

## *Marine nativity*

*For months, no years now, God had been repeating it, "It simply isn't right, I really do have to make them understand!"*

*He was angry with people polluting the rivers, burning down the woods He had so lovingly given them, dirtying the sea He had created with such imagination and care and making the air unbreathable: that clear, crisp air He had embraced them all in one by one.*



*"They'll all die," He told himself, "then they'll learn!"*

*To highlight the damage caused by human selfishness and greed, He arranged for very hot, indeed sweltering summers, but everyone, or at least all those who could, resorted to air conditioning, causing more air pollution, while the others, the voiceless, suffered greatly. The same thing happened with winter, He made it freezing; rains were now sudden and torrential, and droughts recurrent: nobody wondered why and it was always the poor who paid the price.*

*The others, those in power, simply didn't want to understand.*

*But when He saw children, elderly people, and women thrown out of their homes, into the cold muddy streets, with no shelter anywhere, and no food, when He saw the steel birds unloading their bellies of death all around, there was no more doubt in His mind: that year, the year 2000, His Son would be born in the sea, in the gulf of Trieste, right in front of Miramare Castle, among the fish, animals who had suffered human arrogance and foolishness.*

*He would be born in that beautiful marine reserve protected by the Karst foothills, under the Park which Maximilian, Archduke of Austria, had wanted to fill with plants and flowers, to beautify his Castle, which was still tended by many loving gardeners.*

*This incredible decision made everyone shudder, saints, martyrs, evangelists, angels and of course, even the Virgin Mary, but the Lord Father had decided and He was all-powerful and wanted humankind to receive His unmistakable message of profound disapproval.*

*The first to be told was the animal world, or more precisely, the first to have an inkling, were the sardines who immediately set off in ranks across the seas to spread the news.*

*“The Son of God will be born in the gulf of Trieste, this year, the Son of God!” announced the tuna fish, the whales, the dolphins, the salmon but also the corals, the seahorses, the cuttlefish...*

*Upon hearing the news, others set off to communicate it across the oceans.*

*Meanwhile, on land, strange things were happening: small nativity scenes, the ones stored in cellars, in cupboards, then taken out at Christmas, were now unusable. Wooden ones had turned to sawdust, papier-mâché ones were now a yellowish pulp and ones in more modern materials looked awful.*

*Only Saint Francis' Nativity Scene of Assisi, in Greccio, and the Nativity Scene at the Royal Palace of Caserta were saved from this disaster.*

*The motion of the stars too had completely changed, the North Star had moved to a strange position and a large comet was clearly heading towards the Adriatic Sea.*

*A series of astrophysical phenomena was unleashed on earth, changing magnetic fields and all the rules on which human beings had calibrated their instruments.*

*The radars and, in particular, the super intelligent war machines that had been slicing through the skies for months all went haywire.*

*A global black out hit the world making any flights and therefore any bombing impossible.*

*At first the people didn't understand, but eventually they were afraid, and they stopped the ships and the aircraft and forbade any fishing on the sea.*

*So the fish, undisturbed, came from all over to the gulf in front of Miramare; the sea shimmering with fish of all colours, peacefully united with each other, was an incredible sight to behold. Fish came from the freezing northern waters to meet their brothers from the warm seas, and there were colours, a myriad of colours, a marine rainbow of all shapes and sizes. The temperature had evened out and species that had never met before swam comfortably along next to each other.*

*A miracle, it was a miracle for sure.*

*Some fish swam into the cave found for the birth, but not many, to avoid disturbing the newborn left in the care of the monk seal, while a merry-go-round of seahorses circled the child's head.*

*The guiding star lit up the whole sea down to its deepest depths.*

*The sky above the sea was full of birds, not just gulls, flamingos and small birds, but magpies, robins, blackbirds, turtle doves and large vultures from the mountains, hawks and eagles. Each, according to its capability, bowed their heads and flew in wide circles above the sea cave before then flying off towards their homelands, at one with each other.*

*And of course the sky was filled with their sounds: the nightingale's chirping intertwined with the crow's cawing, while the voices of the dolphins and whales rose up from the sea.*

*And much further up, near the stars, like every Christmas, the angels on the right sang while those on the left played their violins and trumpets.*

*But only the children could see and hear them.*



*Some birds, as they left the cave, soared down the Adriatic towards the lands of Serbia and Montenegro, and Kosovo: a desolation, the abandoned lands lifeless, the houses in ruins, the demolished bridges folded in onto rivers polluted with liquids of all kinds, not to mention the bodies buried all over the place.*

*The birds were speechless and horrified, they flew down in search of animals to tell them about the birth of the Son of God.*

*They found a few scraggy dogs, two frightened sheep, some cats and a family of pigs and they hurriedly told them of what was happening, as they had been instructed. They couldn't get away from those places fast enough. The land animals found it very hard to understand what was going on, but they were animals of their word and having made this commitment, they managed to communicate with two children who had somehow survived the war. They in turn managed to talk to some soldiers, a real feat as by now the men, starving and terrified, were incapable of listening. But at long last they understood, God was enraged with them all, He was forsaking them and retiring to the depths of the seas or to the skies. Upon hearing the news, all the soldiers in the region set off towards their own countries to announce to their leaders that they would never fight again.*



*And so the war ended, it was the first of January 2000.*