

Gordon the Goat



by MUNRO LEAF



Gordon was a goat,



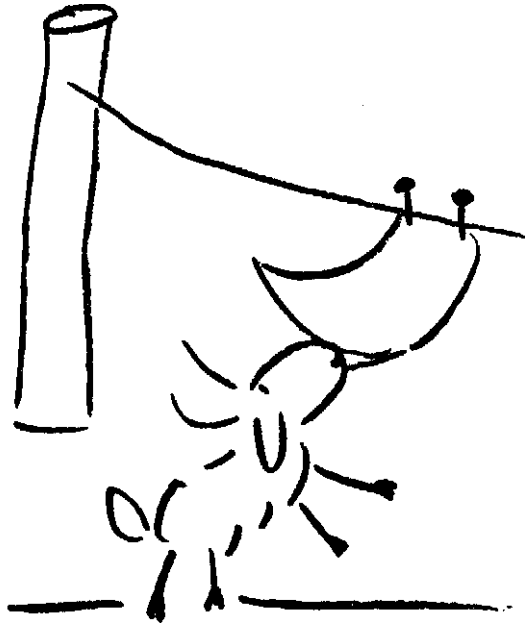
**and he lived
in Texas.**



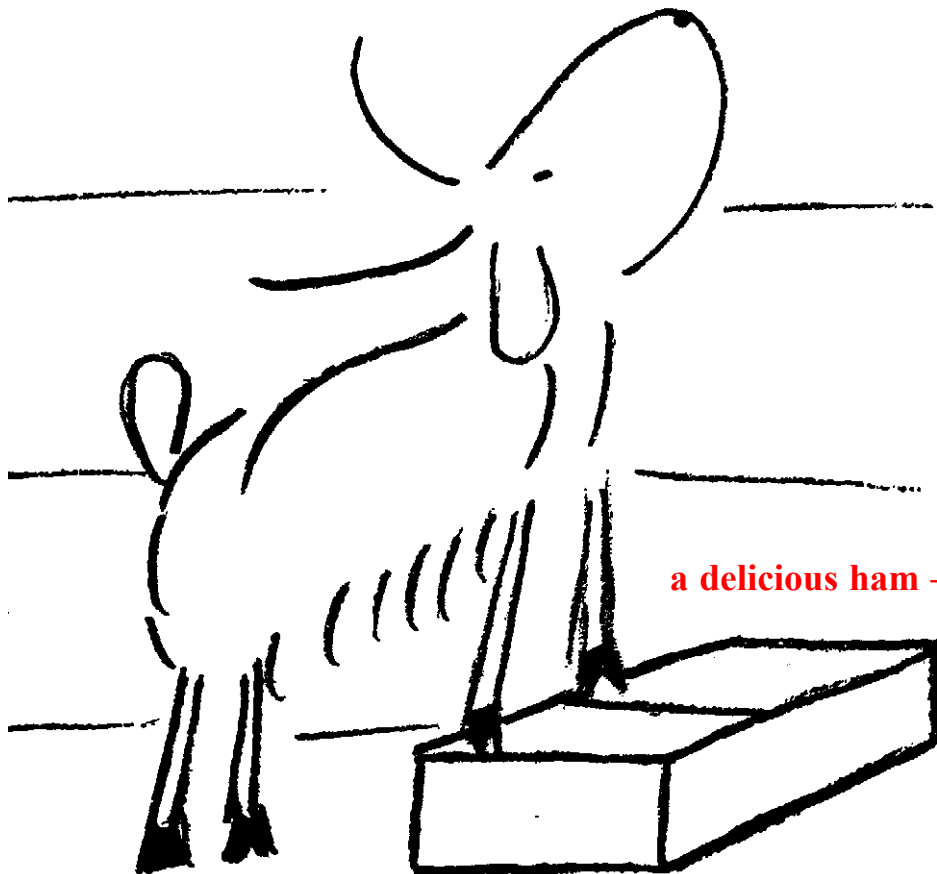
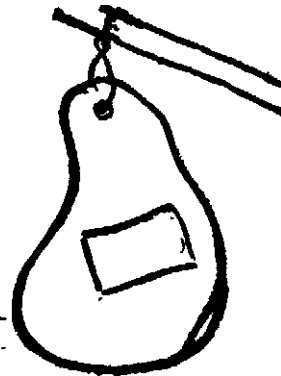
**Gordon liked to eat.
He didn't care what he ate.
He would try anything.**



**Most of the *time*
he ate leaves from the mesquite trees.**



**But he would just as soon
try a dishtowel, or**



a delicious ham — if he could get it.



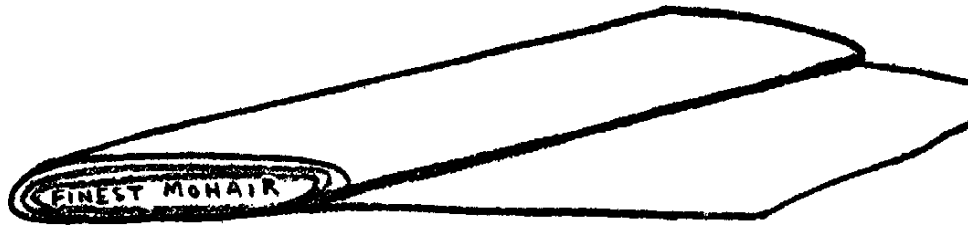
**And every now and then
Gordon would bite a cactus.
But he was sorry every time he did.**



