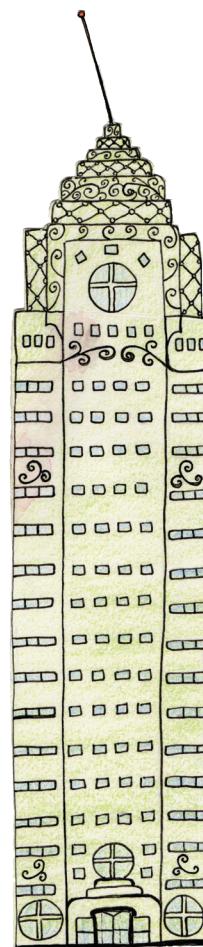


**Phone Booth Press Building**  
1013 3rd Street, Blackwell, NY

Built: 1928  
Stories: 22  
Height (Top Floor): 304 FT (92.7 M)  
Height (Spire): 339 FT (103.3 M)

One of Blackwell's most historic skyscrapers the Phone Booth Press Building stands out prominently in the Blackwell skyline. The rotating antenna spire was originally designed for high power radio broadcasts. The antenna runs to the base of the tower allowing for 250,000 watt night time trans-Atlantic commercial broadcasts. These radio broadcasts were tested in the late 1930s but the Phone Booth Press Building's antenna spire was officially decommissioned after WWII.

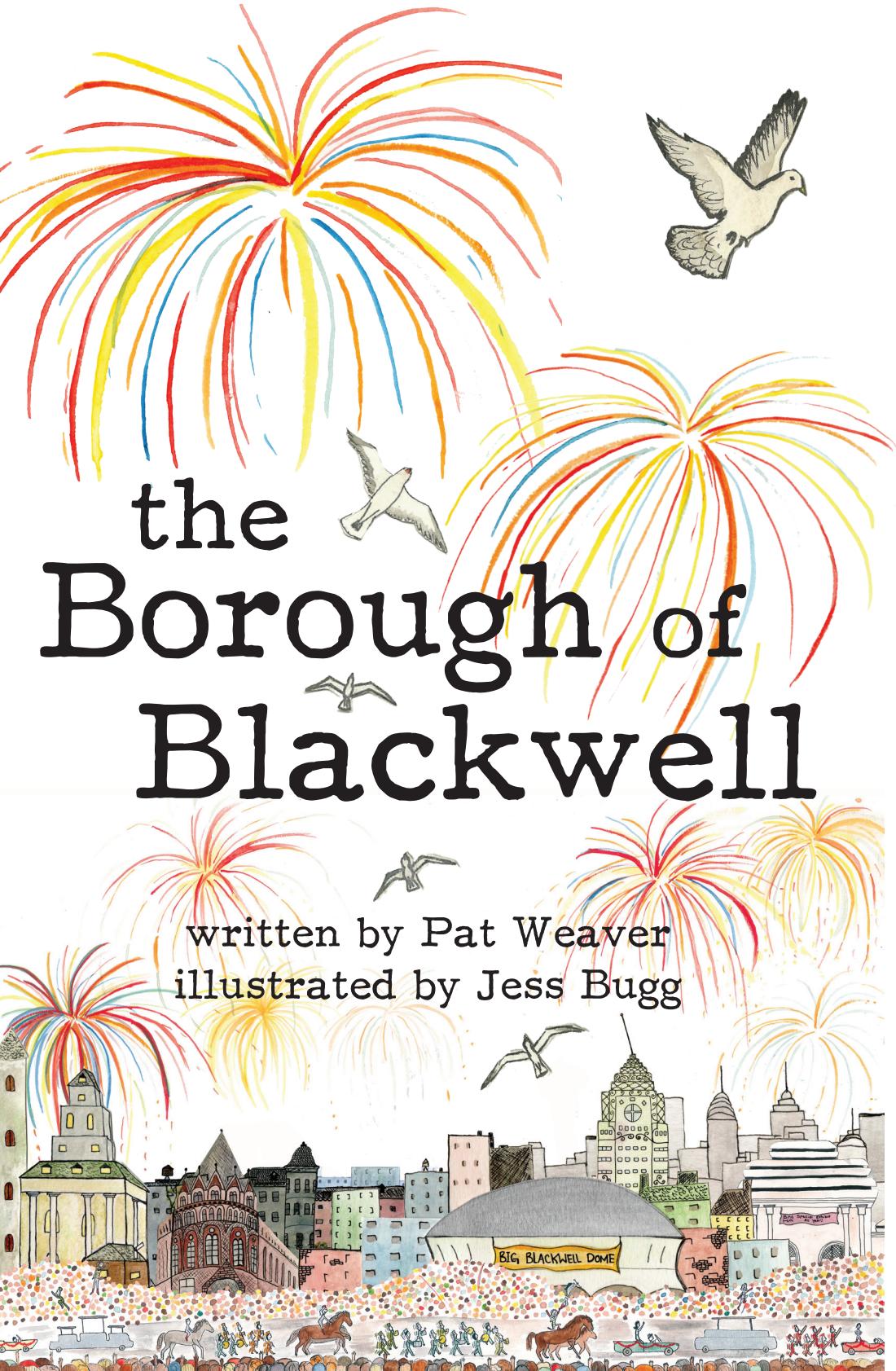


**PHONE BOOTH PRESS**  
**NEW YORK CITY**

[phoneboothpress.com](http://phoneboothpress.com)

the Borough of Blackwell

by Pat Weaver and Jess Bugg



the  
Borough  
of  
Blackwell

Also by Pat Weaver and Jess Bugg:

*Positively Bleecker Street*

the  
Borough  
of  
Blackwell

written by  
Pat Weaver

illustrated by  
Jess Bugg

PHONE BOOTH PRESS

2012

the Borough of Blackwell  
Copyright © 2012 by Pat Weaver and Jess Bugg

All rights reserved. Printed in New York City.

Phone Booth Press

First Printing  
April 2012

[phoneboothpress.com](http://phoneboothpress.com)

Thanks to Brendan Byrne, Carolyn Epstein, Charles Mullen,  
Naomi Solomon, Lesley Wynn, Maggie Muldoon, Ray Flynt and  
everyone at bookbook and Biography Bookshop!



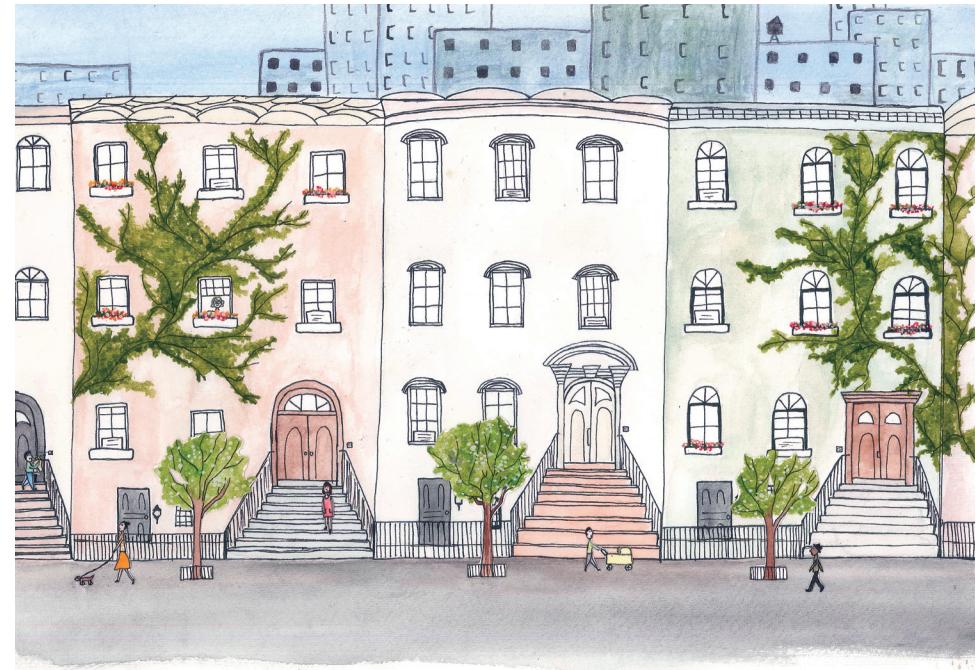
**S**ome time ago -- never mind just how long,  
that's back when I first met  
young Bonnie Rose Brown.  
Such a go-getting, rough-riding,  
tough talking kid,  
“I'm an explorer!” she'd tell you,  
“The best that there is!”

She'd been to Manhattan,  
and all over Queens,  
of those boroughs she'd seen  
“what there is to be seen.”

Of the Island of Staten,  
you'd hear her repeat,  
“Well I've seen every  
avenue, alley and street!”

Yes, the Bronx she'd traversed  
from the north to the south,  
from the shores of the Hudson  
to Long Island Sound,  
and of course she knew Brooklyn,  
from Greenpoint to Brighton,  
from Bay Ridge to Bushwick,  
DUMBO to Coney Island.

