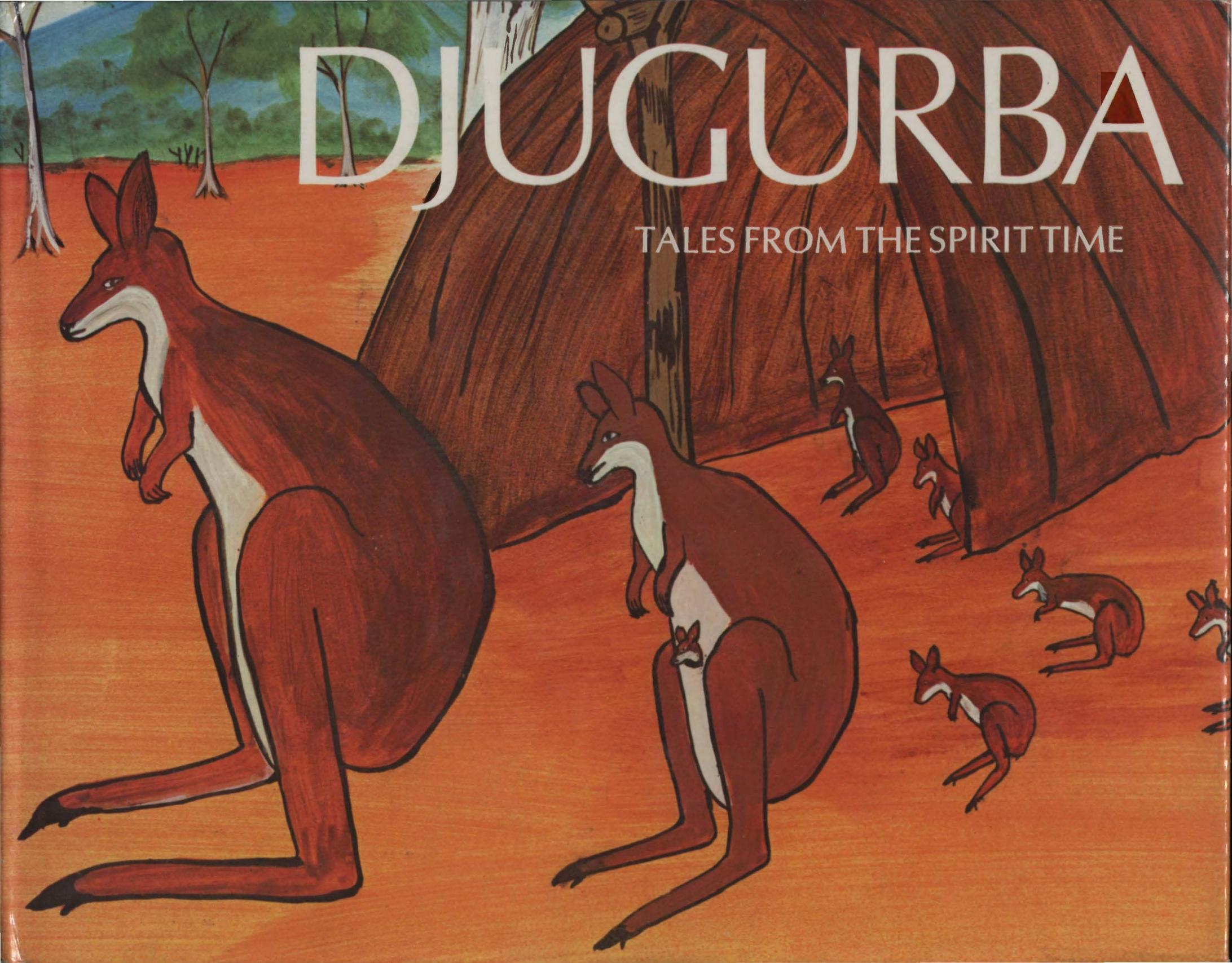


DJUGURBA

TALES FROM THE SPIRIT TIME



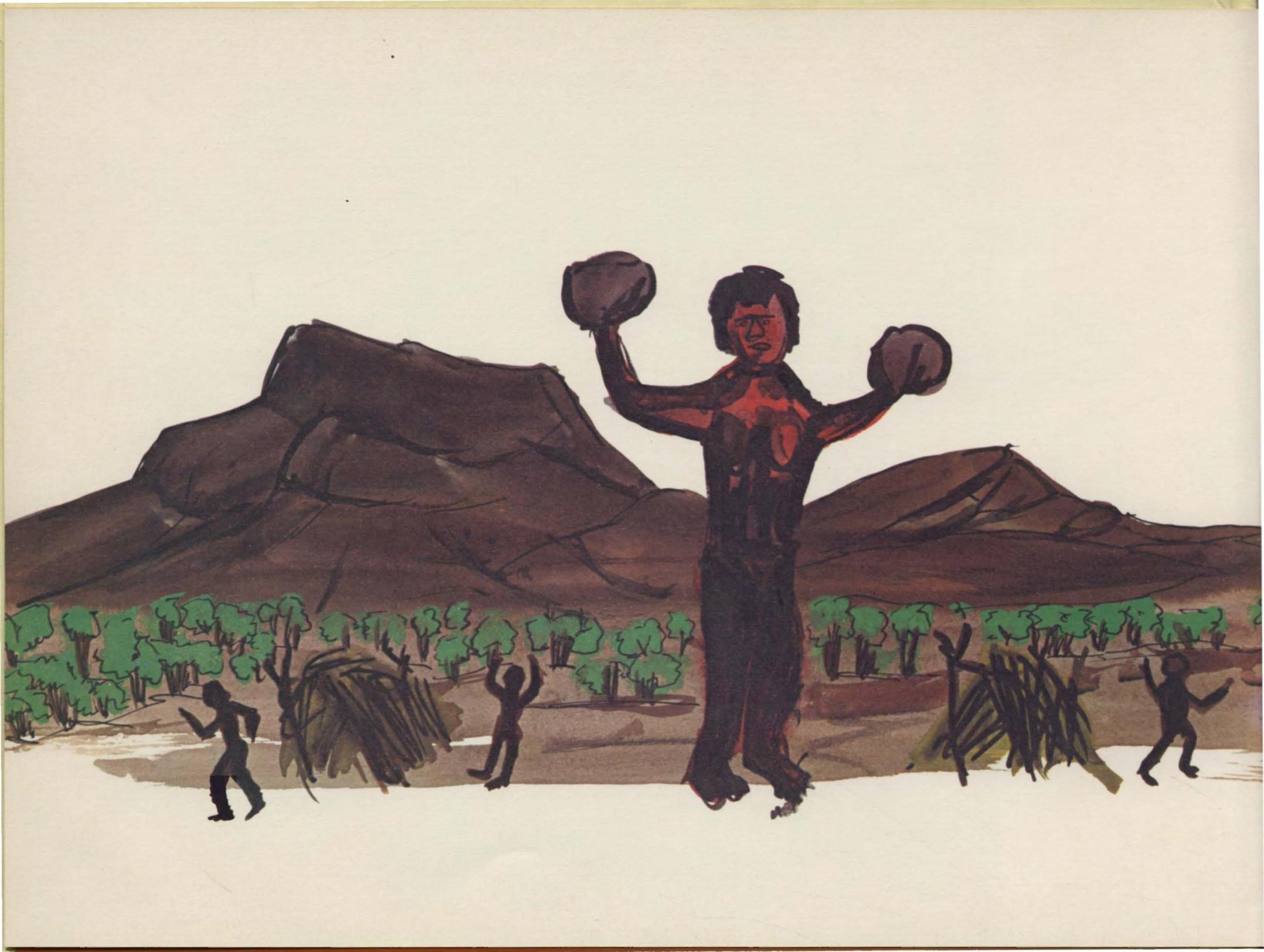
Djugurba (pronounced Jook-urr-pa) means everything concerning the Spirit Time, or Dreamtime, stories.

Those who delight in stories about animals, following their adventures with joyful expectancy, will revel in the tale of the naughty sand frog and the stories of how the kangaroo got his tail and why he learned to hop. They'll follow eagerly the struggle between the bat and the rainbow and the exciting tale of the witchdoctor and the giants.

