

LITTLE BOY AND BIG BEAR



A Zine Short Story
by Randall COLLEY

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LITTLE BOY BIG BEAR

By S. Randall Colley c 2020

Little Boy was playing with the other village boys that did not go on the hunt. Some of the boys were teasing and taunting him about why he didn't go on the hunt with his father and the hunting party.

"You're twelve years old, my brother is twelve years old and he went on the hunt. My father says you are the runt of the litter."

Another boy said, "He can't go on the hunt because he's too small. Look at him, I'm six years old and I'm taller than he is and he's twelve."

Another boy said, "That's why they call him Little Boy. He's too small to ride a horse. Maybe he could ride a coyote."

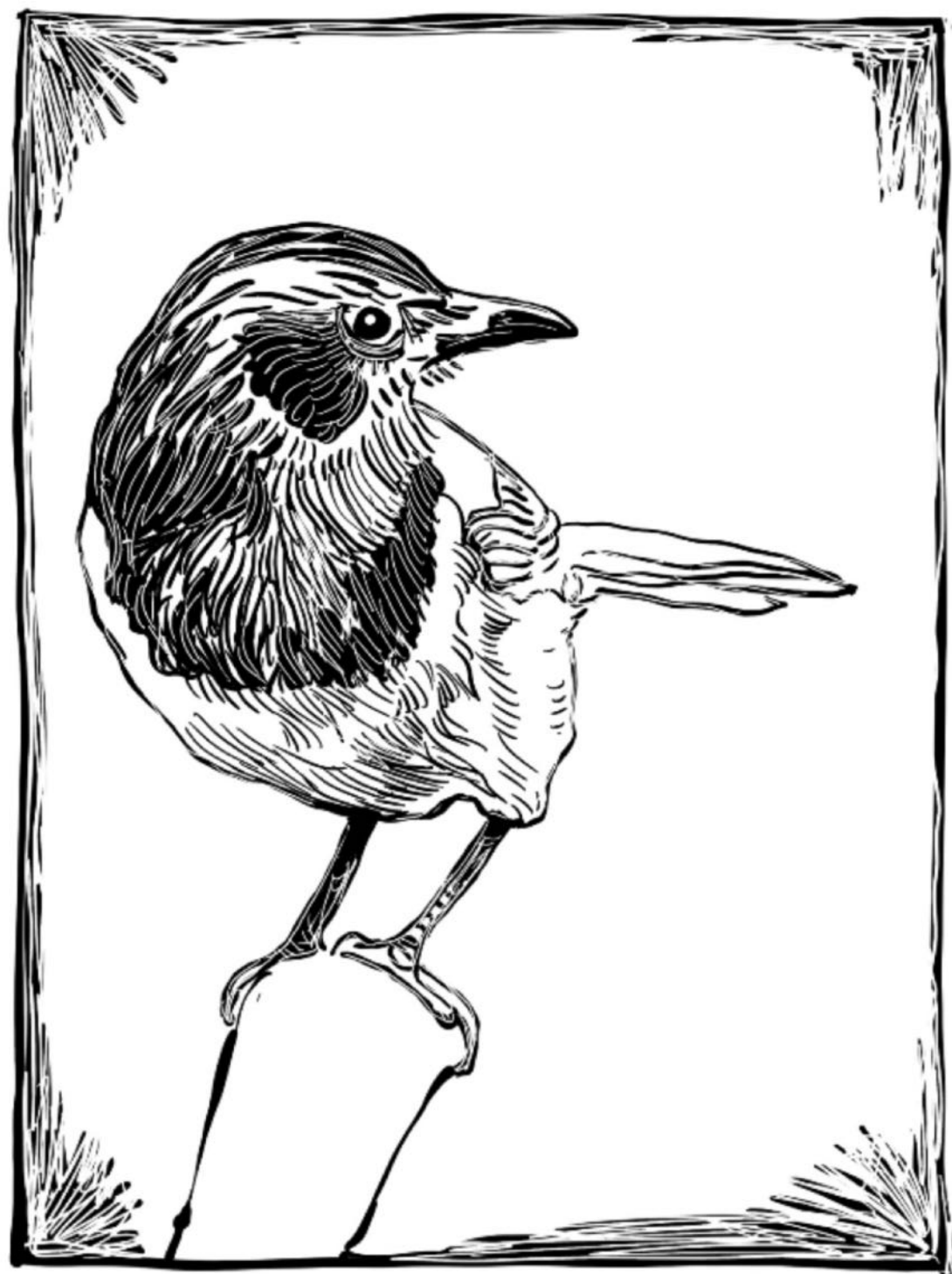
His mother called to him, "Little Boy come with me and your sister, while we pick wild blackberries down by the river."

