

Happy All Over

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR NOTES

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THE THEME

Happy All Over is an early childhood picture book, its pages filled with children soaking up a little joy throughout their day.

A stylised drip motif is repeated throughout the illustrations, representing happiness falling into people's lives and gradually filling them up with colour, as they find happy moments in a shared story, the tickle of a cat's tail, peeking through a hole in a slice of cheese, helping a friend, licking cake mix from a wooden spoon, noticing the moon whilst taking out the compost and many other tiny moments of mindfulness in an ordinary day: seemingly inconsequential things which, when appreciated, make one's life richer. It is my hope that *Happy All Over* will – in some small way – encourage children (and the adults reading with them) to find hope, happiness and optimism in the smallest of things, and as they close the book, it might open a conversation about what else brings joy to their days.

THE IDEA

I've been fascinated by the concept of happiness for over twenty years, and it was on a flight in 2013 that I found a way to weave it into a picture book. I was flying back to Australia after spending some time with my parents in England. My dad was unwell, and during the visit, my mum said happiness to her was seeing the little pink shapes of her granddaughters in their winter coats at the door. I was thinking about what she'd said as I flew away from my family, and the beginnings of the book started to take shape in my mind.

As is often the case with the inspiration for my books, happiness came out of sadness. *Happy All Over* is dedicated to Mum, and it is the front door of my childhood home in the vignette on page 14 illustrating the line, "Shapes at the door."

THE TEXT

Happy All Over is a rhyming text, written to be read aloud, sing-song in its rhythms – sometimes pitter-patter staccato, sometimes flowing, sometime sputtering, often reflecting the sounds water makes and the ways it moves, but always mindful of the role rhyme plays in a young child's speech and language development.


The words of the title appear, with slightly different meanings, at the beginning and at the end of the book – in the first instance describing a feeling of happiness from head to toe, and later implying that joy can be found all around us. I'll explore the text more in my notes accompanying the individual spreads below.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS

LINE WORK

The illustrative approach for *Happy All Over* grew out of unstructured daily creative play at the 'wet station' in my studio while I was illustrating *Rudie Nudie Christmas*. My process for illustrating the Rudie Nudie books is so clean and tidy – using only a 4B pencil and digital collage in Photoshop – and I craved a little messy play. So, I'd spend some time each day engaged in stream-of-consciousness brush and ink sketching, with no agenda and therefore no pressure, as I knew no one need see the results. The quirky little ink children of *Happy All Over* grew out of this experimental practice. I do try to come to each new project with a fresh approach and varying media, and as a result my work can have a quite different feel from one book to the next. There is certainly a contrast between the clean, crisp edges of the colour in *Rudie Nudie Christmas* and the splashiness of *Happy All Over*... and the next book may well be different again, perhaps with a return to graphite, pixels... and a tidier desk and floor!

There are ninety-nine individual children in *Happy All Over*, and my aim in illustrating the characters was to achieve as much of a lightness of touch as possible: to keep the final illustrations as loose as that brush and ink work in my sketchbooks – and indeed some children in the book were scanned straight from those pages.

For new characters, I improvised around the theme of each spread – guided by my pencil roughs but not constrained by them – to produce the line work for the illustrations. Using black ink and a paintbrush held loosely in my fingers, I painted each character over and over again, until my mind let go of trying to control the movements and outcome. Drawing the same thing many times freed up my lines and encouraged a lively, fresh, expressive yet economic quality to the work.  See examples on the [ILLUSTRATING](#) page of my website.

I am intentionally avoiding referring to the brush and ink work defining the characters as "outlines" as I never entirely enclose shapes with a complete line. I like to leave out any superfluous details and allow the viewer to complete the picture themselves. Using the Gestalt rule of closure (or reification), I rely on the fact that we prefer complete shapes, so our minds automatically fill the gaps between elements to perceive a complete image.

