



The Battle

They were so angry that they decided to have a battle. So terrible was their anger that they would not wait, but declared that the fight must be fought now, immediately, on this very spot. Fox blamed what he considered to be the crime on Badger. Badger in turn was all for placing the blame on Cougar.

Jackrabbit hopped in agitation, calling for Mole and for Mouse, and for Deer and Bear to fetch their sharpest arrows and their heaviest warclubs.

By the time Coyote arrived the sides had already been chosen, the battle lines formed, and the smell of hate and future bloodshed permeated the very air.

He, Coyote, listened to all the threats and promises of broken bodies to be. He walked out and stood between the enemies, declaring very solemnly, and in a very soft voice:

"No, I cannot allow this great fight to happen just yet. There has been no battle-preparation dance. There has been no pipe of cleansing. No, the Creation does not wish this battle to take place just yet."

And some say it was Bear, but strangely, no one actually remembers just who it was. Bear denied the accusation, but someone ran from one of the lines and struck Coyote dead!

And Coyote fell and indeed lay there, very dead. And the cry for immediate battle was resumed, and the menacing cries for blood again filled the air,

when, from the opposite end of the battle lines, Coyote again stepped out, dancing and brandishing a huge club.

He ran to his dead self and struck a tremendous blow upon the body, then turned to face the creatures, shouting: "Who killed this person? Who struck him down before I did? Was that person purified? Did he sweat himself and think of the children? Did he dance to assure that the life cycle continue?"

"Enough talking!" someone shouted and ran to Coyote and struck him dead.

And again, much later, no one remembered who or what struck the blow which killed Coyote for the second time.

Then from the left hand side of center, Coyote ran out swinging a great club and struck at his fallen selves until all that remained were two masses of fur and blood and broken bones and twisted sinew.

Then Coyote danced the dance of victory over his own fallen selves, pledging their death to his own great anger. Oh, he danced, he really danced.

"Now, then," said Porcupine, "how is it that this one who dances the victory in battle dance, when it was not himself who killed himself? Is it within reason for him to claim this doubtful victory?"

"If I did not kill these two, then who did kill them?" demanded Coyote. "Let him step forward to claim these deaths, that I may kill him too in revenge."

When no one stepped forward, Coyote declared, motioning to his dead selves, "Then obviously, these hills are mine!"

"It seems to me," began Elk, who was interrupted by Skunk, who also began, "It's quite obvious to me that..." "Now hold on a moment," said Badger. And Coyote wheeled on Badger, shouting, "Hah! Don't you know that you can't hold onto a moment, let alone a minute?"

And so they argued, all the animal creatures, about the finer points of who might or might not claim a kill.

And the women of these great warriors, at the urging of Coyote, prepared a great feast, so that these mighty warrior-debators might continue on full stomachs.

And soon, the recent anger was set aside for the more important battle of words leading to reason.

And by this time, everyone having forgotten all about Coyote,

be, Coyote, took his fallen selves by their tails and dragged them away uphill.

Then he took a good hot sweat bath and then sang a song of renewal known only to himself, and soon his other selves revived. "Now," said one of them, "that's what I'd call making your point the hard way. You know, it really hurt when you killed me."

"Yes," said the other self, standing up and stretching, "the next time this happens, don't forget it'll be your turn to be killed."

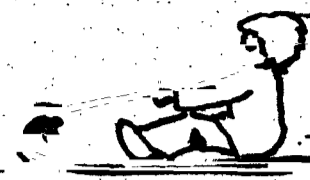
"Hey, maybe this won't ever happen again, huh?"

"Oh, it will happen again," Coyote said, "Yes it always seems to happen again."

Then he merged into himself and walked away, far away.

