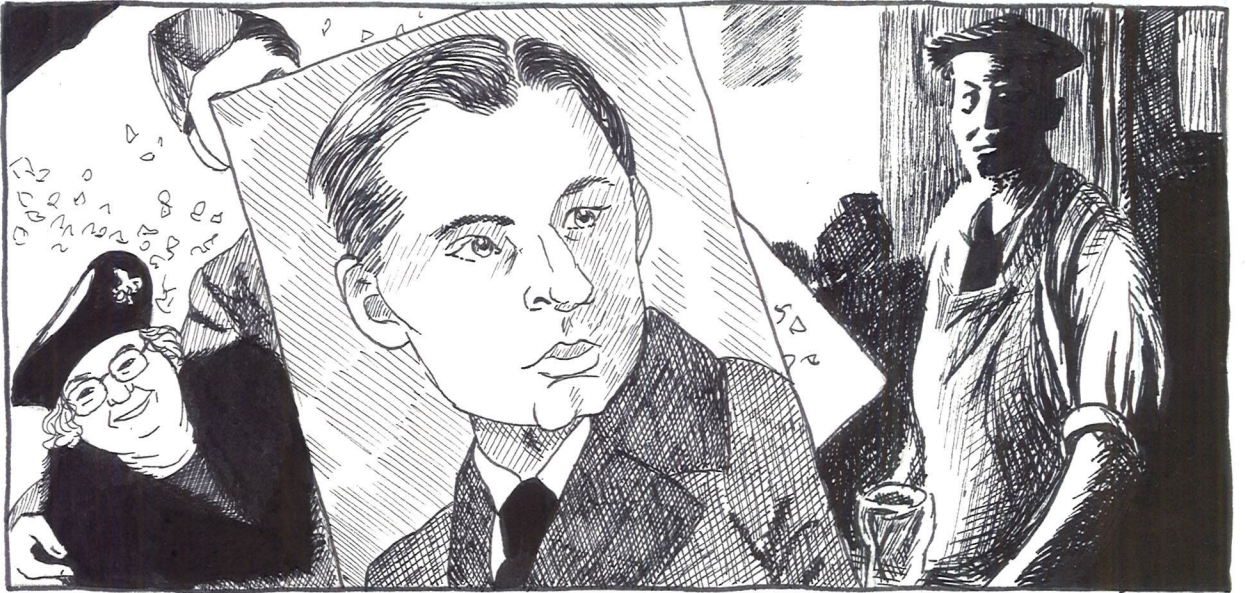


Through My Lens

For Teddy and Sidney Goldfarb

My grandpa was born in 1919, Sidney Louis Goldfarb.

His Jewish parents ran a New York City candy store.