INCLUSION

I have made inclusion and diversity a priority in my illustrations: it is important to me that they reflect children with a range of different ethnicities, body shapes, sizes and abilities, and that I include them all incidentally and without fanfare. I try not let my illustration style dictate body shapes, as I feel the way I draw a leg, for example, is much less important than allowing as many children as possible to feel included. The illustrations in *Happy All Over* depict children with hearing aids, with cerebral palsy, with both manual and power wheelchairs, with same sex parents, and many more characters who are all different to one another and yet filling their cups from the same source. I try not to spell out this kind of inclusion in my work (besides here!), but to make it as natural as possible in its reflection of the world in which we live.

MOTIFS

The text refers to filling your cup, and this motif is repeated throughout the book, with at least one cup for readers to find on each double-page spread. Their squat shape was inspired by my small collection of mid-century melamine mugs.

The coloured drip shapes in every illustration are used to represent many things – leaves, petals, stickers, an apple pip, beads, balloons, light bulbs, birds' wings... and most of all – water, filling up the children's cups.


Intentionally using a method that pre-school children could easily adopt for their own artworks, I used tissue paper to add liquid colour to the illustrations – cutting drip shapes from tissue paper, placing them on white paper then gently wetting them with a paintbrush dipped in water, causing the dye to bleed out and stain the page. The drips were carefully snipped with scissors and deliberately placed, however the larger areas of colour for the children's clothes were made in the same way, but from roughly cut and torn tissue paper shapes, arranged randomly (often overlapping) and drenched in water to create colourful blot shapes on the page. This colour seems to soak up the kids' clothes, half filling them with colour, in keeping with the glass-half-full concept of the book.

The colour palette for the drips and clothing was dictated by the available shades of tissue and crêpe paper – colours one often associates with parties, gift wrapping, confetti, streamers, Christmas crackers and paper hats.

THE ENDPAPERS AND THE EXTENDED COLOUR PALETTE

A pattern created by coloured cups arranged in a 4x4 grid pattern fills the double-page opening and closing endpapers – empty at the opening of the book, and half-filled on closing, in keeping with the theme. One cup is being lifted away in the final endpaper. Opposite p1 and p32, there are single-page endpapers painted in the same mustard background colour but with no cups, so as not detract from the illustrations, but do see the artist's hand in the visible texture of the brushstrokes.

The colour palette for the props and settings in the book was built using the colours on the endpapers as a starting point. I chose the six colours for the large cup shapes and the background colour thinking about vintage plasticware from my childhood in the 1970s – two of them are pinks, then there's a mustard colour, a cream, a teal and a desaturated violet.

In Photoshop I layered up transparent stripes of these six colours, rotating and overlapping each with the others to 'mix' them and extend the palette.  *You'll find more details, and pictures, describing how I created an extended colour palette from the six base colours on the endpapers in this post on the NEWS page of my website: [Planning a harmonious colour palette for a picture book](#).*

I also created a palette of a wide range skin tones and hair colours to dip into, to represent children of differing ethnicities.

SETTINGS AND PROPS

I used another technique to illustrate the elements that are neither characters nor drip shapes: the objects, props, furniture and backgrounds are described in sweeps and blocks of colour, the settings they exist in implied by just a few visual clues and a strategic use of white space. Some of the principles overlap, but the rule of emergence is also central to Gestalt thinking and the way we interpret many artists' and illustrators' work. In leaving out all but the essential elements and by distilling a form down to its identifying characteristics, I like to make use of the fact that

instead of interpreting each patch of ink separately, a reader can swiftly identify an object, scene or character from seemingly random marks.




The utilisation of overlapping forms and contrast in scale helps create a certain amount of depth in the invented space. The pages are not cluttered, but I included plenty of small details in the illustrations for children to find on re-readings, and for when they begin to explore books on their own.

DIGITAL ASSEMBLY

I used Photoshop to bring all these elements together – the brush and ink line work, tissue paper dye and coloured shapes – as digital collages: 300dpi Photoshop Documents with many layers, which (when finished) were flattened and saved in TIF format to send to the team at HarperCollins.

THE SPREADS

p01-03

-  The drip shapes represent petals and buds
-  There is a cup hidden in the grass on p01 for children to find
-  A bird is perching on the baby's cup on p03

The illustrations on the opening pages celebrate a love of the outdoors and of being in nature. There is a strong left-to-right movement across the double-page spread, inviting us into the book.




