



The Koel's Song

Author: Jayashree Deshpande

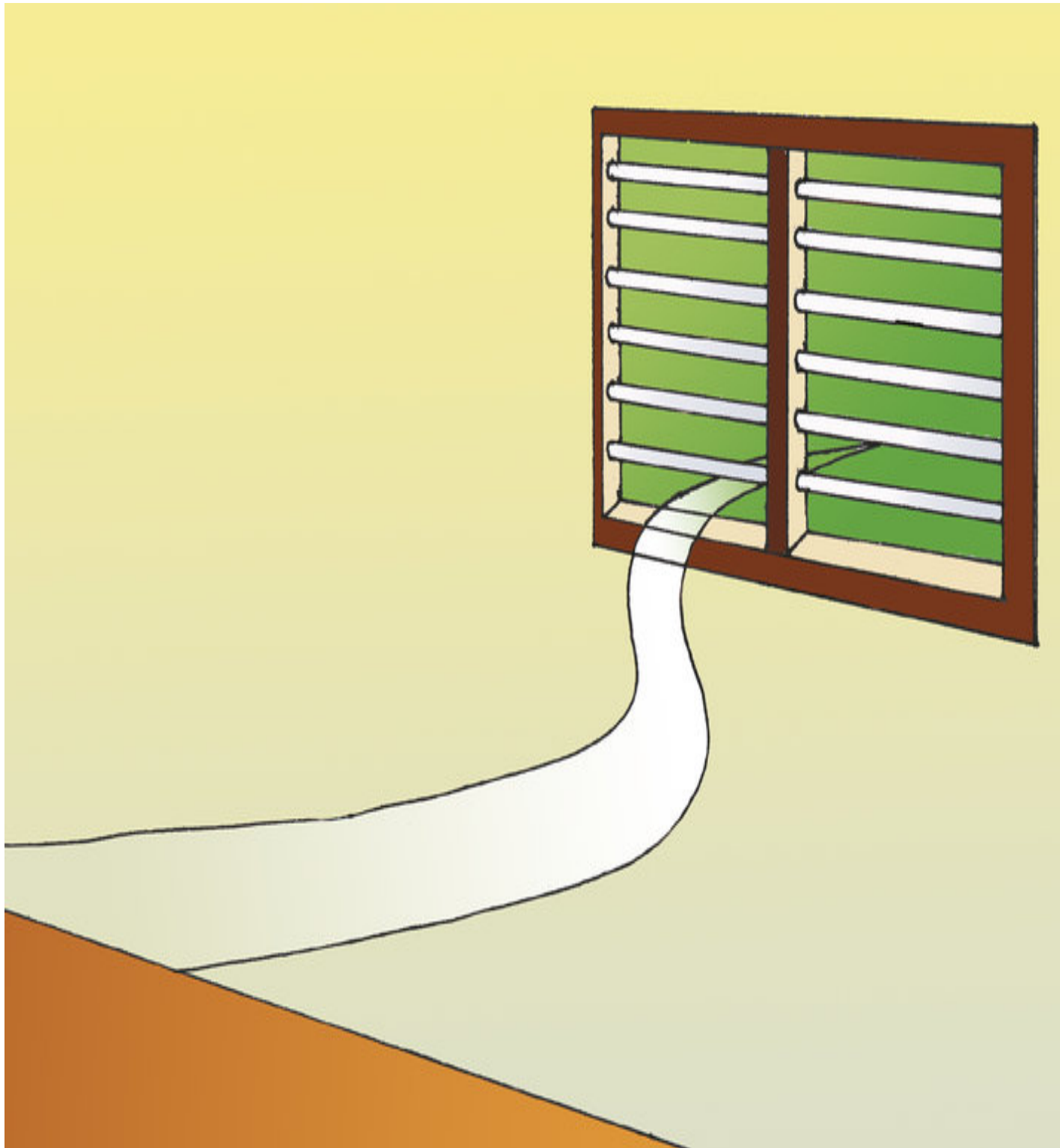
Illustrator: Srikrishna Kedilaya

Translator: Divaspathy Hegde

Level 3



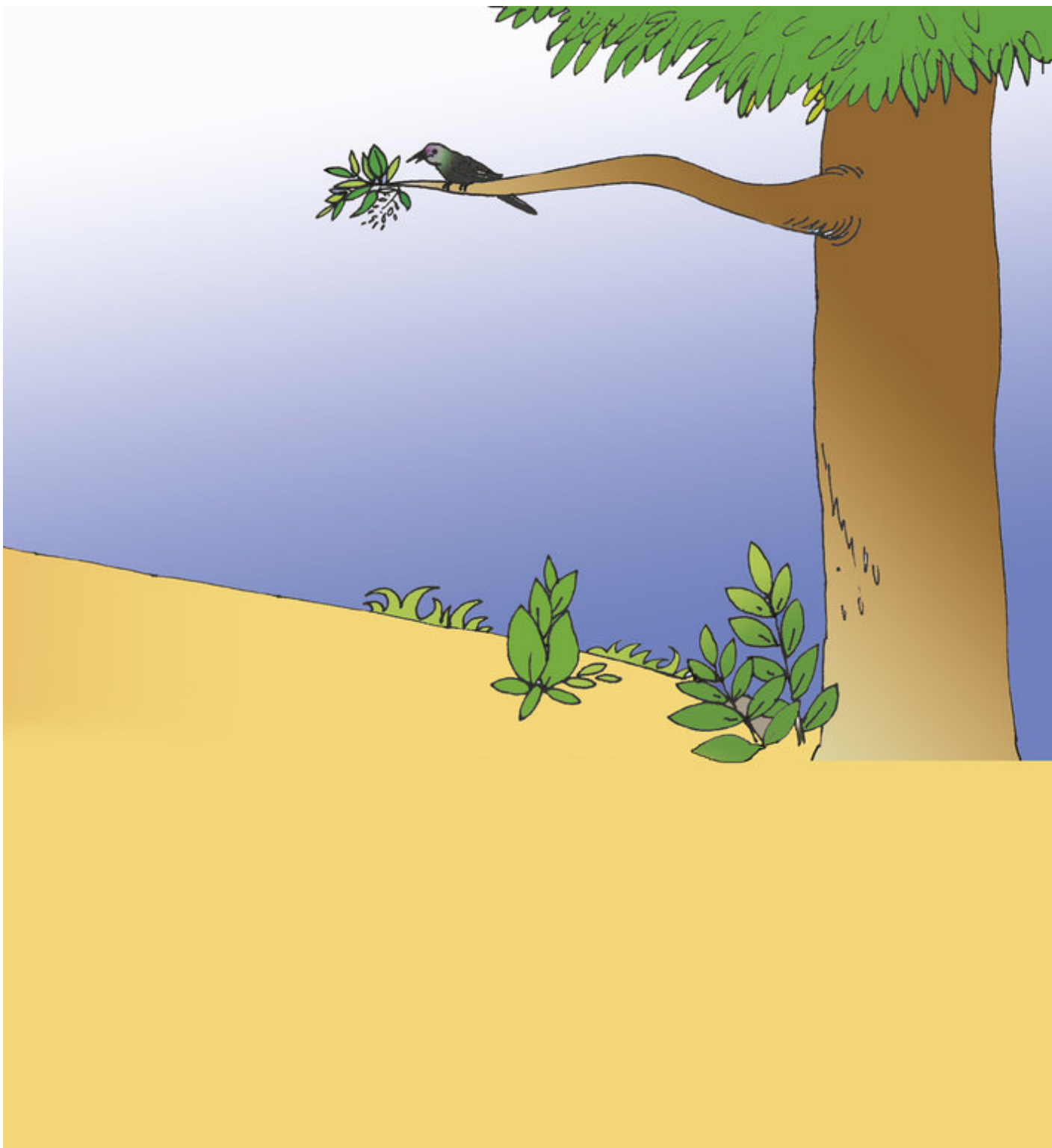
Raju lived in the city. But in the summer, when school was out, he headed straight for his Ajja's farm in the village.



