

## Teachers' Notes by Elizabeth Honey

# I'm Still Awake, Still!

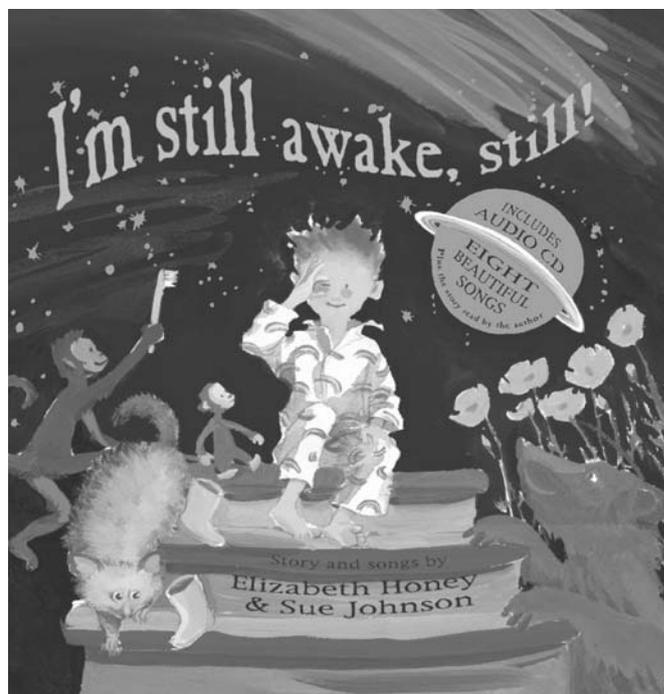
## Elizabeth Honey & Sue Johnson

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Recommended for pre-schools and kindergartens

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83 Alexander Street  
Crows Nest, Sydney  
NSW 2065  
Australia

PO Box 8500  
St Leonards  
NSW 1590  
Australia

ph: (61 2) 8425 0100  
fax: (61 2) 9906 2218

[info@allenandunwin.com](mailto:info@allenandunwin.com)  
[www.allenandunwin.com](http://www.allenandunwin.com)

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## INTRODUCTION

Popular children's author Elizabeth Honey and musician Sue Johnson have combined their talents to create the perfect bedtime book – a richly illustrated Australian storybook with a CD of 8 beautiful and original songs. When little Fiddy can't get to sleep, his family, the animals, the flowers, and the big friendly bear all help him discover the world around him and the calm of sleep. This is a wonderful story - warm, fun and full of affection - with beautiful pictures and songs; guaranteed to leave children feeling happy, comfortable and at home in the world.

The story and the songs are connected, but can be appreciated separately if you prefer. Together, they are a complete package: read the story and then allow the children to be lulled to sleep by the beautiful new songs. In pre-schools and kindergartens, children can explore the book through music and activities and listen to the songs during rest time. The first track on the CD is Elizabeth reading the story, with the songs included. The following tracks are the songs recorded individually.

Elizabeth Honey is an author/illustrator of many well-loved picture books, novels and poems. Sue Johnson is a composer, pianist, choir leader and singer who performs with the acclaimed vocal group Coco's Lunch. They've both been entertaining and inspiring children for many years with their outstanding words and music. Together, they created the celebrated song 'All the Wild Wonders', sung by Coco's Lunch.

### USING THE BOOK AND SONGS IN THE CLASSROOM

**Themes** in the story include: bedtime, families, imagination, Australian animals, singing – and not being able to go to sleep! Children will be able to identify with the small boy and his difficulty with getting to sleep.

**Playing with words** and meaning through songs and music extends children's love of language and retention of the story. The story has a sense of fun and a gentle, quirky humour that is quintessentially Australian.

**Imagination:** art, dance, song and story are the staples that feed our children's imagination. Here, they work together to create a powerful nourishment.

**Musically** this book introduces children to a well-crafted musical experience. In the great lullaby tradition, these contemporary Australian songs are timeless. They have a classic quality that will stay with children for life.

