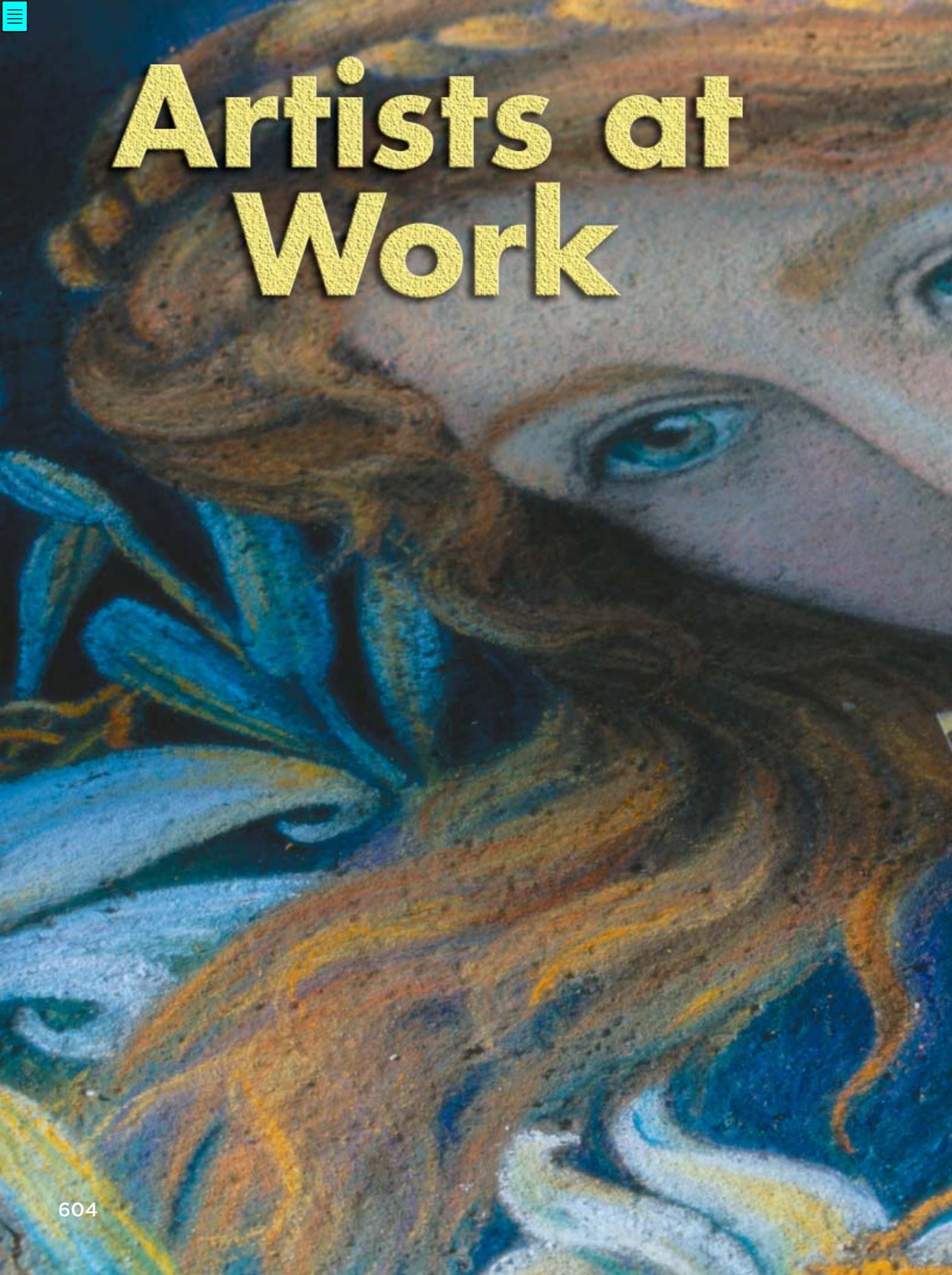




# Artists at Work





## Talk About It

This artist is creating a large picture on a sidewalk. Where do you see artists at work in your community?



Find out more about artists at [www.macmillanmh.com](http://www.macmillanmh.com)





**Vocabulary**

skyscrapers    strutting  
 collage        flicked  
 barbecue       swarms  
 glorious

**Context Clues**

**Descriptions** can help you figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words. Use the description words in the story to figure out what the word *collage* means.



# SECONDHAND ART

by David Walcott

Danny and Emma decided to enter the school art contest. Today they are working together on their project. The problem is, they can't decide what to make.

"Danny, maybe we should make models of modern **skyscrapers**. Mr. Buckle said, 'The sky's the limit.'" Danny and Emma laughed.

"Seriously," said Danny, "how about making a **collage** out of pictures we cut from magazines?"

"We could," said Emma, "but I'll bet a lot of kids will make collages. Let's try to do something different."



Danny's mom walked into the kitchen. She reminded Danny to put the recycling bin in her car. Danny's eyes lit up.

"I've got it!" he said. "Mr. Buckle is always talking about taking care of the Earth. Let's make our project out of that stuff!"

"Great idea," agreed Emma.

They got right to work. There were tons of aluminum cans from last week's outdoor hamburger and hot dog **barbecue**.

They used empty plastic bottles and jars, and cardboard. They cut up strips of newspaper to make papier-mâché. Finally, Danny and Emma were ready to paint.

"Let's use bright yellow," Emma suggested. "It's such a **glorious** color, isn't it?"

Danny giggled. "You're so dramatic, Emma."

He started **strutting** around the room. "Yellow is such a *glorious* color," he said, teasing Emma. Emma **flicked** her paintbrush at Danny.

The next day, Danny and Emma presented their art project. Everyone loved it, especially Mr. Buckle. Danny and Emma won first prize. **Swarms** of people came up to congratulate them.

"Who knew recycling could be so much fun?" said Emma.

"The best part was that I didn't have to haul everything into Mom's car," said Danny with a grin.



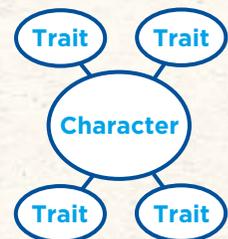
## Reread for Comprehension



### Monitor Comprehension

**Character** To monitor your comprehension of characters, think about their traits, or the long-lasting parts of their personalities. Thinking about a character's traits will help you understand why a character does or says things and what he or she might do next.

A Character Web will help you gather information about a character's traits. Reread the story to find examples of Emma's traits.





# Comprehension

## Genre

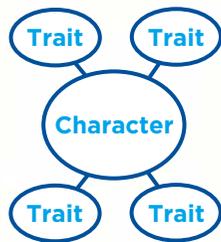
**Realistic Fiction** is a made-up story that could have happened in real life.



## Monitor Comprehension

### Character

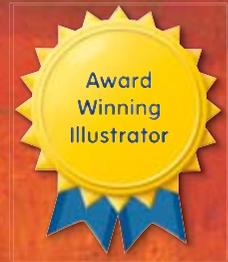
As you read, fill in your Character Web.



