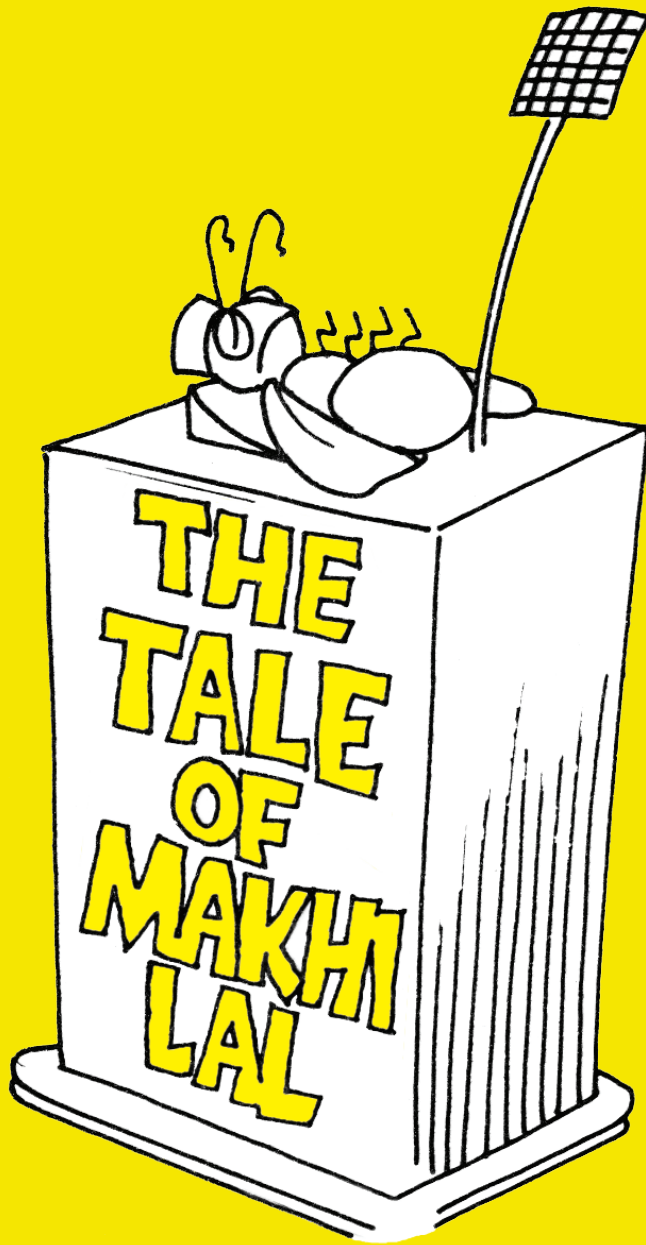


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Geeta Dharmarajan

Art by Ajit Ninan

This book belongs to

.....

About Katha

Katha, a nonprofit organization founded in 1988, works in the literacy to literature continuum. We work with slum communities and municipal corporation schools to ensure that every child learns to read for fun and at grade level. We also work with women and teachers so that all children achieve their potential.

Our books, workshops and learning centres strive to forge cross-cultural connections through story and Story Pedagogy®. As one of India's finest publishers, our initiative has been recognized as "a unique and special moment in Indian publishing history" by *The Economic Times*.

Katha's books have received global recognition, including the nomination by an international jury for the prestigious Astrid Lindgren Award, the world's biggest prize for children's literature.

We love to work with new and established writers, translators and illustrators.

Do you like writing, illustrating, translating for children? Write to us at editors@katha.org to become a cherished member of the Katha family!

"[Katha] ... an educational jewel in India's crown."

— Naoyuki Shinohara, Deputy Managing Director, International Monetary Fund

"Katha stands as an exemplar for all the creative projects around the world that grapple with ordinary and dramatic misery in cities."

