

# THE LITTLE BLACK FISH



**Winner of:**

Golden plaque of Bologna - 1969  
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In a small stream in a distant valley there lived a little black fish. He spent most of his day wondering. He wondered about many things, but most of all he wondered about what was at the end of his stream.



He was so quiet in his thought that his mother finally asked him what was wrong. The little black fish told her that he would like to follow the stream to its very end. His mother scolded him for being so bold, but the little black fish would not change his mind.



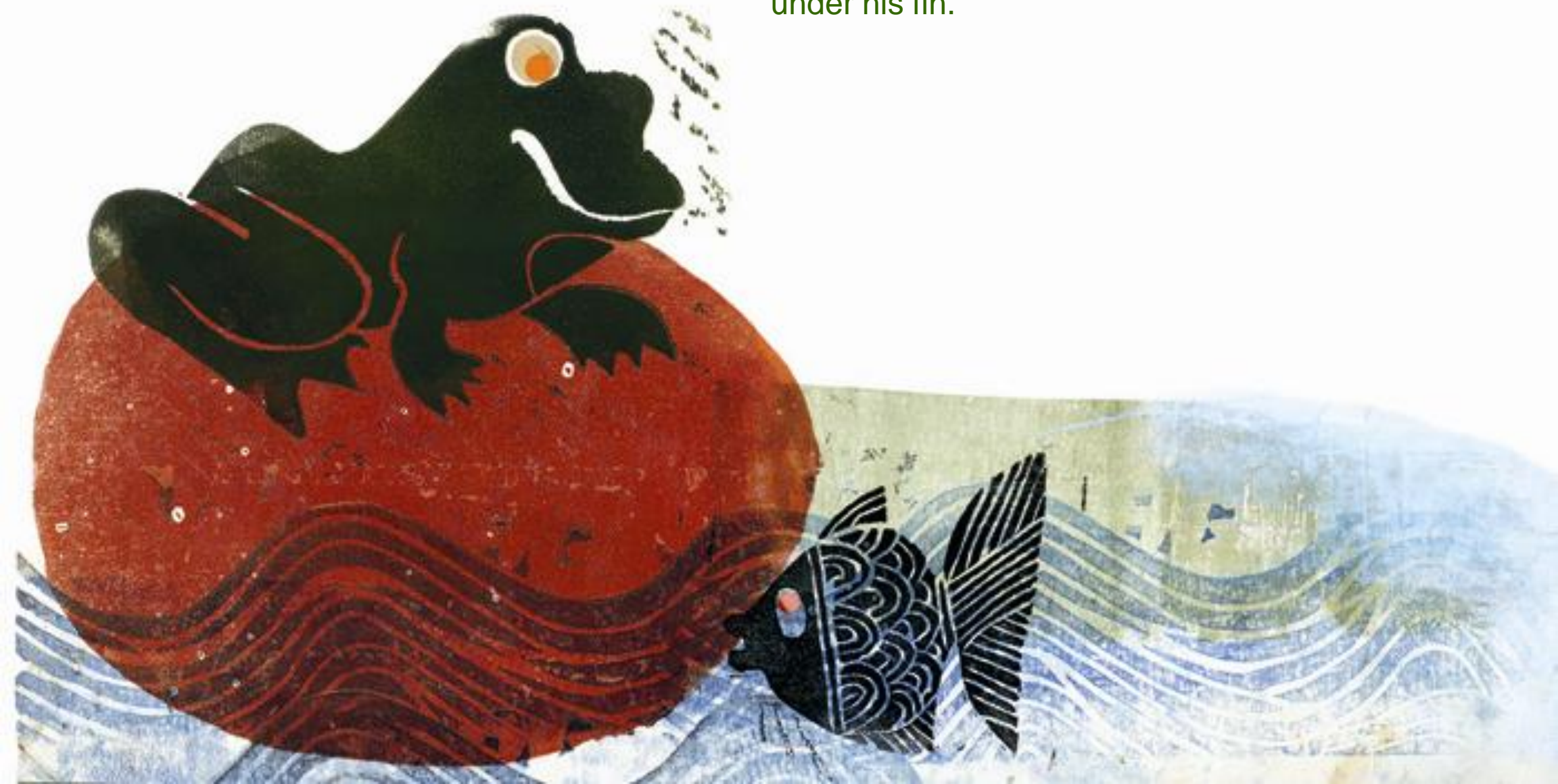
Early the next morning he started on his journey. After traveling for several hours he came upon a strange group of fish. They were ugly - the ugliest fish the little black fish had ever seen. But they thought they were the most beautiful in all the world, for they had never seen any others. "We are the most beautiful fish in all the world", they said to the little black fish. "We are sorry you are so unattractive."

"I really don't mind," said the little black fish, and he waved a fin at them as he swam away.





Finally the stream flowed into a river. "I must follow that river", said the little black fish. He swam on down the river and met a frog. The frog warned the little black fish about a bird that loved to eat fish. "The bird's name is Pelican", he said. Then the frog gave him a curved stick to bring him good luck. The little black fish wondered how he would use the stick, but he thanked the frog for his gift. Then he swam on with his stick tucked under his fin.





The little black fish traveled with the river as it moved toward the ocean. Soon he met a lizard sitting on a rock. The lizard told the little black fish to be careful of the pelican who fished in the ocean. The fish said he had heard about the pelican and swam off.