One summer morning,
he woke up early to the
sound of a beautiful
melody.



"Kuhoo, kuhoo, kuhoo..."
It was the koel singing, from
the mango tree nearby.



Raju thought he had never heard anything quite so sweet. But where was the koel?

Raju searched everywhere for the bird. Finally, he spotted it on one of the branches of the tree.

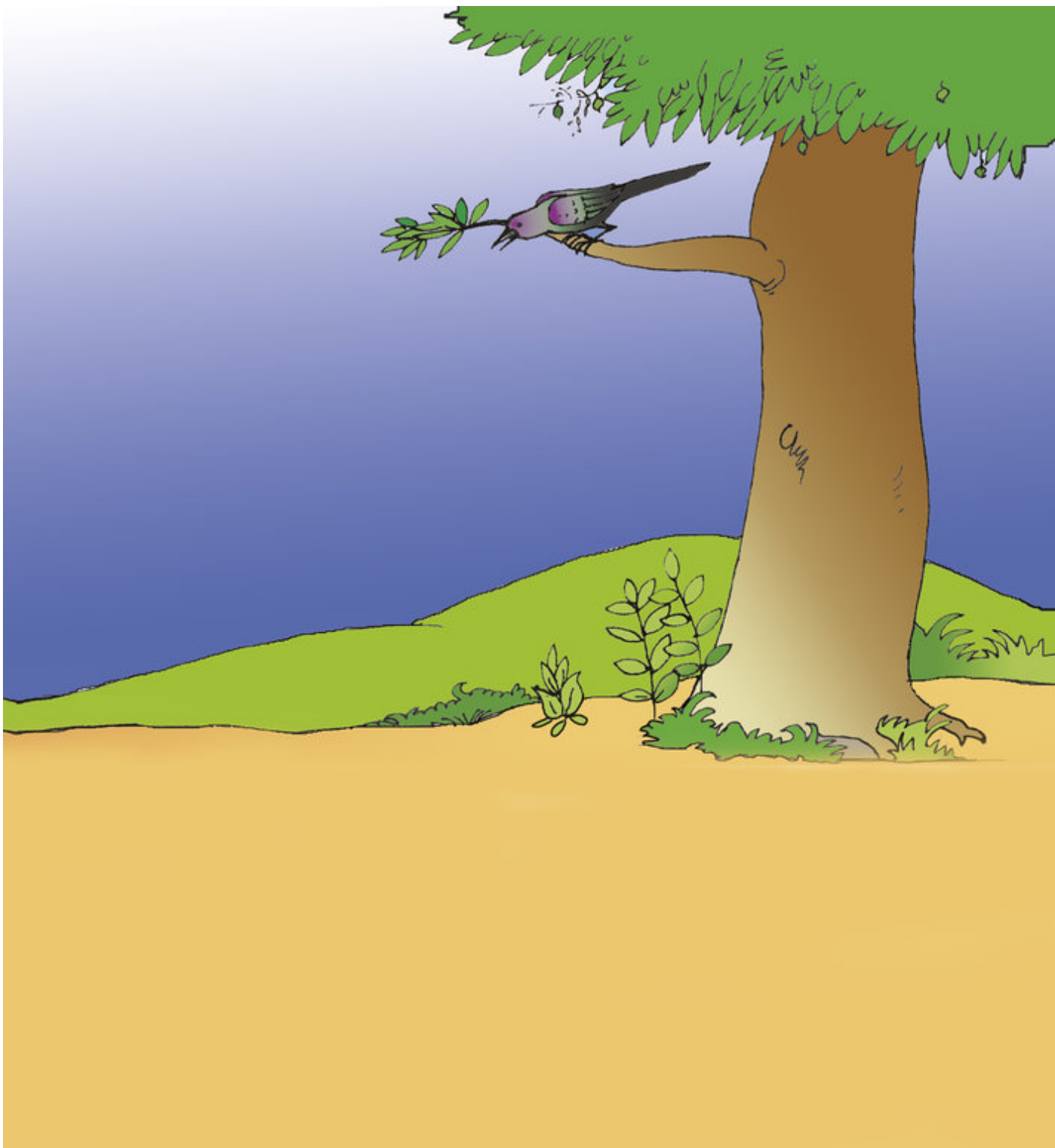


The koel saw Raju.

“Kuhoo, Raju!” said the koel.

Raju was delighted.

“Koel, you know my name!”
he cried.



