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ABSTRACT

The approach of parody writing dates back to ancient Greece. Unlike traditional parody that usually develops satire of an author's work, a form of primary parody writing can be used in the classroom to help children develop connections with text as they express their own ideas. Parody writing is useful with children in grade 3 and has potential with other primary grades. Parody writing builds on the rhythm and rhyming pattern established in text often leading to a humorous result. Children create their own meaningful stories against the backdrop of who, what, when, where, and why to organize their story lines. Children learn to develop parody stories by listening to other stories with pattern, examining the content of picture books, brainstorming and webbing ideas as a total class, and then webbing ideas individually, developing a draft of a story using a theme in a patterned story, peer editing and sharing, and, finally, publishing a story book for everyone to read and enjoy. (An example of an illustrated parody story created by a third grader is included. (Author/CR)

USING LITERATURE AS A VEHICLE FOR WRITING

by TERRENCE V. STANGE and SUSAN L. WYANT

IRA 1996

Abstract

The approach of parody writing dates back to ancient Greece. Parody writing is useful with children in grade 3 and has potential with other primary grades. Parody writing builds on the rhthym and rhyming pattern established in text often leading to a humorous result. Children create their own meaningful story against the backdrop of who, what, when, where and why to organize their story lines. Children learn to develop parody stories by listening to stories with pattern, examining the content of picture books, brainstorming and webbing ideas as a total class and then, webbing ideas individually, developing a draft of a story using a theme in a patterned story, peer editing and sharing, and finally, publishing a story book for everyone to read and enjoy. An example of a parody story created by a third grade child is displayed.

"Using Literature As A Vehicle For Writing"

Sometimes it is necessary to reconsider an established approach in exploring literature, before a new method or perspective can emerge. The rediscovery of parody, a very sophisticated form of using and analyzing literature dating back to the ancient days of Greece (Stott 1990), has opened windows of writing opportunity and learning in the primary classroom. Parody writing models an author's perspective and style while connecting children to vocabulary rich in meaning and rhyme. Students imitate literature and express their thoughts, feelings, and creativity as their own versions of the work unfold. While not frequently used in the primary classroom, parody allows children to become active meaning makers (Wells 1986), constructing new interpretations of literature based on their own knowledge and experience.

Unlike traditional parody that usually develops satire of author's a work (Stott), in the primary parody writing described herein, children enjoy and build on the pattern provided in text and become more confident in their own ideas and writings. Primary parody and writing becomes real, not artificial. Students develop meaningful connections with text as they express their own human experiences. Children utilize elements like who, what, when, where, why, and how in creating their stories. While children are logically influenced by their culture, socio-economics, and traveling opportunities, children with few experiences outside their home or community are not limited when creating parody writing stories. They fuel their stories and experience success with what is real for them. Parody writing encourages all students to use higher ordered thinking skills as they form and reform their writings.

Parody writing accommodates students at all ability levels, improves reading and writing and stresses social interaction and communication between children. As children share with one another, in the writing process,

the emphasis is on the common experience rather than differences in ability. They are eager to express their thoughts and feelings and share newly discovered ideas. In doing so, they act as authors and invent their own story. Their creative responses become more like an enjoyable trip to a new place. As such, children learn from each other's interpretations and experiences. Bonds form between young authors as they explore story variations. It appears that a special sensitivity develops between children reducing the risk of sharing stories. They support and attend to each other as they share in the writing process. Children learn that parody writing is not a careless or casual process (Stott) but one that involves planning, monitoring, revising, rereading and relating known information to writing and inventing new ideas (Tierney & Pearson, 1983). Parody writing follows a number of steps as meaningful stories are developed.

Reading texts with rhyming and lyrical quality to children is the first step in teaching parody writing to young authors. Listening to text and whole-group brainstorming techniques, like webbings, stimulate recall of vocabulary and language patterns. Webbing, as schematic representation of concepts and relationships (Pappas, Kiefer, Levstik, 1990), encourages classroom discussion and provides connections to an author's style. Word family lists emerge and children clap syllables to identify patterns in poetry. Opportunities to discuss new vocabulary often emerges during the webbing process. Webbing is a necessary step in parody writing. It allows students to gain skills in perspective-taking, before they begin to write.

