

## SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

### Picture books to support P4C



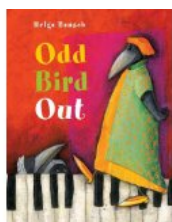
Allan Ahlberg

**The pencil** illustrated by Bruce Ingman

Walker Books, (HB) 2008, 978 1 4063 0962 1

In the beginning there was a pencil and it drew a boy who asked for a dog, who asked for a cat and so a story is created by all the characters as they appear on the page. Paintbrush brings colour. Rubber sorts out mistakes. But rubber can't, or won't, stop.

THEMES: power, choice, creativity, logic.



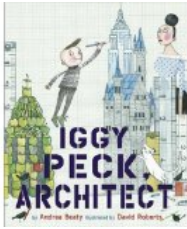
Helga Bansch

**Odd bird out**

Gecko Press, (PB) 2008, 978-1-877467-09-7

Robert, or Bobby as he prefers to be known, is a bit of a dandy. Especially as he is a raven. His family just cannot accept that he is different and so he leaves to find colour and friendship and joy elsewhere. Life in the branch is no longer disordered but isn't it just a little dull?

THEMES: belonging, self- belief, conformity.



Andrea Beaty

**Iggy Peck architect** illustrated by David Roberts

Abrams Books, (HB) 2007, 978 0 8109 1106 2

Still in nappies, and indeed utilising them, Iggy Peck revealed his innate architectural talent to his proud parents. His second grade teacher is less impressed and bans all attempts to design and build. It is only later that she realises what Iggy had known all along 'there are worse things to do when you're in grade two than to spend your time building a dream'.

THEMES: creativity, individuality, self knowledge, control, choice.



Claudia Boldt

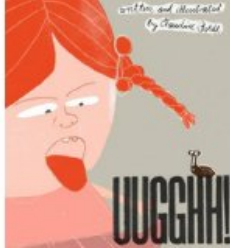
**Odd dog**

Jonathan Cape, (PB) 2012, 978 1 780 08005 5

Helmut adores apples and his apple tree is full to bursting with them. But what if they were to fall into his neighbour's garden? That would be just typical – Igor is the dog with *everything*. Actually, Igor prefers bones.

THEMES: jealousy, acceptance, friendship

Suffolk SLS, JO/LR August 2008  
Updated JO September 2012



Claudia Boldt

**UUGHH!**

Child's Play, (PB) 2011, 978-1-84643-372-6

Slug is so depressed by his appearance which is guaranteed to provoke a reaction of disgust in all who meet him. Spider has a different view. What is beauty anyway?

THEMES: confidence, self belief, prejudice



Anders Brundin

**Dudley the daydreamer** illustrated by Joanna Rubin

Dranger, translated by Frank Perry

WingedChariot Press, (HB) 2008, 978 19 0534 11 08

Working as a Civil Servant is black and white. Daydreaming is colour. Dudley tries to combine the two with little success, resulting in unemployment. Lack of work provides rainbow time but grey hunger. Could a job in the Dream Factory be the answer?

THEMES: identity, convention.

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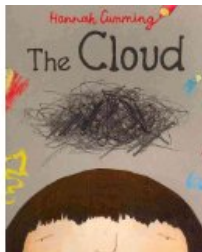
Suzy Chic & Monique Touvay

**Watching** translated by Sarah Adams

WingedChariot Press, (HB) 2006, 978 19 0534 10 78

In this short sparsely written fable, an amorphic creature visits his friend the Apple Tree, every day. One day the Tree offers him a flower but advises him that if he waits something even better will happen and, over time, it does. The simple but gentle illustrations are reminiscent of 'The Little Prince' by Saint-Exupery.

THEMES: patience, friendship, trust.



Hannah Cumming

**The cloud**

Child's Play, (PB) 2010, 978-1-84643-343-6

One girl, and one girl alone, does not engage with the art class. The black cloud will not go away. But it does get so much smaller due to the efforts of a thoughtful and determined class mate.

THEMES: friendship, acceptance, determination, creativity



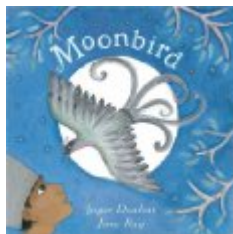
Niki Daly

**Ruby sings the blues**

Frances Lincoln, (PB) 2007, 978-1-84507-280-3

Ruby just likes to belt it out. She is incapable of speaking quietly. Home, school, she is just so LOUD. No-one can cope with her and she finds herself alone and, for once, silent and blue. Maybe that amazing voice could be channelled into song?