**Gordon lived on a ranch
with a lot of other goats.
He didn't work very hard.**

**All Gordon did was to go on being Gordon
day after day. And now and then
he would get his hair cut.**

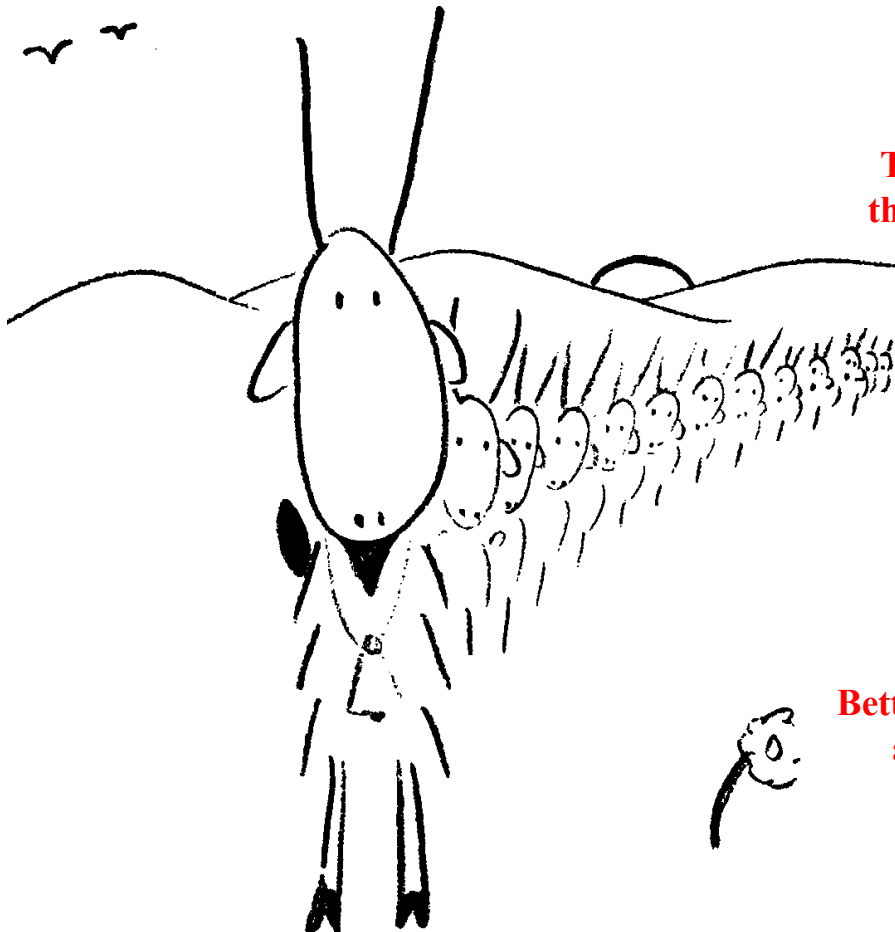




The men who cut his hair called it mohair.
They sold it to other people.
The people used the mohair to make cloth
and to stuff cushions.



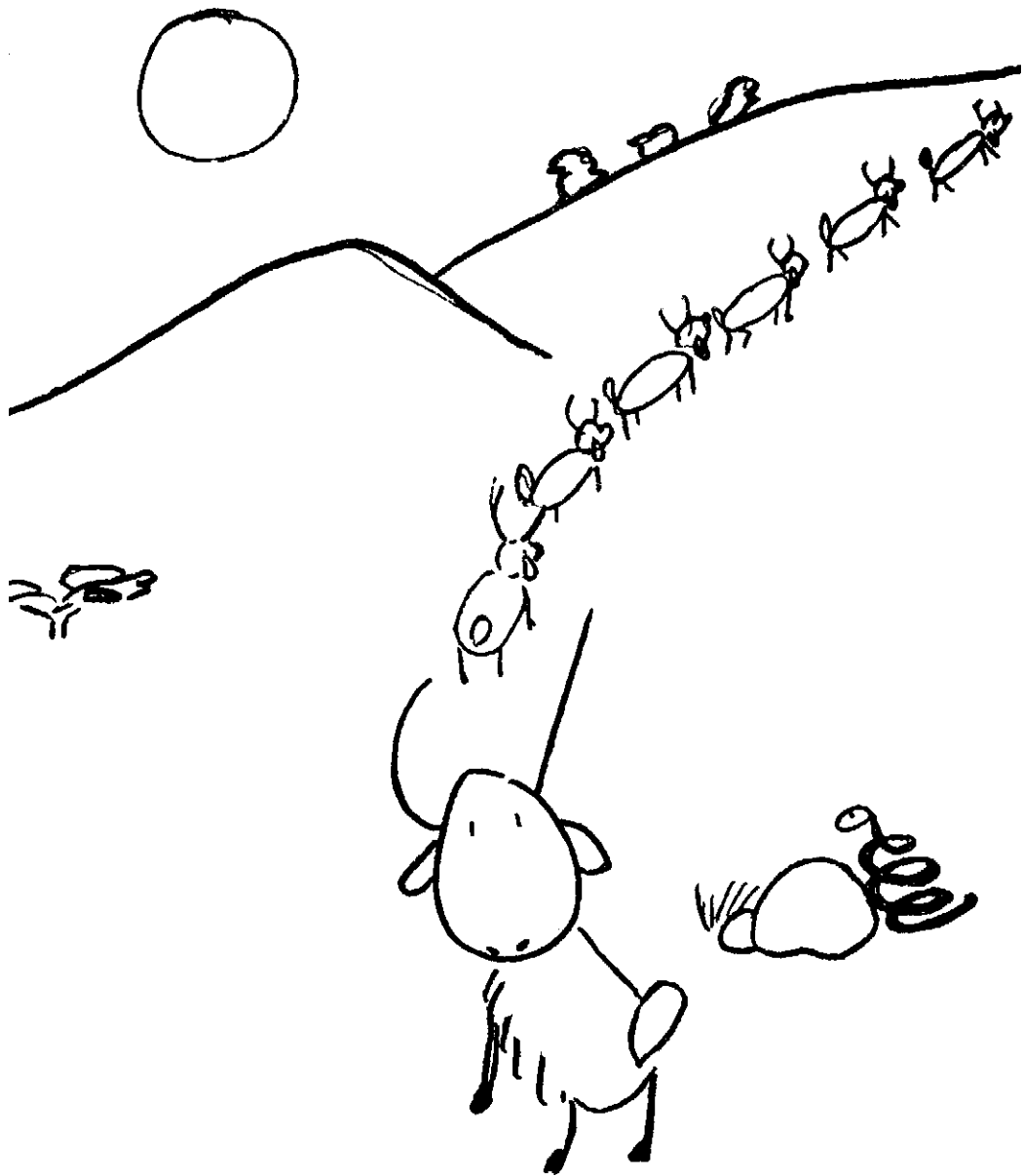
That was all right with Gordon.
He didn't care what
the men did with his hair,
just so they didn't nick him
while they were cutting it off.



Some of the goats on the ranch
were called lead goats.
They were called lead goats because
the other goats followed them around.

