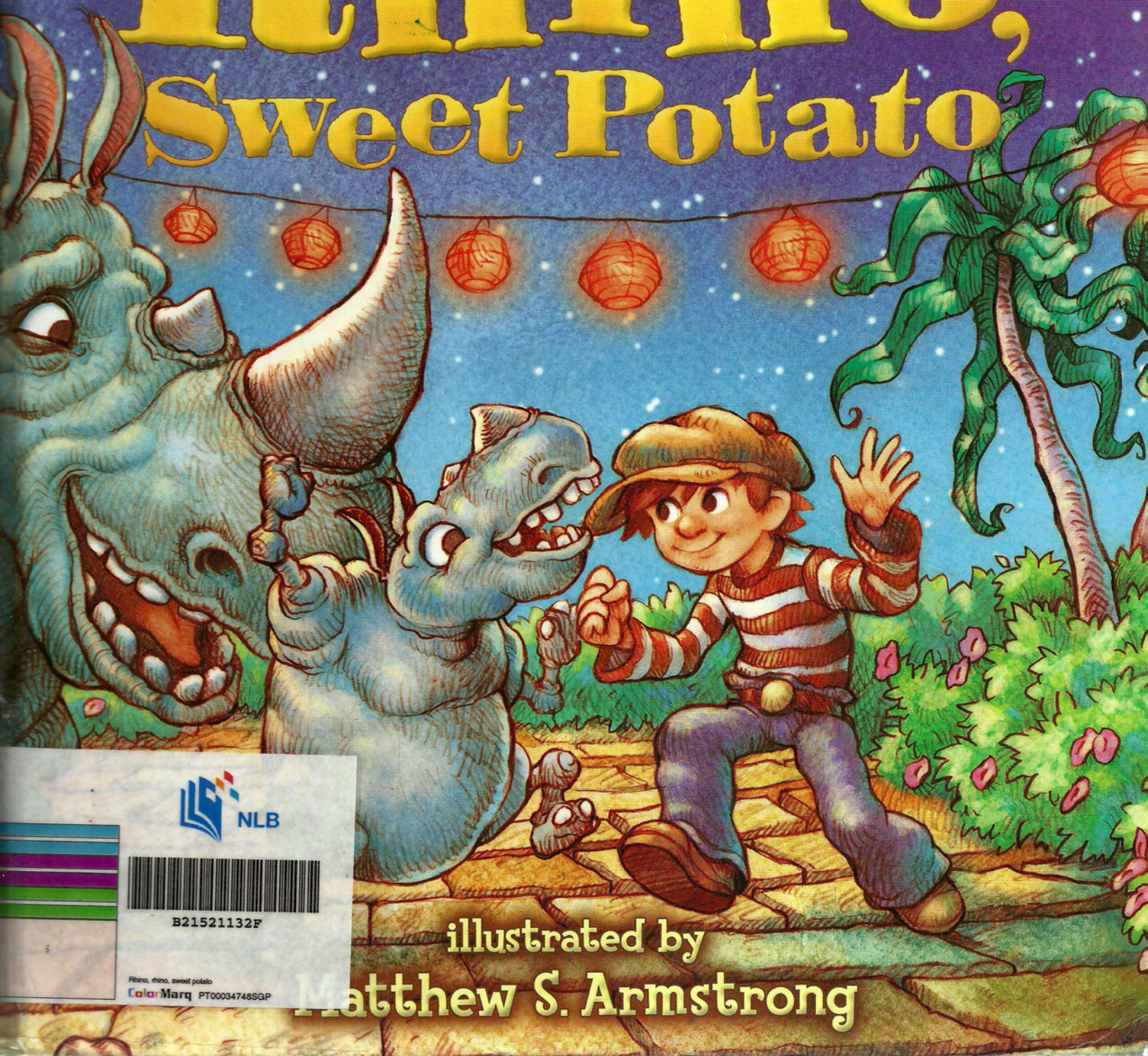


Francine Prose

# Rhino, Rhino, Sweet Potato



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Rhino, rhino, sweet potato  
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illustrated by  
**Matthew S. Armstrong**



Francine Prose

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# Rhino, Rhino, Sweet Potato

Francine Prose

illustrated by  
Matthew S. Armstrong

HarperCollins Publishers



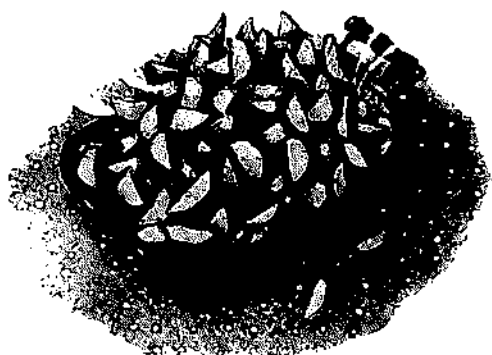






**I**n a village far away  
Lived a little boy.  
The name of the village was Sweet Potato.  
Our hero's name was Roy.

The way their village got its name  
Everybody knew.  
Sweet potatoes were what they ate.  
Sweet potatoes were what they grew.