The songs use acoustic instruments (voice, piano, percussion, accordion and strings) which provide a very human quality. These are the instruments that have been part of family and community music making for centuries. The real acoustic piano sounds so comforting – and the accordion strikes a familiar, slightly nostalgic note.

**Visually**, the illustrations are a rich feast of colour and provide lots of story-talk. Some of our 'making activities' below are based on them, and at the end of these notes Elizabeth has provided photocopiable sketches for some of the activities.

### FIRST ENCOUNTERS

What is the story about?

Do you find it hard to go to sleep?

What helps you to go to sleep?

Look carefully at the illustrations in the book. Match the pictures with the songs. Find things mentioned in the songs. How is colour used in the illustrations? Is the night black?

## **MUSIC**

Listen carefully to the music. What instruments are played?

How do the instruments help tell the story?

What rhythms have been chosen for the different songs?

Which songs have more than one singer?

## **GOODNIGHT MY LITTLE DARLING**

What does your mum or dad say to you, or sing to you when you go to sleep?

## **MUSIC**

Marlo is singing a lullaby to Fiddy. What is a lullaby?

How can you tell a song is a lullaby?

What lullabies do you know?

There are traditional lullabies and made-up ones. Make up a lullaby to sing a particular character to sleep.

What is a song that is definitely NOT a lullaby, the opposite of a lullaby?

There are many beautiful recordings of lullabies. Listen to Brahms's 'Lullaby', 'All the Pretty Little Horses', The Beatles 'Goodnight', 'Summertime', 'Twinkle Twinkle', 'Bless this House'.

Find a songbook of lullabies and learn a lullaby from another country.

## **MY RAINBOW PYJAMAS**

*I am the land all covered in rainbows...*

Look at the illustration of Fiddy in bed. What could happen in Fiddy's Rainbow Pyjamaland?

A bed can be a whole landscape. What could come alive in your bedroom?

Think of your bedroom as a country, a chair as a rock, a mat as an island, etc

Here is a poem from Elizabeth's book of poetry, *Mongrel Doggerel*.

### **Crossing the Poisonfloor Sea will result in Certain Death**

From Tierra del Bed  
to the top of Mount Wardrobe,  
then jump to the tropical island of Stool.  
Through gloomy Mat Mangroves  
to pale Quicksand Cushion,  
Then journey the dark untamed Continent Drawers.  
From Windowsill Pass  
Climb the Great Cliff of Books,  
then plunge to the sub-zero Ottoman Berg.  
Leap wild Floorboard Rapids  
To Val de Chair Galcier,  
Then home to old faithful—Tierra del Bed.

A. A. Milne wrote poems about things in everyday life as seen through an imaginative child's eye. Read *Now We are Six* and *When We Were Very Young*. Look for the raindrops on a windowpane, and the cracks in a pavement.

When are your best times for imagining? Where?

### ***Soft, so soft my rainbow pyjamas...***

Some clothes give you certain feelings, make you feel different: a swishy skirt, a comfy old jacket, gumboots. New runners make you feel like running.

Do you have something you wear that gives you a particular feeling?

Do you wear anything that rustles or makes a noise?

Talk about the link between soft things and sleep.

### **MUSIC**

Sing 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow', 'I can sing a Rainbow'. What songs have colours in them?

Make up your own put-yourself-to-sleep song.

### **MAKING**

Make a rainbow with a prism. Shine light on the crystals of a chandelier.

Play with light and cellophane.

## **GOODNIGHT GUMBOOTS**

What if objects and toys could come alive?

Can you think of other stories where that happens? *Winnie the Pooh*, *Toy Story*, *The Nutcracker*

Choose a couple of your favourite toys and tell of an adventure they have in your house.

What song and dance would your toys do?

Who is Humpty? Where does he come from?

In the picture are they all doing the same dance? How would a couch dance? An umbrella? A frying pan? A book? A doona?

Do you talk to objects like Fiddy is talking to the things in his room? Do you give them voices?

