



# KUNI HIKAKA'S HOUSE

STORY: PRITU VATSA  
ILLUSTRATIONS: ANJALI JOY

Kuni Hikaka's House  
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[www.travellersuniversity.org/publications](http://www.travellersuniversity.org/publications)



## Foreword

This book is an attempt to portray the vernacular architecture of the Kondh villages, and showcase how arts and culture are embedded in them. Art is in the way they make each layer of the earthen plaster on walls and floors, or the cover for the hen's coop. Culture is in the values of caring equally for animals and sharing whatever exists, be it the space in the house or the farm produce.

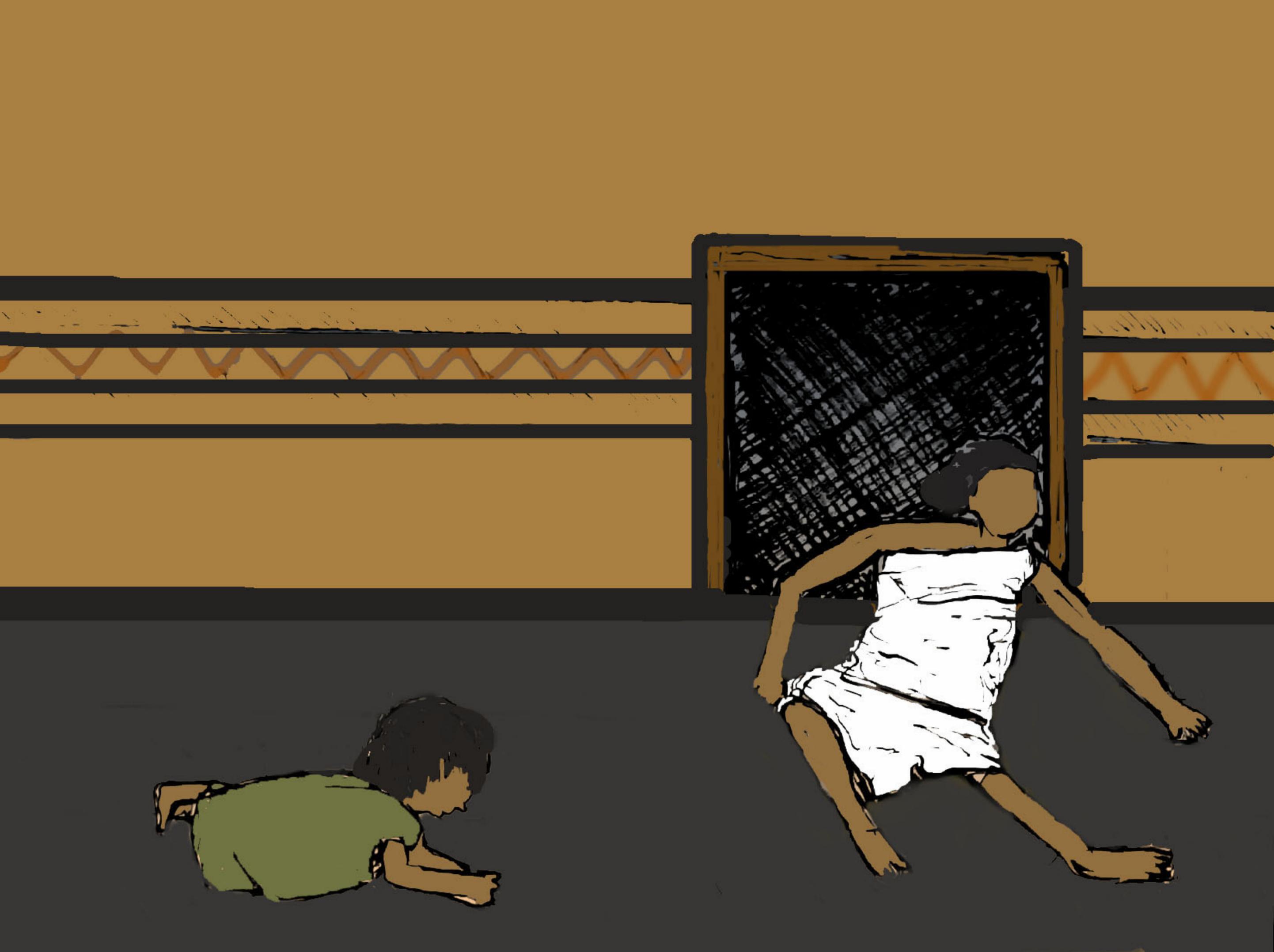
The houses are the outcome and carriers of the rich traditional knowledge systems established by the Kondh elders, now lived through by the community. Architecture in the village is rooted in the oneness of Nature, and accommodates all. Coop for hen, shed for cows, backyard for menstruating women, space for storing seeds, and more. Verandahs are connected and common. Rooms are for sleeping.

The book depicts some of these elements from the Kondh housing, hoping to kindle a spark of connection with the non-Kondh readers as well.



