



for their magical years

a katha-bvlf project report  
2009-10





Dear friends at BvLF,

After a whole year with children, their sheer joy and laughter, we come to you again with a proud annual roundup of work under the BvLF partnership.

Policy level work supported the research on Early Childhood Development in Municipal Corporation of Delhi Schools and in the slums of Delhi. This led us to working closely with children in these schools and we realized the deep need there for the fun of stories to enter their lives. Bright-eyed 4 to 8 year olds have been the focus: How they read and how we can help them to read at grade level. Each child has a dream to get out of the slum s/he lives in – and education, we believe is the best and probably the only way out of this life imprisonment. We continue this work under the BvLF grant for 2010-11.

An exciting range of stories for children took shape as lovely books, and with many more in the pipeline, we continue to strive hard to make children's first encounter with the written word a delight. Nothing gives us more satisfaction than seeing a child lying on her stomach with a book in her hand.

The Chitrakala Search for Excellence has been most satisfying – with over a 100 entries and an international jury. The books that finally come out of this exercise are bound to be fun for children to hold and treasure.

We are happy to share with you the satisfaction we feel and to present to you a slice of our world.

Enjoy!

*Wamby  
Deli*

Geeta Dharmarajan



# Executive Summary

From very early on, Katha understood the need for early childhood development in a child's life. Development pertains to how well poverty is attacked, how opportunities are provided to the underprivileged, how social infrastructure is beefed up and how physical infrastructure is improved.

Katha, with support from the Bernard van Leer Foundation, has spaces catering to these needs of children of this special age and serves a larger mission of improving the quality of life of children from underprivileged groups in urban areas. The year 2009–10 saw a positive impact on the lives of children 0–8 years, touching 78,094 beneficiaries in the communities and 40,000 beneficiaries in MCD schools. Gathered together here is all the work in early learning under **K.H.E.L., the Katha Holistic Early Learning Centre.**

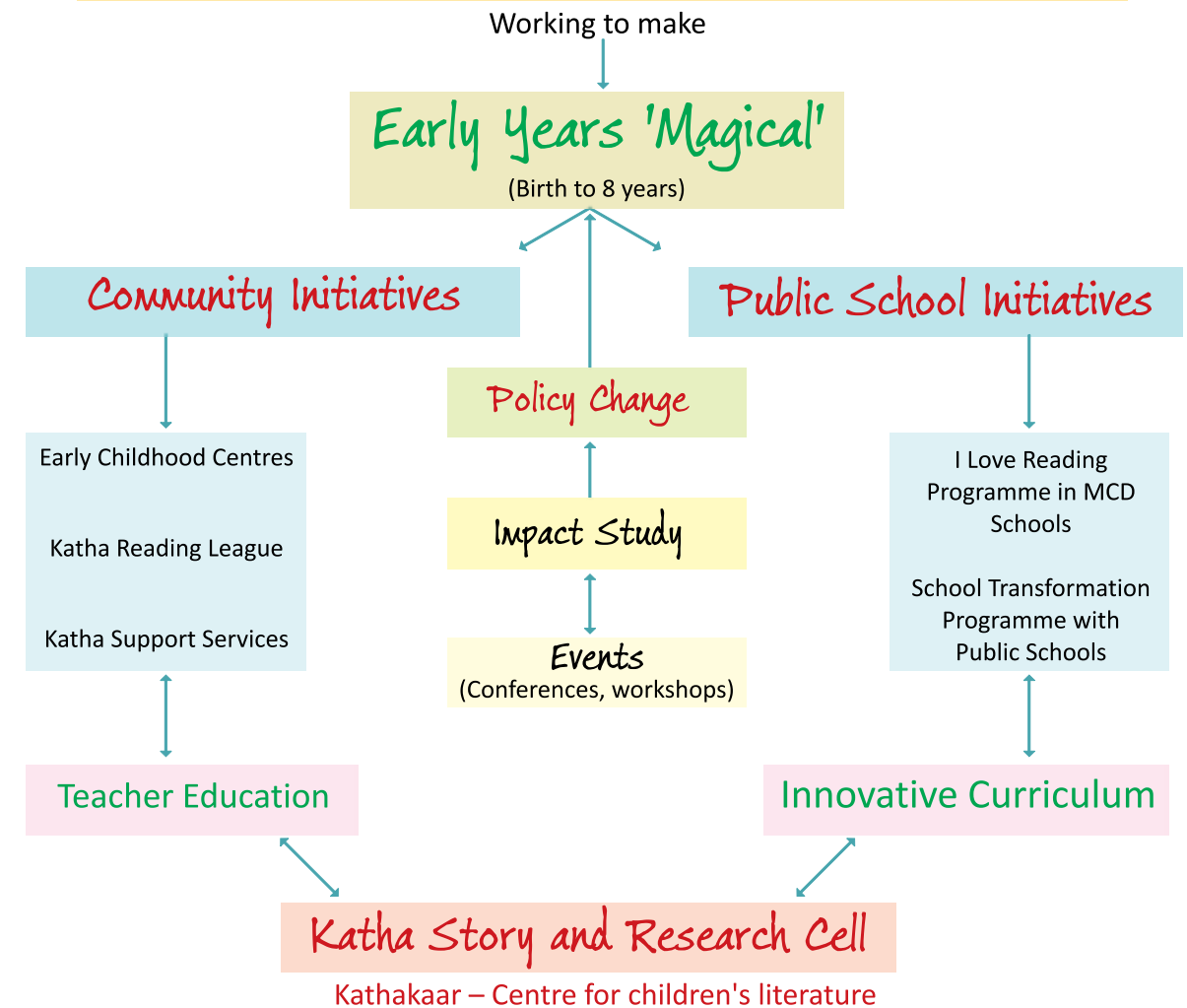
**KhE.L!**

# A Multi Pronged Approach

The work under KHEL entails:

1. Katha Early Learning Centres
2. Teacher Training
3. Katha Reading League
4. School Transformation Programme
5. Searches & Researches
6. Conferences & Deliberations
7. The Publishing Programme
8. The Search for Excellence in Illustrating for Children

## Katha Holistic Early Learning Centre





# I Love Reading Campaign in 50 Municipal Schools

Most of the 4 to 8 year old children in the slum communities go to government schools run by the MCD (Municipal Corporation of Delhi). So Katha started the 'I Love Reading Campaign' in 50 of these schools to help the children adjust better to the formal system of education and to bring them to grade level reading. This programme has enriched the lives of 40,000 children.