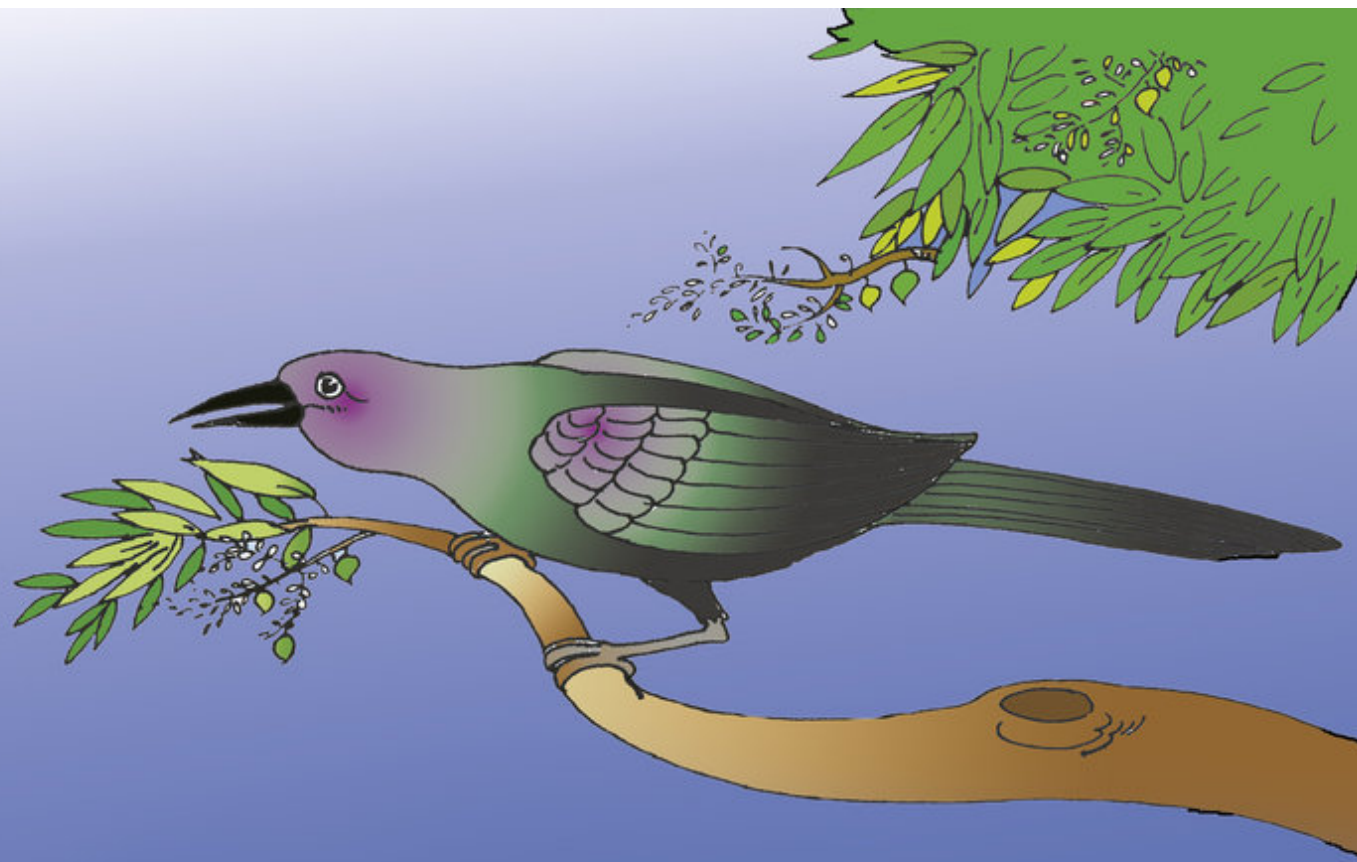
"Of course! In fact, I know everything!" smiled the koel.

"Now tell me,
how did you like my song?"



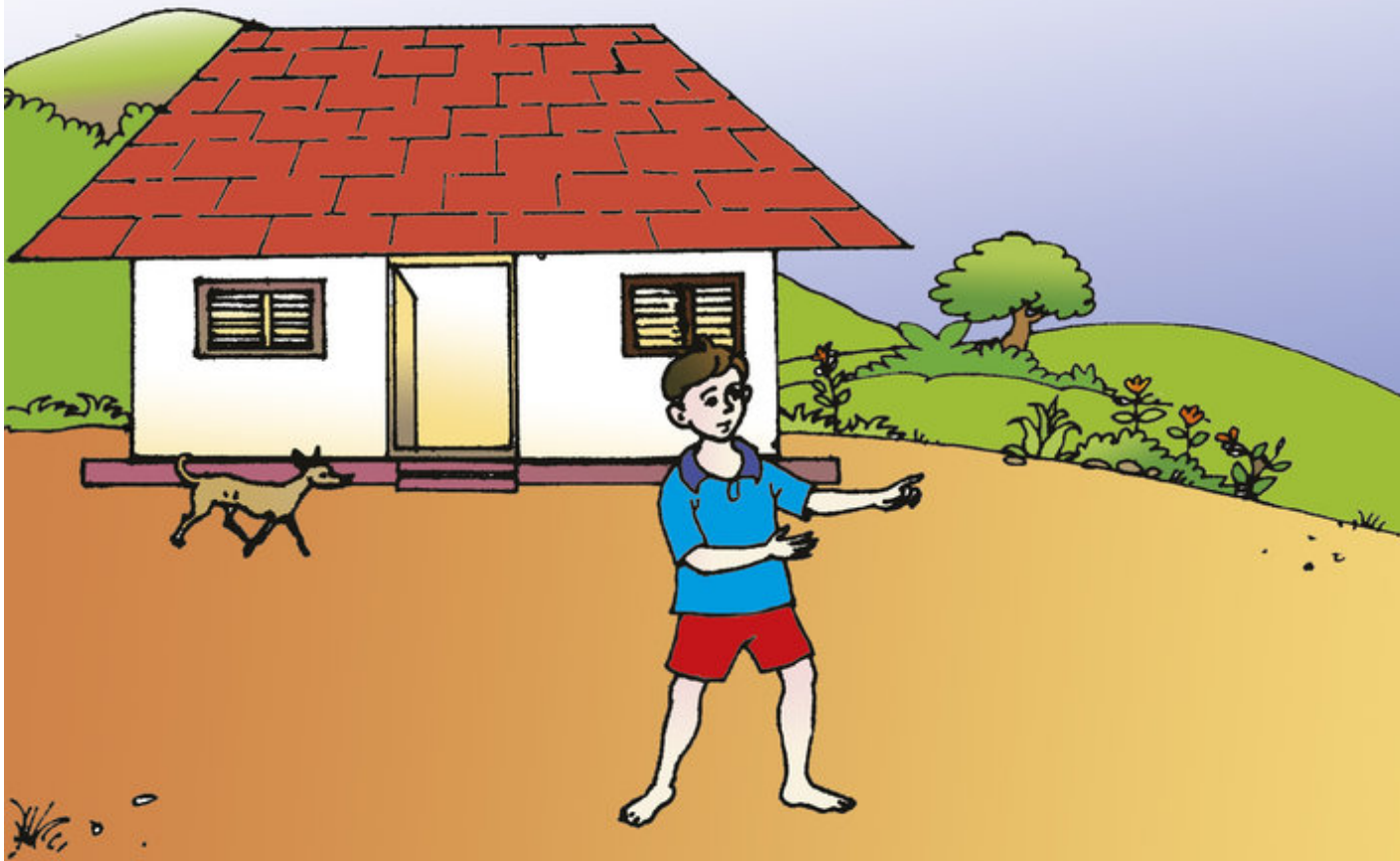
"Oh, you sing beautifully!"
said Raju.