These Australian Aboriginal myths and legends are more than exciting and unusual tales. They are part of the rich Aboriginal culture and of the lore of the Spirit Time, simply told and brilliantly illustrated by young inheritors of that tradition and culture. This is the first time a group of Aborigines has written and illustrated some of their own myths and legends. Nothing depicted in this book is secret or sacred, according to the storytellers and artists.

To read the tales is to share in a world as different as it is enchanting, a world for all, regardless of age, who are young in spirit.

Djugurba



AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY PRESS CANBERRA 1975

DJUGURBA

TALES FROM THE SPIRIT TIME

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From the islands, the coast, and the far harsh inland of northern Australia they came, the young Aborigines who while training as teachers at Kormilda College in Darwin conceived and created this book of the myths and legends of their own peoples.

Depicted here in brilliant, glowing colours and lucidly simple in expression, these tales are part of the rich heritage of the Aboriginal peoples and one which all the young in heart are now privileged to share.

Sharing is the Aboriginal way. When the stories for this book came to be chosen, some had to be left out. Unanimously those whose works were included agreed that all, not just the chosen, should share in its success.

Djugurba: Tales from the Spirit Time, written and illustrated wholly by Aborigines whose proud traditions it records, brings together myths and legends from widespread areas and peoples. It is a happy and unique achievement.

The Publishers

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The Thirsty Sand Frog

Long, long ago, there lived a little sand frog. One day Sand Frog felt thirsty and decided he would play a trick on all of the other animals. He decided to drink all of the water in the country. So the thirsty little Sand Frog hopped away to the nearest waterhole and began drinking.

Bigger and bigger he became as he emptied creeks and rivers, billabongs and waterholes, and even drank lakes dry. Behind him, angry fish yelled out for the sand frog to return their water. But Sand Frog only laughed and moved his huge round body away to the next billabong.

At last he had drunk it all, and there was no water left anywhere in the country. In the afternoon, when the other animals came to drink, the fish told the story. Angrily the animals set off looking for the sand frog. It didn't take long to find him. The eagle saw him sleeping on top of a mountain and led the other animals to him. The sand frog looked enormous by now.







The animals began yelling at Sand Frog to give back the water, but Sand Frog went on sleeping. Then the animals began throwing spears at him. They all cheered when the kangaroo's spear hit Sand Frog and the water began streaming down the mountain. Rushing everywhere, it filled the creeks and the rivers, the billabongs and waterholes, and it filled the lakes.



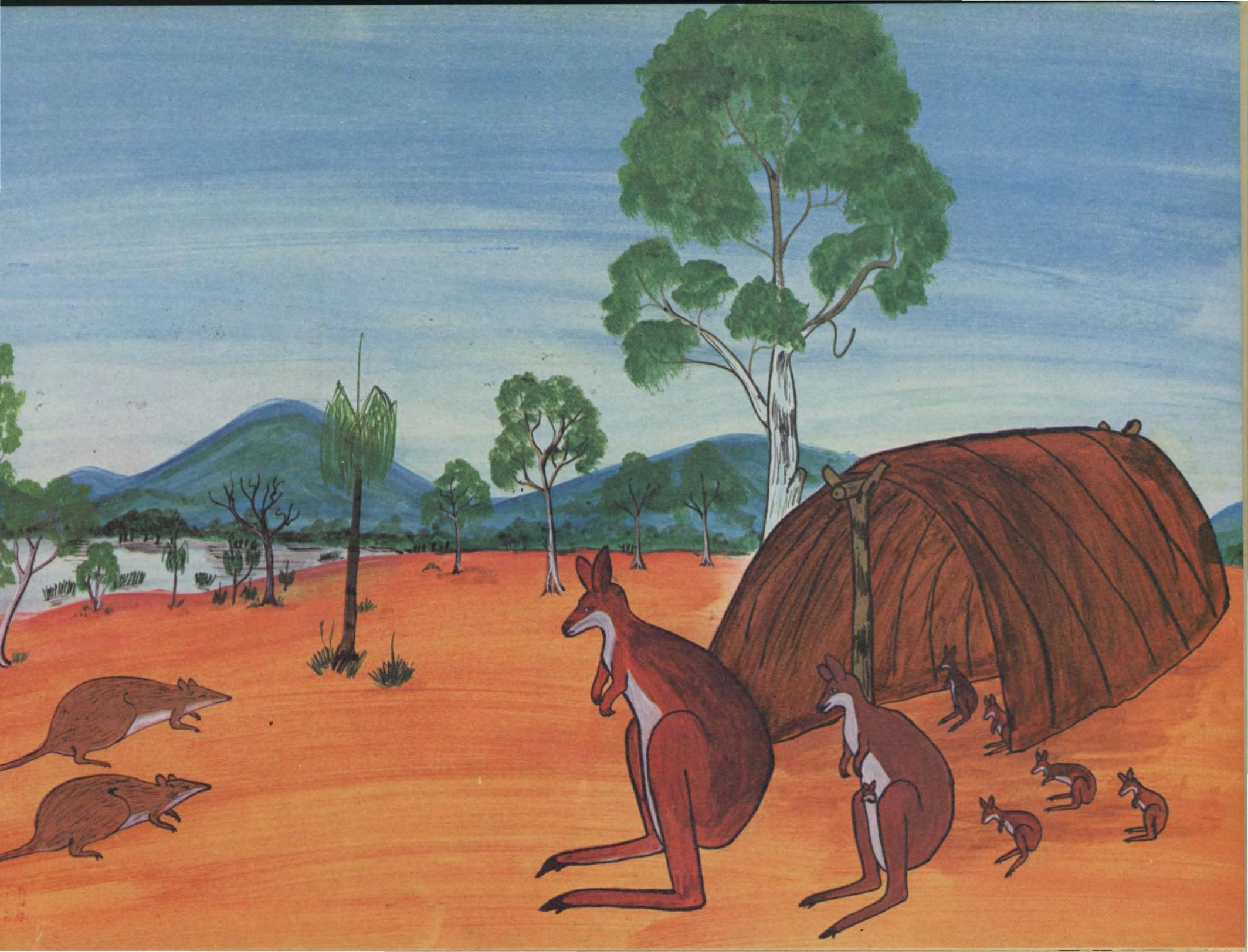
The animals were happy and went away but Sand Frog, now back to his own little size, was too sick to move for a couple of days. Then, one night, he hopped off to the nearest billabong, and hid himself in the sand. And that is why today the little sand frog hides himself in the sand during the day and hunts for his food at night, because he is still ashamed of what he did, long ago in the Dreamtime.

