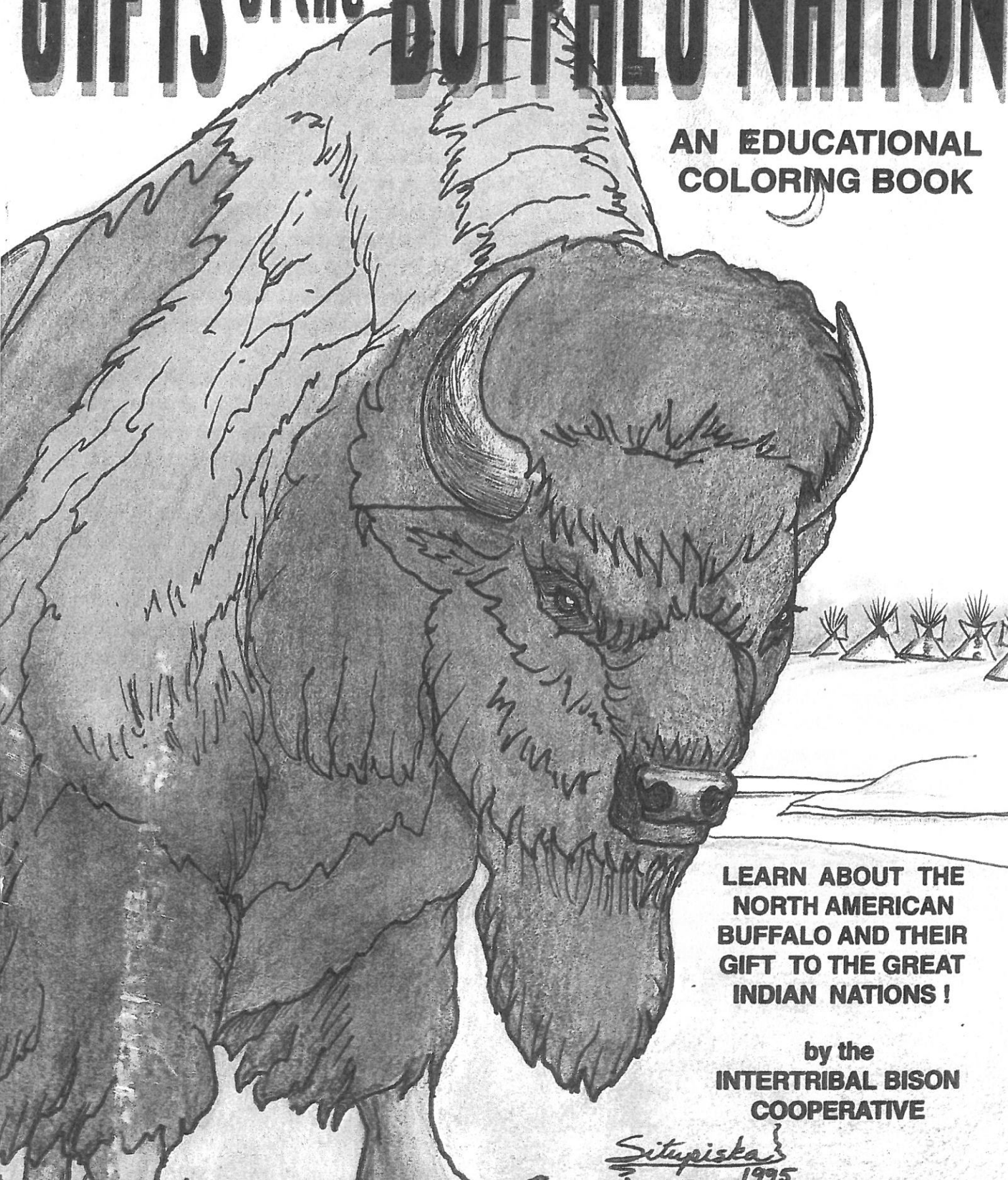


GIFTS of the BUFFALO NATION

AN EDUCATIONAL
COLORING BOOK



LEARN ABOUT THE
NORTH AMERICAN
BUFFALO AND THEIR
GIFT TO THE GREAT
INDIAN NATIONS !

by the
INTERTRIBAL BISON
COOPERATIVE

Situpiska
1995

:~::~~::~~: Gifts of the Buffalo Nation :~::~~::~~:

Note to parents & teachers: Due to the length of this introduction, we suggest that this be read to younger children.

For thousands of years, before the coming of the white man, the native people of the great Indian nations, the Buffalo Nation, and the wildlife of North America lived in harmony. The buffalo provided the native people with food, clothing, shelter, and medicine. The people lived a healthy, happy, and spiritual life on Mother Earth.

To show appreciation to the Buffalo Nation for their gifts, the native people used everything from the buffalo. The meat was eaten or dried and stored for the long winter months. The buffalo skull was used as an altar for religious ceremonies. The horns were used to drink water or made into spoons to eat with. Water containers were made from the bladders and the skins of the buffalo became warm robes, moccasins, and covers for their tipis. The hooves were made into rattles and dancing ornaments. The small dew claws were made into wind chimes that were hung on the tipis to make the sound of walking buffalo. The bones became tools for the adults and toys for the children. Even buffalo droppings served a purpose, as they were burned in camp fires or crushed fine for baby powder.

Because the Buffalo Nation provided so much to the native people, the people honored them and regarded them as sacred. Native people were thankful to the buffalo for their generosity and to show respect for the buffalo they included them in their songs and imitated the buffalo in their dances, while wearing buffalo headdresses. Children were given names with the word buffalo in them. More importantly, the buffalo were in their prayers. Even today, the Indian nations still honor and respect the Buffalo Nation by including them in their songs, dances, and prayers. The Indian Nations consider the Buffalo Nation their relatives because without the gifts of the buffalo their ancestors may not have survived.

But after thousands of years of living in harmony, the sacred way of life for the great Indian nations and the Buffalo Nation was disrupted. Many, many foreigners came from across the oceans, and every year as more foreigners moved to North America, they began to take the land that the Indian nations and the Buffalo Nation lived on and respected.

For many years, the Indian nations tried hard to save what little land was left for their children, grandchildren, and the

buffalo. But the people of the United States Government needed more land and the only way to take the land was to weaken the great Indian nations by killing the buffalo, ensuring that the native people would not have food, clothing, or shelter.

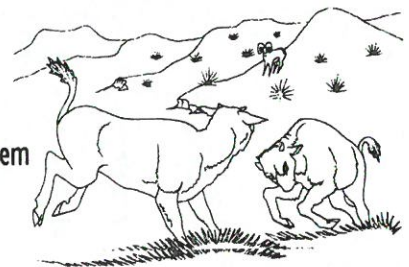
Therefore, in the mid 1800's men were hired to begin slaughtering the buffalo that once numbered over 60 million animals and had roamed all over North America and Canada. It is told that as many as one thousand buffalo were killed in a single day. The buffalo slayers took the hides, and the best meat, leaving the rest of the buffalo to rot. The buffalo hides were shipped to the east coast and made into fancy coats and hats.

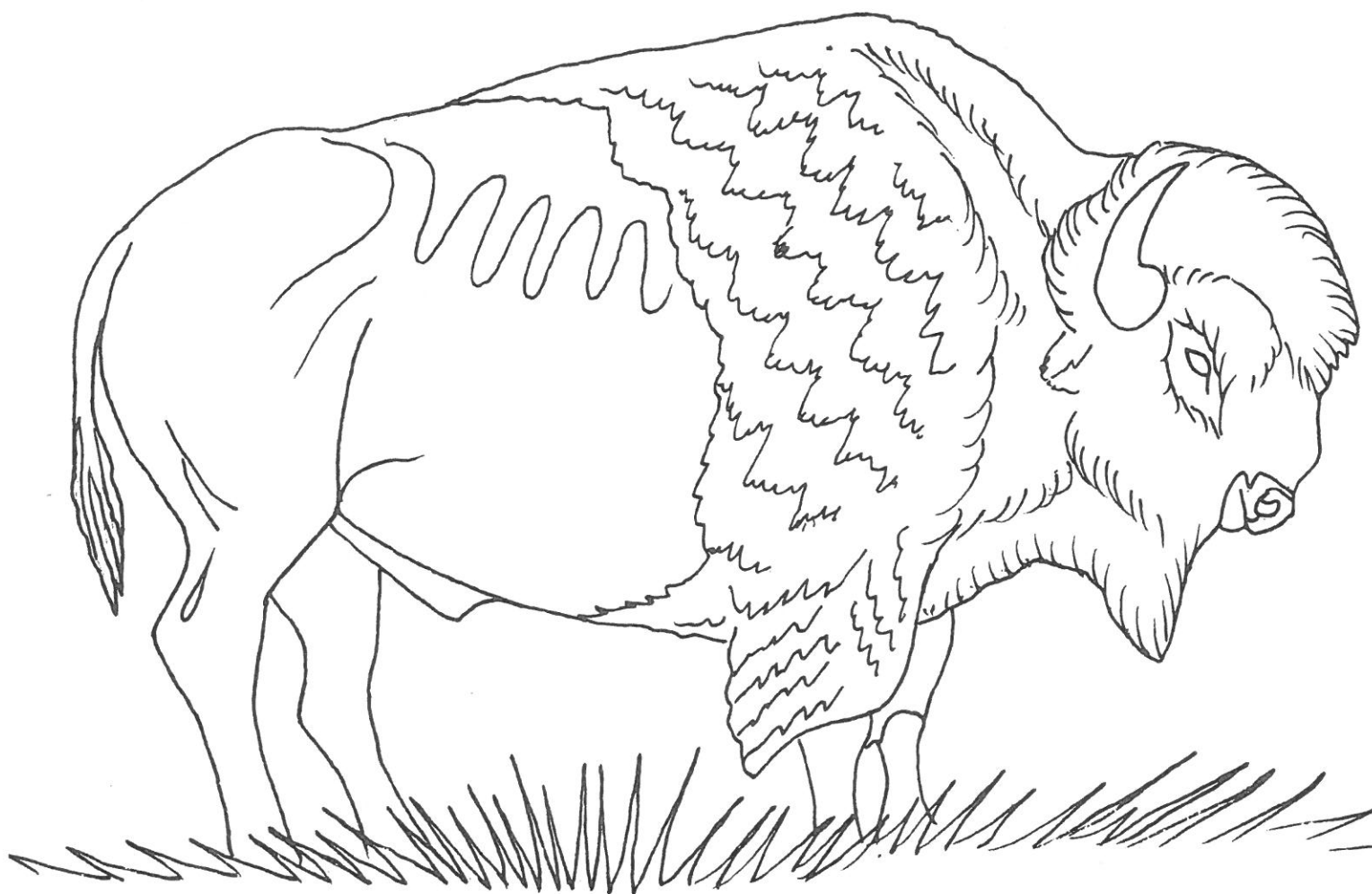
By the late 1800's, with the great slaughter ravaging the buffalo population to near extinction, the Indian nations began suffering from the loss of the buffalo, and were forced to obey the U.S. Government's orders to leave their homelands and live on reservations.