“There's not a place in this city  
that I haven't been,  
oh I've hipped every hop  
and I've flammed every flim.”  
Yes young Bonnie Rose Brown,  
though her years not a lot,  
had seen all of New York  
-- or at least so she thought.



But one morning in June,  
on the last day of Spring,  
on the day before Summer  
can truly begin,  
leaving home around nine,  
bound uptown for a bit,  
she thought, “there's got to be  
some haunt that I haven't hit.”

She took the A out of Brooklyn,  
all the way to West 4th,  
where she got on the F  
and continued on North.  
Then the stations flew by,  
people went and they came,  
and young Bonnie slipped  
quietly into a dream.

A few stations later,  
at least that's what she'd say,  
Bonnie woke with a start,  
all alone on the train.  
The doors they slid open,  
a voice echoed aloud,  
“This stop is the last stop  
so please exit now!”



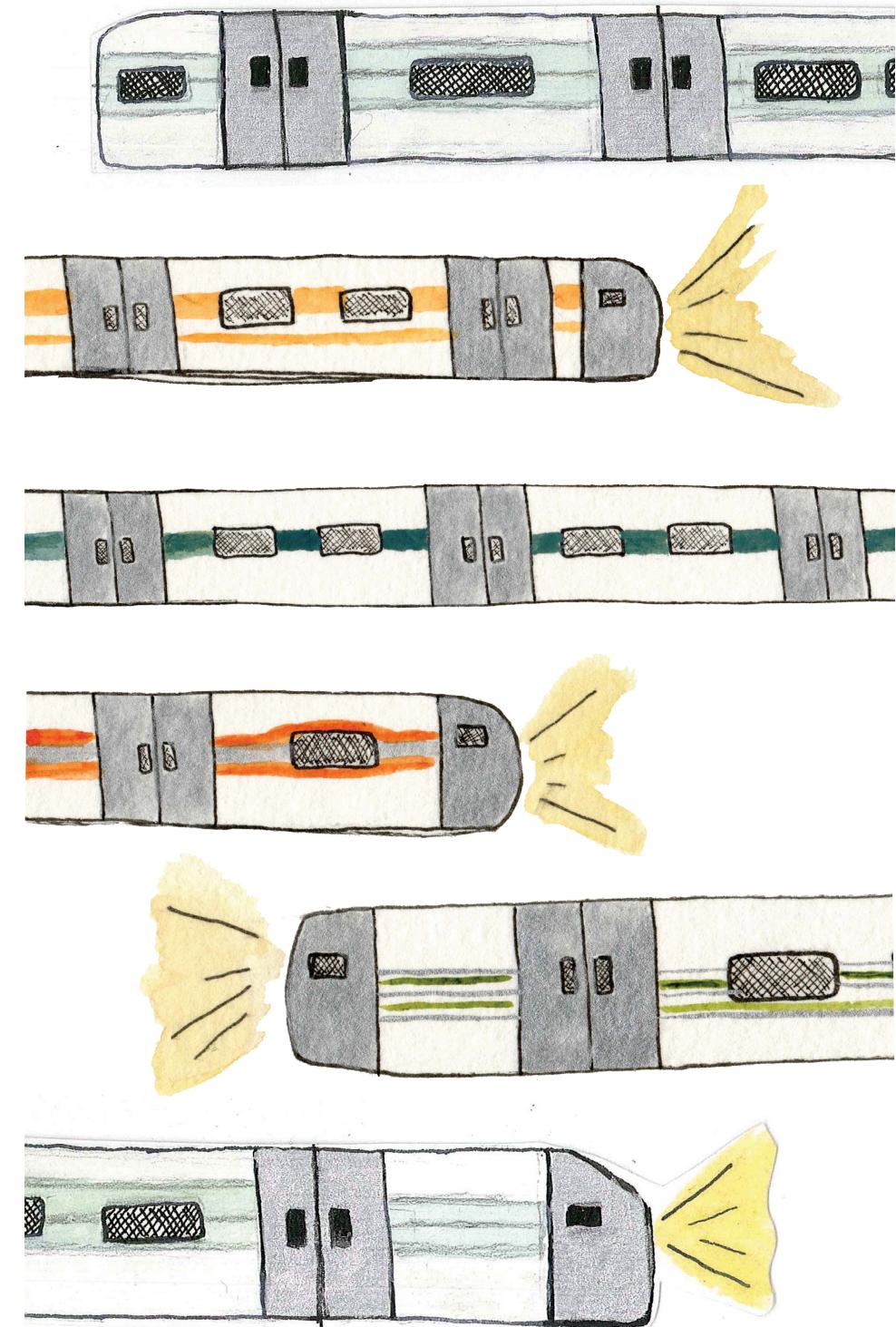
So she stepped off the platform,  
and as soon as she did,  
the doors shut behind her  
and the train disappeared.  
Not too easily frightened,  
taking all this in stride,  
she then said to herself,  
“Well, let's see what's outside.”

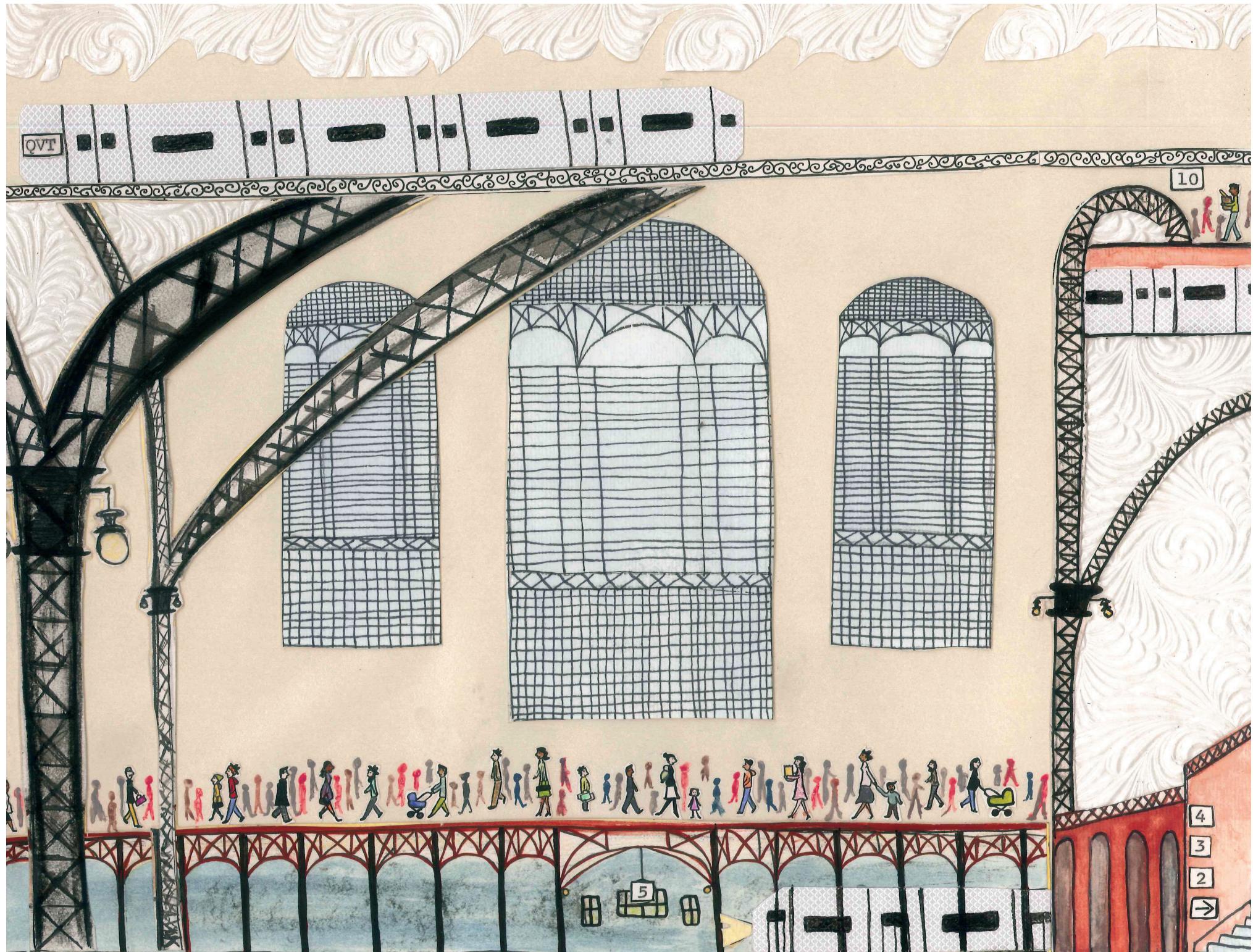
As she walked through the station,  
she looked all around,  
and could hardly believe  
where she was to be found.  
Oh, this station was different  
than any she'd seen,  
it was three times as big,  
it was four times as clean!

There were trains going this way, and trains going that, trains were coming from every which way on the map. Yes, a crowd at track five had its eyes on the tracks, waiting on the express to the Prairie of Prax.

Way upstairs at track ten, raised so high off the ground, an el train was en route from the Valley of Sound. And over at tracks numbers nine, four, and two, there were three trains all headed for Solla Selew.

