

CREATIVE MIND



ACTIVITY BOOK
OF



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FOR A LITTLE BIT OF SPILT MILK

SUMMARY: Baby Heracles was born gifted with superhuman strength. His father Zeus wanted to make him immortal by having him breastfed by his wife Hera, but without her realising it to avoid her anger and jealousy. Zeus waited for his wife to fall asleep, but the force with which Heracles sucked the milk was such that the goddess woke up and suddenly caused the milk to spurt into the sky, thus creating the Milky Way.

ORIGINAL TITLE: MILKY WAY

ORIGIN: GREECE

KEYWORDS: MILK, STRENGTH, JEALOUS

GENRE: MYTH

AGE: 5–6 YEARS

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A long time ago, capricious gods imitated human attitudes, allowing themselves to be carried away by anger, envy or jealousy, or falling in love just as people on earth did, and still do.

Although he was the father of the gods and was supposed to set a good example, even Zeus had both human virtues and human vices.

His human weaknesses would often make him prone to actions that incurred the ire of his divine wife, Hera. Being a god, he would always find mischievous ways to attract girls by disguising or other times transforming himself.

He swore that he would never do it again, but soon he kept forgetting his own promises.

In the city of Thebes lived a beautiful queen Alcmena, wife of King Amphitryon, who was so beautiful that Zeus fell in love with her as soon as he saw her.

“This is the last time,” he told himself before turning into the queen’s husband.

Amphitryon, in fact, had left for war.

Zeus, then taking advantage of his distance, transformed himself into his perfect double so as to trick the queen.

“I thought you had left for war,” she said.

“I forgot to hug you,” Zeus said, squeezing Alcmena.

So, when Heracles and his twin brother Iphicles were born, the king and queen were delighted, but as time went by, Alcmena noticed that Heracles was different, he was an extraordinary child, endowed with surprising strength.

Whatever his mother gave him to play with, Heracles would break it, simply by clutching it with his chubby, strong little hands.

If he threw a stone, he could knock down a tree.

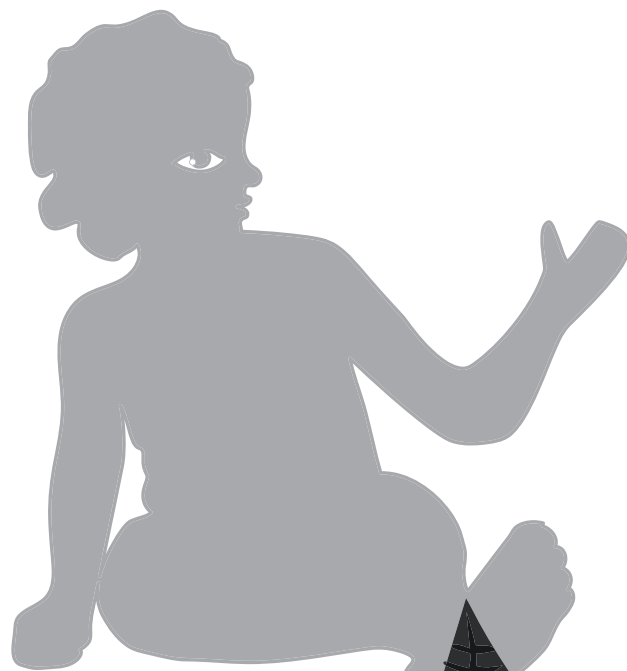
If he jumped, the floor would shake.

The unsuspecting mother could not understand where this incredible strength came from and went to a soothsayer named Tiresias.



Tiresias was blind but saw through secrets,
“My queen, the son you believe to be of King Amphitryon is,
in reality, the son of the divine Zeus,” said the soothsayer.
The queen paled in fright; if Hera had known this secret,
she would surely have taken a revenge.
Desperate, Alcmena ran home to her son.
She picked Heracles up and took him to a flowery field,
where she knew the god often went for walks.
She was certain that Zeus would recognise his son
and do something to help.
As soon as he saw him, in fact, Zeus recognised his son
and also realised that although gifted with great strength,
he was still too small to be left alone to face the world.
Zeus called Hermes, who of all the gods always had
a head full of ideas, inventions and solutions.

