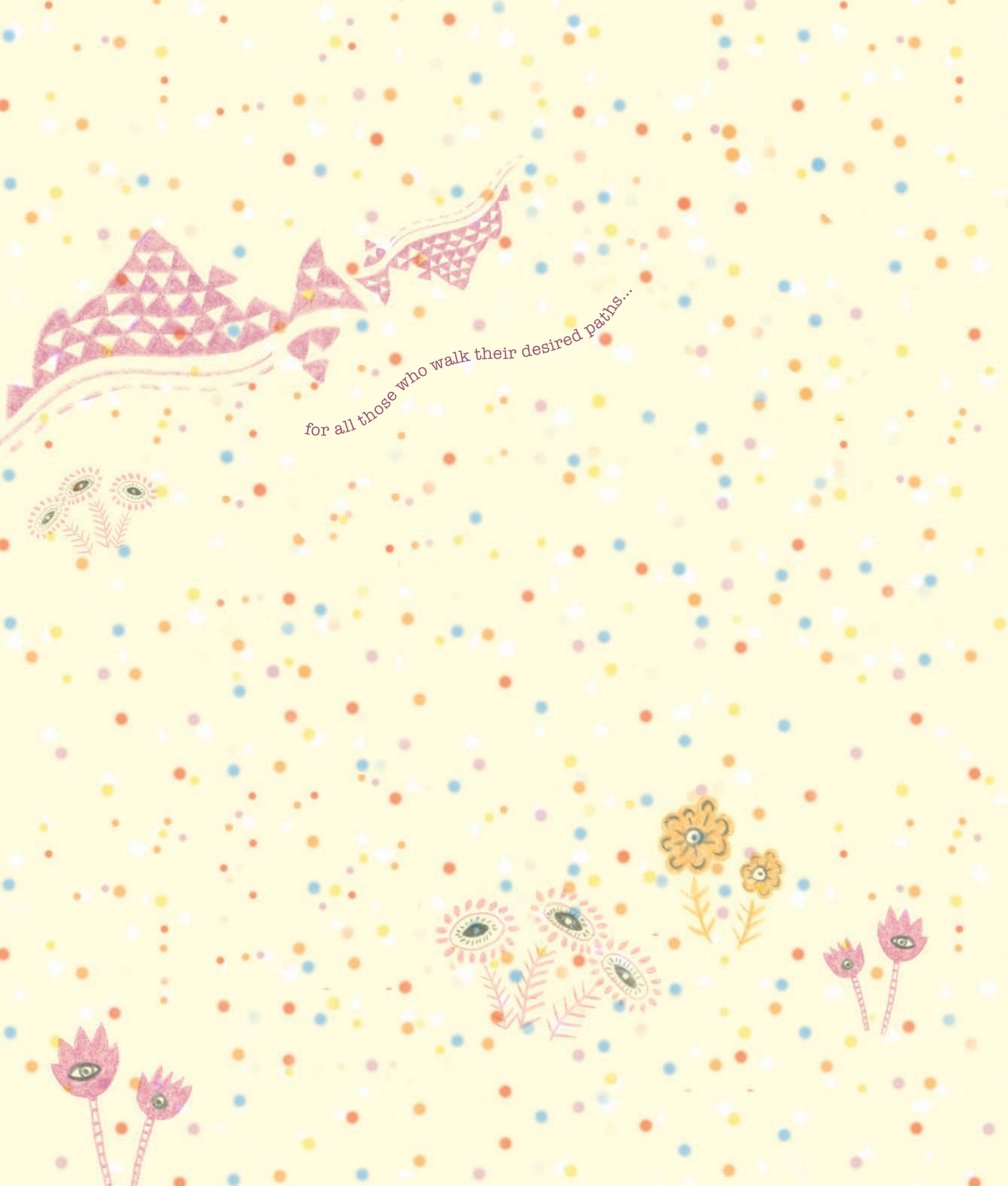




IN OUT WITHIN

by Reshal Shah



for all those who walk their desired paths...