"I think you have the
sweetest voice I ever
heard."

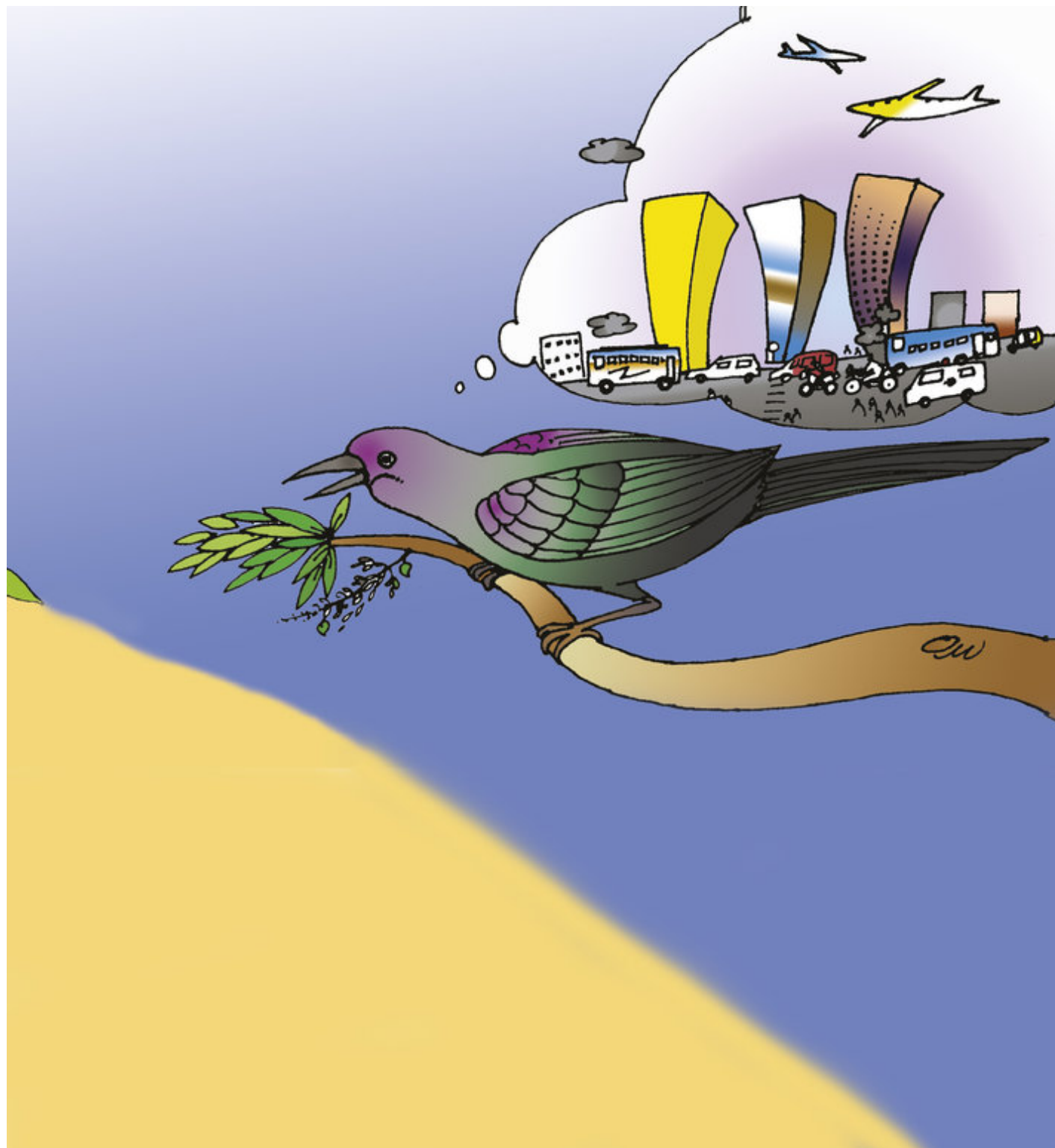


"I'm glad you like it," replied the koel.

"When it is springtime and the mango tree has burst into flower, we koels are so happy we go "kuhoo, kuhoo" the whole day long."

