



# *Picture Storybooks*

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**A combination of  
the art of storytelling and  
the art of illustration**

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# Types of Children's Books

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## (A) Form

- Picture books
- Chapter books
- Comic books  
(graphic novels)

## (B) Genre

- Poetry
- Prose
  - Fiction
  - Nonfiction



# Genres of Children's Literature

Poetry	Prose			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ nursery rhymes</li> <li>■ lyric poems</li> <li>■ narrative poems</li> </ul>	Fiction		Nonfiction	
	Fantasy	Realism		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ concept books (including alphabet and counting books)</li> <li>■ information books</li> <li>■ biographies</li> </ul>
	Folk Literature	Modern Fantasy	Realistic Fiction	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ myths</li> <li>■ epics</li> <li>■ legends</li> <li>■ fables</li> <li>■ fairy tales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ literary fairy tales</li> <li>■ animal fantasy</li> <li>■ magical fantasy</li> <li>■ heroic fantasy</li> <li>■ science fiction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ family stories</li> <li>■ friendship</li> <li>■ adventure / survival stories</li> <li>■ mystery</li> <li>■ animal stories</li> <li>■ sports stories</li> <li>■ historical stories</li> </ul>		

# Must-Read Picture Storybooks

1. ***The Tale of Peter Rabbit*** by Beatrix Potter (1902)
2. ***Millions of Cats*** by Wanda Gág (1928)
3. ***Madeline*** by Ludwig Bemelamans (1939)
4. ***Make Way for Ducklings*** by Robert McCloskey (1941)
5. ***Goodnight Moon*** by Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd (1947)
6. ***The Snowy Day*** by Ezra Jack Keats (1962)
7. ***Swimmy*** by Leo Lionni (1963)
8. ***Where The Wild Things Are*** by Maurice Sendak (1963)
9. ***The Giving Tree*** by Shel Silverstein (1964)
10. ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar*** by Eric Carle (1969)

# Must-Read Picture Storybooks

11. ***Mr. Gumpy's Outing*** by John Burningham (1971)
12. ***Leo the Late Bloomer*** by Robert Kraus and Jose Aruego (1971)
13. ***Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*** by Verna Aardema & Diane Dillon (1975)
14. ***The Snowman*** by Raymond Briggs (1978)
15. ***The Polar Express*** by Chris Van Allsburg (1985)
16. ***We're Going on a Bear Hunt*** by Michael Rosen & Helen Oxenbury (1989)
17. ***The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*** by Jon Scieszka & Lane Smith (1989)
18. ***Seven Blind Mice*** by Ed Young (1992)
19. ***Guess How Much I Love You*** by Sam Bratney & Anita Jeram (1994)
20. ***Voices in the Park*** by Anthony Browne (1998)

# Introduction to Picture Storybooks

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- The term “picture storybooks” is normally applied to the books that tell the story **predominantly through pictures, with a few lines of supporting text.**
- Illustrations in picture storybooks are **integral** to the story, providing **actual plot or concept information** as well as **clues to character traits, settings, and moods.**
- Picture storybooks are usually intended to be read by children aged 3-8.
- A children’s picture storybook usually comes in the form of 32 pages.

# Why do children need picture books?

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- ...“and what is the use of a book,” thought Alice, “without pictures or conversations in it?”  
(from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll)
- Children are **more visually oriented** than adults. Children need **pictorial information** to guide their response to verbal information (Piaget’s theory).
- Pictures usually **more obviously resemble** the objects they represent than do spoken or written words. However, the resemblance is **not necessarily apparent** to all viewers.

# Analyzing Picture Storybooks

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- **Storytelling Elements**
- **Artistic Elements**
- **Design and Meaning**
- **Artistic Media**
- **Artistic Styles**



# Storytelling Elements

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- A. **Plot**
- B. **Character**
- C. **Theme**
- D. **Style**
- E. **Tone**

# Storytelling Elements

## Examples:

- *Mr. Gumpy's Outing* written and illustrated by John Burningham (1970)
- *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* written by Michael Rosen and illustrated by Helen Oxenbury (1989)
- *Guess How Much I Love You* written by Sam Bratney and illustrated by Anita Jeram (1994)
- *Kitten's First Full Moon* written and illustrated by Kevin Henkes (2004)

# Storytelling Elements

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## A. Plot

- The plots of picture storybooks tend to be simple and fast-paced.
- They often rely on repetitive patterns that are suited to the rhythmic nature of the picture-book design.
- The illustrations often assist the development of plots in the storytelling.

# Storytelling Elements

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## B. Character

- Characterization in picture books is simple.
- Characters tend to be identified by clearly outlined traits.
- Protagonists are most often young children or animals.
- Character motivation is usually singular.

# Storytelling Elements

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## C. Theme

- Picture-book themes tend to be sharply focused, i.e., a single theme clearly dominates a book.
- The range of themes in children's picture books, however, is virtually unlimited.
- The harsher themes are usually tempered by an atmosphere of hope at the end of the book  
e.g., *Granpa* by John Burningham (1984)  
*Allison* by Allen Say (1997)  
*Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne (1998)

# Storytelling Elements

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## D. Style / Language

- Words in picture books are carefully chosen and have to be very concise (picture books average about 2,000 words).
- Many picture books rely heavily on dialogues, which can be great fun to read aloud.
- They often contain refrains and repetitive patterns.
- They often play with words and use different kinds of imagery, particularly visual and auditory images (e.g., onomatopoeia).

# Storytelling Elements

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## E. Tone

- Many picture books are comic in tone, sometimes joyfully slapstick, and sometimes the subtle, quiet humor.
- Excitement and suspense are often found in picture storybooks.
- Some picture books are serious and reflective.

# Storytelling Elements

Examples (theme & tone):

- *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak (1963)
- *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein (1964)
- *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* written by Jon Scieszka and illustrated by Lane Smith (1989)
- *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say (1994)
- *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne (1998)



# Artistic Elements

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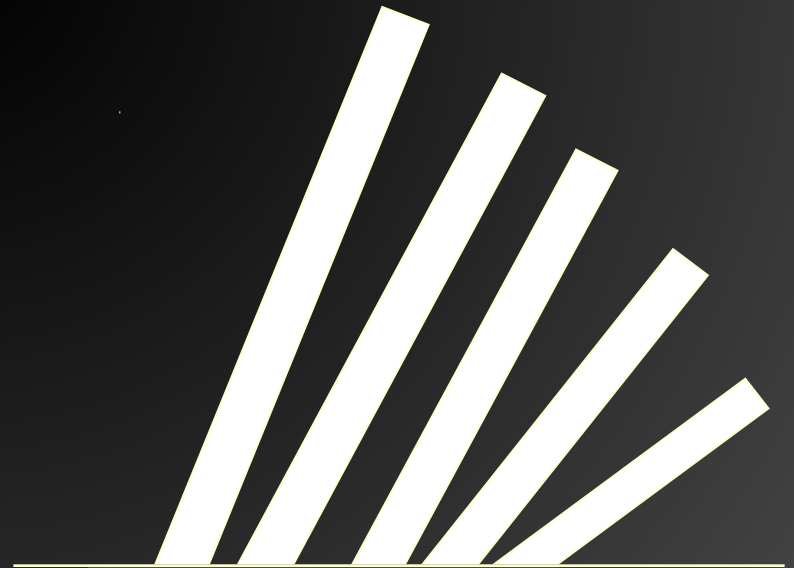
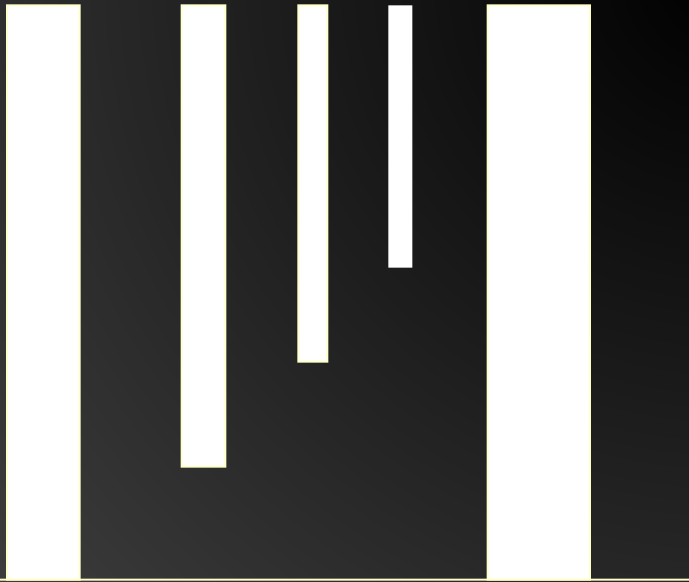
- A. Line
- B. Space
- C. Shape
- D. Color
- E. Texture
- F. Composition
- G. Perspective

# Artistic Elements

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## A. Line (I)

- Lines define objects, but lines can also suggest movement, distance, and even feeling.



# Artistic Elements

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## A. Line (II)

- Curves and circular lines suggest warmth, coziness, and security.



*The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter (1902)

# Artistic Elements

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## A. Line (II)

- Diagonal and zigzagging lines suggest action, excitement and rapid movement.



Miss Clavel ran fast  
and faster,



and she said, "Please children do—  
tell me what is troubling you?"

*Madeline*  
by Ludwig  
Bemelmans  
(1939)



***Millions of Cats*** by Wanda Gag (1928)



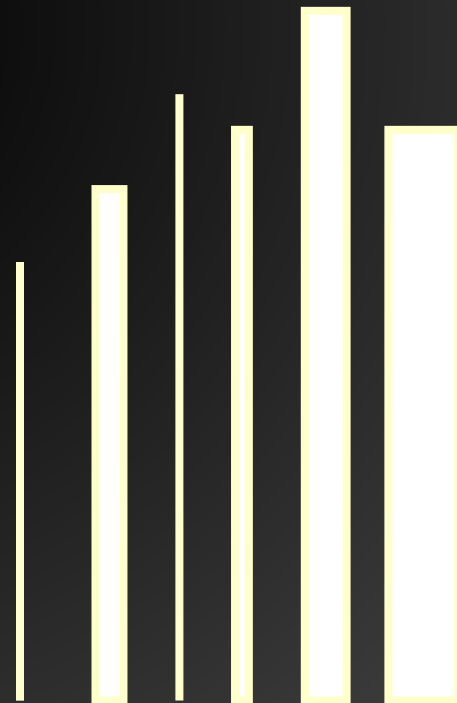
***Millions of Cats*** by Wanda Gag (1928)

# Artistic Elements

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## A. Line (III)

- Horizontal lines suggest calm and stability.
- Vertical lines suggest height and distance.



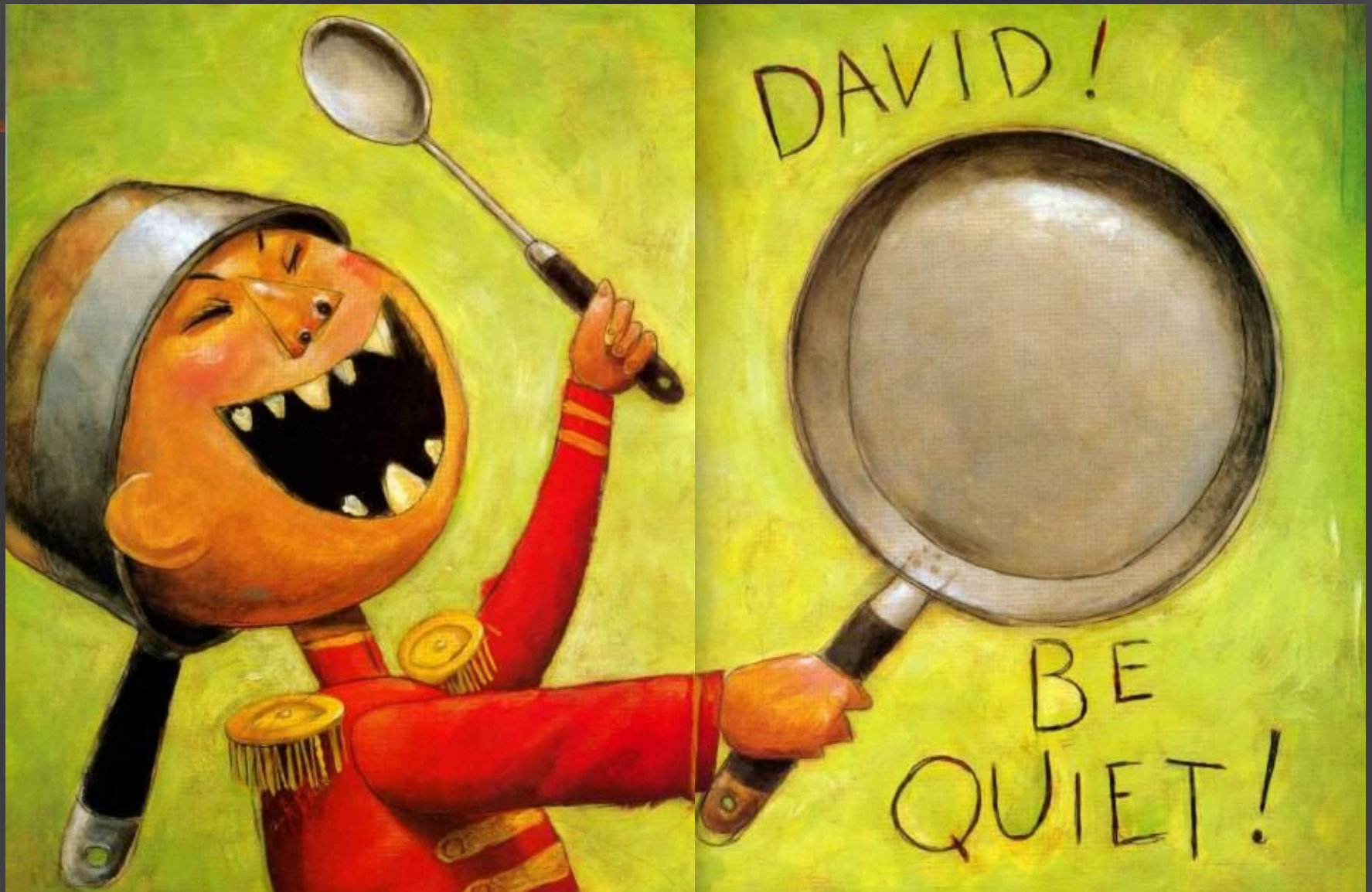
# Artistic Elements

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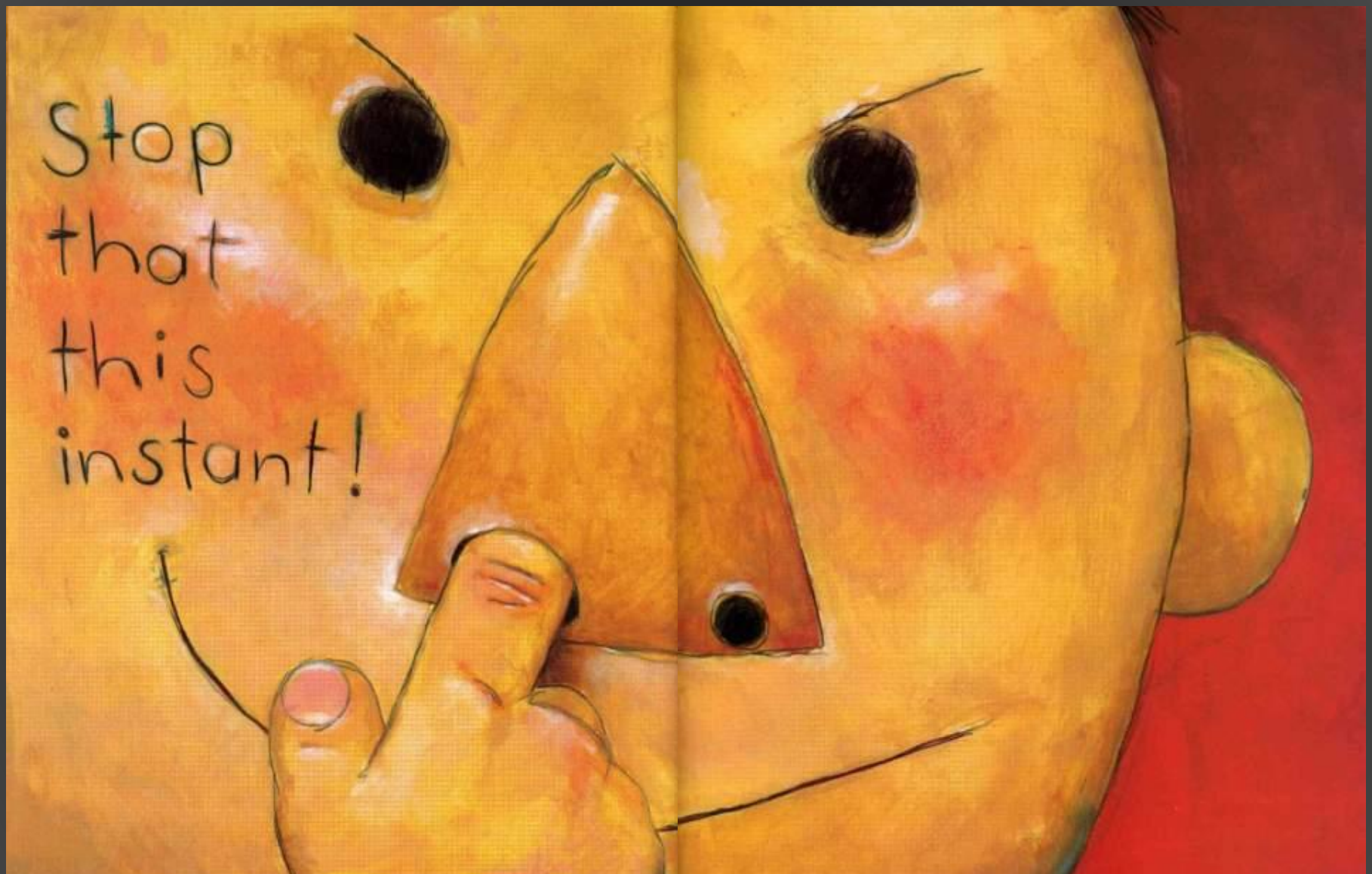
## B. Space

- Space is actually what draws our attention to objects on the page.
- The lack of open space on a page may contribute to a claustrophobic or uneasy feeling or perhaps confusion or chaos.
- The generous use of space in a picture suggests quiet serenity, but it may also imply emptiness, loneliness, or isolation.
- Space can also create the illusion of distance.

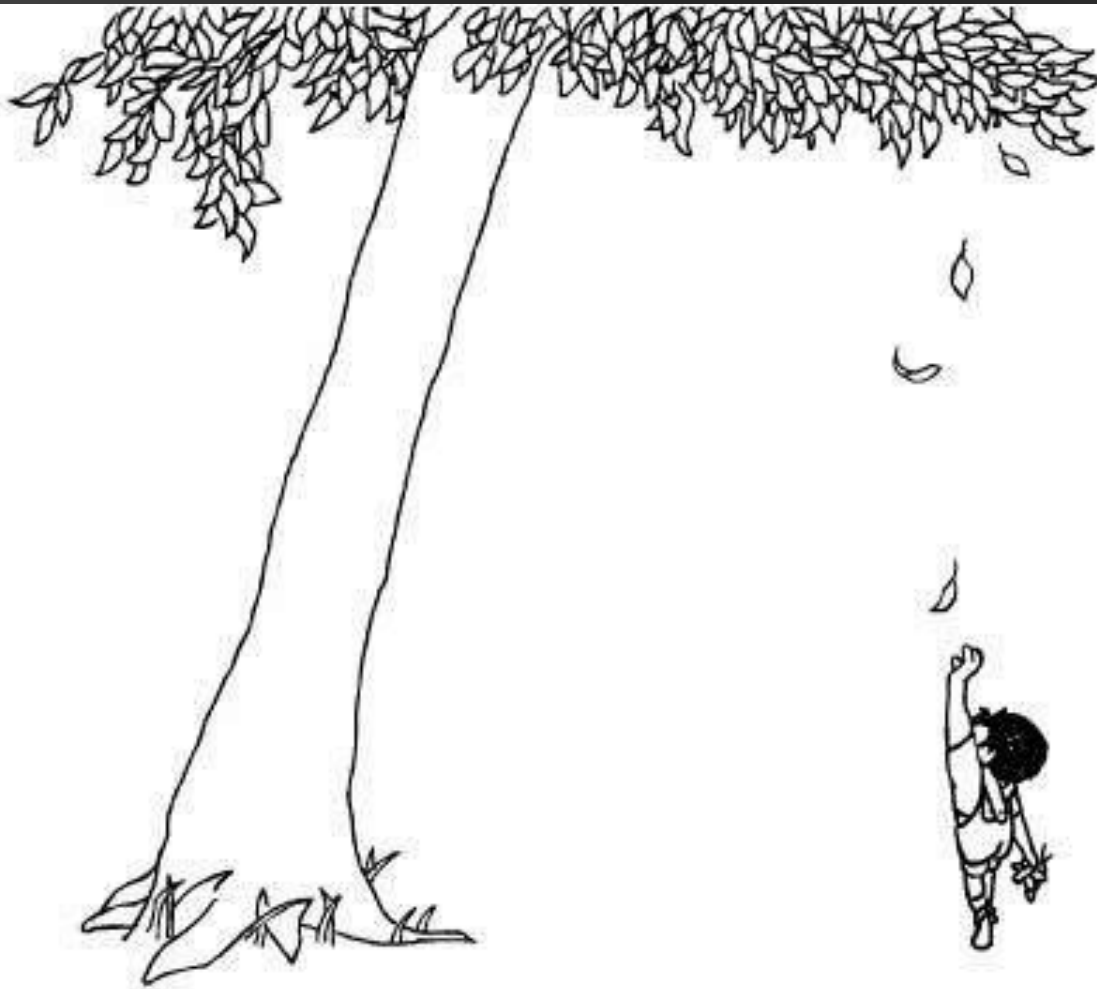




***No, David!*** by David Shannon (1998)



***No, David!*** by David Shannon (1998)



and  
he  
would  
gather  
her  
leaves...

