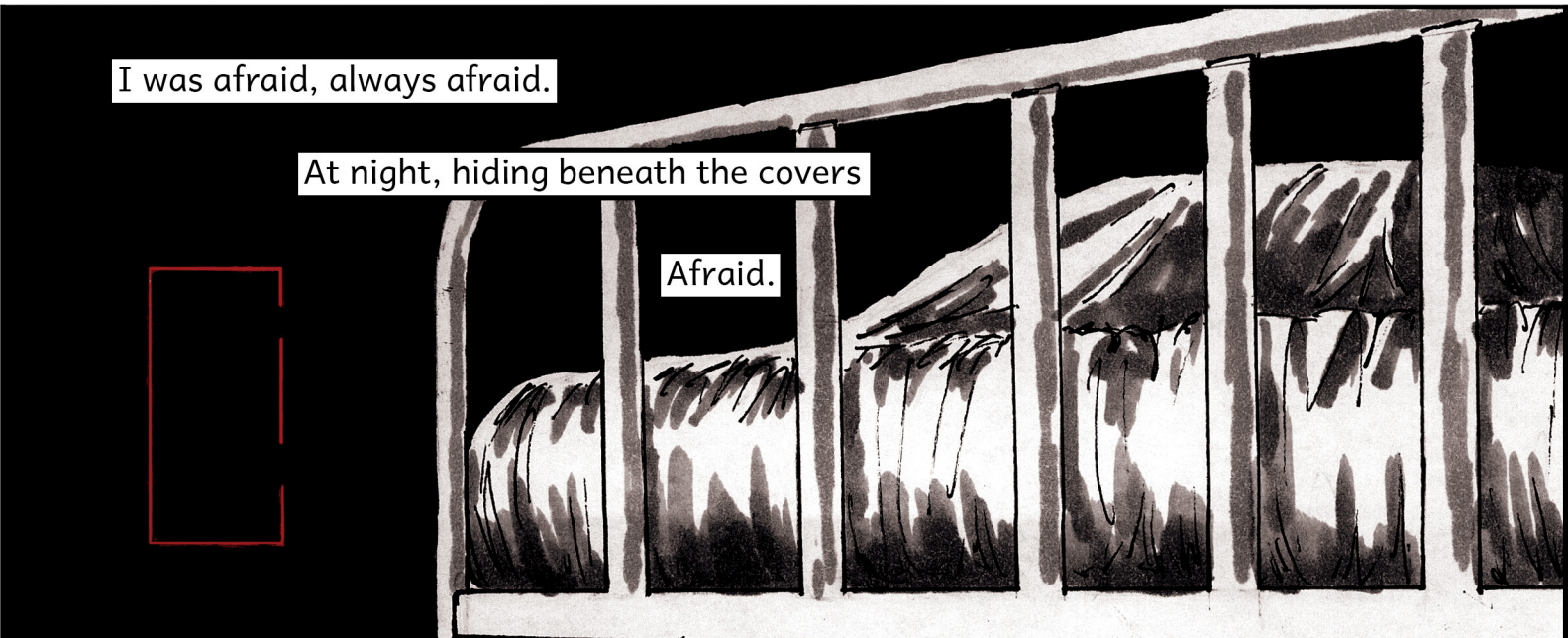
I know I was too small.



I was afraid, always afraid.

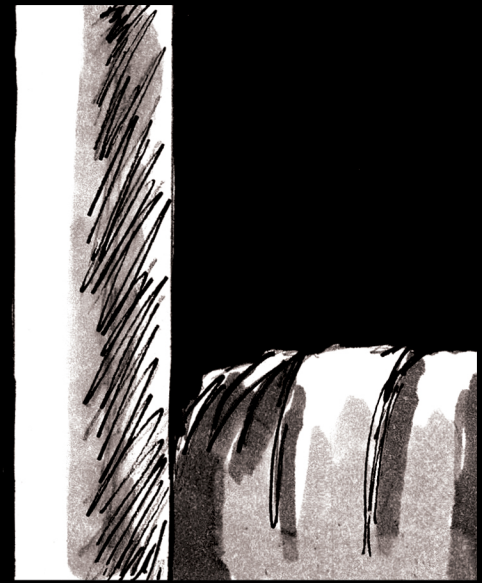
At night, hiding beneath the covers

Afraid.



Noises coming from the bathroom

Every night, noises coming from...



No matter how hard I tried

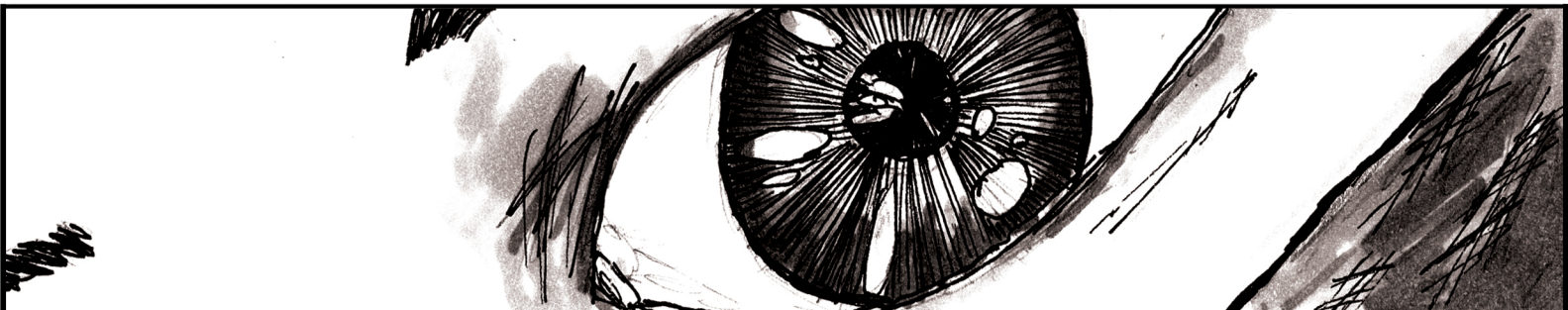
There was no blocking those sounds

The noise coming from...

