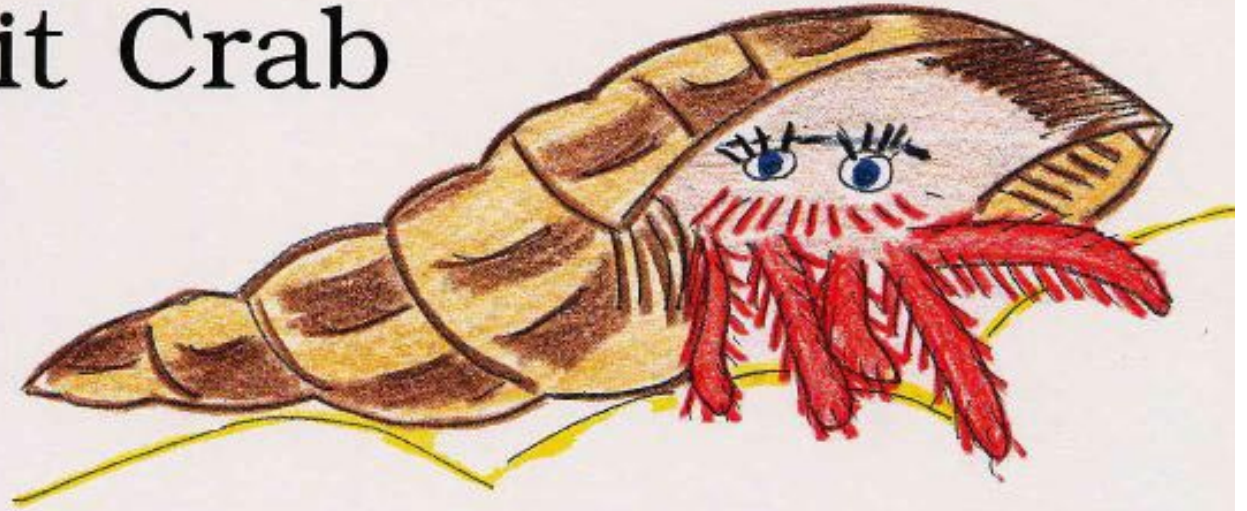
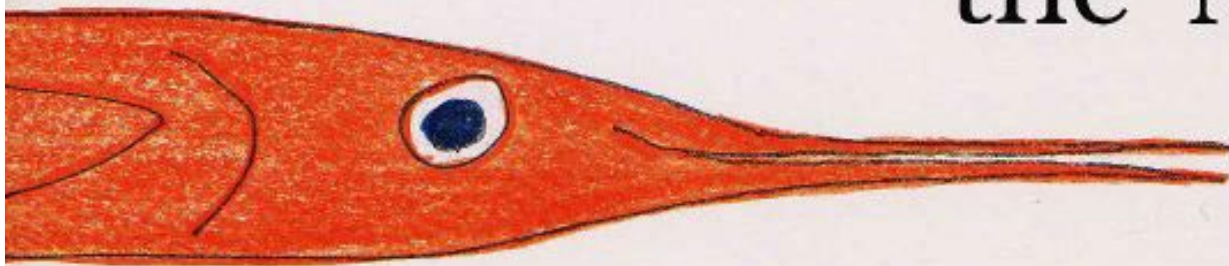


The Hermit Crab

and



the Needlefish



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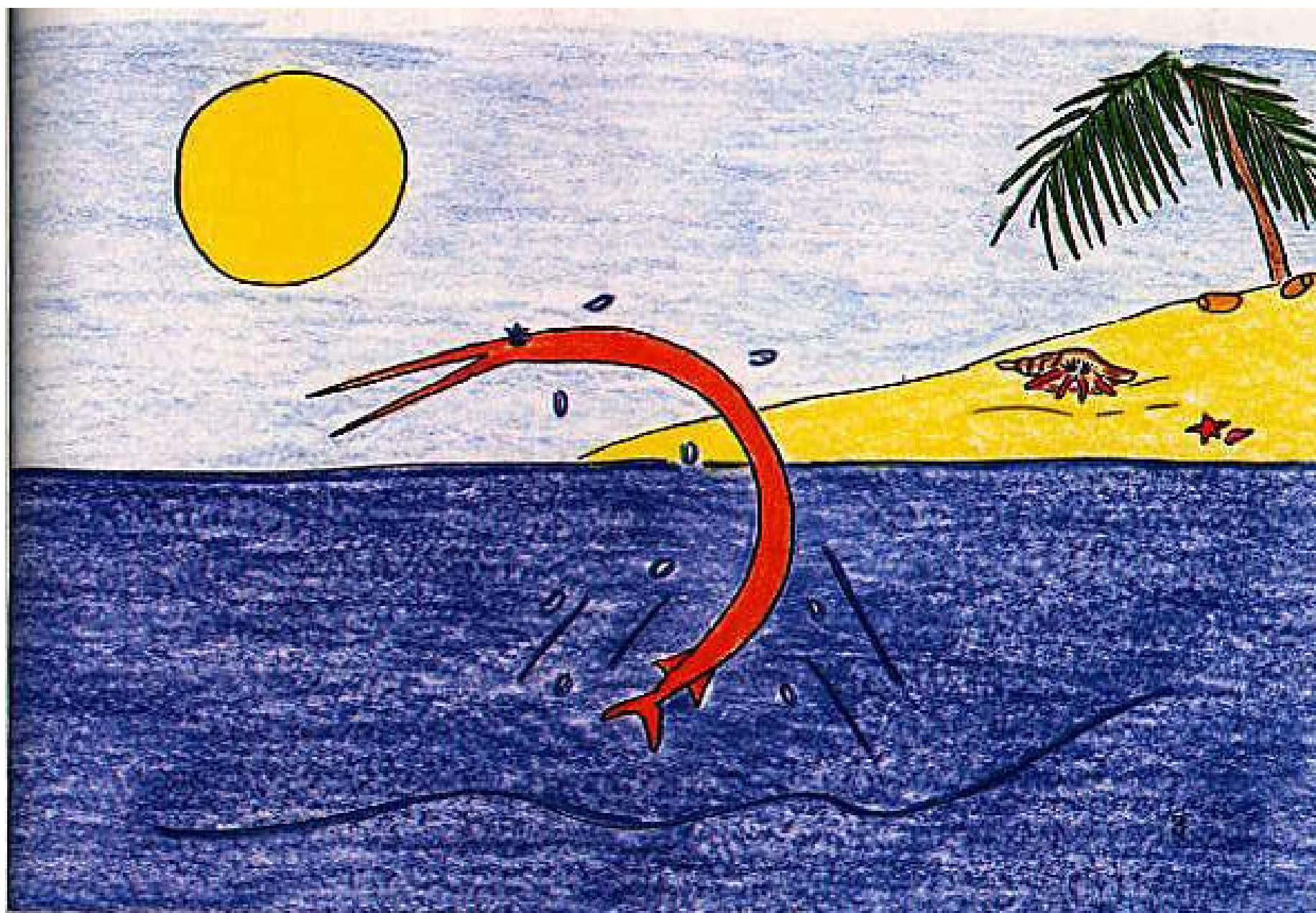
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The Hermit Crab and the Needlefish Ōm eo im tak eo

