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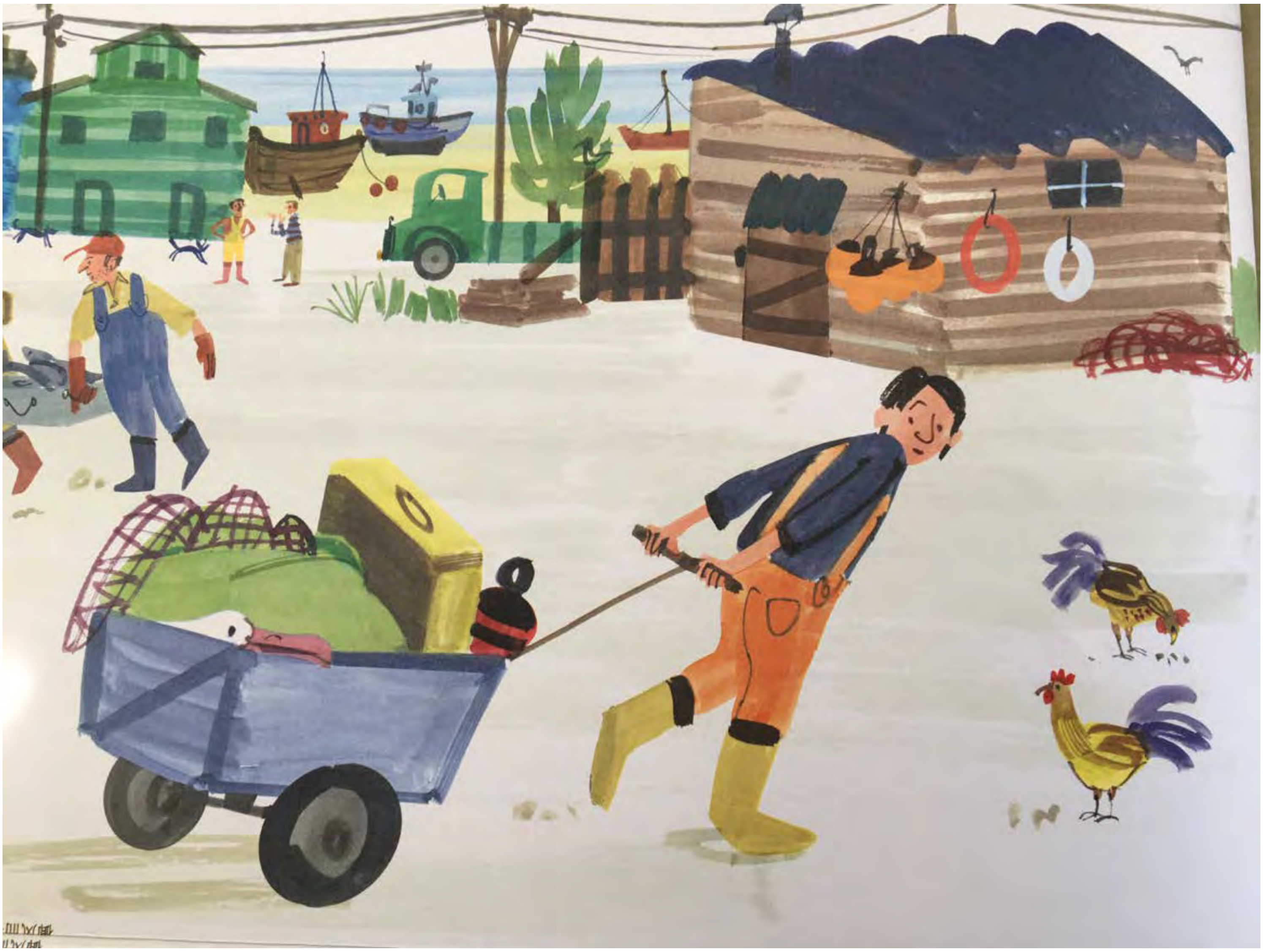
# A Sense of Place: Landscape



From *Ride the Wind* written by Nicola Davies, illustration by Salvatore Rubbino © 2020 Salvatore Rubbino. Published by Walker Books Limited www.walker.co.uk. All rights reserved.

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# Editorial

Landscape – it is all around us, the background to our lives. Usually, perhaps, the term conjures up the idea of a rural setting – we think of all those Dutch paintings, and of Constable and Ravilious. We might not often associate the idea with an urban setting or somewhere with people working and living. It can set a mood or populate the imagination. Landscape is powerful – and authors, illustrators and storytellers draw on it in their work to not only inspire their imaginations but to provide a place for their audience.

David Almond talks about the landscapes that are there in the background to his writing and his relationship to them – the landscapes of the north of England that imbues his writing with such power and reality whether we are walking across the moors or descending to Hades. Though the countryside is always present in his work, there is recognition of the urban – the mining communities, the chimneys, the streets.

It is this world that fascinates the illustrator Salvatore Rubbino; a place where people live and work. This may be busy crowded streets such as in London or Paris where the buildings themselves are the landscape – and because buildings can be tall, allow the viewer to look out to another landscape as one can standing beside the gargoyles of Notre Dame. Or the landscape is the background to people and their lives; the fishermen we meet in *Ride the Wind*. Rubbino opens the door to show us what captures his attention in bringing these worlds to life.

Levi Pinfold is another illustrator for whom landscape is important. In a brief interview he reveals some of the landscapes that have become part of his imagination and inform and influence his own work.

Imagination – landscape allows us to create the worlds we inhabit. J.R.R. Tolkien was a masterful world creator as Philip Reeve reveals when he writes about the effect and power of the landscapes he has met through *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* – and not only those, but the influence of landscape in the books and stories that continue to live with him. The Middle Earth imagined by Tolkien is the countryside he himself knew, and storytellers know how important it is to place the story in the real world.

This specificity is particularly recognised by the storytellers of the Celtic world. Jane Carroll talks about how important it was – and is – that the stories, full of magic and wonder, nevertheless can be placed on the map.

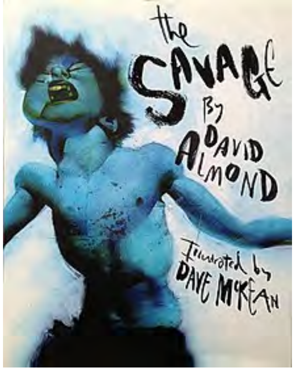
And mapping a landscape to widen understanding of key concepts such as space and distance as well as to link narrative to image is the aim of Karenanne Knight's article where she describes a project she set up to do just this.

What are the landscapes your imagination inhabits? Whether based on real surroundings or the images created for us by writers and artists they reflect moods and emotions, link us to our histories, help us ground our thoughts and ideas, sustaining us wherever we are.

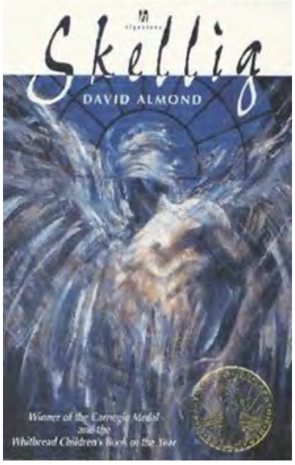
**Ferelith Hordon**

# Landscapes

David Almond is the author of *Skellig*, *The Savage*, *The Tightrope Walkers*, *A Song for Ella Grey*, *The Dam*, *Annie Lumsden, Girl from the Sea*, and many other novels, stories, picture books, songs, opera librettos and plays. His work is translated into 40 languages, and is widely adapted for stage and screen. His major awards include the Hans Christian Andersen Award, the Carnegie Medal, the Eleanor Farjeon Award, the Michael L. Printz Award (USA), Le Prix Sorcières (France) and *The Guardian* Children's Fiction Prize. He lives in Bath and Newcastle upon Tyne, the city of his birth. His new novel, *Brand New Boy,* will be published in November.



When I was a young teenager, we moved to an oval-shaped estate, a ring of small semi-detached houses, just above the heart of the town. The rooms were small, I shared a bedroom with my brother, but there was open land and wide skies not too far away. To get to it, I'd step out through the back door, walk through the square front garden, take the narrow street from the estate, turn left and left again into my grandparents' street, then turn right and follow the steep pathway by the allotments, leave that and step onto the broad playing fields, where my step would quicken as I moved higher, over the slopes of shrubs and wilder grasses, heading for our little wilderness at the very top. Skylarks rose singing into the sky as I advanced. The journey was footloose, liberating, a trip that seemed to take me into immensity, but sometimes old tales, rumours, nightmares came to haunt me – of wild dogs, savage tramps, of children lost in ancient pit shafts just below the turf – and I must glance back to reassure myself – yes, home and safety really weren't too far away.


Skellig
DAVID ALMOND
Winner of the Carnegie Medal and the Whitbread Children's Book of the Year

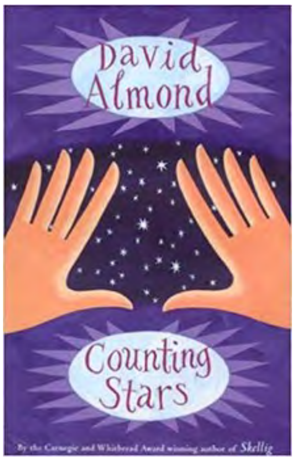
Up here was a place of disused coal mines, old mineral tracks, ponds and copses, and of that final slope where I'd lie on the cindery earth and simply stare up through the tips of breeze-blown grasses, and feel that my journey might continue, that I might quite easily be lifted into the astonishing endless blue.

Then I'd sit up and look back to where I'd come from, and look at what lay all around me and beyond me, the places that I'd come to write about in the coming years; a world made up of the real and the fictional, the true and the false, fact and dream; a world that would become the geography of my imagination.

What did I see? And what do I see now as I look back through that boy's eyes?

The town below, Felling on Tyne, a cluttered place centred on its square. The council estate in which I'd grown up. The church, St Patrick's, where I served on the altar, where my Geordie-inflected Latin helped the miracle of the Mass to occur. My first school, St John the Baptist, where Mrs Fagan's words on a blackboard created visions in the mind. Our little local library where I fell in love with books. The high street with my Uncle Amos' printing shop where I fell in love with print. The graveyard where my sister was buried, where my father and mother would come to be buried. A town with ancient tunnels deep below, tunnels that still held the bodies of those who died in pit explosions not so long ago. A town with the sound of larks and factory sirens in it, the calling of children in parks and gardens, the harsh and tender and beautiful Northern voice in it. A little insignificant town in a far-flung corner of the north, the kind of place that some said was uncultured, that could not be written about in a way that would reach the wider world. A place at the edge of civilisation. Ha! And beyond it: the city, Newcastle with its steeples and bridges, on the opposite bank; the River Tyne snaking its way past the shipyards with their half-built ships; the factories and spreading council estates; the North Sea dark on the horizon. A complex landscape, already riddled with memories and dreams, spreading out below me. And further still: the open spaces of Northumberland, its streams and forests and fells: in the far north, the dark bulges of the Cheviots in a sunlit haze against the massive sky. And when I turned and looked westward: the moors of County Durham, mining country, pithead after pithead standing upon the undulating earth, then the distant Pennines. And south: Wearside, Teesside, and beyond this, yet more moorland, yet more space.

It was, and is, a little, local, ordinary place with endless spaces all around. So it is like us, we human beings. We too are little, local, ordinary, but we're pursued by dreams and memory, filled with mystery, haunted by a sense of the beyond.

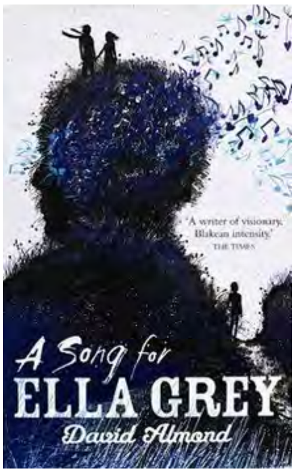

David Almond
Counting Stars
By the Carnegie and Whitbread Award winning author of Skellig

I first wrote about the landscape properly in the story collection, *Counting Stars*. The Felling in that book, which tells of a boy like me in a family like mine, is a mixture of the imaginary and the real. True streets coincide with streets that I invented. 'Real' characters meet up with and talk to those that I made up. Fictions are constructed around actual events, and sometimes even I'm not sure now what's really 'true'. Does it matter? Isn't that the way all memory works? It's certainly the way all fiction works.

Felling, or a fictionalised version of it, appears in so many of my later tales. In *The Colour of the Sun* a boy named Davie takes the journey that I described at the beginning of this piece. Like me, he wanders through his real place and through his own mind. I often feel that the page on which I write becomes the place in which I and my characters live and move. The page itself becomes a landscape, a place of possibility, a place of exploration and discovery. Words are like footsteps, one then another, one then another leading us further into the story's journey.

THE
COLOUR
OF
THE
SUN
David Almond

As I came to include more of the landscapes of the north into my work, I felt as if I'd come into an undiscovered land. My purpose was to explore it, to invent it, to recreate it, to show that any kind of tale could take place in it. Yes, there was a sense of purpose to it all. But I was, and am, also kind of helpless. This place is in me, in my blood and bones and heart and soul. It's almost as if it has been given to me, passed on to me, and I have a weird responsibility to it. And I often feel that I simply have to submit to that fact. This is where my imagination has worked best, where it finds its limits and, paradoxically, its freedoms. At the heart of me is a belief that my writing of this place protects it, sustains it, keeps it all alive. Crazy? Probably. So what? And maybe that really is what all writing is for, what all art is for. We write, sing, dance against the forces of destruction that surround us all. Each word, each paragraph, each page is an act against the pessimists, the dull destroyers. Our task is to make something beautiful and alive, to create and to keep on creating.



That's why this landscape was the place to set my version of the Orpheus myth, *A Song for Ella Grey*. Orpheus comes to Bamburgh Beach. Of course he does. His Eurydice is an ordinary Tyneside lass. Of course she is. The entrance to the Underworld is just beside the River Tyne. Of course it is. In the sunlit beauty of Northumberland, Orpheus sings songs that draw the birds down from the sky and slow the rivers in their flow. He loses Ella to an adder bite in the Bamburgh dunes. He almost sings her back to life again in the Hades beneath Newcastle town. He fails, as he always does. But he'll sing again and again, and maybe one time he'll get it right. Until then, he'll keep on living through version after version of his brand-new ancient tale, playing his music, singing his songs, keeping our beautiful, strange, miraculous and troubled world alive.

DAVID ALMOND
The Boy Who Climbed Into The Moon
Illustrated by
POLLY DUNBAR

In the end, for me, the landscapes of northeastern England are limitless. I do write of other places, use other landscapes. Some of them, such as the landscape of *The Boy Who Climbed Into the Moon*, seem totally invented. But I keep on returning to my source, I keep on exploring and inventing the landscape of my home.

