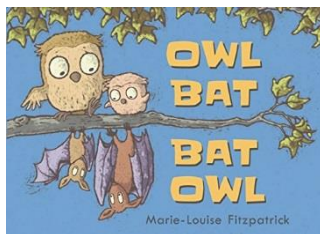


Wordless Books

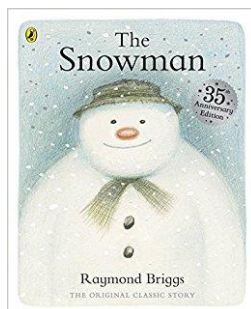
Help children to tell stories for themselves. There are many excellent and sophisticated examples in this list which includes some classic books and some more recent titles. Many of the wordless books published in the UK originated in other countries. To find out more about wordless children's books from around the world and how they are being shared with children in refugee and migrant communities see <http://ibby.org/awards-activities/activities/silent-books/?L=0>



Owl Bat Bat Owl by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick

Walker 9781406364392

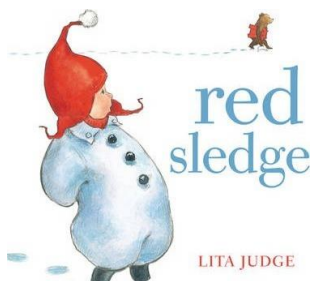
A family of owls and a family of bats companionably occupy the same branch, the owls perched on top and the bats clinging on from below. As the sky slowly darkens, a full moon rises and illuminates their night time activities. The smallest owl and the smallest bat strike up an endearingly depicted friendship which unites both families.



The Snowman by Raymond Briggs

Puffin 9780723275534

A classic wordless book about a boy who makes a snowman which comes to life at night. Their adventure together involves a flight through a snow-filled sky and the dénouement is full of feeling. The film with its memorable accompanying music has become a perennial Christmas favourite.

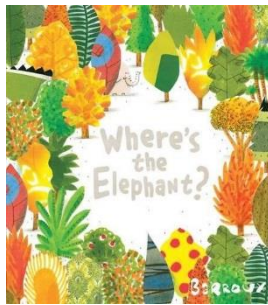


Red Sledge by Lita Judge

Andersen Press 9781849397933

A group of animals borrow a red sledge that a child has left propped up outside. This becomes a bright spot of colour on the snowy slopes as they joy ride under a moonlit sky. In the morning, the child (surely a cousin of Astrid Lindgren's independent youngsters) is puzzled by the animal tracks in the snow ... The only 'words' are onomatopoeic sounds made by the movement of the sledge and the animals' whoops of excitement.

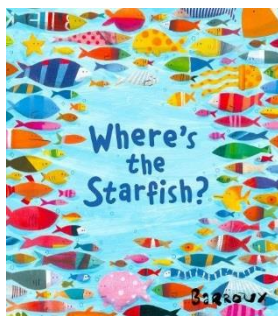




Where's the Elephant? by Barroux

Egmont 9781405271387

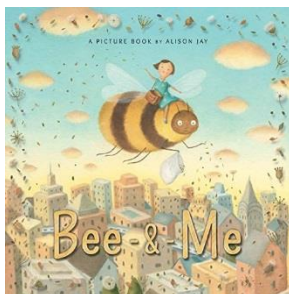
A beautiful forest stands by the edge of the sea with trees strikingly illustrated using collage techniques in green, orange and yellow hues. Who lives in the forest? If we look carefully we can find an elephant, a snake and a parrot hidden amongst the foliage. But, almost imperceptibly at first, change is coming. How will the animals cope with the erosion of their environment? Barroux was inspired by the format of the *Where's Wally?* books to create this thoughtful wordless picture book about deforestation in the Amazon which, despite its serious message, has comical and hopeful elements.



Where's the Starfish? by Barroux

Egmont 9781405271394

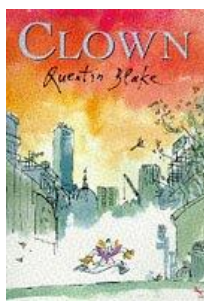
Having highlighted the threat to forests, Barroux turns to the pollution of the oceans. A shoal of multi-coloured fish of many shapes and sizes are intrigued by a pile of debris at the bottom of the ocean. The pile becomes a mountain of items discarded by human beings, destroying the underwater environment. Readers have been alerted at the beginning to look out for a starfish, a jellyfish and a clownfish throughout the book and these three support a helpful whale in finding a solution.



