

About Lisa and the whale story

Lisa's illustrative style came about during the creation of a 20 page wordless love story about a whale, set in and inspired by Manly's Cabbage Tree Bay.

'During a bout of depression I began to cut out hundreds of tiny pieces of paper and create pictures. The simplicity of night and day amazed me. Thoughts of transformation, water, earth, the sun and stars, the moon and the earth were soothing. I was totally inspired by the nature of Manly's Cabbage Tree Bay and whilst sitting under a tree would watch the birds and lizards come close and fish swimming. Trees, birds, fish, dragons and whales began to take shape in my art. New animals were added along the way; a lizard, the rain, a turtle family. A broken heart became thousands of little flowers and the night sky a full moon on black rice paper.'

'The story is quite simple really, its a love story and about the healing of a broken heart'.

A pregnant whale out in the ocean, happy and oblivious to life's threats has her heart suddenly ripped out.

A dragon appears on the horizon. The baby whale is born while the dragon rises and chases the whale's attackers away. The dragon roars fiery flames and creates the night sky.

It is midnight, calm now and in the moonlight a blue whale is surrounded by the broken heart.

Unafraid and intrigued he follows it down to the furthest depths of the ocean floor. Gathering up the broken heart he goes in search of its owner. Passing stormy seas and the rising sun he meets animals along the way and finds a little baby whale at Cabbage Tree Bay who takes him to meet her mother. He offers her her heart and she is whole once more.

'All the elements, trees and animals represented here are very dear friends and family of mine; people who I love and care for very much. Their shape and form, colors and textures are chosen to suit them.'

'My mother, the protector, takes the form of a dragon. She roars, creating the night for the blue whale.'

'The blue whale is my husband who met my daughter - the little green whale - and I when she was one year old.'

The whale story has taken Lisa 10 years from the first concept to final completion. Lisa used collage, pencil, watercolour, paint, washi paper, rice paper, pen and ink.

Lisa Stewart illustrated her first children's picture book for Scholastic Press 'Can I cuddle the moon?', author Kerry Brown, in April of this year.

"Stewart's highly decorative collage illustrations totally enchant. The baby owl is a delightfully expressive ball of fluff, his features suggested by simple brushstrokes. Decorative flowers and leaves abound, butterflies flutter on lacy wings, and even the boa constrictor is non-threatening, sinuously created from flower-print origami paper. But most striking of all is owl's mother, a gorgeous creature with soft tawny feathers and flower-patterned wings."

Stephanie Owen Reeder, Canberra Times, June 5, 2010