**My name is Kuni Hikaka.**

**Today, I will tell you about my house.**



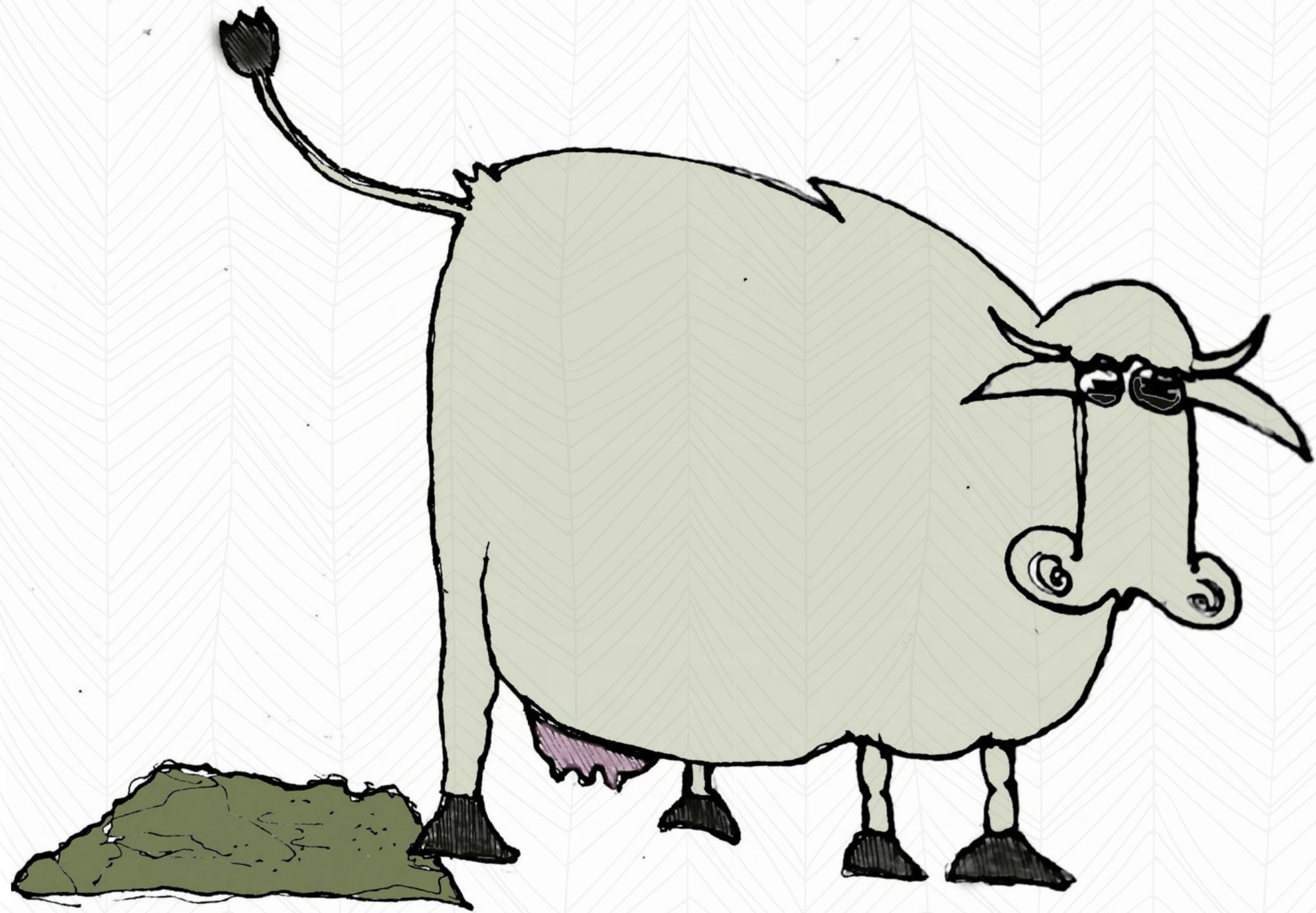
**I was born in a mud house.**

**I live here with my brother and mother.**



Our mud house has red walls.

