

Tears on the other side of the world

Illustrations :
Muriel Dielemans

Text :
Marie Dielemans
Myriam Dielemans

thanks to Graham Keen
for his translation



Dear colleagues

There's an iceberg crying on the other side of the world ...

In their efforts to help, Professor Sneeze and his friends discover that across the globe the glaciers are melting.

« What's a glacier ? » and « It's high time to change our habits » are the new messages that Professor Sneeze wants to get across to the children.

We suggest you use this story at the beginning of some oral work. After reading it out loud ask the children lots of questions to see how well they understood the story. In the middle ask questions or add your personal comments, for example :

- Do you think he was right ?
- Do you think that was a good idea ?
- Do you think he was right to do that ?
- Would you have done the same thing ?
-

That way the children will make the story their own.

Then ask them to try and find some pictures of that lovely region and paste them on a big board in the classroom.

The idea is to immerse the children in a magical but real world and help them to get to know the beauty of the cold regions, which could disappear due to global warming.

Let the children's imagination and emotions wander – they will be more willing to protect something they are fond of.

Dear parents,

« Changing our habits » is not easy to do, but we have no choice : the planet is in danger.

In order to motivate the whole family, find some pictures and make with your children a decorative board for the home.

Let yourselves be moved by the beauty of the countryside and be inventive in the daily actions that you take to protect the climate.



It's summer. Over there on the other side of the world Titel, the young snow petrol is proud. The rays of the never-setting sun are reflected in his lovely white plumage.

He circles around the icebergs and from time to time hears a penguin saying :

- Oh ! Look at that beautiful bird with its black beak and its snowy white feathers.

But flying to show off how beautiful one is requires a lot of energy and Titel starts getting tired.

He notices a little iceberg on its own in the middle of the cold ocean.

- That's ideal for a nap. I won't be disturbed by the noisy chattering of my friends, the penguins, he thought.

So he settled down there. He was the same colour as the snow so nobody could see him.



Boo hoo ! He heard all of a sudden.

He looked round but saw nobody !
Once again, this time louder, he heard :

- Boo hoo ! I'm melting !
- Who is crying ? Titel asked since he still couldn't see anybody.
- Sniff ! murmured the iceberg on which Titel was resting in a sad little voice. The rays of the sun are burning me and I'm melting.

Indeed Titel saw that large tears were falling into the ocean.



- Don't worry, said Titel. I'll go and get some help.

And he flew off, no longer thinking about his handsome feathers.
Everybody Titel met he asked :

- Why is the little iceberg melting ? What can we do to help him ?

But every time he got the same answer :

- It's too warm, Titel, there's nothing to be done ...

An old penguin said :

- Go and find the two explorers, Breakneck and Reckless. Perhaps they can help you because they have a friend who is a scientist !



Titel had seen at the beginning of the summer two rabbits pulling two sledges with all their might, but they were heading inland, where the winds are very strong.

Titel was afraid to venture alone so far from the sea into unknown territory.

- Together with a friend I would be stronger, he thought to himself.

Titel flew for a long, long time looking for a flying companion but nobody wanted to go with him.

- We are sea birds, they all answered. We only leave the sea to give birth to our chicks. Forget that journey, it's too dangerous for you !

Titel was exhausted and sad, so he stopped on the edge of a big iceberg. He felt all alone, without friends ... Large tears fell from his eyes. In the end he dropped off to sleep.



When he woke up a large white bird was standing next to him.

- Hello Titel, the bird said, I know who will accompany you on your trip to the region of the strong winds.
- Who are you ? asked Titel, a little frightened.
- It's your cousin, the storm petrel who will help you, the bird answered without giving his name.
- I don't know him, how do you know he's my cousin ? asked Titel.
- In your family you all « walk » on water.
- What ? We walk on water ! said Titel, astonished by this discovery.

The white bird explained that all the petrels liked flying close to the water letting their feet hang down. It's funny, you would think they are walking, even though it's not true.

