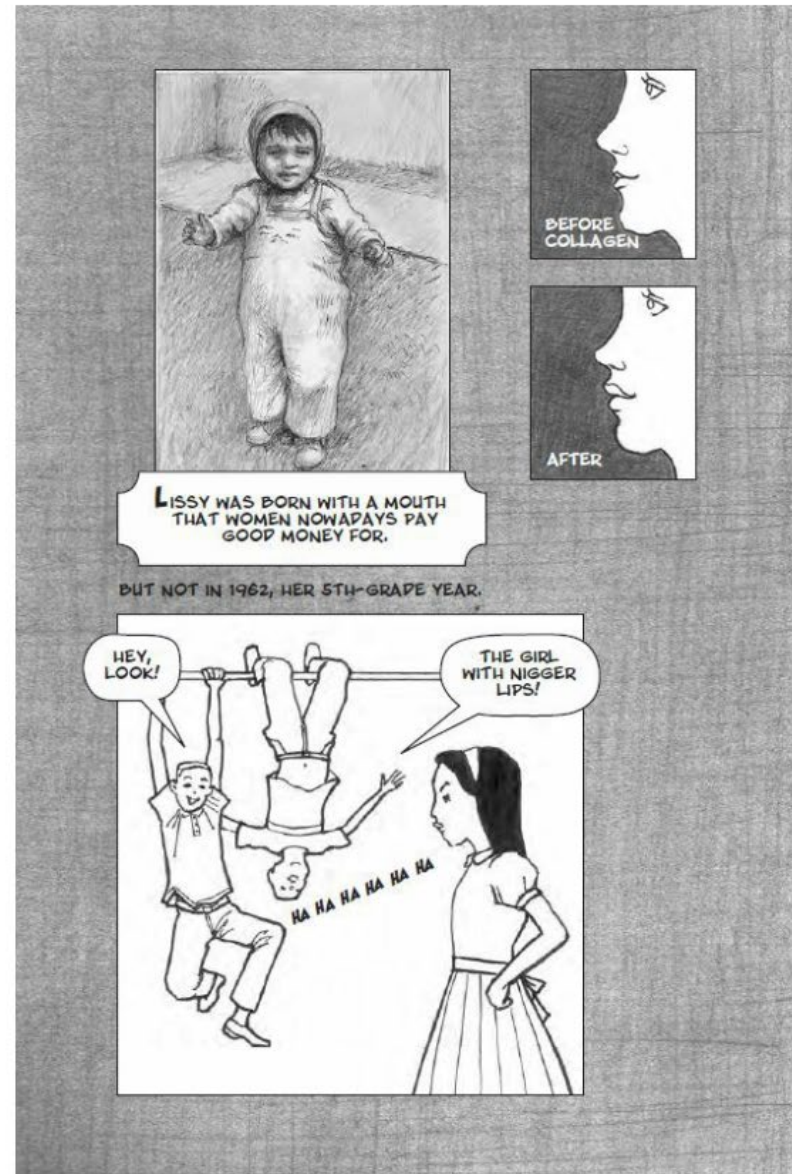


chapter 5
ANCESTRAL LINES





THE TRICK: SHE TUCKED HER LIPS AGAINST THE GUM AND FLASHED A SHAKY "ANGLO" GRIN AT THE CAMERA.

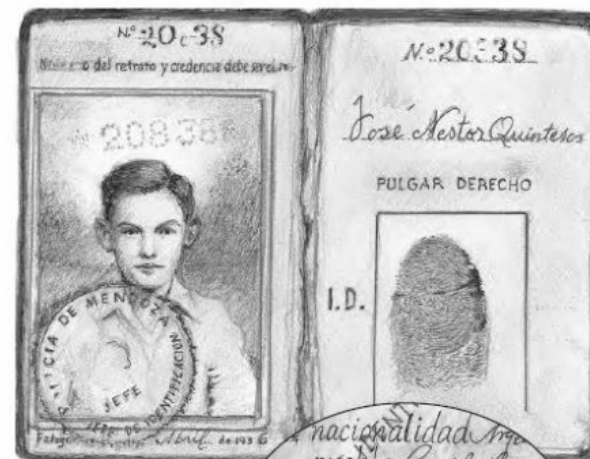


WHY ARE YOU SMILING LIKE THAT?