Well, the hustle and bustle, the zoom and the zim, was for young Bonnie Rose just too much to take in. "There's oh so much to see," as she walked out the door, she thought to herself, "I'll come back for the tour."







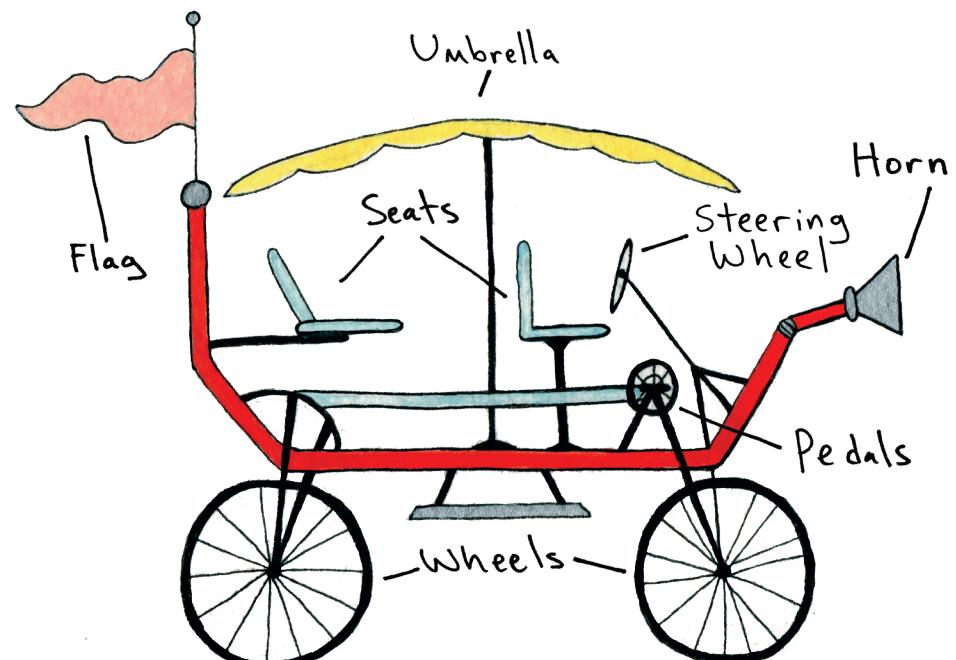
Now Bonnie walked out,  
to the bright late spring sun,  
and the city enveloped her, one building by one.  
Just as soon as she almost had seen what she saw  
on her left came a shout, then a crash, and a yaw.

And then almost before she realized she'd been hit,  
a high-pitched little voice started raising a fit.  
"Oh, watch out where you're standing,  
can't you see where you are?  
For you're right in the way  
of my bike-a-ma-car!"

Bonnie got to her feet,  
and looked up with surprise,  
at a very small man on a very strange bike.  
And this very strange bike,  
through a system of belts,  
was attached to a car, but how, she couldn't tell.

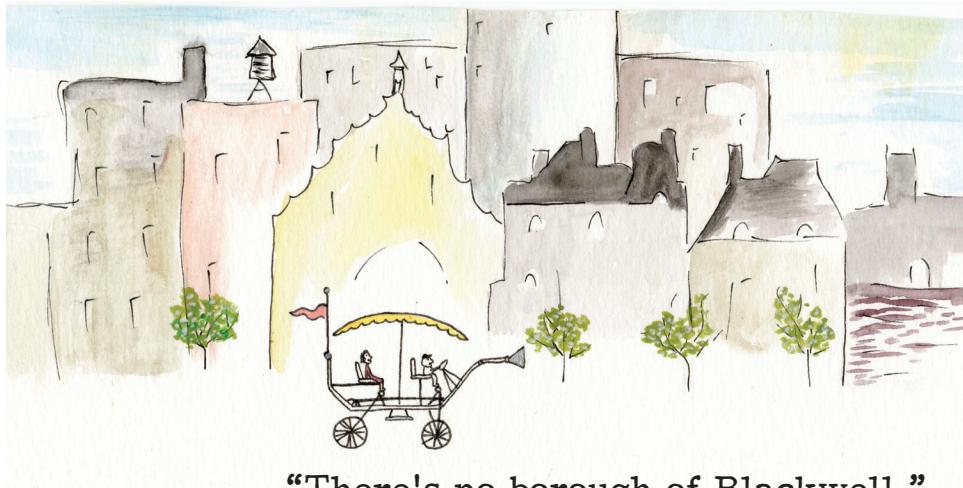
"Oh I'm sorry," said Bonnie,  
still looking around,  
"I'm new here you see,  
it's my first day in town.  
And what's more," she continued,  
to the strange little man,  
"I do not really know  
where it is that I am."

"What's that?" the man shouted  
as he leaped from his perch,  
"Well welcome, yes let me please  
welcome you first!  
To the place where you're at,  
yes the place that you're in,  
is the borough of Blackwell,  
the best place there is."



The Bike-a-ma-car

"The borough of Blackwell?" she started to say,  
"That's no borough I've heard of,  
that can't be the place."  
"Well why not?" asked the man,  
looking not quite so short,  
"Why, Blackwell's the best borough  
in all of New York!"



"There's no borough of Blackwell,"  
she said, "that I know,  
for there's only five boroughs,  
not one borough more."  
"Five!" the man shouted,  
"now don't make me flip,  
if it's borough's you're counting  
you'd better count six!"

And now Bonnie Rose Brown,  
though she wasn't convinced,  
asked, "Well what makes this borough  
the best that there is?"  
And to that the excitable man did reply,  
"For a trip around town,  
boy you've found the right guy!"

"Just climb up right here,  
to my bike-a-ma-car,  
and I'll show you the sights  
and explain what they are."  
And just then with a push of a button out popped  
a second bike seat, and Bonnie climbed right on top.

Then the man hopped up with her,  
and said, "First things first,  
I believe that we haven't yet been introduced.  
My name's William Ramirez  
McDonnell VonGeorge,  
but my friends call me Skip,  
now young lady, what's yours?"

"Oh, I'm Bonnie,"  
she said as she stuck out her hand,  
which he took up then said,  
"Well let's go for a spin."  
Then they started along on that bike-a-ma-car,  
with Skip peddling forward  
quickly they drove quite far.

They were off down the road,  
past a park on the right,  
on the left a tall building was covered in vines.  
As they speedily rode through this odd part of town,  
the odd sights got much odder  
each block they went down.

Yes, we've got to get going,  
there's so much more to see,  
for we're almost arrived at the great E.S.B."

"Oh the Empire State Building,  
I've been there before,  
but that's in Manhattan,  
of that I'm quite sure."

And all of a sudden with a screech to a halt,  
Skip jumped down from the bike,  
and said, "Here's where we'll start."  
"With the oldest of buildings, the old borough hall,  
the first building in Blackwell, built in 1504."

"There's no way," Bonnie shouted,  
"no, it can't be that old!"  
"Well of course it is," Skip said,  
"don't know what you've been told.  
In the middle of June, five-hundred-six years ago,  
my great-great-great-grandmother  
first showed up in Blackwell.

