



StoryTime

Highlighting cultural connections worldwide

Acknowledgments

A huge thank you to everyone who helped bring this art installation and coloring book to life:

- *Liam Dickinson and Riley Milinovich for all the hard work and great contributions in the studio;*
- *Jennifer Noveck, Ph.D., for the insightful story research;*
- *Laura Johanson/Straightup Communication and Lynne Talbot/group c inc, for the fantastic editing and design of this coloring book;*
- *Enzina Marrari, Curator of Public Art, for helping out from day one and seeing it through;*
- *1% For Art Public Art Program — Municipality of Anchorage, for providing funding & oversight. Art matters!*



Many cultures, stories and connections

Through history, cultures around the globe have passed unforgettable tales from generation to generation. Through this lore we learn of virtues and vices, that things are the way they are for a reason, and that dreams precede creations. These stories entertain, bring people together and teach by passing on wisdom, useful skills, and knowledge of the world around us.

Storytelling sessions around fire circles are the original university lectures—a safe place to sit among friends and family, respectfully listen to elders, learn, and find one’s way in the world. These tales connect us to each other and to nature, bind the present to the past, and link one nation to another.

When reviewing the folk tales and origin stories for this project, I was struck by how similar many of them are, such as an African/Ashanti story of the clever spider Anansi, who obtains light for the world by bringing it in the box it was kept in, and the North American/Haida story of the trickster Raven who with skill and cunning steals the box in which light was kept.

StoryTime incorporates details and animals from these stories, with an emphasis on the characters who show up in stories all over the world. Also depicted are the four elements: earth, air, fire and water, as well as the four seasons. Insects, arachnid, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, fish and humans are represented.

One of my favorite concepts, which I encountered in many forms across cultural stories, is the importance of dreams, and the idea that the world, or the creatures of the world, were dreamed into existence. I love how this relates to an artist’s creativity. I used babies and mirrors to convey the idea of dreaming, reflecting, imagining and creating our world.

We all have an opportunity to create from the inside, what we want to be on the outside. Who do we want to be? What do we want to add to this world?

Debbie J. Dickinson, Artist

How Spider Obtained the Sky God’s Stories

A Myth from the Ashanti People of Ghana

Once there were no stories in the world. Kwanku Anansi the spider once went to Nyan-Konpon the sky god in order to buy the sky god’s stories. The sky god said, “What makes you think you can buy them?” The spider answered, “I know I shall be able.” Thereupon, the sky god said, “Great and powerful towns like Kokofu, Bekwai, Asumengya have come and they were unable to purchase them, and yet you who are but a masterless man, you say you will be able?”

The spider said, “What is the price of the stories?” The sky god said, “They cannot be bought for anything except Onini the python, Osebo the leopard, Mmoatia the fairy, and Mmoboro the hornet.” The spider said, “I will bring some of all of these.”

The sky god said, “Go and bring them then!”

Anansi set about capturing these. First he went to where Python lived and debated out loud whether Python was really longer than the palm branch or not as his wife Aso says. Python overheard and, when Anansi explained the debate, agreed to lie along the palm branch. Because he cannot easily make himself completely straight a true impression of his actual length is difficult to obtain, so Python agreed to be tied to the branch. When he was completely tied, Anansi took him to the sky god.

The spider said, “What is the price of the stories?” The sky god said, “They cannot be bought for anything except Onini the python, Osebo the leopard, Mmoatia the fairy, and Mmoboro the hornet.” The spider said, “I will bring some of all of these.”

To catch the leopard, Anansi dug a deep hole in the ground. When the leopard fell in the hole Anansi offered to help him out with his webs. Once the leopard was out of the hole he was bound in Anansi’s webs and was carried away.

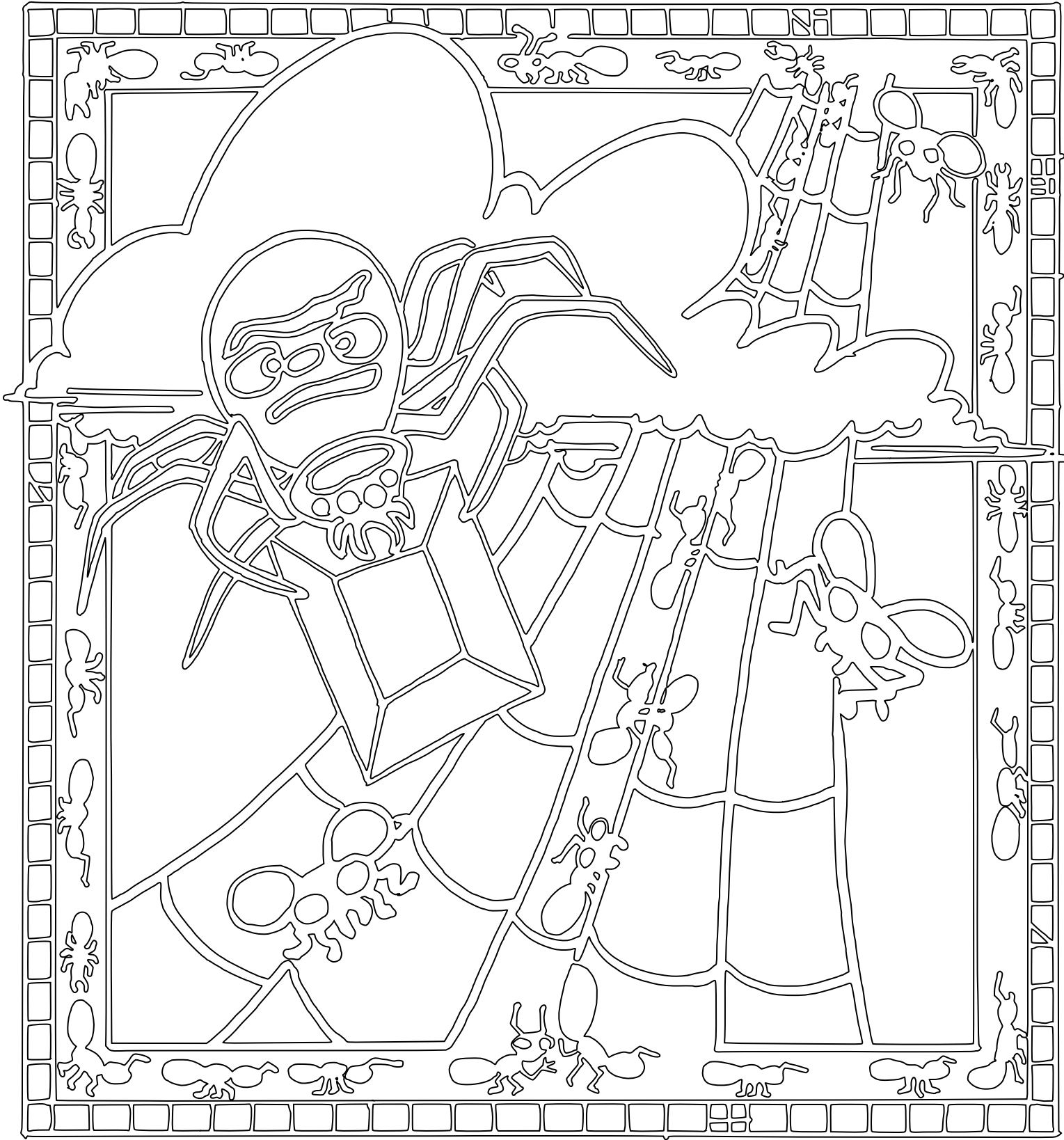
To catch the hornets, Anansi filled a calabash with water and poured some over a banana leaf he held over his head and some over the nest, calling out that it was raining. He suggested the hornets get into the empty calabash, and when they obliged, he quickly sealed the opening.

To catch the fairy he made a doll and covered it with sticky gum. He placed the doll under the Odum (Tree of Life) where the fairies play and put some yam in a bowl in front of it.

When the fairy came and ate the yam she thanked the doll which of course did not reply. Annoyed at its bad manners she struck it, first with one hand then the other. The hands stuck and Anansi captured her.

Anansi handed his captives over to Nyan the sky god. The latter said, “Kawku Anansi, from today and going on forever, I present my sky god stories to you, kose! kose! kose! my blessing, my blessing, my blessing! No more shall we call them the sky god stories, but we shall call them the spider stories!

<https://www.wilderutopia.com/traditions/myth/ashanti-of-ghana-how-spider-obtained-the-sky-gods-stories/>



The Woman and Her Bear

An Eskimo Legend

Long ago in the far north, there lived a village of people known as the Inuit. They lived on the shores of the icy Arctic, and they depended upon the bounty of the salmon and seal and the creatures of the snow to feed themselves. All the young men of the village were hunters and fishermen. One old woman lived alone. She had no husband and no sons to hunt or fish for her, and though her neighbors shared their food with her, as was their custom, she was lonely. She longed for a family of her own. She often walked along the shore, looking far out to sea, praying that the gods might send her a son.

One cold winter day, the woman was walking by the sea when she spotted a tiny white polar bear sitting all alone on the thick ice. At once she felt a kinship toward him, for he looked as lonely as she. His mother was nowhere in sight. “Someone must have killed her,” she said softly, and she walked onto the ice, picked up the cub and looked into his eyes. “You will be my son,” she said. She called him Kunik.

The old woman took her cub back to her home. From that day on, she shared all of her food with Kunik, and a strong bond grew between the two.

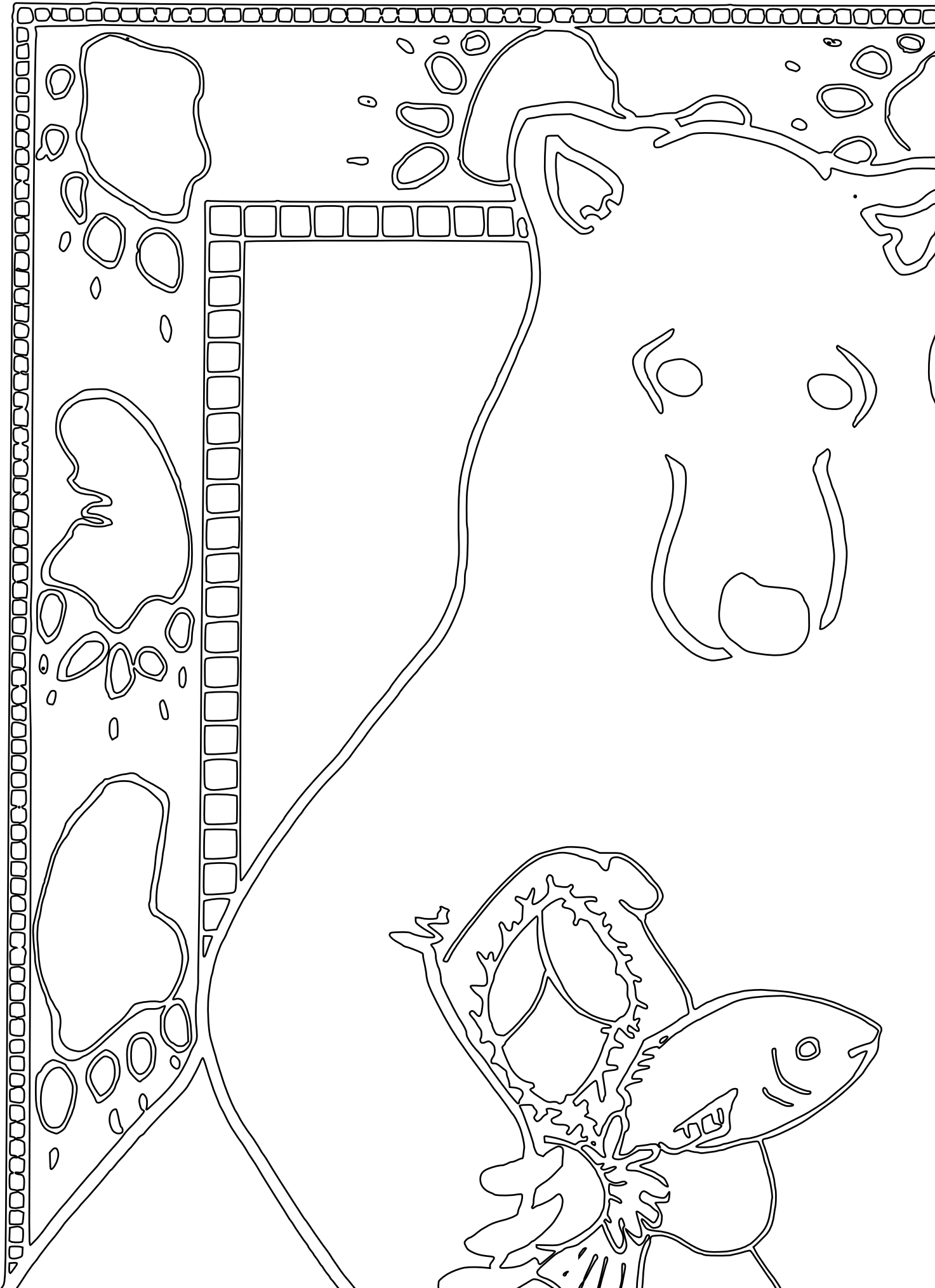
The village children loved Kunik, too. Now the woman was never lonely, for her son, the bear, and all the village children kept her company all day. She

would stand by her igloo and smile as Kunik and the children rolled in the snow and slid on the ice. Kunik was gentle with the children as if they were his brothers and sisters.