An Oral Tradition of the Marshall Islands
Juñ Bwebwenatō in Aelōñ Kein

Adapted by Jane Downing

LETAO



One bright sunny day the needlefish was swimming about the lagoon feeling very happy with himself.

But there was no-one to tell.

Then he heard a little sound from the island,

a small scratch, scratch, scratch.

It was a hermit crab moving slowly along the shore.

“I’m the fastest fish in the world” boasted the needlefish.

The hermit crab did not stop crawling.

“I can swim faster than a shooting star” shouted the needlefish louder.

Still the hermit crab did not stop.

He was not even listening.

The needlefish became very angry.

He was the fastest creature on the whole atoll

and the hermit crab who was so insignificant

he had to live in a thrown-away shell was paying him no attention.

Juōn jibboñōn emman tak eō ekar aō bajjek iarin āneo im emmōnōnō ippān make.

Ejjelok en ekar jelā ta eo ej lōmnake.

Ej Melanlok ak eroñ juon ainikien weerer ijo iāne,

Ainikien an om eo tōballok ijo ioon bōk iāne.

“Ña ij make wōt mōkaj jān aolep ek ipelaakin lal in,” tak eo ekar jājjāj. Ijoke om eo ekar jab ellok ak ekar tōbal maanlok wōt.

“Imōkaj jan iju ko rej wōtlok jān lañ,” tak eo ekar lamōj im kōlaplok ainikien.

Āinwōt ñe om eo en jab roñ, ekar jab bōjrak ak tōballok wōt.

Tak eo ejino an illu.

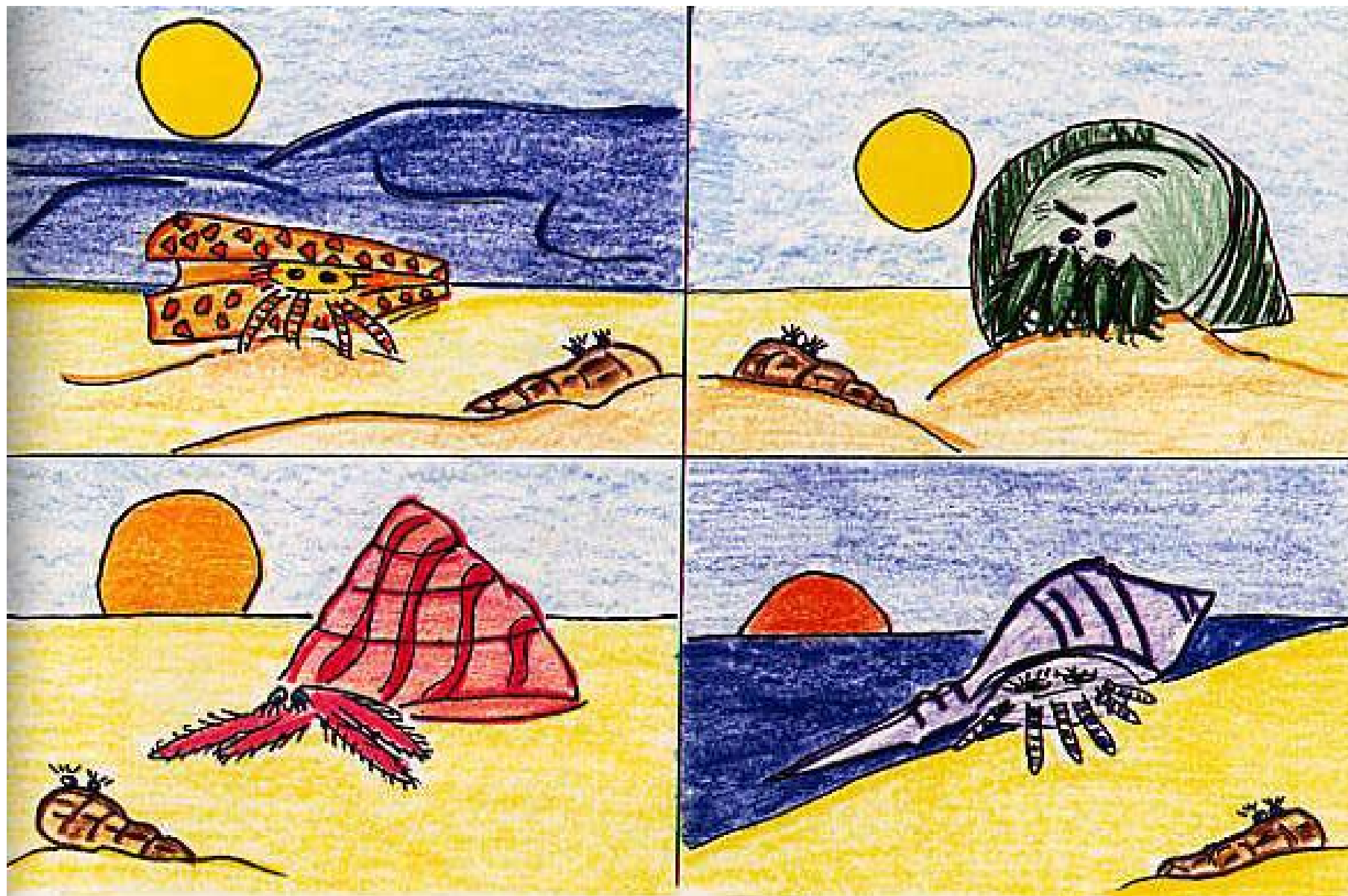
Ej make wōt mōkaj tata iaan aolep menin mour ko ipelaakin aelōñ eo im om eo ejjelok uwaan aikuj jokwe ilowaan libukwe bajjek ejjab roñjake tak eo.



