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MY HERO

written by
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My hero is my great-great-grandma. Thanks to her, I am the lucky one who still has the planet Earth as the place of birth on my passport.

I do not know how my great-great-grandma achieved this exactly. But I will figure it out through this assignment.

As my mother told me, my great-great-grandma, Emily M. Watson, was born on the planet Earth as it was the only place where people could be born.

Today, you can be born on the Moon or Mars; however, I have not seen so many kids from Mars, for instance. It is still a very long trip to Mars. My dad is planning to take me there when I'm sixteen. I don't know if I'm as excited about it as my dad is. But I like spending time with my dad, so it will be fun.

As regards the Moon, I've visited it many times. I like the Moon. I have a friend there. Her name is Ashley. She is white, like all Moon kids. I'm 100% sure that the surface of the Moon has been imprinted in its people's skin. Like a stamp. Although I don't have any proof, no one has such pale cheeks as they have. My friend Ashley has those cheeks too. Never red, always white. I call her Snow White, but she doesn't like the fairy tale or snow! She saw the snow for the first time when she slept over at my place during the winter holiday. She sure looked startled that morning! Of course, she knew about snow from books and TV, but still, she was afraid to touch it. It took some days until she agreed to go play outside. But she was always like that. She likes to play inside. I think it has something to do with her suit. She is like a turtle. But she doesn't like that either.

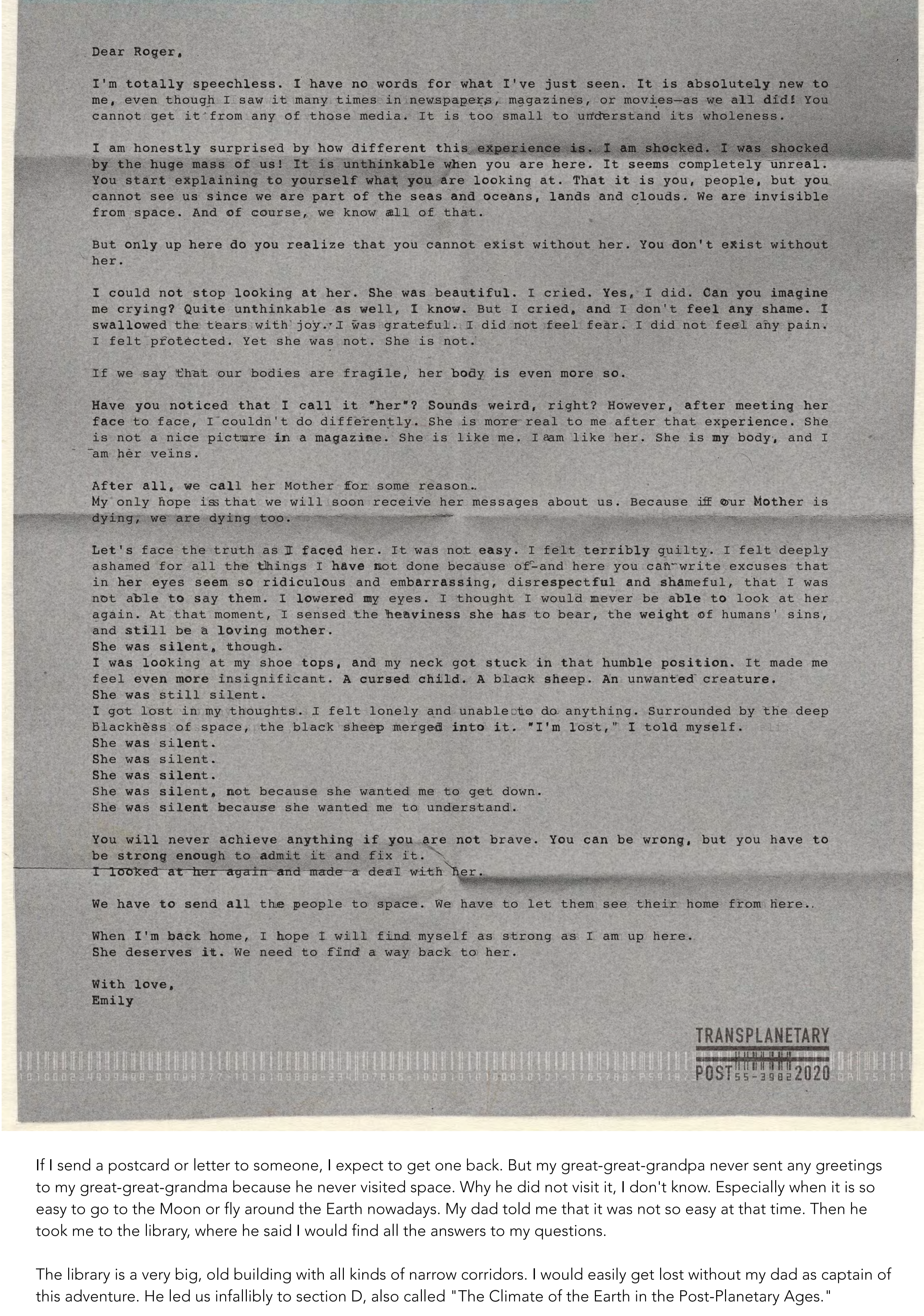
I'm glad I have Ashley. She sends me a letter every week or so from space, which is pretty cool. It is sent via the transplanetary post office, which means that every letter gets marked by its glittery logo. My great-great-grandma never gets any letters from outer space. She only sent one to my great-great-grandpa, who, as my dad told me, never visited space.