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# The Importance of Place

Salvatore Rubbino trained at the Royal College of Art and has worked for many clients across different fields of illustration. *A Walk in New York* (2009), his first picture book, began as a series of paintings that was shortlisted for the Victoria and Albert Illustration Awards, and was followed by *A Walk In London* (2011) and *A Walk In Paris* (2014). These titles celebrate city living and the landmarks that make places special. He has also illustrated stories by other authors including *Harry Miller's Run* (2015) by David Almond, *A Book of Feelings* (2015) by Amanda McCardie and most recently *Ride the Wind* (2020) by Nicola Davies. Salvatore Rubbino has taught at a number of art colleges and delivers events at schools, libraries and museums. He regularly works as a freelance educator at the Museum of London and at the Postal Museum where he creates activities and runs workshops helping visitors to engage with the collection. He has previously worked at the National Gallery and in 2012 created the family trail for the BP Awards at the National Portrait Gallery.

DAVID ALMOND
HARRY MILLER'S RUN
illustrated by
SALVATORE RUBBINO

As an illustrator I spend my day drawing and thinking about pictures. My job is to interpret stories and create a visual world alongside the text, to complement the story and also to draw out its meaning.

I'm frequently asked about where my ideas come from and although there isn't any formula I can recommend, I do know that looking and drawing encourages ideas and helps me to work things out. I love to look in fact, looking is like a 'visual meal', it pricks my curiosity and feeds my imagination. I like to carry a drawing book with me wherever I go in case I see something interesting worth recording. The process of drawing helps me to notice things I would otherwise have walked past and overlooked and as a result makes me keenly aware of my surroundings.

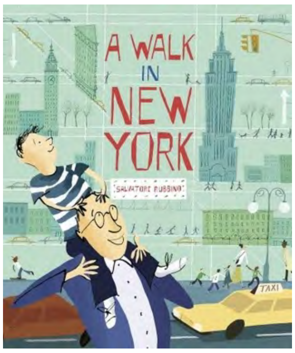
Anything can be interesting and everything has visual potential; we are surrounded by 'wonder' but the challenge is training our eyes to see it. Writers read, musicians listen, artists look!

I grew up and still live in a busy metropolis. In many ways this has shaped my visual point of view and has become a vivid source that continues to inspire me. Cities recreate the idea of 'landscape' as a particular kind of urban spectacle. Full of drama and 'visual friction', large is placed next to small and historic next to new, tower blocks become geometric wonders of different shapes and patterns, buildings go up and come down within an ever-changing skyline as the city reinvents itself.

A BOOK of feelings
AMANDA McCARDIE illustrated by SALVATORE RUBBINO

Cities are fluid and dynamic places and the thrill when I'm drawing in the street is that I'm never quite sure what will happen next. The judder of traffic and the flow of people will constantly rearrange themselves into new and exciting relationships for me to consider, into readymade compositions set against a background of building blocks. At the same time there's often another layer of human-scale drama saturated with pathos and poetry, the homeless next to the happy lovers or an emphatic businessman on their phone whilst someone nearby wearing headphones sings a song. Images present themselves all the time, it can feel exhausting but it's also wonderfully intoxicating.

Place helps to give a story an identity and a sense of belonging. It can create atmosphere and give the reader important cues about what kind of story they are reading. Place can reassure and tug the child reader into the story world with things they might also see and experience from their own lives (a park, a street or a school) or of course transport them to entirely new and exciting locations. Most importantly, place provides a stage-like setting for the characters in the story to perform on, struggle through sometimes, discover and interact with.



*A Walk in New York* was my first picture book and forms a short series which also includes London and Paris. The books are part story and partly a way to deliver fascinating facts whilst exploring the rich experience of urban life. Each title has its own set of characters who guide the reader on a virtual tour through the city; a route I carefully researched and walked to make sure it could also be used on location should a real visit take place. Not too arduous for young explorers (no more than four miles) which always includes a stop for lunch and a panoramic view of the city. There's an annotated map at the front with the characters to suggest that the reader can see and experience similar things too.

Below are several drawings made on location in New York (Figure 1). I particularly enjoy this stage of research where the possibilities of what the book might look like are still quite open, I don't have to make critical decisions yet and I'm free to soak up the city. I'm collecting different ingredients to help me understand – what makes New York, New York?

The job of the first page is to introduce the characters and the theme of the book. I wanted to convey the frenetic energy of New York and a sense of the people I remembered that make it so distinct (Figure 2).

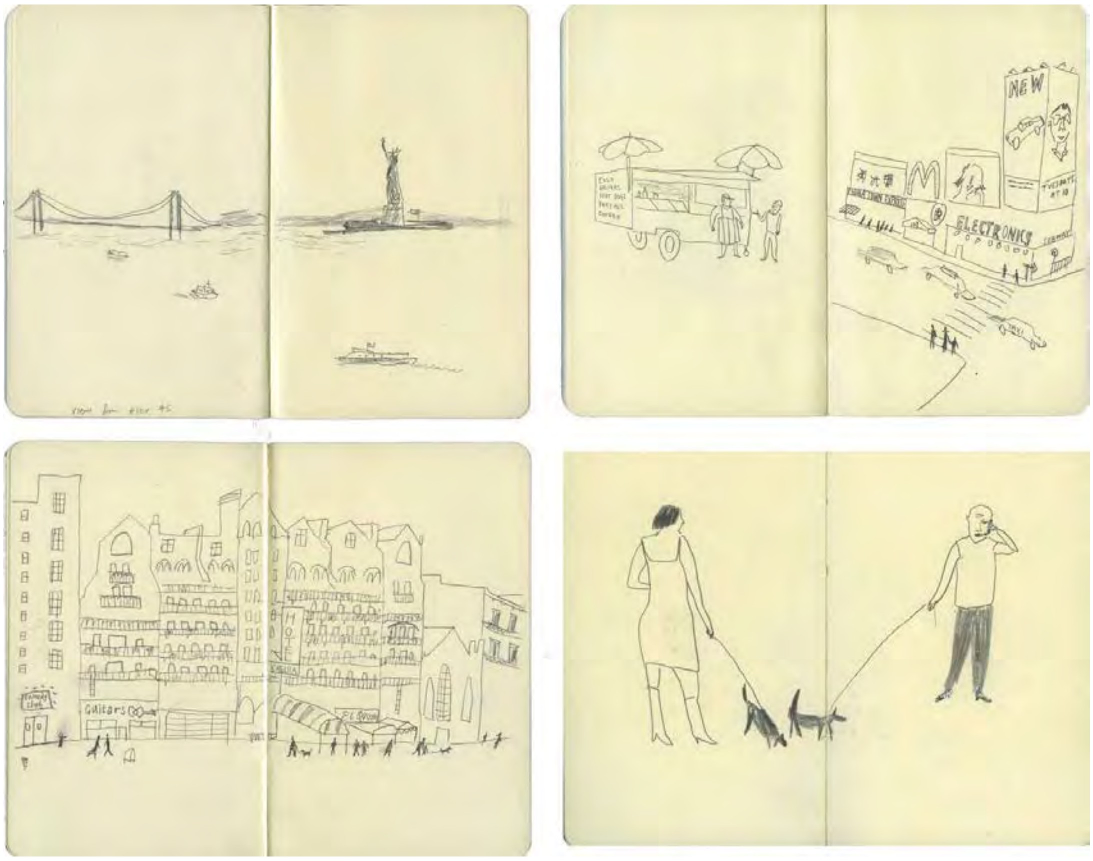

NEW
ELECTRONICS
Guitars

Figure 1.

The character of the dad is loosely based on me. I've always wanted to be taller so reimagined myself as more dapper dad because of course anything is possible in a story! The boy narrator, in the striped T-shirt, is a version of my son (Figure 2).

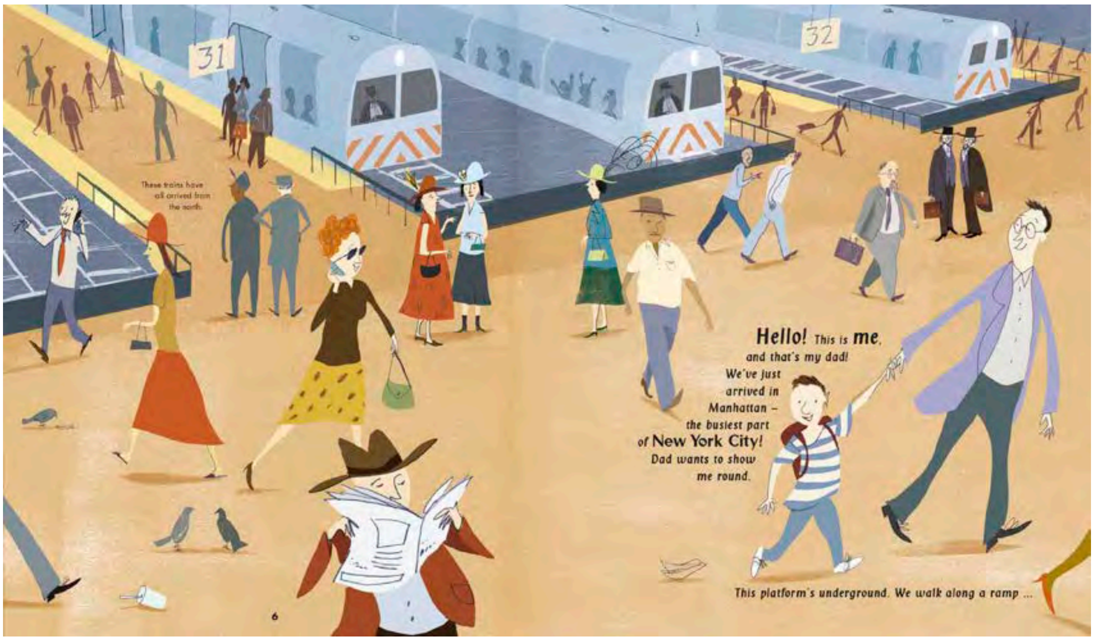

31
32
These trains have all arrived from the north.
Hello! This is me, and that's my dad! We've just arrived in Manhattan – the busiest part of New York City! Dad wants to show me round.
This platform's underground. We walk along a ramp ...
6

Figure 2.

I work hard to recreate ‘believable’ moments and all the location drawings made earlier prompt me about city life. There are lots of details to discover (I’m rather addicted to detail!) – ladies gossiping, excited children …

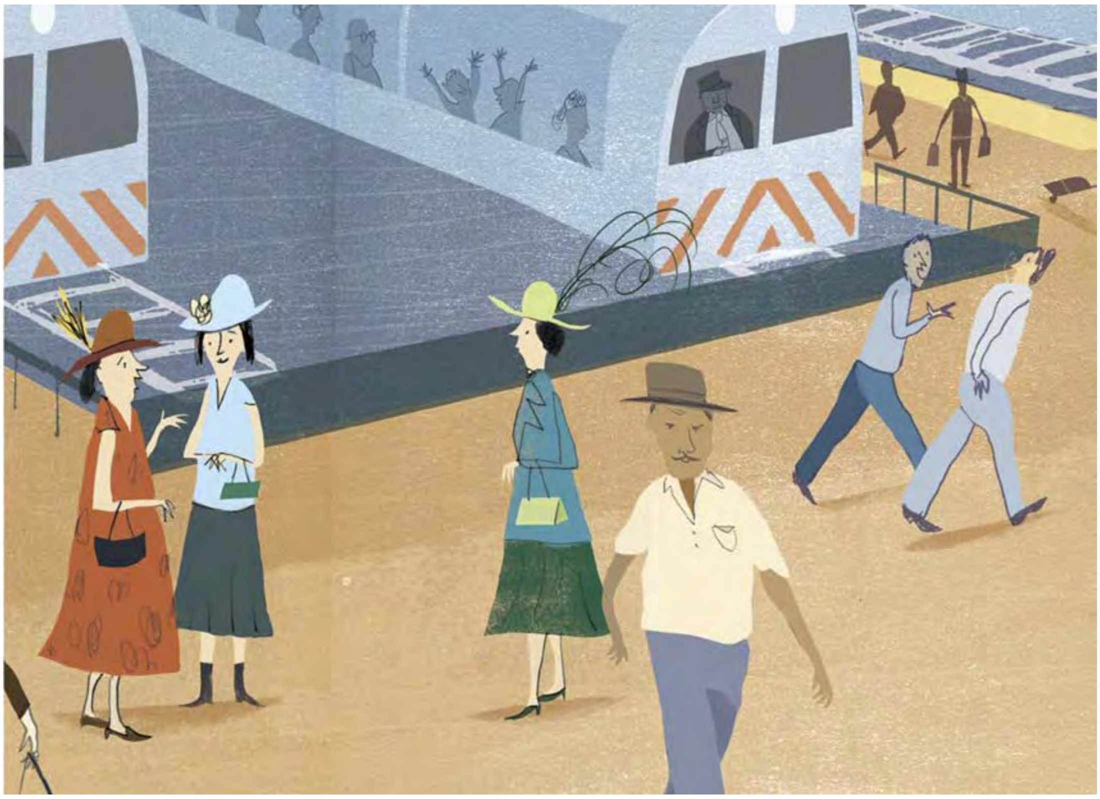


Figure 3.

and friends re-united (on platform 31).

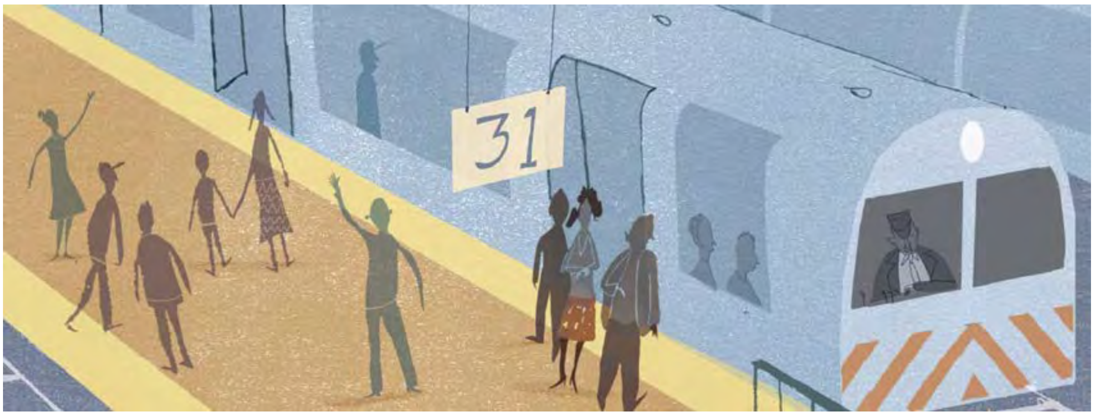


Figure 4.

Once I’m feeling more confident and have a draft of the story I begin to put words and pictures together into a rough page layout (Figure 5). The theme for this page is ‘tallness’ and the gravity defying skyscrapers.

The same page was later transformed into a more coherent composition of buildings, traffic and people (Figure 6). There’s often quite a lot of changes until I tease out what I think the picture needs and how best to communicate the story. The boy and dad are straining their necks to look up and doing exactly what I did when I visited New York too.

