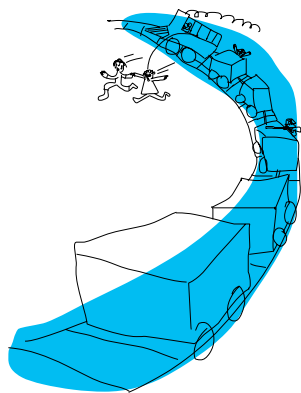
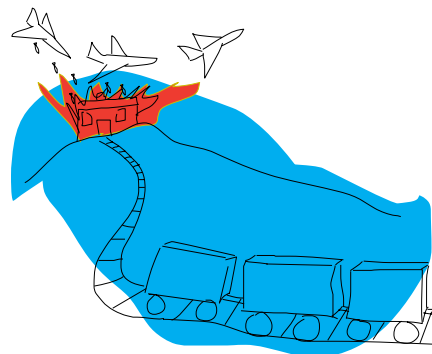
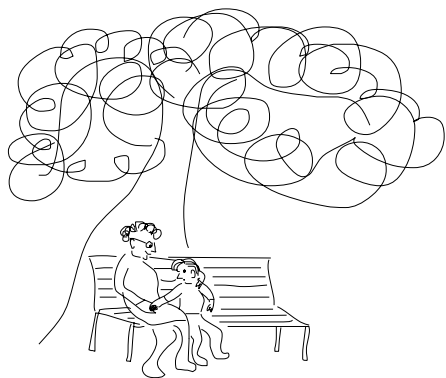


# Granny & Danny

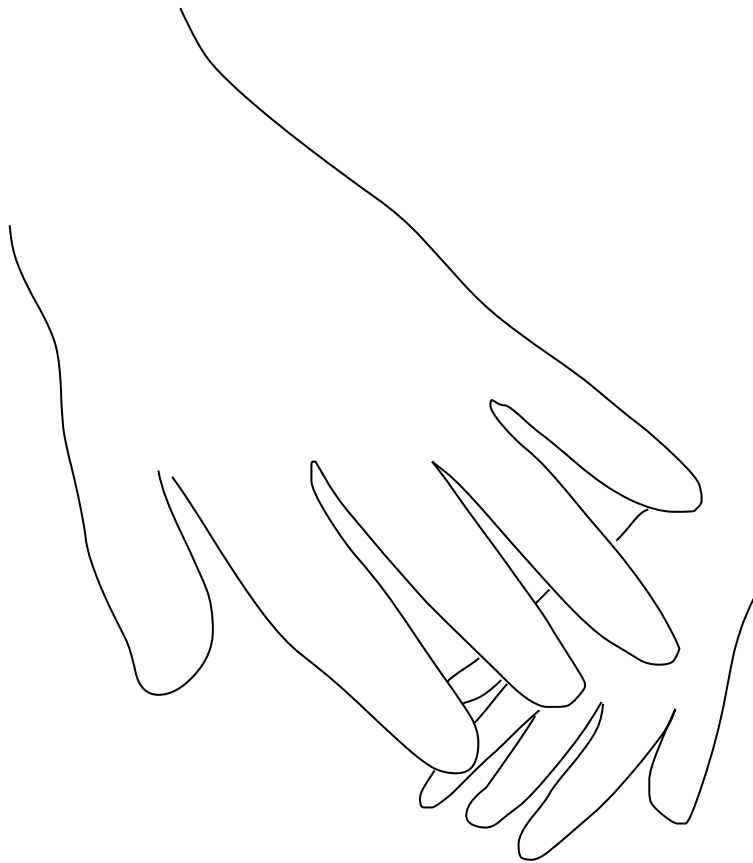


*From the Shtetl  
to America*

Written and Illustrated  
by Dan Stern



# Granny & Danny



# Granny & Danny

From the Shtetl  
to America

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# For Grandma



1920



1952



1985



It's Saturday, the day Danny always visits his Granny. Stepping into the cool hallway of her house, Danny smells good cooking: Krupnik and Klops, baked apples and, especially, thin rye bread.

He rings the doorbell and a small, bent over woman slowly opens the big wooden door.

"Deeaanny!"



After tea Danny jumps up and down on Granny's couch. Higher and higher. Touch the ceiling!

"Granny, come jump with me!"

"Now I'm too old, but when I was a little girl in Poland I was jumping on a couch with my grandfather. We lived on a shtetl, a tiny Jewish town, in the same house as my grandfather. He loved children, especially the small ones and he would come in to play with us every day. We would take turns on that couch and he would hold us by the hand and sing to the rhythm of our jumping, "Bum-bara-baum-bum bim-bum-bum, Bum-bara-baum-bum bim-bum-bum, Na-na-na-na na-na-na..."



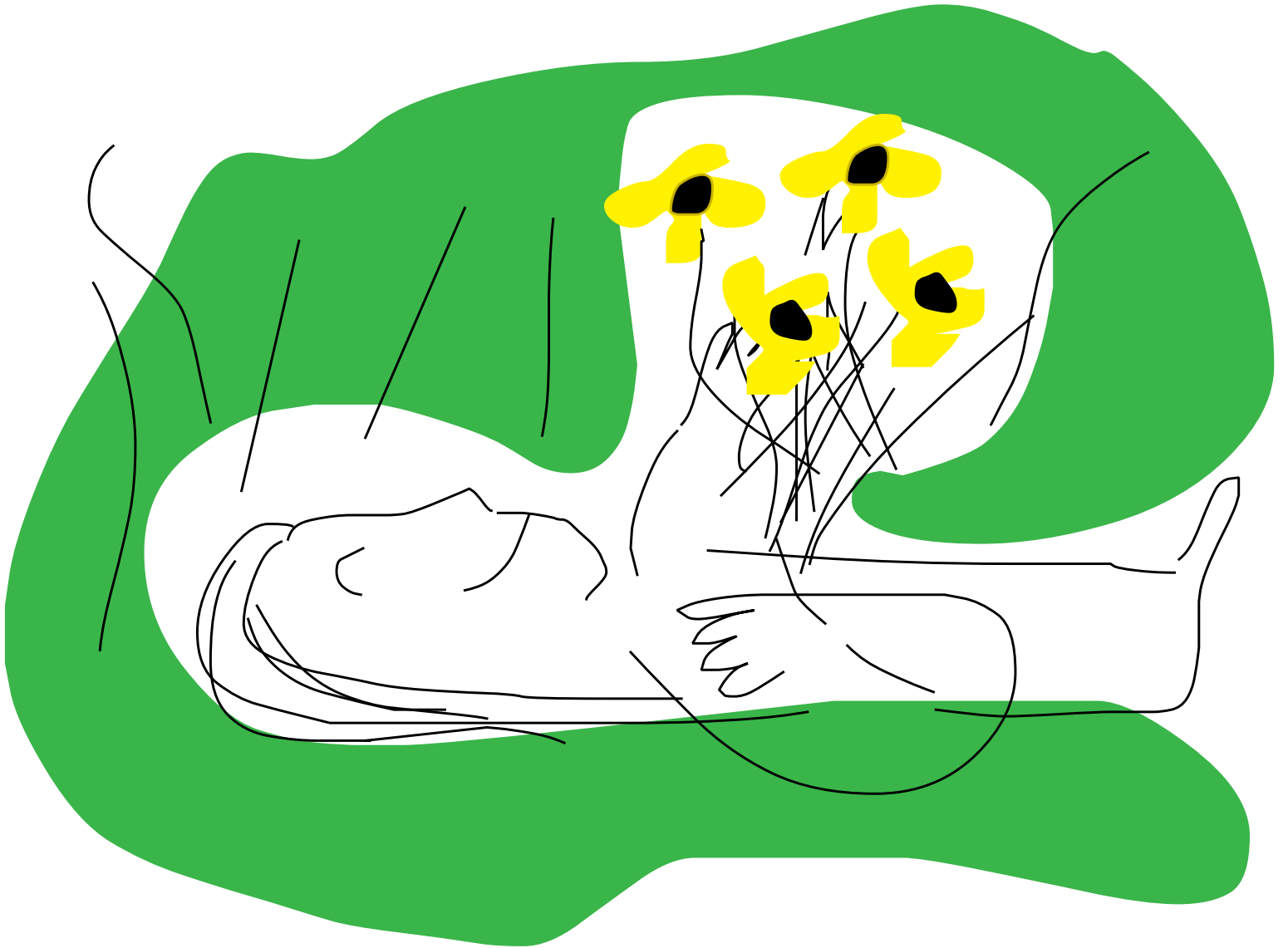
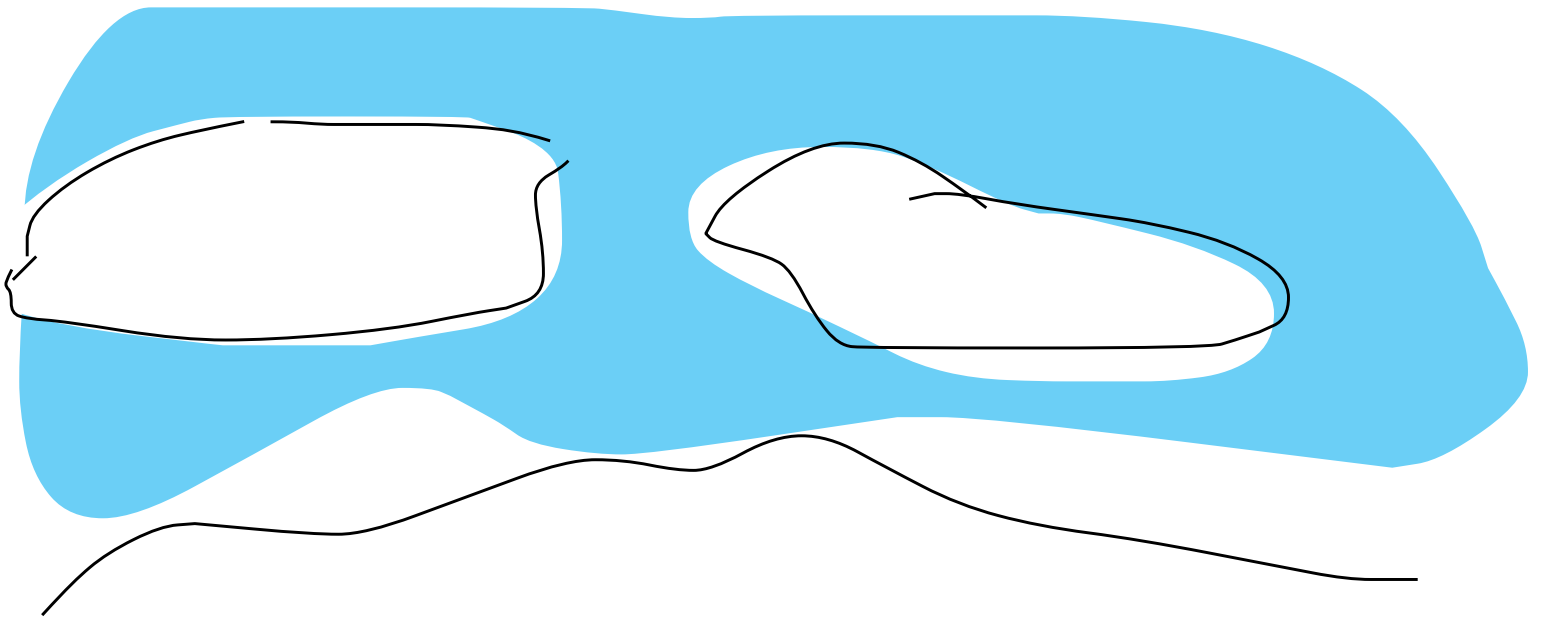


