



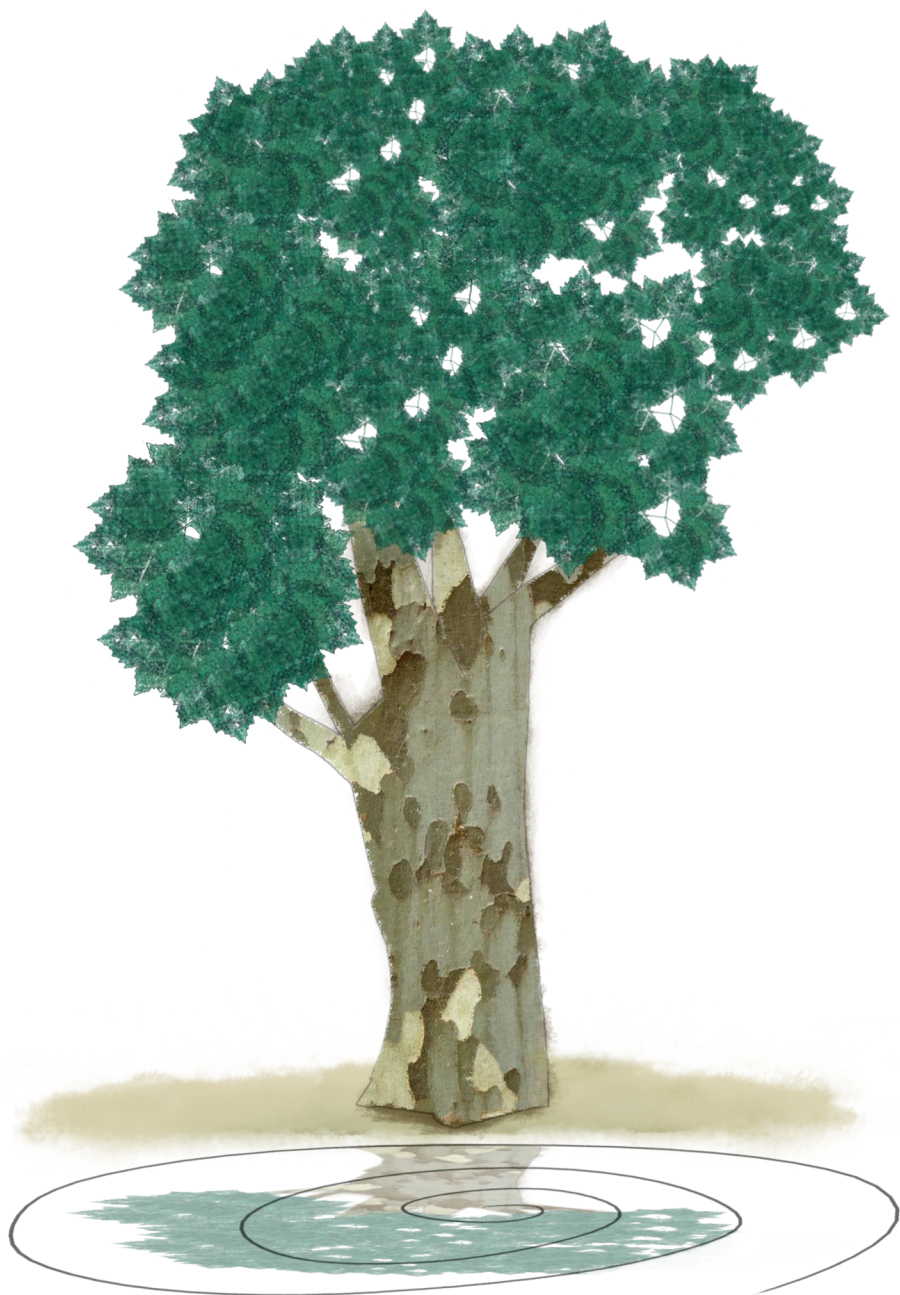
LOS SABIOS HIPO PÓTA MOS

Peter Svetina

**Traducción: Florencia Ferre
y Barbara K. Vuga**

Ilustraciones: Francisco Tomsich

Malinc





A BOUQUET OF RHYMES

Hippos Hubert and Marcelo were sitting under a tree throwing mud balls into the water.