One boy teased him as he was leaving, "Why do you take that little bow? That's just a toy bow, you can't kill anything with it."

Another boy laughed, "It's a little bow for a little boy. My brother's bow can shoot down a buffalo, your bow is so small it won't even kill a frog."

Little Boy was playing and exploring along the river bank, while his mother and sister picked blackberries.

He was trying to capture a bullfrog that was hopping along the river bank.



He took notice that the ants were scurrying around re-enforcing their ant hills. His grandfather told him that when the ants do that, it means a storm was coming. He looked at the sky and it was dark with rain clouds.

He saw a Bluejay on a branch eating a blackberry. His grandfather taught him to never trust a Bluejay; they are tricksters like the coyote.

Little Boy heard his mother screaming. He ran through the briars and thorn bushes with his bow and arrow ready to protect his mother and sister.

Little boy came out of the briar patch into the clearing. He was bleeding from the thorn bushes and the sharp blackberry vines.

He saw his mother facing a large grizzly bear known to the village as Big Bear. He was standing on his hind legs.

Little boy was fearless, he jumped between the bear and his mother. He shot his first arrow, but it missed the bear completely.

He drew back the string with another arrow, faced the bear, released the arrow hitting the bear, but the bear's fur was too tough and his small arrow bounced off.

Little Boy's bow was much smaller than his fathers. His fathers bow, would have killed the bear.





Big Bear stood on his hind legs and reached out with his big claws and knocked Little Boy to the ground, leaving his bloody claw marks across Little Boy's chest and heart.

Little Boy quickly stood back on his feet in front of the bear and fearlessly loaded his last arrow. He took aim, and with all his strength he pulled back his small bow and shot the arrow at the bears soft underbelly.

The arrow pierced the bear's side, causing him to let out a fearsome growl. He stood up again on his hind legs pawing the air with his huge claws, then he retreated into the woods growling in pain.

Little Boy collapsed and mother had to carry his bleeding limp body back to the village.

The young boys saw the bloody claw marks across Little Boy's chest, as his mother brought him to his grandfather's teepee.

It was storming with lightening and rain, when she carried him to his grandfather. Grandfather brought him inside and made a medicine bag of plants and herbs that would heal his wounds.

His grandfather kept a vigil for three days, chanting day and night while Little Boy was in and out of consciousness with fever.

Little Boy spoke, "Grandfather, I saw the bear in my visions. He was in a dark place and needed help. I could hear Big Bear howling in the dark. He was wounded and trapped."



"You will forever be connected with Big Bear, because you gave him a wound and he gave you a wound."

Little boy told his tale around the campfire. The other young boys listen to his heroic effort, how he faced Big Bear and saved his sister and mother.

He reenacted the event many times. Still, some of the boys were jealous and tried to provoke him.

They teased him, doubting his courage. Claiming, it was probably a beaver and not Big Bear.

He asked his grandfather, "Why are the other boys so cruel and why do they tease me about being so small?"

"Grandfather, will I ever be big enough to go on the hunt with my father?"

"Little Boy, you will grow up to be one of the tribes greatest hunters."

"Grandfather do you hear that?"

"Hear what my son?"

"I can hear him, he's in pain, I can hear him in the night. I can see him in my dreams. I can hear him calling me. What do I do?"

His grandfather went into his teepee and returned with a leather bag and handed it to him.

"This is for your vision quest. In the morning, leave before sunrise and do what the great spirit tells you to do."

Little Boy, "You are a great warrior; stay calm, be brave, and watch for signs... but don't tell your mother."

Little Boy sneaked out of the teepee in the darkness, before sunrise and set out on his vision quest.

He walked in the hot sun until well into the afternoon. He was exhausted, he found shade from a tall cactus and sat down to eat the food, and drink the water his grandfather had packed for him.

To his surprise and disappointment, his grandfather had packed for him a knife, three rocks, two pieces of flint and an empty water skin.

He found no food and no water in the bag.

He continued walking in the hot sun with nothing to eat or drink. He was afraid he was lost.

The desert sun was hot and he wanted to go home, but now it was dark and he could still hear Big Bear calling him.

The first night he slept on the cold ground, curled up in a shivering ball, trying to stay warm in the freezing night air.

