

When I was small,
I used clay to create...



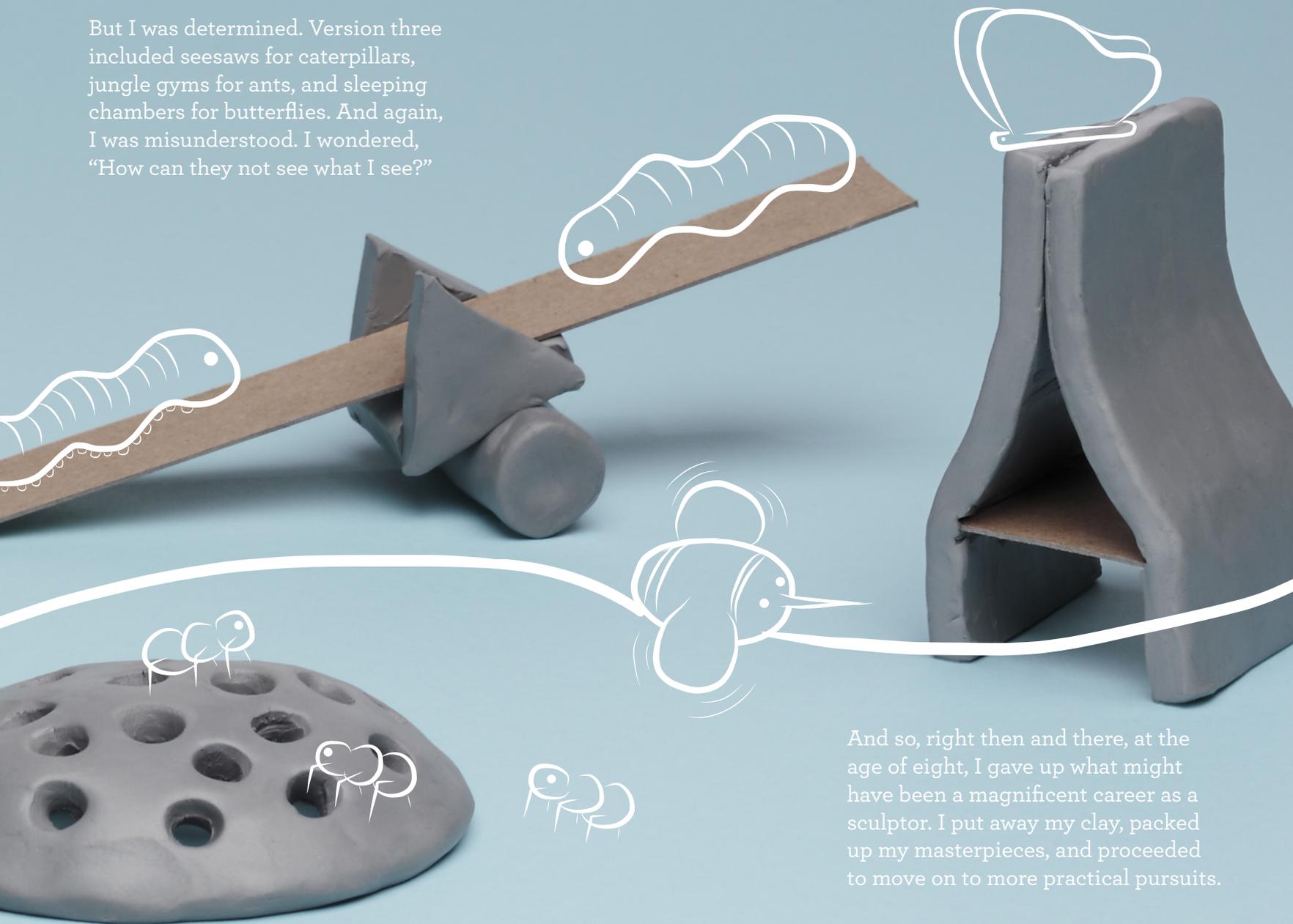
I made a spiral slide for a bee. The grownups said, "That's very nice, Carla. You made a pipe."



So I tried again, creating version two, and the grownups said, "That's very nice, Carla. You made a bolt."



But I was determined. Version three included seesaws for caterpillars, jungle gyms for ants, and sleeping chambers for butterflies. And again, I was misunderstood. I wondered, "How can they not see what I see?"



And so, right then and there, at the age of eight, I gave up what might have been a magnificent career as a sculptor. I put away my clay, packed up my masterpieces, and proceeded to move on to more practical pursuits.





In the end, I became an accountant. Instead of talking to people about seesaws for caterpillars, I talk about dollars and sense, celebrating the importance of balance sheets, annual reports, and the ever important ROI, return on investment.

I moved to New York City (the capital of all things math and money) with all of my boxes (including my misunderstood sculptural masterpieces) and took a job as a bean counter, number cruncher and money mover at the firm of Johnson, Smith and McElroy. And I never thought about sculpture or art again, until...