"How I'd like to write some poem," said Marcelo.

"Shall I help you?" Hubert asked.

"But... do you even know what a poem is?" asked Marcelo.

"Oh, sure...," Hubert said. "Well, maybe not,"

And they sat in silence, still throwing mud balls into the water.

"A poem is like a bouquet made of pure rhymes."

Marcelo clarified after a while.

"And what is a rhyme?" Hubert asked.

"A rhyme is, say, green bean," replied Marcelo.

"And what is the rhyme, the bean, or the green?"

"They are both the rhyme. Bean rhymes with green. Do you understand?"

"Aha!" said Hubert, "Now I understand."

At noon they stopped and said to the tree, "Good luck and lots of success."

And they left.

Later that afternoon, Hubert knocked on the door of Marcelo's house.

"Look," he said, "I don't know if you're going to like it, but I've managed to create one of those poems you were talking about."

Hubert carried between his forelegs a bouquet made of grasses and soybeans and some lettuces and some pods of fava beans and some garbanzos and some parsley leaves. Everything very well tied in a large bouquet, beans with greens.

"You are a true friend," Marcelo commented and invited to come into the room.

"I don't know if anyone else would have known how to compose such a good poem," said Marcelo, after they'd finished off even the last parsley leaf.







TWELVE PENGUINS

"Hey there... what are you doing?" Marcelo asked Hubert.

Hubert was sitting beside the path counting.

"I'm counting penguins," Hubert answered.

"Uh-huh, and where are they?"

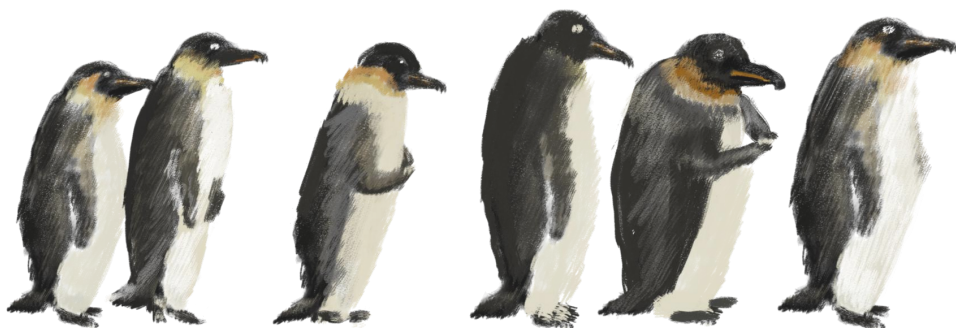
"They're not here yet."

"Then why do you count them?"

"Because they can't be counted by themselves," said Hubert. "They line up one after the other and can't count."

"Shall I help you?" Marcelo asked.

"Yes, please," said Hubert. "Walk from one side to the other in front of me, so it will be easier for me to count."



Marcelo marched in front of Hubert. From here to there. From there to here. And Hubert counted.

Then Tanami the zebra arrived.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"We are counting penguins," said Hubert.

"Can I help you?" Tanami asked.

Marcelo sat next to Hubert and the two counted Tanami, who marched in front of them. From here to there. From there to here.

Then the rhino Rudolf arrived.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"Counting penguins," said Hubert.

"What do you mean penguins? Where are they?"

"Well ... we're actually rehearsing how to count penguins. You could help us," Hubert invited.



Now Tanami joined Hubert and Marcelo, and Rodolfo marched in front of them. From here to there. From there to here.

Then Ludovic the pelican also showed up, and down the road came the elephants Carmela and Teophilo, the beaver Vasko, the skunk Claudia, Felipe the waterbuffalo, Franco the leopard, and finally the little crow Patricia.

Patricia flew so quickly from here to there and there to here that they barely managed to count her.

"Good day, what are you all doing?"

It was a penguin with a cooler!

"We're counting penguins," Hubert answered.

"Great, good thing you now have me, go ahead and count me," said the penguin and started marching in front of them.



