

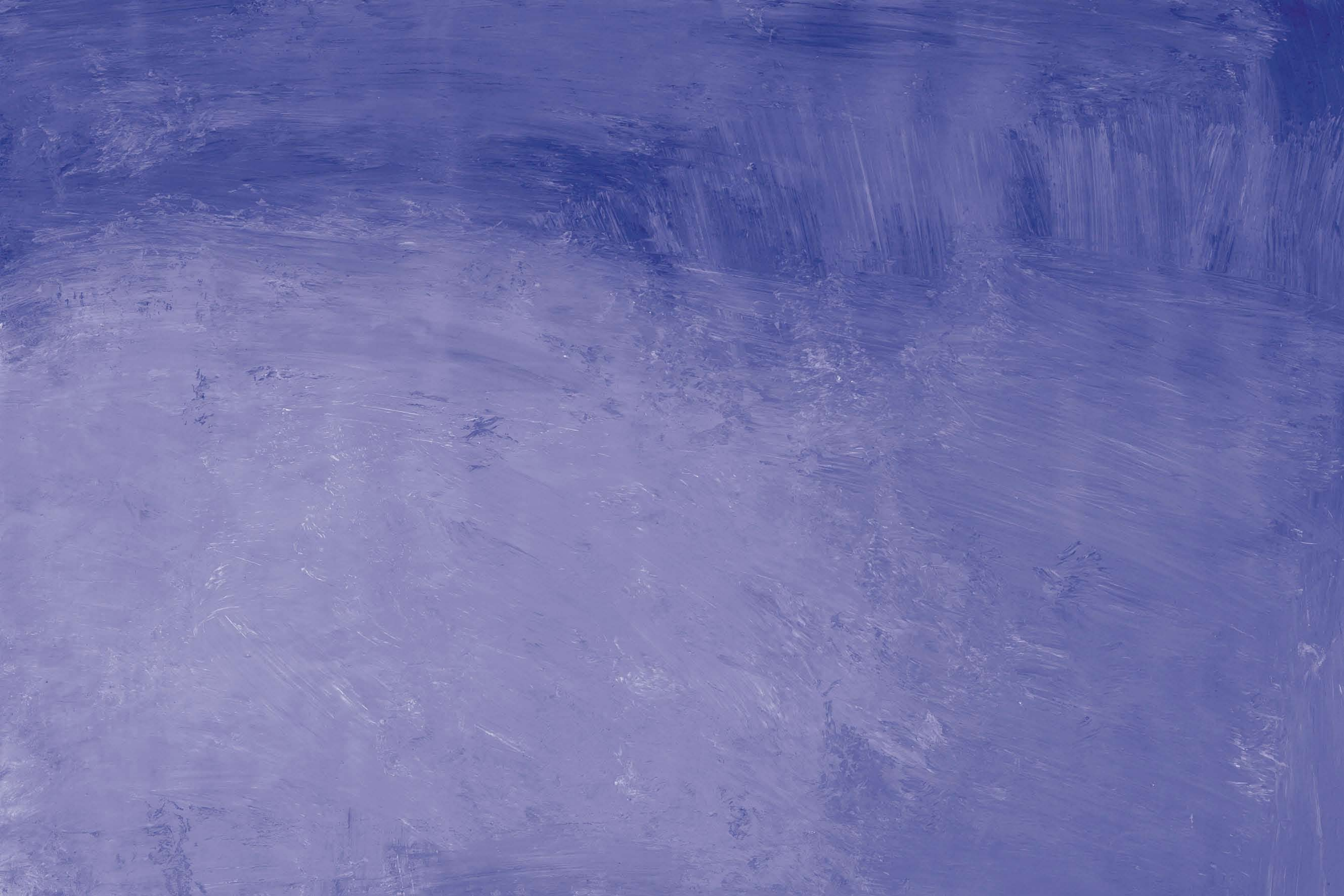
SOFIA MADOUVALOU

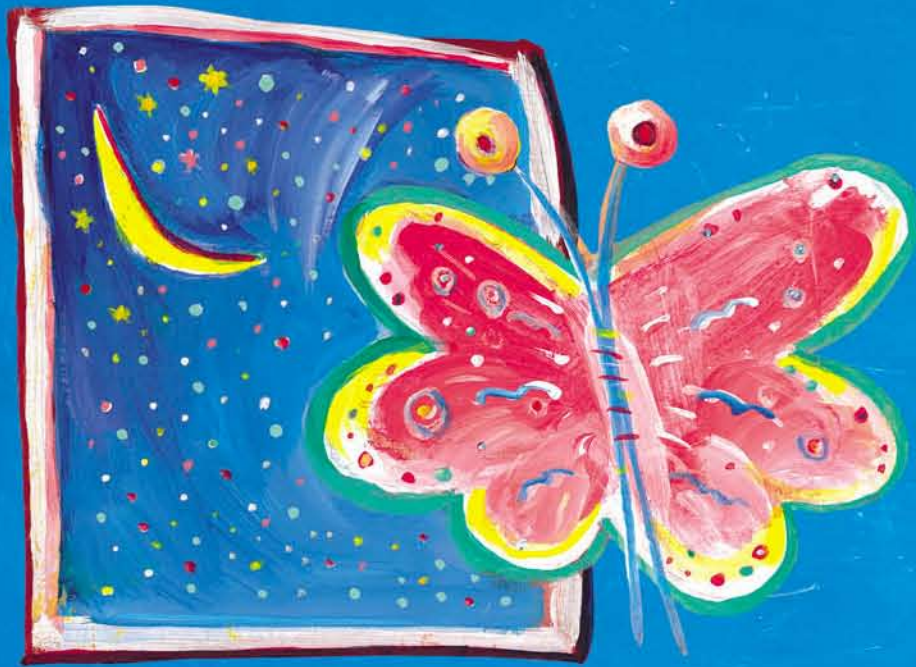
# THE MOON'S NEW DRESSES

illustration

ANDREAS KARABELAS







**SOFIA MADOUVALOU**  
**THE MOON'S  
NEW DRESSES**

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**KEDROS**







At night, the stars tell one another fairy tales  
to keep themselves awake.  
Their stories are so beautiful and vivid  
that hardly any of them  
close their eyes the whole night through.  
Most stars gleam with happiness and shine.  
Some grow sleepy,  
their eyes begin to droop and their light flickers.  
Others, still,  
fall asleep like little children before the fairy  
tale has even ended.  
And any star that goes to sleep  
shoots down through the sky to earth.

These shooting stars  
are the sky's best story tellers down on earth.  
The moment she sees a falling star,  
Irene makes a wish and runs to pick it up.  
She knows that with it in her hand she will live through a  
lovely fairy tale.

'But what's wrong with the stars tonight?'  
little Irene wondered,  
trying to keep her eyelids open.  
'Isn't there going to be a fairy tale this evening?'

Not even the tiniest little star fell from the sky. You'd have  
thought they were all stuck fast to the curtain of the night.  
Then the butterfly of sleep closed her eyes for a while.  
When she opened them again, a bright smile lit up the face  
of night. A little newborn star, like a fine golden thread.



When the little star was born  
the night became a fairy tale.  
The stars lit up like gleaming babies' rattles  
to lull it off to sleep.  
The clouds dripped honey to sweeten it.  
And the night flowers filled the air  
with scents and fragrances.  
The realm of the sky was enchanted  
by the little crescent moon  
and little Irene was enchanted, too.  
'I'm not going to miss this fairy tale  
for anything,' she said.  
'Since there's no shooting star  
to tell it to me,  
I'll go up there myself.'





So just as she was, barefoot and in her nightgown,  
she mounted her sleep and flew off in her dream.  
Dreams are so calm and quiet that even when they fly  
they don't wake up.  
A quarter of an hour before the stroke of midnight,  
Irene sank into a billowing fleecy cloud.  
The tenderness of the sky drew its cover round her,  
the night wind caressed her hair  
and the orchestra of the stars played her a welcome.



‘Hello,’ she greeted the moon with a sleepy smile.

‘Hello to you, too,’ replied the tiny thread of light.

‘What’s your name?’

‘My name’s the Moon, but they’ll call me Queen of the Night when I grow up. And you?’