## Read to Find Out

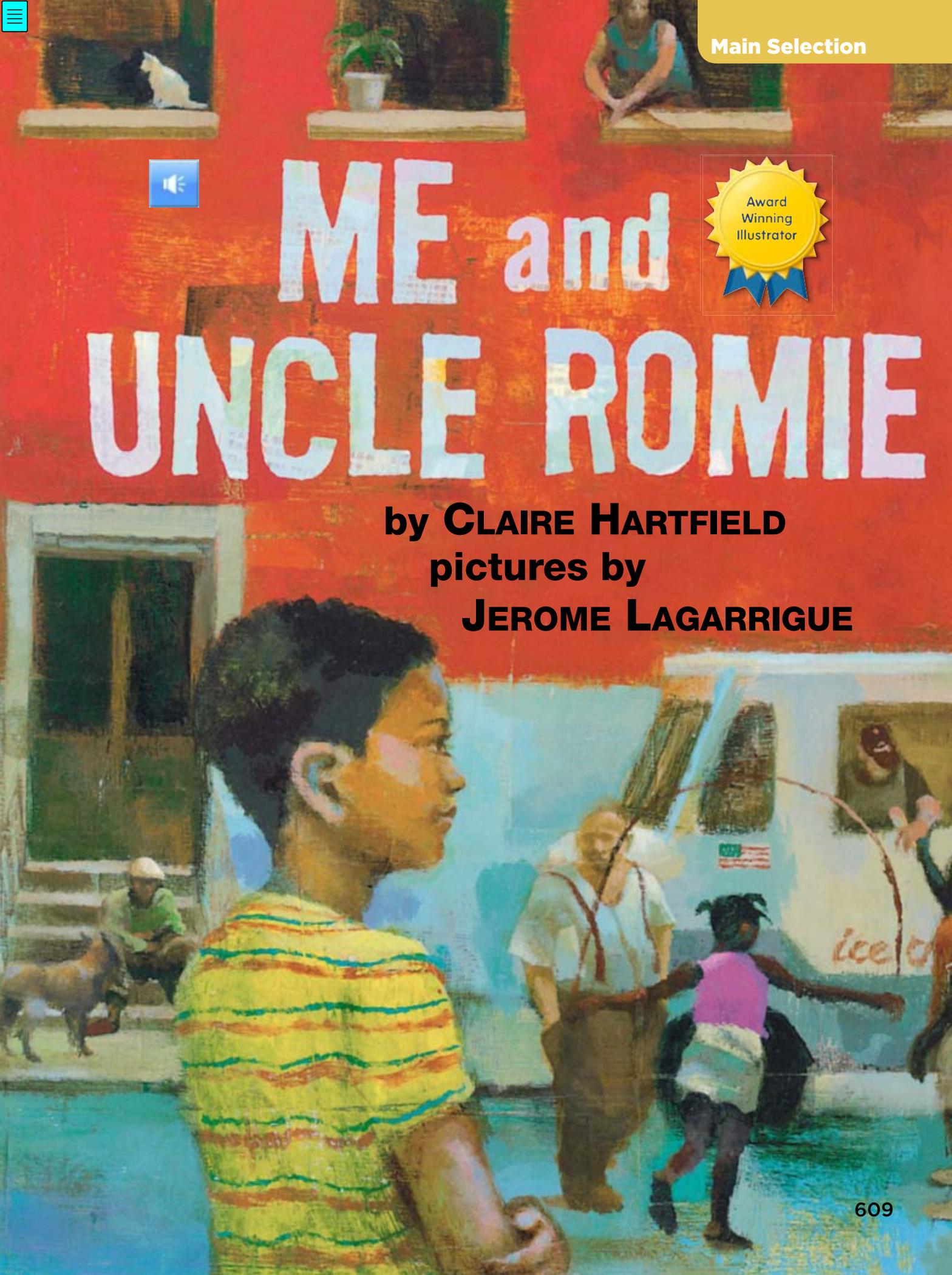
How does James's summer in New York actually turn out?





# ME and UNCLE ROMIE

by **CLAIRE HARTFIELD**  
pictures by  
**JEROME LAGARRIGUE**



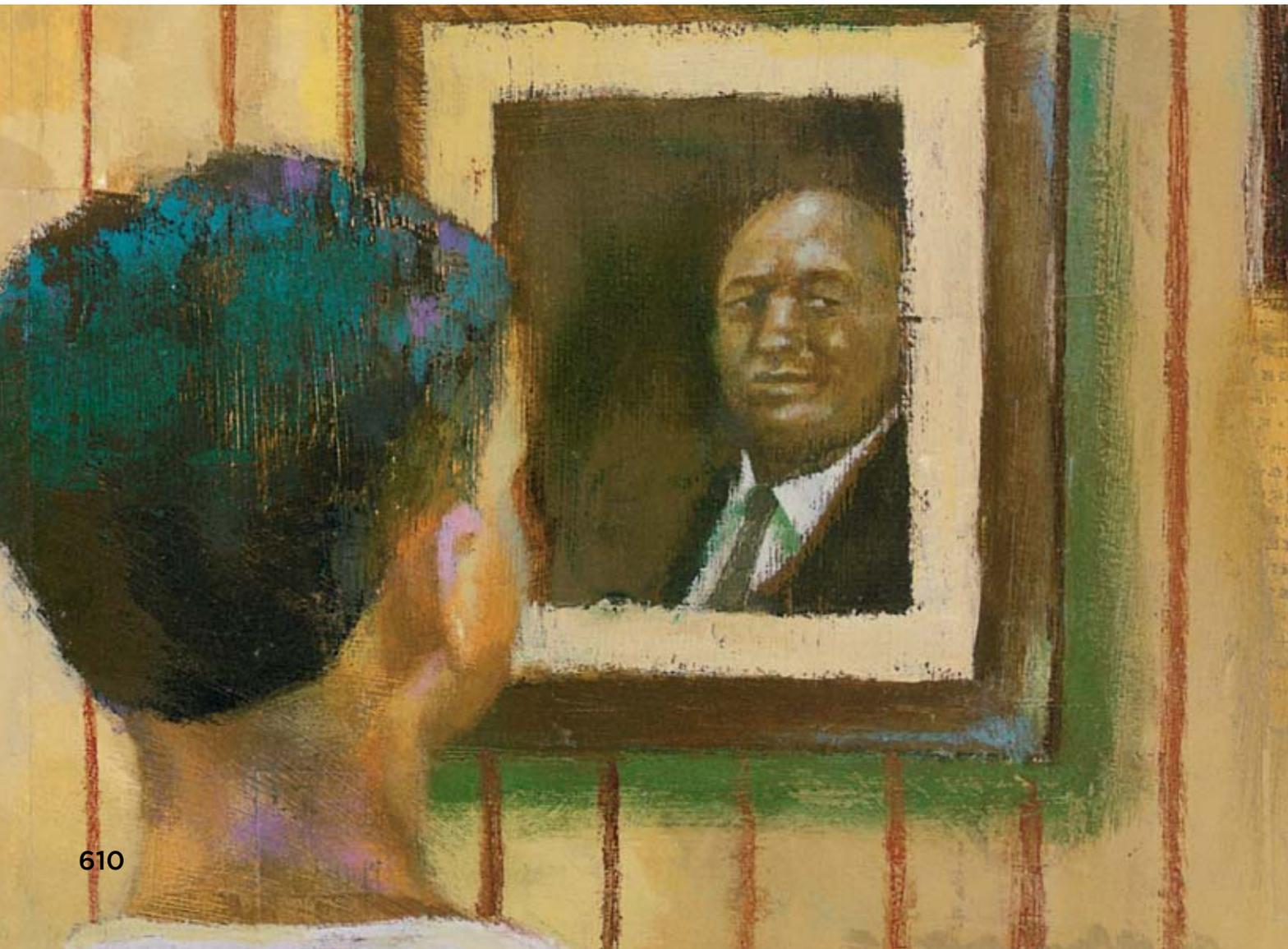


*It was the summer Mama had the twins that I first met my uncle Romie. The doctor had told Mama she had to stay off her feet till the babies got born. Daddy thought it was a good time for me to visit Uncle Romie and his wife, Aunt Nanette, up north in New York City. But I wasn't so sure. Mama had told me that Uncle Romie was some kind of artist, and he didn't have any kids. I'd seen his picture too. He looked scary—a bald-headed, fierce-eyed giant. No, I wasn't sure about this visit at all.*

The day before I left home was a regular North Carolina summer day. “A good train-watching day,” my friend B.J. said.

