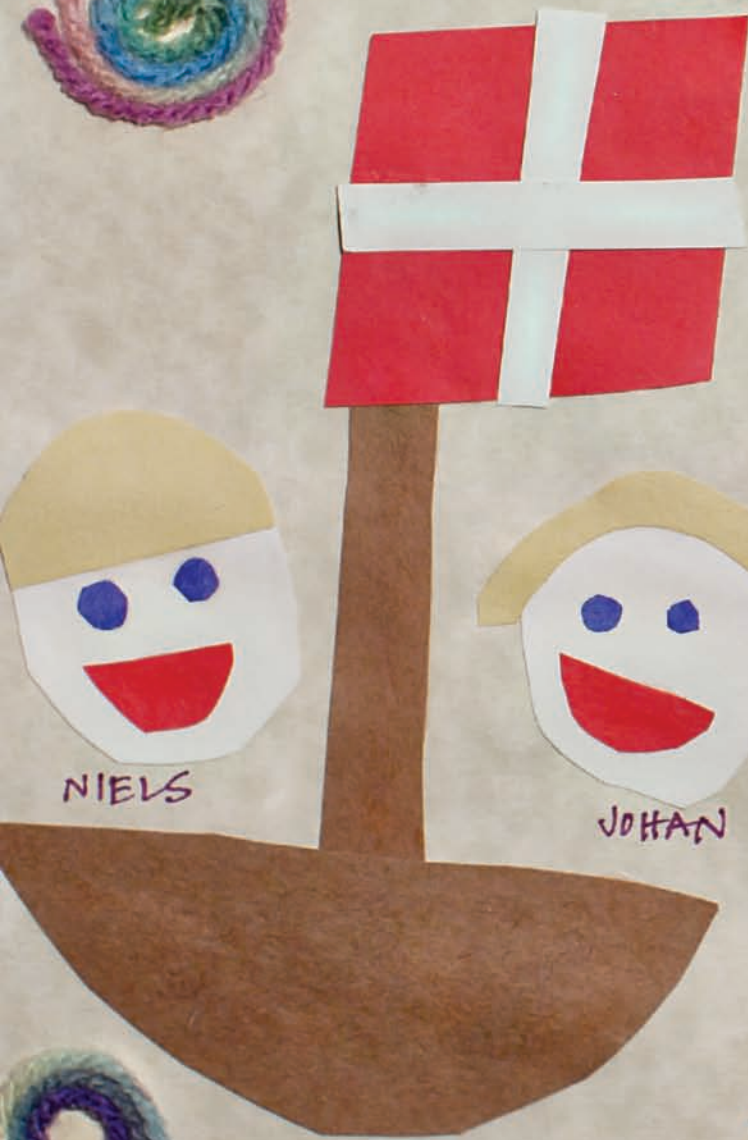


Threads



NIELS

JOHAN



HERMANN



CHAJA



RUTH

BY MARGRET ATKINSON,
WITH HELP FROM MANY FRIENDS

EVEN THOUGH AN INDIVIDUAL MIGHT HAVE DIFFERENT STRENGTHS TO
CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORLD, EACH PERSON'S INDIVIDUAL THREAD
INTERTWINES TO CREATE THE WHOLE THREAD OF HUMANITY.