I was afraid because I knew those sounds

I knew what was happening behind that door.

Noises, always the noises from...



Beneath the door I could see the shadows moving

The shadows, and the noise they made

It happened to me

It happened to me

Sexually assaulted in the bathroom

Against the sink

The sink and mirror, thumping

Thumping
Thumping

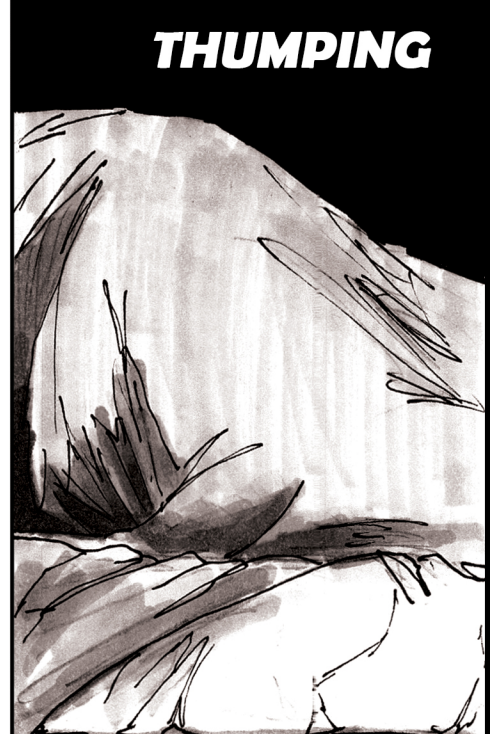


The smell of urine in my nose

Thumping
Thumping



THUMPING
THUMPING



I wet the bed instead of going in there. . .

**THUMPING
THUMPING**


**THUMPING
THUMPING**



**THUMPING
THUMPING**

And then there was the silence

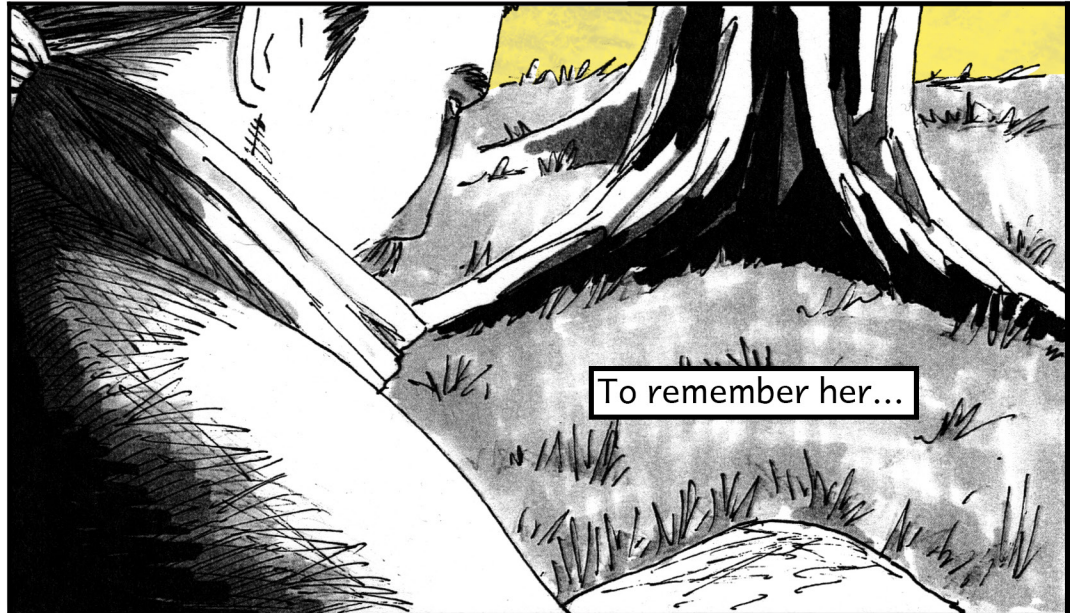




There are no graves



I made this myself



To remember her...



I have sixteen grandchildren I am sixty five years old

It has been a long time since I walked this way.



Nshannacappo is a Saulteaux (Nakawe) artist, graphic novelist, film maker, writer, poet and Social Service Worker graduate from Algonquin College April 2013. His people come from the Rolling River First Nations in Manitoba. Neal's clan is the Wolf, his spirit name is Oshkabay'wis. He follows a traditional/urban lifestyle, smudging, attending ceremony and carrying tobacco for offerings when he can. Neal has been drawing comic books since he was 12 years old, at which time he began to take the craft seriously, currently he's completed Navriss, roughly five versions of the Krillian Key graphic novel and countless side story lines which have helped him shape his novels. Mashkiikii Miikana - Medicine Road marks the first collaboration with another artist.



Ebuchanan is an Ottawa based graphic artist, designer, and musician. He graduated from the Music Industry Arts Certificate Program at Algonquin College in April 2014 and is now collaborating with other local creative forces on several projects. He often works alongside musicians in creating: album artworks, merchandise, logos, websites and other promotional materials, as well as branching out into videography and motion graphics. He has been passionate about art since an early age and continues to hone his creative skills with engaging projects. Mashkiikii Miikana - Medicine Road marks the first graphic novel he has worked on, and the first of many to come.

Artwork by Sandrine Desjourdy