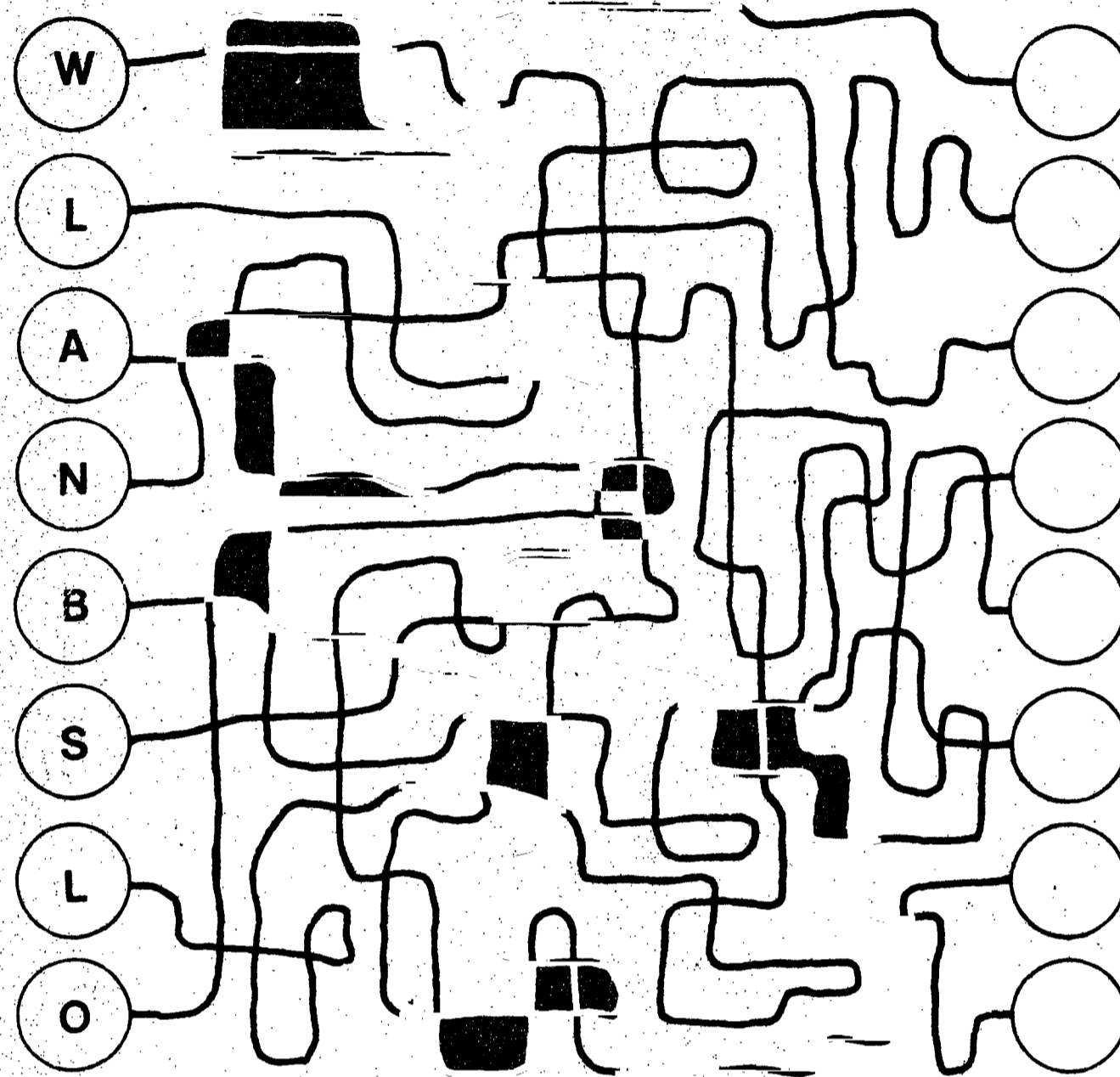
(From: Elderberry Flute Song; Contemporary Coyote Stories by Aronatacunrate Peter Blue Cloud. Available at Akwesasne Notes/Indian Time office at Racquette Point.)

Puzzling Paths



Follow the paths to lead each letter to a circle.

Then write the letter in that circle.



Why Two-Leggeds Wear Shoes

"Grandfather," asked Coyote Boy, "why is it that two-leggeds wear shoes?"

Coyote Old Man was sipping from a tiny basket of acorn mush. He eyed his grandson a moment, then said, "It's so they can rush

here and there and back and forth without ever leaving their chairs, and it's so they don't forget to stumble whenever they're climbing stairs.