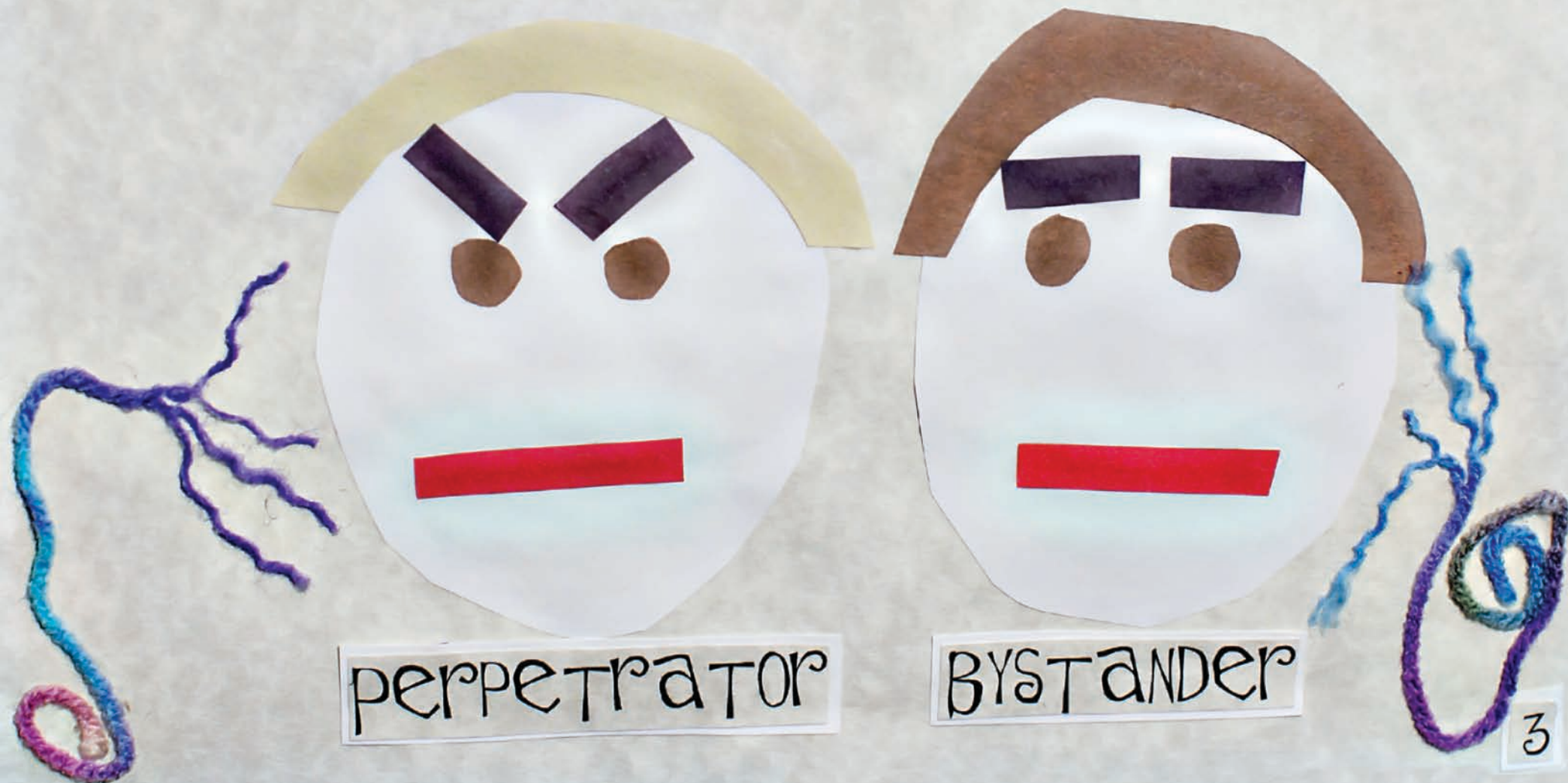


THIS IS WHAT CONNECTS US ALL.

THE INDIVIDUAL THREADS
THAT CREATE A LARGER
HUMANITY NEED TO BE
NURTURED, NOT ISOLATED.



DURING a VERY DARK PERIOD IN OUR
HISTORY, THE THREAD OF HUMANITY WAS
FORGOTTEN BY SOME...



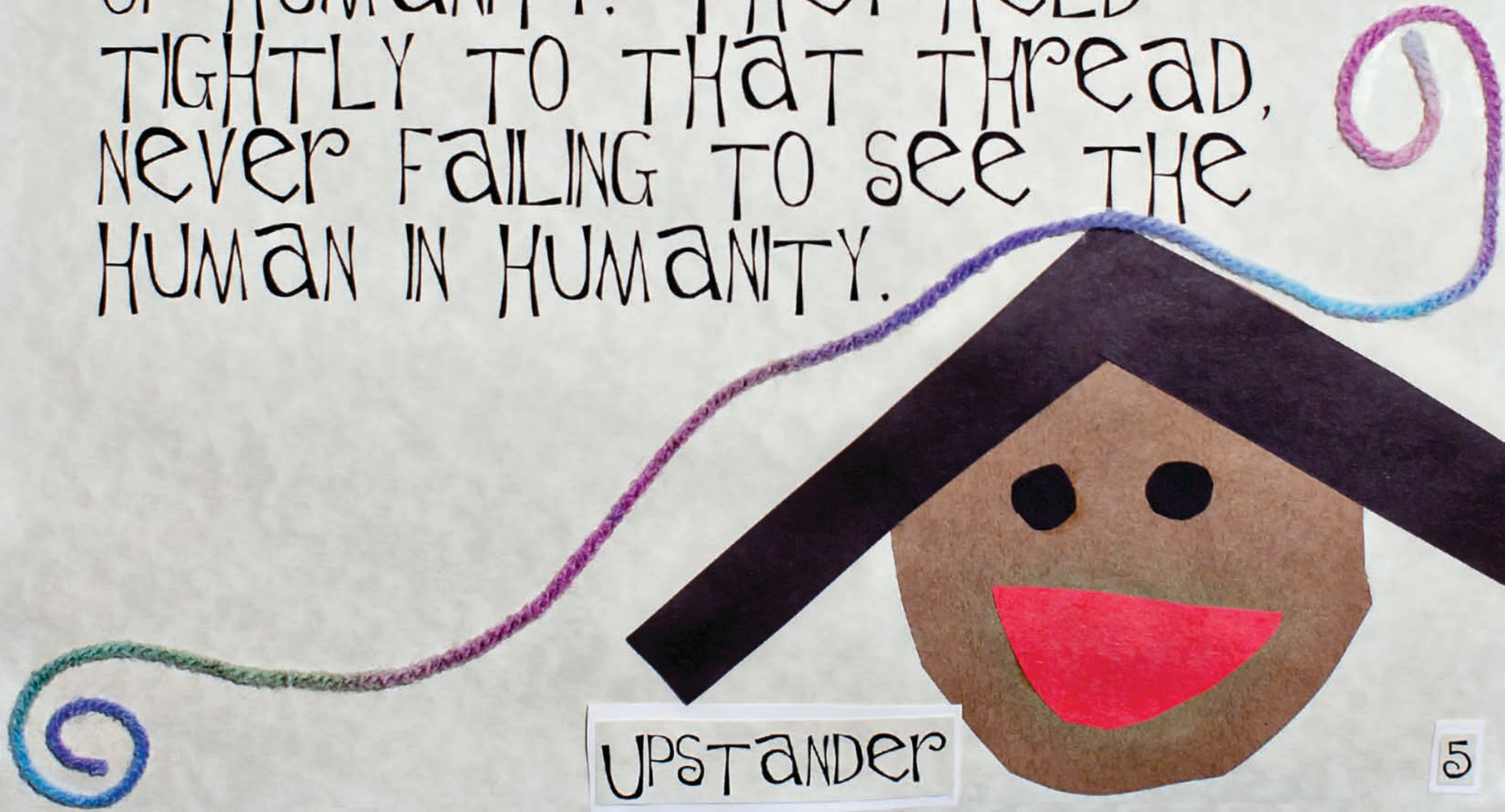
PEOPLE WERE SINGLED OUT
FOR THEIR DIFFERENCES, AND
WERE OFTEN NOT
APPRECIATED AS
INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD AN INTRINSIC
VALUE.