In the early 1900's, with the Buffalo Nation nearly extinct, a group of caring people decided that the buffalo must be saved. A small herd was found hiding in the Yellowstone Valley of Montana, and a few head in Texas. This was the beginning of the return of the Buffalo Nation. Today, in 1996, there are over 175 thousand buffalo living in the United States and Canada, but only about eight thousand of these buffalo are on Indian lands.

Now, with the help of the InterTribal Bison Cooperative (ITBC) there will be many more buffalo returning to the land of their ancestors. The ITBC is a National Indian organization of close to 40 Indian nations that has promised to bring the Buffalo Nation back to their native people, and to the children of all nations.

ITBC's *Gifts of the Buffalo Nation* coloring book has interesting facts about the buffalo, wildlife, and the people who lived in harmony with them for thousands of years.





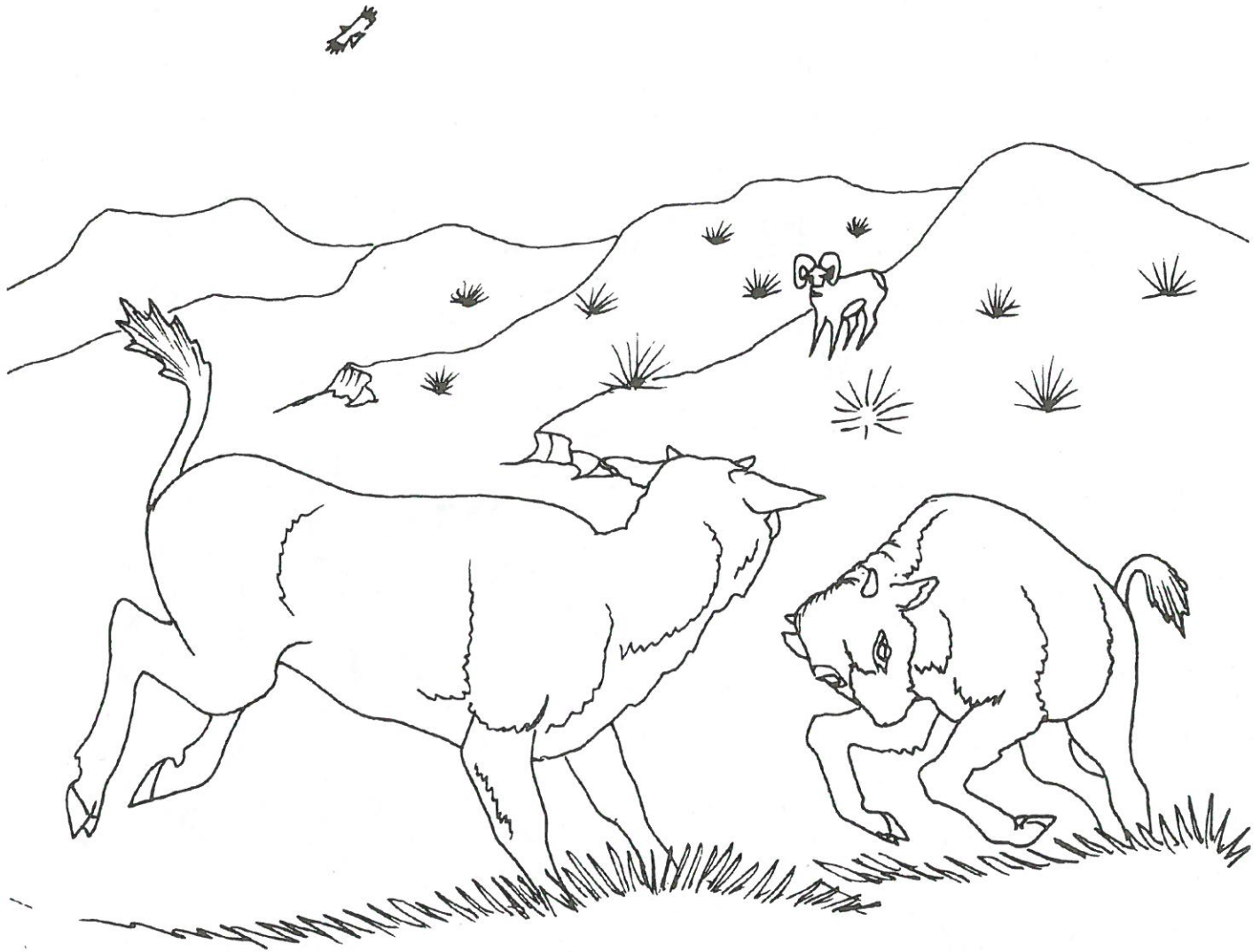
The North American bison, or buffalo, is the largest land mammal on the North American continent. A male buffalo, called a bull, can weigh up to 2,500 pounds and stand 6 1/2 feet tall from the ground

to the top of his hump. Two kinds of buffalo exist, the Plains buffalo and the Wood buffalo. The Plains buffalo now lives all over the United States and most Wood buffalo now live only in Canada.



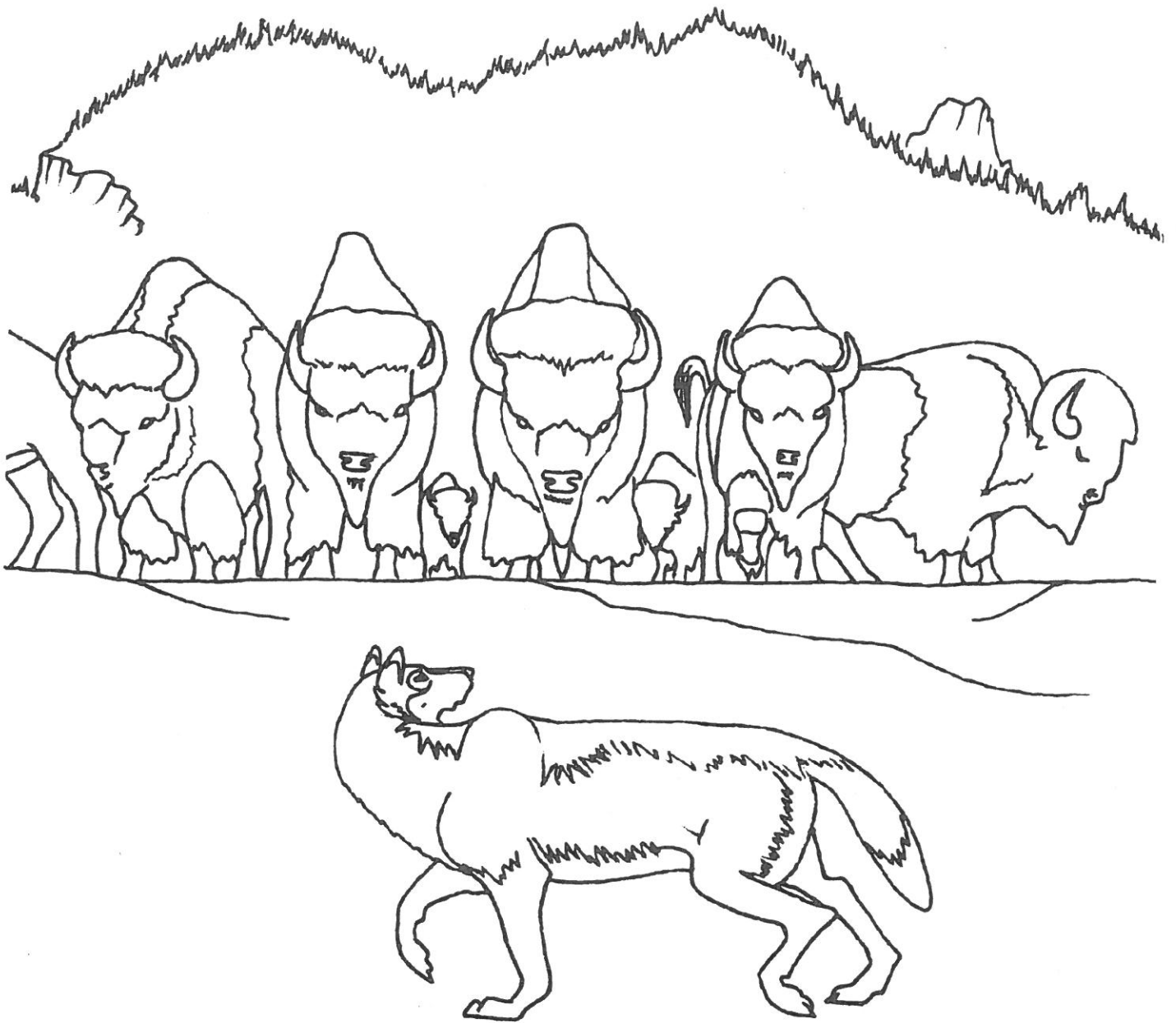
In the late summer months bulls begin mating with cows. This is called the rutting or mating season. Sometimes bulls will fight with each other to get the attention of the cows.

