

Hereditary Penguinism

An account of the
civilisation and manners
of the Penguin race





HOPPING AS A METHOD OF LOCOMOTION IS ONE OF THE FEW
CASES WHERE ONE FOOT IS BETTER THAN TWO.

MAGELLANIC PENGUIN, VALDES PENINSULA, ARGENTINA DAVID ATEXANIN CCBY

First published as *Ile des Pingouins* by Anatole France, 1908

English translation *Penguin Island* by E.W. Evans 1909

Second Edition Anatole France, Robert Whyte and Donal Fitzpatrick serialised on Radio 2SER Sydney 1981

Third edition Robert Whyte 1908-2019 www.h-a-r-p-o.com.au

The authors make no reservation of rights, except in the case of unfair use, which is encouraged.

Cover Galapagos Penguin, Aaron Logan, CC BY 2.0

Page 4 Roosting Penguins, Matt Mawson

Hereditary Penguinism

An account of the
civilisation and manners
of the Penguin race

Anatole France
Robert Whyte
Donal Fitzpatrick

1908-2018

Hereditary Penguinism

What does that even mean? *Hereditary Penguinism*? Aren't all Penguins hereditary? Penguins beget Penguins, back through time, to the original begetting in primordial slime and so on, thus having begotten the Penguins we see today. And *Penguinism*? What's that? Isn't it simply being a Penguin? That's hardly worth mentioning. Unless...

Surely this can't be about us? Oh no. Humans the inheritors of Penguinism? All of us with a little bit of Penguin just waiting for the right moment to...? To what?

A tough question. Ten, in fact. Count the question marks. But really, are these the most pressing issues facing humanity as we hurtle towards an abyssmal and rather disappointing end simply because we could not figure out how to read a thermometer?

Of course not. The most pressing question before us right now is: *Does the world really need yet another fucking book about Penguins?*

Of course not. Yet here we are, banging on about Penguins,



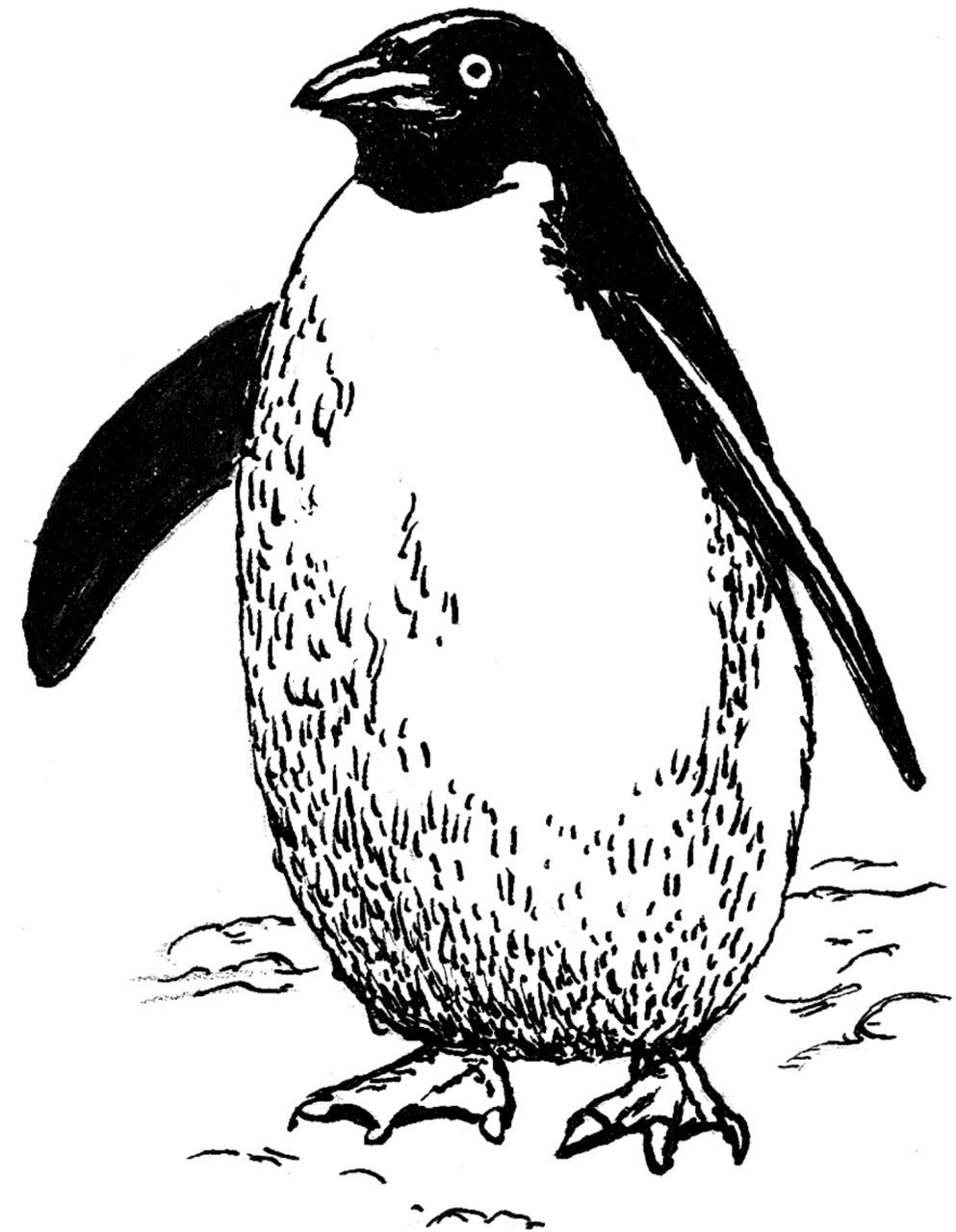
adding another tome of Penguin lore to the pile of codswallop and claptrap spilling out of our libraries, our children's school bags, our leaders' lavatories and our parent's locked drawers which they forget to close after a session of *badinage*, leaving them open at well-thumbed pages, cheek by jowl among sex toys and jars of vegemite.

But Penguins don't exist!

Who is that miscreant non-believer in the shadows, in the half-light, slithering from greasy rainbow-glazed puddles via fish-oil slicks to groaning sewer grates, denying the Penguins not once, not twice, but three times?