Marginalization:
to not include
in a group and
make seem less
important

Intrinsic:
the essential
nature

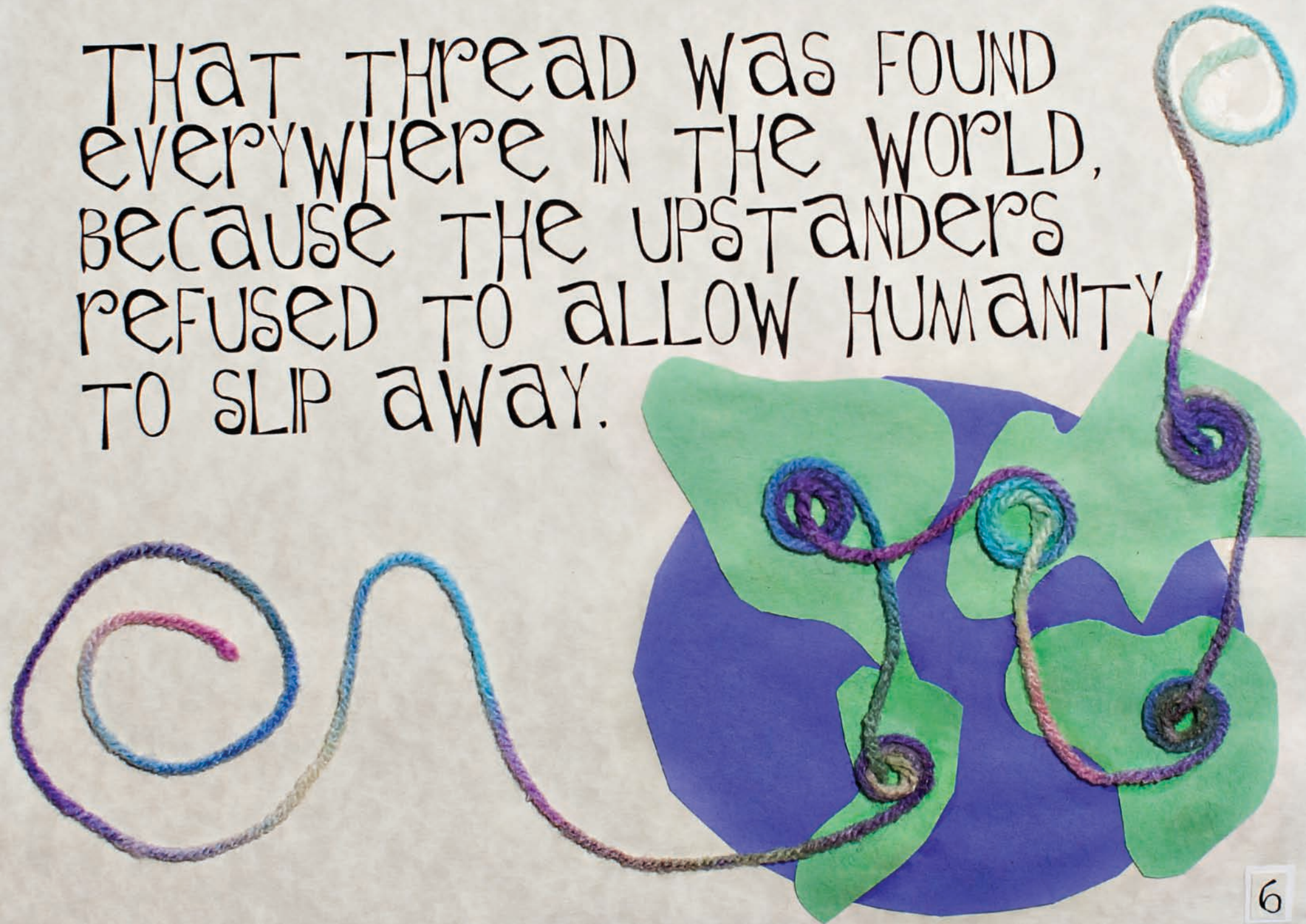


BUT THERE WERE INDIVIDUALS
WHO NEVER LOST THE THREAD
OF HUMANITY. THEY HELD
TIGHTLY TO THAT THREAD,
NEVER FAILING TO SEE THE
HUMAN IN HUMANITY.



UPSTANDER

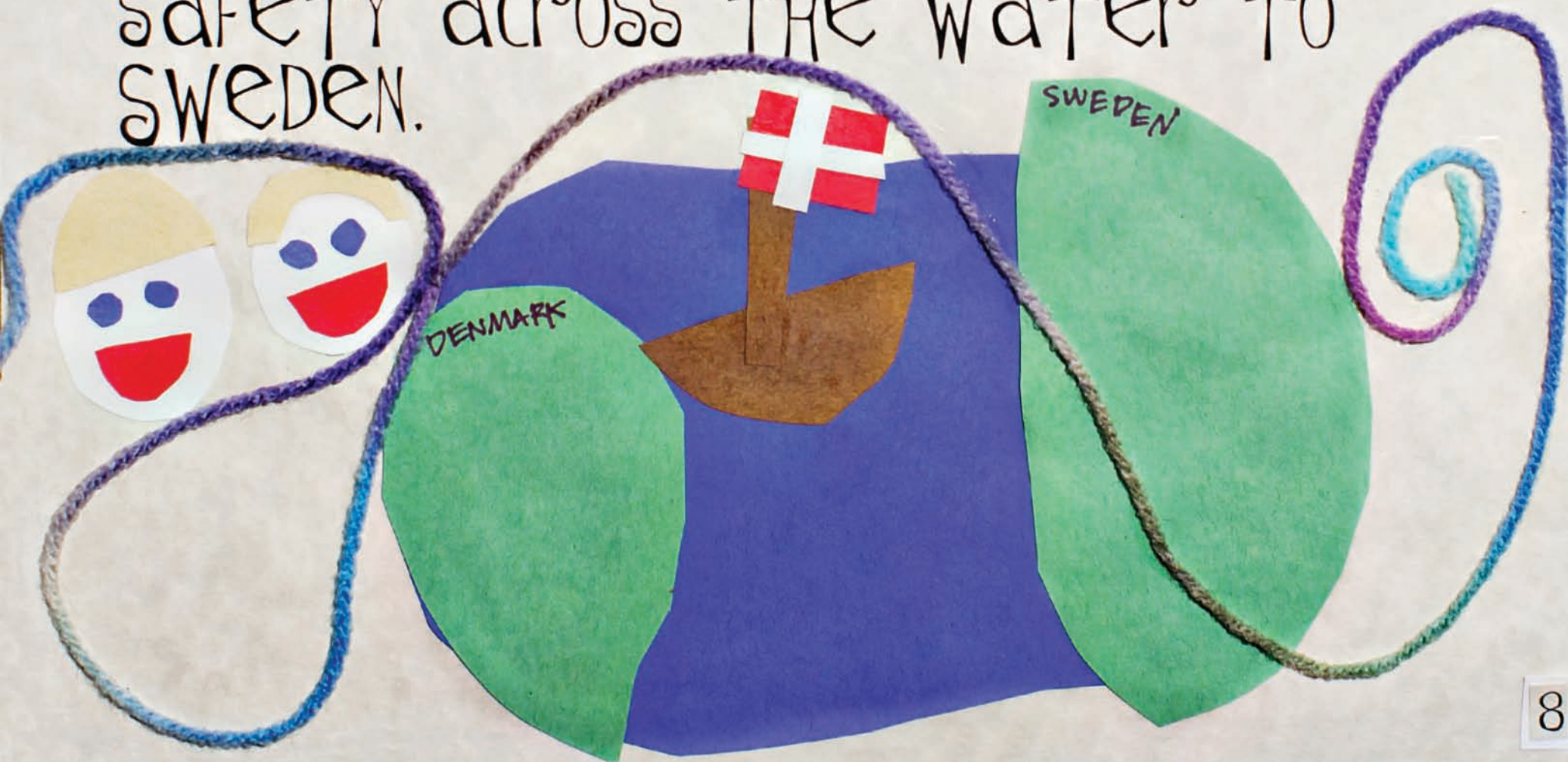
THAT THREAD WAS FOUND
EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD,
BECAUSE THE UPSTANDERS
REFUSED TO ALLOW HUMANITY
TO SLIP AWAY.