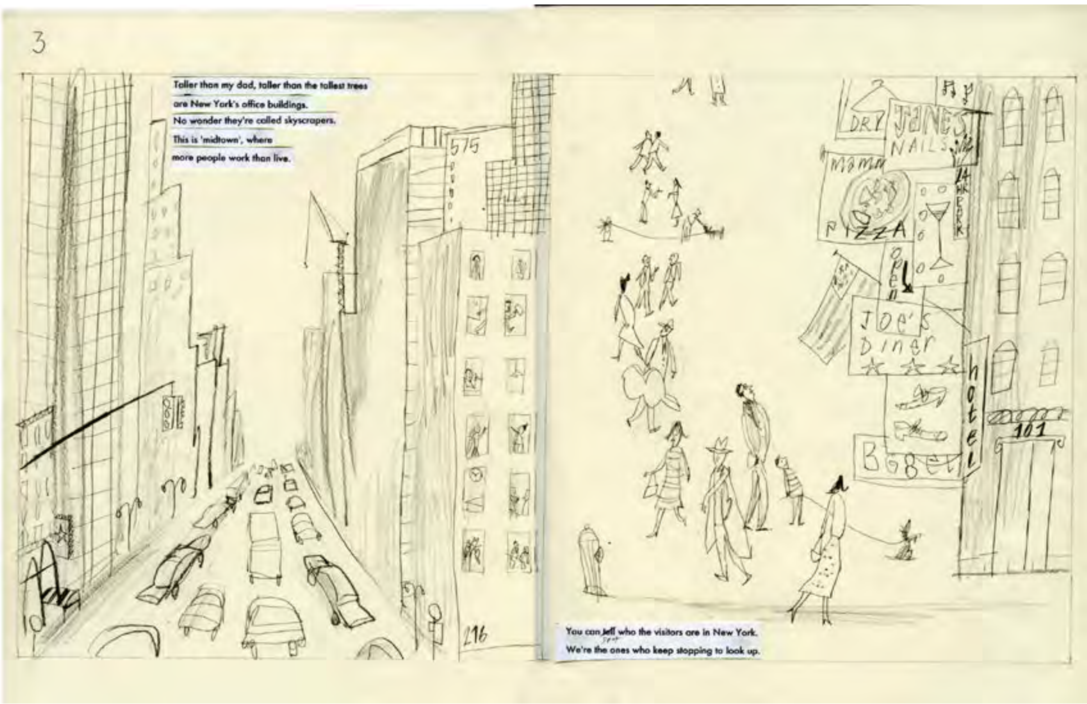

3
Taller than my dad, taller than the tallest trees
are New York's office buildings.
No wonder they're called skyscrapers.
This is 'midtown', where
more people work than live.
575
216
DRY JANES NAILS
Mama PIZZA
Joe's Diner
hotel
Bagel
101
You can ~~tell~~ spot who the visitors are in New York.
We're the ones who keep stopping to look up.

Figure 5.

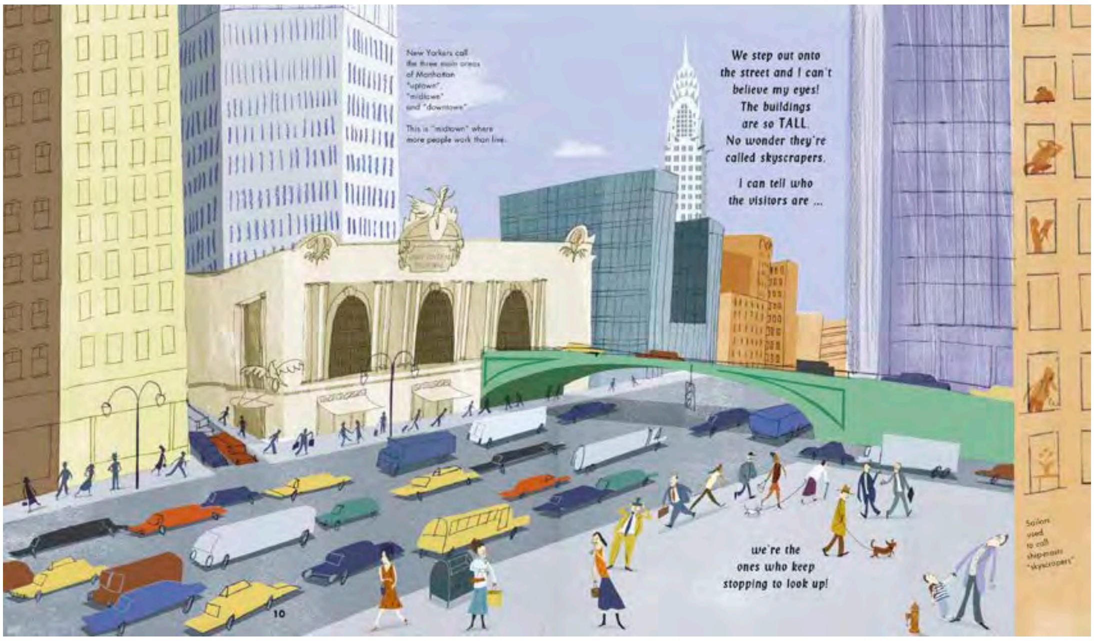

New Yorkers call
the three main areas
of Manhattan
"uptown",
"midtown"
and "downtown"
This is "midtown" where
more people work than live.
We step out onto
the street and I can't
believe my eyes!
The buildings
are so TALL.
No wonder they're
called skyscrapers.
I can tell who
the visitors are ...
we're the
ones who keep
stopping to look up!
10
Sailors
used
to call
ship-masts
"skyscrapers"

Figure 6.

A WALK IN PARIS
Salvatore Rubbino
UNFOLDING EIFFEL TOWER INSIDE!

Unlike a conventional story construction where people and plot usually come first, the route had to be worked out in advance and the story structure fitted around this instead. In many ways, place is the real character in each of my city books. For *A Walk in Paris*, one of the challenges was finding a way to join up all of the places I liked. Some landmarks I could include and visit properly whilst others proved too far away. Although I did sometimes find a way, like Sacré-Cœur, shown on its green mound in the distance in a panoramic view (Figure 7).

Paris is a visual feast, it delights the eyes and lifts the soul. There is a beautiful view everywhere you look! Even so, I was keen to find different ways to describe familiar landmarks and Paris motifs that can sometimes feel over familiar. The things that interest me are tangible moments – like when the characters from the story get lost in the district called the Marais with its network of maze-like streets (that happened to me) or when the girl in the book looks at the cakes through a patisserie window (I did that a lot too). Can you spot the famous landmark in Figure 7?

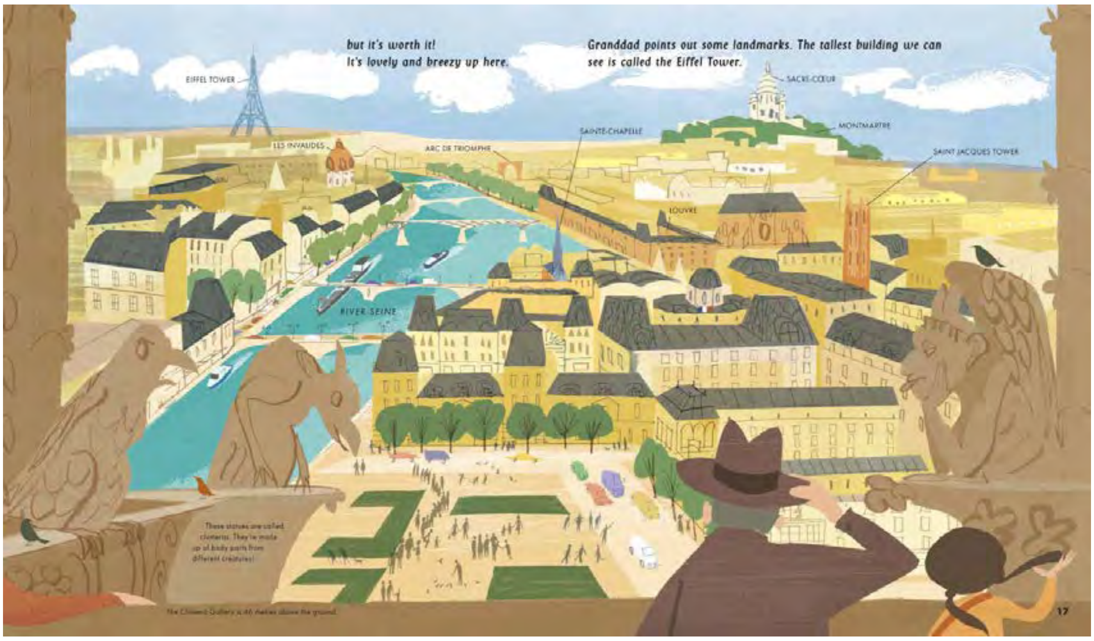

but it's worth it!
It's lovely and breezy up here.
Granddad points out some landmarks. The tallest building we can see is called the Eiffel Tower.
EIFFEL TOWER
LES INVALIDES
ARC DE TRIOMPHE
SAINTE-CHAPELLE
SACRÉ-CŒUR
MONTMARTRE
SAINT JACQUES TOWER
LOUVRE
RIVER SEINE
These statues are called chimeras. They're made up of body parts from different creatures!
The Chimera Gallery is 46 metres above the ground.
17

Figure 7.

These moments and others in the book attempt to describe what it feels like to experience Paris and its daily rhythms (Figure 8).

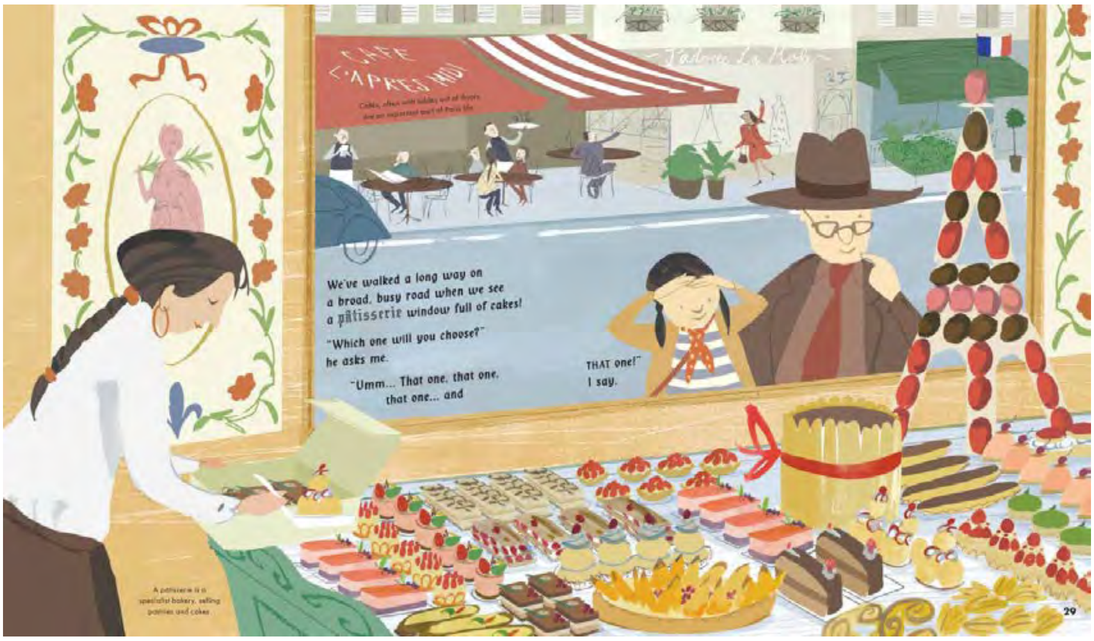

CAFE L'APRES MIDI
Cafés, often with tables out of doors, are an important part of Paris life
We've walked a long way on a broad, busy road when we see a pâtisserie window full of cakes!
"Which one will you choose?" he asks me.
"Umm... That one, that one, that one... and
THAT one!" I say.
A patisserie is a specialist bakery, selling pastries and cakes
29

Figure 8.

NICOLA DAVIES
SALVATORE RUBBINO
Ride the Wind

Some places however are beyond my reach like the location in the most recent story I have illustrated called *Ride the Wind* written this time by Nicola Davies where events unfold in a small fishing village along the coast of Chile.

Although I have a sensitivity to city scenes I can draw anywhere and respond to my surroundings even when there are no buildings in sight! Each book is like a stepping stone, a chance to experience something new and develop my picture making a little further. I'd certainly never drawn an albatross before I was invited to make pictures for Nicola's wonderful story.

Most albatrosses live in the Southern Hemisphere, too far from my home in East London unfortunately to make a trip practical. There are however, taxidermy examples in museums that helped give a sense of their majestic wingspan and scale, although 'my' bird doesn't open its wings until the end of the story.

Without the chance to flex its wings I was worried that the albatross might look like a large goose so I needed other distinguishing features and discovered that they also have large hook-shaped beaks and strong-looking necks. I drew the albatross until I felt I knew it and also other sea birds from museum specimens and gulls whenever I walked along the River Thames (Figure 9 and Figure 10).

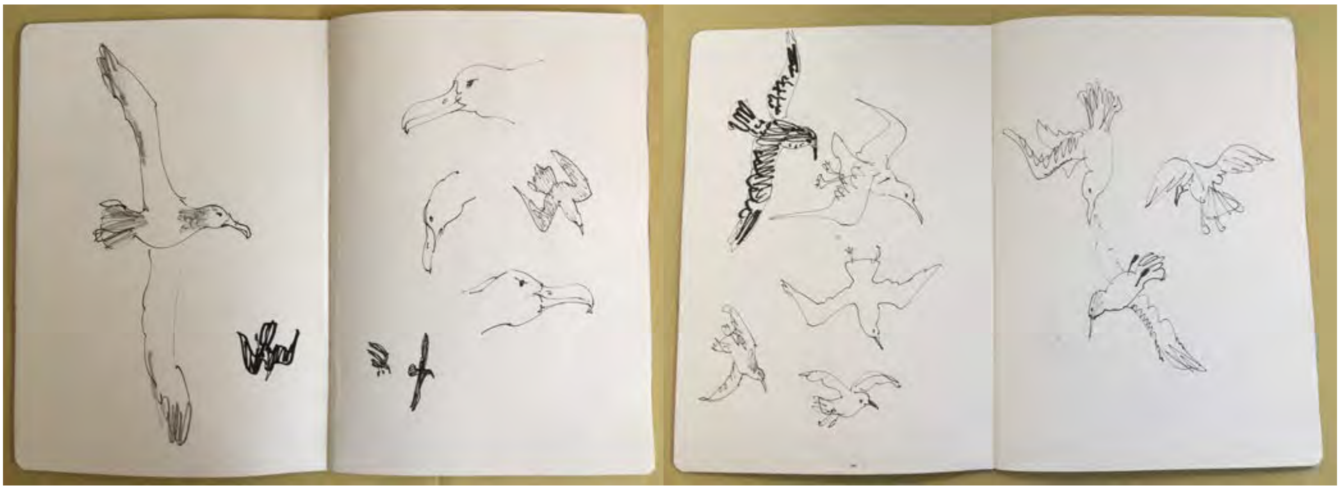


Figure 9. Early drawings for the albatross and other sea birds.

