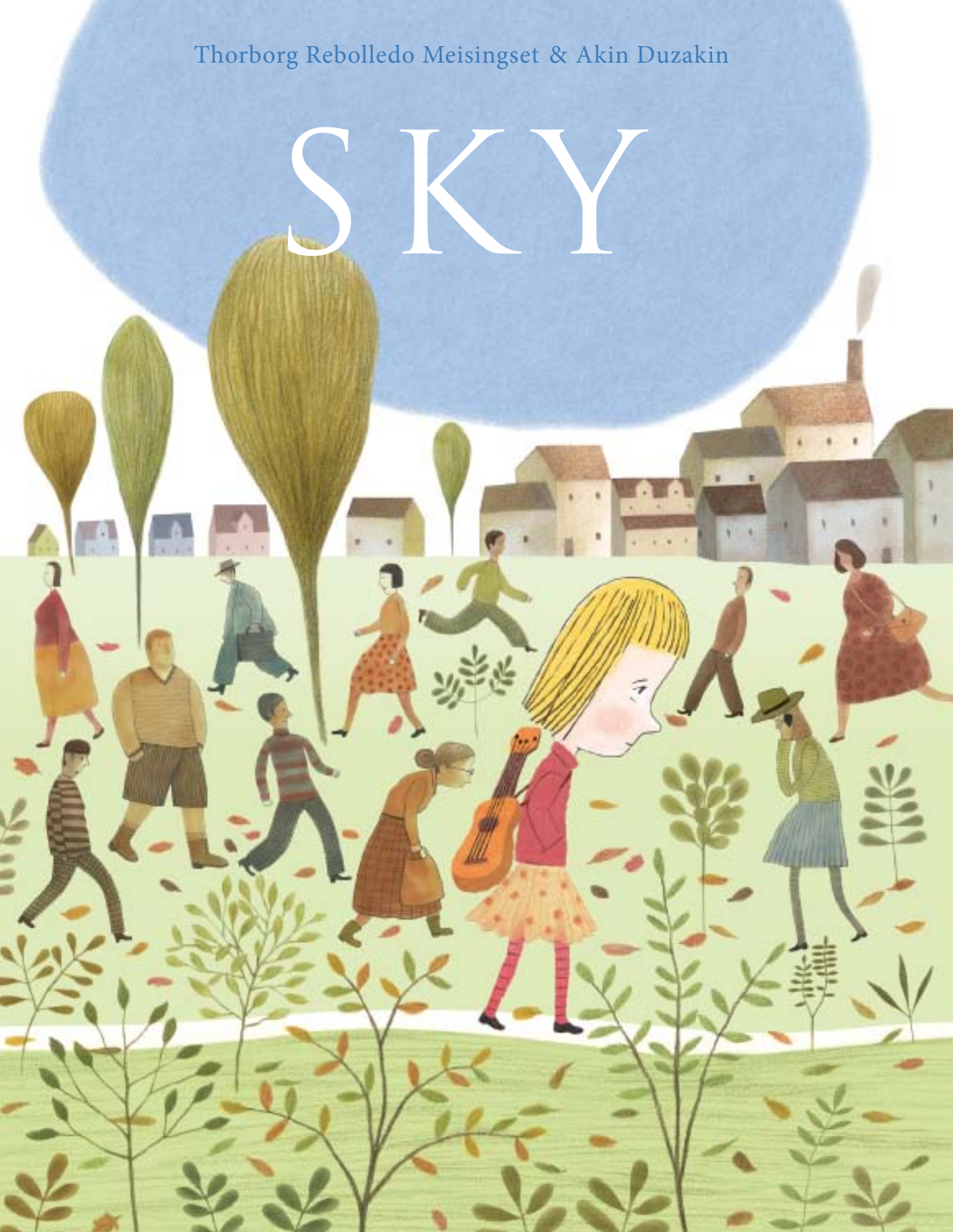


Thorborg Rebolledo Meisingset & Akin Duzakin

SKY



CLOUD

Thorborg Rebolledo Meisingset ([text](#))

& Akin Duzakin ([illustration](#))



- Good luck! purrs Kat gently as Greta leaves the house.



There are way too many people out. Everyone is looking at her. Her feet are heavy as bricks. Greta lugs them along. She wants to turn around, run back home and play with Kat.

Greta is not looking forward to meeting with the other children in her ukulele orchestra. She is especially not looking forward to the concert they are going to perform for all of the parents, to all of their piercing glances.



She is simply going to die!
She wishes she could be at home. Playing peacefully, strumming alone.

—Slowpoke! Did you rub glue on your shoes? tweets a voice that she knows.
A tiny bird darts in the air about her.



Shouts and laughter draw Greta toward the playground. She stops at the old oak.

- It's nice to see you again, creaks the oak.
- It's nice to stand here again, mumbles Greta.
- What? Admit it. It's not very nice at all to stand there alone! chirps the bird.

- Just wait. Soon you will be playing too, comforts the oak, rustling its branches and giving Greta a loving whack.
- That's nonsense, you silly old oak! mocks the bird. – That's never going to happen if she just stands there and hides.