We waited quietly in the grass beside the tracks. B.J. heard it first. “It’s a’coming,” he said. Then I heard it too—a low rumbling, building to a roar. *WHOOO—OOO!*

“The *Piedmont!*” we shouted as the train blasted past.





“I’m the greatest train-watcher ever,” B.J. boasted.  
“Yeah,” I answered, “but tomorrow I’ll be *riding* a train.  
I’m the lucky one.”

*Lucky*, I thought as we headed home. *Maybe*.

That evening I packed my suitcase. Voices drifted up  
from the porch below.

“Romie’s got that big art show coming up,” Mama said  
quietly. “I hope he’s not too busy for James, especially on  
his birthday.”

“Romie’s a good man,” Daddy replied. “And Nanette’ll  
be there too.”



### Character

Who is the narrator of this  
story? How would you  
describe this character?



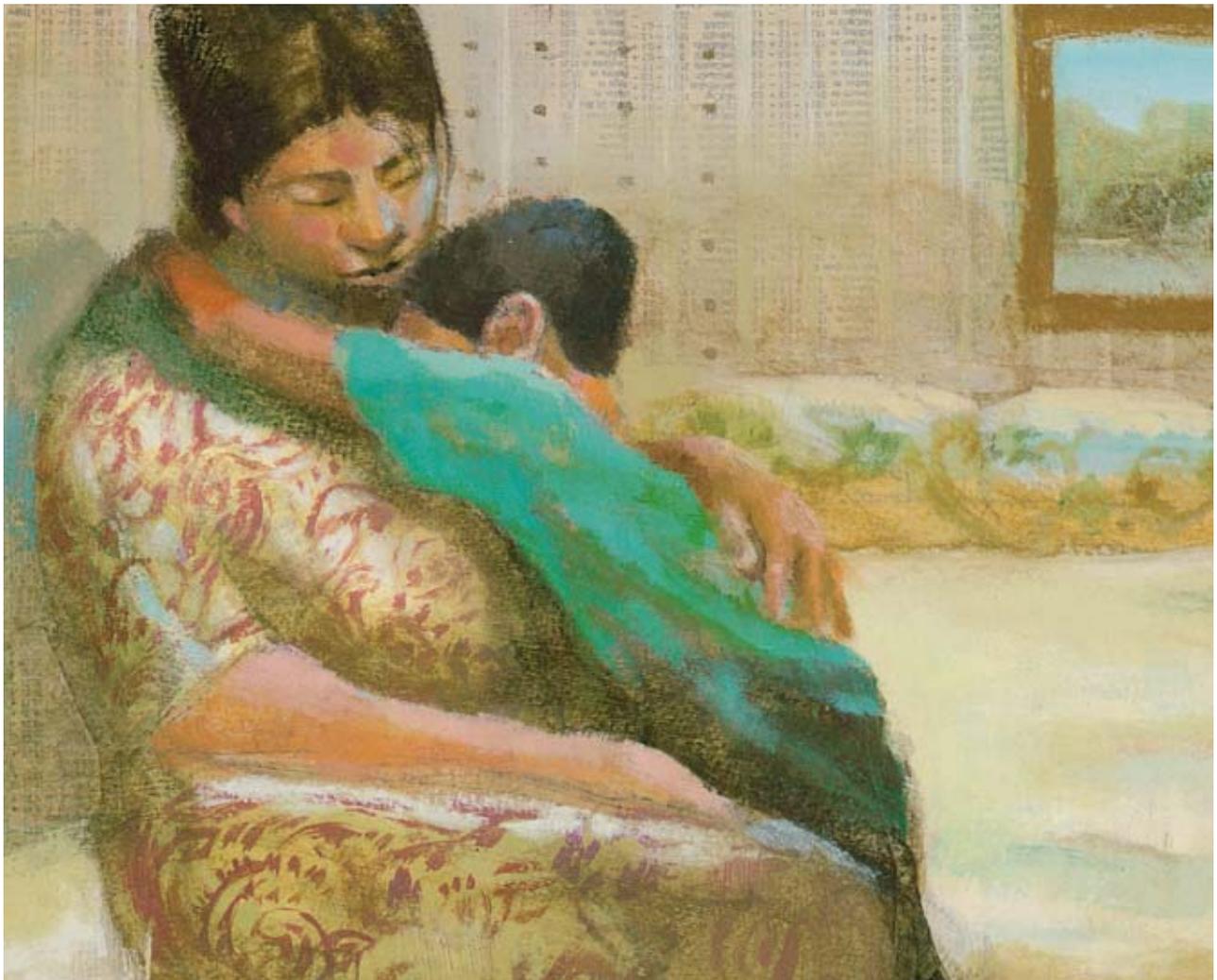
The light faded. Mama called me into her bedroom. “Where’s my good-night kiss?” she said.

