

“Very Short Stories”

by Paolo Silingardi

H2O



This story is hard to tell because **it's the story of a drop of water with no name**. It's really hard to tell the story of someone with no name, so we'll call our drop of water **H2O**. H2O was a drop of water just like all the others. The saying “like two drops of water” used to describe two things or people who are so similar that you can't tell them apart wasn't coined for nothing.

But H2O had a very strong sense of identity, along with an excellent memory, even better than that of an elephant, which, as everyone knows, never forgets anything. But that's another story.

No one knew where H2O kept her memory because she was small and transparent, but she remembered everything, from the day she was born until the day she arrived on the Earth. H2O had been born on a star far, far away billions and billions of years ago. She was made up of two parts of hydrogen and one of oxygen which had been expelled by a primordial star. They had met, become friends and been turned into ice by the cold air in space. Then they had grouped together with lots of other frozen drops of water to form a comet with a very long tail to travel through the Universe.

Then one day the comet entered the Earth's orbit and fell down to the ground. Fortunately this happened many years ago, so many that there was no one around to see it and be frightened by the noise it made. It might seem odd to you, but not to H2O, because this is how all the drops of water on our planet arrived on Earth from the most distant stars. After landing on Earth, H2O began doing the things that all drops of water do: running through streams to lakes or to the sea, climbing up to the sky in the form of vapour, condensing into huge clouds, moving lightly here and there, falling back down to Earth as water, snow or hail, then freezing, melting, flowing and evaporating again, up and down and round and round the planet all the time, without ever stopping. She had seen all kinds of things, from new life forms in the sea to the first

plants on dry land, from the birth of fish and then mammals, to the smallest reptiles and the dinosaurs, and finally the arrival of man. She hadn't missed a thing. The only thing missing was a name. As I'm sure you know, you can't give yourself a name. Someone else has to give you it and, in order to do so, they have to recognise you. But no matter how hard she tried H₂O couldn't make herself stand out from the other drops of water. She wasn't resigned to the fact though, because she was a very determined drop of water and every time she met someone, whether that someone was a person or an animal, she did her best to make herself recognisable. Now that you know, the next time you see a drop of water, on the palm of your hand, on the rim of a glass, on the tablecloth or hanging, momentarily suspended from a tap, **look at it closely. It just might be H₂O, still wandering around the Earth in search of a name. And you might have the chance to give her one.**

Colour me