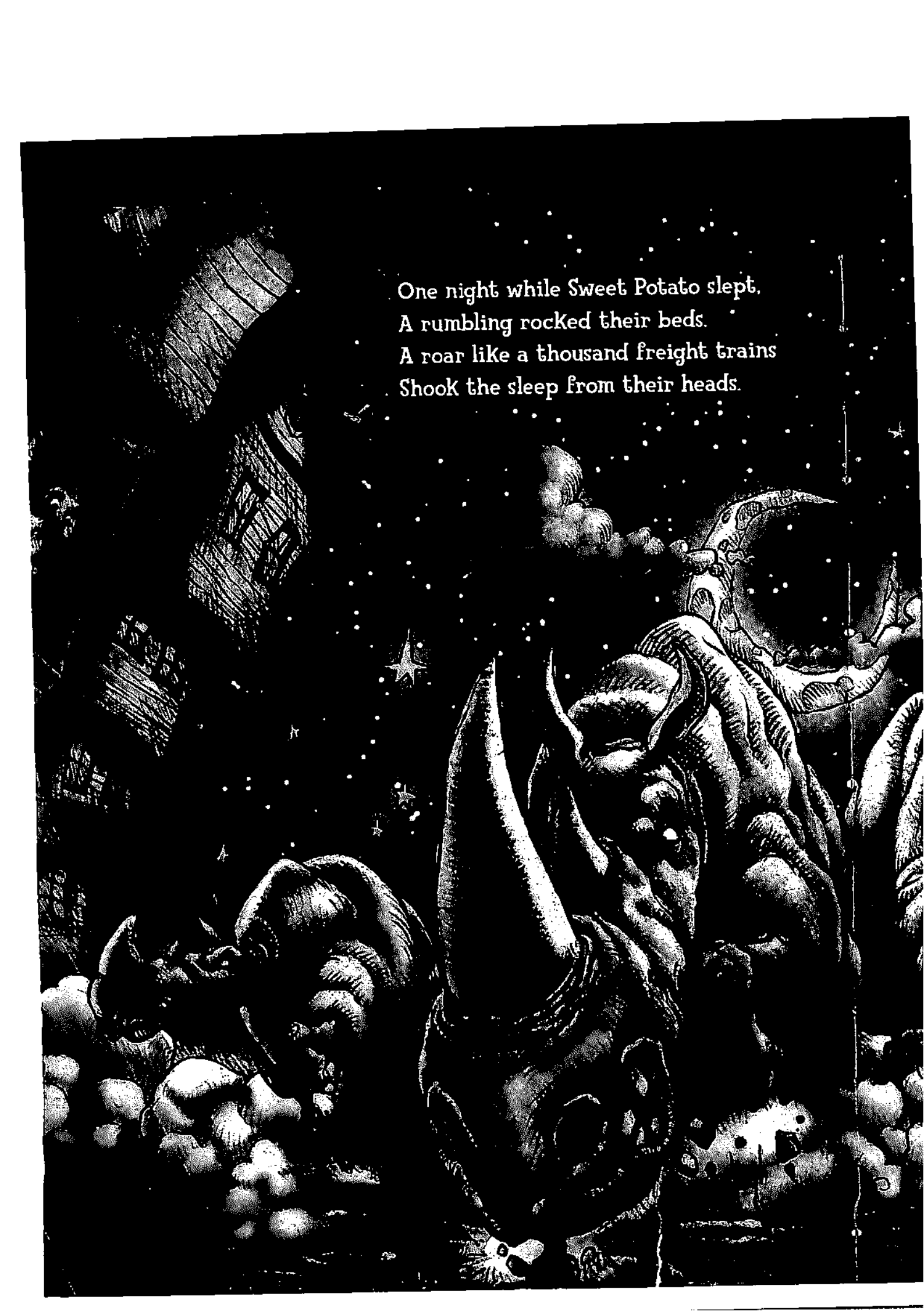


Sweet potato dumplings, sweet potato pies,  
Sweet potato noodles, sweet potato fries,  
Sweet potatoes on the grill, sweet potato ice,  
Sweet potato candy, sweet potato rice.

They farmed the sweet potato patch  
All the warm day long.  
And while they worked, they sang  
This sweet potato song:



