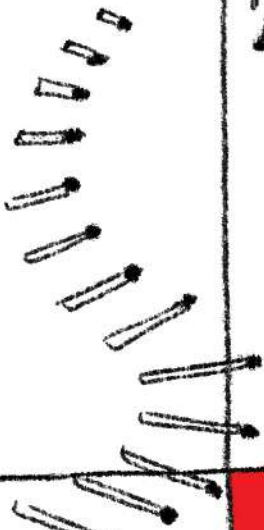


I wish

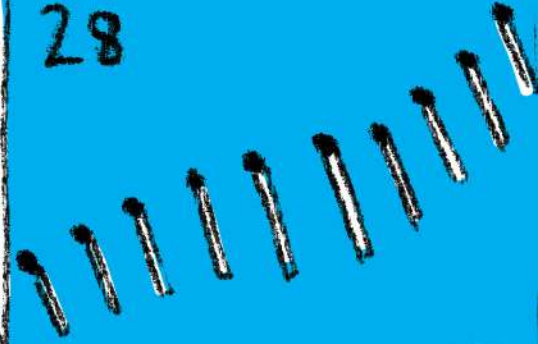
Story and Illustration by
Netra Vasanth

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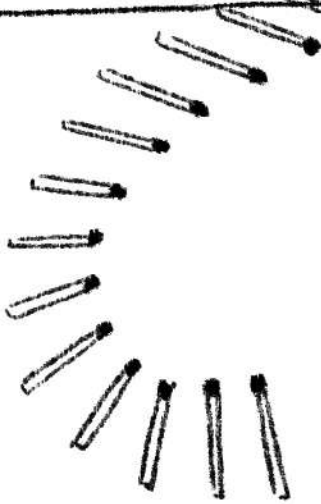


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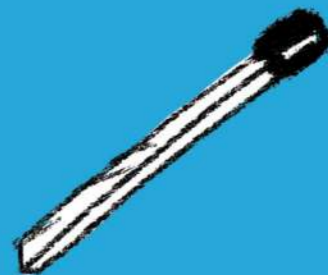
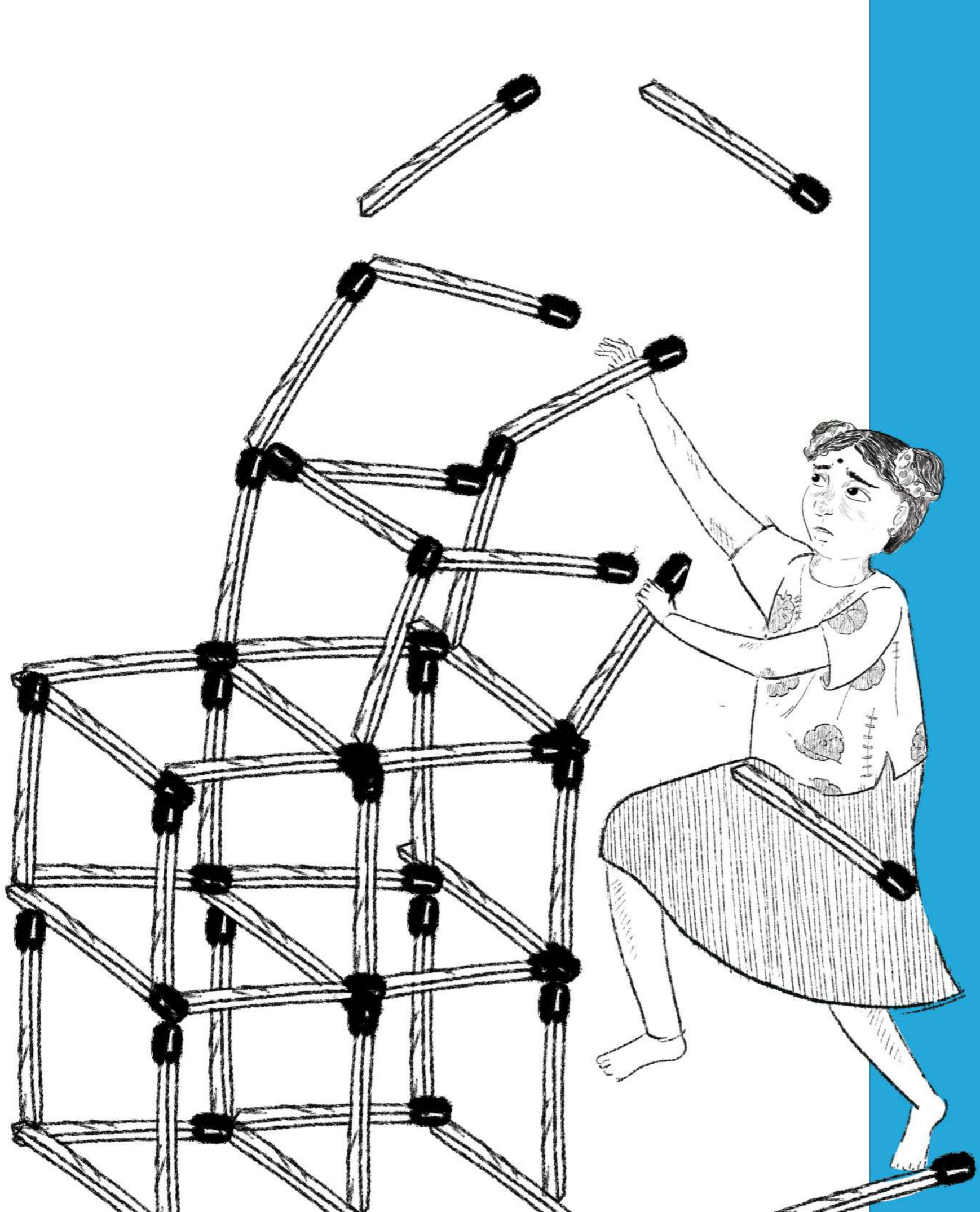