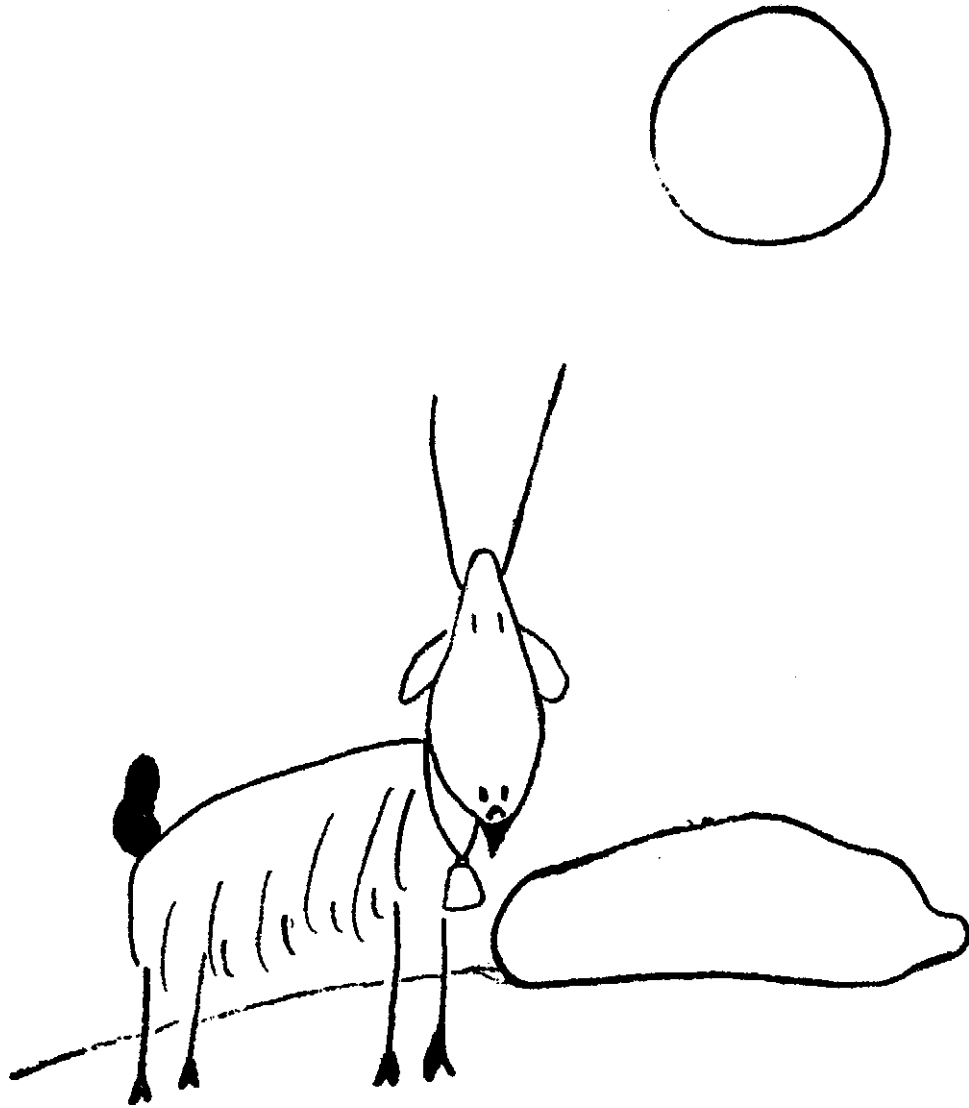
Whenever a lead goat got tired
of staying in one place,
he would go to another place.
All the other goats
would tag along behind him.

Sometimes the new place
was better than the old place.
And sometimes it was worse.
Better or worse, when the lead goat went,
all the rest of the goats went along.

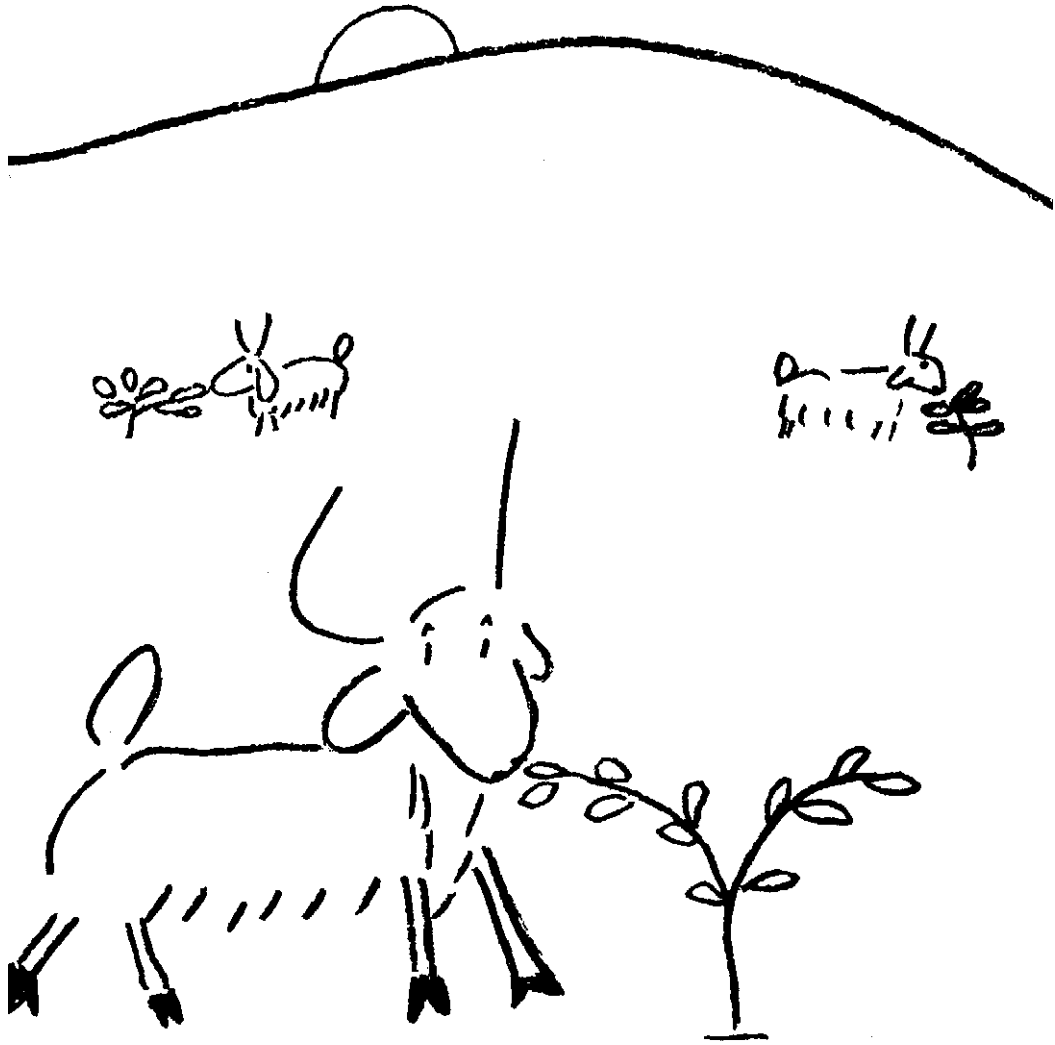


**Gordon went too. He didn't know why.
He just did
what all the rest of the goats did.
He didn't really think about it.**