After brainstorming, children proceed to rough drafts and peer editing. Peer collaboration is particularly important in broadening learning possibilities. Children develop writing expertise while examining the content and grammar of their own work and others. Peer collaboration allows students

to adjust their written language without being graded or criticized. Once the drafting process is complete, illustrations extend the parody process. As stories unfold, the pictures support each child's concept of final text. This concept is particularly apparent in the picture book format created by a primary grade child. (See Cody's book.)

Sharing stories after writing invites the development of new versions of a familiar tale. After children read their work to the class, they often create a story extention. Some children choose special costumes to set the mood for their story. Others draw murals, make dioramas, or bring in artifacts to represent the story. Sometimes they write to the authors they have parodied. As children adopt their own tales as their favorites, they also share their stories with students of other grades or present their books as part of a book fair, common to the school experience. Children celebrate their parody story accomplishments in the culture of the classroom.

It is important to note that parody is not a product oriented activity. Every child's work is unique, expressing individual prior knowledge. Children develop self-confidence for the parody process as they accept familiar ideas and build upon them. For example, after reading Three Days on a River in a Red Canoe, by Vera Williams, a third grade class wrote about their own experiences on a trip. Children who had not spent three days on a vacation tailored their books to "one day" adventures. Every story was inspired by the "gifts" they had to contribute, yet, Vera William's style was clearly visible in their work.

Parody writing is supported through multiple listening and readings of repetitive, predictable and poetic text by a popular author. For example, Chicken soup With Rice by Maurice Sendak is a book a teacher can use throughout the school year. Children begin the school year with a poetry story for September. They become accustomed to the story by reciting and enjoying

the text pattern. Each month they learn a new poem. After several months have passed, students predict through writing what they think Maurice Sendak will write for the month. After repeating this activity for each month of the year, one can observe student developmental changes in their writing. Students display changes in linguistic organization. Children often use language patterns similar to Sendak's. Children also often borrow elements from other stories that the children have been reading. Some student writings change slightly over time, indicating individuality in learning styles. However, what they all have in common is an awareness of Sendak's text structure.

Teachers gain insight into childrens' language exposure and ability through parody writing. Teachers can study composition characteristics like semantics, syntax, spelling, language awareness, and how children think in personal text. A child's perspective of books and writing is helpful in devising plans for instruction. Parody may broaden teachers' understanding of childrens' cognitive developments as they respond to literature through the power of their own language. Teachers may make adjustments in lesson planning and provide mini-lessons based on the parodies created.

Parody writing helps children develop ideas and affections as readers and writers and encourages uniqueness as learners. Affective responses are valued and encouraged through this technique. Children learn to write connecting their feelings and emotions to their words and pictures. In parody writing, children share individual values, writing goals and story language with their peers. Each of the children we teach is one of a kind in the parody writing process.

To briefly review the parody writing procedure, there are seven basic steps of employing literature parody writing in a primary classroom.

One, select a patterned text with rhyme, rhythm or repetition to

stimulate interest and acquaint learners with pattern concepts.

Two, read aloud the patterned text to the children. Later, invite children to read aloud with you. Other variations of reading aloud include partner reading, and alternate reading in which the teacher reads a line, then the children read a line and so on. The alternate reading can be extended to larger blocks of text such as a paragraph, a number of paragraphs or even a whole page. Children can also echo-read with the teacher reading a sentence then children reading the same sentence in a repetitive and echo pattern. Children may also volunteer to read and lead the reading.

Three, the teacher explores text, language, pictures and ideas with children. Guide the children to make discoveries about the text.

Four, students begin to write. Using a familiar pattern text like Sendak's poem, children brainstorm and web ideas of what Sendak's poem might include. Children develop a whole group web with the teacher guiding and completing the process with the class. As children develop other parodies they create a story web for each month of the year.

Five, children compose rough drafts of their stories. The children engage in peer editing in cooperative groups. They often use their personal word dictionaries to make corrections or they ask for help from peers or the teacher.

Six, children publish the text on colored lined paper. Later, parodies are mounted and illustrated on manila paper.

Seven, the children share their publications with classmates and other children and teachers in the building. Parents, too, like to participate in the parody process by hearing stories created by their children.