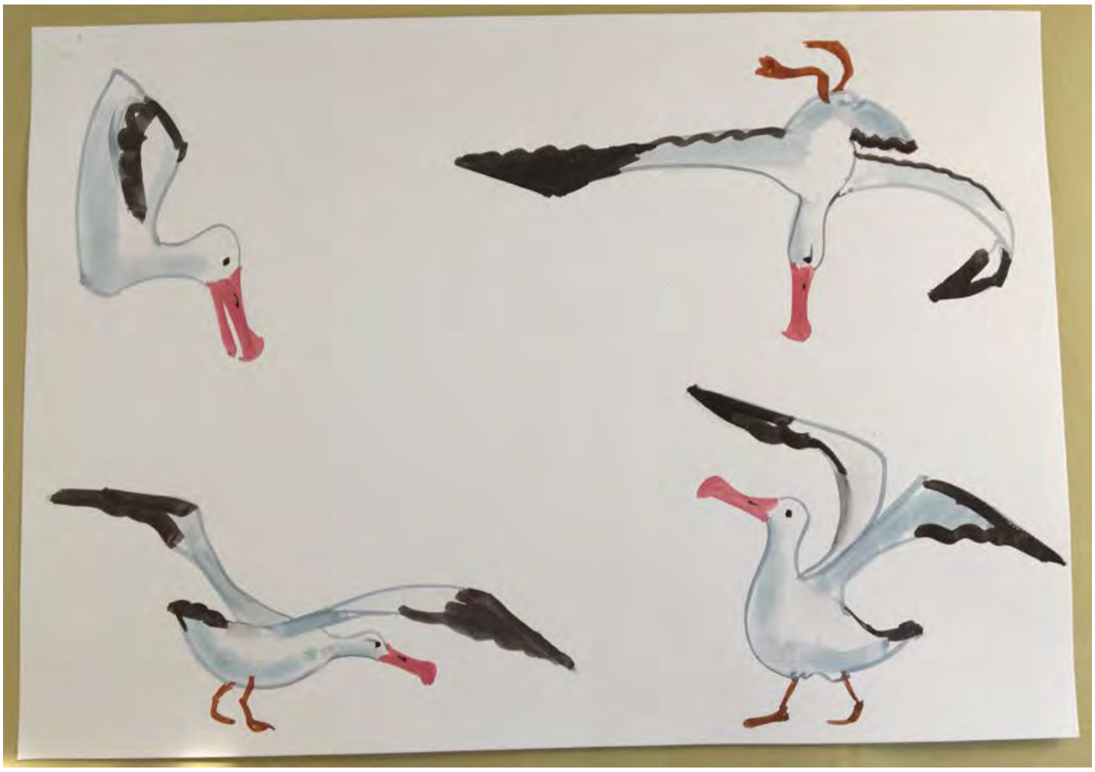


Figure 10. Practice pictures for the albatross.

I wanted to experience sea weather and salt spray. I decided to take the train to Hastings rather than South America, to the ‘Old Town’ where the boats are launched from the beach and winched back in. It meant I could walk in between the fishing vessels, yachts and dinghies, draw their structure closely so I could describe them convincingly in the book and also experience something of the daily rhythm of hardy fishing people. They were maintaining nets, making repairs, gutting fish, whilst all around, piles of floats, impressive anchors, weathered fishing huts and even a local museum with a model of an albatross which I took as a good sign (Figure 11).

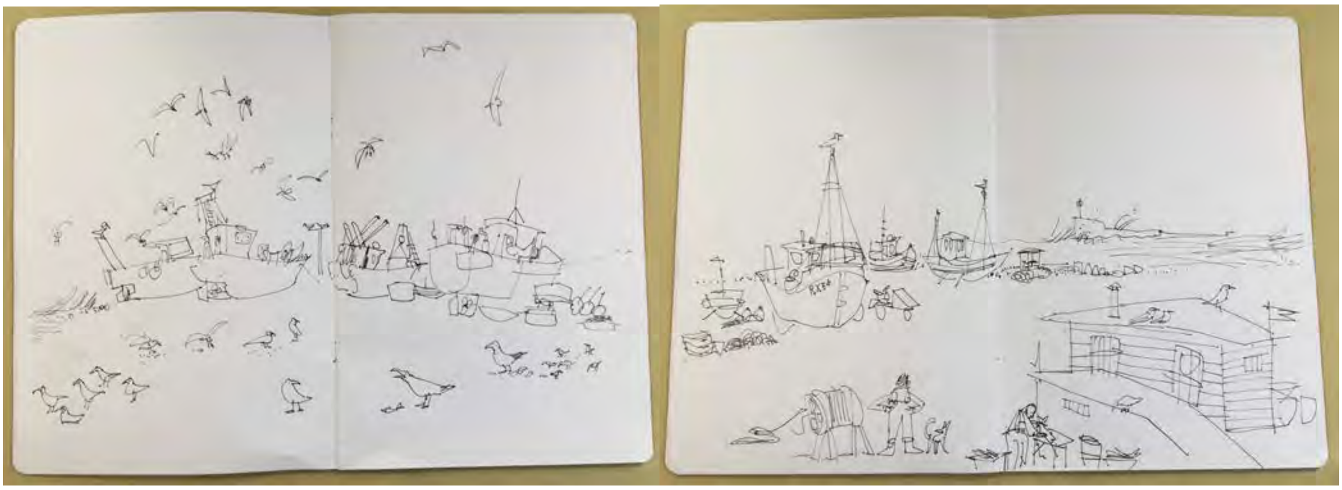


Figure 11. Location drawing at Hastings.

I borrowed the fishing huts and boats from Hastings for my pictures and transformed them with brighter colours, I made the coastline a little more rugged too. Although I had lots of printed sources and an archive of images online for Chile, my experience of walking along a real coast helped to fit things together. It gave me the sense of place I needed to charge the book with atmosphere, especially as a storm builds towards the end of the book (Figure 12 and Figure 13).

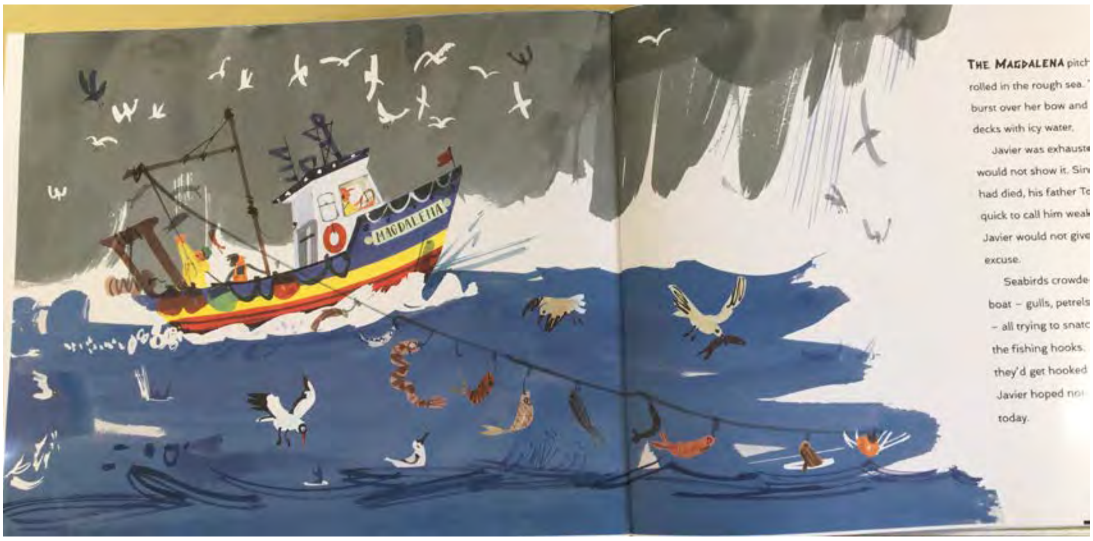

MAGDALENA
THE MAGDALENA pitch
rolled in the rough sea.
burst over her bow and
decks with icy water.
Javier was exhauste
would not show it. Sin
had died, his father To
quick to call him weak
Javier would not give
excuse.
Seabirds crowde
boat – gulls, petrels
– all trying to snatc
the fishing hooks.
they'd get hooked
Javier hoped no
today.

Figure 12. First page from the book.

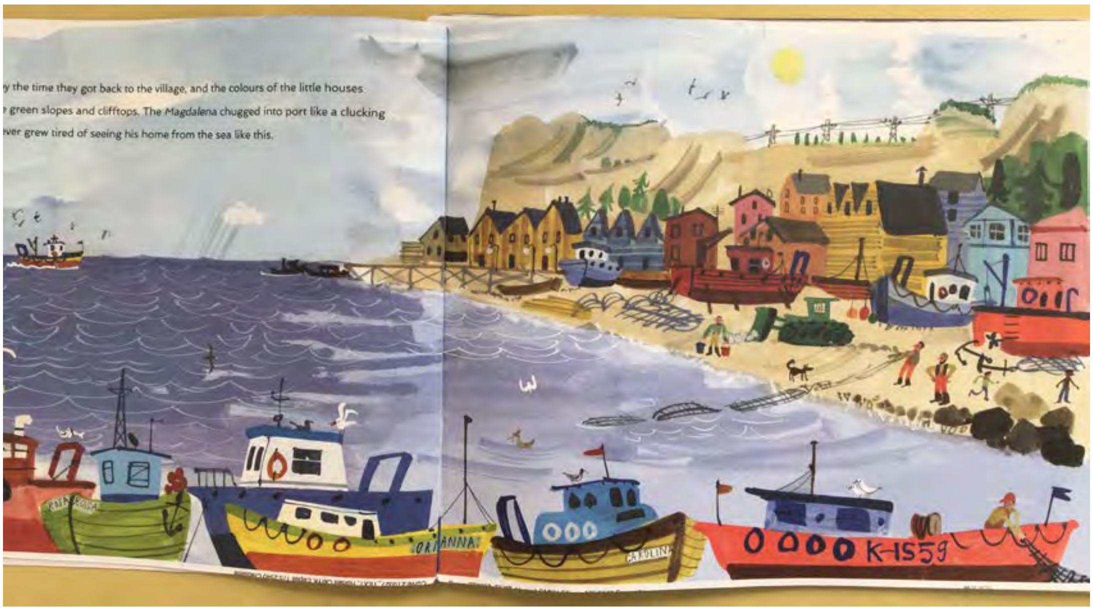

y the time they got back to the village, and the colours of the little houses
green slopes and clifftops. The Magdalena chugged into port like a clucking
ver grew tired of seeing his home from the sea like this.
K-1559

Figure 13. The fishing boat arrives back to the village with Javier and the albatross, from the book.

I see characters everywhere! On the London Underground, on the street, in the supermarket queue. I've never met a person I haven't found interesting and we all come with a story. The characters in the book are a composite of relatives from Southern Italy I remembered from my childhood, farmers this time who had also been shaped by the weather and tough physical work.

I borrowed attributes from different people; there's a little of me in the dad and a little of my son in the boy (Figure 14, Figure 15 and Figure 16).

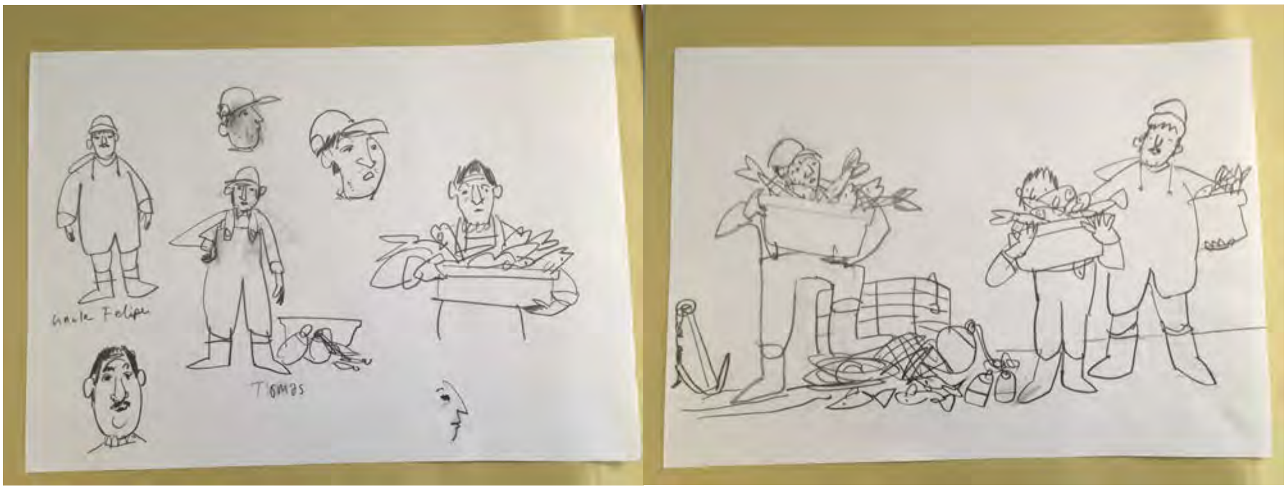


Figure 14. Character sketch, Tomas the 'strict' dad, kind uncle Filipe and Javier, the boy.

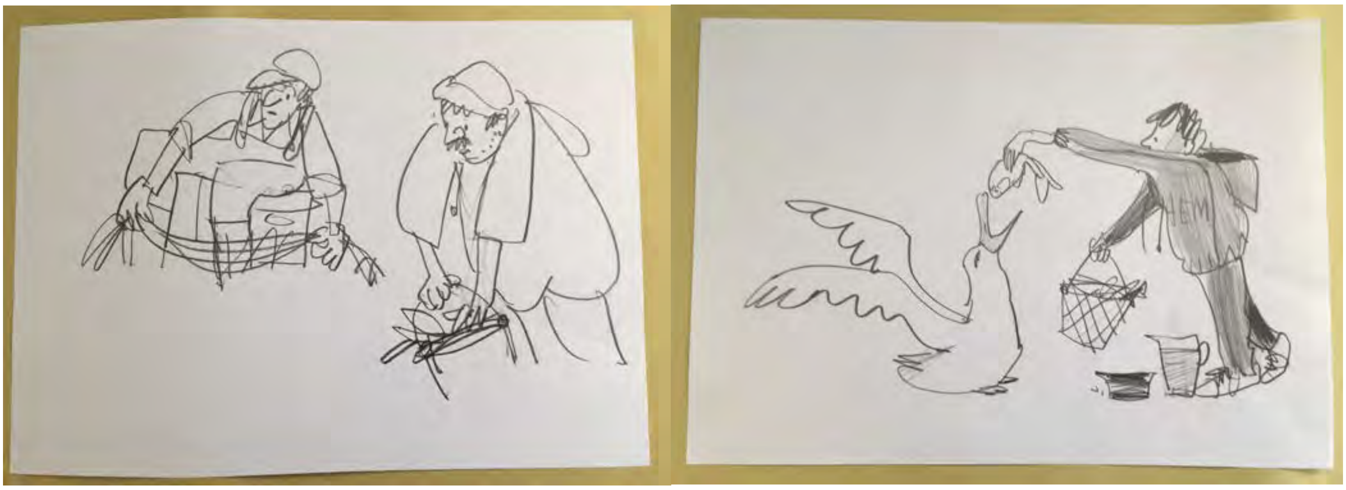


Figure 15. Sketches for Tomas and Filipe, and Javier with the albatross.