‘They call me Irene, Rinio, Rena, Rinoula and Rinaki,’ said Irene in a rush.

‘How old are you?’

‘Two days. I’m a new moon.’

‘And where’s your cradle, little moon?’

‘My cradle?’

‘It’s the first time I’ve seen a new-born baby without a cradle.’

‘Night’s embrace is warmer and more soft than any cradle,’ replied the little moon, blushing shyly.



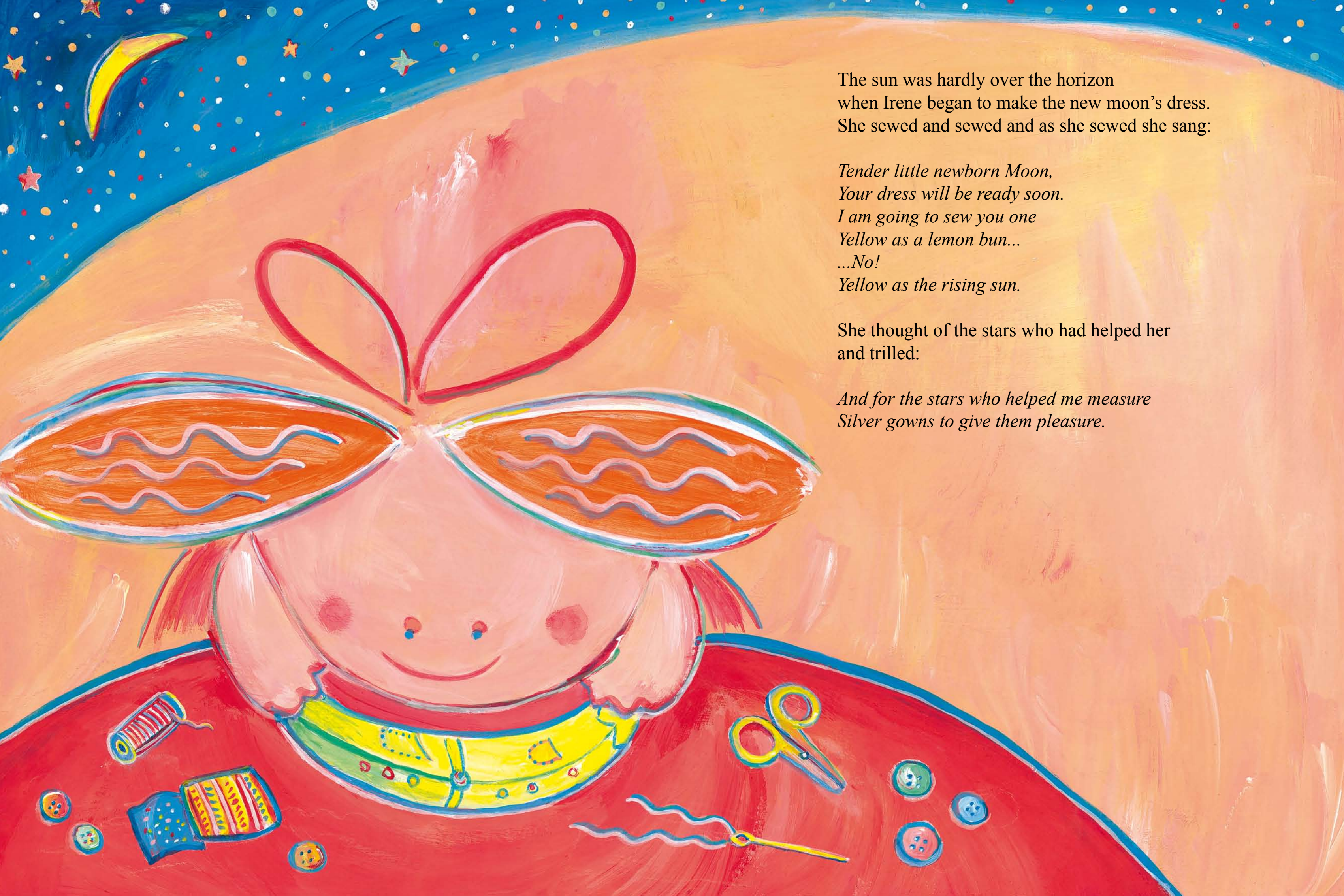


‘Even so, she’ll still be cold up there with nothing on,’  
thought little Irene anxiously.

