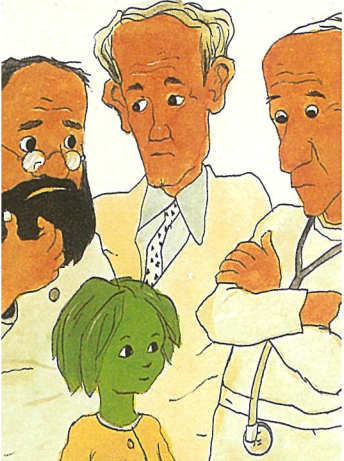




Portuguese Children's Books

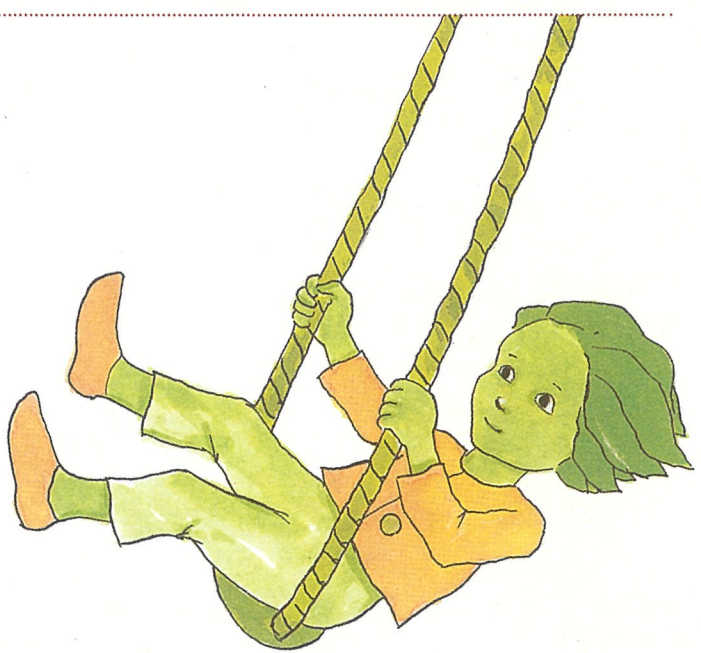
The present selection shows the vitality of a literature which is well worth discovering and, above all, being read by children and young people of different countries and cultures.



FROM
6
UPWARDS
text
illustration
publisher
pp.

A Menina Verde
The Green Girl

text **Luísa Ducla Soares**
 illustration **Miguel Branco**
 publisher Livros Horizonte, 1987
 pp. 15



Luísa Ducla Soares - Born in Lisbon in 1939. She has a degree in English and German Philology. She has been a translator and a journalist and is now principal adviser at the Portuguese National Library in Lisbon. As well as a specialist in children's literature, she is one of the most outstanding authors for children in Portugal. Since her first book in 1972, she has published more than 50 titles - including short stories, novels and poetry - for children and young people between the ages of three and fifteen. In 1996 she was awarded the Calouste Gulbenkian Prize for Children's Literature, in recognition of one of the most original and multifaceted oeuvres in this area.

Miguel Branco - Born in Castelo Branco in 1963, he works and lives in Lisbon. At the age of 24 he has illustrated this book by Luísa Ducla Soares. Nowadays he is an acclaimed and esteemed painter and sculptor. His works have already been exhibited in Germany, Holland, Belgium, France, Japan and the U.S.A.

The Green Girl

That girl was born green, green, green.
 'Might it be because I ate up all my greens?' the mother asked.
 'Might it be because I had lots of green tea?' the father asked.
 But the doctors had no idea. They'd never studied green girls before. They put her in the sun to see if she would redden. She became even greener. They put her in the shade to see if she would grow pale. She became even greener. Nobody was better at playing hide-and-seek than she was. In the green grass, in the green bushes, who could find her? [...] (At the seaside) her green body slithered in the green waves, her green hair streamed through the green seaweed, her green fingers played on the rocks like green crabs. (When she climbed trees) the birds themselves, as she passed through the green foliage, mistook her for the wind and made way for her. Thus she grew, beautiful and green.
 'As green as spring,' said the dreamers.
 'As a lettuce,' said the vegetarians.
 'As green as hope,' said those who believed that hope had a colour.
 [...]
 'As green as my football club's jersey!' said the president of the Green Football Club enthusiastically.
 They fell in love greenly and truly. They went to live in a green house, and, instead of a guard-dog, they bought a crocodile. Green.





Conto Estrelas Em Ti I Count The Stars in You: 17 poets write for children

FROM
8
UPWARDS

text
illustration
publisher
pp.

AAVV

João Caetano

Campo das Letras, 2001, 2nd ed.

72

This poetry anthology gathers 51 poems that are mostly about nature, plants and animals. But also about the affectionate relationship – illustrated by the irreverence and nonsense – of childhood with the world: love and longing, family and school and awareness and social criticism. The great charm and pull of this anthology lies, however, in the wonderful illustrations by João Caetano that not only (re)unite the poetic texts, but light them up, unfold them and talk to them and to us.



I Count the Stars in You

Where's the cat?

The donkeys play guitar,
The mice sing a tune,
The little girls have beards,
And I live on the moon.