“What would you do in my place?” asked Zeus.
“I would make sure to make him immortal, he is already
almost a god... if he could be breastfed by a goddess,
for example...” suggested the astute Hermes.



“You are right! I could have it done by my wife who is the mother of all gods, but if I told her that Heracles is my son, she would raise hell...”

“Better not!” agreed Hermes fearfully, thinking back to all of Hera’s angry outbursts.

“But it is not necessary for us to tell her who this child is. Let’s wait for her to fall asleep and only then, attach Heracles to her breast!”

“What a brilliant idea,” Zeus said relieved, patting his friend on the shoulder. “We will do as you suggest!”



Meanwhile Hera stood under a tree contemplating the passing clouds, warming herself in the warmth of the spring sunshine that made her as happy as the birdsong that cheered on her sweet idleness. She felt her eyelids become heavy and slowly drifted into a deep sleep.



“This is the moment we have been waiting for,” whispered Hermes to Zeus, who, with his son in his arms, began to move quietly towards his sleeping wife.

“Well, my little boy,” said the god, turning to the child who had not ceased for a moment to pull at his beard and hair and, if Zeus had not been a god, would certainly have felt a great pain.

“Now we will give you some milk, drink as much as you can, it is divine milk! Remember though, do it gently...” he said, delicately placing his son in the arms of his wife, who continued to sleep blissfully.

Heracles looked at the beautiful goddess who was not his mother and, puzzled, looked again at Zeus.

“Suck the milk! Go on!” whispered Zeus urging him on, putting his thumb in his mouth to show his son what to do. Heracles understood and threw himself headlong onto Hera’s breast, sucking with all his strength.



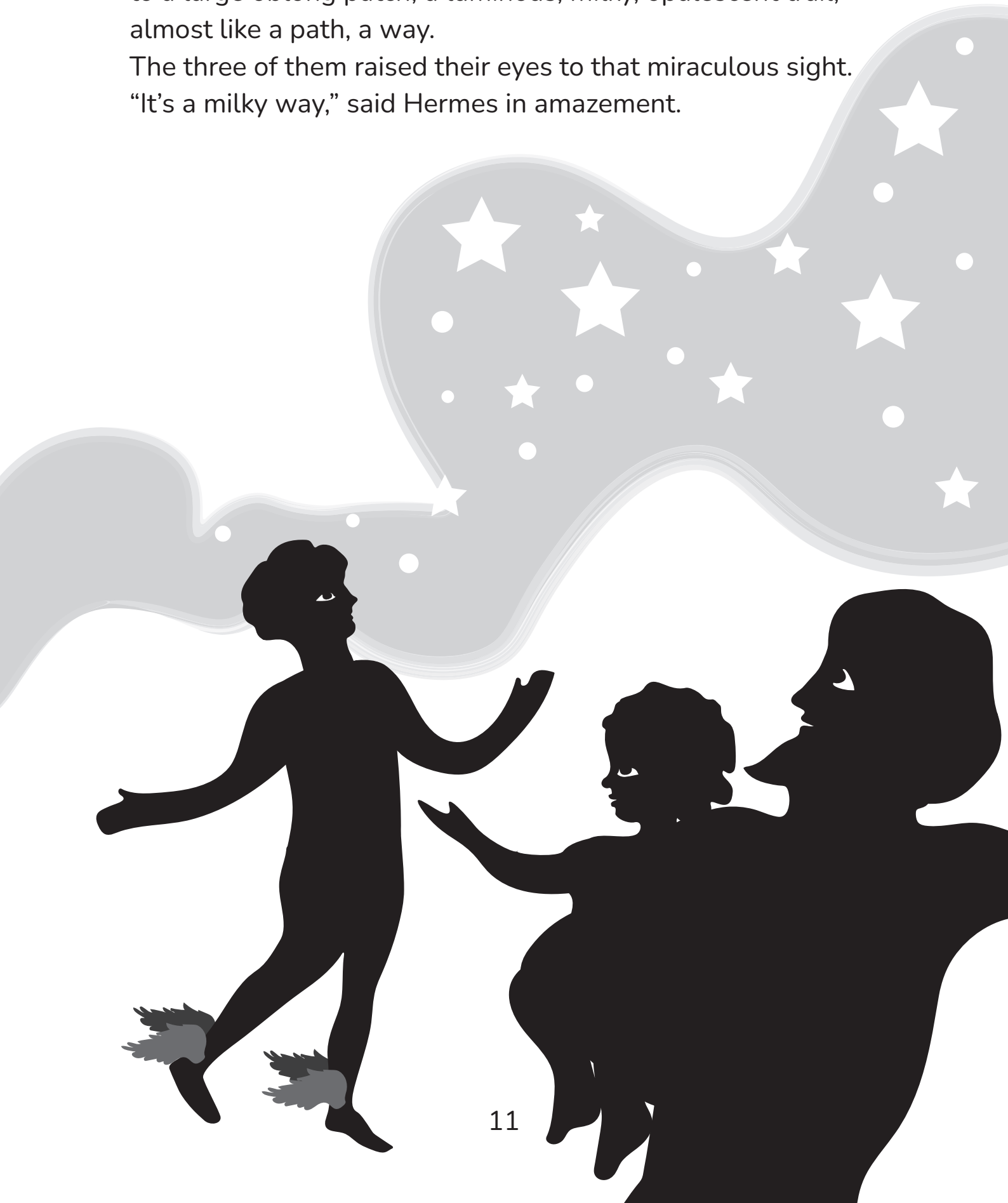
Hera jerked back from the pain this caused her,
and with a gesture as if trying to shoo away a bumblebee,
hurled Heracles away from her.