The older bulls have a long black beard at the end of their chin and are very strong. Nine months after a cow mates with a bull she will have her calf.



A few months after the calves are born their hair starts to turn dark brown and their horns start growing. Their horns stay with them for the rest of their lives. By the calves first birthday they weigh

up to 500 pounds and are called yearlings. By age two, they are young adults and no longer need the protection of their mothers. Calves are very energetic and like to play together.



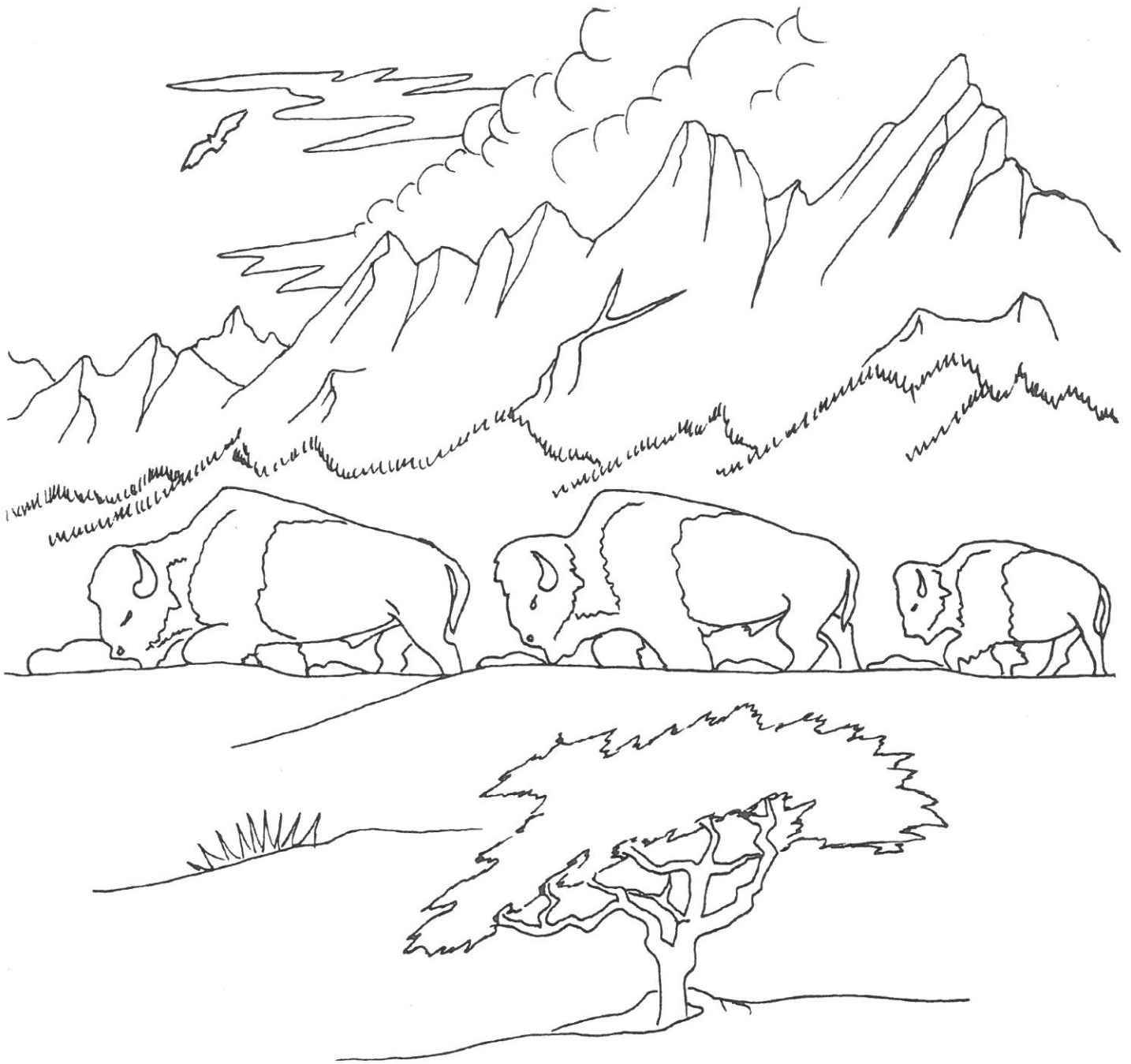
Buffalo are social animals and live in a group called a herd. To protect their calves from predators, such as wolves and grizzly bears, they will stand in a circle; the bulls stand on the

outside of the circle, the cows next and the calves in the center of the circle. This makes it difficult for the predator to get the smaller, weaker calves.



Some believe that buffalo were migrating animals, which means they spent the winter in one area then moved to another area in the summer, then back again. Buffalo also could have been nomadic,

which means they were always on the move, eating the prairie grass as they went. Whether migrating or nomadic animals, the buffalo would have to cross large rivers. They are good swimmers.



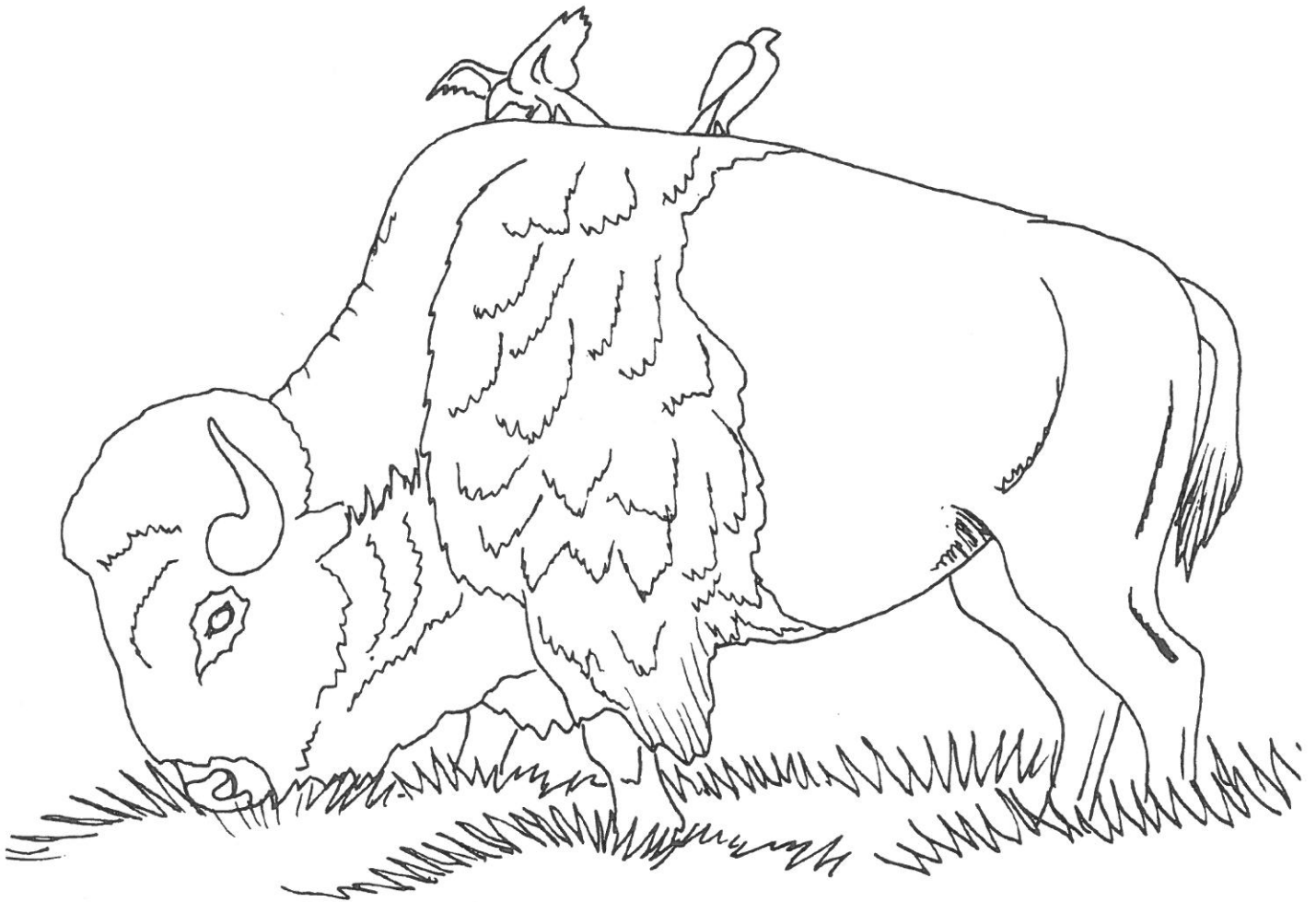
Buffalo are very helpful to plant life. The buffalo have sharp hooves and when they walk over the earth their hooves plow up the ground which helps plants get air and water, and pushes

plant seeds into the ground. Plant seeds also get caught in the thick hair of the buffalo and when they shed their hair in the spring, the seeds fall to the ground and start to grow.