Then he flew off ...



Lots of birds came rushing to see Titel.

- What did the king say ? Did he scold you for wanting to undertake such a journey ? they all asked.
- What king ? said Titel astonished
- The one you were talking to, it was the albatross, the champion flyer of the high seas.

Titel realised that all those around him were inquisitive. He felt even more alone and flew off without answering... but at the bottom of his heart he knew that the king wouldn't let him down.



He was right – a few days later he was flying over the deserted ice guided by a cousin, who was happy to undertake such an adventure.

- Where are Breakneck and Reckless hiding ? Titel said finally
- There they are ! We are catching them up ! he cried suddenly, because he had just noticed in the distance two shapes pulling sledges.
- But they are cheating ! said Titel. The wind is helping them by filling their sails and blowing them along.



Breakneck and Reckless were also touched by the tears of the little iceberg and phoned Professor Sneeze on their satellite phone.

- Gadzooks ! said Professor Sneeze, opening an eye. Who is that on the phone ?
- Err ! It's just a little hello from your friends on the other side of the earth and who need your help, said Breakneck.
- You just wanted to say hello ? That's too much. It's the night here and everyone is sleeping ! said Professor Sneeze putting the phone down in a very bad mood.

Breakneck and Reckless should have checked the time but they were distracted by the never-setting sun.



A few minutes later Professor Sneeze was more awake and he called his friends back and listened to their story.

- No, I won't take a plane to come and join you, that would make too much pollution ! said Professor Sneeze.
- Then come by boat, insisted Breakneck.
- That's impossible, that trip takes too long. I wouldn't get there till winter when it's always night, but go and tell the little iceberg to stop crying, answered Professor Sneeze. That just makes it melt quicker. Tell him not to worry ! During the winter he will regain some of his strength and next summer we will be there.

Titel was so happy to have made some friends who would help him that a couple of tears began to well up in his eyes. The icy wind froze them and they became like two pearls either side of his beak.



From that moment on Professor Sneeze closed himself in his laboratory to study the measurements that his friends across the world sent him regularly. He wanted to understand why the iceberg was crying.

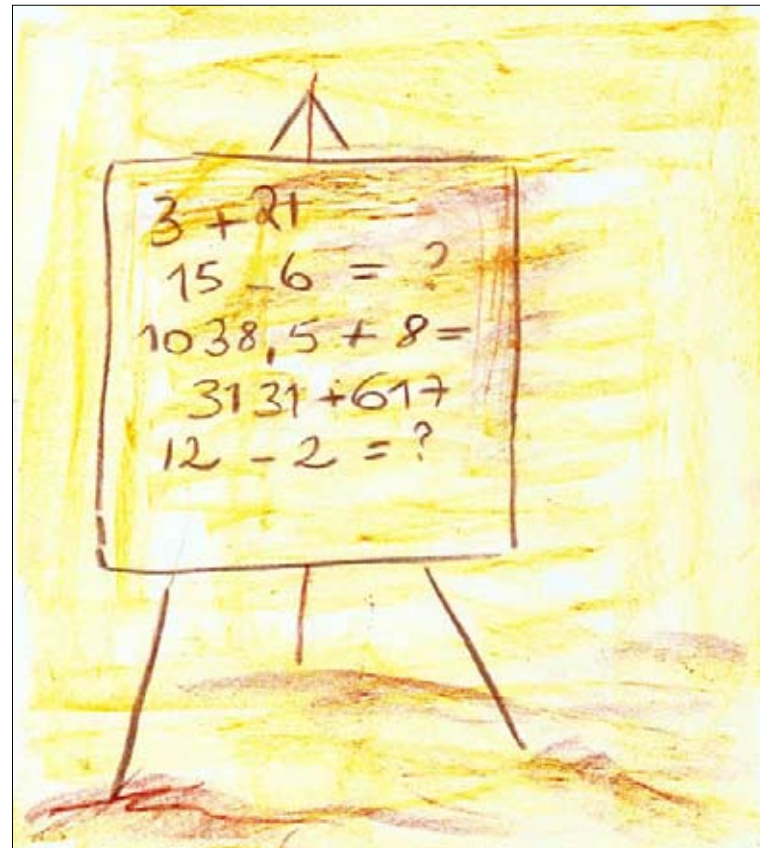
The weeks passed ... because there was a huge volume of data.

