

THE
MAP
OF
ME

COVER NOT
FINAL

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OLGA SHTONDA

In our old home, I knew where everything was.



Cereal was on top of the green cupboard.

Bowls were on the shelf beside the sink.

Joe-Dog's bed was underneath the table.



I knew my way around our neighbourhood:



where to get Granny's almond biscuits,



the shady spot beneath my favourite tree
where Mum waited for the bus.



the shortcut alley to the school.



But in our new flat
I couldn't find a thing

I got lost every time
that I went out.

and the streets outside seemed like a jumble of spaghetti.

The world seemed big
and much too scary.

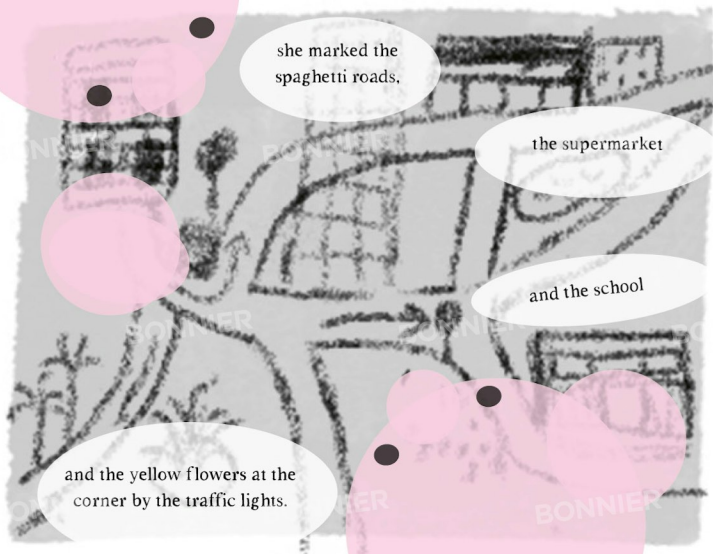
Mum helped me draw a map so I could get around

she marked the spaghetti roads.

the supermarket

and the school

and the yellow flowers at the corner by the traffic lights.



But important things were missing from that map

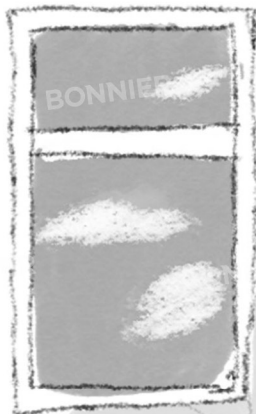


Like Granny and Joe-Dog.



Mum said my map was too small to show things far away.

So I made it bigger



It filled up whole wall but it helped
to know just where they were



and where we were

even though there were whole
countries and oceans in between

On the big map there
was room to put new
things that I found

the shop that sold
the best apples

the library where you could
borrow books for nothing

the swings
in the park

and the new friends
that I made.

When they saw the map they
wanted to put things on it too

their favourite trees

their old homes

their grannies

and their dogs

Now I knew where everything and everyone was,
the distances between us seemed to shrink.



The world was still quite big, but not so scary
and our new house began to be my home.



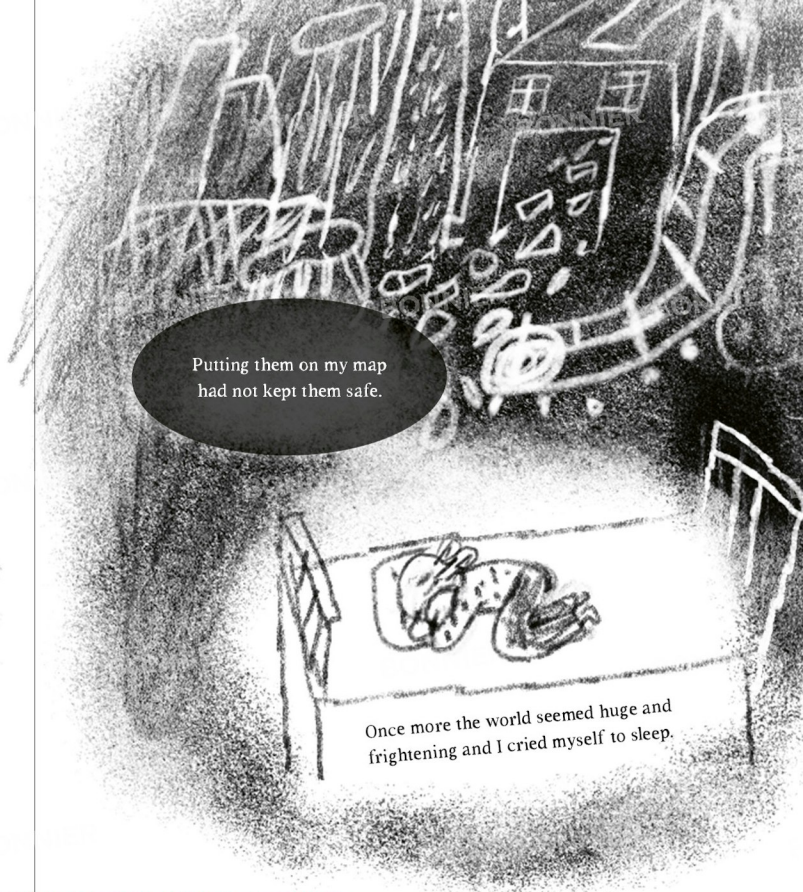
But then two bad things
happened on the same day



Joe-Dog got sick
and died.



And my new
favourite tree got
cut down.



Putting them on my map
had not kept them safe.

Once more the world seemed huge and
frightening and I cried myself to sleep.

In the morning when I came in to the kitchen there was another map
a big one that Dad had made.

On this map Joe-Dog was an orphan puppy
living on the street and Mum and Dad were
far apart in different cities.

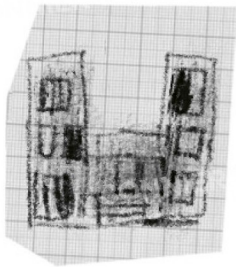
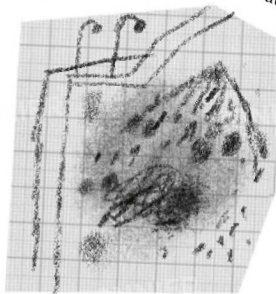
"You see," Dad said, "you don't know about the good things that can happen.
I didn't know that I would marry Mum or that Joe-Dog would be our pet.
And I didn't know about you!"

I liked this map of how things used to be



we went to the library to find out more
then added...

...the park that was just a pile of rubble then



The school that was tall and dark
with broken windows.

The places that our families once lived...



That map made me think of how things change.
Sometimes worse but sometimes better.

So I made another map...

In this map of the future
there are new trees on every street.

there are parks
instead of parking lots

Granny's house is round the corner

and a dog sleeps
in a bed under the table.

There is no space on my future map for fear or war



Even though that world is just as big



it is full of love and wonder.