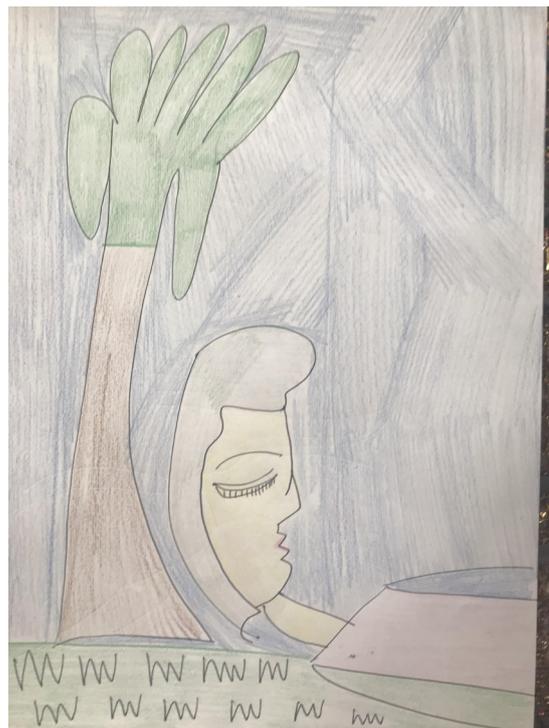


The Heavenly Forest

"Once, a charming girl called Aditi used to spend her time looking after cattle.



One day, she sat under a tree and fell asleep.



While she was thus sleeping, a snake came and spoke to her in a human voice. 'Help me,' said the snake. 'I am in great distress, some snake charmers are looking for me.'

'Place me in your lap and cover me with a cloth,' the snake pleaded.



'Sure,' said the brave girl Aditi and she helped the snake.



When the snake charmers came, they were sure the snake couldn't be where the girl was.



So, they left the place. Aditi opened the cloth on her lap and saw that the snake had disappeared. When she looked up, a Deva was in front of her, blessing her with his hand.



'I am pleased with you,' said the deva, 'for giving shelter to the snake. You are generous and courageous.'

'Ask me for any boon that pleases you.'

'I want nothing for myself, but a forest cover for my cattle is what I wish for,' said sally. 'So be it,' said the smiling deva and granted Aditi her wish.



Thus, a heavenly forest was created around Aditi and her cattle - a forest filled with fruits and lovely flowers."