

The Smiling New Drum



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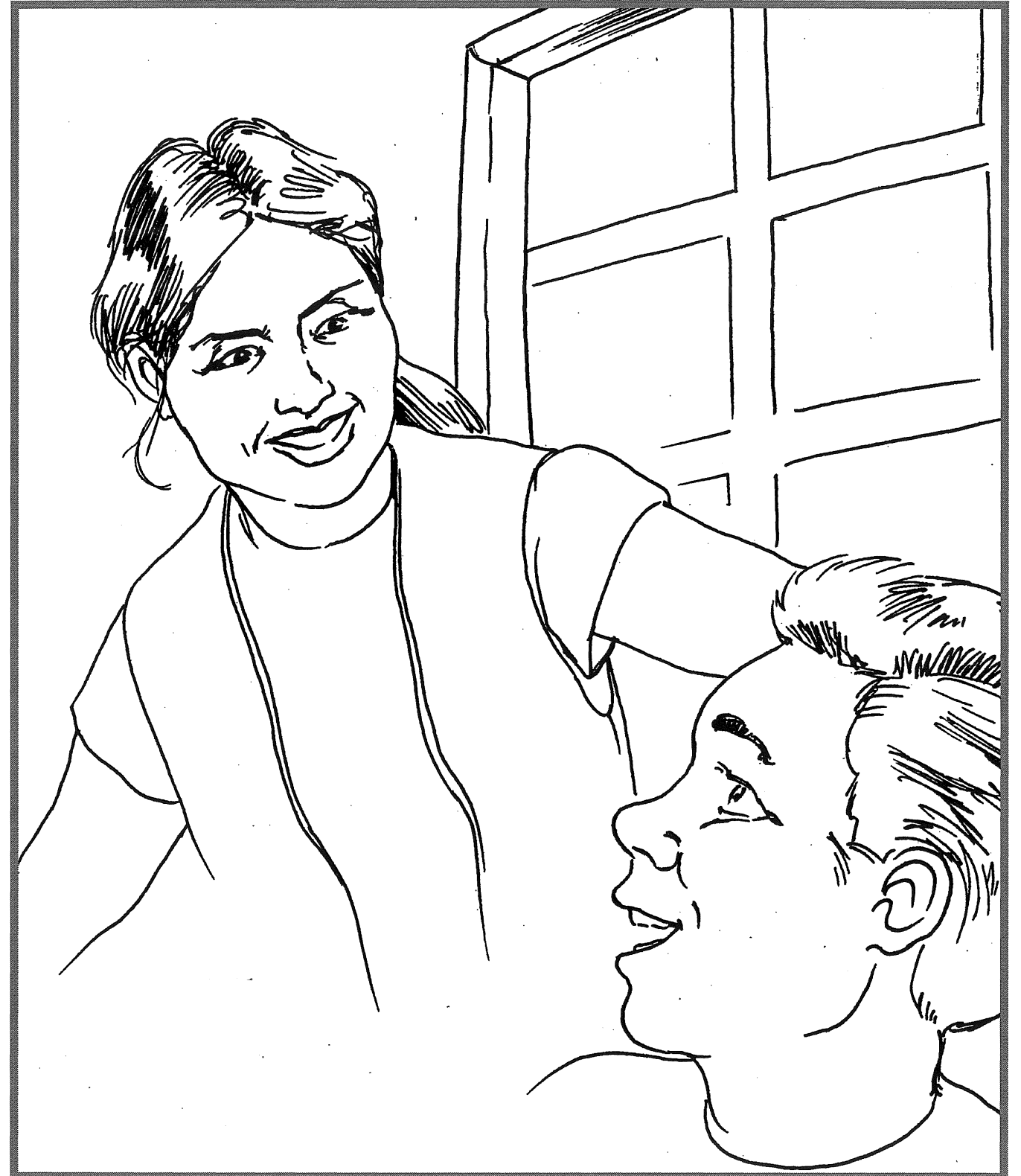
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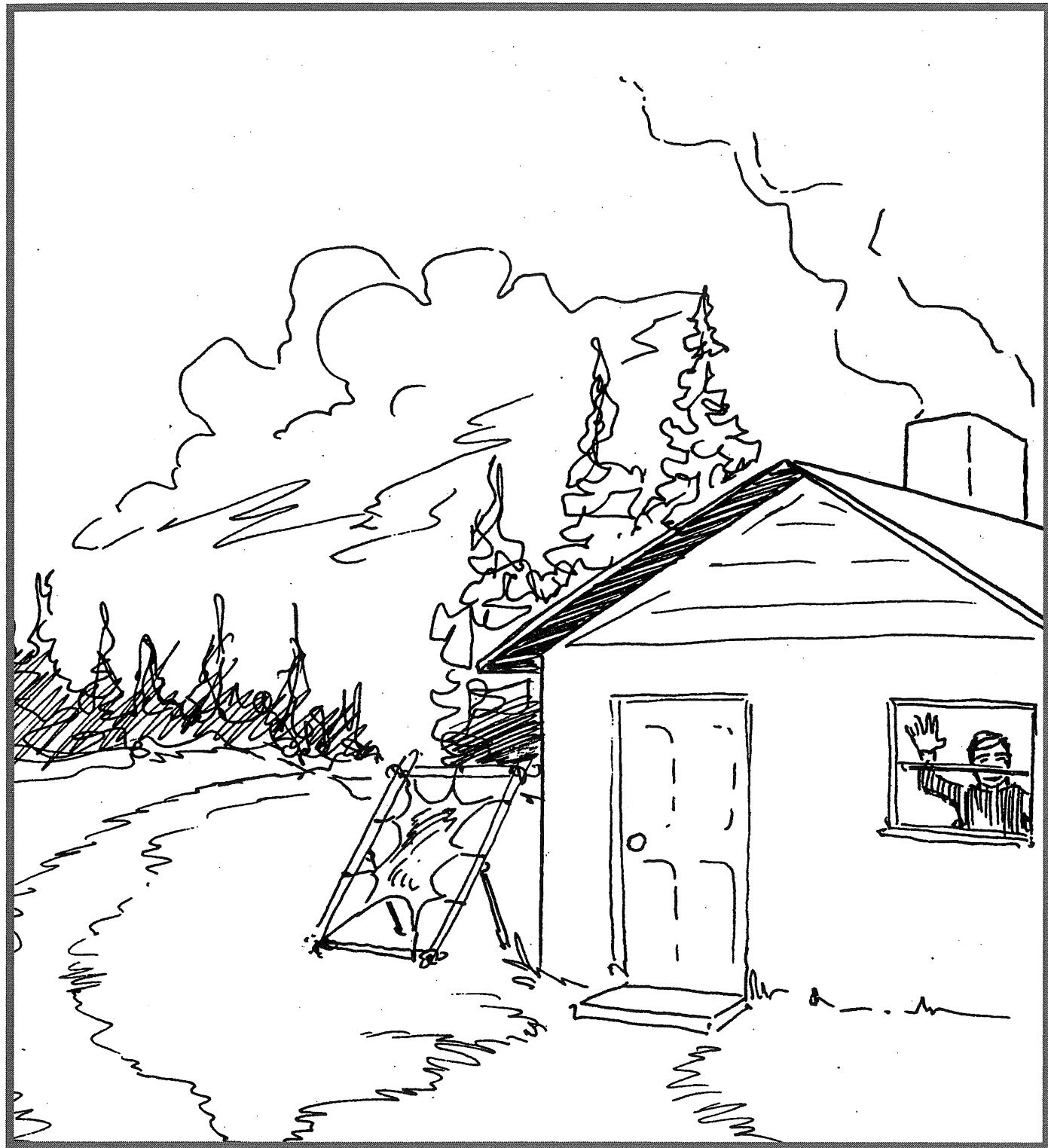
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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In addition to being a cultural specialist for the Suquamish Tribe, Jerome Jainga works for the Marion Forsman-Boushie Early Learning Center. He designs culturally appropriate curriculum and programs for young people ages 3-12. He manages the educational delivery of the Lushootseed Language and acts as an advocate for Native American Education. He holds an Associate's degree in Pastry/Foods from South Seattle Community College and is currently working towards a Bachelors/Masters in Human Development and Native Studies from Pacific Oaks College. Mr. Jainga is also active in the Puget Salish Language Council, the Native Curriculum Development Team and Washington State OSPI.



Mom had to go out of town for the weekend. She asked me if I would like to go to my Uncle's house.