Danny and Granny sit on the couch, looking out the window at a tree in the garden. Granny says, "Wonderful. Wonderful tree."

"Granny, did you have a garden in Poland?"

"No, but not far from our house were fields. In those grain fields we gathered the most beautiful flowers: big bouquets of bluebottles, buttercups, and daisies. I remember the smell of the cut grass, the fields of rye and wheat; white and pink clover, and further on 'Mak,' the red poppies. Blue cornflowers, purple flowers, yellow ones, 'Kaczencze' ('Katchenze'). Oh, oh, and forget-me-nots, growing along the stream, lots of them. We used to put them on a plate with water and they would grow into wreaths that lasted a long time."







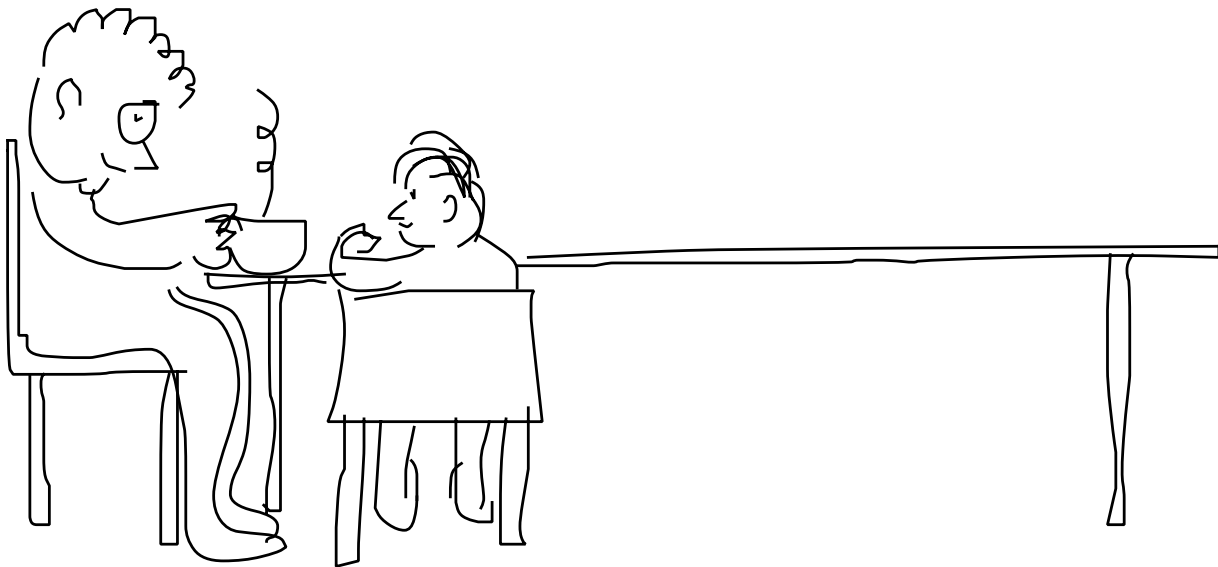
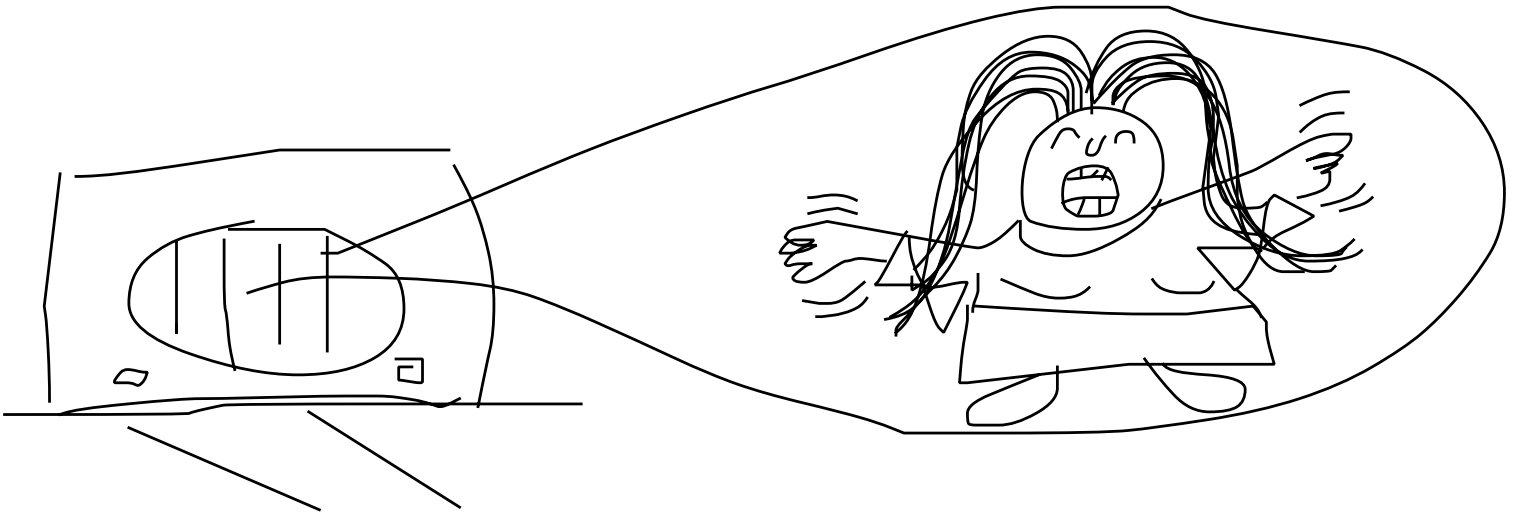
Granny and Danny are making Krupnik, barley soup, in the kitchen. “Chip, chop. Chip, chop,” go the vegetables. “Rise, ploop!, Ahhh,” bubbles the soup. “Tick, tock,” whispers the clock. “Psssss, psssss,” sputters the water faucet. “Bong! Clang! Ping!” sing the pots, tops dancing, steam puffing. The radio is playing music.

“Ah,” says Granny, “that is the music of Beethoven. In Poland my brothers were playing the violin and my sister the piano and we used play string quartets and trios of Beethoven.”

“Granny, why did you leave Poland?”

“Because of a big war, darling, but that’s a long story. Let’s take the food to the table and I’ll tell you during lunch.”





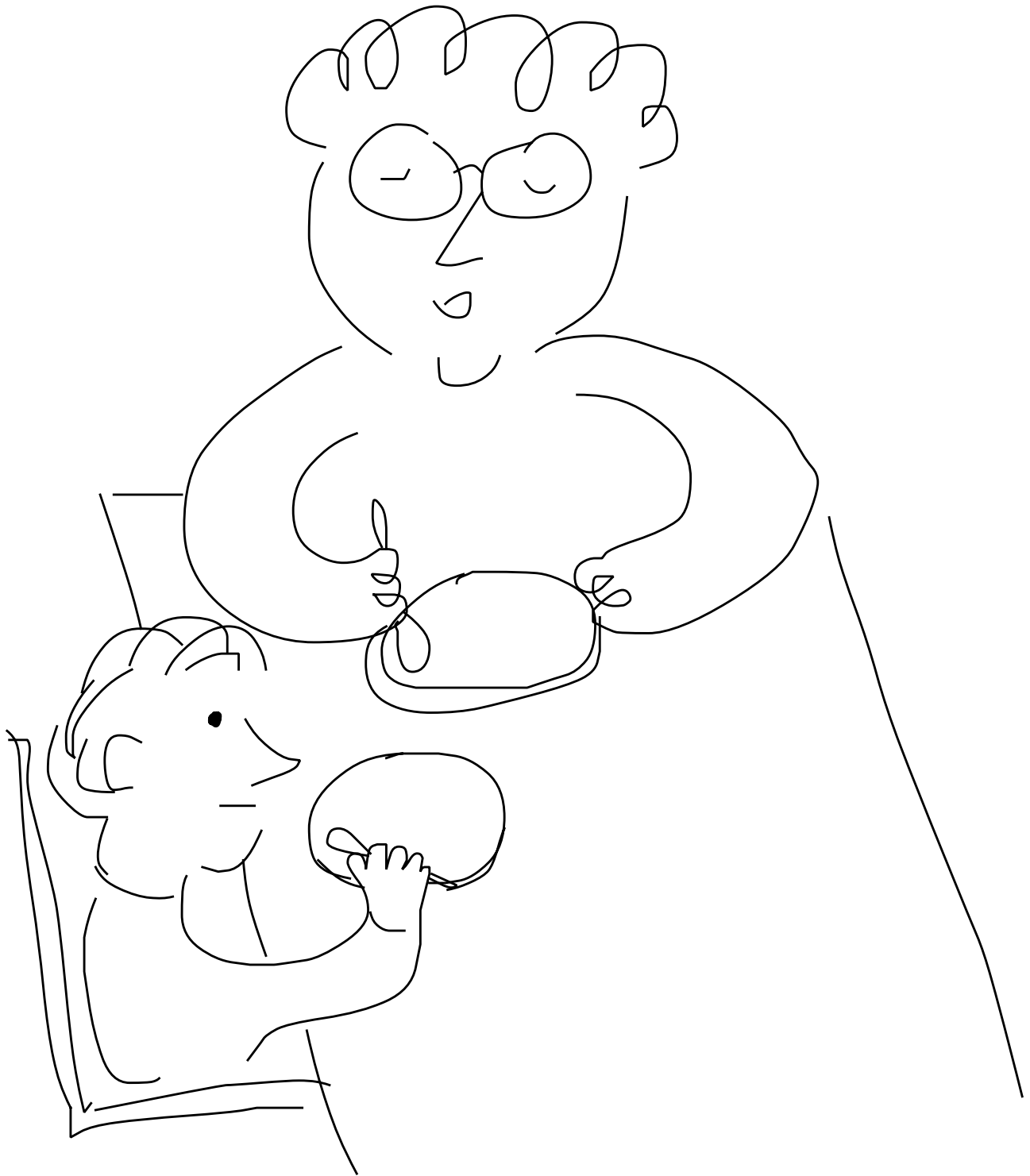
Now there's a lady singing on the radio.