Most of the characters came directly from stream of consciousness drawing sessions in my sketchbooks, in which I tried to capture them mid movement, expressing a sense of happy abandon.

Petals scatter on the breeze and fly off the page. Blotted and bleeding green ink suggests wet paper, and on the first page a cup is hidden in the long grass, which children might not find on the first reading of the book.

p04-05 *Happy on the inside...*

Opening with a choppy, rhythmic verse sets the tone for the book, with an invitation to spread happiness. There are clues as to the theme, but the reader might not yet realise the significance of the recurring motifs. In the opening verse, "*Happy all over*" implies a feeling in one's whole body (the bird is literally immersed in the water of the bird bath). There is ambiguity scattered throughout the whole text, and here "*Happy on the inside*" is open to several interpretations – it might refer to the room inside the house, the girl cocooned in her cosy jumper or the internal quiet joy found in creating something, alone... or all of them.

On this spread, the drip shapes represent:

-  Cut tissue paper shapes strung from the ceiling
-  Stickers
-  Summer leaves on the branches of a tree



Splashes from a bird bath



A cup holds the girl's pencils, crayons, ruler and scissors

The gutter is used as a device to divide the inside and outside, conceptually, with a stylised cross-section of a stud wall running vertically down the centre of the spread. I printed the shapes for the battens and panels from the end grain of real sheets of wood, but these are not realistic spaces – the floor of the 'room' on the left is only defined by the characters sitting and standing on it. Outside, there is a minimal suggestion of grass, stones and branches with the shapes between them forming white negative shapes to define a sense of space and depth and creating room for the type to breathe.

Inside, a girl sits on the floor with her knees tucked inside her jumper and the turtleneck turned up. She has some of her art materials, a sketchbook, a recorder, a fortune teller and a toy mouse scattered around her: lots of details for readers to explore. There is evidence that she has used scissors to cut tissue paper drip shapes (just like I did), to string from the ceiling with wool. Her drawing of a horse and foal is from a story I wrote as a child. There is a palpable sense of spaciousness on this page; a quiet, uninterrupted space to create has always been my happy place, so I just had to include one in the book!

The concept of transparency is explored throughout the illustrations, particularly in the drip shapes on each spread, and here the girl's sheets of coloured tissue paper overlap to create new colours, too.

A boy in the centre of the spread leans across the gutter – half in and half out of the house – to take a deep breath of fresh air, eyes closed, exploring mindfulness, and illustrating the "*inside-out*" of the text.

Outside, a girl on a swing is proud of her origami bird and is introducing it to us and to the garden, where the real birds fly and bathe.

p06-07 *Little things...*

Clues in the text help us to gain more of an understanding of the theme, with the concept of 'half full' being introduced. The reader might eventually notice the characters are also half filled with colour, and I hope they might see the drip motif is repeated in this illustration – bursting out of the bubbler, but not as a direct representation of water.




Water spray from a bubbler/drink fountain



The cups are ready to fill with water

Several children are bringing cups to fill at the bubbler, and when one girl turns on the tap, the water spurts further than expected to fill another child's cup.

White space frames the image (creating plenty of room for the type), with an abstract horizontal green shape transecting the spread and implying grass, made from inking with an assortment of paintbrushes held in various ways to make different marks – some very old, with rogue bristles which suited the subject matter perfectly.

A couple of the children were scanned directly from sketchbook.  You'll see the dandelion boy marching from sketchbook to picture book on the [ILLUSTRATING](#) page of my website.

The characters' horizontal movement leads the reader's eye from left to right across the page, reinforced by the strip of green grass, and then the colourful drips arc in opposite direction.

The image references yoga, play, pets and generosity.

Depth of field is suggested by overlapping shapes – the grasses in the foreground seem much closer to us and create an illusion of a third dimension.

p08 *As small as a pip...*




An apple pip



One cup holds a spoon and some of the soil from the hole the boy has dug to plant his pip

A young boy has dug a hole with a spoon, to plant an apple pip. The apple core lies beside him.

Most of the page is taken up by a vertical cross-section of the soil horizon, made of layers running parallel to the surface – with all the browns taken from mixtures of endpaper colours.  Again, see my NEWS post: [Planning a harmonious colour palette for a picture book](#). For compositional balance, a pale and desaturated teal cloud offsets the placement of the boy kneeling on the grass to drop his pip into the hole.