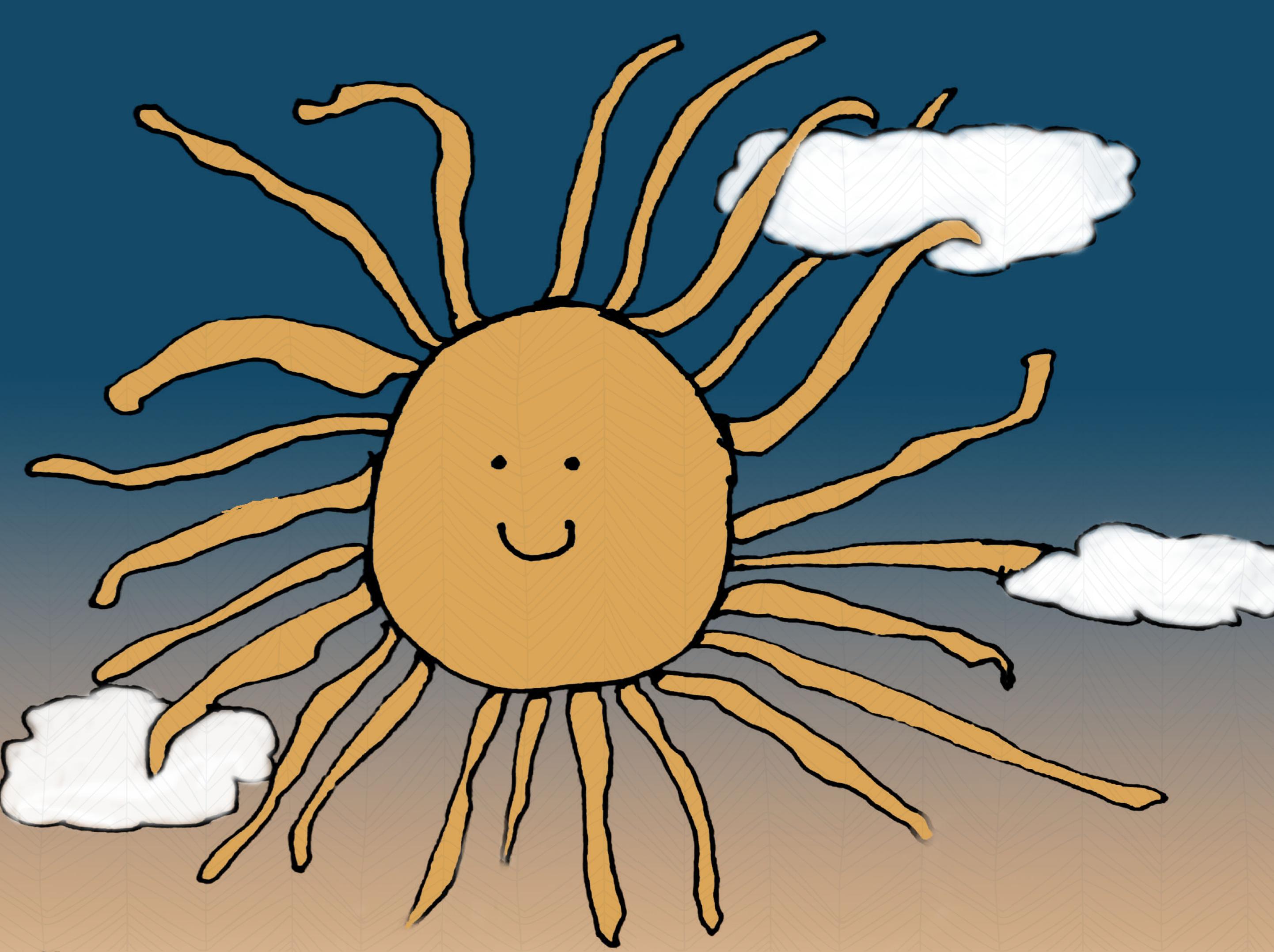
The floor of the house is made up of cow  
dung and mud.