"One," said Hubert.
"One," said Marcelo.
"One," said Tanami.
"One," said Rudolf.
"One," said Ludovico.
"One," said Mary.
"One," said Theo.
"One," said Peter.
"One," Claudia said.
"One," said the water buffalo Phillip.
"One," said the cheetah Frank.
"One," Patricia said.



"Twelve for one is twelve," said Hubert. "Twelve penguins."

"That's a good number," said the penguin.

"Tell me, do you have an iced coffee in the cooler?" Felipe asked.

The penguin opened the cooler. He had iced coffee, very cool.

"It still seems a little strange to me," said Phillip that night.

He was sitting under the tree with Hubert and Marcelo. Marcelo and Hubert were tossing small balls of mud while Phillip drank the last sips of the coffee which was now warm.



"It is strange," he repeated.

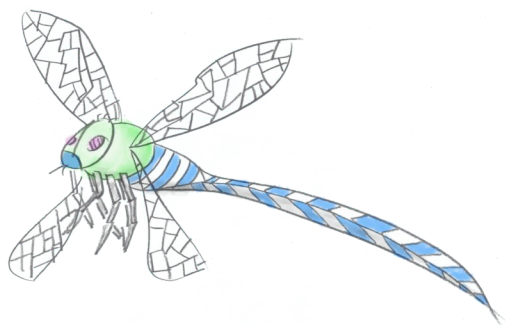
"What's strange?" Hubert asked him.

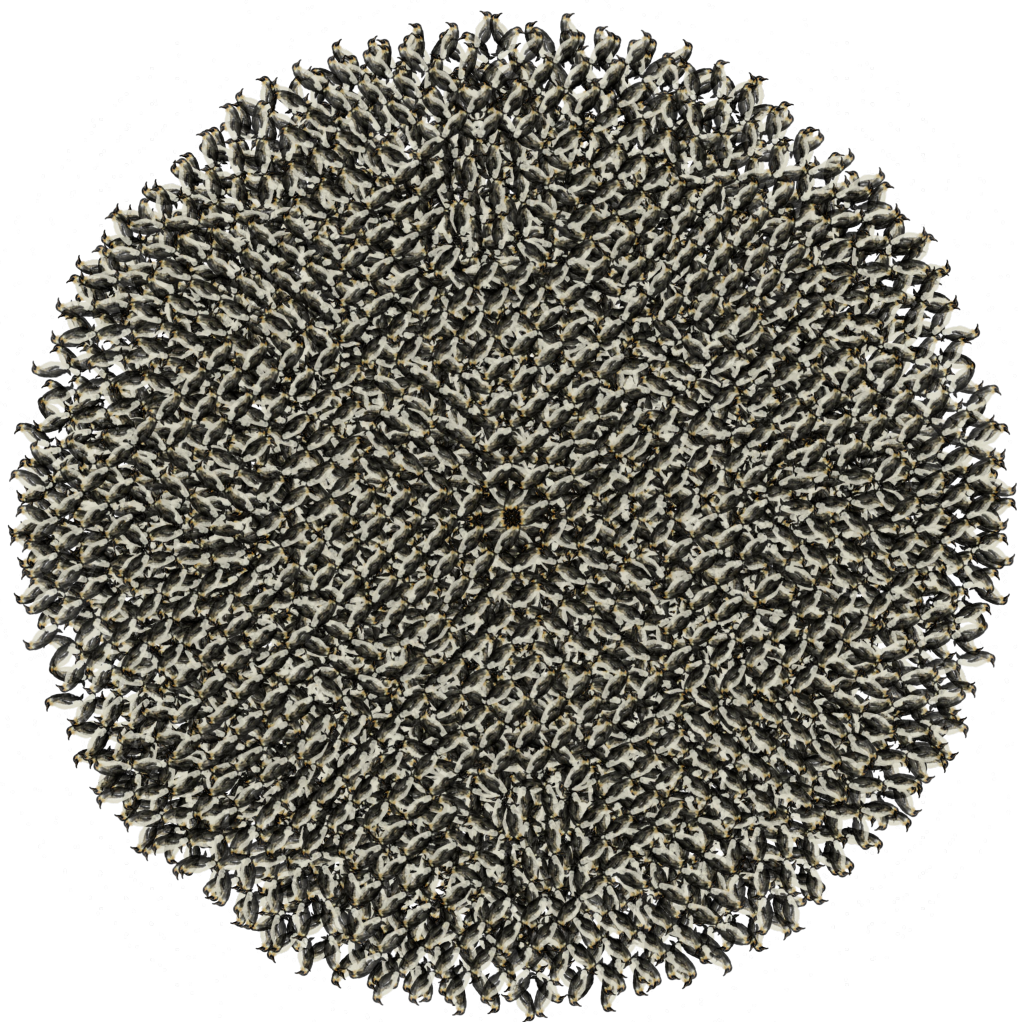
"We counted twelve penguins, but they had only one iced coffee," Phillip answered.

