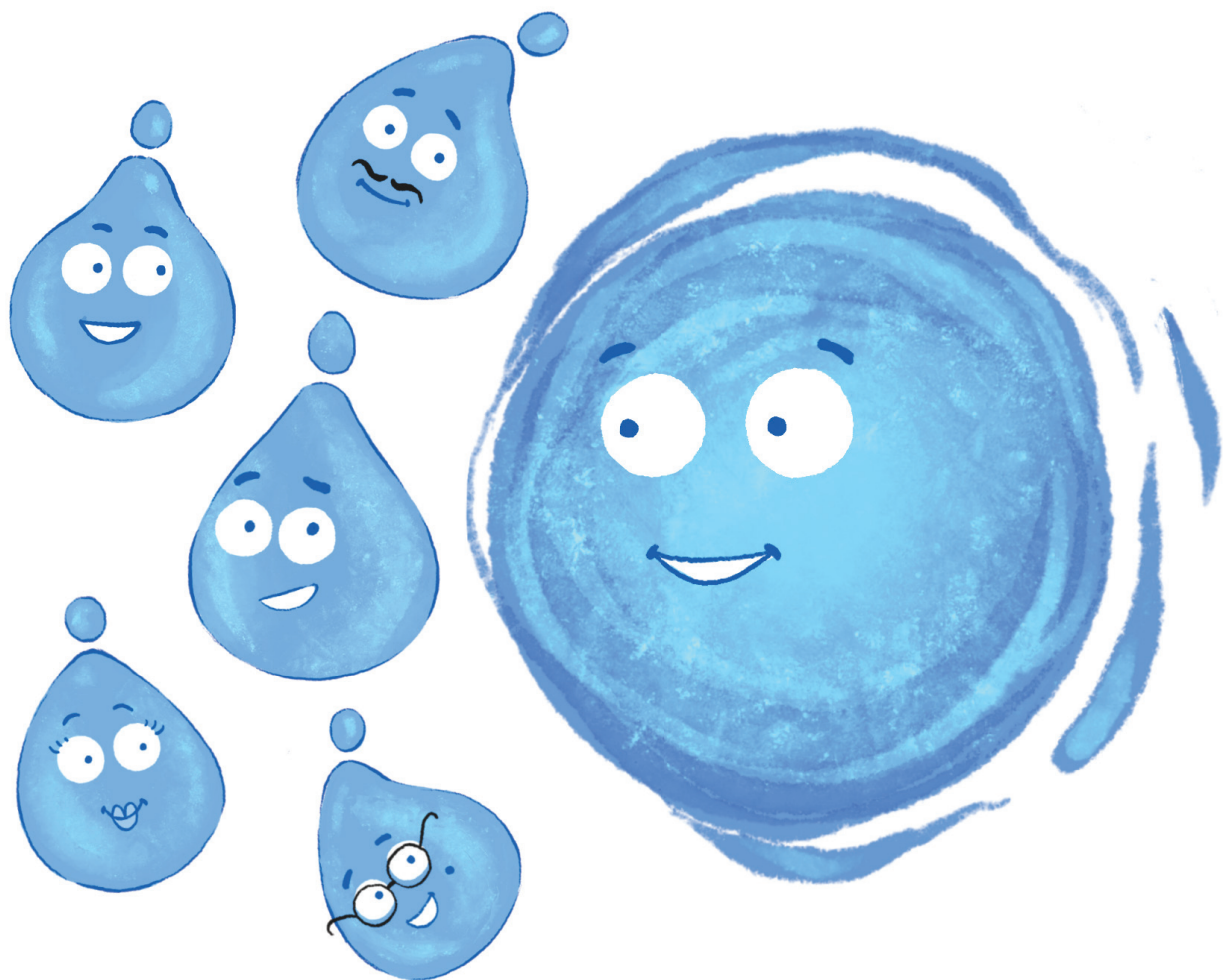


"Very Short Stories"

by Paolo Silingardi

Wasted drops of water



One day the water became fed up of being wasted, dripping from poorly maintained aqueducts and taps that hadn't been turned off tightly enough. So it decided that all the wasted drops would head for the same spot where, all together, they would hold a huge demonstration.

The announcement of the event said: "Big wasted water party!" and continued: "Long live water! Water is life!"

Word spread fast: from all the taps left dripping, from the faulty toilet cisterns, from the leaky pipes... Basically, all the water from every source of waste, be it a little trickle or a gushing stream, made arrangements to go to the party. The journey was the least of its worries because water knows how to move around in a thousand different ways: underground, filtering between the rocks, overground, running through rivers, streams and canals, and, above all, in the sky, hidden in the clouds.

No one knew who had organised the meeting though. Could it have been the Queen of the Wasted Drops who had brought them together, to teach the careless people who don't turn off their taps properly a lesson? Perhaps it had been a choreographer drop, who wanted to create a spectacular dance of the drops, like when children jump in puddles? Or maybe it was a meeting to give them a chance to flow all together again, saving all those lonely drops who would have otherwise evaporated under the sun?

As the date of the party grew nearer, the wasted drops became more and more excited. The taps in all the apartments began dripping like never before and a "plop plop" sound could be heard in every house during the night. The bathroom showers never stopped running, the irrigation systems in the gardens switched themselves on and the pipes leaked for apparently no reason whatsoever. The plumbers simply didn't know what to do and, all the while, water streamed excitedly from the toilet cisterns.

At last the great day came and all the wasted drops flowed together in the same place. Friends and family who hadn't seen each other for years kissed and hugged, and all the singing, dancing, speeches, chattering and joke-telling made the party an event to remember forever. The wasted drops did all the things that lots of wasted drops do when they finally find each other again.

When the party was over, peace and quiet reigned again... but not for long! Because the party venue, which had been kept secret right until the last minute, was the world's biggest desert and, from that day onwards, it was transformed into a lush oasis, full of plants and flowers, butterflies, bees, insects and lots of other animals.

Only humans were forbidden from entering the oasis, at least until they'd learned not to waste drops of water.

Colour me

