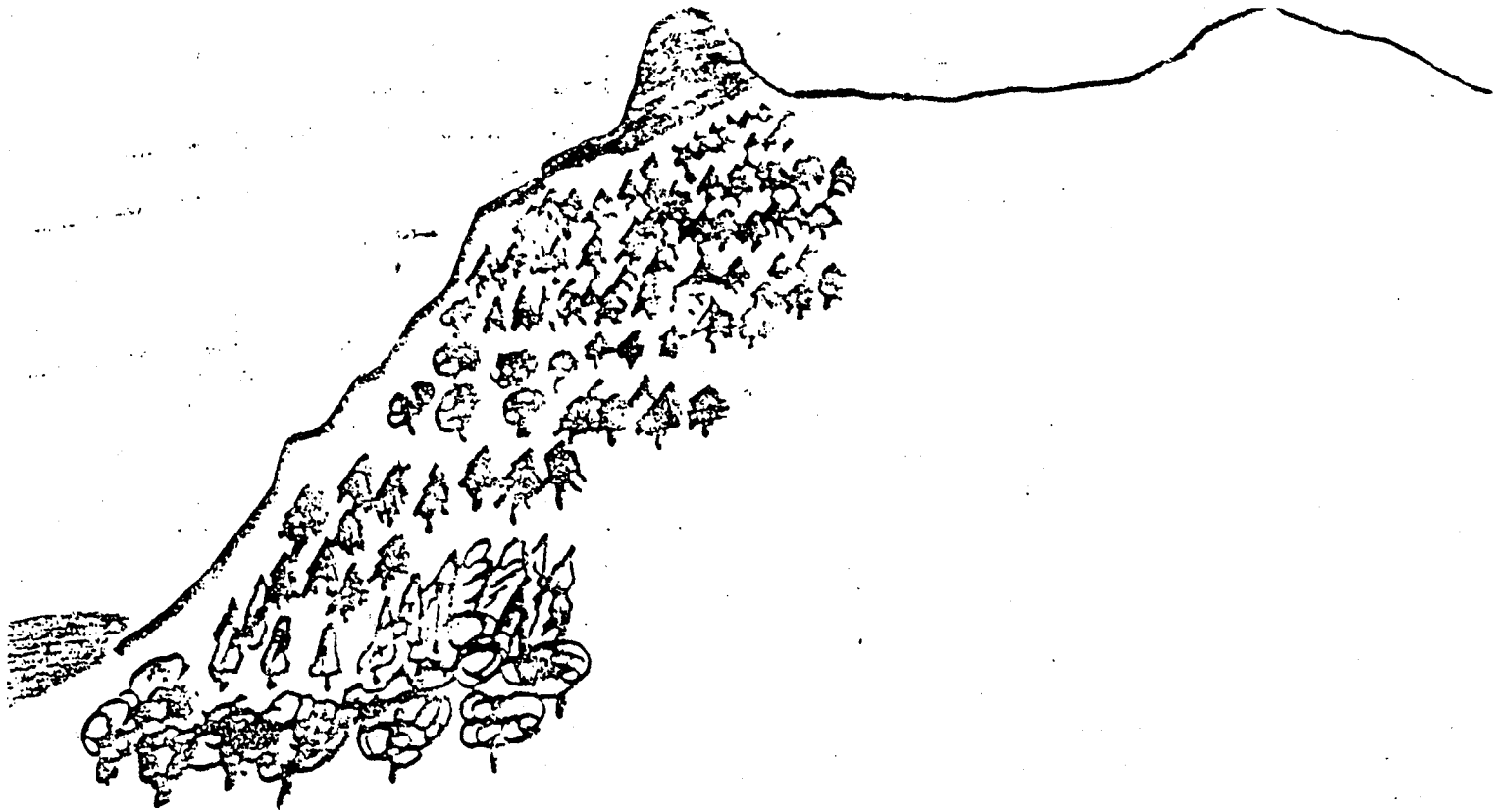
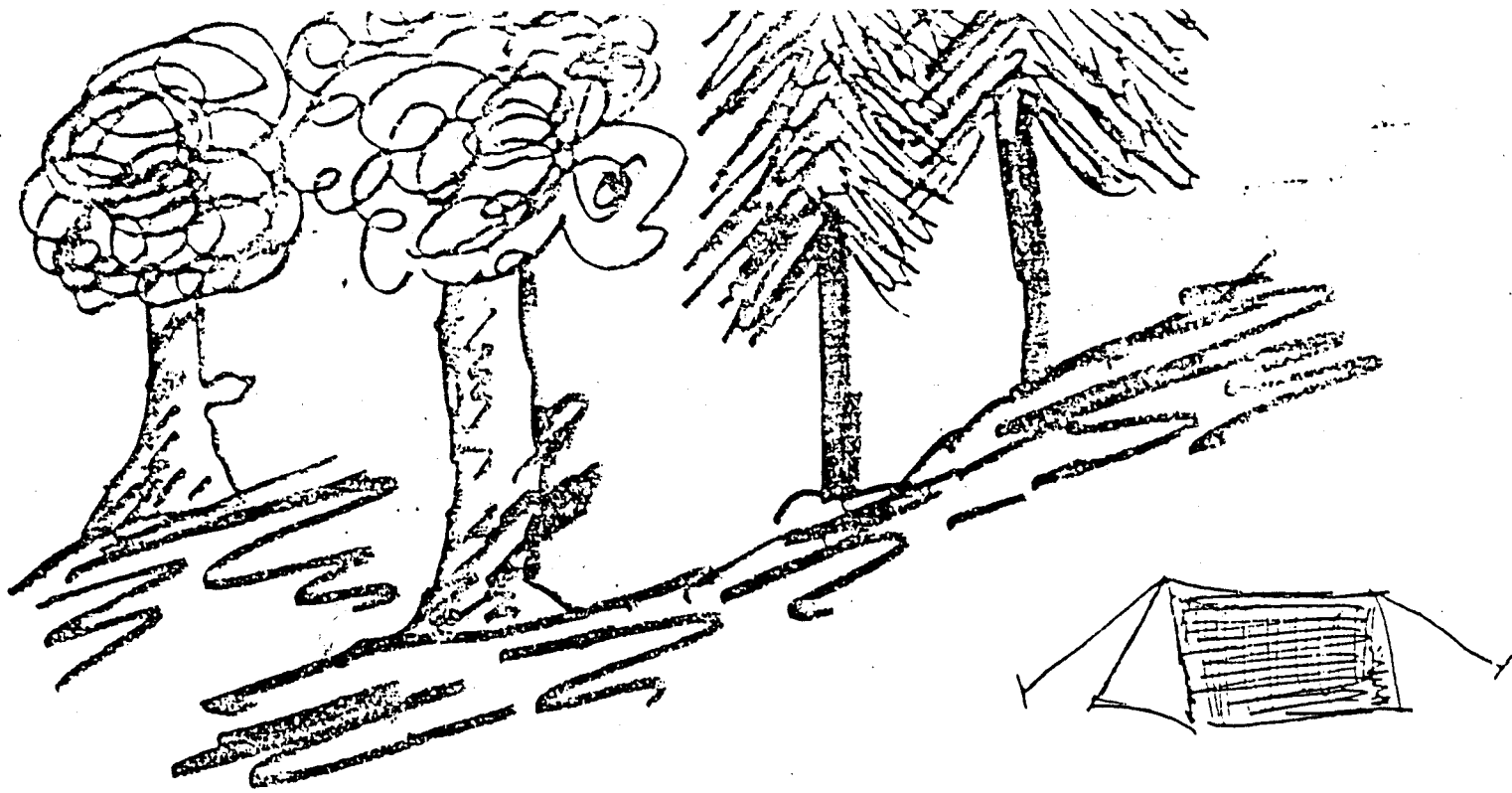


I Am Ready

Muska Mosston  
1988

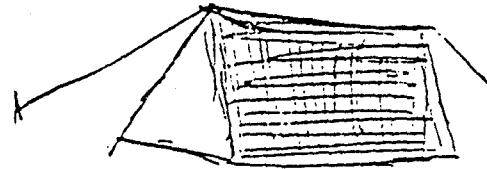


THIS IS MOUNT CHICORUA. IT IS A TALL, BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAIN COVERED WITH TREES. THE TOP LOOKS LIKE A CONE, A ROCKY CONE.