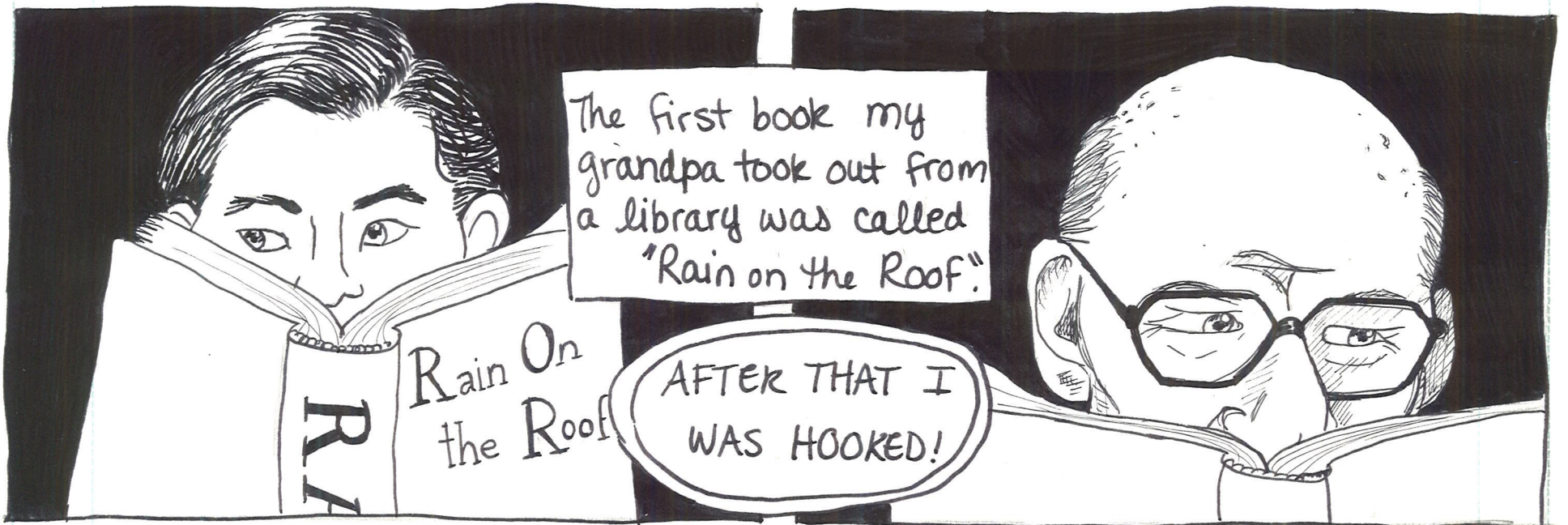


My grandma was born in 1923.

Her birth certificate read "Tillie Ruderman" but Tillie became Theodora, or ^{mom}Teddy to anyone who mattered.