## Katha Reading League

Katha Reading League is a creative programme that brings children across slum clusters and streets in Delhi into reading well and for fun, through strategies and fun ways tried and tested by Katha over 20 years of hands-on work with children. In 2009-10, 78,094 children participated in the programme running in 72 nodal points in all zones of Delhi. Inspiring community participation echoed its success!



# Searches and Researches

Katha's main focus of work has always been children. However, we understand that to study a child without understanding his/her context leads to a very incomplete understanding. Thus, in all the researches and surveys which have been undertaken by Katha, there is an attempt to understand the child holistically. Not only do we study her physical, social and emotional environment, her community, family, school and her significant others, but we also study the policies and programmes put in place by the government for the child. So the child is not studied in a vacuum, but in the context of the ever changing city s/he is living in, making the surveys that much more relevant.

We went into the slums to observe the situation of younger learners. We looked at the 74 slum communities in different zones in Delhi, did a Base Line Survey in 10 slums in South and East Delhi. The data thus collected was depressing.

## Quantitative indicators

### of the progress made: Jan - Dec 09

- MCD schools: 50
- Students under the programme: 49,000
- Master Student Librarians/K.A.R.M.A. volunteers trained: 465
- Books distributed to the children and teachers as reading material: 34,000
- Katha Reading Leagues [KRL] Championship levels: 4
- KRL Championship events conducted: 165
- Number of certificates to be awarded: 83,980
- Actual certificates awarded: 18
- Number of volunteers in the programme: 240

## The Research

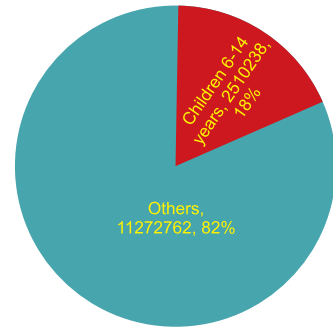
A baseline survey was conducted prior to the beginning of the campaign. The questionnaire was developed by a team of five senior teachers of Katha, with inputs from Katha's research and teacher training department, Kalpana Vilasam. The draft questionnaire was piloted by the team before being rolled out. The questionnaire aimed to assess the overall reading, speaking, listening and writing ability of the students of the 50 MCD schools, using the RUCHI matrix developed by Katha.

Books with less than 200 words were used in the testing. Indicators used are given below alongside survey outcome, in terms of aggregate percentage based on performance of 18,600 students in Grades 2, 3 and 4:

Ability	Proficiency (40-80%)	Proficiency (20-40%)
Listening with interest, expressing views after listening	36.66%	63.55%
Reading for meaning, assessing speed and pronunciation	36.85%	63.14%
Speaking with confidence, describing, responding to questions	37.70%	62.17%
Writing using appropriate words, sentence construction	35.42%	64.50%

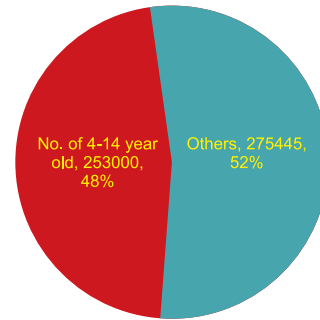
# The Impact Study

6-14 year olds in Delhi



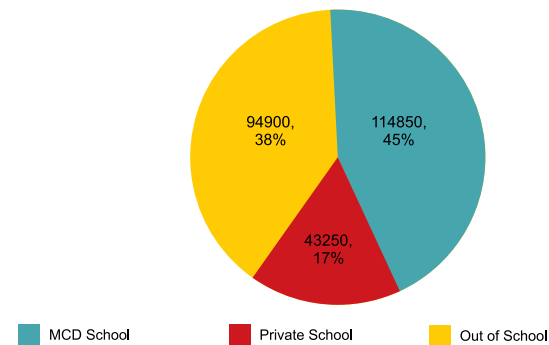
Courtesy Census, India 2001

4-14 year olds in 74 Slums of Delhi



Courtesy Katha Baseline Survey of 74 slums, 2009

32% of the population in 74 slums across Delhi comprises children (4-14 years old), which is higher than the state percentage of 18% children. Katha decided to find out where these children are. To our great dismay we found that around 38% of children of school-going age are out of school.



Source: Baseline Survey of 74 slums of Delhi,

Katha, July 2009

Katha looked at three years' longitudinal data from DISE (District Information System for Education) for two zones in Delhi (Central and South) to see the enrollment rate and dropout rate of children in Government run schools. It was shocking to note that 7.96% of the enrolled students drop out after class 1. The trend of dropouts remains the same throughout primary school with 6 to 8% students dropping out each year.

The second year of the research project carried forward the legacy laid down by the initial year of progressive work. The research team visited the identified MCD schools to collect data by administering tools, making observations and conducting interviews.