There is stillness – the only thing moving is the tiny apple pip, in contrast to the opposite page.

p09 *A dribble...*

Here, the gutter divides the spread into two distinct scenes.

Through the unravelling meaning in the text, the reader might grasp the concept of the book more fully – this verse made up of short, staccato words – often single-syllabled. Percussive. Like the sounds of drip-drip-dripping water.



A drip from a juicy peach



Strands from a beaded curtain flipping up as a dog races through them – here the drips are tiny, and corralled into threaded strings

A girl wears her swimmers and juts her chin forward to eat a juicy peach, and her small dog rushes in to catch a falling drip. We see a smudge of colour behind the dog, suggesting eagerness, speed and the direction he's come from. The beaded curtain at the door flips up in his wake.

p10 *Happy in a gush...*

Here, the verse begins with words often used to describe the movement, both smooth and otherwise, of water through pipes – "gush" and "sputter".



Warm bath water pouring from a cup

- 💧 Patterns on a shower curtain
- 💧 Splashes from a burst bubble
- ☑️ A cup in the bath, for pouring water

A girl sits in the bath, pouring water over her wet hair from a cup. A bath is implied by one broken line and a few visual clues – bathroom tiles on the wall, a semi-transparent shower curtain, and the white page.

At the bottom of the page, a boy and a baby blow bubbles – the baby more successfully so. Bubble mixture is just visible in the boy's cup. I tried many different shapes before I settled on the bird-shaped bubble blower – I always feel it's as important to pay as much attention to the depiction of objects in one's illustrations as one does to everything else, as they need to belong in the same 'world' as the characters.

p11 *Happy for a spin...*

- 💧 Flags flapping on a rope
- 💧 Splashes in a swimming pool

Three girls spin on a tyre swing at the top of the page, with movement suggested though the rope's strong diagonal, brushstrokes around tyre, and the directions in which the drips, the girls' hair and their clothes fly and flap.

The illustration at the bottom of the page shows children of differing abilities enjoying a swimming pool. Here we have another cross-sectional wash of colour, albeit paler and more transparent. A girl enjoys making splashes on the surface of the water with small movements in hydrotherapy, and multiples of the diving boy describe sequential action within one illustration.

p12 *A star...*

- 💧 In the schoolchildren's artwork
- 💧 The coloured filaments in glass marbles
- 💧 Gran's jewellery
- ☑️ The cup holds a child's drink on the table

We start the vignettes with a classroom scene. A girl walks towards us, smiling proudly at the gold star sticker her teacher has given her to put on her shirt; she has a painting of colourful raindrops in her hand. In the background we see two more children sharing their artworks with the teacher. There are large drip-shaped collages on the wall behind them.

The second vignette shows a child lying on the floor to roll marbles. The interpretation of this image, and to a lesser degree the others on the spread, relies on the Gestalt principle of proximity and the fact that things that are close together appear to be more related than things that are spaced farther apart. Although their borders are not defined, we read each vignette as a single scene. The principle of continuity helps us read the marbles as belonging to the second vignette, as elements that are arranged on a line or curve are perceived to be more related than elements not on the line or curve. (As well as – of course – the principle of similarity, which states that when things appear similar to each other, we group them together.)

The point of view from a low angle (a worm's-eye view) contrasts with birds-eye view on the opposite page.

At the bottom of the left-hand page a woman rushes to the door to greet her daughter and two grandchildren. The illustration bleeds off the bottom of the page, as I've employed some strategic cropping – we only see the expressive hands, angled torso and excited face of the foreground character, and from them read her reaction to seeing her family.

Reeded glass at the front door semi abstracts the view. The door frame is not delineated but is suggested by the negative space between the pictorial areas.

p13 ***Finding there are five...***

💧 The colour of spring blossoms

On the right-hand page, we view the scene from above – A bird's-eye view, appropriately – a parent bird is bringing food to its five hungry babies. On the ground below, a girl and her father look up at the nest.

p14 ***A huff and a puff...***

I employ monorhyme on this spread, every sentence ending in the same sound – an AAAA rhyming scheme – in addition to internal (or middle) rhyme in the opening line.