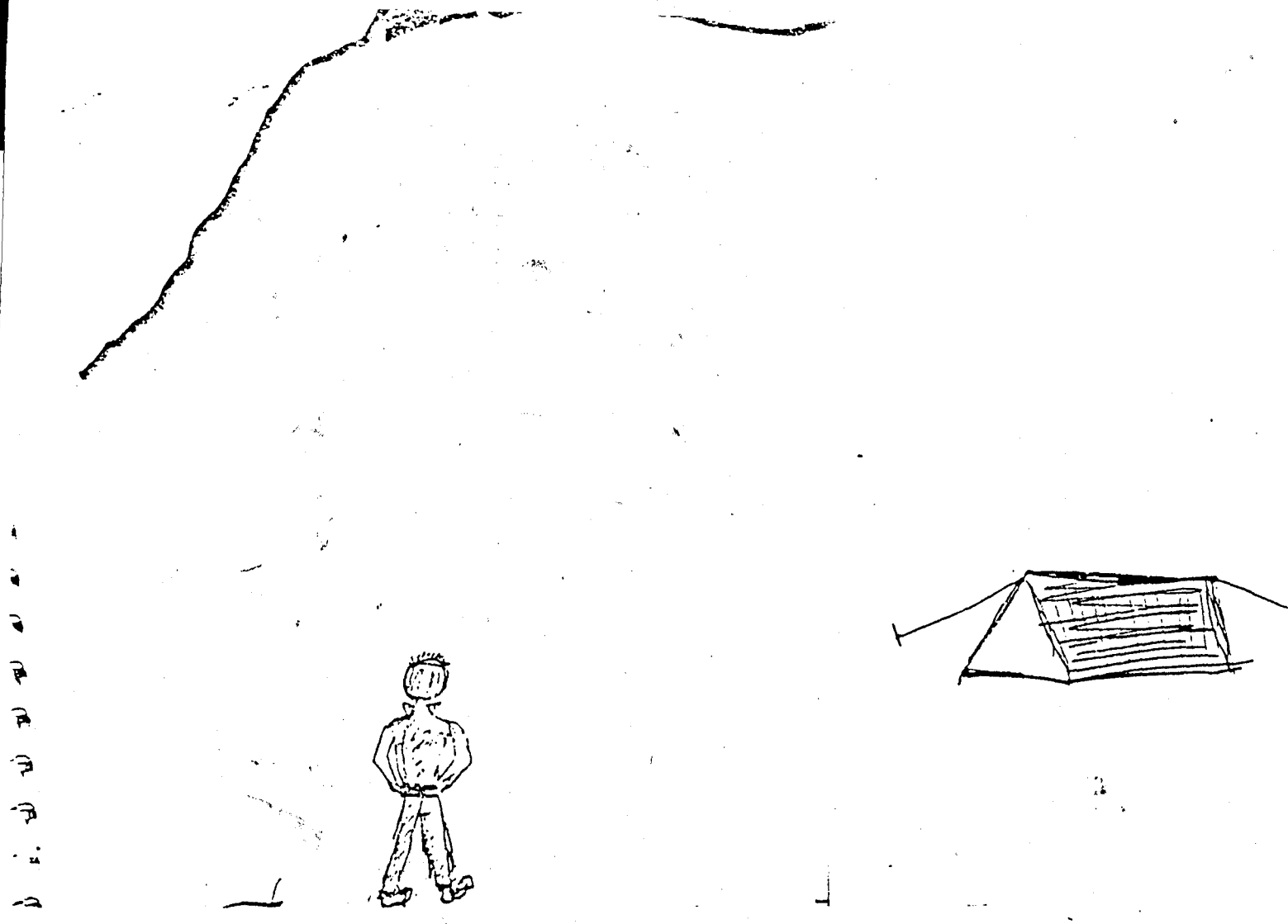


EVERY SUMMER JESSE AND HIS FAMILY GO CAMPING AT THE BASE OF  
MOUNT CHICORUA. THEY HIKE IN THE WOODS. THEY SWIM IN THE LAKE.  
THEY COOK ON FIRE. THEY SLEEP IN TENTS.

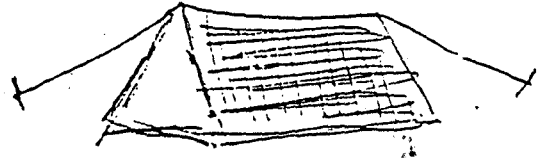
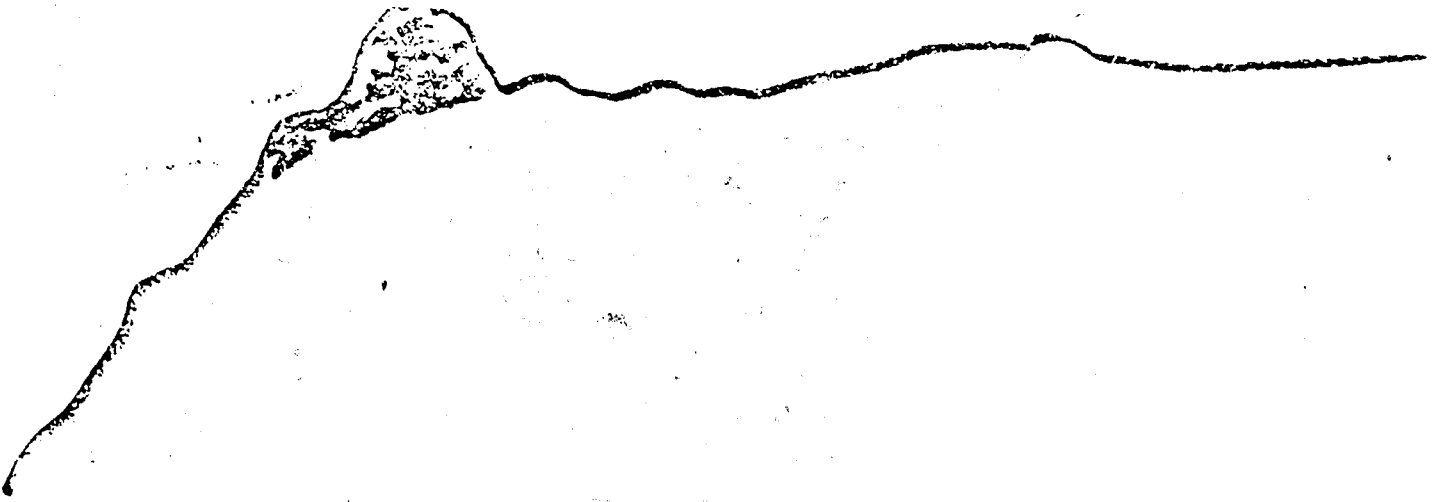
JESSE'S DAD CLIMBS MOUNT CHICORUA. HE HAS CLIMBED IT MANY TIMES.



ONE DAY JESSE STOOD OUTSIDE HIS TENT AND LOOKED AT THE MOUNTAIN.  
HE COULD SEE THE ROCKY CONE AT THE TOP. HE STOOD AND STARED FOR  
A LONG, LONG TIME.



THE SECOND MORNING JESSE AGAIN LOOKED AT THE MOUNTAIN.