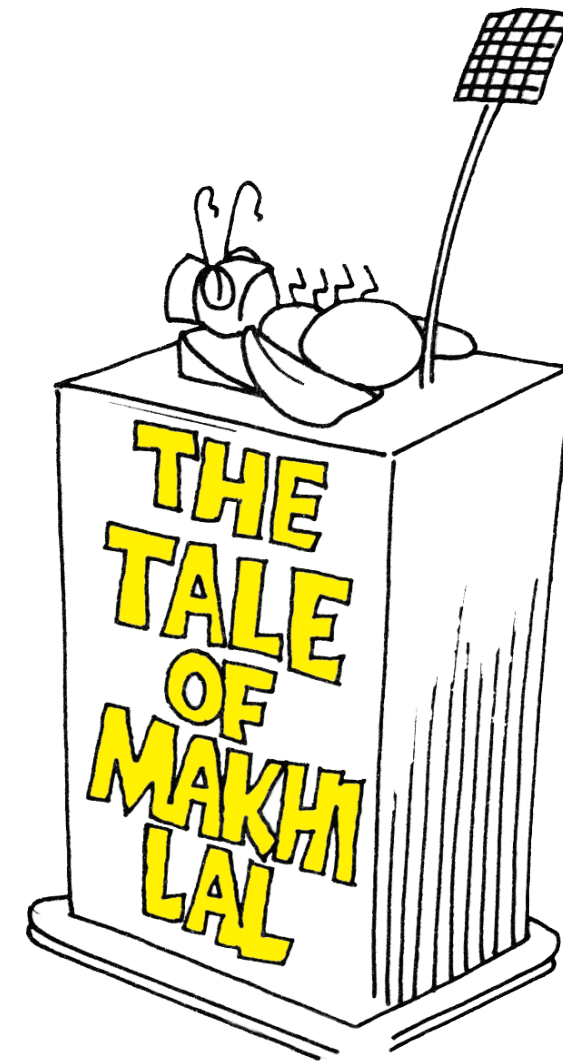
— Charles Landry, *The Art of City Making*

"Katha has a real soft corner for kids. Which is why it ... create[s] such gorgeous picture books for children."

— Time Out

"Katha's work is driven by the idea that children can bring change to their communities that is sustainable and real, just as the children do in [their books]."