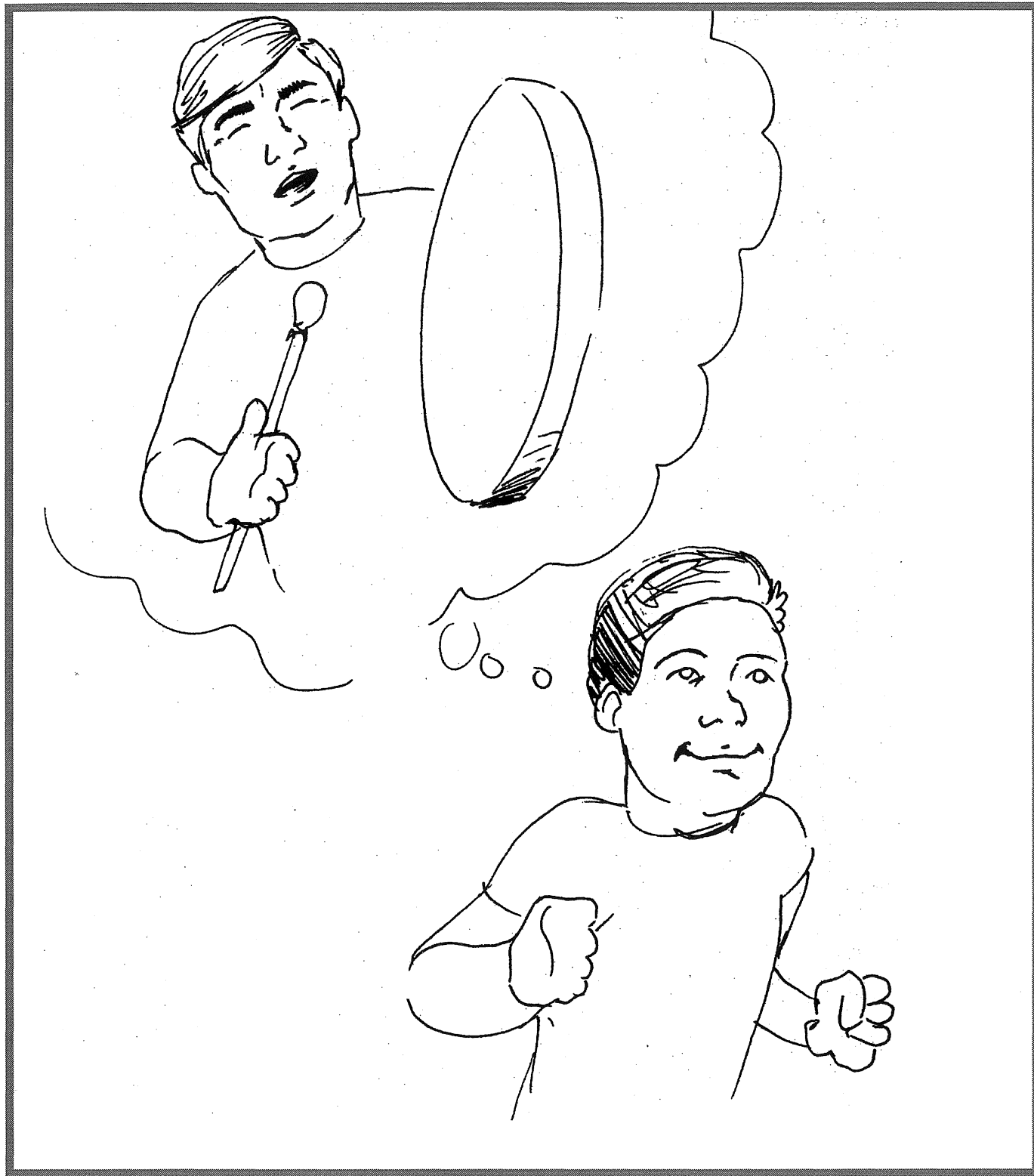


My Uncle's house is lots of fun. He shows me many neat things. I smiled and shouted "Yes!" Mom laughed.

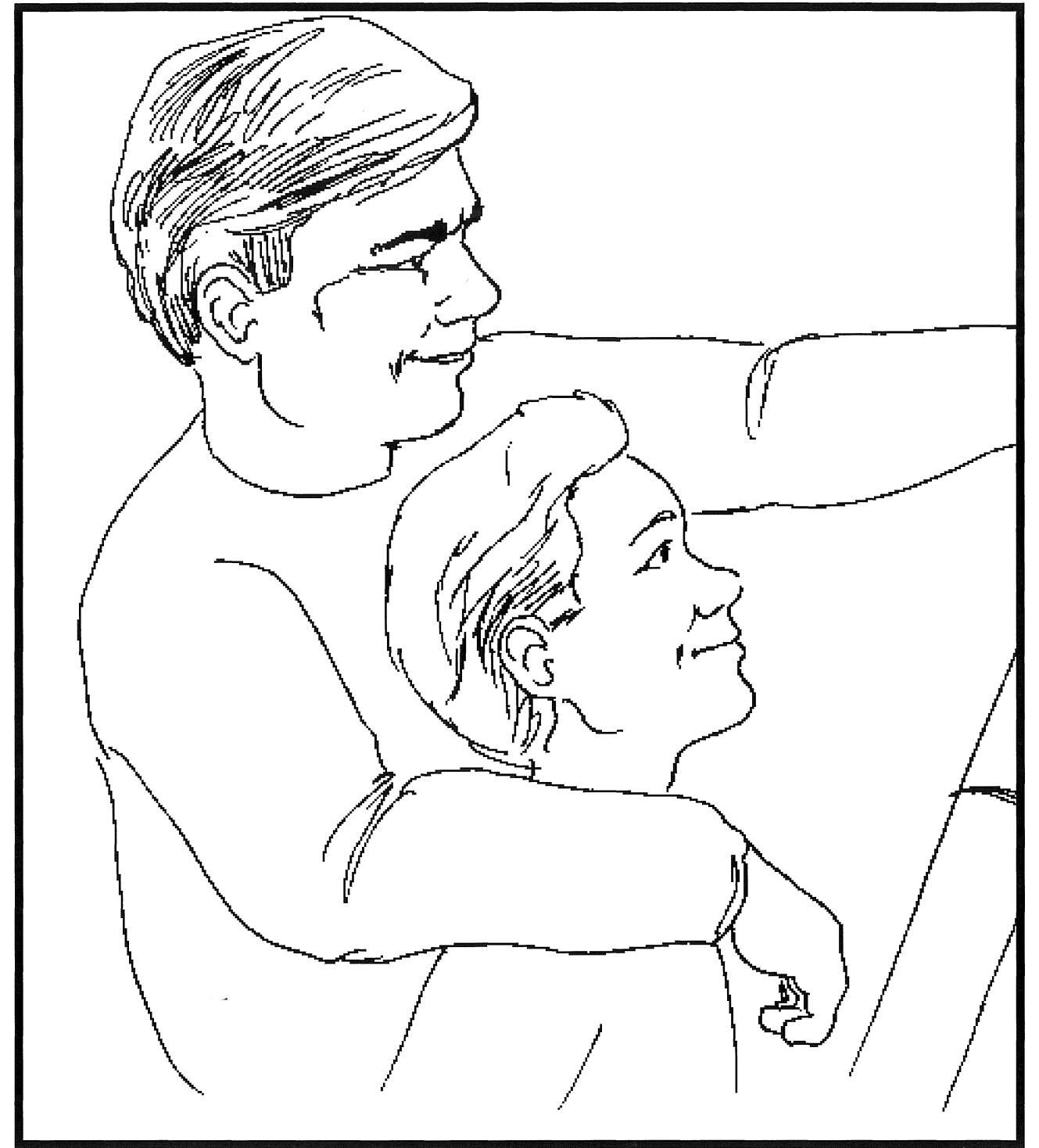


As I started back to Uncle's house, I remembered the song he sang to me on his drum.

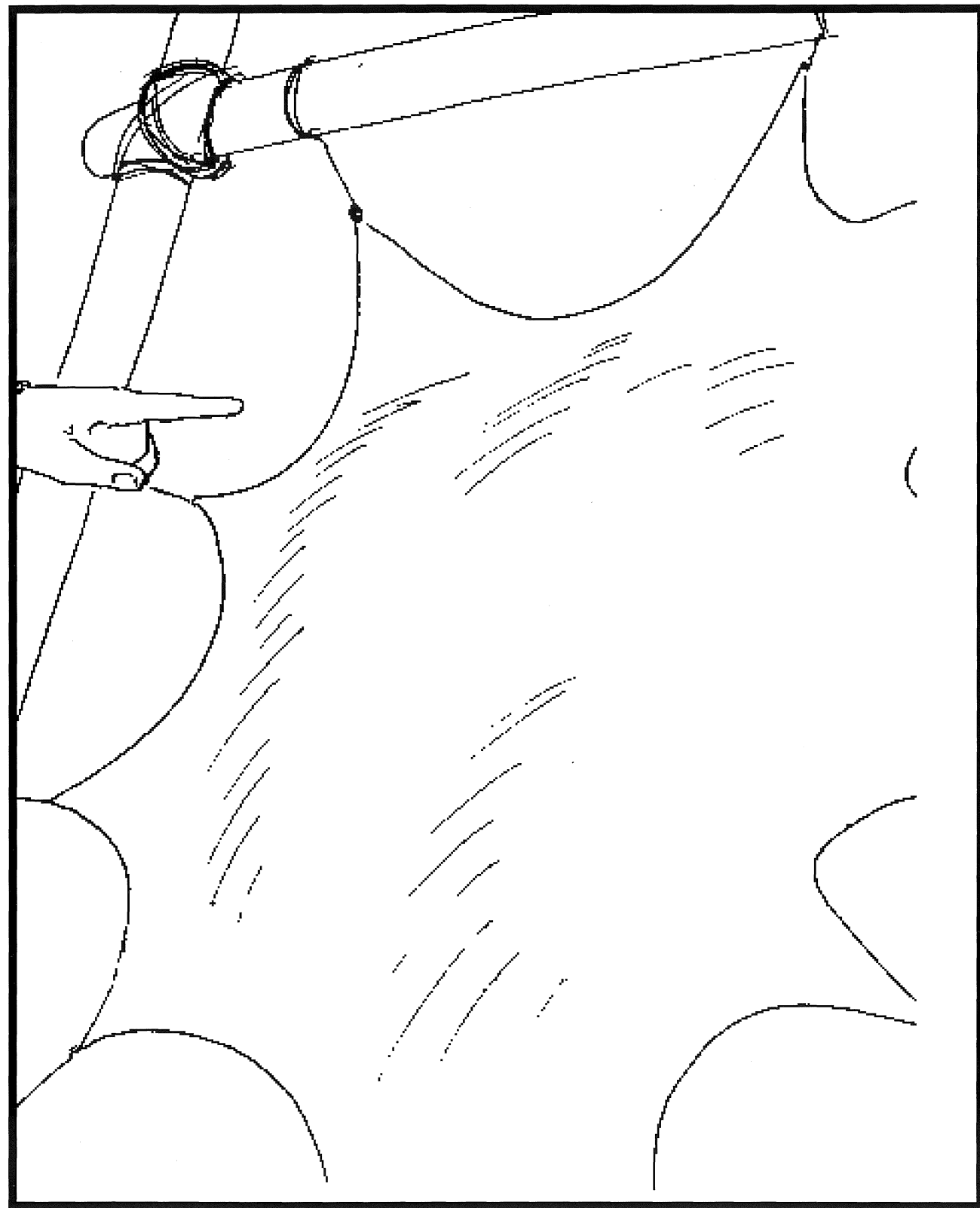
As I ran, smiling all the way, I couldn't stop singing thank you for the smiling new drum we made today.



