The Friendly Crocodile

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The Friendly Crocodile

El Cocodrilo Amigable

By Katia G. Karadjova
Translated by Lilianet Brintrup
Illustrations by Emily Fernandes

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I wrote this poem for my younger son, Darian, when he was 5 years old.
In a small and sunny lake lives a Crocodile. Every day he tries to make a big and happy smile.
En un pequeño y asoleado lago vive un cocodrilo.
Cada día ensaya una alegre y gran sonrisa.
Everyone was so afraid of the way he grins. Even birds would fly away to the tallest trees.
Todos tienen miedo
de esta amplia sonrisa
y al árbol más alto
las aves vuelan de prisa.
Once he saw a greenish turtle sliding from below and he made a little rattle just to say “Hello.”
Una vez vio a una tortuga verdosa deslizándose desde abajo, y Croco agitándose como un renacuajo dijo sólo “hola” con una sonrisa gozosa.
She immediately deadened in her turtleback and remained in there hidden, sinking like a rock.
La tortuga desapareció
y en su caparazón se refugió
y allí permaneció escondida
como una roca, hundida.
Our Croco, sad and lonely, had to move away. He decided to practice smiling every single day.

Solitario y triste nuestro Croco tuvo que irse. Pero decidió un día sonreír cada día.
So no one will be afraid of his dreadful face.
And they all will come to play – turtles, fish and snakes.
Así, ya nadie tendrá más temor de su espantosa cara y todos vendrán a jugar con amor - el pez, la serpierte y la tortuga.
Katia G. Karadjova, PhD, is the College Librarian for Natural Resources & Sciences at Humboldt State University (HSU), California, USA. She was born and raised in Bulgaria, Europe. Katia’s doctoral work was on culturally grounded approaches to Information Literacy understanding to better serve specific groups. She has also an educational and work background in Physics and Documentary Filmmaking and speaks several languages. Katia is an active scholar and her areas of scholarly research and publications include: Information Literacy, International librarianship through the lens of human rights & travel literature, and Mindfulness & Contemplative pedagogy. She is also a poet and a fiction writer and has published several books, including books of poetry, a book of collected and translated Gypsy fairy tales, and The World “The way we saw it” book series. In her free time Katia enjoys photography, racquet sports, and traveling.
Emily Fernandes was a student at Arcata High School and the Arcata Arts Institute. She has grown up in a rural Northern California coastal community. Emily has been drawing since she was a child and enjoys nature and spending time with her friends. In 2017 she was presented with a first place painting award by the Redwood Arts Association and in addition received a certificate of commendation by the Humboldt County Superintendent of Schools for her work. Emily is planning on pursuing a career in the arts. At the moment, she is a student at the California College of Arts at San Francisco, CA.

Lilianet Brintrup, PhD, nació en Chile y reside en Estados Unidos. Enseña Lengua Española y Literatura Hispanoamericana en la Universidad de Humboldt en California. Obtuvo su Doctorado en The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Su escritura se centra en poesía y en investigación literaria de viajes y de importantes viajeros del Siglo XIX, de los cuales ha escrito más de 45 artículos, publicados en distintas revistas especializadas. Es autora de 4 poemarios sobre viajes y viajeros: En tierra Firme, Amor y Caos, El Libro Natural, Quiebres en California y Chile, en particular (inédito) y de Crónicas de sus propios viajes. Ha dado numerosos Recitales de poesía. Ha sido presidenta y organizadora de varios Congresos Internacionales de Poesía y de Literatura de Viaje: Estados Unidos, España, Chile, Hungría, Canadá, China, Marruecos, México, Alemania, Rumanía.