**But it took Gordon so long- to get going,
all the other goats were ahead of him,
Gordon was always
at the tail end of the line.**



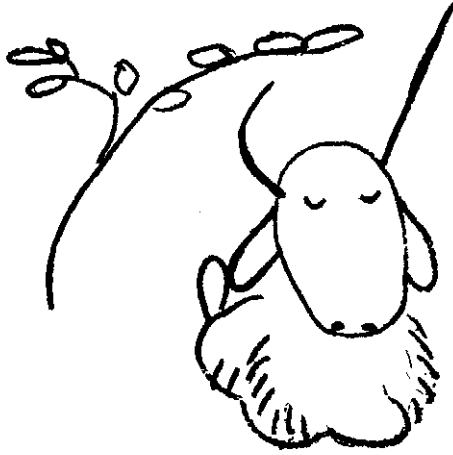
**One hot day, the lead goat got tired
of staying where he was, so he set out
to find another place.
He remembered seeing some new weeds
on the other side of a hill.
Off he went to find the new weeds.
The rest of the goats followed him —
with Gordon at the tail end of the line.**



**After a long, hot walk,
the goats found the new weeds,
Gordon ate some.**

**The weeds were not very good,
and soon Gordon did not feel very well.**

He was sorry he had come along at all.

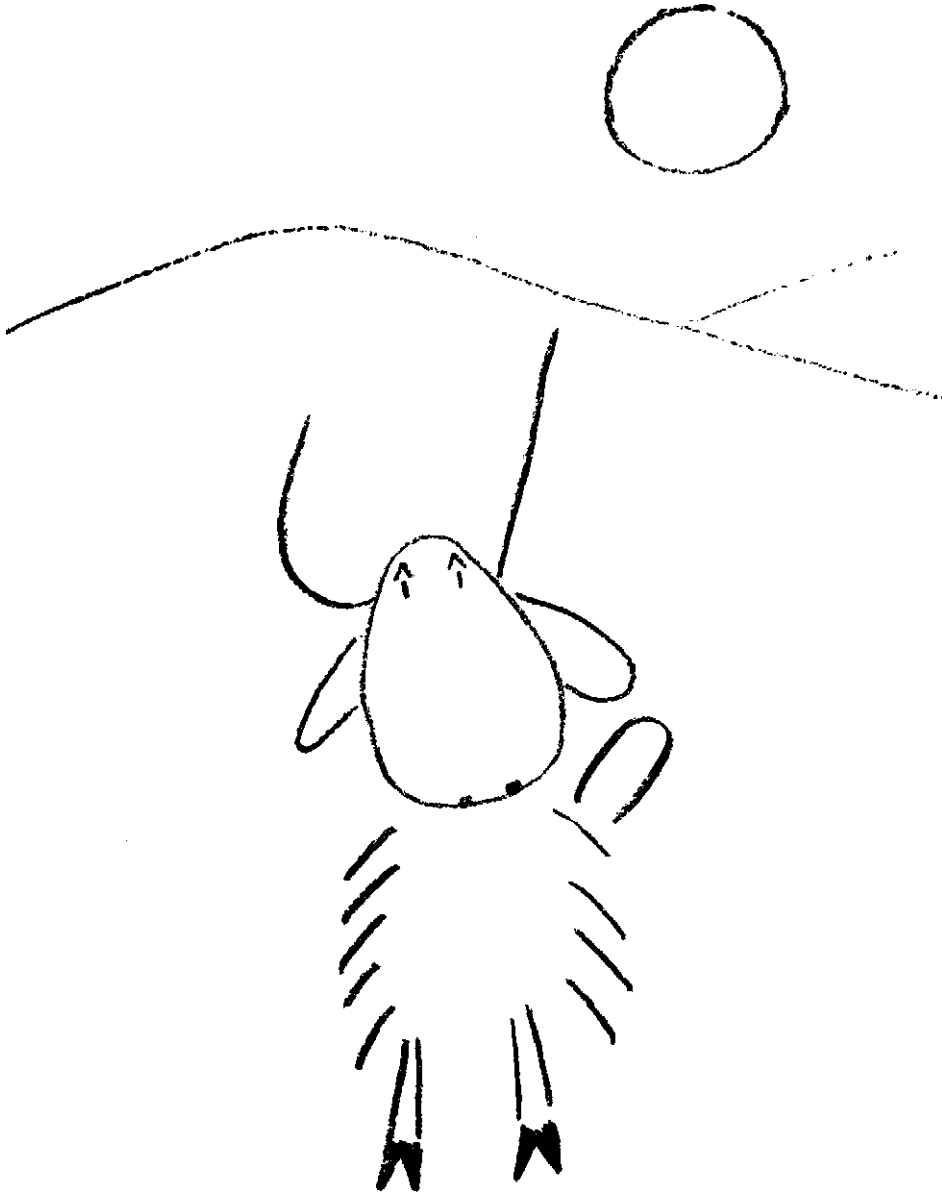


**Gordon sat down on the side of the hill.
He made up his mind to stay there
until he felt better.
But just when Gordon
was getting comfortable,
the lead goat set off for another place.**