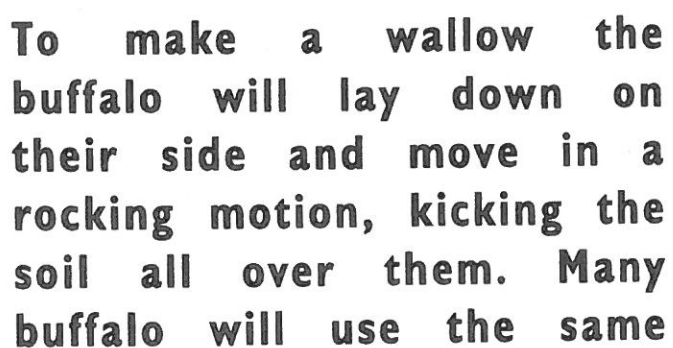
In the winter, buffalo stay warm in their thick, wooly coats. When the grass is covered with snow, buffalo will push the snow out of the way with their huge heads to eat

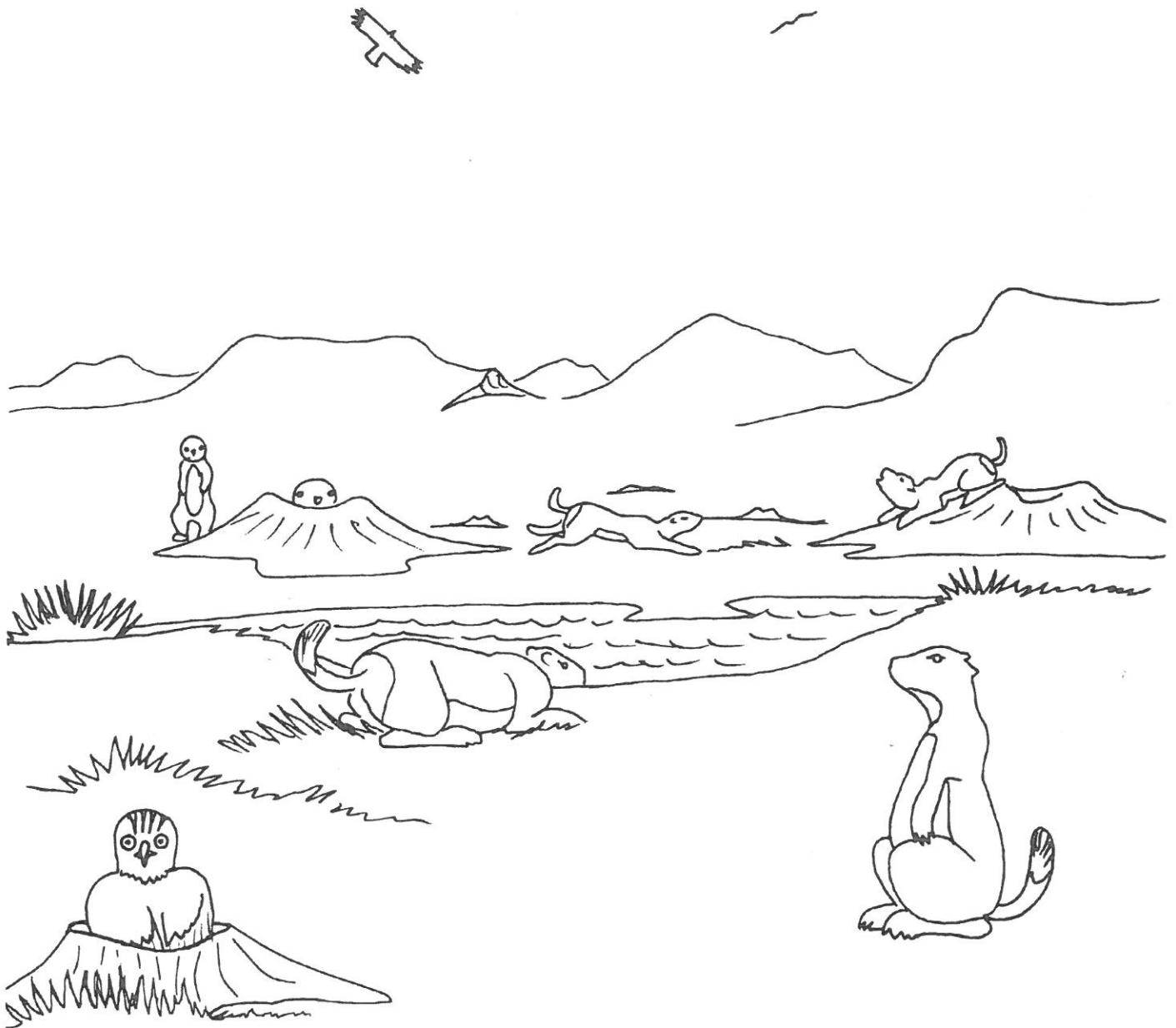
the grass. When they are thirsty and all the water is frozen, they will eat snow. Buffalo can survive in very cold or hot weather. They are very strong animals.



Buffalo share the land with many animals. There are flying insects and ticks that bite the buffalo, making them itch. Cow birds like to sit on the back of

buffalo and eat the insects and ticks. Sometimes the buffalo will use a wallow to scratch their backs and sides.





When it rains, the buffalo wallows fill with water and other animals will drink from these wallows. Prairie dog towns are good places for buffalo to make wallows

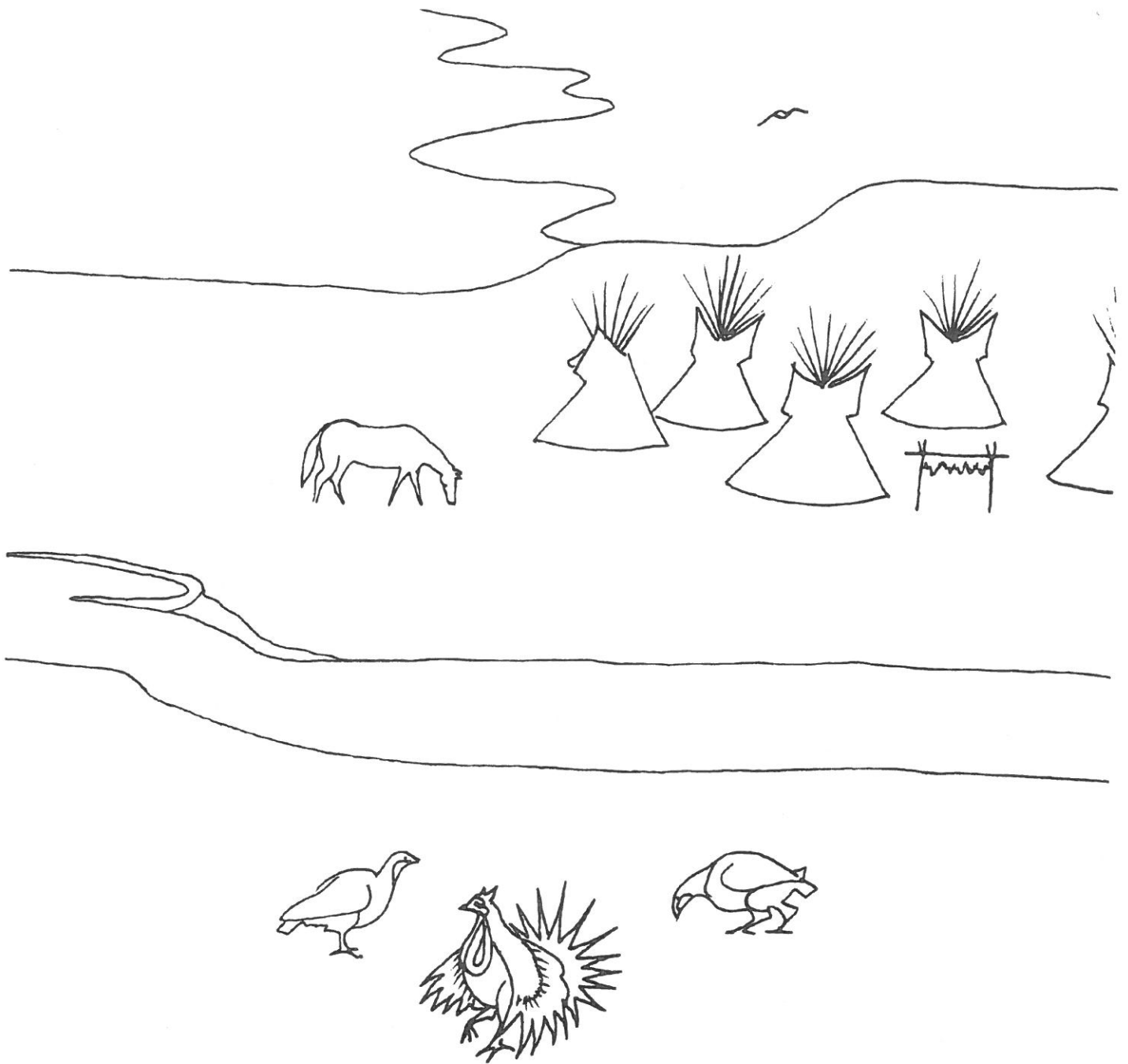
because the soil is soft. Buffalo also like the prairie dog towns because the prairie dogs supply a natural salt that the buffalo like to lick.