I reached out to touch the tree, and as I said thank you, I heard my mom calling me to eat. I smiled thinking about how happy making a drum makes me.

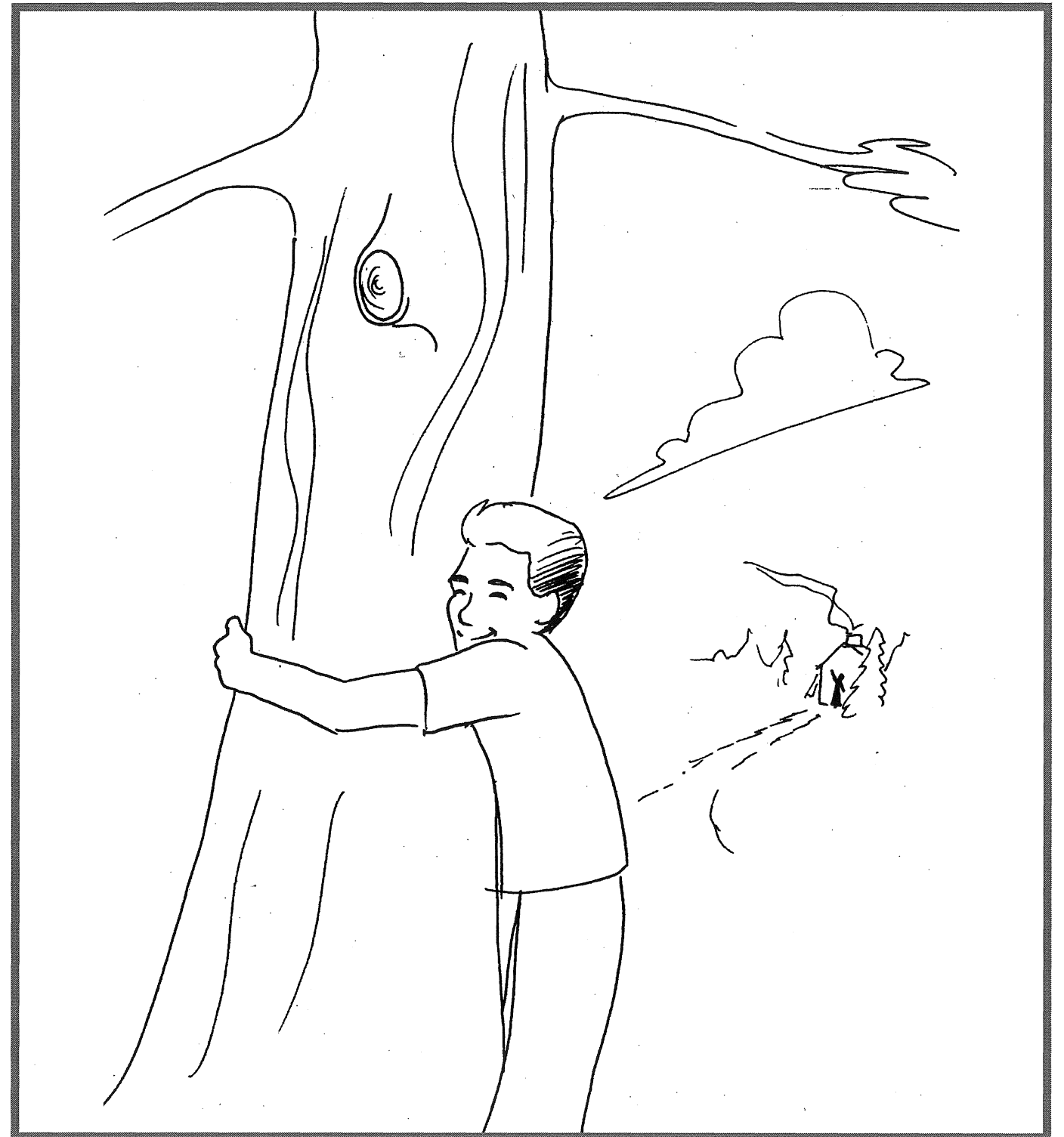


This time when I got to Uncle's house, I saw something really neat. It was a big animal skin. My uncle said it was a deer. He told me it was for making a drum.



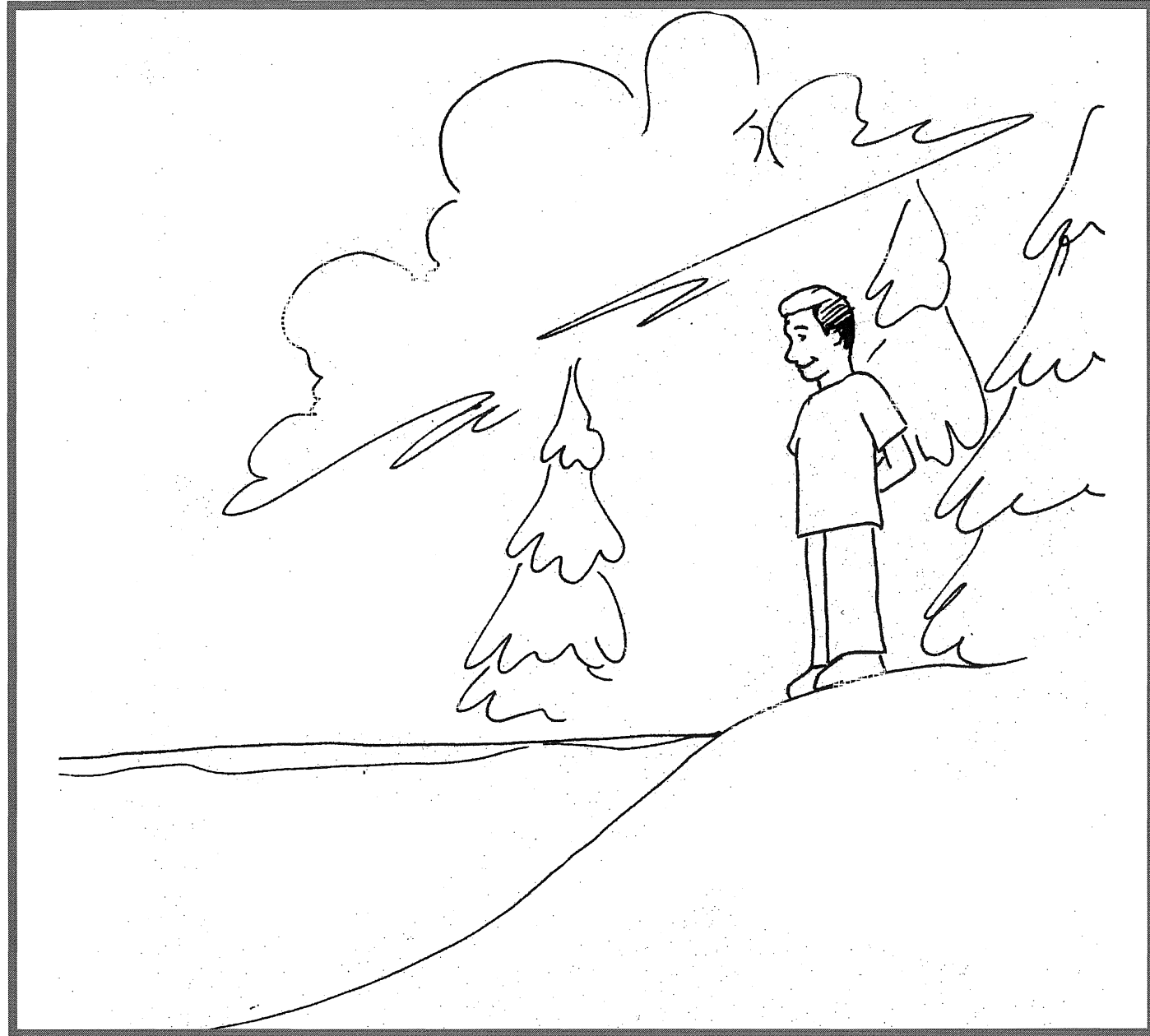
I asked my Uncle if he could show me how to make a drum. He said, as he smiled at me, "It must be your time." He told me he was ready to make a drum today.