Bee & Me by Alison Jay

Old Barn Books 9781910646199

Subtitled 'A Story about Friendship', this book opens with a cityscape scene and then homes in on an open window through which flies a large bee, initially terrifying a girl reading a book about flowers. She revives the exhausted bee with sugar and water and the pair eventually become playmates. The bee grows to such a size that the girl can ride on its back and together they fly over the city scattering seeds which grow into flowers that attract more bees and butterflies too.

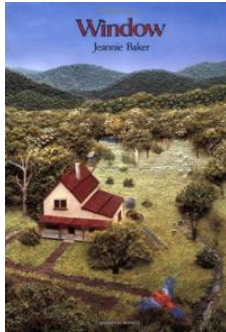


Clown by Quentin Blake

Red Fox 9780099493617

Readers will need to bring their understanding of narrative informed by the conventions of comics to this story which has the cinematic quality of a silent film. The clown is an unwanted toy which comes to life and, after trials and tribulations, finds a happy home. The children's literature tradition that only children are aware that a toy is alive is maintained throughout.

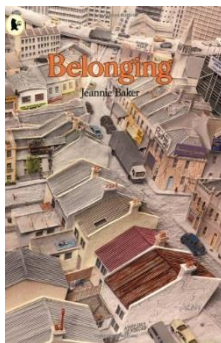




Window by Jeannie Baker

Walker 9780744594867

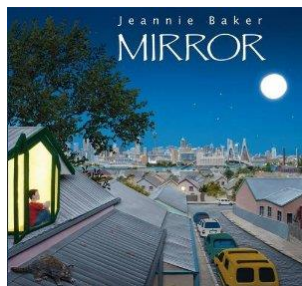
A book which could provoke much discussion about the effects of humanity on the environment. A view from the same window is seen over a period of twenty years, as a newborn child grows to adulthood, showing the changes that take place. The collage illustrations are almost tactile.



Belonging by Jeannie Baker

Walker 9781406305487

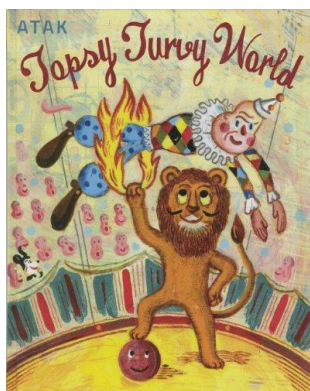
This companion volume to *Window* charts the changes in an urban neighbourhood by viewing it through the same window frame as a baby grows to womanhood and has her own child. Not entirely wordless as there are many examples of environmental print.



Mirror by Jeannie Baker

Walker 9781406309140

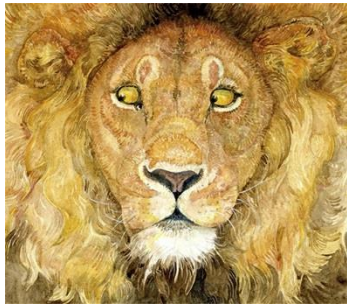
What links two families, one living in Sydney, Australia, the other in a village in southern Morocco? Their lives are explored, side by side, in pictures which follow the directionality of their respective written scripts, English and Arabic. Jeannie Baker's realistic collage pictures portray seemingly starkly different lifestyles but the design and layout of the book facilitate reflection on their similarities. Close examination of the details reveals the Moroccan family's engagement with modern technology and the Australian family's appreciation of long established craft and culture while the specific connection between them is made apparent.



Topsy Turvy World by Atak

Flying Eye Books 9781909263048

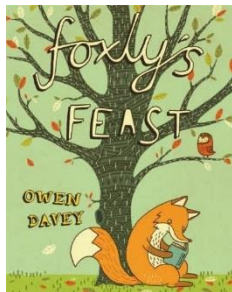
A whole world of unlikely reversals, causing questioning about what is natural and normal. Mice chase cats. A rabbit turns a gun on a hunter. A baby feeds its mother. Firefighters turn hoses full of flames on a fountain while water floods from the windows of a nearby house. A punk hands money to a suited gent begging on the side of the street.



