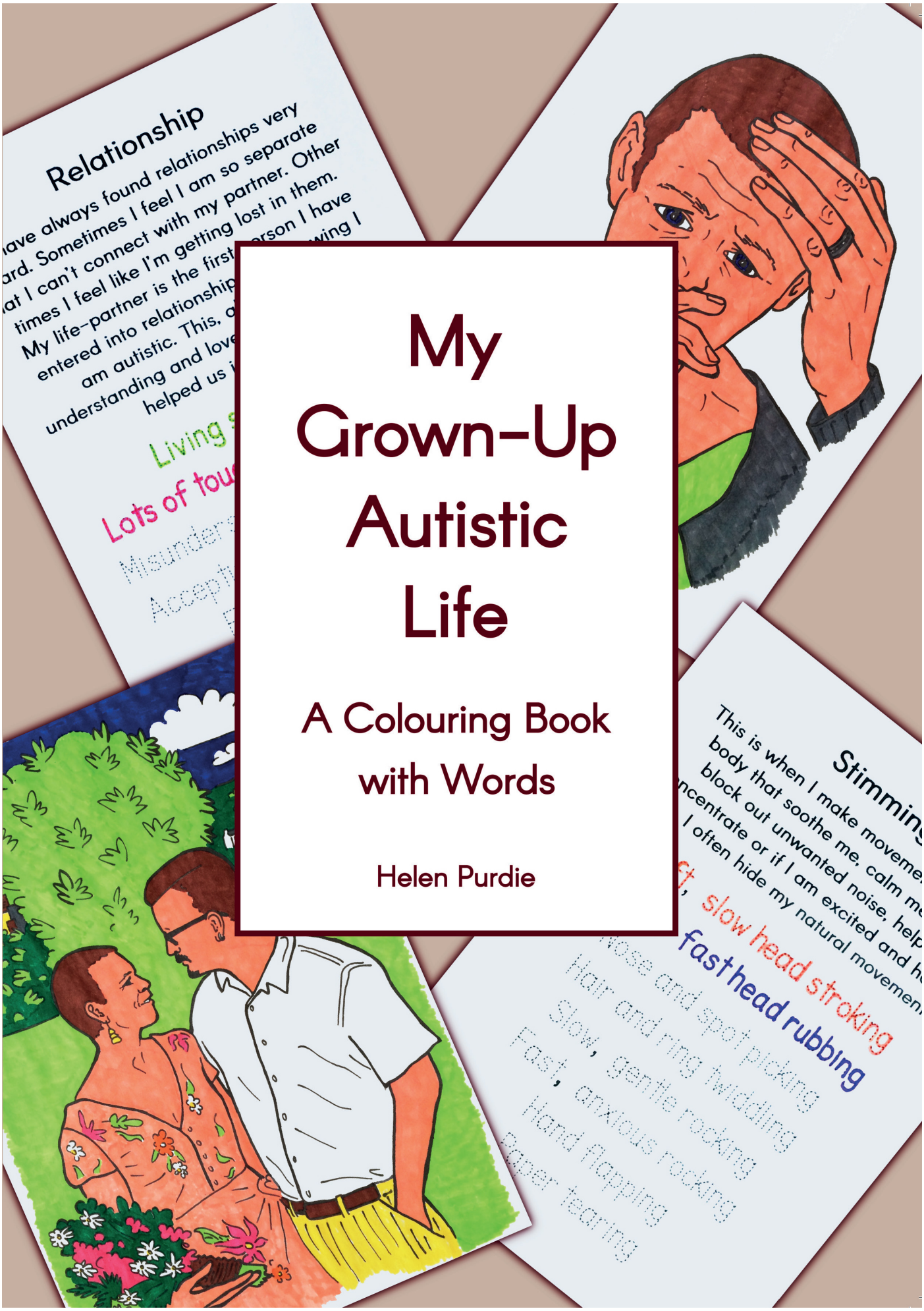


My Grown-Up Autistic Life

A Colouring Book with Words

Helen Purdie

My Grown-Up Autistic Life

Helen Purdie

Paperback edition December 2018

All drawings and words by Helen Purdie copyright © Helen Purdie 2018

Helen Purdie asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the author

ISBN 978-1-9993585-0-1

Purdie Publications

www.helenpurdie.co.uk

Printed and bound by

Mensa Printers

111 Arundel Lane, Sheffield S1 4RF

When I was little I had difficulty with colouring books. I loved to keep the pens lined up in their packet and I really enjoyed the rhythmical movements of colouring in. However, I struggled if I went over the outlines or if the pens started to run out. I also found the subjects of the drawings silly. I began my own colouring book by creating the drawings. The words then followed. Making this book has helped me reconnect with that little girl who didn't understand herself and was confused by the world around her. It is also an artistic expression of myself as the autistic grown-up woman I am.

Friendship and Family

I love my friends and family and they love me. I need a lot of solitude but spending time with them is important to me. I enjoy socialising but I find it exhausting. I often need lots of rest afterwards. The bigger and noisier the occasion, the more difficult I find it.

Feeling like the odd one out

'Passing' to look 'normal'

Liking one-to-one conversation

Taking things literally

Gentle sense of humour

Deep sense of loyalty

Enjoying being autistic me

words-words
words-words
ha ha ha!

Stimming

This is when I make movements with my body that soothe me, calm me down, block out unwanted noise, help me concentrate or if I am excited and having fun. I often hide my natural movements.

Soft, slow head stroking

Hard, fast head rubbing

Nose and spot picking

Hair and ring twiddling

Slow, gentle rocking

Fast, anxious rocking

Hand flapping

Paper tearing

Being a Mummy

My daughter is a young woman now. I love her so much. I used to feel like a naturally childless woman with a child. Now I know I am autistic, we are understanding each other better all the time. I am more confident to be the unusual mummy that I am.

Breastfeeding aggravating

No messy eating or messy play

Unwittingly controlling

Clashes helping with homework

Sleepovers exhausting

Arguments more short-lived

Feeling very proud of her

Meltdowns

I have these when I become overwhelmed. They are ugly and I feel bad afterwards. My meltdowns are most common if I am in a pressured situation or if I am tired. They usually follow a build-up of misunderstandings or emotions.