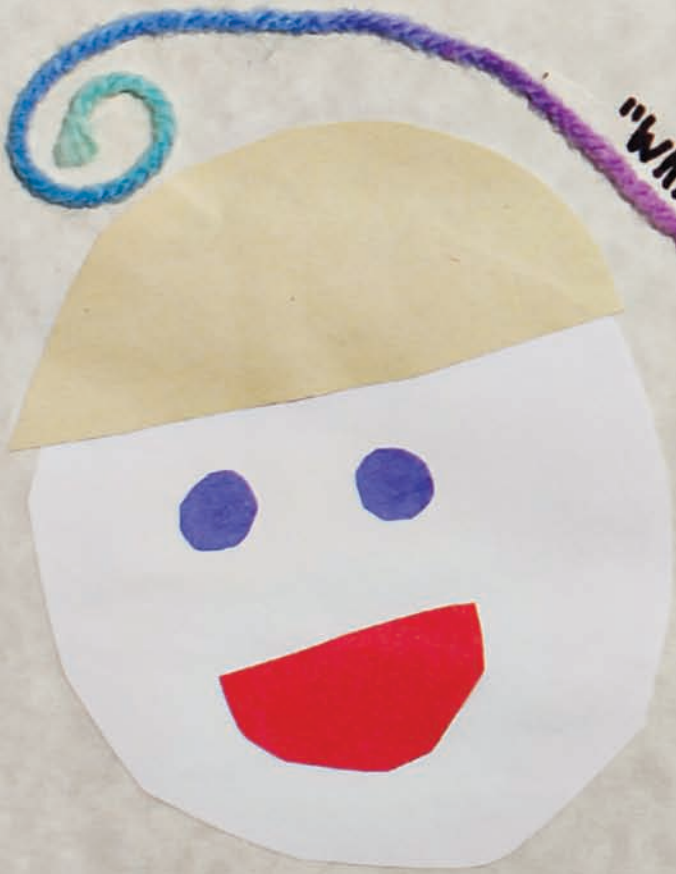
IN GILLIELEJE, DENMARK, NIELS
FERDINANDSEN AND JOHAN JORGENSEN
SAW THE THREAD IN THEIR FELLOW
MAN WHO NEEDED TO ESCAPE THE
EVIL OF THE NAZIS.



THEY HELPED THE PERPETRATED
TRAVEL TO THE COAST, AND THEN
THE BRAVE FISHERMEN WOULD USE
THEIR BOATS TO SNEAK THEM TO
SAFETY ACROSS THE WATER TO
SWEDEN.