Not me! Someone else! I deny everything!

Can you be utterly sure Penguins are only idle fancy? A fairy story suitable only for little children and deathbed confessions? Go on, admit it, there have been those creepy occasions when you've felt your neck feathers tingle and the quills in your pouch stand up, when you feel sure you just caught a fleeting glimpse of something *Penguinesque* out of the corner of your beady little eye, to turn suddenly only to find the mirage flits away, always just out of sight.



A PENGUIN

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF PEARSON SCOTT FORESMAN,
DONATED TO WIKIMEDIA FOUNDATION

You can't prove I was there or that I saw anything!

Hush now, little human. There's nothing to worry about. We agree with you. Penguins do not exist. Which is precisely the reason why we have written this detailed historical account of Penguins and their doings, laced with references, citations and, we confess, quite a few passages copied verbatim from other authors. We did it to eradicate these false gods, these bulwarks of so-called scientific fact. We are writing them out of existence. Leaving not a trace. Not even a whiff.

What about the Penguin Inquisition?

There is that, yes. We know it's blasphemy, but it is not merely to avoid being hung, drawn and quartered for being Penguin skeptics that we now present to you this rigorously researched and meticulously referenced, peer-reviewed account.

We can see your hand raised, little one. We know what you wish to ask. *Does our account settle forever the question of Penguin existence, establishing beyond any reasonable doubt that Penguins are more than a consensual hallucination?* No, it doesn't. And we can prove it. As we take you by the flipper and lead you through these murky waters you will soon find our account of



A MEMBER OF THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION PLAYS BAGPIPES FOR AN INDIFFERENT PENGUIN, MARCH 1904. NEITHER THE PIPER NOR THE PENGUIN COULD POSSIBLY BE GENUINE AS IN 1904 THERE WERE NO PENGUINS ANYWHERE NEAR HERE, OR ANYWHERE ELSE FOR THAT MATTER.

WILLIAM SPEIRS BRUCE, DURING THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION, 1902-04. CC 0

the Penguins, like the very existence of Penguins themselves, lacks both credibility on one hand and evidence on the other. As sure as night follows day and a Dachshund follows a Chihuahua, your Penguin faith is doomed.

We are not alone in this, we can assure you. Far from it. All those other hundreds of thousands of detailed accounts of Penguins and Penguinism, hereditary or otherwise, are doing the same thing, you know. As far as Penguins are concerned, we all labor with but one goal in mind—to disprove their existence.

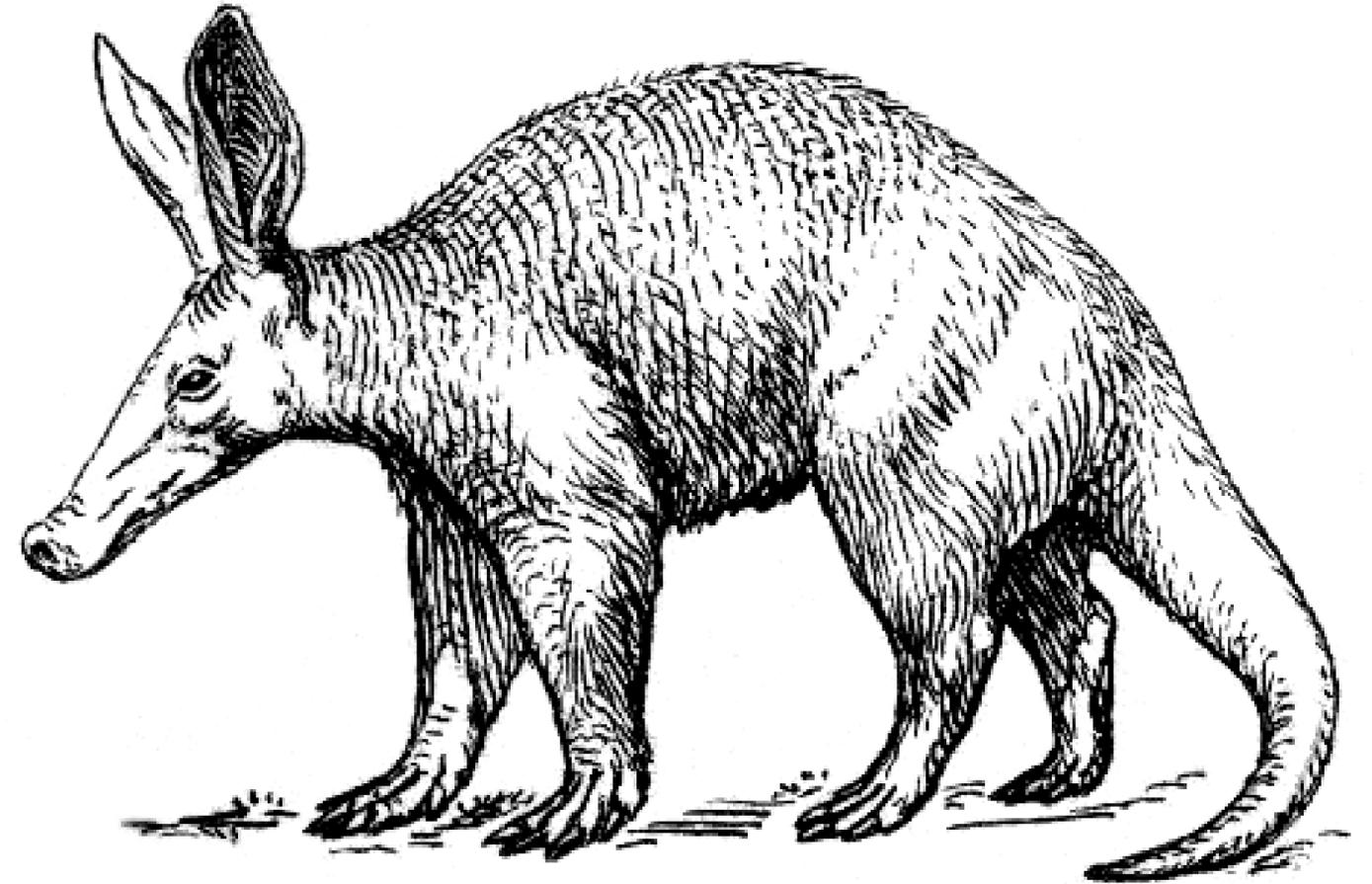
If that's the case, if we've already read all those other books, why read yours?

