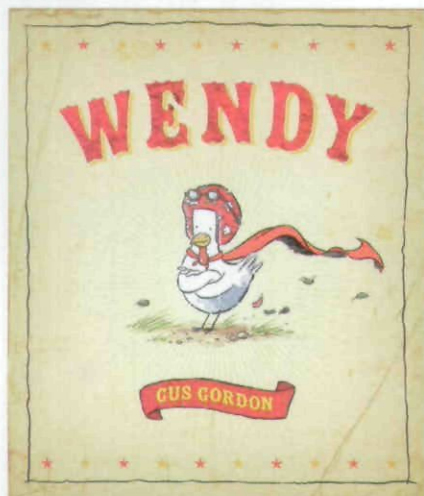


book gives space for children to puzzle over this reality. An intriguing text, *Old Hu-Hu* is a strange mixture of the real and the fantastic that leaves this reader puzzled. On the one hand there is the anthropomorphic where we see an image of old Hu-Hu surfing in the waves, hints of experiencing the transcendent and the possibility of reincarnation; on the other hand we bring our knowledge of the Hu-Hu grub and the idea of metamorphosis and seek to see how the story gives voice to this process. Mystery is at the heart of this story. The pictures are superb: adding both atmosphere and suggestiveness. Again, this is a great book to engender discussion, let alone a provocation for children to find out about metamorphosis. JMCK

**\*\*GORDON, GUS** *Wendy* Viking, 2009 unpagged \$24.95 ISBN 9780670070916 SCIS 1417113



Wendy is a perky, adventurous chicken born on a little farm and, unlike the rest of the flock, she is a show-off, with aspirations to be a star. Seeking a wider audience, she becomes a stunt chicken, joins a circus, and keeps on escalating her jumps over buses, trucks and tractors until one day a spectacular crash results in hospital and time to reflect on what she has lost.

Although Gus Gordon has illustrated many books, this is the first picture book he has written. The illustrations bring the simple story to life, and there are many touches of humour to be found in a detailed perusal of them – for example, a page of the *Pecking Order Post* newspaper, and in the advertisements on buses and hoardings. It's a world of anthropomorphic animals, deftly drawn to bridge the animal/human divide. JG

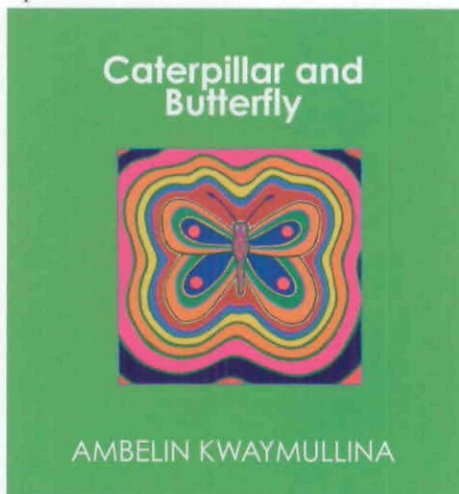
**\*\*GORISSEN, Dean** (illus.) **Matt Zurbo** (text) *My Dad's A Wrestler!* Lothian, 2009 unpagged \$16.99 ISBN 9780734411136 SCIS 1420089

The use of an embossed illustration on the cover may take some fathoming. Some will say how do they do it, others will say why. The stylized characters and settings throughout also take some getting used to. Thankfully it's not every kid's claim that his

dad's a wrestler, not to mention that his mother is an ex-wrestler. Dad's an obese, frayed and unshaven factory storeman by day, but by night he transforms into an obese, frayed and unshaven masked wrestler with the nom de plume 'The Percolator'. There's no end to the bad news but – the son WANTS to become a wrestler! The one element of this tale I have a lot of time for is that it portrays a loving relationship between a father and son. Maybe some kids will enjoy the humour! Maybe wrestling will become popular! Maybe I'll just move on to another book. GD

**\*\*KWAYMULLINA, Ambelin** *Caterpillar and Butterfly* Fremantle Press, 2009 unpagged \$26.95 ISBN 9781921361579 SCIS 1418754

The process of metamorphosis – the changing from one thing to another – must seem like an act of magic to the very young and it is this wonder of life that is the focus of this lovely, brightly coloured, beautifully illustrated picture book.