The Lion and the Mouse by Jerry Pinkney

Walker 9781406332049

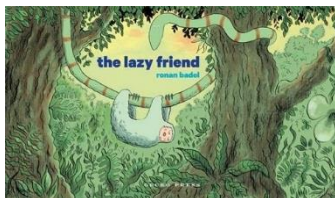
An almost wordless picture book, save for the haunting animal noises of the savannah. Jerry Pinkney, an African American illustrator, has located this well-known fable in Africa and this is especially apparent in the first endpaper illustration, richly abundant with animal life including elephants, giraffes and zebras. However, in the body of the book, the focus is firmly on the two protagonists. The magnificently maned lion who spares the mouse who accidentally finds his way into the big cat's clutches. The larger than life mouse who leaps from frame to frame and returns the favour by gnawing through the rope binding the ensnared lion. The final endpaper depicts a family friendship between the two species.



Foxly's Feast by Owen Davey

Templar 9781848771321

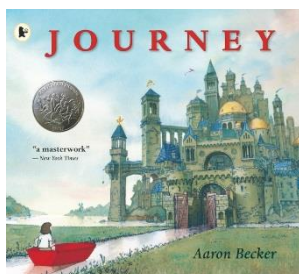
A fox is searching for his next meal, signified on successive spreads by a speech bubble enclosing a knife and fork. He appears to be contemplating various fish and fowl but the ultimate feast may not be what readers expect. Owen Davey makes very effective use of limited colour palettes – here consisting of shades of green, yellow, orange and brown.



The Lazy Friend by Ronan Badel

Gecko Press 9781927271414

Sloths have a well known reputation for being lazy and the character at the centre of this wordless story is no exception. He clings on to his branch, eyes closed, while all sorts of dangerous things go on around him. Luckily he has some faithful friends to protect him.



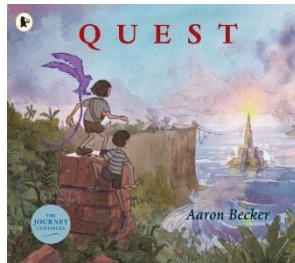
Journey by Aaron Becker

Walker 9781406355345

A girl sits forlornly in a sepia world, ignored by her busy family. Spying a spot of colour in the shape of a red crayon, she draws a door through which she escapes to a green forest, illuminated by sparkling lights and blue lanterns, threaded through with a stream which leads her to the next stage of her journey, once she has drawn a red boat. She sails into the centre of a huge castle and, from there, draws new forms of transport so that she can explore this fantastic world. Then – disaster – she loses the red crayon. Will she be able to return home or even continue her journey? The entire story is told through pictures full of magical detail. The colour red stands for play, imagination and doorways to



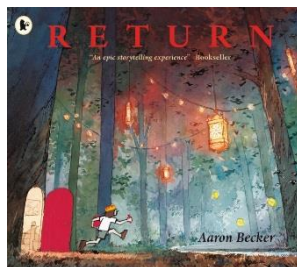
enchantment. As the journey progresses, the colour mauve also comes into its own... A video about the making of this book can be seen [here](#).



Quest by Aaron Becker

Walker 9781406360813

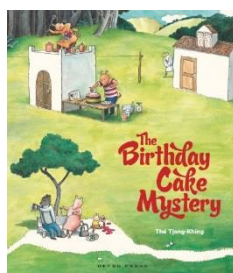
In this sequel to *Journey*, Aaron Becker picks up the idea of the colours red and mauve joining forces. The girl with the red crayon and the boy with the mauve crayon enter a door into another world after a king hands them a rainbow map before he is dragged away by soldiers, dropping an orange crayon in the mêlée. The pair have been challenged to undertake a quest, one which will take them over many terrains, encountering a multitude of dangers, before they reach the rainbow's end.



Return by Aaron Becker

Walker 9781406373295

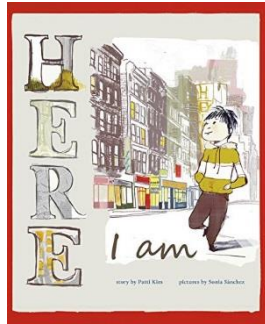
In the final book in Aaron Becker's trilogy, the girl once again uses her red crayon to draw an entrance to a magical world. Her father follows her and finds her with the boy with the mauve crayon and the king who has regained his orange crayon. Soldiers recapture the king and the red and the mauve crayons must be imaginatively employed for escape to be effected in a way that unites the girl and her father, bringing the story full circle from the beginning of *Journey* with many iridescent adventures on the way.



