

The background is an abstract composition of three main color fields: a white area in the top-left corner, a black area in the middle-left, and a large orange area on the right and bottom. The text is centered and written in a white, serif font.

**Hans Christian
Andersen *Illustrator*
Award *Nomination*
2020**



29 January 2019

Dear Jury Members

The South African National Section of IBBY proposes the following **illustrator** as a candidate for the Hans Christian Andersen Illustrator Award 2020 in the firm conviction that his contribution to the children's literature of South Africa and the world has been outstanding.

Please find all the required information and documentation for the nomination in the dossier attached to this letter and the documents accompanying it. We at IBBY South Africa are grateful for your consideration of the work of this prolific illustrator. Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me on ibbysa@ibbysa.org.za.

Yours,

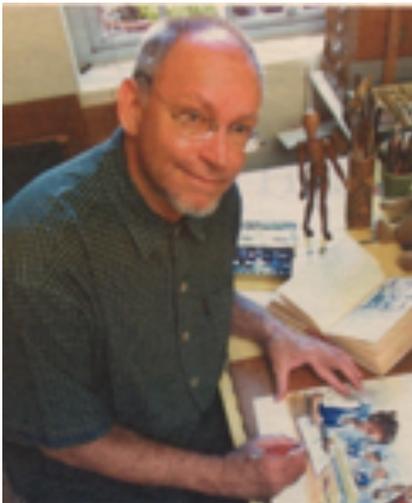
Dusanka Stojakovic
IBBY SA Chairperson

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Nominee:

Nicholas *Niki* Daly



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Biographical information

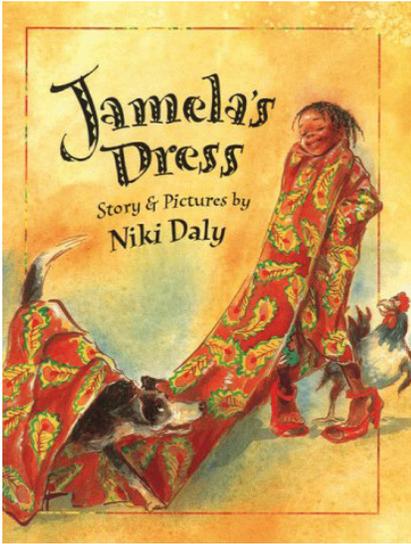
Personal

Born 13 June 1946 in Cape Town, South Africa, Daly was educated at Observatory Boys Junior School and Observatory High School. Daly married Jude in 1973 and they have two sons, Joseph and Leo. He now lives with his wife, the illustrator Jude Daly, in the small seaside village of Kleinmond along the Cape coast, where they both continue to produce picture books.

Career

Daly has had a long career contributing to the arts in South Africa and beyond. Initially interested in becoming a musician, he worked for CBS Record Company in London as a singer and songwriter from 1971–73 before returning to South Africa, where he took on the position of junior art director for advertising agencies in Cape Town. Daly also worked as a freelance illustrator and published his first book, *The Little Girl Who Lived Down the Road*, for which he was awarded the British Arts Council Illustration Award. He returned to London in the late seventies where he worked as a graphics teacher at East Ham Technical College, freelanced as an editorial illustrator and taught art and design at The Foundation School of Arts and Crafts. In the 1980s Daly returned to South Africa again, this time as the head of graphic design at Stellenbosch University. In 1983 he began working for David Philip Publishers as the head of Songololo Books, where he ran writing and illustration workshops which facilitated the work of other writer and illustrator teams. Today, Daly continues his work as an author, illustrator and facilitator of children's picture books.

Statement on the candidate's contribution to literature for young people



Niki Daly is the most inspirational and prolific South African artist (and author) of books for children. Since 1978 he has been involved in the production of more than 50 books, some of which he illustrated and others of which he was the sole author of the text. Various awards have been conferred on 14 of these books and several have been mentioned in special lists, such as the IBBY Honour List.

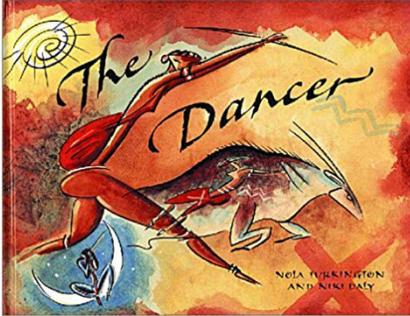
Daly's illustrations create intercultural awareness and build empathy, and his stories allow healing. His work is multi-cultural and it builds a bridge between children of different backgrounds and groups. His respect and care for children are embedded in his writing and exuberant illustrations that capture their lives and the energy of South Africa. He is one of those special, rare individuals who is both illustrator and author.

By representing children as they are, no matter in which community or social stratum they live, Niki Daly has lifted South African children's literature out of the conventional. He evinces the rich variety of South African life through his choice of characters and the way in which he depicts their essential features, as is evident in his titles: *All the Magic in the World*, *The Boy on the Beach*, *Jamela's Dress*. At the same time, he has succeeded with books that are international in flavour, such as *Bravo*, *Zan Angelo!* and *Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky*.

Niki has made an invaluable contribution in presenting the different cultures of South Africa to the rest of the world. His illustrations convey emotion and movement in a natural and spontaneous way. He seems to know the characters in his stories inside out, and this knowledge is transferred into facial expressions, graceful body movement and gestures. All his characters are portrayed enjoying the simple pleasures of life: a day on the beach, getting a new dress, playing wild games or going shopping with a grandparent.

Niki is also 'a born teller and reader of stories'. He is often found reading to children at schools and ECD Centres around the country, particularly in disadvantaged communities. Niki has focused on working with publishers who will translate his books into the vernacular, thereby allowing South African children to read in their home language. He understands the need to have more local content available in a child's home language as this helps grow a love and culture of reading.





Through his involvement in the teaching of graphic design at Stellenbosch University and as a commissioning editor for David Philip Publishers, where he launched Songololo Books, Niki Daly has had an important influence on the publishing of books for young people in South Africa. He has encouraged other authors and illustrators and, by collaborating with them, has helped to get their ideas into print.

Niki was one of the first South African illustrators to make a major impact on the international publishing world. This has made readers around the world more aware of the high standard of South African children's literature, and helped to debunk various African stereotypes. His contribution to our indigenous literature is far more than merely the success of his own books. Niki helped run the READ Organisation writers' and illustrators' workshops that resulted in the The Little Library series (1996 winner of the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award).

Acknowledged as a forerunner of post-apartheid South African children's picture books, *Not So Fast, Songololo* has been referred to by South African academic Dr Andrée-Jeanne Töttemeyer as 'the first significant children's book embracing official acceptance of the black man as a permanent city dweller'.

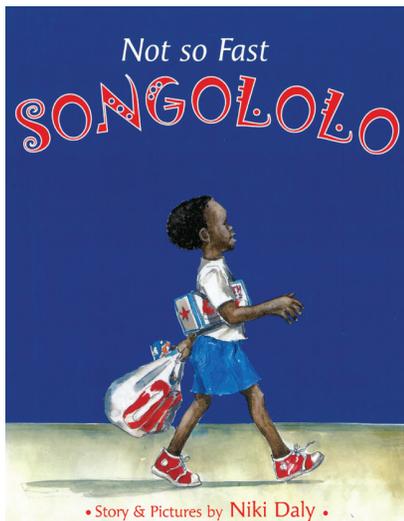
The range of Niki's work bears witness to an extreme versatility. Niki creates a completely credible world in which reality is subject only to imagination and feeling. He has, to an extraordinary degree, the ability to analyse what he sees and re-formulate it on paper, but filtered through a unique sensibility that has never lost contact with how it feels to be a child. This is one of the secrets of his communication with the young (and not-so-young) reader. As a father, he became aware of the *energy* of children and has since been engaged in capturing it – 'The whole body as a gesture'. Niki Daly seems to re-invent his style for every book he does. No two are alike, except if they belong to a series. Besides that, they differ not only in technique but also in the degree of realism.

It is as if Niki can position himself anywhere he chooses, without compromising his essential vision. *Fly, Eagle, Fly!*, *Jamela's Dress*, *The Boy on the Beach*, *One Round Moon* and *Not So Fast, Songololo* belong to the more realistic end of the scale. *The Dancer*, with its deliberately chosen stylisation in which Niki taught himself to draw in the spirit of the Khoi-San artists, belongs at the other end.

*I drew and drew until I could draw the granny riding on the moon
as if it were my signature. – Niki Daly*

Niki explains that as a child he adored comics. Some of his earliest attempts at drawing were of comic characters. He has an instinctive understanding of what comic strip artists call 'diagramming', which is the simplification of a figure to accentuate certain characteristics, usually with a humorous effect. We can see him doing this in varying degrees in most of his work, but particularly in *Mama, Papa and Baby Joe* and in *The Dinosaurs Are Back and It's All Your Fault, Edward!* Both of these make use of cartoon or comic strip devices in the way the characters are formulated and could be said to be at the 'less realistic' end of the scale.

An influence that Niki acknowledges is that of the drawings of the



Impressionists, particularly of Degas. Acute observation, especially of the effects of light, inform their work, as does the intimacy of their choice of subject matter. Perhaps these are the two poles between which Niki positions his work and which create the dynamics of his style – realism akin to Impressionist drawing and the contained energy of cartooning. In his books, they are melded together in a way that has proved to be groundbreaking in challenging the stereotype of the portrayal of black South Africans in picture books, which called for empathy, intimacy of observation and lightness of touch. Niki did this memorably in *Not So Fast, Songololo*.

Every new book plunges Niki, by his own admission, into a great deal of angst. He draws endlessly, rejects and experiments with different media until the unmistakably ‘right’ way of doing it takes shape before his eyes. He sees spontaneity as a vital element of his creativity, and particularly of his line work, which is its lifeblood. He even speaks of occasionally using a ‘faked spontaneity’ by inserting a re-drawn section into a piece of work where he feels the line has gone ‘dead’. Illustration involves a great deal of redrawing, from the initial thumbnail sketches to the stage of roughs and from there to the final artwork.

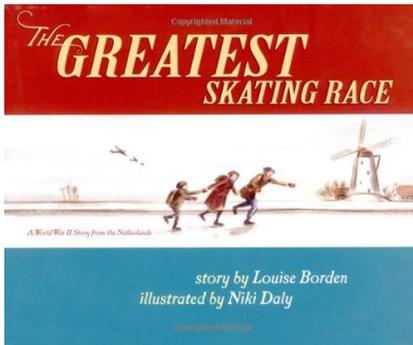
When I am planning the illustrations for a new book, I find myself staring at people as if to imprint them on my mind. Then I go to my studio and draw from memory. I draw a character over and over, until it materializes unmistakably before me on the page. Then I find I can draw that person from any angle, with any expression, in any mood. – Niki Daly

The dilemma of the illustrator is that by the time a perfect arrangement of the illustration has been reached to satisfy the editor and any other interested parties, the work may have become wooden and lifeless. Niki consciously paces himself, always leaving something to be discovered in the next stage. He remains very much the artist among illustrators, taking risks where others would opt for safety.

In spite of the astonishing variety within Niki’s work, his hand is as unmistakable as a signature in everything he does. It is in the lines and the classic sense of space that one recognises, too, in the work of great illustrators such as Ardizzone. It is in the vitality of his characters, the way they seem to dance across the page, the jaunty walk, the tapping feet, the joy of being alive in spite of settings often associated with dire poverty. It is in the love with which he limns the shining faces of Shepherd/ Malusi and Gogo in *Not So fast, Songololo*. It is in the bracing spunkiness of his child characters confronted by adversity, whatever its shape or size. Above all, it is in its unfailing humanity.

All the criteria usually set for a good picture book are present in Niki Daly’s work: his illustrations are in harmony, they are well integrated and in balance with the text; they develop the characters and move the plot; they sustain the mood of the tale; they clarify and exemplify and, when they go beyond the text, they are in keeping with the overall plot and characterisation. His style and media are always sympathetic to the mood and content of his stories.

Over 40 years Niki Daly has been published both locally and internationally in a number of languages. The extensive reach of his



books across the world reveal the breadth and impact of his works. His continuing passion for illustrating books, many of which continue to win awards, reveals Niki's ability to adapt, to innovate and to inspire.

Niki Daly's books transport the reader into a magical world where anything may happen and all things are possible because of the power of illustration and text working together harmoniously. They offer stories and pictures that are essentially South African in flavour but capture what books are meant to do for children: allow them to dream, imagine, feel and share.

Niki Daly has given us an extravaganza of children's books set here in Africa, full of exuberance and celebration, always in an easy style that is psychologically apt, natural and friendly. Underlying all stories is his unwavering care for what a child feels and his underlying acceptance of children's differing, often challenging, realities, wherever they are.

(With contributions from Dr Anna Louw (ex-chair, SA Children's Book Forum), Paddy Bouma (ex-head of illustration at Stellenbosch University), Lona Gericke (children's librarian, Bellville, South Africa), Felicité Fairer-Wessels, Thomas van der Walt (Children's Literature Research Unit, University of South Africa), Carol Broomhall (publisher) and Kathy Dennehy (librarian).)