THEMES: creativity, freedom, understanding



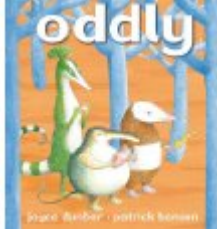
Joyce Dunbar

**Moonbird** illustrated by Jane Ray

Picture Corgi, (PB) 2007, 978 0 552 55003 1

As a baby Prince Orla was wrapped in a bubble by the mystical Moonchild. Unable to hear like other mortals, Orla is saddened that he cannot communicate with his parents until the day that moonbird arrives and transports him to a place of beauty, magic and understanding. Speaking with his eyes, hands and heart, Orla returns to his family to plant a seed of moontree and knowledge.

THEMES: inclusion, trust, compassion, belief.



Joyce Dunbar

**Oddly** illustrated by Patrick Benson

Walker Books, (HB) 2009, 978 1 84428 032 2

Three strange creatures are wandering in a forest, independently pondering the questions of “Who am I? What am I? Where am I?” A little lost boy comes running down the road and attracts their attention by asking the same questions. He needs love and attention to help him feel better.

THEMES: identity, friendship, love.



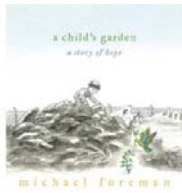
Lluís Farré

**The grey boy** illustrated by Gusti, translated by Judith Willis

WingedChariot Press, (PB) 2006, 978 19 0534 108 5

Joshua is an unrelenting grey. Top to bottom, front to back and, rather more disturbingly, inside. Very little excites, worries or upsets him. His only slight attachment is to his hamster, Gus. And it is Gus who accidentally brings colour into Joshua’s soul.

THEMES: life, emotion, attachment, meaning.



Michael Foreman

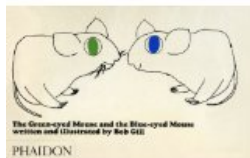
**A child's garden: a story of hope**

Walker Books, (HB) 2009, 978 1 4063 1207 2

On one side of a barbed wire fence, a boy living in the rubble finds and nurtures a tiny plant. Will it thrive and grow? Can hope flourish amidst destruction?

This simplest of stories echoes the situation of many disenfranchised children around the world. Although not wordless, this book has strong illustrations whose colours reflect the mood of the boy, making it accessible to less confident readers.

THEMES: hope, war, poverty, power



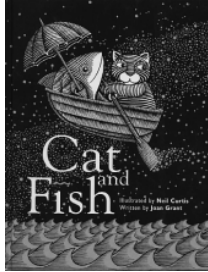
Bob Gill

**The Green-eyed Mouse and the Blue-eyed Mouse**

Phaidon Press, (HB) 2010, 978 0 7148 4887 7

Noah the mouse with green eyes lives mainly in a hole and has very little interaction with the outside world. Raffaella is a mouse with blue eyes and just happens to peer down the hole to be startled by a green eye. Noah is worried by the blue eye. Will they ever actually get to meet each other?

THEMES: fear, trust, compromise, diversity



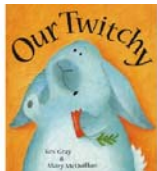
Joan Grant

**Cat and fish** illustrated by Neil Curtis

Lothian Books, (HB) 2003, 0 7344 0481 6

Cat and Fish come from two different environments. When they meet they become good friends and share each others worlds in the spirit of adventure and compromise. Stunning pen and ink illustrations open the way to exploring Op Art and Escher as well as the discussions points in the book.

THEMES: friendship, inclusion, compromise, sharing.



Kes Gray

**Our Twitchy** illustrated by Mary McQuillan

The Bodley Head, (HB) 2003, 0 370 32556 7

Twitchy the rabbit is very happy with his parents until the day realises that they don't behave in exactly the same way as him because they don't hop. When told he was adopted as a baby and if he looks carefully at his reflection he will see that he doesn't resemble them in appearance either, Twitchy is devastated. Surely he must change himself to be worthy of their undeniable love for him.

THEMES: identity, self acceptance, nature/nurture.

Suffolk SLS, JO/LR August 2008  
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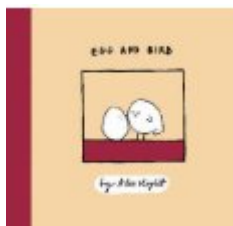
Armin Greder

**The island**

Allen & Unwin, (HB) 2008, 978 1741752663

Powerful Expressionist illustrations support this short fable where an unknown man is found on a beach when his raft washes him ashore. With great reluctance the people take him in to salve their consciences but then their generosity disappears. He is locked in the lowliest of dwelling places and fed the least appealing of the pig swill and scraps. The people's fears grow until seemingly, only a desperate measure will secure their own future. There are close parallels between this book and Jill Paton Walsh's adult novel, "Knowledge of Angels".