Because all those other books, compared to ours, are rubbish.

But you just said they were all the same!

We said they all had in mind the same goal, to disprove Penguin existence. But look around you. Convincing evidence of Penguins is everywhere. It has been thus forever and anon, from here to the primordial slime and back again. We know, we've been there. We didn't just dash this off you know.

Oh yeah.



NOT A PENGUIN

AARDVARK FROM THE ARCHIVES OF PEARSON SCOTT FORESMAN, WIKIMEDIA

Really! This has been more than a labour of love, it has been a labour of labour. There has been no limit to our limitations, no bounds to our boundaries, no Penguin left behind.

How did you go about it, exactly? As if you weren't going to tell me. By the way, I'm going to need a softer pillow.

Would you like the sunlight dimmed a little?

No thanks, Penguins between me and the sun have done that already.

Are you sure you want to hear this?

Zzzzzz...

You are aware that in the western democratic tradition, we take somnolence as consent.

Zzzzzz...

Alrighty then. It wasn't easy, that's for sure. The first thing we did was to amass all the existing, known, unknown, real or rumoured Penguin data. This was thoughtfully boring until we realised it was all in entirely inappropriate and incompatible formats (including, among even less reliable sources, fairy tales, radio broadcasts, sitcoms and television news). In order to make any sense of it at all, we had to transcribe it all onto index cards.



CERTAINLY NOT A PENGUIN

BURGESS MEREDITH AS THE PENGUIN FROM BATMAN, 1966, WIKIMEDIA.

It was fun, but it took quite some time. After we did that, to avoid confusion between the index cards and the source material, we had the source material destroyed. It burned for years. This was an relaxing interlude during which we sat around warming our chest feathers, playing spin the bottle and pinochle, pronounced, would you believe it, pee-knuckle. Then it was back to work.

We soon realised the sheer volume of data, stored in filing cabinets in a city we built for this purpose, was going to be rather impractical. We decided to choose a select few bits of data to represent the whole. A perfectly reasonable procedure based on the theory of fractal holograms. You know the one. A truly representative sample, according to fractal geometry and Van Helsing's Chaos Theory, required the representative selection of cards to be random. Since the cards were numbered strictly in sequence, the first being card number one, the second card number two and so on, we realised we would have to create a randomly-generated sequence of number, taking only a representative sample these cards from the entire sequence, leaving the rest.



CAPABLE OF ENSLAVING HUMANITY
AND BOILING A PLANET?

JOHN KING DAVIS, ANTARCTIC RESEARCH EXPEDITION, 1929-1930. CC 0

As everyone knows, you cannot make an infinite random sequence of numbers, because the number infinity is not a number at all, it's actually a wiggly concept governed by the Heisenberg principle, meaning the closer you get to it, the further it moves away. The concept is written down as the number eight lying on its side having a nap, like so ∞ . No wonder it's taking a nap, you would too if you had to do all that wriggling.

Our cards were not infinite in number, that would be silly, and impossible. But there were a lot of them. The city we built to house them was about the size of London, or Cooladdi, which is half way between Quilpie and Charleville in south west Queensland.

We had forgotten the exact number of cards, so we set out to find the last card and write down its number. It is too big to write down here, but luckily we had created the card itself with the number on it. By the time we had got to the final stages of indexing, the cards had got pretty bulky, with lots of pages and very tiny writing, to accomodate all the numerals and commas and stuff, which represented the card number. We were



PENGUIN AGENTS OFTEN WENT UNDERCOVER TO OBTAIN INTELLIGENCE FOR THEIR ULTIMATE ENSLAVEMENT OF HUMANS.

CHARLES GREEN WITH A PENGUIN FROM "THE ENDURANCE" CAROLINE ALEXANDER

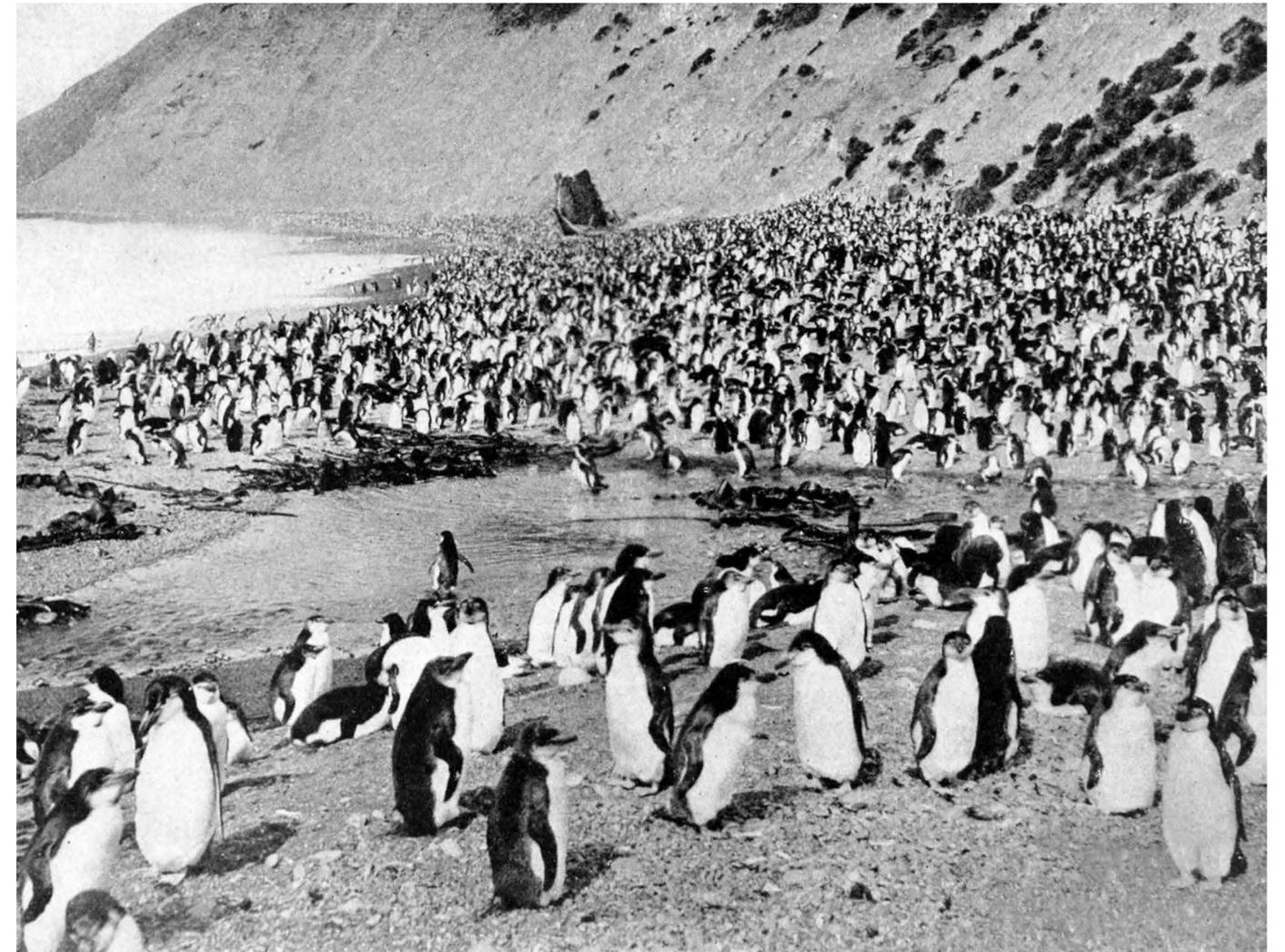
prepared – we had brought a wheelbarrow.