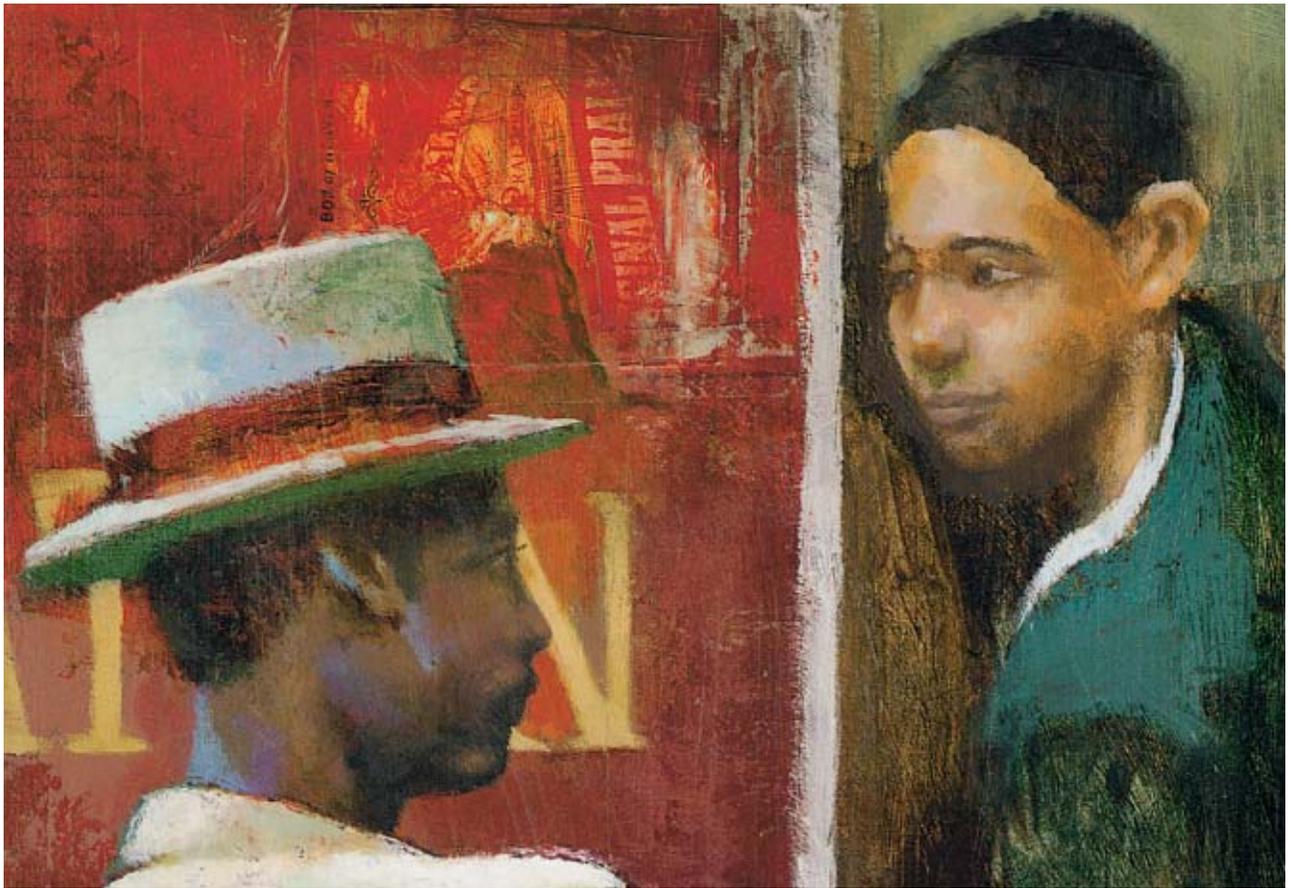
I curled up next to her. “I’ll miss the way you make my birthday special, Mama. Your lemon cake and the baseball game.”

“Well,” Mama sighed, “it won’t be those things. But Uncle Romie and Aunt Nanette are family, and they love you too. It’ll still be a good birthday, honey.”

Mama pulled me close. Her voice sang soft and low. Later, in my own bed, I listened as crickets began their song and continued into the night.

The next morning I hugged Mama good-bye, and Daddy and I headed for the train. He got me seated, then stood waving at me from the outside. I held tight to the jar of pepper jelly Mama had given me for Uncle Romie.





“ALL A-BOARD!” The conductor’s voice crackled over the loudspeaker.

The train pulled away. *Chug-a-chug-a-chug-a-chug*. I watched my town move past my window—bright-colored houses, chickens **strutting** across the yards, flowers everywhere.

After a while I felt hungry. Daddy had packed me a lunch and a dinner to eat one at a time. I ate almost everything at once. Then my belly felt tight and I was kind of sleepy. I closed my eyes and dreamed about Mama and Daddy getting ready for those babies. Would they even miss me?

Later, when I woke up, I ate the last bit of my dinner and thought about my birthday. Would they make my lemon cake and take me to a baseball game in New York?

The sky turned from dark blue to black. I was getting sleepy all over again.

“We’re almost there, son,” the man next to me said.

Then I saw it . . . New York City. Buildings stretching up to the sky. So close together. Not like North Carolina at all.



“Penn Station! Watch your step,” the conductor said, helping me down to the platform. I did like Daddy said and found a spot for myself close to the train. **Swarms** of people rushed by. Soon I heard a silvery voice call my name. This had to be Aunt Nanette. I turned and saw her big smile reaching out to welcome me.



She took my hand and guided me through the rushing crowds onto an underground train called the subway. “This will take us right home,” she explained.

Home was like nothing I’d ever seen before. No regular houses anywhere. Just big buildings and stores of all kinds—in the windows I saw paints, fabrics, radios, and TVs.

We turned into the corner building and climbed the stairs to the apartment—five whole flights up. *Whew!* I tried to catch my breath while Aunt Nanette **flicked** on the lights.

“Uncle Romie’s out talking to some people about his big art show that’s coming up. He’ll be home soon,” Aunt Nanette said. She set some milk and a plate of cookies for me on the table. “Your uncle’s working very hard, so we won’t see much of him for a while. His workroom—we call it his studio—is in the front of our apartment. That’s where he keeps all the things he needs to make his art.”





“Doesn’t he just paint?” I asked.

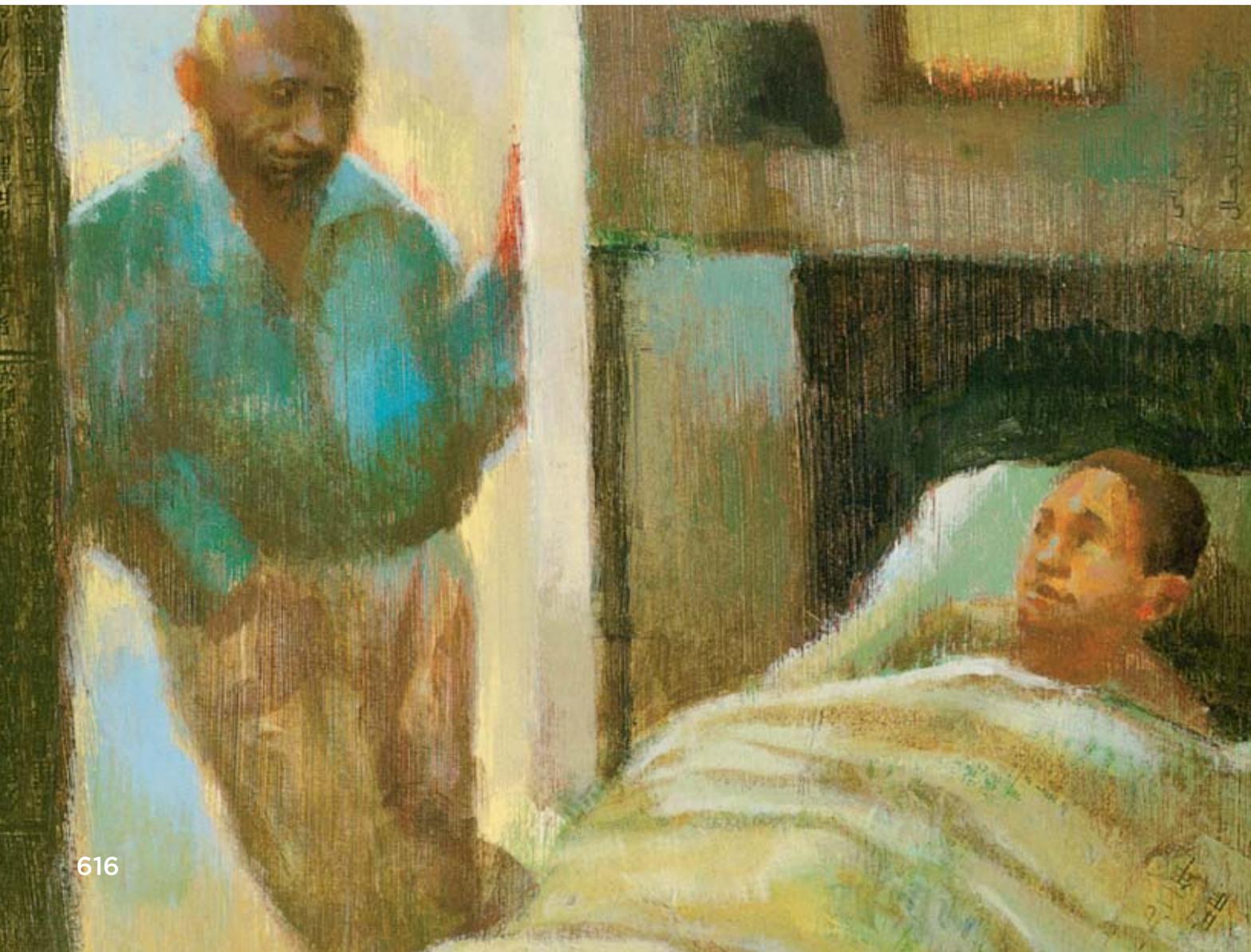
“Uncle Romie is a **collage** artist,” Aunt Nanette explained. “He uses paints, yes. But also photographs, newspapers, cloth. He cuts and pastes them onto a board to make his paintings.”