"Ah," says Granny, "the music of Puccini. During the war we lived in a ghetto and in that ghetto were two sisters who had beautiful voices. Both were singing opera. Verdi. Puccini."

"What's a ghetto, Granny?"

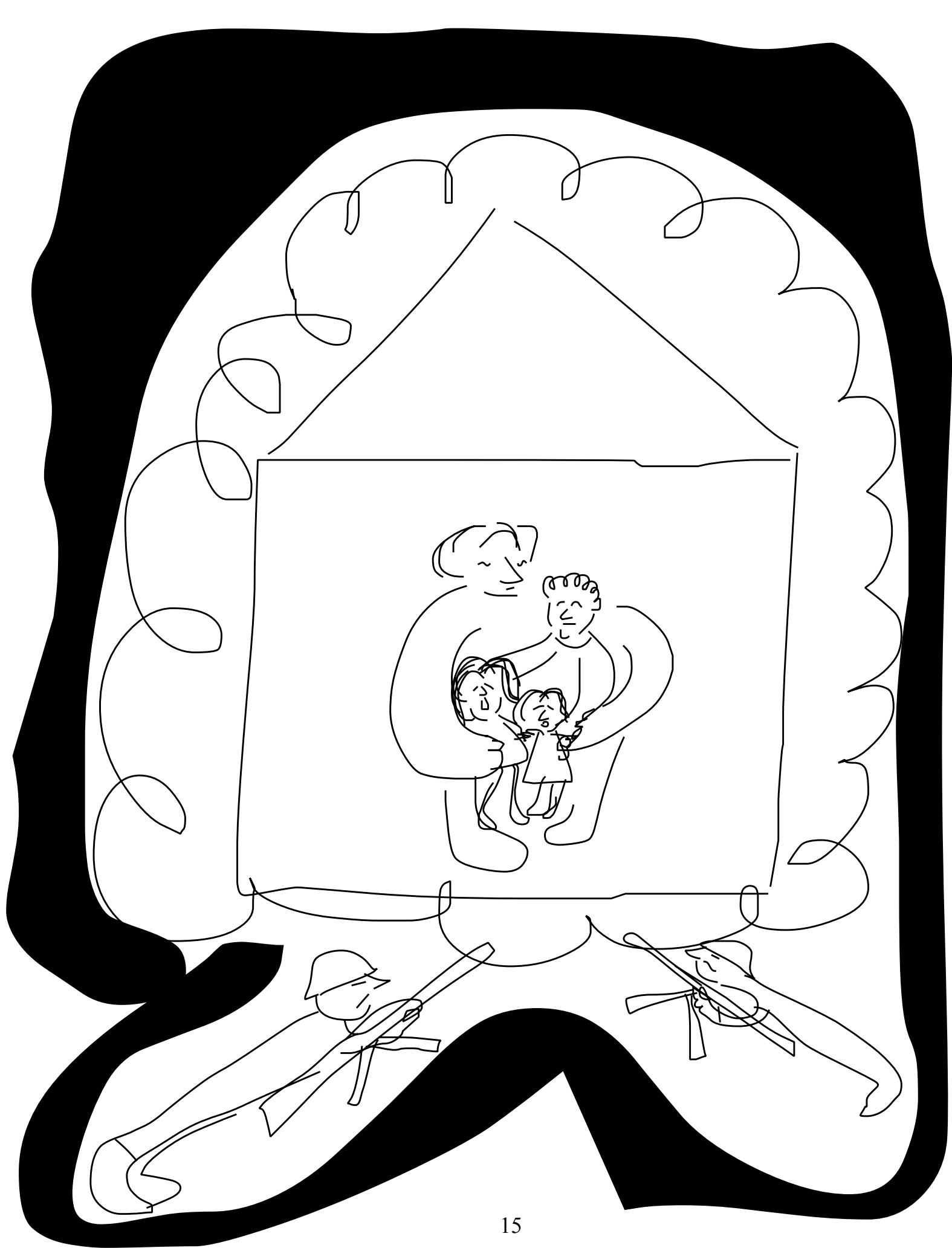
"A ghetto was a closed off place where Jews were forced to live by a man named Hitler. He hated Jews and wherever his soldiers, called 'Nazis,' went, they forced us into ghettos and camps. In order to get a place to live, we exchanged our beautiful apartment for a poor, tiny place. The four of us—your Grandpa, me, your mother and her sister—slept in one room. We did this just to have a roof over our head."

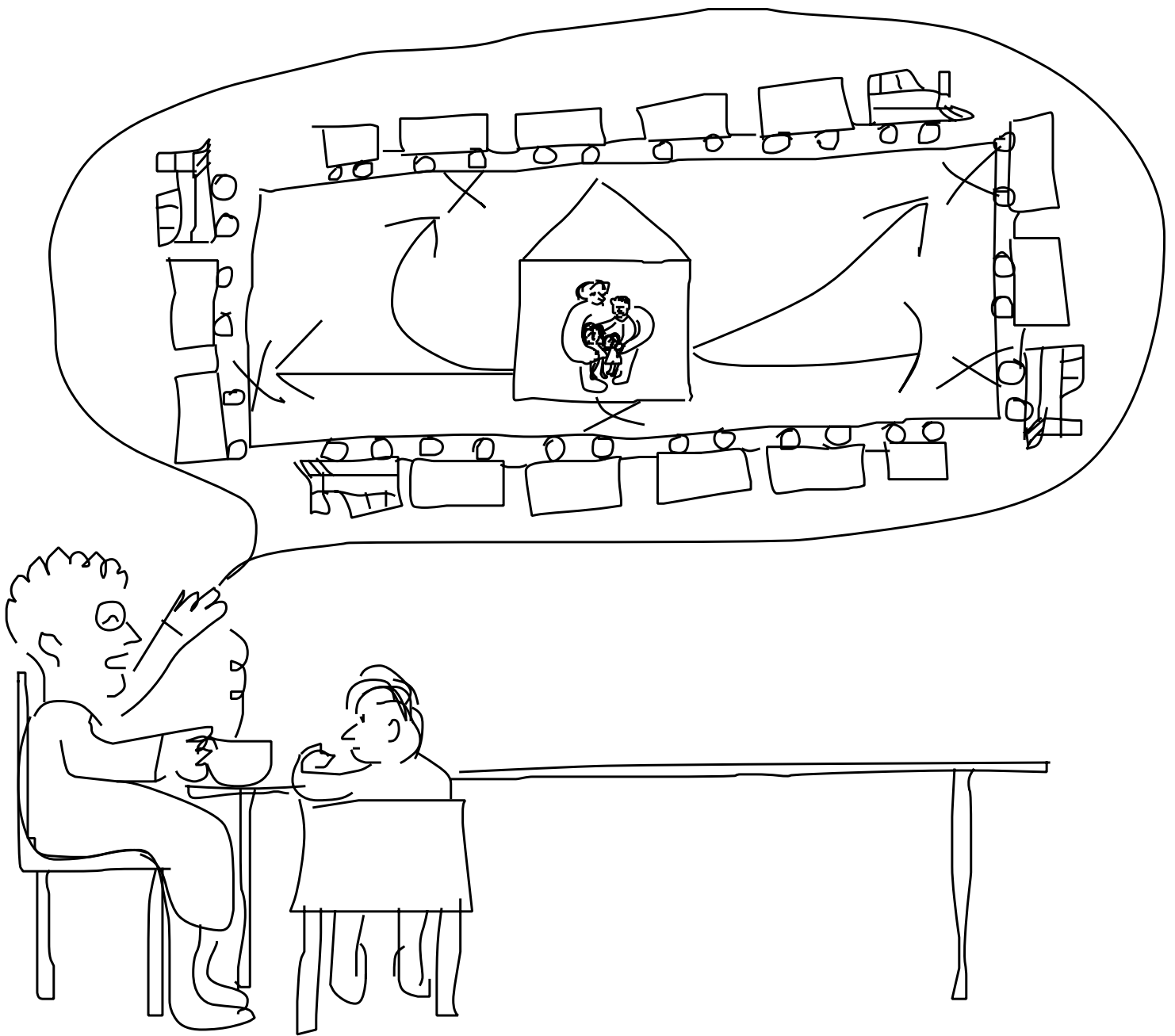




Granny is quiet for awhile. Danny listens to the rain and the lady singing Puccini while he eats his soup.