The desert was alive with sounds; a wolf howling, the coyotes yelping, owls hooting. He was afraid and he wanted to quit and go home.

He wanted to go home to his warm teepee and eat his mother's cooking. He wanted his mother to hug him.

He cried and made up his mind that he was a runt and that he would never be a great hunter.

He was going home at sunrise. He was defeated and he was a failure.



The world was too big, too hard, and he was too small. He cried himself to sleep. Later that night the moon was full and bright, something woke him from a deep sleep. It was a coyote about 10 paces from where he was sleeping.

He grabbed his bow and arrow and took aim at the shadowy figure, he thought of what his grandfather had told him...to never kill a coyote, it will bring you bad luck.

He took a stone out of the bag and hurled it at the coyote striking him on the head, causing him to yelp and run off into the night.

The sound of a frog croaking in the darkness caught his attention. He remembered his grandfather telling him a frog will always lead you to water.



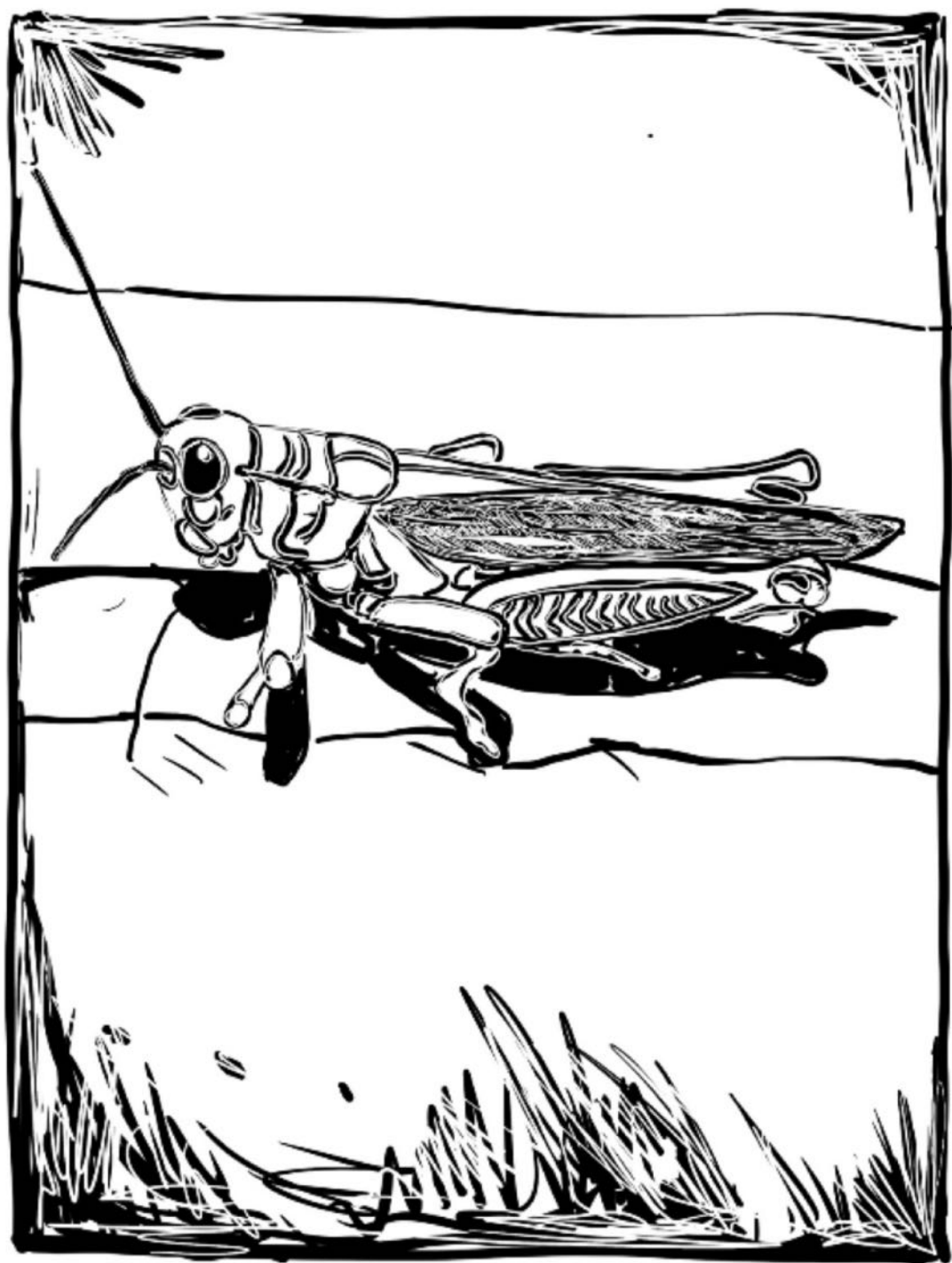
During the night he received another vision of the bear. He was calling him. He was in a dark place, afraid, and in pain. The bear was dying.