For thousands of years, the buffalo, along with the many animals and plants of the plains, depended upon each other for survival and all lived in harmony. The people of the

great Indian nations also lived in harmony with these animals and plants. It was the buffalo that gave the people almost everything they needed to live a healthy, happy and spiritual life.



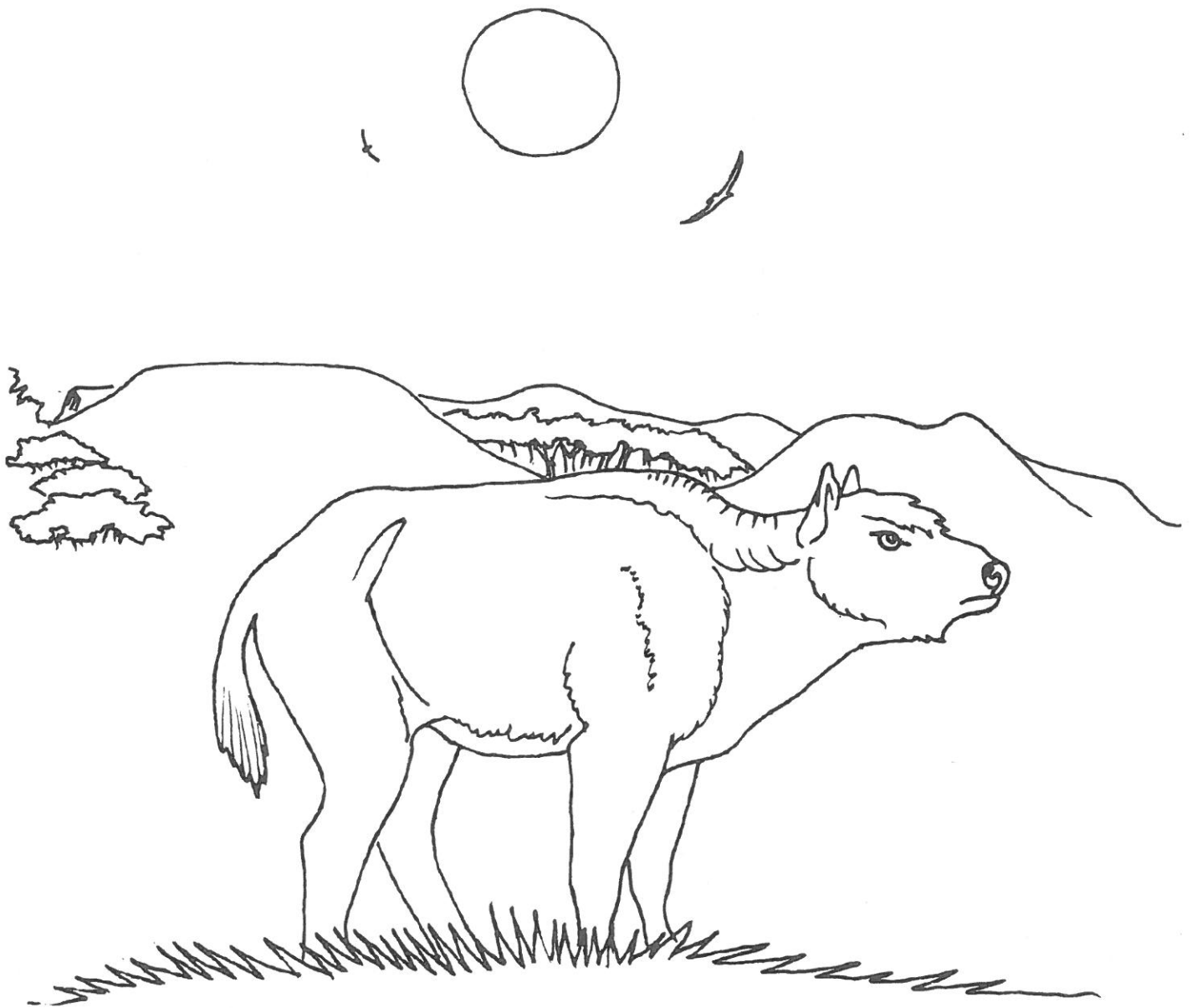
The great Indian nations considered the Buffalo Nation their relatives because the buffalo gave them gifts of: food, shelter, clothing, medicine, and

tools. Because the buffalo gave so much to the native people, the people honored them and regarded them as sacred.



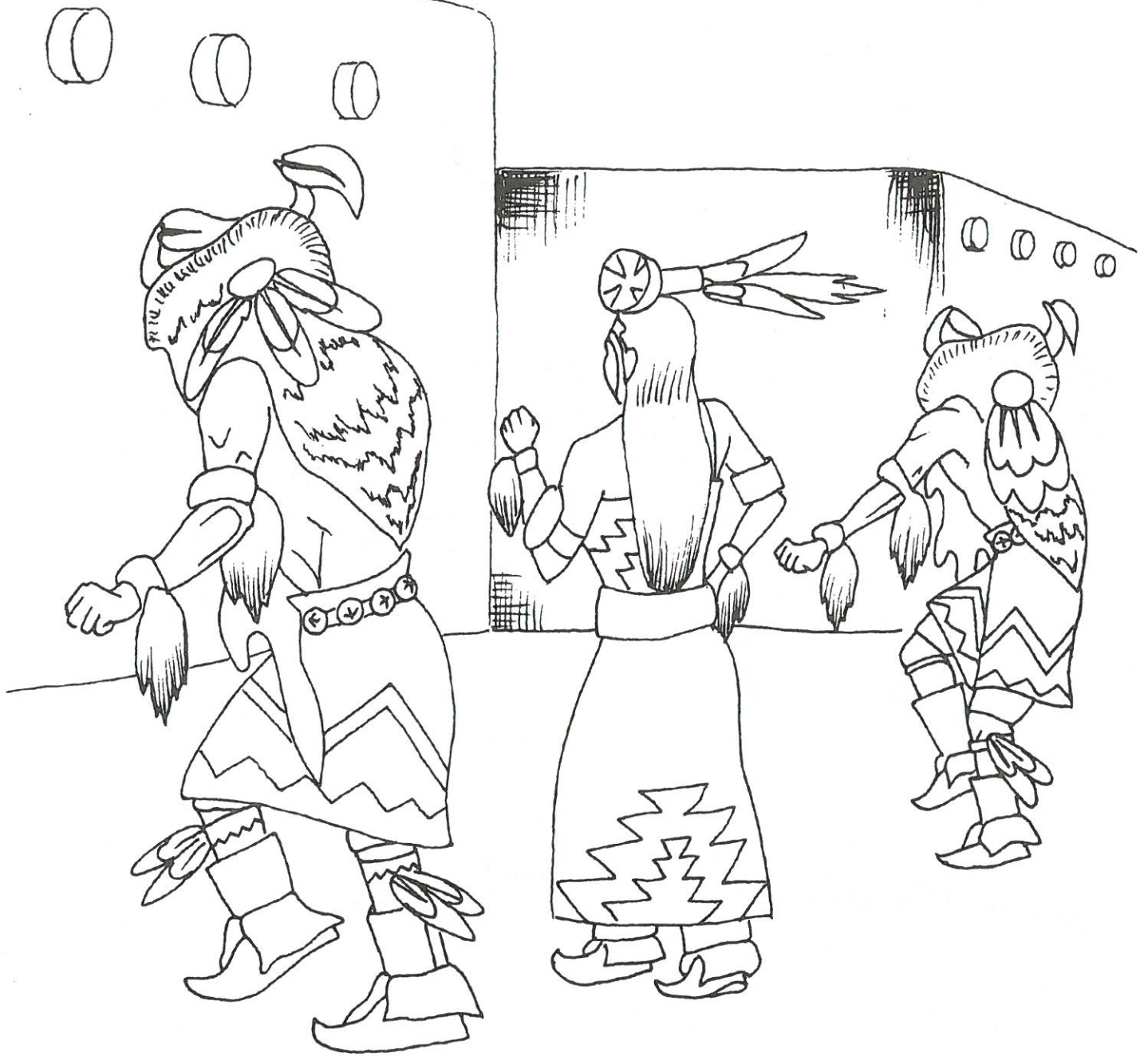
To many Indian people the buffalo are the center of their spiritual lives. A Lakota legend says the White Buffalo Calf Woman brought the Sacred Buffalo Calf Pipe to the Lakota

during a famine. She instructed them to walk on the sacred Mother Earth humbly. "Behold this sacred pipe, always love it! It is sacred and to be treated as such."



"The sacred pipe is related to all natural things and to the Buffalo Nation," said the White Buffalo Calf Woman and as she walked away, she turned into a white buffalo calf and

disappeared. White buffalo are very sacred to Indian people and are regarded with great respect and honor. Today, the chances of a white buffalo calf being born are very rare.



These are buffalo dancers from the Pueblo people of New Mexico. Every Indian nation that depended on the buffalo honored the buffalo in their dances, their songs, and their

prayers. Wearing a buffalo headdress and imitating a buffalo while dancing showed respect for the Buffalo Nation. Even today Indian people dance in honor of the buffalo.



The great Indian nations prayed every day, asking that the Buffalo Nation help them survive. The buffalo skull was often used as an altar in sacred ceremonies. Many sacred items

and medicine were made from the buffalo. Sometimes stones that looked like a buffalo were found and used in ceremonies to prepare the hunters for the hunt.

