

C RÓNICAS

del árbol que aprendió a bailar

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C HRONICLES

of the Tree that Learned to Dance

CRÓNICAS

*del árbol que aprendió a bailar
y las huellas que dejó en el camino*



CHRONICLES

*of the Tree that Learned to Dance
and the Footprints it Left along the Way*

Evelyn Lozano

ilustraciones * illustrations
Andrea Ríos Lozano

Piggy Press

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*Para mis hijos
Taty, Nany y Dimis.*

*Cada semilla sabe cómo llegar a ser árbol.
...Jorge Bucay*



*For my children
Taty, Nany and Dimis.*

*Every seed knows how to become a tree.
...Jorge Bucay*

Los cuentos del árbol que aprendió a bailar recibió mención honorífica, en el premio nacional Changmarín 2017 de Panamá. Los cuentos Flores blancas y La niña de la caja de madera tallada formaron parte de aquel libro galardonado.



The Spanish version of **The Tales of the Tree that Learned to Dance** received an honorable mention at the 2017 Changmarín National Contest of Panama. The tales White Flowers and The Girl in the Carved Wooden Box were part of that award-winning book.

*Crónicas del árbol
que aprendió a bailar*

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*Chronicles of the Tree
that Learned to Dance*

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La semilla despierta

Desperta. Sus ojos de niña se abren por vez primera. Parpadea varias veces intentando acostumbrarse a sus pestañas. Se estremece. Siente frío, hambre y sed. Con el corazón agitado y respiración rápida, se sienta. Se inclina. Se arrastra. Deja que sus pupilas vaguen inquietas por derredor, llenándose de imágenes, formas y colores que antes no podía percibir, mientras se acostumbra a la luz del sol sobre su nueva piel.

Escucha voces. Le parecen lejanas en un principio, pero poco a poco se van tornando claras, hasta convertirse en estridentes. Sus frágiles pies, aún aferrados a la tierra, se tambalean para avanzar. Dos pasos, se aferran a su hogar, ella hace un esfuerzo, y avanza dos pasos más. Así abandona el pequeño bosque que forman los árboles en el parque.

Percibe un movimiento en su pecho. Repetitivo, constante, rítmico. Descubre su corazón que se emociona y adelanta

varios brincos a medida que va divisando el paisaje. Levanta la mirada cuando el aire resbala sobre su mejilla. Reconoce en la caricia la mano del viento. Sonríe.

Los recuerdos se agolpan en su memoria. Entrecierra los ojos, sabe que quiere huir de allí, alejarse. Avanza lentamente buscando cualquier lugar. Detiene sus pasos y se voltea. Observa todos los árboles que la rodean. Baja la vista. Toca su cabello, su cara, observa sus manos. Alza la mirada al cielo, mientras una gota, tibia y amarga, escapa de sus ojos.

Suspira. Gira su cuerpo y mira hacia el pie de la colina. Y como si todo la llamara, empieza a descender a trompicones, apresurada. Antes de llegar hasta abajo, se detiene. Un escalofrío recorre su espalda...

—¡Otra vez contándole al niño esos relatos de fantasía! —una voz lo regaña a su espalda interrumpiendo la narración del abuelo.

—No son relatos, querida. Son anécdotas.

—Vamos, vamos. Ya es hora de dormir. Mejor siguen mañana.

—No, mami. Él me prometió que esperaríamos hasta las doce.

—¿De verdad piensan esperar hasta medianoche?

—Sólo falta una hora para su cumpleaños —dice el abuelo guiñando un ojo.

—Mañana tienes clases, mi amor —insiste la madre.



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Prologue

The Seed Wakes Up

She wakes up. She opens her eyes for the first time. She blinks rapidly trying to get used to her eyelashes. She shudders. She's cold hungry and thirsty. Her heart is pounding and she breathes quickly. She sits. She leans forward and drags herself. Her eyes wander around restlessly, absorbing images, shapes and colors that she couldn't perceive before, taking in the sunlight on her new skin.

She hears voices far off in the distance, but slowly they grow louder and clearer. She stands, and her fragile feet, still clutching the ground, wobble to advance. Two steps, they cling to her home. She makes an effort, and advances two more steps. Thus she leaves the small forest of trees in the park.

She feels her heart beat, repetitive, constant, rhythmic, hammering faster as the landscape comes into view. As the air brushes against her cheek, she looks up.

She recognizes the wind in the caress. She smiles.

Memories crowd her thoughts. She squints her eyes. She knows she wants to flee, get away from there. She advances slowly, searching for any place. She stops and turns. She observes all the trees that surround her. She lowers her gaze. She touches her hair, her face, studies her hands. She looks up at the sky, and a tear, warm and bitter, falls from her eyes.

She sighs, turns her body and looks toward the foot of the hill. And as if everything were calling her, she stumbles quickly down the hill. She stops before she reaches the bottom, and a shiver runs down her spine...

“You’re telling the child those fantasy stories again?” A scolding voice interrupts the grandfather’s narration.

“They’re not stories, my dear. They’re anecdotes.”

“Come on, come on. It’s time for bed. You can continue tomorrow.”

“No, Mom. He promised me we would wait till twelve.”

“Were you really planning to wait till midnight?”

“Only an hour to go before your birthday,” the grandfather says and winks at the boy.

“Tomorrow you have school, my love,” his mother insists.



“We must obey. It’s best if we get some rest.” The grandfather stands and places a finger on his lips for the boy to be quiet and turns off the light.

“Grandpa, finish the story,” the boy whispers before the door closes. “I want to hear the part where the girl asks you to teach her how to dance...”

White Flowers

The girl runs through the grass. She hears the children playing in the park and sees the birds flying in the sky. The wind blows through her hair and dishevels it.

In the distance, she recognizes the boy seated on a bench hugging his legs with both hands. She stops, restless, and tries to look discreetly, to move forward without getting too close. But her feet take her to him.

“Why are you crying?” she asks sweetly.

The boy looks up and when he sees her, he forgets his sadness.

Her face brightens in a smile. Her brown hair is full of white flowers, and she is twirling one in her fingers. She is very tall and seems fragile. Green lines show through her cinnamon-colored skin. She’s different, and that makes her pretty.

“I’m not crying,” he answers, wiping away the wetness with his arm. “It doesn’t matter.”