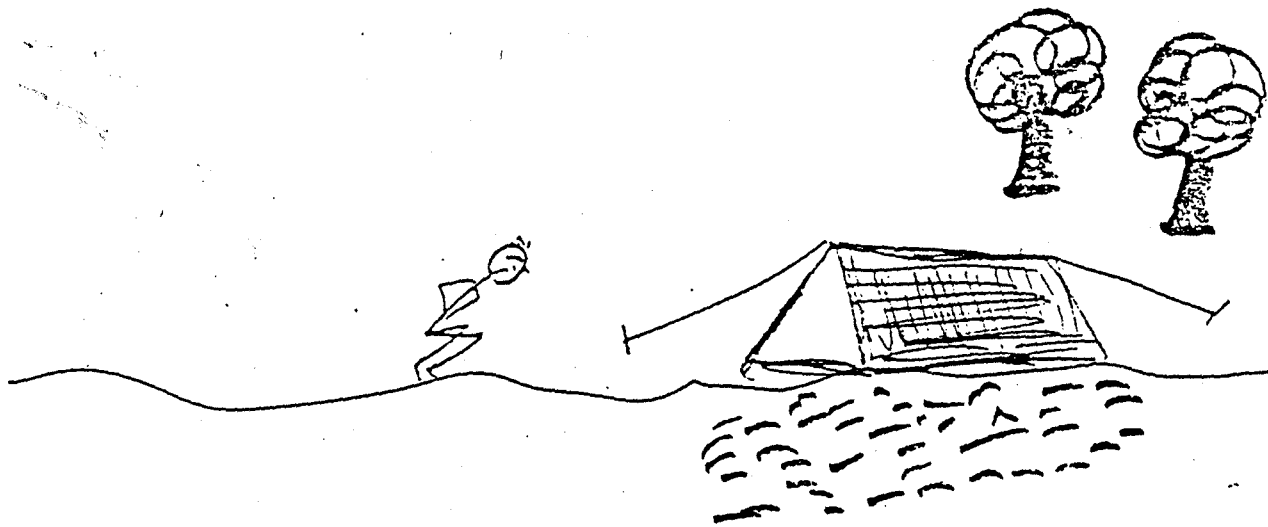


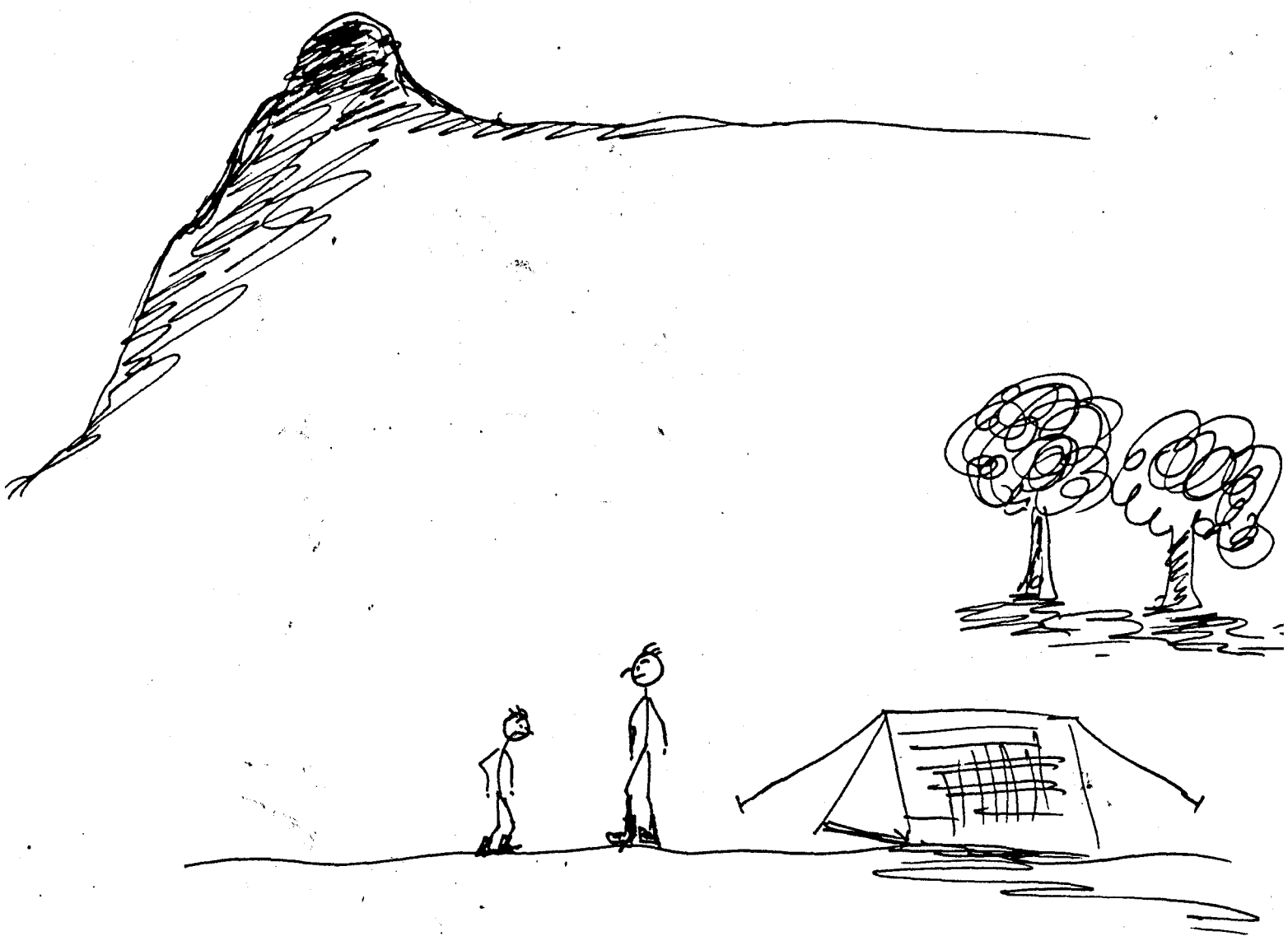
THE NEXT MORNING --

AGAIN HE SILENTLY LOOKED, AND LOOKED, AND LOOKED...

EARLY IN THE MORNING OF THE FOURTH DAY JESSE SAID TO HIS DAD:

I AM READY!

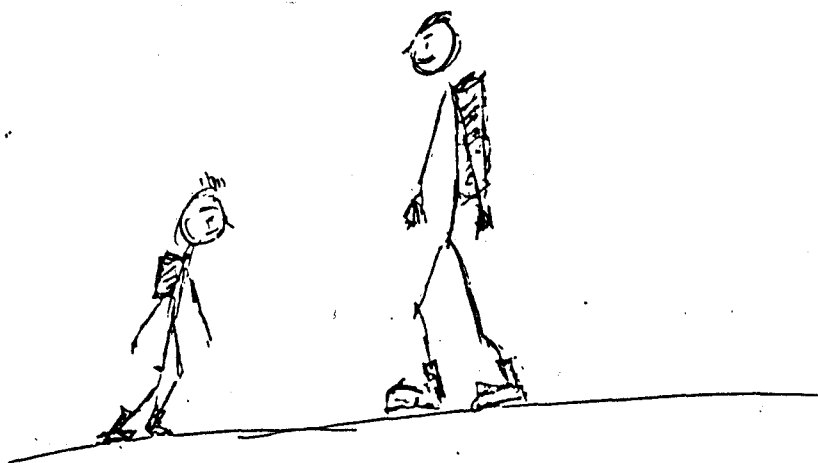




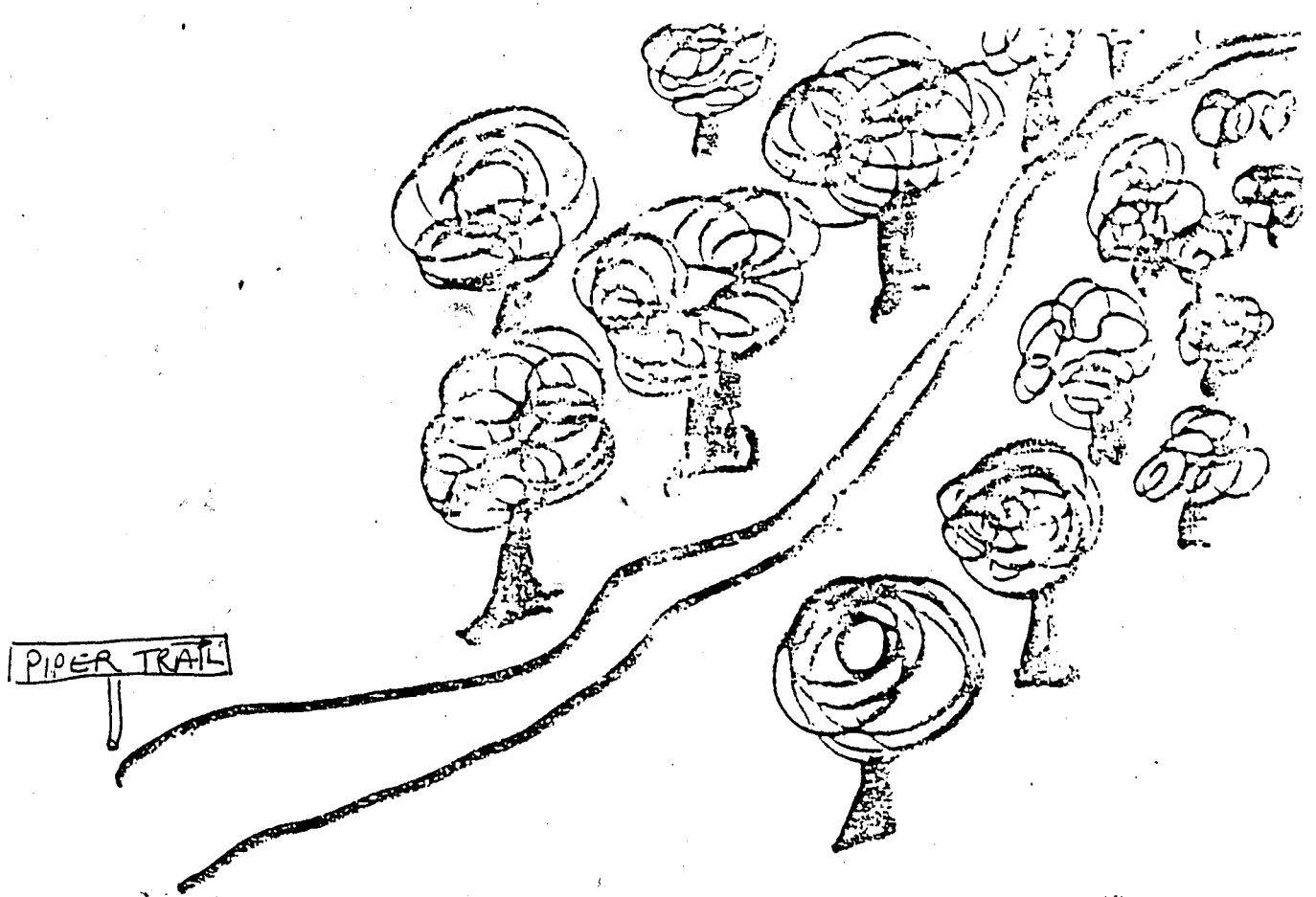
JESSE'S DAD SAID, "MOUNT CHICORUA IS A BIG MOUNTAIN FOR A LITTLE BOY".

JESSE ANSWERED, "I AM READY!"

IN THE BIG BACKPACK THAT JESSE'S DAD CARRIED THERE WAS FOOD, WATER, WARM CLOTHES, SLEEPING BAGS, A FLASHLIGHT AND MATCHES.



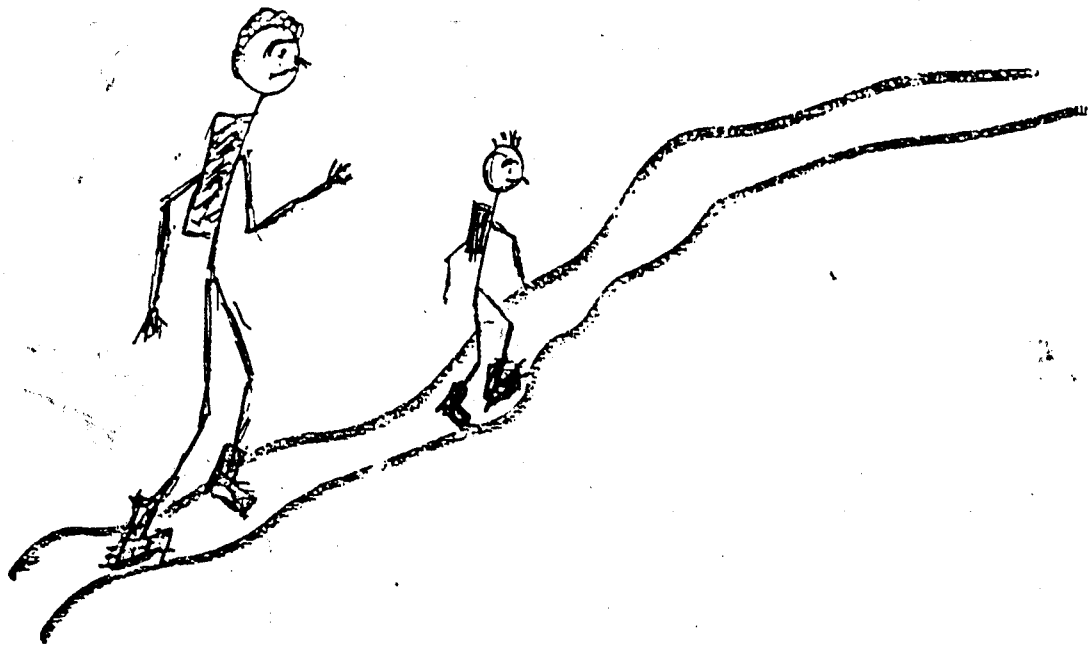
JESSE'S DAD HAD MADE A SPECIAL PACK FOR JESSE. HE HAD SEWN STRAPS ONTO A POUCH AND MADE SURE IT WAS JUST THE RIGHT SIZE. IN THE PACK JESSE HAD A SANDWICH, AN APPLE, A LITTLE TOY CAR, AND HIS FAVORITE BOOK ABOUT THE ADVENTURES OF ANOTHER LITTLE BOY.



AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TRAIL THAT LED TO THE ROCKY TOP THERE WAS A BROWN WOODEN SIGN WITH CARVED LETTERS. PIPER TRAIL.

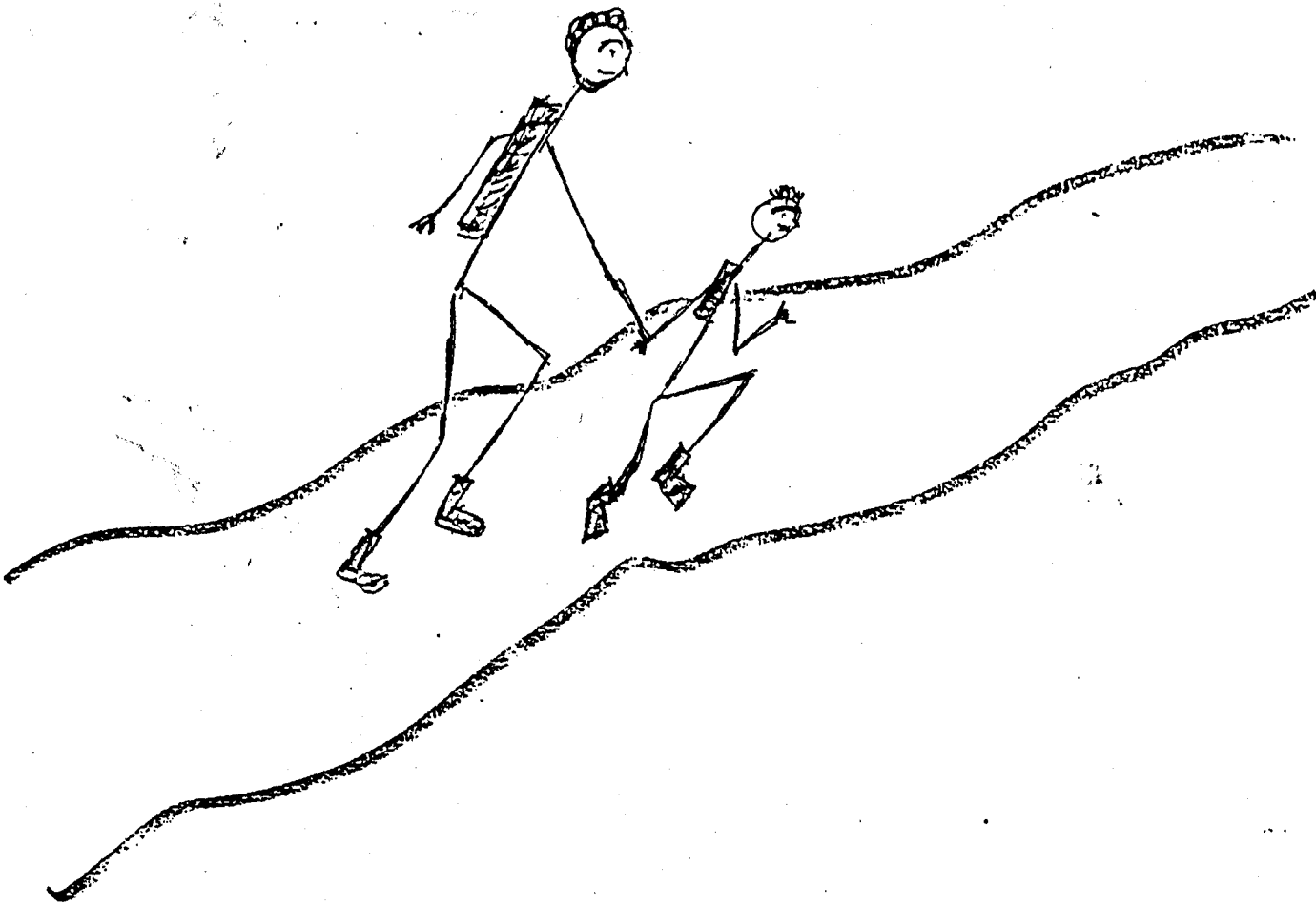
THEY BEGAN WALKING. SOON THEY COULD SEE ONLY THE TREES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE TRAIL.