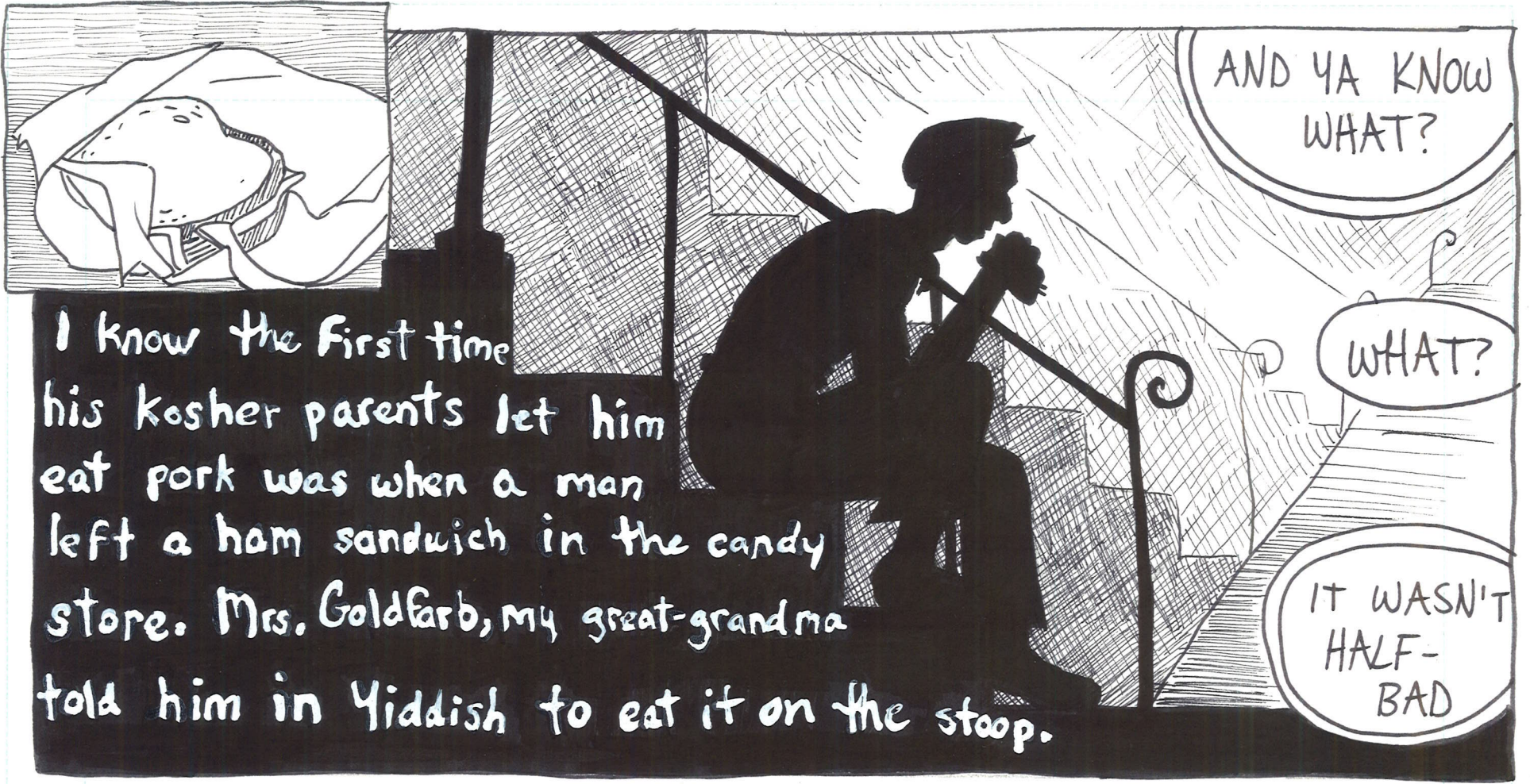


It was the Depression, and the Goldfarbs and the Rudermans got by alright.



When we went for walks and a squirrel or chipmunk would cross our path (he never got the knack of telling them apart), he could be relied upon to describe his walks through Central Park in his youth.



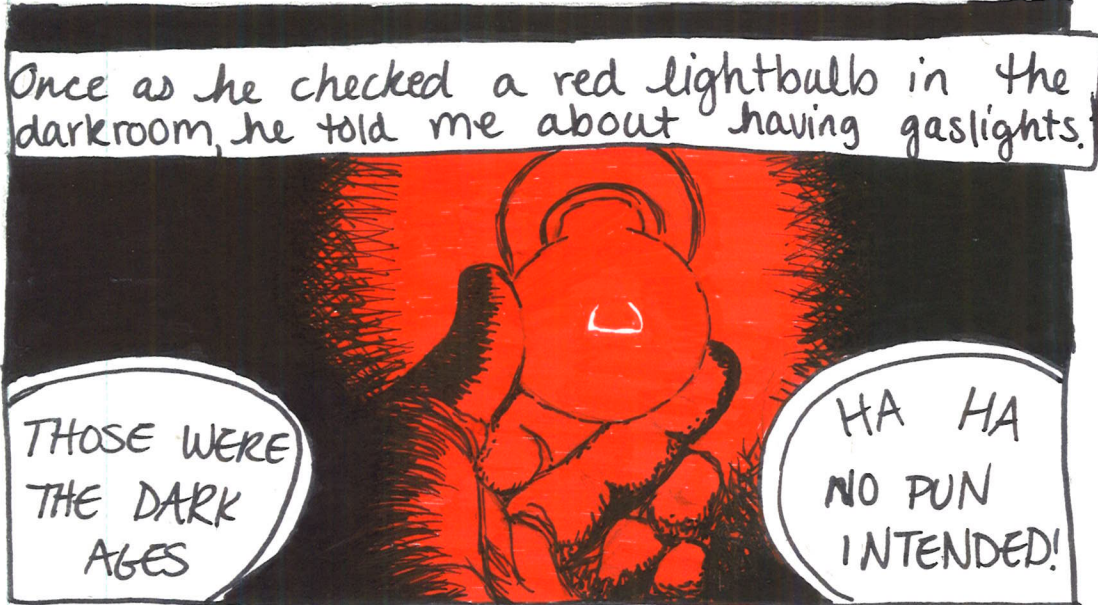


I know the first time his kosher parents let him eat pork was when a man left a ham sandwich in the candy store. Mrs. Goldfarb, my great-grandma told him in Yiddish to eat it on the stoop.

AND YA KNOW WHAT?

WHAT?

IT WASN'T HALF-BAD



Once as he checked a red lightbulb in the darkroom, he told me about having gaslights.

THOSE WERE THE DARK AGES

HA HA NO PUN INTENDED!

My grandpa liked to talk, but I think he may have used it as a defense mechanism. Charm 'em with anecdotes and they won't question you. He never spoke to me of his brother Samuel, who died when he was in High School and he spoke selectively of World War II.



He'd show you the seashells Hawaiian women had given to him.

