



The
blue
people

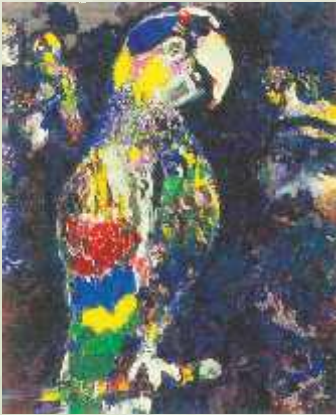
Farideh Khalatbaree
Art: Marc Chagall







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Art: Marc Chagall

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The girl opened her eyes. She was alone.
She left the bed and walked out of the room.

She stopped on the top of the staircase. As usual
the courtyard was crowded with people.

The girl shouted, “Ammi, I am awake. I...”







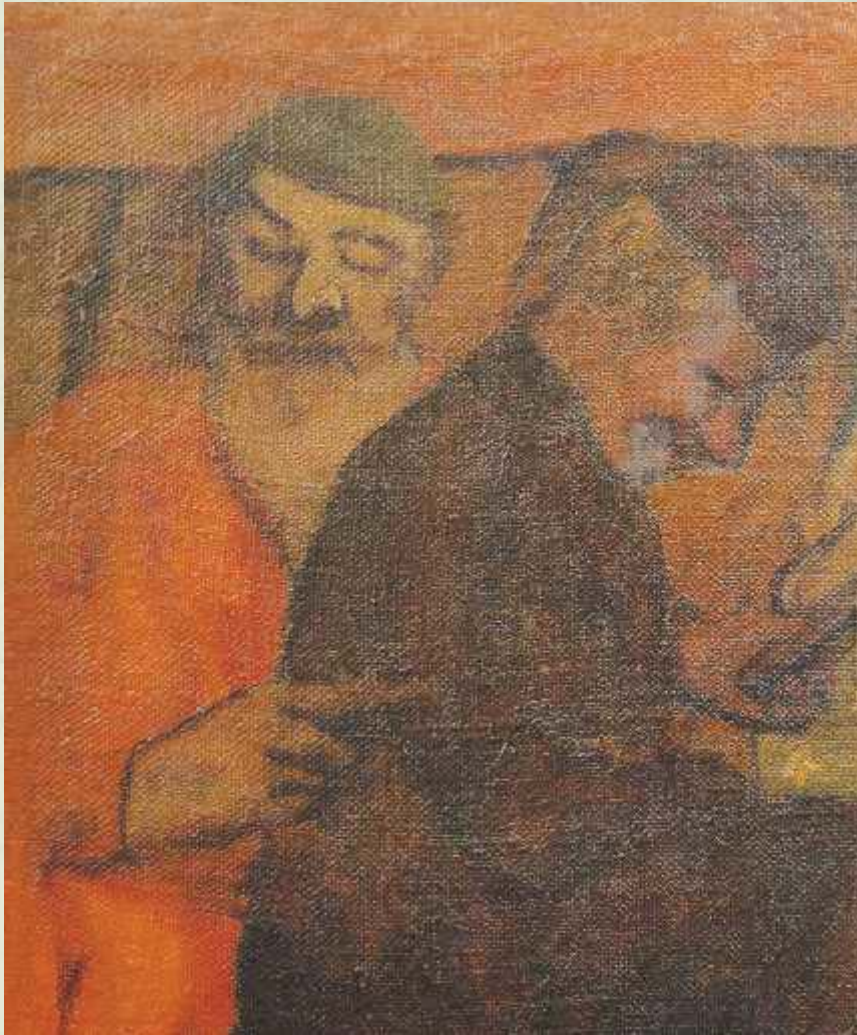
She wanted to say she was hungry, but didn't.
Nobody heard her or even looked at her. The people
had become far stranger than before. They were all
blue, even her mother and father.







She remembered that whenever she had told Ammi that all the people were dim in her eyes, she had replied, “You are wrong my darling. The people are surely dim themselves!”