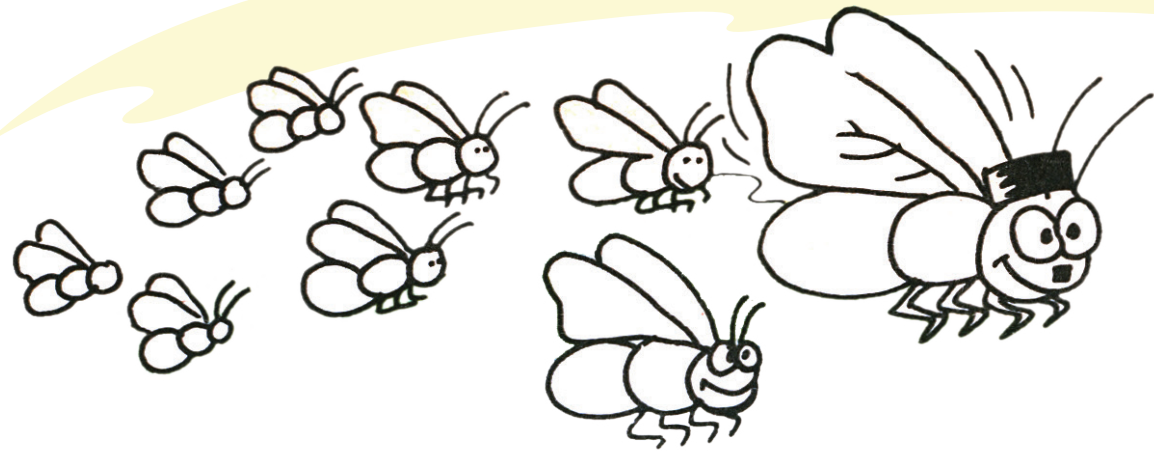
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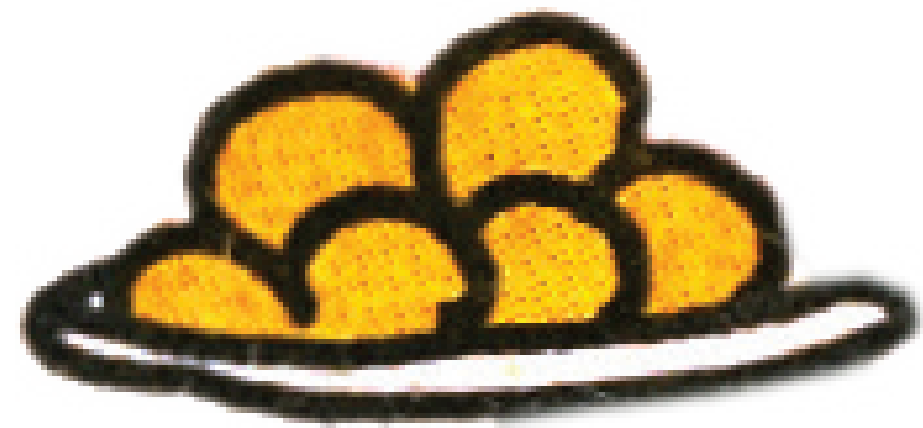
