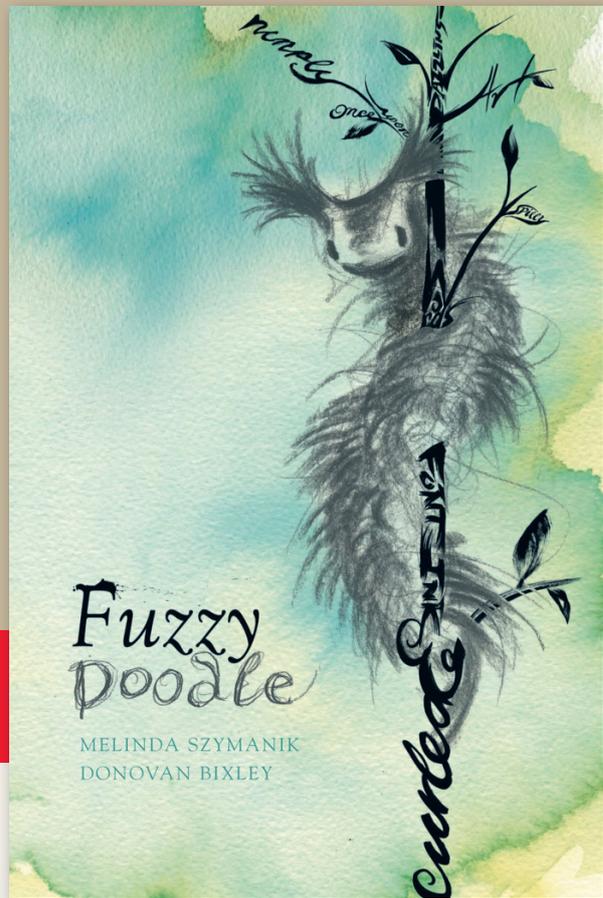


Fuzzy Doodle

By Melinda Szymanik

Illustrated by Donovan Bixley

- Reading • Writing • Poetry
- Science



Synopsis

Fuzzy Doodle is a celebration of creativity. It is a sophisticated picture book in which the text and illustrations work together to create a delightful metaphor for the creative process. The text tells of Fuzzy, a small pencil doodle that magically comes to life, looking very much like a sweet little horned caterpillar. Fuzzy is hungry and immediately begins eating an ink droplet. This causes him to grow and for ink marks to appear on his pencil-sketch body. He then progresses to eating words, and from there, he moves on to eating whole stories. He eats the gold leaf from the ornate initial letter of a fairy tale, and his ever-growing, fuzzy body now sports golden highlights. From there, he moves on to illustrations, eating 'pencil strokes and fine pen markings, paint and pastels, crayon too'. The next few pages show that Fuzzy is now a large – and still growing – multicoloured caterpillar.

Soon, however, Fuzzy enters a picture that looks like a Japanese print of a branch bearing delicate pink spring blossoms. He is shown hanging from the branch and weaving a case about himself. The text queries what he could be doing inside this case, which is pencil grey with golden flecks. Further on, readers learn that the parcel has now turned pretty shades of blue and that Fuzzy appears ready to come out. Fuzzy is no longer a fuzzy caterpillar; he is now a spectacular blue and gold butterfly-like book. On the last page of text, he flies over a landscape of pencil and paint-brush trees, and the author tells us that: *Having started as a squiggle, nothing more than just a scribble, a dazzling book emerged to show great things from little scribbles grow.*

About the Author

Melinda Szymanik is the author of Scholastic picture books *The Song of Kauri* (a 2015 Storylines Notable Book), *The Were-Nana* (2009 Children's Choice winner at the NZ Post Children's Book Awards), and *Clever Moo*. Melinda has also had two novels published by Scholastic NZ: *A Winter's Day in 1939* (winner of Librarian's Choice, 2014 LIANZA Awards, and junior fiction finalist in the 2014 NZ Post Children's Book Awards), and *Jack the Viking*. Melinda lives with her family in Auckland.