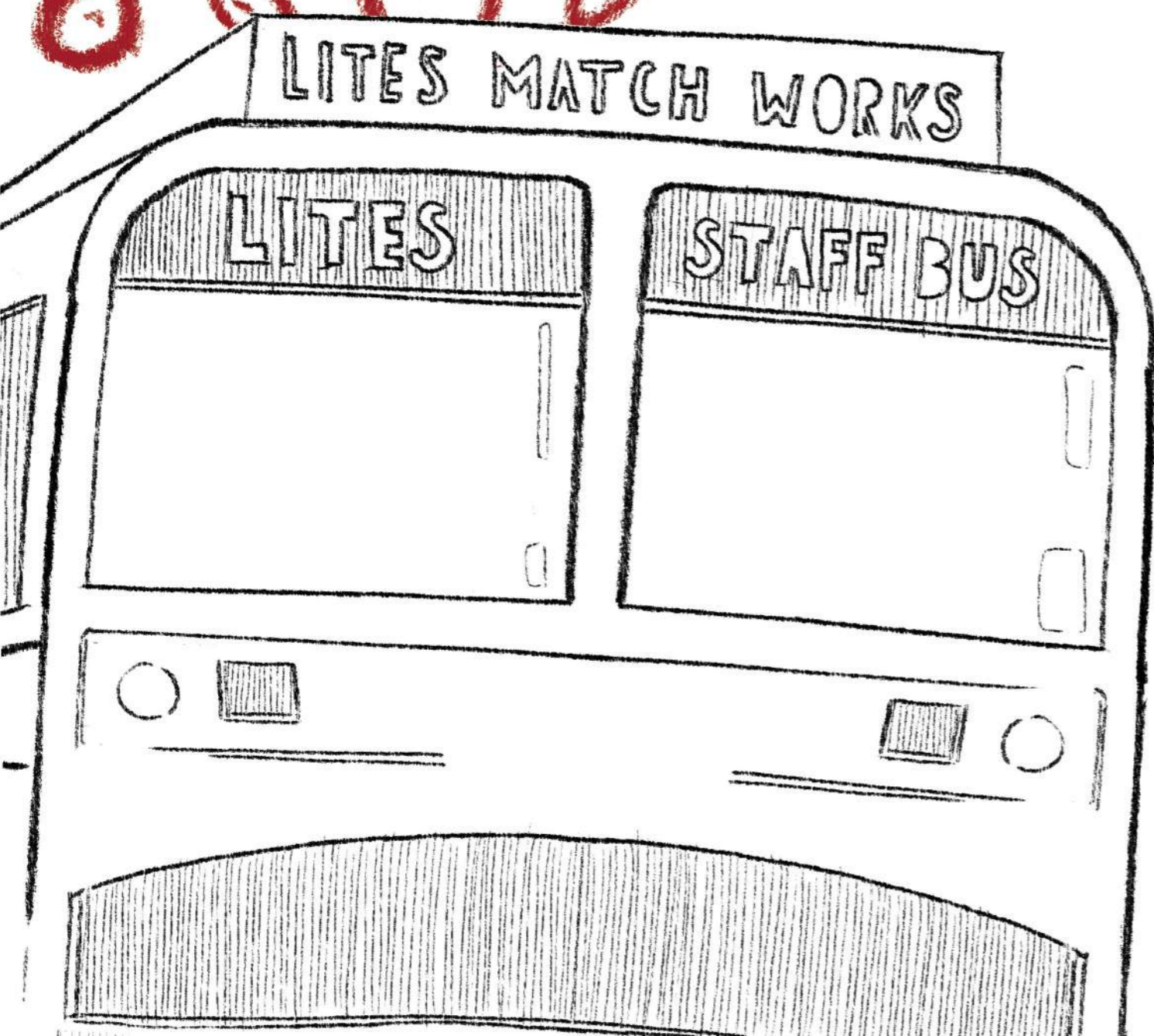
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On a silent, moonlit night in Sivakasi, one can see faint lights from the village houses, hours before the sunrise. The children are getting ready to set off for work at the lites match works factory, some sad, some sleepy, and some still tired from the previous day's rigorous work.