## Objectives were

- To assess the impact of early childhood education (ECE) on the performance of children in class 1 in MCD schools
- To see how early childhood education can help prevent children from dropping out of school
- To see the impact of Katha's I Love Reading (ILR) programme on the children of class 1 in MCD Schools

## Target Group

- Children (age group of 5-6) of Class 1 of MCD schools

## Sample

- 250 children of class 1 who have attended an ECE programme
- 250 children of class 1 who have not attended any ECE programme

## Sampling Technique

- Purposive Selective Sampling was used for sample selection
- The sample was taken from 40 MCD schools in Delhi which generally cater to children from the lower socio-economic strata. Of these, 35 MCD schools have Katha's ILR programme operational in classes 1, 2 and 5. Other MCD schools have no intervention programme.



**TABLE I: SAMPLE DETAILS**

	ILR School	Total	Non-ILR School
Children with ECE background	207	43	250
Children without ECE background	207	43	250
Total	414	86	500

The preliminary findings are informed by the primary experiences of the researchers. Those school-going children who had attended Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) services performed better in the competencies used in the measurement and were better adjusted to the school. Intervention in the reception class had a positive impact on the performance of children, both from the control group and the experimental group. Experiences that the children had in one year of formal school had a positive impact on their performance. Children who had no exposure to ECCE but good classroom experience performed better, whereas children who had exposure to ECCE but not effective classroom experience show that the impact of ECCE exposure seemed to have washed off.

**Tools of Data Collection**

- Tools for assessing numeric and pre writing skills

**Worksheets**

- Tools for assessing story listening and reading skills

This tool had four stages.

- In the 1st stage, the children were told the story ‘The Famous Smile’ (‘Mashhoor Muskaan’ in Hindi) in groups of 6 each, while the researcher noted the attentiveness of each child.
- In the 2nd stage, the researcher asked the children questions about the story individually to see how much of the story each child understood.
- In the 3rd stage, the child is asked to read the “reading sheet” which tries to gauge the alphabet knowledge and the reading level of the child.
- In the 4th stage, the child is given the story book ‘Rani Bhi’ which is a book by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) for grade 1 children. This tool helps us look at the quality of intuitive story reading in children.

The results of the numeric, pre-writing, story listening and reading skills were filled in the data sheet and some teachers were also interviewed.





# Conferences and Deliberations

## Katha-NCERT Roundtable Discussion

### The Education of 4 to 8 Year Olds in the City of Delhi

We at Katha know the importance of reaching out to the policy makers alongside working closely with the community, to better the lives of the children. Katha, with India's premier education institution NCERT (National Council for Educational Research and Training) called for a discussion on the situation of young children in the national capital on 18th August 2009. 'The Katha-NCERT Roundtable Discussion: Education of 4 to 8 Year Olds in the City of Delhi,' had an eminent gathering of policy makers, academicians and early childhood educationalists, who discussed critical questions like how equipped are the young children of today's Delhi for a future that demands greater critical thinking and lifelong learning skills? And more importantly, how are we safeguarding the childhood of these children?

The discussion ended with the formulation of resolutions like: there is need of a continuum between preschool and early primary years of schooling; the non-state actors have a pivotal role to play; and there is an urgent need of public-private partnership in order to deliver better services to the children in the city of Delhi.



## Their Magical Years

### National Workshop on Early Learning and Intuitive Teaching

To get a complete picture of early learning in India, Katha felt the need for a forum where individuals and institutions working in the field of early learning get an opportunity to interact with each other. Keeping this in mind, Katha, with help of the National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) organized 'Their Magical Years: National Workshop on Early Learning and Intuitive Teaching' from 3rd to 5th September 2009.

The workshop brought an eclectic mix of 180 people from across the country to help create a public sphere where senior educators, decision makers from public and non-profit organizations and also students shared concerns and developments in the area of early learning and also brought forth the challenges that face all of us who work with communities and young children.



## International Seminar

### Social Movements for Children & Women: Closing the Social Divide in Globalized Times

Katha, in collaboration with the University of Delaware, held an international seminar on 'Social Movements for Children & Women: Closing the Social Divide in Globalized Times' on 27th January 2010. This seminar, with its special focus on college and school students, was designed to address social movements for change, not just current social, economic and cultural frameworks under which most of urban India operates, but also the theoretical and empirical issues underlying them.

It started with an overview of why there are no effective movements for children and went on to examine what is happening in the field of empowering women and the work of non-profits in the country. The seminar addressed issues related to globalization, the predominance of market-oriented approaches, and the lack of movements that look seriously at children, women and poverty.

# Publishing Programme



## Kathakaar - Evoking Wonder

Stories spin a magical world around a child's vibrant mind. By creating books that introduce young minds to the people, cultures, traditions, folklores and life issues of India through stories they can easily relate to, Kathakaar, the children's book publishing programme at Katha, is poised to be such a magician.

Kathakaar strives to weave an indelible magic of words, pictures, song, drama, rhyme and verse, of stories recounted, poems sung and much more. It is a thriving, living web of social and literary excitement!



Illustrating ebullience!

The *Katha*  
**CHITRAKALA**  
Award  
2009

*Talent hunt with a difference*

Katha recognizes exemplary children's book illustrations and concepts by way of the Katha Chitrakala Awards. Illustrators with that magical eye and a way with colours are invited to create the most wonderful books for Indian children. This is an international search for excellence open to all illustrators, emerging or established, in India and abroad, word-and-image storytellers who can make a vital and significant difference to the world of children's books.



# Celebrating the Indian folk storytelling tradition!

## Workshop

The Katha Chitrakala Workshop was jointly organized with Dastkari Haat, so as to draw upon their understanding and experience of working with Indian artists and craftsmen across the country. The aim of the workshop was to gather these gems of oral literature and publish them so the stories do not fade into oblivion. We also wanted new readers to gain from this rich, vast expanse of oratures and narrative traditions of a different order. Some of these illustrated tales have been shortlisted for the Katha Chitrakala Contest.