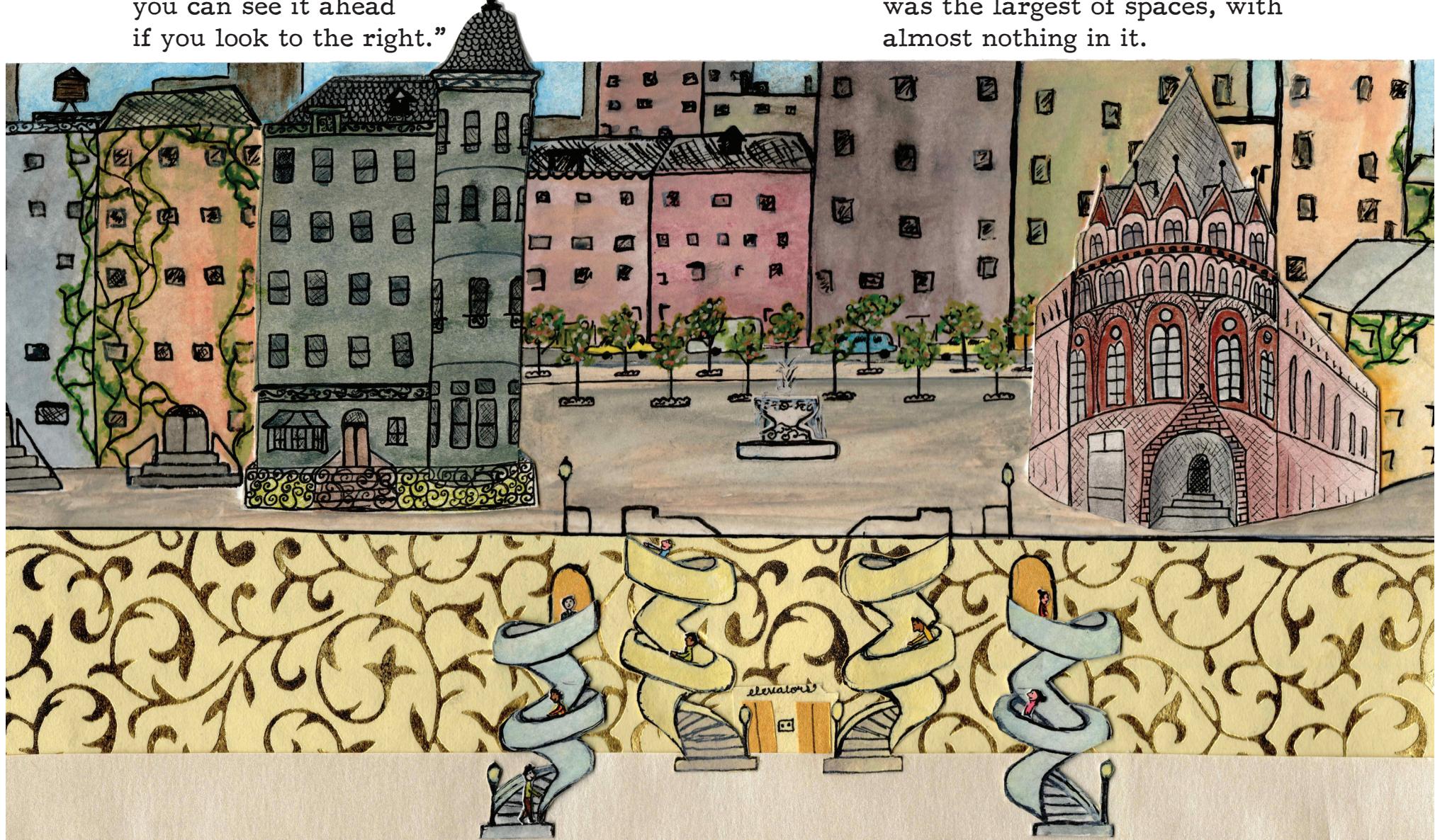
And at first this here building  
was just one little shack,  
then they added three stories, a wing in the back,  
then six stories more, a tower to the west,  
a basement, a ballroom,  
and rooms for twelve guests.

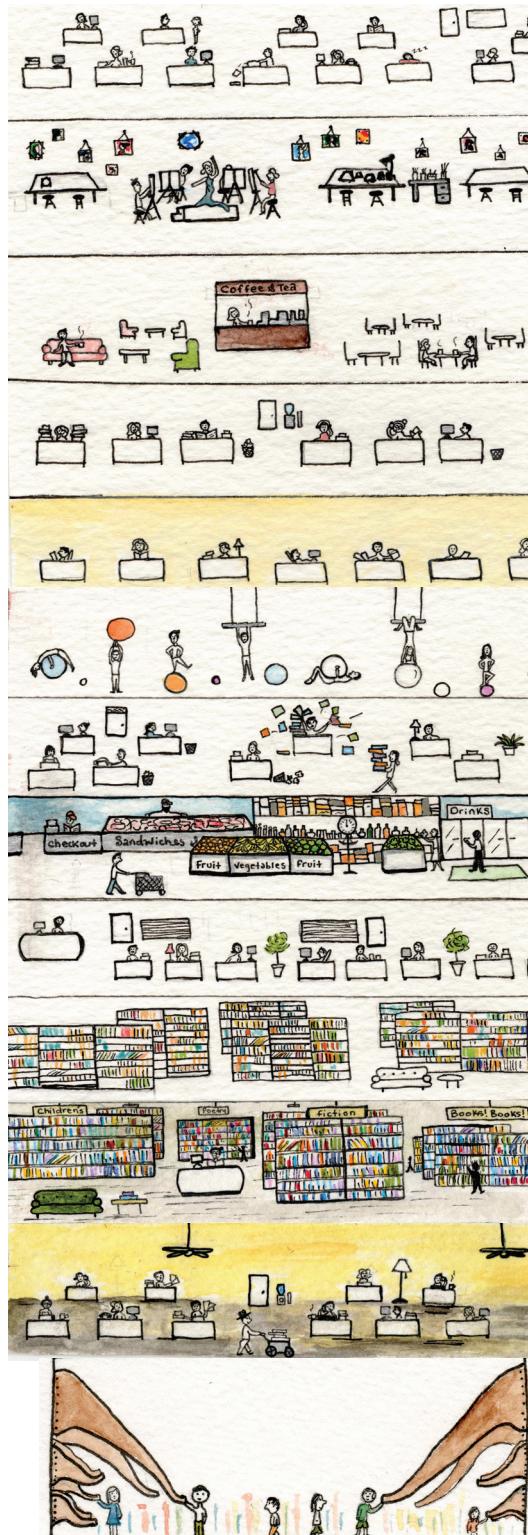
And that's what you see, still here standing up tall,  
yes, the old borough hall, oldest building of all."  
Bonnie said, "Can we go in?  
At least see what's inside?"  
"Not today," Skip responded,  
"We've haven't the time!"



"It's not *building* it stands for,  
that big thing's old news,  
no the E.S.B. here  
is the newest of new!  
It's the Empire State Basement,  
and we've almost arrived,  
you can see it ahead  
if you look to the right."

Bonnie looked up and turned,  
what she saw made her blink,  
"This has got to be  
some sort of joke or a prank."  
Up between two tall buildings,  
one of stone, one of brick,  
was the largest of spaces, with  
almost nothing in it.





Four big stairways lead down  
to this curious space,  
with people coming and going  
at a furious pace.

Skip said, "It's one hundred stories  
-- all underground!  
It's the world's deepest building,  
at least that I've found."

Skip hopped off the bike,  
and he held out his arm,  
"We'll go straight to the bottom,"  
he said, "come along."  
So they walked down the stairs,  
through the bustling crowd,  
and headed right for the elevators,  
all going down.

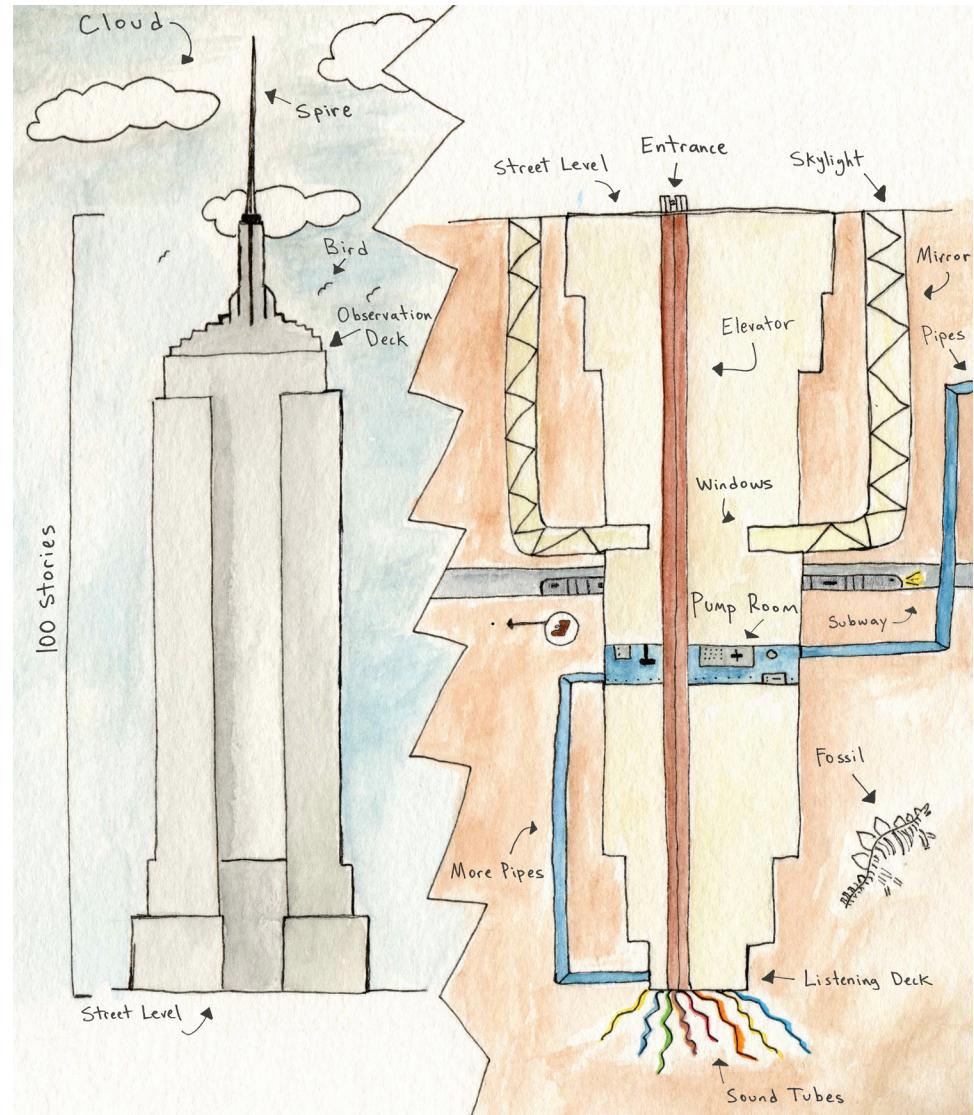
"To the basement!"