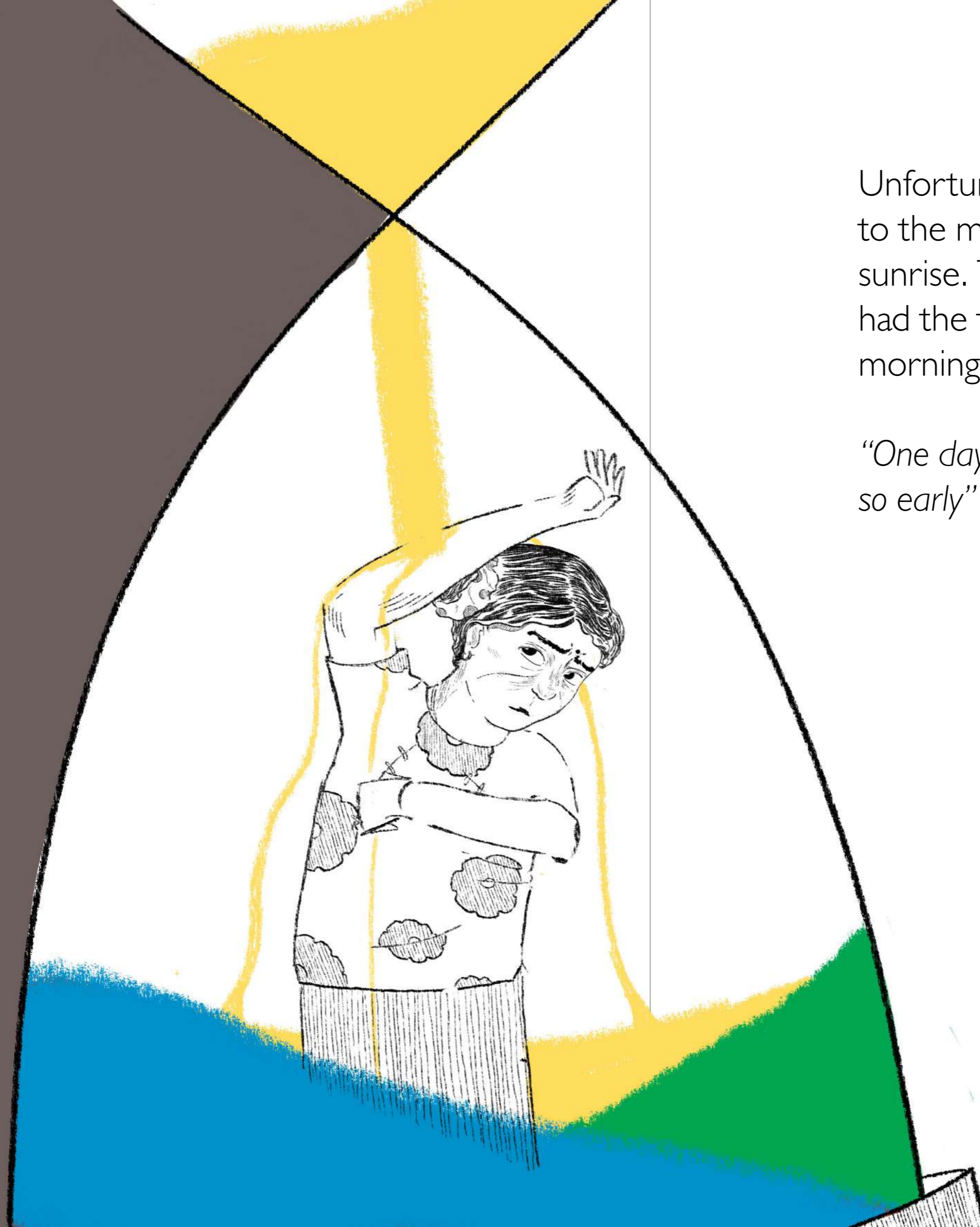
The children wait in silence for their bus to arrive. Among them is Nila, an optimistic, cheerful, 8 year old girl who works at the factory along with many other kids.