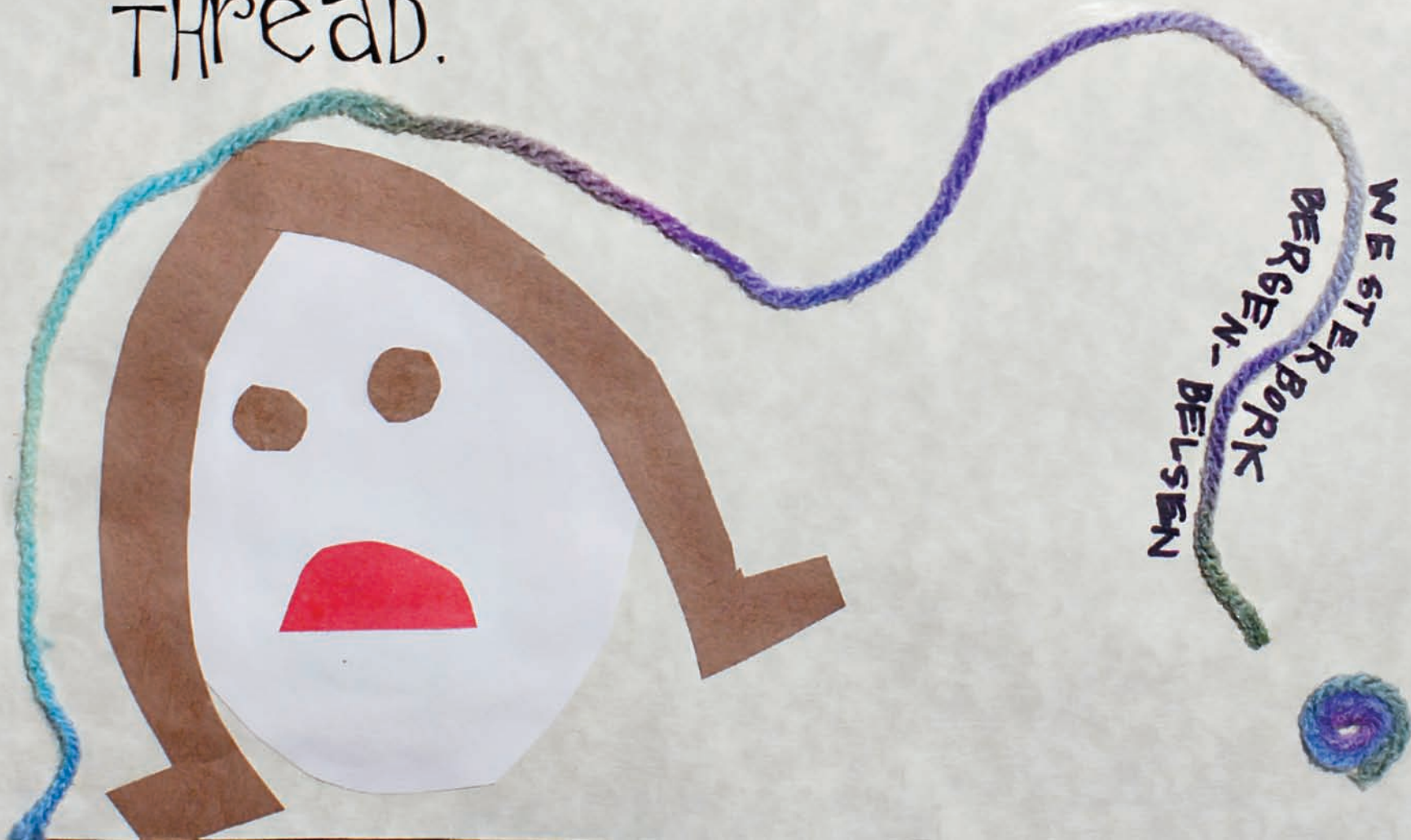
NIELS AND JOHAN WERE UPSTANDERS,
AND DID NOT ALLOW HUMANITY'S
THREAD TO BE FRAYED BY THE
MARGINALIZATION OF THE NAZIS.



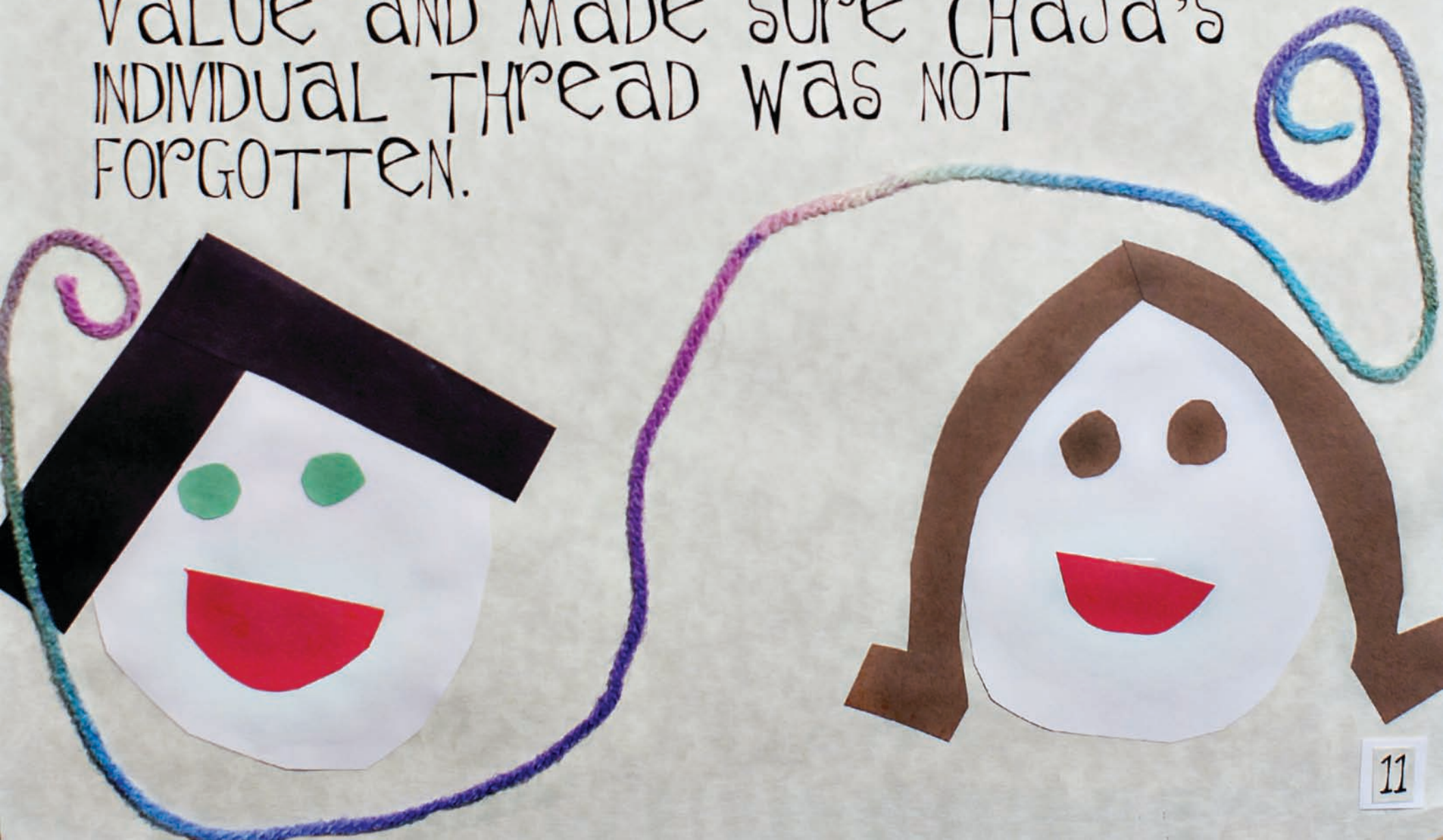
"WHAT ELSE COULD WE DO BUT HELP?"