THEMES: immigration, fear, prejudice.



Alex Higlett

**Egg and bird**

Macmillan Children's Books, (HB) 2006, 1 405 04897 2

Egg and Bird are two very different beings. They have differing tastes in friends, style, hobbies, reading. Opposites in so many ways. Or are they?

THEMES: identity, social class, life processes.

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Oliver Jeffers

**The great paper caper**

Harper Collins, (PB) 2009, 978 0 00 718233 6

One day the forest community notices that their trees are losing branches. Having established that they are all blameless, they decide to launch an investigation and compelling evidence convicts bear. A clear case of wanton destruction of the earth's precious natural resources?

THEMES: right and wrong, conservation, understanding, reconciliation.



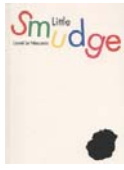
Oliver Jeffers

**The heart and the bottle**

HarperCollins, (HB) 2010, 978-0-00-718230-5

A young girl spends much of her formative years with her grandfather who talks to her and reads with her and tells her about the wonders of the world. When he is no longer there she locks away her heart, her soul, her very being, into a bottle. A chance encounter in her adult life allows her to regain suppressed and vital curiosity.

THEMES: loss, self knowledge, bravery, trust



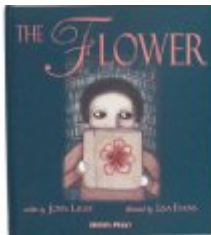
Lionel Le Néouanic

**Little Smudge**

Boxer Books, (PB) 2007, 978 1 905417 23 0

Little Smudge wants some friends but the little shapes he meets are less than welcoming. Little Smudge doesn't look like them so he can't possibly be included in their games. Timely advice from Dad shows the small ink blot that he can be amazing and wow those shapes with attitude. Shapes and smudge working in harmony make for a truly Matisse moment. Unique, clever, addictive.

THEMES: inclusion, relationships, friendship, acceptance.



John Light

**The flower**

Child's Play, (HB) 2007, 978 1846430725

Brigg works in the Library of a grey city. One day he finds some books labelled "Do Not Read". So of course, he reads one and thereby discovers illustrations of beautiful shapes and colours called flowers. He looks for flowers in the city in vain but finally finds a picture of one in a shop. It turns out to be a seed packet. What will happen next?

THEMES: Hope and determination flower in this book aided by Brigg's challenge to authority. This book is a good companion plant to "A child's garden" by Michael Foreman



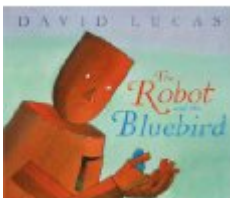
David Lucas

**Peanut**

Walker Books, (HB) 2008, 978 1 4063 1028 3

This simple story begins when a flower opens and out pops a tiny Monkey who grows no bigger than a nut. His first day is a full of bewildering and seemingly inexplicable experiences and his greatest terror is being eaten by a ghost who turns out to be a sensible and friendly Beetle.

THEMES: fear, friendship, self-discovery, learning.



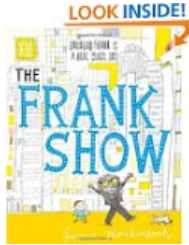
David Lucas

**The robot and the bluebird**

Andersen Press, (PB) 2008, 978 1842707326

Bluebird heals Robot's broken heart in a way that no-one else can and, in return, Robot saves her life. It is not within Bluebird's gift to provide immortality but she enables Robot to be forever a constant in an evolving world.

THEMES: life, friendship, kindness, sacrifice.



David Mackintosh

**The Frank show**

HarperCollins, (PB) 2012, 978-0-00-73699-5

There is rather more to Grandad Frank than is immediately obvious. He is very old, deaf, arthritic, wistful for the past, underwhelmed by modern life with all its gadgets *but* put him in front of the class and boy can he hold an audience!

THEMES: old age, families, prejudice, acceptance, understanding, stereotypes



Antoinette Portis

**Not a box**

HarperCollins Children's Books, (PB) 2008, 978 0 00  
725480 4

Rabbit is playing with a box, only it's not a box. It is many things, but a box it is not. Simple line drawings and covers that look just like a cardboard box (or not) make this a very special book indeed.

THEMES: imagination, curiosity, identity.



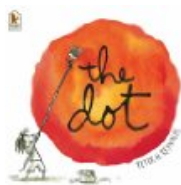
Simon Prescott

**Small mouse, big city**

Little Tiger Press, (HB) 2009, 978 1845067595

City Mouse wants to share her love of the metropolis with his dearest friend, Country Mouse. Although initially frightening, the city soon delights and enchants the rural creature. But home is the countryside and it pulls on his emotions as much as his love for his friend.