The following morning at daylight he went in the direction that he had heard the frogs during the night.

He found a small artesian pool of water. He filled the empty water skin that his grandfather had put in his bag.

Little Boy heard the voice of his grandfather, "You will be a great warrior; stay calm, be brave, and watch for signs."

He did not go home, he continued on his quest. As he walked in the hot sun, he remembered the long walks with his grandfather and the lessons he taught him about how to live in the desert.

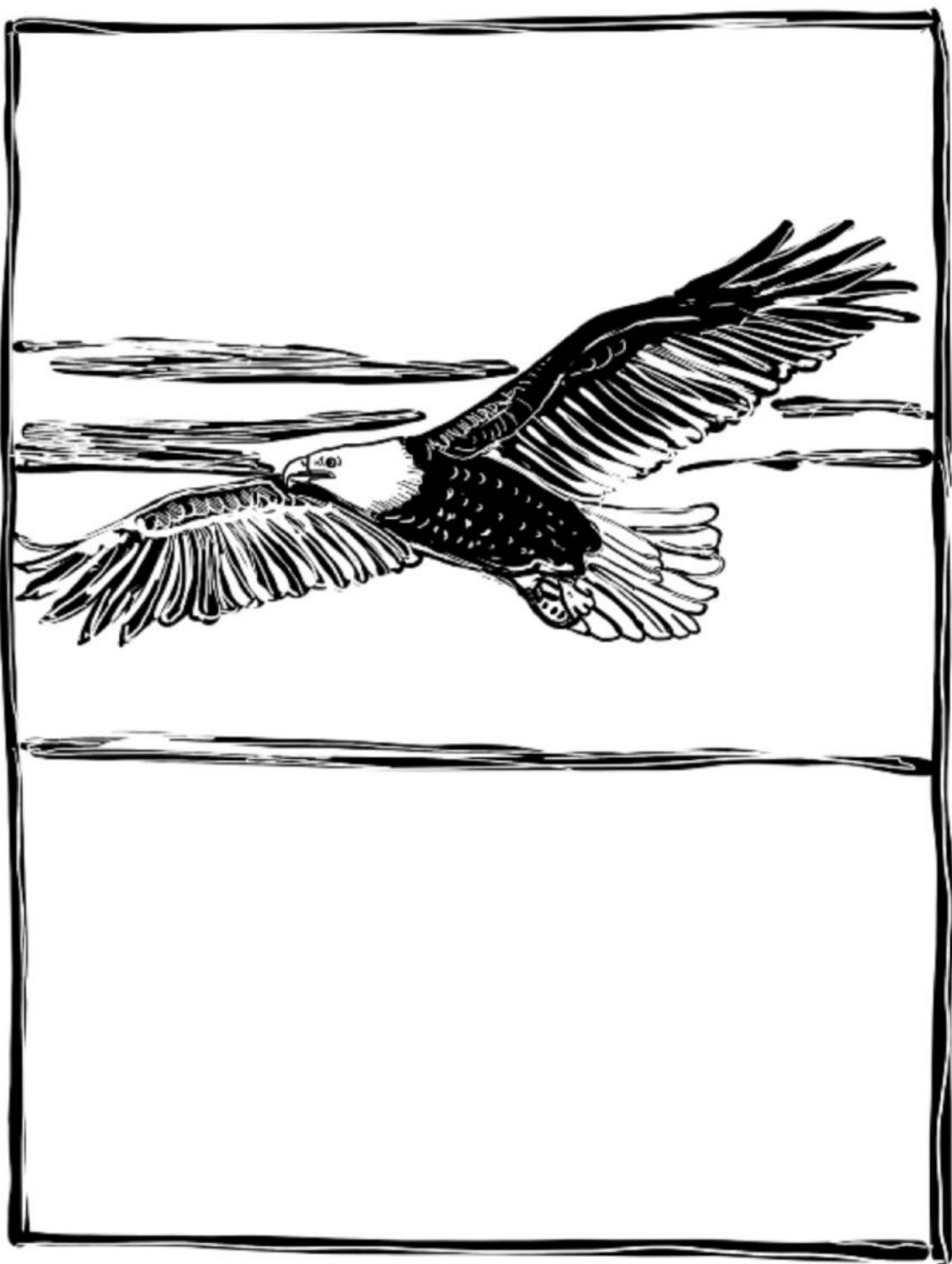


He found edible plants and some grub worms in an old rotten log. Although the worms did not taste good, they stopped the hunger pains and gave him the energy to keep going.