Words coming too fast

Same thoughts repeating

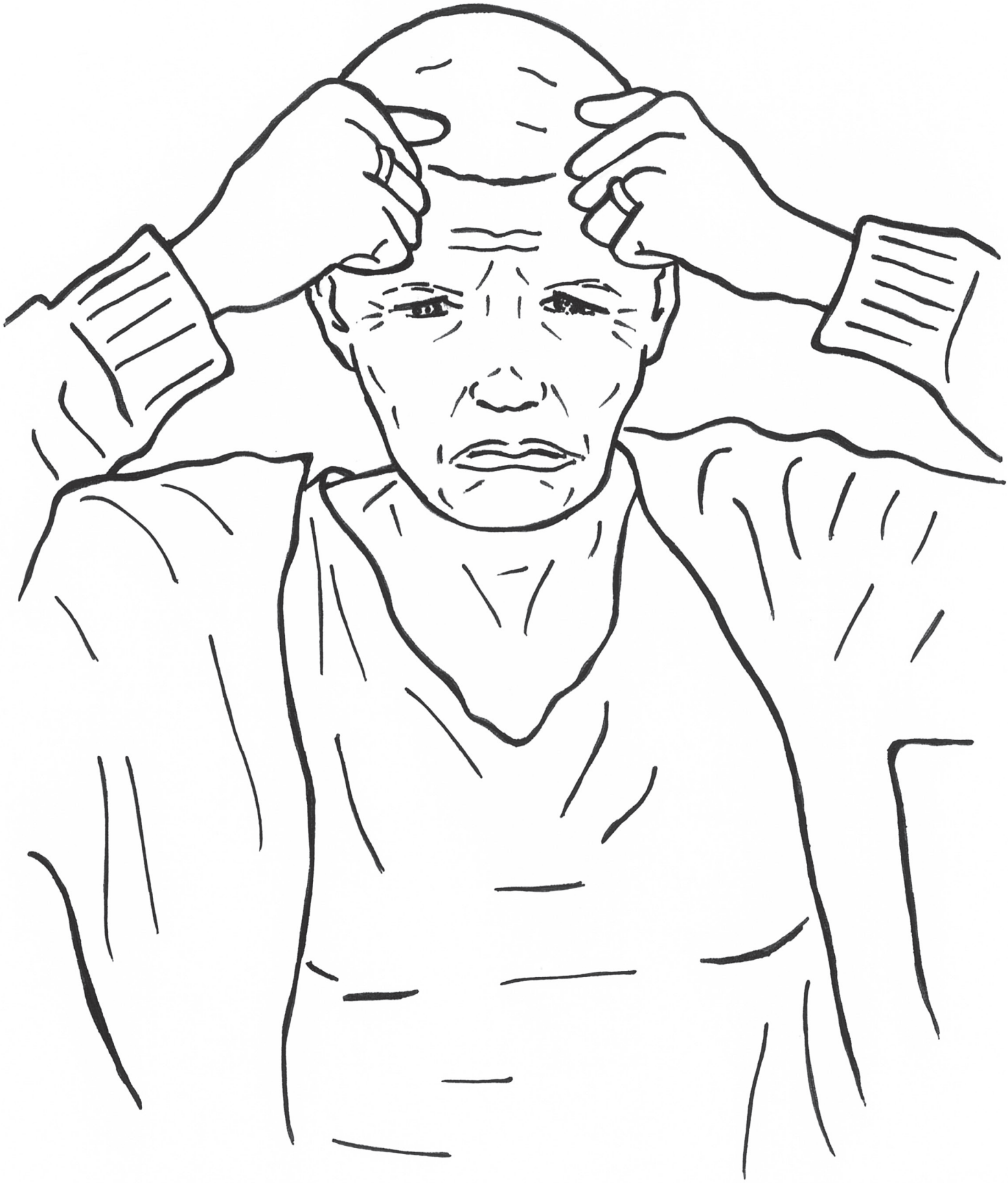
Brain jangling

Shouting and swearing

Pained humming

Head exploding

Knuckles banging forehead



Being at Work

I loved operating. I was very dextrous and found surgery beautiful. The large team environment was difficult for me. My distinctive strengths were appreciated more within a smaller research team. The solitary way I work now feels most natural.

Enjoying focus on detail

Speaking candidly

Anxious about making mistakes

Highly organised and methodical

Prepared to question authority

Struggling with banter

Willing to plough my own furrow

Shutdowns

These are when I become completely overwhelmed. My brain pulls the plug to protect itself from any further input. My shutdowns usually follow a prolonged meltdown, lots of meltdowns one after the other or if I have a surge of powerful emotion.