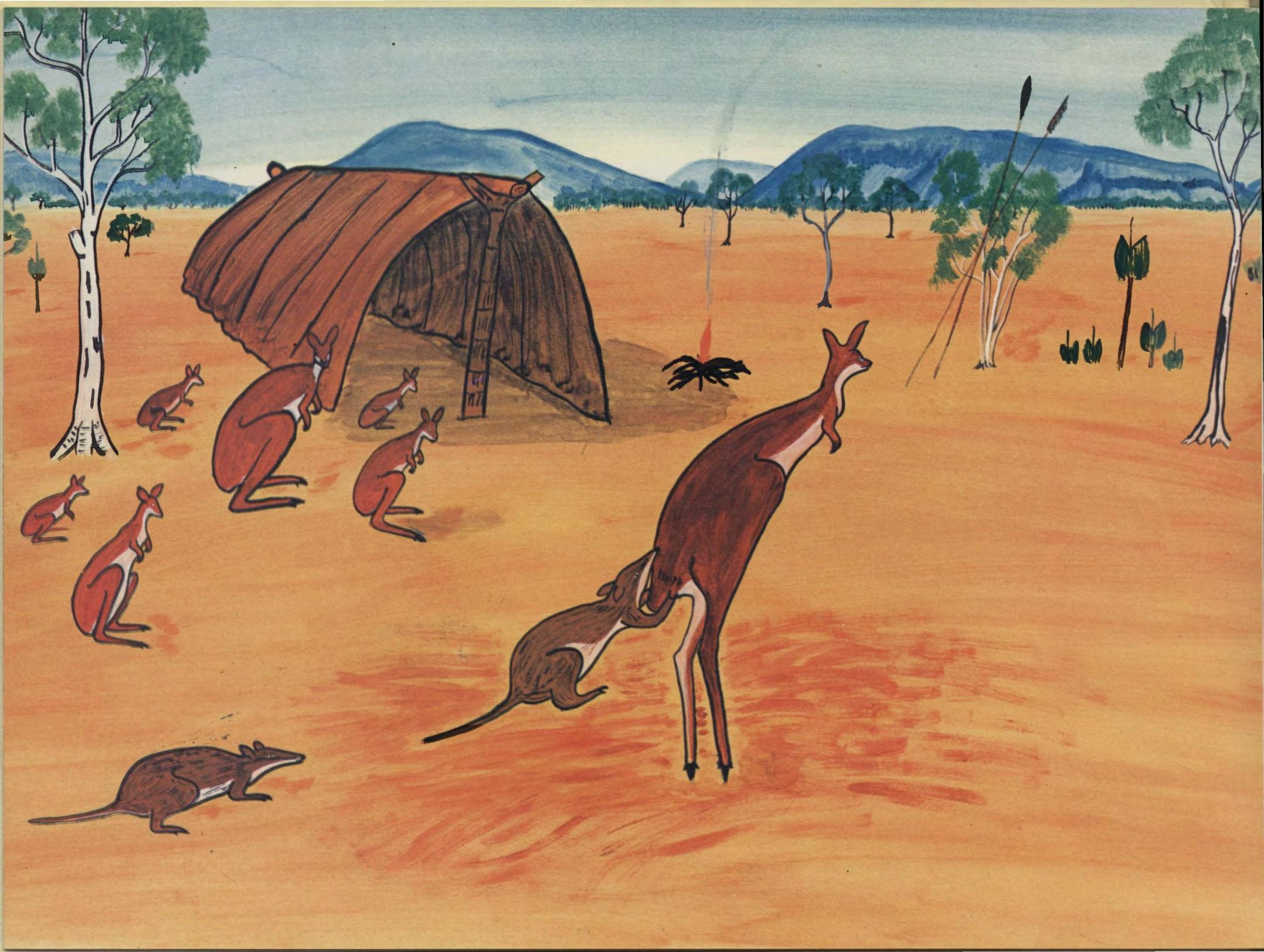
How the Kangaroo got his Tail

Long ago, in the Dreamtime, the kangaroo had no tail. He and his wife and six children lived together in their camp and, although none of them had tails, they were all very happy.

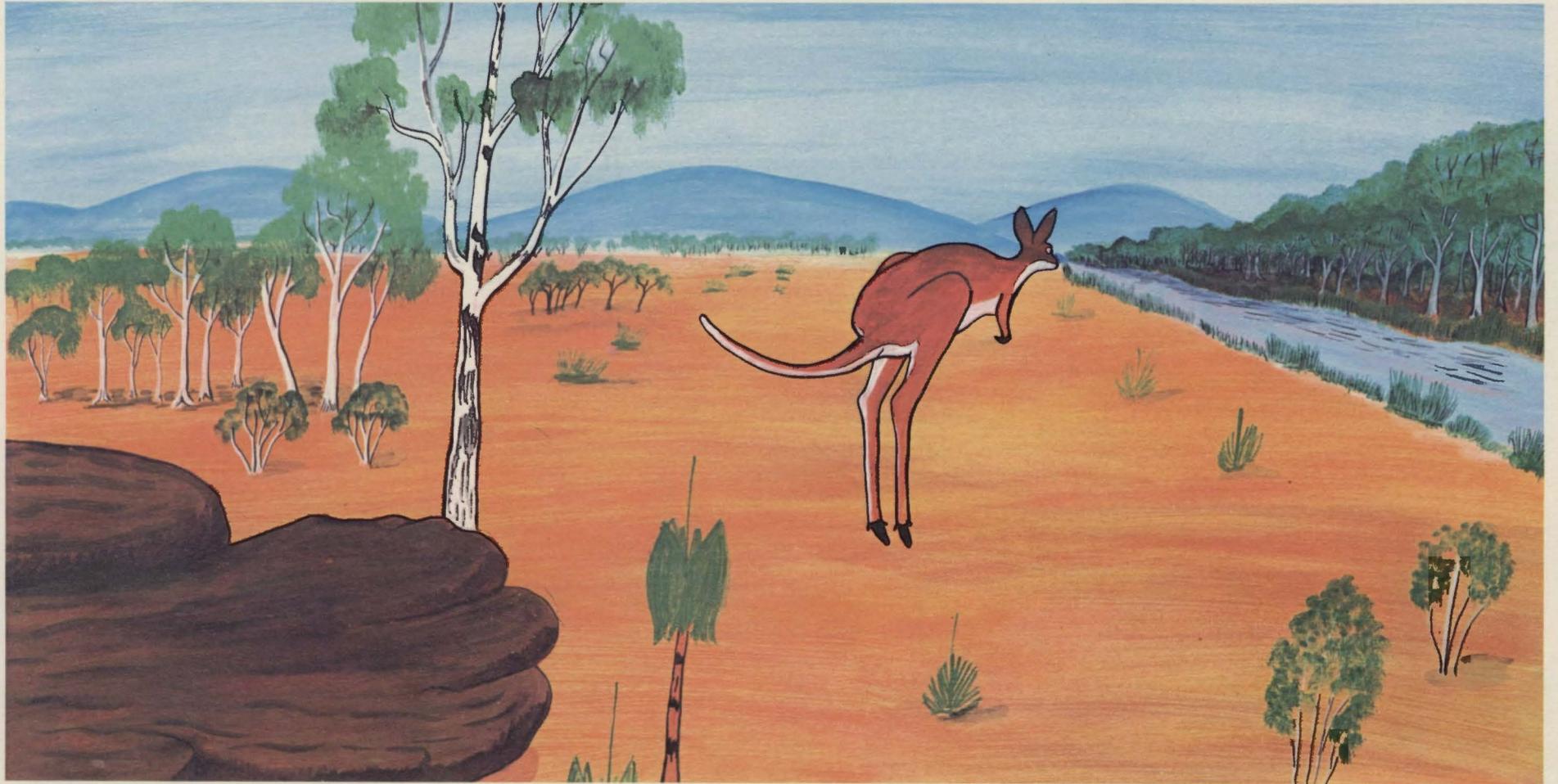
One day the bandicoot decided to ask Kangaroo for two of his children. He explained that he and his wife were unhappy because they had no children and pointed out that the kangaroo had many children. But the kangaroo refused. The bandicoot became angry and said he would steal the children if Kangaroo refused to give them away. This upset the kangaroo and he turned to get his spears, but as he did so the bandicoot held him by the bottom and would not







let go. As the kangaroo pulled to get away, the bandicoot pulled him back. Harder and harder they pulled, until the kangaroo's bottom became longer and longer. Finally, it was stretched so far that it turned into a tail, and ever since that day, long, long ago, all kangaroos have had tails.



How the Goanna and the Lizard got their Painted Backs

Long, long ago, the goanna and the lizard were very plain-looking creatures. The goanna did not have the beautiful back he has today, and the lizard's back was different too.



One day Goanna and Lizard were out hunting in the desert. They came to a creek with still, clear water. Goanna looked at himself in the water. It was just like looking in a mirror. He looked for a long while and then he thought, 'I don't think I look pretty enough. I should have colours and designs on my back.' So he decided he would ask his friend, Lizard, to paint some colours and designs on his back.





Lizard was very happy when Goanna asked him to paint his back and he ran off to get what he needed. He returned with some black charcoal, some yellow stone and a sharp-pointed stick. Then he crushed the charcoal and the red and yellow stones into powder and put the different coloured powders on to a flat stone. Finally, he mixed the powders with water to make his paints. Now he was ready to paint Goanna's back.

Using a sharp-pointed stick and his different coloured paints, Lizard painted designs all over Goanna's back. He took a long time and painted very carefully. When he was finished it looked very colourful and Goanna was as pleased as he could be.

'Now it's your turn to paint my back', said Lizard.

Lizard turned around and Goanna began to paint his back. But Goanna did not take any care with his painting. He was not neat, as Lizard had been, and he finished very quickly.

Lizard went over to the water to look at his back and when he saw the mess Goanna had made he became very angry. Poor Lizard. His back was covered with ugly, careless lines.