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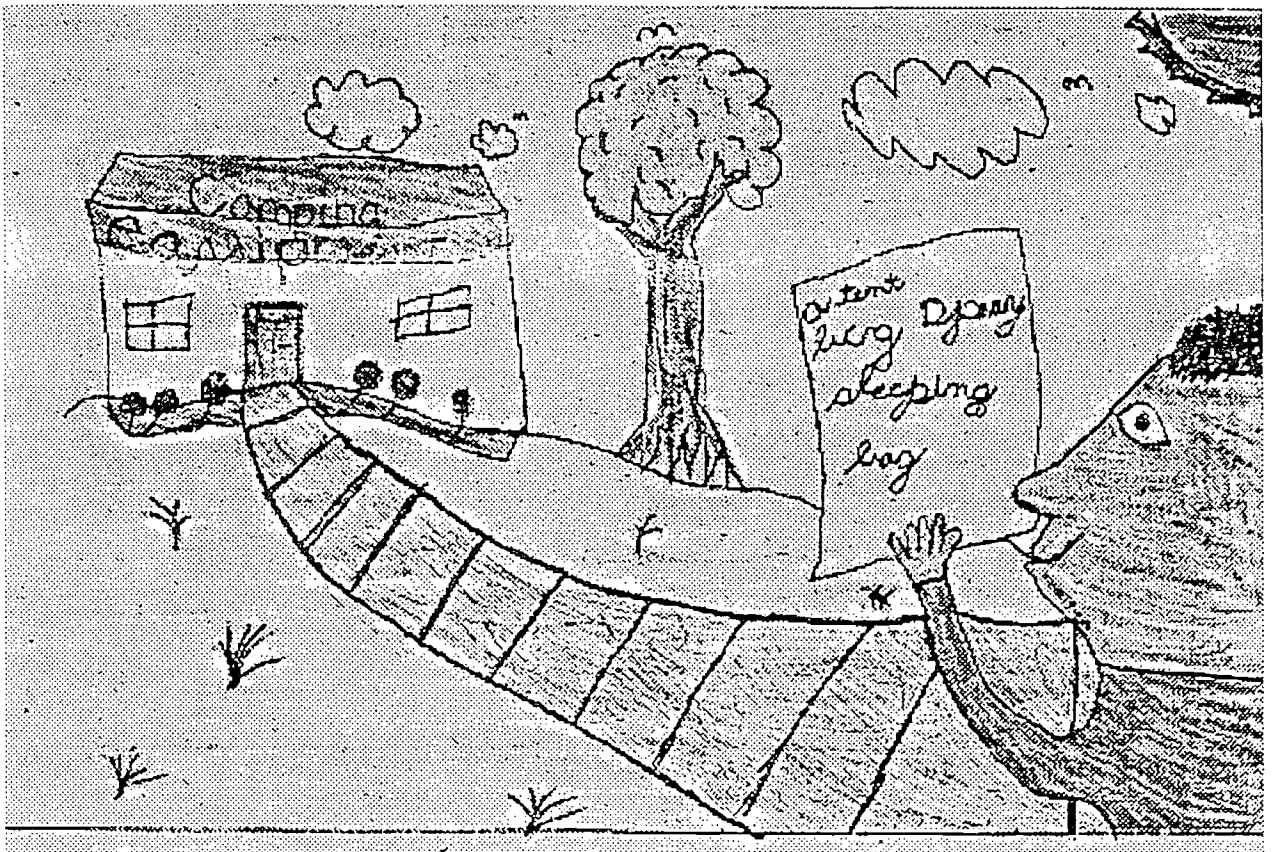
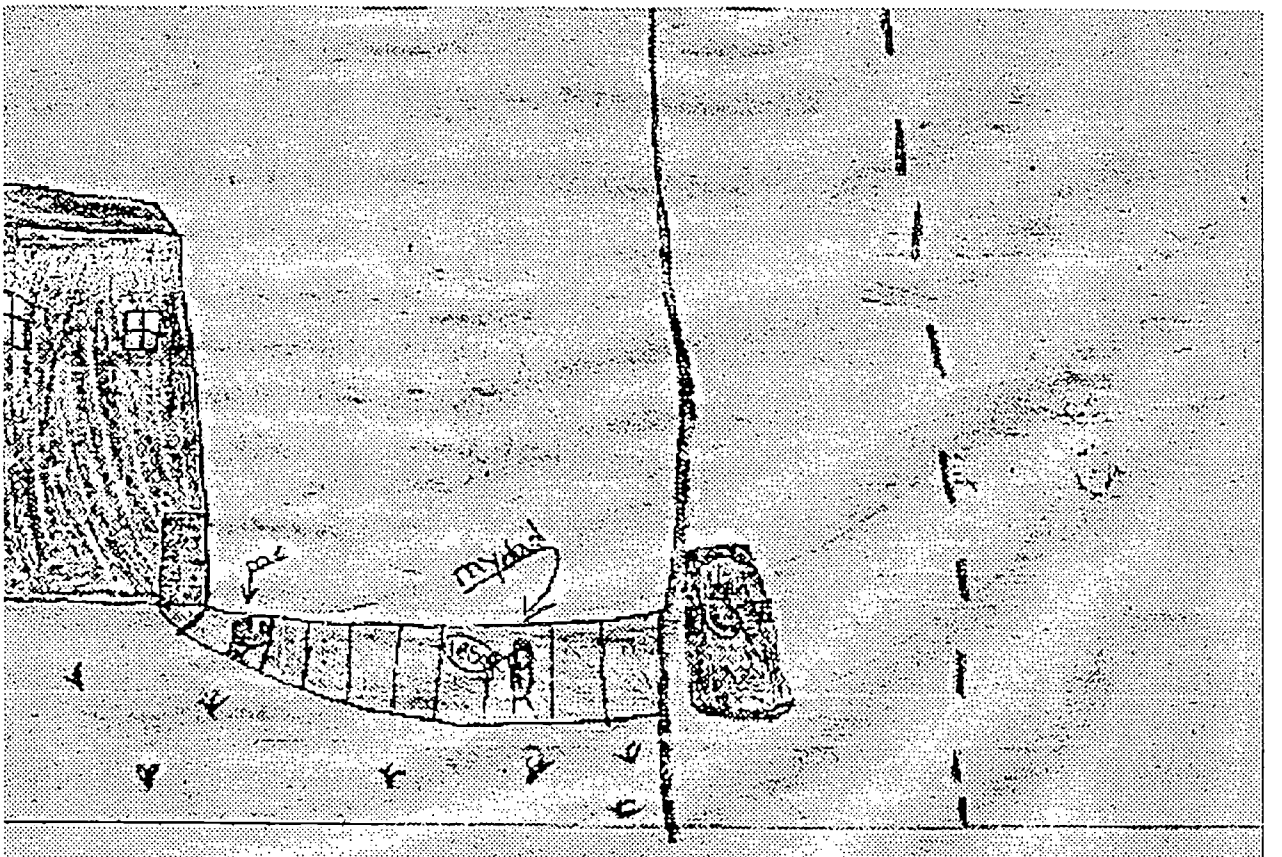
Tierney, R. J., & Pearson, P. D. (1983) . Toward a composing model of reading. Language Arts, 60, 568-580.