About the Illustrator

Donovan Bixley is a prolific illustrator of numerous children's books and book covers. He is the only artist to have ever had three books simultaneously short-listed for the NZ Book Awards for Children and Young Adults (in 2015). The three books were Scholastic titles *Dragon Knight: Fire!*, *Little Red Riding Hood ... Not Quite*, and his debut comic book/novel as author and illustrator, *Monkey Boy*, which took out the top prize for junior fiction. Donovan lives in Taupo with his wife and three daughters.



Writing Style

Fuzzy Doodle is a beautifully written story that children and adults of all ages will love to read again and again. The delightful, spirited text is full of poetic devices and figurative language, evoking a sense of creative exuberance.

*Fuzzy started as a scribble,
just a scrawly little doodle,
a smudgey sort of 'something'
at the bottom of the page.*

On a literal level, the text tells of Fuzzy, a doodle that comes to life and consumes words, pictures and stories and then turns into a beautiful book. This is mirrored in the illustrations, which clearly show that the doodle looks like a caterpillar and that it then becomes a chrysalis and, finally, a book-like butterfly. The final page of text makes the metaphor clear: great ideas can grow from little scribbles.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

- What is a doodle? Have you ever drawn doodles? What sort of doodles did you draw?
- Look at the cover. What can you see? Look carefully at the plant. Can you make out any words? What do you think this book will be about?
- What sort of art supplies do you think the illustrator used to make this page? What does the background look like? (title page)
- Where is Fuzzy on the page? What does he look like? What three things does the author describe him as? (pp.4–5)
- Now look at the text. What writing tool does it look like the author used to write it? Why do you think it was set this way and not using ordinary book fonts? (pp.4–5)
- Did Fuzzy come to life suddenly or slowly? How can you tell? Where on the page was he when he came to life? How has the illustrator shown us this? (pp.6–7)
- Look at the type on these pages. Is it all the same? What is different? (pp.6–7)
- Can you find some rhyming words on this page? What do these words tell us about Fuzzy? (p.8)
- What word is Fuzzy eating? What do you think he'll eat next? (p.9)
- What are jottings? Did Fuzzy find them tasty? What other word does the author use to tell us this? (p.10)
- Hoover is a brand of vacuum cleaner. How does the illustrator show us that Fuzzy is like a vacuum cleaner? (p.11)
- Fuzzy has now been eating ink as well as pencil? How is this changing the way Fuzzy looks? (p.11)

- What sort of story is Fuzzy eating? Did he eat it from the beginning to the end, or from the end to the beginning? How do you know? (pp.12–13)
- Fuzzy is not eating black ink now? What is he eating? Do you think this 'food' could change Fuzzy, too? How might he change? (pp.12–13)
- Were you right? How has Fuzzy changed? (p.14)
- What do you think Fuzzy will move on to next? (p.15)
- What different types of drawings did Fuzzy eat? Which ones can you see on these pages? (pp.16–17)
- Where is Fuzzy? Where has he been already? (pp.16–17)
- Which colours from the rainbow can you see on Fuzzy? (pp.18–19)
- How does the type change as Fuzzy grows? (pp.20–21)
- What is Fuzzy doing? Why do you think he chose this painting for his transformation? (pp.22–23)
- Is Fuzzy really on holiday? What do you think is happening inside the little parcel? (pp.24–25)
- Why do you think the parcel has changed colour? Have you seen anything like this happen in nature? Can you see Fuzzy? What do you think he will look like when he comes out? (pp.26–27)
- What has Fuzzy become? If you look very carefully, you can see that he actually looks a bit like two different things. What are they? (a butterfly and a book) (pp.28–29)
- Why do you think the author says 'great things from little scribbles grow'? How did Fuzzy grow from a scribble? How might this book itself have grown from a scribble? (pp.30–31)
- What about other books and pieces of art? Do you think they sometimes grow from scribbles, too? Have you ever had an idea grow from a scribble? (pp.30–31)
- What is the landscape Fuzzy is flying over made up of? (pp.30–31)
- What is he flying over on the last page? Why do you think the illustrator showed hands instead of flower heads? (pp.32)
- Look back at the title page? What do you notice now?

