Cómo tener ideas
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A grouchy, misanthropic author is suffering from writer's block, and decides to have a snack to see if that will help stimulate her creativity. When she opens up a tin of sardines, she's surprised to find a small mermaid inside. Her surprise turns to displeasure when she realises that the mermaid talks a blue streak, when all she wants to do is get back to work and try to meet her deadline. It seems the mermaid was ambushed while playing hide and seek with her sardine friends. Far from home but with her positivity undaunted, the mermaid is eager to learn about the new world she finds herself in, asking about the "cardboard boxes" (books) that are all around. The writer finds her enthusiasm insufferably twee. Just then the doorbell rings…

This charming and topical book is a lovely ode to the hard work and dedication behind creativity. It manages to be both delightfully absurd (in prose that is occasionally laugh-out-loud funny) while still conceptually coherent. For example, each chapter is titled with a self-helpish suggestion for coming up with an idea, ostensibly from the book the author never gets her hands on. The cantankerous writer remains stymied at the story's close, despite all the adventures that have unfolded without her ever leaving the house, and the final title heading is "Realise that everyday things can be marvellous". The fact that the anticipated ending of her grasping that she has story fodder all around her never comes to fruition is one of the charms of this whimsical book, which manages to confound readers' expectations.

The magical realm that reveals itself beneath the author's reluctant and often outright hostile gaze is wildly imaginative and utterly beguiling. The juxtaposition of these two worlds is a wonderful metaphor for the perspectives that children versus adults have on reality, and both parents and children will see themselves reflected. Highly recommended (N.B. this book will require a talented translator to reimagine some of the language-specific wordplay).

From the reader´s report by .