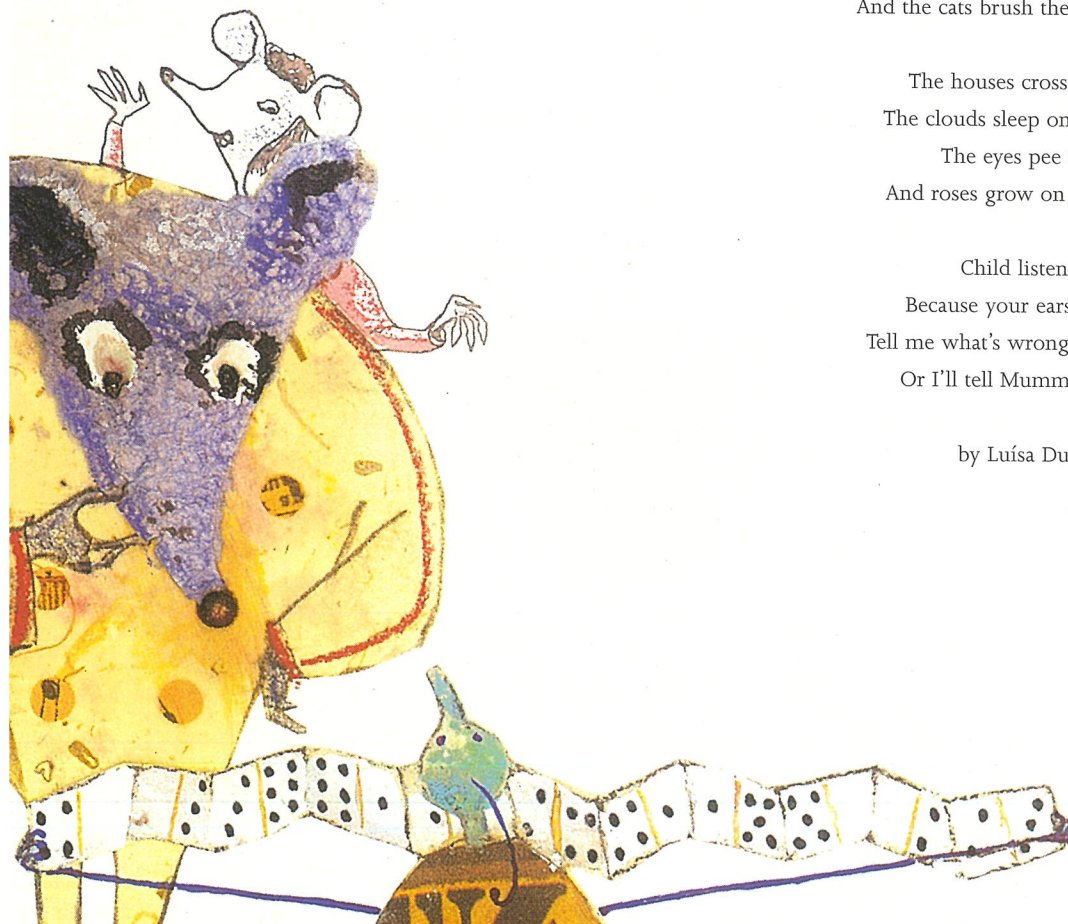
The sardines are woolly,
And all the hens have spines,
The cows give coca-cola
And chocolate's on the vines.

The pussy cats wear shoes,
Look at the serpent's tresses,
The flies can all speak French,
And the cats brush their dresses.

The houses cross the skies,
The clouds sleep on the land,
The eyes pee in the pot
And roses grow on my hand.

Child listening to me
Because your ears are blue,
Tell me what's wrong with this
Or I'll tell Mummy on you.

by Luísa Ducla Soares



FROM	
8	
UPWARDS	
text	José Saramago
illustration	João Caetano
publisher	Caminho, 2001
pp.	32

A Maior Flor do Mundo The World's Biggest Flower

José Saramago, one of the greatest Portuguese writers, talks to children about what it is like for him to write a story for them. Admitting to his own inability, he begins by saying that he never learned to write this kind of story. Even so, he tells a story that glides over the pages with very unique lightness and beauty, until the end, and is a challenge to the reader to re-invent an even more beautiful story and to re-tell it in even simpler words. Once upon a time, there was a boy and a flower...

The World's Biggest Flower

Children's stories must be written with very simple words, since children, because they're small, don't know many words and don't like to use complicated ones. I wish I could write such stories, but I'm sorry to say that I've never learned how. Besides knowing how to choose the right words, it's necessary to have a knack for storytelling and for clearly spelling everything out, with lots of patience – and patience is one thing I don't have, for which I apologize.

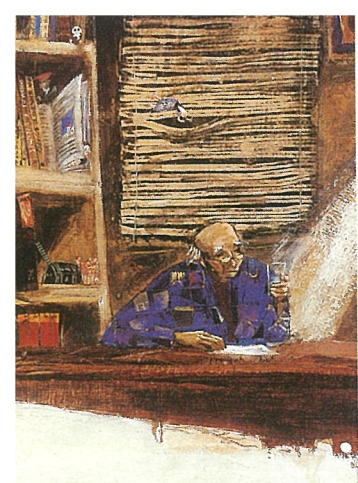
[...]

That was the story I wanted to tell. I'm sorry I don't know how to write children's stories. But now at least you know what my story would be, and you can tell it in a different way, with simpler words than mine, and perhaps one day you'll know how to write children's stories...

It may even happen that I'll one day read a more beautiful version of this same story, written by you who are reading me.

José Saramago – Born in Ribatejo in 1922. Published his first novel in 1947. Worked for a publishing house and was a literary critic in several publications at the time. As of 1976 he has lived solely of his literary work. In 1993 he moved to Lanzarote (Canary Islands, Spain). The importance of his literary work has been widely recognized, and he has received, among other prizes, the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1998.

João Caetano – Born in Mozambique in 1962, he got his degree at the Oporto School of Fine Arts. He has one of the most poetic registers in current Portuguese illustration, and his works have already been published in the Galician publisher Kalandraka. He received two special mentions from the jury for the Portuguese Illustration Prize in 1998 and in 2000.





