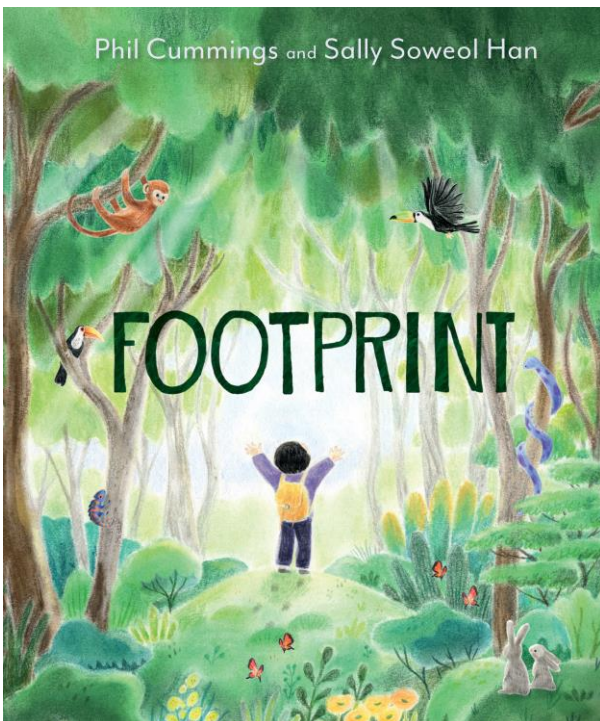


# Footprint

By Phil Cummings  
Illustrated by Sally Soweol Han



A unique, lyrical picture book that empowers children to think about the natural environment in a mindful and positive way, from one of Australia's most prolific writers, with stunningly beautiful illustrations from an exciting up-and-coming illustrator.

**RECOMMENDED FOR**

5–10 (Primary)

**THEMES**

Nature, natural environment, global conservation, climate, global warming

**ISBN (AUS)**

9781761180323



## SYNOPSIS

Embark on a lyrical, meditative journey through nature's tapestry, where every step you take leaves a legacy of wonder and protection for the environment. Explore forests and mountains, cities and fields, and animals in their natural habitats as you ponder the footprint humans have left on the Earth.

## FROM THE AUTHOR

'I originally wrote this piece as a song and the more I redrafted it the more I could see how illustrations could bring it alive in a powerful way. I wanted this to be an open text to allow an illustrator to take hold and work their magic and Sally has certainly done that. I wanted to take the reader wandering through as many realms of the climate spectrum as I could. I didn't want to be didactic; I wanted them to take a walk, guided by language and image, to discover and seek understanding for themselves. As I worked through the text and worked to tighten things, I had to make some hard choices as to what could be left in and what I could take out. I always love the process of playing with the language; seeing where it will take me as I sit and imagine. I hope the readers enjoy the journey when they discover this book.'

Phil Cummings

## FROM THE ILLUSTRATOR

'The book conveys themes of hope, patience, nature, action, and the significance of pausing to reflect and appreciate. And I believe the footprints portrayed are used to represent the influence children will leave on this world, making a positive impact on both people and the environment. I hope the book inspires many young readers to feel hope about the lasting impact of our actions.'

Sally Soweol Han

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Phil Cummings is the author of over seventy books for children, from picture books to novels, in a career that has spanned thirty years. His work is published in the US, Canada, Japan, South Korea, China, the UK and throughout Europe. Phil has received awards for his work, including a number of CBCA Notable Book honours. His picture book *Ride, Ricardo, Ride!* was an Honour Book in the 2016 CBCA Picture Book of the Year Awards. His picture book, *BOY*, won the 2017 Children's Peace Literature Award and was shortlisted in the 2018 CBCA awards. *BOY* was also named an outstanding book for children with disabilities by IBBY, the International Board of Books for Young people in Basel, Switzerland. Recently, as well as working on a number of new book projects, Phil has been involved in co-writing musicals for children. The musicals have been published online by The Song Library and performed across the globe. Phil has also worked with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and arranger/composer Glyn Lehman to co-create two commissioned works based on his books. Phil was a teacher for twenty-two years but now writes full time. His favourite pastimes are: listening to music, trying to play guitar, watching the cricket, cheering for the Adelaide Crows in the AFL, working in the garden and walking Daisy, his little (but very bossy) Jack Russell Terrier.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Sally Soweol Han is an illustrator with a passion and flair for children's books. She is the author and illustrator of *Tiny Wonders*, and has illustrated *Sunshine at Bedtime* by Clare Helen Welsh and *Spellhound* by Lian Tanner.



