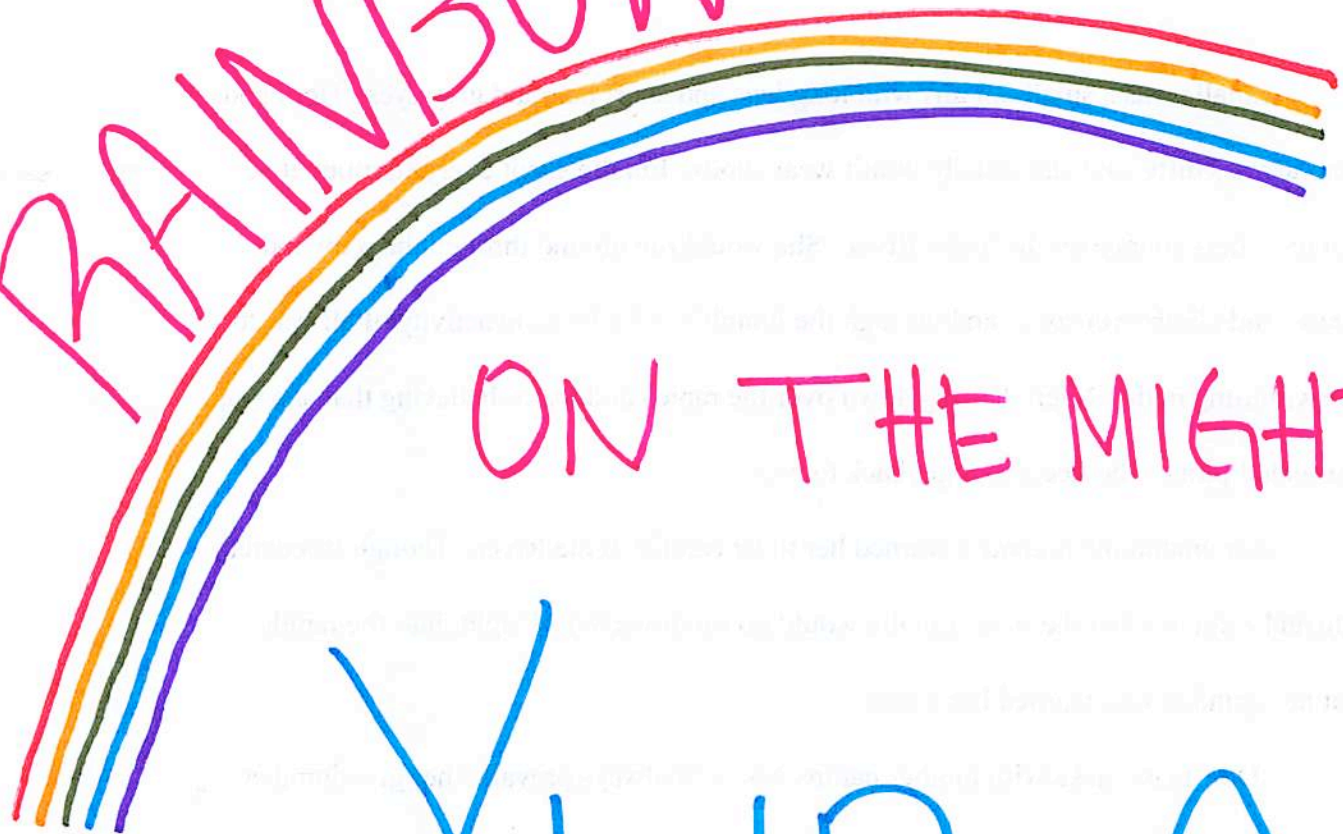
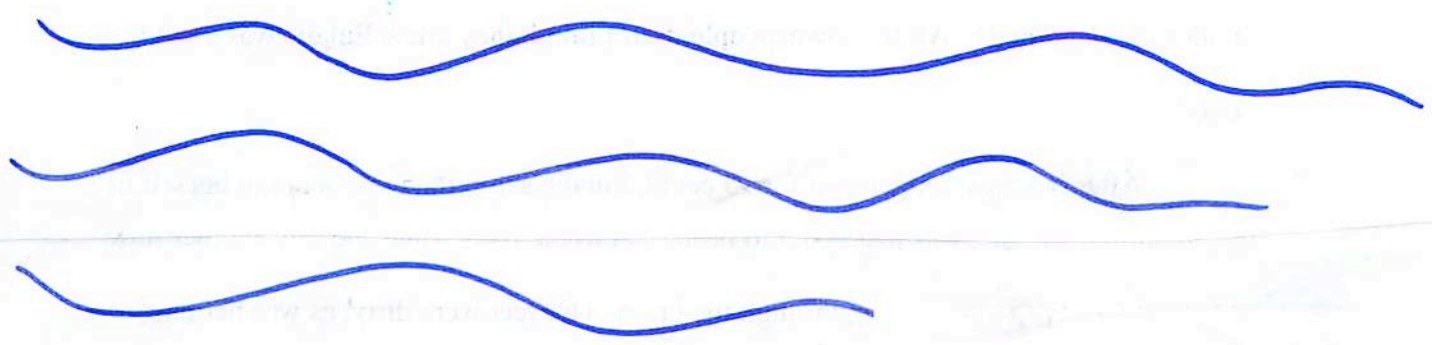