Lizard chased Goanna, who ran away laughing at him.



Today the goanna and the lizard still have the same markings on their backs, but the lizard does not trust the goanna and they have never been friends since.



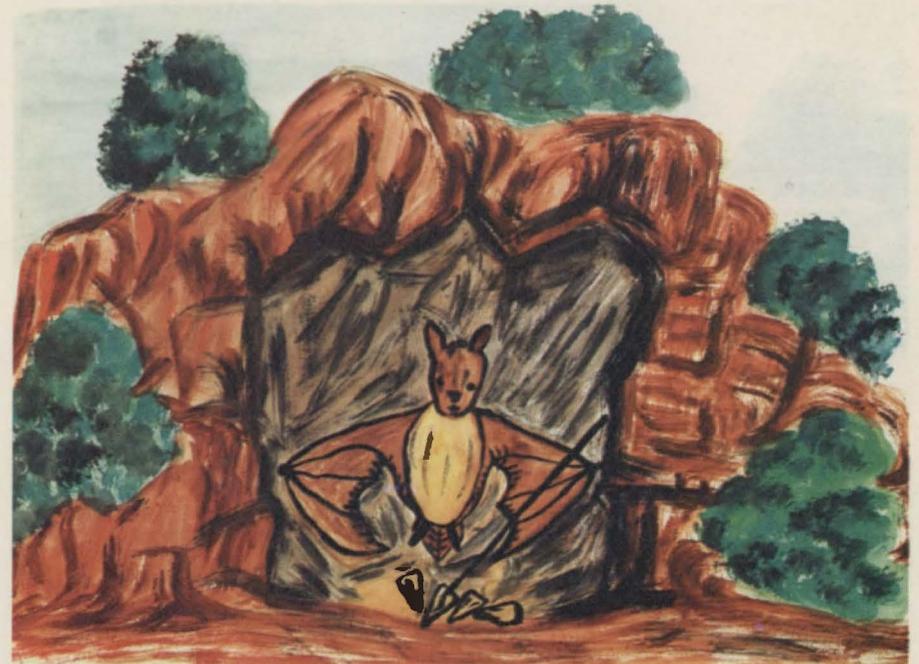
The Bat and the Rainbow

Long, long ago, in the Dreamtime, all the birds lived together in a camp near a big waterhole.

Amongst them lived a very strange and colourful creature called Rainbow. He looked like a fat snake but the beautiful colours in his body made him very handsome.

He was married to Whistle Duck but she was not happy with him because, although he was handsome, he was also very lazy and spent most of his time lying under a tree. Rainbow had stolen Whistle Duck from Bat, who was her true husband and a wonderful dancer.

Bat didn't live with the other birds by the waterhole. He lived all alone in a cave up in the hills. He hated Rainbow because Rainbow had stolen his wife. He knew he would have to kill Rainbow if he was ever to get Whistle Duck back.



But Rainbow was very strong and Bat would need the best spear he could make to kill him.

Bat spent many hours in his cave making spears. He was always searching for pieces of limestone to make spear points. When he sharpened them he would test them by cutting his nose or his face. But they were never good enough. It would have to be a very special spear that killed Rainbow.

One day, while Bat was out looking for more pieces of limestone, he saw a very large, sharp piece jutting from a rock. He broke it off and carried it back to his cave. There he spent many hours sharpening it until it was as sharp as he could make it. Then he tested it by cutting his nose. It was so sharp it cut off his nose and part of his face.



The bat has had a flat face without a nose, ever since. But he didn't care. He was so pleased to have made such a sharp spear point.

Now Bat was ready. At last he had a spear sharp enough and strong enough to fight Rainbow.

That evening he went down to the waterhole where Rainbow lived with the birds. He hid his spear under some bushes nearby and then flew into the camp.

The birds were having a corroboree, as they did every evening. They were glad to see Bat for he was the best dancer of them all.

But Rainbow wasn't glad to see him. He did not like Bat or his dancing. So he just lay under the tree and kept Whistle Duck beside him.

The birds continued singing and dancing and Bat joined them. Jungle Fowl played the clapsticks and Brolga played the didgeridoo. They sang and danced for many hours and everyone enjoyed themselves. Everyone except Rainbow, that is.





When the corroboree was over they were all tired so they went to sleep. Bat pretended to be asleep, too, but he was really just listening and waiting for everyone else to sleep.

When he was sure they were all sound asleep, he got up slowly and crept into the bushes to the place where his spear was hidden. He picked it up and flew silently back to the camp.

Rainbow was asleep with Whistle Duck beside him. Now was Bat's chance to kill Rainbow and take back his own wife. He aimed his sharp, strong spear very carefully and then threw it with all of his strength at the sleeping Rainbow.

The spear cut deeply into Rainbow and broke his back. Rainbow screamed with pain and rolled around savagely on the ground.

He tried to reach and kill Bat. But Bat was very careful to keep away from the dying Rainbow.

The birds, hearing Rainbow's horrible cries, flew away in terror. All except Whistle Duck, who watched as Rainbow screamed and rolled around.

Rainbow was bleeding very badly now but still he rolled until he came to a waterhole. He rolled into it and there he stayed.



Today, the rainbow still lives in waterholes. But, when the rain comes or there are rain clouds floating through the sky, he sometimes rises from a waterhole and stretches himself across the sky. Then you will see his handsome body and the blood still flowing down it.

The Old Dingo who had Six Wives

Long ago there was an old dingo who had six wives. He was very jealous of them because he knew that the single dingoes would steal his wives if he gave them a chance. But the old dingo guarded them night and day, and made his camp a long way from the others. He would not allow any of the young dingoes, married or single, near his camp. One day, however, a young dingo came to his camp asking for water. The old dingo watched him approach, then, without warning, threw his boomerang and struck him on the head. With blood streaming from his head the young dingo ran back to the camp.

In the camp that night the single dingoes talked for many hours about the jealous old dingo. They decided he was too greedy and they would teach him a lesson.