As I walked back to Uncle's house, I saw the tree that gave its branch to make a beater for our drum.



I said thank you to the tree for the beater and smiled as I remembered the wood we used for the drum frame.

I ran through the woods and down by the stream where we soaked the piece of wood for the frame. I remembered what Uncle told me about thanking nature. I smiled and said thank you to the water for helping us make our drum.



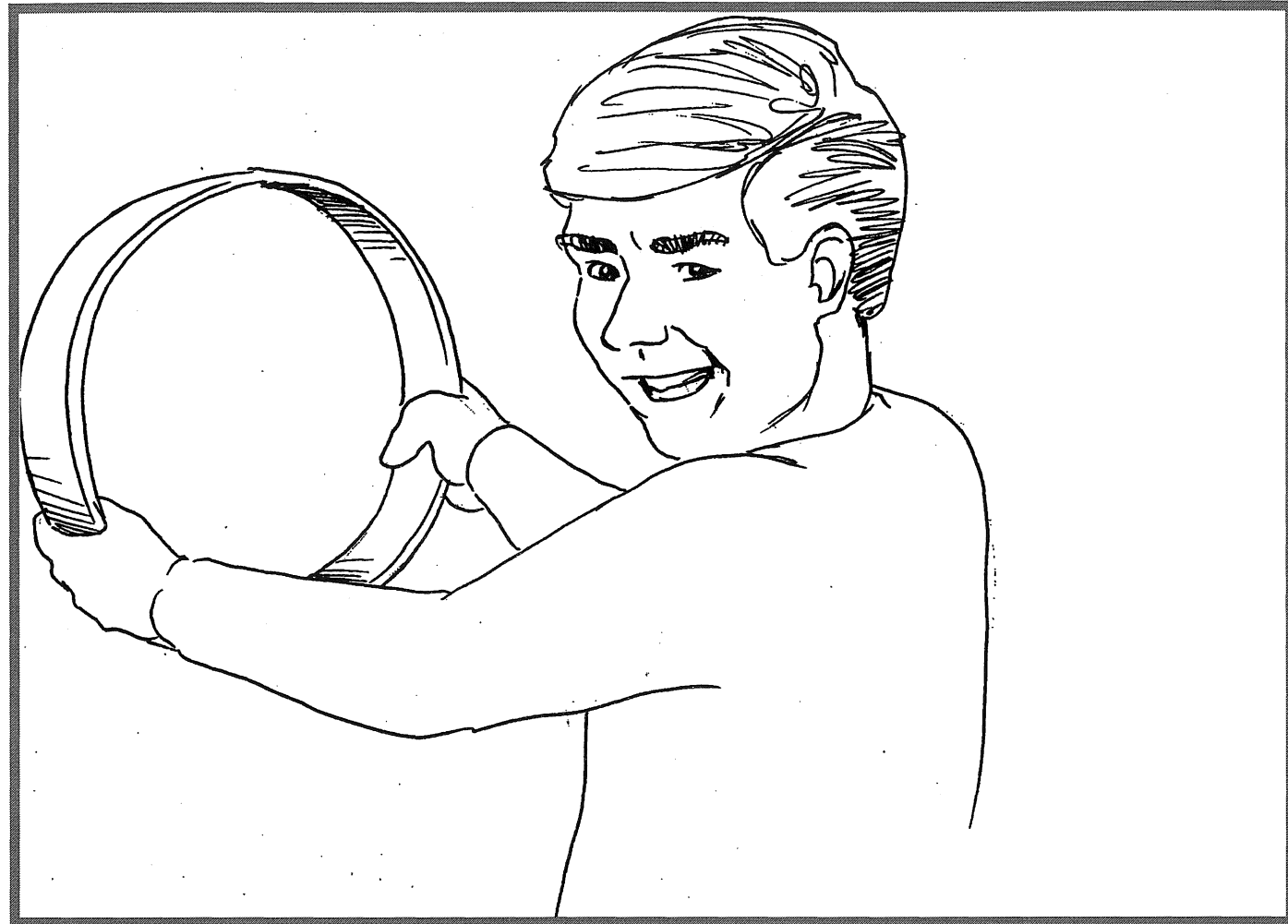
As I looked up, I saw a deer drinking from the stream. I smiled and said thank you to the deer, remembering that it gave us its hide for our drum.



He said he would be proud to show me how a drum is made. I smiled at him too. We went to his workshop. Uncle took a skin out of a big tub of water. He told me the water made the skin soft, and helped the hair to come off the hide.

He laid the hide over a board. Then he took a scraping tool, made from an old file on a piece of wood, and started removing the hair.

When Uncle was finished scraping both sides of the hide, he rinsed it off and let it soak in the tub of water again.



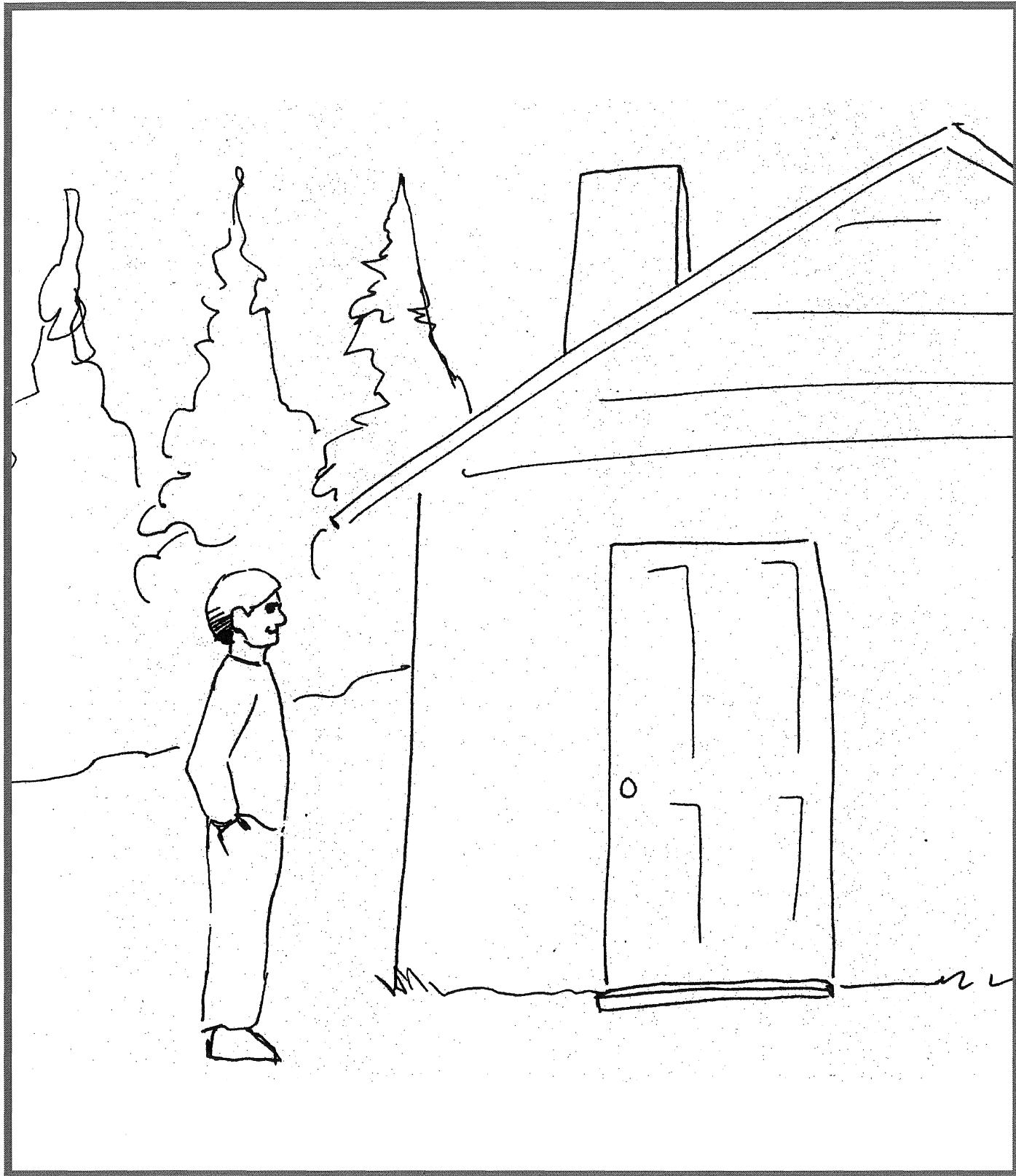
Then, Uncle took a round wooden frame off his workbench. He said, "We will take the hide and stretch it over this to make the drum."