Writing in September 2020 I sense that the pandemic has changed our experience of place. The freedom to travel we took for granted has been restricted. At times confined at home, the view from our windows was the only connection to the world beyond.

And then a strange thing happened, we became more aware of our immediate surroundings and appreciated them in new ways. Those lucky enough with a garden could sit and hear a concert of birdsong even in cities, no longer busy with traffic noise or the drone of aeroplanes. We have been thankful for parks and discovered the simple pleasure of a local walk. We became connected again to our surroundings in lots of small ways.

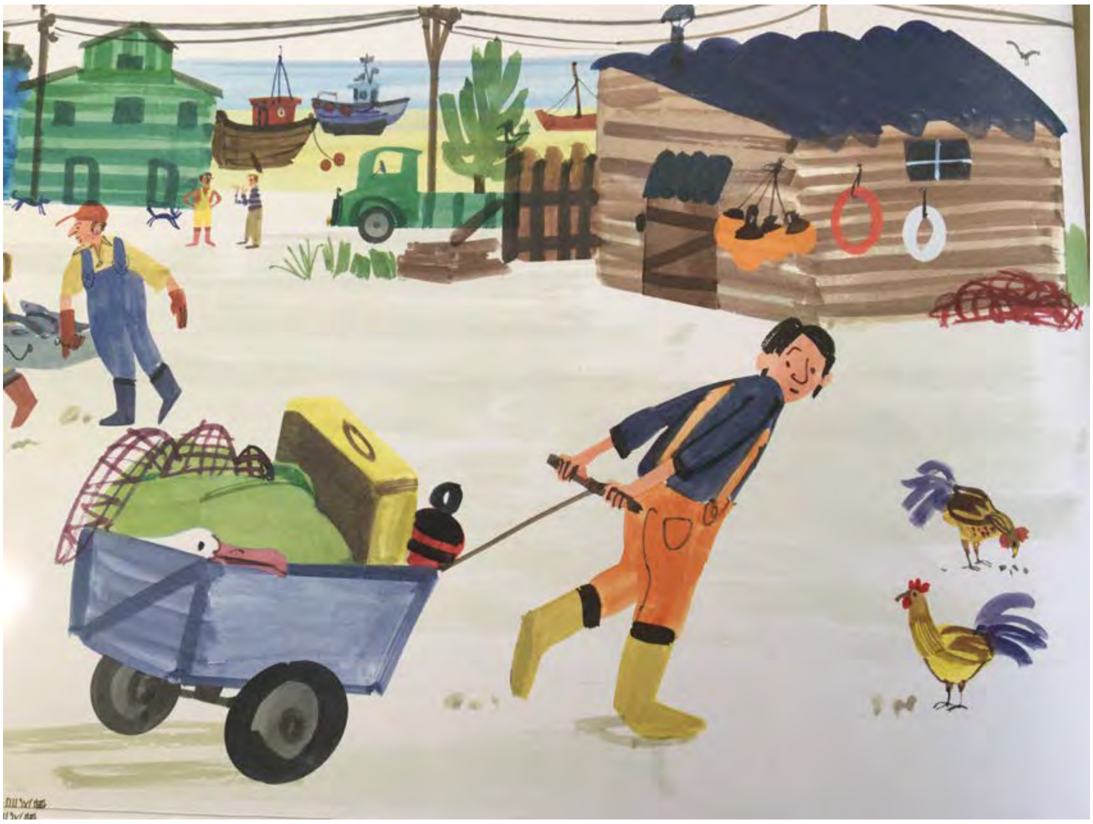


Figure 16. Javier smuggles the albatross home to help nurse it well again.

Place is important because we all need to belong. I hope these small acts of discovery and revelation continue. If you can remember to look with a sense of wonder!

## Acknowledgements and works cited

Sketch and illustrations © 2009 Salvatore Rubbino from *A Walk in New York*.

Illustrations © 2014 Salvatore Rubbino from *A Walk in Paris*.

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# Distance, Direction and Landscape: A Cartographic Study in Picture Books

Dr Karenanne Knight (academic, author and illustrator) is the author of *The Picture Book Maker: The Art of the Picture Book Writer and Illustrator*, published by Trentham Books/IOE Press in 2014 and contributor to *A Companion to Illustration,* published by Wiley Blackwell USA 2019; *The Symbiotic Dilemma of the Children's Picture Book Maker in a Polymathic World*, published by John Wiley 2019. Her specialist field is children's picture books where cartography, the creative process, the illustrator as polymath and typography form many of her many interests, which also include botanical and national history Illustration and medical and scientific Illustration. She authors and illustrates picture books for children and regularly writes papers for academic journals as far afield as Australia, Portugal and the UK. Karenanne Knight is often invited to speak and present her work at various conferences on a national and international scale. She divides her time between her academic work at Portsmouth University; writing reviews for various platforms and publishers; writing, Illustrating and designing children's, adult and academic books; design and logo/branding work for festivals, commercial and corporate clients, and completing illustration commissions; residences and collaborations with clientele such as the British Army and Truro Cathedral, The Royal Ballet, Great Western Railways, the Rt. Hon. Dominic Grieve at the Houses of Parliament, and Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue. She exhibits her work nationally and has pieces in collections worldwide.

WHERE IS HOME?

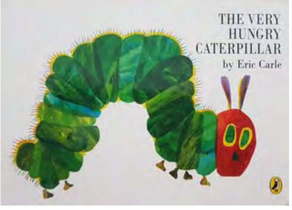
**'Twenty four feet is puddlenuts in Giant Country.' From *The BFG* by Roald Dahl.**

The concept of 'far away' to an under five-year-old is an intriguing one. But how do children learn about world landscapes at a younger age if we don't introduce them to 'far away'? Is the concept too inaccessible for the pre-school age group or is it just possible that they might understand more than we give them credit for when challenging such young minds with the most improbable of narratives?

I wanted to explore landscape through images with pre-school and reception-age children to understand their cartographic ability at a young age. I chose to look at direction and distance in particular as the main themes of the research.

The use of direction and distance in the landscape is central to map reading and I had a strong idea of the themes of the story that I wanted to develop and that I felt would work well in gaining an understanding of how children understood maps, landscape, distance and direction in particular. I therefore worked on a narrative that became the basis for the story, wanting it to reflect movement from A to B through a given landscape. I decided to use animals or insects that would be familiar to young audiences so that children were not confused by the main character and in order that they could concentrate on understanding the main themes of the story. So a main character, a butterfly, was to become a metaphor for a displaced child needing to overcome adversity and obstacles. As in all good stories, and it was with this in mind, I retold the story based on the themes of deforestation and displacement within the landscape. That landscape/setting would be a beautiful wooded forest, some might say the rainforest.

For the very young child I wanted there to be a forest, a river, something fairly familiar; but for the older child and the adult reader, the clues that ran through the book would give a greater sense of setting/landscape, continually finding new clues that made sense to this older audience as well as the very young.



The metamorphosis of the butterfly and her lost home seemed to identify with the idea of a child being displaced through deforestation and then migrating to different lands and landscapes. I also wanted to create the landscapes in the style of Eric Carle, someone I have admired for years and whose work (*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*) appeals to very young audiences.

## The Wordless Picture Book

I wanted to create a fictional landscape and narrative with the intent to allow the child reader a chance to linger in the landscape and play within that space. The possibilities of constructing a wordless picture book, that somehow lent itself to the idea of landscape, was flourishing.

The project has three aims:

1. to create a ‘work(s)’ for young audiences where narrative, landscape and cartography are central;
2. to connect character, space and setting/landscape through the symbiotic relationship between narrative and cartography where the narrative, imagery and space of the creation are integrated with each other to the extent that they are intertwined and of equal importance;
3. and finally to create images where ‘spatialness and landscape’ must be of cartographic value and therefore able to be read as such.

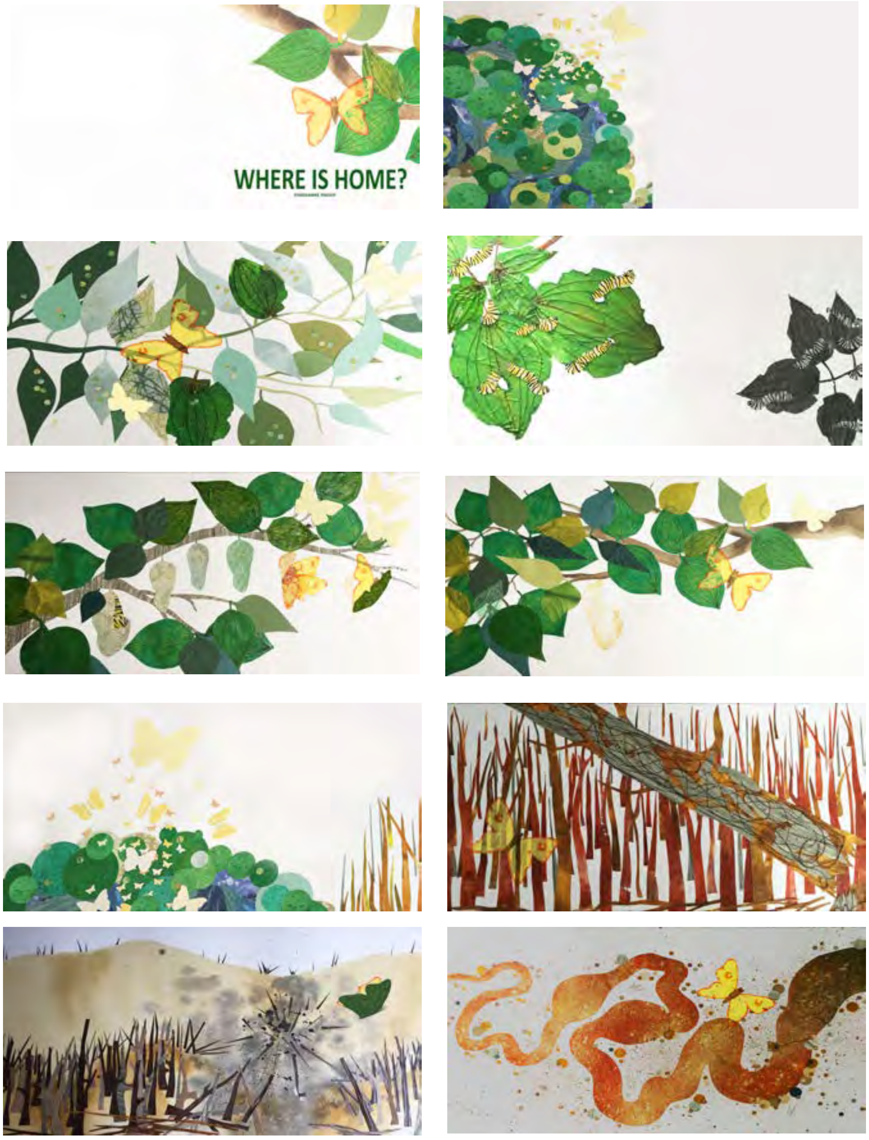
Within these aims my objectives were:

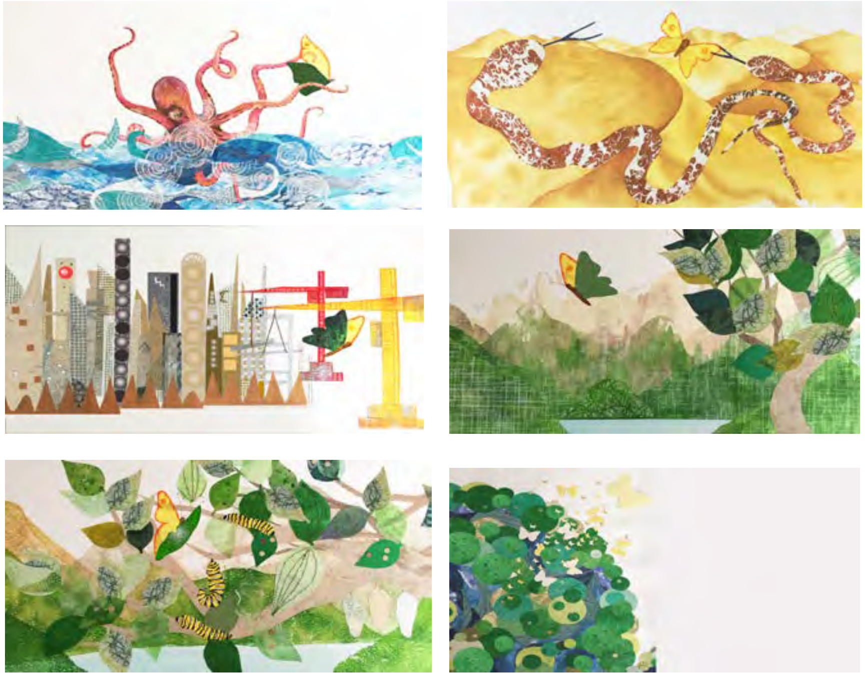
- To develop a wordless picture storybook developing basic cartographic understanding but particularly direction, distance and landscape.
- To develop believable imaginative spaces, in the reading of the artefacts produced.
- To develop a sense of story that will engage the child reader, whilst finding empathy with the heroine.

The wordless picture book was created and became a valuable asset to the research project. The layout of the book can be seen below and fulfils the initial landscape, distance and direction aims of the project.

## The wordless picture storybook – *Where Is Home?*

(Illustrations to be read from left to right.)


WHERE IS HOME?



## Maps, cognition and pedagogy

It was important to convey the joy of story and therefore place, location/landscape and theme, to enable interaction with that 'someplace, sometime and somewhere' based on how the narrative sits within the book and in the real and imaginary world, and landscape.

In depicting landscape I showed how 'place' provides clues that a cartographer would automatically show in a map. The narrative I created exploits the potential of distance, landscape and direction, whilst associating the actual mapping process within that narrative.