Kunik grew taller and smarter. The children taught him to fish. By springtime he was fishing on his own, and every afternoon he came home carrying fresh salmon for his mother. The old woman was now the happiest of all the villagers. She had plenty of food and a son she loved with all her heart. She was so proud of her little bear that whenever he returned home, she would say proudly to anyone nearby, “He’s the finest fisherman in all the village!”

Before long the men began to whisper among themselves. They knew the bear was the most skillful fisherman of the village. They began to feel envious. “What will we do?” they asked each other. “That bear brings home the fattest seals and the biggest salmon.” “He must be stopped,” one of the men said. “He puts us to shame.” They all turned and looked at him. They nodded slowly for although they were envious, they knew how much the old woman loved the bear. “We’ll have to kill him. He has grown far too big,” one man said. One by one the others agreed, for their envy made them stupid and mean. “Yes” the others said. “He is a danger to our families.”

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The Woman and Her Bear (continued)
An Eskimo Legend

A little boy overheard the men talking. He ran to the old woman’s home to tell her of the terrible plan. When the old woman heard the news, she threw her arms around her bear and wept. “No,” she said, “they must not kill my child.” At once she set off to visit every house in the village. She begged each man not to kill her beautiful bear. “Kill me instead,” she wept. “He is my child. I love him dearly.”

“He is fat,” some of the village men said. “He will make a great feast for the whole village.” “He is a danger to our children,” the others said. “We cannot let him live.”

The old woman saw that the men was determined to kill her son. She rushed home and sat down beside him. “Your life is in danger, Kunik. You must run away. Run away and do not return, my child.” She wept as she spoke and held him close. “Run away. But do not go so far that I cannot find you,” she whispered. And though her heart was breaking, she sent Kunik away. He had tears in his eyes, but he obeyed his mother’s wishes.



For many days the old woman and the children grieved their loss. And then one day the old woman rose at dawn and was determined to find Kunik. She walked and walked, calling out his name. After many hours, just as the old woman feared she would never find him, she saw her bear running toward her. He was fat and strong, and his coat was shimmering white. They embraced, and the old woman whispered, “I love you.”

After awhile the villagers grew to understand the love between the woman and the bear was strong and true.

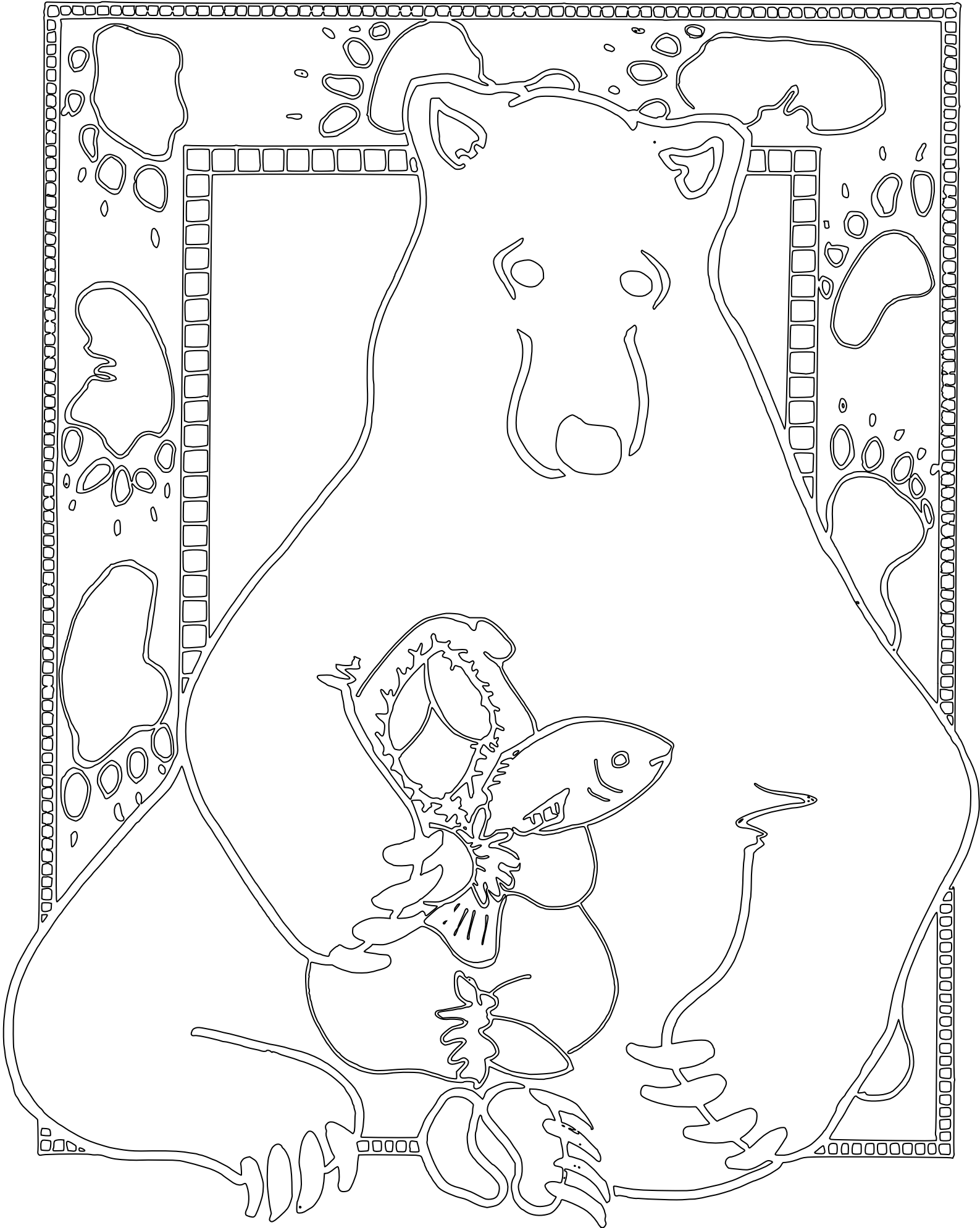
But Kunik could see that his mother was hungry, and so he ran to get her fresh meat and fish. With tears in her eyes, the old woman cut up the seal and gave her son the

choicest slices of blubber. Promising to return the next day, she set off for home, carrying her meat, her heart filled with joy.

The next day, as she had promised, she went to visit her son. And every day after that, the old woman and her son met, and the bear brought his mother fresh meat and fish.

After awhile the villagers grew to understand the love between the woman and the bear was strong and true. And from that point on, they told with pride and respect the tale of the unbroken love between the old woman and her son.

<https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Legends/TheWomanAndHerBear-Eskimo.html>



Raven and How the Tides Began

A Tlingit Legend

Once, long ago, when the world was new, there was Raven. Raven and his people lived near the shore of the Big Water. At this time there were no tides, and the people would get their food from the Big Water, as sometimes good things to eat like clams, would wash up along the shore. But the people could not go out into the Big Water, for it was very deep. After a while, the people became many and soon there was not enough food for all the people and for Raven. You see, Raven was sometimes very greedy and loved to eat the good things that washed up on the shore.

Now Raven was sorely troubled that there was not enough to eat and fill his hungry belly. Raven sat down and began to think about this problem. Soon Raven fell into a deep sleep. Great Spirit having pity upon the people

came to Raven in a dream and said to Raven, “Raven, I have seen that you and the people are suffering because there is not enough to eat. There lies at the end of the world, at the edge of the Big water, a cave. In this cave sits an old woman who holds the tide line across her lap. This controls the ebb and flow or rising and falling of the water. She holds this line very strongly. If, perhaps, you can get her to let go of the line, the water will fall and the people will be able to get some of the good things to eat from the Big Water because they will be uncovered by the water. This will not be easy for you to do, Raven, for the woman holds the line very tightly. Raven, you are clever and perhaps you can trick her into letting go of the line.”

Soon Raven awoke from his dream. Raven knew what he must do to help the people and to feed his hungry belly.

Soon Raven awoke from his dream. Raven knew what he must do to help the people and to feed his hungry belly.

So Raven flew. He flew and flew. For four days and nights Raven flew. Finally Raven came to the cave at the end of the world, at the edge of the Big Water.

Raven looked and saw the old woman sitting in the cave with the line across her lap. She was holding it very tightly.

Raven began walking in front of the cave; rubbing his belly, and saying in a loud voice, “Mmm, Mmm those clams sure were good!”

The old woman heard Raven just outside the cave and leaned a little forward to see Raven, saying, “Raven, Raven! Where did you get those clams?”

Raven paid no attention to the woman and walked again in front of the cave, rubbing his belly and saying in a loud voice, “Mmm, Mmm those clams sure tasted good! I wish I had some more!”

The old woman leaned forward even further and said, “ Raven, Raven! Where did you get those clams?”

Raven again paid no attention to the woman. He walked again in front of the cave, rubbing his belly and saying, “Mmm, Mmm! I sure wish I had some more of those clams!!”

The old woman leaned even further forward. Suddenly, Raven kicked some said up into the woman’s eyes. She could not see, and tried to brush



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Raven and How the Tides Began (continued)

A Tlingit Legend

the sand out of her eyes. When she did, she let go of the line! The waters fell back and soon some of the Big Water was uncovered. Raven saw what had happened and was happy. He flew home thinking of all of the good things that he would soon be eating.

When Raven arrived home the people were happy. Now they had many good things to eat from the Big Water. They thanked Raven and Great Spirit for helping them and held a big feast. Raven was happy because his belly was soon full of the good things that he loved to eat.

For many days, Raven and his people ate all the good things from the Big Water. But soon many of the creatures of the Big Water began to die. They lie on the shore and began to rot and smell. The people went to Raven and said, “ Raven, you must do something! The creatures of the Big Water are dying! We will also die for we will soon have nothing to eat! Help us, Raven!”

So Raven flew. He flew and flew. For four days and nights he flew to the end of the world, at the edge of the Big Water, to the cave of the woman who held the tide.

When Raven got there, he looked into the cave. The woman was still trying to get the sand out of her eyes. She heard Raven approach and said, “Raven, Raven! Is that you? You tricked

me! Help me get the sand out of my eyes, and help me to find the tide line!”

Raven said, “Yes, I did trick you. I wanted to get all of the good things from the Big Water that I love to eat. So I tricked you into letting go and the waters fell. But now, the creatures of the Big Water are dying, and the people have little to eat. If I help you, will you help the people by letting go of the tide line from time to time? Then the people will be able to get some of the good things from the Big Water that they like to eat. And the

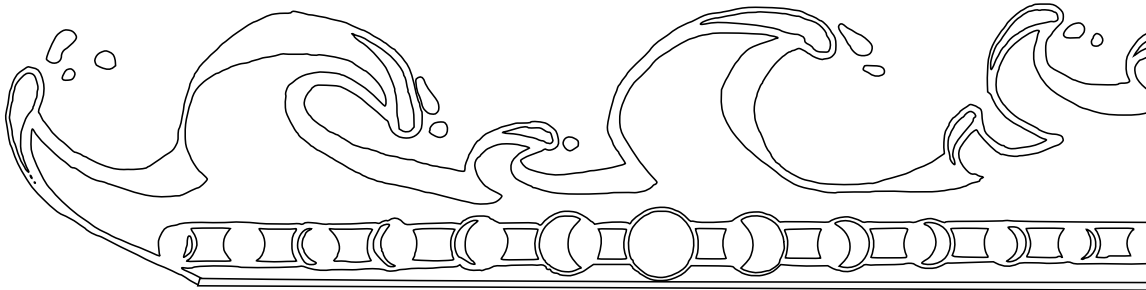
creatures of the Big Water will not die because the waters that are their home do not cover them.”

The old woman said, “Yes, Raven, I agree, if you will help me, I will help the people.”

So Raven cleared the sand out of the woman’s eyes, sat her back in the cave and

gave her the tide line to hold across her lap. From time to time the woman would let go of the line and the waters would fall back. Raven then flew back home to his people, who gave thanks to Raven for helping them. And that is how the tides began.