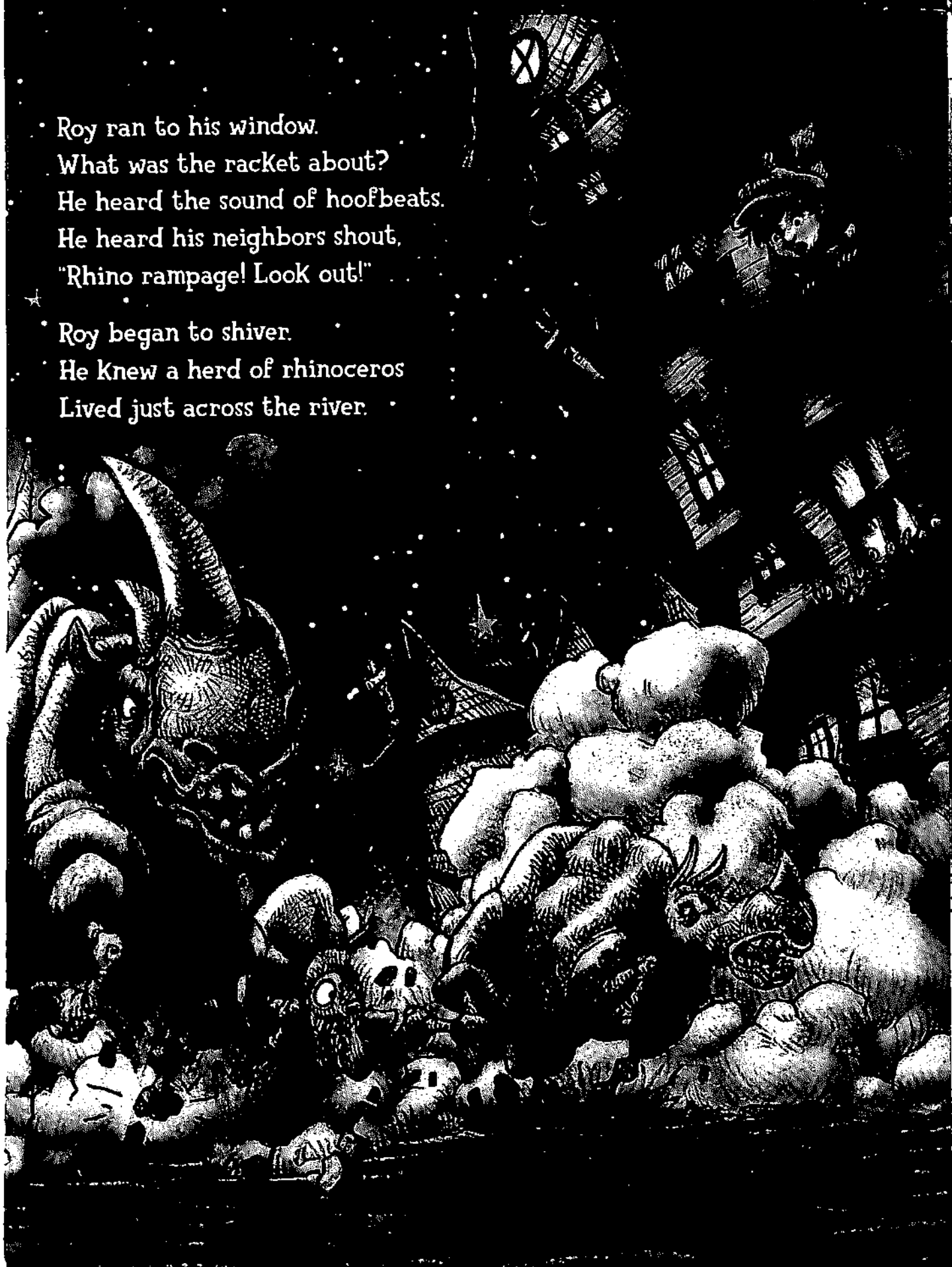




One night while Sweet Potato slept,  
A rumbling rocked their beds.  
A roar like a thousand freight trains  
Shook the sleep from their heads.

Roy ran to his window.  
What was the racket about?  
He heard the sound of hoofbeats.  
He heard his neighbors shout,  
"Rhino rampage! Look out!"

Roy began to shiver.  
He knew a herd of rhinoceros  
Lived just across the river.







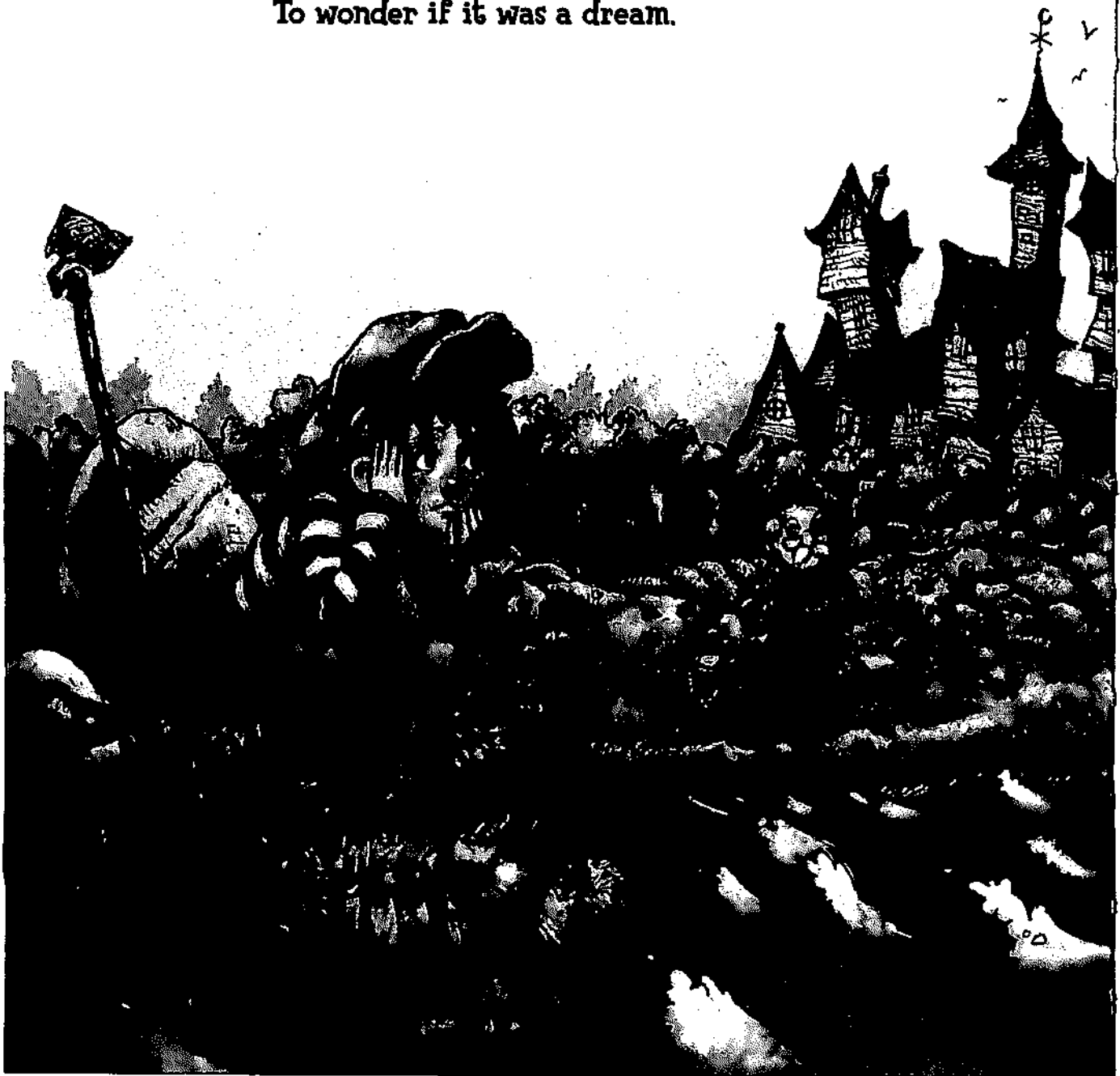
The rhinos were never so bold  
The rhinos were never so bold.