## Maps, books and cartographic skills

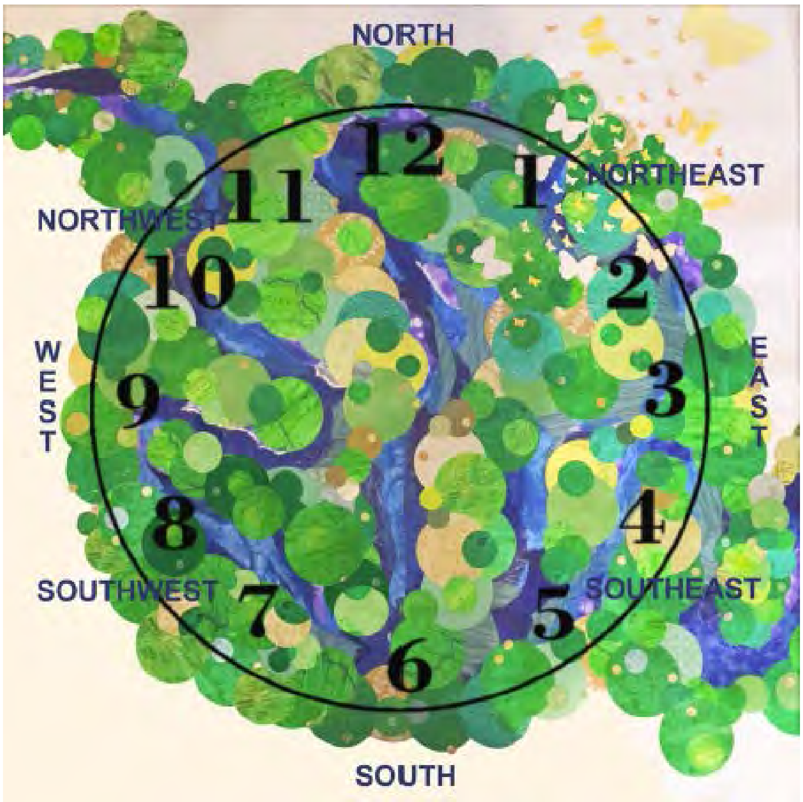
The book opens up possibilities of adventure to landscapes children only dream of, places never seen or heard about, filled with wonder whilst on the other hand empathising with the situation of the butterfly, a metaphor for a child who loses everything and has to move to a new part of the world. However, as we see, that part of the world, that landscape is not always the right one and so the cycle continues until they find 'home'.

The picture book helps young children understand their way in the world through landscape, direction and distance, through time and place and appreciate the way we describe the route from A to B and the numerous deviations that might challenge us in between.

I enable children to picture and understand landscape through the pathways they select as they move through the story, following the journey the butterfly takes, literally helping them figure out where the landscapes/places, objects, countries and cities are in relation to one another and how that relates to the child's place in the world. We can clearly see how the butterfly makes a journey through a variety of landscapes and can then retrace her steps enabling the child to engage and learn about wider spaces, landscapes, distance and direction.

To do this, I produced three large, soft mats for the children to sit on and discuss when I visited the school and nursery. These were larger versions of the double-page spreads.

The first was the *forest river mat* (from a bird's eye view).


NORTH
NORTHEAST
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SOUTHEAST
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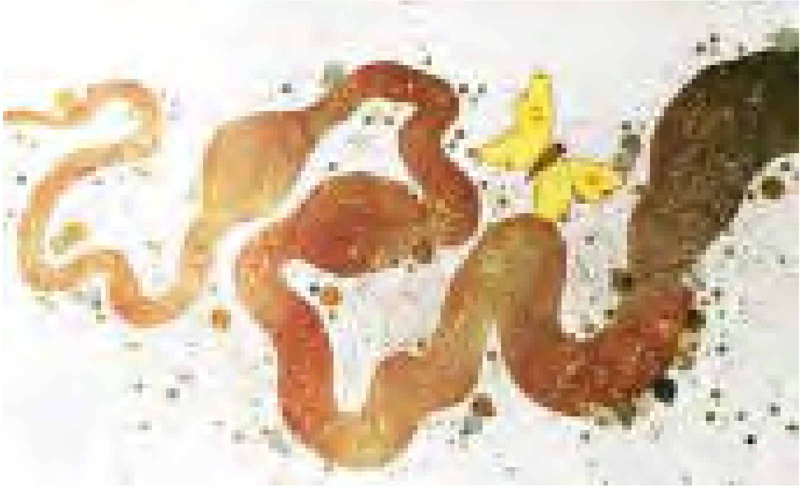
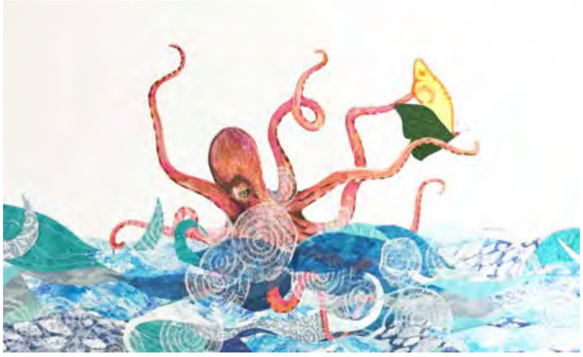
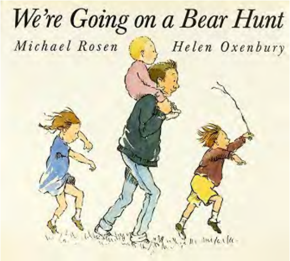
The second was the *dirty river mat* (from a bird's eye view).



The final artefact was the *escape from Octopus mat*. This mat was particularly developed in order to discuss landscape, distance, seas and oceans.



## The results of the experiments using the cartographic devices of direction, distance and scale within the landscape



I worked with a class of 24 five-year-olds introducing *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* which develops the idea of landscape and setting so well.

Initially I discussed distance and landscape using the above book. The children drew maps using the landscapes that generally followed a straight or circular line. Right and left were still difficult concepts to grasp for this age group, therefore north, south, east and west were obviously a difficult notion with which to create the journey/landscapes on the map. Improvisation through a clock and numbers did however, overcome some of these difficulties. Some of the children were more than able to say that the forest was at 'three' from the starting point, the cave at 'eight' and so on.

On returning to the schools later that year with the five-year-olds, the children participated in and listened to my new story *Where Is Home?*. They interpreted it with ease and were able to discuss maturely both distance, landscape and direction. The book provided a solid basis for me to jump into the more difficult concepts of compass points.

- Once the children understood the clock/compass on the 'forest' map/mat, they found using the *dirty river mat* quite easy.
- The children were able to communicate distance physically, using their arms, linking arms or in comparison to their classroom and playground.
- The five-year-olds were able to follow the river landscape on both maps and discuss the direction in which the river meandered using north, south, east and west without any

problems and enjoyed the idea of the 'bird's eye view' perspective.

- Two smaller groups of children understood the idea of northeast, southeast, southwest and northwest too.
- The children began discussing the characters of the butterfly, the octopus and the sea within the landscape. Jessica (5) said 'If the sea is this big (holding her arms as wide as she could) then you wouldn't see the butterfly or the octopus because they would be tiny. If the sea was as big as the playground you might just see them. In the story you can see the octopus and the butterfly because you only see a tiny, tiny, tiny, the tiniest, tiniest part of the sea so they look quite big. If you were in an aeroplane and looked down you see lots of sea but not the octopus and the butterfly, because they are so tiny.'
- Jessica and Sam, sitting on the *dirty river mat* and the *octopus mat* described the landscape. 'So this river is like looking down from an aeroplane and the trees are like dots but look at your mat Sam, you are right next to the octopus so he looks really big.' 'Do you think he is really that size?' asked Sam. 'Well yes, he is as big as us' replied Izzy. Izzy, moved to the *forest mat*. 'The trees are bigger here and the river closer because we are nearer them, but look at the snake[s] in the desert they are bigger because they are closer to us and the sand is further away.'

This was quite an amazing discussion and it wasn't confined to Jessica. The small group of children who understood the NE, SE, SW and NW directions were able to discuss this. Oliver picked up two blocks. He held one nearer Molly and one an arm span behind. 'Which is bigger,' he asked the group. 'That one,' replied Molly pointing to the one nearest her. 'No, it's not,' whispered Dan, 'they are the same, but the other one is far away!'.

I then took the book and the mats to the nursery school to use with three- and four-year-old children. There were similarities but marked differences in this younger age range. *Where Is Home?* was successful in that it created a slightly different reading each time the narrative was delivered.

- The younger children didn't identify with the idea of the butterfly as a metaphor for a displaced child as expected. However, they were able to understand the concept of the landscape as the butterfly's home, where the butterfly had lost her home because the trees had been 'chopped down' (Polly, 3) or 'blown up' (Jamie, 3) therefore deforestation and displacement was a concept that was recognisable to them.

- They were able to comprehend the idea of the butterfly going on a journey through various landscapes to find a new home and the obstacles she had to overcome.
- The children also had some sense of distance and landscape. ‘He had to fly a long, a long way’ (Evie, 3). ‘He had to fly over the water, and the sand and the town’ (Dylan, 3).
- The mats were introduced one at a time, starting with the *dirty river mat*. The children really enjoyed crawling along the river landscape. With some help they were able to discuss moving from one end to the other and in which direction the river might be flowing. When asked where the river started a number of the children pointed to the left-hand side of the mat because ‘it’s little’ (George, 3). Pandora (3) pointed to the right-hand side of the mat and continued, ‘that’s bigger, the water is faster’.
- The second *forest mat* floored the children initially but when Pandora started tracing the river landscape with her finger the other children were soon involved.
- Was this because she had identified the direction in which the ‘dirty river’ flowed, perhaps because we have a tendency to read and write left to right or a purely arbitrary decision? ‘The trees are here’ announced Pandora, ‘and the water goes here’. Pandora recognised the symbols for the trees in the landscape and there was much evidence of basic cartographic understanding and awareness.
- The children used a lot of vocabulary in describing elements of the landscapes on the mats. The final mat, *escape from Octopus*, created much excitement and to my surprise Pandora floored me again in her understanding of scale. ‘The octop … octopus, can eat the butterfly’. She was asked why? ‘The butterfly is little and the octopus is big!’. George, now on the mat, contributed. ‘… and the snakes’. The children had a very strong sense of large and small and with some development one could see how the five-year-olds in the first group had moved on to a primitive sense of scale.

## Conclusion

One of my aims in this study was to enable children to understand the basic elements of landscape within cartography in making sense of their worlds, and that, with the right picture storybook, they could do that. *Where Is Home?* was fundamental in delivering the concepts of landscape through distance and direction. Whilst the younger cohort grasped the fundamental elements of these themes, the older cohort were able to discuss and develop their own theories about aspects of cartography and really had a surprising understanding of the selected themes.

The mats were extremely engaging. Their tactile nature, where the children could sit on them and trace and follow elements of the landscape were particularly successful. These will now become an extension of another project for an older audience, where a set of information artefacts examining cartography in a wider world landscape, will now form a series of six books for a UK publisher.

Ultimately this project highlights the need for a picture storybook which asks as many questions as it answers, and the wordless picture book designed for this project does this successfully. It is the combination of the cartographic picture-book maker as polymath in creating a strong narrative that incorporates maps and mapping as a core element of landscape. Because of this the child, the reader, has the chance to form opinions of the world, of the landscape in which they live from a very young age. The most important places on a map are the ones we haven't explored yet but with a knowledge of cartography, of direction, distance and scale through the landscape, these places can be grasped at a very early age and become probable, conceivable, plausible, imaginable and ultimately true and real.

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# Landscapes and Stories

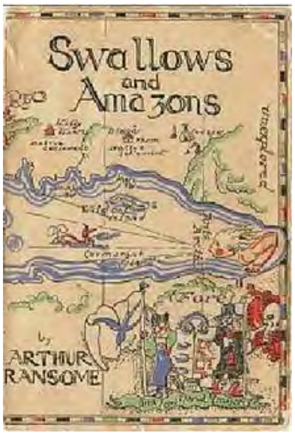
Philip Reeve was born in Brighton in 1966, and now lives on Dartmoor with his wife and son. He is the author of numerous books, including the *Mortal Engines* and *Railhead* series and the Carnegie Medal winning *Here Lies Arthur*. He has collaborated with the author and illustrator Sarah McIntyre on numerous books for younger readers, the latest of which, *Kevin and the Biscuit Bandit*, has just been published in the UK by Oxford University Press.

www. philipreeveblog.blogspot.com.

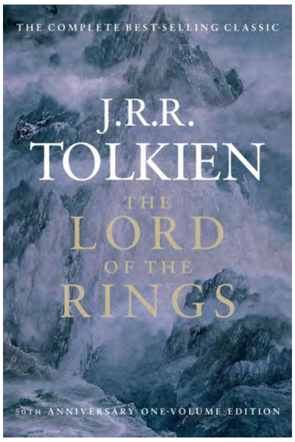
'Philip Reeve in a Tolkien setting'.

Philip Larkin was broadly correct about parents, but if you're lucky they hand you down some good things along with all that misery-deepening-like-a-coastal-shelf stuff. Mine passed on to me a love of landscapes, and a love of books.

From almost as far back as I can recall, the two things were connected. As a child I lived in a very ordinary 1960s terraced house in Brighton, but whenever the school holidays rolled around my parents would decant my sister and I into their VW camper van and head off to Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, or some similarly exotic destination for a couple of weeks. One of the first such trips, when I was six or seven, took us to Coniston Water in the Lake District. You could camp in those days right on the shores of the lake, and while we were there I remember my father reading us Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* – a story set on that very lake, or at least on an imaginary one based closely upon it (there are elements of Derwentwater in the book, too). Peeking out of the tent-flap each morning, I could see the same waters the Swallows had set sail on, or look up to the heights of the Old Man of Coniston, the mountain which they call Kanchenjunga in the book. One day, piling into our little inflatable dinghy, we motored down the lake to Peel Island, which is the original of Wildcat Island. As I recall, we had it more or less to ourselves – we certainly found room to moor in the rocky natural harbour where the Swallows made landfall, and ate tinned sausages wrapped in slices of Mother's Pride, cooked over a fire on the lookout place up above. I even remember, on the far shore of the lake, seeing a run-down old houseboat which must have been Captain Flint's moored against a rotting jetty … . Or do I? I may be remembering an image from the film which came out a few years later. It was all a long time ago.



The discovery that *Swallows and Amazons* was a story whose setting you could walk or sail through was a strange and memorable one. It was pretty neat, I thought, that you could take the best bits of two different lakes and make a new and frankly better lake of your own. Perhaps it made me connect stories with holidays, because the books I remember loving best as a child were always those which took me away from streets and schools and traffic and everyday life to places quite unlike the one I lived in – though often very like the mountains and moors I'd visited with my parents. I wasn't interested in nature, exactly – I found the idea of bird spotting or identifying animal tracks superficially attractive, but far too much like hard work to ever actually do. What grabbed my imagination was a certain type of landscape, one with crags and woods and fast-flowing rivers. I found it in the fantasies of Alan Garner, C.S. Lewis, and Lloyd Alexander, and in Rosemary Sutcliff's historical novels. Even Asterix, hunting wild boar and hapless Romans through the forests of Armorica, had a flavour of it.