“If we had a race around the atoll I would win” said the needlefish in anger. “Are you going to race me?” he taunted the hermit crab. “Yes” the hermit crab replied very quietly. The needlefish could not believe the hermit crab had answered and the answer had been yes!

“You can't win” the needlefish laughed. He was happy again because he was the fastest creature on the islands and in the lagoon And he loved to win. “We will race tomorrow” said the hermit crab “Then we will see who is fastest.” On this, the hermit crab and the needlefish agreed.

“Elaññe kōjro naaj iaekwōj im kapoole ānin inaaj mōkaj jān eok,” tak eo ekar illu im ba. “Kookōnaan ke iwekwōj ippa?” ekar kōnnan ilo an kalluik om eo. “Aaet,” ekar mōkaj an om eo iuwaak. Ke tak eo ej roñ an om eo iuwaak, ekar jab tōmak ñan jidik. “Koban wōt im ban wiin,” tak eo ekar ettōñ ilo an ba. Ekar kanooj utiej buruōn tak eo kōnke ej ba ej make wōt iāne im barāinwōt ilo malo in aelōñ eo. “Kōjro naaj iaekwōj ilju im lale wōn wōt eo emōkaj tata,” om eo ekar jiroñlok tak eo. Tak eo ekar rejtake lōmnak eo ñan aerro iaekwōj raan eo juon.



The needlefish swam away.
He was happy and confident.
The hermit crab moved away too.
He did not like being teased
and he did not like a big-mouth.
He had lots of work to do.

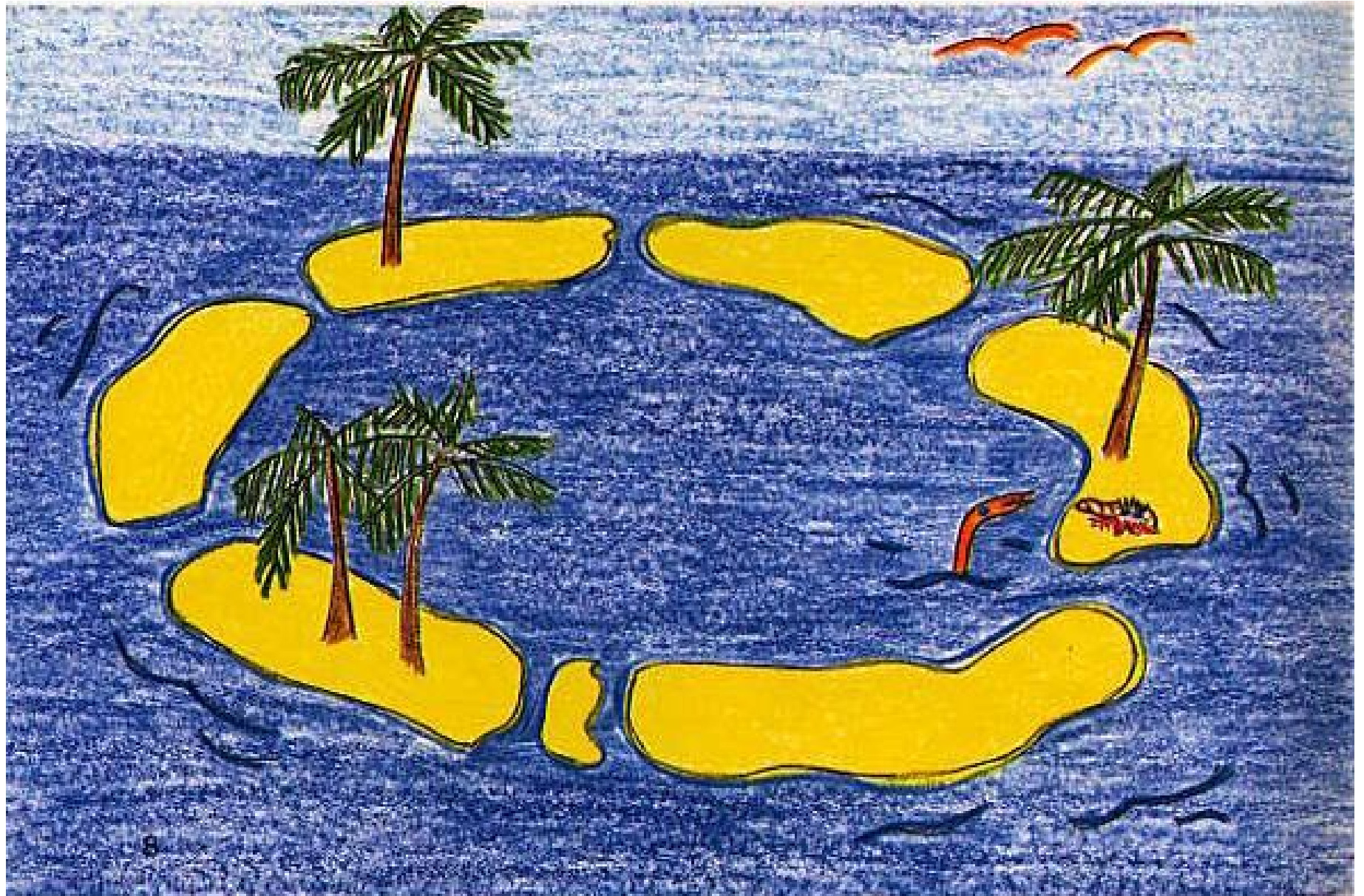
The hermit crab visited all his relatives
on all the islands
in the whole atoll.
To his mother, his father, his sister, his
brother
his uncle, his aunt, his cousins
his children and his grandchildren
To all his relatives he said one thing:
“Tomorrow when you hear a shout from
the lagoon, a shout asking:
‘little crab where are you?’
Answer quickly,
Answer: ‘here I am, here in front of you.’ ”
The family understood.

Tak eo ekar wanmetolok. Ekar kanooj
buñ buruōn im kōjatdikdik ippān.
Om eo ekar bar emmaküt. Edike
kajirere im kain ne elap loñin.