**Cow dung and mud makes the floor strong.**

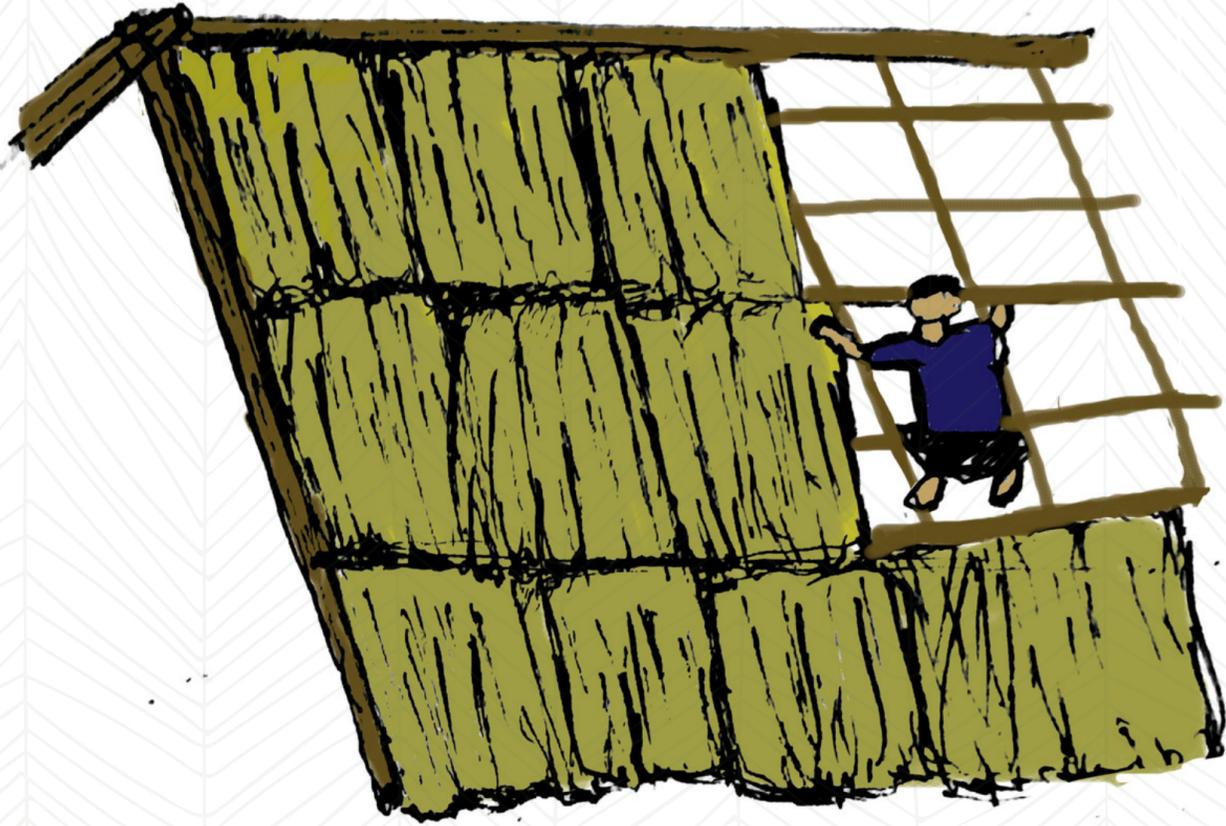


**My friend Minaki lives next to my house.  
Minaki and I share a common verandah.**

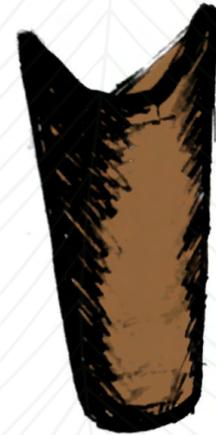


**It is sunny today.**

**So we will play in our verandah.**



grass roofing



earthen tile

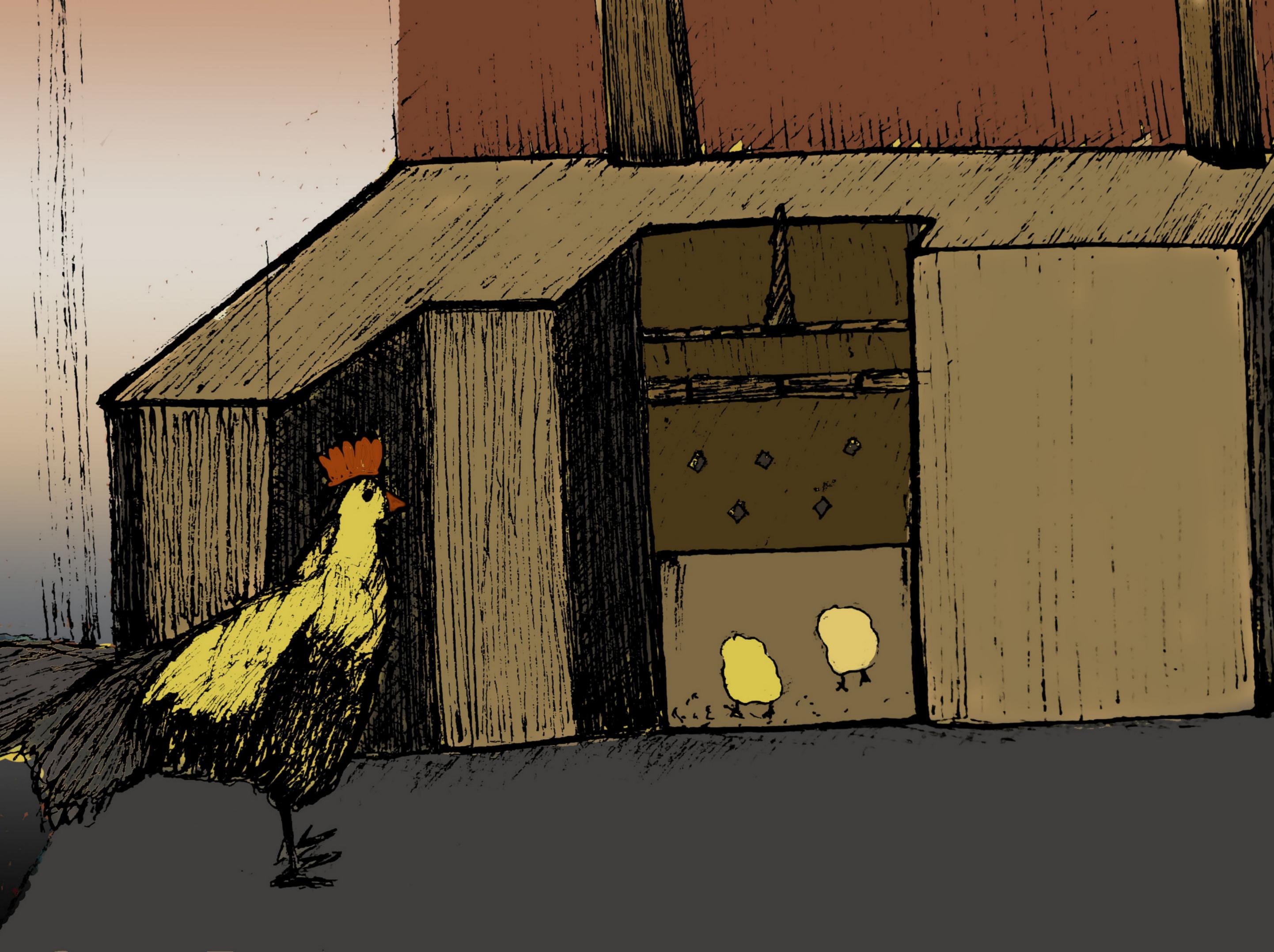
The roof of my house is made up of grass.

The roof of *Minaki's* house is made up of earthen tiles.