Skip shouted while closing the doors,  
and they quickly descended  
down one hundred floors.  
When they slowed to a stop,  
at floor B-Ninety-Nine,  
a chime beeped, the doors opened,  
they got into a line.

"This floor is the listening deck,  
we can take in the sounds  
that the earth makes around us,  
the soft and the loud."

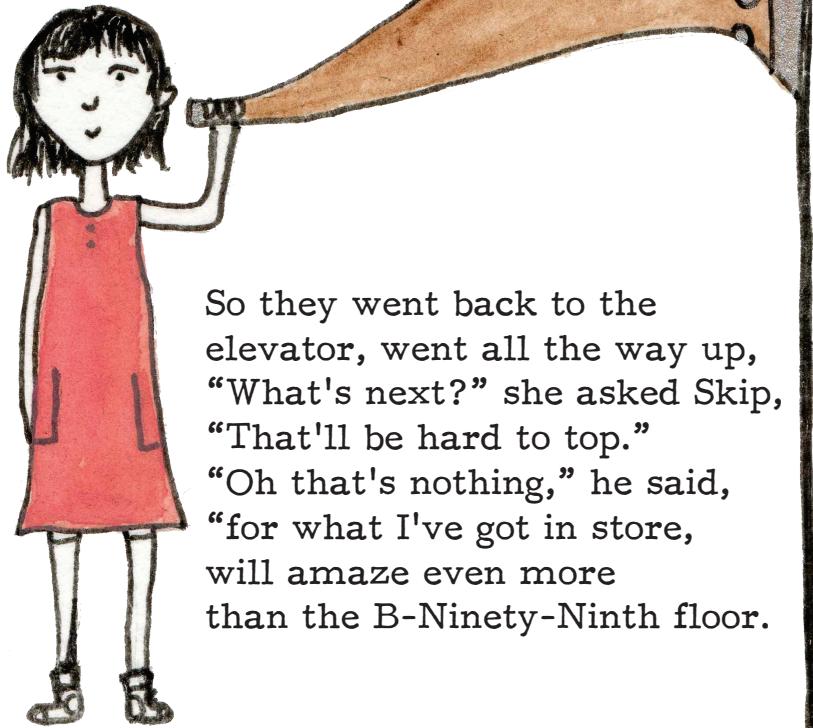
They walked up to a cone,  
a reverse gramophone,  
Skip said, "Here take a listen  
on this sound-a-ma-scope."

So then young Bonnie Rose,  
although still quite confused,  
put her ear to the hear-piece  
on that sound-hearing flute.  
She heard grumblings and rumblings  
and crashings and thumps,  
she heard bumpings and gnashings  
and smashings and clumps!



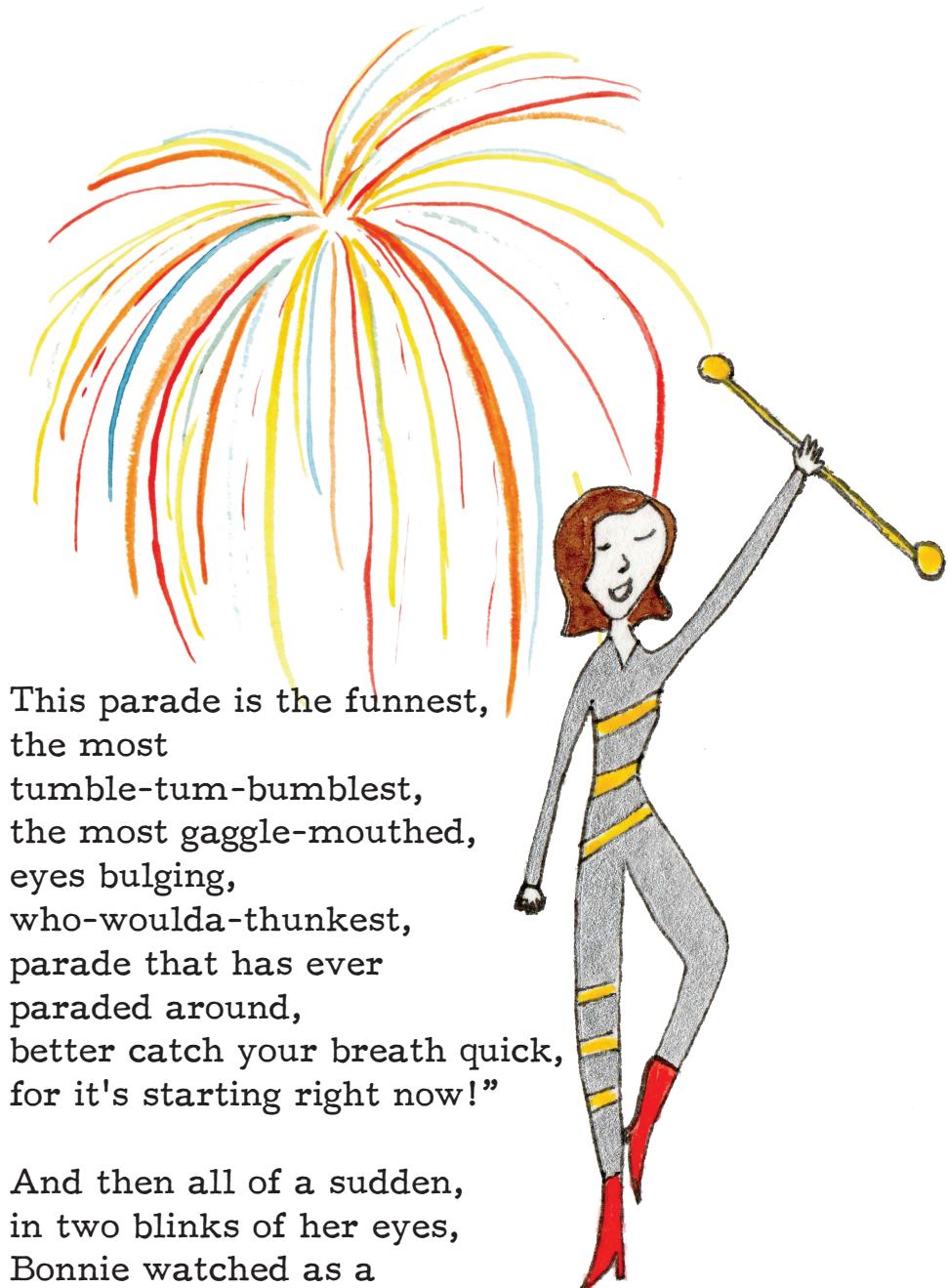
Empire State Building (Manhattan) and  
Empire State Basement (Blackwell) to scale.

"What a noise!" she exclaimed,  
"a cacophony of sound,  
I've never heard so much thumping,  
nor zumping so loud!"  
"Can I listen again?"  
she asked Skip, eyes amazed,  
"No time now," he said,  
"we'll do it some other day."



So they went back to the elevator, went all the way up, "What's next?" she asked Skip, "That'll be hard to top." "Oh that's nothing," he said, "for what I've got in store, will amaze even more than the B-Ninety-Ninth floor.

For today is Blackwell Day,  
in this borough so fine,  
and the Blackwell Day Parade  
is today, rain or shine!  
And before you can say,  
'Oh I've seen it before,'  
let me say that I think,  
that you're in for much more.



This parade is the funnest, the most tumble-tum-bumblest, the most gaggle-mouthed, eyes bulging, who-woulda-thunkest, parade that has ever paraded around, better catch your breath quick, for it's starting right now!"

And then all of a sudden, in two blinks of her eyes, Bonnie watched as a marching band marched right on by, They were led by six drummers, cymbals crashing like thunder, then ten tubists each trying to out-toot each other.

After that the bassoonists,  
too many to count!  
The tromboners were next,  
and were sliding about.

Then the trumpeters'  
booming and bellowing bursts,  
echoed out far and wide,  
Forty-Sixth Street to First.

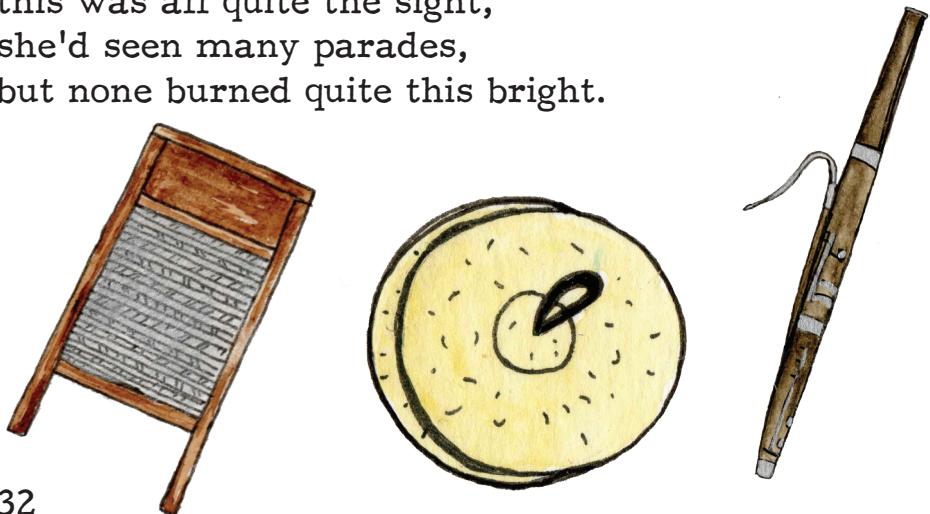




Saxophonists were next,  
marching right to the beat,  
then the washboardists clanked  
down the  
clattering street.



