



SLEEP ©2007
Nick Beery, Age 28

"My sister is a longtime migraine sufferer. Her misery always demanded attention from everyone who was intimately involved in her daily life. Being close to someone who had to deal with the pain, nausea, and constant threat of an elusive affliction brought a profound influence on some of my most innate work."

The Egg Shell Dance

Nancy Bennett
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Vancouver Island, Canada

Older sister goes in first, making sure the coast is clear.
That IT has not returned.
We stand outside with hungry bellies and scratchy throats
careful not to clear them in case IT hears.
Time treads silent, daring not to tick
Should we kick up dust with our shoes? Dust covers the boredom but we dare not
as that sometimes "sounds like rumbling storm clouds" she has said, and IT
would know we were home.
She stands at the door, finger pursed to lips, socked feet and small breaths
motioning us with her eyes to go in.
We leave the noisy shoes that thud like anchors,
the jackets that might rustle
like breaking glass
outside.
One by one we move in slow
like soldiers in formation
we move as stealthily as we can, aware that IT has snipers
all around.
She and IT lay on the couch, under darkened curtains,
her eyes shielded with a dark wet cloth
and we know that now we must do the egg shell dance.
Careful not to tread too loud,
careful not to play or talk or whisper or breathe
or even ask for water for the dripping is like
the Chinese water torture, that's what she says
when she is here, not IT
and we can play outside, my sister signs, pointing us to go far, far off field
until IT has left the building
and we get OUR mother back.

Nancy Bennett does not have migraine but her mother did for her entire life, and her daughter, Amanda, who has artwork in this book, also lives with migraine.