***The Giving Tree*** by Shel Silverstein (1964)

# Artistic Elements

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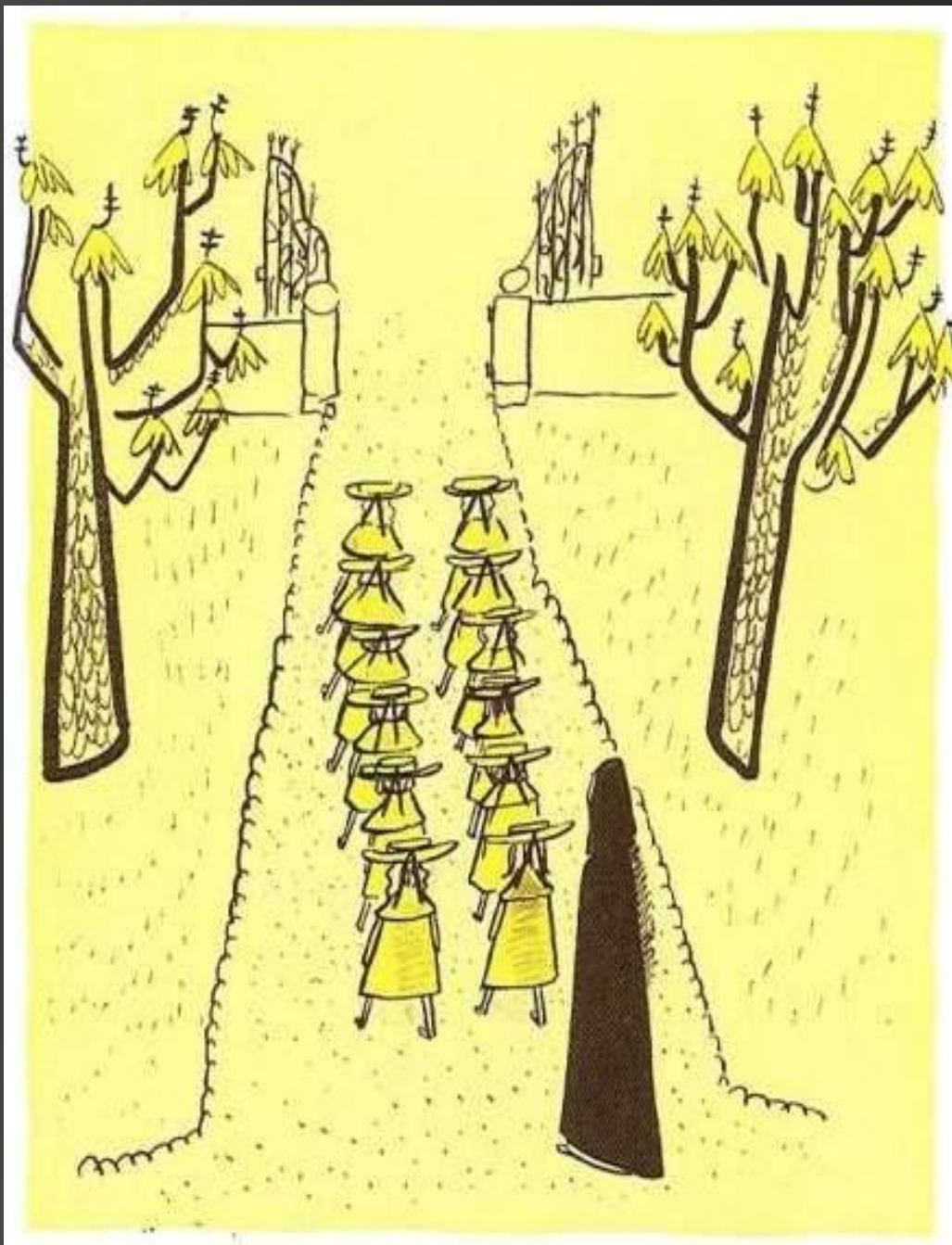
## C. Shape

- Shapes can be evaluated for their simplicity or complexity, their rigidity (as in geometric shapes), and their size.
- Rounded shapes may suggest comfort, security, stability, and softness.
- Squarish, angular shapes may elicit more excitable responses, agitation, alarm, and confusion.
- The bigger a shape is in the picture, the more important it is.

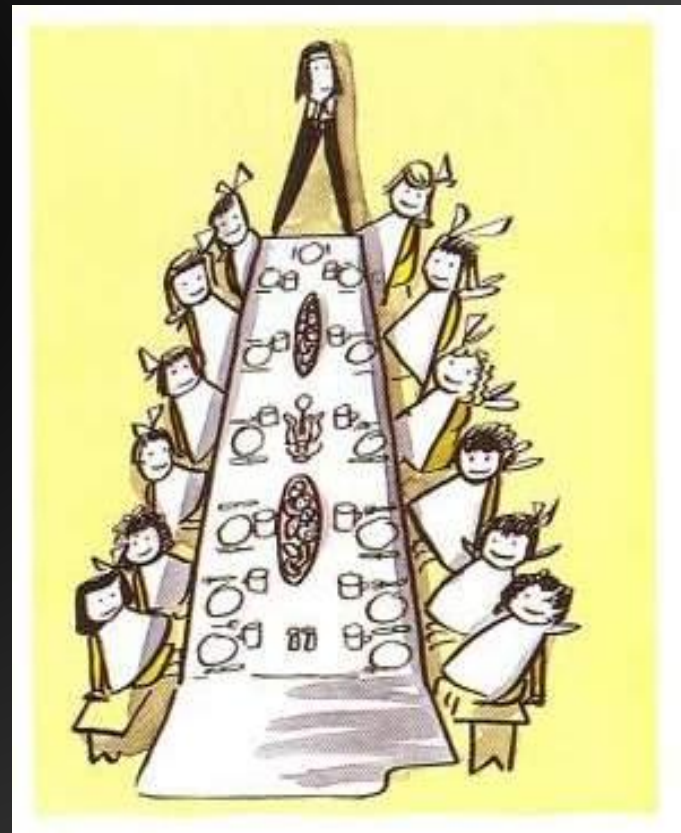


***Millions of Cats*** by Wanda Gag (1928)





***Madeline*** by  
Ludwig Bemelmans  
(1939)





***Harold and the  
Purple Crayon***

by Crockett Johnson  
(1955)

# Artistic Elements

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## D. Color (1) : three key elements

- Hue – classification of color
- Value / Lightness – degree of brightness and darkness
- Saturation – intensity of colors (100% is a pure color. 0% is a shade of gray).

The mood of a picture can be changed by using different hues, value, and saturation.



**\*Primary Colors**

**\*Complementary Colors**

**Red**

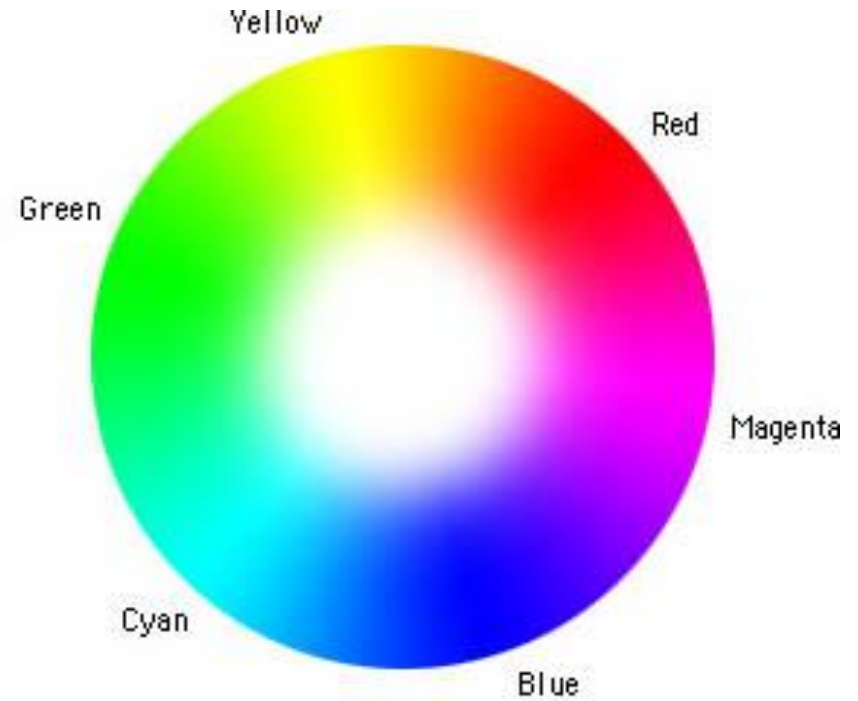
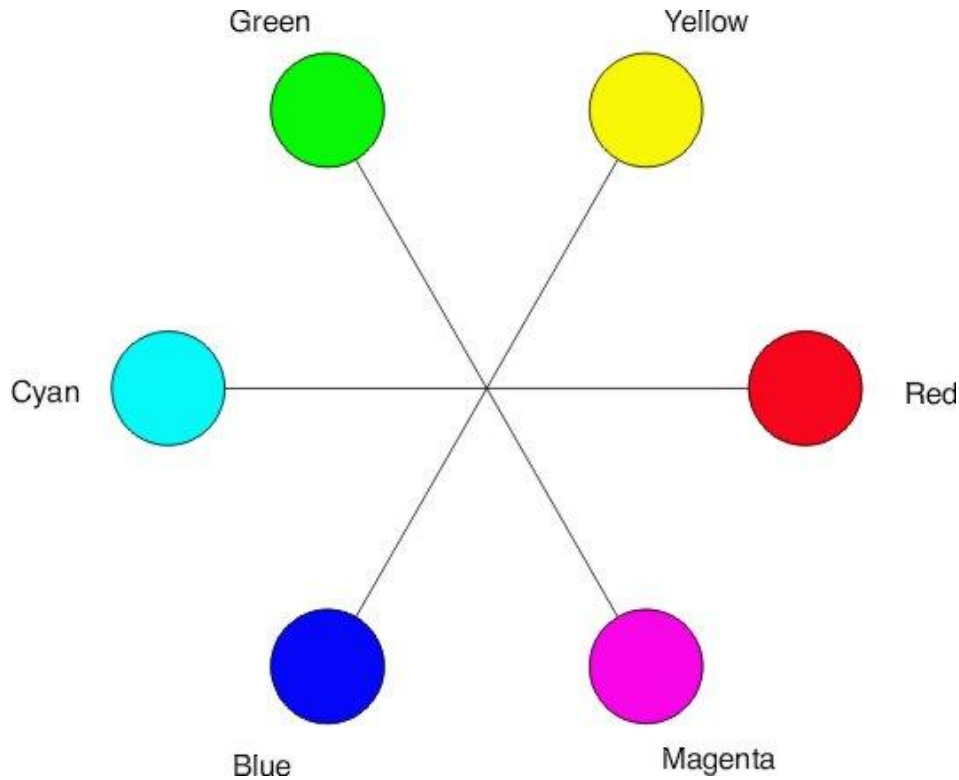
**Cyan**

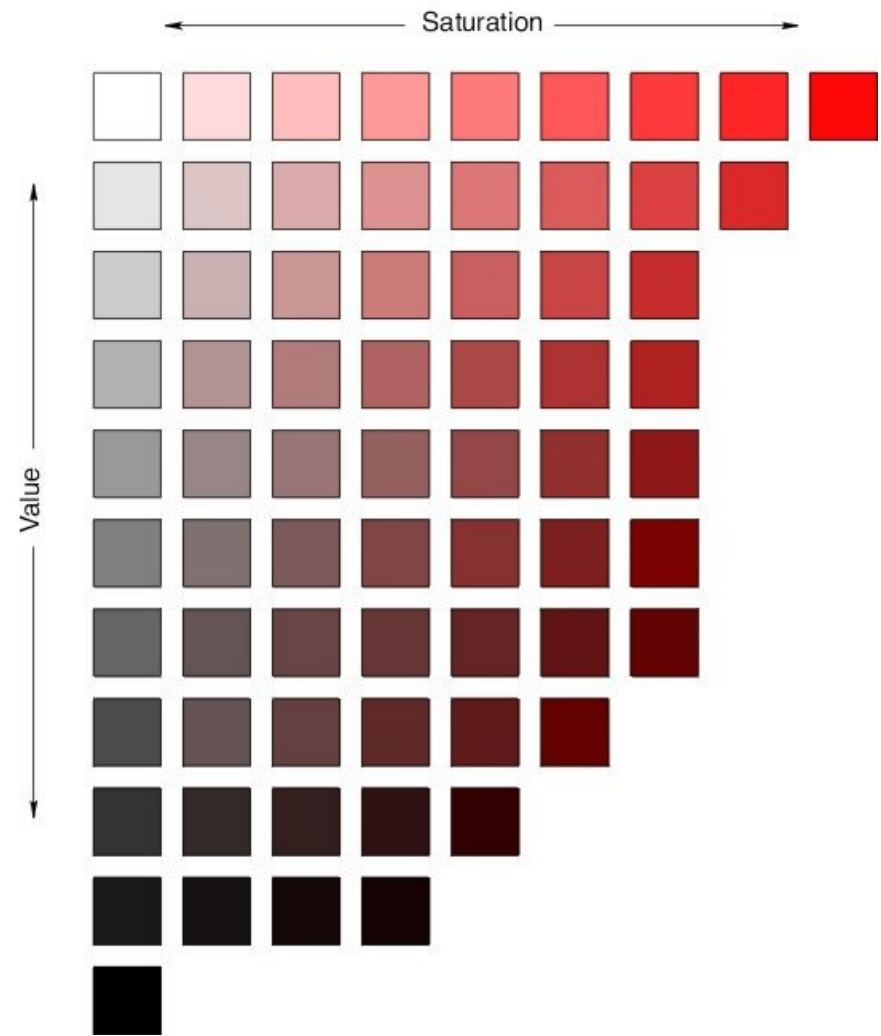
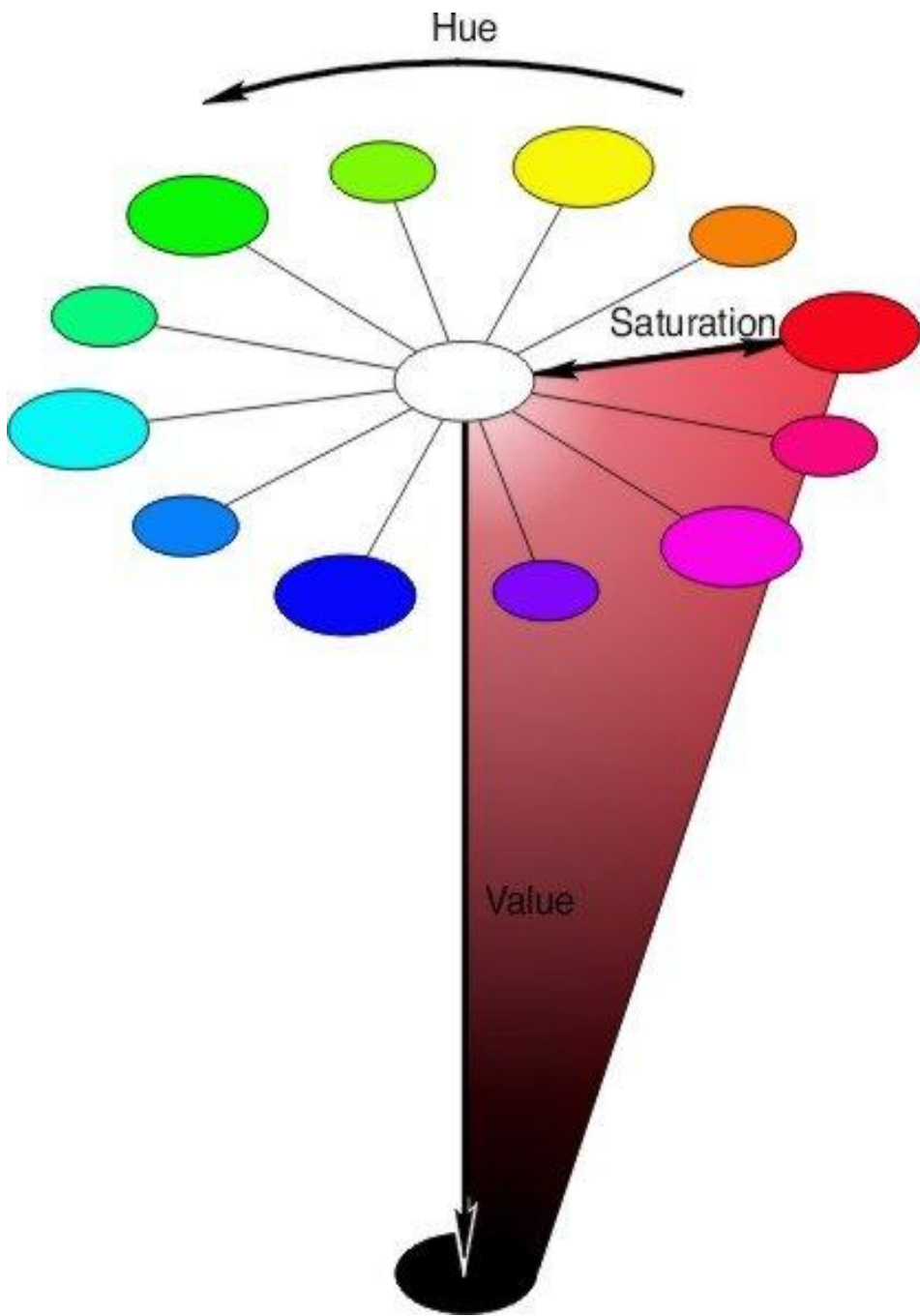
**Green**

**Magenta**

**Blue**

**Yellow**





# Artistic Elements

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## D. Color (2)

- Color is one of the most emotionally evocative of artistic elements.
- Red and yellow (warm or hot colors): suggesting excitement, warmth, happiness. However, red can also signify danger or boldness, and yellow cowardice or cheerfulness.
- Blue and green (cool or cold colors): suggesting calm or quiet. However, blue can also signify soothing or melancholy, and green envy or illness but also life and renewal.
- Colors are used to suggest cultural distinctions (e.g., white is a color of mourning and brides often wear red in Asia).
- The use of black and white remains popular. Children seem to enjoy black and white just as much as color.

# Artistic Elements

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## D. Color (3)

- Value describes the overall intensity or strength of the light. Darker values are usually associated with gloomier subjects, while lighter ones with happier subjects.
- Saturation refers to the dominance of hue in the color. More saturated colors seem more vibrant, while less saturated ones seem more gentle.

# GOODNIGHT MOON

by Margaret Wise Brown  
Pictures by Clement Hurd

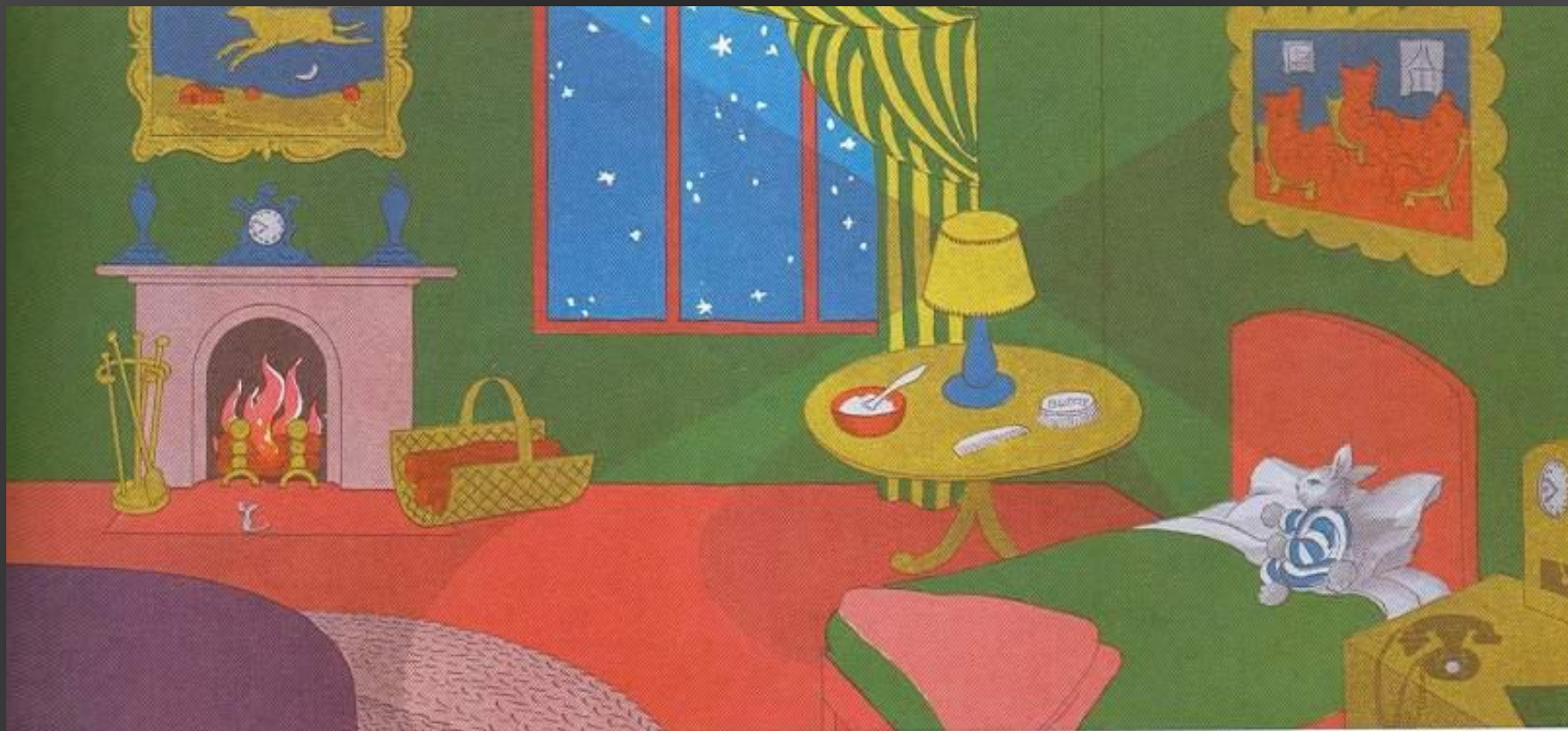


(1947)