💧 Birthday candle flames
 💧 Tiny seeds on dandelion fluff
 🍷 A cup on the table holds the birthday boy's water

Two overlapping images describe a young boy's sequential intake of breath and blowing out of his birthday candles – the illustration of the earlier moment paler than the current one, as it begins to fade.

The scale of the drip shapes varies greatly on the spread, from tiny dandelion seeds blown on the wind to party balloons, blown almost to their full extent. A large dog holds a small twig in its teeth and seems perfectly content with it.

p15 ***The bits you have left over...***

This eleven-word sentence is the longest in the book, and a contrast to the two-word phrases it follows.

💧 Party balloons

A girl has shared her cookies, and her friends skip away happily, while she takes great delight in wetting her finger to dip into the smattering of hundreds and thousands left in the jar.

The illustrations on this spread contain details the reader will need to look at closely to see – I always enjoy the fact there is what one notices at first, on turning the page, and then what one finds on close inspection when one has spent some time *really* looking – hopefully helping to keep the experience fresh with re-readings.

p16-17 ***Happy in a stream...***

The stanza opens with terms describing the varying flow of water, followed by short, snappy two-word sentences which are dotted around the image, corresponding with the characters to which they refer.

- 💧 The illustration of a stream flowing across the cover of an open book
- 💧 Raindrops in a lift-the-flap book
- 💧 Pendant lights and the glow from their bulbs
- 💧 The bell on a cat's collar
- 🍵 A cup has the boy's tooth in it. I had my fingers crossed it would be just visible on the printed page

An older woman shares a large picture book with four young children sitting on her lap and on the arms of her chair. A crawling baby lifts the flap in a board book on the floor at their feet. Many of my titles contain books within books, and this one is no different – I've slipped three pro-reading illustrations into *Happy All Over*.

On the right-hand page, a cat climbs out of a girl's embrace while a boy tickles it under the chin with his toes.

p18-19 ***A race to the bottom...***

This spread explores opposites: up and down, top and bottom – and the illustrated scene helps the reader make sense of the minimal text.

- 💧 Coloured lights strung from the trees
- 🍵 Three cups have been used to play in the sandpit
- 🍵 A smaller cup forms the lid of the thermos flask in the mums' basket

This is a scene in a playground, with a slide, a sandpit, an in-ground trampoline and children playing. The curves of the grass and the slide lead our eyes through the picture, helping us to understand in which order the illustrator intended the visuals to be read – again making use of the continuity principle of Gestalt which states that we group elements that seem to follow a continuous path in a particular direction. The human eye follows the paths, lines, and curves of a design, preferring to see a continuous flow of components making up a scene rather than separated objects; continuing to follow the path even if an obstacle hides it or its flow is 'broken' by interlinking or bisecting visual elements.

The eyeline of the baby and the masked child also help the reader know what to look at, drawing attention to the small round stone being put on the top of the sandcastle. The line of sight of the bird perched on the handle of the spade leads to the jumping child on the trampoline.

The child reader can use visual clues to work out what the girl with her mums on the bench has been doing at the park.

p20-21 *A gurgle...*

The opening two-word sentences describes the properties of water as related to a water butt – bubbling up inside when the tap is turned, before issuing forth. However, the word “spout” could also refer to the toy teapot in the illustration.

- 💧 Leaves on a climbing plant
- 💧 Drips from a water butt
- 💧 Patterns on a ceramic mixing bowl
- ☕ Four small cups are from a toy tea set

I play with point of view on this spread – at first glance, the illustration reads as a single scene, with an archway created by a climbing plant linking its elements, but we then realise the boy curling up on the beanbag belongs in a different space, and is viewed from above, through the leaves.

A girl pretends to water the plant with a plastic teapot from her toy tea set, and in the background we see a boy filling a real watering can from a water butt, marvelling at the shapes bubbling up inside the tank.

In the foreground a girl in an apron hugs a large mixing bowl and surreptitiously licks cake mix from a wooden spoon. There is a small dollop of mix on the floor behind her.