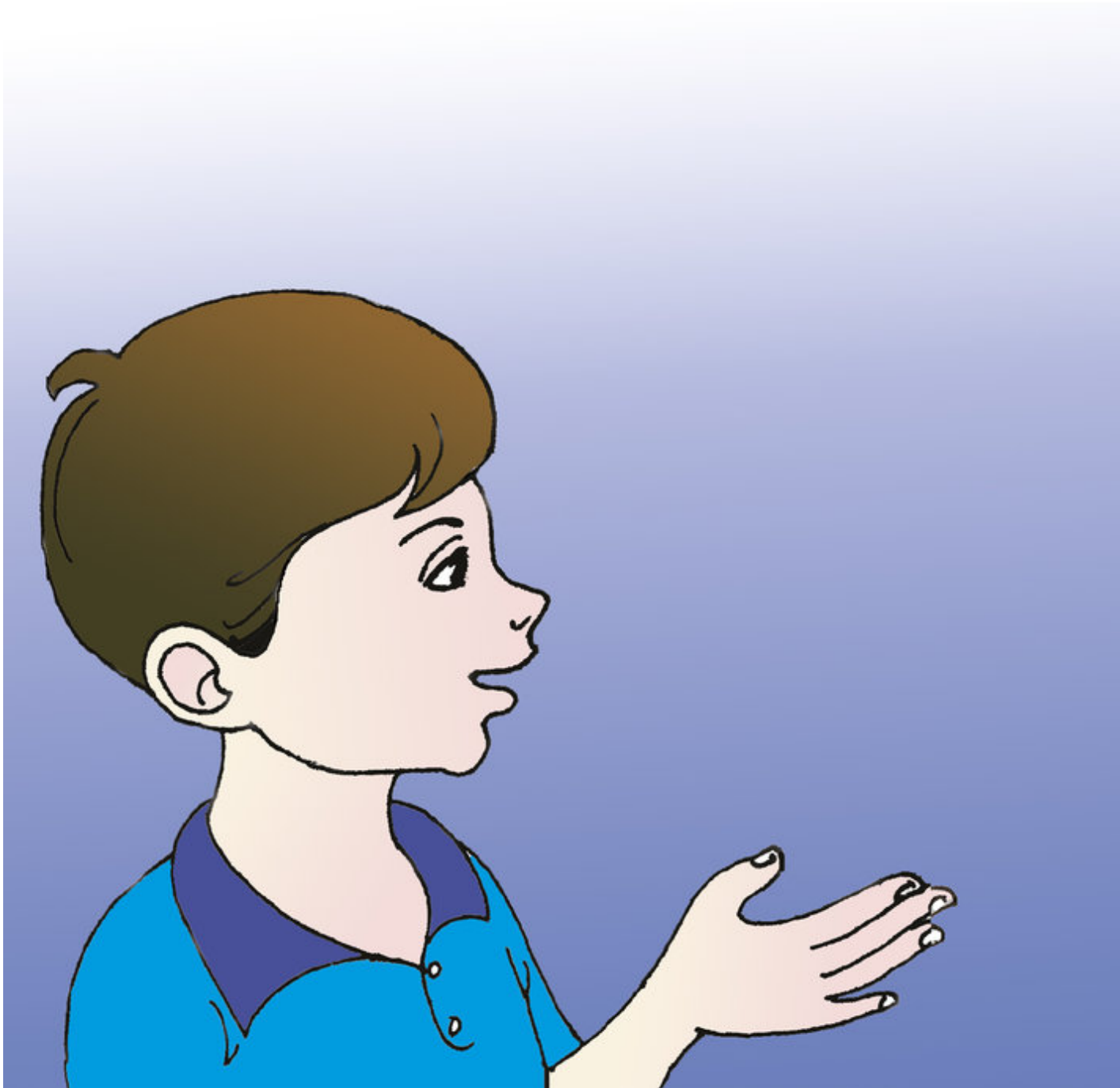


Raju was very happy. "Koel, why don't you come with me to the city?" he said. "Everyone there would love to hear you sing."

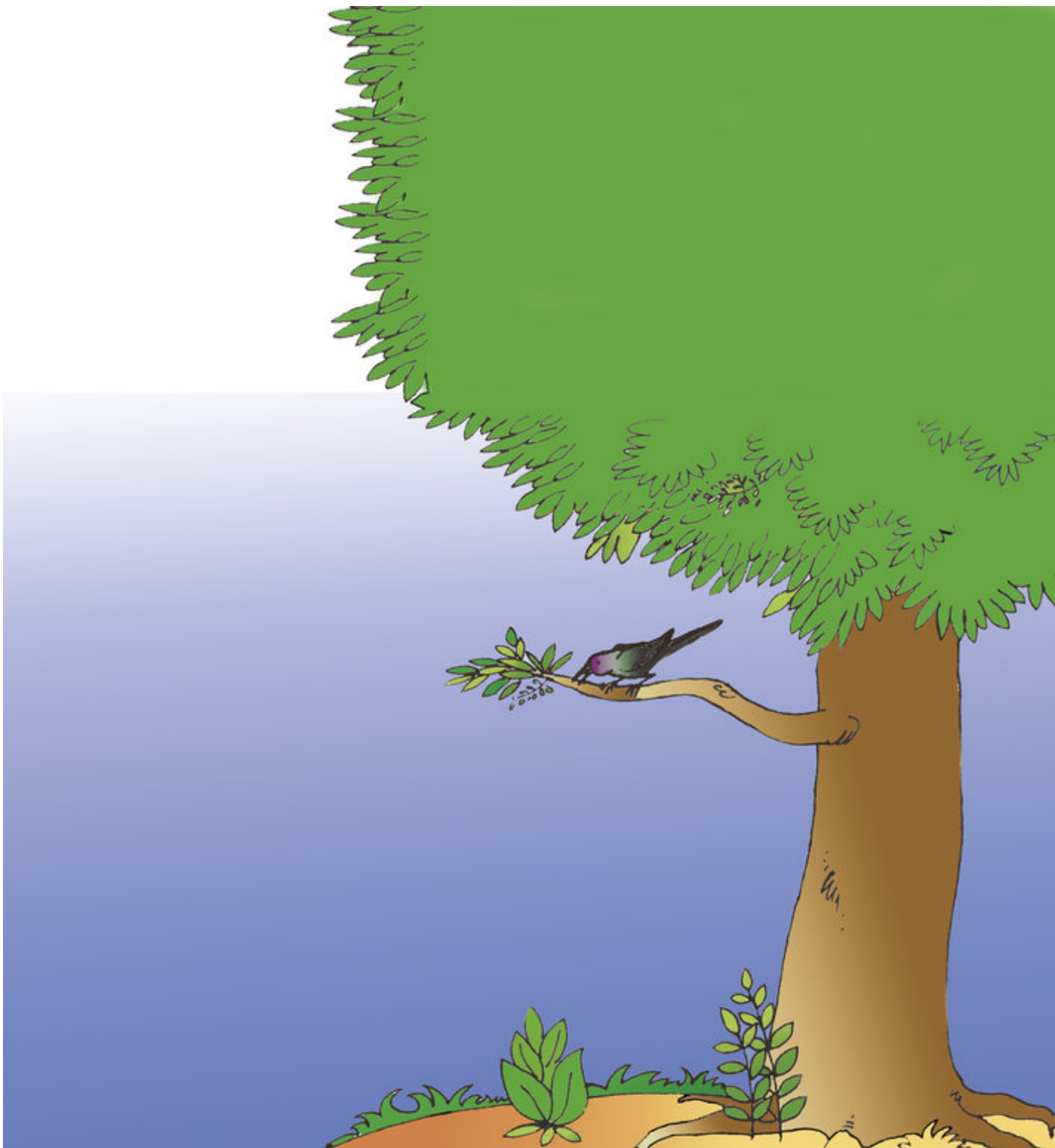


“Me? Come to the city? But why?” asked the koel in surprise.

“So many of my friends and relatives already live there.”