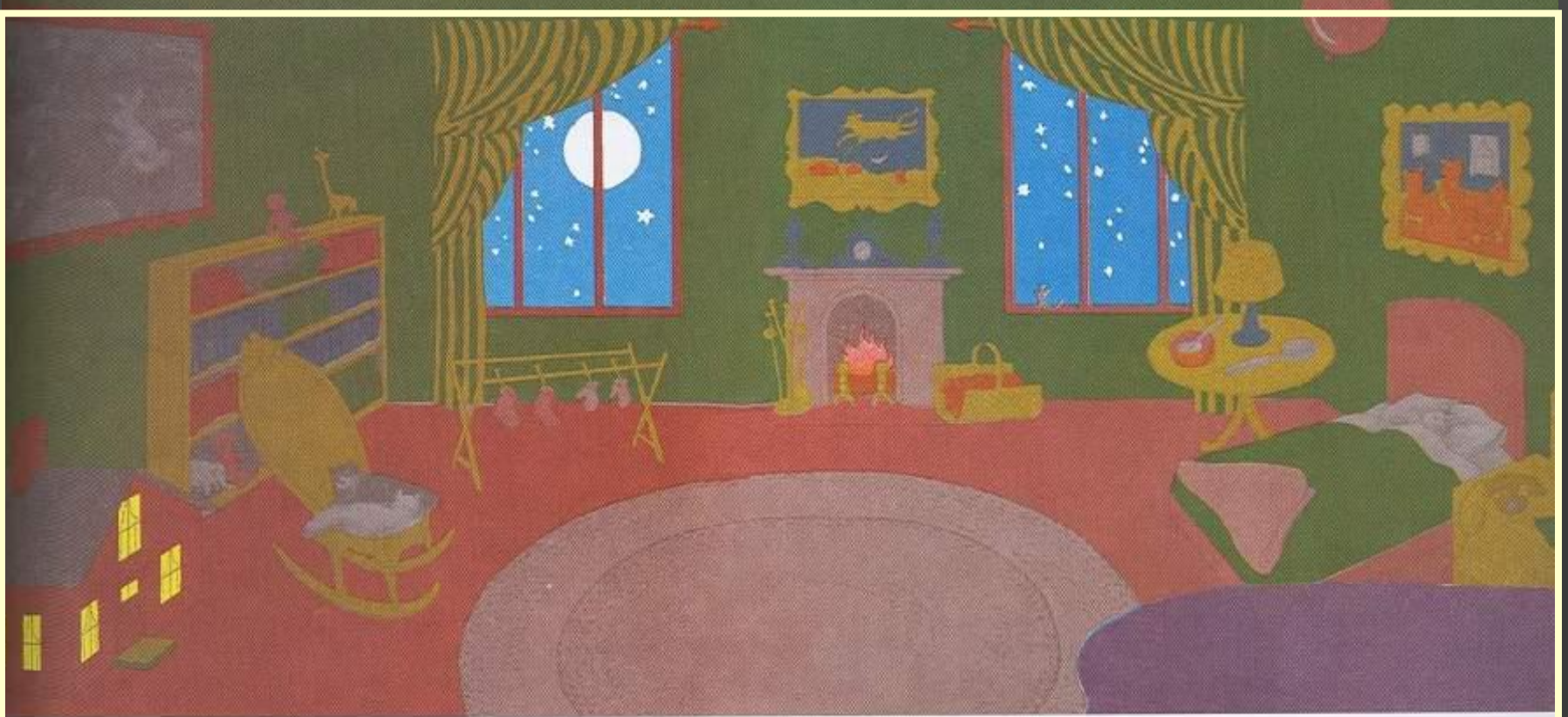
Goodnight room

***Goodnight Moon*** written by Margaret Wise Brown and illustrated by Clement Hurd (1947)



Goodnight comb  
And goodnight brush

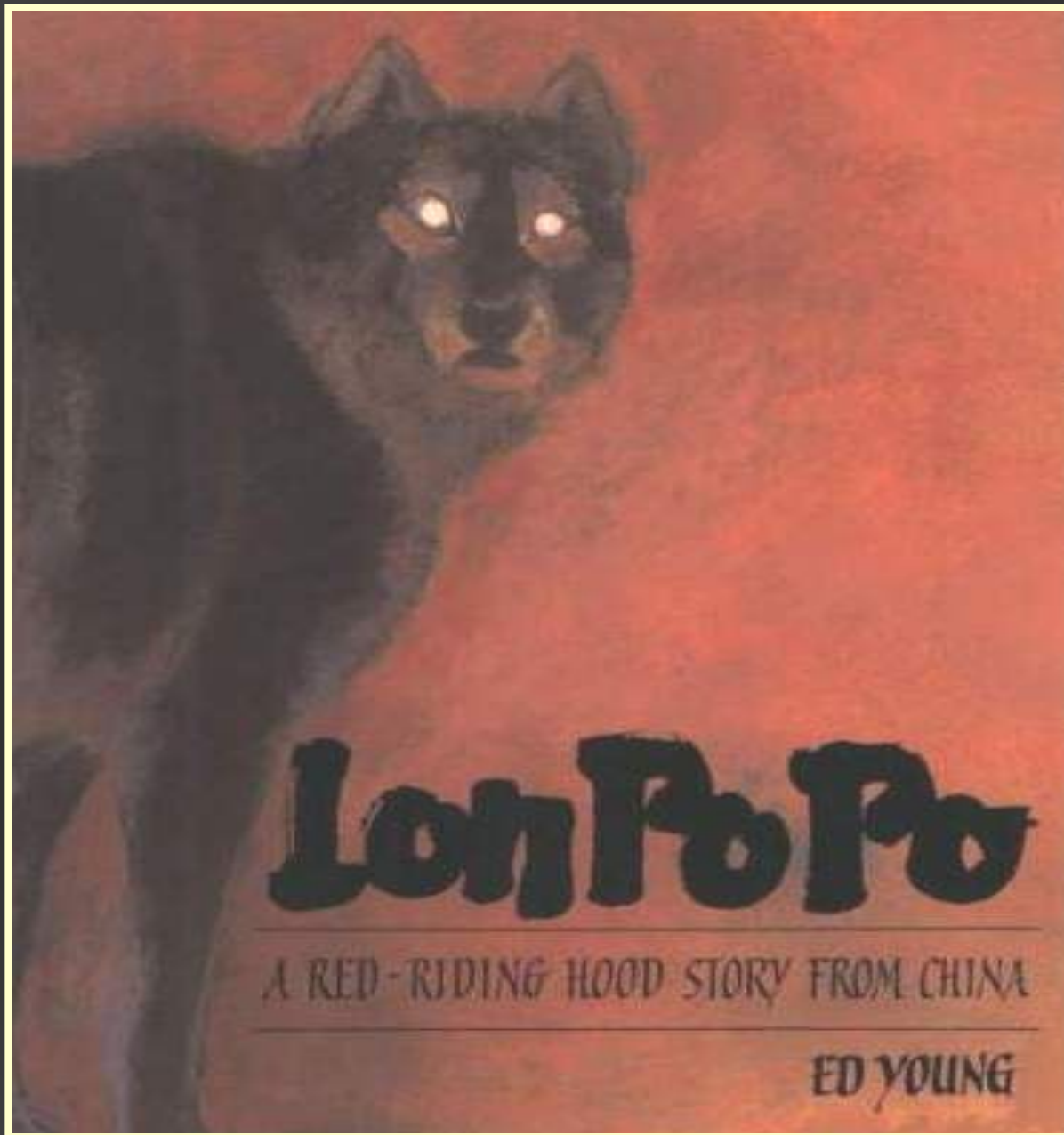
***Goodnight Moon*** written by Margaret Wise Brown  
and illustrated by Clement Hurd (1947)



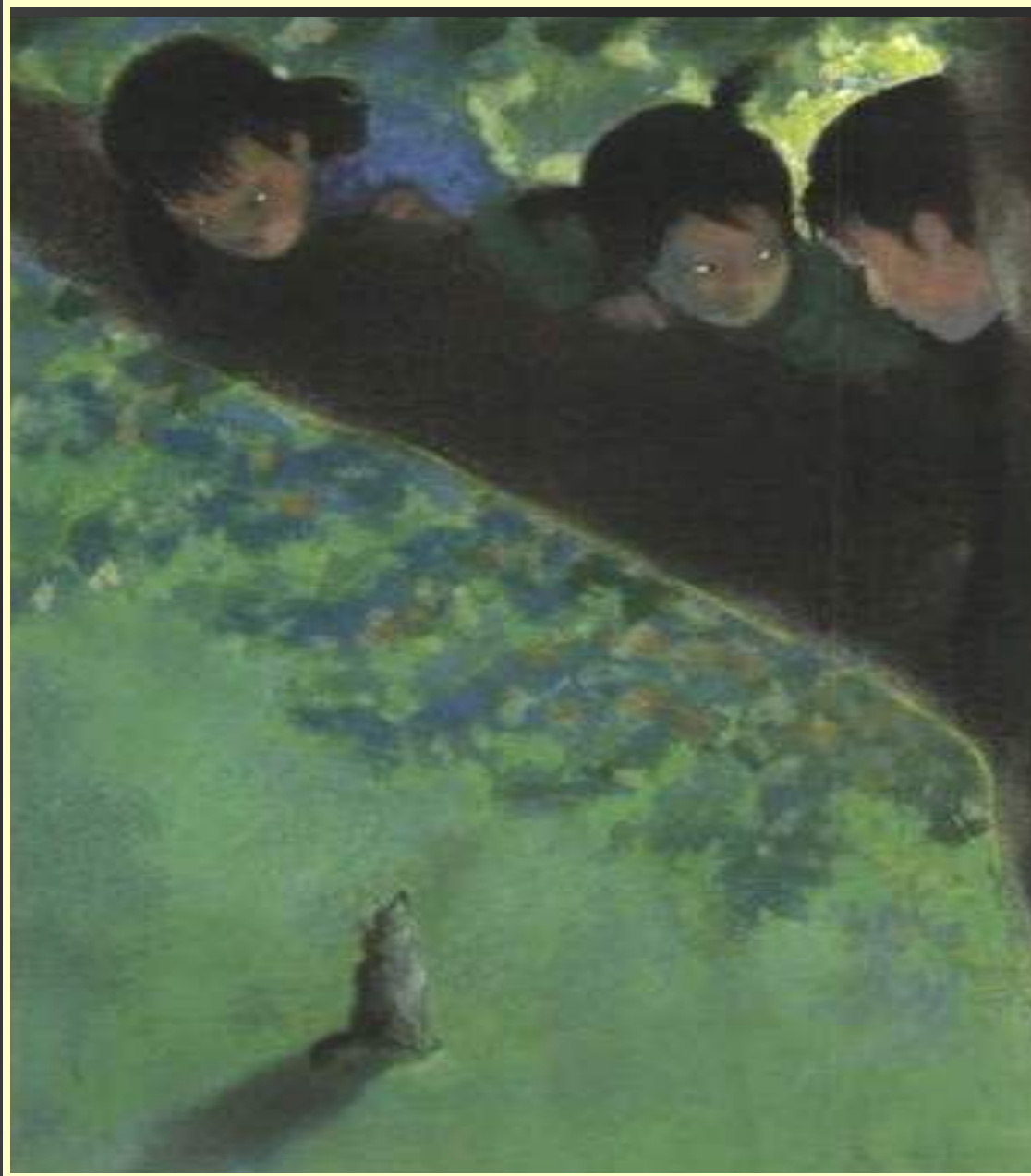
Goodnight noises everywhere

***Goodnight Moon*** written by Margaret Wise Brown  
and illustrated by Clement Hurd (1947)





(1989)



*Lon Po Po*

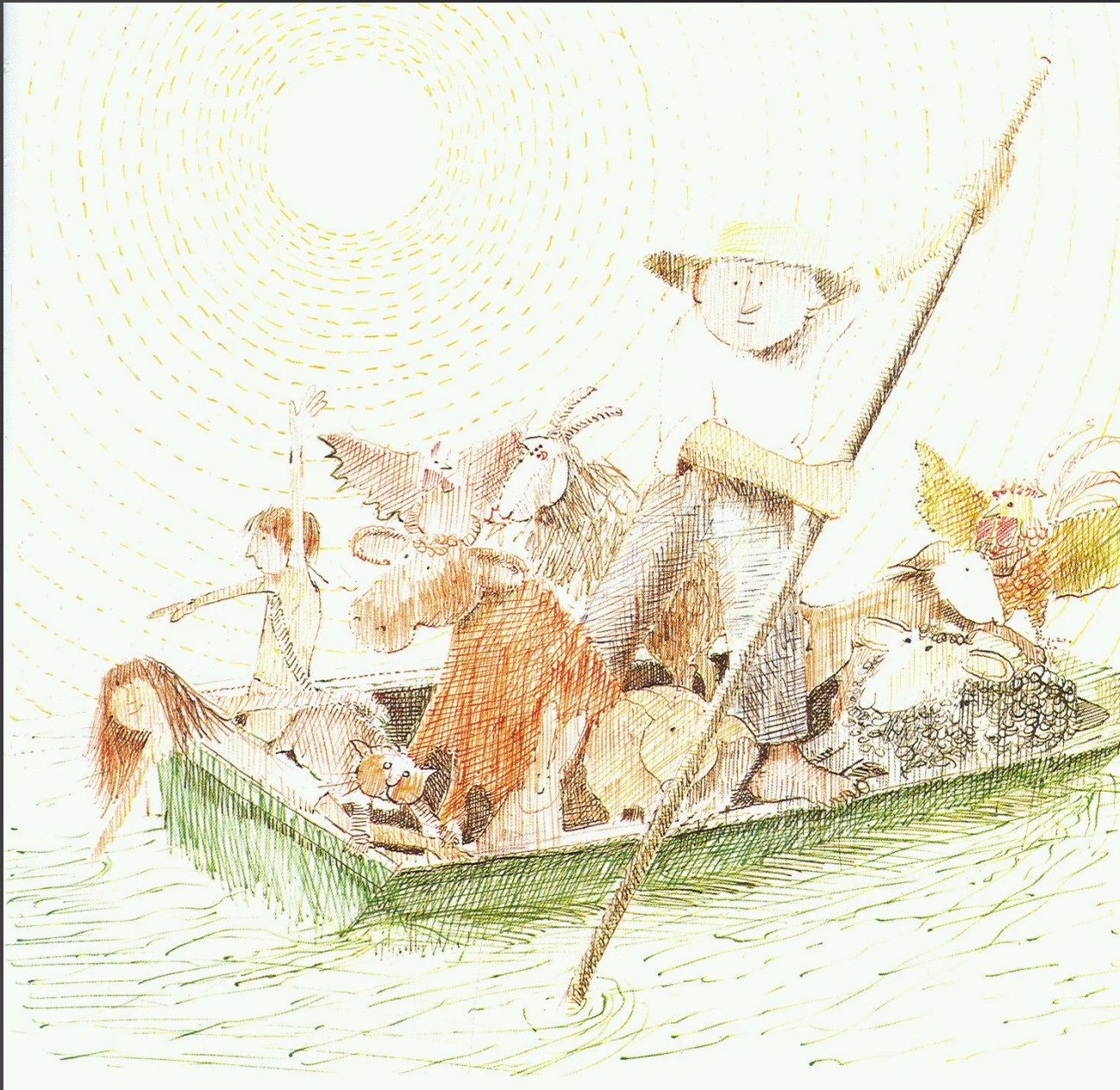
by Ed  
Young

(1989)



***Mr. Gumpy's  
Outing***

by John  
Burningham  
(1970)



***Mr. Gumpy's  
Outing***

by John  
Burningham  
(1970)

# Artistic Elements

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## E. Texture

- Texture refers to the impression of how a pictured object feels. It gives a flat surface the characteristics of a three-dimensional surface.
- Textual effects generally offer a **greater sense of reality** to a picture.
- Less realistic styles may make use of texture to enrich the visual experience and to stimulate the viewer's imagination.
- Texture is achieved through the skillful use of the medium – paint layers, brush strokes, pencil marks, and so on.



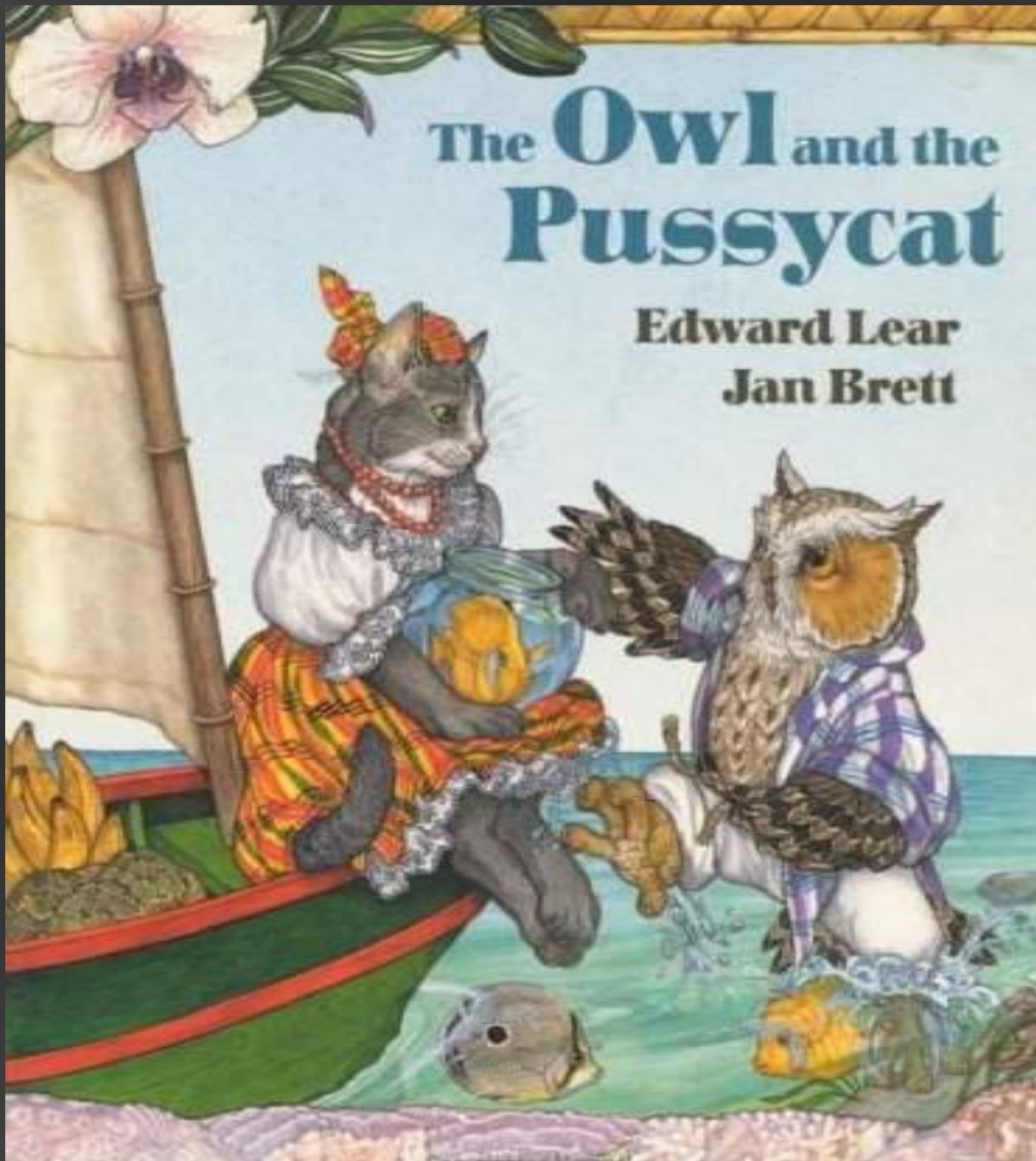
***Where the Wild Things Are*** by Maurice Sendak  
(1963)



***George Shrinks*** by William Joyce (1985)

# The Owl and the Pussycat

Edward Lear  
Jan Brett



(1991)

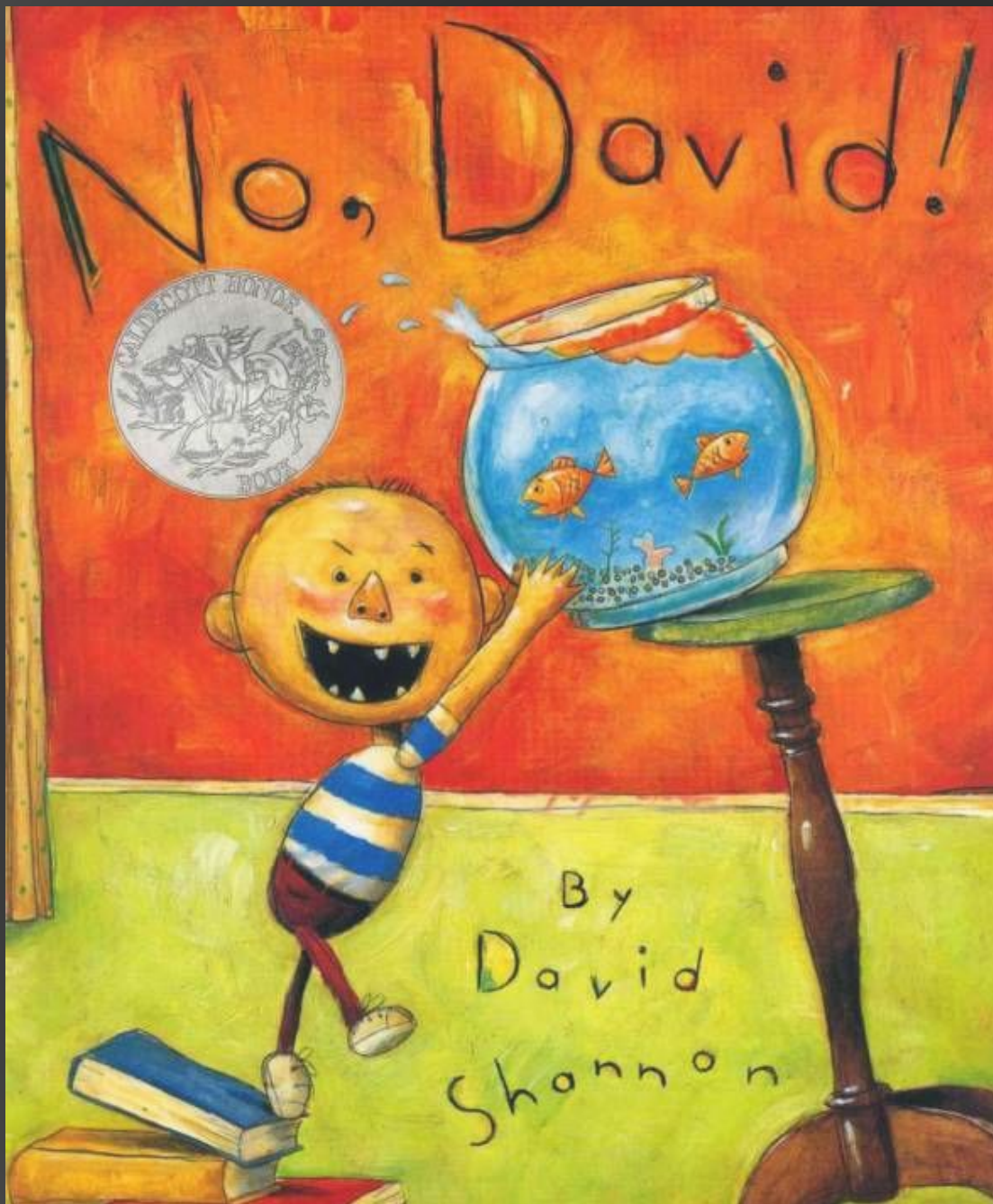


# Artistic Elements

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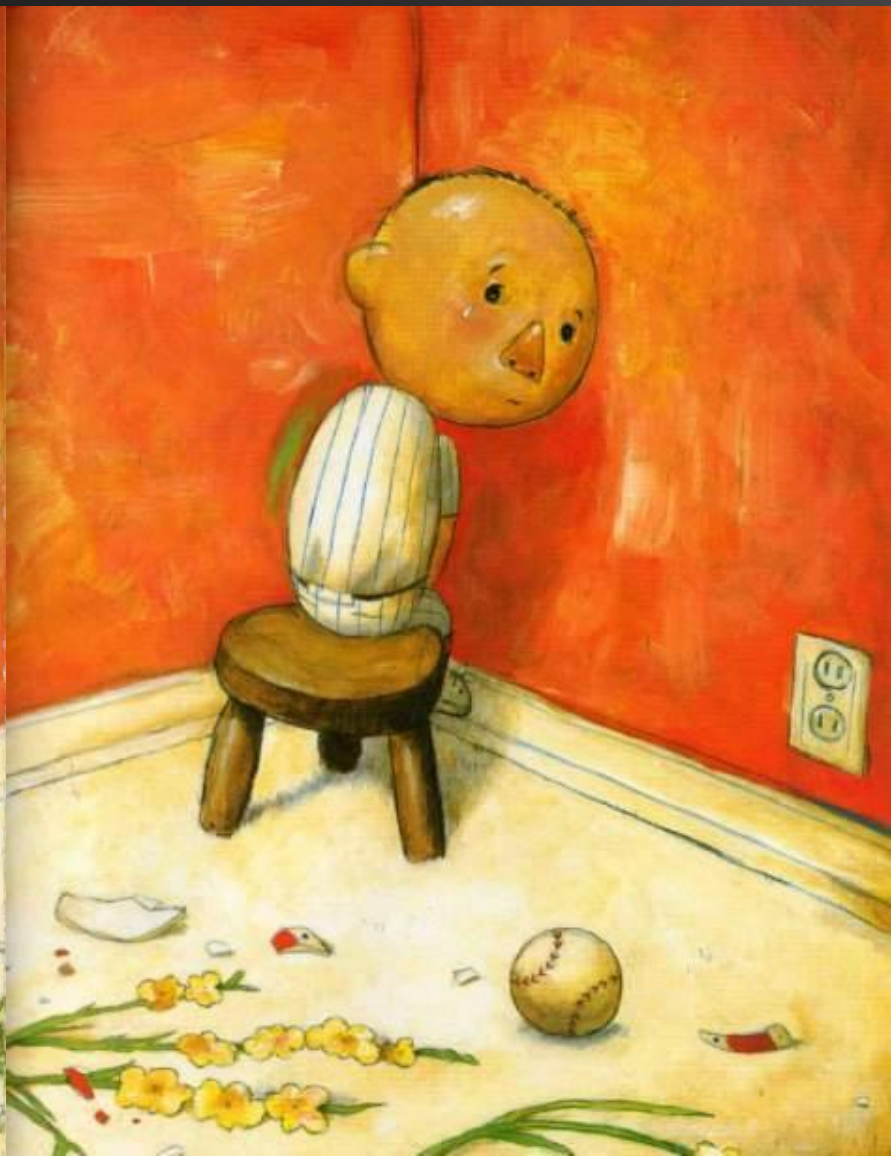
## F. Composition

- The composition of an illustration refers to **the arrangement of the visual elements** in the picture.
- Composition is important to the narrative quality of the picture as well as to its emotional impact.
- A very important concern of composition is the organization of the shapes. Grouping many large shapes may suggest stability, enclosure, or confinement, or perhaps awkwardness. On the other hand, lighter, delicate shapes more loosely grouped may suggest movement, grace, and freedom.



