

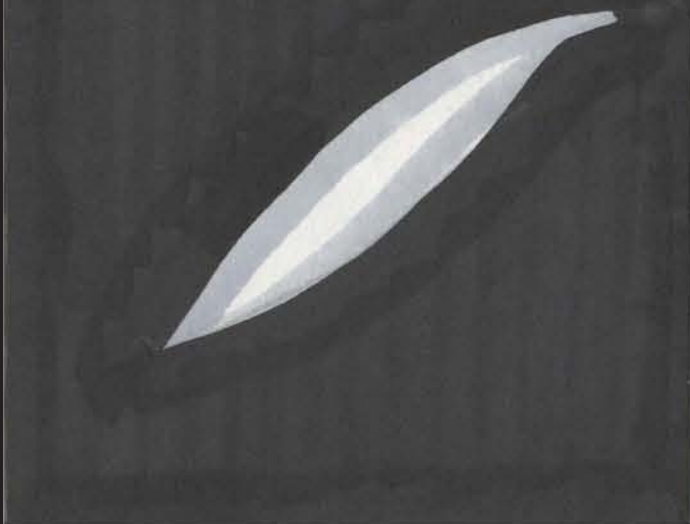


**THE
ROCKING
HORSE**

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Written & Illustrated by Lisa Klug

I was four, and it was late one night...



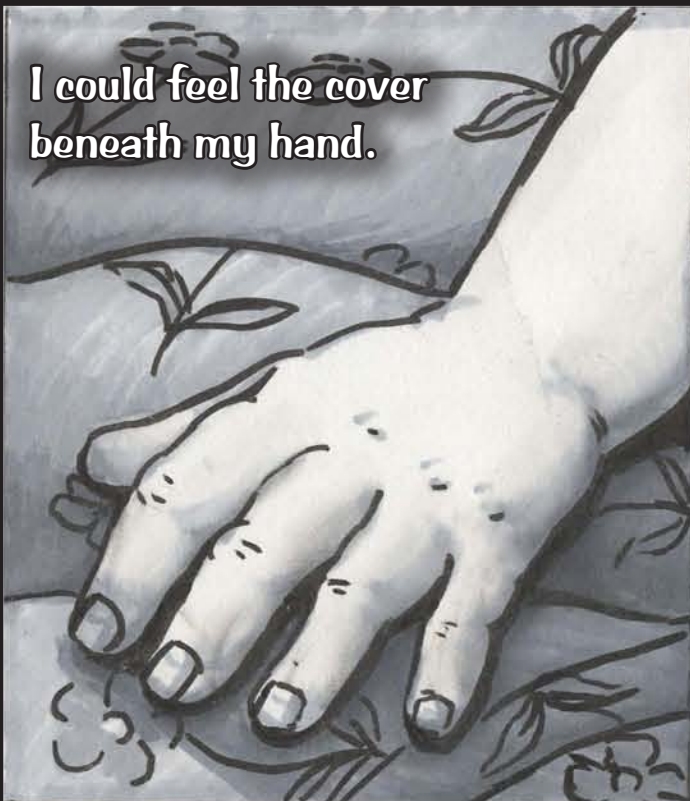
Something woke me up.



