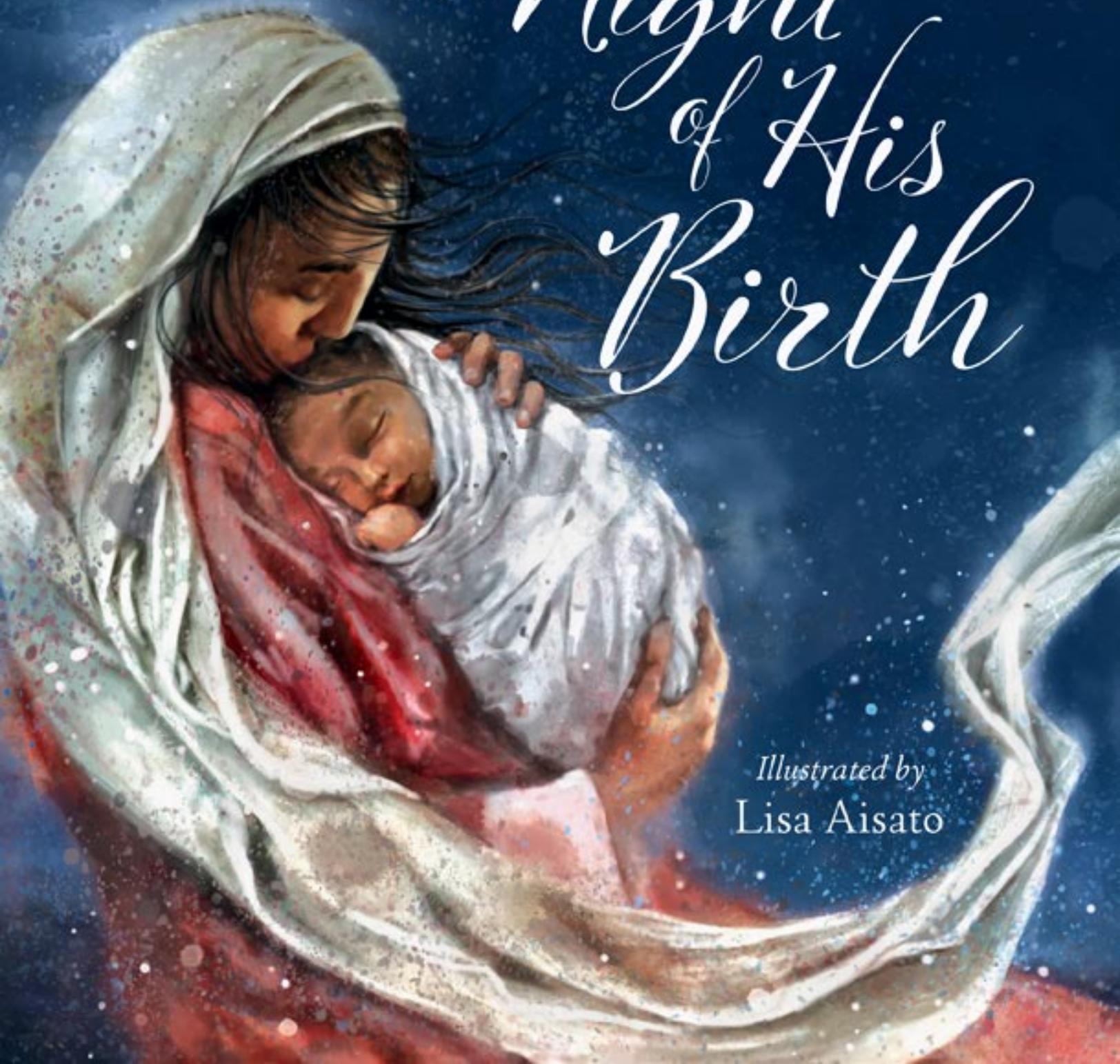


*Newbery Medalist*

KATHERINE PATERSON

*The Night  
of His  
Birth*

*Illustrated by*  
Lisa Aisato





*S*ing out, my soul, the wonder . . .

They are gone now, those shepherds,  
smelling of their sheep and rubbing their  
faces with chapped and grimy hands, eyes  
still dazed with angel light.