Walking like a snail

Arms and legs suddenly floppy

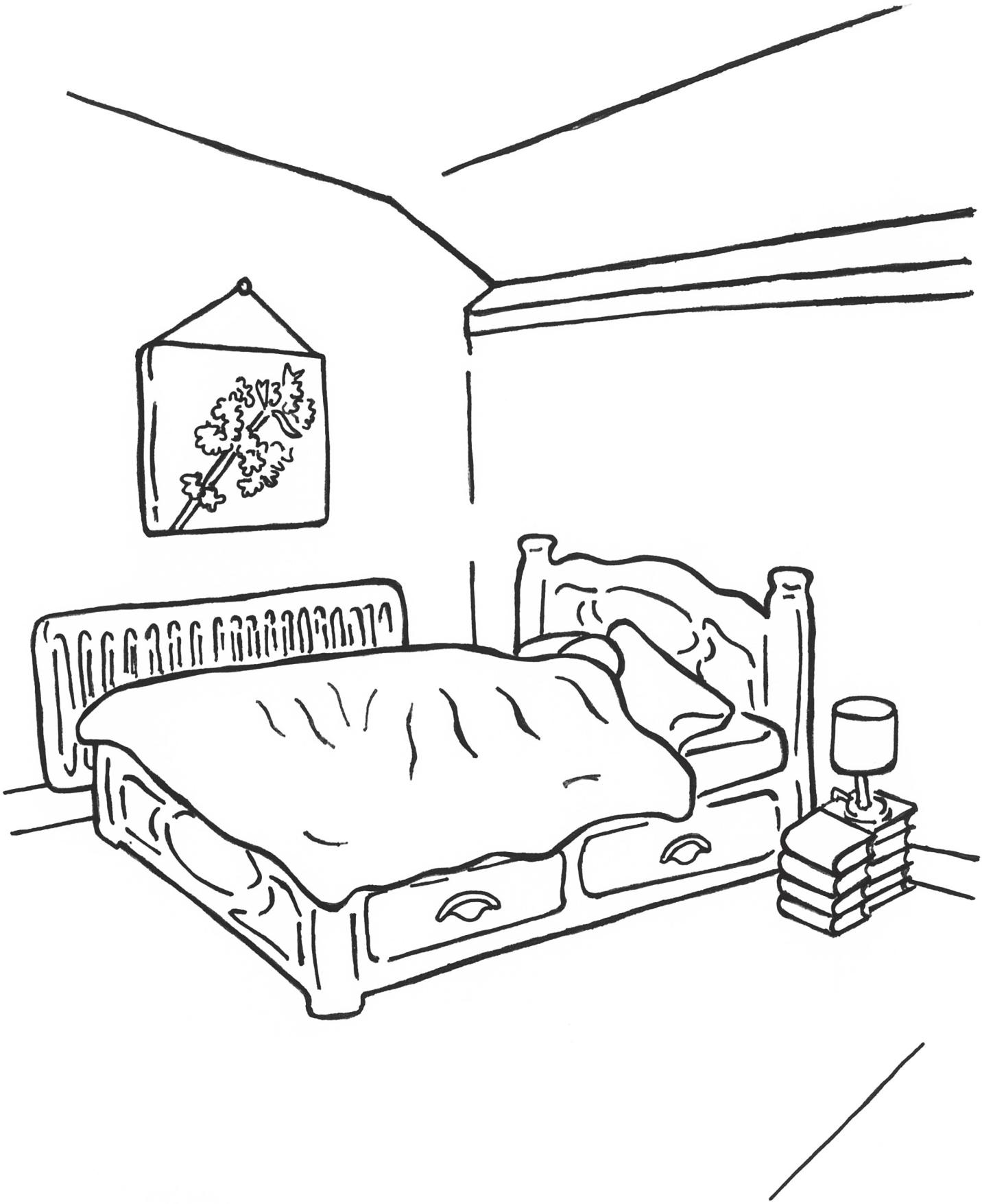
Dropping to the ground

Being unable to talk or move

Lying in the dark and quiet

Heavy quilt cacooning me

Sleeping for hours



Relationship

I have always found relationships very hard. Sometimes I feel I am so separate that I can't connect with my partner. Other times I feel like I'm getting lost in them. My life-partner is the first person I have entered into relationship with knowing I am autistic. This, along with his understanding and love of autistic me, has helped us immensely.