As she went along her day, she often found herself drifting away into thoughts about what could have been.



*"I wish I could draw
kolams in every colour"*



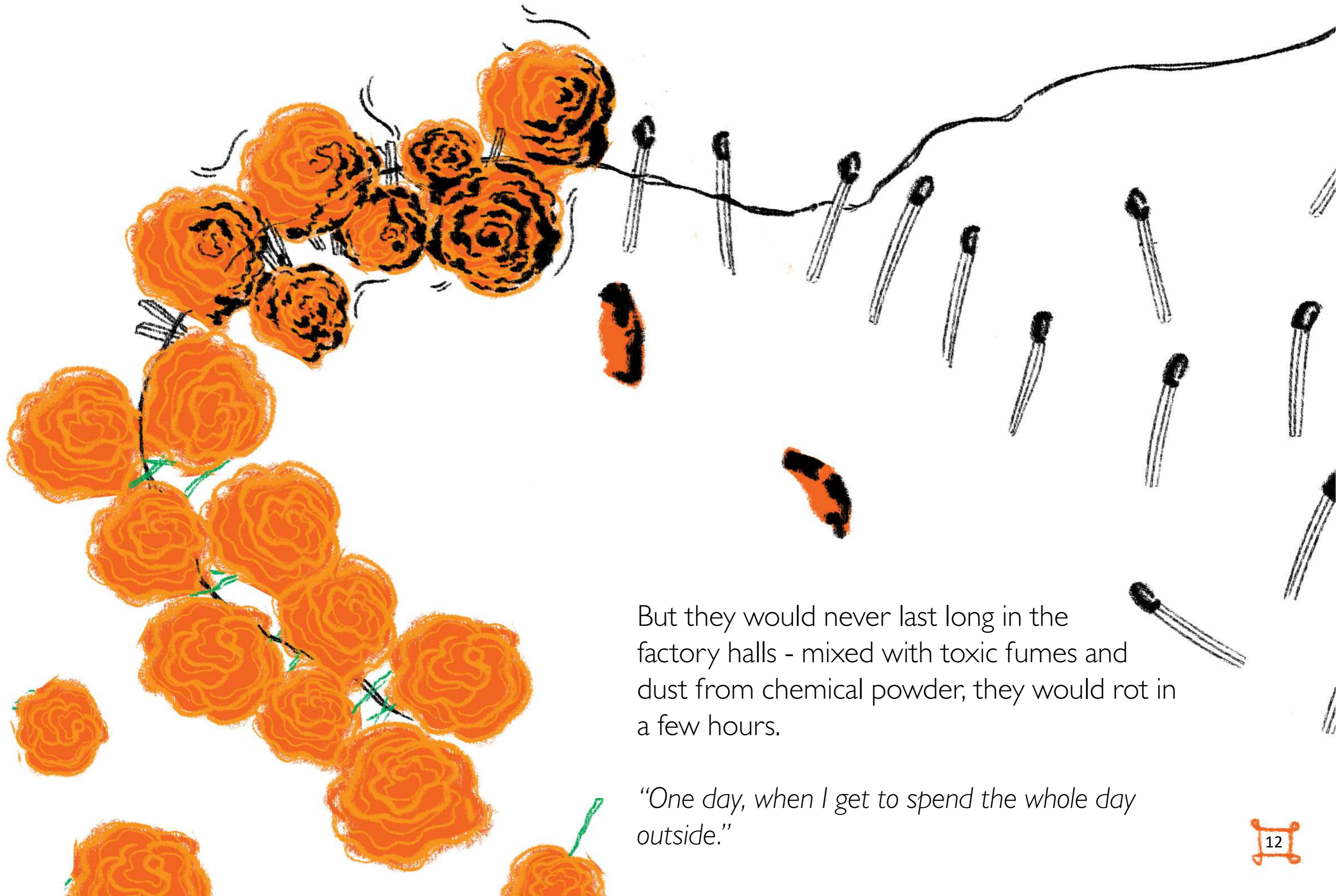
Unfortunately, she was whisked away to the matchbox factory before sunrise. Tired and drowsy, she never had the time to draw kolams in the morning.

“One day when I don’t have to wake up so early” She reassured herself.



The sight of ladies with fresh flowers in their braided hair would make her eyes light up.

"How I wish I could wear marigolds in my hair" she would At noon like every other day while she

