

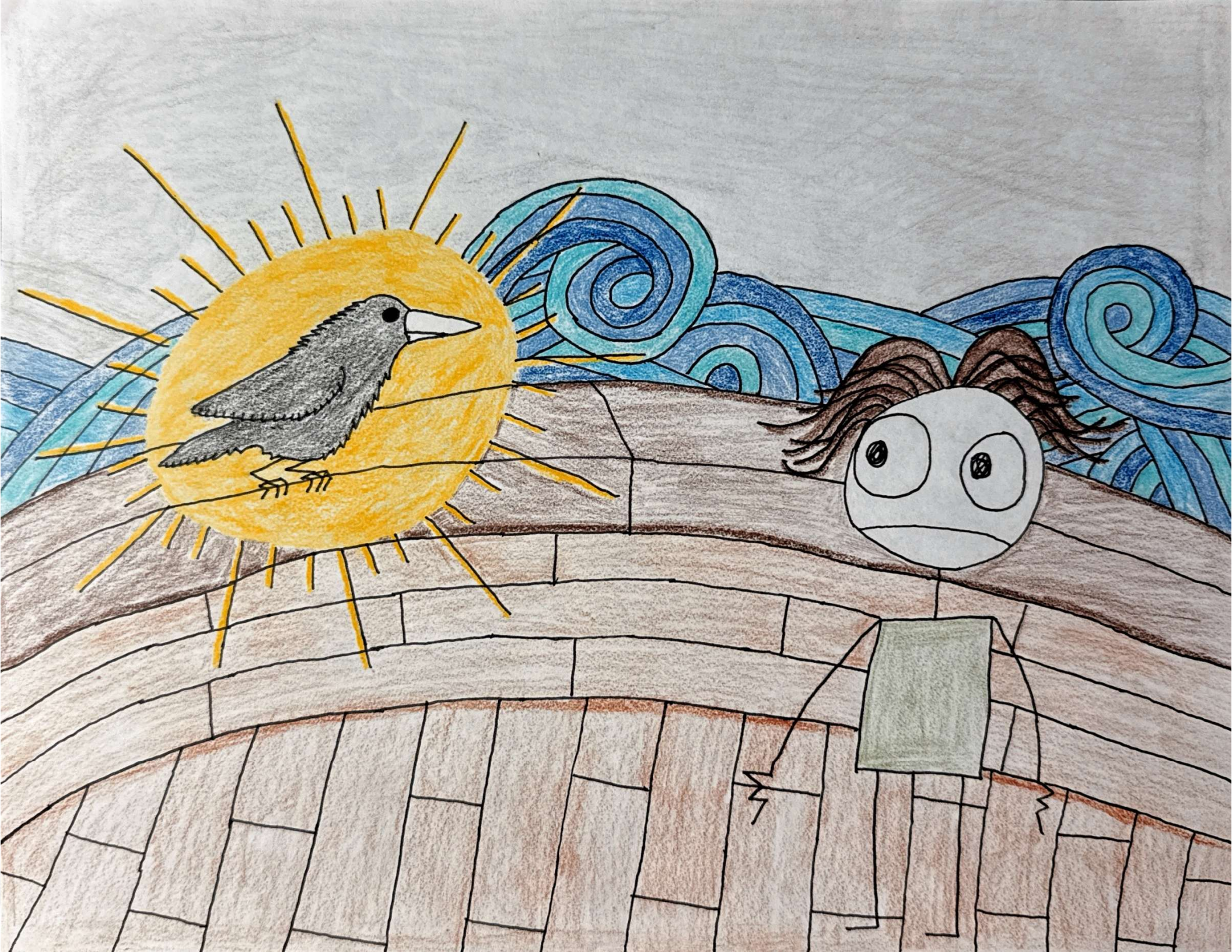
The Great Blue Yonder

Jonah Hunchak

This story is dedicated to the bright, loving cohort who were my guiding light during my time in the Great Blue Yonder. Your kindness and support made all the difference. I'm forever grateful for the joy you brought into my life.



Quinn woke up on a boat in the middle of the endless ocean. The water chaotic and wild. The sky was dark and gloomy. Quinn stood up, confused. How did they get here? They could not remember.



Suddenly a glowing raven arrived on the boat. The sparkling bird said, "You're on a journey through the Great Blue Yonder." Its voice was soft but clear. Quinn frowned, "A journey? To where?" The raven tilted its head. "To where you need to go," it answered.



Quinn felt nervous. "Why me? Why am I on this journey?" they asked. The raven looked at them kindly. "Because you have feelings that have not been dealt with," it said. Quinn began to think about extreme sadness and loneliness that they had been hiding. Could it be the reason why they are here?