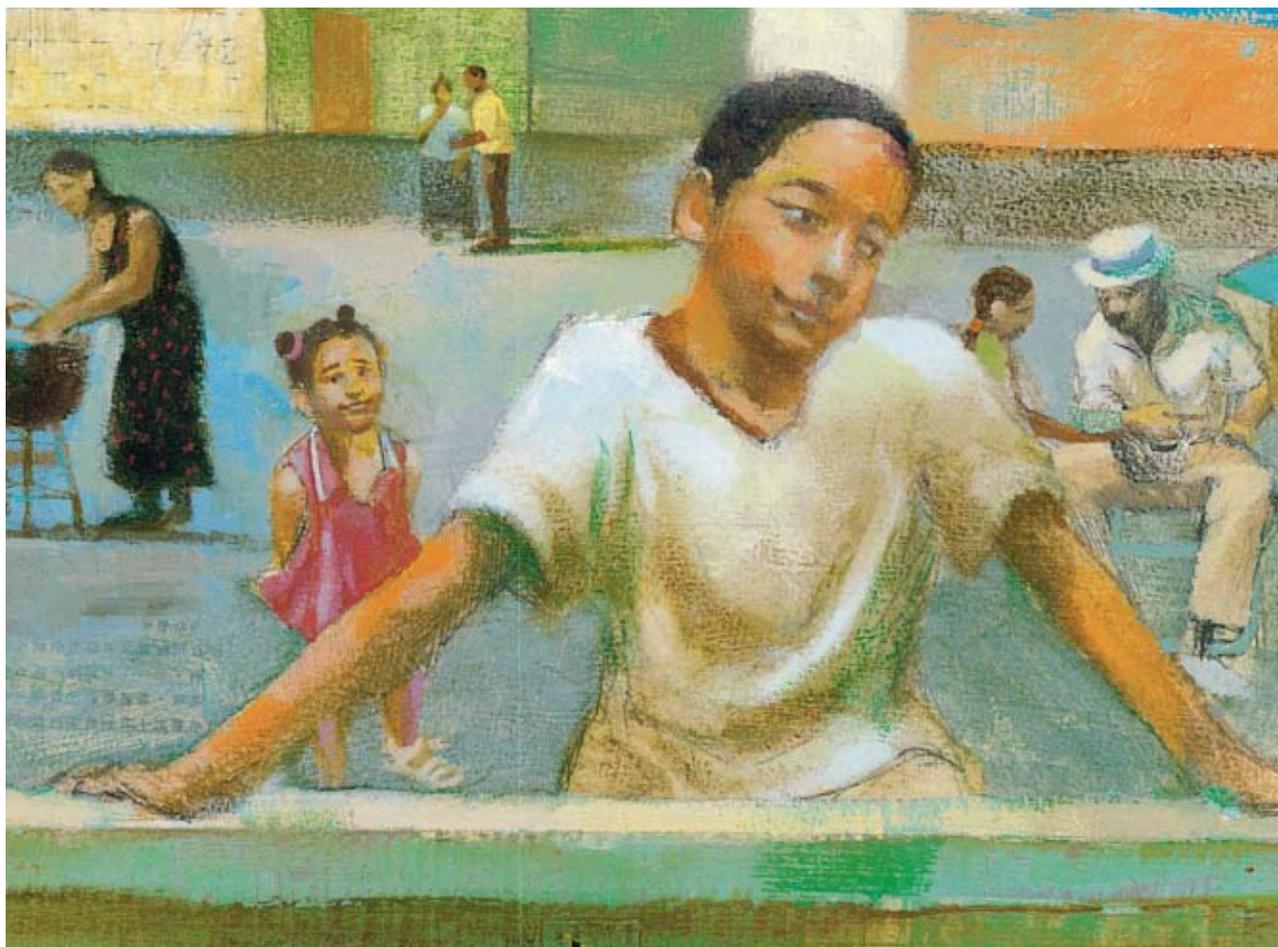
“That sounds kinda easy,” I said.

Aunt Nanette laughed.

“Well, there’s a little more to it than that, James. When you see the paintings, you’ll understand. Come, let’s get you to bed.”

Lying in the dark, I heard heavy footsteps in the hall. A giant stared at me from the doorway. “Hello there, James.” Uncle Romie’s voice was deep and loud, like thunder. “Thanks for the pepper jelly,” he boomed. “You have a good sleep, now.” Then he disappeared down the hall.





The next morning the door to Uncle Romie’s studio was closed. But Aunt Nanette had plans for both of us. “Today we’re going to a neighborhood called Harlem,” she said. “It’s where Uncle Romie lived as a boy.”

Harlem was full of people walking, working, shopping, eating. Some were watching the goings-on from fire escapes. Others were sitting out on stoops greeting folks who passed by—just like the people back home calling out hellos from their front porches. Most everybody seemed to know Aunt Nanette. A lot of them asked after Uncle Romie too.