## The Shortlist

After months of head scratching and soul searching, we finally have our illustrious laureates for Katha Chitrakala 2009, handpicked by the international jury of eminent illustrators and artists.

## 100+ entries

Worthy competitors for the diadem and loads of speculation taut with delight...

## Finally the 12 laureates!

Deadline for submitting the final artworks – 15th of May, 2010.

## Books Planned – 3

- i. The Bioscope
- ii. Mai and Her Friends
- iii. We hope to add the Grand Prize Winner, the Runner Up and other exciting books from the twelve laureates handpicked by our international jury. We are sure they would be worthy additions to the growing library of quality picture books for children.

Katha is confident that the contest will occasion a new beginning for Katha and the contestants and will prove to be starting point for many more delightful books for the children of India!



## Laptime, bedtime and anytime stories!

### 2009 – 10

This year Katha ventured into an exciting culturelinking [ad]venture! For long, we have been bringing stories from India's 21 languages in translation to our children, besides stories written originally in Hindi/English. This year, under the BvLF Grant, we introduced our children to some of the best in world literature, helping them enlarge their worldview. The grant also helped the books reach out to many libraries, allowed us to reprint many of our books and put them out at costs affordable to children, parents, schools, and libraries.



## Hop on board

for an enchanting grasslands expedition

### Walk the Grasslands with Takuri

By Nima Manjarekar & Nandita Hazarika

Takuri the friendly pygmy hog takes us on a trip to the lush greens and opens up the mysterious world of the undulating grasslands throbbing with wildlife that never ceases to amaze!

Katha, one of India's finest children's publishers, has brought out some wonderful gems on environment oriented children's books.

— Saffron Tree





# Great reads this summer

## Moon, Ramu and I

By Geeta Dharmarajan  
Illustrated by Harsh

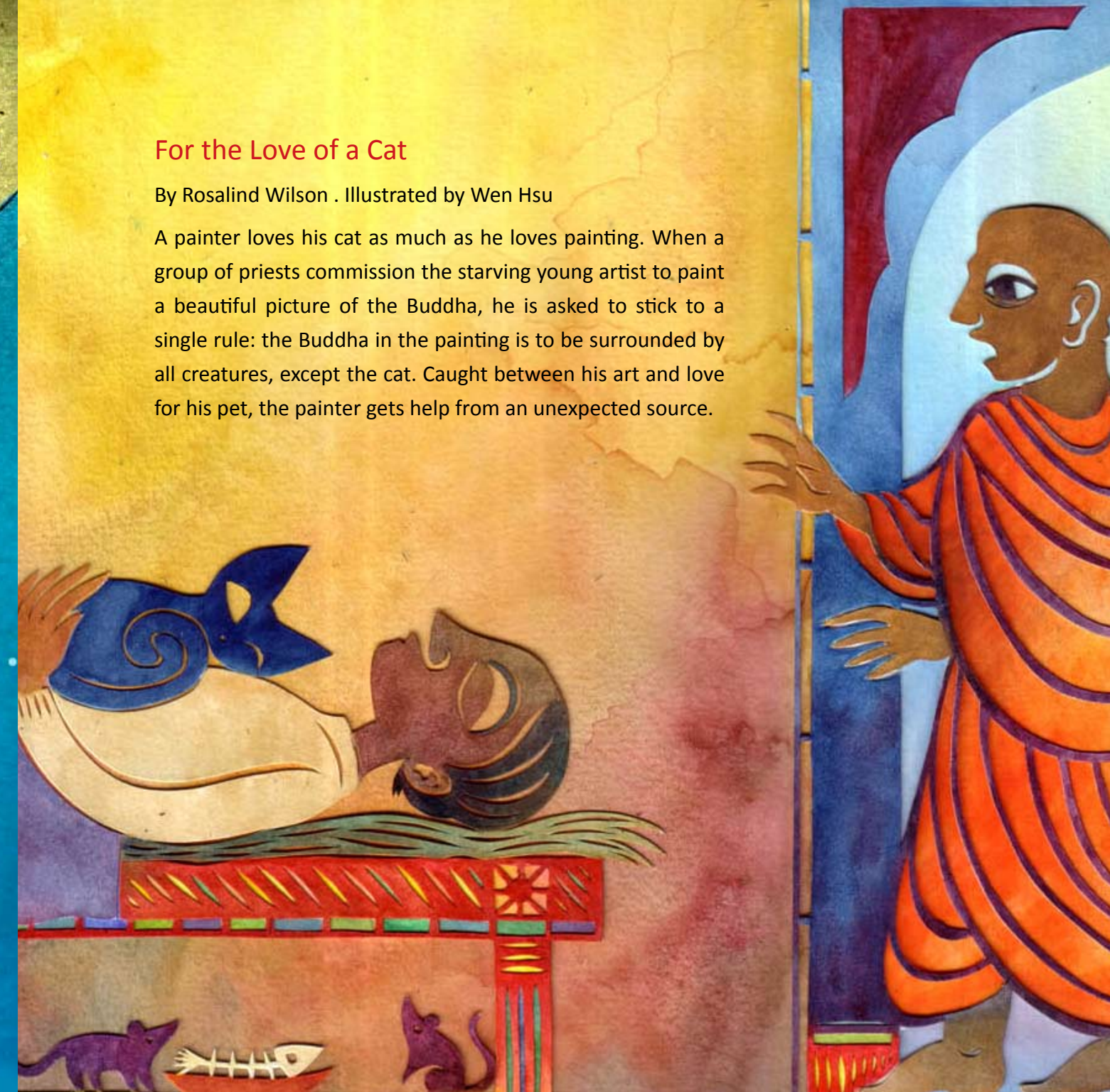
Slip into your invisible space suits for a swashbuckling adventure trip to the moon! Get set for this spellbinding story packed with action and fun.