## IN-CLASS DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Before opening *Footprint*, look at the title and cover design and ask students if they can explain what a footprint is.
- Open the book to the front endpapers showing multiple footprints in a variety of colours and ask:
  - Where might you expect to see footprints?
- Read the book through once and discuss how it made the students feel. What did they like about the words? What did they like about the images?
- Point out to students that the poem talks directly to them by using the pronoun, 'you'. You might like to explore this concept further by asking questions about how this differs from other picture books (usually first and third person perspectives) and how it affected them; for instance, did it seem like the book was speaking directly to the class?
- Language: Explain that authors put a lot of thought into choosing the right word to make a book as interesting to a reader as possible. Point out that Phil Cummings uses repetition, rhyme, rhythmic changes in sentence length, as well as interesting word choices to make the poem come alive.
  - *Repetition* – Point out that repetition allows a writer to put emphasis on things they think are significant in a text. Ask what word or words are repeated in the story and why they think Phil Cummings wanted to emphasise that particular point.
  - *Rhyme* – When two words share the same sound ending, we say they rhyme. Point out examples of rhyme from *Footprint*, such as 'track' and 'back', 'tall' and 'waterfall', as well as 'flow' and 'go'. Now see if students can come up with their own rhymes for simple words such as 'get', 'meet' and 'fly'. How

- about 'orange'? (Note: 'orange' is the most famous example of a word in the English language that does not have a rhyme.)
- *Rhythm and sentence length* – Explain that changing the number of words in a sentence or on a page changes the flow of a text and keeps the reader interested. Point out the pages where there is only one word on the page and discuss its effect.
  - *Word choice* – Some words appeal to our senses more than others. Use as an example from the text, 'Your breath will mist: silver shroud. / Peer through the ribbons; ghostly cloud.' and ask students how the underlined words here increase the drama of what is being described. To illustrate your point, replace the underlined words with less interesting alternatives: 'shroud' changes to 'sheet', 'peer' to 'look', 'ribbons' to 'strips' and 'ghostly' to 'grey'. Which version seems the more interesting and why?
- **Visual Literacy:** Explain that just as the author spends a lot of time choosing the right words, an illustrator spends a lot of time choosing the right images to bring the words and story to life. Point out Sally Soweol Han's use of colour and image choice to match the words and create an even more powerful message on the page.
    - *Colour* – Using the same double-page spread as in the previous exercise, ask students how the different shades of grey bring the terms 'silver shroud' and 'ghostly cloud' alive. Now turn the page and compare how the colours on the left of the page make students feel with the predominantly heavy blacks and greys opposite them.
    - *Image choice* – Why do you think Sally Soweol Han choose the three images on the double-page spread featuring the words, 'You carry hope and future need. / With careful footprint, plant the seed. / Walk and wander near and far. / No footprint you leave will leave a scar.' How might each child's actions in the images help them not leave a scar on the world?

- Choose a double page spread from the book and ask students to imagine they are the child in the image. Encourage them to use sentence starters, such as, 'I see', 'I hear', 'I feel', 'I smell', 'I taste' to describe the scene. Students might also want to describe what they are thinking with the sentence starter, 'I wonder'.
- Deep Breathing – Explain that deep breathing is a great way to help us feel calmer and more clear-headed. Begin by asking the class to sit still and breath normally. Next, have each student place one hand on their belly (above the belly button) and one hand on their upper chest. Tell them to take a deep breath in through the nose and trace the journey of that breath down to their belly. Point out that as their belly expands up and out, their bottom hand rises. Now ask everyone to breathe out slowly through the mouth, feeling the bottom hand lower back down. To encourage a slow exhale, you can ask students to pretend to blow out candles, or hold their hand over their mouth to feel their breath or even to make a noise with their exhale. Repeat this exercise several times and ask anyone if they would like to share with the class how they feel and if they notice any difference.