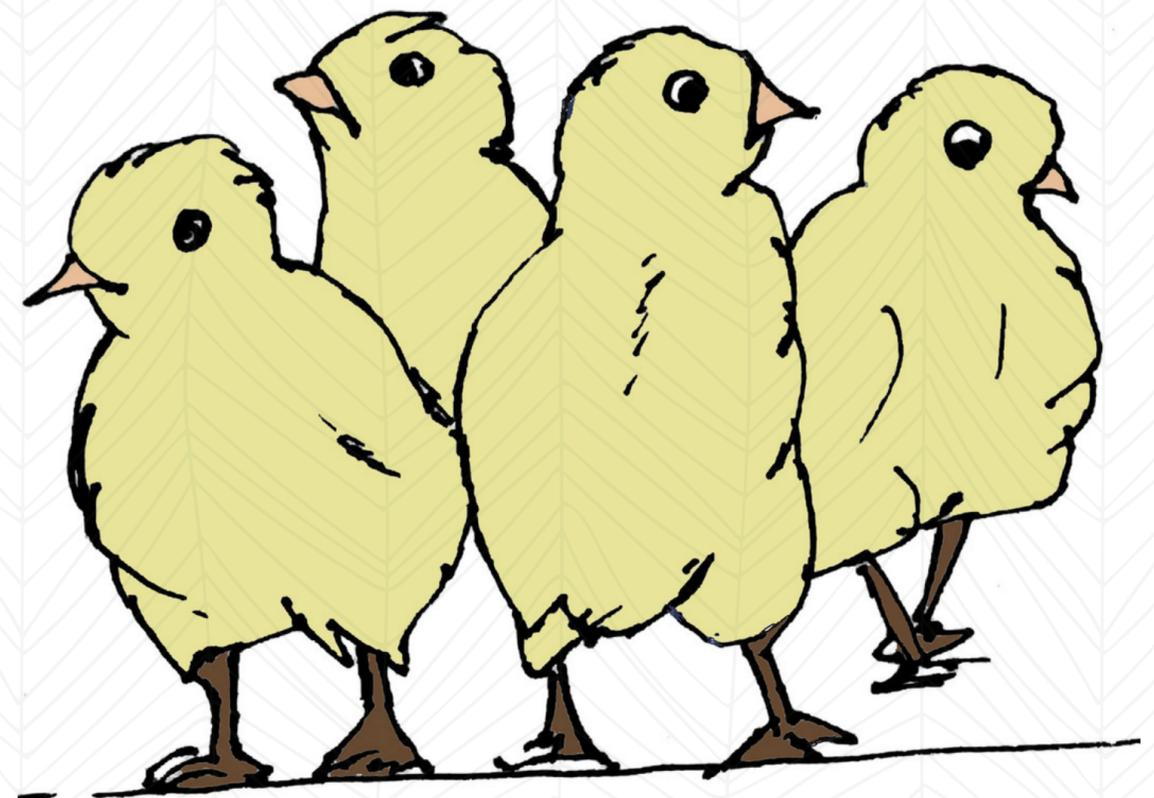
Our houses are pleasant in summer and warm in winter.

Grass and earthen tiles help our houses stay pleasant in the summer season.



Now it is evening.

The chickens are coming back to their coop.

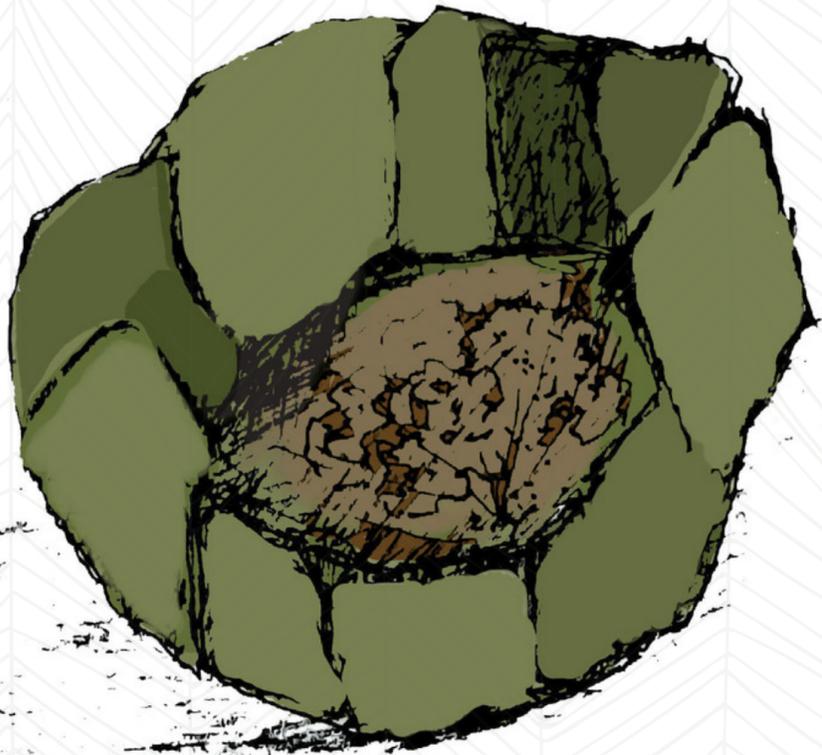


*A chicken coop or hen house is a small house where, typically, female chickens or other fowl are kept safe and secure.*