Om eo ekar pukotlok om ko jet ilo aneo
im ipelaakin aelōñ eo.

Ekar pukotlok jinen, jemān, ledik ro im
ladik ro jein im jatin, leo rükoreān,
kōrā ro jet jinen, im ro jet nukwin,
ajri ro nejin im ro jibwin.
Ekar jiroñlok er juon wōt men.

“Ilju, elaññe kom naaj roñ juon ainikien
jān lojet ej kajjitōk ‘kopād ia le om?’
komin kab mōkaj im iuwaak im ba,
‘ña e ije imaam.’ ”
Aolepān ro nukwin rōmelele.



The next morning the hermit crab waited for the needlefish on the shore. The needlefish appeared as a streak of lightening on the water
“A race, a race” he was laughing.
“Off we go.”

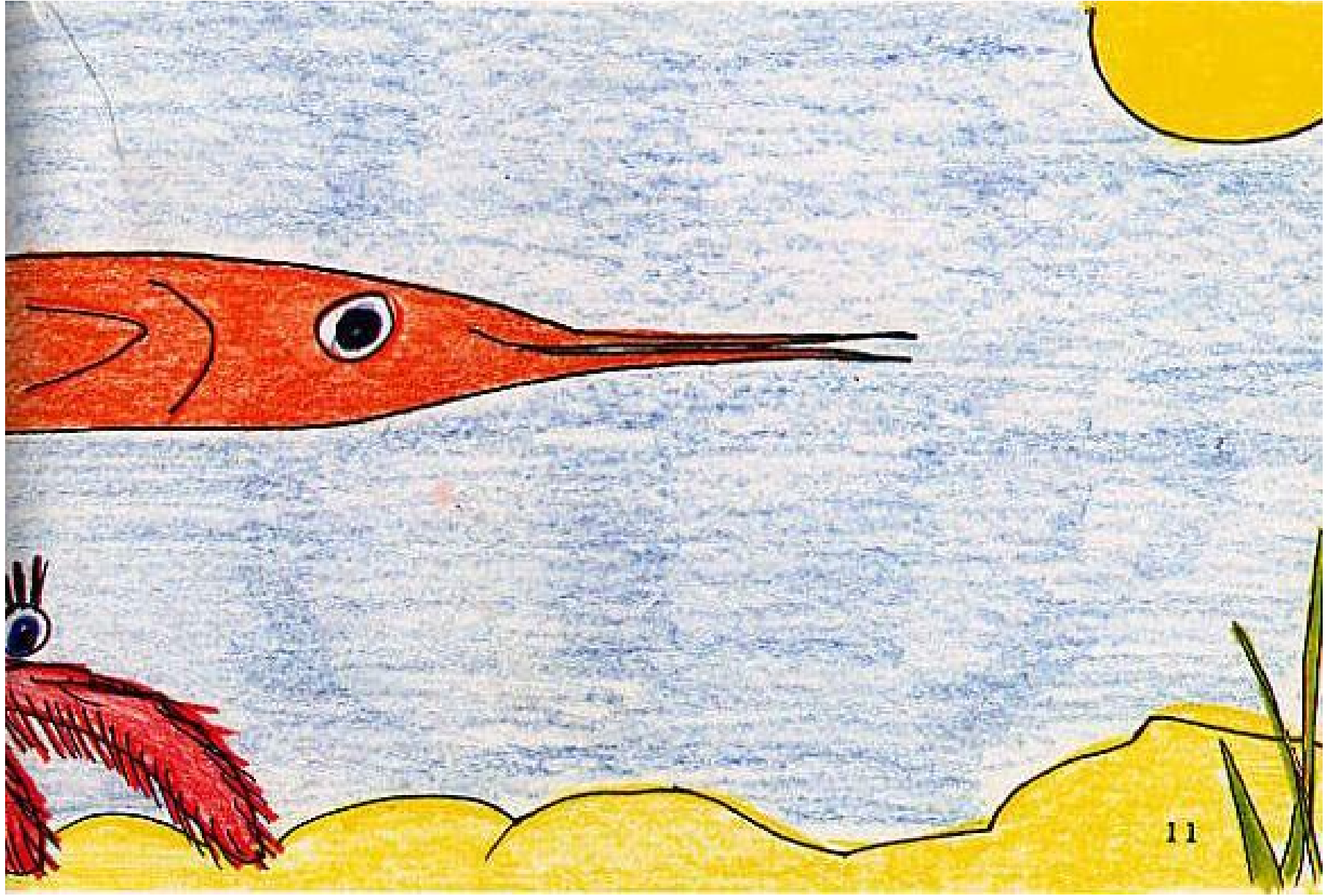
“Wait” commanded the hermit crab in his little voice.
“Wait? You do not want to race?
Are you scared of losing?” teased the needlefish.

“The lagoon is round” continued the hermit crab in his slow, methodical way
“We will travel along the shore starting here finishing here.”
“Yes, yes.”
The needlefish was impatient to start.

Jibboñōn raan eo rej tōn iaekwōj, etto wōt ke om eo ekar ilām pād ioon bok im kōttar tak eo.