Then Granny says, "One night in the ghetto I've seen the Nazis setting up their guns outside my window. They surrounded us in the middle of the night and waited there, downstairs, whispering. I've seen that. I felt what was coming."

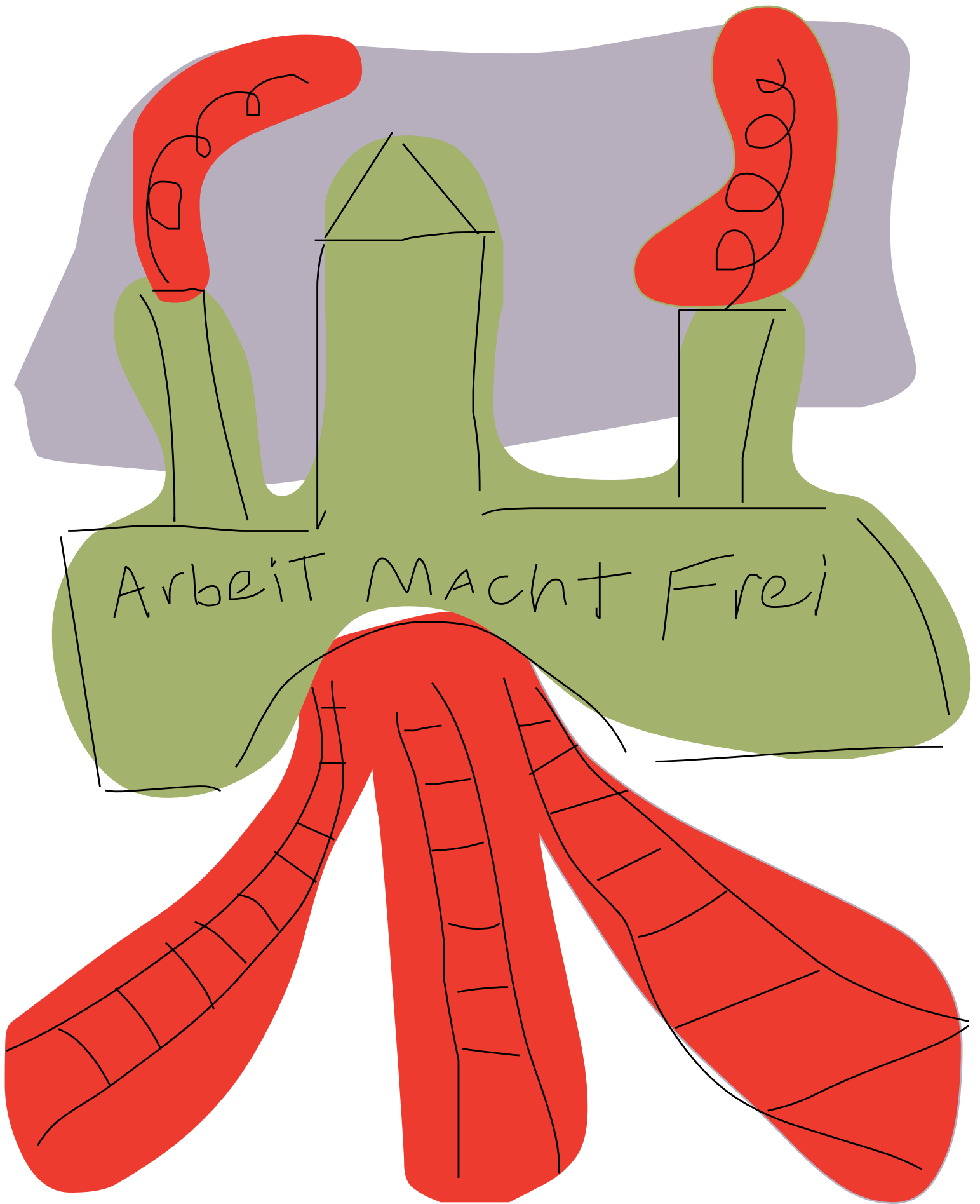


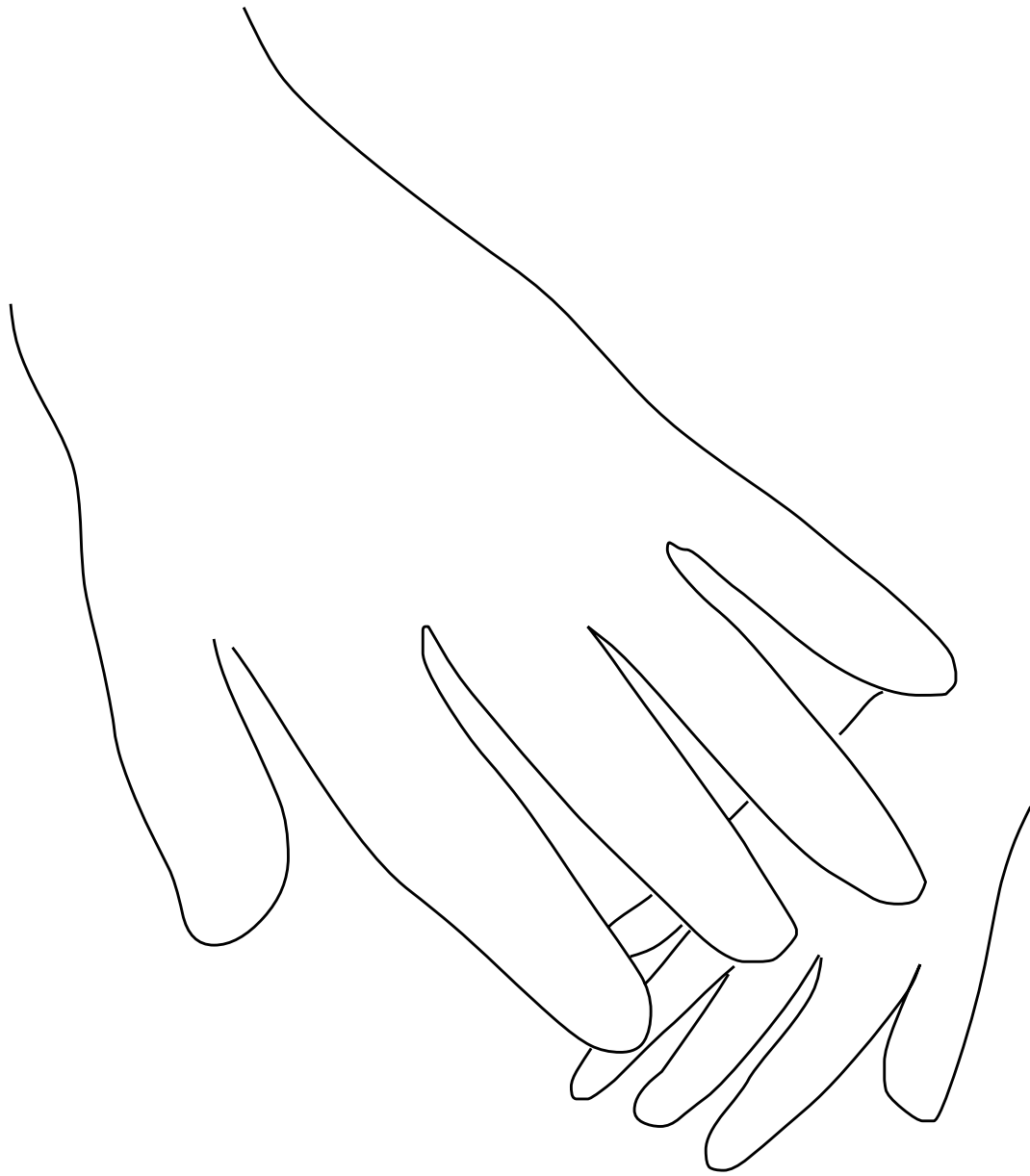


“Why did they surround the ghetto, Granny?”

“Because they wanted to take us on trains to a “concentration camp,” a place to be killed. I tried to escape with the children— your mother was pulling on my skirt, saying, ‘Mama, let’s get out of here! Let’s get out of here!!!’ But all the exits were blocked. I had given up, but your Grandpa said, “No, you’re not going to stay. You’re going to take the children and get out. There’s always a way!”







Granny reaches over and holds Danny's hand. "Ooooooohhh," she says. "Strong hand!" Danny looks at Granny's hand. It's big and very wrinkled, but her skin is soft and white.

"So how did you get out, Granny?"

"The children and I dressed like poor Polish women and went to an exit from the ghetto. Just as we were about to go through the gate, a Nazi soldier stopped us. He said, 'Wait a minute. I haven't seen you go in.' I said, 'I did!' The soldier shouted, 'Ausweis! Ausweis!'—'Identity Card.' I took out the false card your Grandpa had made for us. The soldier studied it. 'Los!' he said, 'Go.' I grabbed the children and left. We were free!"