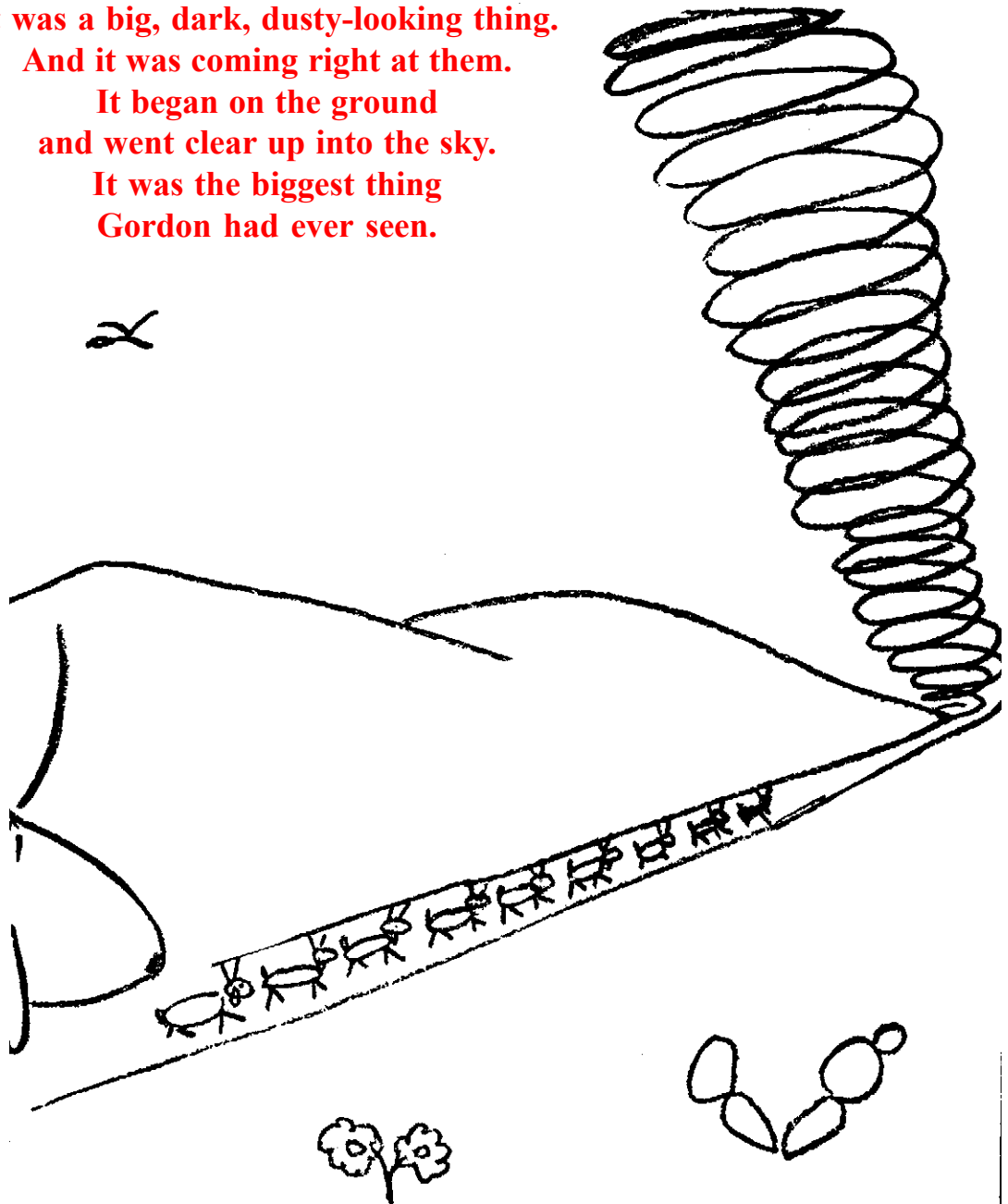
**Away he went,
and the other goats followed him.
The very last goat was Gordon,
who really didn't feel like going at all.**





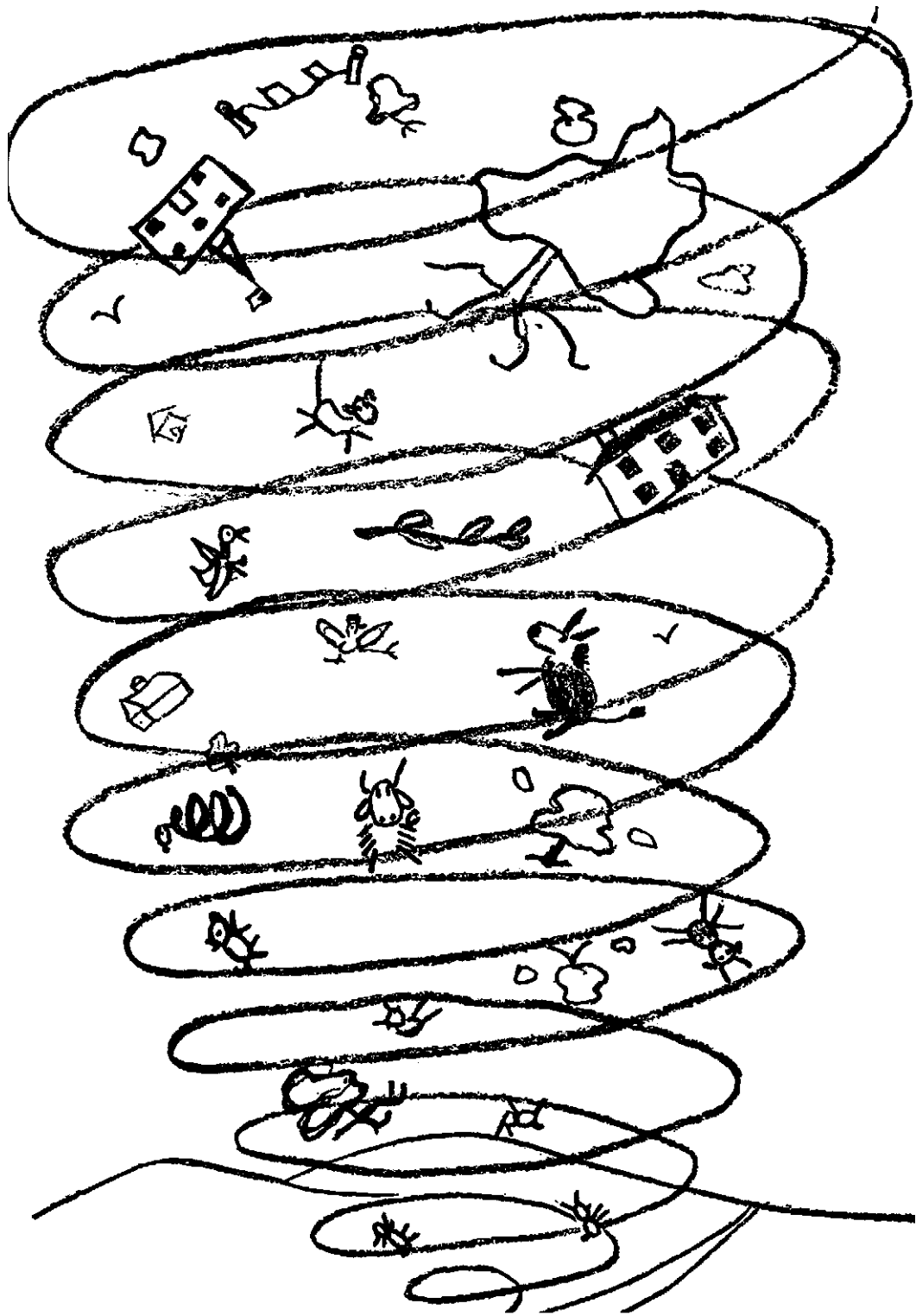
**Gordon walked and walked.
The hot sun beat down, on him.
And Gordon began to wonder —
why had he come along?
Why didn't he do some thinking for himself?
Why did he follow all the other goats,
who were following the lead goat
just because that was what they always did?
It didn't make sense to Gordon.**

All of a sudden Gordon saw something
way off ahead of all the goats.
It was a big, dark, dusty-looking thing.
And it was coming right at them.
It began on the ground
and went clear up into the sky.
It was the biggest thing
Gordon had ever seen.