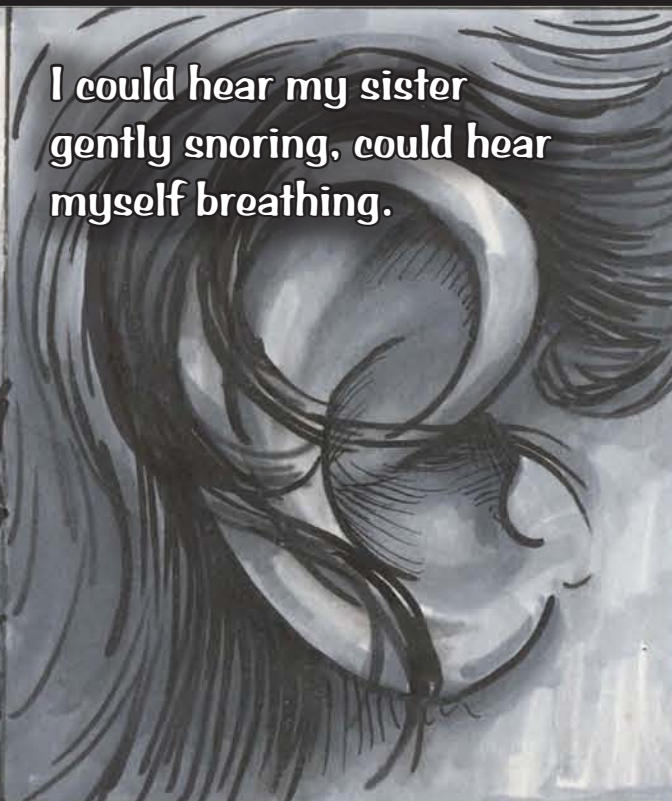
It was very quiet.



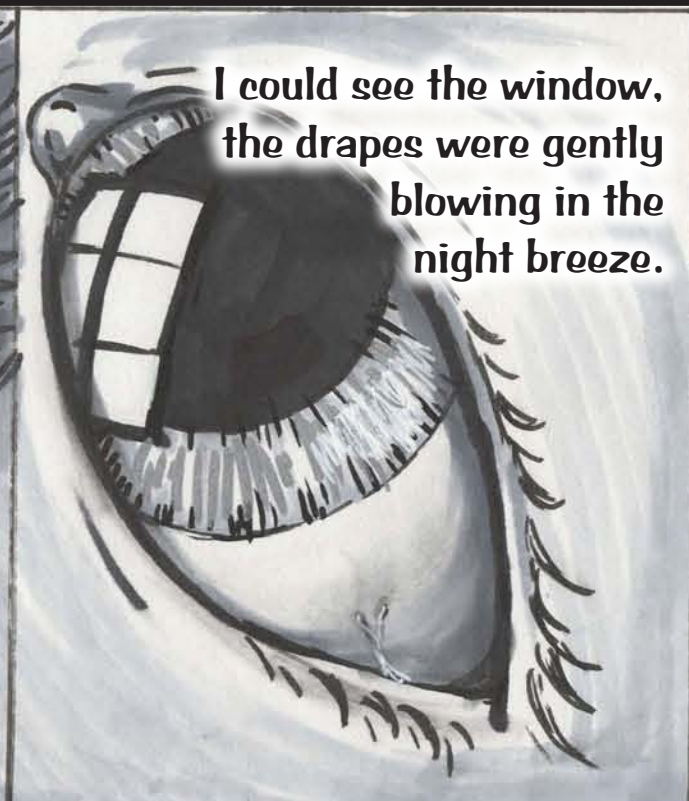
I could feel the cover beneath my hand.



