

PTSD

by maria rumasuglia

My therapist told me I have post traumatic stress disorder
My uncle had that
He fought in the war
I guess I fought in my own kind
Not between countries
Between children and father
Between husband and wife
Between addiction and sobriety
When my father got really mad and would fight with my mom
My sisters and I would all get together in one room
Huddle together like we were keeping each other warm in a
snowstorm
Looking at one another
We didn't have to say anything
We were afraid saying it made it more real
Or maybe it just hurt too much to hear out loud
So we'd just hug each other and cry
We didn't really know what was happening
We just listened for the sounds to tell us
Like bombs going off in the distance we could hear the sounds of
the war between my mother and my father
We didn't know what was hitting what
Fists hitting walls
Bodies hitting floors
We just kept hearing the bang
And then screaming
But we almost couldn't tell whose voice was who's
Just cries and screeches
Mostly it was all muffled together like it was coming out of one
person
But it wasn't
It was dad hitting mom

It was mom crying
It was dad punching the bathroom door
It was mom screaming
It was dad throwing chairs and plates and lamps
I'd hear this one big, loud thump and picture her being thrown
against a wall or picked up and thrown on the floor like a rag doll
Was she hurt
Was she bleeding
Was she afraid too
Who was hugging her
She didn't have anyone to hug her
We'd wait for a sign that it was over
When suddenly silence fell above us
Or the front door slammed
When we knew it was safe to come out
When the enemy had left
We'd walk around the house
Looking for the aftermath
Like a tornado had just come through and we had to search the
wreckage for dolls and pictures that might be salvageable
What had he broken
Check the doors for holes from his fists
The floor for broken glass
Can we talk about it
Or are we supposed to pretend we didn't hear it