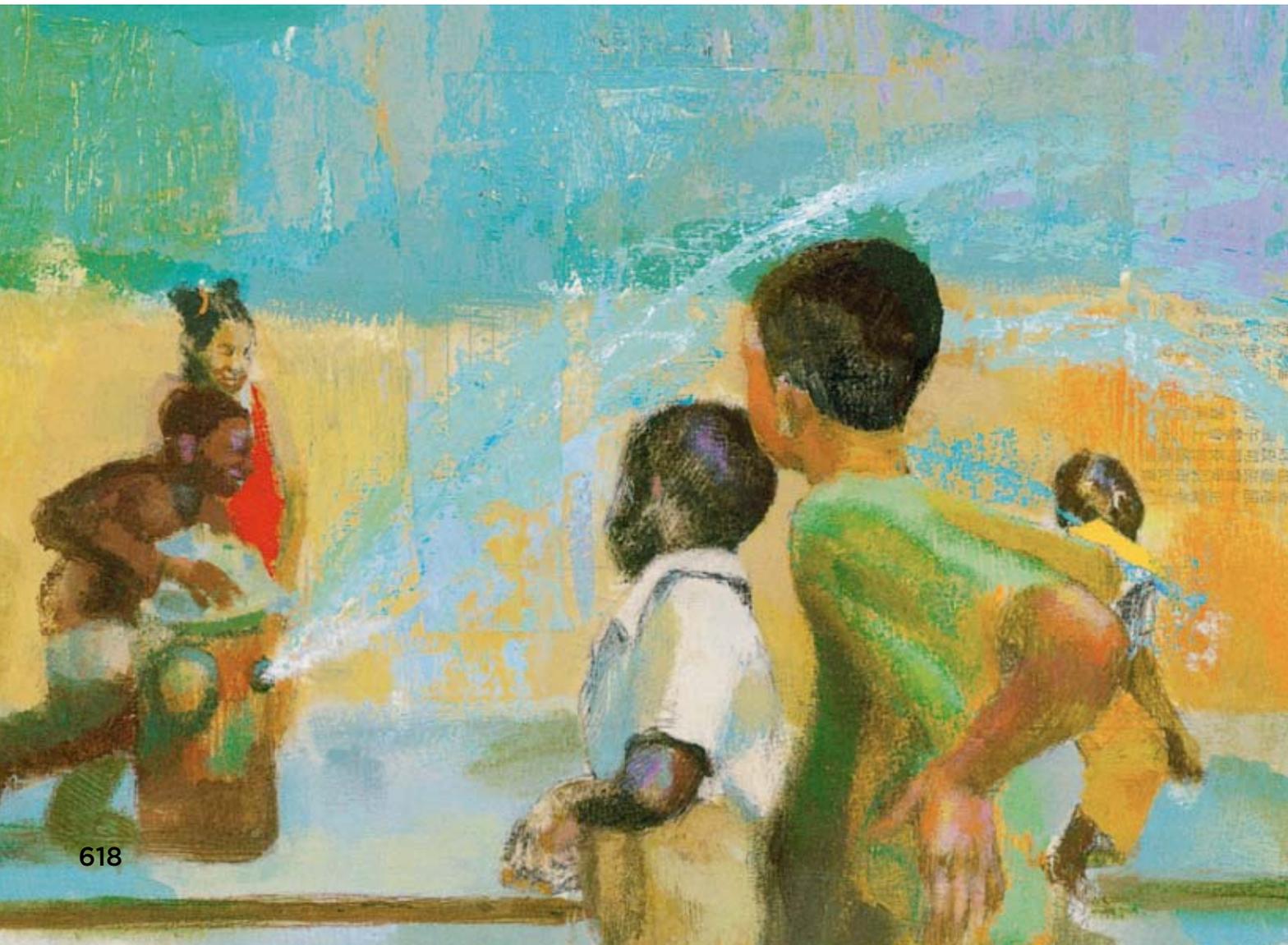
We bought peaches at the market, then stopped to visit awhile. I watched some kids playing stickball. “Go on, get in that game,” Aunt Nanette said, gently pushing me over to join them. When I was all hot and sweaty, we cooled off with double chocolate scoops from the ice cream man. Later we shared some **barbecue** on a rooftop way up high. I felt like I was on top of the world.



As the days went by, Aunt Nanette took me all over the city—we rode a ferry boat to the Statue of Liberty . . . zoomed 102 floors up at the Empire State Building . . . window-shopped the fancy stores on Fifth Avenue . . . gobbled hot dogs in Central Park.

But it was Harlem that I liked best. I played stickball with the kids again . . . and on a really hot day a whole bunch of us ran through the icy cold water that sprayed out hard from the fire hydrant. In the evenings Aunt Nanette and I sat outside listening to the street musicians playing their saxophone songs.

On rainy days I wrote postcards and helped out around the apartment. I told Aunt Nanette about the things I liked to do back home—about baseball games, train-watching, my birthday. She told me about the special Caribbean lemon and mango cake she was going to make.





My uncle Romie stayed hidden away in his studio. But I wasn't worried anymore. Aunt Nanette would make my birthday special.

4 ... 3 ... 2 ... 1 ... My birthday was almost here!

And then Aunt Nanette got a phone call.

"An old aunt has died, James. I have to go away for her funeral. But don't you worry. Uncle Romie will spend your birthday with you. It'll be just fine."

That night Aunt Nanette kissed me good-bye. I knew it would not be fine at all. Uncle Romie didn't know about cakes or baseball games or anything except his dumb old paintings. My birthday was ruined.

When the sky turned black, I tucked myself into bed. I missed Mama and Daddy so much. I listened to the birds on the rooftop—their songs continued into the night.



The next morning everything was quiet. I crept out of bed and into the hall. For the first time the door to Uncle Romie’s studio stood wide open. What a **glorious** mess! There were paints and scraps all over the floor, and around the edges were huge paintings with all sorts of pieces pasted together.

I saw saxophones, birds, fire escapes, and brown faces. *It’s Harlem*, I thought. *The people, the music, the rooftops, and the stoops.* Looking at Uncle Romie’s paintings, I could *feel* Harlem—its beat and bounce.

Then there was one that was different. Smaller houses, flowers, and trains. “That’s home!” I shouted.

“Yep,” Uncle Romie said, smiling, from the doorway. “That’s the Carolina I remember.”

“Mama says you visited your grandparents there most every summer when you were a kid,” I said.



“I sure did, James. *Mmm*. Now that’s the place for pepper jelly. Smear’d thick on biscuits. And when Grandma wasn’t looking. . . I’d sneak some on a spoon.”

“Daddy and I do that too!” I told him.

We laughed together, then walked to the kitchen for a breakfast feast—eggs, bacon, grits, and biscuits.

“James, you’ve got me remembering the pepper jelly lady. People used to line up down the block to buy her preserves.”

“Could you put someone like that in one of your paintings?” I asked.

“I guess I could.” Uncle Romie nodded. “Yes, that’s a memory just right for sharing. What a good idea, James. Now let’s get this birthday going!”



He brought out two presents from home. I tore into the packages while he got down the pepper jelly and two huge spoons. Mama and Daddy had picked out just what I wanted—a special case for my baseball cards, and a model train for me to build.

“Pretty cool,” said Uncle Romie. “I used to watch the trains down in North Carolina, you know.”

How funny to picture big Uncle Romie lying on his belly!

“B.J. and me, we have contests to see who can hear the trains first.”

“Hey, I did that too. You know, it’s a funny thing, James. People live in all sorts of different places and families. But the things we care about are pretty much the same. Like favorite foods, special songs, games, stories . . . and like birthdays.” Uncle Romie held up two tickets to a baseball game!

It turns out Uncle Romie knows all about baseball—he was even a star pitcher in college. We got our mitts and set off for the game.



Way up in the bleachers, we shared a bag of peanuts, cracking the shells with our teeth and keeping our mitts ready in case a home run ball came our way. That didn't happen—but we sure had fun.

Aunt Nanette came home that night. She lit the candles and we all shared my Caribbean birthday cake.