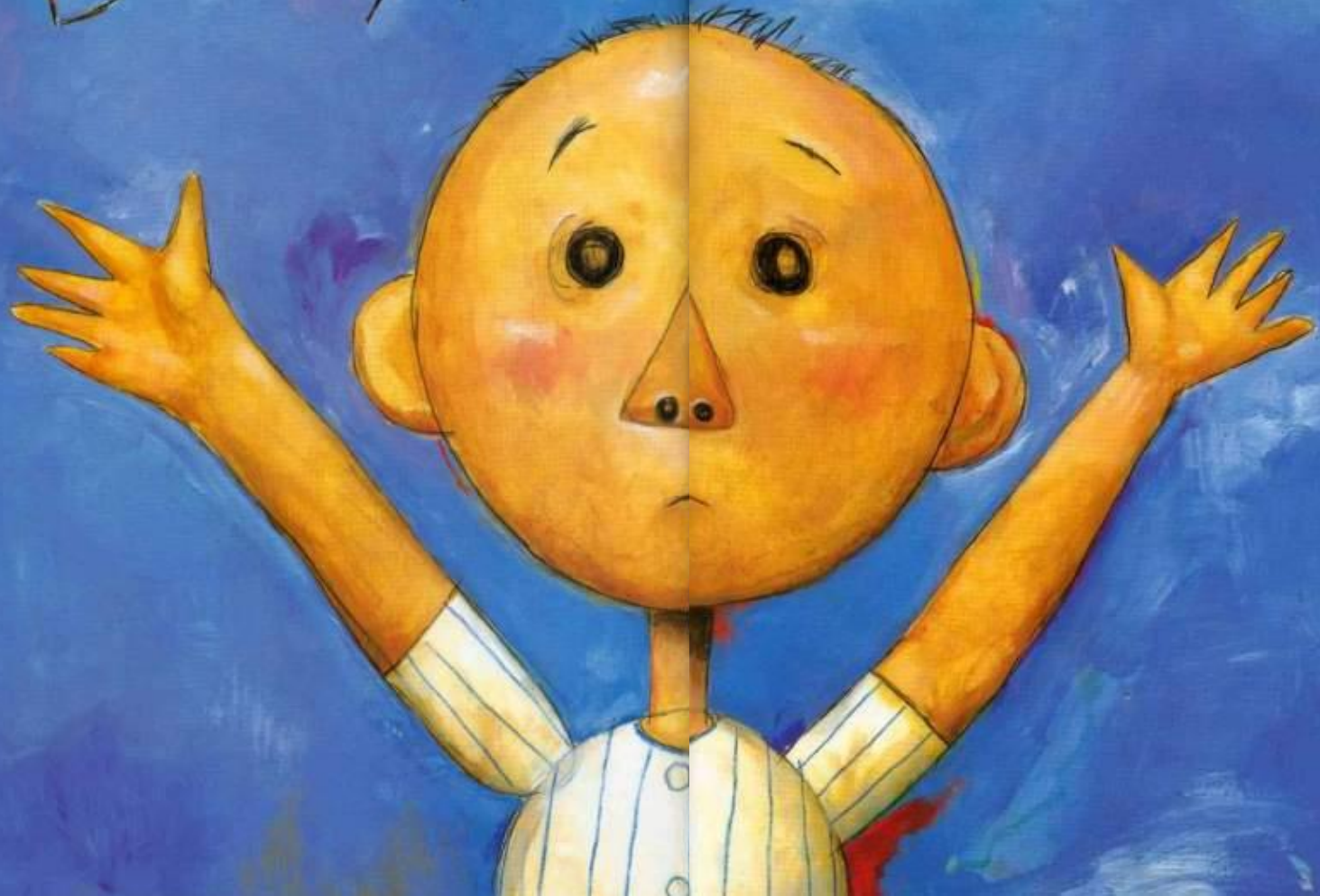
***No, David!***  
**by David Shannon**  
**(1998)**

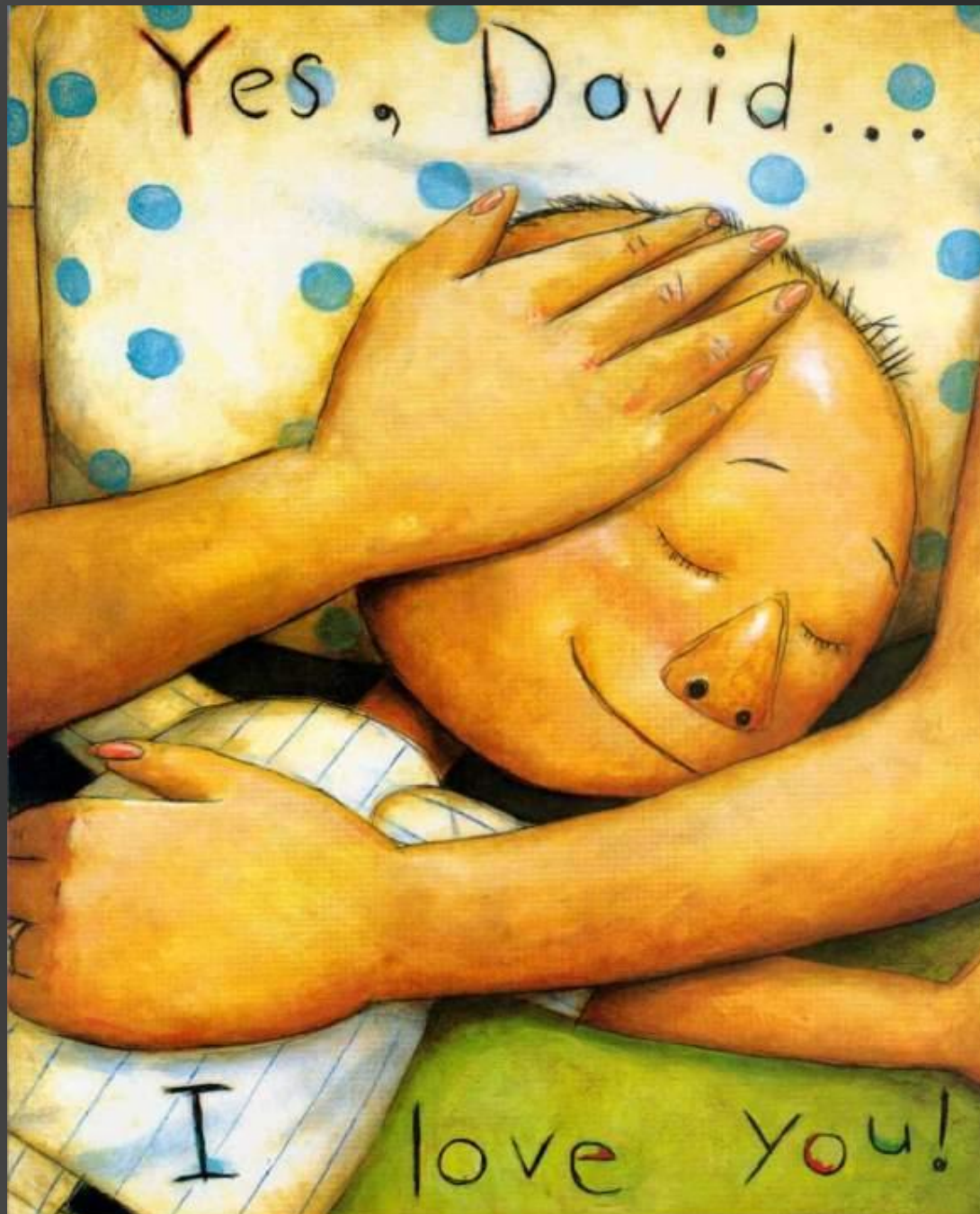
I said  
no, David!



Davey,

come here.

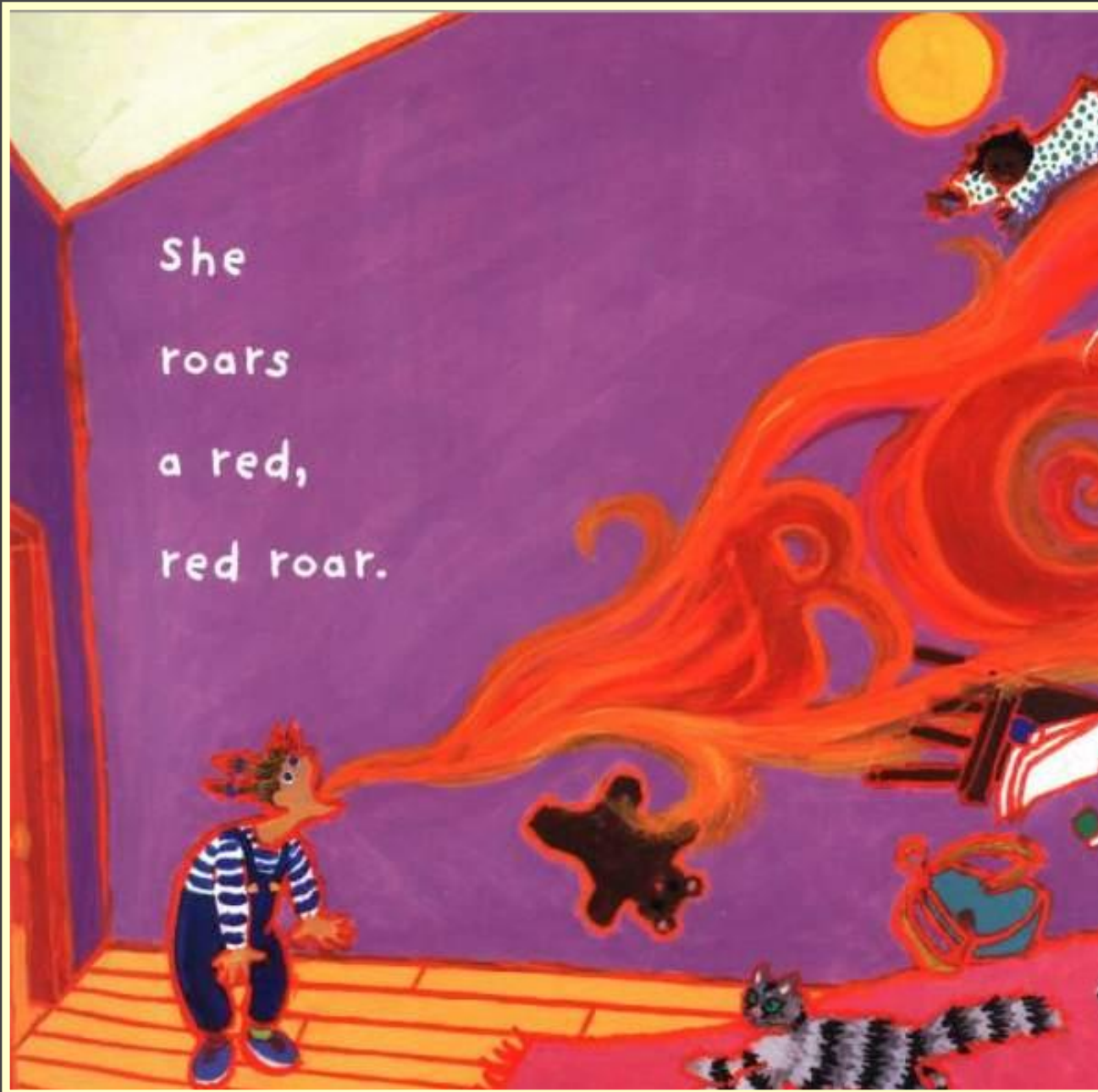




*No, David!*

by David Shannon

(1998)



*When Sophie Gets Angry---Really, Really Angry*

Molly Bang (1999)



***When Sophie Gets Angry---Really, Really Angry***

Molly Bang (1999)

# Artistic Elements

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## G. Perspective

- The perspective refers to **the vantage point from which we see the object** on the page. That is, from what angle the picture is to be viewed.
- The closer we appear to be to the action, the more engaged we are likely to be. The farther away we seem to be, the more detached we are.
- The artists make us see and think about things **in specific ways** by illustrating events from a worm's-eye view, a small child's perspective, a bird's-eye view, or an unreal angle.
- Most picture books give us the **“middle shot”**. We see few close-ups and few panoramic views.





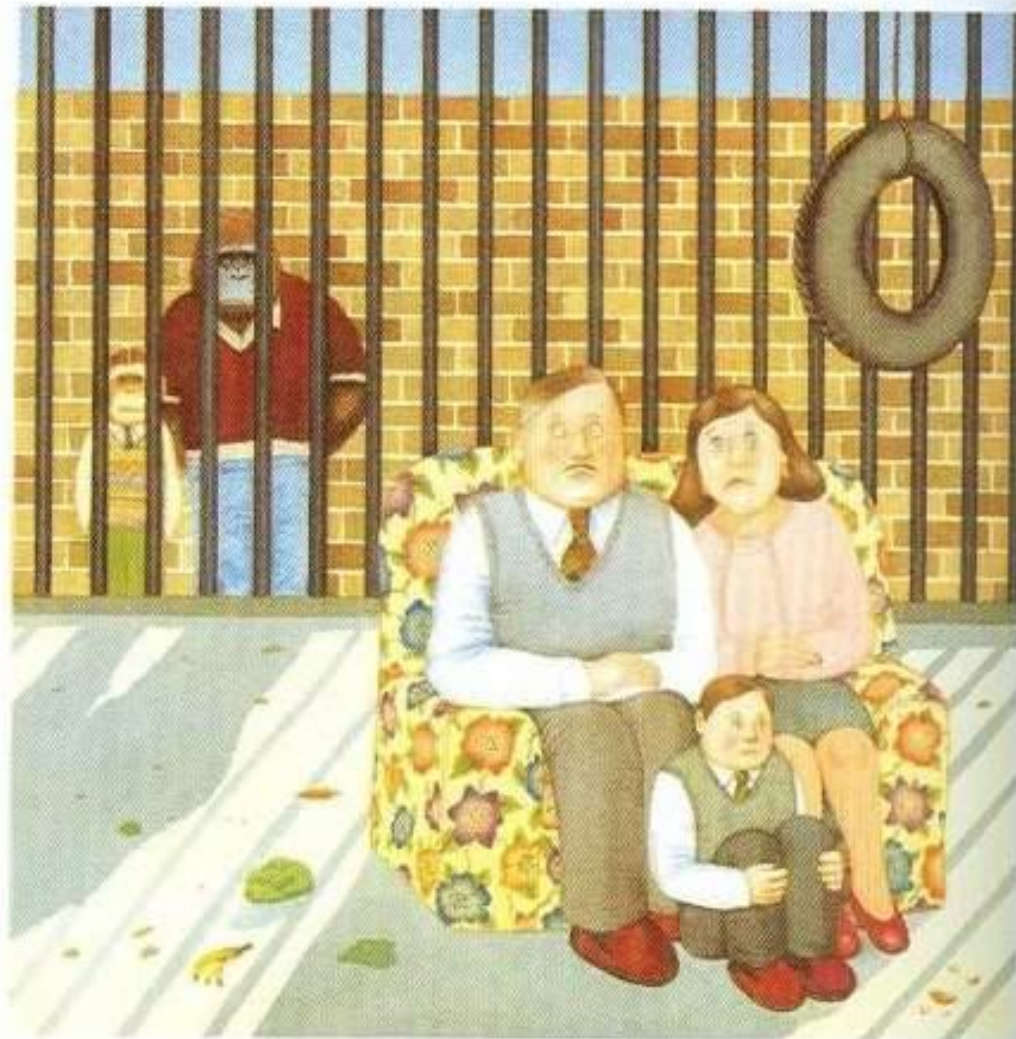
***George Shrinks*** by William Joyce (1985)



***George Shrinks*** by William Joyce (1985)



So Willy and Hugh  
decided to go to the zoo.



***Willy and Hugh*** by Anthony Browne (1991)



# ROUND TRIP ANN JONAS

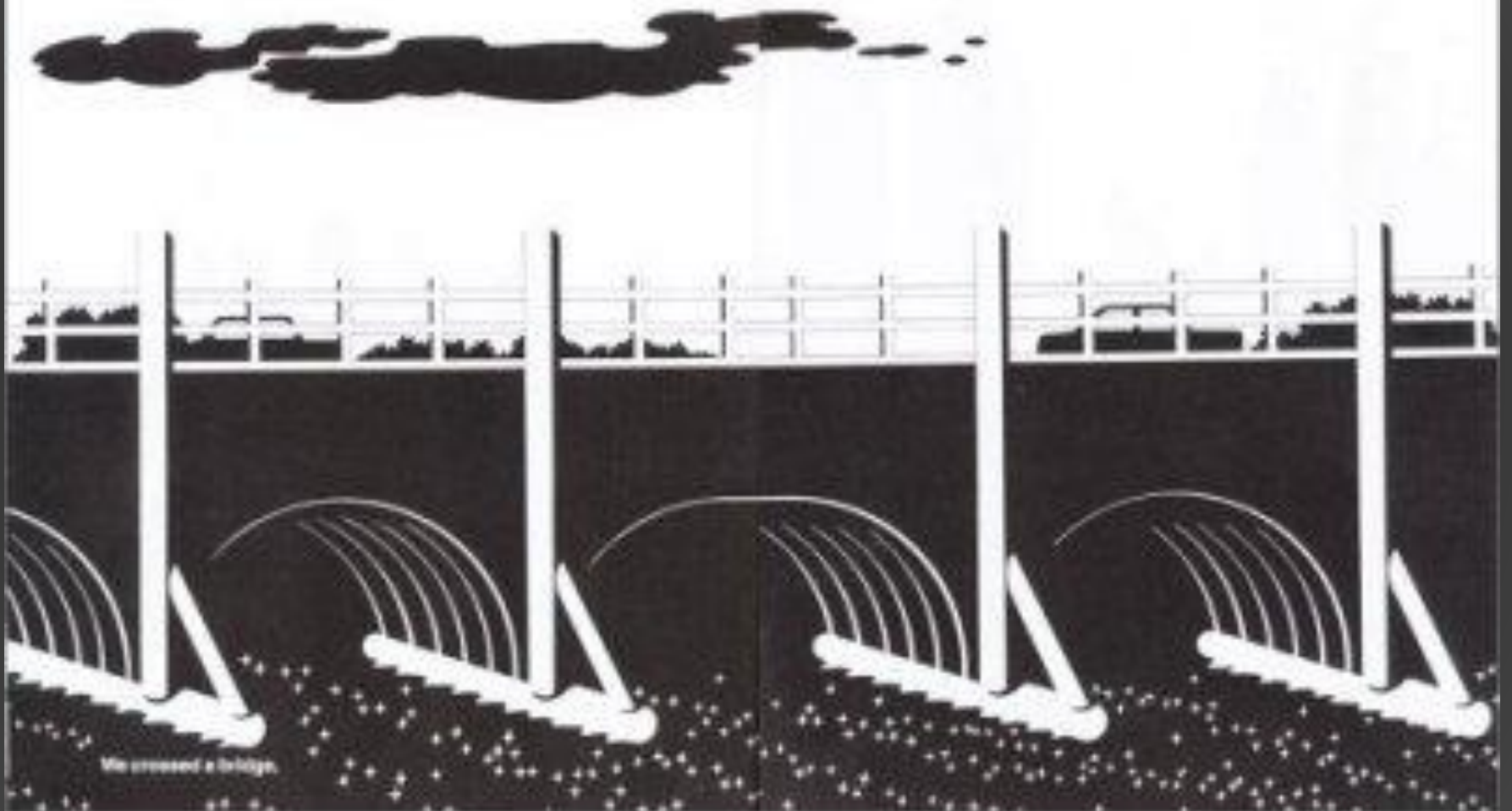


*Round Trip*

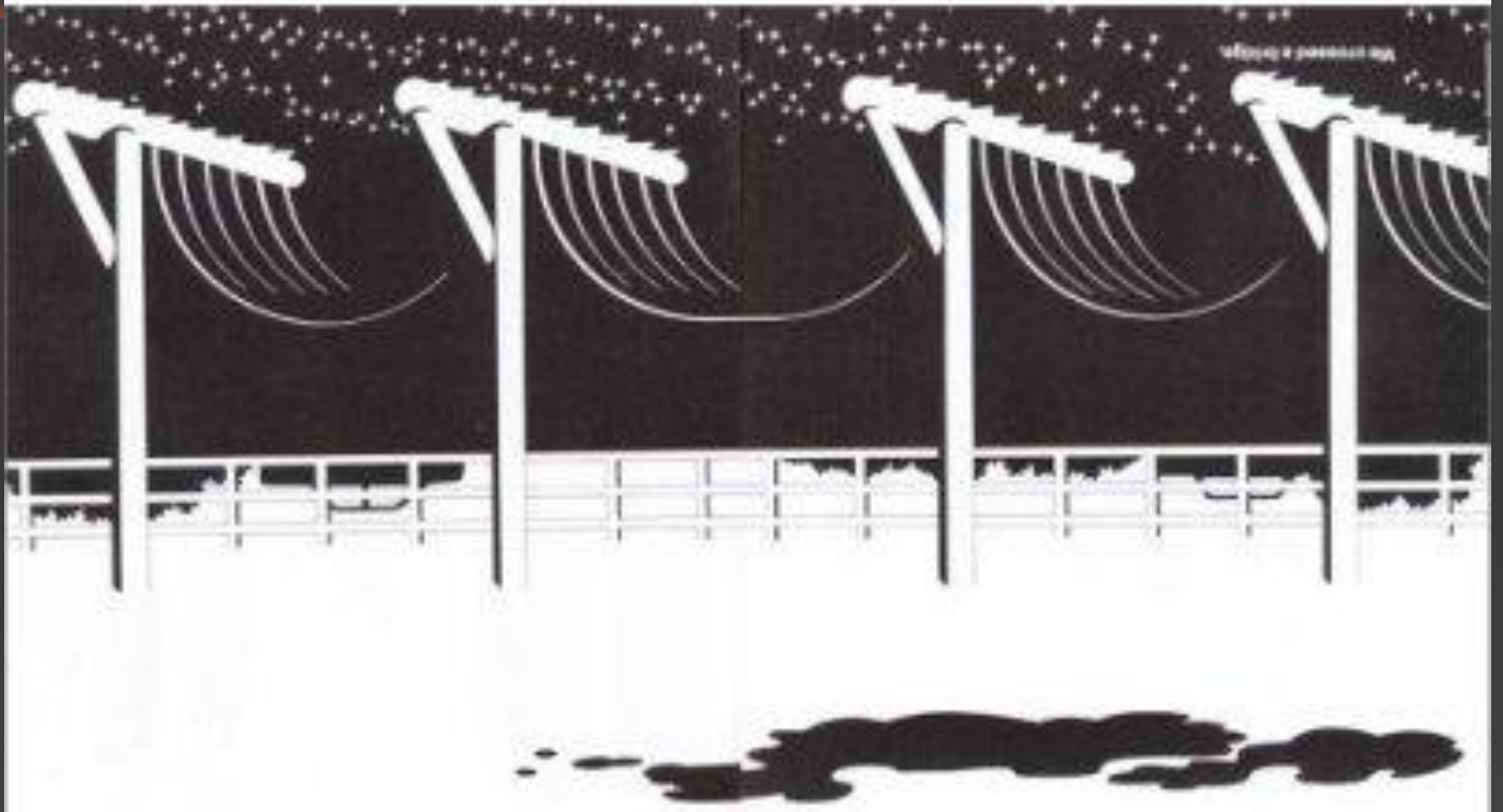
by Ann Jonas

(1983)

In the country, we found good food and good people.