### **MUSIC**

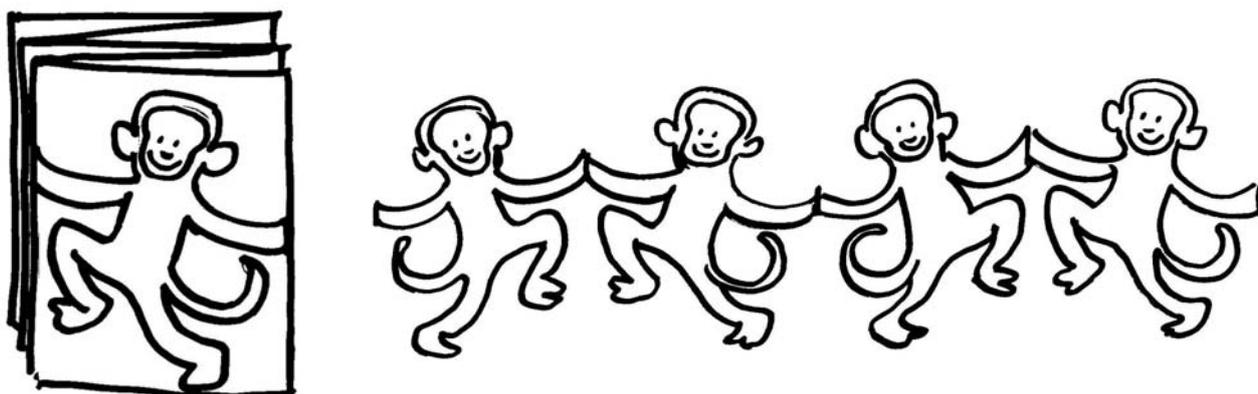
What instruments are used in this song? Can you hear the double bass going down the stairs?

What makes the patty-pat sounds?

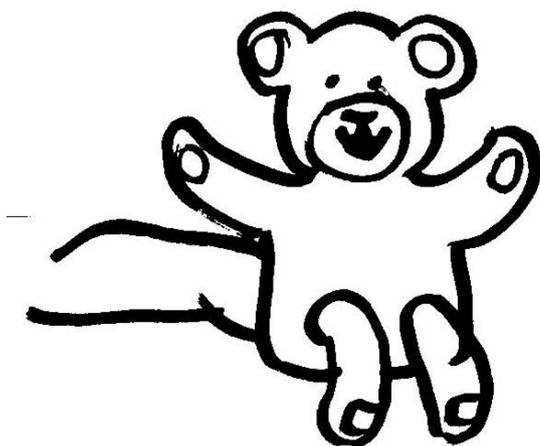
Listen to these compositions where music tells a story: *The Nutcracker* by Tchaikovsky, *Peter and the Wolf* by Prokofiev and *Carnival of the Animals* by Saint-Saens. How does the music help to tell the story?

### **MAKING**

The monkeys are copying Fiddy. Cut out a row of cheeky dancing monkeys, like paper dolls, and make them dance. (See over, and BLM at end of these notes.)



Cut out a bear with holes for your fingers, then make him dance. (See BLM at end of these notes.)



Attach a string or thread to the top of a toy. Now it's a string puppet. Make it dance.

## **FURRY LITTLE POSSUM**

Does every living thing need sleep? Why?

Do shells sleep? Do fish sleep? Butterflies? Find out how something unusual sleeps.

How do you know someone is asleep?

What happens to our bodies when we go to sleep?

What happens if we don't go to sleep?

Do any people stay awake at night? Why?

Many creatures wake up at night. Who wakes up at night?

When do you sleep?

Who sleeps a lot? Who sleeps a little?

Do wild animals snore?

Go for a night hike to see all the night creatures awake. You'll need to be quiet to hear them.

What do the birds do at the end of the day? Where do they sleep?

Do you know about possums? Lots of people have interesting possum stories. Why?

What do possums do in the night?

What is a joey?

Find a picture of a joey and a baby koala.

A koala has two thumbs. Why would that be useful?

What is an echidna? When does an echidna sleep?

Have you ever seen a wombat hole?

### **MAKING**

Make a lift-the-flap picture with animals asleep in their habitats.