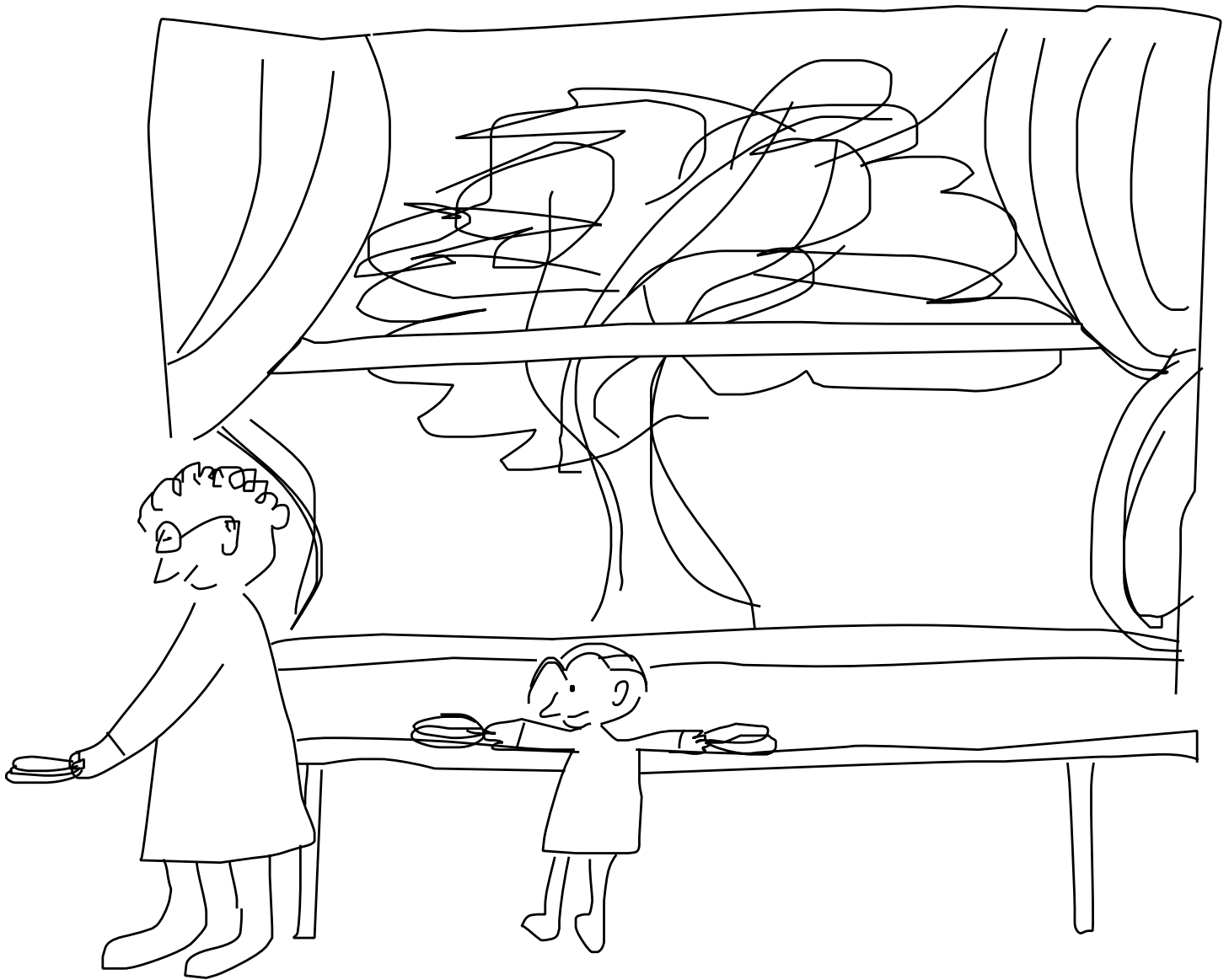




“How did Grandpa get out?”

“As soon as Grandpa knew that we were out, he went to a friend’s apartment that faced outside the ghetto. Soldiers were marching back and forth, guarding the street so that no one could escape, but when they went in the opposite direction, Papa took the moment, jumped out the window and ran across the street. He was very brave.”



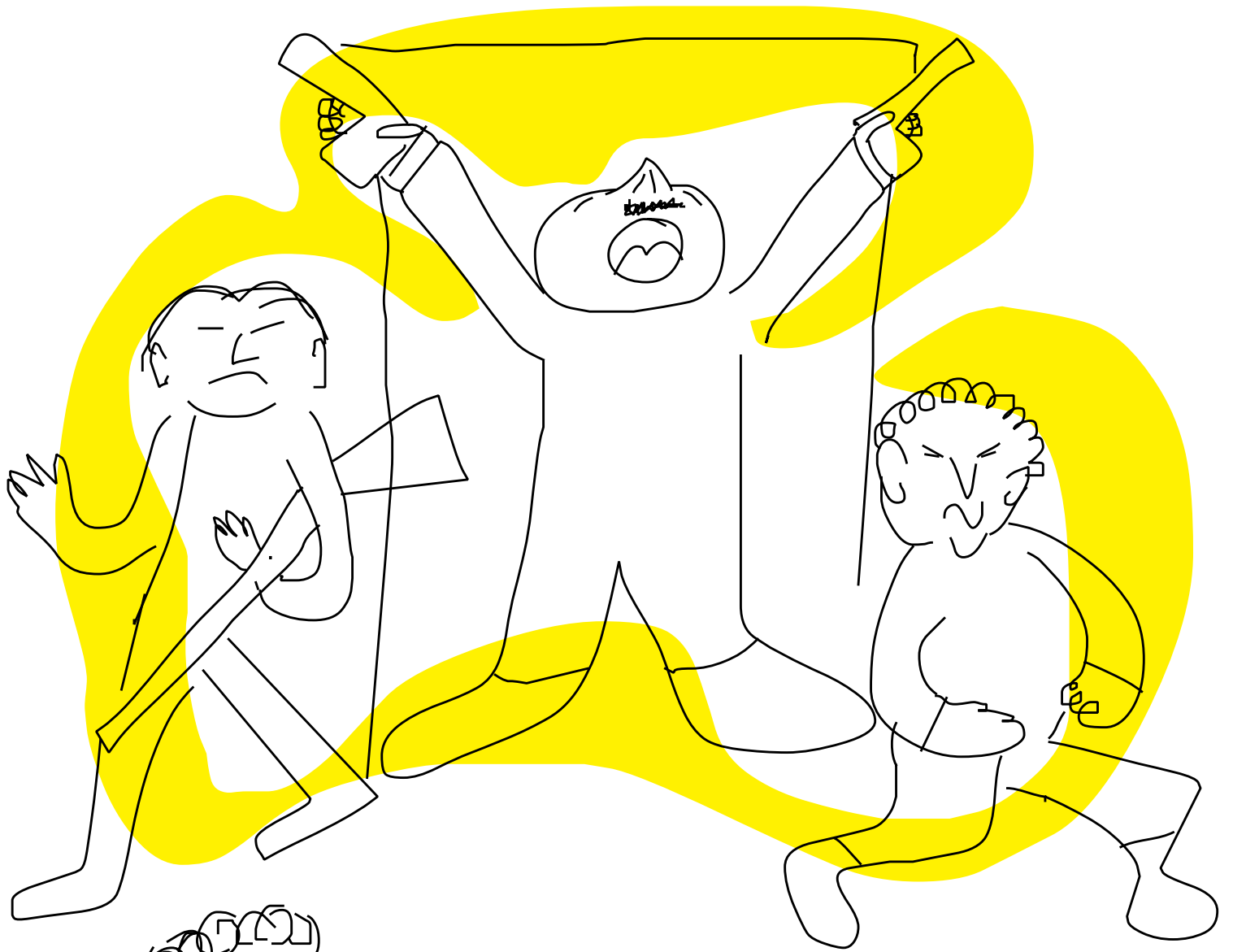


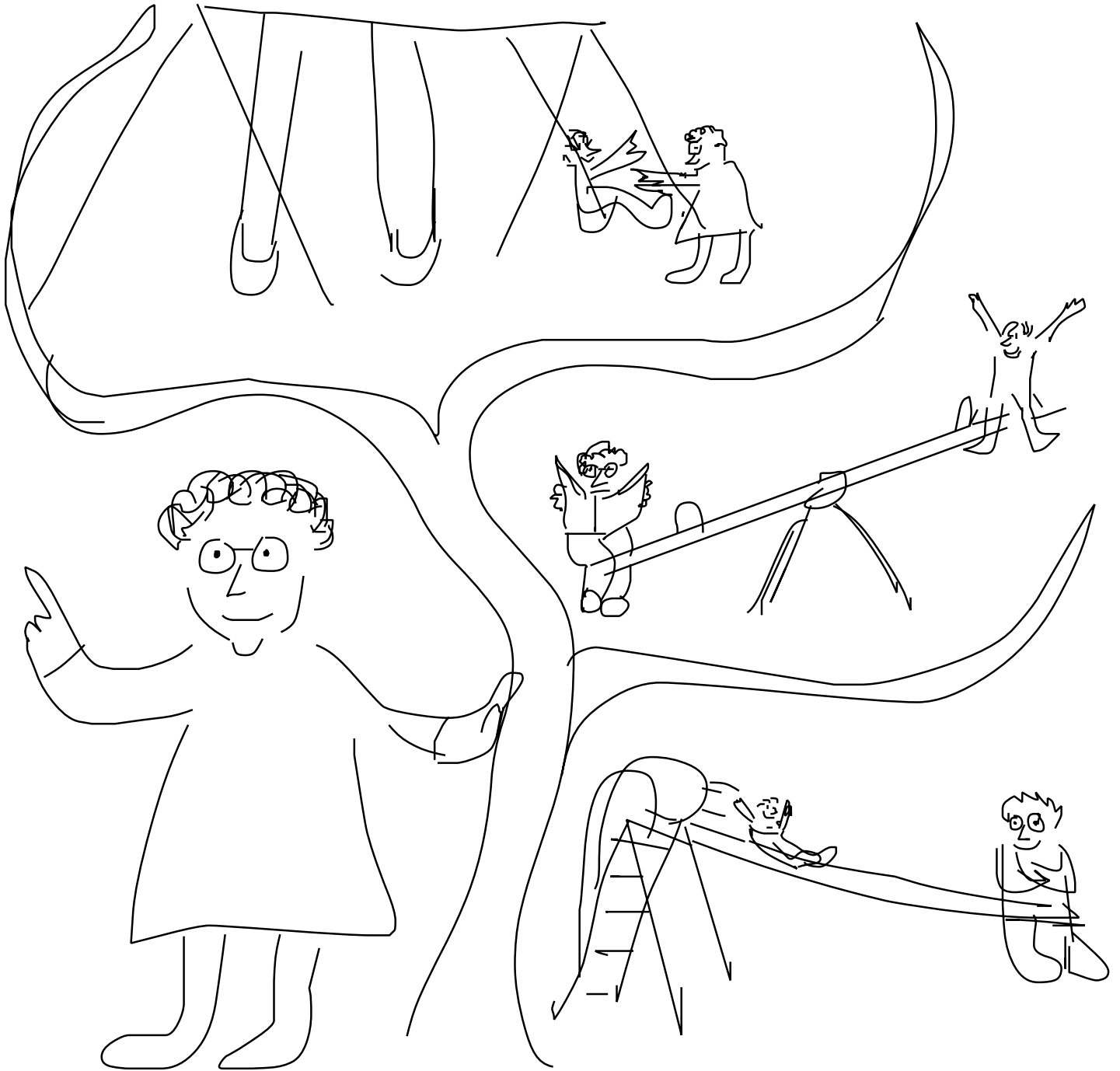
“Was that the end of the war, Granny?”