That day of the big storm,

HURRICANE SANDY



You see, I am an accountant who loves to ride my bike everywhere, even if it isn't the most practical means of transportation. Biking allows me time to turn off all the numbers and ponder, ever so slightly and lightly, the worlds of butterflies and bees. That is how I found myself biking back from a client meeting that had taken me

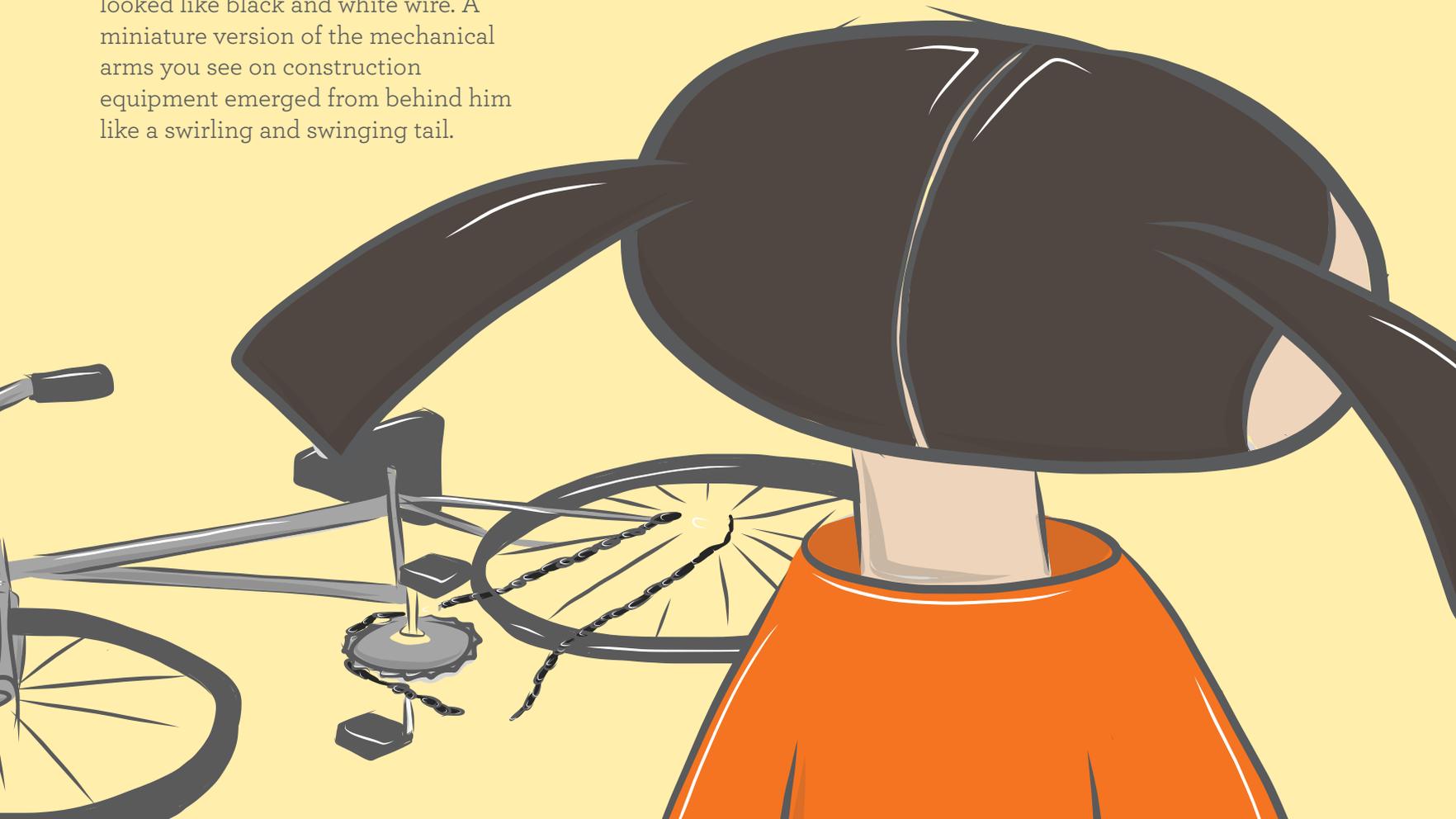
from Manhattan across the Brooklyn Bridge and into the heart of New York City's second largest borough, Brooklyn, or, the other Manhattan. By the time the meeting was over, Hurricane Sandy was percolating and proving punctual, and I was pedaling as fast as possible to get back home safely.

