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Arthur

Philippe L. Gross

V. Kessler

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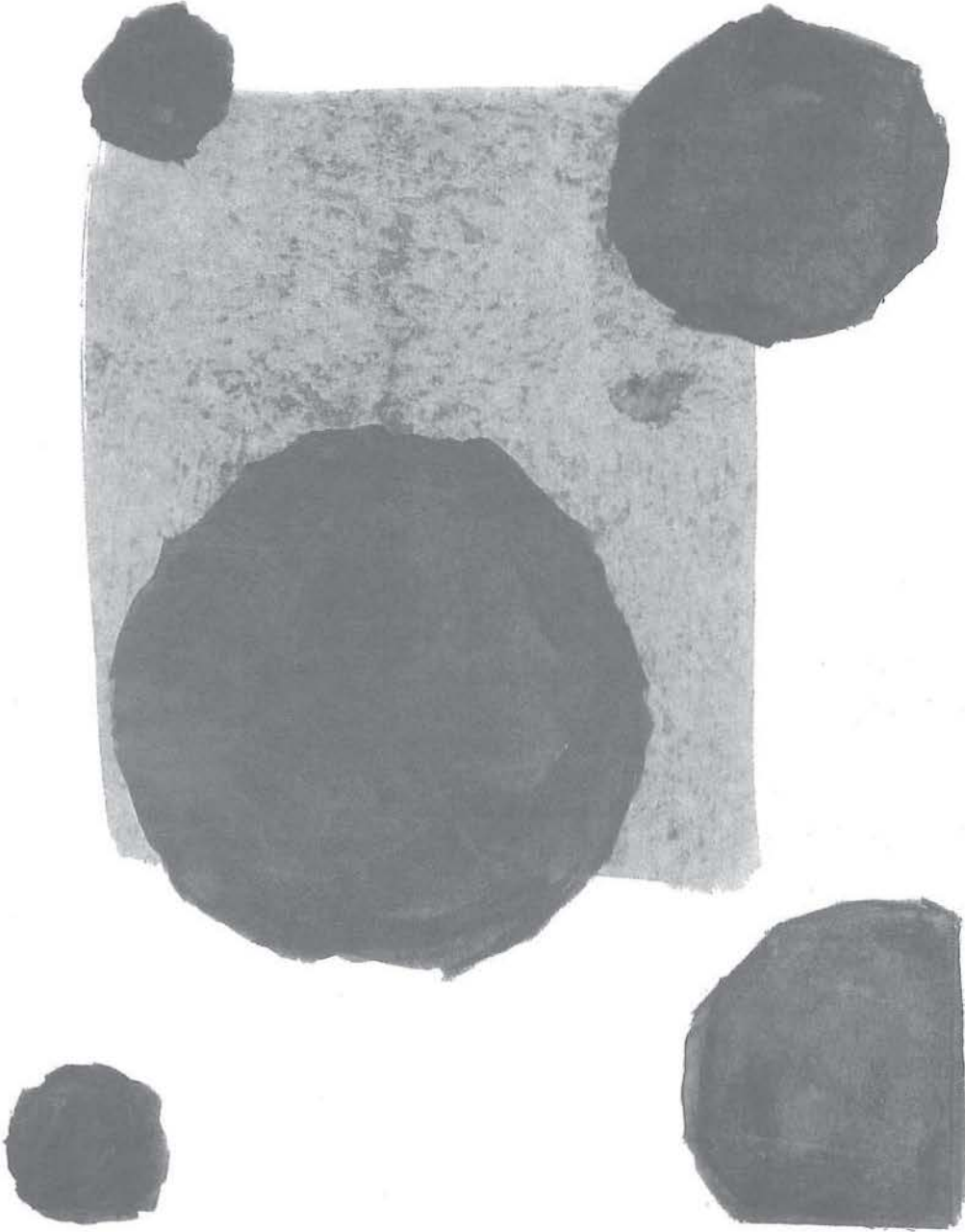
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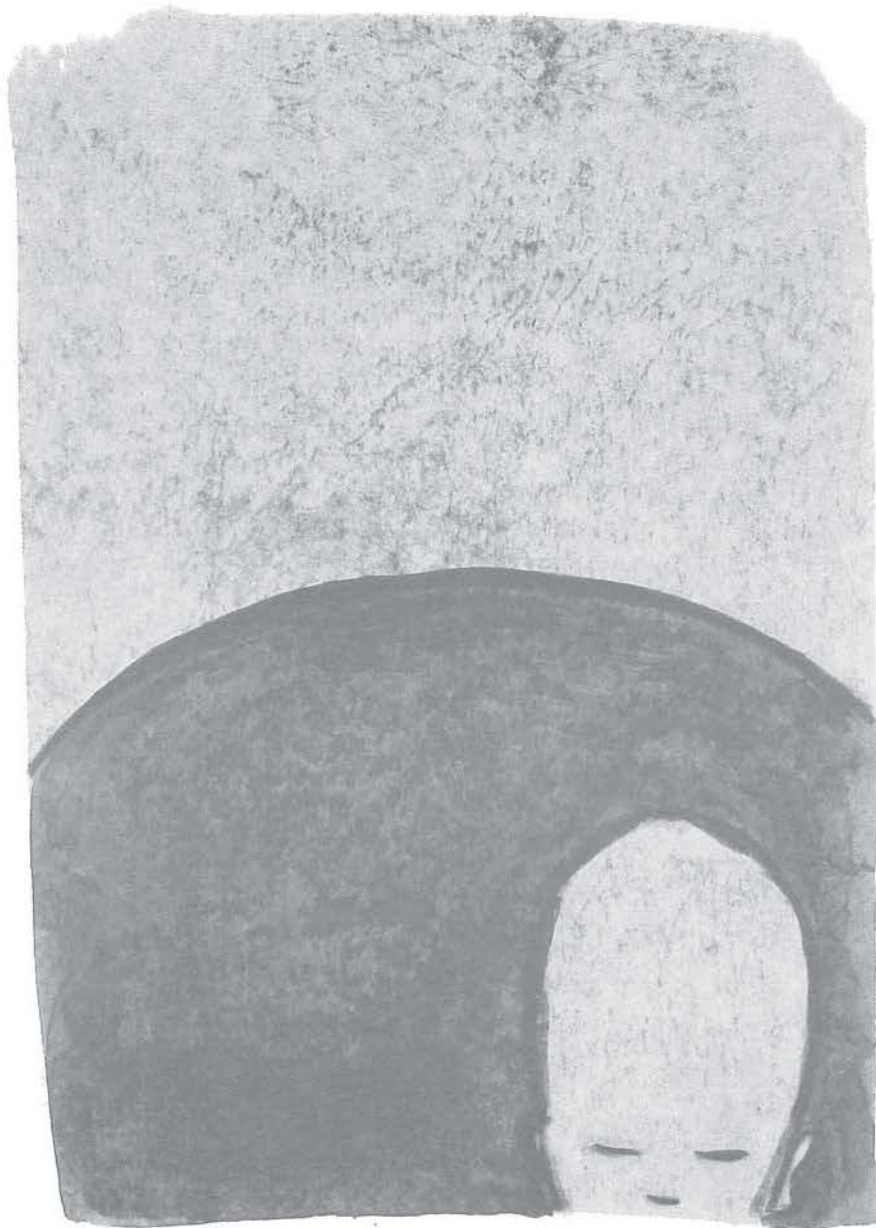