“No,” says Granny, “the war continued for three more years.”

“Were there other scary times?”

“Oh yes, many. One winter night, your mother and I were doing homework by candlelight when Polish bandits with big guns broke down our door! They demanded money or else they would take us to the Nazis. As I went to get the money, your mother tugged on my skirt and whispered, ‘Mama, don’t give them all the money!’ She put some money down her stocking. Late that night we fled with all our belongings in a blanket on my back.”





It's stopped raining and the sun is coming out.

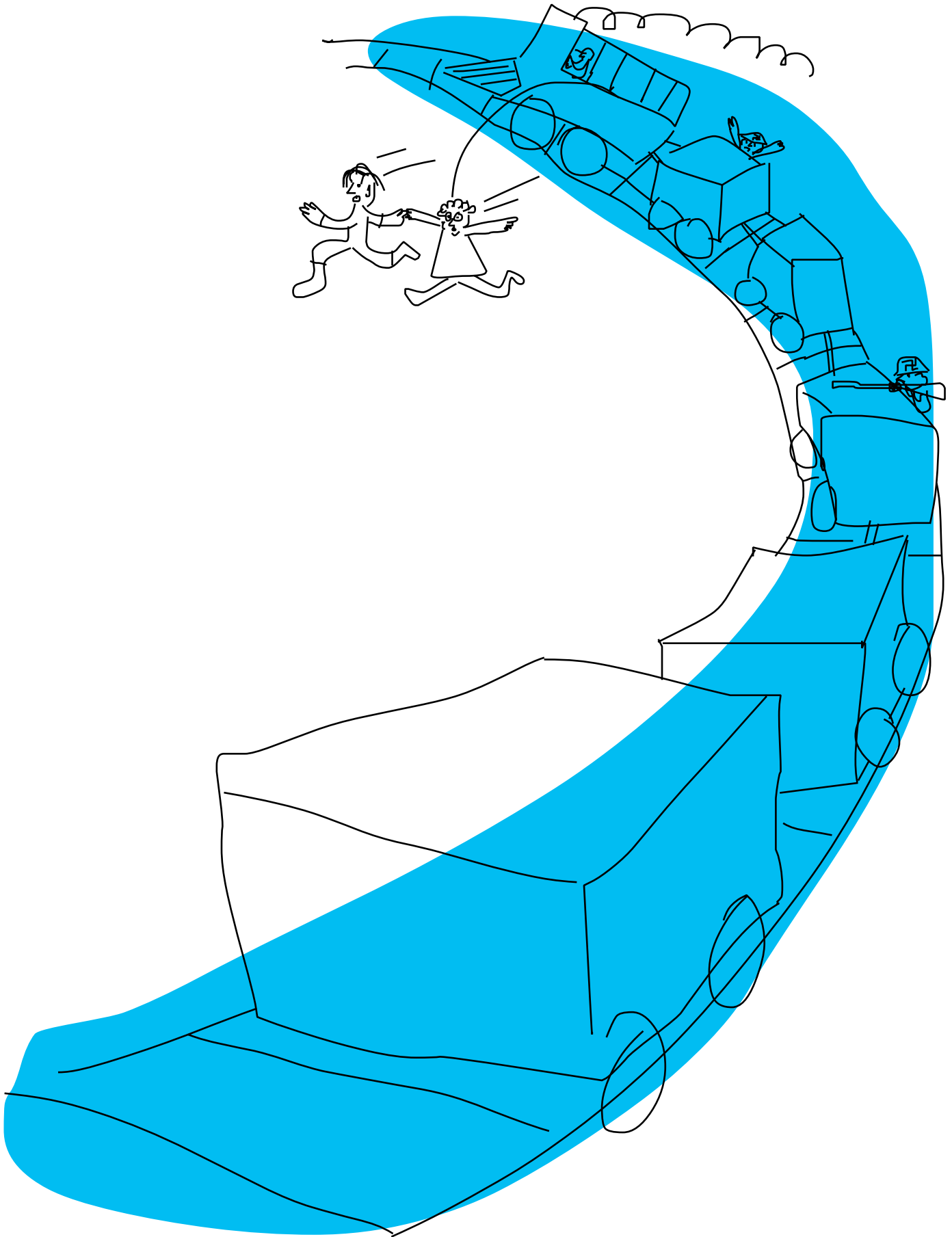
"Come, Danny," says Granny, "Let's go out to the park."

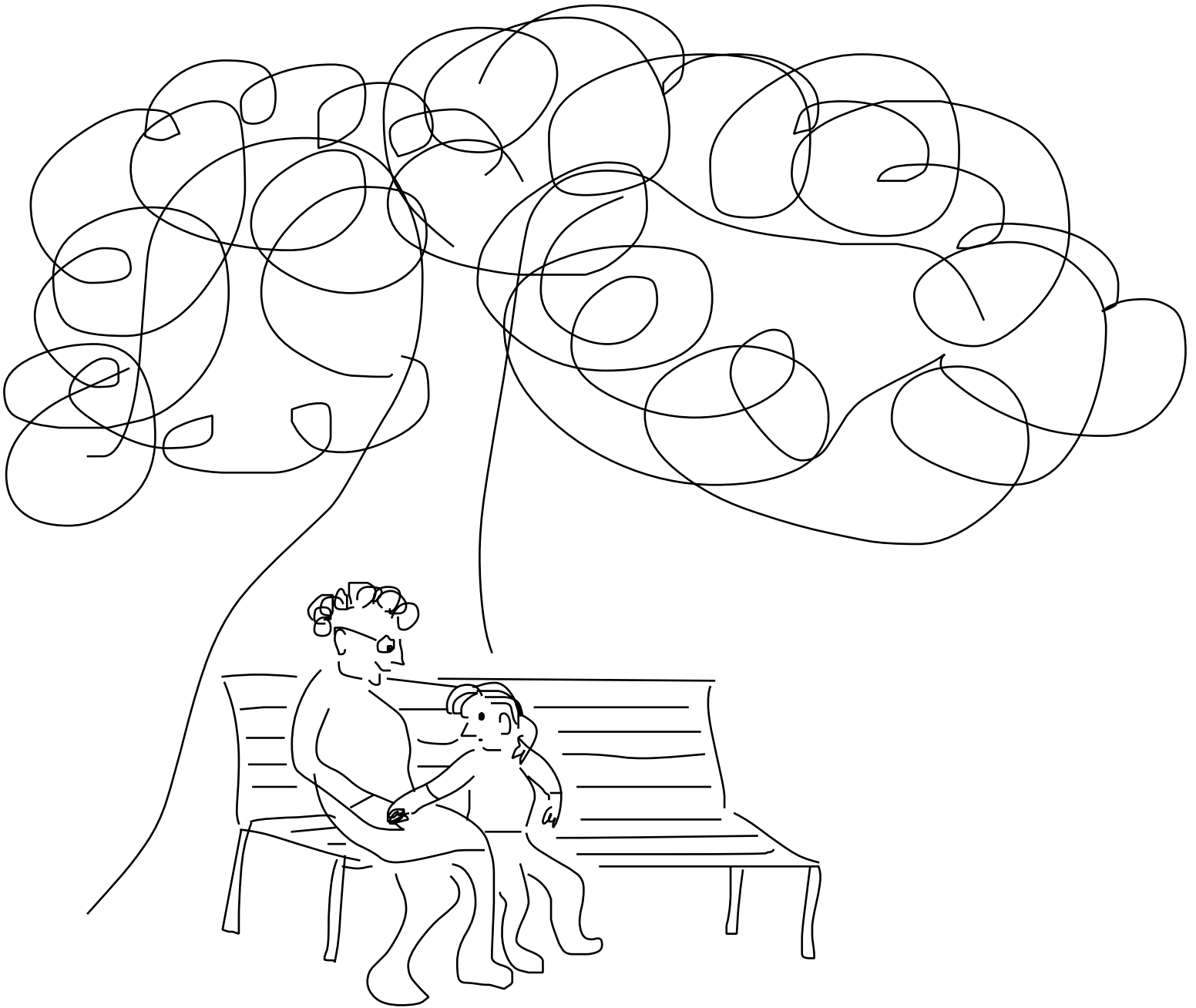
"How about another scary one!" says Danny.

"Another time your Grandpa and I were captured and put on a train headed for Germany. But a friend of mine knew the conductor. As we rode in the engine area with him he slowed down the train and said, 'Now, jump!' We jumped and ran as he sped up again, so the Nazis could only shoot at us as the train went off."

Danny tries to imagine Granny jumping off a train, dodging bullets.