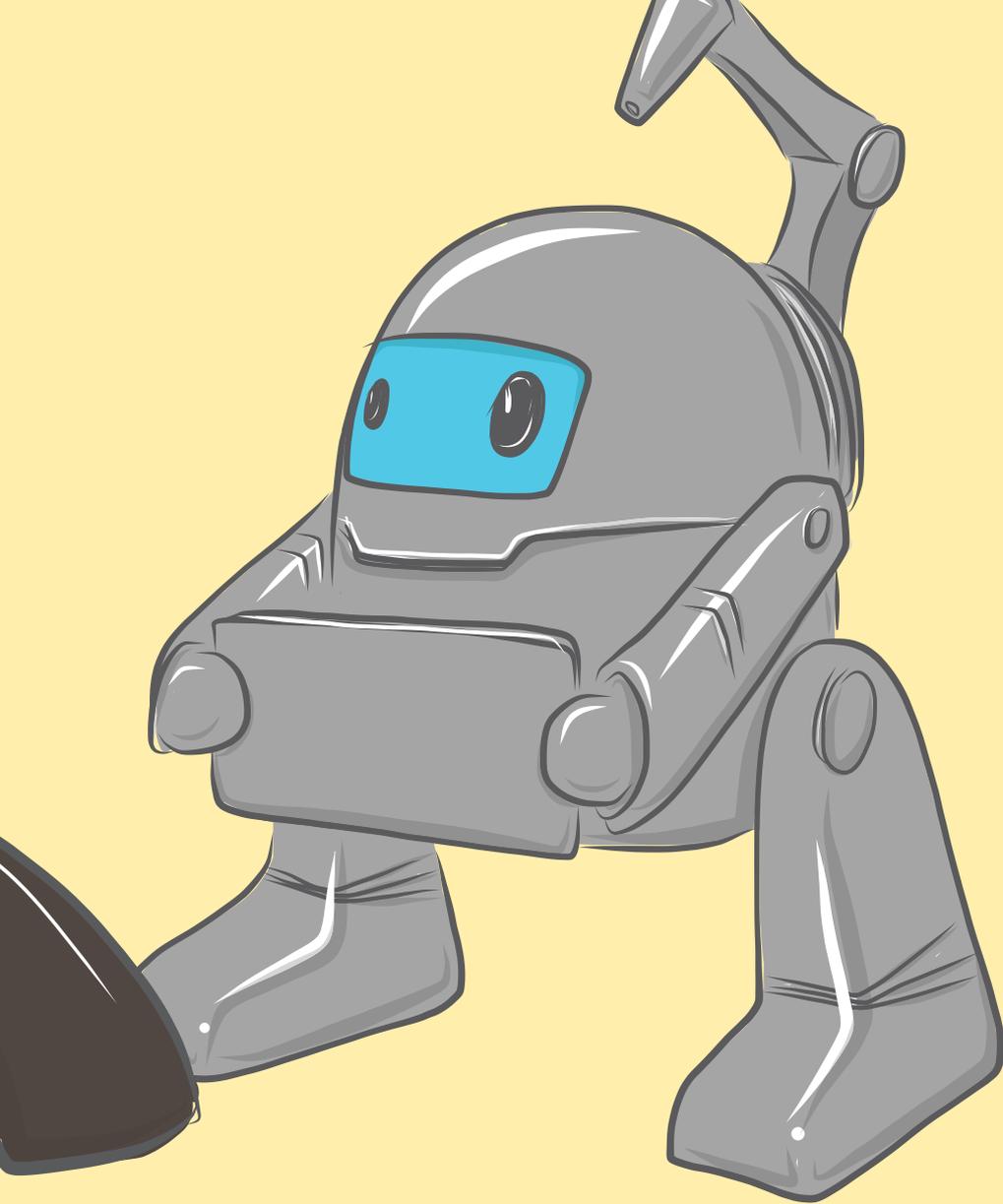
When all of a sudden, a gust of wind took me, and the next thing I knew, I was splat on the pavement. The world was spinning, and blurry. I believe I blacked out.

Because when I came to I could just about make out a silhouette looming over me. Too round to be a person and looking a little like a—no, it couldn't be. Or could it?—a robot? Here? Now? I thought to myself, "How hard had I actually fallen?"



But it was a robot! I admit to being a tiny bit frightened, but there was something very intriguing about this little mechanical character. He had chunky legs, and straight arms that gripped a small tray in front of him. Behind him was a special kind of backpack that held spools of what looked like black and white wire. A miniature version of the mechanical arms you see on construction equipment emerged from behind him like a swirling and swinging tail.





And then the robot spoke. “Hello there! My name is Leonardo, or LEO, for short. What’s yours?” I figured it couldn’t hurt to respond.

“I’m Carla.”

“Hello, Carla! It’s a pleasure to make your acquaintance. Looks as if we are in the midst of a fast approaching storm, so would you please draw me a sheep?”

“Excuse me?” I was mystified by such an artistic request at such an inappropriate time, but I didn’t want to be impolite. “I’m sorry, but I believe you must have mistaken me for someone else.”

“Oh no.” he said, “I don’t actually make mistakes. You are just the person I’m looking for,” he insisted. “The coordinates indicate that this particular superstorm will be bearing down on us rather quickly, so perhaps we should get right to it. Would you please draw me a sheep?”