<https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Legends/RavenAndHowTheTidesBegan-Tlingit.html>



How Raven Brought Light to the World

A Haida Legend

In the beginning the world was in total darkness. The Raven, who had existed from the beginning of time, was tired of groping about and bumping into things in the dark.

Eventually the Raven came upon the home of an old man who lived alone with his daughter. Through his slyness, the Raven learned that the old man had a great treasure. This was all the light in the universe, contained in a tiny box concealed within many boxes. At once the Raven vowed to steal the light.

He thought and thought, and finally came up with a plan. He waited until the old man’s daughter came to the river to gather water. Then the Raven changed himself into a single hemlock needle and dropped himself into the river, just as the girl was dipping her water-basket into the river.

As she drank from the basket, she swallowed the needle. It slipped and slithered down into her warm belly, where the Raven transformed himself again, this time into a tiny human. After sleeping and growing there for a very long time, at last the Raven

emerged into the world once more, this time as a human infant.

Even though he had a rather strange appearance, the Raven’s grandfather loved him. But the old man threatened dire punishment if he ever touched the precious treasure box. Nonetheless the Ravenchild begged and begged to be allowed to hold the light just for a moment.

In time the old man yielded and lifted from the box a warm and glowing sphere, which he threw to his grandson.

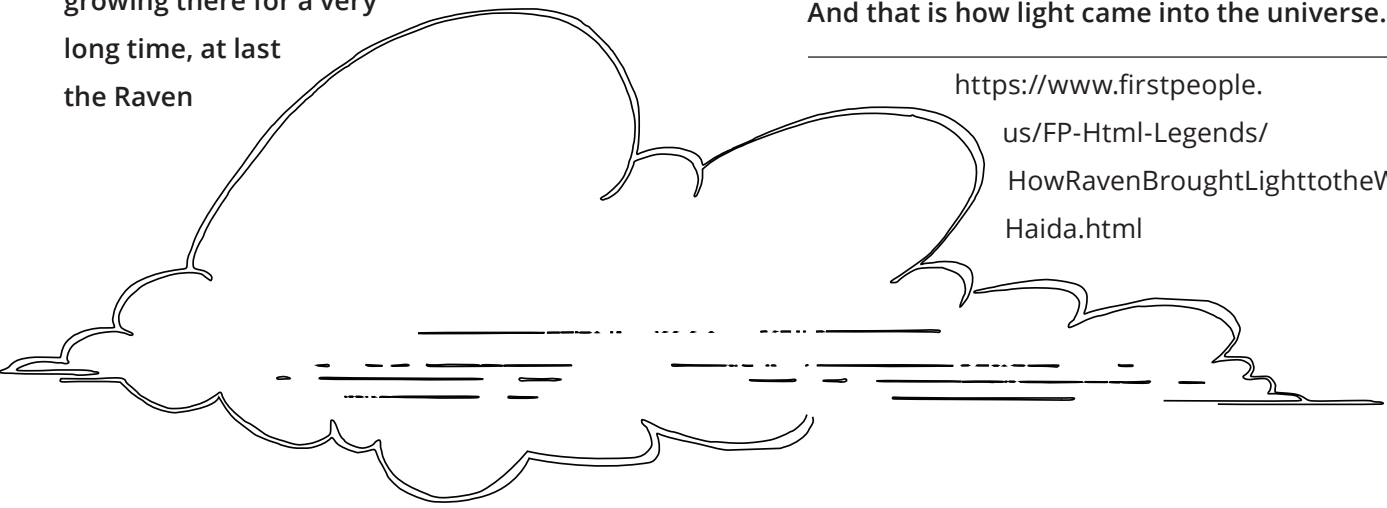
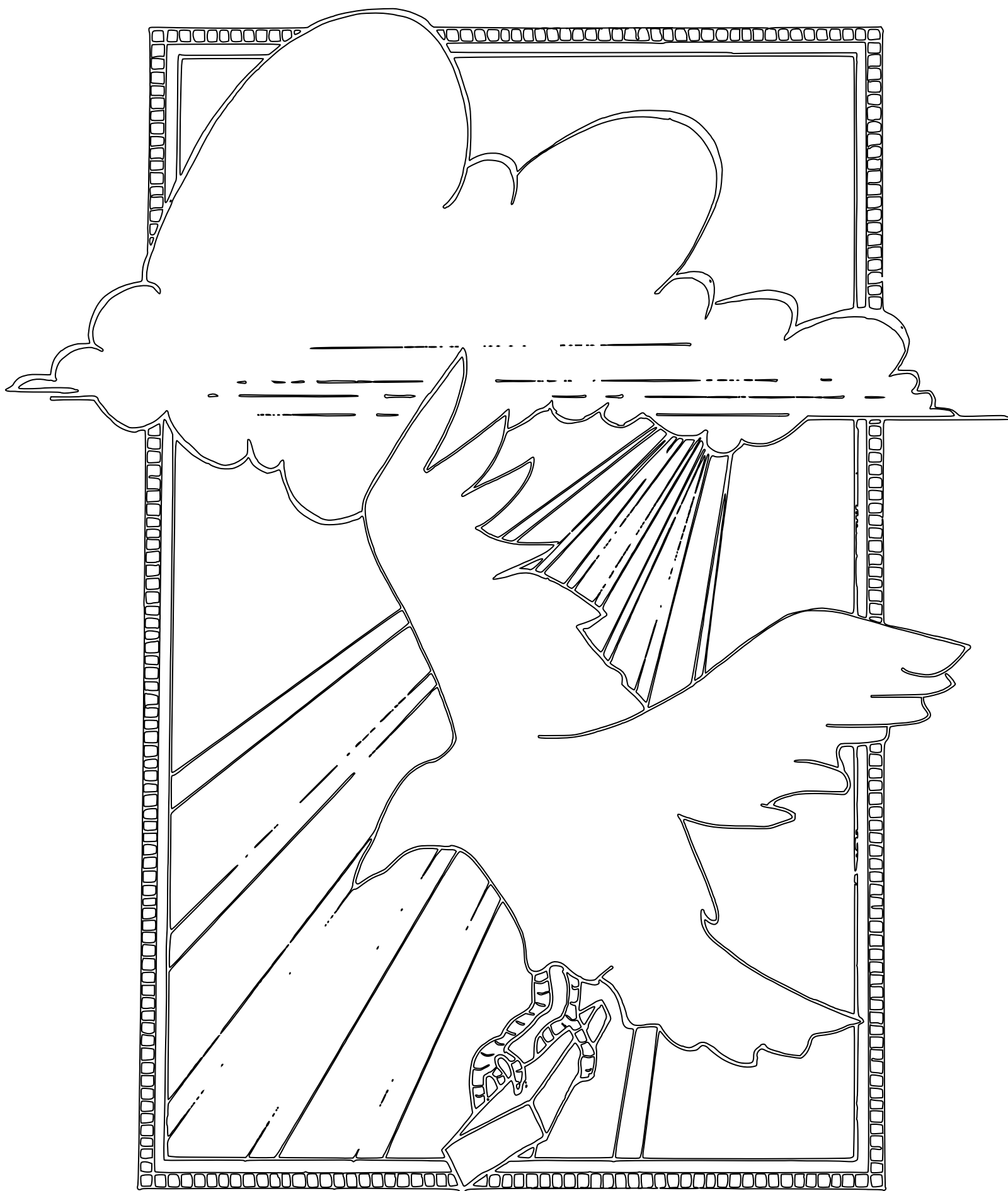
As the light was moving toward him, the human child transformed into a gigantic black shadowy bird-form, wings spread ready for flight, and beak open in anticipation.

As the beautiful ball of light reached him, the Raven captured it in his beak!

Moving his powerful wings, he burst through the smoke-hole in the roof of the house and escaped into the darkness with his stolen treasure.

And that is how light came into the universe.

<https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Legends/HowRavenBroughtLighttotheWorld-Haida.html>



Turtle Island

An Ojibwa Legend

In the beginning, Giidzhii Manidoo, the Great Spirit, made all things and gave instructions for how all creatures could live in harmony. For a long time the creatures of the Earth and the Earth itself lived in peace, but eventually, many forgot to love and respect and honor all living beings.

Giidzhii Manidoo was unhappy, and so the Creator let loose the waters, and a great flood swallowed the land. With nowhere to rest, the animals could only swim, endlessly swim.

Waynaboozhoo, the man-god who plays between Earth and the world of the Great Spirit, took pity on them, and so he built a raft of sticks and welcomed them aboard.

Here they floated, waiting for the waters to recede.

But the waters did not recede. “We have failed the Great Spirit because we have forgotten the instructions,” Waynaboozhoo said.

The animals understood and were ashamed, so they promised if they survived, they would once again remember to love, honor and respect everyone.

Makinaak, the turtle, had an idea. He offered his back to serve as the foundation for a new Earth. Others could swim to the old world below and carry the mud of that world to place on his back. In this way they would create a new Earth.

Makwaa, the bear, loved the idea, and so he said, “I am most powerful, so I should have the honor

of carrying the mud to create our new world.” He took a deep breath and dived, and propelled by his powerful limbs, he swam deeper and deeper. But no matter how hard he stroked, he could not reach the bottom, and soon he felt the breath leaving his body. He shot to the surface, nearly dead from the effort. Waynaboozhoo breathed life back into him.

Amik, the beaver, said, “You are not a good swimmer, but I am the best of all, so I shall swim down for the

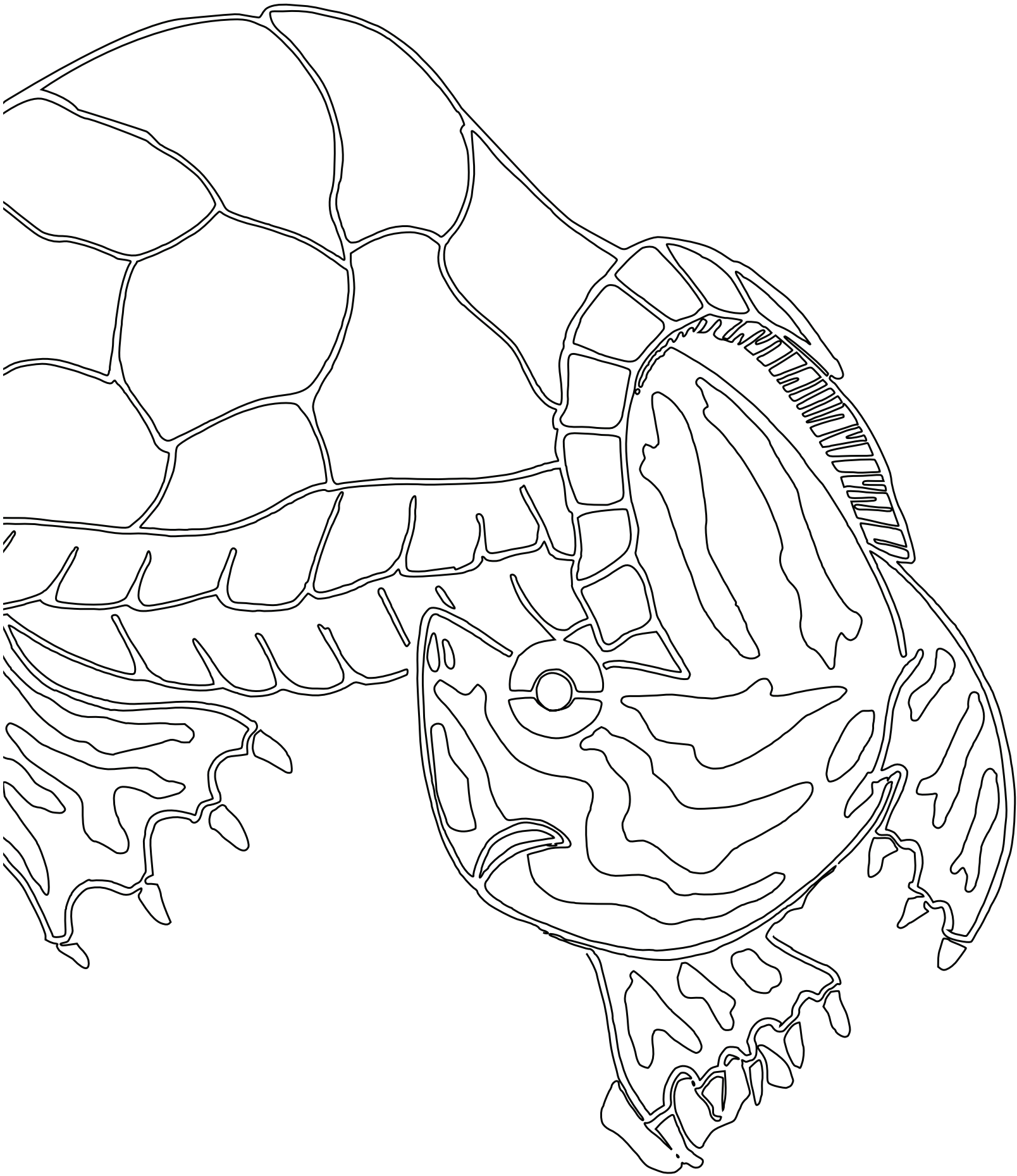
mud.” He dived, but he was gone so long, the others were sure he had died. When he did at long last surface, he had no mud, and he, too, was nearly dead. Waynaboozhoo breathed life back into him.