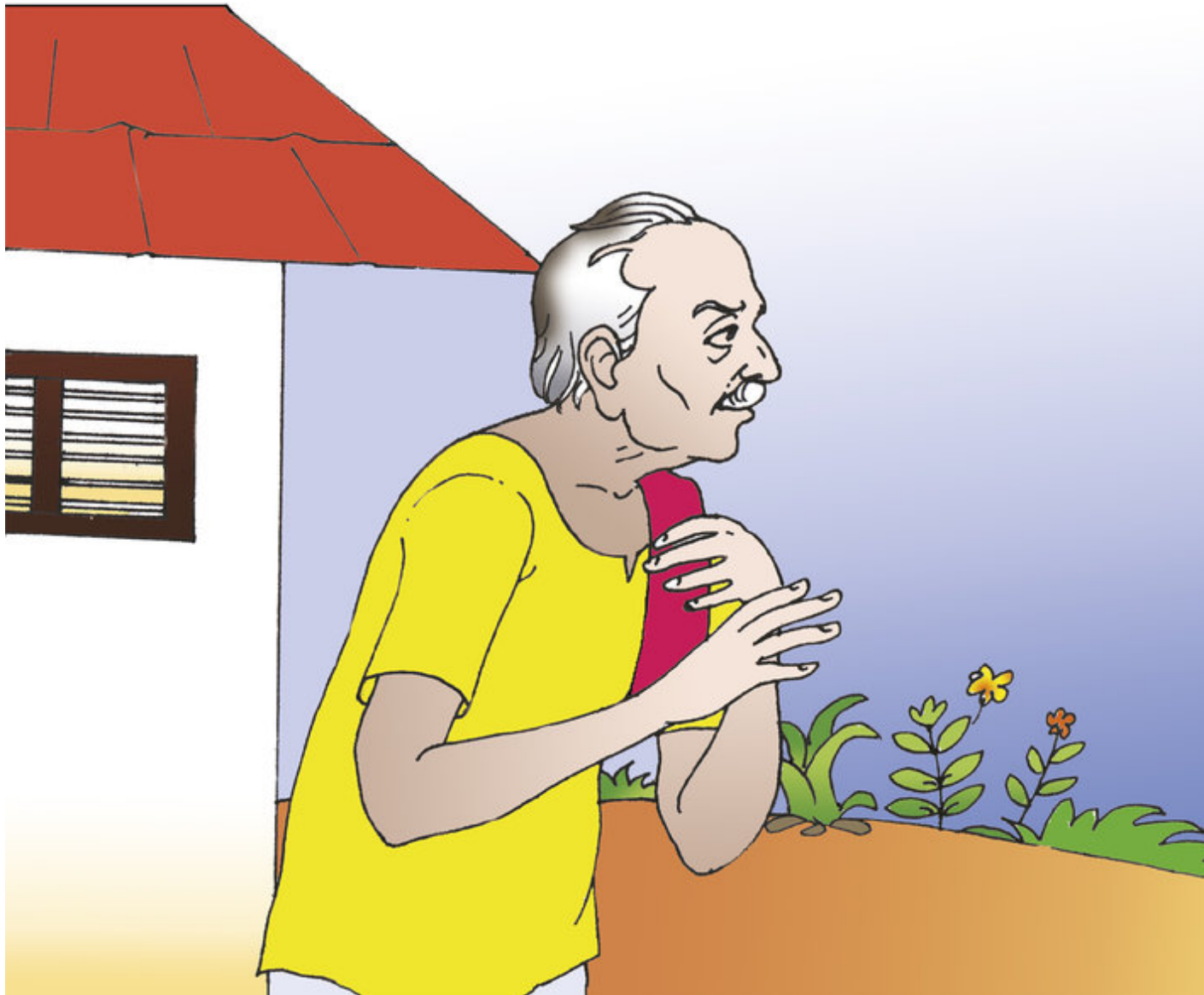
“They do?” asked Raju, equally surprised. “Then how come no one in the city has ever heard them singing?”



The koel looked sad.

“In springtime when all the trees are in flower, we koels sing our hearts out, even in your city,” she said.

“But the city is a noisy place. The whole day long, hundreds of vehicles go roaring down the streets, and planes drone overhead. Our voices are completely drowned out.”



The koel was right, thought Raju. Now he was sad too.

“But, but...” said Raju quickly, as an idea struck him. “If there wasn't so much noise and the city was quiet and peaceful, then would you come and sing for me there?”



"Sure!" smiled the koel.

"Then you would also hear the rest of the koels singing." Raju was happy.

"Raju," called Ajja, coming out of the house, "are you listening to the koel's song?"



"Yes, Ajja. She sings so sweetly, doesn't she?" said Raju. "She does, Raju," agreed Ajja.

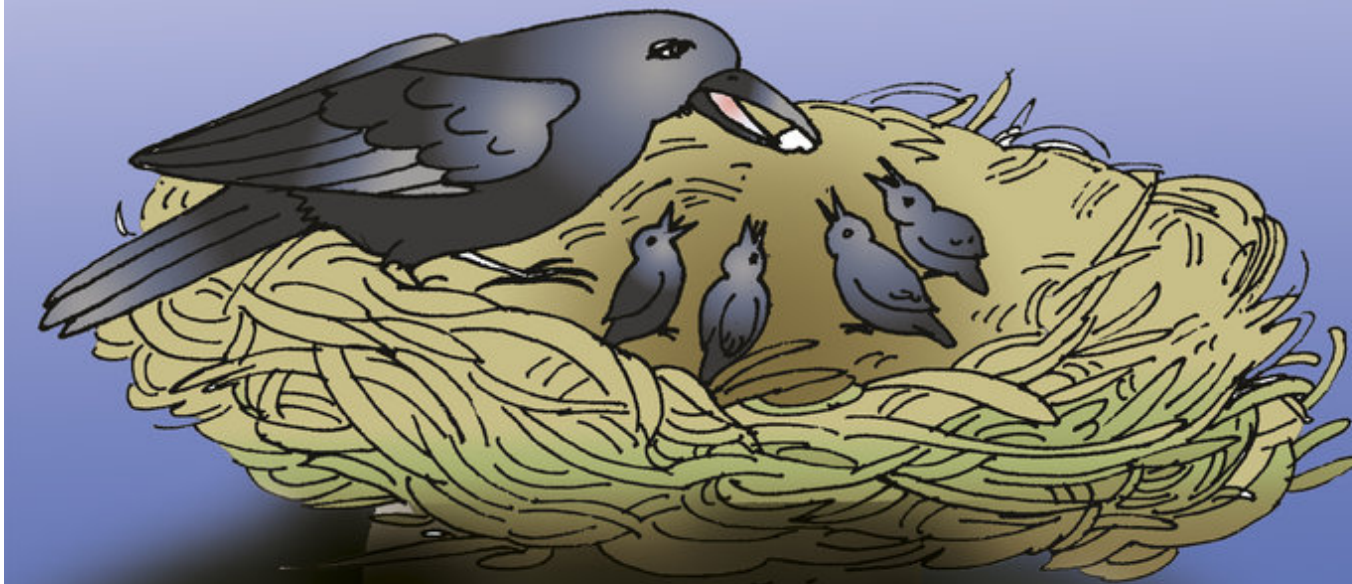
"Do you want to hear her story?"