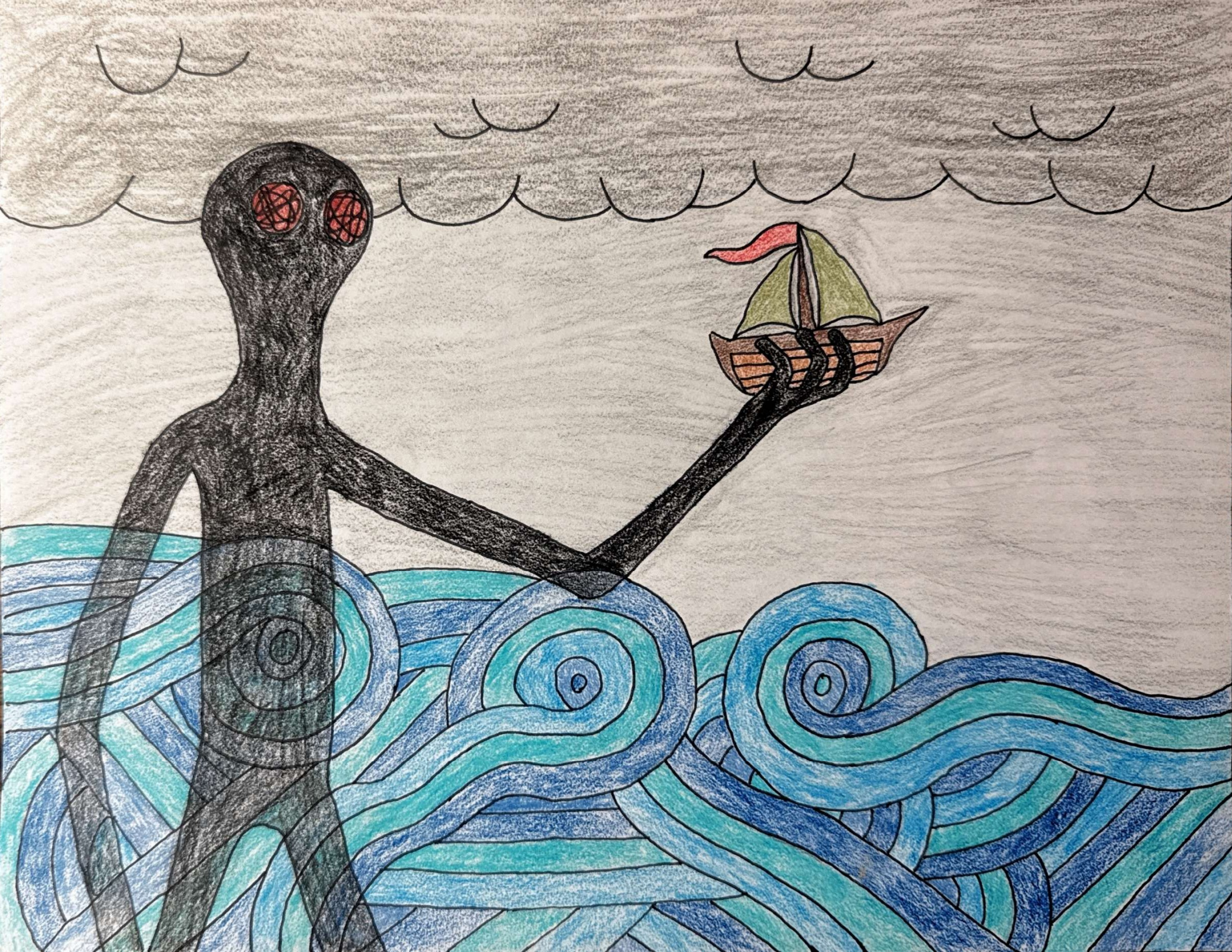
The raven's voice grew serious. "But be careful. The shadow in the sea will try to keep you here. It likes fear and sadness. To escape, you must face your feelings and find peace." Then, the raven flew away, leaving Quinn alone.