A R T H U R

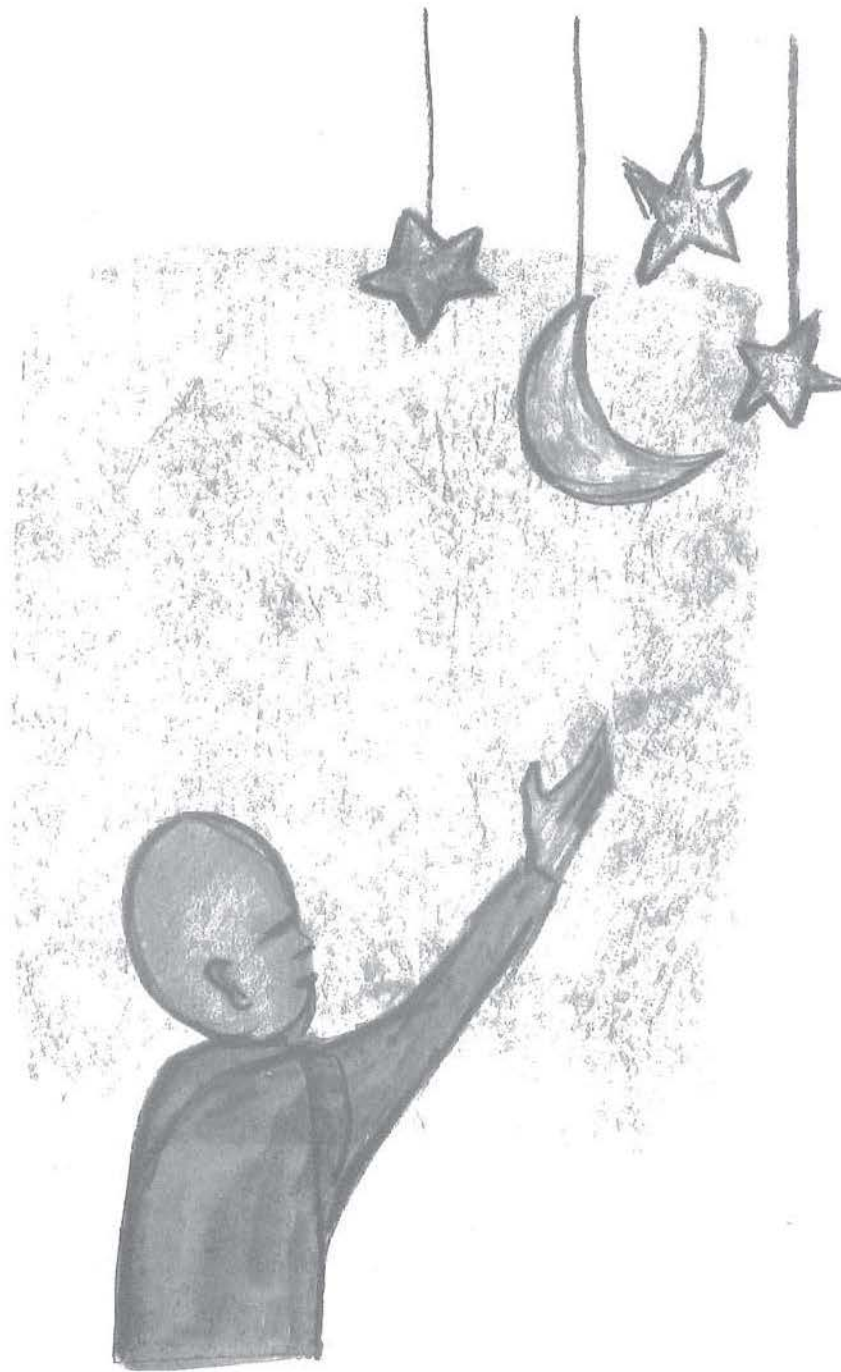
Drawings by Valérie Kessler, Fribourg, Switzerland
Original Story by Jacques Mettraux, Fribourg, Switzerland