IN THE NETHERLANDS, CHAJA WAS A CHILD WHO NEEDED HELP WHEN SHE WAS FACED WITH TERRIBLE REALITIES THAT THREATENED HER THREAD.



A KIND WOMAN BECAME AN
UPSTANDER WHEN SHE SAW CHAJA'S
VALUE AND MADE SURE CHAJA'S
INDIVIDUAL THREAD WAS NOT
FORGOTTEN.



CHAJA NOW DEDICATES HER
LIFE TO ENSURING THAT
MARGINALIZATION DOES NOT
FRAY HUMANITY'S THREAD.



WHILE IN FRANCE, RUTH AND HER SISTER FACED
FEARFUL THINGS:



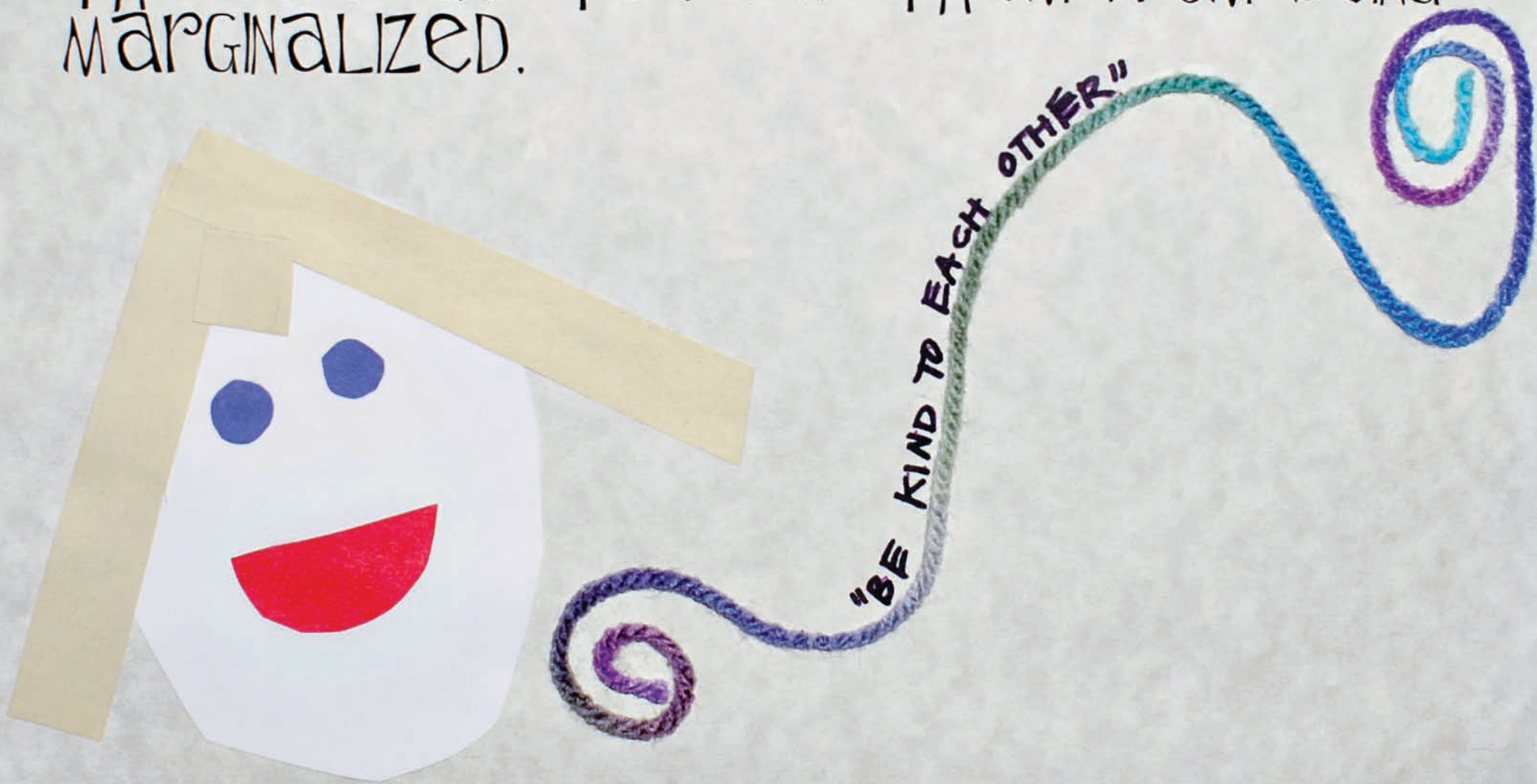
HER FAMILY WAS IN DANGER, AND THEY SEEMED ONLY
TO BE SURROUNDED BY BYSTANDERS AND
PERPETRATORS...WHO FORGOT THE THREADS OF
HUMANITY.

BUT RUTH'S AND HER SISTER'S THREAD WAS SOON RECOGNIZED;
A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE GRASPED RUTH'S AND LEA'S
THREAD AND HELD ON TIGHTLY.

