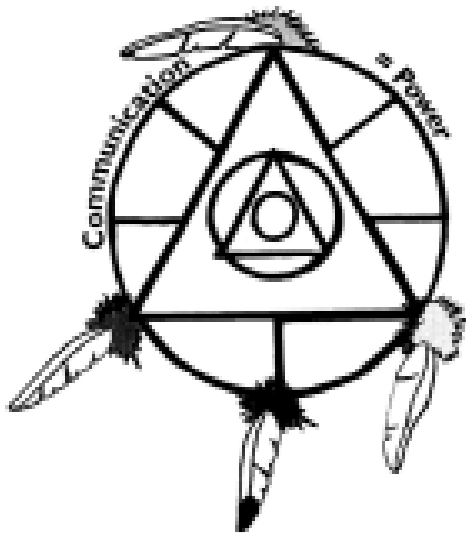


Seven Boys Who Turned Into Geese

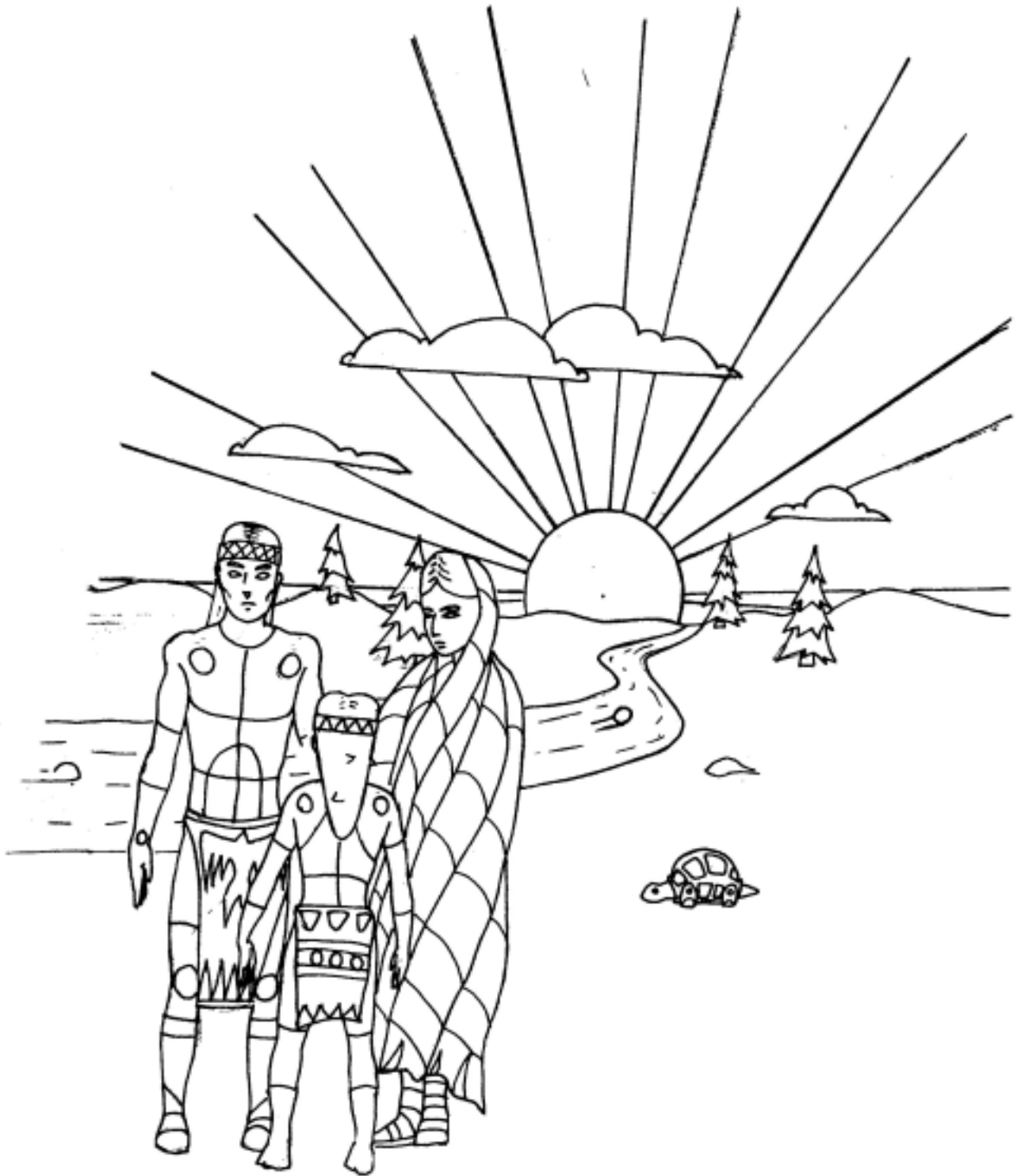
A Chumash Story



Retold by Toloakka

Illustrated by Beakakchush

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A long, long time ago, they say, animals and people still talked to each other. In those days, the men did the hunting and the cooking. During that time, there was a boy who lived with his mother and step-father.