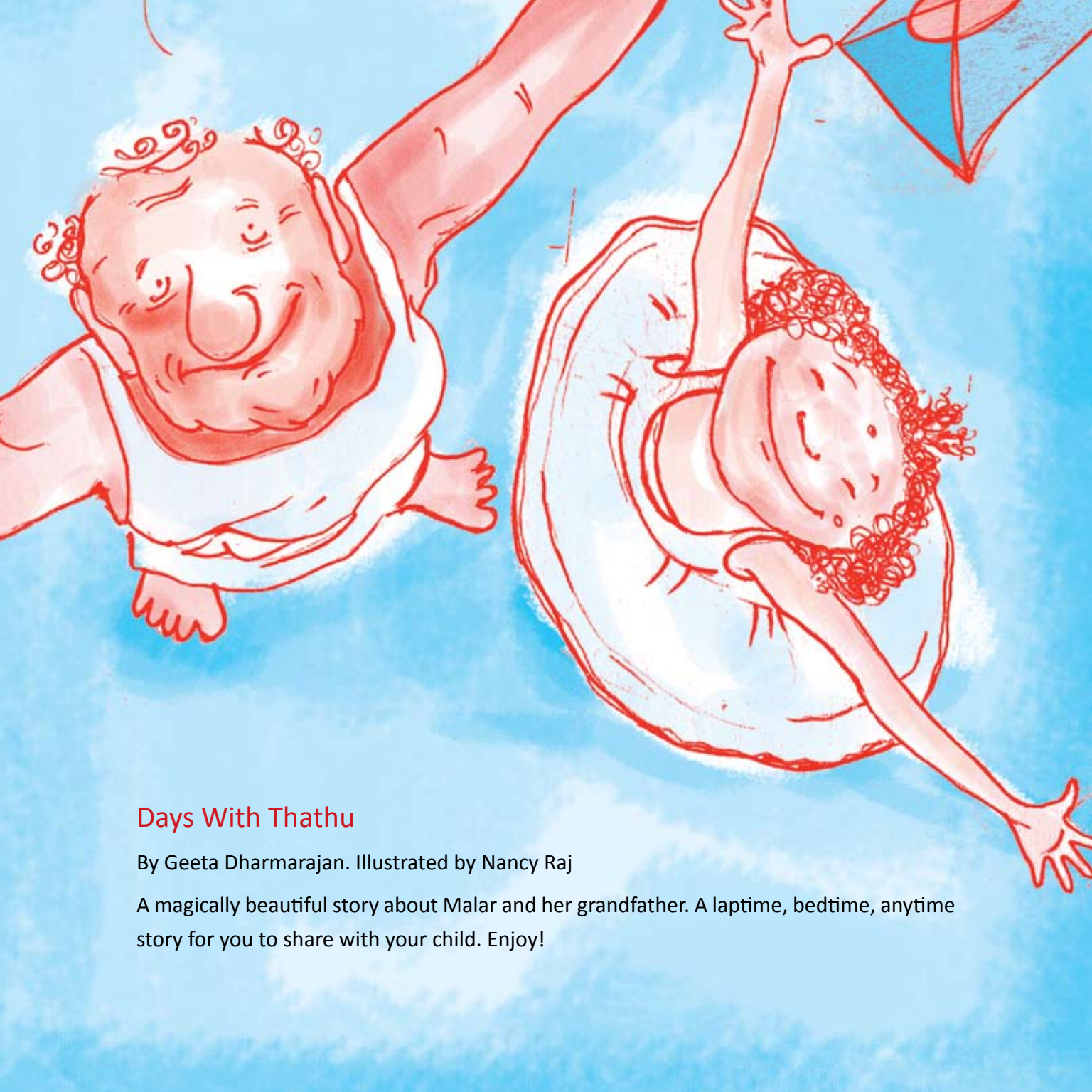


## For the Love of a Cat

By Rosalind Wilson . Illustrated by Wen Hsu

A painter loves his cat as much as he loves painting. When a group of priests commission the starving young artist to paint a beautiful picture of the Buddha, he is asked to stick to a single rule: the Buddha in the painting is to be surrounded by all creatures, except the cat. Caught between his art and love for his pet, the painter gets help from an unexpected source.