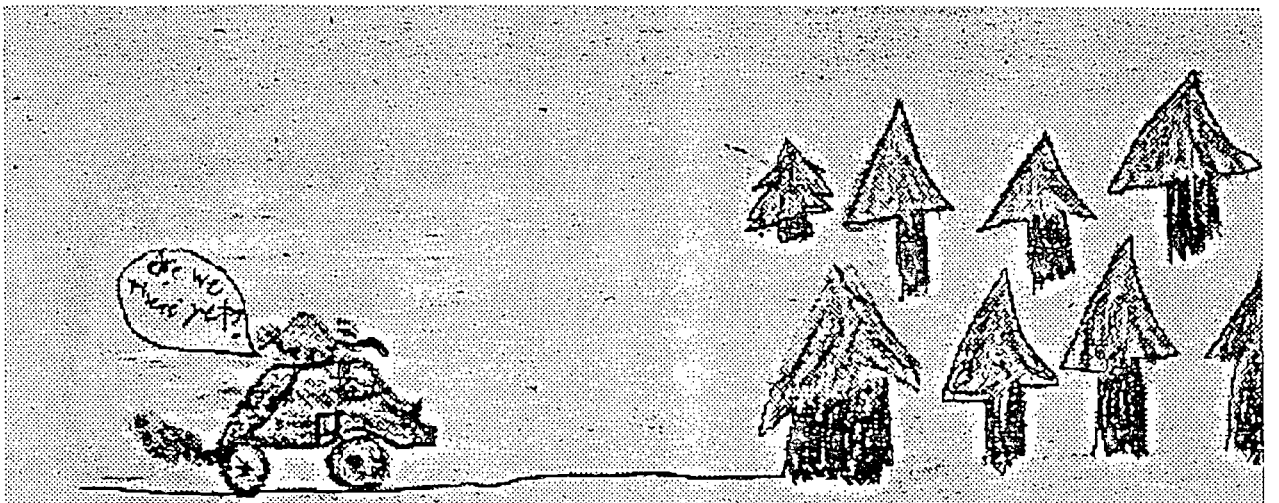
Wells, Gordon (1986). The meaning makers: Children learning language and using language to learn. Portsmouth, N.H.; Heinemann.