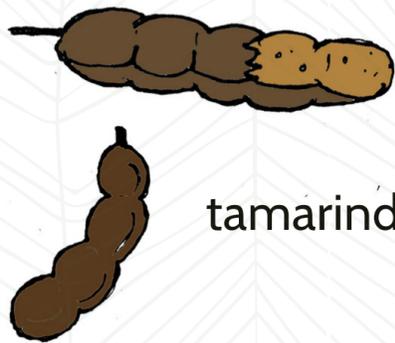




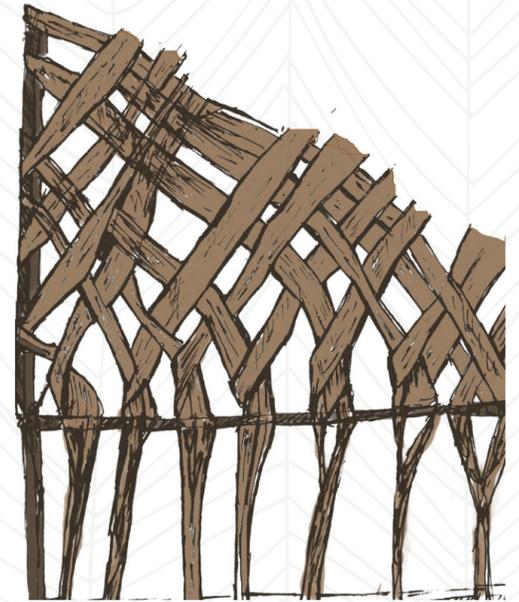
**It is time to eat dinner now.  
I like to eat near the earthen stove.**