My dad kept that letter in one of his old boxes. It is a beautiful letter. But a long one. The letter starts with my great-great-grandpa's name, "Dear Roger," and continues to describe my great-great-grandma's feelings from space. I don't know why she was so surprised to see the Earth, but I think it has something to do with the snow. I mean, Ashley did know about the snow, but when she saw it, she was surprised too.

I don't remember when I saw the Earth for the first time. We visited space so many times that neither my dad nor my mum remembers.

My great-great-grandma certainly enjoyed the view of the Earth. I like that view too. But I never feel guilty or ashamed as she did. She talks about some bad things in that letter, which I don't understand. She talks about sins.

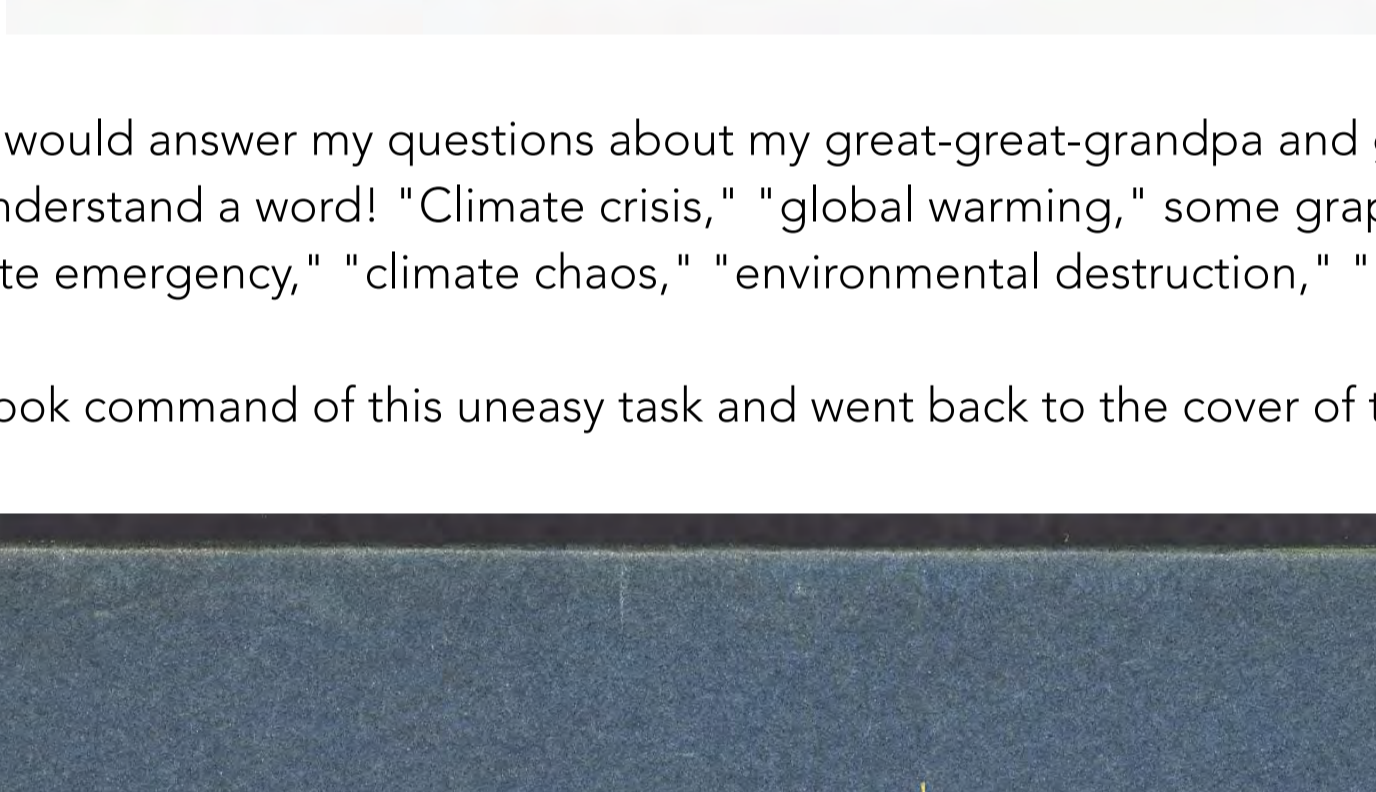
Once, when I was little, I took two lollipops instead of one, as my mum told me to do. Does that mean I caused harm to the Earth? If I'd known that, I would never ever have done it. When I'm going shopping with my mum again, I will take two lollipops but give the second one back. This should work. My great-great-grandma should have done the same thing. Maybe she did when she came back. I hope she did because I don't like to think of my great-great-grandma as a "cursed child" or "black sheep." No one has to be abandoned, much less my great-great-grandma, who was a hero. Although I still do not know how my great-great-grandma became such a hero.