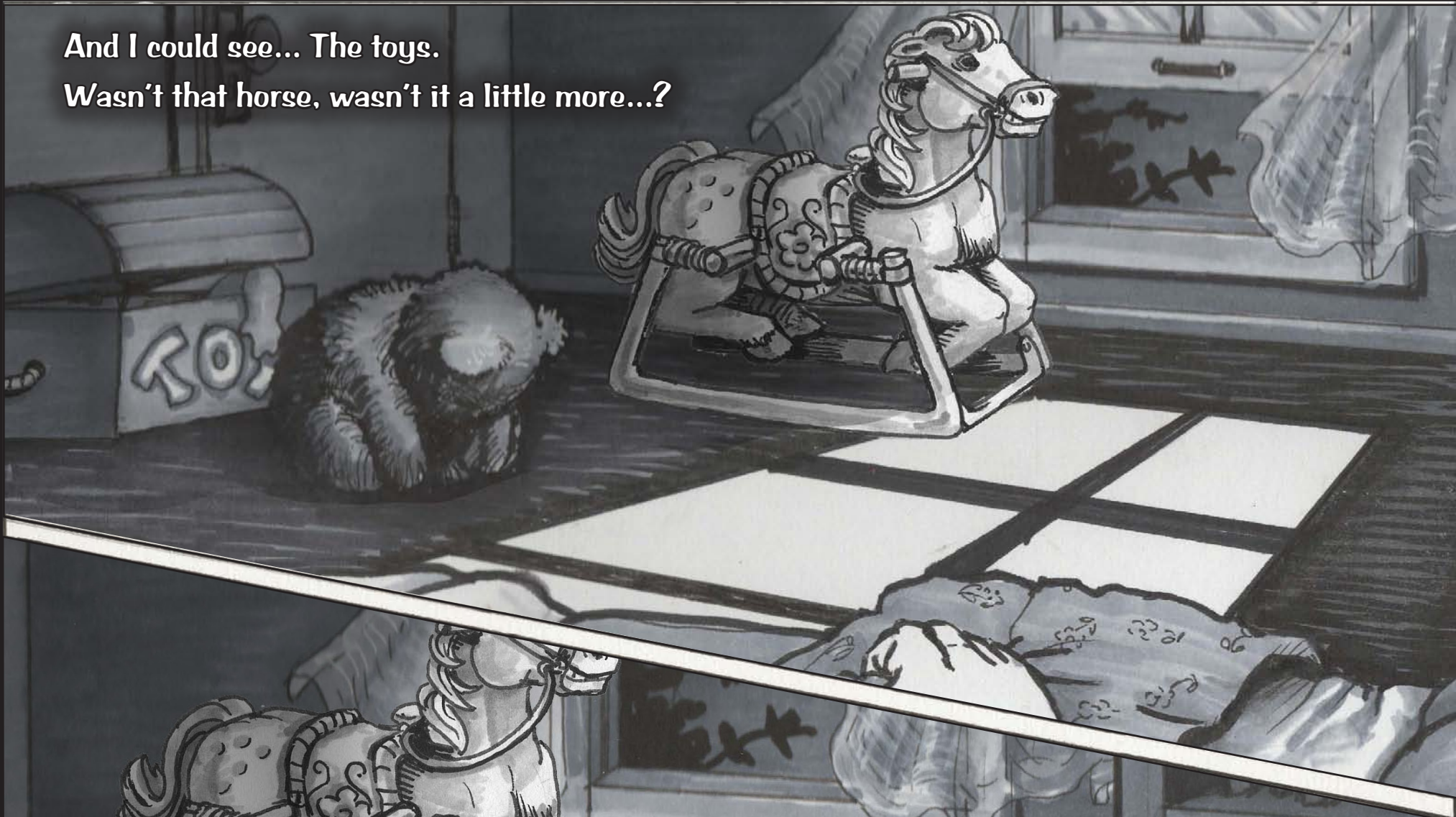
I could hear my sister gently snoring, could hear myself breathing.



I could see the window, the drapes were gently blowing in the night breeze.



And I could see... The toys.
Wasn't that horse, wasn't it a little more...?



It wasn't more forward now.
Was it?



Nah, Toys don't
do that.

Go to sleep.

Go to sleep.



A minute later, there was a soft, scuffing noise.

And I opened my eyes.

I could not move.