The Young Santee Warrior and the Ghost of the Great Buffalo

As told by: Kalon Strickland, Santee Dakota

A long, long time ago in the middle of winter, during a bad snow storm, a small band of Santee Dakota people had been without food for many days. The people got together and asked the elders what they should do. The elders decided that one of the bravest and strongest warriors should go out into the snow storm and pray for four days for the return of the buffalo.

Many of the best and strongest asked to go. Among them was one young man who lived with his grandmother. He was not much to look at and had not proven to be a very good warrior, so he was passed by and another was picked. The man that was picked to go was given a buffalo robe and some water. On the first day as he began to pray, he heard a thundering, rattling sound coming his way; it became louder, as it came towards him. He could not see in the heavy snowstorm and with the wind blowing he became scared. The closer the rattling sound came, the more his fear grew and he ran back to village and told of what he had heard. Another warrior was picked to go, then another, until there were no more brave warriors left to go, as all of them had been scared away by the thundering, rattling sound.

The people began to panic and did not know what to do. Finally, the young man who lived with his grandmother asked if he could go. The people talked and decided that he would go. Many made fun of this young man. Before he left, his grandmother gave him a little bit of food. The first day the young man prayed hard and began hearing the

thundering, rattling sound coming his way. This went on for three days, with the thundering, rattling sound coming closer every day. On the fourth day the noise came up to the young man. The young man was so frozen with fear that he prayed harder. Finally, he could see what had been making the thundering, rattling sound. It was the ghost skeleton of a great buffalo. It stood before him in the form of a ghost skeleton and the thundering, rattling sound was made by its bones rattling together. The ghost skeleton asked the young man for some food. The young man had just a little food left, but he shared it with the ghost skeleton. As the skeleton ate, the food rolled down it's bones and onto the ground. The ghost skeleton told the young man that because he did not run and for his kindness in feeding him, he would give him a gift. He told the young man to go back to his village and prepare the people for a hunt.

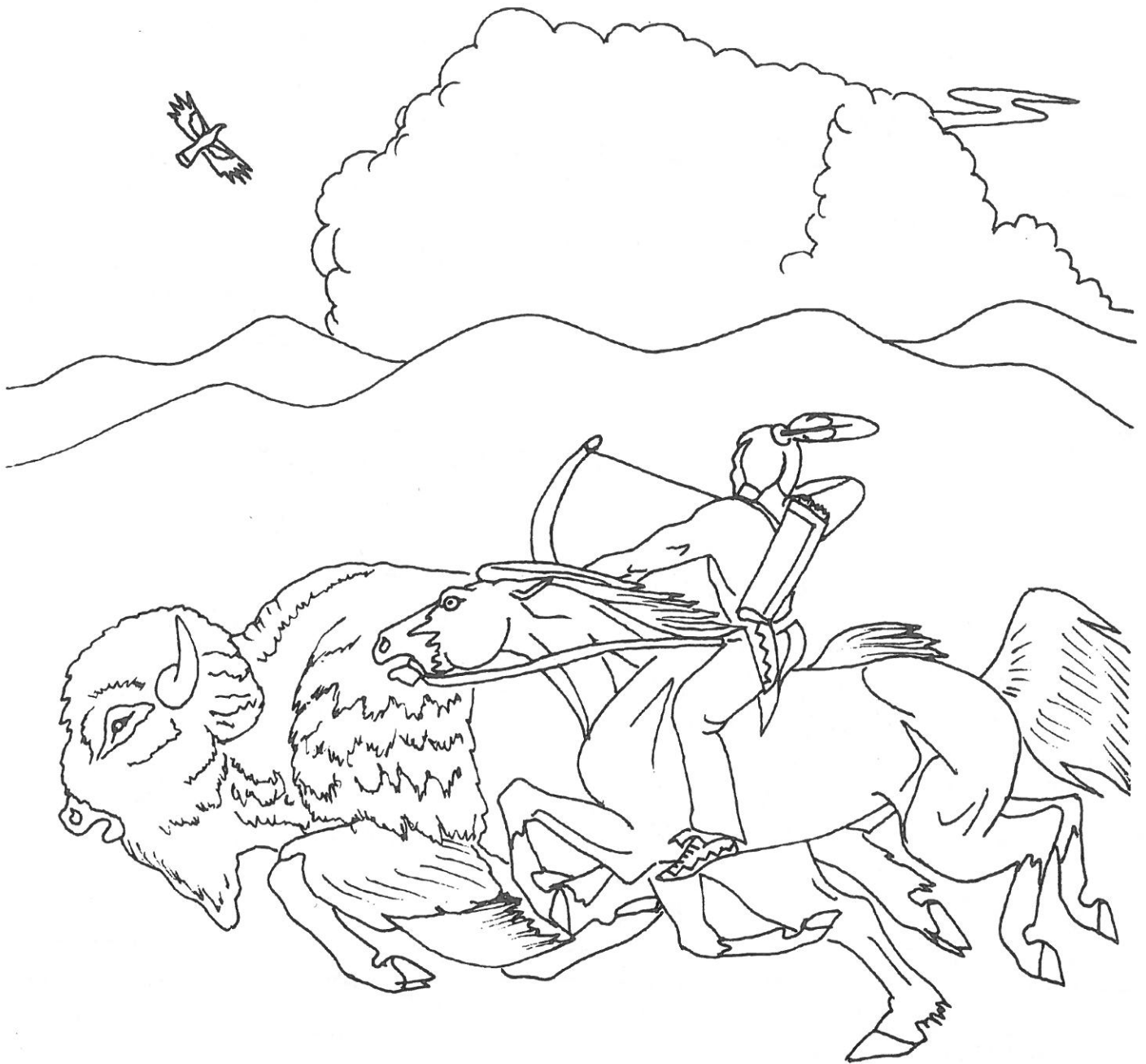
The young man returned to the village and told his people that the noise was the ghost skeleton of the great buffalo and it told him to prepare for a hunt. When everyone was ready, the young man was to sing a song the ghost skeleton had given him. The young man did as he was told and when he sang the song, out of the storm came a herd of buffalo. The people killed many buffalo, but only as many as they needed to feed the people. The people in the village were saved. Because the young man was strong, prayed, and faced his fears, his people were saved and they made him a leader of the village.





"Because of your kindness and generosity in sharing your food with me, your people will not starve!" said the Ghost Skeleton of the Great Buffalo to the young

Santee Dakota warrior. "Go to your village and tell the people to get ready to hunt. When you sing the song I have taught you, the buffalo will come."



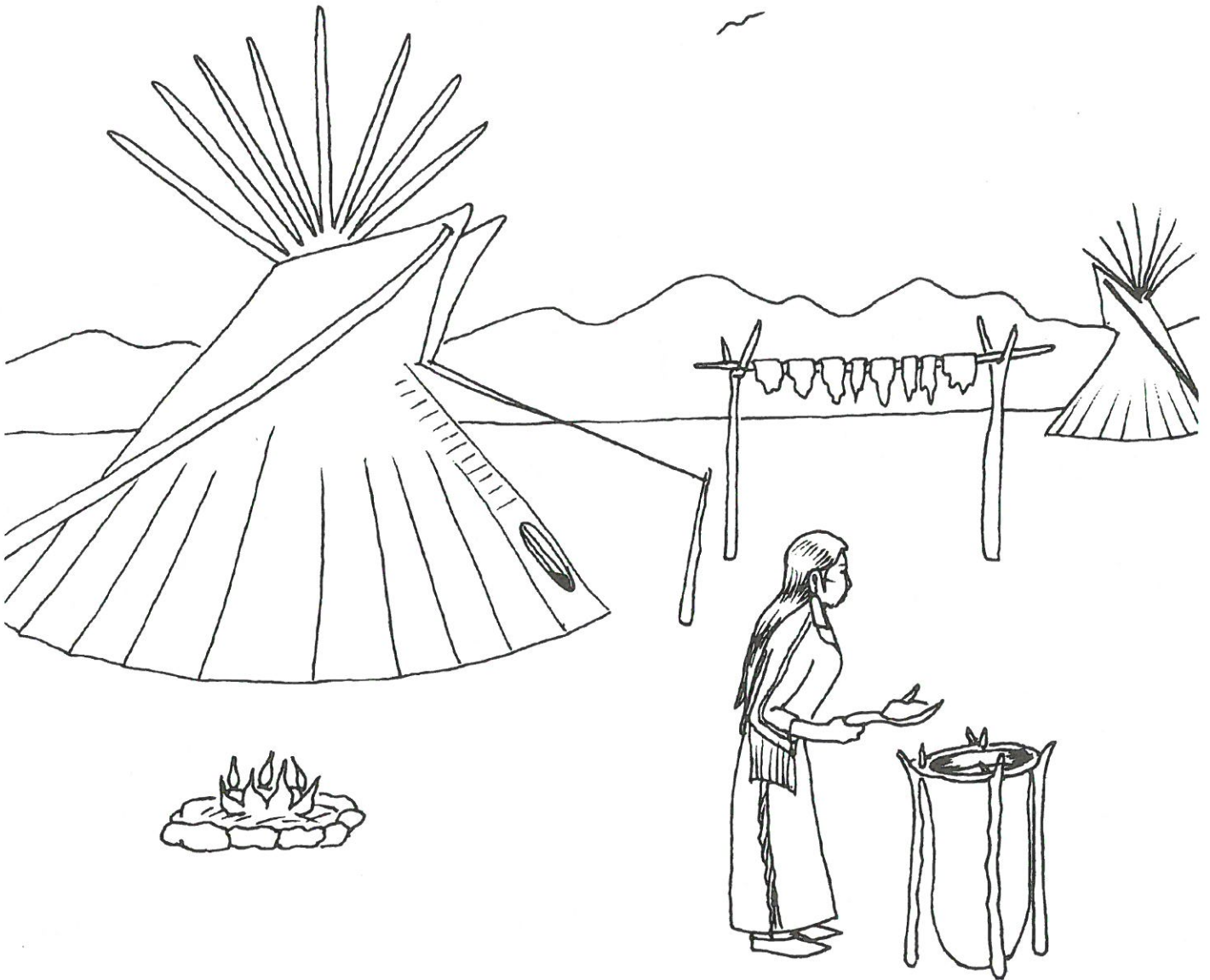
The buffalo had to be hunted and killed to get the meat, along with the hides and bones for clothing, tipi covers, and tools. Buffalo can run 35 miles per hour and the hunters used

specialty trained horses to hunt. The horse had to be very quick to escape a charging buffalo. Sometimes the buffalo were hunted after they drank water because they could not run fast.