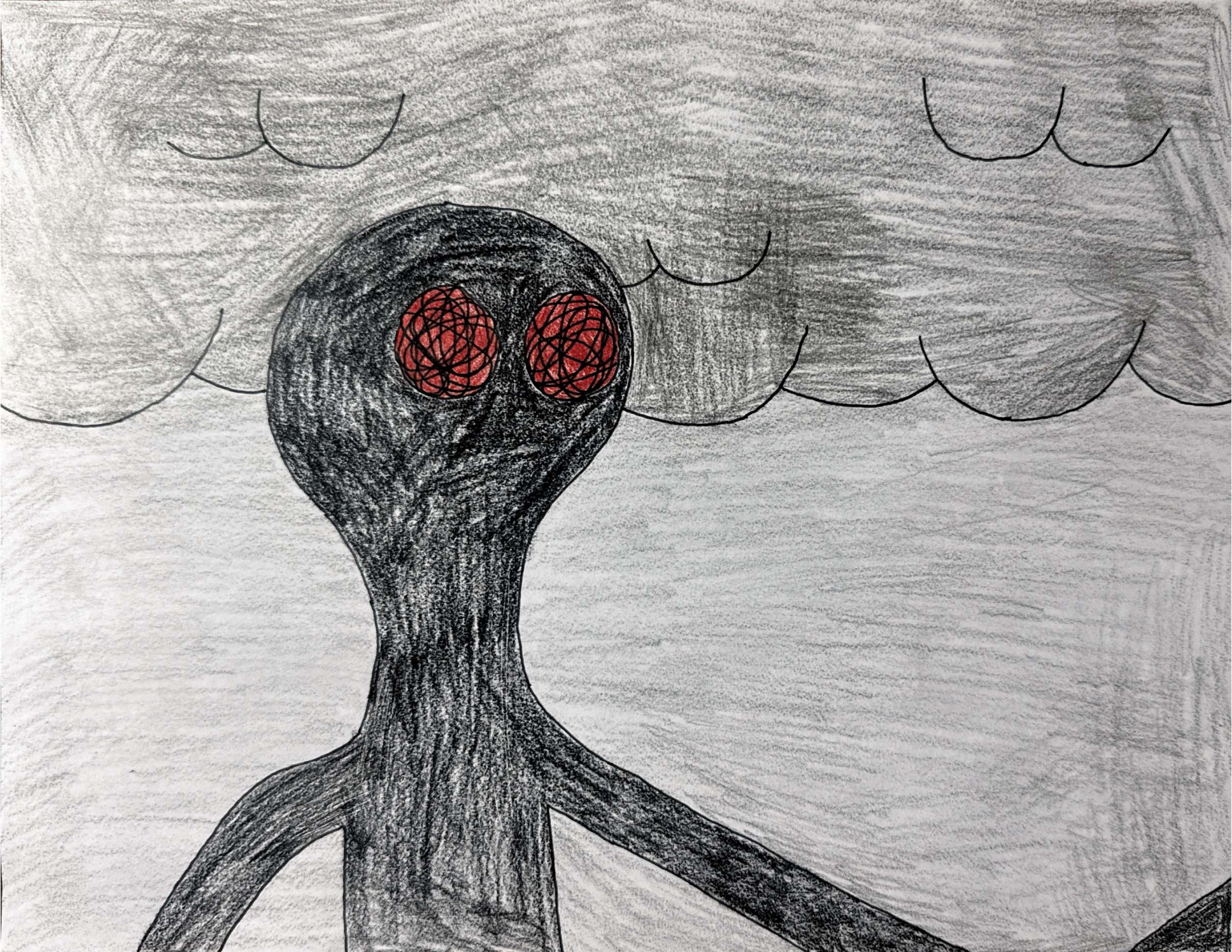
Quinn watched the raven's light disappear. The ocean seemed darker now. Below the boat a huge, dark shadow rose from the depths. It was scary and big. Quinn's heart raced. The shadow was coming closer.



Tears filled Quinn's eyes. They felt all their sadness and fear at once. It was like an elephant was on their chest. "I can't do this," they whispered, feeling overwhelmed.



The shadow reached up and wrapped around the boat. It lifted the boat out of the water.
The glowing light was gone. Everything was dark and quiet. Quinn felt small and scared.