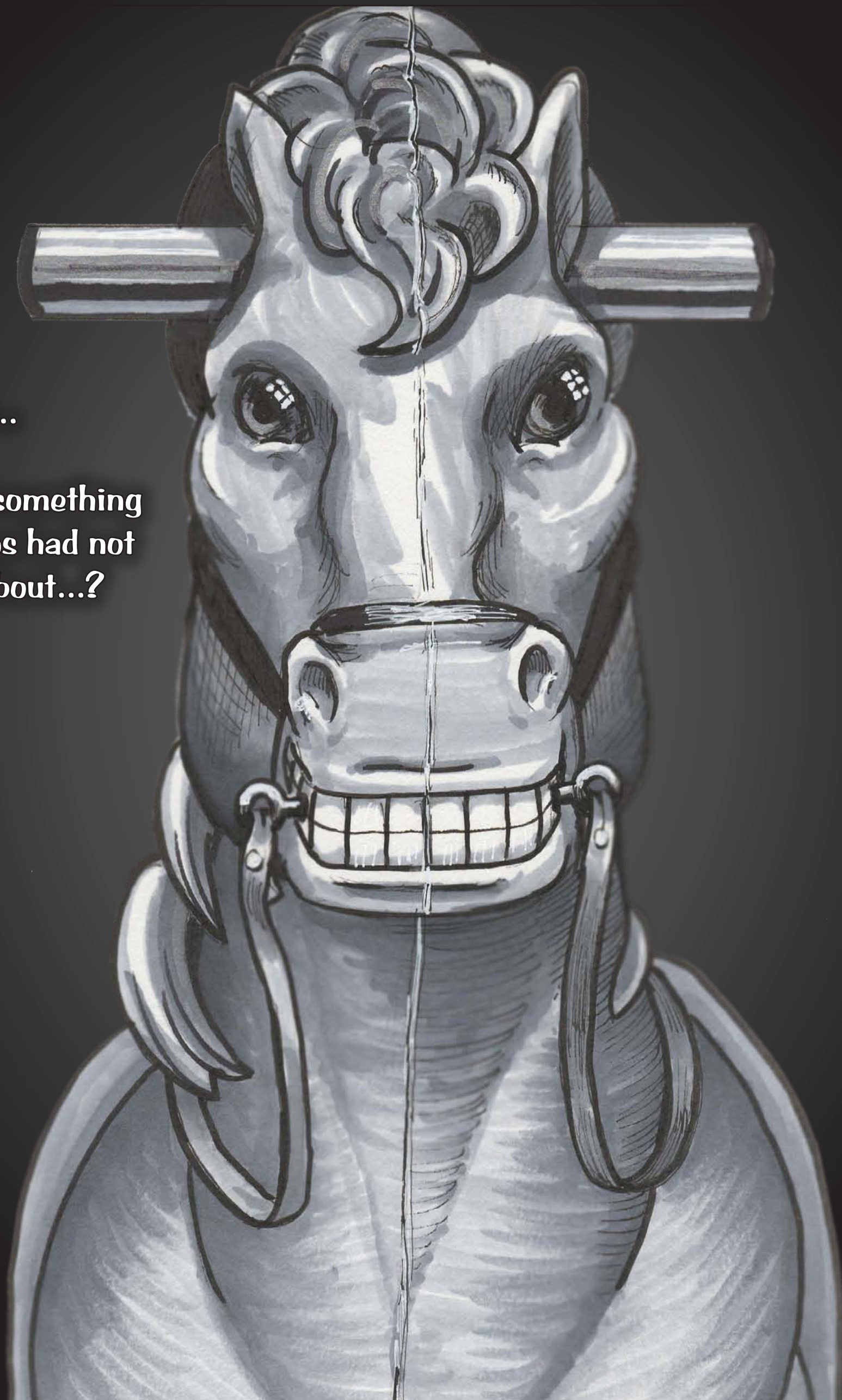
I COULD NOT MOVE.
I FELT PURE TERROR.

I tried to scream.

As hard as I tried,
only a tiny wisper came out.

Was this...

was this something
Grown-ups had not
told me about...?