‘I’ll make her a tiny dress as a present. Something just the  
size to fit her.’

So she asked the stars to help, and they willingly sat down at  
her side to take the new moon’s measurements:

‘One and a half stars round the waist,  
ten stars from head to toe...’



The sun was hardly over the horizon  
when Irene began to make the new moon's dress.  
She sewed and sewed and as she sewed she sang:

*Tender little newborn Moon,  
Your dress will be ready soon.  
I am going to sew you one  
Yellow as a lemon bun...  
...No!  
Yellow as the rising sun.*

She thought of the stars who had helped her  
and trilled:

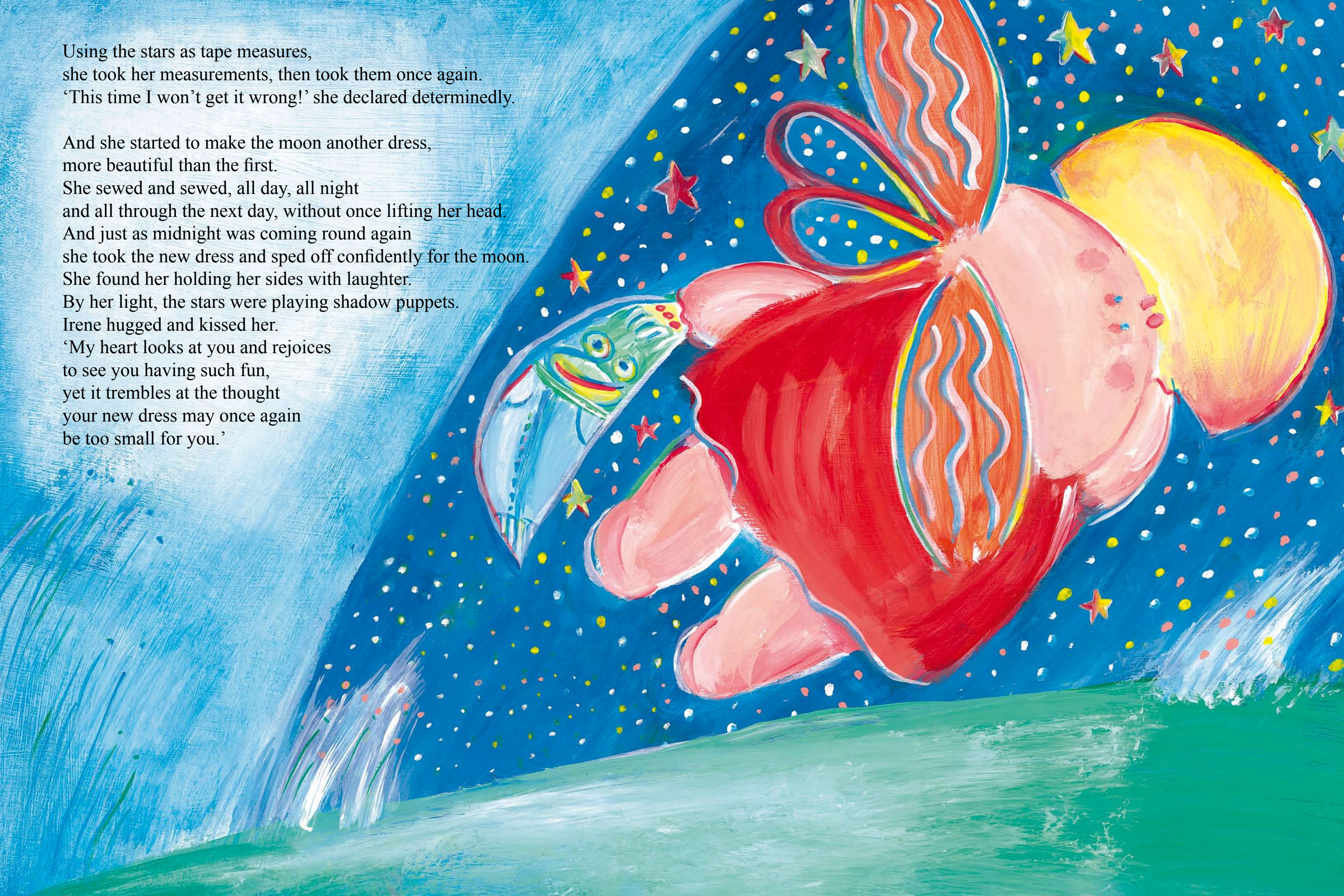
*And for the stars who helped me measure  
Silver gowns to give them pleasure.*



