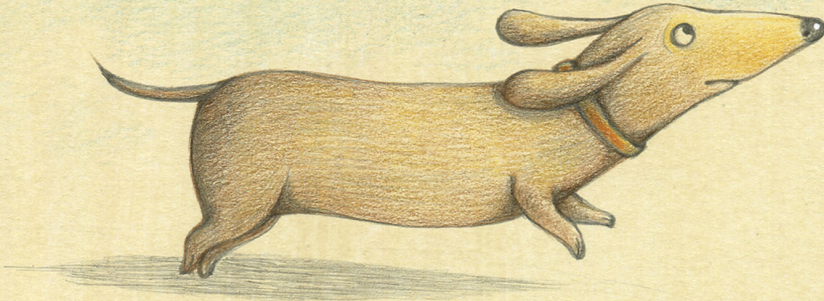


Luisa Carretti · Mariella Cusumano

La paura detesta volare



Luisa Carretti

LA PAURA DETESTA VOLARE

Illustrazioni di Mariella Cusumano

con un intervento di Chiara Carrelli

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The voice



Thursday - Dinner time

Here I am, like every night for a week, with the soup: carrots, cauliflower and leek. Puah! It smells so much like rancid gorgonzola that I can barely breathe.

But I eat it and try to smile at Dad. It's the only recipe he's ever learned to cook and these days I have to be nice to him.

I barely swallow the last spoonful of that greenish-yellow liquid.

"Today we took a nice walk with Mom in the hospital hallway."

"When is she coming back?" I ask with a little fear.

"We still do not know. According to the doctors she'll be home in a few days."

"I hope so", I whisper and take a big breath to drive away the knot in my throat that I felt suddenly.

I miss my Mom so much! Luckily I have Poldo here with me. He always smiles!

I look at it, then I smell it. It smells of good lavender and rose, just like Mom.

When I feel sad or scared, its smell gives me courage.

"Good night," I mumble with a sad tone.

Dad makes as if to wave to me while, wearing mom's rubber gloves, tries to scrape the pot from the burnt soup. They really are too small for him.

I try to cross the corridor, but my right foot seems to be glued to the ground, I hardly move it. The left disobeys my commands and like a shrimp takes a step back.

I take a deep breath, then a leap forward and here I am in front of the semi-open door. I see the walls. They are of an insidious blue, of those that encourage you to enter, deceiving you that on the other side you'll find a playground. I let myself be tempted. I take a step.

"Here you are at last", a voice suddenly whispers from my room. I jump for fear.

"Who is there?" I ask, and the heart starts to beat at the madness. I feel freezing and a moment later like I'm on fire.

"Why are you late?" asks the voice that becomes shrill like the sound of a violin out of tune.

"No, you won't get me!" I scream, squeezing Poldo tightly. I smell it.

I close my eyes and I guess I am an armed Knight, ready to defeat a terrible dragon.

"Aaaahhh!" That's my war cry. I throw myself into the center of the room on the blue wool carpet strewn with cheerful white clouds, which Mom bought me before leaving.

Good. I'm strong again. I'm in attack position. The enemy is there in front of me. He's smart. He tries to trick me with his scented sheets.

"Come here and lie down, we are ready to welcome you," he tells me with the voice of a snake.

"Never!" I declare decided. My legs tremble. "Why?"
"Because you want to drag me into your dark world!"
"What are you saying? There's a warm and cozy corner ready for you here, so you can sleep peacefully."

I'm stumbling. I'm about ready to give in, when a red siren lights up behind me and ten long bony fingers try to catch me.





"BAAAM."

The wind makes the windows tremble and I take the opportunity to escape. In a flash I'm in Dad's room. He snores, did not notice anything.

"Can I go to bed with you?" I whisper in his ear. Dad, without even opening your eyes, pulls the duvet away. "Just for this night," he mumbles with furred tongue and embraces me.

I feel better.
"Just for tonight," I say.

The fear of the unknown

If something is not clear to you, ask!

Tobia feels lonely and has a thousand questions in his mind. He tries to be strong, to deal with a whole new fear, sleeping without his Mom in the house.

Sometimes it works, and when not he asks his Daddy for help.

It's a good way to grow up!

But you need to remember that you are allowed to ask questions to better understand what is not clear to you and that scares you. Do you know that when an adult looks silent or angry, he could be just very frightened just like you?

And if...



"Dad, my tummy really hurts!" Silvia exclaims squinting her eyes to be more persuasive.