The Birthday Cake Mystery by Thé Tjong-Khing

Gecko Press 9781877579103

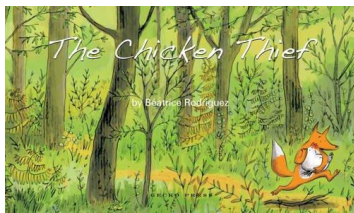
Many hours could be spent following through the mini scenarios on each of the spreads in this book, exploring where they overlap and intersect and discovering the many animal characters that populate each page. There's the fellow doggedly making a cake despite some incredible interruptions. And what are those red footprints leading to a house stage right? Lots of mysteries to puzzle over!



Here I Am by Patti Kim and Sonia Sánchez

Curious Fox 9781782022268

Based on the author's own experience of migrating from Korea to the USA. A young boy's experience of the initial alienation and confusion is eloquently expressed in pictures placed on pages carefully designed in terms of layout and colour. Planting a seed brought from his country leads to the nurturing of friendship and feeling at ease with his identity in his new home.



The Chicken Thief by Béatrice Rodriguez

Gecko Press 9781877467318

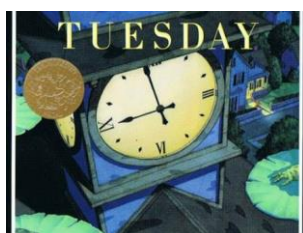
Bear and Hare are breakfasting outside their home when a fox leaps out of the trees and runs away with one of their chickens. Accompanied by Rooster, they set off in hot pursuit deeper and deeper into the forest. But is the situation as it seems? The pictures show the developing tenderness between the fox and the hen resulting in a caring cross species relationship between the pair who choose to live on a desert island.



The Fishing Trip by Béatrice Rodriguez

Gecko Press 9781877579240

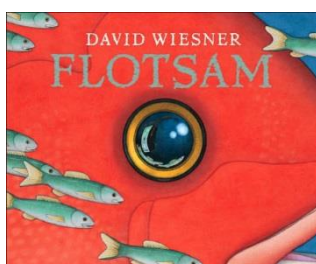
Fox and Chicken have a soon-to-hatch egg but the fridge is empty. Chicken sets off on a fishing trip to bring home food and provide for the family. She encounters many dangers from huge birds and sea monsters. Bringing home her bounty, she has doubts about whether she should have trusted her foxy companion...



Tuesday by David Wiesner

Andersen Press 9781849394475

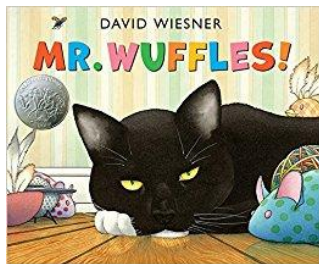
Pigs might fly but on this particular Tuesday night it's an army of frogs that fly in formation on lily pads across a community, leaving puzzlement in their wake. A great incentive to children to invent their own science fiction scenario.



Flotsam by David Wiesner

Andersen Press 9781849394499

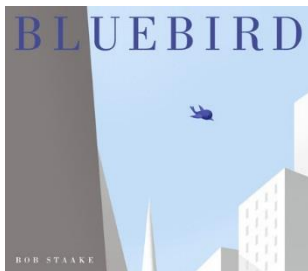
An underwater camera is washed up on a beach and picked up by a boy who takes care to examine things closely. He hastens to get the film inside developed and learns about many unexpected wonders of the deep. However, he is not the first to discover the amazing camera. Nor, it appears, will he be the last. Surreal and superb.



Mr Wuffles! by David Wiesner

Andersen Press 9781783441167

Mr Wuffles the cat has found a new toy. What could it be? Its mysterious appearance looks suspiciously like a flying saucer. And, sure enough, there are little green men inside who, judging by the artwork on their walls, may have had close encounters with his kind before.



Bluebird by Bob Staake

Andersen Press 9781783441853

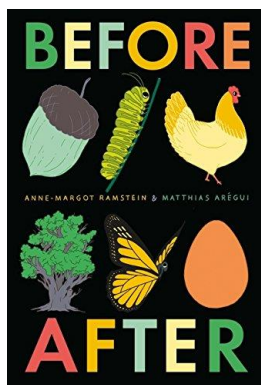
A lonely boy, bullied by his peers, is taken under the wing of a bluebird who becomes his constant companion. Set out in comic strip layout with stylised round headed figures in a geometrically regular urban landscape, a melancholy mood is created in blue, black and white and shades of grey. However, there is warmth at the heart of the relationship between boy and bird and eventually colour enters their world.