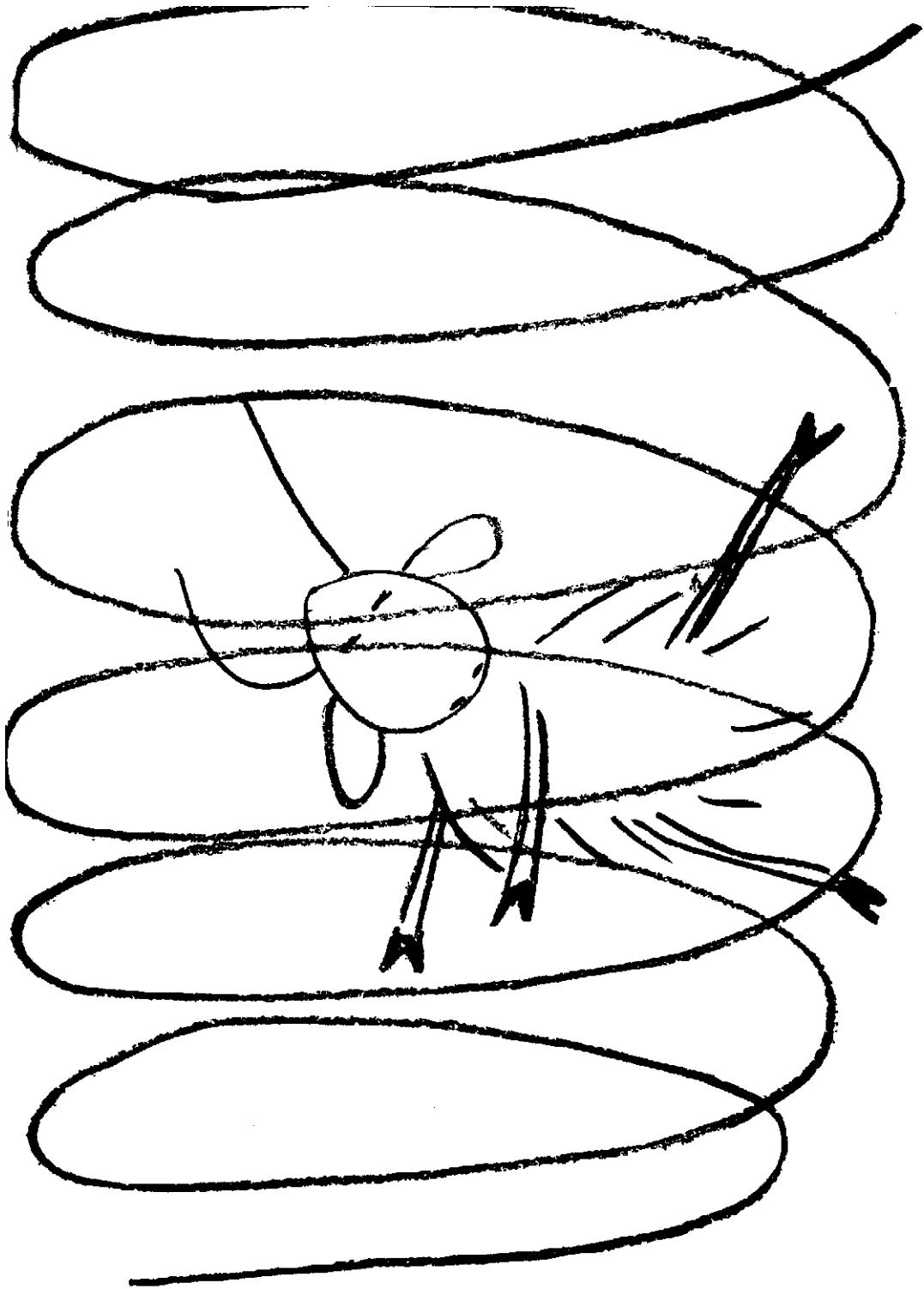


The thing was coming at them,
faster and faster.
Gordon wished that the lead goat
would turn around and go somewhere else.
But the lead goat
went on walking straight ahead.
And so the goats
went on walking straight ahead too.