As the child glided into the arms of Zeus, a stream of milk
came from Hera's breast. It was of such intensity that it poured
into the sky, dispersing and spreading as if someone
had poured an immense bucket of milk into the ground.

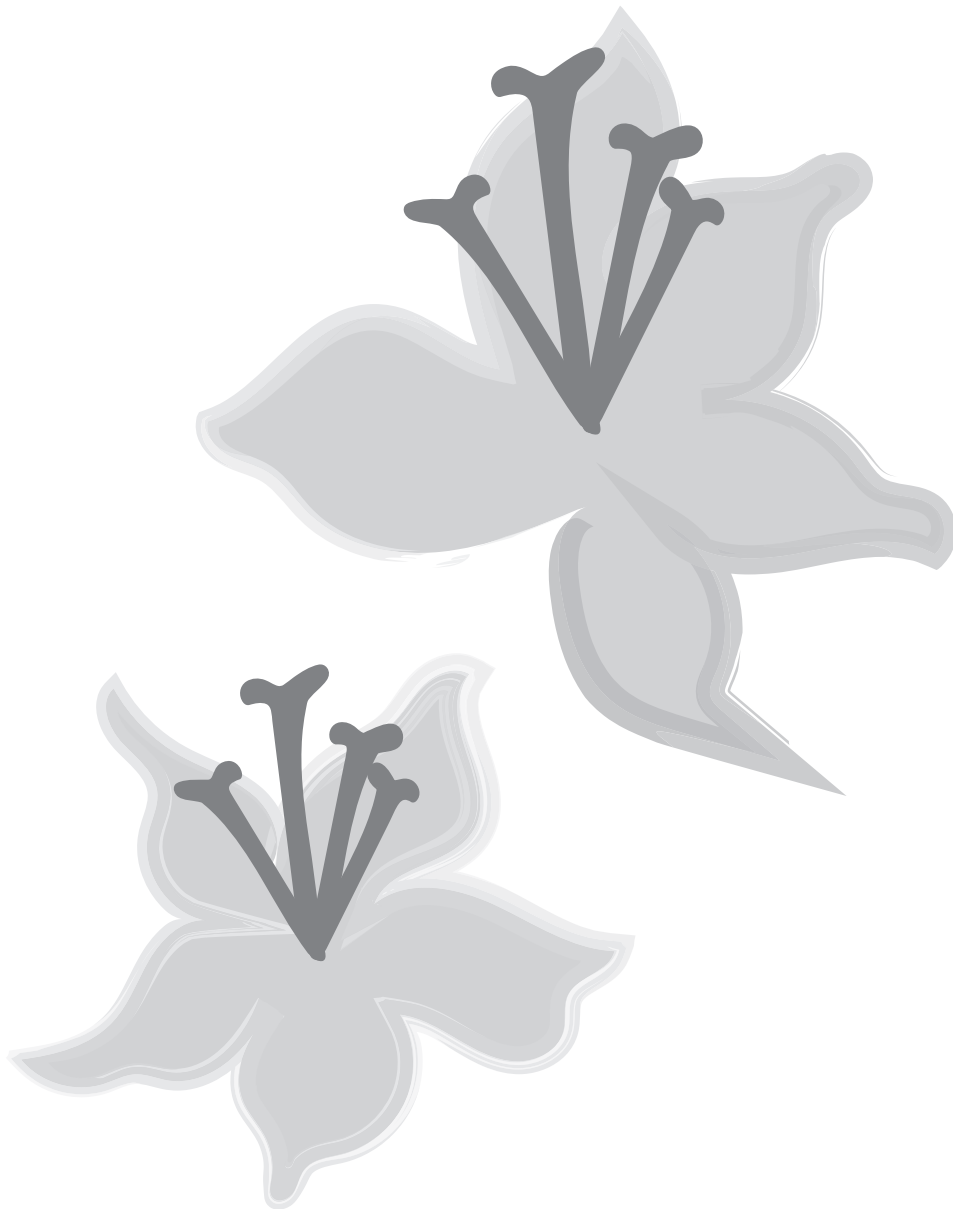


The sky absorbed that niveous liquid like a stain, giving way to a large oblong patch, a luminous, milky, opalescent trail, almost like a path, a way.

