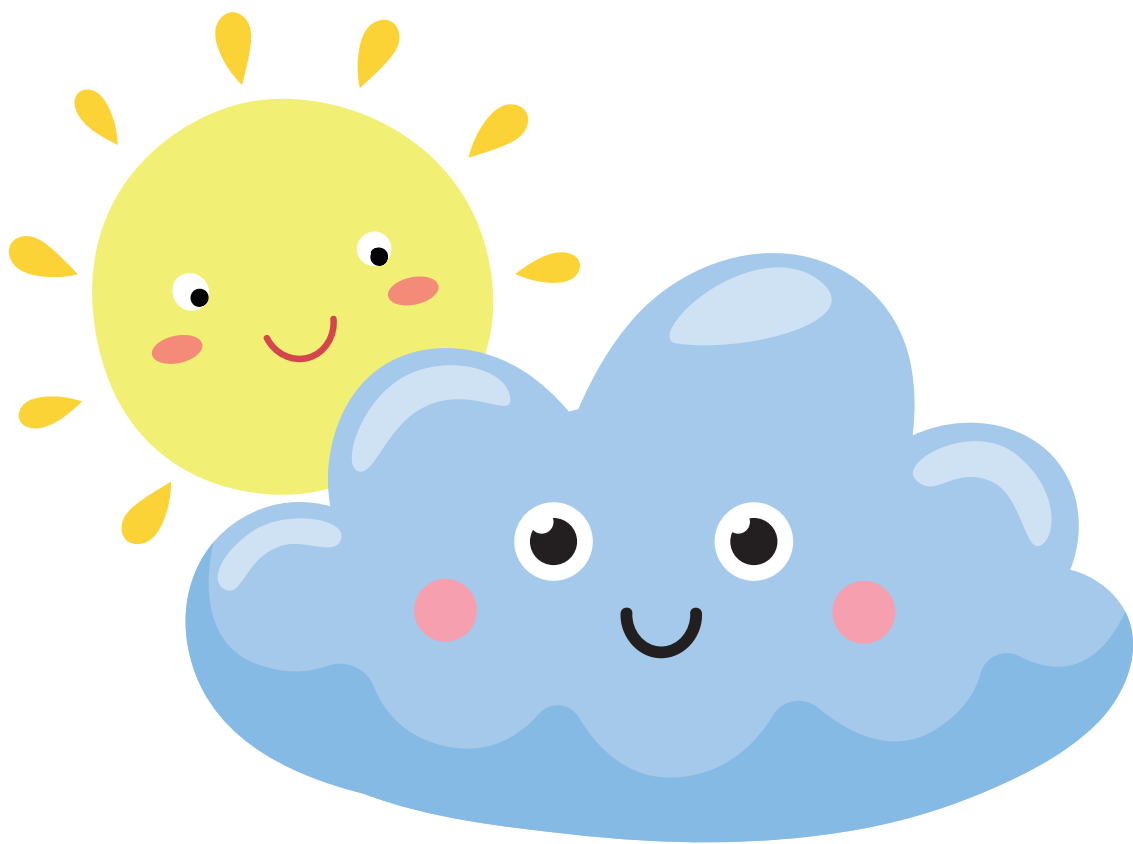


“Very Short Stories”

by Paolo Silingardi

The cloud that didn't want to rain



Sooner or later, all clouds have to rain. It's part of their nature. They form, weightlessly. Initially fine and white, they gradually become thicker and darker, until the wind pushes them together and they become so big that they start to rain. But **among all the clouds, there was one that didn't want to rain.** The other clouds would sail by, pushed by the wind, brushing her as they passed, and

say: **“Come with us, we’re going to have some fun. We’re going to rain cats and dogs”**. But she didn’t want to know and always kept well away from the storms, waiting until the rain eased off, all alone, until the sun came out again.

By this time, all the other clouds, who did their very best to push her to the centre of the storms, where it rained hardest, had heard about this, but she had become very adept at dodging them, twisting and turning, escaping all the invitations of the other clouds. It got to the point where she could no longer stand all their pushing, so **she decided to sail away and wander the skies alone.**

You'll undoubtedly have seen her, on beautiful sunny days, the **only cloud in a bright blue sky**. This went on for a very long time, until one day she settled over a field in which, way down below her, **a little boy and a farmer looked up at the sky**, holding hands and using their free hands to shield their eyes from the sun. She stopped for a moment, just to cast a bit of shade under the blazing sun, and without meaning to, because she was a very discreet cloud, overheard them talking to each other: **“Daddy, daddy, there's a cloud! Do you think it's going to rain?”** asked the child. **“I don't think so son, I know that cloud, it's the cloud that doesn't want to rain”** replied the farmer, looking at the dry field where the seeds of the next harvest were unable to sprout. **The cloud thought about it for a moment, then decided it was time to rain at last.**

