

“Very Short Stories”

by Paolo Silingardi

The Lake



I was told this story by a frog who enjoyed telling stories so much that no one ever had the heart to stop her. **It's the story of a lake and of the fish who lived in it.** Truth be told, **it wasn't a very big lake** and when you were standing on the shore you could see the other side clearly. **But for the fish who lived in it, the lake was endless.**

For them, it was The Lake, their entire world, the only one in the universe, and the sun and stars rotated around it. They were **a very clever species of fish**, cleverer than any other fish before them, and **they knew how to communicate with one another.** Quite how, the frog didn't tell me. They could do lots of other things too and they studied, shared their experience and developed their skills more and more.

Among them was a **really enterprising fish** that one day said: “We lay lots of eggs but very few survive. We must stop this horror.” No sooner said than done! **A team of engineer fish** patented a protective system to stop other animals from eating the fish eggs. The system worked perfectly and when the eggs hatched the fish population grew tremendously.

A mathematician fish worked out that, at that rate, the fish population would be increased fivefold every season. No one seemed worried, because the lake was endless.

The frog who, being an amphibian, lived both in the lake and on its shores, tried talking to them: “**Be careful my fishy friends, your lake isn’t endless and it isn’t the only one in the universe either. You can’t keep on growing like this.**” But no one listened to her. Lots of them said that the frog was only interested in eating their eggs, others that she was heartless and evil, and others again that they couldn’t trust someone who spent half their time in the water and the other half out of it.

Most of them simply thought that the lake was endless and they could grow as much as they liked. So they went on laying their eggs and watching them hatch into fry.

But the only thing that’s endless in this world is stupidity.

The frog didn’t get to the end of the story because all that talking had made her hungry. So she jumped into the water to snack on some caviar.

Colour me