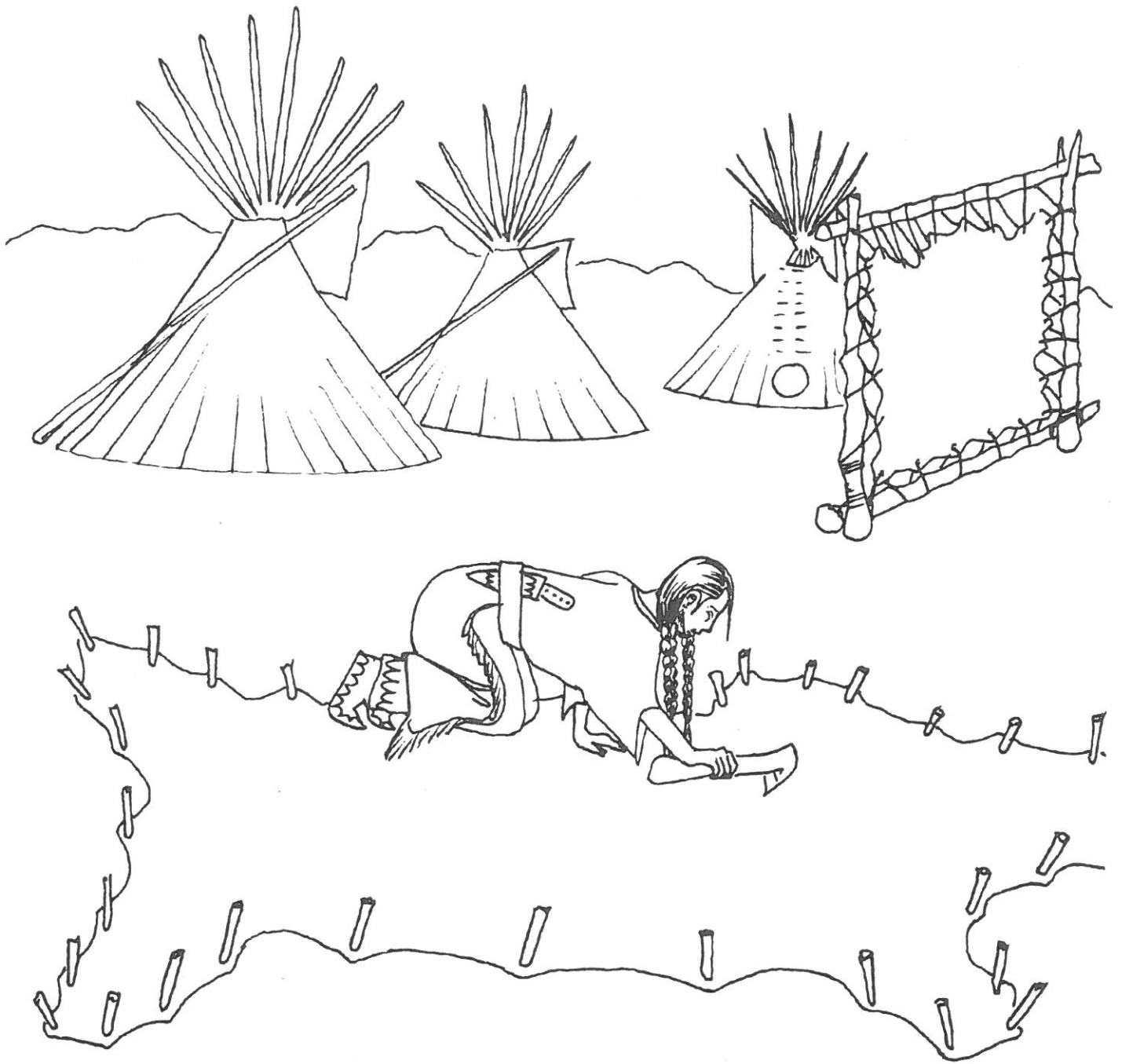
After a buffalo hunt the people gave thanks to the Buffalo Nation for their generosity. The women were in charge of preparing the buffalo meat and hides. Before the coming of the white man and

their steel knives, Indian people used sharp stones such as obsidian, a volcanic glass, to skin the buffalo and cut it up. Bones from the buffalo were also made into cutting tools.



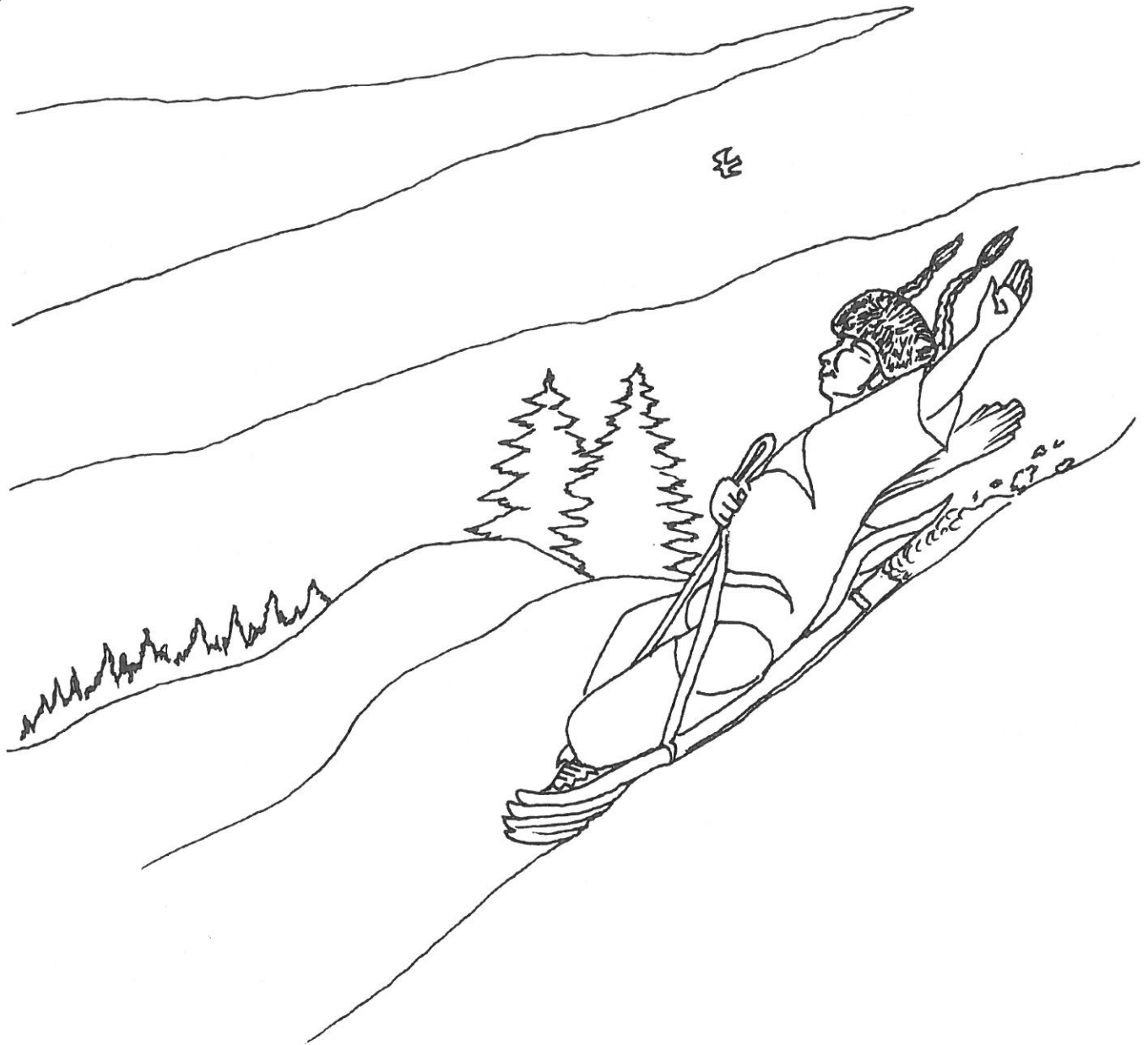
When the women finished harvesting the buffalo, a big feast was held in honor of the hunters and the Buffalo Nation. Everything of the buffalo was used; nothing was wasted. The meat was cut into

thin strips and hung on racks to dry, and saved for the winter months. The horns of the buffalo were made into ladles and cups. Even some medicines were gathered from the buffalo.