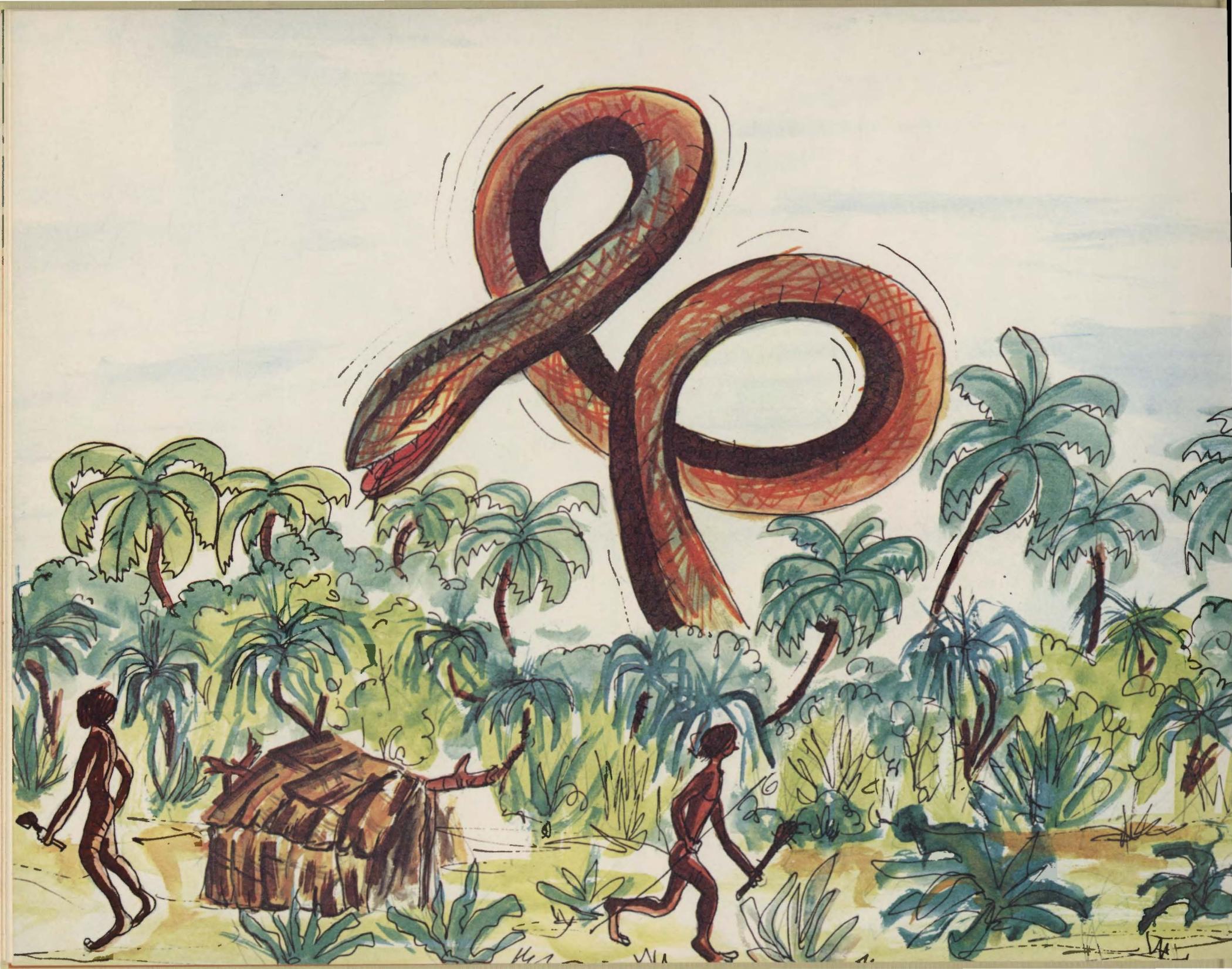




Meanwhile, the old dingo grew very tired from watching his wives all day and all night. He became so tired that he couldn't stay awake any longer, so he built a large fire and fell asleep with his wives grouped around him. But the young dingoes had been watching. Quietly they sneaked into his camp and ran off with the old dingo's wives, travelling in different directions. The old dingo slept on, without hearing a sound.

The next morning, when he awoke and found his wives were gone, he knew that the young dingoes had run off with them. Planning to track them down and kill them all, he set off with his spears. But when he saw how their tracks went in different directions, he realised that he could do nothing. Sadly, the old dingo left that country and died a single man.





Inganarr, the Giant Serpent

Long, long ago, Inganarr the Great Serpent began a journey across Arnhem Land. He moved slowly across the country, from west to east, and whenever he saw people, he ate them. He ate so many people on his long journey that whenever people saw him coming they tried to run away and hide.

When Inganarr reached North Goulburn Island the people tried to escape, but they could not get off the island. Inganarr had them trapped. So the people decided to feed Inganarr. First they fed him their food and when that was gone, they fed him their weapons and their tools, but soon these were also gone. When there was nothing left to feed Inganarr, he ate the people until they were all gone. Then he moved further eastwards and returned to the mainland. Here he rested.

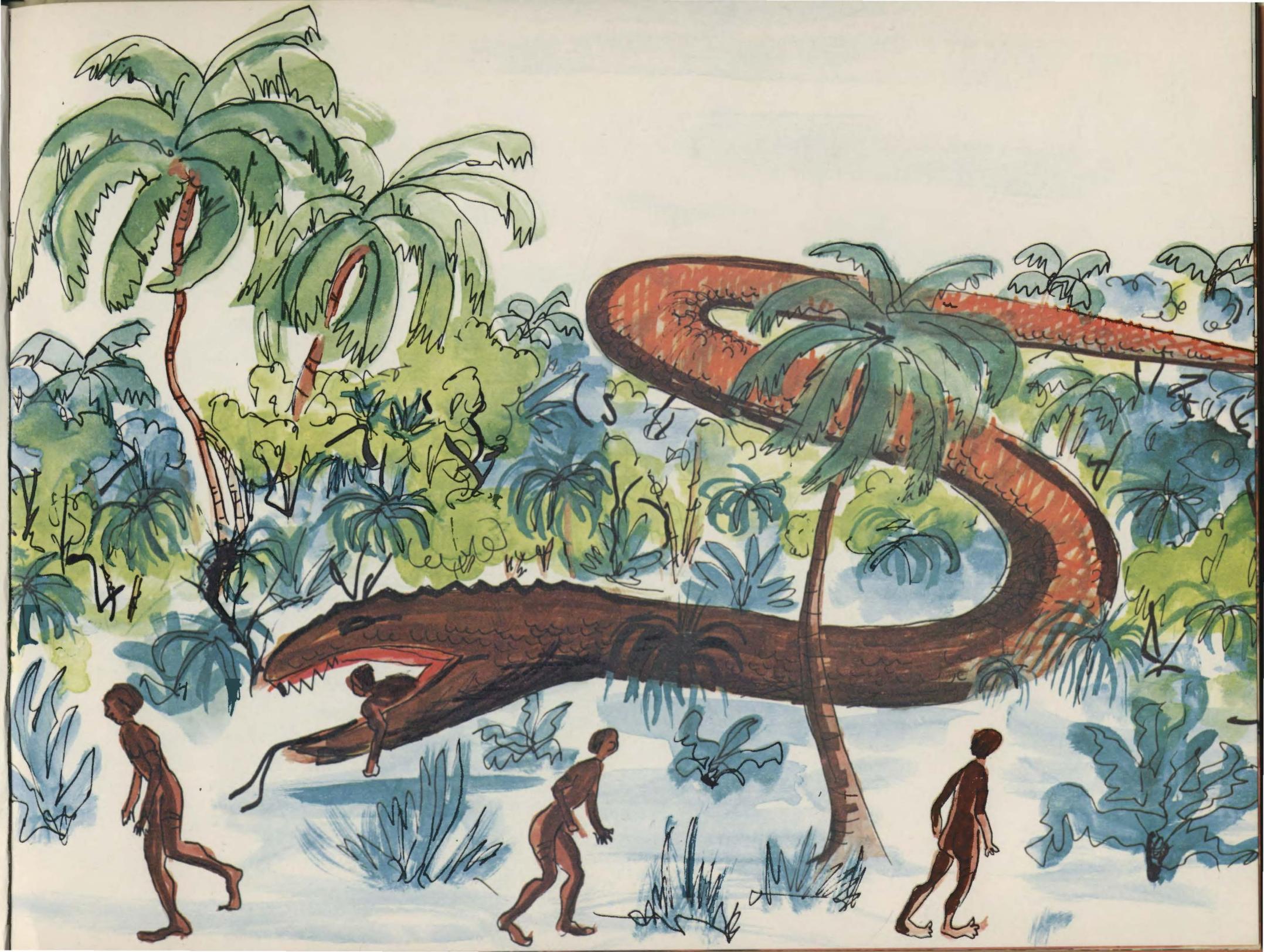
One day two young boys were playing with their spears quite close to where Inganarr was resting. They could not see him in the bush but they noticed that whenever they threw their spears in a certain direction – Inganarr's direction – the spears came back. They moved closer to see what was causing this. Then they saw Inganarr. As fast as they could run the two boys ran for their camp. They told their father of the great serpent they had seen and soon the news spread through the tribe. Everyone quickly prepared and soon they were ready to fight the serpent.



Surrounding Inganarr, the tribe threw spears and rocks at him, but nothing they threw touched the great serpent and their spears and rocks were turned back at them. Seeing they could not hurt Inganarr with their weapons, the tribe tried to escape. But Inganarr was too fast and he swallowed people—men, women and children—until the whole tribe lay inside his enormous stomach.

Inganarr continued on his journey eastwards until finally he arrived in Eastern Arnhem Land. The great serpent was tired after his long journey and suddenly he felt very sick. He had eaten too many people. He opened his huge mouth and out poured the people he had swallowed, released from his enormous stomach. They carried the tools and weapons he had swallowed with them and they ran to many parts of the country to make their camps.

The people stayed in Eastern Arnhem Land and did not return to the west. They were the first people ever to live in this part of the country and this is why, today, there are more people in Eastern Arnhem Land than the western part. It is also why no people live on North Goulburn Island today, for Inganarr swallowed them all and took them to the east where they still live.



The Giant's Hole at Yuendumu

Long, long ago, a giant woman lived near Yuendumu, in the desert country of middle Australia. She lived in a big hole in the ground and the people who lived around her kept well away, for they were frightened of her.