If I send a postcard or letter to someone, I expect to get one back. But my great-great-grandpa never sent any greetings to my great-great-grandma because he never visited space. Why he did not visit it, I don't know. Especially when it is so easy to go to the Moon or fly around the Earth nowadays. My dad told me that it was not so easy at that time. Then he took me to the library, where he said I would find all the answers to my questions.

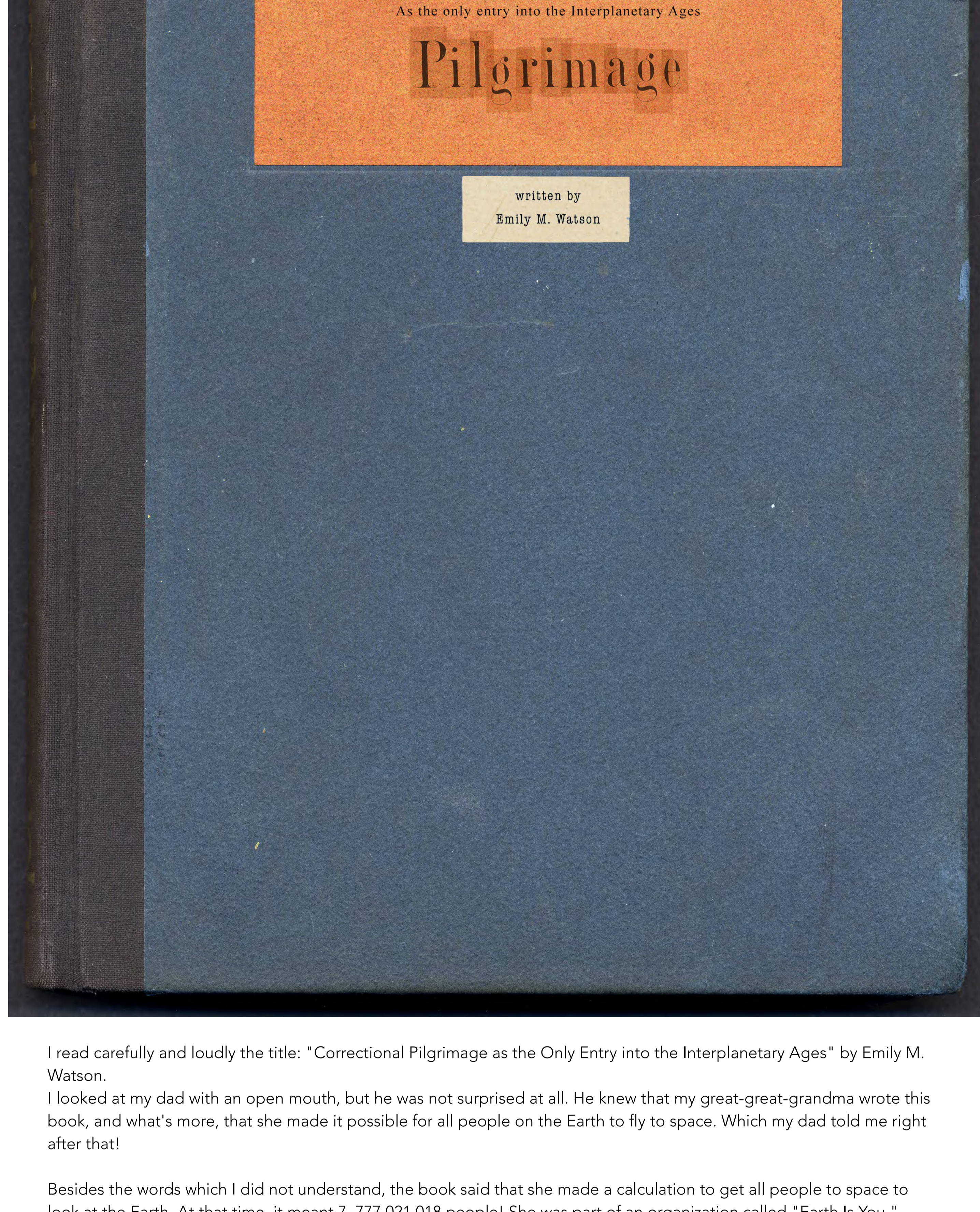
The library is a very big, old building with all kinds of narrow corridors. I would easily get lost without my dad as captain of this adventure. He led us infallibly to section D, also called "The Climate of the Earth in the Post-Planetary Ages."