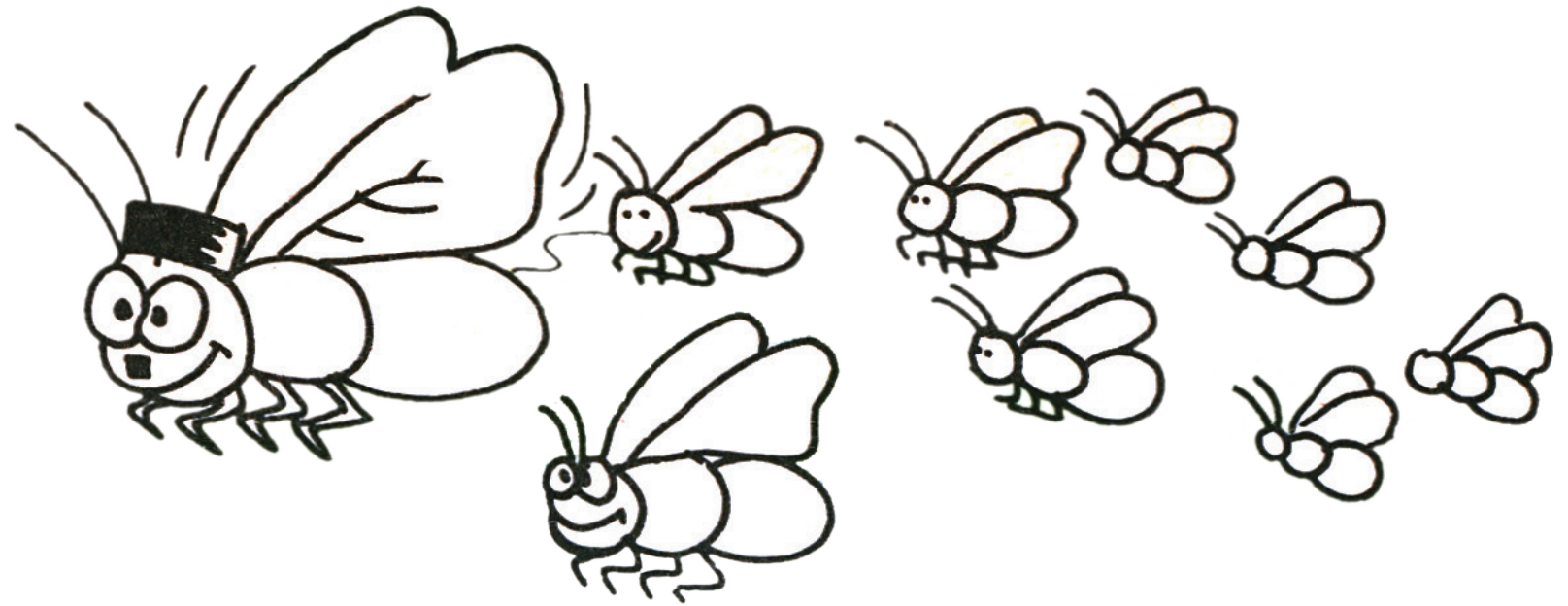
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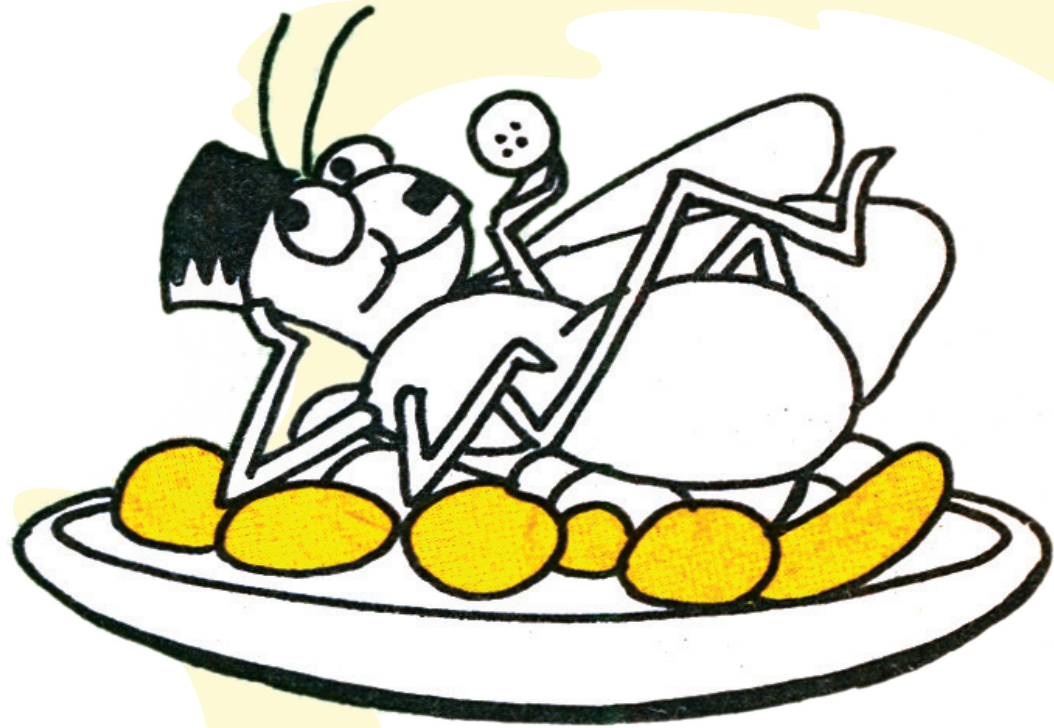