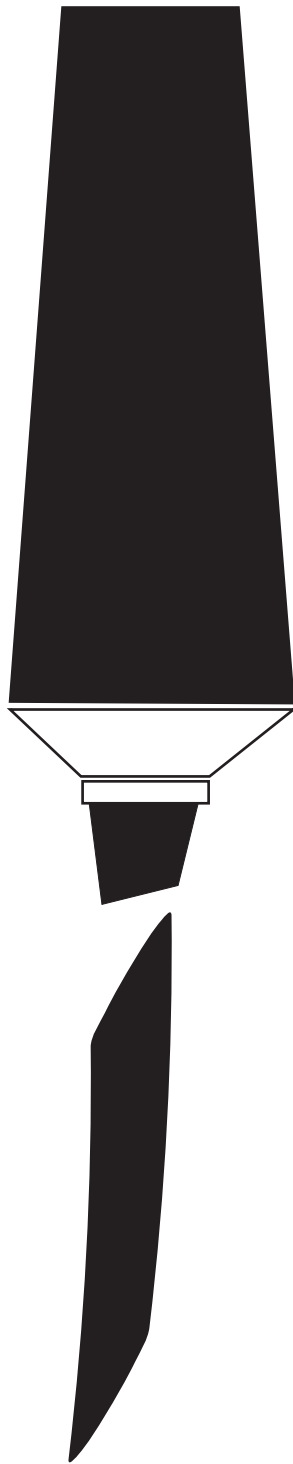
The three of them raised their eyes to that miraculous sight. "It's a milky way," said Hermes in amazement.



The remaining drops of milk fell to the ground, penetrating deep into the earth, and white perfumed lilies sprang forth immediately at Hera's feet. Their beauty, however, was not enough to appease the ire of Hera!



ACTIVITIES



The tools we draw with are important.