Umberto, her father, looks at her incredulous from the rearview mirror and cuts short.

"Come on Silvia! It's just another day of school. It will pass exactly in..."

He looks at the clock on the odometer.

"...in eight hours."

He suddenly stops, so suddenly that Silvia's stomach rises to the ears and then returns to its place.

"Here we are. Have a good day."

He winks at her and whizzes away up the hill that leads from the school to the office.

Silvia's feet seem glued to the sidewalk.

The bell rings.

Her classmates run to the door, she doesn't.

She goes as slow as she can, with the back curved because of her backpack full of books.

The history teacher will interview about the Babylonians during the first hour.

She steps into the lobby. Slowly. Then she steps into her class.

She slowly takes off her coat. She slowly reaches her desk in the third row and very slowly extracts the history book from the folder.

A ticking of heels announces the arrival of Teacher Stefania.

She is tall, thin with big green eyes and a cascade of red curls. She's always in a good mood.

"Good morning, boys and girls." Her cheerful voice rings through the classroom that is unusually quiet.

"Cheerful and severe", thinks Silvia twirling the pencil between her fingers. She feels a tingling from the tips of her feet up to her hands.

The night before, she got up late, kidnapped by her brother Paolo's history book, who attends high school. For her the story is just a passion!

Among all she adores the Babylonians, so much that for her birthday she asked as gift the book "All the Secrets of the ancient Babylonians" and read it all in one breath.

A sudden thud blows her into the chair.

It's teacher Stefania, she loves opening the register in a theatrical way.

Because of the fright, the pencil gets out of her hand and flies across the classroom, on Matthew's desk.

"Who was it?" the teacher asks with a tone of reproach, but she does not wait for the answer. She lower her eyes on the register and begin to scroll through the list.

"Let's see who is coming to the chair today to talk about the Babylonians?"

Silvia's stomach is in revolution, it wriggles and rotates like a washing machine basket.

The teacher's finger runs on the first names.

"I know everything", Silvia whispers, "I know everything..." But suddenly a thought flashes in her mind.



The fear of being judged by others

Remember that nobody is perfect!

How hard can be to monitor everything in your life, isn't it? Your grades, the time that you spend studying, the relationship with your friends and everything else. If something escapes and does not go as you set out, I'll tell you a secret, it's all right, it's not a drama, I assure you!

The fear of being wrong and not being appreciated is unfortunately part of everyone growth, but it helps to understand that no one is immune to failure. You are always you even after a fool and you deserve to be appreciated even if you get a bad grade, because nobody is perfect!

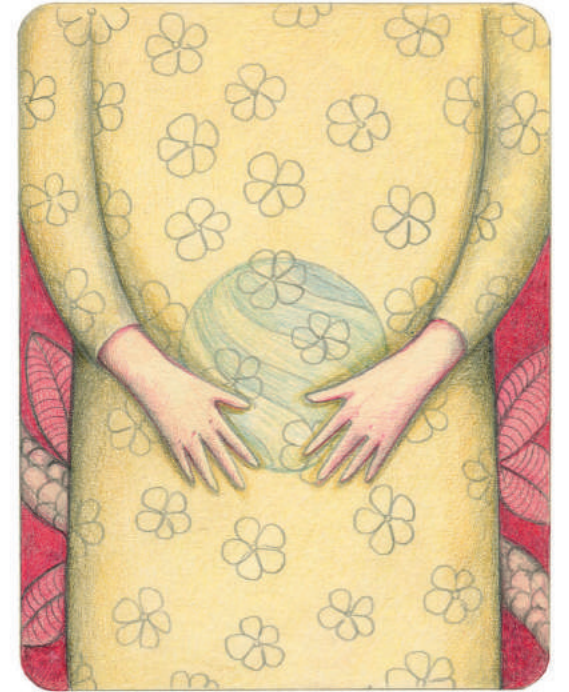
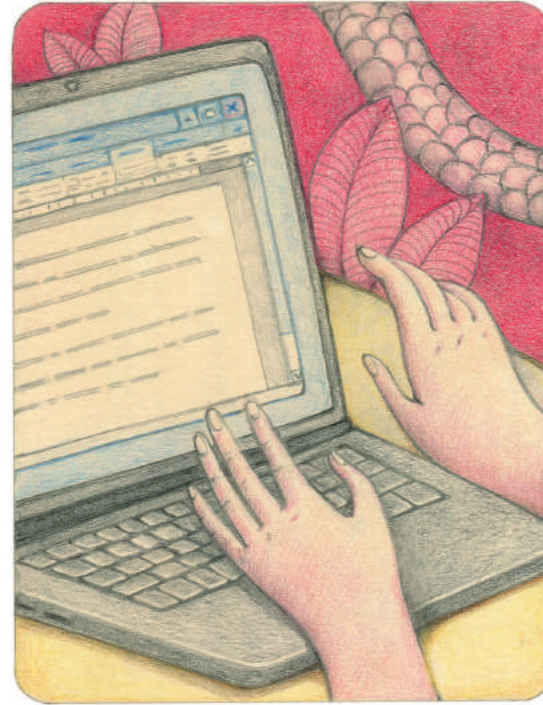
Fear hates flying