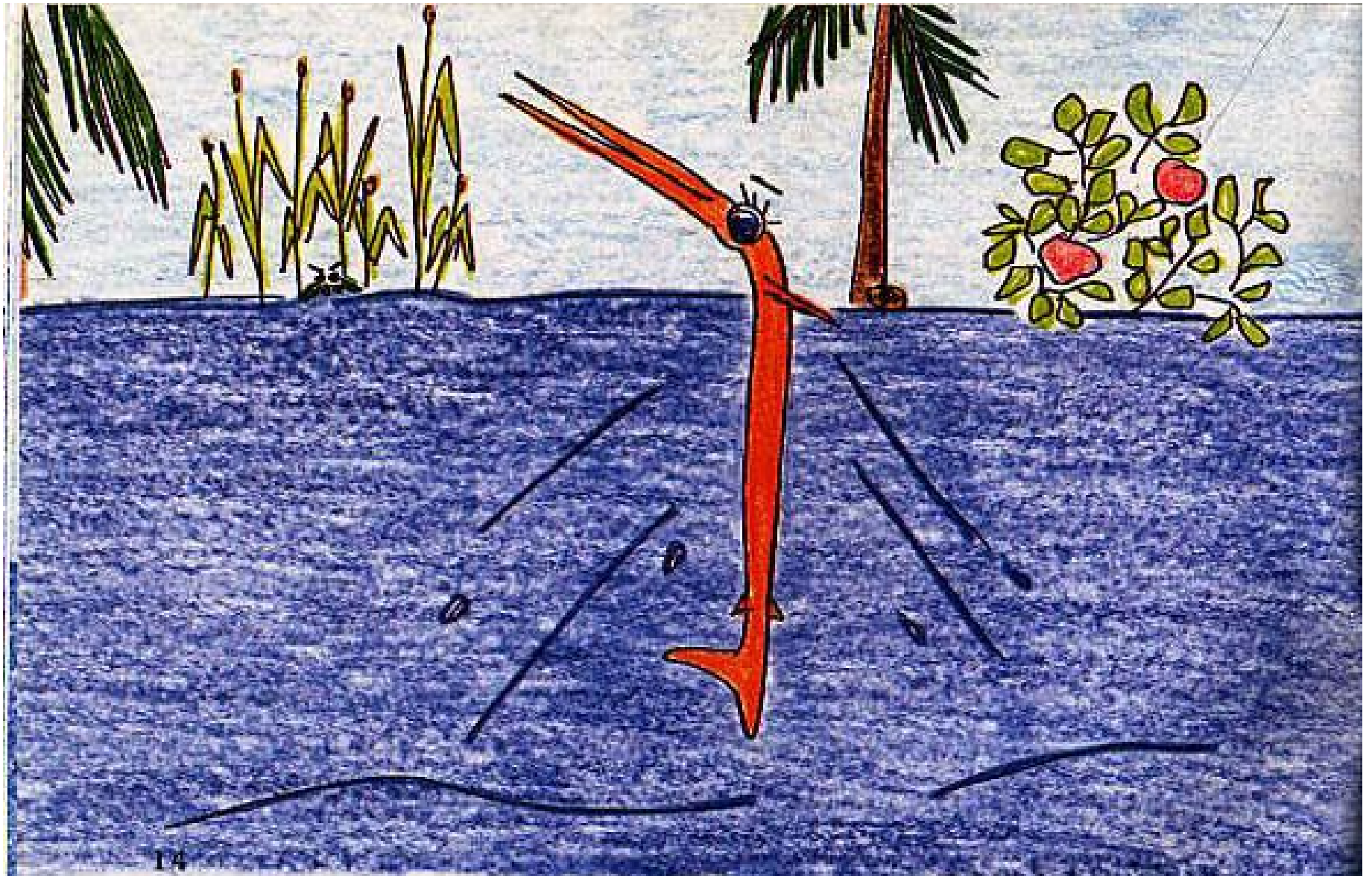
Ejjab to tak eo ej jājjāj tok ioon aejōt tok. Ekar ettōñ dikdik im ba, “Iaekwōj, iaekwōj,”

“Kōjro moot.”
“Kōttar,” om eo ekar jiroñlok tak eo.
“Kōttar,” kwoj jab kōnaan iaekwōj ippa ke?”
“Ta komijak in luuj ke?, tak eo ekar jiroñlok om eo.
“Meto ne elap,” om eo ekar ba,
“Kōjro naaj ettōr wōt ije iparijet, jino ijin im bōjrak ijjuweo,” om eo ekar ba.
“Iññā, iññā,” tak eo ekar kijerjer in jino ettōr.



The hermit crab got to the point.
“I will not know if you are travelling the same distance that I, on land, will have to.
You could just swim around here, back and forth, back and forth, and claim you won.”
“A good idea” said the needlefish. “I wish I’d thought of it.”
“So you cannot cheat we must talk to each other along the way.
Each time you come to an island call out to me.
Ask: little crab where are you?”
The needlefish agreed though he thought he’d have to shout very loudly for the hermit crab to hear him.
The hermit crab would be so far behind.
“Are we ready now?” he asked.
“Yes.”
And they were off.

