

# 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

