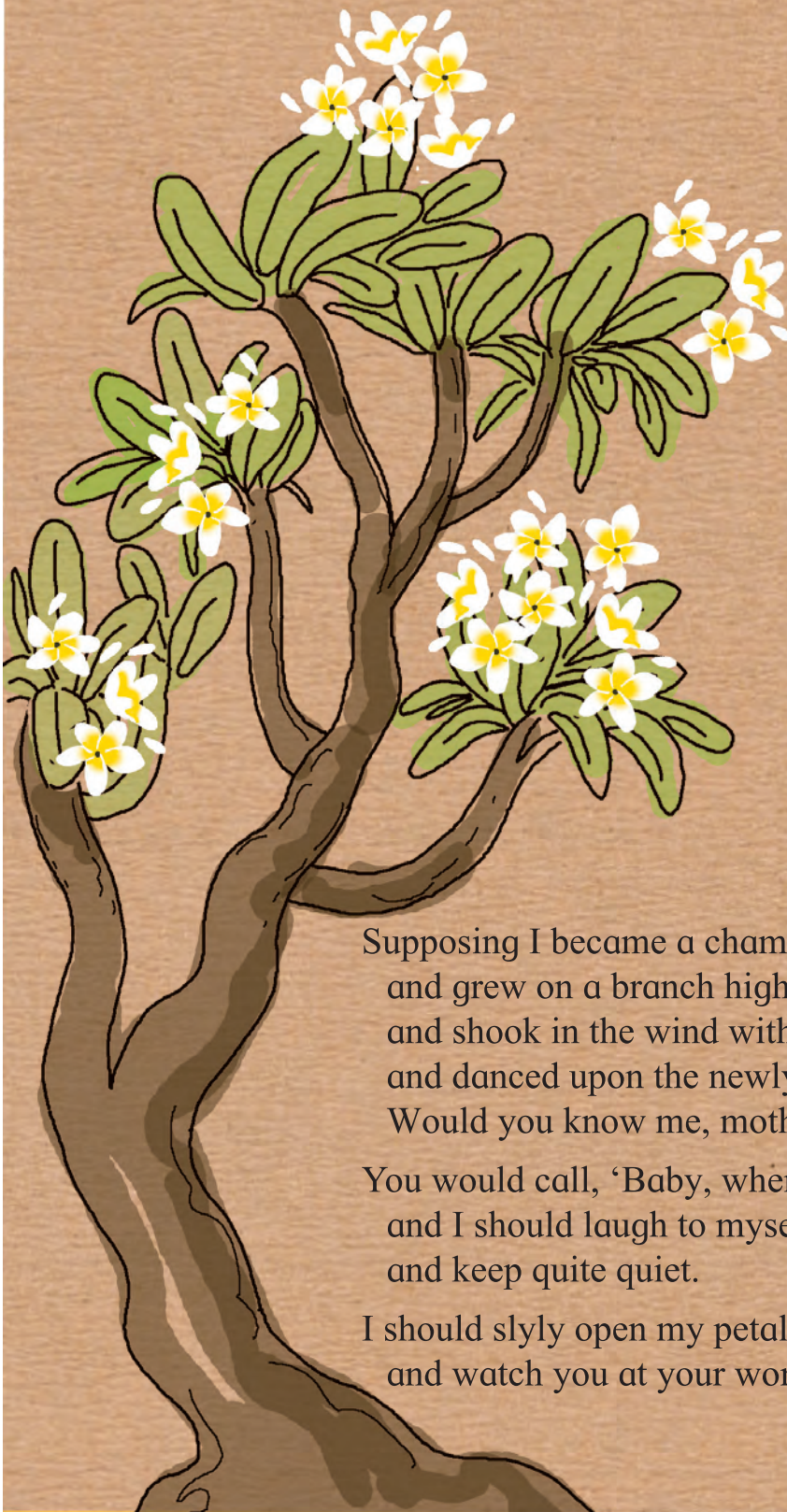


22. The Champa Flower



Supposing I became a champa flower, just for fun,
and grew on a branch high up that tree,
and shook in the wind with laughter
and danced upon the newly budded leaves,
Would you know me, mother ?

You would call, 'Baby, where are you ?'
and I should laugh to myself
and keep quite quiet.

I should slyly open my petals
and watch you at your work.

When after your bath,
with wet hair spread on your shoulders,
you walked through the shadow of the champa tree
to the little court where you say your prayers,
you would notice the scent of the flower,
but not know that it came from me.

When after the mid-day meal,
you sat at the window reading Ramayana,
and the tree's shadow fell over your hair and your lap,
I should fling my wee little shadow
on to the page of your book
just where you were reading.

But would you guess that it was the tiny shadow
of your little child ?

When in the evening you went to the cowshed,
with the lighted lamp in your hand,
I should suddenly drop on to the earth again
and be your own baby once more,
and beg you to tell me a story.

'Where have you been, you naughty child ?'

'I won't tell you mother.'

That's what you and I would say then.

- Rabindranath Tagore



- **slyly** : in a knowing, secret manner. • **fling** : throw. • **wee little** : very small.

Things to do :

1. This poem is about make-believe. The mother's activities described in this poem are a part of her daily routine, but the child wants to play a new role in it just for fun. Write one or two things that the child wants to do as a champa flower.
2. If you were to play a game of make-believe, what would you like to imagine? Write a few lines about it.