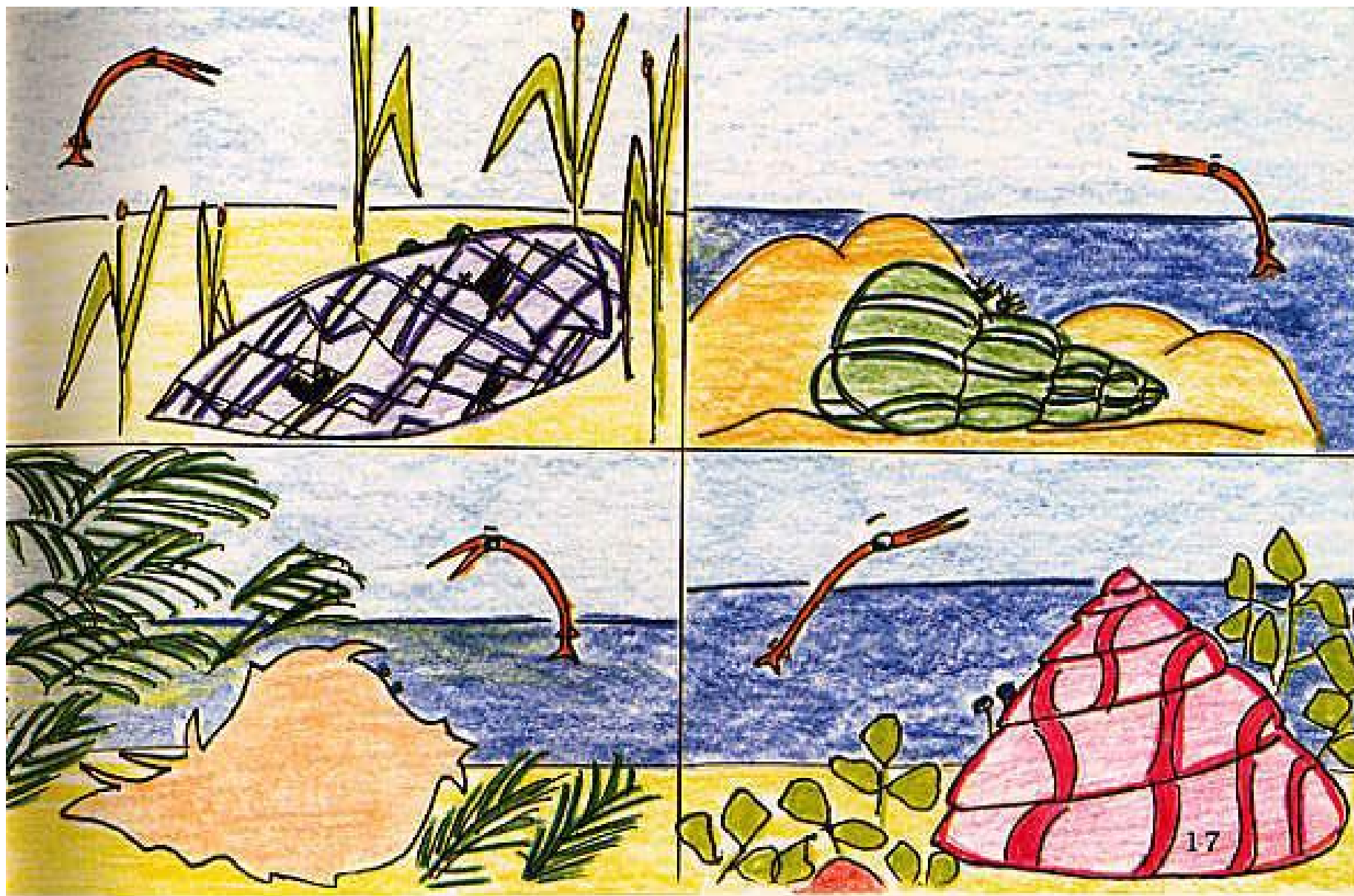
Om eo ekar tōbballok ñan ijo rej jino iaekwōj eo jāne.
“Inaaj jaje elaññe joñan kōtaan eo kwoj ettōr ie ej joñan wōt ijo iāne inaaj ettōr ie. Kwomaroñ ettōr to ettōr tak ijin im bajjek erroolol ie im ba kowiin.”
“Ij rejtake eok kōn lōmnak in am,” tak eo ekar ba. “Etke ikar jab baj lōmnake in wāween.”
“Ilo wāween in kwoj amin mone eō kōnke kōjro naaj kōnaan ippān doon ilo arro iaekwōj.
Elaññe kwonaaj tōpartok kijjien ne āne, kwonaaj lamōje eō im ba, “ewi kwe le om, kopād tok ia kiiō?”
Tak eo ekar reel ilo lōmnak eo an om eo, ijoke ekar ba ippān make bwe enaaj aikuj in lamōj im kolap ainikien bwe om eo en roñ kōnke enaaj bat im etto liklok im eban roñ an kuri.
“Kwo pojak ke kiiō,” om eo ekar kajjitōk.
“Aaet, ipojak.” Innam erro kar jino ettōr.



The needlefish leapt into the air
Flying high through the sky
And down into the water miles ahead.
“I’m winning” he was shouting as he swam
through the crystal blue water.
“And little crab where are you?” he cried
toward the shore.
“Here I am. Here in front of you.”

In front of him!
The needlefish stopped.
He was astonished.
The hermit crab was winning.
He had to go faster.
So he did.
He swam faster
he leapt higher
he was the fastest creature on the
atoll.

Tak eo ekar kālōñlok im kālōk
imejatoto im lak tubar, elukkuun
mootlok imaan.
“Iwiin,” tak eo ekar lamōj ke ej kaiüm
metolok ñan ijo imeto.
“Kopād ia le om,” tak eo ekar reānelok
im āñiñini om eo.
“Ña e ije, ij pad wōt imaam,” om eo ekar
lamōjlok.
Ke tak eo ej roñ ekar jab tōmak im ekar
bōjrak. Ekar kanooj in bwilāñ.
Emōkaj om en kōn menin ij aikuuj in
buul lok jidik bwe in le jāne.
Tak eo ekar kōmaat joñan im bar ettōr
im kālōk ioon dan.