## Days With Thathu

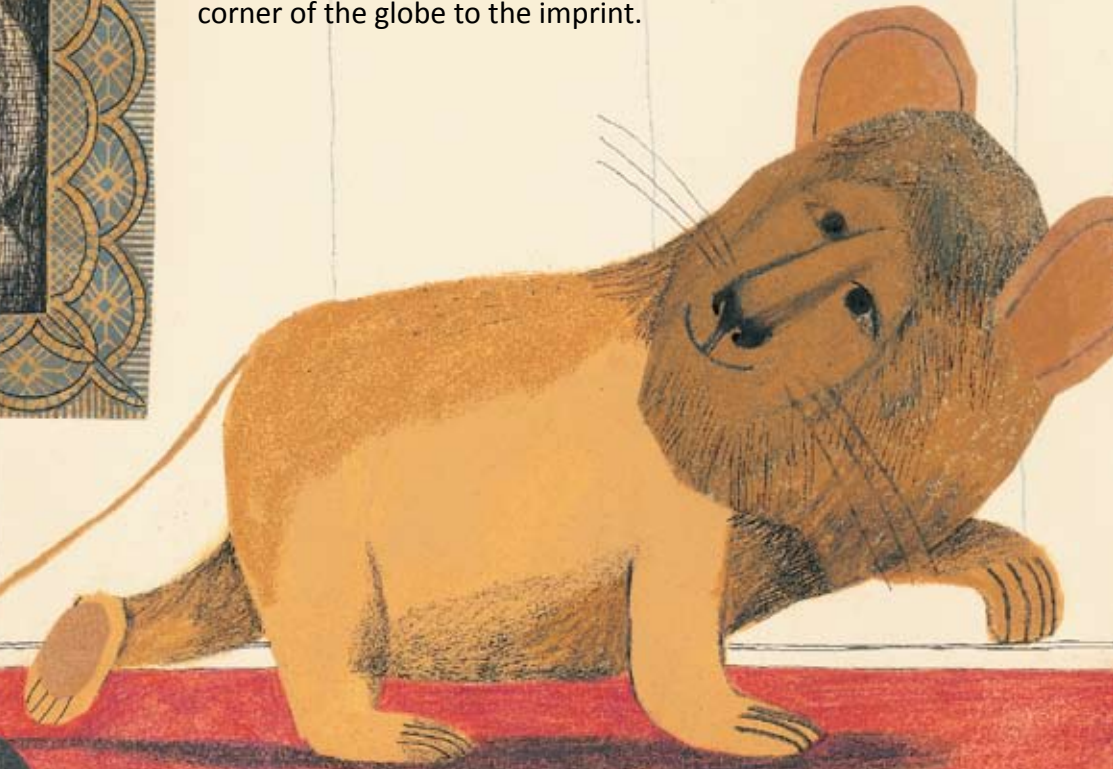
By Geeta Dharmarajan. Illustrated by Nancy Raj

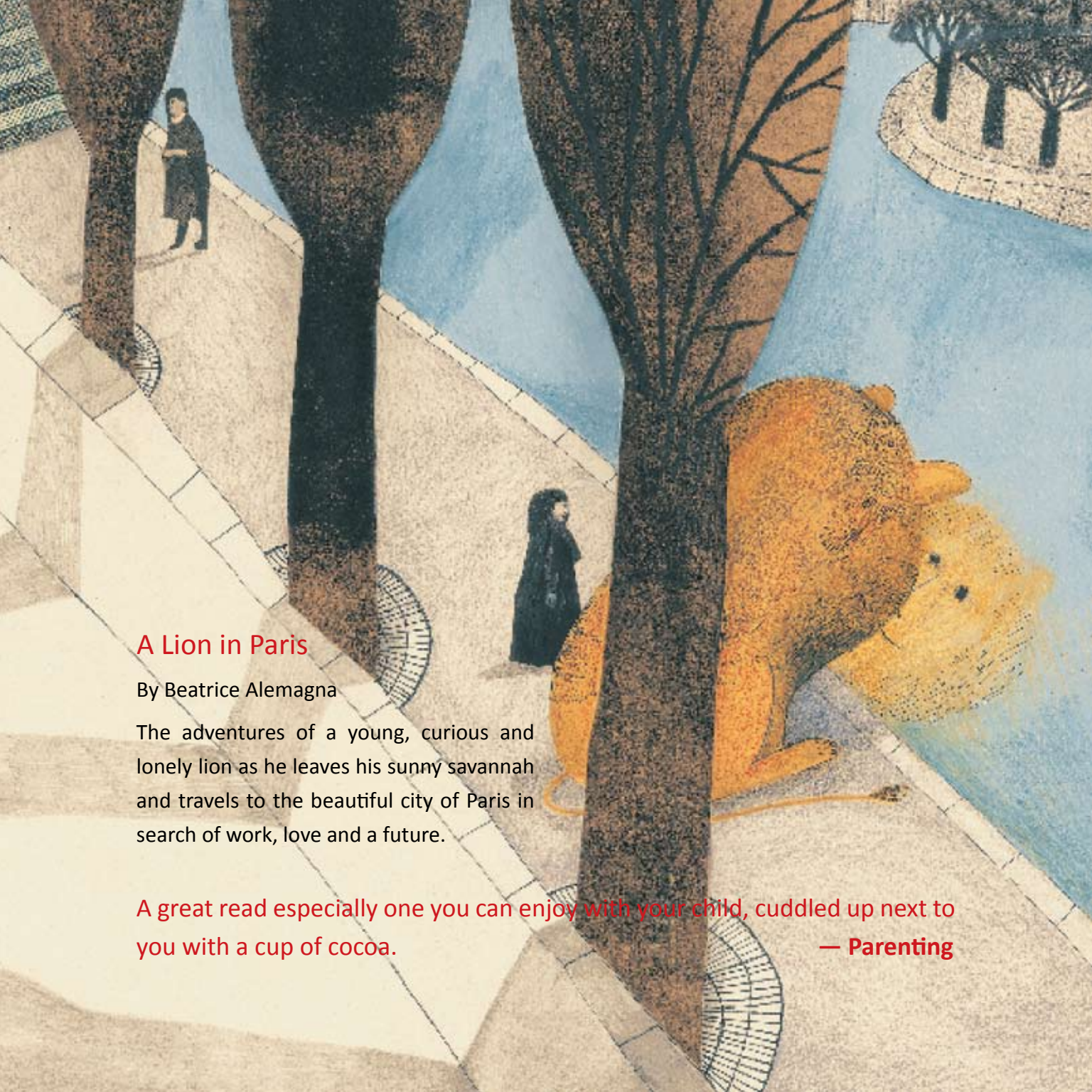
A magically beautiful story about Malar and her grandfather. A laptime, bedtime, anytime story for you to share with your child. Enjoy!