I asked Uncle if he made the drum frame. He smiled at me again. "Would you like to help me bend another frame for tomorrow?" he asked. I smiled and said, "Yes!"

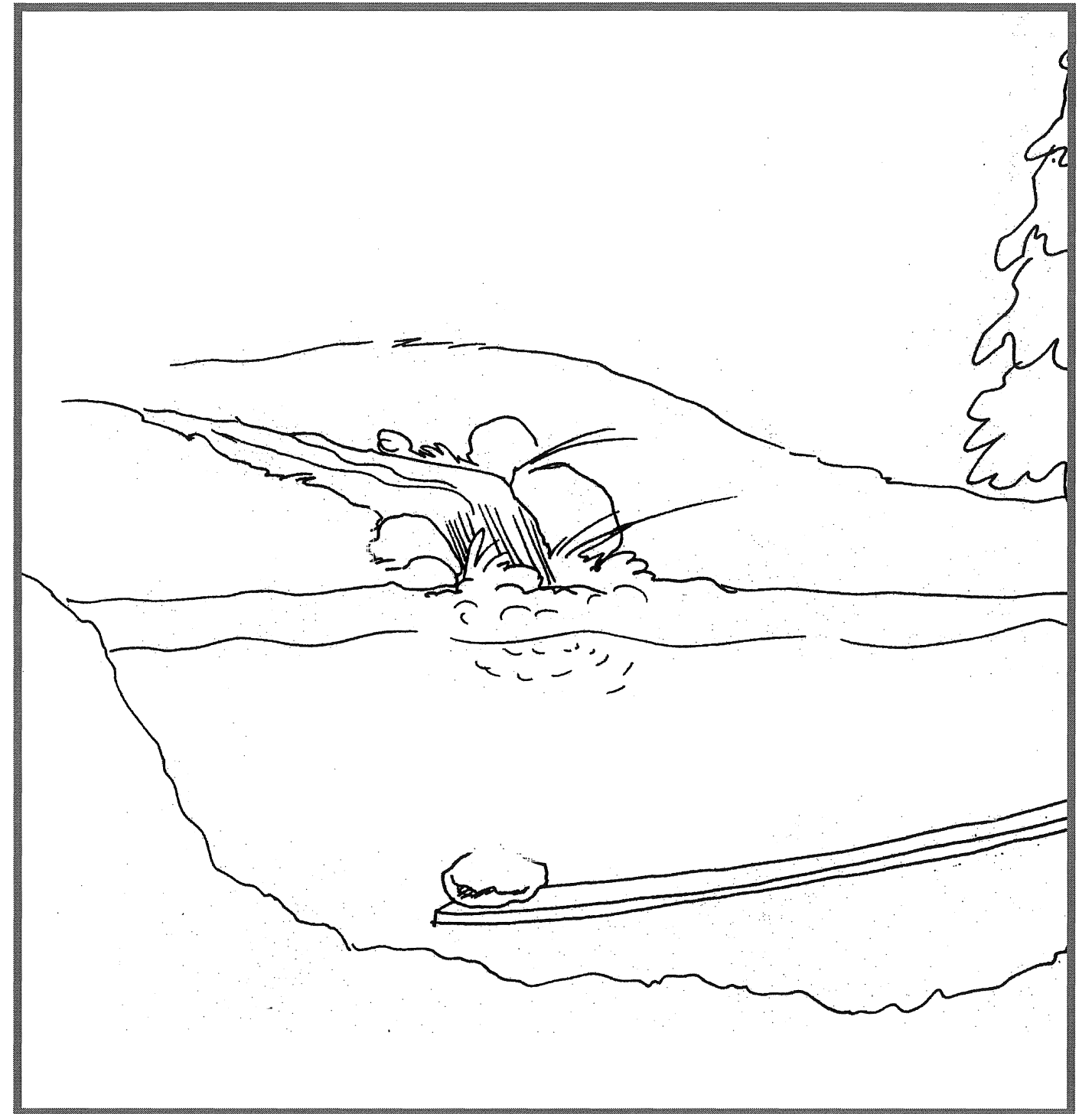


Mom told me to go play while she visited with Uncle and made us dinner.

Mom smiled and said, "I would love to hear your drum after we eat."



When we got back to Uncle's house, Mom was there to meet us. I told her about the fun time I had and wanted to show her the new drum.



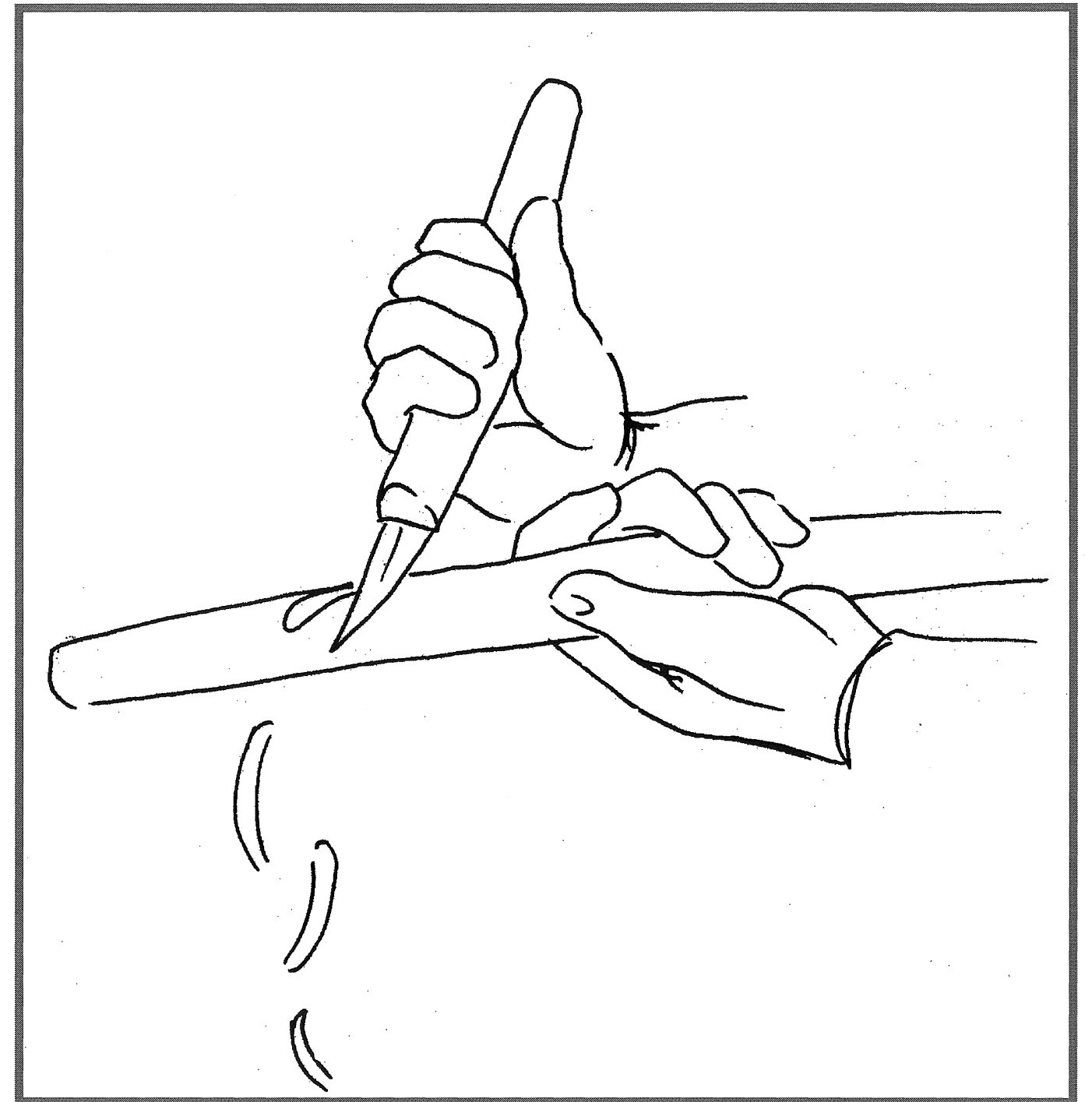
Uncle had a piece of wood cut in a long strip. He showed me that it was not very thick. "We will soak this wood overnight," he said, and then we walked through the woods to the small stream near Uncle's workshop.