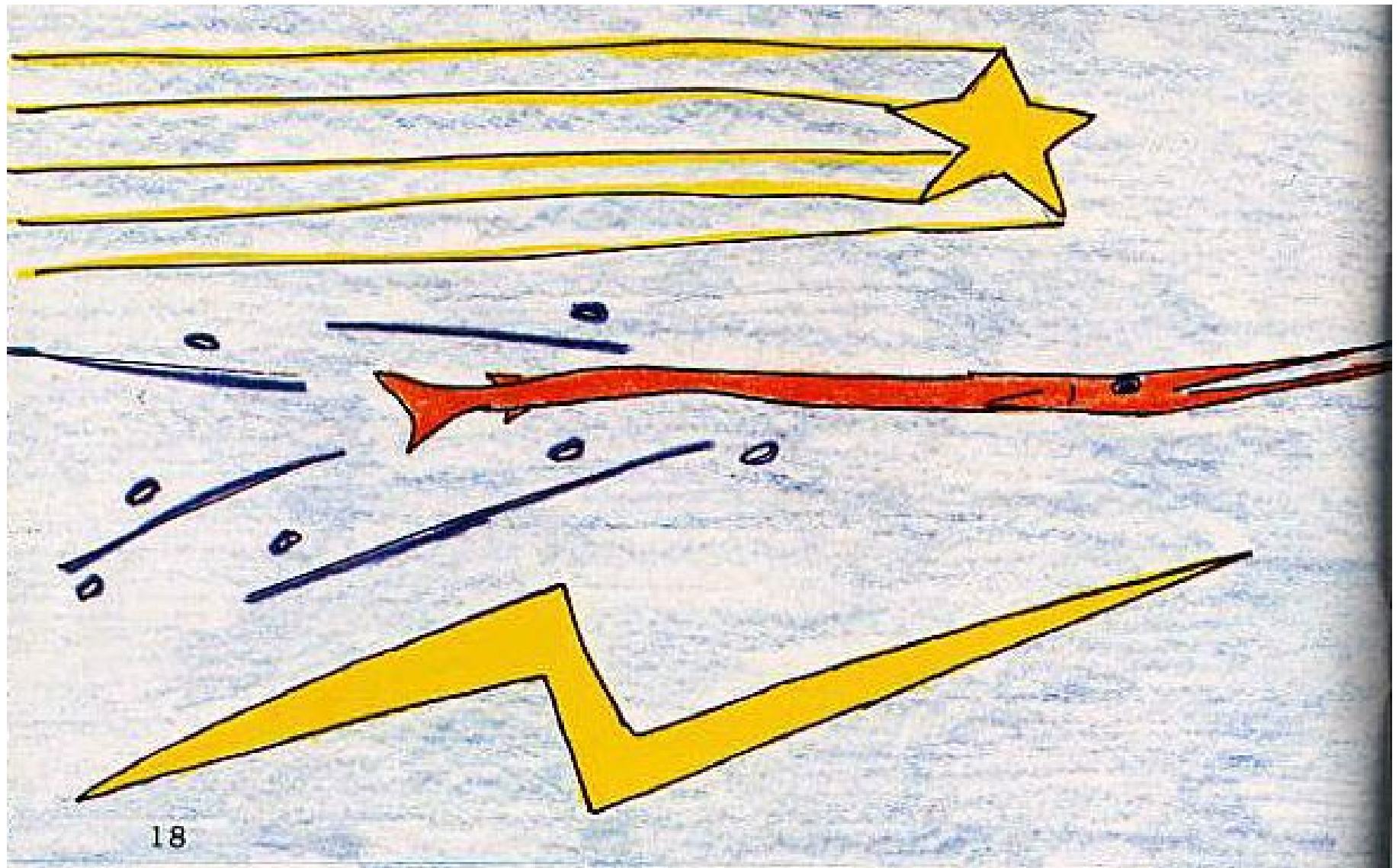


The needlefish came to another island.
“Little crab where are you?” he cried
certain he was now winning.
“Here I am. Here in front of you.”
In front of him!
The needlefish could not believe it.
But he had to believe his own ears.
The hermit crab was winning.
He had to go faster.
So he did.
He swam faster
he leapt higher
he was the fastest creature on the
atoll.

But each time he came to another island
he cried “Little crab where are you?”
And the answer came from the shore
“Here I am. Here in front of you.”

Ke tak eo ej tōpar ne āne im kūr om
eo, om eo ebar lamōj im ba, “Ña wōt e
ije, ij le wōt imaam.” Ke tak eo ej bar
roñ ekar jab tōmak ñan jidik. Ijoke,
kōn an kar bar roñ an om eo iuwaak
im ba ej le wōt imaan, ej bar kōmaat
an maroñ im ettōr im bar kālok ioon
dān.

Aolep iien ñe ej tōpar arin ne āne im
kūr om eo epād ia, juon ainikien ej
lamōj im ba, “Ña wōt e ije, ij le wōt
imaam.”

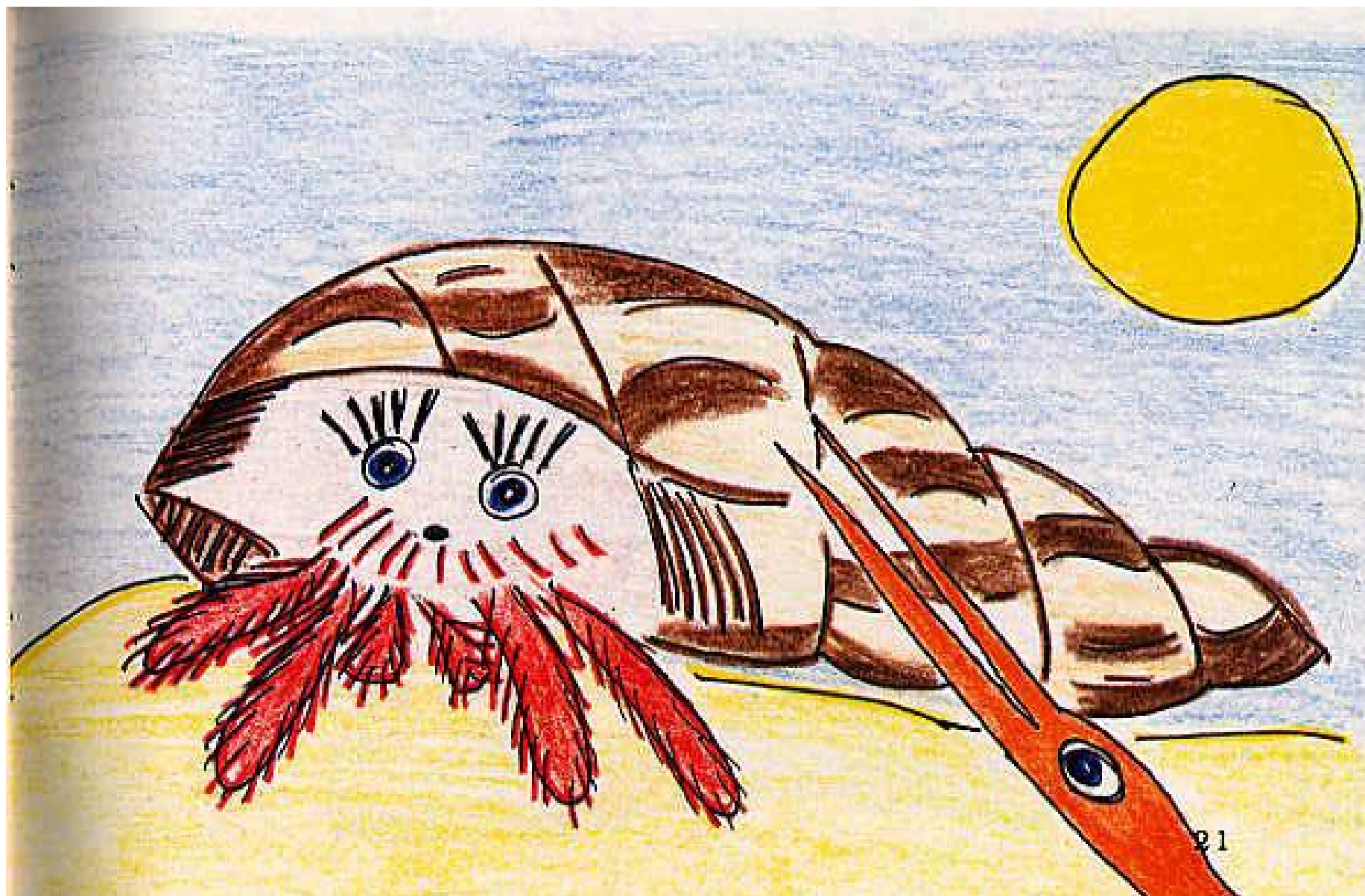


The needlefish was exhausted from
swimming
faster than a shooting star,
faster than lightening.
But he could see the last island.
“Little crab where are you?”
“Here I am.”
The hermit crab was on the last island
too.
But he was not in front of him. “I can win.
I will win” cried the needlefish.
And he swam to the finishing point.