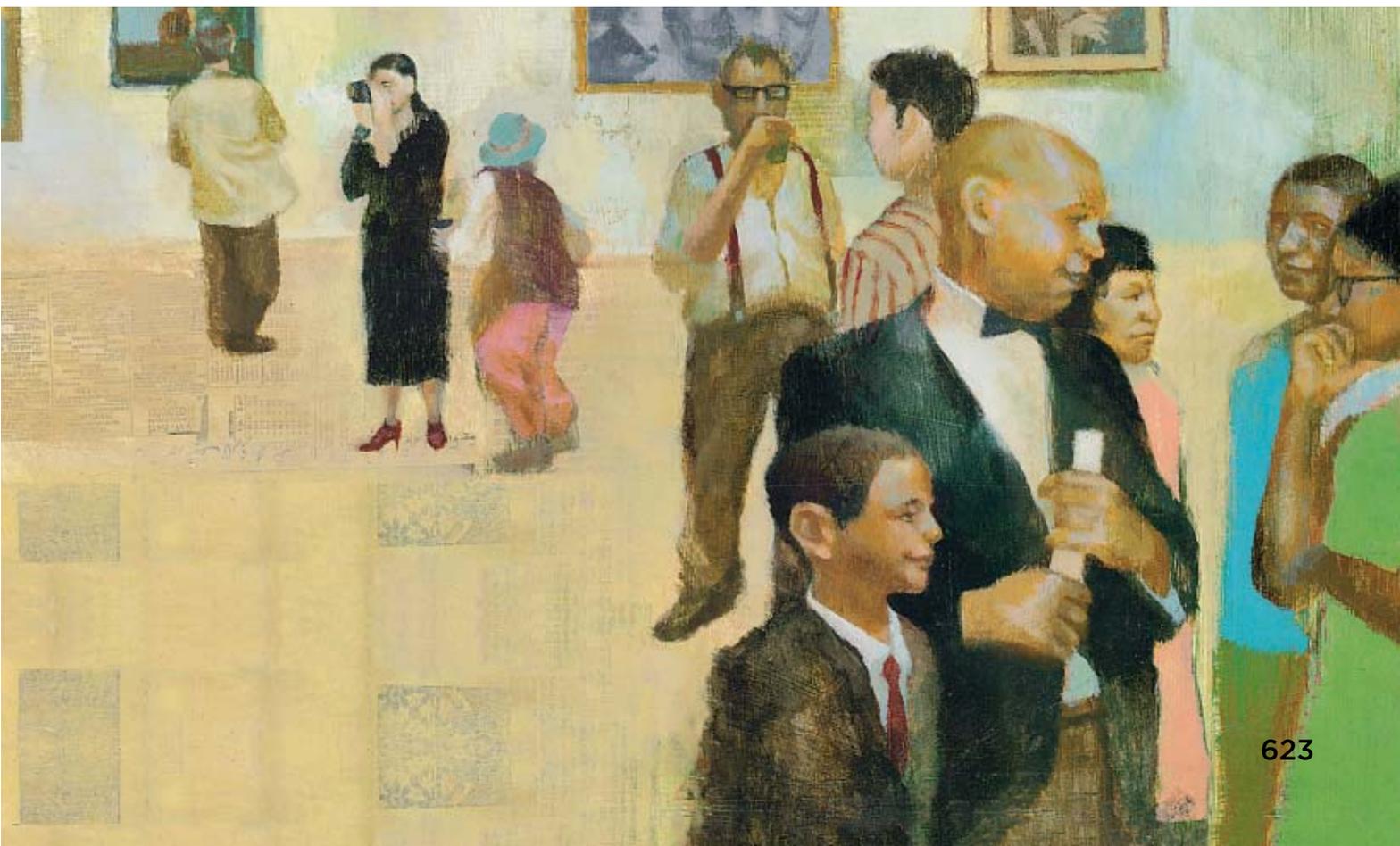
After that, Uncle Romie had to work a lot again. But at the end of each day he let me sit with him in his studio and talk. Daddy was right. Uncle Romie is a good man.

The day of the big art show finally came. I watched the people laughing and talking, walking slowly around the room from painting to painting. I walked around myself, listening to their conversations.

“Remember our first train ride from Chicago to New York?” one lady asked her husband.

“That guitar-playing man reminds me of my uncle Joe,” said another.

All these strangers talking to each other about their families and friends and special times, and all because of how my uncle Romie's paintings reminded them of these things.





Later that night Daddy called. I had a brand-new brother and sister. Daddy said they were both bald and made a lot of noise. But he sounded happy and said how they all missed me.

This time Aunt Nanette and Uncle Romie took me to the train station.

“Here’s a late birthday present for you, James,” Uncle Romie said, holding out a package. “Open it on the train, why don’t you. It’ll help pass the time on the long ride home.”

I waved out the window to Uncle Romie and Aunt Nanette until I couldn’t see them anymore. Then I ripped off the wrappings!

And there was my summer in New York. Bright sky in one corner, city lights at night in another. Tall buildings. Baseball ticket stubs. The label from the pepper jelly jar. And trains. One going toward the **skyscrapers**. Another going away.



### Character

Were the opinions James had of his uncle and his birthday in New York proven correct? How would this story be different if Uncle Romie were the narrator?

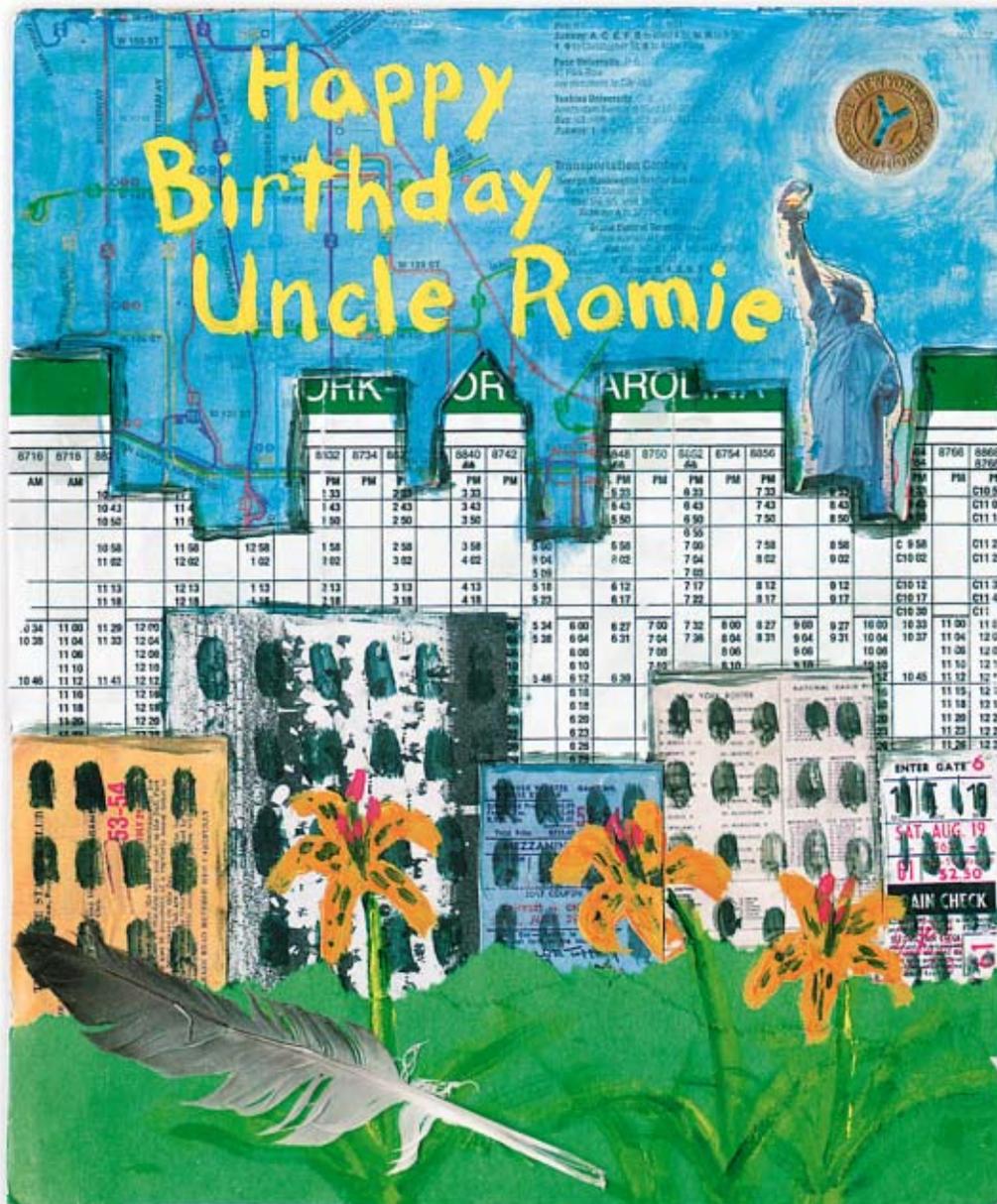


Back home, I lay in the soft North Carolina grass. It was the first of September, almost Uncle Romie's birthday. I watched the birds streak across the sky.