"Weird ... really," Marcelo replied.

And he kept thinking.







REFLEXIONES DEL PITÓN FILÓSOFO

La nube va y viene.

No solo las serpientes silban.

Quien sacude el hocico, salpica saliva. También sobre su propio pellejo.

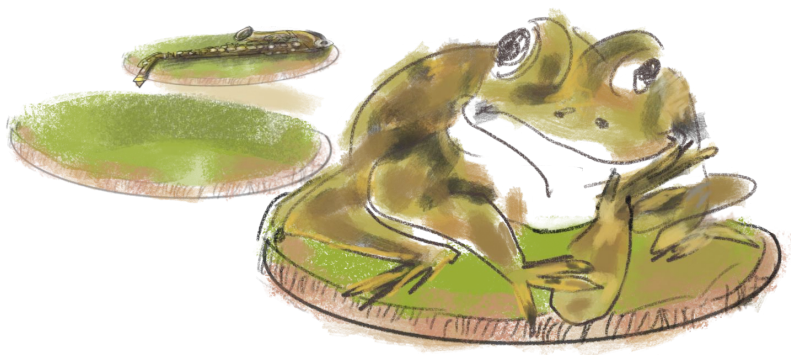
Las palabras son como piedras de río: no son todas igual de redondeadas, no son todas igual de grandes, no son todas igual de blancas.

Quien se hamaca en una rama puede, de paso, hacer caer las ciruelas del árbol.

Mucha lluvia para poco charco.

No puedes tropezarte con un elefante. Con un elefante solamente chocas.

Siempre hay más pingüinos de los que creías haber visto.



AYUDA

Era miércoles.

—Vamos a ayudar a alguien —dijo Huberto.

—Vamos, ya encontraremos a quién —dijo Marcelo.
Y se fueron.

La rana Zografos se preguntaba cómo brincar hasta un nenúfar que se iba alejando de la orilla. Allí se había olvidado su saxofón.

Justo entonces, Huberto y Marcelo entraron en el agua. La superficie subió y el nenúfar regresó flotando casi hasta la orilla. ¡Hop!

La rana Zografos saltó al nenúfar y tuvo de vuelta su saxofón. Huberto y Marcelo, entretanto, ya estaban al otro lado del riachuelo.

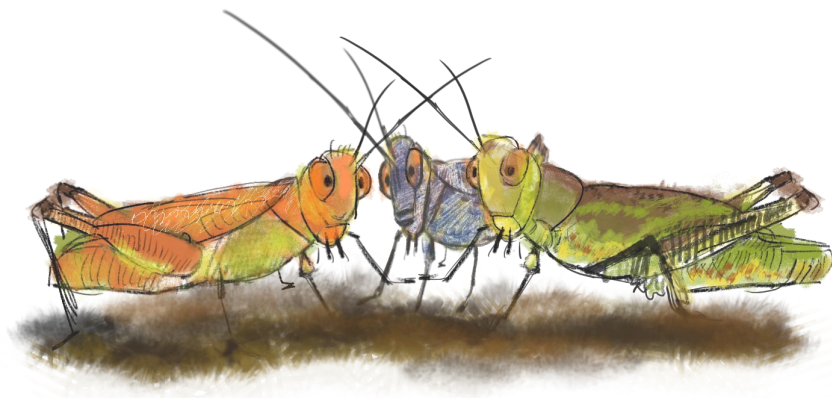
Ese día, la babuina Maximiliana estaba preparando mermelada. Ya había recogido casi todas las ciruelas, pero no podía alcanzar las que estaban en las ramas más delgadas y distantes.