Jumping on a paper dart,  
Irene set off once more for the moon,  
her eyes sparkling with joy.  
In her arms she held the lovely little  
glowing dress. Bursting with happy  
pride, she offered her gift  
to the newborn moon.  
'Thank you,' said the little moon and  
sat still so she could put the dress on her.  
'But what's going on? Irene frowned a  
moment later.  
'Why can't I get it on you?'  
'Perhaps I've grown?'  
'Or perhaps I didn't measure you cor-  
rectly,' said Irene, disappointed.

Using the stars as tape measures,  
she took her measurements, then took them once again.  
'This time I won't get it wrong!' she declared determinedly.

And she started to make the moon another dress,  
more beautiful than the first.  
She sewed and sewed, all day, all night  
and all through the next day, without once lifting her head.  
And just as midnight was coming round again  
she took the new dress and sped off confidently for the moon.  
She found her holding her sides with laughter.  
By her light, the stars were playing shadow puppets.  
Irene hugged and kissed her.  
'My heart looks at you and rejoices  
to see you having such fun,  
yet it trembles at the thought  
your new dress may once again  
be too small for you.'



'The truth is that with every night that passes  
I grow fuller,' said the moon,  
trying to squeeze into her new dress.  
'No, it's much too tight for me.  
If I go on I shall burst.'  
'I'm the one who'll burst!' retorted Irene,  
shouting at the top of her voice to let off steam.  
'What a pity! And to think that I used all my skill to  
embroider that green frog.  
I'll make you an even bigger dress,  
one that you'll fit into.  
A dress that's made to measure,' she said.  
And once again she called the stars to help her.



