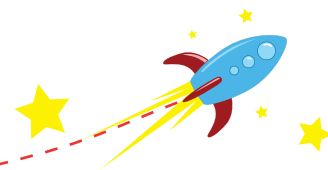


THE DREAMING TREE

Written and illustrated by Jo Oliver
Published by New Frontier Publishing

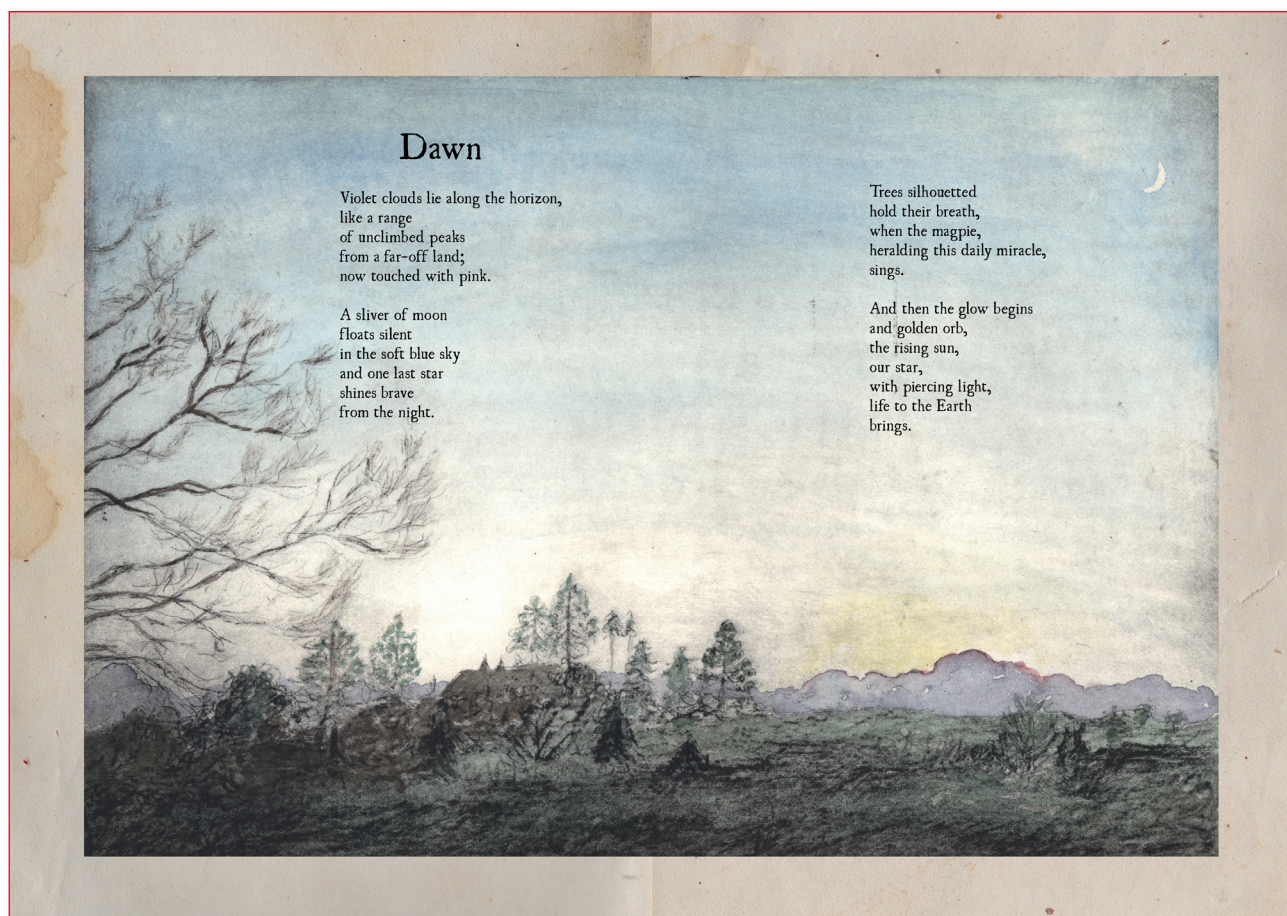


SYNOPSIS

The Dreaming Tree is a book of illustrated poems celebrating the joy and freedom of being a child in the Australian landscape. Some poems are about the landscape itself, many about childhood experiences and some consider issues about what it is to be Australian and our connections to the land.