Activities

ACTIVITY 1: A CLOSER LOOK AT THE TEXT

Discuss with your students how the text of *Fuzzy Doodle* reads. Talk about how it sounds poetic, rather than literal. Tell your students that the author has used some techniques that they can also use to make their own writing sound imaginative and inspiring. Assist them in identifying and creating a class list of examples of poetic devices and figurative language within the text. Assist them in finding examples as such these:

- Rhyme (e.g. squiggle/wriggle; started/half-hearted)



teacher toolkit

 SCHOLASTIC

- Alliteration (e.g. spilly spotting; teeny tiny; creaked and cracked)
- Metaphor (e.g. hoovered up the text; that noodle that Fuzzy had turned into, just a quiet little parcel)
- Evocative (sometimes made-up) words (e.g. scrumptious, rumply, famished, gobbled)
- Onomatopoeia (nibbled, chomped, hoovered, gobbled, creaked, cracked)

The next time the students are working on creative writing, revise the list and display it where the students can see it and use it for inspiration.

ACTIVITY 2: METAPHORS & METAMORPHOSIS

Often, when students learn about metaphors, they learn to identify single sentence metaphors. Unconsciously, they can assume that this is all there is to a metaphor. *Fuzzy Doodle* provides a way of showing that the concept is much larger.

Discuss how, especially within the illustrations, the life cycle of a caterpillar is used as a metaphor for the creative process. Then discuss how, especially within the text, a magical doodle coming to life is used as a linked metaphor for the same thing. A doodle becomes words and then the words become a book.

Talk about why a metaphor can help us understand something. (It compares one thing with something else that we can more readily understand.) Ask why the author might have chosen the metaphor of a caterpillar turning into a butterfly. Help the students understand that metaphors are an imaginative use of language that can make writing more interesting and inspiring. Discuss what part of the creative process the chrysalis stage might represent (e.g. quiet contemplation, or the incubation and maturation of an idea into something more sophisticated).

See if the students can think of any other metaphors the author could have chosen (e.g. a seed transforming into a mighty tree; a baby growing into an adult, etc.).

Finally, assist the students in writing about their own creative process by comparing it to a seed. This could be an individual activity or a class activity, depending on the ages and abilities of the students. Help them to write such sentences as: I had the seed of an idea; I planted it in the ground; I watered the seed with my time, and fed it with my attention.

ACTIVITY 3: LIFE CYCLES

Fuzzy Doodle can also be used as a novel and fun way to introduce students to the topic of animal life cycles. After reading the book for pleasure, talk about Fuzzy's changes in terms of being a caterpillar.

Mention that real caterpillars do not magically come to life. Elicit that they come from eggs laid by butterflies. Discuss how real caterpillars eat a great deal and grow bigger very quickly, just as Fuzzy did. Encourage the students to talk about caterpillars they have seen and/or observed. Then discuss the rest of the life cycle, including becoming

a chrysalis, the chrysalis changing colour, the butterfly emerging, and an adult butterfly laying eggs so that the cycle can begin again.

If possible, arrange for some living caterpillars to be kept in a safe place within the classroom or on a butterfly-friendly plant in the school grounds. Visit the caterpillars regularly, and help the students to take field notes and draw diagrams as they observe, but do not touch. Finally, when they have observed the full life cycle, help them to create illustrated life cycle diagrams from their notes.

If real caterpillars are not available, either watch a video (e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7AUeM8Mbalk>) or read a book that shows the life cycle with lifelike images. Assist the students in making their own butterfly life cycle diagrams.

Written by Mary Atkinson