The Greatest Skating Race



Appreciative essays, interviews or articles

Interview

The Barbara Lehman Interview with Niki Daly, Children's Books
Writer and Illustrator
20 November 2006

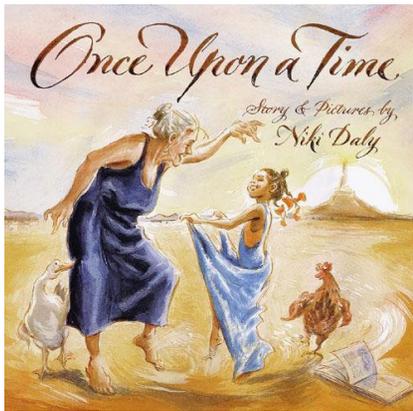
Background and development as an artist:

Barbara: Your dad (a caricaturist) and Uncle Piet were both artists. Do you see any of their influence in your own work and artistic style?

Niki: My dad was a carpenter by trade but enjoyed doing the occasional sketch – mainly faces. I also love drawing faces. My uncle Piet, who was married to my father's sister, was a good water colourist who, I've been told, used to pitch up at my parents' home in the wee hours of the morning, dirty and smelling after tramping down from the Eastern Cape to Cape Town. He lived a sorry life, but did very good watercolours, which he sold for a bottle of wine. For years, his pitch was outside the gates of Rhodes University where he traded his paintings with students. On one of his visits, Piet introduced me to Venus pencils and watercolour paints in little tubs. I think I fell in love with art materials before knowing that I wanted to be an artist. I still look at his paintings and am reminded by them that watercolours need to be kept simple and fresh. He was rather good at painting trees, which I am not.

Barbara: You also credit comic strips, Tenniel's illustrations for *Alice in Wonderland* and C.W. Bacon's illustrations for *Pilgrim's Progress* as influencing your artistic development. Tell us more about the connections among these three, as they are evident in your work today.

Niki: Perhaps comic strips have had the biggest influence on my work as an illustrator. The best of comics are always filled with movement and action. So from them I learnt a way of capturing the body in mid action that suggests movement on a page. I will even make use of comic drawing devices, such as speed lines, to emphasise speed and direction in an action picture. Joe, my son, who trained as an animator, tells me that I draw like an animator – that is, I make use of multiple characters whose combined movements make up a full cycle of movement. I also show my support characters interacting with the central action through their body language. So the entire scene is animated. I think that's what is liked about my work – the illusion of movement. Tenniel's illustrations for *Alice in Wonderland* certainly influenced the first book I did, *The Little Girl Who Lived Down the Road* – despite my thinking that I was copying from Sendak. I later realised that he, being the style thief he is, had also dipped into Tenniel's work. Tenniel's Alice drawings are a constant source of amazement to me because they are masterworks of illustration in which technique, draftsmanship and interpretation all work together to create a unique atmosphere. He really offers the eye an alternate reality in Carol's Wonderland. I found, and still find, those illustrations quite threatening because they are so convincing. Mostly, my stories are set in the everyday realm. I have little reason to distort that reality



because I am so interested in life around me. Yet, my representation of life is not very realistic as it leans towards Impressionism. I adore the Impressionists, with Degas and Lautrec being my idols. *Pilgrim's Progress* with Bacon's illustrations was given to me at the age of twelve by my class teacher, Mr Penfold, with the intention of turning me into a Christian. Instead, it turned me into an illustrator. The sheer drama in the pictures thrilled me – like going to the movies!

Barbara: You credit Edward Ardizzone, Harold Jones and Maurice Sendak as being influential later on your work. Tell us about those connections.

Niki: I was living in London during the '70s and when I started looking at children's books as a place I wanted my art to be 'housed', both Ardizzone and Jones were with Laura Cecil's agency. So when I joined her, I got to see their work. Both were excellent with pen and ink, a medium I was learning to use as an illustrator on educational publications. From them, I learnt how to build up form using light and shade by cross hatching. I felt a stronger affinity with Ardizzone's art than Harold's. But both guided me through those early years. I still dip into Ardizzone's picture books before starting a book of my own, to remind myself that one needs no more than three washes to build a picture. Harold's gentle colour palette is very inspiring – so easy on the eye, and speaks of a time when children were happy bathing their eyes in soft colours.

I first saw Sendak's pen and ink illustrations for Elsa Minarik's Little Bear stories. Again, I was drawn to the black and white cross hatching technique which Sendak used beautifully, combined with dusty pink and peppermint green separated colours. More than that, his ability to capture emotion struck me as his great talent. Emily's motherliness over her broken doll is palpable, as is Little Bear's good-naturedness. In Sendak, I saw that illustration is very close to acting.

For a long time now, I have dropped the time consuming and rather mindless technique of cross hatching, believing, as I do, that life is too short for stuffing prunes and cross hatching. I continue to look to these three greats, as guides towards illustrated worlds that are 'elegantly dreamy' and totally captivating.

Barbara: Since you call yourself a drawer and not a painter, how do all these influences connect with your feelings about drawing versus painting?

Niki: I do feel that all I need to 'say' as an artist, I can 'say' using line. In its most abstract form – a line can convey many moods – from gentle curves to aggressive scratch marks. So before one is even drawing something recognisable, line has potency. I love the immediate way that a line drawing communicates. So it's not surprising that it's the medium of choice for political cartooning. As I am most interested in people and their body language, drawing is perfect for capturing people on paper. For me, adding colour means 'colouring in my drawings'. I do this because that's what people want to see in picture books – bright, coloured pictures. On the other hand, my wife, the illustrator Jude Daly, is a great colourist and painter. For her, colour suggests atmosphere and emotion. Still, there is a way that one can DRAW with COLOUR. So rather than colouring in, I sometimes tell myself that I am 'drawing in colour' – and it feels a lot better!

Barbara: How has your own style evolved from all of these? How do you view your development at this point in your career?

Niki: A few years ago, an editor said to me about work I had just done that my ‘intentions’ were evident in my illustrations. Her observation pleased me because it implied that I had successfully communicated my ‘feelings’ through my illustration. Of course, this ought not to be an extraordinary achievement for an artist. It’s what one would expect, really. But for an illustrator, there are pitfalls to becoming a true artist. For many of us, clever techniques and use of materials can become an end in themselves. I mean, there’s a lot of illustration these days that is beautifully executed but fails to touch me because it lacks feeling.

I do not have great technical skills. Rather, I love drawing – drawing people, most of all. So, I am careful not to let technical considerations, such as using photographs or tricky materials, get in the way of the direct, intuitive connection between my eye, subject, hand and heart.

These days, I really enjoy my work. Possibly, I’m getting good at what I do.

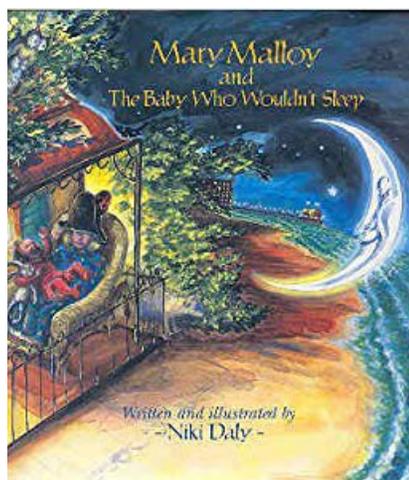
Barbara: What do you mean by the statement, “Ideally, I’d like to eliminate the gear between my handwriting and my drawing to allow my hand and pen to ‘dance me drawing’”?

Niki: Okay – when I write, I am not at all self-conscious about it. I do not intend to impress by my written hand. Yet, my hand makes some beautiful marks while writing. But when I draw, I change gear. I feel self-conscious about wanting to make a ‘nice’ drawing. I am judgmental and hard to please. Now, *that’s* the gear I want to remove. And I’m making progress! These days, when drawing and feeling free of wanting to impress, it feels as though I am dancing with my pen, brush, dip pen – or digital pen! In that sense, I say: “My pen and hand have danced me drawing.” So when people say that my drawings have a dance-like quality, I am pleased to hear that.

Development as a writer:

Barbara: You say that at one point you felt much more confident as an illustrator than as a writer. Later you learned to play with words and use them in order to draw pictures. Do you still prioritise your work this way? Can you explain?

Niki: I romanticise the role of a writer and an artist. For I’m of the persuasion that people are ‘born’ with certain talents. I feel that I’m a ‘born’ illustrator, but I do not feel a ‘born’ writer. If forced to give up one or the other – it would be writing. Shucks! Having my drawing taken away, I reckon, would unhinge me! However, I appreciate good writing. I know that good writing should ‘sound’ good on the ear when read aloud. And it’s my ear for music that might trick people into thinking that I am a writer. But I don’t feel like one.



Themes in your work:

Barbara: You say you discovered a theme of solitariness in your first published book, *The Little Girl Who Lived Down the Road* and in one published much later, *Mary Malloy and the Baby Who Wouldn't Sleep*. Later you drew thematic inspiration from the lives of your young sons, from the lives of others, such as in *Songololo* or a sidewalk dancer in *Papa's Lucky Shadow*, that you observed around you. You also say that you believe that childhood innocence is a myth and naughtiness is natural. Overall, what sort of themes intrigue you today in your work?

Niki: I remember feeling frustrated as a child by my family's financial restraints. My mantra at the time was "if only, if only, if only..." Today, perhaps, children have greater opportunities and the power to exercise them. Still, part of being a child in a grown-up world is that children 'yearn' for things that always seem out of reach. While I don't consciously plant the element of 'yearning' in my stories, it's there, I'd say.

In Africa, there is a saying, "I am, because you are", which is a beautiful way of interlocking the individual with the community. Having a culture that straddles first and third world, and western and African ideologies, I tend to portray the black children in my books as strong individuals who are held closely within their homes and neighbourhoods. It's pretty much the way I grew up, surrounded by buxom aunts, jolly uncles and wild kids on the block.

Barbara: You talk about how you try to make emotional connections between your own childhood experiences and those of children in the books you illustrate. How do these connections become apparent through themes or mood in your books?

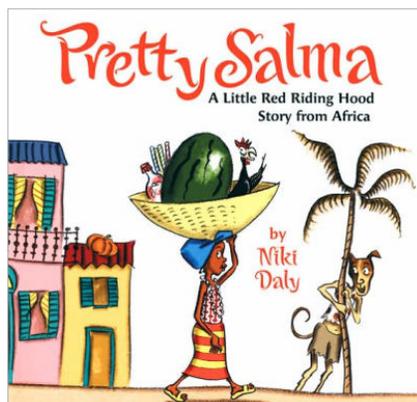
Niki: The answer to this interesting question is, I hope, evident in my previous answer. But the key to making the emotional connection is 'memory'. I particularly remember my life between six to twelve. Life is a bit blurred after that, until I turned forty! I know that most writers have a particular time in their lives when they felt more 'riveted' to life and that's where they pitch their stories and themes.

Barbara: You recognise that current South African realities of many children include violence, poverty and perhaps others issues such as AIDS. How can/should writers for children handle these realities and still offer hope?

Niki: I have illustrated a number of stories set against a background of poverty and disadvantage. But these stories have a big dollop of hope in them. I can't see the point of a bleak story without any hope.

From time to time, I visit the Red Cross Children's Hospital where there are children dying of AIDS-related diseases. I cannot think of anything more tragic than the death of a child. Yet, the hospital school is a place filled with hope – taking each day at a time, feeling hopeful. This makes it a place of joy where reading a jolly picture book story is a great comfort and, I hope, healing. I am not fond of educational books that pretend to be picture books. They each have their place, but the intentions of each are different. I revere the 'real' picture book because they are done by real writers who know how to tell stories that appear light with no apparent lesson, yet touch us on a human level.

We all know that life can be tricky, with people who are unpredictable and even brutal. Certainly, my new book *Pretty Salma*, deals with one of



life's dangers – 'stranger danger'. The idea grew out of a chance meeting with a little girl who was taking a dangerous route home from school. My wife and I spotted her and suggested a safe route. We ended up as friends, and I wrote the story of *Pretty Salma* whose old granny sends her to the market. "Go straight there and back again. And do not talk to strangers, you hear!" says her granny.

Salma's rather chuffed to be the star of my new book. These days, she saunters past our house with a gang of girls making their way home from school. I'm glad to say, they stick to the safe route.

A story about living with HIV or dying from an AIDS-related disease would be pretty challenging, and not beyond my field of interest, just terrifically difficult to do without it being instructional. I'm not interested in instructing anyone. I want to tell stories.

Publishing:

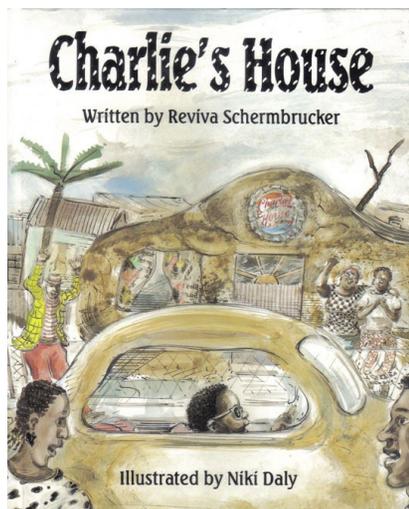
Barbara: You comment that the publishing industry today is driven by how well a book will sell and that editors are rarely willing to put aside their own history in order to promote ideas and messages that oppose their religious and political beliefs. You also say that you believe that values acceptable for children's books are still largely driven by Victorian morals. Do you still believe these statements?

Niki: That was rather rash of me to say – my little rage was against any consensus that I see as a result of too many people from similar backgrounds thinking alike. But after the years as a published writer and illustrator, I can now pretty much predict the responses to those ideas of mine that will receive a good reception and those that will flounder. They fall into two groups – ideas and themes that do not challenge the status quo and those that do. I think many adults are still threatened by the energy that children have. I see this fear in many schoolteachers when I visit schools as they stand around the hall like a lot of firefighters ready to douse anyone who grows too wild. I love wildness in children, which makes *Where the Wild Things Are* such a remarkable book, to me. But would it be published today, I wonder?