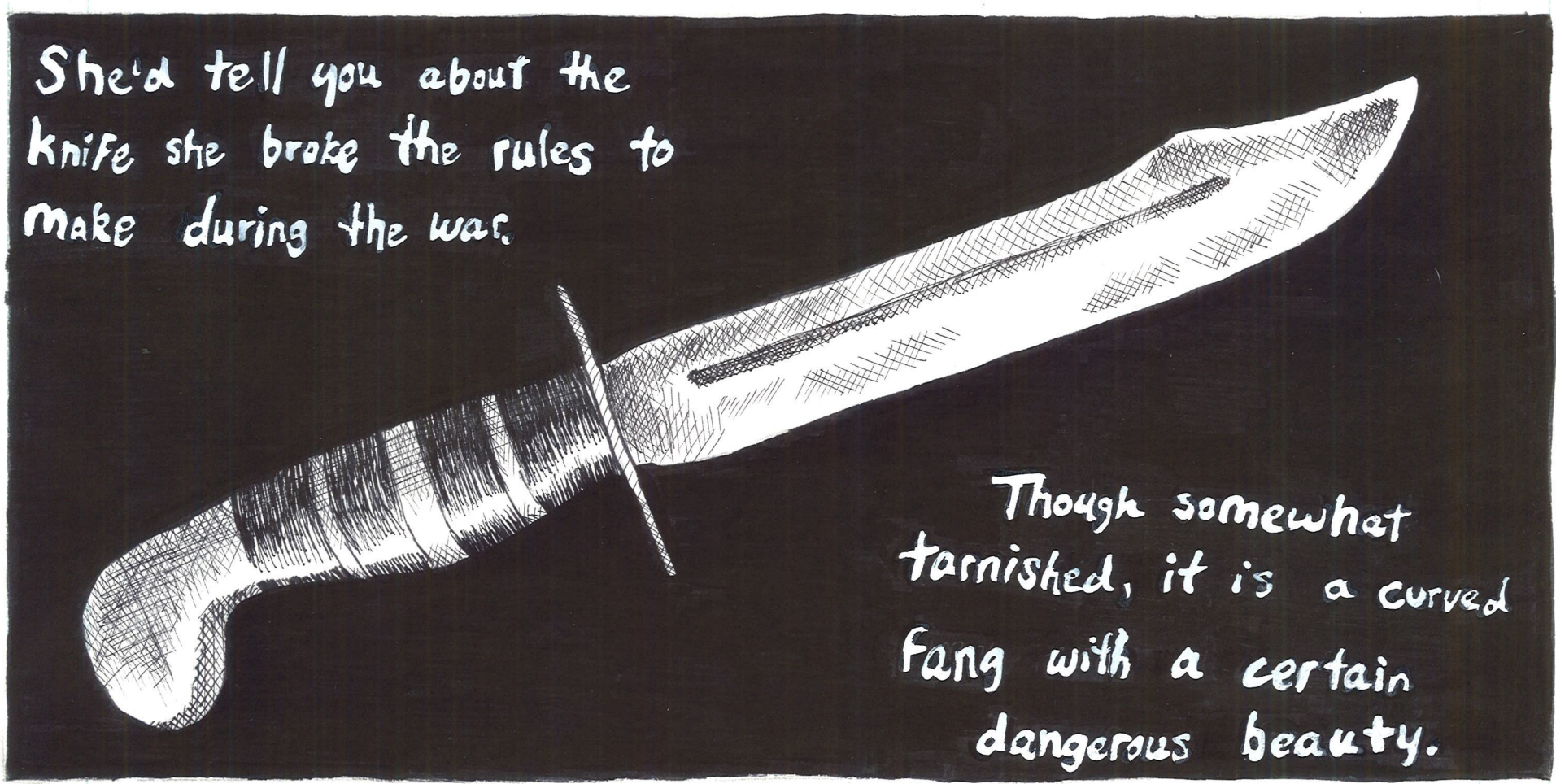
"Oh I got off easy!" he'd tell you, "I did my duty in Hawaii and New Orleans! I sign up to go to war and they ship me off to paradise!"

My grandma liked to tell stories too, but her stories were different...