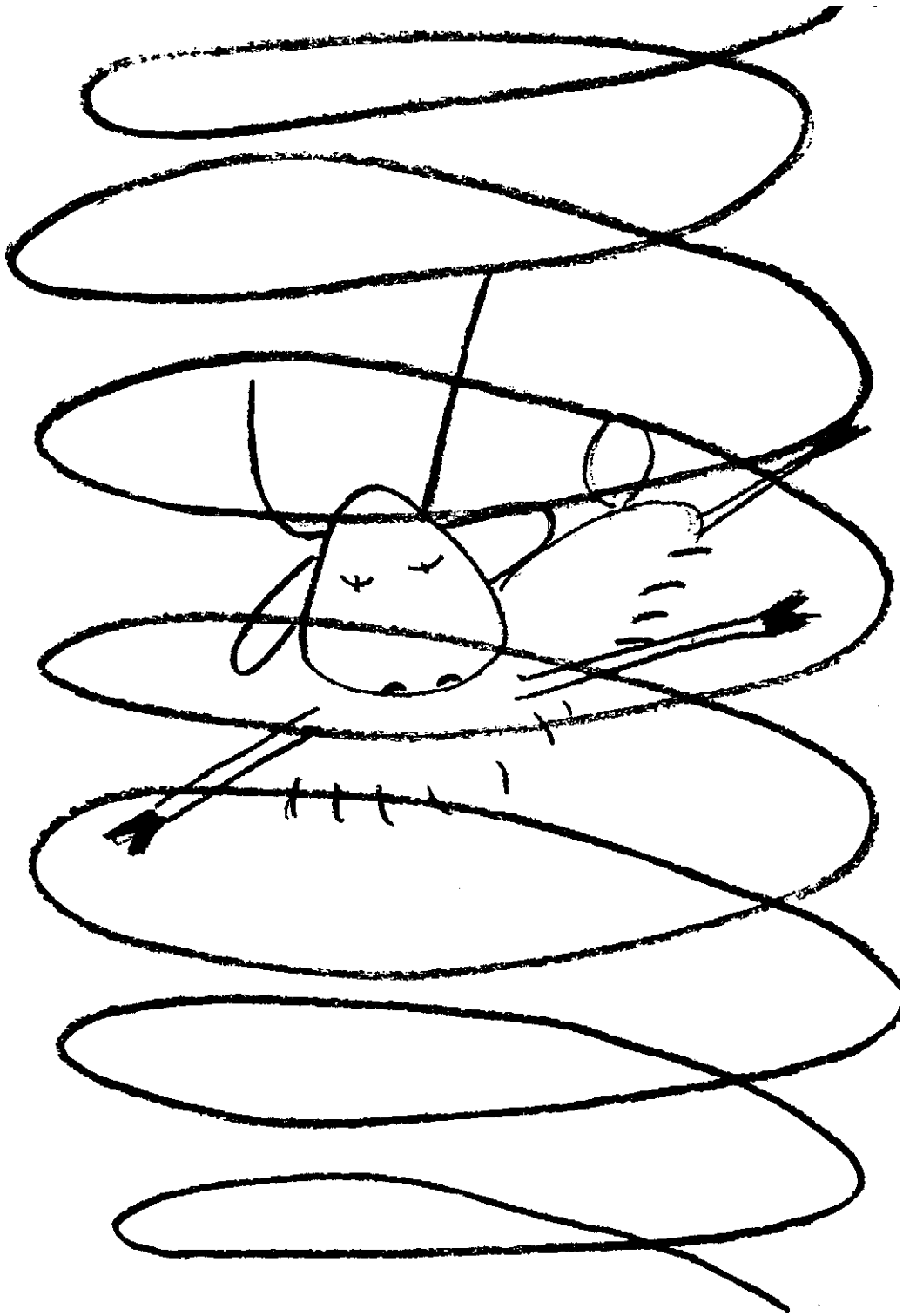
The thing came at them until
all the goats were right in the middle of it.



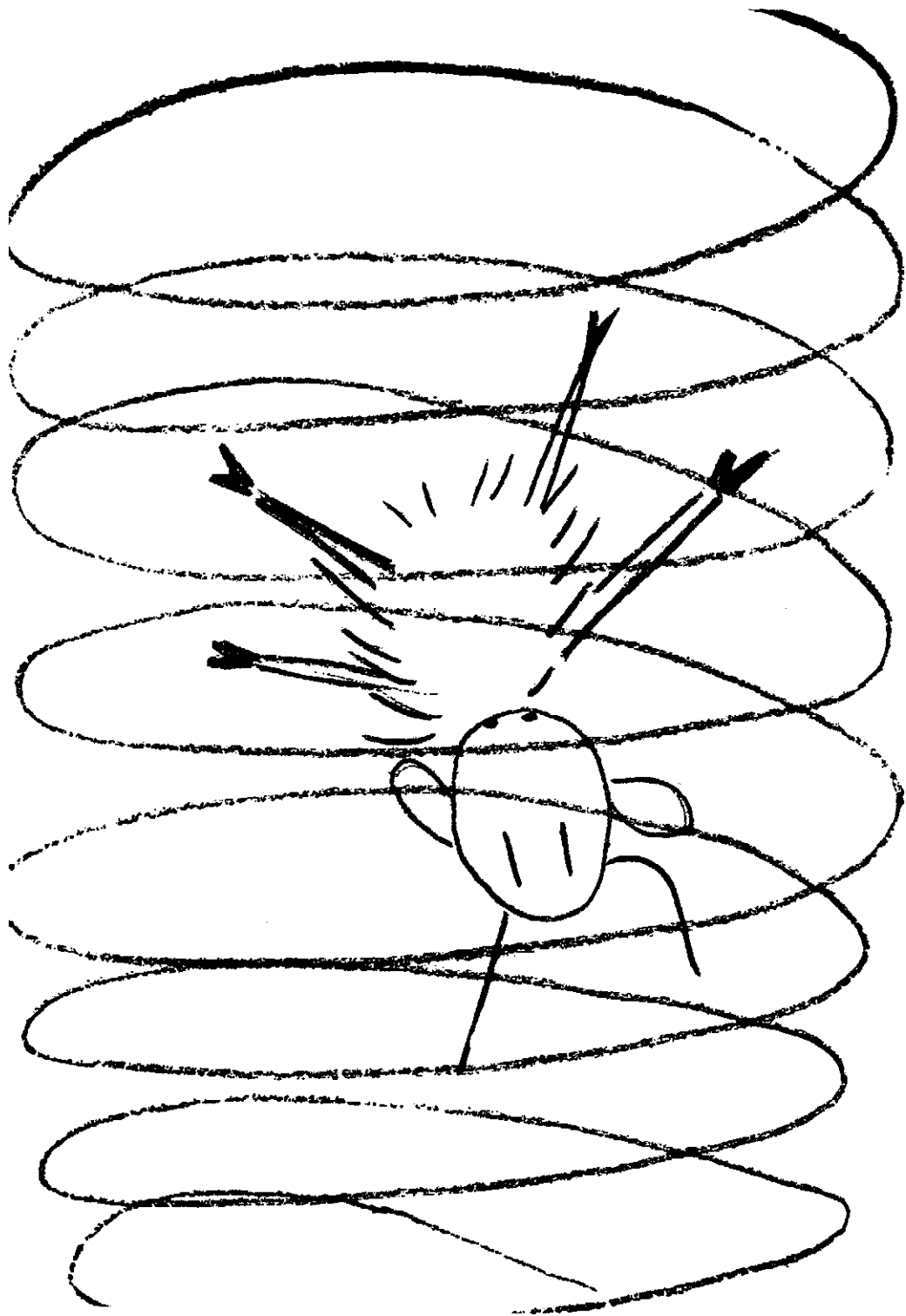
**It was a twister.
Now a twister (a tornado)
is no fun to be in,
and Gordon was scared.
Up he flew in a black cloud.
It tossed him around and around.
It tossed him upside down and downside up.**