Little Boy saw the eagle flying overhead. His grandfather taught him that the eagle sees all from the sky and that he will guide you and warn you.

Later on in the journey Little Boy was not sure which direction to go. When he saw a Bluejay on a cactus he remembered what his grandfather had told him about the Bluejay. Just like the coyote, they were tricksters, be careful, they will always try to trick you.

He went in the other direction. He followed the eagle. He found grasshoppers, and insects to eat, along the way



At the end of the day just before nightfall, he was stopped in his tracks by the warning rattles from a diamondback rattlesnake.

He slowly reached his hand into his bag, took out a stone and he was able to kill the rattlesnake before it could strike him.

He made a fire by striking the two pieces of flint together, sparking the dry moss that he picked up along the way. He cooked the delicious rattlesnake on a stick and that night, he slept on the warm ground next to the warm fire.

The next morning he heard the bear moaning. He continued on, he found signs of a broken branch and dried blood. He knew he was close to the bear; he could feel it.





Little Boy followed the eagle and the cries of the bear that led him to a dark pit.

The bear had fallen into a pit and was not able to climb out. The bear was exhausted from trying to dig and climb his way out of the pit, only to fall back in with each attempt.

The bear moaned in pain, he had been without food and water for many days and the arrow was still in his side.

Little Boy looked into the bear's eyes and he knew the bear was losing hope. He knew that the Great Spirit had guided him here to help the bear out of the pit.

He found a log and was dragging it to the pit.

Little Boy's father, Two Elks, and the hunting party were returning home when they saw Little Boy from a distance.

"What is Little Boy doing this far from the village? He is two days by foot from the village." They watched Little Boy as he struggled with a log that was much bigger and heavier than he was.

It required all his strength and might to lift, roll and drag the log to the edge of the pit.

The other hunters wanted to help Little Boy, but his father stopped them from interfering and made them wait quietly and watch.

Little Boy struggled to get one end of the log over to the edge the pit, then he lifted the other end and let the log slide down into the pit. The top of the log was sticking out above the pit.

His father and the hunters watched with bewilderment. What could he be doing? Little Boy climbed down the log into the pit.

Little Boy knew what he had to do and wasted no time. He faced the bear, then grabbed the arrow and pulled it out of his side. The bear roared in pain and relief.

The grizzly bear sunk his long sharp claws into the log and pulled himself out of the bottom of the pit.

He was free and he knew he would live.

Thinking the worst when the hunters saw the grizzly bear climb out of the pit, they took aim with their arrows and were ready to kill the bear, when Little Boy climbed out of the pit behind Big Bear.

The Big Bear stood on his back legs clawing the air with his huge claws.

He was four times the size of a Little Boy. He was so large that he blocked out the sun and cast a shadow over Little Boy.

Little Boy raised his arms and his bow and roared back at Big Bear.

Then the bear bowed down to the boy, turned and retreated into the desert never to be seen again.

His father and hunting party returned to the village without letting Little Boy know they saw him.



Little Boy started the long trek back home to his village. He was happy and he was different.

He had answered the call of the Great Spirit and he stopped the bear's pain. He completed his quest, and Big Bear was free.

That night, he slept by a warm fire, that he had made. He ate the food that he cooked, and he drank the water that he found.

At sunrise he followed the eagle home.

His father was waiting just outside the village as Little Boy emerged from the desert.

He was on his horse and he had a pony in tow. Little Boy was excited to see his father and to be home.

"Father, why do you have a pony?" Grandfather told me of your bravery and how you saved your mother and your sister from Big Bear.

Now I have seen with my own eyes, your courage and your compassion. You are a true warrior and every warrior must have a pony.

When I was a young man on my first hunting party, I killed two Elks. That is how I became Two Elks. From this day on, you will be called Big Bear.

Two Elks and Big Bear rode home together. The entire village was waiting to celebrate the return of Big Bear, the great hunter.