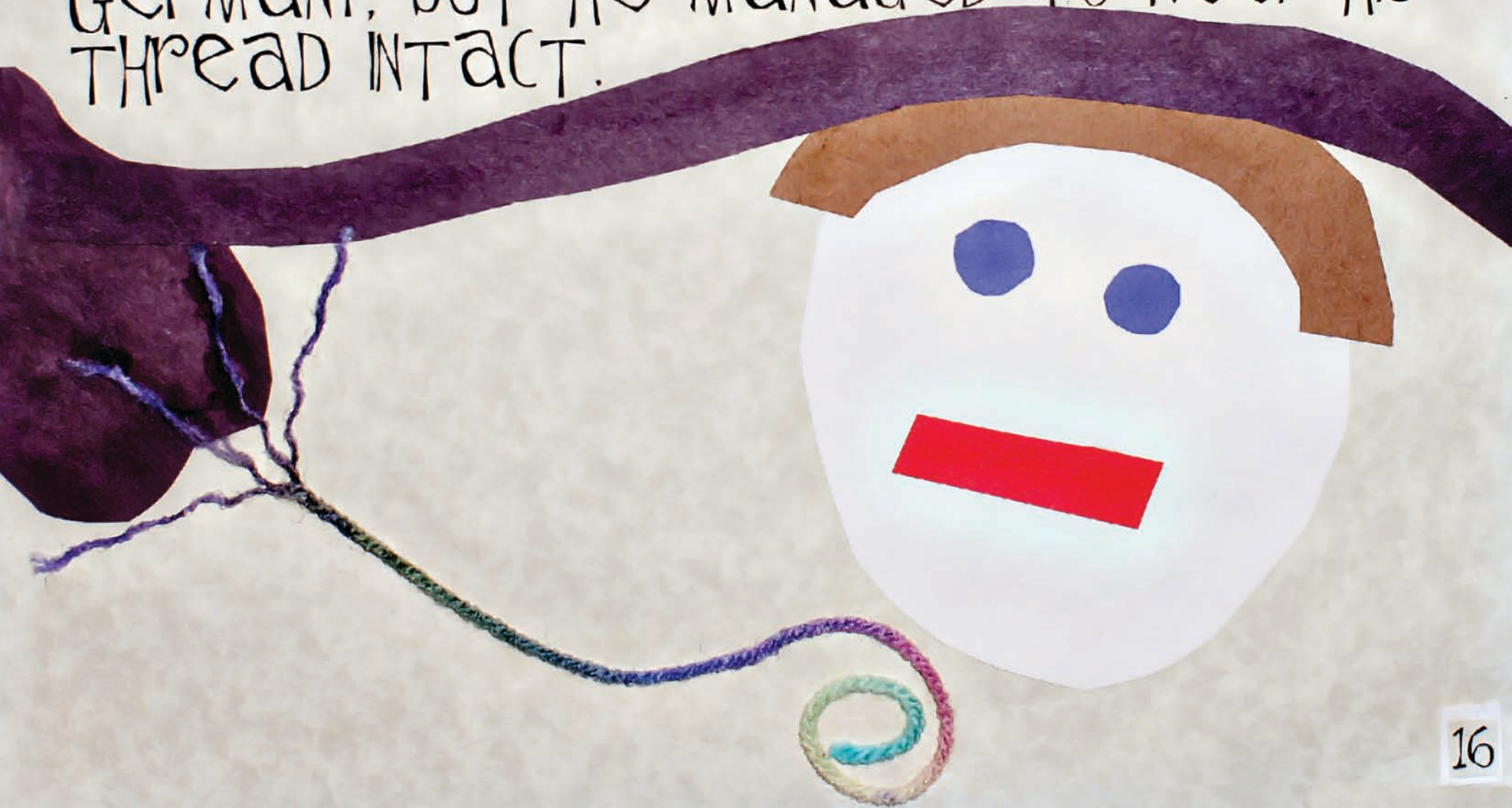


THOSE YOUNG PEOPLE BELONGED TO THE OSE.

RUTH NOW WORKS TRELESSLY IN AN
EFFORT TO CELEBRATE INDIVIDUAL'S
THREADS AND TO KEEP THEM FROM BEING
MARGINALIZED.



HERMANN KEPT HIS THREAD HIDDEN FROM
THE PERPETRATORS AND BYSTANDERS
WHILE HE WAS IN POLAND AND IN
GERMANY, BUT HE MANAGED TO KEEP HIS
THREAD INTACT.



HE LED OTHERS IN PROTECTING HUMANITY'S
THREAD WHILE HE WAS AN UPSTANDER
IN SAVONA, ITALY.



HERMANN FOUGHT COURAGEOUSLY SO THAT
MARGINALIZATION WOULD NOT EVER
DESTROY INDIVIDUAL VALUE.

"ZA WOLNOSE NASZA I WASZA" (POLISH SAYING)

INDIVIDUAL

"FOR OUR FREEDOM AND YOURS AS WELL"



BEING AN UPSTANDER CAN BE HARD AT
TIMES, BECAUSE WE MUST CELEBRATE
OUR DIFFERENCES WHILE WE SHARE OUR
SIMILARITIES.



A GREATER HUMANITY MUST BE SEEN IN
each and every INDIVIDUAL SPIRIT.