When we eventually reached the final card, which took quite some time, we had to make the same trek in reverse, back to the first card, because we had forgotten to take the random number generator.

Finally, we were all set. We fed in the first number, coincidentally the number one, and the last number, which we had to do very carefully, so as not to make a mistake, because you don't want the wrong random sequence in a situation like this.

We had to burn a few of the cabinets to keep the steam pressure high enough to run the random-number generator, but that was okay, we just emptied them onto the floor. The machine was rather noisy, so we moved to a nearby suburb where it was a bit quieter, due to the wet spaghetti on the floors, returning from time to time with more cabinets for the fire.

It was literally a red letter day when the sequence was done because near the end we had run out of black ink and had to slash our wrists and bleed on the rollers for the final numbers in the sequence.



THE HEAD OF IBM, WHEN FIRST HEARING OF PENGUINS,
SAID: "THERE MIGHT BE A NEED FOR PERHAPS SEVEN OF
THESE ANIMALS ON THE ENTIRE PLANET."

COLLIER'S NEW ENCYCLOPEDIA, 1921

It was a strange sequence, when it was all done, not at all what we expected. Its randomness did not seem to respect probability. It started with the aforementioned “one”, a surprise in itself, but then, amazingly, came the number “two”, then would you believe it “three” and so on, just as if you were counting from one to 100.

The improbability of this happening convinced us the result was indeed random. This saved us a lot of time. All we had to do was scabble around in the cards we had tipped out onto the floor and find the cards numbered one to 23. It would have been even easier if we hadn't tipped them onto the floor.

Why 23? Because they were utterly random, we reasoned 23 was plenty. If you can't sum up a topic in 23 random statements you may as well go and play in the traffic, because you are no use to anyone. Any more than 23 and you would just be repeating yourself.

It really was rather lucky the random numbers had come out as they did. If we had been forced to search through all the cards across a city of index cards the size of London or Cooladdi, it would have taken years, and in this case we almost certainly



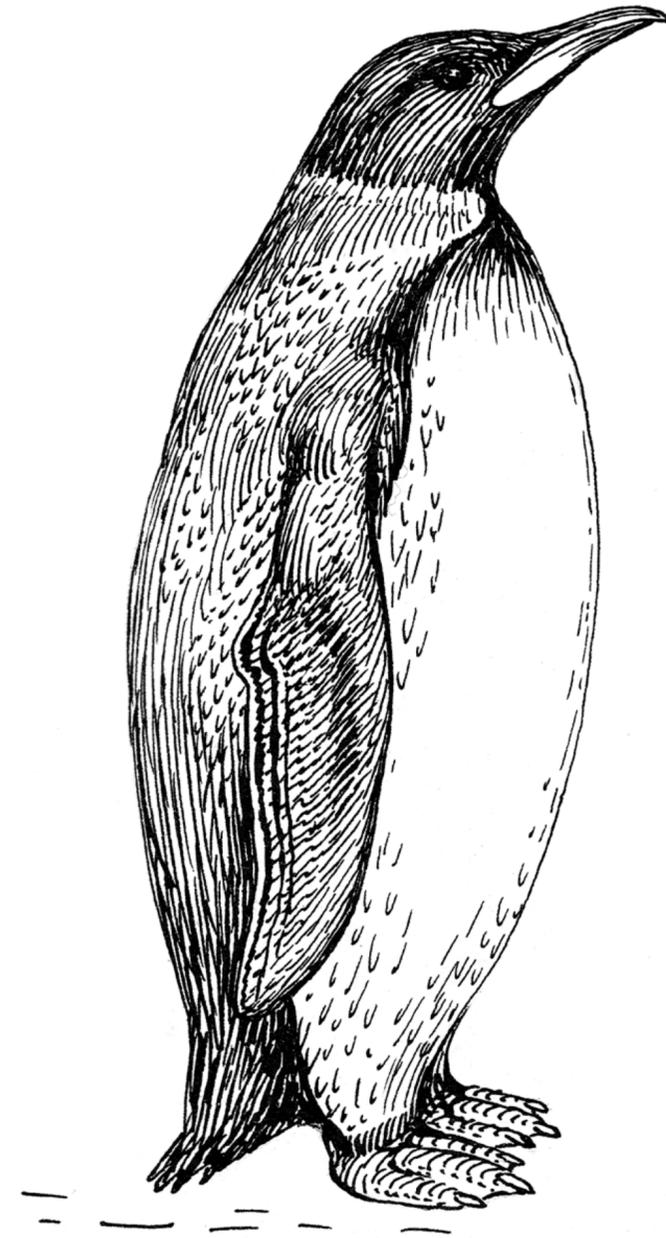
REINDEER AND PENGUINS? CLEAR EVIDENCE OF THE
FALSIFICATION OF PENGUIN HISTORY. EITHER THE REINDEER
OR THE PENGUINS ARE IN THE WRONG HEMISPHERE.