RAINBOW



ON THE MIGHTY

YUBA



Rainbow on the Mighty Yuba

Eulalie was a small tan girl with long legs and short hair and gray eyes. Her hands were always dirty, and she usually didn't wear shoes. Eulalie spent every summer at her grandmothers cottage on the Yuba River. She would run around through the redwood forests and climb over rocks and through the bramble. Her favorite activity of all was to go swimming in the River, drifting down over the rapids and make-believing that she was a stranded pirate who needed to get back to port.

Her grandmother always warned her to be careful in the River. Though it seemed safe and calm most of the time, Eulalie would go far down out of sight, into the rapids that her grandmother warned her about.

"Don't take risks with mother nature. She will always prevail," her grandmother warned. Eulalie wouldn't listen though, and continued to run about with just as little fear and just as much enthusiasm.

One day Eulalie was walking through the town of Grass Valley which was by the river. Her feet were bare and scabbed from running around for weeks. Her hair was dirty and knotty and tangled into a poof. She had dirt smudged on her cheeks and wedged under the fingernails. All the townspeople didn't mind, they knew Eulalie was a wild child.

After buying a gingersnap for 15 cents, Eulalie sat in the grass fanning herself in the dreadful heat. She was just about to head over to the river when she saw another little girl about Eulalie's age walking through the grass. Her feet were dirty, as was her hair



and her hands. Her pants were ripped and cut into shorts, and her shirt was stained and thin. Her hair was cut short like a boys, and her face was drizzled with freckles.

“Who are you?” Eulalie asked. The girl looked up from gnawing on her nails and stared at Eulalie curiously.

“I’m Rainbow. Who are you?” She replied. Eulalie stood up and walked over to Rainbow.

“Your name is *Rainbow*?” She asked, circling the other girl. “Well how old are you *Rainbow*?”

“I’m twelve,” she replied, spitting out a chomped-off hang nail.

“Oh,” Eulalie cleared her throat, “Well I’m nine and a half. My grandmother lives by the river. Where does *your* grandmother live?” Eulalie asked.

“I don’t have a grandmother,” Rainbow replied, moving on to her next finger.

“Well then what about your mother? Does *she* live by the river?”

