



When the Bell Rings: The Girl Who Doesn't Like Break Time

A Full English translation is available.

我不喜歡下課

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BFT 2.0 Translator: Rhoda Kwan

This is my brother. He's three years younger than me. He is an adorable little brother, with chubby cheeks and eyes so big he sometimes looks silly. But little did I know, when my little brother started primary school, my life would become a disaster. I don't like it when the bell rings. When I hear the bell, I know trouble is coming. I want to hide so my little brother can never find me.

A little girl dreads recess—the moment her younger brother, who has autism, comes to find her. Set within the rhythms of school, and drawn from the author's own experience, the book offers an intimate portrait of family bonds. "There wasn't a single day I didn't wish for a 'normal' little brother," the author recalls. "I didn't want to play with him. I pretended I didn't know him."

But twenty years later, her perspective has radically shifted. "Even though he could never fit into what society calls 'normal,' I think he knows what love is. He can always find joy in the smallest things—counting leaves, arranging stones, gazing into a rainspout for an entire day." Written for parents, teachers, loved ones of people with special needs, and anybody who has endured silence, this powerful and tender book explores love, shame, and acceptance.



Author **Hsiu-Chia Tsai**

Hsiu-Chia Tsai leads reading initiatives at Changlong Elementary School in Xinzhuang District, New Taipei City. She manages the school library and is dedicated to encouraging reading and visual storytelling. In the 2017 academic year, she was named Reading Promoter of the Year by Taiwan's Ministry of Education. She is also the author of the picture book *Listen, a River Is Singing*. Art is her profession, and reading is her passion. She dreams of returning to Yunlin after retirement to open an independent bookstore.

It Took Me Over Twenty Years to Speak About My Brother's Autism: Sharing the Hidden Weight of Seeming Strong

by Hsiu-Chia Tsai
translated by Rhoda Kwan

Writing and drawing this story was a very difficult assignment for me, because the sister in the story—the one who doesn't like recess—is me.

I have a younger brother. He came into this world when I was three years old. He's a little unusual. He doesn't talk much, and he's not very good at expressing himself. He could never fit into what society calls "normal." But I think he knows what love is. He can always find joy in the smallest things—counting leaves, arranging stones, gazing into a rainspout for an entire day.

As he grew older, the differences between him and other children only became more obvious. He could never

keep track of class times, he couldn't finish his schoolwork, and he had many odd behaviors. Even though he was often overlooked and misunderstood, his pure, innocent nature held no prejudice against the world.

When I was in elementary school, there wasn't a single day I didn't wish for a "normal" little brother. His strangeness made me the target of many curious and unkind looks at school. I didn't want to play with him. I pretended I didn't know him. I dreaded most of all when he appeared outside my classroom during recess. Sometimes, he would lose control in front of my classmates, leaving me mortified. I didn't want anyone to know

I had a brother like him. I was afraid of being judged because of him.

It wasn't until more than twenty years later, after I became a teacher myself, that I was able to finally speak about it: my brother is autistic. Even now, I carry much guilt in my heart. But looking back, I also understand—at the time I was only a child. And having a brother with autism was, for that child, an unbearably heavy and lonely truth.

For siblings of a child with special needs, parents and teachers often place too many expectations on them. We ask the "normal" child to be understanding, considerate, and accepting, yet we forget that the sibling of a special-needs child is

also just a child—one who also needs care and support.

This book is written for parents, caregivers, and teachers. The sibling of a child with special needs may appear strong on the outside, but inside may still be fragile. Their feelings also need to be cared for. How can we help them find peace within themselves and move forward with courage? When they feel anxious, helpless, or wish to escape, I hope someone will be there to tell them: *It's not your fault. You've already done so well.*