One day Lady Trumpet, his wife said to him :

- I'm going to help you with your work since your friends prefer to travel across the ice rather than help you.
- It's strange ! I hope Breakneck and Reckless haven't had an accident or been attacked by a sea leopard, said Professor Sneeze beginning to worry.

So he phoned them.

In fact Breakneck and Reckless had been forced to take a longer route because the ice was obstructing their way . But during their endless journey the two explorers were preparing a surprise for Professor Sneeze.



$$3 + 21 =$$

$$15 - 6 = ?$$

$$1038,5 + 8 =$$

$$3131 + 617$$

$$12 - 2 = ?$$

Professor Sneeze and Lady Trumpet finally started making some sense of the data.

All glaciers in the world and particularly the one in Skiville are melting and shrinking much too quickly, like Titel's iceberg.

- Where could that come from ? asked Lady Trumpet
- We need to analyse what's under the glacier to find the answer, said Professor Sneeze. Let's get our equipment ready and ask Breakneck and Restless to take us to the little iceberg. We will study where the iceberg came from.

Doctor Shrimp, the friend of Professor Sneeze and a specialist of the deep sea, agreed to join them on their trip to the land of ice.

But Breakneck and Reckless, back in Rabbitville, were very busy preparing their surprise for Professor Sneeze. They didn't want to be disturbed so didn't answer their phone.

Professor Sneeze found that strange.



At the same time Mrs Pretty, the village teacher, was going for a bike ride and rode past the house where Reckless's lived.

- I say, there's no door or windows any more. That's strange, she thought but she continued her ride.

Further on she saw that Breakneck's house didn't have a roof any more. She was amazed and rushed to see Professor Sneeze and Lady Trumpet shouting :

- Help ! Breakneck and Reckless have gone mad. They have broken up their houses !
- Let's meet over there, she said continuing on her way.

She wanted to warn Dr Shrimp.



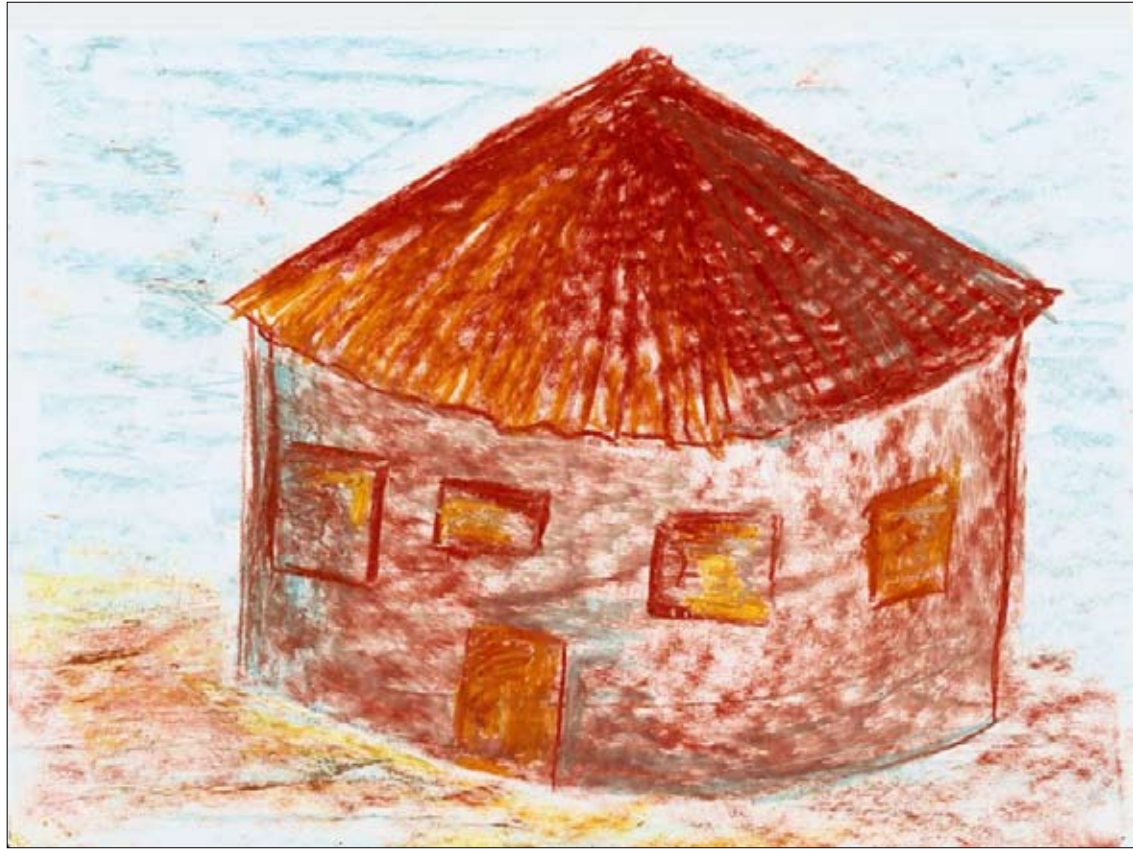
Breakneck and Reckless had just finished their big surprise for Professor Sneeze when they saw the small group arriving.