I got this lovely old ticket as if I was on an airplane, and I had to wait until my number appeared on the screen. I asked my dad what "The Climate of the Earth in the Post-Planetary Ages" means, but I don't remember what he said; I was caught by the screen. When I spotted my number flashing on the screen, I sprang from the chair and ran to the counter. Before Charlie handed me this massive book, he asked for authorization. I like Charlie. Although he has no eyes, only hands, he sees everything! He is a weirdo with eyes on his hand. I showed him my ticket, and he stamped it with a little hole.



I hoped that this huge book would answer my questions about my great-great-grandpa and grandma, but when I went through its pages, I didn't understand a word! "Climate crisis," "global warming," some graphs and weird words again, "scientific warnings," "climate emergency," "climate chaos," "environmental destruction," "global heating," "climate breakdown"...

My dad, as a right captain, took command of this uneasy task and went back to the cover of the book.



I read carefully and loudly the title: "Correctional Pilgrimage as the Only Entry into the Interplanetary Ages" by Emily M. Watson.

I looked at my dad with an open mouth, but he was not surprised at all. He knew that my great-great-grandma wrote this book, and what's more, that she made it possible for all people on the Earth to fly to space. Which my dad told me right after that!

Besides the words which I did not understand, the book said that she made a calculation to get all people to space to look at the Earth. At that time, it meant 7, 777,021,018 people! She was part of an organization called "Earth Is You," where they tried to save the Earth! Their arguments were based on studies from many scientists and philosophers who talked about the overview effect, which is "a moment when you realize that you are part of something bigger." For example: My bed is part of my room. My room is part of our house. Our house is part of our neighborhood. Our neighborhood is part of the city. The city is part of the state. The state is part of the continent. The continent is part of the world. The world is part of the planet Earth. The planet Earth is part of the solar system. And so on. It is much simpler to explain it in this way, I think.

My dad told me that in my great-great-grandma's times, people did not think so much about the Earth, and they hurt her very often. They used to extract coal even though they knew it was bad for her. She polluted the air and the oceans. They did not care about other creatures, only about themselves. All these things were hidden behind those strange words such as environmental destruction, global heating, climate breakdown, and so on.