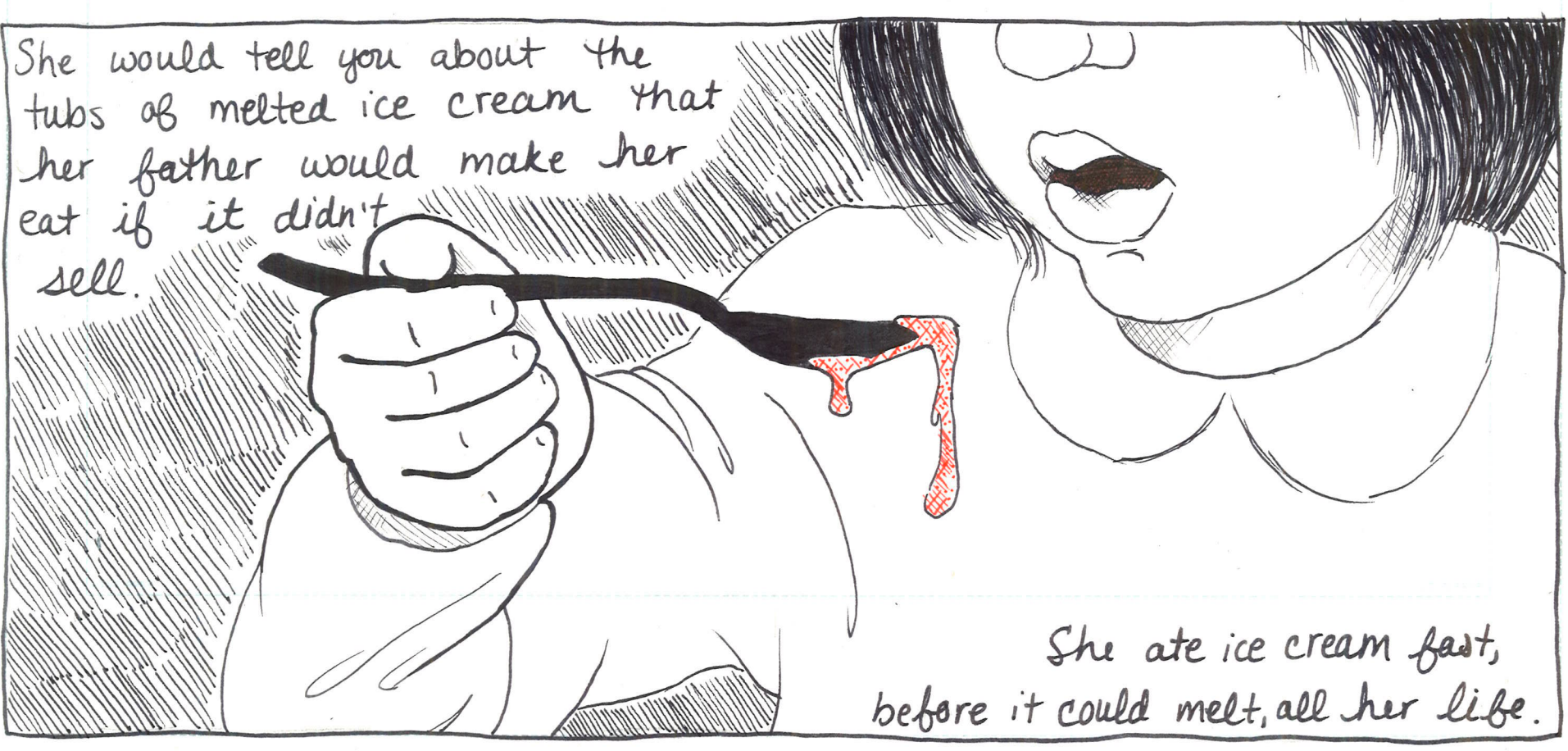
She'd tell you about her Hungarian uncle who could play two clarinets simultaneously.

She'd tell you about the knife she broke the rules to make during the war.