### **FOLD YOUR PETALS UP**

What do the flowers mean by 'close your eye'?

Do all flowers close up at night? Which ones close up? Why?

Dance to the song, closing your petals up with the '*wish wish wish wish*'.

Why do the flowers put on a show for the insects?

What is special about the scarlet poppies from Flanders?

### **MUSIC**

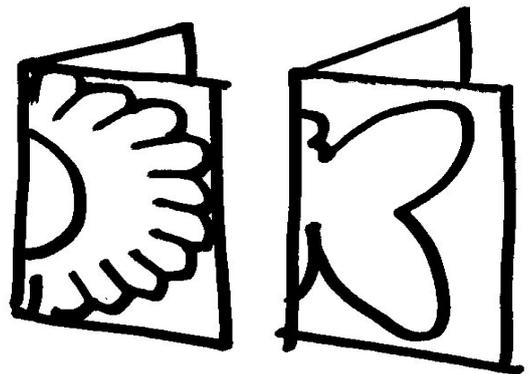
Listen carefully for all the creatures in the song. Can you hear the bees?

Can you make the sounds of insects and birds?

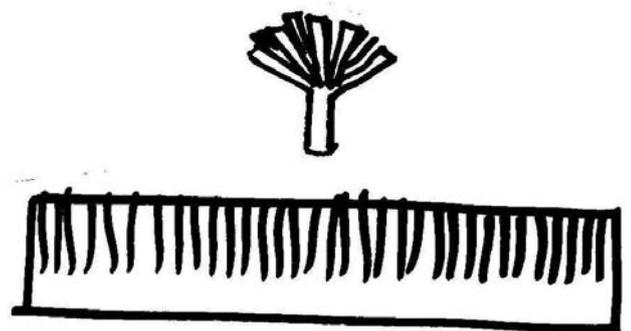
How many flowers are singing?

### **MAKING**

Look at the symmetry of flowers and butterflies. Fold a sheet of paper in half. Draw half a flower and cut it out. Or open it up and on one side paint half a flower or butterfly then fold the paper over and press it. Open it up and—te dah! A flower! A butterfly! Your paint will need to be the right consistency.



Make a flower by cutting a fringe in a long strip of coloured paper. Roll the strip up and tape the stem. Put it in the sunlight and open out the petals.



Make a flower by painting a rectangle of paper then fold in a concertina, tape the stem and fan out.

Make a mobile of flowers and bees and butterflies.

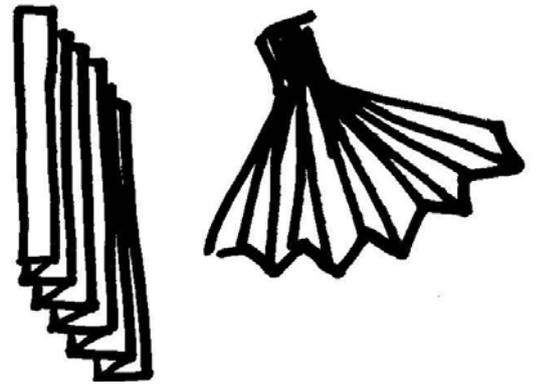
Use fingerprints to paint a flower, each petal a dab by your little finger.

Look at flowers and identify them, include daisies, sunflowers, poppies and hibiscus.

Draw a daisy, a hibiscus, a sunflower, and a poppy.

Grow some black-eyed daisies or sunflowers.

Pick some hibiscus flowers and watch what happens when night falls.



## **HIBERNATING**

What happens when an animal hibernates?

Which animals hibernate? Why?

Where do they hibernate?

Do they need to prepare for hibernation?

What happens to their body when they hibernate?

Do they need to eat or drink?

Do they hibernate alone?

Fiddy tries to hibernate. Can humans hibernate?