Flood by Alvaro F. Villa

Curious Fox 9781782021261

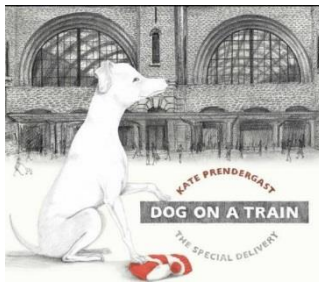
A story of human resilience in the face of environmental disaster. A family who have put much effort into constructing and caring for their isolated house have to flee in the face of a flood. But once the storm subsides, they return and rebuild their home and their lives.



Before After by Anne-Margot Ramstein and Matthias Arégui

Walker 9781406357936

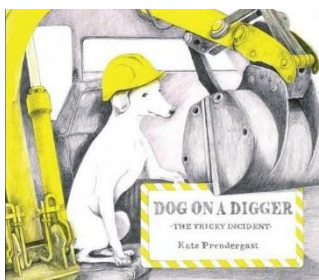
A book full of beautiful images which evoke and extend ideas around the concept of before and after. In most cases, the pictures are on opposite pages: a hive of bees on the left, a jar of honey on the right; a rocking horse on the left, a rocking chair on the right. At other times the linked ideas are on consecutive spreads. Two people are separated by a chasm between two mountains. Turn the page and they have been united by a bridge. Some sophisticated ideas that will encourage talk, presented in a deceptively simple way.



Dog on a Train by Kate Prendergast

Old Barn Books 9781910646120

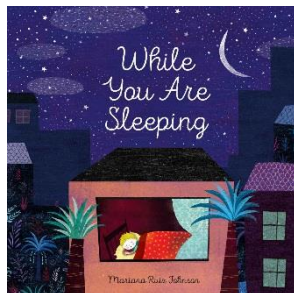
Humour and affection are keynotes in this story of a faithful dog desperate to return a forgotten hat to a child he cares for, drawn in pencil with a splash of red to highlight the missing object. The pictures have a strong sense of movement as befits a story of a fast-moving journey. There is some environmental print, in particular a notice that needs to be read to fully understand the characters' actions.



Dog on a Digger: The Tricky Incident by Kate Prendergast

Old Barn Books 9781910646168

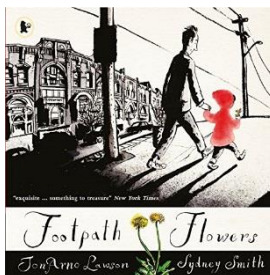
A dog wakes his human companion with a lick on the face, then he's off out into the builder's yard in which the caravan where they live is situated. After sharing a meal with the woman who runs the snack bar and her little dog, our hero becomes an agent for rescue when the latter gets into potentially deep water. As with the earlier book, the drawings are in soft pencil with, in this case, mustard yellow picking out the jackets of the dog and the man and the paint on their digger.



While You Are Sleeping by Mariana Ruiz Johnson

Chronicle 9781452165998

While a child lies sleeping a surreal dream-like world with cavorting carnivalesque characters expands around him. The Argentinian illustrator won the 2015 Silent Book Contest, the first international dedicated to books without words, held in Italy, with this book.

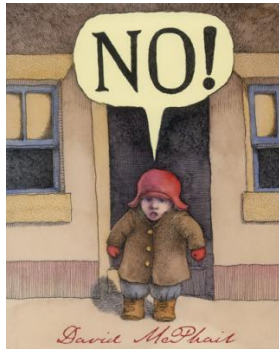


Footpath Flowers by JonArno Lawson & Sydney Smith

Walker 9781406365672

A girl traverses the town beside her father. Most of the pictures are in shades of sepia but bright spots of colour draw our attention – the red splash of the girl's coat and the wild flowers that she finds in all sorts of spaces. She puts the flowers she retrieves in places that reveal her thoughtfulness and caring. As their journey towards home progresses the colour in their world increases. A story that shows how children notice many small details and make connections that adults ignore.