And to young  
Bonnie Rose,  
this was all quite the sight,  
she'd seen many parades,  
but none burned quite this bright.



For as the marching band passed  
then young Bonnie could see,  
coming on down the line with a bounce in their feet,  
fifty acrobats swirling and twirling their way,  
through the crowd that had gathered  
to watch the parade.

They leaped over horses,  
they flipped-flied over cars,  
they sailed through the air as if tied to the stars.  
Their costumes were silver,  
gold stripes and red boots,  
their faces a blur with every shot, shim, and shoot!

But as soon as they passed,  
the crowd took a step back  
Bonnie looked up and gasped,  
said, "Oh my, what is that?!"  
Skip looked over from watching the last acrobat go,  
and said, "Oh, here it is!  
The big Blackwell Day float!"

"The float was spectacular,"  
later Bonnie would say,  
"of all the surprises that surprised me that day,  
that float was the wow-est, the most holy-cow-est,  
most marvelous, astounded us,  
don't-believe-how-est."

There were dancers a prancing around on all sides,  
there were fireworks flying up into the sky,  
there were singers all crooning some jubilant cry,  
and another band keeping those songsters in time.

Bonnie's mouth stood agape,  
no she couldn't believe,  
all the paraders she'd just seen  
parade down the street.

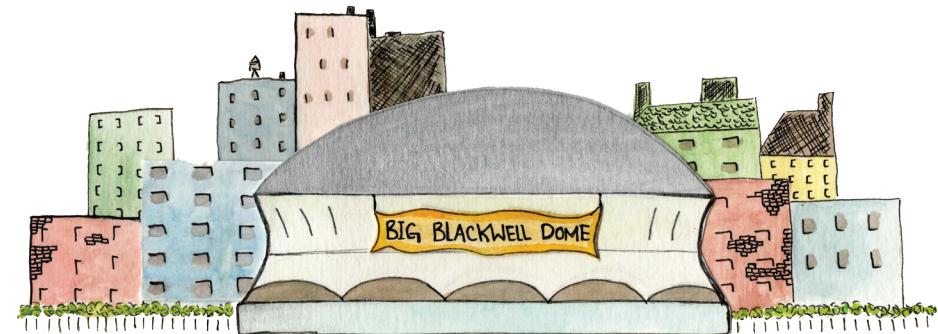
But then Skip honked the horn,  
he was back on the bike,  
saying, "Lets hurry on over,  
our next stop's quite a ride."

They quickly got moving,  
new sights zipped right along,  
"On your right," Skip said,  
"You'll see the Big Blackwell Dome.  
That's where they play  
evrey sport you could possibly play,  
from ice-baseball to speed soccer  
to full contact spades."

They pedaled on by, with a jump and a skate,  
"Next we'll see the museum"  
Skip said, "I can't wait."  
"Oh I just love museums,"  
said young Bonnie Rose,  
"It's been too long since I've seen  
a new one of those."

"You know I've seen the Met,  
the ol' MOMA, the Whitney,  
of course the Museum of Natural History,  
the Guggenheim I've gone whenever they've let me,  
and P.S. 1 I've seen just one time too many."

"This museum is different,  
much different I'd guess,"  
Skip said, then he added,  
"It's the best of the best."  
"You can see up ahead  
if you look past those cars,  
the Blackwell Museum  
of History and Art."



They drove 'round the museum,  
parked in the back,  
left the bike-a-ma-car  
between two taxi cabs.  
"So what is it," asked Bonnie,  
"that makes this place known,  
Its world famous collection,  
or traveling shows?"

"Do they have anything  
that I might have seen?  
A famous Degas,  
a Monet or O'Keeffe?  
Do they have any mummies?  
I really love those,  
or prehistoric old fossilized  
dinosaur bones?"

"Well no, not exactly,"  
Skip said, while mid stride.  
"the collection we have's  
of a quite different kind.  
But of course it is flawless,  
it's really first rate,  
the collection's the best one  
in all 50 states."



They walked back around  
and went in through the front,  
Skip said, "I know just the person  
to show us what's what.  
My friend Suzie she works here,  
yes there she is now."  
Skip waved and then said,  
"She'll show us around."

They walked 'cross the room,  
and Skip, with a smile quite wide,  
said, "Hello Sue, this is Bonnie,  
she's newly arrived.  
All the way up from Brooklyn,  
she's here for a visit,  
would you show us a few  
of your favorite exhibits?"

"Why of course!" replied Sue,  
"Now please come along quick,  
we'll start at the top, yes,  
let's go up to floor six."  
They all walked up the stairs,  
made their way through the crowd,  
Suzie said, "This new exhibit  
is the talk of the town."

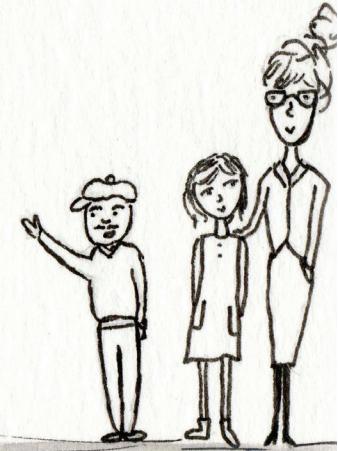
"It really is special to have it right here,  
at our great museum, till the end of the year.  
After that it'll travel, all over the world,  
to Beijing and to Sweden and Zimzanziburg."

By this point young Bonnie  
had become quite confused,  
but did not want to ask Sue for that might be rude.  
For this Blackwell museum, it was indeed strange,  
not like any museum she'd seen in her days.

The lobby was empty, not a thing there to see,  
the walls of the stairways were blank as could be.  
And each room that they passed  
there was nothing inside,  
not a painting, no prints, not a sculpture to find.

So by now you might see  
why young Bonnie Rose Brown,  
was so very confused,  
but still did not make a sound.  
But when they reached the top,  
at the sixth empty floor,  
by then young Bonnie Rose  
could not take any more.

So she shouted aloud, it came as quite a surprise,  
to the rest of the crowd  
and her two confused guides,  
“Why there's nothing to see here! No nothing at all!  
This room is just empty, no art on the walls!



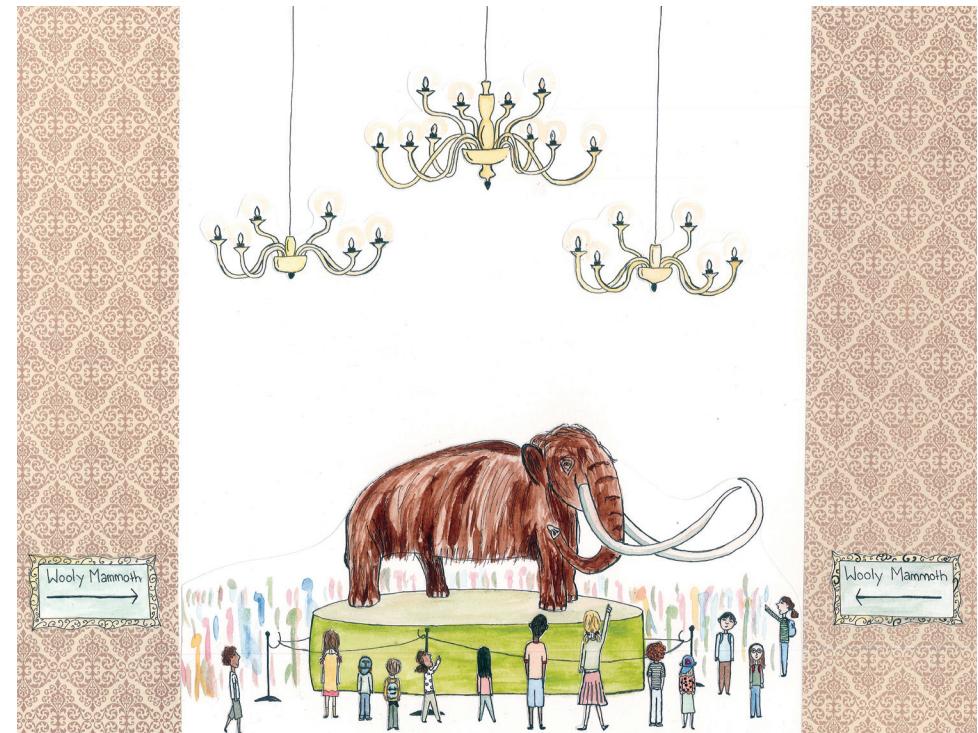
Am I mad? Going blind? Is there something amiss?  
No one else seems confused!  
What's the secret to this?"  
"I'll explain," Suzie said,  
meanwhile shaking her head,  
"This museum, you see, is different than the rest."