We crossed a bridge.



the road a path

In the country, telephone poles lined the road.

# Design and Meaning

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- A. Rhythm and Movement
- B. Tension
- C. Page Layout

# Design and Meaning

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## A. Rhythm and Movement (1)

- Rhythm refers to “**controlled repetition in art**”. Good picture-book design creates a **sense of rhythm** as we move from page to page.
- Rhythm is controlled in various ways: by varying the **size of the images**, by changing the **viewpoint**, or by altering the **actual design of the image** on the page. These changes create an ebb and flow and enhance visual interest.
- Illustrators need to decide when it is necessary to **speed up** or **slow down** actions through **panning**, **zooming**, or **close-ups**.



# Design and Meaning

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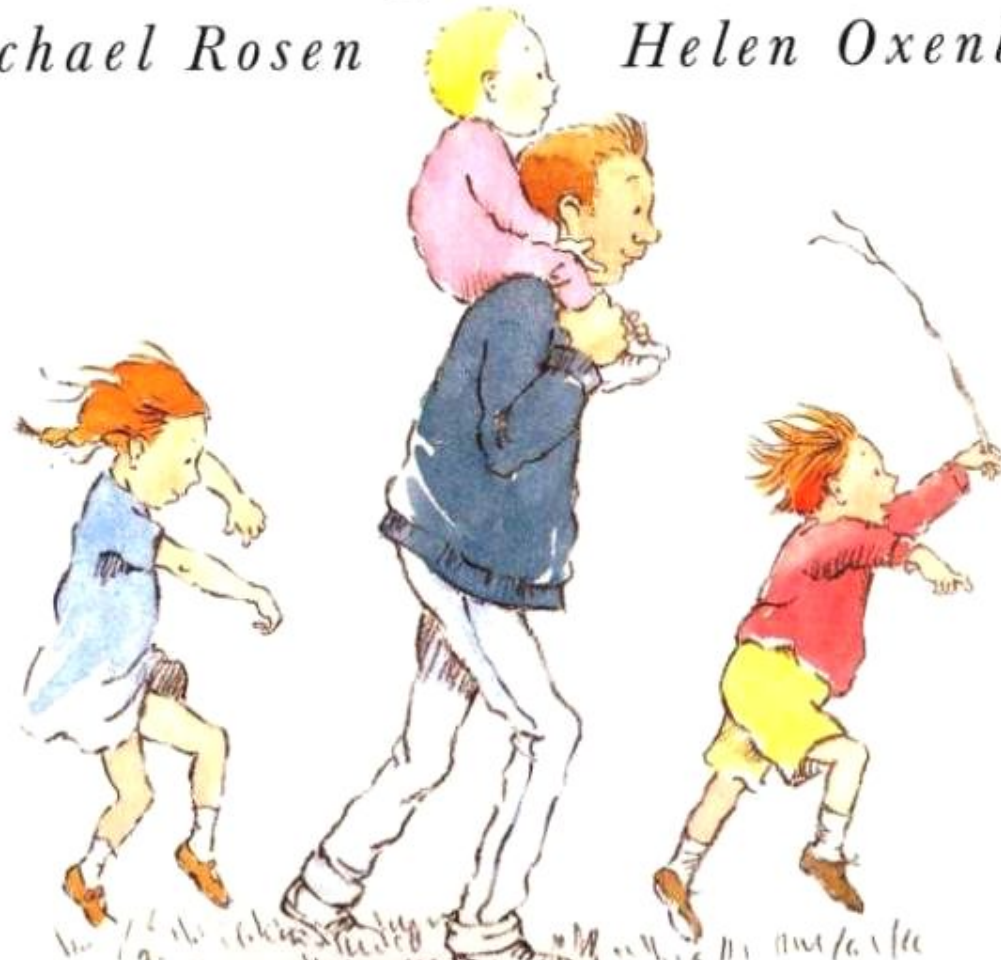
## A. Rhythm and Movement (2)

- We tend to **identify most closely with objects on the left** since we read books from left to right (Western texts). Thus, protagonists typically appear on the left and antagonists on the right.
- The pictures create a **starting and stopping pattern** for which the text must accommodate. The movement is *not* continually forward; rather, we look at the pictures, then we read, then we look at the pictures again.
- Picture books are usually designed to make a **natural pause between the turning of pages**, so that some **tension** is set up that invites readers to turn the page.

# *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*

*Michael Rosen*

*Helen Oxenbury*



***We're Going on a Bear Hunt* (1989)**



Quick! Back through the cave! Tiptoe! Tiptoe! Tiptoe!



Back through the snowstorm! Hoooo woooo! Hoooo woooo!



Back through the forest! Stumble trip! Stumble trip! Stumble trip!



Back through the mud! Squelch squerch! Squelch squerch!



Back through the river! Splash splosh! Splash splosh! Splash splosh!



Back through the grass! Swishy swashy! Swishy swashy!



Get to our front door.

Open the door.

Up the stairs.



Oh, no!

We forgot to shut the door.

Back downstairs.

# Design and Meaning

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## B. Tension

- Good picture books create a tension between **what the words say** and **what the illustrations depict**, resulting in our heightened interest and excitement.
- **Words and pictures work together** in picture storybooks. Without words, the pictures would make little sense. Without pictures, the meaning of the text would not be clear.
- The narrative nature of picture books often prevents the individual pictures from functioning as artistically complete units in themselves, similar to that of cartoon strips.

# Design and Meaning

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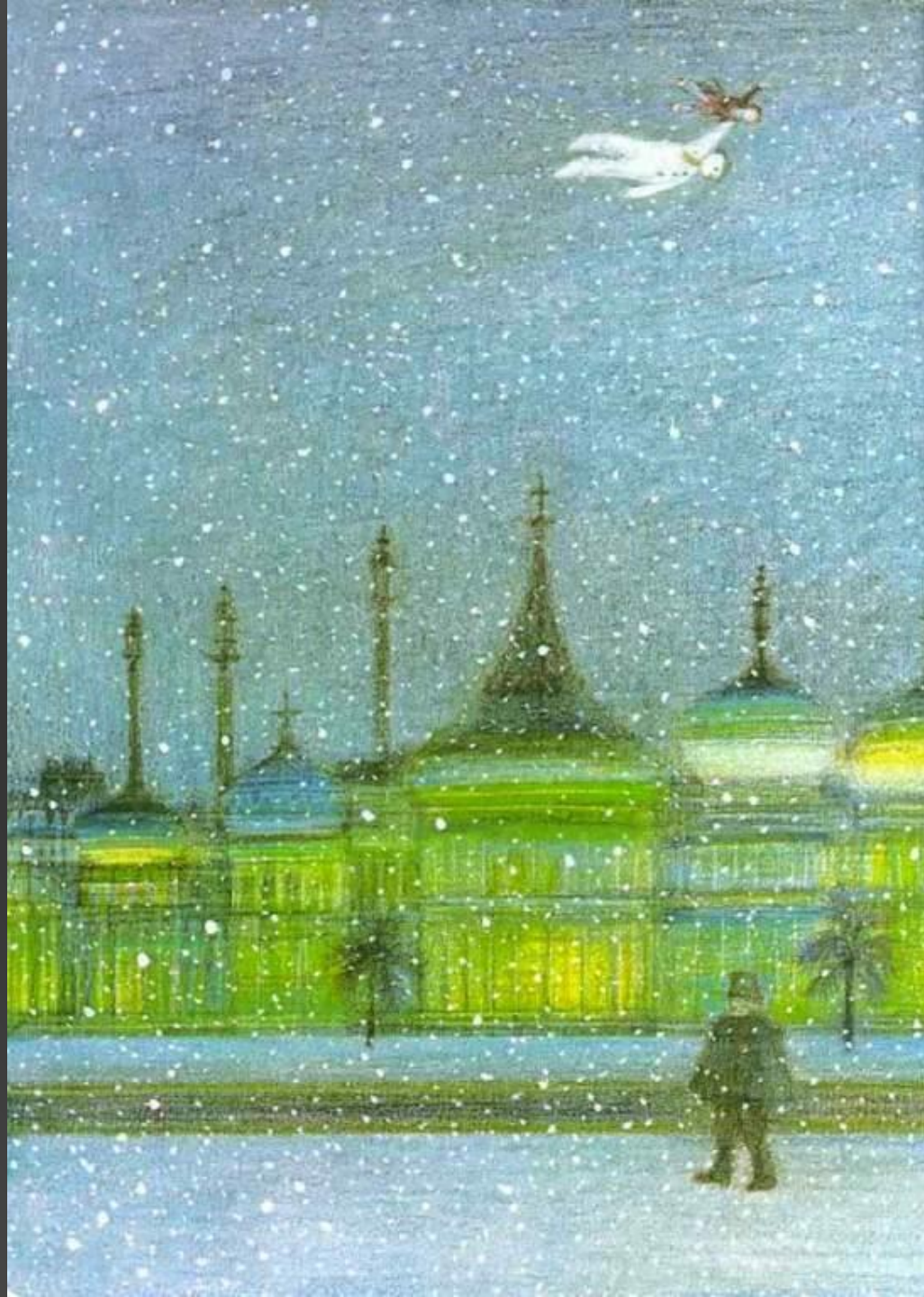
## C. Page Layout

- Page layout refers to the **placement of the pictures and the text** on the page.
- Most picture books are **wider than they are high**, which makes them especially suited to **narrative illustration** because this design gives the artist ample space to depict the **setting** around the characters, **expanding the narrative quality of the pictures**.
- Medium-sized books are frequently more complex, whereas small books (easy to handle) and large books (eye-catching) are designed for very younger readers.
- The size and placement of illustrations is **not a random process**, but rather a **carefully conceived plan** that **carries out the overall intent** of the book.



*The Snowman* by  
Raymond Briggs  
(1978)





*The Snowman* by  
Raymond Briggs  
(1978)



*The Snowman* by  
Raymond Briggs  
(1978)



*The Man Who Walked  
Between the Towers*

by Mordicai Gerstein

(2003)

# Artistic Media

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- A. Painterly Techniques**
- B. Graphic Techniques**
- C. Photography**
- D. Composite Techniques**

# Artistic Media

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## A. Painterly Techniques

- Watercolors 水彩畫
- Tempera 蛋彩畫
- Gouache 粉彩畫
- Acrylic paint 壓克力畫
- Oil paint 油畫
- Pastels 粉蠟筆畫
- Chalk, pencil, and ink drawings 炭筆/鉛筆/針筆  
黑白或單色畫

# Artistic Media

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## B. Graphic Techniques (Print-based media)

- Woodblocks / Woodcuts 木板印刷
- Linocuts 膠版印刷
- Stone lithography 石版印刷
- Screen printing 絹版印刷

# Artistic Media

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## C. Photography

- The art of photography is the art of composition. The result is intellectually stimulating.
- Photographs are principally for realistic stories.
- Photographs can also be effective in informational books.

# Artistic Media

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## D. Composite Techniques

- Montage: the collection and assembling of a variety of different pictures or designs to create a single picture.
- Collage: similar to montage but using materials other than or in addition to paper – string, fabrics, wallpapers, and other found materials. The medium of collage has long been prominent in children’s book illustration.

Examples:

- *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats (1962)
- *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni (1963)
- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle (1969) - [website](#)





***The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats  
(1962)**

# Swimmy

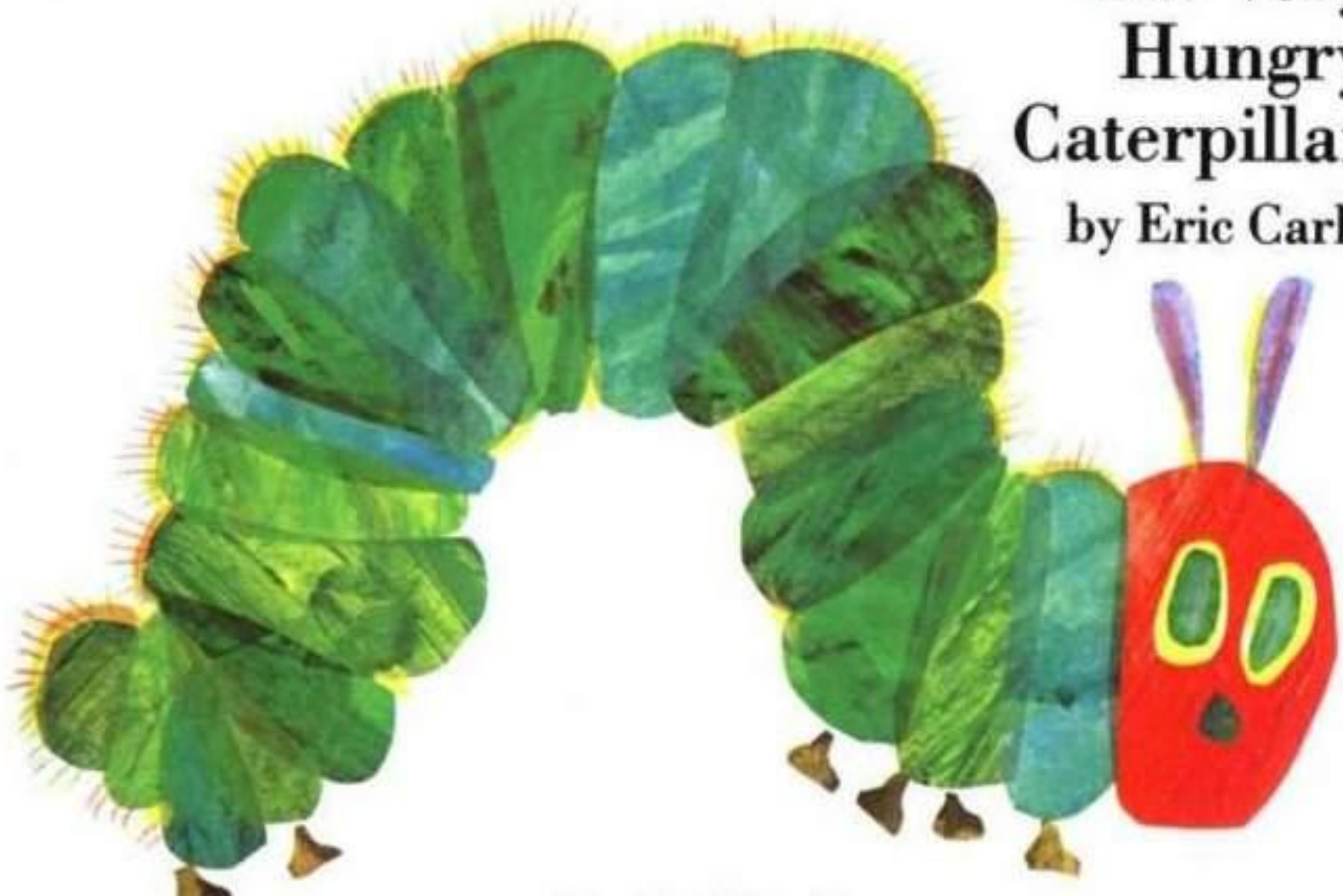
by Leo Lionni

SCHOLASTIC INC.

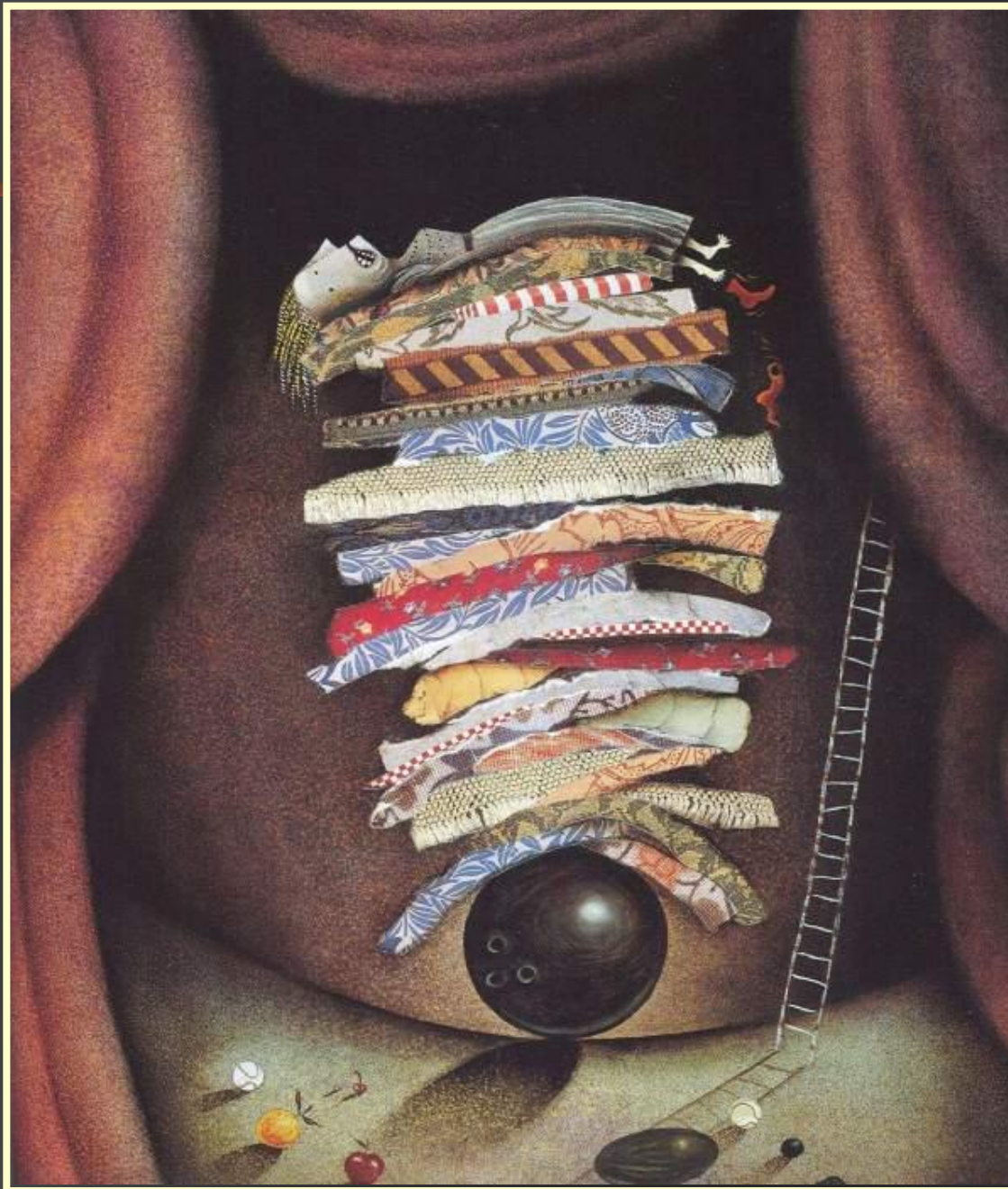
New York Toronto London Auckland Sydney

(1963)

**The Very  
Hungry  
Caterpillar**  
by Eric Carle



**(1969)**



***The Stinky Cheese  
Man and other  
Fairly Stupid Tales***

By Jon Scieszka and  
Lane Smith

(1992)

# Artistic Styles

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- A. Realism
- B. Cartoon Art
- C. Expressionism
- D. Impressionism
- E. Surrealism
- F. Folk Art