Translated and Adapted from the French by Philippe L. Gross and Valérie Kessler

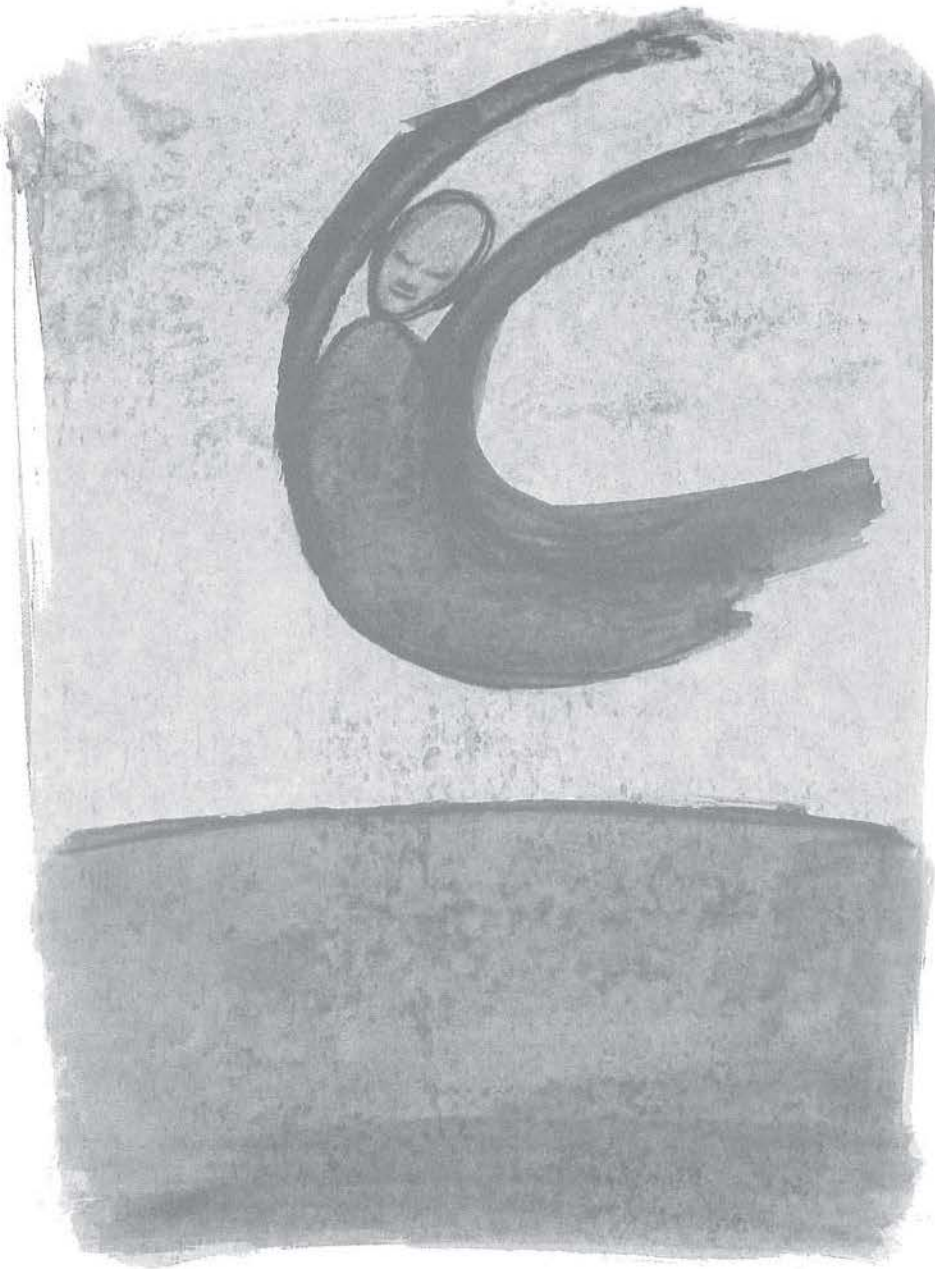




Far away, Arthur lived on a small planet,
all by himself.
He behaved somewhat humanlike.
But he was more fortunate.