SOMETIMES JESSE LED THE WAY



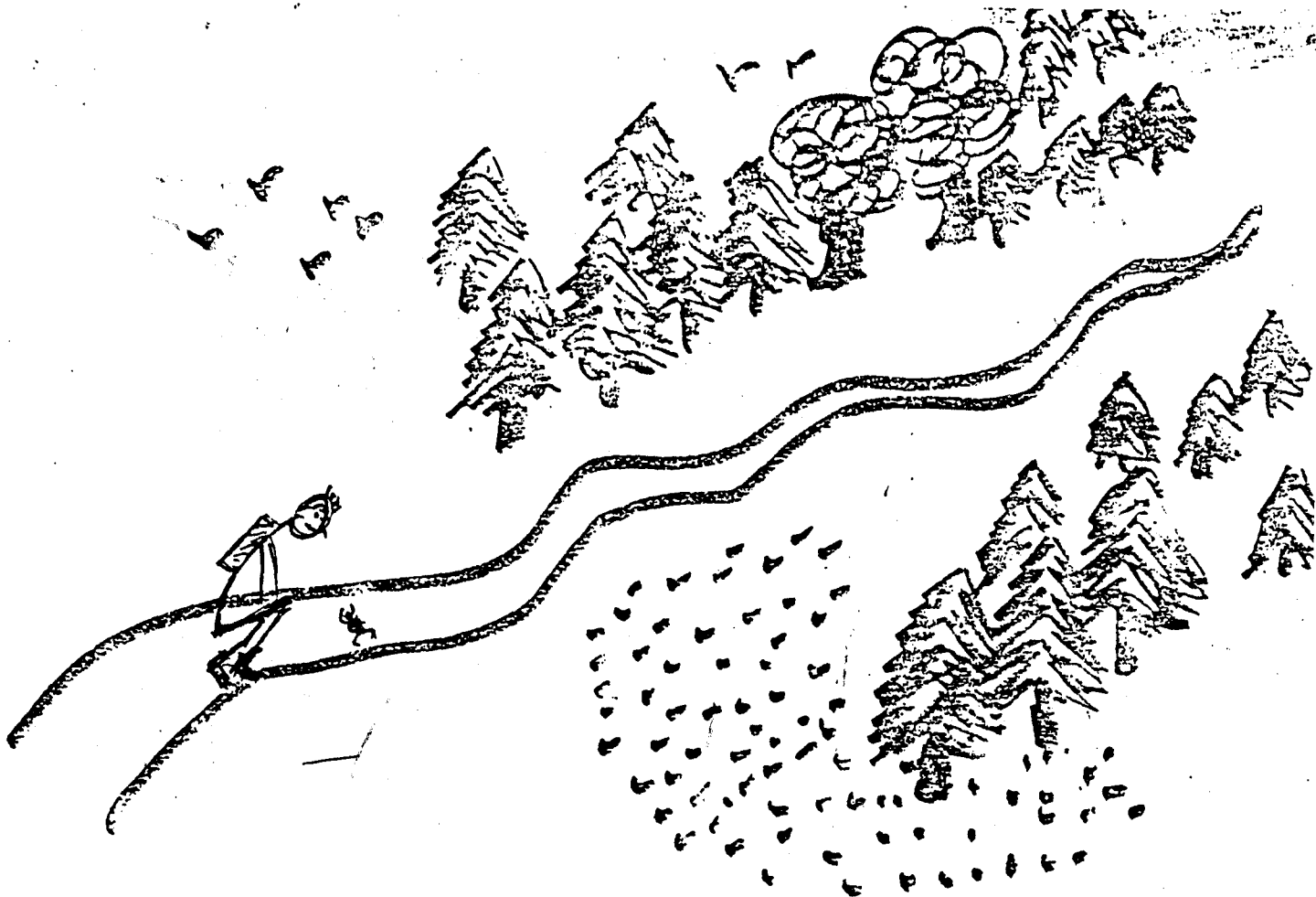


AND WHEN THE TRAIL WAS WIDER THEY WALKED HAND IN HAND

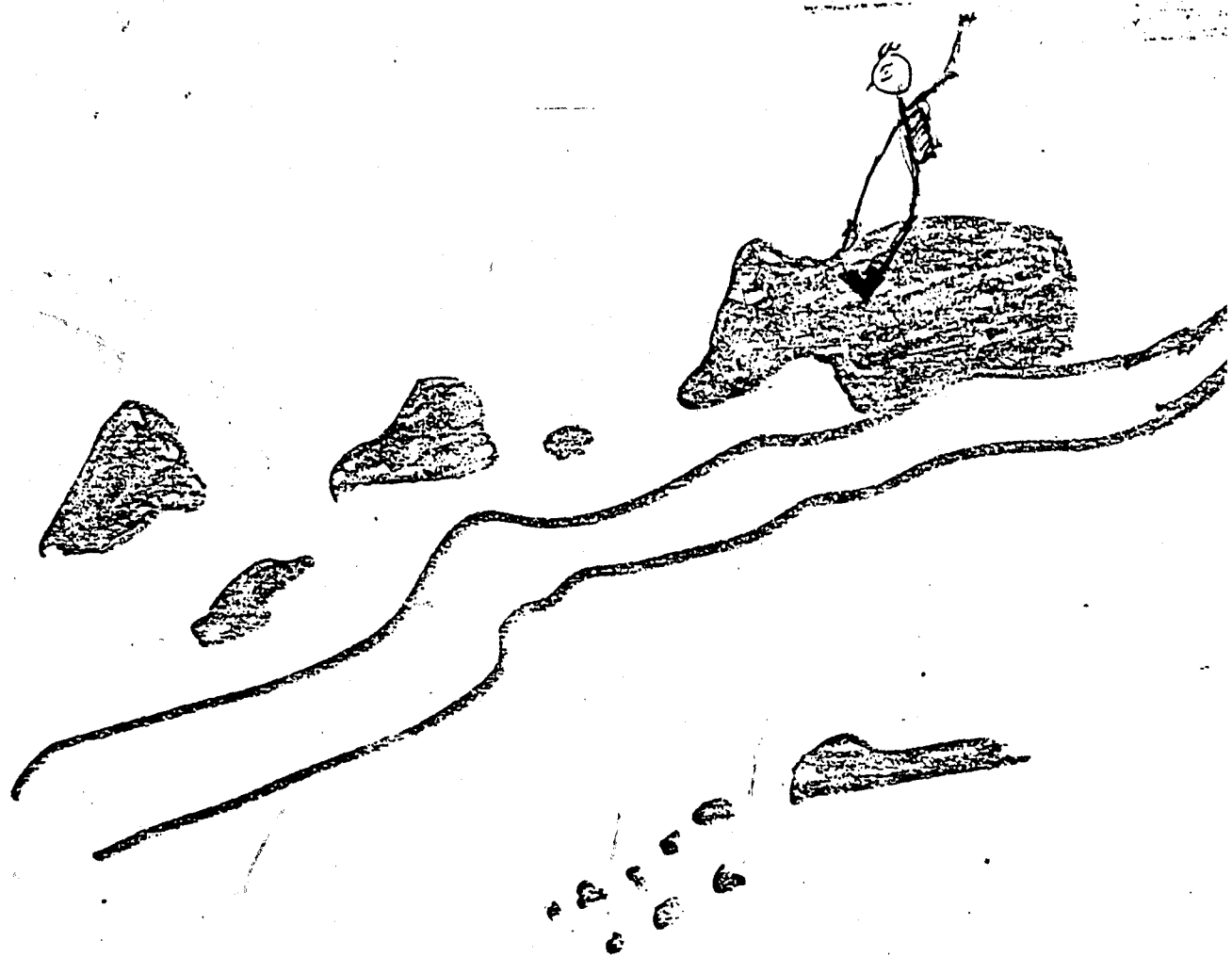


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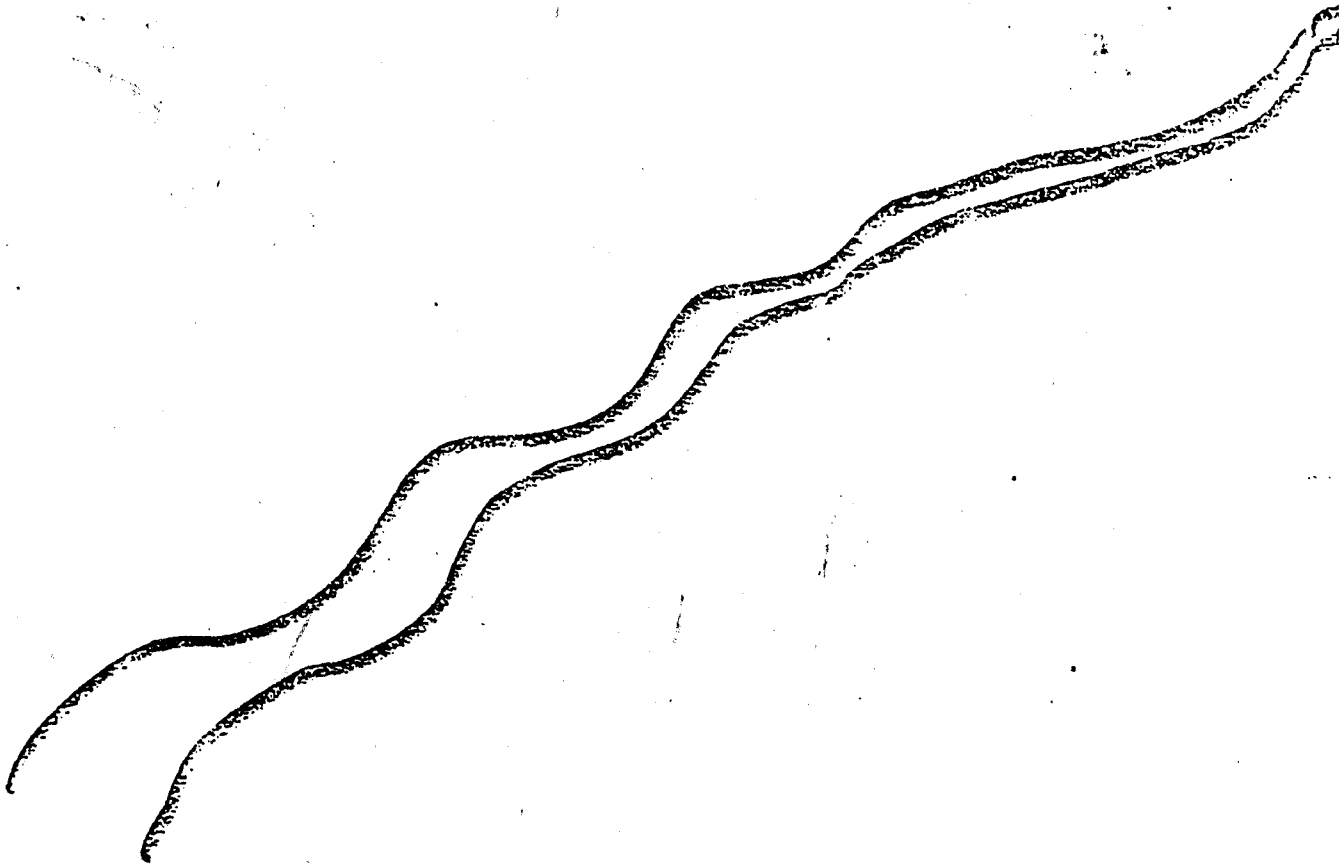
ALONG THE WAY THEY SAW MANY THINGS. THERE WERE MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF TREES. BIRDS PERCHED ON THEIR BRANCHES. WILD FLOWERS GREW IN LITTLE CLUMPS; PINK AND BLUE AND YELLOW. SQUIRRELS AND CHIPMUNKS SCURRIED ABOUT AND A TOAD LEAPED ACCROSS THE TRAIL.



THERE WERE MANY ROCKS ALONG THE WAY. ONE ROCK LOOKED LIKE AN ELEPHANT.  
THEY STOPPED FOR A WHILE AND JESSE RODE THE ELEPHANT-ROCK.

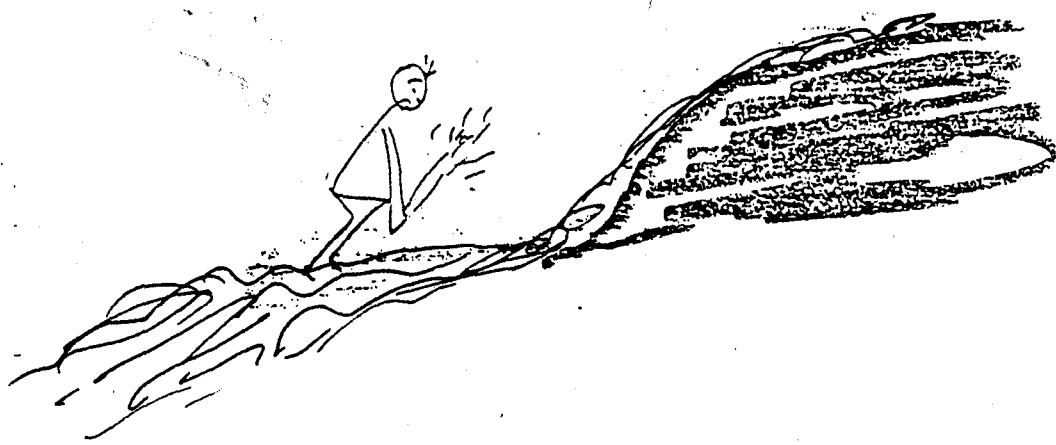


UP AND UP WENT JESSE AND HIS DAD. ONLY THE SOUND OF THEIR BREATHING  
AND THE SOUND OF THEIR BOOTS STEPPING ON THE HARD GROUND COULD BE HEARD.





THEY WASHED THEIR FACES AND HANDS IN THE STREAM. THE COOL WATER FELT GOOD.  
AFTER JESSE AND HIS DAD ATE THEIR SANDWICHES, JESSE SPLASHED IN THE WATER.