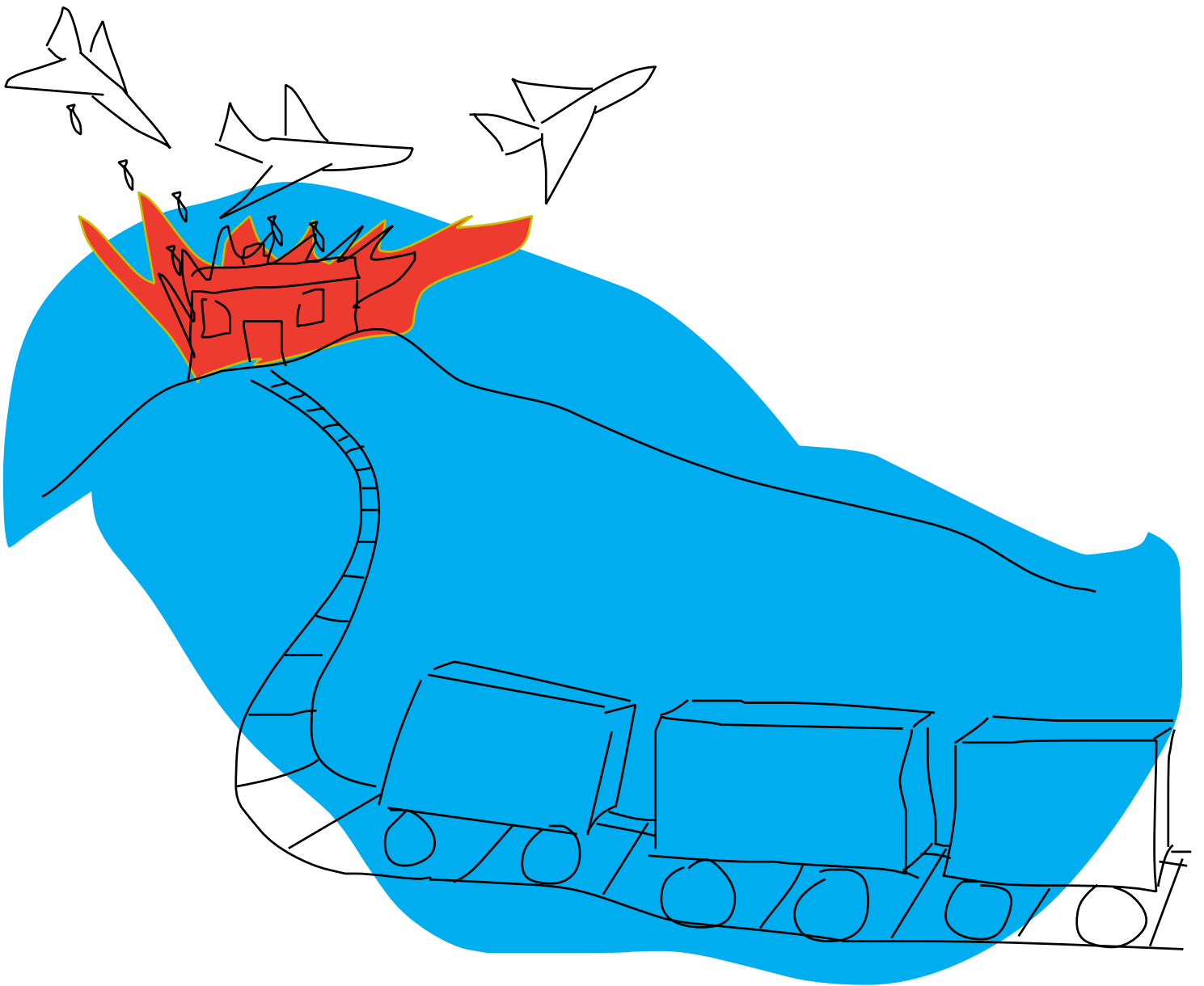




“Where was Mom when you jumped off the train, Granny?”

“Your mother and her sister spent the last two years of the war in an orphanage pretending to be Catholic children. It was too dangerous for them to be with us.

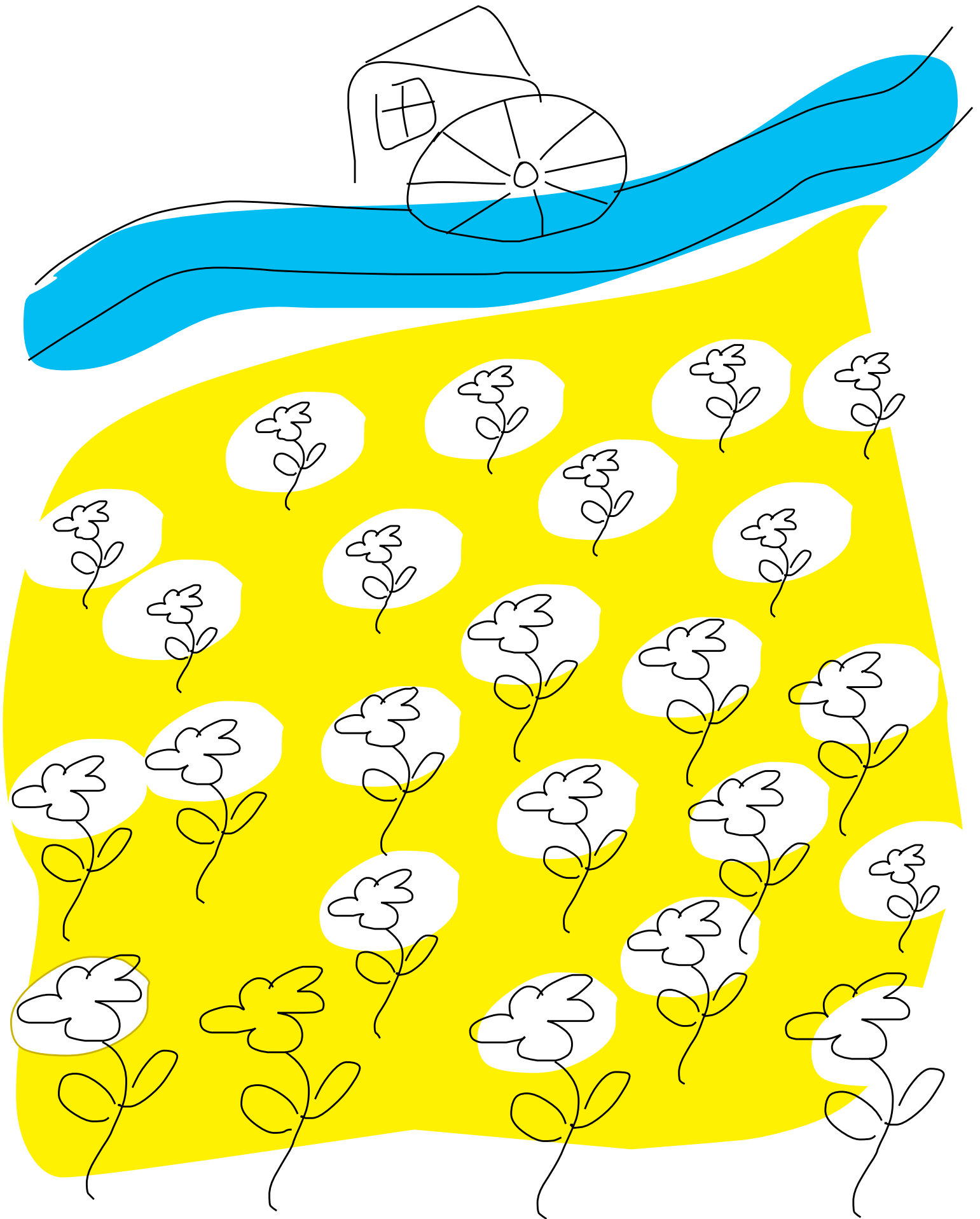
“After Grandpa and I jumped off the train we walked many miles to a town. There I sold candy in the streets until the end of the war. One day a woman told me there were some children and nuns at the railway station. I went to give them candy and there I found my children. The convent had been bombed by airplanes.”





“Ah,” says Granny, “It’s springtime in the park. Look at the beautiful flowers.”

“After the war we returned to my father’s mill in a small town. We had no money, but we did have thousands of flowers, like that one over there, only smaller. We sold those flowers in the town and that was the beginning of our money supply.”