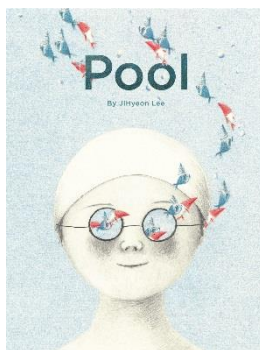




No! by David McPhail

Frances Lincoln 9781847807137

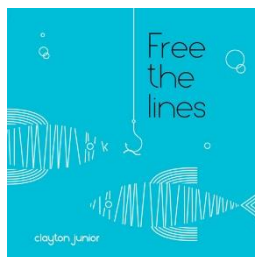
A wordless book except for the one word of the title that appears at the climax of the centre of the story and changes everything. A boy sets out to post a letter and on the way observes all kinds of destructive human behaviour - soldiers forcibly entering houses, tanks in the street and planes dropping bombs. The tide turns when he confronts a bully awaiting him and the reader ultimately discovers what is in the letter.



Pool by JiHyeon Lee

Chronicle 9781452142944

Two children develop a friendship when they dive into a watery world in reality and in their imaginations in this first picture book by Korean artist JiHyeon Lee. The pictures make bold use of clear spaces, particularly in the early spreads where one of the children appears to be hesitating to take the plunge. Details and colour palette expand as their underwater adventure advances, then once again features a sense of space on their return.



Free the lines by Clayton Junior

Words & Pictures 9781784936266

A story with a strong environmental theme which shows how a lone fisherman can effect change even when he is like a small fish in a big sea. Strong lines and shapes and a limited colour range of blue, black and white convey a clear and effective message.



Professional Crocodile by Giovanna Zoboli and Mariachiara Di Giorgio

Chronicle 9781452165066

A crocodile gets up and goes through his morning routine, rides the metro, interacts with others on his way to work. But what is his job? The answer will make you smile! The streets are in an Italian town, made evident by the environmental print, and while they are populated principally by humans, the presence of other animals including the crocodile himself appears to go unremarked.



Wave by Suzy Lee

Chronicle 9780811859240

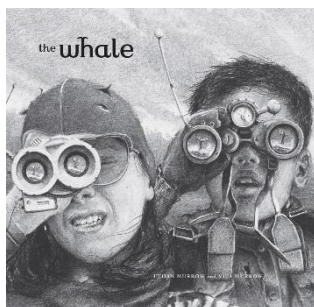
Accompanied by a flock of five seagulls, a small girl stands at the edge of the sea observing, challenging and playing with the waves that roll in, finding out at first hand about the movement of the ocean as it strikes the shore. Presented in a landscape format, the child moves from the beach on the left hand side across the boundary of the page divide into the wave which rises on the right hand page. The pictures have a sparse simplicity and are rendered in charcoal for the drawings of the girl and the birds on the seashore and acrylic paint for the sea.



Lines by Suzy Lee

Chronicle 9781452156651

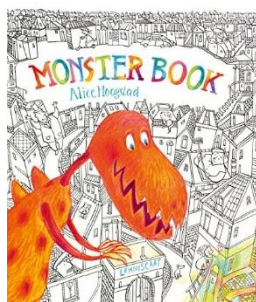
A pencil line traces the track of a skater's movements whirling around on the ice, circling and making figures of eight. First of all it's just the skater and her shadow, later to be joined by a host of other joyful young skaters, eventually revealed to be moving around a pond, all drawn by the artist as evidenced by the endpapers.



The Whale by Ethan & Vita Murrow

Templar 9781783701711

A boy and a girl set out in a small boat to record in sound and pictures the presence of a giant whale which people say does not exist. Excerpts from newspapers at the beginning and end of the book situate the story but the tale of their perilous voyage depicted from a variety of angles is shown entirely in pencil drawings.

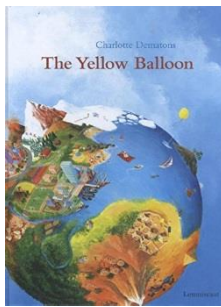


Monster Book by Alice Hoogstad

Lemniscaat 9781788070102

A small girl brings colour and excitement to her black and white town by drawing an array of friendly looking monsters on any surface she can find. They spring to life and grow in size. Anxious townsfolk try to wash them away and then down comes the rain and it seems the monsters have vanished. The town is restored to monochrome anonymity. However, in a corner a small girl, now joined by other children with crayons, is again making her mark.





The Yellow Balloon by Charlotte Dematons

Lemniscaat 9781788070072

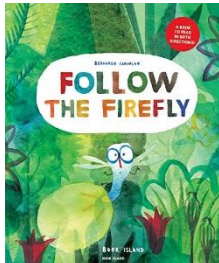
Take a trip in a hot air balloon and view from on high scenes that shift between continents and time periods culminating in a final fairy tale spread. There are lots of tiny details to pore over making this book reminiscent of the classic wordless picture books of Mitsumasa Anno such as *Anno's Journey*.