When the giant woman was hungry, she would leave her hole and hunt people. She threw huge rocks at whomever she saw and had killed and eaten many people, even though they tried to run away when they saw her coming.





One day, a man was passing near the giant's hole and saw her sleeping. He ran back to the camp and brought the whole tribe to see the sleeping giant. Quickly the tribe collected wood and piled it high around the big hole. The giant woman remained asleep as they worked.

At last the tribe finished piling wood around the giant's hole, and still the bad giant woman slept on. The tribe then set fire to the wood around the hole and the giant was trapped. It was a huge fire and burnt for many days and when it finally died out the giant woman was dead. No more would she kill people and eat them.

The big hole she lived in is still there and the people around Yuendumu remember the bad giant woman who lived in it long, long ago.

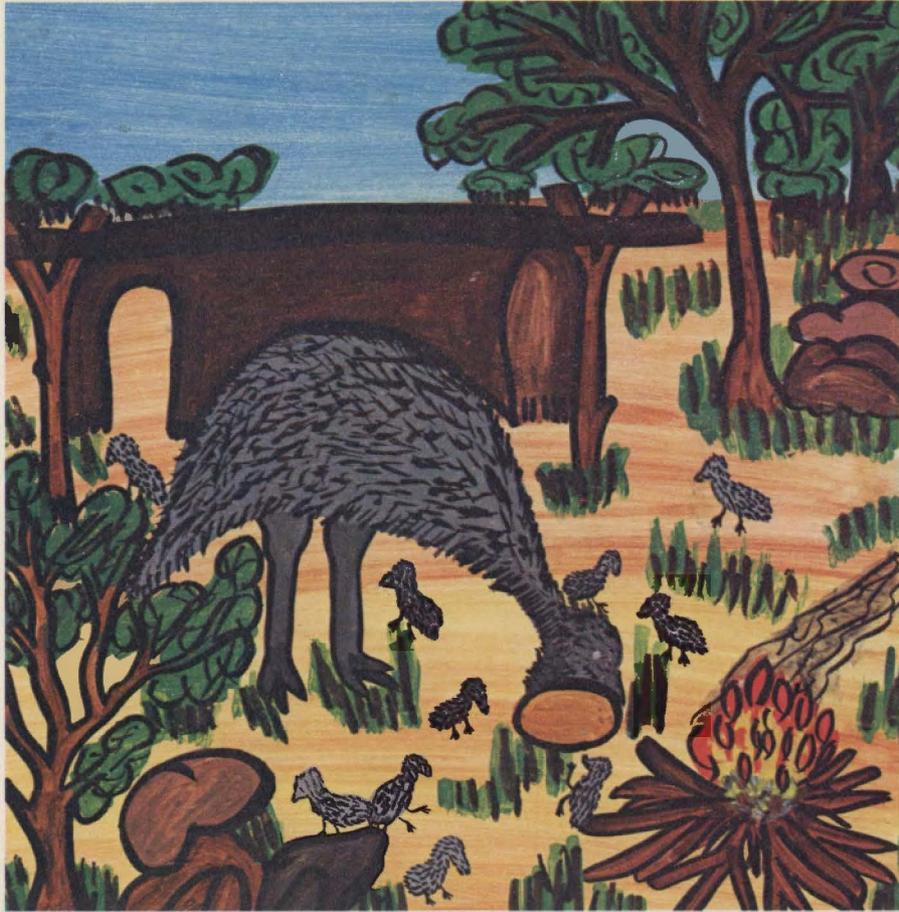


The Brolga and the Emu

Long ago, the emu and the brolga lived together with their families near a billabong. Every morning the two families went hunting for snails and other things at the swamp. Late in the afternoon they would return to their camps with food for the evening. They had lived this way for many years and were happy.

One afternoon, Emu and her children came back early from the swamp. They had some food for the evening, but, as they were hungry, they ate it all straight away. Then the children went to play while Emu sat in the shade of a tree.





But Emu still felt hungry and looked for something else to eat. There was nothing. Then she noticed Brolga's grinding stone. She walked over to Brolga's camp, took the grinding stone in her beak and swallowed it. Then she went back to her tree and fell asleep.

Later that afternoon Brolga returned with some food to grind for her children. She looked for the grinding stone, but couldn't see it anywhere. She asked the children, but neither her own nor Emu's children had seen it. Then she woke Emu and asked her if she had seen it. She said she hadn't but Brolga didn't believe her. Brolga asked Emu again and this made Emu very angry. In a temper she picked up her digging stick and struck Brolga around the head with it.

When Emu saw blood pouring from both sides of Brolga's head, she was sorry. She admitted to swallowing the grinding stone and told Brolga to hit her hard on the back. So Brolga hit Emu hard on the back and out popped the grinding stone. Now Brolga was happy but even today she still has the red marks on the sides of her head where she was hit by Emu, and you can see the lump on Emu's back where Brolga hit her to make the grinding stone come out, long, long ago.



The Moon Man and his Family

Long, long ago, Moon Man lived with his family by a wide river. Many ducks lived by the river too, and Moon Man's two sons often hunted them.

One day the two sons returned from hunting with many ducks in their nets. They cooked the ducks on the fire and were soon eating them. They were hungry and ate quickly. Their father, Moon Man, sat by the fire waiting to be given a duck, but the two boys continued eating. Finally Moon Man asked for a duck, but the greedy boys told him to wait until his wives brought his food. The father watched angrily until his sons had finished eating the ducks.

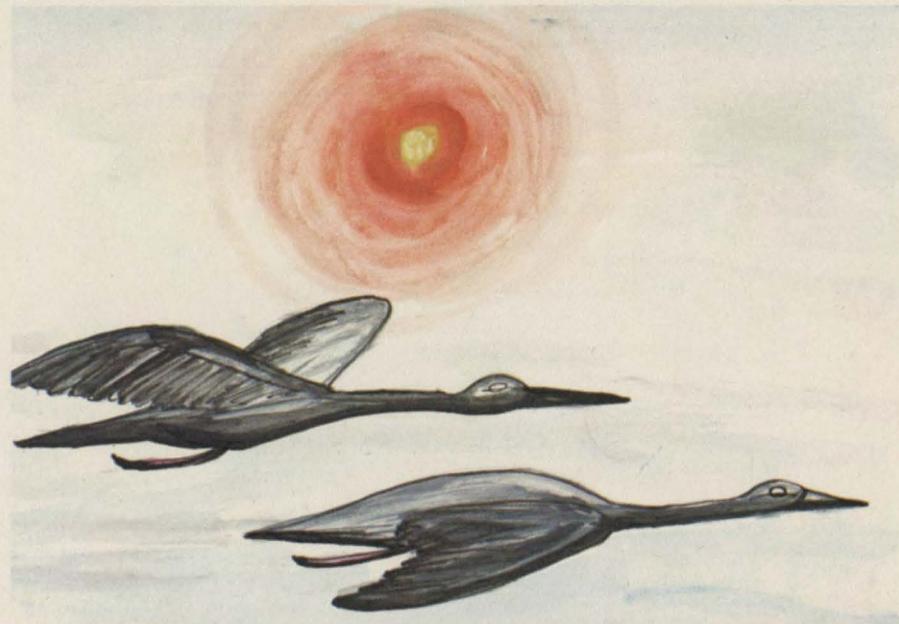
When all the ducks were eaten, the boys decided to go for a swim in the wide river. Soon they were shouting and splashing happily in the water and had forgotten all about their angry father. But Moon Man had not forgotten them and he decided he must punish his two greedy sons.

Working quickly, the Moon Man made a large net from vines. When it was ready, he crept quietly to the river where his sons were splashing and diving under the water. The boys did not see their father and continued their game, diving happily under the water.





Moon Man waited until both his sons were under the water then ran to the bank of the river and threw his large net over them. The two boys were caught in the net, just like two ducks. Moon Man pulled in the net and then tied it up tightly so that the boys could not get out. Then he threw it back into the river. The boys drifted away and sank in the deep water.



Soon after, Moon Man's two wives returned from hunting. They asked their husband where their sons were. He told them the boys were swimming in the river.

The two wives went looking for their sons and found their bodies tied in the net. They began to wail and cry and knew their husband had killed the boys. So they went back to kill him.