Professor Sneeze didn't have time to say good morning. Reckless was wiping his hands with a cloth and threw it over the professor's head to cover his eyes.

Lady Trumpet found her eyes covered by a hat, which was in fact a pair of trousers that had been lying around. Dr Shrimp got a saucepan and Mrs Pretty got the basket used for carrying carrots.

- Everybody hold on to somebody's shoulder and follow us, laughed Breakneck.
- They have gone completely mad ! thought Professor Sneeze moving forward awkwardly.

Fortunately it wasn't far.



As soon as their eyes were uncovered Professor Sneeze, Lady Trumpet, Dr Shrimp and Mrs Pretty discovered a beautiful house made of wood with Reckless's windows and Breakneck's roof.

- Are you moving ? asked Lady Trumpet timidly.
- No, answered Breakneck. This will be your base, both your house and laboratory, in the land of the ice. We will dismantle it and transport it there. The little iceberg needs you so much.
- Not only that one ! All the glaciers in the world, replied Professor Sneeze, very moved by the beautiful present he had just received.



He got out his calculations and launched into some complicated explanations. That was the start of a knowledgeable discussion.

Mrs Pretty didn't understand a word so decided to try out the new kitchen by making a carrot and herb soup for which she had a secret recipe.

- But there's no electricity, she cried from the window.
- Not yet, answered Reckless. Tomorrow we are fitting solar panels in the roof and a wind turbine because there is a lot of wind over there. It will generate electricity that doesn't pollute.
- That's too bad for today, she said disappointedly, preparing a dish of raw carrots.
- What about the washing up ! Where are you going to throw the water away ? Dr Shrimp called out suddenly. The shrimps I study need clean water.

With all the work they had done Breakneck and Reckless hadn't thought of that detail, which would be so important on the other side of the world.

- At home I have a filter system that makes dirty water clean, said Dr Shrimp. I will dismantle it and we can take it with us.
- It's true, Breakneck admitted, our base must be a model. There must be no pollution.



All the inhabitants of Rabbitville helped Breakneck and Reckless to load the crates on the boat, including the dismantled base, Professor Sneeze's measuring instruments and also all the necessary provisions because there are no shops in the land of the ice.

At Lady Trumpet's request, Mr Slide, the expert at Skiville, arrived with three other researchers.