Now Maa’ingan, the wolf, decided he must try. “On Earth I could run faster than wind without losing my breath. I am the finest runner, so I shall try.” He dived, and he swam and swam, but he could not reach bottom, and by the time he reached the surface, he, too, required the breath of Waynaboozhoo to return to life.

The animals started to panic. Who would rescue them? Who was the bravest, the strongest, the wisest? They began to bicker when, above the din, they heard a little voice. It was Waszhask, the muskrat, who spoke. “I’ll try,” he squeaked.

The others burst out laughing. “You are not powerful or strong or fast or brave,” they said. “You could never survive.”

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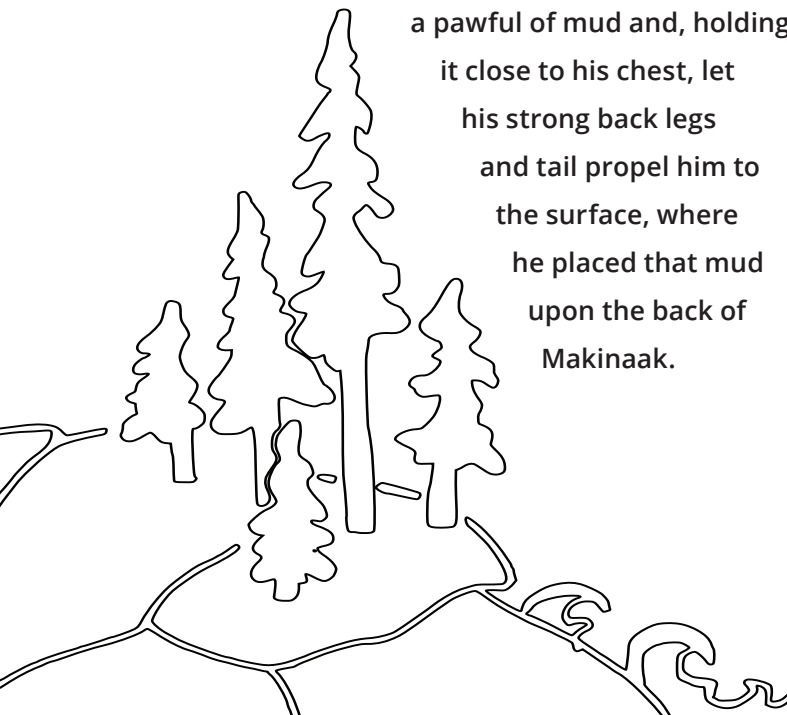
Turtle Island (continued)
An Ojibwa Legend

They laughed and teased Waszhask, until, at last, Waynaboozhoo called for silence. “Every one of you thinks you are powerful, but none of you could reach bottom. Remember on our new Earth, no one is more important than anyone else. We all need each other. Without each other, the circle of life is broken. Perhaps Waszhask is not as strong or fast or brave as others, but he wants to try to help us, and we must give him our support.”

The animals fell silent. Then they began to whisper amongst themselves. “Good luck,” they said to the muskrat. “We are counting on you. We admire you and love and respect you.”

The muskrat dived. He swam and swam. He was not strong, but as he moved through the water, he recalled the others’ words and, feeling their love, he felt a power he had never felt before.

Waszhask reached the bottom. There he scooped up a pawful of mud and, holding it close to his chest, let his strong back legs and tail propel him to the surface, where he placed that mud upon the back of Makinaak.



The others cheered.

“It was love and encouragement and trust that powered me,” the muskrat said, and he dived again. With this thought in mind, the others dived, too.

They were not puffed up by pride, nor swelled by pompous talk. They were moved by love. Each one reached the bottom and carried mud back to the surface, to turtle’s back. Soon they had formed a small island.

They worked on, and their island grew larger and larger.

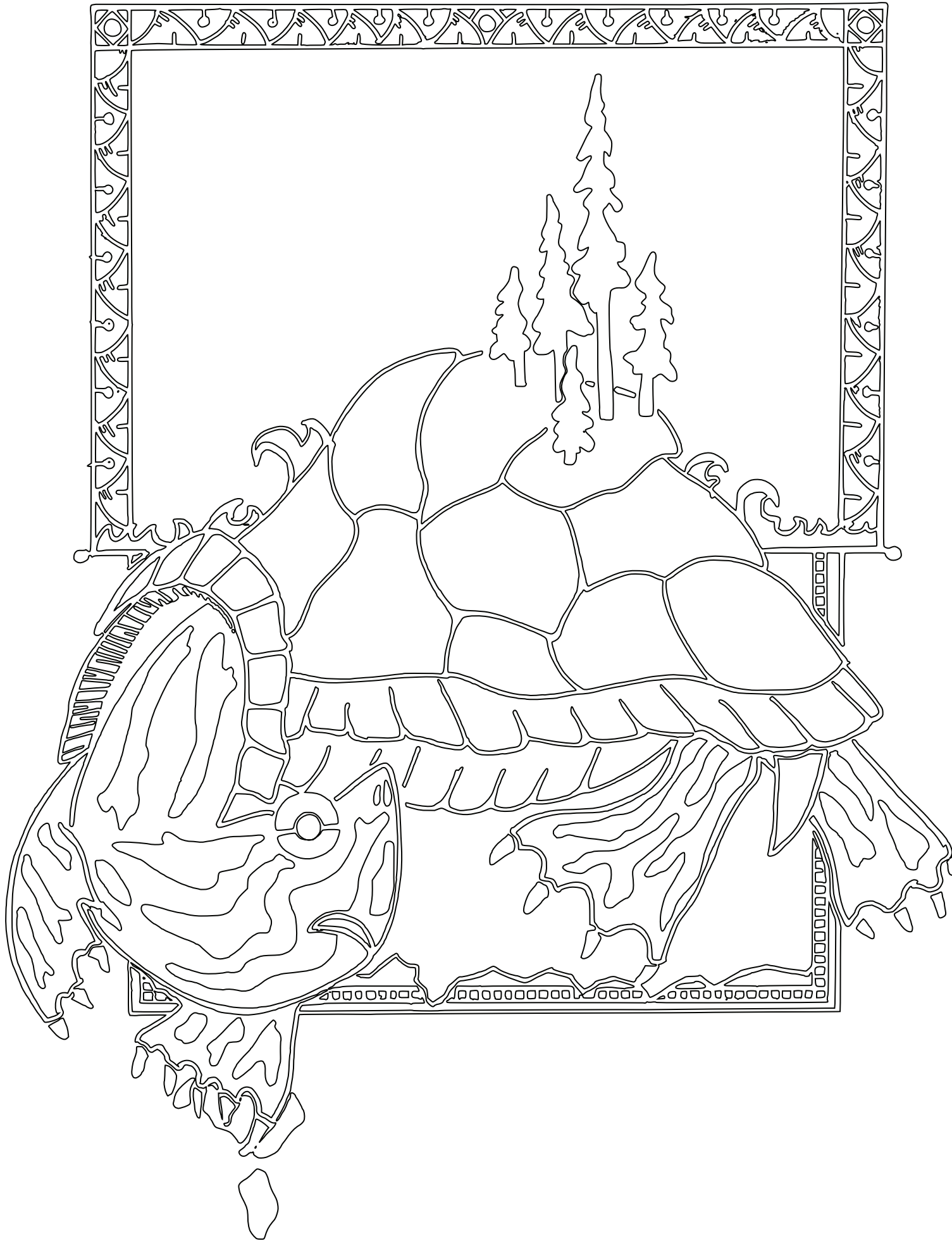
Then, one by one, the animals climbed upon the island, and the birds flew overhead. Everyone began to sing, and their song caused the wind to

blow, north, south, east and west. They danced, and their joyous dance brought life to trees and flowers and grass.

Soon the water that had drowned the Earth became the Oceans and the Lakes and the Rivers. Makwaa, the bear, offered to move to the far North and live there so that he could keep the water bound in ice and could keep it from flooding the land.

The creatures named their island Turtle Island, in honor of the turtle’s gift.

<https://www.uexpress.com/tell-me-a-story/2009/2/22/turtle-island-an-ogibwa-legend><https://www.uexpress.com/tell-me-a-story/2009/2/22/turtle-island-an-ogibwa-legend>



The First Sunrise

An Aboriginal Story from Australia

Long, long ago in the Dreamtime the earth was dark. There was no light. It was very cold and very black. Huge grey clouds kept the light and the warmth out and were so low that the animals had to crawl around. The Emu hobbled neck bent almost to the ground; the Kangaroo couldn't hop, and none of the birds could fly higher than several feet in the air. Only the Snakes were happy because they lived close to the ground.

The animals lived by crawling around the damp dark earth, feeling for fruits and berries. Often it was so hard to find food that several days would pass between meals. The Wombat became so tired of people bumping into him that he dug himself a burrow, and learned to sleep for long periods.

Eventually, the birds decided they'd had enough. They called a meeting of all the animals. The Magpies decided that they would raise the sky by gathering sticks and pushing the sky up. All the animals agreed it was a good idea, and they set about gathering sticks. The Magpies took a big stick each, and began to push at the sky.

The Emus, the Kangaroos and the Wombats watched as the Magpies pushed the sky slowly upwards. They used the sticks as levers, first resting the sky on low boulders, then on small hills. As the animals watched, the Magpies, pushing and straining, reached the top of a small mountain.

It was still very dark, but at least the Emu could straighten up, and the Kangaroo was able to move in long proud hops. The Magpies kept pushing the sky higher and higher, until they reached the highest mountain in the whole land. Then with a mighty heave, they gave the sky one last push! The sky shot up into the air, and as it rose it split open and a huge flood of warmth and light poured through on to the land below. The whole sky was filled with beautiful reds and yellows. It was the first sunrise.

Overjoyed with the beauty, the light and the warmth, the Magpies burst into song. As their loud warbling carried across the land, the Sun-Woman rose slowly, and began her journey towards the west. Now, each morning when the

Sun-Woman wakes in the east she lights a fire to prepare the torch that she will carry across the sky each day. It is this fire that provides the first light of dawn. Then she takes up her torch, and begins her daily journey across the sky. When she reaches the western edge of the world, she extinguishes her flaming bark torch. Then she sits down, and repaints herself in brilliant reds and yellows, ready for her journey through a long underground passage back to her camp in the east. So that is why, to this day, every morning when the Sun-Woman wakes and lights her early morning fire, all the magpies greet her with their beautiful song.

<http://worldstories.org.uk/stories/the-first-sunrise/>



The Rainbow Serpent

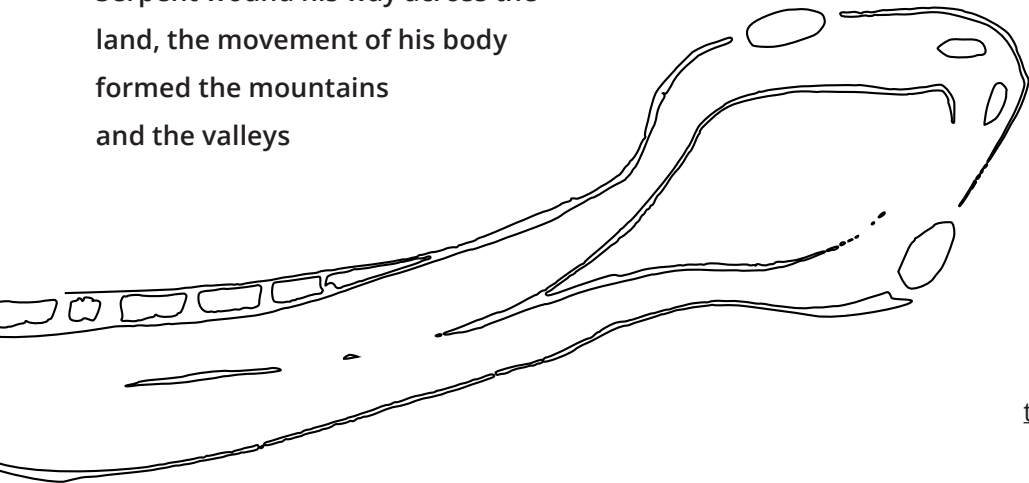
An Aboriginal Tale from Australia

Long ago in the Dreamtime a group of Aboriginals were out hunting. After many hours, they grew tired and decided to rest and as they sat around, telling stories and warming their hands by the fire, one of them looked up. There on the horizon was a beautiful multi-coloured arch — a rainbow. But the Aborigines thought that it was a Serpent moving from one waterhole to another and they were frightened

as they did not want the huge brightly-coloured Serpent in a waterhole near their camp. But they were grateful that he did not seem to be moving too near their own waterhole.

