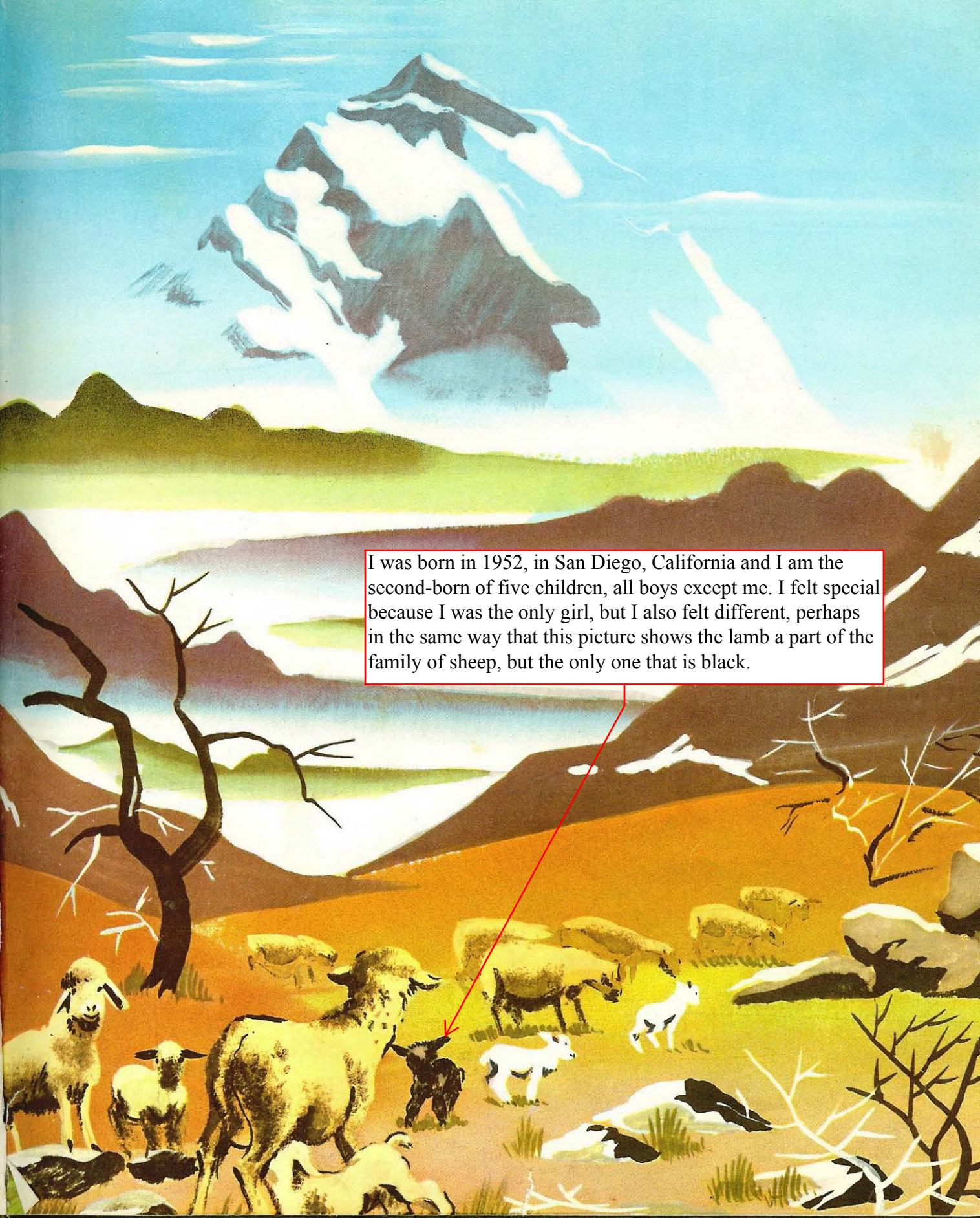


Below him in the green grass huddled the sheep — a great gray moving field of young lambs with their mothers. And in all that soft flock of moving gray was one little black smudge.

It was the black sheep born in every flock. A sweet little black lamb kicking up his stiff young legs—leaping with the gray lambs in the small dances of baby animals.

I think I have had trouble with this all my life. I identify with the heros of stories, and they are most often male. I wonder how I felt at that age. In the previous paragraph, I am a genderless "smudge," but in the next paragraph I am a gendered "he." Did I notice this at the time, or did it seem so natural to me by them that I just did some sort of inner compensation? Is an "implied reader" always gendered?



I was born in 1952, in San Diego, California and I am the second-born of five children, all boys except me. I felt special because I was the only girl, but I also felt different, perhaps in the same way that this picture shows the lamb a part of the family of sheep, but the only one that is black.