My outburst did come after a few books of mine were rejected, I admit. One is called 'The Sweet Giant who learnt how NOT to eat Little Children'. Anyone interested?

Barbara: You were instrumental in getting the Songololo books line started, with David Philip Publishers in South Africa, in an effort to provide children's books that reflected the lives of all South African children. What has happened to this line?

Niki: For a while, the Songololo list went out of print while the company changed hands. Then Arabella Koopman, a passionate children's book editor, stepped in and decided that the backlist was too good to disappear. Now, most of the books I did back in the '80s are back in print and doing well. Songololo Books attracted much support for its slogan – "Books for All our Children". Up until then, it was unclear that publishers had black children in mind when they published children's books in which token black children appeared – usually barefooted and looking bewildered while being introduced to a white world by a white child. At Songololo Books, I chose books that



portrayed children in their own right. And if they were resourceful and imaginative, I valued the stories even more. Favourites from that period are *Charlie's House* by Reviva Schermbrucker, *All the Magic in the World* by Wendy Hartmann and *One Round Moon and a Star for Me* by Ingrid Mennen. All three writers attended my workshop and have continued to write.

Barbara: You also promoted workshops to encourage the work of more South African writers of colour; yet, you say that these “did not stimulate any publishable material”. Is it still true that South African children’s book publishing remains largely in the hands of whites? What do you think can be done about this? How can the needs of South African children of diverse cultural and language groups be met?

Niki: At the time I ran workshops, I really wanted to bring in writers from all racial groups. However, South Africa was erupting with political pressure and white and black South Africans were very isolated from one another, beyond those involved in the struggle as comrades. It wasn’t easy setting up a venue where everyone was able to attend. So, I ended up with quite a motley crew. There was a group who co-wrote according to their non-sexist, non-racist, democratic ideology – producing a non-sexist, non-racist text where each character was democratically assigned an equal amount of speech. It was pretty awful. If there was one thing those workshops taught me, it was that, while everyone can be taught to write, not EVERYONE is a writer.

This was a time of heated debate regarding white writers writing about black experiences. These days, that debate has subsided. Most of us know that reading is key to learning, and that attractive books with appropriate content invite reading. ‘Who’ writes is now less important than ‘how’ and ‘what’ is written. Writers are expected to show respect for their subject. I do this by research and trying to understand the background to my stories. But, finally, I rely on a sense of humanity, my curiosity and imagination to guide me. Then it’s up to the market to decide to support or reject my work. For sure, I never take it for granted that my books will sell. I am always, surprised, grateful and delighted by the good things that come from my work.

Sorry, this is a longwinded way of offering an explanation for the lack of black writers for children in South Africa. Basically then, writing for children has always been a middle-class occupation. So, I hope that in the future, as a fast-emerging black middle class starts to explore lifestyles, some of my black brothers and sisters will gravitate towards writing and illustrating for children because they just have it in them to follow that path. Once there are a few role models, one would hope to see more voices that speak to children. Until then, these voices, stories and pictures are sorely lacking in South African children’s books. It is odd that there are a number of excellent black writers who write for adults. They need to be asked why they don’t write for children as well.

Implications of your work in the South African context:

Barbara: You speak of having working-class Irish, English and Afrikaner roots. How does this personal heritage connect with the new South Africa?

Niki: I am not someone who depends on others to define who I am and how I ought to feel about myself. So, I do not think about that question very often – unless I am made aware of being excluded from an opportunity because I am a white South African. You see, I take such a strong individual stance (even as a child within my own family) that it's not natural for me to want to fit in with any specific group. I love meeting people and I am good at making friends. That matters to me. But I must admit – I have a tiny bit of vanity over my Irish roots. And despite living a middle-class life, as I do, I still harbour a working-class mentality that automatically sides with the underdog. I think you can sense this in my books.

Barbara: You also describe yourself as a child being largely ignorant about black culture. Yet today you are well known for your picture books depicting blacks and other persons of colour in South Africa. What have you done to educate yourself over the years, even before the end of apartheid? How has this informed your work?

Niki: Yes, as a child I had no idea where the black woman who worked for my mother lived. I understood that black folk had difficult lives, plagued by passbook regulations and squalid living conditions. I also questioned my family's practice of discrimination where the maid was not encouraged to drink from our cups or use our plates and cutlery. Instead, my mother set aside less than the best cup and saucer for 'the girl'. I know that it's irksome to hear a white South African of my generation go on about their 'special bond' with the black woman who worked in their homes. But I certainly had a bond with all the black woman who worked for my mother. I still have a strong connection to Miriam Makalima, who saw me through my boyhood into adulthood. African men were different. I had little connection with African men and was mainly fearful of them having been told by my grandmother that "they put naughty white children in big black bags and carry them away".

Fortunately, through my 'black mothers', I knew that racism was a bad thing. More than that, it was plain stupid. Still, I consider myself contaminated by racist thinking and have to consciously make an effort, as 'a white child of apartheid', to debunk the notion that I, because of my 'whiteness', am better than the next man. That's really what I learnt from the black woman who worked for my mother, and gives me the confidence to do the books I choose to do.

Barbara: You say that when *Songololo* was published, you hadn't considered the implications of a white person writing a 'black' story. What do you think these implications are?

Niki: Causing indignation among some black folk who saw it as opportunism at its most hypocritical. That, and having to defend my 'Aunt Jemima' portrayal of the old Gogo. I claimed that I was being true to what I had witnessed on a crowded street. The old grandmother was a large old lady. Beautifully large to my eyes. The little boy, tiny and

touching. Those are the contrasts that make good pictures, to me. But it would seem, I was wrong to choose a large granny when there might have been one in the crowd that looked like Diana Ross.

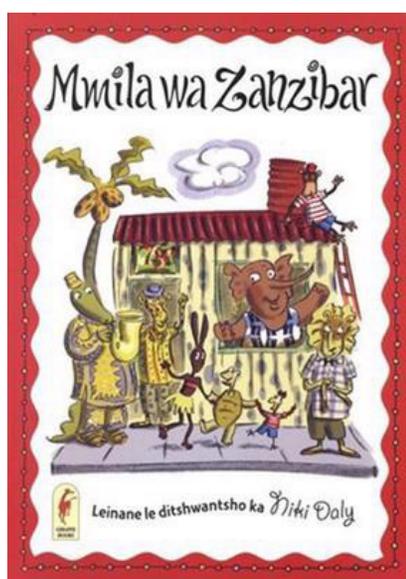
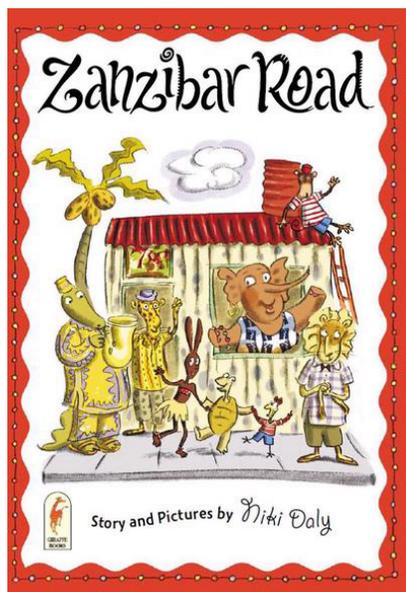
Critics from the 'other side' might have described my writing *Not So Fast, Songololo* as 'excavating black lives as a resource' (a phrase once used by Gcina Mhlope to describe what she felt 'white writers of black stories' were doing). Well, I disagree with any suggestion that any writer should confine their writing to their own 'lived experiences'. The magical aspect of creative writing is that we are able to imagine ourselves into someone else's shoes, living other lives. I suspect that, in some cases, an outsider's perspective might reveal more than 'a writer from within' who is blinded by over-familiarity with their subject. And, surely, having an agenda to portray 'your own' in a certain light, must be as damaging to authentic writing as 'getting it wrong' as an outsider. Political posturing on both sides bedevils the debate. Otherwise, we might all agree that it's possible for a white man to write like a black woman – which I have often been mistakenly identified as. And as I have such high regard for the black women in my life, I am never swift to correct that error!

Barbara: Tell us about your decision to return from London to South Africa in 1979. Why did you feel compelled to do that?

Niki: We returned in '79, against the advice of friends who warned that we were returning to a blood bath. But we had had our first child, Joe, in London and were without family, besides a scattering of distant cousins and old aunts and uncles on my wife's side. What mattered was that Joe's maternal and paternal grandparent was in South Africa and I wanted him to have grandparents. Also, we had outgrown our bachelor flat in London and, as I had never felt more than a tourist who had forgotten to return home, we decided it was time to go home. And by returning, I felt truly alive to my country and people for the first time in my life. For me, it was a time of growth and developing as an artist and a South African. I imagine that had I remained in Britain, I would not have achieved very much as a writer and illustrator. My stories come from this soil.

Barbara: What are your thoughts about how the new South Africa is developing?

Niki: It was foolish for any of us to think that transformation was going to be easy and without some serious social problems. Part of the difficulty whites experience is sharing the resources that once catered exclusively for their needs. They get hissy when they have to wait in long queues and complain about the 'incompetence' of affirmative action appointees. Thousands have left South Africa since 1994. Most claim that the 'nature' of our crime is intolerable. And it is. Most are too fearful to walk around the streets. So, when I walk up to my local shops, I am often the only white person in a crowd of black people. So what! I think it is intolerable to give up that freedom to walk around my neighbourhood. I get a lot of good ideas walking around my neighbourhood! Besides, I travel and know that things are not so hunky dory in other countries. I adore South Africans. They impress me no end! We have a great ability to reach out to each other. Mandela embodies the spirit that the majority of us embrace. So, change is tough, but we are changing.



Barbara: What role do you think that children's books can play and have played in the new South Africa?

Niki: In the years leading up to democracy, the best of our children's books, to my mind, were those that built bridges between our racial divide. There were books that offered healing simply by having positive portrayals of black children. This gave previously disenfranchised children a sense of importance when they looked at the new books and recognised themselves in the stories written by others and myself. At the same time, white children were introduced to their black brothers and sisters who they could see were no different to themselves, regarding the things that make us human. The opening of model C schools followed, where children of all races met for the first time, and I think it helped the process of integration to have books that showed black and white children as equal partners. For all the criticism against white writers and their 'black books', I see our contribution as part of the bridge building that was happening then.

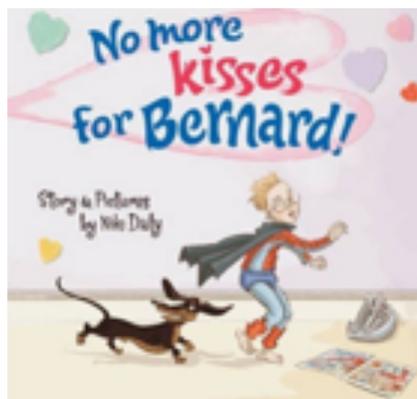
We are now in our 12th year of democratic change. Education is a top priority, and with it reading has a keen focus. New libraries are being built for communities who have never owned library cards in their lives before. Our Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, speaks passionately about children having great books to encourage reading. For the first time since returning to South Africa, I am feeling optimistic about writers and illustrators being able to make a living. *Zanzibar Road*, my new book, is available in 12 languages, which ought to support more than my art materials account this year. General publishers are enthusiastic about growing their children's lists. In June this year we held our first ever Cape Town International Book Fair and it was a great success – bagging 30 000 visitors in four days. Next year it will be an even larger book fair. Everybody must come!

There are still great stories to tell which I hope will be told in a host of voices. Some of those stories will challenge the stereotypical image of Africa served in an overly reverent manner – where blacks are noble tribesmen and children run wild and free among animals. I hope there will always be animals and people living rural lives. But, as South Africa emerges as a modern country with all the technologies that take us into the future with the rest of the globe, we ought to see this reality reflected in our children's books. This is the Africa that excites me the most; the way in which we negotiate our lives between our first and third world structures. The changes that have taken place in my own neighbourhood since the abolition of the Group Areas Act means that I have no further to look than my street to find stories that combine all my interests. That's pretty cool!

Other interests:

Barbara: At one point, you had a go at a singing career, even moving to London with a recording contract. Tell us a bit about that and whether/how singing is still part of your professional life.

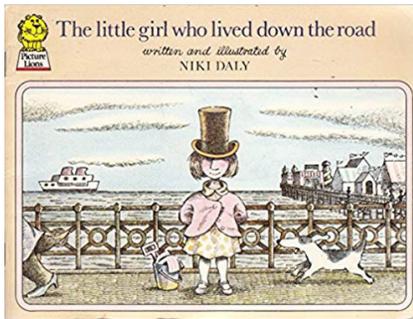
Niki: Making music, that is writing songs and singing them, is a very essential part of being me, even though I am not performing at this time. What I have been exploring is telling my stories to music. When I'm with a group of children, it is 'the performer' in me that comes through. But at the age of sixty, I look for ways of performing



economically and gracefully. No dressing up like a rabbit and jumping around!

Barbara: What are your current projects, writing and illustrating books or otherwise?

Niki: I have a couple of dummy books circulating among publishers – those are mock-ups of the books I'd like my ideas to become. But, as I mentioned – in the past year, I have had more ideas rejected than ever before. Does this mean I might be getting it right, OR, I have lost it? Time will tell. So I am keeping an open mind for the next year or so, before abandoning any of my dummies. Meanwhile, I have a wonderful story by Shelia Moses sent to me to illustrate by Scholastic. For this, I have to imagine myself back in the sixties (not at all difficult for me to do!) and into the skin of a little African American girl called Sallie Gal (not very difficult for me to do!) and imagine what her life with her momma in a little town in North Carolina was like (research, research, research!). The book will have stacks of black and white drawings. And if you are a drawer like I am, there's nothing better than that!