A murmur on the air twirls round her ears.
What in heavens name? Just what is that strange creature?
– Who are you? asks Greta in wonder.
– Hello. My name is Cloud, says the cloud cheerfully.

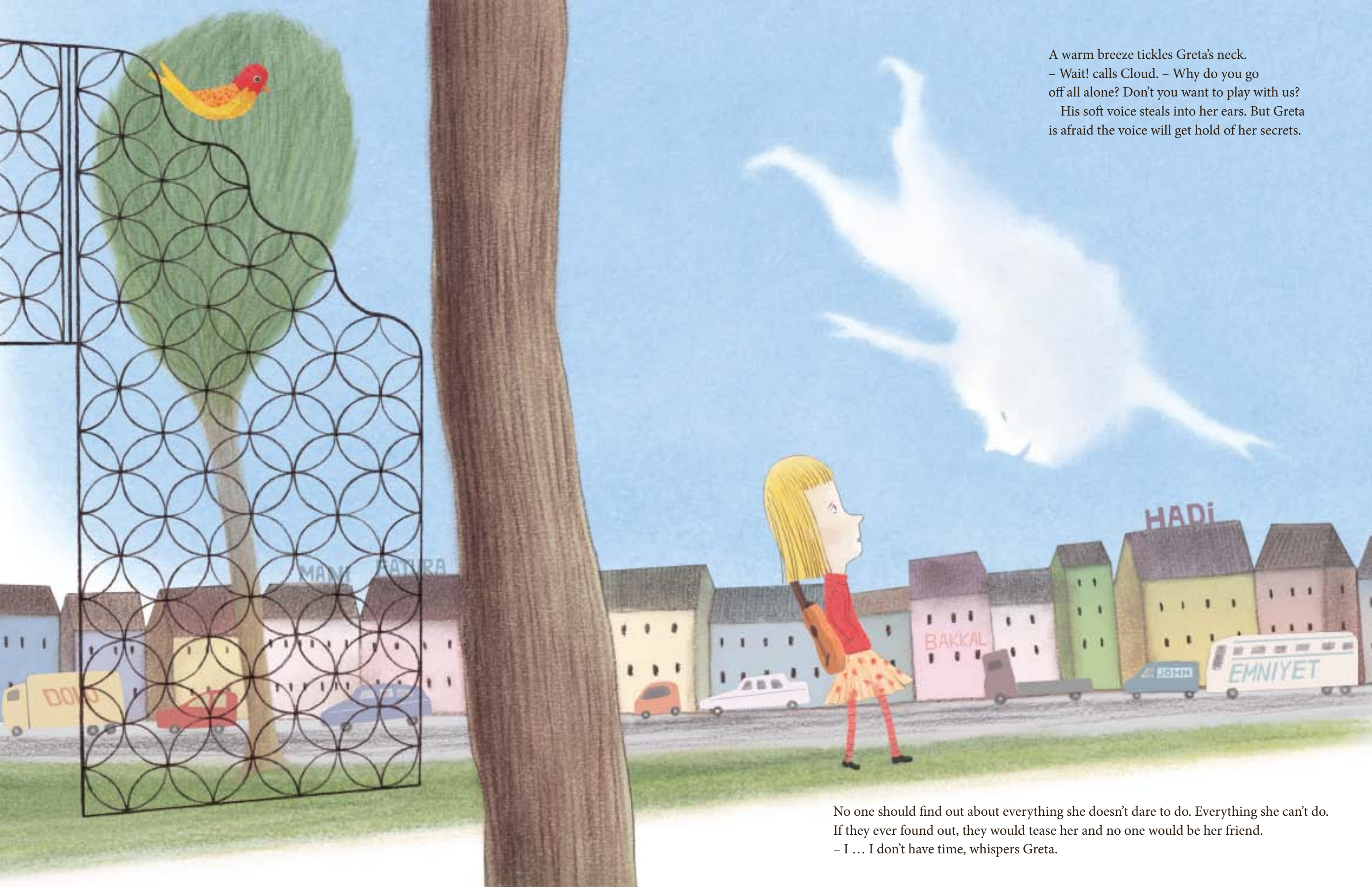


– Such a nice park, don't you agree? Won't you come to the playground with me?
To all the other children? Greta shudders. Never! – No, thank you, she whispers.

– Well, suit yourself but I want to play! Cloud soars happily away.
How dare he! Go right up to strangers? thinks Greta. Isn't he afraid they will laugh and make fun?



– Anchors away! We're off on an adventure! rallies Cloud.
– We'll come ashore on an undiscovered island!
The crew cheers. The ship sets sail out to sea.
Songs and laughter echo in their wake.
Greta continues wistfully on her way.



A warm breeze tickles Greta's neck.
– Wait! calls Cloud. – Why do you go
off all alone? Don't you want to play with us?
His soft voice steals into her ears. But Greta
is afraid the voice will get hold of her secrets.

No one should find out about everything she doesn't dare to do. Everything she can't do.
If they ever found out, they would tease her and no one would be her friend.
– I ... I don't have time, whispers Greta.

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