Tommorow was the big day! We were going to go camping. We were going today but we did not have what we needed. We needed a can of bug Spray, a couple of Sleeping bags, a tent.

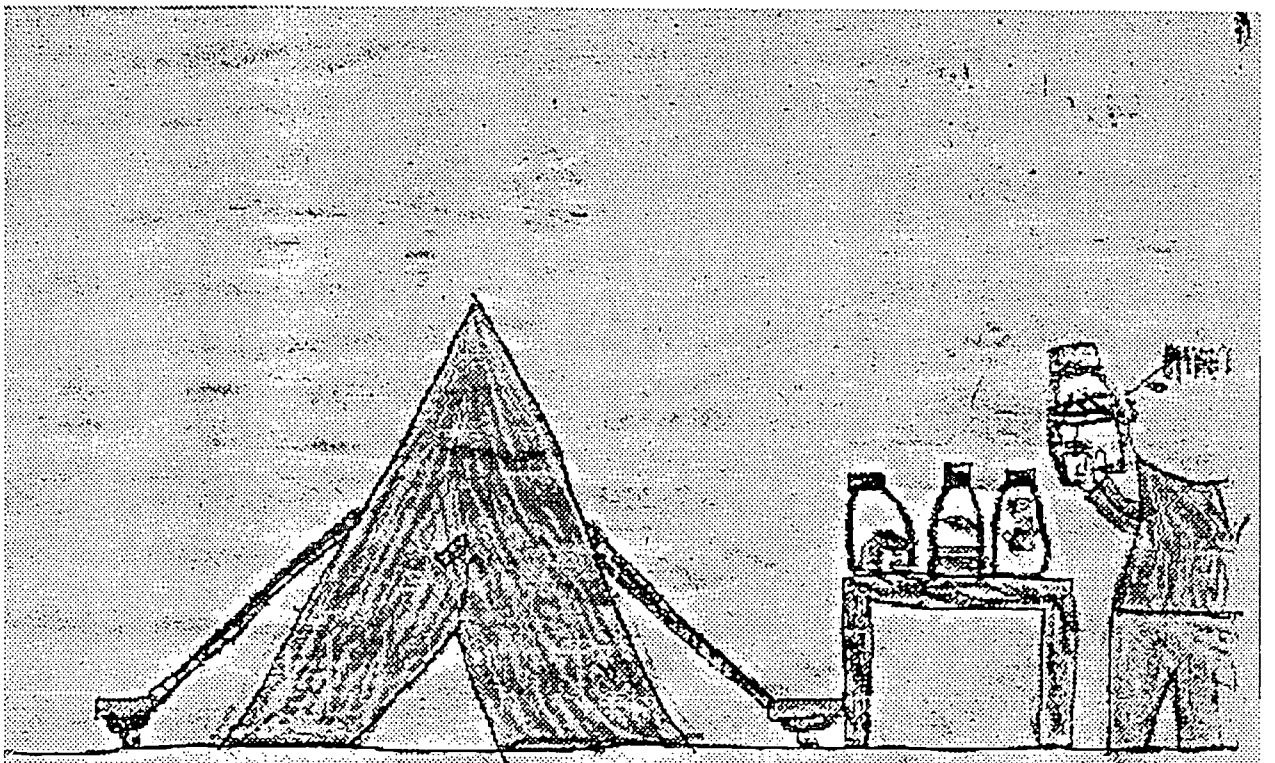


I got the tent, Sleeping bag and bug Spray. we are packing the car.

