

To my father (rahimullah), who taught me to be myself fully, openly, and without shame —J.T.-B.

For those who are struggling to find a place —H.A.



Also illustrated by Hatem Aly: The Proudest Blue

The Kindest Red

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SALAIN SECRET

JAMILAH THOMPKINS-BIGELOW

HATEM ALY







Before prayer that night, I make wudu, washing carefully.















During salat, I don't rock and sway. My fingers don't tap-dance. No making funny faces at Maryama. I am too old for that now.

I am still. Like Daddy. When
I press my forehead on that
velvety rug, I repeat words
learned in Sunday school. I
whisper my most-wished-for
wishes to Allah.



After I pray fajr the next morning, I know I'll do dhuhr too. Dhuhr comes in the middle of the school day. Somehow, I'll find a secret place to do it. Somehow, asking won't be scary.