Now if she was to tell her that the people were blue in her eyes, she would have invariably answered, “You are wrong my darling. The people are surely blue themselves!”





She didn't like crowded places. She walked out of the house.
The street too was full of blue people!

She said to herself, “Surely these people have come to attend
the wedding party of my cousin, even though my Khala's
house is two streets away!”



She went towards her aunt's house,
hopping and circling around herself now
and then.

The door of her aunt's house was open.
Blue people had crowded in here too.
She wanted to go to her aunt and cuddle
her, but didn't.







She remembered her school. She hadn't gone there in a long time. She remembered that every time she had wished to go, Ammi had said, "Fine students don't need to go to school every day. It is enough for you to go to school once in a while!"





She slowly entered the school's courtyard and peeped inside the classrooms through the windows. Blue teachers were teaching and blue students were listening to them.









She got bored with all those blue people.
She ran out of the school.

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She stopped on the street, hesitating.
She wasn't sure whether she wanted
to go back home or go to the park.
She chose the park.

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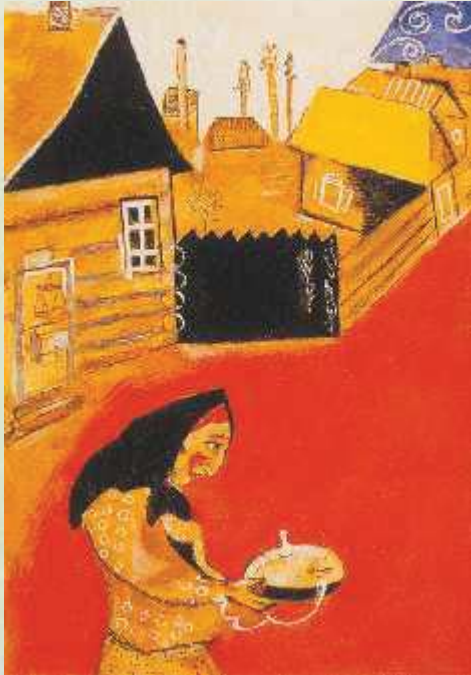


She entered the park. Nobody was there.
She mounted the swing and swung as
much as she wished. She skidded over the
slide for a while. She found nobody to play
see-saw with.

24









Looking at the trees, she remembered the apple tree in her grandma's house. She had missed her grandma for a long time.

2.7





Ammi always said, “We are very lucky that our house is close to your Khala's and Nani's homes. When your Abba and I are not around, you can visit whomever you like.”

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But it was a long time since her mother had allowed her to go to grandma's house. She decided to visit her, without even looking at all those blue people around.

31

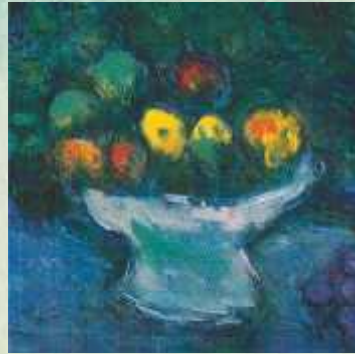




She silently tiptoed into her grandma's courtyard. She wanted to find her, cover her eyes from behind with her hands and ask, "Can you guess who this is?"

33





She didn't see her grandma, but the apple tree was there. She embraced the tree and circled around it. Then she looked up to see the apples. She could find only a few on her branches.

34









She asked the tree, “What have you done to your apples?”
She saw the small brook running under the tree. It was full of apples.
She smiled and said, “How did you know that I would come today?”

37







She stooped down to pick up an apple. She saw herself in the water, and withdrew her head startled. She wanted to scream, but laughed instead.