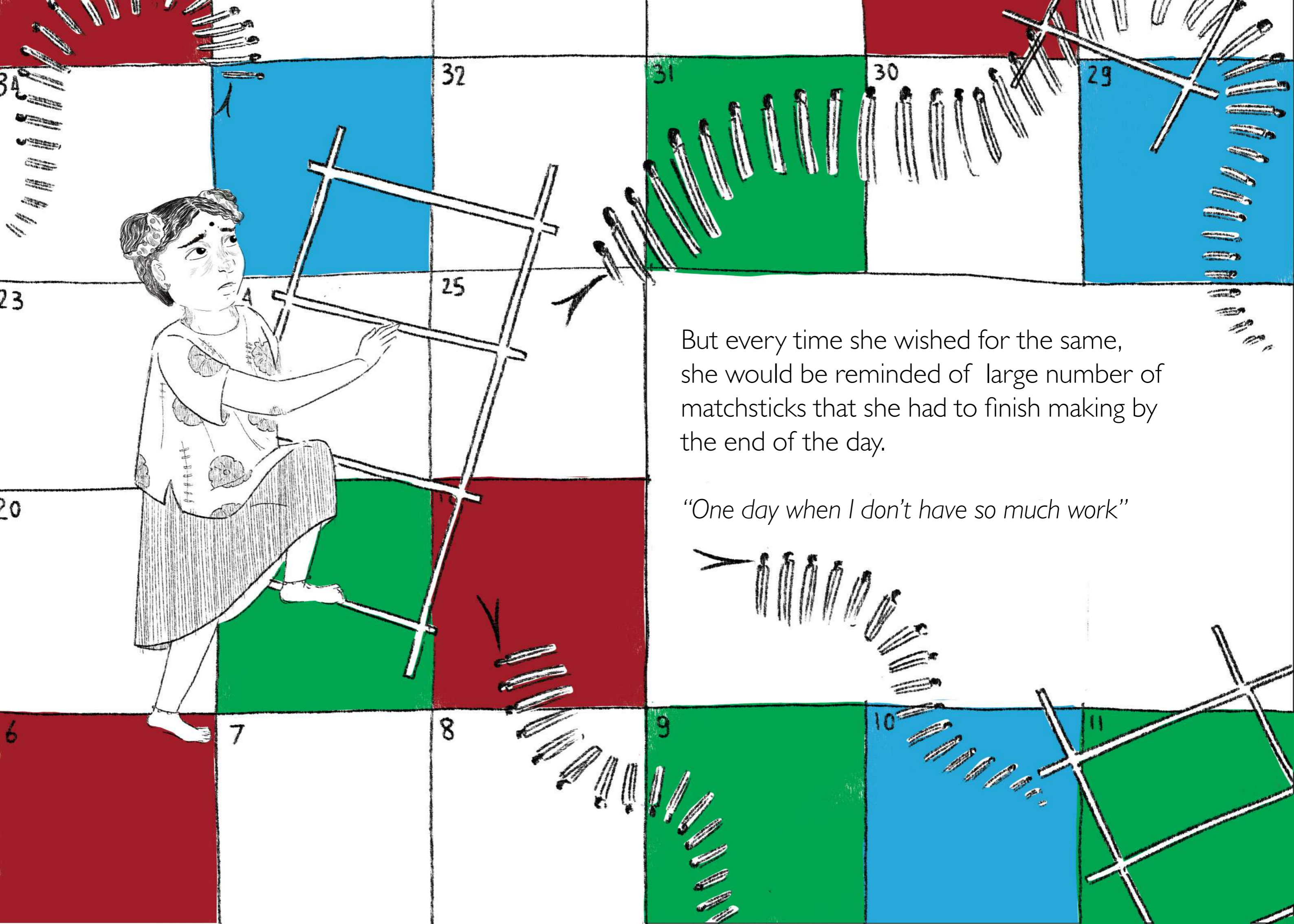


But they would never last long in the factory halls - mixed with toxic fumes and dust from chemical powder, they would rot in a few hours.

“One day, when I get to spend the whole day outside.”



While arranging matchsticks, she thought about the games she could have been playing with her cousins instead.



But every time she wished for the same, she would be reminded of large number of matchsticks that she had to finish making by the end of the day.

“One day when I don’t have so much work”

Every day at noon, she would get a pottalum of cold, dry curd rice for lunch at the factory.



As she ate the food in silence she would think about the Jalebis at the stall on her way to the factory and the all the sweet syrup dripping from them.

A strange wave of despair washes over Nila. she suddenly realizes that she craves a number of things that overwhelm her and feels hopeless about how they are all so out of her reach, so far away.