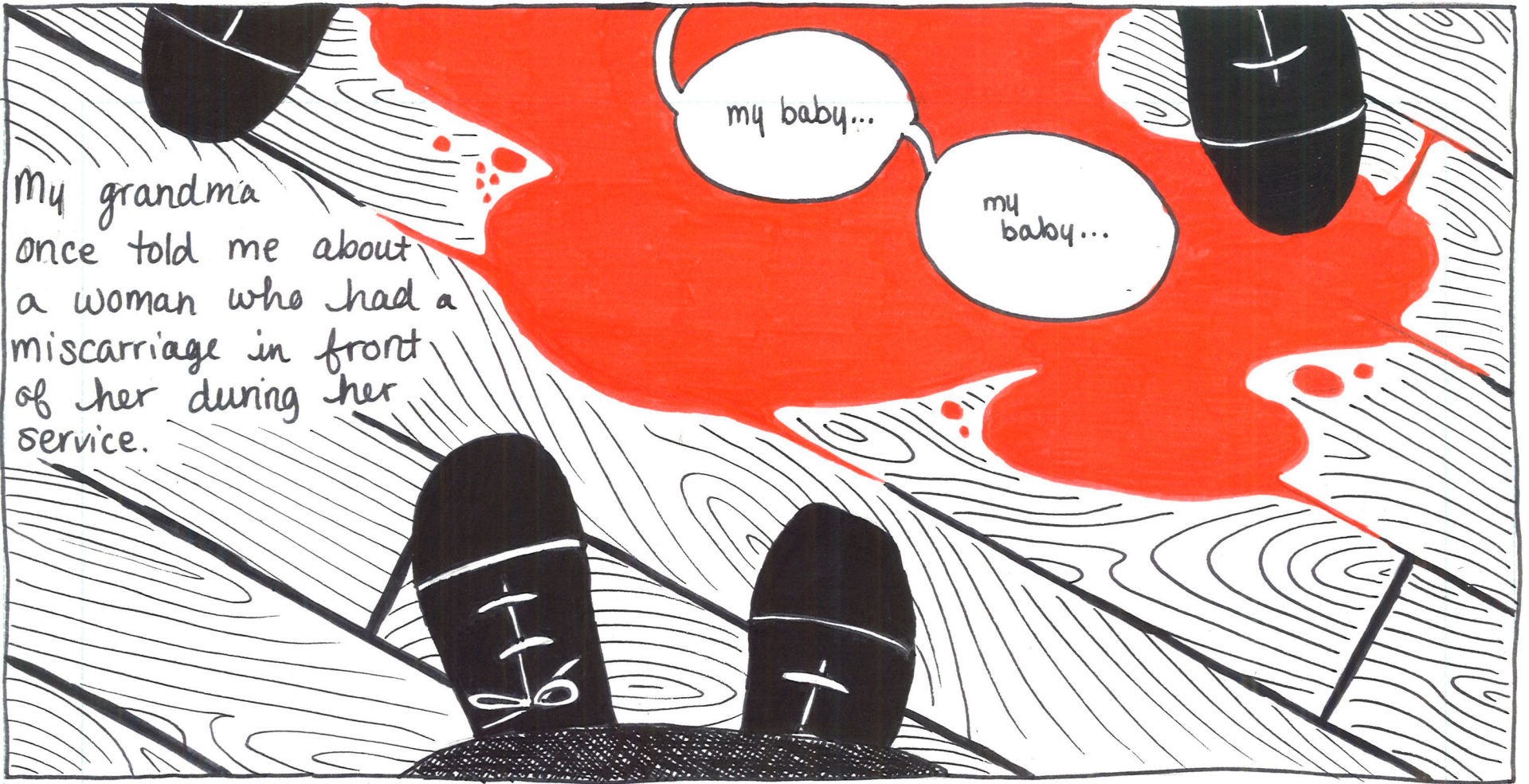


Though somewhat tarnished, it is a curved fang with a certain dangerous beauty.

She would tell you about the tubs of melted ice cream that her father would make her eat if it didn't sell.