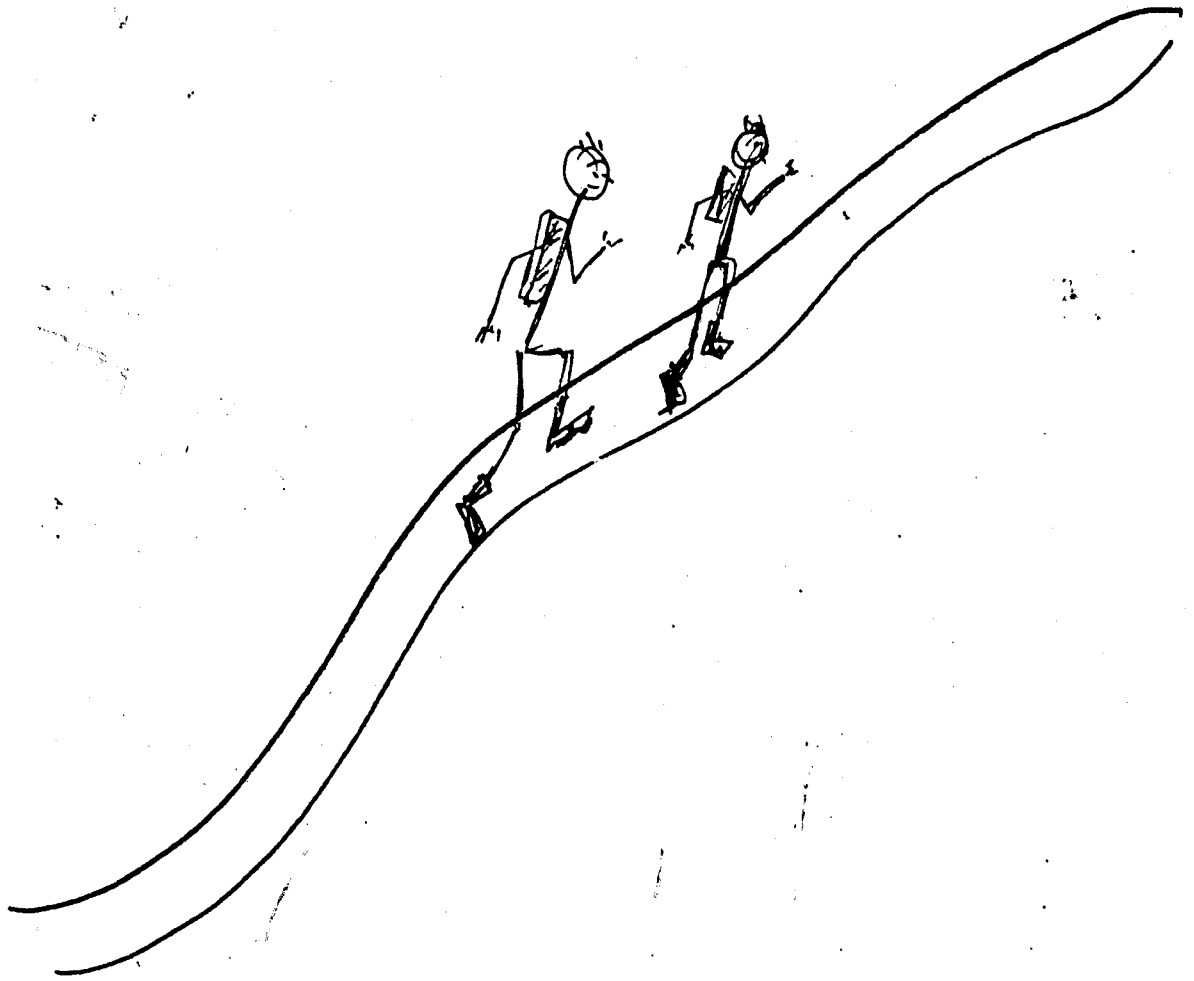




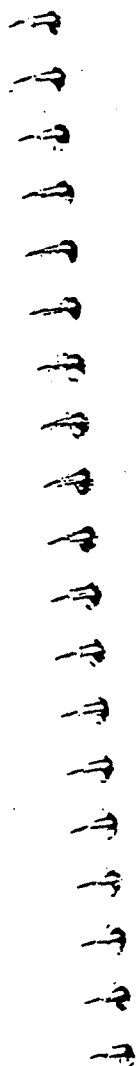
"THERE IT IS", SHOUTED JESSE AS THEY CAME TO A CLEARING. "I CAN SEE THE TOP. IT IS STILL FAR AWAY BUT I CAN SEE THE ROCKY CONE".



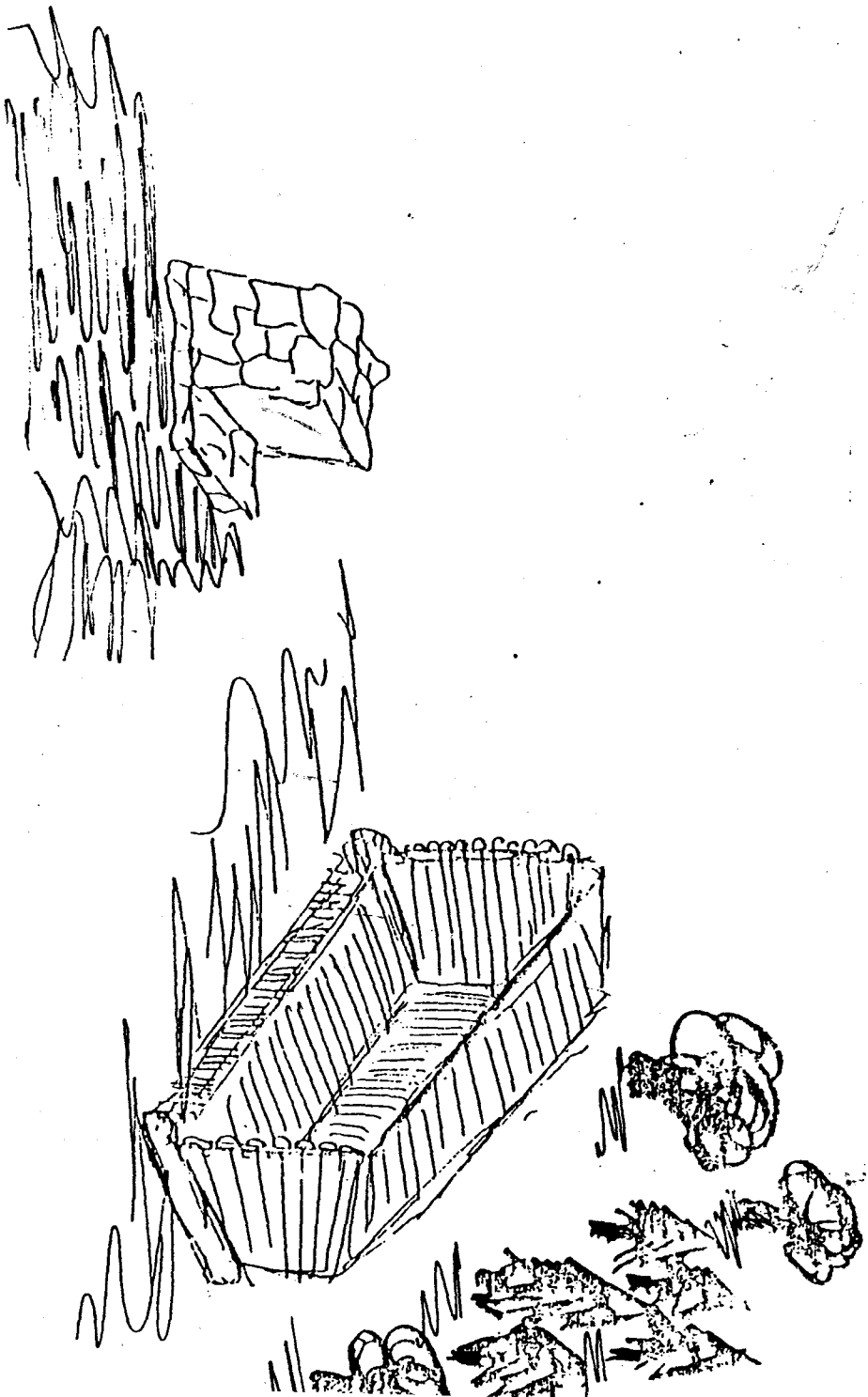
AGAIN THEY BEGAN TO CLIMB.



LATE IN THE AFTERNOON, JESSE AND HIS DAD WALKED SLOWER AND SLOWER.  
"I AM TIRED," SAID JESSE. "CAN WE STOP NOW?" "I AM TIRED TOO",  
SAID HIS DAD. "THERE IS A LITTLE HUT FURTHER UP THE TRAIL. IT  
IS CALLED A LEAN-TO. WE WILL STOP THERE. THAT IS WHERE WE WILL  
SPEND THE NIGHT".



WHEN THEY REACHED THE LEAN-TO THEY TOOK OFF THEIR PACKS AND SPREAD THE SLEEPING BAGS ON THE WOODEN FLOOR. THEY GATHERED DRY BRANCHES THAT WERE LYING ON THE GROUND TO MAKE THEIR CAMPFIRE.



AFTER THEY ATE, JESSE'S DAD SAT ON A ROCK AND LOOKED AT THE DIM LIGHTS IN THE VALLEY BELOW. JESSE PLAYED WITH HIS TOY CAR. THE ONLY LIGHT WAS FROM THE FIRE IN THE FIREPLACE AND THE MOON IN THE SKY. THE ONLY SOUND WAS THE SOUND OF THE LITTLE TOY CAR: BROOM, BROOM.