THEMES: friendship, choice, differences, connections, place, self knowledge.



Peter Reynolds

**The dot**

Walker Books, (PB) 2004, 978 1844281695



Peter Reynolds

**Ish**

Walker Books, (PB) 2005, 978 1844282968

How easy it can be to knock other people's self confidence and self-belief. In the first title *The Dot*, Vashti feels incapable of drawing anything. Her teacher encourages her to draw a dot and sign it. To Vashti's surprise, when she next walks into the Art Room, she discovers it framed and on the Wall. "I can make a better dot than THAT", hmmpfs Vashti and indeed she does, producing increasingly varied dots.

In the second title *Ish*, Ramon's confidence is diminished when Leon laughs at his drawing. From then on he crumples up all his drawings as they fail to look as he thinks they should. It takes the support and admiration of his sister to recover his self-belief.

THEMES: criticism, confidence.



Michel Streich

**The grumpy little king**

Allen & Unwin, (HB) 2011, 978 1 74237 572 4

The little king lives in a state of perpetual disgruntlement and is convinced that if he rules over a huge nation he will cheer up no end. His ministers persuade him that war with another country is the easiest way to extend his rule and he soon identifies an enemy. Let battle commence. Or not. Why should the soldiers fight if their royals are safe at home?

THEMES: war, greed, selfishness, conflict



Colin Thompson

**The big little book of happy sadness**

Random House, (HB) 2008, 978 1 74166 256 6

George is a sad child who lives with his grandmother and “an empty place where his mother and father should have been”. One day he visits the dog shelter where he discovers an unwanted three legged dog spending his final day on earth. George immediately identifies with the little dog and decides to save him and in doing so enters into a world which includes words like “warmth” and “not being on your own”.

Colin Thompson’s generous illustrations capture those words effectively and he has created a moving book which softens the hardest of hearts and embraces the needs of the lonely.

THEMES: sadness, bereavement, self-esteem, kindness.



Sylvia Van Ommen

**Sweets**

WingedChariot Press, (PB) 2009, 978 1905341146

Two friends arrange to meet for coffee and sweets in the park. As they sit beneath the trees they muse about the possibility of life after death, whether they will recognise each other and how they may have to make friends all over again. The simple black and white illustrations complement the story line perfectly.

**THEMES:** this book looks at the big questions of death and friendship, while conveying the pleasure of easy companionship.



Max Velthuis

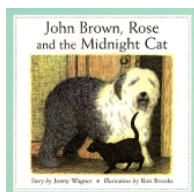
**Frog is frog**

Andersen Press, (PB) 1996, 0 86264 812 2

Frog loves being himself until he looks around at his friends and jealousy kicks in. He wants to fly like Duck, bake cakes like Pig, read like Hare. But what he excels at is being a green frog.

**THEMES:** identity, self knowledge, acceptance, self belief, friendship.





Jenny Wagner

**John Brown, Rose and the midnight cat** illustrated by  
Ron Brooks

Catnip, (PB) 2009, 978 1905117963

Originally published in 1977, the book tells the story of an interloper, the Midnight Cat, into a small family unit. John Brown, the Sheepdog, has been Rose's long time, faithful companion and he loves her. But jealousy springs to life when the Midnight cat creeps into their lives. "We're all right, Rose and I", thinks John Brown and deliberately sets out to drive the cat away. But Rose wants to befriend the cat. What will be the outcome?

**THEMES:** Jealousy and love can be two sides of the same coin. This story demonstrates how loving someone means being prepared to concede your own importance in another person's life.



Mo Willems

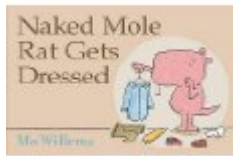
**Leonardo the terrible monster**

Walker Books, (PB) 2007, 978 1 4063 1215 7

Leonardo is a truly ineffectual monster until he realises that success lies in finding a suitable victim. Sam is that victim. But 'scaring the tuna salad' out of the poor little boy does not give Leonardo the psychological 'high' he was anticipating.

**THEMES:** intimidation, power, self knowledge, understanding, behaviour, change.

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Mo Willems

**Naked mole rat gets dressed**

Walker Books, (PB) 2009, 978 1 4063 2137 1

Wilbur is a naked mole rat with a difference. He wears clothes. He loves clothes. Clothes are empowering. Berated by his fellow totally naked mole rats, he toughs it out and opens a clothes shop. Shown the example of the eminent, hugely naked Grand-pah, Wilbur is undeterred. Will a proclamation by the elder statesman change his view?

THEMES: conviction, individuality, self expression, control, fear, social conventions.