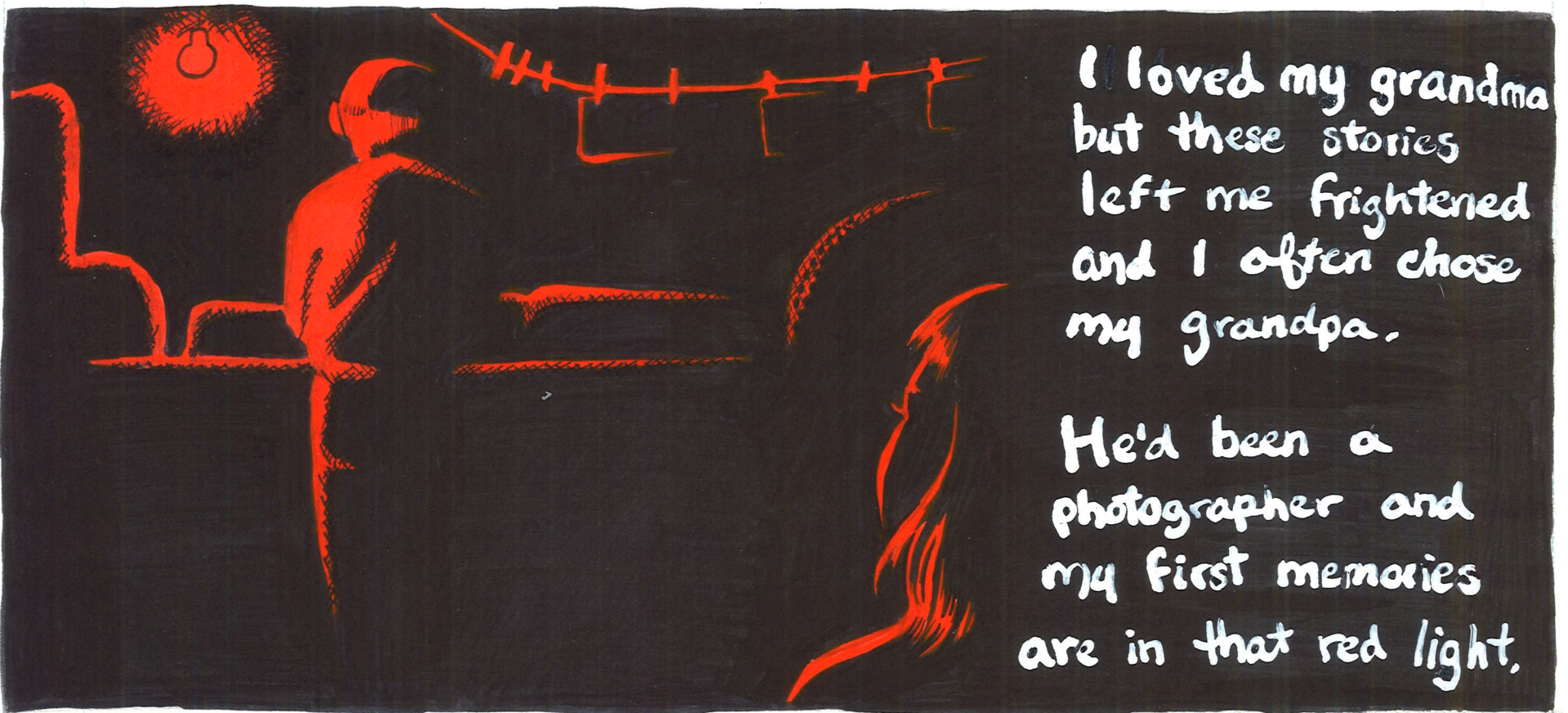
She ate ice cream fast, before it could melt, all her life.



My grandma once told me about a woman who had a miscarriage in front of her during her service.

my baby...

my baby...



I loved my grandma but these stories left me frightened and I often chose my grandpa.