# Artistic Styles

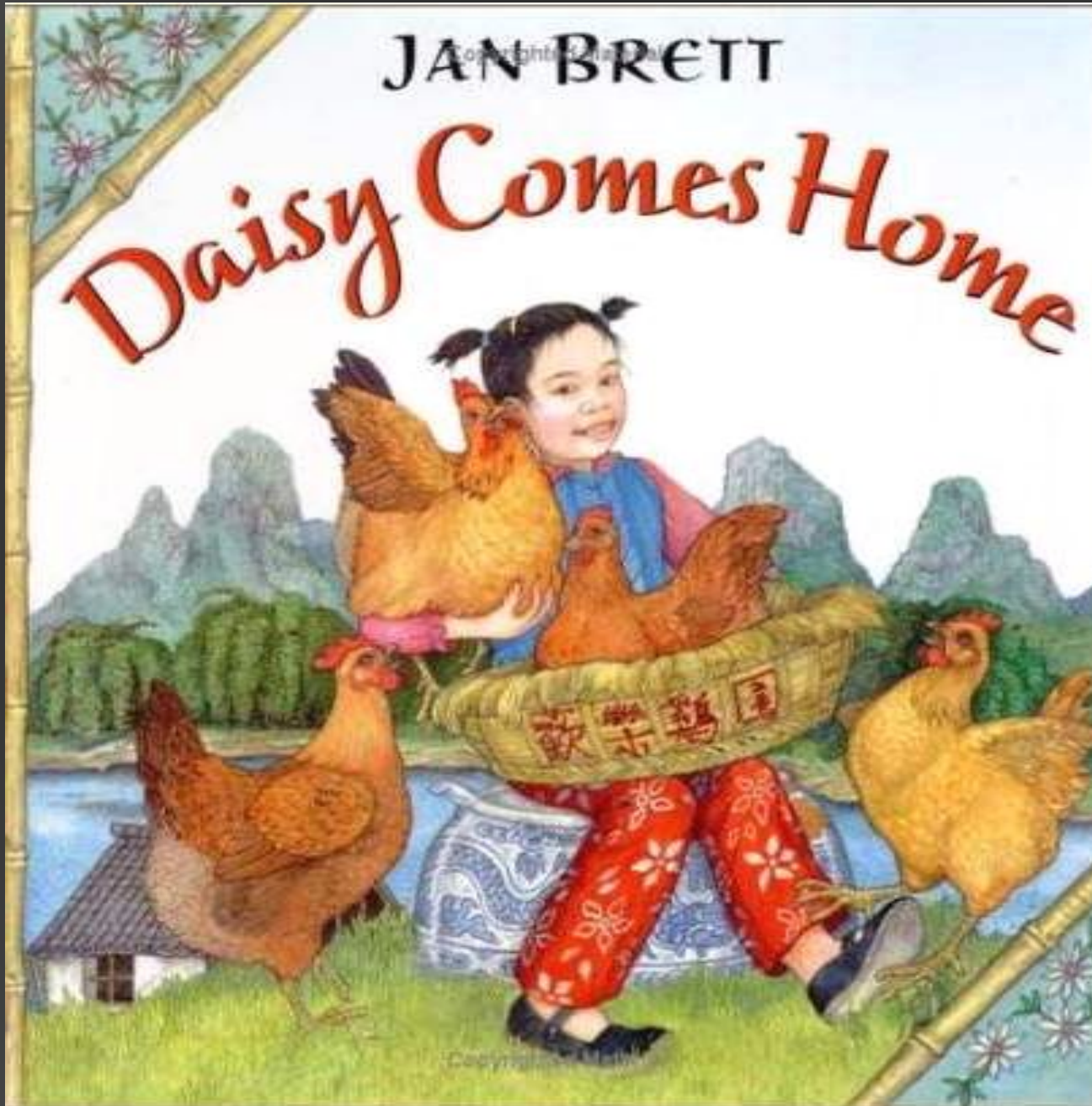
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## A. Realism

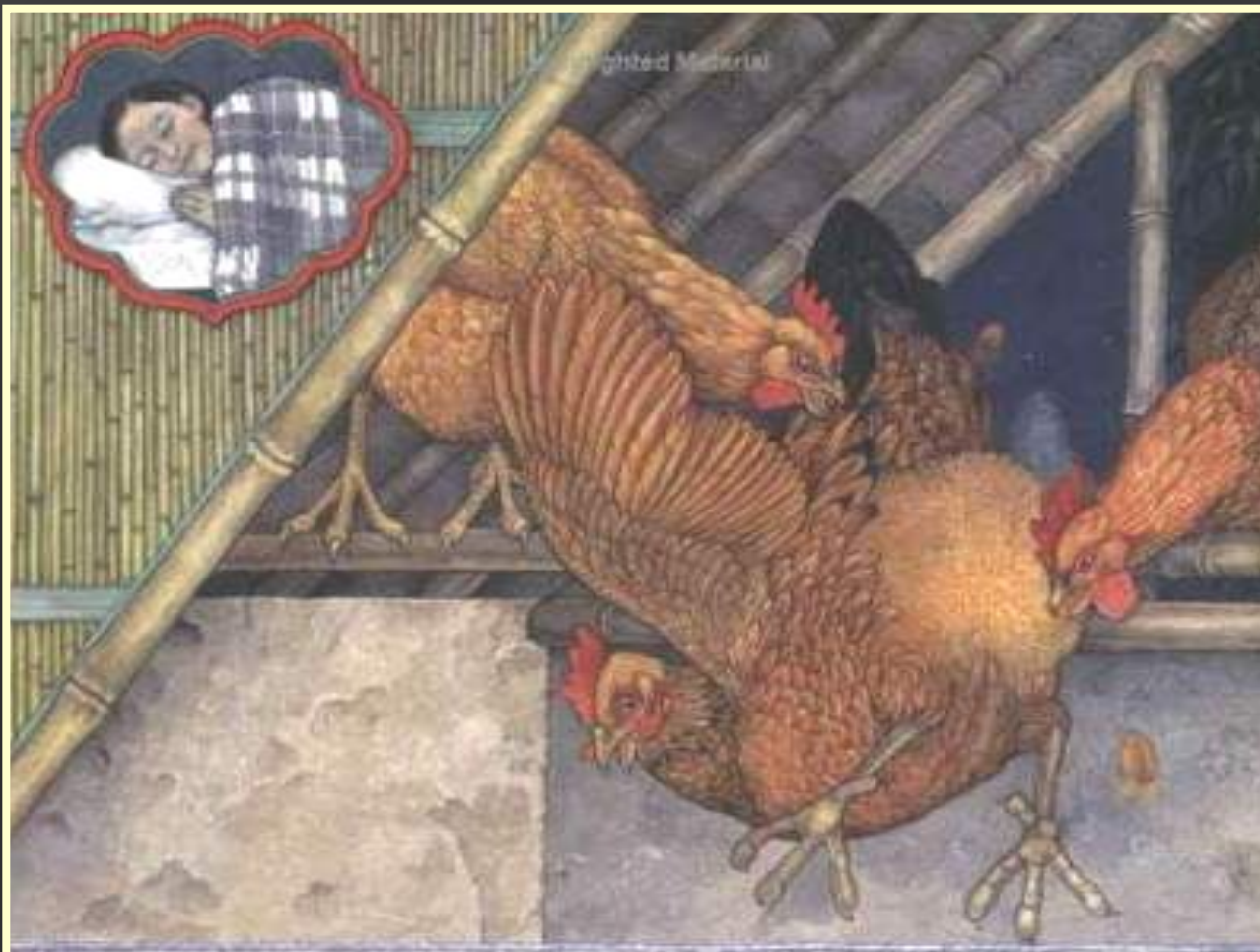
- **Realistic or representational** art portrays the world with faithful attention to lifelike detail. A few artists aim at almost photographic realism, but many prefer to approximate reality.
- It is particularly suited to illustrate realistic stories with serious content or themes.

JAN BRETT

# Daisy Comes Home



(2002)



But every night when it was time to roost in the henhouse, the other hens picked on Daisy. They fluffed up their feathers and crowded her off the perch. They jostled her until *Peck!* one or the other pushed her and *Thump!* off she fell.

***Daisy Comes Home*** by Jan Brett (2002)

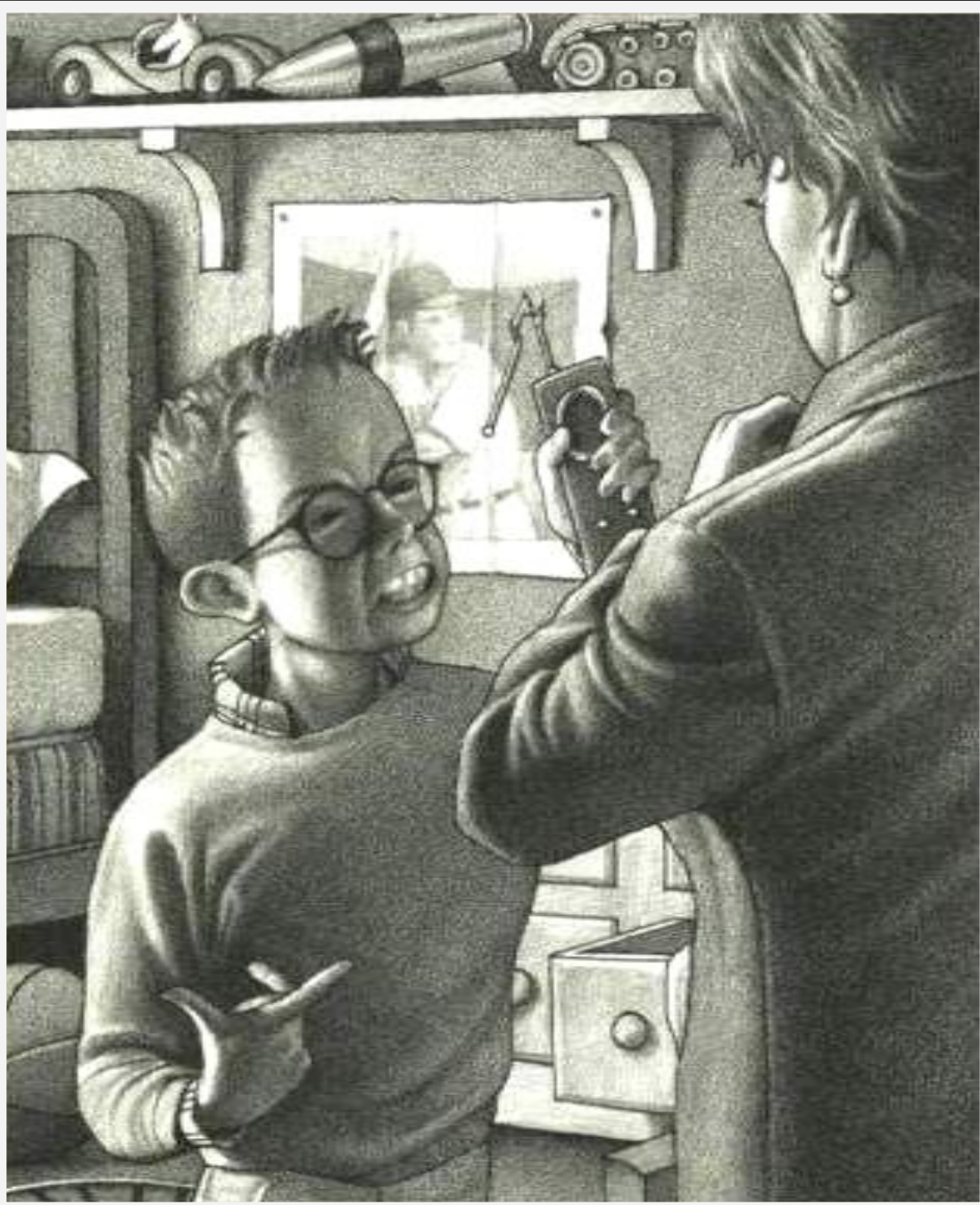




***Zathura***

by Chris Van  
Allsburg

(2002)



***Zathura***

by Chris Van  
Allsburg

(2002)

# Artistic Styles

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## B. Cartoon Art

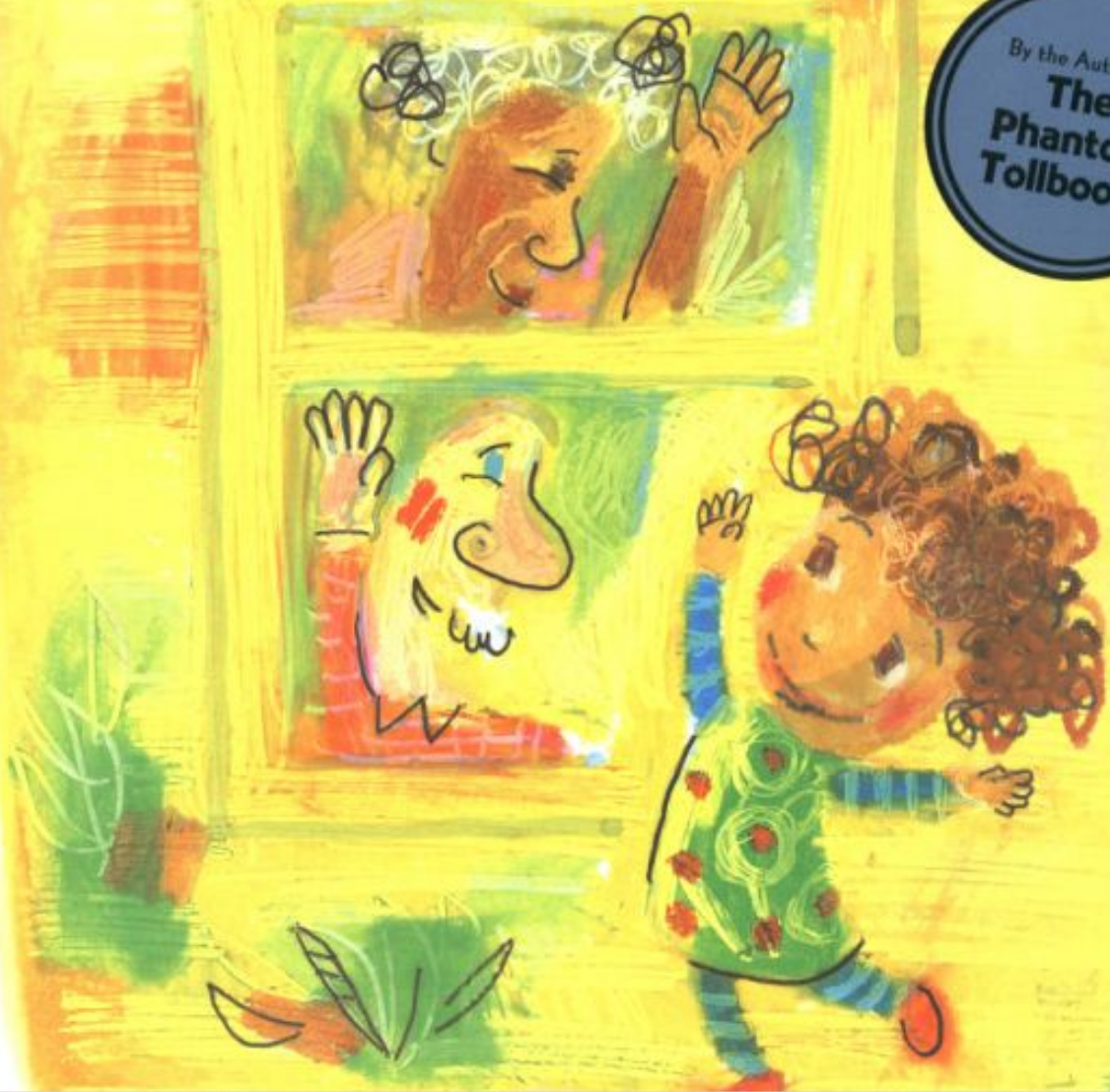
- Cartoons consist of exaggerated caricatures that emphasize emotion and movement. They possess no subtlety, but are simple and straightforward.
- They are often chosen to illustrate humorous stories, nonsense, and comical satire.