# World Series

The Katha World Series is a very important area of focus for Katha. Conceived with the specific aim of introducing children in India (and South Asia, by extension) to new cultures and generating a healthy curiosity about other countries and people, these stories dispel prejudices, counter stereotypes through culture-linking and help children understand the world better. We are keen on carrying this forward and including stories from every corner of the globe to the imprint.





## A Lion in Paris

By Beatrice Alemagna

The adventures of a young, curious and lonely lion as he leaves his sunny savannah and travels to the beautiful city of Paris in search of work, love and a future.

A great read especially one you can enjoy with your child, cuddled up next to you with a cup of cocoa.  
— Parenting

## Fledolin Upside Down

By Antje Damm

All bats hang with their heads down. But Fledolin — he stands firmly on the ground! An upside down book on how it's great fun to be topsy-turvy just like Fledolin.

The book speaks of life's fundamentals and is worth a try if you're looking to boost your kid's thinking power and imagination. — New Woman





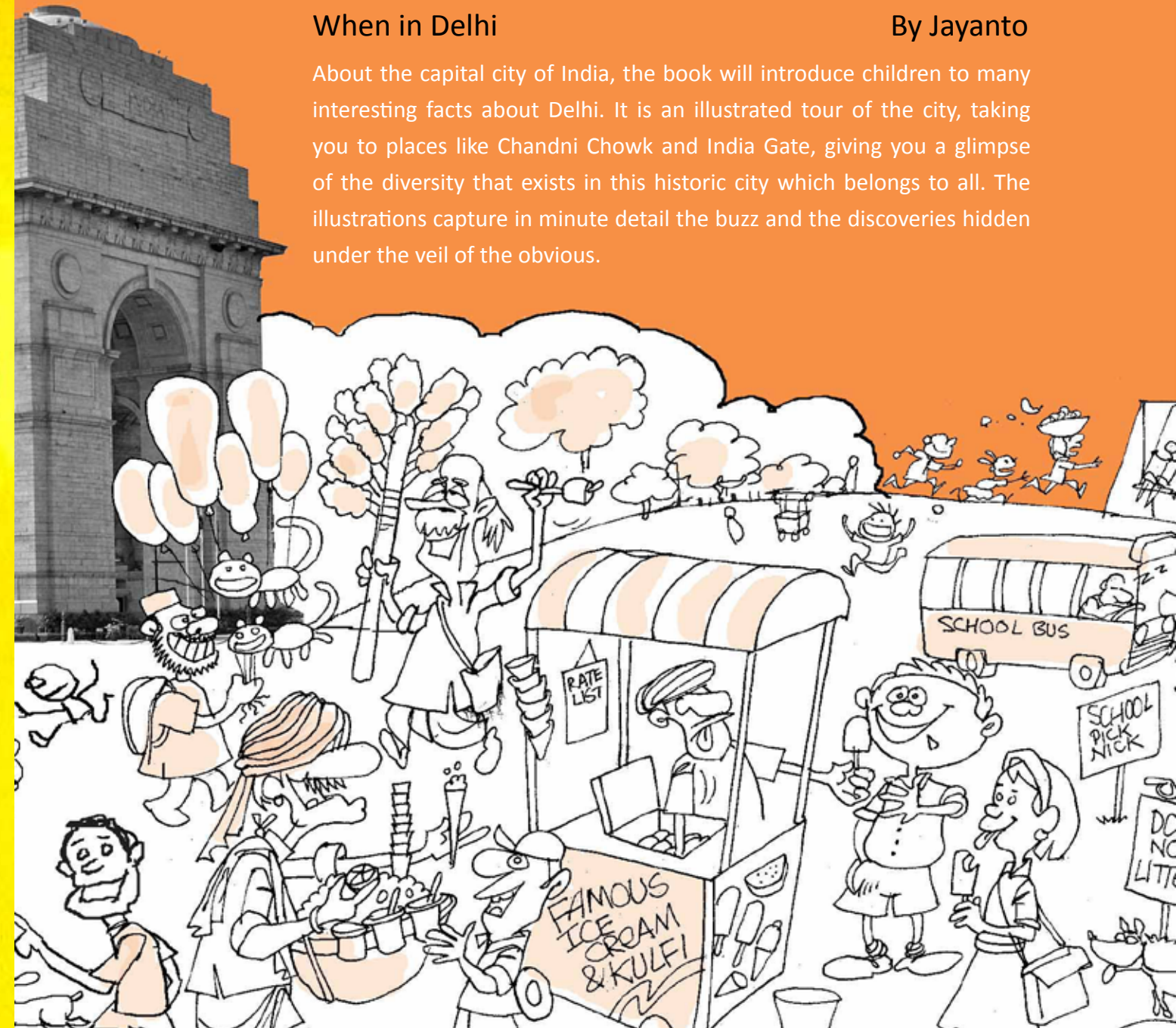
# The Palette 2010-11

The year 2008-09 saw a range of storybooks for tiny-tots, lovingly crafted by gifted illustrators, nicely stacked in the 'New Releases' section of the bookstores. Here's a sneak peek into what we have in store for you this year!

## When in Delhi

By Jayanto

About the capital city of India, the book will introduce children to many interesting facts about Delhi. It is an illustrated tour of the city, taking you to places like Chandni Chowk and India Gate, giving you a glimpse of the diversity that exists in this historic city which belongs to all. The illustrations capture in minute detail the buzz and the discoveries hidden under the veil of the obvious.