BRIAN GRATWICKE CC BY 2.0

would not have written this book (though anything is possible).

All well and good. We now had the 23 representative facts standing like 23 synecdoches for the whole shebang. Unfortunately, at some unknown time or other since we did this, the small wooden box containing the first 23 index cards seems to have been misplaced. It was on the bedside table but it isn't there now. Oops. We admit this casts doubt on our narrative and as a consequence, on the very existence of Penguins.

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. At this time we were still in possession of these holographic facts, in the sense of the hurricane and the butterfly's wing. With them we were able to demonstrate the existence of Penguins was incontrovertibly true and furthermore, since the time Penguins enslaved humans and boiled our planet (thereby committing suicide through lack of suitable ice floes on which to sit while presiding over the simmering soup, whose lumps of mammal, vegetable and dumpling were theirs to command) there has been only agreement regarding the actual existence of Penguins. Not only their existence, but even this fairy story of enslavement and



DESPITE THEIR OBVIOUSLY FICTIONAL NATURE,
ILLUSTRATIONS OF PENGUINS SEEM SO MUCH MORE
AUTHORITATIVE THAN PHOTOGRAPHS.
CAN THIS MEAN ANYTHING?

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF PEARSON SCOTT FORESMAN, WIKIMEDIA FOUNDATION

suicide by double boiler, which stretches credulity for even the most gullible. Disbelief has not been an option.

Really? No-one doubted Penguinism? Even late at night in a shed on a mouldy mattress reading "Catcher in the Rye" by candle light?

Oh so you're awake now?

Not that you'd notice.

What is that supposed to mean?

Nothing.

I'm not sure I like your tone.

Bite me. So let me give you back the dot points. You set out to disprove the existence of Penguins, so you collected all the Penguin evidence, narrowed it down to 23 random facts in perfect consequential numbering from 1 to 23, which you then lost, yet you claim those 23 random facts establish the existence of Penguins as incontrovertibly true.

Correct.

And you claim it's also true Penguins enslaved humans and boiled our planet, killing all forms of life including themselves.

Yes.



A GENTOO AND TWO KING PENGUINS WALKING ON THE BEACH AT MOLTKE HARBOUR, SOUTH GEORGIA. IF THESE ARE REAL PENGUINS WE WILL EAT OUR HATS.

LIAM QUINN CC BY-SA 2.0

Which leads s into the logic trap in which, if we were to include ourselves in “all life” we would not exist, making it extremely difficult to discuss this at all.

Yes.

Just for the hell of it, let's take a contrary view.

Okay.

Instead of believing this horrible fate which led to the end of civilisation as we knew it and the annihilation of all life, including Penguins, let's ask the obvious question. If all that is true, shouldn't we be dead?

Indeed.

Now you are about to tell me if we exist, it automatically follows Penguins cannot.

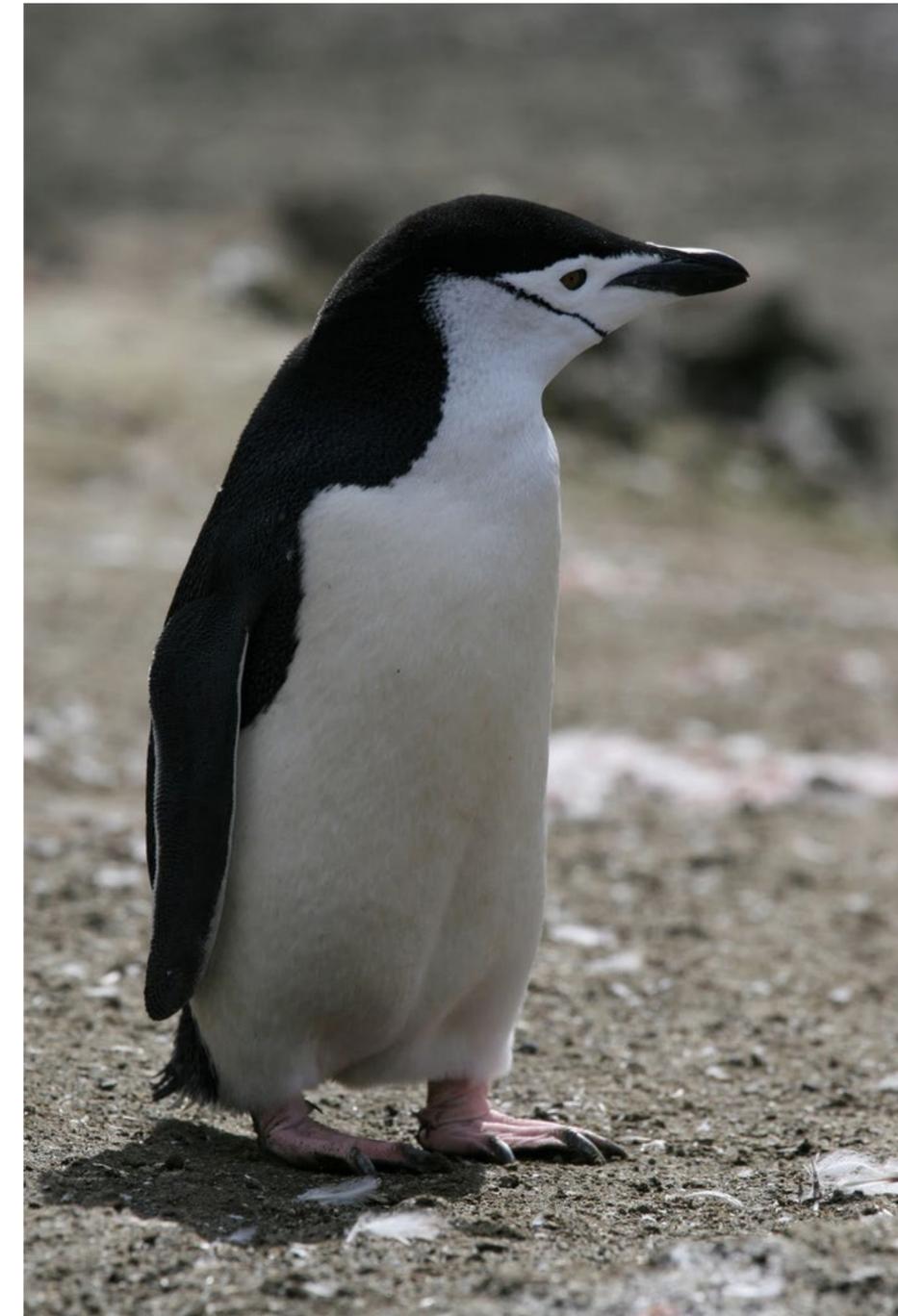
How did you guess?