Tipi covers, robes, moccasins, and other needed items were made from softer leather. To make the soft leather from the buffalo hide, the hide was stretched out on the ground or fastened to a frame and

tanned. The hide had to be scraped and the brains and fat of the animal were worked into the hide to make it soft. Stiff raw hide was used to make drums, cases, moccasin soles, saddles, and other items.



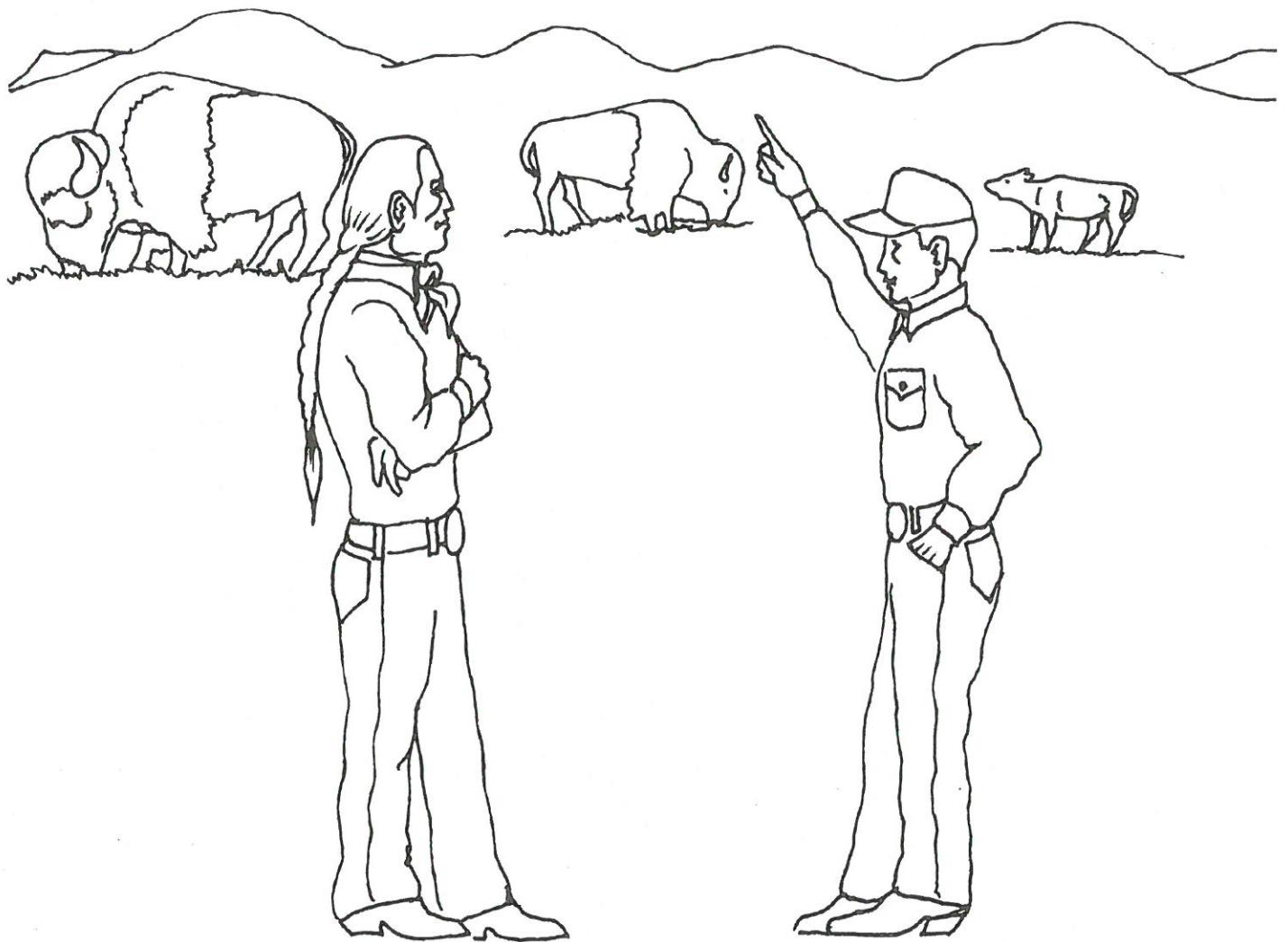
The bones of the buffalo were made into knives, cooking utensils, tools, paint brushes, and even toys. The children made miniature animals from

the foot bones of the buffalo and the rib bones were tied together to make sleds for the children to play on during the winter.



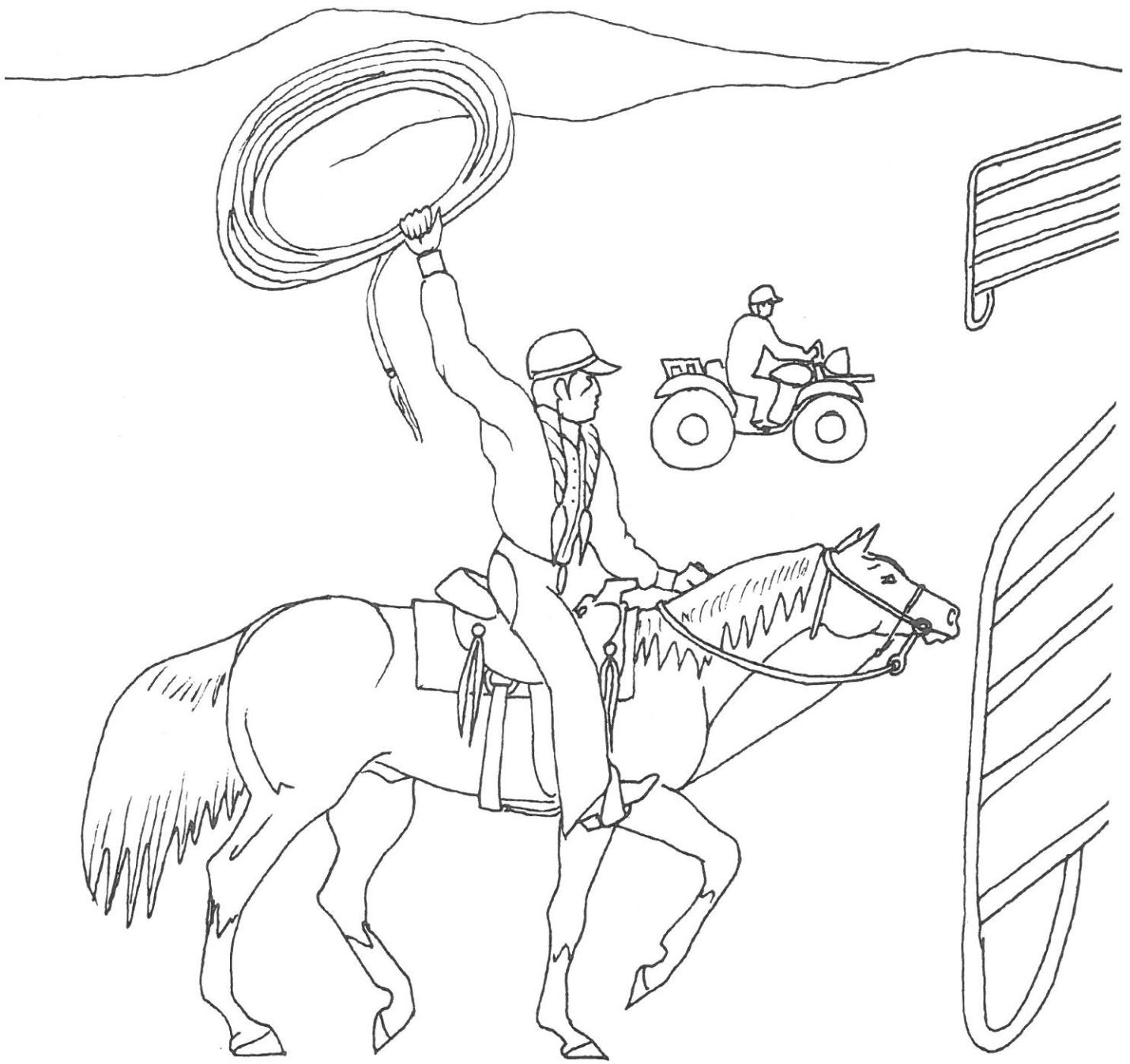
Then, with nearly all the buffalo slaughtered in the late 1800's, the Indian nations healthy lifestyle could no longer be lived and enjoyed. With the killing of the buffalo, many plants, animals, and people suffered

a great loss. The Indian people were saddened by the loss of the buffalo because their homes, their main source of food, and their source for many traditional clothing were now all gone.



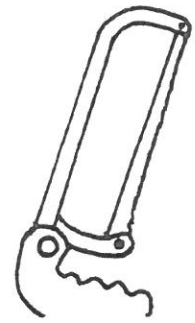
But now, with the help of the InterTribal Bison Cooperative (ITBC), a group of 40 Indian nations, or tribes, the buffalo are being returned to Indian lands. ITBC members work together to

create a healthy home for the buffalo. Members share buffalo with each other to start new herds; and share money for fencing, corrals, and other equipment needed to raise buffalo.



In the fall, many tribes who have buffalo round-up their animals to be counted and vaccinated. Today, instead of riding horses, they may use helicopters or vehicles to herd

the buffalo into corrals. Members of the ITBC are also working together to hold buffalo auctions. The sale of buffalo will help each tribe with the cost of raising its buffalo.

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