A boy wears large headphones to listen to music, lying on a beanbag with a small dog curled up on his bare feet to keep them warm. The boy might be singing along to the music.

The vine growing around the edge of the spread flows into the vertical illustration at the edge of the right-hand page, to become the leaves of a tree in a nighttime garden scene. A girl is taking an ice-cream tub of scraps out to the compost bin in the garden and is looking up at a beautiful full moon. As the girl is a wheelchair user, I researched compost bins with lids that can be opened with one hand and stay open as long as required, then made my own design for the page.

The mostly analogous colour scheme of cool blues, greens and yellows contrasts with the warmer autumnal colour palette highlights as one turns the page.

p22 *A smile...*

This stanza is made up of seven two-word sentences (with one phrase forming a compound word), and the meaning of the text is not clear when isolated from the illustrations. The rhyme scheme on this page is monorhyme: AAA, in contrast to the second half of the spread.

- 💧 A drip of juice from a slice of orange
- 💧 Raked-up autumn leaves
- 💧 Ice cream in cones
- ☕ A cup holds slices of orange and discarded peel

A girl holds a semicircular slice of orange in front of her mouth, to make a big grin, and to reassure the reader that she is also happy behind the orange, the very edges of her real smile are visible too. Instead of sitting her at the table to eat her fruit, I added some dynamic qualities to the illustration by drawing her mid-movement – on her way to standing on the chair to show us her orange grin, with a diagonal lean from toe to top of head.

In the second vignette, a girl finds satisfaction in adding the last leaf to a pile she has raked. A great sense of accomplishment. Twenty short brushstrokes at her feet suggest grass, and the garden setting.

At the bottom of the left-hand page, a car bonnet straddles the gutter, visually tying the two pages together. A man brings his partner and daughter an ice cream each. We see the ice-cream van in the background, and I hope sharp-eyed children will spot the reader enjoying a book in the lull between customers.

p23 ***A dash...***

Following on from the AAA rhyme scheme above, the text on the right-hand page adds a BBCB patterning to complete the stanza.

- 💧 Water spurting from a hose
- 💧 Leaves the girl has collected and arranged
- 🍵 Cups used for leaf 'flower arrangements' and for mud pie mixing

This is the first time children are repeated in consecutive scenes in the book. A 'before' and 'after', cause and effect – add water to soil and you get mud. A boy holds a garden hose while two children dash through its water jet, then play in the mud while a bird watches on. The way the ink has pooled on the paper before drying adds a liquid, wet effect to the illustration, in contrast to the dry brush treatment for the grass on the opposite page.

p24 ***The promise of something...***

The first sentence of this stanza employs a word which could be interpreted in two ways: *to lead*, the verb, or *a lead*, the noun. In this context, with the help of the illustration and the "a", we infer that it is the latter – a dog's lead. A slight tension is created by the two words closing the sentence: the verb "follow" is coupled with the indefinite article, with the nice sense of opposites – "a lead, a follow" – making us wonder if we should read "lead" as a verb after all.



Here, we find an ABCB rhyme scheme.

- 💧 The tag on a dog's collar
- 💧 Bird wings

The first vignette is a study of anticipation – a dog excitedly jumping up when her owner reaches for the lead. Here, again, we have 'before' and 'after' scenes – the pair walking in the countryside, under a flock of migrating birds in the second illustration. Here is another tension – is the "follow" referring to the boy walking behind the dog, or individual birds being guided by the ones in front?

The grassy hillside extends across both pages, linking the two, with the tall reeds at its right-hand slope also seeming to belong to the next scene, and helping to create compositional balance with the large cocoon-shaped hanging chair.






p25 ***A one-upon-a-time...***

-  A large hanging chair
-  A toddler's sippy cup


In the full-page illustration on the right, the linear boundaries of the two children flow into one another, as they cosy up under a blanket to share a book.

p26 ***Sticky-tape heaven...***

This spread is about creativity and playfulness – structured games and making one's own.

-  An orange drip graphic on an empty juice carton
-  The teat on a baby's dummy
-  A large hair bow
-  A cup holds a pair of scissors
-  A cup is half filled with juice

The left-hand page comprises three vignettes, staggered vertically.