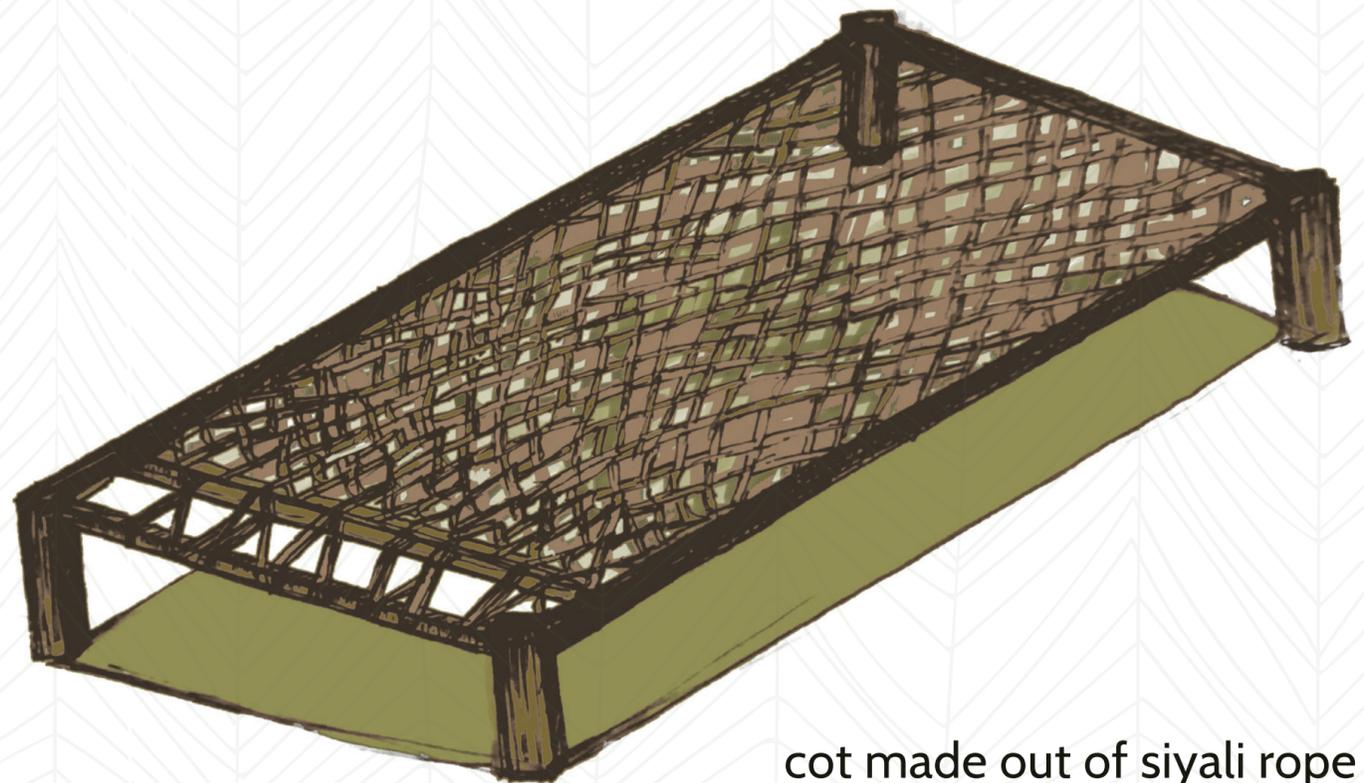
mandiya jao / ragi porridge



tamarind



siyali weaving



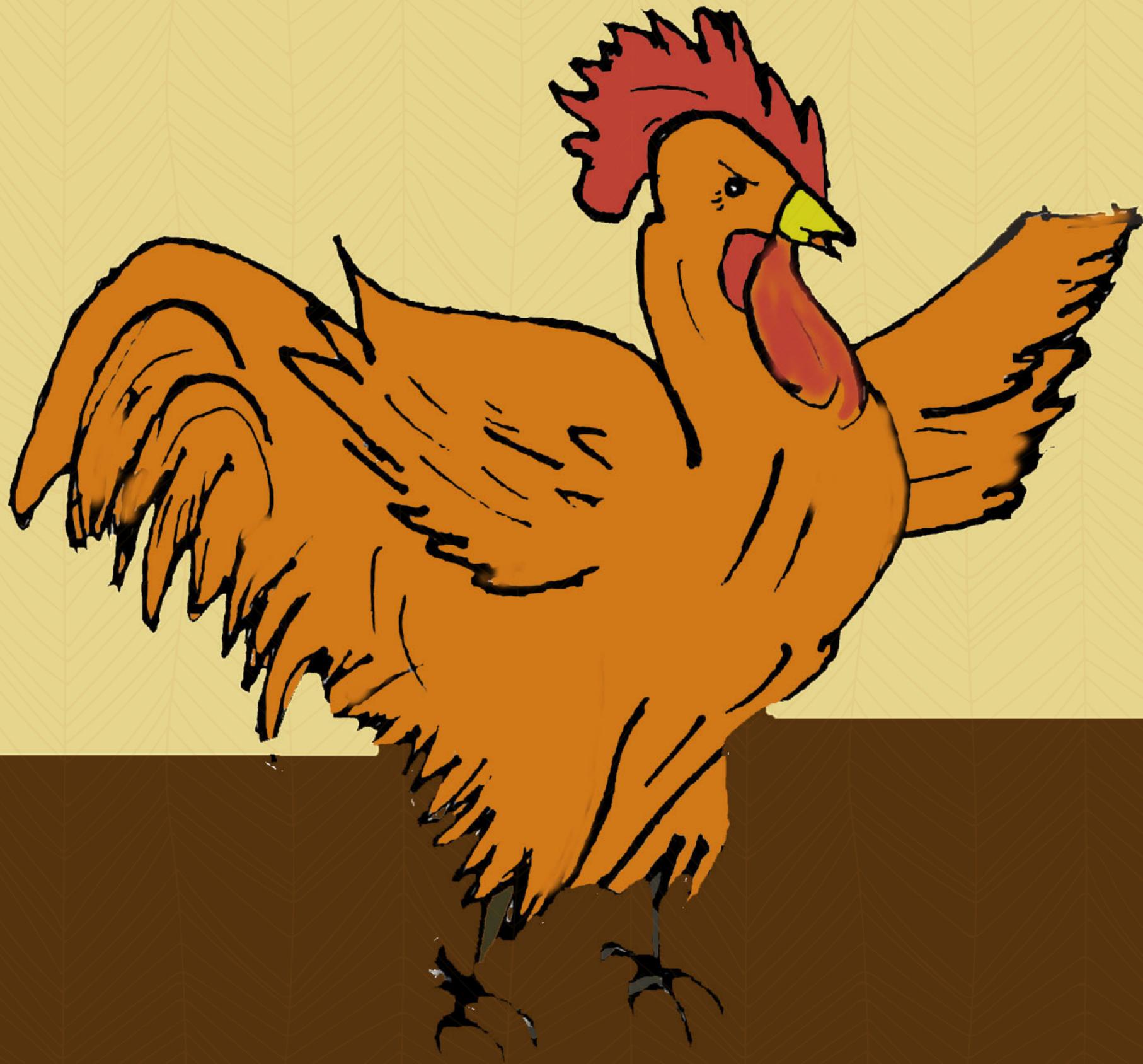
cot made out of siyali rope

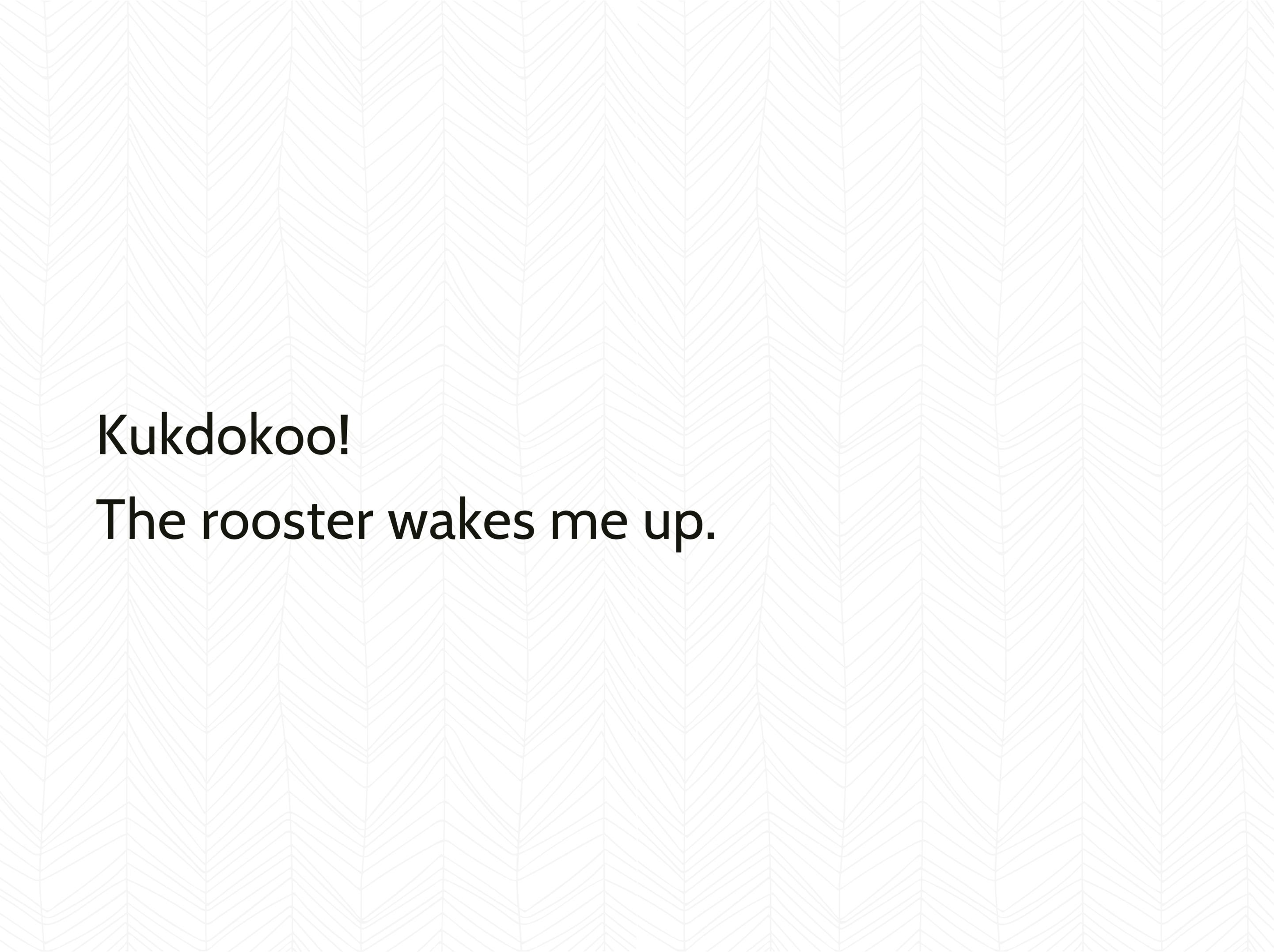
I ate mandiya jao with some tamarind.  
Now I will sleep on the cot made from  
siyali rope.

*Mandiya jao is a certain kind of ragi porridge.*

*Siyali is a forest plant, the leaves of which are used by the Kondhs to make cups and plates, and its seeds are roasted and consumed.*

*Siyali rope is made out of the bark of the forest plant.*





**Kukdokoo!**

**The rooster wakes me up.**



**I open my eyes and walk towards the Forest.  
The day starts.**

*Kondhs mostly reside around the forests in the districts of Odisha.  
They live in earthen houses made by themselves.*

## About the writer

Pritu is a dreamer, free soul, a learner in the school of life, and a believer of co-creating holistic ideas and spaces. She is to be found mostly in and around forests, streams, mountains and villages, and is currently learning and sharing with the indigenous communities in Odisha, practicing sustainability. She has also been working in collaboration with EcoFemme, trying to reach women and girls. With them, she conducts workshops on eco-menstruation, body image, body discomfort, and stigmas and taboos related to menstruation. She aspires to learn and design learning experiences with the Kondh elders and Nature.

## About the illustrator

Anjali is an aspiring visual storyteller, anthropologist and an avid manga enthusiast. A wanderer who loves collecting stories and living within them, she is often found plastered head to toe with mud on a construction site or fixated across a window with a cup of tea or hot water and a book. She has spent the last two years learning from and with indigenous communities. She aspires to be a chaiwala someday.

