

Cuando floreció la risa by Gioconda Belli

Translated by Charles Castaldi

When Laughter Blossomed

One fine day, in a damp, tropical jungle
Where huge trees are
cloaked in orchids and vines,
Enea and Alia descended from the highest branches of a ceiba tree
And discovered they were the first boy and the first girl.

Seeing how different each was from the other made them laugh.

She placed her hand on his and said:

—My hand is smaller than yours.

He placed his hand on her waist and said:

—Your waist is curved like the moon and your feet are like the fish in the stream.

Alia laughed.

—Look, you're all boxy, but your chest is wide like the horizon and strong like the earth
on which we live.

Enea laughed.

And you are round and soft and I feel you can read my deepest thoughts.

She was happy to have him at her side

And she felt like touching him and tickling him.

She put her hand under his arm and scratched around as if to find an opening.

He broke into giggles and tickled her back.

Then Alia took a branch and stroked his back with it. Enea couldn't stop laughing. He
laughed so hard he fell to the ground. Even Alia couldn't stop laughing.

The jungle had never heard laughter
and it listened spellbound.

The stream thought: "The laughter of this boy and this girl is like the gurgling I make
when I flow over boulders."

The wind marveled at the laughter of the girl and the boy and how it was just like the
sound it made as it rustled through leaves.

Enea and Alia couldn't stop laughing.

"What can I do to laugh like them?" thought an acacia tree growing nearby. "I too want
joy that can spread like the breeze."

With some effort, the young acacia stretched one of his branches to touch Alia's back.
When he closed his eyes her laughter felt as if all the birds were singing within her.

That night the tree felt its bark was ticklish. It dreamt that it laughed with happiness that was light and fragrant.

The next day Enea and Alia awakened covered in petals. She rubbed sleep from her eyes and looked at the tree. Then she woke Enea and said: “Enea look, the tree is laughing. It’s blooming with laughter.”