The step-father had killed a duck and cooked it for dinner. The mother and step-father ate the delicious duck, but they didn't give any to the boy. The poor boy felt so hungry that he cried.

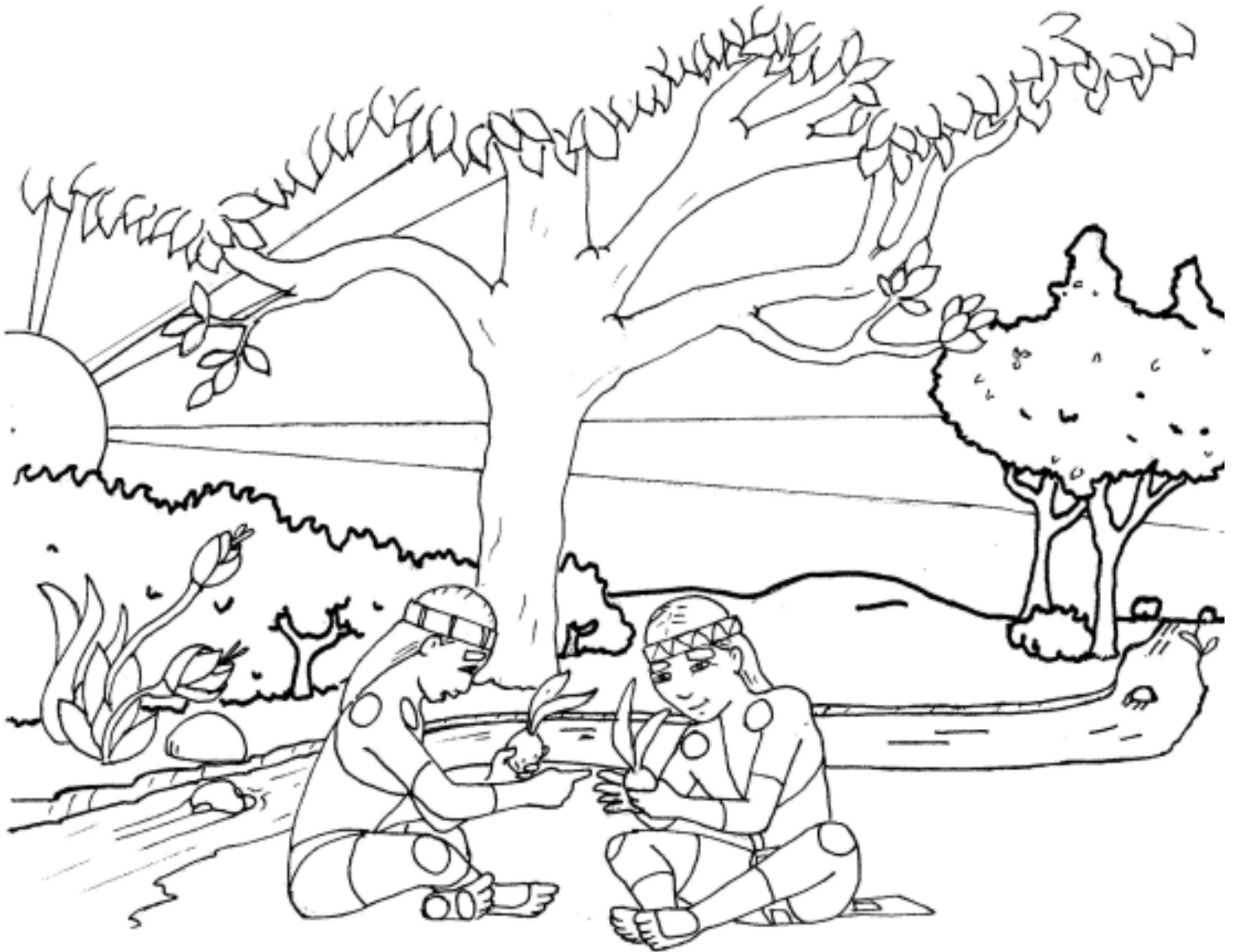


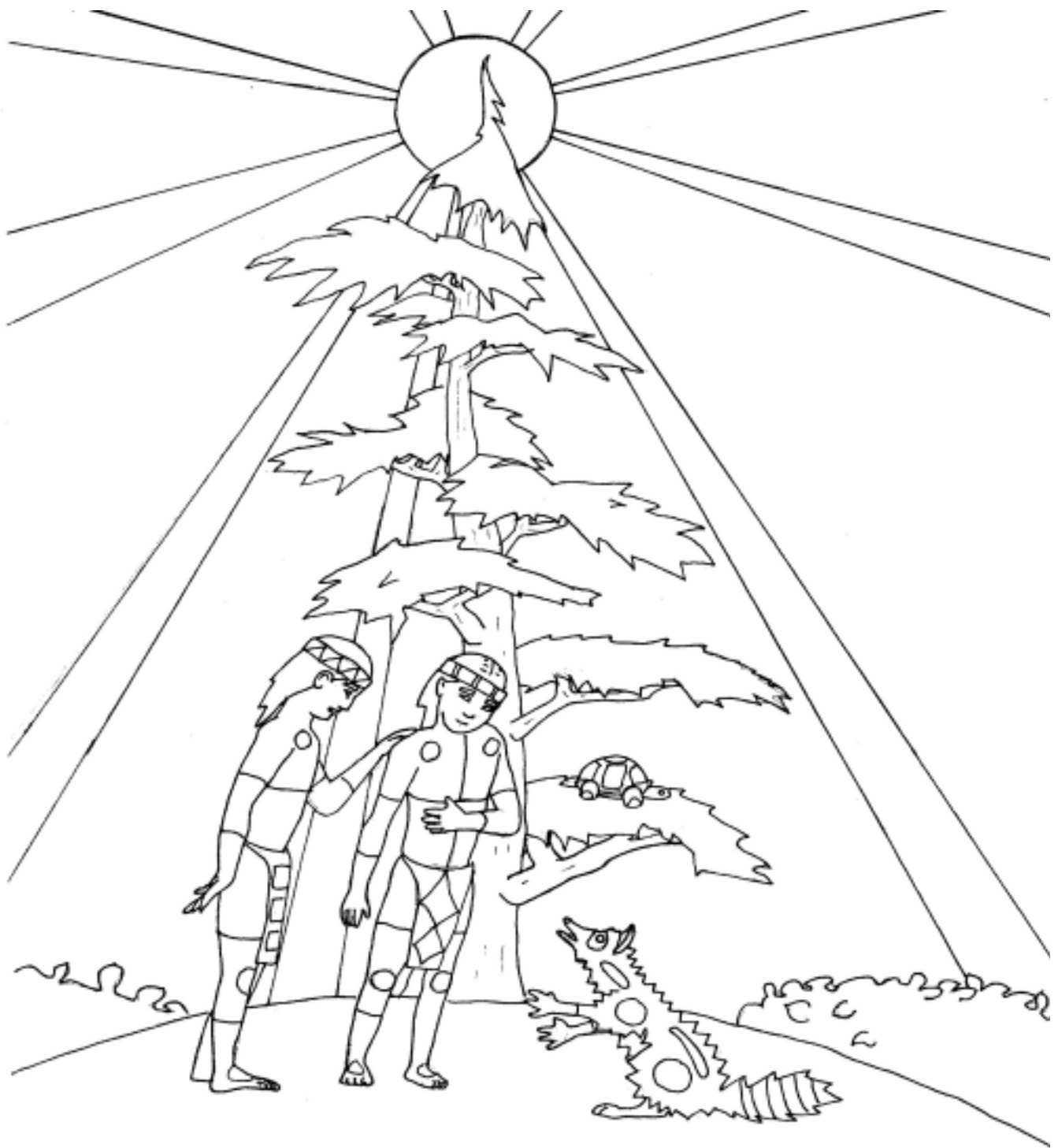


“Stop crying,” his mother said. “If you want some food, find your own father.”

The boy couldn’t believe his ears. His own father had left him. He walked away into the darkness to go to his special place. There he could play alone away from the noises of the camp.

In the morning, he found some edible bulbs called *cocomites*. They filled him up. Another boy came along. His family had chased him away from home too. The first boy showed the second boy how to dig for the bulbs, clean them, cut them up, and eat them. That way, they had a great day together.