## About School Of Nature

School of Nature with the Kondh community in Rayagada, Odisha is inspired by the Adivasi worldview, and is evolving through learning with and from the Kondh elders. It aims to make education culturally relevant, context specific and ecologically rooted. Amidst the race for economic progress, the initiative aspires to encourage slowing down and offer an education that teaches to love and care along with reading and writing.



## About Travellers' University

At Travellers' University, we believe the whole universe is a learning ground and that experiences invoke one's innate curiosity which is fundamental for one's education. Travellers' University is a platform to build learning communities, and to facilitate individuals who are interested to travel and learn to deepen their knowledge and understanding of themselves and the world, and are looking for alternative choices in learning. We encourage individuals to venture outside their academics and work life to engage with questions that perturb them, and work together to find their answers.



## Invitation to the reader

This e-book is an initial attempt to document the various indigenous knowledge systems in Odisha. It is a step towards creating culturally relevant and context based learning material. The e-book may be used freely for educational purposes, and the reader is invited to share it with relevant people, circulate it widely.

You may write to [vatsapritu@gmail.com](mailto:vatsapritu@gmail.com) to send your feedforwards, to connect to know more about School Of Nature, and to volunteer.

This e-book is offered in the spirit of gift, and you are invited to financially support this work and the upcoming works from School Of Nature by contributing to the UPI [prituvatsa12@okicici](https://api.whatsapp.com/send?phone=919894012000).

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