"Of course!" cried Raju happily.

He loved his Ajja's nature lessons.



"Koels sing sweetly," began Ajja, "but they are lazy birds. Mummy Koel does not even want the bother of looking after her babies! So she simply lays her eggs in a crow's nest."



“Mother Crow warms the koel’s eggs along with her own,” continued Ajja.

“Even when the eggs hatch, Mother Crow cannot tell that she is feeding a koel chick because it is just as black as her own.”



“It is only when the koel chick begins to sing that Mother Crow realizes she has been tricked. Furious, she throws the koel chick out of her nest. From then on, the chick has to look after herself.”

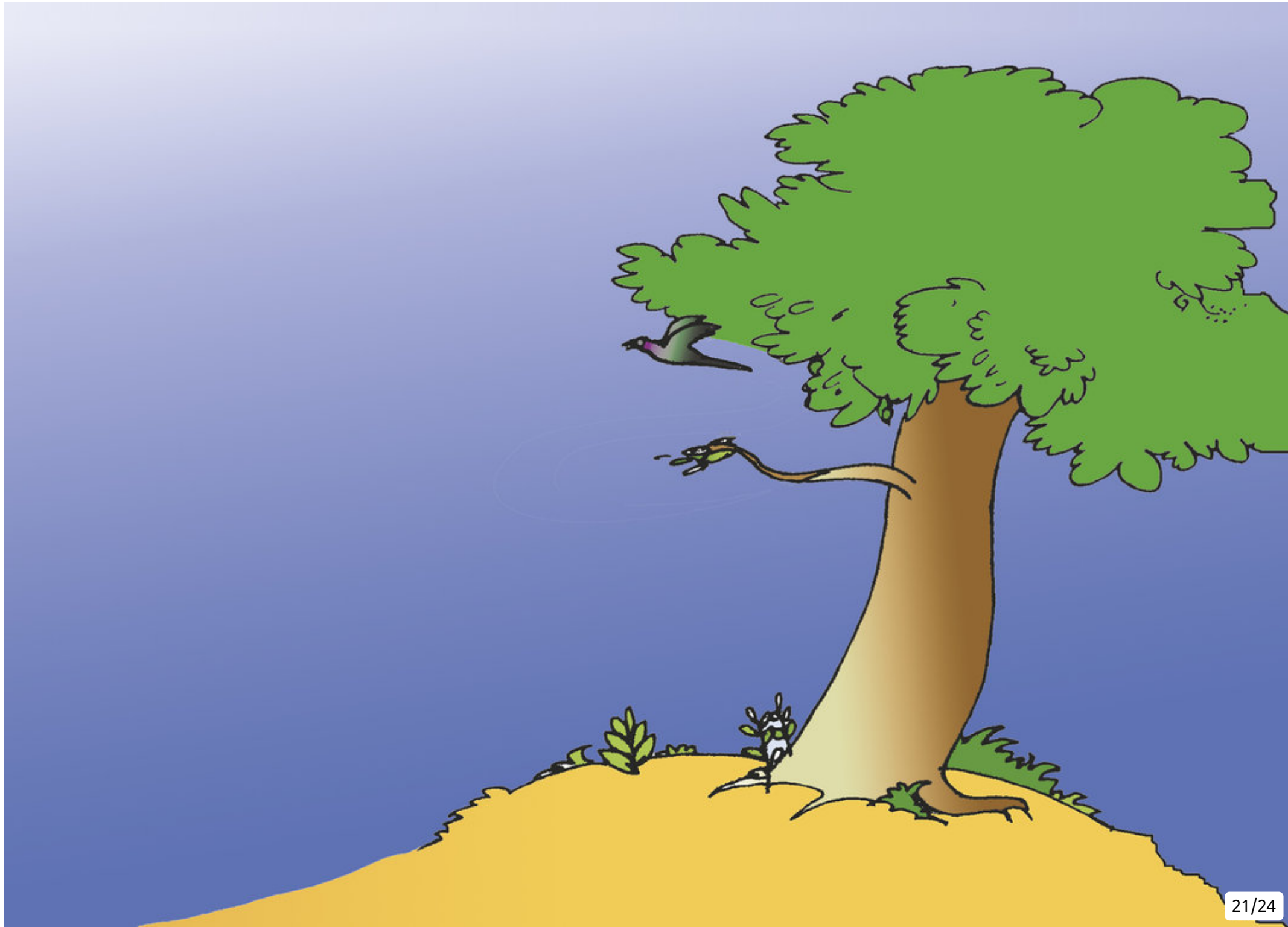


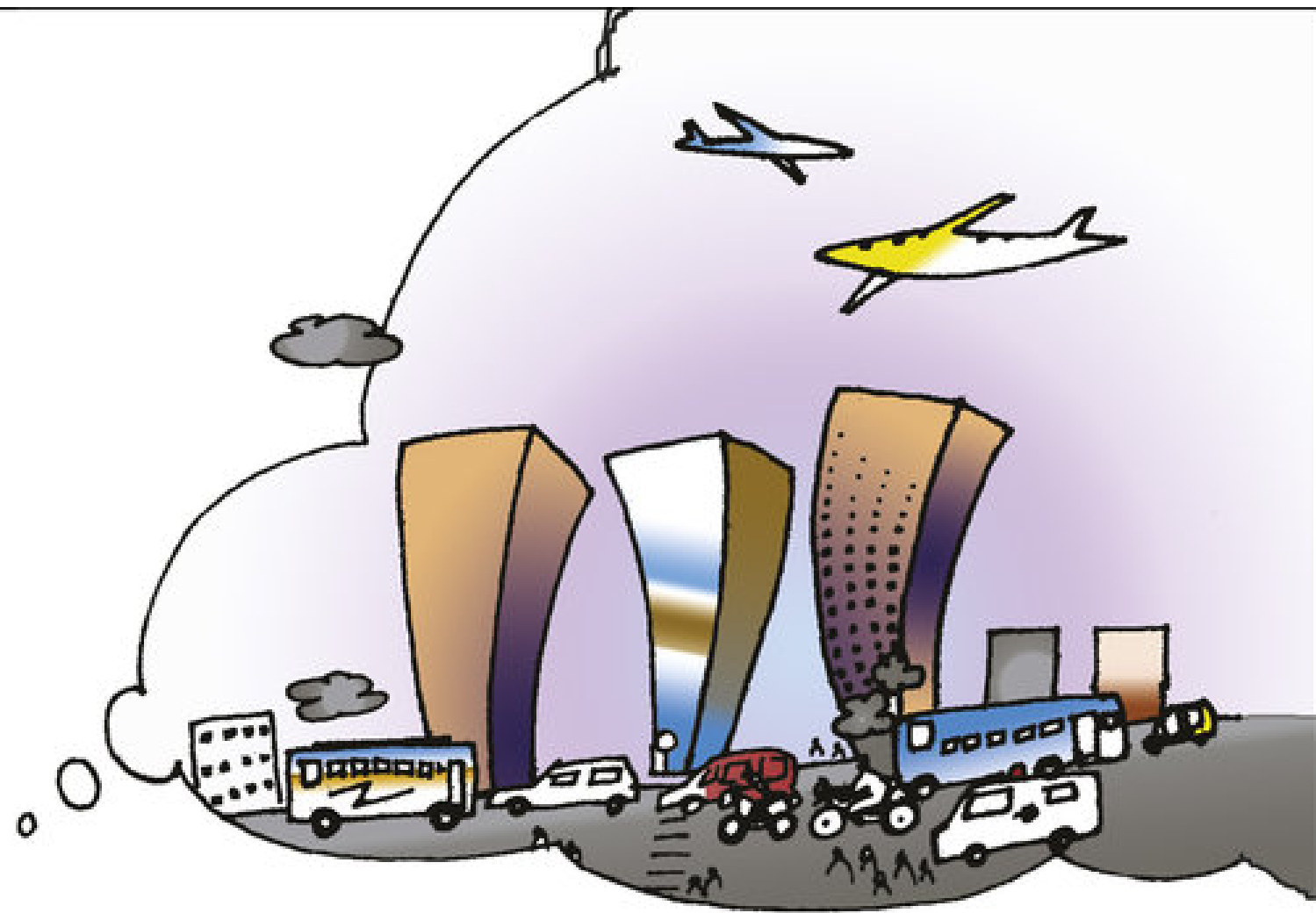
Raju was moved. "The poor thing," he said. "What a strange life she has led!"