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR STYLE OR MEDIUM

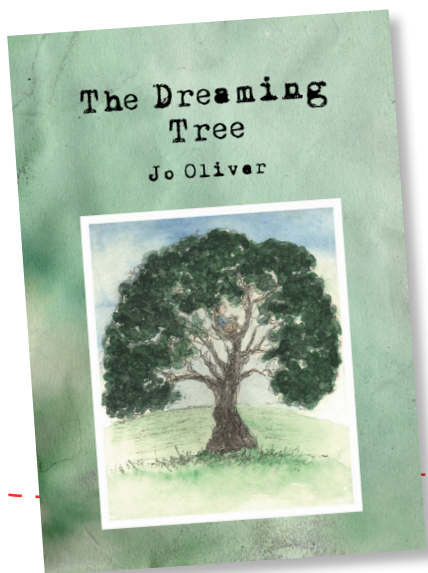
The illustrations for *The Dreaming Tree* are solar plate etchings, a medium in which drawings are transferred to a metal plate using light exposure. The plate is then inked and rubbed back before printing. Ink left on the surface of the plate, or print tone, gives gradations of light and dark in addition to the etched lines. The prints are then hand coloured in watercolour. The colour palette comes from the colours of the Australian landscape.



AUTHOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Jo has worked as a children's librarian for many years and feels privileged to have shared books with children. She lives by the beach, south of Sydney with her husband. They have three sons who all love the Australian bush and sea.

Jo was awarded the biannual Australian Library and Information Association Marjorie Cotton Award in 2004 for



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recognition of outstanding contribution to children and youth library services.

Jo's first book *Pilgrim* was released in 2008. It is the story of a boy's first time on the sea with his father in a boat called *Pilgrim*. The Children's Book Council of Australia awarded *Pilgrim* a Notable Book and Jo was shortlisted for their Crichton Award for new illustrators in 2009.

Her second book, *Tatiara*, was published in 2010 and tells the story of a friendship between a girl and a seal and their experience of healing.

Jo's third book *The Light* tells the story of a lighthouse keeper's family living on a light station on an island one hundred years ago.

Jo writes and envisages images at the same time. She enjoys the unexpected nature of printmaking and the clarity and tones of watercolour for her stories.

All Jo's books are listed for the NSW Premier's Reading Challenge and have received great reviews.

EDUCATIONAL APPLICABILITY

The Dreaming supports themes of identity, Australian history and the environment. It can be used to discuss issues of environmental change and responsibility, indigenous understandings of land connection and issues around migration and refugees. *The Dreaming Tree* poems are free verse and encourage children to write of their impressions, ideas and experiences freely in this text form. The illustrations can be used as stimulus for drawing, printmaking and painting activities.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The Dreaming Tree

Do you like to climb trees? What is it like being up in a tree, how does it change what you see and how you feel? Do you have a special place you like to go? Where do oak trees come from? Where is your family from? What does the saying, 'Hearts of oak from little acorns grow'? Do you know other sayings? Does your family have any sayings?

Dawn

What does dawn mean? Have you ever seen the dawn? What did you see, hear, feel? How does light bring life to the Earth?

Honesty

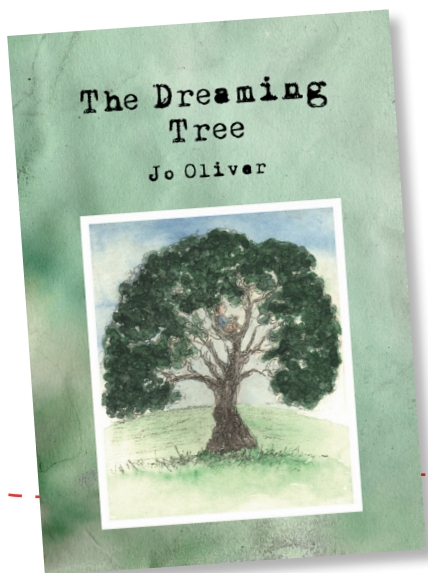
Honesty has two means. One is a plant with dry seedpods. What is the other meaning? How is honesty fragile? What happens if people are not honest? What happens if they are honest?