Article

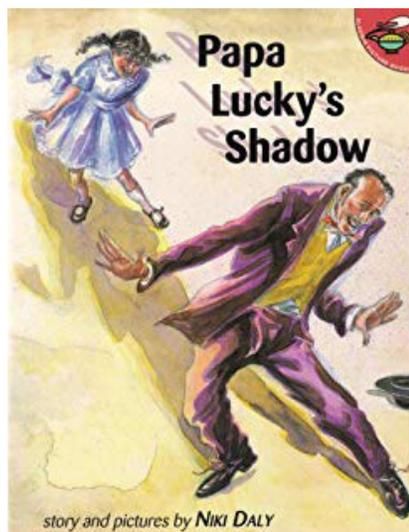
Niki Daly is a South African author-illustrator whose picture books celebrate the imaginative powers of children and their magnificent everyday lives. Notable about his style are his abilities to view the world from a child's perspective and to see the world in a rainbow of shades, reflective of multicultural modern South Africa. Indeed, many of Daly's solo efforts, as well as his illustrations for other authors, represent strongly African themes. In books such as *Not So Fast*, *Songololo*, *Why the Sun and Moon Live in the Sky*, *The Boy on the Beach* and *Jamela's Dress*, Daly looks at the day-to-day interactions of the myths that shape black South African reality. As a writer, editor and provider of art workshops, Daly has furthered the creation of a body of South African children's literature inclusive of all races and ethnic groups.

Daly first became involved in drawing by using pencil stubs handed down from an uncle who painted watercolour pictures. Born in South Africa, Daly travelled to London at the age of twenty-four in order to pursue a career in singing and songwriting. However, economic difficulties ended his music career after two years, and Daly found work as a commercial artist, which eventually led to illustration for children's books. Daly once commented to *SATA*: "My interest in illustrating for children started after I settled in London. My first book, *The Little Girl Who Lived down the Road*, was written by myself simply as an excuse to draw the pictures, after realising that a completed product was more useful to a publisher than trying an unknown illustrator on the work of an established writer. I was very encouraged by the favourable reviews I received concerning the writing of *The Little Girl Who Lived down the Road* – which spurred me on to further books."

Partly inspired by the work of Maurice Sendak, *The Little Girl Who Lived down the Road* is the story of a day at the sea that "has the inevitability of the folk tale", according to a reviewer for Junior Bookshelf. This story "is ideal material for the oral story-teller," concluded the reviewer. Carolyn O'Grady wrote in the *Times Educational Supplement* that Daly creates "endearing creatures which make the most of a child's love of animals". Winner of the British Arts Council illustration award, this debut effort encouraged Daly to believe he could actually make a living writing and illustrating children's books.

Inspired by a collection of ornaments and toys arranged on the windowsill of his London studio, Daly next wrote and illustrated *Vim the Rag Mouse* about a toy mouse who lives on a similar windowsill and longs for adventures. A *Publishers Weekly* critic called this book "a welcome fantasy," while a writer for *School Library Journal* commented that the "story has lots of action and a satisfyingly resolved plot". *Joseph's Other Red Sock*, another one of Daly's early works, is a read-aloud story for young children. In the story, the hunt for a missing sock turns into imaginative play as it runs from one room to another. The clutter in Joseph's closet finally becomes a monster who has the sock perched on his ear. "Cheerful pastel watercolors highlight the nonchalant pictures, which have a messy, real-kid feel to them," remarked a reviewer in *Booklist*.

In 1980 Daly and his family returned to South Africa after ten years living abroad. During his first years back in the country of his birth,



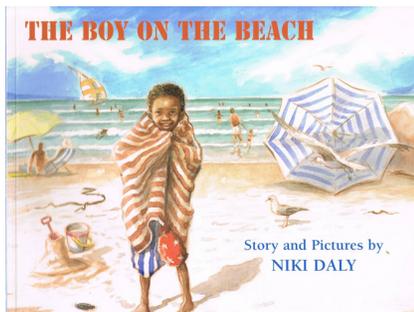
Daly produced several traditional books for the very young. *Leo's Christmas Surprise* follows Leo and his family through their Christmas festivities. They blow up balloons, decorate the tree and ice the cake while Grandpa Bob finishes the surprise gift he is making for Leo in the shed. Growing Point reviewer Margery Fisher lauded the book as a "good idea expressed in a spirited, individual manner". G. Bott noted in *Junior Bookshelf* that *Leo's Christmas Surprise* "has all the signs of qualifying as a Christmas favourite." Daly's other books for the very young include the six small books in the Walker Storytime series: *Ben's Gingerbread Man*, *Teddy's Ear*, *Monsters Are like That*, *Just like Archie*, *Look at Me!*, and *Thank You Henrietta*. Lucy Ellmann, writing in the *Times Literary Supplement*, commented that "Daly's Storytime books offer ... down-to-earth instruction on child psychology".

When Daly and his family returned to South Africa, the country was experiencing great unrest as a result of apartheid. As the author/illustrator explained to *SATA*, "I wrote and illustrated a number of books which reflected the lives of the children on the other side of the racial divide. In retrospect, I see these books (*Not So Fast*, *Songololo*, *Charlie's House*, *Papa Lucky's Shadow* and *All the Magic in the World*) as half-way bridges between white and black children who live[d] separate and unequal lives determined by the appalling apartheid system. In order to do these books I ignored the myth propagated through apartheid and some political activists who said that there are differences between people."

The award-winning *Not So Fast*, *Songololo* explores South African themes from a South African viewpoint. Young Songololo guides his grandmother on and off the bus as the pair goes to town to buy the boy some new shoes. A *Kirkus Reviews* critic called the book an "evocative depiction of a young black boy in South Africa and his warm relationship with his grandmother". Karla Kuskin noted in the *New York Times Book Review* that there "is a sweet spirit in this simple, neatly constructed story". Kuskin went on to remark that Daly's "easy watercolors over loose pencil sketching pick up bright patterns and make sensitive studies of individual black faces".

In *Papa Lucky's Shadow*, Papa Lucky dusts off his dancing shoes and shows why he was a dancing champion in his younger days – much to the delight of his granddaughter, Sugar. "The peppy bebop quality of Sugar's narrative might inspire some impromptu toe-tapping," noted a reviewer for *Publishers Weekly*. Ilene Cooper commented in *Booklist* that the "exuberant artwork" adds "spice to a story that might otherwise have been too sweet". Sian Griffiths observed in a review in *Times Educational Supplement* that "Daly is at the forefront of a wave of South African writers and illustrators ... who have made their mark abroad".

In the late 1980s Daly established Songololo Books, a children's book imprint for David Philip Publishers in South Africa. As an editor he attempted to promote children's literature for all South African children, and to this end tried to cultivate not only stories about black South Africans, but by them as well. In addition to publishing his own texts, he illustrated several books by other authors, including Reviva Schermbrucker's *Charlie's House* and Wendy Hartmann's *All the Magic in the World*. In the former title, a small boy watches his elders build a makeshift hut of corrugated iron in his shanty town and then attempts to do the same with his own materials. Set in the wheat lands of the



Between bright umbrellas and tropical towels they find their spot.

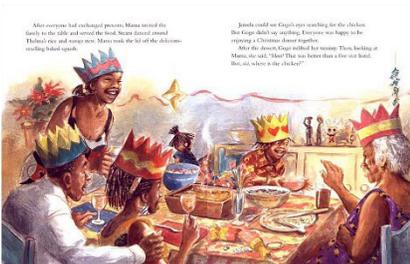
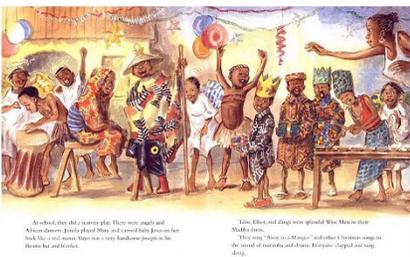
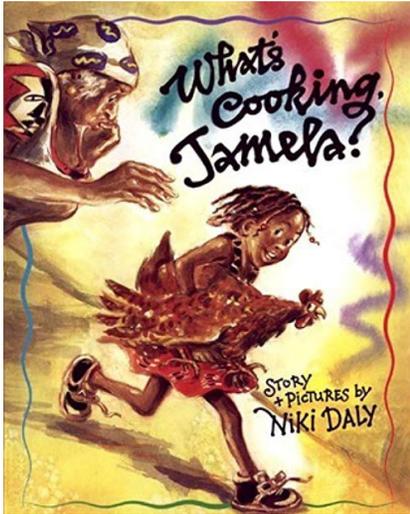
Cape, *All the Magic in the World* tells of the games of a group of farm labourers' children.

After the establishment of a free South Africa, Daly and millions of others voted for the first time as equal South Africans in 1994. He was then at work on *Why the Sun and Moon Live in the Sky*, a Nigerian mythic tale, as well as the realistic story *My Dad*, which harkens back to the difficulties Daly felt as a youth with an alcoholic father. Of the former award-winning title, a *Publishers Weekly* contributor noted that Daly's "witty illustrations" invest the tale with "offbeat charm". The reviewer applauded the book's "wonderful balance of high energy and refined aesthetics". Nancy B. Cardozo commented on the wide appeal of the book in the *New York Times Book Review*, concluding that the youngest children "are likely to be hooked by the lovely pictures; the older ones will respond to the characters and themes; parents may end up having the most fun of all as they watch their children fill the wild and hopeful spaces in this fine book with their own wild hope".

Set in eighteenth-century Venice, *Bravo, Zan Angelo!* is a departure from South African scenes and themes. A little boy wants to join his rather grumpy grandfather's commedia dell'arte street-theatre group. Grandfather, a once-famous clown, reluctantly gives in, allowing Angelo to play a small part as a rooster. Mary Simons, writing in the *New York Times Book Review*, observed that Daly's "illustrations, exquisitely drawn and illuminated with Venetian light, carry the story farther than the words". *Booklist* critic Michael Cart wrote that "Daly's good-natured story about an unusual subject ... is greatly enhanced by his beautiful illustrations".

Daly returned to books with South African motifs in *Jamela's Dress* and *The Boy on the Beach*. Fun-loving, playful Jamela adores the fabric her mother has bought to make herself a dress for a friend's wedding. Jamela wraps herself in the soft colourful material and parades through town like royalty, luxuriating in the chants of "Kwela Jamela African Queen!" Unfortunately, Jamela does not notice that her royal garb has suffered the indignities of bicycle grease and chicken pecking; the fabric is now stained and torn. Everyone is angry with her until a photographer, who has caught Jamela's royal exploits on film, wins a prize for his photograph and shares the award money with his young subject. Jamela is then able to replace the damaged fabric, including enough to fashion a dress of her own. Joan Zaleski commented in *School Library Journal* that the "story is filled with the musical language of South Africa. Daly's illustrations are vibrant and colorful and impart a child's eye view of the world." Zaleski called *Jamela's Dress* a "delightful read-aloud that will be enjoyed by a wide audience," while a *Publishers Weekly* writer remarked: "Daly splashes luminous watercolors across the pages of this ... sympathetic and light-hearted slice of life."

A young boy on a South African beach, reminding Daly of what it was like to be a young child again himself, provided the inspiration for *The Boy on the Beach*. According to a reviewer for *Publishers Weekly*, the book "summons the sights and sounds of a summertime outing through sun-drenched watercolors and keenly tuned language." When the boy on the beach becomes separated from his parents, a lifeguard takes him to Lost and Found where he is reunited with them. "Daly maintains a rigorous visual pace by varying broad vistas of busy seashore activity with close-ups," commented the *Publishers Weekly*



reviewer. Kate McClelland observed in *School Library Journal* that “Daly’s watercolor illustrations are cheerfully energetic in depicting the vibrant colors of the busy beach, the sprightliness of little Joe ... and his parents’ carefree enjoyment of the day.”

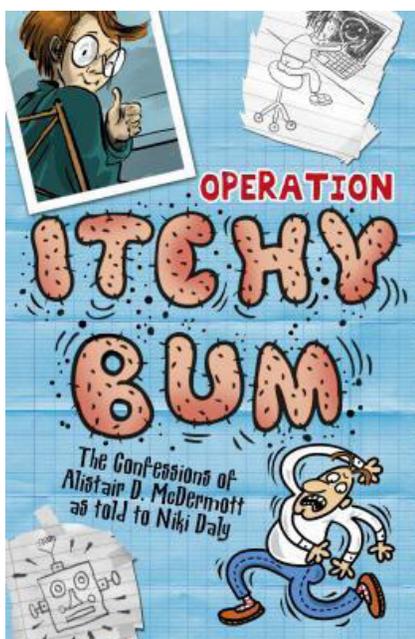
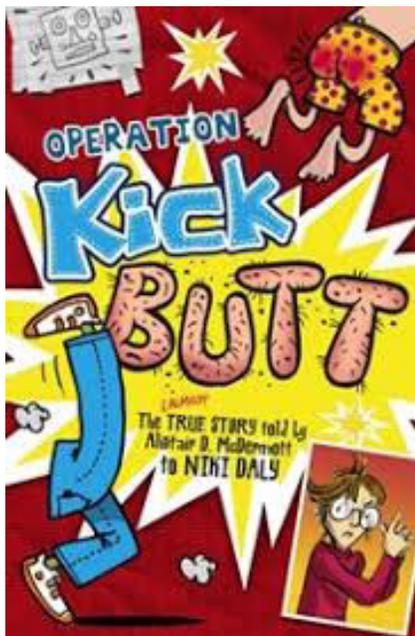
Jamela wins more young fans in other books by Daly, including *What’s Cooking, Jamela?* and *Where’s Jamela?* After causing so much trouble in *Jamela’s Dress*, Daly’s young protagonist is at it again when her mother asks her to take care of the chicken the family plans to serve for Christmas dinner. Not surprisingly, when Christmas rolls around, Jamela balks when the discussion turns to the chicken’s unpleasant destiny, and she decides to set the ill-fated fowl free. After the chicken causes chaos in a local hair salon, Jamela is able to convince her mother to let the bird continue to be a pet instead of becoming the main course. According to a *Horn Book* reviewer, Daly’s “lively illustrations ... capture Jamela’s spirit”.