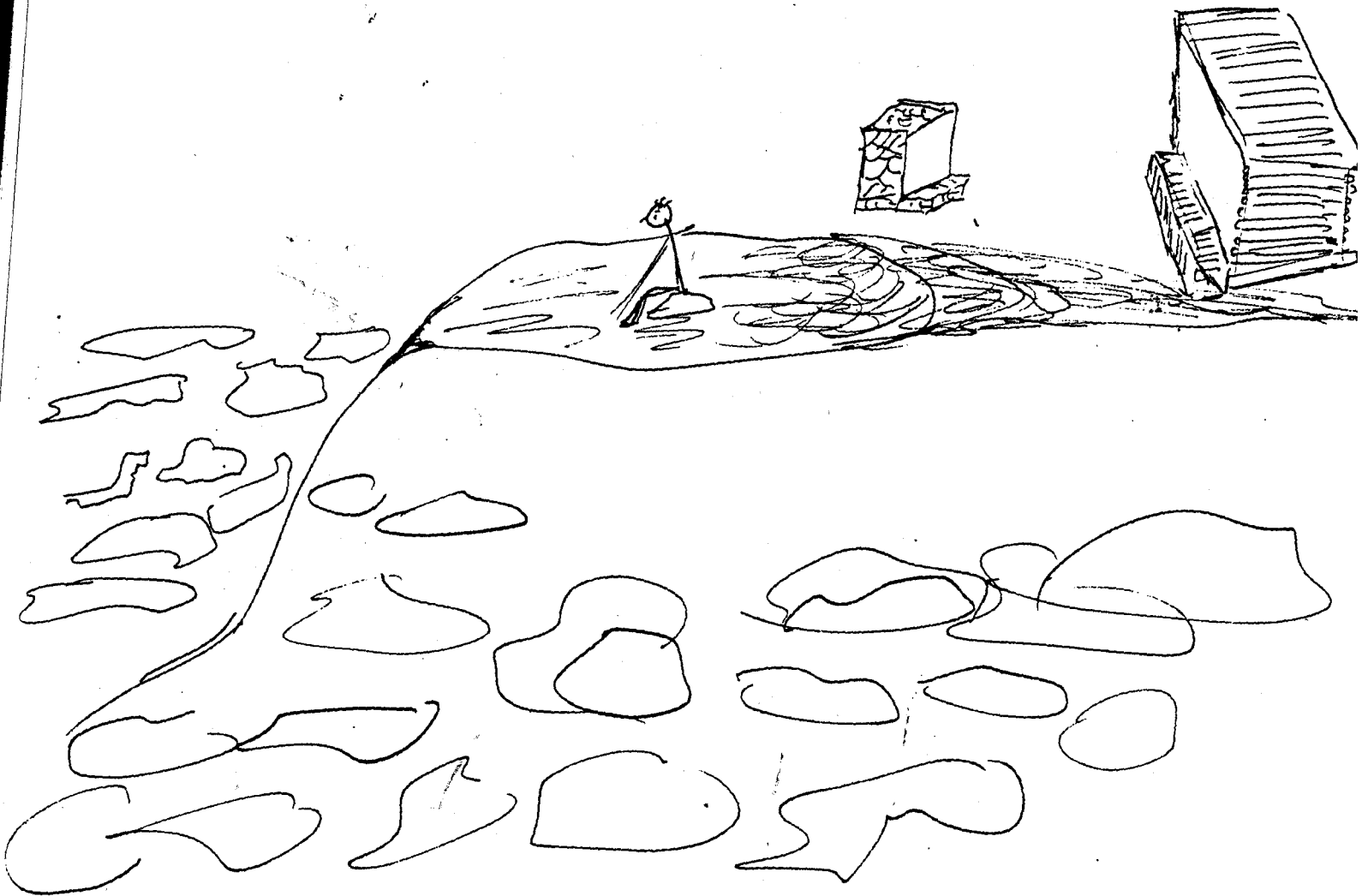


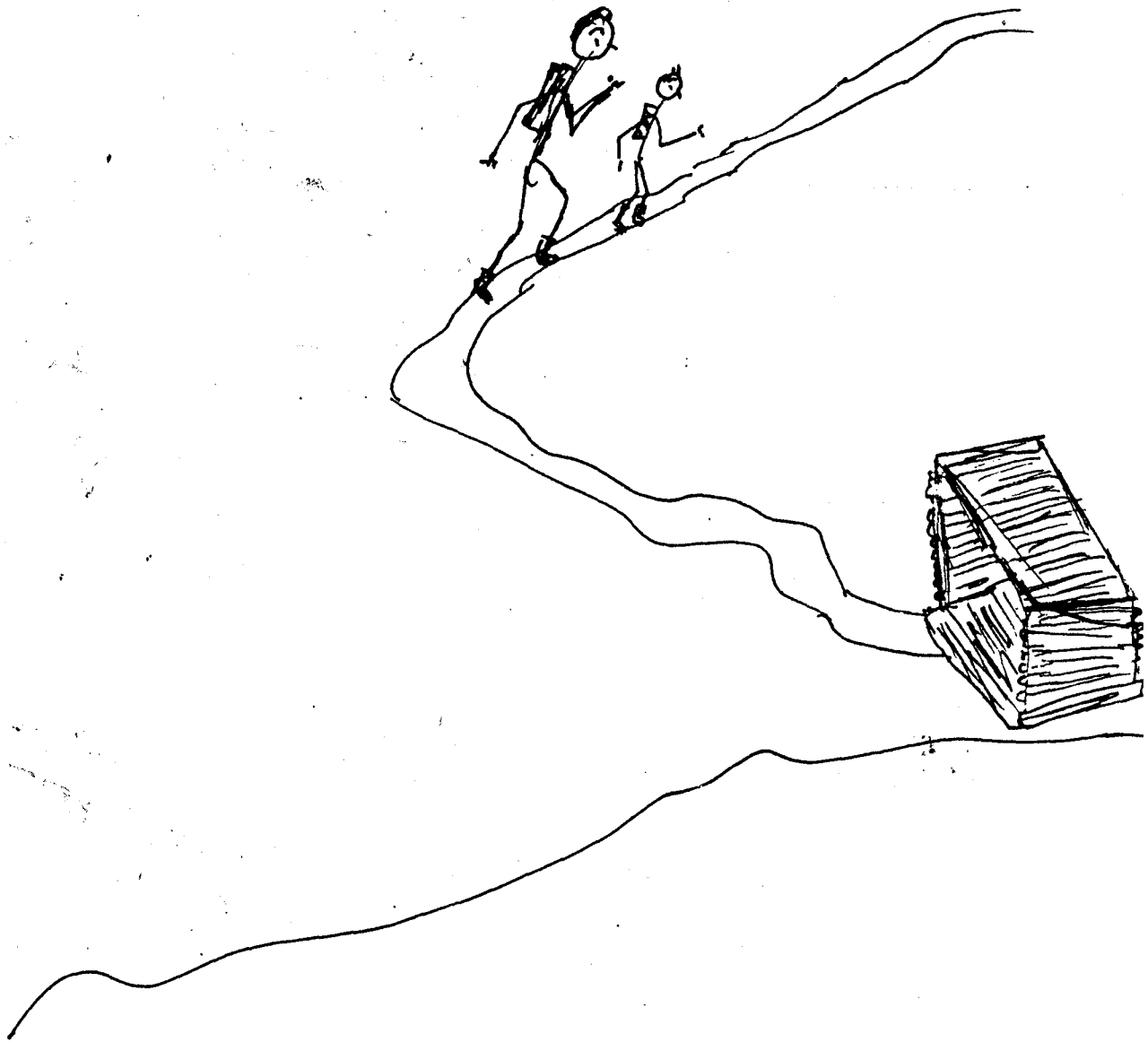


JESSE WAS TIRED AND TUCKED HIMSELF INTO HIS SLEEPING BAG. "READ ME A STORY, DAD". HE GAVE HIS DAD THE LITTLE BOOK. HIS DAD BEGAN TO READ BUT VERY SOON JESSE WAS ASLEEP. IT HAD BEEN A LONG WALK. MOUNT CHICORUA IS A BIG MOUNTAIN FOR A LITTLE BOY.

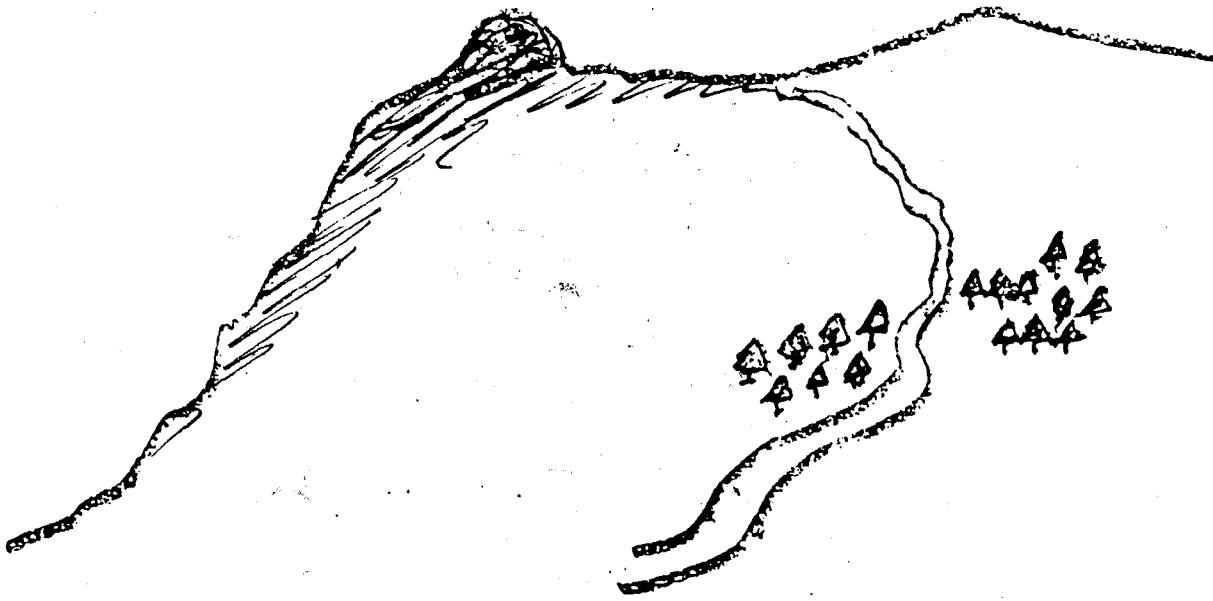
"WAKE UP, WAKE UP DAD! LOOK!