When he reached the ocean the little black fish met other water creatures. There was a seahorse who floated through the water holding a piece of seaweed in his curled tail.

There was an oyster with shiny pearl inside his shell.

And there were many fish. He became friends with all of them and his days in the ocean were happy.



Each day the little black fish and his friends met to exchange stories. The little black fish told his new friends about his home in the small stream, and how he and his brothers and sisters played follow -the- leader through the sparkling water. He told of having a narrow escape when a passing deer drank from his stream and almost swallowed him.



One day the little black fish and his friends were listening to King Crab tell of his sea adventures, when suddenly the bird called Pelican flew out from behind a cloud and headed for the water. He scooped up the little black fish and held him in his mouth.

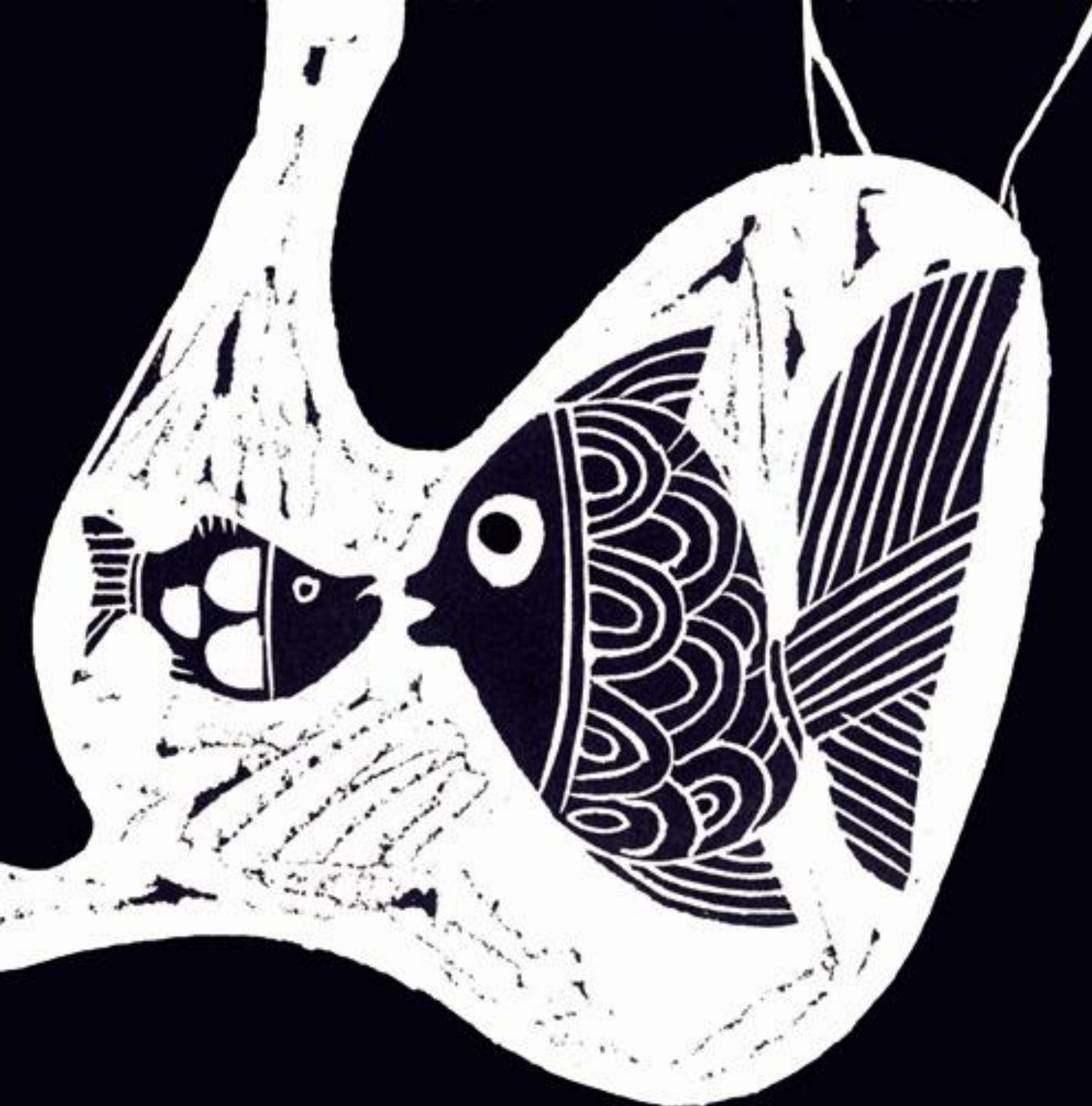




Inside the pelican's mouth the little black fish was terribly frightened. "I must get out of here", he cried. But he could think of no way to escape. Meanwhile, the pelican flew high up in the air over the ocean.







Then the pelican swallowed, and the little black fish was tossed and pushed into the bird's stomach. There he met another fish who was anxious to escape. But they could find no way out. The two fish were very glum. Then the little black fish remembered the curved stick under his fin.



"It is good luck", he said. And he tickled the pelican's throat with the stick. The pelican began to choke. He started to cough, and as he coughed he fell down from the sky into the ocean. In one big cough the little black fish and his friend landed in the ocean. The other fish welcomed them, and they said, "How wonderful it is to be free and with our friends".