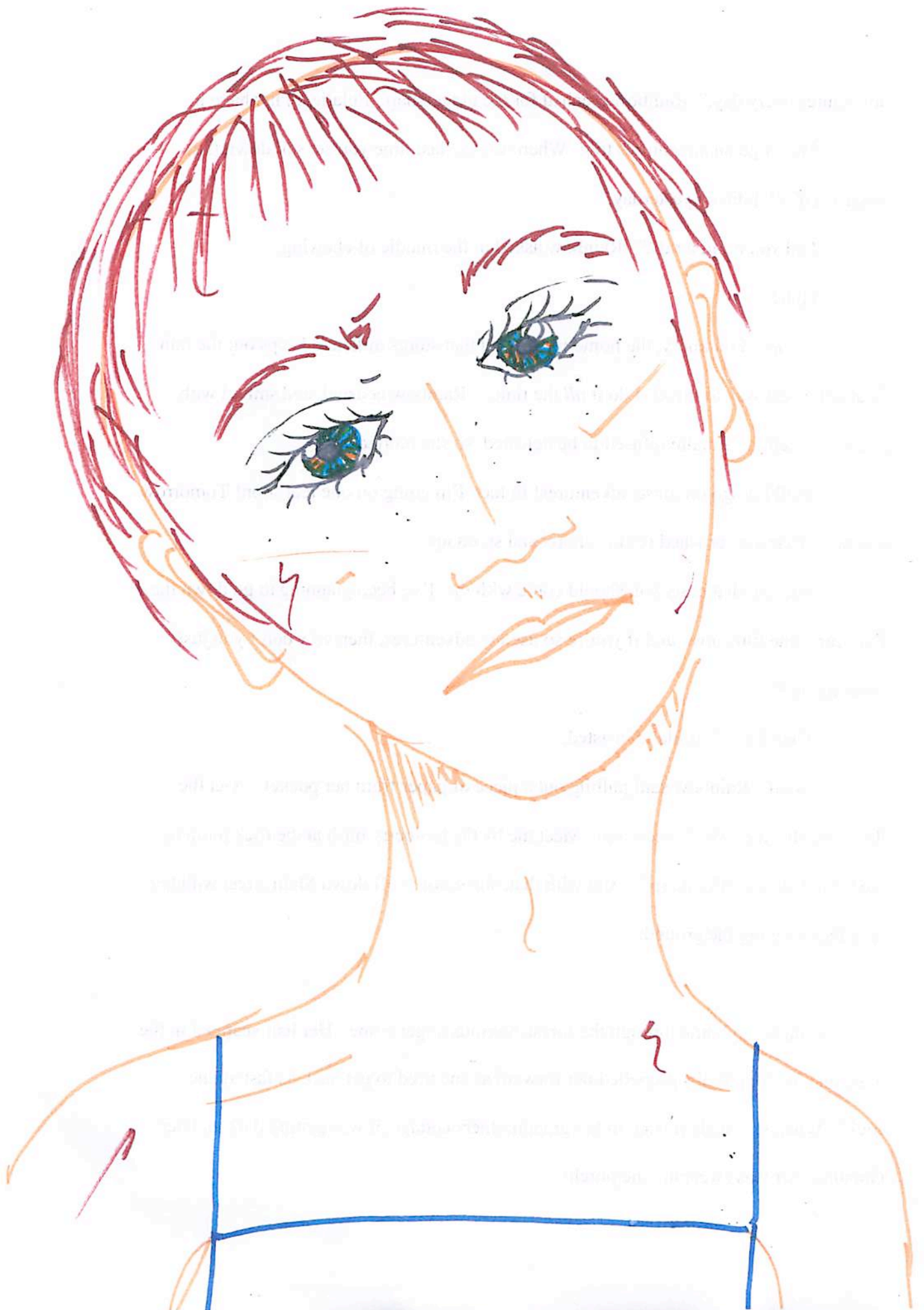
“Naw,” Rainbow shook her head. “I don’t got a mother neither. I live by the river though, if you must know.” Eulalie tried to not seem shocked by this. She sat down, placing the last part of her gingersnap in the grass next to her.

“Let me get this straight. Your name is Rainbow, and you live by the river, all by *yourself*?”

“That’s right. Well, mostly right. I do live with lots of animals too,” Rainbow began eyeing the gingersnap.

“Well...I’ve camped out by myself loads of times. I can make a fire too. What do you eat?” Eulalie bragged.

“I eat toads and ants and bark and mud. I eat whatever I please! And I go on



adventures every day.” Rainbow reached for the gingersnap. Eulalie let her have it.