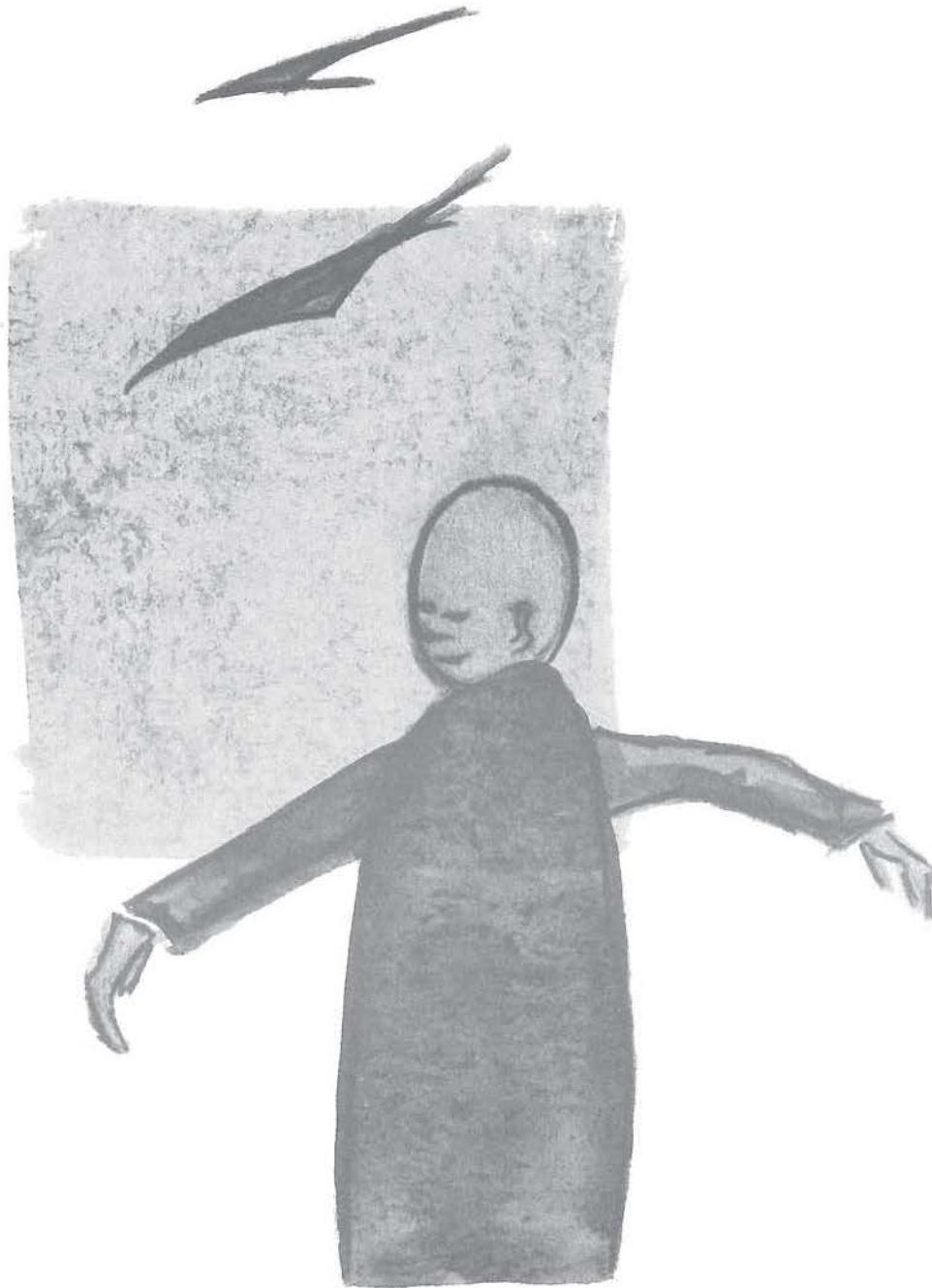


Self-sufficient, thanks to the energy of the nearby stars,
Arthur knew not of hunger, thirst, cold, or pain.
His body was immune to aging,
and his serene face reflected great vitality.
His days were spent observing the bare surface of his planet,
his nights examining the sky,
rich with comets, planets, and stars.

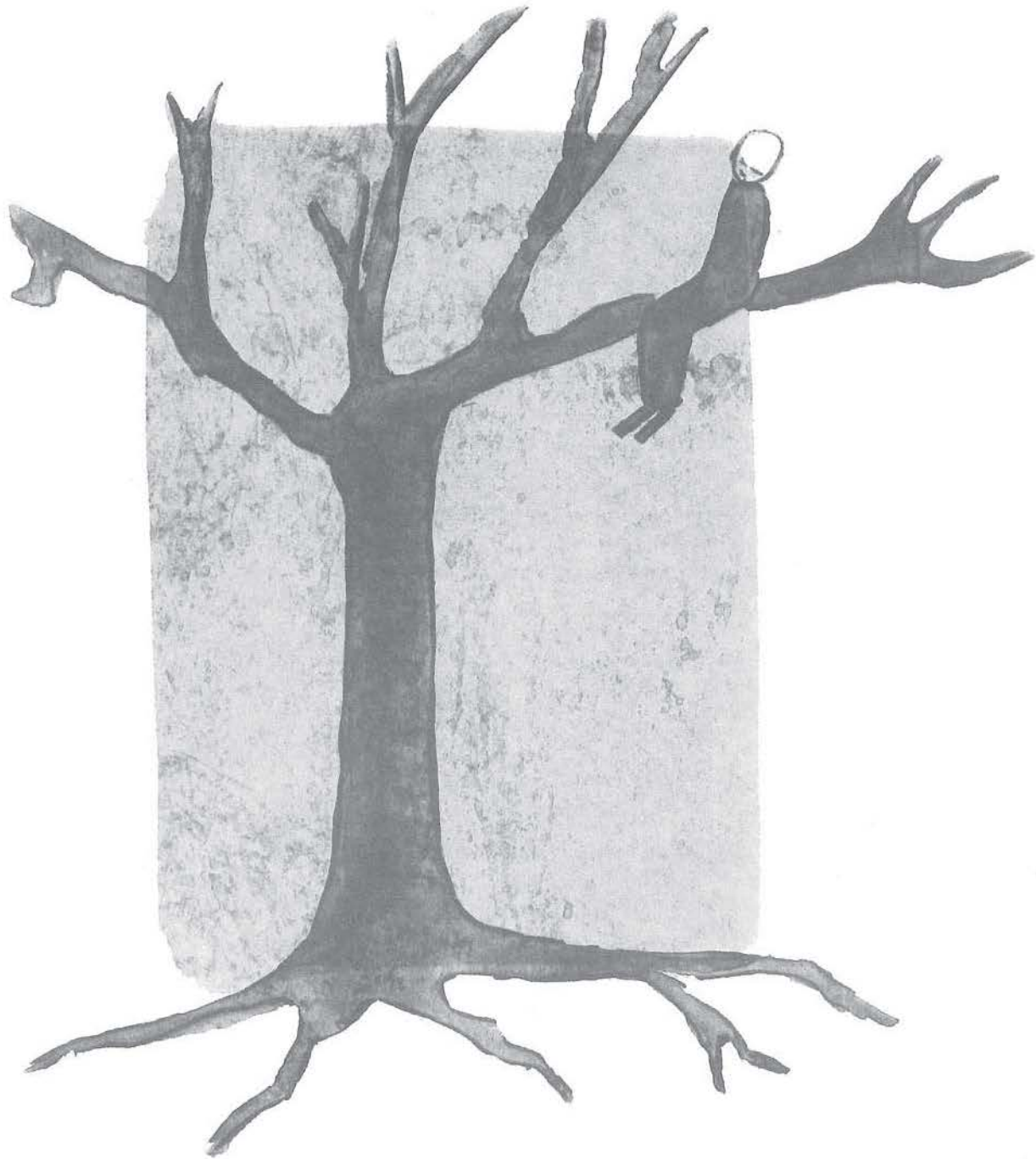


For millennia, Arthur found joy in this cosmic panorama.
One night, a new idea crossed his mind.
What if he could reach one of those points of light so far away?
This revolutionary idea surprised him greatly.
Where did it come from?
The new thought would change his life forever.