This, I am afraid, is what is called a false assumption based on an unspoken but bogus law which says humans and Penguins cannot both exist, as if this was the nature of the universe.

It isn't?

No.

But where's the evidence?



CHINSTRAP PENGUIN. THIS RATHER MEEK LOOKING SPECIMEN HARDLY SEEMS THE ENSLAVING TYPE.

PHOTO GILAD ROM CC BY 2.0

What evidence? Of non existence? I don't think we need to pay any attention to an absence of evidence of non-existence. That's a circular argument. Not being able produce evidence of nonexistence doesn't mean nonexistence must be true.

It doesn't?

No. The normal process is to declare the possibility of nonexistence because of a lack of evidence of existence. Which is provisional and temporary by nature and refuted as soon as you do find said evidence.

Like what.

Fossils?

There are no Penguin fossils.

Really? What makes you say that?

Fossils occur in geology, right?

Yes.

There are no fossils because there is no geology.

Really?

Yes. When Penguins boiled our planet they melted the ice caps and now everything is underwater.

You're basing this on the supposition the story of Penguins boiling



GENTOO PENGUIN ORIGINALLY KNOWN AS
"PENGUIN CAN FLY" THE CONCEPT OF ATMOSPHERE WAS
DEEPLY MISUNDERSTOOD BY THE PENGUINS.

KEN FUNAKOSHI CC BY 2.0

the planet is true, aren't you.

Yes.

Leaving aside the lack of evidence of this actually happening, and the contrary evidence available to anyone with a reasonably recent atlas indicating icecaps still exist, at least for now. If you really go out on a limb and consult a couple of random newspapers you would pretty soon come to the conclusion humans exist and have cities all over the world

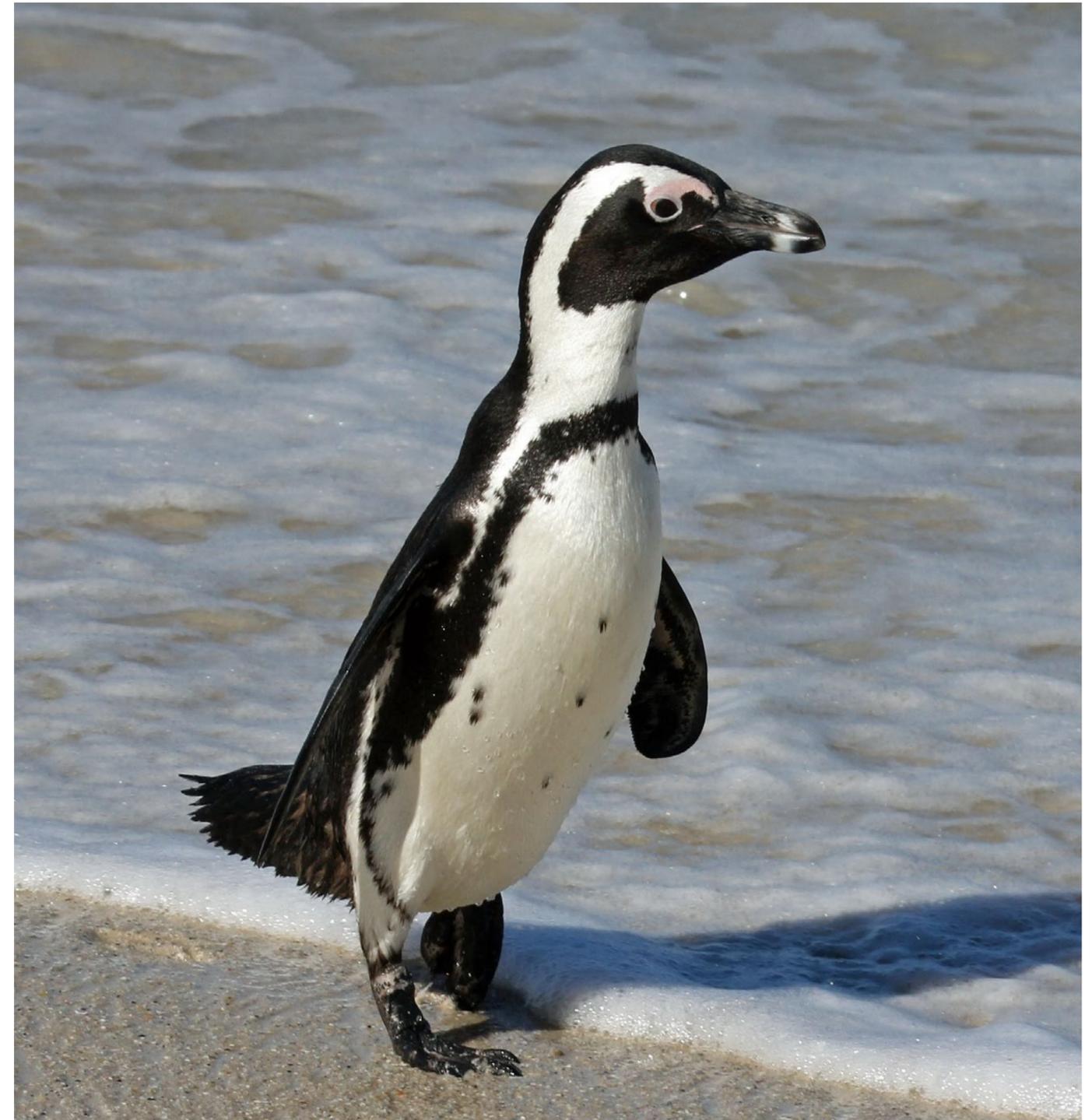
So what?

Have you heard about libraries?

What about them?

You can walk into any library anywhere in the world and get not only one but several boooks about Penguins.