One young man, wanted to know more about the Rainbow Serpent so when he returned home, he asked the old men of his tribe why the hunters had been scared of the Rainbow Serpent.

The old men told him that the Rainbow Serpent was one of the Dreamtime creatures who had shaped the earth. In the beginning the earth was flat. As the Rainbow Serpent wound his way across the land, the movement of his body formed the mountains and the valleys



where the rivers lived. He was the biggest of the Dreamtime Beings and his power scared even the other Dreamtime Creatures.

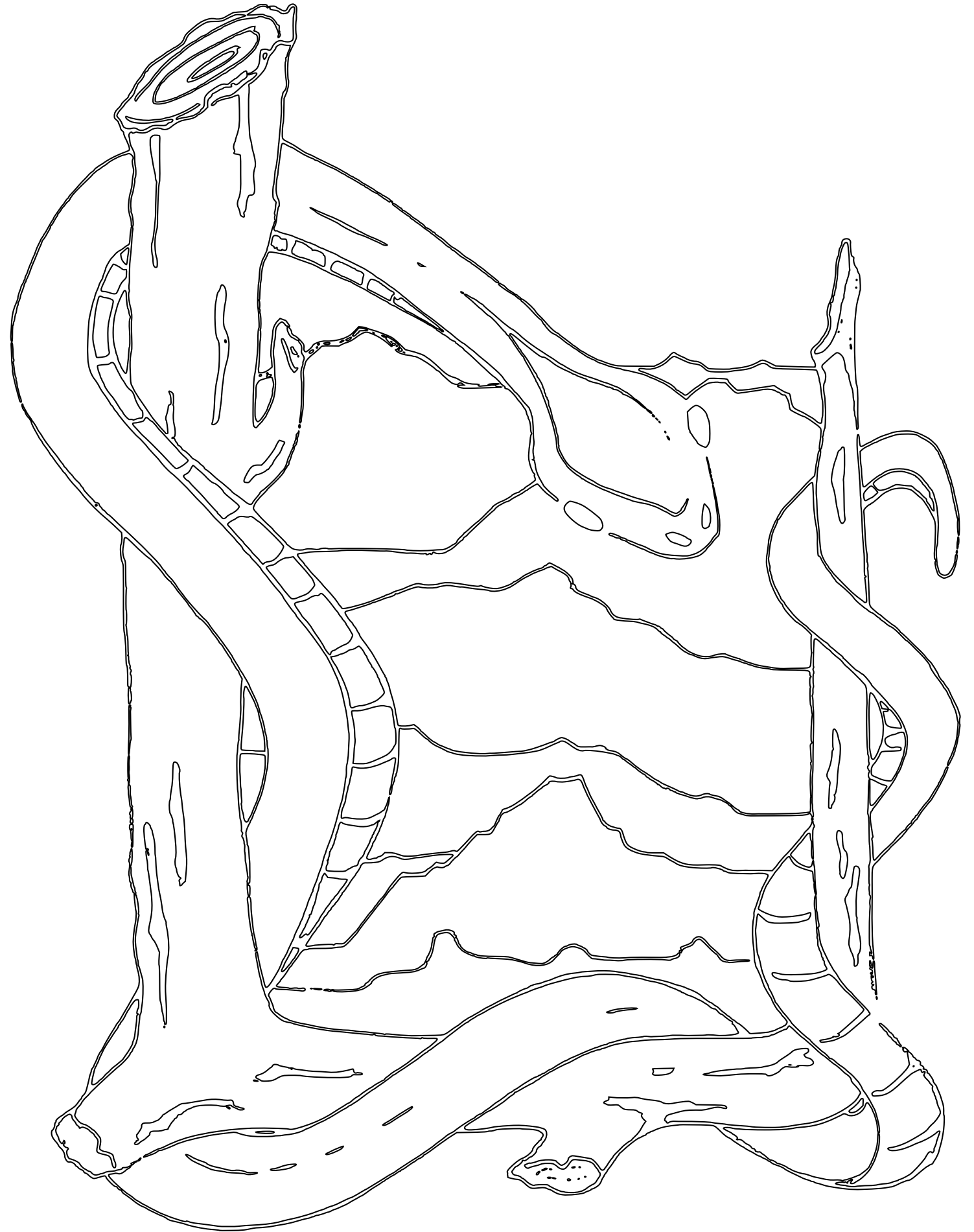
At last, tired with the effort of shaping the earth, the Rainbow Serpent crawled into a waterhole where he lay in the cool water which soothed him and softened the bright colours of his body. Each time the animals

visited the waterhole, they were careful not to disturb the water, for although they could not see him they knew he was there. He only came out after heavy rainstorms when his waterhole was disturbed and when the sun touched his coloured body. Then he rose up from the waterhole and travelled over the tree-tops, up through the clouds and across the plain to another waterhole. The people were fearful that he was angry and would churn up

the land once again so they were very quiet and still as he moved to his new home. Once he was there he disappeared beneath the water again and was not to be seen.

That is why Aboriginals are careful not to disturb the Rainbow Serpent, as they see him going across the sky, from one waterhole to another.

<http://worldstories.org.uk/stories/the-rainbow-serpent/>



Beaver and Porcupine

A Tlingit Legend

The beaver and the porcupine were great friends and went about everywhere together. The porcupine often visited the beaver’s house, but the latter did not like to have him come because he left quills there. One time, when the porcupine said that he wanted to go out to the beaver’s house, the beaver said, “All right, I will take you out on my back.” He started, but instead of going to his house he took him to a stump in the very middle of the lake. Then he said to him, “This is my house,” left him there, and went ashore.

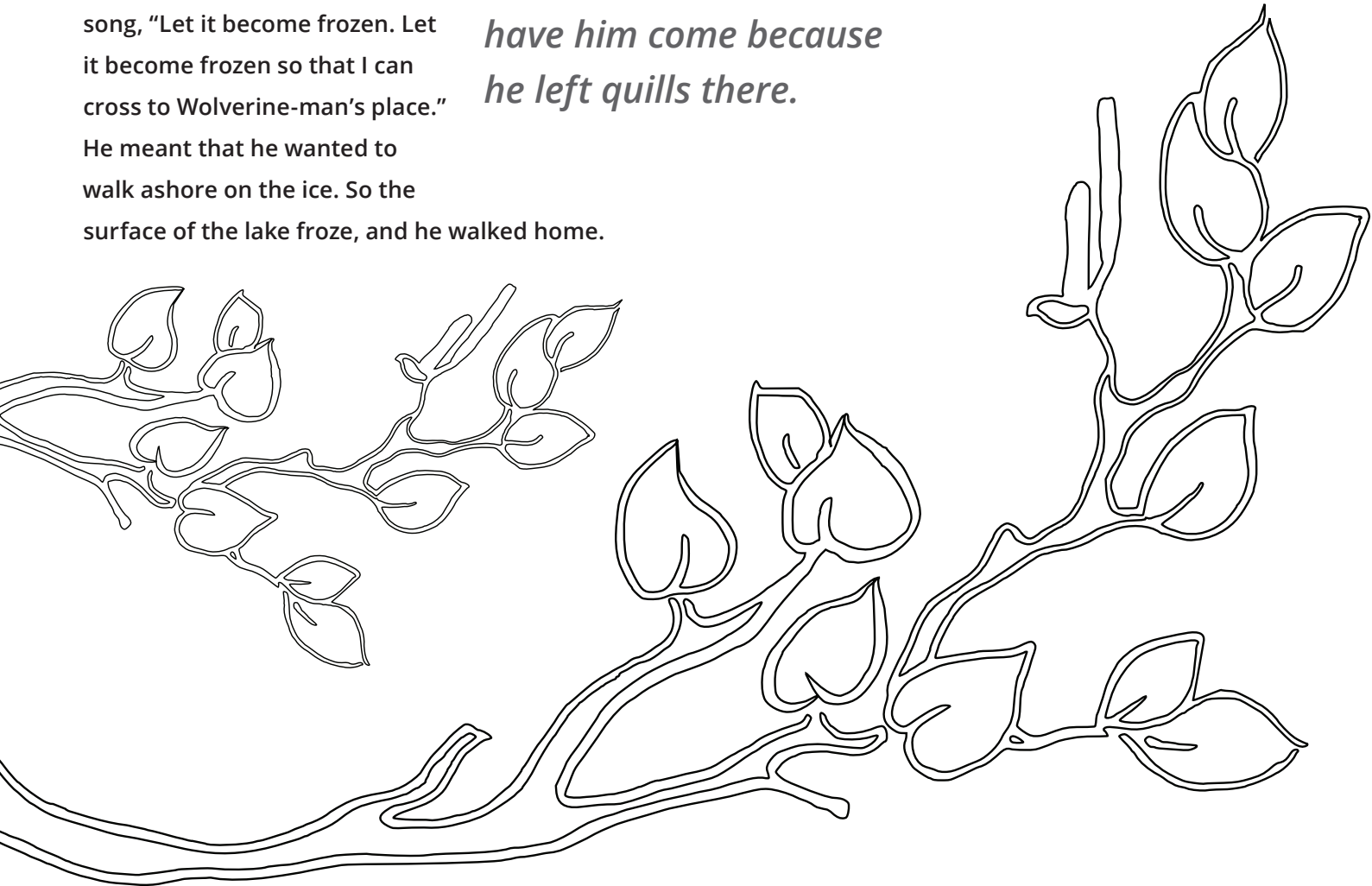
While the porcupine was upon this stump he began singing a song, “Let it become frozen. Let it become frozen so that I can cross to Wolverine-man’s place.” He meant that he wanted to walk ashore on the ice. So the surface of the lake froze, and he walked home.

Some time after this, when the two friends were again playing together, the porcupine said, “You come now. It is my turn to carry you on my back.” Then the beaver got on the porcupine’s back, and the porcupine took him to the top of a very high tree, after which he came down and left him. For a long

time the beaver did not know how to get down, but finally he climbed down, and they say that this is what gives the broken appearance to tree bark.

https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Legends/Beaver_And_Porcupine-Tlingit.html

The beaver and the porcupine were great friends and went about everywhere together. The porcupine often visited the beaver’s house, but the latter did not like to have him come because he left quills there.



Pele’s Revenge

A Hawaiian Legend (retold by S.E. Schlosser)

Ohi’a and Lehua loved each other from the moment they first saw each other at a village dance. Ohi’a was a tall strong man with a handsome face and lithe form. He was something of a trickster and was first in all the sports played by all the young men. Lehua was gentle and sweet and as fragile as a flower. Her beauty was the talk of the island, and her father was quite protective of his only child.

When Lehua saw the handsome, bold Ohi’a speaking with her father beside the bonfire, she blushed crimson, unable to take her eyes from the young man. At the same moment, Ohi’a glanced up from

his conversation and his mouth dropped open at the sight of the

beautiful maiden. He was not even aware that he had stopped speaking right in the middle of his sentence, so overwhelmed was he by the sight of the fair maiden across the fire from him.