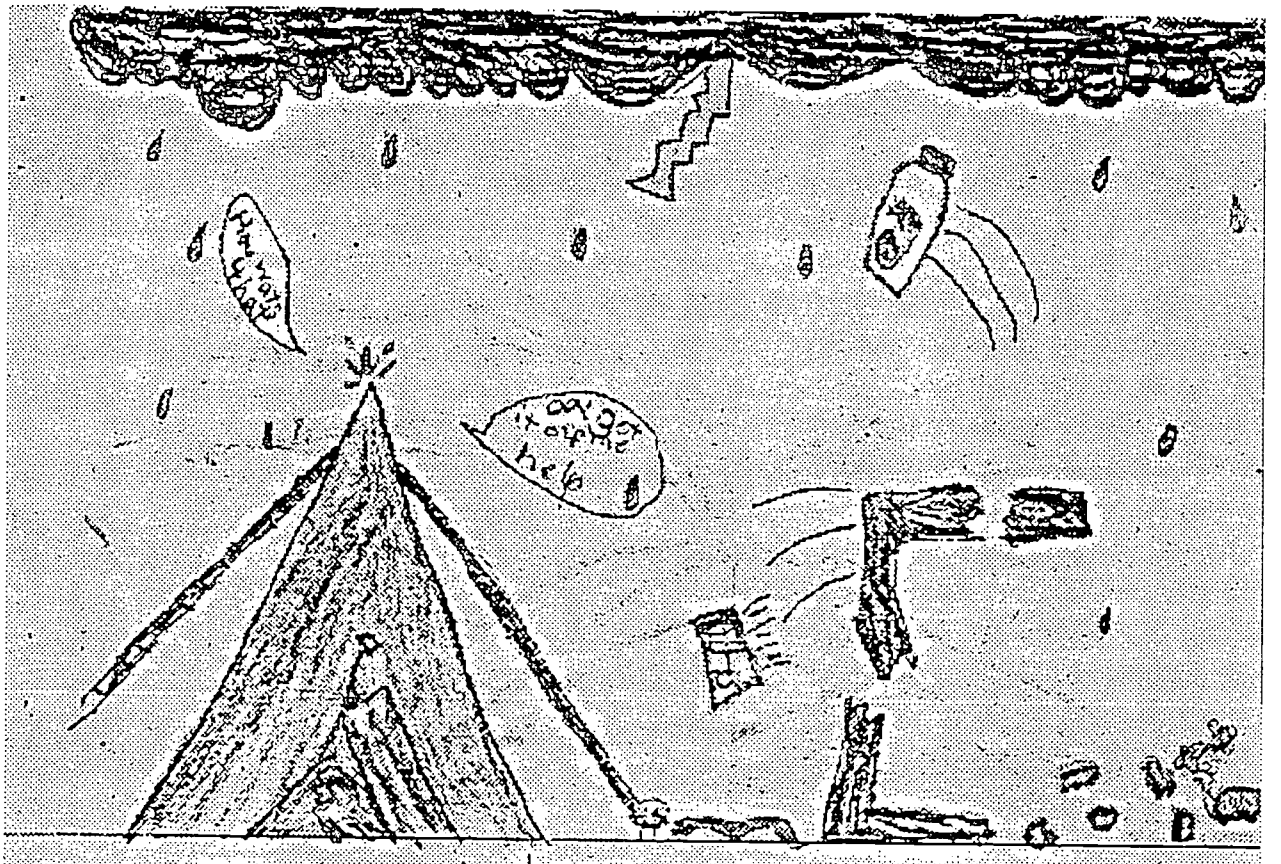


. . . . We are on our way. This is going to

. . . be fun.



Our first day in the forest was fun. But the best thing was that we went out and caught frogs and snacks and bugs!