That's not true. If you could "just walk into any library" which is ridiculous because there would be a law against it, it's beside the point, because the libraries are underwater too and books were printed on paper which dissolves underwater, so there are no books left anyway. Besides, books aren't proof of anything they are just books. It's like dreams. You might dream of the President of the United States but it's not really the real



AFRICAN PENGUIN.

DICK DANIELS CC SA 3.0

President of the United States, it's just a dream.

I'll give you that, but what about microfilm?

What about it?

Microfilm doesn't dissolve in water.

It wouldn't matter. Stuff on microfilm is way too small to read. Whoever thought up that idea?

They have microfilm readers that enlarge that stuff, you know.

Oh. Do they? I just remembered, all the microfilm was used to make gigantic polyurethane bags to scoop up the waste plastic in the Pacific Gyre.

The Penguins did that too, did they? Okay. What about magnetic tapes?

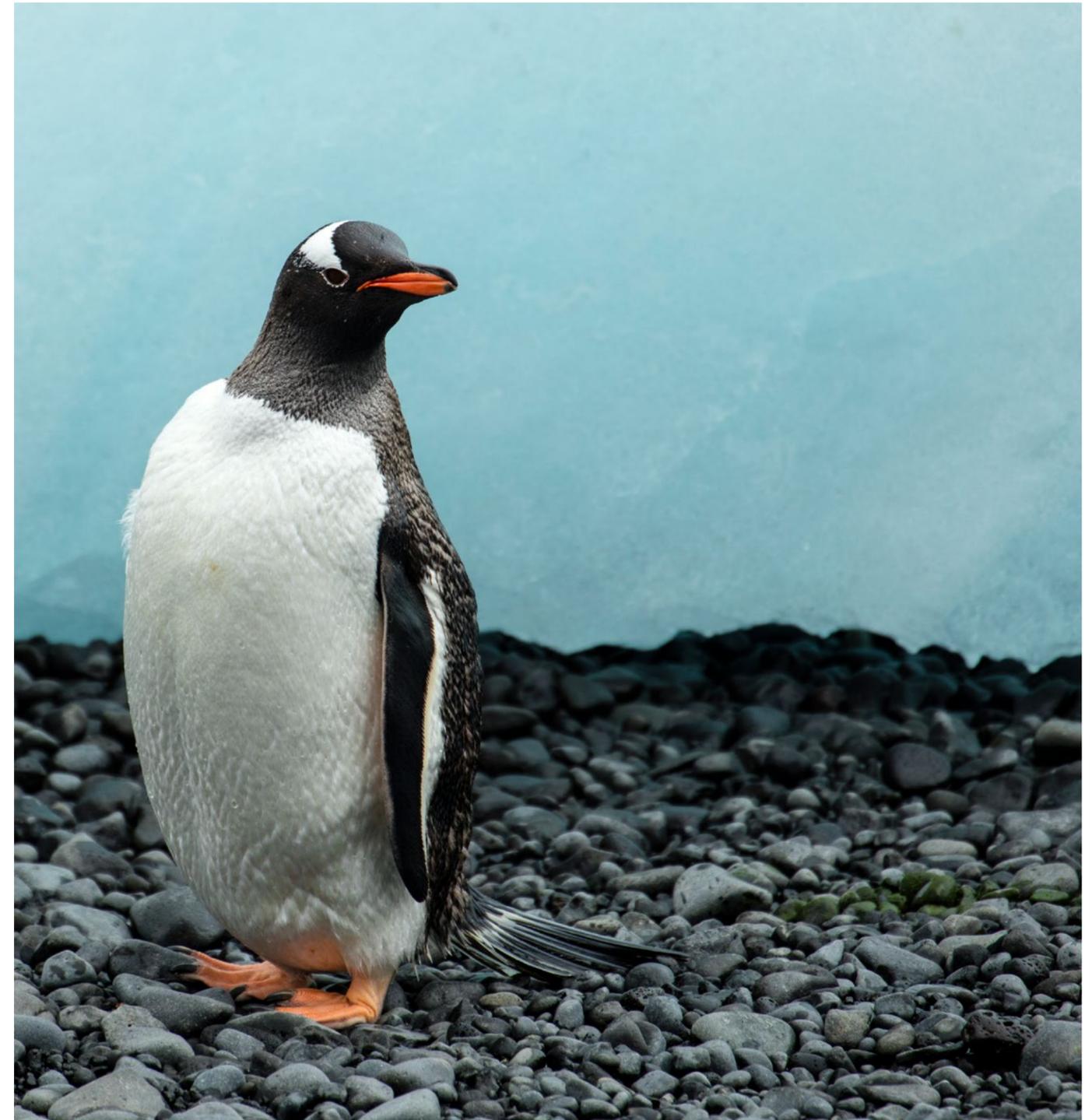
Erased.

Compact discs?

All used up dressing a gigantic Christmas tree burned at the end of the world to celebrate humanity's passing.

It does seem you have all the answers. Except for the big one. If we don't exist, what are we doing here?

I can answer that, but before I do that why don't we establish some basic ground rules we can agree on, before we get all



GENTOO PENGUIN, TABARIN PENINSULA, 2016

CC 0

muddled up and lose the plot.

There's a plot?

Don't be funny. You know about the concept of a priori, don't you? Prior to observation, facts may exist. Therefore priories may exist. Therefore priories can be built. In fact priories they need to be built, to house all those mendicant friars and nuns. However, for a priory to be built, it has to exist somewhere, at least in the imagination, otherwise you wouldn't know how to build it and you might end up building a giraffe, or the road to Mandalay. Therefore at least the idea of a priory must exist, and that's a fact.

A priory is a fact?

Yes.

Now we're getting somewhere.

Okay. It follows, a priori, that even if you have never seen, heard, or personally known a Penguin, this doesn't mean they couldn't possibly exist, at least somewhere, perhaps on an Island, running around naked, eating fish and laying eggs and talking about the meaning of life.

Sure. It follows, just like Dachshunds follow Chihuahuas.



HERE'S LOOKIN' AT YOU KID.

CC 0

However, we have to admit, it does seem rather fanciful.

Are you joking me?

Not at all. It follows, as you say, like Dachshunds follow Chihuahuas. In exactly the same way, when confronted by a complete lack of evidence for well-known events, the historian must take refuge in fiction. From fiction comes storytelling, and from stories, the truth. If we were to deny the truth, we might as well give up now.