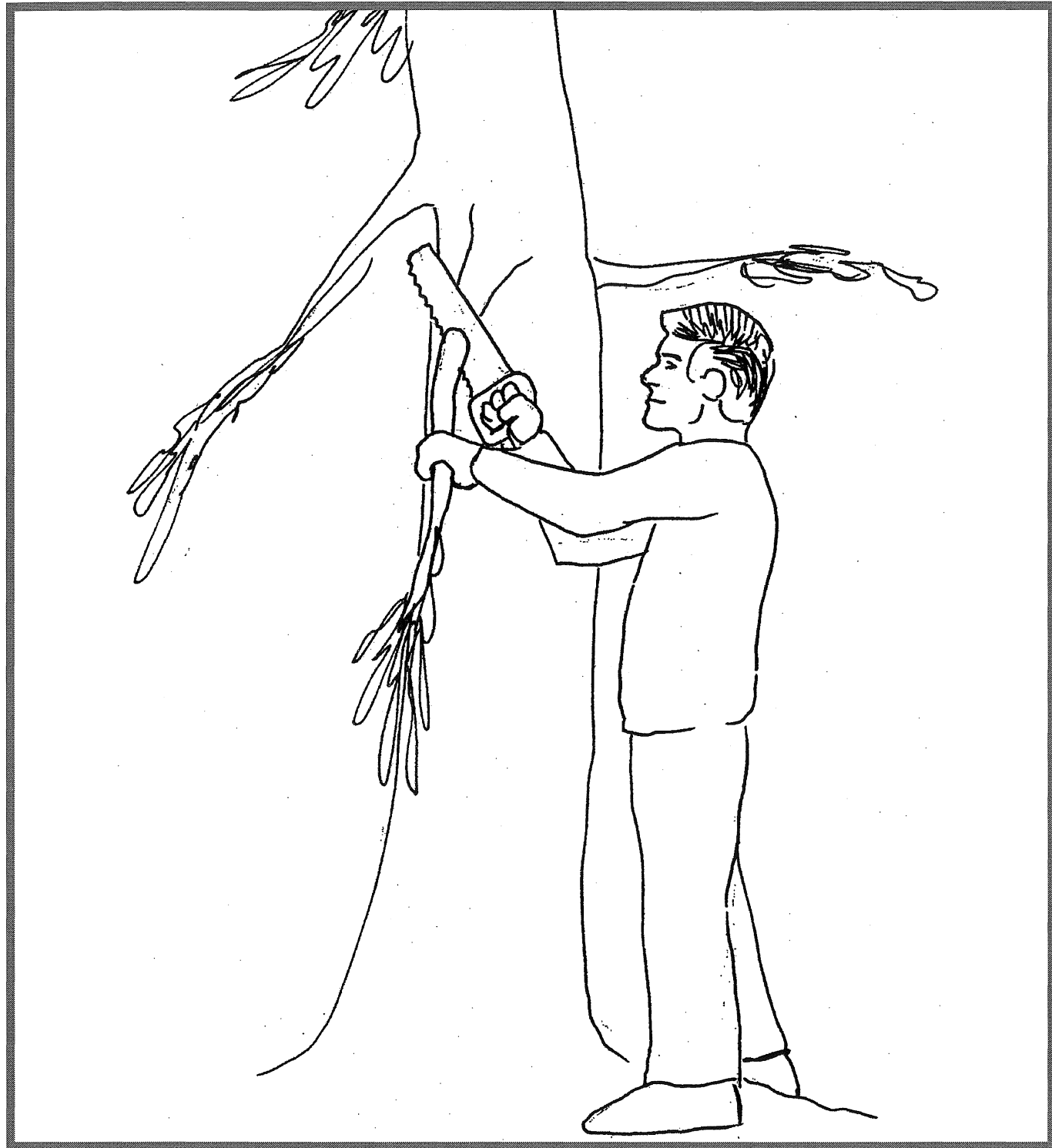
Uncle told me to put the wood in the stream, and put a rock on the wood so the water would cover it.

When I was done, we walked back to his house to eat dinner. Uncle said, "After dinner, we will rest for our work tomorrow."

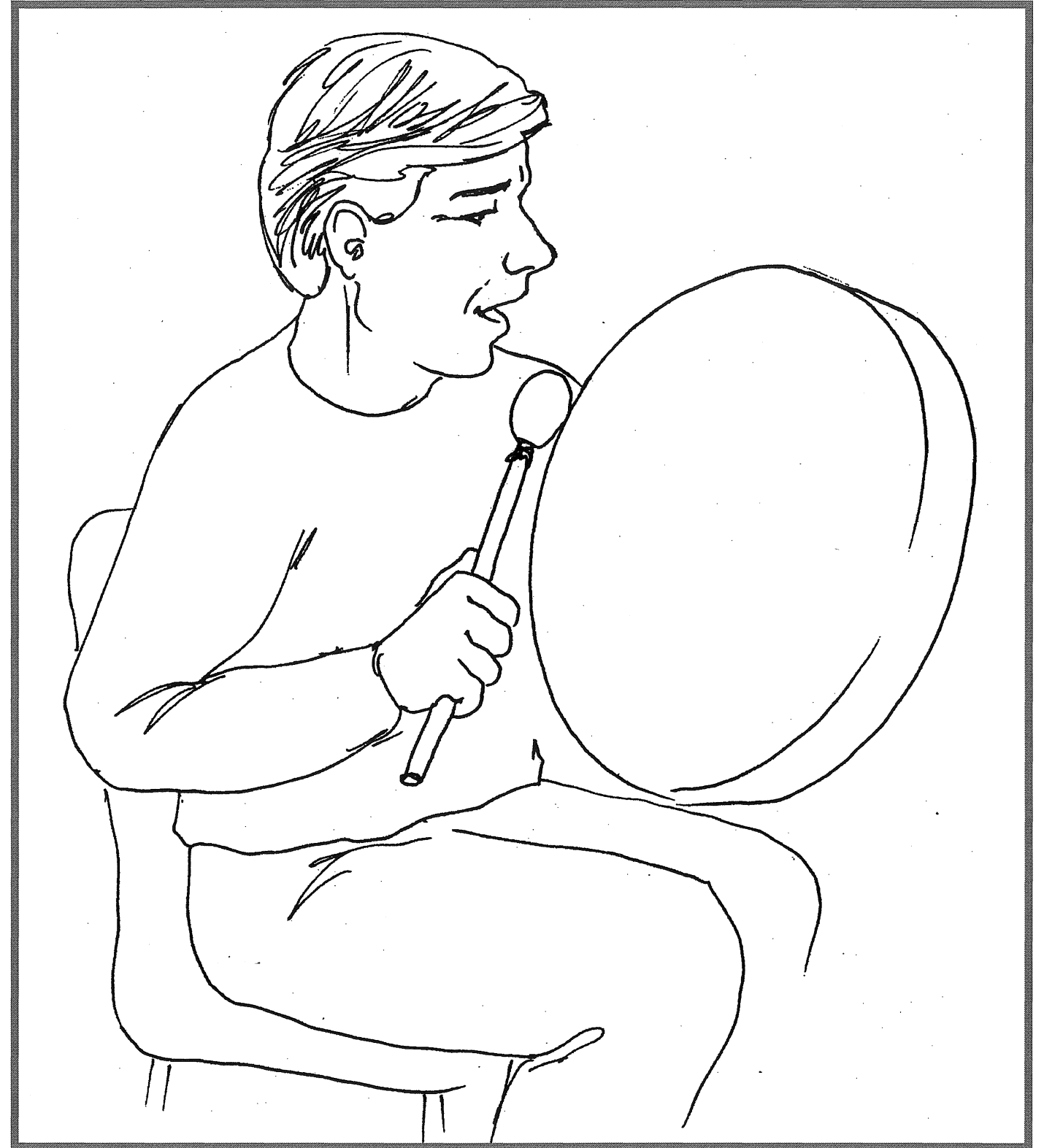
Uncle told me that it is always good to thank nature for the things we need, and only to take what we will use.