But now the hungry rhinos  
Dug up the plants and went on  
Eating every potato,  
Till every potato was gone.





At last the rhinos turned around  
And swam back across the stream,  
Leaving the frightened villagers  
To wonder if it was a dream.



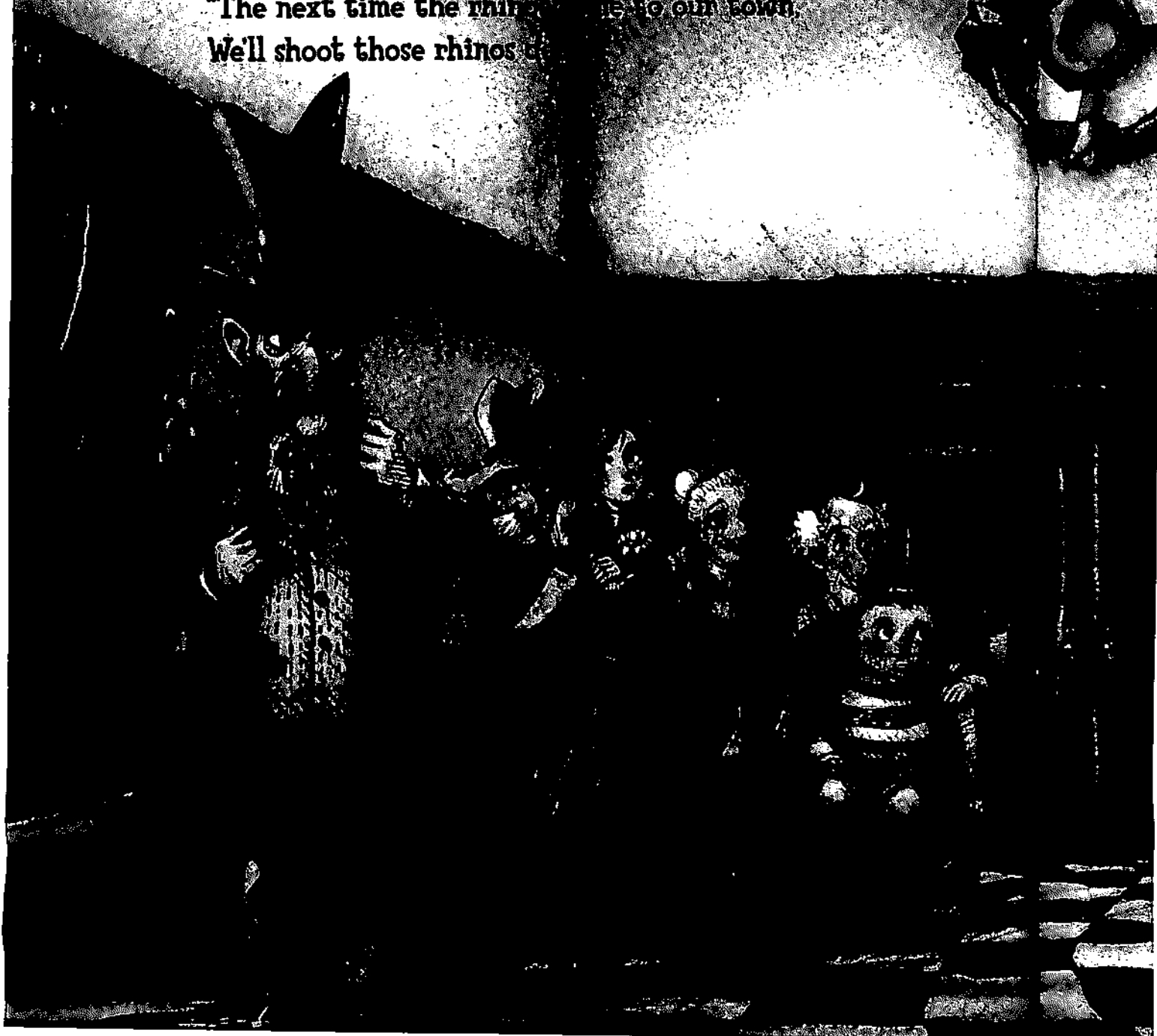


Only the torn-up leaves and vines  
In the sweet potato field  
Proved that it was no nightmare.  
The runaway rhinos were real.