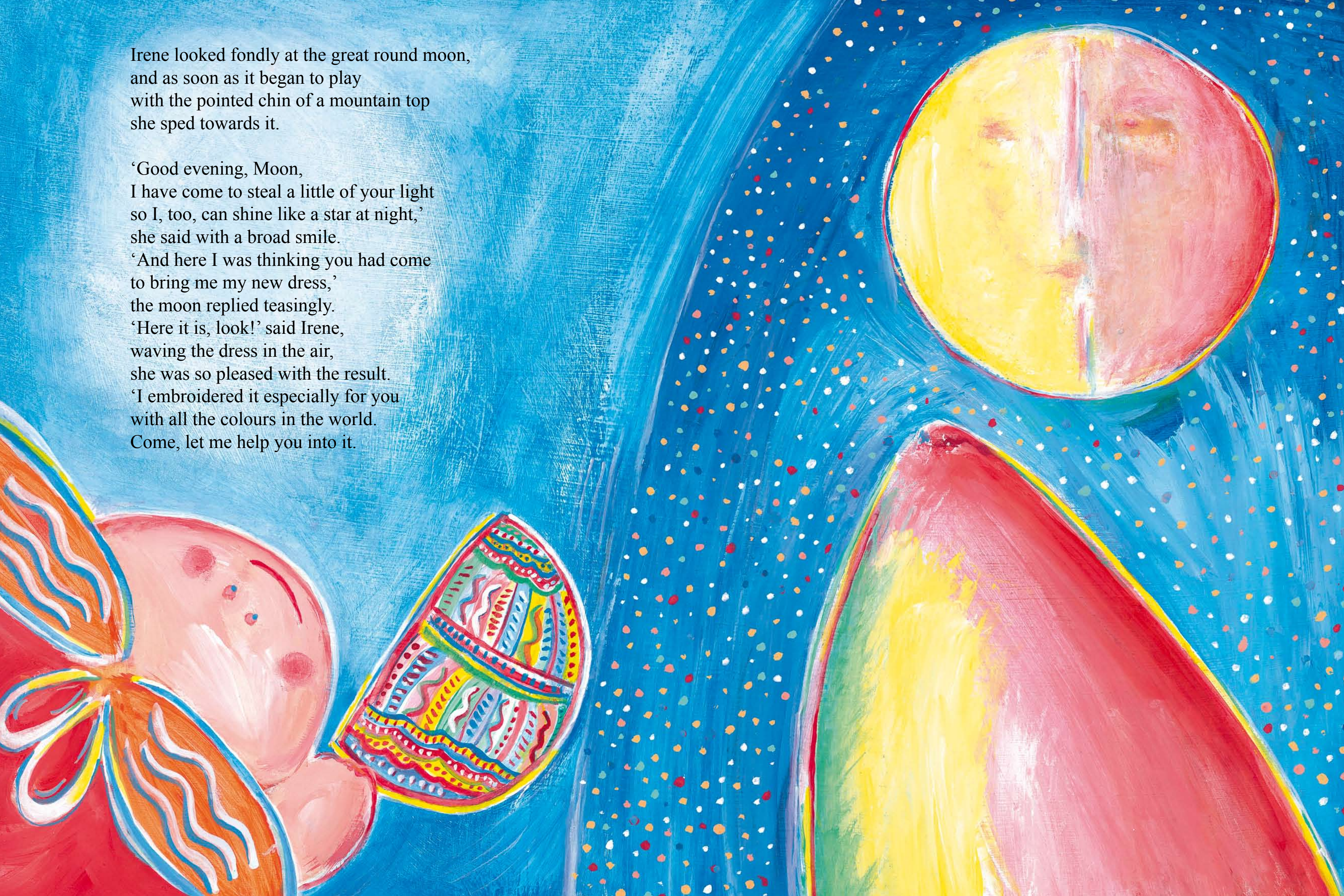
Irene looked fondly at the great round moon,  
and as soon as it began to play  
with the pointed chin of a mountain top  
she sped towards it.