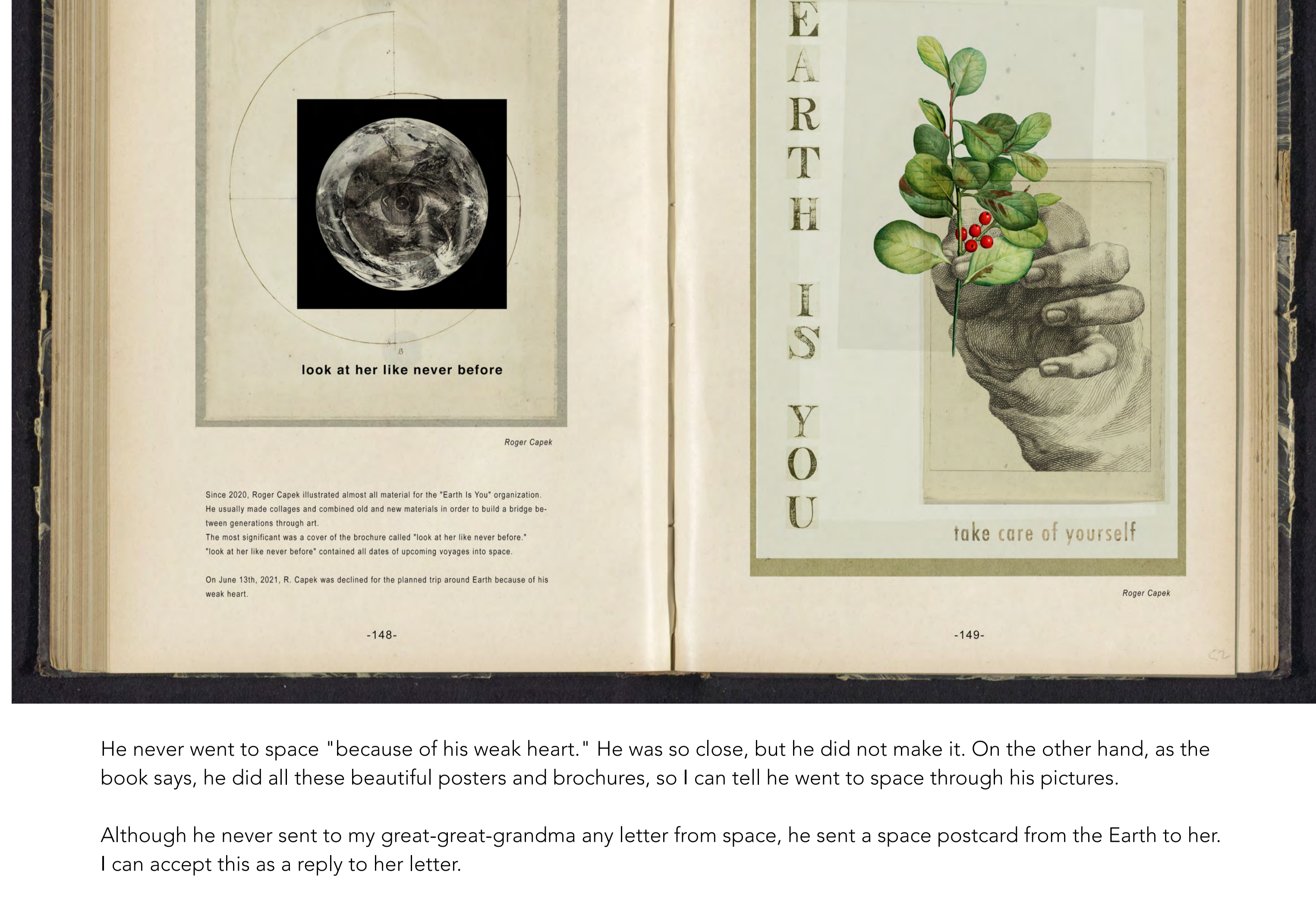
On the other hand, the "overview effect" came with astronauts who saw the Earth from outer space, and it changed their thinking. They started to care more about things around themselves. So, the overview effect is a good thing!

The organization "Earth Is You" was in love with the Earth and got an idea to send all of its people to outer space to see the planet Earth from afar. Their plan was to make them instant astronauts—and to change their minds. After that experience, people felt this overview effect, and it changed their behavior. They stopped harming the Earth because they realized that it hurt them as well.

Thanks to this space pilgrimage, the world has been changed into a place that is familiar to me today. Since that time, when people call the Earth "Mother," they truly mean it.

I cannot imagine hurting the Earth, but maybe it has something to do with the lollipops. I mean, I also did not know that I did something wrong, but I will fix it! Yet, my dad told me that my DNA code contains my great-great-grandma's experience, which makes me love the Earth. It passes from generation to generation, he said. Therefore, he, my mum, their parents, and me—we all share the same experience—of love. It also means that I did not hurt the Earth by the lollipops. I just did not listen to my mum. I couldn't hurt her because I was born with a love code! (How cool is that!)

But what about my great-great-grandpa?



He never went to space "because of his weak heart." He was so close, but he did not make it. On the other hand, as the book says, he did all these beautiful posters and brochures, so I can tell he went to space through his pictures.

Although he never sent to my great-great-grandma any letter from space, he sent a space postcard from the Earth to her. I can accept this as a reply to her letter.

In the end, they are both my heroes.

