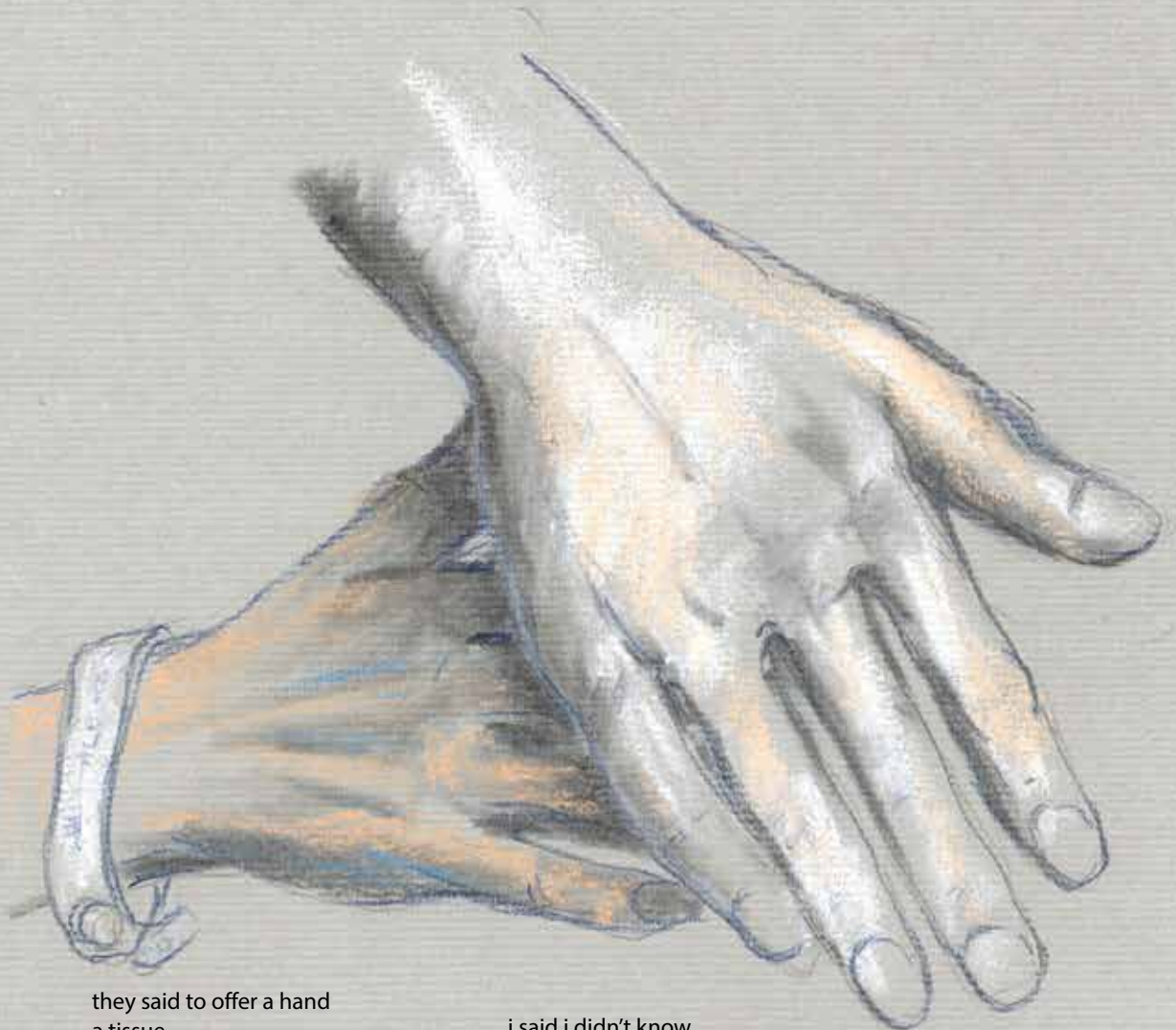


# what i said



they said to offer a hand  
a tissue  
a hug  
they said to be strong  
they said to be quiet  
they said to nod

how are you? i said  
fine she said  
just fine  
philadelphia chromosome she said  
acute lymphoblastic leukemia  
it's a bad prognosis she said

they don't know  
they just don't know she said  
they just can't give me time  
i'm fine she said again

i said i didn't know  
i said we didn't know  
i said we could just talk

how old are you? she said  
twenty-three i said  
you're young she said  
like my daughter  
what's she like? i said  
is she here?  
no she said  
i'm alone she said  
then she said nothing

they said to offer a hand when they shake  
a tissue when they cry  
a hug when they hurt  
they said to be strong when they're weak  
they said to be quiet when they can't  
they said to nod like i can understand

this is how to help the pain, they said  
when medicine gets too tough  
when therapy hurts too hard  
when disease takes too much

they didn't say what comes next  
what to say when the pain isn't from us

here's a tissue i said  
because i couldn't understand  
because that's all i could say

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