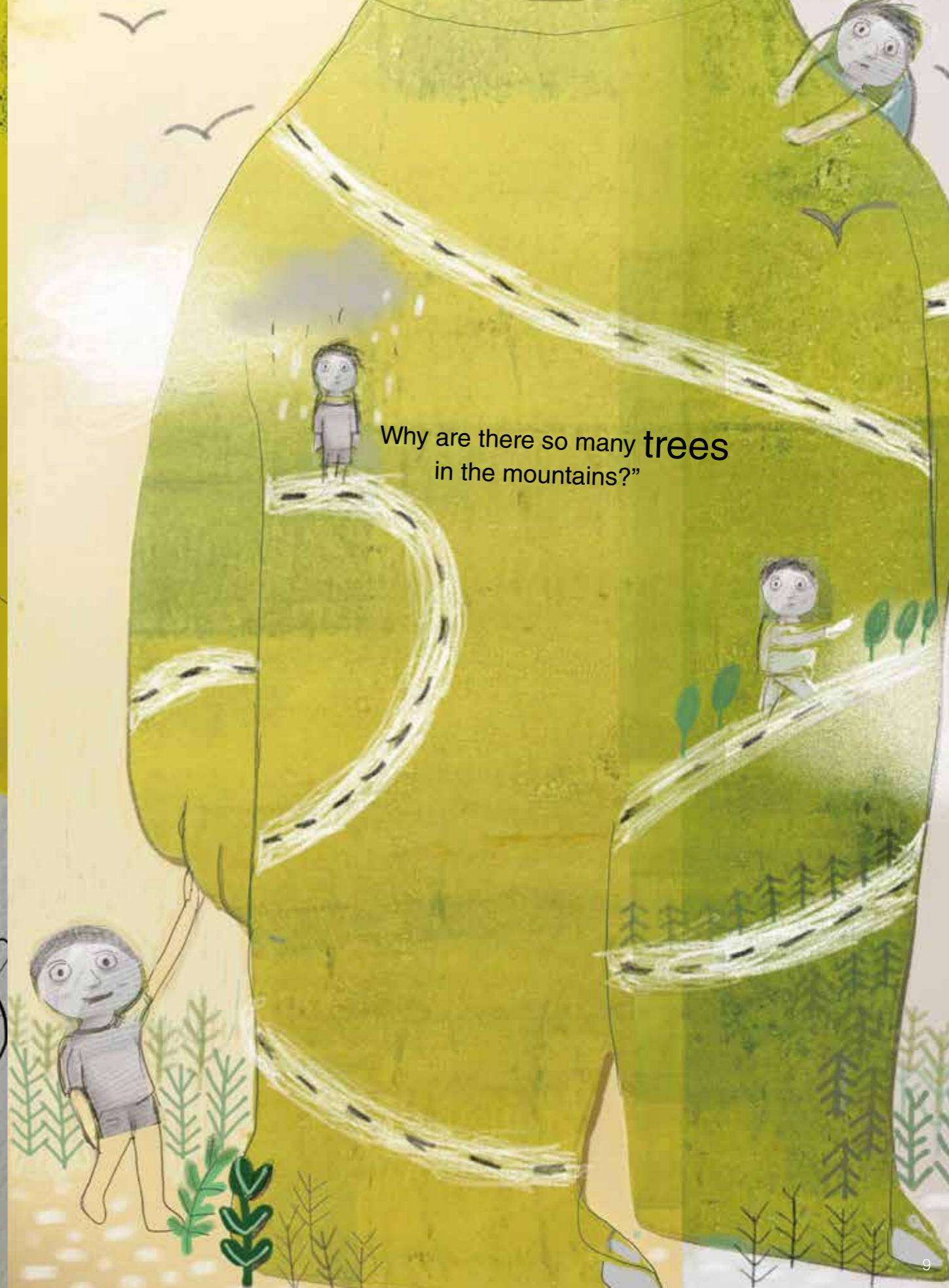
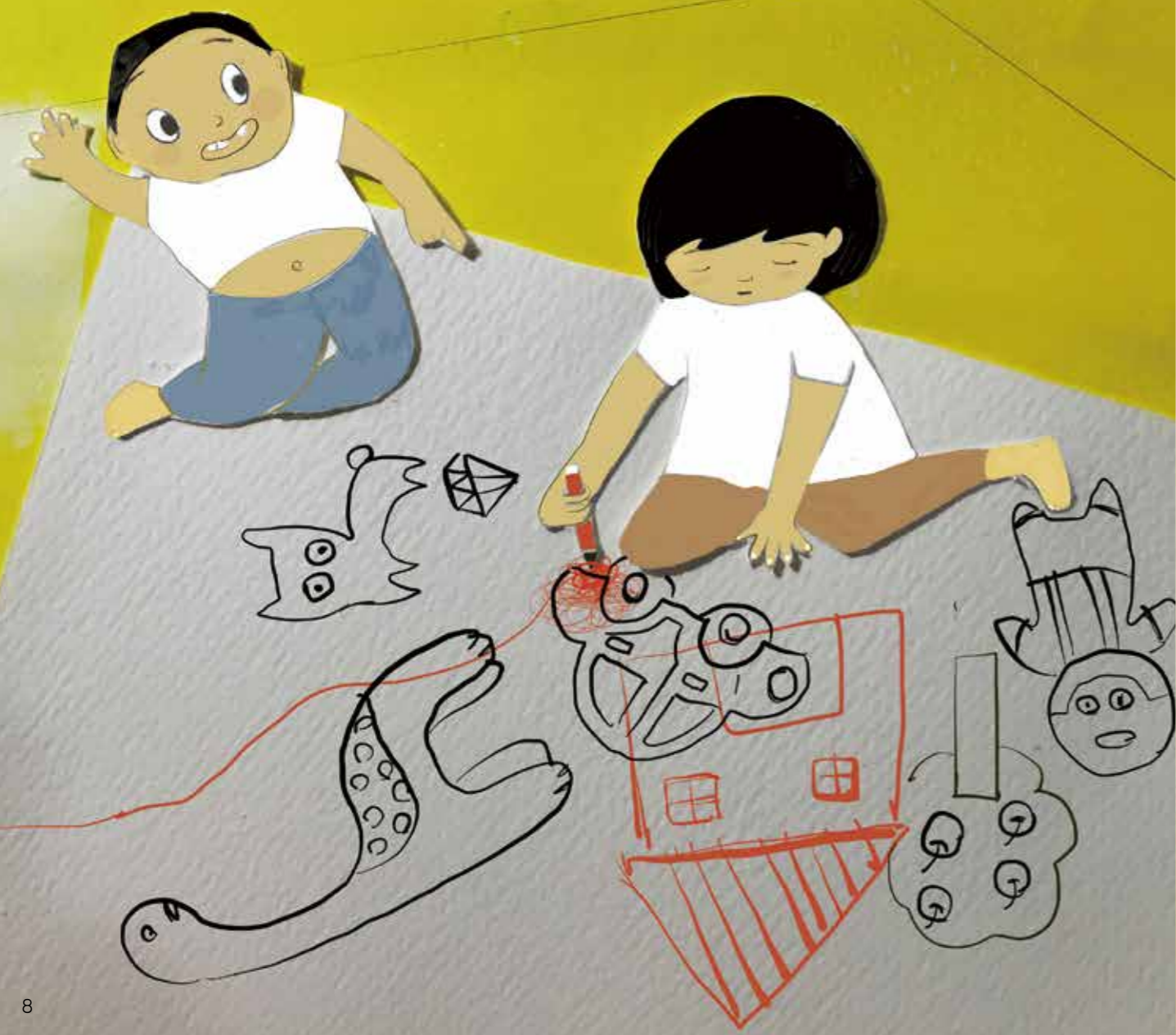
This text originally appeared as an afterword in the author's book and has been edited for this booklet.

He is an adorable little brother,
with chubby cheeks and eyes
so big he sometimes looks silly.



He doesn't like to wear shoes and is always making noises,
humming songs he makes up himself.

He loves to follow me wherever I go.
He loves to bother me and asks me questions nonstop: "Why? Why?"



Why are there so many **trees**
in the mountains?"



Why am I not a **fish**?



Why can't I **fly**?