Long ago our museum  
was the same as those others,  
there were paintings and sculptures,  
the walls they were covered.  
We had quite the exhibit on the history of Greece,  
a stuffed wooly mammoth  
with saber-toothed-teeth!

At first people came, by the thousands per day,  
yes the crowds were so large  
that we turned them away.  
But attendance it dwindled,  
'Oh, we've seen all of that,'  
people said when we asked them  
why they didn't come back.

And then one day  
the day came when nobody showed,  
the hallways stood empty, not a ticket was sold.  
So the head honcho here, Mrs. Parsley E. Frank,  
had to call up a meeting to see what we'd think.

Of a change in the plan, yes a sweeping reform,  
something had to be done, to get guests to return.  
The meeting was heated, the tensions were high,  
after hours of talking there emerged two sides.



Normal Museum Stuff



On one side were the people who wanted to keep all the art where it was and to cover the streets, with posters and ads, and exciting displays, reading, 'Visit the Museum!' or 'Visit Today!'

'But what would that do?' cried the rest of the folks, yes the others were not for ideas like those. 'No, the people of Blackwell are smarter than that, they'll see right through that plan, they'll say, 'It's all old hat.'



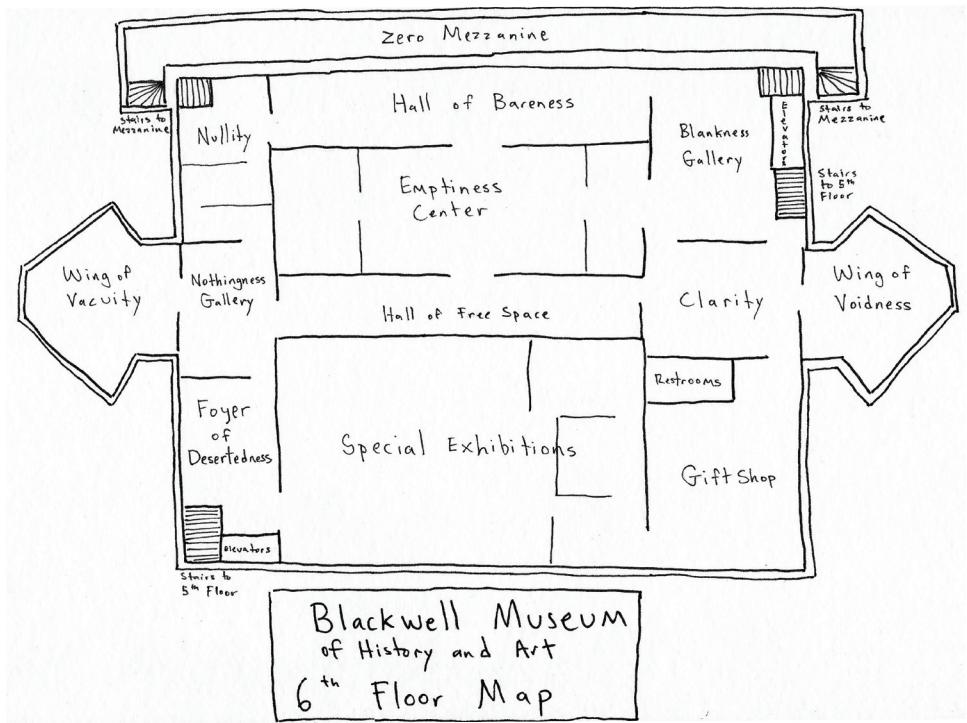
And just then a voice from way far in the back, cried out, 'Listen up now, if you do you'll be glad. For I've got an idea, a new song and dance, if it's different you want, then I've got just the plan.'

You see every museum, all over the globe, has one big thing in common, as far as I know. They're all just the same, from what I've been hearing, stuff to see everywhere from the floor to the ceiling.

From now on we'll be different, we'll take it all out, we'll remove all the artwork, and everything else. And when people come to see our museum so fine, they'll say, "This one is different, it's one of a kind."

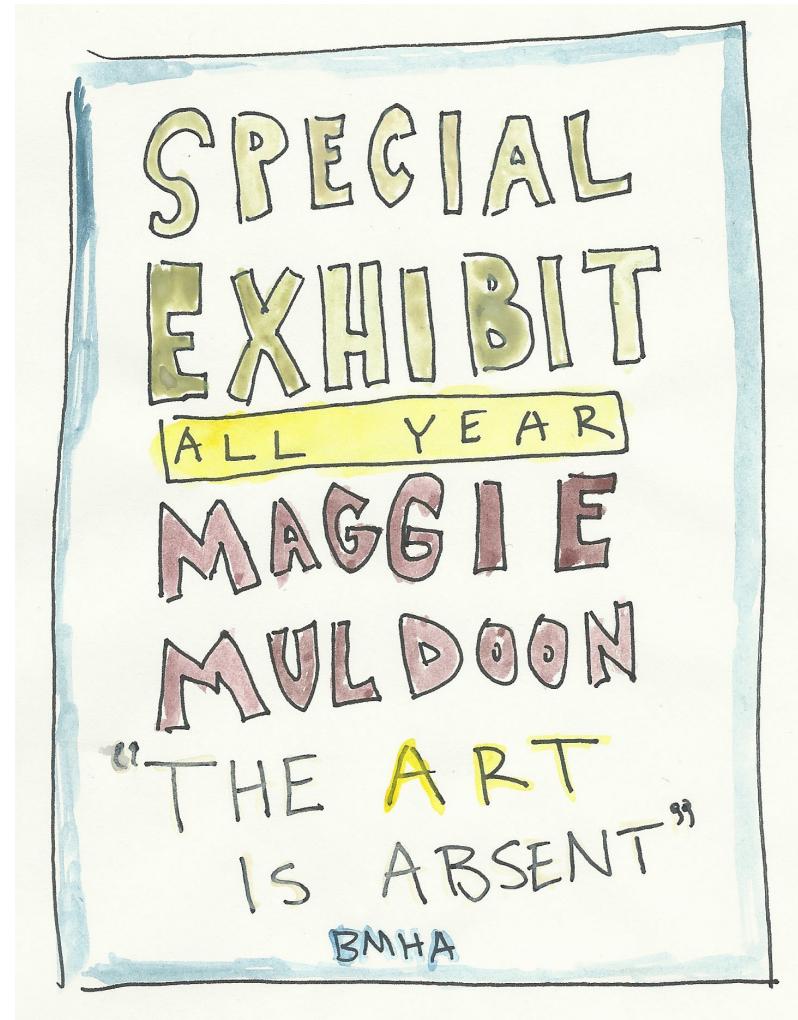
You'll see what you want when you walk in the door, if it's history you like there'll be seven floors, and when you come back, the next year or next week, it will all be new, but what you want to repeat.'

'It's a crazy idea!' a shout came from the crowd, 'But I think it might work!' a new voice rang aloud. 'We'll do it!' they said, a consensus was reached, and they started to clear out the museum that week.



And that's how it happened, that's how we got here, to this empty museum, so full of ideas. In the end it's no different than other museums, so big that you can't see everything they got in 'em."

"I see," said Bonnie, still puzzled a little bit, "but what about this sixth floor special exhibit?" "Well," Suzie answered, "yes let me explain, sometimes we give one artist a section of space.

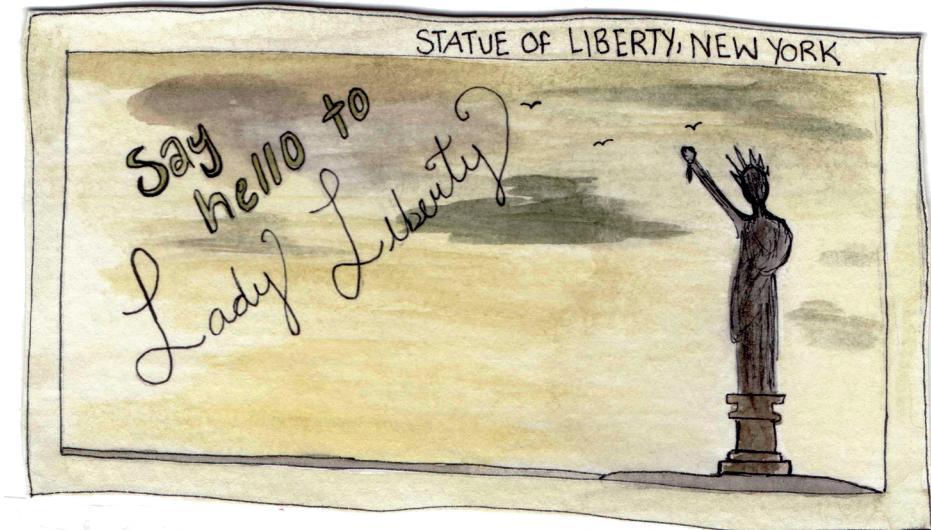


And we let them go wild, do whatever they want, as long as the result is blank empty walls. And this gallery here, in the very next room, has been curated quite well by Maggie Muldoon."