Lehua’s father nudged the young man, recalling him to his duties as a guest. Ohi’a stuttered and stammered apologies, trying to continue his conversation while keeping one eye on the fair Lehua. Lehua’s father was amused by the young man’s

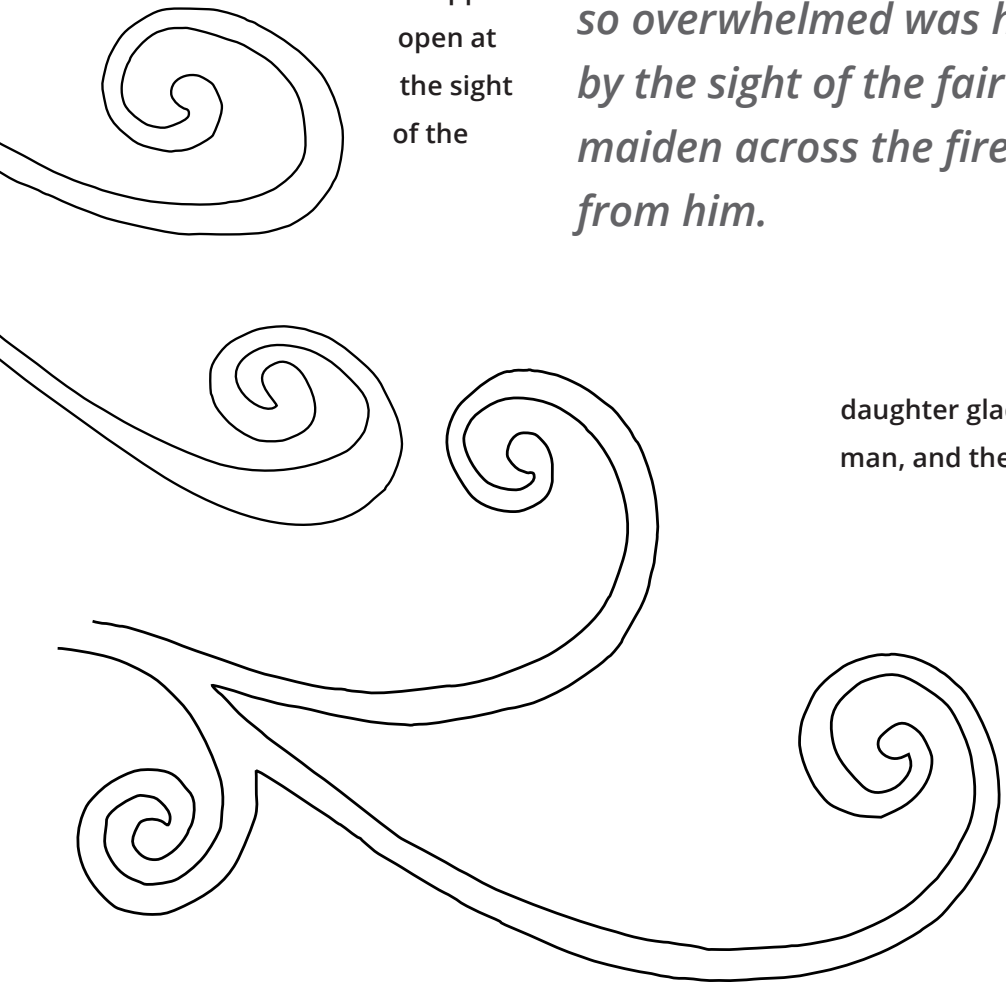
obvious infatuation with his daughter. He quite liked this bold trickster, and so he offered to introduce Ohi’a to his daughter. The young man almost fell over in his haste as they walked across the clearing to where Lehua stood with her friends.

From that moment, there was no other woman for Ohi’a but Lehua. He had eyes only for her, and courted her with a passion and zeal that swiftly won her heart. Her father gave his only

daughter gladly into the keeping of the strong young man, and the young couple lived quite happily for several months in a new home Ohi’a built for his bride.

Then one day the goddess Pele was walking in the forest near the home of the handsome Ohi’a and spied the young man at work. Pele was smitten by him, and went at once to engage him

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Pele’s Revenge (continued)
A Hawaiian Legend (retold by S.E. Schlosser)

in conversation. Ohi’a spoke politely to the beautiful woman, but did not respond to her advances, which infuriated Pele. She was determined to have this young man for herself, but before she could renew her efforts, Lehua came to the place her young husband was working to bring him his midday meal.

When he saw his lovely wife, Ohi’a’s face lit up with love. He dropped everything at once and went to her side, leaving a fuming Pele to stare in jealous rage at the young couple. Dropping her human disguise, the goddess transformed into a raging column of fire and struck Ohi’a down, transforming him into a twisted ugly tree in revenge for spurning her advances.

As Lehua lay weeping in despair, the gods reached down and transformed the girl into a beautiful red flower, which they placed upon the twisted Ohi’a tree, so that she and her beloved husband would never more be apart.

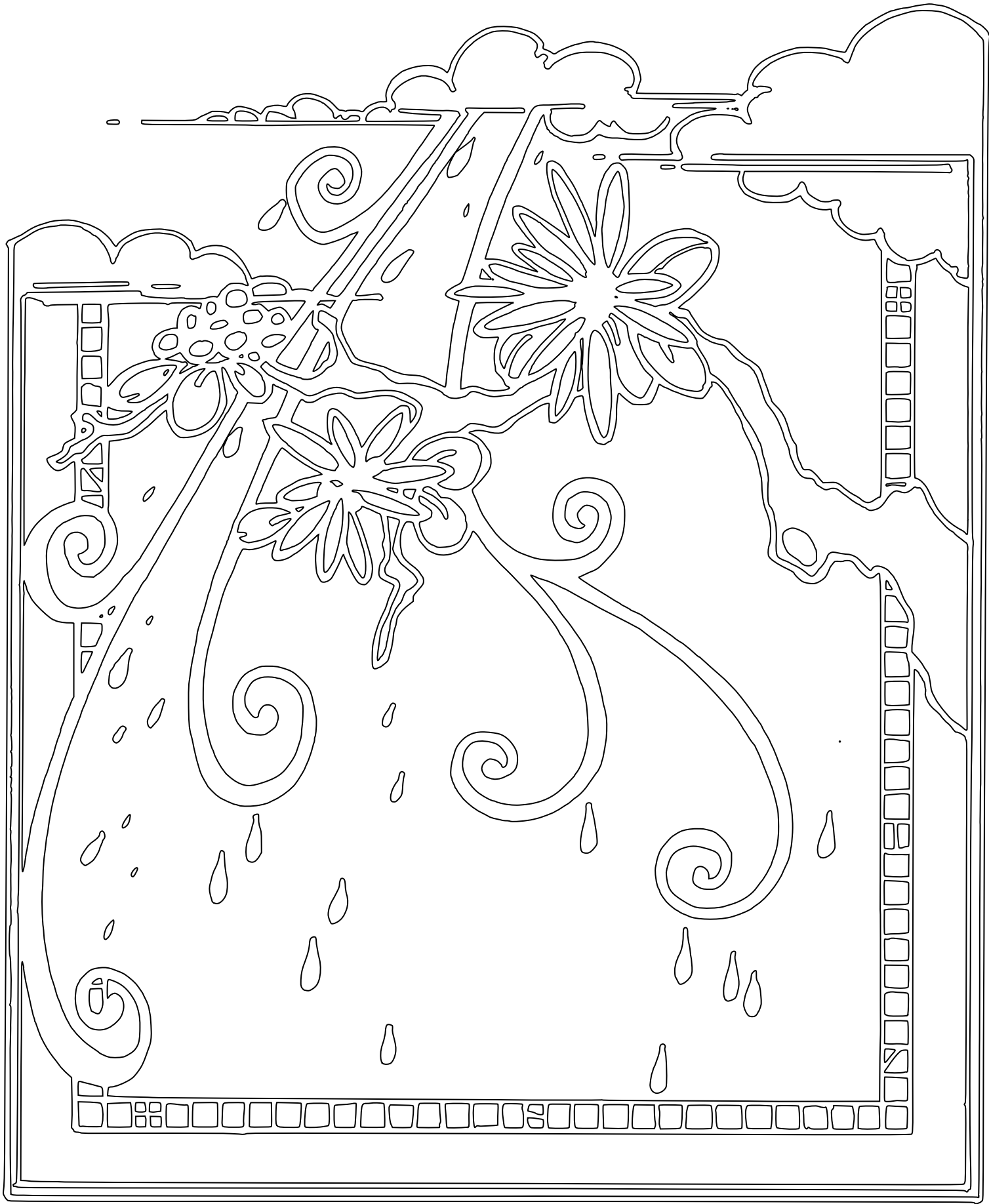
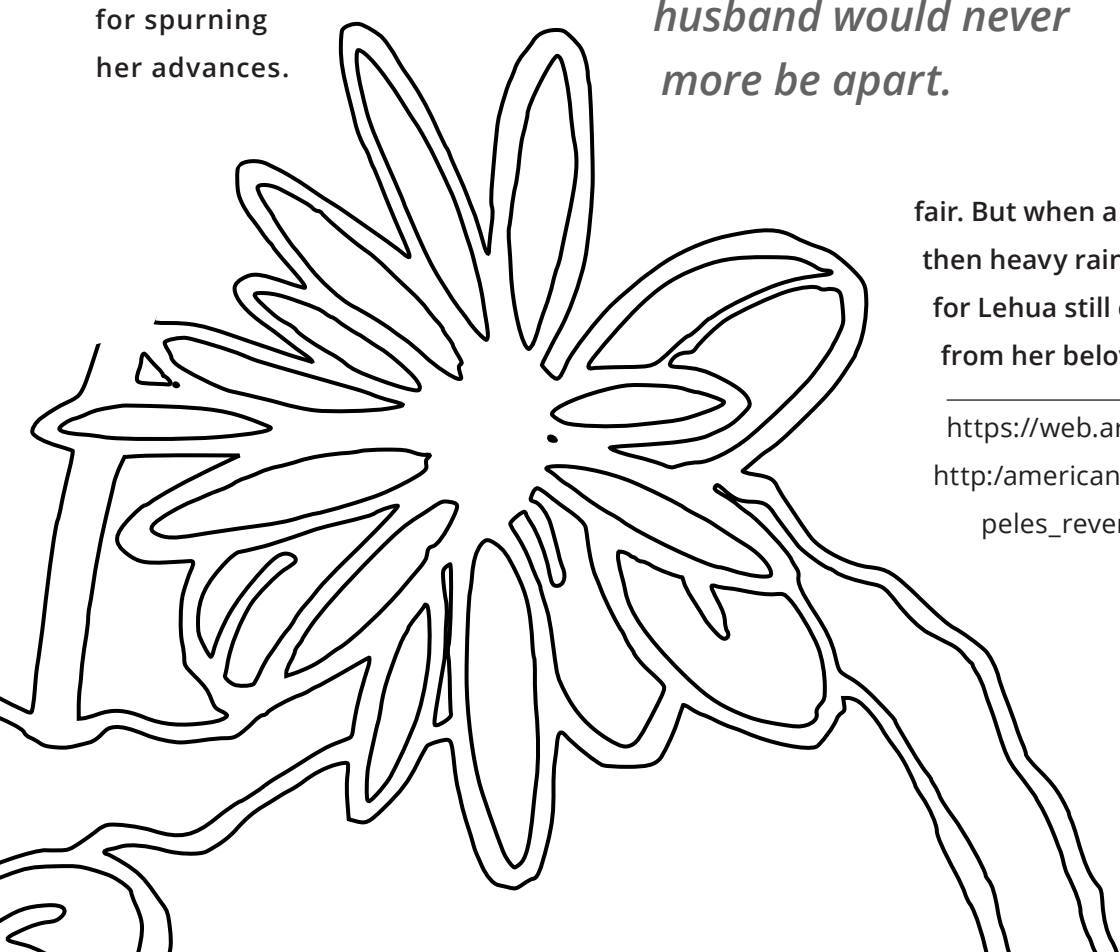
Lehua fell to her knees beside the twisted tree that had once been her husband. Tears streaming down her lovely face, she begged Pele to turn him back into a man or else turn her into a tree, as she could not bear to be separated from her beloved. But Pele ignored the girl, taking herself up to the cool heights, her anger satisfied. But the gods saw what Pele had done to the innocent lovers and were angry. As

Lehua lay weeping in despair, the gods reached down and transformed the girl into a beautiful red flower, which they placed upon the twisted Ohi’a tree, so that she and her beloved husband would never more be apart.

From that day to this, the Ohi’a tree has blossomed with the beautiful red Lehua flowers. While the flowers remain on the tree, the weather remains sunny and

fair. But when a flower is plucked from the tree, then heavy rain falls upon the land like tears, for Lehua still cannot bear to be separated from her beloved husband Ohi’a.

https://web.archive.org/web/20161228194416/http://americanfolklore.net/folklore/2010/10/peles_revenge.html



The Importance of Dreaming

An Abenaki Legend

The Great Spirit, in a time not known to us looked about and saw nothing. No colors, no beauty. Time was silent in darkness. There was no sound. Nothing could be seen or felt. The Great Spirit decided to fill this space with light and life.

From his great power he commanded the sparks of creation. He ordered Tôlba, the Great Turtle to come from the waters and become the land. The Great Spirit molded the mountains and the valleys on turtle’s back. He put white clouds into the blue skies. He was very happy. He said, “Everything is ready now. I will fill this place with the happy movement of life.” He thought and thought about what kind of creatures he would make.