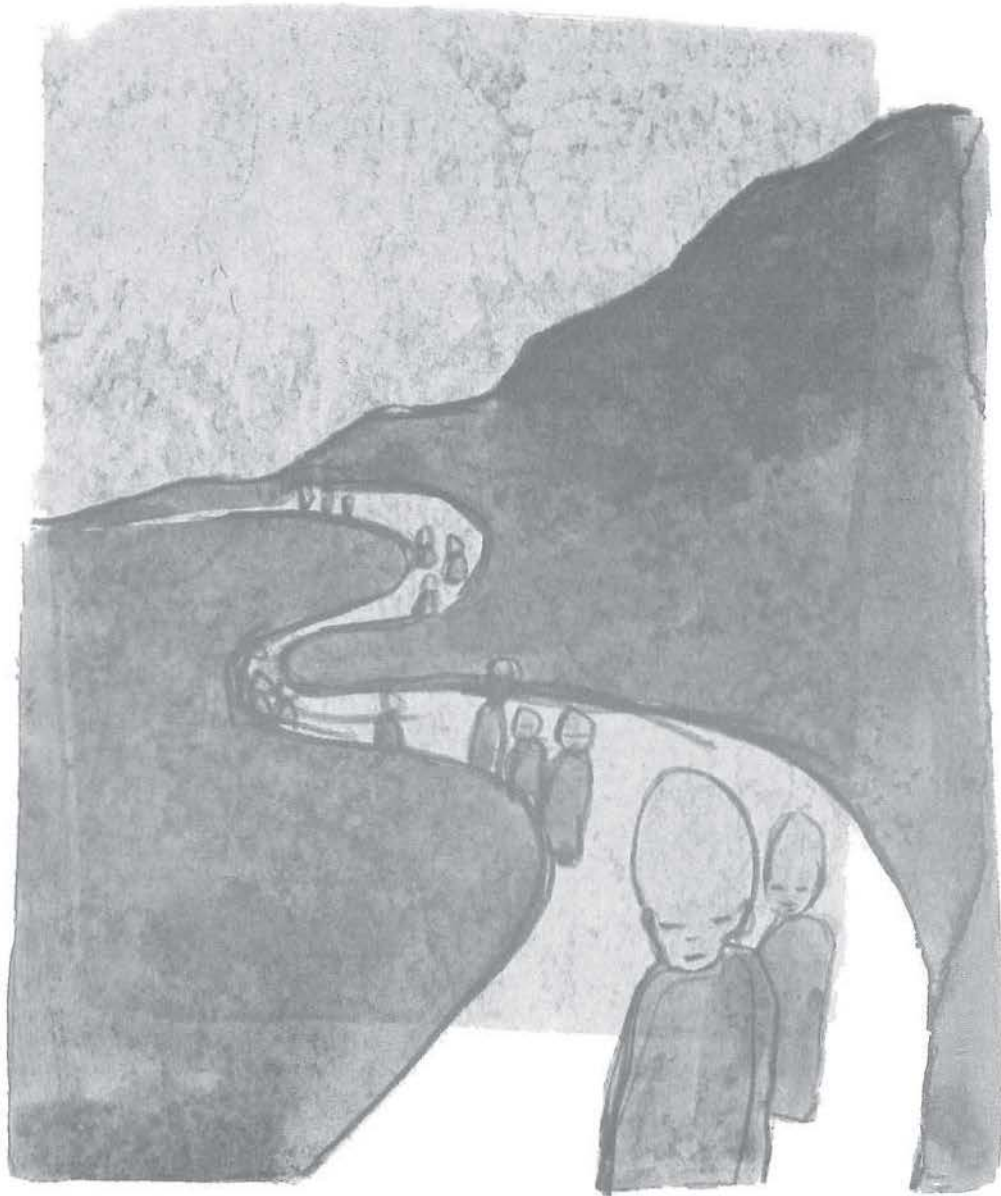
Until then, Arthur had lived intuitively—
 completely in harmony with his surroundings,
 every action reflecting complete accord between mind and body.
Now, he felt a need for change.
Concentrating all his energy, in a flash,
 he executed a prodigious jump across space,
 landing on a distant planet called Earth.



His first contact on the new planet was with birds.
Seeing them fly so elegantly with stretched out wings was a great visual treat.
Their ability to float weightlessly in the wind,
then twirl effortlessly in the breeze,
brought Arthur countless hours of enjoyment.