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# The Hello, Goodbye Window

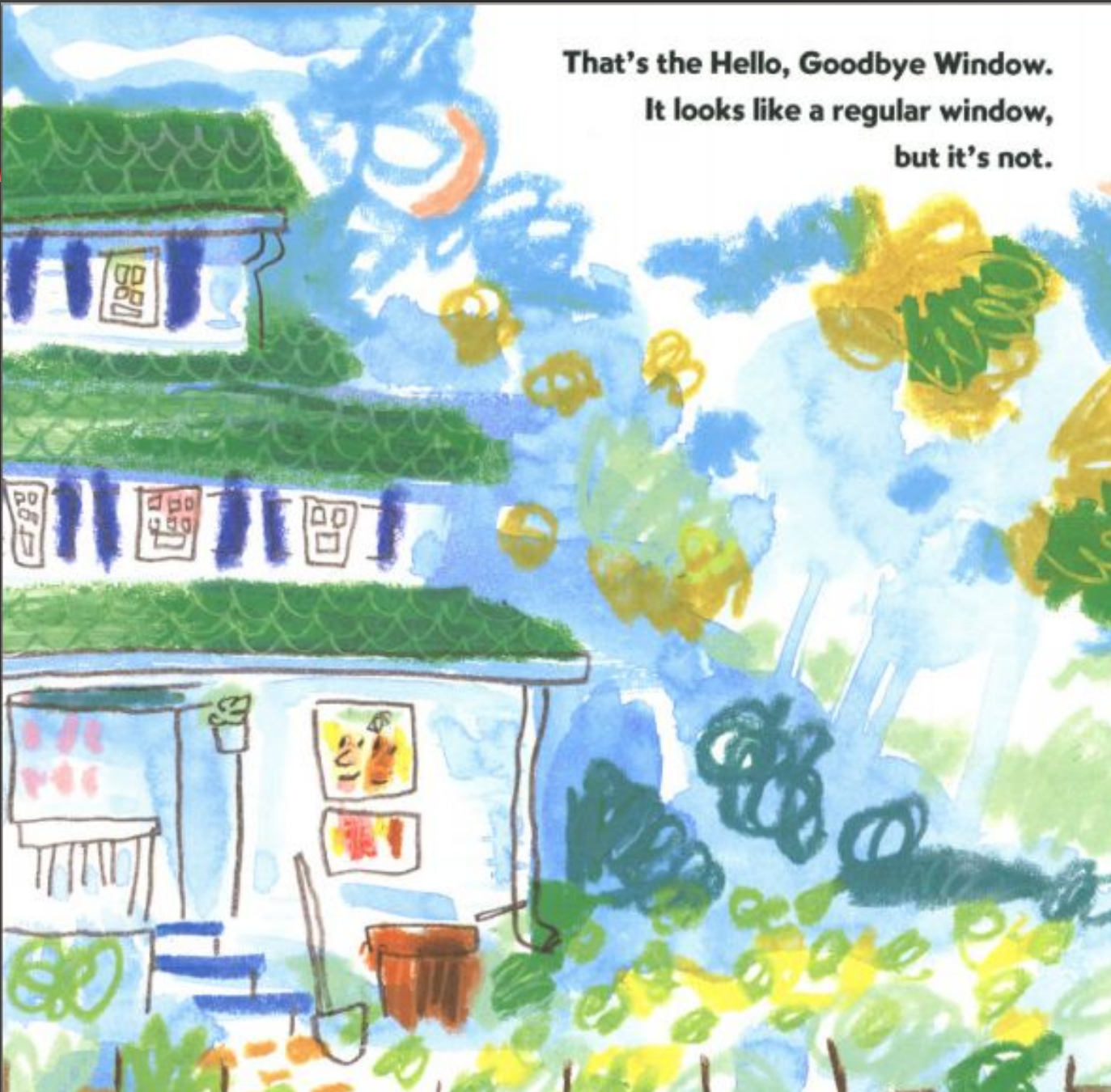
Norton Juster Chris Raschka

By the Author of  
**The  
Phantom  
Tollbooth**



2005

**That's the Hello, Goodbye Window.  
It looks like a regular window,  
but it's not.**

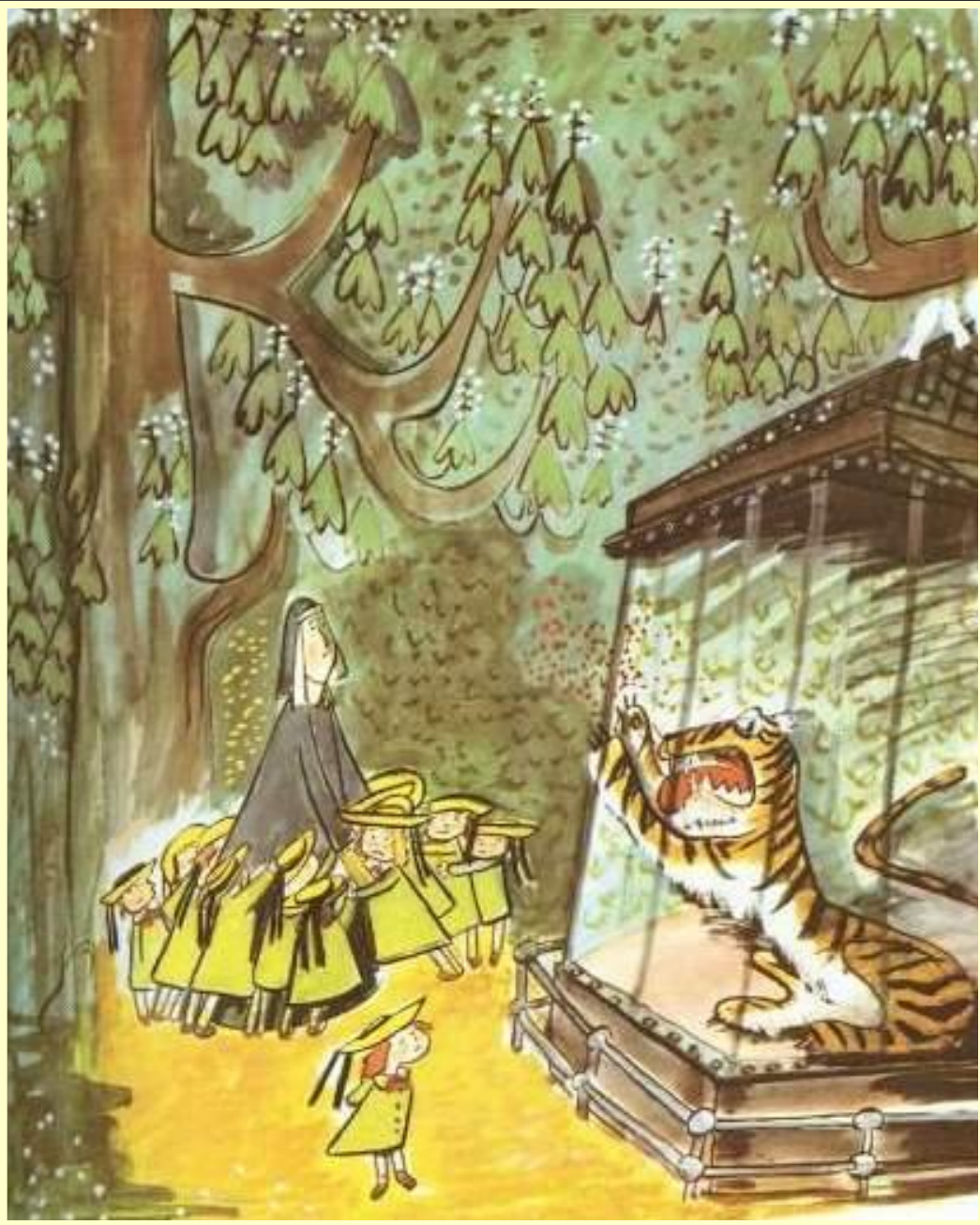


# Artistic Styles

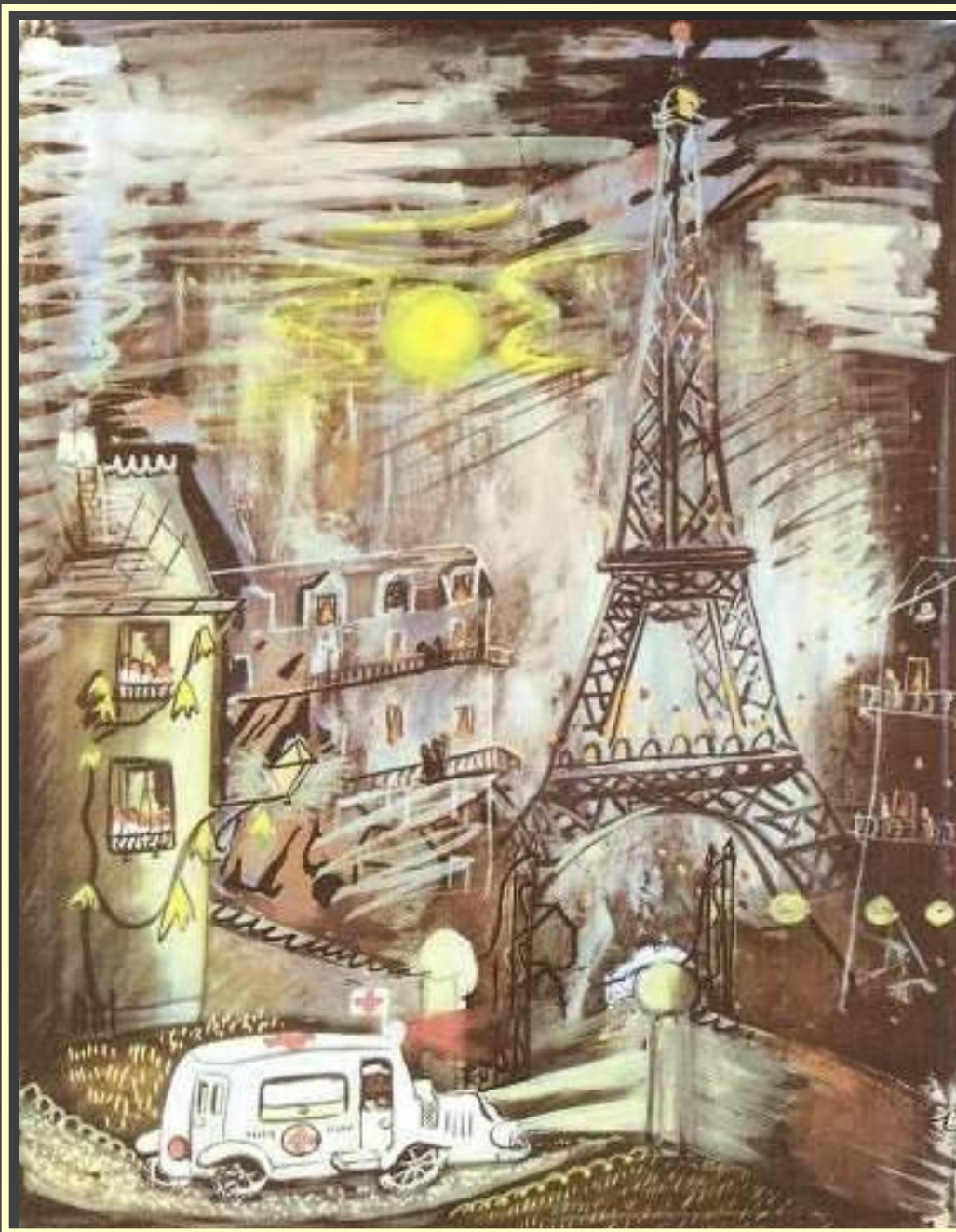
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## C. Expressionism

- Expressionistic art conveys an inner feeling or vision by distorting external reality.
- Expressionism flourished in France toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Painters such as Vincent van Gogh sought new freedom of expression, rejecting traditional uses of line, color, space, and so on.
- The influence of expressionism is often found in children's picture books in the form of distorted shapes and provocative use of color.
- Expressionism is quite versatile and can be used to create fresh perspectives in both serious and humorous stories.



***Madeline*** by  
Ludwig Bemelmans  
(1939)

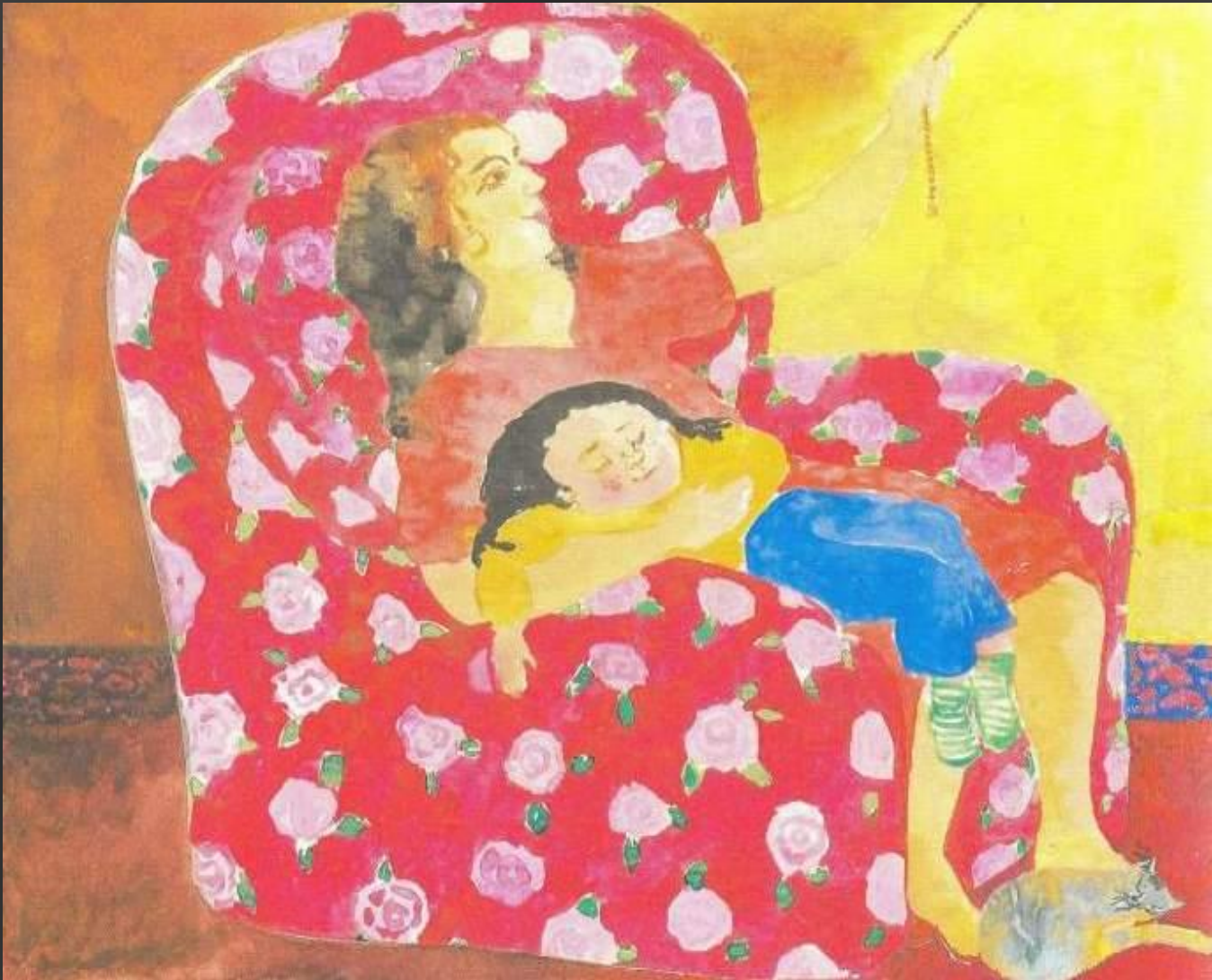


*Madeline* by  
Ludwig Bemelmans  
(1939)





***A Chair for My Mother***  
by Vera B. Williams (1982)



***A Chair for My Mother***  
by Vera B. Williams (1982)

# The First Starry Night

Joan Shaddox Json



(1997)



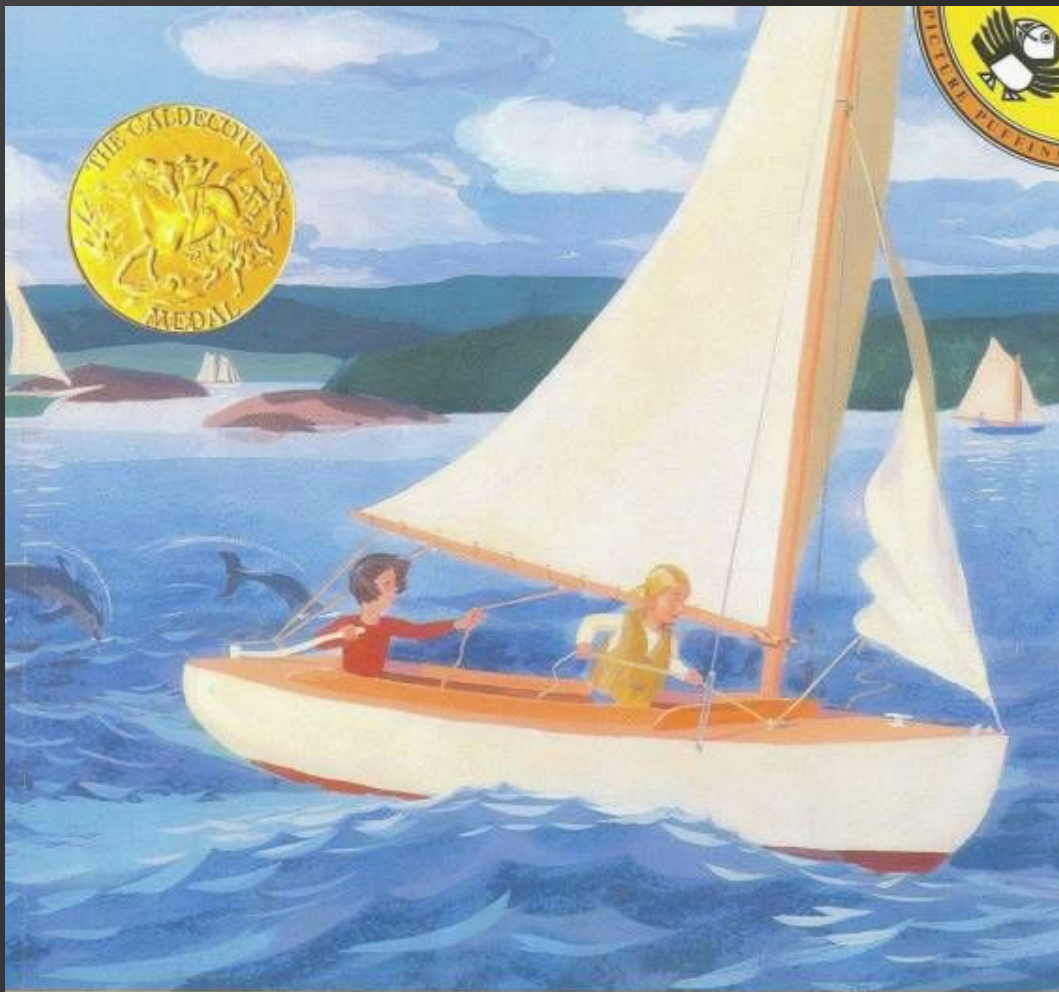
***The First Starry Night*** by Joan Shaddox Isom  
(1997)

# Artistic Styles

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## D. Impressionism

- Impressionistic art depicts natural appearances of objects by giving visual impressions with an emphasis on **light**. Color is the most distinctive feature of this style, especially the interplay of color and light, often created with splashes, speckles, or dots of paint (pointillism).
- Impressionism is also a 19th century French movement. The most influential impressionists were Monet and Cezanne, who wished to convey more of the artist's emotional responses in their paintings.
- The effect is dreamlike, sometimes romantic or magical. It also evokes a quiet, pensive mood.



# Time of Wonder

Robert McCloskey

*Time of  
Wonder*

by Robert  
McCloskey  
(1957)

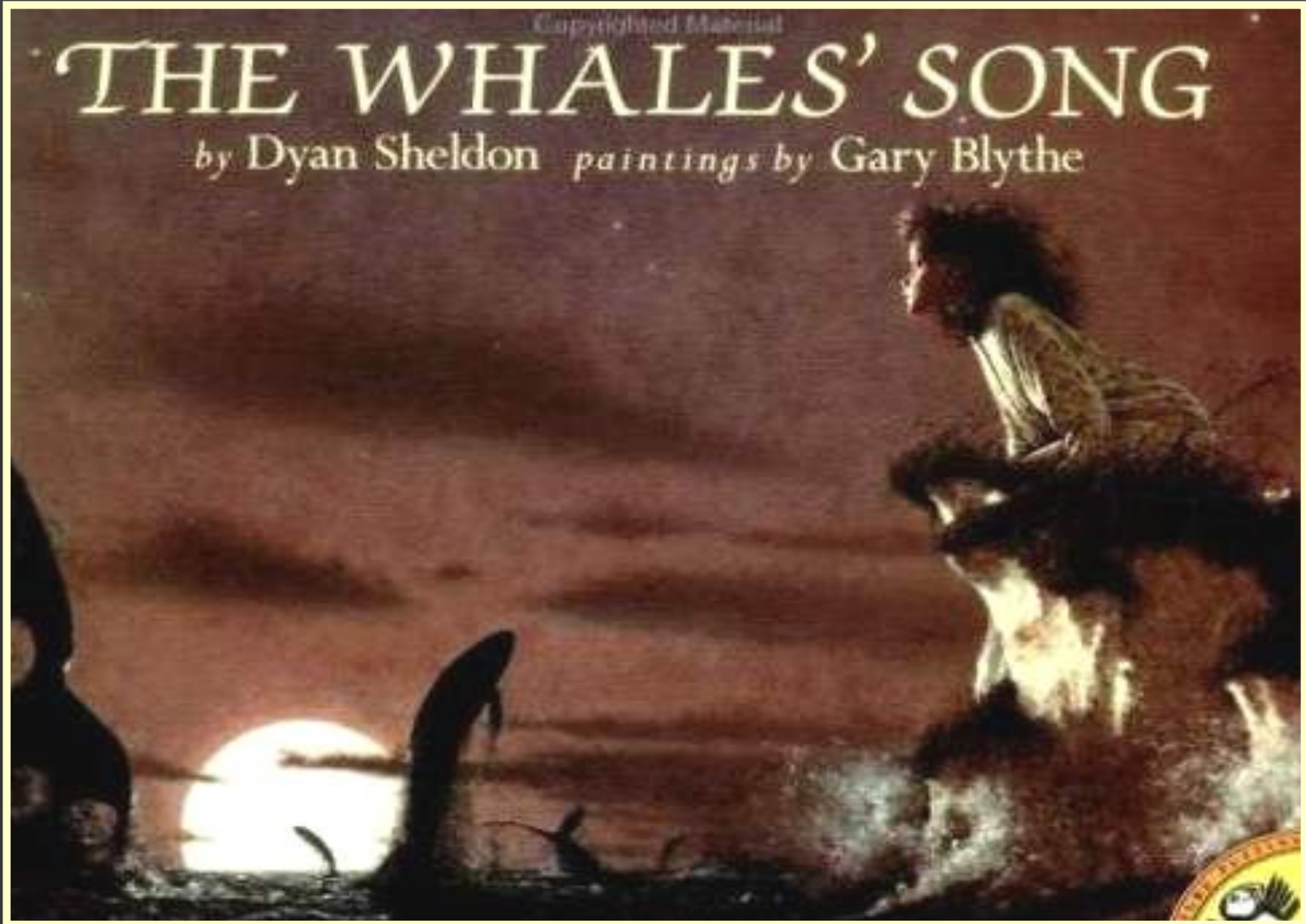


***Time of Wonder*** by Robert McCloskey (1957)

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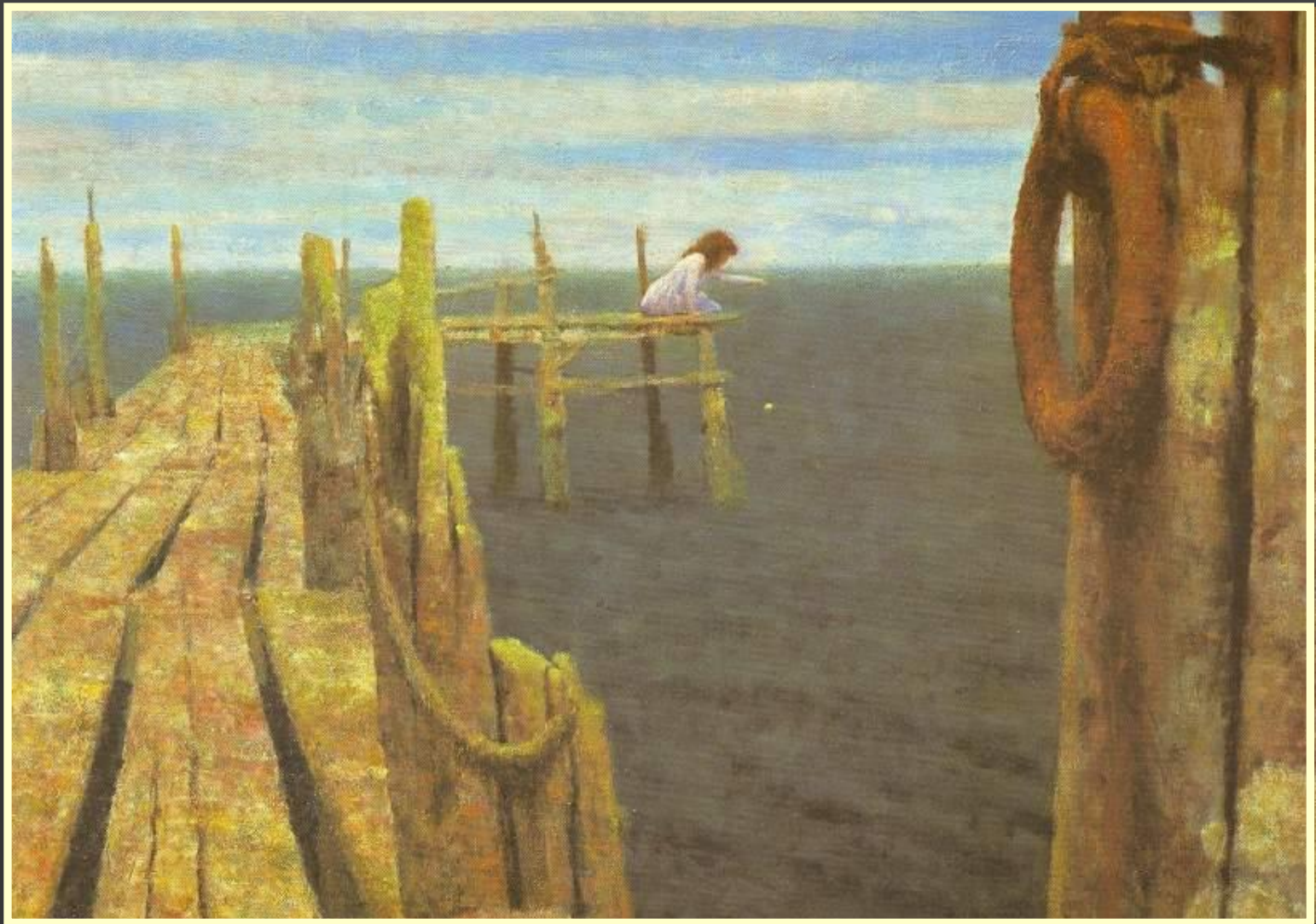
# THE WHALES' SONG

by Dyan Sheldon *paintings by Gary Blythe*



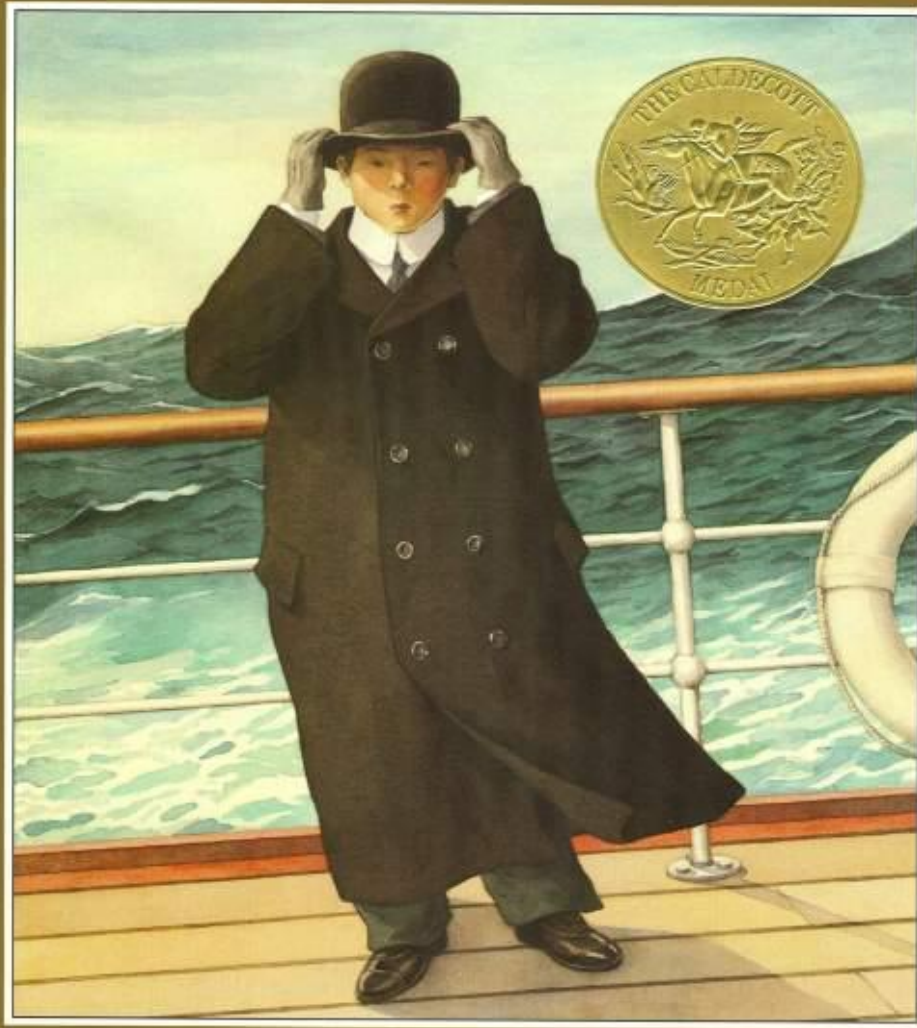
(1990)