A *Kirkus Reviews* contributor called Jamela “a charmer and so is her story,” while a critic in *School Library Journal* considered the book “an enjoyable read”. Hazel Rochman praised *What’s Cooking, Jamela?* in her *Booklist* review, writing that Daly’s “words and pictures capture Jamela’s dynamic world”.

Jamela’s mother gets a new job and the family moves to a bigger house in *Where’s Jamela?* As Daly’s young readers will relate, Jamela is unhappy about having to leave her home behind, and when she climbs into a large box to avoid the chaos of the move no one is aware of her hiding place. Eventually, she is discovered, and when she looks out her window at the new house and finds it sheltered by the same sky, Jamela feels more confident about the change. A *Kirkus Reviews* contributor noted that the story “will captivate young readers with its engaging protagonist and warm portrayals of close family”. Kathy Krasniewicz commented in *School Library Journal* Daly includes “South African words that so effectively flavor this treatment of a familiar theme”. *Horn Book* contributor Lauren Adams wrote that “Daly maintains the child’s perspective with immediacy of experience and lots of sensory details”. Also praising the book, *Booklist* contributor Jennifer Mattson noted that “childhood issues rather than political ones drive Daly’s storytelling”.

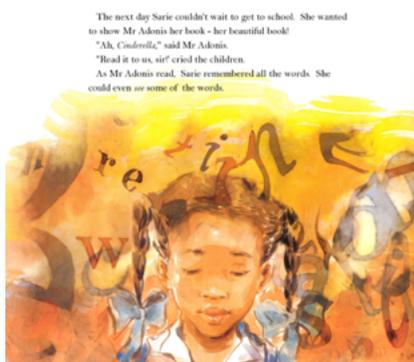
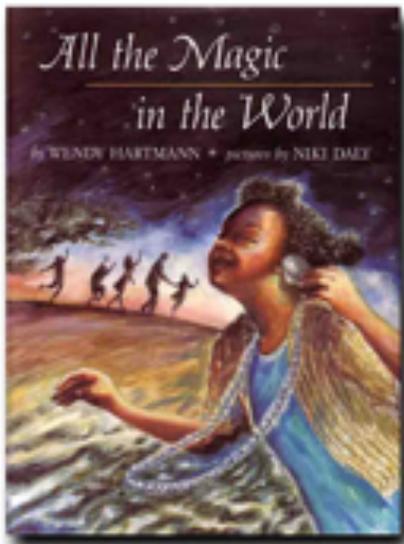
While Daly has gained international acclaim, he continues to make his home in South Africa. As he explained to Michael Thorne in an interview for the *Illustrators Portfolio Web site*, “Originally, we returned to Cape Town with our son Joe when he was a baby because we wanted to surround him with my large, unruly family. However, during the process of staying and seeing the changes taking place in the country, I felt that, as a South African, I didn’t want to miss the experience of transformation. As a writer I [have] benefited from being close to my South African roots. I also feel that I would not have developed as independently as an artist living in the UK where one is forced to confront competition and the yearly swing of trends and financial dips that take place in publishing overseas. Isolation is not a bad thing provided one is a perfectionist and sets standards beyond one’s known abilities.”

Daly’s themes and motifs continue to surprise. His picture books range from the sublime to the silly, and in between they subtly challenge social prejudices without being didactic. Daly summed up his



achievement in an essay for *Something about the Author Autobiography Series*: “My motivation – a love for drawing pictures and a wish to be famous for something I do well – has remained with me since I was a kid ... What has emerged though, after ... years of illustrating and writing children’s books, is my position on the ideological battleground. I’ve discovered that I’m a banner-carrying subversive. Emblazoned on my banner is the message ‘STRUT YOUR STUFF!’”

From: <http://biography.jrank.org/pages/1854/Daly-Niki-1946.html>

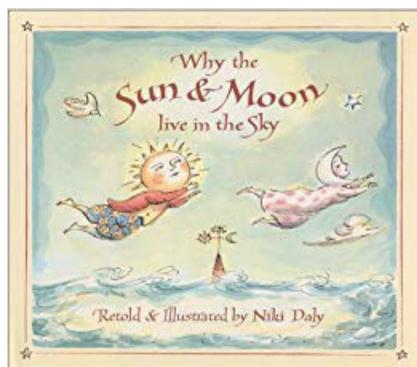


List of awards and other distinctions

*My vision is shaped by a desire to champion:
The unconventional, the individual, the loner and survivor
A love of comedy, whimsy and the absurd;
A revelry for our world, in all its real and fantastic forms;
And a celebration of love between people. – Niki Daly*

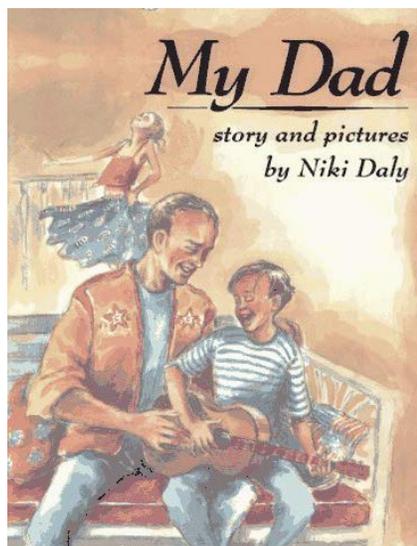
- Award for Illustration, British Arts Council/Provincial Booksellers, 1978 for ***The Little Girl Who Lived Down the Road***
- New York Times Ten Best Illustrated Books list, 1995, and Anne Izard Storytellers' Choice Award, 1996, both for ***Why the Sun and Moon Live in the Sky***
- *Jamela's Dress* winner of: ALA Notable Children's Book, Children's Literature Choice Award, Parents' Choice Silver Award, Peter Pan Silver Award in Sweden
- ***Not So Fast, Songololo*** winner of: Parents' Choice Foundation Book Award for Literature, 1987; Horn Book Honor List, 1987; Katrine Harries Award (South Africa) for illustration, 1988
- International Board on Books for Young People Honors Award for illustration, 1995, for *All the Magic in the World*, and 1996, for ***One Round Moon and a Star for Me***
- Parents' Choice Award, 1999, for ***Bravo, Zan Angelo!***
- Children's Africana Book Award Honor Book for Young Children, 2004, for ***Once upon a Time***
- ***Jamela's Dress*** was chosen by the ALA as a Notable Children's Book by Booklist as one of the Top 10 African American Picture Books of 2000, and also won the Children's Literature Choice Award, the Parents' Choice Silver Award and the Peter Pan Silver Award in Sweden.
- In 2009 Niki was awarded the Molteno Gold Medal for his major contribution towards South African children's literature.
- ***The Herd Boy*** – 2013 IBBY SA Exclusive Books Award; Junior Library Guild Selection (2012); Poetry Center at Passaic County CC, Paterson Prize for Young People Honor Book (2013); United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY), Outstanding International Books (2013)
- ***Not So Fast, Songololo*** and ***Fly, Eagle Fly!*** listed in the Mail and Guardian's 50 best children's books published from 1950 to the present day that celebrate cultural and ethnic diversity October, 2014 (UK)

<https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2014/oct/13/50-best-culturally-diverse-childrens-books>

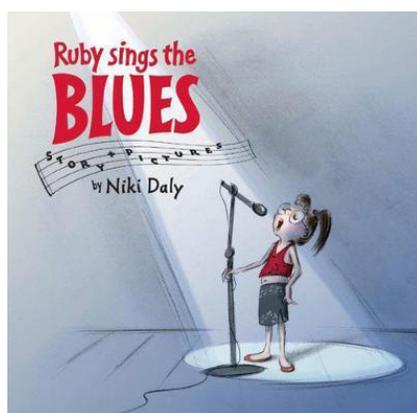


Complete bibliography of the children's books by the candidate, English translation of the titles, the year and place of publication and the name of the publisher

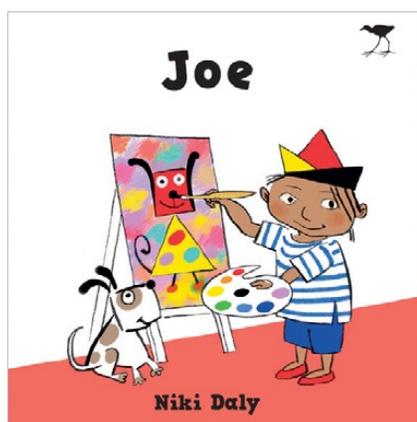
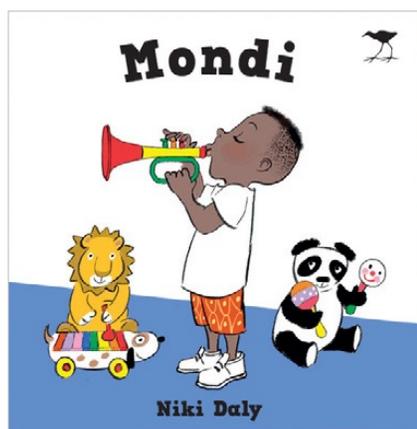
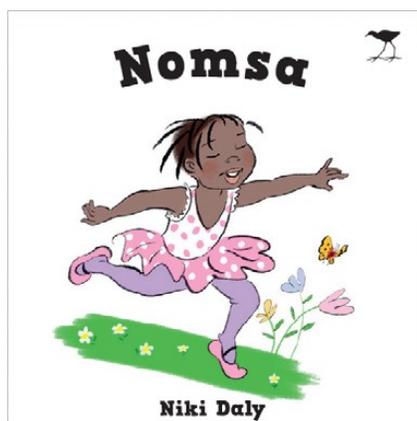
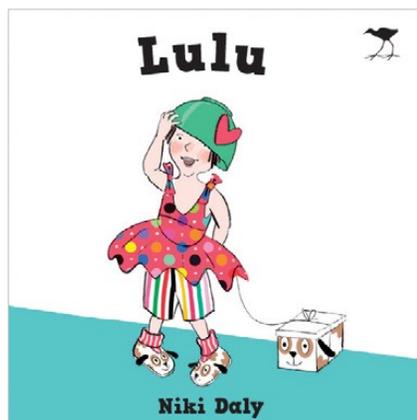
Illustration ought not to draw attention to its technical wizardry to the point where it competes with the story. It is the function of illustration to faithfully serve the story and further the meaning and emotional effect of the words. – Niki Daly



Self-illustrated fiction for children



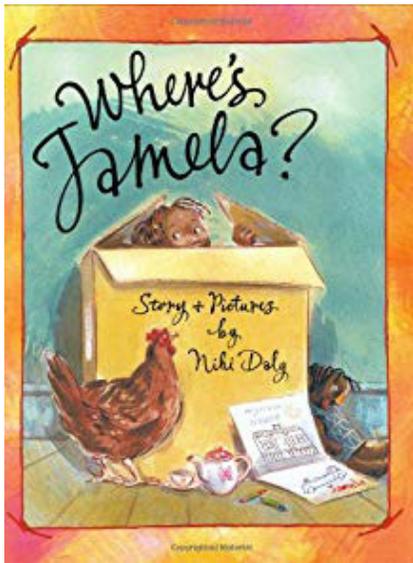
- ***The Little Girl Who Lived Down the Road***, Collins (London, England), 1978.
- ***Vim the Rag Mouse***, Atheneum (New York, NY), 1979.
- ***Joseph's Other Red Sock***, Atheneum (New York, NY), 1982.
- ***Leo's Christmas Surprise***, Gollancz (London, England), Human and Rousseau (Cape Town), 1983.
- ***Not So Fast, Songololo***, Gollancz (London, England), 1985, Atheneum (New York, NY), 1986.
- ***Mama, Papa, and Baby Joe***, Viking (New York, NY), Songololo Books – David Philip (Cape Town), The Bodley Head (London), 1991.
- ***Papa Lucky's Shadow***, Margaret K. McElderry (New York, NY), The Bodley Head (London) 1992, reprinted, Songololo Books – David Philip (Cape Town, South Africa), 2002.
- ***Mary Malloy and the Baby Who Wouldn't Sleep***, Golden (New York, NY), 1993.
- ***Why the Sun and Moon Live in the Sky***, Lothrop, Lee & Shepard (New York, NY), Maruzen Mates Ltd (Tokyo), 1994.
- ***My Dad***, Margaret K. McElderry (New York, NY), Anansi (Cape Town), 1995.
- ***Bravo, Zan Angelo!***, Farrar, Straus & Giroux (New York, NY), Frances Lincoln (London), Forlaget Hjulet, Risskov, Klematis (Copenhagen), Zirkoon (Amsterdam), Deux Coqs D'or (Paris), 1996.
- (With Nola Turkington) ***The Dancer***, Human & Rousseau (Cape Town, South Africa), 1996, Forgalet Hjulet (Copenhagen), Frances Lincoln (London), Circonflexe (Paris), 2000.
- (With Wendy Hartmann) ***The Dinosaurs Are Back and It's Your Fault, Edward!***, Margaret K. McElderry (New York, NY), 1996, The Bodley Head (London), Red Fox (London) paperback 1997.
- ***The Boy on the Beach***, McElderry (New York, NY), Bloomsbury Publishers (London), Forgalet Hjulet (Copenhagen), Human and Rousseau (Cape Town), 1999.
- ***Pa's Perfect Pizza***, Corgi (London, England), 2000.
- ***Old Bob's Brown Bear***, Farrar, Straus & Giroux (New York, NY), Bloomsbury (London), Forlaget Hjulet (Copenhagen), 2002.
- ***Once upon a Time***, Farrar, Straus & Giroux (New York, NY), Frances Lincoln (London); Forlaget Hjulet (Copenhagen), 2003.
- ***Ruby Sings the Blues***, Bloomsbury (New York, NY), Frances Lincoln (London), 2005.