In the land of Makhipuri,
The fly was God for all,
They prayed to it for good health,
They called it Makhi Lal.



They left their food all open,
For Makhi Lal to taste,
They let the fly to sit on,
Their baby's eyes and face.



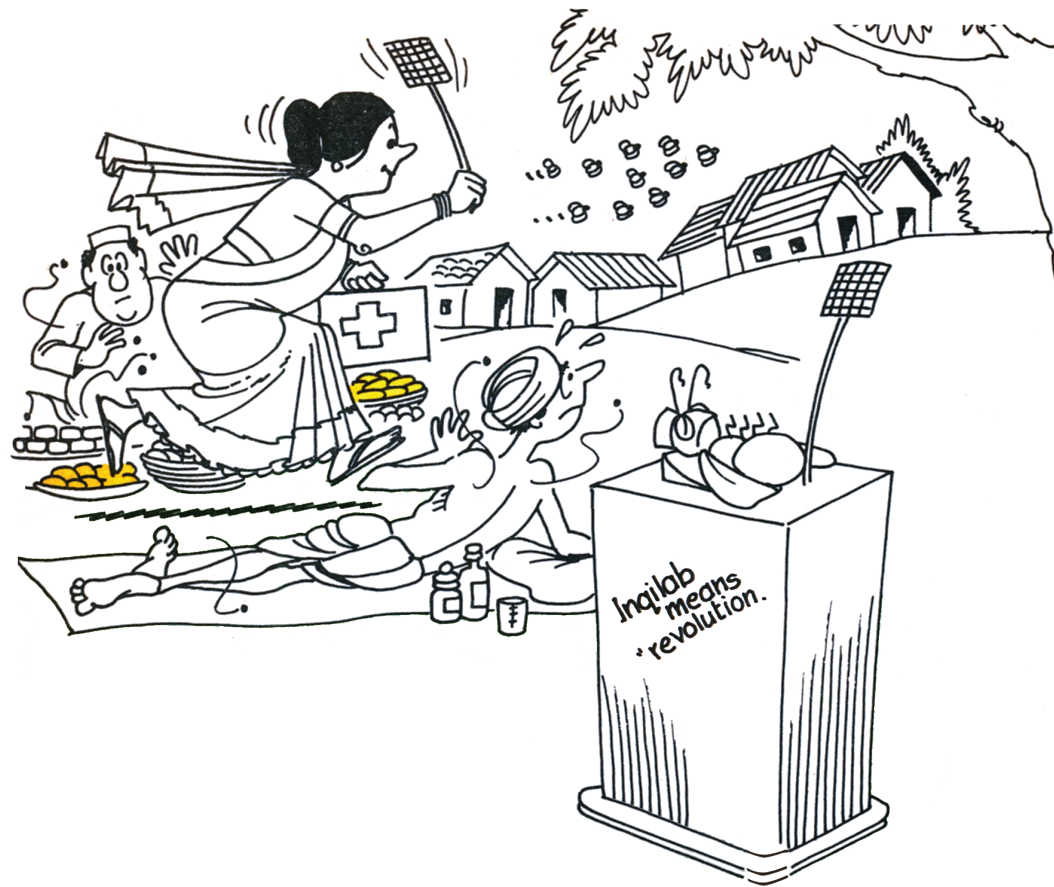


‘Our flying god is kind, see?’
The people said each day.
They offered daily *prasad*
For Makhi Lal to stay.

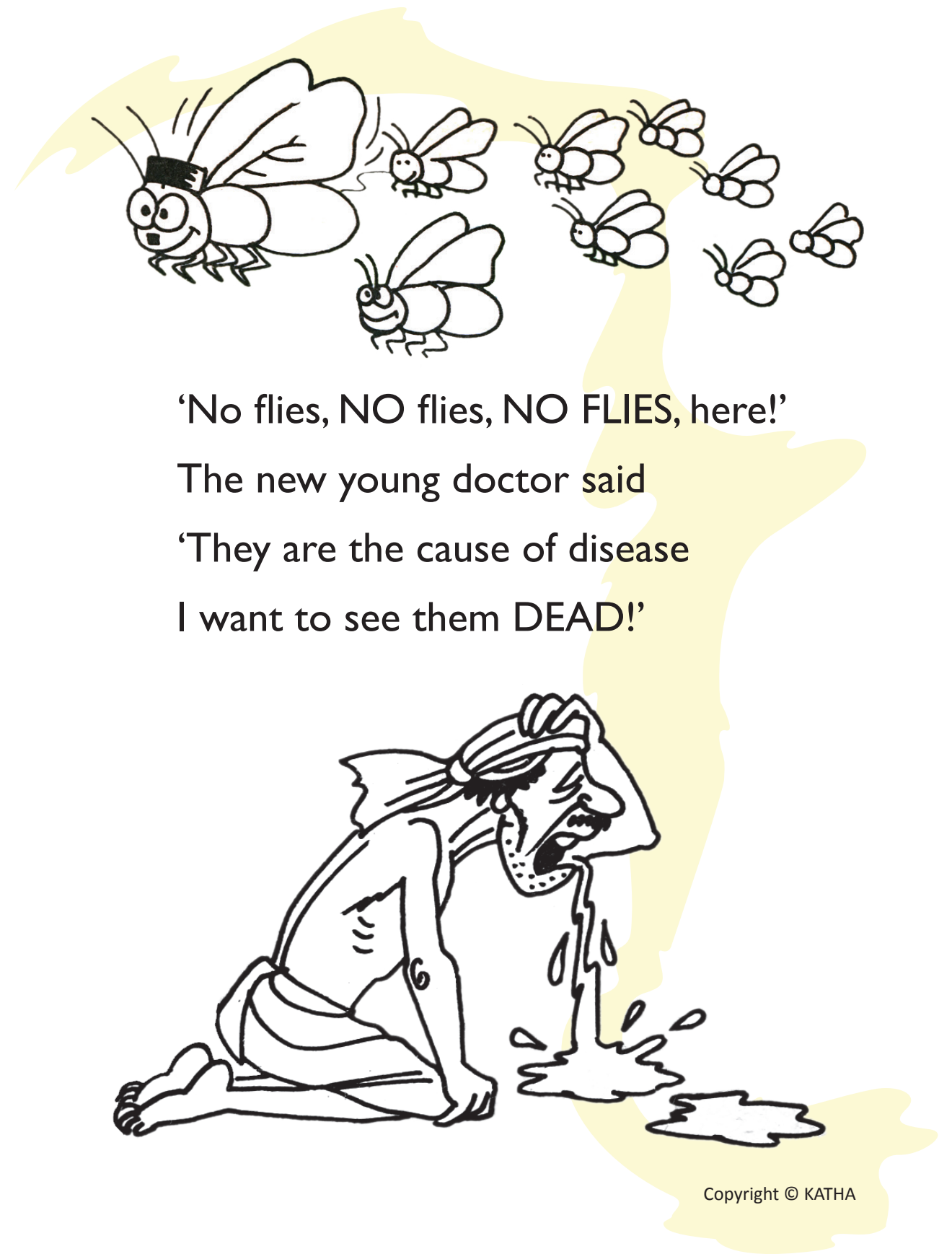


Why were their children dying?
What made them always sick?
They never even wondered
If it was Makhi’s trick!





