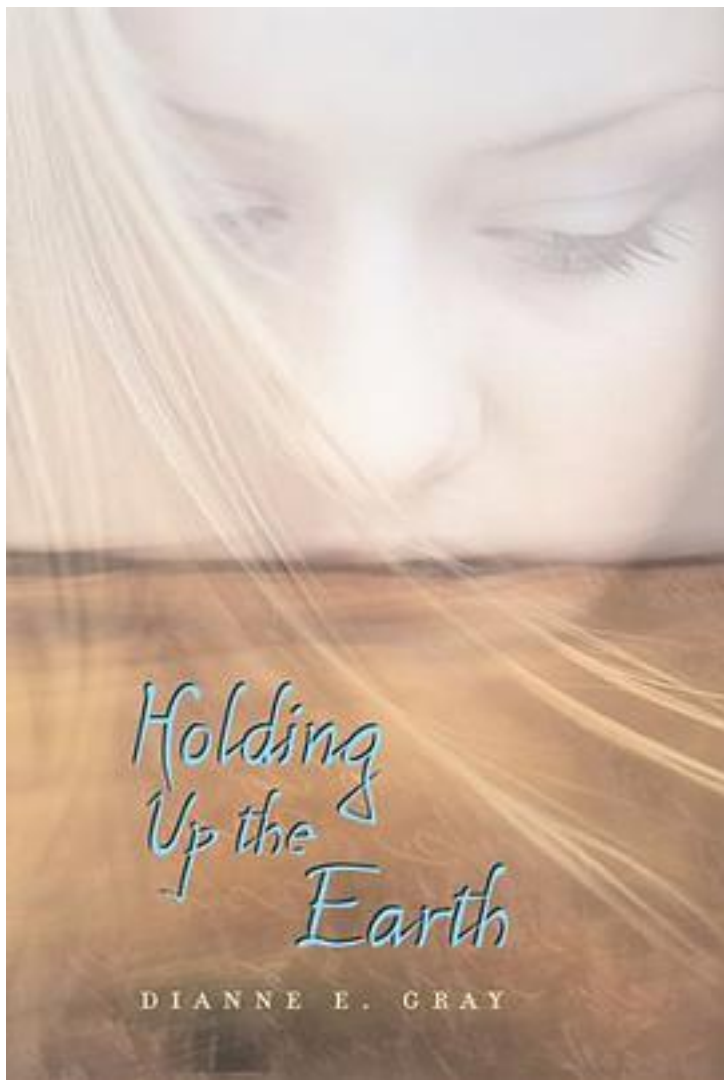


Holding Up the Earth



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It has been eight years since Hope's mom died in a car accident. Eight years of shuffling from foster home to foster home. Eight years of trying to hold on to the memories that tether her to her mother. Now Sarah, Hope's newest foster mom, has taken her from Minneapolis to spend the summer on the Nebraska farm where Sarah grew up. Hope is set adrift, anchored only by her ever-present and memory-heavy backpack. Accustomed to the clamor of city life, Hope is at first unsettled by the silence that descends over the farm each night. But listening deeply, she begins to hear the quiet: the crickets' chirp, the windsong, the steady in and out of her own breath. Soon the silence is replaced by voices, like echoes sounding across time -- the voices of girls who inhabited the old farmhouse before her. Reluctantly, Hope begins to stretch down roots in the earth and accept this new family as her own.

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