FROM
8
UPWARDS

A Rapariga e o Sonho The Girl and Her Dreams

text **Luísa Dacosta**

illustration **Cristina Valadas**

publisher Asa, 2001

pp. 42

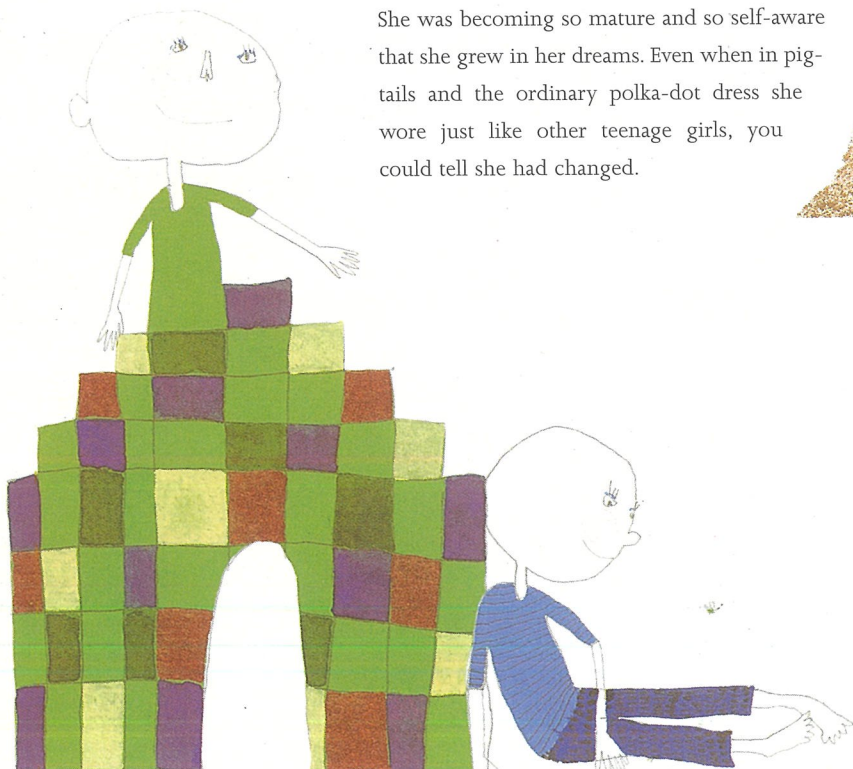
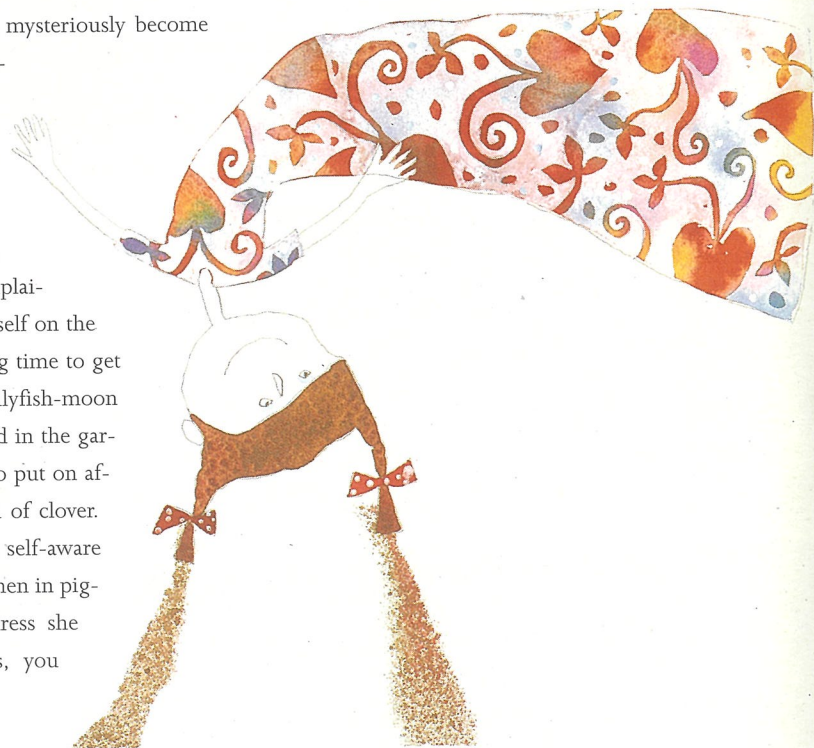
This is the story of a girl and her dreams. In this book, and in this author's work in general, the dream has the power to transform reality, or, in other words, the dream itself creates a new reality, as it is the means to reach absolute freedom, which is only possible through itself, and to thusly learn about something larger than life. The dreams, also stories of fun and games with "little invisible creatures that rain from the sun, moon and stars" take place and the little girl grows inside and recognizes her own self in herself.

Luísa Dacosta – Born in 1927 she lives in Oporto, where she teaches and writes fiction for both adults and children. Her keen, sometimes strict style is marked by strong poetic surroundings, where she tells stories of friendship and loneliness. Among other prizes, she was awarded the Calouste Gulbenkian Prize for Children's Literature in 1994 and 1996.

Cristina Valadas – Born in Oporto in 1965, she has a degree in Fine Arts and a post graduation in Design. She has received several awards, among which is Almada Negreiros Prize, in 1997. She is also an acclaimed illustrator, and has received the Gulbenkian Award for Children's Literature in 2000 with *Herbário.*, written by Jorge Sousa Braga.

The Girl and her Dreams

Sometimes she would suddenly and mysteriously become quiet and sad. Then the cat and the invisible little creatures would converse. The cat, which loved to be petted and cuddled by her, felt neglected and complained to one of the imaginary beings, who patiently and enigmatically explained that she was growing up by herself on the inside. At other times she took a long time to get dressed, assisted by her nanny, a jellyfish-moon that kept an eye on a certain ladybird in the garden, a living brooch that she liked to put on after getting dressed behind a curtain of clover. She was becoming so mature and so self-aware that she grew in her dreams. Even when in pig-tails and the ordinary polka-dot dress she wore just like other teenage girls, you could tell she had changed.



Como Outro Qualquer Like Any Other

Ana Saldanha

José Miguel Ribeiro

Caminho, 2001

203

FROM
8 to 10
UPWARDS

text

illustration

publisher

pp.

In the everyday life of a major city we meet Barbara, the only child of a middle class family. Very pretty, diligent and well-behaved, this child seems to have no inner drama, even though she lives in total emotional loneliness. Even at school. She is alone in an apparently normal emotional universe, but she is terribly ill. That is why the discovery of the magic doorknob in the small door at school will change her life. It allows her to ask for such impossible things as the emotional re-balance of her world. Barbara's anguish begins when the school is renovated and the doorknob disappears.