One day there came a stranger,
She was their doctor saab,
She threw the thronging flies out
Ordered an inqialab!



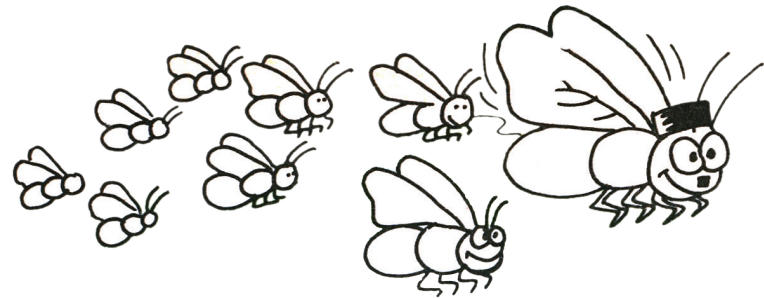
‘No flies, NO flies, NO FLIES, here!’
The new young doctor said
‘They are the cause of disease
I want to see them DEAD!’



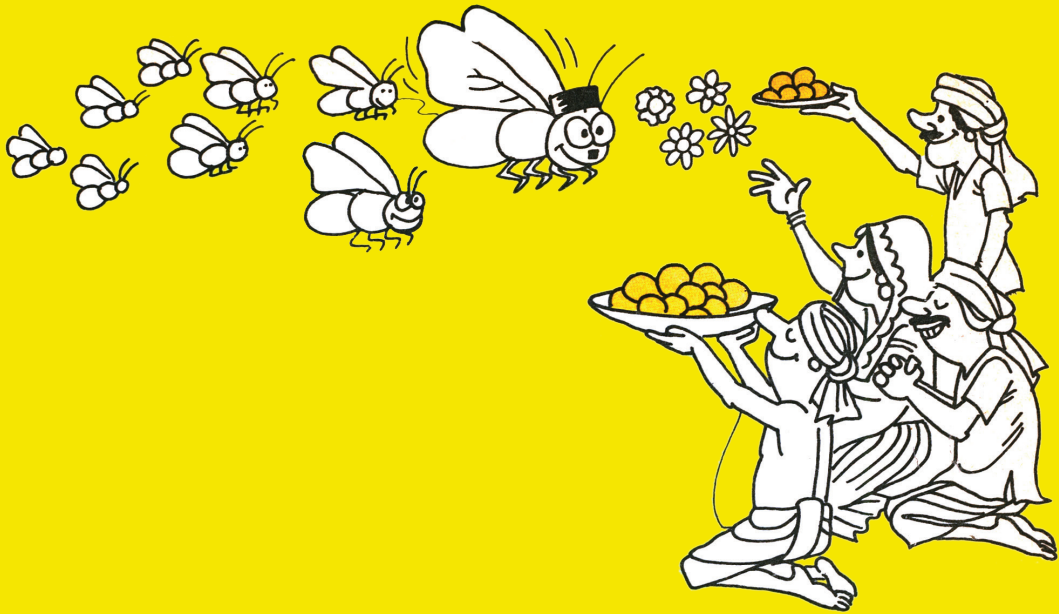
No *prasad* for the black gods?
Kill Makhi Lal the Fly?
The people feared the god's curse,
They all lay down to die.

And then, come guess what happened,
There was no curse, no drought.
The children now are healthy,
They play and sing and shout!

The moral of this story,
Is not too hard to see.
We must be careful whom we choose
Our God and king to be!



Geeta Dharmarajan loves writing stories for children. She was one of the editors of *Target*, a magazine for children, and *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, the magazine of the University of Pennsylvania. She was awarded the prestigious Padma Shri in 2012 for her distinguished service in the fields of literature and education.



Was Makhi Lal God or a common housefly to be feared by all? Why did the people of Makhipuri treat him with respect, even though everyone was falling ill? Through humorous verses and fun illustrations that deliver a powerful message, this is a delightful must-read for young readers and old.