**Now Gordon was really sorry
that he had ever
eaten those new weeds.**

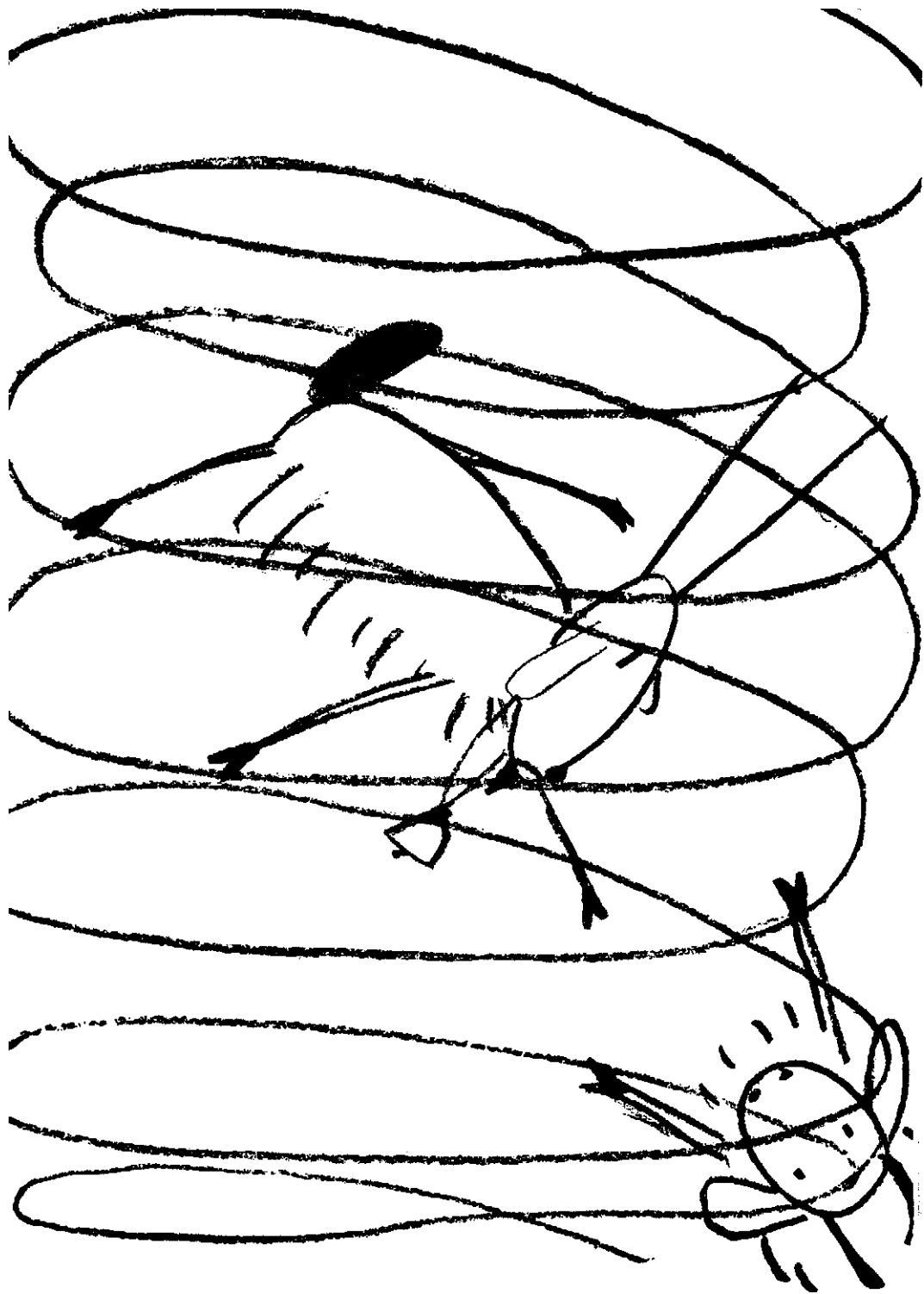


First he turned yellow,



**and then he turned green.
And then he was sick.
Gordon felt sorry for himself.
He had never felt so sorry for himself before.**

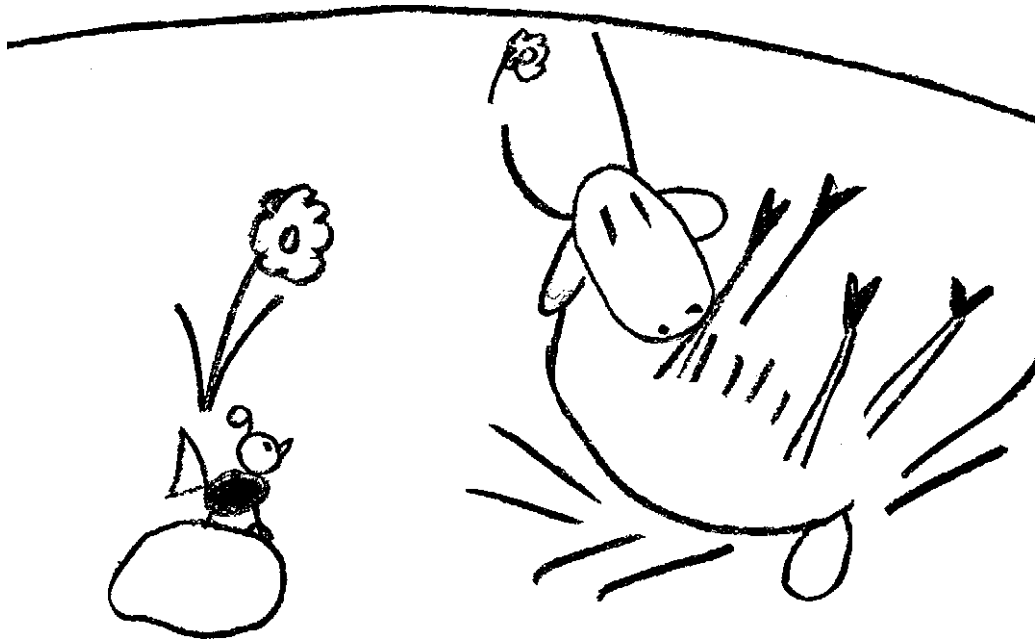
**When he thought that he just couldn't last
much longer,**



**he saw the old lead goat
go spinning past him.
The old goat went higher and higher.
He looked as if he felt worse than Gordon.**

**Just then
Gordon was blown out of the twister.
He landed with a thud in the middle of a**

**field. The field was soft enough
to keep him from breaking his bones,
but it was hard enough
to hurt a lot.**



**After a long time, Gordon got up.
He was stiff and sore.
He ached all over.
But Gordon knew something now
that he would never forget.**

**Never again would he follow along
just because everyone else did.
He was going to find out first —
where he was going,
why he was going,
and what he was going to do
when he got there.**



**Gordon does his own thinking now.
He gets along much better than before.**

End