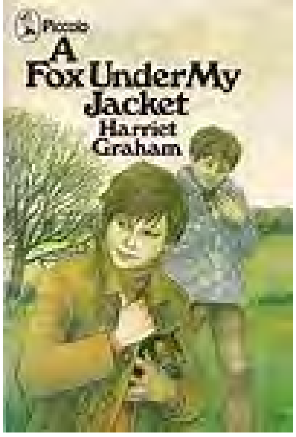


Best of all, of course, was Tolkien. I remember being fairly bored by *The Hobbit* when I first encountered it – perhaps I was too young – but when I moved on to *The Lord of the Rings* I really sat up and started to take an interest. Tolkien had taken the British landscape and transformed it: it was bigger and grander, Elves wandered its forests and Orcs lurked in its caverns, but it was still recognisable. In a way, Tolkien was doing exactly what Arthur Ransome (and Arthur Ransome's young characters) had done with the Lake District – borrowing the bits he liked best from the real landscape, rearranging them, expanding on them, giving them new names, and turning them into a world where the stories he wanted to tell would seem to grow naturally out of the rivers, woods, and hills. Middle-earth is not just Britain, of course – it has been overlaid with imagery from Tolkien's time on the battlefields of the Western Front, from the Alps, and from the Iceland of the sagas. But as a young reader, with few illustrations and no movies to influence me, I based my mental images of Middle-earth on Wales, Cornwall, Devon and the Lake District, and I don't think I got them very far wrong. At heart, it is a very British world. Its forests are filled with oak and willow, beech and hornbeam, and the echoes of Celtic myth and Victorian poetry. The Shire, where the book begins and ends and where I think much of its power resides, is a vision of *L'Angleterre Profonde*, a rose-tinted dream of a pastoral England which was already fading when Tolkien wrote of it, and which has now been almost entirely lost.

That sense of loss rings all through *The Lord of the Rings.* Even the defeat of Sauron is not a final victory. 'Together through the ages of the world we have fought the long defeat' says Galadriel. The old ways are passing; the Elves are departing Middle-earth, leaving it to diminish into the mundane world we know today. That feeling of living in a spoiled and diminished world was one that I understood well as a child. I had a keen sense of history, and I was aware that a lot of places which I knew as housing estates and busy roads had been fields in my grandparents' youth, before the hungry suburbs of Brighton ate them up.

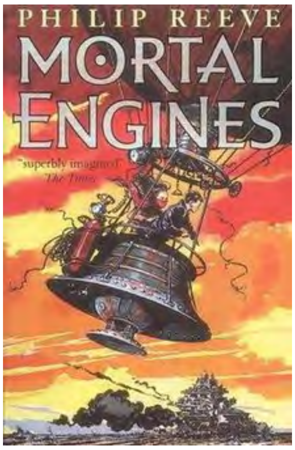
KNIGHT'S FEE
Rosemary Sutcliff

If I wanted to look back further into time I had Rosemary Sutcliff's books *Warrior Scarlet* and *Knight's Fee,* both set on the nearby South Downs. On day trips to Ditchling Beacon or Devil's Dyke I could imagine myself standing on the very paths her heroes had trodden hundreds or thousands of years before me. In a lovely touch, the hero of *Knight's Fee,* who lives in Norman times, finds an ancient stone knife on the high chalk which anyone who has read *Warrior Scarlet* will know belonged to that book's Bronze Age hero, Drem: people pass, Sutcliff seemed to be saying, but the stones, and the land, endures. Like Tolkien's characters, I was living in a world where countless other people had lived and died and been forgotten, leaving only ruins on hilltops, old paths in the grass. I rather wished I had been one of them – my reading had convinced me (erroneously, I suspect) that things had been better in The Olden Days.



One downside of bathing in all this stuff was that, as a child, I had almost no imaginative connection to the actual landscape which surrounded me for 48 weeks of each year. The streets and shops and blocks of flats I lived among seemed dull stuff, best ignored. None of the stories I was interested in was set anywhere like that. Or, if one was, it was only as a framing device, to be endured for a chapter or two before the protagonists found their way by magical means into some more interesting world. (The only contemporary urban story I particularly remember enjoying was Harriet Graham's *A Fox under my Jacket*, whose young hero is transplanted from the country to London and hates it until he discovers the consolation of Hampstead Heath and its foxes.) Dreaming of Middle-earth and Camelot, I completely failed to understand that my hometown's weird mix of decaying Georgian grandeur, shabby seaside tat and blighted council estates was also rather magical in its own way.

Only as a teenager, when I ventured through the door which divided the children's library from the adult section in search of yellow-jacketed Gollancz science fiction anthologies, did I start to realise that technology and the built environment could be just as inspiring to a storyteller as magic and the open countryside. When viewed through a sci-fi lens, the run-down sink estates around my secondary school began to look intriguingly post-apocalyptic. (The bleak stretch of nearby seafront with its abstract concrete sea defences and derelict swimming pool was virtually a J.G. Ballard theme park). From then on my reading increasingly took me into towns and cities, perhaps because that's where the more grown-up stories happened, but perhaps also because I rarely found an adult author who wrote about the countryside with the unselfconscious love that the authors of my favourite children's books had.



So my imagination became divided; I never lost my fondness for Tolkien and Sutcliff, and wild landscapes remained powerfully evocative, but the city exerted a powerful pull of its own. It became a problem when I tried to write my own stories, because I was torn between the moors, mountains and marshes of Tolkienesque adventure and the urban and industrial settings which also appealed to me. Trying to combine those things, I eventually found my way into the imaginary landscape of my first novel, *Mortal Engines*.

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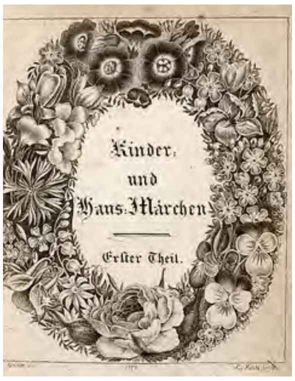
# Storied Places and Emplaced Stories: Landscape in Welsh and Irish Fairy Tales

Jane Carroll is an Ussher Assistant Professor of Children's Literature at Trinity College Dublin. Her teaching and research interests centre on children's literature, landscape, and material culture in fiction. Her first monograph, *Landscape in Children's Literature*, published by Routledge in 2012 as part of the Children's Literature and Culture series, traces the development of literary landscapes from medieval texts through to twentieth-century children's literature. She has also published on Susan Cooper, Terry Pratchett, J.R.R. Tolkien, M.R. James and Jules Verne. She is currently working on a new project on material culture in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century children's fantasy texts.

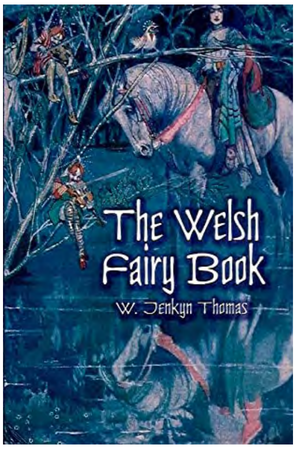
Fairy tales are notoriously slippery things. That is, perhaps, part of their great appeal. The narratives are highly supple, existing in many versions, with characters and plots that are only loosely sketched in. Most of the main characters are really types rather than true characters: the beautiful girl, the wicked witch, the resourceful hero, the clever companion.[1] Fairy-tale plots, likewise, fall into easily recognisable but rather vague patterns: rags-to-riches, overcoming the monster, the hero's journey, etc.[2] Moreover, these stories are often only loosely fixed in terms of their temporal and geographical settings: they take place in a vague past ('once upon a time') and in a vague place ('a land far away').



Kinder
und
Haus-Märchen
Erſter Theil.

Take, for example, the stories collected by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm in their *Kinder und Hausmärchen* (1812). Although Robert Dunbar reminds us that 'all fiction … is indicative to one extent or another of its geographical origins, even when it goes out of its way to ignore or to mask them',[3] there are only the vaguest outlines of a northern European landscape sketched into the Grimms' stories. The stories take place in cottages or castles, on the edge of the woods or beside the sea. Each space fulfils a clear and limited function within the narrative: home is the site of family, the woods are spaces for encounters with (potentially dangerous) strangers, the tower is a place of confinement and conflict. As Éilís Ní Dhuibne summarises: '[Fairy tales] are highly stylised, tightly structured and richly layered. They have a unique atmosphere, cast of character types, and props: cottages and castles, monsters and princesses, magic mountains and bottomless wells.'[4] When Ní Dhuibhne refers to 'fairy tales' here, most Anglophone readers will immediately think of the stories collected by the Grimms. The global popularity of their tales – helped in no small part by the behemoth that is the American film industry – has created an expectation that these stories are the standard model for fairy tales. We have come to expect the stereotypical and stylised characters and, also, to expect that the stories will not be rigidly set in space or time.

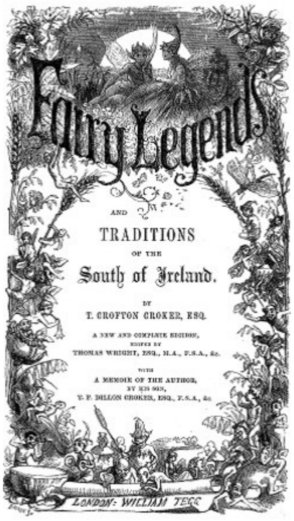
But not all fairy tales work this way. If we turn our attention to other kinds of fairy tale and folktale, we see that many of them buck the trends established in the Grimms' work and put place – and, moreover, very specific, identifiable places – right at the heart of the narrative. The fairy tales collected in Ireland and Wales in the nineteenth century treat landscape and location in a very different way to the stories collected on the European mainland.



The Welsh story 'The Stray Cow' from W. Jenkyn Thomas *The Welsh Fairy Book* (1907) is one such example. In this story, a fairy cow walks out of a lake and is taken in by a farmer. She gives wonderful pure milk and the farmer becomes rich. He becomes greedy though and, depending on the version of the story, tries to sell the cow's calf or to slaughter the cow for her silver hide. The fairy cow walks back into the lake and the farmer is left with nothing. So far, so stereotypical. The farmer's character is a mere sketch and the narrative a simple moral lesson of greed and gratitude. Except that this summary does not do justice to how the story was first recorded and published in English. Thomas's translation is rich with landscape detail:

> **In a secluded spot in the upland country behind Aberdovey is a small lake called Llyn Barfog, or the Lake of the Bearded One. Its waters are black and gloomy, no fish is ever seen to rise to the surface, and the fowls of the air fly high above it. In times of old the neighbourhood of the lake was haunted by a band of elfin ladies. They were sometimes seen in the dusk of a summer evening, clad all in green, accompanied by their hounds and comely milk-white kine; but no one was favoured with more than a passing glimpse till an old farmer residing at Dyssyrnant, in the adjoining valley of Dyffryn Gwyn, had the good luck to catch one of the Gwartheg y Llyn, or kine of the lake, which had fallen in love with the cattle of his herd. From the day that he captured the elfin cow the farmer's fortune was made.**[5]

Here Thomas makes use of many particular place names to firmly root this story in a recognisable landscape. The fairy cow doesn't emerge from any old lake but from Llyn Barfog near Aberdovey. Rather than giving the reader a strangely ambiguous but universal story, Thomas instead offers a sense of the specific and the exact, creating a fairy tale that intersects with a real and knowable landscape.



Fairy Legends
AND
TRADITIONS
OF THE
South of Ireland.
BY
T. CROFTON CROKER, ESQ.
A NEW AND COMPLETE EDITION,
EDITED BY
THOMAS WRIGHT, ESQ., M.A., F.S.A., &c.
WITH
A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR,
BY HIS SON,
T. F. DILLON CROKER, ESQ., F.S.A., &c.
LONDON: WILLIAM TEGG

In Ireland, the systematic recording, study and appreciation of Irish fairy tales really begins with 'the amateur antiquarian and artist Thomas Crofton Croker (1798–1854) [who] brought Irish popular culture and traditional tales to the attention of the English-speaking public.'[6] Croker's *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland,* published anonymously in London in 1825, was a popular and critical success and was even translated into German by the Brothers Grimm.[7] We can't know exactly what made the Grimms so interested in Croker's collection but one quality that may have made these stories so fascinating is their treatment of landscape.

Croker's collection contains many onomastic stories which show how certain places in Ireland came by their names and so there is a rich sense of the intersections between history, folktale and geography within these stories. Other stories collected by Croker are deeply embedded within particular places, such as the story of the merrow or the selkie. The selkie story is, at its heart, a kind of mermaid tale, and while there are hundreds of variants from Scotland, Iceland, the Orkneys, Norway and Polynesia, the basic story is this: a fisherman comes across a selkie and steals its furry cloak or hood (in some versions it is called a magic caul or cowl), forcing the selkie to stay in human form. The fisherman takes the selkie home and they live together happily enough. However, one day the selkie finds her magic cloak or caul and puts it on, returning to seal form. She escapes back to the sea and is never seen again.

The selkie stories in Ireland are remarkable for being highly localised, and for being deeply and indelibly rooted in a small number of places. Bairbre Ní Fhloinn points out in her essay on seals in the Irish oral tradition, people in the west of Ireland insist that it is only the rón glas, or grey seal, that has magical associations. The rón beag, or common seal, has no otherworldly qualities.[8] Interestingly, the geographical distribution of the grey seal around Ireland maps quite neatly onto the distribution of selkie stories and in the areas that we find grey seals we also find a distribution of names such as O'Shea, Conneely, O'Dowd, O'Hara and Gallagher, names traditionally believed to come from families with selkie blood in them. In Irish selkie stories the seals are often named. Ní Fhloinn reminds us that in the variants of the story common around Galway and Mayo, the selkies are male and named Tadhg and Donncha. In other places and in other stories, the selkies are not named but the fishermen who encounter them are.

The variant of the selkie story collected in Thomas Crofton Croker's *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland* (1825), 'The Lady of Gollerus' begins like this:

> **On the shore of Smerwick harbour, one fine summer's morning, just at day-break, stood Dick Fitzgerald 'shoghing the dudeen,' which may be translated, smoking his pipe. The sun was gradually rising behind the lofty Brandon, the dark sea was getting green in the light, and the mists clearing away out of the valleys went rolling and curling like the smoke from the corner of Dick's mouth.**[9]

So, rather than a vague sense of time and a vague sense of place as we have in the Grimms' fairy stories, this tale is absolutely rooted in a particular moment and within a particular place. It is just at daybreak and Dick Fitzgerald is standing beside Smerwick harbour, smoking his pipe. We have a clear sense of the landscape here, the colour of the dark sea and the shape of the pale mist curling around the valleys, the smell of the pipe smoke, the feeling of a summer's day just beginning to warm up. The setting is not some vague 'far away' space but a very specific and identifiable location in Co. Kerry in the southwest of Ireland.

These are just two examples of many Welsh and Irish fairy tales that make use of landscape in this way. This is not to say, of course, that this sort of connection between story and real place *only* happens in Wales and Ireland: there are storied places and emplaced stories the world over. While we may be used to thinking of the landscapes of fairy tales as full of rigid patterns rather than real places, I suggest that these sorts of formulaic settings are really the ones we associate with the Grimms' fairy tales. It's only because of the popularity of their stories that we have come to think of them as setting the standard for how fairy tales should look and feel. Jack Zipes suggests that the 'universality' of the Grimms' stories stems from that fact that their 'style and ideology … suited middle-class taste throughout Europe and North-America, and the subsequent value of the tales has been determined by the manner in which people throughout the world have regarded them as universal and classic'.[10] If we broaden our reading, even just to the islands west of the European mainland, we can find a wealth of stories that move against – and even subvert – these apparently universal trends. Although Welsh and Irish fairy stories are still ambiguous things that evade our grasp just like a fairy cow that disappears under the surface of a lake, or a selkie who slips from the house in the night clutching her cloak, we can hold on to the sense of place that these stories give us and, if nothing else, can point to the surface of the lake or the shore of the harbour and say 'There! Right there! That's where it happened!'.