It just might also be because of little people's open doors which are very close to the ground so it's easier for them to do chores,

such as gathering fallen pollen or watching the playful does, and a shoe fits over a doorway so you're not assaulted by toes.

In another version of this story composed with charcoal and sticks, the simple, practical answer was to avoid the biting of ticks!

Which, as you know, like a hairy bide, especially the soles of feet, so shoes are a sort of armor and also keep in the heat.

And feet that are warm are happy, so they don't like to go outside, and they send this message up to brains which are also snuggled inside

a gourd of bone, a shell so thick that few sounds penetrate, and those that do go in circles and never even hesitate

to create a thought from their tail which also happens to be their head, 'cause circles have no beginning or end and are like a ball of thread which

is a never-ending thread of thought. For you see, the two-leggeds are mostly confused, almost all the time, just like me a short time back when I lost the thread of this rhyme.

In actual fact the real reason of why they keep their feet in boxes, is because they don't want us to know that they're wearing dirty socks.

coyote 2



Desert

Do you wonder why we have deserts? Long ago when the trees were tall and thick and the lakes and rivers were blue, so blue you could see to the bottom of the river. But one thing was missing: **Animals**.

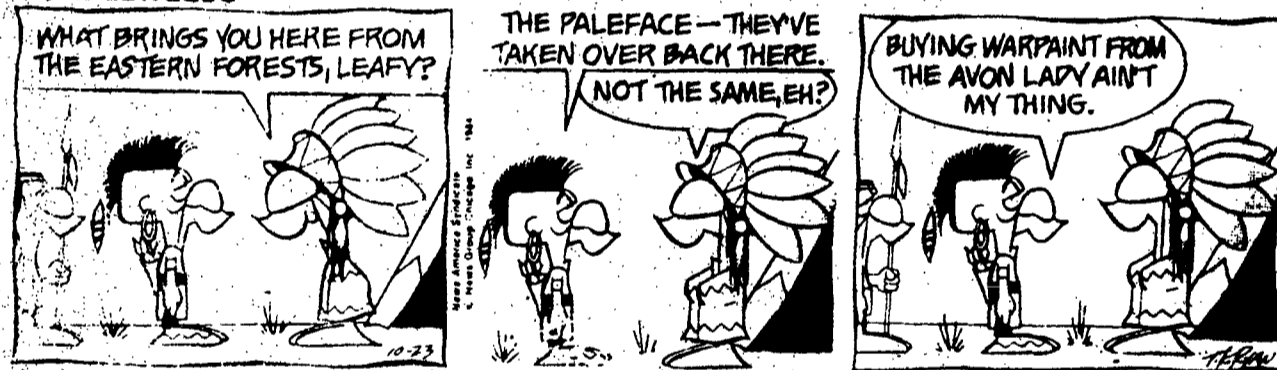
There was a village of proud people, so proud they were "stuck-up." They were the "Keepers of the Forest."

One day the Creator asked the people if they could drive animals in the forest to make it complete. The people instantly said "No, this is our forest, our home, who wish to stay here." The Creator in his anger said, "You have no room in your forest to keep animals to make it complete, so I will make a fireball to destroy your forest, but I won't if you let them go." They thought about it. They said to themselves, "he can't burn this forest, he won't, it's too beautiful to burn." "It is not possible, rubbish," said the people. So they decided to answer "No." The Creator with the anger of hearing this said "When you sleep tonight your forest will be burned."

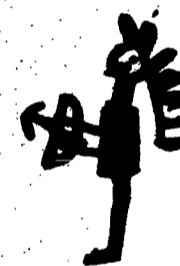
The next morning they awoke, nothing but sand and a few cactuses remained. Their beautiful lake, their trees, all were not to be seen anymore. They stepped for the foolishness of not sharing their beautiful forest.

That is why there are deserts today.

TUMBLEWEEDS



Draw A Picture for the back page of I. T. in black ink for all to share of your favorite winter sport or play and send it to the Indian Time Office. It can be any size, but no larger than 7 1/2" X 10".



by Drew Bero

Dot to Dot