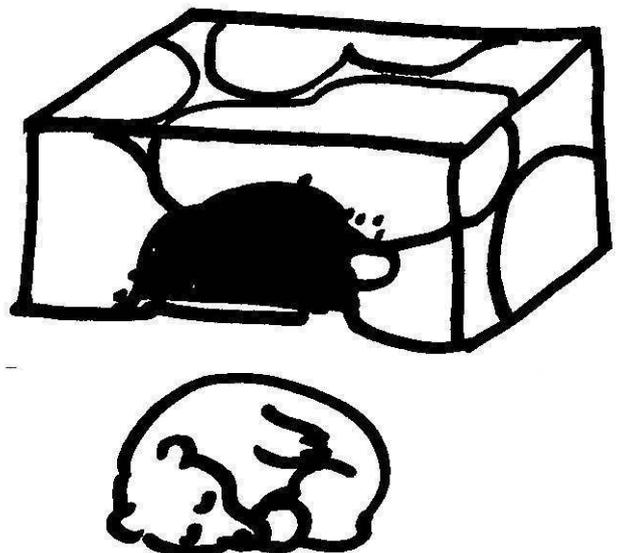
Your toys can hibernate for a while.

## **MUSIC**

Move around slowly like a tired bear then find a nice comfy spot and curl up to hibernate.

## **MAKING**

Make a cave out of a shoebox. Cut out a bear and have him hibernate. (See BLM at end of these notes.)



## **I PIANETI (THE PLANETS)**

Why are the stars so tiny?

Do you know any stars or constellations? Find a book that identifies them.

Fiddy and Nonno sing the names of the planets in Italian. Why?

What are the planets' names in English?

What Italian words do you know?

### **MUSIC**

Sing 'Twinkle Twinkle'. 'Moon River'.

### **MAKING**

Find pictures of the planets. Draw and cut out the planets to scale then make a mobile of our solar system.

Make a planet by covering a balloon with paper mâché. When it's dry take out the balloon and paint your planet.

Use a torch to show how the sun shines on the rotating Earth, giving us night and day.

## **IT WILL ALL BE THERE TOMORROW**

Listen to the sounds of the night. What sorts of sounds are they?

Have you ever fallen asleep to the sound of the sea? Where was that? How did you feel?

Is the night always scary?

What are soothing noises?

### **MUSIC**

What night time sounds can you make? Make the sound of the sea, the wind, and the rain.

How else can you make the sound of the wind? The swish of a broom.

Make the sound of rain drops by clicking your fingers.

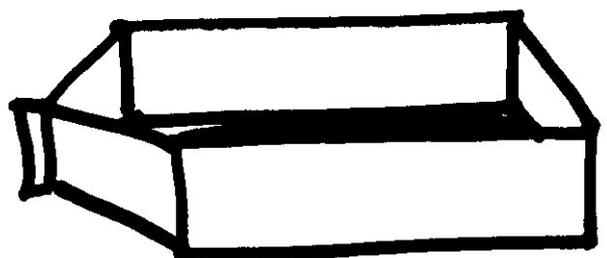
Listen to Nicola Eveleigh's song 'Rain' on the Coco's Lunch CD *Rat Trap Snap!*

### **MAKING**

Make a rain stick by putting fine stones, peas, beans or rice in a long thin cardboard tube and tape up the ends. A wrapping paper tube is good, the longer and thinner the tube the better. Tip your rain stick and listen to the different sounds made by the different materials inside.

Make a little walnut shell boat. Draw Fiddy. Make him small enough to put in the boat, and let him float away.

Make a boat by cutting a milk carton in half.



## Night pictures

- Make a potato cut of a star and the moon then print them on dark paper.
- Draw the night with pastels on black paper.
- Draw a night picture in greasy crayons then wash dark purple or navy food dye over it.

## Make an 'Animals at Night' scratch picture.

- Colour in a sheet of white paper with bright wax crayons. That's the background.
- Paint over the crayon with solid navy or black ink or paint.
- With a sharp tool scratch a picture and the colours will show through.

## ABOUT THE WRITERS

### ELIZABETH HONEY

Elizabeth Honey is the hugely popular, award-winning author of poetry, picture books and junior novels. Her playful humour, originality and irrepressible energy strike a chord with kids everywhere and her stories about the Stella Street mob have been translated into many languages.