Like Any Other

(Bárbara, the protagonist, is an eight year old. She is at the book club meeting at her primary school. She believes that a special door handle in her school has magical powers.)

'The wolf. What colour was the wolf?' the teacher asks, quickly, to avoid yet another interruption.

'Purple!' says one of the boys, forgetting the rules for answering questions.

'I coloured it pink,' Gustavo confesses.

'Gustavo, didn't you hear me?' the teacher scolds. 'Anyway, who's ever heard of a pink wolf? Honestly! Everybody knows there's no such thing as a pink wolf!' The teacher turns to Rui. 'Or purple,' she says.

[...]

'But in the picture in the book, it's purply pink,' Gustavo argues, in a plaintive voice. 'I know it is. I copied all the pictures and coloured them with my new felt pens.'

'The book's illustrations are neither here nor there, child! What do the book's illustrations matter? Well?'

[...]

'Miss, but the word isn't magic either,' Gustavo replies. 'And in the story it's magic. And my grandpa said...'

'Right!' The teacher is flustered. 'Right,' she says. 'Right, who knows the answer to...'

'Me, me!'

'No, me, me!'

'Me, me!'

Arms shoot up all over the classroom, fists clenched like claws.

'You, Miguel, come on. What colour...'

'It was blue!'

Miss Flávia is beginning to lose patience. 'For goodness' sake, what does it take...' she says and there are bursts of laughter in the classroom. Miss Flávia sounds like a poet. 'Children, please!'

There are rules for answering questions like this one she's trying to ask, because the right reply entitles you to special privileges.

'Right, I'll ask the question again,' the teacher says, 'and this time, only those who're very quiet and with their hands up get to answer. Right. What colour was the wolf's coat?'

Some arms are raised, here and there, some rigid, others waving impatiently.

It has to work, Bárbara thinks. If the door handle really is magic, it should work now.

'You answer then, Dorinda.'

'The wolf's coat... the wolf's coat...'

'I know! I know!'

'Woooh...' Fernando howls.

'Silence, children! Dorinda, answer the question, go on.'

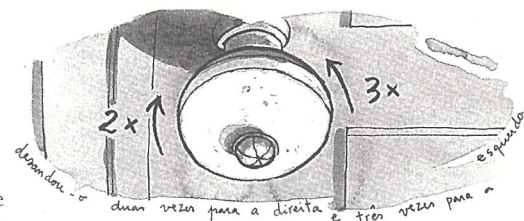
With her arm still raised, a flagpole, Dorinda hesitates. 'The wolf's coat... the wolf's coat is light grey, because the little boy said to the wolf, he said, Mister Wolf...'

'That's enough,' the teacher interrupts. 'You've got it right,' says Miss Flávia, and the toothless smile of Dorinda fades.

The door handle really is magic. It didn't work with Gustavo, but it worked with Dorinda.



Ana Saldanha - Born in Oporto in 1959, and now living in the U.K. She has a PhD from Glasgow University on translation theory and Rudyard Kipling's work for children. Her voice is one of the most distinctive in the panorama of fiction for young people in Portugal today. Providing an insight into the inner world of young people shows us why adults, in their hurried lives, are oblivious to this world, it falls to the reader to realize the losses in a world made by adults to conform to their image and dimensions, when faced with the world vision, luminous but fragile, of young people.



FROM 10 UPWARDS
text
illustration
publisher
pp.

As Botas do Sargento The Sergeant's Boots

Vasco Graça Moura

Paula Rego

Quetzal, 2001

46

The harmonious union of literature and painting produced this precious book, which will immediately attract younger readers. The written words follow and interact perfectly with the drawings of one of Portugal's most famous painters (Paula Rego), without one overshadowing the other, and it highlights the suggestive exchange between the arts and proposes numerous games for each person's imagination. Adélia will ever be the little girl who put on those boots that made her dance continuously and an image of a painting representing a ball on the beach on a moonlit night.



Vasco Graça Moura – Born in Oporto in 1942, he studied Law in Lisbon. Practiced as a lawyer and held several public offices, and is currently a member of the European Parliament. As a writer, he has published over 60 books in the areas of poetry, fiction, essays and literary review. His activity as a translator is also very important. He has been honoured several times for his poetic works, but it was his translation of Dante that earned him one of the most prestigious literary awards in Portugal – Prémio Pessoa in 1995. “*As Botas do Sargento*” is his first children’s book.

Paula Rego – Born in Lisbon on January 26th 1935 and residing in the UK. She is a great painter and one of the most prominent figures in Portuguese plastic arts. She has received several awards, both in Portugal and abroad, she is a reader at the Slade School of Fine Art and an invited associated artist at the National Gallery.

The Sergeant's Boots

Adélia made me promise not to tell this to anyone. People around here don't like her, they think she's mean and wicked and loves to pluck geese and kill pigs. But I like her a lot. She's always very patient with me and explains really cool things that only she knows. So don't say anything to Lena or Alda. I'm only telling you because you're a close friend.

Francisca shrugged her shoulders. She was used to Catarina's fantasies. And since she didn't have anything planned for the next day, she thought it would be lots of fun to go to the dance. A lot more fun than to finish the book which her mother wanted her to read to practise her French and which was called The Red Shoes. The weather was quite nice and it would be lovely to see people dancing tomorrow under a full moon. But her parents would never let her stay out late and have fun next to the cliff with friends her own

age plus grown-ups. They thought that a thirteen-year-old girl wasn't ready to do things that grown-ups do. [...]

Francisca tried to read a few more pages of her book. Lena and Alda decided to take a swim in the water tank of Lameira and to pick some pomegranates on the way. As for Catarina, she went home, drank a glass of milk and tried to peek through the keyhole of Adélia's bedroom door to make sure the maid was resting. The room was empty.