Tak eo kiiō ekar kanooj in mōk im
ikkijelok kōn an kate im buul ettōr.
Kiiō mōttan wōt āne eo āliktata. Ke ej
bar kūr om eo im kajjitōk epād ia, om
eo ej bar ba ej le wōt imaan.

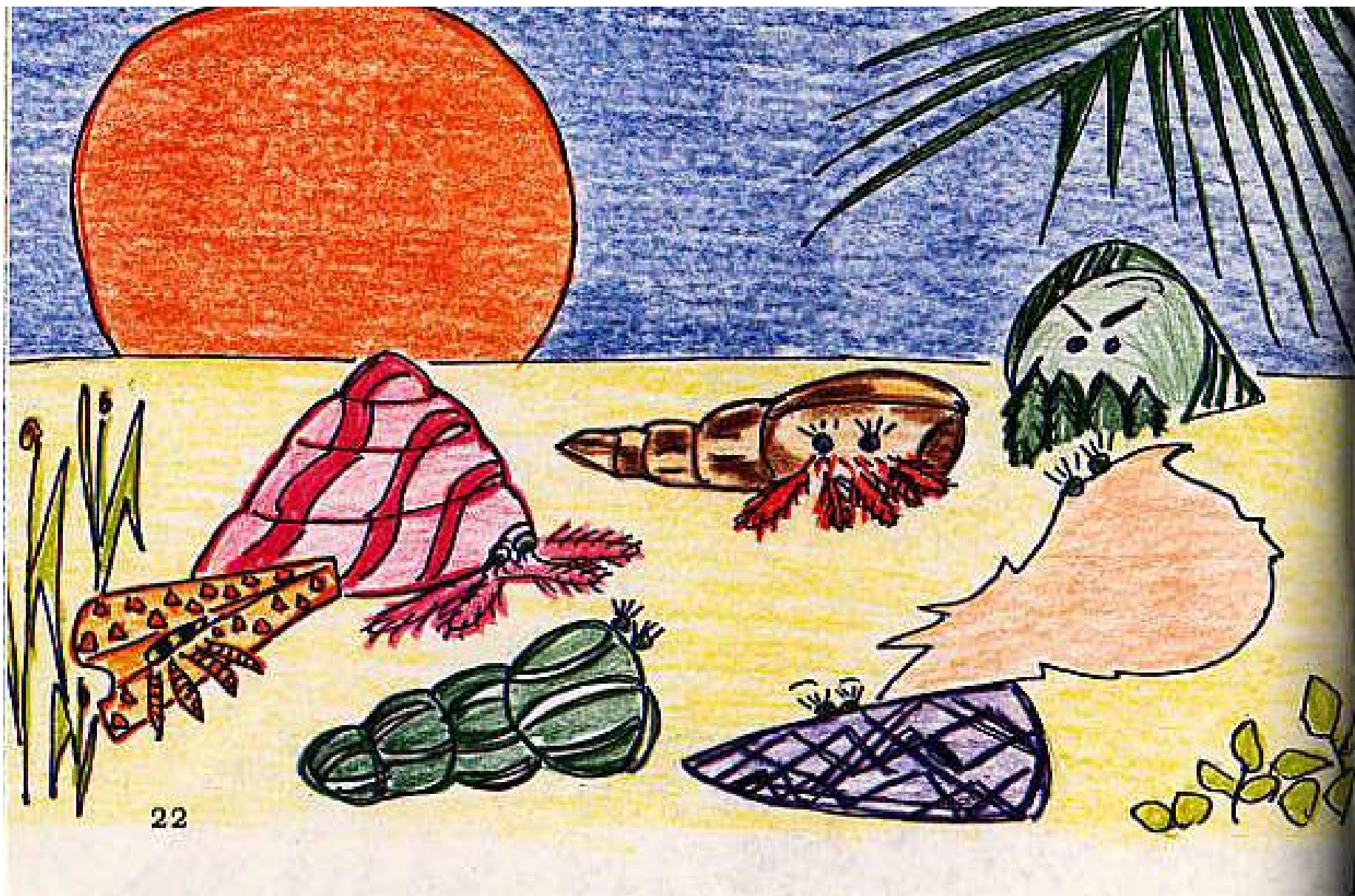
Om eo ekar bar pād ilo āne eo āliktata,
ekar jab pad aolep iien imaan tak eo.

“Imaroñ wiin, im inaaj wiin,” tak eo ekar
ba. Ekar ba im kaieoklok jemlokin ijo
rej kōttōparlok.



“W hat took you?” asked the hermit
crab from the shore.
The hermit crab was not even breathing
heavily.
The needlefish let out a shriek of pain
and disappeared below the surface of
the lagoon
never to be seen
never to tease
again.

“T a eo ekar karumwiji eok?” om eo
ekar jijōt ioon bok im jiroñlok tak eo.
Ejjab mejān mōk im ikkijelok ñan
jidik.
Tak eo euwaak ilo an mōk im jakolok
ibulōn dān im ñan rainin jeban bar
maroñ loe, im kōmman kōjak ippān.



That night the hermit crab celebrated
with all his family.

Young cousin giggled

because he'd forgotten his lines at
the last moment.

The family joined him in laughing.

They were very happy.

They may not be the fastest creatures on
the atoll

But together they had won the race.

Joteenlok eo om eo ekar kürtok aolep
ro nukwin erwōj emmōnōnō ippān
doon kōn wiin eo an.

Leo rilikin ekar ettōñ kōnke ekar
melokloke ijo kwonaan ke ej itōn
jemlok iaekwōj eo.

Erwōj kar aolep ettōñ im mōnōnō ippān
doon.

Emaroñ jab er ro remōkaj tata iaan
aolep mennin mour ko ilo āneo,
bōtaab kōn aer kar bōro wōt juon raar
maroñ wiini iaekwōj eo.

LETAO