***The Whales' Song*** written by Dyan Sheldon  
and illustrated by Gary Blythe (1990)

# Grandfather's Journey



ALLEN SAY

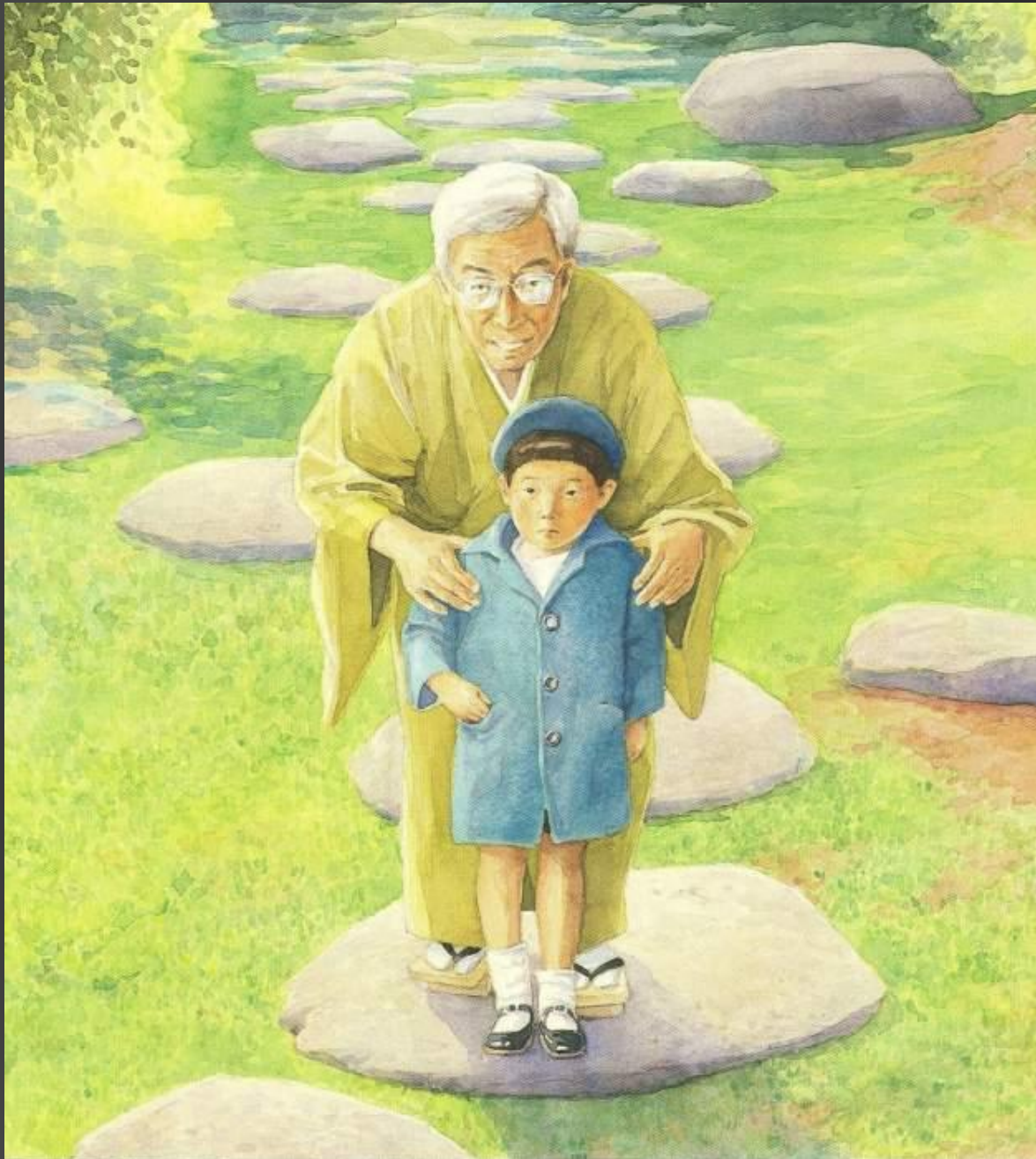
(1993)



***Grandfather's  
Journey***

by Allen Say

(1993)



***Grandfather's  
Journey***

by Allen Say

(1993)

# Artistic Styles

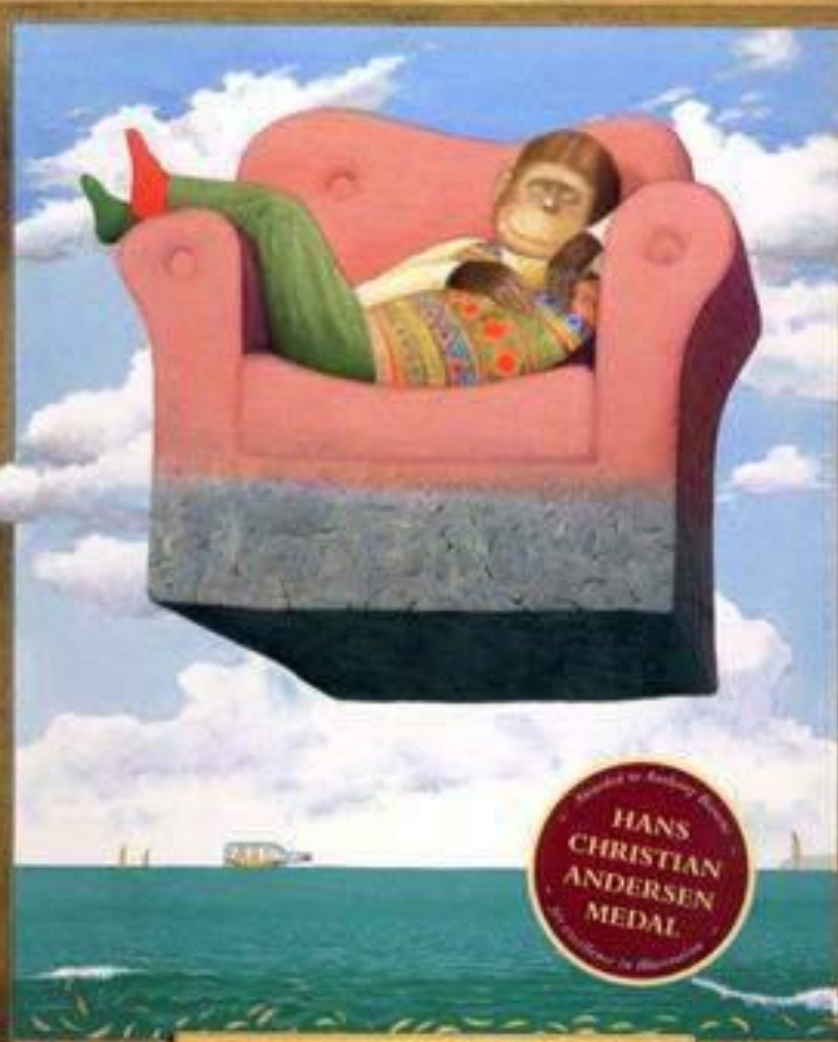
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## E. Surrealism

- Surrealistic art often presents incongruous dream and fantasy images. It creates unnatural juxtapositions and bizarre incongruities.
- The most famous practitioner of surrealistic art was Dali. Surrealism is a very intellectual response to a subject.
- The expressionist and the impressionist make us feel, but the surrealist makes us think.
- It is suited to strange, unrealistic, or humorous stories.



# WILLY THE DREAMER



ANTHONY BROWNE

(1997)



*Willy the Dreamer*

by Anthony  
Browne

(1997)



*Willy the Dreamer*

by Anthony  
Browne

(1997)





# PIGGYBOOK



Anthony Browne

(1986)

"Hurry up with the meal, Mom," the boys called every evening when they came home from their very important school.



"Hurry up with the meal, old girl," Mr. Piggott called every evening when he came home from his very important job.



***Piggybook*** by Anthony Browne (1986)

# Artistic Styles

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## F. Folk Art

- Folk art is associated with a specific cultural or social group and is reminiscent of the style prevalent at the time the story events occurred.
- It is usually decorative in nature, providing ornamentation for everyday utilitarian objects.
- Since it is culturally specific, folk art is favored in illustrating folktales.

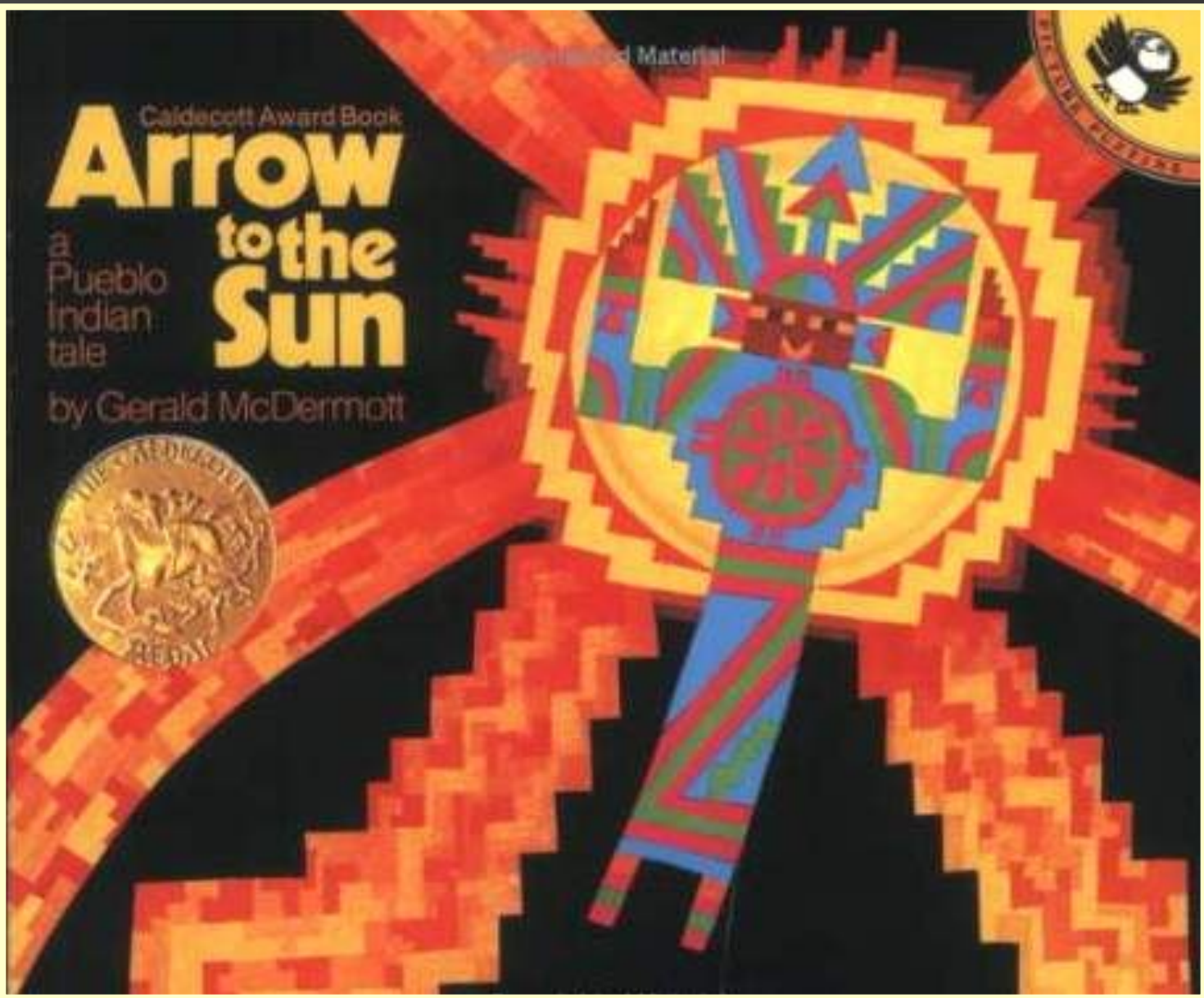
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Caldecott Award Book  
**Arrow  
to the  
Sun**

a  
Pueblo  
Indian  
tale

by Gerald McDermott



(1974)



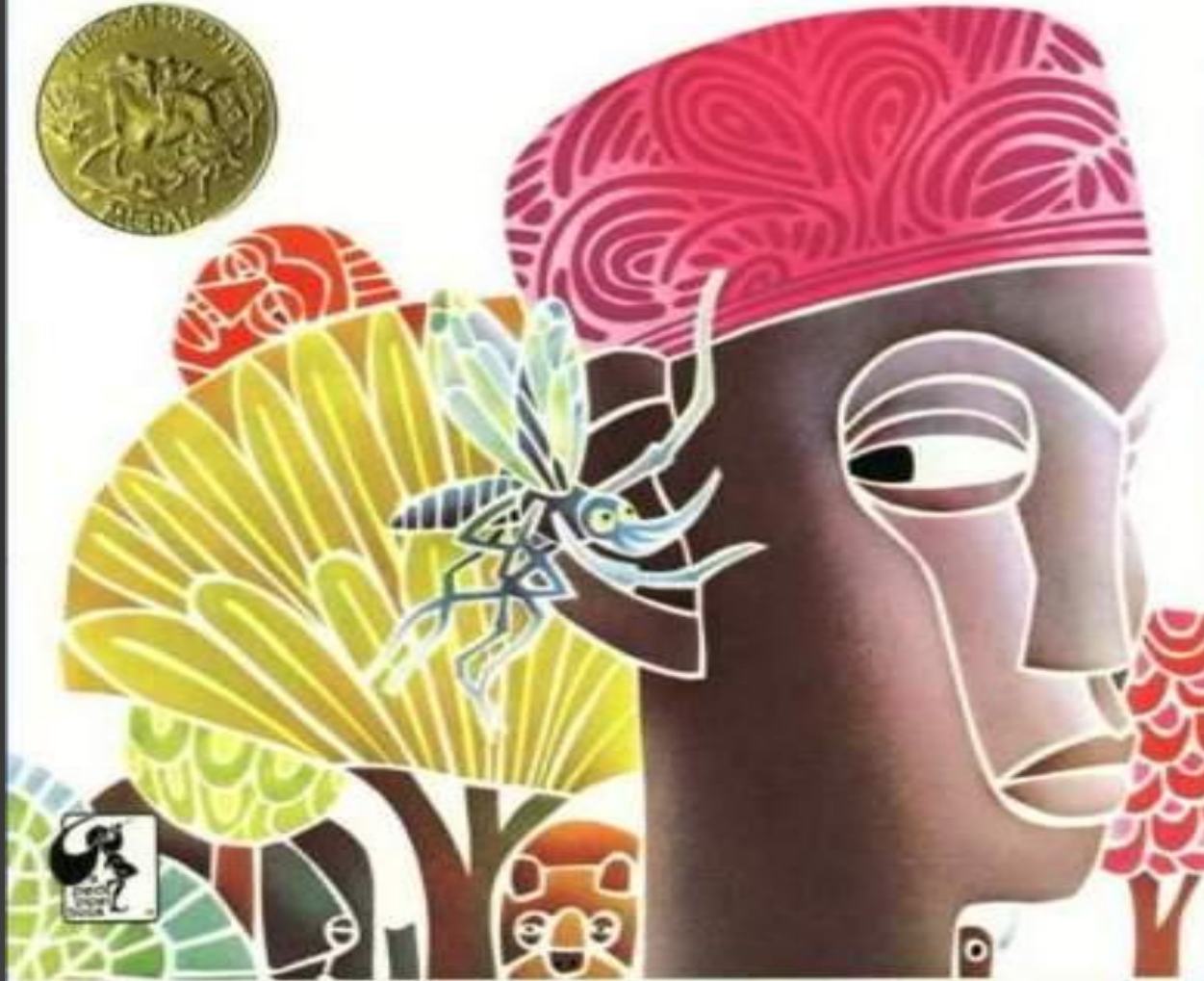
***Arrow to the Sun***

by by Gerald  
McDermott  
(1974)

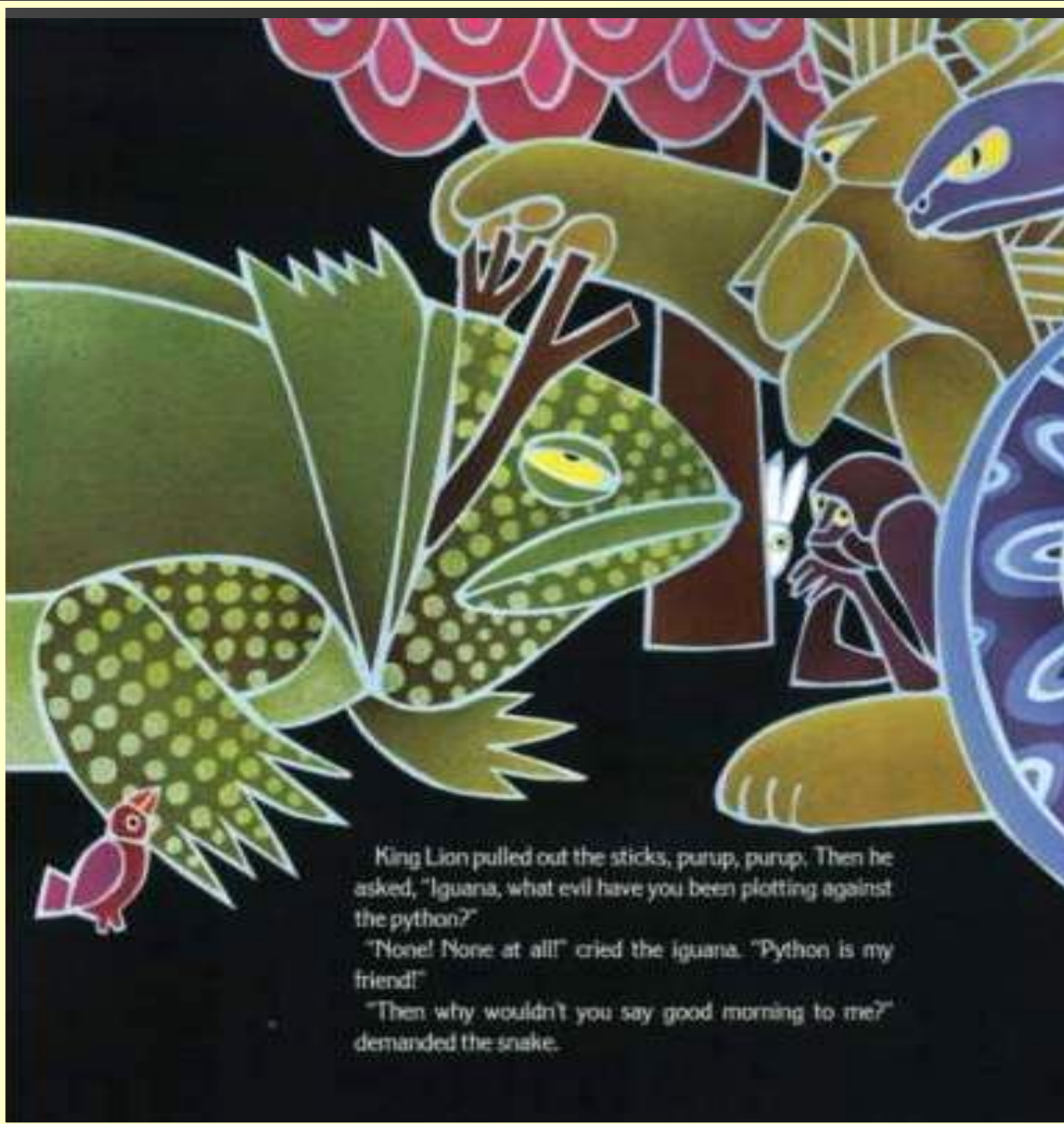
# Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears

Verna Aardema | pictures by Leo and Diane Dillon

Winner of the Caldecott Award



(1975)



King Lion pulled out the sticks, purup, purup. Then he asked, "Iguana, what evil have you been plotting against the python?"

"None! None at all!" cried the iguana. "Python is my friend!"

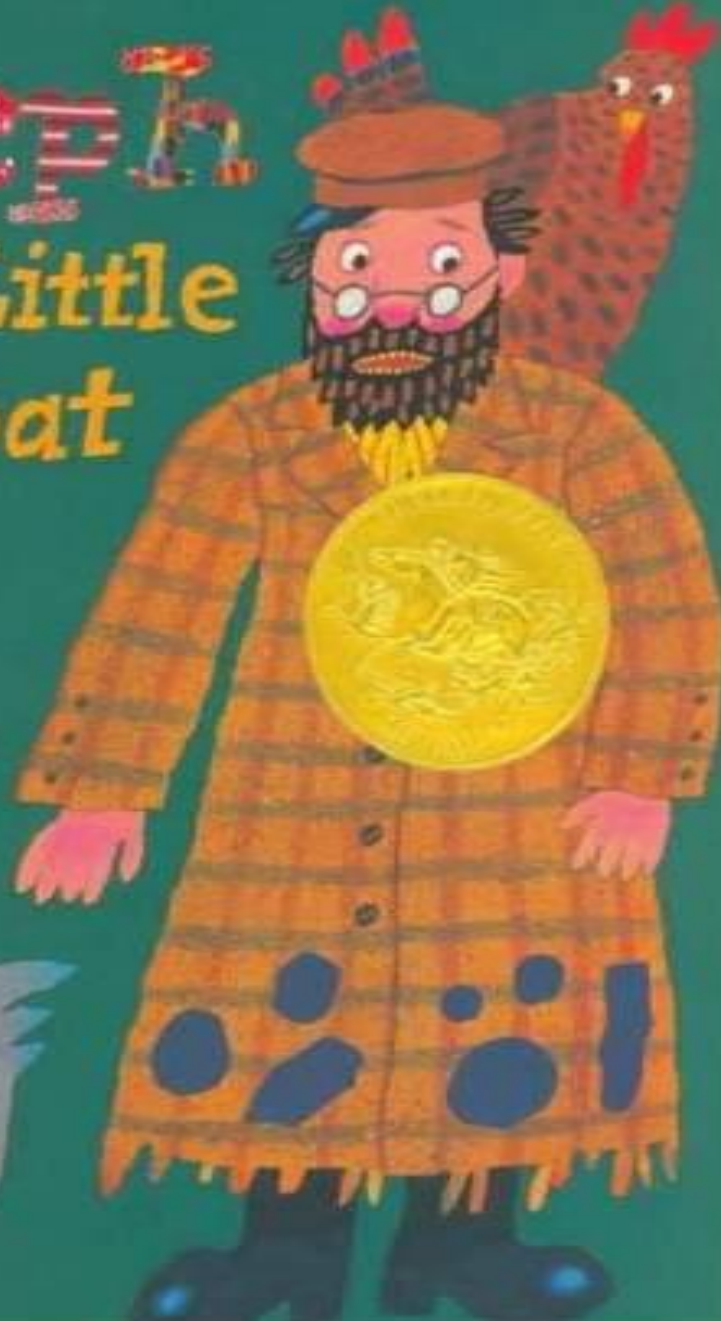
"Then why wouldn't you say good morning to me?" demanded the snake.

*Why Mosquitoes  
Buss in People's  
Ears (1975)*

Joseph

Had a Little  
Overcoat

Simms  
Taback



(1999)





*Joseph Had a  
Little Overcoat*  
by Simms  
Taback (1999)

# Summary

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- Picture books constitute an art form that has become increasingly sophisticated.
- Understanding the artist's techniques and style can enrich our appreciation of the work as adults and help us to make wise book selections for children.
- Reading good picture books can foster in children an acuity of vision and artistic sensitivity.