IT LOOKS COMPLETELY ARTIFICIAL!

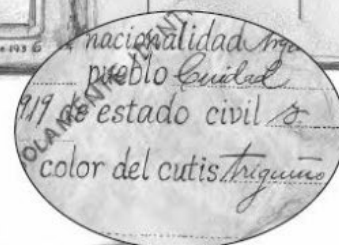
SOMEHOW PAPPY LACKED THE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS THAT USUALLY COMES WITH OUTSIDER STATUS.

HE'D ALWAYS BEEN ON THE OUTSIDE. AS A PENNILESS TEENAGER, HE MOVED FROM THE MOUNTAIN PROVINCE OF MENDOZA TO BUENOS AIRES IN SEARCH OF EDUCATION.



ON PAPPY'S OFFICIAL ID, HIS SKIN-COLOR DESIGNATION READS, TRIGUENO.

THE ONLY OTHER CHOICE: WHITE.



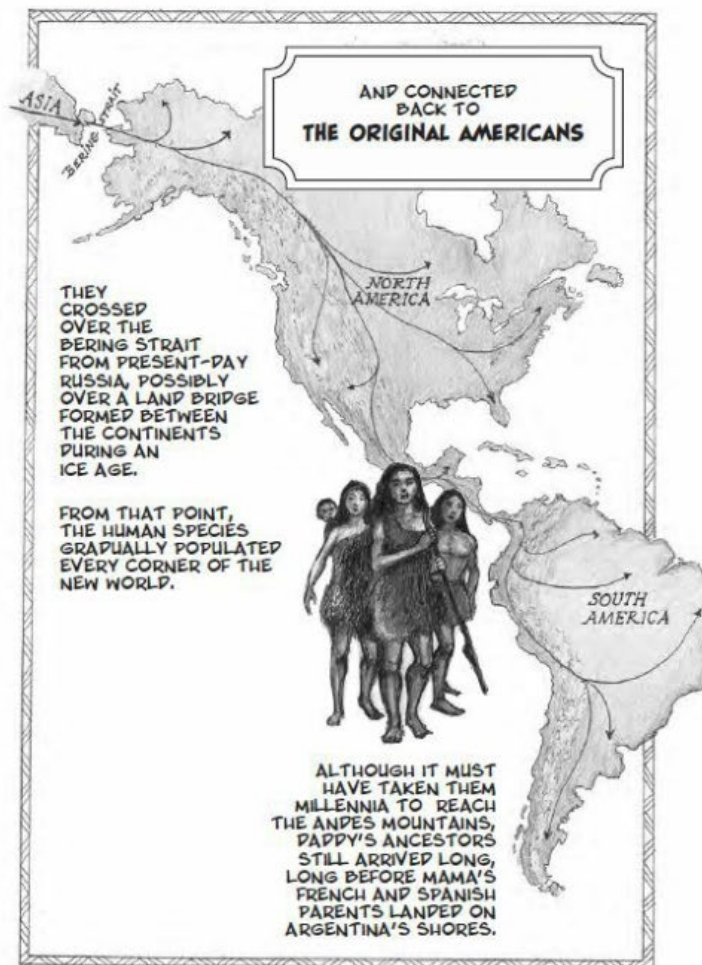
TRIGUENO IS A TERM DERIVED FROM TRIGO—SPANISH FOR WHEAT. IT APPLIES TO A PALETTE OF SKIN TONES BELONGING TO MIXED-RACE PEOPLE IN LATINO CULTURES.

MAMA, OFFICIALLY DEEMED WHITE,
PERIED SOCIAL CONVENTION BY
MARRYING THIS TRIGUENO.



LIKE MOST BUENOS AIRES NATIVES,
SHE CAME FROM PURE EUROPEAN STOCK.

PAPPY'S ANCESTRAL LINE CONSISTED OF WANPERERS,



MY FATHER PROUDLY IDENTIFIED WITH NATIVE AMERICANS
ACROSS THE SPECTRUM.



TRACES OF THEIR
COMMON ANCESTORS
LIVED ON IN HIM AND
HIS OFFSPRING.