“Well I go an adventures too! When was the last time you set sail down the mighty Yuba? I did so yesterday.”

“Did you build a raft?” Rainbow asked in the middle of chewing.

“Huh?”

“A *raft*. You know, the home-made kind that stores milk and keeps out the rain. That’s the best way to travel. I do it *all* the time.” Rainbow boasted, and smiled with great satisfaction. Eulalie refused to be defeated, so she blurted out

“Well I do go on those adventures! In fact, I’m going on one real soon! Tomorrow maybe!” Rainbow brushed off her shorts and stood up.

“Well, in that case, you should come with me. I’ve been planning to go down the river for some time now, and if you’re so used to adventures, then why don’t you just come along?”

“Then I will!” Eulalie insisted.

“Good,” Rainbow said pulling out a piece of paper from her pocket. “Get the things on this list. We’ll need ‘em. Meet me by the mulberry bush at the rock jump by the bridge at 4:30 AM sharp!” And with that, she scooted off down Main street with her bare feet scraping the ground.

Eulalie ran home through the forest, anxious to get home. Her hair snapped in the wind and her long limbs propelled her forward as she tried to get back as fast as she could. When she made it back to her grandmothers cottage, it was getting dark and her Grandmother was sweeping the porch.

"Now where have you been all day in this heat?" Her grandmother asked as she leapt up the stairs.

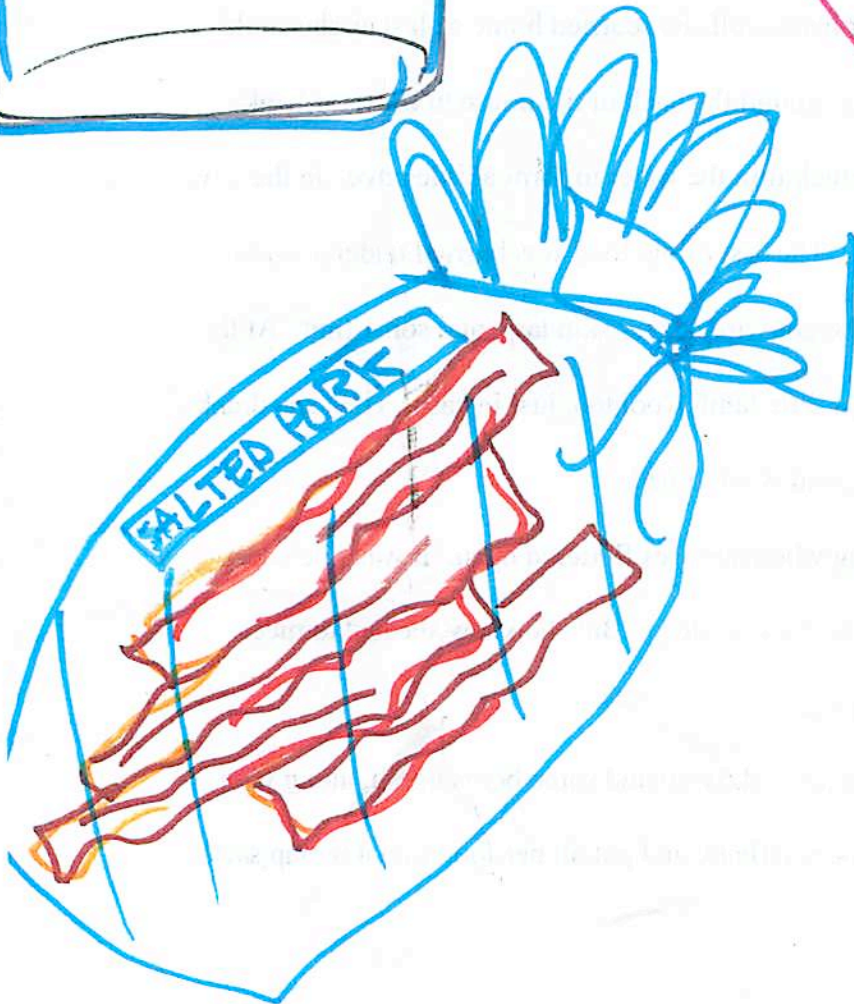
"I was at the River. Then I made a friend." Eulalie pounced into the house, trying to ignore the words of her grandmother;

"Just be careful when you talk to strangers, dear..."