A girl kneels up to add a long strip of sticky tape to her cardboard construction. As with most of the characters, I drew her multiple times in brush and ink and chose the one I felt was most expressive to use in the book.  You'll find some of these drawings on the [ILLUSTRATING](#) page of my website. I liked the way the angle of the sole of her back foot and then her arms lead the eye to focus on her pointed finger on the curl at the top of her strip of tape.

A large orange drip and a splash of orange liquid let us know what used to be in the juice carton. I couldn't use type in my illustrations, as the language would need to be translated in foreign editions, so I used a graphic treatment here – communicating an orange juice carton. Likewise with the depiction of the snakes and ladders board on the opposite page – there are no numbers or words, but the image of a trophy on the final square instead.

The second vignette shows a baby hugging a teddy bear, with his arms and with his legs too. The slant of the baby's body helps us anticipate what is about to happen – both will roll backwards – adding a dynamic quality to the simple drawing.

At the bottom of the page, a girl is kneeling up to peep out at us through a hole in her slice of Swiss cheese. She originated in one of my sketchbooks, in pencil, although when first I drew her, I didn't know what she'd end up holding in her hands. When I'm asked to choose, this is one of my favourite illustrations in the book.

There are no entirely straight edges in the illustrations in *Happy All Over*, but through quality of line I am trying to show the differences between objects, surfaces and materials – for example the rigid carton contrasting with the soft cuddly toy.

p27 *Just the right number of spots on the dice.*

- 💧 An oversized light bulb and the diffused light it is emitting
- 💧 The small beads of a girl's necklace

On the right-hand page, three older children sit on the floor to play snakes and ladders on a giant game mat. On spending some time interpreting the illustration, the child reader might establish that the colour of the children's clothes relate to their counter in the game. If they compute the number just thrown, they can anticipate the move the 'blue' boy is about to make. He has narrowly missed the head of a snake, and will climb a ladder to take the lead, as the other players react good-heartedly.

p28-29 *Happy patter...*

The text and the content of this two-page illustration celebrate sound: bubbling water, splashing, children's footsteps, chatter, laughter, a pat-a-cake clapping game.

- 💧 Spurts of water from holes in the paths
- 💧 A tiny drip from an ice lolly
- 🍹 Cups ready for pre-school water play – scooping, pouring, floating, being delivered in a toy truck

A swooping bird top left leads us into the scene, then our eyes follow the curve of the spiral path through shallow water in a park with fountains of water shooting up at intervals from the pavement (even the birds are playing in the spray) to a girl and her puppy gazing at their upside-down reflections in a puddle. The children in the illustration find delight in the unpredictable water spurts, reacting in different ways to the surprise.

Two paddling children play a clapping game, another two leap from stepping stone to stepping stone, and a child in the background helps a boy who has tripped over his flip-flops.

I consulted the team at Aussie Deaf Kids to make sure I illustrated the clapping boy's hearing aid convincingly.

p30-31 *Little things, all day...*

Here, the text is bringing us back around to the theme of filling your cup. Echoing the verse on page 6, "Little things, all day, topping us up." this text reads, "Little things, all day, fill your cup."

The phrase "Happy all over" now suggests that it is to be found all around us.

- 💧 Scattering spray from a sprinkler
- 🍹 Each child has a cup, to fill from the sprinkler
- 🍹 One cup is upside-down on the baby's head, like a hat



The story is winding down, yet at same time as we reach an illustrative climax with a riot of colourful drips spinning out from a lawn sprinkler and a group of children holding their cups out. I slowed down videos of sprinklers to observe how to capture in a still image the parabolas created by their arcs of water droplets.

The image reads as coloured shapes against the white sky (or page), with the characters grounded by stylised strips of desaturated green grass, contrasting with the bright rainbow colours of the drip shapes.

One child has already half filled his cup, and a bird has its eye on it. A bee is making its way in the opposite direction to the spray – another detail for sharp eyes and re-readings.

p32 *soak some up.*

The type on the last page is not set in a straight, horizontal line, but instead deliberately staggered vertically, to encourage an adult sharing the book with a child to read more slowly, and savour the closing line of the text, rather than rushing the final three short words – a gentle moulding of the UX or User Experience.