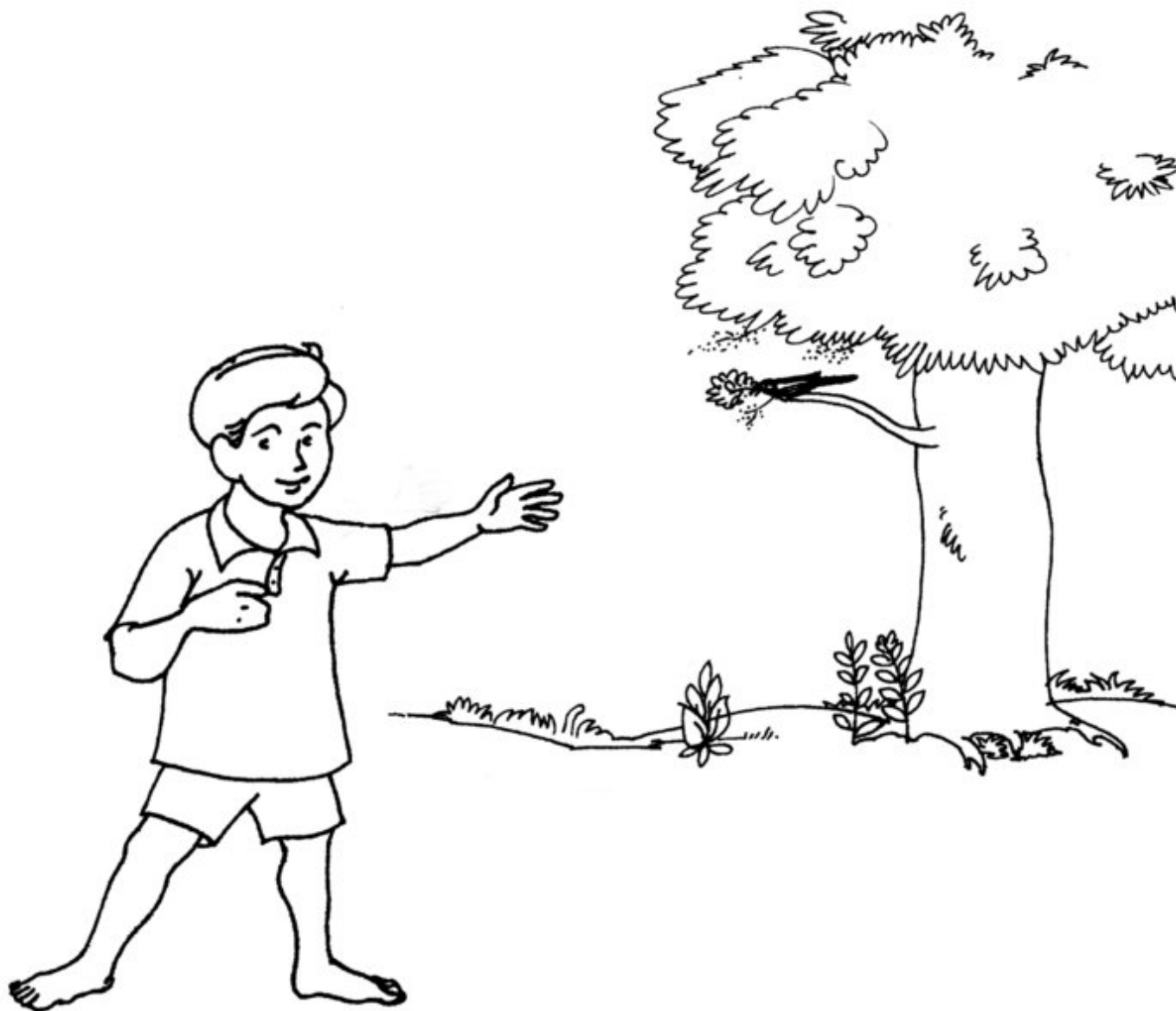
Ajja nodded. "Yes, Raju," he said.

"The animal world is full of strange stories like this."

"Kuhoo, kuhoo, kuhoo," agreed the koel as she flew to another tree, and began singing her sweet song again.







Use your imagination and colour this picture any way YOU like.



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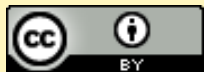
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The Koel's Song

(English)

Why don't we ever hear the koel's sweet song in our cities anymore? City kid Raju finds out the answers to this and many other questions when he chats with a koel on his grandfather's farm.

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.



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