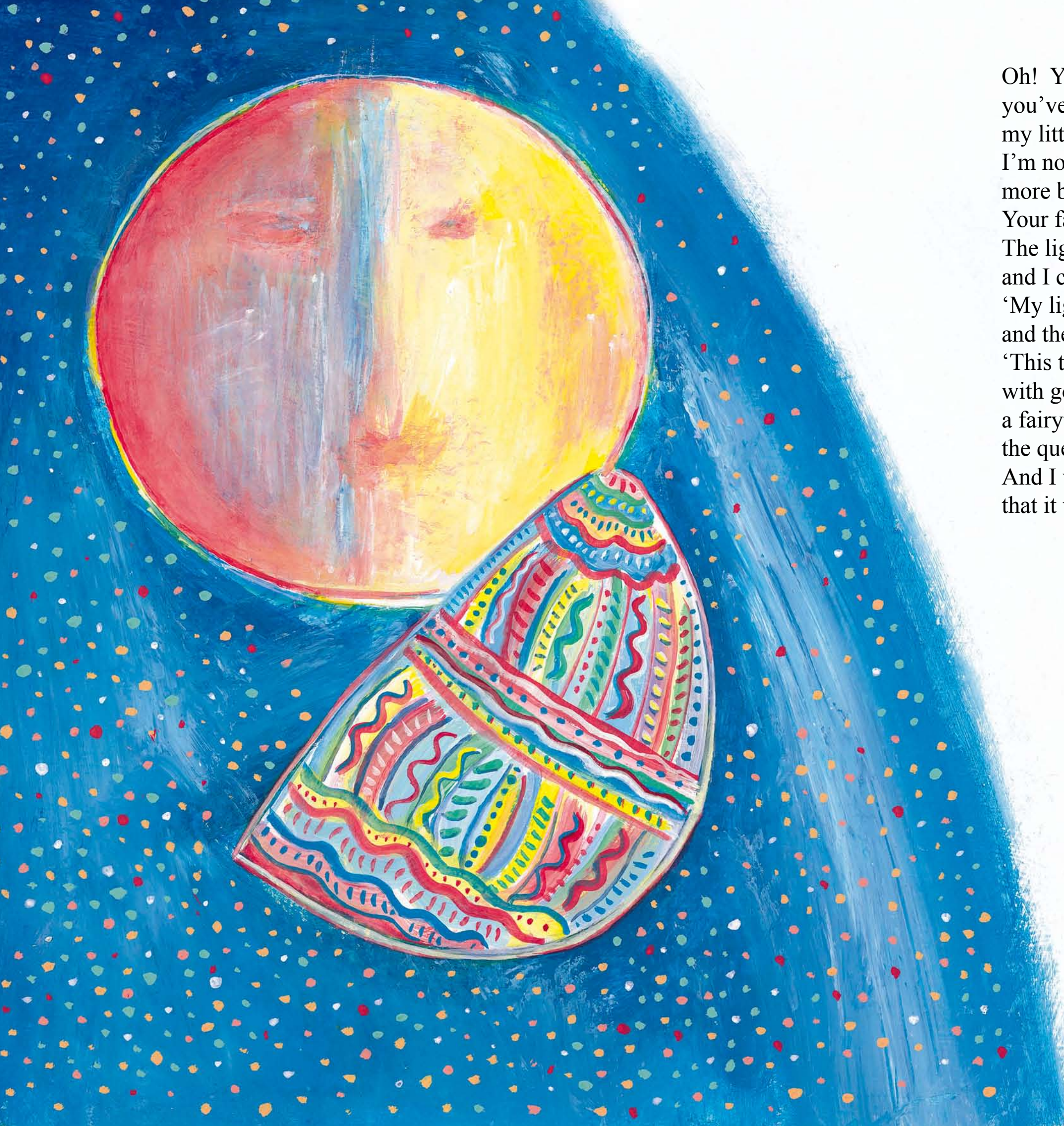
‘Good evening, Moon,  
I have come to steal a little of your light  
so I, too, can shine like a star at night,’  
she said with a broad smile.

‘And here I was thinking you had come  
to bring me my new dress,’  
the moon replied teasingly.

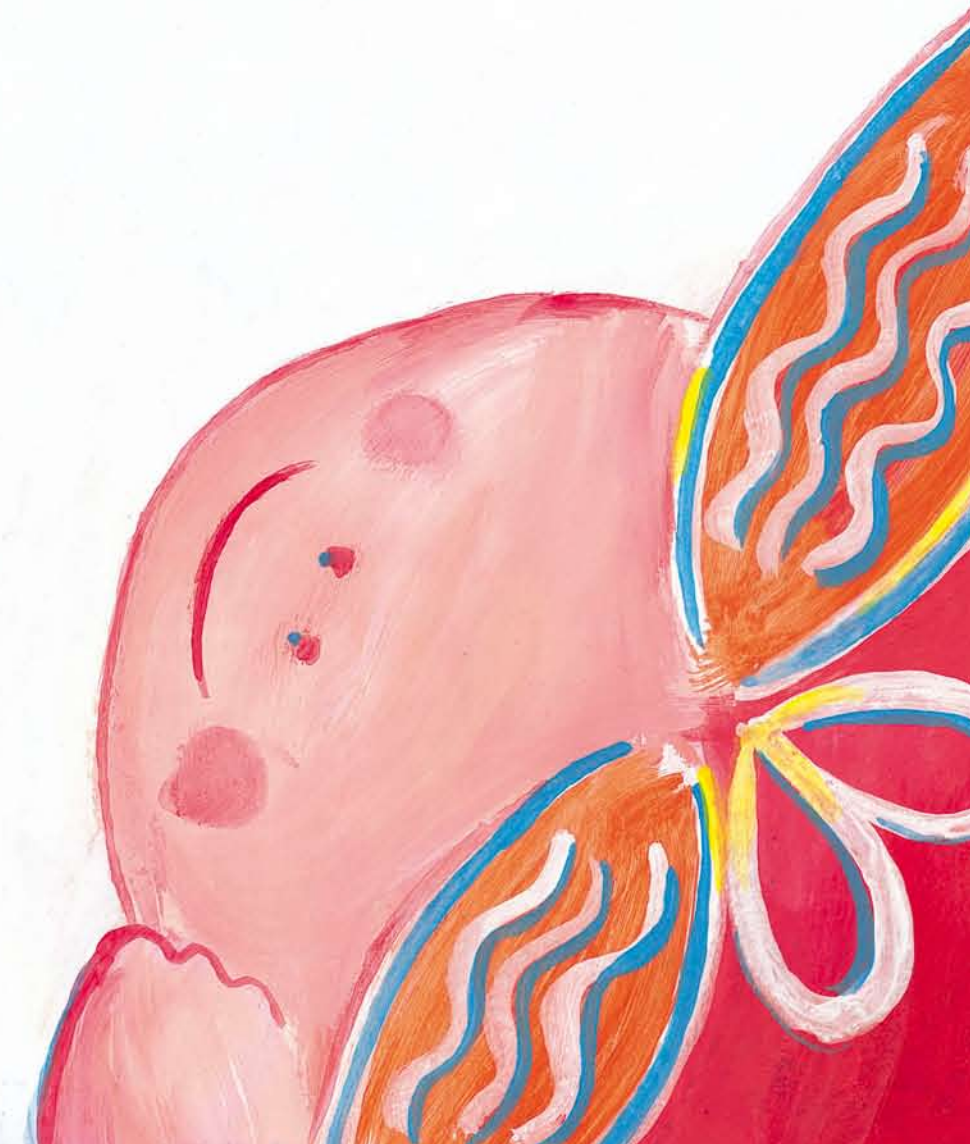
‘Here it is, look!’ said Irene,  
waving the dress in the air,  
she was so pleased with the result.