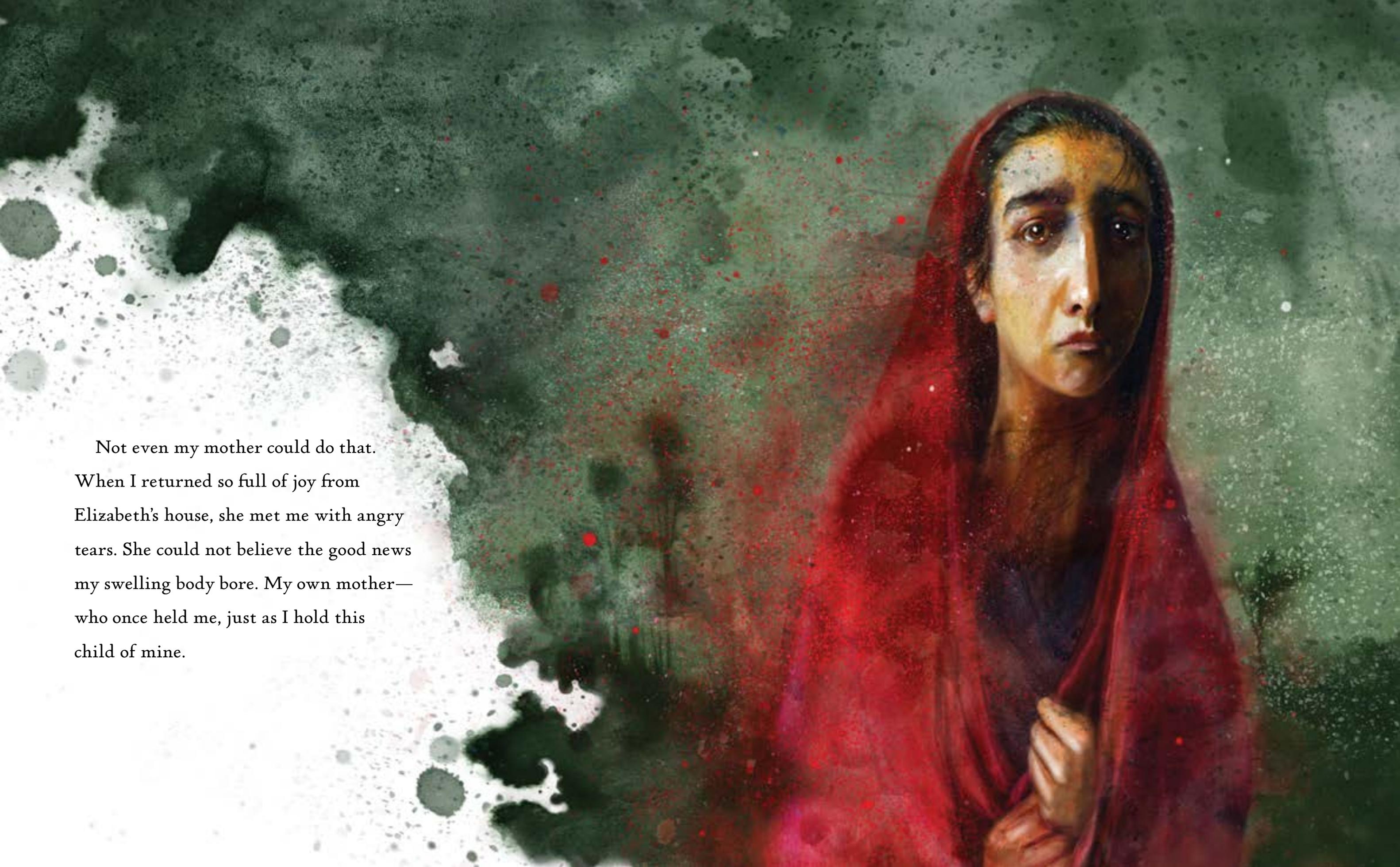
“Please, can we touch him?” Their  
hands reached toward the child my arms  
held close.

How could I say no? God is the host  
of this strange celebration at which I am  
also a guest.





Like these rough men, I, too, was startled by an angel. "Hail, most favored one!" he said. And through his messenger, God summoned me, as though to play a divine joke on a prideful world. Pity Isaiah. When that noble prophet sang of David's coming son, could he have dreamed of me?

A woman with dark hair, wearing a vibrant red headscarf, is the central figure. She has a somber, almost tearful expression, looking directly at the viewer. Her hands are clasped in front of her. The background is a textured, painterly composition of dark green, light green, and white, with small red specks scattered throughout, suggesting a scene of conflict or a somber environment. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting her face and the texture of her scarf.

Not even my mother could do that.  
When I returned so full of joy from  
Elizabeth's house, she met me with angry  
tears. She could not believe the good news  
my swelling body bore. My own mother—  
who once held me, just as I hold this  
child of mine.



My father did not speak, but I could see the questions in his eyes. Does she lie? Has she gone mad? And which is better, there being no comfort in either answer? They are sick with shame, for they are simple, pious people who care what the neighbors say.