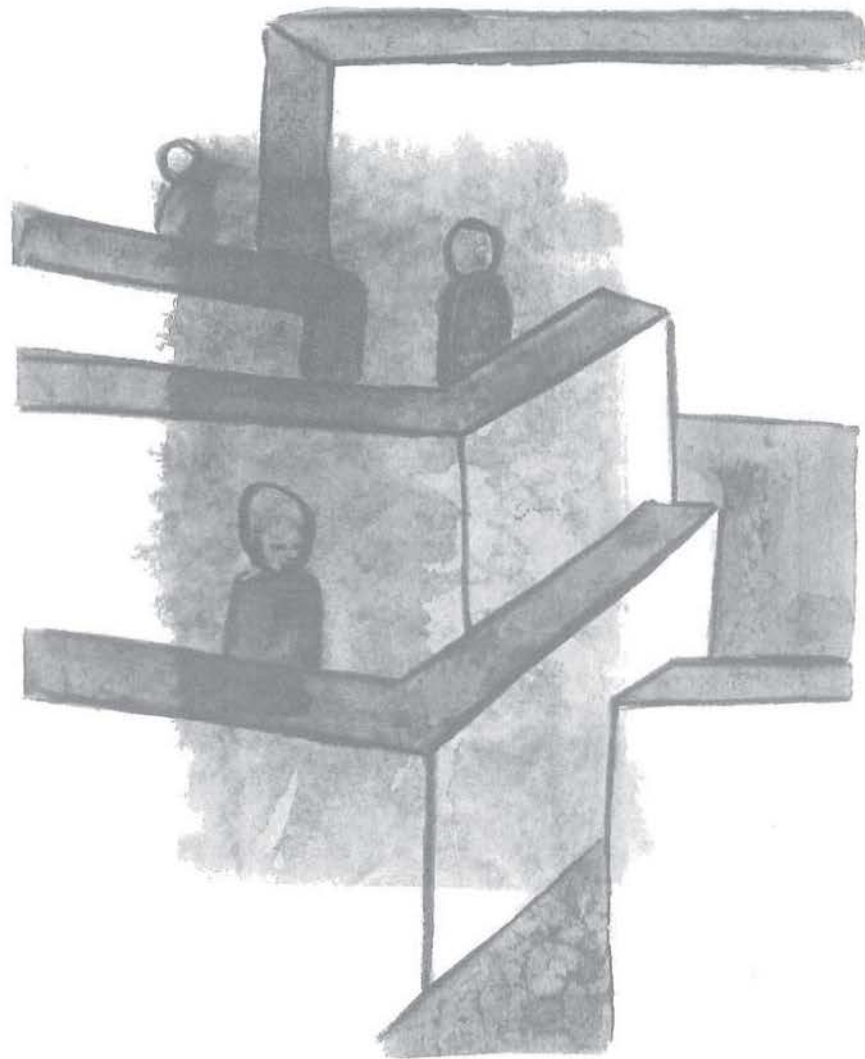
Trees were just as fascinating.
On his own deserted planet, sand dunes alternated with wide plains of stones.
Earth, therefore, was a source of astonishing discoveries.
Arthur was particularly enamored of a tall tree that became his observing site.
Perched high up, he would observe the graceful flying creatures who filled him with such wonder.



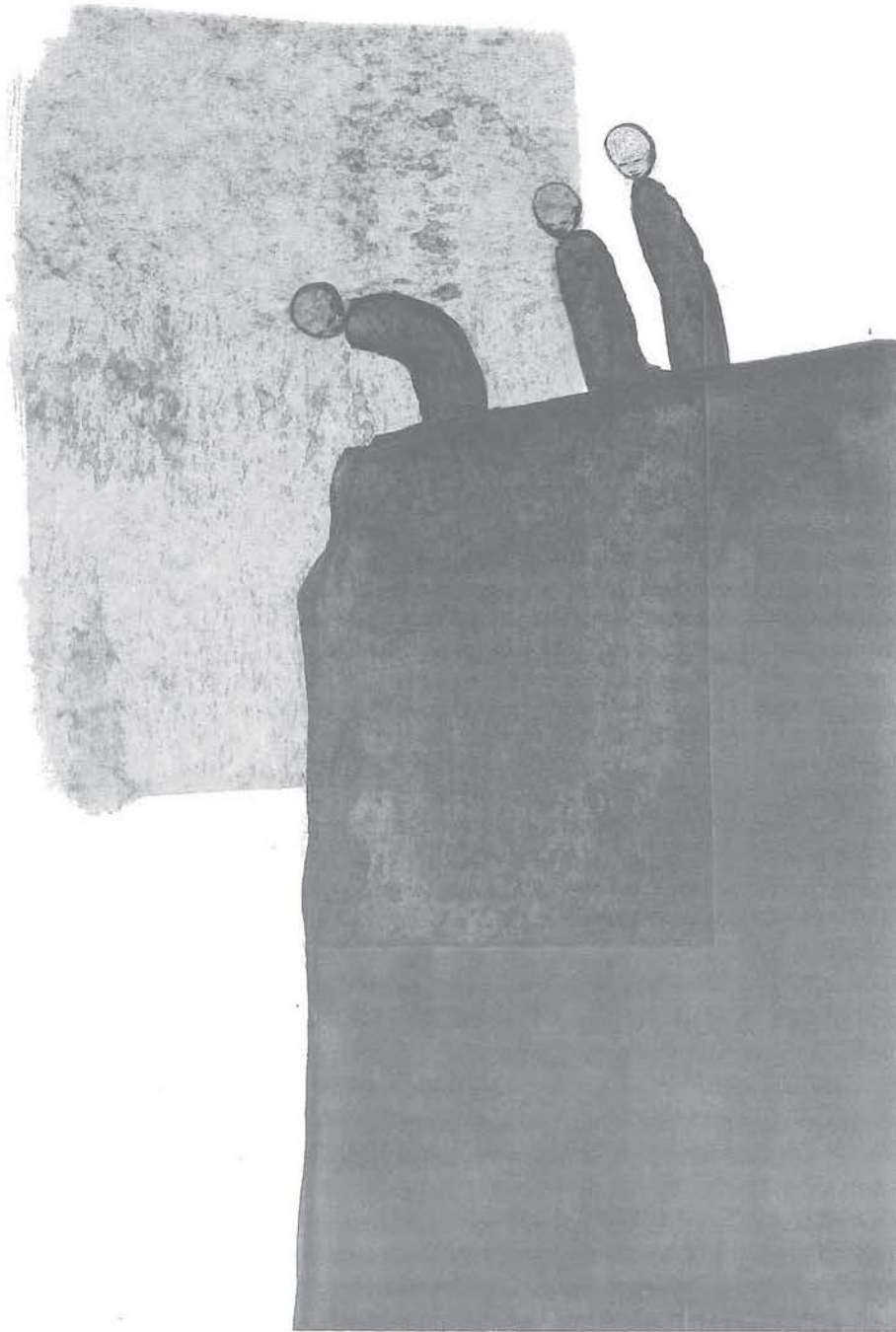
Arthur's curiosity soon extended to the entire vegetable and animal world...
then to human beings.