His sleep was filled with dreams of his creation. He saw strange things in his dream. ... Everything seemed out of place. The Great Spirit thought he was having a bad dream. He thought, nothing could be this imperfect.

Where would they live? What would they do? What would their purpose be? He wanted a perfect plan. He thought so hard that he became very tired and fell asleep.

His sleep was filled with dreams of his creation. He saw strange things in his dream. He saw animals crawling on four legs, some on two. Some creatures flew with wings, some swam with fins. There were

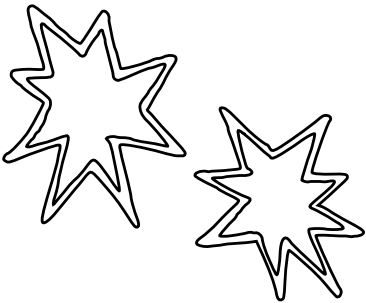
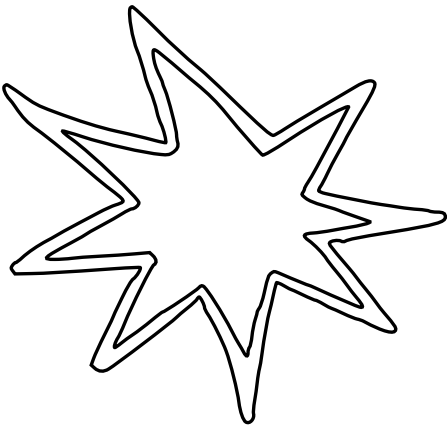
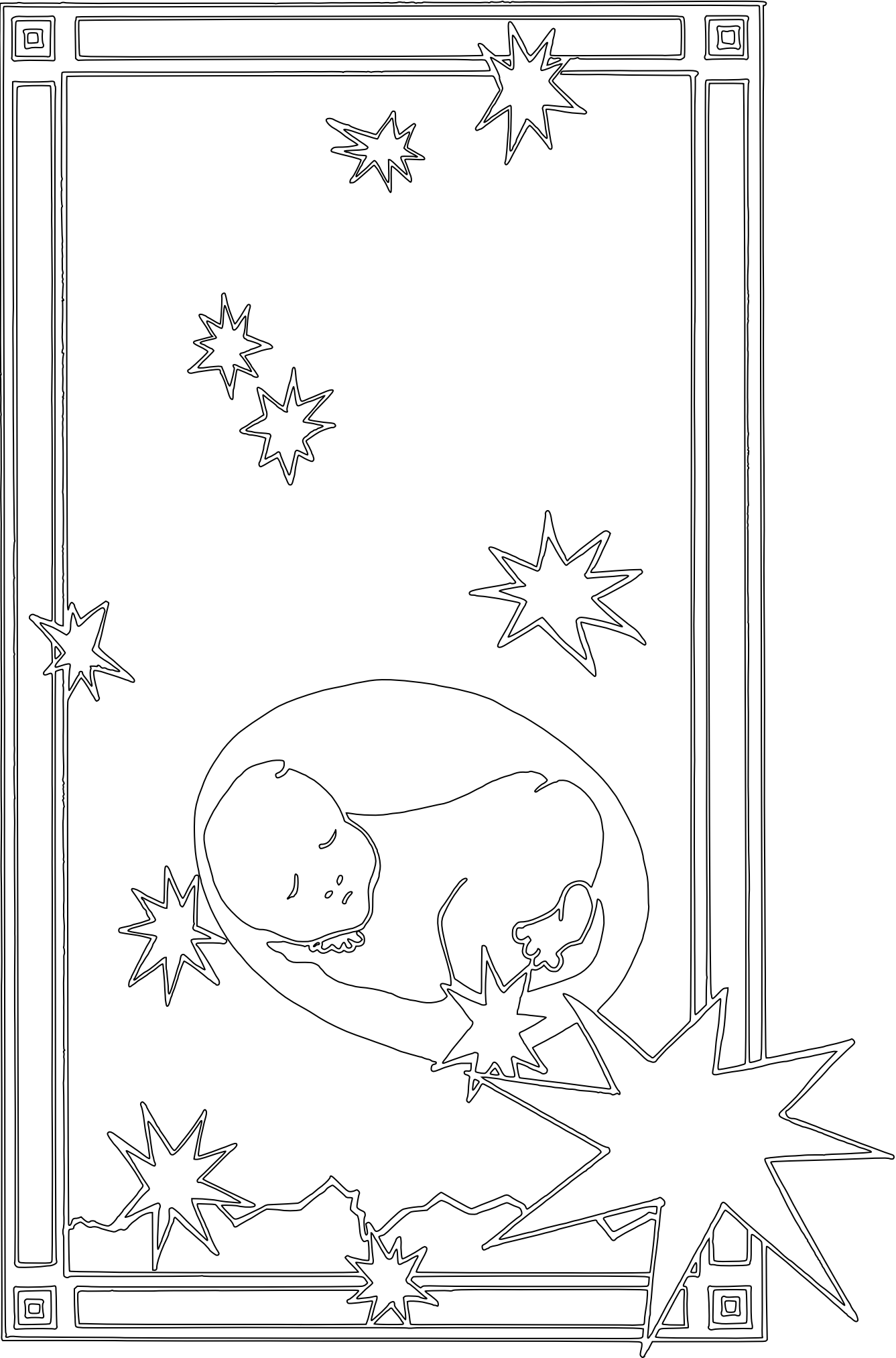
plants of all colors, covering the ground everywhere. Insects buzzed around, dogs barked, birds sang, and human beings called to each other. Everything seemed out of place. The Great Spirit thought he was having a bad dream. He thought, nothing could be this imperfect.

When the Great Spirit awakened, he saw a beaver nibbling on a branch. He

realized the world of his dream became his creation. Everything he dreamed about came true. When he saw the beaver make his home, and a dam to provide a pond for his family to swim in, he then knew everything has its place, and purpose in the time to come.

It has been told among our people from generation to generation. We must not question our dreams. They are our creation.

<https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-Html-Legends/AbenakiCreationStoryandTheImportanceofDreaming-Abenaki.html>



The Origin of the Winds

An Aleut Legend

Long ago, when the world was still quite new, there were no winds at all, neither the gentle breeze of summer nor the fierce winter gale. Everything was perfectly still. Nothing disturbed the marsh grass on the shore and, when snow fell, it fell straight to earth instead of blowing and swirling into drifts as it does now.

At that time, in a village near the mouth of the Yukon River, there lived a couple who had no children. This made them very sad. Often the woman would sigh and say, ‘How happy we would be if only we had a child!’

Her husband would sigh too and answer, ‘Yes, if we had a son, I would teach him to stalk bears and seals over the ice-floes, and to make traps and snares. What will become of us in our old age with no one to provide for us ? Who will give festivals for our souls when we are dead ?’

These thoughts troubled them deeply and on many a long winter evening they sat in the flickering firelight, imagining how different life might be if they had a child.

One night the woman had a strange dream, in which she saw a sled pulled by three dogs, one brown, one white and one black, draw up outside her door. The driver leaned from his seat and beckoned her. ‘Come,’ he said. ‘Sit here by me. I will take you on a journey.’

Wondering and fearful, the woman did as she was told. No sooner had she seated herself than the driver cracked his whip and the sled rose high into

the air. Through the night-black sky they flew, faster and faster, past stars sparkling like hoar-frost. The woman was no longer afraid for she knew that this must be Igaluk, the Moon Spirit, who often comes to comfort those in distress.

Suddenly the sled stopped and the panting dogs lay down to rest. On all sides, as far as the eye could see, lay a great plain of smooth ice, the glittering expanse broken only by one small stunted tree.

Igaluk pointed and said, ‘You who so desire a child, look at that tree over there. Make a doll from its trunk and you will find happiness.’

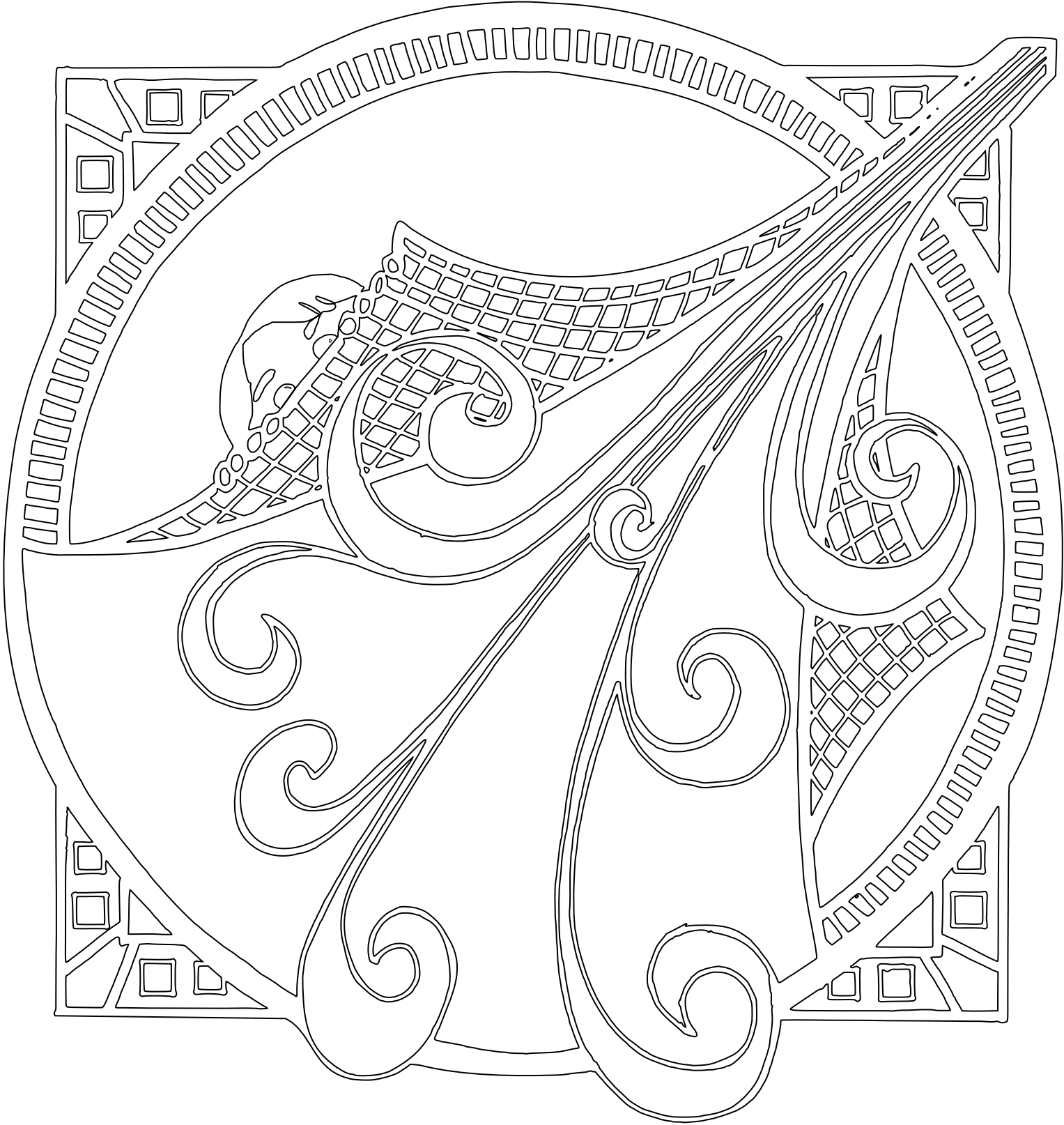
Before she could learn more, the woman awoke. So vivid was her dream that she at once roused her husband. She told him what she had seen and begged him to find the tree.

The man rubbed the sleep from his eyes. ‘What would be the point?’ he grumbled. ‘It

would only be a doll, not a real child.’ But the woman persisted and finally, for the sake of peace, the man shouldered his axe and set out to look for the tree.

At the edge of the village where the snow lay thick and untrodden, he saw a bright path stretching far into the distance. It was now full day, yet the path shone like moonlight and the man knew that this was the direction which he must take.