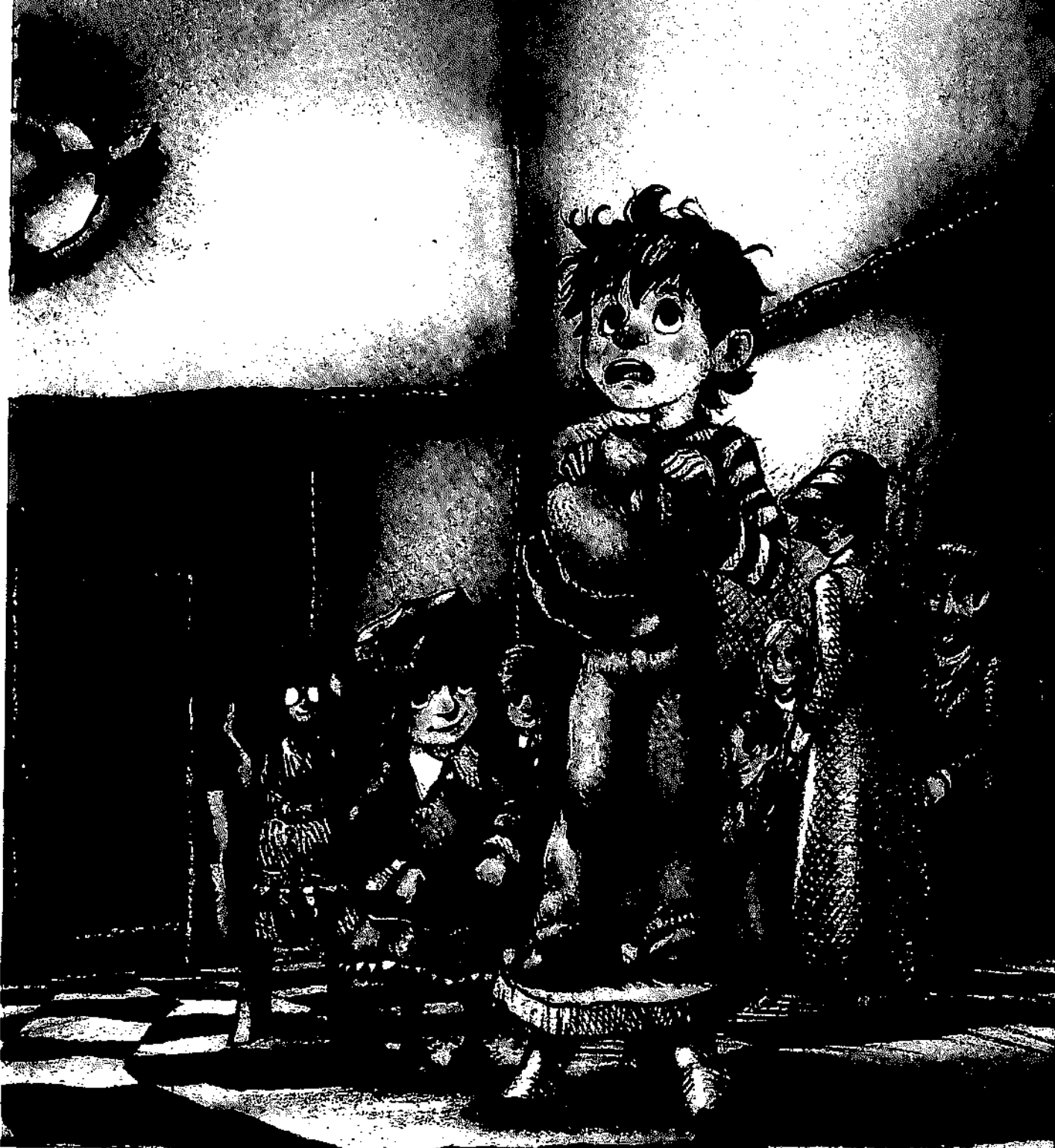


Sweet Potato held  
To decide what to do.  
Everyone in town was  
Roy attended, too.

Everybody talked at once  
Till finally someone said  
"The next time the rhinos come to our town,  
We'll shoot those rhinos dead."