Mrs Pretty felt a tear in her eye ... there was no room for her. The scientific expedition was about to start !

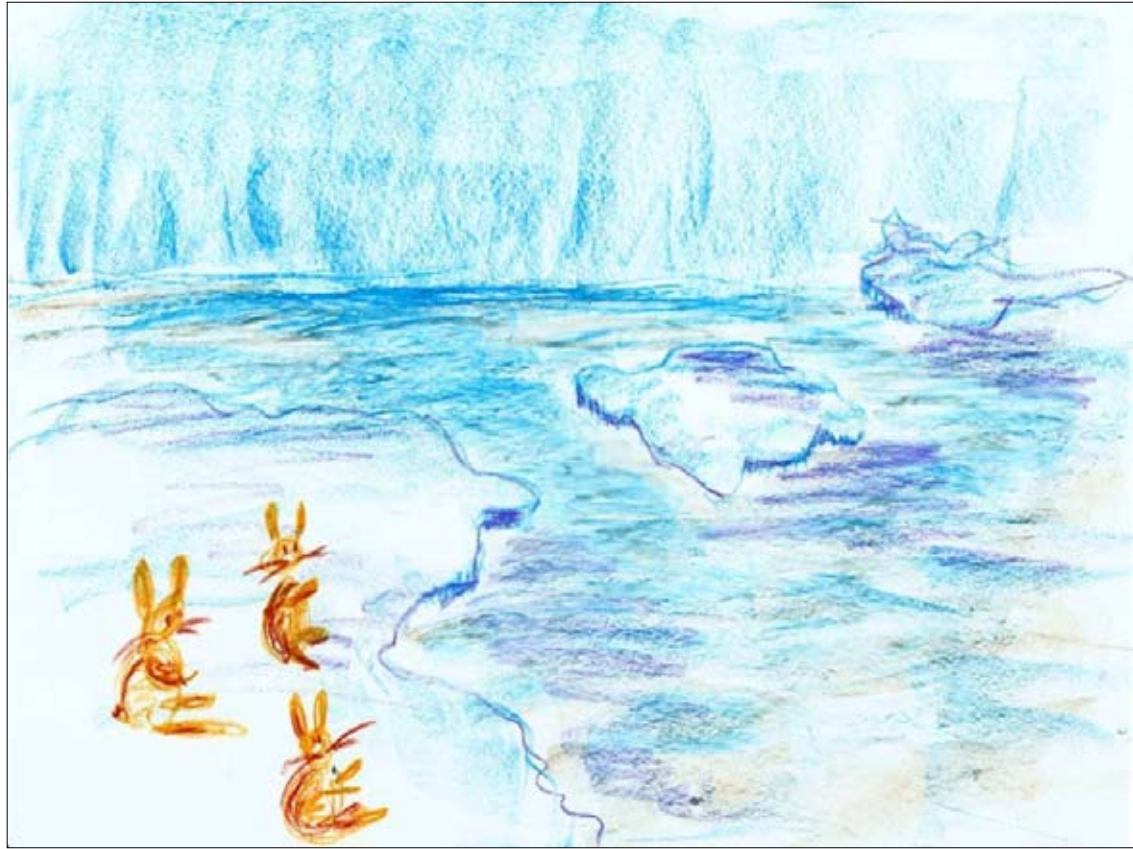


As soon as the boat reached the icy water, where the waves are enormous, a flight of chattering sea birds welcomed them.

The news about the arrival of Professor Sneeze and his house in crates spread fast.

All the animals from the end of the world were reunited. They had to help the scientist and his friends.

Titel, the snow petrel, couldn't believe his eyes when he saw them all ! He smoothed down his lovely white feathers. He wanted to look his best when he saw his friends Breakneck and Reckless again.



With so much help the base was soon reconstructed and everybody could quickly start their work.