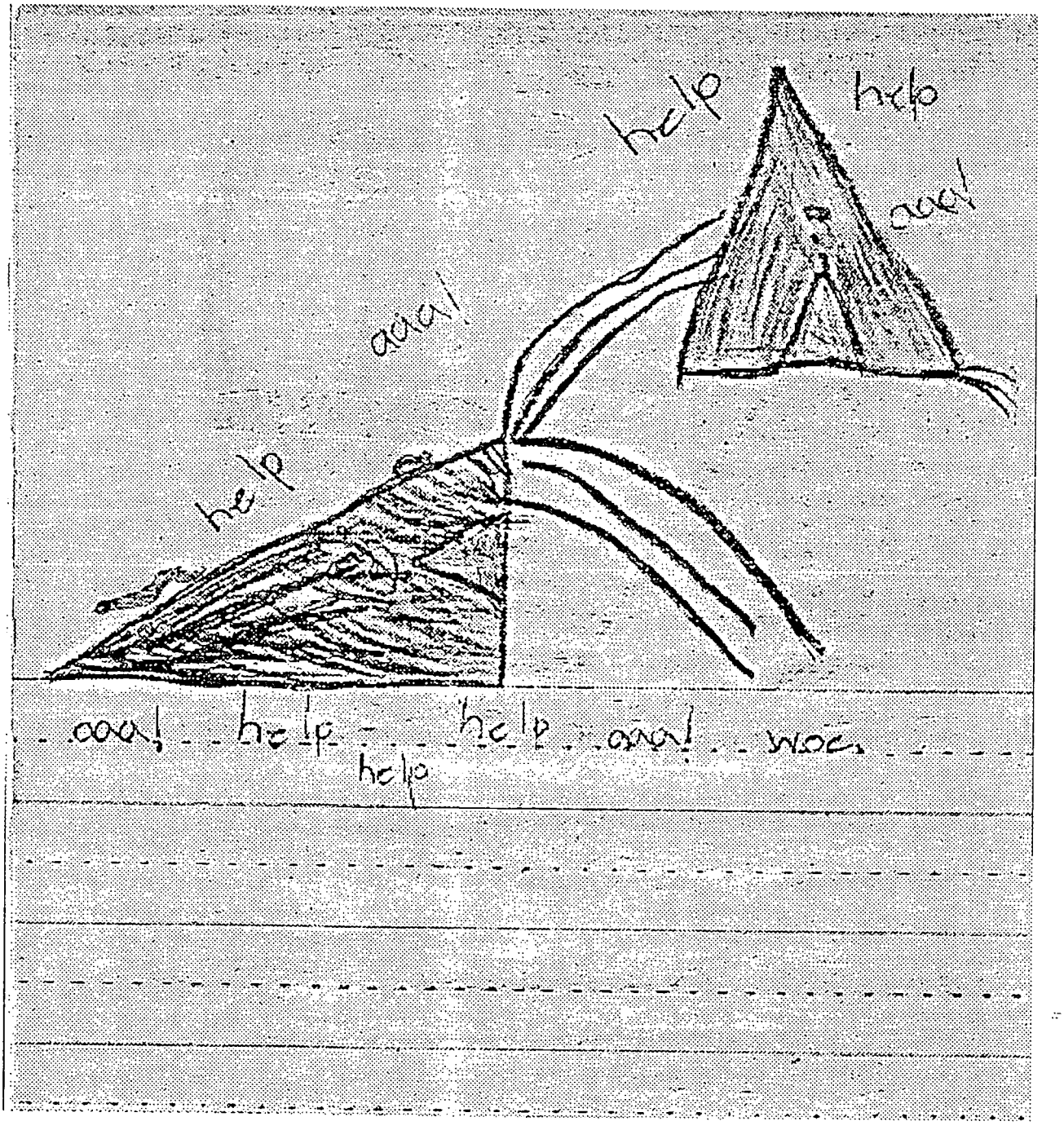


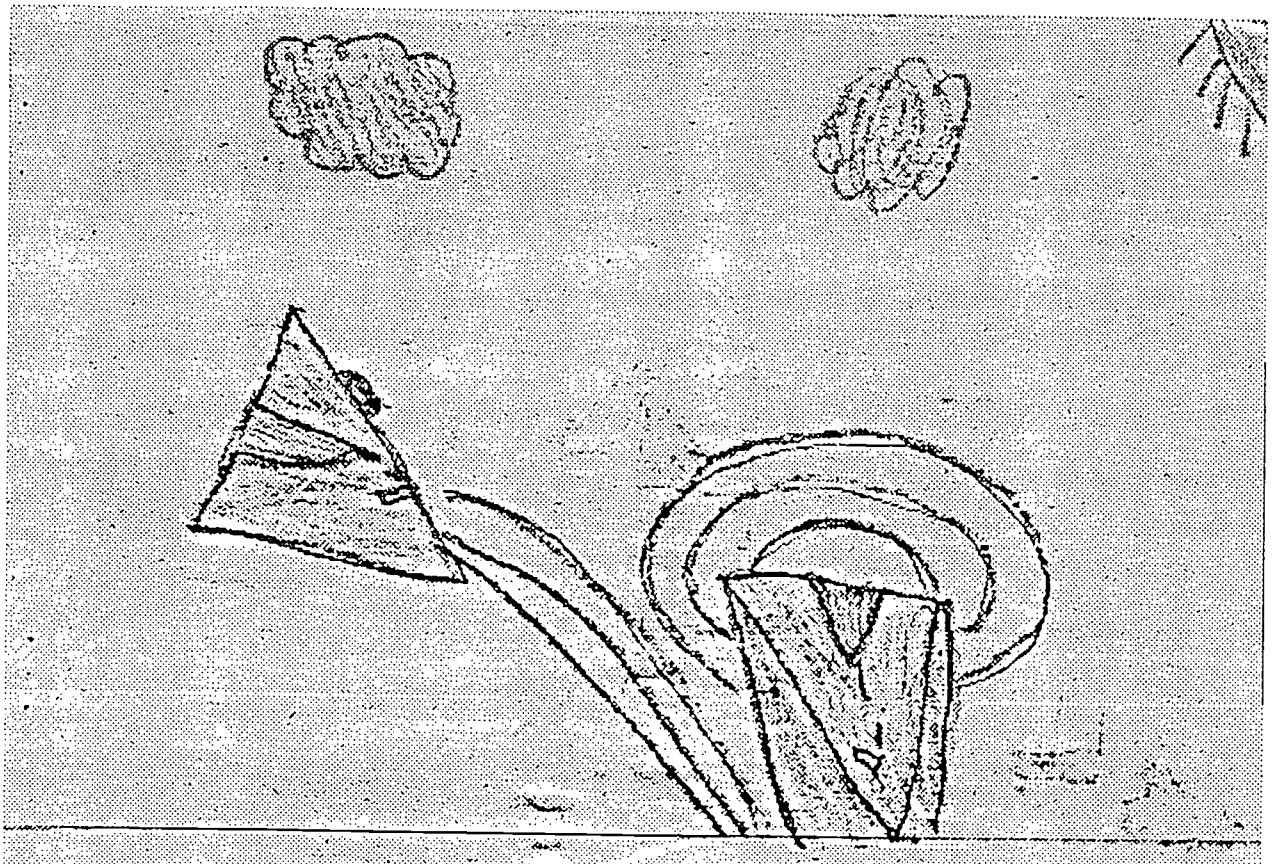
That night a big storm came.

All the jars fell off the shelf and

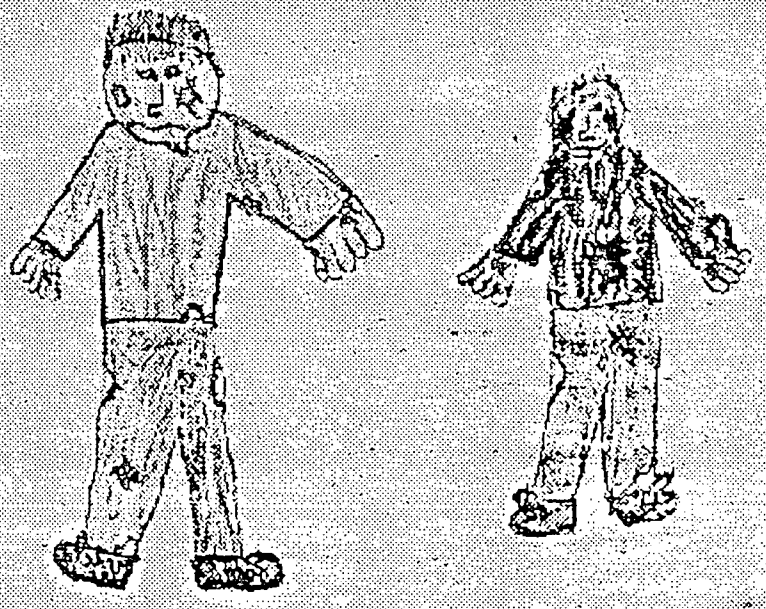
broke. The animals and bugs went

into the tent!





The bouncing and rolling went on
on. It came the next day, and
we were still rolling around.



When we went home we were

cut up and bruised.

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