But he changed himself into the Moon and rose high into the sky where he has lived ever since. The two wives changed themselves into brolgas and chased their husband, but they have never been able to catch him. And they have remained brolgas, flying in the sky and crying for the sons they lost, long ago, in the Dreamtime.



The Parrot Fish and the Moon

Once, long ago, the parrot fish and the moon lived together near a river bank. They were very good friends until one day they had an argument.

Parrot Fish said she would leave the river bank and go to live in the sea. She said she would hide under the coral so Moon would never see her again.

This made Moon angry, so he answered her like this: 'When you die, it will be forever. It will be the end of you. But when I die, it will be for three days only. After three days I will live again.'

Then Moon rose up into the sky and stayed there forever. Parrot Fish went to live in the sea and hide under the coral. She lived there happily for many years and her body became very colourful, just like the coral.



All this time Moon lived in the sky. Every month he died, but after three days he rose again, just as he had said he would. He often looked for Parrot Fish but he never saw her again for now she looked just as colourful as the coral she hid beneath.

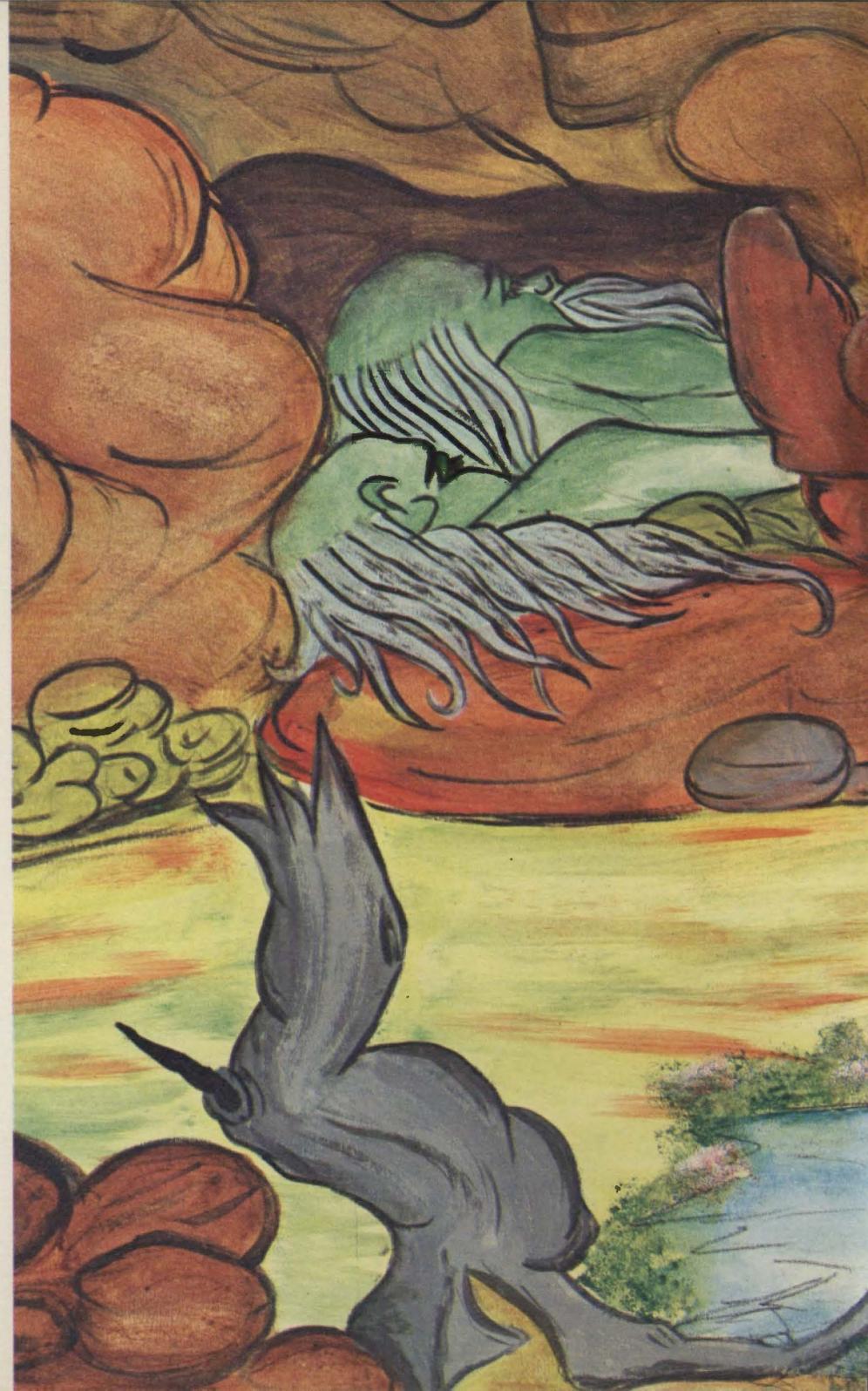
Then, one day Parrot Fish died, and just as Moon had said, it was forever.

Some parrot fish still live under the coral today and are just as colourful. But the same moon still lives in the sky and dies for three days every month.

The Witchdoctor and the Two Giants

Long, long ago, at the beginning of the Dreamtime, two giants went to sleep in a cave. They remained sleeping, undisturbed, for many, many years until one day a group of Walbiri people entered the lonely valley where the giants' cave was situated. The hunting was good and the Walbiri made their camp not far from the giants' cave, unaware that the giants were there. After a few days the Walbiri held a corroboree. It went on for three days and the sound of singing and clapsticks grew louder until the noise became so loud that the giants awoke from their long sleep. Angry at being wakened, the two giants ran from their cave and killed everyone at the corroboree. The giants then left the valley and moved into the surrounding country, killing groups of Walbiris wherever they found them.

Frightened by the murderous giants, the Walbiris gathered in their various camps and talked of plans to get rid of them. In one camp there was a very clever witchdoctor, and the people asked him to kill the giants. The next day the witchdoctor set off in search of the giants, taking his spears and boomerang, and carrying his bag of magic things under his arm. It did not take him long to find them, asleep in another cave.





Silently, the witchdoctor sneaked up on the two giants. Then he changed himself into a bush mouse and ran up to one of the giants and bit him on the ear. The giant woke up and hit the other giant on the face; startled, the second giant awoke and said, 'Why did you hit me when I was asleep?'

'Because you bit my ear!' replied the first giant angrily.

The two giants then began fighting, but the fight did not last long and soon the giants went back to sleep.



The witchdoctor, who had been watching from behind a bush, then changed himself into a snake and crawled over to the first giant and bit him on the leg. Furious, the giant grabbed his club and began beating the other giant.



A tremendous battle followed with the two giants battling savagely and clubbing each other until they were both so weak that they could barely move. Then the witchdoctor changed himself back to a man, took his spears and easily killed the two giants.

At last the Walbiris were safe from the giants, and the story of the witchdoctor's cunning trick was often told around their campfires.

The Anteater and the Turtle

Long, long ago, in the Dreamtime, the anteater had no spines and the turtle had no shell.

Turtle and Anteater lived together in the bush. They were good friends and were very happy together.

One day Anteater asked Turtle to mind her baby while she went hunting. So Anteater went into the bush while Turtle looked after Baby Anteater.

Anteater was gone a long time, and Turtle was getting very hungry. He waited longer but still Anteater did not return. Then Turtle became so hungry he had to eat something. So he ate Baby Anteater.

Not long after, Anteater returned from the bush. She looked for her baby but could not see it anywhere.



'Where's my baby?' she asked Turtle. But Turtle didn't answer.

Suddenly Anteater realised that Turtle had eaten her baby. Angry and heartbroken, she ran over to a big pile of stones. She picked up stone after stone and threw them at Turtle. Some of the stones hit and stuck in his back.



Then Turtle ran to get his spears and threw them at Anteater. Some of the spears hit and stuck in her back.

Today the spears are still in the anteater's back but they have become her spines. And the stones which the anteater threw at the turtle have stayed stuck in his back and become his shell.

