

Glowruses





Roberto Piumini

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Translated from the Italian
by Leah Janeczko

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To my son Michele,
who gives me the idea of love





In the Turkish city of Malatya lived a painter named Sakumat, who was neither young nor even old. He was the age at which wise men know how to be their own friend without risking their friendships with others.

Though the rocky valley of Malatya didn't shine with great beauty, Sakumat painted wonderful landscapes and invented others, arranging shapes and colours just as—had they been real—a fine Creator would have done.



Many wealthy cattle owners, horse traders and textile merchants would summon Sakumat to their homes to have him embellish a corner, the back of a portico, or broaden the light on a windowsill by painting his colourful flowers. Yet even if no one had requested his artwork, Sakumat would have painted all the same, because to him brushes were like fingers and with each brushstroke he tenderly offered a drop of his life's blood.

As for the landscapes he imagined, who knows where he'd seen them. Not even he knew. Perhaps they didn't exist anywhere in the world or in any human dream. Yet looking at them, they were like real lands that one could smell and touch. The more a person looked at them, the more their body would slip away through their eyes and journey, whole and alive, to colourful realms full of peace.