BELOW THEM THE VALLEY WAS COVERED WITH FLUFFY WHITE CLOUDS.  
THEY FLOATED OVER EVERYTHING BENEATH THEM. IN THE DISTANCE  
SEVERAL MOUNTAIN TOPS PEEKED THROUGH.



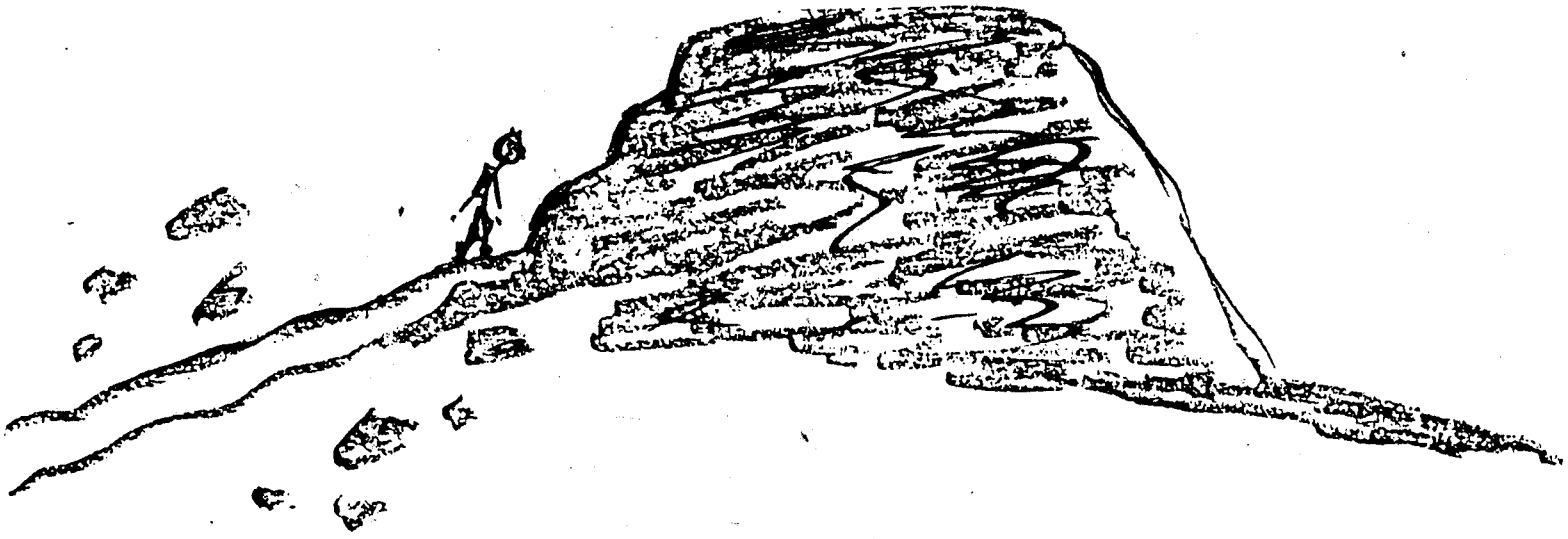


AFTER BREAKFAST THEY PACKED THEIR GEAR, CLEANED THE AREA AND WERE  
READY TO WALK.



JESSE SAW THAT THE TREES BECAME SHORTER AND SHORTER. SOON THERE WERE NO TREES AT ALL. JESSE'S DAD SAID "WE HAVE REACHED THE TREE LINE". "WHAT IS A TREE LINE?" ASKED JESSE. "THE WIND IS VERY STRONG ON A MOUNTAIN TOP. SOMETIMES IT IS VERY COLD. THE TREES CANNOT GROW".

THEY WERE VERY NEAR THE ROCKY CONE. JESSE KNEW THAT HE COULD REACH THE TOP!



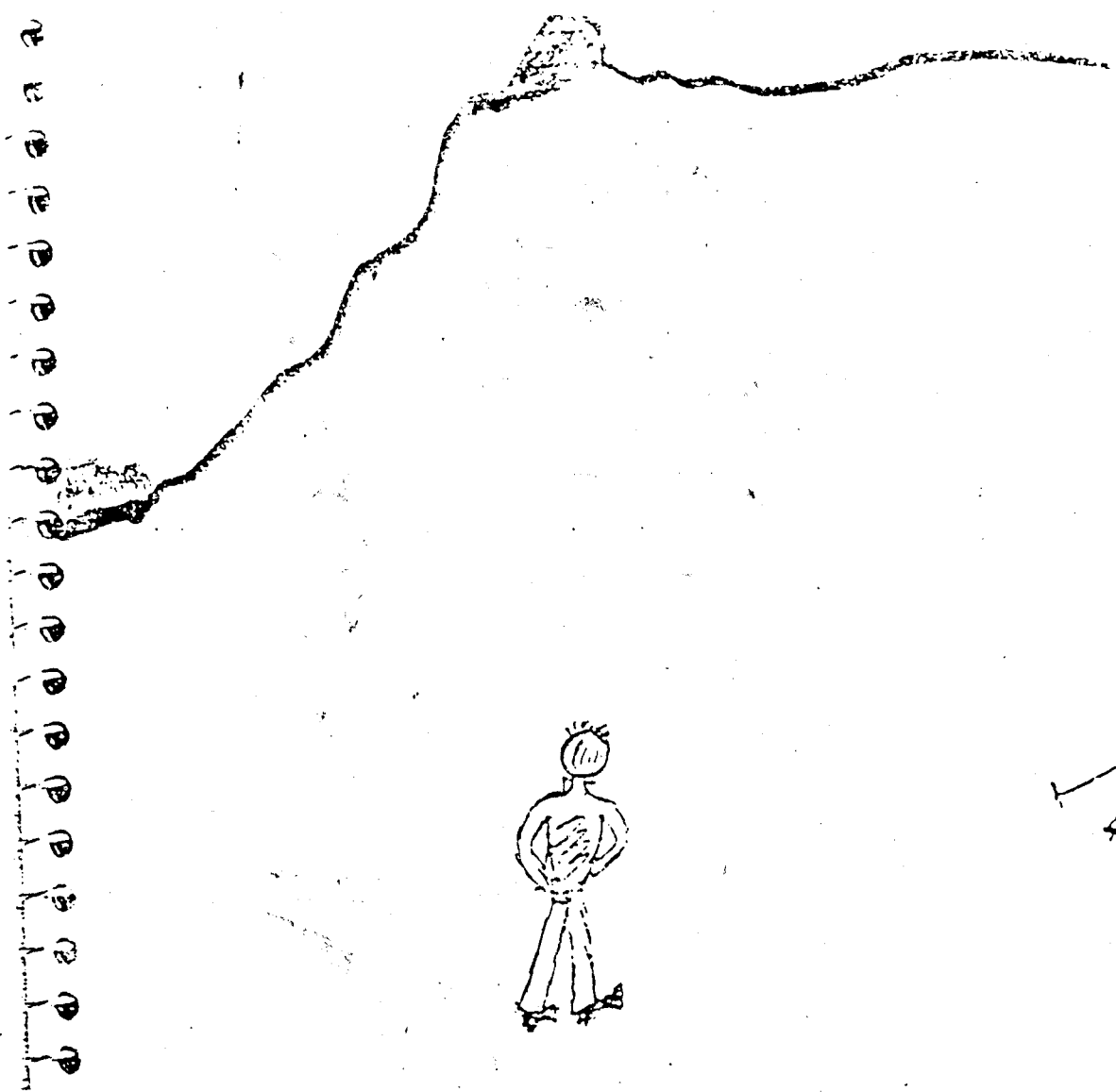
ABRUPTLY THE TRAIL ENDED. JESSE FACED THE ROCKY CONE. IT WAS ENORMOUS.  
SLOWLY, ONE HAND AFTER THE OTHER, AND ONE FOOT AFTER THE OTHER JESSE  
CLIMBED THE LAST FEW STEPS TO THE VERY TOP.

ON THE SMALL FLAT TOP OF MOUNT CHICORUA JESSE AND HIS DAD STOOD SILENTLY.  
THEY COULD SEE FOR MANY MILES IN ALL DIRECTIONS. THEY SAW OTHER MOUNTAINS.  
THEY SAW LAKES AND FORESTS. THEY SAW A TOWN IN THE DISTANCE.





THEN THEY TURNED TO EACH OTHER AND HUGGED FOR A LONG TIME.



STANDING NEAR HIS TENT THE NEXT MORNING, JESSE LOOKED AT THE MOUNTAIN.  
HE LOOKED AND LOOKED, THEN JOINED HIS FAMILY FOR BREAKFAST.