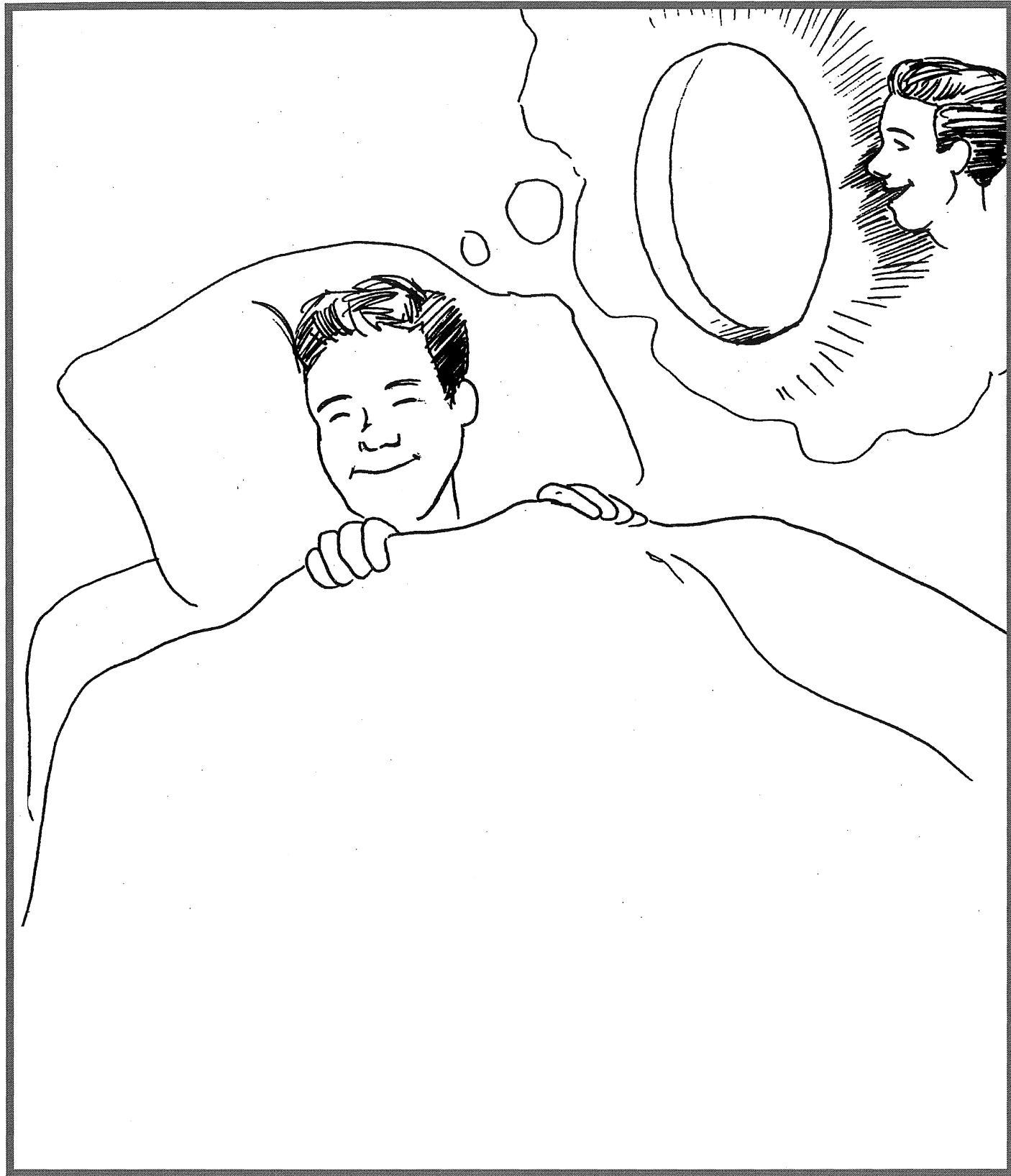


We walked back to Uncle's workshop and he began to carve the branch until it was clean of bark and yellowish-white in color.

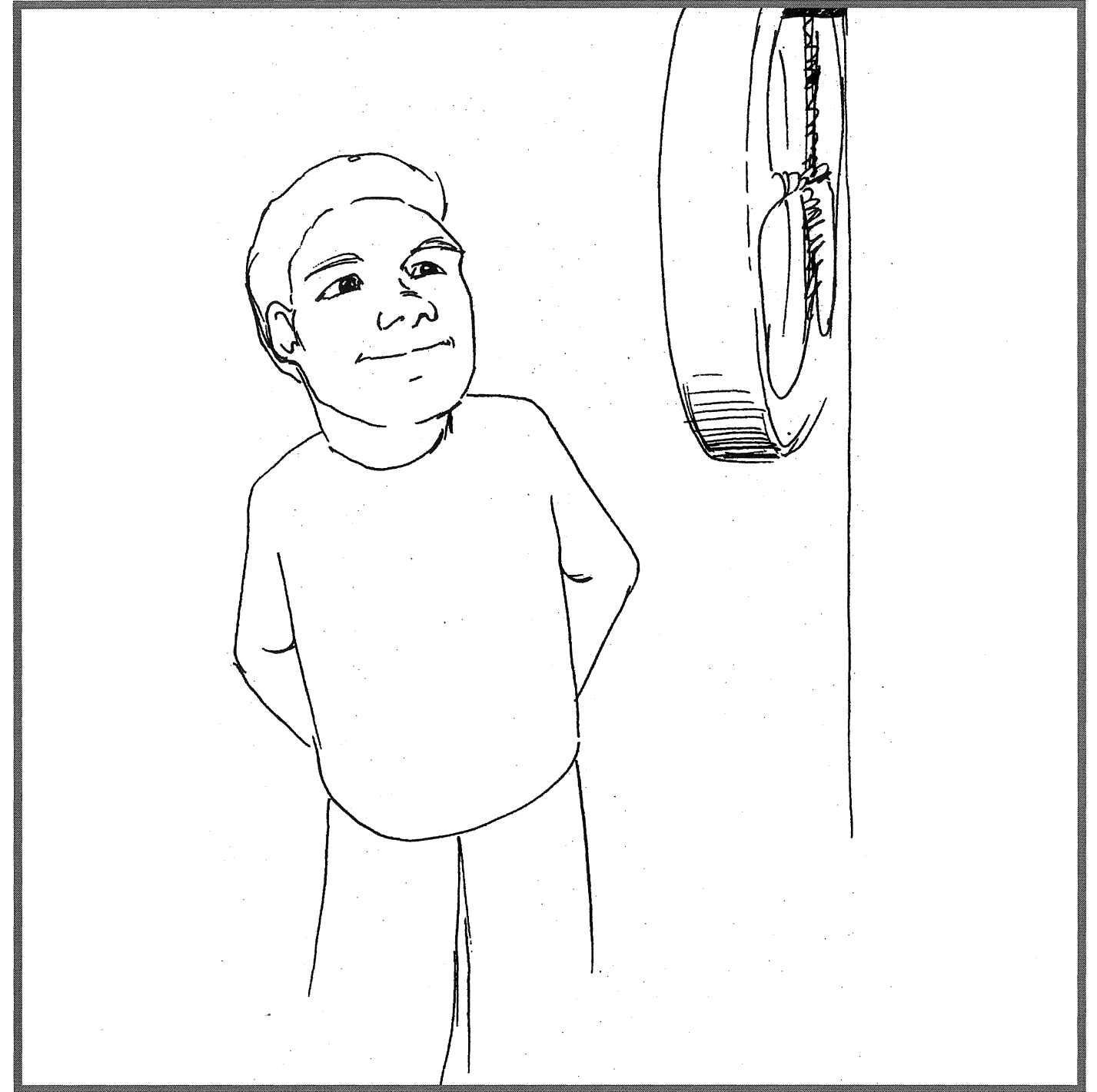


As we walked through the woods, Uncle stopped and went to a tree. He said some words to the tree. He asked the tree for a branch to help finish our drum. Then he thanked the tree for the branch as he cut it from the tree.



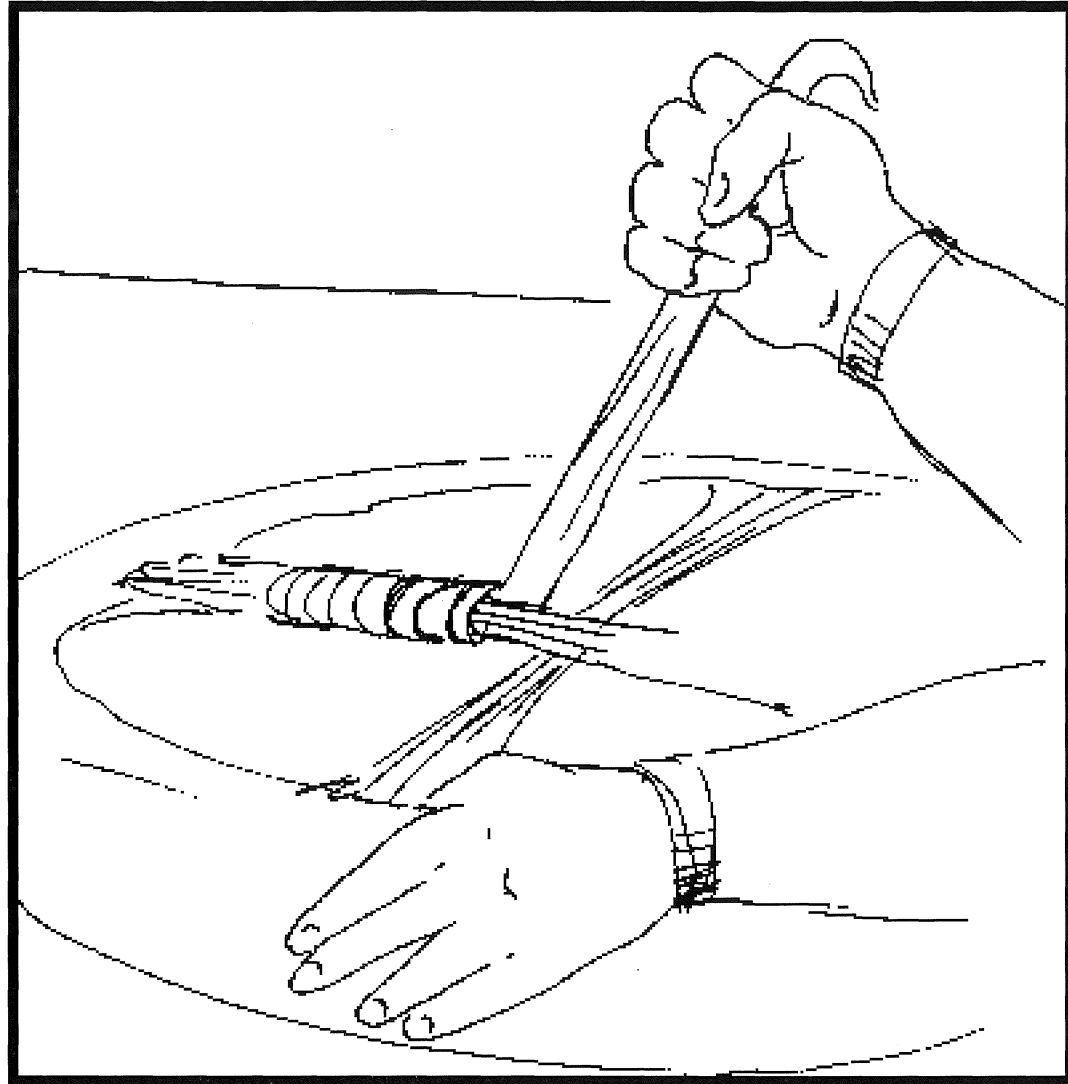


Uncle sang me a song as I fell fast asleep, dreaming about what our drum would look and sound like.



