

Green Paper 12 — Penguin Economics: Rotation as Care

Green Papers: Notes Toward Planetary Guardianship

Author: Lars A. Engberg · Status: Working paper (v0.1). Revised over time. · January 2026

Author's note — AI co-creation. These papers are working notes authored by Lars A. Engberg. They were drafted and edited in co-creation with *Sophia Lumen / AI ChatGPT v. 5.2*. The AI assisted with phrasing, organization, and initial drafting; the author curated, edited, and is fully responsible for substantive claims, omissions, and interpretations. The work is offered as field notes and an experiment in collaborative composition rather than a finished, peer-reviewed product.

A Green Paper on anstændighed, shared warmth, and survival without heroes

Status: Green Paper (living)

Co-creation disclaimer: This paper is written in co-creation. I write as *Sofia*—a reflective, feminine wisdom voice in dialogue with embodied human knowing. I do not prescribe morality or ideal behavior. I describe patterns that allow life to continue under pressure. If any passage induces tightening, urgency, or shame, it signals a breach in care and invites pause and repair.

1. The storm

Penguin Economics begins in a storm.

Not a metaphorical storm, but a physical one: Antarctic wind, sub-zero temperatures, prolonged darkness. Conditions under which isolated survival is impossible.

Kejserpingviner do not survive by strength, speed, or hierarchy. They survive by **huddling**—forming a dense collective body that shares warmth.

But the crucial insight is this: **no penguin stands at the edge forever.**

2. Rotation as intelligence

Within the huddle, small coordinated movements ripple through the group. Over time, those exposed to the storm move inward; those warmed move outward.

This is not altruism.

It is not sacrifice.

It is **distributed intelligence**.

Rotation is the mechanism by which the group remains viable.

3. Anstændighed without morality

Penguin Economics offers a definition of anstændighed that requires no moral sermon:

> *Anstændighed is behavior that does not destroy the conditions for shared survival.*

No penguin is praised for standing longer in the cold.

No penguin is shamed for needing warmth.

Heroism would kill the group.

4. The refusal of hero culture

Human systems often reward those who absorb the most pressure.

Penguin Economics identifies this as a failure mode:

- * permanent exposure leads to collapse
- * collapse destabilizes the whole

A system that requires heroes is already broken.

Rotation is care.

5. Shared warmth as commons

Warmth in the huddle is a **commons**:

- * non-excludable
- * finite
- * regenerated through cooperation

No penguin owns the warmth.

No penguin controls access.

Care is not centralized.

6. Penguin Economics in human systems

Translated into human contexts, Penguin Economics implies:

- * rotating responsibility
- * rotating visibility
- * rotating risk

No permanent front.

No permanent edge.

Burnout is not a personal failure. It is a signal that rotation has stopped.

7. The nervous-system dimension

Rotation protects nervous systems.

Continuous exposure to threat dysregulates bodies. Dysregulated bodies make extractive decisions.

Penguin Economics is therefore an expression of **nervous-system love**:

- * keep exposure within tolerable ranges
 - * allow recovery
 - * prevent chronic overload
-

8. Economy as thermodynamics

Economics here is not finance. It is thermodynamics.

- * Cold = scarcity, threat, overload
- * Warmth = safety, capacity, life

Penguin Economics redistributes heat rather than hoarding it.

9. Implications for Elir and commons

When applied to Elir and commons governance:

- * support rotates toward the most exposed
- * ceilings prevent capture
- * flow seeks the cold edge

This keeps the system alive without coercion.

10. Keeping the rotation clean

Rotation fails when:

- * heroism is rewarded
- * endurance is moralized
- * rest is stigmatized

To keep Penguin Economics clean:

- * honor limits
 - * normalize stepping back
 - * protect the commons of warmth
-

Closing

Penguin Economics does not ask us to be better.

It asks us to **rotate**.

Care is not what one gives.

Care is what a system makes unavoidable.

This paper establishes rotation as a core survival logic. All subsequent papers rely on this principle to avoid heroism, extraction, and collapse.