HUMANITY

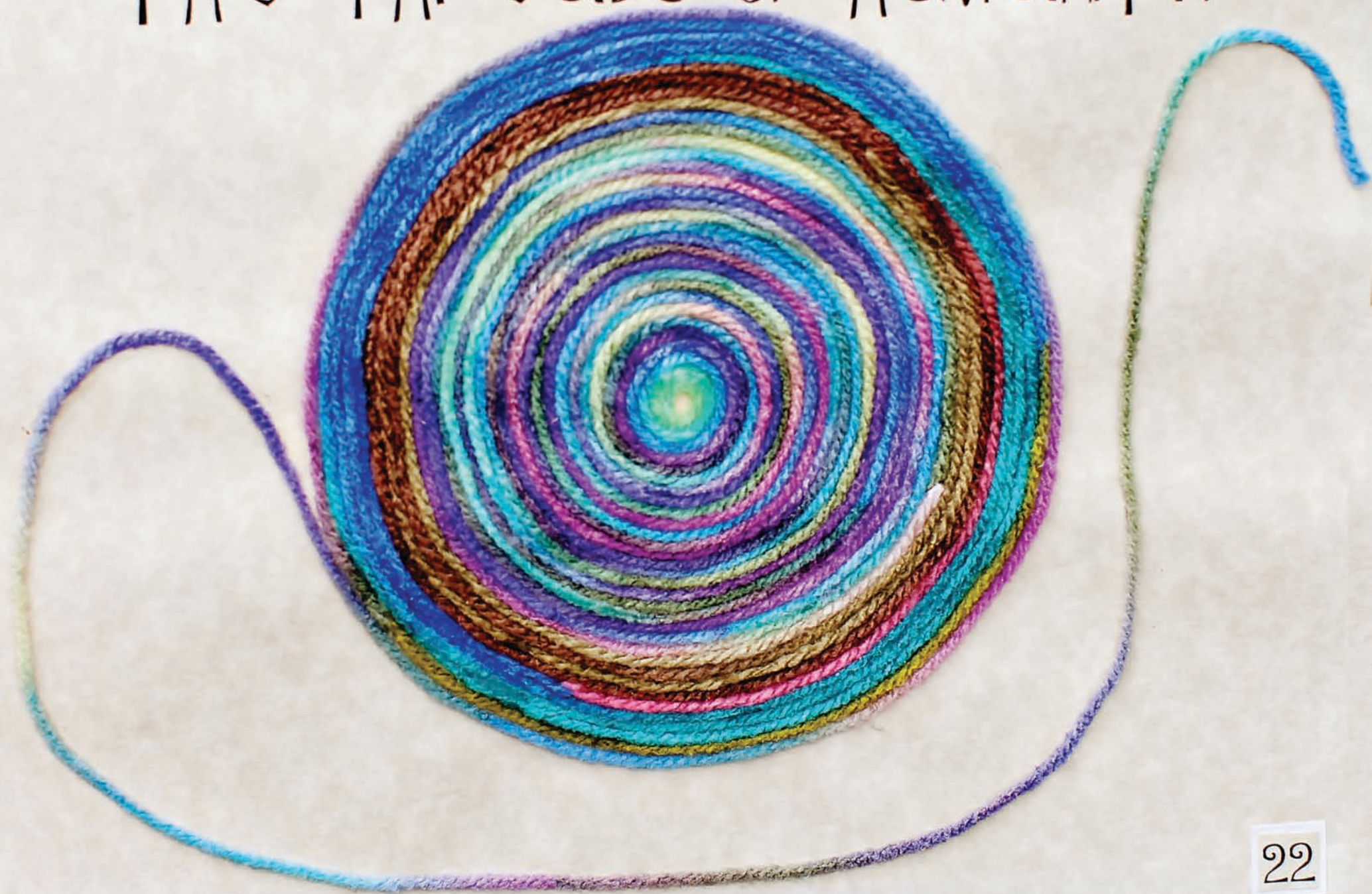
SO INSTEAD OF BEING a BYSTANDER OR a
PERPETRATOR WHO MARGINALIZES...



CHOOSE TO BE AN UPSTANDER WHO PROTECTS...



THE THREADS OF HUMANITY.



ABOUT OUR UPSTANDERS: IT CAN BE ANYONE! IT'S A CHOICE!

Niels Ferdninandson and Johan Jorgensen

Niels and Johan were best friends for a very long time, and even though they risked everything by bringing people to the coast during the occupation of Gilleleje, Denmark during World War II, they never thought of themselves as heroes. They simply thought of themselves as ordinary men who helped others.

Niels' son, Jan, and Johan's daughter, Lotte, got married when they grew up, and they still live in Gilleleje as they raise their own family.

Jan is the mayor of Gilleleje, and is very passionate about giving people a voice.

Chaja Verveer

Chaja was born in 1941, and was separated from her family very early in life. In 1944, she was first sent to the Westerbork transit camp in the Netherlands, but a kind woman was able to take care of her.

From Westerbork, Chaja was sent on a very long train ride to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany. Again, she found kindness in strangers who looked after her.

She was finally sent to the Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia. The camp was liberated in 1945.

She has lived and worked in Houston as a business consultant for more than thirty years. She has worked with the Child Survivors organization in Houston, and has also served on the board for Holocaust Museum Houston (www.hmh.org).

Ruth Steinfeld and Lea Weems

Ruth and her sister, Lea, were small children in the transit camp of Gurs in southern France when their mother made a heart-wrenching choice: the girls were sent with members of the OSE, so that they could have a better chance to survive the war.

The girls lived with other children and the members of the OSE, who also became their teachers.

Ruth and Lea, until she passed recently, live in Houston. Ruth has worked with the Child Survivors organization in Houston, and is very involved with Holocaust Museum Houston (www.hmh.com).

Ruth often says that her mother gave her life twice: once when she gave birth, and once when she sent her with the OSE.

The OSE (Œuvre de secours aux enfants)

The OSE was first begun in 1912 in Russia as the OZE. It was begun to help the needy of the Jewish population in the town of St. Petersburg.

It moved to Berlin in the 1920s, and when the threat of the Nazis came in the 1930s, it moved again to France. Once there, the members tried to save as many children as they could. During the 1940s, they organized underground networks to smuggle children out of the camps and to safer places.

Today, they still work to help people in need.

You can visit the OSE website (it is in French): <http://www.ose-france.org/>

Hermann Wygoda

Hermann lived in Warsaw, Poland until the Nazis invaded the country in 1939. With Germany's *blitzkrieg*, he was forced to begin his long journey to his safety.

He writes in his memoir, "There were no rules of safety to follow to save one's life; all of our choices had to be quick..." Although Hermann did not have any guide book to help him to his safety, he took many risks and hid the fact that he was Jewish.

Even though he was separated from his family, he found the courage to journey onward, through Germany and the epicenter of the Nazi regime, and finally to Italy. It was in the small town of Savona, in northern Italy, that he found his destiny: to lead the partisans in the fight against the Nazis. Going by the name Enrico, he was able to help the partisans liberate Savona from the Nazis.

Because of his heroic actions, he was awarded the American Bronze Star in 1946. He is revered by the townspeople of Savona, and seen as a hero for his courage during the war.

Hermann wrote *In the Shadow of the Swastika* about his courageous journey. It has been translated into Italian and given to Italian school children so that they can learn about him.