CAMPFIRE MANY YEARS LATER (GRANDFATHER TWO ELKS)

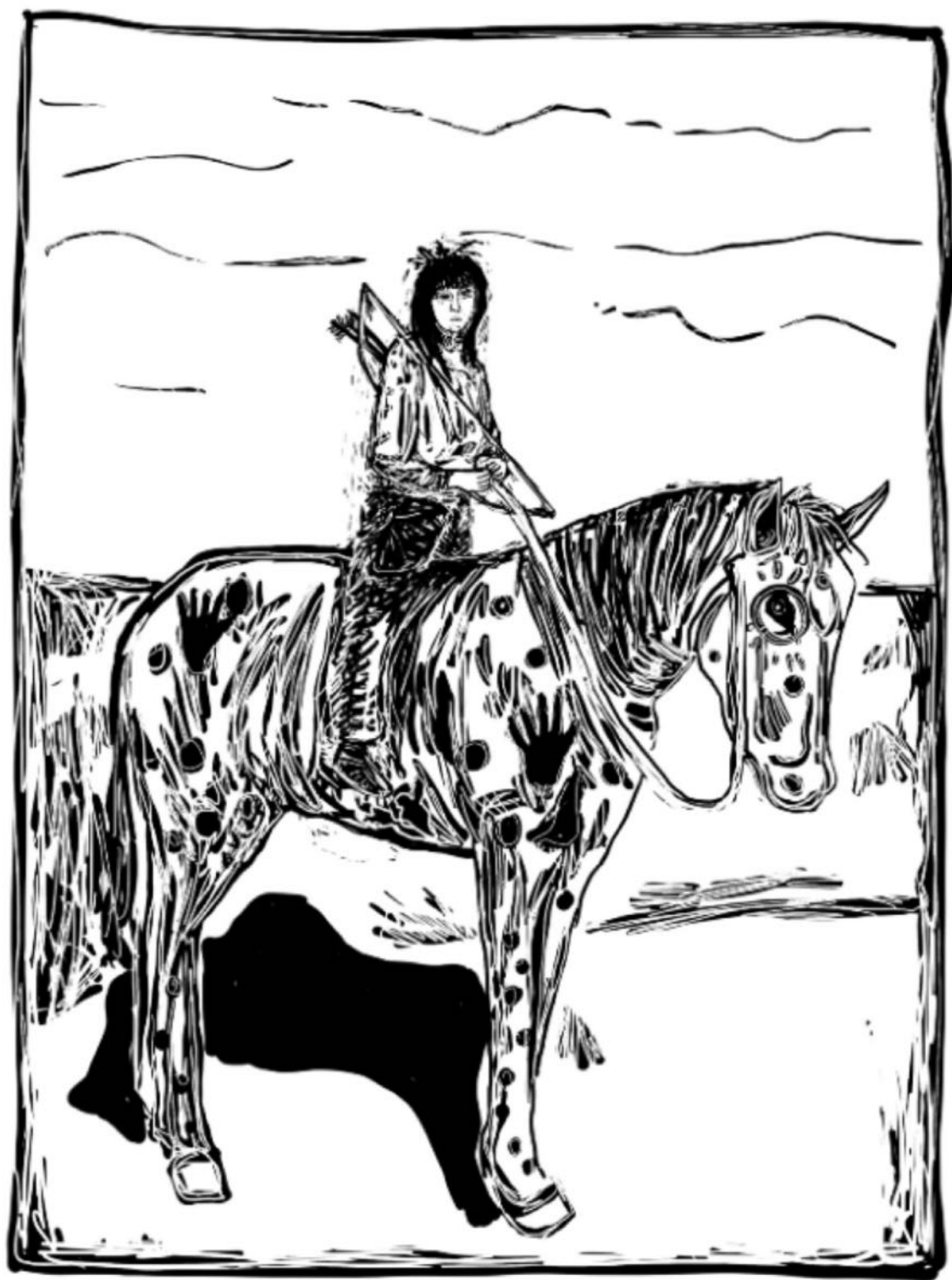
The young boys were sitting around the campfire. They had been acting out the story as grandfather Two Elks told it.

They took turns playing the part of Little Boy and Big Bear.

That's how Grandfather Two Elks ended the story of how his son Little Boy, became Big Bear, the tribes greatest warrior.

"Tell us again grandfather."

THE END



MAKE A POEM
WRITE A STORY
MAKE A DRAWING
MAKE A ZINE
EVERYDAY