YOU COULD SEE IT IN
THEIR EYELID FOLDS, IN
THE TEXTURE OF THEIR
HAIR, IN THEIR LIPS, IN
THEIR SKIN TONES
THAT RANGED FROM
MAHOGANY TO WHEAT.



MOST SOUTHERNERS HAD NO IDEA HOW TO LABEL US. THEY
TOOK IN OUR DARK FEATURES, HISPANIC OLIVE SKIN, AND FULL LIPS,
AND IF THEIR MOUTHS DIDN'T ASK THE QUESTION, THEIR EYES DID:



**WHAT
ARE YOU?**

EVEN OUR GEOGRAPHICAL ORIGIN DREW BLANK STARES.

ARGENTINA.
HMM...



OH!

IS THAT
IN SOUTH
ALABAMA?



LONG BEFORE THE TERM
"HISPANIC" GAINED
RECOGNITION IN THE
SOUTH, NO SUITABLE
CATEGORIES FOR OUR
ETHNIC TYPE EXISTED.

Name: _____

Age: _____

Race: _____

☐ White
☐ Negro

LET'S SEE:
I'M
CERTAINLY
NOT A
NEGRO.

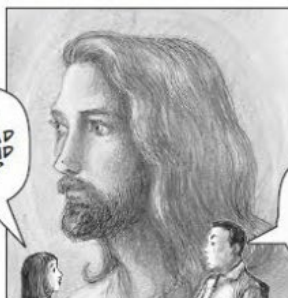
THAT ONLY
LEAVES ONE
CHOICE.

BUT
I DON'T
REALLY FEEL
WHITE.

I GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT WHITENESS WAS A PRIVILEGE, IF YOU WANTED TO SEE IT AS SUCH, RESERVED FOR DESCENDANTS OF NORTHERN EUROPEANS.



EVEN JESUS GOT DRAWN INTO THIS FOLD. BLUE-EYED PORTRAITS OF HIM WERE EVERYWHERE IN OUR BIBLE BELT STATE.



IS IT TRUE THAT GALILEANS HAD BLUE EYES AND BLOND HAIR?



WHERE DID YOU HEAR THAT, SUNDAY SCHOOL?

THAT'S COMPLETE NONSENSE.

ACCORDING TO PAPPY, JESUS WOULD'VE BEEN AS DARK-SKINNED AS AN ARAB, NOT THE MILKY WHITE WISHED ON HIM BY SOUTHERNERS.

WE OWNED AN ENCYCLOPEDIA THAT MAMA PURCHASED AT THE GROCERY STORE, ONE VOLUME AT A TIME. IT WAS A SHABBY COUSIN TO WORLD BOOK, BUT CERTAIN FEATURES CAPTURED MY INTEREST.

I WAS STRUCK BY WHAT IT OFFERED ON THE SUBJECT OF RACE.



THE RACES OF MAN



HERE, THE DIVIDING LINES BETWEEN ONE RACE AND THE NEXT WERE UNMISTAKABLE. HOW SIMPLE FOR SUCH PEOPLE TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THEY ARE...

...EVEN WHEN REALITY FAILS TO ACCOMMODATE THOSE NEAT CATEGORIES.



BUT FEW WHITE SOUTHERNERS TOLERATED RACIAL AMBIGUITY. THEY DISPENSED WITH SUCH FUZZY BOUNDARIES BY APPLYING THE ONE-DROP RULE.

ACCORDING TO THE ONE-DROP RULE, NO ONE WHO HAS THE SLIGHTEST TRACE OF AFRICAN ANCESTRY CAN CLAIM TO BE WHITE.



THE RULE IS UNYIELDING. NO MATTER HOW HIGH A PROPORTION OF WHITE ANCESTRY A PERSON MAY HAVE, JUST ONE DROP OF BLACKNESS CANCELS IT OUT.



PURITY OF RACE IS PARAMOUNT.

WHITE ALABAMIANS' OBSESSION WITH KEEPING THE RACES APART PROPELLED A POLITICALLY ASTUTE JUDGE TO THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR. IT HAPPENED SHORTLY AFTER OUR ARRIVAL.

FROM THIS CRADLE OF THE CONFEDERACY, FROM THIS VERY HEART OF THE GREAT ANGLO-SAXON SOUTHLAND...



...I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny, and I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, and segregation forever.

—Gov. George C. Wallace
January 14, 1963