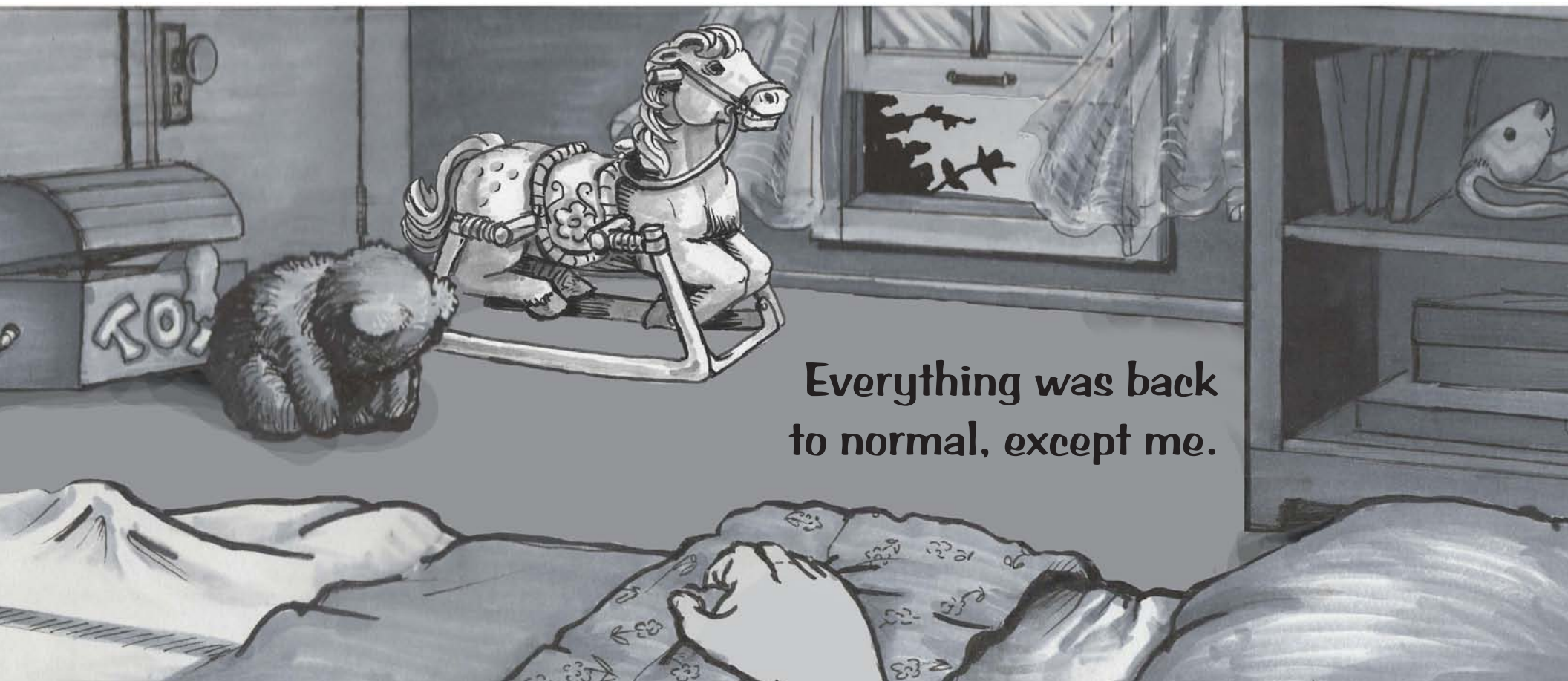
It went on and on, It just hovered, staring at me with lifeless eyes, gently bobbing as it floated. Grinning with plastic teeth bared.

I tried to move or make a sound for what seemed hours.

Eventually, I just shut my eyes and slept. It was my only option.



The next morning.



Everything was back to normal, except me.



I told my mom. She laughed gently and said, "Oh Honey, it's just a dream!"

Just a dream.

A week later, it happened again. Same exact thing.



