The background of the image is a light green gradient. It is decorated with white musical notes and stems that curve across the top and bottom. Interspersed among the notes are green leaves and small, glowing yellow dots, creating a whimsical, musical atmosphere.

**I want to dedicate this book to all the
struggling, underprivileged kids!
I hope this book lets you know that you can
go through the worst situations in life and
still come out victorious!**

It was a rough time.

My dad had just walked out, abandoning us.

A few weeks later, a freak tornado destroyed our house.

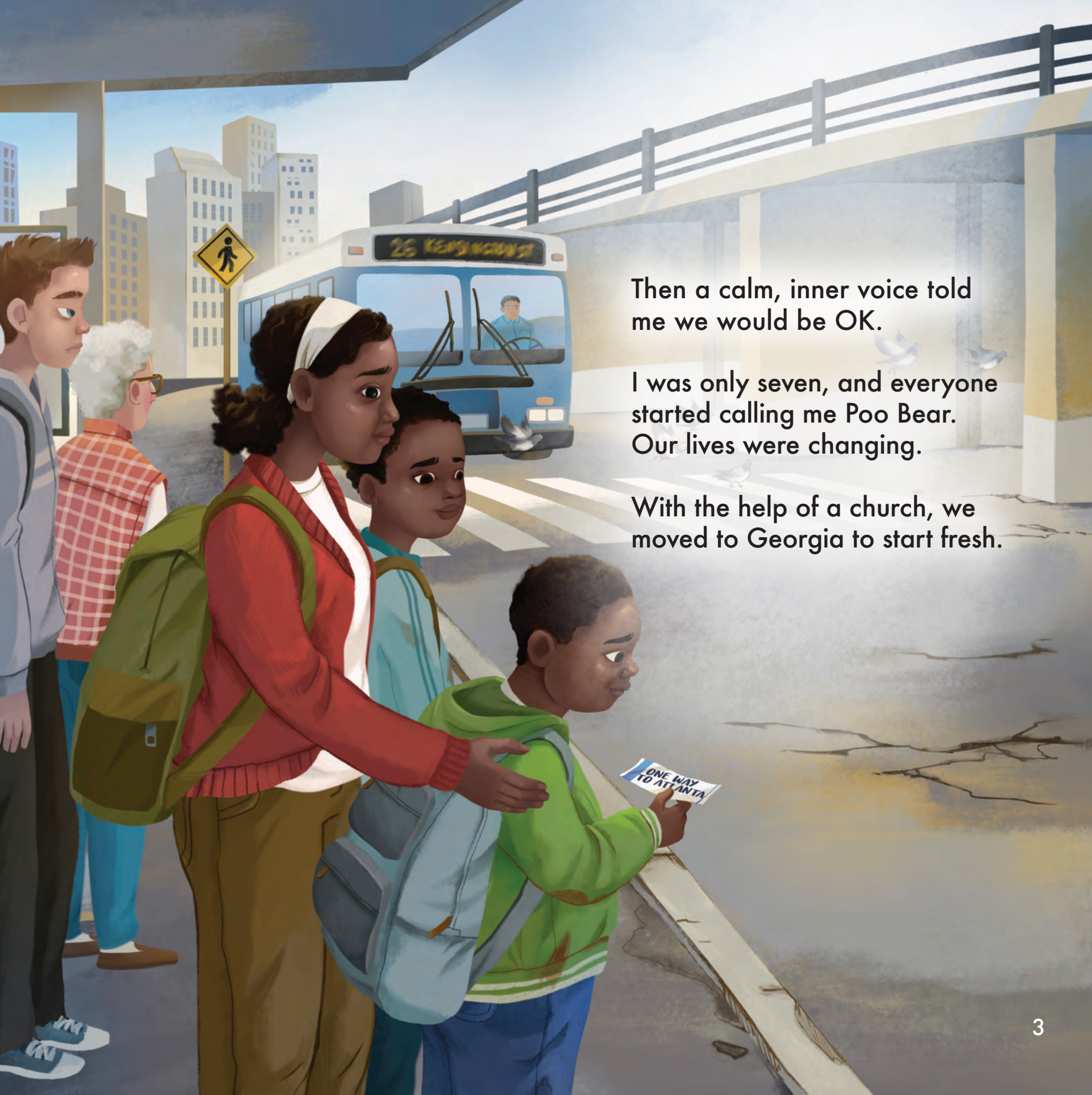
BAM!

My mom, my brother Jabba, and I were staying in a **shelter**.
We were **homeless**.

I was sad, mad, and scared.

How would we survive this moment?





Then a calm, inner voice told me we would be OK.

I was only seven, and everyone started calling me Poo Bear. Our lives were changing.

With the help of a church, we moved to Georgia to start fresh.


In Atlanta we struggled to find both a place to sleep and food to eat. An aunt, an uncle, and cousins came to live with us. Eight people squeezed into a tiny apartment. I slept on the cold, hard floor.

With such few **resources**, we were **evicted** from every place we rented. I'd come home from school and see all our clothes and belongings thrown onto the pavement. Everyone could see our stuff sitting there in a messy pile, thrown out like trash. It was humiliating!






I hated living like this.
But even more, I hated seeing
my mom live like this.

A man with glasses and a goatee, wearing a yellow jacket over a black shirt, is sitting at a large mixing console in a recording studio. He is looking towards the left with a slight smile. The studio has a blue wall with posters, including one for 'Hip-Hop Fest' and another that says 'DREAM open 24h'. A large speaker is mounted on the wall above him. A yellow lightning bolt graphic points from the speaker towards the text on the left. The mixing console in the foreground has many sliders and buttons, with a blue pen resting on it. A piece of paper is visible on the right side of the console.

It wasn't easy.
Not everyone liked my unique music.
They weren't used to it.
Or maybe they weren't ready for it?

After I had been writing hit songs for famous musicians for ten years, people started warming up to my sound. I got used to songwriters not getting **publishing credit**, but I also knew that being invisible while others got the glory didn't feel great. I waited for someone to acknowledge the work I did. But nobody really noticed *me*.



Then I started writing songs for Justin Bieber.
He was the first person outside my family to
make me feel accepted.
He helped me feel appreciated for being my
unique self, with my own distinctive style of songs.
It was the first time I truly felt like I belonged,
like I mattered.

STAY POSITIVE

WORK HARD

NEVER GIVE UP

Happy Bearthday!



I might have had a rough start and a tough road, but my dream came true. I helped my mom and my family live a better life just like I dreamed of when I was younger.