The stories told to us by other people often stimulate our imagination and pique our curiosity. This magical effect can be even stronger when the stories are of far off lands, which are even more different and exotic when compared to our own culture. This curiosity is the reason I was drawn to pursue this project.

A year ago I moved to the United States and shortly after I began attending ESL (English as a second language) classes at the library in Hudson, NY. It was there that I met many wonderful and interesting people from around the globe. Our common ground was that our personal histories originated somewhere else and that we ended up together in this small classroom in upstate New York. Seeing this, I was struck with the desire to learn more about these people and their culture. Not from a book or the internet, but from the pure sources that now surrounded me. The question I asked was simple: Describe one thing that you value from your country. Perhaps something beautiful, interesting, or just worthwhile to tell a foreigner. Ten people chose to participate including myself. Each of us prepared our thoughts, in english. While many entries are imperfect, it is important to see the effort by each of these people to learn and improve their english. Some are further along, while others have just begun their journey. Based on these wonderful recollections I created illustrations. My own artistic interpretation to represent these things that were precious to each of us. My hope is that the colorful world we created together would inspire you learn more about the cultures and people in the world that surrounds you. You might find that you don’t even have to leave your neighborhood to have a glimpse of the world beyond.

They prepared short texts. Based on those texts I create illustrations which are my artistic vision of those places they told me about.

Co-creators of this book:

Shubra, Bangladesh

Victorico Lopez, Mexico

Li Jun, China

Saulius, Lituania

Vera, Siberia

Maksuda, Bangladesh

Andre, France

Wenling Zhao, China

Qiu Ping Zhang, China

Agnieszka, Poland