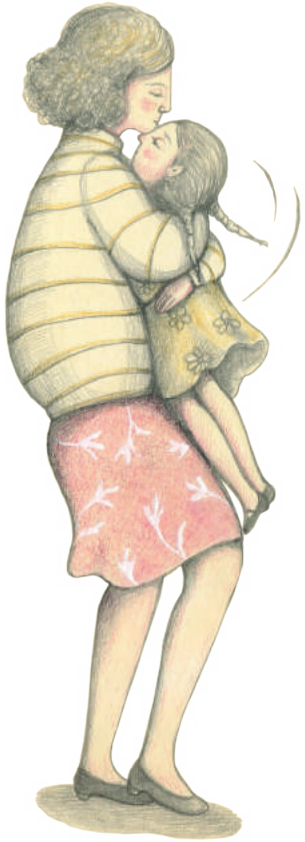


"Mom is back."

"Who are you talking about?" Anna asks with her eyes fixed on the screen and her fingers that fly fast on the keyboard. "About fear."

Anna's hands stop tapping. She looks up and looks at Irene's big grey eyes.
"Where is she?"
"Here", she answers with a thread of voice, pointing to an indefinite point on the belly.





"Come over her. I'm gonna squeeze you so it's off your head. Is it gone?"

"No, it's still here," Irene chirps with her finger on her belly.

"Let's get it out of your feet!"

Anna gets out of her chair and grabs her under the armpits, then gently shakes her from top to bottom.

"...so what?"

"Nothing."

"I have an idea! Let's slide it out of your ears. Just like at the sea this summer, when you heard the rustle of water that remained stuck inside," Mom proposes resolutely.

"Do you remember? Grandma told you to bend your head to the right and spin your left arm. Are you ready?"

The first experiences of anxiety

What gives you a stomachache?

Did you happen to feel like Irene? Did you manage to explain what your fear was? Did the person you spoke to understand what you meant? It's not always easy to express your emotions, Irene didn't succeed at all, but she used metaphors to try to explain herself.

Sometimes even a drawing, a story or a cartoon can help you understand that you feel just like that character. You can also start by telling mom or dad what would make you feel better at that moment and then tell, when you are ready, what gives you a stomachache

Facing fears together

Facing fears together!

by Chiara Carrelli, psychologist



"I'm scared, it sucks, I can't be trusted, my friends told me, I heard it on TV, Mom told me it's dangerous!"

These are the expressions that children bring back to me when they have to describe or explain the reasons for a fear. These expressions hide, perhaps to most people in a not so evident way, a confusion in recognizing the emotions and associate them with the right function. Thus fear is mistaken for sadness or disgust and the parental or adult reference model inevitably plays an important role in triggering emotional and behavioral reactions manifested as forms of avoidance. After all, fears are very often shared among children between the ages of 8 and 11: fear of the different, of the dark, of being alone of the judgment of others or of making a bad impression with friends and for this reason not feeling part of a group, of the illness or of the physical pain of their own or loved ones. Most of the time a focal group is represented by the negation of a less cheerful, more taciturn or thoughtful mood as if this were certainly the antechamber of a more serious problem on the horizon. Emotions, however, share the same course of beginning and end and are individually linked to a precise adaptive function. The stories created together with the author Luisa Carretti were born with the aim of helping the reader, child or parent, to identify themselves in the situation told and to find ideas for reflection and small suggestions for intervention through a light and accessible like that of the illustrated story. We have chosen to face the fear of the unknown and the night management by the child of such difficulty, the fear of the judgment of others in a school context and the first experiences of fear or anxiety felt by a child.

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