They say, 'A CHAMELEON DOES NOT LEAVE
ONE TREE UNTIL HE IS SURE OF ANOTHER.'
What happens when he starts living in one tree forever?

This is the story of JUSHTI, who along with her fellow chameleons, lived in a tree, in a beautiful and colourful forest. But this forest did not seem wonderful to them. They were not sure if colour would be safe as much as it appeared wonderful. Jushti and her fellow chameleons often used COLOUR only to hide from their enemies. They rarely celebrated their gift of colour and felt that their ability of changing colours had become a curse in disguise. They say that a chameleon who chose to be colourful ended up being ALONE, for they are feared by the rest.





Afraid and intimidated, they stayed shut in their tree. This tree that they found was a special tree where everything was black and white. This tree had showed them safety, provided these chameleons also stayed black and white. How did this tree come into such a colourful forest was always a mystery, some say that the creator of the forest gave them this. The rest of the forest was so filled with colours, millions of them, so from where they stood they would just look on with wonder towards the world of colours.



They were sure that it was easier to stay rigidly black and white in this tree rather than change colours to hide. And once they entered this comfort bubble, they never dreamt to go back to the colour outside. Did they miss being colourful, that once existed? Maybe, maybe not. Few cared little to find out and a few, waited for that day to come, when they were comfortable enough to leave this tree. They told themselves and each other that they were happy, but who knows if they were really happy!



Jushti, amongst all the chameleons, often questioned herself and felt empty inside. She often asked herself looking outside, “WHO AM I?” But she was so accustomed to the comforts of “I CANNOT”, “I DO NOT WANT TO” and “IT IS TOO DIFFICULT” that she forgot to realize, she had stopped doing things that made her ‘HERSELF’. After all, what is a chameleon like, if she does not change her colours? She too, like others hoped that a day might come, when destiny would bring back the colours with all the security assured.

Days passed and so passed the nights; she kept looking out with teary eyes. Lost in her confusions, it so happened that one of her fellows took his last breath. Time was sad and much of pain. But, the death of her dear fellow taught Jushti the importance of life.

It was in this time of pain and silence when she realized that life was too short. There was no guarantee of the so-called future and maybe her wish to get out into the world of colour would die with her someday. This gave Jushti the courage to break out of the comfort tree. But was this an easy struggle?





Her fellows tore her down, and so did her thoughts.
She had to take the challenge, overcome the FEARS
and dance with them. For everything she desired,
was outside the tree. To bring in the change; she had
to be the change. And this would come only with
SACRIFICE, the sacrifice of escaping the comfort
trap. After several failed attempts, Jushti pushed
herself out. Now, she was UNCERTAIN, and equally
scared. But, the desire to bring back colour to life
made her march ahead.

As she went farther from the black and white tree, she saw the world was no longer as she imagined. She was disappointed and devastated to see that the world outside had turned all PALE AND GREY. The flowers were drooped and the trees were bare. The cats were sad and the children gloomy, the houses so dead with people so sleepy. What had happened to it all! How scary it was for her to see such a sight!





She thought of the comfort tree and told herself, that she could go back to the black and white tree. She blamed the world; she blamed herself and the destiny for the betrayal. But she had come out, with great courage and determination, she wanted to fight it all to bring in colour. It was during those scary, uncertain moments that the unsure steps were taken. She looked at herself in the stream close by. What did she see? LOOK!!

She was an ILLUMINATED, POWERFUL and a MAGICAL chameleon. What she was searching outside; lied within. Jushti suddenly discovered a smile, she had not seen since a long time. While walking into the unknown, she discovered herself. Yes, she was a blessed chameleon! A chameleon who is gifted to change colours at her own will.



Jushti jumped with joy and
danced in different colours.
She felt a sense of freedom that
she herself had imprisoned.
The happiness she desired lied
within. And what she had found
now, reflected all around!