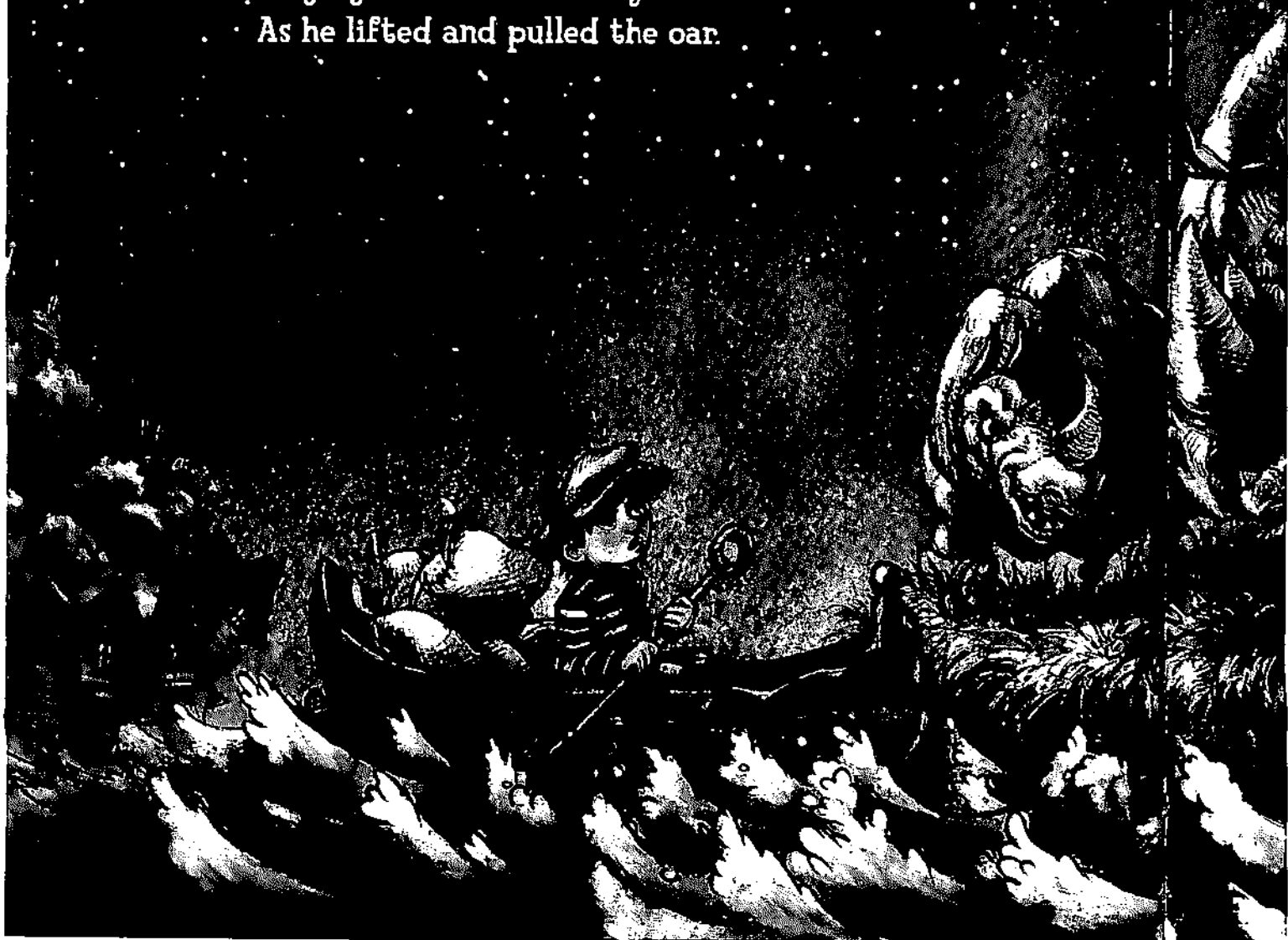


He stood up and looked at a tear in his eye.  
"We can't have another one. Rhinos don't have to die."  
Some people said, "He's a boy."  
But others said, "Let him be."

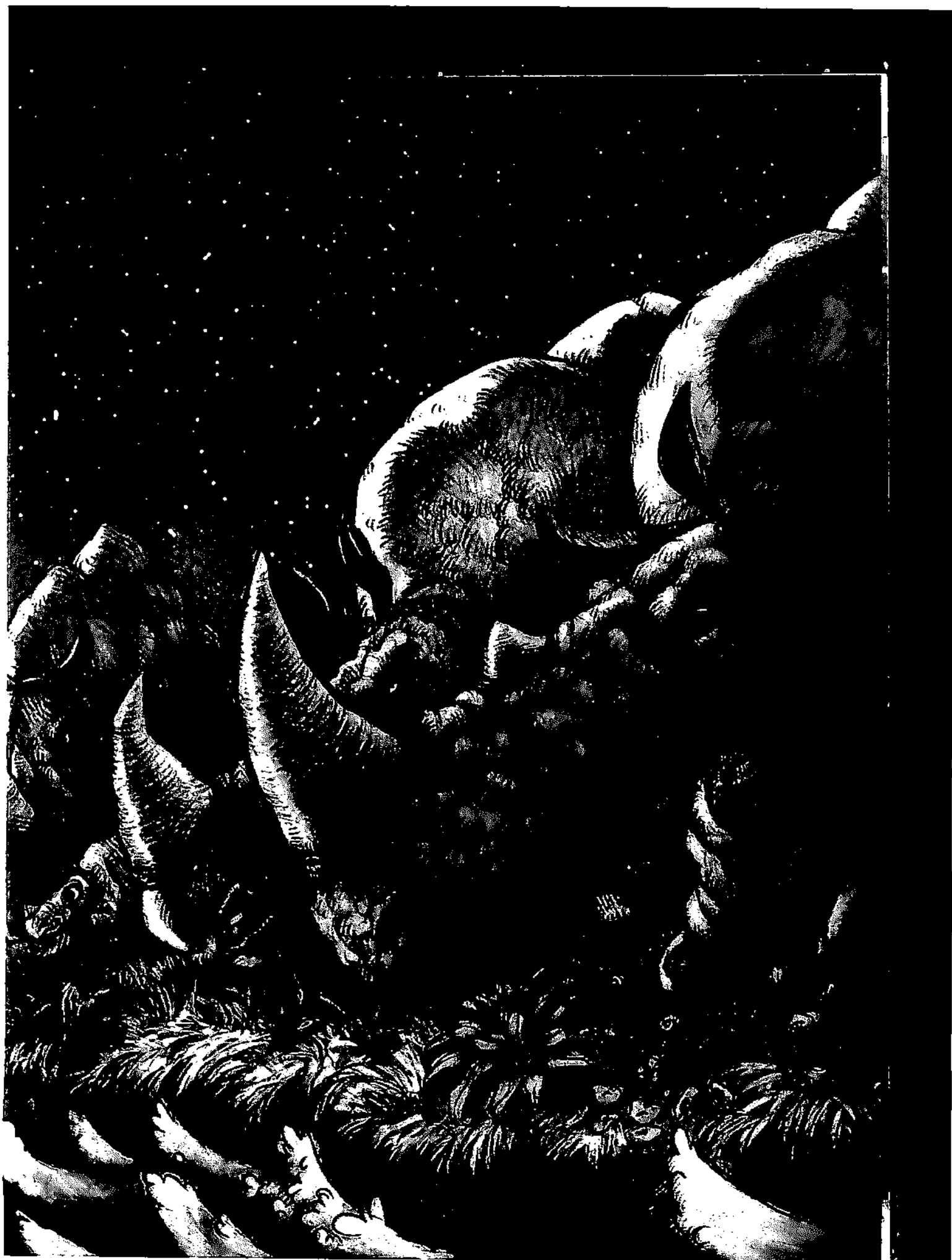




By the light of the moon Roy took a canoe  
And rowed from shore to shore,  
Singing a brave little song to himself  
As he lifted and pulled the oar.