*Rooftop birds*, I thought. *Back home from their summer in New York, just like me.* Watching them, I could still feel the city's beat inside my head.

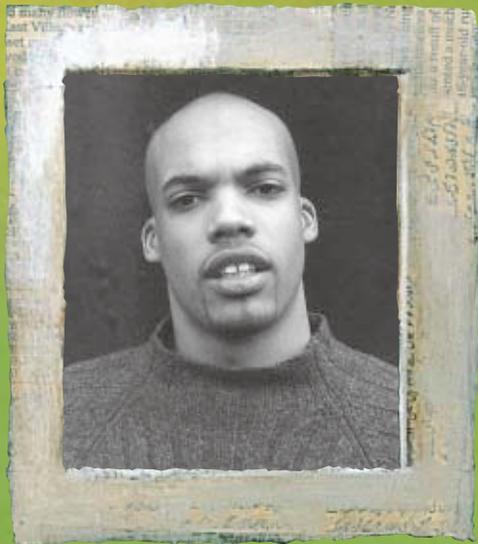
A feather drifted down from the sky. In the garden tiger lilies bent in the wind. *Uncle Romie's favorite flowers.* I yanked off a few blossoms. And then I was off on a treasure hunt, collecting things that reminded me of Uncle Romie.

I painted and pasted them together on a big piece of cardboard. Right in the middle I put the train schedule. And at the top I wrote:



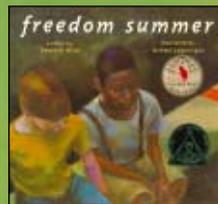
# Visit the Studios of Claire and Jerome

**Claire Hartfield** based this story on African American artist Romare Bearden. She likes his collages because they seem to tell stories. Claire wrote her story to show how we can use art to share ideas. She's been expressing herself through art since she was young. Claire was a shy child, and she found that dance and art helped her share her feelings.



**Jerome Lagarrigue** comes from a family of artists. He grew up in France, but came to the United States to study art. Jerome illustrates books and magazines. He also teaches art.

**Other books** by Jerome Lagarrigue



**LOG ON**

Find out more about Claire Hartfield and Jerome Lagarrigue at [www.macmillanmh.com](http://www.macmillanmh.com)

## Write About It

Uncle Romie's paintings reminded people of their own memories. When you look at paintings or photographs taken by other people, what kinds of things do you notice or think about?

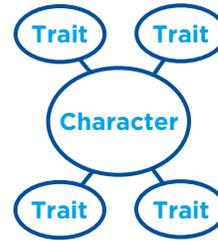


## Comprehension Check



### Summarize

Summarize *Me and Uncle Romie*. Tell why James went to New York City to stay with his aunt and uncle and what happened there.



### Think and Compare

1. How do Uncle Romie's character traits differ from his physical traits? Use your Character Web to help you.  
**Monitor Comprehension: Character**
2. Look again at the **collage** on page 625 that James created for his uncle. Why do you think James arranged the pieces of the collage in this way? **Analyze**
3. Have you ever discovered that you were mistaken about someone's character based on the person's appearance? Explain your answer. **Apply**
4. Why is art a good way to express feelings and ideas?  
**Evaluate**
5. Read "Secondhand Art" on pages 606-607. Compare this story with *Me and Uncle Romie*. How are the stories alike? How are they different? Use details from both selections in your answer. **Reading/Writing Across Texts**



## Art

### Genre

**How-to Articles** provide directions on how to do or make something.

### Text Feature

**Directions** are the steps you follow in order to do or make something.

### Content Vocabulary

images      background

# MAKING A COLLAGE

by Claire Hartfield

## Choosing a Story or Theme

To begin your project, pick a story or theme for your collage. Do you want to tell about something that really happened? Or would you rather make up a story? Is there a theme that would make a fun collage—things that make you laugh, things you do at bedtime, a list of wishes, favorite songs? To get ideas, think of people, places, or memories that mean a lot to you.

Then think about **images** you can use in your collage to illustrate what you want to say. What do you want in the picture? People? Animals? What are they doing? Where are they? What do they see, hear, smell, taste, and feel?

## Materials You Will Need

- ★ A board or thick piece of paper
- ★ Glue or paste
- ★ Paints, colored markers, or crayons
- ★ Anything that can be glued or pasted on your collage



## reating Your Collage

Start by deciding whether or not it's important to have the images you'll be using in any particular order. If it is, you can lay them out to get an idea of how they will look together.

Next, paint or color the **background** on your paper or board. Use colors you want to peek through in the finished picture.

Then begin to create your story or theme by cutting and pasting your objects onto the background.

Words such as *Start*, *Next*, and *Then* show the steps to follow.

### Connect and Compare

1. When making a collage, what do you do before you paint or color the background? What do you do after you paint the background? **Reading Directions**
2. What would happen if you pasted down your materials before you painted the background? **Synthesize**
3. In *Me and Uncle Romie*, James made a collage. What did he do that was similar to the directions in this article? What did he do differently? **Reading/Writing Across Texts**



### Art Activity

Research artists who make collages. Create your own piece of art in the style of one of them.



Find out more about collages at [www.macmillanmh.com](http://www.macmillanmh.com)

# Write a Speech

## Writing

### Voice

The voice of a writer comes through when he or she expresses opinions. A speech introducing someone usually includes some opinions.



I admire my older sister, Blanca. I wrote a short speech to introduce her to my class.

I included personal opinions in my speech.

## My Sister, the Artist

by Jillian N.

My sister, Blanca, is here today to tell you about drawing. She is the best artist in her high school. She has been painting and drawing since she was only six. Her first picture was of her dog Champ.

She always takes a drawing pad with her when she goes out. When she sees an interesting person, animal, or flower, she quickly sketches it. Then she chooses her favorite sketches and turns them into finished art.

She taught me everything I know about drawing. She is the most incredible teacher, and I hope you can learn a lot!

## Your Turn

Think of a person you admire. It could be someone famous, someone you have read about, or someone you know, such as a teacher or relative. Pretend you are going to give a speech that introduces this person to an audience. Include your opinions about this person. Back up your opinions with facts. Then use the Writer's Checklist to check your writing.



**Amelia Earhart in her  
airplane cockpit**

### Writer's Checklist

- Ideas and Content:** Did I choose a person others will also find interesting?
- Organization:** Did I start with a strong opening statement? Did I go on to support that statement?
- Voice:** Did I clearly express my opinion of this person?
- Word Choice:** Did I choose precise words to describe this person?
- Sentence Fluency:** Did I use a variety of sentence types and sentence lengths?
- Conventions:** Did I use commas to set off people's names? Did I check my spelling?