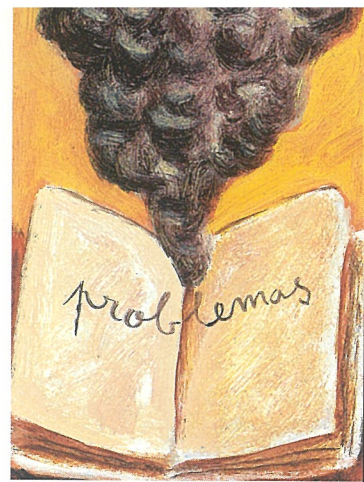
Pequeno Livro da Desmatemática

A Little Unmathematics Book

Manuel António Pina
Pedro Prouença
Assírio e Alvim, 2001
59

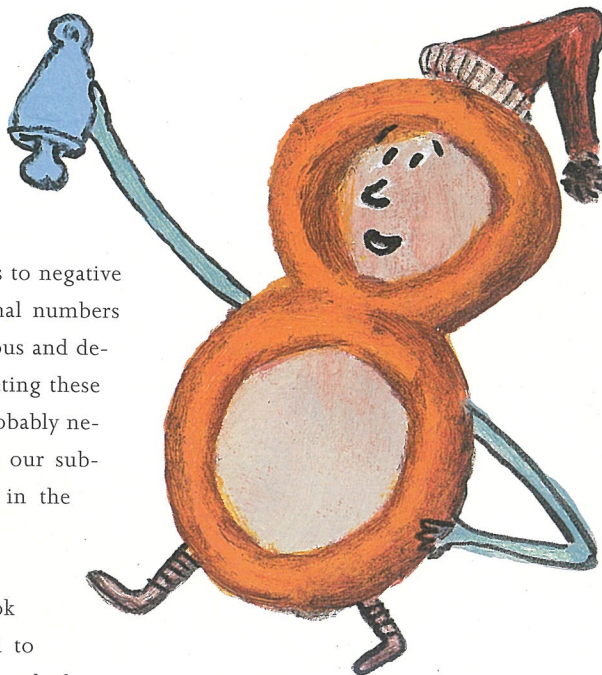
FROM
10
UPWARDS
text
illustration
publisher
pp.

As the title says, this story is a first and amusing introduction to the fascinating world of numbers, where each number tells its own story: how, where and when it was born, why it was born and its role in the Universe of mathematical sciences. It may be a great beginning for a more abstract kind of thinking, as the author takes apart difficult concepts such as the "mysterious π ", the irrational numbers and the imaginary numbers in a fun and easy way.



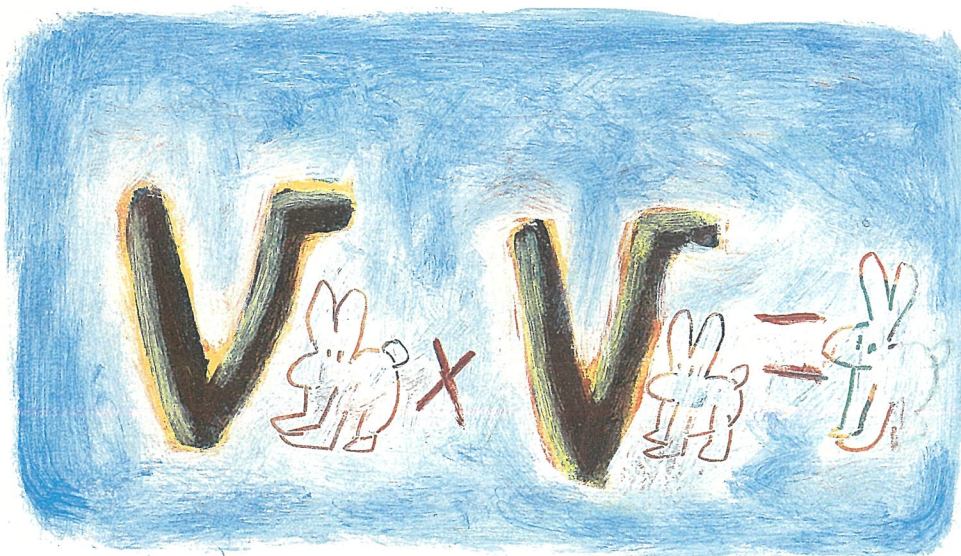
A Little Unmathematics Book

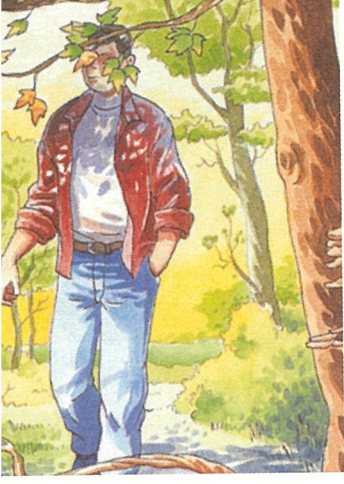
So let me introduce you to my friend zero (considered worthless by some, but how wrong they are!) as well as to negative numbers, imaginary numbers and irrational numbers (what a crazy name!), and to that mysterious and delicious character called π . Maybe after meeting these fellows, you'll want to meet others. You probably never counted (and counting is essential to our subject!) on finding so many curious sorts in the world of mathematics. I thought of including prime numbers, fractions and all the strange figures of geometry, but the book would have been very big, and I wanted to write a little book. Besides, I looked at the clock and saw it was getting late (time deserves a book all its own!). I'll save them, perhaps, for next time.



Manuel António Pina - Born in 1943, he studied Law at the University of Coimbra, and has worked since 1971 as a professional journalist. He is one of the few authors whose work is harmoniously divided between poetry and the so-called "children's literature". Many theatre productions, television and cinema programs were inspired in his work, and several records were published with musical versions of his texts. He has been distinguished with several awards, amongst them the "White Ravens" Mention in Germany ("Os Dois Ladrões"), the Gulbenkian Prize for the Best Book Published in Portugal in 1986/1987 ("O Inventão"), the Special Mention by the Jury of the Pier Paolo Vergerio European Prize from the University of Padua, ("O Inventão") and the Portuguese Centre for Theatre for Children and Young People Prize, 1988 (for his work as a whole).

