

To my Ella Marie, remember that with courage, perseverance and the passage of time, we can face our fears and turn them into victories – E.J.



The illustrations in this book were hand-drawn using ink and painted using watercolours.

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I Will Swim Next Time

Emily Joof and Matilda Ruta

Floris Books


When I first saw the big blue sea
I was scared and confused.
It crashed so loud and spread so wide.
It made me feel small inside.





Next summer, we went to a quiet lake
and I dipped in my little toe.
It looked so deep and felt so cold.
I wondered what hid in the dark below.





We played beside a river
with water rushing by.
We said hello to a friendly fish
and a hopping frog
and some tiny bugs.
I started to feel less shy.



Perhaps the water wasn't so scary.
The cool on my toes felt kind of nice.
As Mama held me tight, I thought:
Maybe I'll go in next time.