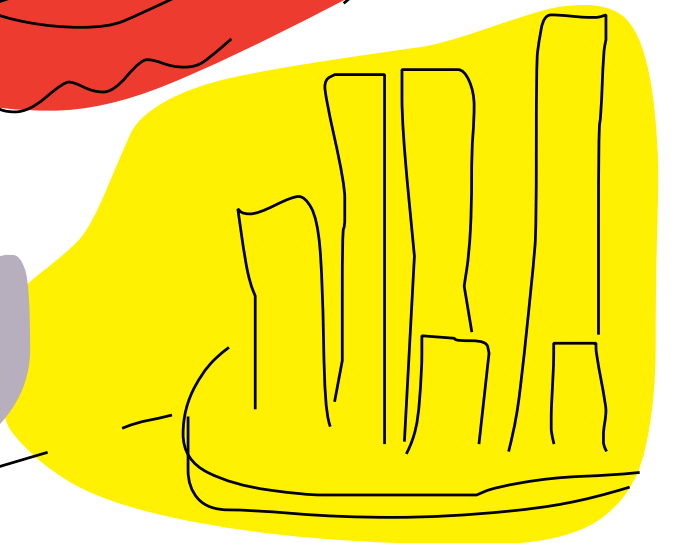
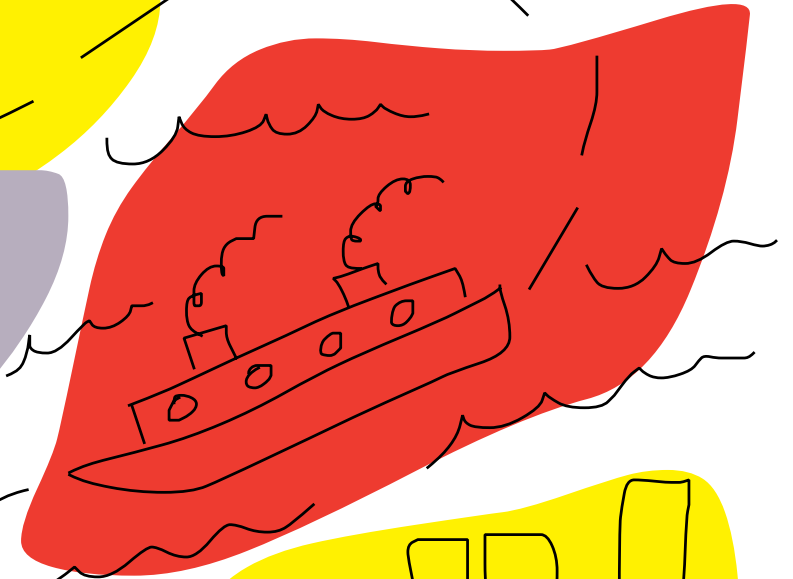
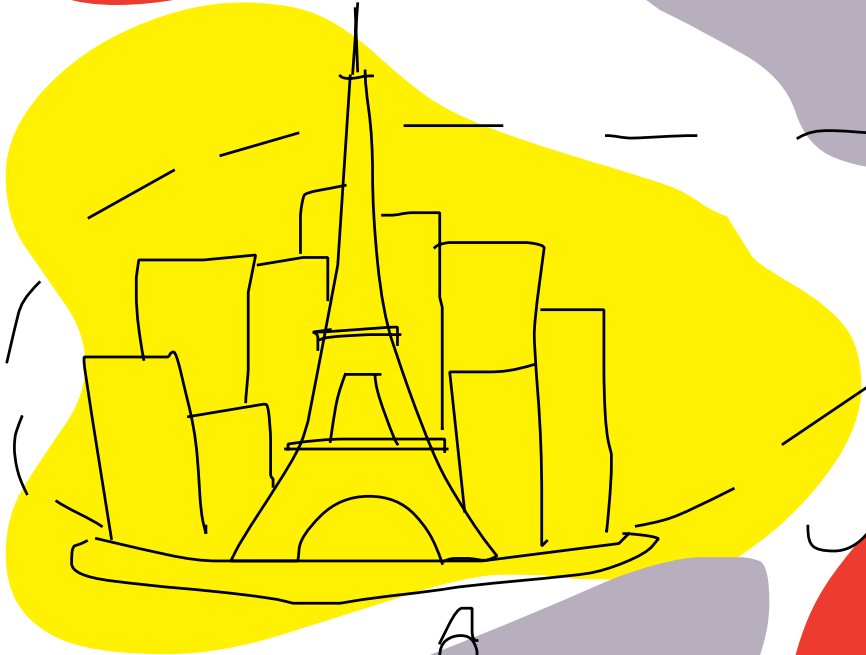
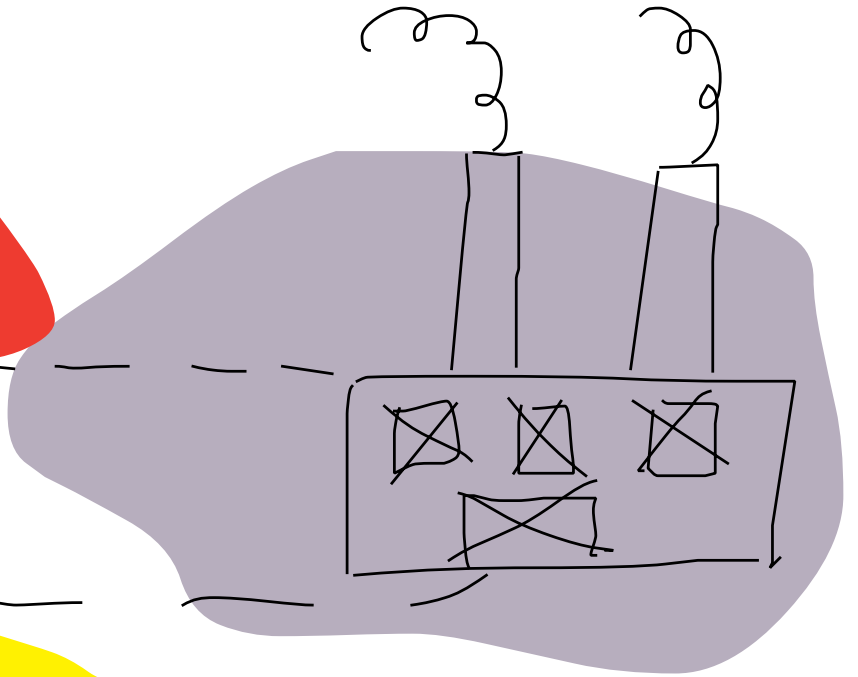


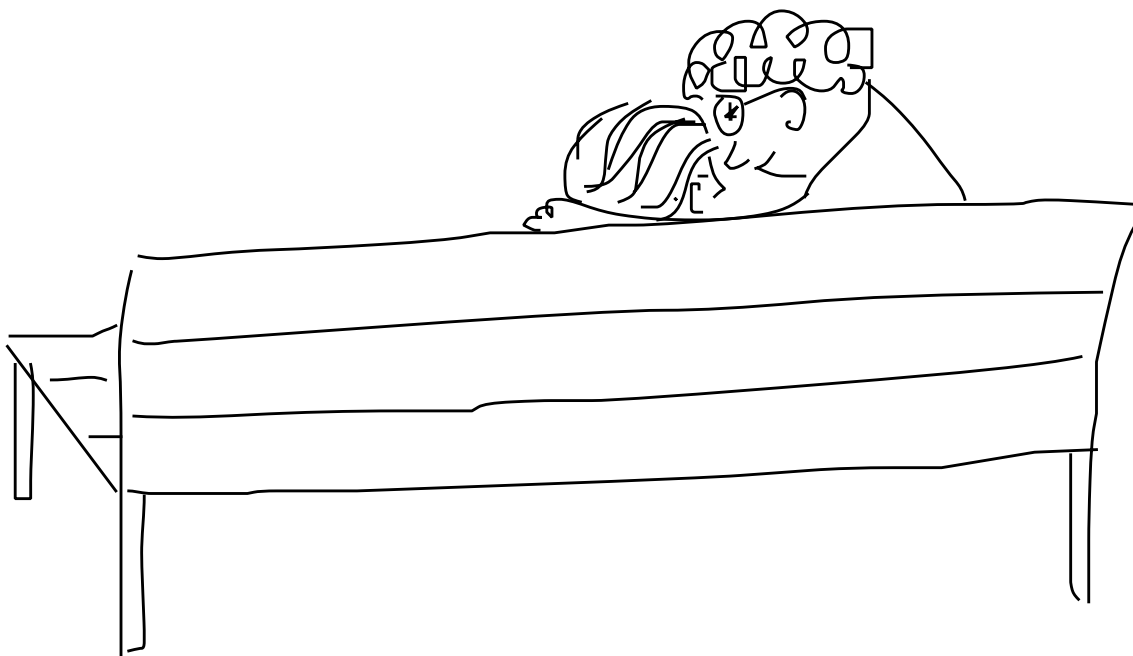
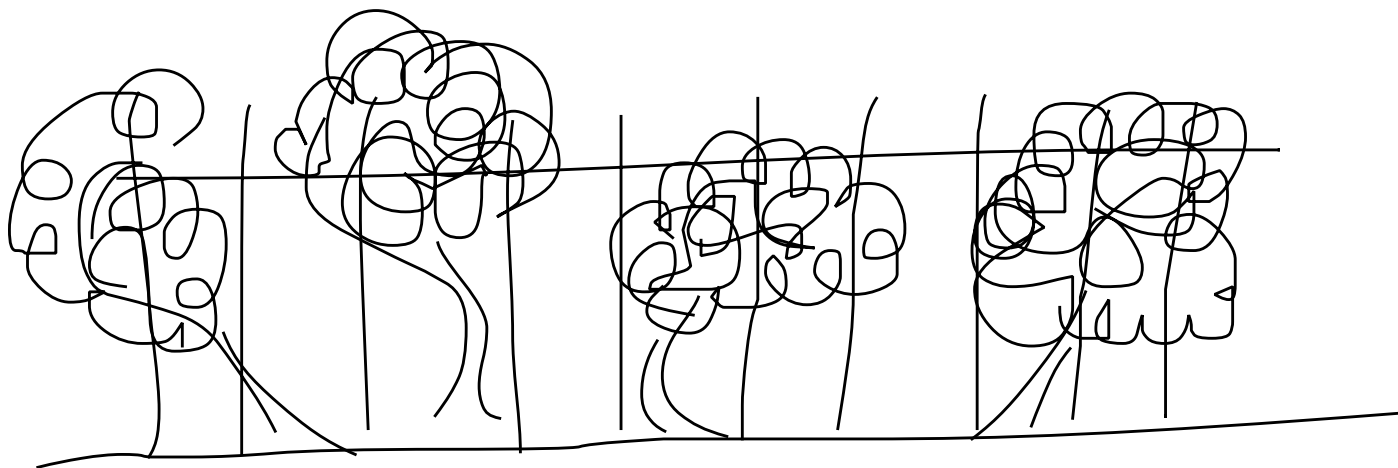


“But the townspeople didn’t want us there anymore. We went back to a big city where Grandpa’s family owned a factory, but the government took over all business. So we decided to go to America, but we had to wait for six years in France for our papers to be ready. And that is how we finally came to America.”

“And that’s where Mom met Dad and how I was born,” says Danny.

“Yes,” says Granny, “but that’s another story.”





It's late in the afternoon. Danny and Granny sit on a bench next to the flower garden and watch the people walk by.

A gentle breeze blows. The sun sparkles on the river. Together, they sleep.





Dan Stern and his grandmother, Pauline Monat, lived together for many years in a brownstone building in New York City. It was there that Dan learned about Pauline's happy childhood and how she survived World War II in Poland. This book is her true story. In 1997, at the age of 94, Pauline Monat peacefully passed away at home, surrounded by her family.

Dan Stern is a writer, illustrator, reviewer and former children's book editor. His work has been featured in the Los Angeles Times Book Review, Publishers Weekly, on National Public Radio's "Morning Edition," and he has been a consultant and lecturer for the National Conference of the the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators and the Getty Center for Education in the Arts. He is the author/illustrator of *The Family Guide to Collecting Children's Books: Investing in the Future While Enjoying Books of Today*.