Pedro Prouença - Born in Angola in 1962. Degree in painting from the Lisbon School of Fine Arts. He has exhibited his work regularly since 1983 in Portugal and abroad, and is one of the most renown painters in his generation. He has illustrated poetry books, and also essays and works of fiction.





FROM	10
UPWARDS	
text	Ana Maria Magalhães e Isabel Alçada
illustration	Carlos Marques
publisher	Caminho, 2000
pp.	220

Diário Cruzado de João e Joana The Crossed Letters of João and Joana

A juvenile "novel" in epistolary style of letters exchanged between two friends during the summer holidays, where the passing of time is also felt in the hard transition from adolescence to adulthood, in becoming aware of certain harsher realities, in how hard and important some choices are, and in learning about not-so-easy human relations. This narrative strategy allows the author to focus on many experiences and to approach several subjects that, in one way or another, intersect each other: parents/children relations, divorces, love, friendship and the construction of a sense of life.

Ana Maria Magalhães / Isabel Alçada

Born in 1946 and in 1950, respectively. With degrees in Philosophy, they both have a large pedagogic and writing experience. Besides being the writers of over thirty titles of detective collection "Uma Aventura" [An Adventure] (a true editorial phenomenon almost twenty years old), they have dedicated themselves to a meritorious and fascinating diffusion of the Portuguese History, both with fictions of "Viagens no Tempo" [Travels in Time] collection, as well as juvenile books written together with well-known historians as José Mattoso. Their books are concerned with forming good reading habits and have contributed significantly to the development of reading among young people in Portugal.

The Crossed Letters of João and Joana

Dear Joana:

I still don't know your holiday address, but I absolutely must write you today. I experienced something completely unexpected, or to be more exact, a series of unexpected things, and if I don't tell you everything, down to the tiniest detail, I'll burst. But I wish I could picture where you are now, so far away. On the beach? In a fantastic swimming pool? On the terrace of a house that looks out onto the sea? Call me as soon as you can so that we can describe to each other our respective scenarios and make our conversations in writing more vivid. In the meantime sit down, relax, and get ready. I'm going to start at the very beginning and tell the facts in the order they happened, so that you can follow me step by step. Just be patient and listen. Or rather, read.

[...]

It's great to have a friend like you I can tell absolutely everything to. If we were brother and sister, we wouldn't be any closer. (Or else we'd probably always be bickering.)

Write soon.

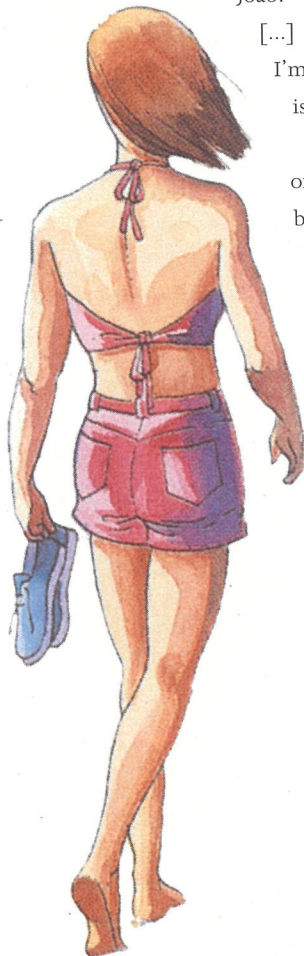
A big hug,
João

João:

[...]

I'm in the dining room of the beach house that belonged to my grandparents and is now my Aunt Rosarinho's. The furniture and dishes are the same, and on the wall there's still an oil painting that I've always loved. It depicts a basket of fruit on top of a white tablecloth, and on the tablecloth there's a pomegranate with bright red seeds that's exactly where it would be right after falling from the basket and breaking open. I vividly remember the day when my grandfather lifted me in his arms so that I could see the painting up close and how I longed to taste the pomegranate. These memories give me some peace of mind. It's a good thing I came here, and it will be good for me to go bed now and sleep. I'll call you as soon as I can, and tomorrow I'll try to go to the post office to send you this letter.

A hug (now much calmer) from
Joana





A História de uma Alma The Story of a Soul

Álvaro Magalhães

José Pedro Costa

Asa, 2000

283

FROM
10
UPWARDS

text

illustration

publisher

pp.

This is one of the titles from the "Triângulo J" [Triangle J] series, one of the more popular and successful ones with the younger Portuguese readers, with over ten published volumes so far. This particular story is quite up to date, and plays to the tastes and interests with which the younger people identify today, as it has supernatural undertones and involves haunted souls looking for their eternal rest, and a group of young people yearning for adventure, who discover confrontation with otherness.

The Story of a Soul

This was it then. There was no monstrous creature in the freezing cold room. Nor in the cupboard. Just the soul of Mary Celeste who, despite her name, hadn't managed to find the way to heaven.

The cold became unbearable, especially for Joel who was trembling like a leaf. And it wasn't only the cold. His knees were knocking, his teeth chattering.

Suddenly he went as pale as someone about to perish in a storm at sea.

– What's the matter? – asked Jorge.

– I don't know. My head feels empty. I think I'm going to faint.

Cold sweat ran down his face.

– You'd better sit down – said Jorge as he tried to take him over to the bed, but Joel resisted, uncomfortable. He didn't want to sit on the bed or on any of those chairs if they were the bed and chairs of that soul.

– It's better now. I'm fine – he said, wiping the sweat away.

– I have to hurry – said the Voice – but first lock the door.

Jorge turned the key in the lock and Joel took the opportunity to speak.

– Why us? – he wanted to know – Why have you chosen us?

– Who else is there who could do what I am going to ask you to do? – said the Voice

The servants are so faithful to their master that they'd never steal a book to throw in a well.