He hung the drum up on the wall and said, "Let's go for a walk."

I smiled as I looked at the drum. I could hardly wait to play it. Uncle smiled at me and said, "We will play the drum tonight when your mom comes for you."

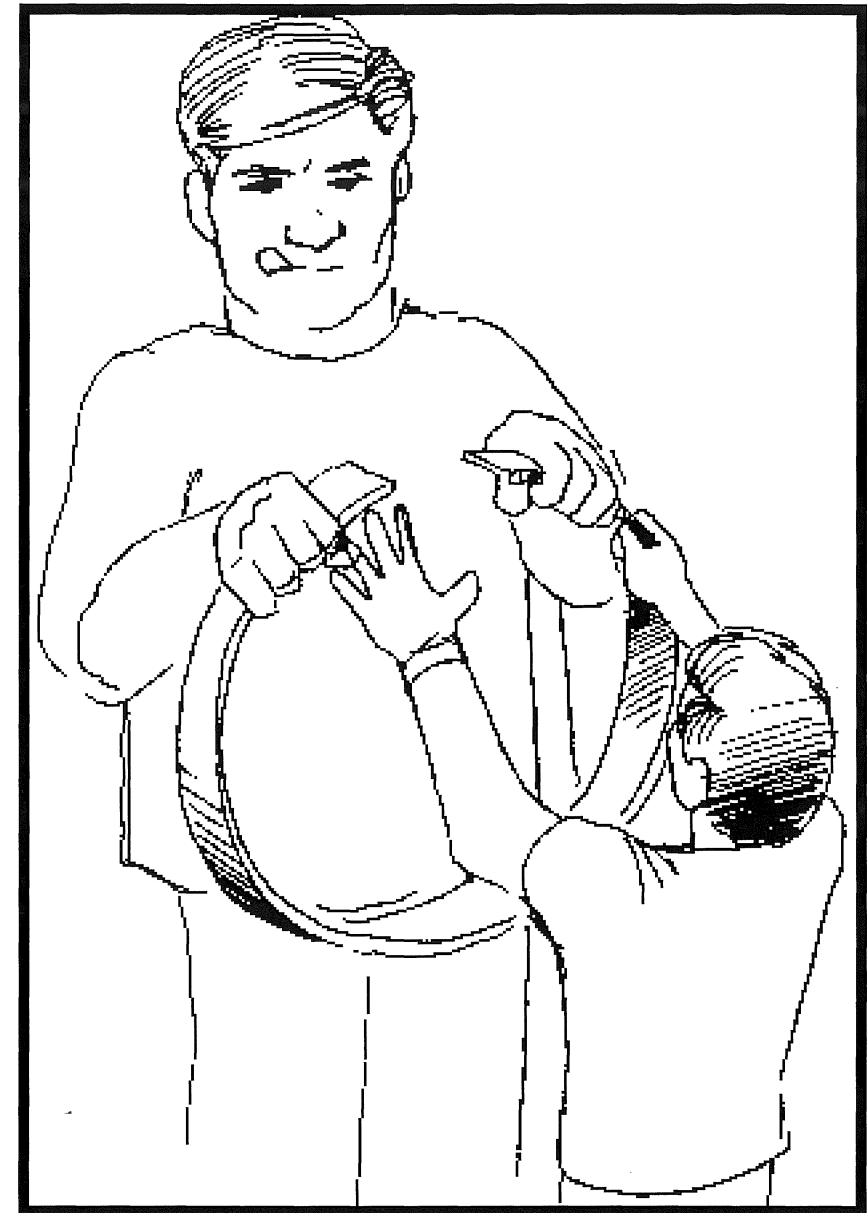


"Our drum is done!" I yelled as he smiled and said, "Not so fast. We have to make it strong."

Uncle took more hide strings and tied them evenly to the sides, joining in the middle. Then he wrapped them around each other and tied it up in a knot.

I told Uncle that I thought it looked like a handle. Uncle smiled and said, "Now it will be strong."

We walked down to the stream where Uncle took the wood for the drum frame out of the water.

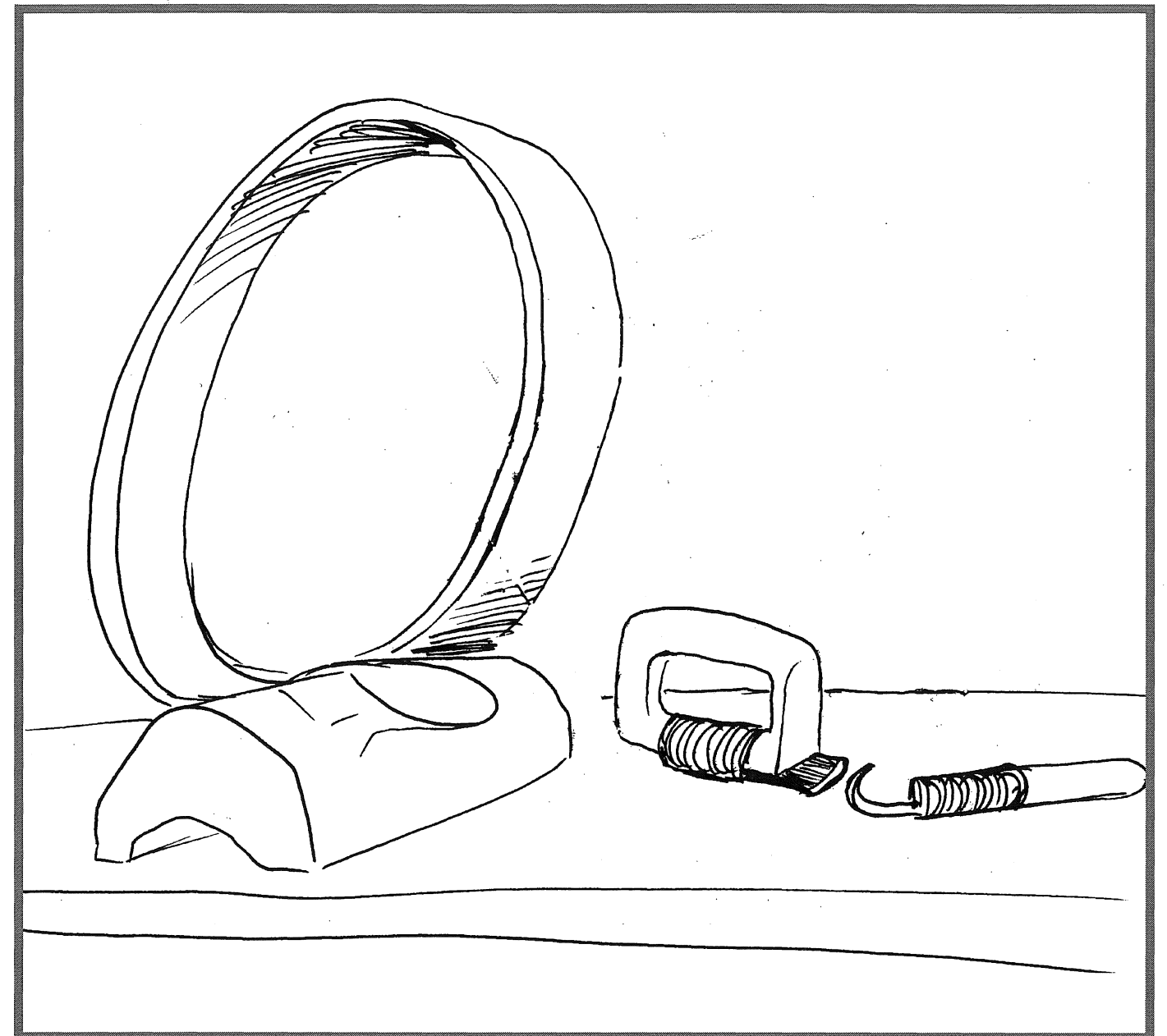


"Wow," I said, "is that really the wood?"

"Yes," said Uncle. "The water makes the wood soft and easier to bend. When it is dry, it will become hard again, like this one." Uncle took the other drum frame from the day before and knocked on it. It was hard and dry.



"Let's finish our drum," Uncle told me as we both smiled. Uncle took the hide out of the water and trimmed some long strips that looked like strings.



He took a knife and carefully made holes around the outside of the hide about two fingers apart. Then Uncle asked me to help stretch the hide over the wooden frame.

As we stretched the skin, Uncle put the hide string through the holes and pulled real hard. He tied the ends of the string together in a knot.