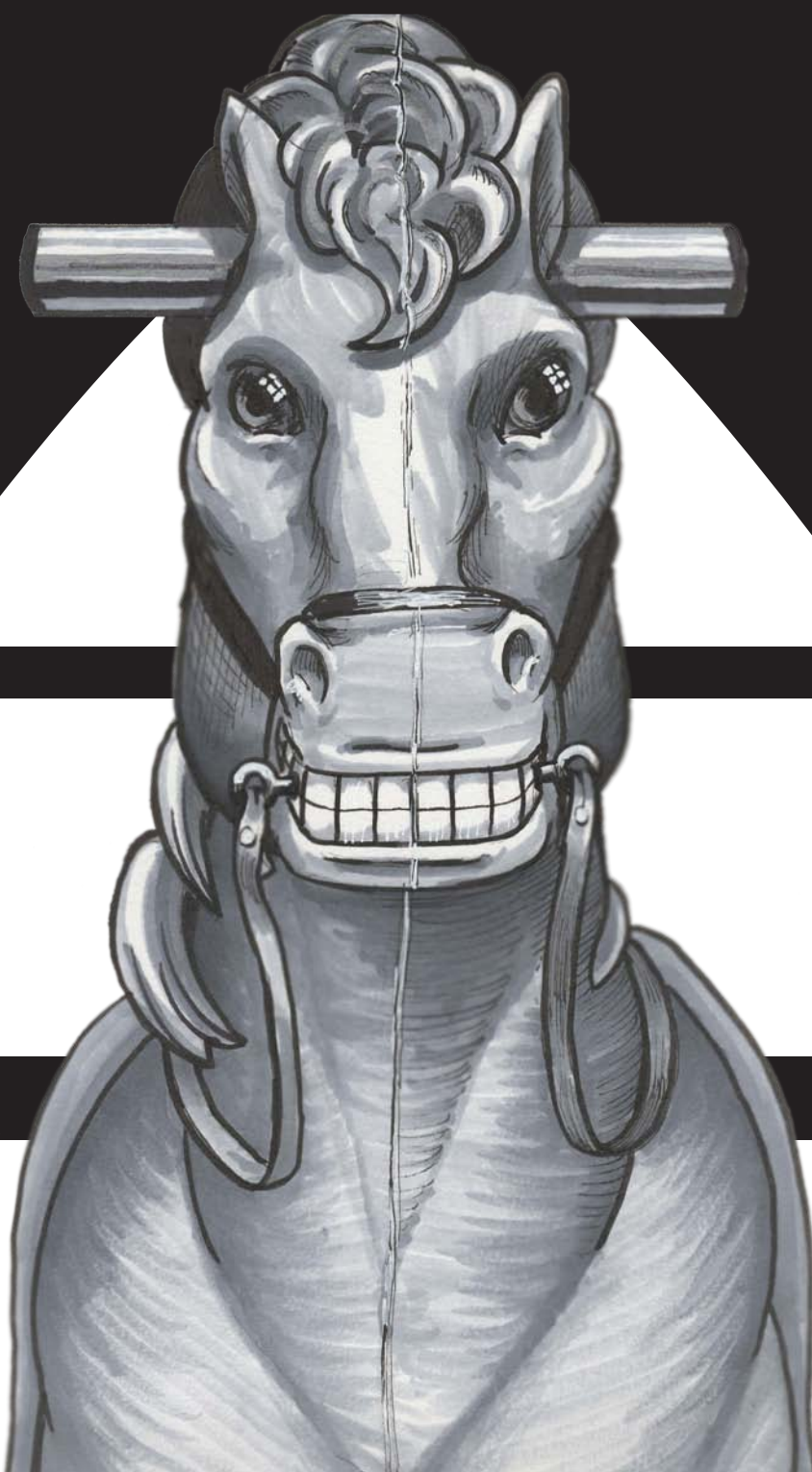
I was **AWAKE**. I made sure I could see, hear, smell everything that was normally there, but it happened anyway.



Mom called her dad, who said to her, "I'm sure it's just a dream, just don't give her a snack before bedtime."



But a few days later...



I told her one more time.



She said
"It will all be ok."



The horse was moved
to the attic.



We moved a year later, the horse was left on the curb.

Years later, I read an article about Waking Dreams.

Waking Dreams, much like sleepwalking, happen only when you are deeply "asleep". Your mind misfires. Instead of normal sleep, where your eyes are shut and your body paralysed for safety, your eyes are open and your mind superimposes hallucinations on what you see. Usually, the body remains almost completely paralysed, as in normal sleep. When you sleep and are not paralysed, you sleepwalk.

That eased my mind a bit, until I asked my sister if anything had happened to her in that room. She mentioned a voice, a sinister voice, calling her name and waking her up. She's not the kind of person who makes things up to scare me.

It could have been a dream as well...

but we never had those things happen after the horse was removed, or ever again in our lives. I never had a "waking dream" again, nor did I ever have a dream that repeated itself over and over with exact precision.