The voice fell silent. So did they. Now they knew what the soul wanted of them. To steal a book and throw it down a well. Wasn't that just what the girl in black had been going to do?

Jorge was suddenly interested and became attentive.

– If you don't do it by Monday, it'll no longer be possible to do it and I'll never be able to find my way.

– Just a moment – said Jorge.

– Not so loud. Speak more quietly. I know what you're saying even if you're just moving your lips. And out there they don't need to hear you.

– I'd like to know – murmured Jorge. – what's so special about that book?

– It's mine. It was given to me by Samuel Lobo, my husband, on the day we met. He swore that it belonged to me and that it would go to the grave with me. That's how it was. The book was buried with me and was with me until recently when my husband repented of his generosity and opened up the tomb to snatch the book out of my hands. My body turned to dust immediately but even this didn't move him. And now my evolution as a soul has come to a stop. If, as he wants, he publishes this book I shall never be at peace. I'll never be free of the memories that keep me earthbound and prevent my astral development. I shall be wandering eternally in this inferior state of spirit; of that there's no doubt.

– But why? – Jorge wanted to know. – What's so special about those words?

– They're magical words of love and enchantment that come from the beyond time. I have read them so often and with such passion that they make my blood run. In this world there are no words; we have to let go of them or they become a terrible weight for us. Words bring with them the smell and taste of things, of feelings. The memory of our lives vanishes but the weight of those words keeps me in earthly orbit, in a no-man's-land between two worlds. They are the remains of being human and they won't let me die completely. And it is this remnant of being human that allows me to communicate with you.

The Voice fell silent for a few instants. It was clear that speaking used up energies and tired her somewhat. The two boys waited in silence for her to get her breath back.

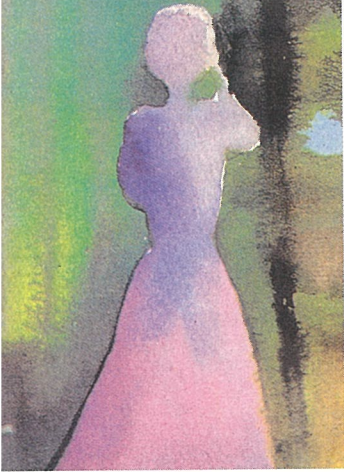
– Something strange vibrates inside me when someone says those words. Now I have neither hunger nor thirst, I have no stomach, I have no heart, I don't feel anything, but words of passion make me tremble as if I still had a body like yours – they bring back the warmth of existence.



Álvaro Magalhães – Born in Oporto in 1951. He started by publishing poetry in the early 80s. In 1982 he published his first children's book, and has built up a distinctive body of work in this area, which includes stories, poetry, narratives for young people and plays. Considered one of the most important writers of his generation, he has received several awards from the Portuguese Writers' Association and the Ministry of Culture, as well as by the IBBY which has just distinguished "O Limpa-palavras e outros poemas" ["The Word-Cleaner and other poems"] as the best text published in 2000 and 2001, and has added it to the "Honour List" for the 2002 Hans Christian Anderson Prize.

José Pedro Costa – Born in Angola in 1963, studied photography and design. He lives in Oporto and works as a graphic designer and illustrator. Clearly influenced by cartoons and the cinema, he is one of the most interesting illustrators of his generation.





FROM	10	UPWARDS
text		
illustration	Natividade Correia	
publisher	Figueirinhas, 2001, 33 rd. ed.	
pp.	77	

A Fada Oriana The Fairy Named Oriana

Created by one of the most loved and more highly regarded Portuguese poets, this fairy, whose task is to guard a forest and all those who live in it, falls victim to her own charm. Dazzled by the beauty of her reflection in the river, she neglects her tasks as a good fairy, and the forest will never be the same. Once her magic status is lost, Oriana must strive to repair her mistakes, in order to recover her charmed powers as a fairy. A magical book that defies the children's imagination with the wonders of the adventures and the charm of words and gestures.

Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen

– Born in Oporto in 1919, she graduated in Lisbon in Classic Philology and is one of the most important Portuguese poets. She won the Camões Prize in 1999, the most important prize for Portuguese language, awarded to the authors whose work is considered of great importance for the literary inheritance. Light, verticality and magic are ever present in her work: whether poetry or her important children's books, initially dedicated to her five children, but that turned into a classic of children's literature in Portugal, and marked several generations of young readers.

The Fairy Named Oriana

"It's already night! How fast the time went by!"

And she remembered that it was time to visit her friend the Poet. The Poet was the only grown-up Oriana could appear to. Because he was different from other grown-ups.

The Poet lived in the middle of the forest, in a very tall and very old tower covered with ivy, wistaria and creeping roses. Oriana flew over the trees through the first blue of night. The tower door was open, but Oriana rode on a breeze through the window. The creeping roses shook and danced when she arrived.

"You're late today," said the Poet.

"I was leaning over the river to see my reflection," answered Oriana. "I'm late because I was enchanted by my beauty."

"Oriana," begged the poet, "make the night enchanted."

Oriana touched the night with her magic wand and the night became enchanted.

And the poet said:

"What you bring me is much more than beauty. There are many pretty girls in the world. But only you, because you're a fairy, can make the night enchanted."

And Oriana sat on the edge of the window and told the wondrous stories of the wind's horses, the cave with dragons, and Saturn's rings. The Poet recited for her his verses, which were clear and bright like stars. Then they were both quiet as the Moon rose in the sky. Until a distant bell chimed twelve times – midnight! – and Oriana said good-bye to the Poet.



O Rapaz de Bronze

The Bronze Youth

Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen

Júlio Resende

Salamandra, 1996, 16th. ed.

39

FROM

10

UPWARDS

text

illustration

publisher

pp.

Night is the day of all beautiful things: of all the flowers in the gardens, of the distant and static statues, which no one notices, of the purest dreams of children. Night brings the world alive. A world no one knows, where the "gladioluses" throw extravagant parties and the children who see all occupy the spaces left empty by the statues. In the "country of the night" all is possible, and no one will ever be able to say, after reading this book, that fantastic and extraordinary things aren't also real.