And then in an instant, as they walked in the door, Bonnie's face lit up, and it started to glow. "Oh, I get it!" she said, turned to Skip and to Sue, "What a wonderful show, what a marvelous room!"

Each wall was quite empty,  
but in the very best way,  
and once Bonnie saw that she wanted to stay.  
“Can't we see every room?  
Can we check out 'The Void'?”  
Bonnie asked, but Skip said,  
“Oh we've got to get going!”

“Where to next?” Bonnie asked  
as they climbed on the bike,  
“There's just one place I'll show you,  
one more Blackwell sight.  
The last thing we'll see,  
the last stop on our ride,  
is impressive, it's what puts  
the spring in our stride.



This famous attraction,  
you won't want to miss her,  
you might have heard of her twin,  
yes her sister,  
the big Statue of Liberty,  
out near Manhattan,  
but Blackwell's was the first,  
and I'll tell you what happened.

Because only a few people  
outside of Blackwell will say,  
that the original statue's  
not the one in the bay.

That way back in Eighteen-Eighty-Six,  
when the statue arrived,  
They forgot about birds,  
who like sitting outside.

Yes, the favorite thing  
of those feathery flappers,  
is to sit way up high in the sky  
and to splatter,  
their smelly bird droppings  
wherever they can,  
onto every last surface,  
street, statue or sand.

So much to the dismay  
of the statue's erectors,  
by the first day three bird families  
had made their nests there.  
And before the first week,  
for that statue, was out,  
it was covered from torch to toe,  
crown to the ground."

"But how?" Bonnie asked,  
"have I not heard this before?  
I know all about  
the history of New York."  
"I'll explain," said Skip then  
as they got off the bike,  
"I'll explain to you everything  
on this short ferry ride."

Left the bike by the curb,  
they walked down a short pier,  
to a bright purple boat  
and climbed up through the stairs,  
to the deck that was highest,  
and then took a seat,  
Skip said, "This is the story  
of Blackwell's great feat:



About three weeks had passed,  
the statue was a mess,  
and no one wanted to clean it,  
or become bird toilets.  
And all over New York  
people said, 'Send it back!  
Send that mess of a thing  
on its way back to France!'

But then all the Blackwellians  
started to say,  
'What's wrong with it,  
we want that statue to stay!'  
So Blackwell's best thinkers  
thought up just the way we,  
would move the now ever so  
white-speckled lady.

The plan would be secret,  
as New Yorkers all thought,  
they should send off the statue,  
didn't care where it stopped,  
said, 'Don't take it to Blackwell,  
take it far, far from here,  
to Antarctica, Italy, Chile, Tangiers!'

So one dark foggy night, out Blackwellians crept,  
while the city that never sleeps took a short nap,  
they snuck up in the statue, and built from inside,  
a replica statue, slightly smaller in size.

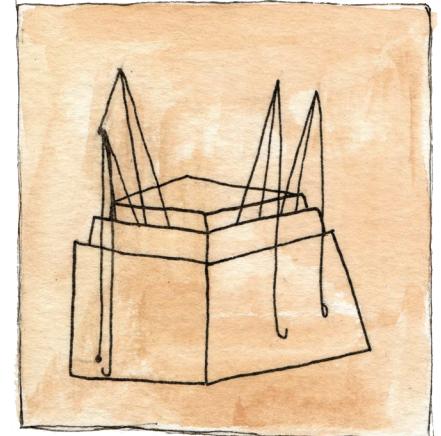
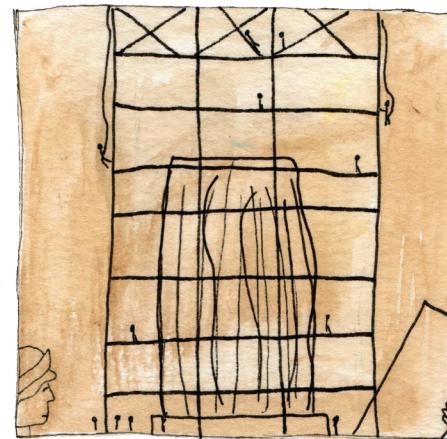
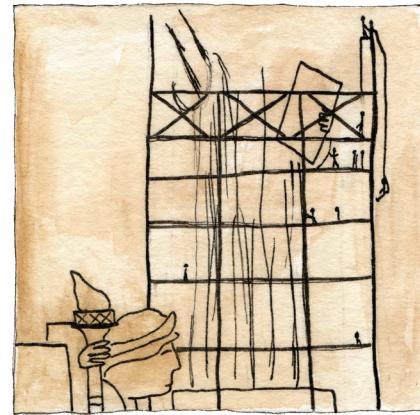
And to keep the birds off, this time they really had,  
a foolproof idea that no bird could out flap.  
At the top of the statue's torch this time around,  
they built a wind whistle  
sounding like a cat's meow.

So that every time  
a small breeze blew her way,  
which was really quite often  
way out in the bay,  
a high pitched meow-like whistle,  
that only birds hear,  
or sometimes small children  
with small child ears,



would resound all around  
the statue for a mile,  
and it kept the birds off  
and kept on people's smiles.  
So then the next morning  
when New York awoke,  
the whole city was shocked  
by the statue's new look.

Because after they built a new statue inside,  
the Blackwellians took the old shell for a ride.  
They took it apart, limb by bird-splattered limb,  
and put it back together on Blackwell's south tip."



"It's best seen from the river,"  
Skip said as the boat  
left the dock and south-headed  
down Blackwell's west shore.  
And then off in the distance  
it came into view,  
a white liberty lady,  
not the one Bonnie knew.

"There it is!" Skip cried out,  
"Ain't it grand, what a sight!"  
"It's amazing," said Bonnie, "I quite like it in white.  
Makes that bluish-green one, if I have to compare,  
seem not quite as magnificent  
as this one right here."

"Well I'm glad you agree,"  
nodded Skip with a smile,  
and I'm glad that you came out  
to Blackwell for a while."

"That's not it?" Bonnie asked him,  
"There's got to be more."  
"I'm afraid," Skip then said,  
"that that's it for this tour."



He explained as the ferry  
pulled back into the pier,  
"The last train to Manhattan  
is about to leave here."  
So they got off the boat,  
hurried down the short dock,  
and went into the subway,  
Skip glanced at the clock.

"Yes the five-forty-nine,  
and it's Grand Central bound,  
It's been swell I'd say Bonnie,  
showing you around town.  
And when you come on back,  
the next day or next year,  
look me up, come on by,  
yes for sure I'll be here.



For the borough of Blackwell's  
the best place there is,  
there ain't no borough better,  
the best of the six.  
And when you grow up,  
find a place of your own,  
maybe Blackwell's that place  
that you'll make your new home."

"Oh for sure I'll be back,"  
Bonnie said as she sighed,  
"Just one day in Blackwell's  
not enough for my kind.  
You'll be sick of me by the time I've seen it all,  
and see it all I will 'cause that's just my style."

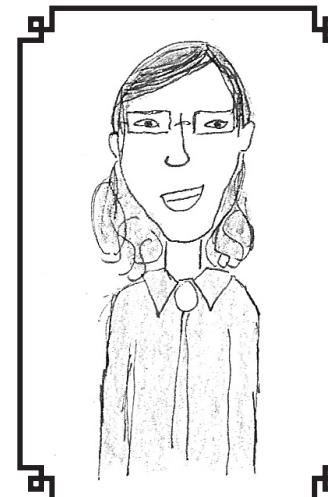
She said, "Well, I'll see you,"  
and waved bye to Skip,  
"Maybe I'll bring a friend  
on my next Blackwell trip."  
Then she got on the train  
and the doors they slid closed,  
as it pulled out her eyes shut  
and off she did doze.



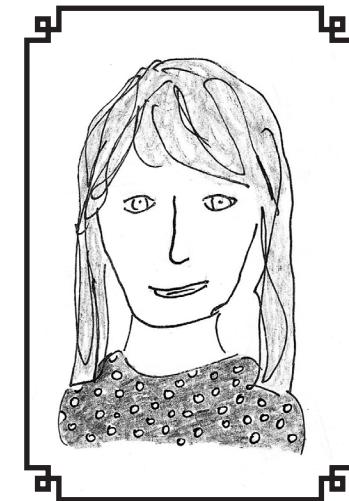
Then a clang and a clank and she startled awake,  
and a voice said,  
"Grand Central, last stop on this train."

Pat Weaver and Jess Bugg live respectively in Queens, NY and Austin, TX and sometimes live other places. They are the co-authors and illustrators of *Positively Bleecker Street*, which is occasionally available from Phone Booth Press, and *The Indisposed Offspring*, coming soon from Phone Booth Press!

They still just want to be on the side that's winning.



Pat



Jess