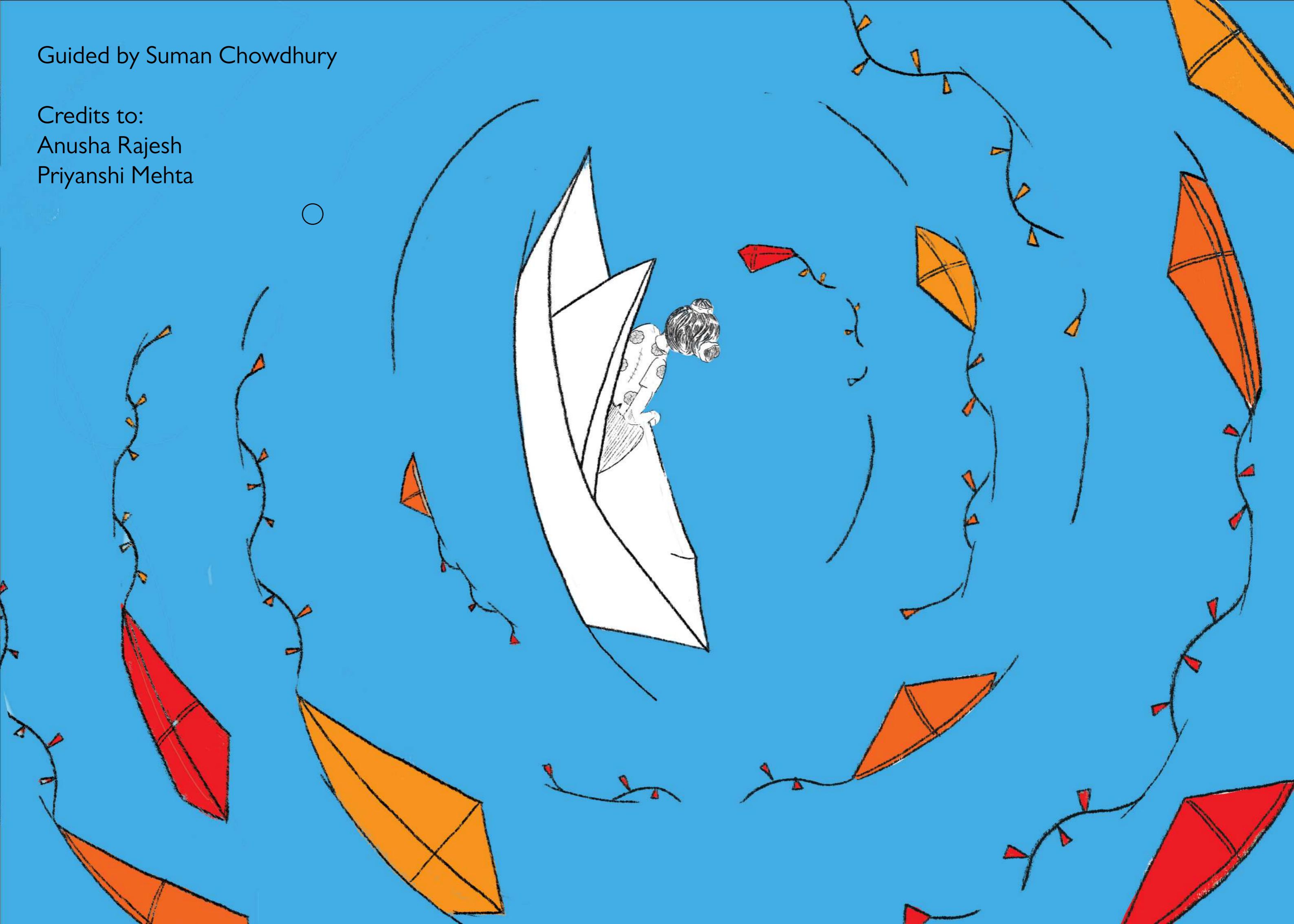


Even as she slaves away within the four walls of the factory every day, there is still a small window of hope in her heart. She still hopes that one day everything she wishes for can be more than just 'what could have been.'



Guided by Suman Chowdhury

Credits to:
Anusha Rajesh
Priyanshi Mehta



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A look into a day in Nila's life, an optimistic, cheerful, 8 yr old school dropout, who along with many other kids works at the lites match work factory in Sivakasi. we embark on a journey into Nila's thoughts, fantasies and despair.

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