This land

Where have you been in Australia? What have you seen? Who were the first people to come to Australia? How long ago was that? When did your family come to Australia? Other people want to come to Australia. Should we let them come? What does it mean to own land? Who owns Australia? How do the first people who came to Australia relate to this land?

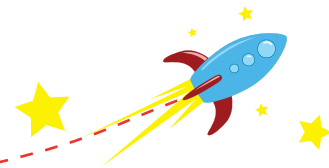
Rock

How old are rocks? What are they made from? How has the earth changed over time? How have people changed the Earth? How can we look after the Earth?



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Gumleaf

Find some gum leaves. What do they look like? Are they all the same? How are they different? Have you tried to do some of the things with gumleaves in the poem? How do you think soldiers felt who took gumleaves overseas with them?

Wind

Do you like wind? What do you do when it is windy? Have you ever flown a kite? What happened? Have you ever made a kite? How would you do it? Do you think wind makes children 'a little bit wild'?

Children playing

Where do you like to play, who with and what games? Find out what other games children play, over the world, in history? What do you need to play a game? Some children are refugees. Can they still play games?

I slept once

What do you see when you lie on a beach? Where is the strangest place you have slept? Where do you feel safe? What makes you feel that way?

A bird flew into our window

Have you ever seen a something die? How did you feel? What did you do with the creature's body? Have you ever kept something to remember a creature or a person?

Frost

Have you ever seen frost? Who is Jack Frost? What does frost look, feel, sound like? What do you like to touch? What don't you like to touch?

The river

Have you seen a river? What was it like? Where do rivers come from? Where do they go? Who and what lives along and in rivers?

Prawning

Have you ever been prawning or catching things in water? Have you ever been outside when it is very dark? What was it like? Have you been camping? What was it like? If not, would you like to go?

Morning ride

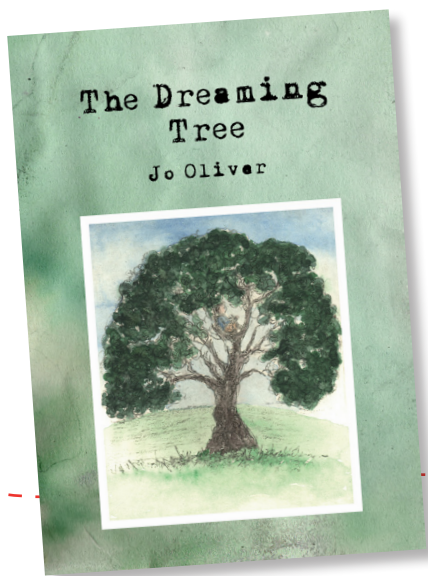
Do you like going out in the morning? Have you ridden a bike or a horse? What did you see, hear, smell, feel?

Picking peas

Have you ever grown something then eaten it? What was it like? What do you enjoy doing with your family?

When the oil runs out it'll be okay

What do we use oil for? Why is it running out? What do the people in this family do to use less oil? What things could your family do? What might be fun about living without oil?



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Moonrise over Mallacoota

Have you ever seen the moon rise over water? Where does the moon get its light? What places make you feel peaceful?

WRITING POEMS

What is a poem? A child once said, 'poetry is that stuff in books that doesn't read the edges'. The Australian poet Judith Wright said, 'Poetry is based firmly on the realities of human feeling which is fundamental to all of us.'

Read poems of different forms and try writing in that form, eg. limerick, rhyming couplets, haiku, free verse.

Go walking and write a poem as you make the steps.

ACTIVITIES

1. Printmaking forms could be explored including leaf printing, cut potato printing, foam or linocut and collograph. Prints can be made using water-based ink without a press.
2. Watercolour, wax resist and washes can be used to make artwork based on the Australian landscape.
3. Children could sit outside and draw what they see.
4. Children could draw their special place.