Justo entonces, pasaron por ahí Huberto y Marcelo.

Como el camino era angosto, Huberto se dio contra el árbol sin querer. ¡Paf! ¡Puf! ¡Paf! Las ciruelas cayeron al suelo detrás de él. «Qué torpe soy», se dijo Huberto.

Cuando Maximiliana salió de su casita, se preguntó, sorprendida, cómo había sido posible que las ciruelas cayeran al suelo solas. Y, entonces, preparó dos ollas más de mermelada.





Ese mismo día, las saltamontes Sofía, Teresa y Rebeca intentaban alisar la cancha de fútbol para poder patear la pelota. Pero no había forma, no lo conseguían. La tierra estaba tan blanda que las patitas se les enterraban hasta las ancas y aún más. En una cancha así no se puede patear la pelota.

Justo entonces, pasaron por ahí Huberto y Marcelo. ¡Pum-pabum-pabum-pabum! Y siguieron su camino.

—Ji, ji, ji — rieron las saltamontes—. ¡Han apisonado la cancha! ¡Han apisonado la cancha!

Huberto y Marcelo pasaron por el riachuelo y se encontraron con el pelícano Ludovico. Estaba pintando a un trío de jilgueros acróbatas. La cuerva Patricia los miraba.

—¡Hola! —saludaron Huberto y Marcelo.

—¡Hola! —contestó Patricia.

Ludovico y los jilgueros estaban demasiado ocupados como para advertir su presencia.

Por la tarde, Huberto y Marcelo se sentaron bajo el plátano y se pusieron a arrojar bolitas de barro al agua.

—Pero, ¡qué raro! —dijo Marcelo—, todo el día hemos andado dando vueltas y viendo si podíamos ayudar a alguien, y nada. No hemos conseguido ayudar ni a uno solo.

—Tal vez somos demasiado torpes para eso —contestó Huberto.

En eso, llegó volando la cuerva Isolda. —¿No habéis visto a la pequeña Patricia? —preguntó.

—Sí, claro —dijo Marcelo—. Está mirando a Ludovico pintar, ahí, en el arroyo.

—¡Gracias! ¡Gracias! —grajeó Isolda y se fue volando.

—Bueno, al menos hemos ayudado a una —dijo Huberto.

—Al menos a una, sí —afirmó Marcelo.

Después, se dieron las buenas noches y se fueron a dormir muy satisfechos.



Peter Svetina was born in 1970 in Ljubljana. In 1995 he graduated in Slovenian Studies and defended his PhD thesis on Old Slovenian Poetry in 2001 (both at Faculty for Arts, University Ljubljana, Slovenia). He is an associate professor for Slavic literature at the Institute for Slavic languages, Alpen-Adria University, Klagenfurt, Austria. He writes for children, young adults and adults, but his work often crosses the borders between different target audiences and can be read as crossover literature. His literary debut was a picture book called *The Walrus who Didn't Want to Cut his Nails* (1999), which soon served as the basis for a puppet play, a path later followed by many of his works (e.g. *Mr. Constantine's Hat*). His books for children and youth have been translated into English, German, Spanish, Korean, Polish, Latvian, Estonian, and Lithuanian. Svetina's works often play with occurrences and images from his everyday life. They reflect not only his home town of Ljubljana and the destinations of his travels, but also his scholarly interests – Svetina's scientific research is focused on old Slovenian poetry, children's and youth literature (especially its socially and politically directed transformation after World War II), and detective novels. He translates poetry and children's literature from English, German, Croatian, and Czech and works as an editor for poetry collections and literature textbooks for primary school. His books have received some of the most prestigious national and international awards and are immensely popular among literary critics as well as young readers.

Francisco Tomsich is an artist and author born in Uruguay in 1981. He produces exhibitions, publications, works for the stage, research models and pedagogical devices since 2003, operating with different media, languages and tongues. He has co-founded and integrates many non-disciplinary associations of artists in South America and Europe. See: <http://franciscotomsich.tumblr.com>