Eulalie grabbed three dollars in pennies and nickels from her knapsack and scurried back out to town. She didn't want all the stores to close before it was dark, because she had a lot of items to pick up. Once in *Joe's Market*, she bought a jar of milk, peanut butter, honey wheat bread, corn meal, dried mango, cheese, and sugar cubes. She packed it all tightly into a paper bag then ran across the street to the butcher where she bought salted pork and salt. With her hands full she scurried home as fast as she could with what little light was left. She ran around the back of the house to the river bank where she took rocks and brush and stuck it in the water to form a little cove. In the cove she placed the pork, milk, and cheese. The rest of the food was buried under a stump. She then ran to the tool shed where she got wire, a deer skin tarp, and some flint. At the very last minute she decided to bring a little lamb wool too, just in case. Then she drank some hot cocoa, took a long salt bath, and went to bed.

The birds were hardly tweeting when her eyes fluttered open. It was pitch dark out and her body was begging her to go back to sleep. But she knew she had to meet Rainbow, and she wasn't going to be late.

She grabbed her knapsack and packed a coat and some boots into it, along with some paper and ink. She ran out to the riverbank and put all her food into a burlap sack



and then left a small note by her grandmothers bed;

I'll be back for supper, or perhaps supper tomorrow. I'm hunting for rabbits.

Signed, Eulalie.

The river was dark and cool by the mulberry bush at the bridge. Eulalie put down her knapsack and burlap bag and sat on a rock picking mulberries. She wasn't sure what the time was, and just as she started to get anxious she heard rustling - before Rainbow appeared out of the forest.

"You showed!" She explained, dropping a heap of fire wood. She had a big bag full of tools and food which she also dropped.

"Of course I showed! I'm not a scardy cat. So how are we getting down the river?" Eulalie asked, following Rainbow down to the bank.

"I got a raft hidden under where the bush meets the bridge post. Shouldn't be too soggy by now, it's a dry spot. Help me look..."

"But the water's freezing right now!"

"Nonsense. We're about the be on the river for days, git used to it!" Eulalie tried to ignore the *days* detail, and waded out into the water after Rainbow. It sent shivers up her back and her teeth began to chatter.

They rummaged through the rocks and iron at the base of the bridge. Wedged up against the rocks was a wide, flat raft built of drift wood and redwood slabs. They floated it over to the bank where their supplies were and pulled it onto the shore.

"Wow," Eulalie gasped, "What a beautiful Raft! But what if it rains?"

“In the summer? Well, I suppose its possible. But we aren’t even finished. You brought the wire right? I brought some wood. We gotta make a hut!” Eulalie helped Rainbow shape the large wood pieces into a small hut in the middle of the raft. The branches arched up and were tied at the tip, like a teepee. Then the base of the hut was tied in multiple places to the actual raft. They draped the deer skin tarp over the outside of the hut, and Eulalie packed the edges with lamb wool and leather.