Roy began to sing louder  
To keep his shaking hands still.  
And the rhinos began to listen,  
As even rhinos will,  
When a song is clear and true  
And sung straight from the heart.  
Roy sang all the way to the end of the song.  
Then sang it again from the start.

*Rhino, rhino, sweet potato,  
Sweet potato pie.  
Rhino, baby rhino,  
Rhino, don't you cry.  
Rhino, don't you worry.  
Rhino, don't you weep.  
Rhino, rhino, sweet potato,  
Rhino baby, sleep.*





Roy sang his song again and again,  
Trembling all the while  
Until he was almost sure  
He saw the rhinos smile.  
Until the rhinos waved their horns  
And did a silly dance,  
Stumbling and skipping rhinos  
In a happy trance.

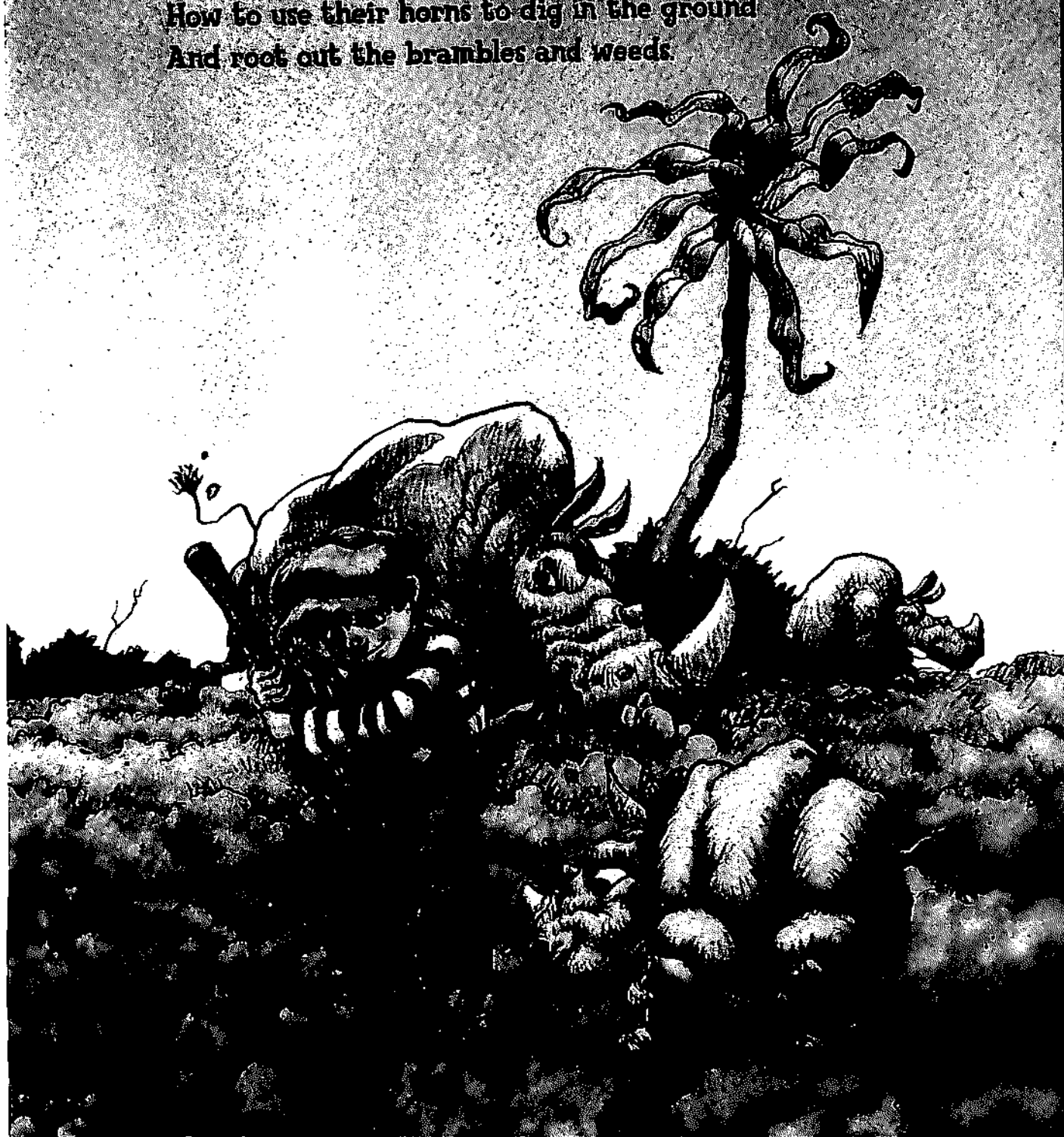


1800





He led the herd of rhinos  
To a place where there were no trees.  
He patiently showed the rhinos  
How to get down on their knees.  
How to use their horns to dig in the ground  
And root out the brambles and weeds.