## Notes

[1] A list of character types identified by Vladimir Propp can be found at https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zgydhv4/revision/1.

[2] See Christopher Booker, *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories* (London: Continuum, 2004).

[3] Robert Dunbar, ‘It’s the way we tell ’em: voices from Ulster Children’s Fiction’ p.62.

[4] Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, ‘The fabled roots of fiction’ review of *Once Upon a Time: A Short History of Fairy Tale* by Marina Warner, *The Irish Times*, November 22, 2014.

[5] W. Jenkyn Thomas, ‘The Stray Cow’, p.75.

[6] Anne Markey, ‘The Discovery of Irish Folklore’, p.25.

[7] This was published as *Mährchen und Sagen aus Süd-Irland. Aus dem Engl. Übersezt und mit Ammerkungen bereichert von den Brüdern Grimm* (Leipzig: Friedrick Fleischur, 1825).

[8] Bairbre Ní Fhloinn, ‘Tadhg, Donncha and some of their Relations: Seals in Irish Oral Tradition’, p.3.

[9] Thomas Crofton Croker, ‘The Lady of Gollerus’, p.180.

[10] Jack Zipes ‘Cross-Cultural Connections and the Contamination of the Classical Fairy Tale’, p.868.

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# An Interview with an Artist: Levi Pinfold

Currently based in New South Wales, Australia, multi award-winning artist, writer and illustrator Levi Pinfold originally graduated from Falmouth University. Levi Pinfold quickly found himself on a pathway to children's publishing as he developed his now instantly recognisable artwork style. His use of detail and talent for lyrical storytelling, alongside the stylised realism of his illustrations, proved a winning combination.

Winner of the BookTrust Best New Illustrator Award for his first book *The Django*, his watercolour and egg tempera fine painting techniques quickly became the foundation for his future career in creating award-winning picture books.

His second standalone picture book *Black Dog* was awarded the prestigious Kate Greenaway Medal for excellence in children's book illustration. This was followed by *Greenling*, which won the UKLA Picture Book Award and Levi Pinfold has since been shortlisted for the CILIP Kate Greenaway medal for *The Dam*, written by David Almond, and *The Song from Somewhere Else*, written by A.F Harrold, which won the Amnesty Honour.

Levi Pinfold has recently turned his considerable talents to illustrating fiction for older readers, creating exquisite pieces for the 20th Anniversary House Editions of the beloved Harry Potter series.

A question and answer session between Ferelith Hordon and Levi Pinfold.

1 Has landscape always been important to you as a visual artist? What does it represent or mean to you?

LP Like the weather, landscapes have meaning for all of us, so I tend to be drawn to them as a tool to express emotion or a sense of drama in a story.

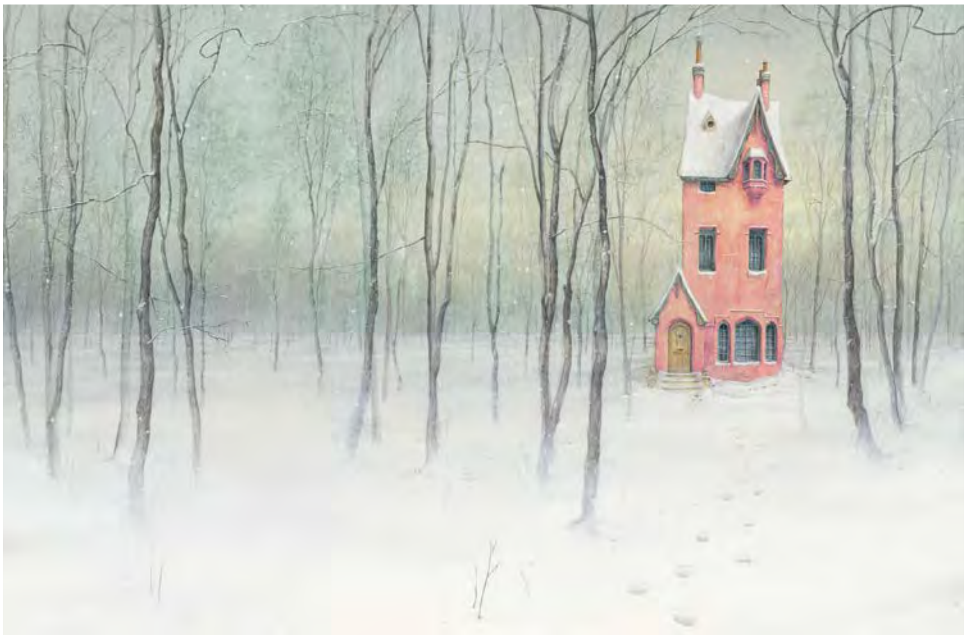
2 How did landscape impinge on your consciousness as a child? Has this affected how you react to/respond to landscape now? How does this translate to your art?

LP I lived in the Forest of Dean for a time, then moved to a West Midlands village right next to a busy road. The forest, the field, the farm machinery and the crackle of the electricity pylons continually fight against each other to find their way into my personal work. My Dad was an engineer, so I spent a bit of time running through milling machines and factory offices, which are an impressive landscape of their own.

Our generation was the first to spend a good deal of time with three-dimensional computer games. Back then they weren't as graphically advanced as they are now. As a result they felt extremely surreal and unnatural. I think this too formed part of the scope and breadth of landscapes I was exposed to as a kid. It was an imaginative space that still felt tangible, with a distinctive tang of something disturbingly human. Sometimes I'll be actively trying to design a landscape that gives the same feeling as those weirdly proportioned geometric shapes from *Doom*.

Movies too were especially impressive. Like the most greeky kids of my age, I watch *Star Wars* over and over again which, like most fantasy, is very landscape heavy. Of course, there are plenty of landscape illustrations too, but I'll get to that later.

3 There are many different ways in which an illustrator/artist might illustrate a text – at which point did landscape become an important element in your books – *The Dam*, *Greenling*, *The Django* – even *Black Dog*? What did you want the spreads to convey?



*Black Dog*, pp.4–5. Copyright © 2011 Levi Pinfold.

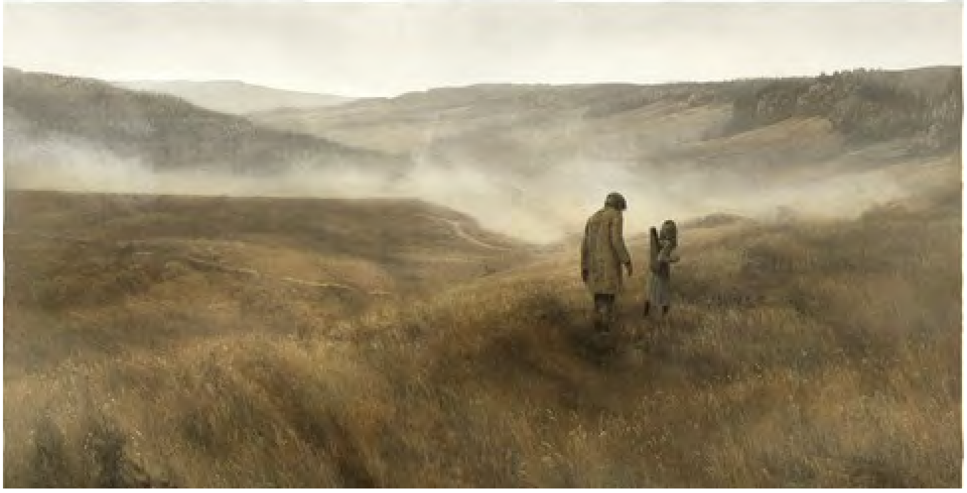
LP I've always wanted to put characters in a setting, especially in my childhood drawings and comics. Perhaps I wanted to know more about the characters. Your surroundings affect your sense of identity, and it always seems natural to me to put in all of that information into an illustration as a way of exploring the mindset of a character. This is by no means a new concept. When I am feeling particularly pretentious, I like to call it 'mise en scène' in an appalling French accent.

4 In these books the character of the landscape very much reflects the underlying themes of the texts – *The Django* – fantastic, *Greenling* – transformation, *The Dam* – space. Was this a conscious choice?

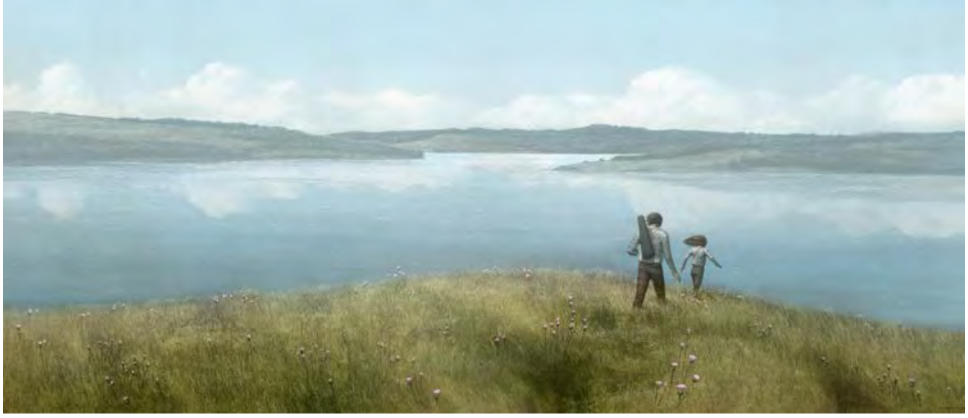
LP No, not conscious. I do what feels right at the time. If I am not content I'll keep adding and subtracting elements until the picture communicates what I need it to. It is more of an intuitive thing, I guess.

5 Do you have to experience a landscape for yourself?

LP It is best when you can breathe the air. When I was working on *The Dam*, my wife and I were lucky enough to be able to visit Northumberland from Australia. I don't think I could have worked on that book without it. I spent the whole six months trying to recapture what I felt in four days of walking around Kielder.



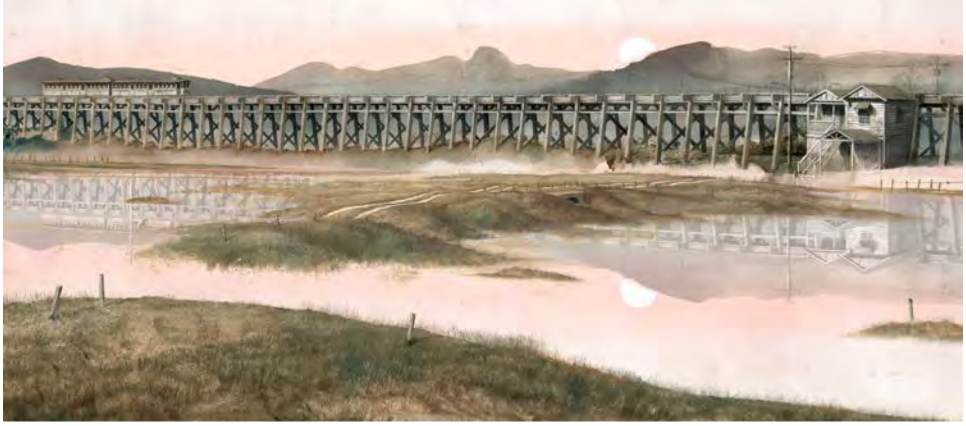
*The Dam*, pp.4–5. Copyright © 2019 Levi Pinfold.



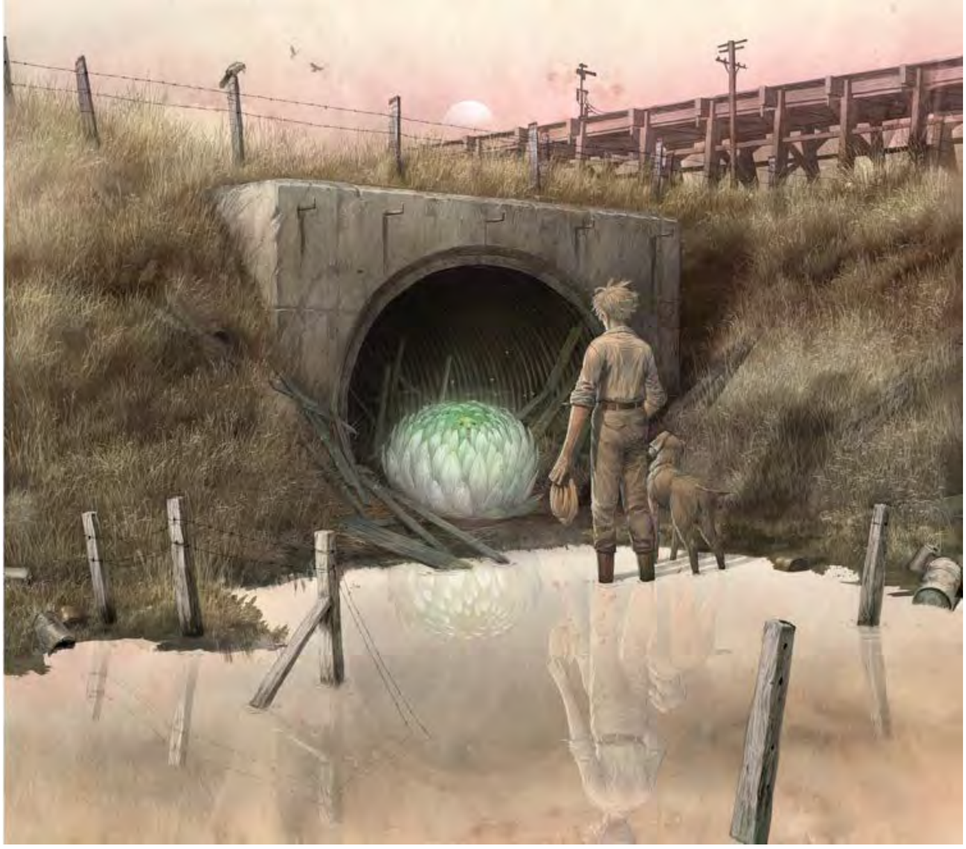
*The Dam*, pp.24–25. Copyright © 2019 Levi Pinfold.

Most of the time you can't experience a place, and find yourself cobbling it together from reference, which is interesting in and of itself.

6 Landscape in illustration – who has influenced you and in what way?



*Greenling*, pp.4–5. Copyright © 2015 Levi Pinfold.



*Greenling*, pp.6–7. Copyright © 2015 Levi Pinfold.

LP So many! Hard to list them all here, but I'll give a brief snapshot! Arthur Rackham's trees for their psychological power; Alan Lee for his natural forms, his figures seem to be a part of the landscape themselves; Ul de Rico for his fantastic cloudspaces and use of light; E.H. Shepard for his fluid line and an incredibly well-observed English countryside; Gennady Spirin for his fairy-tale forests with their own anatomy and rules; Roberto Innocenti for his cluttered realism; Chris Van Allsberg for his quiet surrealism; the list goes on … .

Thank you so much Levi Pinfold.

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