

SEPARATION

TILDE

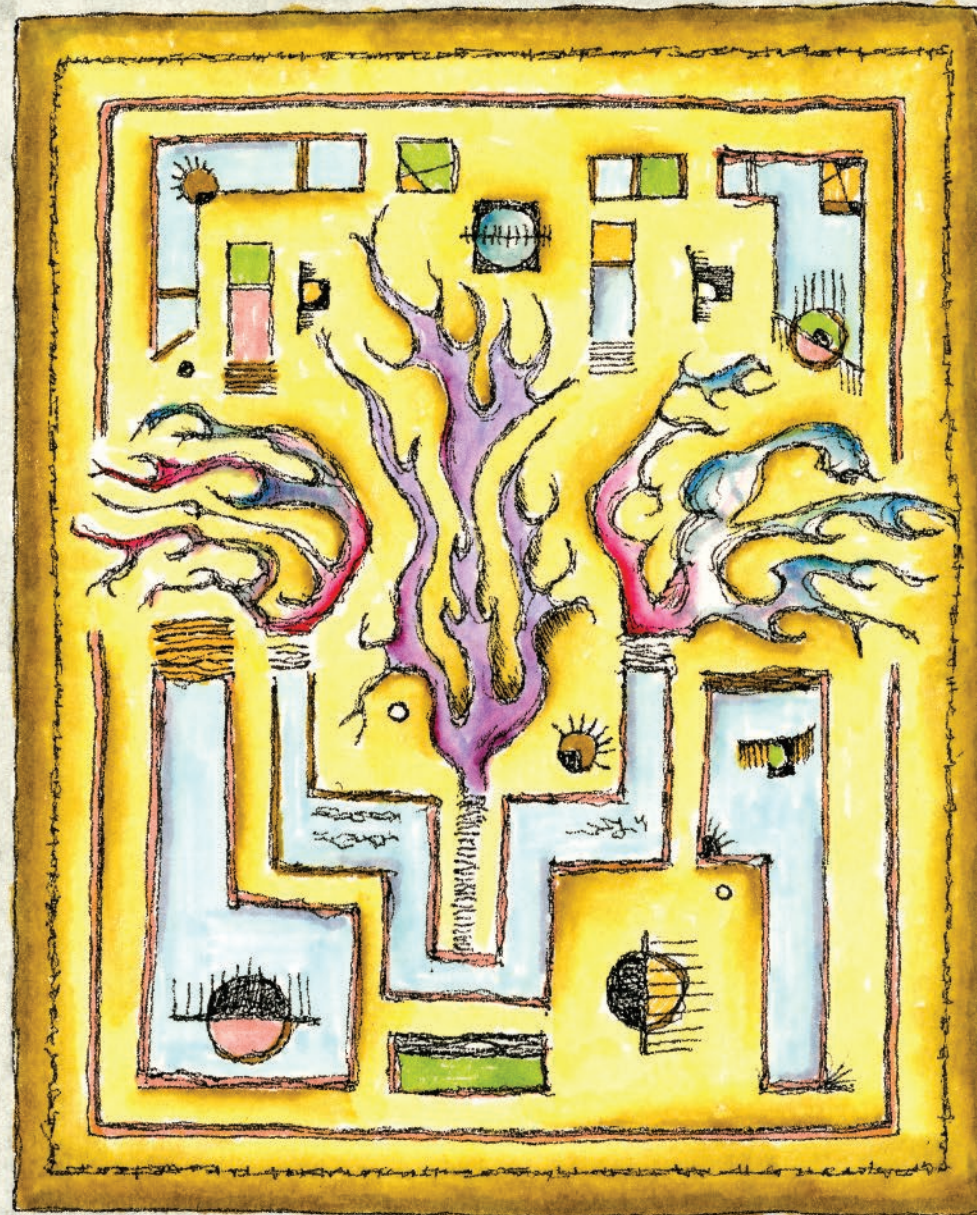
There was an explosion, I remember that much. The walls collapsed. I was too young and stupid to be afraid. The memory is as old as the world; I'd rather not think about it.

SIMONE

I sensed the absence immediately. A sudden chill like when Mom pulls the blankets off and says "let's move." Tilde doesn't believe me, just like she doesn't believe I knew the moment she broke her arm at recess, even though I was inside helping Mrs. Daubs with the bulletin board. But we have different talents. Identical doesn't mean the same.

TILDE

In another era, my sister would have been a witch.



SIMONE

It's called the *zona pellucida*, the place we used to live. It was dark and warm.

TILDE

What I don't understand is, if it hadn't happened, would we have been Simone, or would we have been me? I get a funny feeling when I think about that, like when I watched the ocean documentary on the Discovery Channel. We went deeper and deeper into the blue, and after a while I couldn't tell which way was up, and after a while I couldn't remember exactly how to breathe.