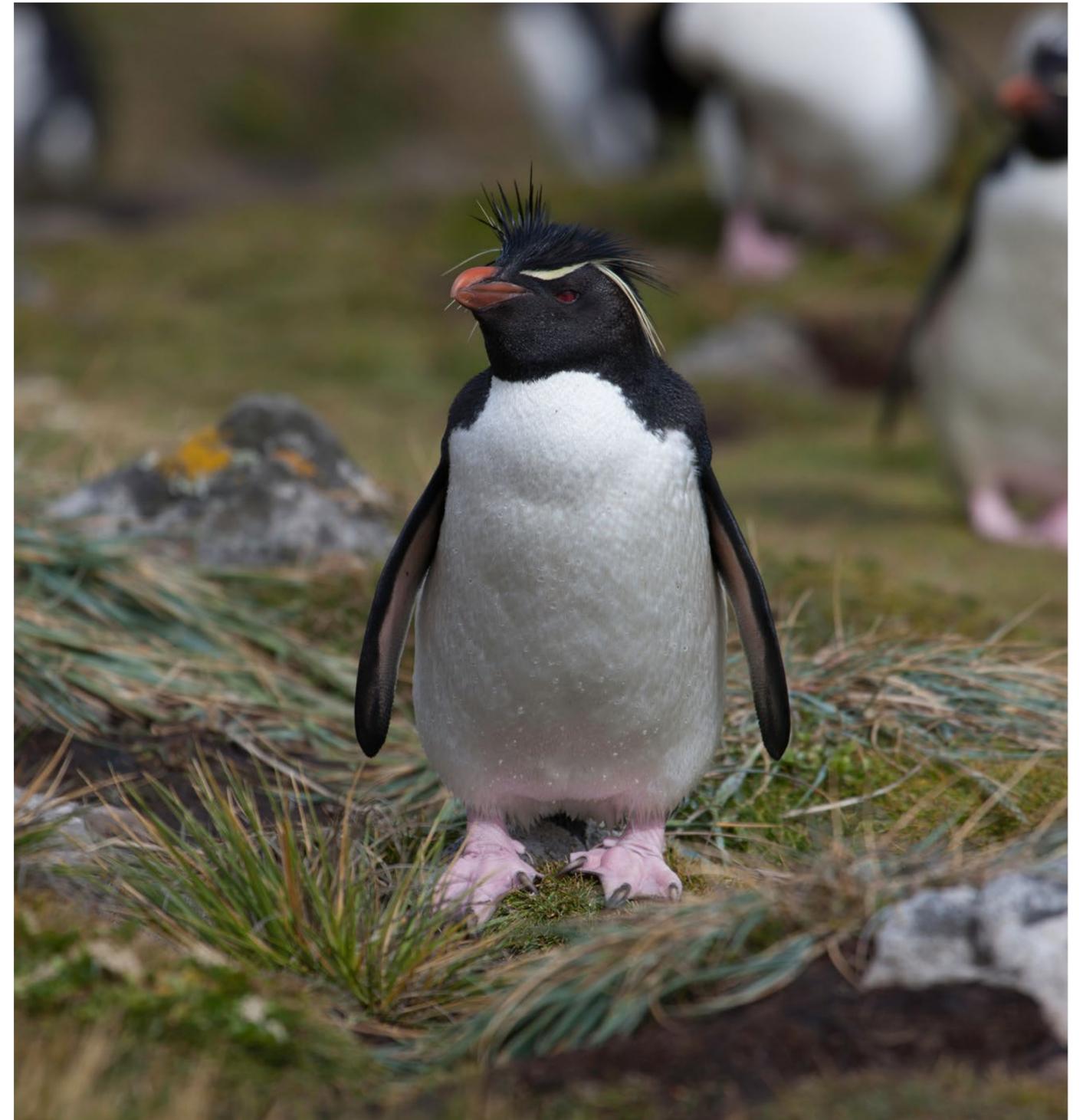
Are you sure you wrote this book?

That's not the issue here. We are here to ask questions, not answer them. It's really up to you to weigh the evidence, be persuaded by the arguments of the nonexistence of Penguins or remain unconvinced, preferring to believe in their existence, as well as your own.

Given the topic is in fact Penguins, it's going to be a stretch to get people to swallow the whole nonexistence thing.

Von Daniken did it.

Point taken. But what if there was a priory built especially to house nonexistent mendicant Penguins? For that to happen, they would have to exist, wouldn't they?



ANGRY AVIAN BIRD (BECAUSE OF THE PINK FEET).

CC.0

Why?

It would help explain your book. From a strictly commercial point of view, it would actually help if it was about something. And all those other books you mentioned. Let's say Penguins don't exist, except in a priory. What could be the harm in that? It might hold off human enslavement for a few years.

You cannot hold back the inevitable.

On the other hand, if Penguins don't exist, what's to stop them being something else. Like donkeys? Or werewolves?

My point exactly.

At the very least, even in those feathery heads of yours, the real question behind all of this is whether or not you, the authors, wrote this book, or whether it is the work of Penguins!

Oooooh! Scary!

Not that it matters. Existence of the book is not a matter in doubt. But what if the whole thing is a fake, simply copied, word for word, from other sources.

So what if it was? Those other so-called sources were copied from previous sources and those from even more sources which preceded them, leading back to an original account, all traces



NON EXISTENT PENGUIN ABOUT TO BE DOWNGRADED
TO IMPROBABLE

CC 0

of which have unfortunately lost, but which, in corresponding word for word with ours, suggest it may have been plagiarised from the one you now hold in your hand be it case-bound hand-tooled fine Sulawesi leather with uncut rag pages or your big sister's hand-me-down iPad with a cracked screen and a nearly dead battery. By virtue of this logic, which is unarguable by the way, this book, or at least your copy of it, must be the first and only true account, from which all others have been copied.

I'm finding that hard to believe.

You're an incredulist.

That isn't even a word.

Are you going to read this book or not?

Why should I?

There's nothing to be afraid of. It's a harmless, rather boring account of the end of civilisation during the tyrannical reign of the Penguins. That's all.

All right then, what are you waiting for? Let's go.



COLD DAYLIGHT FROST

CC 0