Observing them,
he accumulated a wealth of information about their daily lives,
habits, and concepts of life.

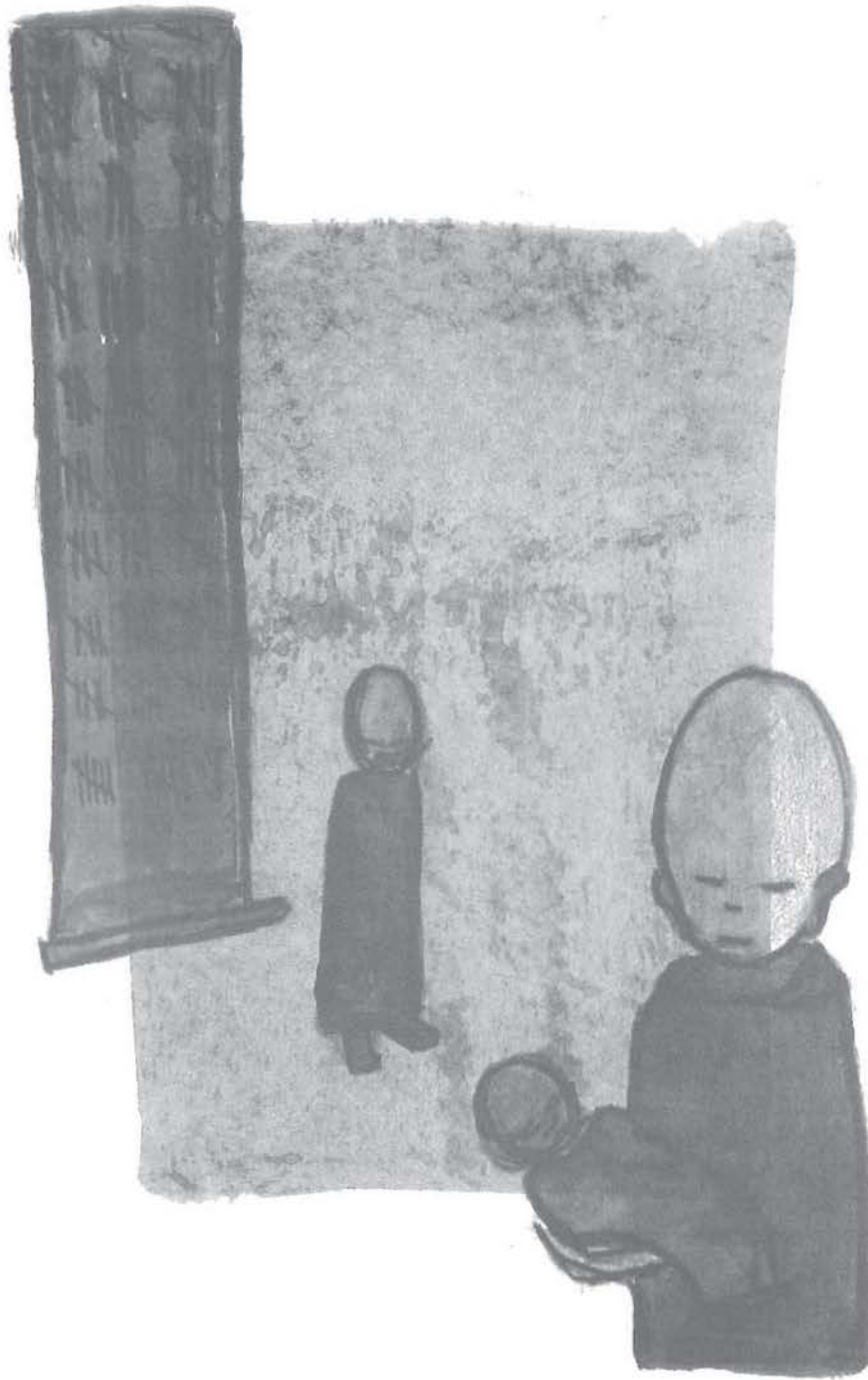
He was particularly curious about dreams, beauty, poetry,
and the harmony between soul and spirit.



Arthur's most astonishing discovery
was how unhappy humans became because of their social lives.
He tried very hard to understand this phenomenon,
but remained perplexed.
Eventually he concluded that a less crowded planet
would greatly benefit human beings.



From then on,
Arthur devoted his attention to eliminating humans
bit by bit.
He would lure them for a walk
then either kick them down ravines
or push them into rapids to drown.

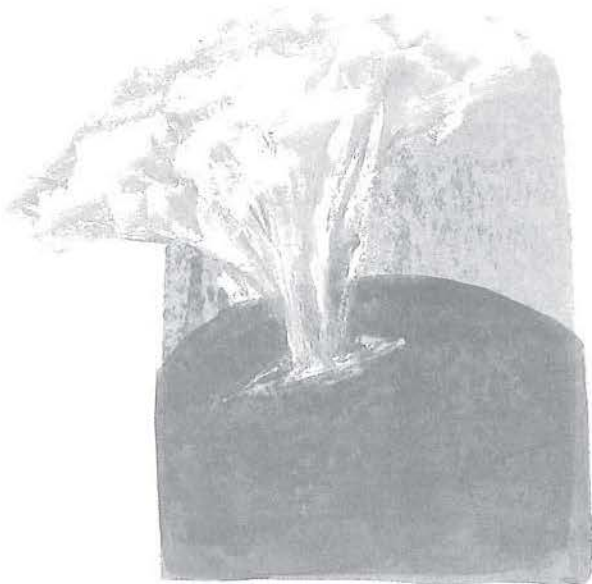
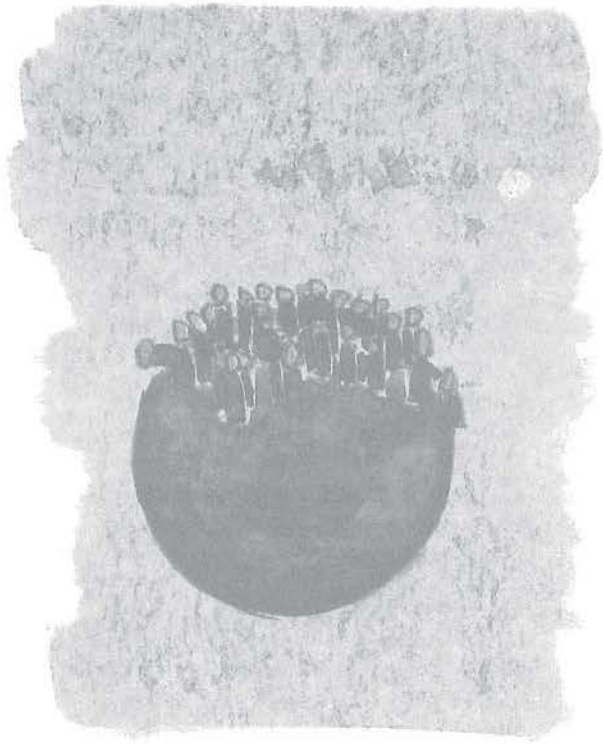