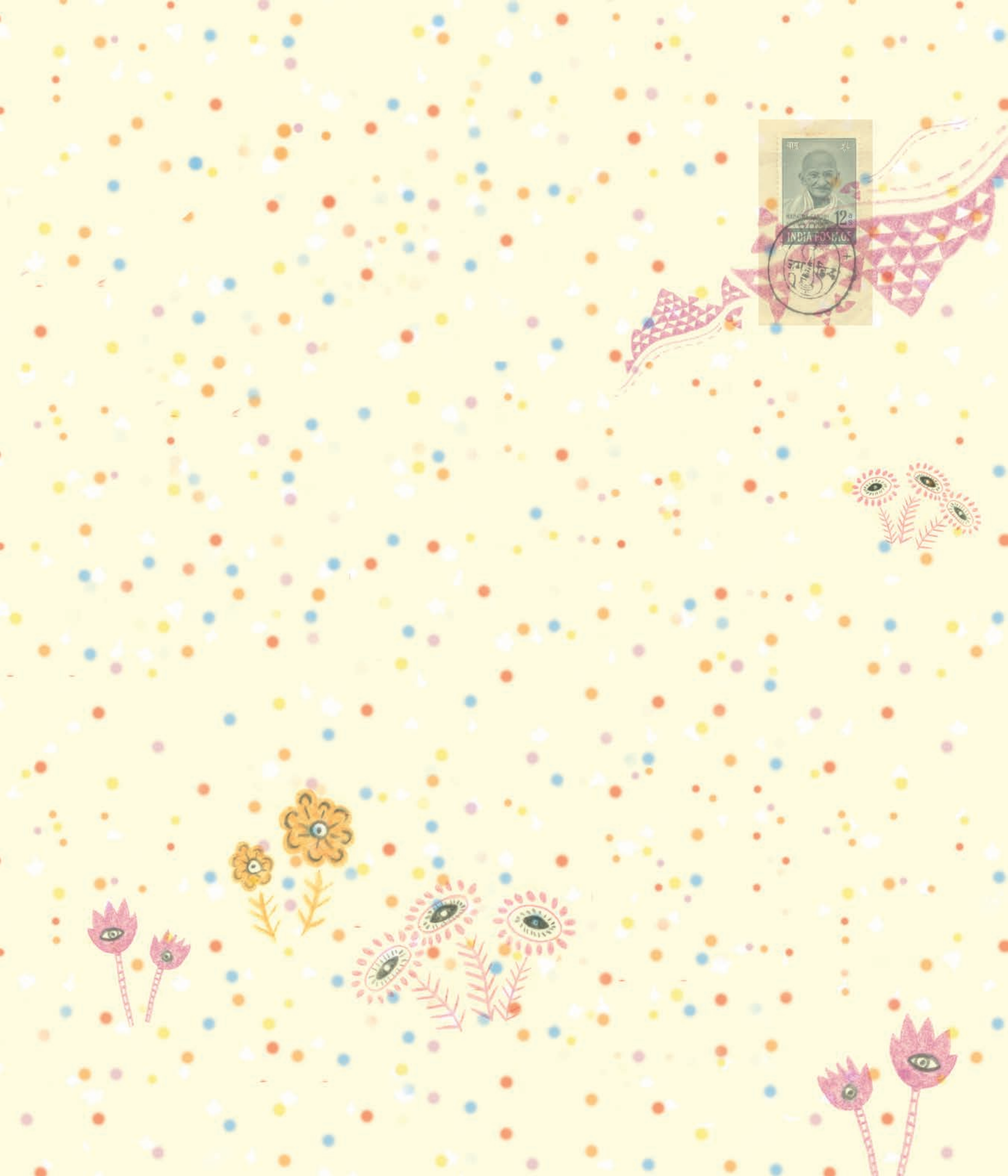


Just like for herself, she wanted everyone around to be colourful and happy.

She found her purpose and the **STRENGTH** that she had within. Her colours kept changing; Jushti could experience this joy and **CONTENTMENT** only after she had hopped outside the black and white tree.



This was an experience she wrote to her fellows back in the black and white tree. She continued her journey, of spreading happiness WITHIN AND OUTSIDE.





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