## I am Aan

By Meenakshi Bharadwaj. Illustrated by Christopher Corr

Deep in the jungles of the Western Ghats lives a baby elephant called Aan. His mother and brother and sister all dote on him. Growing from a pampered baby of the herd to an adult, Aan learns many invaluable lessons. His journey from the magical world of childhood to the tough adult one is an exciting voyage of self-discovery.

## GT Express

By Christopher Corr

The nostalgia-stirring Grand Trunk Express takes you all the way from Chennai to Delhi. And what happens inside the train and outside it forms the stuff this book is made of. A kaleidoscope of colours and cultures to enjoy and explore!

## Hic!copotomus

By Geeta Dharmarajan. Illustrated by Rajiv Eipe

A quirky tale of a hiccupping Hippo plopping into a pond because of its unstoppable hiccups. The book comes with the perils of being highly entertaining, giving you uncontrollable giggles, and a very rumbling, grumbling tummy!

## I Love Earth Series

Katha's new I LOVE EARTH! series of books is a colouring encyclopaedia that gives preschoolers the larger picture in fun ways. Studies show that your preschooler can understand BIG ideas, especially when it's about things that they see daily. Katha is the first publisher to bring to you and your preschooler the joy of being a member of planet earth. Enjoy! And in the process, help make your child socially, culturally and environmentally savvy.

## Razia and the Pink Elephant

By Mukul Dube

Offering the best of fun fiddled narration, the story with its subtle humour and word play is a rare delight. The goofy world of Razia and her elephant Saraswati and her carrot taster Uncle Sher Singh and his best friend Natasha - the world's fastest courier pigeon, is sure to make your child's imagination soar... for nothing is quite what it seems to be here.

## Gijjigudde and the Fireflies

By Gopini Karunakar. Illustrated by Atanu Roy

The golden sparrows complain to the gods that their homes have no light. Men light lamps, owls have eyes that shine. But sparrows have no way to get through the night. The gods feel sorry for them and let them collect moondust when the moon rubs against the sky. With nests of moondust, the sparrows catch fireflies who happily light up their homes.



## The Old Man Who Wouldn't Listen

By Nonda Chatterjee. Illustrated by Siddharth Tripathi

He was laughed at, scolded for his obstinacy, called names. But the old man would not change his ways, nor part with his companions. With pockets of suspense, this beautiful story - our first graphic novel! - exemplifies that life is impossible without a little help from friends.

## Little Cloud's Quest

By Stephen Aitken. Illustrated by Anjali Nayar


A tender tale of seeking and finding. In search of a true friend, a little cloud embarks on a journey over the vast oceans, through swamps and jungles and up and down tall mountains. Dismayed at the lack of response, on and on she travels, through several encounters. Until finally one day...lo and behold!





## Oh No, Not Again!

By Geeta Dharmarajan. Illustrated by Rajiv Eipe

What happens when the famous cricketer of Dhamdhoom Nagar, Her Most Royal Highness of Dhamdhoom and owner of the Best Cricket Pitch in the World, Banu, loses her temper? Find out for yourself in this mad mad story... Laughs guaranteed!

**OUR MARKETING [AD]VENTURES** took off to a zipping start because of BvLF and the leveraging partners, WIPRO Applying Thought to Schools, and WWF. The sales team managed to reach out to children across the Hindi speaking belt through major library operations, both government and non-governmental. And we are proud to showcase

—  ROOM TO READ has established 3295 libraries in total through 2009 and projected in 2010 are 85 libraries in both rural and urban areas.

- They bought 23,160 Katha Children's Books worth Rs. 1,763,850 for 3,295 libraries, reaching out to roughly 231,600 children.
-  PRATHAM DELHI EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES has reading programmes in the states of UP, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Uttaranchal.
- They bought 1065 Katha Children's Books worth Rs. 1.276.450 for 200 libraries, reaching out to roughly 10,450 children.
-  CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF INDIAN LANGUAGES has 150 libraries spread across India for their research and other programmes.
- They bought 810 Katha Children's Books worth Rs. 218,700 for 70 libraries, reaching out to roughly 8,100 children.
-  Raja Ram Mohun Ray Library is India's premier network of libraries across different states and districts (rural and urban).
- They bought 5340 books Katha Children's Books worth Rs. 738,240 for 300 libraries, reaching out to roughly 53,400 children.
-  Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is India's flagship project aiming to bring all children into school. Uttar Pradesh, India's second largest state, has already opened its account with Katha, which is reaching out to all the 73 districts in the state.
- They bought 97,000 Katha Children's Books worth Rs. 48,50,000 for 300 libraries, reaching roughly 53,400 children.

TOTAL SALES: Rs. 6,422,240 to 3,865 libraries, serving at least around 303,550 child readers [we have taken about 10 readers/book for the sake of calculation].

*We hope to bring you for 2010-11 a similar exciting potpourri of books and child-related happenings at Katha that foster the joys of reading, knowing, and living in all children, parents and teachers!*

# THANK YOU!







Warm greetings! Katha is a unique model that seamlessly connects grassroots work in education, urban resurgence and story for social justice and poverty alleviation through education.

Since 1990, we have driven our education model on a powerful idea: Children can bring change that is sustainable and real. We run 96 schools in slum, street and tribal communities. Inter alia, we train teachers, help them prepare low-cost teaching/learning materials, and are into action research.

We work with communities and the government as well as national and international donor agencies, to bring the joy of reading to more than 200,000 children. We see translation as a non-divisive tool in nation building. We are a “profit for all” social organization.

 **KATHA**

katha . a3 . sarvodaya enclave

sri aurobindo marg . new delhi 110017

ph: (91-11) 4141 6600 . 2652 1752 . fax: (91-11) 2652 4373

visit us at [www.katha.org](http://www.katha.org) . write to us at [katha@katha.org](mailto:katha@katha.org)