The Tree House by Marije Tolman & Ronald Tolman

Lemniscaat 9781788070010

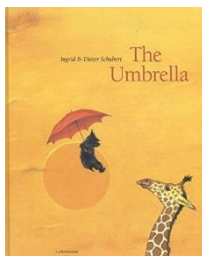
A polar bear and a brown bear make their home in a tree house where they are joined by a variety of animals and birds ranging from a flock of flamingos to a pair of pandas. In this wordless book, space and directionality are used to tell the story with the tree house standing on the right hand page while its changing conglomerations of visitors enter and exit on the left. The two bears appear to welcome the company of their fellow creatures but, when they have all departed, they are content to be alone gazing at the moon.



Follow the Firefly/Run, Rabbit, Run! by Bernardo Cavalho

Book Island 9780994109828

Two stories shown in the same pictures. Depending on which end of the book you start, you can follow a white rabbit's escape from captivity into a wild wood or a firefly's journey from the same wood into a city.



The Umbrella by Dieter & Ingrid Schubert

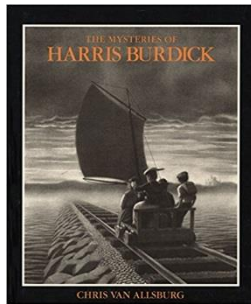
Lemniscaat 9781788070089

On a very blustery day, a little black dog is whirled away into the sky, clinging on to an umbrella. As he is carried around the world, the umbrella proves a very useful aid in all sorts of circumstances, whether it's a sword to defend himself against crocodiles, upturned as a boat to ride wild ocean waves or a sledge to speed down a snowy mountain.



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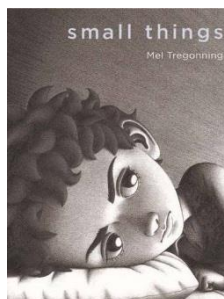
www.clpe.org.uk



The Mysteries of Harris Burdick by Chris Van Allsburg

Andersen Press 9781849392792

The premise behind this unique book of pictures is that the fourteen drawings within it were left with a publisher by a man named Harris Burdick who subsequently disappeared. Each black and white drawing purports to be a single illustration from a different story. Each one has a title and a brief caption but otherwise the only clues to the context are in the pictures themselves, providing a great stimulus for children's own creative writing.



Small Things by Mel Tregunning

Allen & Unwin 9781743368725

This profoundly moving book captures the heart of what it can feel like to be isolated and burdened with the weight and pressure of life. Every page offers a glimpse into the window of the soul of the late author and a mirror into a corner of your own. Mel Tregunning, whose exceptional talent and sensitive attention to detail will live on in the pages of this powerful and beautiful book, encourages us all to tread more sensitively and thoughtfully as we make our way through the world.

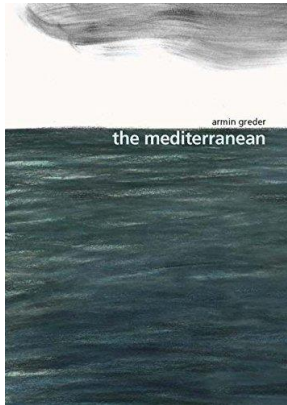


The Arrival by Shaun Tan

Hodder 9780734415868

This graphic novel tells many stories through expressive sepia illustrations which depict a strange mix of the realistic and the surreal. A man travels to another country leaving his wife and child behind. Why does he go? What is this country where he finds it so hard to understand what is going on and to be understood? He gradually finds ways to communicate and other people start to tell him their own stories. By not making the settings identifiable places and by adding many surrealistic touches, Shaun Tan allows this story to be simultaneously about a specific migrant and every migrant. A unique book to be puzzled over, discussed and made the reader's own.





***The Mediterranean* by Armin Greder**

Allen & Unwin 9781760634018

Having dramatically dealt with the theme of prejudice in his earlier picture book *The Island*, here Armin Greder uses his distinctive charcoal drawings to depict a dark world with a global dimension. The only words in the story are a single sentence indicating what is happening to the body in the water in the first picture. From there on the reader needs to examine the pictures to draw conclusions about how that body came to be in the sea. An afterword by Alessandro Leogrande, an Italian journalist who writes about social, political and environmental issues, fills in the background about the 'food chain' portrayed in this disturbing picture book which demands discussion.