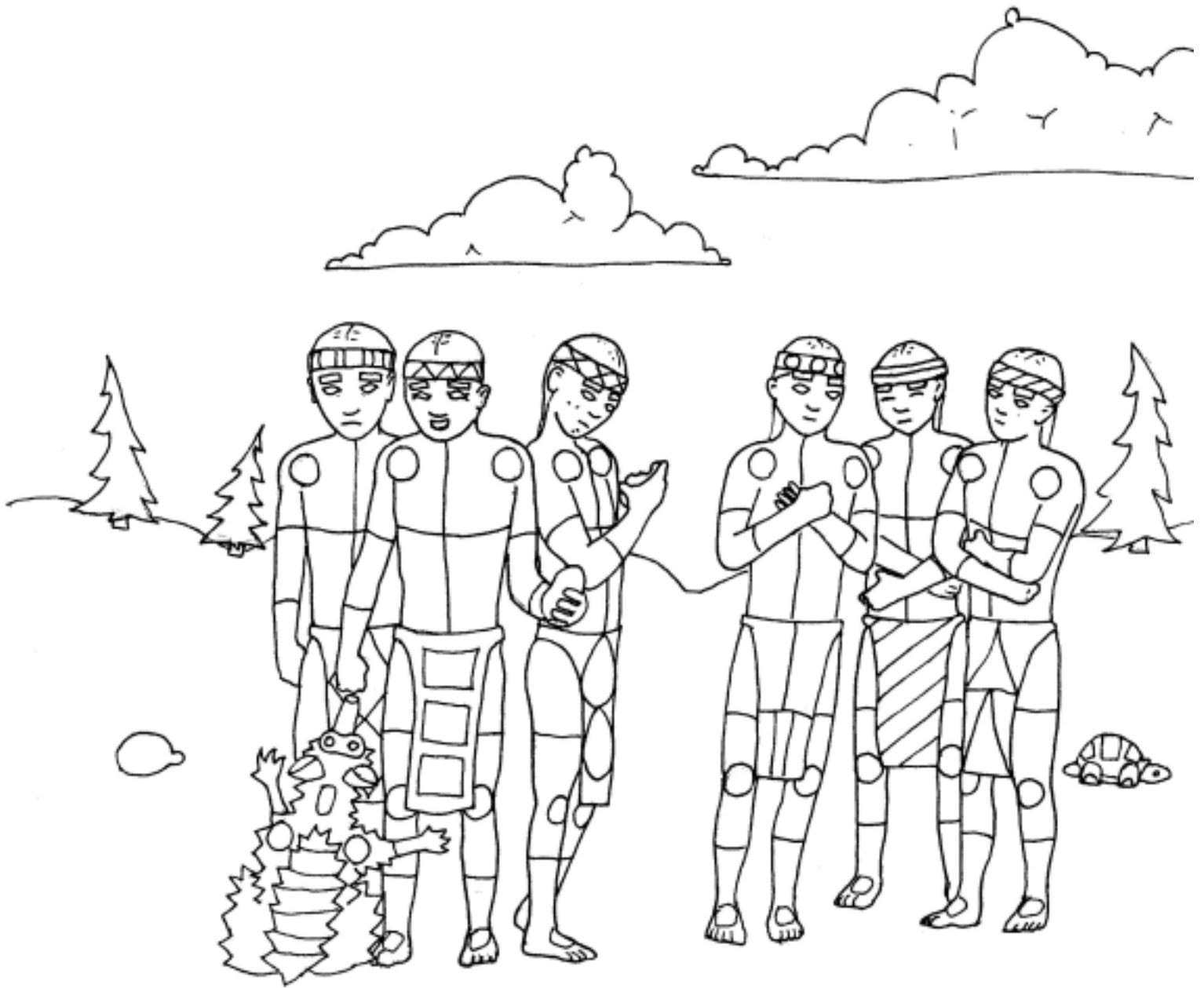


They spent the night in the special place. In the morning, they eagerly began looking for food. Just then Raccoon came along. “What are you doing?” he asked.

“We are digging roots and bulbs for our breakfast, Uncle,” they answered respectfully. “Our mothers and fathers do not want us.”

Raccoon said, "Come with me. I will take care of you."
Raccoon showed them where to find wild potatoes. Then a
third boy came along and joined them. Then three more boys
came along. Raccoon certainly had his hands full trying to
feed all these boys.