Roy reached down into his sack,  
All the while singing his song,  
And took the baby sweet potato  
Plants he'd brought along.

He laid the plants in straight rows  
And covered them with sand.  
Then climbed back in his canoe  
And rowed away from land.







When the weather got dry,  
Roy sang the rhinos like more  
And taught the rhinos to carry water  
From the river shore.

Together they tended and watered the plants  
Till the sweet potatoes grew high.  
And each time Roy sang the rhinos  
His rhino lullaby.



*Rhino, rhino, sweet potato,  
Sweet potato pie.  
Rhino, baby rhino,  
Rhino, don't you cry.  
Rhino, don't you worry.  
Rhino, don't you weep.  
Rhino, rhino, sweet potato,  
Rhino baby, sleep.*





Now on one side of the river  
The rhinos eat what they've grown.  
And nowadays on the other side  
The villagers have their own:

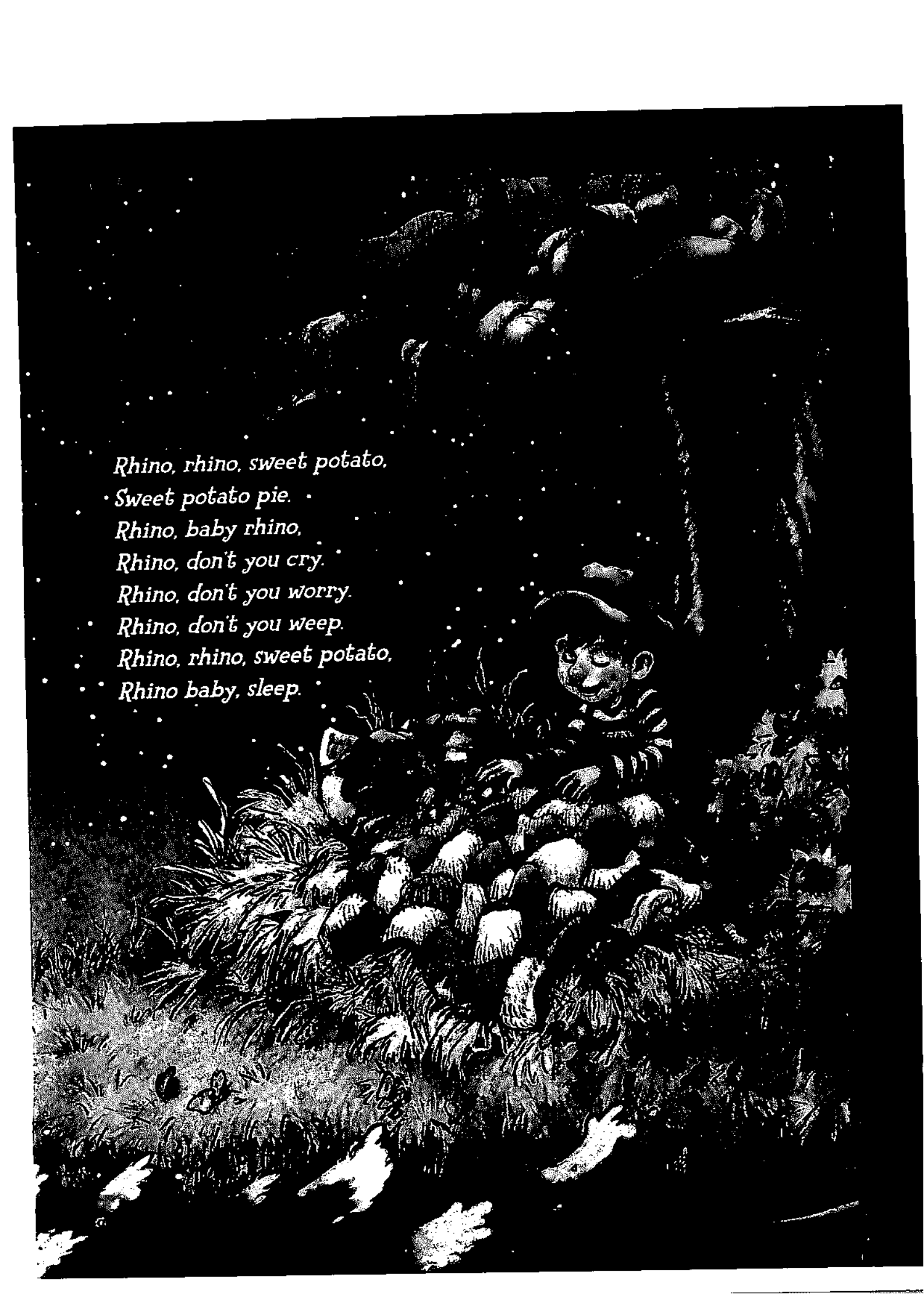
Sweet potato dumplings, sweet potato pies,  
Sweet potato noodles, sweet potato fries,  
Sweet potatoes on the grill, sweet potato ice,  
Sweet potato candy, sweet potato rice.





Now everyone has sweet potatoes  
And everyone sings Roy's song.  
And sometimes it even seems to Roy  
That the rhinos sing along.





*Rhino, rhino, sweet potato.*

*Sweet potato pie.*

*Rhino, baby rhino,*

*Rhino, don't you cry.*

*Rhino, don't you worry.*

*Rhino, don't you weep.*

*Rhino, rhino, sweet potato.*

*Rhino baby, sleep.*