- *A Wanderer in Og: An Amphigory Devised for Your Amusement*, Double Storey Books (Cape Town, South Africa), 2005.
- *Pretty Salma*, Frances Lincoln, (London, England), 2006, published as *Pretty Salma: A Little Red Riding Hood Story from Africa*, Tafelberg (South Africa), 2007.
- *Welcome to Zanzibar Road*, Clarion Books (New York, NY), 2006, published as *Zanzibar Road*, Giraffe Books (Johannesburg, South Africa), 2006.
- *Elsa and the Little Thingamajig*, Pan Macmillan (Johannesburg, South Africa), 2008.
- *Bettina Valentino and the Picasso Club*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux (New York, NY), 2009.
- *The Herd Boy*, Eerdmans (Grand Rapids, MI), Jacana Media (Johannesburg, South Africa), 2012.
- *Next Stop—Zanzibar Road!*, Clarion Books (Boston, MA), 2012.
- *No More Kisses for Bernard*, Frances Lincoln (London, England), 2012.
- *Operation Kick Butt*, Hodder & Stoughton (London, England), 2012.
- *Operation Itchy Bum*, Hodder & Stoughton (London, England), 2012.
- (With wife, Jude Daly) *Seb and Hamish*, Frances Lincoln (London, England), 2014.
- (With wife, Jude Daly) *Thank You, Jackson: How One Little Boy Makes a BIG Difference*, Frances Lincoln (London, England), 2014.
- (With wife, Jude Daly) *Little Hands Books* (four board-book box set, includes *Carlos*, *Mondi*, *Nina* and *Ruby*), Jacana (Johannesburg, South Africa), 2014; published as *Little Artists Books* (box set including the same titles), Kane Miller (La Jolla, CA), 2016.
- *Nicholas and the Wild Ones*, Jacana (Johannesburg, South Africa), 2015.
- *Surprise! Surprise!* Tafelberg (Cape Town, South Africa), 2017.
- *Hooray! Thoko*, Jacana (Johannesburg, South Africa), 2017, to be published by Janetta Otterbarry Books UK, 2019.
- *Sharp Sharp! Thoko*, Jacana, (Johannesburg, South Africa), 2018, to be published by Janetta Otterbarry Books UK, 2019.

Walker Storytime series, self-illustrated

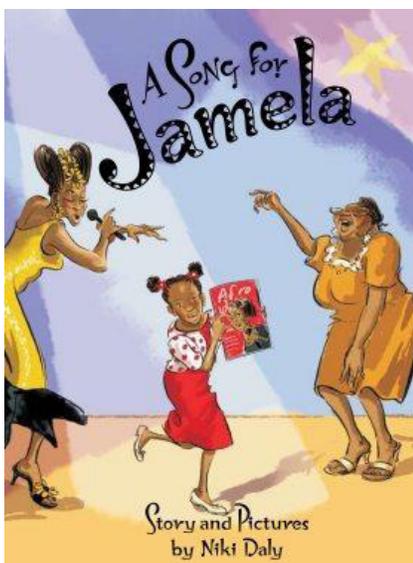
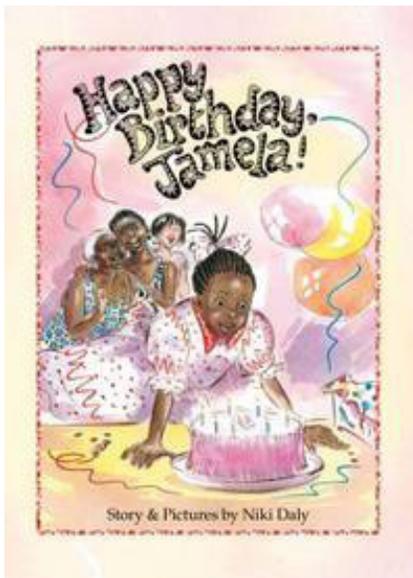
- *Ben's Gingerbread Man*, Viking (New York, NY), Walker Books (London, England), Uitgeverij C. De Vries Bouwers (The Netherlands), 1985.
- *Teddy's Ear*, Viking (New York, NY), 1985.
- *Monsters Are like That*, Viking (New York, NY), 1985.
- *Just like Archie*, Viking (New York, NY), 1986.
- *Look at Me!*, Viking (New York, NY), 1986.
- *Thank You, Henrietta*, Viking (New York, NY), 1986.



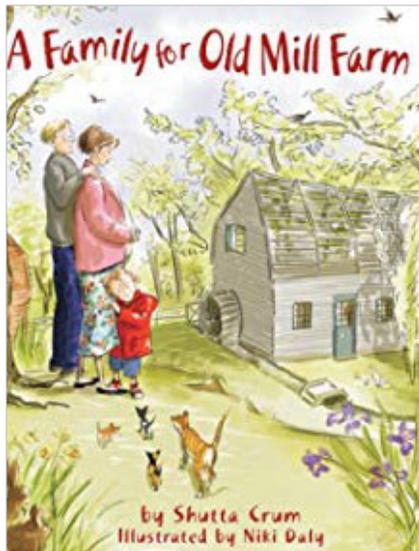
Jamela series, self-illustrated

- *Jamela's Dress*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux (New York, NY), Tafelberg (South Africa), 1999.
- *What's Cooking, Jamela?*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux (New York, NY), Tafelberg (South Africa), Frances Lincoln (London, England), 2001.
- *Where's Jamela?*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux (New York, NY), Tafelberg (South Africa), Frances Lincoln (London, England), Forlaget Hjulet (Copenhagen), 2004.
- *Happy Birthday, Jamela!*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux (New York, NY), Tafelberg (South Africa), 2006.
- *A Song for Jamela*, Frances Lincoln (UK) Tafelberg (South Africa), 2009.

Illustrations



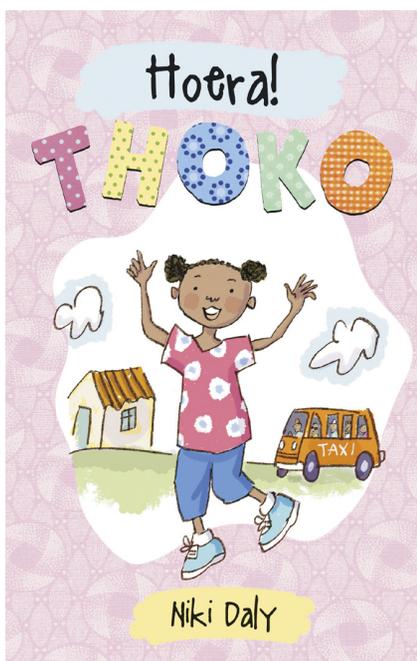
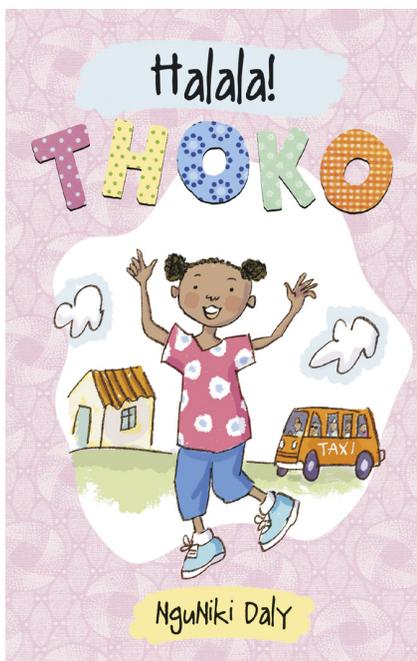
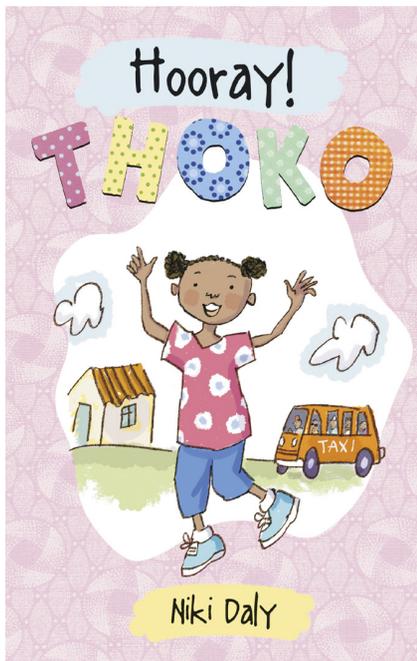
- Kathleen Hersom, *Maybe It's a Tiger*, Macmillan (London, England), 1981.
- Christopher Gregorowski, reteller, *Fly, Eagle, Fly!*, Tafelberg (London, England), 1982, revised edition, Margaret K. McElderry (New York, NY), Frances Lincoln (London, England), Forgalet Hjulet (Copenhagen), Tafelberg (Cape Town, South Africa), Sub Saharan Publishers (Accra), Hachette Gauthier-Languereau (Paris, France), 2000.
- Louis Baum, *I Want to See the Moon*, Bodley Head (London, England), 1984, Overlook Press (New York, NY), 1989.
- Ruth Craft, *The Day of the Rainbow*, Heinemann (London, England), 1988, Viking (New York, NY), Human and Rousseau (Cape Town, South Africa), 1989.
- Reviva Schermbrucker, *Charlie's House*, Songololo (Cape Town, South Africa), 1989, Viking (New York, NY), 1991, Walker Books (London, England), Viking Kestrel (New York, NY), 1995, Solidaritätsfonds e.V (Hamburg), reprinted, Songololo (Claremont, South Africa), 2002.
- Ben MacLennan, *Apartheid: The Lighter Side*, Chameleon Press (Plumstead, South Africa), 1990.
- Wendy Hartmann, *All the Magic in the World*, Dutton (New York, NY), The Bodley Head (London), 1993, reprinted, Songololo (Claremont, South Africa), 2002.
- Ingrid Mennen, *One Round Moon and a Star for Me*, Orchard (New York, NY), 1995, Songololo Books (Cape Town, South Africa), Human and Rousseau (Cape Town, South Africa), Orchard Books (New York, NY), The Bodley Head (London, England), Forgalet Hjulet (Copenhagen), 1994.
- Cari Best, *Red Light, Green Light, Mama, and Me*, Orchard (New York, NY), 1995.
- Gus Ferguson, *The Herding of the Snail: An Adaptation in Verse*, Firfield Pamphlet Press (Cape Town, South Africa), 1995.
- Dinah M. Mbanze, reteller, *The Magic Pot: Three African Tales*, Kwela Books (Cape Town, South Africa), 1999.
- Dinah M. Mbanze, reteller, *The Berry Basket: Three African Tales*, Kwela Books (Cape Town, South Africa), 1999.



- Philip Wells, *Daddy Island*, Barefoot Books (New York, NY), 2001.
- Pat Thomson, *The Squeaky, Creaky Bed*, Random House (New York, NY), 2003.
- Louise Borden, *The Greatest Skating Race: A World War II Story from the Netherlands*, Margaret K. McElderry (New York, NY), 2004.
- Shutta Crum, *A Family for Old Mill Farm*, Clarion (New York, NY), 2007.
- Sheila P. Moses, *Sallie Gal and the Wall-a-kee Man*, Scholastic Press (New York, NY), 2007.

Co-authored books

- (With Ingrid Mennen) *Ashraf of Africa*, illustrated by Nicolaas Maritz, Songololo Books – David Philip/retitled *Somewhere in Africa*, The Bodley Head (London, England), Dutton (New York, NY), 1992.