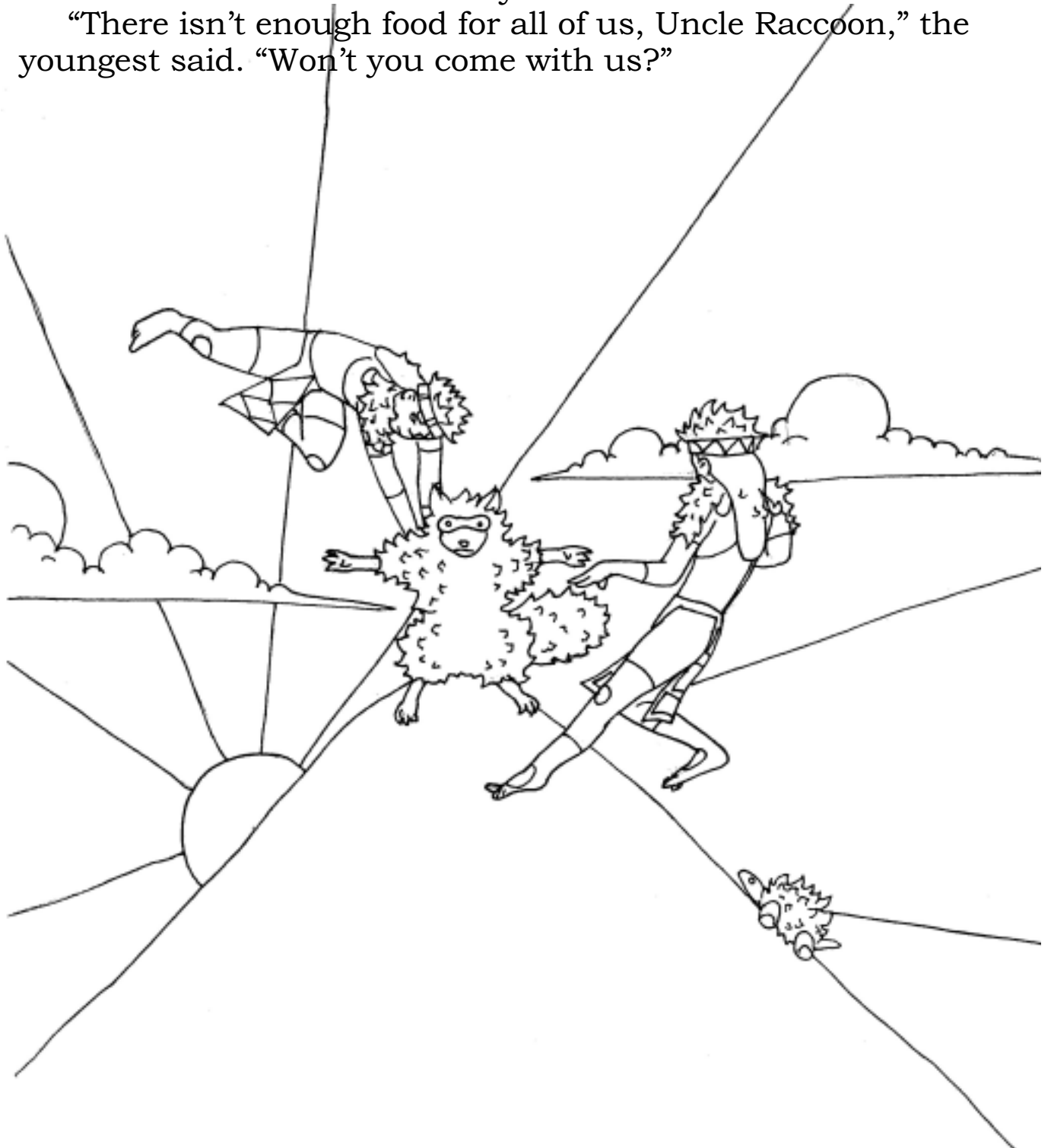
After a day of gathering food, Raccoon asked the boys to spend the night. The next day they built a fire for their breakfast. One more boy showed up. His family had chased him away too.