For many hours he journeyed along the path of light until at last, on the horizon, he saw something



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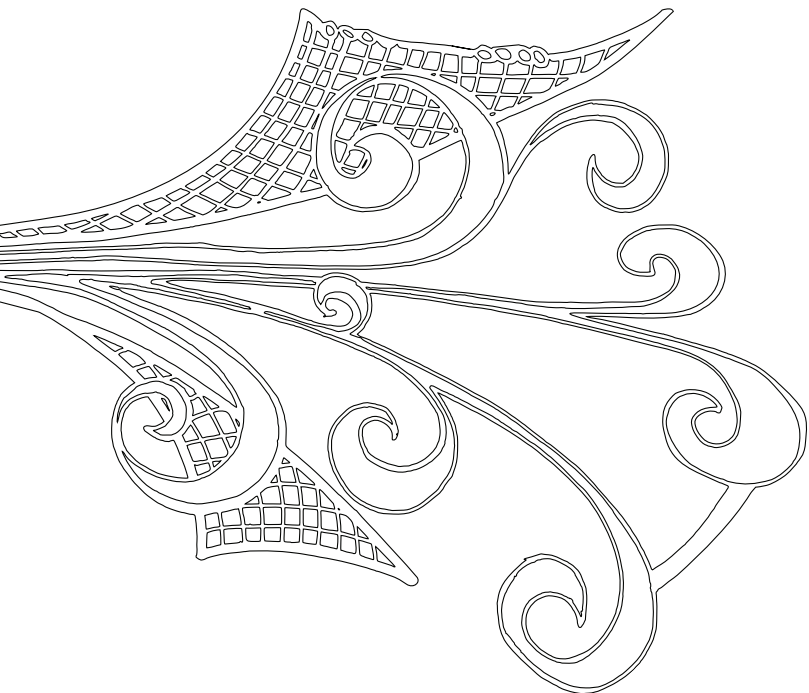
The Origin of the Winds (continued)
An Aleut Legend

shining very brightly. As he came nearer he saw that it was the tree of which his wife had spoken. The man cut it down with his axe and carried it home.

That evening, while he carved the figure of a small boy from some of the wood, his wife made a little suit of sealskin and, when the doll was finished, she dressed it and set it in the place of honor on the bench opposite the door. From the remaining wood the man carved a set of toy dishes and some tiny weapons, a spear and a knife, tipped with bone. His wife filled the dishes with food and water and set them before the doll.

Before going to bed, the couple sat and gazed at the doll. Although it was no more than six inches high, it was very lifelike, with eyes made from tiny chips of ivory.

‘I cannot think why we have gone to all this trouble,’ said the man gloomily. ‘We are no better off than before.’



‘Perhaps not,’ replied his wife, ‘but at least it will give us some amusement and something to talk about.’

During the night the woman awoke suddenly. Close at hand she heard several low whistles. She shook her husband and said, ‘Did you hear that? It was the doll!’

They jumped up and, by the glow of their hastily lit lamp, they saw that the doll had eaten the food and drunk the water. They saw it breathe and its eyes move. The woman picked it up in her arms and hugged it.

They played with the doll for some time until it grew sleepy. Then they carefully returned it to the bench and went back to bed, delighted with their new toy.

In the morning, however, when they awoke, the doll had gone. Rushing outside, they saw its

footprints leading away through the village. They followed as fast as they could, but at the edge of the village the tracks stopped and there was no trace of the doll. Sadly the couple returned home.

Although they did not know it, the doll was traveling along the path of light which the man had taken the day before. On and on he went until he came to the eastern edge of day where the sky comes down to meet the earth and walls in the light.

Looking up, the doll saw a hole in the sky wall, covered over with a piece of skin. The cover was bulging inwards, as if there was some powerful force on the other side. The doll was curious and, drawing

his knife, he slashed the cords holding the cover in place and pulled it aside.

At once a great wind rushed in, carrying birds and animals with it. The doll peered through the hole and saw the Sky Land on the other side, looking just like earth, with mountains, trees and rivers.

When he felt that the wind had blown long enough, the doll drew the skin cover back over the hole, saying sternly, ‘Wind, sometimes blow hard, sometimes soft, and sometimes not at all.’ Then he went on his way.

When he came to the south, he saw another piece of skin covering an opening in the sky wall and bulging as before. Again the doll drew his knife and this time a warmer wind blew in, bringing more animals, trees and bushes. After a time the doll closed up the opening with the same words as before and passed on towards the west.

There he found yet another opening like the others, but this time, as soon as the cords were cut, the wind blew in a heavy rainstorm with waves and spray from the great ocean on the other side. The doll hastened to cover up the hole and instructed this wind as he had one the others.

When he came to the North, the cold was so intense that he hesitated for some time before he dared to open the hole in the sky there. When he finally did so, a fierce blast whistled in, with great masses of snow and ice, so that the doll was at once frozen to the marrow and he closed that opening very quickly indeed.

Admonishing the wind as before, the doll now turned his steps inwards, away from the sky wall and

traveled on until he came to the very center of the Earth’s plain. There he saw the sky arching overhead like a huge tent, supported on a framework of tall slender poles. Satisfied that he had now traveled the whole world over, the doll decided to return to the village from which he started.

His foster-parents greeted him with great joy, for they feared that he had gone forever. The doll told them and all the people of the village about his travels and how he had let the winds into the world. Everyone was pleased for with the wind came good hunting. The winds brought the birds of the air and the land animals, and they stirred up the sea currents so that seals and walrus could be found all along the coast.

Because he had brought good fortune as the Moon Spirit had predicted, the doll was honored in special festivals afterwards. Shamans made dolls like him to help them in their magic and parents also made dolls for their children, knowing that they bring happiness to those who care for them.

<https://www.firstpeople.us/FP-HTML-Legends/TheOriginoftheWinds-Aleuts.html>

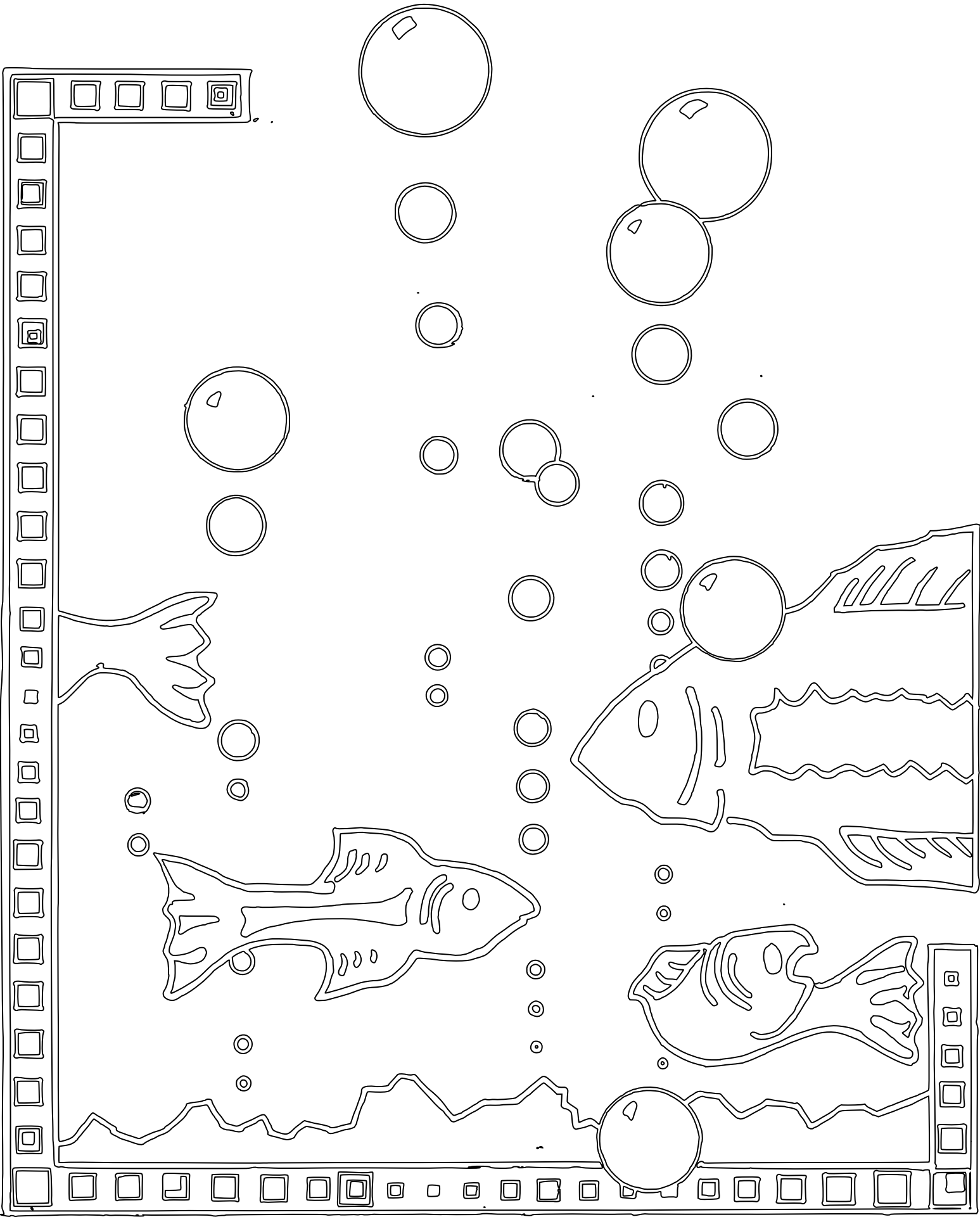
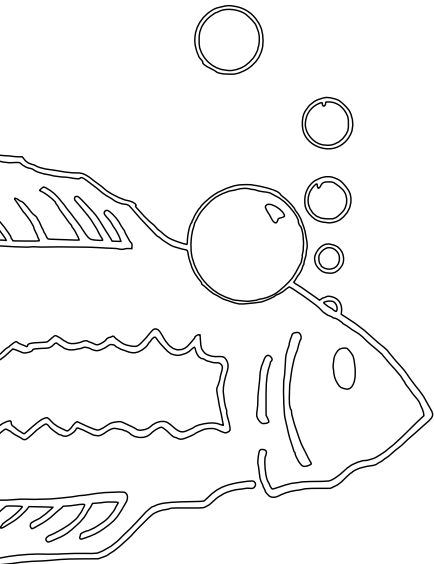


Fish

What's your fish story?

In Maori mythology, a fish named Ikaroa gave birth to all the stars in the Milky Way.

Now it's your turn to create a story about fish!



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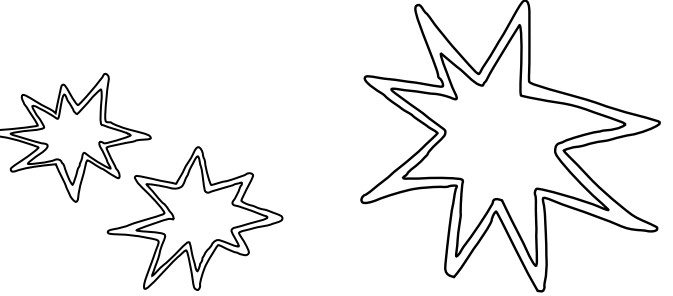
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Coloring Images—Background Notes

Spider
Anansi the trickster originates in West Africa. He often takes the shape of a spider and is one of the most important characters of West African and Caribbean folklore.

Bear & Woman
The bear appears in stories of Finland, Russia, Japan and North America.

Grandmother
Elders are especially important in oral traditions, highly respected as keepers of knowledge and responsible for passing wisdom from one generation to the next through stories. Many native American stories feature grandmothers including “Raven and How Tides Began” and the Eskimo tale “Being Still at Night.” (<http://www.snowwowl.com/legends/inuit/inuit001.html>)

Raven
Ravens are popular characters in stories from Japan, China, India, Australia, Middle East and North and South America. They play an especially important role in the origin stories of many Alaska natives.

Turtle
Stories referencing turtles and their shells are seen in creation stories across many cultures, including the Ashanti in Nigeria and Lao folktales, as well as Native Americans, some of whom referred to Earth as “Turtle Island.”

Magpie
The magpie can be found in stories from China, Korea and Australia.

Snake
The rainbow serpent, the shape of a rainbow and a snake, appears in many Aboriginal stories across different groups in Australia (and goes by different names for each) and is often described as an immortal being associated with dreamtime.

Porcupine & Beaver
The beaver and porcupine characters appear in many aboriginal stories. They are usually friends and that get into mischief together, sometimes helping each other, sometimes playing (not very nice) jokes on one another other.

Flower
“Pele’s Revenge,” or “Don’t Pick the Lehua Blossom” is a love story from Hawai’i that explains how the twisted Ohia tree, the first tree to grow after lava flows, came to have such beautiful red blossoms, and why picking them could lead to rainy weather.

Dreamer
Many cultures emphasize the importance of dreams, and particularly the idea that the world, or the creatures of the world, were dreamed into existence.

Wind
Wind gods figure in ancient stories across Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas, often associated with a cardinal direction. In Greek mythology, Zephyrus brought gentle spring and summer breezes from the west.

Fish
As an important source of food, medicine and income across the globe, fish is found in folklore throughout the world include Africa, Europe, Asia and Polynesia, the Americas and Australia.