The Bronze Youth

Because the night is different from the day.

During the day the flowers are stuck to the earth and can't move. But the night frees the flowers. At night the flowers dance and walk around. By day the garden was ruled by the lady of the house and by the gardener. But at night it was ruled by the Bronze Youth.

Between the rose garden and the park, in a green and shady, solitary place, there was a small garden covered by the branches of the tall trees that surrounded it. In the middle of that garden was a round pond always full of leaves. In the middle of the pond there was a very tiny island of pebbles where ferns grew. And in the middle of that island there stood a statue of a youth made of bronze.

By day the Bronze Youth couldn't move but had to remain very still, always in the same position, because he was a statue. But at night he talked, moved, walked and danced, and he was the one who ruled over the gardens, the park, the pine grove, the orchards and the fields.

And all the trees and all the animals and all the plants obeyed him, because he was lord of the garden and king of the night.



Júlio Resende - He is one of the great names in Portuguese painting. Born in Oporto on October 23rd 1917, he has been a teacher at the school of fine arts and has made sets and models for theatre plays, dancing and cinema. He has also illustrated children's books and comics.



FROM
12
UPWARDS

Se Perguntarem por Mim Digam que Voei If Someone Asks for Me Tell Them I've Flown

text	Alice Vieira
illustration	Catarina Fonseca
publisher	Caminho, 2001, 4th.ed.
pp.	198

The stories in this book spread over several generations, and are narrated in an interwoven way that makes reading them a challenge, as it increases the reading capabilities of the younger readers, by demanding more attention in certain more complex narrative sequences, and a greater ability to comprehend certain rural environments: trails of beliefs and eon-old gestures that are perpetuated in time, connected to an inevitable hardship directly linked to the rural condition.

Alice Vieira – Born in Lisbon in 1943. She did her degree in Germanic Philology and began her career as a journalist in 1964. Besides her extensive writing, divided between narrative fiction and plays, she has also published adaptations of traditional stories from Portugal and Macao and an anthology of popular poetry for children. In 1994 she received the major Calouste Gulbenkian Children's Literature Award for her collected work and, in 1996 and 1998 she was the Portuguese candidate for the Hans Christian Andersen Award. Several of her works were selected as distinguished examples of writing for children and young people for the International Children's Library in Munich.

Catarina Fonseca – Born in Lisbon in 1969. Got her degree in Modern Languages and Literature and her masters at Joseph Conrad. She always loved to draw, but is entirely self-taught. She has illustrated two books by Alice Vieira. She is currently a journalist and has published 5 novels.

If Someone Asks for Me Tell Them I've Flown

– Sing the whole thing, Demétria! – then asked Piedade.

– It's very long – she said.

– We've got plenty of time – insisted Piedade.

– Don't interrupt me then.

– I won't interrupt you.

And Demétria, in a low murmur, her hands seeking out the all-powerful berries and herbs in the damp earth, engaged upon an endless story about castles and fountains and old barges, moons and tigers, roots which hid the sorrows of the world, crossroads and bridges with strange names, until her voice ended up by merging with the sound of the breeze in the leaves of the poplars and willows. Piedade loved hearing her and allowed herself to be carried away by the magic of the words and, when she got home, though exhausted and almost asleep on her feet, she would still write some of them down in her notebooks. Piedade liked words in the same way she liked people. And she was certain that it was in them and not in the berries, roots, seeds or grasses that the salvation of the world lay. But she never said this to Demétria as she didn't want to annoy her.

– Are we going to stay much longer? – asked Letícia.

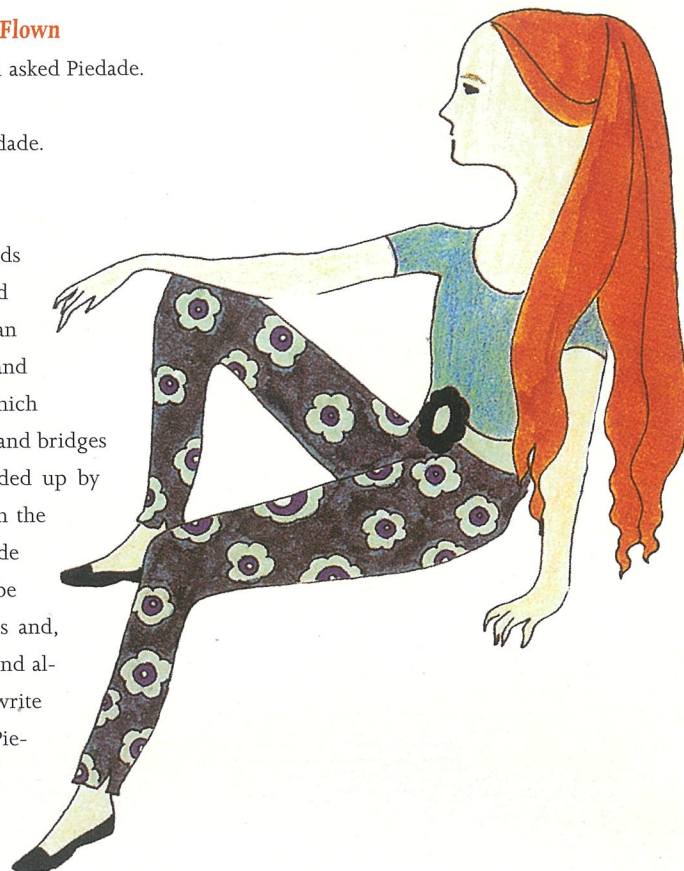
Demétria looked at her as if she'd just woken up. Then she got up and said:

– Let's go. It's still a long way to the stream.

– Aren't you tired? Only yesterday you had a temperature, and Carlota said that there are some days when you don't eat anything and you have nightmares.

[...]

Demétria's voice was weak. They went on walking. Every now and then Demétria would look up at the moon, smiling and murmuring.



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