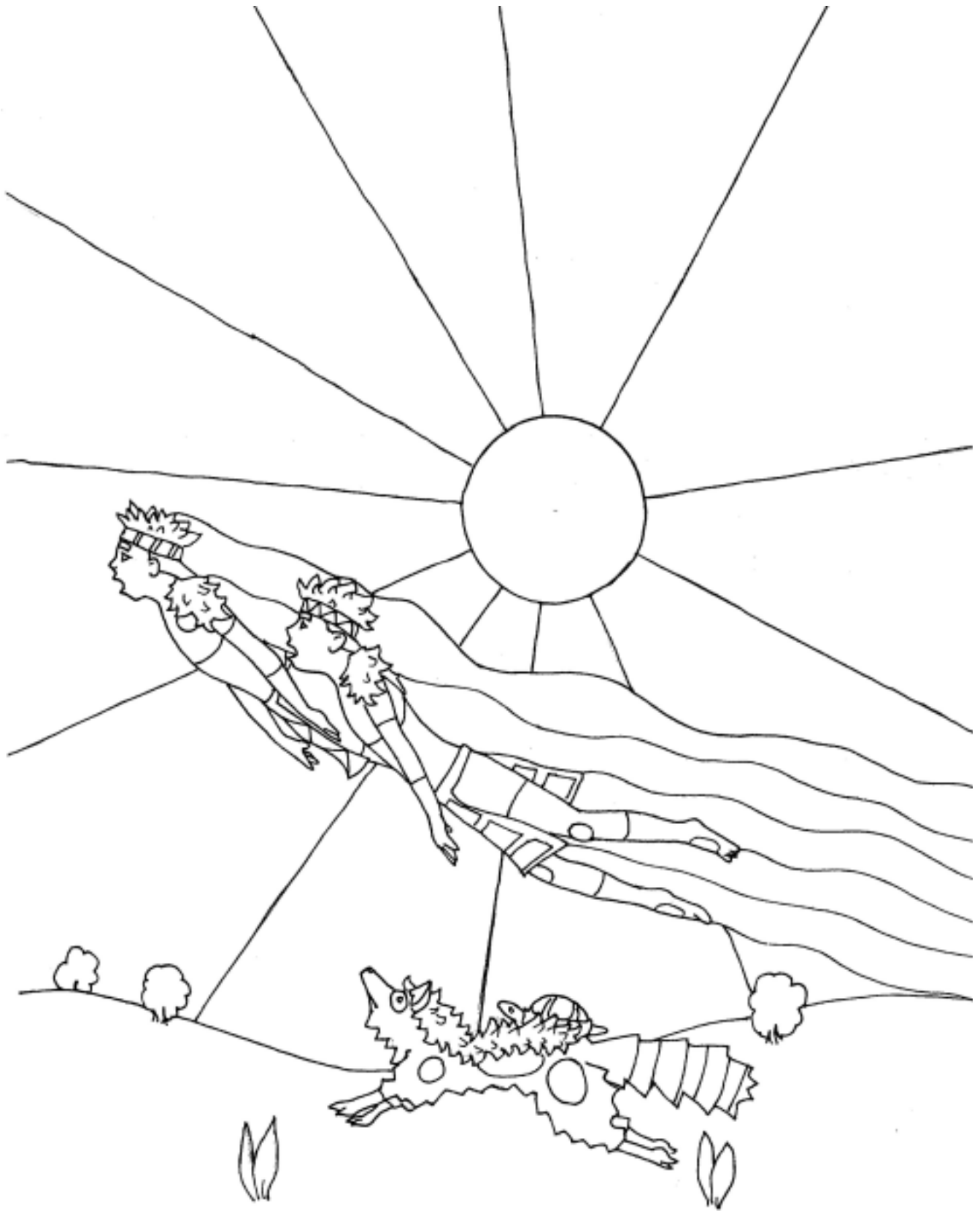
After they ate, the oldest boy said, "I'm headed north. Anyone want to come with me?"

They all said yes. "Why don't you come with us, Uncle Raccoon?"

One boy had found some goose down and put a little on the head and shoulders of each boy.

"There isn't enough food for all of us, Uncle Raccoon," the youngest said. "Won't you come with us?"





Raccoon agreed, and the boys put some goose down on him too. The oldest began singing. The other boys joined in. As they sang, they began to float above the ground.

Uncle Raccoon had to follow on the ground.

Everyone felt sad because Raccoon couldn't fly. The boys covered Raccoon completely in goose down, but he still could not fly. Everyday, the boys flew higher and higher. It became harder and harder to get back to Raccoon on the ground.





They flew so high an old neighbor woman saw them. “Shame on you,” she said to their mothers. “Look what has happened to your sons.”

The boys had turned into geese. Below, the mothers cried for their lost sons. Raccoon cried too.

Above, the geese cried long and hard. To this day, you can hear them crying. At last, they flew to the Sky Country where they became the Big Dipper.

The End