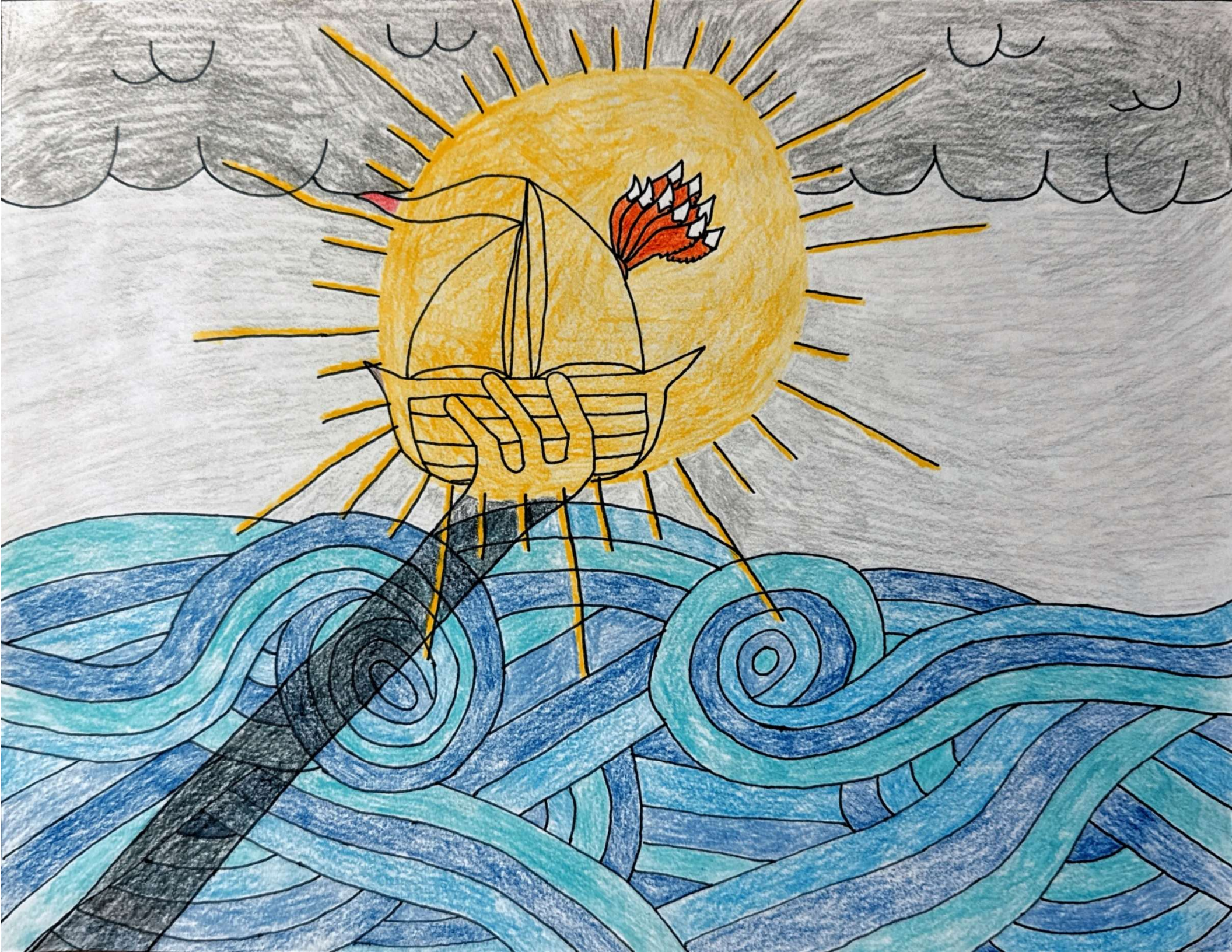
The shadow's voice was deep and quiet. "*Stay here,*" it said. "*It's easier to be alone. No pain, no fear, no trouble.*" Quinn almost believed it. Maybe it would be easier to stay.



Quinn sat down on the boat, feeling tired and heavy as they thought of all the pain that they had had been carrying. For a moment, they thought about giving up.



But then, a bright light appeared. The raven was back, glowing even brighter than before. The shadow started to sink back into the sea. Quinn looked up, feeling a tiny spark of hope.



The raven changed into a fox. Its fur glowed with golden light. The shadow hissed and sank deeper, its grip loosening. The fox stood tall, its light pushing the darkness away.



The fox spoke in the same kind voice. "You must go back. The world needs you, and you need it. There is so much joy and light in the world. You are one of those lights." Quinn stared at the fox, feeling a little stronger.



Quinn thought about the people they loved—their family, their friends, and the happy times they had shared. A small light began to glow inside Quinn. They weren't alone. They never had been.



With the fox's light guiding them, Quinn steered the boat away from the shadow. The sea became calmer, and the stars above shone brighter. The shadow sank back into the depths of the ocean.



Quinn put a hand on their chest, feeling the warm glow inside. They smiled, even as a tear rolled down their cheek. They still felt hurt, but they were ready to start healing.



In the distance, the sun began to rise. The ocean sparkled with golden light. Quinn knew their journey wasn't over, but they weren't afraid anymore. They had faced the shadow and found their light. And that was enough.



Jonah Hunchak is an author-illustrator, wannabe teacher, and absolute buffoon, The Great Blue Yonder is inspired by personal experiences that left the author feeling beat down and defeated, However, through the love and support of his friends and family, he was able to learn and grow from that experience. The only hope for this book is to help people know that things do get better and that they are loved! :)