Arthur soon realized that his task was not so easy.
As hard as he worked to exterminate some individuals,
new ones kept appearing.
Apparently, human beings could easily multiply—
a never-ending problem!

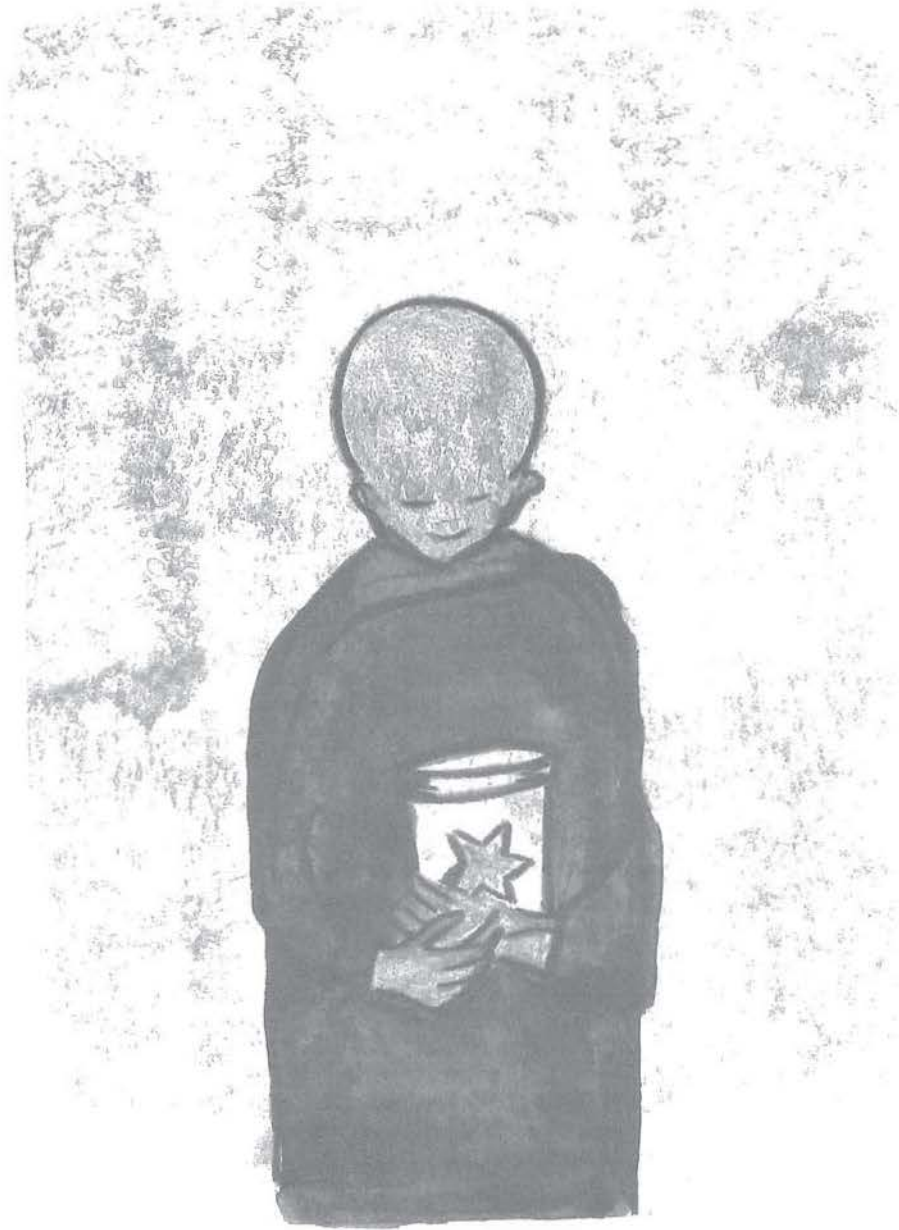


Arthur eventually came to realize
that his plan was failing.
For the first time in his life,
he became depressed.

As time went by,
Arthur grew gloomier.
He could no longer tolerate
this overpopulated place,
where everyone seemed to rush mindlessly around,
heavy-hearted, faces tensed,
preoccupied with meaningless worries.
The exploding population obviously needed
a more radical approach.



So Arthur worked out a Machiavellian plan. Yes,
he—Arthur—the Perfect Being,
decided to speed up the Great Devolution.
He was determined to bring an end quickly
to this world gone awry
and return *all* its inhabitants to
Nothingness.



Arthur created a black box
with a large red button on top.
Inside the box,
he trapped enough energy from the stars
to consummate his Grand Plan.

Everything was set,
but a nagging doubt made him hesitate.
He decided to leave his final decision
to fate.

As Arthur flipped a coin high into the air
...he caught a glimpse of his old planet.

