

The background of the entire page is a complex, abstract line drawing in a light blue color. It features various shapes, including what looks like a large, stylized figure in the center, and other geometric and organic forms scattered around. The lines are thin and somewhat sketchy, giving it a hand-drawn or artistic feel.

# LOCAL COLORING

5 writers  
67 artists

Axle Contemporary



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Front cover: detail, Rose Simpson

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In response to the Social Distancing recommendations in the world at this time, Axle Contemporary is offering our 2017 Local Coloring book for free online. If you have access to a printer, please download the book, read the stories, and color the pages with your pens, crayons, and imagination!

We'll release one story and its accompanying drawing pages each week for five weeks.

Visit [www.axleart.com](http://www.axleart.com) to download.

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**Axle Contemporary Press**

## **Johnny Blue**

Nasario García

Johnny Blue (Juanito Azul) was an orphan who lived in a one-room shack near the village of Santa Clara. He had sparkling blue eyes, deemed an oddity among the local villagers, hence his nickname Johnny Blue. But he was also short, had long hands and one leg was shorter than the other.

Because of his physical characteristics, whenever there was a fiesta in Santa Clara the mothers did not allow their daughters to dance with him. He was even shunned on St. John's Day, June 24th, a popular day that honored persons bearing the name of Juan or Juana.

But an equally important festive day was St. Anne's Day, July 26th. Only women participated in the day's activities. Ladies of all ages wore colorful blouses and long pleated-skirts (pants were taboo) and rode their beautiful horses side-saddle to celebrate the occasion. Young girls used regular saddles and engaged in horse races.

The day's celebration always culminated in a joyful evening dance, but, unlike in previous dances, a dramatic and unsuspected thing happened one night after the musicians, a violinist and a guitarist, returned from taking a break. Just as they picked up their instruments to resume playing, Johnny Blue walked into the dance hall. He was all dressed in blue: a blue shirt, blue trousers, blue kerchief, blue cowboy hat, and shiny blue boots. He approached the violinist, asked him for his violin, and started playing a beautiful waltz. The women were in awe.

"Wow! Who would have guessed that the young man with long hands could make such lovely music?" a surprised lady asked rhetorically.

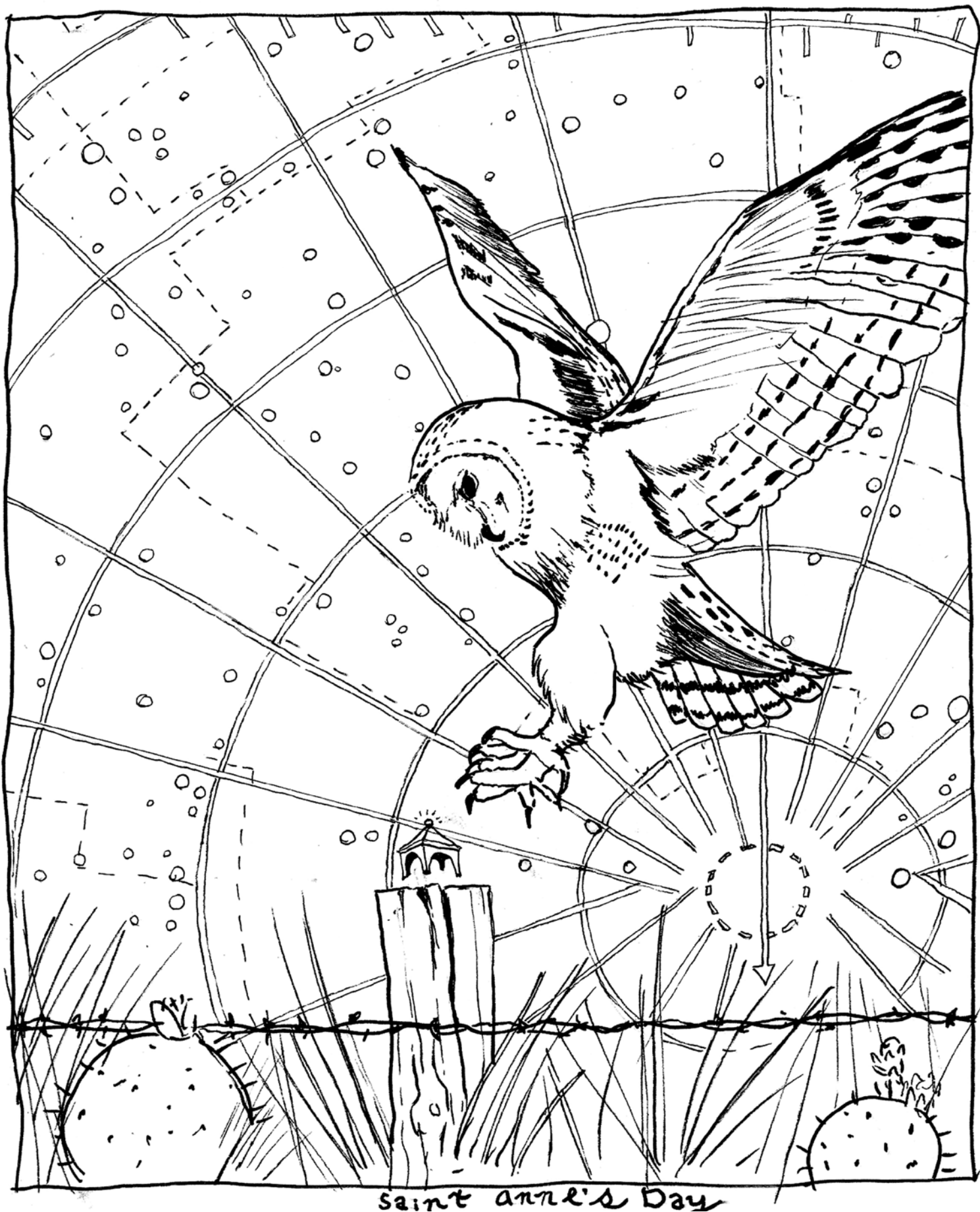
The words scarcely escaped her mouth when a tall attractive young lady dressed in white entered the dance hall, strolled halfway across the floor, and paused. The music stopped. Dead silence ensued, whereupon Johnny Blue limped slowly toward her. "May I have this dance?" he asked courteously and he removed his hat.