-  Splashy raindrops
-  Cup – half-filled, and that's enough

Under a shower of coloured raindrops, one child abandons herself to happiness – holding her* umbrella aside and lifting her face to the rain. Her friend skips ahead, managing not to tilt his* half-filled cup.

*I say “her” and “his”, but I am not sure of these children’s genders, and in fact many of the characters in the book wear gender neutral clothes and can be identified by children in the ways they choose.

FEEDBACK AND COLLABORATION

I was very lucky that the publishers I worked with on the project were Chren Byng and then Ana Vivas, both of whom I have known and worked with for years. I also joined an informal peer critique group in 2023, and the input from other illustrators has been invaluable, too.

The whole children’s books team at HarperCollins Australia helped me make an eye-catching cover, by gently rejecting the original (somewhat overcrowded) artwork after I thought I’d finished the book. I’m so glad they did, now, as there is so much more movement, a strong focal point and room to breathe in the final version.

DESIGN

Melbourne book designer Bruno Herfst worked on the cover design, and the decisions he made were a delightful surprise. The title on the front cover has a childlike quality to its form, with non-uniform shapes, weights (compare the stems of the two Ls in “All”) and uneven edges which echo the non-mechanical qualities of the illustrative elements. I also appreciate its vessel-like qualities – the tall cup of the open counter in the “y” of “Happy” (compare with the “y” of “Quay”) and the lower case Ls resembling water pipes. Printed in a transparent cyan, its watery qualities are accentuated by the spot UV varnish picking out the title and the author’s name against the matte laminate of the cover paper stock.

Each line of type for the quote in the blurb is typeset in a different colour – pink, green, orange and blue. Bruno picked out these colours from the drips in the illustration.


It was fun to let my illustrations interact with the functional design elements on the back cover – I wanted to do something playful with the bar code, so it looked like colour was running down from its stripes (things were bound to get wet, with a garden hose around). I created a large rainbow blot with tissue paper dye on paper, then mocked up the effect on my cover rough, using a barcode from one of my other books to indicate my intention to Bruno.

 *You can see the rainbow ink blot and the finished barcode on the [ILLUSTRATING](#) page of my website.*

Also on the back cover, a cup rests on the horizontal line above the website address in the ABC Books logo. I provided a layered Photoshop file so Bruno could adjust the positioning of the cup, to sit exactly on the line. The internal type was designed by the HarperCollins Design Studio. In my roughs, I had mocked up each line of text as it corresponded with the illustrations, and they added a lot more flair in their choice of an open, fluted font, printed in grey, and with adjustments to my placements. It was Bruno who suggested we returned to the initial idea of using woodfree stock for the pages, and Ana and I love its matte, textured, retro qualities.

THE COVER ILLUSTRATIONS

A boy on the back cover holds up the end of a garden hose so an arc of colourful drips splashes across to the front cover, where a child and a dog walk happily through the 'rain', sticking out their tongues to catch a drop or two. The characters are captured mid gesture, adding a dynamic quality to the image, which is also accentuated by the diagonals of the falling drips and their strategic cropping, which implies that the action continues beyond the confines of the cover. The illustration spans the back and front covers and can be viewed when the book is opened up, but each half of the image works in isolation, too.

The child on the front cover is dressed in ordinary, everyday play clothes. I wanted the gender of the first character a child sees to be ambiguous – if a boy looks at it he might think it's a boy, and girl might think it a girl.  *You'll find 'before and after' images of this child, from a first scribble in my sketchbook to the finished cover on the [ILLUSTRATING](#) page of my website.*

A tiny image of the child jumping for joy from the playground spread is reproduced on the spine.

Also on the back cover, at a safe distance from the spurting hose, a girl sits on the floor with cup, reflecting happily on its half-filled state, while a friendly bird looks on. Another bird flies in from the top left corner, leading our eye towards the blurb.

THE FINISHED BOOK

The word count for *Happy All Over* is 210 words, but it took several years to illustrate the book. However, it really was a labour of love and the making of it certainly filled my cup.

I hope you'll enjoy it!

To see some illustrations in progress and for more information about Emma Quay and her books, visit
www.emmaquay.com