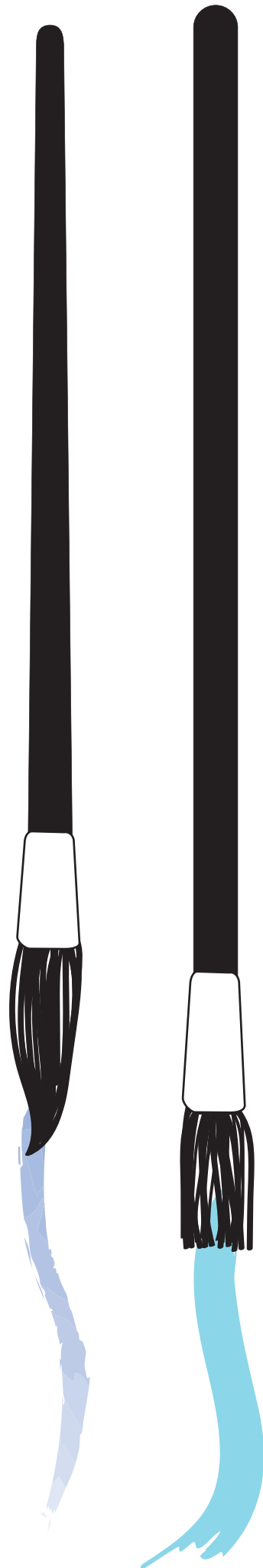
Get markers with different tips flat, round or brush.

Also get some brushes and tempera paints.

You can choose black or any other colour you like.



Get some brushes
and watercolours, too.
In fact, brushes are needed to write
the characters of this special alphabet.
However, at first you can use
the brush-tipped markers.
As you know there are
different languages: some are illegible
to us because their words and letters
are very different.
The Japanese language is an example:
their ideograms are real drawings
that express meanings.





In your sketchbook,
draw with watercolors a flowing river.
Next to it, using the marker or the brush,
write the ideogram

river



In your sketchbook, draw a mountain.
Next to it, using the marker or brush write
the ideogram.



mountain

In your sketchbook, draw a tree.
Next to it, using the marker or brush
write the ideogram

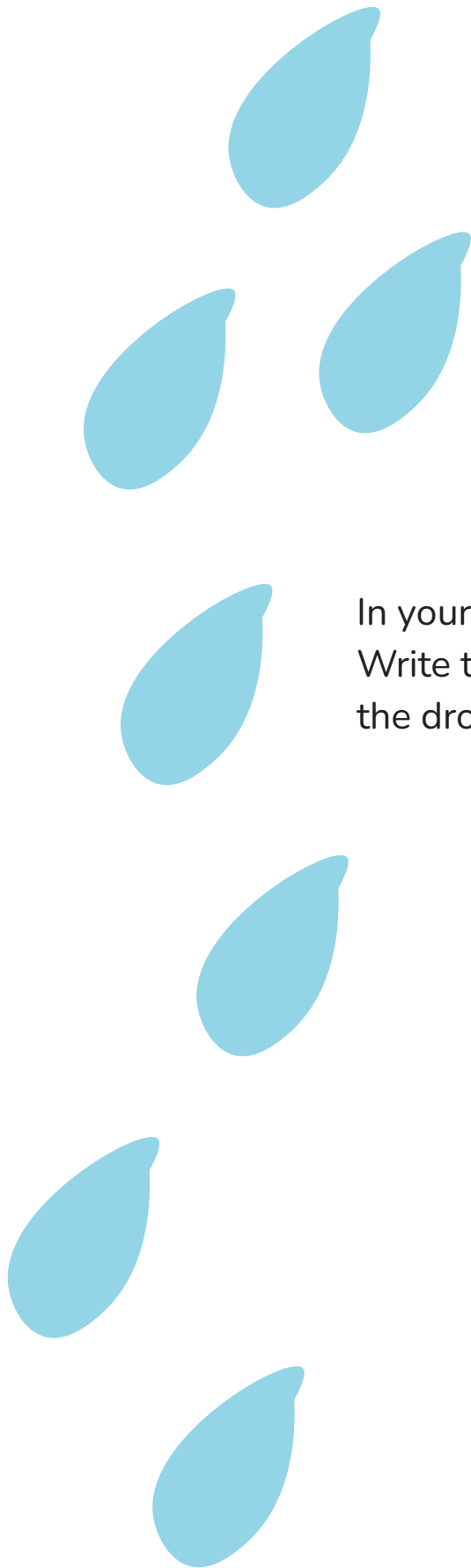


tree



This ideogram means “forest” .

As you can see it seems to consist of three different trees.
Draw this ideogram in your sketchbook.



In your sketchbook draw raindrops.
Write the ideogram rain. It denotes
the drops falling from the sky.

rain





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