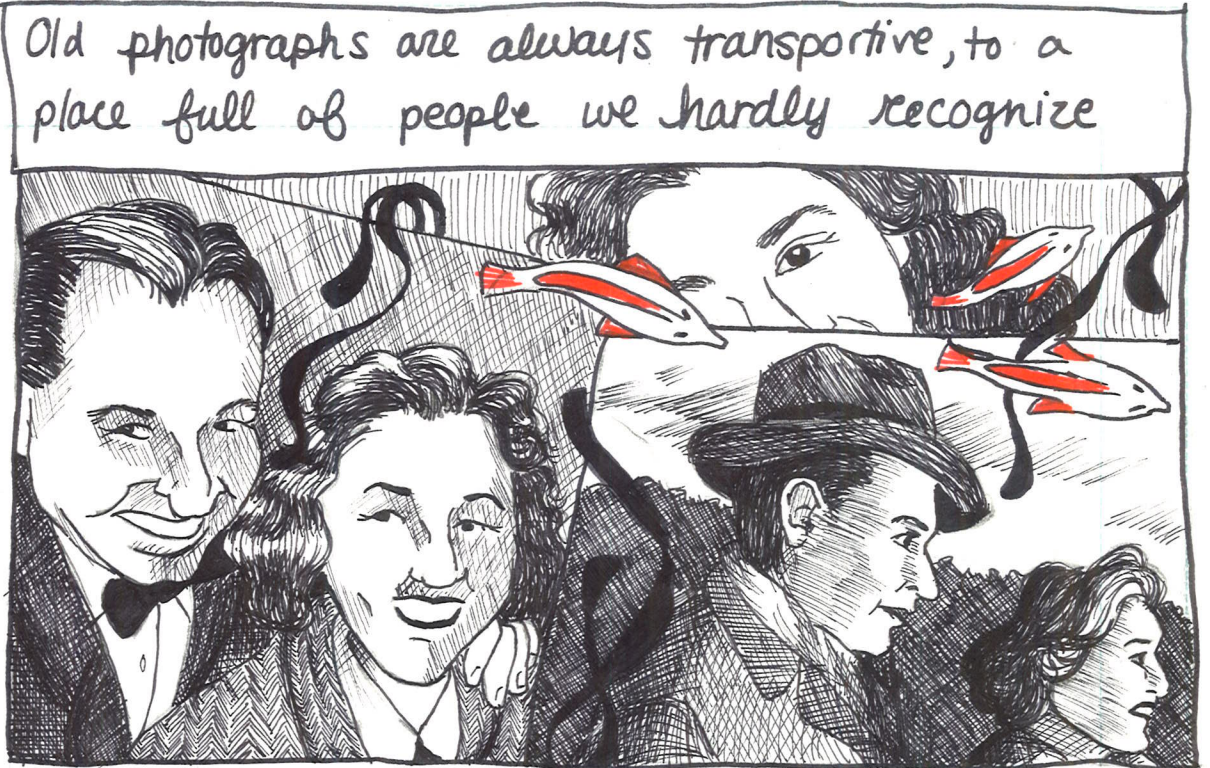
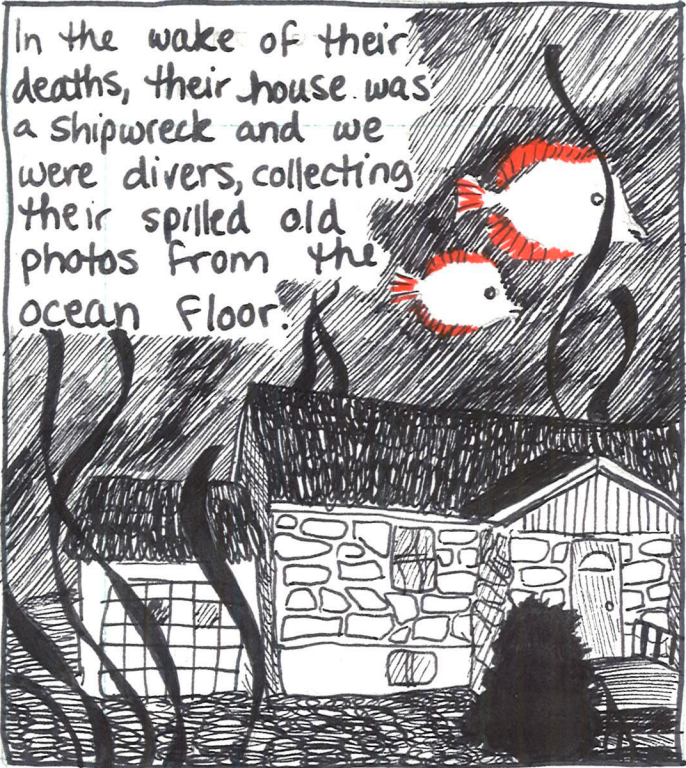
He'd been a photographer and my first memories are in that red light.



My grandma passed away first, but I had already said my farewells while she was lying in that hospital bed, grumbling bits and pieces of a conversation she was having far away.

...ALL THIS MEAT...

When she said this, I am sure that she was talking about her own confining flesh.



It isn't just strange to see Teddy and Sidney's gleaming black and white youth. It is also just the curse of the grandchild to see those last years through the inhibited eyes of a child



Grandma's stories made no mention of this laughing young girl and Grandpa's jokes weren't always old.