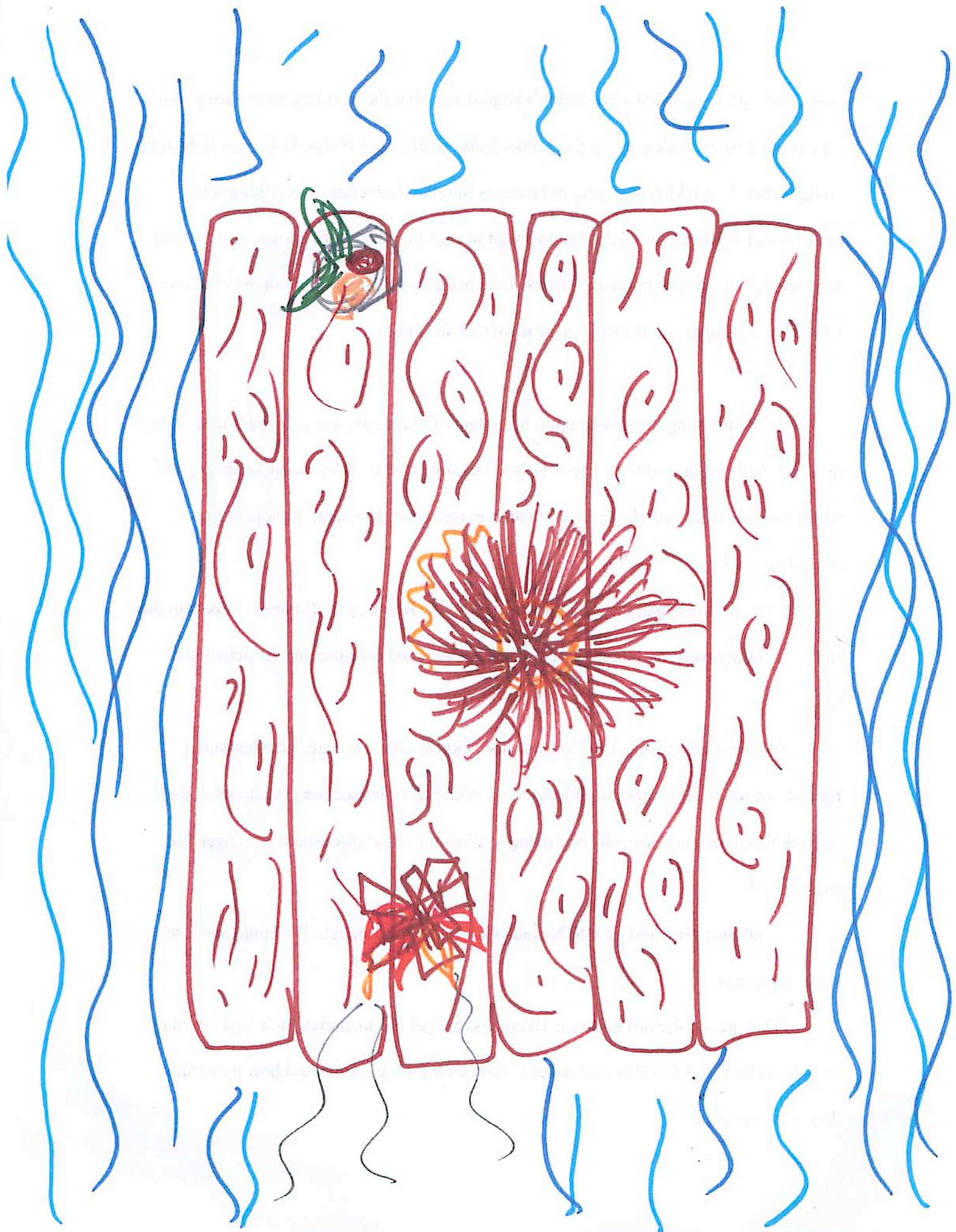
Then Rainbow took a bucket out from her sack and filled it with water and rocks before placing all the food in it. She hooked the bucket up to the edge of the hut, and covered it with wood. All the remaining supplies were stored in the edge of the hut.

“Well. Ready to set sail?” Rainbow asked, wiping her brow. It was now light out and the day smelled fresh and moist. The tall redwood trees reflected beautifully off the river, and the heat was slowly but steadily wafting in from the west.

“I’m ready as ever!” Eulalie replied. With that, they both shoved the raft onto the water, and pulled it out a bit down stream before jumping on. With that, they both grabbed sticks and sat on the front edge and paddled along gently down the river.

The first day was splendid. They sucked on sugar cubes, gnawed on dried mango, and sipped the chilly sweet milk. They played pebble-dice, and splashed each other from across the raft. Occasionally Eulalie would jump in the water and paddle along next to the raft, feeling the tiny trout swim against her toes. Other times Rainbow would try to use the wire to hook fish but only caught one - a tiny one.