- Digging further and further ... The ice is too hard ! complained Breakneck. There's nothing to be found under there.
- Yes, there is ! We need to see how quickly the glacier is moving, answered Mr Slide.
- Ho, ho ! That's easy to calculate because we aren't moving at all, exclaimed Reckless
- That's not true, the expert answered seriously. Glaciers are rivers of ice that move very slowly. That's why you don't see it moving and when they reach the sea pieces of it break off : those are the icebergs floating on the water.
- So we are on the mother of the little iceberg that's crying, said Reckless tenderly !



The work was tiring. Dr Shrimp thought that some nice hot soup would do everyone the world of good. He went back to the nearby base and returned with a pot of lovely hot soup.

But ice is slippery !

Woops, Dr Shrimp missed his footing and landed on his backside next to his friends. The soup spilled into the hole they had dug.

- Oh ! The soup is melting the ice and the hole is getting bigger all on it's own ! exclaimed Breakneck as he helped Dr Shrimp to get up.
- Dear Dr Shrimp, you're a genius ! said Professor Sneeze. Hot water will do the digging for us ! Go and heat up some snow ! he ordered.

That evening the hole was deep enough and Mr Slide could calculate the speed of the glacier. He was the only happy one, because Professor Sneeze thought that it wasn't that which was making the little iceberg melt.

He was disappointed.



Suddenly there was a loud noise like an enormous clap of thunder.

The platform of ice that covered part of the sea near the base and acted as a port for the boat had just become detached from the coast.

- That's worrying, murmured Professor Sneeze.

And he asked Dr Shrimp to go back to the boat and see what he could discover back there.

Dr Shrimp was happy because he was going to dive underwater and examine the little marine animals that he loved so much.



The days passed. Everyone was busy calculating, analysing and measuring ...

- Have you seen my balloons ? Lady Trumpet asked suddenly
- We don't have any time for balloon games ! answered Breakneck
- They are special balloons. Without them I won't be able to get the air samples from high up in the sky and Professor Sneeze won't have anything to analyse, she said shedding a little tear. I think I left them back in Rabbitville.

Titel, who was still accompanying his friends, wanted to console her and offered to collect the air himself in little containers.

Dr Shrimp came back very happy from his underwater expedition because he had seen four unknown fish and said :

- We don't have a name for our base. We ought to call it « snow petrel ». We could draw the portrait of Titel on the door.

Everyone thought that was a wonderful idea.

