



illustration & narration: **TEJUBEHAN**

This stunning autobiographical book recounts self-taught artist Tejubehan's journey from an impoverished childhood in rural India, through her family's efforts to improve their lot in a tent city in Mumbai, and into her adulthood, when she lived as a singer and artist with her husband.

Born in Rajasthan and to music, Teju and her husband Ganesh Jogi, belonged to a community that wandered the streets, singing devotional songs. In return, the singers were given grain, clothes and some money. Soon, this was no longer a viable occupation. Ganesh Jogi, like others in his community, had to make other livelihood choices. For a while he did whatever work came his way, but some years proved harsher than others. His fortune changed when he met the incredible artist Haku Shah in Ahmedabad, who encouraged him to draw. In his generous and unusual way, Ganesh then nurtured Teju's talent, disregarding what was considered appropriate for women in the community to do.

This hand screen-printed illustrations bring to life Teju's characteristic line work and patterns of dots. This is both a celebration of Tejubehan's life and a vision of women going places, dreaming up a world where women are free to just be.

**Here are some questions and ideas for students to understand the story and explore the world in this book.**

### Talk about the story

- Tejubehan has been moving from place to place all her life. Make note of where from and where to. Why did she move? Did she want to, or was moving a necessity?
- When rural people move to the city, the shift is not easy, especially for the poor. The homes they build and live in are very unlike 'typical' city homes. Looking at the painting of her arrival to the city and the painting of her tent city, talk about how these lives are different.
- What comes to mind when you think of 'cities'. Can these elements be found in this book? Can Tejubehan's city be your city?
- "There are always two women in my cars. One drives and the other looks out of the window. I want to be both of those women." What does it mean for a woman to be driving a car herself? What does it mean to sit back and go where you wish? Both of these are women. Why is this important? Why does she want to be both?

### Talk about the art

- You can touch and feel the print of the book. This is a book which is hand silkscreen-printed on handmade paper. Look up what silkscreen-printing is. Watch this: [vimeo.com/tarabooks/handmade](https://vimeo.com/tarabooks/handmade) to see how these are made.
- Look at the drawing of the women driving around in cars. See how Tejubehan has used dots and lines to show different things such as road, grass, cars, etc. thereby 'colouring' these pictures with patterns.
- Look at the first drawing where Teju is a young child in her village. Can you spot her? List all the activities that are going on in different parts of the paintings. Now look at the painting of Teju living in the tent cities. Can you spot her here? What are the activities going on here? Are there any similarities between the two scenes? Have these activities been rendered differently in each of these two scenes?

### Activities

- Draw five outlines of transport vehicles with five different women in them. (Hints: Young woman, old woman, poor woman, rich woman, etc.) Fill your drawing in with different patterns of your choice. Who are these people? Where are they going? Where are they coming from? Write 5 lines about each of the five vehicles.
- Tejubehan draws women who float down, in air through parachutes. At the time of drawing this, she watched a programme on TV about Sunita Williams, the woman astronaut of Indian origin. Imagine and draw other alternatives to these women flying. (Hints: Mechanical wings? Paragliding?)