As twilight approached, they made a fire outside the hut and roasted the dried pork with the honey wheat bread, and sucked on balls of peanut butter. They were both



very tired but very excited, and couldn't wait to see what the next day would bring. So far the ride had been slow along the gentle, warm river. They had seen townsfolk bathing along the bank, and kids swinging in branches into the deep ends. Everything was familiar and soothing, and they couldn't wait to venture even farther down. Just as they were snuggling into the hut under the rawhide blanket, Eulalie peered out over the warm fire to see a glimpse of the last edge of town that she knew.

In the morning they woke up to the sound of burnt charcoal and sweet rain. It had drizzled in the night, and their fire was dead but still potent. They ate some cheese and mulberries for breakfast, then rubbed their eyes and looked around. Eulalie didn't recognize anything.

"So...", she began coolly, "where are we now Rainbow?" Rainbow looked to the right side of the river, and then to the left. She scrunched her nose and scratched her head.

"Why! - we're almost in Nevada City. I know where we are," she reassured. Eulalie felt relieved but also slightly worried. She had promised her grandmother she'd be back for dinner, and she was beginning to think the adventure would be longer than she planned.

"Lets stop here and go into Nevada City for some oatmeal. We could also use some sugarcane."

They pulled the raft up to the riverbank and got out to stretch their legs. As they walked towards Nevada City they talked about their journey so far and how much fun they were having.

"You know, I've never had a friend before," said Rainbow. "At least, not a person-friend. I've only ever been around rabbits and beavers really."

"Yeah well, I have trouble keeping friends too," Eulalie replied. "My friends' parents always say I'm a rambunctious trouble-maker, and no one is ever allowed to come out and play with me."

"Yeah well, it's good we're friends then," Rainbow said, smiling.

"Yeah, you're right." Eulalie agreed.

Once they were in Nevada City they got chocolate milk and sugarcane for fifty cents. They were walking by a bead store when all of a sudden Eulalie was grabbed by the shoulder from behind. She yelped.

"Eulalie!! You had me worried sick!" Eulalie spun around to see her grandmother staring down at her, shaking. She began to cry as she grabbed Eulalie close. "Where have you been? I've been looking for you everywhere!"

"I was on the river...I was gonna come home..I promise!" Eulalie began sputtering, trying to explain herself. Her grandmother kneeled down, shaking her head.

"Don't ever do that again Lulu. You're just a little girl, and the Yuba gets messier and messier the farther you go down. What came over you?" At that moment she looked at Rainbow who was digging her foot into the gravel nervously. "Who are you!?" She asked.

"I...I'm rainbow," Rainbow stuttered. She turned bright pink and Eulalie could tell she was almost going to cry.

"It's not her fault Grandma. We wanted to go on an adventure together! Now

we're safe, and we can go home, it's okay..." Her grandmother stood up and brushed her apron off.

"*We?*" She asked.

"Er...yes. You, me...and Rainbow. Please Grandma, she has no home! And she didn't mean to take me away, I chose!" Eulalie's grandmother looked down at the two little girls, who were very different but very the same. Rainbow was truly everything that everyone didn't like about Eulalie, but was also just a little girl. Without Eulalie she would just be an incomplete half, and with Eulalie she could learn. She sighed.

"Well...why don't you show me where this raft is and we can talk about it."

With that she grabbed both the girls' hands and followed them down to the river. Eulalie had realized that every summer when she ran through the forest she was always looking for something, *anything*, and she could never find it. She had clambered over boulders and climbed the tree tops trying to satisfy her need for adventure. But she realized now that her search had ended in not only an adventure through nature, but to the beginning of a journey into friendship. She held her Grandmother's hand close and looked up at her with pleading eyes. Her Grandmother sighed and looked down at both girls, her anger going away. Who was she to send a little lost girl into the wild, and pretend that she had never wanted the same adventure both girls were looking for?

As they got to the raft she realized that two lonely little girls apart would be no good, and that both would be much happier together. So she agreed to let Rainbow stay with them, and they all got back on the raft and sailed a little more before it got too dark and was time for dinner.