Caterpillar feeling small, frightened and vulnerable declines offers by other bush creatures to experience things outside his limited world – see a sunset, climb a rock, go to the waterhole. It is only through hiding away in his crysalis that he is finally able to overcome his fear and grow – literally from caterpillar to butterfly but also metaphorically and meet all that life has to offer. The happy, decorative images build on the text, making this a lovely introduction to life's challenges and changes. Highly recommended for preschool level. MC

**LAT** *Kampung Boy* Wilkins Farago, 2009 142pp \$22.99 pbk ISBN 9780980607000 SCIS 1428876

*Kampung Boy* is an informative and endearing graphic novel, giving a delightful recount of the life of Mat, a Muslim boy growing up in rural Malaysia in the 1950s. Accompanied by witty, expressive cartoons this book gives a unique perspective on the culture of the time in a lighthearted way. Originally published thirty years ago, it has sold thousands of copies worldwide. This book could be used as part of Asian cultural studies and as an excellent

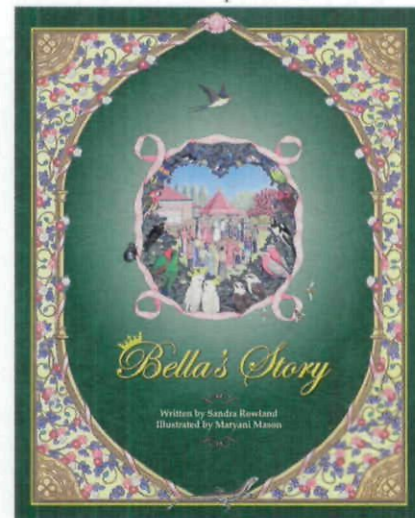
example of cartooning. There are extensive teaching notes provided on the publisher's website. Contains references to circumcision. Recommended for older readers.SS

**LECHNER, John** *The Clever Stick* Walker, 2009 unpagged \$19.95 ISBN 9781406322231 SCIS 1420642

How many times have we drawn on the ground or the sand with a random stick we have found? This is the stick's story. Not just an ordinary stick, mind you, but a clever stick. Looking for a voice to express itself, the stick overcomes frustration and discouragement to finally discover it can draw, and bring pleasure not only to itself, but to other plants and creatures in the forest. It can even turn into an umbrella when the rain comes! Such versatility and adaptability! This is an interesting story, gently and very effectively illustrated with watercolour and pencil, about finding the creative voice in us all, and a way to express it. Recommended for pre-school and junior primary children, or as an inspiration to artists and inventors of all ages. JH

**\*\*MASON, Maryani** (illus.) **Sandra Rowland** (text) *Bella's Story* Sherara, 2009 95pp \$45.95 ISBN 9780646506777

Here is a remarkably handsome publication: large format, padded cover, carefully designed page layout, lavish colour, bordered page illustrations - indeed a lovingly produced gift book in the tradition of early 20th century limited editions. It is clearly designed to appeal to the adult purchaser although dedicated *For the child in all of us* and has its own website and email address. Nothing has been spared in the production. Indeed the eye is immediately attracted to the sometimes intricate and highly coloured illustrations in which on numerous pages expressive, mostly female faces, - young and old - gaze outwardly from the centre of an opened named rose.



Each face wears an apt expression appropriate to its name and in glowing colours and gold trims, reminiscent of an illuminated manuscript, 'a prince of the red rose family marries a princess of the white rose family and

Copyright of Reading Time is the property of Children's Book Council of Australia and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.