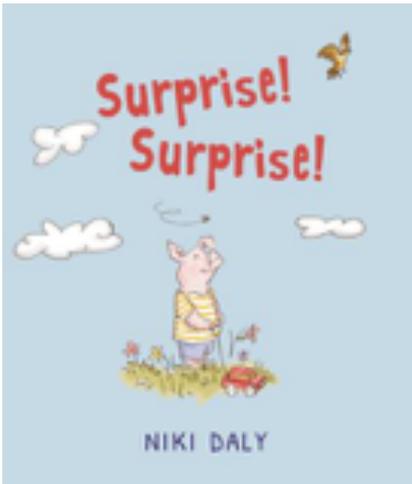
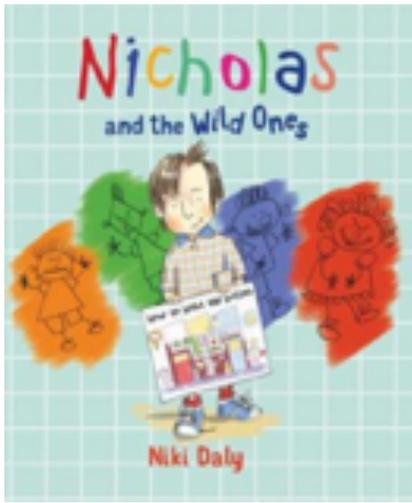
List of translated editions and their languages

Countries in which Niki Daly's books have been published

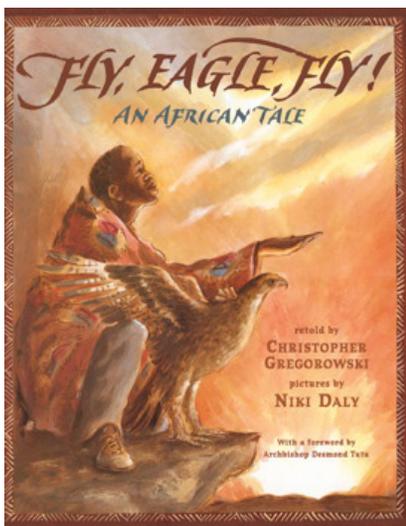
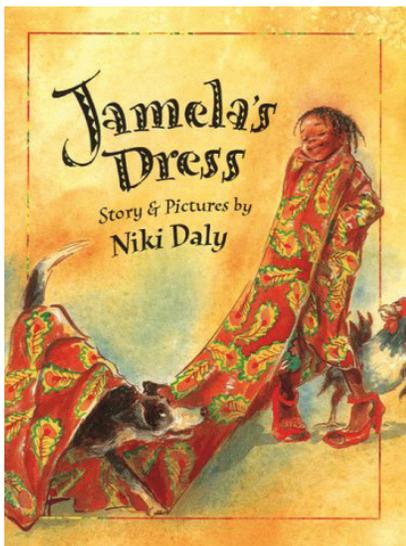
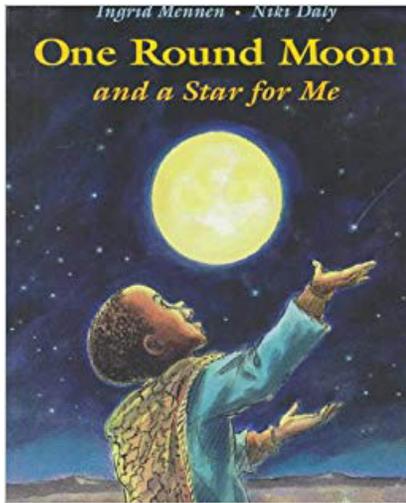
- Brazil
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Ghana
- Holland
- Japan
- Norway
- Scandinavia
- South Africa
- Spain
- United Kingdom
- United States of America
- China
- Korea

List of translations

- **Ashraf of Africa**
Afrikaans, Japanese
- **The Boy on the Beach**
Afrikaans, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish
- **Bravo! Zan Angelo**
Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, French, German
- **The Dancer**
Afrikaans, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish
- **The Day of the Rainbow**
Afrikaans, German
- **Fly, Eagle, Fly!**
Afrikaans, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish
- **I Want to see the Moon**
Japanese
- **Jamela's Dress**
Afrikaans, Danish, Finish, Norwegian, Spanish, Swedish, Zulu
- **Leo's Christmas**
Surprise Afrikaans
- **Not So Fast, Songololo**
Afrikaans, North Sotho, South Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish
- **Old Bob's Brown Bear**
Danish, Norwegian, Swedish
- **One Round Moon and a Star for Me**
Afrikaans, Danish, Swedish, Zulu
- **Papa Lucky's Shadow**
Afrikaans
- **Why the Sun and Moon Live in the Sky**
Japanese
- **The Walker Storytime Series**
Afrikaans, Dutch
- **What's Cooking, Jamela?**
Afrikaans, Danish, Finish, Norwegian, Swedish
- **Daddy Island**
Chinese, Korean
- **The Herd Boy**
English, Afrikaans, Sepedi, Sotho, Swati, Setswana, Xhosa, Zulu

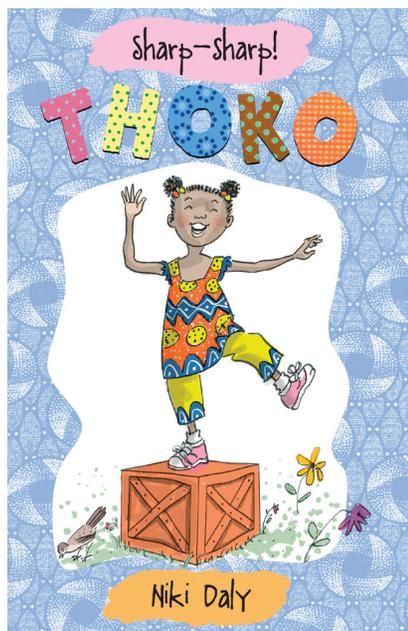


- ***Little Hands Books***
English, Afrikaans, Ndebele, Sepedi, Sotho, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu
- ***Nicholas and the Wild Ones***
English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Zulu
- ***Thank You Jackson***
English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Zulu
- ***Surprise! Surprise!***
English, Afrikaans, Chinese, Spanish
- ***Hooray! Thoko***
English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Zulu
- ***Sharp-Sharp! Thoko***
English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Zulu



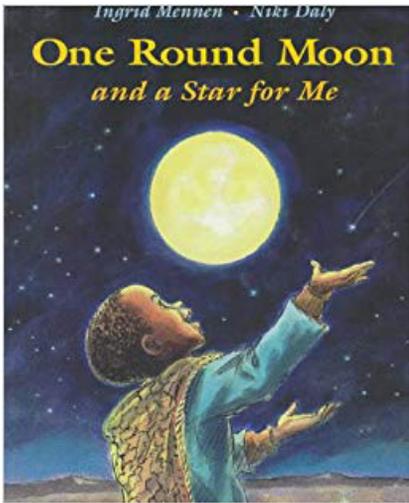
Ten of the most important titles by the candidate and the names of the publishers of all the editions

1. Ingrid Mennen, *One Round Moon and a Star for Me*, Orchard (New York, NY), 1994, Songololo Books David Philip Publishers (South Africa), 2003.
2. *Jamela's Dress*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux (New York, NY), Frances Lincoln (London, England), Farrar, Straus & Giroux (New York, NY), Human and Rousseau (Cape Town, South Africa) Forgalet Hjulet (Copenhagen), 2001, Intermon (Barcelona, Spain), Pieni Karhu (Finland), 1999.
3. Christopher Gregorowski, reteller, *Fly, Eagle Fly!*, Francis Lincoln (London, England), Tafelberg (South Africa), 1982, revised edition, McElderry (New York, NY), 2000.
4. *Next Stop—Zanzibar Road!*, Clarion Books (Boston, MA), 2012, Pan MacMillan (South Africa), 2012.
5. *Pretty Salma*, Frances Lincoln (London, England), 2006, published as *Pretty Salma: A Little Red Riding Hood Story from Africa*, Tafelberg (South Africa), 2007.
6. *The Herd Boy*, Eerdmans (Grand Rapids, MI), Jacana Media (Johannesburg, South Africa), 2012.
7. *Not So Fast, Songololo*, Gollancz (London, England), Human and Rousseau (Cape Town, South Africa), Margaret MacElderry (New York, NY), Gollancz (London, England), Penguin (Puffin paperback) (Harmondsworth), 1985, Atheneum (New York, NY), 1986, Frances Lincoln (London, England), Hachette Gauthier-Languereau (Paris, France), Forlaget Hjulet (Copenhagen), 2002.
8. *The Boy on the Beach*, McElderry (New York, NY), Bloomsbury Publishers (London, England), Forgalet Hjulet (Copenhagen), Human and Rousseau (Cape Town, South Africa), 1999.
9. *Once upon a Time*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux (New York, NY), Frances Lincoln (London, England); Forlaget Hjulet (Copenhagen), 2003.
10. The Thoko Series. *Hooray! Thoko* and *Sharp-Sharp! Thoko* (Jacana Media, South Africa), 2017, 2018. Both Thoko books to be published by Janetta Otterbarry Books UK, 2019.



List of five titles submitted to the jury

1. Ingrid Mennen, *One Round Moon and a Star for Me*, Orchard (New York, NY), 1994, Songololo Books David Philip Publishers (South Africa), 2003.
2. Christopher Gregorowski, reteller, *Fly, Eagle Fly!*, Francis Lincoln (London, England), Tafelberg (South Africa), 1982, revised edition, McElderry (New York, NY), 2000.
3. *The Herd Boy*, Eerdmans (Grand Rapids, MI), Jacana Media (Johannesburg, South Africa), 2012.
4. *Not So Fast, Songololo*, Gollancz (London, England), Human and Rousseau (Cape Town, South Africa), Margaret MacElderry (New York, NY), Gollancz (London, England), Penguin (Puffin paperback) (Harmondsworth), 1985, Atheneum (New York, NY), 1986, Frances Lincoln (London, England), Hachette Gauthier-Languereau (Paris, France), Forlaget Hjulet (Copenhagen), 2002.
5. The Thoko Series. *Hooray! Thoko* and *Sharp-Sharp! Thoko* (Jacana Media, South Africa), 2017, 2018. Both Thoko books to be published by Janetta Otterbarry Books UK, 2019.



Published reviews of the books submitted to the jury and book summaries

I became a writer in order to draw pictures. – Niki Daly

Ingrid Mennen, *One Round Moon and a Star for Me*, Orchard (New York, NY), 1994; Songologo Books, David Philip (Johannesburg), 2003.

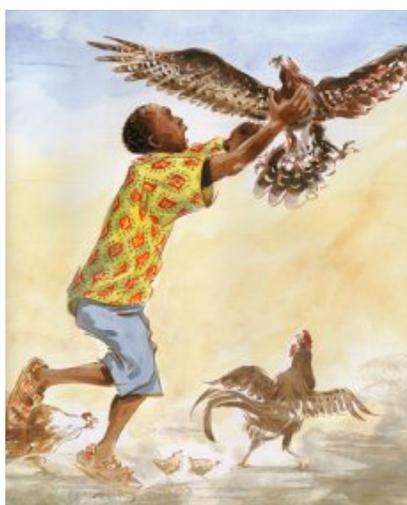
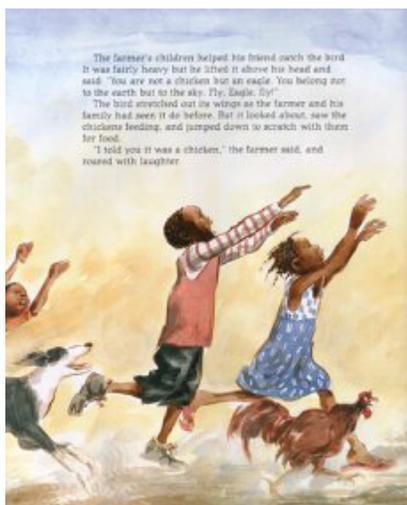
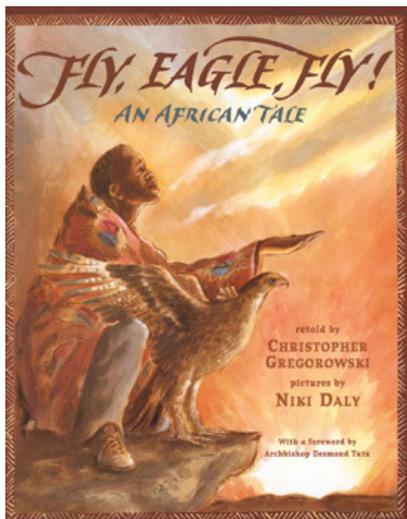
A falling star summons neighbours and relations to welcome a little boy's new-born sibling, but the boy becomes concerned when his papa pays so much attention to the baby.

Enriched by an African setting, the familiar theme of reassuring a child about his secure place in the family after a new baby is born. The sky is very close to this Lesotho boy; Papa seems to catch a falling star in his milk bucket (“‘A star for a new baby,’ says Mama”), and when he sees the rising sun the boy imagines that it’s chasing the moon “back to her empty hut”. Mennen weaves other celestial images into her simple portrayal of such Lesotho customs for welcoming a baby as gifts of water, soap, or “fresh cow-dung for a new floor”. When Papa proudly identifies the child as his (“They look like my hands...”), the older child expresses misgivings: “...are you really my papa too?” Papa warmly confirms their relationship with another physical comparison – and also finds the little boy his own special star. Daly’s freely rendered art reflects the family’s joy and affection while nicely evoking the rural setting. Warm-hearted and appealing; it might be wise, in sharing this, to discuss (especially with adoptees) other bases for parent-child bonding. (Picture book. 4-8)

From: <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/ingrid-mennen/one-round-moon-and-a-star-for-me/>

Atmospheric details particularize this affecting tale of a rural southern African boy whose mother has just given birth. The boy, narrating, begins with an expression of awe: “A falling star, Mama! Look how Papa catches it in his warm brown blanket. See how it slips into his silver milk bucket. ‘A star for a new baby,’ says Mama.” After Papa proudly inspects the baby and announces, “I’m the baby’s father,” the older boy wonders, “Papa, are you really my papa too?” Papa reassures him, promising that another star will fall from the sky just for him. The use of native terms (a “tula-tula hush-hush song”) and references to local practices (sticking two stalks of grass above the door to signify a birth; celebrating the new arrival by flooring the hut with fresh cow-dung) enhance this journey abroad. Daly’s gently reverent pencil-and-watercolor illustrations reinforce Mennen’s comforting depiction of a world where a boy might indeed catch a star in his palm, and where the special quality of each child is valued. Ages 4-7. (Mar.)