Living separately

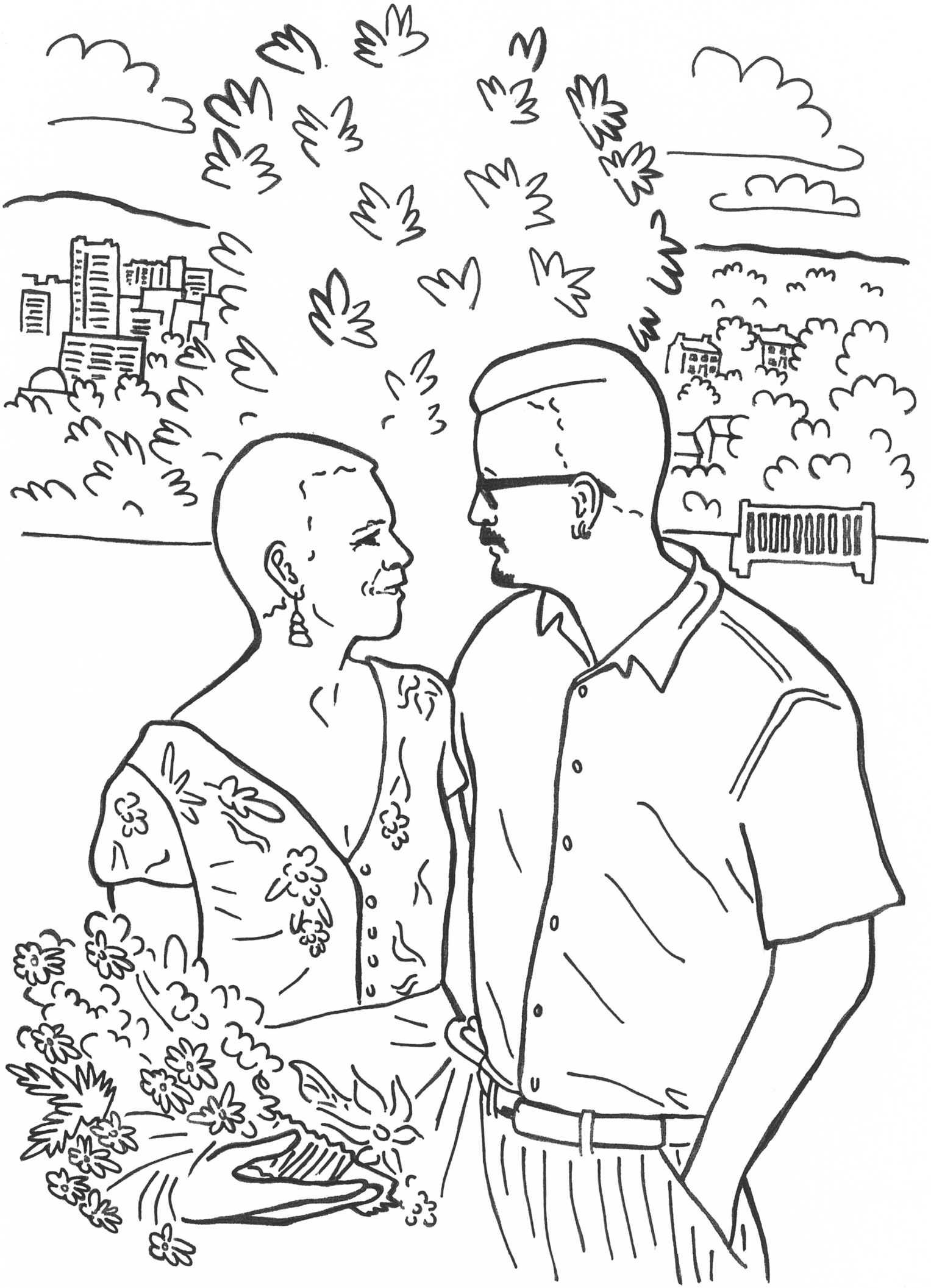
Lots of touching and stroking

Misunderstandings escalating

Accepting meltdowns happen

Forgiving mistakes

Being funny little things together



I live in Sheffield, England. I was confirmed autistic when I was forty six years old. I am learning to understand myself better now and to explain my inner experience to people more easily. I hope this colouring book with words about my grown-up autistic life may help people on their journey in understanding, accepting and celebrating themselves or those who are autistic.

Purdie Publications
www.helenpurdie.co.uk

ISBN 978-1-9993585-0-1
9 781999 358501 >