"A waltz, if you will," he said to the musicians, and Johnny Blue and his partner glided back and forth across the floor with incredible ease and elegance amid ohs and ahs from the older women. The dance ended, he thanked the lady, and she left the dance floor.

"Ladies and gentlemen!" interrupted the guitarist. "The next number will be ladies' choice." Unexpectedly, and much to Johnny Blue's astonishment, all the girls lined up to dance with him, but he rejected each one.

Johnny Blue put on his hat, departed in a swagger, mounted Moro, his bluish-white horse and headed home. Along the way an owl hooted and kept appearing from fence post to fence post. "Could this be a bad omen?" Johnny Blue wondered silently since owls were said to possess supernatural powers. Suddenly, standing in the middle of the dirt road was a tall figure with glittering blue eyes. "Though I appeared at tonight's dance uninvited," remarked the feminine voice, "it was to show those mothers what an elegant dancer you are," at which point she vanished in the dark.

Johnny Blue then leaned forward and whispered to Moro, "Blue is not only the color of the heavens and symbolic of the human spirit but magical as well."



saint anne's Day







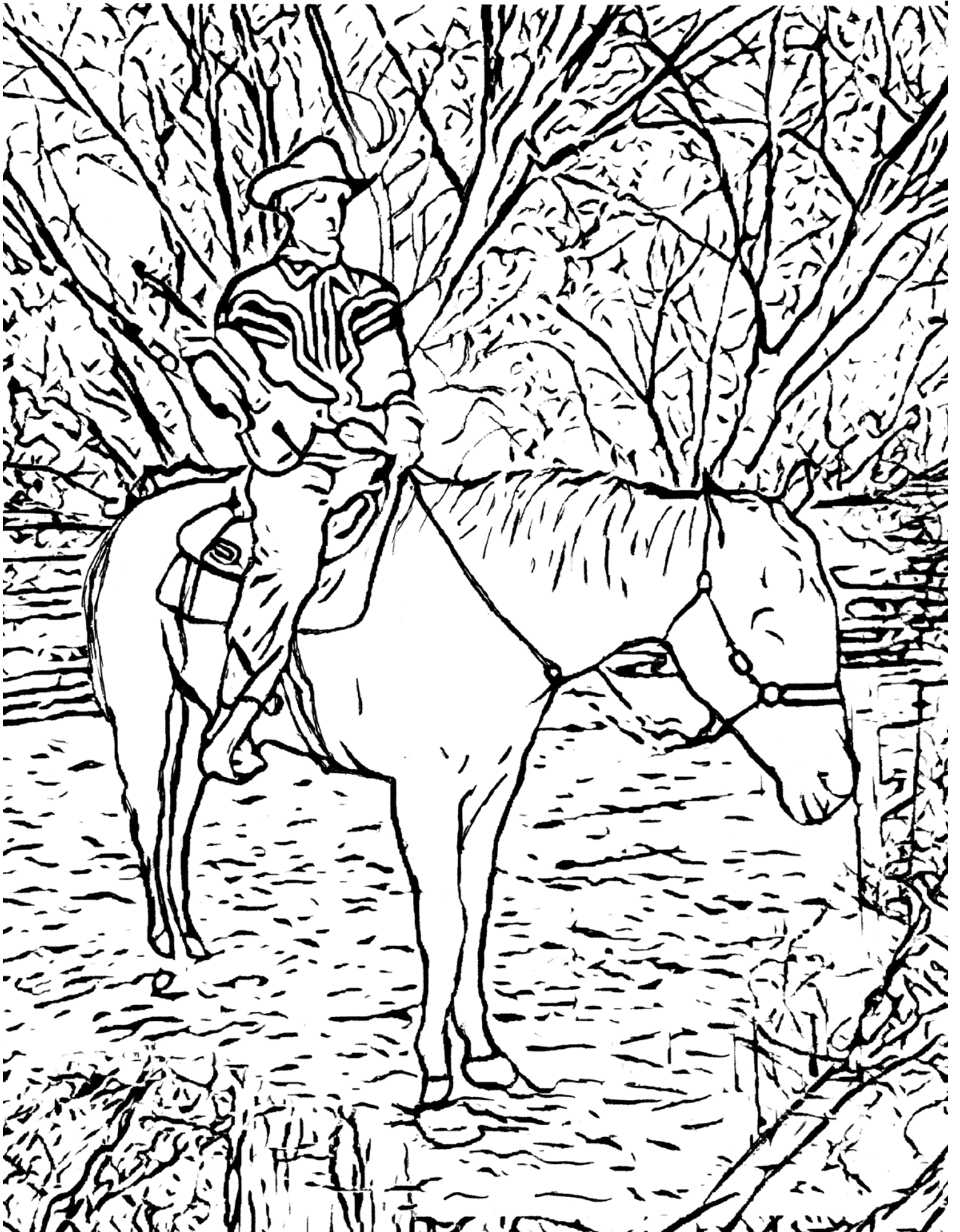






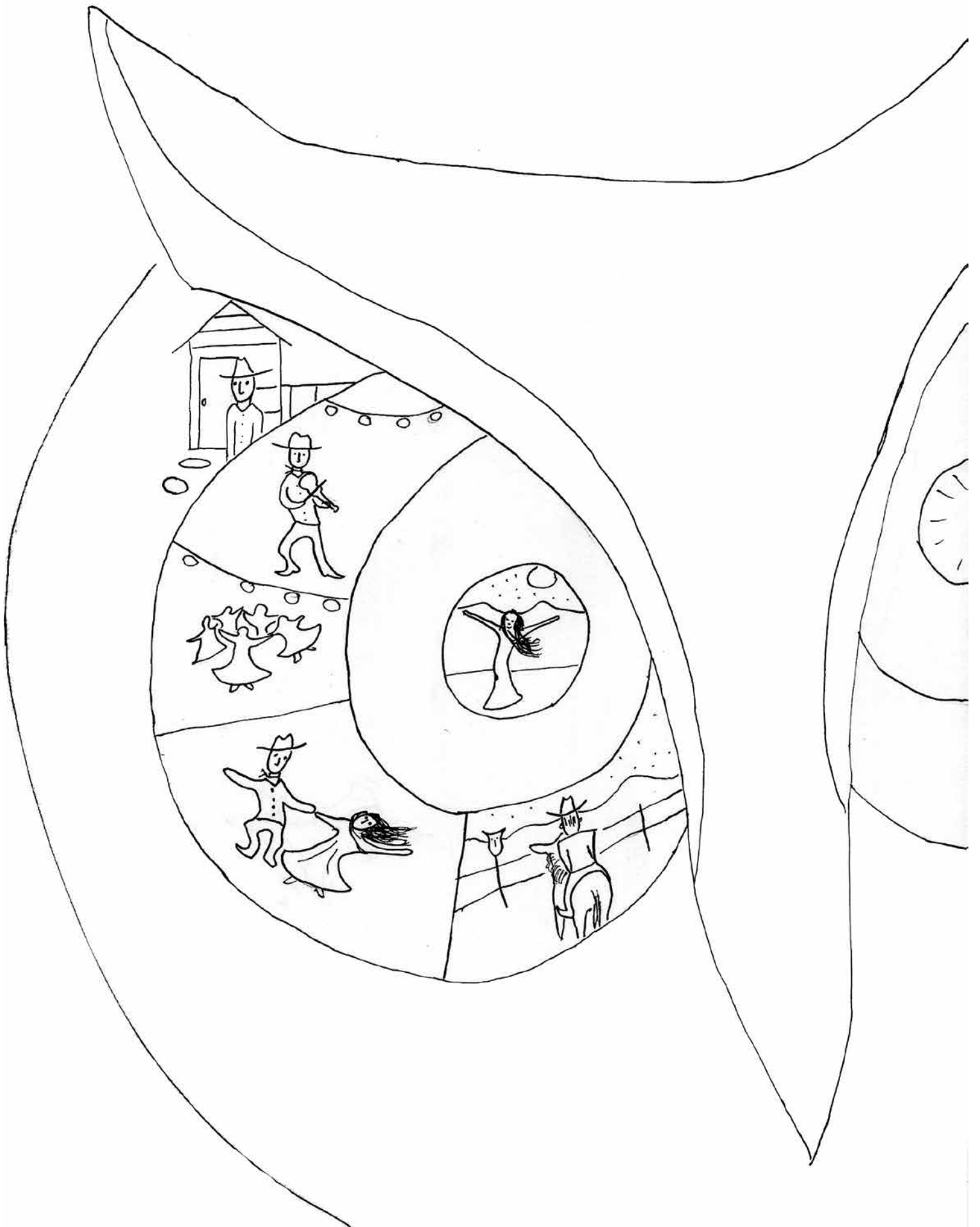




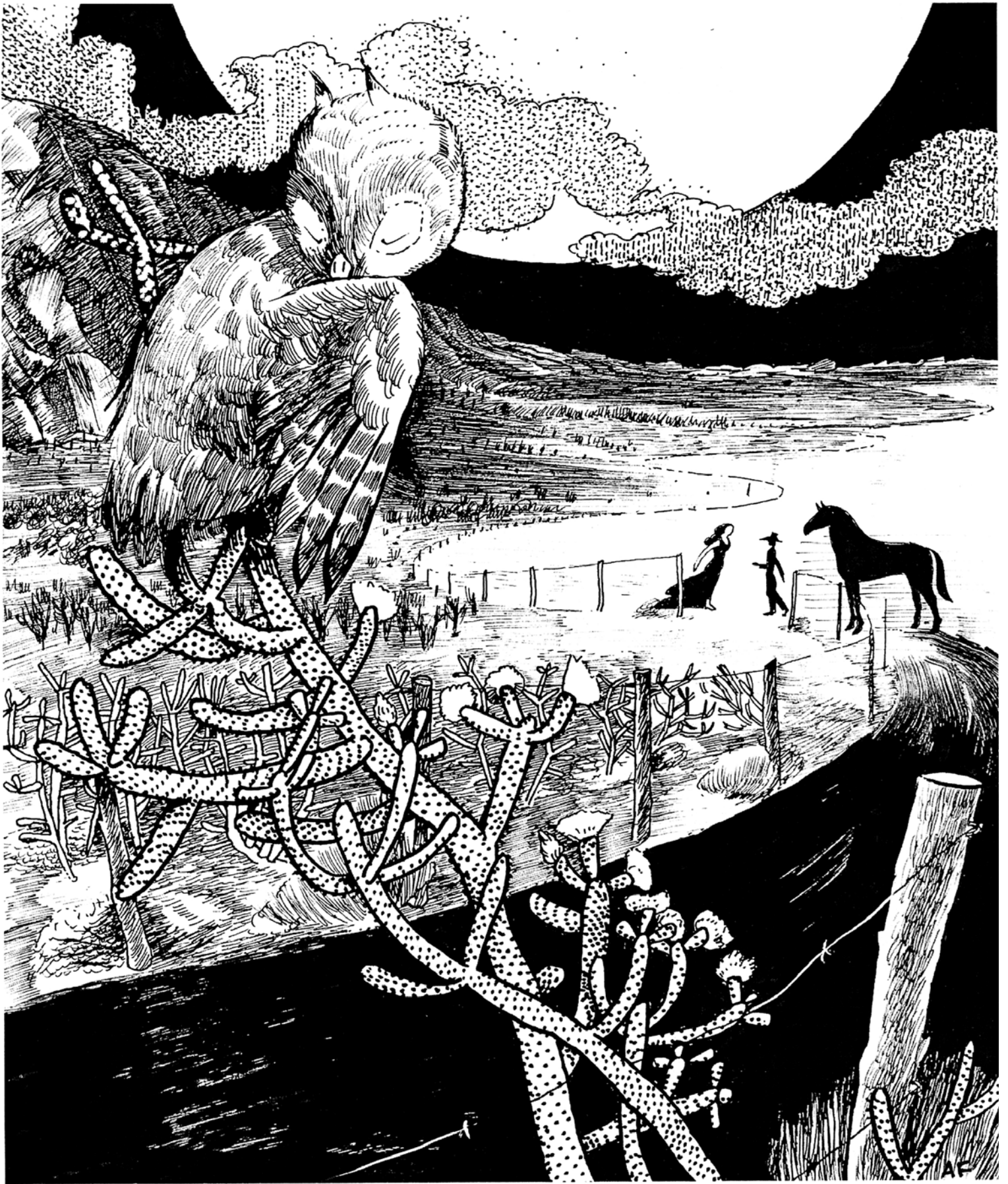












Andrew Fearnside