From: <https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-531-06804-5>



Christopher Gregorowski, reteller, *Fly, Eagle, Fly!*, Tafelberg (London, England), 1982, revised edition, McElderry (New York, NY), 2000.

After a stormy night, a farmer searching for his lost calf finds a baby eagle that has been blown out of its nest. He takes it home and raises it with his chickens. When a friend comes to visit one day, he tells the farmer that an eagle should be flying high in the sky, not staying on the ground. "But this eagle walks like a chicken, eats like a chicken, even thinks like a chicken," the farmer replies.

Twice, the farmer's friend tries to get the eagle to fly, but it sees the chickens on the ground and drops down each time. At last the friend, followed by the farmer, carries the young eagle back into the mountains and places the great bird on a rocky ledge, just before sunrise. As the air is filled with golden light and the sun appears, the friend cries, "Fly, Eagle, Fly!" and the eagle raises its wings and soars upwards, out of sight.

This simply told yet dramatic story from Africa will delight children everywhere and encourage them to "lift off and soar," as Archbishop Tutu puts it in his foreword. In lovely, expressive paintings of great beauty, sparked with touches of humour, Niki Daly, an internationally known artist, catches the essence of this powerful tale.

Fly, Eagle, Fly! has become the most famous picture-book story in South African children's literature. It has a past, a present, and probably a long future. In 1981, Christopher Gregorowski retold this story to his small daughter, who was dying. He gave the parable an Eastern Cape setting, aiming to show that "we are all born to be eagles who are lifted up by the might of the Spirit". *Fly, Eagle, Fly!* was published by Tafelberg, using illustrations by Niki Daly. Colour printing was then too expensive, so he used only black and a warm yellow-ochre. The book was warmly received, praised by reviewers, turned into an animated film by Weston Woods in the United States (using the storytelling voice of Gcina Mhlophe), and began to become quietly well known.

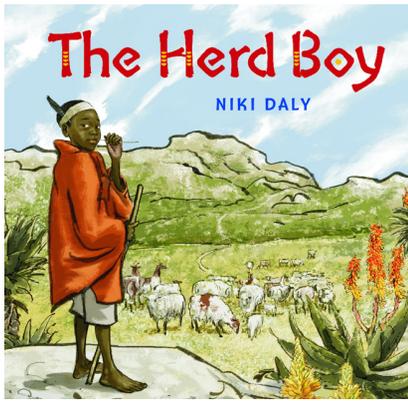
In the year 2000, Tafelberg produced a new edition, with larger, full-colour pictures re-created by Niki Daly, with a special foreword from Archbishop Desmond Tutu. With the support of Biblionef, *Fly, Eagle, Fly!* was translated and published in all eleven official languages of South Africa. At last, all our children could hear this inspiring story in their own mother-tongue. 2015, Author: Jay Heale

From: <https://www.childrensbook.co.za/news/2015/10/28/fly-eagle-fly>

Illustrator Niki Daly, who dedicates the book to the children of South Africa, uses watercolors that are broad, sweeping, and very detailed. Full of browns, greens, and oranges, the book feels earthy and warm. And, while the story itself describes few, if any, daily village activities, Daly's illustrations are sufficiently explicit, and children will gain a rudimentary sense of some traditional African architectural structures, textiles, and geography.

Further, the illustrations represent present-day Africa, where people wear contemporary clothing as well as traditional African garb. In this sense, *Fly, Eagle, Fly!* points to the fable's timelessness.

From: <https://bookpage.com/reviews/1201-christopher-gregorowski-fly-eagle-fly-african-tale-childrens#.XERRDlwzBIU>



The Herd Boy, Eerdmans (Grand Rapids, MI), Jacana Media (Johannesburg, South Africa), 2012.

“Pweew! Pweew!” Malusi’s shrill whistling drives the sheep out of Grandfather’s kraal. By the time they reach the grazing slopes, the earth is hot beneath his bare feet.

‘He keeps the sheep and goats from straying towards the deep donga, which is easy to fall into but hard to climb out of. You have to be awake, and you have to be brave, to be a herd boy.’

Malusi is a herd boy. It is a big job for a small boy, yet he does it well, no matter the danger. But he also dreams of being more than a herd boy someday: Malusi wants to be president.

This simple but poignant story explores the idea that many great leaders have come from humble beginnings. Perhaps what gives someone the strength and integrity to lead well isn’t so different from what it takes to be a good herd boy.

Vivid illustrations of depth and beauty transform this story into an experience of indelible power and inspiration.

The wilderness is dramatic and raw as Nicky Daly chooses perspectives which give dominance to the mood of each page.

We see the baboon’s eye view of the village far below and an ‘eye level’ view of the boys stick fighting, which will engage children in the drama.

Flowers and creatures from the natural surroundings are woven into the story both visually and in text, adding context to the boy’s experience of being alone in the wild all day.

Local language is used to describe landforms, food and greetings. References to things that go on in the community like the meals that are eaten and the swapping of dung balls for fresh vegetables add valuable background to this well-developed story.

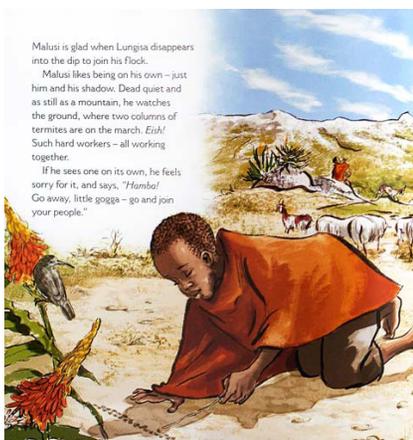
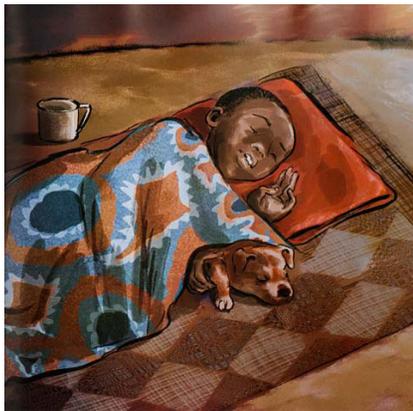
Children can learn a lot about cultural diversity and of course gain inspiration from the main theme of the story which is that great leaders can come from humble beginnings.

There is an uplifting end to this tale which will make children smile with delight.

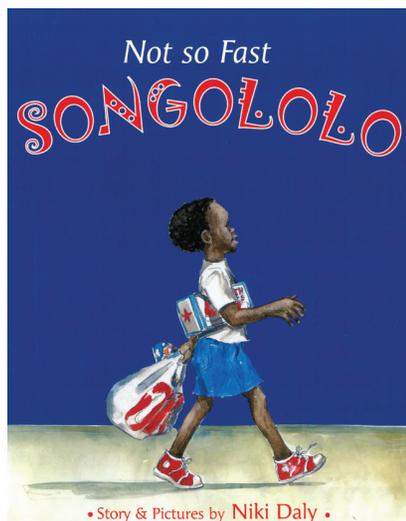
From: <https://brightstarbedtimestories.com/the-herd-boy-niki-daly-african-story-books/>

A day in the life and dreams of a young South African herding boy.

Daly provides an opportunity to witness an everyday existence most likely very different from the one led by readers. Malusi is a Xhosa herder. Daly sketches his day, from his porridge breakfast to taking the sheep and goats out to graze, a little play with his friend, gathering dung to fertilize the garden, a dangerous encounter with a baboon and then home again. There is an elemental rhythm to the story, and the artwork is striking, the colors a mottle of landscape greens and browns, picked out by vivid wildflowers. The author salts the common proceedings with Malusi’s dreams of a better lunch, owning a dog and becoming president of the country one day. (Nelson Mandela makes a brief appearance, reminding readers that he, too, was a herd boy.) Also sprinkled here and there are a sampling of words from South Africa – both Xhosa and Afrikaans: kraal, donga, googa – that are corralled into a glossary, as well as local fauna, from black eagles to puff adders to those opportunistic baboons. Malusi’s life may be cut to



Malusi is glad when Lungisa disappears into the dip to join his flock.
Malusi likes being on his own – just him and his shadow. Dead quiet and as still as a mountain, he watches the ground, where two columns of termites are on the march. *Eink!* Such hard workers – all working together.
If he sees one on its own, he feels sorry for it, and says, *“Hamba! Go away, little gogga – go and join your people.”*



the essential, but it is never short on incident and for the need to be on his toes.

Affectionate and existential, Daly has well and fully caught Malusi's immediate circumstance and his horizons. (Picture book. 6-10)

From: <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/niki-daly/herd-boy/>

Not So Fast, Songololo, Gollancz (London, England), Human and Rousseau (Cape Town, South Africa), Margaret MacElderry (New York, NY), Gollancz (London, England), Penguin (Puffin paperback) (Harmondsworth) 1985, Atheneum (New York, NY), 1986, Frances Lincoln (London, England), Hachette Gauthier-Languereau (Paris, France), Forlaget Hjulet (Copenhagen), 2002.

A young boy agrees to accompany his elderly grandmother on a shopping trip, but he finds himself constantly having to wait for the old woman to catch up, which he finds annoying. However, his patience is rewarded when he is given a treat for his troubles.

Niki Daly's expressive watercolours highlight all the points that his text merely hints at: from the elderly Gogo's smiling love for her grandson to the boy's touching care and concern for someone so much older than he is. This picture book is a simple story about a universally shared experience and has already become a classic in its own time. – Julia Eccleshare, '1001 Children's Books You Must Read Before You Grow Up'

From: <https://www.lovereadng4kids.co.uk/book/10711/Not-So-Fast-Songololo-by-Niki-Daly.html>

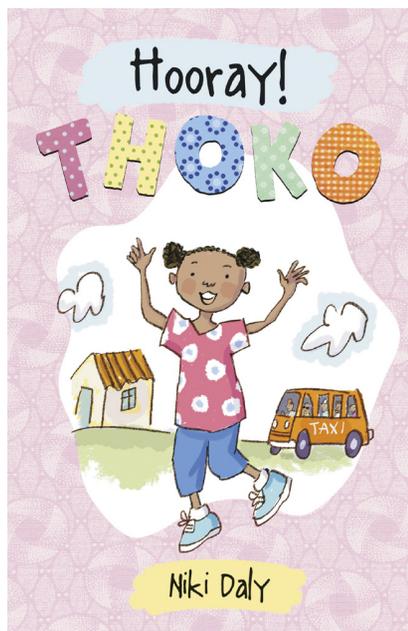
The setting is South Africa and the names of the people are like poetry: Uzuti, Mongi, Mr. Motiki. Malusi is now old enough to accompany his grandmother, Gogo, into the city to shop. She is an old woman, ample, proud, not quite in step with modern technology, and she no longer moves quickly. Malusi (Songololo to his grandmother) helps her with her shopping. It's a universally appealing shared experience. The love and respect that flows between the two is warm and beautiful, and Daly's watercolor and marker art is very expressive. When Daly writes, "Gogo was old, but her face shone like new school shoes. Her hands were large and used to hard work, but they were gentle," her painting says all this and much more.

From: <https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-689-50367-2>

The Thoko Series. *Hooray! Thoko and Sharp-Sharp! Thoko*, Jacana Media (Johannesburg, South Africa), 2017, 2018. Both Thoko books to be published by Janetta Otterbarry Books UK 2019.

Niki Daly makes reading about life as a kid entertaining and realistic with his delightful new local heroine, Thoko. Thoko skips through life, leaving behind a trail of laughter and a few frowns. With adorable illustrations and four heart-warming easy-to-read stories in each book, Niki Daly has created a little girl who is sure to become your new favourite friend.

Niki 'is excited about the fact that his second collection of stories in the Thoko series is about to be released. It is called *Sharp-Sharp! Thoko*. Unlike his other famous young heroine, Jamela, whose antics



have endeared themselves to thousands of children, not only in his country, but around the world, Thoko takes life much more seriously. She finds ways to solve problems instead of creating them, although, as Niki confesses, ‘she’s a bit of a chip off the old block and she and her gogo often bump heads; in fact, they’re engaged in a constant battle of wills.’ You can see by the twinkle in his eye that Niki has a soft spot for Thoko.

The fact of the matter is that this Kleinmond writer/illustrator has never forgotten what it is to be a child. All he has to do is inlock the door and out tumble all the feelings. His books tend to be about solitary children in the often-confusing world of adults.

He says he is firmly anchored to the lives of children under the age of ten. “I can relate to all their issues: fears about school, about being bullied; about all their yearnings – to have, to happen, to become – as well as pride and pleasure at their achievements. I can tap directly into those feelings and then transcribe them onto the page in word and illustration, and, magically, the young readers recognise them as their own.’

And so Niki, the child who didn’t grow up, continues into his seventies, to delight both adults and children with his charming, whimsical little people, both on and out of the paper which are guaranteed to lift the heart, create a smile of recognition and make the world an altogether nicer place to live in. Sharp-sharp, Niki!

From: ‘Niki, the little boy who didn’t grow up’, Elaine Davie, *Village News*, 26 June 2018

This beautifully illustrated book for little ones is packed with four short stories about Thoko and her grade 3 adventures. With many lessons to be learnt in the four chapters – Thoko’s Worst Friend, Thoko’s First Library Book, What Made Thoko Smile and Thoko The Babysitter – this heart-warming read highlights moments that teach us that it’s the simple things in life that matter most.

From: *True Love*, February 2019