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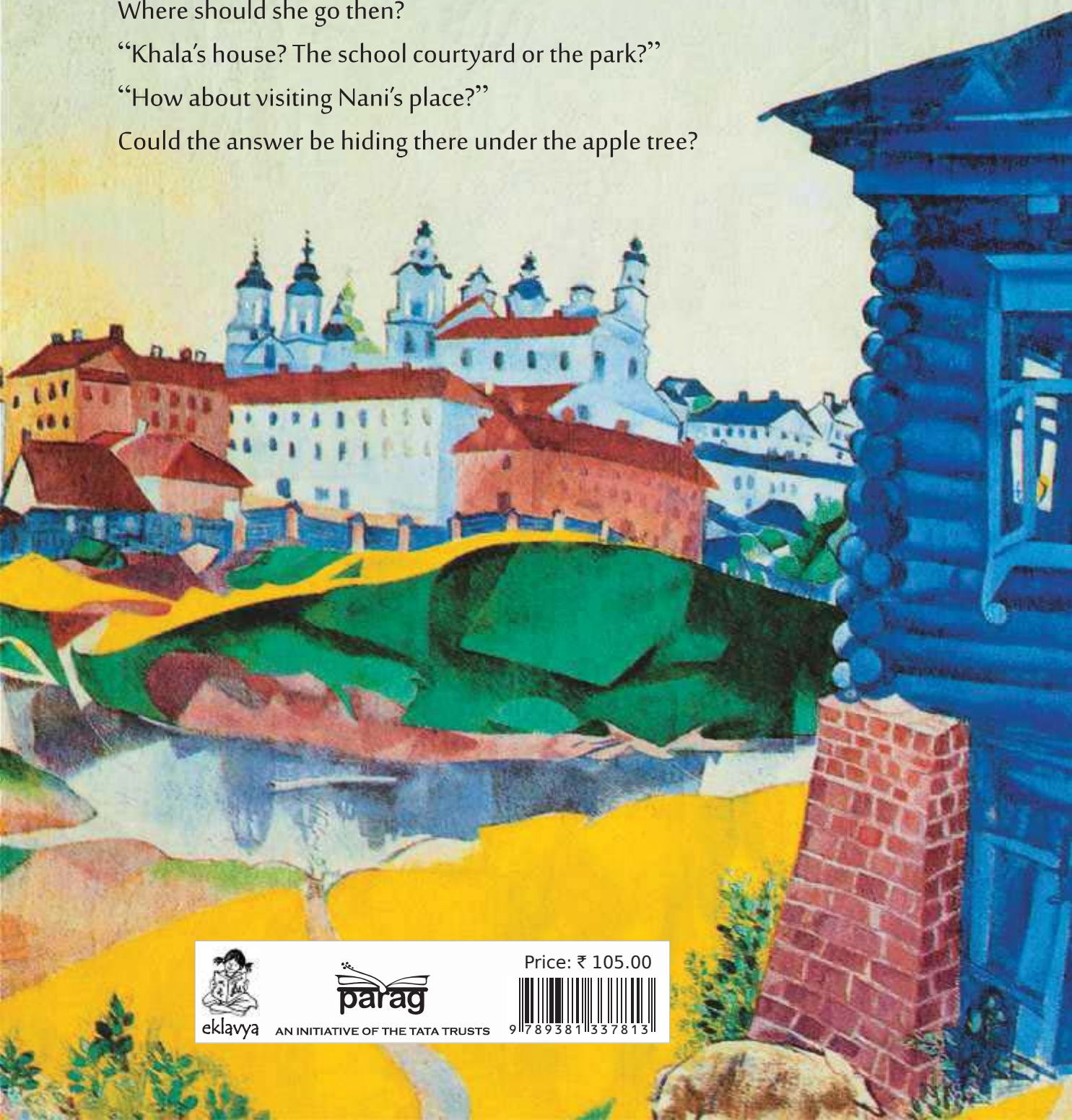
All the people had turned blue in her eyes. But she did not ask about them as she already knew what Ammi's response would be: "You are wrong, my dear. The people are surely blue themselves!"

Where should she go then?

"Khala's house? The school courtyard or the park?"

"How about visiting Nani's place?"

Could the answer be hiding there under the apple tree?



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