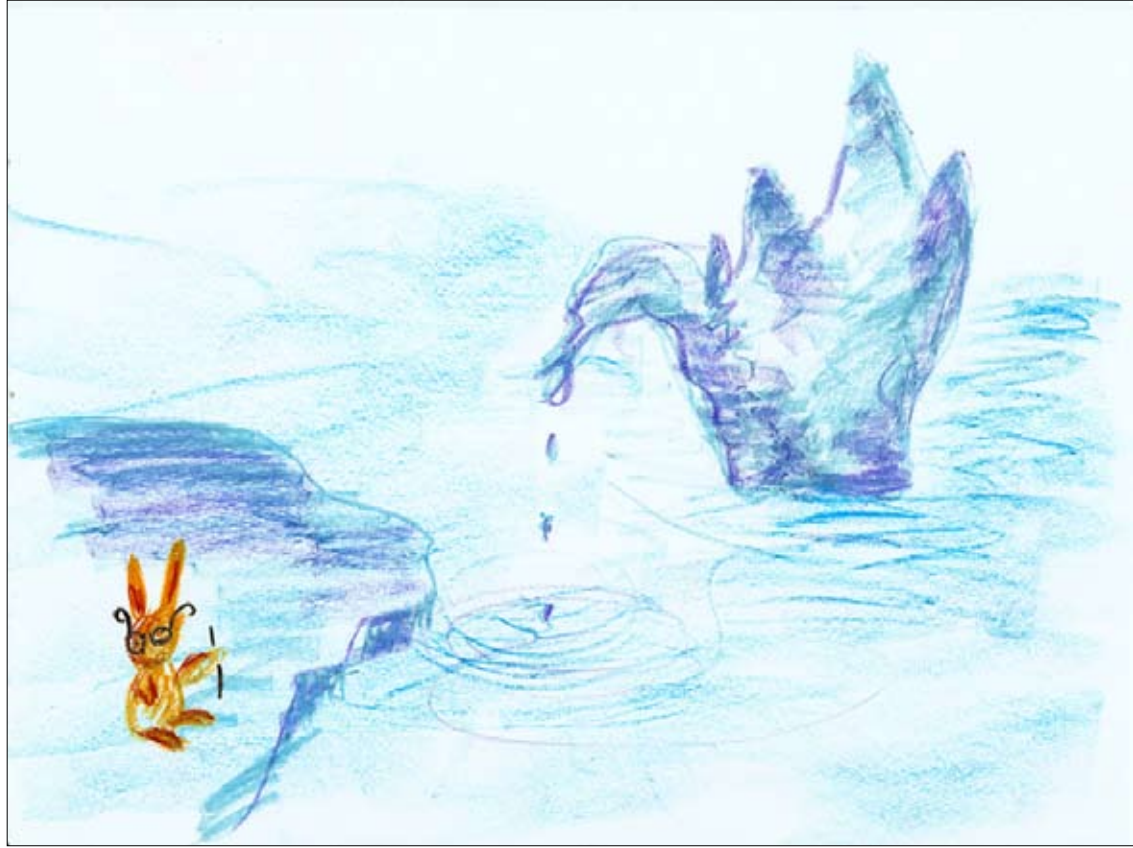


Professor Sneeze was settled in his new laboratory in the base and was analysing the containers that Titel brought back.

- That's not possible, I must be mistaken ! he murmured

He restarted his analyses several times and asked Lady Trumpet, Dr Shrimp, Breakneck, Reckless, Mr Slide and the experts to check his calculations.
But the results were the same every time.

- It's very worrying, said Professor Sneeze. There is too much bad gas in the air. That's what is warming up the planet and making the glaciers and the little iceberg melt.
- But where does that gas come from, asked Reckless
- From our cars, from our heating, from all the energy that we use for lighting, computers, televisions, dish washers ... in short, from our whole way of life.
- In order to stop the little iceberg crying we must change our habits, said Dr Shrimp.
- We can't stay here. We must tell everyone the bad news said Breakneck. Let's clear up our base and go back to Rabbitville.



Before setting off on their long journey back to Rabbitville the boat stopped near the little iceberg.

- Dry your tears, Professor Sneeze said to him. It's our fault that you are melting. We lead a bad lifestyle and throw too much dangerous gas into the air. Please forgive us.
- Oh ! said the little iceberg, who didn't really understand.
- Out of our friendship to you, we promise we will change our ways, Professor Sneeze continued.
- I promise I will install solar panels on the new roof of my house, said Breakneck. My electricity will be clean.
- I promise to use the air conditioning in my car as little as possible, said Lady Trumpet.
- I promise to insulate my house with sheep's wool inside the walls and the roof, so I need less heating, said Reckless.
- I promise you I will get organised and share car journeys with my colleagues and do more walking as well, said Mr Slide.
- And I, said Dr Shrimp, promise I will tell everyone that every time you switch on a light or a machine another tear falls on the other side of the world.

The little iceberg began to sob with all these friendly words.



On the bridge of the boat Titel was feeling sorrowful – his friends were about to leave.

He didn't want them to see him crying so he flew off.

He heard Breakneck saying « We may be out of sight but we won't be out of mind...»

This is dedicated to :

- one of our grandfathers, who was an explorer ...
- all of you who, like us, agree to change our way of life in order to pass on to future generations a planet that is pleasant to live on.

Our warmest thanks

to **GAUTHIER CHAPELLE**, doctor of biology, scientific director of the International Polar Foundation and General Secretary of the Biomimicry Europa association

to **GRAHAM KEEN**, marketing consultant

for their help with this project in spite of their heavy workload.