Elizabeth grew up on a farm and came to Melbourne to study art. She worked as a freelance illustrator, and after years of illustrating other people's stories she began to write her own. Now her poetry, picture books and novels are popular with children around the world. *Not a Nibble!* was a CBCA Picture Book of the Year, and *Honey Sandwich*, *45 & 47 Stella Street* and *Don't Pat the Wombat* were CBCA Honour Books.

Elizabeth is very excited about the collaboration with Sue Johnson to create a picture book with original songs. She had become a performer when teaching children the verses from her book *The Moon in the Man*, and that led to the writing of her first play for children, *Mr Bleak and the Etryop*, which is about a school Poetry Day that goes off the rails. Elizabeth had also been involved in the promotion of staged classical ballets for children – she wrote the script for *Christmas Carol* – and she gained an understanding of what made a successful production. When Elizabeth joined the lunch-time choir taken by Sue Johnson, it was the beginning of their creative partnership. Sue composed the music for Elizabeth's poem 'All the Wild Wonders', and the song was recorded by the popular a capella group Coco's Lunch, and was a finalist for the Most Performed Jazz Work in the 2003 APRA Music Awards.

For the artwork in *I'm still awake, still!*, Elizabeth used a medium she hadn't tried before: gouache. She was inspired by the vivid paintings of Matisse.

### SUE JOHNSON

Sue says: 'Running the lunch-time sing/choir at Allen and Unwin has led to a fertile collaboration with Liz Honey. When writing this book together I would often come home and find messages on my answerphone that were Liz singing ideas about hibernatin' bears!'

Sue Johnson is a singer, pianist and composer who co-founded the internationally renowned vocal percussion group Coco's Lunch. This award-winning a cappella group has performed their original songs for adults and children for many years receiving standing ovations in concerts in Australia, Canada, Europe and Asia. Nominated in 2007 for 2 ARIA awards including best children's album, Coco's Lunch has performed sell-out seasons at the Sydney Opera House and toured extensively with Musica Viva.

She has composed for television, film and dance, including the television series, Playhouse Disney. Many of her songs have been performed and recorded by choirs in USA, Canada and Australia.

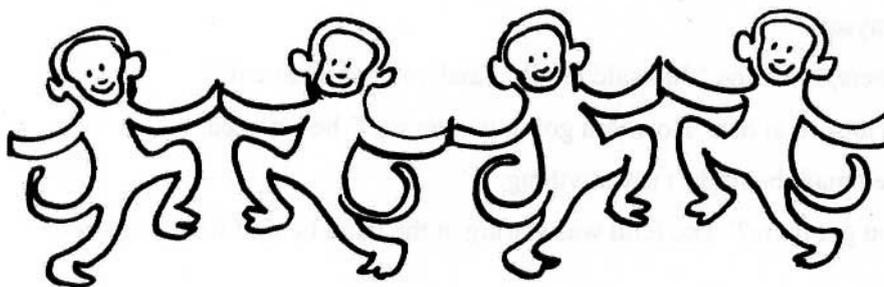
Sue has led many vocal workshops and directed massed choirs, creating and directing instant pieces with audiences of over 3000 at the Sydney Town Hall and Melbourne Concert Hall.

Sue was nominated at the 2003 APRA Music Awards for her song 'All the Wild Wonders' (lyrics by author Elizabeth Honey) in the Most Performed Jazz Work category. She has toured Australia performing at major vocal festivals and jazz festivals, working with many great musicians.

For over a decade, she lectured in the improvisation department at the Victorian College of the Arts.

## Dancing Monkeys

Concertina your paper, then trace this monkey onto the top page. Cut out the monkey through all layers of paper, EXCEPT where the hands touch the edge. When you open out your paper, you'll have a row of dancing monkeys!



Using stiff paper or thin card, colour in Teddy and Little Bear. Cut them out carefully. Cut out the finger holes in Teddy. Little fingers should be able to slip through the holes and make Teddy dance; and Little Bear can be put in his cave to hibernate.