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The Legend of the Birds

Long ago, in the time known as the Dreaming, there lived no animals or birds but only spirit-like people, and a kangaroo. In one group of these spirit people there were six men and an old lady. Every day the old lady went into the bush gathering herbs, and when she returned to the camp the men would ask her for some food. But the old lady would give them none and instead she teased them by singing:

'Bungurdij, bungurdij, bungai nguda bunnga'

So the men had to be happy with the sugar cane which they ate all of the time.

One day, when three of the men went out to get some sugar cane, they saw the kangaroo. They decided to kill the kangaroo and eat it, as they were tired of eating sugar

cane. So they went back to get their spears and the other three men. The kangaroo was a very wise creature, however, and could tell by looking at people whether they were able to kill him or not. When all of the men returned, except for the one called Bower-bird who had a boil on his foot and could not walk, the kangaroo looked at them and knew straight away that none of them would be able to kill him. So the kangaroo moved off and the five men returned to the camp, realising that the kangaroo had some special power. They told the man called Bower-bird about it and he said that he would try to kill the kangaroo if one of them could burst his boil. One after the other the five men tried, Rosella, Black Cockatoo, Quail, Honey-eater and last of all Crow. Crow was very strong and when he squeezed the boil as hard as he could, it burst. The pus from the boil squirted into Crow's eyes and turned them yellow. Bower-bird was very pleased and got his spear to go hunting. Then the men went back to the place where the kangaroo was feeding but Bower-bird was careful to keep himself hidden and stealthily crept closer to the kangaroo. Seeing only the other men and knowing none of them were able to kill him the kangaroo was not worried, so he continued eating unaware that Bower-bird crept closer and closer. At last, when Bower-bird was almost able to touch the kangaroo, he threw his spear and killed him. Happily the men carried the dead kangaroo back to their camp and lit a large fire. They buried the kangaroo in an earthen oven with the hot coals spread over the top.



The old lady, who had been out gathering herbs all of this time, saw the smoke and ran back to the camp wanting to share in the food, but the men sent her to a far off place to get a special grass, which they said they wanted to cook with the kangaroo. As soon as she was gone, the men took the kangaroo from the oven and began eating. As they ate they changed into birds. They flew into the sky and then, realising that the best part of the kangaroo was still in the fire (the base of the spine and the tail) they flew back to get it. First Rosella tried to fly off with it but red hot blood from the tail spilt over his shoulders and wings and that is how the Rosella got his red patches. Then Honey-eater tried to move the tail with his head and was burnt where the bald marks can be seen today. Black Cockatoo tried to pick up the kangaroo's tail in his claws. As he lifted it, his tail feathers were scorched by the hot meat and that is how they became red. Finally, Quail







managed to pick up the tail and took it into the long grass to eat. Just then the old lady returned with the special grass and looked for the men. She didn't notice them flying in the sky, but she did see that the food was gone. She searched everywhere for a sign of the men and found nothing. Then she heard Quail's cry and thought that Quail was in the sky. She threw her walking stick up in the direction she thought Quail's cry had come from, and

was so intently looking up that she did not see her stick coming back to earth. It fell into her open mouth and lodged in her neck. She changed into an Emu. That is why the Emu has such a long neck today. Then the old Emu lady went over to the fire where the kangaroo had been cooked and saw the stones which had been used in the earthen oven. As there was nothing else to eat she swallowed the stones and walked away. Ever since that time the Emu has laid large eggs like the stones she swallowed. And the birds have carried the same markings that they received on that day in the Dreamtime, long, long ago.



Why the Kangaroo Hops

Long, long ago, in the Dreamtime, the kangaroo walked on his four legs like other animals. He did not hop as he does today, but he could run very fast.



Kangaroo was a shy animal and lived by himself. All day he would lie in the shade of the mulga trees and at night he would go out on to the plains to eat grass.

One day while he was sleeping under the mulga trees, a bushfire blazed across the plains. Kangaroo woke up and tried to run to safety but he was caught by the flames.

As he ran through the fire his front paws were badly burnt. They were now much smaller, and burnt black. He could no longer run and was trapped in the middle of a fierce circle of fire.

Kangaroo was frightened and knew he was in great danger.



NEVILLE PAINTING

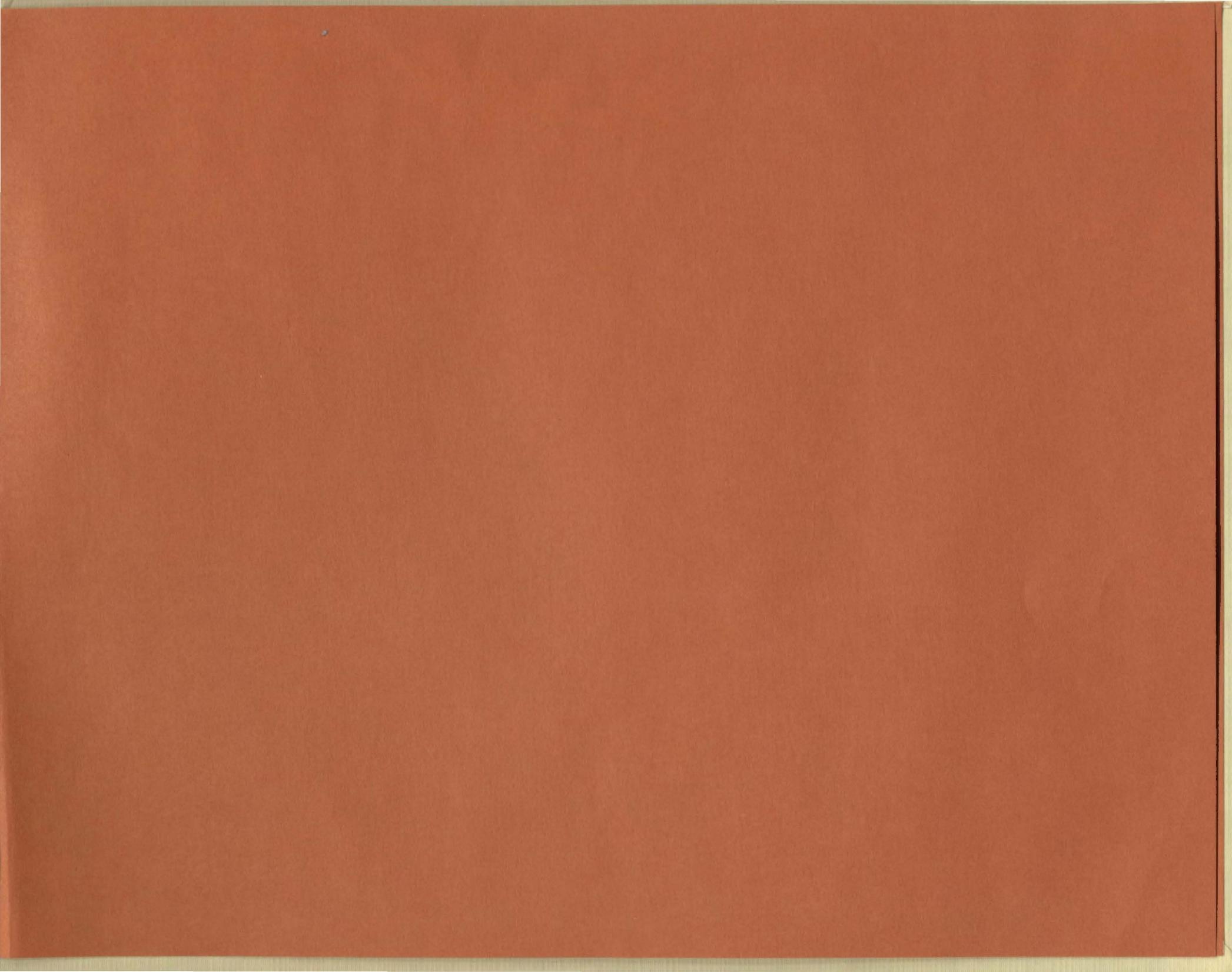
He decided he would have to run using only his strong back legs and his long tail. And so he hopped. He hopped as far as he could until he was very close to the fire.

Then he made a mighty leap over the top of the flames.

Kangaroo continued hopping until he was safe. When he tried to walk again on all four legs he found he couldn't so he began hopping again and has done so ever since.



And if you look at a kangaroo's paws you will see where they were burnt black by the fire long, long ago.



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DIJUGURBA: TALES FROM THE SPIRIT TIME