‘I embroidered it especially for you  
with all the colours in the world.  
Come, let me help you into it.’





Oh! You can't even get half way;  
you've become as round as a ball,  
my little moon.  
I'm not saying you haven't grown  
more beautiful along with it, but even so ...  
Your face has changed the colour of the night.  
The light of the stars has dimmed  
and I can hardly see them any more.'  
'My light's too bright for them  
and they are hiding,' laughed the moon.  
'This time I'll sew you a dress  
with gold and silver needles,  
a fairytale dress for the moon,  
the queen of the night.  
And I will make it wide, so wide  
that it will fit you however much you grow.'





Little Irene did just what she'd said.  
She made the brightest  
and most glittering of dresses,  
with mirrors and tiny crystals,  
spangles and precious stones,  
and a crown for the queen of the night.  
'At last!' she cried, tossing the dress into the air  
in her enthusiasm,  
'A lovely dress that will fit the moon!'

Putting on the dress she had sewn  
with so much joy, Irene disappeared from sight,  
waltzing across the endless dance-floor  
of the sky.

'I love you,' the moon said to Irene  
when she offered her the new dress.  
'And I love you,' replied Irene.  
'I love you through my dreams.'  
'I love you,' the moon said again,  
'but once more  
I am going to disappoint you.'





This dress is much too big for a half moon.  
You see, in the time it took you to make it,  
dance and bring it to me,  
I have become just half of what I was.  
Two like me could fit in this. It's not your fault,  
it's just that I pass through my phases.  
But none of these dresses will go to waste.  
I shall wear them all, I promise you,  
one after the other.'



Night slipped silently into the sleeping room  
without a single ray of moonlight.  
In the magic of her sleep Irene smiled.  
A shooting star was whispering  
some well-loved story in her ear,  
one of those the stars tell one another  
so they will not fall asleep.  
A tale about a distant shining smile.



‘Once upon a time  
and many times since then,  
in the kingdom of the sky  
a little light was born,  
thin as a yellow thread.  
With the birth of the new moon  
the night became a fairy tale,  
the stars dripped honey  
and the kingdom of the sky  
became enchanted.



From among the mountains  
where the clouds embrace it  
and from the mirror of the sea  
the moon winks at us as it grows,  
until one night it is no longer in the sky.'

What do you say? Will it come back again?





ΚΕΔΡΟΣ